



ECO CHURCH  
RESOURCES

LAND

# How to Look After Your Church Land in Wildlife-Friendly Ways

ECO CHURCH  
RESOURCES

LAND

think



If you put all churchyards and land together in one place, they could create an area the size of a national park. So what we do with our green spaces around our churches could have a profoundly significant impact on the future for UK wildlife.

The big challenge with looking after church land is that it is often seen to be most cost effective to mow everything, prune everything, and concrete over everything else!

But the reality is that if we were to leave small areas un-mown and plant the areas up with native wildflowers – or if we were to bring in fruit trees to provide a source of food for wildlife – the costs are modest and the benefits for our declining flora and fauna would be substantial.

Churchyards are also havens for some of our least recorded species – lichen and mosses. A huge variety can grow on gravestones, and the sheltered conditions are perfect places for vertical lichen gardens. Seeing gravestones covered in small plants need not be a bad thing. They don't damage the stones and provide a haven for many microscopic species of insects.

Colossians 1:16 says, 'by him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible'. Churches can be one of the best places we have left to study not just the visible natural world – but also the invisible. The land outside our buildings is often teeming with life.

It's a good opportunity to work together to make church green spaces beneficial for all of God's creatures – while also acknowledging the need to keep things carefully managed in some of the more formal areas.

do



ECO CHURCH  
RESOURCES

LAND

Communication is a key part of keeping your church land eco-friendly. That helps everyone to travel together on the journey.

All Saints Church, Walton on the Naze, have found it's good to talk the walk. Carole Gooding writes articles in the church magazine and the weekly notice sheet, encouraging care for the planet and how parishioners can make a difference by the things they do and purchase.

'Our Green Group is writing an environmental policy for the church which will encourage car sharing and an annual 'beach clean'; help people to take part in the 'Big Butterfly Count' and recycle household tools through Tools with a Mission,' she said.

As you start to make changes to your church and land, make sure this is communicated to the members. Try one of the following action points:

- 1 Write an accessible document on how to look after your churchyard for wildlife. Get A Rocha UK or your local wildlife trust to look over it and advise you on the content.
- 2 Pull together a blog that informs the congregation on the things the church is doing in the grounds and the wildlife that is being seen.
- 3 Send your records in to iSPOT or to your local wildlife trust so that a record is kept of everything you see.

ISPOT

[www.ispotnature.org/communities/uk-and-ireland](http://www.ispotnature.org/communities/uk-and-ireland)



## Work with the wider community

Churchyards make an important contribution to the biodiversity of the country and are important places for wild flowers and wildlife, according to ChurchCare. There is huge potential for working with the wider community and with local schools to learn about the natural world through churchyards. All this – and more – is explored on the ChurchCare website.

## Look after your natural resources

The document Wildlife In Churchyards is a useful guide to looking after the natural resources that surround many of Britain's church buildings.

## Value your churchyard and burial grounds

This is the vision of Caring For God's Acre – an organisation that champions the conservation of churchyards and burial sites across the British Isles. What began as a pilot scheme in the Shropshire Hills in 1997 has now become an independent charity with a much wider coverage. CfGA is the only organisation in the UK to focus solely on the conservation of churchyards and burial grounds. They recommend a five-step programme of church grounds management:

1. Research existing records;
2. Map the site and start to fill in what you know and what you find out about plants, animals and built features;
3. Plan what you want to do and how you will manage the site. Talk to people and reach an agreement on management;
4. Inform people about the plans and invite them to become involved. Run events and training days, help people to learn more about the site;
5. Review the plan. Is it working? Check to see how practical it is and how people feel about it.

For more information and a whole range of resources to download, visit their website.

ECO CHURCH  
RESOURCES

LAND

### CHURCHCARE'S GUIDE TO MANAGING YOUR CHURCHYARD

[www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint/ways-to-take-action/managing-your-churchyard](http://www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint/ways-to-take-action/managing-your-churchyard)

### CHURCHCARE'S GUIDE TO WILDLIFE IN CHURCHYARDS

[www.churchcare.co.uk/images/wildlife\\_in\\_churchyards.pdf](http://www.churchcare.co.uk/images/wildlife_in_churchyards.pdf)

### CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE

[www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk)



ECO CHURCH  
RESOURCES

LAND

## Preserve churchyards as special places

These sites have been set apart from the beginning as sacred ground. However, if we control them too closely, there may be no room for the 'wildness' of heaven, perhaps God himself. If we turn them entirely over to nature, we neglect past generations who tended the ground as something different from its surroundings. This careful balance is proposed in the book, *The Nature Of God's Acre*, published by Church House, Hove, in East Sussex. At the heart of the book is a survey where more than three-quarters of those questioned agreed that they valued the presence of wildlife in their churchyard.

## Learn from the experiences of church and community projects

Case studies from churches and communities are available in various print publications and websites. It is worth spending some time reading through some of these for ideas and direction of good practice in land management and the wellbeing of wildlife. Here are some examples:

### 1. ST MARK'S, HADLOW DOWN, EAST SUSSEX

St Mark's is an Anglican church in the district of Wealden. Founded in 1834, the stone-built church boasts a well-regarded 'living churchyard' nature reserve. Offering much of ecological interest, the churchyard is classified as a site of Nature Conservation Importance. St Mark's features in the survey *The Nature Of God's Acre*. The churchyard contains 'a remarkable number' of grassland plant species, along with spotted orchids and some green-winged orchids. The land is managed sympathetically for its wildlife and for visitors. A large part of the churchyard is allowed to grow as meadow each summer. There are mowed walkways to allow access to graves. 'I just enjoy being there,' said a local resident. 'It is sympathetically cared for, with paths carefully cut, leaving long grass with its wildflowers in the majority of the churchyard. We have a wonderful selection of wildflowers in the appropriate seasons.'

### THE NATURE OF GOD'S ACRE

[www.chichester.anglican.org/  
news/2015/03/24/new-book-celebrating-  
wonders-creation-launched](http://www.chichester.anglican.org/news/2015/03/24/new-book-celebrating-wonders-creation-launched)

### HISTORY OF ST MARK'S

[www.bhdchurches.org.uk/historymark.htm](http://www.bhdchurches.org.uk/historymark.htm)

### NHBS SHOP LISTING FOR THE NATURE OF GOD'S ACRE

[www.nhbs.com/title/204749/the-nature-  
of-gods-acre](http://www.nhbs.com/title/204749/the-nature-of-gods-acre)



ECO CHURCH  
RESOURCES

LAND

## 2. ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, HAMPTON, EVESHAM

Concerned about the state of a medieval chest tomb, trustees wanted to do conservation work on this monument to a local farmer. The plan was to include cleaning the tomb, which was covered in lichens and mosses. The British Lichen Society carried out a survey of the churchyard and tomb, giving advice on the lichens and what works would be possible without damaging them. More than 30 species of lichen were found on the top limestone slab alone, some of them rare. Removing them would have been damaging not only to the lichens but also to the stonework. The PCC and Trustees accepted that while certain conservation work could be carried out on the sandstone slabs forming the walls of the tomb, the limestone base and top – where most of the lichens were found – should be left untouched. Through planning, it was possible both to preserve the lichens and also conserve the monument. It turned out to be a win-win situation.

## 3. ST ELIDYR'S, LUDCHURCH, PEMBROKESHIRE

This Church in Wales congregation wanted to make part of their churchyard into a natural, flowery space, 'to encourage wildlife and make it more attractive and interesting for visitors'. Over the last ten years they have been gradually moving from short mown grass to long grass. They left key areas, such as around the church entrance, cut short. The church reports that long grass areas are full of flowers, insects and more birds have definitely been seen within the churchyard. Seed eaters like finches are particularly noticeable. Ancient grassland indicator plants include pignut, betony, orchids and burnet are present, too. The church's next step is going to be a leaflet about the history and wildlife to encourage more visitors.

