Cornwall Coucil Public Realm Improvement and Re-introduction of Weed Treatment

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Email received from Cornwall Council 31st March 2026

Circulation: Clerks of Town & Parish Councils, South East Cornwall Community Area Partnership

c.c. Cornwall Councillors and Chair & Vice-Chair of CAP

Dear Colleague,

Public Realm Improvement and Re-introduction of Weed Treatment

Cornwall Council's Cabinet has instructed Cornwall Highways & Environment Services to begin a new programme of weed treatment and public realm improvements across Cornwall. This decision follows evidence of declining standards since routine weed management stopped in 2013, resulting in increasing complaints, narrowing footways, damaged surfaces, and perceived reduced community pride.

We have reviewed options and have directed Cormac Solutions Limited to carry out the following on the adopted highway network:

• **Targeted manual and mechanical weed removal** on the very worst-affected estates (one per CAP)

• **Carefully controlled, limited chemical treatment** only on the urban highway network where weeds are present, using modern Controlled Droplet Application methods to minimise quantity and footprint.

• **Improvements to amenity and environmental areas**, including enhanced cutting and better management of urban verges.

• **Partnership working with local councils and volunteers**, supporting local pride and community involvement.

Please note this directive does not apply to private areas or areas maintained via the waste contract.

The aim of this recovery programme is to restore safe, accessible streets and deliver consistent standards across Cornwall. We want to support strong, safe, clean and well-maintained communities and to ensure Cornwall's neighbourhoods reflect the pride residents have in where they live.

The default position is that all Cornwall Council maintained areas are opted in, this will include all adopted highway within urban areas as it was in 2013. An opt-out option is available for Town and Parish Councils that wish to manage their areas without chemical treatment, provided they can meet the required standards and protect asset integrity.

In the first instance Town and Parishes should send responses and Opt-out forms before the **20th of April 2026** to your Community Link Officers (CLO) who will collate responses and feed this information through to Cornwall Highways who will then pick up further contact.

We appreciate this is short notice, given the operational need to commence weed treatment at the beginning of May. However, if meeting this deadline is not possible because you will not be able to consider this at a council meeting before this date, please can you let your CLO know the earliest you will be able to make a decision.

Please disregard this correspondence if you already undertake weed management on behalf of Cornwall Council under a previous agreement.

Please find enclosed (in suggested order of review):

. The all-member briefing provided to members on the 6th of March 2026.

2. The Public Realm Improvement and Weed Management FAQ

3. The 2013 maps which will be used for the first treatment (NOTE: **Green = new treatment area, Red = area as treated via the Waste contract in 2013**.) We have attached the maps relevant to your parish area.

