

# Holy Trinity Church, Aldershot

## Eco-Church Project

“Throughout  
the country that  
you hold as a  
possession, you  
must provide  
for the  
redemption of  
the land.”

Leviticus 25 v24



# Holy Trinity Church – Eco Project

**Eco Church is about caring for God's earth in different areas of our church life and work.**

**As Christians we take our stewardship of the planet seriously**

**Increasing climate events and environmental degradation demand a response**

The project takes us through five key areas of church life:

- **Worship and teaching**
- **Management of church buildings**
  - **Management of church land**
- **Community and global engagement**
  - **Lifestyle**





# Land and Gardens

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Holy Trinity land and buildings occupy a central location in Aldershot Town Centre

- Our objective has been to rejuvenate our gardens and make them a place fit for people to enjoy and find quiet amid our busy urban bustle, and for flowers, plants and wildlife to have a chance to grow and prosper.
- The following slides show you the work and some of the people who have been involved in our journey over the last 24 months.





# The Wider Mission

- A new life for the church grounds is driven by the A Rocha scheme
- Sustainable eco-churches with a global and community awareness
- Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust (BVCT) were asked to help in 2019



**ECO CHURCH**  
AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT

## Welcome to Eco Church: A Rocha UK's award scheme for churches in England and Wales who want to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God's earth.

Our free online survey and supporting resources are designed to equip your church to express your care for God's world in your worship and teaching; in how you look after your buildings and land; in how you engage with your local community and in global campaigns, and in the personal lifestyles of your congregation.

The actions you take will count towards a prestigious Eco Church Award...

Eco Church tu...  
On 26 January Eco Church became five years old. Covid has prevented a face to face 'birthday party', but on 26 March we will be holding an online event to celebrate the extraordinary development of the programme, to thank all who have contributed

# Eco-Church Assessment

Working within the A Rocha framework

- Encouraging environmental awareness
- Three levels: Gold, Silver and Bronze
- 'Land' criteria focuses on improving the wildlife potential of church grounds

These criteria provide the basis for BVCT's involvement with Holy Trinity

Our project plan aims to deliver these goals by 2022

**LAND** **ECO CHURCH**  
AN ARCHA PROJECT

1. Does your church have influence over any land? (e.g. churchyard, community nature reserve)  
 Yes  No
2. The land at our church is managed for the encouragement of native wildlife (birds, animals and plants):  
 Yes  No  Need to find out
3. We encourage native wildlife on our church land through provision of the following:  
 Bird Boxes  Bat Boxes  Bug Hotel  Hedgehog Boxes  
 Other (please tell us in the additional comments)  None  Need to find out
4. Stocked wildlife feeding stations are present on our church land (e.g. bird feeders, bird tables):  
 Yes, all year round  Yes, winter only  No  Need to find out
5. Our church land contains a pond or wetland area that is good for wildlife:  
 Yes  No  Need to find out  Not applicable (no space for a pond)
6. We grow plants on our land that benefit birds, bees, butterflies etc.:  
 Yes  No  Need to find out
7. Our church maintains an area of land for native wildflowers:  
 Yes  No  Need to find out
8. Our church has researched and established a mowing regime appropriate to the conservation of the grassland and wildlife present:  
 Yes  No  Need to find out
9. Our church avoids the use of harmful chemicals (pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers) in the management of our land (excluding paths and driveways):  
 Yes  No  Need to find out
10. Our church participates in responsible native tree planting schemes in accordance with guidance from environment professionals:  
 Yes  No  Need to find out
11. Our church undertakes wildlife (birds, animals and plants) surveys on our land:  
 Annually (or more)  Occasionally  
 Never  Need to find out
12. Our church participates in a scheme, other than Eco Church, designed to promote conservation on church land (e.g. 'Living Churchyards'):  
 Yes  No  Need to find out
13. We grow fruit and vegetables on our land (including in planters, window boxes etc. as well as in a community garden/allotment):  
 Yes  No  Need to find out  
 Not applicable (insufficient land)
14. Composting facilities are available on our church land:  
 Yes  No  Need to find out
15. Our church actively encourages members to use church land for recreation/contemplation (e.g. picnics, prayer etc.):  
 Yes  No  Need to find out  
 Not applicable (insufficient land)
16. Our church actively encourages members of the local community to use the church land for recreation/contemplation:  
 Yes  No  Need to find out  
 Not applicable (insufficient land)
17. Our church has established a management plan for the land for which we are responsible:  
 Yes  No  Need to find out



# Holy Trinity's Garden in 1905





# Site plan 2019

Working within  
a concrete  
jungle



Yew garden

Canadian  
Memorial  
Garden

Hedge  
boundary

Gateways





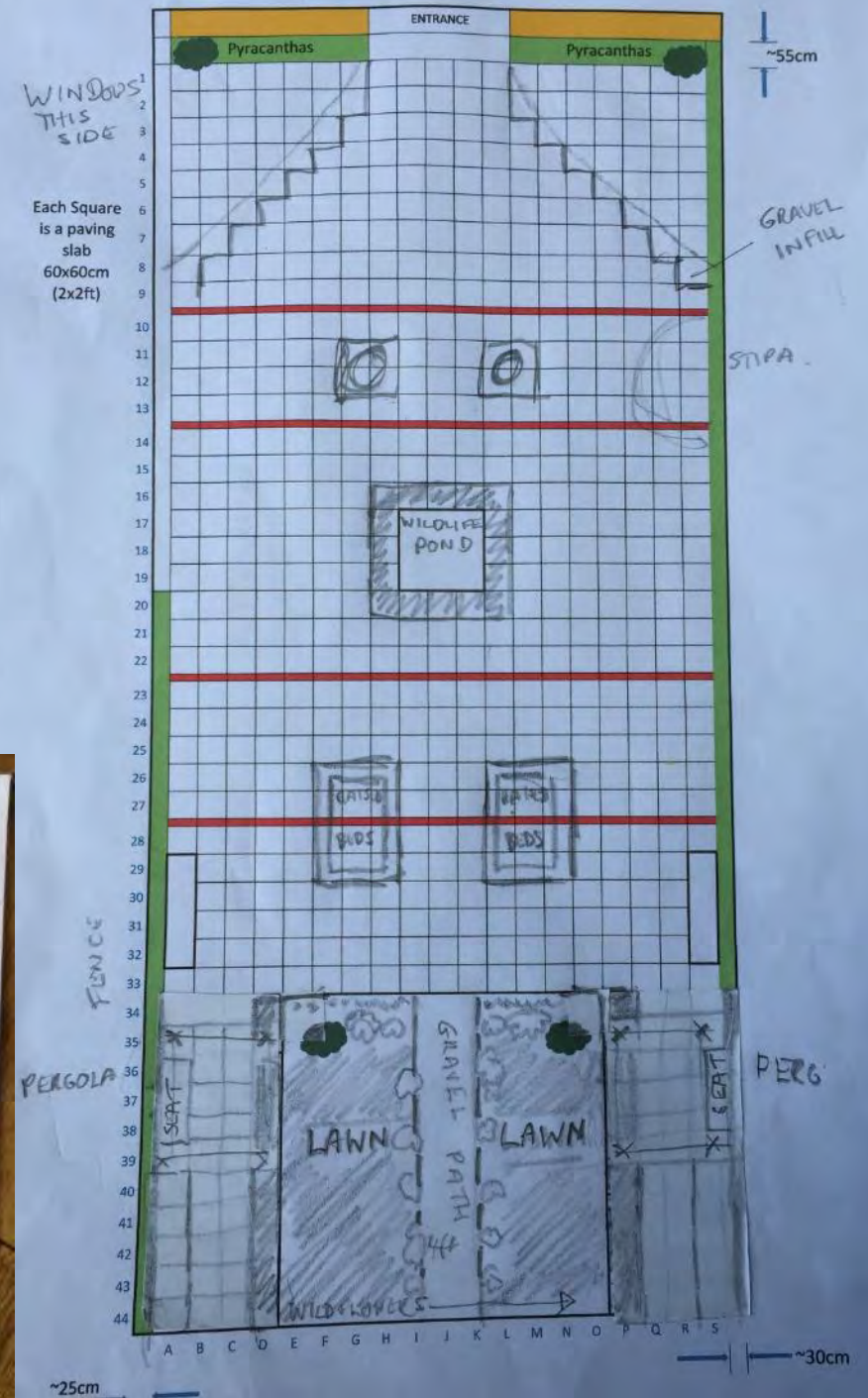
# The Vision

- The designs used or recycled some of the existing planting
- Grassed areas were repurposed and wildflowers retained
- Encouraging wildlife was a key feature





