OV23
Lolium perenne-Dactylis glomerata community

Constant species
Dactylis glomerata, *Lolium perenne*, *Plantago lanceolata*, *Taraxacum officinale* agg.

Physiognomy
The *Lolium perenne-Dactylis glomerata* community comprises coarse weedy grassland vegetation in which *Lolium perenne* and *Dactylis glomerata* usually make up the bulk of the more or less closed cover, along with a variety of perennial associates and scattered ephemerals which find a place in locally disturbed places. *Plantago lanceolata* and *Taraxacum officinale* agg. are the commonest of these companions but *Achillea millefolium*, *Plantago major*, *Trifolium pratense*, *Agrostis stolonifera*, *Urtica dioica*, *Hypochoeris radicata* and *Potentilla reptans* all figure occasionally among the perennials, *Poa annua*, *Bromus hordeaceus* ssp. *hordeaceus* and *B. sterilis* among the annuals.

Sub-communities

Typical sub-community. Apart from the community constants, only frequent records for *Trifolium dubium* and *Hordeum murinum* with occasional *Vicia sativa* and *Senecio squalidus* are distinctive here.

***Crepis vesicaria-Rumex obtusifolius* sub-community.** *Poa annua* becomes constant here but better preferentials are *Crepis vesicaria* and *Rumex obtusifolius* with *Poa trivialis*, *Senecio vulgaris* and *Cirsium arvense* occasional. Seedlings of *Buddleja davidii* are sometimes found.

***Plantago major-Trifolium repens* sub-community.** *Poa annua* and *Holcus lanatus* remain very frequent here but *Plantago major* and *Trifolium repens* are more distinctive with *Ranunculus repens* and *Rumex crispus* occasional.

***Arrhenatherum elatius-Medicago lupulina* sub-community.** The grass contingent of the vegetation is further augmented here by constant *H. lanatus* and, more preferential, *Arrhenatherum elatius* and *Agrostis capillaris*. Also very frequent are *Achillea millefolium*, *Medicago lupulina* with occasional *Cerastium fontanum*, *Vicia sativa* and taller herbs such as *Artemisia vulgaris*, *Daucus carota*, *Heracleum sphondylium*, *Senecio jacobaea*, *Centaurea nigra* and, on chalky soils in the south-east, *Cichorium intybus*.

Habitat
The *Lolium-Dactylis* community is characteristic of resown recreation areas like verges, playing fields and institutional grounds where there is only occasional summer mowing, continuing disturbance or a measure of neglect.

Reseeding of disturbed ground or made areas around residential buildings, institutions, factories and urban road schemes often involves the use of rye-dominated mixtures (Hubbard 1968). In such situations, with periodic mowing through the growing season but little else by way of management, bulky perennial grasses are able to maintain some ascendancy over smaller and more ephemeral plants though local or periodic disturbance often provides opportunity for weedy plants to continue to figure.

Such disturbance may be very particular. The high frequency of *Hordeum murinum* in the Typical sub-community, for example, is often seen around lamp-posts and trees on suburban verges where dogs urinate. More widely, trampling provides a source of disturbance and the *Plantago-Trifolium* sub-community is most common around paths through such resown swards where treading favours frequent occurrence of *P. major* and provides an opportunity for *Poa annua* to colonise. The *Crepis-Rumex* sub-community experiences more gross disturbance, being typical of churned-up verges and waste ground.

By contrast, the *Arrhenatherum-Medicago* sub-community is found on those resown verges and recreational areas where mowing occurs but once or twice each spring or summer, or where abandonment of management favours the further spread of bulkier grasses and taller dicotyledonous herbs.

Zonation and succession

The *Lolium-Dactylis* community is commonly found in zonations and mosaics with other grasslands and weed communities, on verges, recreation and waste ground, patterns being dependent upon the frequency of disturbance, trampling and mowing.

Paths through stretches of this vegetation usually see a sharp transition through the *Plantago-Trifolium* sub-community to the *Poa-Plantago* community along the trampled strip (Figure 25). Where there is more extensive trampling, an intervening zone of *Polygonum-Chamomilla* vegetation can mark the areas with lighter treading. Verges with the *Lolium-Dactylis* community may have a disturbed fringe along the roadside with *Poa-Matricaria* vegetation.

Where resown grasslands are less frequently mown or disturbed, *Lolium-Dactylis* vegetation can grade through the *Arrhenatheretum-Medicago* sub-community to the *Arrhenatheretum* and this can represent a common successional development where management becomes less intensive. On verges or in recreation areas where this happens, the usual further stage is for *Rubus-Holcus* underscrub and *Crataegus-Hedera* scrub to develop. Similar mixtures of rank grasslands and woody vegetation can be found on wasteland and abandoned building sites where *Lolium-Dactylis* vegetation spreads on to spoil heaps.

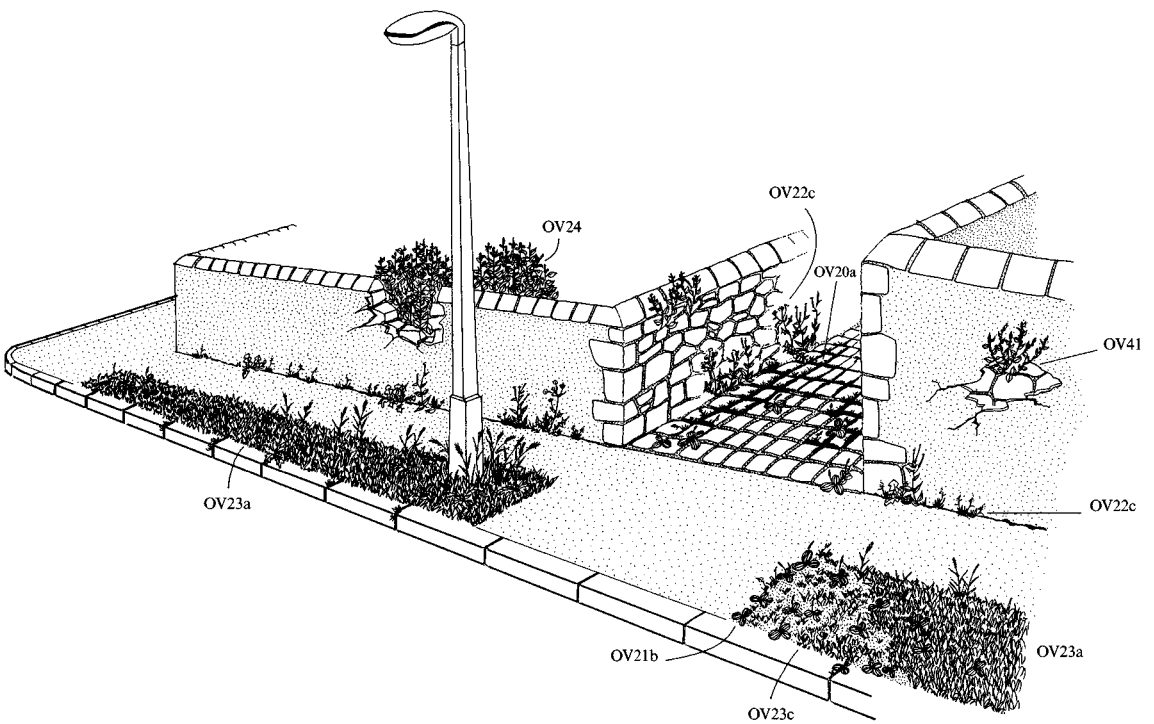
Figure 25. Vegetation pattern on an ill-maintained urban street.
The sown and occasionally mown strips of turf on the pavement are Typical OV23a *Lolium-Dactylis* vegetation with an abundance of *Hordeum murinum* around the lamp-post indicating a favourite spot for dogs to urinate. More trampled sections of the verge have the OV23c *Plantago-Trifolium* sub-community, giving way to the OV21b *Lolium* sub-community of *Poa-Plantago* vegetation where there is heavier pedestrian pressure. Between the cobbles of the much-used snicket behind, there is Typical OV20a *Sagino-Bryetum argentii* and, along the crevices at the foot of the wall, the OV22c *Crepis-Epilobium* sub-community of *Poa-Taraxacum* vegetation. In crevices on the wall itself, small stands of OV41 *Parietarietum judaicae* can be seen, with a stand of OV24 *Urtica-Galium* vegetation in a run-down garden.

Distribution

The community is ubiquitous through the British lowlands.

Affinities

This is a difficult assemblage to place within a phytosociological frame because it lies close to the border between the Lolio-Plantaginion alliance and the Arrhenatherion where coarser grasses like *Dactylis*, *H. lanatus* and *Arrhenatherum* become important. On balance, it seems better to locate it in the former, as a weedier assemblage than the swards included in this scheme among the *Lolium* leys. It has no direct equivalent in the European literature.



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Floristic table OV23

	a	b	c	d	23
Lolium perenne	V (1–8)	IV (3–5)	V (2–7)	IV (2–7)	V (1–8)
Dactylis glomerata	IV (2–6)	IV (2–7)	III (1–4)	V (1–8)	IV (1–8)
Plantago lanceolata	V (1–7)	III (2–4)	V (1–5)	IV (2–4)	IV (1–7)
Taraxacum officinale agg.	V (1–4)	IV (2–5)	V (1–4)	III (2–4)	IV (1–5)
Trifolium dubium	III (2–6)	II (2)	I (2–4)	I (4)	II (2–6)
Hordeum murinum	III (1–9)	I (3)		I (3)	I (1–9)
Senecio squalidus	II (1–2)		I (1)	I (2)	I (1–2)
Stellaria media	I (2–3)				I (2–3)
Crepis vesicaria	II (2)	IV (2–5)	I (1)		II (1–5)
Rumex obtusifolius		IV (1–5)	II (1–4)	I (3)	II (1–5)
Poa trivialis	I (2)	II (4–8)	I (3)	I (4)	I (1–8)
Buddleja davidii seedling		II (2–4)	I (7)		I (2–7)
Senecio vulgaris	I (1–2)	II (1–3)	I (2)		I (1–3)
Cirsium arvense	I (1)	II (2–4)			I (1–4)
Poa annua	I (3–5)	IV (2–5)	IV (2–6)	II (2–4)	III (2–6)
Plantago major	I (1)	II (1–2)	IV (1–4)	II (3–4)	II (1–4)
Trifolium repens	II (2–5)	I (4–5)	IV (2–6)	II (1–4)	II (1–6)
Ranunculus repens	I (3)	II (2–3)	III (1–3)	I (2–3)	II (1–3)
Rumex crispus	I (3)	I (3)	II (2–4)	I (1–3)	I (1–4)
Spergula arvensis			I (5–7)		I (5–7)
Polygonum arenastrum			I (2–3)		I (2–3)
Phleum bertolonii			I (1–4)		I (1–4)
Plantago coronopus			I (1–3)		I (1–3)
Achillea millefolium	III (2–5)	I (1)	II (2–4)	IV (2–5)	III (1–5)
Holcus lanatus	I (3)	I (2–5)	III (1–5)	IV (2–4)	II (1–5)
Medicago lupulina	I (3–4)		II (3–8)	IV (2–5)	II (2–8)
Arrhenatherum elatius	I (4)	I (4)	I (1)	IV (3–4)	II (1–4)
Agrostis capillaris			I (4)	III (3–5)	I (3–5)
Artemisia vulgaris		I (6)	I (1)	II (2–6)	I (1–6)
Cerastium fontanum	I (2)	I (4)	I (2)	II (1–4)	I (1–4)

