

Botanical Survey of Verges along A35 Charmouth Bypass

(i) The management of the A35 verges



BALANCING RAGWORT CONTROL AND WILDFLOWER MANAGEMENT ON THE A35 IN WEST DORSET

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document sets out how Highways England is working with representatives of the local community at Charmouth West Dorset, Plantlife and with the Dorset Wildlife Trust, to improve the control of some problematic ragwort growth while enhancing the other wildflowers that are already present in the verges at that locality.

2. THE SITUATION

2.1 Highways England has responsibilities under the Weeds Act 1959 and DEFRA Code of Practice to control the spread of ragwort and other injurious and noxious weeds. At the same time, Highways England is keen to manage road verges to benefit wild flowers and other nature.

2.2 Dorset Wildlife Trust have confirmed through a species survey that a strong species mix is already present (with a dozen Dorset Notable species found) in the A35 verges at Charmouth. Designation as a Site of Nature conservation Interest (SNCI) is a possible consideration, and the local community at Charmouth have expressed a strong desire to see these verges managed to enhance the wild flower population.

2.3 Meanwhile, there is a high density of ragwort in some parts of the site and all parties are open to the thought that there must be a way to reduce the risk of ragwort spreading to neighbouring agricultural land that does not restrict the development of the more favourable wild flower species.

3. THE APPROACH

3.1 The cutting regime will be upgraded to match that recommended in the Plantlife Verge Management Guide. This proposes one cut in the season (around the middle of July for our region). It also suggests removing cut material which will also be evaluated.

3.2 Variations in the prescription for controlling ragwort will be explored, in recognition of the ragwort population in the Charmouth verges. Herbicides will not be included in the trials.

3.3 A probable outcome would be to establish a two-tier ongoing verge management regime. One standard operating practice would apply to most of the network where ragwort is

not problematic and where ambitions for species diversity are modest. Elsewhere, a site-specific operating practice would be developed in recognition of the specific conditions prevailing at (or planned for) each site.

3.4 The success of this trial will be measured at the one and two year stage which will determine, whether the ragwort is being effectively controlled, if wildflowers have flourished and whether the approach has proved to be a value for money investment. The success of the project will require ongoing good engagement between Highways England, the local community, Plantlife, Dorset Wildlife Trust, and potentially other interested parties.

(ii) Species Survey undertaken by Dorset Wildlife Trust as mentioned in para 2.2 above

<i>Scientific name</i>	Common name	Area B	Area C	Area D	Area E	Area F	Area G	Area H
HERBS								
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	A	A	F	A	F	F	O
<i>Aethusa cynapium</i>	Fool's parsley	A	F	F	A	F	F	F
<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>	Agrimony			O	R			
<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	Pyramidal orchid						R (LF)	
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow parsley				R			
<i>Blackstonia perfoliata</i>	Yellow-wort				F		R (LO)	R
<i>Carex flacca</i>	Glaucous sedge				O (LF)		R	R
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Black knapweed				O-F	O		
<i>Centaureum erythraea</i>	Common centaury			O	A	O	O	O
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common mouse-ear	F	F	P	F		O	O
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	Marsh thistle	O			R			
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	Smooth hawksbeard			P	O		O	O
<i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii / praetermissa</i>	Common spotted / Marsh orchid	A	O		O (LF)		R	R
<i>Daucus carota</i>	Wild carrot	O		F	A	F	A	A
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	Teasel			P	R	R	A	F
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	Great willowherb			O	R (LF)			O
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers				R			
<i>Galium mollugo</i>	Hedge bedstraw			O	R			
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb robert				R		R	O
<i>Helminthotheca echioides</i>	Bristly oxtongue				O-F	F	A	A

