

St Mary's Graveyard, Molescroft

Management Plan

by Harriet Carty of Caring for God's Acre, June 2024



INTRODUCTION

There are over 25,000 burial grounds in England and Wales, ranging from small, Medieval rural churchyards to large Victorian city cemeteries, spanning different cultures, religions, and centuries.

Burial grounds can contain outstanding built heritage including walls, lychgates, preaching crosses, sundials and of course, monuments. These structures reveal the skill of crafts people and changing styles and fashions over the centuries.

Burial grounds also give us a tangible glimpse into the past, how people lived, what work they did, how communities changed over the centuries as well as patterns of migration and immigration. The wording of inscriptions reveals attitudes to life, death and religion and the symbols used tell their own story. In a burial ground you can learn about the famous, the infamous and also the 'normal' people as, from the eighteenth century onwards, an increasingly large proportion of the public have been memorialised in stone.

Many of these burial grounds are true havens or arks for wildlife, containing species which were once much more common across the country. Many graveyards have changed little over the centuries, and whilst this makes them particularly special, younger sites can hold treasures as well.

Look for wildflowers and fungi in the grass; this may be a last fragment of traditional meadow, once widespread in the UK. Mature and veteran trees provide shelter and places for nesting, whilst the many invertebrates living on the tree are in turn, food for other species. Stone walls and monuments create habitat for amphibians, reptiles, small mammals and invertebrates as well as ferns, mosses and liverworts whilst offering a refuge for many of our 2,000 lichen species. Check for thrushes feeding on berries, and swifts and bats under the eaves of the church or chapel.

Over the last 60 years 97% of flower-rich or traditional meadow has vanished. Many churchyards act as havens for this flowery meadow as they have not been artificially fertilised, ploughed or allowed to go to scrub and then woodland. The resulting community of plants will have taken many years to establish. Managed sensitively, this lovely old grassland can enhance a visit to a churchyard as well as improving it for wildlife, making it a more peaceful and beautiful place for quiet reflection and remembrance. Churchyards are also well placed to become seed donor sites which means this historic habitat has the potential to be restored elsewhere within the local area.

Well-established, complex grasslands such as those found within churchyards and cemeteries are also important carbon stores, holding a range of microbes, fungi, plants and animals within the soil, all of which are increasing the carbon within it. Taller, deeper-rooted swards store more carbon than short mown grassland thus contributing to the reduction of our national carbon footprint.

Conservation management within burial grounds is about active management, not neglect. It is important to draw up a management plan that is appropriate to your cemetery, realistic for your resources and welcomed by your community.

Caring for God's Acre (CfGA) is the charity for burial grounds, we work nationally to support groups and individuals to investigate, care for, and enjoy churchyards and other burial grounds. Harriet Carty is the director of CfGA, she is an ecologist with over 30 years' experience of managing land for people and nature. Harriet was invited Molescroft Wildlife Network to draw up a management plan for the churchyard which was funded by Molescroft Parish Council. She visited the site on the 8th May 2024.

ST MARY'S CEMETERY- see map 1, current situation

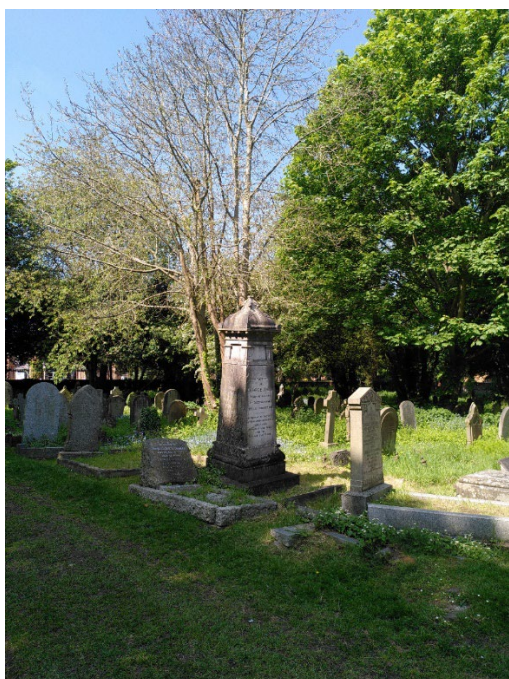
St Mary's Cemetery is a closed burial ground with a mix of older and recent graves. Some graves are visited regularly and local people remember a time when the site was overgrown and access difficult. The Cemetery has a locked chapel within it which is used by the diocese but not accessible otherwise. This is deteriorating and may cease to be weatherproof before long. The Cemetery can be zoned into the wooded, shadier area to the southwest and the open, sunnier area to the northeast. The recent graves tend to be in the open area.

Much of the Cemetery has an old wall around it made of an attractive small brick. This is deteriorating in some places.

There are several war graves in the cemetery including quite a few of the typical Portland stone. It is important to ensure that management is sufficient to allow visitors to reach these graves and read the inscriptions. There is also a grave to two well-known artists, Fred and Mary Elwell as they are called locally. This grave attracts visitors and also the school.

Discussion took place during the site visit with several community members who came to discuss the cemetery and with the Revd. Becky Lumney. There were varying views but with some common themes.

- Many people enjoyed seeing wildflowers and liked to see the turf of the Cemetery allowed to bloom.
- All felt that there was a need to change management so as to reduce the dominance of nettle, thistle and dock.
- Many people valued and enjoyed the wildlife including foxes and birds.
- There was concern at the safety of the trees and also at the standard of work when a fallen tree was removed recently. This work seems to have been done rather roughly but that might actually have been damage caused by the falling tree itself.
- There was anxiety that the Cemetery might slip back into the neglect that many remember, and the great work done to clear it might be lost.
- The Cemetery feels safer now it is less overgrown, and more people are comfortable coming in although the nettles are something of a deterrent.



