

Plant Biosecurity: Delivering a healthier future for plants and trees

Fiona Sutton-Wilson, Head of APSE Training



What am I going to talk about?

- What is plant security and why is it important?
- What can local authorities do?
- How can APSE help?



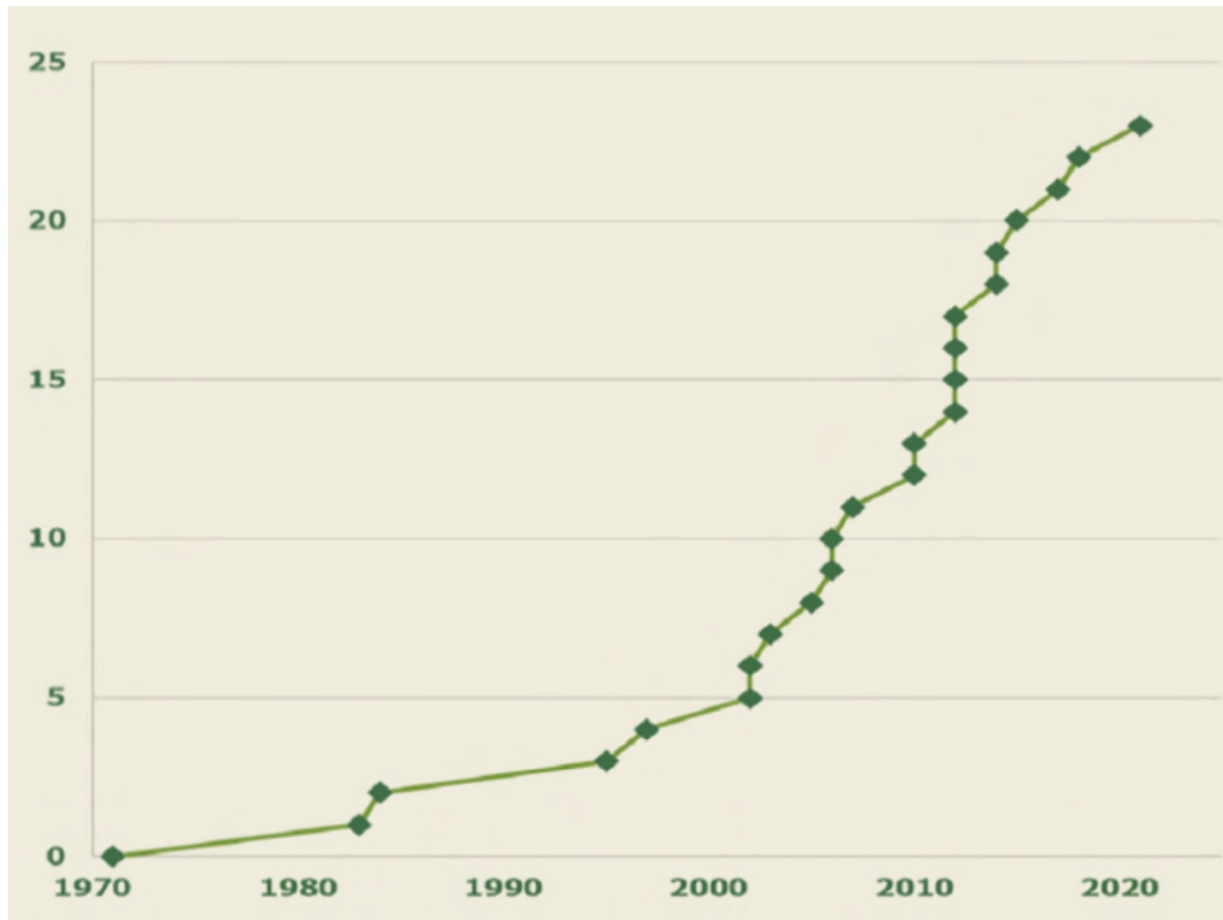
What is plant-biosecurity?



What has caused the problem?

- World-wide transportation
- Agriculture - plants grown to meet human needs
- Climate change
- Growing resistance to pesticides

Increase in new pests and disease outbreaks affecting trees since 1971



- What is happening?
- What are the problems?
- What's the plan?

New pest/disease outbreaks since 1971

1971	Dutch elm disease	2010	Acute oak decline
1983	Great spruce bark beetle	2010	Phytophthora lateralis
1984	Phytophthora alni	2012	Ash dieback
1995	Gypsy moth	2012	Asian longhorn beetle
1997	Dothistroma needle blight	2012	Sweet chestnut blight
2002	Phytophthora ramorum	2014	Phytophthora sikiyouensis
2002	Horse chestnut leaf miner	2014	Sirococcus tsugae
2003	Phytophthora kernoviae	2015	Oriental chestnut gall wasp
2005	Bleeding canker of horse chestnut	2017	Elm zigzag sawfly
2006	Oak processionary moth	2018	Eight toothed spruce bark beetle
2006	Phytophthora pseudosyringae	2021	Phytophthora pluvialis
2007	Pine tree lappet moth		

A triple threat...

The Triple Threat:

- Climate Change
- Food Security
- Biodiversity Crisis



Everything is linked - this is a systems issue.

Invasive non-native plants can...

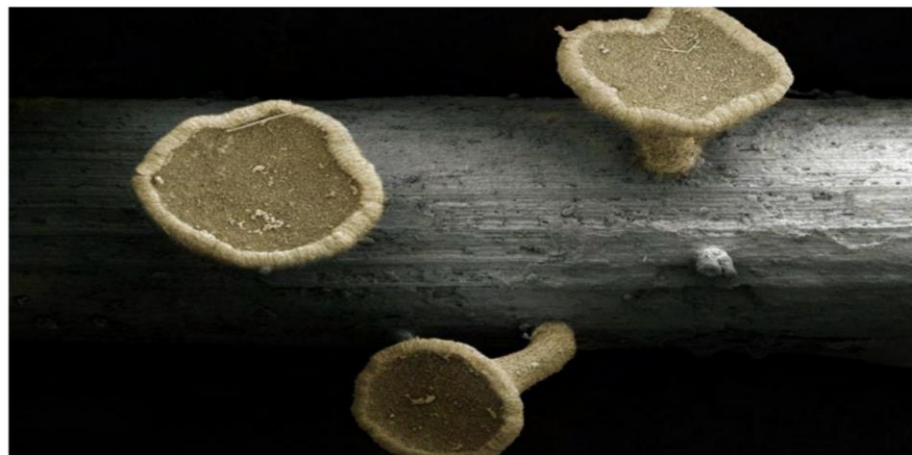
- Change ecosystems and habitats.
- Outcompete native plants.
- Take a long time to become invasive.
- Be expensive to eradicate.



Asian Longhorn Beetle photo credit FERA



Oak processionary moth

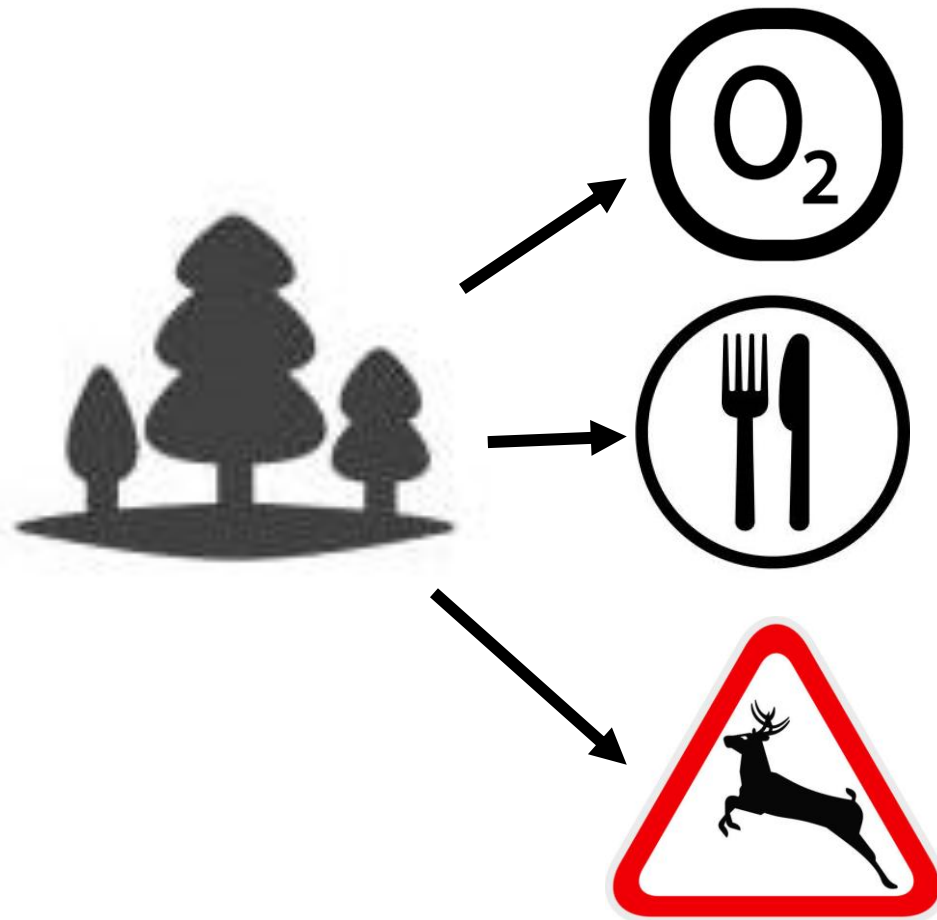


Hymenoscyphus fraxineus – Ash Dieback



Photo credit Paul Beales and David Crossley

Why is plant-biosecurity important?

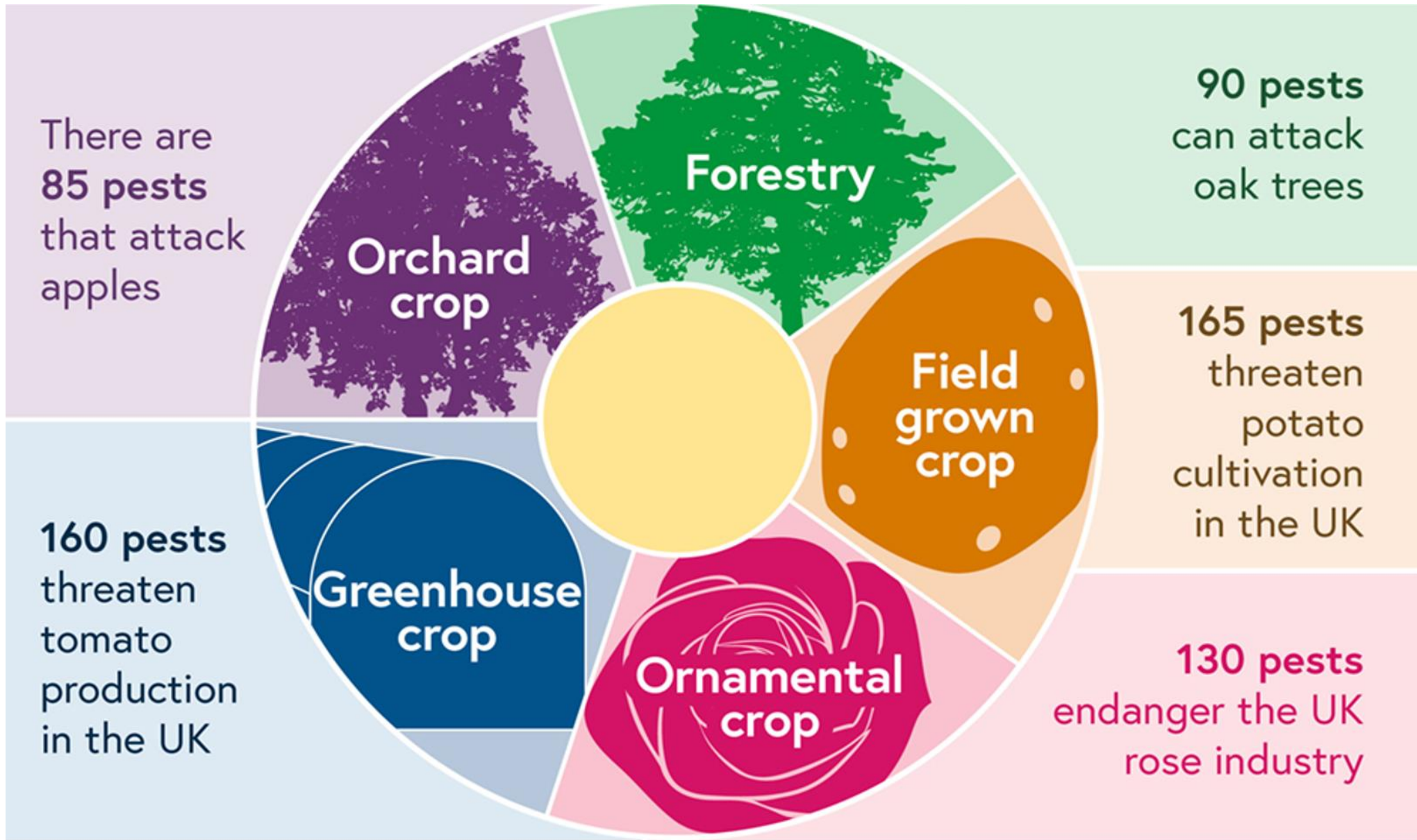


98% of the oxygen we breathe is produced by trees and plants

80% of the food we eat is provided by plants

80% of the world's terrestrial species of animals, plants and insects live in forests etc.

Potential Pest Threats



There are **85 pests** that attack apples

Orchard crop

Forestry

90 pests can attack oak trees

Field grown crop

165 pests threaten potato cultivation in the UK

Greenhouse crop

160 pests threaten tomato production in the UK

Ornamental crop

130 pests endanger the UK rose industry

Plant-biosecurity in Great Britain 2023 - 2038

In conjunction with Scottish and Welsh Governments

Outcome 1: World class biosecurity regime

Outcome 2: Society that values healthy plants

Outcome 3: Biosecure plant supply chain

Outcome 4: Enhanced technical capability



Himalayan balsam

What can councils do?

“(Plant Biosecurity is) an area of responsibility which impacts not only on current and future generations, but also the very survival of humans as a species.”

Adopt plant biosecurity measures



What can local authorities do?

1. Develop a local plant biosecurity policy, strategy and action plan.
2. Embed plant biosecurity into existing plans(e.g. tree strategy)
3. Controlling the waste from invasive non-native species
4. H&S PPE (e.g Giant Hogweed)
5. Good practice cultivation, plant hygiene and natural enemies - minimise chemicals.
6. Consider contamination - keep equipment clean
7. Source plants responsibly
8. Report early signs of disease
9. Work with neighbouring authorities and other stakeholders
10. Inform the public...

How can APSE help?

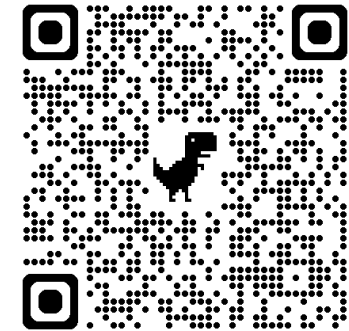





Plant Biosecurity for Local Authorities

Upcoming sessions

Date	Price (APSE Members)	Price (Non-APSE Members)
📅 TUE 01/10/24 + WED 02/10/24 🕒 TWO HALF DAYS 09:30 - 12:30	£187 + VAT	£304 + VAT



[Book Your Place Now](#)

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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.



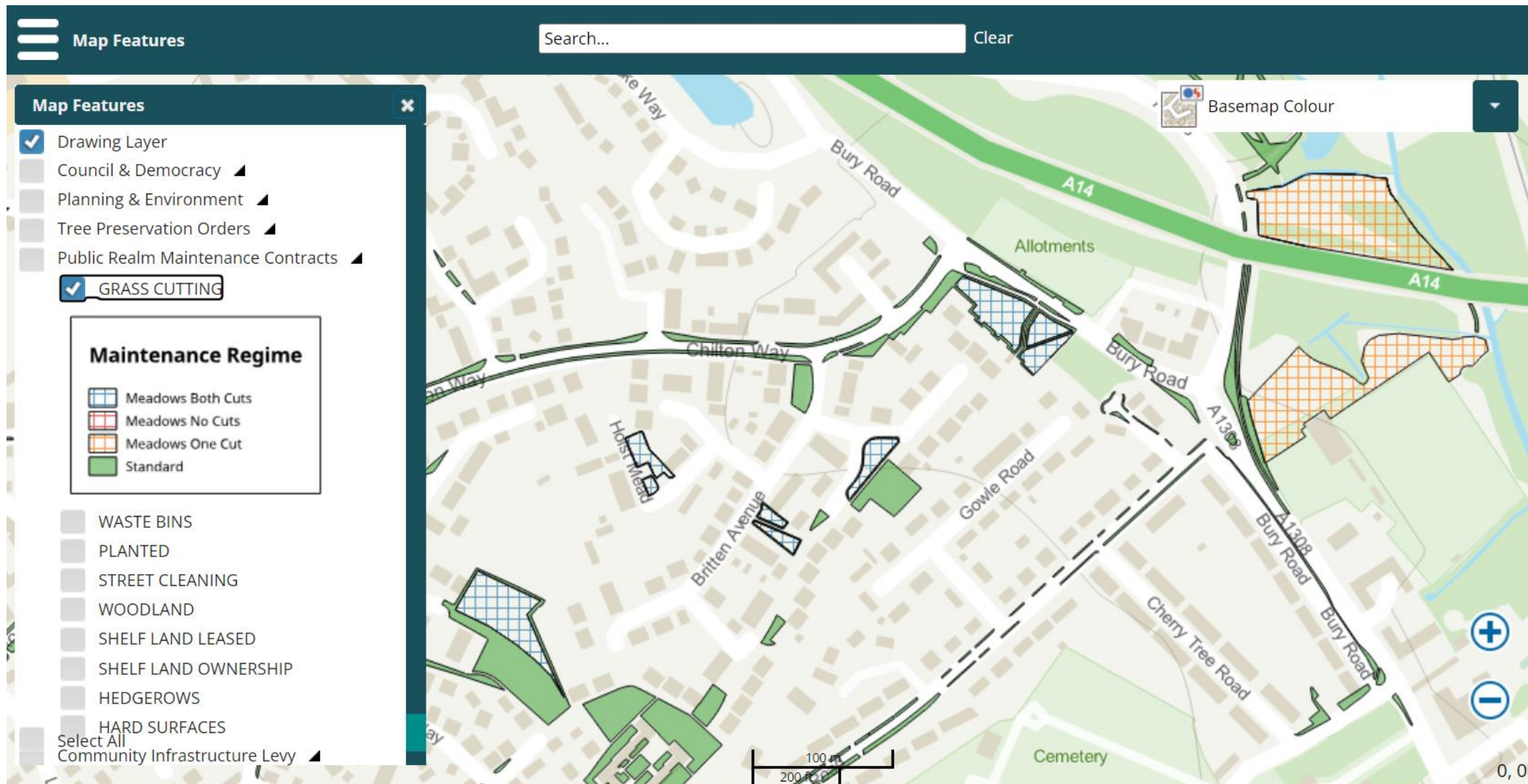
Opposition – national and local. Often due to poor information and site selection

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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