

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

**County Council
23rd January 2020**

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Heulwen Hulme, Portfolio Holder for Environment

SUBJECT: Question from County Councillor Karen Laurie-Parry

Time & Cost Saving Management - Grass Cutting on Trunk Roads & County Council maintained highways.

Many residents have read a Social Media post whereby another County Council had reported financial savings in Grass Cutting, by planting wild flowers which are very pleasing to the eye, and encourage the sustainment of butterflies, bees etc.

Residents have asked for consideration where there are very wide grass verges and embankments, would it not be cost-saving and better time management of workers to grass cut just 3 feet of verge and to allow the already planted wild flowers to take effect?

Might this not free-up time, for the Highways Department Manual Workers, to undertake identified much needed highway maintenance work on 'B' Class roads, other side roads and associated drainage?

Response

Powys County Council currently has 127 Roadside Verge Nature Reserves (RVNR's) on the County road network which all have individual management plans to benefit the species present on that site. The database of these RVNR's will be emailed to Members for information.

The Rural grass verge cutting contract specification is already limited to a 1.2 metre width of cut with additional width of cut only at junctions or where there are visibility issues.

The Urban grass verges are where we are looking to reduce the areas that are currently cut. We have a number of projects ongoing, where we have worked with local groups to identify areas that can be left uncut. Please find below a list of some of the groups we are working with:

- Brecon Beacons National Park
- Presteigne Town Council
- "On the verge" – Creating wildlife havens Talgarth
- Radnorshire Wildlife Trust
- Brecknock Wildlife Trust

- Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust
- Crickhowell Town Council
- Hay-on-Wye Community Group

If you have any specific areas that you feel would benefit from remaining uncut, then please contact the HGSS Contracts & Programmes Manager Brian Price and I am sure he will be able to arrange for the area to be assessed.