# Yew garden planning





# BVCT Mood Boards

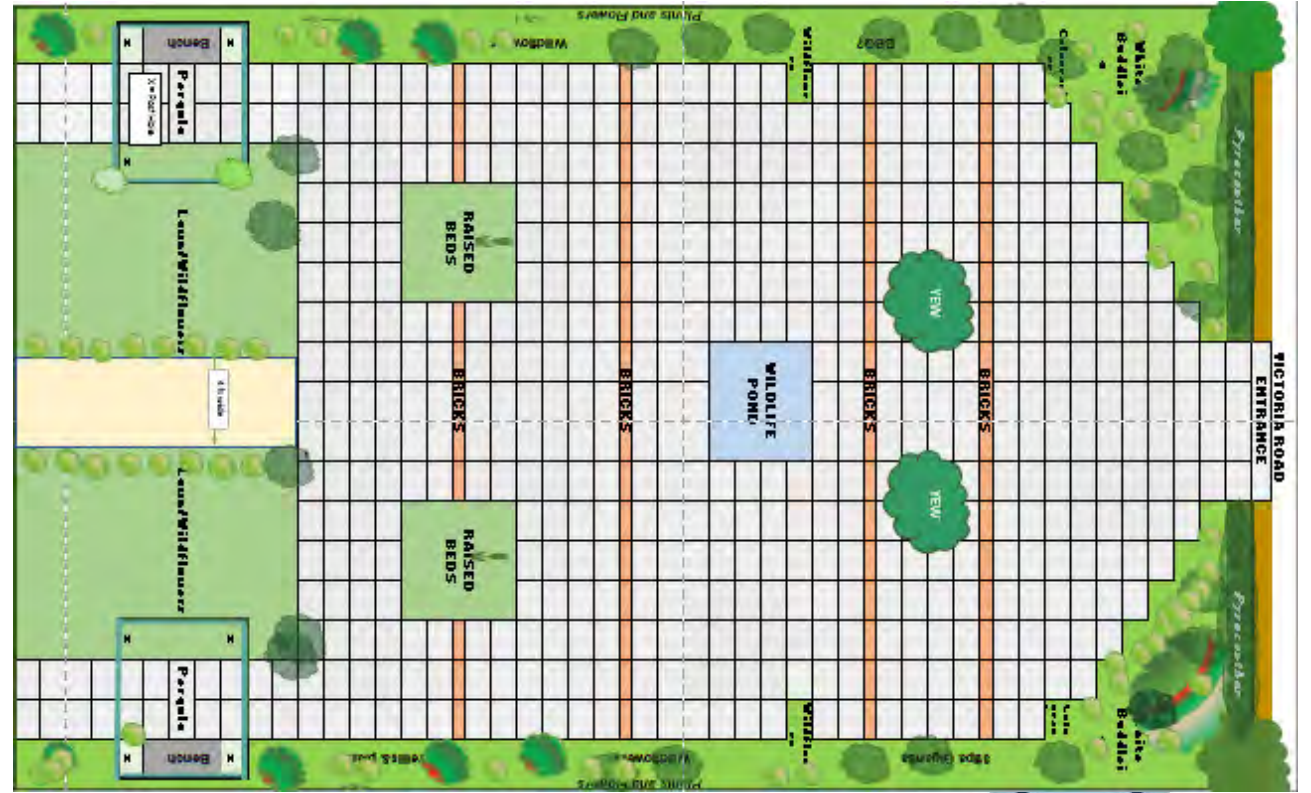
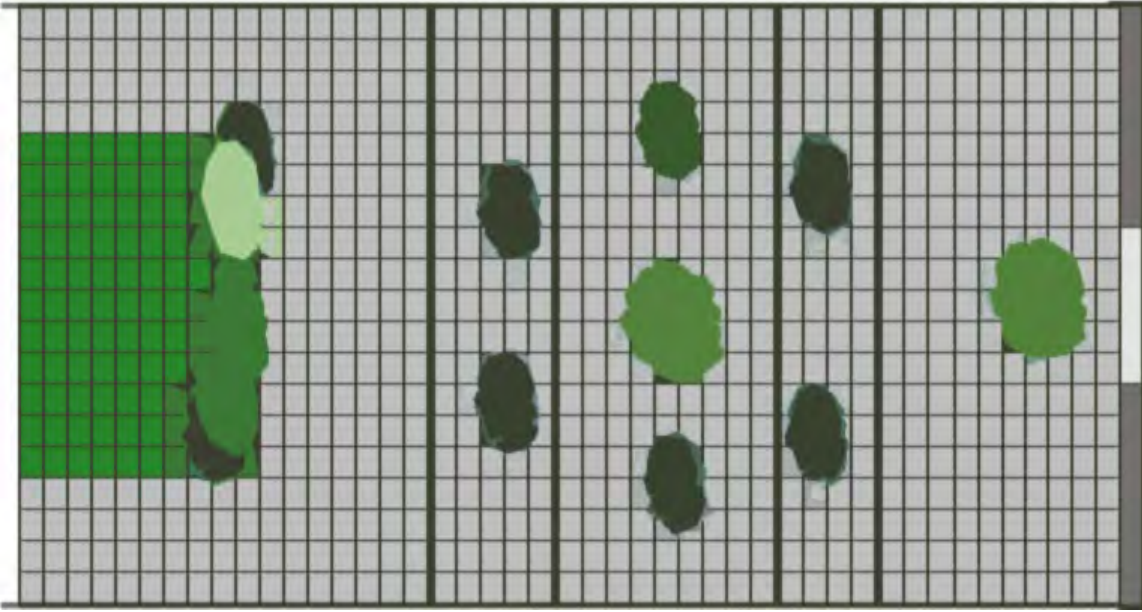
These were created based on discussion of the Church's needs.

