

# Public Document Pack

## Climate & Biodiversity Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



**Tuesday, 13th January, 2026 at 6.00 pm**

To members of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee - D Enright, A Bailey, A Mubin, D Newcombe, J Robertshaw, S Simpson, R Smith and J Treloar (and all other Town Councillors for information).

You are hereby summonsed to the above meeting to be held in the **Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney** for the transaction of the business stated in the agenda below.

### **Admission to Meetings**

All Council meetings are open to the public and press unless otherwise stated.

Numbers of the public will be limited, with priority given to those who have registered to speak on an item on the agenda. Any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting should contact the Committee Clerk [derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk) in advance.

### **Recording of Meetings**

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 the council's public meetings may be recorded, which includes filming, audio-recording as well as photography.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings, please let the Deputy Town Clerk or Committee Clerk know before the start of the meeting.

### **Agenda**

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

To consider apologies and reasons for absence.

Committee Members who are unable to attend the meeting should notify the Committee Clerk [derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk) **prior** to the meeting, stating the reason for absence.

**Standing Order 8(e)(v)** permits the appointment of substitute Councillors to a Committee whose role is to replace ordinary Councillors at a meeting of a Committee if ordinary Councillors of the Committee have confirmed to the Proper Officer **before** the meeting that they are unable to attend.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

Members are reminded to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in any of the items under consideration at this meeting in accordance with the Town Council's code of conduct.

#### **3. Minutes (Pages 4 - 9)**

To receive and consider the minutes of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee meeting held on 9 September 2025;

Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda (Questions on the progress on any item).

4. **Public Participation**

The meeting will adjourn for this item.

Members of the public may speak for a maximum of five minutes each during the period of public participation, in line with Standing Order 25. Matters raised shall relate to the following items on the agenda.

5. **Climate Action Working Party Minutes** (Pages 10 - 14)

To receive the minutes of the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 25 September for information.

6. **Climate Action Plan Update** (Pages 15 - 53)

To receive and consider the report of the Compliance and Environment Officer.

7. **Lake & Country Park Report** (Pages 54 - 56)

To receive and consider the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer.

8. **Nature Verge Update** (Pages 57 - 197)

To receive and consider the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer.

9. **Seasonal Planting Schemes** (Pages 198 - 200)

To receive and consider the report of the Head of Estates & Operations.

10. **Tree Policy** (Pages 201 - 205)

To receive and consider a revised Tree Policy for the Town Council and to make recommendations to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee accordingly.

11. **Memorial Tree Policy Review** (Pages 206 - 209)

To receive and consider a revised Tree Policy for the Town Council and to make recommendations to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee accordingly.



Town Clerk

Town Hall, Market Square  
Witney  
Oxon  
OX28 6AG

Mrs Sharon Groth FSLCC FCMI  
**Town Clerk**

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T: 01993 704379  
E: [info@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@witney-tc.gov.uk)  
w: [www.witney-tc.gov.uk](http://www.witney-tc.gov.uk)

# Agenda Item 3

## CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Tuesday, 9 September 2025

At 6.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

### **Present:**

Councillor S Simpson (Chair)

Councillors:	D Enright A Mubin D Newcombe	R Smith J Treloar J Doughty (In place of J Robertshaw)
Officers:	Adam Clapton Sharon Groth Derek Mackenzie Carl Whitehead Janine Sparrowhawk	Deputy Town Clerk Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer Compliance & Environment Officer
Others:	One member of the public.	

### **CB501 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Robertshaw, Councillor J Doughty attended as a substitute.

Councillor A Bailey submitted his apologies after the meeting had commenced, and as such, they could not be formally communicated during the meeting.

### **CB502 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

### **CB503 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee meeting held on 20 May 2025 were received.

### **Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee meeting held on 20 May 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

### **CB504 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*The Committee adjourned for this item.*

The committee received representations from a resident of Kingfisher Meadows concerning Agenda Item 8

*The Committee reconvened.*

**CB505 ROAD VERGE NATURE RESERVES AND CIRCULAR WALKING ROUTE FOR WITNEY**

With the permission of the Chair, this item was moved up the agenda so the member of public could hear the discussion and outcome.

The Committee had heard how pleased the member of the public was with the current state of the verges in the Burford Road area and how they hoped these could be further maintained as road verge nature reserves.

Members were supportive of any activity that would assist the protection of the species identified in the residents brief to the Committee and welcomed the potential inclusion in the town biodiversity portfolio. It was noted that some of the verges highlighted were in a neighbouring parish however the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officers (B&GSO) explained the ownership structure of the verges and offered to make contact with Oxfordshire Country Council (OCC) to discuss changes or possible adoption into the Road verge nature reserves scheme.

Discussion turned to that of walking routes within the town. The residents expressed their keenness to be involved in developing a group of three walking routes with resilient signage options. A Member who was also a West Oxfordshire District Council suggested that collaboration with WODC could lead to cost savings as work was already under consideration.

Members were unanimously supportive of these ideas and asked that they be delegated to Officers to explore the options further.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report and verbal updates be noted and,
2. That, the B&GSO make contact with OCC to discuss the action to adopt the areas identified as a road verge nature reserve and,
3. That, Officers explore the options of walking routes in and around the town with a potential collaboration with WODC.

*The Member of the Public left the meeting at 6:36pm.*

**CB506 FINANCE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) detailing income and expenditure for budgets which were the responsibility of the committee.

No questions arose from Members.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the management accounts of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee for the period 1 April to 30 June be approved.
- 3.

**CB507 ANNUAL RESIDENTS SURVEY RESULTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the results of the resident's annual satisfaction survey which was held at the beginning of the year.

Members were advised the report represented the survey results for the services under the remit of this committee and showed the combined satisfactory and above percentages against poor ones. Previous years data was also included to help benchmark the results. The report also contained all unedited comments on the services.

The Committee acknowledged that a huge portion of the work carried out by the Councils Team was long term however, they were encouraged to hear and see the improvements that are being made predominantly at the Lake & Country Park. These improvements included the changes to the level of the pathway around the lake that had led to improved access in time of flooding.

In response to comments raised in the survey regarding the appearance of the street scene, it was raised by a Member that the current scheme being run by West Oxfordshire District Council to improve commercial shop fronts also extended to planting idea and this could be something for the town businesses to explore.

**Resolved:**

That, the report be noted.

**CB508 CLIMATE ACTION WORKING PARTY MINUTES**

Members received and considered the minutes of the Climate Action Working Party held on 22 July 2025.

Item 5 - Members were provided with an update on the progress of the Eco Fair which would take place on 9 October 2025. It was further explained that the event would primarily be an opportunity for partner organisations to promote their schemes to residents.

It was then proposed that a further event be held in the future on a weekend day to capture those residents that would not be able to attend a weekday event.

The next Climate Action Working Party meeting would be held on 25 September 2025 at 4pm, thus providing sufficient time for budget requirements to be presented to the meeting of the Council on 6<sup>th</sup> October.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Climate Action Working Party be approved and the recommendations therein be approved.

**CB509 BIODIVERSITY UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer which provided an update on the recent surveys carried out in the Country park and the aims for its future development.

Members were also supportive of the plans to carry out the work to plant wildflowers on the Curbridge Roundabout, though this would involve the use of heavy machinery and additional working hours they were pleased to hear that no road closure or restrictions would be required.

Additionally, the Committee were pleased to hear of the continued collaboration with the Witney Shed to provide habitat boxes.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, a wildflower area be established at the Curbridge Roundabout.

**CB510 LAKE & COUNTRY PARK REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer along with a verbal update to explain how the Council may approach a reapplication for Green Flag status.

Members heard that Officers had recognised that the application required additional documentation to be completed prior to the submission and that the application should be submitted at a time that would see the onsite visit being carried out in March or April when the biodiversity would be at its best.

In response to Member's questions, the B&GSO confirmed that the Green Flag was an excellent status to hold as it could lead to more support, by way of grant funding, in order to reach the Council's leisure ambitions.

The Committee was unanimous in favour of supporting the reapplication providing that it did not create unnecessary time pressures on Officers.

Members also received details of the updated Management Plan for the Lake & Country Park as well as the In Bloom submission documentation. No questions arose and the Committee thanked the Council team for their work in providing the updates.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, Officers resubmit an application for Green Flag status and,
3. That, the updated management plan be approved.

**CB511 CARBON FOOTPRINT REPORT - WITNEY CIVIL PARISH**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Compliance and Environment Officer which outlined details of the Carbon Footprint Audit for the Parish.

Members heard how the report would be used to continually track the changes made and hopefully track any improvements made. They also heard that the parish currently compared well against other similar sized towns both locally and across Great Britain.

The C&EO outlined the changes targets and suggested that these be discussed at greater length at the Climate Action Working Party meetings.

Members were encouraged to fully evaluate the contents of the report in order to prepare for future discussions.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers undertake an analysis of the Parish Carbon footprint and prepare a schedule of actions and recommendations for consideration.

*Cllr A Mubin left the meeting at 7:18pm.*

*Rejoining part way through the following item at 7:25pm.*

**CB512 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer relating to the first draft of the Climate Change strategy and action plan.

Members again received a comprehensive document that they were encouraged to review fully so that they may feedback at the meeting of the Climate Working Action party to be held on 25 September 2025. They heard that it tied in with the larger overall Council Strategic Plan. Officers would be working collaboratively to ensure there would be a clear understanding across the Council in order that progress was smooth and effective.

The C&EO updated the Committee on the progress of the Carbon Audit of the Council's buildings; there had been a delay due to the reports being produced with the assistance of university students which given the time of year had been on their summer recess.

The initial focus would be on Burwell Hall as this was owned by the Council outright and did not have any listed status therefore any actions could be actioned without undue delay. Any recommendations would be communicated to the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee for their budget approval.

Members also heard of the introduction of Key Performance Indicators to the Action Plan in order that the Committee along with the Climate Action Working Party could have input in setting expected delivery targets on each of the aims.

The Committee congratulated and thanked the C&EO on the process made in the short time that she had been in post and warmly welcomed seeing how the plans progressed.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, that the first draft of the Action plan be noted and,
3. That, Members provide feedback on the plan and KPI's to the meeting of the CAWP on 25 September.

*The Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer left the meeting at 7:30pm*

**CB513 WEST WITNEY PROJECTS - ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer which provides details of the energy efficient elements of the West Witney Projects which would commence later in the year.

Members heard that the report had been complied with information gathered from the Project Officer in response to a request from the Climate Action Working Party at their meeting of 22 July 2025.

Members raised questions regarding to the use of solar energy and if this would be used year-round. They also asked why a heat exchanger had been scoped out of the proposals. It was agreed that these questions be passed to the Project Officer for response.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the questions raised be passed to the Project Officer for response to the Committee.

**CB514 POWER FOR PEOPLE - COMMUNITY ENERGY**

The Committee received the correspondence from the Power for the People campaign.

Members acknowledged that this formed part of the Terms of Reference for the Committee to support “To explore and promote the expansion of community energy” and therefore welcomed being kept updated as the scheme progresses.

Members heard that West Oxfordshire District Council was also currently looking at this and similar schemes.

**Resolved:**

That, the correspondence be noted.

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The meeting closed at: 7.45 pm

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Chair

# Agenda Item 5

## CLIMATE ACTION WORKING PARTY MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

**Held on Thursday, 25 September 2025**

**At 4.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney**

### **Present:**

Councillor S Simpson (Chair)

Councillors:	D Edwards-Hughes D Enright	J Robertshaw R Smith (In place of J Aitman)
Officers:	Adam Clapton Zoe Henstridge Derek Mackenzie	Deputy Town Clerk Administrative Support - Halls & Green Spaces Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	None.	

### **7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Aitman, Councillor R Smith attended as a substitute.

### **8 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 22 July 2025 were received.

#### **Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 22 July 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

*Cllr D Enright joined the meeting at 4:05pm*

### **9 WITNEY PARISH CARBON FOOTPRINT**

The Working Party received and considered a report which complimented the Compliance and Environment Officer's progress with the Council's Strategy & Action Plan. The report had originally been considered by the Climate & Biodiversity Committee on 9 September and Members of the Working Party were now asked for their recommendations and proposed actions.

Members welcomed the report which highlighted the potential goals in reducing the carbon footprint of the parish and noted that a number of those goals were already being carried out in the Council's activity such as their support for community bus services, the community fridge

and larder, promotion of active travel and improved land management which incorporated the use of allotments and community orchards. It was noted that further changes could be incorporated into the further actions that the Working Party and Climate & Biodiversity Committee set.

Although wider parish objectives were part of the Council's overall objective to be carbon neutral by 2028, it was agreed carbon reduction of the Council's facilities and estate should take precedence and that this should be the main focus of the Working Party.

Members appreciated the short time that the Compliance and Environment Officer had been in post in order to compile the assessments and reports between meetings of the Committee and Working Party and welcomed receipt of an impact report on the Council's activities at the earliest opportunity.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report of the Compliance and Environment Officer be noted and,
2. That, an impact report of the Council Activities be provided and,
3. That, the changes be incorporated where possible, but precedence be given to the town council's facilities.

10      **DRAFT CLIMATE STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN**

The Working Party received and considered the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer, along with the draft climate strategy and action plan for the Council. The report and draft plan had originally been considered by the Climate & Biodiversity Committee on 9 September and Members of the Working Party were now asked for their recommendations and proposed actions.

The C&EO welcomed the points raised by the Climate & Biodiversity Committee at their meeting on 9 September. Members heard that some of the suggested improvements would come from existing budgets however others would have to be included in the 2026-27 budget setting process.

Additionally, Members heard that work was ongoing with the Action Plan this included collaboration between all Officers to ensure that any action followed the overall corporate strategy plan and reflected individual Committees terms of reference.

Members made additional suggestions to refine the details within the Action Plan, such as the inclusion at an early stage of the financial cost of each action as well as the potential carbon reduction impact figures so as to allow the Council and residents to see, as each Key Performance Indicator was reached, the cumulative impact of carbon reduction achieved.

Members asked that the actions be placed into order of impact and for Council and Community actions to be separated. They acknowledged that although the action plan and strategy were not yet at a quantitative stage, that the work so far was a great starting point and were pleased with the progress made.

Lastly, various access to grant funding options were discussed and the C&EO advised they were aware of these and that each would be explored further as the action plan was implemented.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers incorporate the suggestions of the Working Party into the final version of the Action Plan and Climate Change Strategy and
3. That, any grant funding opportunities are explored by Officers.

11

**PUBLIC HALLS - BURWELL HALL**

The Working Party received and considered the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer concerning potential improvements to Burwell Hall.

Although officers were in the process of obtaining assessments for the Council's other facilities, an energy audit in 2022 had highlighted several further areas for improvement after the replacement of the boiler which was completed in 2023.

Members were advised that small changes such as the replacement of lighting was carried out as the need arose and that the existing maintenance budget for the hall would be used. However larger projects such as the ones highlighted in the 2022 report for improvements to the halls ceiling (£10,000-15,000) and the introduction of Solar PV arrays (£10,000 – 12,000) would require budget setting or grant funding.

Officers would look to obtain updated estimates for the costs of the ceiling and Solar PV works ahead of the 2026-27 budget setting however, the Deputy Town Clerk advised that there was an existing Energy efficiency budget for the Councils buildings which may be utilised towards the cost of improvements.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, updated estimates for Solar PV and Ceiling insulation be obtained ahead of 2026-27 budget setting and,
3. That, the level of the existing energy efficiency be investigated by Officers.

12

**WATER REFILL STATION - THE LEYS**

The Working Party received and considered a verbal update from the Compliance & Environment Officer concerning a potential budget addition for the 2026-27 year.

Members heard that this scheme had originally been the idea of the previous Youth Council. The Operations Manager had reviewed the project in 2023 and indicated a cost of approx. £3,500 to implement.

Members were supportive as it's need was evidenced at events previously held on The Leys. They asked that the new Youth Council and Stronger Communities Committee be involved in the delivery of the project along with a consideration that the fountain be utilised by both people and dogs.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,

2. That, the project be supported by this Working Party and recommended for inclusion in the 2026-27 budget for consideration by the Stronger Communities Committee.

*Cllr D Enright left the meeting at 4:39pm*

13 **CARBON LITERACY TRAINING**

Members of the working party that were also West Oxfordshire District Council members were asked to provide their feedback on research.

The Chair advised that she has attended meetings held by WODC however, had not been able to progress the idea of having the carbon literacy training opened up to the Town Council.

Cllr R Smith advised that the decision would likely be taken by the Audit & Governance Committee and would follow up with her fellow WODC Councillors to request a response from WODC.

**Recommended:**

1. That, WODC Council members follow up with the Audit & Governance Committee.

14 **WEBSITE INFORMATION**

Working Party members advised they had seen several Council websites which hosted green and climate initiatives.

Members provided ideas of Websites from other Councils and agreed to forward the details they had to the Compliance & Environment Officer for consideration.

Additionally, Members would continue to look and provide details of anything they found that could be of further interest.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the websites as advised be noted and,
2. That, Members continue to provide additional material.

15 **WITNEY ECO FAIR**

The Working Party received an update on the Eco Fair scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> October from the Compliance & Environment Officer.

Plans were in place and 9 out of 32 of the invited representatives had replied to advise they would be taking part. Confirmed attendees were from WODC, OCC, WTC, Low Carbon Hub, BBWOT and the Cherwell Collective

The C&EO would continue to chase up those that had not responded, those that were unable to attend would be asked if they had literature that could be displayed in their absence.

Members asked if the digital poster advertising the event could be shared and flyers could be made for their use, distribution in the Corn Exchange and also shared by the Chair, who would be attending a similar event being held by St Marys Church Eco Group.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the digital poster be shared and small flyers be created.

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The meeting closed at: 4.52 pm

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Chair

**Agenda Item:** Draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

**Meeting Date:** Tuesday 13 January 2026

**Contact Officer:** Compliance and Environment Officer

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The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Witney Town Council's Climate Strategy and Action Plan.

## **Background**

At its meeting on 26 June 2019, Witney Town Council formally declared a Climate Emergency. In response, the Council committed to taking all necessary measures to address climate change, setting a target to achieve carbon neutrality by 2028 in pursuit of a cleaner, more sustainable future for its residents.

## **Current Situation**

This version of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan represents a second draft and is being brought forward to seek further Member input. The draft document will be shared with officers for further input. The intention is to ensure that the final version reflects the Council's priorities.

## **Draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan**

The second draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (Appendix A) has been prepared following the preliminary roadmap presented to the Climate and Biodiversity Committee on 20 May 2025 and the Climate Action Working Party on 25 September 2025 where further direction from Members was given to officers. A detailed Action Plan, including key performance indicators (KPIs) and timelines, will now be further developed to accompany the Climate Change Strategy. This will allow the Council to track progress and link strategic objectives directly to measurable outcomes.

## **Council Carbon Emissions Assessment 2024-2025**

Historical emissions data for 2019-2020 was submitted to Council as part of the initial assessment. The Council's carbon footprint for 2019-2020 was calculated to be 64.08 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. Following this initial assessment, the Council internalised the grounds maintenance contract in 2022, resulting in a material change to operational scope. The 2019-2020 assessment cannot be considered directly comparable to the 2024-2025 baseline due to the substantial expansion of Council activities. Nevertheless, historical building data on water, heating, and electricity consumption will be reviewed.

The Council has undertaken a detailed review of its carbon emissions for the period April 2024 - March 2025, using the local authority industry recognised GHG Accounting Tool. The accounting tool has been developed by The Local Government Association and is widely used by local authorities to establish their baseline greenhouse gas emissions over a single reporting year. This assessment has established total Council emissions for 2024-2025 of 65.08 tCO2e.

Scope	Emissions tCO2e	Percentage of Total Emissions
Scope 1	51.39	79%
Scope 2	0.55	1%
Scope 3	13.14	20%

Scope 1: Direct emissions from Council owned operations, excluding any buildings leased to third parties. e.g. Liquid fuel for vehicles (petrol and diesel).

A breakdown of Scope 1 emissions sources details heating emissions at 26.91 tCO2e and the Council's fleet use at 24.48 tCO2e.

Scope 2: Indirect emissions from purchased energy e.g. gas used in Council buildings.

A breakdown of Scope 2 emissions relates to the electricity supplied via Oxfordshire County Council's street lighting for the Town Councils Christmas Lights display.

Scope 3: Other indirect emissions where data is reasonable available e.g. water.

A breakdown of Scope 3 emissions relates to the supply and treatment of water 2.46 tCO2e and emissions associated with the extraction, refinement and transportation of fuel prior to combustion (Well to Tank) at 10.63 tCO2e.

Out of scope for reporting are supply chain emissions from procurement and waste from properties and sites.

Calculations only cover Council owned operations or long term leased building e.g. Town Hall and Admin Offices. The assessment currently excludes any buildings leased to third parties e.g. Langdale Hall, Madley Park Hall, Towerhill Cemetery Lodge, West Witney Sports and Social Club etc.

To support clear communication of the findings, officers have prepared an infographic summarising this information for use by the Council (Appendix B). This visual resource is intended to present the data in an accessible format, enabling Members and residents to quickly understand key outcomes and implications.

### **Implementation Roadmap & Estimated Reductions**

Following the completion of the 2024–25 baseline emissions assessment, clear carbon reduction priorities have now been established, highlighting the most significant opportunities for impactful change. The next phase will focus on calculating the estimated tCO2e savings for each measure to finalise this component of the plan.

## **Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)**

EPC's have recently been completed for Burwell Hall and the Corn Exchange. The reports have been reviewed by officers.

Burwell Hall: The building's rating has improved from a previous C to a B, primarily due to the replacement of the heating and hot water system in 2023.

Corn Exchange: The current rating is C, compared to a B rating recorded in 2016. Notably, electricity usage has increased by 56.5% since the 2016 audit. Several recommendations relating to insulation of floors, glazing and internal walls etc. are detailed in the report that will provide medium impact on carbon emissions.

Windrush Cemetery Depot building: The Low Carbon Hub have undertaken a free carbon and energy efficiency assessment on the Windrush Cemetery Depot building. The building is just within the Eynsham and Cassington Ward where Low Carbon Hub are running the CAP Zero project. The results from the assessment will be available shortly.

## **Benchmarking**

Officers have liaised with the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) Environmental & Sustainability Advisor to evaluate how the Council's performance compares with that of similar town councils. Currently, there appears to be limited published benchmarking data available for town councils. It is anticipated that SLCC may be able to provide officers with relevant information or comparative datasets to inform the Council's approach and benchmark any objectives.

## **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – The impacts of implementing a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for Witney will have equal impact on all services, customers, and staff as there is shared benefit.
- b) Biodiversity – Climate change action plans can include measures to protect and restore biodiversity, which in turn can help with climate adaptation and mitigation as detailed in the report.
- c) Crime & Disorder - No direct crime and disorder impact with regards to the content of this report.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – The information and suggested targets within the report will have a direct, positive impact on the Council's plan for the wider positive benefits towards climate change mitigation and adaptation across the town.

## **Risk**

In decision making Members should consider any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Any recommendations will be reported to the appropriate Committee and Full Council for approval.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates. The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan will have multi-dimensional impact across various areas including social, economic, and environmental benefits. Stakeholder engagement will be crucial including the public, communities, and local businesses. Consideration of the effects on local communities, including economic development, social inclusion and environmental sustainability will form the draft documents.

## **Financial implications**

- Any costs associated with the Climate Emergency Action Plan incorporating the reduction of the carbon footprint for Witney will follow Council process and be reported to appropriate committees for approval or from existing budget allocations.
- All external funding opportunities will be explored to support climate action costs.
- Officers will maximise the use of support by the various organisations and agencies available.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to:

1. Note progress made and the contents of the second draft of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.
2. Share feedback and recommendations to help shape the final version of the strategy.

Document is Restricted



# Witney Town Council Carbon Emissions 2024/25

65.08  
tCO<sub>2</sub>e

Baseline total emissions

tCO<sub>2</sub>e stands for tonnes (t) of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) equivalent (e) and is a standard unit of measurement in carbon accounting.

"Sustainable choices today lead to a greener tomorrow for our community and planet."

– Environmental Advocate

Understanding our carbon emissions is crucial to implementing effective sustainability strategies and reducing our environmental impact.

**Scope 1** from direct emissions from Council controlled sources

24.48 tCO<sub>2</sub>e

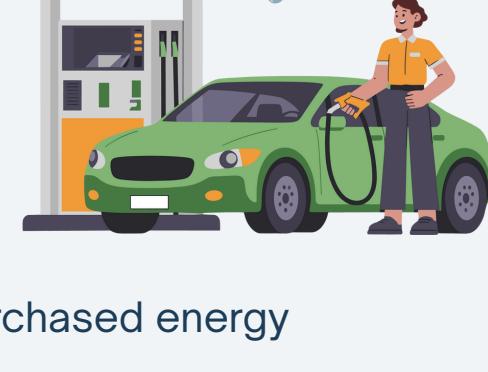
Fleet fuel use emissions

Fleet fuel use results in substantial emissions.

26.91 tCO<sub>2</sub>e

Building heating use emissions

Heating fuel use results in substantial emissions.



**Scope 2** from indirect emissions from purchased energy

0.55 tCO<sub>2</sub>e

Christmas lighting emissions in 2024/25

Seasonal display lighting significantly adds to our carbon emissions during winter months.



**Scope 3** from other indirect emissions

2.46 tCO<sub>2</sub>e

Water use and treatment emissions

Water use and treatment emissions from all our facilities and cemeteries contribute to our footprint.



Remaining Scope 3 emissions = 10.68 tCO<sub>2</sub>e Well to tank from fuel use.

The council's total emissions reveal critical areas for improvement and targeted actions to reduce our carbon footprint. Prioritising sustainability efforts can lead to lasting environmental benefits for our community and future generations.

**Agenda Item:** Lake and Country Park Report

**Meeting Date:** Monday 13 January 2026

**Contact Officer:** Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer

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The purpose of this report is to update members on the works carried out on the Lake, Country Park by the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer and the Park Ranger.

### Background

The Lake and Country Park continue to be managed for recreation and conservation, and we continue to work to align with the 10-year management plan which includes actions and progress.

<https://www.witney-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/aaaaaManagement-plan-summary.docx>

### Current Situation

There have been projects carried out such as:

- The council continues to move forward with the “branding of the country park by removing and replacing old and broken benches and signage with more suitable ones (such as a new recycled bench and picnic table)
- There has been an increase in ASB and the Green Spaces team deals with things such as graffiti and removal of life rings as a top priority
- The council continue to carry out water tests of the lake, the dragonfly area, and in the winter the newly created scrapes on Snipe Meadow, the results of which will be provided in a future separate report
- The Council has designed and installed some new signs around the country Park and is at present designing a new interpretation sign for the Mill Meadow and Avenue 2 entrances
- Flooding has been at an all-time high around the lake and the river Windrush has risen in places, so much so it has overtapped the new path we built up, that is 9 inches higher than this time last year
- 75m of path around the lake has been raised and widened in a carefully selected area of which has received a number of positive comments from the public
- The Council have had one confirmed case of Avian bird flu and have taken all measures that were appropriate to maintain biosecurity
- Officers have removed several trees that have been blocking the water flow along both arms of the river Windrush
- Officers have carried out work to improve sightlines and safety around the Country Park
- Officers have begun the re-furnishement of the Tern raft for re-siting in Spring

- Officers have applied for an £87,000 grant for path improvements around the lake that will complete the planned works identified to create an inclusive access for all pathway

## **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality –Equality in biodiversity in green spaces refers to the idea that all species regardless of their size, role, or ecological status should have the opportunity to thrive and be represented within urban and natural green spaces. Achieving equality in biodiversity involves not just conserving a wide variety of species but also ensuring that ecological systems are designed and managed in ways that support diverse species' needs. This can be applied to urban parks, nature reserves, forests, and other green spaces, aiming for a balance where no group of species is disproportionately favoured over others.
- b) Crime & Disorder –Green spaces such as Lakes and Parks can contribute to reducing urban crime by making spaces more inviting and safer for residents.
- c) Environment & Climate Emergency –This is deeply intertwined with both the protection of biodiversity and the fight against climate change. Both challenges require urgent and comprehensive action, as they not only affect the country's natural systems but also its economy, society, and future well-being.
- d) All aspects of this report are to action our responsibilities to this situation

The Lake and Country Park and the facilities it provides the following

- Benefits to the local community at all levels giving users a resource to enjoy and experience nature and all it provides
- Benefits to the economy, employment, a free natural resource and support to local contractors
- Benefits to the environment, increasing species levels and creating new habitats for rare and endangered species (Water Voles)

## **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

## **Financial implications**

There is an agreed budget for the management of the Country Park but as it grows and the usage increases, then a regular review of financial requirements will be needed

We have also secured £2,500 from Freshwater Habitats Trust and Lower Windrush Valley Project towards the design and purchase of the new interpretation boards

If the council is unsuccessful with the grant application to RSS, then a review will be required to clarify the cost of on-going works to prevent flooding and provide a safe and usable access around the lake

## **Recommendations**

Member are invited to note the report and

1. Consider the ongoing costs and timeframes to maintain a viable and accessible route for all users around the lake

# Agenda Item 8

## Road Verge Nature Reserves in Witney

Date: Tues 10 June Recorder: [REDACTED]

### ***Location***

Burford Road from Tower Hill to Deer Park Road junction on both sides of the road, including the verge running parallel to the main road on the slip road leading to Windrush Valley Road.

### ***Species list***

Mullein – quite a colony and spreading on the slip road segment



**1 Great Mullein field along the verge**

*Heading west on Burford Road...*

Wild snapdragon – common toadflax



**2 Common or Yellow Toadflax – *Linaria vulgaris***

Knapweed

Yarrow

Lesser celandine

White campion

Hedge bedstraw



**3 Hedge Bedstraw - *Galium mollugo***

***Heading East on way back from Deer Park Road lights***

Musk Mallow near the lights



**4 Musk Mallow - *Malva moschata***

Bird's Foot trefoil

Hedge bedstraw

Lady's bedstraw



### 5 Lady's bedstraw - *Galium Verum*

Creeping cinquefoil



## 6 Creeping cinquefoil - *Potentilla reptans*

Spiny Restarrow



## 7 Spiny Restarrow - *Ononis spinosa*

Scabious

Common toadflax – wild snapdragon

[5 hemlock plants before the bus shelter, of which 4 trampled down – poisonous and invasive. Should be dug out with protective clothing on]

Creeping cinquefoil

Numerous grasses that would need an expert to classify



# Road Verge Nature Reserves in Oxfordshire

## Survey Report and Management Requirements



October 2024

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>V.1 Prepared by</b>	Sue Lawley	Ecologist Planner	2016
<b>V.2 Prepared by</b>	Louise Fox	Ecologist Planner	06/2020
<b>V.3 Prepared by</b>	Jack Wheeler	Biodiversity Officer	06/2023
<b>V.4 Prepared by</b>	Jack Wheeler	Senior Biodiversity Officer	10/2024
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Rebecca Micklem	Team Leader Landscape and Nature Recovery	10/2024

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## What are Road Verge Nature Reserves?

Road Verge Nature Reserves (RVNRs) are verges rich in biodiversity, including a number of scarce and threatened plants and habitats. RVNRs provide connectivity between wildlife areas, helping maintain and restore a green network through which wildlife can move and survive. Green verges provide a vital link between otherwise inhospitable landscapes, providing benefits for wildlife and people.

There are currently 52 designated RVNRs in Oxfordshire, holding populations of locally or nationally rare plant species, such as Autumn Crocus and Meadow Clary. The verges are protecting valuable remnants of chalk and limestone grassland in the Cotswolds and Chilterns National Landscapes.

## Why do they matter?

Road verges can be rich in biodiversity and have many benefits for people and wildlife. Verges can be very attractive and show OCC's commitment to caring for the local environments of our residents and our responsibilities for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

RVNRs are part of Oxfordshire County Councils legal commitment to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Section 40(1) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 states: '*Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity*'. This duty has been strengthened through the Environment Act 2021.

RVNRs are often given a high value by local communities, with residents wanting to volunteer to carry out ecological monitoring and some management activities. There has been increased national interest in the value of wildflowers for pollinators and road verges as refuges for rare plant species. For example, the charity Plantlife is running a national Road Verge Campaign.

