

# Wild flower management suggestions for **St Giles Church, Graffham**



**Sussex**  
Wildlife Trust



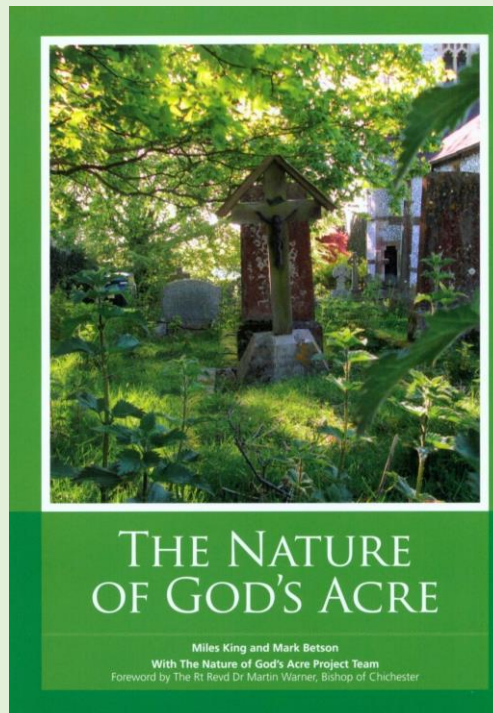
## The Nature of God's Acre

*"The more wildlife there is, the longer I would be likely to linger in the churchyard to enjoy the peace and quiet."*

*"Seeing wildlife in the churchyard (or anywhere) reminds me how God cares about every tiny detail of his Creation and our lives, how he loves beauty; how he sustains his Creation and makes things work together harmoniously; the reliability of the changing seasons, etc."*

*"Wildlife in the churchyard shows the beauty of God's Creation, that the cycle of life continues and is forever renewing itself. It reminds me of Christ's resurrection and God's promise of everlasting life to all who believe in him".*

*"The presence of wildlife in a churchyard changes the experience from what can be quite sombre to an uplifting one. One feels God's presence in the beauty of nature".*



Quotes from the 'The Nature of God's Acre' by Miles King and Mark Betson (2014) an exploration into the relationship between the spiritual and natural value of churchyards.

The book's research included views and reflections of parishioners from forty Sussex churches and recommended that *"where possible churchyards should be managed to enhance their wildlife potential to support the wellbeing of those who visit"*

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## St Giles Church Graffham

In autumn 2021 Sussex Wildlife Trust visited St Giles Churchyard in Graffham following a request from Reverend Vivien Turner to discuss the opportunities for encouraging more wildflowers in the churchyard and adjacent burial ground.

We were also joined by local botanist Frances Abraham who has previously undertaken a survey of the site on behalf of the Sussex Botanical Recording Society.



*The group meet on a sunny afternoon in St Giles churchyard, September 2021*

During our visit we reviewed the opportunities which St Giles churchyard and burial ground allowed for creating areas of wildflower meadow while respecting burial areas, gravestones and spaces for church and community events. Following our visit we have compiled the following suggestions and recommendations.



## Suggestions and Recommendations.

1) The sward at St Giles already contains a good variety of species which with sensitive mowing will be allowed to grow and flower Suitable areas of the churchyard and burial ground were identified as areas that could be allowed to grow longer by amending the current mowing regime.





**Area 1:** *The area opposite the church entrance was proposed as a corner of the churchyard where wild flowers could be allowed to grow. The area is visible to the public, receives plenty of light is also a corner where daffodils are already allowed to grow each year.*



**Area 2:** *The area between the yew and the ivy-covered tree in the east of the churchyard was chosen as a discreet area which still receives sunlight.*

