



Herefordshire Wildlife Trust

Weobley & District Branch

Wildlife Enhancement Project- Staunton-On-Wye Churchyard

You might have been wondering what was happening, (or rather not happening), in the churchyard this Spring and noticed some small areas of grassland that had been left to grow uncut which now support a pretty array of flowers.



In March, members of the Weobley Branch of the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust met members of the Staunton-On-Wye PCC to discuss options for enhancing wildlife in the churchyard by reducing the extent and frequency of grass cutting.

would benefit from less frequent cutting without interfering with access to grave stones that were frequently visited.

A number of areas were identified where there appeared to be a wide variety of plant species that

After the March meeting small areas were marked out with pegs and strings to be left uncut to see what would emerge.



On 30 May these plots were re- visited by Amanda and Hilary from the Weobley & District Branch of the Wildlife Trust. Species lists were compiled for each of 4 areas that hadn't been cut since March.

A colourful display of grasses and herbs had developed in the uncut areas.

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An impressive **41 different species** were recorded across the four plots, including **10 grasses, 29 herbs and 2 mosses**.



The most common grasses were Red fescue, Yorkshire Fog and False Oat grass. The richest plot, with 25 different species, was that near the main entrance to the church with a lot of Yarrow, Daisy, Autumn hawkbit, red clover, white clover, and Germander speedwell (see p.1). The other plots in open areas had, in addition, Knapweed, Meadow buttercup, Oxeye daisy, Rough hawkbit (left) and Field woodrush (right).



In the shadier areas beyond the gravestones the vegetation was ranker, but here there had been an impressive display of Cowslips. Other occasional species included Selfheal, Hairy violet and Common dog-violet.

In addition, across the graveyard in the more open areas, there was a very colourful display of the orange flowered Fox-and-cubs (below left). A naturalised garden escape from Europe now widely found in churchyards, gardens, and roadsides across Britain.



All of the above mentioned areas will be cut in late June/early July and this year's growth removed, in effect to mimic a hay cut and thus prevent the grasses becoming too dominant.

A full list of all 41 species that were recorded by Amanda and Hilary across the 4 plots is also available.

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