## Background to Road Verge Nature Reserves in Oxfordshire

In acknowledgement of the importance of roadside verges for wildlife, Oxfordshire RVNRs were set up in 1991 following a survey of 55 verges to identify those of particular botanical interest. 24 verges were initially identified, and a report published in a manual which gave brief details of verges and management required.

Subsequently other verges have been added and information has been received from local naturalists about potential further sites. Please see a map overleaf of the current RVNRs.



## Map of OCC's RVNRs



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There are currently 52 RVNRs located across the county. West Oxfordshire has the highest number of RVNRs with 26 present – South Oxfordshire has nine, Vale of White Horse has eight, Cherwell has eight and Oxford City has one. There are several different general grassland types that are present on the verges:

- Limestone grassland – the most abundant and located primarily in West Oxfordshire, these comprise of limestone flora including yellow rattle, cowslip, early purple orchid, salad burnet, agrimony, autumn crocus, milkwort, bee orchid, pyramidal orchid, rock rose, clustered bellflower, green hellebore, hairy rockcress
- Acid grassland – located in Vale of White Horse, these comprise of sandland flora such as common storksbill, purple toadflax, musk mallow, viper's bugloss, haresfoot clover, blue fleabane, sheep sorrel
- Neutral grassland - located predominantly in South Oxfordshire, this verge comprises of dry grassland flora such as clary
- Chalk grassland – located predominantly in South Oxfordshire, these comprise of chalk flora such as field scabious, bee orchid, greater knapweed, marjoram, dark mullein

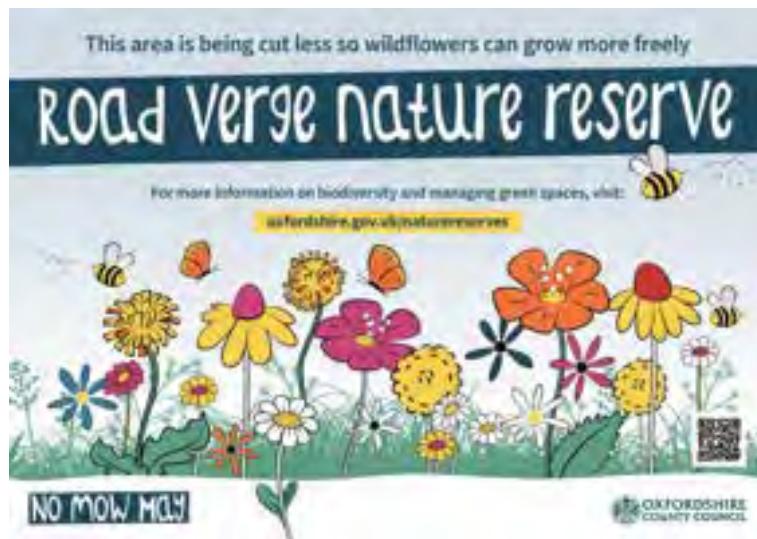
## Designation of OCC's RVNRs

RVNRs are designated following an ecological survey and consideration of other factors, such as road safety. A RVNR should meet one or more of the following selection criteria:

- Supports a species which is classified as critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable, near threatened or Nationally scarce in the National or County Red Data Book or very rare, rare, very scarce or scarce (as defined by Day 2001).
- It supports a good example of a plant community that represents a habitat characteristic of Oxfordshire or is a Habitat of Principal Importance (listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006)
- It supports any animal species protected under legislation or supports a rare animal species or rich community of animals in the context of the county's fauna.

In 2016 it was decided that the available information on RVNRs should be updated. Verges were surveyed between 2016 and 2019. The surveys were undertaken by the County Ecology Officers. The results of the most recent surveys are listed in the detailed verge information section below.

After designation RVNRs were marked by posts with 'NR' inscribed at the top, indicating their Nature Reserve status. In 2022 marker posts were installed at RVNRs 1-32, with marker posts to be installed at RVNRs 33-52 following their designation in 2024 following a review of survey data. All marker posts are due to be updated in 2024 with the sign illustrated below.



Each verge has its own specific proposed management regime developed to benefit the special wildlife of that verge. Due to logistical and financial limitations a total of 10 RVNRs are currently under full active management with the remaining to verges to be added incrementally.

Verges are monitored regularly through a survey visit every 5 years to ensure that their wildlife value is being maintained or enhanced and to inform the proposed management plan as necessary. The option to remove designation is reserved for sites that no longer meet the designation criteria after 10 years of active management.

New RVNRs can be proposed at any time by visiting [Taking action for the environment | Oxfordshire County Council](#) and completing the online form. Each proposal will be assessed against the designation criteria and assigned appropriate site-specific management as practical and required. Details including a map of the proposed area and photos should be provided where possible.

## RVNR Management

RVNRs in Oxfordshire are predominantly managed by the Highways and Transport Team, with ecological support provided by the Biodiversity Team. RVNR 14 is managed by Oxfordshire County Council's countryside access team. The Crawley Conservation Group provides support in managing the three RVNRs present within their village. RVNR 49 is managed by the Sandhills Naturehood community group.

The majority of RVNRs should be managed by a single annual cut at the end of the summer / early autumn, so that the flowers have had chance to seed. This also provides benefits for invertebrates, such as bees and butterflies, with the longer grass and flowers providing breeding habitat and a food resource.

Ideally, the cuttings are to be removed from the site to maintain the low-nutrient levels of the soil. In some cases, it may be necessary to take a second cut in late winter to break down surface vegetation. Where possible, an uncut area may be left to provide over-wintering habitat for invertebrates.

Certain verges have differing individual management prescriptions to encourage the growth of particular flora that are present. Any encroaching woody vegetation should be well cut back, so the grassland habitat is not choked and shaded. The marker posts should be kept in place and replaced where necessary.

## Core Verge Management Summary (as of October 2024)

Verge No	Name	District	Management Required	Verge in active management	Further Survey Requirements
1	Heythrop 1	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in late Spring. Do not cut between August and October. Second cut and collect/pile in November. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey in July to confirm presence of Autumn Crocus
2	Rangers Lawn	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July
3	Shipton-under-Wychwood	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July
4	Whitehall	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July
5	Signet	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Set blades high where anthills are present. Restoration by scrub removal. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of broomrape
6	Worsham	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile. Scrub control required. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
7	Ashford Mill Farm	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Removal of scrub. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
8	Freeland	WODC	Cut and collect/pile twice per year in late Spring and Autumn. Control Bracken. Replacement of marker posts. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and bracken control	Survey between June and July

Verge No	Name	District	Management Required	Verge in active management	Further Survey Requirements
9	Dry Sandford	VoWH	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
10	Tubney	VoWH	Verge requires extensive restoration by removal of topsoil to allow re-establishment from seed-bank. Installation of marker posts.	Pending removal of topsoil	Survey between June and July
11	Pusey	VoWH	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Restoration may required to improve species diversity. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey in July to confirm presence of Creeping Bellflower
12	Hatford	VoWH	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Removal of scrub species. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Wild Clary
13	Taynton Down	WODC	Cut and collect/pile whole width of verge annually in October. Scrub control in quarry area. Scrub clearance around northern post. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Purple Milk Vetch
14	Spelsbury	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Meadow Clary
15	Spelsbury II	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September and remedial cutting in Spring may be required. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Meadow Clary
16	Shillingford	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September, including southern verge. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Meadow Clary

Verge No	Name	District	Management Required	Verge in active management	Further Survey Requirements
17	Stratford Lane	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Some scrub control required. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey in July to confirm presence of Wild Liquorice and Sainfoin
18	Burford	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September of whole width. Scrub control required and management of the former carriageway. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
19	Hailey	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending verge restoration	Survey between June and July
20	Middleton Stoney	CDC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September/October. Some scrub control and restoration works to see if Meadow Clary re-establishes. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings, scrub removal and restoration	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Meadow Clary
21	Heythrop 2	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub control, particularly on former carriageway. Possible remedial work to encourage clary. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
22	Ipsden	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub control to remove Bramble. Installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July. Survey verge on eastern aspect of road
23	Ashford Mill	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Control of scrub. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July

Verge No	Name	District	Management Required	Verge in active management	Further Survey Requirements
24	Watlington	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September/October. Scrub control. Blades set high to protect anthills. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
25	Middleton Stoney II	CDC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub removal. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey in May for woodland species close to hedgerow. Further survey required in July to confirm presence of Blue Fleabane and Ploughman's Spikenard
26	Dry Lane, Crawley	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Consider deepening channel to re-direct road run-off. Installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July
27	Leafield Lane, Crawley	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Meadow Clary
28	Ridings Lane, Crawley	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment. Installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July
29	Britwell Hill	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Control of Dogwood. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
30	Cowleaze Wood	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Control of scrub. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Ploughman's Spikenard

Verge No	Name	District	Management Required	Verge in active management	Further Survey Requirements
31	Aston Rowant	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July. Survey verges adjacent to motorway bridge
32	Ipsden Heath	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Restoration by scrub/tree control and removal of arisings. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of Violet Helleborine
33	Hinksey Hill	VOWH	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
34	Fullbrook 1	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July
35	Fullbrook 2	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July
36	Caps Lane, Cholsey	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey in July
37	Tittenford Bridge	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July
38	Bridewell	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July to confirm presence of broomrape

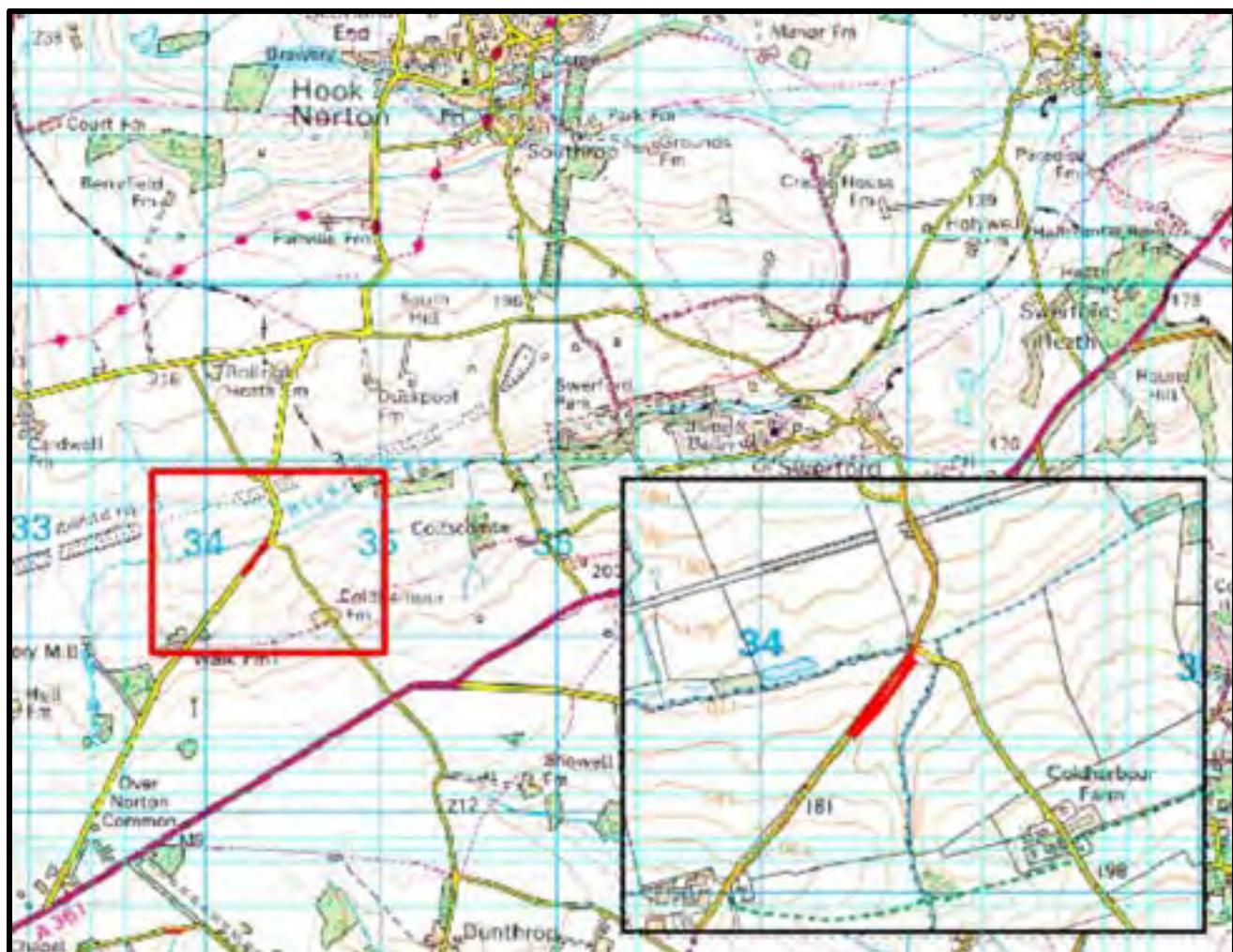
Verge No	Name	District	Management Required	Verge in active management	Further Survey Requirements
39	A44, Bladon	CDC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July
40	Cumnor	VOWH	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July
41	Linch Hill	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey in May to confirm presence of Cotswold penny-cress. Further survey required in July to confirm presence of Blue Fleabane and Dwarf Thistle
42	Peartree	CDC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment on northern section of verge. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
43	A4260 Thrupp	CDC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July
44	Straight Mile	CDC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July
45	Adjacent Black Ley	CDC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey in June
46	Upper Campsfield Road	CDC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July

Verge No	Name	District	Management Required	Verge in active management	Further Survey Requirements
47	Rocksley Copse	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings	Survey between June and July
48	Stonesfield	WODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
49	A40 Sandhills	OC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July
50	Marcham Interchange	VOWH	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
51	Milton Hill	VOWH	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.	Pending collection/piling of arisings and scrub removal	Survey between June and July
52	Lewknor	SODC	Annual cut and collect/pile in September. Installation of marker posts.	Yes	Survey between June and July

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## Verge 1: Heythrop (1)

Verge Name	Heythrop 1
Grid Reference	SP 343 304
Local Authority	West Oxfordshire District Council
Parish	Swerford
Date of last survey	July 2024
Approximate Length	300m (on each side)
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland
Features	Dry Ditch



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### Site Description

A wide and flat verge on both sides of a minor road, with tall, mature and species-diverse hedgerows. A range of species have been identified within the verge, including yellow rattle, cowslip, early purple orchid, pyramidal orchid, common spotted orchid, salad burnet, field scabious and agrimony.

A colony of autumn crocus was present, however this species has not been recorded since 2020.

The verge is generally in moderate condition, with the southern section less consistent terms of quality compared to the northern section. Which is the opposite of the assessment undertaken in 2017. Part of the southern section had been recently mown which may be reducing the condition of this section over time.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Swere Valley and Upper Stour Conservation Target Area

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in late Spring.

Do not cut between July and October due to presence of Autumn Crocus. Second cut and collect/pile later cut in November.

Installation of marker posts.



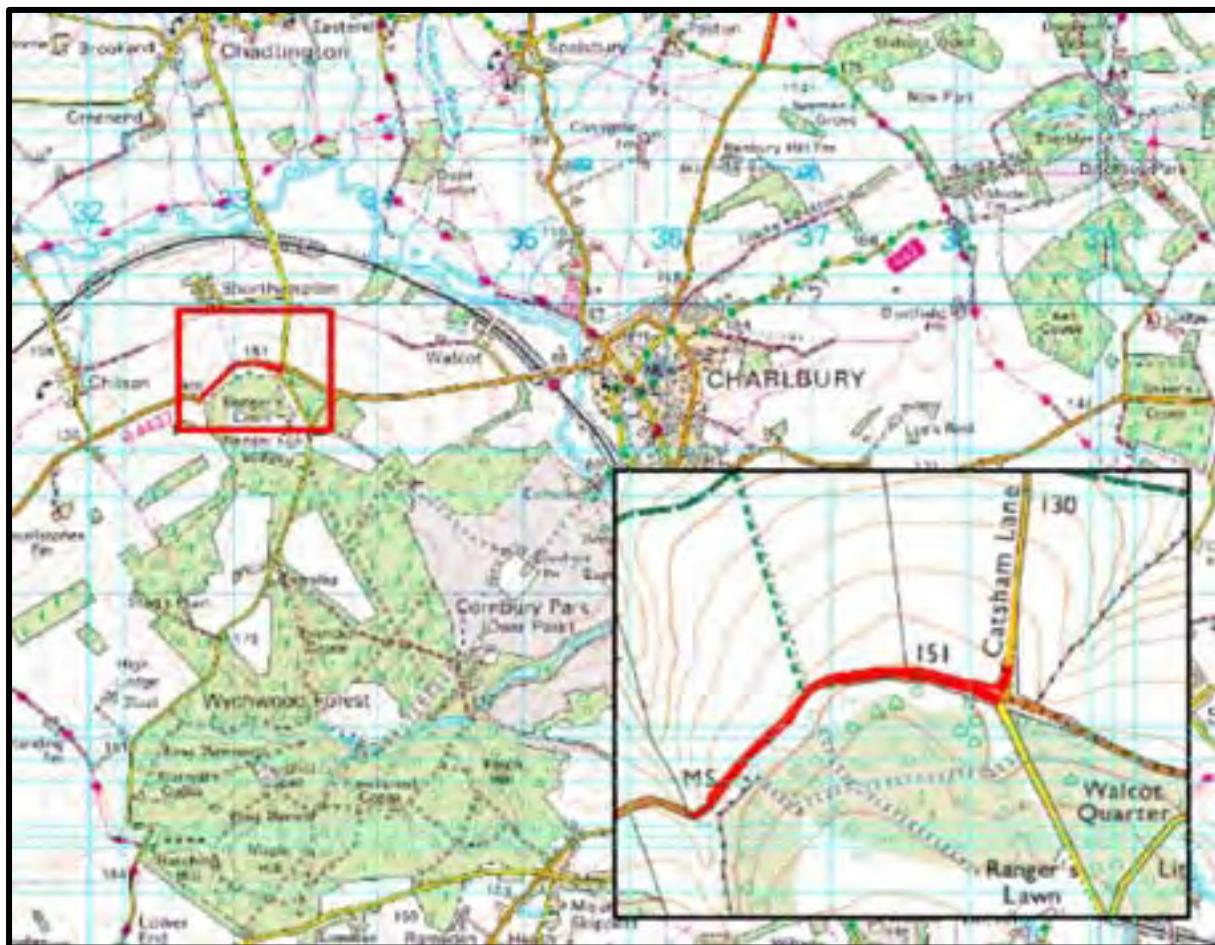
**Northern verge (2024) left and southern verge (2024) right**



**North-western verge in flower (23<sup>rd</sup> August 2020)**

## Verge 2: Rangers Lawn

<b>Verge Name</b>	Rangers Lawn
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 327 194 – SP 333 196
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Chilson / Short Hampton
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	600m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Wall and hedgerow



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### Site Description

The verge is along a curved section of the B4437 to the east of Chilson, with open countryside to the north and an enclosed park to the south. Verges are present on both sides of the road, with species-rich grassland on the southern side, extending to the north of the road junction.

Overall the verge is in moderate condition and becomes more rank towards the west and is most diverse at the east. The northern verge is more rank in character, with lower species

diversity and overall reduced condition with the exception of the eastern end which is high in species diversity.

Species present include frequent burnet saxifrage, salad burnet, rock rose, sainfoin, yellow rattle, woolly thistle, agrimony, restarrow, cowslip, primrose and pyramidal orchid. Areas of poorer quality include nettles and Traveller's Joy. A number of common lizards were also observed during the 2024 survey visit.

A large section of verge had been recently mown in June 2024 on both the northern and southern sides, reducing the ecological condition.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Wychwood and Lower Evenlode Conservation Target Area and 600m from Wychwood SSSI.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

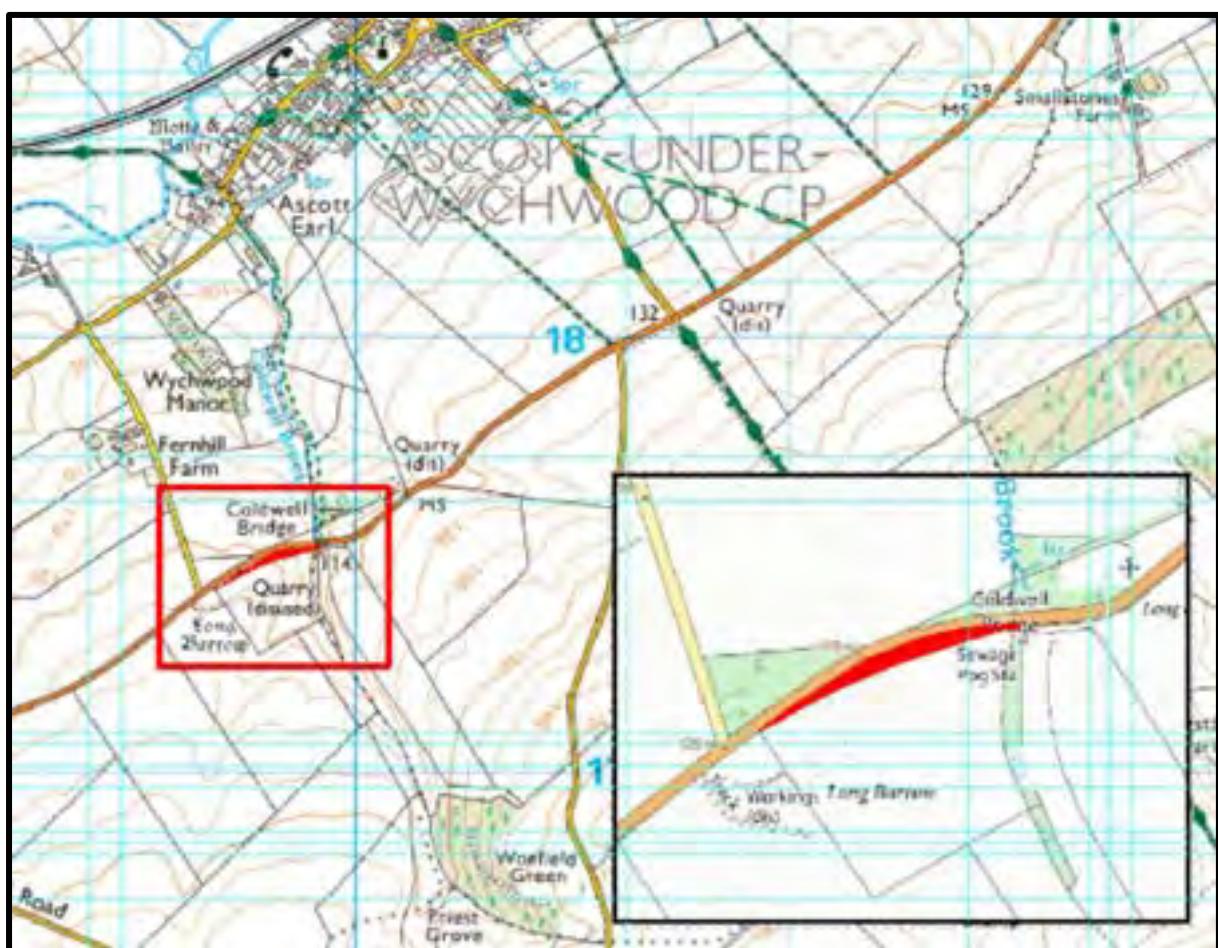
Installation of marker posts.



**Northern verge (2024) right and southern verge (2024) left**

## Verge 3: Shipton-under-Wychwood

<b>Verge Name</b>	Shipton-under-Wychwood
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 297 174
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Shipton-under-Wychwood
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Wall and trees



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### Site Description

A wide and short section of grassy verge with a good species diversity, which slopes down from a wall at the top. Most notable is the presence of clustered bellflower within the central section (although this species was not recorded in 2024), along with other limestone indicator species such as wild basil, restharrow, salad burnet, fairy flax and pyramidal orchid.

Overall the verge is in poor condition, with limestone grassland largely confined to the central section of the verge, with more neutral species such as false oat-grass to either side.

The areas under the trees and at the edges of the verge are more rank in nature, with reducing diversity towards the west. Regular mowing in the eastern end, fertiliser drift at the western end and resultant nitrification may be a reason for reduced diversity.

## Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge adjoins the boundary of the Wychwood and Lower Evenlode Conservation Target Area (CTA).

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile required in September.

Addition of marker posts.

Installation of marker posts.



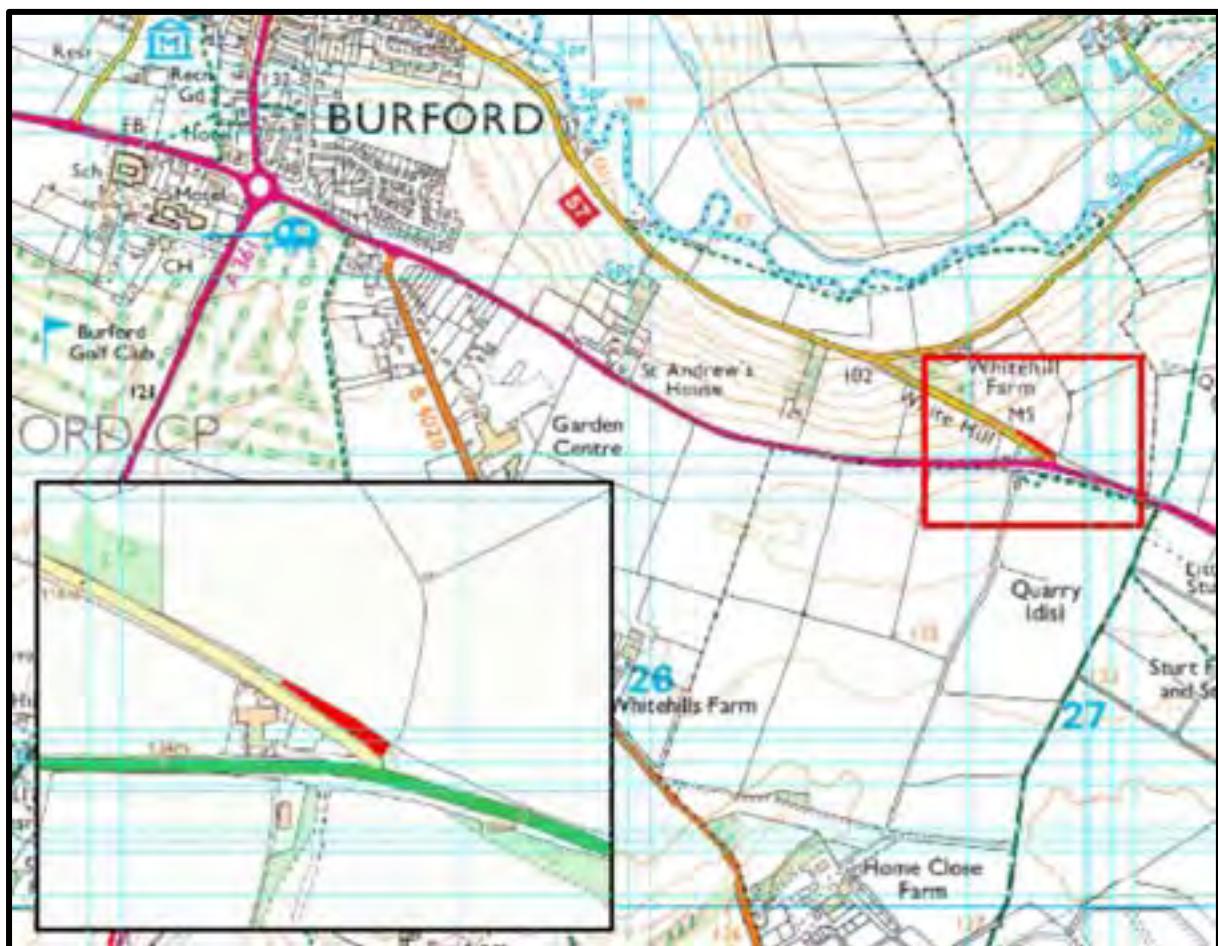
Overview of the verge in 2024



Clustered Bellflower in 2016

## Verge 4: Whitehall

<b>Verge Name</b>	Whitehall
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 269 111
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Widford
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Hedgerow



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### Site Description

A banked verge on a minor road (White Hill), which has become shaded and nutrient enriched.

Previous surveys have recorded meadow crane's-bill, field scabious, restharrow, hedge bedstraw, salad burnet, greater knapweed and lady's bedstraw. Common lizard and common blood-vein moth have also been recorded. However, in 2024 few key indicator species remain present and the verge is in poor condition.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is approximately 280m from the Upper Windrush Conservation Target Area.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile required in September for both northern and southern verges.

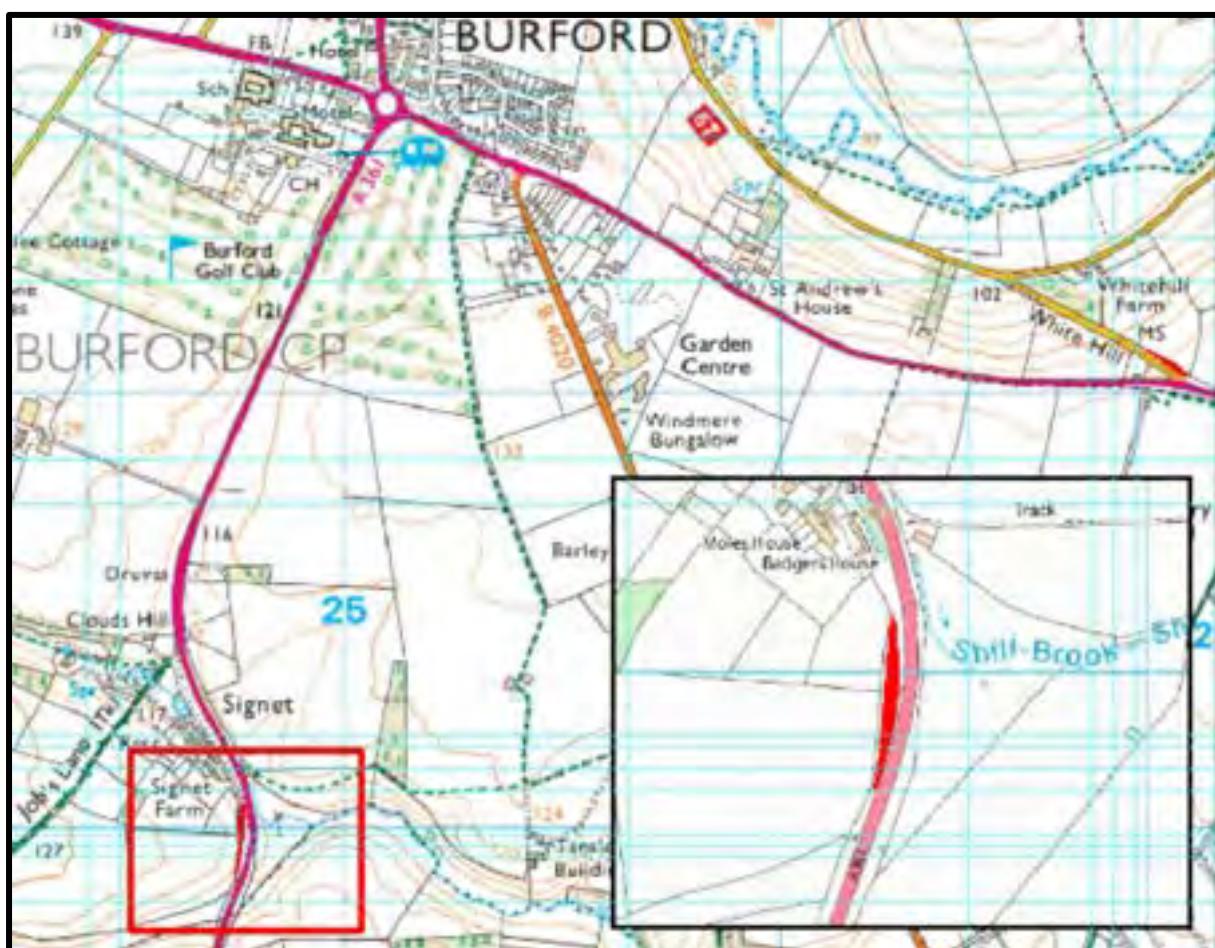
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 5: Signet

<b>Verge Name</b>	Signet
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 247 100
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Signet
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2020
<b>Approximate Length</b>	150m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Steep bank and hedgerow



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### Site Description

A wide and flat verge with a steep bank and hedgerow, located adjacent to arable land. Overall the verge was found to be in good condition during the 2017 survey, with tussocky vegetation and a significant population of Yellow Ant *Lasius flavus*, which is an anthill-forming species typical of old grasslands.