4. A draft copy of the Town and Parish Council Opt-Out Agreement

5. Town and Parish Council Opt-Out Guidance

6. Town and Parish Council Opt-Out Form

Yours sincerely,

Dhywgh hwi yn hwir

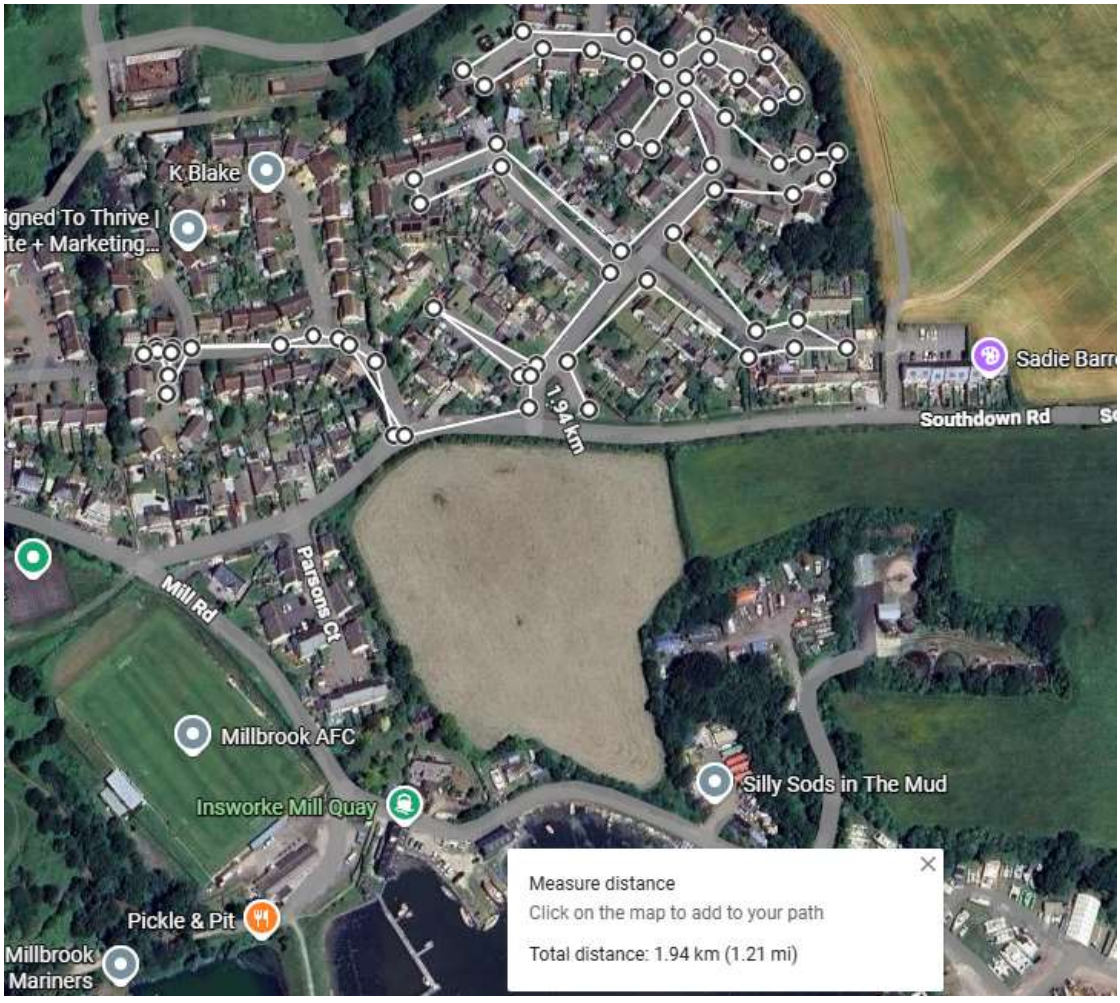
Cornwall Council

Connectivity and Environment Service

Google maps

Map 1: All areas excluding Insworke / Southdown

Map 2: Southdown / Insworke area



Email received from Cormac (Landscaping East) 8th April 2026 – re grass verges.

Currently there is no plan to change how Cormac manage the roadside verges and we will continue to work with the parish council to promote the wildflowers in the verges as in previous years.

Decisions from other Town and Parish Councils

Note: these Town / Parish Council's have been selected at random by doing a Google search 'Cornwall Council' 'weed control' 'town / parish council'

Penzance Town Council – Draft minutes from Leisure & Amenities Committee 13th April 2026

https://www.penzance-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Leisure-Amenities-Minutes-13.04.26-DRAFT.pdf

On 30 March 2026 all town and parish councils in Cornwall were notified that Cornwall Council's Cabinet had instructed its Highways and Environment Services to commence a new programme of weed treatment and public realm improvements across Cornwall. The decision followed evidence of declining standards since routine weed management ceased in 2013, resulting in increasing complaints, narrowing footways, damaged surfaces and the perception of reduced community pride. Further detail was set out within the report and its appendices but, having reviewed the documentation, the Committee was advised that there was not sufficient officer capacity to meet Cornwall Council's service specification criteria in order to allow Penzance Council to 'opt out' of chemical weed treatment. New posts for the Leisure and Amenities Service had recently been approved; the Council's Strategic Plan was in the process of being revised and negotiations had been entered into for the next phase of service and asset devolution from Cornwall Council. It was therefore recommended that monitoring was undertaken during the first year of the reintroduced service and that an evaluation, including a cost benefit analysis, was undertaken to determine future service delivery and the potential ability to 'opt out' in future years. During the debate, Members raised a number of points including the following:

During the debate, Members raised a number of points including the following:

i) The lack of notice provided by Cornwall Council prior to making this change was utterly disappointing and was an example of extremely poor partnership working.
ii) Given the declaration of a climate emergency by Cornwall Council and its supposed commitment to nature, the decision to reimpose chemical weed spraying was extremely disheartening given the adverse impacts which it would have upon the wider nature and biodiversity of the area, in addition to any health consequences for residents due to the employment of a known carcinogen.

iii) It was acknowledged that it would be impossible for Penzance Council to 'optout' of the proposed weed treatment programme as it simply did not have the resources, nor the various licences required, to do so, and it could not undertake to make those commitments within a legally binding contract. However, despite this, assurance was sought that Penzance Council would not be liable for future legal claims for not having 'opted-out'.

Following consideration, it was unanimously.

RESOLVED that

1. Cornwall Council's decision to reinstate weed treatment throughout the authority area be noted.
2. This Council expresses its dismay and dissatisfaction with Cornwall Council's decision to use herbicides across Cornwall in spite of the known negative consequences for the climate crisis, the environment and the health of local residents.
3. The Town Mayor and Town Clerk write to the Leader and the Chief Executive of Cornwall Council to express this Council's disappointment at the lack of notice provided to town and parish councils, given the significant environmental and resource implications.
4. Written assurance be sought from Cornwall Council that this Council will be discharged from liability in the event of any legal claims brought as a result of chemical weed treatment undertaken due to any decision of Penzance Council not to 'opt out' of the proposed treatment programme.
5. In light of the recently approved new posts within the Leisure and Amenities Service, an evaluation of the proposed reintroduction of weed treatment be undertaken to determine how it may impact upon officer capacity and workload and future service delivery.
6. Said evaluation assess any further impact(s) associated with the Council resolving to 'opt out' in future years. (Proposed: Councillor Young; seconded: Councillor Reynolds

Statement from Bude-Stratton Town Council website

Bude-Stratton Town Council is aware of concerns being raised regarding Cornwall Council's use of weedkiller (glyphosate) and the option for town and parish councils to opt out.

This matter will be considered by councillors at the Facilities and Environmental Committee meeting on 23 April at 6pm, held in the Conference Room at Parkhouse Centre. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

Cornwall Council has acknowledged the short timescales involved and has confirmed that ***Bude-Stratton Town Council has been granted additional time*** beyond the original 20 April deadline to allow for proper consideration.

No decision has been made at this stage. A further update will be provided once councillors have had the opportunity to consider the information available and the views raised by the community.

Residents who wish to share their views can also email **office@bude-stratton.gov.uk**. All feedback received will be shared with councillors to help inform the discussion.

Posanooth Parish Council – Extract of Draft Minutes from 13th April 2026

Cornwall Council Correspondence regarding Public Realm Improvement and Re-introduction of Weed Treatment Cornwall Council had decided to implement a new programme of weed management across Cornwall's urban highway network in response to evidence of declining standards since routine weed management was stopped in 2013. The Parish Council discussed the issue of weeds in the pavements and agreed that they needed attention. However, the Parish Council were not in a position, especially with the short timescale to respond to Cornwall Council, to undertake this work themselves. Ponsanooth Parish Council RESOLVED not to opt-out of the Public Realm Improvement and Re-introduction of Weed Treatment by Cornwall Council.

The Clerk would look into indicative costs for the Parish Council to undertake the work and the item would be added to a future agenda.

Agnes Parish Council Facebook post

https://www.facebook.com/share/18PTS33LaG/?mibextid=wwXIfr

This Was Not Our Choice – But We Want You to Know Why

We know this is an issue many residents feel strongly about – and we want to be open with you.

Following a long and difficult discussion, St Agnes Parish Council has reluctantly agreed to join Cornwall Council's Public Realm Improvement and weed treatment scheme.

This was not a decision we wanted to make.

In reality, the Parish Council was left with no practical alternative. Opting out would have required us to design, fund and deliver a full service to the same (or higher) standard within a very short timeframe – something that simply wasn't achievable without significant cost to local taxpayers.

We are deeply disappointed with how this process has been handled, particularly the lack of time given to properly consider the options and financial implications.

👉We understand that many residents have concerns about weed treatment, and we share those concerns.

👉**Cornwall Council** has not yet made a final decision, with a vote due to take place next week – which means there is still time for residents to make their views known.

👉If you feel strongly about this issue, you may wish to contact your Cornwall Councillors:

Councillor Pete Mitchell – cllr.pete.mitchell@cornwall.gov.uk

Councillor Louise Blackman – cllr.louise.blackman@cornwall.gov.uk

👉You may also wish to explore and support the petition regarding the use of glyphosate in Cornwall:

https://forms.gle/Tv3DZML3mmxsMc417

We will continue to represent the views of our community and push for better, more transparent decision-making in the future.

Thank you for your understanding and for continuing to engage with us.

Illogen Parish Council Facebook post

https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Cm92Ss9tC/

There is still an opportunity for residents to share their views regarding Cornwall Councils proposed direction to proceed with a new weed treatment programme. Link to the petition: **https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSe657kuWrJZiO.../viewform**

Contact your Cornwall Councillors:
cllr.cliff.crawford@cornwall.gov.uk
cllr.susanne.desmonde@cornwall.gov.uk

Redruth Town Council – Petition against the Cornwall Council proposed use of glyphosate.

https://www.redruth-tc.gov.uk/_UserFiles/Files/_Agendas/196054-1304_Extraordinary_Full_Council_Public.pdf

From: **Karenza Heald** <theclerk@millbrook-pc.gov.uk>
Date: Tue, 14 Apr 2026 at 14:43
Subject: Fwd: Public Realm Improvement and Re-introduction of Weed Treatment
To: admin@redruth-tc.gov.uk <admin@redruth-tc.gov.uk>

Hello Charlotte

Please could you tell me what Redruth Town Council's decision was from your meeting on 13th April 2026.

Kind Regards

Karenza
Karenza Heald
Parish Clerk / RFO
T | +44 (0) 1752 823128
E | theclerk@millbrook-pc.gov.uk

From: **Charlotte Williams** <townclerk@redruth-tc.gov.uk>
Date: Tue, 14 Apr 2026 at 14:49
Subject: Urgent Anti-Glyphosate Petition by Redruth Town Council
To: theclerk@millbrook-pc.gov.uk <theclerk@millbrook-pc.gov.uk>

Dear Karenza

In response to your email, please find below;

Cc: All Town and Parish Councils Clerks and Chairs, throughout Cornwall will be receiving this email shortly.

PETITION AGAINST THE CORNWALL COUNCIL PROPOSED USE OF GLYPHOSATE

At their recent Full Council meeting, Redruth Town Council resolved to start a petition to Cornwall Council, to urge them to undertake the following actions , in relation to the proposed re-introduction of the use of glyphosate weedkiller on their land within our respective parishes.

1. Accept their statutory responsibility to maintain all highways controlled areas highlighted in green on the parish maps as circulated, in line with their declaration of

Climate Emergency, using non glyphosate methods of weed management. In so doing, fully acknowledge the noxious and harmful long-term effects of using glyphosate in any form on the eco system, human, animal and environmental health of Cornwall.

Or,

2. Deelay the date for a decision by Town and Parish Councils to the end of May 2026. Due to the short notice period given, this has not enabled the sector sufficient quality time to explore and cost alternative methods, including collaborative working between Councils and potential sharing of equipment schemes to facilitate positive change.

3. And acknowledge the fact that the financial offer of £343.45 per km, is an insufficient and inappropriate amount for Town and Parish Councils who wish to take on the maintenance using non glyphosate methods. To reconsider and increase the amount per km to £1,000 per km.

4. And to call in and revisit the Cabinet decision to use glyphosate as part of the weed management process in Cornwall.

We hope that you will share the link to the petition below to all your Councillors and networks, as soon as we have a total of 5,000 signatures across Cornwall, this will be submitted to Cornwall Council for inclusion on their Council agenda for debate.

Link to petition

https://forms.gle/Tv3DZML3mmxsMc417

As time is of the essence, we would appreciate you sharing this as a matter of **urgency**. We have also written to CALC – the Cornwall Association of Local Councils.

Redruth Town Council believes we are stronger together as one voice from the Town and Parish Council sector.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Alison Biscoe, Chair and Town Mayor, Redruth Town Council and

Charlotte Williams – Town Clerk, Redruth Town Council

On behalf of Redruth Town Council.
Charlotte Williams FRSA, PSLCC
Town Clerk
Redruth Town Council
Consel An Dre Resrudh
Redruth Civic Centre
Alma Place
Redruth
Cornwall TR15 2AT

Tel: 01209 210038

Email from Cornwall Wildlife Trust

From: **Faye Treffry**
Date: Thu, 16 Apr 2026 at 15:02
Subject: Cornwall Council glyphosate proposals
To: Faye Treffry <faye.treffry@cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk>

Dear Clerk / Chair / Councillor,

I am writing regarding Cornwall Council's recent notification to Town and Parish Councils about the reintroduction of glyphosate use for weed management on urban highways, and to let you know what action we are taking to support your position.

We are aware that this notification has been received at very short notice and that you are being asked to make decisions with significant environmental, financial and governance implications under tight timescales.

Cornwall Wildlife Trust has significant concerns about the potential impact to wildlife, with mounting evidence that glyphosate use can be harmful, particularly to invertebrates and freshwater species. We believe that the current timeframe does not allow for meaningful exploration of alternative approaches, or time to examine the apparent contradiction between these proposals and Cornwall Council's stated commitments to environmental protection and nature recovery, as set out in the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Nature Recovery Strategy.

Our CEO, Matt Walpole, has written formally to Cornwall Council requesting that:

- They delay the planned reintroduction of glyphosate use on urban highways.
- The opt-out decision deadlines are extended for all Town and Parish Councils, and a revised timetable for the process is confirmed.
- That the extended period is used to support constructive dialogue between Town and Parish Councils, local organisations, and communities on local circumstances, options, safeguards and alignment with wider Council commitments.

If you have not already done so, you may wish to consider:

- Formally requesting an extension directly, noting that the current deadline does not allow for proper consideration.

- Recording concerns clearly in minutes/records to ensure public opinion is captured.
- Flagging local sensitivities. E.g. Proximity to rivers, coast, nature sites, schools or play areas.
- Sharing concerns collectively. Many councils have already been granted short extensions, a consistent message from multiple parishes strengthens the case.

We believe that allowing more time will support better decision making and fewer problems later, whatever position individual councils ultimately take.

We have provided further information on our website here, including a Glyphosate Myth Buster document produced by PAN UK, should this be helpful.

