

FAQs – Grass biodiversity areas

Q. Why has the grass in some areas not been cut?

A. There is a national decline in many of the UK's species and the council is committed to helping address this where possible.

Some areas of grass will be cut at the end of the growing season in order to try and increase the variety and numbers of insects and plants throughout the borough.

The scheme will also be used by the council to assess alternative sustainable practices.

Potential benefits for wildlife include:

- Increased number of wild flower species
- Provide seed for birds, habitats for insects and nectar for bees
- Shelter for eggs or pupa to overwinter.
- Provide cover for small mammals, amphibians & reptiles.

Q: Which areas are included in the scheme?

Areas where grass will be left uncut this year include:

North West Area

- Parts of Sandy Lane
- Few areas in Stalks Road, near the bridge
- Pylon field, swathe around the pylons and margins
- Birchwood Avenue, swathe the woodland margin
- Burnbridge, tree understory and corner
- Dudley Lane, beside hedge and roadside
- B1321 and Love Avenue, tree understory
- Fern Drive, increase the swathes beside the burn
- Burradon Road, leave single mowing strip
- Weetslade Road, strips between trees and field margin
- B 1317 Killingworth Way, single mowing strip.
- Backworth Lane, single mowing strip on North side
- Castle Square, tree understory
- Holystone Way, single swathe and waggonways
- Whitley Road, single mowing strip
- Forest hall Road and Great Lime Road, tree understory
- Southgate, tree understory
- Station Road, selective large existing mown areas, areas, tree understorey
- Far end of Fusilier Field
- Cat and Dog shelter field, swathing around trees
- East and West Bailey, selective areas

- Garth 21, bankside at Megstone Court and Alderley Drive
- Ongar Way, swathe beside Quorum Business Park

South West Area

- Rear Wharfedale / Wensleydale (cut paths)
- Hill by Aldi's, rear Airedale / Deepdale (cut paths)
- Rear Regents Park / Holland Pk / Home Pk (cut paths)
- Rear Home Pk / Wiltshire Dr / Coast Rd
- Chicken Rd Field (Cut paths to play area)
- Battle Hill Dene (cut paths)
- Black path Battle Hill / Hadrian Park (cut paths)
- Rear Blackhill Ave. parallel with A19
- A19 / Melrose / Henley Gds
- A19 / Firtrees Ave
- Wallsend Burn
- Archer St Field (Cut paths and football size area)
- Hadrian Rd (cut against the road)

North East Area

- A1148 Monkseaton Drive, swathed areas
- Brierdene, rig and furrow, swathe in beside footpath
- Trinity Road banksides
- Links swathe around Brierdene Burn
- Shiremoor Bypass
- Bankside at end of Plessey Crescent
- Swathes in Preston Road
- Swathe grass strip between Zetland Drive and Hampton Road Marden
- Marden Road South / Broadway adjacent to Marden Quarry

South East Area

- Bank sides entrance to Yeoman street North Shields
- Rake Lane / Westminster Road area
- New York Road / By – pass

The sites listed below will be sown:

- Coast Rd / Rear of Battle Hill Drive shops
- Station Rd, Benton
- Southgate bank in front of George Stephenson High School
- Holystone Way roundabout
- Killingworth Way
- Monkseaton Drive

Q. How were the areas chosen?

A. The Council has carefully chosen the areas involved in this scheme.

It is not using any areas used for recreation purposes, and it will continue to cut the grass on approaches to junctions so that road users can see any oncoming traffic.

Other selected sites are close to larger areas of close mown grass such as parks. Importantly, people will continue to have the opportunity to enjoy their local parks and recreational grounds for their leisure activities.

Q. How long will the biodiversity areas remain?

A. The biodiversity areas will be cut at the end of the growing season between mid-September and October.

Q. Will dogs still be able to be walked in this area?

A. Yes, where appropriate paths have been cut through the biodiversity areas so people can still have access to exercise their dogs. However it is the dog owner's responsibility to pick up after their pets regardless of the length of grass. If a person allows their dog to foul and does not pick it up, they are committing an offence. This applies to all public land across North Tyneside.

Q. Is the longer grass a fire hazard?

A. The risk of fire is considered to be very low. If we were to experience a prolonged drought and heat wave the risk would be reassessed at this time and any required action taken.

Q. Will the longer grass impact on hay fever sufferers?

A. It would be very difficult to tell if hay fever symptoms are made worse by the biodiversity areas or if it was simply due to high pollen levels in the atmosphere normally experienced during the summer months.

If the sites were maintained as short grass it is still likely that hay fever sufferers living nearby would continue to experience symptoms due to the nature of the condition and how pollen moves through the atmosphere. In addition to grasses many other plants produce pollen that can contribute to the symptoms of hay fever.

Q. How will the biodiversity areas be cut?

A. The cutting of verges and open spaces will be considered on a site-by-site basis.

It is anticipated that most sites will be cut using a flail mower.

The life cycle of many plants and insects occurs in the core summer months, therefore cutting after this time will not have a detrimental effect on the diversity of

these species. Many of the biodiversity areas are close to areas of denser vegetation such as hedgerows which can be used as shelter by other animals when the biodiversity areas are cut.

Leaving the grass uncut during the summer months will have a much more beneficial effect on wildlife.

Q. Is this being done to save money?

A. The establishment of biodiversity areas is being encouraged for environmental benefits . By allowing the grass to grow longer it can provide more food and shelter for local wildlife, as well as a colourful array of wildflowers.

If this new biodiversity management approach is successful there is likely to be some cost savings. However, there is maintenance associated with managing these areas.