

Millbrook Parish Council – Published grass cutting and village maintenance comments: as at 1:15pm on 12th July 2023

23 Comments

1. **Mary Mattholie** on 12 July 2023 at 7:54 am

I strongly support the council in its modified mowing policy We face an ecological emergency The long grass provides a vital habitat for the invertebrates to breed and supports the pollinating insects. It is true that hay fever and asthma are increasing but other factors such as increased air pollution and warmer temperatures with longer seasons due to climate change are contributing to this. We have lived in one house in the village for 40 years The decline in bees, butterflies and other insects in that time has been staggering in just one garden Where are the cuckoos , owls and hedgehogs now ?

2. **Fiona** on 11 July 2023 at 8:02 pm

This is a contentious subject and will forever bring out those who prefer the neatness and order of traditional public parks and those who have embraced the need for wild spaces.

A balance needs to be found.

I believe it is a good thing to leave the grass long through-out the nesting season to provide cover for water birds.

Grass should be cut short around all benches, including to the front.

The dam should be kept short.

I haven't really walked around the field, so can't comment from experience.

Having read other comments it sounds lime its neither one thing or another. Is it a nature park or a community space? Sounds like it is neither.

As I have said previously, it's about moderation, as so much is in life.

On a side note, I do so wish residents would take some pride in their village and clear the weeds in front of their homes. I live West St and it makes me sad to see the state of the street.

3. **Lucy** on 11 July 2023 at 7:44 pm

The village looks fantastic – it's just not what we are used to! At this time of climate crisis, the actions of small communities do matter. Allowing small pockets of nature to thrive without destroying habitats is making a difference to levels of biodiversity in our area. It is a progressive step in the right direction. Every child I have seen walking past the over grown paths has found clear and obvious delight from the beauty of the nature.

The flowers and the grasses look lovely, and they are clearly helping insect populations.

As someone who suffers from asthma, we need to be very clear in understanding that leaving grasses in no way increases how much people suffer- it is of course predominantly the pollen in the air from the trees. Should we cut all the trees down also? Let's try and get some perspective.

As to it blocking views, being a safety hazard and increasing rat populations: these views are obviously totally unfounded. People will always struggle with change, but change we must.

Of course, getting rid of some of the buddleia is essential so as to prevent building damage. Why can't we be sensible? We can cut back the buddleia and other plants which may cause damage to walls and buildings, without having to cut down every blade of grass.

There are ample places to walk all around the village. We are truly lucky to live somewhere so beautiful. Let's look after it and help it grow.

4. **Jo Ballard** on 11 July 2023 at 6:27 pm

I think it looks beautiful and natural and I love the way it has been managed. We need more wild places and biodiversity. Thank you its a brilliant thing to do. I've found some unusual flowers not seen before.

5. **Helen** on 11 July 2023 at 6:17 pm

I love the mix of cut and wild areas. It encourages wildlife, something that with intensive farming practices has suffered significantly in recent years. Overall, I'm happy with the tall, long grassy areas... i wonder if the crossing by the play park should be kept short as little people could have a problem seeing cars approaching when obscured by long grass and making their way to and from

the park. Having areas of long grass around the edge of the lake isn't a problem for me... in fact I like it as it gives the wildlife somewhere to shelter. Knowing where the edge of the lake is isn't an issue.... just avoid the long grass and you won't fall in.

Thanks you to those who initiated the varied cutting plan.... It's lovely to walk around the lake and see so many butterflies.

6. **Penelope Knowles** on 11 July 2023 at 2:18 pm

I have recently moved from a nearby village to Millbrook and I love the whole area and am proud to say I live here.

The council made the brave decision to declare a climate emergency and I feel as parishioners we should do all we can to support that declaration – not just for our lifetime but for our children their children and the children of the future. Constant grass cutting throughout the growing season is extremely expensive and certainly not in compliance with the declaration of climate emergency.