Gravestones



Ornate monument

Current management

The cemetery is closed and therefore managed by the local authority. Prior to 2022 council teams would cut the vegetation every 2 or 3 weeks and leave the cuttings *in situ*. In 2022 a new cutting regime started, following discussion with St Mary's Church, Molescroft Parish Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and the Molescroft Wildlife Network amongst others. The grounds team cut and raked the whole cemetery in May and August. Following further reductions to local authority funding, this level of intervention is no longer possible. The site was left uncut until late in the growing season, in part due to the level of rainfall. This year (2024) a spring cut is underway, being done bit by bit. The site is cut with a conventional mower which does not collect or with a strimmer. No raking is taking place at the moment.

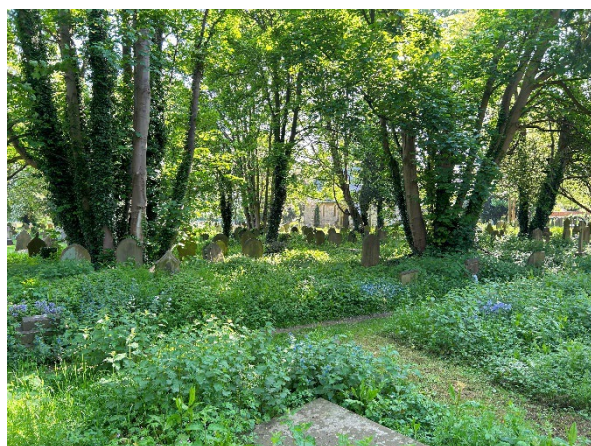
All tree inspection and management work is carried out by council teams who will keep the site safe and remove dead, dying and dangerous trees. There are no resources for other tree work at present.

The **Church of England is aiming to be zero carbon** by 2030 so management of this site needs to take into account the potential for increasing stored carbon and for decreasing the use of fossil fuels in management. The Church is also committed to **caring for biodiversity** so finding ways of managing where these two aims go hand-in-hand is ideal. Both of these aims are also echoed within the policies of Molescroft Parish and East Riding of Yorkshire councils too.

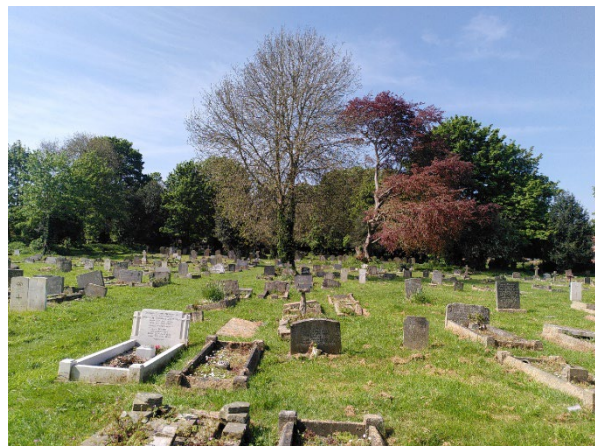
For the purposes of description and management the Cemetery can be divided into two zones:

A **WOODED AREA including the locked chapel**

This area contains many mature trees, mainly ash, elder, birch, bird cherry, holly and sycamore. Many or all of the trees are self-seeded and have been coppiced in the past but most are now mature with full canopies and well-spaced.



Wooded nature of A, dappled and deep shade



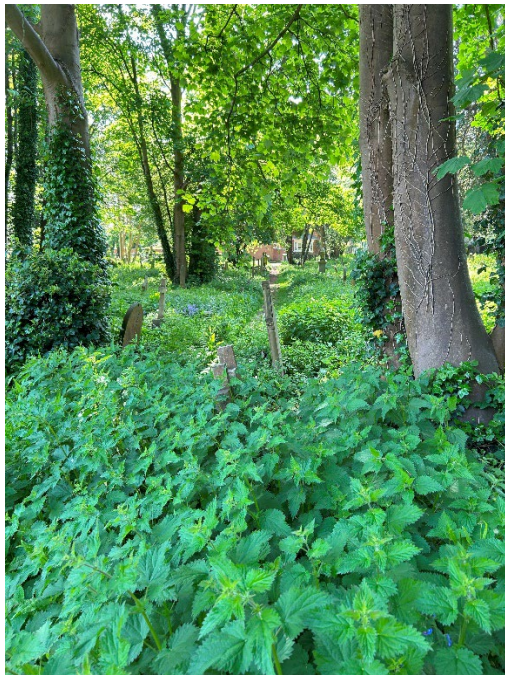
View across from the open sunny area

Most of Area A has a lush and varied ground flora typical of woodland, although nettles, coarse grasses and docks are dominant, probably as a result of years of cutting without raking which enriches the soil, encouraging nettles in particular as opposed to wildflowers. There are quite a few native wildflowers however, including some quite large patches of wild garlic near to the Molescroft Road boundary. There are also bluebells, green alkanet, cow parsley and primrose. In the spring there are many snowdrops visible from Molescroft Road pavement.

Where the shade is lighter there are signs of old meadow and some attractive species in and around the monuments including; pignut, lesser celandine, oxeye daisy, selfheal, forget-me-not and speedwell. Pignut is particularly interesting as this is an indicator of old, undisturbed meadow.

There are some garden escapes, perhaps planted on graves or seed spread by birds. These include pheasant eye narcissus and fringe cap.

There is a large Copper Beech which is likely to have been a Victorian planting. This has recently lost a large limb and is nearing the end of its life. It is a statuesque tree and a strong landscape feature.



Area dominated by nettles



Area with wild garlic and herb Robert as well as nettles



Forget-me-not flowering away from mowers



Large Copper Beech

There is a laurel bush within area A and also a small Sitka Spruce, both of these are non-native and have the potential to grow large. Removal of both would be beneficial.

B SUNNY AREA including more recent graves

The grassland is species poor, it is likely to be an extension of the original chapel yard and so may never have contained flowery meadow. Also, the effect of years of mowing without picking up the cuttings will have been detrimental, favouring coarse grasses over wildflowers and fine grasses.

This area is accessible and well visited by the local community.



