

KNIGHTON ON TEME PARISH COUNCIL
VERGES GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE – DECEMBER 2015

GENERAL The Council sees value in promoting practices which seek to improve verges in the Parish in terms of wildlife health and diversity and in terms of visual appearance. The basic guide it seeks to follow is “Plantlife- Road Verges and Wildlife Management Guidelines” April 2015.

Website link – plantlife.org.uk

ROLE OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The tasks the PC has identified that it should address are as follows:-

- Draw up and publicise a guideline policy identifying what good practice should be encouraged in the village.
- Obtain relevant information about the wildlife condition of verges in the Parish, including surveys and audits from Local Authority and other sources, and seek to monitor the condition over time. Publicise the data.
- Encourage community involvement in the improvement of verges.
- Liaise with MHDC on all matters relating to verges including Roadside Verge Nature Reserves (NVNR), verge cutting and initiatives to improve verge wildlife diversity.
- Organise a community litter pick at least once a year. Seek to discourage the dropping of litter and waste on verges. Encourage individuals to pick up litter or waste as they move about the village.
- Research and run pilot schemes on collection of wild flower seed for planting in impoverished areas.

ROLE OF INDIVIDUALS

- Respond to PC initiatives indicated above eg litter picking, seed collection and dispersal, learning more about flowers and other wildlife in our verges and how to nurture it.
- Follow good practice when mowing or cutting verges next to their property. The PC does not seek to encourage the close mowing of verges by householders, but recognises that some individuals will choose to do so for reasons of road safety sightlines or for visual appearance. Where this is done, it is suggested that the following best practice is adopted in the interest of wildlife and general appearance in the rural lanes in the village;

Restrict any close mowing to the immediate vicinity of ones’ property; remove all grass cuttings to compost elsewhere.

Where mowing is carried out, leave a width uncut on the hedge side, ideally at least a metre wide; this stretch of longer vegetation might be cut back once a year between mid July and September and the cut material removed.

When collected wild flower seeds become available, sow in suitable sections of the longer vegetation.

Seek to identify the plant types in the section which is cut just once a year.

- Experiment with planting of native bulbs and native wildflowers on suitable sections of verge, and monitor changes.
- Make suggestions to the PC on how the condition of verges might be improved.