

Would you like extra help in your churchyard?

In 2008, Norfolk Wildlife Trust launched a scheme in partnership with the Norfolk Probation Service to provide free, practical help in churchyards.

Over 20 churchyards took part in Summer 2008, and a further 20 received help during the winter months. In particular, we want to help churches where management is problematic, perhaps because of a shortage of labour to mow and rake a conservation area; or perhaps because management has lapsed in parts of the churchyard, and these areas are now just too difficult or expensive to tackle.

The Probation Service can help with a wide range of work. Typical tasks might include cutting and raking a conservation area in late summer; cutting hedges or clearing back scrub in winter; or cutting and clearing overgrown or tussocky areas to make them easier to manage in future.

NB: The Probation Service cannot help with ROUTINE grass cutting or maintenance.

NWT hopes that this scheme will encourage churches to maintain - or develop! - areas that are actively managed for conservation, to help to benefit wildlife. We will work closely with you to discuss what is needed and to draw up clear work plans and maps that the Probation Service teams can work to. Churchyards which have (or have had), a particularly rich array of wildflowers in the past, or with neglected conservation areas that are now overrun with brambles and nettles, are our highest priority, but others can benefit too. Some churches may need help just for one year to tackle a particular problem, while others may want help every year.

Please note that churches must be able to provide basic facilities, including a toilet (although a hired portaloo is fine) and refreshments. There also needs to be enough work to keep approx. eight workers busy for about 5 hours. The Probation Service provides all its own tools and equipment, but churches are expected to provide consumables such as petrol, oil and strimmer cord.

Further information about the scheme is below. If you would like to apply, please complete the attached form and return it **by Friday 20 March 2008.**

We will contact you as soon as possible in the spring to arrange a visit.

Additional Information

- Probation Service workers who undertake this work have usually been given community service for minor offences, such as speeding. Many churches who took part in 2008 particularly praised the work teams, commenting on their pleasant manner, the pride they took in their work and their desire to 'do a good job'.
- The work teams are fully equipped and do not need to use, or have access to, church tools or equipment. They are fully trained, and supervised on the day by Probation Service staff. They will be transported to and from the church in a minibus.
- Work in the churchyard has to be covered by the church's public liability insurance. A copy of the policy will be requested by NWT in advance.
- Work dates are agreed direct between the Probation Service and the church officers, to avoid clashes with church events, holidays etc. A 'work day' is about 5 hours (approx 10am – 3pm), and the number of days needed to complete the work is agreed in advance.
- The church must be able to provide
 - toilet facilities (a hired portaloos with running water for handwashing is fine - special rates have been negotiated by NWT with a hire company)
 - someone to greet or meet the work party on the day
 - someone to make refreshments, or facilities for workers to make their own drinks
 - consumables such as petrol and oil for tools to be used on the day
 - at least one day's suitable work (see below)
- These groups are not able to undertake *routine* grass cutting of the churchyard.
- Appropriate work includes: Cutting of longer grass which requires the use of a scythe, brushcutter or strimmer; raking up and collecting cuttings; clearing neglected areas; removing saplings; scrub clearance; hedge cutting. Grass cutting is undertaken during July/August, while scrub/hedge cutting will be undertaken *only* during the winter period (January or February) to avoid the bird-nesting season.
- NWT will work closely with the churchyard manager(s) to draw up a suitable work programme and on the basis of this, prepares a detailed work schedule and sketch map. Once this is approved by the church, the paperwork is forwarded to the Probation Service Supervisor.
- The Supervisor takes over from this point, making all further arrangements direct with the church contact.
- Work programmes need to be finalised by end May for summer work, and end October for winter work.

Help in the churchyard

Registration Form

1) Church details:

Church Name	
Parish	
District	
Name of Main Contact for Churchyard*	
Address of Contact	
Tel. No.	
Email	

**This person should be the main liaison person for this project for both NWT and Probation Service*

2) Is the church able to provide:

Toilet facilities at the church (hired portaloos is fine):	Yes / No	Refreshments (or facilities) on the day	Yes / No
Someone to greet work party on the day:	Yes / No	Copy of public liability insurance policy	Yes / No

3) *The purpose of this section is to get an idea of the amount and range of work involved. We are looking for good volumes of work but are also particularly interested in churches with regularly managed, flower-rich conservation areas where more help is needed; and in those where regular management has been difficult to sustain and help is needed to reclaim neglected areas:*

a) Conservation Areas

Do you need help with cutting and clearing the conservation area(s)? Yes / No

No. of areas: Approximate size of area(s) (metres x metres):

Are the conservation area(s) regularly managed and wildflower-rich? Yes / No

Are the conservation area(s) infrequently managed, and tussocky? Yes / No

What proportion of the conservation area(s) is covered by scrub? 0-30% 30-60% >60%

Is help likely to be required annually with the conservation area(s)? Yes / No

Can arrangements be made for grass cuttings/scrub prunings to be taken away (eg by a local landowner or farmer) Yes / No

b) Neglected/Overgrown Areas

Is there a large area in the churchyard which has gone unmanaged for many years which is now overgrown and difficult to tackle? Yes / No

Approximately how large is this area (metres x metres)?

What proportion of this neglected area is covered by scrub? 0-30% 30-60% >60%

Does the scrub also need clearing? Yes / No

What are the main scrub/shrub species?

If a tussocky/neglected area is cleared by the Probation Service, will the church be able to manage/mow the cleared area in the future? Yes / No

c) Hedges

Is help needed with hedge-cutting? Yes / No

Approximate length and height of hedge(s) (in metres): Length: Height:

How long is it since the hedge was last cut?

Will help be needed to cut the hedge(s) every year? Yes / No

What are the main hedge species?

d) Other (please list any other work that is needed, or use this space for additional comments)