

Wildflower and Grasses observations 2025

This report summarises wildflower and grass observations from June 2025 in Dukes Meadow and Neals Place Meadow. The study continues the annual flora monitoring begun in 2023, tracking species diversity to support the parish's biodiversity records and guide future land management.

The spring and early summer of 2025 has been characterised by prolonged dry spells with below-average rainfall which has created challenging conditions for plant growth and flowering. The lack of soil moisture has clearly impacted shallow-rooted species, those reliant on early summer flowering, and nectar-producing plants.

Rainfall for the period 1st Jan 25 to 1st July 25 has been just over 200mm, a near 50% reduction compared to the 402mm received over the same period in 2024. Critically, we had only 65mm between 1st March to 1st July providing very little springtime recharge of soil moisture.

This has resulted in soil surface cracking in exposed areas, browning of grasses by early June and earlier than usual senescence, particularly in shallow-rooted species.

Some of the more moisture dependant species like Meadow Buttercup and Cuckoo flower have been stunted with poor growth and minimal flowering or even absence. The more tolerant species like some of the Vetches, Red Clover and Birds Foot Trefoil have persisted and thrived. All of the grasses have suffered and their density and lack of height are evident.

This year's findings clearly show how climatic stress, especially drought, can dramatically affect both the presence and performance of typical meadow flora.