

# Increasing the opportunities for Nature in Wigan's Cemeteries

Kieran Sayer, Biodiversity Officer  
Wigan Council

# Realising the potential - The COVID effect

- ▶ Grounds maintenance staff redeployed to essential services
- ▶ Naturalising the borough project
- ▶ 6ha of wildflower meadow into development borough wide, currently at 18ha
- ▶ Nature took advantage and blossomed
- ▶ Site visits to cemeteries



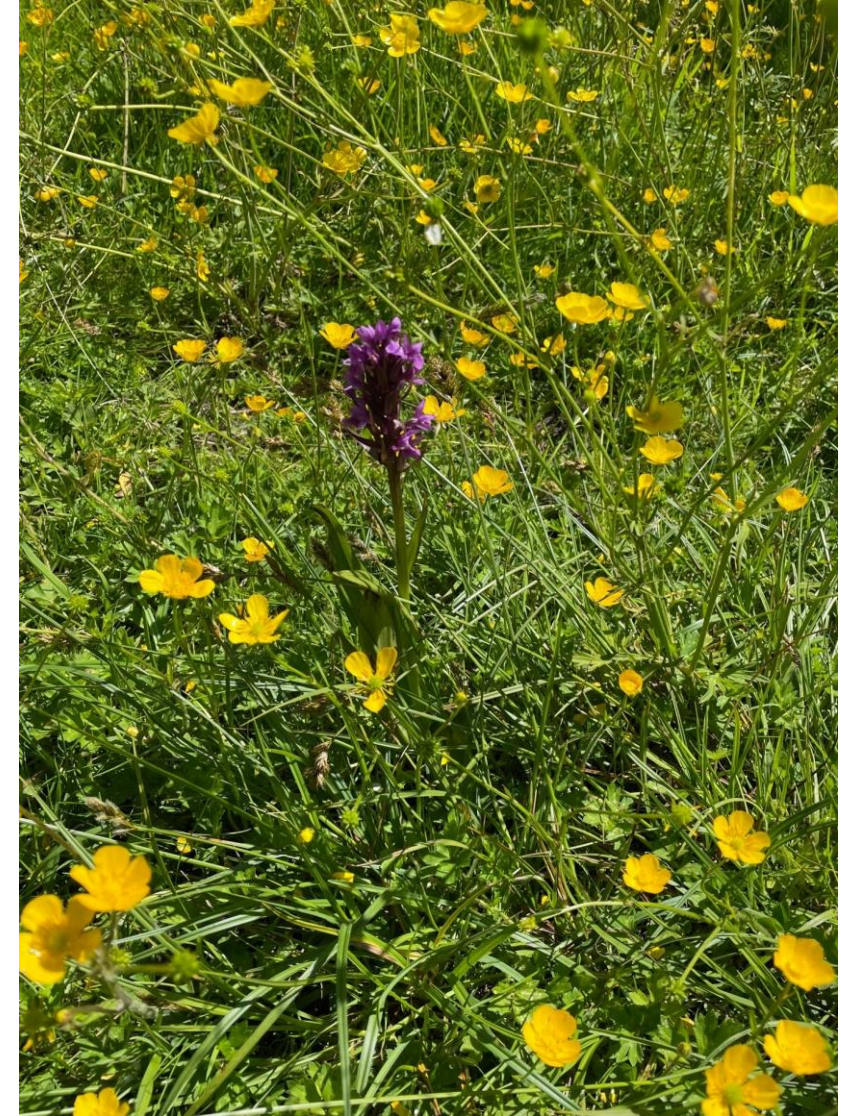
# Golborne Park



# Developing wildflower and wildlife opportunities in cemetery grounds

- ▶ Species rich meadows
- ▶ Tree planting, hedgerows
- ▶ Habitat piles following tree work
- ▶ Standing deadwood where possible
- ▶ Mission to change mindsets

# Wigan Crematorium





# Gidlow Cemetery



Photo courtesy of Dr Mark Champion, Lancashire Wildlife Trust





# The benefits achieved

- ▶ Increased biodiversity in cemetery grounds
- ▶ Important stepping stones for improving species connectivity across the wider landscape
- ▶ Creating safe areas for wildlife
- ▶ Evidence of badger foraging - protected species so can't disclose location
- ▶ Improves visitor experience providing a colourful and natural space for quiet reflection

# Future plans

- ▶ Seeking potential areas in each of the council owned cemetery sites for biodiversity improvements
- ▶ Gidlow Cemetery meadow into management - 1.7ha
- ▶ Wigan crem woodland area in partnership with Lancashire Wildlife Trust
- ▶ Plant hedgerow at boundary of Wigan crematorium where the wall has failed
- ▶ Interpretation boards