

Somerset County Council

Economic and Community Infrastructure - Highways

Environmental Maintenance Information Sheet 2020

Introduction

The highway network is vital to the people of Somerset and the local economy. During the growing season, Somerset County Council carries out environmental maintenance works to help keep all road users safe. The maintenance activities are listed below.

Grass cutting

Highway verges are cut to a minimum of one metre in width from the road side to provide a safe area for pedestrians, preserve visibility and help the flow of surface water along road channels. Sight lines are also cut at road junctions and bends to ensure better visibility for road users and pedestrians.

In certain urban areas around the county, grass cutting is carried out by District Councils. You can get more information from your respective District Council.

Our grass cutting programme normally commences in early / mid-May and is complete by early September, depending on the seasonal growing conditions. The busiest routes are cut first because of the higher volumes of traffic using them.

The grass cutting programme is below: -

Road Classification	Grass Cutting Dates
1 st cut - A and B roads (including junction visibility splays and sight lines)	11 th May 2020 – 07 th Jun 2020 (dependant on rate of growth) 4 - weeks
C and unclassified roads (including junction visibility splays and sight lines)	08 th Jun 2020 – 02 nd Aug 2020 (dependant on rate of growth) 8 - weeks
2 nd cut - A and B roads (including junction visibility splays and sight lines)	03 rd Aug 2020 – 30 th Sep 2020 (dependant on rate of growth) 4 - weeks
Environmentally protected sites	Late August/early September (dependant on rate of growth) 1 - week

Please note the dates listed above may be subject to change due to weather or any unforeseen events.

Hedges and banks

Where there are no verges and the roads are immediately bordered by a bank or hedge, a minimum of a single vertical swathe of seasonal growth will be cut.

However, the majority of hedges bordering the highway are privately owned. Landowners and occupiers are responsible for the maintenance of their boundary, except between 1 March and 31 July (bird nesting season), to make sure their hedge, tree or shrub does not obstruct highway users or lines of sight at junctions. Landowners must also remove any debris from the road surface to prevent nuisance and to stop it blocking surface water drainage systems.

To report dangerous vegetation on the highway network please visit; <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-transport/problems-on-the-road/report-an-overgrown-verge-or-hedge-on-the-road/>; and it will be dealt with in the appropriate manner.

Weed spraying

Under the Noxious Weeds Act 1959, certain noxious weeds, including ragwort, must be removed where they are reported as causing a nuisance to highway users or adjoining landowners.

Invasive species are treated and controlled by the County Council as part of a planned programme of works. Known species include; Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed.

Specific sites can receive up to four planned inspections and/or treatments per season. Our weed treatment programme normally commences in early / mid-May and is complete by early September, depending on the seasonal growing conditions.

To report noxious or invasive weeds on the highway network please visit; <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-transport/problems-on-the-road/report-weeds-on-the-road/>; and it will be dealt with in the appropriate manner.

Conservation

All environmental works will seek to protect wildlife on roadside verges, while maintaining road safety, consistent with the Somerset Highways Biodiversity Manual and the Somerset Pollinator Action Plan.

For more information about environmental maintenance, please visit www.travelsomerset.co.uk/grass-cutting