

# Friends of Heene Cemetery

## AGM environment/species report

3rd September 2023

Once more, this is a species/habitat report, as my role does not include hands-on conservation.

### Species totals

	Species recorded on the website				
	12 / 2020	12 / 2021	5 / 2022	10 / 2022	9 / 2023
Amphibians	1	1	1	1	1
Arachnids	6	10	15	16	19
Birds	22	36	37	37	37
Butterflies and moths	20	29	31	46	54
Flowering plants	174	184	192	200	212
Fungi	29	31	32	32	33
Insects (other)	32	56	68	103	155
Invertebrates (other)	13	25	25	25	25
Mammals	5	6	6	6	6
Non-flowering-plants	24	24	24	24	24
Reptiles	2	2	2	2	2
Totals	328	404	433	492	569

### Species surveying

The numbers above show a recent increase in species being identified, more of insects than of any other category of species, which is exactly what we should expect. Although lichens still remain unsurveyed, all other categories (except insects) will probably not be registering an upward count. Insects, therefore, will be responsible for any substantial future species count increase. The more insects, in a general sense, the healthier the cemetery's biological diversity. We have a race on to spot them before they go.

We continue to benefit from the participation of a number of skilled and enthusiastic volunteers, and by Stuart Ball, an amateur entomologist with excellent photography skills. The species surveying project remains a collective endeavour. Thanks to all who participate.

### Data sharing and interpretation

We continue to share our species records with Caring for God's Acre and the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre. The validation of these records takes time and they will eventually show up on the National Biodiversity Network Atlas. Some species, particularly hoverflies, are advanced directly to the iRecord website where they are usually processed in a matter of hours by Roger Morris, one of the country's leading hoverfly experts. Getting accurate records distributed to all these platforms is a key long-term goal. Not many cemeteries practice this degree of recording, so this helps mark us out.

The website now highlights - at the species level - where individual species are notable, rare or threatened at a local and/or national level. Where this happens, the relevant legislation is cited. At the time of writing, there are 32 such species with varying degrees of designation. These species designations have been brought together on [a single page of the site](#).

Website blogs	<p>The species listing on the website – as with the burial records – becomes harder to use as numbers increase. To counter that, we now have an increasing number of blog posts about different species groups. These articles aim to gather together on a single page some of the extraordinary diversity that can be found in the cemetery, helping to showcase them photographically, and to a certain extent make sense of this. To date, these cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Mosses</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Crickets and grasshoppers</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Lichen</a> (by John Brownbill)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Trees</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Hoverflies</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Bees</a></li> <li>• Roses (in production, with Philippa Matthews)</li> <li>• Wasps (in production)</li> </ul>
Planting	<p>Plans for planting drought-tolerant, pollinator-friendly plants were put on hold following the cemetery's closure this spring, and after its re-opening were scotched by the enforcement of a no-dig policy.</p>
The future	<p>As you know, the cemetery was closed in 1977. The Disused Burial (Amendment) Act of 1981 stipulates that a building may be erected on consecrated ground if there are no objections from the personal representatives or relatives of anybody interred within the last 50 years. This protection may therefore lapse for Heene Cemetery in 2027.</p> <p>The legal complexities may be abundant but, at the least, the more that can be done to identify and highlight other reasons why the cemetery should be preserved for the future the better.</p> <p>Its status as a Local Wildlife Site does not in itself provide legal protection, but the <a href="#">Sussex Wildlife Site Initiative</a> maintains that by following a carefully thought-out <i>management plan</i> and <i>documenting the biodiversity</i> that a site has, an LWS can “be given due consideration in the planning and developing process”. The ongoing species work is an attempt to do just that.</p>

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