



Dear friends of St Nics Churchyard,

Welcome to our second newsletter and a warm welcome to those who have recently joined us.

Thank you!

A very big thank you to all of you who joined in the Big Help out Day last month – around 50 of us braved the weather to plant wild flower seeds, clear some paths and create not one, but two incredible ‘Bugingham Palaces’. It’s great to be able to walk around the site and enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of the churchyard. Here’s some photos of the day, but you can check out some more on our Facebook page.



Future Volunteering Opportunities:

Many people enjoyed the day so much that they’ve been asking when can we do it again. Jodie from Durham Wildlife Trust (DWT) has been in touch, and has put together an exciting programme of events for us. Our first date will be **Saturday 22nd July** so do put this one in your diary. You’ll find the programme at the end of this newsletter.

Networking:

As we mentioned in the previous newsletter, we have plans to link up with the Green Corridor Project. Some of the team have recently met with Laura McIntyre-Brown from the National Trust, who is leading on the Durham City Green Corridor Project. This is spearheaded by the NT and Durham County Council. (See <https://rb.gy/tx1zy> if you want to find out more about the Green Corridor project) Laura was very excited to see the work that we are planning in the churchyard, and tells us it fits exactly with their aim to create a green oasis within an urban environment for people and wildlife, so we will continue the conversation. It is great to have their support and interest.

Consultation leaflet:

You might be wondering about the outcome of the consultation following our leaflet drop. All of the comments we have received have now been collated, and they will be considered at the next St Nics Church Council (PCC) meeting which takes place shortly.

Grants:

We are hoping to hear by the end of the month whether our AAP (Area Action Partnership) funding bid has been successful, but good news just in: We have received a grant from the City of Durham Parish Council to fund the full £2000 we bid for. We are very grateful for their support and encouragement.

If you have expertise in applying for grants, or you know of suitable grant-making bodies that may be able to help us – please do get in touch – we'd love to have your help.

Churchyard Plan:

We are still trying to locate an original burial plan of the churchyard, but sadly, we so far have failed in this attempt. We were very grateful to hear from someone who is willing to undertake a survey of the gravestones and we also have a lead which we're following up of a previous survey done (before the nettles and sycamores took hold!) so it looks like we can make a start on this.



If anyone is interested in forming a small working group to look at the history of some of the people buried in our churchyard, this would be a lovely addition to the work we are doing. Just let us know, and we'll put you in touch with like-minded others. Once names and dates are found it should be possible to trace obituaries in archived newspapers, and maybe get funding to have some explanatory boards put up in the churchyard, linking to this information. A good start might be to look at the War Graves, maintained by the War Graves Commission, so easy to access. Who are these local heroes? How did they die? And what is their story?

Thank you for reading this. We hope you have a brilliant summer, and please do get in touch if you have any thoughts or ideas to help us with this project by contacting us by email at churchyard-group@stnics.org.uk

PS: Don't forget to continue to scroll down for our Programme of Volunteer Days

A reminder of who we are: The Churchyard group is a team of volunteers led by one of the Churchwardens at St Nics, Alan Smith. We are made up of members of St Nics, neighbours, a parish council representative and members of the Orthodox Church of St Cuthbert and St Bede, Durham. Together we want to see the Churchyard become a biodiverse sanctuary for wildlife and people, whilst at the same time, preserving the sanctity of a place where loved ones are remembered and cherished.

You're receiving this email because you've let us know that you're interested in helping out in some way in St Nics Churchyard, or want to keep in touch with what's happening. If for any reason this isn't the case and you don't want to receive future newsletters, then please email us at churchyard-group@stnics.org.uk and we'll remove you from the database.



Saturday 22nd July - More cut back – tidying of the entrance, more Ivy pulling, marking the sycamores which are to be cut back at a later date.

Saturday 19th August Open Event: Bio Blitz and bug-hunting

This is an opportunity to explore the churchyard and find out which furry, feathered and many legged friends live here, a great thing to do in the summer hols. Be ready for some surprises.

This is a great event to invite friends –Jodie will send out more information nearer the time as to how you can book.

Tuesday 8th August – Sycamore cutting – *just to be aware – the specialist DWT team will be here using pesticides to stop regrowth of the sycamores in the old graves, so this event will **not** be suitable for all, and Jodie will let us have more details nearer the time.*

Saturday 16th September Open Event: Bat walk

Obviously, bats are not likely to be flying around during the day, so this event is likely to be in the early evening, so look out for further details.

This is another great event to invite friends along to – Jodie will send out more information nearer the time as to how you can book this.

Further dates:

Saturday 16th September – Tree management / shrub management

Saturday 7th October – Shrub cutback

Tuesday 7th November - **To be confirmed** – Benches, signage.

Date for December - To Be Confirmed

Saturday 20th January – Tree, shrub work, path work

Saturday 17th February – **To be confirmed** – **It's the start of half term, so come with the kids and have fun!**

Saturday 16th March – It's springtime, so we'll be planting seeds in the wildflower meadows, and planting up planters.

Practicalities:

Please note that all children must be accompanied by a parent or carer, and must be supervised at all times by their responsible adult.

Jodie and team from the Durham Wildlife Trust will be there from 10.00am to 2.30pm, but people are welcome to come and go as they are able. We hope that the Youth Centre will be available for comfort breaks when we are working. Bring a picnic and suitable clothing. Jodie and the team from the Durham Wildlife Trust will need to leave at 2.30, but if you have your own tools and want to stay on, we may be able to accommodate this, subject to the availability of a qualified first-aider on site. Jodie will give us some tips on how we can continue the work after they've left.

Look out for further notifications with confirmation of dates nearer the time. We'll also send reminders on Facebook and by email.

It's helpful to let us know if you are intending to come along by emailing the team by emailing us at churchyard-group@stnics.org.uk