



Fact Sheet

Maintaining public open spaces

Grass cutting

Cormac uses a balanced approach to grass cutting, with grass managed for people and for nature.

Who is responsible

Cormac is responsible for maintaining and managing Cornwall Council's public open spaces. This includes parks, gardens, playgrounds, sports fields, and verges. In total, this covers more than 416 hectares of amenity sites.

Across Cornwall there are currently 855 amenity sites. Of those, 540 sites are public open spaces (parks, recreation, and sports facilities) and 142 are play facilities.

Some grass cutting is undertaken by local town and parish councils, and their approach may vary.

How is grass managed?

Our approach supports Cornwall Council's Nature Recovery Strategy, creating space and conditions for more abundant, resilient, and connected habitats.

We adjust grass cutting to suit how each space is used. Some grass is **managed for people, and some for nature**. This means some areas will be kept short for recreation and access, while others will be allowed to grow longer to support biodiversity and nature recovery.

From spring to autumn, our environment teams visit sites on average every four weeks. Most grass cutting takes place between March and October, depending on weather, ground conditions, and growth. During extreme weather such as drought or prolonged rain, we may delay mowing until conditions improve. Little or no grass cutting is carried out in the winter months.

Grass managed for people

Grass managed for people is cut regularly using a 'cut and drop' approach. We leave the cut grass to break down naturally.

Grass managed for nature - meadow management

These areas are maintained at intervals to provide habitats for wildlife and deliver wider environmental benefits, including flood management, healthier soils, and improved air quality. Cutting takes place a few times a year, usually using a 'cut and collect' approach, where we remove the cut grass.

Where wildflowers are flourishing, an early spring cut to 'top' the grass is scheduled. Later cuts follow, after the native flora has grown tall, flowered and set seed. This is usually in late summer, depending on the species and growing season.

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In some cases, we work with local communities to enhance these areas, for example through wildflower seeding.

Our experienced teams assess each site during visits, using their knowledge of how the space is used and its condition. We take a flexible approach and listen to local communities.

As well as the programmed cutting, we may carry out additional cutting where there are safety or access concerns.

Urban verges

This relates to highway verges in towns and villages within a 20mph or 30mph speed limit.

Safety always comes first. We keep sightlines and junctions clear for road users and make sure footways are accessible.

We use a 'picture framing' approach, balancing the needs of people and nature. This means leaving longer grass in the centre of an area (managed for nature), with a neat strip of shorter grass cut around the edges to create a tidy, framed appearance (managed for people).

This approach provides environmental benefits and ensures clear access to street furniture, for example bins, seats, and bus stops. We maintain mown paths where needed.

Rural verges are managed separately by Cornwall Highways. They look after nearly 1,660 miles of roadside verges across Cornwall. For more information, please see the Rural Verge Maintenance fact sheet.

Grass cutting

For people: Grass is cut more often, with cuttings usually left on site (cut and drop), due to the sheer volume. These cuttings break down and disperse over time and this does not hinder grass growth. Our teams are equipped with blowers to help keep footpaths clear of mown grass.

For nature: In wildlife meadow areas, grass is allowed to grow longer and is cut less often. We collect the cuttings (cut and collect) to gradually reduce nutrients in the soil, which helps increase species diversity in the grassland.

Collaborating with our local communities

We work closely with community volunteers to help keep public open spaces in good condition for everyone to enjoy.

This supports a stronger sense of place and brings benefits for health and wellbeing, nature recovery, and climate resilience.

If you would like to learn more about verges and the benefits of grassland management, please follow this link [Ecosystem Services of Cornwall's Verges](#)

Get in touch

If you would like to find out more about volunteering opportunities, email us at volunteers@cormacltd.co.uk

For open space enquiries about grass cutting and site management, email us at environment@cormacltd.co.uk

To let Cornwall Highways know about a problem on a road or pavement, please report it here: <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/reportroad>

Cormac also provides maintenance and landscaping services to many schools and external organisations. If you would like to discuss a new partnership opportunity, please email us at environment@cormacltd.co.uk

And finally...

If there is an issue which is a threat to public safety, please telephone **0300 1234 222** (24-hour service) giving details of the location.



How do we maintain grass in public open spaces?

Management type	Main purpose	Cutting frequency	Method	Key benefits
Grass managed for people	Recreation, access, safety	Regular (approx. every 4 weeks, Mar – Oct)	Cut and drop	Safe, useable spaces, clear paths and sightlines
Grass managed for nature	Wildlife and biodiversity	Infrequent (a few times a year)	Cut and collect	Supports habitats, healthier soils, climate resilience



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