

Welwyn Hatfield Environmental News

The Alban Way of Life

The urban stretches of the Alban Way have been much improved by lifting vegetation, letting more light in and effectively widening the path.



Before



During

Two teams of contractors cut back trees and shrubs from the sides of the path and overhanging tendrils to above head height earlier this year. They also removed fallen leaves and branches and other wintry waste from the pathway and ivy and dead plants from the sides. Other litter was removed by Serco, the council's streetscene partner.



After

All works finished before the bird nesting season got underway in mid-February. Step access from Burrells open space to the path, was also rebuilt.

The Alban Way is home to various flora and fauna. You may spot plenty of small woodland and garden birds, including long-tailed tits, blackbirds, robins, thrushes and even great spotted woodpeckers along the route. If you see any slowworms or lizards, we would like to hear about them: call 017 07 357418. Head of Landscape & Ecology, Ann MacDonald said: "By providing this timely maintenance of the Alban Way and other local open spaces, we hope to encourage residents to access and explore our local environment, wildlife and countryside in 2009."

The six-mile trail passes through Hatfield, linking the town with neighbouring St Albans. Part of the

Sustrans National Cycle Network (Route 61), the Alban Way is a critical component in our local sustainable transport network. It provides a seasonally ever-changing backdrop for an enjoyable, active and free family day out.

Winding from The Ryde, through Birchwood to Rice Green and on walkers and cyclists pass the old Fiddlebridge and Ellenbrook platforms, reminders of the former Great Northern Railway line. Beyond Ellenbrook is the boundary mile post between Welwyn Hatfield and St Albans. Ahead, the Blackberry Arch, you enter the countryside, wildlife and quiet.

Why not dust off your bike or simply take a leisurely stroll along the Way yourself this spring, and see what you discover?

For more information and maps – www.welhat.gov.uk, ('Pedal Point' and 'Cycling'), www.stacc.org.uk, www.sustrans.org.uk.

Grounds Maintenance Uncovered

Here we set out the service you can expect and dispel a few myths we've heard over the years.

Grass cutting

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council cuts its grass verges and public open spaces 12 times a year, normally from March until October. Progress of cuts is flexible. It is dependent on factors such as the weather.

During the peak growing season (usually May/June) rapid growth can prove challenging. Whilst Serco, the council's streetscene partner, endeavours to complete cuts promptly, it would require

unjustified and expensive resources to retain the same high standards during this short period.

→ Did you know?

Verges belong to the county council who pay us to cut them six times a year for safety reasons. Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council chooses to top this up to 12 cuts to keep them neater and more aesthetically pleasing.

Hedge cutting

Council-maintained hedges are cut twice yearly (June/July and September/October) removing one season's growth. This year, responding to residents' concerns, we will undertake a third cut on alleyway hedges to maintain good access.

Hedges in 'prestige areas' such as town centres are also cut three times a year.

Council tenants on the council's 'Welfare List', typically elderly and disabled residents, have their hedges cut twice a year. (If tenants wish for additional maintenance of their hedges

during the year, they are required to undertake this). To receive this service tenants need to seek approval from the Housing Department by calling 017 07 357000. This service also extends to grass cutting. >

→ Did you know?

Conservation hedges are only cut every two years to encourage wildlife to flourish. To avoid disturbing nesting birds cutting occurs in February.