

Mr. F. Wheeler  
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For the attention of :

10th Sept '95

Mr. Chris Hedges  
Countryside Service  
Countryside & Community Dept.  
Hampshire County Council.

Dear Sir,

Having worked voluntarily within the churchyard of All Saints Church, East Meon, for a number of years, it became apparent to me that the workload for the voluntary sector was too great and that the policy of leaving large areas to wildlife, in an unmanaged state, just wasn't working.

I approached the Vicar and the P.C.C. in the autumn of last year, proposing that I set up a charity. This would collect monies by fundraising and would manage the churchyard utilizing a mixture of paid professional gardeners and volunteers. These would variously attend to respective areas and provide a mix between wildlife and the visual requirements of a community church.

A charity was set up called Sexton. (Charity number : 1046891). We have three trustees and a treasurer. One of our trustees is, although she will deny it, a wildlife expert and has carried out surveys of the churchyard, with the help of East Meon Primary School. This has been on behalf of Sue Bellamy, of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. In fact, Ms. Bellamy or one of her specialists has recently been to the village and identifies our churchyard as in "the top ten" churches in the county for lichen

Picking out items from our trustees survey, she lists :- Trees - Lime, Beech, Copper Beech, Ash, Sycamore, Conifers, Yew, Hawthorn, Holly, Maple, Horsechestnut, Etc. : Many examples of wild flowers and Daffodils, Anemones, Snowdrops, Primroses, Etc. : Bird life is prolific - Kestrels and Jackdaws in the tower, a large Rookery at the west end, Spotted Flycatchers, Blue and Great Tits, Greenfinch, Chaffinch and Goldfinch, Mistle and Song Thrush, Green Woodpeckers, Collared Doves, Swallows, Sparrows and even a Heron has been seen. And I'm told not to forget the Robin.

There is a colony of Pipistrelle Bats who have made their home in the church; a large variety of Insects, Moths, Butterflies, Slow-worm, Shrews, Fieldmice and Voles; Rabbits, Hedgehogs and Roedeer. And a church cat!

To enable us to continue to manage this churchyard, this home for so many, we are totally reliant on our own fundraising efforts and the generosity of those who wish to make us a donation.

We think it is a well worthwhile task, but our " God's Acre " is four !

Yours Sincerely