



Road Verge Management Guidance – Case Study



‘Mini meadows’ provide Refuge for Wildlife in Stevenage



Grass has been encouraged to grow long on some roadside verges by Stevenage Borough Council and Hertfordshire & Middlesex Wildlife Trust for the past two years, as part of a trial to help the town’s wildlife thrive.

Longer grass allows native wildflowers to bloom and set seed. Insects such as butterflies and bees are helped, which in turn benefit birds that feed on them. Drivers’ line of vision is unaffected, as the grass is cut short immediately next to the road to a width of two metres, but grass further away from the edge is allowed to grow long.

Stevenage has some very wide road verges which make ideal places for establishing these ‘mini-meadows’. The verges also act as corridors, allowing wildlife to move around the town more easily. Some areas are cut at the end of summer, once the

flowers have set seed. Other road verges are left long throughout the year, as grasshoppers and crickets lay their eggs in the grass which hatch the following spring.

Cllr John Gardner, Deputy Leader of Stevenage Borough Council, and responsible for the environment, said:

“The creation of these urban meadows alongside a number of our major roads, through a more managed approach to grass cutting, is already showing evidence of increased variety in both insects and wildflowers. It’s true to say the butterflies, bees and crickets are returning to our green town to enhance our enjoyment of the natural world.”

Surveys in 2012 show that two of the verges are at Local Wildlife Site quality.

To find out more about the project, email info@hmwt.org or call **01727 858901**

