

Roadside Nature Reserves

What are they?

Butterfly-shaped signs are popping up around the town! These signs mark “Roadside Nature Reserves”, which are areas of grass verge rich in wildlife. Bracknell Forest Council manages these roadside areas to allow wildflowers to grow and support an abundance of insects such as bees and butterflies. Some of the Roadside Nature Reserves in Bracknell also support rare plants such as orchids; sadly these plants are often dug up in the mistaken belief that they will be ‘better off growing elsewhere’.



How are they managed?

For wildflowers to grow and flourish, grass areas need to be managed in a different way to most grass verges, which are mown regularly. Roadside Nature Reserves are left uncut between spring and late summer, so that the grass and wildflowers can grow. They will not be cut again until after the wildflowers have set seed. In the meantime, these areas should be full of colour and alive with the sound of foraging bees and the sight of butterflies and other insects feeding on wildflower nectar.

Why are they important?

Grasslands are an important part of the natural and urban landscape. They provide habitats for a number of different plant and animal species. This includes important pollinator insects such as bees and butterflies, which have suffered huge declines in numbers in recent decades. This is partly due to a loss of flower rich grasslands.

Repeated mowing of grasslands kills wildflowers and reduces the amount of nectar available for pollinator insects. Changing the mowing regime, so that grasslands are only cut once during the summer, increases the number of wildflowers that are growing and provides a food source for bees, butterflies and other insects.

Conserving biodiversity in towns and cities areas has become increasingly important as the landscape has become more urbanised. Grasslands managed for biodiversity are important havens for wildlife and act as corridors for the movement and migration of wildlife in urban environments. Bracknell Forest Council will be looking to increase the number of Roadside Nature Reserves each year as part of the Bracknell Forest Biodiversity Action Plan.

