

Land Management plan Wesley Memorial Church

1. Purpose and objectives

We are a large city centre church with very little land. When we began the Eco Church survey, we initially ticked the box to say that the management of our land didn't really apply to us. We thought we had no land apart from a flower bed at the front of the church. When we looked closer, we discovered that we had a patch of tarmac at the back of the church that we could do something with. And so, our Eco Church Garden journey began.

- We aim to show people what it is possible to do with a small city centre area. Although we have a small space, every small step towards a greener city helps. Our Eco Garden at the front enhances our environment, it is enjoyed by those visiting the building and those passing by on the pavement. It is an example to other City Centre properties that cultivating green spaces is possible.
- To share our green spaces, where possible, with the public and allow natural species and wildlife to flourish (e.g. Quarry Churchyard. This is a circuit project, led largely by people at WM showing a desire to be involved in eco projects beyond our immediate environment).
- To offer a living green space for users of our premises to sit and have lunch, hold meetings, reflect quietly. As well as the environmental benefits the rear garden provides a place of tranquillity for those using our building as well as providing wildlife habits for birds and insects
- To encourage wildlife by our imaginative use of organic planting in pots and wall space for year-round herbs and flowers to attract insects and birds.

Front Garden (Spring)



Back Garden (Spring)



Front Garden

The garden at the front is in dry shade partly because it is surrounded by buildings and also because of the sorbus tree whose leaves create shade and whose roots drink up the water. The plants have flourished, and it has been a delight to see bees busy around the flowers all summer and a hummingbird hawk moth.

We have a bee nest-box there now, and we expect tenants in the spring.

But by then we will have bulbs and plants that will thrive in their dry, shady surroundings, attracting the pollinators. There are similar boxes throughout the city in college gardens and they are all being monitored by the university as part of the Oxford Plan Bee research project.



Putting up the bee box

Aims for the front Garden

- The front garden is part of a corridor of growing areas in a city-centre setting to encourage pollinators.
- Maintaining and developing a long-established shady garden.
- Avoiding use of all harmful chemicals.
- Providing a bird-feeder, water source and habitat piles to benefit wildlife.
- Maintaining good soil quality, using only mediums which are sustainable, [suggest Moorland Gold clay-buster, Sylvagrow compost or similar.] Trying to use only organic [or at least peat-free] nurseries, or growing from seed, or otherwise home-grown.
- Growing a wide variety of early to late-flowering plants to cater for the many different insects throughout the year.
- Working collaboratively, sharing resources, knowledge and skills.

Aims for the back garden

- To be part of a corridor of growing spaces in a city centre.
- To be a container garden growing a rich variety of plants which between them will encourage pollinating insects over as long a season as possible.

- We are part of the Oxford Plan Bee research project,
- We informally monitor the wildlife in our small Eco Church Garden. We have observed House Sparrows, Dunnocks, Robins, Coal Tits, Blue Tits, Magpies.
- As part of our custodianship of Quarry Churchyard a group of people have been documenting the plants over a 2-year period (see attached).
- Individual members are encouraged to take part in the RSPB Annual Birdwatch in our weekly newsletter (24-26 Jan 2025) and we share this on social media.



Membership of the County Trust [BBOWT] and Organic Garden gives us information about, and access to, surveys, etc.

Here is our plan of work:

Winter

Check and clean insect/wildlife boxes.

Dead-head ferns and stinking iris.

Generally tidy up, remove tatty and dead leaves from perennials, enrich soil and mulch as needed.

Prune epimedium.

Clean bird-feeder, maybe replace current one with one that deters big birds and squirrels.

Wet gravel dish for insects and possibly fixed bird bath.

Spring

Send for any extra plants needed; plant seeds - alyssum, lobelia, violas - to go in gaps.

Enjoy flowering spring bulbs, and dead head as flowering finishes.

Divide over-large clumps.

Plant *Saxifrage London Pride* and *Campanula cochlearifolia*.

Seed sowing.

Nurturing cuttings of annuals eg Penstemon, salvia, erigeron.

Refreshing compost (using organic compost), replanting pots for summer.

Summer

Planting containers with plants for biodiversity/wildlife.

Tying back shrubs.

Deadheading flowering plants.

Monitor wildlife habitats for bees/insects/birds.

Continue to check bee box and look out for wildlife.

Watering as appropriate.

Autumn

Planting spring bulbs.

Taking cuttings of tender plants.

Clearing pots of tender plants and annuals.

Prune and mulch climbing shrubs and flowers.

Collect sorbus tree leaves as they fall....

Plant more red campion seeds.

Mulch.



5. Engagement (Explain how you actively encourage church members/volunteers/wider community to nurture and protect the environment)

- We encourage church members to make ethical choices such as organic growing methods for our plants.

- Work with children and young people. Our Junior Church share their enthusiasm for protecting the environment in all-age services and by taking responsibility for the pots in our Eco Church Garden.
- We invite church members to grow plants for the Christian Aid Street Market in May by taking cuttings and sowing seeds in their own gardens.
- We have a stall after church in the growing season to give away surplus produce and plants. We ask for donations towards our Eco Church Garden fund.
- Within worship, observing the season of Creationtide, other special services.
- In display and posters around the building.
- In one-to-one conversations.
- Personal encouragement to become involved, when appropriate. This can mean many things.
- We have a budget from the church council to spend on our Eco Church Garden.
- Through our weekly newsletter and website, we advertise such things as litter picks, working parties at Quarry churchyard, and share pictures of the garden/churchyard and the wildlife we have observed there.
- Through our Eco Church services and all-age talks in church, especially through our children's workers' talks, bringing in items from her garden or stories of the wildlife there.
- Through our Eco themed displays at church.

6. Impact and celebration

- The front garden celebrates itself by just being there. It is enjoyed by those visiting the building and those passing by on the pavement
- We put highlights in the weekly newsletter, on the website and on social media.
- We celebrate the spaces by inviting congregation to go into the garden in summer months at coffee time.
- Our premises users need no encouragement to use our Eco Church garden to eat their lunch or chat or sit quietly.

7. Date for review

Review January 2026 (annually)