

It has been estimated there are nearly half a million kilometres of rural road verge in the UK. With over 97% of ancient wildflower meadows destroyed since the 1930s road verges are a vital refuge for many bees, butterflies, birds, bats and insects. The Effingham Grass Verges project is just one of a number of projects now underway as part of the Effingham Parish Council Climate Change Group. This working group came about from a desire by EPC to actively promote ideas and ways to combat climate change within our community. We have been helped enormously by the advice and support given by Steve and Diane Poole who started the Bookham grass verges campaign in 2020, with support from their local county councillor. They had already identified a number of verges along the A246 in Effingham that could benefit from not being mowed and together we were able to identify other verges in Effingham that would be suitable, including some along Effingham Common Road. Having approached Guildford Borough Council we were given the go ahead last spring to put up our own blue hearts, which many of you will have noticed on your way in and out of the village. Over time we hope that the flowers which have been identified further along the A246 will appear in Effingham. These include meadow cranesbill, burdock, evening primrose, mallow, knapweed and orchids. It will be wonderful to see these flowers complete their natural life cycle.

If you would like to nominate a grass verge near you, there is an online form you need to complete and submit to Surrey County Council. The form is simple to fill in and we recommend you submit your application with a couple of images of the verge you'd like to put forward. If the verge runs alongside several properties it would also be an idea to speak to your neighbours to let them know. The application can be accessed here:

<https://www9.surreycc.gov.uk/HighwayIssue/WhatIsTheIssue.aspx?Code=thgw-grs>.

Once you have had confirmation from the Council that your verge has been accepted then you can go ahead and make some blue hearts to show everyone that the verges are not being neglected but are being allowed to grow. They also help alert the mowing contractors not to mow that particular area!

We hope you will support our project and enjoy seeing what comes up on the verges in and around Effingham. If you would like any further information please email Kay and Jeremy Palmer via the Parish Clerk at clerk2010@EffinghamParishCouncil.gov.uk