Surely it's a time to support our councillors during a challenging term of austerity and inflation. I believe the grass cutting has been carried out with huge considerations for everyone's needs – old and young alike. We can surely make out the edge of the water when necessary! We are extremely privileged to live in an area with a choice of walks and play areas so close at hand.

I would like to thank all the councillors for their time and dedication given freely for the benefit of our wonderful community – by no means an easy task

7. **Bruce** on 11 July 2023 at 2:02 pm

I think the MPC contractor has the cutting about right in the Park/lakeside area: plenty of cut areas to walk/ride around and some long grass patches to encourage the wildlife they support. Pollen affecting those who suffer hayfever (such as me) blows in from trees, fields and local verges so can't be completely controlled; avoidance at peak season and use of medication is a better option than taking away a key foundation of the wildlife food chain.

I love the Park having some wild areas with paths meandering thru' and fail to see how this makes the village untidy and parishioners ashamed to live here do residents remember 20+ years ago when there was no footpath around the lake and brambles screened off the east side of the lake? We now have a super

amenity for all to enjoy – just look at how many folk now come here for their walk or ride in their mobility scooter.

- **Helen** on 12 July 2023 at 6:28 am

I echo Bruce's comment.

During June, I was delighted to see the swathes of long grass around the lake, and really enjoyed a walk through the "maze" in the park that used to just be a bog.

We humans really must do all we can to encourage biodiversity and wildlife. If we don't there will be traumatic consequences.

Rats beside the lake are proliferating, but that is due to overfeeding of the ducks and fowl, not because they can hide in the long grass.

I congratulate the parish council on their management of the open areas of the village.

Thank you.

8. **Hilary** on 11 July 2023 at 12:19 pm

The biodiversity of plants and animals is lovely, the dog walking field is significantly less soggy in recent years thanks to the extra growth. It would be lovely to see some more wildflowers in the patches that aren't cut rather than just grass but I feel that will come with time as we allow wild flowers to grow to seed. The mental stimulation it gives the children and the dog when exploring now is wonderful and I am very grateful for the change. I would agree the road verges were an issue but it did slow people down, also noted this is not your responsibility so I will report to Cornwall Council in the future. Thank you for doing the best you can.

9. **Karen** on 11 July 2023 at 11:01 am

I think the village green areas are looking fabulous.

I do like to see the wild grass areas, we know it encourages essential wild life.

The children love following the paths that are cut amongst the long grass cut in the field.

It does concern me that a rise in asthma/breathing issues has been mentioned by other residents, I think any data related to this should be considered by the council on any future planning.

I think the area along New Road, alongside the lake, should be trimmed down to aid visibility for traffic.

10. **Sian** on 11 July 2023 at 9:37 am

It's been so, so lovely to see the grass and wild flowers been left to grow around the verges and lake in Millbrook. This is such an important part of our local ecosystem and will encourage all sorts of wildlife that we are so lucky to have here. We live in a beautiful rural setting and am so grateful that our local population and the parish council appreciate the absolute importance of leaving certain areas to grow naturally. I walk with my children and dog daily through the dog field and around the lake and it is now such a more enjoyable, relaxing and interesting experience since the wild grass areas have been allowed to grow. So pleased it's been done such a sympathetic way allowing access for all to enjoy the areas. Thank you and please let's continue to develop our local communal areas into wildlife friendly spaces.

11. **Sylvie Gomez** on 11 July 2023 at 9:18 am

I like the way the grass has been managed, especially around the lake. There are clear paths for people and the areas left are lovely, not only for us but for our wildlife. The number of insects has dramatically declined in the past twenty years and this has a knock on effect for birds and mammals. I realise that verges beside roads where sight is impacted must be kept clear but these are only in a few places. I am very happy with our parish council thinking about nature and trying to increase diversity.

