

Highway Badgers Evicted...

The man from Del DEFRA said yes and the digging began.



There were more people looking into the badger hole than anticipated, which caused me some concern as witnesses are not necessarily a good thing at such tense moments.

I noted that the lady from Del DEFRA was armed with a badger cage and a long pole complete with noose at one end. All very well but what if two badgers sprung from the hole at the same time and chose to attack. I stood very close to the lady with the noose. 'Dig here' the man from Del DEFRA said 'and here' 'and here' and so on. End result very large hole no badgers not enough stone to refill the hole.

All in a days work for a WCC badger bailiff.

Recycling Facts and Figures

- This year we will collect, wash & re-use an estimated 2,500 tonnes of Surface Dressing Sweepings
- This year we will collect and re-use around 30,000 tonnes of Road Plannings
- We are working on a project to crush, screen and re-use slabs, kerbs and other concrete products

Problem Weeds!

Although a multitude of weeds appear in our highway verges throughout the year there are two species which give cause for concern and on which action must be taken to prevent their growth.

Japanese Knotweed

This was originally brought from the Far East as an ornamental plant by the Victorians and is now classed as Britain's most invasive noxious non native species, its aggressive root system can cause structural damage and also destroys natural flora. The plant has an extraordinary ability to spread vegetatively from crown, stem and rhizome. The most effective treatment for its removal is therefore a herbicide treatment. Flailing or mowing will only exacerbate its growth. Care has also to be taken in its disposal as a mere fragment of the knotweed can cause re-growth. The treatment is most effective in its initial stages as it will take some years to completely destroy a well-established rhizome (root) network. Early detection is therefore paramount to its eradication.



Ragwort

Ragwort is thought to have come into Britain from Europe in the early 1900s, possibly through contaminated hay and is one of the injurious weeds specified in the Weeds Act 1959. It has the potential to kill horses, sheep, cattle, deer and hares through the toxics in the plant attacking the liver and it is therefore essential that all traces are removed as quickly as possible. Animals eating 5 percent or more of their total daily diet of ragwort for periods exceeding 20 consecutive days can be expected to die within a 6-month period. An animal can also become infected simply through seeds/spores being blown from a neighbouring area.

It is biennial and the rosettes appear in the first year and the actual flower during the second year when they become most poisonous. It can be removed by pulling or by herbicide application, the wearing of protective gloves is also strongly



recommended, as there is anecdotal evidence of risk of liver damage to humans through contamination. As it presents itself as more palatable when cut or wilted it is vital that all traces are removed and are disposed of in a secure manner. The County Council has over the summer been operating a two week programme of ragwort eradication from its highway verges which involves pulling it, and containing the vegetation in bags and then placing them in a covered skip which is taken to a designated disposal site by the skip operators. Similar to Japanese Knotweed it is essential to remove all traces to prevent re-growth and also the risk of harm to animals.

The area offices welcome information regarding any known sites from town and parish representatives so that issues may be dealt with as efficiently as possible.



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