Care for Creation
acting together for the environment

Churchyard opportunities
for wildlife and for mission
Diocese of Oxford
Diocese of Oxford Environmental Action Programme

Working on the Diocese’s net zero carbon and wider environmental commitments. We share resources on a variety of pathways for action such as:

- Eco Church award scheme
- Energy Audit programme
- Greenshoots Network
- Gathering of existing resources – EcoHub
- Creating resources
- Wilder Churches with BBOWT
Churchyards often form valuable “stepping-stone” islands for wildlife, providing both habitats to live in and corridors for movement through urban or agricultural landscapes. Here are some ways we can make them even more valuable to wildlife…

**Hedgerows and old trees** are valuable habitats for bats, birds and small mammals.

Regularly updated interpretation boards inform visitors about the wildlife and habitat management.

Regularly mowing both paths and areas with recent burials allows good access.

There are 600 or so lichens found in churchyards in lowland England and half of these are very rare.

Churches often provide much needed roosting habitat for bats and nesting holes for swifts.

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**A compost heap and patches of nettles** can be tucked away to provide more wildlife habitats.

Reducing the number of cuts allows wildflowers to grow and set seed.

Log piles can shelter invertebrates, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

Stone walls provide a habitat for mosses, lichens and ferns and homes for numerous animals.

What your church can do – land

With credit to victoriawainwright.com & kentwildlifetrust.org.uk
Churchyard Scavenger Hunt

Churchyard nature hunt

Our churchyards are rich with biodiversity, what can you find?
Keep score and fill in the table on the reverse.

1. Listen, how many birds can you see & hear?
2. How many types of plant can you see?
3. Is there a place to sit?
4. How many invertebrates can you see?
5. Is there a pond?
6. Can you find a compost bin/heap?
7. Is there a birdbath or birdbase?
8. Can you find a bat?
9. Is there a vegetable patch?
10. Are there signs of bats?
11. Are there linen, mosses or ferns growing on a wall?

Share your nature hunt finds with us on social media @DioceseofOxford

oxford.anglican.org/environment
Churches Count On Nature

WILDLIFE DISCOVERY for children and families
Fancy an opportunity to get closer to nature with your family? Come along to St Leonard’s churchyard, Wallingford (OX10 0HA)
No parking

Discover our nature trail and craft activities
FREE event

Saturday 11 June 2022
1.30 pm to 4 pm

Email: stmarychildren2@gmail.com
wallingford.wildlife@gmail.com

Caring for God’s Acre Love your burial ground week
Village Wildlife Day

Join us for the launch of the Wildlife Friendly Community project and two talks in the church - one on fungi, and one by ecologist and author Hugh Warwick on hedgehogs.

- Art activities for children
- Build a ‘dead hedge’
- Picnic in the churchyard
- Hedgehog map

There’s also the opportunity to learn about composting, plants for pollinators, wildflower meadows, and hedgehog care, as well as the history of All Saints.

Tea, coffee & cakes available.
Everyone welcome.
Holy Trinity, Prestwood waxcap fungi
St Peter’s purpose is to ‘bring wholeness and hope to the people around us through encountering Jesus’.

The Quarrendon community’s needs are centred around its markers of deprivation and poverty, with the most prevalent (within the bottom 10% of the country) in:

- Health & Wellbeing
- Loneliness & Isolation
- Education & Skills
- Poverty affecting older people and children
St Peter’s Aylesbury Community Garden

Creativity, Worship & Fun Ideas
- QR Codes - helping people to cook and eat healthily
- Use the Seasons (eg Advent)
- Recycling & Reclamation (Carpet tiles, pallets, compostable cups, etc)
- Paint Parties (Wellness, Outreach)
  www.stpa.life/community-garden/
Chinnor Churches Go Wild!

The five churches in the Chinnor Churches Go Wild! project have received support from the Chiltern Conservation Board and BBOWT’s Rough Around the Edges project and are an A Rocha UK Partner in Action.

Their aims are:

• to understand the habitats and wildlife in each churchyard
• to improve them for the benefit of wildlife and the local community
• to target at least one declining or threatened species for specific action
• to increase the number of people engaging in nature & the depth of engagement
Churchyard wildlife survey opportunities

- Churches Count on Nature
- Caring for God’s Acre species recording
- Butterfly Conservation, Upper Thames Branch
- Bats In Churches
- Plantlife Every Flower Counts
- RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch
- British Lichen Society churchyard survey
- Existing churchyard species records from TVERC via NBN Gateway or BMKERC
Discussion Questions

What one action do you feel you could take with your church?

What would be the ways it would fit with the wider mission of your church?

What obstacles might you come across and how might you tackle them?

What resources / areas of information would be useful to your church?