



Mapping Walks Report – Godshill

Identifying potential areas to improve and create space for nature (orange areas)

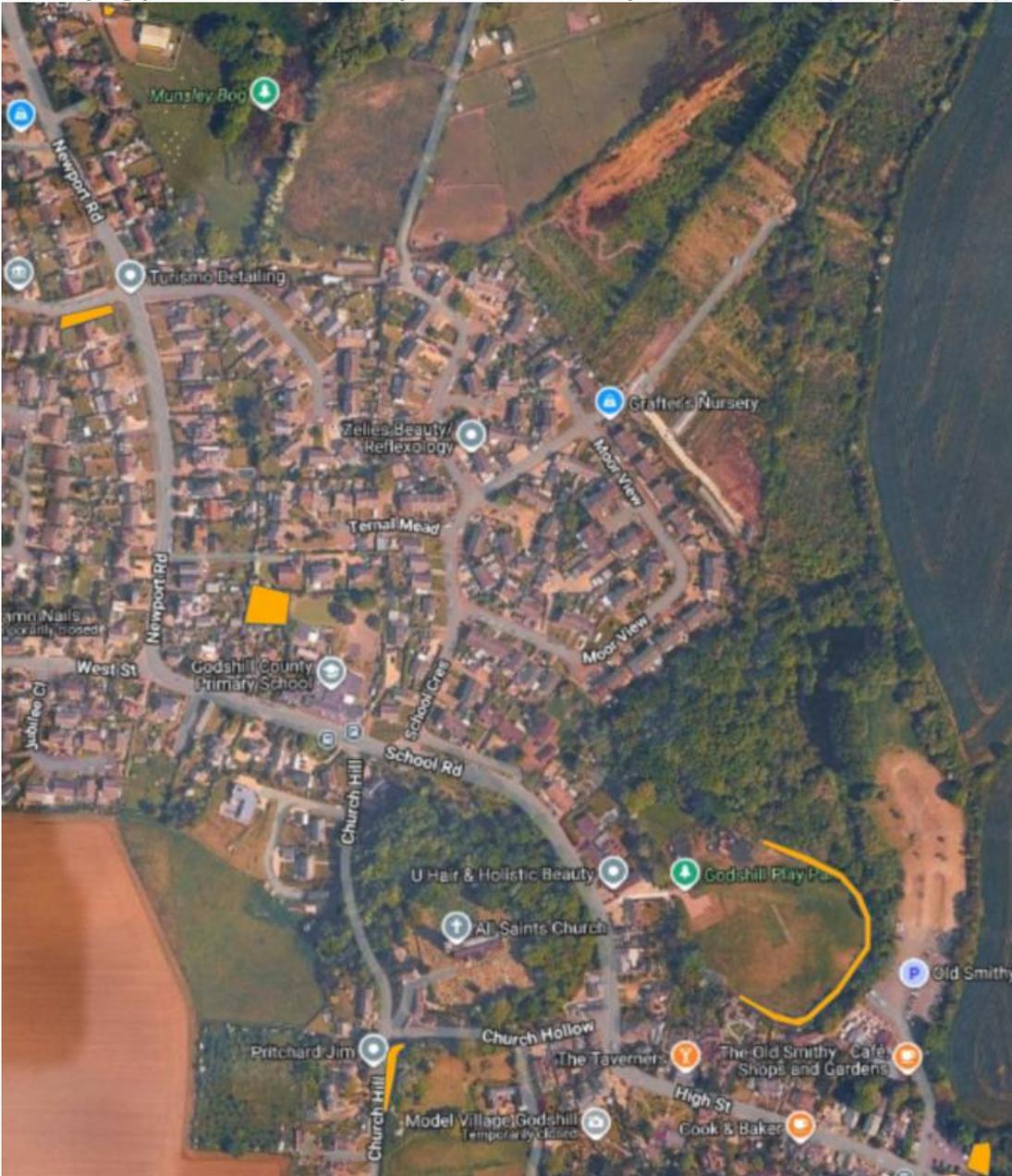


Fig1. Overview spaces identified in Godshill to improve or create space for nature

Godshill is a rural village on the Isle of Wight set within agriculturally farmed landscape. Godshill does not have any designated spaces apart from Munsley Bog which is a SIN (site of importance for nature conservation), which is next to the playground in the northern end of the village just off May Close. The purpose of the walk was to identify spaces where there is potential to improve or create space for nature in addition to existing areas of focus and activities being undertaken to support local wildlife.

