Tuesday, 9 June 2020

**Time to prepare for branchage inspections**

This year’s first Visites du Branchage will go ahead from 24 June, and land occupiers are reminded that they are still responsible for adhering to the Branchage Law, even during Covid-19 restrictions.

Under the law, the occupiers of land bordering public roads and footpaths must ensure that overhanging vegetation is cut back and cleared off the road, and parishes organise the twice-yearly Visites du Branchage to ensure that the law is being met.

Government is backing an initiative by Jersey’s environmental organisations to encourage the vegetation to be cut in a way that protects the needs of the environment.

The Chairman of Action for Wildlife Jersey, Chris Perkins said: “We want to ensure that landowners and occupiers understand how important it is to balance the requirements of the branchage with protecting the environment. There are leaflets and videos available which demonstrate best practice techniques for minimising the impact to wildlife, including nests, young fledglings and hedgehogs, as well as reducing the impact on flowering plants to allow for pollinators.

“The branchage guidelines were updated in 2019 and, since then, we have seen noticeable improvements to roadside banques and hedges, but there is still more to be done; the Jersey Hedgehog Preservation Group have already received a number of hedgehogs seriously injured by strimmers and it is hoped that the campaign will reduce this number, as well as protecting other wildlife.”

Deidre Mezbourian, Connétable of St Lawrence and Chairman of the Comité des Connétables added: “The Connétables partnered with environmental organisations last year when the guidelines were updated. We are sympathetic to, and support, the management of banks and hedges to maintain a diverse vegetation and structure.

At the same time Connétables are responsible for ensuring the branchage is undertaken so there are no encroachments to pedestrians and vehicles. Anyone needing further advice can refer to the leaflets available on the parishes’ website or contact their Parish Hall.”
The Visites du Branchage, which include the Parish Connétable, members of the Roads Committee, Centeniers and Vingteniers, check that land occupiers have completed the branchage in accordance with the law.

Guidelines and more information on the next inspections, which will take place over three weeks from 24 June, is available on the parishes’ website gov.je/parish and on gov.je/branchage

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Notes to Editors

1. For further information, please contact the press office on 01534 440430 or pressoffice@gov.je