### LICHEN CASE STUDY

[www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/images/uploads/case-studies/Lichen%20Case%20Study.pdf](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/images/uploads/case-studies/Lichen%20Case%20Study.pdf)

### ST ELIDYR'S CASE STUDY

[www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/images/uploads/case-studies/3-st-elidyr/St%20Elidyr%20-%20Case%20study.pdf](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/images/uploads/case-studies/3-st-elidyr/St%20Elidyr%20-%20Case%20study.pdf)





ECO CHURCH  
RESOURCES

LAND

#### 4. LEA BROOK VALLEY PROJECT, DRONFIELD

Hard work by pioneering environmentalist Norman Crowson of Dronfield Baptist Church and a team of volunteers from across a wide range of organisations transformed Lea Brook Valley from 'a rather uninspiring urban river valley to a place teeming with life'. The practical work started in 2005 when volunteers decided to clean up a half-mile stretch between Sheards Drive and Lea Road, Dronfield. Eighteen months later, the Derbyshire valley had completely changed. Rubbish was removed, a new woodland path built to protect wildflowers, timberwork repaired, bat and bird boxes installed and stream pollution was reduced. Most recently, 1,000 trees were planted at Lee Brook, which is part of A Rocha UK's Partners In Action network. 'A wide range of bird, insect and flower species now occur in the valley,' said A Rocha UK Conservation Director Andy Lester, 'and it's used for recreation by an ever-growing number of local residents. The project has been a great example of how to link faith, fun, conservation and community together into a single project that's inspired the town and many others beyond its boundaries.'

#### 5. ST MARGARET'S OF ANTIOCH, CORSLEY, WILTSHIRE

Historically, the land around this church used to be grazed. But the practice stopped. Sheep have been reintroduced recently, thanks to the co-operation of a nextdoor neighbour. The church has found this is a sustainable and traditional way to manage church grassland. Prior to starting the grazing, the churchyard was mown by council contractors at a cost to the church. The sheep are free! The posts and wire necessary to stop sheep straying onto footpaths were donated. It is reported that the church's decision has been well received by the local community. There is a primary school in the village and the children love to see the sheep. The vicar and parishioners have asked that the sheep are in the churchyard for Rogation Sunday for blessing.

#### A ROCHA UK ARTICLE 1

[arocha.org.uk/normans-wisdom-reshaped-a-valley](http://arocha.org.uk/normans-wisdom-reshaped-a-valley)

#### A ROCHA UK ARTICLE 2

[arocha.org.uk/our-activities/practical-conservation/partners-in-action/lea-brook-valley](http://arocha.org.uk/our-activities/practical-conservation/partners-in-action/lea-brook-valley)

#### A ROCHA UK ARTICLE 2

[www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/images/uploads/case-studies/St%20Margarets%20of%20Antioch%20Corsley%20Grazing.pdf](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/images/uploads/case-studies/St%20Margarets%20of%20Antioch%20Corsley%20Grazing.pdf)



## 6. ST LEONARD'S, ALDRINGTON, EAST SUSSEX

The tranquil graveyard at St Leonard's Church is one of only three public access open spaces in the parish of Aldrington. It is now managed to encourage wildlife. The church lands are said to be 'full of birdsong and the sounds of insects' throughout the year. The north-east corner, which was never consecrated, has been a community allotment managed by the Secret Garden Group since 2013. The Secret Garden is now abundant with raised beds growing a variety of vegetables, herbs and plants, a scented area, a wild area with a pond, shed, greenhouse and four bee hives. They have an expanding band of volunteers who work to make the garden beautiful as well as productive. Access to the area is through the church grounds and they are open to all members of the community. There are plans to make the main path and adjoining beds suitable for wheelchair users.

