THORNBURY
Town Council

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Town Clerk: Hannah Bowden, CiLCA

12 October 2026

To Councillors - Cllr Danny Bonnett (Chair), Cllr Kath Greenman, Cllr Maggie Tyrrell, Cllr Chris Bloor (Vice Chair), Cllr Chris Rowe, Cllr Christine Carter, Cllr Gil Gilroy and all non-councillor Committee members

Please take notice that a meeting of the **Climate and Nature Committee** of Thornbury Town Council will be held in the **Council Chamber of the Town Hall** on **Tuesday 20 October 2026** at **7.30 pm**.

All above named Councillors are hereby **summoned**, and non-councillors invited, to attend the above meeting for the purpose of considering and resolving upon the business to be transacted at the meeting as set out hereunder.

S J Gardham

Sharon Gardham, Climate and Nature Officer

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime & Disorder, Health & Safety, Human Rights and the need to conserve biodiversity.

Public participation: *Please note that this meeting is open to the public. Please take note of the guidance notes for public participation provided.*
If you would not be physically able to use the stairs in the event of a fire, please inform us of your intention to attend this meeting no later than 9.00am on the Monday before, so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

AGENDA

1. **To note any apologies for absence**
2. **To receive any members' declarations of interest**
3. **To receive any representations from the public relating to items on the agenda**
4. **To approve and sign the minutes of the Climate and Nature Committee meeting held on 1 September 2026 (paper attached)**
5. **To receive a presentation on the design for the Memorial Woodland/Wellbeing Garden from Seed Landscape Designers**
6. **To consider options for the Climate and Nature budget for financial year 2027-28 (paper attached)**
7. **To consider options for a Tiny Forest/Edible Forest for Thornbury (paper attached)**
8. **Biodiversity Audit Update (paper attached)**
9. **Biodiversity Measures proposal (paper attached)**
10. **To note that the deadline for submission of items for inclusion on the next agenda is Tuesday 1 December 2026**
11. **Date of next meeting - 7.30pm on Tuesday 15 December 2026**

1.

THORNBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Climate and Nature Committee Meeting
held on Tuesday 1 September 2026 at 7:30pm at Council Chamber, Town Hall

Members present:	Councillors	Chris Bloor (Vice Chair) Christine Carter Gil Gilroy Kath Greenman Maggie Tyrell Chris Rowe
	Non-councillors	Geradine Barnes
In attendance:		Sharon Gardham (Climate and Nature Officer)
Members absent:	Councillors	Danny Bonnett
	Non-Councillors	Ella Wiggans (Sustainable Thornbury) Guy Rawlinson (Holy Mowers) Emma Young (Plastic Free Thornbury)

CN2627.18 To note any apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were noted from Danny Bonnett, Ella Wiggans (Sustainable Thornbury), Emma Young (Plastic Free Thornbury) and Guy Rawlinson (Holy Mowers).

CN2627.19 To receive any members' declaration of interest.

No declarations of interest were made by members.

CN2627.20 To receive any representations from the public relating to items on the agenda.

There were no representations from the public.

CN2627.21 To approve and sign the minutes of the Climate and Nature Committee Meeting held on 16 June 2026.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Climate and Nature Committee held on 16 June 2026 as an accurate record of the proceedings and the minutes were signed by the Vice Chair.

Proposed by Cllr. Rowe, seconded by Cllr. Greenman, unanimously agreed.

CN2627.22 To consider the decarbonisation road map and a recommendation to Full Council regarding decarbonisation measures.

The committee discussed how TTC operations could be made more resilient in extreme weather conditions, such as those experienced this summer. A summary of the kinds of measures that may be needed is included in the Decarbonisation Road Map (Section 12.4).

CN2627.22.1: SG to talk with the Facilities Manager about practical ways to retrofit existing buildings to better cope with heatwaves.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend the adoption of the Decarbonisation Road Map and the related capital spend to Full Council.

Proposed by Cllr. Gilroy, seconded by Cllr. Rowe, unanimously agreed.

CN2627.23 To receive an update on the 2026-27 Climate and Nature budget and consider the reallocation of some of the budget between spend items.

An update on the Climate and Nature budget was **NOTED**. The Committee **RESOLVED** to reallocate the budget spend items as suggested in the Officer Report.

Proposed by Cllr. Gilroy, seconded by Cllr. Greenman, unanimously agreed.

CN2627.24 To receive an update on the Watermark Town scheme.

The update on the Watermark Town scheme was **NOTED**. Cllr. Tyrell suggested that participation in the scheme would benefit from more publicity, perhaps via videos.

CN2627.24.1: SG to discuss Watermark Town publicity with the Communications Officer.

CN2627.25 To receive an update on the Memorial Woodland plans and consider a recommendation to Full Council regarding delegated spending powers.

The update on the Memorial Woodland project was **NOTED**. The Committee **RESOLVED** to request delegated spending powers for the remaining phase one budget from Full Council, with everyday spending decisions (in compliance with the Financial Regulations) in turn delegated to Officers.

Proposed by Cllr. Tyrell, seconded by Cllr. Rowe, unanimously agreed.

CN2627.26 To consider options for a Tiny Forest/Edible Forest for Thornbury.

The Tiny/Edible Forest agenda item was deferred until the October meeting of the Climate and Nature Committee, due to the Chair's absence.

CN2627.27 To consider potential Climate and Nature projects for 2027-28.

The Committee considered various potential projects for the Climate and Nature budget for 2027-28.

Projects shortlisted for costing were as follows:

- Further rainwater harvesting projects
- Provision of ponds and watery habitats

DRAFT

- Collaboration with the Streamside Walk improvement project to open more watery wildlife corridors
- Composting courses/awareness for residents
- Public water fountains
- More bicycle racks at the Mundy Playing Fields
- Events and engagement
- Green roofs

The Committee requested that the next meeting focus largely on budget and delivery priorities for the next financial year.

CN2627.28 **To note that the deadline for submission of items for inclusion on the next agenda is Tuesday 6 October 2026.**

The deadline for the submission of items for inclusion on the next agenda was **NOTED.**

CN2627.29 **To note that the date of the next meeting of the Climate and Nature Committee is Tuesday 20 October at 19.30.**

The date of the next Climate and Nature Committee was **NOTED.**

The next Thriving Nature working group takes place on Tuesday 24 November at 19.00.

Meeting concluded at 20.35.

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Officer Report to Thornbury Town Council Climate and Nature Committee

Report Title: Climate and Nature Budget 2027-28

Prepared By: Sharon Gardham

Meeting Date: 20 October 2026

Status: For Action

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1. Detail

The current Local Climate and Nature Action Plan (LCNAP) covers the period 2023-2028, meaning that financial year 2027-2028 is the last opportunity to deliver any outstanding items from the plan.

A gap analysis has been carried which identified outstanding LCNAP delivery items (i.e., those not delivered to date or not currently in progress). The gap analysis was presented to and discussed at the Climate and Nature Committee in September. Items from the gap analysis that the Committee wished to prioritise for delivery were shortlisted in the meeting (CN2627.27). These items are included in the suggested budget detailed below.

Alongside outstanding items from the plan, there are ongoing plan items included in the suggested budget, including events and engagement.

Budget Item	Plan Category	Suggested Budget	Total	Details
Rainwater Harvesting	Water	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	Rainwater harvesting at MPF - Tank/butts plus a pump to refill the bowser.
Public Water Fountains	Water	£3,500.00	£4,500.00	Wall mounted at Mundy Playing Fields. Free standing outside Town Hall
Bicycle Racks @ MPF	GHG	£600.00	£5,100.00	3 x Sheffield Bike Stands at Mundy Playing Fields
Events and Engagement	Comms and Events	£2,000.00	£7,100.00	Including composting courses
Green Roofs	Nature	£1,500.00	£8,600.00	10 square metres at average of £150 per square metre
Biodiversity Measures	Nature	£2,000.00	£10,600.00	Biodiversity works as suggested by the ecological surveys. Provision of wildlife homes. Wildflower reseeding.
Total			**£10,600.00**	

Alongside delivery of the remaining LCNAP items, the Committee will need to consider a follow-on plan to pick up and continue (as appropriate) from the current plan. The length of the new plan (i.e., should it be for another 5 years, so 2029-2034?) its strategic and operational objectives, and its deliverables, will need to be discussed, drafted, and recommended to Full Council in due course. The Committee may wish to delegate detailed discussion of the follow on plan to the Thriving Nature Working Group.

2. Implications

Environmental

Delivery of the items outlined in this paper will allow us to complete most of the outstanding elements from the current Local Climate and Nature Action Plan. The budget proposal gives focus to areas that have not featured as prominently in previous year's deliverables, notably supporting active travel and improving water resilience.

Financial

The C&N budget proposal for 2027-28 is comparable to the current financial year C&N budget, which was set at £10,250.

3. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to:

- Make any changes to the budget proposal
- Recommend the budget proposal to Full Council

Officer Report to Thornbury Town Council Climate and Nature Committee

Report Title: Tiny/Edible Forest Options

Prepared By: Sharon Gardham

Meeting Date: 20 October 2026

Status: For Action

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1. Detail

This paper was deferred from the Climate and Nature Committee meeting that took place on 1 September.

The Climate and Nature Committee has a long-term ambition to undertake a Tiny Forest project in Thornbury. The Tiny Forest concept involves densely planting 600 trees in an area the approximate size of a tennis court. Ideally, Tiny Forests are planted in urban locations, where the maximum benefit in terms of air quality, biodiversity and nature connection improvements can take place. Enabling environmental education and study are also key elements of the Tiny Forest concept.

In 2025, a feasibility study of potential sites for a Thornbury Tiny Forest was undertaken. The sites shortlisted were those that were15-minutes or less walk from at least one school, where value could be added in terms of increasing biodiversity, with access for pedestrians and vehicles, and that were the correct size for a Tiny Forest. The Committee resolved that further investigations should be carried out for sites at Barley Fields and behind the Castle Court car park (CN2526.32). At the June 2026 meeting of the Committee, a new site was added to the mix, which is located behind the Crossways School playing fields (CN2627.13). This land belongs to South Glos Council. I have contacted South Glos Council about this land but have received no response.

There have been two main barriers to progressing the project further. Firstly, TTC does not itself have a site which sufficiently meets the criteria outlined in the feasibility study, meaning that we would need a long-term agreement to host a Tiny Forest from another landowner. Feasible sites have included those currently owned by developers and by South Gloucestershire Council. The former are unlikely to give land up unless planning stipulates that they should do so. The latter are in the process of developing a new local plan which will potentially set out new priorities for their land in Thornbury.

Secondly, there is no current budget for establishing or maintaining a Tiny Forest. The costs for a Tiny Forest are estimated at between £25,000 and £40,000 for its establishment and subsequent maintenance for the first three years. Additionally, TTC officer time to support the project has been limited by other commitments. Maintenance of the Tiny Forest after planting would also be complicated by Grounds Maintenance staff availability, particularly as the site would be new to TTC's estate. Keeping a Tiny Forest on a new site watered and maintained, given the increasing incidences of dry summer weather, may be particularly challenging.

In August, I visited a site in Emerson's Green where a local volunteering group (Friends of Emersons Green Park) have planted an edible tiny forest, after considering the Tiny Forest idea and deciding it was too expensive/not feasible. The edible forest at Emerson's Green is comprised of traditional fruit trees, unusual varieties such as quince, local varieties of plums

and damsons, as well as soft fruits such as strawberries and loganberries, rhubarb, figs, and herbs such as rosemary and bay. The group (who meet and work in the park weekly) planted and care for the edible forest and harvest in the autumn for the benefit of the community. Tables with produce are laid out for local people to collect, which apparently is extremely popular. The Friends of Emersons Green Park group was set up and is supported by enthusiastic members of the community, with arms-length support from the Town Council.

Given the success of the edible forest in Emersons Green, the Committee may wish to consider flexing the Tiny Forest concept to an edible tiny forest. This would give the option to reduce costs, improve local food resilience and benefit a wider population in the town, either directly or in partnership with the Thornbury Foodbank. It may also open further funding/partnership working opportunities. Furthermore, re-consideration could be given to locating the edible forest on TTC-owned and maintained land.

The Committee may also wish to consider options for facilitating a 'Friends of' type group that could help to organise, deliver and maintain the tiny forest. The experience of the Emersons Green group is that this would need to be instigated from within the community, not by the Town Council.

When examining further options for a Tiny Forest in Thornbury, the Committee should consider:

- The intricacies of gaining permission from another landowner for the long-term establishment of a Tiny Forest on their land and the legal work (and cost) this may entail.
- The Officer time involved in managing the project to establish and care for a Tiny Forest and how this should be balanced against other deliverables and priorities. For 2027-28 these include delivery of Phase 2 of the Memorial Woodland project, delivering agreed decarbonisation measures, working with the Grounds Maintenance team on habitat improvements, education and outreach, and devising a new Local Climate and Nature Action Plan (see agenda item 10).
- The feasibility of establishing a 'Friends of' or similar group in Thornbury to assist with establishing and caring for a Tiny Forest or similar and how this could be instigated.
- Whether the Tiny Forest idea should be flexed towards the idea of an edible tiny forest and if so, whether this alters the criteria for selecting its location.
- The overall cost of establishing a Tiny Forest/edible tiny forest in Thornbury, how this might be balanced against other TTC spending priorities, and how financial impacts might be lessened.

The Committee has expressed a desire to include establishment of a Tiny Forest in budgets and work plans for 2027-28 (CN2627.13). Given this, the Committee needs to have a firm plan of what will be delivered, the benefits of doing so, how much funding is needed, and how much officer time is needed to deliver the project and maintain the Tiny Forest afterwards. These areas will need to be addressed at the October meeting of the Climate and Nature Committee if a case is to be made to Full Council for the project to be included in budgets for 2027-28.

2. Implications

<u>Environmental</u>
The establishment of a Tiny or edible tiny forest in Thornbury has clear environmental benefits. These include improved biodiversity, cleaner air, better soil health and enhanced opportunities for nature education and connection. An edible forest has the added benefit of improving local food resilience and directly benefiting the people of Thornbury.

Financial

The financial implications of a Tiny Forest project include the initial, upfront costs to secure a site (which may include legal fees), costs of initial planting and establishment, and costs of ongoing maintenance.

3. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to consider:

- Should the Tiny Forest idea be flexed to an edible tiny forest?
- Should the possibility of locating the project on TTC land be revisited?
- What is the financial and environmental case for the establishment of a Tiny Forest in Thornbury and how should this be presented to Full Council?
- How should this project be prioritised over other Climate and Nature projects the Committee wants to deliver in 2027-28, particularly given the limited Officer time available (see agenda item 6)?

Officer Report to Thornbury Town Council Climate and Nature Committee

Report Title: 2026 Biodiversity Audit/Ecological Survey Results

Prepared By: Sharon Gardham

Meeting Date: 20 October 2026

Status: For Noting

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1. Detail

In 2022, Thornbury Town Council commissioned Wessex Ecological Consultancy to carry out surveys of its key sites and to suggest ecological enhancement plans. Since then, many of the suggested enhancements have been made, including changes to management regimes and schemes of tree and wildflower planting.

To measure the success (or otherwise) of the changes made to management at TTC sites, in 2026, the Climate and Nature Committee decided to commission a re-examination of the sites surveyed in 2022. Alongside measuring the impact of the changes made, the commissioned ecologist was also asked to suggest areas for further improvement and/or changes in approach to management.

This paper summarises the results of the 2026 audit. The suggested changes/enhancements included in the biodiversity audit reports will be presented in a sister paper (2026 Biodiversity Enhancement Measures Proposal).

Overall, the 2026 surveys show that the enhancements and changes made at TTC sites since 2022 have had a positive impact on biodiversity in Thornbury. Key findings include:

- An increase in the number of plant, insect and bird species recorded.
- An improvement in the prevalence of habitats and species prioritised under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (which places a duty to conserve biodiversity on public authorities in England).
- Increasing or new recordings of species that are 'red-listed' (i.e., are of the greatest conservation concern).
- Recording of species that are locally rare.
- Presence of habitats that are of high nature conservation value in a local or South Gloucestershire context.

In summary, the 2026 biodiversity audits show clear enhancement of the biodiversity value of TTC's sites, which is a testament to the efforts of TTC's grounds maintenance team, council officers, volunteer members of the public, and the support of councillors.

