

RESTORING SHROPSHIRE'S VERGES: Case Studies

Shrewsbury road grid reference SO 45771 95104

Establishment of a wildflower verge

Partners/Funders: Three Parish Project, Restoring Shropshire's Verges Project (RSVP); National Trust Volunteers and Stretton's Parishes Volunteers

Costs:

- Volunteer time – several hundred hours
- See Three Parishes Project grant
- Free contributions seeds/plants from volunteers + grant monies



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RESTORING SHROPSHIRE'S VERGES PROJECT :

Church Stretton – Shrewsbury Road including All Stretton and Little Stretton

Meg Stratford, local resident took the lead for the project which consisted of the long roadside verge along Shrewsbury Road in All Stretton being restored to a long linear meadow.

The cut was delayed until late July 2024 with Restoring Shropshire's Verges signs prominent in the verge. Agreement was reached by negotiation with Shropshire Highways department not to cut this verge and removal of the more aggressive plants such as hog weed, brambles and thistles by hand was an ongoing task by the dedicated band of volunteers brought together by Meg.

In spring the verge was scarified and Yellow Rattle seed sown.

Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) is an annual that thrives in grasslands, living a semi-parasitic life by feeding off the nutrients in the roots of nearby grasses. For this reason, it was once seen as an indicator of unproductive grassland by farmers, but is now often used to turn improved grassland back to meadow - by feeding off the vigorous grasses, it eventually allows more delicate, traditional species to push their way through.

Volunteers proceeded with the intentional planting back into the verge of wild flowers in spring 2024 and also began growing on wildflowers to plant in autumn. Despite the long hot summer of 2024 this verge thrived whilst other nearby cut verges ended up scorched and dead providing little cover for any insects or small mammals.

During late summer the volunteers commenced weeding and planting and in September the verge was cut by one volunteer with a heavy-duty machine and the arisings raked off by volunteers to reduce the fertility of the verge in preparation for 2025, volunteers included helpers from nearby National Trust, Carding Mill Valley.

A survey led by Pete Carty and volunteers in June 2025 resulted in a species list being established. This identified 53 species of flowering plants plus 11 species of grasses

IMPORTANTLY the first Common Spotted Orchid noted on this verge made an appearance indicating a positive change in management of the verge.

The volunteer group increased to 19 in 2025 and now includes volunteers from Little Stretton and Church Stretton. Large patches of yellow rattle appeared in early 2025 and no new seed was sown but in September 2025 plant plugs and seed purchased from a local supplier

(Rob Lee Nursery- <https://www.robleewildflowerseeds.co.uk/>)

The plant plugs needed to be transferred to pots as the ground was parched and the plants would have been very vulnerable if planted out immediately, these were planted out in October once the drought had finished and the ground conditions allowed.

**Below: Yellow rattle reducing the growth of tall grasses and more aggressive plants removed:
Hog weed, nettles & brambles**



First Common Spotted Orchid appeared summer 2025 and verge mown late summer and raked off to reduce fertility