Felling works had been undertaken prior to the survey in 2017, with piles of chippings present. Removal of such piles is required to prevent nitrogen enrichment. During the 2020 survey it was unclear whether this work was undertaken.

Overall the verge remained in good condition in June 2020, however the recent hot weather had left the vegetation very dry. Key species including Agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria*, Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum* and Bird's-foot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* were present in good numbers. A small and very desiccated specimen of Broomrape *Orobanche minor* was present at the base of the bank. The plant was in poor condition, likely due to the weather conditions. Abundant Comfrey was present immediately to the north of the verge section, providing a useful resource for invertebrates, as clear at the time of survey.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the South Cotswolds Valleys CTA and the Shill Brook Local Geological Site.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September, preferably with blade set high where tussocks and anthills are most frequent.

Restoration required, including scrub control and removal of arisings.

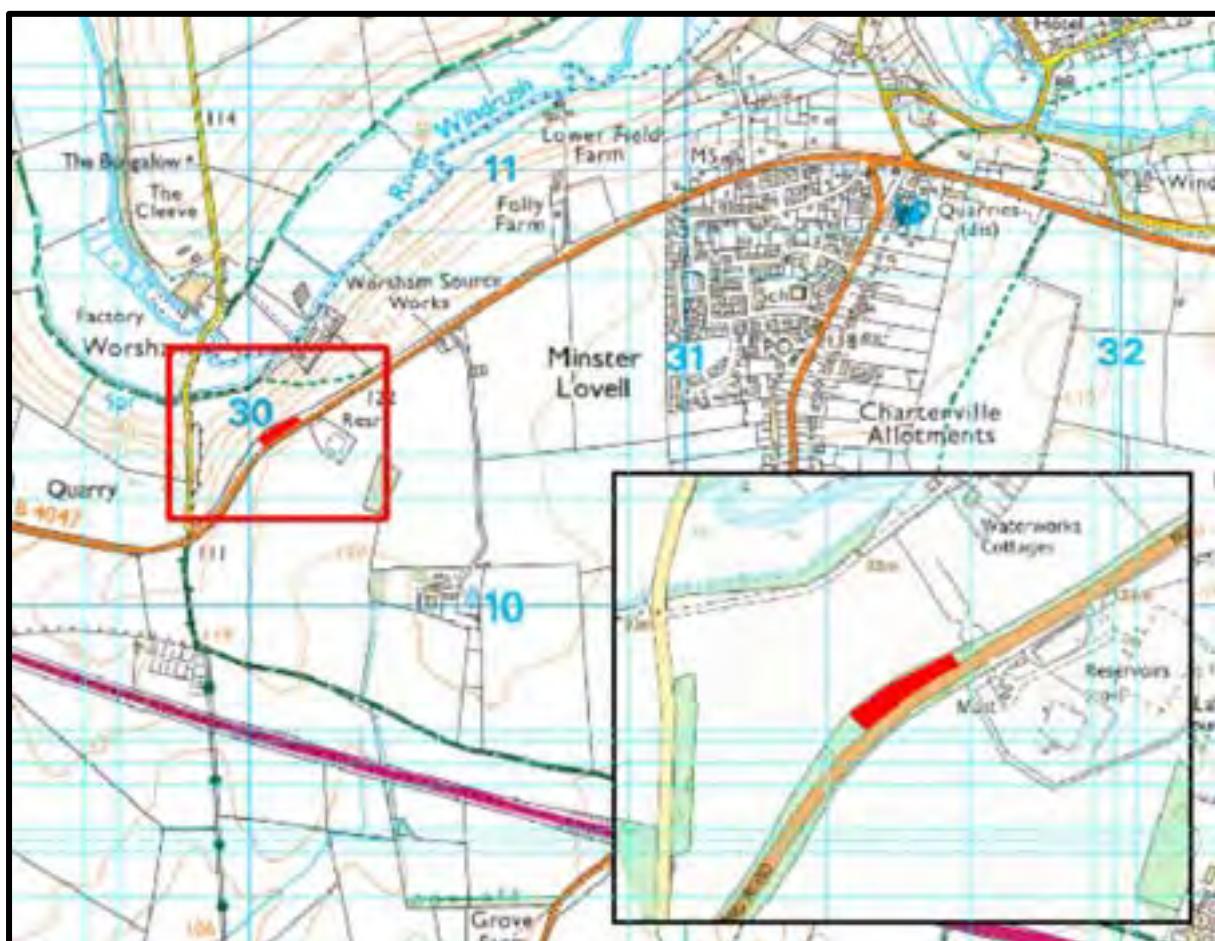
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2017**

## Verge 6: Worsham

<b>Verge Name</b>	Worsham
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 300 104
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Minster Lovell
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland



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### Site Description

A wide, grassy verge with some scrub encroachment and generally in poor condition. However, a number of key indicator species remain including agrimony, pyramidal orchid, meadow cranesbill, woolly thistle. Ploughman's-spikenard *Inula conyza* has been recorded at the site previously but was not recorded in 2024.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

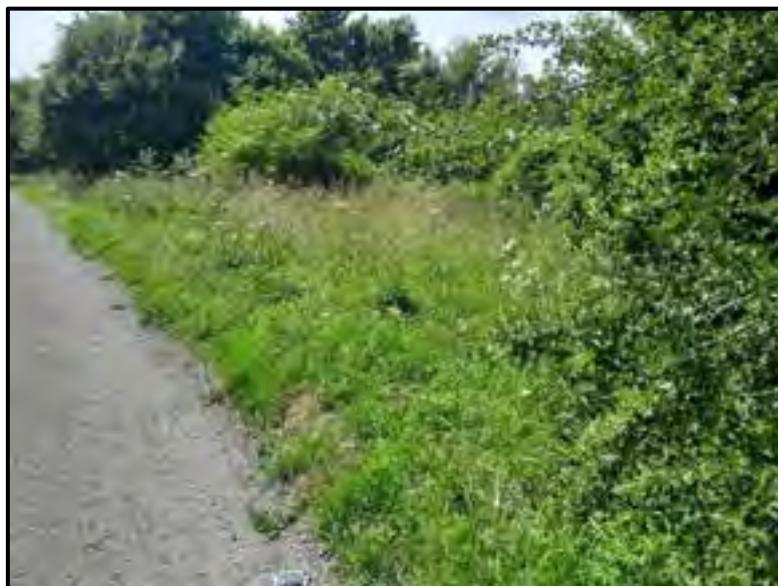
The verge is within the Upper Windrush Conservation Target Area and adjacent to the Pumping Station Local Wildlife Site. The verge is approximately 1.2km from the Worsham Lane SSSI.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile required in September.

Removal of scrub.

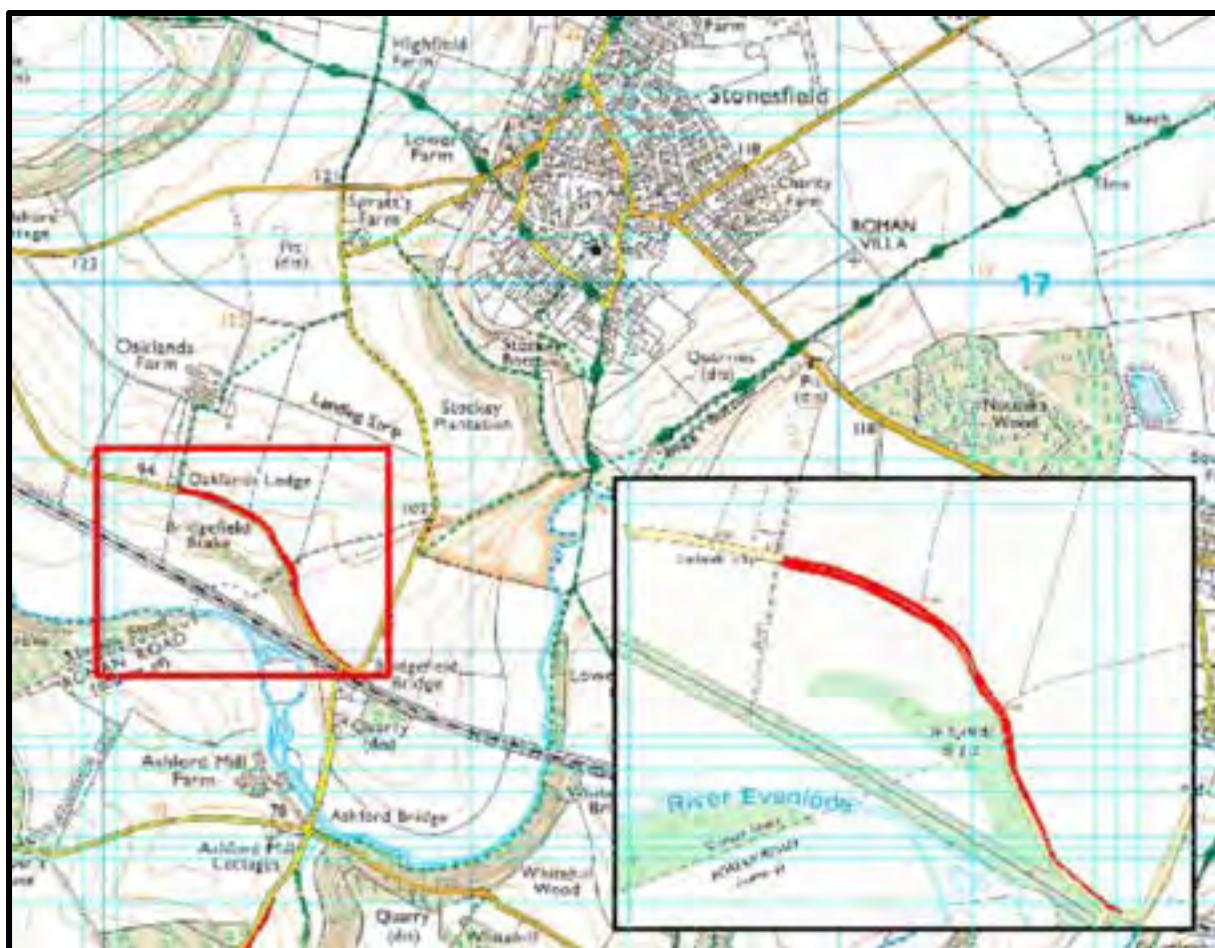
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 7: Ashford Mill Farm

<b>Verge Name</b>	Ashford Mill Farm
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 386 160 – SP 382 165
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	East End
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100 – 700m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Dry-stone wall to part of northern verge, bare ground



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### Site Description

Both sides of the lane are listed as RVNRs. The southern verge is more shaded and overgrown in places. The northern section is rank and overgrown, however it retains good species diversity in places. Overall the verge is in poor condition.

Of particular note is the presence of wild liquorice (although not recorded in 2024). Other species present include burnet saxifrage, restharrow, wild garlic, pyramidal orchid, salad burnet, marjoram and fairy flax.

A public footpath is located at the eastern end.

## Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is within the North Evenlode Valleys Conservation Target Area, adjacent to the Bridgefield Bank and Brake Local Wildlife Site and the Stonesfield Common Site of Special Scientific Interest is located approximately 400m to the east.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile required in September.

Removal of scrub.

Installation of marker posts.



Overviews of the verge in 2024

## Verge 8: Freeland

<b>Verge Name</b>	Freeland
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 407 121 – SP 413 117
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Freeland
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2020
<b>Approximate Length</b>	800m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Dry Ditch



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### Site Description

A long verge located along the southern side of Cuckoo Lane. In 2016 the verge was dominated by Bracken in places, with shaded sections becoming more grassy. The hedgerow comprised a number of mature trees.

Overall, the verge is now in rank and declining condition, with fewer key species present than identified in 1991 such as Common Spotted Orchid *Dactylorhizs fuchsii* and Twayblade

*Listera ovata*. Fertiliser drift from adjacent fields likely to be problematic. The 2020 survey found the verge to be completely overgrown, without safe places to stop and park.

A public footpath is located at the eastern end.

## Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is approximately 300m from the Wychwood and Lower Evenlode Conservation Target Area.

## Management Requirements

Restorative work is required to improve verge condition and reduce dominant Bracken, nettles and grasses. Bracken removal is required using an appropriate herbicide.

Cut and collect/pile twice a year, in late Spring and Autumn.



Verge overview in 2016

## Verge 9: Dry Sandford

<b>Verge Name</b>	Dry Sandford
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 467 997 – SP 482 005
<b>Local Authority</b>	Vale of White Horse
<b>Parish</b>	Cothill
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	1000 – 1300m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Acid Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Dry ditch along western section of southern verge, hedgerow.



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### Site Description

Verges on either side of Honey Bottom Lane. The verges are flat, with the majority of species interest at the ends, with each narrowing towards the centre. Overall, the verges are in poor condition, with some species rich patches.

Species recorded include greater knapweed, wild parsnip, common knapweed, agrimony, marjoram, wild garlic, restharrow, vipers bugloss and pyramidal orchid. Ranker areas are dominated by species including false oat grass and cleavers.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The western end of the verges adjoin the Oxford Heights West Conservation Target Area and are approximately 100m from the Dry Sandford Pit Site of Special Scientific Interest.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Scrub removal required.

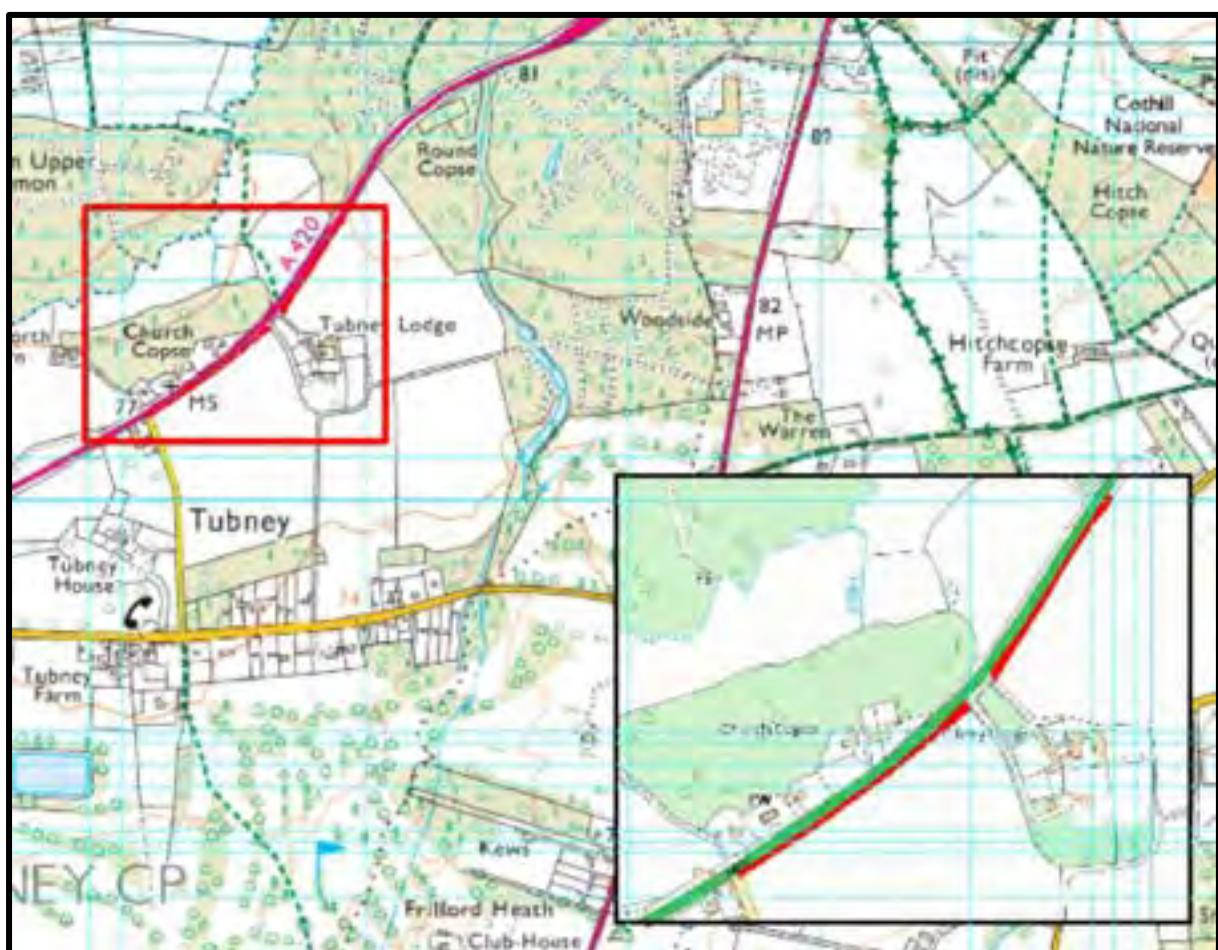
Installation of marker posts.



**Overviews of verge in 2024**

## Verge 10: Tubney

<b>Verge Name</b>	Tubney
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 435 993 – SP 439 996
<b>Local Authority</b>	Vale of White Horse
<b>Parish</b>	Tubney
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	300m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Acid Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Dry-stone wall



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### Site Description

A narrow verge along the A420, currently in poor rank condition. Overall species diversity has fallen since the verge was designated and restoration is required to improve it. No previously found key sandland species were identified during the survey, such as blue fleabane or sheep's sorrel were recorded.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Oxford Heights Conservation Target Area and the Tubney Wood and Appleton Upper Common Local Wildlife Sites are within 300m. Frilford Heath, Ponds and Fens SSSI is approximately 500m to the east and south-east.

## **Management Requirements**

Restoration of the verge is required in order to remain a RVNR. Topsoil should be removed to allow re-establishment from the seed bank.

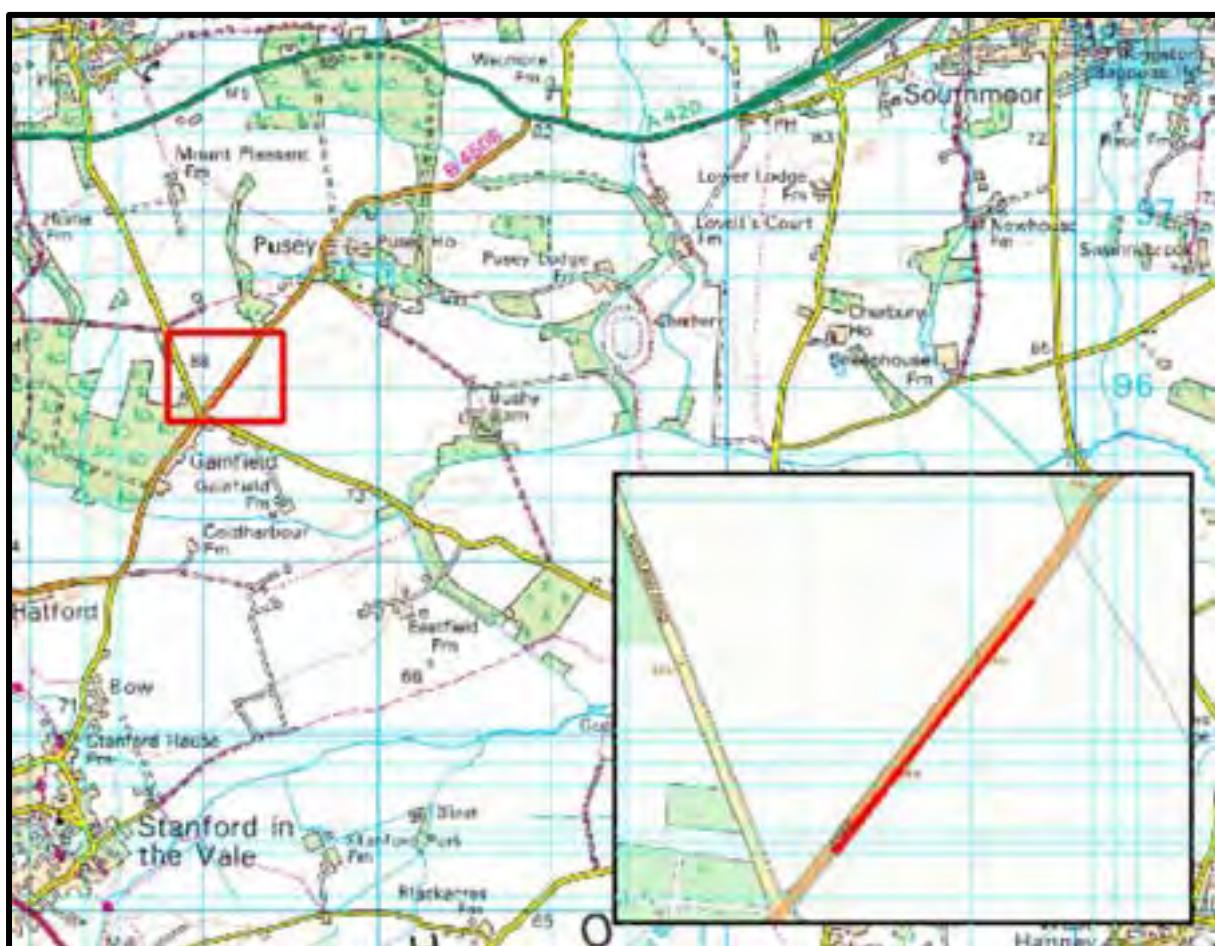
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 11: Pusey

Verge Name	Pusey
Grid Reference	SP 351 959 – SP 353 962
Local Authority	Vale of White Horse
Parish	Pusey
Date of last survey	July 2024
Approximate Length	300m
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland
Features	Ditch, bare ground



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### Site Description

A narrow verge on the southern side of the road. Overall, the verge is in poor condition and dominated by coarse grasses with very few indicators remaining, with abundant false oat-grass and cock's-foot. Species present include field scabious, lady's bedstraw and greater knapweed. Creeping bellflower, which was abundant during the original survey, was not recorded.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is in close proximity to the Buckland Warren Woods Local Wildlife Site.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Restoration of verge required to improve species diversity.

Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 12: Hatford

<b>Verge Name</b>	Hatford
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 336 947
<b>Local Authority</b>	Vale of White Horse
<b>Parish</b>	Hatford
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	50m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland



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### Site Description

A steeply banked verge along the B4508, adjacent to arable fields and in moderate condition. The southerly facing embankment has frequent wild clary. Other species identified included field scabious, burnet saxifrage and lady's bedstraw.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is within the Oxon Heights West Conservation Target Area.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Removal of scrub required.

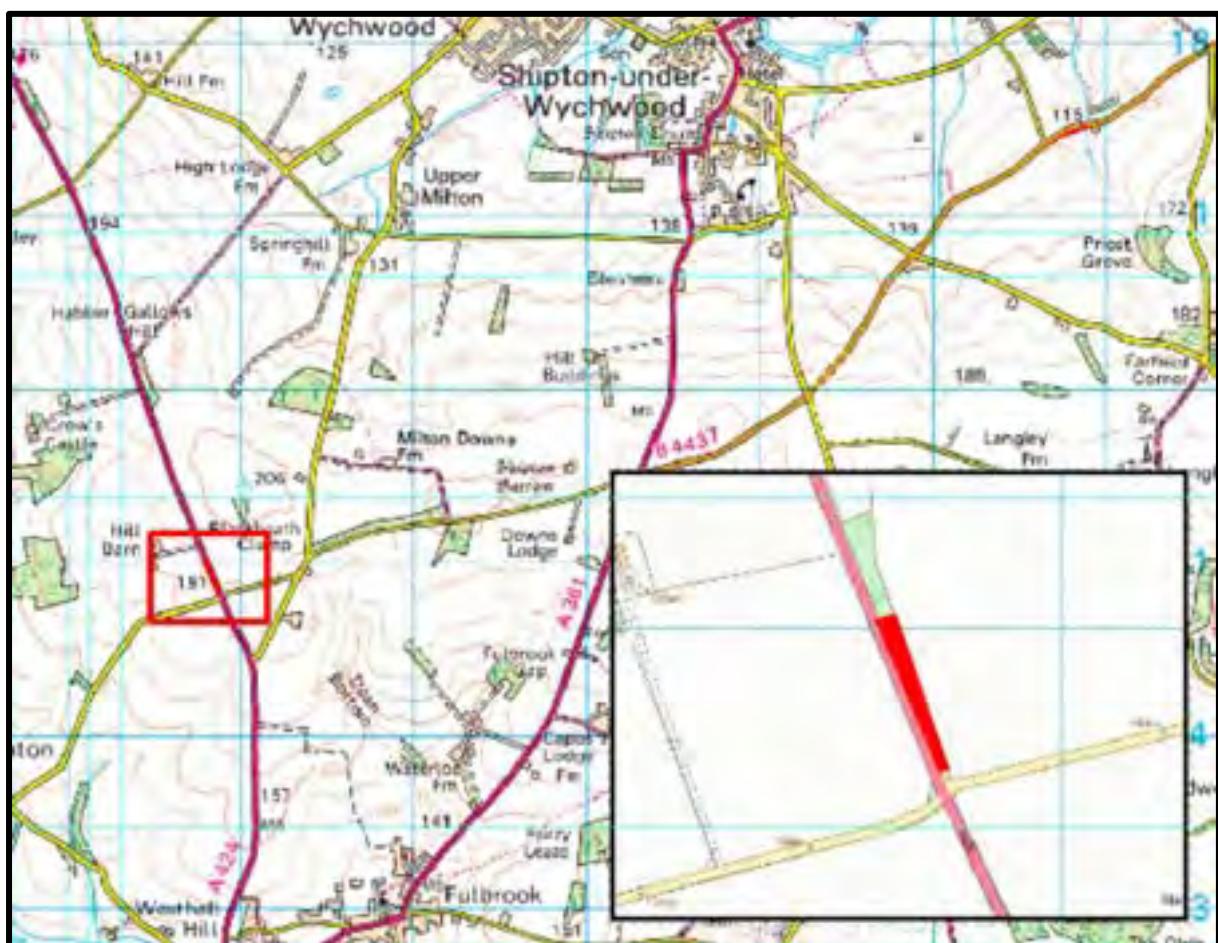
Installation of marker posts.



Overview of verge in 2024

## Verge 13: Taynton Down

<b>Verge Name</b>	Taynton Down
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 248 150 – SP 248 148
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Taynton
<b>Date of last survey</b>	August 2018
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland



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### Site Description

A wide verge along the A424 with tall grassland and a small quarry area to the north. Overall the verge is in moderate condition, with lots of indicator species remaining but likely to be overtaken by scrub and tall grasses without intervention. No purple mil-vetch was recorded in 2024 as identified previously.

Within the grassland, several lime-loving species were recorded, including common restarrow, greater knapweed, yellow rattle, pyramidal orchid, common spotted orchid, woolly thistle, burnet saxifrage, meadow crane's-bill and agrimony.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is adjacent to the Taynton Down Local Wildlife Site.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in October.

The verge would benefit from some scrub control.

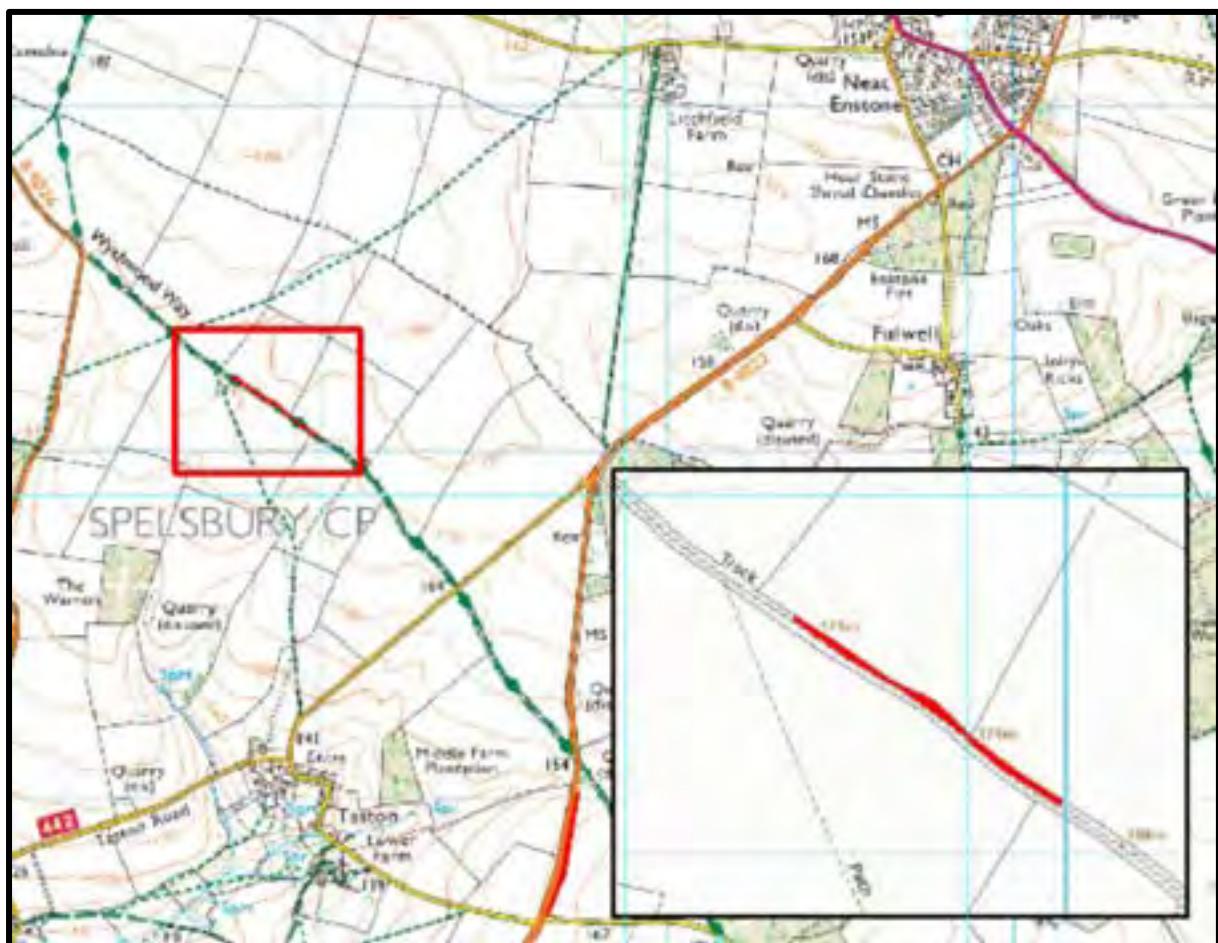
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 14: Spelsbury 1

<b>Verge Name</b>	Spelsbury 1
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 358 232 -SP 360 231
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Spelsbury
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	1.4km
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Dry-stone walls, ditch, scrub



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### Site Description

A green lane with hedgerows on either side, with stone walls between the hedgerows and adjacent arable land. A wide range of species have been recorded, with the key interest species meadow clary *Salvia pratensis* located within the centre of the lane.

A number of species of limestone grassland were identified, including meadow crane's-bill, field scabious, yellow rattle, broomrape, common knapweed and greater knapweed. Sections

of the verge are more wooded and scrubby in character. Overall, the verge was found to be in moderate condition, however it would benefit from improved management.

The verge is part of the Wychwood Way public right of way.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the North Evenlode Valleys Conservation Target Area.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in late Summer.

Restoration by removal of scrub.

