



PARISH OF GREAT BERKHAMSTED

Additional Meeting of the Parochial Church Council held via Zoom on Tuesday 24th May at 8pm

In attendance: Christine Cowie, Christopher Green, Stuart Owen, David Cook, Richard Hackworth, Sarah Elder, Susan Holmes, Oliver Fradgley, Mark Grego, Astrid Biddle, Carolyn Charman

Prayers

Apologies: Alan Conway; Hilary Elliott

Faculty Application Rectory Lane Cemetery

This Parochial Church Council of St Peter's, Berkhamsted, approves the Faculty application for the creation of three small wildlife ponds in the Rectory Lane Cemetery, whilst taking note of the following:

1) The concern raised by Dr Astrid Biddle:

I am Dr Astrid Biddle and I am Joint Botanical Society of Great Britain and Ireland Recorder for Hertfordshire, the Joint British Bryological Society Recorder for Hertfordshire and an Ecologist for Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.

In my professional opinion the siting of ponds under a Sycamore is not a good idea as they would be both shaded and adversely affected by leaf-fall. Shading reduces the available light for plant growth and makes the pond surroundings a colder habitat and less attractive to creatures such as frogs. Leaf-fall adds excess nutrients and the tannins in the leaves acidify the water, resulting in a low oxygen concentration and rather smelly, muddy conditions with little plant life.

Currently the shade in this area supports grassland of "woodland glade character" as stated in the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust report of 2017. That section of the cemetery supports a population of primroses and other woodland vegetation, representing one of the better ecological features found in the cemetery. Removing or cutting back the sycamore to shed more light on the ponds would have a very detrimental effect on that character. The woodland vegetation is likely to deteriorate and tend more towards resembling the other areas of the cemetery.

I explained my concerns to Kate Campbell in Oct/ Nov 2021 when we met to discuss elements of the Rectory Lane Cemetery grassland management. I would advise against siting ponds in this location but I welcome the assurance from James Moir that the scheme is entirely reversible should it prove necessary.

2) The assurance given by Dr James Moir that the works are entirely reversible should that prove necessary.

Unanimously passed.

It was hoped that a better working relationship would now follow.

Maintenance Payment

PCC approve the annual maintenance payment to the cemetery £5000 subject to review
unanimously passed.

Meeting closed