



Bedfordshire Cambridgeshire Northamptonshire

22 September, 2021

Thank you very much for such a thorough update of developments in St Mary's churchyard yesterday and your hospitality. The judges decided unanimously that you have attained the necessary points to gain the Bronze Award, so congratulations!

In summary, we were very pleased to note the following.

- There is a very clear plan of the cemetery, which is displayed inside the church buildings, which explains how different areas are managed.
- Despite teething problems with the Council, in relation to the new mowing regime, you successfully created substantial wildflower areas this year and were able to survey and record the different species that appeared.
- The choice of trees and hedges for new planting has been made to help provide a food source for birds.
- The churchyard's wonderful collection of trees are very well documented and appropriately inspected and managed by those with expert knowledge.
- A variety of bird boxes are positioned round the cemetery.
- You have (after a lot of hard work) been able to remove a substantial amount of the membrane in the uncut area.
- A bug hotel, compost, brushwood and log pile have been established.
- Flower beds (and sunflowers) provide food for pollinators, birds and small mammals

Recommendations for the future

1. Water: establish an additional source (suggest next to the rain butt) in the open air which will act as a bird bath and provide drinking water. A small stone in it will prevent insects, such as moths and butterflies, from drowning.
2. Compost heaps: keep static and permanent as a home for invertebrates (once the position is agreed) and do not disturb. The same for brushwood and log piles.
3. Uncut area: remove remains of membrane (or puncture it?) and ensure that long grass can be established. Some of the long grass must be in the sunshine and because much of the area is shaded by trees, you should consider extending the area round the back of the church, to ensure some is in the sunlight. (You would probably need one of your fine notices to explain that it is being left uncut to provide a home for small mammals, over wintering butterflies and insects.)
4. Provide an additional notice board outside to inform passers-by of the management plan and related information. (I think you are applying for one at the moment).
5. Plant additional flowers which specifically provide a rich source of seeds for birds. For example, thistles (makes up a third of a goldfinch's diet) teasels, sunflowers, buddleia (you have some but leave dead flowers to provide seeds for birds).

6. Ivy: mature ivy produces flowers and then berries. If you have to cut it leave until after the winter so insects, including butterflies, can feed on its pollen and birds on its berries. (Mature ivy, if in the sun, is buzzing at the moment with ivy bees, hoverflies and butterflies and will be followed by blackbirds once the berries appear.)
7. Work with the Council to ensure the grass mowing regime is delivered during the next year, wherever possible.

Congratulations again and thank you very much for all you have done.

The Bronze Award lasts for 3 years and you can re-apply after this time. Alternatively, you might want to consider the Silver Award at a later stage.

With best wishes

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