

OVERVIEW



ECO  **CHURCH**
AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT



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LAND

Why include a section on land and gardens?

The state of nature in the UK landscape can make depressing reading. We hear about the near extinction of once common butterflies and birds, the arrival of invasive species, and dramatic reductions in insect populations, largely due to pesticide use on farmland. A UK wide State of Nature report in 2019, reported a 60% decline in insects since 1970. The full report can be found here along with some useful infographics: <https://nbn.org.uk/stateofnature2019/>

As Christians, we understand that the environment, both in the UK and globally, is under stress. How can we love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength if we do not also honour and care for the gift of this beautiful planet which he gave us to live on? How can we make any difference in our small corner of the earth? How can we be salt and light in our local areas and help reverse the trends of species destruction?

In this 'land' section, we encourage churches to be active in the environmental management of any outdoor space they own or have influence over. This might be a large rural churchyard, a small urban space with no grass, or perhaps some community land nearby which the church is (or could become) involved with.

The objective of the questions is to help churches to think about what is possible as they manage land, garden or other outdoor spaces for the benefit of native plants and wildlife. Our resources offer plenty of tips on encouraging birds and animals, how to find out what grass and flower species you already have and how to create management plans. Whether your space is large or small, such plans are useful to ensure actions are taken at appropriate times of year and to keep everyone informed of what is happening.

It is now generally acknowledged that access to outdoor space is important to our mental health and even more so with the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic, so we ask questions encouraging



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your congregation and community to use them wisely, whether for recreation, contemplation or growing fruit and vegetables.

LONGER READS & OTHER RESOURCES

A Rocha UK regularly puts new information on its blog – including a series on nature and climate change: <https://arocha.org.uk/blog/>

Limmy Khongsai shows us what she has been up to in her half term to learn about, and take care of, the environment: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8i5NdNs8HaU>

The National Biodiversity Network undertook a large-scale 'State of Nature' report in 2019. Seventy organisations including A Rocha UK contributed to this 'stocktake', which highlights both the doom and gloom of record-breaking species loss and the signs of real hope such as the presence of breeding otters in all English and Welsh counties: <https://arocha.org.uk/enews-stateofnature-timeforaction/>

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Taking action on this topic will contribute to this UN Strategic Development Goal:

