



## GARDENS, PARKS & CHURCHYARDS

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This amalgamation of three of the original action plans – **Gardens, Parks & Public Open Space** and **Churchyards & Cemeteries** – was written for the LBAP **Focus 2008** programme. In addition to focussing effort by this programme on four of our failing habitat action plans (see the **LBAP Report 2001 – 2007**: [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/biodiversity](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/biodiversity)), the partnership requested the inclusion of an action plan of more direct relevance to the general public and was particularly interested in raising the profile of gardens. To achieve this, a combination of our three ‘green space’ plans was agreed, despite their generally upward progress.



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**Targets (section 2)** for this plan are based on the new UKBAP standard terminology and the **Actions (section 6)** are mostly targets from the original 3 action plans. **Sections 4, 7,8 and 9** have been omitted as they would only repeat information from the original action plans. **Current Local Action (section 5)** includes information from our reporting in 2006 on the three original plans into the national database **Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS)**.

This new plan will not be reported on in **BARS** as this would lead to double counting; reporting on the original 3 plans in **BARS** will continue to take place every three years.

2. OUR OBJECTIVES & TARGETS	Target
A. To maintain the extent of the resource.	2015
B. To increase the extent of the resource.	2015
C. To improve the condition of these habitats.	2015
D. To maximise and record our knowledge of the wildlife of these habitats and to monitor losses and gains.	2015
E. To raise awareness of the importance of these habitats for wildlife and overcome the perception of untidiness which threatens the rarity and fragility of biodiversity.	2015

**ASSOCIATED HABITAT PLANS**

- Parks & Public Open Spaces
- Gardens
- Churchyards & Cemeteries
- School Grounds
- Hedgerows
- Allotments
- Ponds, Lakes & Reservoirs
- The Built Environment
- Traditional Orchards
- Lowland Grassland (all types)
- Wood-pasture, Parkland & Veteran Trees
- Woodland

**ASSOCIATED SPECIES PLANS**

- Song Thrush
- Bats
- Water Vole
- Great Crested Newt
- Rare Bumble bees
- Barn Owl
- Farmland Birds
- Black Poplar

**3. NATIONAL BAP OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS**

There are no specific national objectives or targets for this action plan. There are, however, BAP objectives or targets for some of the habitats and species they contain, e.g. standing open water, reed beds, various grasslands, song thrush. Such sites therefore provide a valuable opportunity to promote habitat creation or act as wildlife corridors in a manner that helps address national targets. The Biodiversity Strategy for England "Working with the grain of nature" (DEFRA, 2002) regards parks and urban green spaces as a Priority Policy Issue stating: "*Ensuring biodiversity as an integral part of parks, playing fields and other urban greenspace. Multi-functional role of green spaces linked to urban renaissance.*"

**4. See the original action plans****5. CURRENT LOCAL ACTION**

- **Gardens**

- *Ryton Organic Gardens* wildlife garden has been revamped with new signage to promote wildlife as part of organic gardening. Their new website promotes better understanding of wildlife in gardens.
- *Butterfly Conservation* has a new 'Gardening for Butterflies' leaflet which it has been handing out at local shows and events.
- *RSPB* produces free materials on wildlife-friendly gardening, both hard copies and online (see <http://www.rspb.org.uk/gardens/>), including *Birds in your Garden* booklet and up to 30 different leaflets on a wide range of garden wildlife topics.
- *British Trust for Ornithology* continues to promote the Garden Birdwatch and Birdtrack as a way of allowing people to get involved regarding birds and their own spaces and gardens.
- The restoration of *Hill Close* Victorian gardens in Warwick.

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- *Warwickshire Wildlife Trust* has set up a Wildlife Gardening Club at Brandon Marsh with Wildflower Bring and Buy Sales and talks to community groups.
- Coventry's *Urban Rangers* give talks on 'Gardening for Wildlife' and have continued Urban Ranger membership of Urban Wildlife Network.
- **Parks**
  - *Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council* Local Planning Document reports the use only of a recycled peat- free medium. *Coventry City Council*, *Warwick District Council* and *Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council* all encourage home composting. North Warwickshire Borough Council offers garden composters.
  - Bulb-planting days school sessions in *Primrose Hill Park*
  - Solihull MBC continues to manage *Marston Green Park*; all park plans a contain areas of biodiversity interest. The theme for 2006 was Biodiversity with a leaflet of top biodiversity spots to visit and wildlife gardening tips.
  - *Butterfly Conservation* helped to co-ordinate a series of public training events on moths and butterflies at Sutton Park and has monitoring in place on all important sites for their LBAP butterfly species.
  - The *Big Tree Hunt of Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull* has massively raised the profile of local parks and green spaces as 'arboretums' with substantial educational potential and often historic and ecological significance. Numerous tree walks now take place around the subregion each year linked to the Big Tree Hunt and information on the trees of most better parks is being placed on the web ([www.warwickshire.gov.uk/rings](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/rings) - go to Big Tree Hunt web page for attachments) and will be sent to the Tree Register of Britain and Ireland. Any veteran trees, mature elms or native black poplars within parks or public open spaces are recorded and data sent to the national recordingschemes.WM: Increased public awareness through themed guided walks at all Warwickshire Museum and various LA tree officers and tree warden groups re: the trees of parks and public open spaces. This is happening on a regular basis at Ufton Fields SSSI and Hartshill Hayes Country Park and all other sites have meetings on an adhoc basis Some plans exist for improving interpretation at some sites and improving tree collections.
  - The *Draft Rugby Open Spaces Strategy* includes biodiversity.
  - *Warwickshire Wildlife Trust* has organised a series of training workshops for birds, butterflies, dragonflies, bats, great crested newts and water voles.
  - In Coventry a *Green Infrastructure Plan* exists following a review of the Culture and leisure 'Green space Strategy' underway.
  - The production of '*Master Plans*' for all parks and public open spaces that include areas of biodiversity interest has been achieved by Solihull MBC where the theme for 2006 was Biodiversity with a leaflet of top biodiversity spots to visit and wildlife gardening tips.

