

WILBERFOSS PARISH COUNCIL

BOUNDARY HEDGE POLICY 2022

It's important to keep footpaths, pavements, roads and streetlights clear so that everyone can use them safely. And it's **your responsibility as either the owner or the occupier of a property** to ensure that your vegetation, be it a hedge, a bush, a tree or anything else, isn't causing an obstruction. So, **please keep an eye on your property boundary and maintain it to within the guidelines below**. If you don't:

1. You could receive a letter from the Parish Council, politely asking you to trim any vegetation back to the limits set out below, within a defined and reasonable period of time.
2. If you don't act on the letter, the District Council can carry out remedial work, and **you** will be charged for it.

It's the law: under **Section 154 of the Highways Act 1980** you must ensure that the 'public highway/footway' adjacent to a property is not obstructed by vegetation from your property boundary. Local Authorities also have a legal duty to ensure that public highways, footways and streetlights are unobstructed.

Here are the measurements that count: for boundary hedges adjacent to footpaths and between properties:

- **1.5m is generally the minimum width clearance on footpaths to allow access for pedestrians**
- **Hedges between properties should grow to a maximum of 2 metres. Beyond that, they may be violating the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003** [High Hedges: Complaining to the Council](#)
- **Boundary hedges/trees must not obstruct street light columns**

You also need to consider **vegetation that overhangs different public spaces**. Although the **Highways Act 1980** does not specify any actual measurements for overhanging vegetation (above head height), the requirement should be met by:

- 5.2m clearance for hedges overhanging roads
- 2.3m clearance for hedges overhanging footpaths
- 2.5m clearance for hedges overhanging cycleways
- For pedestrian areas, minimum headroom of 2.3m

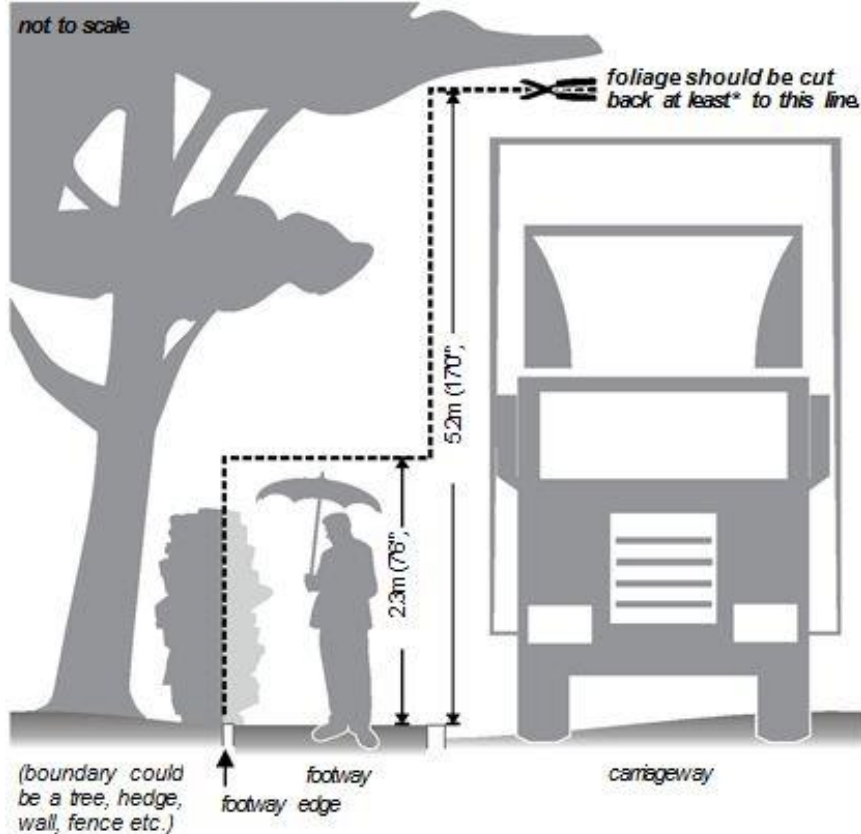
It is illegal under the **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** to disturb nesting birds; so, **check carefully before cutting back**. **Late January through to the end of February** is often the best time to cut back a hedge; **Autumn may also be suitable**. These suggested timings:

- reduce the chance of disturbing breeding birds which have legal protection under the **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981**. The bird nesting season is usually considered to run from March to August (rhs.org.uk)
- allow most plants to finish flowering and seeding
- help make berries and nuts available for wildlife for as long as possible during the winter

Guidance for cutting back overhanging foliage

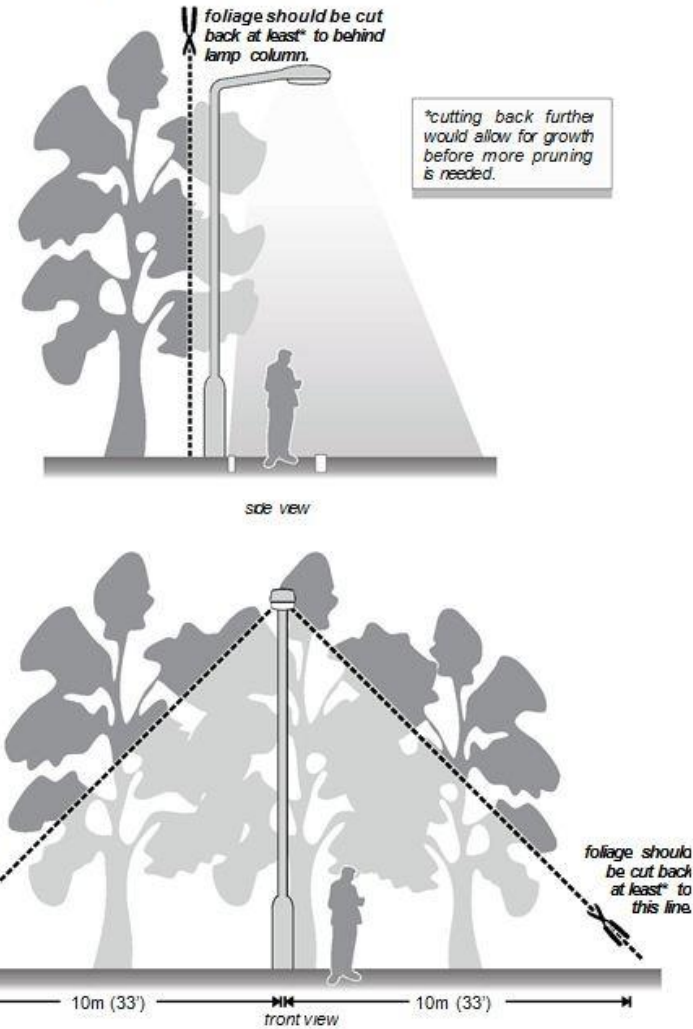
Cutting back encroaching foliage from footway & carriageway.

not to scale



*cutting back further would allow for growth before more pruning is needed.

Cutting back encroaching foliage from lighting over footway & carriageway.



East Riding of Yorkshire Council, as the highway authority, bears the legal duty with regard to highways being kept free from obstructions. **The Council will always consider each individual set of circumstances when applying legislation in practice, for example 1.5m of minimum width clearance on some footpaths might not be possible.**