

Management Principles for Stones Farm Country Park

The cutting regime overleaf gives an overview of how mowing will be carried out. However, a flexible approach must be taken to ensure the site aims are met, not just following the cutting regime blindly. The cutting regime should be amended as it is hard to predict growth rates and how areas respond. Target habitat condition should be dictated by the aim for each area.

Timing of Cuts

The timing of cuts will vary according to weather and ground conditions. However, annual cuts should be in September/October if possible. If a second cut is required it should be before the middle of February to avoid impact on nesting birds. In reptile areas, the later in the year the cut is the better.

Amenity Cut (4cm)

Aim: to keep a permanent short sward that creates tidy areas with clear lines of site and obvious pathways. Usually, 8 cuts a year

Additional: relax mowing in hot dry conditions

Annual Cut (7cm)

Aim: to maintain a species rich sward with wildflowers.

Additional: If undesirable plants establish then consider a second cut at the end of the winter before ground nesting birds arrive. Possible also spot spray

Cut Every Two Years – rough grassland (30cm)

Aim: to keep a permanent complex grass sward suitable for reptiles. Scrub and brambles should be encouraged but ultimately, a mosaic of scrub and grassland is the aim.

Additional: Some scrub control through more regular mowing may be required as the site develops. Scrub already on site should be scalloped using volunteers with brush cutters. The Attenuation Pond Margin already requires more regular cutting.

Cut Every Two Years – grassland (10cm)

Aim: to keep a permanent grass sward that allows local plants to colonise and for a diversity of sward structures to establish. Half of this area is cut each year.

Additional: Monitor and revert to an annual cut if this is not working. Alternatively, revert to an amenity cut if brambles and other undesirable plants establish and consider spot spray treatment.

Orchard (10cm)

Aim: to keep a wildflower-rich sward beneath trees and to avoid damage to trees by cutting.

Additional: May require an annual cut to maintain plant diversity and reduce the growth of unwanted plants. Spot spray may be considered around trees to reduce damage.

Attenuation Pond

Aim: to stop area from scrubbing over completely. An annual cut where machines can be used

Additional: As ground is often moist an annual cut may not be possible. This isn't a problem so long as the area can be cut sometimes.

Stones Farm Cutting Regime

 Site Boundary

Cutting regime

 Amenity cut to 4cm

 Annual cut to 7cm

 Even years to 10cm

 Odd years to 10cm

 Even years to 30cm

 Odd years to 30cm

 No regular cutting



0 100 200 m



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White Horse Ecology