



East  
Hagbourne  
Parish  
Council

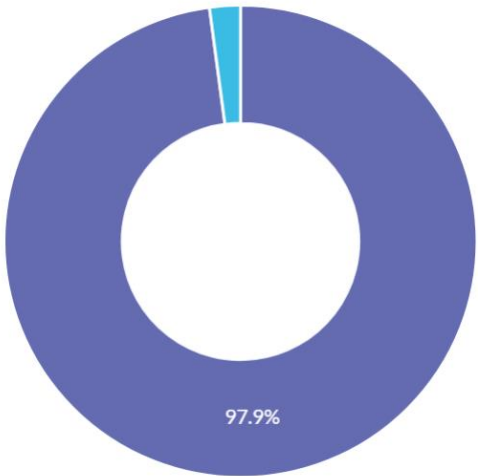
# Grass Cutting Consultation Results

October 2023

# Consultation Participants

Q1

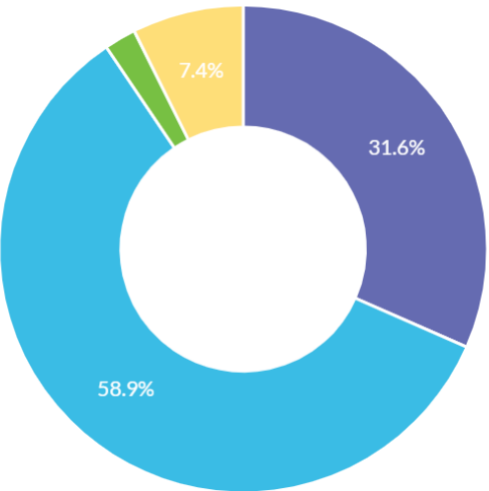
Are you currently a resident of East Hagbourne?



Choice	Total
Yes	93
No	2

Q2

We would like to understand which part of the village you live in, please refer to our maps to identify your zone:

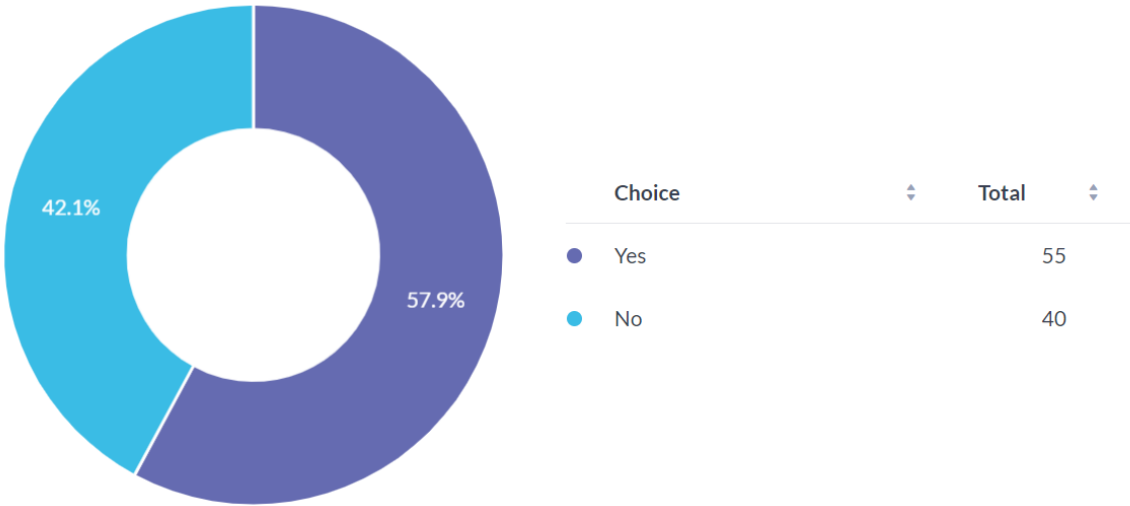


Choice	Total
Zone A ( conservation area)	30
Zone B ( residential area)	56
Zone D (rural roads & footpaths)	2
I don't know	7

# On average there is equal importance placed on tidiness and biodiversity

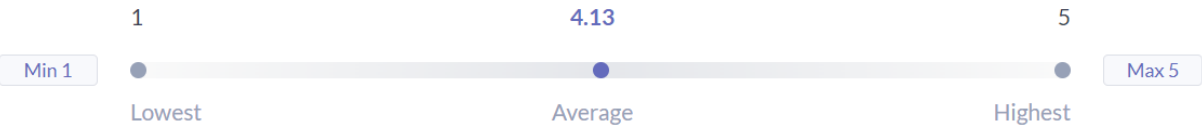
Q3

Do you look after the verges outside your own house?



