

Catalytic Converter Theft

Local Thefts of Catalytic Converters

We have had local thefts in Stinchcombe and area of Catalytic Converters. It seems that the Honda Jazz is the favoured target.

A combination of factors including surging global demand for vehicles, and the slump in mining during the pandemic, has meant that the price of the precious metals contained within catalytic converters has risen exponentially. An ounce of rhodium costs more than a brand-new Honda Jazz. This hasn't escaped the attention of criminals. With a single scrap catalytic converter currently worth around £400, organised gangs are targeting dozens of cars each day. Older Toyota and Honda models are particularly at risk of Converter theft.

If yours is stolen

Call the police 101

The cost of a Catalytic Converter Theft

Catalytic converter theft is estimated to cost car insurance customers an average of £1,500. That's before you consider rising premium costs. Worryingly, the crime could also make your car a [write off](#).

What to do

To reduce the risk of having your catalytic converter stolen, you should:

- Park your car in a locked garage where possible. Or park it in a well-lit and well-populated area.
- Park close to fences, walls or a kerb with the exhaust being closest to the fence, wall or kerb. This makes the theft more difficult
- Avoid parking your vehicle half on the pavement and half on the road. This may make it easier for thieves to access the catalytic converter
- If parking in a public car park, consider parking alongside other cars and facing your bonnet towards the wall if possible. With the catalytic converter positioned at the front of your vehicle, this will make it harder for thieves to get close enough to steal it.
- For thefts occurring on driveways, consider the use of a Secured by Design (SBD) approved driveway alarm and sensor. This may assist in alerting you of a potential intruder entering your driveway or garden
- If your catalytic converter is bolted on, you can ask for your local garage to weld the bolts to make it more difficult to remove.
- Alternatively, you can mark your catalytic converter. Please ensure any property marking is Secured by Design (SBD) approved
- You can purchase a 'cage clamp'. This is a cage device that locks in around the converter to make it more difficult to remove. Toyota are offering a 'Catloc' for the Prius (3rd generation, 2009-2011 models) and Auris (2nd generation, 2012-2018 models). Please contact your Toyota dealership for more information
- Speak to your dealership about the possibility of installing a Thatcham approved alarm. A tilt sensor will activate the alarm should any thief try to jack the

vehicle up to steal the converter

- If you see someone acting suspiciously under a vehicle, report it to the Police. Obtain as much information as possible, including any vehicle registrations.

Further reading

- [RAC](#)
 - [Which](#)
-

If you have a tree with Ash Dieback

So you think you have a Diseased Tree – what to do.

Identify

Among the first symptoms of Ash Dieback is that an ash tree might be infected is blackening and wilting of leaves and shoots in mid- to late summer (July to September). These months are the best time of year to survey ash trees for symptoms in the foliage. This is because once autumn begins in late September or October, the normal seasonal change in the colour of the leaves can be mistaken for symptoms of the disease.

Most infected leaves are shed prematurely by the tree, but in some cases the infection progresses from the leaves and into the twigs, branches and eventually the trunk, causing dark

lesions, or cankers, to form in the bark. These often have a characteristic elongated-diamond shape.

Report a sighting

If you think you have spotted the disease **IN A NEW AREA**, please **REPORT** but check [the distribution map](#) and [symptoms](#) before reporting it.

- Report sightings in Great Britain [TreeAlert](#).

Management and Control

You are ***not legally required*** to take any particular action if you own infected ash trees, unless your country forestry or plant health authority serves you with a Statutory Plant Health Notice (SPHN) requiring action. This is unlikely.

With the exceptions of felling for public safety or timber production, [Forest Research](#) advises a general presumption against felling living ash trees, whether infected or not. This is because there is good evidence that a small proportion will be able to tolerate *H. fraxineus* infection. There is also the possibility that a proportion of ash trees can become diseased, but then recover to good health. These, too, would be valuable for research, although it is still too early to know whether there are such trees in the British ash population.

However, by keeping as many ash trees standing as possible, Forest Research can identify individuals which appear to survive exposure to the fungus and which can be used for breeding tolerant ash trees for the future.

That said, public safety must be the priority, so keep an eye on the trees' safety as the disease progresses, and prune or fell them if they or their branches threaten to cause injury

or damage. In particular, watch for basal lesions (lesions, or cankers, forming near the bottom of the trunk), which can weaken the trunk and make the tree more prone to falling.

There is no known cure, although some fungicides might be effective in suppressing the disease, enabling individual ash trees of particular value to be saved. These might include trees of high amenity, heritage or cultural value. However, such treatments often have to be re-applied periodically, perhaps every year, and can therefore be expensive.

More Information

- [*Ash dieback \(Hymenoscyphus fraxineus\)*](#)
- [*Interactive Map*](#)
- [*Pictures of Ash DieBack \(Hymenoscyphus fraxineus\)*](#)
- [*Tree Alert*](#)

On the Verge

Roadside verges – something to cherish

Because 97% of our wildflower meadows have disappeared since the 1930s, roadside verges provide an important food source for insects, birds and bats. [*BugLife*](#) have reviewed the

evidence on the importance of verges for pollinating insects and found that as well as a food source they provide shelter, nesting and hibernation sites.



