

## **Notes from Wildflower planting in Churchyard Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

**Present:** Tony Crabb, Jenny Gaitskell, Ruth Webb, Rachel Bywater, Hilary Dunlavey, Marianne & Chris Mathews, Carol Byrom

### **Background**

The St Martins Parochial Church Council (PCC) has met and discussed our request to facilitate more wild flower growth in the churchyard. They have consented to our taking on the management of the south west and west areas of the churchyard. Areas to the east and south east of the church are actively used and ashes are still being buried here, so are to remain mown as at present. The churchyard is consecrated ground and so grass cuttings may be removed but soil may not. Garden implements need to be thoroughly cleaned before leaving the site. Respect for the relatives of those buried here is of prime importance.

### **Proposals**

#### **South of the Church**

It was agreed that we will create three plots on the south side of the church, in an area where there are no gravestones and to the west of the area where ashes are buried. Plots will measure 4m x 2m and be marked with garden canes and string. After the September mowing the areas to be managed differently as follows:

Area 1: Leave alone completely no mow, no management. On old land such as this it will be interesting to see what comes up naturally.

Area 2: Clear off cuttings and sow yellow rattle seed to weaken the grass on which it a parasite, so preparing the soil for wild flower planting.

Area 3. Clear off cuttings, sow yellow rattle seed and plant up with the plants we already have: Autumn Hawkbit, Bird's Foot Trefoil, Burnet Saxifrage, Dog Violet, Kidney Vetch, Knapweed, Muskmallow, Salad Burnet, Wild Basil and Yarrow.

Carol to ask Chris Haskett the date in September when he plans to mow the churchyard and to explain our plans for its management. The above work can start immediately after this. It was noted that in a warm autumn the churchyard may require an extra cut.

Then see what happens after year one, and base future management plans on this.

Ruth was asked if she could find out who lead the project of rewilding the Hilton Churchyard and if we can access any photos of it. She said she would ask Roger and let us know.

#### **West of the Church**

This area is heavily shaded by overhanging trees and has encroaching hedge and hedgerow plants, including nettles. It is noted that in spring it is covered in snowdrops and wild daffodils, some of which might be native. It was agreed to wait until next spring when we will note where the existing bulbs are before additionally planting up with native bluebells and wood anemones.

## **Graveyard**

Our approach to the PCC to manage this area has not yet been made, but it is noted that new burials are still taking place here and so it is much more actively used. We will ask if we could take on the management of the area to the west of the war memorial at the top of the site, margins down the south side to the west of existing graves and along the western edge to the south of the gate. The plan for these margins is to mow only twice a year, in March and September, remove cuttings and see what comes up.

We will also approach the PCC with a request to manage the verges of the churchyard and alongside the track.

## **Communication**

Consented proposals are to be described in the October Village News and a laminated copy to be displayed on the churchyard gate so that villagers and relatives of those buried there are fully informed of the community's plans for these areas.