

A local resident's recent enquiry and offer of support has led to a colony of bee orchids flourishing near Stoke-sub-Hamdon!

Two colonies of rare bee orchids were highlighted as being at risk due to verge cutting on the A356 near Stoke-sub-Hamdon, and it was identified that SSDC were responsible for the maintenance of this verge on behalf of the County Council's Highways team. We are required to maintain these verges with up to 11 cuttings a year, however SSDC have recently adopted a policy of active conservation management for those that are appropriate for biodiversity improvements. This means that for many areas we will be reducing our cuttings to 4 times a year, including at this site, which will allow for species to flower and set seed over the summer months!

On a recent count 35 bee orchids were identified, as well as several other species including the common spotted orchid. The photo is a testament to the benefits that reduced mowing can bring for nature!

We have also submitted this site, along with several others from across the District to the County Council's Ecology team to be considered for designation as Conservation Verges, which will further influence decisions for the management of these sites.

Working alongside our Environmental Services team, we will be making sure sites across the District are mown appropriately in the future to support biodiversity, whilst continuing to ensure road safety!

If you would like to have a similar impact, and know of a site that might need help, get in touch as we may be able to do the same in your area!

Contact: SSDCenvironment@southsomerset.gov.uk

Mowed....



Reduced mowing...

