

# **HAWKSHEAD CHURCHYARD**

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## **GRASS MANAGEMENT PLAN**






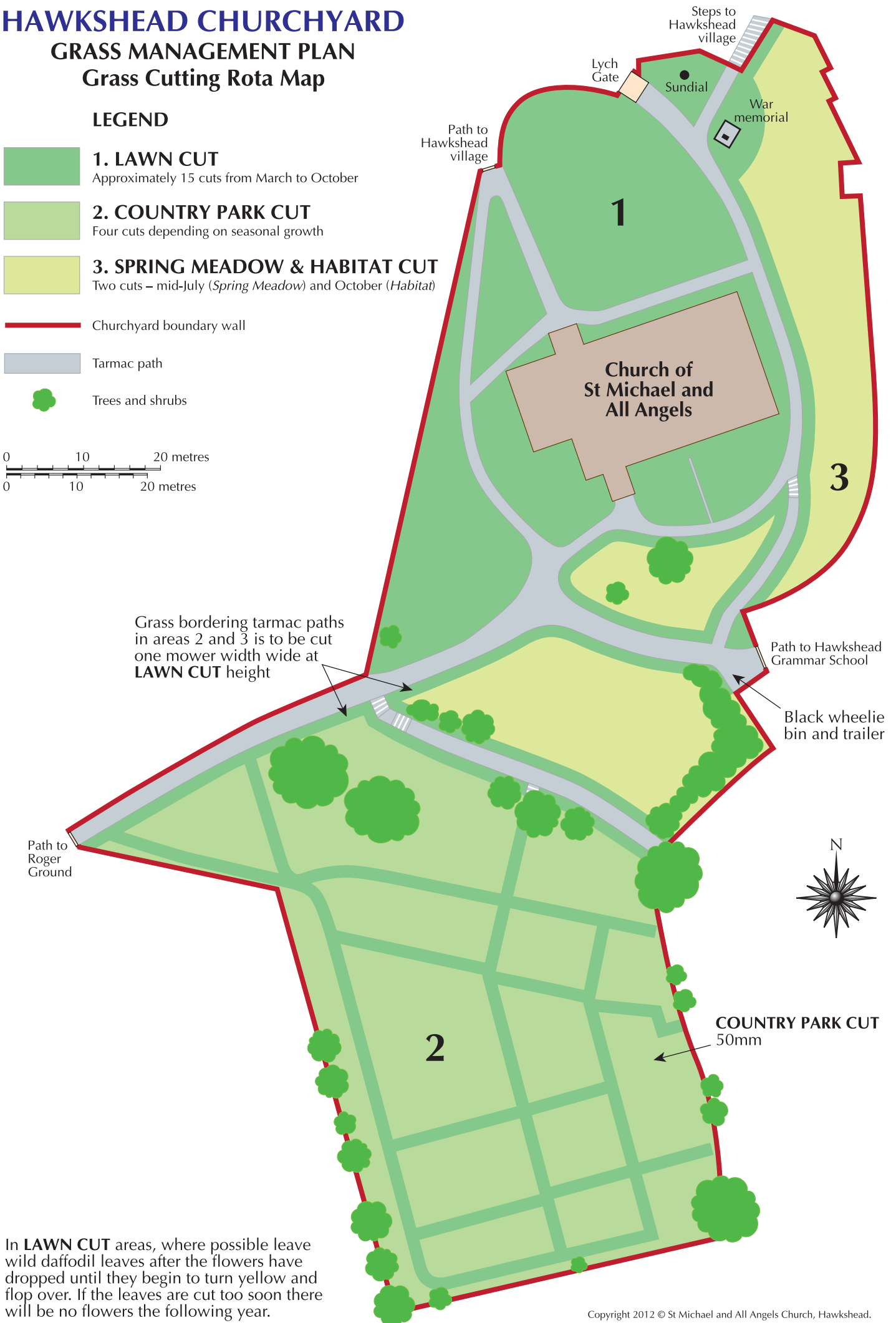
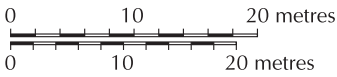
# HAWKSHEAD CHURCHYARD

## GRASS MANAGEMENT PLAN

### Grass Cutting Rota Map

#### LEGEND

-  **1. LAWN CUT**  
Approximately 15 cuts from March to October
-  **2. COUNTRY PARK CUT**  
Four cuts depending on seasonal growth
-  **3. SPRING MEADOW & HABITAT CUT**  
Two cuts – mid-July (*Spring Meadow*) and October (*Habitat*)
-  Churchyard boundary wall
-  Tarmac path
-  Trees and shrubs



Grass bordering tarmac paths in areas 2 and 3 is to be cut one mower width wide at **LAWN CUT** height

Path to Hawkshead Grammar School

Black wheelie bin and trailer

Path to Roger Ground

**COUNTRY PARK CUT**  
50mm

In **LAWN CUT** areas, where possible leave wild daffodil leaves after the flowers have dropped until they begin to turn yellow and flop over. If the leaves are cut too soon there will be no flowers the following year.

