



# ANNUAL REPORT 2022 - 2023





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*Cover photo: Jane O’Dell, St Mary’s, Oldberrow, Warwickshire*

## REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the 2023 Annual Report.

How easy it is amid all the statistics, to forget the pleasure that we find in those patches of nature, the little green wildernesses down the road, the burial ground near you. Each one offers tranquillity, solace and extraordinary bio-diversity in what is often a small space.

So many of you have worked with CfGA over the past year and you will each have a different story to tell, a moment which will have stayed with you. That is the magic of the natural world. We react to it individually and we are changed by it.

What is so fantastic is that this Report helps us to understand how all those individual moments can be utilised to record and illustrate what is there and describe the changes that can be brought about by effective management.

I have had the privilege to Chair CfGA for the last eight years and as I hand over to Catherine MacCarthy, your new Chair, in December four things will bring me special pleasure.

Firstly, the growth of the Charity over those years; its increasing effectiveness as an advocate for nature in Burial Grounds and its ability to build effective partnerships to achieve so much more than it ever could by itself. Among other things partnerships are our route to increasing impact nationally, to new recording of what is in burial grounds. They help us build new ways of working, incorporate innovation into our programmes and seek answers to new questions such as sequestration of carbon in burial grounds. We owe all those organisations with whom we work in partnership a huge debt of gratitude, just as they look to us to help them achieve their objectives.

Secondly, I will be grateful to you; for the huge number of individuals and groups who come to our events and activities. Each one of you has helped us to shape what we do and how we do it. We learn from each activity, each contact. All of our funding applications has been shaped by all the work that went before it. For instance you will read in this report how over 20,000 of you attended over 800 events during the Love your Burial Ground Week. Thank you to each one of you. I know we will keep learning from your experiences.

Of course this activity is entirely dependent on the invaluable contribution of our members, organisations and sponsors, we are so lucky to have such a committed group of funders who see the value of our work and are prepared to underwrite our activities. Over the last year, a very challenging one for all charities, our fundraising staff have managed to find the support of so many

new funding organisations to work alongside long standing supporters, we are really grateful to each one. You will see in the financial sections how well their contributions have been spent.

And finally, I will have most pleasure in looking at the group of staff at the heart of CfGA. Each one of them makes a unique contribution to our work. You will know as well as I do how hard they work, as most of you will have had the opportunity to see their work or even help them do it. They are shaping CfGA into the 'go to' organisation for burial ground conservation and management and I am so proud to see how their work has born such fruit.

So the future is in good hands, the future is CfGA!

**Oliver Goode,**

**Chair, Caring for God's Acre**

October 2023



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### PRESIDENT

**HRH The Former Prince of Wales**

### PATRONS

**Sir Roy Strong, CH**

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

**Dr George Peterken OBE**

**Prof Chris Baines**

**Prof Stefan Buczacki**

**Brigit Strawbridge Howard**

### TRUSTEES

**Oliver Goode** Chair

**Gillian Binks** Vice Chair

**Sarah Ellison** Treasurer

**Lisette Davies** Secretary

**Anni Holden**

**Judith Leigh**

**Catherine MacCarthy**

**Alex Glanville**

**Simon Cooter**

**David Primrose**

### STAFF

**Harriet Carty** Director

**Andrea Gilpin** Conservation & Communications Manager

**Prue Dakin** Office Manager

**Anna Wilde** Digital Manager

**Alex Logan** Conservation Volunteer Manager

**Georgina Sharp** Beautiful Burial Ground Community Coordinator -  
Georgina left CfGA at the end of 2022

**Liam Taylor** Beautiful Burial Ground Data Manager

<b>Mick Clifton</b>	Fund Raiser and Project Manager
<b>Kirsty Stevens</b>	Opening the Ark Project Manager
<b>Megan Gallant</b>	Opening the Ark Project Assistant – Megan left CfGA at the end of March 2023

## **BANKERS**

**HSBC**, 6 High Street, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire, SY9 5BJ

## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

S.E. Hardwick, Armstrong Rogers & Co., 45 Etnam Street, Leominster Herefordshire, HR6 8AE

## **CONTACT**

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01588 673041 - [info@cfga.org.uk](mailto:info@cfga.org.uk) - [www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk)

**Charity Registration Number 1155536.**

**CfGA commenced operations as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2014 - CIO Number CE000722.**

## OBJECTIVES OF THE CHARITY

The charity's objectives are to promote, for the benefit of the public and for the advancement of education, the conservation, enhancement and interpretation of the natural and built features of burial grounds of all types and denominations.

## ACTIVITIES

- To carry out projects as they arise in the furtherance of the objectives stated above
- To encourage the public to investigate, research and record within burial grounds thus adding to the body of information and records made
- To assist those with responsibility for burial ground maintenance with advice and support
- To promote public awareness of burial ground importance and conservation
- The Trustees have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to guidance published by the Commission concerning public benefit.

## REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS

**Communication developments are led by Andrea Gilpin and Anna Wilde**

All of our project and core work relies on excellent communications and we have focused on this over the year. This has resulted in a marked increase in our reach via digital platforms including our own website and social media.


The **website** continues to be well used. **29,635** users viewed **99,107 pages** over the period 1<sup>st</sup> May 2022 – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023. The majority of visitors are finding us either via Google search or directly typing the address into a search engine. Social media continues to send traffic to the site, with Facebook sending the highest number and engagement via Twitter was also good.

As part of individual and diocesan membership we continue with the online members area at <https://members.caringforgodsacre.org.uk>. This site can be logged into by members to access content such as **webinar recordings, downloads and links** specific to certain topics which were covered in talks. There is also a **forum chat feature** for members to leave questions and to interact with each other. We have begun to develop an online surgery as part of the area.

Publicity and communication via social media continues:

- **2,717 subscribers to our e-newsletter**

- 3,836 followers on Twitter
- 1,700 followers on Facebook
- 1,219 subscribers on YouTube
- 428 followers on Instagram



**CaringforGodsAcre**

@CaringForGodsAcre 1.21K subscribers 27 videos

More about this channel >

[caringforgodsacre.org.uk](http://caringforgodsacre.org.uk)

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Latest


Popular

Oldest




**Using the Botanical Companion in your Burial Ground v1.1**

22 views • 1 month ago




**How to do a volunteer tree survey**

31 views • 5 months ago




**Find a Flowery Burial Ground**

51 views • 5 months ago




**Intermediate lichens with April Windle - 3/3**

155 views • 9 months ago




**Meet April Windle, Lichenologist - 1/3**

217 views • 9 months ago



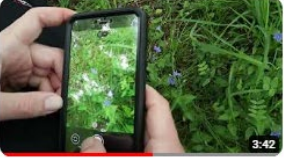
**Burial Grounds for Wellbeing**

43 views • 9 months ago




**In search of slow worms with Chris Baines**

197 views • 10 months ago




**Using iNaturalist**

480 views • 10 months ago




**Ancient Yew Trees with Chris Baines**

817 views • 11 months ago




**Join Caring for God's Acre**

99 views • 11 months ago



**Submitting a burial grounds wildlife record using iNaturalist**

883 views • 1 year ago



**Lichens with April Windle - 2/3**

553 views • 1 year ago

### *Caring for God's Acre YouTube videos*



# REVIEW OF PROJECT ACTIVITY

Project activity undertaken this year:

- 1      **The Beautiful Burial Ground including Churches Count on Nature**
  - 2      **God's Acre Volunteers**
  - 3      **Biodiversity Hotspots in Mid and North East Wales**
  - 4      **Celebrating Birmingham's Burial Grounds**
  - 5      **Welsh Burial Grounds for Wildlife**
  - 6      **Opening the Ark**
- 

## 1. THE BEAUTIFUL BURIAL GROUND

**Delivered by Harriet Carty, Georgina Sharp and Liam Taylor, supported by Prue Dakin, Andrea Gilpin, Anna Wilde and Mick Clifton**

The **Beautiful Burial Ground (BBG)** project finished during this reporting period, at the end of 2022 having run for **4 years and 7 months**. This was our largest project to date, involving two dedicated members of staff, George (4 days) and Liam (4 days), plus combined nine days per week from Prue (2 days), Andrea (1 day), Anna (1½ days) and Harriet (2½ days) and Mick (2 days).

So much has happened during BBG which can be summarised under 3 headings:

1. We created linked systems that allow everyone to see what's already known about an individual burial ground, giving a full picture. To do this we worked with national organisations able to manage large datasets. We now have a **BBG portal** and more information on the Church Heritage Records of both England and Wales. It's now possible to check an individual burial ground and see what's known about its wildlife, ancient trees, listed monuments and more.
2. It's great to know what has already been recorded in a particular churchyard, chapel yard or cemetery but it's also vital to keep adding more information. We've encouraged people to get out exploring, recording monuments and archaeology and making lists of species they see, be it a blackbird or a rare waxcap!

3. We're a small charity and can't do this alone. BBG has been a project of partnerships and collaboration with churches, councils, experts, interest groups and other conservation charities. **Thank you to all who worked with us, we will continue to work in this collaborative way.**

Stand-out achievements are:

The number of people who got involved. **Love Your Burial Ground Week** activities took place across **808 burial grounds**, with many people joining in through **Churches Count on Nature**. In all, about **20,000 people** were involved, across England and Wales, many of whom had never done something like this before and our feedback forms showed that they loved it. Large numbers of experienced naturalists and social history experts have now started to record regularly in burial grounds with about **650 continuing to regularly submit records** of species, to photograph monuments or record inscriptions.

Volunteering or 'citizen science' is of huge value to a charity like Caring for God's Acre, we estimate that the financial worth of the work done by volunteers during BBG is **£857,115**.

Thanks to BBG we now know far more about burial grounds, in particular the rich biodiversity they contain. You can [look up an individual site](#) and see what's known to be there and can also start to get a feel for the cumulative importance of these places. Information generated during BBG is stored in a few places. Biodiversity information is on the BBG portal of the NBN Atlas; information on listed structures (and some biodiversity information) is on the Church Heritage Records of England and Wales. It can also be found within local environmental record centres, regional archives and Welsh archaeological trusts.

We now have **over 87,000 new heritage records across 6,273 burial grounds in England and Wales**. The key features of each site can also be viewed on the Church Heritage Records, bringing wildlife information into the heart of church planning. Look out for **Ancient and Veteran Tree information** (from the Woodland Trust), designations such as **Local Wildlife Site** (from county Wildlife Trusts), rare species in the **Seek Advice** list and a **Summary of Ecological Importance** to help site managers to make informed decisions.

We hoped that BBG would encourage people to think of burial grounds in a new way, be they church wardens, local authority employees, neighbours or naturalists. There is good evidence to suggest that this is happening, with those managing burial grounds taking a holistic view and managing for heritage, wildlife and people. One happy result is that **people feel increasingly welcome to visit and**

enjoy their local burial ground, and there is a changing perception of the importance of these places within the community.

