CLUN TOWN COUNCIL
with CHAPEL LAWN

Strategy and Management of the Closed Churchyard of St Georges Church

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LTN 64 Tombstones and Memorials - *Legal Topic Note NALC May 2014*

LTN 65 Closed Churchyards and Disused Burial Grounds - *Legal Topic Note NALC November 2007*

Cemetery Management and Administration for Local Council Clerks - *A guidance document prepared jointly by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management and the Society of Local Council Clerks - Society of Local Clerks 2007*

Technical Appendices - in separate document

A. **Baseline Status Memorials**
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1. Introduction

The document is intended as a reference and guide for future Councillors and Clerks regarding the background, nature and requirements for the management of the Closed Section St Georges Churchyard Clun.

It is not intended as a definitive document and will require regular review and updating. Whist some reference is made to legislation and Church Processes these will change over time and will also need to be kept under review.

The current document is not complete and are work is required to develop inspection portals for use by the council as the work develops. These could not be done until initial survey work was carried out that has only just been completed.

2. Summary

St Georges Church Clun is Grade II* Listed the perimeter walls are accepted as part of this. In addition the Churchyard Contains 234 listed memorials and additionally other listed structures. These all bring additional responsibility for their care and maintenance. There is one area that is excluded from our responsibility - the area for internment of Ashes on the E Boundary.

There are formal procedures to follow both with secular authorities and with the church authorities regarding any substantive work to structure, memorials or trees.

The assets and liabilities are effectively shared between the Church and the Council. The Town Council will need to take this into account as it proceeds in the management.

3. Closed Churchyard of St Georges Church

3.1. Background to Town Council Management and relationship with Church Authorities

3.2. Description

The St Georges Church is situated in a prominent position over looking the Town from the South. It lies within an ancient site and the Church and surrounding Churchyard with the Old Vicarage comprise a major feature in the landscape of Clun and of its cultural history. The church is open for worship throughout the year and used for major cultural and civic events such as the annual Town Service, Remembrance Day service and wreath laying, Music Festival and Ah Hoc Concerts and annual Flower Festival (a part of Clun Open Gardens).

The Closed Churchyard although not specifically listed is major part of the context. St Georges Church itself is Listed **Grade II* (Figure 2)**, and includes the Lychgate **Grade II**, Listed gate piers **Grade II** (at the ramp gateway) and the War Memorial **Grade II** as well as 34 **Grade II** Listed Headstones, Memorials Tombs and Monuments.

Within the area of the Closed Churchyard are some more modern graves and memorials to the S and N of the path that goes W of the Church entrance. There is also an area along the Eastern boundary to the SE of the northern area that is open for burial of ashes. The boundaries are shown in plan at **Figure 1.**

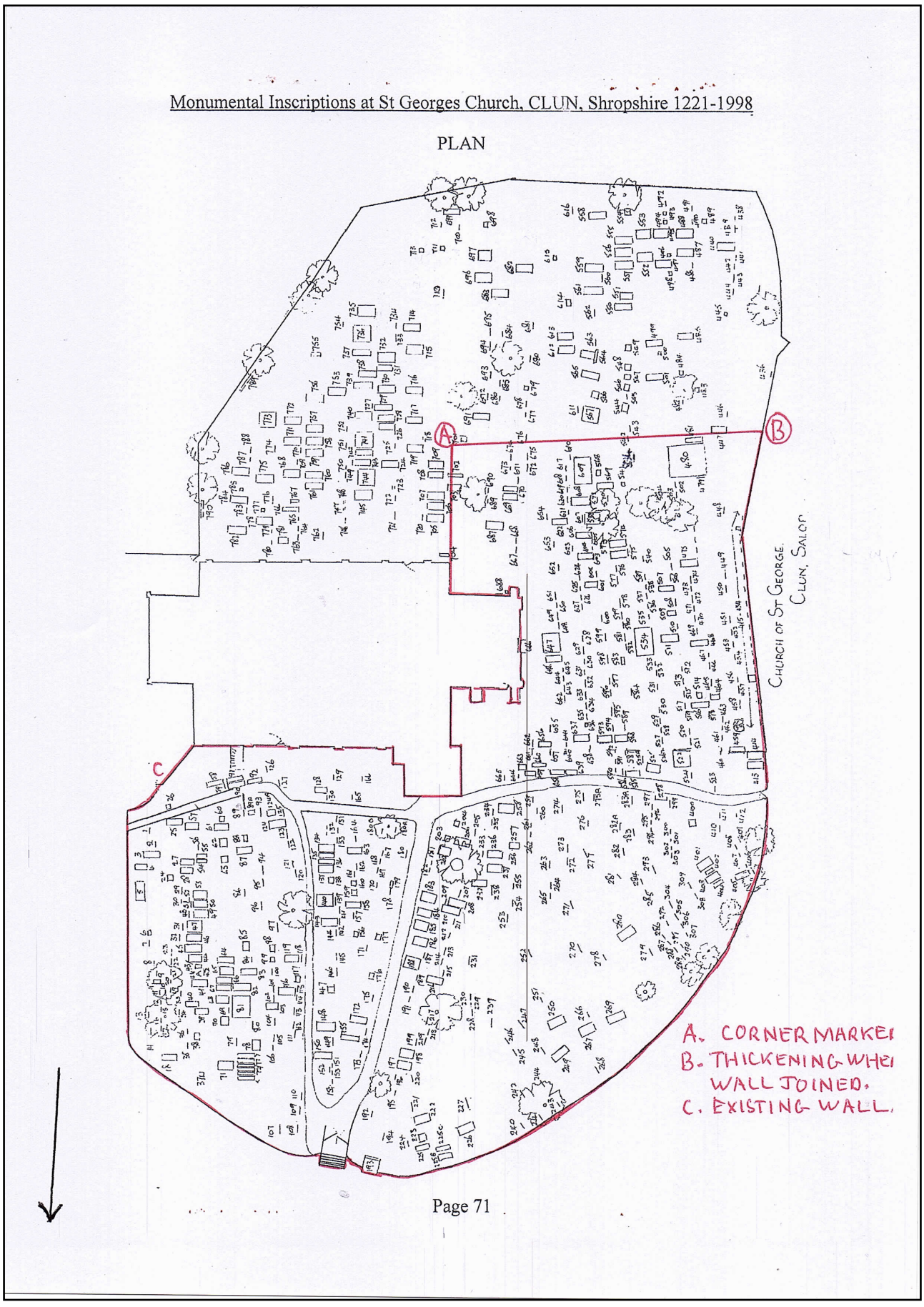
3.3. Background to town Council Management

