



Road Verge Management Guidance – Case Study



Restoring Shropshire's Verges



Edgton Village is a small community of 45 households in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in South Shropshire. Early in 2018, a grant to support a local verge project was awarded to Shropshire Wildlife Trust from the Shropshire Hills AONB Conservation Fund, and work began on 4th April 2018 with a launch event in the local village hall.

The AONB grant specified 6 conditions to be met:

1. Survey and agree areas of special interest

With the help of local botanist, Rob Rowe, all the verges in Edgton village were surveyed with a local 'Verge Volunteer' group. Wildflower species of interest were identified, and a colour coded map, data sheet and photographic record were produced.

As a result, baseline evidence shows that Edgton has some of the best verges currently known in South Shropshire, with 53 species of interest positively identified.

2. Agree cutting regimes and attempt damage repair

A late cut in August was agreed with South Shropshire Highways department. Overall, this was successful with the support of most of the village residents. Some concerns were raised by individuals as listed below and with the help of the local verge volunteer group, these issues were resolved locally.

Road safety, visibility and car scratching issues were resolved by volunteers clearing the problem areas. A further complaint was related to untidiness and so educational information was supplied about the project using the Plant life Good Verge Guide.

3. Implement gentler cutting regime and restoration work

Throughout the summer local volunteers set about scything and hand pulling undesirable plants from selected verges in and around Edgton, with any litter removed by hand. A local farmer and volunteers helped move the green waste removed from the verges, which were taken to the local recycling facility.

Special attention was paid to the verges directly in front of the village hall. This verge was chosen as a test bed to see what is possible in terms of rewilding of a verge with wild flower seeds and plants.

4. Carry out local community consultations and events

The verge project was launched, and a public consultation was given at the Village Meeting AGM on 22nd May with follow up information included in the village meeting minutes and sent to all Edgton residents.

5. Produce promotional material and information

A series of wildflower photographs, from which Shropshire Wildlife Trust plan to create a permanent exhibition in the village hall, and a map of colour coded verges according to species present were produced.

The recorded verge data identifying which plants were present was also made available, and various articles were published. Shropshire Wildlife Trust intend to produce a final report and updated presentation for public meetings.



6. Share information and good practice with others

Several presentations and talks have taken place or are planned with various community groups such as Woman's Institutes, local gardening clubs and the Shropshire smallholders' group. The aim is to try to encourage these groups to initiate local verge projects, adopt a verge, grow wildflower plugs and spread good practice.



Ongoing discussions with the local Highways Department are aimed at ensuring the project is maintained and partnerships have been established with The National Trust, AONB and Shropshire Wildlife Trust.

The Edgton Village Verge Project was funded by Shropshire Hills AONB Conservation Fund.

Shropshire Wildlife Trust was a partner in the project, alongside Shropshire Council, Caring for God's Acre, and the National Trust. For more information about the project, email Janet Cobb janet@jan-net.co.uk

