

## Managing road verges for biodiversity



Rother



HIGH WEALD LANDSCAPE TRUST



**RALC**

**East Sussex**  
Highways  
Keeping You Moving

**GREAT DIXTER**  
**HOUSE & GARDENS**

# **Rother road verges: online survey results**

RALC Meeting

Date/ time: 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021 7.30pm

Remote meeting

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Rother District Council

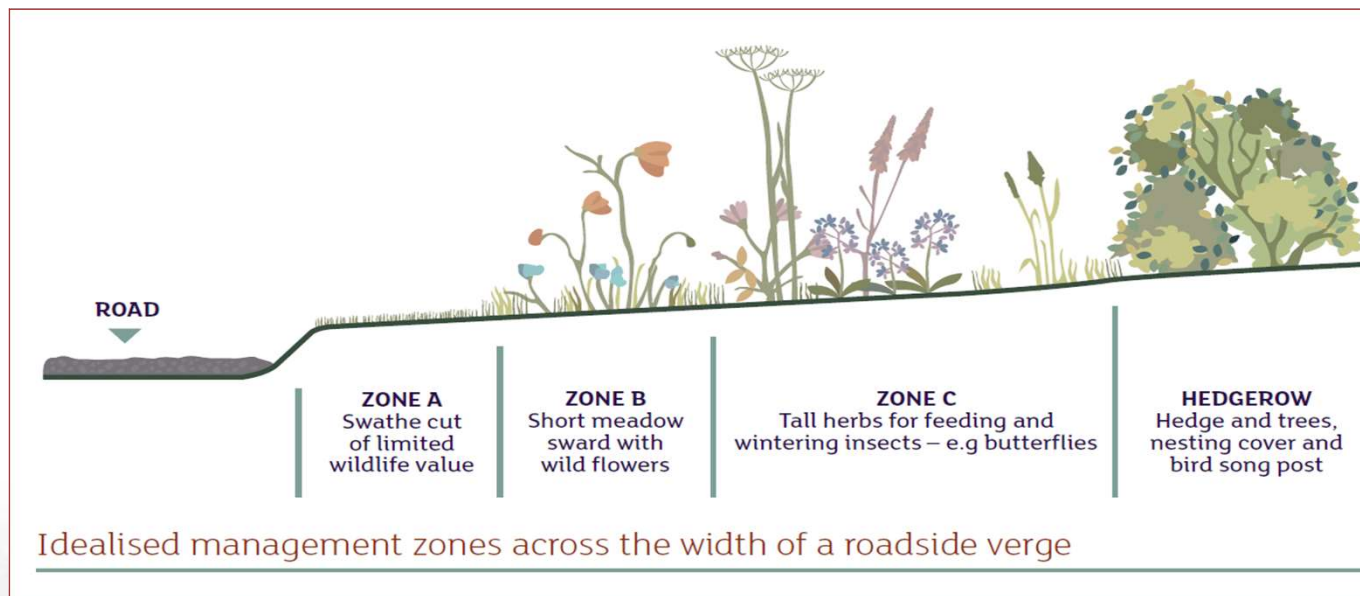
[www.rother.gov.uk](http://www.rother.gov.uk)



## Why is this important?

- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 s.40 specifies:

**“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.**



@Plantlife

[www.rother.gov.uk](http://www.rother.gov.uk)

## Is the parish or town council considering applying to East Sussex County Council to have any or more wildlife verges designated?



- **Yes - In the next 6 months**

- Brightling
- Mountfield
- Sedlescombe

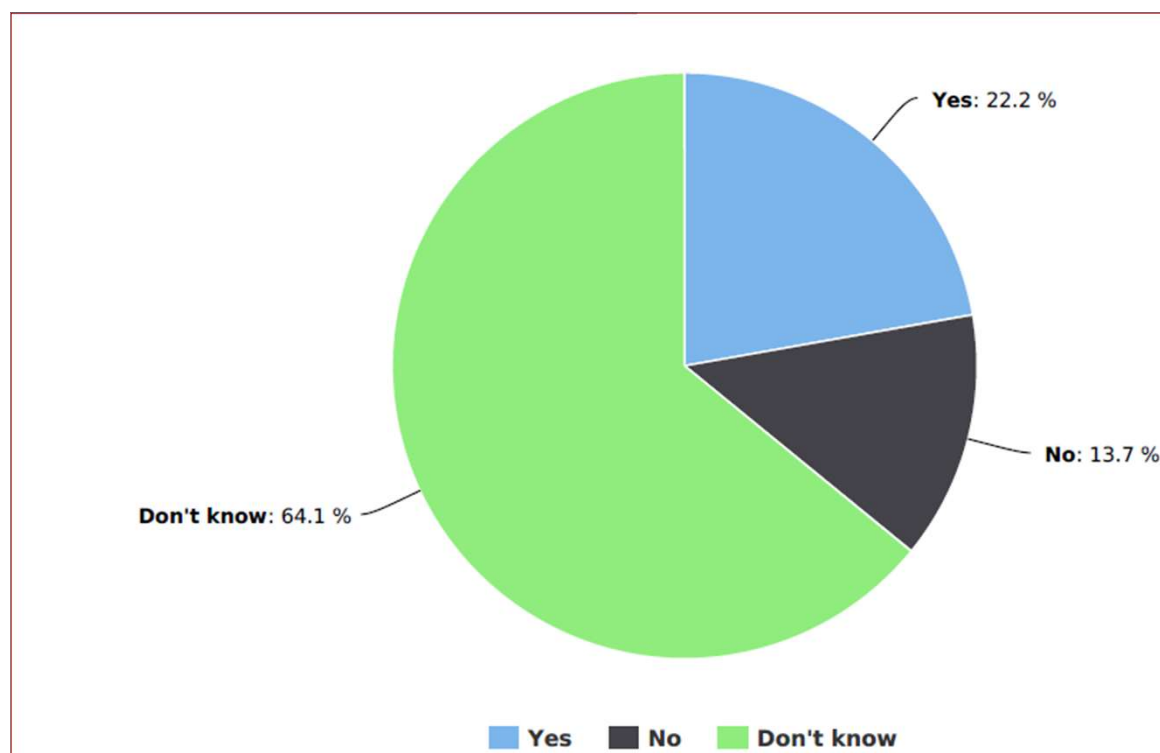
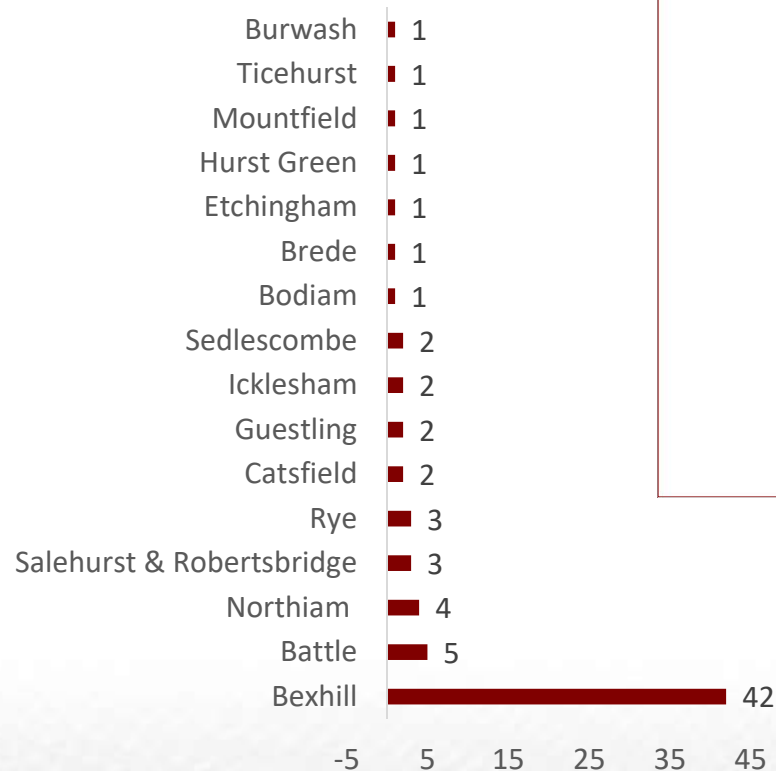
- **Yes - In the next 12 months**

- Bexhill
- Crowhurst
- Etchingham
- Northiam
- Peasmarsh
- Salehurst & Robertsbridge