Area B, species poor grassland which is regularly visited

BOUNDARIES

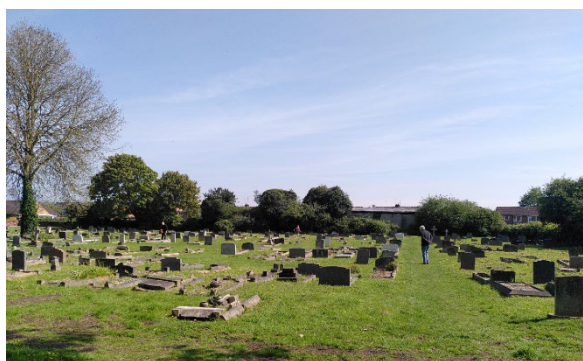
There is a mix of brick wall, low wall with railings on and a gappy hedge with trees within it. The brick wall is in disrepair in some places and has thick ivy growing on it in part. The south-facing wall will be good habitat for insects and any basking reptiles. A hedge is always good to have and will provide nesting and sheltering places, although these are not lacking in this particular site. This hedge is a mix of garden and native shrubs including cotoneaster, sycamore, bramble, elder, holly, garden viburnum and thick ivy.



Brick wall with areas of thick ivy



Brick wall with erosion



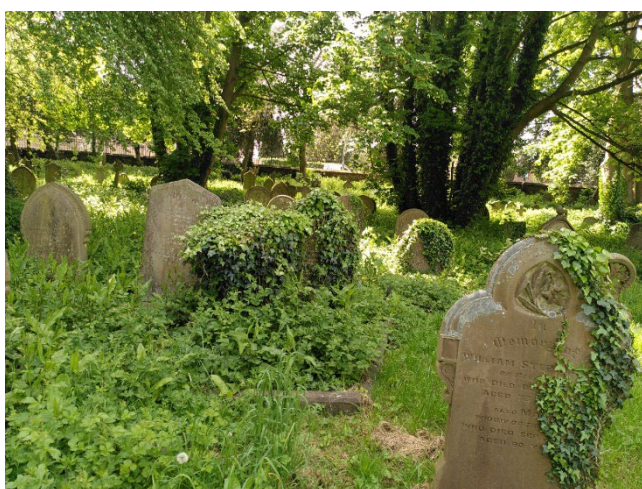
View of the back hedge with trees

PEOPLE, MONUMENTS AND ACCESS

The site is now much easier to access which is probably appreciated by many. The monuments can be viewed including the war graves and the Elwell grave. Most of the monuments are legible although there are a few covered in ivy. In some cases this may now be structural and great care should be taken if it is going to be removed. Ivy does protect stonework from erosion as well as being good habitat so unless someone wishes to read the monument it can usually be left *in situ*.

Some of the graves with kerbs and gravel are filling up with sedum plants. This is excellent ground cover which suppresses weeds and is good for pollinators when it flowers. Sedum also brings a bit of colour to a short-mown area.

There is a good path network and also, a nice mown path meandering through the woodland. Many people walk down Bleach Yard Lane and look at the site from there. According to those consulted, people are now more likely to come in than previously. This improvement in accessibility needs to be maintained and perhaps increased by reducing the height of the woodland vegetation and the dominance of nettles.



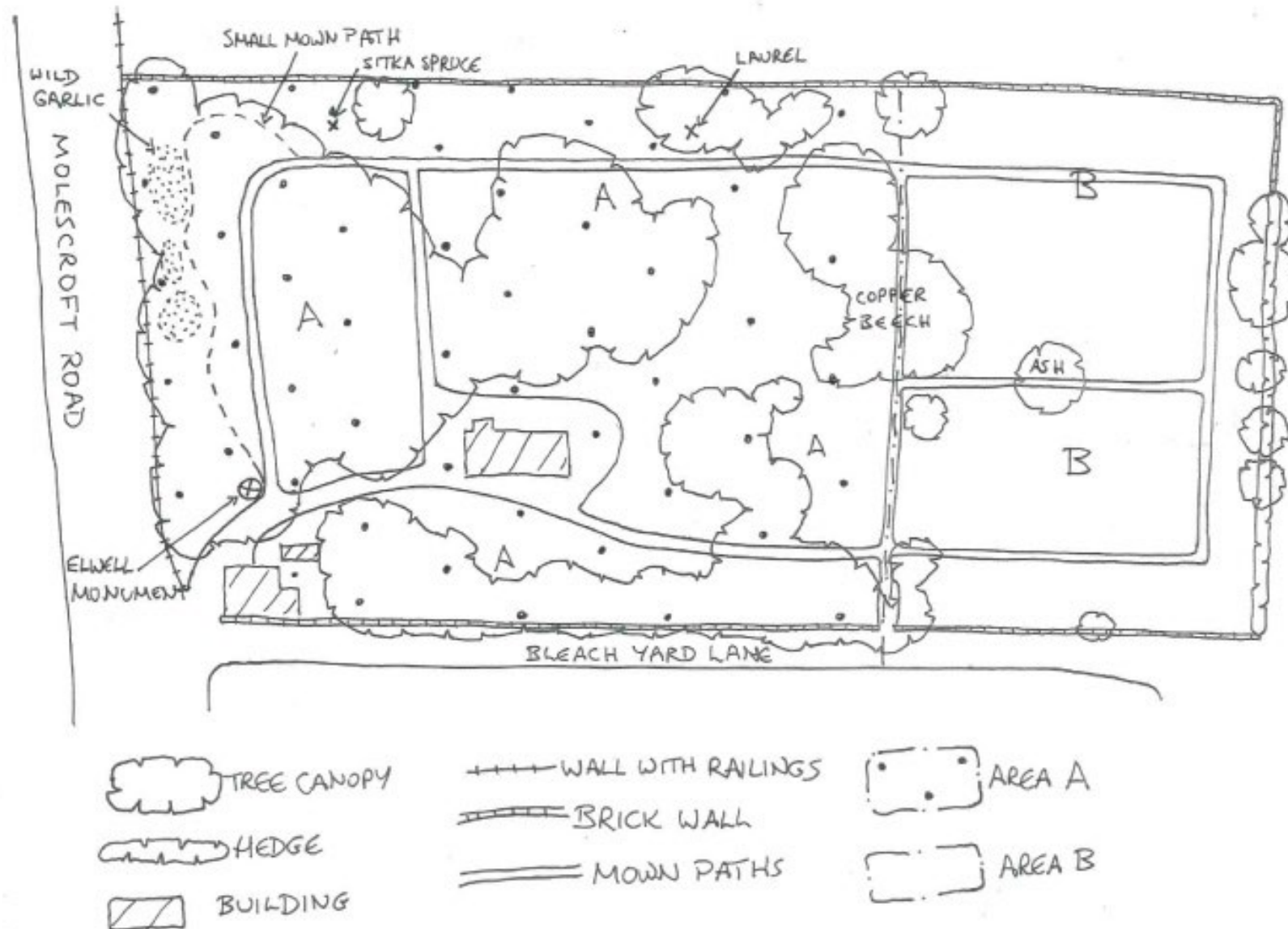
Ivy covered monument



Sedum growing within a kerbed grave

MAP 1 shows the current situation

ST. MARY'S CEMETERY, MOLESCROFT MAP 1



CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

A few general points about managing churchyards:

CARBON FOOTPRINT

See sheet A12 of your Action Pack or visit our website to buy one

<https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk>

Churchyard management can use fossil fuels (particularly when mowing) and can also increase the sequestration of carbon through tree and grassland management. Understanding of carbon footprint is needed for all of our actions so it's good to start here.

GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT

See sheets A2, A3, A8 and A12 of your Action Pack

At present the grassland is mown or strimmed short with no mowings raked up. Any amount of raking, large or small is worth doing. It's better to choose a small area and keep raking year on year ~~than to try and do too much then fail to keep it going~~

Golden Rule: always pick up your grass cuttings, regardless of the length of the grass.

Species-rich grassland depends on the soil having low fertility. High residual soil fertility allows competitive, coarse grasses such as False Oat Grass to grow fast and crowd out the smaller species.

This is why cutting and removing the grass is important and why we advise the introduction of Yellow Rattle.

Medium Grass

Consider moving from short mown grass to medium. This is mown approximately once a month in the growing season with the mower cutting blade set at a high setting. Cuttings must continue to be collected and composted or removed from site. Medium grass is managed with a conventional mower, keeps a site looking neat and accessible but allows many plants to flower as it is never cut right down to the ground. You do need to be able to rake afterwards with medium grass or else it gets too messy.

N.B. Medium grass roots more deeply than short grass which means that it stores more carbon in the soil and also stays greener for longer during dry weather.

Long Grass

This is the management for your meadow areas. Leave the sward uncut for 3 to 4 months in the growing season. You can either cut it in April and then leave it until late July or early August, or don't cut in the spring and leave uncut until late June or early July, following up with an autumn cut in September or October. **Do not leave it for longer than 4 months.**

Meadow management is a traditional way to care for grassland and will be how the Cemetery was managed when it was first consecrated and for most of the time since then. It involves cutting quite a

few flowers in bloom but this can't be helped, they are perennials and so won't be lost if they don't set seed. You are mimicking a farmer, and so want to 'make hay' when there is plenty of green energy in the grass.

Long grass, well managed is the best for biodiversity, it allows taller plants to flower including the meadow grasses, oxeye daisy, black knapweed and yarrow. It is a good idea to introduce the wildflower Yellow Rattle into areas of long grass, you may know of a meadow which contains it where you could go and collect some, or you could buy it from a local wildflower seed merchant.

N.B. Long grass stores more carbon than short as it roots deeper and species-rich grassland stores more carbon than a sward containing only a few species. By creating an area of long, species-rich grassland you will definitely increase the amount of stored soil carbon.

Yellow Rattle

This plant is very useful in creating and restoring wildflower meadows. It is a semi-parasitic, meadow annual which attaches itself to neighbouring grasses through the root system and reduces the vigour of the grass. Where yellow rattle is present you can see that the grass is shorter and less dense. Sow yellow rattle seed in the summer or autumn, so that it overwinters in the soil.

It needs to reach bare soil so it is best sown after cutting and you may need to scarify the soil with a rake to expose soil.

After sowing, tread the seed in but do not cover it with soil.

Sometimes it doesn't germinate well, so keep trying for several years!



Unlike most meadow flowers Yellow Rattle is an annual, so it must be allowed to flower and set seed before being cut. It flowers early in the summer (usually June) so grass cutting needs to take place before it germinates (March/April) and after it seeds (July/August).

For St Mary's Graveyard would recommend a 'summer meadow' which is cut in April and then late July/August.

Tussocky Grass

Tussocky grass is cut every 2 or 3 years, ideally cut and rake 1/3 of it each year. It quickly fills with coarse grasses such as False Oat Grass and Yorkshire Fog and with robust plants like hogweed and cow parsley. It's great to have a patch of tussocky grass somewhere, a bit out of sight and ideally against a hedge. This will provide shelter and overwintering sites for many species. You have many areas that will fulfil this purpose of providing year-round shelter so do not need to create this. A strip against the boundaries works well.



Coarse vegetation by the wall

TREES

See sheets A4, A5 and A6 of your Action Pack

In a closed churchyard the responsibility for tree health and safety sits with the local authority but you may be able to help them by carrying out the volunteer tree survey found in sheet A6. This does not replace their surveys but helps you to alert them to problems early on and cements a good relationship.

Many of your mature trees have ivy on the trunks, this can be left in situ, it is excellent habitat and does not damage the tree. It may be that your council arborist will need to remove it in order to check tree health however.

WOODLAND

See sheet B6

We do not have an Action Pack sheet on woodland yet! Woodland is a great habitat but the ground flora can be too impenetrable due to height, prickles and stings. This is the case in your woodland which shows signs of having been disturbed, probably when the site was cleared and made more accessible. Cutting the vegetation once a year and raking it off will gradually reduce the species that you want less such as the nettles and docks. It will also create space and better conditions for those you favour including woodland flowers such as wild garlic and bluebells. You will never lose all of the nettles, but they will reduce year on year. Nettles are particularly good for butterflies especially when they are in the sun, small tortoiseshell, peacock and comma caterpillars all feed on nettle.

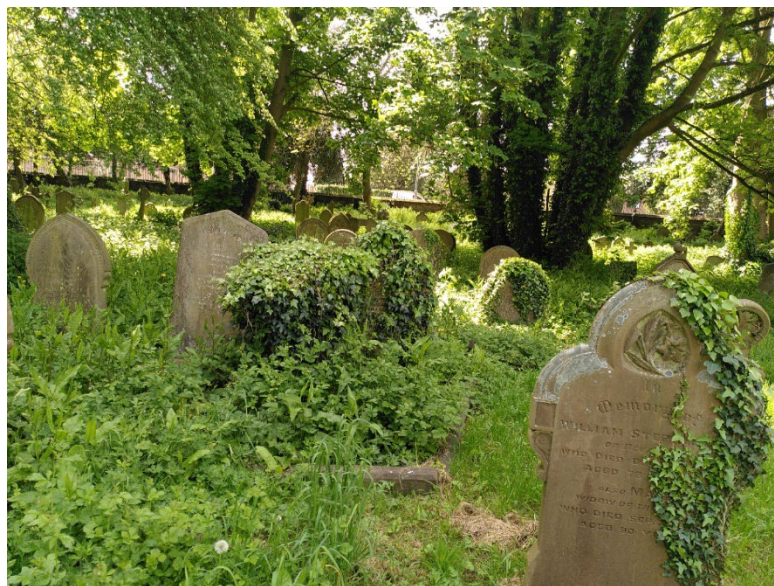
HEDGES

See sheet A7 of your Action Pack

MONUMENTS

See sheets A10, A9 and B7 of your Action Pack

Take care if removing ivy from monuments, particularly complex ones like crosses or chest tombs as removal of the ivy may make the monument unstable and dangerous. If ivy has been removed then try and stop it from covering the monument again, this allows lichens to flourish and also keeps the monument legible (although the ivy does protect the inscription from erosion). The advice of English Heritage regarding ivy is to leave it in place unless you have the resources to repair the monument beneath should that prove necessary.



Thick ivy on a complex monument and sparse ivy on a simple headstone

This photo shows examples of ivy that can safely and easily be removed (monument in the fore, on the right hand side) and also thick ivy that could be problematic to remove (monument in the centre).

The Church of England are currently having all their churchyards surveyed and monuments recorded using a bespoke system call the Burial Ground Management System. Caring for God's Acre are running a project called Our Digital Ancestors which will shadow the surveyors and provide training in the use of the system. This will offer great opportunities for involving people with the churchyard and for learning more about local history.

If you have unvisited graves with kerbs and gravel they may well contain sedum plants which colonise naturally. These give excellent ground cover as well as being good for pollinators. By planting more sedums within graves you help suppress weeds whilst making the site more colourful and supporting invertebrates.



Sedum established on a stone wall in Great Yarmouth

PEOPLE

See sheets D1, D2, D3 and D4 of your Action Pack

There are many ways to welcome people to your Cemetery, through events, volunteering opportunities, interpretation such as leaflets or a downloadable trail. You may wish to have a permanent notice board at an entrance. This will require a faculty and considerable planning but does give a strong welcome to visitors. Taking part in Churches Count on Nature in the second week of June 2024 was a great way of involving local people and getting more ecological information about the site (See the Caring for God's Acre website). Organising events or volunteering sessions can seem daunting but is quite straightforward. You will need a risk assessment but once you've done one, the next is far quicker.

It is worthwhile letting people know what you are doing, particularly if something is going to change by putting temporary signs up. You might also seek a feature in local media before changing things. Download a Caring for God's Acre meadow sign for any areas of long grass, <https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/free-meadow-management-sign/>

ACCESS

See sheet D7 of your Action Pack

Access is far more than just the state of the paths! Have a careful think about how to make the churchyard welcoming, is there information available for people with particular needs to plan a visit? Do you have disabled parking spaces and where is the nearest accessible loo? Sometimes putting in extra benches can transform a visit. Sheet D7 includes an Access Checklist which may help. Enabling the main paths to be wheelchair and buggy friendly but still in keeping with the beauty of the graveyard would be beneficial.

MAKING MORE PLACES FOR WILDLIFE

See sheet A8 of your Action Pack

There are lots of ways of creating habitat and all of these activities are excellent for volunteers of all ages. Consider putting up a range of bird and bat boxes within the mature trees. Make or buy boxes with different sized holes for different birds and also include open-fronted ones for robins or spotted flycatchers. Tawny owls used to be heard nearby so an owl box might be appropriate. Seek advice from Bats in Churches staff or the local branch of the Bat Conservation Trust on bat boxes and revisit the advice that the chapel is too low for bats, as the roof is no longer weatherproof there may be places bats can get in already and you may well have them there. N.B. you need permission from the Archdeacon before erecting boxes in trees.

You might create a compost pile for grave flowers (although these can fill up with old plastic flowers). You can make piles of deadwood or put it into a dead hedge by driving pairs of stakes into the ground and putting any fallen deadwood (twigs and small branches) into it. If you have a keen school or youth club then building a bug hotel is great fun, this needs a sunny location. Alternatively, you can make a smarter looking one, perhaps asking Yorkshire Wildlife Trust #TeamWilder or a similar group.

An example of a dead hedge in a public area



SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS FOR ST Mary's Cemetery

See map 2, management proposals

GENERAL APPROACH

The wooded area of this cemetery (A) is the most species rich, including some meadow plants within the sunnier areas of this section. The wildflowers and finer grasses within this area would benefit from regular cutting and raking as this would knock back the coarser plants as well as nettles and docks. This area is also causing concern because of the amount of nettles and the height of the vegetation, cutting and raking would help to reduce both of these factors and make it more accessible, so this is a win, win – good for biodiversity and good for access and people.

There is the potential for a few small patches of meadow within the sunny areas here, starting with one and building up to a few. This will give you time to pace, bring the community along with you and generate more volunteers.

The northeast, sunny area (B) is less species rich and, whilst it could be improved by regular raking of grass cuttings, this would be a long job and not necessarily worth the time. The management of this area can be left largely unchanged, which may be reassuring to visitors and provide an area where ERYC does not need to change its management and will allow the Council and volunteer effort to focus on the wooded area.