## 7. WOLF FIELDS, SOUTHALL

This three-acre site in West London was formerly used as a brick works (it is thought that some of the bricks from Wolf Fields now form part of the outer wall of Buckingham Palace!). Since then the site had fallen into disrepair and become a neglected wasteland used only for rubbish dumping, drug taking and substance abuse. A Rocha UK acquired the site in 2012 and work started in 2013. The charity has been busy transforming Wolf Fields from wasteland to wildlife haven, with the co-operation of local churches, community volunteers and even Chelsea Flower Show award winners Crocus! The vision is to create a thriving community garden and nature reserve, in partnership with local community members. A community orchard, sensory garden, wildflower meadow and organic food allotment are just some of the things being established at Wolf Fields. There is much more to come.

ECO CHURCH  
RESOURCES

LAND

### SECRET GARDEN CASE STUDY

[www.sussexgiving.org.uk/case-studies/secret-garden-hove](http://www.sussexgiving.org.uk/case-studies/secret-garden-hove)

### A CHURCH NEAR YOU

[www.achurchnearyou.com/aldrington-st-leonard](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/aldrington-st-leonard)

### BH FOOD'S ARTICLE

[bhfood.org.uk/secret-garden](http://bhfood.org.uk/secret-garden)

### WOLF FIELDS

[arocha.org.uk/our-activities/practical-conservation/wolf-fields](http://arocha.org.uk/our-activities/practical-conservation/wolf-fields)

### GET WEST LONDON ARTICLE

[www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/local-news/drug-den-transformed-childrens-designs-7411051](http://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/local-news/drug-den-transformed-childrens-designs-7411051)





ECO CHURCH  
RESOURCES

LAND

## 8. ST THOMAS A BECKET, FRAMFIELD

The ancient parish of Framfield boasts a churchyard that is rich in wildlife. According to the survey The Nature Of God's Acre, researchers have found 120 species of wildflowers, grasses, shrubs and trees. Butterflies, damselflies and slow-worms are also abundant there. Ecologist Sally Clifton wrote a management plan for the churchyard. 'The challenge is to maintain the right balance between keeping paths accessible to visitors,' said Sally, 'while taking care of the best of the wild flora, allowing them to flower so beautifully in spring or summer, depending on the species, and to set seed before being mown or strimmed at the best time.' As a result of donations, six bird boxes were put up in various trees around the churchyard. 'I wish I'd been there when they hoisted the three-foot-long owl box into the big beech trees by the vicarage,' said Sally. 'As an ecologist, I was delighted to see such a huge area providing not only a resting place for the loved ones of the community who have passed on, but also a terrific sanctuary for wildlife.'

## 9. ST HELEN'S CHURCH, LUNDY

Part of A Rocha UK's Partners In Action network, St Helen's Church represents 1,300 years of Christian presence on Lundy. An appeal fund has been set up for it to continue as a place of worship and provide educational facilities for the schools that come to visit Lundy's unique natural environment. St Helen's will also provide interpretation to help visitors learn more about the island's fascinating history and nationally important wildlife. Facilities will be provided for special interest groups such as the Lundy Field Society and universities to undertake research and hold talks. Lundy is a small and rugged island located where the Bristol Channel meets the Atlantic. Its Marine Nature Reserve protects a range of sea life, including cup corals and sea fans. The island itself is a Site of Special Scientific interest for its plants and sea birds. It is also used for a wide range of short-term and long-term studies, and is well-known for its range of migrant birds. Lundy offers an accessible remoteness, where visitors can enjoy stunning scenery and engaging wildlife.

### FRAMFIELD CHURCHYARD PAGE

[www.framfieldchurch.org.uk/churchyard.html](http://www.framfieldchurch.org.uk/churchyard.html)

### GET WEST LONDON ARTICLE

[www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/local-news/drug-den-transformed-childrens-designs-7411051](http://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/local-news/drug-den-transformed-childrens-designs-7411051)

### LUNDY ISLAND

[arocha.org.uk/our-activities/practical-conservation/partners-in-action/lundy-island](http://arocha.org.uk/our-activities/practical-conservation/partners-in-action/lundy-island)

### LUNDY CHURCH PROJECT

[www.lundychurch.org.uk/the-project](http://www.lundychurch.org.uk/the-project)



ECO CHURCH  
RESOURCES

LAND

## 10. FRIENDS OF THE ROSARY CEMETERY, NORWICH

This group of about 70 volunteers, was set up to help with practical management tasks within what was England's first non-denominational burial ground – as well as promoting it as a place of historical and recreational value. The group works closely with Norwich City Council and has forged links with local conservation organisations. Norfolk Wildlife Trust helped to carry out an initial wildlife audit and the group undertakes annual guided wildlife tours, which help map the fortunes of various wild flower species against the baseline. The group won an award which allowed development of a self-guided trail and production of a booklet to support it. The artwork for the trail signs was a final year project for three students from Norwich School of Art and Design. The trail has proved so popular that the city council now mows short paths to the featured monuments to ensure easy access. Rosary Cemetery also secured top honours at the Norfolk Community Biodiversity Awards in 2009. The group has plans to develop further thematic historical tours and wildlife activities such as a dawn chorus walk and tree identification tour.

### ROSARY CEMETERY CASE STUDY

[www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-in-norfolk/wildlife-surveys/case-studies/churchyard-conservation-success-story](http://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-in-norfolk/wildlife-surveys/case-studies/churchyard-conservation-success-story)



ECO CHURCH  
RESOURCES

LAND

## Learn from conservation groups

A Rocha UK's conservation team have compiled a guide to making the most of your church grounds. Here is their advice:

### WILDFLOWER MEADOWS

before introducing new management or changing the existing management, get a survey done of the wildflower area(s)/grassland. This means any new management can be planned around the species. Leaving some areas under long grass throughout the year provides shelter, food and overwintering sites for invertebrates and other small animals – eg frogs, lizards, field voles, etc.

To prevent scrub invasion – and maintain the grass species – these areas should be divided into sections and a different section cut in autumn each year in rotation with the rest left uncut. Cuttings should be removed. Meadows should be cut to a height of around 8cm roughly every three weeks through spring until the end of May. They should be left unmown until August/September, after which they should be cut, and the mowings left on the ground for a few days for the seed to fall out.

The 'hay' should then be removed and the ground trampled to push the seeds into the earth. Then they should be cut every three weeks with the removal of cuttings until end of October. This will reduce the fertility of the soil and encourage a greater diversity of wild flowers.

It is worth doing a survey of your plants before thinking about sowing native wildflower seed. If you do sow seed, it is essential to get professional advice from your local wildlife trust first, so you sow the right flower mix. Some churchyards – especially old village churches – are the last remnants of the ancient meadows that used to cover the countryside. When you let the grass grow, you may find many species reappear that have not had a chance to flourish because of the grass cuts. Often the surrounding land has been converted to intensive land practices for farming or has been developed. So the churchyards can become a haven for plants and insects, often with nothing more complicated than changing the mowing regime.

### FLORAL ENHANCEMENT

[www.floralocale.org/Grassland%20creation%20and%20floral%20enhancement](http://www.floralocale.org/Grassland%20creation%20and%20floral%20enhancement)

### CHURCHYARD MANAGEMENT

[www.ywt.org.uk/sites/yorkshire.live.wt.precedenthost.co.uk/files/2011%2007%20038\\_churchyard\\_management\\_booklet\\_v2\\_0.pdf](http://www.ywt.org.uk/sites/yorkshire.live.wt.precedenthost.co.uk/files/2011%2007%20038_churchyard_management_booklet_v2_0.pdf)

### CHURCHYARDS GRASSLANDS

[www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/documents/churchyard/churchyards\\_grassland.aspx](http://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/documents/churchyard/churchyards_grassland.aspx)



## BATS AND BOXES

many species of bat use churches for roosting. All species of bat and their roosts are protected by law. Some churches have provided refuges for bats for hundreds of years. By welcoming or tolerating bats in your church, you can make an important contribution to their survival.

It is important that bat boxes are made from untreated wood. Look for the FSC logo for reassurance that the wood is from a sustainable source. Site a bat box as high as you can and at least 2m above the ground. You can put it on a tree or wall, as long as it's sheltered. Make sure the entrance is accessible and the box is secure. If you're fixing it to a tree, avoid doing damage by using a strap.

Once your bat box is in place, leave it alone. Enjoy watching the bats as they fly, rather than trying to watch them in their nest. Bats and bat roosts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and it's an offence to disturb, handle or kill a bat. You can attract bats by attracting insects. Plant plenty of native species. If possible, dig a pond as these help attract insects. Bats love moths, so plant some night-scented flowers like evening primrose, which attract moths.

The most common species of bat in Britain is the Pipistrelle. It hunts mostly in open countryside so large grassy areas will probably be the most popular with them. A large pond will help attract the Daubentons bat, a larger species which hunts over water. Hedgerows and deciduous woodland are popular with Noctule bats.

Bats can also be a problem for church furnishings, and bats in the wrong place can be a nuisance. For detailed advice on how to ensure your bats end up roosting and breeding in the right places, contact the Bat Conservation Trust, who can provide honest and impartial advice for churches with bat challenges.

ECO CHURCH  
RESOURCES

LAND

### A ROCHA UK BAT LEAFLET

[arocha.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/A-Rocha-UK-bat-leaflet.pdf](http://arocha.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/A-Rocha-UK-bat-leaflet.pdf)

### BATS AND CHURCHES PAGE

[www.bats.org.uk/pages/bats\\_and\\_churches.html](http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/bats_and_churches.html)

### BATS AND CHURCHES PAGE

[www.bats.org.uk/publications\\_detail.php/296/bats\\_in\\_churches\\_a\\_management\\_guide\\_natural\\_england](http://www.bats.org.uk/publications_detail.php/296/bats_in_churches_a_management_guide_natural_england)

### BAT BOXES

[www.bats.org.uk/pages/bat\\_boxes.html](http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/bat_boxes.html)

### BATS CHURCH CASE STUDIES

[www.bats.org.uk/pages/church\\_case\\_studies.html](http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/church_case_studies.html)



## BIRDS

Well-structured old hedges and more mature trees and shrubs are likely to be used by a variety of nesting birds. Churchyard habitats are also likely to provide an important food source for birds, including berries, seeds, insects and other invertebrates, and small mammals. Bird boxes come in all shapes and sizes for a variety of species. See the RSPB website for good info and suppliers of boxes.

## HEDGES AND FRUIT TREES

Trees are likely to be one of the oldest and most distinctive features in a churchyard. They can provide a food source (fruit and seeds) and nesting and roosting sites for birds. Bats can be found in the hollows and cracks of trees. Trees also provide refuge for mammals and insects.

Churchyards often provide homes for veteran trees which are considered to be in the ancient stage of their lives, and they are important biologically, culturally and aesthetically because of their age. Planting new trees is not always environmentally friendly. Planting new trees on grassland will shade out and eliminate many of the important plants that live in churchyards – eg cowslips, burnet saxifrage, pignut.

Planting should only be considered when old trees are felled for safety reasons or fall down or they are approaching the end of their life and new ones are required to replace them. Trees will often propagate themselves naturally by seedlings or suckers which will produce healthier saplings. However, they should be removed quickly from areas where they're not wanted (ie from grassland and monuments).

