

CHILHAM PARISH COUNCIL - HEDGE TRIMMING TIPS

High Hedges

If you allow your hedge to grow taller than 2m your neighbour is legally allowed to ask for it to be cut down to that level.

If you refuse to do this you can be reported to your local authority who can then enforce the pruning. Your neighbour will have to pay an administrative fee which can be between £100 and £650 and if you refuse to cut the hedge you can be fined.

To view the High Hedge Law you can access their site on: hedgeline.org

Wildlife Hedges

Never cut a hedge if birds are nesting within - always check nesting season in accordance with legal guidelines before you think of cutting.

Most birds are legally protected - an exception is feral pigeons - and the nests must be empty before you carry out any trimming.

The nests of feral pigeons can be removed anywhere in the UK.

Overhanging hedges

If a neighbour's hedge overhangs your boundary and is causing an obstruction or otherwise spoiling the enjoyment of your garden you are at liberty to cut back the protruding branches up to the boundary line.

If you go beyond this your neighbour could have a claim against you.

Legally you should offer the branches back as they belong to your neighbour.

Ideally, talk to your neighbour first, more often than not they have not realised there is a problem and will probably be quite happy for you to prune the offending overhang.

What should I do about hedges alongside roads, and where there are visibility and safety issues?

Land owners and occupiers are required by law to trim any hedge next to a road, footway, cycleway or public right of way where the growth is preventing the passage, or affecting the safety, of the highway user, including cyclists and pedestrians.

The debris from cutting must also be cleared away. Often it will be safe to limit annual or early cutting to places where the verge is narrow, to junctions and entrances, and to the inside of bends.

Finally:

Remember - planting a hedge is preferable to a hard fence, it provides living boundaries for wildlife and an attractive boundary and windbreak for your garden and is "green" contribution to our lives in every sense.

The best time for planting a new hedge is October and November.