



Saltash Town Council Report

May 07th 2026

Cllr Keith Johnson – Cornwall Councillor, Saltash Tamar Ward

Report: Weed Management and Glyphosate Use in Saltash

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1. Background

Saltash has experienced a noticeable decline in routine weed control and general maintenance of pavements and highways over recent years. This has resulted in increased weed growth across residential areas, the town centre, and key locations, contributing to concerns from residents regarding the appearance and upkeep of the town.

2. Current Position

Cornwall Council has introduced a three-year recovery programme (from April 2026) to address weed growth on pavements and kerbsides. As part of this programme, the use of glyphosate-based herbicides has been reintroduced.

Town and Parish Councils were given a limited timeframe of approximately three weeks, including the Easter period, to decide whether to opt in or opt out of this approach. Those opting out would be required to arrange and fund alternative weed control measures independently.

3. Council Motion

A motion was brought forward by Green councillors Drew Creek and Karen La Borde calling for a delay in the reintroduction of glyphosate and for alternative methods to be properly considered.

This motion followed concerns that Cornwall Council's Cabinet introduced the proposal without prior consultation, leaving local councils and communities with insufficient time to respond.

Cllr Keith Johnson fully supported this motion, recognising the need for proper engagement, transparency, and consideration of safer and more sustainable alternatives.

4. Key Concerns

Consultation:

The short consultation period is considered insufficient for informed decision-making by Town and Parish Councils.

Financial Implications:

Opting out places an unplanned financial burden on local councils, with no provision in existing budgets.

Public Health Considerations:

Glyphosate has been classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer as “probably carcinogenic to humans,” with ongoing concerns regarding links to serious health conditions and exposure risks.

Legal and Regulatory Context:

Glyphosate has been restricted or banned in a number of countries and by some local authorities. The manufacturer of widely used glyphosate products has faced significant legal action, with settlements exceeding \$10 billion relating to health claims.

Environmental Impact:

Potential impacts on biodiversity, including pollinators, soil health, and ecosystems, remain a concern.

Prioritisation of Resources:

Residents frequently raise concerns regarding overgrown verges and general maintenance standards, suggesting resources could be better directed toward routine upkeep.

5. Conclusion

While the need to address weed growth in Saltash is acknowledged, concerns remain regarding both the process followed and the reliance on glyphosate as a primary solution.

Greater emphasis should be placed on consultation, transparency, and exploring alternative methods alongside improved routine maintenance.

6. Recommendations

- That Cornwall Council be requested to pause and review the current approach to glyphosate use.
- That further engagement be undertaken with Town and Parish Councils.
- That alternative weed control methods be fully explored.
- That clearer guidance be provided on application areas and safety measures.
- That increased focus be placed on routine maintenance, including verge management.
- That residents be encouraged to report affected areas to support targeted action.

Report to Town Council: Improving Children's Access to NHS Dental Care in Cornwall**Purpose of Report**

To inform Members of the ongoing challenges surrounding children's access to NHS dental services in Cornwall, and to outline the actions being pursued by Cornwall Council to improve oral health outcomes for children and young people.

Background

Cornwall Council has recognised significant public concern regarding access to NHS dental services, particularly for children. This concern has been reinforced by findings contained within the Healthwatch Cornwall report on dentistry, which was considered by the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 October 2025.

The report highlighted the difficulties many families face in securing routine NHS dental appointments for their children. Regular dental check-ups are essential for monitoring oral health, preventing tooth decay, identifying emerging problems early, and promoting lifelong healthy habits.

Key Issues

- A significant number of children in Cornwall are not receiving regular NHS dental check-ups.
- Access challenges are particularly acute in some rural and coastal communities.
- Looked After Children are especially vulnerable and require consistent access to dental care.
- Tooth decay remains one of the leading causes of hospital admission among children, despite being largely preventable.

Current Initiatives

Cornwall Council welcomes the positive work already underway through initiatives such as the **Big Brush Club**, delivered in partnership with schools and NHS partners. This programme helps children develop effective toothbrushing habits from an early age.

In addition, organisations such as **Smile Together** continue to play a vital role in delivering community dental services across Cornwall.

