

Wiltshire Protected Road Verge Scheme



Volunteer monitoring of protected road verges – background information



Some fifty or so road verges in Wiltshire are designated as protected road verges because of the importance of their fauna, flora or geological features and are subject to special management by Wiltshire Council or the Highways Authority. Each verge is monitored by a volunteer whose duties are to check the condition of the verge regularly and the performance of those species, communities or features for which the verge was designated.

Volunteer protected road verge monitors are appointed by Wiltshire Council and the Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC), a part of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Ltd (WWT) and as such they fall within the category of WWT volunteers and are covered by the same regulations.*

Each monitor is supplied with a map, species list, details of the management plan for the verge, details of the health and safety criteria agreed for monitoring, and copies of blank monitoring forms which they are expected to complete and return to the Trust on an annual basis. In addition a high visibility safety jerkin is available for loan to each monitor for the duration of their term.

Wiltshire Council will provide new monitors with an appropriate induction to equip them with the expertise and skills to carry out their duties. A knowledge of botany is an advantage but not essential. Species lists for most sites are compiled by independent experts, and one of the monitor's main tasks will be to confirm and/or up date this list on an annual basis (if their verge is designated for a range of plants). The WSBRC stores the information accumulated by the scheme.



Each year a meeting is held for the road verge monitors. This not only gives an opportunity for new monitors to meet other monitors and administrators, but also includes relevant talks and presentations by outside experts.

Responsibilities of a monitor include:

- Complete a botanical survey of species found on the verge, a minimum of 3 times per year
- Complete a recording sheet of these surveys and return to the Biological Records Centre by November each year
- Feedback additional comments on the verge to the verge coordinator
- Make note of special interest species which are found on the verge

Support network for monitors:

- New monitors receive an induction pack and full introduction to the scheme and their verge
- Monitors receive a newsletter twice a year
- Monitor/management meetings are held twice a year
- Scheme verge survey visits are arranged to allow monitors to exchange tips, expertise and experiences whilst learning about different types of verge

- There are strong links between the scheme and the Wiltshire Botanical Society, who help provide botanical support when required
- The scheme coordinator liaises between monitors, the Biological Records Centre, the County Ecologist and the council Highways department

All queries and comments about the scheme should be addressed to:

- Emma Glover, Landscape & Design, Economic Development & Planning, Wiltshire Council, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN
- Tel: 01225 718478
- Email: emma.glover@wiltshire.gov.uk

Annual reports should be sent to:

- Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre, Elm Tree Court, Long Street, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 1NJ
- Tel: 01380 725670
- Email: brc@wiltshirewildlife.org

*Volunteers are expected to comply with all rules and policies of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, and to comply with any relevant legal obligations placed upon the Trust, including Health and Safety regulations. The Trust has Personal Accident Cover to cover all volunteers between the ages of 16 and 75, and also Employers Liability Cover which covers all volunteers (no age limits) if injury is incurred by a volunteer due to the negligence of the Trust.