

Southwold's open spaces

Southwold's greens and open spaces are an iconic part of the landscape of the town and most have traditionally been maintained as closely cut lawns. At the same time the Common is clearly an important wildlife habitat strongly linked to the nature reserve areas of Southwold marshes, parts of which are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

Southwold Town Council's Leisure and Environment Committee have been in discussion with the East Suffolk District Council and their contractor Waveney Norse about the maintenance of Southwold's greens and open spaces.

STC, ESC, the Common Trust and Norse are all committed to green policies and to preserving natural habitats wherever possible. We have therefore been discussing whether the maintenance schedule for some of the greens and open spaces could be modified to encourage growth of more wildflowers, which would in turn benefit the insect and butterfly population. We are not talking about letting areas go completely wild, but rather reducing in some areas the frequency of mowing from four times per year, as at present, to twice a year. It would still be necessary in such areas to keep control of invasive species such as brambles and alexander. A possible benefit of thicker grass on the edges of some areas is that it might also help to deter cars parking on them.

In some areas local volunteers are already helping with maintenance of grass and flower-beds, and STC would welcome further community volunteers. Any savings made from areas where the cutting is reduced will be re-invested into plants and shrubs for the town.

These changes would form part of a one-year pilot study in the town which if successful could then provide a platform for ESC to roll out the initiative across the district.

Consultation with local residents and stakeholders will start with a drop in day at the Town Hall on 15th August 10am – 2pm where you can look at the maps of the areas being suggested and give your suggestions. Please come along, or otherwise email any suggestions to admin@southwoldtowncouncil.com.

Southwold Town Council