



## **Grounds Maintenance**

### **How often do you cut the grass outside my house?**

All highway and housing sites receive 10 cuts a year.

### **When do you cut the grass?**

Grass cutting starts in April and runs to the end of October.

We aim on housing sites to cut grass every 3 weeks but due to seasonal growth of the grass and other issues such as mechanical breakdown this may extend from time to time to 4 weeks.

### **I live on the Outer Ring Road, when will my grass be cut and why is it different to other sites?**

The outer ring road is cut 6 times a year. However some sections of the ring road are 'relaxed mowing' and receive 2 cuts, at the start and end of the grass cutting season, although we do perimeter strips to path and kerb edges to the same frequency as the rest of the ring road to create a definition between the 2 types of cutting regimes and we aim to maintain sightlines and traffic signs etc.

One of the reasons behind the revised grassland management was to reduce the amount of money the council spends on grass cutting, but it was also hoped that it would lead to the creation of a number of meadow areas for pollinating insects and other wildlife. The meadow grassland does not have to be flower rich to provide valuable habitat for both foraging and nesting habitat for pollinating insects, however we have established pockets of wildflowers to give colour and added interest around the City.

### **The grass in my area has not been cut for months?**

The teams employed to cut the grass across the district have a huge area to cover. Occasionally areas of grass do get missed, so if you feel an area of grass has not been cut when generally similar areas in your neighbourhood have, please do let us now.

### **Why does the council not remove the grass cuttings?**

We do not remove grass cuttings after the mowers have been out due to the cost. These grass cuttings will compost down back into the soil. Grass cuttings that go on the road or paths should be blown back onto the grass - if this is not happening please let us know at [parks@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:parks@leicester.gov.uk)

### **Why not have extra resources ready when the grass is growing strongly?**

During wet and then warm weather conditions grass growth will be significantly stronger, this can occur several times throughout the growing season depending on the weather and can be difficult to predict. These situations along with mechanical breakdown can cause delays and severely hamper progress with grass cutting.

In an attempt to catch up during peak season additional resource is applied to the service (subject to availability of budgets) but given the scale of the amount of grass to be cut across the city some delays are inevitable

### **Why is herbicide used around grass obstacles?**

The use of herbicide around lampposts and other street furniture on a highway verge for example, can dramatically reduce the amount of strimming required to tidy a site following mowing. This allows more time for operatives to spend on the actual mowing and eliminates the damage that strimming would otherwise cause. For example: stones/debris being catapulted onto untargeted areas.

We only use products which comply with Government legislation and all staff that undertake such operations are trained and licenced to do so. We have also reduced the amount of herbicide we use and actively look at alternative treatments as they become available

### **When are shrubs pruned?**

Shrubs are given one prune a year between September and February, outside of the bird nesting season, to comply with the Wildlife and Countryside Act. Sight lines on the highway and items considered a H&S risk will be pruned as required.

It is an offence under Section 1 of the [Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981](#) to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.

### **When do you trim hedges back?**

Hedges are trimmed once a year between period September and February, outside of the bird nesting season. to comply with the Wildlife & Countryside Act.

It is an offence under Section 1 of the [Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981](#) to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.

### **How often do you empty bins on parks & open spaces?**

This will depend on the level of use the site receives, some park bins are emptied daily, others once per week.

## **Cleansing Services**

### **How often is my street cleaned?**

The council must, by law, keep clean all streets, paths, parks and open spaces in the city. The standards for cleanliness are laid down in the Environmental Protection Act 1990: The Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse.

The city is divided into 'zones' and the zones which are busiest and get dirtiest are cleaned more often. For example the city centre is swept and cleaned daily, including the emptying of litter bins, whilst the districts and road are swept and cleaned on average on a weekly cycle.

### **Is dog mess a health hazard and will the council remove it?**

Apart from being an unpleasant nuisance if you step in it, fall in it, cycle through it, or wheel your wheelchair through it, dog mess can also be a health hazard.

