



Update About Hedge Cutting in Alderbury & Whaddon.

New legislation came into force on 23rd May 2024 aimed at strengthening the protection for hedgerows nationwide. The full legislation [can be read here](#).

Alderbury Parish Council already has [a policy](#) that covers our approach to preserving, and supporting the growth of, trees and hedgerows in our village. This UK legislative update will prompt us to review that policy.

The following is a summary of our interpretation of what this new legislation means for Alderbury & Whaddon:

- 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 two most prominent updates in this legislation are;
 1. Cutting hedgerows is now banned* from 1st March to 31st August (inclusive).
 2. A buffer strip should be created and maintained;
 - a. Of two metres, measured from the centre of a hedgerow, where a green cover must be established and maintained,
 - b. And no cultivation or the application of pesticides or fertilisers should take place within this buffer strip.
- *There are some circumstances that negate the cutting ban:
 - While all exemptions are equally important, the one that APC expects to be relevant most often, based on past experience, are clauses 6.1 and 6.2a 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.
 - We have Wiltshire Council’s standardised letter that can be sent to the land owner/resident wherever such a problematic hedgerow is located.

Note:

- We will continue to review the appropriateness and effectiveness of our policy, and update it if/when required.
- This letter doesn’t constitute APC giving any legal advice, nor will we ever give legal advice.