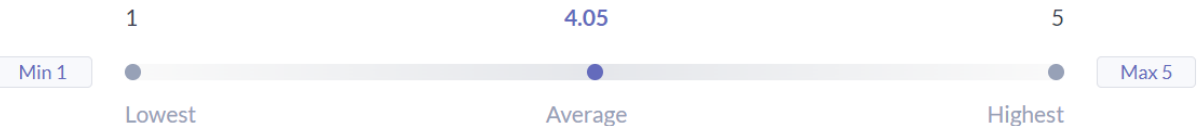
Q4

With 5 being very important and 1 being not important at all, how important is the general tidiness of the village to you?



Q5

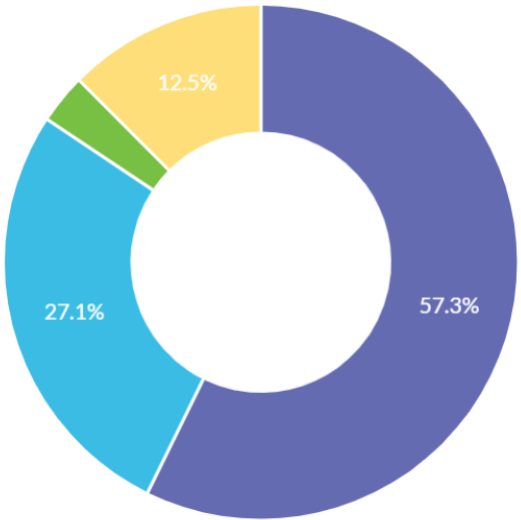
With 5 being very important and 1 being not important at all, how important is biodiversity to you?



# A significant majority of people would like both residential areas (zones A & B) to be cut every 2-3 weeks

Q6

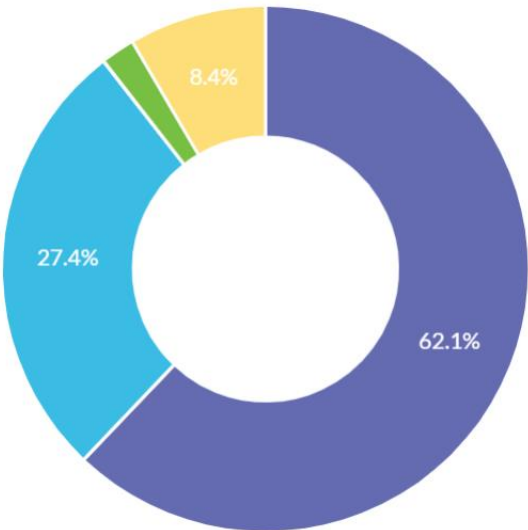
How would you like us to manage the grass in Zone A (Convservation Area)?



Choice	Total
Maintain 2-3 week cutting schedule	55
Reduce cutting in support of biodiversity agenda	26
Stop organised cutting and give responsibility to residents	3
Other	12

