



# Wilding Enmore





# Background

- Wilder Churches Seminar (Somerset Wildlife Trust and our Diocese of Bath & Wells)
- Initiative since 2021 with lots of support materials
- Started because Church areas are often last bastions of timeless landscape and good option for Wilding
- Encourage PCCs to turn their Church land into green havens by increasing biodiversity in a green and sustainable way



- Expand Wilding to whole Parish Agendas

# What is Wilding?

- “a process-led approach committed to restoring ecological function, with benefits to people and wildlife
- Is as much about soil restoration, flood mitigation, water and air purification, carbon capture and pollination as it is about more space for nature “
- Champion sustainable pro-nature behaviours through community education and sharing knowledge and skills
- Increase the biodiversity of local Wildlife so that the local ecosystem recovers and can function wholly and independently for local and wider benefit

# Why ?

- We have lost 97% of Wildflower grasslands in UK
- 41% of species lost, Hedgehogs have declined by 95%, UK is among world's most nature depleted
- Noticeable decline seen by current generations
- Upside is that Nature fights back hard to survive
- To increase from 10% to 30% our island's land and sea being positively managed for Nature

## How?

- To not wait for a “trickle down” effect from on high
- Start now with “Bottom Up” action across multiple local communities, all towards a common objective

# Why should we do it in Enmore ?

- Because there is evidence there are enough of us who really care about our Green Village
- Because we know we are only custodians of our land
- Privileged to live in a rural landscape that gives scope and opportunity for “easy” Wilding
- Many of us, as individuals, trying our best but in isolation, limited impact and no success measures

## So Far

- Village wins – litter pick, solar panels on VH, verge planting, verge drainage, action on speed limits

# What are the key areas within Parish ?

1. Church Yard
2. “New” Cemetery Field
3. Farms and Farmland
4. Verges and Hedges
5. Private Gardens or large spaces (Golf Club)
6. School
7. Village Hall

# 1. Benefits of Wilding our Churchyard

- Church, as is, is at risk – few countable parishioners
- A need to increase the dependency of the community on the Church to ensure survival
- Wilding Churchyard
  - Invite Somerset Botany Group Volunteer (free)
  - Assess current biodiversity (incl gravestone lichen)
  - Suggest a sustainable wilding approach including increasing wildlife habitat eg bird/insect boxes, leaf litter/composting, wildflower patches, info signs on historic graves, yew tree etc, build a small pond or wet patch
  - Involve local school eg nature lessons, wildlife trails etc
- Work towards Eco Church certification ?



# 4. Verges and Hedges

- A survey of a Somerset Organic Farm's land was 5% hedges that was habitat for 95% of their wildlife
- Like mini woodland strips, haven for pollinators
- Define roads/properties/farmland – cross borders!
- Mixed species planting and ages
- Need to be cut to maximise both wildlife habitat and provide sustainable food source
- Different hedges need different approaches
  - Incremental trimming
  - A line shaping
  - Differing cutting intervals according to hedge habitat priorities
  - Cutting plans specific to age and location of hedge
  - Invite expert opinions and recommendations - Somerset Hedge Group, SWT
  - Recommend priorities and hedge management approach for range of hedge groups in Parish in light of expert input
  - Encourage landowners to revisit and adjust hedge maintenance



# Next Steps

- Form a Village Parish Panel with members representing key areas within Parish identified as candidates for Wilding
- Phase1 Village Action Plan, PC to explore funding opp.
- Each Panel member will work with own formed group or existing committee
  - Invite Somerset Botany and other expert volunteers to contribute advice as appropriate to own sub-group
  - Share local knowledge and skill sets across groups
  - Produce specific Wilding Plan
- Produce a high level Village Wilding Plan supported by more detailed plans produced by each area
- Set targets, priorities, timeframes, measures of success

# Communication & Continuity

- Communicate plan and progress to plan via Village Communication channels
- Celebrate milestones achieved
- Arrange local meets at Churchyard, private gardens, share knowledge - growing a wildflower patch, Enmore Gardening Club, Smocombe House, bee-keeping
- Bulk discount buys of wildlife boxes, seeds etc
- Install wildlife cameras for record
- Adjust Village Plan and Priorities as needed

# Summary

- The proposal is for a rolling Village plan
- NOT a directive, it is down to private choice to join in
- We agree a Village Panel and start “Bottom Up”
- This is a positive and measurable contribution to the quality of our Village Life in our Parish
- This is an initiative that can be co-ordinated under the Parish Council auspices
- We would like to gauge interest by asking you please fill out this questionnaire, and begin “Bottom up” the process of protecting and

## Wilding Enmore



# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Kevin Costner in the classic movie "Field of Dreams"

"If you build it, 'they' will come"

