



CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE DIOCESAN MEMBERSHIP

Caring for God's Acre is now offering diocesan membership packages. From as little as £1,975 per year we can work with your diocese to encourage parishes to manage their churchyards with nature in mind, engaging with the wider community who may love their local churchyards but seldom enter the church. Through greater understanding and small changes, churchyards become arks for biodiversity and are visible exemplars of management that takes account of people and also God's creation.

'I am delighted to be a patron of Caring for God's Acre and to support the important work being undertaken across England and Wales. Historically our churchyards and burial grounds have been one of the most overlooked of our natural heritage resources. I am hugely impressed with the projects that are now underway and with the vision and commitment that is energising them. Natural settings such as these need planning and practical management, and they also need our care and protection, in order that they can continue to be havens for wildlife and places where visitors will feel comfortable and can appreciate the setting. I warmly commend Caring for God's Acre and I encourage you to get involved locally.'

The Rt Revd Dr Bishop Alan Smith, Diocese of St Albans

'We are now in our fourth year of our diocesan partnership with Caring for God's Acre. It's been a great experience having access to high quality resources for that space where global environmental issues overlap with local parish concerns – that space being the churchyard. The advice is always adapted to the local. I would recommend diocesan membership and would be pleased to discuss how this has worked for us.'

Revd Dr David Primrose, retired Director of Transforming Communities, Diocese of Lichfield. Trustee of CfGA

CHURCHYARDS FOR MISSION

Did you know that more than half of the people who visit a churchyard do not go into the church itself and are not visiting the grave of a loved one?* Your churchyards are used and loved by numerous local people and visitors, offering a unique interface between the church community and those who do not currently attend church services or church activities. A survey in 2014 showed that people love churchyards for many reasons, with Peace and Peacefulness, History and Nature coming out as the favourites. * By encouraging people who already love your churchyards to become involved and help with the churchyard management, it is possible to break down barriers or preconceptions that may be stopping people from experiencing a living faith and becoming involved with their church community.

CHURCHYARDS FOR BIODIVERSITY

How important are the churchyards in your diocese for biodiversity? It is likely that they are outstanding and many of them would be of great interest to visiting naturalists. Due to a combination of churchyard longevity plus the continuity of management, they represent a timeless sanctuary for plants and animals in our fast-changing country. With over 20,000 burial grounds in England and Wales, we estimate that the area of them all is equivalent to that of Exmoor National Park. Understanding the importance of churchyards for biodiversity and tweaking management to maintain or increase this richness offers a real benefit to nature. They are stepping-stones for species moving in response to climate change and arks for those species that can't move and are being squeezed out elsewhere.

Churchwardens and other churchyard volunteers welcome help, advice and information about what makes their churchyards so special. In a series of surveys which questioned over 1,000 people 70% of burial ground managers wanted to know what plants and animals had been seen in their burial ground, 84% wanted more people involved with their sites. **

CHURCHYARDS FOR HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Churches and churchyards are a fantastic place to learn about local history. Preaching crosses, sundials, gravestones, chest tombs, they all tell a story of life as it was and the people who lived here before us. School children, college students and local enthusiasts can all learn about the past, the famous and infamous, changes in lifestyle and life span as well as the fashions in commemoration and the craft of the stonemason. By helping congregations to see the opportunities, we can reach a new audience and enthuse them about these fantastic places. When consulted, 66% of burial ground managers welcomed involvement from heritage interest groups in their sites, while 86% felt that having more information would help them to promote and manage their sites. **

* *The Nature of God's Acre 2014, Miles King & Mark Betson*

** *The Beautiful Burial Ground Consultation Report 2016, Caring for God's Acre for HLF*

ORIGIN OF CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE

We began as a Shropshire based initiative in 1997 after being inspired by the national Living Churchyard and Cemetery Project (LCCP) set up in 1985 by the Council for the Care of Churches and English Nature.

