

A dark, weathered gravestone for Richard Richards, with text overlaid about nature in burial grounds. The stone is set in a cemetery with fallen leaves and soil around it. The text on the stone includes the name 'RICHARD RICHARDS', his birth date 'NOV 21ST 1866', and a religious inscription. The overlaid text reads: 'Making space for nature in our burial grounds.'

Making space for nature in our burial grounds.

The importance of engaging volunteers to ensure biodiversity is protected.

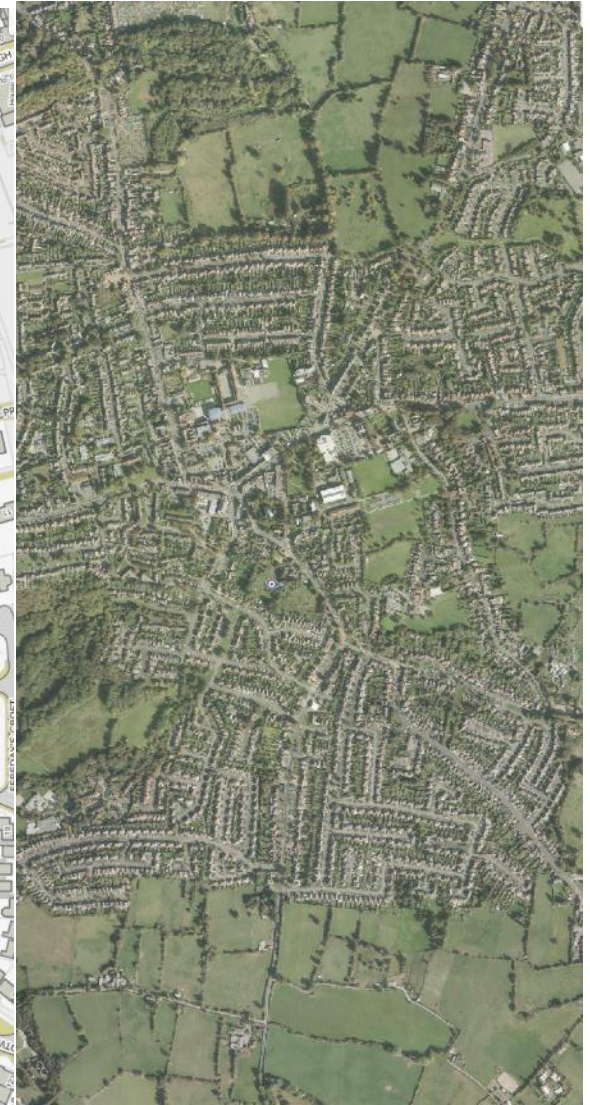
The value of volunteers

- 32 Friends of groups (over 400 people, over 10,000 hours per annum)
 - 38 Allotment Associations
 - Community Centres
 - Tenants and residents Associations
 - More recently closed churchyard groups
-
- Flexible approach to the group needs and aspirations.
 - Dedicated contact for continued support.
 - Over half a million raised in external funds over 4 years.



Sedgley (All Saints) Churchyard

- West Extension highlighted yellow (left picture).
- Position in wider green space network.
- Urban setting with predominantly field and pasture in surrounding areas.





*Aerial photo 1980 Sedgley (All Saints)
Churchyard West Extension*



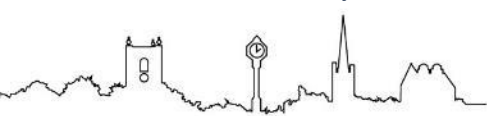
*Aerial photo 1996 Sedgley (All Saints)
Churchyard West Extension*



*Aerial photo 2001 Sedgley (All Saints)
Churchyard West Extension*



*Aerial photo September 2011 Sedgley (All
Saints) Churchyard West Extension*



Working as One Council in
the historic capital of the Black Country





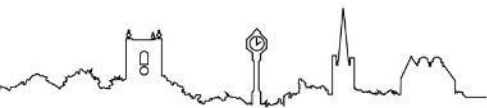


More harm than good?

There are many drivers that motivate people to volunteer their time but often it will be to help bring about change or to make a difference and do what they feel or think is the right thing to do. However, that is not always the case, unpicking what has been done will be more challenging, early communications and initial group set up in partnership with LA's is key to better outcomes and a happier volunteering experience.

Volunteers are an asset to site management but if left unchecked can cause harm to themselves, to others and to wildlife:

- Using petrol driven machinery such as brush cutters without authority, certificates or insurance.
- Using chemicals like herbicide on sites without licence or due care for legislation.
- Breaches to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Cause of local complaints regards noise and changes to views from homes.
- General disregard for biodiversity through ignorance or design often in the cause of 'making it tidy'.



Working as One Council in
the historic capital of the Black Country



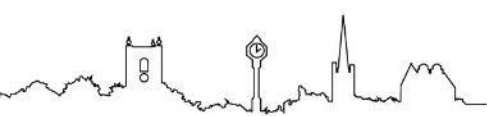
Bringing it together

Where a group is forming get in early try and understand the motivations – are they clean and tidy ups? Work together to find a balance and a route forward that all can agree to.

DMBC have produced the closed graveyard document to be published on website and sent to churches with graveyards for information.

Consider: waste management and disposal, the sensitivity of memorials, wildlife, biodiversity and protected species, forewarning of the need for constitution, insurance, risk assessments, Health & Safety.

Is an intervention required to stop and/or change the direction of on site actions?



Working as One Council in
the historic capital of the Black Country



Bringing it together the intervention



Where work has begun without any knowledge causing complaints, harm and legal challenges intervention required.