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Fig 2. Land adjacent to Godshill Top Council Car Park

The land in front of the public toilets is likely to have high footfall particularly during times of peak tourists visiting the village. It is therefore recommended that the grass is kept at a low sward height in front of the toilets and the main central area so people can use the area. A border of 1m could be left unmown which would help create habitat and a corridor running along the edges to support invertebrates and local wildlife. The border would also expand the existing hedgerow corridor habitat at the north and east edges. Saplings could be planted along the fence line around the west and southern edge which would create more habitat and enclose the area. The top northeast corner is quite dark and shady. Bulbs could be planted in this area which would provide important nectar for pollinators coming out of hibernation in the spring.

The area also hosts the village Christmas tree which is cut up and disposed of each year. Some residents discussed the possibility of planting a tree which could be used as the annual Christmas tree or planting another tree such as a cherry tree which could still be decorated each year as a more sustainable option.



Fig. 2 Memorial Garden

The memorial garden is bordered by hedgerow, the grass is mowed to a short sward height and has some planters next to the benches. There is opportunity to plant some saplings in the gaps along the eastern hedgerow to fill in gaps and make the hedgerow thicker to provide a more viable habitat. It was confirmed the short grass sward is preferred by visitors.

There is space to add some additional planters with plants that support pollinators, this will also add colour and enhance the space as a peaceful and tranquil space to spend time in. Planting a variety of shrubs and plants that bloom at different times of the year from spring to early autumn will provide nectar for as long as possible for pollinators throughout the seasons. Flowers that come into bloom in early spring are particularly important for pollinators coming out of hibernation in search of food. Please find below a link to a list of plants that come into bloom from spring to autumn: [Making Space for Nature PollinatorPlants.pdf](#)

All Saints Church

The churchyard was visited as part of the walk and the warden outlined that an area at the back held SSSI status. This was looked into and no details of a SSSI designation could be found. It is however an old site and it would be recommended to revisit in spring and early summer to undertake a grassland survey to find out what grasses and flower species are present. This will help identify management options to encourage any important species recorded. The banks of the pathway may also contain bulbs but this could not be seen on the date of the visit and may be more visible as the flowers come out in early spring.

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A search was undertaken to see if any species of importance had been recorded on the site and it highlighted that it was an important site for moss and lichens. This should be taken into consideration if any cleaning is going to be undertaken on the stonework in the church grounds.



Fig. 3 Godshill County Primary School grounds

The grounds of the school has lots of space which could be managed to support wildlife whilst also providing opportunity for pupils to connect with nature. It was outlined that the aim was to extend the fence around the pond to create more room. The pond also needs clearing out and rejuvenating. If possible wait until late autumn (September/October) to carry out work on a pond as this is when there will be fewest amphibians in it to disturb. Clearing the pond in sections at a time will also ensure you are not removing habitat for the pond's inhabitants all in one go. Extending the area could create enough space to put in a dipping platform. Enough space around the pond should be left for vegetation to grow to provide shelter for amphibians exiting the pond.

There is a small growing space in the corner which could be extended with pollinator friendly plants to attract bees and butterflies. Creating a butterfly garden could include plants which butterflies lay their eggs on and the caterpillars eat, as well as plants that provide food for the adults. This would provide an education opportunity to demonstrate the lifecycle of butterflies.

More trees could be planted in the open area to create shade and a mini-woodland effect. Planting a few fruit trees would create a mini-orchard and leaving areas of long grass around the edges will encourage invertebrates which could then be surveyed and recorded by pupils.

The large open space available could provide a fun opportunity to get pupils involved in designing the area to support wildlife. The initial stage should be to survey the area in spring/summer and identify what wildlife is there such as birds, bugs, butterflies etc. From the survey data this could identify what could be created to support more species. The pupils could choose what species they would like to encourage and this could steer the design of what is undertaken to help wildlife. For example planting flowers with seed heads or shrubs/trees with berries will provide food for birds over winter. Planting a hedgerow can provide important nesting habitat. Leaving dead log piles, creating dead hedges and leaving longer patches of grass will provide important habitat for a wide variety of wildlife and help increase biodiversity.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust has a Wilder Schools Programme and details of this has been sent to the school representative who attended the walk.

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Fig. 4 Scout Hut & Playground off May Close

The walk looked at the scout hut and surrounding land. There is an existing pond which is overgrown and needs to be cleared out. The benefits of doing this was discussed and it was felt if extended it would provide a great opportunity to create a pond for wildlife and include a pond dipping platform for the scouts to explore the wildlife under the surface. Putting in some plants to block the pond from the road was discussed to protect the area and create a buffer from the residential area.

