

Highway Soft Landscape Team

Urban Areas



Urban Grass Verges

| Urban Grass - 6 cuts per annum between following dates | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| Cut No. | Start | Finish |
| 1 | 13 March | 14 April |
| 2 | 17 April | 19 May |
| 3 | 22 May | 22 June |
| 4 | 3 July | 2 August |
| 5 | 21 August | 21 September |
| 6 | 25 September | 25 October |



- ◆ Urban Grass is usually in built up areas and is cut with a ride on mower and strimmers.
- ◆ The cuttings are not collected and are spread evenly over the verges.
- ◆ Cuttings are cleared from hard surfaces with a blower.
- ◆ Obstacles such as lamp posts are cut with a strimmer.

Urban Conservation Verges and 'Plan Bee'

- ◆ Our conservation verges are maintained to help protect and enhance the biodiversity within the urban environment
- ◆ Cuttings are mulched or collected based on individual management plans for each site
- ◆ Conservation verges are cut once with the last urban Grass cut of the year during October.



Urban Shrubs & Hedges



| Shrubs & Hedges 1 cut per annum. | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Visit No. | Start | Finish |
| 1 | 01 May 2023 | 28 February 2024 |



- ◆ Shrubs and Hedges are maintained once per year from May to February.
- ◆ Some locations are visited outside this period for safety.
- ◆ At each maintenance visit they are weeded, pruned and self-sown trees and litter cleared.
- ◆ Works maybe carried out with a hedge cutter.



Rural Areas

Visibility

| Visibility - 3 cuts per annum on following dates | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| Visit | Start | Finish |
| 1 | 01 May | 21 May |
| 2 | 10 July | 31 July |
| 3 | 11 September | 30 September |



- ◆ Visibility cutting takes place with a tractor and flail on junctions and bends to improve visibility.
- ◆ A separate vehicle follows the tractor to cut around obstructions with a strimmer.

Rural Swathe



| Rural Verges. Swathe cut once per annum on following dates | | | |
|--|--------|------------|------------|
| Tier | Visits | Start | Finish |
| Tier 1 roads | 1 | 01 June | 30 June |
| Tier 2 & Tier 3 roads | 1 | 01 October | 30 October |

- ◆ A 900mm wide swathe cut takes place on rural roads by a tractor and flail along both sides of the road. Cuttings are not cleared.
- ◆ A separate vehicle follows the tractor to cut around obstructions with a strimmer.
- ◆ Swathe cutting does not include hedges.



The primary aim of swathe cutting is always highway safety, but we have two cutting windows, one in the summer and one during the autumn. Roads are cut depending on their needs for safety and environmental benefit and divided into the following categories:

◆ **Tier 1 - Highway Safety Swathe Cut**

Roads with highway safety as their priority need.

◆ **Tier 2 – Lower Value Biodiversity Swathe Cut**

These roads will include our Beelines, which is a network of interlinked pollinator routes and general conservation verges.

◆ **Tier 3 – Higher Value Biodiversity Swathe Cut**

Roads or sites with higher level biodiversity conservation and pollinator value as their priority need. These contain protected verges and include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR) and Bee Roads.

Rural Swathe and 'Plan Bee'



| Rural Verges Full Width Biodiversity Cut | | |
|--|------------|------------|
| 1 or 2 cuts per annum on following dates | | |
| Visits | Start | Finish |
| Early Tier 3 | 15 March | 31 March |
| Late Tier 3 | 01 October | 30 October |



As part of Kent's Plan Bee Pollinator Action Plan, we are identifying how we can enhance biodiversity and conservation while balancing the important need to keep our highways safe for all users. We have now introduced a tiered approach to enable us to better manage and promote biodiversity on rural grass verges. We have changed the way we carry out our swathe cutting so we can improve our pollinator habitats and help bees as part of our Plan Bee Pollinator Action Plan. By focussing on verges of higher value to pollinators, or those verges in areas of known importance to pollinators, we can ensure our efforts are targeted to where they are most needed and offer the greatest benefits. Over time we want to create an extensive network of habitat mosaics across Kent which are interconnected and are managed to optimise the range of habitats for pollinators across Kent's rural verge network.

Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR)



We have been working with the Kent Wildlife Trust since 1994 to manage Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR). These may contain threatened habitats or wildlife and include ancient woodland, heathland and chalk grassland.

We manage over 130 RNR in line with the Trust's management plans for each site and with assistance from the Trust's volunteer teams.

Most RNR are located on our rural roads and are within our higher value biodiversity cut.

They may receive a 900mm (3 foot) wide cut next to the road edge or a full width cut to the rear of the verge in early spring or late autumn.

We work with the Trust's Wilder Road Verge Officer to manage our RNR sites and to develop site management plans.

Rural Hedges



| Rural Hedges - 1 cut per annum | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Visit | Start | Finish |
| 1 | 1 December | 31 January |



- ◆ Rural hedges are normally outside of built-up areas and are usually native trees and shrubs such as hazel or hawthorn.
- ◆ Rural hedges are faced up off the highway to a height of 5.5m or 2.5m depending on location. Works are carried out with a tractor and flail cutter.
- ◆ Rural hedges are cut between December and January to leave berries on hedges late as possible to allow birds and wildlife to forage for food.

Weed Control

| Weed Control - 2 treatments per annum | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Visit | Start | Finish |
| 1 | 17 April | 17 June |
| 2 | 14 August | 09 October |



- ◆ Weed control is undertaken twice per year.
- ◆ Footpaths, kerb lines, traffic islands and roundabouts & detached alleyways are treated.
- ◆ Weeds can take up to 10-14 days after treatment before they start to brown off and die.
- ◆ Tall weeds which cause an obstruction or health and safety concerns may be removed.

For more information on our highway soft landscape maintenance programmes visit:

[Soft landscape maintenance - Kent County Council](#)

For information on “Plan Bee” visit: [Kent's Plan Bee | Facebook](#)

We are always pleased when residents report faults to us and the best way to do this is using our online reporting tool at www.kent.gov.uk/highwayfaults. We will provide a unique reference number to enable tracking of our progress. Residents can use the tool to see what we maintain on their road and see if an issue has already been reported to us.

We ask residents to ring us on 03000 41 81 81 if they spot a problem on the highway that could cause an accident.