

Hampshire County Council Report Cllr Jan Warwick July 2019

Protecting Wildlife in the Verges Many verges across Hampshire offer a vital refuge for rare species of plants and other wildlife. Maintenance of these areas seeks to preserve wildlife habitats as far as possible, without impacting on road safety. Rural grass verges are cut once a year, usually during summer, with the cutting of some verges is timed to allow rare species to flower and seed. Almost 200 of these verges are home to bees, butterflies and moths that rely on flower rich grassland to provide a source of nectar and pollen. Protected species (such as orchids, Cudweed, Tower Mustard, glow worms and Lychnis moth caterpillars) need to remain uncut throughout their flowering and seeding seasons, so they can survive and reproduce. Conventional cutting throughout summer would result in a decrease in biodiversity interest over time. Protected areas are therefore cut in April and/or late September, depending on the species present.

Surface Dressing helps protect the road surface by providing a waterproof seal to prevent potholes and restore any lost skid resistance. Surface dressing treatments are applied when the road is dry. It is a quick process with most sites taking less than a day to complete. A thin layer of new stone chippings improves skid resistance and also reduces the risk of aquaplaning. Drivers are advised to slow down to avoid damage to their cars (and to others) when a road has just been treated. The road is swept to remove loose chippings as soon as possible after treatment and before the road markings are repainted. Issues that relate to surface dressing operations can be addressed by the Customer Contact Centre on 0300 555 1388.

Thinking about volunteering at Sir Harold Hillier Gardens? The gardens are an unrivalled collection of trees and shrubs set in 180 acres near Romsey, in Hampshire. If you have a few hours to spare on a regular basis then please do consider volunteering. There are opportunities both inside and outside and no previous experience is required. For further information is available from the Volunteer Co-ordinator on 01794 369305

Ofsted have graded **Hampshire County Council's Children's Service** as outstanding in all areas. The service received the top score for overall effectiveness, the impact of leaders on social work practices, for children who need help and protection, and those in care and care leavers. The report found that social workers are highly skilled at building meaningful relationships with children. It also highlighted the council's political and corporate support as well as financial investment. Hampshire's response to vulnerable young people at risk of exploitation is described as highly effective.