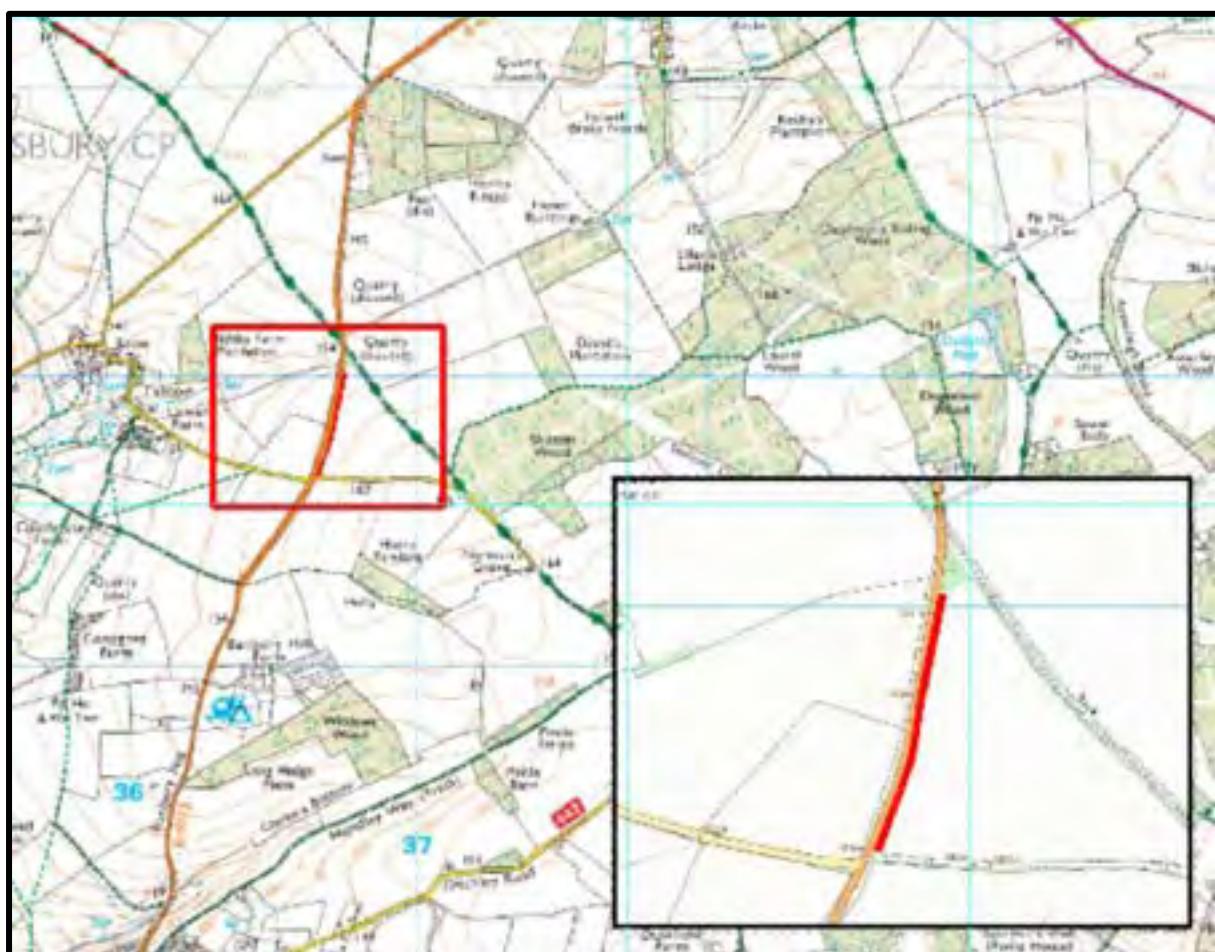
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 15: Spelsbury 2

<b>Verge Name</b>	Spelsbury 2
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 367 220 – SP 366 216
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Spelsbury
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	300m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland



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### Site Description

A verge along the eastern side of a straight section of the B4022. A range of limestone grassland species, including agrimony, pyramidal orchid, common spotted orchid, lady's bedstraw, meadow crane's-bill, greater knapweed and most notably meadow clary *Salvia Herminoides*, although this species was not recorded in 2024.

The majority of the verge is in poor condition, however retains key interest species particularly at the northern end.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Blenheim and Ditchley Parks Conservation Target Area and approximately 480m from the Lower Farm Meadow Local Wildlife Site.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Restoration work to improve diversity and allow greater re-establishment of Meadow Clary.

Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of the verge in 2024**

## Verge 16: Shillingford

<b>Verge Name</b>	Shillingford
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 586 935 – SP 587 934
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Shillingford
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Neutral Grassland



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### Site Description

On the northern side of the road the verge is grassy and banked. Species present include greater knapweed, field scabious, wild onion and wild basil. Multiple patches of wild clary are present.

Overall the verge is in good condition.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is within the Thames Clifton to Shillingford Conservation Target Area.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September, including southern verge.

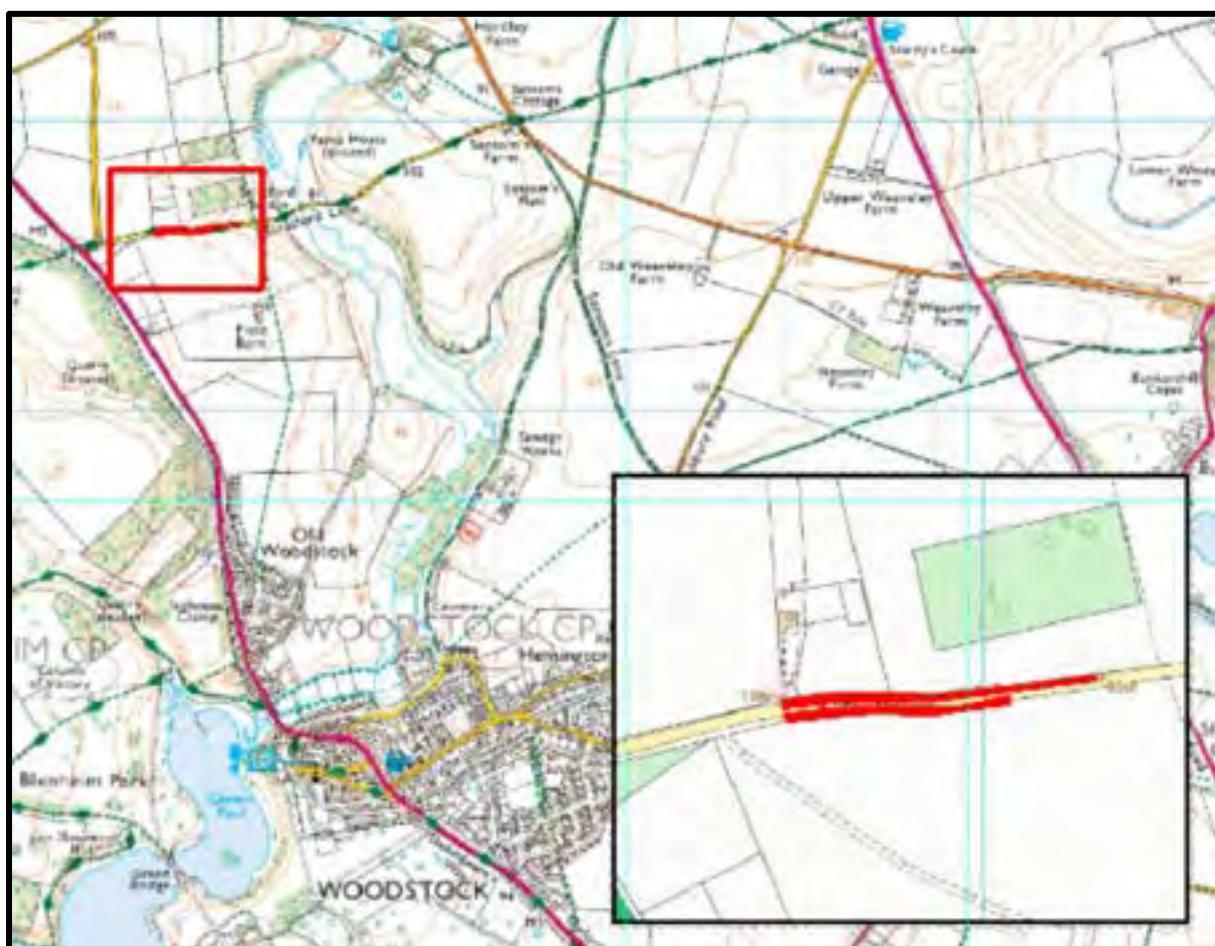
Installation of marker posts.



**Verge overview in 2024**

## Verge 17: Stratford Lane

<b>Verge Name</b>	Stratford Lane
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 438 187 – SP 440 187
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Wootton and Woodstock
<b>Date of last survey</b>	July 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland



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### Site Description

A straight section of road with interesting verges on both sides. Limestone grassland characteristic species are present including agrimony, sainfoin, greater knapweed, common knapweed, wild basil, pyramidal orchid, salad burnet, field scabious and marjoram. Previously recorded species wild liquorice was not recorded during the latest survey.

Overall, the northern verge is in poor condition but some key indicator species are still present. The southern verge is in moderate condition but is starting to become rank in places. Both verges are subject to scrub encroachment.

A footpath is located along the eastern end.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Glyme and Dorn Conservation Target Area.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Some scrub control required.

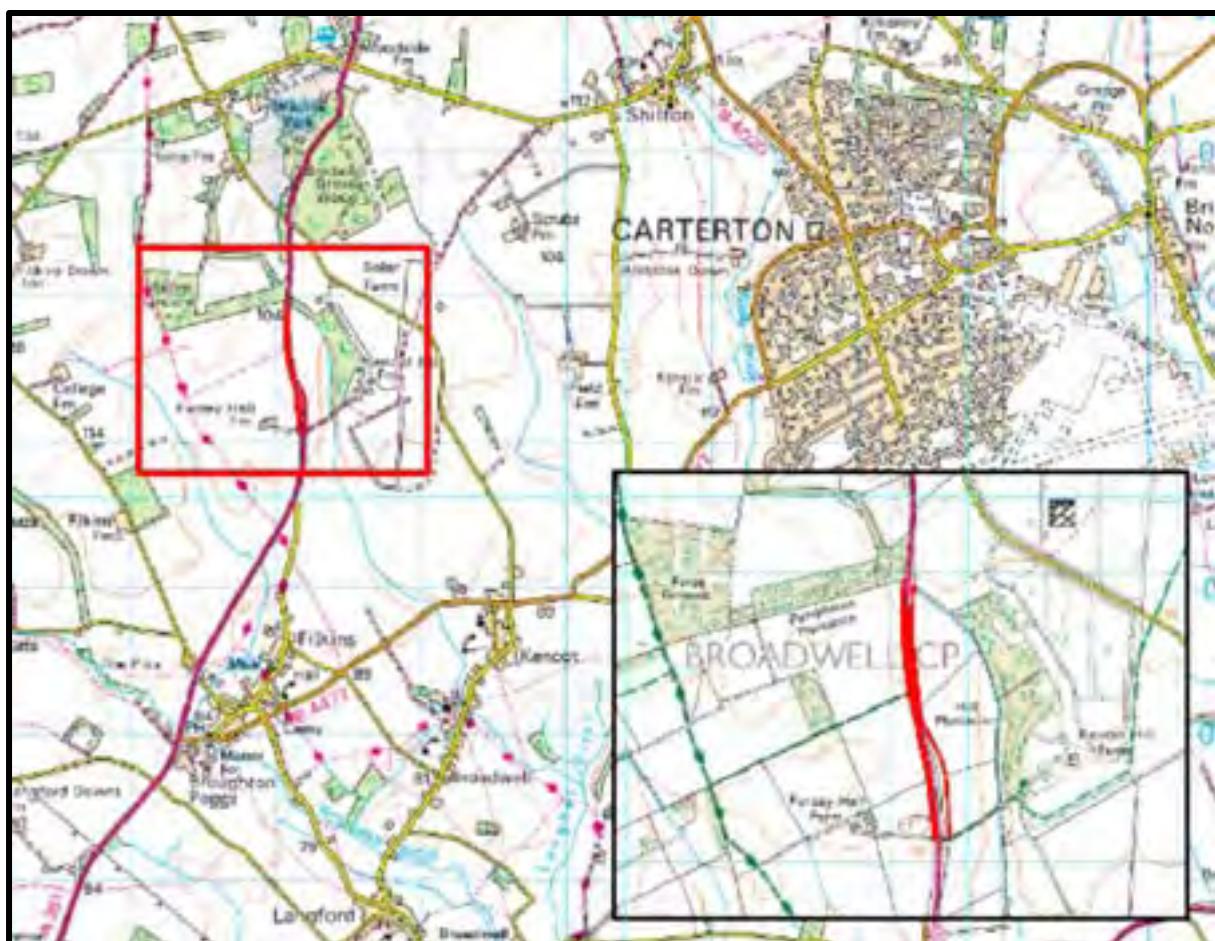
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of the verges in 2024**

## Verge 18: Burford

<b>Verge Name</b>	Burford
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 243 061 – SP 241 069
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Filkins and Broadwell
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	800m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Wooded section of old road (east) and Bank (west)



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### Site Description

Narrow verges on either side of the A361. On the west side there is a bank and on the eastern side there is an overgrown hedgerow with the old road behind. The verge supports a range of limestone grassland species, including field scabious, agrimony, pyramidal orchid, woolly thistle, lady's bedstraw, wild parsnip, common knapweed, field scabious, greater knapweed, marjoram, common spotted orchid and restharrow. Yellow ant has been observed on previous survey visits.

The verge on both sides is in moderate condition that has some species diverse patches and other areas that have not been overtaken by rank grasses or scrub.

more rank in character with overgrown hedgerow and scrub developing.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

Approximately 250m from the RAF Broadwell Local Wildlife Site.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September, preferably with a high blade where anthills are present.

Some scrub control required and management of the former carriageway.

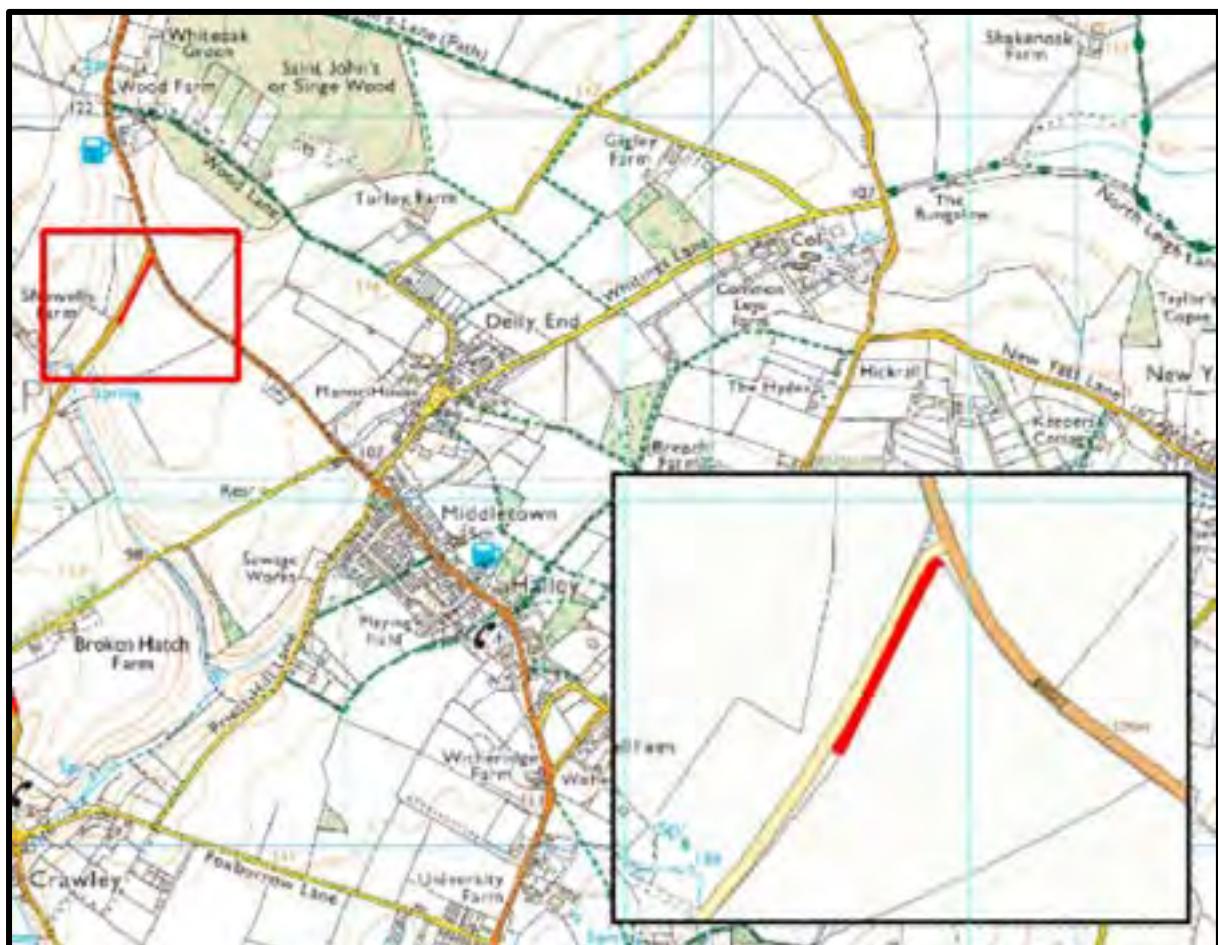
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of the verges in 2024**

## Verge 19: Hailey

Verge Name	Hailey
Grid Reference	SP 334 134 – SP 345 136
Local Authority	West Oxfordshire District Council
Parish	Crawley
Date of last survey	June 2019
Approximate Length	150m
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland



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### Site Description

A north-west facing embankment in good condition which supports a range of characteristic limestone grassland species.

A number of species have been identified including pyramidal orchid, common knapweed, wild parsnip, yellow rattle, woolly thistle, restharrow, agrimony and salad burnet. Hoary plantain, fairy flax and quaking grass were also recorded in previous surveys but not in 2024.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Upper Windrush Conservation Target Area.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Installation of marker posts.



**Verge overview in 2024**

## Verge 20: Middleton Stoney 1

<b>Verge Name</b>	Middleton Stoney 1
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 537 251
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cherwell District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Middleton Stoney
<b>Date of last survey</b>	May 2020
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland



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### Site Description

A banked verge along the B430, located adjacent to arable fields. No evidence of the original key species meadow clary was found during the survey in 2017. The verge was in largely poor and rank condition, with some evidence of dumped vegetation and woodchip.

During the 2020 survey, the verges condition appeared improved, with a large stand of Meadow Clary located at the northern end. This stand appears to be further north than the original survey records suggest.

The old road is more overgrown, with scrub encroachment. This habitat was however clearly of value to nesting birds, with species including Long-tailed Tits nesting at the time of survey.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is adjacent to the Ardley Trackways Site of Special Scientific Interest and Ardley Fields Local Geological Site.

The verge is within the Ardley and Upper Heyford Conservation Target Area and approximately 430m from the Ardley Fields Ponds West Local Wildlife Site.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September / October.

Scrub control required.

Installation of marker posts.



**Verge looking south and scrub encroachment in 2017**



**Meadow Clary – May 2020**

## Verge 21: Heythrop 2

**Verge Name**

Heythrop 2

**Grid Reference**

SP 337 248 – SP 338 248

**Local Authority**

West Oxfordshire District Council

**Parish**

Heythrop

**Date of last survey**

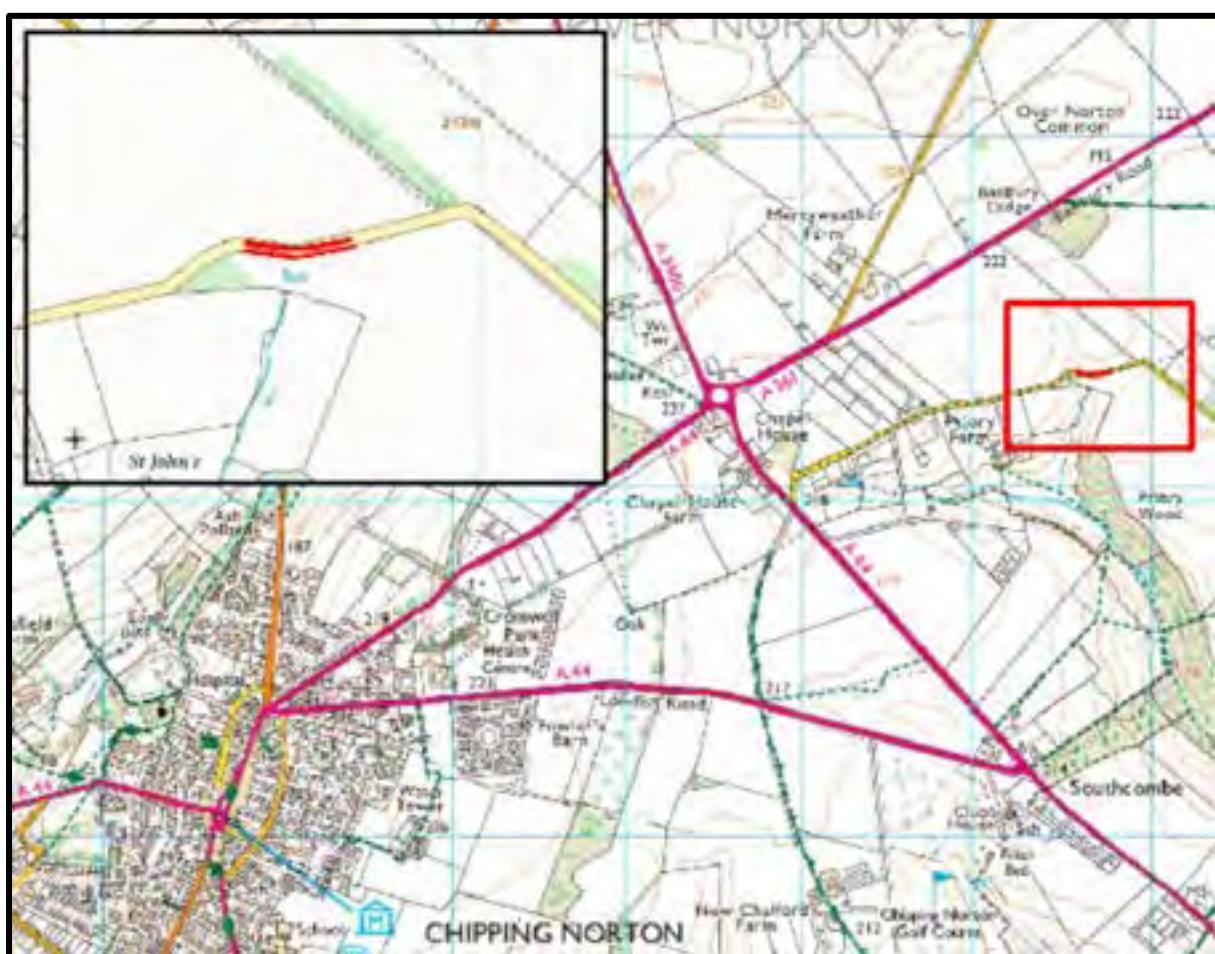
July 2024

**Approximate Length**

100m

**Key Habitat**

Limestone Grassland



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### Site Description

A narrow verge adjacent to a minor road to Heythrop from Chipping Norton. A steep bank is present on the northern side and both sides are adjacent to arable fields.

The verge was becoming rank in character and is in poor condition, with some likelihood of fertiliser drift from the adjacent fields. Some indicator species remain including field scabious, lady's bedstraw, greater knapweed and common knapweed still present.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is adjacent to the Glyme and Dorn Conservation Target Area.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in late September.

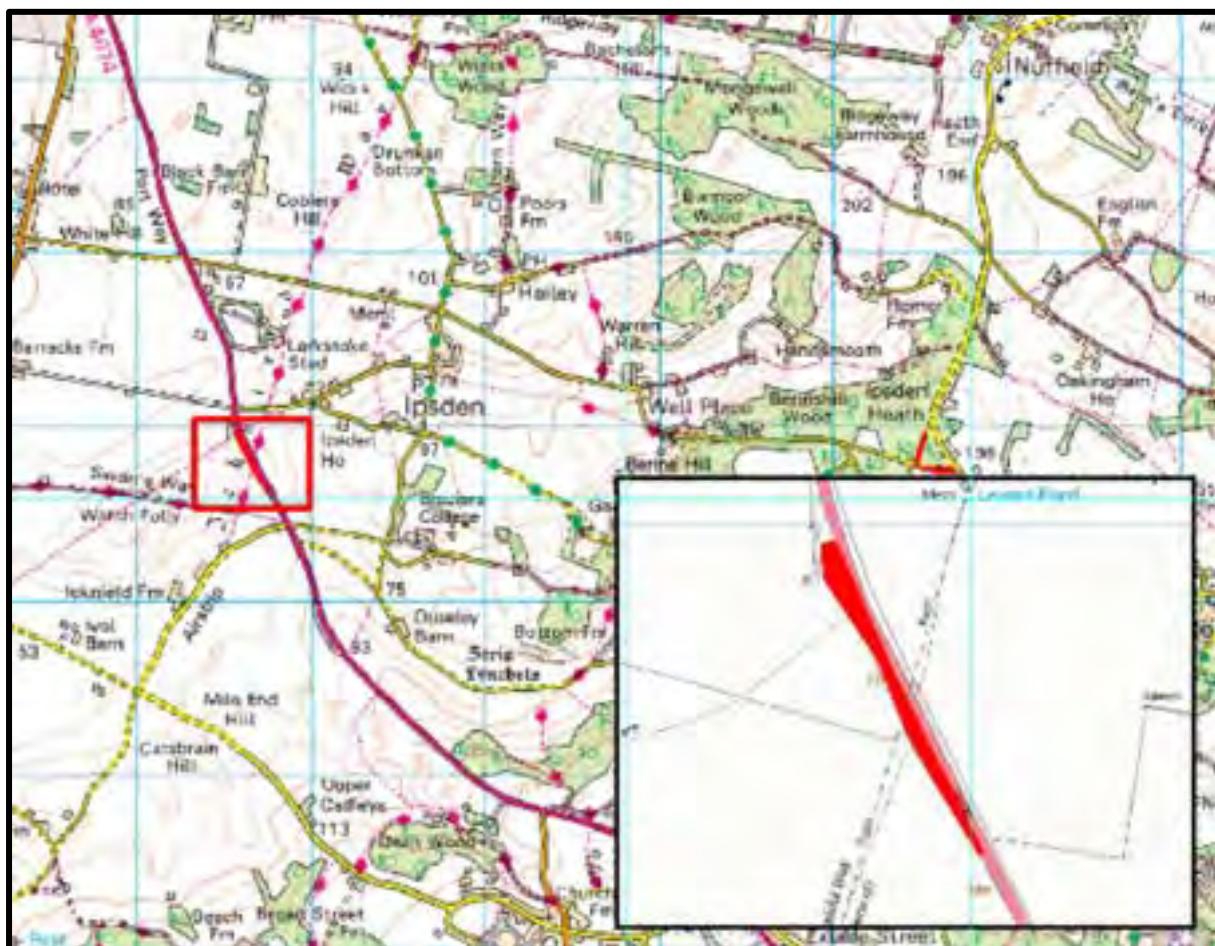
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 22: Ipsden

Verge Name	Ipsden
Grid Reference	SP 626 848 – SP 627 846
Local Authority	South Oxfordshire District Council
Parish	Ipsden
Date of last survey	June 2024
Approximate Length	500m
Key Habitat	Chalk Grassland



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### Site Description

A wide verge and embankment along the western side of the A4074. The verge supports a good range of chalk grassland species including pyramidal orchid, wild parsnip, cowslip, broomrape, restharrow, lady's bedstraw, dark mullein, agrimony, fairy flax, field scabious, greater knapweed, bee orchid and marjoram.

The northern part of the verge maintains key species; however it is becoming more overgrown with hemlock and bramble scrub.

Overall, the grassland is in very good condition, with scrub largely confined to an area in the northern end where trees have been planted.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

None.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in late September.

Scrub control to remove Bramble at northern end of verge.

Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of the verge in 2024**

## Verge 23: Ashford Mill

<b>Verge Name</b>	Ashford Mill
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 384 152
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	North Leigh
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	250m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland



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### Site Description

A grassy verge on a narrow lane along a minor road. The verge has shaded sections on a wider area towards the top of the hill. The verge has patches of high species diversity including meadow cranesbill, agrimony, marjoram, pyramidal orchid, salad burnet, lady's bedstraw, yellow rattle, wild parsnip and common knapweed. Red bartsia, cowslip and hairy St John's wort have been recorded during previous surveys but not during the 2024 survey.

Overall, the verge is in poor condition and becoming increasingly shaded due to the copse on the opposite side with reduced species diversity within the copse and species diversity increasing in patches further north.

A bridleway is present at the northern end of the verge.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

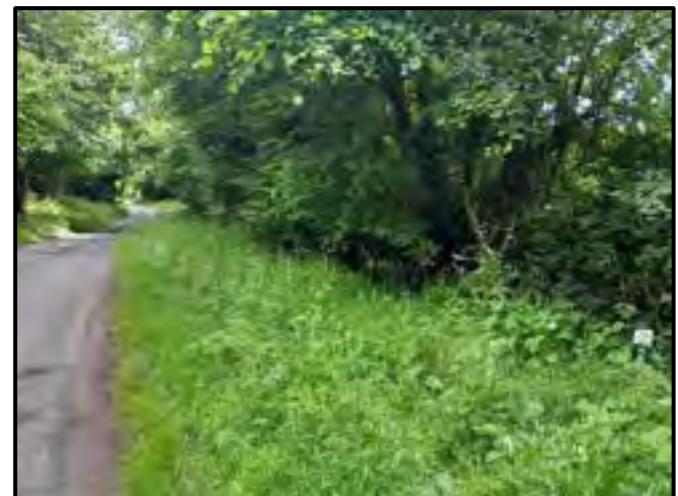
The verge is within the Wychwood and Lower Evenlode Conservation Target Area and approximately 130m from the Holly Court Bank SSSI.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Control of scrub development and cutting back trees to reduce shading if possible.

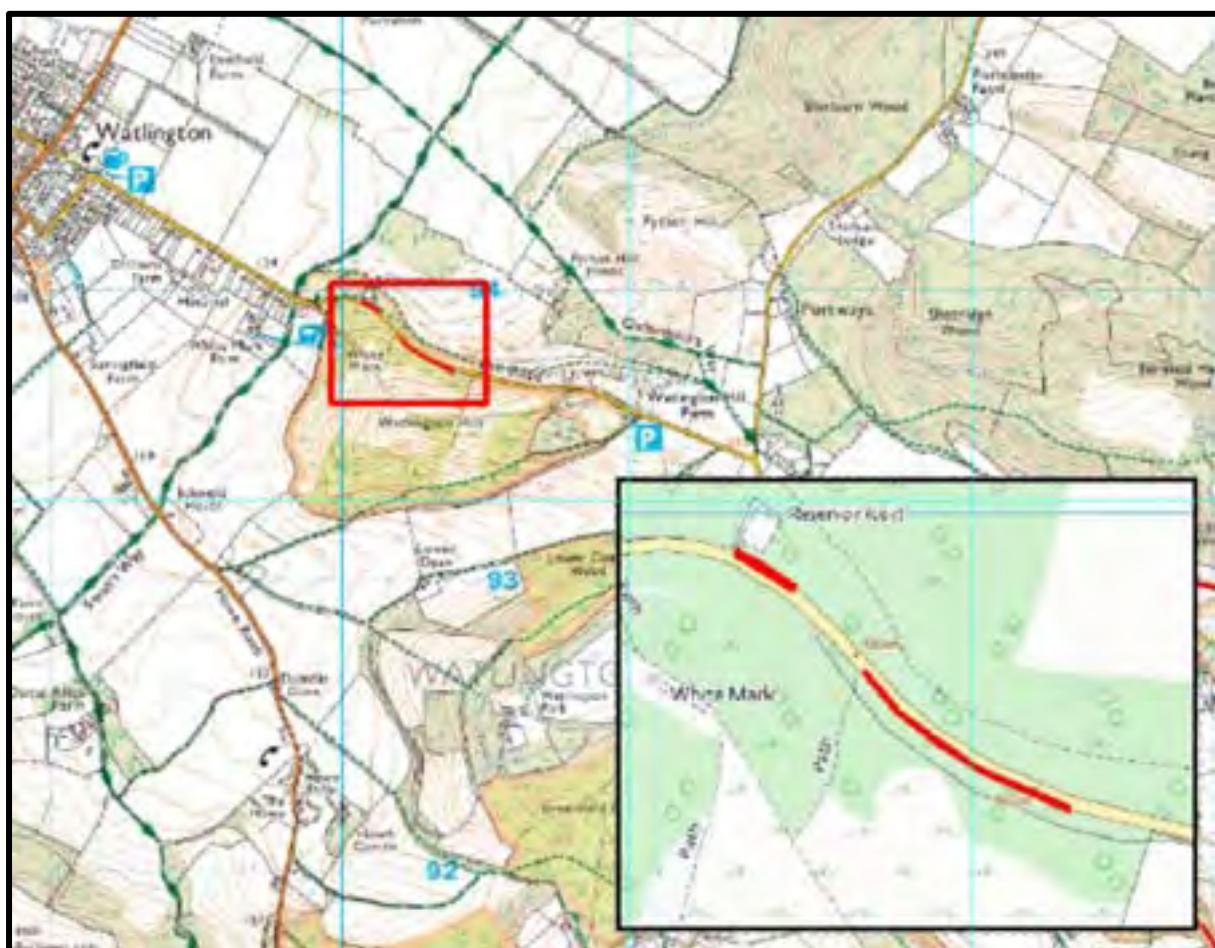
Installation of marker posts.



**Overviews of the verge in 2024**

## Verge 24: Watlington

<b>Verge Name</b>	Watlington
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 700 940 – SP 705 938
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Watlington
<b>Date of last survey</b>	July 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Chalk Grassland



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### Site Description

A steeply banked verge along a minor C road, with a wide flat top that adjoins the Watlington Hill National Trust Nature Reserve. The boundary between the verge and reserve is poorly defined.

The verge comprises a very diverse range of characteristic chalk grassland species including wild parsnip, agrimony, marjoram, lady's bedstraw, dark mullein, red bartsia, yellow rattle and restarrow.

Both verges are in good condition, however the northern verge is subject to scrub encroachment. Numerous anthills were recorded scattered throughout the flat top of the bank along the southern section.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Chilterns Escarpment North Conservation Target Area, within the Watlington and Pyrton Hills Site of Special Scientific Interest and adjacent to the Watlington Hay Meadow Local Wildlife Site.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September / October.

Scrub control.

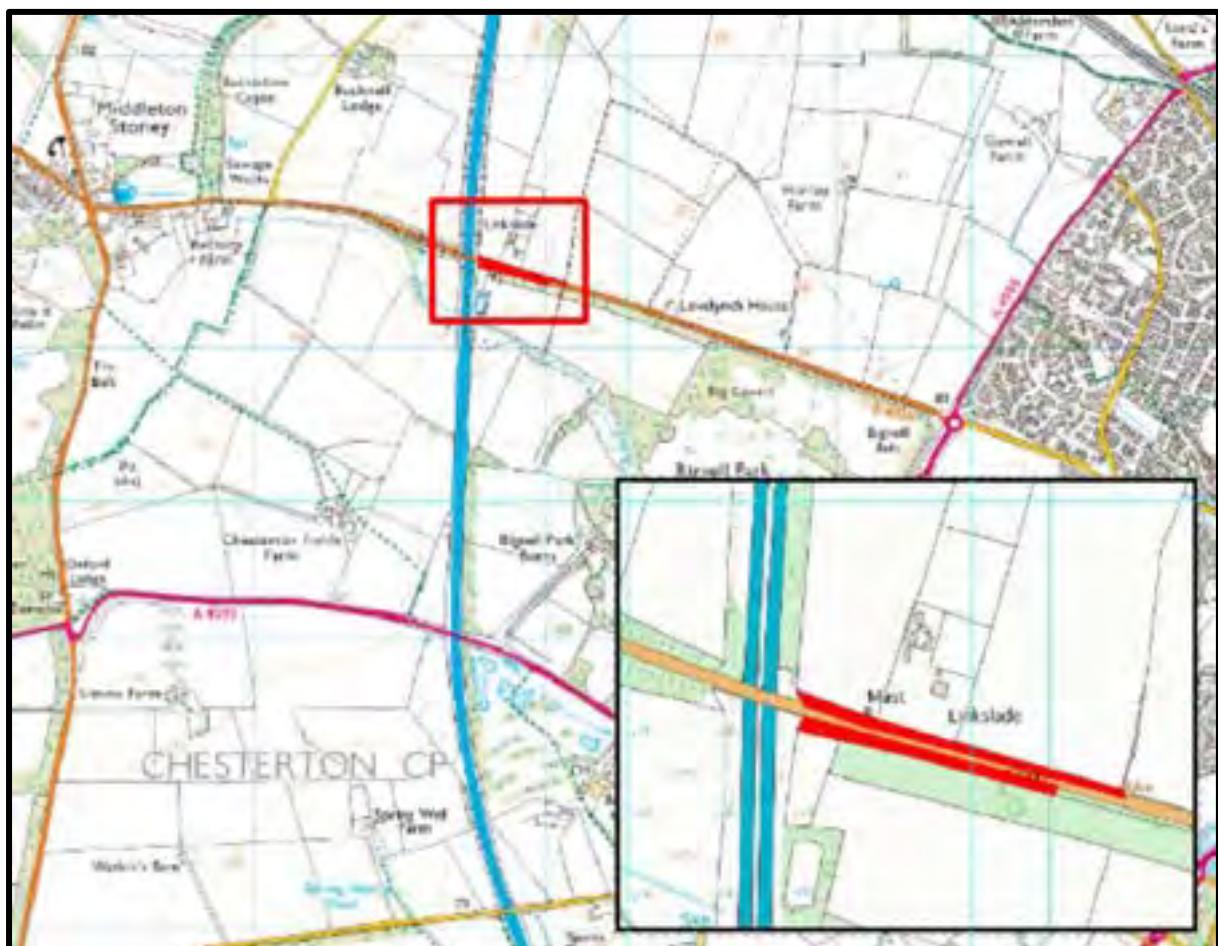
Installation of marker posts.



**Verge overviews in 2024**

## Verge 25: Middleton Stoney 2

<b>Verge Name</b>	Middleton Stoney 2
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 549 232
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cherwell District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Middleton Stoney
<b>Date of last survey</b>	July 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	150m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Bank and adjoining woodland



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### Site Description

A narrow flat verge in poor condition with the northern section mown short in front of the adjacent private properties and major scrub encroachment along the majority of the southern section.

A number of indicator species still remain including field scabious, common knapweed, agrimony, pyramidal orchid, yellow rattle, greater knapweed, woolly thistle, lady's bedstraw,

wild parsnip, common spotted orchid and salad burnet. Ploughman's spikenard and blue fleabane were recorded previously but not during the 2024 survey.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

None.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Scrub removal.

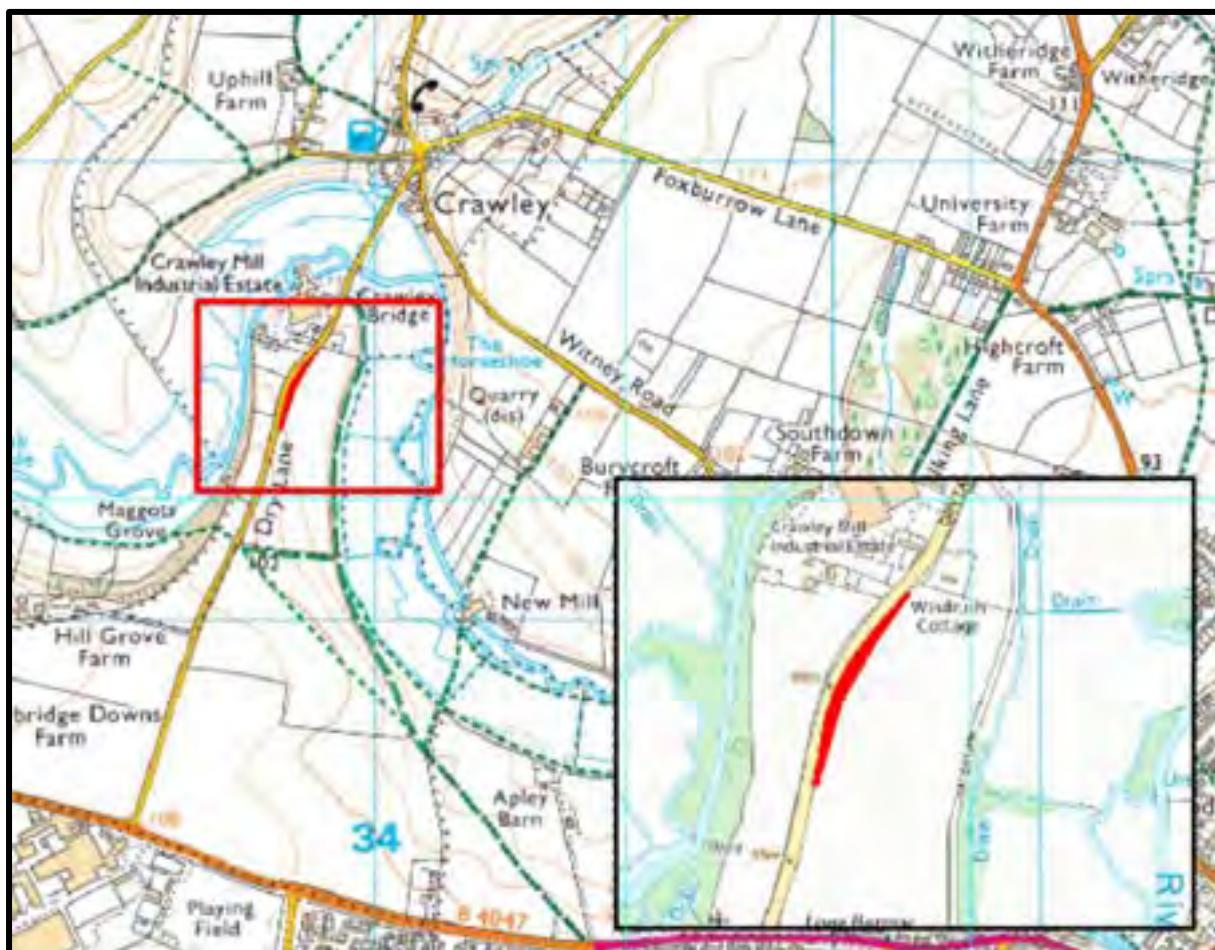
Installation of marker posts.



**Verges overview in 2024**

## Verge 26: Dry Lane, Crawley

Verge Name	Dry Lane, Crawley
Grid Reference	SU 338 115
Local Authority	West Oxfordshire District Council
Parish	Crawley
Date of last survey	June 2024
Approximate Length	170m
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland
Features	Ditch



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### Site Description

A flat, wide verge along Dry Lane in poor condition but with some indicator species still present including woolly thistle, common knapweed, pyramidal orchid and yellow rattle.

The ditch was dry at the time of the survey with no wetland species present, however marsh thistle has been recorded on the verge in previous surveys but not in 2024. A drainage channel from the road crosses the verge, suggesting that run-off may be affecting the grassland.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is approximately 50m from the Upper Windrush Conservation Target Area and approximately 160m from the Maggots Grove Wood Local Wildlife Site, 100m from the Minster Lovell Meadows Local Wildlife Site and 145m from the Crawley Marsh Local Wildlife Site.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Deepening of the channel to ensure run-off reaches the ditch rather than over-spilling onto the verge.

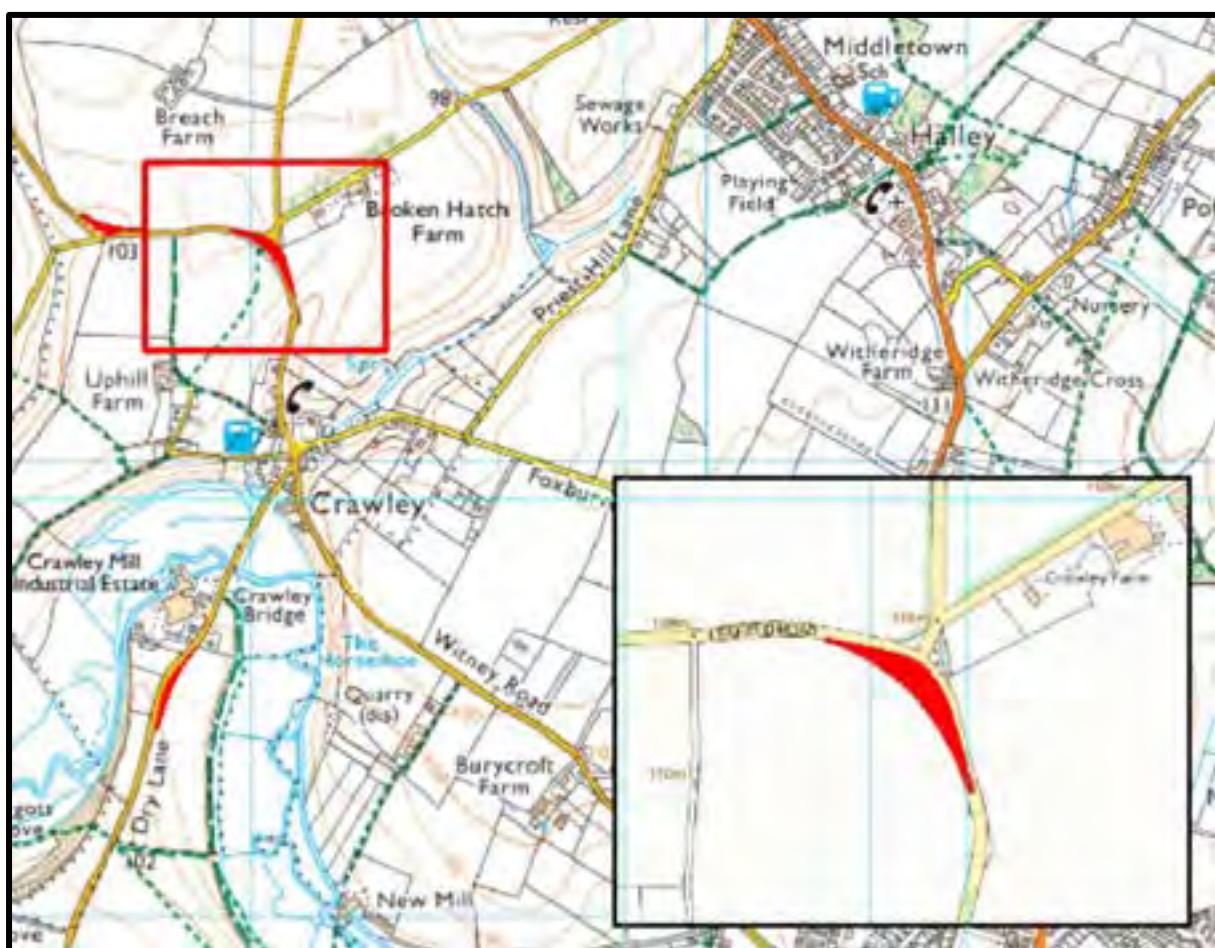
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 27: Leafield Lane, Crawley

Verge Name	Leafield Lane, Crawley
Grid Reference	SP 340 125
Local Authority	West Oxfordshire District Council
Parish	Crawley
Date of last survey	June 2024
Approximate Length	150m
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland
Features	Bare ground



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### Site Description

This verge is located around the junction to north of Crawley and is in good condition. The widest and most species-rich area of the verge is to the west of the junction, with species including records of meadow clary, greater knapweed and meadow crane's-bill. The meadow clary was located within areas of thinner soil, whereas the rest of the verge is more grassy, with abundant false oat-grass and a good distribution of forbs such as marjoram, pyramidal orchid, bee orchid, common knapweed, woolly thistle and fairy flax. Run-off from the road and uneven ground is likely causing nutrient enrichment. A footpath crosses the western verge.

## Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verges are approximately 35m from the Upper Windrush Conservation Target Area and the Manor Farm Meadow Local Wildlife Site is approximately 400m to the south-west.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

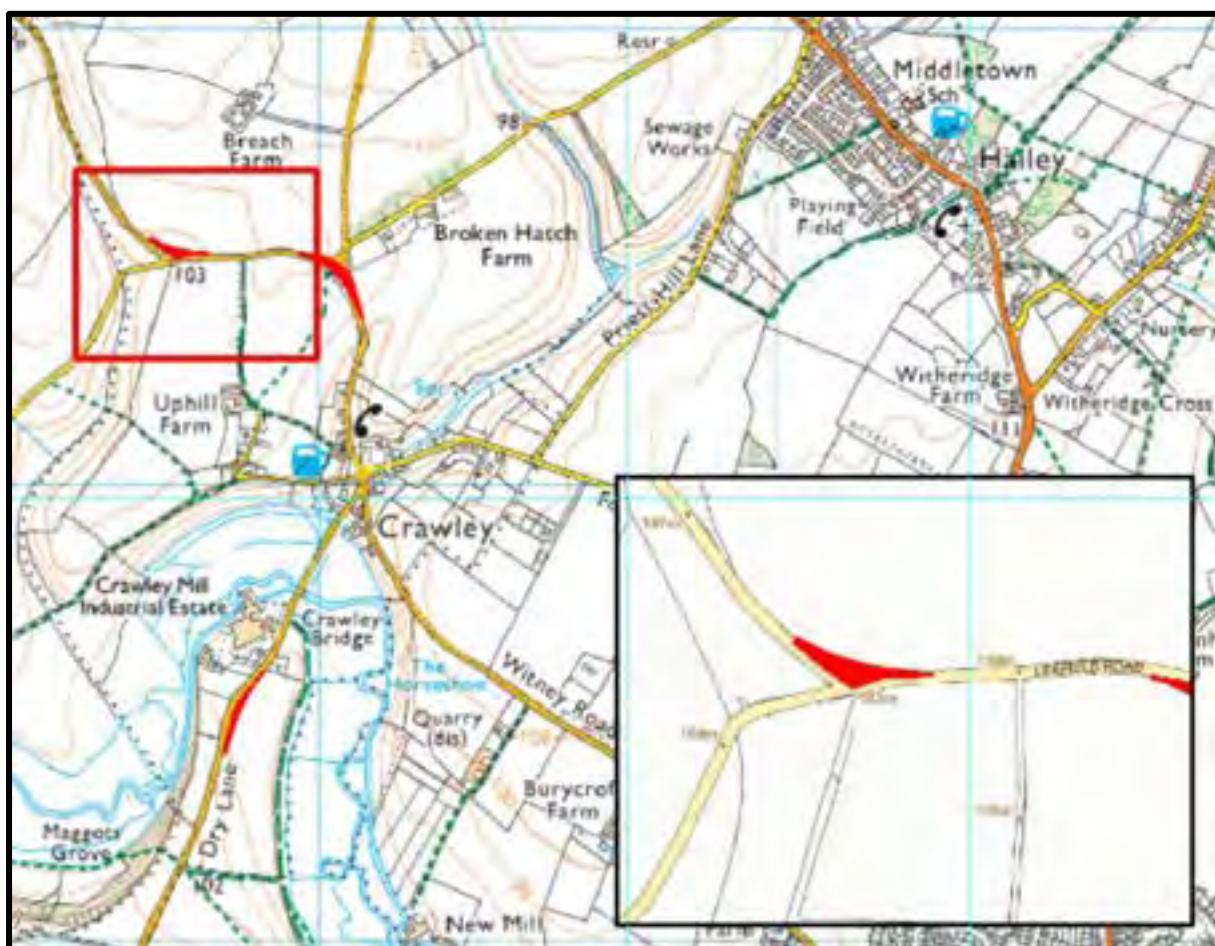
Installation of marker posts.



Overview of the verge in 2024 (left) and meadow clary in 2024 (right)

## Verge 28: Ridings Lane, Crawley

<b>Verge Name</b>	Ridings Lane, Crawley
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 336 125
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Crawley
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	150m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland



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### Site Description

A wide section of verge with a good diversity of lime-loving species including common restharrow, yellow rattle, pyramidal orchid, marjoram, bee orchid, common knapweed and fairy flax.

Generally, the verge is in good condition, with occasional scrub. Some fertiliser drift onto the verge from the adjacent field appears to be being reduced by the scrub, hedgerow and wall, where common nettle and common hogweed become more apparent.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is located between the Upper Windrush and Wychwood and Lower Evenlode (500m to each) Conservation Target Areas.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Scrub control required.

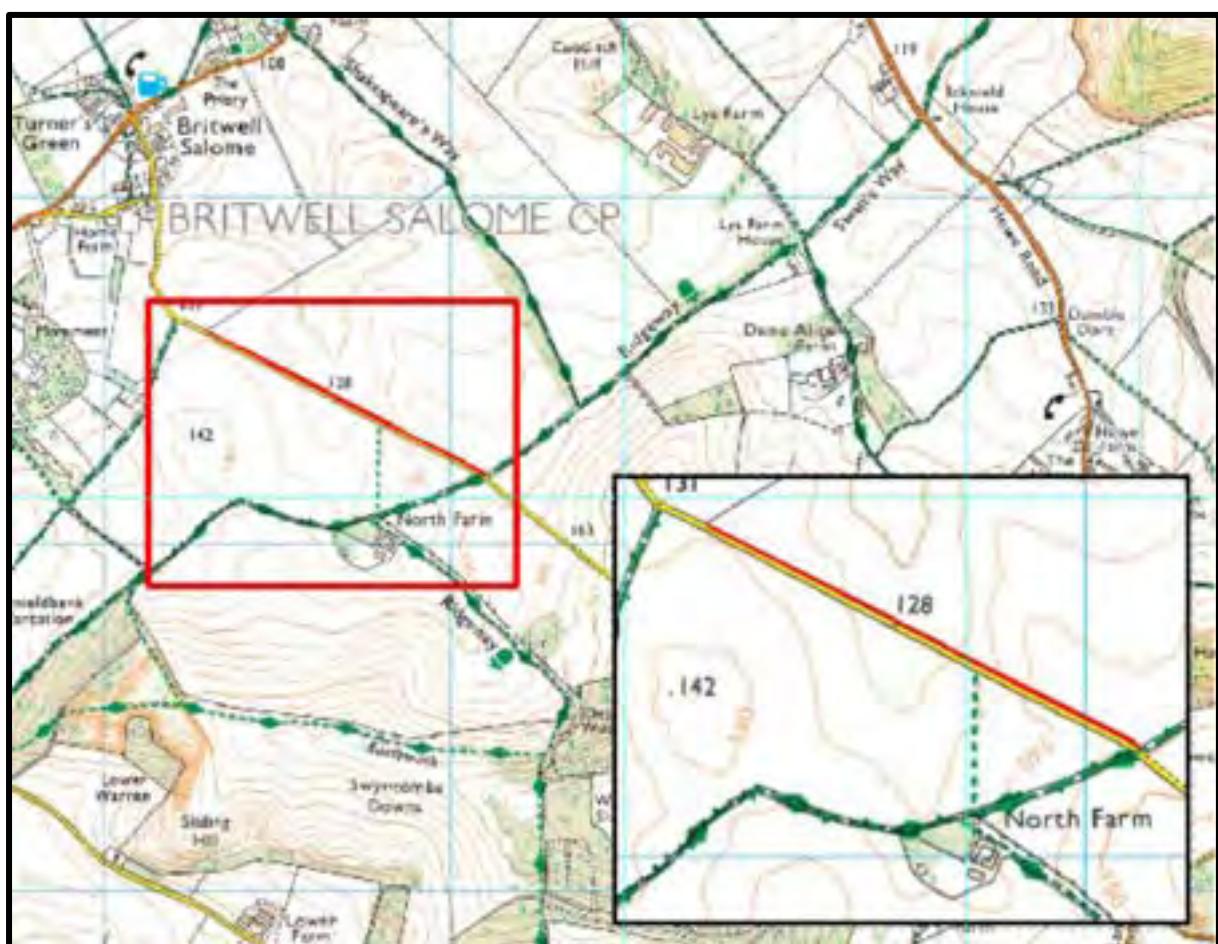
Installation of marker posts.



**Verge overview in 2024**

## Verge 29: Britwell Hill

<b>Verge Name</b>	Britwell Hill
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 676 924
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Britwell Salome
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	800m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Ditch



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### Site Description

A long straight road with verges on either side in generally poor ecological condition, however a number of indicator species remain including field scabious, agrimony, greater and common knapweed. Greater broomrape, wild basil and burnet saxifrage have been recorded during previous surveys but were not recorded in 2024.

## Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is approximately 230m from the Chilterns Escarpment North Conservation Target Area.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Control of scrub.

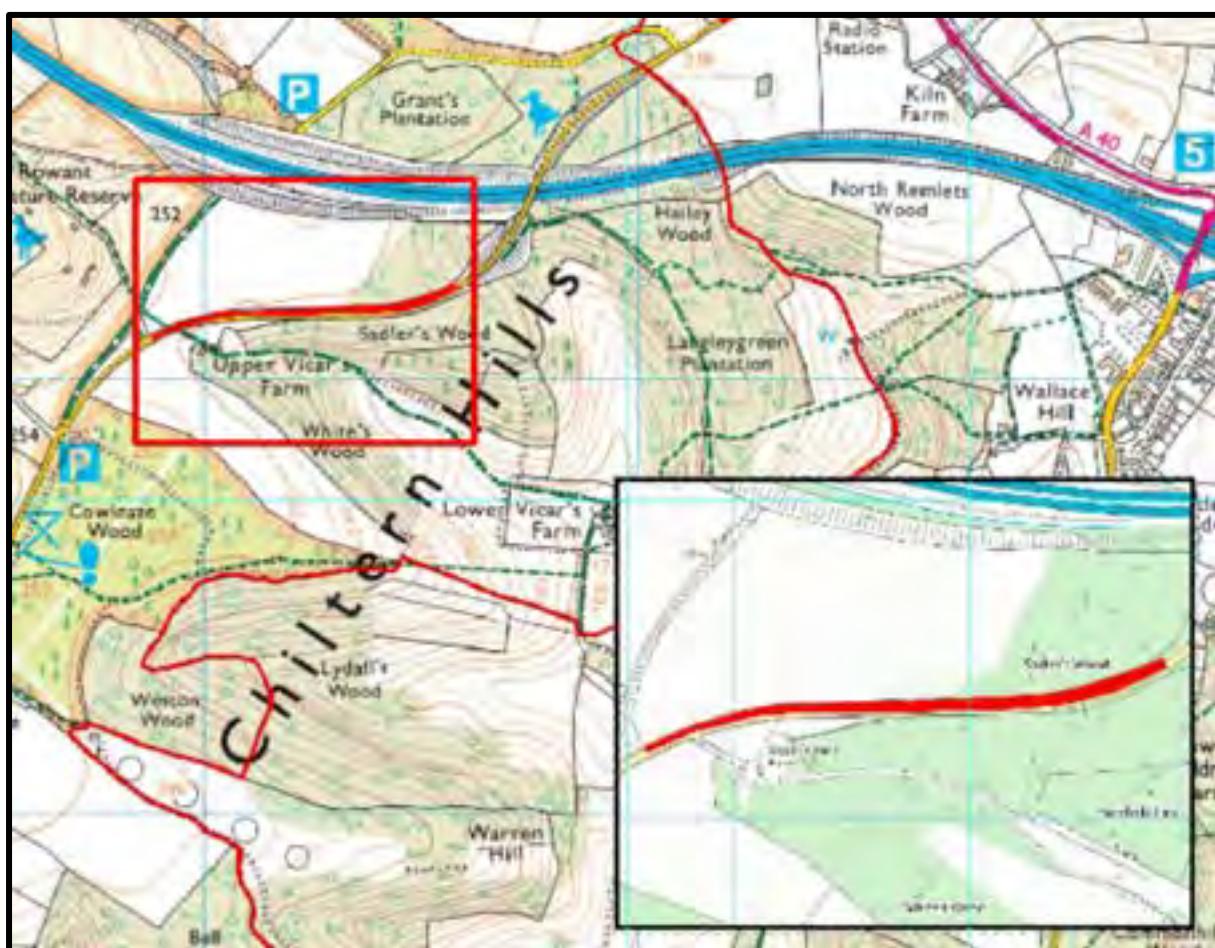
Installation of marker posts.



Overview of the verge in 2024 (left) and greater broomrape recorded in 2017 (right)

## Verge 30: Cowleaze Wood

Verge Name	Cowleaze Wood
Grid Reference	SU 732 960
Local Authority	South Oxfordshire District Council
Parish	Aston Rowant
Date of last survey	June 2024
Approximate Length	500m
Key Habitat	Limestone Grassland
Features	Hedgerow



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### Site Description

A south facing verge adjacent to a hedgerow in good condition. Species recorded in 2024 include agrimony, yellow rattle, common knapweed, marjoram, common broomrape and pyramidal orchid. Wild basil, wild carrot, field scabious and ploughman's-spikenard were recorded previously but not in 2024.

The verge shows signs of scrub encroachment. A footpath is located at the western end.

## Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is adjacent to the Chilterns Dipslope and Plateau Conservation Target Area and approximately 60m from the Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September to hedgerow.

Scrub control required.

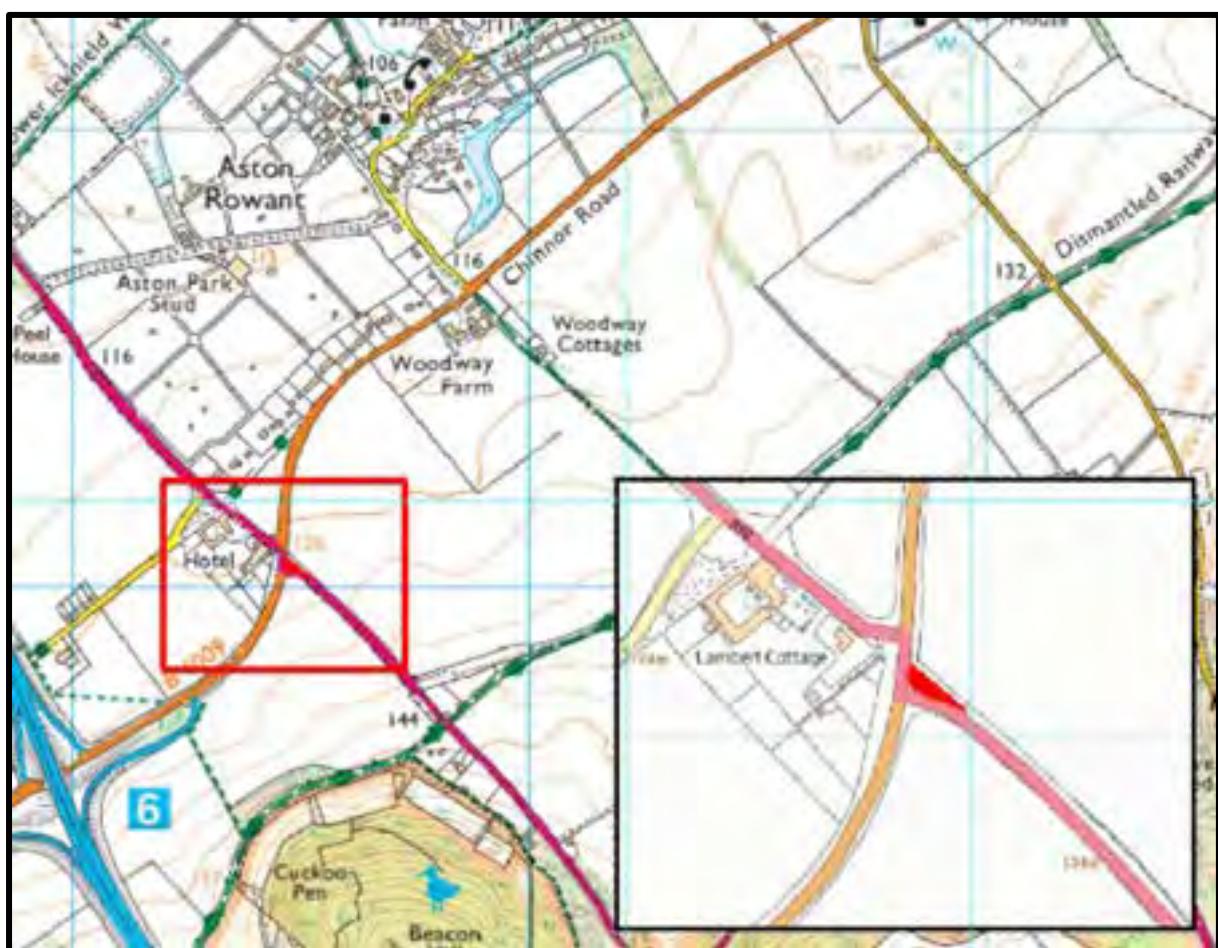
Installation of marker posts.