# Does your parish or town already have verges designated by East Sussex County Council? (all responses)



## Don't know answer



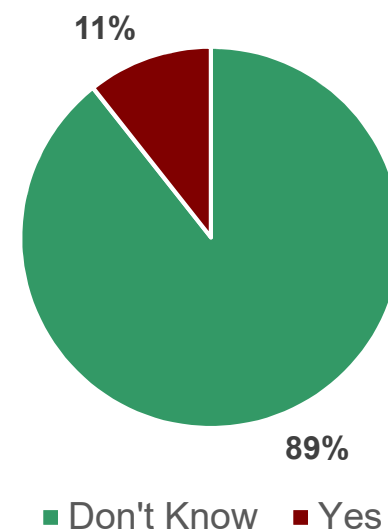
## Are there wildlife verges already designated in your parish or a town ? How many?

### • Rural Rother

- 29% responses confirming a designation
- How many and where?

1- 5 designated verges	Brightling, Pett, <b>Battle</b> , Crowhurst, Etchingham, Dallington
Between 6 and 10 designated verges	<b>Battle</b>
More than 10 designated verges	<b>Battle</b>
Don't know	86% responses

### • Bexhill



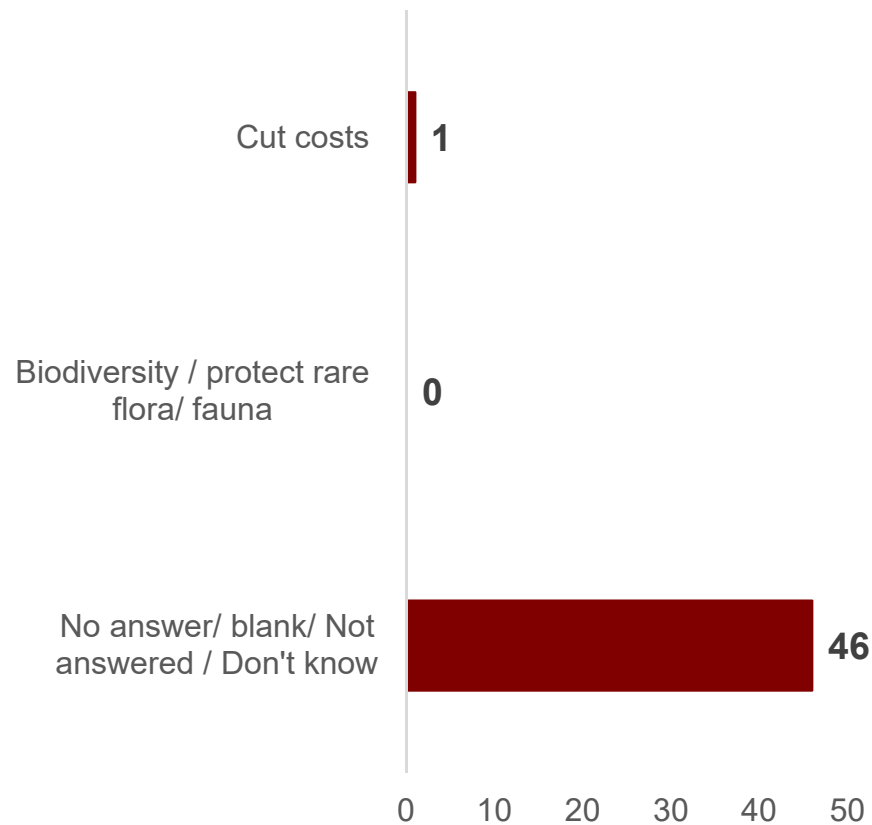
How many? Out of those who replied yes, only 1 response said 3x; the rest did not know

## What were the reasons for applying for a wildlife verge designation at that time? Rural Rother



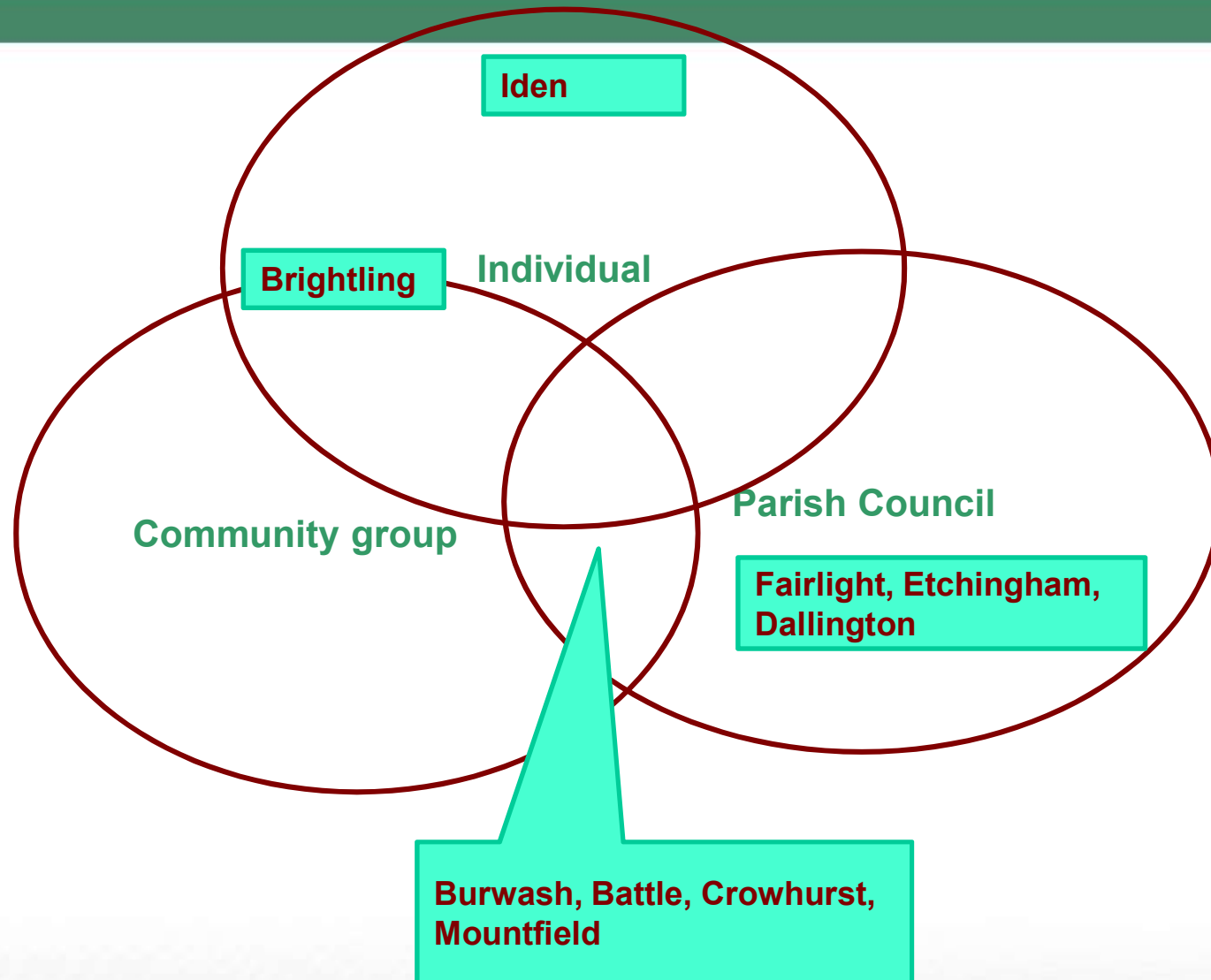


## What were the reasons for applying for a wildlife verge designation at that time? Bexhill





# Who in the parish or town applied to East Sussex County Council for the designation of the current wildlife verge or verges?(all responses)



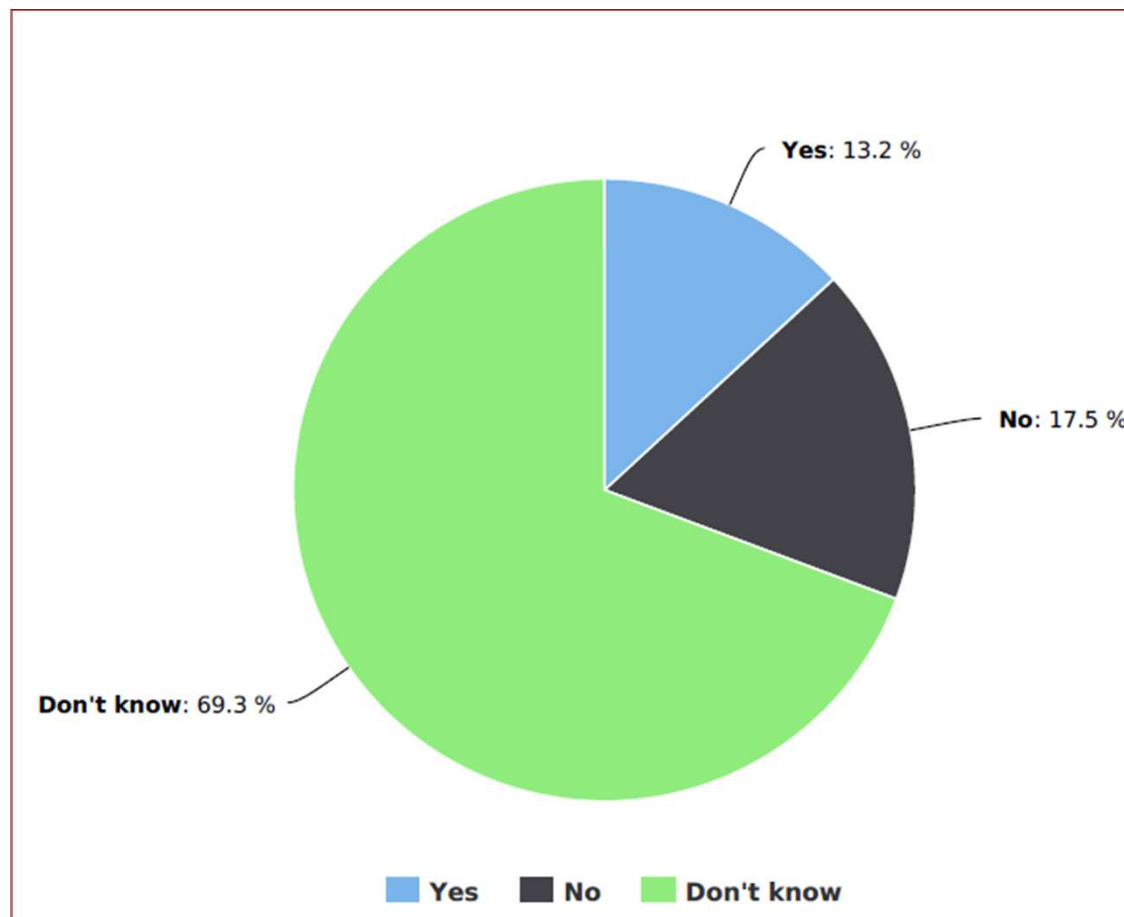
## Who advised your parish or town on roadside verges management and wildlife verges designation?all responses)



- Dr John Feltwell
- Plantlife
- Great Dixter
- High Weald AONB
- Crowhurst Environment Group
- James Newmarch (East Sussex Highways)
- Town Mayor

**93% of responses did not know/ blank  
Including all (100%) of responses for Bexhill**

## Does your parish or town have an existing group(s) for wildlife or landscape or biodiversity? (all responses)



- Bexhill Environmental Group
- Crowhurst Environment Group (Independent Voluntary Group)
- Crowhurst Ecological and Climate Emergency Sub Group
- Darwell Area Conservation Society
- Northiam Conservation Society
- Pett Preservation Trust
- Wild About Battle
- Wild About Burwash



