


The benefits of cut and collect management for grassland habitats within parks and open spaces

Giles Nicholson - Coast and Greenspace Service Manager



Dorset
Council

A photograph showing two workers in high-visibility yellow and orange gear performing lawn maintenance. One worker is operating a green riding mower with a red cutting deck, while the other is using a trimmer on the grass. The background shows a brick building and dense greenery.

Standard amenity grass cutting - Why change?



Dorset
Council

Amenity grass cutting - cut and drop





Drivers for change

97% of lowland unimproved grassland has been lost since 1930

Budget reduction – systemic change needed

Delivering policy aims – climate change and biodiversity

Enhancing wildlife and landscape quality

Public opinion



How to achieve
this change?

Rewilding?

High input wildflower
seeding?



Cut and collecting?



Taking a “crop” reduces nutrient cycling into the soil - reducing fertility that leads to – lower growth rates and higher biodiversity



Advantages of cut and collect....

- Can be integrated into routine maintenance so can be delivered at scale
- Cut less often, saves time, money and carbon
- Reduced growth rates over time
- It will increase biodiversity and landscape quality

5 years of cut and collect





Local farmers can be a huge help



**This grass is
being taken for
hay to feed local
livestock.**

**Please keep it
free from dog
fouling and
litter.**

Thank you



**Dorset
Council**

Contractors



2021



2022



Cut and collect in house



Rytec collector flail

Grillo FD 2200



Iseki SF551







Disposal on site







I lay my
eggs in
composting grasssssss

#LoveYourVerge





Building from scratch – low
fertility is key

08/2009

Since construction the Butterfly species list has more than doubled to over 30 species, which is over half of the British list



Perennial mix

Agrimony	Agrimonia eupatoria	15
Betony	Betonica officianalis	4
Bird's Foot Trefoil	Lotus corniculatus	25
Black Knapweed	Centaurea nigra	5
Black Medic	Medicago lupulina	15
Greater Knapweed	Centaurea scabiosa	3
Ox-Eye Daisy	Leucanthemum vulgare	15
Rock Rose	Helianthemum nummularium	5
Self heal	Prunella vulgaris	10
Small Scabious	Scabiosa columbaria	3

The mix is £145/kg



Dorset
Council



Take-home messages

Cut and collect means less mowing and higher biodiversity across all your grassland greenspace

Disposal of arisings is an issue, but solutions are easier than you think

Grassland habitats full of wildflowers are popular with the public and decision makers

Cut and collect will help meet your biodiversity and climate objectives

The opportunity to transform our environment is huge!