Habitat creation can happen anywhere across the whole site that you feel is appropriate. How about some bird and bat boxes in the mature trees? I've marked a suggestion for the location of dead hedging but you can change these or extend this as you prefer. A bug hotel in a sunny spot could be by the hedge at the far end next to the stables, or against the brick wall, particularly if it was rather a neat looking one.

Whilst this is a cemetery plan, you might think about the chapel too. Try and find out if there are birds nesting under the eaves and whether bats are using the building at all. This becomes particularly important if the diocese is planning repair work.

Management Tasks

Make or buy bird and bat boxes and erect in the trees, seek advice when locating bat boxes so that they are used.

Inspect the chapel for nesting birds and organise a bat survey by Bat Conservation Trust volunteers

A Wooded Area.

Liaise with the council staff who are cutting the vegetation within this area and agree a programme that allows you to galvanise volunteers to rake up after cutting. This will need coordination as the raked material will need to be taken off site. I know that you are already making links and thinking of ways to do this. If you have anybody locally who enjoys scything then you might be able to help with the cutting as well, as this sort of coarse vegetation is great for scything, it comes down really fast and is satisfying to do! If you are only able to rake a small area then try and do the top section, against Molescroft Road as this is highly visible, has clumps of wild garlic and contains the Elwell grave. If you could bring the area between the iron railings and the path by the Elwell grave into regular management that would be a great start and might generate new volunteers who are pleased to see the site looking a bit tidier as well as those who wish to increase biodiversity. This woodland area can be cut and raked several times over the summer months if you have capacity, until the docks and nettles are back under control. Once a year, done well is better than over stretching but two cuts, with

all vegetation removed will speed recovery. Ideally you could cut in June or July when the nettles and docks are most vigorous, with a further cut as they regrow in August or September.

There is a laurel in area A which needs removing, laurel is a non-native plant which poisons the ground beneath it, so is of little or no benefit within a cemetery. It is vigorous and fast-growing and will cover a large area if unchecked. After discussion with your Archdeacon, I'd recommend getting this tree felled and all material taken off site (it will root if boughs are put into a dead hedge or log pile). The stump will need treating to prevent it regrowing, this can be done with herbicides or by criss-crossing the stump with cuts and then filling with salt provided that any small sprouts coming from lower down are regularly pulled off.

There is also a small Sitka Spruce growing which came from a garden. Again, this is a non-native tree which is out of place here and should be removed. This is so small that the work can be done without prior agreement.

There are three areas which would be suitable for meadows. These should be cut and raked in the spring and then again in the summer. Introduce one meadow a year if this is within ERYC's capacity and there are enough volunteers, slower if this is not possible.

Area A would be best for a dead hedge, it is close to the mature trees and the branches that you will put into it and also, less formal than area B.

Area A: Management tasks

Cut and rake woodland vegetation, removing from site. N.B this is vegetation from shaded areas

Cut and rake grassland vegetation, removing from site. N.B. this is vegetation from sunny areas

Generate volunteers to scythe as well as rake, working closely with the council staff

Remove laurel and Sitka Spruce

Create meadows 1, 2 and 3 – mark out the extent with agreed markers or a rope and small stakes

Cut and rake the meadows

Introduce Yellow Rattle to meadow areas

Create a dead hedge

Pick up branches and twigs and place into the dead hedge

B Sunny Area

Little change is planned in area B for the life of this plan. You might create a bug hotel in a sunny area and can plant sedums into the gravel of unvisited graves, but other than that, leaving it unchanged will give continuity and help to generate positive community responses. A compost area could be a good idea, for grave flowers and those weeding family graves. This can be made from pallets and located near to the back hedge.



Volunteers constructing compost bays from pallets

Area B: Management tasks:

Build a compost bay from pallets

Boundaries

The hedge on the eastern boundary at the bottom of Area B is great for wildlife and should be left as it is, unmanaged. This will be supporting birds, small mammals, amphibians and reptiles as well as a range of invertebrates.

The wall has patches of thick ivy which may now be holding it up as well as supporting wildlife. The bricks are small and presumably quite old and make an attractive boundary despite needing structural work (which will be the responsibility of the council). Removing the ivy is risky unless there are the resources available to mend the wall beneath as needed, trimming it so that it doesn't encroach further is probably the best course of action. There is an opportunity, if the wall is being mended, to put bee bricks in which contain holes of differing sizes. Finding suitable bricks will not be easy as the wall is made of old, small bricks. Making and installing bee bricks could be a project that you seek funding for, creating something bespoke for the Cemetery and publicising it.

Boundaries Management Tasks:

Trim ivy on the walls to keep it at its current level of coverage. Do not reduce it by much, just enough to stop it encroaching.

Use bee bricks if wall repair is taking place and bricks of the right size can be found.

Monuments

Following a great deal of work by volunteers, for the Commonwealth War Graves and East Riding of Yorkshire Council for the others, the monuments in this Cemetery are largely accessible and can be visited for much of the year. Maintaining this accessibility should be a priority through cutting and raking of the vegetation in Area A, particularly nettles, thistles and docks. Most monuments have little or no ivy. Maintaining the status quo is probably the best approach here, during an annual work party, go around with secateurs and trim back new ivy growth, keeping it from

encroaching further but not removing it wholesale in case this causes stability problems. Trimming ivy will be particularly relevant if mapping is taking place as part of the National Burial Ground Survey. All monuments will be photographed during this survey so legibility is particularly important.

Several graves in Area B have kerbs and gravelled surfaces. You can plant sedums into these as sedums are both good for pollinators and also good at suppressing other taller plants which might look untidy such as docks and thistles. Sedums are common garden plants which are easy to propagate and move, so having a sedum planting day might be popular. You could ask for donations and accept a range of different types. The native ones include Biting Stonecrop, White Stonecrop, Orpine, English Stonecrop, Meadow Saxifrage, Rue-leaved Saxifrage, Mossy Saxifrage. This is not a nature reserve however, there are non-native plants already on graves, so there's no need to stick to native plants and there are many garden varieties too.

We discussed the England-wide churchyard mapping that is taking place, to see how the system works you can see [these NBGS examples](#) Ask your diocese whether they have plans to take part in the National Burial Ground Survey and if so when.

Monuments Management Tasks

Cut and rake vegetation within Area A

Trim ivy to prevent encroachment

Plant sedums onto unvisited gravelled graves

Ask your diocese about the National Burial Ground Survey.

People & Access

There are many possibilities for encouraging people to visit and explore the churchyard, particularly area A where there are historic and beautiful monuments to visit as well as woodland and wildlife. This area will become increasingly accessible as the vegetation management rolls out. Consider a trail which encompasses a range of points of interest, some natural, some historical, I'm sending you a copy of a trail around Bishops Castle churchyard, one for adults, the other for children, to give you some ideas.

This is a site that would benefit from a notice board, particularly as the Elwell headstone is so close to the entrance and is within the biodiverse woodland area. You may wish to have a moveable one, which can be lifted off its footings to allow larger vehicles (such as a trailer for collecting raked grass) to enter occasionally. I would also advise continuing with the temporary notices and information on seasonal things such as spring flowers in the woodland. It's great if you can put up temporary signs to explain management that may surprise and worry people. Meadow areas would be an example, download a [Caring for God's Acre meadow sign](#). Other permanent information can be digital, on a website or downloadable as a pdf. Hopefully you will be able to use one set of design and art work for all interpretation both on and off site, physical and online.

Seating is always appreciated within a burial ground, either for those visiting graves of loved ones or for people using it to experience green space and spend time in a nature-rich place. With more benches you may find that those with mobility issues are able to use it more – taking a first short walk after an operation for example. In some instances, increasing benches can lead to antisocial behaviour, which seems unlikely to me for this Cemetery, but you know your local community well. Try and link

with other initiatives such as social prescribing, dementia groups, walking groups (particularly for those taking short, flat walks). The inherent accessibility of a burial ground can be celebrated and communicated.

Is there a local Men in Sheds (or similar) who might enjoy making some seating for the Cemetery?

This is a good site for activities and events, perhaps starting with local schools who are known to be already visiting the Elwell grave. We have an education pack on our website, a couple of the more popular activities are [Symbols Hunt](#) and [Minibeast Hunt](#). Once teachers have seen how well activities can go within the Cemetery, they often start to view it as an outdoor classroom to be used repeatedly. It would be great to prepare bespoke educational information, a teacher or classroom helper (or a retired one!) is perfect for this as they really understand what is needed to make a successful school visit and to fit with curriculum constrictions. There is a natural history GCSE in the pipeline, a local and biodiverse site might be just what a secondary school is looking for.

You might have a youth group or school who would enjoy doing a Bat Badge with children which can be found here: [Bats in Churches Challenge Badge](#). The Church Lads and Girls Brigade was mentioned during consultation. Our education pack has links to scouting movement badges too.

Many of the tasks outlined in this plan make excellent volunteer and children's activities – making bird and bat boxes, raking, constructing and adding to the dead hedge, making a bug hotel. There is an opportunity to put this Cemetery onto the mental map of many local children, hopefully creating a life-long connection. Including food into an event is worth considering to make it more fun – cake and rake days or autumn tidy-up followed by a barbeque perhaps.

Please continue to join in with Churches Count on Nature in the second week of June each year (during Love Your Burial Ground week). There are lots of ideas and resources for this including a specific registration for schools who will not wish to be featured on our map of public events. Your event really can be as large or small as you want.

Local history is of great interest to many people. Are there people who would lead a guided walk, telling a little about the people memorialised within the churchyard? You have 25 war graves and considerable interest and information about many of the people memorialised within the Cemetery as well as the Elwell grave. Having a group of guides shares the load.

Read the Action Pack sheet on accessibility (D7) and take a look at your Cemetery in a new way. Could you invite representatives of various groups for people with physical disabilities or mental divergences to visit and share their impressions? Try to make the site as welcoming as possible, remembering that one of the most important things you can do is to give lots of information off site - for those planning a visit and using websites or local information to do so.

People & Access Management Tasks

Create a trail by pulling together information, commissioning a designer and putting it online to be downloaded. You may also print copies.

Design and erect a permanent notice board, this includes seeking a faculty.

Put up temporary notices including meadow signs.

Discuss seating with your archdeacon and increase the number of benches.

Plan and run public events, drawing on local experts and interest and starting small.

Run volunteer tasks making them fun and accessible to new volunteers.

