

Managing verges and grassland to benefit wildlife

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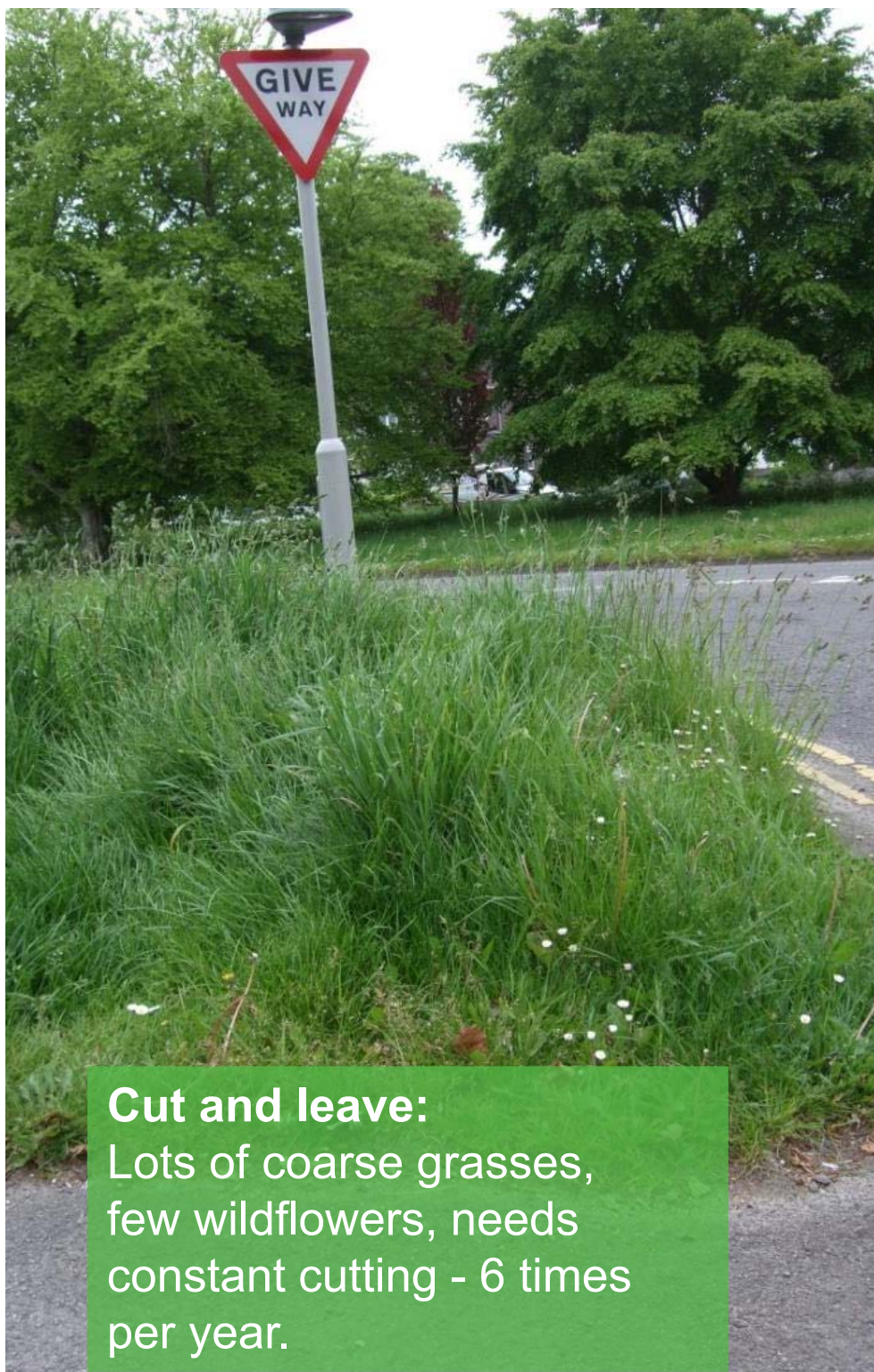
Dorset
Council



Standard amenity grass cutting - Why change?

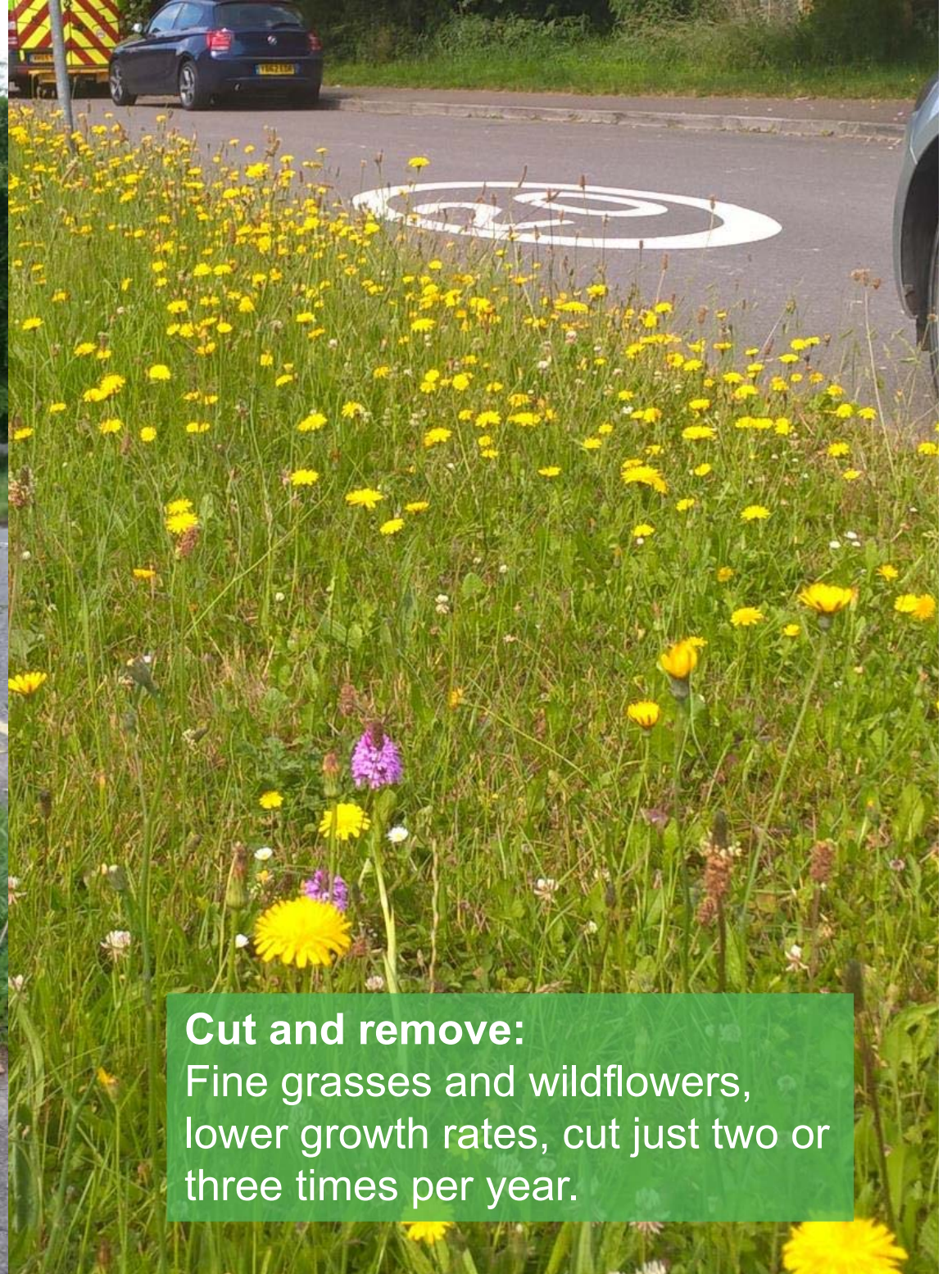
Amenity grass cutting - cut and drop





Cut and leave:

Lots of coarse grasses, few wildflowers, needs constant cutting - 6 times per year.



Cut and remove:

Fine grasses and wildflowers, lower growth rates, cut just two or three times per year.



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.**

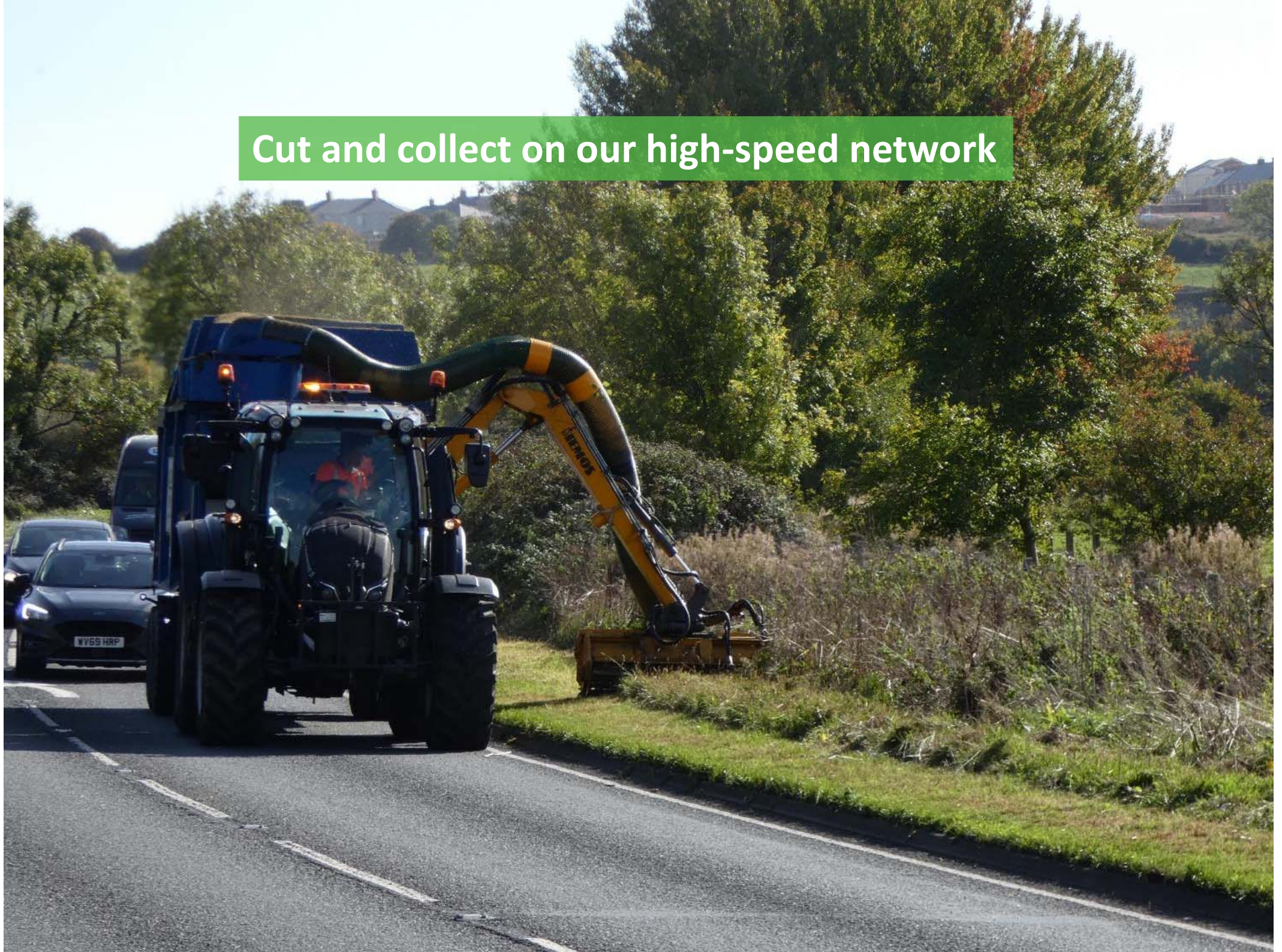
**Please keep it
free from dog
fouling and
litter.**

Thank you



**Dorset
Council**

Cut and collect on our high-speed network



2021



2022



Cut and collect in house




Rytec collector flail

**Winner of LGC best
Environmental Service
award 2019**

**Most urban
verges in Dorset
are cut and
collected**





Verges are contributing to climate and ecological objectives, Landscape Nature Recovery Strategy, 30 x 30, and many SNCI's and SSSI's.

Grillo FD 2200



Iseki SF551











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

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!