12. **Linda Dunstone** on 11 July 2023 at 8:53 am

As a resident for over 43 years of the Rame Peninsula, I have personally witnessed the fall in bird, mammal and insect populations. It's been encouraging to see how our local council and councils around the country have embraced the no mow policy and let our verges grow to help bio diversity thrive again. Road verges are particularly important during the spring and

summer when a huge range of wildflowers and grasses provide a rich habitat for wildlife including insects, spiders, snails, small mammals and birds. We are so fortunate on this peninsula to still have a range of bio diversity as many areas of the world have completely lost theirs and with it their ability to grow food. I'd like to thank Millbrook Parish Council for their forward thinking and implementation of this hugely important effort. If we the human race are really going to help in this very apparent climate crisis then we all need to understand the fragility of our current eco systems and importance of boosting our insect populations for the survival of future generations.

13. **Frances Brennan** on 11 July 2023 at 8:36 am

It used to be that the balance of wildlife havens wasn't at the expense of Health and Safety. I complained to C C too as the line of sight on New Rd was dangerously impeded by the long grass. C C were/are not interested. The balance is wrong now. Wildlife is important and I loved the mix of long and short areas in the dog field. I also think the council needs to better explain it's limitations and maybe look at how to manage fb without councillors getting involved in fb debates. Maybe review the comms strategy?

14. **Zoe Fowler** on 10 July 2023 at 10:45 pm

The lack of grass cutting around the village is making it look unsightly and dangerous with poor visibility. I don't see the point of cutting small areas and leaving clumps of long grass. As mentioned on another comment you can't see where the edge of the lake is and that makes it dangerous. There are also several clumps of stinging nettles along the new road section of the lake. Snakes are a problem in long grass too which we discovered several years ago when our dog was bitten by a snake down near Stone pier and he later died. The grass seed also causes problems for people with hay fever. We have a problem with a buddleia bush growing in the road by Pete's garage and I'll give the Council their due whenever I have gone into the Council office and mentioned it, it is usually dealt with swiftly. My big gripe is the state of the graveyard and the fact that the area in the new section where nobody is buried gets cut but the rest doesn't! The war graves get cut around but no where else, my grandfather served in the war and although he did not die in it, does he not deserve the respect others do? There

are numerous areas in the village that can be left wild but we need to get a balance between safety and nature. Encourage wild flowers in the flower beds and boats around the village, have wild areas by all means in areas that are not going to endanger residents by blocking the view when driving and verges that can't be seen.

15. **Rob Dyson** on 10 July 2023 at 9:52 pm

Generally I would like a mixture, some left wild and some mown. Round the childrens area next to West St car park, mown. But a patch close to the stream definitely left wild, close the to parking spaces mown. On the lakeside again a mixture but mainly wild. Near the benches cut for example.

Much is made of the area between the lake and the footy ground but the wildlife will disappear if mown. What's left for the kids to see?

16. **Max rodpu** on 10 July 2023 at 8:09 pm

I would like to support the council in their survey and will give my opinion on the grass verges around the lake. I would prefer to see the water and like the grass cut.

17. **Kirstie Bristow** on 9 July 2023 at 3:42 pm

The grass areas in Millbrook Village are a disgrace. I used to be proud to live in this village, but now it is just looks like an unloved, unkept mess.

The grass areas around the lake are dangerous. Nobody can see where the end of the bank ends and the lake begins, meaning that some poor person (I expect a child) could very possibly fall in. This could and would be fatal (as it has been in the past).

The only animals that are making nests and thriving in that area are rats, which carry diseases, that can also be fatal to both animals and people.

Bees and butterflies do not gravitate towards grass, as the grass pollen is not useful to them.

People with lung problems are having difficulty with breathing due to the amount of grass pollen caused by the height of the grass. There has been a sufficient rise in emergency hospital admissions due to what is known as the 'Pollen Bomb' caused by not cutting grassy areas.

If the grass is kept short regularly, then it wouldn't be brown and unsightly, it would be green, like it is outside peoples houses that have cut it themselves. Sight is still hindered when travelling along the road between the village and Southdown.