Floristic table OV23 (*cont.*)

	a	b	c	d	23
Heracleum sphondylium			I (1)	II (1–3)	I (1–3)
Daucus carota			I (2)	II (2–4)	I (2–4)
Brachythecium rutabulum			I (1–3)	II (1–4)	I (1–4)
Senecio jacobaea				II (2–4)	I (2–4)
Festuca ovina				II (2–4)	I (2–4)
Cichorium intybus				II (4)	I (4)
Centaurea nigra				II (2–4)	I (2–4)
Silene vulgaris				II (2–4)	I (2–4)
Torilis japonica				I (2–4)	I (2–4)
Leucanthemum vulgare				I (3–4)	I (3–4)
Epilobium angustifolium				I (2–6)	I (2–6)
Trifolium pratense	II (2–4)	I (2–4)	II (3–8)	II (3–4)	II (2–8)
Bromus hordeaceus hordeaceus	II (1–4)	II (2–3)	I (1–3)	I (2)	II (1–4)
Urtica dioica	II (1–4)	II (2–5)	I (1)	I (1)	II (1–5)
Vicia sativa	II (3–4)	I (2–3)	I (2)	II (3–6)	II (2–6)
Agrostis stolonifera		I (3)	II (3–8)	II (2–4)	II (2–8)
Hypochoeris radicata	I (1)		II (1–5)	II (2–4)	II (1–5)
Bromus sterilis	II (1–5)	II (2–7)			I (1–7)
Crepis capillaris	II (2–3)		I (2–4)	II (1–4)	I (1–4)
Potentilla reptans	II (2–5)		I (2–4)	II (2–4)	I (2–5)
Chamomilla suaveolens	I (2)	I (1)	I (3)	I (3)	I (2–3)
Sonchus oleraceus	I (4)	I (2)	I (1–2)	I (3)	I (1–4)
Capsella bursa-pastoris	I (2)	I (1)	I (2–5)	I (2)	I (1–5)
Geranium dissectum	I (3)	I (3)	I (1–3)	I (5)	I (2–5)
Sonchus asper	I (1)	I (3)	I (1–3)	I (3)	I (1–3)
Bellis perennis	I (2)	I (2)	I (2–3)	I (3)	I (2–3)
Poa pratensis	I (3–4)	I (2–3)	I (4–5)		I (2–5)
Sisymbrium officinale	I (2–4)	I (3)	I (1)		I (1–4)
Malva sylvestris	I (5–6)	I (3)	I (3)		I (3–6)
Cynosurus cristatus	I (3)	I (2)	I (2)		I (2–3)
Tragopogon pratensis	I (1)	I (4)		I (3)	I (1–4)
Medicago arabica	I (7)	I (3–7)		I (7)	I (3–7)

Ceratodon purpureus	I (2)		I (3)	I (1)	I (1–3)
Cirsium vulgare		I (4)	I (1–4)	I (2–3)	I (1–4)
Holcus mollis	I (2)	I (1)			I (1–2)
Vulpia myuros	I (4)		I (1)		I (1–4)
Tussilago farfara	I (7)			I (5)	I (5–7)
Lapsana communis	I (3)		I (2)		I (2–3)
Cymbalaria muralis		I (2)	I (3)		I (2–3)
Ranunculus bulbosus	I (3)	I (2)			I (2–3)
Cerastium glomeratum		I (1)	I (1–2)		I (1–2)
Bryum argenteum			I (1–3)	I (2–5)	I (1–5)
Sagina procumbens			I (1–3)	I (2)	I (1–3)
Festuca rubra			I (1–2)	I (3)	I (1–3)
Galium aparine		I (1)	I (2–3)		I (1–3)
Matricaria maritima			I (4–7)	I (3)	I (3–7)
Veronica arvensis		I (3)	I (1)		I (1–3)
Picris echioides		I (5)	I (1–3)		I (1–5)
Number of samples	13	13	16	14	56
Number of species/sample	12 (7–19)	12 (8–20)	16 (8–35)	19 (8–30)	15 (7–35)

a Typical sub-community
b *Crepis vesicaria-Rumex obtusifolius* sub-community
c *Plantago major-Trifolium repens* sub-community
d *Arrhenatherum elatius-Medicago lupulina* sub-community
23 *Lolium perenne-Dactylis glomerata* community (total)