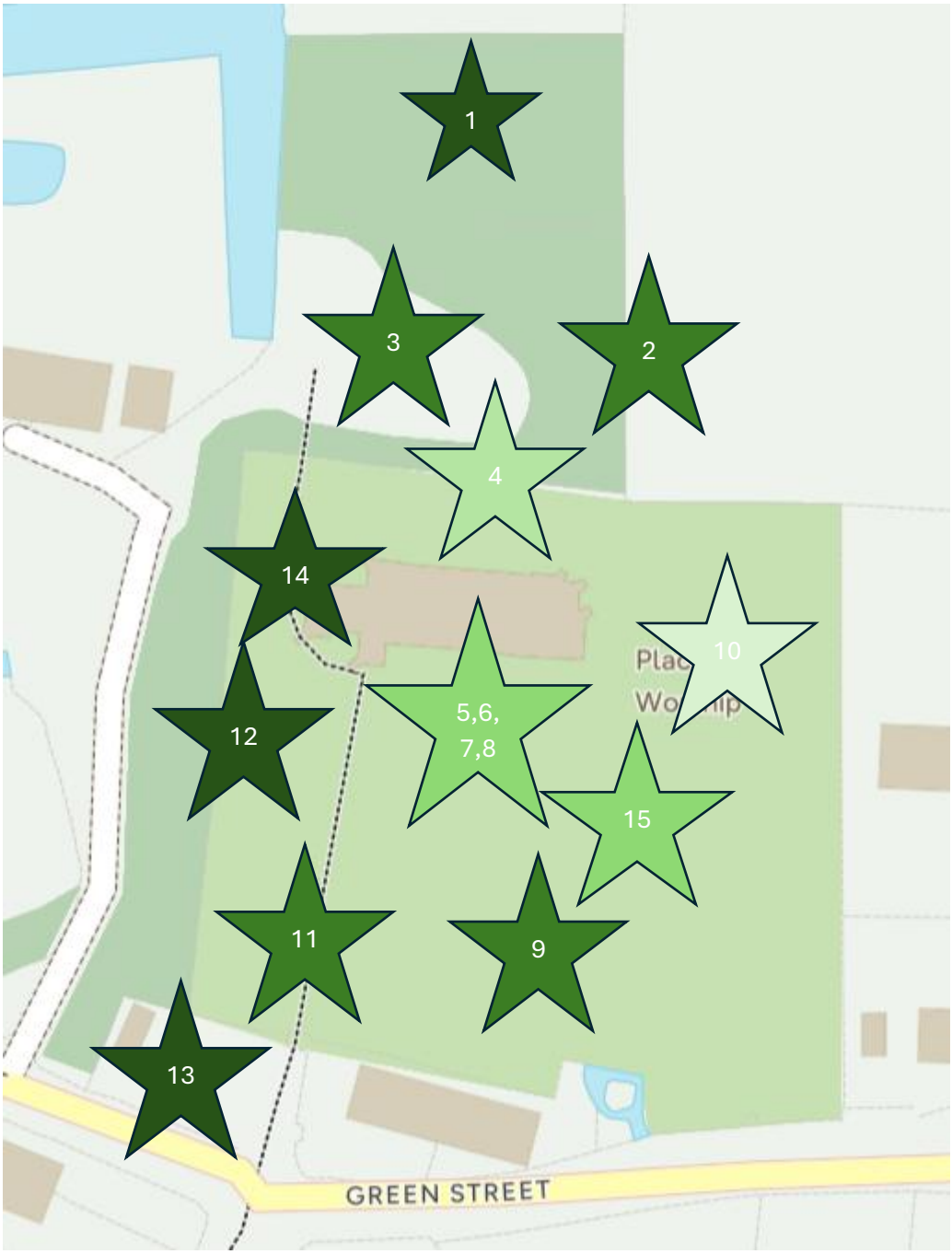
Churchyard management – St Peter and St Paul with St Edmund, Hoxne