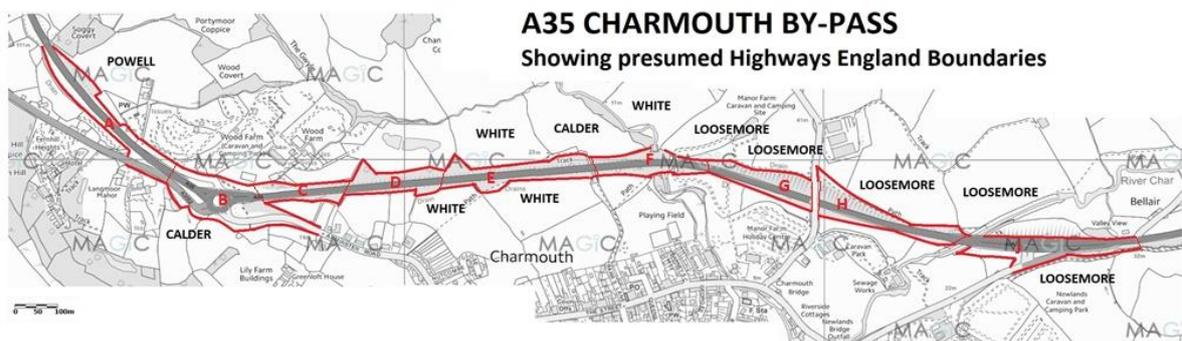
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Common hogweed	F	F	F	F			O
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	Perforate St John's wort				A	F	F	R
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Common cat's-ear				F	O	R	R
<i>Jacobaea erucifolia</i>	Hoary ragwort				F	O	A	A
<i>Juncus sp</i>	Rush species				O (LF)			R
<i>Lathyrus nissolia</i>	Grass vetchling	O-F			R	O	R	O (LF)
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow vetchling						O	
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Oxeye daisy	A	A	F	A	A	D	D
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Bird's-foot trefoil				R	R	O-F	R
<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	Forget-me-not	R			R		R	
<i>Oenanthe pimpinelloides</i>	Corky-fruited water dropwort				O (LF)		R	R
<i>Ophrys apifera</i>	Bee orchid	R						
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort plantain	A	A	F	F	F	A	A
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal	O		O	A	F	R	O
<i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i>	Common Fleabane	A	F	F	A	F	O	O
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow buttercup		O		O-F		O	O
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping buttercup		O		O-F			R
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	Yellow rattle	R						
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog rose			O	O		F	O
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common sorrel	O	F		O		R	
<i>Silene dioica</i>	Red campion			O				
<i>Stellaria graminea</i>	Lesser stitchwort	F						
<i>Tragopogon pratensis</i>	Goat's-beard				O	O		
<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	Lesser trefoil				R	O		
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red clover	F	F	F	F	O	A	F
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White clover	O					R	R
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	Tufted vetch						R	
<i>Vicia sativa</i>	Common vetch	F	F	O	F	O	O	F
GRASSES								
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common bent			O	A	F	F	F
<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	Meadow foxtail				R			R
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet vernal grass	D	A		A	O	O	F
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False oat grass	A	A	A	A	F	A	A
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>	Soft brome	O	O		O	O		
<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	Crested dogs tail	O			F	O	A	F
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot	A	A	F	A	F	A	A
<i>Festuca sp</i>	Fescue species	A	A		O		R	

<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire fog	D	A	A	A	A	D	D
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial rye grass			O	R			
<i>Phleum pratense</i>	Timothy			O				
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough-stalked meadow grass	O	O		O	O	O	R
INJURIOUS SPECIES								
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping thistle	F	O		O	O		
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	Bramble	O					F	O
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved dock	A	O		O		F	F
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Ragwort	A	O	F	A	F	A	A
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common nettle				R (LF)		R	R

KEY: DAFOR D=Dominant A=Abundant F=Frequent O=Occasional R=Rare

Species in **Bold** are Dorset Notable

(iii) Map of the Areas surveyed along the A35



Areas as listed in the table above starting at Area B (by roundabout), Areas C to H moving eastwards

