

**Date:** 05 October 2023

**Title:** Report Item 9 – Ecological Survey Report

**By:** S Adeniji (Parish Clerk)

**Purpose:** To accept the Ecological Survey report

**Recommendations:** a) To note the road verge assessment report  
b) To consider the additional opportunities highlighted in para 3.4 of the survey report  
c) To consider the conclusions of the survey report

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1. At its meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2023, the parish council resolved to instruct Laurie Jackson to commission an ecological survey of specified verges to assess their appropriateness for designation as wildlife verges. On completion of the survey, Laurie Jackson will apply to ESCC for the verges to be designated as Wildlife Verges.
  2. In August 2023, an assessment was undertaken by Laurie Jackson of the following verges to assess their suitability for classification as Wildlife Verges.
    - The Birling Gap Road, starting at the gate to the recreation ground and continuing down to the coast and past Belle Tout to the parish boundary.
    - The A259 westwards from the junction with Upper Street to the parish boundary
    - The Jevington Road northwards to the parish boundary
    - The Old Willingdon Road
    - The A259 eastwards from the junction with Downs View Lane
    - A section of Footpath 33b.

A copy of the survey report has been previously circulated to members.

3. The report asserts that many of these verges are in private ownership, so not appropriate for submission to the Wildlife Verge scheme. Five road verges were identified in the survey as potential Wildlife Verges these are:
  - Birling Gap Road,
  - Downsview Lane,
  - Gilberts Drive
  - Old Willingdon Road North
  - Old Willingdon Road South

Completed forms were submitted to East Sussex County Council on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2023.

## ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

4. Section 3.4 page 11 of the report highlighted some additional opportunities. The report states:

*At the Link, chalk grassland plants including Mouse-ear Hawk-weed, **Wild Thyme, Squinancywort, Hairy Violet, Dwarf Thistle, Small Scabious and Autumn Lady's Tresses** were seen growing in lawns alongside other wild flowers such as Yarrow, Common Bird's-foot Trefoil, Common Cat's-ear and Oxeye Daisy.*

*These verges represent a huge potential resource of an important habitat and could become a key part of the identity of East Dean if residents were encouraged to learn about and appreciate their flora, with verges allowed to flower and provide a valuable resource for wildlife.*

*There are a number of other greenspaces in East Dean and Friston that could be managed under a less intensive regime, including the green fronting the houses immediately south of Lower Street, East Dean, the churchyard of St Simon and St Jude's Church, East Dean Village Green, and the small green on Lower Street. The current composition of these areas was of amenity grassland with Perennial Rye Grass, Cock's-foot, White Clover, Yarrow, Dandelion, Creeping Buttercup and Dove's-foot Crane's-bill the most frequent species.*

## SURVEY REPORT CONCLUSIONS

5. The survey report concludes by highlighting in section 4 (page 12) that there are significant opportunities to enhance a network of greenspaces and wildlife corridors within East Dean and Friston Parish both through the Wildlife Verge scheme and outside of it.
6. The report highlighted roads to the north of the A259 where there are wide verges and lawns, in some cases full of chalk grassland plants, which are mown short. According to the report, *this is an opportunity to engage residents in these areas with just how special this is!*

The council may wish to consider the opportunities highlighted in the survey report.