Both dog and cat faeces can contain the eggs of the roundworm 'Toxocara'. These eggs can survive in the soil for several years. If they are ingested or inhaled by humans, they may cause eye, liver, brain and respiratory problems such as asthma, hepatitis and epilepsy.

Children playing in fouled recreation areas are most at risk. Dog waste is also a potential health risk to farmers' livestock if you allow your dog to foul in their fields.

The council will remove all fouling on the highway during the street cleaning program.

### **Does the council pick up dead animals?**

The council is responsible for the removal of dead animals from the public highway only (roads, parks, etc). We are not permitted to go onto private property for removal. We will, however, pick up the animal if it is placed in a strong bag or box and placed at the front of the property.

### **What do I do if I find a needle/SHARP?**

It is very important that you contact us immediately if you find drug related litter. You can call 0116 454 1003, during normal office hours, or 0116 373 7770 out of hours.

We aim to collect and safely dispose of this potentially hazardous material within 2 hours of being reported, please let us know:

- details of where the items has been found
- how many and the type of items
- your contact details - in case an officer cannot find the item

### **How are the weeds on the highway managed?**

We have a contract to treat all weeds on the highway footpaths on three occasions per year using a translocated herbicide.

### **What happens to the leaves in Autumn?**

The council has a leaf collection program in place during periods of leaf fall and will remove fallen leaves from the public highway and parks.

### **What is an abandoned vehicle?**

Usually abandoned vehicles are vehicles that have been in the same location without being driven for some time and do not usually have valid road tax. However, if a vehicle is untaxed this does not necessarily mean that the vehicle is abandoned; sometimes vehicles will be driven without a valid road tax.

The council will investigate vehicle abandonment.

If you suspect a vehicle to be abandoned, you will be asked to provide the following:-

- Vehicle Registration Number
- Make, model and colour
- Location – please be as precise as you can giving the road name and nearest house number if available
- How long the vehicle has been at the location
- General condition of vehicle
- Your name and contact details – all personal information is held in the strictest confidence

## **Play Services**

### **How often are play areas tested for safety?**

We carry out visual safety checks weekly in all play areas to ensure all the equipment is safe to use and hasn't been vandalised. Operational inspections are carried out monthly by our trained play Inspectors and an annual independent inspection is undertaken by ROSPA.

## **Trees & Woodlands**

### **Will the council fell the tree adjacent to my property?**

We have a policy to only remove trees that are dead, diseased, dangerous, or can be proven to be linked to damage caused to buildings. This approach fully addresses our duty of care in accordance with current industry best practice and ensures that all possible investigations are carried out.

### **Can I prune the tree adjacent to my property?**

If the tree or trees are within a conservation area or protected by a tree preservation order you must apply to the planning department and inform the owner of the trees as a courtesy.

If the trees are not protected you are within your rights to remove any overhanging vegetation to your boundary, but you must offer the cuttings back to the owner.

### **What do I do if the tree causing damage to my property?**

You should contact your insurer who will be able to answer your questions.

Damage to buildings due to vegetation-linked subsidence is far less frequent than is often commonly believed. However, occasionally difficulties can occur when inadequate foundations are placed on a shrinkable clay soil, adjacent to the roots of vegetation. It is then, usually in periods of extended drought, that effects can be noted of movement in a building's foundations.

If evidence has been found of structural damage to your property and it is believed that this may be linked to the location of adjacent council-owned trees or shrubs, it is imperative that all details are forwarded immediately to us. We will then try to investigate these concerns and will take every appropriate action to prevent any further difficulties.

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### **Trees are shading my property?**

Legally you have the right to vertical light but not horizontal light.

### **I have trees within my property, what are my responsibilities?**

The owner of trees have a duty of care to ensure that their trees are safe, and it is recommended that they are regularly inspected by a suitably impartial experienced consultant arboriculturist, and having professional indemnity insurance.

A suitably experienced arboriculturist with public liability insurance must carry out any works regarding trees that are protected.

### **Who owns the trees adjacent to my property?**

We do not hold the records of land ownership, but the Land Registry will be able to help you.