Thornbury Cemetery

Key points:

- The Cemetery includes an area of **moderately diverse unimproved grassland**, which is identified as a **priority habitat** under the NERC Act. There was a **75% increase** in the presence of key indicator species for this habitat type between 2022 and 2026.
- The oldest part of the cemetery is **of nature conservation value in a South Gloucestershire context** and this **value has risen significantly** since 2022.
- There were **3 red-listed plant species** recorded on site in 2026.

- The trees and shrubs across the cemetery are of **nature conservation value in a South Gloucestershire context**.
- There are **locally rare insects and lichens** at the cemetery, including an acorn weevil that has not previously been recorded in South Gloucestershire.
- The cemetery is of **high interest for biodiversity.** The changes of management made recently have increased the level of interest.

Mundy Playing Fields

Key Points:

- Several areas that have been managed differently since 2022 show a **significant increase in plant diversity**.
- The banks between the stream and playground support lowland dry acidic grassland which is a **priority habitat** under the NERC Act. This area represents **one of the most significant areas of acidic grassland in South Gloucestershire**. Two species of clover are present in '**exceptional quantities'**.
- There has been a **'striking' increase in the diversity of insect species** recorded, including one species not previously recorded in South Gloucestershire.
- There has been a **42% increase in the number of bird species** recorded, including red-listed species such as swift and starling.
- Overall, the site has seen a **significant increase in biodiversity** value since 2022.

Oakleaze Green

Key Points:

- In 2026, several **plant species associated with unimproved grassland** were recorded, which indicates a reduction in soil fertility. If soil fertility continues to decline, gains in floral diversity should accelerate.
- The grasslands on site support a **moderate diversity of invertebrates**, including a hoverfly recorded at only 2 other sites in South Gloucestershire.
- The grassland across the site is of **nature conservation value in a local context**.
- The diversity of insects and plants has increased, with a **significant increase in biodiversity** overall.
- **Three bird species of conservation concern** were recorded; starling, house sparrow and dunnock.
- Note: There are already plans in place to plant perennial wildflowers and yellow rattle at Oakleaze Green, which will take advantage of the decline in soil fertility. Shade-loving native wildflower species have already been planted in a small area adjacent to neighbouring gardens.

Thicket Walk

Key Points:

- There has been **some increase in diversity** since 2022, including tree planting, which benefit a range of associated species.
- Given the size and use of the site, significant further changes are not suggested.
- Note: There are already plans in place to plant 500 native wildflower bulbs at Thicket Walk (wood anemone, snowdrop, English bluebell and winter aconite).

Chantry Playing Field

Key Points:

- Areas of the playing field are of **nature conservation value in a local context**.
- **Two hoverfly species that are scarce in South Gloucestershire** were recorded on ivy on the southern edge of the site.
- There has been **some increase in the diversity of insects** on the site, showing the 'impact that even small measures can have on biodiversity'.

- There is an **increase in bird species diversity** on the site, including **red-listed dunnock, starlings and swifts**.
- Note: There are already plans to plant perennial wildflowers and yellow rattle in a small area of the playing field.

St Mary's Churchyard

Key Points:

- The churchyard is **moderately species-rich**. It has improved slightly since 2022 from an already good position, reflecting the **success of its management regime** over the last 4 years.
- Several **indicator species of unimproved grassland**, which is a **priority habitat** under the NERC Act are present.
- Two **locally uncommon plant species** were recorded, including the yellow-juiced poppy, which has only been recoded at one other site in South Gloucestershire in the last 20 years.
- The **range of insect species** recorded is described as **'impressive'**.
- One invertebrate species recorded has **only been recorded at one other site in South Gloucestershire in the last century**.
- The churchyard is of **conservation value in a South Gloucestershire context**.

Chantry Road Play Area

Key Points:

- No birds were recorded on the site in 2022. In 2026, **3 species of bird** were recorded, including the red-listed starling.
- There have been few changes to the site since 2022, but there was a **slight increase in bird and insect species** recorded.

2. Implications

Environmental

The changes made to management regimes on TTC sites since 2022, as well as the ecological enhancements put in place, have had a positive impact on species diversity and habitat value.

While the impact of these changes varies from site to site, where nature has been lent a helping hand, some significant improvements have been made. This includes supporting priority habitats and species under the NERC Act, thus fulfilling TTC's statutory obligations. It also includes species which are nationally threatened, such as starlings, swifts and a range of plants and insects. Some of the species and habitats recorded are of value in a county-wide context.

The improvements achieved have been possible while maintaining the recreational value of the sites, showing the possibility of balancing the needs of human site users with the needs of other species.

Repeating surveys like every 4-5 years will enable the Council to build on the work already completed, identifying approaches that are succeeding and suggesting further enhancements.

3. Recommendations

The Climate and Nature Committee is asked to **NOTE** the observations made in this summary and in the full biodiversity audit reports (see attachments to this paper).

4. Appendix

See attached biodiversity audits for St Mary's Churchyard, Thornbury Cemetery, Mundy Playing Fields, Chantry Road Play Area, Thicket Walk, Oakleaze Green, and Chantry Playing Field,

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CHANTRY PLAYING FIELD

BIODIVERSITY AUDIT

SUMMER 2026

For

THORNBURY TOWN COUNCIL

CHANTRY PLAYING FIELDS

BIODIVERSITY AUDIT

1 INTRODUCTION

This plan is one of a series commissioned by Thornbury Town Council with the aims of assessing the biodiversity interest of green spaces in the town, identifying any changes that have taken place since a similar series of surveys was carried out in 2022, and making enhancement proposals where appropriate.

A site survey was carried out on 23rd May 2026. It covered vegetation types and plant species, insects and birds; potential for other groups was assessed.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary

Chantry Playing Fields is dominated by two rugby pitches, which are regularly mown. Strips of grassland along some of the site boundaries have been allowed to grow tall since 2022. There is a continuous hedge, with semi-mature trees, along the Church Road boundary on the northern edge of the sites and the western boundary has a line of trees. Other boundaries have walls and fences with gappy vegetation.

The Playing Fields form part of a chain of green spaces in northern Thornbury, lying between the playing fields of The Castle School and Oakleaze Green to the south-east, and the grounds of St Mary's Primary School and St Mary's Churchyard to the north-west. Beyond these sites are the grounds of Thornbury Castle and open countryside.

2.2 Vegetation

The areas described below are shown on the attached map.

Area 1

As in 2022, the majority of the site has close mown grassland, which is dominated by perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), with other grass species including creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*) and cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*). There is not a high diversity of herb species within the sward but species present include dandelion (*Taraxacum vulgare agg*), common catsear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) and smooth hawksbeard (*Crepis capillaris*).

The herb component is higher on small banks in the southern part of the site, where in addition to the species mentioned above, lesser trefoil (*Trifolum dubium*) was recorded.

Area 1 a)

There is little variation in the composition of the sward across the grassland area, but it is slightly more diverse in the south-eastern part of the site. Additional species here

include fiddle dock (*Rumex pulcher*), field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) and germander speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*).

Area 2

This is the boundary hedge along Church Road. It is narrow – approximately 1 metre wide – and tall – approximately 2.5 metres. It has a mix of native shrub species: hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), field maple (*Acer campestre*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), English elm (*Ulmus procera*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and dog rose (*Rosa canina*). There are several semi-mature trees – lime (*Tilia x europaea*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), crack willow (*Salix x fragilis*), grey poplar (*Populus x canescens*) and false-acacia (*Robinia pseudo-acacia*) – on the southern side of the hedge. Ground flora species associated with the hedge include black horehound (*Ballota nigra*) and cyclamen (*Cyclamen hederifolium*).

The tall grassland strip along the hedge is dominated by false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) with associated herb species including spotted medick (*Medicago arabica*), hedge woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*) and field poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*).

Area 3

The eastern boundary of the site has a wall with some exotic planting nearby. The wall supports rustyback fern (*Asplenium ceterach*) and maidenhair spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*), together with a moderately diverse growth of lichens.

The tall grassland strip along this boundary is dominated by false oat-grass, soft-brome (*Bromus hordaceus*) and cocksfoot. Herb species include germander speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), crow garlic (*Allium vineale*), grey sedge (*Carex divulsa*), field poppy and long-headed poppy (*Papaver dubium*).

Area 4

The southern boundary of the site abuts domestic gardens and has sections of wall and fence. A strip alongside the boundary has been left unmown. This has tall grassland dominated by false oat-grass with frequent bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg*) and cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*). Other plant species here include stinking iris (*Iris foetidissima*), wood avens (*Geum urbanum*) and black horehound, with encroaching scrub species including elder (*Sambucus nigra*), English elm and stag's-horn sumach (*Rhus typhina*).

Area 5

The western boundary has an open line of trees, which include lime, sycamore, grey poplar, horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), walnut (*Juglans regia*) and cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*). Several smaller trees, which include pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) and rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), have recently been planted here. The ground flora below the trees is dominated by false oat-grass and also includes cyclamen, French crane's-bill (*Geranium endressii*), musk mallow (*Malva moschata*), hollyhock (*Alcea rosea*), teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*) and stinking iris. The area of tall

grassland is slightly more extensive than it was in 2022, and additional herb species here include greater knapweed (*Centaurea scabiosa*), hemlock water dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*) and germander speedwell.

2.3 Fauna

2.3.1 Birds

The following were recorded in 2022:

Area 1 (grassland): Carrion crow;
Area 2 (Church Road boundary): Wood pigeon;
Area 5 (western boundary): blue tit, wood pigeon.

The following were recorded in 2026:

Area 1 (grassland): Carrion crow, jackdaw and starling, with swift feeding overhead;
Area 2 (Church Road boundary): Blue tit, goldcrest, goldfinch, robin, wood pigeon and wren;
Area 4 (southern boundary): Dunnock, goldfinch, robin and wood pigeon.
Area 5 (western boundary): Blue tit, coal tit, dunnock, great tit, wood pigeon.

2.3.2 Insects

The following were recorded in 2022:

Area 2 (Church Road boundary): *Lyonetia clerkella, Parornix devoniella, Stigmella plagicolella* moths.
Area 4 (southern boundary): Red admiral butterfly; hornet, ivy bee, buff-tailed bumblebee; *Eristalis tenax, Eristalis pertinax, Myathropa florea, Volucella inanis, Volucella zonaria* flies;
Area 5 (western boundary): *Aspidapion radiolus* beetle.

The following were recorded in 2026:

Area 2 (Church Road boundary): *Lyonetia clerkella* moth; common carder bee; 24-spot ladybird and *Oedemera nobilis* beetles; *Eristalis tenax, Xanthogramma pedissequum* and *Meliscaeva auricollis* flies.
Area 3 (eastern boundary): *Ditula angustoriana* and *Glyphiteryx simpliciella* moths; 16-spot ladybird, seven-spot ladybird and *Oedemera nobilis* beetles; *Chrysopilus cristatus* fly.
Area 4 (southern boundary): Common carder bee and buff-tailed bumblebee; 24-spot ladybird, cockchafer and *Gastrophysa viridula* beetles; *Episyrphus balteatus* and *Platycheirus albimanus* flies.
Area 5 (western boundary): Red-tailed and garden bumblebees; seven-spot ladybird, *Pseudapion rufirostre, Rhopalpion longirostre, Malvapion malvae, Adisapion radilolus, Phyllobius pomaceus, Rhyzobius liturus* and *Scymnus suturalis* beetles; *Pentatoma rufipes* and *Neolygus viridis* bugs; *Eumerus strigatus* and *Chrysotoxum cautum* flies.

2.4 Amenity

The rugby pitches are the dominant amenity provision on the site. Otherwise, it is well used for informal recreation. An unofficial and unsurfaced path across the eastern side of the park is well used, particularly by students from The Castle School.

3 EVALUATION

3.1 Introduction

Various criteria are used in assessing the biodiversity value of sites. These include rarity, in terms of either habitats or species, which can be viewed in a range of contexts from international to local and also degree of threat: some species remain widespread but are of conservation concern because their populations have declined rapidly. Some habitats take many centuries, or require very specialised conditions, to develop their full diversity and those that cannot be recreated are more highly valued than those that can be readily created. The extent and connectivity of habitats is of importance, since many species rely on large areas of habitat or on having access to different habitat types at different stages in their life cycle. This can be particularly important in urban areas, where species can be lost from small and isolated areas of habitat, even if these remain in good condition. Conversely, sites can have value in a wider context if, for example, they allow wildlife to colonise gardens and other sites in the surrounding area or if they allow wildlife to move into and across otherwise inhospitable areas. In accessible urban areas the public appeal or visibility of wildlife is also a factor in contributing to public enjoyment and wellbeing.

Guidance on site evaluation is given in various sources, including the South Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, and has been followed here.

3.2 Habitats

The grassland that dominates the site has been intensively managed and the use of fertilisers in particular has excluded all but the most tolerant species of plant. Frequent mowing means that the grassland is not of significant value for invertebrates, or for other animals.

The grassland across most of the site is of minimal nature conservation value.

The grassland in the south-eastern corner of the site is only slightly more diverse, but it does include germander speedwell, a plant that is associated with species-rich grasslands. Fiddle dock, which was found here, is an uncommon plant that has been recorder from fewer than ten sites in South Gloucestershire, and from only three others since 2000. It is listed as Near Threatened in the Great Britain Red List.

The grassland here is of nature conservation value in a local context.

The hedge at area 2 is moderately diverse in woody species and the proximity of standard trees adds to its potential for birds and other wildlife. The presence of a strip

of tall grassland alongside the hedge adds to its value for wildlife, in particular for invertebrates.

The hedge is of nature conservation value in a local context.

The strip of vegetation at area 4, on the southern edge of the site, is of some value for invertebrates. A large plant of flowering ivy here was attracting very large numbers of insects at the time of the 2022 survey. These include ivy bee (*Colletes hederae*), which is a recent colonist of Britain, as well as hornet and two hoverflies that mimic this species: *Volucella inanis* and *Volucella zonaria*, both of which are scarce in South Gloucestershire.

The vegetation here is of nature conservation value in a local context.

The western boundary of the site (area 5) is of interest for its mix of tree species and the associated tall grassland. The ladybird *Scymnus suturalis,* which is associated with pine, has been recorded at one other site in South Gloucestershire. Four of the beetle species recorded along this boundary are weevils associated with hollyhock; all appear to be rare in South Gloucestershire (only *Malvapion malvae* has been recorded previously). This is doubtless in part due to their small size, but it does indicate that the population of this non-native plant supports a rich invertebrate fauna. The bug *Neolygus viridis* has only been recorded at one other site in South Gloucestershire. It was on lime, its main food plant, here.

The vegetation along this boundary is of nature conservation value in a local context.

3.3 Protected and Invasive Species

No signs of any protected species were seen on or around the site. It is likely that bats use the tree lines on the edge of the site for foraging and commuting and there are potential roosting opportunities in the trees at area 5, on the western edge of the site.

The grassland is mown too frequently to be used by groups such as reptiles.

No scheduled invasive species were recorded on the site.

3.5 Trends

The retention of small areas of tall grassland has increased the diversity of insects recorded along the hedgerows: the additional species recorded include grassland specialists such as 24-spot and *Rhyzobius litura* ladybirds, *Chrysopilus cristatus* fly, common carder bee and cockchafer, showing the impact that even small measures can have on biodiversity.

The diversity of birds recorded was also higher in 2026 than in 2022. In part, this is due to the earlier timing of the 2026 survey, but it may also reflect a genuine increase in bird populations. Species such as dunnock may have benefited from the provision of tall grassland corridors. Starling was recorded at several of the sites surveyed in

2026, whilst it was not seen at all in the 2022 surveys. The Avon population, by contrast, has fallen by around 50% over the same period. It is unlikely that changes at Chantry Playing Fields alone have had a significant impact on the local starling population, but it is possible that biodiversity measures across the town are having a positive impact on this threatened species.

3.5 Summary

Area	Scale of Interest	Features of Interest
1 (main grassland)	Minimal	
1 (south-eastern corner)	Local context	Fiddle dock (locally uncommon plant)
2 (hedge on northern boundary)	Local context	Value for birds and insects, potentially foraging bats
4 (vegetation on southern boundary)	Local context	Value for insects
5 (western boundary)	Local context	Value for birds and insects, potential for foraging and roosting bats

4 MANAGEMENT

4.1 Aim

To maximise the biodiversity interest of the site whilst maintaining its value for amenity and other interests.