Based at the Arthur Rank Centre, the LCCP was the first to promote the conservation of burial sites in the UK. Managed by Eve Dennis MBE, the project supported organisations to establish their own Living Churchyard Projects. The original LCCP came to an end around 2000. At this time Eve contacted Caring for God's Acre to ask if we would take forward the national role of promoting the conservation of burial sites. We agreed, became a national charity, and have been supporting those managing churchyards, cemeteries and other burial grounds since then.

WHAT WE DO

Caring for God's Acre was 20 years old in 2020! We have been supporting and advising churchwardens, PCCs and churchyard volunteers since the birth of the charity, helping them to keep these unique sites beautiful and accessible. We raise general awareness of the importance of these significant places and the need to involve more people from the local community in their management. By encouraging people to love and value their local churchyard we inspire them to get involved, learn more about the wildlife and interesting history, and see themselves as part of the group caring for this special place and passing it on to future generations. Since we took on a national role we have expanded out from the Welsh Marches and now have a strong national presence, currently delivering The Beautiful Burial Ground project, our most ambitious project to date that is putting burial grounds on the map by revealing their hidden heritage and importance to biodiversity.

OUR TEAM

The Charity is governed by nine experienced trustees. We have ten members of staff; four working on core activities and six working on projects. The importance of the work the charity does is reflected through our Patrons and we are delighted to have the Prince of Wales as our President. We are also lucky enough to have many dedicated volunteers undertaking tasks ranging from botanical recording, practical work and helping to spread the word by giving talks.

DIOCESAN MEMBERSHIP

Caring for God's Acre are delighted to be offering a bespoke membership, specifically for dioceses. This allows us to focus on your parishes, to learn from you about specific issues or opportunities in order to increase the support we can give to churchwardens and PCCs. We will agree details annually to fit with your priorities and will build a relationship together which will bring benefits and sustainability when delivering environmental measures. We will work closely with your DAC to ensure consistency in the advice we offer.

We are offering three levels of diocesan membership, Bronze, Silver and Gold. There is flexibility within the categories to ensure that your membership is the best fit for your church communities and your areas of priority. We would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss this.

Support and Advice

Would your parishes benefit from having an online forum offering advice, information and a place to chat on all matters to do with habitat management, engaging communities, raising funds through grants and sponsors, caring for biodiversity and preserving heritage? We are launching this forum in September 2022 and all of our members; individual, group or diocese will be able to access it. Two experienced members of staff will respond to posts and questions and will also run monthly surgeries, answering specific questions. We also respond to phone calls and emails, working with your DAC Secretary to act as your churchyard wildlife and heritage advisers. These conversations are on-going and can result in lasting relationships with a particular church helping change to embed in their practices. In addition, you will receive a range of our resources to distribute, and all churches within the diocese have a 20% discount in our online shop. These benefits will be available to all of the churches within your diocese.

Getting Involved

Love Your Burial Ground Week in June is a brilliant way to encourage the wider community into a churchyard and to thank those who already volunteer in caring for the site. We will encourage people to take action during this week, advising them how to make the most from an event. In 2021 our new partnership initiative **Churches Count on Nature** encouraged people to record wildlife during Love Your Burial Ground Week. We can help with publicity and media coverage, which is increased by being part of a national event.

When local churches sign up to Eco Church, we can offer advice on the section that covers the use of land.

Spreading the Word

Communication is key to bringing about change and this is an important part of the diocesan package. We have a six-monthly members' magazine, **The Lychgate**, available digitally or in hard copy which we will personalise to your diocese. We will create a brand with our designers specific to your diocese and feature one major article chosen by you. In addition, the back page will contain a section for diocesan news and activities. The Diocese of Lichfield particularly value their Lichfield Lychgate.

Do you have a regular **newsletter** or blog? We will provide monthly articles, relevant to the season which can be distributed for inclusion in local church magazines. 'Diary Notes from your Nature & Wildlife Adviser' can be popular as can 'Fascinating Heritage and History'. Perhaps you would prefer an article on seasonal tasks, similar to a Gardeners' Calendar. We will discuss options with you and find the best fit.

