

CHURCHYARD MAINTENANCE 2019/20

The Churchyard Maintenance Team comprises 13 individuals which includes 3 ladies one of whom is not a member of the congregation.

Our work is split into two definite parts:

- The step sweeping work which is carried out on a rota basis by an individual or a couple on a Saturday morning or occasionally the preceding Friday.
- The upkeep of the churchyard which is a team event and takes place on a Monday morning, weather permitting with an average of about 6 or 7. Also, there are some Saturday morning events where extra help is provided by members of the congregation to help prepare for The South and South East in Bloom (SSEB) competition (Kent to Dorset) judgement day.

The mowing of that part of the churchyard used for new burials is the responsibility of the Parish Council and the broad rectangular sweep downwards from the barrier formed by the pathway from the twitten to the steps to School Lane and the southern side of the path leading down in westerly direction is mown independently by Peter Bristow on a Thursday.

The churchyard team mow the remainder and trim all parts as needed and also take any necessary action to keep walls and paths free from ivy and weeds and the path edges marked clearly. Flower beds and shrubs are tended and developed with the seasons in mind and fresh soil added from our 3 year composting cycle. Last, but not least, our dustbins are sorted and emptied on work mornings.

We also devote time to develop our two wild gardens which are sited on the slope leading to the area used for current burials and at the western end of the area mown by Peter Bristow. The line of acer trees has been moved to form a boundary at the bottom and northern side of the 'slope' wild garden and now includes a new acer paid for by a donation from an anonymous donor.

It is worth reporting that according to an expert survey in 2016 the churchyard is home to 132 different plant species

We have entered the 2020 competition for SSEB having again won a Silver Gilt award in 2019. The creation of the wild gardens, the log piles for 'bug hotels', bat and bird boxes stand us in good stead on the marking front.

A potential new development is that the creation of two new noticeboards is under active consideration which, if they come to fruition, will be an additional benefit when it comes to the 2020 competition marking.

The bequest from Steve Freeman acknowledged in the last APCM report has been put to good use; we now have a hedge trimmer and a pole pruner, both petrol driven. These will be very helpful and enhance our capabilities.

All our activities are covered through a comprehensive Health and Safety report and the latest edition was handed to the Churchwardens in February. Any notifiable events are reported when they occur.

Newcomers to the team are always welcome and it is important to stress that we have jobs that are not labour intensive. Please do not hesitate to come along on a Monday morning for an exploratory chat or to just to see what we are up to that day.

Ramon Hunt