The Council was first informed by the Churchwarden in March 2023. This confirmed, that part of the churchyard at St Georges had been Closed since 1893 and requested that under s. 215 of the Local Government Act 1972 it was asking The Town Council to take over Management. Copies of documents including an application to the Ministry of Justice dated 28/3/23, correspondence with the Ministry of Justice November 2020, indicating closure was initially 20 May 1881 confirmed with the final closure 31 March 1893. This is accompanied by copies of the Order in Council and including a map of the area.

The matter was discussed in Council and resolution to adopt the Maintenance.

Formal notice from the Churchwarden was sent by email on 17 July 2023 to take over the maintenance with the practical start date to be “after the grass cutting season”. The documents are held on file.

FIGURE 1 BOUNDARIES AND GENERAL LOCATION OF MONUMENTS FROM 1221-



FIGURES 2 LISTING CITATION FOR ST GEORGES CHURCH

Listing Entry :
SO 3080-3180 CLUN C.P. CHURCH STREET (South side)

15/82 Church of St. George 21.3.68.

GV II*

Parish church. C12 core with additions of the C13 and C14; C17 alterations, general restoration and additions in 1877 by G.E. Street. Coursed limestone and sandstone rubble with tile patching in tower, and roughly squared limestone dressings; C19 work of squared and snecked limestone with ashlar dressings; graded stone slate roofs, separately over nave and North aisle, with lean- to South aisle. 4-bay nave, C13 North aisle, South aisle with clerestory, rebuilt in a neo-Norman style in 1877, lancet style 2- bay chancel of 1877, C14 North porch remodelled in C17 and C19, and squat square west tower remodelled in Cl7. Tower: 4 stages, 3 externally; clasping West buttresses up to second stage (that to North-west encasing newel staircase), two C18 and C19 buttresses to North and South with off-sets, string course; probably Cl7 plain- tiled double-pyramidal roof, top stage separated from bottom by shaped balusters with louvres between and surmounted by lead-sheathed globe finial and weathervane; twin-lancet belfry openings, third stage West lancet and second stage chamfered round-arched window; large round-arched recessed West doorway with C19 boarded door, impost blocks, and hoodmould with weathered carved stops and probably re-set weathered carved head at apex, inscription above door "ISAAC MORGAN THOMAS POWIS CHURCHWARDENS (sic) 1666". North aisle: 4 bays to left of porch with lancets and C19 buttresses; chamfered-arched boarded doorway in second bay from left with capitals, dogtooth- enriched hoodmould with carved stops and reset carved head in wall above (left-jamb dated "HB RB 1658"); cinquefoil-arched tomb recess to left of door with ball flower enriched hoodmould; C12 doorway to right with C19 boarded doors, 2 orders with roll-moulded jambs and carved capitals, moulded round-arch and hoodmould with carved stops. North porch: entrance with double-chamfered segmental arch dying into responds, first floor window with 2 trefoiled lights, and planted timbers in gable-end with flagpole; left-hand return front with projection for internal staircase and C19 lancet; right- hand return front with C19 first floor square-headed 2-light window. North aisle and clerestory: 6 bays; round-arched windows, those in clerestory above aisle buttresses; doorway in second bay from left with boarded door, one order of shafts with scalloped capitals, and round arch with roll moulding and chevron decoration; round-arched windows at East and West ends of aisle. Chancel: 2 bays with lancets; low clasping buttresses to East and triple-stepped East lancets under continuous hoodmould with carved stops. Interior: 4 bay North and

FIGURE 2 (CONTINUED)

Listing Entry (Continued):

SO 3080-3180 CLUN C.P. CHURCH STREET (South side)

Church of St. George (Continued)

South aisle arcades with circular piers, scalloped capitals, slightly- pointed recessed arches with roll moulding to inner arch, chevron decoration and continuous hoodmould to nave face; North-east arch with square respond and simple impost moulding to East, capital to South-west pier with small carved heads at corners, pointed tower- arch with simple imposts, round-arched window to tower above; Chancel with 1877 sedilia and piscina, and moulded-arched North doorway; continuous 14-bay roof over nave and chancel with double purlins, arch- bracing to collars, cusped V-struts, cusped wind braces forming quatrefoils, ceilure over altar, and carved winged-angels to wall plate; probably re-sited C12 organ arch to South-west; North aisle with 10 bay roof as nave. Fittings include: circa 1877 reredos, canopied stalls, 1910 chancel screen, and North chapel screen; C14 font heavily restored in 1877, with 8 columns supporting octagonal bowl and canopy; C17 octagonal wooden pulpit, with high backplate and tester with pendant finials; re-used Cl7 panelling in North aisle chapel with guilloche, lozenge and other decoration; possibly Cl7 carved Coat of Arms in wall to right of North-aisle chapel reredos with brass plaque above to Robert Howard of 1653; various late C18 and early C19 commemorative tablets on West wall of nave; Cl7 staircases in tower with flat circular finials to square newel posts. Cranage, Vol. 5, pp. 432-444; B.O.E. pp. 107-8.

Listing NGR: SO3004180554

(Ref: https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1367257?section=official-list-entry accessed on 21/02/24)

3.4.Procedures, Contact Points and Contractors

The primary contact for the Town Council will be the Town Clerk supported by a nominated Councillor. The primary contact for the Church will be the senior Churchwarden.