Roadside Orchid

Here in Stinchcombe

Have you noticed how rich in wildflowers Stinchcombe's outlying roadside verges are? In mid-July we found about seventy species on Echo Lane, including orchids (see photo above). Seventy sounds a lot but, according to [Plantlife](#) over 700 species grow on British verges.

We're also lucky to have a few miles of different types of verge; lowland grassy, wooded, urban and probably a bit of damp verge too.

Trouble in Paradise?

Verges are vulnerable to poor management, progressively losing their wildflower diversity and their value to wildlife. The main problem is cutting them too early before the summer-flowering plants have set seed. Failing to remove the clippings makes things worse because they release nutrients that are bad for most wildflowers. Early flowering plants

e.g. *garlic mustard* (see below) and ones that tolerate fertile soil and don't rely on setting seed to spread e.g. *cow parsley* do well but at the expense of other species.



Garlic Mustard

It was Jess who first suggested that we should do more to look after our verges and the invertebrates that rely on them. Trudy and Kath have been doing some surveys to find out what wildflower species we currently have.

How to increase wildflower diversity

Sowing a generic seed mix for a quick explosion of colour that has mostly disappeared by the following year is definitely not a good idea! [*The Good Verge Guide*](#) strongly recommends establishing an appropriate mix of perennial native flowers. Although this approach is slower and more effortful, once in place it helps a wide range of wildlife for years to come. It is also cheaper in the long run because the new plants should be self-sustaining.

What has been done so far

We have collected small amounts of seed locally, including *yellow rattle*, *foxgloves*, *ox-eye daisies*, *field scabious*, *musk mallow*, *red campion* and *white campion*. Trudy, the green-fingered one, is already nurturing lots of little plants. Photo of Trudy's ox-eye daisy seedlings



Yellow Rattle

Proposed next steps

We would like to do some limited planting in three areas. The aim is a gentle build on each years' successes (or failures) culminating in self-seeding, self-sustaining verges.

Wick Lane in front of the churchyard wall – the objective this autumn is to sow patches of *yellow rattle*, with red poppies for additional colour. *Yellow rattle* is known as nature's own lawnmower because it can [reduce grass growth by up to 60%](#), making it easier for other wildflowers to grow.

Less grass and less frequent mowing is also good news for Russell Legg and his team. And don't worry, we'll work around the snowdrops and daffodils that already give such a lovely display each year. As the yellow rattle does its work we will introduce other wildflowers to increase the diversity and interest.

The Avenue – the introduction of *foxgloves* and *ox-eye daisies* (see below) between the trees this autumn, followed by a couple of other shade-tolerant plants next year.



Trudys ox-eye seedlings

Clingre end of Oldhill Lane – we plan to introduce white campion initially in this sunny area.

Let us know what you think

We have already discussed these ideas with the Parish Council, and with Rev Fiona in the case of the Wick Lane plot. It would be helpful to know what residents think via the comments facility or by contacting Kath or Trudy directly. Admittedly, there are valid concerns about wildflower areas looking untidy at times, overhanging pavements or obstructing drivers' or pedestrians' view of the road. We believe that these can be addressed to a large degree and are happy to discuss how this might be achieved.

Would you like to get involved?

There is plenty of scope to get involved e.g.

- joining in with next year's wildflower survey
 - donating small native wildflower plants grown using your own seed (no garden hybrids or foreign imports please, however pretty they look in the garden)
 - giving us the benefit of your expertise if you have a successful wildflower area
 - helping to collect and dispose of clippings after mowing
 - committing to mowing later and less frequently if you maintain a stretch of verge
-

ETIAS is coming in 2023

British citizens will require an ETIAS to visit EU member countries in 2023

The EU now consider the UK as a 'third-country'. At present we can travel to the EU without a travel authorization until the ETIAS is launched in 2023. The ETIAS requirement for British travellers was confirmed by the EU in 2019.

What is ETIAS?

ETIAS stands for the EU Travel Information and Authorisation System. It was announced by the European Commission in 2016

How will I apply?

You can only apply online for ETIAS, as you would any other electronic travel authorization. Mail or postal applications are not accepted.

Do I need to apply for a separate ETIAS for each country I visit?

No, only one approved ETIAS is required per traveller to visit all [ETIAS member countries](#). You do not need to apply for an ETIAS for each member country you visit. An approved ETIAS will cover all visits to [ETIAS member countries](#), regardless the travellers point of E.U. entry or exit

How long is the ETIAS valid for?

The ETIAS will be valid for three years, or the date of passport expiry (whichever comes first), and can be used for stays of up to 90 days in a 180 day period.

Want to know more?

