



Information Governance
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Please contact Information Governance
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Dear Sir/Madam

**Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)
Request ID: REQ07733**

Thank you for your request for information on the wildflower maintenance contract.

Your request and our responses are outlined below:

1. On the road verge network you are responsible for maintaining, are you or your services contractor implementing a mowing regime to benefit wildflowers?

Yes.

a. If yes, can you outline your management practices (e.g. cutting verges later in the year, cutting them less often, collecting the arisings).

We use an annual wildflower mix which we cut at the end of the season but allow to regrow for a second year before cutting and weedkilling. Each year's growth of wildflowers are mown on a cut and drop regime with a rear flail used to cut back the growth at the end of the season.

b. If not, are you or your contractor planning on implementing one from 2021 or beyond?

Not applicable.

2. If you or your contractor are implementing such a scheme, what has prompted you to do so (eg. cost savings, reduced CO2 emissions, the impacts of the pandemic)? What benefits, if any, have you seen? And what, if any, problems have you encountered?

Coventry City Council first looked at the potential of growing wildflower areas on areas of the adopted highway in 2014. This was to consider the potential of cost saving due to wildflower meadows requiring less maintenance visits per year than regular amenity grass. This meant maintaining areas including roundabouts and central reservations on major trunk roads such as the A45 and A444 would require less Traffic Management costs. As a result, although the City Council has sowed some highway verges with wildflowers – notably on Allesley Hall Drive and at Rye Hill - our primary focus has been on sowing wildflowers in areas which are difficult to mow without Traffic Management.

We are currently trialling methods to rejuvenate some of the highway wildflower meadows which have been sown repeatedly and where weeds such as docks, fat hen and creeping thistle are becoming a problem. This involves a programme of selective weedkilling, applying fertiliser and regular mowing.

We review the success of the Highway Wildflower scheme at the end of every year and consider what options are available to modify and improve the scheme including public opinion, the annual cost and the advice from colleagues in Highways/Traffic etc.

Evidence gathered by Sheffield University shows that the Coventry Highway Wildflower scheme and others like it help the UK reach targets set in the National Pollinator Strategy 2014 – 2024. Our scheme has prompted more favourable responses from the public than any project of its size in Coventry and in 2014, the Coventry City Council 'Highway Wildflower Meadows' scheme led to us winning a golden 'Green Apple' award from the Green Organisation for environmental innovation. We intend for the Coventry Highway Wildflower scheme to be especially memorable in Coventry's year as the UK City of Culture in 2021.

3. If you or your contractor have not implemented one, what, if any, reasons are preventing you (eg, safety concerns, lack of information, resident views)?

Not applicable.

4. What is your approach to using glyphosate for weed control?

With respect to the use of Glyphosate, Coventry City Council and its contractors currently use products containing Glyphosate as a weed killer. The authority continually monitors guidance on its use and as yet has not received guidance from Central Government nor the HSE to advise us to stop or restrict the use of glyphosate in public places. We try to limit its use nevertheless.

The supply of information in response to a freedom of information request does not confer an automatic right to re-use the information. You can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non-commercial research without requiring further permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re-used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs. Please contact us if you wish to use the information for any other purpose.

Should you wish to make any further requests for information, you may find what you are looking for is already published on the Council's web site and in particular its FOI/EIR Disclosure log, Council's Publication Scheme, Open Data and Facts about Coventry.

If you are unhappy with the handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. Requests for reviews should be submitted within 40 days of the date of receipt of our response to your original request – email: infogov@coventry.gov.uk

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our review, you can write to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or email casework@ico.org.uk.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in your response.

Yours faithfully

Information Governance