

The United Benefice of Atlow, Bradley, Hognaston, Hulland and Kniveton

The Parish of Christ Church, Hulland



A Management Plan for Hulland Churchyard 2024

BACKGROUND

The oldest part of the Churchyard is the land which surrounds the church building. It dates from 1838 when the Church was built. It was closed for burials in 1900 and land to the west was consecrated, now managed as the Conservation Area. In 1932 a further piece of land to the south was consecrated and is still open for burials.

The churchyard is the highest point of Hulland Ward parish with commanding views to the west. It is therefore exposed to south- westerly winds. It has a First World War memorial near the gate and a Commonwealth war grave from WW1. Ashes were interred under a Yew until a second area along the southern boundary was dedicated in 1990s, known as the Garden of Remembrance. The church is Grade II* listed.

(Historical information from *A Country Church and its Parish*)

OUR CHURCHYARD SERVES SEVERAL FUNCTIONS:

- ☒ A historical burial place
- ☒ A place for current burials and interment of ashes
- ☒ A place to remember those who died
- ☒ A place for quiet contemplation /prayer
- ☒ A place to enjoy nature
- ☒ A place for wildlife conservation
- ☒ As the setting for the church building

PURPOSES OF THIS CHURCHYARD MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. To balance the needs of churchyard heritage, people visiting the churchyard and wildlife.
2. To consult local people (PCC, church congregation, local community) so that they are involved with decisions and informed about changes and the reasons for them.
3. To serve as a basis for annual reviews of tasks completed, objectives met or not and forward planning.

KEY MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

- ☒ All work should be done in a manner sensitive to the sacred nature of the area and to users of the space.
- ☒ Whenever possible, new trees, shrubs and plants should be native species.
- ☒ The “carbon footprint” of every activity should be minimised.
- ☒ The use of chemicals should be avoided or minimised.
- ☒ Management principles should be sympathetic to wildlife whenever possible.
- ☒ Clear signage should be used to explain to the public what we are trying to achieve
- ☒ Involvement of interested volunteers, from within the congregation and also the wider community

MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

To conserve churchyard heritage

1. Volunteers will continue to keep the memorial stones currently not looked after clear of vegetation so that they are easily accessible to interested visitors and inscriptions are not obscured.
2. The railings and church gates will be maintained in good condition by volunteers.

To benefit people

1. Continue to pay a contractor to mow the churchyard monthly during the growing season (except for the Conservation Area) and remove cut grass. This regime also allows our low-growing plants, such as clovers, buttercups, Cat's-ear to flower and set seed.
2. Volunteers will continue to mow paths through the Conservation area to allow access to memorials and enjoyment of nature.
3. Volunteers will reduce the hedge and vegetation encroaching on the pavement between the carpark and churchyard gate. This is to enable side by side walking which will benefit Hulland Hippos and others on their visits to church.
4. The benches by the main door will be kept in good condition by volunteers.
5. The church path and access pavement will be kept free of leaves and fallen sticks by volunteers.
6. Memorials are checked for safety by church wardens annually.
7. Mole activity near graves will be controlled.

To increase the biodiversity of the churchyard

1. Continue to request contractor to abstain from mowing patches of spring flowers until they have finished flowering. The two areas with Cyclamen and Star of Bethlehem will be cordoned off for no mowing when their leaves appear and until the flowers wither.
2. The Conservation area will be cut and raked up by volunteers in late summer and autumn. This will help flowering species to flourish by reducing grass dominance.
3. New bird box to be installed. Other habitat boxes to be cleaned out in early autumn.
4. Rowan tree to be planted in February to replace felled Cherry.
5. Hedges to be cut by contractor outside of the bird nesting season.
6. Lime trees not recently pollarded to be pollarded by contractors as soon as funds allow. This will doubtless cause some changes to ecosystems in the churchyard (shade, water levels, and fungi network changes) which will be interesting to monitor.
7. The lichen on older gravestones should not be cleared off unless it makes inscriptions illegible. In 1997 The British Lichen Society identified 29 lichen species in our churchyard According to BLS "The British churchyard is unique in Europe for its richness and diversity of lichen species".
8. The existing bug hotel and habitat piles of logs, sticks and rocks to be monitored for wildlife and safety by volunteers.
9. A wooden receptacle for leaf compost could be constructed by volunteers opposite the sheds. This would provide a habitat for invertebrates and reptiles as well as providing compost for churchyard users.
10. A couple of planters with pollinator-friendly plants could be installed by the two benches and looked after by volunteers.

Written by Penny Northall (Eco Church Lead) 15.1.2024

And agreed by the PCC, 31.1.2024