Overview of verge in 2024 (left) and ploughman's-spikenard in 2016 (right)

## Verge 31: Aston Rowant

<b>Verge Name</b>	Aston Rowant
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 724 980
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Aston Rowant
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Planted trees and scrub



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### Site Description

This verge is located where the B4009 meets the A40. Species key indicator species recorded in 2024 include pyramidal orchid and marjoram. Wild basil and wild carrot were recorded during previous surveys but not in 2024. The north-eastern side drops sharply through a hedgerow into a field.

Overall, the verge is in moderate condition, becoming more rank up the hill and towards the eastern boundary.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is approximately 410m from the Aston Rowant SSSI.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of the verge in 2024**

## Verge 32: Ipsden Heath

<b>Verge Name</b>	Ipsden Heath
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SU 665 848
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Minster Lovell
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland



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### Site Description

Two woodland lanes with verges on both sides. Sections to the east and west are relatively more shaded, while the northern and southern sides are more rank and overgrown. The key indicator species recorded in 2024 include both predominantly woodland indicator species such as common knapweed, herb robert, wood avens, wood melick, sweet woodruff, bluebells, greater stitchwort, enchanter's nightshade, wild strawberry, woodland sedge, wood speedwell, wood anemone, yellow archangel and woodland figwort. Violet helleborine has been recorded on previous surveys but not in 2024.

Overall, the verges are in moderate condition becoming increasingly overshadowed along most of the length resulting in a change of species composition to reflect the surrounding woodland ground flora.

A footpath is located at the eastern end.

### **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Ipsden Heath Local Wildlife Site and 130m south of the Chilterns Escarpment Conservation Target Area.

The verge is located within an area of priority lowland deciduous woodland and adjacent to patches of ancient woodland.

### **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile required in September.

Tree work required to increase light in the most shaded areas, and cutting of Bramble.

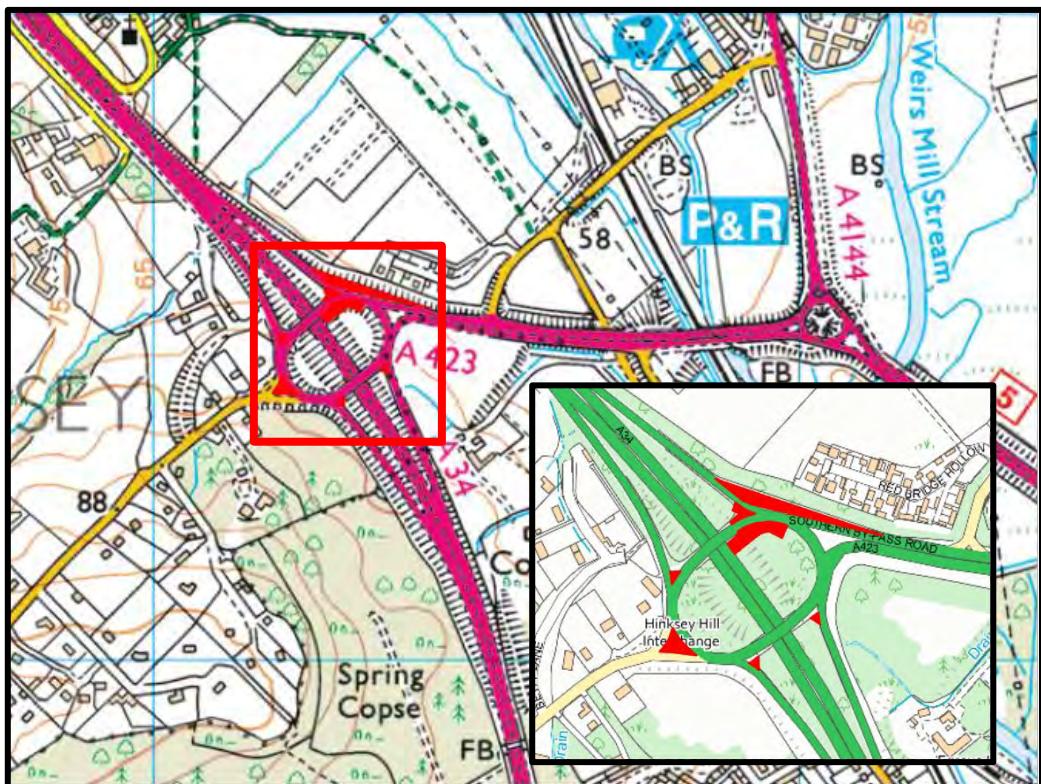
Installation of marker posts.



Overview of the verge in 2024 (left) and violet helleborine recorded in 2016 (right)

## Verge 33: Hinksey Hill

<b>Verge Name</b>	Hinksey Hill
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 512 034
<b>Local Authority</b>	Vale of White Horse
<b>Parish</b>	South Hinksey
<b>Date of last survey</b>	July 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjoining woodland



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### Site Description

Seven sections of verge are present at this location in varying condition, with the verge overall in moderate condition. The larger triangle section and strip along the north western edge are considered to be in moderate condition with key indicator species still present but starting to be overtaken by scrub and tall grasses. The four smaller triangular sections located adjacent to each slip road are in poor condition and have been largely overtaken by scrub and rank vegetation, however some indicator species still remain. The section located on the interior island of the junction is in good ecological condition with finer grasses present and a good diversity of indicator species.

The key indicator species recorded across the seven verge sections include pyramidal orchid, wild parsnip, agrimony, field scabious, woolly thistle and common knapweed.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is within the Oxfordshire Heights West Conservation Target Area

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

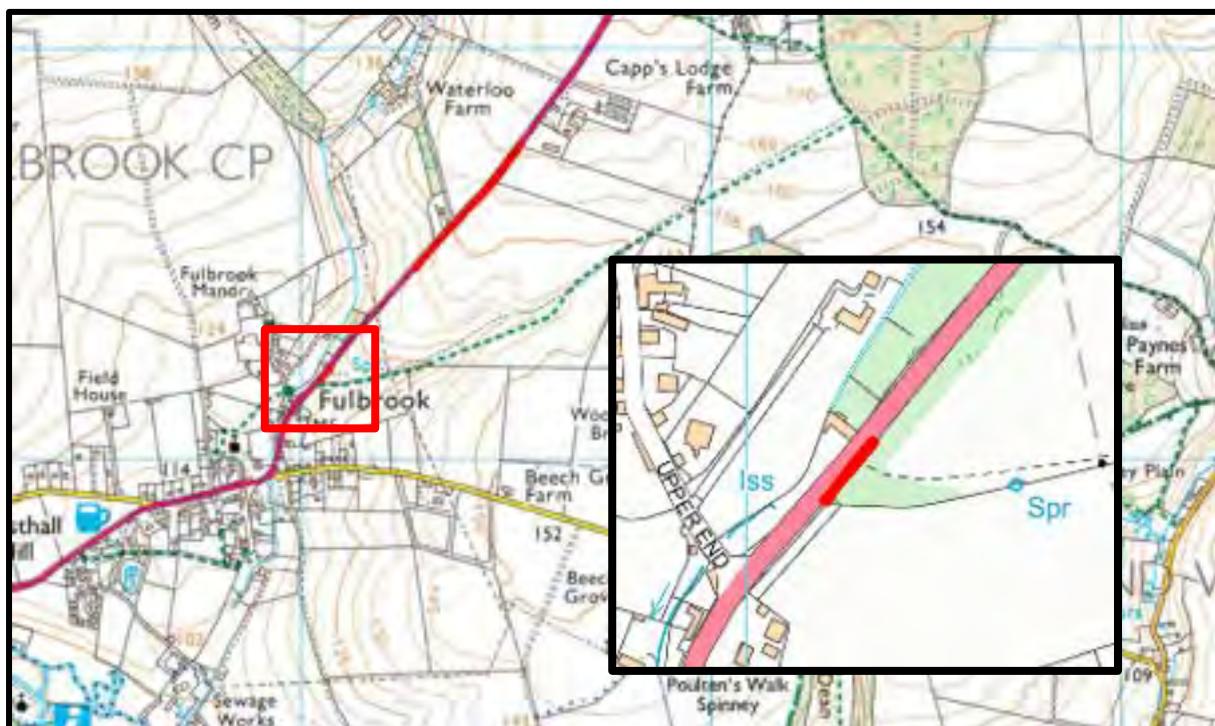
Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge sections in 2024**

## Verge 34: Fullbrook (1)

<b>Verge Name</b>	Fullbrook 1
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 263 135
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Fullbrook
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	400m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Hedgerow



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### Site Description

A flat, fairly wide verge alongside an A-road and adjacent to arable land. The grassland is generally in poor condition due to nutrient enrichment, however some key indicator species remain including meadow cranesbill and common knapweed. Field scabious, greater knapweed, lady's bedstraw, musk mallow, hairy St John's-wort, marjoram, viper's bugloss and sainfoin have been recorded previously but were not identified in 2024.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is located 100m east of Upper Windrush Conservation Target Area.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

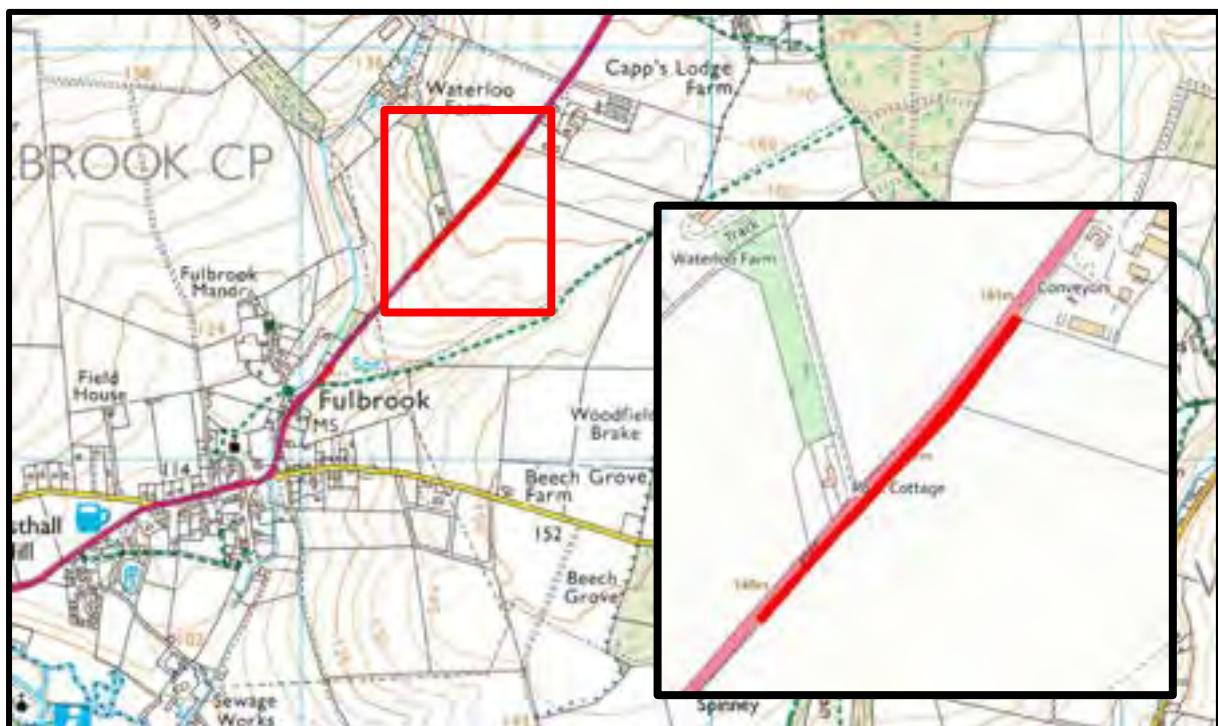
Installation of marker posts, the current marker posts are not in the correct location.



Overview of verge in 2024

## Verge 35: Fullbrook (2)

<b>Verge Name</b>	Fullbrook 2
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 264 136
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Fullbrook
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent woodland



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### Site Description

A flat, fairly wide verge alongside an A road and adjacent to arable land. The grassland is generally in good condition with frequent indicator species such as common knapweed, yellow rattle, field scabious, meadow cranesbill, lady's bedstraw and marjoram. Viper's bugloss, greater knapweed, musk mallow, hairy St John's-wort and sainfoin have been recorded previously but not in 2024.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is located 100m east of Upper Windrush Conservation Target Area.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

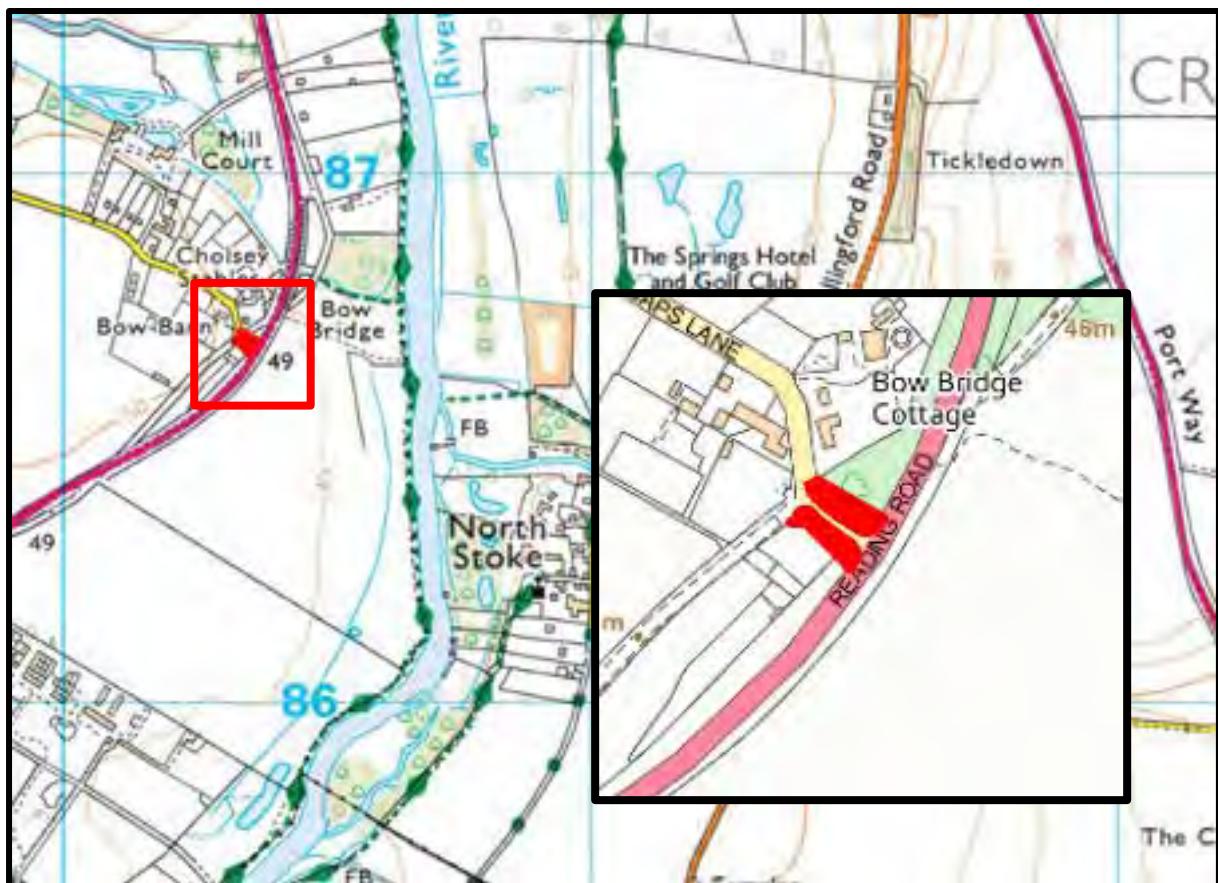
Installation of marker posts.



Overview of verge in 2024

## Verge 36: Caps Lane, Cholsey

Verge Name	Caps Lane, Cholsey
Grid Reference	SU 603 866
Local Authority	South Oxfordshire District Council
Parish	Cholsey
Date of last survey	July 2024
Approximate Length	100m
Key Habitat	Chalk Grassland
Features	Adjacent scrub



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### Site Description

A flat verge on road junction, which extends into a triangular shaped patch of scrub on the northeast side, along the A road. The verge is in moderate condition, with encroachment by now mature scrub. Marjoram was the dominant species recorded with other species recorded including common knapweed, pyramidal orchid, agrimony and common centaury. Blue fleabane, ploughman's-spikenard, wild basil, wild carrot and large garden thyme were recorded during previous surveys but in 2024.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is located within the Thames Wallingford to Goring Conservation Target Area.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

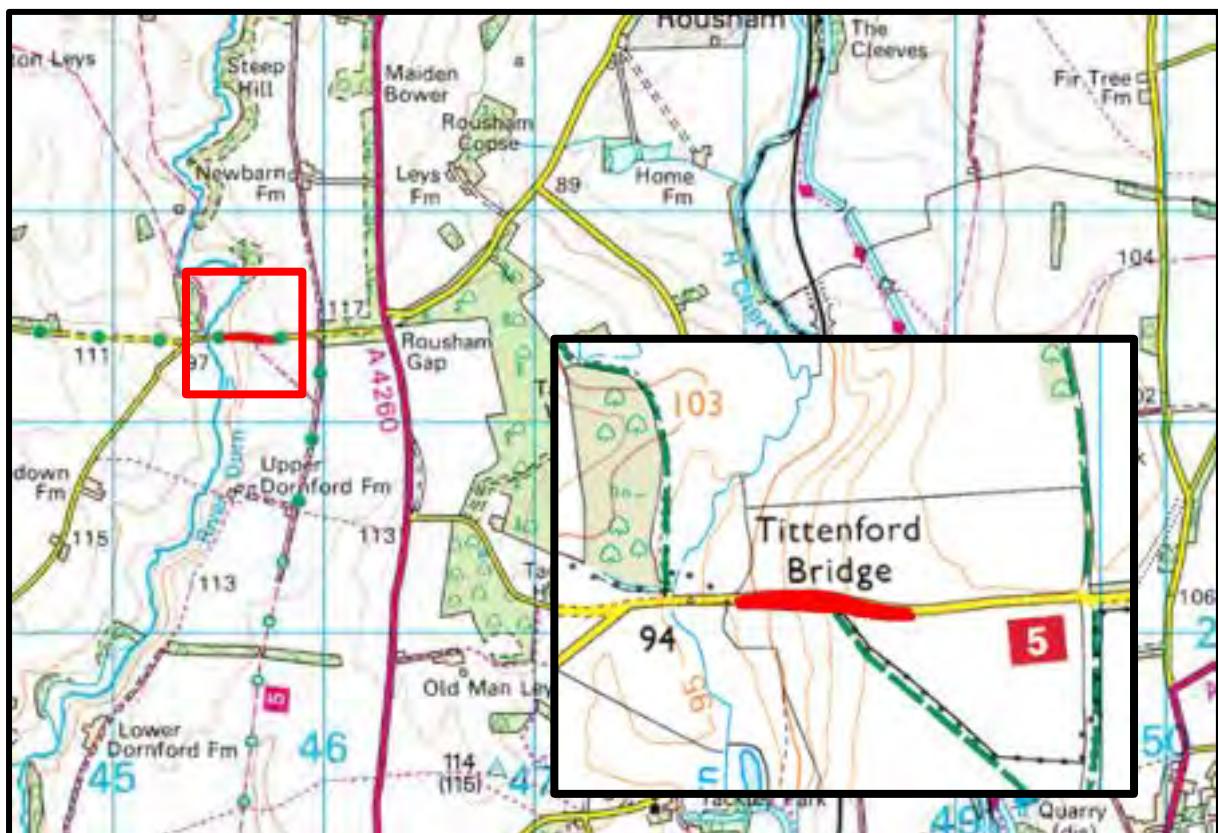
Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verges in 2024**

## Verge 37: Tittenford Bridge

<b>Verge Name</b>	Tittenford Bridge
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 456 224
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Steeple Barton and Wootton
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent hedgerow and woodland



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### Site Description

A short section of minor lane off A4260 at Glympton, with small bank to north side and mainly flat verge to south, which is raised above road level. Nearby to west is a stream valley and woodland.

The southern verge is in good ecological condition whereas the northern verge is in poor condition. Species recorded include common knapweed, woolly thistle, agrimony, pyramidal orchid, field scabious, hairy sedge, salad burnet and lady's bedstraw. Common rock-rose was recorded on the northern verge during previous surveys but not in 2024.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is located on the edge of Glyme and Dorn Conservation Target Area. Priory Wood LWS is located 200m south of the verge.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of the verges in 2024**

## Verge 38: Bridewell

<b>Verge Name</b>	Bridewell
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 381 147
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	North Leigh
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent hedgerow and woodland



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### Site Description

A west-facing verge and bank in generally good condition with characteristic limestone species recorded including common knapweed, field scabious, cowslip, marjoram, salad burnet, pyramidal orchid, agrimony and common broomrape. Stemless thistle, burnet saxifrage, wild carrot and common restarrow were recorded during previous survey visits but not in 2024.

The island at the northern end had been recently mown during the survey visit in 2024 and was in poor condition, however some key indicator species were still observed.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is located within the Wychwood and Lower Evenlode Conservation Target Area.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

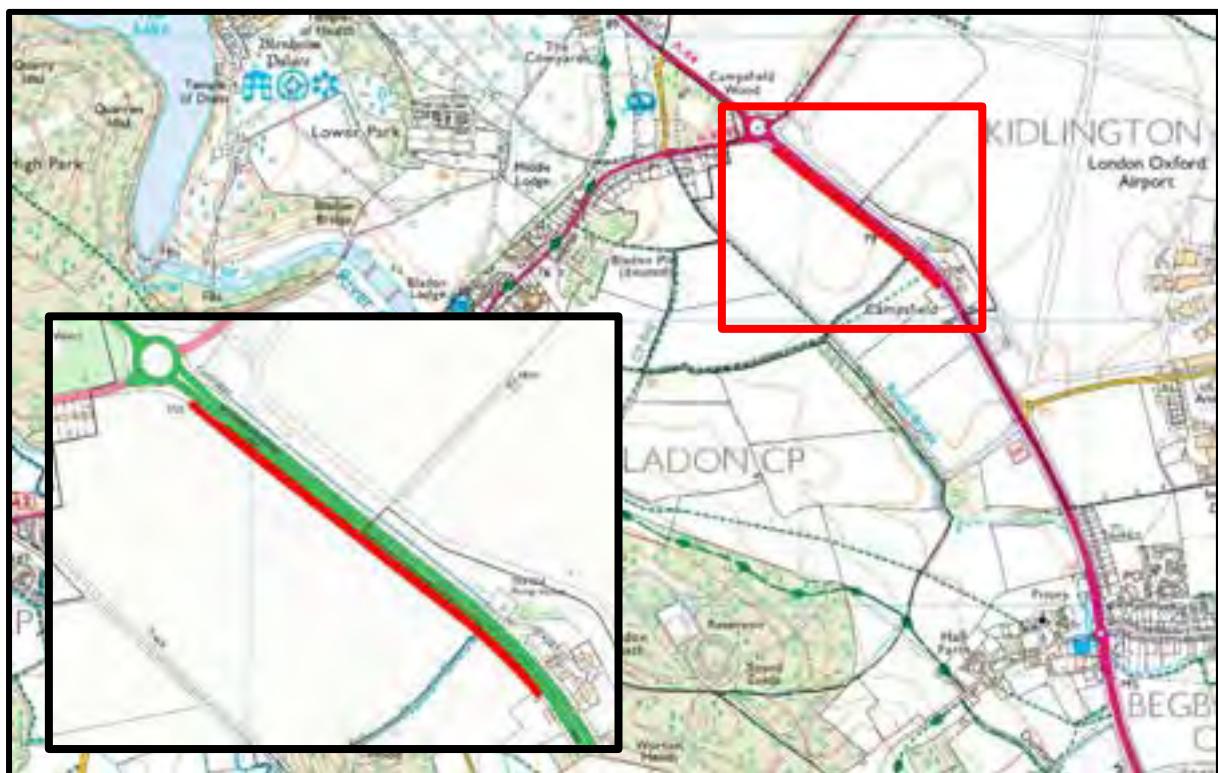
Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 39: A44, Bladon

<b>Verge Name</b>	A44, Bladon
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 460 155
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cherwell District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Kidlington and Begbroke
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent ditch and wall



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### Site Description

A wide, flat verge separated from A44 by a cycle path and narrow verge and bounded by a ditch bank and wall to the west side. During the survey visit in 2024 over half of the verge had been recently mown for the whole length with the remainder in poor condition. However, some key indicator species remain including common knapweed, pyramidal orchid, agrimony, field scabious and greater knapweed. Violet helleborine and common restharrow recorded previously were not identified during the survey undertaken in 2024.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

None.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

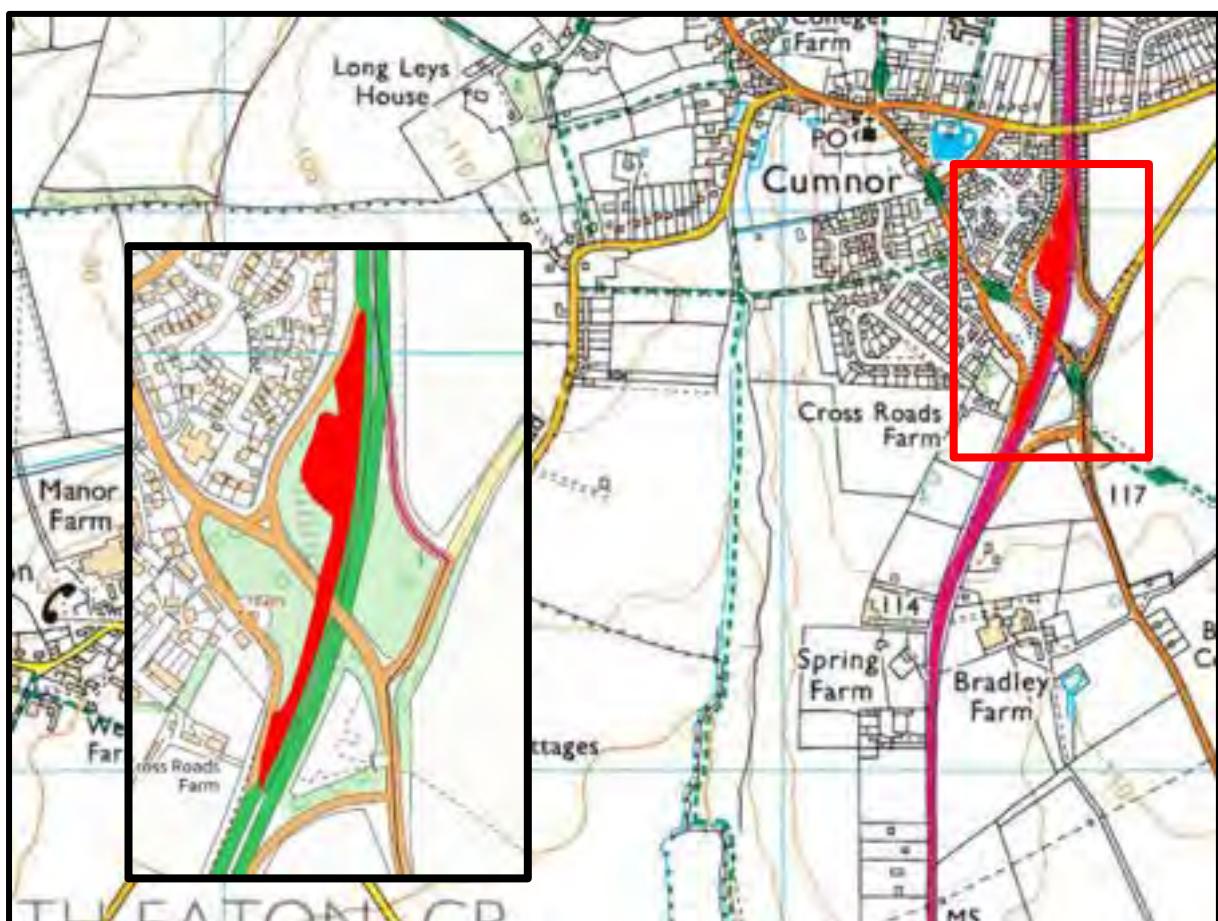
Installation of marker posts.



Overview of verge in 2024

## Verge 40: Cumnor

<b>Verge Name</b>	Cumnor
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 464 038
<b>Local Authority</b>	Vale of White Horse District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Cumnor
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	50m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent scrub and woodland



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### Site Description

A wide verge adjacent to main A420 and in good condition. Species recorded include common knapweed, yellow rattle, cowslip and pyramidal orchid. Fairy flax, wild carrot, wild basil and wild parsnip were recorded during previous survey visits but not in 2024.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

Within Oxford Heights West Conservation Target Area, Long Copse and Pasture Near Chawley Local Wildlife Sites are ~900m to north-east. Cumnor Site of Special Scientific Interest is ~400m to the south; Hurst Hill SSSI is ~900m to the east.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

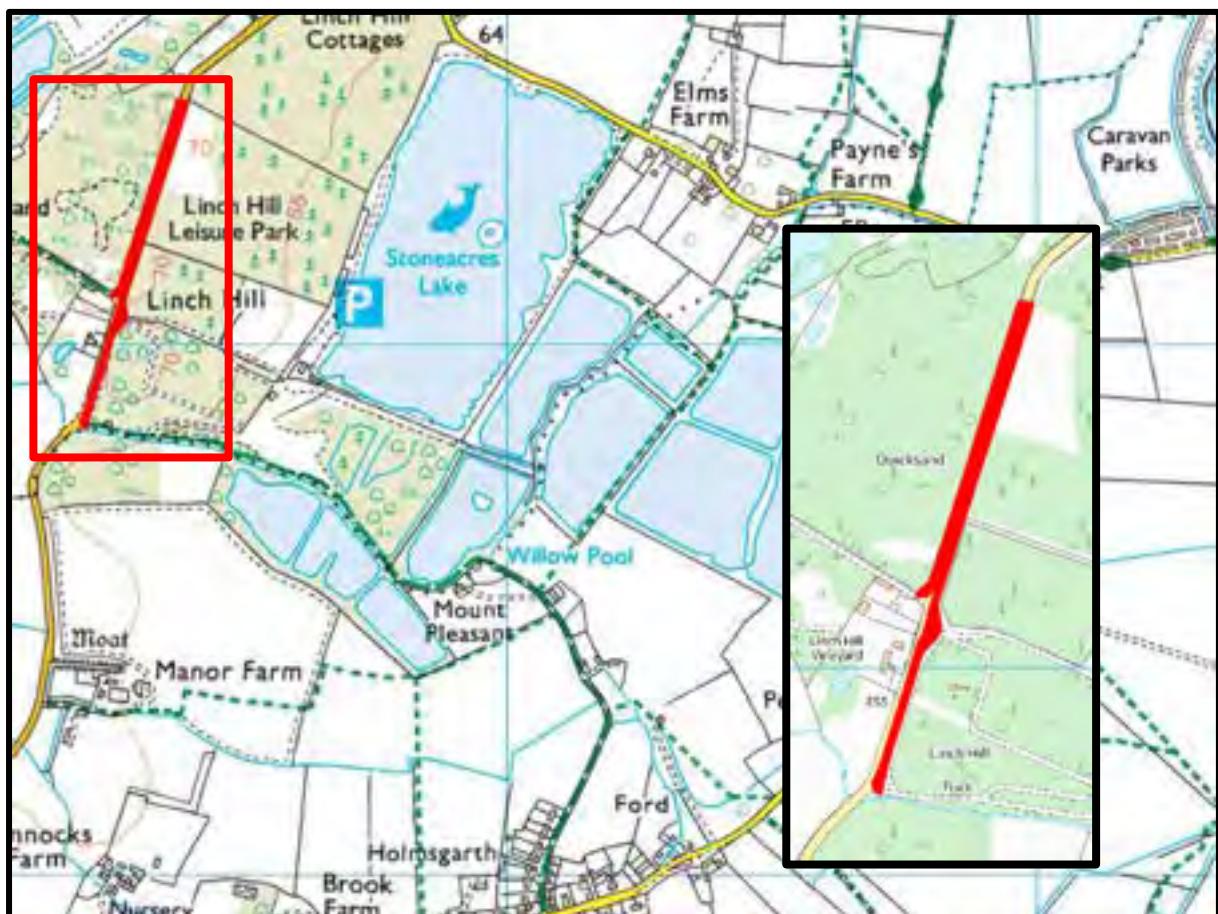
Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 41: Linch Hill

<b>Verge Name</b>	Linch Hill
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 413 041
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Stanton Harcourt
<b>Date of last survey</b>	July 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	400m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent woodland



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### Site Description

A relatively flat verge adjacent to former sand quarries, on dry, calcareous soils. The eastern verge is good condition however the western verge is in poor condition. Species recorded in 2024 include lady's bedstraw, pyramidal orchid, common restharrow, common knapweed, woolly thistle, greater knapweed, agrimony, yellow rattle and wild parsnip.

