

Meadow Management – Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils



Started May 2022

Expansion over three years

2022

- Babergh 1,570
- Mid Suffolk 37,761

2023

- Babergh 49,988
- Mid Suffolk 86,450

2024

- Babergh 68,157
- Mid Suffolk 82,788*





Some areas worked better than others

Objection Bingo!

Looks neglected	Fire risk	Vets' bills for grass seed	Encourages snakes	Dog and cat mess
Encourages rats	Nothing but weeds	Full of deer ticks	Nothing but a cost saving exercise	Encourages fly-tipping
Plenty of space in the countryside	More weeds in my garden	No wildlife there	Can't sell my house	Makes my hay fever worse
Rebate on my council tax	Deer will eat my flowers	Ragwort will kill my dog	Greenwash	Unelected bureaucrats imposed this on us
Nowhere for kids to play	Breach of Open Spaces Act	All the birds have disappeared	No Mow May has finished	It's always been mown

We didn't get it right

Problems with staff acceptance

- Staff failed to manage some areas properly
- Staff failed to understand what they were doing and why
- Some staff didn't support the change

Problems with overall open space management

- Weed control without Glyphosate
- Weather
- Staff numbers

Problems with the site

- Unsuitable soil conditions
- Tree suckers
- How the public use it
- Lack of support

The meadow mutiny: why a rewilding scheme sparked a residents' revolt

A council in Derbyshire decided to let grass grow wild - and a group of vigilante mowers fought back. What can be done to make sure essential environmental schemes get the local support they need?

No mow May has continued into June, July and August, according to a Bury St Edmunds resident calling for neglected open space near their home to be maintained.

The public open space on The Bartons at Pondgrove Close, off Barton Road, now boasts grass six feet tall as it has not been mowed this summer, said Stephen Tully.

He said it was the second year the area had been neglected while other open spaces on the Moreton Hall estate were mowed.



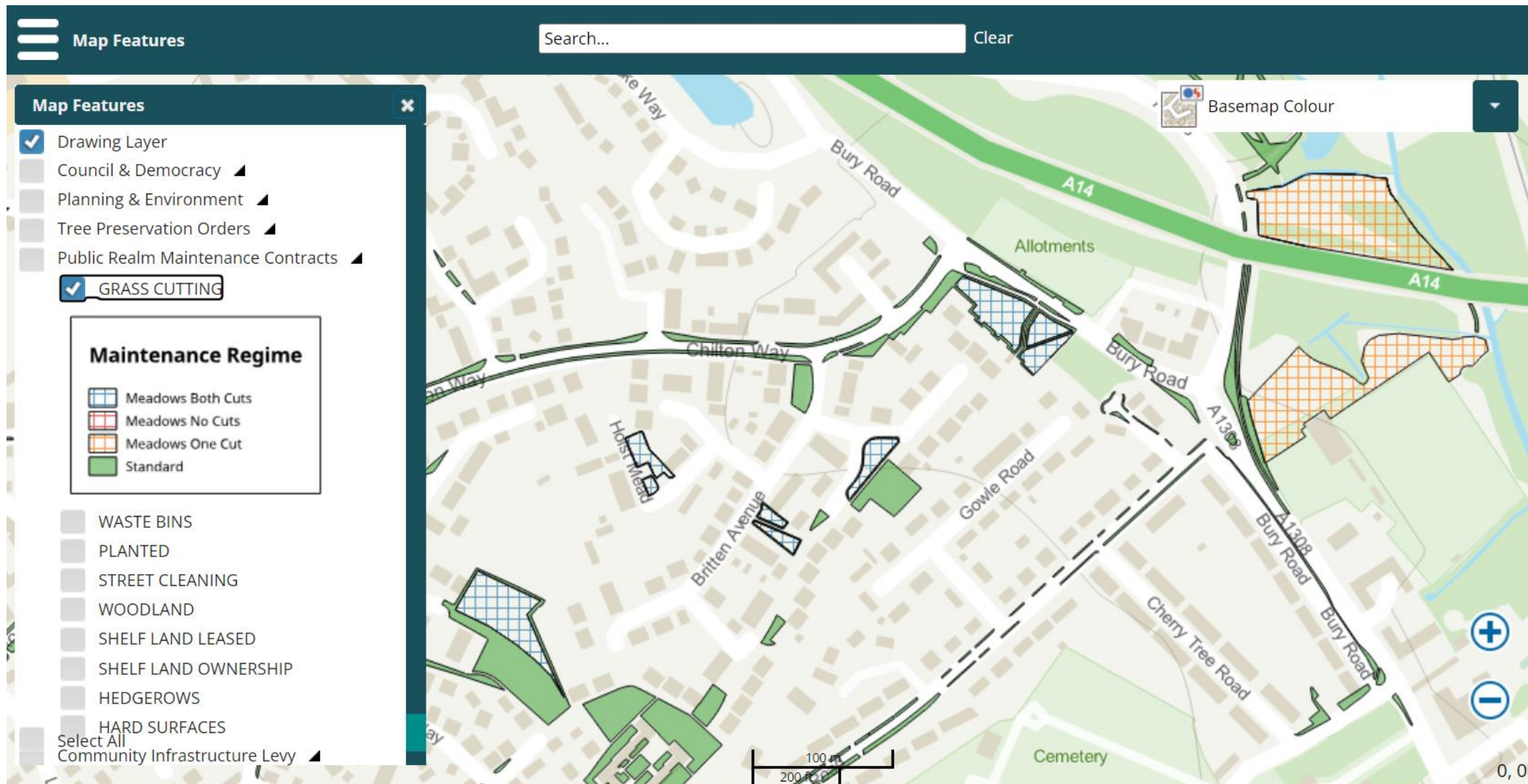
Opposition – national and local. Often due to poor information and site selection

Problems with large expansion in 2023

So, what did we do?

- **Information** – is key, for public, staff, councillors, town and parish councils – proactive, not reactive
- **Site selection** – not all sites are suitable. Size, location and nature of use
- **Public demand** – only where people want this
- **Management** – get it right, everywhere, not just meadow areas
- **Adapt** – if it doesn't work, or if people don't like it, change it

All meadow areas mapped, available to staff and public



Staff Awareness

- Regular meetings covering management and local knowledge
- Simplified approach to management – all areas framed with mown strip
- Map packs printed off and put in every vehicle



Public Awareness

- Signs on all new areas with QR code to webpage
- Revamped webpage with more information
- Articles in local publications
- Maps to all town and parish councils
- Adaptation in response to site conditions and public opinion



Social media posts increased


 **Mid Suffolk District Council**
4 days ago · 🌐

We'll soon be giving all our wildflower meadows their end of season cut 🌱

This cut at the end of the season, along with the one we do at the start of the season, is an important part of helping to control the grass to support wildflower growth throughout each spring and summer.

🌱 It's important we leave our sites for as long as possible before this cut. Not only to support our pollinators and wildlife within the long grass, but also to allow flower seeds to spread and settl...
[See more](#)




 **Babergh District Council**
July 12 · 🌐

🌱 What beautiful flowers and insects have you discovered in our or someone else's wildflower meadows this Bees' Needs Week 2024 ? 🐝

🌱 Wildflowers provide food for many insects (including bees and butterflies) 🐝


📷 Share your photos in the comments - let us know the road and town or village!

🌱 H... [See more](#)



👍 You and 5 others 1 comment 2 shares

👍 Like 💬 Comment 🕒 Send ➦ Share

 Author
Babergh District Council

📄 Find more information about:

- 🌱 Our wildflower meadows at www.babergh.gov.uk/wildflower-meadows
- 🐝 Bees' Needs Week at <http://www.gov.uk/.../publ.../bees-needs/bees-needs-campaign>

🌱 ... [See more](#)

9w Like Reply Edited



Adaptation:

Some areas seeded to make them more interesting

Better for people

Better for wildlife

Demonstrates we listen and respond



“I agree the areas certainly look far better than last year, with the Tippett Avenue piece being quite spectacular with the Cornflower which we didn't have on the Britten Avenue area.

We will get used to the growth and change, it takes time, even I am changing slightly!! Think it just annoys quite a few residents that we try to keep our front gardens clear and tidy and then just across the path it is so grown up.”



Don't give up!

- Attitudes have already changed over three years
- Fewer complaints about meadow areas, more complaints about us cutting down wildflowers
- Defensible position to have a compromise!
- Silent majority - Thurston

Thank you!



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