

Guidance on Mowing Regime

Information of grassland cutting options.

How changing a mowing regime can benefit biodiversity and pollinators:

Relaxing mowing can help wildlife by:

- allowing plants to flower and provide pollinators opportunities to forage on the nectar and pollen, giving them energy,
- allowing plants to grow bigger root systems and store more carbon in the soil.
- increasing soil aeration, which increases water storage and so helps reduce flooding.
- allowing areas of longer grass which will provides food for insects, like grasshoppers and moths and provide food and shelter for birds, small mammals and reptiles.

Options for grassland management on green areas that will contribute to taking action to help tackle the Nature and Climate Emergencies and make sure that grassland is managed so that it provides green space that works for residents and wildlife.

This approach allows flexibility and can be applied to all the green infrastructure you manage or be specified on a site by site basis.



A - Amenity Cut for High-Use Areas

- Grass requiring regular mowing (every 5-7 days) – arisings (cuttings) left on ground.

B - Nectar Cut areas where slightly higher grass height is desired, allowing short flowering plants to flower and set seed.

- Designated areas within sites cut on a **4-5 week** cycle, allowing short-flowering plants to complete their full flowering cycle and increasing the nectar available to insects.
- Cut height: blade set to a height allow which allows low-growing plants in flower to pass under blades – 2.5-5cm.
- Maintain a 'managed' look next to paths by mowing a **1-m swathe** of short grass alongside any path edge.
- The management means that some flowering species will still be cut but over the season it will still be a net gain for pollinators.
- **Arisings** will be removed to reduce the nutrient content of the soil. This will encourage flowering plants and discourage lush grass.
- Arisings removed from site to a green waste site – contract arrangement in place.
- Edges will be cuts to maintain a neat appearance and if necessary/appropriate paths cut through site.

C - Meadow Cut

- Designated sites/areas to be managed as a meadow – and cut twice a year in March and August.
- Maintain a 'managed' look next to paths by mowing a **1-m swathe** of short grass alongside any path edge.
- If necessary/appropriate paths cut through site.
- Grass can be left uncut under the drip line of trees and alongside hedgerows.
- Site cut using a cut-and-collect tractor in late summer /early autumn. Cutting prevents grass from becoming too dominant and removing the cuttings takes some of the nutrients away from the soil, encourage more flowering plants.
- Managed as normal between September and March so that grass is short at beginning of spring growing season.