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## GRASS MANAGEMENT PLAN

### Statement of Intent

Hawkshead churchyard is a pleasant, interesting and well cared for place. The objectives of this grass management plan are as follows:

1. That the churchyard should always be a fitting setting for this ancient and beautiful church.
2. It should be a reflective and pleasant place for the residents and visitors.
3. It should provide a suitable environment for burial.
4. It should be a sanctuary for wildlife by providing conditions that will encourage a wide variety of wildflowers, birds, trees and shrubs.

### Management Plan – Grass

The churchyard grassland is managed in three categories: **1. Lawn Cut**, **2. Country Park Cut** and **3. Spring Meadow & Habitat Cut**. It has a spectacular display of spring flowers of all kinds from January to mid-June, and it is essential that careful management to protect their habitat is maintained. This management is undertaken by paid contractors.

The following grassland management plan should be read in conjunction with the churchyard grass cutting rota map opposite.

**1. LAWN CUT** – The areas of grass in close proximity to the church are cut regularly from March to October (approximately 15 times a year). The grass paths in the upper churchyard (area 2) are also managed in this way and cut to a width of 1.5 metres.

**2. COUNTRY PARK CUT** – The flat, high ground to the south of the church is cut four times a year depending on the seasonal growth (usually in April, July, August and October). There are many new graves here and it is managed to give as tidy an appearance as possible. It is a delightful summer wildflower meadow in June and July, and there are spectacular views of the surrounding fells.

**3. SPRING MEADOW & HABITAT CUT** – Thanks to its managed grass cutting regime, the glory of Hawkshead churchyard is its spring flowers. Wild daffodils are preceded by snowdrops and crocuses, and succeeded by wood anemones, bluebells, primroses, celandines, violets etc. This Spring Meadow and Habitat area is cut twice a year, around mid-July (at hay time) and again in October. A hay time (*Spring Meadow*) cut ensures that the wildflowers have had time to obtain food from their leaves to make new bulbs, and for the flowers to have set seed. After cutting, the grass is left for two or three days to enable any seeds to dry and fall off the hay, reseeding the area for the following year. This hay grass is then raked up and removed, otherwise it forms a thick, rotting blanket which new grass and flowers are unable to penetrate. The area is cut again in October (*Habitat*) to prevent it getting unmanageable, and then lies undisturbed from October to hay time the following mid-July, providing a habitat for ground nesting birds, small mammals and reptiles. The October cut is not raked off, but is left to rot during the winter.

**INDIVIDUAL GRAVES** – Those who wish to have the grass kept short on the graves of loved ones may make their own arrangements, or may have this done by our contractor for a modest fee. Please contact the Church Treasurer for details.

## Management Plan – Waste

1. Grass cuttings from a **Lawn Cut** are put in the trailer by the east gate leading to Hawkshead Grammar School, which is emptied when full. The contractor sweeps all paths after each cut.
2. The grass from a **Country Park Cut** can usually be left in situ, and it rots quickly into the ground during the summer. If one of the cuts is very long in growth, it will need to be collected and may be removed to a pile situated at the extreme edge of the north east corner of the upper churchyard. It is left to rot there as a haystack, creating another habitat for wildlife. It must never be burned upon a bonfire. If possible it should be removed to the trailer.
3. Hay from a **Spring Meadow Cut** is dried and raked up. This hay is removed by the contractor if possible and used by local farmers. The raking up of this grass will be undertaken by the grass cutting contractor. The **Habitat Cut** in October is left to rot in situ and disappears during the winter months.
4. All other vegetation, i.e. floral tributes, floral church displays etc. is put in the trailer.
5. Any other refuse: wire flower arrangers, non-vegetation, pots, vases, paper, plastic etc. must be placed in a separate container. This is a black wheelie bin, which is emptied by South Lakeland District Council, and is near the trailer by the east gate leading to Hawkshead Grammar School.
6. Dog fouling is a concern. Dog owners are reminded to clear up any waste.

## Hedges, Trees and Walls

In the churchyard is a thick and well maintained beech hedge. It is a good nesting site for birds, providing cover against predators, and offering shelter in winter. The large trees in the churchyard are mainly evergreens and represent the traditional symbol of the continuity of living things. We continue to encourage the number of indigenous small trees and shrubs on the perimeters of the churchyard. On the right hand side of the path leading to the west gate of the churchyard is a section of one of the ancient Hawkshead slate fences. The slates and many of the older gravestones are covered with very slow growing lichens and mosses which should not be removed.

## Biodiversity

Like many churchyards, St Michael's is an important wildlife sanctuary. A 2008 survey by Cumbria Wildlife Trust identified nearly 100 species of wild plants, some of which are under threat elsewhere.

## Churchyard History

Most churches in England dedicated to Saint Michael are on top of hills and were holy places before the birth of Christ. There has been a chapel on this site since the 12th century. It is estimated that there are over 25,000 burials in this churchyard. Wordsworth loved it, and in *The Prelude of 1805* he writes of standing in silent meditation here on summer evenings, by the grave of a boyhood friend. A burial plan of the churchyard hangs inside the church, on a wall in the north aisle, near the main entrance, and is also available for viewing on the Hawkshead Benefice website: [www.hawksheadbenefice.co.uk](http://www.hawksheadbenefice.co.uk)

You can help us to maintain this beautiful Lakeland churchyard by making a contribution to the churchyard fund. Donations may be dropped into the stone pillar box located in the churchyard.