

**MANAGING ROAD VERGES FOR SAFETY AND BIODIVERSITY
GUIDANCE FOR CONTRACTORS – PLEASE READ AND TAKE NOTE**



Please be mindful of the wildlife (biodiversity) value of roadside verges when cutting them and make sure that, where H&S allows, they are managed appropriately. This is consistent with the Council's duty to take positive steps to enhance biodiversity as set out in the Environment Act (Wales).

The way in which verges are cut will affect their value for wildlife (biodiversity), and positive steps can be taken to enhance this:

1. Start date of cutting and cutting plan.

- Start cutting as late as possible in the season, and if your beat covers low and high areas, cut the roads at lower altitude first, finishing with the roads verges on the higher land.
- Outside settlements, apart from junctions and bends, cut vegetation within one swathe width of the carriageway edge. NB. A uniform cut across the entire verge or hedgebank is not the objective – the vegetation that is left is a valuable habitat for wildlife and a valuable seed source.
- Where possible do not cut flowering plants, and plants which have yet to flower.



2. Consider the nature of the vegetation you are cutting.

- Where the verge is heavily shaded and vegetation growth is sparse avoid cutting, or cut light and high.
- Avoid scalping the vegetation on steep banks, and leaving them bare and exposed, for example cutting mossy banks will only damage the vegetation and may result in erosion of the bank and slippage onto the road.
- Consider carefully the need to cut the heather and bilberry vegetation on the higher land, e.g. Rhos Llangeller area. If you feel it needs to be cut, make this a high light cut, as late in the season as possible. Ideally for nature conservation, such areas should only be cut every 3 or more years.



Woodland Verge



Upland Verge

3. Verges and associated habitats - hedgerows and ditches

- Wherever possible avoid cutting the woody plants in hedgerows as part of the verge maintenance, this is important if we are to avoid disturbing nesting birds. Where woody growth has to be cut for H&S reasons only cut this year's soft growth.
- Leave un-cut some vegetation on the banks of ditches, particularly where this includes flowering plants or plants which have not yet flowered.



Invasive species

Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan balsam

DO NOT to cut any areas of Japanese Knotweed that you may come across. Notify the Highway Inspectors so that they can arrange for a CCC gang to treat with herbicide.



Himalayan Balsam



Japanese Knotweed

Japanese knotweed and Himalayan Balsam are included on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act where it is an offence to plant or otherwise allow either plant to grow in the wild. Cutting these species could cause the knotweed's rhizome or the seeds of the balsam to spread via machinery or equipment.

For more information contact:

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