



## Church Field Friends Group – Code of Conduct

The purpose of this code of conduct is to ensure the safety and comfort of both wildlife and people. In order to be a Friend, you must sign up to it, but anyone accessing the field, whether Friend or not, will be required to abide by it.

### Three principles govern this code of conduct:

1. In Church Field Nature Reserve, nature has priority, not people.
2. Access is allowed so that Friends can experience the field and its wildlife – and for no other purpose.
3. Take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints!

### The detail:

#### 1. When is access possible?

Friends may access the field between the hours of 8 am and 8 pm at times of year when the Management Committee have notified you that access is allowed. Access outside these times – for example, to undertake surveys – must be agreed in advance with the Management Committee. There is a lock on the gate which can be unlocked with a Friends access code. You must not give this code to anyone who is not a member of the Friends Group. If the code doesn't work it means you should not access the field. Please comply with any signs restricting access to specific areas – this will be to protect wildlife or to keep people out of danger.

#### 2. Who can come in?

Access is only for people covered by your Friends membership. Please do not bring other people, including children, into the field unless you have agreed this with the Management Committee first. Children must be accompanied by an adult Friend and must be supervised while in the field.

#### 3. Dogs

Friends may bring their dogs into the field except when the Management Committee have specifically asked you not to, e.g. to protect wildlife or grazing animals. If you bring your dogs into the field, you must, please:

- collect all dog poo and take it away (dog poo can cause diseases in cattle and wildlife, as well as discouraging flowers)
- keep your dog under control; do not allow it to chase wildlife
- keep your dog out of areas covered by signs restricting access to specific parts of the reserve (where we may be protecting nesting wildlife).



Commercial dog walking with groups of dogs is not allowed in the field .

#### 4. Activities in the field

While in the field, Friends are asked to:

- respect the privacy of any wildlife you may see, and
- respect the privacy and quiet of our immediate neighbours.

If you have a picnic, everything you bring in must be taken away again.

#### You must not:

- light fires or leave litter
- play music or have parties
- climb fences
- use drones, except with the prior agreement of the Management Committee (e.g. for surveys)
- pick flowers or take specimens of insects or other wildlife (except with the prior agreement of the Management Committee, for example, for the purposes of a scientific survey)

or do anything else which may disturb wildlife or damage the field.

#### You are strongly encouraged to:

- enjoy the flowers and the wildlife
- experience some nature therapy
- have fun!



*continued on next page*

## 5. Your safety

Please exercise common sense and take reasonable care while in the field. As you would expect in a field, there is uneven ground and the potential for holes, slippery surfaces and similar. There are also steep slopes and streams run along the field edges. You are responsible for your safety and that of your group. Please read the Risk Assessment below, follow its recommendations and be aware of the hazards listed there. Wear suitable clothes and wash your hands when you get home.



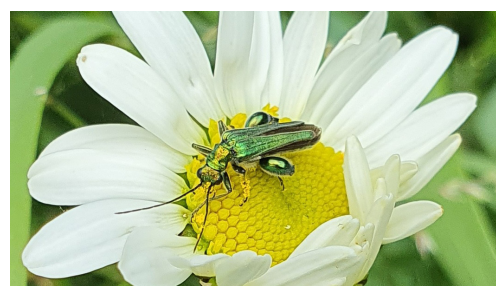
## 6. Church Field Risk Assessment – general access to the field

People affected: Friends and anyone else accessing the field for general activities not involving use of tools or other specialist equipment.

Hazards	Associated Risks	Action recommended
Steep slopes, rough ground	Slips, trips and falls	Wear suitable footwear and be aware of your physical abilities. Be aware of steep slopes and rough ground. Do not attempt to access any areas which may not be safe for you.
Steeply sloping and gravelled access between main gate and pavement	Slips, trips and falls	As above – take extra care when approaching and opening gate.
Ticks	Lyme disease through tick bites.	Wear long sleeves and long trousers, tuck trousers into socks, use insect repellent and check for ticks when you get home.
Biting and stinging insects	Bites and stings	Wear long sleeves and long trousers and use insect repellent. If allergic to stings, carry the appropriate medication.
Springs and boggy ground near stream, banks adjoining stream	Falls into water. Weil's disease (caught from rat's urine).	Two streams border the field, but these are not part of the nature reserve (they belong to a different landowner) and access is not permitted for any reason. Do not cross field boundary to access stream; do not allow children to wander near water unsupervised. Wash hands before eating to avoid Weil's disease.
Brambles and other thorny vegetation, low branches, scrub	Stings and scratches, trip hazards from low-lying branches	Wear appropriate clothing. Do not approach areas of scrub if not dressed appropriately. Watch where your feet are going. Ensure low branches don't flick back into other members of your group.
Livestock	Injuries from alarmed animals. Brucellosis can be contracted through cattle.	Access to the reserve will not normally be allowed when grazing animals are in the field. If you happen to find yourself in the field with stock, give them a wide berth, keep dogs well away and do not walk between cows and calves.
Dangerous trees or falling branches	Injuries caused by trees/branches	Be aware of the potential risk from falling trees/branches and if you notice any trees that appear to be diseased or at risk, give them a wide berth and notify the Management Committee. Obey any notices restricting access to specific parts of the reserve as these may relate to hazards including dangerous trees.
Barbed wire fences	Cuts and scratches from wire barbs	Keep away from fences; do not attempt to climb or cross any fence.

*Church Field general risk assessment – version GRA01 – 20 March 23*

**AND FINALLY...** If you see anything in the field that you specially enjoy, or you think is unusual, we will very much appreciate it if you tell us about it and share any photos with us! You can e-mail us on [churchfield@thevatch.co.uk](mailto:churchfield@thevatch.co.uk), or you can share your photos on our Facebook page.



*Church Field Code of Conduct - version COC02 - 25 March 2023*