Q7

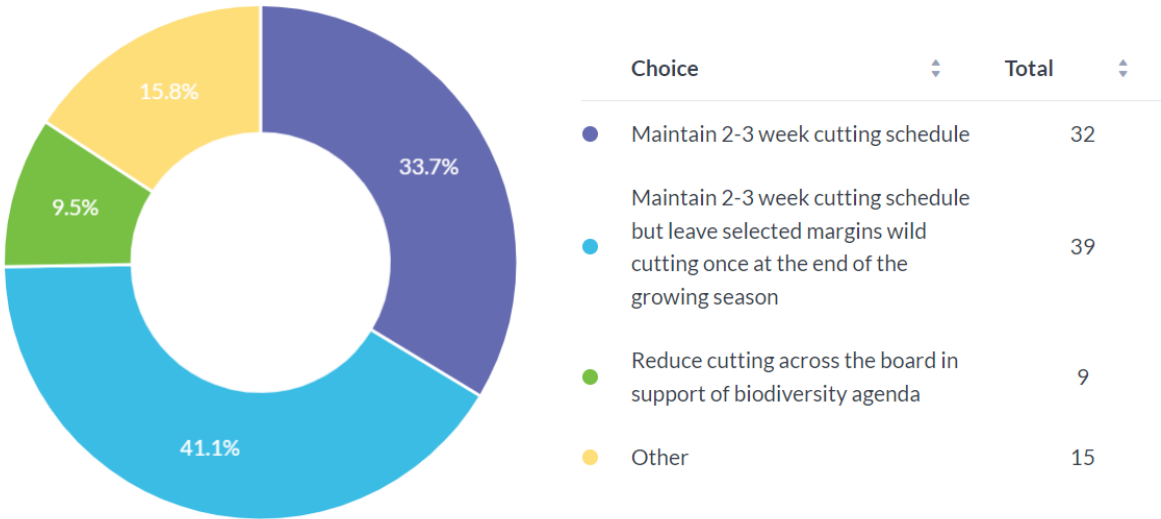
How would you like us to manage grass in Zone B (Residential Area)?



Choice	Total
Maintain 2-3 week cutting schedule	59
Reduce cutting in support of biodiversity agenda	26
Stop organised cutting and give responsibility to residents	2
Other	8

# The majority are happy for the margins of public amenity spaces to be cut less frequently but a significant proportion feel it should all be cut every 2-3 weeks

**Q8**  
How would you like us to manage grass in Zone C (Public Amenity Spaces)?



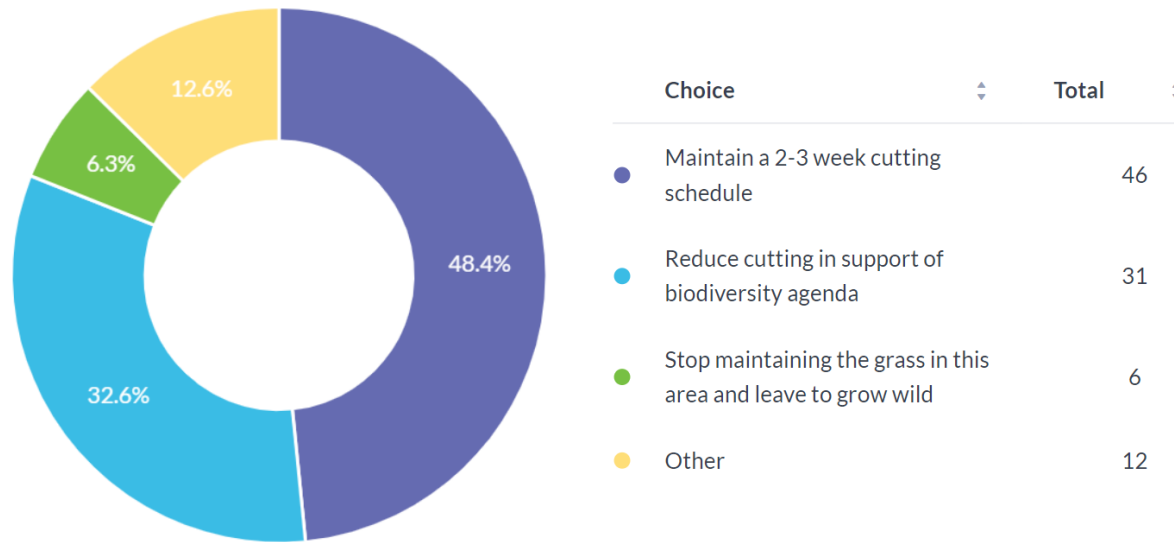
## OTHER COMMENTS

- Clearly much needs to be cut but some well planned wild areas are needed for biodiversity
- It depends on the area. Have to make sure spaces are safe to use. Ticks can be a problem also long grass if dog owners don't clear up!
- Plant wild flowers rather than leaving grass to look untidy
- Maintain 2-3 week cutting schedule in general. For specific identified locations agreed by the council (not individuals) the cutting schedule and style of cutting (trimming edges for example) could be tailored to suit biodiversity objectives.

