

Biodiversity Group recommendations to Parish Council

16th November 2016, updated 20th January 2017

The Biodiversity Group reports to the Nun Monkton Parish Council on matters concerning the Environmental Stewardship Agreement in place to improve biodiversity of the Green.

Following a meeting of the Group on 7th November 2016 the following recommendations are offered.

Cutting the Green

Cutting and baling of grass in summer is a part of the management plan designed to reduce fertility of the soil whilst allowing wildflowers to mature and disperse their seeds.

To give wild flowers time to set seed, the Environmental Stewardship Agreement prohibits cutting before July 15th each year. We recommend that the Parish Council ensures that cutting and baling is undertaken as soon as possible after mid-July. In a late Spring it may be necessary to postpone grass cutting until flowers such as Yellow Rattle have matured.

The irregular shape and contours of the Green are not conducive to the use of modern large farm equipment. It has been difficult to find a contractor with suitable machinery who is willing to undertake this relatively small project at a time of year when harvesting is also underway. For the past two years the contract has been let to Reveley's Groundworks & Landscaping but their availability in mid-summer is limited by the demands of harvesting. We recommend that the Parish Council continue to explore other contractors who have the appropriate machinery and availability during harvest time.

Trimming and weed management

Grazing by cattle and mid-summer cutting fails to keep grass short around posts, monuments and seats so these require a programme of manual trimming. Undesirable plants such as thistle, nettle and ragwort require control from time to time. **We recommend that the Group calls for volunteers to trim and tidy twice a year, in late Spring and in late Summer.**