The Town Clerk will be responsible, following a resolution passed in council or within formally delegated powers, for arranging contracts with suppliers of investigative or delivery work. In addition and when permits are required the following will apply:

Trees - as the whole site is in a Conservation area significant work to trees will require permission from Shropshire Council - Planning and Tree Officers. In addition permission from the Archdeacon or possibly a full faculty.

Structures - like for like repairs to structures such as walls, lychgate, and paths should not require planning consent however if repairs are significant, advice from the Shropshire Council Heritage department should be sought. The Church warden will advise if any such work requires permission from Church Authorities.

Monuments, memorials and headstones - normal procedures will apply in relation to the inspection and work to these structures although the owners must be contacted where applicable. Responsibility for arranging this work lies with the Town Council and any work will be contracted in the same ways as for other structures. In the case of Listed Monuments, memorials and headstones the advice of Shropshire Councils Heritage officer must be sought.

For major renovation it is likely Shropshire Council and Archdeacon or Faculty permission will be required.

However in exceptional circumstances emergency work for health and safety reasons to protect the public may be commissioned before permission is granted.

For the avoidance of doubt, owners of gravestones, memorials and tombs are responsible for their maintenance and safety. However as many of those in the Closed churchyard are very old tracing ownership if indeed possible at all would be onerous. In these cases the Town Council as manager become responsible for their upkeep and safety. Guidance on this is provided in Legal Topic Note LTN 64 May 2014 of the Natal Association of Local Councils (NALC).

3.5.Process

To ensure smooth running it will be essential that Town Clerk, for each and every commission, ensures that agreement is reach with the Churchwarden at an early stage to ensure that both Church and Civil permissions are obtained in an orderly manner, and that work does not commence until all such permissions have been granted. Annual plans developed within this strategy should, other than to meet health and safety emergencies, ensure that permissions are sought early in the process.

3.6.Insurance and Liabilities

Both the Church and Town Council have shared responsibility of the assets and use of the Churchyard. Firstly the Church as owner and secondly the Town Council as the manager of its care and maintenance as specified in this document. The Town Council will ensure its contractors are covered by their own workmanship and public liabilities and the Town Councils own Insurance

will cover the responsibilities of the Town Council as overall manager in the normal way.

3.7. Location and Description of Boundaries

The broad description of the location and the position of the boundaries are covered in Section **3.2** and **Figure 1**. It should be noted the entrance to the Crypt, steps down and associated walls remain the responsibility of the Church. Also to note the short length of wall in this SE corner note C on Figure XXX contains a gateway there are no plans to reinstate this gate.

A detailed description of the boundaries is contained in the baseline report prepared by Loadstone Consulting 29 December 2023 - Structural Assessment – St.George's Church Graveyard and Clun Cemetery Perimeter Stone Walls - a full copy of which is held on file and referred to in **Appendix D.** A review of the approach to maintenance of the Walls are given in the report by Elliott Ryder Conservation March 2025.

The brief extracts from the Loadstone here are pertinent.

The report divides the Walls into the following sections.

- Zone 1 - The northern facing section of wall facing Vicarage Road
- Zone 2 - The north western facing section of wall facing the A488
- Zone 3 - The length of wall dividing the church graveyard from an existing property
- Zone 4 - A short section of wall within the grounds adjacent to the church.

Their assessment of condition is:

Zone 1

This section of wall was generally in fair condition considering its age with some areas of localised deterioration or damage. The main observations for Zone 1 are,

- Vegetation has been allowed to grow unhindered along the length of Zone 1. The depth and in turn weight of vegetation has increased, and overhangs the wall by up to 500mm in places.
- The stone capping is cracked or damaged in several locations allowing water ingress within the wall.
- To the left of the post box that is embedded adjacent to the main steps there is a stone block that has been pushed into the wall. It was unclear the cause of this, but it appeared to be from an external impact pushing the block inwards rather than issues directly related to the wall construction.
- To the right of the entrance steps repairs appear to have been carried out to the coping and junction with the return wall. Vertical cracks have formed within the centre of the wall. This area is on a natural outward curve. It is speculated that the cracks are as a result of thermal effects expanding the stone and leading to a crack at midpoint. We would recommend on going monitoring of the cracks to check for any future movement.
- To the right of the War Memorial, there is damage and cracking to the upper courses of stonework. It is thought that the growth of vegetation and the associated root balls have led to expansion of the stonework and subsequent cracking and displacement. The affected area should be removed and rebuilt following removal of all vegetation.

Zone 2

- Similar to Zone 1, typically this Zone is in fair condition with localised areas that would benefit from repair or maintenance. The main observations for Zone 2 are:
- Vegetation has been allowed to grow unhindered along the length of Zone 2. The stone capping is cracked or damaged in several locations allowing water ingress within the wall.

- Locally there are stones that have been dislodged. Typically, there is a root or vegetation behind that is likely to have caused the stone to become dislodged. These areas should be cleaned out and the stone replaced.
- Adjacent to the churchyard access at the junction of the A488 and Hand Causeway there is cracking to the wall where a large tree sits directly behind. In addition to the tree, the height of the wall steps with no side protection allowing for moisture ingress.
- The cracking and loss of mortar may have been caused by moisture ingress due to the condition of the wall, side and capping protection and / or due to the potential for the tree to have applied pressure.
- To this location we would recommend that the vegetation is removed and the stonework repaired such that the top and sides of the wall are capped to prevent moisture ingress.
- Following this work, monitoring should be carried out to assess whether further movement or cracking occurs which would suggest that the tree is impacting the performance of the wall structure.

Zone 3

The wall to Zone 3 could only be inspected from the churchyard side as access to the adjoining property was not possible. Typically, the wall appeared in fair condition with no obvious signs of distress. The main observations for Zone 3 are:

- Vegetation has been allowed to grow unhindered along the length.
- The capping stones are loose in places, and others are broken or crumpling. The capping would benefit from maintenance and possible replacement to ensure that the stones are sound and solid.

Zone 4

The short section of wall to Zone 4 is internal and appears to be a dividing wall between areas of the churchyard. The majority of the wall could not be inspected due to dense vegetation. However, those areas of wall that were accessible appeared in good condition with no evident signs of distress.

3.8.Hard Assets

3.8.1.Paths

No comments are given in the Church's survey nor the Survey Carried out by Loadstone Consulting. A visual assessment by Councillors Shepherd and Duffee Identify the following:

- The surfaces of the tarmac paths are generally in good condition with only minor small areas of degraded surface were found.
- The path to the W of the Church provides a steep ramp from /Hands Causeway and is the only disabled access to the Churchyard and Church. This Only has a single handrail on its S Edge and it is suggested a second handrail might be required. They also recommend removing the over growing vegetation from the existing hand rail.
- They also identify a loose manhole cover situated under the seat which is adjacent to the path and W Wall. It is suggested this should be properly secured.

It should be noted that the gate piers to the gate way at the top of the ramp on the path from Hands Causeway are listed Grade II see listing below **Figure 3**:

FIGURE 3 LISTING CITATION OF GATE PILLARS

Listing Entry:

SO 2880-2980 CLUN C.P. KNIGHTON ROAD (South-east side)

14/163 Pair of Gatepiers - approximately 32 metres to East of Church of St George

GV II

Pair of gatepiers. Probably circa 1877 incorporating some probably medieval material from the Church of St George (q.v.). Coursed sandstone and limestone rubble with limestone hinge-blocks and chamfered caps. 2 square gatepiers approximately 1.5 metres high. 2 reused medieval carved sandstone heads to East. 2 late C19 or early C20 wooden gates (not included).

Listing NGR: SO2998680571

(Ref: https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1175900?section=official-list-entry accessed on 21/02/24)

Suggested approach:

Y1 The clearing of vegetation from the handrail adjacent to the path from Hands Causeway.

Carry out visual assessment of paths and only commission small work repairs if condition dictate for safety reasons following clearance from the local church representatives.

Y1 Use small works contractor to assess what is required to fix the loose manhole and confirm with Church warden if permission is required and commission work as appropriate.

Y2-Y 5 Repeat annual inspection and commission small works as required.

3.8.2.Gates

There are two gateways within our area of concern one as part of the Lychgate and one where the wall meets the sloping path from Hands Causeway. The gates in Lychgate should be assessed as part of the Lychgate.

The other single gateway currently has no gate present this having fallen in to disrepair has been removed by the Churchwarden and a decision is to be taken by the Church whether to replace as this is the disabled entrance.

3.8.3.Boundary Walls

The wall comprising the boundary to the Closed Churchyard are seen on the the Map Figure[xxxx]. They run in a curved manner along the side of Vicarage Road to the Lychgate and From the Lychgate a short section prior to the War Memorial (which is fitted into the wall) and thence to the W and S to the Hands Causeway path. It then runs S behind a house which is on Hands Causeway to a thickening of the wall where there is visible the remnants of the wall in the past travelled East as shown on the Map of 1883. As this wall no longer exists a boundary stone has been placed near to Tree number 22. **[this needs ground truthing] .** There is also a short length of wall in the SE of the Closed church year cordoning off an area behind the East gable wall.

Current Status:
In the Church's survey by Tim Ratcliffe Associates of July 2020 the following commentary is given.

> "The stone is eroding in places and plant growth has become established in open joints. These and several cracks need investigating and localised repoints.
>
> …it is recommended a rolling programme of localised repairs is instigated over the next few years."

This survey also raises the question whether the wall in the SE corner of the Closed area is worth repairing or whether it may be better to dismantle it.
The Town Council Commissioned Lordstone Consulting to report on the conditions of the walls. Their report is dated 29/12/2023.

They provided a detailed visual assessment of the condition of the walls, with particular mention of the ingrowth of vegetation and a vertical crack between the War Memorial and Lychgate. They conclude:
"…*the walls are generally in fair condition, with minimal visual bulging and only localised areas of cracking. It is thought that the local cracking is as a result of vegetation growth, or linked to poor historical maintenance.*

As a result, it is our recommendation that a programme of repair and maintenance be put in place with regular annual monitoring of the wall and its condition. Regular monitoring will allow for changes in the wall behaviour and appearance to be identified and, if required, reviewed to allow for rectification measures to be put in place. The following is a recommended list of maintenance items that, if implemented, will help to improve the condition of the walls and elongate their working life."

- Remove / cut back vegetation from all wall surfaces. Where roots are intertwined with the stonework, removal of the roots will possibly lead to damage and requirement to rebuild parts of the wall. As such it may be preferred to leave the roots in-situ and accept potential future localised stone replacement as the roots grow. If possible, remove 200-300mm of soil from behind the wall to remove the over growth and prevent future growth over the wall and capping.
- Replace / repair damaged capping to prevent future moisture ingress to the wall cavity.

- Where the wall steps in height, review the condition of the side faces and provide capping if required to prevent moisture ingress.
- Repoint with lime mortar those areas where mortar has been lost or removed.
- Remove cement mortar and repoint with lime mortar.
- Replace lost stones and remove, where applicable, any root growth that may have led to the stone loss.
- At tree locations it is recommended that the Council take a risk based approach when deciding whether tree removal and / or wall repair is required. The trees are well established and important to the local ecology, and so judgement with regard risk should the wall be damaged and locally collapse would be a recommended approach to avoid cutting down trees unnecessarily.
- With this approach, a regular monitoring of wall bulge and cracking would be recommended.
- Monitoring of the vertical cracks in the Zone 1 wall to the right of the main entrance steps to check for future movement or crack development.

Suggested Approach:

These reports suggest that the walls themselves although in need of significant maintenance are not in immediate risk of collapse. From the recommendations in both reports the following is suggested way forward:

Y1 Develop a risk assessment pro forma for visual assessment of the walls.

Carry out initial reduction of the vegetation removing overhanging elements to slow growth without disturbing the wall structure.

Tender for and appoint a suitable contractor with historical building experience and track record. The specification to be based on the reports recommendations and the requirement to develop a planned programme of work over 5 years with estimates.

Y2 Repeat visual inspection of walls. Explore and Secure sources of funding and agree work programme.

Y3 Let contract for on going works and start on highest priority or easiest to implement.

Y4-Y5 Continue with annual inspections and work with contractor to start implementing agreed programme of work subject to funding.

3.8.4.Lychgate

Current Status:

The Lychgate is listed as Grade II (List Entry Number:1054471) and is listed separately from the Church which is II*. It dates from 1723,

dismantled in 1841 re-erected c1881 restored 1956. Most timbers are assessed as from 19 and 20th Century.

FIGURE 4 LISTING CITATION OF LYCHGATE

Listing entry:

Lychgate. 1723 (churchwardens' accounts), dismantled 1841, re- erected in circa 1881 and restored 1956. Timber framed on low coursed limestone rubble walls; graded stone slate roof, gabled on all sides with circa 1881 moulded barge boards and finials. Square plan. Framing: close studded sides with central rail, blocked below and open above; large curved arch - braces to entrances at North and South; trusses in gables with vertical struts to collar and quatre- foiled panels, Central pair of circa 1881 wooden gates. After its dismantling in 1841 it was re-erected at the gateway to Handcauseway (Cf . Cranage) before being returned to its original location in about 1881. Despite restoration in 1956, it is included as a faithful copy and for group value. Cranage, Vol. 5, P.442-4; Brief notes on St, George's Church, Clun; N.M.R.

Listing NGR: SO3003880617

(Ref: https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1054471?section=official-list-entry accessed on 21/02/24)

The Church's own survey daed July 200 identified rot in the base timbers supporting the timber frame. Their suggested course of action was for "localised piecing in repairs, in the next few years".

They identified that most damage was occurring at the corners and they suggested "it may be worth forming extended drips at the bottom of the roof valleys to throw water further from the base". They also suggest minor works to the roof to ensure out stays water tight.

Town councillors Shepherd and Duffee carried out a visual assessment on 10/03/2023. The identified the following in relation to the Lychgate and the approach steps:

- 2 Stone roof Tiles Missing
- One flagstone on the Floor raised and trip hazard
- At least one Oak Hand Rail and Posts needing replacement
- Steps up to needing pointing
- Bottom Step requires modification to avoid damage to the corners by vehicles

Suggested Approach

None of the proposed work is urgent although the work to the steps is and issue and a temporary repair to the first step could be considered first as the Church currently hold a small sum of money for this work could be used.

Y1 Carry out interim repair to first step reduce risk by implementing radius profile using small works contractor.

Y1 Contractors should be approached to carry out a full inspection of the lychgate and provide estimates/quotes for the following:

- Repair to the base timbers of the Frame
- Repairs/Replacement of to roof slates to ensure it remains watertight
- Propose a solution as suggested to extend water runoff from the roof valleys
- Remove trip hazards from the floor
- Asses both hand rails and posts for safety and replace in Oak

Once the work has been assessed and estimated requests must be made for the necessary Church Permits and if required Shropshire Council Heritage approval.

Y2 Secure suitable funding

Y3-Y5 depending on priority with other expenditure agreed work to be scheduled for implementation.

3.8.5.War Memorial

The war memorial is prominent at the top of Church Street and can be seen from down by the bridge. It carries the names of those who died in the 1914-1919, the 1059-1945 war and the more recent conflict in Norther Ireland 1972. Wreaths are displayed all the year round within the buttresses.

Although effectively part of the graveyard walls it was inserted in to them when built in 1920-21. It holds deep meaning for many in the Town and surrounding area whose families are represented on it.

The memorial is **Grade II listing,** the citation is a Figure XXX below.

The memorial is currently in good condition. However it is topped by a 3m high cross in granite. This, according to the advice from the advice in the Society of Local Councils Guidance, will require inspecting like other memorials to ensure it remains safe. However because of its height it will require to be inspected and tested by a **structural engineer**.

FIGURE 5 WAR MEMORIAL

Listing Entry):

Number: 1444412 Clun War Memorial
Grade II

A churchyard war memorial cross, unveiled in June 1921.

MATERIALS & PLAN: Cornish granite. The monument is sited in a churchyard which is raised above road height. It has plaques, flanked by buttresses, set into the churchyard wall. The cross, base and plinth are set immediately above and behind this in the churchyard.

The north, road, front has granite plaques set between buttresses of local stone with offsets to their tops of granite. The rectangular plaques have moulded frames and recessed panels with inset lead lettering. Above the names of the fallen is inscribed: TO THE MEN OF CLUN / WHO DIED FOR THEIR COUNTRY / 1914 - 1919'. A separate, lower plaque is inscribed: '1939 - 1945' above the names of the fallen from that war and below this is a further, small, granite plaque inscribed: '1972 / N. IRELAND' with a single name. The platform of the churchyard cross connects with the buttress tops and has two steps to the plinth, the lower of which has a semi-circular concave indent to each side. Above the plinth is a square base with a moulded top which supports the octagonal shaft which is gently tapered. The cross has a circular boss at the centre carrying a shield to the road front, and a crown finial.

This List entry has been amended to add sources for War Memorials Online and the War Memorials Register. These sources were not used in the compilation of this List entry but are added here as a guide for further reading, 10 March 2017.

(Ref: https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1444412?section=official-list-entr accessed on 21/02/24y)

Suggested approach

This should be done when the other memorials are also inspected and tested and at least once in the first 5year programme.

3.8.6. Benches

Of the 5 benches identified the dilapidated bench near to the Hands Causeway entrance to the W of the Church has been removed. There is no plan to replace this.