- There aren't many public spaces for children to play so the grassy areas should largely be cut regularly to allow this. It would be good to establish some wilder areas with input and potentially volunteer help to introduce some managed wilder areas in suitable locations - in line with the district council's current efforts
- Cut only areas needed to maintain safety/utility (eg. path edges, sports pitches) and leave remainder to support biodiversity
- Maintain 2-3 weeks & leave wild margins ....and also actively manage the 'wilding' so that wild flowers grow and it's not just a jungle of nettles, brambles and unsuitable grasses

# Nearly half of respondents also want rural roads to be cut every 2-3 weeks

Q9  
How would you like us to maintain grass in Zone D (Rural Roads and Footpaths)?



## OTHER COMMENTS

*It is crucial that sight lines are kept so safety is a priority. It would be good if Hagbourne council took some responsibility for this from OCC*

*Maintain 2-3 week cutting schedule in general. For specific identified locations agreed by the council (not individuals) the cutting schedule and style of cutting (trimming edges for example) could be tailored to suit biodiversity objectives.*

*Areas wider than 1m to be cut with 1m strip at road/path edge and remainder cut less frequently 2-3 times per year*

*Cut back nettles etc from pathway but keep the verges longer for wildlife*

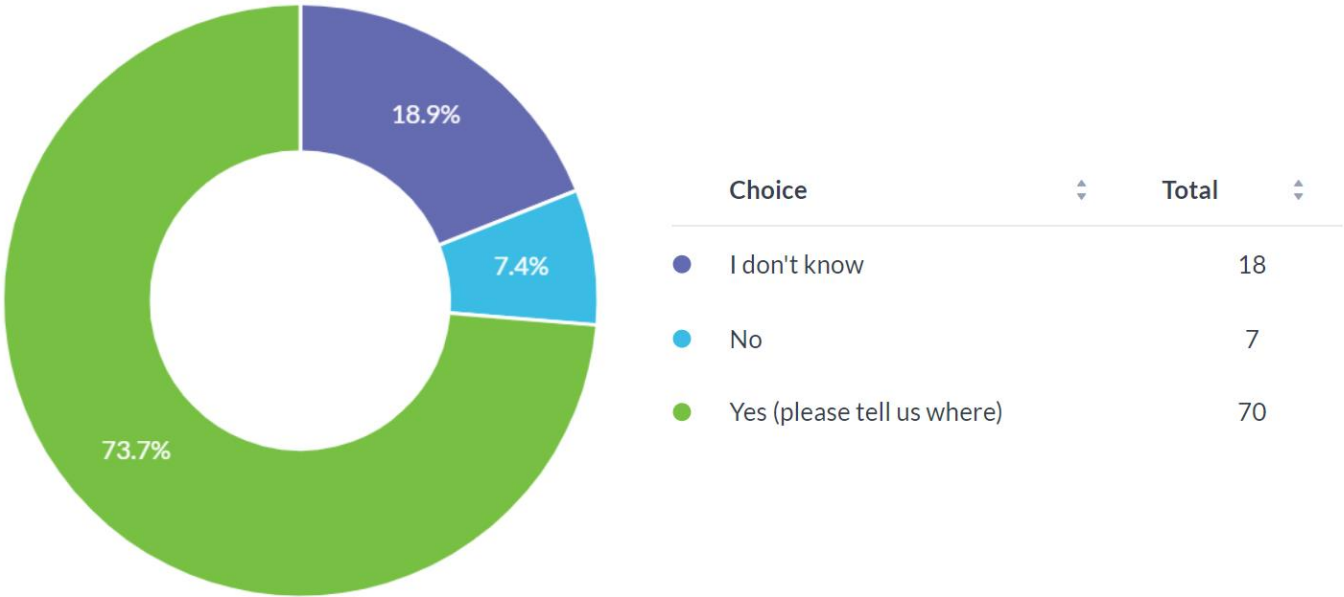
*Reduce cutting schedule to 4 week schedule*

*Some level of footpath care is needed over and above what is currently happening, whether this is done by volunteers or footpaths are added to the regular cutting schedule. Rural road verges would likely be an expensive addition to the current contract*

# There are strong feelings about better management of key areas where safety of pedestrians and road users are concerned

## Q10

Are there some areas that should be mowed frequently regardless for road safety or pedestrian access?



