

WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Planning & Environment Committee

Grass Cutting & Re-wilding

1. Update – Services Working Party

- 1.1 Since the meeting of this Committee on 12 April 2021, the Services Working Party met to review the potential for growing long grass alongside the main roads through the Parish, to support a long term sustainability commitment.
- 1.2 The Services Working Party has identified a number of issues arising from this proposal particularly around the consistency of treatment and dealing with changing depths of verges, particularly where residential properties border the main road edges.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The Services Working Party has determined that adding to the wildflower meadows with additional areas of uncut long grass would be easier to manage and would cumulatively be at least the same, possibly more coverage of uncut grassed areas. These spaces could potentially be added to the agricultural cut of the wildflower meadows thus avoiding issues later in the season of dealing with uncut grass.
- 2.2 Additional areas proposed by the Working Party to be left uncut include
- Shaw Linear Park (opposite Tumpy Field play area)
 - Shaw Linear Park (adjacent to Tewkesbury Way footbridge)
 - Middleleaze field (adjacent to footpath by Camton Road)
 - Eastleaze field off Whitehill Way
 - Section of Shaw Forest park

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 Adding areas to the wildflower meadow agricultural cut will increase the charges to the Parish Council for the annual cut (currently approximately £2000) however it would reduce the need for additional equipment to be purchased this season.
- 3.2 It may be necessary to purchase machinery to cut long grass if there is a long term commitment to reducing cuts in some areas.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 For the Committee to agree the proposal from the Services Working Party to add uncut grassed areas to the current sections of wildflower meadows and that these areas remain uncut until the cut and bale session in the Summer.

Paula Harrison, Parish Manager