

To whom it may concern

I have read carefully Section 40 of the Wildlife Act- Burning /Cutting Control and welcome the opportunity to make a submission supporting a review of the act Firstly I would like to state that I fully agree with the aim of Section 40 - to protect bird life during nesting season, to prevent forest fires, and to protect vegetation and wildlife habitats during the months of growth and reproduction. However I have grave concerns that length of the closed period for cutting hedges is affecting public safety in the rural countryside. I have witnessed neighbours and my sons fall off their bicycles due to brambles but most worrying incidents where motorist's views have been blocked by overgrown hedges.

Since been elected as a councillor for the Athenry- Oranmore District I have been inundated with calls from concerned locals and road users in the area expressing their alarm about the overgrown hedges and ditches and the dangers they are causing. I believe a balance needs to be struck between wildlife safety and human safety.

I am of the opinion that the closed period for cutting hedges (1st March and 31st August) should be reduced. However I am not qualified to suggest exact dates but would welcome a reduction of the closed period for at least 4-6 weeks. I believe this extra period would be adventurously to council officials enabling them to advert hedges/ditches becoming overgrown in future months which would reduce the risk of stated concerns.

Protection of biodiversity is very important and I understand that changes must be in line with Ireland's obligation to protect and enhance our habitats, birds and other species and not to increase threat to them. However I would like to state that an overriding consideration in any act/ law should be to protect human safety where possible and I believe that this submission should be considered on this point

Look forward to hearing from your office in the further on this matter

Cllr Martina Kinane