

To parishes within/adjacent to the Yorkshire Dales National Park

Date: April 2021

Please Help Manage Dales Verges for Biodiversity this year!

You may know about a recent national campaign by the charity Plantlife to increase biodiversity by improving how roadside verges are managed, see <https://plantlife.love-wildflowers.org.uk/roadvergecampaign>.

Closer to home, we at Friends of the Dales are running a similar campaign with their support. The aim is to enable flowering plant species to flourish in roadside grass, for the benefit of pollinating insects and all the other wildlife that depends on them. More info at www.friendsofthedales.org.uk/campaigns/verges.

Very often this can be easily achieved, simply by altering the cutting regime of roadside and/or village grass. Leaving an area of grass uncut throughout the summer months can support all sorts of nectar-rich flowers to grow. **This provides essential nectar and pollen for butterflies, moths and other species whose populations have dramatically declined over recent decades.**

Our campaign already has the support of North Yorkshire County Council, but since much of the roadside verge and village grass in the Dales is **managed more locally, we are writing to Parish Councils and Meetings** to invite them on board. As you may be aware, the following grass management principles can have substantial benefits for biodiversity:

- Try not to cut the grass between **May and August** (inclusive) to allow flowers to set seed
- If cutting can't be avoided, consider mowing paths and edge strips and **leaving some areas uncut**, as a wildlife refuge. This can also help to address concerns about untidiness and safety
- **Remove invasive weeds** (nettles, thistles, docks) by chopping down/uprooting, not spraying

We hope that your parish will be able to adopt the above measures, especially in these days of Climate and Biodiversity Emergency. Do let us know if you are managing your verges for biodiversity or need more advice - our volunteer campaign coordinator is Dr Anne Readshaw (annereadshaw@btinternet.com). We would be very happy to publicise your efforts on our social media, website or magazine. I enclose a complimentary copy of our Winter Review 2021 magazine, with an article about verges on page 6.

Regards



Dr Bruce McLeod, Chair Friends of the Dales



CAMPAIGN • PROTECT • ENJOY