Although this particular project has closed this is not the end of **The Beautiful Burial Ground** – we will continue to promote it, to encourage recording and to use the data in a range of ways. In particular it really helps us to support those managing them and to champion their importance both locally and nationally.

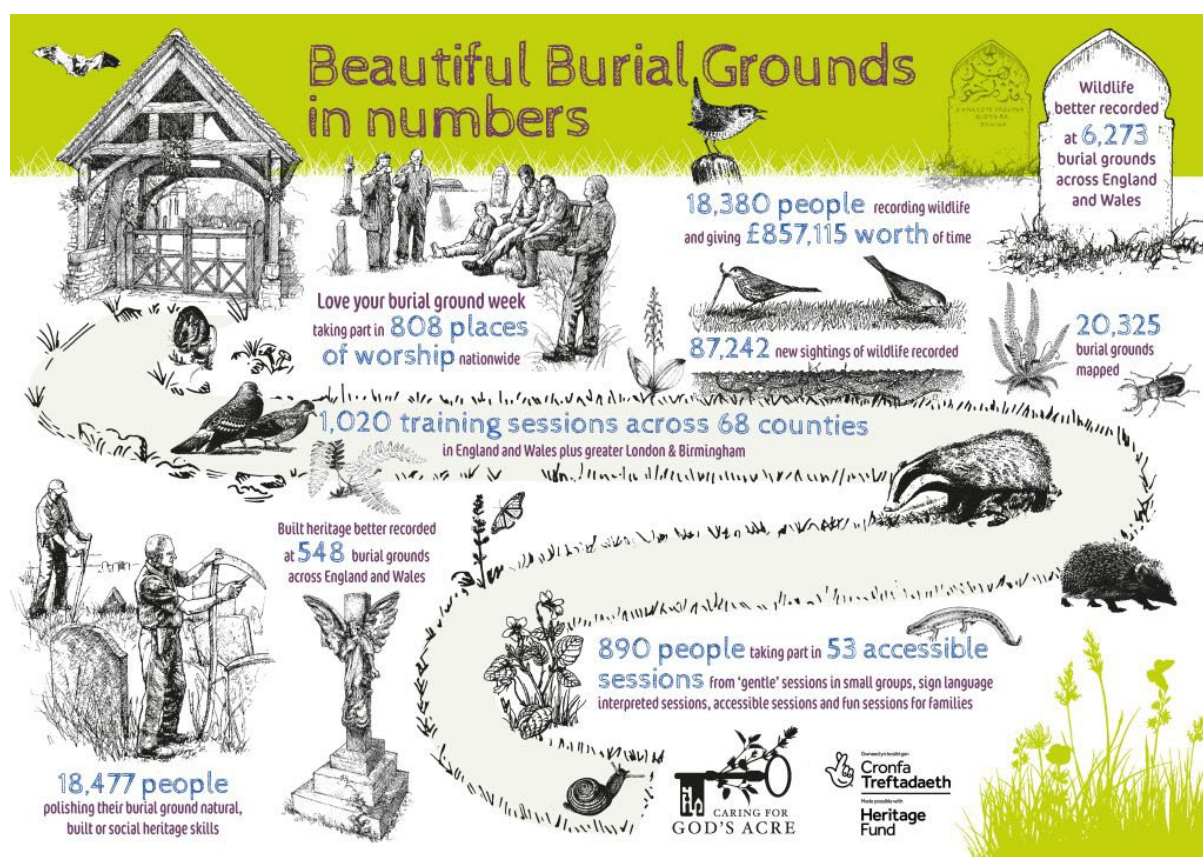
To give the final word to our evaluator; “*Given Beautiful Burial Grounds has been such an accomplished project, it will be fascinating to see what this organisation can achieve next.*”

We have continued to work in partnership with the **National Biodiversity Network, the Church of England and the Church in Wales** to sustain the work of this project and to keep it going as part of our core work.

The Beautiful Burial Ground project was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, thanks to National Lottery players.



Some highlights from the project from our evaluator, Heritage Insider:



## 2. CHURCHES COUNT ON NATURE

**Delivered by Harriet Carty, Andrea Gilpin and Anna Wilde**

This initiative is part of the BBG project and is a partnership between **Caring for God's Acre, the Church of England, the Church in Wales and A Rocha UK** (a Christian charity who run the Ecochurch award). **Churches of all denominations** were encouraged to take part in Churches Count on Nature and to run **biological recording events**. People are encouraged to organise events during **Love Your Burial Ground Week** in early June. This year's Love your Burial Ground Week and Churches Count on Nature activities in June were a great success with **over 4,000** people taking part across England and Wales in 335 burial grounds.

**Over 10 thousand records were submitted** either via the iNaturalist app, by post, iRecord or e-mail. The top flowers recorded were common daisy, herb Robert and ribwort plantain. The top three bird records were blackbird, wood pigeon and robin. Bumblebees and ladybirds were the top two most frequently recorded invertebrates.

### und Week & Churches Count on Nature Events Gallery

if you have been kind enough to send in photos of your Love Your Burial Ground Week/Churches Count on Nature events taking place. Looks like a great time was had by all!  
your mouse cursor over the photo to see where it was taken, or click to see a bigger photo.



*Photo Gallery of photos sent in by CCoN and Love Your Burial Ground Week participants*



### 3. THE CARING FOR GOD'S ACRE CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS

**Delivered by Alex Logan**



This project is on-going and the team have been active now for **over two decades**. We continue to build our conservation volunteers and to seek funding for their work. Volunteers go out two or three times a week led by Alex Logan, our Volunteer Co-ordinator, supported and welcomed by local PCCs and members of the community. The volunteers carry out a **range of conservation tasks**, aimed at enhancing and increasing biodiversity in special places whilst keeping them accessible and welcoming for people to enjoy. Typical tasks include:

- Scything and raking to improve wildflower meadow habitats;
- Pruning;
- Removing ivy from yew trees;
- Making deadwood piles;
- Building compost bins;
- Making and installing bird and bat boxes;
- Planting and laying hedges;
- Repairing dry stone walls.

The work follows agreed management plans drawn up by CfGA.

This has been a good year with more communities embracing our ethos, largely due to Opening the Ark Project staff having capacity to link closely with local communities and inform them about our practical conservation work. We ran **105 task days** in this year (up on last year) with some record attendances of volunteers with **up to 25 volunteers present**, this was made up of **nearly 50% locals** turning up to help, learn and take green hay away. This equates to **689 volunteer days or 3,445 volunteer hours**. We have taken on another couple of new sites and we now visit **42 sites regularly**. We've given advice, support or practical assistance to burial grounds in Shropshire, Herefordshire and Powys, soon to add South Herefordshire and Worcestershire too.

The support of our enthusiastic volunteers was vital in enabling this to happen and thanks go to them for their fantastic efforts and continued support. We have **74 volunteers registered** (the same as last year, we have gained a new volunteer and very sadly our volunteer Rose passed away last November), **40** of the volunteers come out on tasks regularly. There are usually up to **18** of our regular volunteers on a task, often joined by local people.

## PARTNERSHIP WORKING

This year saw the CfGA Conservation Volunteers **working with several partners to deliver conservation management to as many burial grounds as possible**. Partnerships included:

- **Friends of Longden Road Cemetery**
- **Friends of Cressage Churchyard**
- **Shropshire Dormouse Group**
- **The Earl of Plymouth Estate**
- **The National Trust**
- **The Friends of Castle View Terrace meadow (Ludlow).**
- **Bridgnorth Town Council**

The volunteer team have always been interested in the biodiversity of the sites they visit and this year they continued **recording species systematically and making biological records** after each task. These records are submitted to the local record centre and to NBN.

We have more **swift boxes** going up in our churches (thanks to The OTA project), more **dormouse boxes** have gone up in Bromfield where signs of dormice have been found by The Dormouse Group including particularly large animals and litters of young. This indicates that the Hazel Dormouse cannot just survive but thrive in a churchyard which has a river on two sides and busy road on the other. We have a new volunteer **making habitat boxes for us**, he is in the process of making around 25 tit and open fronted bird boxes to be put up in our sites.



*A volunteer scything meadow grass at Clifford nr Hay on Wye.*

The volunteers have collected several kilos of yellow rattle seed from local meadows owned by the National Trust. This seed is used to enhance our churchyard sites and is also sold for use in gardens or public spaces. One of our enterprising volunteers is helping with sales of seed and also scythe kits. We are now managing a roundabout in Presteigne. This has responded well to management and is now full of flowers and insects including yellow rattle and field scabious. Alex continues to teach scything, delivering courses for the RSPB and for Wildlife Trusts. We are now selling scythes via our website as well as at scything courses. The Opening the Ark project has also proved an invaluable link for the volunteers as we now have local people getting more involved with us and planning to collect green hay from some sites in the summer.

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#### 4. BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOTS ACROSS WALES

**Delivered by Andrea Gilpin and Mick Clifton**

Biodiversity Hotspots Across Wales (Mid & North East Wales) finished during this reporting period. The project reached across the Welsh counties of Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Ceredigion and Powys with the aim of supporting burial ground managers to increase biodiversity within their site. The project was funded from October 2020 and was completed in March 2023. Outputs included:

- Over 70 burial grounds were registered with the scheme
- 80 volunteer burial ground champions were identified and supported
- 51 grassland surveys of burial grounds were undertaken
- 15 training workshops were delivered
- 90 base maps of burial grounds were disseminated
- 94 Biodiversity Management Briefs for burial grounds were developed
- 22 Best practice sites were identified
- 4 mini films were produced
- 22 native seed doner sites were identified
- 7 Case Studies completed

Biodiversity Hotspots Across Wales was a tremendous success, delivering **demonstrable biodiversity benefits** to those registered with the project. As well as working with individual burial ground managers through the project, we also provided support to local authority owned cemeteries in **Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Ceredigion and Powys**. It is worth noting the impact the project had on one particular local authority – Powys Council (PC); as part of the initial project scoping, PC signed up for the Hotspot project with a view of including four cemeteries. PC also attended most of the project webinars and zoom discussions. It became evident that PC was increasingly interested in the biodiversity of their own sites and was keen to engage with the project as much as possible. This resulted in PC **hosting 6 grassland surveys** and working with the project to produce a **Management Brief Template** that includes all their **19 sites**. PC has started taking management actions forward not only in the Hotspot cemeteries that received a survey, but within all their burial ground sites across Powys.

Biodiversity Hotspots across Wales is funded by the Welsh Government via Natural Resources Wales.



