

Count on nature – Lower churchyard June 8th 2026 (For eco church)



7 intrepid nature watchers spent an hour or so looking closely at what is growing, singing, creeping, flying or otherwise living in the lower churchyard. We recorded our findings on various apps that help with photo or birdsong identification, or just noted what we saw.

We could only record a small proportion of the life down there, but it was a fine, sunny afternoon, very peaceful and relaxing to look closely at some of the creatures we share our space with, and to realise what a vast variety of wild species are thriving without us really noticing them.

Unsurprisingly, as the land was ancient meadowland (as indicated by the Yellow Meadow Anthills that are dotted around the churchyards), there are at present many varieties of wild grasses, which have flourished in the recent weather. Apart from looking green, they provide habitats for insects, birds, small mammals, food for native butterflies, protect and shade the soil, and in time we hope they will provide support for more native wildflowers.

Although we did not have enough time to record more than a tiny proportion of the natural life in the churchyard, we have between us a list of **87 named wild plants**, flowers, grasses, including a few trees.

12 different varieties of birds were recorded, plus 2 passing gulls. Two of us recorded a little owl's voice, which, if accurate, could be a good sign for future tenancy of the owl box.

We did not have enough time to spend on recording many insects or fungi, but 8 types of insect were noted, ranging from a buff tailed bumble bee to a common rough woodlouse, and a small fly with a large name, called a spring epistrophe which as well as being an efficient pollinator, apparently acts as a natural pest controller by eating aphids (which were also noted, called Elder aphids.) A small but helpful hoverfly, it seems.

The one fungal type growth noted is called **subfamily caloplacoideae** on the app, a kind of lichen. Hopefully there are more fungi hidden away under the meadowgrass, to be discovered on another day.

There is so much to see when we take time out to look closely! The tiny, or slightly larger, forms of life which we noted, some with names much larger than themselves, all have a significant impact on the web of nature. More Counts on Nature to follow!