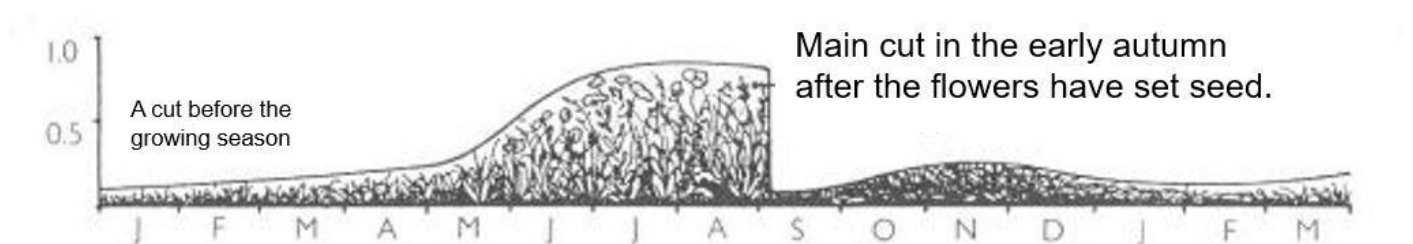




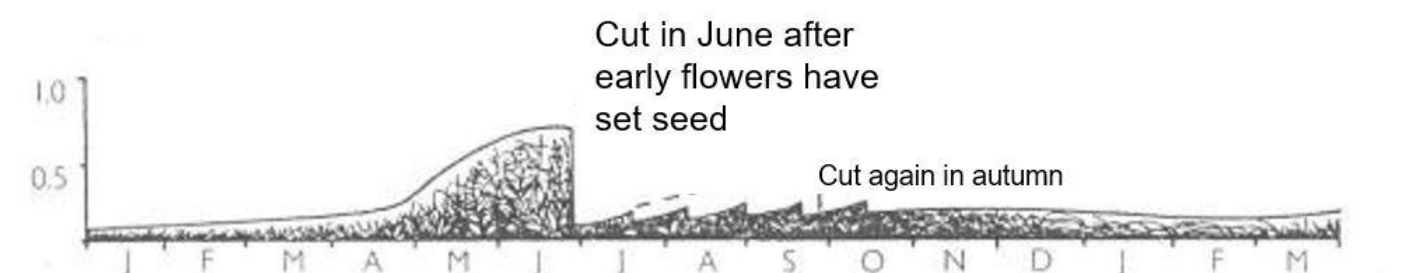
**Area 3:** Over the road, on the eastern side of the burial ground, an area between gravestones (indicated on the map) could be allowed to grow while the perimeter path remains maintained for access.



2) Cut the chosen areas in late **Feb/early March** down to 2/3 inches and the cuttings removed. The removal of these cuttings is vital to prevent ongoing enrichment of the soil which is detrimental to floral diversity. The lower the soil quality, the greater the variety of species you're likely to see.



If the areas contain early spring flowers such as primroses, cowslips and daffodils then the cutting regime can be amended to allow them to flower and set seed. These areas can be cut in **mid-June**.





- 3) Allow these wildflower areas to grow until **late August/ September** when they are cut. Again, it is essential that these cuttings are raked and removed.
- 4) Throughout the year these areas can then be monitored and surveyed to understand what is growing at St Giles. This can inform any future changes to the cutting regime. At present there are no plans to sow any additional wildflower seeds
- 5) The remainder of the churchyard can continued to be mown as normal (The contrast between the short-mown grass and wildflower meadows indicates that the churchyard is being managed – not abandoned!)
- 6) Interpretation notices are a good way of explaining to people why the churchyard is being managed in this way and can provide information on the plants, butterflies and other wildlife that may be seen. Sussex Wildlife Trust can assist with these notices.
- 7) Elsewhere any ivy growing on walls or trees should be left. The ivy at St Giles provides an excellent source of late nectar for various insects such as Ivy bees and Red Admiral butterflies.



*The ivy (seen here in the burial ground) provides essential late nectar for bees, Butterflies and other insects as well as berries and a home for birds.*

- 9) In the burial ground the Leylandii in the hedgeline could be removed to open the view and less dominant, native hedgerow species such as Hawthorn, Field Maple and Spindle planted along the fence-line.
- 10) Anthills occur in the churchyard and are a valuable part of the churchyard's ecology. They should be preserved wherever possible, though they will recover if accidentally damaged.



11) The rare example of Mistletoe growing on Cotoneaster needs to be tended carefully to avoid the Mistletoe becoming swamped.



*The St Giles mistletoe has achieved fame in the Sussex botanical world ! It's rare to see it growing so low.*

12) There are a lot of interesting ferns and lichens growing on walls around St Giles and these are not causing any damage to the walls. They should be left wherever possible.



*Maidenhair Spleenwort growing on the wall in the churchyard*



## Plants found at St. Giles, Graffham

Surveys undertaken by Miss Frances Abraham March – September 2017

### Graffham Burial Ground (East of Churchyard)

<b>Taxon</b>	<b>Common name</b>
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow
<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>	Ground-elder
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	Bugle
<i>Alchemilla mollis</i>	Garden Lady's-mantle
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Garlic Mustard
<i>Anisantha sterilis</i>	Barren Brome
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal-grass
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-Grass
<i>Arum maculatum</i>	Lords-and-Ladies
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	False-brome
<i>Bromus racemosus</i>	Smooth Brome
<i>Bryonia dioica</i>	White Bryony
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	Hedge Bindweed
<i>Calystegia silvatica</i>	Large Bindweed
<i>Campanula poscharskyana</i>	Trailing Bellflower
<i>Carex divulsa</i> subsp. <i>divulsa</i>	Grey Sedge
<i>Carex flacca</i>	Glaucous Sedge
<i>Carex pendula</i>	Pendulous Sedge
<i>Carex spicata</i>	Spiked Sedge
<i>Carex sylvatica</i>	Wood-sedge
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed
<i>Chelidonium majus</i>	Greater Celandine
<i>Circaea lutetiana</i>	Enchanter's-nightshade
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle
<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	Traveller's-joy
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field Bindweed
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	Smooth Hawk's-beard
<i>Cyclamen hederifolium</i>	Sowbread
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot
<i>Epilobium montanum</i>	Broad-leaved Willowherb
<i>Epilobium parviflorum</i>	Hoary Willowherb
<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>	Hemp-agrimony
<i>Festuca rubra</i> agg.	Red Fescue
<i>Ficaria verna</i>	Lesser Celandine
<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	Wild Strawberry