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## 5. CELEBRATING BIRMINGHAM'S BURIAL GROUNDS

**Delivered by George Sharp, Harriet Carty and Anna Wilde**

This project started in December 2019 and ended in December 2022. This project was primarily concerned with **social history** and took place within **5 burial grounds in Birmingham**, which are:

- **St Mary's Churchyard, Handsworth**
- **Brandwood End Cemetery**
- **Key Hill Cemetery**
- **Warstone Lane Cemetery**
- **St Barnabas Churchyard, Erdington**



Using a bespoke digital system we mapped the **5** sites, ran **44** memorial recording sessions which (alongside some wonderful independent recorders) recorded the inscriptions of over **4,338** memorials and the details of **7,610** people have been added to the **5** digital maps in **12** group sessions and many, many hours of people continuing this work at home. Our wonderful volunteers are still working away and the numbers are still rising. We also ran **2** dawn chorus walks, a **BioBlitz**, a **family session** and a **Churches Count on Nature** session. We organised **6** talks, part-funded **3** **after-school club sessions**, and **ran 2 fungi walks**. Watch the [Short Film of volunteers in Warstone Lane Cemetery](#).

Celebrating Birmingham's Burial Grounds is funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic England and the Garfield Weston Foundation.



## 6. WELSH BURIAL GROUNDS FOR WILDLIFE



**Delivered by Mick Clifton and Harriet Carty**

'Welsh Burial Grounds for Wildlife' finished during this reporting period and has given burial ground managers significant opportunities for learning and improving skill sets. Through this project, we now have a **comprehensive set of bespoke learning materials (Welsh & English language)**, aimed at those who manage burial grounds, focusing on **biodiversity and connecting people with nature**.

These include: **How to Guides** (Lichens, Ancient & Veteran Trees, Flower Rich Meadow, Amphibian & Reptiles), **Mini films** (Using the Botanical Companion, Grassland & iNaturalist, Lichens 1 & 2, Find a

Beautiful Burial Ground Near You, Yew Trees with Chris Baines, Amphibian & Reptiles with Chris Baines, Volunteer Tree Survey and Membership Promotion) & a **Wales-wide leaflet on Burial Ground Biodiversity**.

Our project has also enabled us to engage with over **500 burial ground managers** throughout Wales, producing **biodiversity gains in burial grounds** as well as connecting people with nature.

Examples include:

- ‘Hub’ **training** at St Asaph and at Abergavenny
- Attending a **Diocese ‘Eco-fest’**
- Providing a series of **webinars** (in total reaching 188 Welsh attendees)
- Increasing **biological recording** in burial grounds throughout Wales (we now have in excess of **8,500 biological records** from Welsh burial grounds)
- Delivering **Beautiful Burial Ground** talks in Wales (215 attendees in total)

In addition to the above, through this project we were also able to **increase our Membership by 193%** over the period of our project.

Welsh Burial Grounds for Wildlife was funded by The Prince of Wales’s Charitable Fund.



**THE PRINCE OF WALES'S  
CHARITABLE FUND**

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## **7. OPENING THE ARK**

**Delivered by Kirsty Stevens and Megan Gallant**

Opening the Ark (OtA) ran for 12 months and came to an end in June 2023, following an agreed 3 month extension to allow us to utilise a small underspend. The project focussed on **26 churchyards within the Shropshire Hills AONB** with the aim of engaging local people with the **biodiversity in their churchyards** and spreading that biodiversity out into the **wider community**.

Throughout the project OtA engaged with partners to extend the reach of the project and strengthen relationships with other local, ‘green’ organisations. These included: CPRE (Hedgerow Heroes project), Restoring Shropshire’s Verges Project, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Buglife, Going Wild in Bishop’s Castle, Shropshire Dormouse Group and the Stepping Stones project (National Trust).

There were multiple strands to Opening the Ark:

- We delivered 8 'Love Your Burial Ground' nature-based activity days, engaging nearly 400 people across the project area. The events ran for an entire morning or afternoon (3 hours) with the majority of participants staying for the duration and engaging with all of the activities on offer. The LYBG days attracted a broad demographic of local people, many of whom signed up to a mailing list to be notified of future events.  
The activities were delivered by specialists in their field and included: a moth release, day-flying moths, making nature themed clay tiles, churchyard poetry, wildflower identification and folklore, children's activities, dormice and nibbled nut hunts, slow worm activities, swifts and entomologist / bug hunts.
- The project also delivered a wide range of activities aimed at connecting people with nature. 49 separate nature-based activity sessions were delivered to an audience of 1,104 people. These activities included: multiple school sessions, talks, bat walks, botanical training, bioblitz sessions, education events, moth releases, habitat creation, bird box building and siting (swift boxes), hay days, dormouse awareness sessions and training in volunteer management.
- In an effort to 'spread the biodiversity outwards' the project delivered tangible benefits to different habitats and species. 10 new volunteers were engaged to make a total of 70 swift boxes, which have now been installed, alongside swift calling systems, in 5 local church towers. Hedge planting schemes at 4 different sites, delivered in conjunction with CPRE's Hedgerow Heroes project, has improved habitat for dormice and other species. Finally, green hay from the most species-rich churchyards was offered to create new meadows. This was a popular activity resulting in a number of new meadows including publicly accessible sites at Aston on Clun village green and the Earl of Plymouth Estate.
- Management plans have been produced for each of the 26 sites. In consultation with our volunteer manager it was decided that the plans should take the form of an eye-catching poster, rather than a written document. The posters set out management operations season by season in a clear, graphic presentation and are intended to be less 'technical' and more user friendly than a written report.

