

Living Verges

Our campaign to restore country verges and village greens in the Dales

Guidance for increasing biodiversity in your village:

Remember that small changes can be made easily, don't need to look untidy, and can have major benefits for wildlife.

This information – which is part of a wider resource pack of information – was prepared by Dr Anne Readshaw, volunteer campaign leader for Living Verges.

For further information visit www.friendsofthedales.org.uk or email Membership & Events Officer, Victoria Benn: victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk

No.	Habitat	Rationale
1.	Village Grass Consider leaving an area of the village green and/or verges uncut between May and August.	This will enable flowering plants to provide nectar and pollen for insects, which are in turn food for birds and mammals. Allowing the flowering plants to set seed will help them to return in future years, increasing the diversity of the plant life, and benefitting insects whose larvae eat plants other than grass. Some birds (e.g. goldfinches) eat seeds directly.
2.	Bird boxes	Provides safe nesting sites for birds.
3.	Bird feeders	Provides year-round food supply for birds.
4.	Hedges Consider letting new growth get slightly long (less manicured). Definitely don't cut in bird nesting season (April to July).	To improve the habitat for birds (and insects).
5.	Wood pile (in a shady spot).	To provide a home for insects and fungi. A pile of decaying wood is good!
6.	Bat boxes, hedgehog 'hotels', hedgehog 'highways'	To provide homes and access to food for mammals.
7.	Village pond	Habitat for insects, frogs, toads etc. Edges should be wildlife-friendly, and planted with native species.
8.	Native planting	Big, ornamental blooms often do not provide as much nectar & pollen as less conspicuous, native plant species. A range of native plant species is good.
9.	Peat-free ornamental planting	Using peat-based compost is bad for the environment because it destroys peat bogs, which are important for carbon storage. Good peat substitutes are now easily available for use in flower tubs, hanging baskets, etc.
10.	Churchyard Consider leaving some areas of the churchyard uncut during summer, and/or cut on a rotational basis.	Food for pollinators (see No.1, above).
11.	Community involvement	Many community members would be pleased to see an increase in wildlife in their village. People have been 'reconnecting' with nature during lockdowns, and the benefits for mental health are well-established. Several villages and parishes have local wildlife groups, get in touch if you'd like to find out more about their work.