



Village hedge cutting.

1. Background.

Some front garden hedges in the village are over hanging the pavement by around 20 – 40 cm making them impassable especially for prams etc. Comments have been made on social media in the past, also mentioned in the September issue of inSPIRE.

For the benefit of all villagers, we need to inform those private properties that their hedges need to be cut back to the edge of the pavement.

Wiltshire Council's published Tree Management Safety Inspection and Maintenance Policy (Section 15.0: Pavement – Obstruction) states:

“Where a pavement is obstructed by vegetation growing from private property, the owner/occupier will be asked to cut back the vegetation. If the owner/occupier fails to do so, the Council may serve a notice under Section 154 of the Highways Act 1980 requiring the vegetation to be cut back. If the notice is not complied with, the Council may carry out the work and recover the costs from the owner/occupier.”

This means that landowners are responsible for ensuring that hedges, shrubs, and other vegetation do not encroach onto the public highway.

While Wiltshire Council ultimately hold the enforcement power for this matter, they generally ask for Parish Councils to take the first step in attempting to ensure highways are kept clear. They have published standard template letters to assist parish councils to make this initial contact.

2. Proposal

Following initial observations there are about 12 properties where hedges are overgrown. A full survey of houses next to footways should be completed to ensure that all properties are dealt with in an equitable manner.

Once the properties are identified we need to agree the most appropriate process to communicate with each of them.

For example, a first step;

- A brief polite, in person conversation.
- A professional, courteous letter from the Parish Council encouraging cooperation while making the legal position clear.

3. Recommendation.

The council approve the next steps in ensuring the hedges/vegetation do not encroach on the public highway.

Cllr Martin Handyside