Fraxinus excelsior	Ash
Galanthus nivalis	Snowdrop
Galium aparine	Cleavers
Geranium dissectum	Cut-leaved Crane's-bill
Geranium robertianum	Herb-Robert
Geum urbanum	Wood Avens
Glechoma hederacea	Ground-ivy
Hedera helix	Common Ivy
Heracleum sphondylium	Hogweed
Holcus lanatus	Yorkshire-fog
Humulus lupulus	Hop
Hyacinthoides non-scripta	Bluebell
	Hybrid Bluebell (H. non-scripta x hispanica)
Hyacinthoides x massartiana	Tutsan
Hypericum androsaemum	Hairy St John's-wort
Hypericum hirsutum	Holly
Ilex aquifolium	Stinking Iris
Iris foetidissima	White Dead-nettle
Lamium album	Nipplewort
Lapsana communis	Rough Hawkbit
Leontodon hispidus	Oxeye Daisy
Leucanthemum vulgare	Wild Privet
Ligustrum vulgare	Perennial Rye-grass
Lolium perenne	Honeysuckle
Lonicera periclymenum	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil
Lotus corniculatus	Honesty
Lunaria annua	Field Wood-rush
Luzula campestris	Creeping-Jenny
Lysimachia nummularia	Black Medick
Medicago lupulina	Dog's Mercury
Mercurialis perennis	Wall Lettuce
Mycelis muralis	Field Forget-me-not
Myosotis arvensis	Cultivated Daffodil
Narcissus agg.	Green Alkanet
Pentaglottis sempervirens	Ribwort Plantain
Plantago lanceolata	Greater Plantain
Plantago major	Annual Meadow-grass
Poa annua	Rough Meadow-grass
Poa trivialis	Creeping Cinquefoil
Potentilla reptans	Barren Strawberry
Potentilla sterilis	Cowslip
Primula veris	Primrose
Primula vulgaris	Selfheal
Prunella vulgaris	Cherry Laurel
Prunus laurocerasus	Bracken
Pteridium aquilinum	Lungwort
Pulmonaria officinalis	Creeping Buttercup
Ranunculus repens	Field-rose
Rosa arvensis	



Rubus fruticosus agg.	Bramble
Rumex acetosa	Common Sorrel
Rumex crispus	Curled Dock
Rumex obtusifolius	Broad-leaved Dock
Rumex sanguineus	Wood Dock
Sambucus nigra	Elder
Sanicula europaea	Sanicle
Schedonorus arundinaceus	Tall Fescue
Senecio vulgaris	Groundsel
Solanum dulcamara	Bittersweet
Sonchus oleraceus	Smooth Sow-thistle
Stachys sylvatica	Hedge Woundwort
Tamus communis	Black Bryony
Taraxacum agg.	Dandelion
Tilia x europaea	Lime
Trifolium dubium	Lesser Trefoil
Trifolium repens	White Clover
Trisetum flavescens	Yellow Oat-grass
Ulmus procera	English Elm
Urtica dioica	Common Nettle
Veronica chamaedrys	Germander Speedwell
Veronica filiformis	Slender Speedwell
Veronica hederifolia subsp. lucorum	Ivy-leaved Speedwell
Veronica persica	Common Field-speedwell
Viburnum opulus	Guelder-rose
Vicia sepium	Bush Vetch
Viola odorata	Sweet Violet
Viola reichenbachiana	Early Dog-violet
Viola riviniana	Common Dog-violet

#### **Graffham Churchyard**

Acer pseudoplatanus	Sycamore
Achillea millefolium	Yarrow
Aegopodium podagraria	Ground-elder
Ajuga reptans	Bugle
Alchemilla mollis	Garden Lady's-mantle
Anisantha sterilis	Barren Brome
Anthoxanthum odoratum	Sweet Vernal-grass
Anthriscus sylvestris	Cow Parsley
Arrhenatherum elatius	False Oat-Grass
Arum maculatum	Lords-and-Ladies
Asplenium adiantum-nigrum sens. lat.	Black Spleenwort
Asplenium ruta-muraria	Wall-rue
Asplenium scolopendrium	Hart's-tongue
Asplenium trichomanes	Maidenhair Spleenwort
Bellis perennis	Daisy
Brachypodium sylvaticum	False-brome
Bromus hordeaceus subsp. hordeaceus	Common Soft-brome
Calystegia sepium	Hedge Bindweed



Cardamine hirsuta	Hairy Bitter-cress
Cardamine pratensis	Cuckooflower
Centaurea montana	Perennial Cornflower
Centaurea nigra	Common Knapweed
Centranthus ruber	Red Valerian
Cerastium fontanum	Common Mouse-ear
Convolvulus arvensis	Field Bindweed
Corylus avellana	Hazel
Cotoneaster horizontalis	Wall Cotoneaster
Crepis capillaris	Smooth Hawk's-beard
Cymbalaria muralis	Ivy-leaved Toadflax
Dactylis glomerata	Cock's-foot
Dryopteris filix-mas	Male-fern
Epilobium hirsutum	Great Willowherb
Epilobium montanum	Broad-leaved Willowherb
Epilobium obscurum	Short-fruited Willowherb
Epilobium parviflorum	Hoary Willowherb
Erigeron karvinskianus	Mexican Fleabane
Eupatorium cannabinum	Hemp-agrimony
Euphorbia lathyris	Caper Spurge
Euphorbia peplus	Petty Spurge
Festuca ovina agg.	Sheep's-fescue
Festuca rubra agg.	Red Fescue
Ficaria verna	Lesser Celandine
Fragaria vesca	Wild Strawberry
Fraxinus excelsior	Ash
Galanthus nivalis	Snowdrop
Galium album	Hedge Bedstraw
Galium aparine	Cleavers
Galium verum	Lady's Bedstraw
Geranium robertianum	Herb-Robert
Geum urbanum	Wood Avens
Hedera helix	Common Ivy
Heracleum sphondylium	Hogweed
Holcus lanatus	Yorkshire-fog
Hyacinthoides non-scripta	Bluebell
Hypericum androsaemum	Tutsan
Hypochaeris radicata	Cat's-ear
Ilex aquifolium	Holly
Iris foetidissima	Stinking Iris
Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. argentatum	Garden Yellow-archangel
Lamium album	White Dead-nettle
Lapsana communis	Nipplewort
Lathyrus pratensis	Meadow Vetchling
Leontodon hispidus	Rough Hawkbit
Leucanthemum vulgare	Oxeye Daisy
Lotus corniculatus	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil
Luzula campestris	Field Wood-rush
Medicago lupulina	Black Medick

<i>Mycelis muralis</i>	Wall Lettuce
<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	Field Forget-me-not
<i>Myosotis sylvatica</i>	Wood Forget-me-not
<i>Narcissus</i> agg.	Cultivated Daffodil
<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i>	Green Alkanet
<i>Pilosella officinarum</i>	Mouse-ear-hawkweed
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual Meadow-grass
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass
<i>Potentilla sterilis</i>	Barren Strawberry
<i>Primula veris</i>	Cowslip
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Primrose
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal
<i>Pulmonaria officinalis</i>	Lungwort
<i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i>	Bulbous Buttercup
<i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i>	Bulbous Buttercup
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup
<i>Rhus typhina</i>	Stag's-horn Sumach
<i>Rosa arvensis</i>	Field-rose
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock
<i>Rumex sanguineus</i>	Wood Dock
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly Sow-thistle
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	Smooth Sow-thistle
<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	Hedge Woundwort
<i>Tamus communis</i>	Black Bryony
<i>Taraxacum</i> agg.	Dandelion
<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Yew
<i>Tellima grandiflora</i>	Fringecups
<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	Lesser Trefoil
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover
<i>Ulmus</i> agg.	Elm
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle
<i>Valerianella carinata</i>	Keeled-fruited Cornsalad
<i>Valerianella locusta</i>	Common Cornsalad
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander Speedwell
<i>Veronica filiformis</i>	Slender Speedwell
<i>Veronica hederifolia</i> subsp. <i>hederifolia</i>	Ivy-leaved Speedwell
<i>Veronica persica</i>	Common Field-speedwell
<i>Veronica serpyllifolia</i>	Thyme-leaved Speedwell
<i>Vicia sativa</i> subsp. <i>segetalis</i>	Common Vetch
<i>Viola odorata</i>	Sweet Violet
<i>Viola riviniana</i>	Common Dog-violet
<i>Viscum album</i>	Mistletoe
<i>Vulpia myuros</i>	Rat's-tail Fescue



