

## Judi Stretton and the Longcot Churchyard Project.

*A village project to develop and maintain St Mary's churchyard as an attractive, peaceful space and a haven for wildlife.*

Following Millenium celebrations in the village, a sum of money was available for another project. Judi Stretton suggested that it be used to manage our rather neglected churchyard as a wildlife garden.

Judi led and coordinated the project and work began in February 2001. The monthly work parties involved many adults and children. She produced detailed work plans and called on experts to help out. Villagers were kept informed of progress and many helped by providing different skills. The local school helped by growing and planting a selection of wildflowers.

Early work involved planting of a hedgerow of native species, sorting compost heaps and much clearing and pruning. A mowing regime was implemented using the new recycling mower. By securing more funds from different grants, walls were repaired, a new path was made and the memorial garden planted.



Plan of the Churchyard in February 2001

Judi worked extremely hard and from her knowledge of wildlife new habitats were created increasing the diversity and number of plant and animal species in the churchyard. She demonstrated the success of the project using her meticulous observation and recording skills. The project achieved recognition locally and further afield, receiving awards for Best Kept Small Village, a Civic Trust Green Pennant and a brief appearance on BBC TV's Countryfile programme. She spread the word about our project and educated many people on the importance of looking after nature.

We continue to look after our churchyard and it is appreciated by many Longcot residents; two native cherry trees and our 'bug hotel' are our particular continuing tributes to Judi.

For further information see

awards

species lists