Key – Darkest green star = most conservation

Management strategy

1. Woods – leave alone, make safe trees if required. Potetential for nesting boxes. In time, selectively remove understory.
2. Woodland – composting and dead wood
3. Car park, toilets. Edge with logs, cut intrusive vegetation on carpark, move spring bulbs. Solar lights on pathway to WC. Water butts from Church and WC roof. Investigate possibility of cycle racks and EV charging point. Angle outside lights downwards to reduce light pollution.
4. Church function lawn, cut grass when required. Vary cutting height of lawn leaving patches of wild flowers.
5. Church borders contains paths and cremations. Remove invasive vegetation(Ivy, thistle and saplings) from the cremation plots along the church, the walls and cordon sanitaire. Allow Ivy leaved toadflax and Pellitory of the wall. Rain fed water container for wildlife. Investigate more rain fed water options for wildlife. Cut edge of grass.

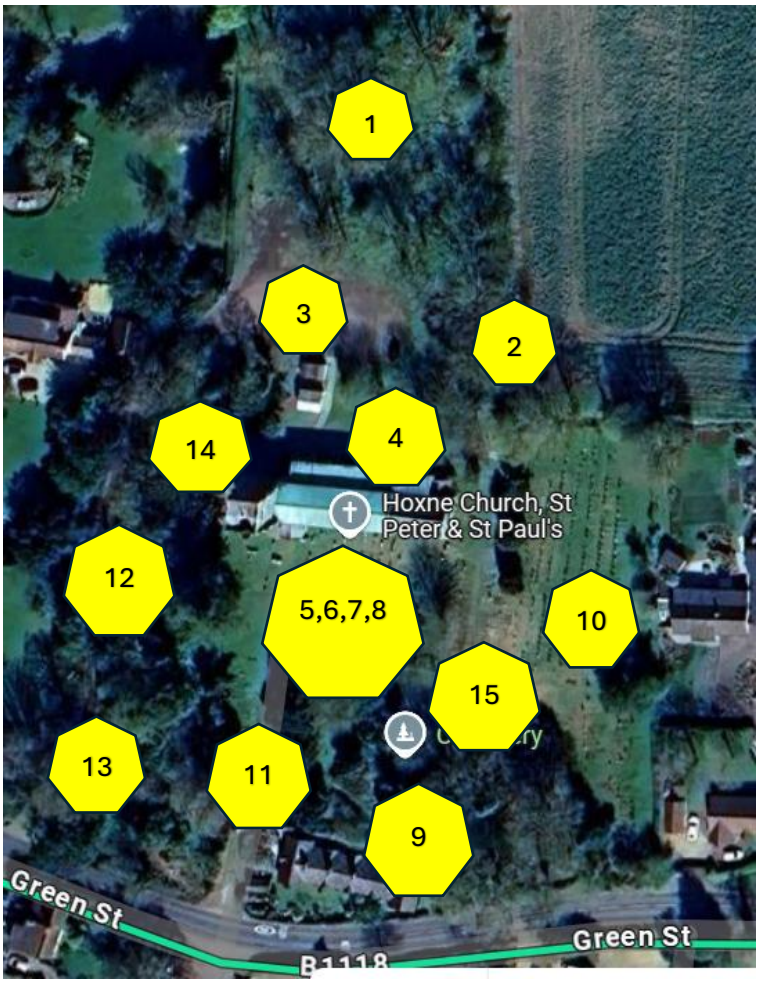
6. Cut a path around the church.
7. Grassland – cut 1-2 a year (February and August) to allow wildflowers. When cut, leave small pockets to allow habitats for invertiebrates. Collect and sow local seeds.
8. 2 memorial benches. Investigate possibility of picnic table and ecochurch structure for wildlife and bee towers.
9. Wooded area with grassland and ancient anthills, deer and rabbits. Mainly leave alone, making safe trees and remove invasive saplings. Mark trails with information on ecosystem and management, logs and deadhedging marking them.
10. Recent graves – cut and tidy frequently. Remove plastic and rubbish. Provide recycling and composting bins. Empty regularly in line with waste disposal collections. Two benches provided for visitors. Consider encouraging visitors not to leave plastic flowers.
11. Path From the lytchgate – Cut either side of the path and leave vegetation further away, denote edges by logs.
12. Wooded area – make safe trees when necessary, allow understory to grow.
13. "Old Sunday School". Leave to nature but make safe trees where necessary. Cut hedge twice a year. Coppice hazel trees, 1 every 2 years and protect new growth from deer.
14. Bat conservation measures in lower tower chamber, thermostatted heater.
15. Maintain path, cut and fill in holes. Remove nettles 1 grave deep west of path

