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Wet weather kicks into the long grass

4 July 2024

People fed up with long unsightly overgrown grass and verges can use an interactive map to see when their favourite spots are next due to be cut.

The seemingly endless rainfall this year has heavily affected work across the county as the wet weather shuts down the process – Surrey County Council says this is because its machinery will not cut wet grass properly and can, in some cases, even damage the turf.

Urban areas are due to have six cuts a year by the county – unless they have been designated as a blue heart zone. Rural cuts and high speed roads are chopped twice a year.

Blue hearts are part of Surrey's 3,000 miles of grass verges but have been deliberately left to grow as a way of increasing plant and insect biodiversity.

Reducing the amount of times these areas are cut is intended to allow native plant species to thrive – or even to sow native wildflower seeds.

As well as using the map, the county council has published a table covering each area in Surrey and when it estimates to get on with the job.

The council's website reads: "We are experiencing some delays with our planned grass cutting programme dates in parts of the county as a result of the weather and operational issues.

"We are working with our contractors to improve the situation and are sorry for any inconvenience. Thank you for your patience."

The Blue Campaign, founded in 2014 by wildlife filmmaker Fergus Beeley in response to dramatic declining biodiversity in the UK, lets nature take a bit more control, the county council said.

It encourages the rewilding of green spaces in suitable areas and are marked in blue on the map.

Often they can be identified with a blue heart planted in th ground to show residents grass and flowers are deliberately being left to grow – and the council is encouraging residents to identify new sites and gather local support.

Any areas put forward for blue hearts will be reviewed by the county council and, if approved, contractors told to skip the verge unless some safety work is needed.

All verges, including blue hearts are supposed to have a full cut each autumn.

Surrey County Council spokesperson said: "Our new interactive grass cutting map available here shows residents when their area is due to be cut.

"Our grass cutting programme can however be heavily affected by weather. We cannot cut when it is raining heavily or shortly after as the machinery will not cut the wet grass properly and risks damaging the grass itself.

"Weather and ground conditions permitting, urban spaces are cut six times a year and for rural areas, this takes place twice a year."

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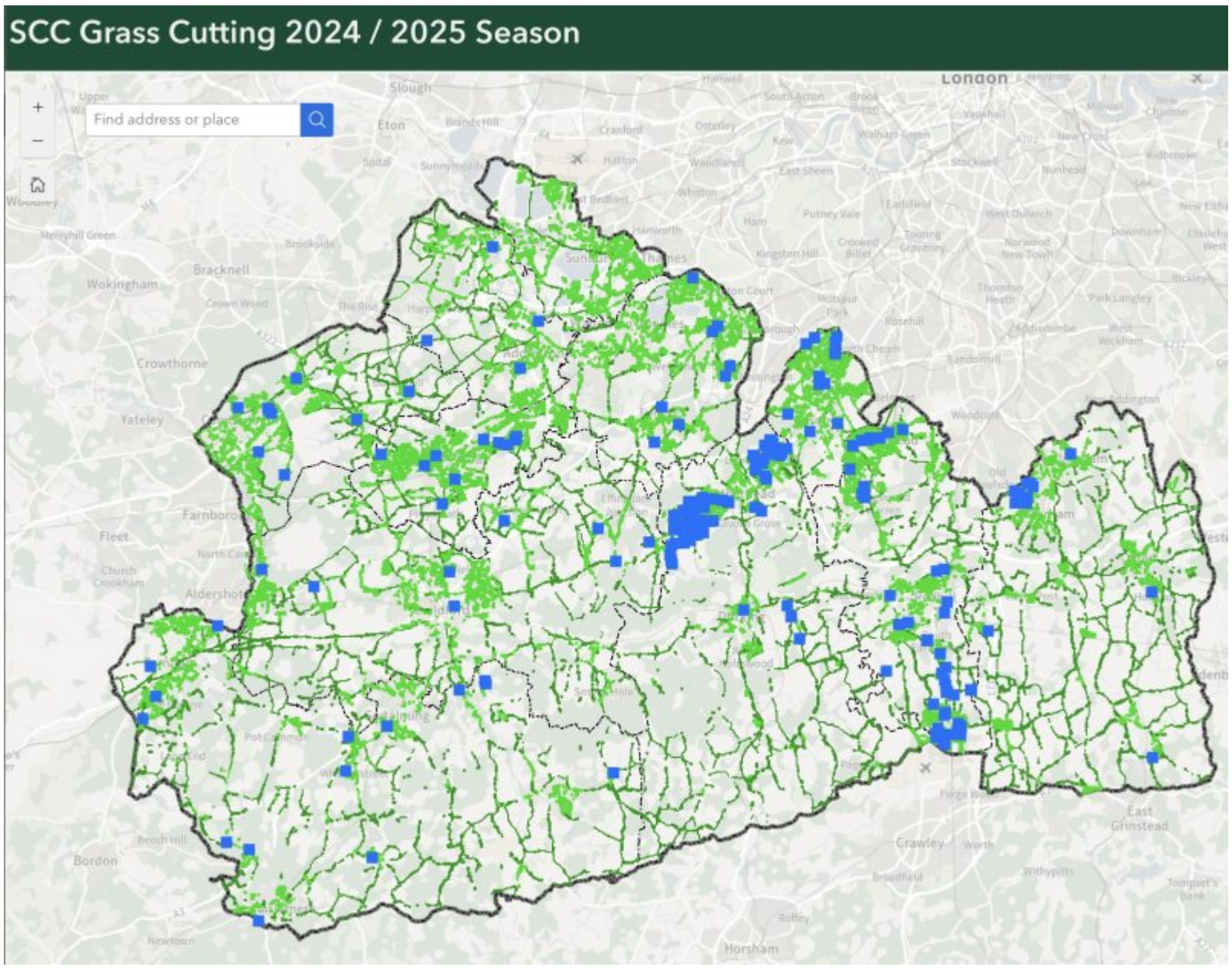

Image: Surrey grass cutting, when your verge is due to be cut. Areas in blue are being left to grow over the summer to encourage biodiversity (image SCC)

INTERACTIVE MAP

Blue Heart

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Feature photo: *credit Jon Hawkins – Surrey Hills Photography*

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