When I did my online poll, 93% of the village people who voted, voted for the grass areas to be cut and left short. I understand this does not involve the whole of the village as some are not on social media, but it is a large proportion of the village.

- **Parish Clerk** on 11 July 2023 at 10:39 pm

Hi Kirstie, Many thanks for your comments. Looking back to your Facebook poll, it appears that you were gauging local opinion on the roadside grass verges and not the lakeside area. As you are aware, Cornwall Council are responsible for the verges. As soon as the Parish Council were aware of safety concerns, Cornwall Council were alerted to the issue by the Clerk, which was prior to your poll. The office is open Monday – Friday afternoons, so please feel free to pop in or email us directly with your concerns.

18. **Mandy Gulatar** on 9 July 2023 at 12:50 pm

The village is a mess! Many people are having hay fever and asthma issues. Residents along New Road are have rat issues apparently. The visibility along new road is still dangerous and children running can't see the edge of the lake. I've lived in the village for 61 years and I'm sad to say I'm now ashamed of the place and hope my family from down west don't visit!! They have always loved the lake as it was..neat and tidy. The majority of the village agree with cutting all the grass around the lake area.

19. **Susan Cox** on 9 July 2023 at 11:56 am

The village of Millbrook looks an utter mess, I along with others feel that our concerns regarding the verges, play areas for the children of the village are totally ignored.

Walked past the children's "tractor park" play area that too look awful.

No mow May is totally understandable and I'm certain nobody complains then but this is too much.

The walk around the "lake" through the wooded area is an utter disgrace.

20. **Pat McMahon** on 7 July 2023 at 10:04 am

I am still utterly frustrated with the lack of openness and the way the clerk of the parish fobs you off, again and again. So after phone calls, emails now let's try this way.

I completely understand no mow May, but we are in July, and still only silly paths being cut, around the lake and the field with the addition of a small area completely cut. The grass is brown and gone to seed. Insects now moved on to pasture new.

The Tanyard and the field are the only communal spaces the village have to sit and talk, to take a stroll, for children to run and play, and families to gather for picnics, play family games of cricket and rounders, as well as dog owners to exercise their pets chasing balls, playing with other dogs.

Sad times we live in when I now drive to Torpoint, even Seaton to exercise my dog twice a day, when there is a perfectly good field in walking distance, but this is the only option open to me and others, because the parish council do not keep a communal space in a condition that is fit for purpose, so families, dog walkers or those out for a stroll, can enjoy the area.

But come Harvest festival a miracle happens and the field is completely cut for the community event, how hypocritical is that? The field should be fully cut and fully assessable year round for the community not just when the Parish Council deem us worthy.

In the meantime myself and others are forced to pollute the environment, really helping the birds, insects, bees flowers and wildlife.

The village rumour is now that there is no point complaining as the field is going to be wild seeded and given back to nature, can you confirm if this is just gossip or if it has substance?

I am really frustrated at the lack of openness of the Parish Council, and the hypocrisy surrounding the grass cutting, thought we lived in a democratic society not a dictatorship.

Would be nice to have an open discussion so we can all put our point of views across and cut through the rumour and understand from both sides, so a

solution can be agreed upon, so we do not have to keep having the same discussion on different platforms.

As I work, I am unable to attend meet up at the village hall to discuss this, but would attend a council meeting if you could confirm your next one please.

Parish Clerk on 11 July 2023 at 11:00 pm

Dear Pat

Your initial email was sent to Cormac and forwarded to Millbrook Parish Council on 26th May 2023. A response was sent from the Council's Admin Support Officer on 30th May 2023.

<https://millbrook-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/20230530-Grasscutting-of-the-dog-field-PM.pdf>

A further email was sent to Millbrook Parish Councillors and the Maker with Rame Parish Clerk. A response to this email can be found here – <https://millbrook-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/20230707-Cutting-of-the-recreation-PM.pdf>