The eastern and southern boundary is a tall metal fence which runs round the outdoor seating area. It is quite obtrusive and doesn't make the area feel you are in a natural space. Planting saplings that will grow into a hedge around the perimeter will make the area feel more outdoorsy and enclosed for the scouts to feel they are in a natural space. It is also advisable from a safeguarding perspective and provides screening from the external area and people wandering by. Planting should ideally include a variety of native species which will provide benefits of shelter, food, nesting and hibernating habitat. Please find below a link on planting a hedge and recommended species: [How to make a hedge for wildlife | Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust](#)

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We also looked at different options to create wildlife friendly features including bug hotels, bird boxes and growing spaces. A couple of planters with trellis up the side of the building would provide a good growing space as it is south facing and wouldn't take up too much of the lawned area which is used for activities.

The Playground Area

The playground equipment is in an open part of the park with no shade. Planting a few trees around the edge would grow in time and provide shade for families using the area and provide stepping stone habitats for wildlife.

The park is mowed to a short sward height which is appropriate for the activities that are undertaken on there, including football in the southern end. There is opportunity to not mow right up to the edge and leave a 1 or 2m border of the vegetation to grow longer over spring and summer and provide habitat for invertebrates and small mammals. The borders of tall sward could be cut late summer with some patches left for invertebrates to overwinter in.

The middle of the park has a gentle slope towards the area used to play football on. This would be a suitable site to plant native fruit trees to create a community orchard. Engagement and consultation with local residents would need to take place to determine whether this is something they would like to see in the park as well as providing opportunity to demonstrate the benefits to wildlife the orchard would provide. Long-term management would also need to be considered and if there is support to look after the orchard on a long-term basis.

There is an old pond at the southern end of the park which has become significantly overgrown. This could be cleared but it is a large area therefore an assessment would need to be undertaken to ensure it could be done safely and if carried out ensure adequate fencing is put in place around the around to prevent anyone accessing the area whilst it is being cleared to prevent an accident.

We did not look at Munsley Bog which is adjacent to the recreation ground as this is being already being managed. If there is opportunity in the future to extend the bog it will help increase the resilience of this sensitive habitat.



Fig. 5 Green patch on Yarborough Close – opposite surgery

It was outlined on the walk that permission has been given to do something with this area of land, fig.5. Options were discussed and the general consensus was felt that it shouldn't be something permanent such as tree planting in case permissions were later changed. The best option reached was to plant a wildflower strip. This could be done by completely removing all the turf and sowing the seeds or it could be done gradually by scarifying the ground and adding patches of seed. Sowing yellow rattle is recommended to start with as it is a parasite on grass and will help outcompete grass and give other flowers a chance to come through.

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There are quite a few large verges along Newport Road as you travel south into Godshill. The ownership of these could also be looked into and whether there is opportunity to sow wildflower patches in these areas. A strip may be required to be mowed shorter on the road edge for visibility reasons but the verges are a good size and would provide opportunity to sow seeds and create wildflower strips along the road. There may also be wildflowers in the seed bank on these verges which could come up if left unmown. Leaving the strips unmown and letting them grow for the first year will provide opportunity to carry out surveys to identify what flora and grasses are already there. This will then help identify future management requirements and whether sowing additional wildflowers would help increase the species diversity. If there is mainly grass that comes up a seed mix including Yellow Rattle will help reduce to grass as it outcompetes it, allowing other species to come through.

If any management is to take place on the verges along Newport road it will be important to engage with residents along the road to let them know what is happening and why. This will help avoid any misunderstanding about what is happening, provide opportunity for any queries they may have to be answered but generally keeping everyone aware of what is happening is important particularly if it is outside their home to help address any concerns they may have and get their support for the initiative.



Fig. 6 Godshill park and recreation ground

The main ground (fig.6) has been used for cricket in the past and it was not clear whether the boundary would need to be maintained and the grass kept short in the future. If this is the case, there is still opportunity outside of the cricket boundary to let the grass grow long to create a mini meadow and allowing a 1 or 2m border around the park edges to grow long during the spring and summer will create invertebrate habitat as well as shelter and safe commute routes for local wildlife using the area. If any area in the park floods after heavy rainfall wildflower areas are good for absorbing water and run(-off?). Allowing the vegetation to grow longer in patches will provide opportunity for a survey to be carried out in spring and summer to monitor the diversity of species present.

The grounds are surrounded by mature trees from the north edge round to the south east. There is a fence from the pavilion to the tree line, a hedge could be planted along this edge to provide additional habitat and extend the corridor for wildlife. The playground area has no shade from the south and is exposed in hot weather. Planting some trees around this area will provide shade and keep the area cooler for families using the play area.

