



# Road verge types in the High Weald

**Wildflower verges are part of the High Weald's natural beauty and are often a refuge for wildlife that has disappeared elsewhere.** For many of us, whether walkers, riders or drivers, verges are our closest daily contact with nature. Primroses and bluebells on our roadside banks are a welcome sign of spring, and the bright white of ox-eye daisies and pink of common-spotted orchids announce the arrival of summer. **There are four types of verge in the High Weald AONB.**

## Species-rich grassland verges

- These are common across the High Weald, but rare nationally.
- They are made up of naturally occurring 'delicate' grasses and wildflowers and are remnants of the ancient flower-rich meadows that once covered the landscape.
- They often have nine or more species/m<sup>2</sup>.
- They are frequent where soils are poorer and undisturbed, often alongside quieter lanes and sometimes at the heart of our villages.
- You can often see species such as birds-foot trefoil, knapweed, ox-eye daisy and common spotted orchids in these verges.
- These rare verges need care to stop wildlife decline. They need sensitive, sometimes bespoke, mowing regimes.



*Rare wildflower grassland in the centre of a High Weald village*

## Species-rich 'woodland' verges

- These are common across the High Weald but rare nationally.
- They are made up of naturally occurring plants that are typical of the ancient woodlands that are still abundant in our landscape.
- They often have nine or more species/m<sup>2</sup>.
- They are frequent next to woodland and on the steep banks of our routeways, often below a hedge.
- You can often see species such as primroses, bluebells, wild garlic and wood melick in these verges.
- These rare verges need care to stop wildlife decline. They should not be cut and often need protection from vehicle damage.



*Verge with species typical of an ancient woodland*

### Species-poor grassland verges

- These verges are typical of the national road network and are found in the High Weald where soils are more fertile and disturbed, for example alongside main roads or ditches where nutrients are more likely to build-up.
- The verges are dominated by 'vigorous' grasses and wildflowers that like fertile soils and usually have less than nine species/m<sup>2</sup>.
- You can often see species such as Yorkshire fog (a grass), creeping buttercup, white clover and nettles in these verges.
- These verges can often be improved for wildlife through changes to the mowing regime.



*Ditch dredgings encourage vigorous grass growth (left)*

### Amenity grassland verges

- These verges are often found in the area's settlements, normally alongside development.
- The verges tend to be made up of grasses and herbs that tolerate regular cutting.
- These verges can often be improved for wildlife through changes to the mowing regime.



*Amenity grassland in a village setting*

For more information on road verges in the High Weald AONB visit

**[www.highweald.org](http://www.highweald.org)**