

# Hedge Hog Awareness Signs Request Committee Matters Report 10.02.2021 – Item 9



In 2019 Chris Grayling unveiled the small mammal road traffic warning sign, featuring a hedgehog. The purpose of the new sign was to warn road users of the presence of small mammals, to protect wildlife, and to reduce the number of accidents and injuries at identified hotspots. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-road-sign-to-improve-road-safety-and-protect-animals>)

In September 2020 Wild Portishead made a [Freedom of Information request to the DfT](#) after North Somerset Highways officers advised us of obstructive criteria for obtaining the new sign.

The information returned to Wild Portishead details that the DfT had not approved a single small mammal sign in the time frame specified. Local authority highways departments have not been granted usual pre-approved permissions, to use their discretion, when it comes to the installation of the small mammal road traffic warning sign. Instead, every time a council wants to install a sign, they must make individual applications directly to the DfT, for each proposed location, and supply details of significant small mammal populations **as well as data demonstrating personal injury accidents - to humans - caused by small mammals.**

There are various efforts taking place across the nation appealing to the DfT to alter its obstructive issuing criteria, and to facilitate the installation of signs at locations where they would serve to increase protection for wildlife, removing the requirement to additionally demonstrate that small mammals are causing injury to humans. Locally, Councillor Bridget Petty, together with Portishead resident and Green Party volunteer, Ursula Lucas, have launched a [petition](#) to that aim. Wild Portishead has been working with Beryl Casey, founder of Hedgehog Rescue North Somerset, and star of [BBC Springwatch](#), to map Portishead's hedgehog population and identify our town's hotspots for injuries and fatalities. One such location, of significant concern, is the area around Gordano School.

In the coming weeks hedgehogs will begin to move around in great numbers as they emerge from hibernation and travel in search of a mate. In the absence of any reasonable alternative via official channels such as NSC Highways and the DfT, and to help raise awareness of the dangers the hogs – [which are now vulnerable to extinction](#) – will face, Wild Portishead is appealing to Portishead Town Council to approve council funds for the purchase of two hedgehog warning signs, as well as

permission to install the signs on the fencing either side of the gated access into Gertie Gale’s allotments, which are well placed to draw attention to the dangers in that immediate locality.



Wild Portishead has made preliminary searches for suitable alternatives to the official road sign. One example can be found below, and details a reflective, weatherproof sign at cost of approximately [£140.00 \(plus VAT and postage\) for two signs.](#)



We hope that Portishead Town Council will be receptive to this proposal and look forward to discussing with you how we might take this forward in the very near future.

**Wild Portishead, January 2021**