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Baseline Data

For the larger green spaces it will be useful to carry out surveys and monitoring in the spring and summer to start a baseline record of what wildlife and flora is in the area. This will help identify the beneficial management options for particular habitats and species in the area. Continuing monitoring after creating space or enhancing habitats for nature will demonstrate changes in diversity and species numbers and hopefully show an increase in biodiversity in the area. Community citizen science opportunities are a great way of getting people in the community involved in spotting and recording species. Sightings could be shared on a local facebook page and recorded from there or iRecord has the option to set up a community project for people to add their sightings to. A community bioblitz on a greenspace is a good community engagement event to get people involved in spotting and recording species whilst also promoting projects and signing up potential new volunteers.

Community Engagement

When looking at opportunities to create habitat in the green spaces that sit within or connect housing areas it is important to engage with local residents to find out what they use the areas for, what nature they would like to see or the types of habitat and listen to their views and any concerns they have about habitat management, restoration and creation ideas. This will help get people on board but also contribute to alleviating concerns they may have about changes and planting. It may also help identify potential volunteers to help look after these spaces for nature in the future. Our community hub has lots of guides about setting up a community group including how to reach people in your community: [Guides | The Wildlife Trusts](#)

Nature Connection & Wellbeing

Godshill has areas of green spaces for people to use and enjoy. Looking into opportunities to provide more seating in these areas will provide spaces for people to spend time enjoying the area and also provide opportunity for people who are less mobile to sit in a green space. Looking at different ways people in the community can connect with nature is important to appreciate local nature and the landscapes but also to support wellbeing.

Organising nature focused events are a great way to connect with more people in community. Nature walks or nature related activities can help connect with different audiences and provide opportunity for people to see and learn more about what is one their doorstep. Events which tap into different ways people connect with nature such as art, music and writing can provide experiences for people to notice nature and spend more time in green spaces and could in turn have more interest in doing more to help local wildlife. This is a useful handbook with ideas to help build community and nature relationships: [nature connected communities1.pdf](#)

Interpretation

Where habitat management is undertaken on public land it is recommended to put in some signage to explain to people what is being done and why. This is important for people to understand why the changes are being made and hopefully alleviate any concerns but also potentially spark interest to either help or connect them with the nature in the community, do more to help the wildlife and spend time in and enjoy these areas.

Wildlife friendly gardening

Encouraging residents to implement wildlife friendly gardening planting/features can help local wildlife and create a network of habitats. A good start is to find out whether there are hedgehogs present and encouraging people to open up hedgehog highways, leave piles of leaves for them to hibernate in or put

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out food or water in spring, summer and early autumn. [UK hedgehog distribution map - Hedgehog Street](#). You could also contact iWatchWildlife – the Island’s species recording project as they hold a database of IW Hedgehog records.

There are lots of ideas of actions people can do to help local wildlife on our website: [Team Wilder Resources, Toolkits and Courses | Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust](#)

Greening Campaign - Central Rural Mapping Walk

10th January 2026

Species List

Stop 1 - Green in front of Public Toilets

Common Name	Latin Name	Group
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Bird
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Bird
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	Bird
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Bird
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	Bird
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos Caudatus</i>	Bird
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Bird
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba Palumbus</i>	Bird

Stop 2 - War Memorial

Common Name	Latin Name	Group
Dunnock	<i>Prunella Modularis</i>	Bird
Rook	<i>Corvus Frugilegus</i>	Bird

Stop 3 - All Saints Churchyard

Common Name	Latin Name	Group
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Bird
Dunnock	<i>Prunella Modularis</i>	Bird
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos Caudatus</i>	Bird
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Bird

Stop 4 - Godshill Primary School

Common Name	Latin Name	Group
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Bird
House Sparrow	<i>Passer Domesticus</i>	Bird
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Bird

Stop 5 – The Old Orchards (not visited)

Stop 6 - Scout Hut & Rec

Common Name	Latin Name	Group
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Bird
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	Bird
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Bird
House Sparrow	<i>Passer Domesticus</i>	Bird

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Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	Bird
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Bird
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Bird
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	Bird

Stop 7 – Verge opposite Surgery

Common Name	Latin Name	Group
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Flowering Plants

Stop 6 - The Mead

Common Name	Latin Name	Group
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Bird
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Bird
House Sparrow	<i>Passer Domesticus</i>	Bird
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Bird
Rook	<i>Corvus Frugilegus</i>	Bird