

SOUTH KYME PARISH COUNCIL

Grass Cutting Safety and Risk Assessment

Introduction

The South Kyme Parish Council (the "Council") undertakes grass cutting operations in and around the village and the following guidance is to assist volunteers working on behalf of the Council to carry out these duties in a safe manner.

Scope and Application

This code of practice applies to all grass cutting carried out by Council and in addition, when cutting grass on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), the LCC 'Grass Cutting by Parishes' Code of Practice also applies.

Risk

The main risks associated with grass cutting are:

Operator

- Damage to hearing caused by grass cutting vehicle and other associated machine noise.
- Respiratory/allergy disorders from breathing in pollen and dust.
- Damage to limbs and fingers from moving machinery.
- Damage to eyes from flying debris, stones, etc. during cutting.
- Injury from losing control of mower when carrying out pedestrian mowing on slopes and embankments.
- Illness during single person working.
- Infection/skin irritation from contact with debris in grass and certain irritant plants.
- Injury to feet or hands from strimmer when cutting around posts and obstructions.
- Injury to hands while clearing obstructions from mower.
- Injury from passing traffic when stepping onto carriageway.
- As much of this work is undertaken in the summer months, from UV rays.

Road Users

- Accident/damage through contact with tractor, mower, or other machinery used by volunteers.
- Cyclists skidding on wet grass cuttings.
- Injury from debris such as stones and other detritus thrown up during cutting and strimming.
- Pedestrians slipping on wet grass cuttings.

Property

- Damage to windows in buildings and parked and moving vehicles from flying debris, during cutting and strimming.
- Damage to trees, plants, fences, service covers etc. from machines/trimmers.

These risks can be eliminated or minimised by all operatives following a safe system of work and by applying common sense and experience to the individual requirements of each location.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Parish Council makes available for all volunteers the following PPE, which it recommends should be worn when carrying out grass cutting activities:

- Ear defenders/Ear Plugs.
- Clear Visors.
- Safety Glasses.
- Hi Viz Vests.

Volunteers will be guided and instructed on the equipment when they initially commence volunteering or when new equipment becomes available.

In addition to the above, it is recommended that:

- Volunteers wear non-slip steel toe capped boots, or stout shoes.
- Volunteers wear gloves for strimming.

Equipment

All equipment should be checked by the operator before work commences:

- Fluid levels.
- Lighting/warning devices.
- Security of attachments, drive belts, prop shafts, etc.
- Guards intact and secure.

Carrying out works

Signage

- Before work commences the two grass cutting warning signs must be securely set out at either end of the section to be cut or strimmed and should not present a hazard to road users/pedestrians.

Public Safety

- Volunteers should ensure all pedestrians, motor vehicles, and horse riders have a safe passage past the working area and ALWAYS be aware of the presence of pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, and other highway users.

Operations

- Never work alone when cutting the banks of the river.
- Before cutting an area, ensure that it is clear of hazards such as wire, bottles, cans, and other materials which could cause damage to the equipment or injury to yourself or others.

- Sweep/blow grass cuttings from foot paths and carriageways.
- When carrying out mowing on slopes or the riverbanks, extra care must be taken to control the mower/trimmer and to avoid slips or falls.
- Whenever leaving a machine, leave it in a safe position and in a safe condition.
- Do not re-fuel a machine with the engine running.
- **If blockages occur, turn off the machine before attempting to clear any blockages.** The same action should be carried out if adjustments to the machine are required.
- For the purposes of insurance, it is necessary to record the names of the volunteers for each session.
- The users of Council equipment, including the Village Tidy Group (VTG) group, should notify the Council of any issues as soon as possible through direct contact with the Clerk.

Maintenance

- Where fuels and other fluids are needed, they should be purchased in appropriate containers and costs claimed back through the Council expenses process.
- Parts should be acquired from the agreed supplier, providing their name when ordering items to be used as the order number to adhere to an auditable financial process. The parts should be fitted by an appropriately trained, competent, or qualified person.
- Equipment should be regularly serviced to maintain in good working order. It should be serviced through a reputable and competent company. Costs will be managed through the process described in the fuels, fluids, or parts descriptions above.