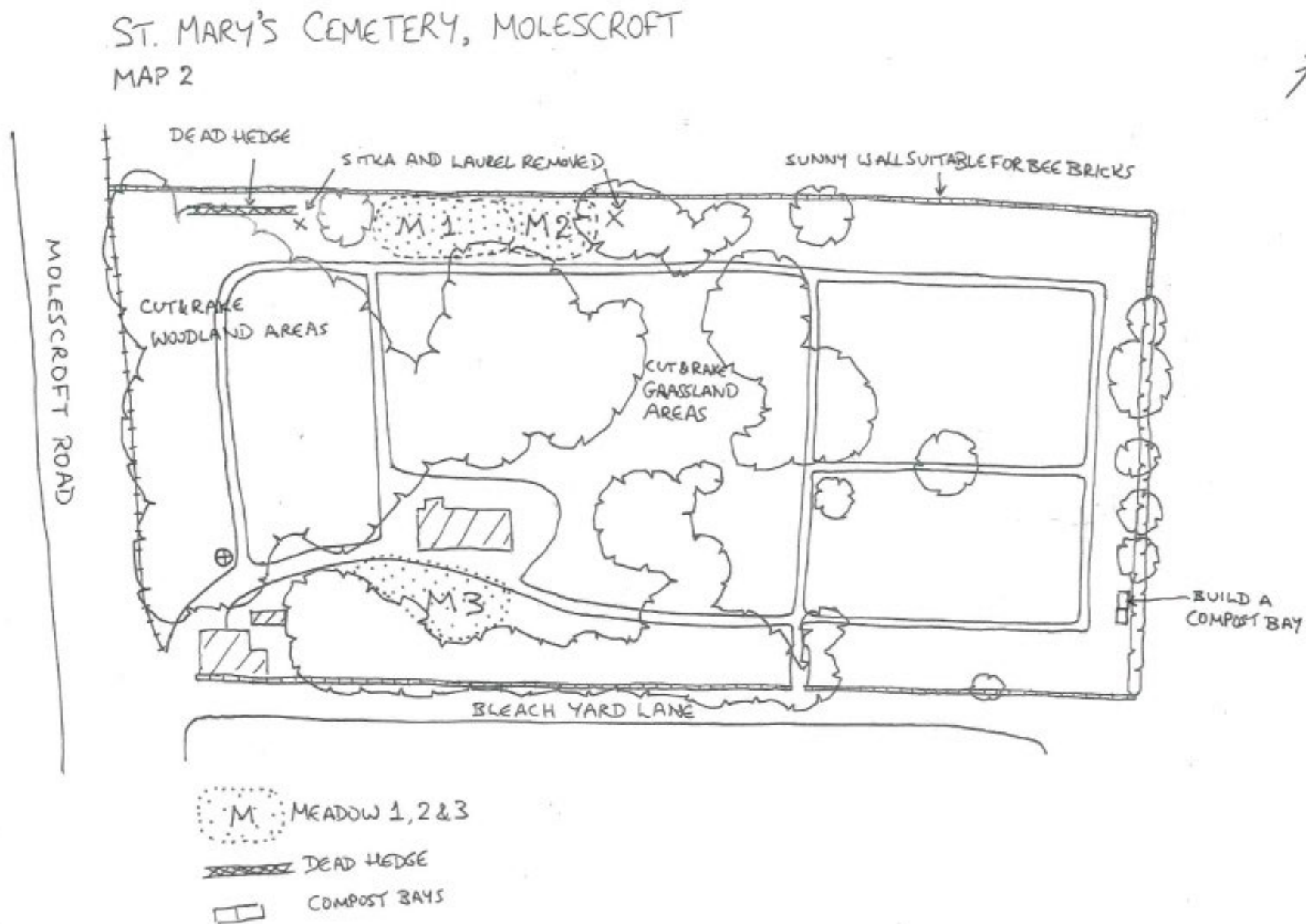
Involve local schools and encourage them to use the Cemetery repeatedly. Use the CfGA education pack resources for this.

Working closely with schools, create activities and work plans that are specific to the Cemetery, featuring monuments, species and features found within the site.

Take part in Churches Count on Nature (CCoN).

Consider access for all and start to plan any changes.

Map 2 showing management proposals



MONTHLY WORK PLAN

Task	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
General tasks												
Install bird and bat boxes	Any	time										
Investigate chapel												
Area A												
Cut, rake and remove woodland vegetation												
Cut, rake and remove grassland vegetation												
Remove laurel and Sitka												
Create meadows, mark out												
Cut, rake and remove grass												
Sow Yellow Rattle												
Create dead hedge	Any	time										
Add deadwood to 'hedge'												
Create dead hedge	Any	time										
Pile in twigs and branches												
Area B												
Build compost bay												
Boundaries												
Trim ivy on walls												
Bee bricks into walls	Any	time										
Monuments												
Trim ivy on monuments												
Plant sedums on graves												
Ask the diocese about NBGS	Any	time										
People & Access												
Create a trail	Any	time										
Produce a notice board	Any	time										
Put up temporary signs												
Increase number of seats	Any	time										
Plan and run public events												
Plan and run volunteer events												
Involve local schools	Any	time										
Create bespoke school plan	Any	time										
Take part in CCoN												
Improve access for all	Any	time										

ANNUAL PROGRAMME FOR THREE YEARS

Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
General tasks			
Bird and bat boxes			
Area A			
Cut, rake and remove woodland vegetation			
Cut, rake and remove grassland vegetation			
Remove laurel and Sitka spruce			
Mark out Meadow 1			
Manage Meadow 1			
Mark out Meadow 2			
Manage Meadow 2			
Mark out Meadow 3			
Manage Meadow 3			
Sow Yellow Rattle into meadow areas			
Create dead hedge			
Pile in twigs and small branches			
Cut down laurel and treat stump			
Pull off laurel sprouts			
Area B			
Compost bay			
Boundaries			
Trim ivy on walls			
Put bee bricks into walls	When	Being	repaired
Monuments			
Trim ivy on monuments			
Plant sedums on unvisited graves			
Ask diocese about NBGS			
People & Access			
Create a churchyard trail			
Design and erect permanent notice board			
Put up temporary signs			
Increase number of seats			
Plan and run public events			
Plan and run volunteer tasks			
Involve local schools			
Create bespoke school plan			
Take part in CCoN			
Improve access for all			

St Mary's Graveyard Molescroft

Plants

Ash
Beech, copper
Bluebell, Spanish – garden plant
Bramble
Bugel
Buttercup, meadow
Celandine, lesser
Cherry, bird
Cherry, decorative variety
Cinquefoil, creeping
Cleavers
Cocksfoot
Cow parsley
Cranesbill, meadow
Cranesbill, shining
Daffodil, pheasant eye – garden plant
Daisy
Dandelion
Dead nettle, white
Dock, curled
Elder
Field woodrush
Forget-me-not, common
Fringe cap – garden plant
Green alkanet
Ground elder
Ground ivy
Hawthorn
Hazel
Herb Bennet
Herb Robert
Holly
Hogweed
Ivy
Knapweed, black
Laurel – non native
Lords and ladies
Love in a Mist – garden plant
Meadow foxtail

Species seen 8th May 2024

Meadow grass
Nettle
Oxeye daisy
Pignut
Plantain, ribwort
Poppy, yellow – garden plant
Primrose
Ragwort
Ransoms
Sedge, pendula
Selfheal
Sitka spruce – non native
Silver birch
Sorrel, common
Speedwell, birds-eye
Speedwell, thyme leaved
Spurge, petty
Strawberry, wild
Sweet vernal grass
Sycamore
Thistle, spear
Tutsan – garden plant
Vetch, bush
Violet, common
Wallflower – garden plant
Whitebeam
Willowherb sp.
Woundwort
Yew, English
Yew, Irish

Animals

Blackbird
Holly blue
Jackdaw
Magpie
Orange tip
Robin
Speckled wood
White, green veined