The remaining 4 benches to be inspected annually and repairs or ongoing maintenance such as preservative treatment carried out using a small works contractor.

It should be noted that the bench to the S of the path West of the Church door is of special significance to the family who tend the adjoining grave. They will need to be approached regarding any work required or if replacement is required to meet our risk and insurance obligations.

3.8.7. Memorials, Headstones and Monuments (MHM)

The Closed Churchyard has a large number of graves of historic and more recent date. The are depicted in detail on a large scale map **(yet to be received)**. These are of varying type from simple headstones to stone sided Table top tombs, Iron railed crypts and tombs, stone obelisks and sone pillars topped with urns or other ornamentation.

They are made using a wide range of stone.

Many of the MHM are not in good repair. The most updated review of condition carried out by the Churchwarden is shown in **Appendix A.** These are dated reviewed in 2021, updated in 2022 and in one case 2024.

These lists note that some are supported by a wooden props, tombs are protected by wire with or without wooden spars to prevent outward collapse, some are surrounded by a strand of wire and some are indicated by wooden hand painted notices warning of danger.

In addition some movement is noted in the recent condition update and also noted is that the Architect has agreed one collapsed tomb can be left and vegetation allowed to over grow this.

It must be noted that **31** of the MHMs are Grade II listed. The locations of these are shown on the Heritage England Interactive database ad a pictorial representation is shown in **Figure XXX.** The Churchwarden has listed these against the Grave Number so they can be located more easily once we have the large scale map. This list is attached in **Appendix A.**

Suggested Approach

In view of the state of many of the MMH, and the rather temporary nature of the mitigation regarding the unstable or unsafe tombs and headstones. The Council will need to careful develop a strategy to protect the heritage, minimise risk to the public and ensure public safety.

A first step would be to get advice from the Shropshire Council Heritage officer and or English Heritage on the condition, mitigation or reinstatement of some listed MHM.

Secondly Council should get a professional assessment of the safety and integrity with a focus on risk and danger.

Both of these Steps will allow the town Council to assess the financial risk and find mechanisms to fund the work. In any event the initial survey could be expensive and time may be required to budget to fund this.

There are other small councils that also mange Closed churchyards and those close to should be approached to learn from their experience and explore opportunities to minimise inspection requirements and cost.

The following is a suggested way forward:

Y1 Monitor the MHM against the risk and management profile provide by the Churchwarden using current resources.

Council should formally approach Shropshire Council and/or Heritage England for advise on the Listed MHMs.

Contact and obtain quotes from organisations or individuals trained in MHM assessments to survey all the MHMs and report on condition, risk and priority for action.

Y2 Continue monitoring and temporary solutions as in Y1.

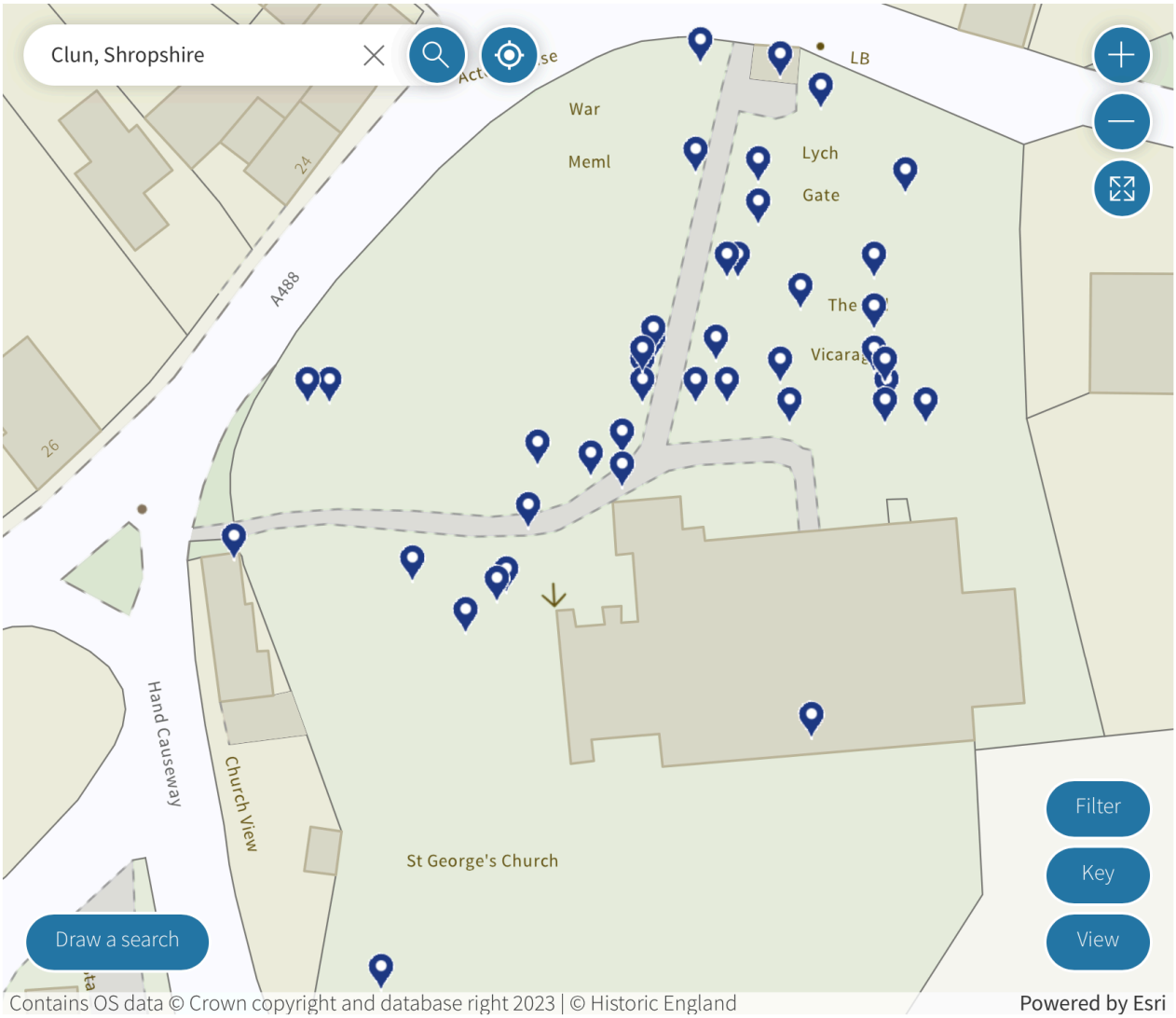
Review the reports on heritage and risk instigated in Y1 and plan an approach for funding.