Cornwall Council's Proposed Actions

Cornwall Council has called upon the Director of Public Health to:

1. Identify schools not currently engaged in oral health preventative programmes, including those declining participation, and develop actions to increase uptake. This will include exploring the extension of supervised toothbrushing through Family Hubs.
2. Work with partners, including Smile Together, to expand the reach of the dental van and establish dental nurse-led check-up and referral pathways into NHS dental services.
3. Investigate initiatives to encourage local students to pursue careers in dentistry and support their return to practise in Cornwall.
4. Ensure all Looked After Children are registered with an NHS dentist and receive a dental check-up within six months of entering care.

Importance of the Initiative

While daily toothbrushing is an essential part of maintaining oral health, it is not a substitute for regular dental examinations. Routine dental assessments are necessary to:

- Detect problems early;
- Prevent avoidable decay and complications;
- Support healthy oral development;
- Reinforce lifelong oral health habits.

The British Dental Association has emphasised the importance of ensuring that preventive programmes are complemented by timely access to professional dental care.

Councillor Support Statement

I fully support this motion. Every child in Cornwall deserves access to regular NHS dental care, particularly our Looked After Children, for whom we have a special responsibility.

Member Statement for Council

"We are judged not by the promises we make, but by the lives we change.

Today, we speak of children—children in Cornwall who wake with pain, who go without care, and who are denied something as basic as a visit to a dentist. This is not simply a failure of service; it is a failure of duty.

For our Looked After Children, it is even more profound. They do not choose their circumstances. We are their parents in this chamber. And where they are not receiving care, we must accept that we are falling short.

Yet there is hope in this motion. It speaks not of blame, but of action: to reach the schools not yet reached; to bring care into our communities through mobile services; to build a future workforce from within Cornwall itself; and to ensure that every child, especially the most vulnerable, is seen, cared for, and never forgotten.

Prevention is dignity. Access is justice. And justice demands that no child is left behind.

Let us stand together, not as parties, but as guardians of the next generation, and support this motion."

Cllr Keith Johnson

Conclusion

Cornwall Council's ambition is clear: every child in Cornwall should have access to regular NHS dental check-ups.

This work represents an important step towards improving children's health, reducing inequalities, and ensuring that no child, particularly the most vulnerable, is left without access to essential dental care.

Recommendation

That the Town Council notes the contents of this report and supports Cornwall Council's efforts to improve access to NHS dental services for children across Cornwall.

Motion Road Safety Through Timely Renewal of Road Markings And Improved Parking Enforcement

- Road markings in Saltash is at crisis point
- I Have drafted a motion to be tabled on the 19th May
- I have also logged 6 casework assist cases regarding defective and high-risk road markings.

Clear and visible road markings are essential for road safety, traffic management, and the effective enforcement of traffic regulations.

Faded or worn road markings can lead to driver confusion, increase the risk of collisions, and undermine public confidence in the safety of our highways.

In many locations, faded markings also make it more difficult to deter or enforce against illegal and dangerous parking — including on double yellow lines, near junctions, on pavements, and in areas where visibility must be kept clear.

Such parking can obstruct sight lines, impede pedestrians, wheelchair users, and emergency vehicles, and significantly increase the risk of accidents, particularly for children, older residents, and other vulnerable road users.

Documented casework dated September 2025 (CAS-24647-H8H7L7) & (CAS-24641-W8Z4R0 / berry park) illustrates the consequences of the current gap: Highways and Enforcement Services reached contradictory assessments of the same markings; escalation to the Portfolio Holder and highways officer resulted in a commitment to remedial works; yet as of May 2026 those works remain outstanding at a site that has reported several near misses and therefore still assessed as high risk. This motion seeks to ensure that such failures cannot recur.

The Highway Authority has a statutory duty under the Highways Act 1980, the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and the Traffic Management Act 2004 to maintain the highway in a safe condition and to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of traffic.

Road markings associated with junction controls, pedestrian crossings, school safety zones, cycle infrastructure, bus stops, and other high-risk locations are of particular importance and warrant priority attention.

Existing arrangements for the inspection, maintenance, and renewal of road markings across Cornwall have proven demonstrably inadequate in a number of locations, resulting in unacceptable road safety risks, ineffective parking enforcement, and inconsistent outcomes for residents

Recommendation

That the Town Council notes the contents of this report and supports Road Safety Through Timely Renewal of Road Markings and improved Parking Enforcement across Cornwall.

End of report - Cllr Keith Johnson