Stop for H&S on all site activity, chance to review, call a meeting with committee representatives to tackle issues head on.



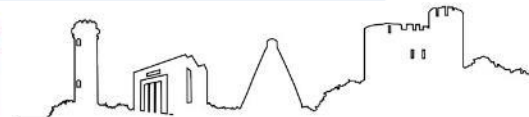
Consider the approach: motivations, aims, language and positioning. Justification for requirements, not unreasonable but necessary, comply with law, better local relations, mosaic of habitats beneficial so room in part for their objective to be achieved.



Forward planning – management plan, independent body if helpful or needed such as WWTBBC.



Confidence to observers no harm being done, compliant with regulations, sympathetic to nature with consideration for biodiversity.



Developing a workable management plan

Work through this, user friendly, clarifications in terms or actions build understanding and balance of the site continued support

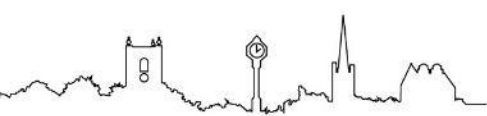
Training where needed with equipment to ensure compliance, share the burden of funding so not putting barriers in the way.

Managing expectations of what can be achieved

Be prepared to give and take to try and achieve a balance

Inform land owners and share plans if direct involvement not feasible.

What happens if the volunteer group fold?



Working as One Council in
the historic capital of the Black Country



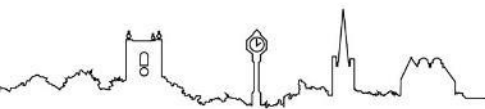


Management Brief				
2	Meadow grassland management	Traditional species-rich meadows require continued management to retain their ecological character and floral diversity. This has traditionally comprised being left uncut until late summer when a hay cut is taken and the surplus removed and baled.	The meadow management method has been designed to mimic the traditional by meadow management method: I. mow once a year from November – August II. Cut 8 times a year in 1st week of August III. Do not cut as required between August – October New areas of Meadow should be left to establish for a full season before any cutting occurs	From 2024 onwards As method
3	Arnhem grassland Management	Grassland to be maintained at a short sward height to enable public access to meadows in the area.	Regular brush cutting of swardy paths, six times per annum (as required). Sward height to be maintained between 35-50mm in this location.	From 2024 onwards April to October
4	Control scrub	If left unmanaged, bramble scrub from adjacent habitats will begin to encroach into the grassland. However, it will need to be managed to limit its extent (but not completely eradicate it).	Further offcuts should be reduced in the area on a regular basis to provide an access at different stages of development. Use should be done using hand tools only. No herbicides to be utilized.	November – March Focus of the the meadow meadow as required

Compartment 3 – Woodland Areas				
Action	Objective & Rationale	Method	Timings	
1	Carry out tree safety inspection	It needs to make sure that all trees can enjoy the grassy space and are inspected that all mature trees are regularly inspected to ensure that they do not present a health and safety hazard.	To be carried out by licensed tree safety inspectors. This will involve an experienced person climbing the trees and deciding which trees may need to be removed to ensure safety of the site.	As advised. Should be repeated every two years.
2	Reevaluation of dangerous trees as defined by the tree survey.	Once tree safety inspection has been carried out any recommendations should be undertaken to ensure safety of the area group.	As advised by the tree safety survey. Trees to be carried out by suitable qualified arboriculturists.	As advised.
3	Control scrub	Bramble scrub within and along the boundaries of the Woodland Open areas should be managed to prevent excessive encroachment and eventual displacement of the better development trees due to general purchase or areas of different ages, rather than completely eradicate scrub from the area.	Palisade of bramble should be reduced in the area, as required and on a regular basis to provide a mosaic of different stages of development. Areas should be removed from the site, as far as possible. This should be done using hand tools only. No herbicides to be utilized. All separate woodings should be manually removed from these areas.	November – March Focus of the the meadow meadow as required
4	Woodland thinning	It is able to promote biodiversity in woodland, a varied range of habitats of nature need to be created. To achieve this objective of	Carry out thinning selected habitats/areas.	November – March As advised.

Action	Objective & Rationale	
1	30m Buffer Zone	No digging to take place within 30m of a badger sett
2	20m Buffer Zone	Scrub to be retained within 20m of a badger sett
3	10m Buffer Zone	No habitat management works to be undertaken within 10m of a badger sett.

Compartment 1 – Grassland Areas				
Action	Objective & Rationale	Method	Timings	
1	Rotational management	Essential to have two both working and hibernated conservation meadows of the site. It is proposed that grassland be managed in rotation blocks. Figure 2 (table) Grassland Areas can be sub-divided (a-e) Each year, one of these periods will be maintained as Arnhem Grassland (as detailed below), where the other three will be managed as Meadow Grassland. Each year, a different period will be maintained as Arnhem Grassland and so a rotational management system will be established. This will allow a majority of the grassland on site to develop high biodiversity value, whilst ensuring protected access to at least some of the meadows on site each year.	Refer to methods below. Grassland Area Compartment 1a to be managed as Arnhem Grassland in the first year.	From 2024 onwards Seasonal/range based



Working as One Council in
the historic capital of the Black Country



Summary of useful points



Have a mind for the motivation, what the ambition they are chasing is to help with negotiations and positioning.



What are the sites biodiversity considerations, where are the conflicts of interest. What we want to achieve vs what can be achieved.



Group dynamics and personalities.



Bring together joined up plans/ways of working – management plan, action plan or simple SLA.



Continue support and guidance to maintain rapport or connection, monitor in accordance with need and keep communications open.



Recognise the little wins along the way.