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- **Churchyards**

- *Coventry's Divine Inspiration Project* encourages people to visit & Warwickshire's churches and churchyards. There is a quarterly newsletter and discussion of the production of a leaflet to raise the profile of wildlife, among other features, of the 30+ churches across Warwickshire. They plan to find if any research has already been carried out on biodiversity and to identify SSSIs close to and overlapping the sites, with the help of the County Ecology Field Services. The project has distributed an action pack on management of churchyard grassland for conservation. Only one - Oldberrow - is currently known to have a management plan.
- Talk by *Caring for God's Acre* to 40 out of the 70 churches signed up for the Divine Inspiration Project in Coventry & Warwickshire
- *The Living Churchyard* website describes 5 churches in Warwickshire
- Events such as a Wildflower Sunday and Flower Festival in celebration of the biodiversity of Oldberrow churchyard; a Harvest Home event In Wootton Wawen – for several years and Oldberrow, Coventry.

## 6. PROPOSED LOCAL ACTIONS

ACTION	Lead	Partners	By	Meets objective
<b>Policy &amp; Legislation</b>				
<b>PL1.</b> Establish appropriate policies in local planning documents and strategies.	LBAPSG		2008-2015	A
<b>PL2.</b> Identify the most ecologically - important <b>churchyards &amp; cemeteries</b> , and <b>parks &amp; public open spaces</b> and their ownership, by referring to the Habitat Biodiversity Audit and the 1984/5 churchyard survey.	HBA		2010	A
<b>PL3.</b> Inform owners/managers of land adjacent to <b>parks &amp; public open spaces</b> of any ecological significance, where it is thought that this will benefit vulnerable species or assemblages, or produce 'stepping stones' between sites.	LBAPSG		2015	A
<b>Site / Species Safeguard &amp; Management</b>				
<b>SM1.</b> Increase the extent of the ecologically - rich areas in <b>gardens, churchyards &amp; cemeteries</b> and <b>parks &amp; public open spaces</b> , eg. by leaving areas of grass unmown, leaving wood piles, creating ponds, erecting bird, bat and bee boxes.	LBAPSG		2015	B

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<b>SM2.</b> Investigate <i>churchyards</i> as a source of local provenance seed and stock for spreading into the wider countryside, eg. for the re-creation of species-rich hay meadows through agri-environment schemes.	WSP		2010	B
<b>Advisory</b>				
<b>A1.</b> Stimulate local action to benefit <i>garden</i> wildlife by advice, eg. on composting and the use of alternatives to peat and chemicals.	LBAPSG		2008-2015	C
<b>A2.</b> Encourage the sympathetic management of <i>churchyards &amp; cemeteries</i> by advice, eg. by wildlife interpretation boards and management plans.	CDEG		2008 – 2015	C
<b>A3.</b> Promote good management practice in <i>parks &amp; public open spaces</i> which maximises the wildlife value, e.g. by the preparation of 'Master' plans, acquiring Green Flag status.	LBAPSG		2008 – 2015	C
<b>Research &amp; Monitoring</b>				
<b>RM1.</b> Develop a local recording system to monitor the extent of <i>garden</i> habitats and wildlife populations.	HBA		2010	D
<b>RM2.</b> Encourage a resurvey programme of <i>churchyards &amp; cemeteries</i> .	CDEG		2010	D
<b>RM3.</b> Survey the actual and potential biodiversity value of <i>parks &amp; public open spaces</i> .	HBA		2015	D
<b>Communication, Education &amp; Publicity</b>				
<b>CP1.</b> Set up a Wildlife <i>Gardening</i> Initiative (WGI) to provide information, advice and support.	WWT		2008 – 2015	E
<b>CP2.</b> Organise events to demonstrate good practice in <i>gardens, churchyards &amp; cemeteries</i> and <i>parks &amp; public open spaces</i> .	LBAPSG		2008 – 2015	E
<b>CP3.</b> Encourage local community action in <i>parks &amp; public open spaces</i> .	LBAPSG		2008 – 2015	E

**Abbreviations:** CDEG - Coventry Diocesan Environmental Group, HBA - Habitat Biodiversity Audit, LBAPSG - Local Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group, WSP - Wildlife Sites Project, WWT - Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.

**For sections 7,8 and 9 – see the original action plans.**