4.2 Objectives

To extend the area of tall grassland on the site.

To extend the area of wooded habitats on the site.

4.3 Constraints

The main constraint on management for biodiversity here is the need to retain rugby pitches on the site, together with short grass around the margins of the pitches. This means that no changes to management can be proposed for a large area in the centre of the site. It is also important to maintain the appeal of the site for informal recreation and to ensure that the informal path across the south-eastern corner of the site remains open.

There are ecological constraints on enhancement opportunities. Most importantly, the soil across most of the site is very fertile (as revealed by the composition of the existing vegetation) and this means that measures such as the creation of wildflower meadows are impractical without drastic interventions to change the soil chemistry.

There are also practical constraints on some potential measures. Initiatives such as the creation of beds of wildflower planting would be worth consideration if there is support and enthusiasm for such measures but have not been recommended here

because they require a commitment to relatively intensive management if they are to be maintained in the long term.

4.4 Rationale

Several of the measures recommended in the 2022 report have been implemented here: management has been relaxed along the site boundaries, allowing tall herb and grassland vegetation to develop; management of lengths of hedge has been relaxed; and bird and bat boxes and insect hotels have been installed. The scope for further measures is constrained by the need to maintain sports pitches, but some further enhancements may be possible.

4.5 Management Proposals

1 Maintain management as at present over most site but avoid fertiliser use on any area not within the rugby pitches.

2 In the area shown as being of higher diversity on the attached map, relax mowing regime, so grassland is cut once a month from May to September, with mower blades set at 70 mm.

3 Cut strips of tall grassland once every three years but otherwise leave uncut.

4 Plant trees on site boundaries as possible.

5 Replace bird and bat boxes as necessary.

6 Maintain bug hotels

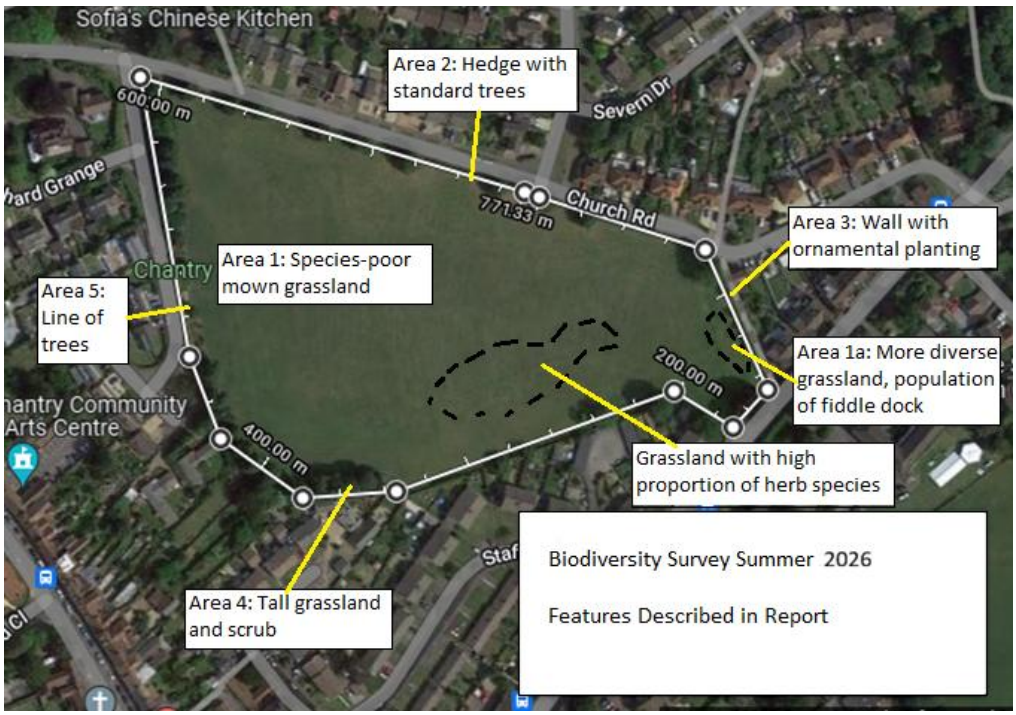
Measures such as drilling holes in wooden posts can also provide nest sites for solitary bees.

7 Retain any dead wood as a habitat feature, place in partial shade in area 5. Logs should be kept in as large sections as possible, because this makes them difficult to move and also provides optimal habitat for wildlife.

4.6 Work Planner

Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Maintain amenity grassland over most of site, avoid use of fertilisers	Throughout	Throughout	Throughout	Throughout	Throughout
Mow herb-rich grassland, set mower blades at 70mm	May-Sept	May-Sept	May-Sept	May-Sept	May-Sept
Mow one-third of tall grassland strips on a rotation, so each area is cut once every three years	Sept	Sept	Sept	Sept	Sept

Plant trees and shrubs	As possible
Maintain bug hotels	As necessary
Create dead wood piles in area 5	When possible





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CHANTRY ROAD PLAY AREA

BIODIVERSITY AUDIT

SUMMER 2026

For

THORNBURY TOWN COUNCIL

CHANTRY ROAD PLAY AREA

BIODIVERSITY AUDIT

1 INTRODUCTION

This plan is one of a series commissioned by Thornbury Town Council with the aim of identifying measures by which the biodiversity interest of green spaces in the town might be enhanced, whilst maintaining their value for both formal and informal recreation. It follows on from a similar series of surveys carried out in 2022.

A site survey was carried out on 21st May 2026. It covered vegetation types and plant species, insects and birds; potential for other groups was assessed.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary

Chantry Road Play Area is dominated by close mown grassland with other vegetation at present limited to a small group of trees and has changed little since 2022.

The Play Area is rather isolated from other green spaces within an area of housing, but it provides a stepping stone between Chantry Playing Fields and the grounds of The Castle School.

2.2 Vegetation

The areas described below are shown on the attached map.

The majority of the site has close mown grassland, which is dominated by perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), with other grass species including creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) and rough-stalked meadow grass (*Poa trivialis*). The frequency of herb species within the sward is low. The species present are dandelion (*Taraxacum vulgare agg*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), common daisy (*Bellis perennis*), field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) and autumn hawksbeard (*Scorzoneroides autumnalis*). Spotted medick (*Medicago arabica*) and common catsear (*Hypochaeris radicata*) were recorded in 2026 but not in 2022.

There is a small group of Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) trees in the western corner of the site. The largest tree supports a growth of mistletoe (*Viscum album*). Several trees have been planted since 2022.

The site boundaries are fences and lack any woody vegetation but have small quantities of tall herb species, which include evergreen alkanet (*Pentaglottis sempervirens*), nipplewort (*Lapsana communis*) and common mallow (*Malva sylvestris*).

2.3 Fauna

No birds were recorded on the site in 2022; goldfinch, starling and wood pigeon were present in 2026.

Episyrphus balteatus hoverfly was recorded io 2022, and *Bombus terrestris. Bombus pascuorum* and *Bombus hortensis* bumblebees in 2026.

2.4 Amenity
The site has very well used and maintained children's play equipment.

3 EVALUATION

3.1 Introduction
Various criteria are used in assessing the biodiversity value of sites. These include rarity, in terms of either habitats or species, which can be viewed in a range of contexts from international to local and also degree of threat: some species remain widespread but are of conservation concern because their populations have declined rapidly. Some habitats take many centuries, or require very specialised conditions, to develop their full diversity and those that cannot be recreated are more highly valued than those that can be readily created. The extent and connectivity of habitats is of importance, since many species rely on large areas of habitat or on having access to different habitat types at different stages in their life cycle. This can be particularly important in urban areas, where species can be lost from small and isolated areas of habitat, even if these remain in good condition. Conversely, sites can have value in a wider context if, for example, they allow wildlife to colonise gardens and other sites in the surrounding area or if they allow wildlife to move into and across otherwise inhospitable areas. In accessible urban areas the public appeal or visibility of wildlife is also a factor in contributing to public enjoyment and wellbeing.

Guidance on site evaluation is given in various documents, including the South Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, and has been followed here.

3.2 Habitats
The grassland that dominates the site has been intensively managed and the use of fertilisers in particular has excluded all but the most tolerant species of plant. Frequent mowing means that the grassland is not of significant value for invertebrates, or for other animals.

The grassland across the site is of minimal nature conservation value.

The population of mistletoe associated with the Norway maple tree is of some interest, although this species is fairly widespread in and around Thornbury.

The population of Norway maple is of nature conservation value in a local context.

3.3 Protected and Invasive Species
No signs of any protected species were seen on or around the site and it has very little potential for any such species.

No scheduled invasive species were recorded on the site.

3.4 Trends

There have been few changes to the site since 2022, although the planted trees should have a beneficial effect as they mature.

There were slight increases in the numbers of bird and insect species recorded. The increase in bird species probably reflects an overall increase in biodiversity value in the surrounding area; starling was recorded at several sites in 2026 and not in 2022, a welcome increase in the local population of this declining species. The bumblebees were all recorded at a single plant of evergreen alkanet, reflecting the contribution that even a small feature can make.

3.4 Summary

Area	Scale of Interest	Features of Interest
Main grassland	Minimal	
Norway maple	Local context	Mistletoe

4 MANAGEMENT

4.1 Aims

To maximise the biodiversity interest of the site whilst maintaining its value for amenity and other interests.

4.2 Objectives

To enhance the boundaries of the site.

4.3 Constraints

The main constraint on management for biodiversity here is the need to maintain the value of the site for amenity, including retention of the play equipment and a surrounding area of close mown grassland.

There are practical constraints on some potential measures. Initiatives such as the creation of beds of wildflower planting would be worth consideration if there is support and enthusiasm for such measures but have not been recommended here because they require a commitment to relatively intensive management if they are to be maintained in the long term.

4.4 Rationale

The potential to enhance the biodiversity value of this site is limited by its small size and the need to retain formal play opportunities across most of the area. There are good opportunities to plant hedges or to allow tall herb vegetation to develop along site boundaries. One of the planted trees (a rowan) has died and could be replaced.

4.5 Management Proposals

1 Maintain management of amenity grassland as at present over most site but avoid fertiliser use on the grassland.

2 Plant hedges along the boundaries of the site using the following mix:

Field maple	*Acer campestre*
Dogwood	*Cornus sanguinea*
Hazel	*Corylus avellana*
Hawthorn	*Crataegus monogyna*
Spindle	*Euonymus europaea*
Wayfaring tree	*Viburnum lantana*

Or relax mowing regime adjacent to fences, so that tall herbs are able to colonise.

3 Maintain planted trees: check ties and stakes, mulch as necessary and loosen ties. Replace any failed tree planting.:

4 Install bug hotels at the locations shown. Suitable designs are given at the links below:

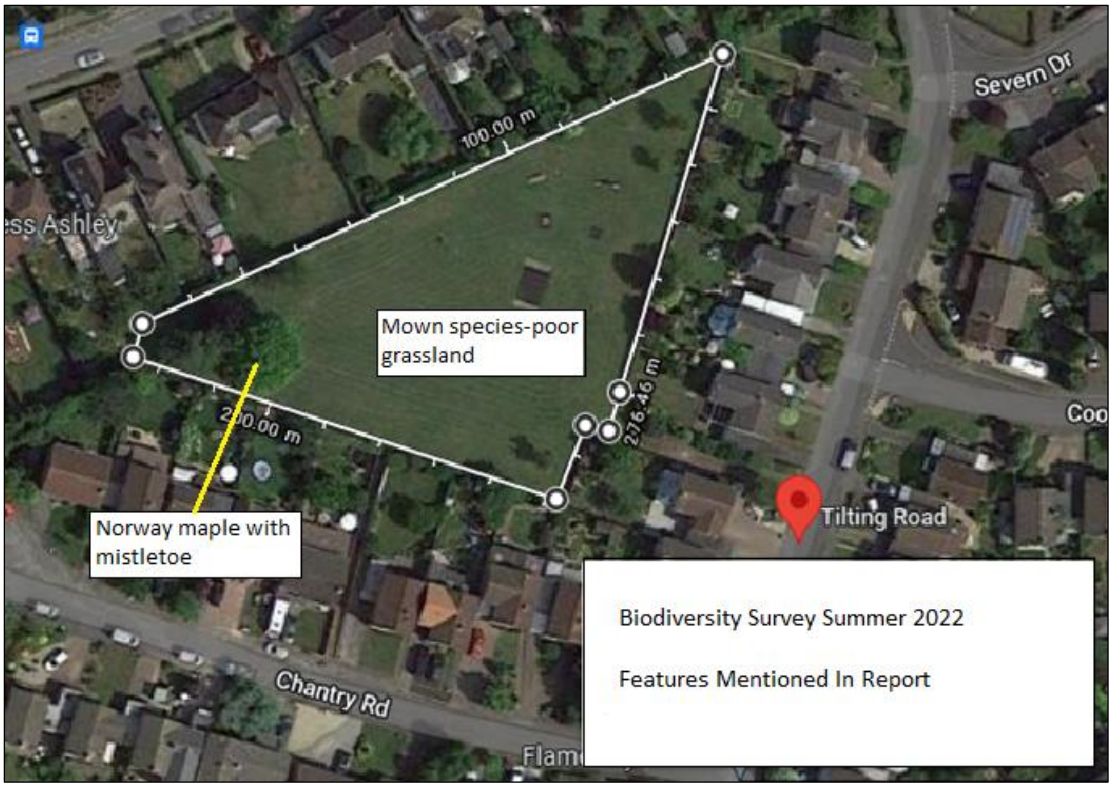
https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/nature-on-your-doorstep/garden-activities/build-a-bug-hotel/

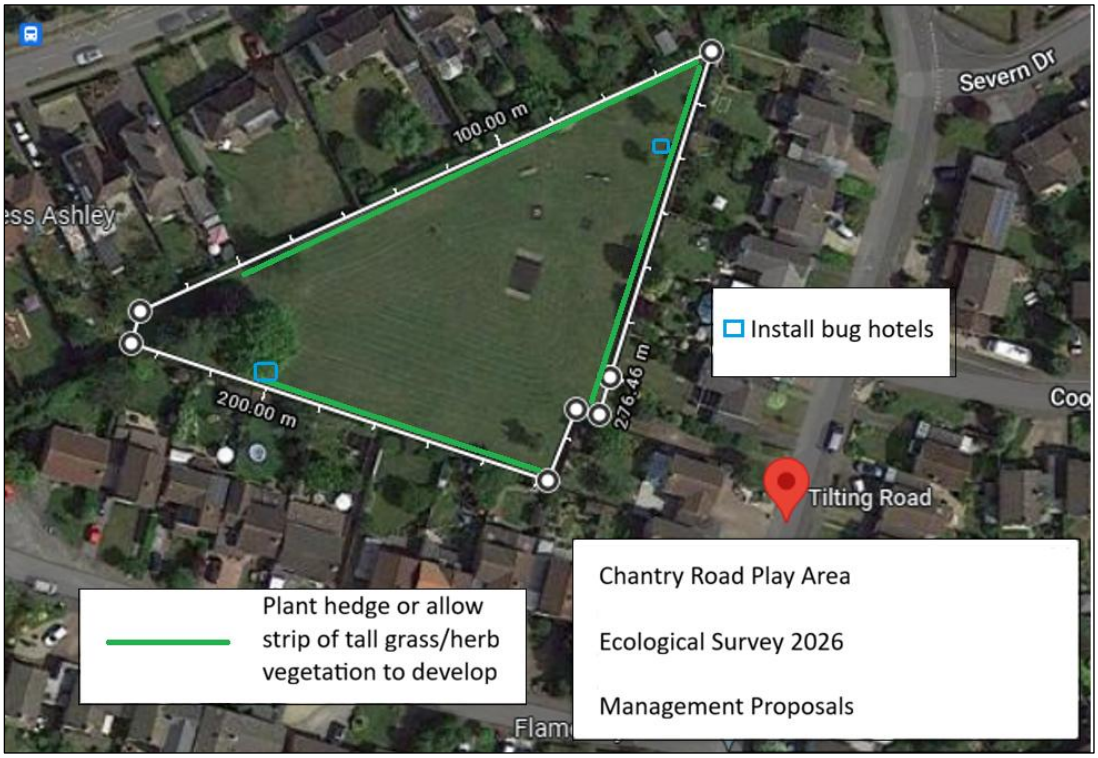
https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/Resources/Project/Make-a-bug-hotel

Measures such as drilling holes in wooden posts can also provide nest sites for solitary bees – fence posts on the boundaries of the site may provide suitable locations.

