

**Hayley White**

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**Subject:** FW: Address to Open Spaces Committee - Colin Hyde

**From:** colin hyde <[mrcolinhyde@gmail.com](mailto:mrcolinhyde@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** 15 July 2020 10:47

**To:** Julie Earp <[deputy.clerk@ilminster.gov.uk](mailto:deputy.clerk@ilminster.gov.uk)>

**Subject:** Address to Open Spaces Committee - Colin Hyde

Hi Julie,

Disappointed not to be able to deliver this last night, but perhaps you could pass on my email to committee members for them to consider at their next meeting.

Many thanks

Colin

Ilminster Town Council (ITC) - Open Spaces Committee: Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Address by Colin Hyde: Environment Champion for Ilminster

I'd just like to preface these remarks by reminding members that last year the ITC both declared a Climate Emergency and adopted 10 Sustainability Principles, one of which reads: 'To protect and restore land for the benefit of wildlife and people'.

With this in mind I would like to talk about the management of marginal land within the parish owned by the ITC. By coincidence, Jeremy Vine's Radio 2 lunchtime program discussed a closely related issue and headlined it: **Should Councils stop mowing roadside verges** in order to allow the growth of a richer and more diverse habitat?

There are 300,000 miles of roadside verges in the UK covering 3 times the area of all wild flower meadows combined. Environmental scientists at Exeter University recommend mowing verges twice a year.

I know that the ITC is not responsible for maintaining Ilminster's roadside verges, but I would like the Open Spaces Committee to consider the **two** following **actions**:

1. Reconsider the land that they do manage: The Rec, playgrounds, Herne Hill and New Road cemetery. Mow any marginal land not used for sport or footpaths less frequently to help halt the decline in insect biomass, calculated as a 75% decrease in 27 years.\* This new policy could, for example, be put into practice where the Paupers' graves are at the cemetery. Surely it would not be disrespectful to the paupers whose lives were left unheralded with unmarked graves. In death they could be helping to increase biodiversity, a fitting memorial. This is one example, and I'm sure the Committee could find others.

2. Support your Environment Champions in their representations to both County and District to re-evaluate their verge mowing regimes. It would be very powerful for us, if we could add to our message as environmentalists, the fact that we are backed by our own Town Council. This might be in the form of a written endorsement.

Please consider these 2 actions and let us know what the Open Spaces committee decides.

\* German research for which evidence is available if required.