

## Mepal Parish Council – Grass cutting of Village Green and Verges

Mepal Parish Council manages the grass cutting on our own land and for some County Council areas under an agreement with Cambridge County Council (CCC). The map below shows the verge and green cutting areas covered by the schedule. We have aligned our verge cutting schedule to bring it in line with a new Cambridgeshire County Council Verge cutting policy.



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Most of the grass cutting across Cambridgeshire is carried out by one of CCCs sub-contractors. Some years ago, formal agreements were offered to all local Parish Councils to carry out grass cutting in some villages for an annual payment and Mepal Parish Council agreed to take on the responsibility from CCC for cutting the verges within Mepal. As the payment for this has not increased over the years, the Parish Council does not receive sufficient income from CCC to cover its costs and must fund the deficit within the annual budget. We therefore took a minuted decision in 2020 to bring the village verge and green cutting in-house.

The verges in villages still managed by CCC were cut three times a year with grass near junctions that may obstruct views of drivers, cyclists and pedestrians being monitored and given additional cuts as required. The Parish Council does not maintain areas not included in the CCC agreement that are privately owned and homeowners or developers are responsible for these areas.

Many County Councils are reducing the frequency of grass cutting to the benefit of wildlife, in particular bees. After a campaign by local Councillor Lorna Dupree, CCC have recently agreed to a new policy stating that they will no longer require an application for a licence before groups can do this.

CCC have instituted a new verge maintenance programme and the policy highlights the fact that it is essential that grass cuttings are removed to reduce soil fertility, so that wildflowers can thrive and an optimal cutting regime of two cuts per year, with arisings collected is to be implemented. CCC will undertake cuts within the following 4-week windows (depending on flowering interest), either:

A) 1st cut in April & 2nd cut in mid-September to mid-October; or

B) 1st cut in late July & 2nd cut in mid-September to mid-October

All cuttings will be collected

In line with this CCC decision, the Parish Council with immediate effect will implement the same verge maintenance programme.

### Annual Schedule

Area	Cuts per year	Date of operation	In-house or outside contract
Village Greens	16	March-October	In-house
Mepal Village Verges	2	Mid April - October	In-house
Play Park	16	March – October alternative weeks with greens	In-house

We are not permitted to undertake any other maintenance of land not owned by the Parish Council, and we cannot cut grass on private or unregistered land.

**The next verge cut is now planned for September.**

**Any verges under the responsibility of Mepal Parish Council near junctions or areas which require unobstructed views will be cut as and when needed for safety reasons.**