### OTHER COMMENTS

*Near footpaths*

*Where sightlines are required by car drivers*

*Grass verge & grass area at edge of road opposite shop/garage. Footway along main road from lower to upper cross*

*By road corners or where clear view may be obstructed*

*On bends on road - or near them. To give clear view to all road users including children and shorter adults and people driving lower cars*

*At road junctions to give safe visibility, eg at Coscote junction with Park Road.*

*Main Road, New Road, Blewbury Road*

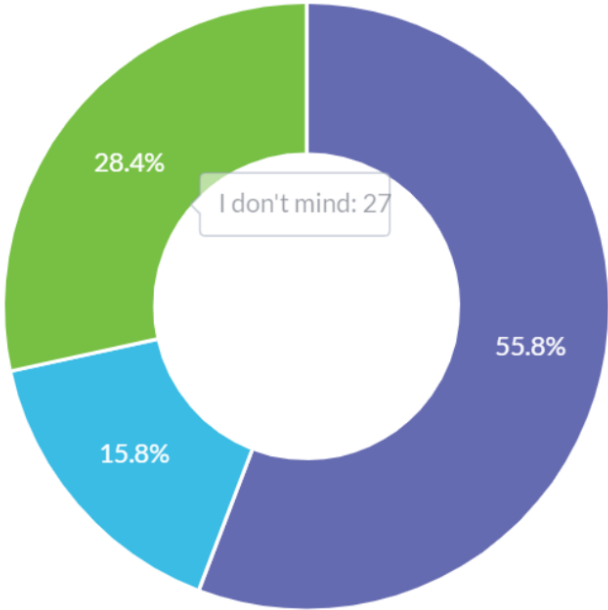
*Disused railway Sustrans path - at least as far as Mowbray Fields*

*All verges in conservation area, some on New Road should be cut for safety and well-being. Also more clearance of gutters and footways*

*New Road approaching the garage from Didcot. A couple of verges on Blewbury Road where the verge is high and also the residents garden is very over grown and you get caught when you walk past. On main road especially where the chickens used to be*

# A significant majority of respondents would like EHPC maintain more of the grass in the village

**Q11**  
The Parish Council are not responsible for grass cutting in all areas. Would you like us to take responsibility for maintaining more of the village grass?



Choice	Total
Yes	53
No	15
I don't mind	27



# All other comments

Residents should keep THEIR vegetation clear of the footpaths

Having lived in the village all my life I have never seen it looking such a mess!

The area we live in is now looking very unkempt owing to a bio-diversity project which is a mess. As a leaseholder who pays for grass cutting this is very annoying

I have sympathy with both sides but road and footpath safety have to be a priority. Will not help anyone if accidents happen because people have reduced visibility due to overgrown grass verges/hedges

Visitors to our home have commented about how scruffy the village looks, especially the roadside verges

The village looks increasingly scruffy which detracts from the village appeal compared with when we moved here (approx 15 years ago). Biodiversity is important but should be managed in specific areas.

EHPC does not have sole authority over the Cemetery - shared with WHDC. EHPC leases the Recreation Ground and Pavilion to a Managing Organisation. See separate Email

I don't mind who is responsible for grass cutting as long as the same policy is used throughout.

An attractive and tidy village is v. important and wilding should not take place on the key roads giving access into and through the village. Can something be done to improve the 'field' in Main Road

I do support biodiversity in some areas, but feel strongly that areas around housing, roads and some footpaths should be kept mowed to provide a tidy appearance and prevent paths becoming overgrown.

Grass-cutting of verges is only part of the issue. Some wilding attempts by allowing growth in road gutters and on pavements also cause problems with road and pavement safety. Action is required here

Just leaving somewhere to rewild is too hit and miss. Rewilding requires a degree of knowledge and management.

Keeping pedestrian routes clear is important for the safety of push chairs, mobility and wheelchair users throughout the village. In a rural community biodiversity is already in place.