# What fauna and flora have been identified in your designated wildlife verges?

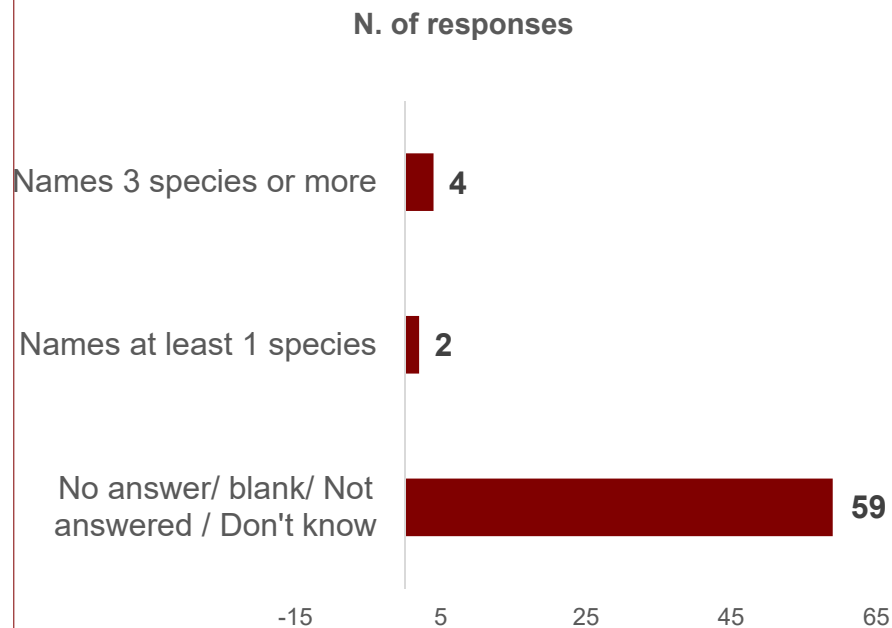




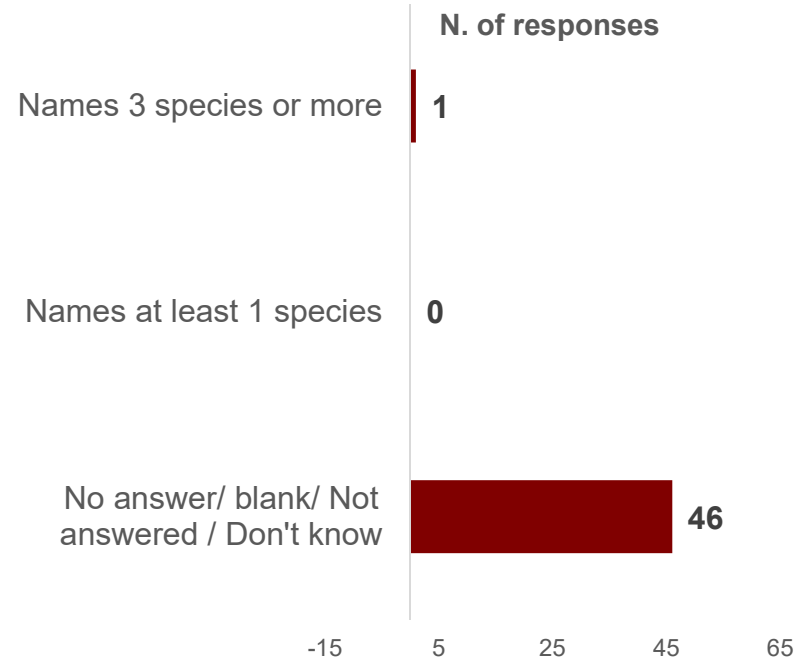
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- Rural Rother



