

Council – 4 November 2019

Notice of motion – Reducing Grass Cutting and Introducing Areas of Seeded Wildflowers

A Notice of Motion has been received from Councillors Shires and Barker.

The motion states

This Council notes that there are many main roads across the borough with grassed areas to either a central reservation or roadside or both.

Therefore this Council requests that officers undertake a review of all roads with a view to reducing the need for grass cutting wherever possible and areas seeded with wildflowers subject to the maintenance of satisfactory sight lines for drivers and pedestrians.

Further that consultation on the recommendations of this review be the subject of a Community Consultation through each of the four Strategic Locality Partnership Boards (SLPB). That the feedback from the four SLPBs be referred to the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the pre-decision scrutiny process before going to Cabinet.

This Council believes that this approach will:

- Improve bio-diversity
- Provide areas for pollinating insects
- Add to the visual amenity appeal of many of our main thoroughfares
- Saves money which can be used for other environmental activity.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Grass cutting frequencies have been reduced across the borough since 2015/16 resulting in the current arrangement where routine grass cutting of highway verges is carried out approximately every 4 weeks with some rural verges only scheduled to receive an annual cut. For operational efficiencies, annual cutting may be increased to twice per annum on occasion, and where necessary four weekly frequencies are maintained for visibility splays. The list of highway verges for an annual cut are detailed in Appendix A
- 1.2 In June 2019 the proposal to introduce wild flower meadows was discussed between officers within Clean and Green and myself and it was agreed a number of sites would be identified for a trial.

2.0 Grass cutting in 2020

- 2.1 Cabinet agreed in September 2019 for additional funding to reinstate grass-cutting frequencies on highway verges to three weekly, and where appropriate consider alternative management regimes such as the establishment of wild flower areas.
- 2.2 A review of grass cutting is underway, and consideration will be given to localities and ground conditions with a view to reducing the need for grass cutting in appropriate locations and creating areas of seeded wildflowers subject to the maintenance of satisfactory possible sight lines for drivers and pedestrians.
- 2.3 It is acknowledged, that when correctly located and managed naturalised grass and wild flower areas can greatly enhance the local environment. Such areas, together with our green spaces, are essential for supporting biodiversity, providing habitats and access to a variety of flora and fauna in an urban environment. They form wildlife corridors that allow the migration of plants and animals, acting as important stepping stone links between urban and rural areas.

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Appendix A

Highway Verges with one scheduled cut per year

- Noose Lane (Willenhall) – verge running adjacent to Memorial Park, from junction of Beech Road, to the car park that serves the park itself;
- Wolverhampton Road West (Willenhall) – verges either side of the carriageway, between numbers 199 to 279;
- Hough Road (Pleck) – verge running adjacent to railway line , between numbers 2 – 130;
- Bosty Lane (Rushall) – verge running adjacent to farm land, between number 123 and the Royal Oak pub;
- Little Aston Road (Aldridge) – verge adjacent to farm land, between numbers 173 and 205;
- Walsall Road (Aldridge) – verge running adjacent to farm land, between junction of Longwood Lane and number 214;
- Aldridge Road (Aldridge) – verges running adjacent to farm land, on both sides of carriageway, between number 19 and Longwood canal bridge;
- Barr Common Road Aldridge – triangular verge junction with Longwood Road;
- Aldridge Road (Streetly) – verge running along service road adjacent to hedgerow, between numbers 2 and 204;
- Sutton Road (Walsall) – verge running adjacent to farm land, both sides of the carriageway, between junction of Beacon Road and number 515;
- Sutton Road (Walsall) island verge at the junction with Skip Lane;
- Beacon Hill (Streetly) – verge running adjacent to farm land, between junction of Beacon Road and junction of Aldridge Road;
- The Parade (Brownhills) – verge running adjacent to Holland Park – between junction of Chester Road North and the A5;
- Fishley Lane Bloxwich – verge adjacent to canal side;
- Stoney Lane Bloxwich – open space rear of high rise flats
- Redbourne Road Bloxwich – open space rear of Isaac Walton pool
- Vernon Way Bloxwich – verges either side of road from junction with Lichfield Road, leading up to Sneyd PH;
- Ashley Road Bloxwich – verge running adjacent to canal side;
- Mossley track Bloxwich – verge running from Vernon Way to Broad Lane
- Sneyd Lane Bloxwich – verge by Baileys Pool
- Bloxwich Lane Leamore – land by fishing pool (Butlers Pool)
- Wood Lane Short Heath – verge either side of road, from M6 motorway bridge, to junction with Shelley Road
- Leckie Road North Walsall – small open space known as Leckie Wildlife
- Hilton Road New Invention – small open space known as Allens Rough Pit Mound
- Greadier Street Short Heath – small open space adjacent to canal side
- Littleton Road New Invention – small open space adjacent to woodland
- Oakridge Drive Short Heath – small open space adjacent to former railway line
- Mill Lane The Butts – small open space running to the rear of Borneo Street
- Norton Road Pelsall – verge rear of Mallard Close, near canal bridge
- Northfield Way Clayhanger – verge on left hand side of road on approach to dead end