4.6 Work Planner

Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Maintain amenity grassland, avoid use of fertilisers	Throughout	Throughout	Throughout	Throughout	Throughout
Plant hedges		Oct-Feb	Oct-Feb		
Plant trees and shrubs			Oct-Feb		
Install bug hotels		Feb			
Maintain bug hotels		As necessary	As necessary	As necessary	As necessary


Severn Dr
100.00 m
Mown species-poor grassland
276.46 m
200.00 m
Norway maple with mistletoe
Tilting Road
Chantry Rd
Biodiversity Survey Summer 2022
Features Mentioned In Report


Severn Dr
100.00 m
Install bug hotels
276.46 m
200.00 m
Tilting Road
Plant hedge or allow strip of tall grass/herb vegetation to develop
Chantry Road Play Area
Ecological Survey 2026
Management Proposals

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MUNDY PLAYING FIELDS
BIODIVERSITY MONITORING AND ENHANCEMENT PLAN
SUMMER 2026

For
THORNBURY TOWN COUNCIL



MUNDY PLAYING FIELDS

ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT PLAN

1 INTRODUCTION

This report is one of a series commissioned by Thornbury Town Council following on from a series of surveys carried out in 2022. The 2022 surveys had the aim of identifying measures by which the biodiversity interest of green spaces in the town might be enhanced, whilst maintaining their value for both formal and informal recreation. The 2026 surveys were carried out to assess the effectiveness of any changes in management, and to make further recommendations where appropriate.

Site surveys were carried out on 20th May and 9th June 2026. They covered vegetation types and plant species, insects and birds; potential for other groups was assessed.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary

The site is dominated by large areas of mown grass, some of which is used as football pitches and some for informal play, with smaller areas of tree and shrub cover, which include lengths of species-rich hedge, and a stretch of stream.

The site is on the western edge of Thornbury, between the town and open countryside, so has the potential to contribute to the ecological connectivity of both public spaces and private gardens in that part of the town.

2.2 Vegetation

The areas described below are shown on the attached map. Area descriptions from 2022 are included as Appendix 1: changes observed since then are described below.

2.2.1 Grassland

Area A

The grassland across most of the site has not changed, but alterations to management have led to changes to the sward in parts of the site.

The following areas are broadly similar but have a slightly higher diversity:

Ai): A slightly elevated frequency of herbs was detected here in 2022 and the grassland has since been left to grow tall. The species recorded in the two years were broadly similar but a greater diversity of grasses was recorded in 2026; these included sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*). Additional herb species recorded in 2026 include common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*) and meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*).

Aii): The is another area that was noted in 2022 as having a higher diversity of both grasses and herbs than other areas of grassland. It has since been allowed to grow tall and has been planted with a seed mix. A significantly increased diversity of plants

was recorded here in 2026, with additional species including common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), common bird's-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), ox-eye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), wild carrot (*Daucus carota*) and cowslip (*Primula veris*). Annual herbs that have taken advantage of the bare soil created by wildflower planting include common forget-me-not (*Myosotis arvensis*) and wall speedwell (*Veronica arvensis*).

Aiii) This area had been left to grow tall but was mown shortly before the survey was carried out and could not be fully surveyed.

Aiv) This is another area that was noted in 2022 as having a slightly elevated diversity of herbs and has since been left to grow tall, with some areas planted with a wildflower mix. Arable weeds such as corncockle (*Agrostemma githago*), austrian chamomile (*Anthemis austriaca*) and field poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*) are present in the seeded patches. Other parts of the area have good quantities of yellow rattle and pignut (*Conopodium majus*).

Area B

The grassland on the banks around the play area and to the south was noted in 2022 as being significantly more diverse than that elsewhere on the site. Most of the area was close mown then but the management regime has since been relaxed, resulting in a significant increase in diversity.

The west-facing and south-facing continue to support large quantities of sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) with additional species in 2026 including subterranean clover (*Trifolium subterraneum*), knotted clover (*Trifolium striatum*), lesser trefoil (*Trifolium micranthum*), slender parsely-piert (*Aphanes australis*), prickly sedge (*Carex muricata*), squirrel-tail fescue (*Vulpia bromoides*) and small cat's-tail (*Phleum bertolonii*).

The north-facing banks continue to support a good variety of species, including common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), glaucous sedge (*Carex flacca*) and burnet saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*).

2.3 Fauna

The following bird species were recorded in 2022:

Hedge 6. Wood pigeon.
Hedge 8: Robin, wood pigeon and wren.
Hedge 9: Blue tit, chiffchaff, robin, treecreeper, wood pigeon and wren
Hedge 10: Blackcap, chiffchaff, dunnock and goldfinch.

Other species present across the site were greenfinch, green woodpecker, jackdaw and magpie, with house martin feeding overhead.

The following were recorded in 2026:

Hedge 1 Blackcap, goldfinch and robin
Hedge 6. Blackbird, dunnock, chiffchaff, robin and wood pigeon.
Hedge 7 Blackbird, blackcap, blue tit and robin.
Hedge 8: Blackbird, blue tit, robin, wood pigeon and wren.
Hedge 9: Blackbird, blue tit, magpie, robin, wood pigeon, siskin and wren
Hedge 10: Blackcap, chiffchaff, dunnock, greenfinch and goldfinch.
Hedge 11: Goldfinch, robin and wood pigeon.
Hedge 13 (stream): Rook and grey wagtail.

Other species present across the site were carrion crow, pied wagtail, jackdaw, starling and magpie, with house martin and swift feeding overhead.

The following insect species were recorded:

2022

Hedge 6: *Stigmella plagicolella* moth.
Hedge 7: *Phyllonorycter coryli, Phyllonorycter nicellii, Stigmella micotheriella, Stigmella floslactella, Parornix devoniella* and *Celypha lacunana* moths.
Hedge 10: *Phyllonorycter coryfoliella* moth.

2026

Ai (unmown area) *Epistrophe grossulariae* fly

Aii (unmown areas) Buff-tailed bumblebee, *Lasioglossum* sp bee; seven-spot ladybird, *Oedemera nobilis, Oulema melanopus, Cantharis rustica* and *Mecinus pascuorum* beetles; *Stenodema calcarata* bug.

Aiv Red-tailed bumblebee and *Lasioglossum* sp bees

B Red-tailed bumblebee and common carder bee; meadow brown butterfly.

Hedge 2 *Eristalis tenax* and *Meliscaeva auricollis* flies; *Nomada marshamella* bee; *Oedemera nobilis* beetle

Hedge 4 *Celypha lacunana* moth; buff-tailed bumblebee and early bumblebee; seven-spot ladybird, sixteen-spot ladybird, *Oedemera nobilis* and *Cantharis rusticana* beetles; *Coreus marginatus* bug; *Helophilus pendulus, Epistrophe eligans, Melanostoma scalare* and *Dioctria rufipes* flies.

Hedge 5 Holly blue and small copper butterflies; common carder bee, early bumblebee, buff-tailed bumblebee, *Andrena cineraria, Andrena nitida, Andrena flavipes* and *Nomada marshamella* bees; harlequin ladybird, seven-spot ladybird, fourteen-spot ladybird, *Liloceris lilii, Gastrophysa viridula* and *Stenocorus meridianus*

beetles; *Dolichopus plumipes, Helophilis pendulus, Eristalis tenax, Eristalis pertinax* and *Episyrphus balteatus* flies; *Coreus marginatus* bug.

Hedge 6 *Apotomis turbidana, Pseudargyrotoza conwagana* and *Alabonia geoffrella* moths; *Chrysopilus cristatus, Dolichopus plumipes, Nephrotoma quadrifaria, Ptychoptera lacustris, Helophilus pendulus* and *Melanostoma scalare* flies; cream-spot ladybird, fourteen-spot ladybird, *Pyrochroa serraticornis* and *Grammpotera ruficornis* beetles

Hedge 7 *Cheilosia albitarus* fly; *Phyllobius pomaceus* beetle.

Hedge 9 Green-veined white butterfly; early bumblebee; *Helophilus pendulus* fly; *Amara aenea* beetle.

Stream *Phaonia pallida* fly and *Tingis cardui* bug.

2.4 Amenity

The playing field provides a major resource for the population of Thornbury, which includes providing formal children's play, football pitches and areas for informal recreation.

3 EVALUATION

3.1 Introduction

Various criteria are used in assessing the biodiversity value of sites. These include rarity, in terms of either habitats or species, which can be viewed in a range of contexts from international to local and also degree of threat: some species remain widespread but are of conservation concern because their populations have declined rapidly. Some habitats take many centuries, or require very specialised conditions, to develop their full diversity and those that cannot be recreated are more highly valued than those that can be readily created. The extent and connectivity of habitats is of importance, since many species rely on large areas of habitat or on having access to different habitat types at different stages in their life cycle. This can be particularly important in urban areas, where species can be lost from small and isolated areas of habitat, even if these remain in good condition. Conversely, sites can have value in a wider context if, for example, they allow wildlife to colonise gardens and other sites in the surrounding area or if they allow wildlife to move into and across otherwise inhospitable areas. In accessible urban areas the public appeal or visibility of wildlife is also a factor in contributing to public enjoyment and wellbeing.

Guidance on site evaluation is given by various sources, including the South Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, and has been followed here.

3.2 Habitats

Grasslands

Area B, on the banks around the playground and to the east of the stream, was identified in the 2022 report as the most valuable area of grassland on the site; its value has since risen considerably following changes in the management regime. Species that were highlighted in the earlier report, such as sheep's sorrel, burnet saxifrage and glaucous sedge, are still present. Several species that were not recorded in 2022 were recorded in 2026. Most notably, they include:

- subterranean clover, which has not been recorded in South Gloucestershire since 1985;
- knotted clover, which had been recorded at two other sites in South Gloucestershire (one of them allocated for development) since 2000; and
- slender parsley-piert, which is known from one other site in South Gloucestershire.

The two clover species are present in exceptional quantity. Like sheep's sorrel, these three species are indicative of soils with a low pH, which are rare in most of South Gloucestershire. This area is very small, but it supports lowland dry acidic grassland, which is listed as a Priority Habitat in Section 41 of the 2006 NERC Act.

Area B is of nature conservation value in a South Gloucestershire context.



Trifolium subterraneum and *Trifolium striatum*

Most of Area A is of minimal nature conservation value but the more diverse areas that have been left to grow tall now support some species indicative of unimproved grassland, notably pignut and common knapweed. The new management regime has also enabled colonisation of these areas by a range of grassland insect species. Most are widespread, but *Mecinus pascuorum,* a weevil associated with ribwort plantain, is known from only two other sites in South Gloucestershire.

These areas are of nature conservation value in a local context.

Hedges and Trees

The nature conservation value of the hedges remains as described in 2022: hedges 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 qualify as Important Hedgerows under the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations, largely due to their diversity of woody species. The hedges support a good diversity of insects. Most of these are widespread, but the longhorn beetle *Stenocorus meridianus,* which is associated with dead wood, has only been recorded at three other sites in South Gloucestershire. The robberfly *Dioctria rufipes* has only been recorded at one other site in South Gloucestershire since 2000; it is a predator of other insects, associated with hedges and woodland edge. The cranefly *Ptychoptera lacustris* has not previously been recorded from South Gloucestershire: it is associated with shaded wetlands, including small streams.

These hedges are of high nature conservation value in a local context.



Stencorus meridianus

There are notable trees associated with some of the hedges; the most valuable of these are in hedges 4, 6, 8 and 9. As well as contributing to the nature conservation value of the hedges these trees are of ecological value in their own right.

Wetlands

Ditches and streams provide wetland habitat in parts of the site.

The ditches are small, but they support a reasonable diversity of wetland plant species. The most diverse are those along hedges 2 and 8 and at area 12. None of the plant species recorded is uncommon but they add diversity to the site. The ditches are of value for a range of insect species, including *Ptychoptera lacustris* mentioned above.



Ptychoptera lacustris, a fold-winged cranefly.

The stream has limited amounts of wetland vegetation but there is potential for the development of more extensive stands, which would be of value for invertebrates and birds. The poplar and willow trees associated with the stream provide habitat for a range of invertebrates and are a valuable feature in their own right.

These wetland features are of nature conservation value in a local context.

3.3 Protected and Invasive Species

No sign of any protected species recorded was seen.

Bats may use habitats across the site, particularly the hedges, tree lines and the stream, for foraging and there are potential bat roosts in trees on the boundaries of the playing fields and along the stream.

No scheduled invasive species were recorded on the site.

3.4 Summary

Area	Feature	Scale of Interest	Features of Interest
B	Grassland	South Gloucestershire context	Diverse vegetation, including indicator species of unimproved grassland and locally uncommon plants.
Aiv and v	Grassland	Local context	Populations of fiddle dock.
Hedges 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8	Important hedges	Local context	Diverse woody species, historic and cultural interest
Hedges 4, 6, 8 and 9	Standard trees	Local context	Intrinsic value, and potential for birds, insects and other wildlife
Hedges 2 & 8 and area 12	Wetland	Local context	Plant populations. Potential for invertebrates
Whole site	Amenity	Local context	Formal and informal recreation

4 TRENDS

There have been several changes to the management regime since 2022, and these have led to a significant increase in the site's biodiversity value. Site-wide changes are reflected in the bird species recorded. The 2026 survey was carried out at a more favourable time of year for bird surveying than the 2022 survey, but the increase from 14 species in 2022 to 20 species in 2026 probably reflects a genuine increase in value. Several of the species recorded are of conservation concern: perhaps the most significant are starling and swift. There is no evidence that either species nests on the site, but their use of it for feeding reflects its value for insects.

The increase in the diversity of insects recorded is also striking. Many of those recorded were along the hedges, but several of these are likely to use the areas of long grassland as well.

Changes in plant populations are discussed above. The most significant changes are the appearance of several uncommon plant species at area B, which despite its small size is now one of the most significant areas of acidic grassland in South Gloucestershire.

5 MANAGEMENT

5.1 Aims

To maximise the biodiversity interest of the site whilst maintaining its role as an important resource for both formal and informal recreation.

5.2 Objectives

To maintain species-rich grassland on the site.

To maintain and enhance hedges.

To maintain and enhance wetlands.

5.3 Constraints

The main constraint on management for biodiversity is the need to maintain the value of the site for recreation. The formal play and sports areas should be maintained as at present and short grassland should be retained across other areas of the site, where it is important for informal recreation.

5.4 Rationale

Changes made to site management since 2022, in line with recommendations made in that year's report, have produced some clear improvements in biodiversity value. The modifications to the grassland management regime have increased biodiversity across the site: it is important that these areas are maintained, and provision of further small areas of tall grassland, especially alongside hedges, would be beneficial.

5.5 Management Proposals

1 No fertilisers or herbicides of any kind should be used on any area of grassland.

2 Continue grassland mowing as at present across the most of site

3 The acidic grassland at area B is principally of interest for low growing plants that flower in the spring. It should be mown annually to prevent dominance by tall grasses; the first mow can be at any time from early July onwards and a second mowing in autumn would be beneficial. The arisings should be gathered and removed.

4 Manage the other areas left to grow tall as hay meadow: leave unmown between May and August, then cut and remove arisings. Cuts can be staggered through the summer, so that not all areas are mown simultaneously. Small areas should be left tall over the winter, in order to provide habitat for insects. These areas may require occasional management to prevent scrub encroachment.

5 Allow tall grassland to develop in strips parallel to hedges.

6 Allow the hedges shown on the map below to grow tall, cut every other year in February.

7 Plant further trees, using the following species:

Field maple	*Acer campestre*
Silver birch	*Betula pendula*
Crab apple	*Malus sylvestris*
Pedunculate oak	*Quercus robur*
Rowan	*Sorbus aucuparia*

8 Remove vegetation and silt from ditch at hedges 2, 5 and 12; leave undisturbed patches of vegetation as refuge areas.

9 Leave sections of stream at area 13 unmanaged.

10 Fit bird and bat boxes to trees. Boxes can be either purchased commercially or made by the local community or schools.

11 Retain any dead wood as a habitat feature, place in partial shade on the eastern boundary of the cemetery. Logs should be kept in as large sections as possible, because this makes them difficult for the public to move and also provides optimal habitat for wildlife.

