

Dear Battle Town Council,

Rural Verges as Wildlife Corridors – A Reduction in Rural Grass Cutting Trial

In response to public interest we have received in roadside wildlife, and in consideration of the 2006 Natural Resources and Rural Communities Act to have regard to biodiversity in all our activities, East Sussex County Council will be undertaking a trial to reduce the number of cuts some rural verges receive in 2021.

Over the past year we have been listening to residents and members requests to cut the County's rural verges less and later in the year. We are therefore contacting you, as you have expressed an interest in this before, to ask whether the Town Council would like to be involved in this trial.

At present rural verges receive two cuts per year. The first cut starts in May and the second in Autumn. These are carried out as a 1m wide swathe and visibility splays at junctions and on the inside of bends where sight lines between road users may be obscured by vegetation.

The trial would reduce the grass cutting service of rural verges in your Town to:

- **One visibility cut undertaken around May/June**
- **One 1 metre Swathe with Visibility cuts in the Autumn**

This change would mean that we would not cut rural verges (except for visibility) at a time when flowering is often at its peak and it is the most beneficial time for pollinators. Flowering plants would then be able to complete their lifecycles and set seed, providing further biodiversity benefits. Safety issues will remain a priority, with any visibility or access issues being picked up and rectified through the usual process. You can report a problem as per normal via our [website](#) or contact centre.

Feedback from the trial will be collated and reviewed along with any operational issues encountered, costs and an overview of the flora and fauna observed in the verges during the trial. The results will be presented and considered for a potential full Policy change to the whole rural grass cutting service from 2022/23.

Attached is a map of the rural verges in your area. We use high resolution maps, as the area of a Town can be large and this allows you to zoom in. If using Adobe, the easiest way to do this is to right click and select marquee zoom. You can then drag your mouse across the screen to zoom in on a specific area. This can be repeated until you reach the level of depth you need.

Please review these areas and consider with your local knowledge and any consultation or notification required with residents, whether these areas would be suitable.

If you would like to be included in this trial, please let us know by the 15th January 2021.

If you have any questions, please get in touch.

Best regards,

Fenella Lillywhite | Service Support Officer | Service Development Team

Comments received:

Wildflower Meadow Group:

This sounds great. My concern is that it won't go down well with residents unless it's managed well. Good luck with that! Maybe we could find someone to write an article for the town newsletter explaining the advantages to biodiversity?

Keith Datchler

Well..... this is music to my ears!!

Learning from the activities of Wild Battle, carry public perception with you on this as much as possible.

Perhaps an article in the local paper explaining what the notion is and why. Highlight the advantages to people and wildlife, don't labour the financial advantages (although we all recognise there are some)

I really hope this trial is well received and leads to an expansion of the ethos across the region and beyond.

Great initiative ask if I can help in any way.