



**SEA Report to STC  
Services Committee  
December 2024**

**Elwell Woods**

In order to weaken and hopefully suppress the **heliotrope** which has invaded the orchard and surrounding wall and hedges, SEA volunteers have 'pulled' the stems up on several occasions, and Services have mown the grass several times since the first main cut at the end of Summer. True to its nature, the heliotrope is simply growing again but we hope to keep repeating our pulling!

We have agreed to work together with Services to write a **Management Plan** for Elwell Woods which we shall put forward for Council's suggestions and hopefully approval in due course. The plan's purpose will be to define clear aims for the area which will guide specific management decisions for the different habitats.

We note that the **bird bath** that SEA recently placed in Victoria Gardens will need to be removed for the planting of the Coronation Tree. We are considering various locations for it, and the current favourite is the orchard area of Elwell Woods; we would welcome any comments that Councillors have on this subject.

**Planned Community Garden, Grenfell Avenue**

(For information) SEA is applying for County funds for manger-style accessible planters. If the County provide money to convert the land to parking, as per the long-term plan, then the planters can be moved to the Community Allotment.

**Cemetery wildflower areas**

Since July 2021, SEA has been attempting to manage a 1-2-3 meter wide strip round the St Stephens cemetery, together with the area behind the East end of the Church itself (which is a great spring wildflower garden), on a trial basis. In two surveys in May and June 2022, we recorded 80 different species of wildflower, which is extraordinary! This indicates the richness of the seed bank in land that has been largely left undisturbed and not treated with chemicals.

We are now rethinking what is best future plan for the cemetery and for SEA. Since 2022, heavy persistent rain has very much restricted essential and timely mowing, so the grass has flourished at the expense of wildflowers. The displays have been very disappointing. The rain also meant we were not able to supplement mowing with scything – two of us are now trained. Moreover, we are worried that Cornwall's imposed limit of just two mows a year will make it difficult to restrict the overgrowth of grass sufficiently, particularly in our warm wet climate where grass can grow all year round. And finally, we note that the SDM now has a clear policy of establishing wildflower meadows in several sites around Saltash.

So, we would be happy to **restrict our meadow-making** to the far end, the approx 2-3 meter strip (the furthest right red line on the map used in our current agreement, below) with specimen trees planted in the middle section We think we can achieve more diversity by concentrating our efforts there. The question arises whether the Services Delivery would need to mow this area: we prefer to leave that flexible, meaning we could ask for mechanical mows in August and/or early Spring ONLY if we can't cope with the grass with our scythes alone. It is difficult to arranged a fixed schedule when Nature is so variable. We would welcome the Council's views on our proposal to restrict our activities, and then will presumably need to approach the Joint Burial Board for approval and to make a new agreement.



**Adrian White**  
SEA