

Small mammal trapping in the churchyard at St Andrew's Church, Witchford, overnight from 2 to 3 November 2024 - Peter Pilbeam and Nina and George Jellicoe (Churchyard Manager)

Twenty (20) Longworth traps were set to catch with bedding (hay) and bait (muesli, excess casters and excess diced apple) at various locations (a narrow range of habitats) in the churchyard around St Andrew's Church, Witchford, from about 3.45pm on Saturday 2 November 2024. The temperature at the time was around 7 degrees C so the maximum possible amount of hay was used for insulation. They were opened from 8am on Sunday 3 November 2024. All trapped animals were identified to species level, weighed and sexed before being released immediately where they were caught - the traps were then removed.

Trap No.	Location	03/11/2024 – c8am
65	Going clockwise round the church - LHS of bug hotel	BV - fc- 15gm
60	LHS of honeysuckle In scrub	BV - f - 15gm
59	LHS of yew in scrub	WM - f - 14gm
61	on LHS - RHS of giant ash	WM - m - 15.5gm
63	on LHS - behind next ash	o
66	on LHS - behind log pile behind bench	BV - m - 19.5gm
56	ditto - in front of log pile	o
69	ditto - behind next log pile	o
70	LHS under gnarled tree	WM - f - 18.5gm
52	LHS in corner of churchyard by gate to field	t - + droppings/burrow/empty
67	half way along foot of laid hedge	o
64	LHS behind heap of grass cuttings	o
58	in next corner of churchyard	o
55	on LHS half way along at foot of hedge	BV - f - 19gm
68	on LHS at join of hedge and fence	WM - m - 18.5gm
54	on LHS behind spoil heap	WM - f - 24gm
51	in corner under laurel	o
57	on LHS where laurel hedge finishes	WM - f - 16gm
62	on LHS under large ash	o
53	in LHS corner of churchyard	o

WM -- Wood Mouse

BV -- Bank Vole

m -- male

f -- female

o -- open, not tripped

t -- tripped

c -- marked with fur clip for demonstration purposes

In summary, out of 20 traps over one night there were 6 Wood Mouse and 4 Bank Vole. This represents (of 20 trap sessions) an overall catch rate of 50%.

Trap 52 had been entered by a small mammal (droppings were in the tunnel section and there was a burrow into the hay) but it was closed and no animal was present. Likeliest explanation - malfunctioning front flap/catch.

The weather overnight and when the traps were checked at 8am on 3 November was cloudy, cold and dry.

Peter Pilbeam

4 November 2024