4.6 Work Planner

Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Mow grassland at area B; gather and remove arisings	July and September	July and September	July and September	July and September	July and September
Mow tall grasslands; gather and remove arisings	August	August	August	August	August
Remove encroaching scrub from tall grasslands			February		February
Cut hedge 5			February		February
Plant trees	As resources allow	As resources allow	As resources allow	As resources allow	As resources allow
Clear out ditch along hedge 5			August		
Clear out ditch along hedge 2				August	
Fit bird and bat boxes to trees	January	January			
Check bird and bat boxes, and replace as necessary			January	January	January
Create dead wood piles	As dead wood becomes available	As dead wood becomes available	As dead wood becomes available	As dead wood becomes available	As dead wood becomes available



Map 1: Existing features



Map 2: Management proposals.

Appendix 1 Vegetation Descriptions, 2022

The areas described below are shown on the attached map.

Grassland

Area A

The grassland across most of the site is dominated by perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) with other grass species including creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and rough-stalked meadow-grass (*Poa trivialis*). The diversity of herb species is low, with the most frequent being dandelion (*Taraxacum vulgare*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*).

The following areas are broadly similar but have a slightly higher diversity:

Ai): The frequency of herbs is higher here, with species in reasonable quantity including ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), bulbous buttercup (*Ranunculus bulbosus*), autumnal hawkbit (*Scorzoneroides autumnalis*) and self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*).

Aii): The frequency of creeping bent and red fescue (*Festuca rubra*) is higher here, and the frequency of perennial rye-grass lower, than in the main grassland. Common catsear (*Hypochaeris radicata*) is reasonably frequent.

Aiii) Herbs make up a high proportion of the sward here, and include yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), lesser trefoil (*Trifolium dubium*) and self-heal.

Aiv) Herb species across this area include yarrow, common catsear, ribwort plantain and fiddle dock (*Rumex pulcher*).

Av) Herb species here include yarrow, common castear, ribwort plantain, red clover and fiddle dock.

Area B

The grassland on the banks around the play area and to the south is significantly more diverse than that elsewhere on the site.

The west-facing and south-facing banks have very sparse grassland around small rock outcrops and patches of bare soil, with large quantities of sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) in a sward dominated by common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*). Other species here include grey sedge (*Carex divulsa*), black knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) and fiddle dock as well as the mosses *Ceratodon purpureus* and *Brachythecium rutabulum*.

The north-facing banks have a grass-dominated sward, without bare earth, but herbs are fairly frequent. Common sorrel, glaucous sedge (*Carex flacca*) and burnet saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*) are still present with additional species including wild

carrot, yellow rattle, spotted medic (*Medicago arabica*) and cuckoo-flower (*Cardamine pratensis*).

Hedges
There are several stretches of hedge on and around the site, as follows:

Hedge 5
This is a low hedge with two semi-mature ash trees. It is diverse and contains hawthorn, field maple, elder, English elm, sallow, dogwood, blackthorn and dogwood. Associated ground flora includes red campion (*Silene dioica*) and wood avens (*Geum urbanum*).

A ditch that runs along the northern side of the hedge is dry but supports hard rush (*Juncus inflexus*) and angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*).

Hedge 6
The hedge between the playing field and the green lane is low and supports a good diversity of woody species: hawthorn, hazel, field maple, elder, ash, spindle, sycamore, holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and dog rose. It becomes taller to the south, where there are several semi-mature field maple trees and a large pollarded ash. Associated ground flora includes dog's mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), black bryony (*Tamus communis*), hart's-tongue fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium*) and hedge woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*). Species in the grassland adjacent to the hedge include common fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*) and common bent.

There is a species-rich hedge on the western side of the green lane.

Hedge 7
This is a tall and leggy hedge of ash, field maple, hazel, dogwood, English elm and sycamore, with associated ground flora species including dog's mercury, hart's-tongue fern, wood dock (*Rumex sanguineus*) and male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*).

A line of pedunculate oak trees has been planted parallel to the hedge.

Hedge 8
This hedge is a continuation of hedge 7 but is dominated by tall trees of crack willow (*Salix x fragilis*), with smaller quantities of hazel and grey sallow (*Salix cinerea*). The hedge's ground flora includes hart's-tongue fern, male fern and dog's mercury, and species associated with a small ditch include yellow flag (*Iris pseudacorus*), hemlock water dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*) and greater pond sedge (*Carex riparia*).

Hedge 9
A low hedge with immature field maple and horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) trees and a mature pedunculate oak. Shrubby species in the hedge are field maple, hawthorn, elder and English elm. At the eastern end of the boundary there is a small copse of hazel, pedunculate oak and dogwood.

Hedge 10
A wide and dense hedge running along a section of the stream, with hawthorn, English elm, field maple and elder.

Hedge 11
A low hedge of hawthorn, hazel and blackthorn, with a semi-mature sallow and associated tree planting including field maple, silver birch (*Betula pendula*), holly and Corsican pine (*Pinus nigra*).

Wetlands
As well as the ditches associated with hedges, described above, the following wetland habitats are present:

Area 12
An open ditch with water mint (*Mentha aquatica*), fool's water-cress, angelica and square-stemmed willow herb (*Epilobium tetragonum*).

Area 13
The small stream has limited wetland vegetation, but small quantities of water figwort and hemlock water dropwort are present. The streamside has scattered trees of hybrid poplar, white willow (*Salix alba*) and Italian alder, which support a moderate growth of bryophytes including the liverwort *Radulua complana* and the moss *Orthotrichum affine*.

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OAKLEAZE GREEN

BIODIVERSITY AUDIT

SUMMER 2026

For

THORNBURY TOWN COUNCIL

OAKLEAZE GREEN

BIODIVERSITY AUDIT

1 INTRODUCTION

Oakleaze Green was surveyed as part of a series of surveys carried out in 2026, repeating surveys carried out in 2022, with the aims of: identifying features of biodiversity interest; assessing the success of changes to management since 2022 in enhancing the site's biodiversity; and identifying further enhancement measures where appropriate.

A site survey was carried out on 9th June 2026. It covered vegetation types and plant species, insects and birds. Potential for other groups of plants and animals was assessed.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary

Oakleaze Green has a mixture of close mown and tall grassland with scattered trees and is well used by members of the public.

The site is surrounded by housing, but in a wider context it provides a stepping-stone between sites in the northern parts of Thornbury, including Chantry Playing Fields, sites in the southern part of the town, including Streamleaze Park.

2.2 Vegetation

The areas described below are shown on the attached map.

In 2022 the majority of the site had close mown grassland, which persists over the central part of the site, but has been allowed to grow slightly taller. This grassland was described in 2022 as being "*dominated by perennial rye-grass (Lolium perenne), with other grass species including creeping bent (Agrostis stolonifera), red fescue (Festuca rubra) and cocksfoot (Dactylis glomerata).*" The sward remains broadly similar, but in addition common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), soft brome (*Bromus hordaceus*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and timothy (*Phleum pratensis*) were recorded. The 2022 description states that the "*frequency of herbs within the sward is rather low. Frequent species include dandelion (Taraxacum vulgare agg), white clover (Trifolium repens), autumn hawksbeard (Scorzoneroides autumnalis) and creeping buttercup (Ranunculus repens). Those present in smaller quantity include yarrow (Achillea millefolium), ribwort plantain (Plantago lanceolata), self-heal (Prunella vulgaris) and creeping cinquefoil (Potentilla reptans).*" Several additional species, including spotted medick (*Medicago arabica*), common mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum*) and ox-eye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), were recorded in 2026.

There are now areas of tall grassland at the northern and southern ends of the site as well as a narrow strip along the Oakleaze Road boundary. All three areas have a mix of tall grass species, which includes Yorkshire fog, soft brome, false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and rough-stalked meadow-grass (*Poa trivialis*). The sward in

the northern area is the most diverse, with additional species here including meadow barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), crested dogstail (*Cynorurus cristatus*) and smooth meadow-grass (*Poa pratensis*). The herb component here is also more diverse than in the other areas, with species present including common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), ox-eye daisy, field woodrush (*Luzula campestris*) and common bird's-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*).



Tall and short grassland on the site.

Although the other two areas are less diverse, each has some species of interest. In the southern area, these include meadow brome (*Bromus racemosus*), and along the roadside strip, yarrow and lesser trefoil (*Trifolium dubium*), as well as ox-eye daisy and spotted medick.

There are two semi-mature bird cherry (*Prunus padus*) trees in the north-western part of the site, a small clump of trees including immature silver birch (*Betula pendula*), Italian alder (*Alnus cordata*) and walnut (*Juglans regia*) in the south-western part of the site, with small cherries (*Prunus sp*) trees elsewhere. Trees, including lime (*Tilia x europaea*) and rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), have recently been planted in the northern part of the site.

There is a hedge, which includes hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), silver birch, rowan and sweet briar (*Rosa rubiginosa*) on the western boundary of the site. The other site boundaries are fences and lack any vegetation, although there is a large patch of bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg*) in the site's south-western corner.

2.3 Fauna

The bird species recorded on the site were:

2022 - jackdaw, robin and wood pigeon.
2026 – blackcap, blue tit, dunnock, house sparrow and starling.

Insect species recorded on the site were:

2022
Trees in north-western part of site - hawthorn shield-bug (*Acanthosoma haemorrhoidale*)

Trees in south-western part of site - alder leaf-beetle (*Agelastica alni*).

2026
Grassland in northern part of site – meadow brown butterfly; *Dolichopus plumipes, Coremacera marginata, Eupeodes latifasciatus* and *Merodon equestris* flies; *Lygus rugulipennis* and *Liorhysus hyalinus* bugs.
Grassland in southern part of site – meadow brown and common blue butterflies; *Cheilosia labitarsus, Spaerophoria scripta, Eupeodes latifasciatus* and *Chrysotoxum festivum* flies; *Oedemera nobilis* beetle.
Grassland on road edge – meadow brown butterfly.
Hedge on western boundary – *Polydrusus sp* beetle and *Chloromyia formosa* fly.
Scrub in south-western corner – buff-tailed (30 plus), tree and garden bumblebees; *Syrphus ribesii* fly; seven-spot ladybird.

2.4 Amenity
The surfaced footpath linking Oakleaze Road and Elmdale Crescent is very well-used and the site as a whole is used for dog walking and other informal recreation.

3 EVALUATION

3.1 Introduction
Various criteria are used in assessing the biodiversity value of sites. These include rarity, in terms of either habitats or species, which can be viewed in a range of contexts from international to local and also degree of threat: some species remain widespread but are of conservation concern because their populations have declined rapidly. Some habitats take many centuries, or require very specialised conditions, to develop their full diversity and those that cannot be recreated are more highly valued than those that can be readily created. The extent and connectivity of habitats is of importance, since many species rely on large areas of habitat or on having access to different habitat types at different stages in their life cycle. This can be particularly important in urban areas, where species can be lost from small and isolated areas of habitat, even if these remain in good condition. Conversely, sites can have value in a wider context if, for example, they allow wildlife to colonise gardens and other sites in the surrounding area or if they allow wildlife to move into and across otherwise inhospitable areas. In accessible urban areas the public appeal or visibility of wildlife is also a factor in contributing to public enjoyment and wellbeing.

Guidance on site evaluation is given in various documents, including the South Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, and has been followed here.

3.2 Habitats

Relaxation of management across the site has allowed several plant species associated with unimproved grassland (grassland that has not been treated with fertilisers or herbicides and is a priority habitat type) to either colonise or to become more readily apparent than they were in 2022. These species are ox-eye daisy, field woodrush, common woodrush and meadow brome. The diversity of indicator species is not high and none of them is present in large quantity. This suggests that fertilisers were used here in the past but that soil fertility is beginning to decline. Once declining soil fertility becomes evident in the flora gains in diversity can be rapid and there is potential for further colonisation. The grasslands on the site support a moderate diversity of invertebrates. These include grassland specialists such as common blue butterfly and the hoverfly *Chrysotoxum festivum*. The latter has only been recorded previously in South Gloucestershire at two sites.



Chrysotoxum festivum

The bug *Liorhysus hyalinus* had not been recorded in South Gloucestershire before 2026 but appears to have spread rapidly in the last two years and has now been found by the author at two other sites as well as this one. It is associated with dry grasslands with a good frequency of herbs.

The grassland across the site is of nature conservation value in a local context.

The trees and hedge provide some habitat for birds and insects and are of nature conservation value in a local context.

3.3 Protected and Invasive Species

No signs of any protected species were seen on or around the site and it has very little potential for any such species.

No scheduled invasive species were recorded on the site.

3.4 Trends

As noted above, modified grassland management has led to an increase since 2002 in the diversity of both insects and plants and a significant increase in the biodiversity value of the site as a whole.

The number of bird species recorded rose slightly. The species recorded in 2026 but not in 2022 include three that are of nature conservation concern – dunnock, house sparrow and starling. Of these three, only dunnock is likely to breed on the site, but the presence of the other species is an indication of the value of the site for insects.

3.5 Summary

Area	Scale of Interest	Features of Interest
Main grassland	Local context	Plant and insect populations
Trees and hedge	Local context	Use by birds and insects

4 MANAGEMENT

4.1 Aims

To maximise the biodiversity interest of the site whilst maintaining its value for amenity and other interests.

4.2 Objectives

To manage the grassland on the site.

To plant further hedges on the boundaries of the site.

To maintain hedges and trees.

4.3 Constraints

The main constraints on management for biodiversity here is the need to maintain the value of the site for amenity. The current regime achieves this, retaining short grassland in the centre of the site, which includes the main footpath, and tall grassland in the less used northern and southern parts of the site.

4.4 Rationale

Leaving areas of grass to grow longer has led to an increase in biodiversity on the site. The areas that are currently left tall should continue to be left unmown in the spring and early summer and then cut in the late summer; arisings should be gathered and removed in order to prevent a build-up of thatch, which may present a fire risk and which suppresses plant growth, and to reduce soil fertility.

There are good opportunities to plant further hedges along site boundaries.

4.5 Management Proposals

1 Avoid fertiliser use on any grassland.

2 In the tall grassland areas, leave the grass unmown until August, then mow and remove the arisings.

3 Cut the other areas of grasslan once a month over the growing season, in order to create a sward of intermediate height.

4 Plant hedges along the boundaries of the site using the following mix:

Field maple	*Acer campestre*
Dogwood	*Cornus sanguinea*
Hazel	*Corylus avellana*
Hawthorn	*Crataegus monogyna*
Spindle	*Euonymus europaea*
Wayfaring tree	*Viburnum lantana*

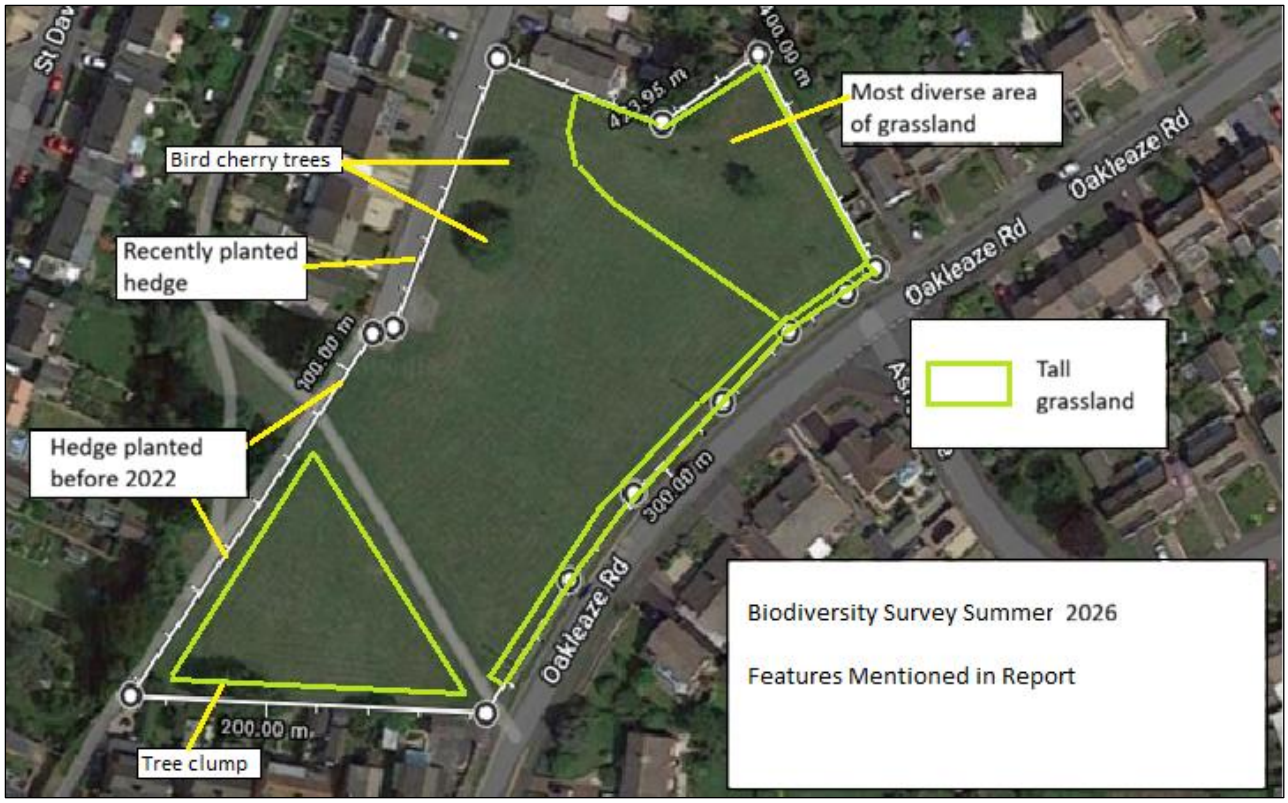
5 Trim hedges to a height of 1.5 metres and a maximum width of 2 metres.

