

Somerset Council

Environmental Maintenance, Verge Maintenance Sheet 2026

The highway network is vital to the people of Somerset and the local economy. During the growing season, Somerset Council carries out environmental maintenance works to help keep all road users safe. The maintenance activities are listed below.

Grass cutting

Rural highway verges are cut to a minimum of one swathe (up to one metre in width) from the roadside using a tractor and flail. This is to provide a safe area for pedestrians, preserve visibility, help the flow of surface water along road channels and enable the safe positioning of any temporary traffic management (Signs barriers/cones).

Sight lines are also cut at road junctions and bends to ensure better visibility for road users and pedestrians.

Our rural grass cutting programme typically commences in May and is complete by September. The busiest routes are cut first. Approximately 80% of the verge maintenance programme is cut outside of the month of May.

Road Classification	Grass Cutting Dates
1 st cut - A and B roads (including junction visibility splays and sight lines)	27 th April 2026 – 24 th May 2026 (dependant on rate of growth) 4 weeks
C and unclassified roads (including junction visibility splays and sight lines)	25 th May 2026 – 19 th July 2026 (dependant on rate of growth) 8 weeks
2 nd cut - A and B roads (including junction visibility splays and sight lines)	20 th July 2026 – 16 th August 2026 (dependant on rate of growth) 4 weeks
Environmentally protected sites	Mid/Late August (dependant on rate of growth) 1 - week

High amenity verges in urban areas are maintained by our Open Spaces Team using a variety of machinery/plant.

Please note the dates listed above may be subject to change due to weather or any unforeseen events.



Hedges and banks

It should be noted that most hedges bordering the highway are privately owned. Landowners/occupiers are responsible for the maintenance of their boundary and should undertake regular and more extensive cut back outside of the bird nesting season.

Landowners are responsible for the hedge, and any part that remains above our 1-swathe width cut, which is overhanging the highway and potentially causing an issue, should be cut by them. Landowners must also remove any debris from the road surface to prevent nuisance and to stop it blocking surface water drainage systems.

Where there are no verges, and the road is immediately bordered by a bank or hedge, a minimum of a single vertical swathe of seasonal growth will be cut. We do not undertake a significant cut back to the main fabric of a roadside hedge as our programme runs through bird nesting season.

To report dangerous vegetation on the highway network please visit;

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/>

Planned Hedge Trimming

SC co-ordinate the delivery of hedge trimming operations outside of the bird nesting season. Typically, such planned works are undertaken between October and February each year. Approximately 200 individual sites, countywide, are cut.

Whilst planned works are promoted, it should be noted that cutting of hedges within the bird nesting season may be required to address an immediate localised safety concern.

Weed Treatment

Under the Noxious Weeds Act 1959, certain noxious weeds (e.g. Ragwort) must be removed where they are reported as causing a nuisance to highway users or adjoining landowners.

SC completes an annual weed treatment programme to control invasive species. Species include Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed. Approximately 110 known sites, countywide, are treated and/or monitored each year).

Specific sites can receive up to four planned inspections and/or treatments per season. Our weed treatment programme typically commences in April and is complete by October.

To report noxious or invasive weeds on the highway network please visit;

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/>

Conservation

All environmental works will seek to protect wildlife on roadside verges, while maintaining road safety, consistent with the Somerset Highways Biodiversity Manual and the Somerset Pollinator Action Plan. <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/biodiversity/#Somerset-Pollinator-Action-Plan>.

For more information about environmental maintenance, please visit [Grass cutting \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk).