

Kington Langley Parish Council

Reduced Mowing Scheme (Version 1.0)

As Resolved at the Kington Langley Parish Council Meeting held on 8th September 2025 - Minute Number 077.25

This document outlines the reduced-mowing scheme that is run by the Parish Council in Kington Langley.

For many years environmental organisations have been pushing for homeowners, landowners and councils to participate in “No Mow May”, where areas of grass should be left to grow, thereby allowing the flowers within the grass to actually flower. These areas are beneficial to wildlife, especially invertebrates, whether providing feed (pollen, nectar) for bees, or habitat for insects. These same environmental organisations pointed out that leaving grass uncut doesn’t have to be just for May but can be left for longer.

In 2023 it was decided that the Parish Council would run a trial in Kington Langley, following positive responses to a “climate action” survey distributed to all villagers. The trial ran in 2023 and 2024 with opportunities for feedback from villagers at the two Annual Parish Meetings held since the start of the trial. Reduced mowing is now an integral part of how the Parish Council manages Registered Commons and verges in the village, and it is noted that similar schemes are springing up in villages and towns across Wiltshire and beyond.

Benefits:

- Creates visual interest in the open areas of the village
- Benefits wildlife, thereby contributing to our “climate action” initiative
- Minor reductions in fuel used by mowing contractors

The Parish Council’s approach

The Parish Council has chosen different areas of the village for reduced mowing, and the aim is to stick to these areas (rather than choose new areas each year). Middle Common has been avoided as this is used for events.

The aim is to cut the grass in Spring, if necessary, but no cutting from April until September.

Ideally the clippings from the first cut after the summer would be collected and disposed of, to reduce the fertility of the soil which would reduce the vigour of the perennial grasses thereby encouraging flowering plants; however various factors prevent this currently¹. (Experience has shown that the cut grass, although long, rots down quickly.)

The Parish Council appreciates it would be attractive to treat the chosen areas as wildflower meadows, cutting and collecting clippings in late July, but this is labour intensive and not currently thought feasible.

Considerations

- Villager feedback (areas can be moved or managed differently, for valid reasons)
- Traffic sightlines (views should not be obscured at junctions)
- Fire risk (see below)

Fire Risk

It is recognised that long grass is a good fuel for fires. Each reduced-mowing area is delineated by a cut-grass border which a) makes the uncut area look neater and “as if it was meant” and b) stops transfer of flames to neighbouring properties, trees or other grass areas. Guidance from the London Fire Brigade states a minimum of 2 metres².

Overhanging vegetation is a particular concern, whether trees or (for example) shrubs overhanging a wall. The Parish Council will ask residents to trim back trees to ensure 2m clearance, and reduced mowing areas will be kept 2m away from the overhanging tree / shrub.

¹For a cost the Parish Council can obtain a flailing machine that efficiently cuts and collects clippings, but has no allocated funds for this, equally important is it has no location for disposing of the clippings.

²<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/grass-and-wildfires/wildfires-protecting-your-home-and-garden/>

Each reduced mowing area will be inspected every month (in the summer), to ensure:

- a) No rubbish or other unexpected object is hidden in the grass
- b) To spot any unwanted species: bramble, nettles, invasive non-native plants
- c) Ensure the cut-grass borders are intact (at least 2m)
- d) Ensure no long grass under overhanging vegetation
- e) Traffic sightlines are maintained

Inspections will be recorded, and issues followed up (e.g. liaising with landowners re trees that need cutting back).

Areas for Reduced Mowing

The following areas are subject to reduced mowing, along with any special management notes (if any).

- 1 Outside Langley Chase and up Plough Hill as far as the bench.
- 2 Half of Upper Common, beside main road, with a cut path through it.
- 2a Continuation of Area 2 in front of the Firs, again with a cut path through it.
- 3 Common outside Chedd's Cottage, subject to special management in an effort to encourage cowslips etc. (Details TBC)
- 4 Common outside Sedgebrook, both sides of the driveway. The mowed border can be minimal beside the Millenium Path. Some collection of clippings may be done by the homeowners, who are supportive of the scheme and its aims.
- 5 Wide, rough verge to the west of Days Lane, near Lypgate (opposite KLAN34A).
- 6 Segment of Lower Common on west side of main road, facing Kin House

See 'Reduced Mowing Map' for details.

The areas of Lower Common east of the main road are currently maintained by Kin House and feature a wildflower area and reduced mowing area. This is a trial to be reviewed by the Parish Council in 2026. A map of these areas is available, updated annually with any minor changes.

Any feedback (suggestions for improvement, volunteers to help with inspections, complaints etc) from villagers can be sent to the Parish Clerk at klparishclerk@kingtonlangley-pc.gov.uk or getinvolved@kingtonlangley-pc.gov.uk