

LIVING THREADS

GUERNSEY HEDGES

Guernsey's beautiful landscape is defined by its distinctive roadside hedge banks which form an important part of our Island's heritage. They form living threads which run through and connect the parishes, and can be a haven for both plants and animals, adding much to the Island's natural living diversity.



Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus*

WILDLIFE NOTES

THINK BEFORE YOU CUT

Give some thought as to what you want the hedge to look like, the greater the variety of native plants and hedging the more wildlife it will support. Cutting the hedge too severely and frequently can have a detrimental effect on the vegetation and the wildlife it supports.

Grassed and flower rich earth banks should have a minimum 100mm [4 inches] of vegetation left after cutting to avoid desiccation and erosion.

In the autumn avoid cutting grass and other plants to soil level especially as many insects and other invertebrates will overwinter at the bases of vegetation. If a substantial cut is needed to the outside (road facing) of the hedge, delay cutting the inside face until the following year or make it a light cut to avoid stress on the hedge.

It is recommended to cut the hedge at an angle so that it is wider at the base and narrower at the top, to encourage stronger and thicker growth and provide a more stable hedge.

Hedges and hedge banks which do not face roads should not be cut until August, at the earliest, to avoid disturbing nesting birds.

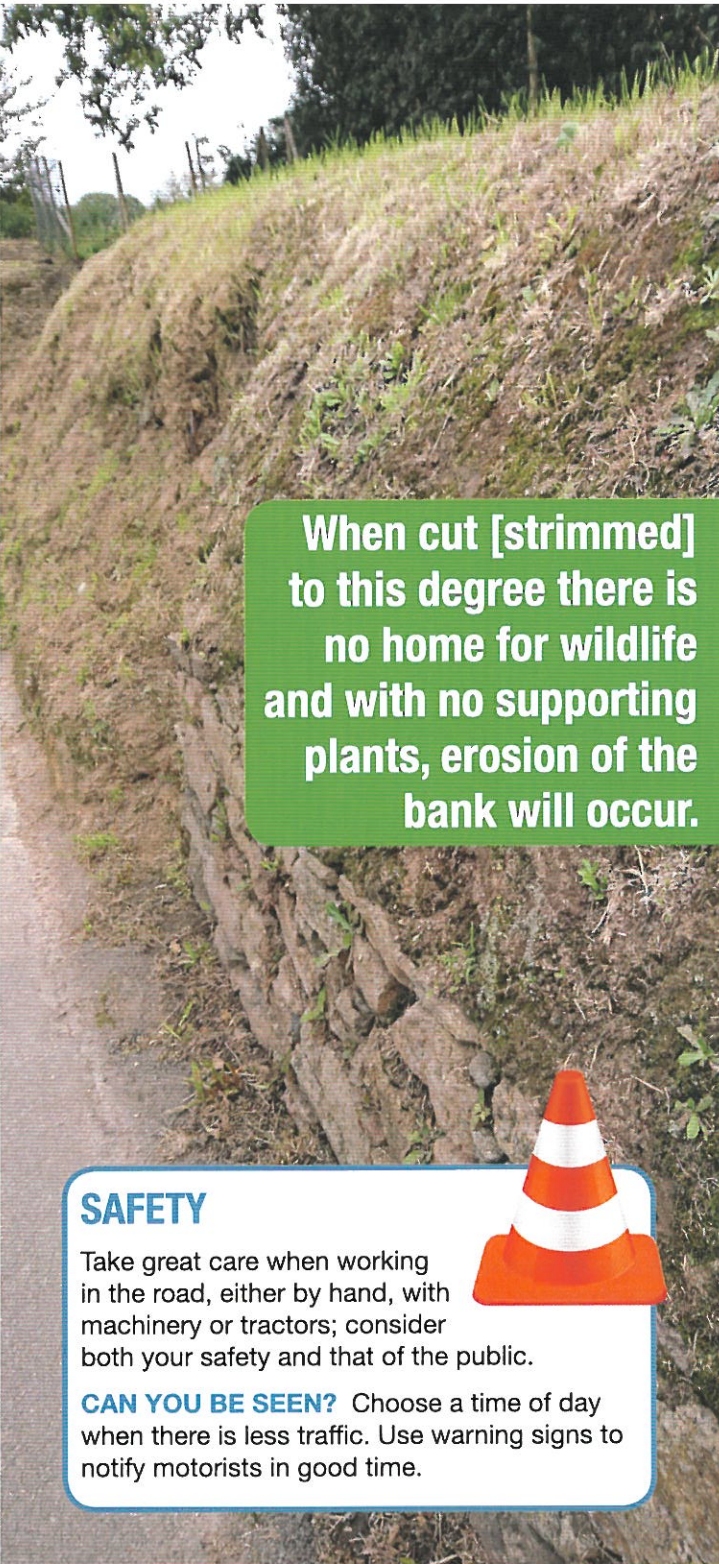
A well cut hedge for the wildlife with plenty of shelter left, but be careful of the cuttings as they can so easily compromise the road drains.



TAKE CARE

The Use of plastic mulches (e.g. black sheeting) is not encouraged and should be avoided. Also the use of herbicides [weed killers] can have a devastating effect on a hedge bank and should not be used.





When cut [strimmed]
to this degree there is
no home for wildlife
and with no supporting
plants, erosion of the
bank will occur.

SAFETY

Take great care when working in the road, either by hand, with machinery or tractors; consider both your safety and that of the public.

CAN YOU BE SEEN? Choose a time of day when there is less traffic. Use warning signs to notify motorists in good time.



WHEN SHOULD I CUT MY HEDGE?

Cutting of roadside hedges is required by law between **1st & 15th of June** and the **15th & 30th of September** each year.

HOW SHOULD I CUT MY HEDGE?

Hedges are to be cut to a height of **3.6m (12 feet)** when bordering a road used by vehicles [including over pavements] and to a height of **2.4m (8ft)** when bordering a lane used only by pedestrians.

CLEARING UP AFTERWARDS

It is a requirement of the law that all cuttings are cleared away immediately after the hedge is cut. Cutting left in the road can easily compromise the road drainage.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

It is the land owners responsibility [just as it is for the maintenance of streams] to ensure that the hedge is cut at the appropriate time and that the cuttings are picked up and cleared away immediately after cutting.



Produced and written by Al Brouard with thanks to Andrew Casebow, David Chamberlain and Andy McCutcheon.



CUTTING OF HEDGE BANKS ALONG ROADS & LANES

WITH WILDLIFE NOTES