- [Etias.com](https://etias.com)
 - [Schengen Visa info](#)
 - [ETIAS for British Citizens](#)
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It's a Lottery

No, we don't mean crossing The Street at busy times, though that can be a game of chance. We're talking about the **Lucky Severn Lottery**.

You can support **Stinchcombe Speed Watch** by buying a ticket from our lottery page. It's easy to access using the QR code on the flyer.

Every penny we get will go towards improving road safety in Stinchcombe. The increase in Parish Precept (i.e. your council tax) will pay for the vehicle-activated sign. But we want to do more, starting with automated traffic counts to provide the comprehensive evidence we need and village gateways like those in Slimbridge.

We've been set a target of 50 tickets in the first 28 days. Please help us to meet it – just 18 more tickets before the end of August and we're there!



supporting



WE'VE LAUNCHED OUR LOTTERY PAGE

Buy Your Tickets From Our Page - We Get 50%

- Finally we have a Lucky Severn Lottery page!
- Help make Stinchcombe's roads safer and win up to £25,000!
- 50% of all tickets sales from our page goes to us!
- PLUS 10% goes to other local good causes
- Tickets only cost £1 per week!
- You won't win it if you aren't in it!

To Start Supporting, Visit:
www.LuckySevernLottery.co.uk
And Search For:
Stinchcombe Speed



Supporters must be 16 years of age or older

- [Severn Vale Community Kitchen](#)
 - [Severn & Wye Smokery](#)
 - [Places to Eat](#)
 - [Severn Trent Warning](#)
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Your street needs YOU

Your Street needs YOU!

Without breaking any rules, Stinchcombe Speed Watch has been busy throughout the pandemic. Following our Committee meeting on 2nd July, here is our latest news.

Speed Monitoring on The Street

Community speed watch monitoring recently began on The Street. It is vital as a way of demonstrating our community's commitment to tackling the speeding problem. Without that evidence we may not get approval to use a vehicle-activated sign at locations on The Street. Enforcement monitoring by the Police, although very welcome, is not a substitute for the involvement of residents.

Call for volunteers

We desperately need some more volunteers to assist Trudy and Cherry. Taits Hill Road veterans are currently helping out, but we can't expect them to do that long term. Come on all you public-spirited residents of The Street! All it takes is a few minutes training and as little as one hour a month. The timing of the sessions is flexible – weekdays or weekends,

daytime or evenings before dusk. Our new speed gun is much lighter than the old ones. And abuse from motorists has really not been a problem. In fact, we get the thumbs up more often than the finger.

Please contact our Co-ordinator [Ava](#) if you can help.

Speed Watch “Good Practice” Meeting 29th July

Together with District Cllr Catherine Braun, we’ve been instrumental in setting up this online meeting. Our County Councillor, District Councillors, high level Police and Highways representatives and people from other local parishes will be attending. We intend to use the meeting to help fine tune our imminent applications for 1) a vehicle-activated sign and 2) a speed limit review for the bottom end of Berkeley Road.

Automated Traffic Survey on Tait’s Hill Road (19th – 25th May)

This was funded privately by Committee members to support our application for a vehicle-activated sign. The data came in extremely handy for our detailed and critical comments on the proposed Tait’s Hill Road development. We want to raise £250 to do the same on The Street.

AGM

Our first AGM will be held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 29th September, starting at 7.30 pm. Save the date if you have an interest in road safety in Stinchcombe.

The Right to Roam

Rights of way and accessing land

You can access some land across England without having to use paths – this land is known as ‘open access land’ or ‘access land’.

Access land includes mountains, moors, heaths and downs that are privately owned. It also includes common land registered with the local council and some land around the [England Coast Path](#).

Your right to access this land is called the ‘right to roam’, or ‘freedom to roam’.

What you can and cannot do

You can use access land for walking, running, watching wildlife and climbing.

There are certain activities you cannot usually do on open access land, including:

- horse-riding
- cycling
- camping
- taking animals other than dogs on to the land
- driving a vehicle (except mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs)
- water sports

But you can use access land for horse-riding and cycling if:

- the landowner allows it
- public bridleways or byways cross the land – horse riders and cyclists can ride along these
- there are local traditions, or rights, of access

Dogs on open access land

You must keep your dog on a lead no more than 2 metres long on open access land:

- between 1 March and 31 July – to protect ground-nesting birds
- at all times around livestock

On land next to the England Coast Path you must keep your dog under close control.

There may be other local or seasonal restrictions. These do not apply to public rights of way or assistance dogs.

Excepted land

On access land some areas remain private ('excepted land'). You do not have the right to access these areas, even if they appear on a map of open access land.

Excepted land includes:

- houses, buildings and the land they're on (such as courtyards)
- land used to grow crops
- building sites and land that's being developed
- parks and gardens
- golf courses and racecourses
- railways and tramways
- working quarries

Use public rights of way to cross excepted land.

Find open access land

- Use the Great Portal at [Natural England](#)
- For further information go to [GOV.UK](#)