Apply for funding.

Y3 - Y5 Continue monitoring and temporary solutions as in Y1.

If funding secured seek suitable contracts and obtain works to implement an agreed programme of work.

FIGURE 6 LOCATION OF LISTED MEMORIALS, /HEADSTONES AND MONUMENTS.



3.8.8. Exceptions

The only exceptions from the Town Council Management arrangements for the Closed Churchyard agreed with the Church are:

1. The flood lighting equipment and associated cabling etc
2. The path side lighting posts, lights and cables
3. Underground other underground cables, pipes, and sewers connected to the Church or its services.
4. The walls and steps and entrance surrounding the entry to the Crypt
5. The oil tank
6. The areas of grass surrounding the part remaining open for internment of ashes and memorials in that defined area.
7. The rainwater gulley at the base of the Tower and adjoining area.

3.9. Biological Assets

3.9.1. Trees

As the Closed Churchyard is in the Clun Conservation area any work to them must be notified to Shropshire Council Planning Department on the appropriate form. Furthermore request for work to trees must be sent to the Archdeacon for approval.

The locations of the trees are shown in Figure 7 below. In addition the species and status of these trees are identified in the listing Figure 8 provided by the Churchwarden dated 4/12/23.

It should be noted one of the trees No3 has a Tree Preservation Order and is and ancient yew of c2000-3000 years old. Currently this requires minimalist intervention such as if a risk to personal injury is identified on inspection.

This list also provides brief commentary on whether action is currently required and where particular management may be required more frequently. Significant work has taken place in recent years.

Suggest Approach:

It seems appropriate to use this list based on the Church's survey for the time being and commission a Survey in years 2 or 3 to allow time to plan and secure any permits required. In years one and two an annual review should identify any minor work not requiring a permit to be carried out.

3.9.2. Shrubs

The Eastern Boundary of the Closed Churchyard is comprised of Holly hedge which has been well cut. As of January 2024 this has recently been cut by the resident of the Old Vicarage that shares this boundary.

FIGURE 7 APPROXIMATE LOCATIONS OF TREES

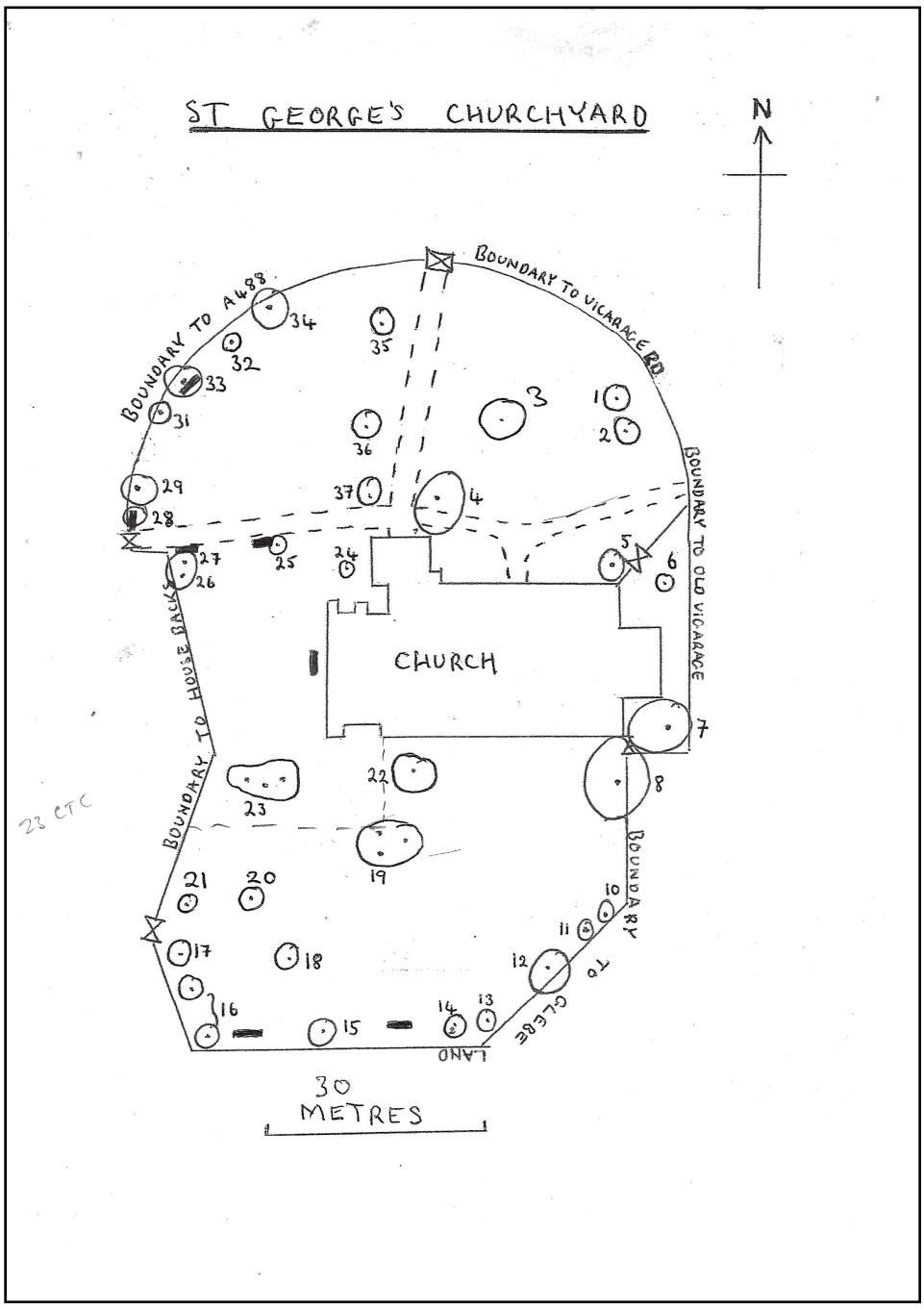


FIGURE 8 LIST OF TREES SPECIES CONDITION AND RECENT MANAGEMENT

(Blacked out trees are in the open Churchyard or have been cut down)

