

Meeting	Parks & Open Spaces Committee
Date	2 nd June 2026
Report Title	Lyddon Way Ermine Moth Caterpillar Activity
Agenda Reference	14
Author	Jason Watts, POS & Facility Manager

Recommendations

1. To note an observation of Ermine Moth activity in Lyddon Way.
2. To consider a precautionary maintenance measure, it is recommended that grass cutting operations in the immediate affected area are suspended for the next few weeks.
3. To consider whether to issue communications about the activity for education and awareness or whether this will give unwanted attention to an area the Council is wishing to protect.

During routine bin maintenance at the Lyddon Way green area, significant silken webbing was observed covering several trees and sections of the surrounding grassed area.

Based on initial observations, this appears consistent with the activity of Ermine Moth caterpillars, which are commonly seen during this time of year. These caterpillars create extensive silk webbing to protect themselves while feeding. Although the appearance can be alarming and may result in temporary defoliation of affected trees, this is generally considered a natural and cyclical environmental phenomenon. In most cases, the trees recover fully once the caterpillars complete their life cycle.

While this assessment is based on visual observation, it is recommended that a suitably qualified officer or specialist confirms the species identification to ensure the activity is not attributable to another pest or invasive species.

As a precautionary maintenance measure, it is recommended that grass cutting operations in the immediate affected area are suspended for the next few weeks. This will minimise disturbance to the wildlife cycle and help prevent potential issues with grounds maintenance equipment while the webbing remains dense.

Given the unusual and visually striking appearance of the site, this may present an opportunity for a public information or educational social media post to reassure residents that the phenomenon is natural and not considered harmful to the long-term health of the trees. However, consideration should also be given to whether publicising the exact location could encourage unnecessary interference or damage to the habitat. A decision on any communications should therefore be made by the Council.

Photographs and video footage of the affected area have been uploaded for reference. Should any media content be used for social media purposes.