# All other comments

Remove the eyesore in Wilcher close. Long grass. And commercial vehicles parking in car parks. No room for residents to park.

Parish council should only take responsibility for cutting of all areas only if they are actually planning on maintaining it unlike the recreation ground and cemetery in the spring

In Wilcher close alone, the grass verges have been left due to biodiversity (SOHA's decision). This not only looks awful, it's a fire hazard, it's a road collision hazard, and isn't promoting biodiver

The tidiness of the village is very poor. Road gutters full of weeds. There should be certain areas for the environment but not verges that obstruct a drivers view for safety

I love seeing all of the daffodils in spring and Hollyhocks in July/august. I am very in favour of biodiversity but not at the cost of safety e.g when you can't see round a corner over long grass!

Walking along the Main Road footpath is impeded with overgrown plants outside houses - lavender in particular is a problem. We live near fields so wild plants have growing space along verges.!

Please tidy the village and don't let HUGs take on areas. They don't look after them. Long grass does not encourage insects! It prevents access through the village for disabled people.

The village would never win another village award as it has in the past. The village looks unkempt and neglected with weeds and long grass very few flowers. Rewilding is simply cost cutting and lazy.

I believe most areas can be kept longer and still be attractive and not provide any hazard to traffic, pedestrian or vehicle. Biodiversity and climate is the challenge for our generation.

We are fortunate to be surrounded by fields, footpaths and areas where biodiversity has priority, but within the village and along roadsides cutting back the grass is important. Not enough space!!!

The village has started to look untidy with grass not been cut, hedges aren't been kept neat and tidy. Paths seem to be getting smaller. Hard to walk 2 by 2 or even with a pushchair.

# All other comments

I am all for biodiversity but the village is looking very scruffy. Biodiversity is a good idea in a city/town but when you live in a village with open fields around it why make the village look unkempt

The Parish Council should be bullied into meaningless virtue signalling by of the village's pro-biodiversity faction.

It's bushes more than grass, but the paths are becoming very overgrown and in some areas you need to step onto the road if someone is walking towards you where bushes are taking up a % of the path.

Increasing biodiversity should be a priority of the parish council. There is clearly room for compromise. The safety of amenities and facilities should be maintained, but biodiversity should be prime

The environmental and biodiversity crisis should be taken seriously. Every person and every community can do its bit to help the planet. no matter how small or large the contribution - it all matters!

The grass cutting is very noisy. Could it be quieter?

As a 16 yr old I find it very upsetting how unbothered the old in our village are about biodiversity and that they find a bit of tidiness more important than biodiversity and the future of the planet.

I am really happy with the biodiversity initiative in the village and fully support this continuing, and hopefully eventually expanding too.

All grass cutting should be at a minimum

Everything Hugs have achieved so far has been brilliant in the village.

As a young person I am anxious about the climate and biodiversity crisis and would like those in the parish council to take action and act in a responsible manner taking this issue seriously.

Please cut only where necessary, to enhance biodiversity and minimise cost

I have lived in the village my whole life. It's important to me that we support the natural world so that we may continue to celebrate our village and its native beauty. I fully support changes.

# All other comments

I go for cross-country walks and have seen the difference between our management. We can do better to provide a safe space for nature alongside our needs. Cutting regularly is an old practice.

I'm a young person who grew up in this village. It would mean very much to live in an area that is considerate to our love wildlife. Change is definitely needed, it can't continue being cut constantly

The current processes are not supporting our much loved natural wildlife. Both plant life and creatures are intimately dependent on each other. Other areas have made simple changes, we can too.

looking after nature and combatting climate change are vital. We don't have much time left to make a difference. all generations need a say on this. every small space for nature makes a difference

The village is surrounded to the East, South and West with open countryside and fields, I believe there is sufficient biodiversity there without the need to make the village look untidy and unkempt.

Cemetery verges and gutters poorly kept. The village look is extremely untidy hedges sprawling over pavements weeds protruding from gutters and driving visibility poor around corners due to long grass

Hogweed has become a problem due to lack of mowing which is dangerous for humans and pets. People can choose to increase biodiversity in their own gardens, we don't need it throughout

There has to be a balance between bio-diversity safety (including the rule of law). By all means start the process, it isn't possible to change everything overnight. It needs planting then curating!

