

Biodiversity and Green Management of your churchyard.

Protecting our natural environment and Gods creation is our 5th Mark of Mission which is integral to the response to our Christian calling. The land God has blessed us with to steward forms a unique national network of opportunities to encourage, support and connect wildlife and to protect diversity and the wider environment in the management techniques we choose to use. They also provide areas for solitude, prayer, reflection, education, peace and worship as well as recreation and fellowship. This guide has been created to help you plan and maintain a purposeful management regime that promotes biodiversity and careful resource management.

Each action is linked to **Ecochurch Award** questions which will support you in achieving a wonderful Bronze, Silver or Gold Award for your church.

For further information on Ecochurch, see: [www.arocha.org.uk/ecochurch](http://www.arocha.org.uk/ecochurch) or email the Environment Team for help and advice- [sara.emmett@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:sara.emmett@bathwells.anglican.org)

**We love to hear from you!**

The Environment Team.

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| **Action** | **Benefits and How-To** | **Ecochurch**  **Link** |
| **Native Species and Wildflowers** | Encouraging and protecting native species and wildflowers allows your church land to become a biodiverse haven for pollinators. For advice on how to improve or maintain diversity, see **Somerset Wildlife Trust** who we are working in partnership with to protect and enhance the biodiversity in our churchyards:  <https://www.somersetwildlife.org>  **A Rocha** also provide a very detailed advice pack at:  <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Land-How-to-Look-After-Your-Land-in-Wildlife-Friendly-Ways.pdf> | **Land 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 & 10** |
| **Pollinators** | See our detailed advice on beekeeping and pollinators available at:  <https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/BathWells-BeeKeeping.pdf> | **Land 3, 7 & 8** |
| **Feeding Wildlife** | Feeding wildlife can be an easy and rewarding way to encourage and support a great many species. Bird feeding is especially important in winter and early spring when natural food sources are scarce. Feeding hedgehogs and badgers (especially in autumn before hibernation) can be a real treat. Many people are now using inexpensive night cameras to observe nocturnal wildlife with fascinating results! **The RHS** has some good advice on where to start:  <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=382>.  Don’t forget to encourage your community and young people to create feeding stations and stock feeders. | **Land 4** |
| **Ponds and Wetland** | If you have space, a pond is a beneficial way to increase biodiversity in your church yard and water is a wonderful resource for prayer and contemplation. **The Haven Church** have a really helpful guide at:  <https://thehavenecochurch.com/2019/11/27/hedges-and-ponds/>.  If you are short on space, you could use a barrel or even an old sink to create a miniature haven. | **Land 5** |
| **Mowing** | A planned mowing regime with some areas allowed to grow long encourages many grassland species such as yellow rattle, invertebrates including butterflies and bees and mammals, including hedgehogs and mice. For help in creating a seasonal plan and for case-studies in other churches visit **Caring for Gods Acres** at:  <https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/download/a2-caring-for-grassland/> | **Land 8** |
| **Water Storage and Collection** | Storing water when it rains will reduce your water use and be especially useful in dry periods. Try **Blackbrook**s for a recycled plastic option:  <https://www.blackbrooks.co.uk/shop/products/garden-care1/watering-and-water-butts/water-butts-and-accessories/water-butt-recycled.html> . | **Buildings 13** |
| **Pesticide and Fertilisers** | Pesticide and herbicide use can pollute waterways and kill bees and other beneficial creatures. There are natural alternatives- see:  <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-make-your-garden-chemical-free-zone>  You can also buy fertiliser made from Somerset’s garden and food waste from **Somerset Waste** at:  <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/revive-soil-conditioner/>  If you need to use fertiliser look at the **RHS** advice: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=304> which includes how to make your own organic fertiliser. If you need compost, always look for peat-free (peat harvesting damages the mature ecosystems where the peat forms). | **Land 9** |
| **Surveys** | Surveying the species found on your land can be very rewarding and can contribute to national databases of species distribution. For a free beginners guide see:  <https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CfGA-Starter-Guide-2020.pdf>  If you wish to organise a larger event, try a **Bioblitz:**  <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/projects/bioblitz/> | **Land 11** |
| **Other Conservation Initiatives** | If you need some inspiration, see what **Suffolk churches** are doing at:  <http://angelsandpinnacles.org.uk/for-children/cherishchurchyards/>  **St. Albans** also have some very specific information on how they manage their churchyards: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Managing-churchyards-for-wildlife-Leaflet-38.pdf>  **The Woodlands Trust** can provide you with native saplings if you have space to plant some trees: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/> | **Land 12** |
| **Growing Food** | If you have time and a little space, you can grow your own food. It can be a wonderful learning opportunity for your young people and very satisfying as well as well as providing a time to marvel at Gods mastery. See:  <https://ecochurchsouthwest.org.uk/actions/living-churchyards/> | **Land 13** |
| **Composting** | Composting is simple and has many benefits. Reduced waste and cost, tidier gardens, lovely ‘home-made’ compost for your garden or church yard and it is very beneficial for biodiversity, insects and the plants you grow next year!  You can add fruit and vegetable scraps, tea leaves and coffee grounds (remove the ‘bag’ part first as they often contain plastic), fallen leaves, cuttings, grass trimming and household cardboard (toilet rolls, cereal boxes and egg boxes). For a guide on how-to, visit:  <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/compost-bin-deal/>  **Somerset Waste** have a fantastic offer on compost bins for residents at £18.95 for the first and £9.25 for the second! Call Somerset Waste on 0844 571 4444. | **Land 14, Community Engagement 27.** |
| **Prayer, Worship and Recreation** | Outdoor worship and prayer can be a very moving and refreshing experience. Connecting ourselves with God’s wider creation and enjoying it enriches and brightens our lives immeasurably. The **Church of England** have lots of resources on their website at:  <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/outdoor-worship> | **Land 15 & 16** |
| **Management Plans** | See: <https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/resources/action-pack/> for advice on how to write up a management plan. | **Land 17** |
| **Engagement** | How can you use your land for education and engagement with the wider community? You could host a Bioblitz and invite the wider community to take part or host a picnic. | **Land 15 & 16.** |