They reflect ideas from Geoff Berry and Jane Newton who were the prime movers in changing the use and landscaping of the site.





From this.....to this







## Assessing potential

Health and Safety was a primary concern

These areas required immediate attention

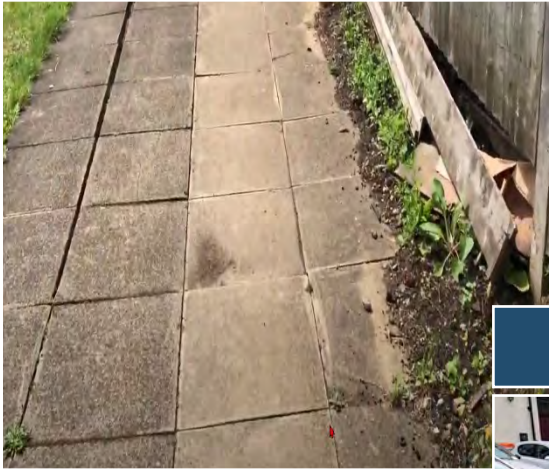
- The paving slabs were broken and uneven
- Perimeter fences had been damaged
- Disabled access was restricted



# In the beginning.....

How can we bring life to an unloved and unkempt urban space in the middle of Aldershot?

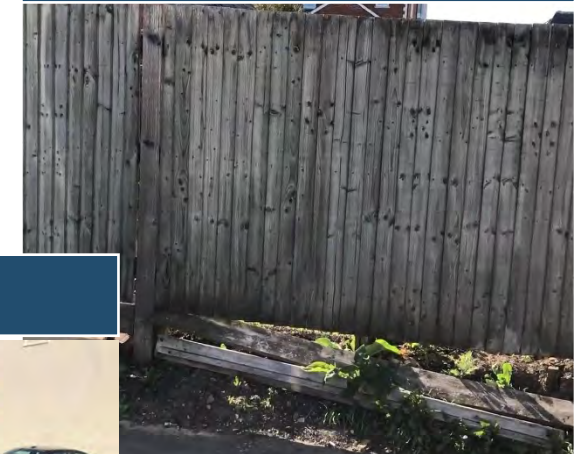
Broken and uneven concrete slabs



Overgrown



Broken fences



Broken fences



Overgrown





# Scope for Improvement

- Recent development of the site had been piecemeal and lacked cohesion.
- Shrubs were overgrown and there were barriers to sightlines.
- The church was isolated from its surroundings





# Saving the past: Canadian Memorial Garden

This sorry patch of ground to the rear of the church was dedicated to the Canadian troops stationed in Aldershot during the Second World War.

Parishioners wanted to honour this memory

Stones from the original obelisk have been sympathetically repurposed to construct a new focal point.





# The first step...

- Planting the lavender
- Bee-ing welcoming!





# Memorial garden

- The obelisk was demolished to create an uninterrupted view across the plot
- Broken paving was removed and bamboo was cleared
- A new place for a bench emerged





# Memorial garden

- Volunteers re-potted plants for the yew garden
- New beds were dug
- Tea breaks were essential!