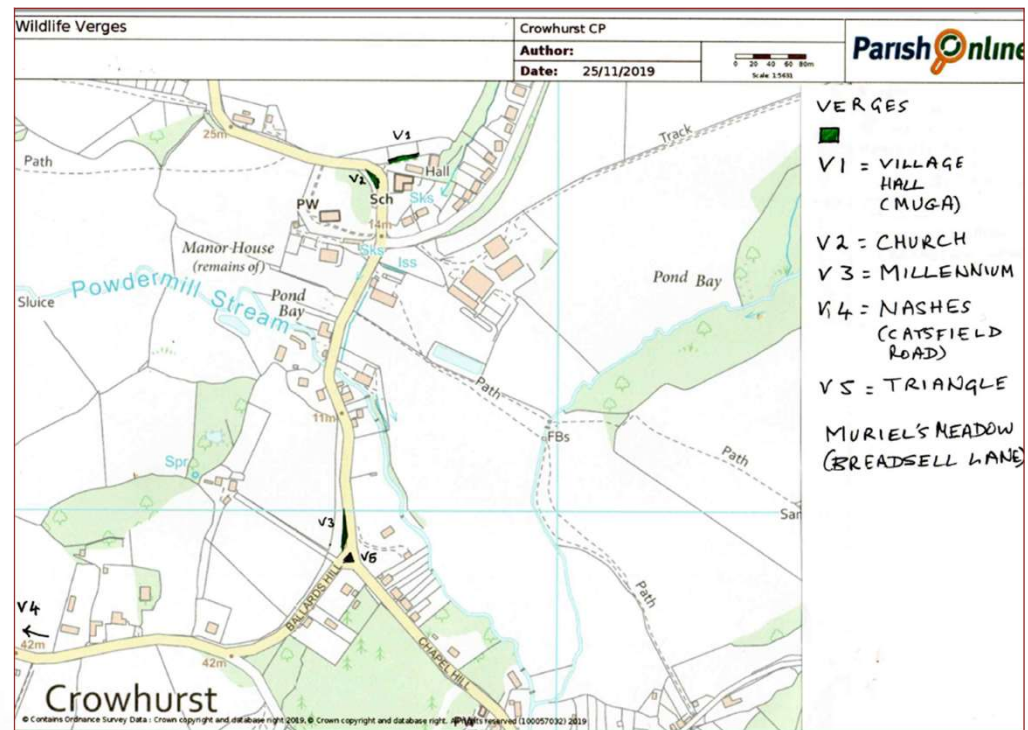
- Bexhill



- Battle

<http://www.battletowncouncil.gov.uk/community/battle-town-council-7838/wildflower-areas/>

- Crowhurst



# Comments on the process of getting wildlife verges designations? (all responses)



## What could be improved

### What worked well

- ✓ It led to a verges designation and protection
- ✓ Less mowing

“I feel that Rother District Council and ESCC are either keeping very quiet about their actions to maintain wildflower verges, or they are actually not doing a thing about it.”

- ✓ Transparency of the process
- ✓ Better communication
- ✓ Collaboration amongst parishes – knowledge sharing
- ✓ Formal management of sites
- ✓ More resource and support
- ✓ The process is too lengthy and time consuming for small communities
- ✓ Maps availability, accesibility and accuracy
- ✓ Wildlife surveys help
- ✓ Accessible virtual Wildlife Verge record system
- ✓ Timing of cuts

### **Pedestrians safety**

- As previous stated all our verges need to be cut regularly for safety of pedestrians.  
(Whatlington Parish)

### **Cars parking on the wildlife verges**

- Our community verges are being destroyed widely by parking cars on them. When wet, car tyres churn the verges into mud. If you want to do something to protect verges then the first thing is to make it a criminal offence, punishable by a substantial fine, to park on them.
- Thoughtless parking of vehicles. Is there any way that parking can be enforced?
- Stopping motorists from driving over and parking on the verges.

### **Residents destroying habitat**

- Residents have destroyed the habitat by mowing and strimming.



## Other comments – Bexhill

### Visibility issue

- Please don't make verges at crossroads, drivers have not got clear views. Pebsham Lane\Wrestwood rd junction. Several times vision has been blocked by long grass.
- In my road the verge been cut less frequently over the years has not led to increased biodiversity. Visibility for road safety has deteriorated.
- I support the idea of wildlife verges as long as road safety is not compromised. Some road corners are dangerous where foliage has been allowed to grow to close to the roadside.
- I am completing this survey from a VISION IMPAIRED point of view as if verges and hedges, any properties/areas adjoining public areas are not kept clear, and cut back and free of obstructions, then they become a constant hindrance, obstruction and danger to VIPS and BLIND people.

## Other comments – Bexhill

### Neat and tidy brigade

- I strongly believe that verges for wildlife are very important, but should not be brought into a town or residential setting. They are attractive for a couple of months, then become untidy and, in Bexhill, a place for dogs to mess. The mess left behind by the cutting of the verges is disgraceful ... The excuse of composting the grass is based on inaccurate science.
- Residents in my area like to keep our gardens and green spaces looking respectable. Is Rother council telling us they will stop cutting the verges and green spaces alongside our properties because if they are it will make the entire area very scruffy!
- Residential areas look unkempt.
- Overgrown verges attract wild animals which end up being killed by the adjoining traffic. Why not designate a large area and plant it properly
- Wildlife verges are fine if still controlled and kept clean and tidy, but there is nothing worse than an area full of litter, overgrown, and unkept.
- Maintenance of roadside verges has been very poor - grass left to grow too long. A better solution is to designate parts of parks to run wild, away from traffic and drains!
- I keep my verges tidy. The council only cut them about 4-5 times a year. I don't like them getting overgrown as they are full, of weeds which then spread to my garden.

End

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# Managing grassland road verges

A best practice guide