

**WITHYHAM PARISH COUNCIL
RESPONSIBILITIES: GRASS, VERGES, HEDGES, TREES**

Responsibility: Finance & Administration/Full Council

Review Cycle: Annually or earlier in the event of legislative changes

Date of Adoption/Renewal	Date for review
April 2021	April 2022

This document explains Withyham Parish Council's agreed responsibilities for grass and other vegetation in the parish. Areas that are not mentioned in this document are the responsibilities of other Councils (East Sussex or Wealden) or private landowners.

Grass and verges

Withyham Parish Council undertakes to arrange grass cutting at the areas outlined below, up to the maximum number indicated.

	Maximum number of cuts
Groombridge Recreation ground Main Area of grass	18
Cutting & Strimming fence line to guide hut	2
Cutting & strimming round Guide Hut, play area and Lime trees	7
Cut vegetation between footpath and recreation ground	2
Strim outside edges of Recreation Ground	2
Newton Willows Groombridge Cutting & strimming adjacent to storage facility	7
Tanyard on behalf of Groombridge Sports Ground Association	14
St John's Reading Room Under the trees	2
Teasley Mead Grass cutting of grass area and verge	14
Balls Green Play Area Grass cutting at play area through growing season and verge leading to play area	10

Withyham Parish Council holds a licence for Park Corner with the Eridge Estate. It is in the process of confirming whether a volunteer might cut the grass or whether a contractor will need to be asked to do it.

No other areas of grass or verges are the responsibility of the Parish Council.

Hedges

Withyham Parish Council is responsible for the hedge that borders Teasley Mead recreation area and Willetts Lane. Frequency of cuts was reviewed by F&A in September 2017 and it was recommended that the hedge should be cut sympathetically to a height of 7 or 8 foot and the sides also cut, between December and February 2017/18. Thereafter, each year one side should be cut and the top back to 7 or 8 foot, alternating so that the other side is cut the following year.

Hedging at Balls Green Community Space on the parish council's side of the boundary is maintained by WPC. Evidence of dormice in the hedge is registered with Sussex Wildlife Trust and as such ecological advice has been that a cutting back to thin the canopy may be made December to January when any dormice are dormant. Any maintenance of the lower hedge would likely require an ecological survey and guidance.

In December 2019 Finance and Administration Committee requested that in November/December 2021 the hedge behind the fence on Station Road Groombridge should be reviewed for its suitability for hedge laying. Once it is of adequate size the hedge should be laid to provide a barrier and the chain-link fence removed.

Withyham Parish Council is responsible for a small area of land, Manor Pound, at Lye Green. Neighbouring residents cut the grass. Annual checks of the hedging should be made to assess whether works are required.

Other hedges in the parish are the responsibility of landowners, ESCC or Wealden District Council.

Trees

Withyham Parish Council is responsible for trees at Groombridge Recreation Ground (within the areas defined by the lease) and not including trees in the Cricket Ground curtilage, Newton Willows adjacent to storage facility, and at St John's Reading Room land.

It is the policy of Withyham Parish Council to have a health and safety tree survey undertaken of trees on Parish Council land every 18 months.

In view of financial restrictions and the number of trees on Parish Council land it is the policy of Withyham Parish Council to only undertake health and safety work to trees on Parish Council land, except for the Lime trees at Groombridge Recreation Ground. The epicormic growth will be cut by the use of volunteer help each February. Where possible a chipper will be borrowed but all health and safety matters should be considered (e.g training undertaken) in its use, otherwise a skip or other means of disposal will be paid for. Where volunteer help is not secured the works will not be undertaken.