

Grass management and suggestions for other land - report September 2023

The council has been trying to encourage biodiversity in recent years by reducing grass cutting on the recreation ground and along verges around the parish. This summer there were several complaints because the village looked untidy. Council wished to take advice and asked the clerk to contact Sustainable Harwell regarding grass verge and recreation ground management, planting and management of land adjacent to Footpath 11, and use of herbicides. Clerk also contacted the Harwell Gardeners' Club at the suggestion of SusH.

Sustainable Harwell sent this initial response;

Re: Land adjacent to Footpath 11 – PC will be laying weed-suppressant membrane along this land during the winter to keep the weeds down but still has no long term plans for replanting and replacing the alder trees. Any suggestions?

One possibility here is that it is replanted as a hedge, however we suggest that the PC also contact Harwell Gardener's Club as they may have alternative views. We would also be happy to ask the question to the wider SH group, via a forthcoming newsletter, to see if any of our members have an opinion which could help the PC. Please let me know if you would like us to do this.

Grass management – PC has tried to keep a balance between cutting verges all year and leaving long for biodiversity, following the PlantLife advice, but it hasn't really hit off. The same problem occurs in the rec where the schedule is to leave a section long for biodiversity but it's unclear what particular benefits are conveyed at present.

We have recently published a view on the management of verges which can be read on the SH website. "Sustainable Harwell supports measures that will increase the biodiversity of our verges" It can be read here: <https://sustainable-harwell.uk/management-of-verges/>

Please refer to this article for more ideas and suggestions.

And has promised advice on herbicides in due course, as well as the group can advise on this.