As a management principle – do nothing wholescale so as to allow climate resilience and management.

Work undertaken by:

1. Community payback once a month
2. Volunteers – more frequently but on an ad hoc basis

Plan devised by Richard Giffin (PCC) in consultation with Marie Lagerberg (Hoxne Parish Council and a volunteer for South Wildlife Trust). July 2025.



HOXNE CHURCHYARD

Works which would immediately benefit the churchyard include:

- re-instatement of **regular cutting of footpaths** through the open areas of the churchyard
- **identification (via a brief survey) of naturally flower-rich areas of grassland** which can then be managed to encourage their floristic diversity and discourage grasses. Such management generally consists of allowing these areas to grow, flower and set seed during the months of April – July/August, followed by monthly or bi-monthly mowing/strimming and raking up of cuttings (this is essential as it prevents the cut material from breaking down and enriching the soil) for the rest of the autumn. In spring, a single light cut is beneficial in late March/early April to cut back any vigorous grasses. During a restorative phase, regular cutting and clearing is essential to weaken the more vigorous, dominant species.
- **removal of small saplings,** particularly where they threaten the stability of monuments, headstones etc, or where they are growing into other larger trees. Ideally, the cut stumps should then be spot-treated with a granular herbicide to kill the roots and prevent regrowth. The most damaging species are sycamore and ash as they grow rapidly and seed prolifically, while also enriching the soil below with signficant quantities of leaf-drop. Some species are less invasive and have a more direct wildlife benefit (eg elder, spindle) and these can generally be retained especially in more marginal areas. Some are multi-stemmed but are now tall and spindly (eg hawthorn, blackthorn etc), and these could be recoppiced on a rotation to produce lower-growing, denserbushes which would be of benefit to wildlife.
- **clearing of ivy and other woody species from headstones** to prevent destabilisation and to allow lichens to flourish. Headstones in East Anglia are an important habitat for lichens, with many rare species found only in these locations, as natural stone is relatively rare in the countryside. *For this reason, chemical or mechanical cleaning of memorials is never recommended*. Ivy is also highly beneficial to wildlife, providing late summer nectar and pollen, energy-rich berries in late winter and dense evergreen foliage for winter roosts, so mature ivy where can be retained without causing a problem, it should be.
- **cutting back of untidy shrubs and tree branches**, particularly where these block sight lines, overhang paths, or hamper management activity.
- **Treatment or manual digging up of persistent weed species,** especially where these are very invasive, occur in highly visible areas, such as alongside the main entrance/footpath to the church, or where they grow in naturally species-rich areas. The main problem species include alkanet, comfrey, cow parsley etc. All of these plants are very beneficial for wildlife as pollen/nectar-bearing plants, particularly where growing in sunny areas, so they should be retained where they are not a problem, alongside hedges, edges of scrubby corners etc

Scheduling of work

Many management works are season-dependent so should be scheduled at an appropriate time. Tree /scrub cutting should avoid the bird-breeding season (ie completed by end of February, as birds can now start to nest from early March, and not started until August/September). Cutting of flower-rich grassland is usually done in July/August but can be as late as September/October in some years to enable later-flowering species to set seed.

Priorities

A phased programme of work, set out over several years, will enable real progress to be made in the most critical areas, in particular restoration of grassland which has become dominated by coarse grasses and weeds. **Grassland restoration and the removal of young but rapidly-developing scrub from more open areas appear to be the most urgent priorities at present.**