

Press release: A38 verges in Devon being transformed for bees and butterflies

Environment-conscious drivers may be concerned to see areas of wild vegetation being removed on the roadside of the A38 in Devon over the coming weeks, but it's all in a good cause.

The land is being cleared to make way for a colourful carpet of native grasses and wild flowers that will form part of a wildlife corridor along Highways England roads in Devon and Cornwall.

Highways England ecologist Leo Gurbert explained:

The grassland and scrub growing on parts of our verges is known as 'rank grassland' and doesn't support a wide variety of species, particularly bees and butterflies, as it has limited biodiversity value.

By replanting with a wider variety of native grasses and wildflowers we'll be able to provide a much more wildlife friendly environment for a range of pollinators and insects, some of which are in decline.

The planting is taking place at 11 sites on the A38 between Ashburton and Wrangaton and will create almost six hectares of new grassland which will be enhanced by planting native perennial species including; yellow rattle and bird's foot trefoil.

Leo added:

As well as pollinators such as bees, butterflies and hoverflies the new areas should support further biodiversity such as invertebrates, reptiles and small mammals and it should improve the appearance of the road and journey experience for everyone using it.

The Highways England grassland planting schemes are now in their third year and a total of 10 hectares have been planted along the A30 and A38 in Devon and Cornwall.

The seeds being planted this year have been sourced from a nearby farm to make sure the plants are as local as possible.

The scheme is being delivered under Highways England's national [Biodiversity](#)

[Plan](#) which is being supported by a £30 million national investment programme over the next five years.

The plan recognises road verges and associated land can be managed to provide great areas of wildlife habitat, relatively free from human access, that are often scarce in the surrounding landscape.

These road verges can also be used to connect fragmented habitats in the wider landscape, enabling plant and animal populations to move and interact, and so become stronger and more resilient.

The project also aligns with DEFRA's National Pollinator Strategy and environmental charity's Buglives' B-line initiative, which aims to create a nationwide network for pollinating species such as bees.

The scheme involves three phases of work between Monday, 23 July and Friday, 28 Sept 2018.

This work will be carried out overnight when traffic flows are at their lowest to keep disruption to a minimum and while most sites will require lane closures no delays are anticipated.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.