

Bridford Road Verges Management Plan for 2026

Bridford Wildlife Wardens (part of the [ACTion on Climate in Teignbridge Ecology Group](#))

January 2026

Contents

Project Aims.....	1
Principles of Managing Land for Wildflowers.....	2
2025 Assessment.....	3
Community Feedback.....	4
Management Plan.....	5

1. Project Aims

The Wildlife Wardens submitted an Ecological Management Plan for Bridford's road verges to the Parish Council in January 2022 and this plan was agreed by the Parish Council at the meeting on 10th January 2022. The aim of the plan was to develop the grass verges into a species rich wildflower meadow. These meadows would have been part of a traditionally farmed landscape but since the 1930s, 97% of these have been lost and this has had far reaching effects on pollinating insects and bird populations. In Bridford, a large area of land is now farmed in an intensive manner, impacting on the biodiversity of the area. It can therefore be seen on a very local level why it is important that the margins of land in the area are managed in a way that is sympathetic to wildlife, creating corridors that are vital for species of plant, insect, bird and small mammal to thrive. The verges project is part of a network of similar schemes, both local and national, to address biodiversity loss. At the local level we are linking with the Bridford Woodland Park and at a national level we are supporting the UK Government's stated aims to protect 30% of land for wildlife by 2030. Projects such as Bridford's are crucial to combat declining biodiversity, but they also benefit people; a living landscape which is rich in biodiversity is now widely accepted as important to people's good mental health and the NHS itself supports this view, offering nature-based prescriptions.

2. Principles of Managing Land for Wildflowers

The principles of managing the land for wildflowers can be summarised as follows:

- Reduced cutting - leave the verges to grow (other than paths) between January and the end of summer. Whole verge cut between August and the end of September, and once or twice before January depending on grass growth.

- Sow yellow-rattle in the first year to reduce competition from dominant grass species. Yellow rattle is an annual wildflower that suppresses the growth of grass by parasiting on it. This leaves gaps in the soil where wildflower seed can germinate.
- Reduce fertilisation of the soil by taking away grass cuttings and ensuring any dog faeces are picked up.

Over time this management means that there is less grass and the wildflowers that are endemic to the area can grow, flower and seed. The flowers are of great value to pollinators and the seeds are an important food source for birds. A perennial meadow can take a number of years to establish.

For further information please see the [Good Verge Guide](#)

3. 2025 Assessment

Key points:

- The rattle germinated well in 2025 and the Pound Lane verge shows a good amount of wildflowers, including a lot of knapweed which is a great flower for pollinating insects. The grass will continue to decrease over time with the right management.
- It is still necessary to do some management of the Pound Lane verge to ensure that species such as hogweed and dock do not take over. The Wildlife Wardens went out on a few occasions during 2025 to pull or cut these out from the verges.
- Graham Dicker has regularly mown the 1.5 metre path in 2025 which works well. As well as providing people with room to walk along the verge, this path is important to how it appears, looking managed rather than just left.
- Graham has taken the cuttings after each mow. Taking the grass away is vital to cut the ground fertility over time, so this is working well also. I will speak to Graham about whether he could leave the cuttings from Pound Lane on the pile in the playground in future.
- The Butts Close verge is still very fertile with grass. The Wildlife Wardens planted some wildflower plugs from the local area in this stretch in spring 2024 and 2025 to speed up the process of the area becoming a wildflower meadow. Quite a few of these have taken, but it is still grass heavy. As the verge is in the village it is important that it is visually appealing to people living in the area.
- The Butts Close verge was severely mowed by Teignbridge contractors earlier than the late summer mow. This may mean that the rattle flowers had not gone to seed by then, but we will not know this until spring 2026.
- Swallows are now nesting in the bus shelter. Increasing the plant diversity in the area will increase the insects and therefore the amount insect eating birds and bats. See Appendix 2 for a photo of the swallows.

4. Community Feedback

There were some concerns raised by Butts Close residents in 2025 about the look of the verge. As stated above, the verge is still heavy in grass which when long in late summer is not visually appealing to all. The management plan for 2026 has been modified to engage with these concerns and the plan can be shared with Butts Close residents.