There was definitely an appetite for a community engagement project of this type, with lots of positive feedback and many participants signing up to a mailing list for future events. In total the project **engaged with 1474 people** leaving a legacy of increased awareness of, and enthusiasm for, these rare, species-rich habitats.



## Green Recovery Challenge Fund

OtA was funded by the Recovery Challenge Fund.



Green



## 8. CHURCHYARD CARBON ANALYSIS

Working in partnership with the Church of England and the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH) we are investigating the Carbon stored within churchyards. This includes the vegetation cover such as trees and shrubs and also the carbon within churchyard soils. During 2021, UKCEH carried out a desktop analysis using existing data from the Church Heritage Record mapping of burial grounds and their own habitat mapping work. The conclusion from this was that further analysis was needed as **burial grounds could well be exceptional in terms of Carbon storage** and the current data does not include any burial grounds. In the summer and autumn of 2021 the partnership devised a methodology for soil sampling which was trialled once by CfGA staff.

This was then rolled out to participating churchyards and **37 samples were dug with augers and analysed by UKCEH** giving a clearer picture of the soil carbon within churchyard grasslands and also the percentage of tree canopy cover to grassland. Further study would be useful, particularly focusing on different management systems and the effect of this on stored Carbon.

CfGA wrote a new Action Pack sheet, funded by the Church in Wales and the Church of England and entitled **Improving the Carbon Footprint of Your Burial Ground**.



# REVIEW OF CORE ACTIVITIES

Delivered by Andrea Gilpin, Mick Clifton and Harriet Carty with office and digital support from Prue Dakin and Anna Wilde.

- 1 Support local communities, groups and individuals who manage burial grounds
  - 2 Charity and project development plus general fundraising
  - 3 General management of the charity, its staff, governance, office
  - 4 Organising Love Your Burial Ground Week
  - 5 Supporting and increasing membership including Diocesan Membership
- 

## 1. SUPPORT LOCAL COMMUNITIES, GROUPS & INDIVIDUALS WHO MANAGE BURIAL GROUNDS

We offer **support and guidance** to anybody involved in **managing a burial ground**. We encourage them to consider the full range of features within their site; **biodiversity, built heritage and social history** plus the opportunities to involve their local communities and inform their visitors. We advocate **investigation, recording and research** within burial grounds, to increase the body of knowledge about these fascinating places.

This is achieved through a combination of **phone calls, emails, public speaking and visits**, and through the **provision of resources** including written material, video, website content and social media. This year we added **virtual visits** to our methods of reaching and supporting burial ground managers.

CfGA also supports burial ground managers through the resources that we provide: our **Action Pack, Education Pack, Field Studies Council Fold-out Chart, Botanical Companion, Beautiful Burial Ground DVD and Starter Guide**. All of these are available to download and/or buy via our website. The **Starter Guide** is currently sent out in hard copy to anybody who requests it as part of Love Your Burial Ground week. In addition, we now have **21 mini-films available** on our website. We have recently produced 4 Guides, giving in-depth information.

These are:

### **A Guide to Ancient and Veteran Churchyard Trees**

## A Guide to Meadows and Wildflowers

## A Guide to Lichens

## A Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles

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## 2. CHARITY & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PLUS GENERAL FUNDRAISING

During this year, focus has been on completing delivery of the Beautiful Burial Ground project plus **building resources via grant applications** and increasing the income raised by staff through management planning and paid practical work for our volunteer manager. We have been building projects which were submitted during this financial year or shortly afterwards by Mick Clifton our Fund Raiser.

These include:

**Our Digital Ancestors:** over the next decade the Church of England is working with AG Intl to map all Church of England burial grounds. These maps are useful for church wardens and incumbents and also anybody interested in social history or family history. AG Intl has received commercial funding to carry this out, but there are no funds for training, awareness raising or celebration of this amazing endeavour. CfGA initially applied in 2021 for funding to run a training project in parallel to the mapping work so that these maps can be used by local communities. We were asked to withdraw and amend our application with regards to digital accessibility. This has now been resubmitted and 2/3 of the funding is secured. If the remaining monies are secured then this project will start in autumn 2023.

**Green Burial Ground feasibility study:** we received funding from the Natural England Environment Investment Readiness Fund to carry out a feasibility study into the concept of Caring for God's Acre owning (or managing in partnership) a green burial ground which could also showcase best practice for conservation management.

**Small grants for our Conservation Volunteers and other aspects of our work:** numerous applications have been made to other trusts and agencies, and our successful applications were:

- UK Government Faith New Deal pilot
- AONB Conservation Fund for works to Hope Bagot ancient yew and for swift box installation within church towers.

## LEGACY

We now have a legacy pack and dedicated staff member dealing with legacy enquiries – Anna Wilde.

The legacy pack can be found here <https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/support-us/leave-a-legacy/>

## GEOGRAPHICAL REACH OF THE CHARITY

In March 2023 the trustees decided that Caring for God's Acre should **extend its reach** in principle, to cover the **four nations** of the UK. We are not intending to actively work in either Scotland or Northern Ireland at present but will now be open to opportunities should they arise.

