



1st July 2021

Co-Chairmen
Joint Burial Board Committee
Saltash Town Council,
The Guildhall,
Lower Fore Street,
Saltash, Cornwall PL12 6JX

Dear Chairmen,

Re Proposal for reduced grass cutting schedule in defined areas of the churchyard

I write as Chairman representing Committee and Members of Saltash Environmental Action, and would be pleased if you would consider this correspondence at your next meeting. It relates to both Correspondence 33/20/21, and item 36/20/21 as per your minutes.

Several Members of SEA were invited to a meeting with members of the PCC at the Churchyard on 15th June 2021, for which we are grateful.

We explained that the loss of biodiversity (i.e. Nature) is known to be a major threat to our health and wellbeing in several ways, particularly the loss of pollinating insects that are crucial for production of our food.

We explained that the Churchyard has huge potential in the fight to reverse this loss of biodiversity. The land between the graves has been undisturbed for many years and rarely (if ever) treated with weedkillers and insecticides. Therefore it will contain a great store of viable seeds of wildflowers that could provide valuable habitats for insects. However, the wildflowers are currently suppressed by the grass's strong growth, which is due to the current mowing regime.

SEA would be willing to work to encourage the growth of wildflowers in defined areas – around the periphery of the Churchyard, and on the land between the East End and the Old Rectory. The Services Manager has agreed that, subject to approval of this committee, he would work with SEA on a reduced mowing regime. This collaboration currently works well at Pillmere Meadow, to the great benefit of wildflowers including for example bee orchids.

The precise areas that would be involved would need to be agreed in detail with Services Manager, and would depend for example on maintaining safe access to graves, and accessibility to the particular type of mower that needs to be used. The general areas where we propose to consider

this regime are marked on the attached map; they contain a few graves which would continue to be maintained under the present mowing regime.

Finally, we would like to note that meadows take several years to develop, so we urge PCC and visitors to the Churchyard to be patient in waiting for results in terms of colourful flowers – wildlife will in fact benefit even in year 1, simply from allowing grasses to flower. The grass will be allowed to grow between Spring and Summer, the main flowering period. We hope that visitors will consider it to be 'natural' rather than 'untidy'.

St Stephens - by - Sulfragh Church

Plan of Churchyard