# Memorial garden

- The builders get creative with old coping stones
- A donated planter becomes the new bird bath
- New screening will mask the car park
- A new, winding path leads to a peaceful haven





# Place for Contemplation

- Buddlejias and crab apples provide instant height and colour
- The first butterflies arrive
- Foxgloves and marigolds attract the bees





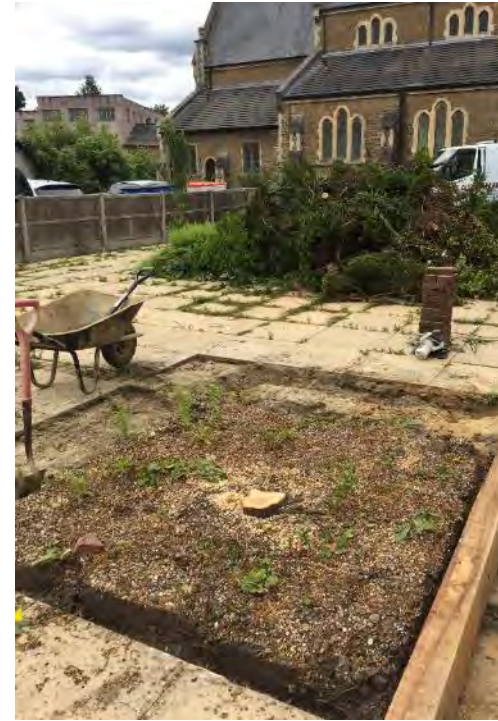
# Main garden area - bringing new life to old concrete





# July 2020 – contractors finally on site

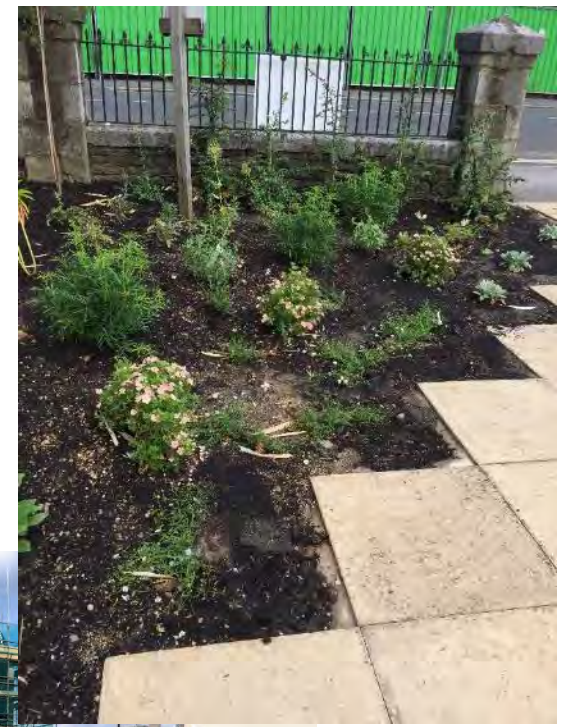
- 155 paving slabs were lifted and levelled
- A weed-proof membrane was laid
- Some of the yews were removed to open up the space for outside events
- The original approach to the church was reinstated





# Taking shape

- Pergolas under construction
- Earth moving
- Lawn planting

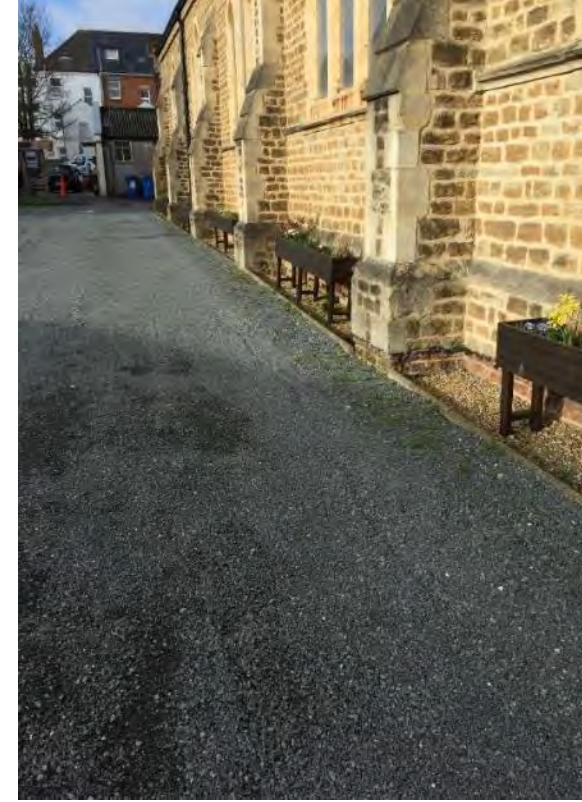


- New borders
- New pathways





# Church Planters!





# Yew garden – Mark 2

- Pergolas with integral seating add height and shade
- Another cherry tree adds balance
- Climbing roses will add softness and scent



