

## Bringing new life to a neglected churchyard.

Birdforth Church, off the A19, just north of Thormanby was closed some time ago and is now cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust. But the Churchyard, the burial ground for Carlton Husthwaite, is still in use. So who is going to care for it and how should it be cared for?

Husthwaite have joined with their daughter church at Carlton Husthwaite to take up this challenge. With suggestions and practical help from the Easingwold Deanery Environment Group they decided to go for a managed 'wild' churchyard. Only the small area currently in use for burials and visited by mourners will be kept closely trimmed. There are already a lot of lovely flowers growing naturally with areas of bluebells, wood anemone and primroses in the spring. They plan to introduce more wild flowers including yellow rattle which helps reduce the dominance of grasses. To do this a full cut is needed annually at the end of the flowering season. The 'hay' is then removed so that the rotting plants do not re-enrich the soil and feed new growth.

So on a hot day in July a group of people met up to do this first full cut.



A sit-on mower was a big help, but had to be driven carefully to avoid hidden gravestones.



Then strimmers got going and finally the task of raking and removing the 'hay'. A neighbouring farmer has offered to take the hay away. Another half day with a few more strimmers will finish the work and then a regular survey of the flowers, birds and other wild life will take place to help inform visitors.

Do call by and see the progress. We could be developing our own wonderful wild life refuge.