

Further information on the National Hedge Cutting Programme

Addressing Environmental Concerns

Defence Estates Operations Housing, together with MODern Housing Solutions (MHS) are implementing a national hedge cutting programme.

We have instructed contractors to undertake this task, following a strict regime of assessing risk, with particular attention to the threat to wildlife. These risk assessments are documented and therefore available should questions and queries be asked by any interested party, be they the occupant themselves, an MHS Inspector or a member of the enforcing or regulatory authorities.

Prior to cutting any hedge the operative must assess the hedge for the risk to wildlife, particularly nesting birds (to date, 12% of hedges have had their cut deferred due to animal activity). Operatives follow a detailed method statement which instructs them on how to inspect the hedge to determine if nesting birds are present. If it appears that they are present or, in fact, if the inspection is inconclusive, they are not to complete any cutting activities and move on to the next hedge, repeating an identical risk assessment.

We have received assurances from ISS Waterers (the contractors) that this regime is being strictly adhered to. Copies of the completed risk assessments are forwarded to MHS for inspection and review and MHS Technical Officers continue to monitor all works on site to ensure that the correct processes are being followed.

MHS confirms that we will comply, and insist that our contractor complies, with the requirements of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 in respect to nesting birds and wild animals that may be present within hedges at the time the proposed cutting is to take place.

03 July 2009