- A new gravel path divides the 'lawn'





# Raised beds

- Sleepers create growing space for community vegetables
- The height is wheelchair friendly
- The raised beds for vegetable growing are filled with a mix of organic topsoil and peat-free compost
- The third bed is earmarked for a shallow pond





# From little acorns...

Children from Deux Chats Pre-School help plant the native hedge

- Free trees! Free labour!
- Rowans, crab-apples, hazels, sloes and dog roses



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## Free trees for schools and communities

We want to make sure everybody in the UK has the chance to plant a tree. So we're giving away hundreds of thousands of trees to schools and communities. Together, we'll get millions more trees in the ground.





# Wildlife corridor

- BVCT successfully applied for 100 free trees from the Woodland Trust to create a native hedge.
- More flowering cherries create a welcoming entrance at each of the gates





# The Big Plant

- Birch trees will add shade
- Rowans and pyracantha provide flowers and berries
- Large beds contrast with the urban landscape
- 55 metres of plants for pollinators





# What you sow.....you reap!



**Our Nepalese helpers**







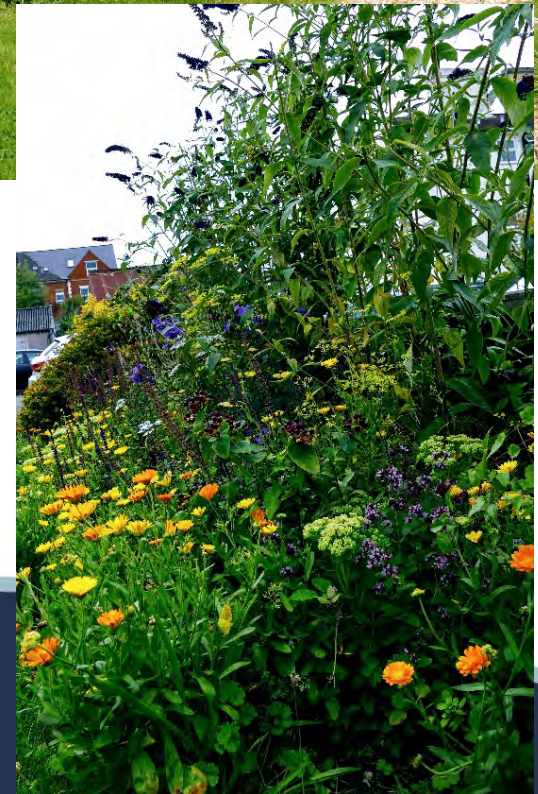
## The Pond

Freshwater snails, nymph and other invertebrates have already made the pond their home.





# August 2021





# The Veg Patch







Many thanks to Annie Keighley and the Team from Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust

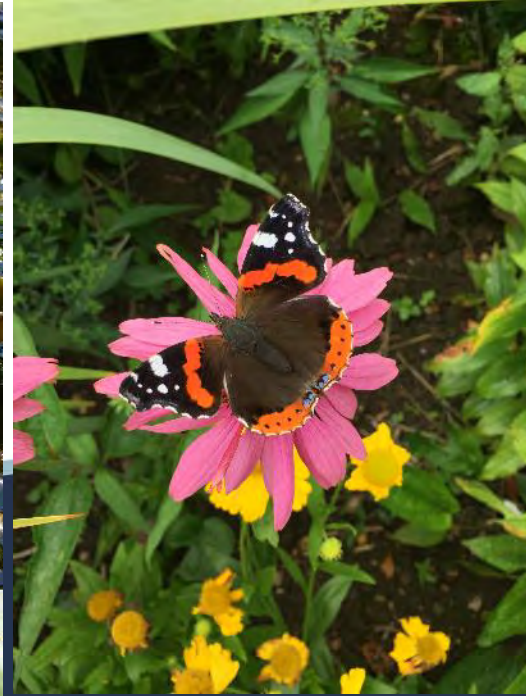




# Watch this space...

## Making a difference with BVCT

- Working towards wildflowers
- Creating a wildlife pond
- Wildlife surveys





“The earth is the LORD’s and everything in it”

# Thank you