6 Maintain planted trees: check ties and stakes, loosen ties as necessary and replace any failed planting.

7 Install and maintain bug hotels.

4.6 Work Planner

Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Mow grassland area 1, gather and remove arisings	August	August	August	August	August
Mow grassland area 2 once a month	April-Sept	April-Sept	April-Sept	April-Sept	April-Sept
Maintain amenity grassland, avoid use of fertilisers	Throughout	Throughout	Throughout	Throughout	Throughout
Plant hedges	Oct-Feb	Oct-Feb			
Plant trees		Oct-Feb			
Trim hedges				Jan	
Maintain planted trees – check stakes and ties, loosen ties as necessary	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan
Install bug hotels		Feb			
Maintain bug hotels		As necessary	As necessary	As necessary	As necessary


Most diverse area of grassland
Bird cherry trees
Recently planted hedge
Hedge planted before 2022
Tree clump
Tall grassland
Biodiversity Survey Summer 2026
Features Mentioned in Report
Oakleaze Rd
Oakleaze Rd
Oakleaze Rd
100.00 m
300.00 m
200.00 m

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THORNBURY CEMETERY

BIODIVERSITY AUDIT

SUMMER 2026

For

THORNBURY TOWN COUNCIL

THORNBURY CEMETERY

BIODIVERSITY AUDIT

1 INTRODUCTION

This report was commissioned by Thornbury Town Council with the aim of identifying features of biodiversity interest at Thornbury Cemetery; of assessing the impacts of changes to management made since a similar survey was carried out in 2022; and of identifying further measures by which the site's biodiversity interest can be enhanced.

Site surveys were carried out on 21st May and 9th June 2026. They covered vegetation types and plant species, insects and birds; potential for other groups was assessed.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary

The cemetery consists largely of mown grassland between graves; the composition of the grassland varies significantly between different areas of the site, with species-rich grassland concentrated in the western parts of the site and less diverse areas to the east. There are scattered trees throughout the cemetery and hedges on some of the boundaries. A former field to the north-west of the cemetery was also included in the survey.

The cemetery is on the edge of open countryside just to the north-west of Thornbury.

2.2 Vegetation

The areas described below are shown on the attached map. In 2022 almost all of the grassland in the cemetery was close mown; in 2026, in line with recommendations made in the 2022 report, several areas had been allowed to grow taller.

Area 1

The 2022 description was as follows: "*The grassland between the graves is dominated red fescue (Festuca rubra) with other grass species including common bent (Agrostis capillaris) and yellow-oat grass (Trisetum flavescens). Herb species make up a high proportion of the sward, with species present including mouse-ear hawkweed (Pilosella officinarum), lesser hawkbit (Leontodon saxatils), rough hawkbit (Leontodon hispidus), bird's-foot trefoil (Lotus corniculatus), meadow vetchling (Lathyrus pratensis), hedge bedstraw (Galium album) and glaucous sedge (Carex flacca). The mosses Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus and Kindbergia praelonga are locally frequent.*"

The sward is now mown less tightly, allowing low-growing plants to flower. Of the species listed above only hedge bedstraw was not found in 2026 and a number of additional species were recorded. These include quaking grass (*Briza media*), spring sedge (*Carex caryophyllea*), field woodrush (*Luzula campestris*), pignut (*Conopdium majus*) and greater bird's-foot trefoil (*Lotus pedunculatus*).



Flowering sward in area 1, including bird's-foot trefoil, quaking grass and ox-eye daisy.

Mature and semi-mature trees, most of them conifers are scattered through the area.

Gravestones in the area support a reasonable range of lichens, which include *Parmelia saxatilis, Melanelixia fuliginosa, Tephromela atra* and *Acarospora fuscata*.

Disturbed ground on graves and elsewhere in the area supports a variety of ruderal species of plant, which include many-seeded goosefoot (*Lipandra polysperma*) and broad-leaved warty spurge (*Euphorbia platyphyllos*). More established vegetation on graves includes woodland species such as common dog violet (*Viola riviniana*), wild strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*) and barren strawberry (*Potentilla sterilis*).

Area 2

This area was described in 2022 as: "*less diverse and perennial rye-grass (Lolium perenne) frequent. Herb species include yarrow (Achillea millefolium), ribwort plantain (Plantago lanceolata) and autumnal hawkbit (Scorzoneroides autumnalis).*" Changes here since then are less marked than at area 1, but bird's-foot trefoil has colonised the area.

Area 3

The sward across this area is less diverse than in area 1 but more diverse than in area 2. Herb species recorded in this area in 2022 included mouse-ear hawkweed, lesser hawkbit, common catsear (*Hypochaeris radicata*) and red clover (*Trifolium pratense*). These species were still present in 2026, when bird's-foot trefoil and germander speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*) were also present.

The hedges and trees around the cemetery remain as described in 2022:

Area 4
This is a clump of horse chestnut trees, with a single pedunculate oak.

Area 5
This area comprises a larger clump of trees, which include copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and red oak (*Quercus ruber*).

Area 6
There is a well-developed hedge on the north-western boundary of the site, which includes two mature pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) trees, but woody species are otherwise limited to hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*).

Area 7
The northern boundary of the cemetery has a low hedge of English elm (*Ulmus procera*), hawthorn, dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*) and elder (*Sambucus nigra*). Trees, which include Italian alder (*Alnus cordata*), rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), have been planted adjacent to the hedge.

Area 8
The eastern boundary of the cemetery has a tall line of trees, which include horse chestnut, ornamental cherry (*Prunus mahaleb*) and pedunculate oak, together with various conifers. An associated hedge has English elm, hawthorn, hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and dog rose (*Rosa canina*).

Extension Area
The proposed extension area was surveyed in 2026. It had largely been mown before the survey was carried out, but sufficient unmown areas remained to allow a survey and regrowth was strong in some parts of the area.

The following species were recorded in the main part of the area:

Grasses		
Agrostis stolonifera	Creeping bent	RLF
Alopecurus geniculatus	Marsh foxtail	R
Alopecurus pratensis	Meadow foxtail	O
Anthoxanthum odoratum	Sweet vernal grass	O
Arrhenatherum elatius	False oat-grass	RLF
Dactylis glomerata	Cocksfoot	O
Festuca rubra	Red fescue	O
Holcus lanatus	Yorkshire fog	OLF
Lolium perenne	Perennial rye-grass	F
Poa trivialis	Rough-stalked meadow-grass	OLF
Herbs		
Achillea millefolium	Yarrow	O
Bellis perennis	Common daisy	R
Carex hirta	Hairy sedge	R
Cerastium fontanum	Common mouse-ear	R

Cirsium arvense	Creeping thistle	RLF
Cirsium vulgare	Spear thistle	R
Conopodium majus	Pignut	R
Filipendula ulmaria	Meadow-sweet	RLF
Geranium dissectum	Cut-leaved cranesbill	R
Heracleum sphondylium	Hogweed	O
Lathyrus pratensis	Meadow vetchling	RLF
Lotus pedunculatus	Greater bird's-foot trefoil	R
Plantago lanceolata	Ribwort plantain	O
Potentilla reptans	Creeping cinquefoil	O
Ranunculus acris	Meadow buttercup	O
Ranunculus bulbosus	Bulbous buttercup	R
Ranunculus repens	Creeping buttercup	RLF
Rumex acetosa	Common sorrel	R
Sonchus apser	Prickly sow-thistle	R
Taraxacum vulgare agg	Dandelion	R
Trifolium pratense	Red clover	R
Trifolium repens	White clover	O

Frequency codes: D – dominant; A – abundant; F – frequent; O – occasional; R – rare; L – locally

A strip of tall grassland along the area's northern boundary has some additional species, which include tall fescue (*Schedonorus arundinaceus*), common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) and tufted vetch (*Vicia cracca*). This strip is locally wet, and additional species in wet areas include square-stemmed St John's wort (*Hypericum tetrapterum*), hemlock water dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*) and purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*). The ground is also wet in the south-western part of the area, where flote-grass (*Glyceria plicata*) is locally frequent.

The hedge that crosses part of the area is tall and wide, consisting of hawthorn, hazel, dogwood, ash and field maple (*Acer campestre*). The hedge's ground flora includes hedge garlic (*Alliaria petiolata*).

2.3 Fauna

Hedgehog droppings were seen in 2026.

The following bird species were recorded:

2022
Blue tit, chiffchaff, goldcrest, goldfinch, great tit, long-tailed tit, robin, wood pigeon and wren.

2026
Blackbird, blue tit, chiffchaff, goldcrest, goldfinch, great tit, greenfinch, jackdaw, robin, starling, swallow, wood pigeon and wren.

The insect species recorded were:

2022: Rush veneer and *Agriphila tristella* moths; buff-tailed bumblebee and *Lasioglossum calceatum* bee; and *Syrphus vitripennis* fly.

2026:

Area 1 Small tortoiseshell and meadow brown butterflies; garden, buff-tailed and red-tailed bumblebees and *Lasioglossum sp* bee; common earwig; *Glyphipterix* simpliciella and *Glyphipterix fuscoviridella* moths; *Spahaerophoria scripta* and *Eupeodes latifasciatus* flies; *Malachus bipustulatus, Trichosirocalus troglodytes, Mecinus pascuorum* beetles; *Lygus rugulipennis* bug

Area 2 Roesel's bush-cricket, meadow grasshopper.

Area 5 *Argyresthia trifasciata* moth; *Anthribus fasciatus* beetle

Area 6 Dark bush-cricket; early bumble-bee; *Curculio glandium, Grammoptera ruficornis* beetles.

Area 9 Red admiral butterfly; meadow grasshopper; *Andrena haemorrhoa* bee; seven-spot ladybird, *Rhinocyllus conicus* and *Oedemera nobilis* beetles;

Extension area: Red admiral butterfly; seven spot ladybird, *Rhinocyllus conicus* and *Oedemera nobilis* beetles.

2.4 Amenity

The cemetery remains in active use and the maintenance of a suitable environment for funeral attendees and for visitors to graves is a prime consideration in site management.

3 EVALUATION

3.1 Introduction

Various criteria are used in assessing the biodiversity value of sites. These include rarity, in terms of either habitats or species, which can be viewed in a range of contexts from international to local and also degree of threat: some species remain widespread but are of conservation concern because their populations have declined rapidly. Some habitats take many centuries, or require very specialised conditions, to develop their full diversity and those that cannot be recreated are more highly valued than those that can be readily created. The extent and connectivity of habitats is of importance, since many species rely on large areas of habitat or on having access to different habitat types at different stages in their life cycle. This can be particularly important in urban areas, where species can be lost from small and isolated areas of habitat, even if these remain in good condition. Conversely, sites can have value in a wider context if, for example, they allow wildlife to colonise gardens and other sites in the surrounding area or if they allow wildlife to move into and across otherwise inhospitable areas. In accessible urban areas the public appeal or visibility of wildlife is also a factor in contributing to public enjoyment and wellbeing.

Guidance on site evaluation is given in various publications, including the South Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, and has been followed here.

3.2 Habitats

The grassland across the western part of the cemetery, which also has the oldest tombs, is moderately diverse. The plants present here include several species that are indicative of unimproved grassland, a habitat type that has undergone serious declines, largely as a result of agricultural intensification and is recognised as a priority for conservation in BAPs and the NERC Act. Table 1 below compares the diversity of indicator species of unimproved grassland across the two surveys.

	Area 1		Area 2		Area 3	
	2022	2026	2022	2026	2022	2026
Bugle		X				
Common bird's-foot trefoil	X	X		X		X
Field woodrush		X				
Germander speedwell		X				X
Glaucous sedge	X	X				
Greater bird's-foot trefoil		X				
Hedge bedstraw	X					
Lesser hawkbit	X	X			X	X
Meadow fescue		X				
Meadow vetchling	X	X				
Mouse-ear hawkweed	X	X			X	X
Ox-eye daisy	X	X				
Pignut		X				
Quaking grass		X				
Rough hawkbit	X	X				
Spring sedge		X				
Yellow oat-grass	X	X				
Number of indicator species	9	16	0	1	2	4

The diversity of indicator species has risen markedly since 2022. This may in part be because plants are easier to detect in the taller swards than they were in the close mown turf present in 2022 but may also represent a genuine increase in diversity. The species recorded in 2026 include three – quaking grass, meadow fescue and spring sedge – that are included in the Great Britain Red List of endangered vascular plants. None of them is rare, but they are included because they have undergone dramatic declines in range over the last 25 years, and their presence is another indication of the biodiversity value of the cemetery.

Gravestones within the cemetery support a reasonable quantity and diversity of lichens. The BRERC (Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre) has very few records of some of the species recorded – with none in South Gloucestershire for *Melanelixia fuliginosa, Tephromela atra* and *Acarospora fuscata* – but this may be due

to under-recording. A full lichen survey would probably reveal species of interest – there is a good range of monuments here and air quality is reasonably high.

Few insects were recorded in 2022, when the grassland was cut short, but a greater diversity was recorded in the taller grassland present in 2026. Most of the species found are widespread, but *Mecinus pascuorum,* a weevil associated with ribwort plantain, is known from only two other sites in South Gloucestershire. *Rhincocyllus conicus,* which is associated with thistles, is known from only one other site in South Gloucestershire. Larvae of the micromoth *Glyphipterix fuscoviridella* feed on field woodrush and it is restricted to species-rich grasslands.

The western part of the cemetery is of nature conservation value in a South Gloucestershire context, and this value has risen significantly since 2022.

The grassland at area 2, across much of the eastern part of the cemetery, which has recent burials and is in active use, has very few plant species associated with unimproved grassland, but its value has risen slightly.

This area is of nature conservation value in a local context.

Area 3, in the south-western part of the cemetery, supports some species of unimproved grassland, notably mouse-ear hawkweed, and has become more diverse since 2022.

This area is of nature conservation value in a local context.

The oaks in the hedge at area 4 are the most valuable of the trees and shrubs on the site. The hedges are not outstandingly diverse and their potential for birds and other wildlife is limited by their low height and narrow width. The trees within the cemetery are largely non-native, but they provide habitat for birds.

A moderate diversity of insects associated with trees and shrubs was recorded in the cemetery. The least common is the weevil *Anthribus fasciatus,* which has not previously been recorded from South Gloucestershire and has been recorded from only two other sites in the former County of Avon and one other site in Gloucestershire. It is a predator of scale insects.



Anthribus fasciatus

The acorn weevil, *Curculio glandium,* is widely distributed across the southern part of the former County of Avon but had not been recorded previously in South Gloucestershire. It was found in oak trees on the western boundary of the cemetery.



Curculio glandium

The trees and shrubs across the cemetery are of nature conservation value in a South Gloucestershire context.

3.3 Protected and Invasive Species

No sign of any protected species recorded was seen.

Bats are likely to use habitats across the cemetery for foraging.

The cemetery lacks habitat suitable for any other protected species.

No scheduled invasive species were recorded on the site.

3.4 Summary

Area	Feature	Scale of Interest	Features of Interest
1	Grassland	South Gloucestershire context	Diverse vegetation, including indicator species of unimproved grassland
1	Monuments	Local context, possibly greater	Lichen populations
2	Grassland	Local context	Small populations of unimproved grassland indicator species
3	Grassland	Local context	Small populations of unimproved grassland indicator species
6	Oak trees	Local context	
All	Trees	South Gloucestershire context	Populations of locally rare insects.

3.5 Trends

As outlined above, the value of several areas of the cemetery for both plants and insects has increased since 2022, with notable new records of Red List plant species and locally rare insects. The diversity of bird species recorded gives an indication of the overall biodiversity value of the cemetery. The number of species recorded has risen from nine in 2022 to 13 in 2026. The presence of swallow and starling in 2026 is noteworthy. Populations of both species have declined sharply, both nationally and locally. Both feed on invertebrates, their presence reflecting the increased value of the cemetery since the management regime was modified.

3.6 Extension Area

The grassland in this area is moderately diverse and it supports several plant species that are indicative of unimproved grassland: pignut, meadow vetchling and greater bird's-foot trefoil, with common knapweed and tufted vetch in the strip along the northern edge of the area. None of these species is uncommon, but their presence indicates that the grassland here is semi-improved, and therefore of some biodiversity value. Survey before the area is mown might reveal the presence of additional species. The presence of wetland species adds further diversity and biodiversity value to the area. It is not, however, as diverse as area 1 of the cemetery and lacks the Red List species present in that area.

The extension area is of nature conservation value in a local context.

4 MANAGEMENT

4.1 Aims

To maximise the biodiversity interest of the site whilst maintaining its role as a cemetery

4.2 Objectives

To maintain species-rich grassland on the site.

To maintain graves and monuments in a suitable condition for lichen growth.

To enhance site boundaries.

4.3 Constraints

The main constraint on management for biodiversity here is the need to ensure the good condition of the monuments. For these and general amenity reasons it is appropriate to maintain the grassland around most of the site in a fairly formal condition.

4.4 Rationale

The cemetery is currently of high interest for biodiversity and amendments to the mowing regime have increased the level of interest. Further significant changes to existing management practices are not recommended.

The change to a less intensive mowing regime across area 1 and the retention of areas of tall grassland elsewhere have been successful and should be continued.



The mowing regime is maintaining a formal appearance and protecting monuments, whilst allowing plants to flower.

The cemetery has a good balance of trees and open habitats, and this should be maintained – additional tree planting away from the boundaries is not recommended but any lost trees should be replaced.

4.5 Management Proposals

1 No fertilisers or herbicides of any kind should be used on any area of grassland.

2 Continue the current grassland mowing regime across the cemetery.

3 Continue to keep monuments clear of scrub and ivy.

4 Allow the hedges on the north-western and northern boundaries of the cemetery to grow taller.

5 Plant trees alongside hedges as indicated on the map below, using the following species:

Field maple	*Acer campestre*
Silver birch	*Betula pendula*
Crab apple	*Malus sylvestris*
Rowan	*Sorbus aucuparia*

6 Fit bird and bat boxes to trees. Boxes can be either purchased commercially or made by the local community or schools.

7 Retain any dead wood as a habitat feature, place in partial shade on the eastern boundary of the cemetery. Logs should be kept in as large sections as possible, because this makes them difficult to move and also provides optimal habitat for wildlife.

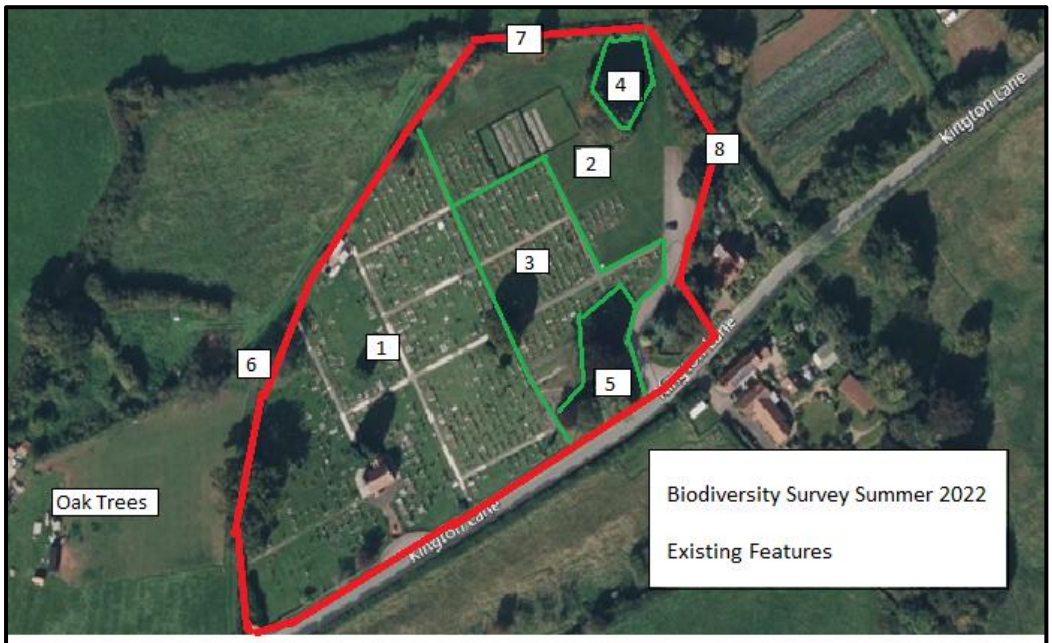
4.6 Extension Area

The proposal for this area is to develop it as a memorial woodland, since drainage patterns across the area do not allow for burials. The impacts of this proposal on the existing biodiversity interest will depend on the density of tree planting. If the tree canopy becomes continuous then much of the existing grassland flora will be shaded out and there will be some adverse impact. However, if the canopy is reasonably open, allowing grassland to remain between and underneath the trees, all or most of the plants that are currently present should survive. Experience at other sites, notably Memorial Woodlands near Itchington, has shown that widely spaced trees planted over grassland can develop significant biodiversity interest over a relatively short time, supporting species of insect and fungus that are absent from more closed woodland. However, over-dense planting carried out in parts of Memorial Woodlands during the site's early years have led to management problems as the trees have grown and become over-crowded, exacerbated by sensitivities over carrying out works to memorial trees.

It is recommended that trees are planted sparsely, so that grassland persists beneath the canopy, and that the grassland beneath the trees is managed using a hay cut, with the arisings being gathered and removed.

4.6 Work Planner

Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Continue current grass mowing regime	Throughout	Throughout	Throughout	Throughout	Throughout
Keep monuments clear of ivy and scrub	As necessary	As necessary	As necessary	As necessary	As necessary
Mow grassland between and underneath the trees in the memorial woodland. Gather and remove arisings. Repeat later in the year if necessary.	July	July	July	July	July
Fit bird and bat boxes to trees in area 4	January	January			
Check bird and bat boxes, and replace as necessary			January	January	January
Maintain bug hotel	As necessary	As necessary	As necessary	As necessary	As necessary
Create dead wood piles in area 4	As dead wood becomes available	As dead wood becomes available	As dead wood becomes available	As dead wood becomes available	As dead wood becomes available



1	Species-rich grassland
2	Species-poor grassland
3	Moderately species-rich grassland
4	Tree clump
5	Tree clump
6	Hedge with mature trees
7	Hedge
8	Tree line with hedge

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ST MARY'S CHURCHYARD, THORNBURY
BIODIVERSITY AUDIT

SUMMER 2026

For

THORNBURY TOWN COUNCIL



ST MARY'S CHURCHYARD

ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT PLAN

1 INTRODUCTION

This plan is one of a series commissioned by Thornbury Town Council with the aim of assessing the biodiversity interest of green spaces in the town and identifying measures that might be taken to enhance this interest, whilst maintaining their value for both formal and informal recreation. A similar series of surveys was undertaken in 2022.

Site surveys were carried out on 21st May and 10th June 2026. They covered vegetation types and plant species, insects and birds; potential for other groups was assessed.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary

The churchyard consists largely of grassland between graves; the composition of the grassland varies between different areas of the churchyard but most areas are at least moderately species-rich. The management of the grassland varies: some is mown short, other areas are mown once a year, and some areas have not been managed recently. There are also scattered trees and shrubs, with more continuous lines of woody vegetation on the site boundaries.

The churchyard is close to the north-western edge of Thornbury and provides a link between habitats around the castle and in the open countryside and more urban sites, including the playing fields at Chantry Road and around The Castle School and Oakleaze Green and St Mary's Primary School.

2.2 Vegetation

The areas described below are shown on the attached map.

Area 1

The grassland between the graves was described was described in 2022 as: "*dominated by red fescue (Festuca rubra) with other grass species including creeping bent (Agrostis stolonifera) and smooth meadow grass (Poa pratensis). Herb species make up a high proportion of the sward, with frequent species including common catsear (Hypochaeris radicata), white clover (Trifolium repens), common daisy (Bellis perennis), ribwort plantain (Plantago lanceolata) and mouse-ear hawkweed (Pilosella officinarum), as well as the moss Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus. Less frequent species include hoary plantain (Plantago media), black knapweed (Centaurea nigra), lesser hawkbit (Leontodon saxatils) and rough hawkbit (Leontodon hispidus)*."

It remained broadly similar in 2026 but a few additional species, including hoary plantain (*Plantago media*) and cowslip (*Primula veris*), were recorded. Rough hawkbit is now locally frequent.

Most of the graves are open but a few are overgrown with scrub, most commonly ivy (*Hedera helix*) and dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*). Most of the headstones and tombs support a good growth of lichens: frequent species include *Caloplaca flavescens, Caloplaca saxicola* and *Aspicilia caesiocinerea*; less frequent species include *Opegrapha gyrocarpa* and *Melanelixia fuliginosa*.

Mature and semi-mature trees are scattered through the area. Species include lime (*Tilia x vulgaris*), Montpellier maple (*Acer monspessullanum*) and various whitebeams (*Sorbus spp*). There are heavy growths of mistletoe (*Viscum album*) on some of the whitebeams.

Area 2

A small patch of taller grassland by the church door was identified in 2022 as having additional herb species, including yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) and ox-eye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*). These species survived here in 2026, when wild carrot (*Daucus carota*) was also recorded.

Area 3

This area of tall grassland was described as follows in 2022: "*false oat-grass (Arrhenatherum elatius) is frequent here with other grass species including red fescue and Yorkshire fog (Holcus lanatus). Herb species in this area include ribwort plantain, common catsear and germander speedwell, with patches of tall herb vegetation dominated by rosebay willowherb (Chamaenerion angustifolium). Scrub is encroaching across parts of the area, the most frequent species being bramble (Rubus fruticosus agg), buddleia (Buddleja davidii) and holly (Ilex aquifolium).*

A small part of the area, close to the bird feeders, is more diverse with additional species here including wild carrot (Daucus carota), black knapweed, ox-eye daisy, bird's-foot trefoil (Lotus corniculatus), hedge bedstraw (Galium album) and salad burnet (Poterium sanguisorba).

Another small area has been planted with a pollinator mix; plants surviving from this include California poppy (Eschscholzia californica) and radish (Raphanus raphanistrum), with associated ruderals including spear thistle (Cirsium vulgare) and hoary willowherb (Epilobium parviflorum)."

The area remained broadly similar in 2026. Species derived from the seed mix, such as cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*), corn cockle (*Agrostemma githago*) and corn marigold (*Glebionis segetum*), are still evident. Populations of other plants are much as described in 2022, but some additional species, including yellow rattle, were recorded.

Area 4

The eastern boundary has a line of trees, which include lime (*Tilia x vulgaris*) and laburnum (*Laburnum anagyroides*), over a ground flora dominated by ivy with some stinking iris (*Iris foetidissima*).

2.3 Fauna

Signs of badger and fox activity were seen in the north-eastern corner of the churchyard.

The following bird species were recorded:

2022 - blue tit, chiffchaff, great tit, long-tailed tit, jackdaw, magpie and wood pigeon.

2026 – blackbird, blue tit, chiffchaff, dunnock, great tit, jackdaw, mistle thrush, robin, rook and wood pigeon

The insect species recorded were:

2022

Speckled wood butterfly;
Common carder bee; and
Coreus marginatus and *Pinalitus viscicola* bugs.

2026
Holly blue butterfly;
Garden pebble and cinnabar moths;
Bombus terrestris, Lasioglossum leucozonium, Megachile centuncularis and *Osmia bicornis* bees;
Seven-spot ladybird, 24-spot ladybird, *Oedemera nobilis* and *Cassida vibex* beetles;
Eurygaster testudinaria, Palomena prasina, Dolycoris baccarum, Nabis ferus and *Rhopalus subrufus* bugs*;* and
Pipizella viduata, Chloromyia formosa, Eristalis tenax, Helophilus pendulus, Eumerus strigatus, Dioctria rufipes and *Xanthogramma pedissequum* flies.

2.4 Amenity

The southern part of the churchyard forms part of the approach to St Mary's Church, which is in active use. The rest of the churchyard also appears to be well visited; it offers opportunities for quiet recreation, access to historic gravestones and views over part of the Thornbury Castle.

3 EVALUATION

3.1 Introduction

Various criteria are used in assessing the biodiversity value of sites. These include rarity, in terms of either habitats or species, which can be viewed in a range of contexts from international to local and also degree of threat: some species remain widespread but are of conservation concern because their populations have declined rapidly. Some habitats take many centuries, or require very specialised conditions, to develop their full diversity and those that cannot be recreated are more highly valued than those that can be readily created. The extent and connectivity of habitats is of importance, since many species rely on large areas of habitat or on having access to

different habitat types at different stages in their life cycle. This can be particularly important in urban areas, where species can be lost from small and isolated areas of habitat, even if these remain in good condition. Conversely, sites can have value in a wider context if, for example, they allow wildlife to colonise gardens and other sites in the surrounding area or if they allow wildlife to move into and across otherwise inhospitable areas. In accessible urban areas the public appeal or visibility of wildlife is also a factor in contributing to public enjoyment and wellbeing.

Guidance on site evaluation is given in various publications, including the South Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, and has been followed here.

3.2 Habitats

The grassland across almost all of the churchyard is moderately diverse. The plants present here include several species that are indicative of unimproved grassland, a habitat type that has undergone serious declines, largely as a result of agricultural intensification and is recognised as a priority for conservation in BAPs and the NERC Act. The indicator species recorded widely across the churchyard include black knapweed, hoary plantain, mouse-ear hawkweed, lesser hawkbit and rough hawkbit; species that are more localised within the churchyard include ox-eye daisy, yellow rattle, bird's-foot trefoil, salad burnet and wild carrot. Cowslip was recorded in 2026, but not in 2022, although this may reflect the earlier timing of the 2026 survey.

Two locally uncommon plant species, changing forget-me-not (*Myosotis discolor*) and yellow-juiced poppy (*Papaver lecoqii*), were recorded in the western part of the churchyard. The former is associated with sparse grassland on nutrient-poor soils. It has been recorded from about ten other sites in South Gloucestershire, but only two of these records is in the last twenty years. Yellow-juiced poppy is traditionally associated with arable fields but is now more often seen in disturbed ground. Its local distribution has also contracted drastically, and it has only been recorded from one other site in South Gloucestershire in the last twenty years.

Yellow-juiced poppy is included in the Great Britain Red List of threatened plant species, as are two of the grassland indicator species: hoary plantain and salad burnet.

The diversity of micro-habitats within the site, provided by grassland of different lengths, graves, trees and shrubs, suggests that the grassland is likely to be of some value for invertebrates. The diversity of insect species recorded rose between 2022 and 2026. Most are widespread, but the range of species recorded is impressive.

The robberfly *Dioctria rufipes* has only been recorded at one other site in South Gloucestershire since 2000; it is a predator of other insects, associated with hedges and woodland edge. The tortoise beetle *Cassida vibex* had been recorded from one other site in South Gloucestershire this century. It is associated with various plants in the daisy family, including thistles and yarrow. Field damsel bug (*Nabis ferus*) has

previously been recorded at two sites in South Gloucestershire. It is a predator of other insects, found in tall grassland.