The verge is listed for the presence of the very rare Cotswold penny-cress, however this species was not recorded in the survey undertaken in 2024. Dwarf thistle and blue fleabane were also not recorded in 2024 but were recorded during previous visits.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The site is within the Lower Windrush Valley Conservation Target Area, Dix Pit Local Wildlife Site is the nearest and is ~450m to the north-west.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verges in 2024**

## Verge 42: Peartree

<b>Verge Name</b>	Peartree
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 492 111
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cherwell District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Gosford and Water Eaton
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent woodland and scrub



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### Site Description

Two sections of verge supporting limestone grassland in poor condition. However, some indicator species remain including common knapweed, wild parsnip, hairy tare, common broomrape, narrow-leaved bird's-foot trefoil, agrimony, salad burnet and pyramidal orchid. Bee orchid recorded previously was not recorded in 2024.

The northern section of this verge has largely scrubbed over and requires extensive scrub clearance. The southern section of the verge has been impacted by road works in 2023, but should recover over time.

## Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

Part of the Nature Recovery Network core zone.

### Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

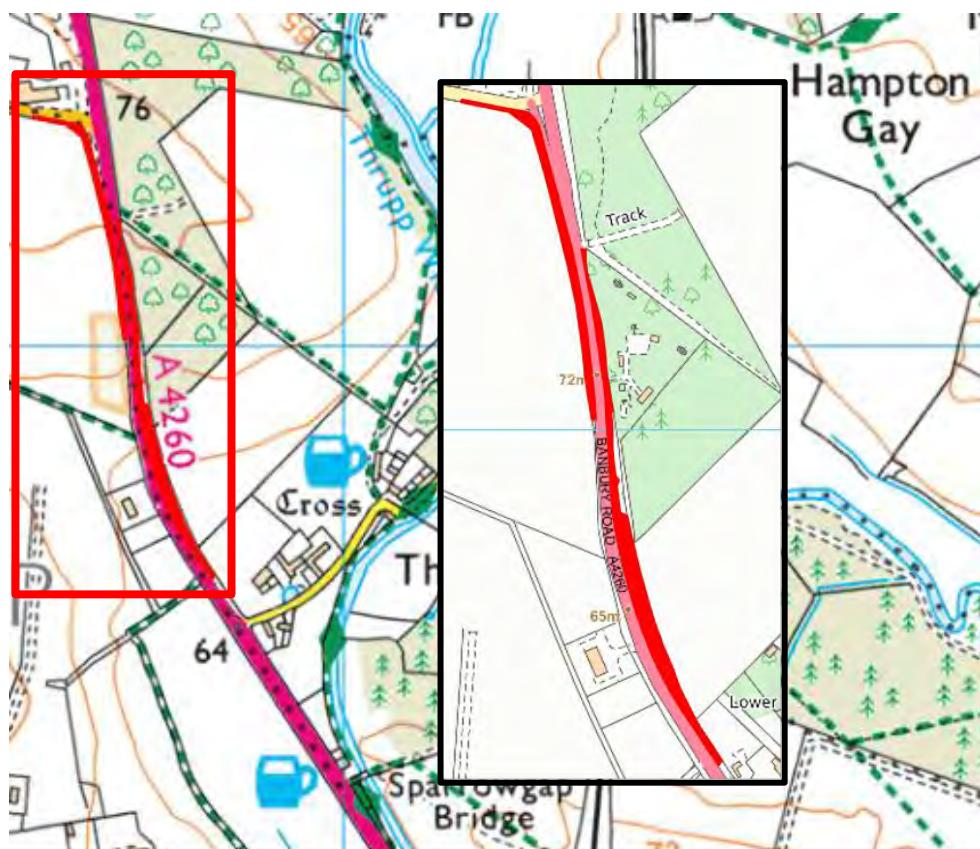
Scrub treatment and installation of marker posts.



North (above) and south (below) sides of verge in 2024

## Verge 43: A4260 Thrupp

<b>Verge Name</b>	A4260 Thrupp
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 477 160
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cherwell District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Kiddlington
<b>Date of last survey</b>	July 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	800m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent hedgerow



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### Site Description

Two sections of verge generally in poor condition. The verge supports a number of limestone grassland species including field scabious, agrimony, common knapweed, pyramidal orchid, lady's bedstraw, cowslip, greater knapweed, wild parsnip, common restharrow, burnet saxifrage and notably lizard orchid. Common broomrape has been recorded at this site previously but this species was not recorded in 2024.

During the 2024 survey visit it was noted that the majority of the western section had been recently mown.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is located ~500m west of Lower Cherwell Valley Conservation Target Area and ~30m south-west of Langford Meadows Local Wildlife Site.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

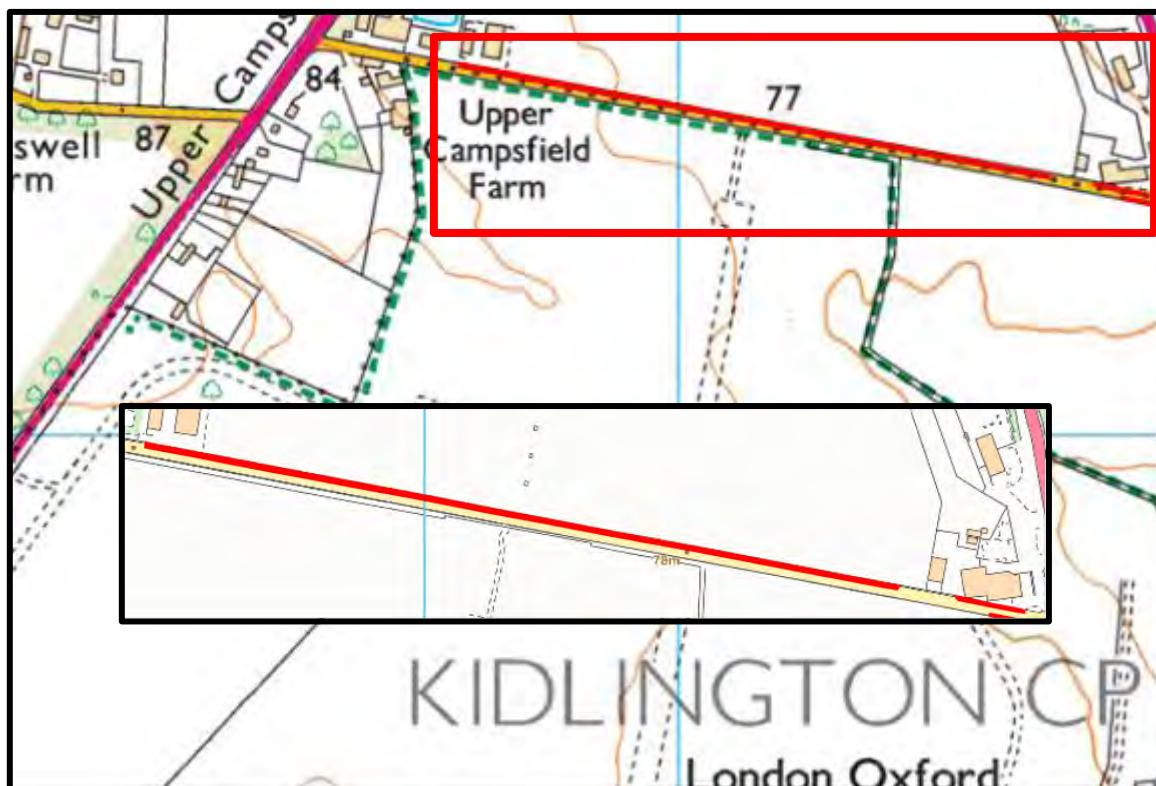
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 44: Straight Mile

<b>Verge Name</b>	Straight Mile
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 470 164
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cherwell District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Kiddlington
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2017
<b>Approximate Length</b>	800m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent hedgerow with trees



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### Site Description

A flat narrow verge supporting limestone grassland located between arable land and an airport. Species recorded include common restarrow, field scabious, common broomrape and lizard orchid.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is located ~560m west of Lower Cherwell Valley Conservation Target Area with Bunkers Hill Quarry Local Wildlife Site to north-east and Langford Meadows Local Wildlife Site to the south.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

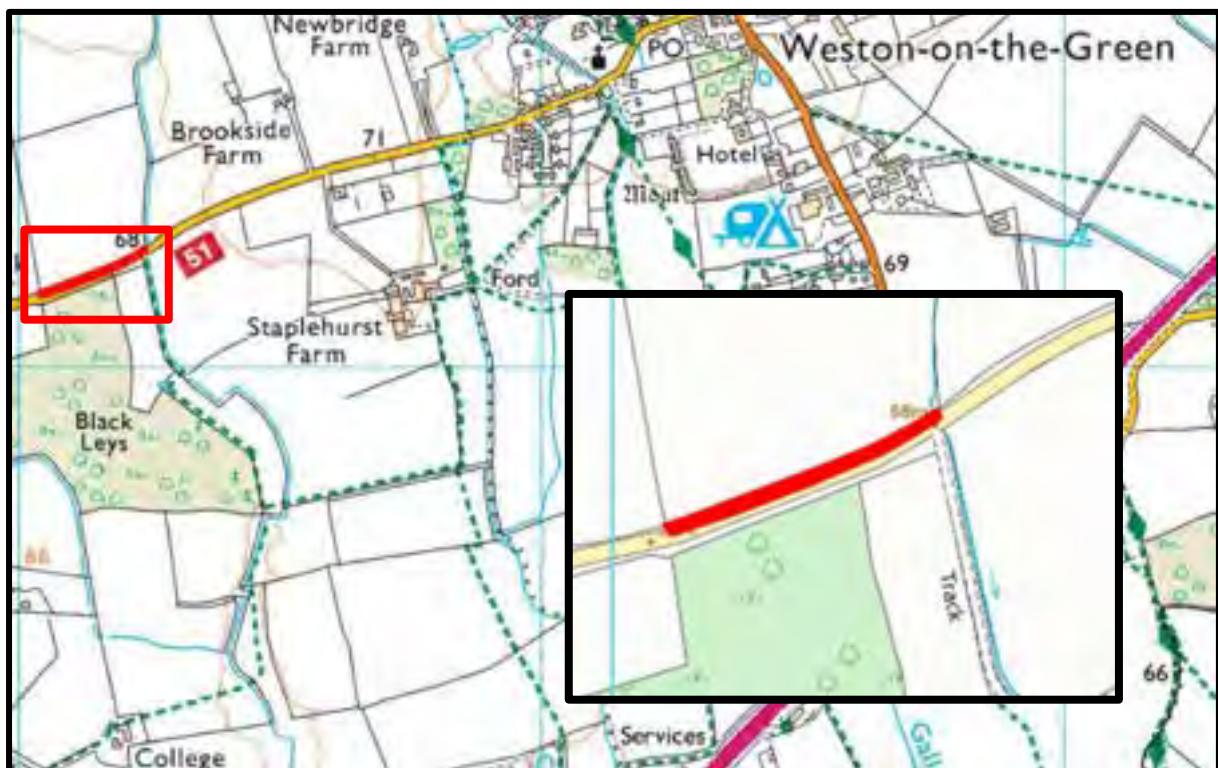
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2017**

## Verge 45: Adjacent Black Ley

<b>Verge Name</b>	Adjacent Black Ley
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 521 181
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cherwell District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Bletchingdon
<b>Date of last survey</b>	April 2017
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent ditch, bank and hedgerow



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### Site Description

A wide, flat verge supporting limestone grassland with a deep ditch, bank and hedgerow including several mature oak standards. Adjoining land to north is arable, with woodland located opposite the verge. Species recorded include early-purple orchid, tormentil, cowslip, meadow cranesbill, meadowsweet and wild angelica.

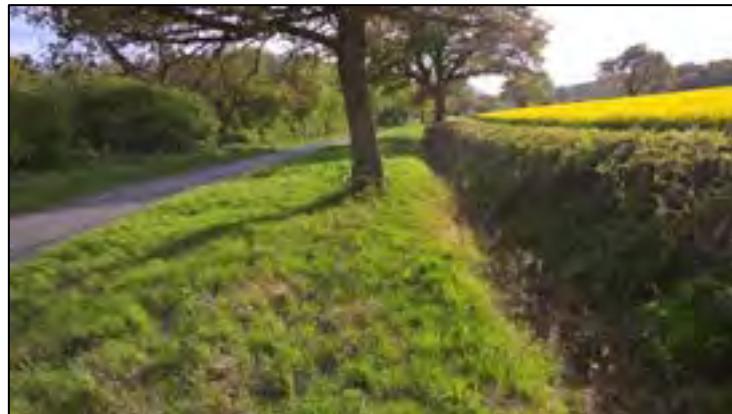
### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is located within Kirtlington and Bletchingdon Parks and Woods Conservation Target Area and is adjacent Black Ley woodland Local Wildlife Site

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

Installation of marker posts.



Overview of verge in 2017

## Verge 46: Upper Campsfield Road

<b>Verge Name</b>	Upper Campsfield Road
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 467 167
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cherwell District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Shipton-on-Cherwell and Thrupp
<b>Date of last survey</b>	July 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	100m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent ditch, hedgerow and scattered trees



### Site Description

A wide verge adjacent to arable land and generally in poor ecological condition due to dominant rank grasses present. However, some species characteristic of limestone grassland remain including agrimony, pyramidal orchid, common knapweed, hairy tare, lady's bedstraw and burnet saxifrage. Field scabious and greater knapweed were not recorded in 2024 but have been recorded during previous visits.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

None.

### Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

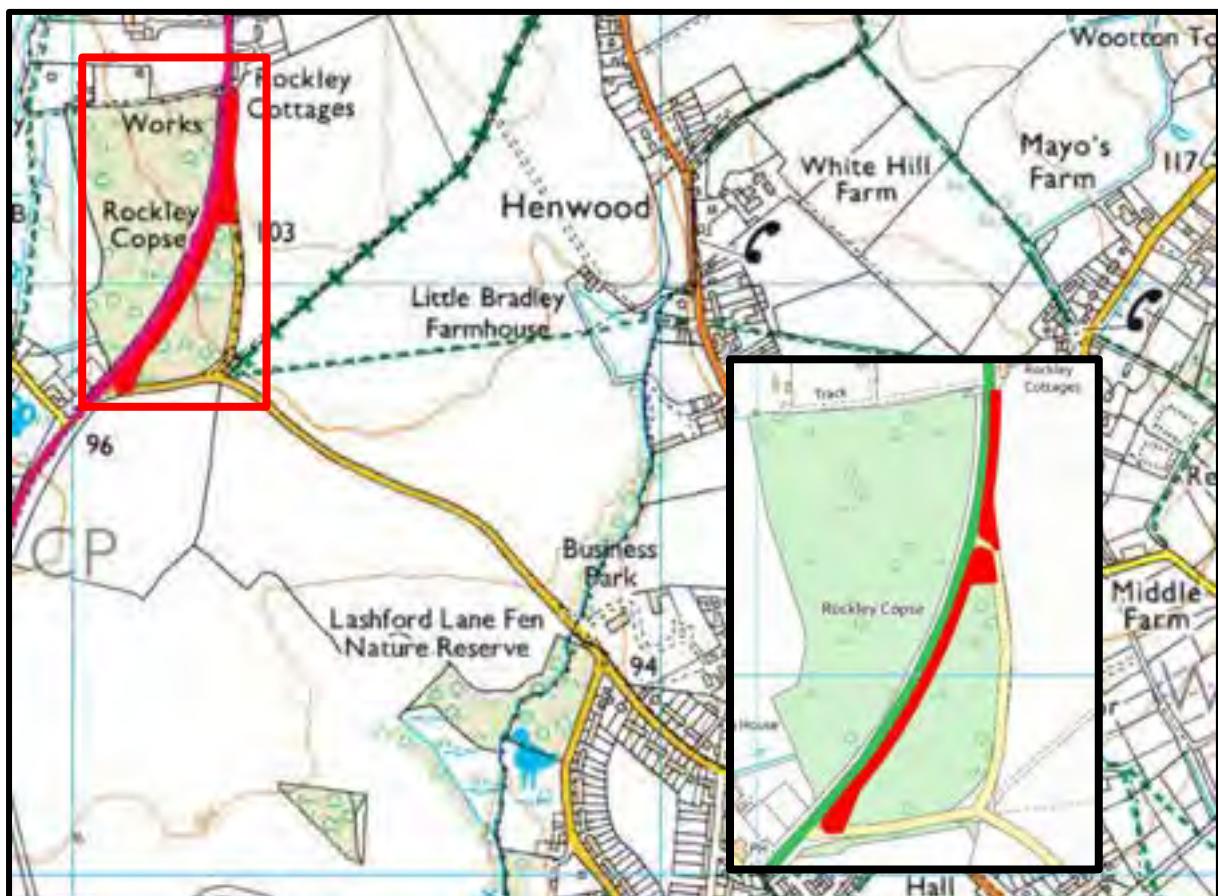
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Verge 47: Rockley Copse

<b>Verge Name</b>	Rockley Copse
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 462 022
<b>Local Authority</b>	Vale of the White Horse District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Besselsleigh
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2022
<b>Approximate Length</b>	250m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent treeline and dry stone wall



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### Site Description

Rich flora dominated by dry, limestone grassland species including large populations of field scabious, common broomrape, pyramidal orchid and common calamint. Also present is greater knapweed, lady's bedstraw, hedge bedstraw, blue fleabane, hairy violet. Of note is the large population field scabious (*Knautia arvensis*) and dependant invertebrates, the large scabious mining bee (*Andrena hattorfiana*), brassy longhorn moth (*Nemophora metallica*) and its parasitoid Ichneumon wasp *Stilbops ruficornis*. The verge is backed by a dry-stone wall (collapsing in parts) which will provide refuge habitat for invertebrates using the verge flora.

## **Designations of Nature Conservation Interest**

The verge is located within Oxford Heights West CTA.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

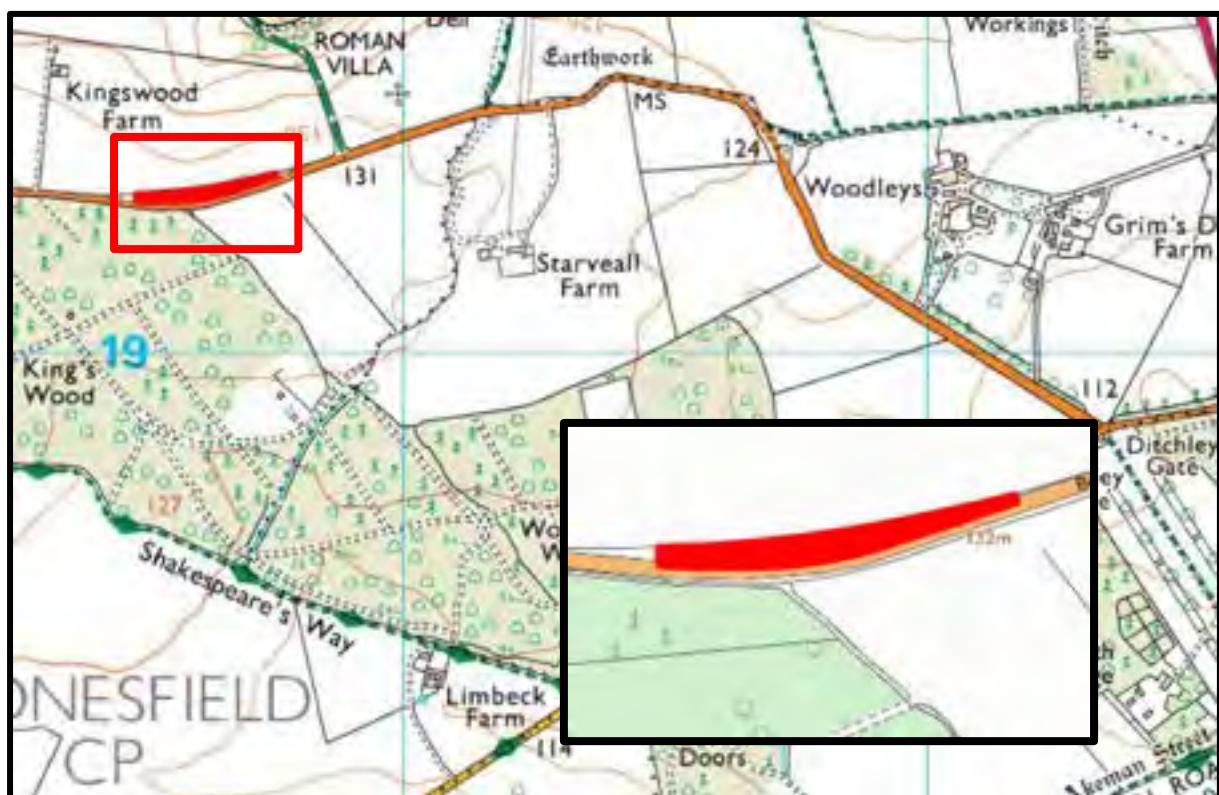
Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2022**

## Verge 48: Stonesfield

<b>Verge Name</b>	Stonesfield
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 406 193
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Stonesfield
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2023
<b>Approximate Length</b>	250m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent hedgerow with trees



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### Site Description

Rich flora dominated by dry, limestone grassland species including populations of agrimony, bluebells, pyramidal orchid and field scabious. Also present is greater knapweed, yellow rattle and dog's mercury. Of note is the large population of wild marjoram and hedge bedstraw.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is located within Blenheim and Ditchley Parks CTA and opposite King's Wood replanted ancient woodland.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

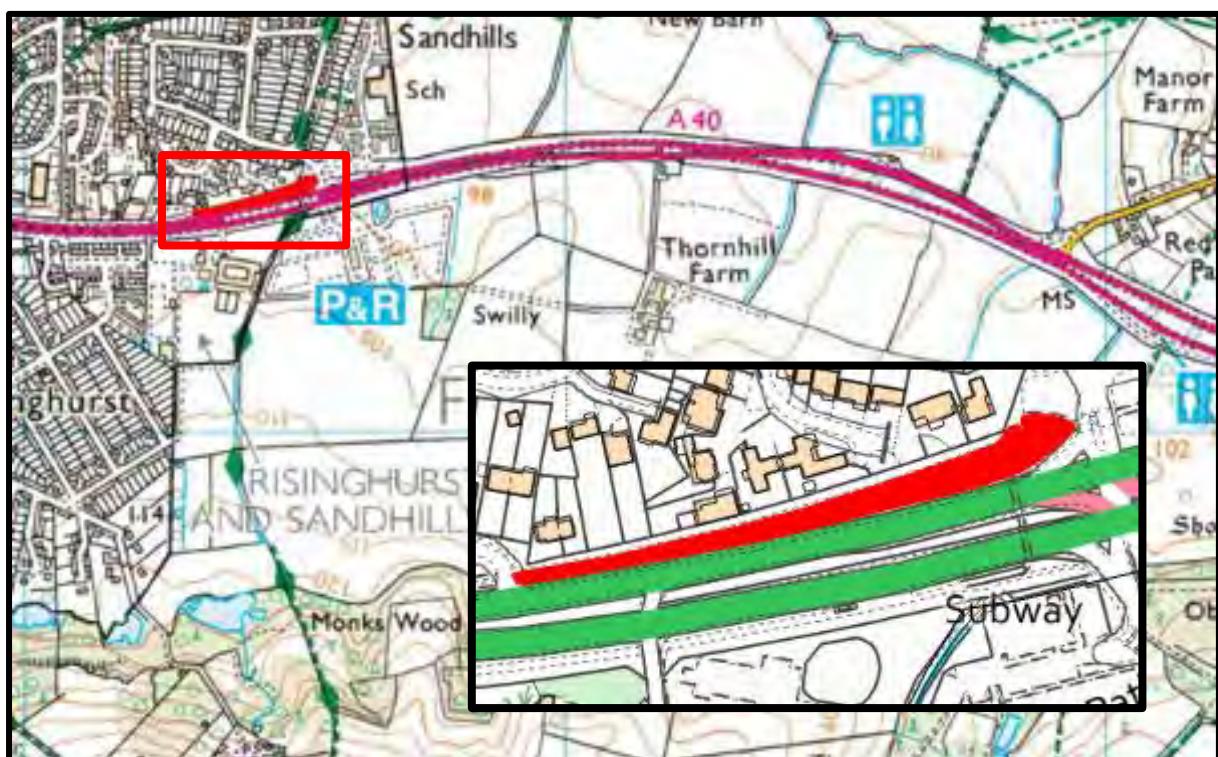
Scrub control and installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2023**

## Verge 49: A40 Sandhills

<b>Verge Name</b>	A40 Sandhills
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 565 074
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxford City District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Risinghurst and Sandhills
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2021
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent scrub and hedgerow with trees



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### Site Description

Species rich limestone grassland including populations of quaking grass, pyramidal orchid, wild carrot, lady's bedstraw, field scabious, wild marjoram, common broomrape and lesser bird's-foot trefoil.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

None

### Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

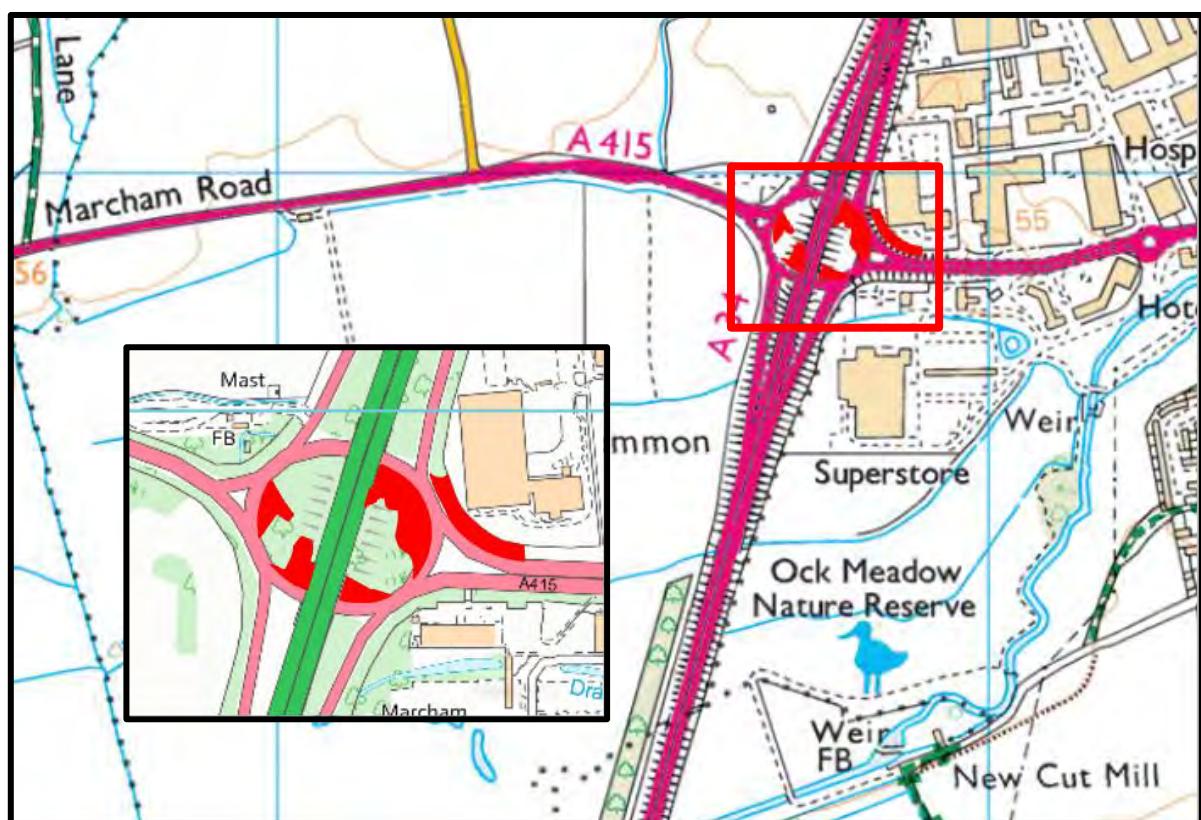
Scrub control and installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2022**

## Verge 50: Marcham Interchange

<b>Verge Name</b>	Marcham Interchange
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SU 477 969
<b>Local Authority</b>	Vale of White Horse District Council
<b>Parish</b>	St Helens Without and Abingdon on Thames
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2023
<b>Approximate Length</b>	450m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent scrub, deciduous woodland and lines of trees



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### Site Description

Consisting of five verge sections, the habitat consists of species rich limestone grassland including populations of fleabane, mullein, common broomrape, burnet saxifrage, common knapweed, glaucous sedge and meadowsweet. Of particular note is the large population of pyramidal orchids.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

None.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

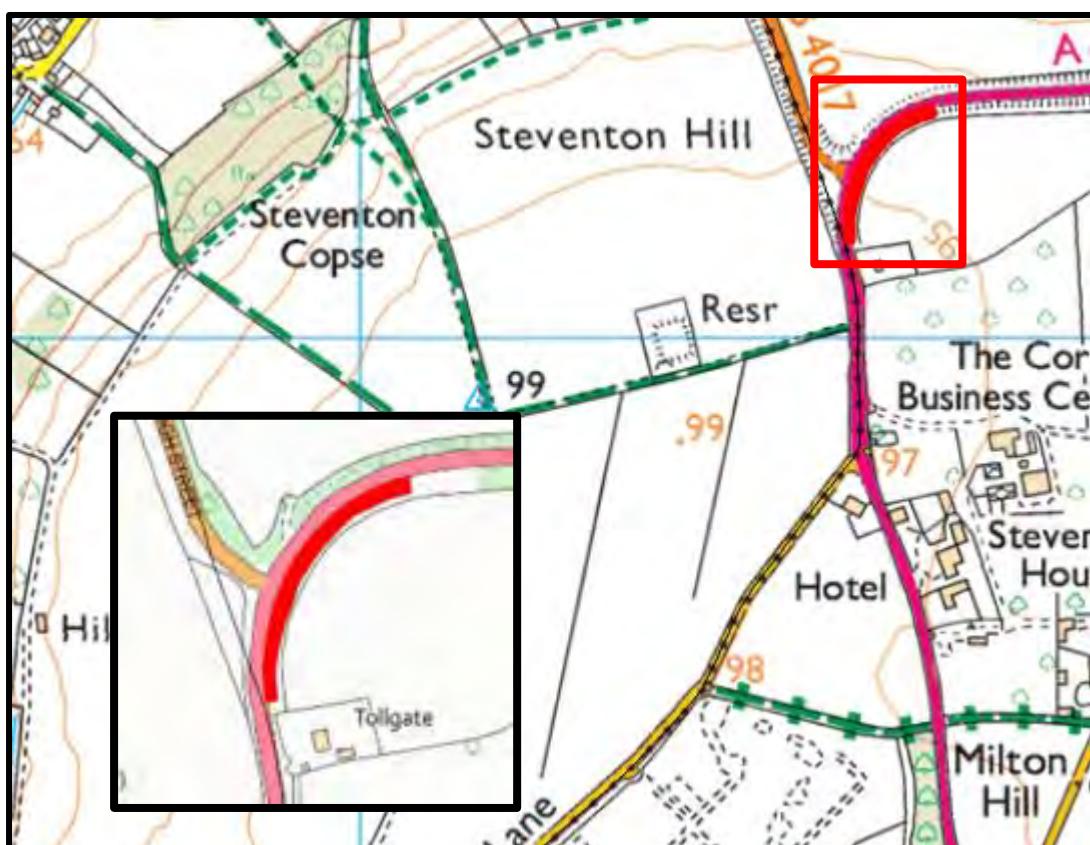
Scrub control and installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2023**

## Verge 51: Milton Hill

<b>Verge Name</b>	Milton Hill
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SU 476 912
<b>Local Authority</b>	Vale of White Horse District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Milton
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2023
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Dry ditch with adjacent scrub and line of trees



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### Site Description

Species rich limestone grassland including populations of sweet vernal grass, wild basil, pyramidal orchid, common spotted orchid, common restarrow and common toadflax.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

None.

