

## Churchyard Awarded County Council Nature Status

A Church in the Ripon Episcopal area has been recognised as a Site of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINC) and declared a County Wildlife Site by North Yorkshire County Council.

St John's Sharow holds one of the largest open churchyards in the North of England and is home to over an acre of meadowland, a rare survivor from pesticides and intensive farming.

The churchyard is managed by a number of conservation volunteers who have reintroduced traditional conservation techniques, such as the scythe, and worked with partners including Open Country and Caring for God's Acre to create new areas of meadow around the churchyard. Their hard work has seen a string of recent accolades, including being highly commended in the Church Times Green Award, for their work improving the biodiversity of the area and being declared one of the finest churchyards in England by Caring for God's Acre, the national charity for churchyards.

Revd Ruth Newton, Parish Priest, says, "I consider our work in the area of the environment to be at the forefront of the church's mission. Our churchyard not only functions as an "Ark" for vulnerable species, but allows us to engage with people who would otherwise have no contact with church. We have had young people volunteering as part of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the National Citizenship Scheme and a growing number of visitors. Being recognised as a Country Wildlife Site is a testimony to the vision and hard work of all those involved."



For more information, contact Rev Ruth Newton at [ruth.newton@leeds.anglican.org](mailto:ruth.newton@leeds.anglican.org)

