



Public Rights of Way Team

Guidance to volunteers on the cutting-back of vegetation on PROW

The Public Rights of Way Team is assisted on a regular basis by volunteer groups who survey, waymark and cut minor vegetation along the PROW network.

The purpose of this guidance note is to explain how minor vegetation cutting should be carried out by volunteers. This note should be read in conjunction with the most recent Risk Assessment on vegetation cutting.

Location

The most useful location where minor vegetation cutting can be carried out is around path furniture, which can quickly become overgrown and difficult to use, particularly along lesser walked paths. Grass, nettles and brambles around stiles and kissing gates should be the primary target for volunteer groups.

Volunteers may also find it necessary to cut some surface vegetation along paths, but this will normally be limited to what can be achieved with hand tools. Significant stretches of surface overgrowth should be reported to the PROW team.

Significant overgrowth from trees and hedges adjacent to/overhanging a path should be left and reported to the PROW team, who will speak to the landowner to get the problem resolved.

Method

The Council does not provide tools and volunteers are responsible for providing their own.

Only hand tools should be used, such as secateurs, saws, slashers, billhooks, shears, or loppers. Power tools should never be used.

Volunteers are responsible for ensuring:-

- 1) that all tools are in a good condition;
- 2) vegetation clearance is not undertaken above head height without use of an appropriate safety helmet and eye protection; and,
- 3) that all volunteers know how to use the tools properly.

Informing someone of your whereabouts

All volunteers should inform a suitable person of their intended whereabouts, expected time of return and what to do should they not return by that time.

Personal protective equipment

Volunteers are responsible for providing their own personal protective equipment and for ensuring it is in a fit condition for the planned activity. For vegetation cutting, this could include: -

- Gloves/gauntlets (gloves should not be worn when using wooden handled tools such as hammers);
- Sturdy footwear;
- Waterproofs (as necessary);
- Long-sleeved clothing; and,
- Eye protection (e.g. clear goggles).

This list is not exhaustive. Additional PPE may be required according to specific tasks or weather conditions (e.g. hot weather may require sun cream, sun hat) and volunteers are responsible for determining what is required for any given activity, day and location.