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## 3 GENERAL MANAGEMENT OF THE CHARITY

Core staff are charged with management of the charity including:

- **Managing the finances of the charity to ensure best value for all expenditure**
- **Maintaining and improving office systems to maximise effectiveness of human resources**
- **Reducing our carbon footprint and increasing sustainability**
- **Following CfGA policies and updating and checking those policies**
- **Organising meetings and reporting to trustees to allow robust governance**
- **Keeping up to date with changes in charity policies and systems.**
- **Organising the AGM which took place digitally**

## CARBON FOOTPRINT

Our carbon footprint is now a standing agenda item at trustees meeting. During this year we have made the following carbon reductions:

- Joined a bike-to-work scheme through which 1 bike has been purchased
  - Improved the office recycling and compost system to reduce waste
  - Moved more office supplies away from plastic, finding alternatives such as paper sticky tape, paper padded envelopes, carbon neutral envelopes
  - Discussed carbon and waste with the firm who print our resources, we now use a more sustainable paper source, entirely vegetable inks and a low energy printing system
  - We have changed energy supplier to an entirely green supply (Octopus Energy).
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## 4 ORGANISING LOVE YOUR BURIAL GROUND WEEK

This national event takes place in the second week of June, spanning two weekends. People are encouraged to run **an event of their choice to encourage the public to visit their burial ground**, learn something about it and have an enjoyable time. Events are logged on the CfGA website. During 2022 there were 268 events during Love Your Burial Ground Week.

## 5 SUPPORTING & INCREASING MEMBERSHIP INCLUDING DIOCESAN MEMBERSHIP

### INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP MEMBERSHIP

During 2022/2023 our membership forum went live, and all members were sent an individual log in. We have created a library of resources including the recordings of our webinars.

The individual and group membership of CfGA stood at **284 individual or group members** at the end of April 2023.



Two editions of the members' magazine, were produced and distributed. In the spring of 2023 we changed the name and look of the magazine which is now called **Beautiful Burial Grounds**.

This year we ran a **virtual AGM on Zoom**, the speaker was Cat Irving, Human Remains Conservator for the Surgeons' Hall in Edinburgh. **60** people attended the AGM.



## DIOCESAN MEMBERSHIPS

We have three rolling memberships with the **Lichfield, Hereford and St David's Dioceses** through which CfGA supply a range of services including **advice, support, communications** and our **printed resources**. These dioceses commit to **monthly financial support** of the charity.

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# STAFF AND GOVERNANCE

## TRUSTEES

The trustees who held office during the financial year and at the date of this report are:

<b>Oliver Goode</b>	<b>Chair</b>
<b>Gillian Binks</b>	<b>Vice Chair</b>
<b>Sarah Ellison</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>
<b>Lisette Davies</b>	<b>Secretary</b>
<b>Anni Holden</b>	
<b>Judith Leigh</b>	
<b>Catherine MacCarthy</b>	
<b>Alex Glanville</b>	
<b>Simon Cooter</b>	
<b>David Primrose</b>	

New trustees are recruited as needed, either by appointment at the AGM or by co-option. In 2015 we carried out an initial **skills audit of trustees** which is updated annually. No new trustees were recruited this year. The charity is governed by its constitution.

## TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT

CfGA Director or existing trustees suggest potential new trustees and identify the skills and experience which they would bring to the group. This is then considered by the Director and Chair of Trustees, assessing whether the new individual will fit with the existing skills of the trustees and whether a balance is being maintained regarding skills and experience and the objectives of the charity. If the potential new trustee is deemed to be suitable then either the Director or Chair of Trustees will approach them to see if they will be willing to stand and the other trustees are informed of this by email or post. If interested, the individual is invited to the next trustees meeting to learn more about the charity and the role of trustees. They are then invited to join.

New trustees meet with the Director prior to their first trustees meeting, who explains the work and objectives of the charity. They are given a full set of our publications and also a copy of the Roles of Trustees and generic guidelines on being a trustee from the Charity Commission.

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to its operations and finances, and are satisfied that systems are in place to minimise exposure to those risks.

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## GOVERNANCE ACTIVITY

During the year trustees held four trustees' meetings in June, September, December and March. Our **Finance & Risk Committee** meets a few weeks in advance of each of these meetings and then reports to full trustees. Trustees are also sent the minutes of the Finance & Risk Committee meetings. Two of the trustees' meetings took place digitally. Our December and March meetings were hybrids, with several trustees there in person and others online.

The Finance and Risk Committee oversees the **management of the finance**, monitoring expenditure against budget over the financial year. This includes the **preparation of the charity's annual accounts** and the routine financial management. This committee also considers **the risks to the charity** and the **projects being delivered** by the charity. The risk log is considered and updated at each meeting.

This committee reports to the **full board of trustees** which is responsible for approval of the budget and **the annual accounts**. This committee met four times this year with all meetings taking place online.

**Members: Oliver Goode, Sarah Ellison, Alex Glanville, Revd David Primrose. Also attending: Harriet Carty, Prue Dakin and Anna Wilde.**

2022/2023 marked the completion of the new **Business Plan**. At the June trustees meeting, we focussed entirely on the Business Plan during a **facilitated trustees meeting** led by Revd Mark Betson the National Rural Officer for the Church of England. Following this the plan was produced in draft and then finalised for agreement at our December 2022 meeting. This is now being followed and quarterly trustee meeting reports are based on the aims of the business plan. Once the Business Plan is completed, we will set up a new **Start and Finish Group**.

The **Project Champions** meet or speak to the member of staff responsible for a project prior to the full board of trustees' meetings. They then **present the report** written by staff on their particular project and **add their views and information**. They take a lead in the governance of the projects for which they are champion.