It should be noted that a perennial wildflower meadow does not always have the bright colours of an annual wildflower meadow (which include poppies and cornflowers) which some people visually prefer. Annual wildflowers need to be sown each year on bare or heavily scarrified ground and are therefore more labour intensive to manage. However, it is possible that a small section of the verge could be roughly scarrified and sown with annual flower seed. It should be noted that rats will not be attracted by the verges, the grass/ flowers neither provide the food source or shelter that they are looking for.

In 2022 we asked for feedback from the wider Bridford community, and the responses were overwhelmingly positive, with 1 negative comment and 10 positive. To continue to engage the local community it is recommended that we do a survey of the flora and fauna on the verge in 2026 and publish this with a request for comment.

5. Management Plan for 2026

It is proposed that the 2026 management plan largely follows last year's plan, with modifications for the Butts Close verge. The verge within the village is an important stepping stone for wildlife in the area and can, with some changes, be both appealing to wildlife and residents. Good publicity round the benefits of wildflower verges will help people engage with the reasons behind the management plan.

Time of year	Action	Notes	Who to action
February 2026	Publicity about the wildflower verges and why these are important, including around changes to management. Plan to be shared with Butts Close residents. Wildflower sign to go out on Butts Close verge.	Article in Unity, plus on social media.	PC (Lucy has existing content to use)
Butts Close Verge January - April 2026	Assess the Butts Close verges for wildflowers and plug in wildflowers as necessary. 'Top off' the grass end of March/ April. This will encourage flower growth and make sure that the grass does not get too long and seed.	Locally found wildflowers such as Oxeye Daisy and Campion. This is done with a strimmer and can target any grass heavy areas.	Lucy Lucy

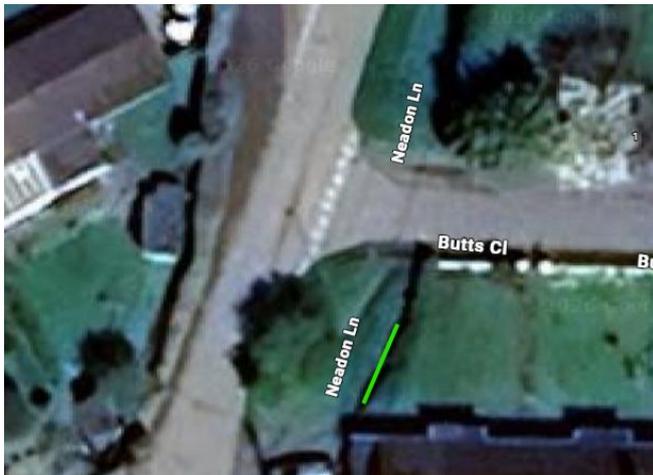
January – August 2026	Mowing of paths 1.5 metre wide next to the roads, including around the layby area. Additional area to be mown regularly on Butts Close verge, alongside fence – see Appendix 1	The additional area is in response to a request by a Butts Close resident	Parish contractor
May - July 2026	Assessment of Butts Close verge to ensure the grass is not too long and taking over. This can be targeted by a strim or an earlier mow than the Pound Lane verge.	This is to ensure that residents in the area are happy with the look of the verge. Once there are more flowers and less grass it is hoped that the area will sell itself.	Lucy
Late June – August	Full mow of verge	Following assessment of flowers and grass	Parish contractor
September/ October	Full mow of verge		Parish contractor
Pounds Lane Verge			
January – August 2026	Mowing of paths 1.5 metre wide next to the roads. Removal of grass cuttings	These paths are important as it ensures that the area looks managed.	Parish contractor
May - August 2026	Wildlife Wardens to remove thistles and docks as appropriate	Removing these plants will ensure that the ground is not over fertilised.	Wildlife Wardens
August/ September 2026	Mow of all the verges once the flowers have set seed. Cuttings to be removed.	Cuttings to be taken by contractor.	Parish contractor
November/ December 2026	A second mow of all the verges	This will ensure that the grass is short for the new year so that the Yellow Rattle can germinate	Parish contractor
July 2026	Include information on verges at the Parish Council stall at the Village Fete	This could be a print of the existing information board, plus further information following a	PC/ Lucy

		survey. Invite comments.	
--	--	--------------------------	--

We thank the Parish Council for investing in this project and their ongoing support with it. We also appreciate Graham Dicker’s management of the land in line with the plan, as this is vital to the project’s success.

Appendix 1

New area to be mown regularly on the Butts Close verge – green line indicates.



Appendix 2

Swallows are nesting in the bus shelter.