The village used to be a winner of Village in Bloom but it certainly wouldn't win any prizes now

In a rural area we can keep the village tidy and safe with frequent cutting and leave plenty of wild areas around the fields. I would like to see the footpaths across the fields regularly strimmed.

Maintenance of the area Lower Cross to the Pub. In frost weeds will crack the raised stonework.



# All other comments

Area of railway bank which EHPC is responsible for is not being maintained.  
Entrance to Bishops Orchard footpath overgrown. Lower Cross to the Fluer de lyse is my main concern. Road overrun by weeds

There are several pathways that have overgrown vegetation on them, where residents have allowed cultivated and weeds to partly block pathways. What action is needed?

A balance is needed between encouraging biodiversity, tidyness, access and safety. Just not mowing seems a blunt simplistic approach to tackling biodiversity that impacts the other factors.

Need some well maintained, demarcated wild areas selected with professional advice such as the edge of recreation ground. EHPC grass cutting contract should be extended to all appropriate verges.

There are lots of areas surrounding the village that do not affect residents if left uncut. More thought needs to be put into the areas left uncut as this can cause flooding, littering, obstruction

Stop letting HUGS run our village into the ground. Grass verges are not the place nor is the recreational ground for biodiversity. Encourage people to do more in their gardens or by the allotments

paths are narrow around the village. it is important that they are maintained, people in wheelchairs can get around without issue. so called 'rewilding' is no more than letting weeds grow. Lazy!

We're right in the country side. A bit of uncut grass verge here and there isn't going to affect biodiversity as a whole. Let's keep it trimmed and do our bit in our own gardens if we wish.

The village looks shabby, I think Monica Lawson would be turning in her grave, our work for the best kept village seems a million miles away. Cemetery hedge looks a state as does the main rd orchard .

I would like to walk around the village and not see weeds along kerbs etc. there must be a way forward - can the PC pay a contractor to clear? Would county council highways allow this?

# All other comments

Prioritise improving habitats (e.g. trees, hedges, grass, streams) & ensuring connectivity between wild spaces to provide wildlife corridors. Plant more trees, stop using pesticides & herbicides.

Thoroughfares need to be safe & clear. Chair/pram users & less mobile must be able to get about safely. Doesn't need to be 'manicured'. 'Wild & Tidy' good description. Encourage bio-div in gardens.

Ben Manning spoke well at the meeting. Other communities are doing more for biodiversity than us. We could learn from them.

We are surrounded by farm land countryside, is there really a need to leave the grass verges unkept making the village look a bloody mess as you drive through. We wouldn't win best kept village.

The footpaths and walkways need to be kept clear for safety and ease of access. Private front and rear gardens can be rewilded. Gutters should be kept clear, eg outside the Toppings and Kingsholm.

Managed areas with cut borders look much tidier than the area around Ryman's Crescent - not good for visitors to the village. It would be good to see HUGS amend their policy to include this method.

More cooperation/ joint activity needed between HUGS and other village groups, eg garden club, and residents. Attractive environment and increased biodiversity are not mutually exclusive.

Accessibility should not be compromised and improved where feasible.

Since the areas given over to HUGS control are not being properly maintained, the parish council should take them back again, in order to have them properly managed. There is no evidence.

Weeds in gutters and on pavement edges should be removed. Pavements should be full width so verges and weeds should be cut back/destroyed. Village gardens provide the best insect corridors.

I was at the church & those who claimed to speak for "everyone there" were doing no such thing. Neither am I part of HUGS. The answer is thoughtful biodiversity management, considering safety & aesthetics.

We have so much beauty in the village. Let's enhance that with a good understanding of how to read & respond to our environment. How can we agree to make change? Make a 'Hotspot' map of all concerns.

## All other comments

We need access for all and to fix mobility and road hazards whilst increasing biodiversity- all at the same time. Both can be achieved if we walk & wheel together with secateurs.

Sorry but I can't make any useful comment in only 200 characters except this is a pretty meaningless survey! If I have time maybe I'll email Laura.

I would like East Hagbourne to be a tidy village with trimmed verges and weeds removed from kerbsides and footpaths.