

Mr Barrie Mason
Assistant Director Highways & Transportation
North Yorkshire County Council
County Hall
Northallerton
North Yorkshire DL7 8AD

cc Councillor Don Mackenzie

29 January 2018

2018 cutting dates for verges

Dear Mr Mason

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of Friends of the Dales, to raise the urgent matter of cutting dates for verges during 2018 within the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

As you are no doubt aware, the national charity Plantlife has asked county authorities throughout England to have the correct policy for the cutting of verges. Friends of the Dales notes your policy on your website:

“We have to balance the safety of road users and pedestrians with environmental considerations, recognising that verges are important for wildlife. Some of our grass cutting is done early in the year, and some in July, August or September, to allow flowers to set seed whilst also maintaining safety. The frequency of the cut depends on where the verge is located.”

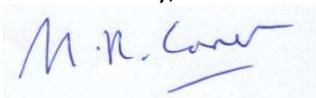
We welcome your acknowledgement of the importance of verges for wildlife, and late cutting of verges is a good way of protecting the fauna of our rural areas. Many plant species now depend upon verges for their survival, and without properly managed verges they would be extinct. Birds, insects and small mammals also need this protection. In a recent report done in Germany it was revealed that insect life had decreased by 75%. This has grave implications for agriculture and the health of the environment.

We are also pleased to hear that within the Yorkshire Dales National Park you have agreed with the NP Authority that certain stretches of verges are special and will be cut to a particular regime.

However, despite these good intentions, it was noted this year that many verges in the Yorkshire Dales, often of exceptional importance for their plant communities, **were cut in JUNE and not in July or later.**

This is of great concern to us, **and we are writing to ask for your reassurance that in future road verges will be properly managed and cut at the correct time.** If it would be helpful, Friends of the Dales and experts within the Yorkshire Dales National Park would be willing to meet with you to discuss this urgent matter

Yours sincerely,



Mark Corner
Chair



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