

[FACT SHEET]

Naturalised Grass

Naturalised grass cutting is a method of maintaining grass that reduces the frequency of cut, encourages biodiversity and looks attractive.



Suitable sites

- Grass bankings
- Under tree copses
- Large, seldom used areas

Unsuitable sites

- Sport pitches
- Well used amenity grassland (e.g. kick about areas)

Machinery

You need to choose the correct machinery for the site and the effect you wish to achieve. Flail cutting units are best for cutting long grass and reducing arisings. Rotary units are suitable for 'topping' shorter grass.

Cutting heights

- Set cutting heights quite high (this avoids arisings).
- Don't set too low, as this can put stress on the machine.
- Relaxed plots should **not** be cut to standard amenity grass specification (20–60mm).



When to cut

The decision on when to cut will be agreed locally between managers, supervisors and staff. Consider the following points when deciding when to cut:

- Not all plots are the same. Sites will differ when a cut is required.
- Most sites will require a minimum of two cuts per year – one at the start and one at the end of the season.
- Cut when a site begins to look unsightly and the grass is about to fall over.
- Cut in dry conditions if possible.

Below is an example where grass has been left too long without a cut.



Design and maintenance

- Maintenance strips should be cut around the perimeter of a site.
- Where possible, cut out paths for people to walk through the area, or areas for people to sit.
- Try and create natural looking curves and edges to the site. Avoid creating squares and rectangles!
- Maintenance strips and paths should be cut every 2/3 weeks to a height of 20–60mm.
- Litter picking should **NOT** be reduced on relaxed sites and is especially important before/after cutting a relaxed plot.
- Some weeds may need to be removed if they start to dominate.
- Sites should be monitored on a regular basis.