- The Beautiful Burial Ground champion was Catherine McCarthy
- Biodiversity Hotspots in Mid Wales champion was Alex Glanville
- Welsh Burial Grounds for Wildlife champion was Alex Glanville
- The CfGA Conservation Volunteers champion is Anni Holden
- Celebrating Birmingham's Burial Grounds champion was Judith Leigh
- Opening the Ark champion is Oliver Goode

Governance and support for the Director is given via the full board of trustees and also through quarterly informal meetings between the **Chair of Trustees Oliver Goode** and the **Director Harriet Carty**.

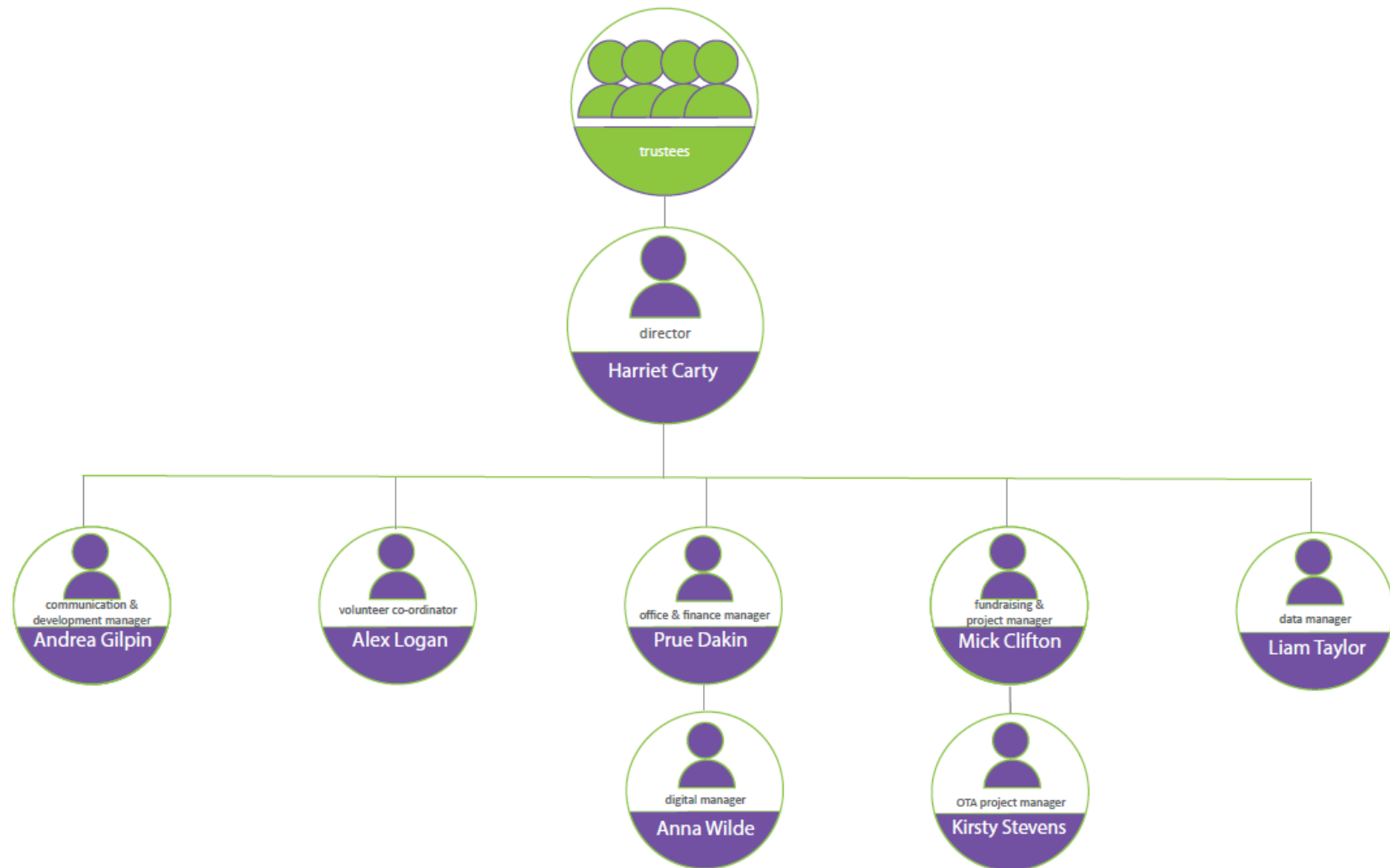
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## STAFF

During this reporting period we seen some staff changes:

Harriet Carty	Director, 3.5 days per week until Jan 2022, then 3 days per week
Andrea Gilpin	Conservation & Communications Manager, 3 days per week until Sept 2022, then 2 days per week
Prue Dakin	Office Manager, 3 days per week
Anna Wilde	Digital Manager, 3 days per week until Sept 2022, then 2 days per week
Mick Clifton	Fund Raiser and Project Manager, 3 days per week until May 2023 then 1.5 days per week
Alex Logan	Volunteer Coordinator, 4 days per week
George Sharp	Beautiful Burial Ground Community Coordinator, 4 days per week, made redundant when project closed end 2022
Liam Taylor	Beautiful Burial Ground Data Manager, 4 days per week until December 2022 then 2 days a week
Kirsty Stevens	Opening the Ark Project Manager, 4 days per week
Megan Gallant	Opening the Ark Project Assistant, 4 days per week, left March 2023





**Caring for God's Acre Organisational Chart**  
at April 2023