Cassida vibex, a locally scarce tortoise beetle recorded in the churchyard in 2026

Gravestones within the churchyard support a reasonable quantity and diversity of lichens and a full survey may reveal species of interest.

The churchyard is of nature conservation value in a South Gloucestershire context.

3.3 Protected and Invasive Species

The only protected species recorded was badger: foraging signs were seen near the north-eastern corner of the churchyard.

It is likely that bats use the churchyard, especially the tree line on the eastern boundary, for foraging and commuting.

The churchyard has suitable habitat for reptiles, in particular slow worm.

No scheduled invasive species were recorded on the site.

3.4 Summary

Feature	Scale of Interest	Features of Interest
Grassland	South Gloucestershire context	Diverse vegetation, including indicator species of unimproved grassland and uncommon species associated with disturbed ground
Monuments	Local context, possibly greater	Lichen populations
Trees	South Gloucestershire context	Invertebrate and bird populations

3.5 Trends

The vegetation in the churchyard has changed relatively little since 2022, although the area of tall grassland has been allowed to expand and this is reflected in the greater number of insect species recorded in 2026.

There was a slight increase in the number of bird species recorded between 2022 and 2026. The species not recorded in the earlier year include mistle thrush, which is a species of conservation concern due to a severe decline in its population. The varied tree population within the churchyard and in the surrounding area, combined with areas of grassland, provide ideal habitat for this species.

4 MANAGEMENT

4.1 Aims

To maximise the biodiversity interest of the site whilst maintaining its role as a churchyard.

4.2 Objectives

To maintain species-rich grassland on the site.

To maintain graves and monuments in a suitable condition for lichen growth.

To retain a mix of grassland sward length.

4.3 Constraints

The main constraints on management for biodiversity here are the need to agree any changes in management with the church and to ensure the good condition of the monuments, some of which have listed status. For these and general amenity reasons it is appropriate to maintain the grassland around most of the site in a fairly formal condition.

4.4 Rationale

The churchyard is currently of high interest for biodiversity and significant changes to existing management practices are not recommended.

The main biodiversity objective here is to ensure that species-rich grassland survives in the churchyard. This requires management of the grassland, which is normally in the form of either grazing or mowing. Grazing is not possible here so a mowing regime should continue.

It is proposed that the current balance between tall and short grassland is maintained. The tall grassland is of value for small mammals and for many groups of invertebrates and allows plants to flower and set seed. The shorter sward benefits low growing plants such as hoary plantain and provides habitat for fungi and for insects such as burrowing bees. It also keeps monuments in better condition by discouraging vegetation growth across stones and by allowing access to stones for management. This has benefits for lichen populations, as well as for heritage and amenity reasons.

In summary, it would be beneficial to retain areas of both tall and short grassland. It is important, whatever approach to mowing is taken, that the fertility of the grassland is kept low.

Parts of the grassland is threatened by scrub encroachment and, whilst scrub has some value for wildlife, scrub should be controlled in order to reverse this trend.

The churchyard has a good balance of trees and open habitats, and this should be maintained – additional tree planting is not recommended but any lost trees should be replaced. Retention of mistletoe should allow the population of *Pinalitus viscicola* to survive.

4.5 Management Proposals

1 No fertilisers or herbicides of any kind should be used on any area of grassland.

2 Continue grassland mowing across area 1. In order to allow low-growing plants to flower, whilst maintaining a formal appearance and protecting graves, mow once a month from April to September.

3 Continue to keep monuments clear of scrub and ivy.

4 Mow area 2 once a year in August. Gather and remove arisings.

5 Clear bramble and other scrub from area 3 as shown on the map below.

6 Mow the more diverse part of area 3, as shown below on the map annually in August. Gather and remove arisings.

7 If possible, mow the remainder of area 3 every three years in August. Gather and remove arisings.

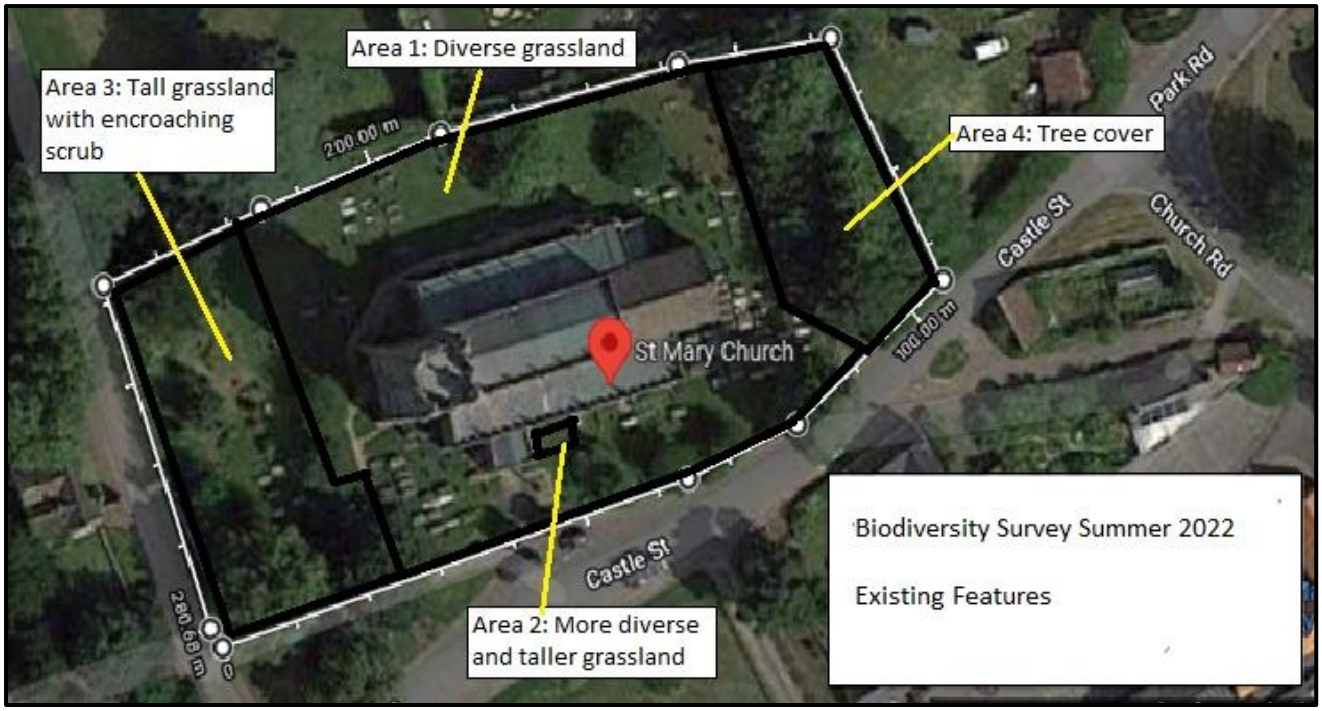
8 Trim back trees on the edge of area 4 where these are encroaching across grassland and tombs.

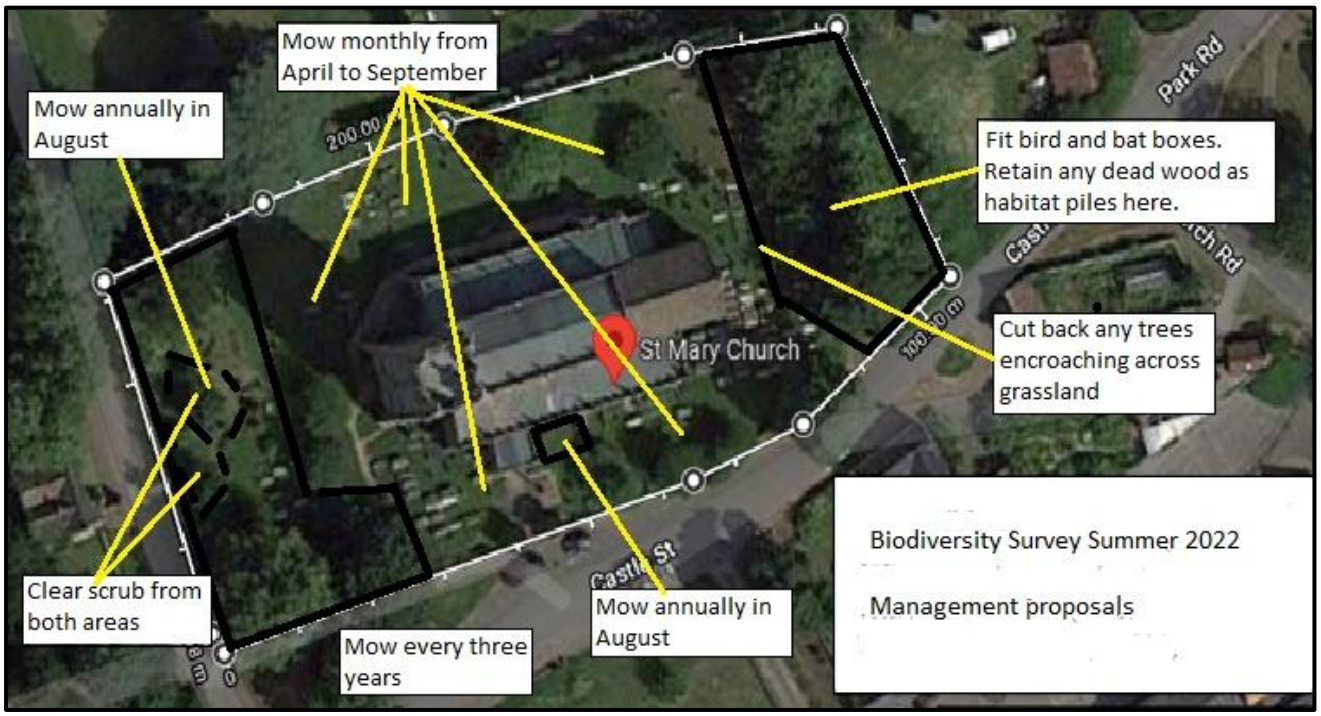
9 Maintain bug hotel and bird and bat boxes as necessary.

10 Retain any dead wood as a habitat feature, place in partial shade in area 4. Logs should be kept in as large sections as possible, because this makes them difficult to move and also provides optimal habitat for wildlife.

4.6 Work Planner

Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Mow area 1	Monthly, Apr-Sept	Monthly, Apr-Sept	Monthly, Apr-Sept	Monthly, Apr-Sept	Monthly, Apr-Sept
Keep monuments clear of ivy and scrub	As necessary	As necessary	As necessary	As necessary	As necessary
Mow area 2, gather and remove arisings	August	August	August	August	August
Clear scrub in area 3	Sept-Feb		Sept-Feb		Sept-Feb
Mow diverse part of area 3, gather and remove arisings	August	August	August	August	August
Mow remainder of area 3, gather and remove arisings	Aug			Aug	
Trim back trees on edge of area 4	Nov-Jan		Nov-Jan		Nov-Jan
Fit bird and bat boxes to trees in area 4	January	January			
Check bird and bat boxes, and replace as necessary			January	January	January
Maintain bug hotel	As necessary	As necessary	As necessary	As necessary	As necessary
Create dead wood piles in area 4	As dead wood becomes available	As dead wood becomes available	As dead wood becomes available	As dead wood becomes available	As dead wood becomes available


Area 1: Diverse grassland
Area 3: Tall grassland with encroaching scrub
Area 4: Tree cover
Park Rd
Castle St
Church Rd
St Mary Church
Area 2: More diverse and taller grassland
Biodiversity Survey Summer 2022
Existing Features


Mow monthly from April to September
Mow annually in August
Fit bird and bat boxes. Retain any dead wood as habitat piles here.
Park Rd
Cut back any trees encroaching across grassland
St Mary Church
Clear scrub from both areas
Mow annually in August
Mow every three years
Biodiversity Survey Summer 2022
Management proposals

Officer Report to Thornbury Town Council Climate and Nature Committee

Report Title: 2026 Biodiversity Enhancement Measures Proposal

Prepared By: Sharon Gardham

Meeting Date: 20 October 2026

Status: For Action

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1. Detail

In 2022, Thornbury Town Council commissioned Wessex Ecological Consultancy to carry out surveys of its key sites and to devise ecological enhancement plans. Since then, many of the suggested enhancements have been made, including changes to management regimes and schemes of tree and wildflower planting.

As detailed in the sister paper to this one (2026 Biodiversity Audit/Ecological Survey Results) the 2026 surveys show that the enhancements and changes made at TTC sites since 2022 have had a positive impact on biodiversity in Thornbury.

The impact does, however, vary across sites. Furthermore, the reports suggest more actions that could be considered for implementation. These are summarised below and are in addition to the regimes/plans already in place, which should be continued. Full details can be found in the biodiversity audit reports that are appended to the survey results paper.

Thornbury Cemetery

- Allow some hedges to grow taller.
- Plant trees alongside hedges.
- Fit bird and bat boxes (already in progress – bat and tawny owl boxes are being made by the Thornbury Men's Shed).
- Retain dead wood piles.

Mundy Playing Fields

- Leave some areas of the hay meadow/taller grass areas unmown over the winter months to provide habitat for insects.
- Allow tall grassland to develop in strips along hedge lines.
- Plant further trees.
- Remove vegetation and silt from some ditches.
- Install bird and bat boxes.
- Leave some areas of the stream bank unmanaged.

Oakleaze Green

- Plant hedges along site boundaries.
- Install and maintain bug hotels.
- NOTE: There are already plans in place to plant perennial wildflowers and yellow rattle at Oakleaze Green.

Thicket Walk

- Amend the mowing regime in limited areas to once per month during the growing season.

- Trim the hedge to promote dense growth at the base (NOTE: there are plans to lay this hedge using traditional methods during the 2026/27 season).
- NOTE: There are already plans in place to plant 500 native wildflower bulbs at Thicket Walk (wood anemone, snowdrop, English bluebell and winter aconite).

Chantry Road Playing Field

- Relax mowing regime in some areas of the site that are not used as a pitch.
- Plant additional trees on the site boundaries.
- Cut some strips of tall grassland only once every three years.
- NOTE: There are already plans to plant perennial wildflowers and yellow rattle in a small area of the playing field.

St Mary's Churchyard

- Adopt the mowing regime suggested in the report.
- Clear some bramble and scrub.
- Trim back trees where they are encroaching on tombs and grassland.
- Retain dead wood as a habitat feature.
- Largely, the advice at St Mary's is to keep up the good work!
- NOTE: Measures for the Churchyard will need to be discussed and agreed with the Holy Mowers

Chantry Road Play Area

- Plant hedges along the boundary of the site OR relax mowing regime along the boundaries.
- Install bug hotels.

The measures detailed above are, relatively speaking, small in scale. This is reflective of the success of the measures already introduced subsequent to the 2022 surveys.

The overarching message from the biodiversity audits of 2026 is to keep doing what we are already doing!

Not all measures suggested in the biodiversity audits are recommended. For example, the suggestion to leave the hedgerow between MPF and Poulterbrook to increase in height has previously been discussed with the Grounds Maintenance team and dismissed due to concerns about anti-social behaviour. The measures outlined in this paper are, therefore, those that are considered practical and possible, given the need to maintain the sites for multiple users/purposes.

2. Implications

Environmental

TTC's sites have already seen good increases in biodiversity by and large since 2022. Implementation of the measures suggested in this paper (which are fully detailed in the biodiversity audit reports) will allow further enhancements to be experienced. The enhancements could have a particular impact on the sites where more moderate improvements have been made since 2022, namely Chantry Road Play Area, Chantry Playing Field and Thicket Walk.

Financial

The measures suggested (except perhaps for ditch and silt clearance at MPF) are relatively small-scale and, as a result, low-cost. The 2026-27 Climate and Nature Committee budget for ecological surveying was underspent by a little over £2000. At the September meeting of the Committee, it was decided that this money should be reallocated to implementing the

measures suggested by the biodiversity audits (subject to the agreement of the Open Spaces Committee – CN2627.23). Significant additional spend is not therefore anticipated in this financial year.

If there are biodiversity actions outstanding at the end of this financial year, the budget proposed for 2027-28 includes funds for biodiversity works.

3. Recommendations

The Climate and Nature Committee are asked to:

- Recommend the implementation of the measures outlined in this paper to the Open Spaces Committee.