

VERGE AND GREEN MAINTENANCE

A REPORT TO THE PARISH COUNCIL AND OTHERS
ON THE MAINTENANCE OF GREEN SPACES AND
VERGES IN THE PARISH OF WHATTON-IN-THE-
VALE

GR REDFORD

AUGUST 2009

VERGE AND GREEN MAINTENANCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Council has for two years maintained at its own cost a number of verges and the Green Walk 'Green'. As a result of Rushcliffe Borough Council undertaking to maintain the Green Walk 'Green' to the extent of twelve cuts a year, the capacity freed can now be used to maintain the eastern verge of Dark Lane.

If the proposal for additional cutting areas (Scheme B) is accepted, virtually all the verges in the parish will be maintained by a combination of residents, adjacent landowners and the parish council. The notable exceptions will be:

- Granby Road,
- A small portion of Manor Lane, close to the A52; and
- the A52.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The total cost of the project (Scheme A and Scheme B) would be in the region of £2,680 - an increase of £680 on the current years budgeted cost. Assuming no contribution from Nottinghamshire County Council the total cost would represent approximately 26% of the budget and a 6% increase in the precept for 2010/2011. Clearly any contribution from the County Council would mitigate that impact.

The financial impact in the current year would be in the order of £380.

CONCLUSION

- The response from Rushcliffe Borough Council to our request for financial assistance in maintaining the green on Green Walk was disappointing.
- The intention of Nottinghamshire County Council to clear the verge on the south side of Grantham Road provides an ideal opportunity to maintain the area in an acceptable state. The area on the north side is not currently maintained at all. Scheme B would provide a substantial improvement of the aspect at Whatton Bridge and Grantham Road from Whatton Bridge to the junction of Main Street.

- Given the level of roadside verges maintained by the Parish Council it is not unreasonable to expect Nottinghamshire County Council to recognise that fact by defraying the cost of the work undertaken by the Parish Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Parish Council adopt Scheme B subject to the advice of the RFO as to the funds available to fund the scheme.
2. That the Parish Council seek funding from Nottinghamshire County Council in respect the maintenance of the verges in the parish as a matter of urgency.
3. That the performance of Rushcliffe Borough Council in respect of the green on Green Walk be closely monitored to ensure compliance with the 12 cuts per year undertaking.
4. Copies of this report be made available to our Borough and County Councillors.

GR Redford

August 2009

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to inform the Parish Council and other interested authorities as to the current condition and maintenance of green spaces and verges within the parish of Whatton-in-the-Vale (the 'Parish').

Maintenance of roadside verges by the Local Highways Authority is undertaken on a 'safety' basis only (four cuts a year) and rarely extends much further than the immediate area by the side of the road. A number of verges in the parish were not maintained at all as presumably they do not represent a hazard to safety. The cutting of amenity land was spasmodic at best.

Against this background Whatton-in-the-Vale undertook to maintain a number of verges and amenity areas. The current programme is described in Scheme A. A number of requests have been made to Nottinghamshire County Council for funding to defray in part the cost of maintaining areas for which they are responsible. To date no such funding has been received or any practical proposal made.

Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Council (the 'Parish Council') does currently maintain a number of green spaces and verges out of its precept (the 'Scheme A'). This report proposes an extension to the Scheme A and examines the cost impact of such an extension and further proposes that funding be sought from the appropriate maintenance authority to defray the impact on Parish precept payers.

SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

This section summarises the green spaces and verges/roadside waste areas in the Parish. Whilst every effort has been made to identify areas this list should not be considered definitive or exhaustive.

GREEN SPACES / VERGES

AREA	STATUS	MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY	CONDITION	CURRENTLY MAINTAINED BY
A52	Roadside waste/verge	Highways Agency	OK	Highways Agency
Azimgur Road Playground	Amenity Land	Rushcliffe Borough Council	Overgrown	Rushcliffe Borough Council
Beverleys Avenue	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council	OK	Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Council – Scheme A
Burton Lane	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council	OK	Adjacent residents
Church Street	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Adjacent residents
Conery Lane (South of A52)	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Nottinghamshire County Council and adjacent Landowner
Conery Lane (North of A52)	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council	OK	Nottinghamshire County Council and adjacent Landowner
Conery Gardens	No applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Cottage Avenue	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Council – Scheme A
Dark Lane	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	Recently cut but overgrown around trees and by the fence to the playing field.	Nottinghamshire County Council
Granby Road	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council	OK	Nottinghamshire County Council

AREA	STATUS	MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY	CONDITION	CURRENTLY MAINTAINED BY
Grantham Road / Dark Lane Junction	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Council – Scheme A
Grantham Road / Whatton Bridge	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council	Overgrown	Nottinghamshire County Council
Grantham Road from Dark Lane to Main Street	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council	Overgrown	Nottinghamshire County Council
Grantham Road from Main Street to Orston Lane	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council	OK	Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Council – Scheme A
Grantham Road from Orston Lane to A52	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council	OK	Nottinghamshire County Council and adjacent Residents
Grantham Road verge around Green	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council	OK	Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Council – Scheme A
Green Walk	Amenity Land	Rushcliffe Borough Council	OK	Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Council – Scheme A
Main Street	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Adjacent Residents
Manor Lane	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Adjacent Landowner
Old Grantham Road	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK – except for area around Barns - overgrown	Adjacent Landowner
Smite Close	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Council – Scheme A
School Lane	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Adjacent Residents
Sunbeam Street	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Adjacent Residents
The Green, Ivy Row	Amenity Land	Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Council	OK	Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Council – Scheme A
The Lawns	Not applicable	Not Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

PARISH CURRENT AND PROPOSED SCHEMES

SUMMARY

AREA	STATUS	MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY	CONDITION	PROPOSED MAINTENANCE
A52	Roadside waste/verge	Highways Agency	OK	Highways Agency
Azimghur Road Playground	Amenity Land	Rushcliffe Borough Council	Overgrown	Rushcliffe Borough Council
Beverleys Avenue	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	PARISH COUNCIL SCHEME A
Burton Lane	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Adjacent residents
Church Street	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Adjacent residents
Conery Lane (South of A52)	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹ and adjacent Landowner
Conery Lane (North of A52)	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹ and adjacent Landowner
Conery Gardens	No applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Cottage Avenue	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	PARISH COUNCIL SCHEME A
Dark Lane	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	PARISH COUNCIL SCHEME A
Granby Road	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹

¹ Acting as the Local Highways Agency

AREA	STATUS	MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY	CONDITION	PROPOSED MAINTENANCE
Grantham Road from A52 (Prison) to Dark Lane	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Adjacent Landowners
Grantham Road / Dark Lane Junction	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	PARISH COUNCIL – SCHEME A
Grantham Road / Whatton Bridge	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	Overgrown	PARISH COUNCIL – SCHEME B
Grantham Road from Dark Lane to Main Street	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	Overgrown	PARISH COUNCIL – SCHEME B
Grantham Road from Main Street to Orston Lane	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	PARISH COUNCIL – SCHEME A
Grantham Road from Orston Lane to A52	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Adjacent Residents
Grantham Road verge around Green	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	PARISH COUNCIL – SCHEME A
Green Walk	Amenity Land	Rushcliffe Borough Council	OK	RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL
Main Street	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Adjacent Residents
Manor Lane	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Adjacent Landowner
Old Grantham Road	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK – except for area around Barns - overgrown	Adjacent Landowner
Smite Close	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	PARISH COUNCIL – SCHEME A
School Lane	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Adjacent Residents
Sunbeam Street	Roadside waste/verge	Nottinghamshire County Council ¹	OK	Adjacent Residents
The Green, Ivy Row	Amenity Land	Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Council	OK	PARISH COUNCIL – SCHEME A
The Lawns	Not applicable	Not Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

PARISH COUNCIL SCHEME A – CURRENT SCHEME

The current scheme has been operating for nearly two years and is entirely financed from the parish precept. The scheme operates on a two-week cutting cycle through the growing season, sixteen cuts per year.

The scheme includes the following areas:

Beverley's Avenue – all verges.

The junction of Cottage Avenue and Dark Lane.

Smite Close verge.

The 'Green' on the junction of Dark Lane and Grantham Road.

The junction of Main Street and Grantham Road and along Grantham Road to Orston Lane.

The Green fronting Ivy Row.

Grantham Road verges fronting The Green.

Originally the scheme included the Green on Green Walk. However, Rushcliffe Borough has informed the parish council that they intend to cut the area at least twelve times a year. The spare capacity released has been transferred to the Dark Lane verge bordering the Playing Field, from the parish boundary in the North to Grantham Road. The change was implemented at the first cut in August, 2008

The cost of the scheme is £125 per cut (£2,000 per annum).

PARISH COUNCIL SCHEME B – PROPOSED ADDITIONS

It is understood that Nottinghamshire County Council are to clear the verge on the south side of Grantham Road, between the ‘mowed’ area and Whatton Bridge. It would clearly make sense to maintain that verge and the much small area on the opposite side, once the main area has been cleared.

The area around Whatton Bridge, including the grass area on the bridge itself is becoming seriously overgrown and requires immediate and regular attention.

Scheme B therefore proposes additional areas, namely:

Grantham Road, the verge on the south side of the road, between the ‘mowed’ area and Whatton Bridge.

Grantham Road, the verge of the north side from the junction of Dark Lane to the junction with Main Street.

Whatton Bridge, both sides of the Grantham Road end of the Bridge, the grass on the bridge and the area around the bollards on the south-side of the bridge.

A provisional costing has been obtained for guidance purposes; an accurate cost will be available once the main area has been cleared.

A one-off ‘tidy-up’ charge for the north side of Grantham Road (the hedge side) and Whatton Bridge of £75 plus VAT.

To maintain the above areas on a fortnightly basis (16 cuts) at a cost of £400 + VAT per annum.

To maintain the south side of Grantham Road (the wide verge area) on the assumption that the overgrown area has been cleared on a monthly basis (8 cuts) at a cost of £280 + VAT per annum.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This section examines the financial implications to the Parish Council of the current and proposed additions to the grass cutting schedule.

CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR

Action	Cost	Budgeted in current financial year	Addition impact in current financial year
Scheme A	£2,000	£2,000	£0
Scheme B			
Tidy-up of Grantham Road north side and Whatton Bridge	£75	£0	£75
Maintenance of Grantham Road North side and Whatton Bridge on 2 weekly basis (say 8 cuts in current year)	£200	£0	£200
Maintenance of Grantham Road South side on monthly basis (say 3 cuts in current year)	£105	£0	£105
TOTAL	£2,380	£2,000	£380

As can be seen from the above table the impact of implementing Scheme B in the current year would be an additional cost of £380.

FULL YEAR COSTS

The inclusion of Scheme B would produce a total cost of £2,680 + VAT per annum. Assuming no contribution from Nottinghamshire County Council the total scheme would require an increase in the precept of £680. This figure would equate to an increase of 6% on the 2009/2010 level.

CONCLUSIONS

It is regrettable that Rushcliffe Borough Council did not find it possible to support the Parish Councils initiative in green area maintenance in the parish. Since the Parish Council undertook to maintain the green by Green Walk the overall condition of that area has improved significantly. In fact the Rushcliffe Borough's program of twelve cuts a year is a retrograde step as the Parish Council's programme included sixteen cuts a year. However, it is clearly not viable for the Parish Council to continue the cutting of the (Green Walk) green if the Borough Council insists on cutting it themselves, albeit on an inferior basis. However, on the positive side the Parish Council has been able to switch the capacity released by not cutting on the green on Green Walk to the eastern verge on Dark Lane.

The table in the Summary section clearly demonstrates that if Scheme B is adopted the Parish Council in conjunction with residents maintain nearly all the verges in the parish. As those verges need not be maintained by the Local Highways Authority (Nottinghamshire County Council), it would not be unreasonable to expect the County Council make a contribution to the Parish Council for the work undertaken.

It would be a missed opportunity if the regular maintenance of the south side of Grantham Road was not undertaken once the area was cleared. The condition of the north side of Grantham Road and the area around Whatton Bridge is to say the least 'shabby' and action needs to be taken on those issues.

On the assumption that Scheme B will be adopted green area and verge maintenance would amount to approximately 26% of the total budgeted expenses (assuming the 2009/2010 budget as the base).

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- The Parish Council adopt Scheme B subject to the advice of the RFO as to the funds available to fund the scheme.
- That the Parish Council seek funding from Nottinghamshire County Council in respect the maintenance of the verges in the parish as a matter or urgency.
- That the performance of Rushcliffe Borough Council in respect of the green on Green Walk be closely monitored to ensure compliance with the 12 cuts per year undertaking.
- Those copies of this report be made available to our Borough and County Councillors.