

## To receive and consider a weeding report and any associated expenditure

As you will be aware Cornwall Council ceased offering the herbicide application for the streets and paths a few years ago.

At this time STC invested in some herbicide application equipment with the intention of undertaking this operation. The equipment is a spray tank with a boom and a hand lance that mounts to the Kubota RTV. It would seem that the spray tank has not been used.

During 2021 the herbicide application was not undertaken due to lack of resources and definitely not undertaken in 2020, and in as far as can be ascertained not in any previous years either.

Due to the lack of herbicide application to the streets and pathways throughout Saltash there is now a major weed problem in most areas. Part of the reason for the current situation is the build of debris in the kerb lines of the roads. Where the roads are swept at a higher frequency i.e. the main roads, there is less of a problem, with the minor roads in the housing estates having more of a problem with a lower frequency of road sweeping.

Resources are in place for the year 2022 and future years so that the herbicide application can be undertaken going forward.

The herbicide application is a 2 person job with the correct training, PPE, a vehicle with a mobile chemical store, spraying equipment consisting of the RTV with spray tank and back pack sprayers. **Please note:** the RTV is used for the watering of the town centre bedding plants and hanging baskets daily between May/June and September/October.

The estimated time to complete each herbicide application to the whole town is between 6 to 8 weeks and needs to be completed between April/May and September/October. The minimum frequency of applications is twice per annum with a recommendation of three applications per annum to maintain to a weed free state.

Herbicide applications can only be undertaken during favourable weather conditions, which are, dry days without wind speeds above 4km/h.

The product used for the herbicide application is Glyphosate, which is a biodegradable substance, or a similar chemical herbicide. Glyphosate is absorbed through the leaf of the plant and is translocated to the roots, effectively killing the plant. Glyphosate does not control pre-emergence weeds, and is non residual in the growing medium to prevent regrowth after application.

Non-Chemical herbicides are not available to purchase. There are various recipes online which include 35% vinegar and other ingredients such as baking soda, citric acid, dish soap and other substances that need to be mixed on site. After investigation, the cost of the ingredients is prohibitive to make this a viable alternative to chemical herbicide. It is also noted that the effectiveness of these recipes is not known.

There are alternative cultural methods for weed control that eliminates the use of Glyphosate and other chemicals. These are a mix of mechanical sweeping and thermal heat. Examples of the available equipment are Powered pedestrian sweepers, mounted sweepers, pedestrian thermal heat machines and mounted thermal heat machines. Thermal heat machines destroy the cells of the plant. The mounted machines can be fitted, instead of a mowing deck, to the Kubota F3890 ride on mower power unit. It is noted the SDD premises does not have the capacity at present to store this equipment.

The control of weeds in this manner only treats the surface of the plants and may not effectively kill the root of the plant. Due to this the regrowth rate is far higher than using a chemical herbicide, therefore the frequencies required for treatment will be far higher than the herbicide application to maintain areas weed free, meaning increased labour times over the season. This method can be undertaken when weather conditions are unfavourable for spraying.

Research is taking place to find out more around the effectiveness of the thermal heat equipment further, with a local supplier organising a demonstration day with the manufacturer, date to be confirmed. At which the equipment will be demonstrated in action and questions answered as to the effectiveness and costs of the equipment.

If council wishes to pursue no chemical weed control, then it will be recommended that at least one application of chemical herbicide is undertaken due to the extent of the current problem.

### **Finance:**

Budget: 6506 Grounds Maintenance and Watering

Available Budget: £5,945 for the year 2021-22

Available Budget: £12,000 for the year 2022-23

### **Options:**

1. Use chemical herbicide, such as Glyphosate, to control the weed growth?
2. Where possible (specifically bad areas) the SDD to dig the weeds out to limit the use of herbicide treatment and where herbicide treatment is used (we do not spray indiscriminately), only to where the weeds are causing problems?
3. Further investigate the cultural weed control methods reporting back at 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022 Service Committee meeting?

**End of Report**  
**Service Delivery Manager**