



BIODIVERSITY & ENVIRONMENTAL  
NET GAIN GROUP

part of Green Construction Board

SMALL CHANGES,  
**BIG RESULTS.**

# Do you own or manage green estate?

Small changes can make a big difference to biodiversity, recreational value and overall sustainability, while reducing the costs and providing flexibility of use and appearance.

Local Authorities are starting to implement nature friendly maintenance methods. Read on for some great ideas to start.

You can click here to read **Chesterfield Borough Council's Grassland Management Policy** and visit **Plantlife's 'No Mow May'** which gives tips for gardeners of every size!



With a little bit of training, people become **biodiversity champions** and local advocates for their patch of land, learning about its seasonal biodiversity as well as providing opportunities for citizen science.



It is also more **cost-effective**. For example, assuming 1 ha of traditional greenspace maintenance is an average of one day once a month would be £4,500 a year. **If maintenance was reduced to twice a year, this would be £750 a year, this represents a £3,750 per ha per year cost saving.** Or that time and money could be spent on biodiversity enhancements and nature engagement.



In terms of **Biodiversity Units** (as measured by the statutory biodiversity metric) a poor to good state change for modified grassland, is an **uplift of 2.34 Biodiversity Units per ha worth £70,000 per ha.** This totals a net benefit of £73k per ha with an additional **annual saving of £3,000 per ha** without considering the wider educational, recreational and environmental benefits.

# Birds, bees and butterflies are coming back!

As well as great awards and accreditations to showcase your biodiversity enhancements, having quality greenspace greatly improves people's health, wellbeing and productivity. Monthly photography, using apps to identify plants and animals, and sharing this data with records centres, friends, family and colleagues is an enjoyable and rewarding activity for everyone.



# STOP MOWING!

**Do not mow between April and September in marginal areas and around trees.**

This will increase the plant diversity, pollen and provide other food sources for insects. It will also improve the soil and the variety of wildlife. Leaving a proportion of longer grass through winter, as margins to hedges and beneath trees, will provide shelter for overwintering eggs or pupae of insects in the thatch

When taking the first cuts in spring, do not cut shorter than 15cm to protect the overwintering insects in the thatch beneath.

After mowing, the cuttings can be used to make habitat piles or they can be composted.



# STOP CUTTING!

**Allow hedgerows to flower and keep them until winter.**

This provides pollen, lets berries develop and provides food sources for birds, small mammals and insects. It also allows birds to nest and invertebrates to safely overwinter, resulting in more predators for pest species in the summer.

The best time to cut is in early February, just before the bird nesting season.



## CREATE BARE GROUND

**Small patches of bare ground are the perfect germination sites for seeds. They also provide nesting opportunity for solitary bees and wasps.**

The wind and animals will naturally bring you new species. You can encourage this by pulling up grasses or raking in small patches. Areas of bare ground are also important as basking and hunting areas for insects.



## DO NOT USE CHEMICALS

**There is no need for herbicides,  
pesticides, slug pellets or  
fertilisers.**

A healthy ecosystem will have a balance of predators and prey, the ground cover and additional plant material will retain water and will self-regulate.



## MINIMISE WATER USE

**A healthy established plant environment won't need watering.**

However, if there are new plants or planting in pots that do require watering, avoid watering during the hottest time of the day and in windy weather (to reduce evaporation).





## TELL PEOPLE WHAT IT'S ABOUT

**Use signs, knowledge shares  
and QR codes to let people  
know.**

Signs can tell people that this isn't an unloved patch of land but one where positive land management is being applied.