## Management Requirements

Annual cut and collect/pile in September.

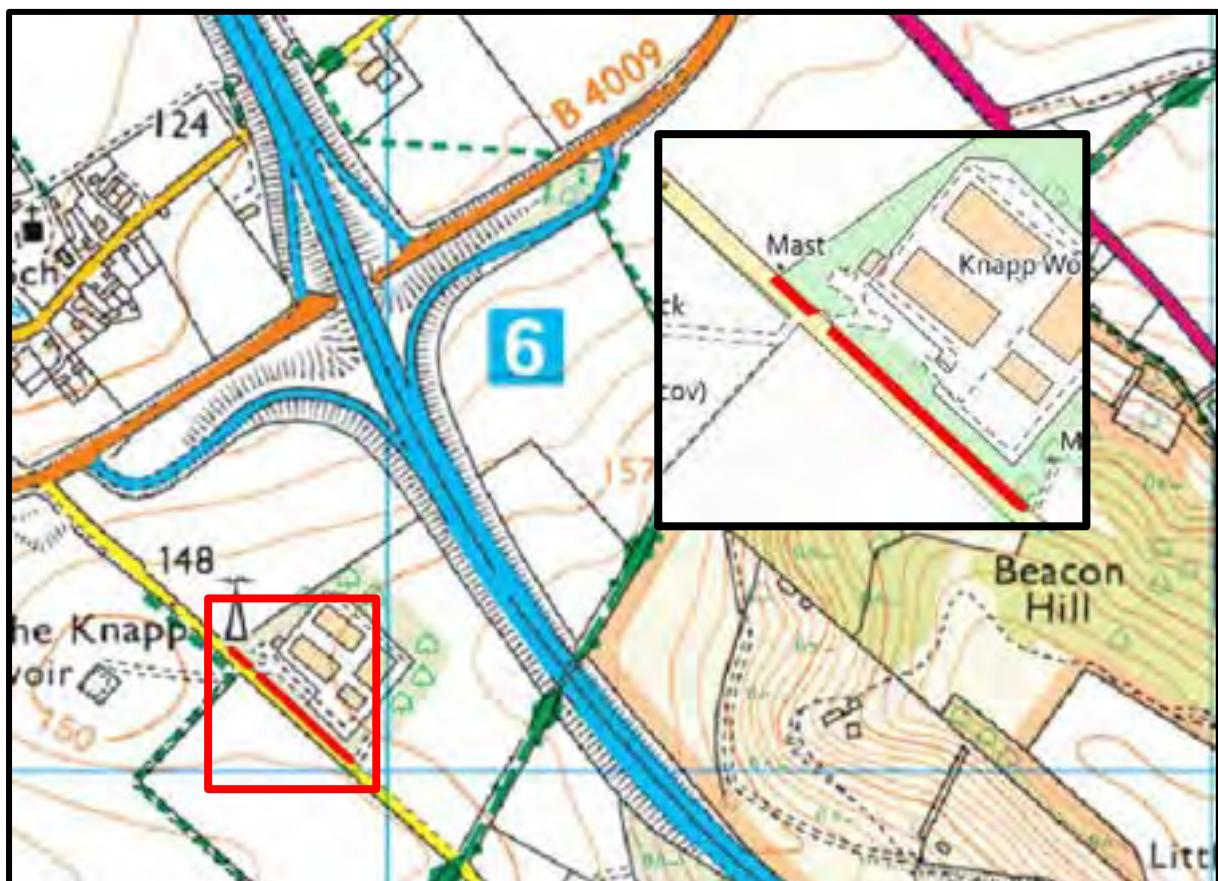
Scrub control and installation of marker posts.



Overview of verge in 2023

## Verge 52: Lewknor

<b>Verge Name</b>	Lewknor
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SU 718 970
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Oxfordshire District Council
<b>Parish</b>	Lewknor
<b>Date of last survey</b>	June 2024
<b>Approximate Length</b>	200m
<b>Key Habitat</b>	Limestone Grassland
<b>Features</b>	Adjacent scrub and hedgerow



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### Site Description

Species rich limestone grassland in moderate condition including populations of common knapweed, marjoram, bird's-foot trefoil, pyramidal orchid, agrimony, lady's bedstraw and broomrape.

### Designations of Nature Conservation Interest

The verge is located approximately 500m north-west of Aston Rowant SPA and Aston Rowant SSSI as well as approximately 400m north-west of Aston Rowant NNR and Chilterns Escarpment North CTA.

## **Management Requirements**

Annual cut and collect in September.

Installation of marker posts.



**Overview of verge in 2024**

## Appendix

# Road Verge Nature Reserves in Witney

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## Introduction

It has been noticeable this year that a number of roadside verges have been designated as nature reserves with appropriate signage and mowing maintenance to encourage the native wild flower diversity to flourish. One site visited by this recorder while walking in Crawley near the junction with the Charlbury road on Leafield Road brought a number of (previously unknown to the recorder) native species to the fore. These were:

**Meadow clary or Meadow sage** – *Salvia pratensis*

**Hoary plantain** – *Plantago media*

**Yellow mignonette** – *Reseda lutea* (used to make a yellow dye called 'weld' since 1000BC)

The following document captures a species list of plants found along an extended section of the Burford Road that encompasses hedgerows and footpath on one side, light woodland adjacent to the Windrush Valley Road development and a middle verge separating a slip road to that same development.

On the hedgerow side, the cutting back in the Spring of ground-invading and copse-creating blackthorn, elder and brambles left space for the wild flowers to show their heads. The walk experience along the path on that side has become *almost* a delight... if you ignore the speeding drivers at commuting hours and in the early evening.

This document aims to collate the species seen at different times of the year, each section representing a different month captured.

## Proposal

It is proposed that, following the clean-up that took place by volunteers in 2023 and subsequent timely spring coppicing in 2024 by the council, the verges and middle verge be classified as 'road verge nature reserves' to preserve their unique biodiversity and be maintained in the same way each Spring.

## Section 1 — Species recorded 10 June 2025

### ***Locations***

Burford Road from Tower Hill to Deer Park Road junction on both sides of the road, including the verge running parallel to the main road on the slip road leading to Windrush Valley Road.

### ***Species list***

GMullein – quite a colony and spreading on the slip road ‘middle verge’ segment



**1 Great Mullein field — *Verbascum thapsus***

**Location: Heading west on Burford Road...**

Wild snapdragon – common toadflax



**2 Common or Yellow Toadflax — *Linaria vulgaris***

Knapweed      Yarrow      Lesser celandine

White campion      Hedge bedstraw



**3 Hedge Bedstraw — *Galium mollugo***

**Location: Heading East on way back from Deer Park Road traffic lights**

Musk Mallow near the lights and Common Mallow



**4 Musk Mallow — *Malva moschata***

Bird's Foot trefoil      Hedge bedstraw Lady's bedstraw



**5 Lady's bedstraw — *Galium Verum***

Creeping cinquefoil



6 Creeping cinquefoil — *Potentilla reptans*

Spiny Restharrow



7 Spiny Restharrow — *Ononis spinosa*

Scabious

Common toadflax – wild snapdragon

[5 hemlock plants before the bus shelter, of which 4 trampled down – poisonous and invasive. Should be dug out with protective clothing on]

Numerous grasses that would need an expert to classify

## Section 2 — Species recorded 25 July 2025

---

### ***Location: Middle Verge between Burford Road and slip road to Windrush Valley Road***

The light woodland area on the south side of Burford Road nearest to the lights contains many **wild plum trees** that are laden this month with yellow and red plums.

In addition, these native flowers have come into bloom since this report was first compiled. They are...

Tansy and Caper Spurge



**8 Tansy — *Tanacetum vulgare***



**9 Caper Spurge — *Euphorbia lathyris***

**Location: Hedgerow Verge between Tower Hill roundabout on Burford Road to traffic lights at Deer Park Road**

Woolly Thistle and Mugwort (or wormwood)



**10 Woolly Thistle — *Cirsium eriophorum***



**11 Mugwort or wormwood — *Artemisia vulgaris***

## Appendix: Nature Reserve species in Crawley

**Location: Leafield Road, Crawley near junction turn off towards Charlbury**



12 Meadow clary or Meadow sage — *Salvia pratensis*

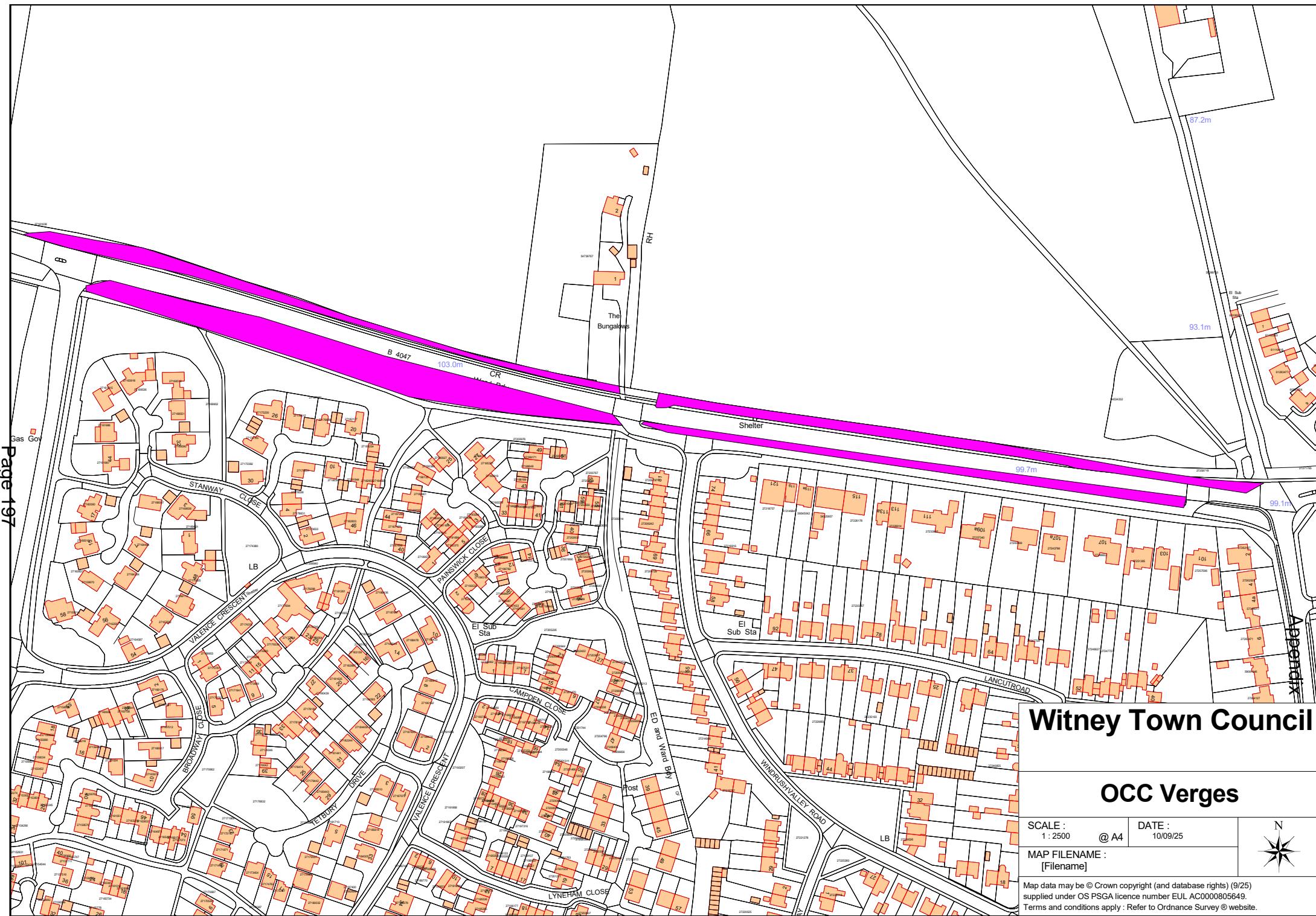


13 Hoary plantain — *Plantago media*



**14 Yellow mignonette — *Reseda lutea***

This flower has been used since 1000BC to make a yellow dye called '**weld**'.



## CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE



**Agenda Item:** Seasonal Planting in WTC Public Spaces

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 13 January 2026

**Contact Officer:** Head of Estates and Operations

---

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the planting of floral displays across the green spaces Witney Town Council manage.

### Background

Public green spaces such as council's parks, the town centre and housing estates play an important role in improving the appearance of communities, supporting biodiversity, and enhancing wellbeing.

Local authorities and organisations often choose between seasonal bedding plants (changed every summer and winter) and perennial planting schemes.

This report compares these approaches in terms of cost, maintenance, environmental impact, and visual effect within the UK climate.

### Current Situation

The council plant seasonal bedding twice a year that typically consists of begonias, petunias, and geraniums for the summer bedding, and pansies, violas, and wallflowers for the Winter bedding.

These plants provide bright, short-term displays and are removed and replaced each season.

#### Advantages

- Provides immediate, colourful impact
- Allows for seasonal themes and designs
- Familiar and popular with the public
- Useful for high-profile areas such as town centres and memorial spaces

#### Disadvantages

- Higher cost due to regular plant replacement
- Labour-intensive planting and removal
- Requires frequent watering and feeding
- Creates large amounts of green waste
- Limited benefits for wildlife
- Higher carbon footprint due to plant production and transport

An alternative is to use perennial plants which are long-lived plants that can return several years. Examples include lavender, ornamental grasses, sedum, rudbeckia, and shrubs. Once established, they require less frequent replanting.

### Advantages

- Lower long-term costs
- Reduced labour and maintenance
- More drought-tolerant once established
- Improved biodiversity, supporting pollinators
- Reduced waste and environmental impact
- Naturalistic appearance that fits modern landscape design

### Disadvantages

- Slower to establish visual impact
- May appear less colourful in winter
- Requires good design and planning
- Some public resistance due to less formal appearance

When we consider the environmental aspects, perennial planting is generally more sustainable as it:

- Reduces carbon emissions from plant production
- Improves soil health
- Supports insects, birds, and pollinators
- Reduces water use

Seasonal bedding has a higher environmental cost due to repeated planting cycles and maintained and conditioned soil.

Cost and Maintenance Comparison		
Factor	Seasonal Bedding	Perennial Planting
Initial cost	Medium	Medium
Long-term cost	High	Low
Labour	High	Low–Medium
Water use	High	Low
Lifespan	3–6 months	Several years
Biodiversity value	Low	High

If we consider the suitability for the town council's public spaces, we can determine the seasonal bedding is best suited for areas where a striking colourful floral display will have the greatest impact for the residents, businesses and tourists.

Perennial planting can be considered to be ideal in areas such as our parks and green corridors, housing estates, road verges and roundabouts.

Witney Town Council have been using a mixed approach, combining seasonal bedding in key locations with perennial schemes elsewhere. Officers continue to look at ways to maximise the level of perennials plants and achieve the correct balance that provides many benefits to the town's occupants and visitors.

## **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality - is linked to seasonal floral display planting through fair access to attractive public spaces, inclusive decision-making, and representation of diverse communities. When planting is focused only on affluent or tourist areas, it can reinforce inequality.
- b) Biodiversity - seasonal floral displays in Witney are used as a tool to enhance urban biodiversity, support pollinators, and meet sustainability goals, while still improving the appearance of public spaces.
- c) Crime & Disorder - research shows that well-maintained green spaces (including parks, landscaped areas, and planted public spaces) tend to be associated with lower rates of crime and vandalism, especially when they are attractive, visible, and actively used by the community.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency - Local governments and environmental campaigns in the UK are responding to the climate emergency by expanding urban planting initiatives including trees, wildflowers, shrubs, and other vegetation to help mitigate climate impacts and support biodiversity.

## **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

## **Financial implications**

- None to report for this report.

## **Recommendations**

Members are asked to note the report and recognise that a balanced approach prioritising the use of perennials while retaining seasonal displays in key locations is considered the most effective and sustainable strategy.



## Tree Policy

Adopted: xxxx Committee. Minute no:

Review Date:

### 1. Introduction

1.1 Witney Town Council is responsible for over 7,500 trees across the town and surrounding area. These trees provide a valuable amenity with many benefits for the town, parks and surrounding areas. These include maintaining and shaping the environment and align with the Town Council's commitment to Climate Change and maximising biodiversity value through proactive tree care and a tree planting programme. Trees also play an important role and structure for the town to help support flood alleviation, carbon sequestration, noise and air pollution, wildlife corridors (both urban and rural), and health and wellbeing.

### 2. Management of the Town Council's Trees

2.1 The Town Council has a duty to inspect these trees and to comply with its legal obligations to manage and maintain. In addition to planned maintenance, the Town Council react to reported issues where there is a risk to the public or where damage has been caused to property.

2.2 Where trees are located on land not owned by the Town Council, the landowner will be responsible and should be contacted directly with any concerns.

2.3 The Town Council will respond to urgent matters reported within 24 hours where trees pose a risk to life.

<b>Tree maintenance will only be carried out if necessary and in line with the following criteria:</b>	
Safety	Significant risk to the public Dead trees located near properties or roads
Tree Health	Work which will prolong life and encourage the development of a good tree structure
Removal	Dangerous, diseased, damaging property or to comply with the Highways Act 1980 S.154

Tree maintenance will not be carried out for the following:	
Natural Characteristics	Shade Leaf, blossom, pollen or seed distribution Television reception View
Overhanging Vegetation	Which is not causing damage or a risk to health & safety. Any tree owned by us that is causing any of the above can be cut back to your boundary. (Before cutting back any tree you will need to check whether there is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protected by a Tree Preservation Order</li> <li>• In a Conservation Area</li> </ul> If the tree is protected in any way, you will need to seek our permission.

2.4 The Town Council will seek to investigate and prosecute any organisation or individual that has caused significant damage to or removed any public tree(s) that are the responsibility of the Town Council.

### **3. Claims for subsidence, damage and heave**

3.1 When investigating claims of subsidence and/or damage to properties from tree roots emanating from a tree owned and maintained by the Town Council, the Town Council requires the property owner to submit a structural engineers report. This will enable the Town Council to review the evidence and determine the appropriate course of action.

The report must cover:

- Physical damage
- Presence of live roots of a suitable species
- Seasonal movement or variation of the damage during different seasons

3.2 All claims regarding subsidence will be referred to the Town Council's Insurer along with a brief report detailing the age, type and condition of the tree and any other factors that may be of importance to the claim. If evidence is insufficient any claim will be dismissed.

### **4. Tree planting strategy**

4.1 The Town Council will manage and maintain the quality and quantity of its tree stock by continuing to plant new trees in suitable locations with appropriate species to enhance the enjoyment of open spaces, promote local distinctiveness, conserve the environment and enhance structural and genetic diversity of its treescapes.

4.2 The Town Council will establish a diversity of species to mitigate against climate adaptation, pests and disease that can threaten entire species adopting a 'Right tree, right place' approach to species selection will be made.

4.3 The following will be taken into consideration at the planning stage prior to planting:

- Local provenance (as much as can be confirmed) of ALL trees must be confirmed.

- Factors limiting planting (e.g. archaeology, underground utilities, roads).
- The planting is suitable for the landscape and enhances the way the area is utilised.
- The planting is appropriate from an arboriculturally perspective, giving consideration to the issue or situation in terms of tree care, management, and conservation.
- Planting schemes are tailored to the site's specific conditions and requirements to ensure a high success rate.
- Planting schemes and specifications will comply with the latest biosecurity measures and strategies for tree health resilience.

4.4 For every tree that is on Town Council land that has a stem Diameter of 15cm or greater at the time of removal, two trees will be planted in the same or similar location. Should the existing location(s) be deemed not viable for direct replacements, alternative tree planting locations will be identified within the Town Council's responsibility or land within the locality.

4.5 Any Town Council tree that must be removed due to claim mitigation will be replaced adhering to the mitigation agreement.

4.6 The Town Council will proactively work and engage with Community Groups, West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to enable tree planting projects to succeed.

## **5. External Funding and Grants**

5.1 The Town Council will actively seek external funding and grant opportunities to support the delivery of new tree planting and long-term establishment projects. Priority will be given to initiatives that promote sustainability, biodiversity, and climate resilience, ensuring that all funded projects align with the Town Council's environmental objectives and best practice standards.

## **6. Memorial and Commemorative Tree Planting**

6.1 Requests for memorial or commemorative tree planting will be considered where the proposed details meet location standards and provisions are in place for long-term management. For further guidance, please refer to the Council's Memorial Tree Policy.

## **7. Mayoral Trees**

7.1 Since 2015, the Town Council has planted a Mayoral tree each year within the Witney Parish boundary. In accordance with minute F315, the Council has agreed to continue this tradition, with a preference for planting within the Mayor's electoral ward. Officers will identify a suitable location and select an appropriate native species, ensuring compliance with Town Council restrictions and management plans.

7.2 The Council will replace any Mayoral tree that becomes damaged, vandalised, or decayed. Where ground conditions or repeated vandalism make replanting impractical, officers

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may relocate the replacement tree to an alternative site. A plaque may also be installed to indicate the tree's dedication.

## **8. Tree Suppliers**

8.1 The Town Council will work with local and national UK tree nurseries and suppliers to source trees grown within the UK, prioritising sustainable practices and biosecurity. By supporting the production and use of locally grown, native species, the Council aims to reduce environmental impact, minimise the risk of pests and diseases, and contribute to long-term biodiversity and climate resilience.

## **9. Disposal and recycling**

9.1 The Town Council will consider recycling and upcycling tree wood waste where appropriate to align with its sustainable and environmentally friendly approach to managing timber and wood waste.

9.2 Disposing of tree wood waste in a way that promotes biodiversity is an important consideration in the Town Council's environmental management. Proper disposal methods can help ensure that the ecosystem remains balanced, avoiding harm to wildlife and encouraging the regeneration of plant species.

9.3 The Town Council will always look at ways wood waste can be recycled which can involve processing the wood into new products, wood chippings and pellets, or compost and mulch.

9.4 The Town Council will determine where retaining deadwood, damaged trees, and felled trees would be suitable in particular circumstances, to support biodiversity, promote invertebrate and fungal activity, and create wildlife corridors.

## **10. Management of the Town Council's trees – Routine inspections**

10.1 The Town Council is responsible for over 7,500 trees across the town and surrounding area. To ensure that we survey these as per best practice, the Town Council will undertake a Zoning\* exercise on selected Town Council sites to highlight areas where trees are present and in need of an increased level of inspection. This method is now being used by many Local Authorities. The method is to: -

- Identify areas of sites that are high risk and require surveying more frequently.
- Identify areas of sites that are low risk therefore reducing the inspection frequency of these areas. The Town Council believe a number of our trees will not be classed as high risk and will reduce the frequency of inspection required.

*\*Zoning – The following extract is from the 'Common Sense Tree Risk Management - Summary' by the National Tree Safety Group*

<https://ntsgroup.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/NTSG-summary.pdf>

‘Zoning is a practice whereby landowners and managers define areas of land according to levels of use. This practice prioritises the most used areas, and by doing so contributes to a cost-effective approach to tree inspection, focusing resources where they are most needed. It contributes to sensible risk management and a defendable position in the event of an accident. It may be a reasonable outcome of the zoning process to decide that no areas require inspection. Classifying levels of use in this way requires only a broad assessment of levels of use. Typically, two zones, high and low use, may be sufficient. High-use zones are areas used by many people every day, such as busy roads, railways and other well-used routes, car parks and children’s playgrounds or where property may be affected. Low use zones are used infrequently and may only require irregular inspection, if any. While owners and managers may deem it appropriate to use a more sophisticated approach, designating three or more zones, in the event of an accident whichever system is adopted may require justification according to the standard set. Normally, the best person to carry out an initial zoning assessment is someone who is familiar with the land, how it is used and what trees are present. Typically, this could be the landowner, occupier or land manager. It does not require a tree specialist to zone a site.’

10.2 Zoning, inspection schedules and the inspections will be undertaken by a specialist inspector. This information is held on the Town Council’s tree mapping software and plotted on a geographical information system.

## **11. Privacy Statement**

11.1 Witney Town Council is committed to ensuring that the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 1998 are met. Please refer to the Council’s data protection policy and privacy notice here:  
[Witney Town Council Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice](#)

## **12. Monitoring and Review**

12.1 A formal review will take place every two years or sooner if required by legislation or organisational change.

**Policy Document****Memorial Tree Policy**

Adopted: xxxx Committee. Minute no:

Review Date:

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Witney Town Council understands the wishes of anyone wishing to plant a memorial tree. The Council will only consider requests for trees to be planted on land under the direct ownership and management of the Council. The application for a memorial tree must be seen as the donation of a tree to the town of Witney and not a personal memorial.
- 1.2 The policy is also intended to address the donation of trees not intended to be in memory of a lost one.
- 1.3 This Memorial Tree Policy does not relate to trees in Witney Town Council's cemeteries or closed churchyards.

**2. Purpose**

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to address the below points.
  - To be respectful and sympathetic to those seeking to plant a tree.
  - To establish responsibility for the maintenance, repair and replacement of memorial trees.
  - To ensure trees are maintained, in keeping with the area and will not cause future problems once matured.
  - Enhance the enjoyment of the area by all users.

**3. Tree Species & Planting Locations**

- 3.1 Witney Town Council officers will select an appropriate tree for an area it is to be planted in. The below factors will all be considered when selecting a species:
  - Mature height and spread of the tree.
  - Species of other trees in the area. It may be necessary to add trees with autumn colours or that provide berries or nuts for wildlife.
  - Replacement of recently felled trees or trees that have been identified to be near the end of their lifespan.

- Sun level requirements of species.

3.2 Witney Town Council restrictions or management plans in any one area including:

- Native British species in Windrush Cemetery.
- Creation of an arboretum at Tower Hill Cemetery.
- Lake and Country Park clearing of overgrowth from felled trees and coppicing.

3.3 The below factors are all considered with planting locations:

- Proximity to properties.
- Nearby installations that could be affected by root growth.
- Underground services.
- Accessible to be watered.

3.4 Tree locations on offer for each planting season may only be based on where trees have been felled or where planting project locations have been identified.

## 4. Maintenance

4.1 Trees will be assessed every 5 years by an external surveyor.

4.2 Surveyors will recommend works to a tree that will be carried out in the timeframe recommended by the surveyor. These works would be seen as essential, and the applicant of the tree will not be made aware of these works to avoid delay in maintenance and care for trees.

4.3 Outside of the 5 years assessments, it may be the case that an officer from Witney Town Council trained in tree surveying may also recommend necessary works.

## 5. Planting and Maintenance

5.1 All trees will be planted in line with Witney Town Council tree planting processes. Trees will be planted during the autumn and winter planting season by Witney Town Council:

- Three-times the volume of the rootball is excavated and loosened.
- A suitable soil conditioner is used to increase the survival rate in the first year of planting.
- The tree is then planted and topped with a mulch layer to help aid soil moisture.
- All necessary tree planting accessories are then installed tree stakes and ties, irrigation accessories and tree guard.

5.2 Based on the area a tree is being planted a suitable tree guard will be installed. This would include one of the solutions below:

- Full steel tree guard.
- Staked galvanised mesh.
- Biodegradable plastic-free tree shelter guard.

5.3 Irrigation accessories can include the following and will be installed based on the tree size requirements to give it the best chance of survival:

- Irrigation bags
- Tree irrigation rings

5.4 Tree stakes and ties are installed based on the size of the tree.

5.5 All newly planted trees will be maintained by Witney Town Council in line with guidance from 'The Tree Council – Caring for newly planted trees'.

<https://treecouncil.org.uk/guidance-resources/caring-for-newly-planted-trees/>

## 6. Tree Donation

6.1 It may be the case that a person or persons wish to donate a tree to Witney Town Council. In this event, all items in this policy that are relevant will be considered.

6.2 A tree donation can come in the form of payment for Witney Town Council to purchase a tree or a physical tree that has been grown by the donator.

## 7. Memorial Plaques and Memorial Items

7.1 Memorial plaques and memorial items will not be permitted on or near any memorial tree(s).

7.2 If an applicant chooses to install a plaque or item on or near a tree(s) then it will be removed by Witney Town Council staff.

## 8. Removal

8.1. In the rare case, a tree has to be removed, all efforts will be made to relocate it. Relocation will only be possible when the tree is dormant (early spring and autumn) and if it is of a manageable size.

8.2 A location will be identified in line with this policy, and the original applicant will be made aware of the new location. All reasonable endeavours will be made to contact the original applicant.

8.3 If a tree has to be felled the applicant will be made aware of the process. The tree will then be replaced at the cost of Witney Town Council. This is Witney Town Council's process to maintain its tree stock.

8.4 If an applicant wishes to assist in the purchase of a new tree purchase with a more mature tree it is welcomed. The difference in cost will be invoiced to the applicant.

## 9. Application Process

9.1 Anyone wishing to make an application can source an application form online or at the Witney Town Council offices.

9.2 The application form must then be submitted via email to [info@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@witney-tc.gov.uk) or via post to Witney Town Council, 51B Market Square, Witney OX28 6AG.

9.3 All requests will be considered by officers. This process will take time, and the applicant should allow up to three months for a decision to be made, following receipt of the application form and full information.

9.4 An applicant will then be advised if their application has been accepted or rejected and on what grounds.

9.5 Witney Town Council will attempt to accommodate the wishes of the application, but it may limit the number and type of trees in a particular area or add any stipulations at its own discretion.

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- 9.6 Prior planting of trees in any area does not convey any obligation on Witney Town Council to plant future trees in a similar area or a similar manner. Each request will be considered on its own merits at the time of application.
- 9.7 Communication will then be held with the applicant regarding location and tree species.
- 9.8 All trees and planting requirements must be paid for by the applicant prior to purchase and installation by Witney Town Council. Witney Town Council will inform the applicant of the price on receipt of an approved application form.
- 9.9 The applicant will then be invoiced for payment which includes the tree, irrigation equipment, stake and tie, tree guard and work hours to plant. Ongoing watering is not included but will not be charged.
- 9.10 The applicant can then be made aware of the planting date if they wish to be present and assist if practicable and desired. It is important this is not seen as a ceremonial event.
- 9.11 The location, species and planting date are all stored securely on the Council's tree mapping software. The applicants contact information is additionally stored on the Council's tree mapping software.

## **10. Memorial Tree Contact Information Procedure**

- 10.1 The Council will hold the memorial tree applicant's details on file for the sole purpose of the tree management only and will only contact the applicant if there are any issues relating to the tree(s). If there is no response from the applicant within the timescale given, the Council will take the necessary action to ensure safety and resolve the issue.

## **11. Privacy Statement**

- 11.1 Witney Town Council is committed to ensuring that the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 1998 are met. Please refer to the Council's data protection policy and privacy notice here:  
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## **12. Monitoring and Review**

- 12.1 A formal review will take place every two years or sooner if required by legislation or organisational change.