

What to do about Overgrown Hedges and Verges

Neighbouring Hedges

If you allow your hedge to grow taller than 2m your neighbour is legally allowed to ask for it to be cut down to that level. If you refuse to do this you can be reported to Wiltshire Council who can then enforce the pruning. Your neighbour will have to pay an administrative fee which can be between £100 and £650 and if you refuse to cut the hedge you can be fined.

To view the High Hedge Law you can access their site on: www.hedgeline.org

If a neighbour's hedge overhangs your boundary and is causing an obstruction or otherwise spoiling the enjoyment of your garden you are at liberty to cut back the protruding branches up to the boundary line. If you go beyond this your neighbour could have a claim against you.

Legally you should offer the branches back as they belong to your neighbour. Ideally, talk to your neighbour first, more often than not they have not realised there is a problem and will probably be quite happy for you to prune the offending overhang.

Wildlife Hedges

Never cut a hedge if birds are nesting within – always check nesting season in accordance with legal guidelines before you think of cutting.

All wild birds and their eggs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; under this Act, birds cannot be taken or killed, and their eggs or nests (when in use or being built) cannot be taken or destroyed except under licence.

Overgrown Hedges and Verges alongside Roads, Pavements and Rights of Way

Land owners (including Wiltshire Council) and occupiers are required by law to trim any hedge or grass next to a road, footway, cycle way or public right of way where the growth is preventing the passage, or affecting the safety, of the highway user, including cyclists and pedestrians.

The debris from cutting must also be cleared away. Often it will be safe to limit annual or early cutting to places where the verge is narrow, to junctions and entrances, and to the inside of bends.

Report an Overgrown Hedge, Verge or Footpath to:

Wiltshire Council Highways / Street Care Service – 0300 456 0105

Email: localhighways@wiltshire.gov.uk

www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parkingtransportandstreets/roadshighwaysstreetcare/mywiltshireregister.htm