



AMENITIES COMMITTEE **HEDGEROW POLICY**

General Statement

Hedgerows have indicated land boundaries and contained livestock since the Bronze Age and have a positive effect for both wildlife and the amenity of residents, as well as playing a vital role in carbon reduction and biodiversity.

Hedgerows are an important feature in the Parish of Marden and enhance the visual character of the Parish. Some of the hedgerows are over 150 years old and they may have marked important historical boundaries, and their loss is to be discouraged. The Environment Act 1995 introduced an enabling power to protect important hedgerows and land managers are required to consult local authorities before hedgerows can be removed.

The UK Government (prior to the election) was on course to reinstate the prevention of agricultural hedge cutting during nesting season from 1st March to 31st August and guarantee a 2-metre buffer strip surrounding hedgerows free of cultivation and pesticides.

Hedgerows create a diverse habitat and wildlife-rich environment which has been shown to provide health and economic benefits. They are an important component in the Parish of Marden and play a crucial role in providing food, shelter and linear routes for many of our wildlife species including woodland birds, mammals and butterflies. They not only provide important breeding habitat to a range of generalist species and specialist farmland birds but enable wildlife to move through the countryside, protect soils from wind erosion, and provide shelter for people and livestock and habitats for pollinators. Bats navigate and feed along hedgerows and more than 30 species of birds' nest in them. Mammals use the areas for shelter, whilst ditches alongside hedgerows are home to a diverse range of invertebrates.

Hedgerows growing on land which forms part of the adopted Highway are the responsibility of the Highways Authority, Kent County Council (www.kent.gov.uk).

Hedge Management – General

This policy applies to all hedgerows under Marden Parish Council ownership/management, regardless of their location and aim to preserve and enhance its hedgerows for future generations to enjoy. Marden Parish Council will

Office Opening Times:

Mondays, Tuesdays & Fridays 10am - 12 noon

Email: clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk

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seek to further improve our hedgerow network to protect wildlife and help tackle climate change.

The Council is responsible for hedgerows on land that it owns on its areas of open space at Marden Playing Field (including Napoleon Drive and The Chestnuts area), Rookery Path, Southons Field and Marden Cemetery.

Hedgerow Plan

- Hedge cutting work only undertaken out of bird nesting season unless urgent work is required.
- Ensure consistency with regard to requests to prune and maintain hedgerows.
- Any cuttings to be placed around the boundary of the open space for wildlife.
- Ensure that the Council maintains a safe hedgerow stock with indigenous hedging stock pertaining to the Low Weald.
- The Parish Council to formulate a plan/strategy for hedges to increase the number of hedging stock not only on Parish Council owned land but in the wider Parish e.g. increase stock on the edge of the Parsonage/Windsor Meadows.

Adopted by Marden Parish Council on 12th November 2024

Reviewed/Amended on: 28th January 2025

Review Date: March 2026

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