

Church Grounds Mapping for Biodiversity

Following on from your evening of reflection on this biodiversity initiative, to make part of the church grounds 'a haven for pollinators and biodiversity' as agreed by the Irish Bishops in March 2023, your first task is to map your church grounds. This document aims to help you map your church grounds in simple practical steps. You might also like to watch this video from *Heritage in Schools* to give an idea of what a biodiversity map looks like: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kkwadM-MYO>

1. With your group, walk the grounds and draw a simple map of the church grounds as they are now. Include the church, the boiler-house etc.
2. Include any area that is covered in concrete/tarmac. Include any existing features i.e. flower beds, shrubs, trees, hedges, stream, ponds, nesting sites, seating, car park, bike stands.
3. You have to take into account the following elements:
 - Where is north and south in relation to the site?
 - Make a note of the path of the sun from east to west
 - Which direction is your prevailing wind coming from?
 - Is there a slope and which direction is it facing?
 - Is the site at the bottom of a hill, or in the shadow of any forestry or mountains?
 - Is any of the land generally wet, or even liable to flooding?
4. Using the above information assess, which areas on your map could be used for biodiversity and planting projects? Remember this is only a wish list, so don't let barriers stop you from adding the elements, (e.g. a pond). Apply all the elements of the site audit and don't forget to use your imagination to think of any other potential ideas:
 - Herb area
 - Sensory area
 - Quiet/meditation area
 - Paths between
 - A living willow structure native
 - Compost area for grass cuttings, leaves, small twigs, branches
 - Other ideas: e.g. bird/bat boxes, native hedging, apple trees
 - Signage

"St. Francis asked that part of the friary garden always be left untouched, so that wild flowers and herbs could grow there, and those who saw them could raise their minds to God, the Creator of such beauty." - Pope Francis in Laudato Si', 12



A prayer for our earth to inspire you as you begin: All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Amen. (Full prayer in Laudato Si, 246)

Church Grounds Checklist

Do you have a native hedgerow or a natural stonewall?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have a woodland (small or large)?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have a vegetable plot?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have any compost system?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have an orchard and/or fruit bushes?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have any herbs growing?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have a flower garden? Are there pollinator friendly plants growing?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have a lawn/playing pitch/grassy area?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have wild areas eg. Wild flower meadows, long grass, log piles etc?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have a pond?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have a polytunnel or glasshouse?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have any domestic farm animals?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have a willow or hazel coppice?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have a tree nursery?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have a living willow fence/dome/tunnel/archway?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have any bat boxes or bird boxes?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have a wetland, pond or bog habitat?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have outdoor seating? Benches/logs	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have a trellis/climbing area	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have water collectors?	Yes No	Notes:
Do you have alternative energy sources or BER?	Y/N	Notes:
Do you have a shed?	Y/N	Notes:
What do you recycle?	Y/N	Notes: