

Sherborne Parish Council

Village Grass Verge Management Research

February 2025

Dear fellow resident

Many Parishioners have shared their views (at Parish Council meetings, via email, and general conversation) on how Sherborne's grass verges should be managed throughout the year.

Some prefer to see all the verges within the 30 mph signs cut on a regular basis, whilst some are keen to see a 'more natural look' throughout the year. Many have complimented the recent grass trimming work conducted by the National Trust. Additionally, the National Trust has produced a short document which describes **their own opinion** on how particular verges could be managed and the effort they may be prepared to contribute. It is available at <https://sherborneparish.org/verge-management>.

Although grass verge management (broadly speaking as there are always exceptions) is the responsibility of the County Council, it's obvious from recent years the County Council struggle to do much beyond attending to reported road safety concerns – grass too high at junctions etc. Perhaps the answer is a combination of efforts from the County Council, Parishioners, and local landowners.

As 2025 is upon us, and before too long we will start to see the first signs of Spring, it's timely to add a more empirical view to the debate. This short and simple to complete questionnaire is intended to provide everyone with an opportunity to share their ideas. Please have a read and return your completed questionnaire by **14 March** via the returns box in the Village Shop, or simply take a photo of it and email it to any Parish Councillor (details at sherborneparish.org). There is also an online version of the questionnaire at <https://sherborneparish.org/verge-management>.

All responses will be treated in confidence with the following commitment made to respondents:

- *You do not need to provide your name or contact details if you would prefer not to.*
- *Individual responses will not be published in any form.*
- *The published report will only ever show a consolidated view (all responses grouped together) of answers to each question.*
- *Any additional notes you provide will be anonymised (so they are not personally identifiable) before inclusion in the published report.*
- *Once the results have been collated and the report has been published, all individual responses will be destroyed.*

The summary report will be made available to all Sherborne Parish residents, the County Council, and relevant local landowners. Any subsequent actions/plans will be discussed at future Parish Council meetings to which all Parish residents are always welcome.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sherborne Parish Council

Question 1: Your contact details

Name (optional): Address (optional):

Email (optional): Telephone (optional):

Question 2: How would you like Sherborne's grass verges to be managed?

Zones 1-8 refer to sections of road to and through the village. A map is included at the end of this questionnaire. Individual Zones could be managed differently. If you have specific thoughts about the verges right outside your house or other areas of the village, then please add these within the 'additional comments' box below. Please add your name and address at Question 1 if you would like someone to get back to you. Months shown are approximate to allow for variations in seasons. In all Zones, verges will continue to be managed according to road safety needs.

Please tick all that apply:	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Zone 8
A No cutting at any time except for road safety reasons	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B Short (4-6 inches) all year round	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C Short (4-6 inches) January-April	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D Leave for natural/wildflower growth* April-September except for road safety reasons	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E Short (4-6 inches) October-December	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Additional comments:

* Interesting information about the wildflower growing season at <https://www.rhs.org.uk/lawns/creating-wildflower-meadows>

Question 3: Would you be prepared to help?

If the results of the survey, and subsequent discussion at Parish Council meetings, point towards some form of verge trimming/cutting, the obvious follow-on question will be ‘so how will this happen?’ We can assume the County Council will continue as they have in previous years (basic once a year cut and attention to road safety concerns), and the National Trust may help. In addition, further community input may be required.

To help gauge the extent of community help available, please answer below.

Please tick all that apply:	If yes, how many times a year:							
	Yes	No	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six
I would like to help* with verge management.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would be happy for the Parish Council to employ** a contractor to help with verge cutting.	☐	☐						

* This could include a range of tasks including grass cutting, clearing debris and traffic safety. Depending on the outcome of the survey and subsequent action plan, each session could take approximately 2-3 hours. To be confirmed.

** Any potential expenditure would be funded via the Parish Council Precept. This is an annual budget allocated by the District Council and is derived from our individual Council Tax bills. The annual amount is shown on our Council Tax bills as ‘Sherborne’. The Precept also funds public liability insurance for the War Memorial and telephone box, maintenance of the village defibrillator (batteries and pads), and general admin costs including printing.

Question 4: Additional comments?

If you would like to add anything else, please do so here. You can also contact the Parish Council via email at clerk@sherborneparish.org.

Zone map related to Question 2

