



Update About Hedge Cutting in Alderbury & Whaddon.

New legislation, in force from 23rd May 2024, strengthens protection for UK hedgerows. **Cutting hedges either on or bordering agricultural land between 1st March and 31st August is now banned unless specific exceptions apply.**

Alderbury is a wildlife friendly village, and the Parish Council has [a policy](#) for our approach to preserving, and supporting the growth of, our trees and hedgerows.

If residents have hedges which overhang a pavement or road, APC recommends they anticipate getting them cut in the autumn or winter to avoid disturbing nesting birds. In exceptional circumstances, (such as to avoid danger to pedestrians, cyclists or drivers), there is provision for cutting an overgrown hedge outside of this period, for which we recommend using hand tools.

For anyone interested in the details, the full legislation [can be read here](#).

Our summary interpretation:

- The specified intention of the legislation is to;
 - Put hedgerow management practices more rigorously into law,
 - Increase protection for nesting birds,
 - Boost biodiversity and carbon storage in our hedgerows.
- The most prominent updates in this legislation are;
 1. Cutting hedgerows is now banned* from 1st March to 31st August (inclusive),
 2. A buffer strip of 2m should be created and maintained,
 3. No application of pesticides/fertilisers should take place within this buffer strip.
- *There are some circumstances that negate the cutting ban, and while all exemptions are important, APC expects clause 6.2a to be relevant most often, which exempt the hedgerow cutting ban when the hedge *“overhangs a highway, road or footpath over which there is a public or private right of way and the overhanging hedgerow obstructs the passage of, or is a danger to users”*.

So whilst APC strongly supports the retention of hedgerows (and trees), the protection for nesting birds, and a general increase in biodiversity and carbon capture wherever possible, we will be accepting of hedgerow cutting in circumstances where hedgerows would, if uncut, restrict visibility for drivers, force pedestrians to step into a road, risk crashes of vehicles/bicycles, or any other potential risks.

Note: This letter doesn't constitute APC giving any legal advice. We continually review the appropriateness and effectiveness of our policies, and update them if/when required.