ECO CHURCH  
RESOURCES

LAND

### NEST BOXES

[www.rspb.org.uk/makeahomeforwildlife/advice/helpingbirds/nestboxes](http://www.rspb.org.uk/makeahomeforwildlife/advice/helpingbirds/nestboxes)

### GWENT WILDLIFE'S BIRDS GUIDE

[www.gwentwildlife.org/sites/default/files/Birds.pdf](http://www.gwentwildlife.org/sites/default/files/Birds.pdf)

### NESTING BIRDS

[www.bto.org/about-birds/nbnw/nesting-birds](http://www.bto.org/about-birds/nbnw/nesting-birds)

### HAVENS FOR WILDLIFE – BIRDS

[www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCB4-swifts-etc.pdf](http://www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCB4-swifts-etc.pdf)



## BOUNDARY HEDGES

A thick hedge provides a valuable habitat for over-wintering insects, as well as a fruit, berry and nut source for feeding and nesting birds. Trim to an approximate A-shape to create a hedge that's thicker at the base and narrower at the top. Try to leave a gap of between two to four years between cuts or divide the hedge up into three or four sections and cut one section each year.

Trim the hedge between September and February, outside the bird-nesting season. Scrub – woody plants such as bramble and elder – provides protection and food for wildlife, but is very invasive if left unmanaged. Scrub should be prevented from encroaching onto grassland by annual trimming around the edge between September and February.

## REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Often found in the dry stone walls around churchyards, toads will hunt after dusk for slugs, snails and earthworms. They sleep during the day and hibernate in the winter under rocks and stones or in a hole in the ground. Reptiles and amphibians benefit from areas with a variety of habitats. Compost heaps are a good home for slow worms who need to keep their body temperature warm to digest their food. Snakes may also lay eggs in compost heaps. Avoid using sharp pointed tools in compost heaps and disturb the heaps as little as possible especially in winter and spring.

ECO CHURCH  
RESOURCES

LAND

### HAVENS FOR WILDLIFE – HEDGEROWS

[www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCA7-hedgerows.pdf](http://www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCA7-hedgerows.pdf)

### HAVENS FOR WILDLIFE – TREES

[www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCA4-trees.pdf](http://www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCA4-trees.pdf)

### HAVENS FOR WILDLIFE – TREES AND SHRUBS

[www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCA6-trees-and-shrubs.pdf](http://www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCA6-trees-and-shrubs.pdf)

### HAVENS FOR WILDLIFE – REPTILES

[www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCB1-reptiles-etc.pdf](http://www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCB1-reptiles-etc.pdf)

### LIVING CHURCHYARDS

[www.gwentwildlife.org/sites/default/files/GLCP%20newsletter%20Issue%206.pdf](http://www.gwentwildlife.org/sites/default/files/GLCP%20newsletter%20Issue%206.pdf)

### HAVENS FOR WILDLIFE – AMPHIBIANS

[www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/attracting-amphibians](http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/attracting-amphibians)





## COMPOST HEAPS

Compost heaps are great! They're easy to set up in a corner of the churchyard. Use uncooked food only and garden waste – eg grass cuttings – as cooked food can attract rats. It's good to layer up fresh kitchen waste/grass cuttings with drier woody material. It's also good to turn compost, if possible, and have more than one pile/heap, so one can be in use while the other is maturing. They make a good home for slow worms and insects. Don't worry about adding worms – they'll find their way!

Compost heaps provide a home for fungi and invertebrates which in turn become food for frogs, toads, slow worms and birds. Grass snakes, as well as hedgehogs, may overwinter in the heap because of the warmth. Compost heaps need to be sited away from the base of trees and from areas where the nutrients could leach out and enter running and standing water. Compost heaps should be contained within a small area away from frequently visited parts.

## SWIFTS AND HOUSE MARTINS

Nest holes, nest boxes or swift bricks can be fitted into and onto buildings, including listed ones, without difficulty. Swifts and House martins are protected by law. It is illegal to kill or harm them or to damage nests or eggs. Both species feed on tiny flying insects – aphids, flying ants, mosquitoes, hoverflies and small beetles. Having habitat for these insects will encourage swifts and martins into the churchyard.

ECO CHURCH  
RESOURCES

LAND

### COMPOST HEAPS

[www.rspb.org.uk/makeahomeforwildlife/wildlifegarden/atoz/c/compostheap.aspx](http://www.rspb.org.uk/makeahomeforwildlife/wildlifegarden/atoz/c/compostheap.aspx)

### COMPOST HEAP TIPS

[www.edenproject.com/learn/for-everyone/how-to-make-a-compost-heap-10-top-tips](http://www.edenproject.com/learn/for-everyone/how-to-make-a-compost-heap-10-top-tips)

### ATTRACT HOUSEMARTINS

[www.rspb.org.uk/makeahomeforwildlife/advice/helpingbirds/nestboxes/attracthousemartins/index.aspx](http://www.rspb.org.uk/makeahomeforwildlife/advice/helpingbirds/nestboxes/attracthousemartins/index.aspx)

### HAVENS FOR WILDLIFE – BIRDS

[www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCB4-swifts-etc.pdf](http://www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCB4-swifts-etc.pdf)



## SMALL MAMMALS

Many mammals live within churchyards or visit them for food including hedgehogs, moles, badgers, mice, voles, shrews, squirrels, foxes, weasels, stoats, and rabbits. Smaller mammals are food for the larger ones. Small mammals can be encouraged in churchyards if there is enough insect and floral food for them, created through good management of hedges and grasslands.

## BEES AND INSECTS

When managing churchyards or gardens, variety is the key. Have a mixture of short turf, bare ground, tussocky grasses and flowering plants. Leave a range of plants to flower and set seed to increase the availability of food. Leave some seed heads to provide shelter and breeding sites.

Hedgerows are important, and the more flowering species in them, the better. Ivy flowers in late autumn are a beneficial source of nectar for insects such as hoverflies. Leave dead wood on the ground, or standing if appropriate. Nettles are really valuable for many insects including peacock, comma, and painted lady butterflies so leave some areas for them. Bee and bug hotels can be made or bought to provide extra spaces for insects to live.

## PONDS

Small ponds or marshy areas can be created within churchyards and cemeteries and provide perfect habitat for frogs, toads and dragonflies. Pond edges can be planted with native aquatic plants to provide food for wildlife and to help oxygenate the pond. Pond management should be carried out in the winter when amphibians are in hibernation, away from the pond. Ponds should be shallower at the edges and deeper in the middle. But deep ponds (one metre or more at the centre) are often unsafe in a church environment and of limited interest for wildlife. So keep it under a metre at the centre and taper off to 6-8 inches at the edges. Never top off pond water with water from tap as the chlorine can kill sensitive aquatic species. Always use rainwater from a butt.

ECO CHURCH  
RESOURCES

LAND

### HAVENS FOR WILDLIFE – SMALL MAMMALS

[www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCB2-mammals.pdf](http://www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCB2-mammals.pdf)

### HAVENS FOR WILDLIFE – BUMBLEBEES

[www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCB5-bumblebees-etc.pdf](http://www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCB5-bumblebees-etc.pdf)

### HAVENS FOR WILDLIFE – BUTTERFLIES

[www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCB6-butterflies-etc.pdf](http://www.arcworld.org/downloads/LCB6-butterflies-etc.pdf)

### INSECT HOTEL

[www.bbcwildlife.org.uk/sites/birmingham.live.wt.precedenthost.co.uk/files/Insect%20Hotel.pdf](http://www.bbcwildlife.org.uk/sites/birmingham.live.wt.precedenthost.co.uk/files/Insect%20Hotel.pdf)

### BUILDING HOMES FOR INSECTS

[www.rspb.org.uk/makeahomeforwildlife/advice/gardening/insects/building\\_homes.aspx](http://www.rspb.org.uk/makeahomeforwildlife/advice/gardening/insects/building_homes.aspx)

### ATTRACTING AMPHIBIANS

[www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/attracting-amphibians](http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/attracting-amphibians)

### POND CREATION TOOLKIT

[www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/projects/million-ponds/pond-creation-toolkit](http://www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/projects/million-ponds/pond-creation-toolkit)

### FROGLIFE

[www.froglife.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/JAW2014-for-printing-HLF1.pdf](http://www.froglife.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/JAW2014-for-printing-HLF1.pdf)