

## ROADSIDE VERGES

The roadside verge is part of the highway, including trees and bushes growing on it. Trimming of the verge for visibility purposes and maintenance of road drainage ditches are the responsibility of the Highway Authority. When cutting verges, the Highway Authority may also trim small sections of roadside hedge. This does not relieve the owner/occupier of his responsibility for roadside trimming.

## OWNERS AND OCCUPIERS ARE REQUIRED TO :-

- Trim roadside hedges so that growth does not impair the safety of highway users. This is likely to include any hedge that directly abuts any Public Right of Way.
- Trim roadside hedges to maintain visibility, particularly at junctions, on the inside of bends and at passing-places.
- Remove dead or decaying trees and other growth likely to fall across the highway.
- Remove branches and other growth that may prevent the passage of high-sided vehicles or obstruct light from a public street light.

When felling or pruning trees, consent will be required from the Planning Department of the Council as the island has 'Conservation Area' status.

## RESPONSIBILITY

Cutting should be timed to avoid daytime traffic flows and not done at night. Flail mowers should be mounted on the left hand side of the tractor, so that the tractor can cut with the flow of traffic.

Warning signs should be displayed at the ends of the section being cut and at road junctions. Avoid trimming hedges too closely, as this causes stones to fall out and endangers safety on the highway.

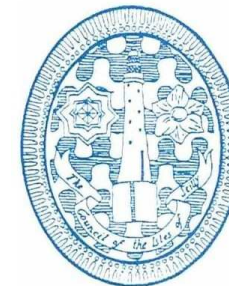
All trimmings should be cleared from the highway, including from footways and drainage features. Herbicides should not be used on hedges (except for invasive alien species). Hedges adjoining bridleways and footpaths should be trimmed as local circumstances require.

Those responsible for trimming, or their sub-contractor, should have public liability insurance cover appropriate for working on the highway. Many private householders have a small length of roadside hedge to look after and they have the same legal responsibilities as other owners and occupiers under the Highways Act 1980.

### WARNING

At locations where roadside hedge growth has become a problem, the Highway Authority is likely to serve notice on the owner/occupier requiring the necessary work to be completed within a stated period. Failure to comply with the conditions of this notice may result in the Highway Authority undertaking the works and recovering the expenses from the owner/occupier.

The Council may recover all costs of administration, mobilisation, labour and equipment, together with invoices including labour, freight, equipment, travel and subsistence, if qualified tree surgeons are brought to St. Mary's to ensure trees are trimmed correctly.



## COUNCIL OF THE ISLES OF SCILLY ST. MARY'S ROADSIDE HEDGE MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

If you have any queries or would like this guidance in large print then please write to:

Council of the Isles of Scilly, Technical Services Department, Town Hall, St. Mary's, Isles of Scilly. TR21 0LW.

Telephone: 01720 422537

Alternatively you can email the Council on:  
[enquiries@scilly.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@scilly.gov.uk)

### THE HIGHWAY AUTHORITY

The Council of the Isles of Scilly is the relevant Highway Authority for St. Mary's roads. It encourages roadside hedge owners and occupiers to act in a responsible way towards users of highways and is happy to give advice.

## RECOMMENDED PRACTICE FOR ROADSIDE HEDGES

There are 14km of road on St. Mary's, Isles of Scilly, essential for the movement of goods, services, tourism and general access. They are vital to the landscape which attracts so many visitors.

Most of the roads are bordered by hedges which provide a unique landscape, shelter and wildlife habitats. They are usually hundreds, sometimes thousands of years old. On main roads, they give a pleasant backdrop for motorists. On narrow single-lane roads, the wealth of flowering plants is a joy to behold.

On footpaths, the individual plants, insects and other animals are seen at close hand. The stone and turf structure of Scillonian hedges fosters an especially rich bio-diversity and supports wildlife indefinitely, so long as man's interference keeps to the minimum disturbance. They are very susceptible to damage by over-zealous trimming but, when correctly managed, their plant and animal populations are balanced and persistent.

Under the Highways Act 1980, the Highway Authority has the legal duty to prevent, as far as possible, the obstruction of roads. This includes hedge growth from roadside hedges.

The Highway Authority is aware that summer trimming disrupts annual seeding cycles, but is required to reconcile, as far as possible, the conflicting requirements of road safety and wildlife.

## WHEN TO TRIM ROADSIDE HEDGES

Single-Lane  
road

### Summer trimming

Trim only the passing places, junctions and blind corners leaving 200-300mm (8" to 12" inches) of growth once in June and once in August.

Two-lane road  
less than 18ft  
wide (no  
white line)

Road hedge-side to be trimmed in June and again in August, leaving 200-500mm (8" to 12" inches) of growth.

Other road  
types

Do not trim in summer.

All roadside  
hedges not  
trimmed in  
summer.

### Winter trimming

Roadside hedges to be trimmed once, during December, January or February, leaving 300-500mm (8" to 12" inches) of growth.

Notes:- 1)

Hedge trimming during the months of March to August, except as recommended above, is likely unnecessarily to disturb nesting birds and likely to constitute an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

2)

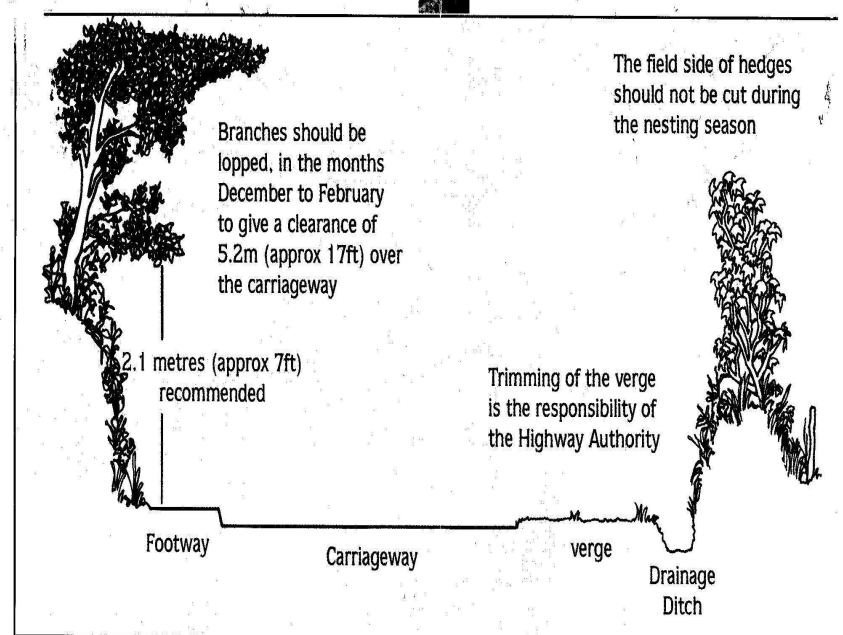
Where there is a verge, hedge trimming is necessary only to maintain visibility at junctions and blind corners.

3)

Some roadside hedges in wind-swept localities grow very slowly and need trimming less often, or not at all. Consult the Highway Authority if you are unsure.

4)

Written advice will be given by the Highway Authority for exceptional situations



## TOPS OF ROADSIDE HEDGES AND TREES

Tops of roadside hedges need to be cut only where specifically requested by the Highway Authority for visibility, and a minimum of 1m of growth should be kept. Traditional thorn, hazel and beech hedges can be cut or laid every 7-15 years depending on need.

Mature growth and trees, not growing from the verge, which canopy over the highway must be trimmed to a suitable height for the vehicle usage on the road. This varies between 2.1m-5.2m (approx 17ft.) depending on pedestrian or vehicle usage, and is done in December, January or February. Advice should be obtained from the Council of the Isles of Scilly on 01720 422537.

Where possible, hedgerow saplings and trees should be left to grow and mature. Such trees, if carefully selected and managed, will provide shelter and greatly improve the wider landscape.

Over-mature broad-leaved trees should be selectively coppiced at 0.5m (20 inches) height over several years, and allowed to re-grow.