

St James's churchyards

Biodiversity plan 2025-26

This is a 'living document' – constantly being updated and amended. Last updated March 2025.

The three main priority areas of activity (in no particular order) are:

- **Complete and expand our surveys of the existing wildlife in both churchyards.**
- **Engagement of the church and wider local community.**
- **Actions and possible remediation.**

All three are priorities, and we need to reach agreement, through discussion with and engagement of the community, on the details and priorities within this plan.

Aim:

**to ensure the churchyards provide a sustainable mosaic of habitats
for wildlife and people.**

Priority areas

- **Complete and continue the surveys** of what we already have, and feed our findings into local and regional recording schemes
 - We need some expert advice in some areas.
 - ~~Plot all trees on map (underway – should be finished May '24)~~
 - List wild flowers and grasses etc within wildflower banks (Done '25, need repeating and updating)
 - (Do some transects/random grids – more formal survey not a priority?)
 - We have yet to investigate the lower churchyard properly, including the stream, having prioritised the Upper Churchyard.
 - Maintain and increase bird list (continually ongoing)
 - Do more insect surveys – start with butterflies and moths?
 - Seasonal moth traps (ongoing)
 - Seasonal butterfly surveys (2024 was a bad year for butterflies – will try again in 2025)
- **Engagement of community groups.**
 - The local Beavers – camera traps and Longworth traps, plus some bug hunts again. Maybe try lower churchyard too.
 - Have moth and bat events. Other churches have held bat evenings – including wine! – and these could be a wider community activity. Last year lots of visiting

bats but the maternity roost in the church didn't really happen – cross finders for 2025.

- Continue monthly Wildlife Notes
- Update Facebook pages – to tie in with Greener Gretton and the village's Nature Recovery Scheme (underway) and publicise what's on the web already
- Engage wider community in recording what they see in the churchyard (eg birds, butterflies, wildflowers – all the surveys above could be done by engaging local community)
- Ensure there are posters in and around church when other events are on (e.g. D-day event, Flower Festival, weddings etc)

- **Further actions and remediation**

- Agreed last year an absolute ban on herbicides and pesticides, but only use on invasive plants when absolutely necessary. (Many plants are equally well controlled by strimming before seeds set (allowing insects to get food first from flowers)
 - Continue planting and seeding wild flowering plants, particularly with pollinators in mind?
- Agreement on grass cutting and maintenance
 - Increase wild areas – aim for seasonal maintenance only of larger areas, but have paths cut through to get to enable access, especially to more recent, well-maintained graves and memorials
 - May need to improve access generally – wheelchairs and push chairs)
- Where water collects, make more formal pond/wetland? (NB not sure necessary as have water just outside churchyard, and stream in lower churchyard?)
- Cart pond is extremely nitrogen rich. The immediate problem appears to be a blocked drainage pipe, possibly owing to tree roots. (But not part of church – talk to council?)