

## The Downs – Proposed Tussocky Grassland Areas

Bristol City Council (BCC) Parks department, in conjunction with the Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge, and the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project, are proposing to introduce areas of tussocky grassland on the Downs.

Tussocky grassland is established by reducing the cutting frequency to only one cut every two or three years. The resulting longer and thicker grass provides important cover for various types of wildlife including small mammals and amphibians. Many insects also overwinter on longer grasses, and therefore tussocky grassland which is left uncut over the entire year is essential to allow these species to complete their lifecycle. This habitat is particularly valuable for wildlife when connected to areas of flower-rich habitats, such as the hay meadows across the Downs, and areas of scrub or woodland.



It is still important to cut these areas every 2 or 3 years in order to keep this as open grassland and prevent them being swallowed up by encroaching trees and scrub. The changes to grassland management will be monitored and implemented alongside the Downs Scrub Management Plan, which is due to be reviewed this year (2025).

Each proposed area of tussocky grassland will be split into sections with different areas cut each year; this will mean that there is always at least one section that is left undisturbed and uncut over the Winter to support wildlife. Generally these areas will be cut by BCC parks department, however the area known as the ‘Dumps’ is to be managed by volunteers using hand tools due to the smaller size of the sections, and the limited access for larger machinery,

Where there are existing paths or ‘desire lines’, these will still be maintained under a regular cut to allow access through these areas.

The management regimes are described and shown on maps below. Note that these management regimes are conjunctive with our Managing for Nature programme and will therefore count towards the BCC target of managing 30% of land for nature by 2030.

### **Proposed Regimes**

<b>Symbology</b>	<b>Management Regime</b>	<b>Description</b>
	Tussocky Grassland (1 in 2 year cut and drop)	The grass is cut every two years. This method is used for areas next to existing scrub where this is more likely to spread into the grassland more quickly. Where there is more than one section, each area will be cut on rotation so that there is at least one which is left uncut over winter.
	Tussocky Grassland (1 in 3 year cut and drop)	The grass is cut every three years. Where there is more than one section, each area will be cut on rotation so that there is at least one which is left uncut over winter.

**Maps – South Section**





# 1. Sea Walls





## 2. Fountain Hill





### 3. Ladies Mile





#### 4. The Dumps





**Maps – North Section**





# 1. Boundary of St Monica Trust





## 2. Granny Downs