CHURCHYARD TREES

The numbering and identification is taken from a survey of the trees with advice on management dated 10/6/1998, corrected for changes and omissions. The churchyard is in a conservation area so tree work usually requires planning permission as well consulting Hereford Diocesan Advisory Committee

Trees in the closed area italicised.

1. *Irish yew. No action needed.*
2. *Irish Yew. do*
3. *Ancient yew. Current thinking is minimalist intervention. TPO*
4. *Irish yew. No action needed*
5. *Holly near oil tank already cut back. Elder needs frequent trimming.*
6. [redacted]
7. [redacted]
8. [redacted]
9. [redacted]
10. [redacted]
11. [redacted]
12. [redacted]
13. [redacted]
14. [redacted]
15. [redacted]
16. [redacted]
17. [redacted]
18. [redacted]
19. [redacted]
20. [redacted]
21. [redacted]
22. *Irish yew (further west than shown on plan). No action needed*
23. *Group of 6 trees. Look after Red Oak.*
24. *Ornamental Cherry. Not prospering.*
25. *Again we had advice hostile to this tree. It is a berrying holly to be looked after.*
26. *Amelanchior. Try to look after this.*
27. *Holly. Keep under some control but allow to smother decayed seat.*
28. *Scots Pine. No action needed, but close to overhead wire.*
29. *Common Yew. No action needed.*
30. *This was a Scots Pine felled c. 2001*
31. *Scots Pine. No action needed.*
32. *Holm Oak replacing a Scots Pine felled c. 2001 (position different).*
33. *Common Yew. No action needed.*
34. *Common Yew. No action needed.*
35. *Irish Yew. Consider crown reduction*
36. *Irish Yew. Do.*
37. *Common Yew. Continue trimming regime (DONE) TPO*

March 2022
Tree work was done in September 2022 by Nicky Tranter
Updated April 2023.

Information checked and current December 4th 2023.

Signed: Frank Nicholls Date: 4/12/23

There is also a shrub **Spp XXXXX** about 3 M SW of the Lychgate

3.10.Landscaping grass

3.10.1.Mown Grass

The grass will be mown as under previous management.

The areas to be mown closely receive a monthly cut from March/April when the grass begins to grow and will be mown when the grass in the open area within the Closed Churchyard and the main open Churchyard are mown. A cut will be made to ensure a neat and tidy appearance for the open Gardens Weekend which is held in annually in June.

The areas for which the Town council are responsible comprise the small area of headstones to the North of the West path and some of the area to the South of this path, all the path edges to one mower width, and the area surrounding the War Memorial.

The grass in the area open for Ashes internment and the main open Churchyard are the Church's responsibility.

Suggested approach

The current arrangements should remain as they work well and the Church is very happy with them.

The organisation of the contractor and the payments will be made by the Church who will bill the Council for their share in the agreed proportions of 4/7^{ths} and the Town Council 3/7^{ths} or 57% and 43% respectively.

It would be prudent to review these arrangements within the first 5 years.

3.10.2.Conservation Grass

The remaining grass areas are managed with conservation in mind. Previous management has been to cut once per year in the autumn. This area is cut using a strimmer. The loose grass in the past has been removed using volunteers.

Suggested approach

The current annual cut approach is less frequent than Caring For God's Acre (CFGA) Suggest, but the Church Warden is content to continue in this way for the time being. However the contract and related price may need to be negotiated to include the removal of the cuttings, if the mechanism for use of volunteers becomes onerous.

3.11.Approach to Conservation and Biodiversity

3.11.1.Overview

The recent practice has been to involve the Caring For God's Acre Charity to advise on a relevant conservation approach to the management of vegetation and fauna within the Closed Churchyard. This includes vegetative plants, mosses, liverworts, lichens and fungi, insects, birds,

mammals and amphibians.

The result of the recent interventions have been, with the agreement of the Church, to allow certain areas of bramble to develop, the long areas of grass, management of some smaller trees for their berries and installation of a number of bird boxes situated in or on trees.

They have developed a seasonal Management Plan which is posted in the Church Porch a copy is in **Appendix G**

3.11.2.Relationship with Caring for God's Acre

The current arrangement has been for the Church Warden to meet annually with representatives from CFGA to review and plan what work may be required in the forthcoming year to maintain or enhance biodiversity.

Once any work has been agreed the work is carried out by working parties the CFGA Volunteers. CFGA also arrange education visits for members of the public and Schools from time to time.

Suggested approach

The current annual meeting should continue but with a representative from the Town Council present. The Town Council representative should be empowered to decide any work proposed that does not conflict with our general management approach for our areas of responsibility or detailed works proposed in annual workplans.

Should conflicts arise in any way for example where CFGA may want vegetation in and on walls to remain, but the Council wish to remove it for maintenance, safety and risk minimisation agreement should be reached and the agreed proposed approach confirmed by Council before any work commences. Should agreement of any compromise not be possible the Town Council should have the final word based on short term and longterm risk to the assets, safety and liability.

The Bird boxes and their maintenance should remain the responsibility of CFGA. However should any be come unsafe and pose a risk of falling the Town Council will remove them to avoid liability to the public.