

## Case study: St John's Ranmoor

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### Name of project or group

St John's Church, Ranmoor Eco Church Group. Case study by John Green, August 2022

### What actions for nature did your group want to take and why?

As Christians we believe it's our mission to strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. Rev Matthew Rhodes encouraged us to work for an A Rocha Eco Church award which includes land around the church, parish centre and vicarage. Working for nature recovery has given focus to our wider role in the local community.



Photo credit: Cathy Rhodes

### What resources or support did you use?

We had great personal support and advice from Nicky Rivers (SRWT) and Jon Hall, Environment Officer (Phoenix Futures, a local therapeutic community).

We used on-line resources from A Rocha, The Wildlife Trusts and Caring for God's Acre.

Cathy Rhodes, Diocesan Environment Adviser and part of our congregation also gave advice and leadership.

## Case study: St John's Ranmoor

### How did you empower or involve others?

We formed a working group from the wider congregation. Children from our church took part in a nature survey 'Churches Count on Nature,' and we are part of Nature Recovery Sheffield. Residents from Phoenix Futures helped with the gardening work, alongside working parties. There's regular information in our Parish magazine and online, and a 'plant of the week' on our notice board. We put up signs to explain 'No Mow May!' Linking with and fundraising for global charities such as Christian Aid connects us to our siblings suffering the effects of the environment emergency.

### How did it make you feel?

Very positive, with lots of ideas and energy. Especially when the orchids appeared!

"The wildflower meadow is prominent in front of the church and has been a great talking point."

### What changes have there been as a result of your actions?

We achieved our Bronze and Silver Eco Church awards, and are now working towards Gold [Eco Church](#). This includes our Worship & Teaching, Buildings, Lifestyles and Community/Global Engagement so is a holistic programme.

### Have you had any memorable nature encounters while doing this?

When we created a wildflower meadow area in churchyard grassland we discovered wide diversity including bee and pyramid orchids.

We've installed swift and bat boxes at the Parish Community Centre and vicarage, and are awaiting residents!



Photo credit: Claire Webber? TBC

## Case study: St John's Ranmoor

### How have your actions been shared or inspired others?

Monthly articles on the project and wider climate/nature issues in the Parish magazine distributed across the local community and online, and mentioned in notices, prayers and talks in weekly services.

We participated in environmental strategy working groups with our local MP in advance of COP26. We've joined with other local churches in a new network 'Sheffield Churches for Nature' for inspiration, to share resources and good practice, and to celebrate the work we are all doing for nature recovery.

### What's next?

Complete a full Land Management plan towards our application for Gold Eco-Church Award. This includes a wildlife pond in the Parish Centre garden, increased diversity of planting to encourage pollinators, and a native hedge.



*Photo credit: Cathy Rhodes*