Do you have an **e-newsletter**, going out to parishes and linking to articles on your website? We will provide material for this. Through a combination of e-news and monthly articles it is possible to reach a greater number of parishes.

Caring for God's Acre has a membership area on our **website** and your diocese will feature on this. When we launch this in September this page will give us an opportunity to showcase the partnership work underway in your diocese. We are active on **social media** and will feature your diocese using content that you supply to us, focussing on aspects of your activities that overlap with our work and initiatives such as the Beautiful Burial Ground or Conservation Volunteering. As well as written material for your diocese, we have experienced speakers who can attend events or conferences, **speaking** and running **workshops**. We have an annual AGM with renowned speakers to which all your parishes will be invited.

Working Together

We are always keen to work in partnership with dioceses, community groups, other conservation charities and heritage groups. This allows us to build projects and initiatives, both large and small. Partners bring different skills and contacts, reaching more communities and unlocking resources. Diocesan membership gives opportunities to discuss and plan this and will help your parishes to join in with initiatives already afoot such as the Beautiful Burial Ground project.

To find out more please contact: **Harriet Carty, Director**, Caring for God's Acre, 11 Drovers House, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 9BZ
harriet@cfga.org.uk, 01588 673041

BRONZE, SILVER & GOLD MEMBERSHIP

Membership benefit	Notes	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Support & Advice				
Experienced member of staff to give support online, via telephone and email to DAC Secretary, individuals and churches on all aspects of churchyard management, community engagement and seeking resources	Via our members' forum as well as telephone or email, on churchyard related subjects. Harriet Carty and Andrea Gilpin will answer questions, provide on-going support and dialogue	✓	✓	✓
Free copies of our comprehensive leaflet – This folds out into a poster and contains a wealth of information	Sent to the diocese office for distribution	25 copies	100 copies	150 copies
Field Studies Council fold-out chart Guide to the Wildlife of Burial Grounds	Sent to the diocese office for distribution	10 copies	25 copies	50 copies
20 % discount on printed materials from the CfGA shop and events	Includes our Action Pack, Field Studies Council chart, and Botanical Companion plus free entry to our AGM and our webinar series. Other events vary annually	✓	✓	✓
Getting Involved				
Support with Love your Burial Ground Week. Encouragement and advice on getting involved, in particular in generating involvement with Churches Count on Nature	We will advise on the practicalities of running events; ideas for activities, bringing volunteer specialists in, event development, publicity and H&S including risk management	✓	✓	✓

Spreading the Word				
Six monthly magazine - The Lychgate branded with your diocese and containing bespoke articles plus news or events	CfGA staff to write or edit diocesan articles and plan content together. Your diocesan Lychgate will be supplied as a digital copy		✓	✓
Monthly article or blog focusing on churchyard topics for the diocesan parish mailing. Suggestions include a Nature Diary, Churchyard Seasonal Tasks, Fascinating Heritage	Emailed to diocese agreed number of days in advance on a monthly basis	✓	✓	✓
Monthly information for e-newsletters for general circulation within your diocese, through your emailing system.	Sent to diocese on a regular basis to fit with your e-newsletter distribution	✓	✓	✓
Caring for God's Acre website and social media - your diocese will feature in our website members' area and through social media	CfGA staff to update website information and feature your diocese on social media regularly	✓	✓	✓
CfGA expert to assist with and speak at a diocesan event	This can be a conference, a workshop, an archdeacons or DAC meeting		1 event	2 events
Working Together				
Building projects together Diocese and CfGA to seek opportunities to gain funding and work together on bespoke projects	Initially scoping and set-up meeting within the diocesan package agreement. Subsequent work to be agreed with the aim of seeking funds to develop		✓	✓
Cost of Diocesan Membership	Annual payment which can be paid monthly	£1,975 Monthly payment £165	£4,500 Monthly payment £375	£5,900 Monthly payment £492