Sending on behalf of Cornwall Wildlife Trust,

Yours sincerely,

Faye Treffry (she/her)

Brand and Communications Manager

Cornall Wildlife Trust

https://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/news/cornwall-wildlife-trust-calls-more-time-local-councils-weed-spraying-proposals

Feedback from founder of Wild Edge

From: Vix Hill-Ryder <vix@wildedgeuk.com>
Sent: 17 April 2026 14:09
To: Councillor Kate Ewert <cllr.kate.ewert@cornwall.gov.uk>; Karenza Heald <theclerk@millbrook-pc.gov.uk>
Subject: Urgent Concerns Regarding the Reintroduction of Glyphosate in Cornwall

Dear Councillor Kate Ewert and Millbrook Parish Council Members,

I am writing to you both as the founder of Wild Edge, a sole trading environmental education and foraging enterprise based on the Rame Peninsula, working daily within Cornwall's hedgerows, verges, estuaries and woodlands.

Firstly, I want to thank you for raising concerns about the recent decision by Cornwall Council to reintroduce glyphosate use along roads and kerbs. I share your concerns deeply, both in terms of the environmental implications and the process by which this decision has been made.

From a practical, ground-level perspective, I believe this decision represents a significant step backwards for Cornwall's biodiversity, public health, and environmental leadership.

Over the past decade, Cornwall has quietly become a leading example of how reduced chemical intervention can allow roadside verges and urban edges to recover. In that time, we have seen a marked increase in pollinators, wildflowers, and invertebrate life along our roadsides—spaces which are now functioning as vital ecological corridors in an otherwise fragmented landscape.

The reintroduction of glyphosate, even when applied in so-called "targeted" or "drop" applications, poses several concerns:

• **Biodiversity Impact**: Glyphosate is a broad-spectrum herbicide. Its application, however controlled, disrupts plant diversity at the base of the food chain. This has knock-on effects for pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and hoverflies, as well as the birds and mammals that depend on them. The loss of roadside flora reduces habitat resilience at a time when biodiversity recovery is a national priority.

• **Soil and Ecosystem Health**: Glyphosate does not remain neatly confined to its point of application. It can affect soil microbiota—fungi, bacteria, and mycorrhizal networks—which are essential for healthy ecosystems. Repeated applications can degrade soil quality and inhibit natural regeneration.

• **Water Contamination**: Runoff from roads and pavements inevitably carries residues into drains, streams, and estuarine environments. Given Cornwall's extensive coastline and interconnected waterways, this raises serious concerns for aquatic ecosystems.

• **Human Health Concerns**: While regulatory bodies differ in their conclusions, the classification of glyphosate as a "probable carcinogen" by the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer cannot be ignored. Public exposure—particularly for children playing on verges, or residents in close proximity to sprayed areas—raises valid concerns.

• **Canine and Animal Health**: As someone who regularly engages with dog owners during my work, I am increasingly aware of concerns around dogs walking through recently treated areas. Exposure through paws, ingestion of contaminated plant matter, and grooming behaviour presents a potential risk that has not been adequately addressed in public communication.

• **False Precision of 'Targeted' Use**: The idea that glyphosate can be applied in a fully controlled, minimal-impact way does not align with real-world conditions. Weather, surface runoff, operator variability, and cumulative exposure all contribute to a far broader impact than intended.

Beyond these concerns, I feel strongly that this move is counterintuitive to Cornwall Council's stated environmental commitments and its previously progressive stance on reducing pesticide use. Cornwall has built a reputation for forward-thinking environmental stewardship, and this decision risks undermining public trust and reversing years of positive ecological recovery.

Equally troubling is the process itself. The limited timeframe given to Town and Parish Councils to make decisions—paired with the financial burden of opting out—does not constitute meaningful consultation. It places local councils in an impossible position and weakens the principle of community-led environmental management.

From my professional perspective, working directly with communities, schools, and residents, I can say there is a growing cultural shift towards valuing "wild edges" and understanding their ecological importance. While some residents express concerns about "untidiness," these are best addressed through education, improved verge management strategies, and selective mechanical maintenance—not chemical intervention.

I would strongly support the motion to pause this decision and call for:

- A full and transparent public consultation process
- Clear mapping of proposed glyphosate use areas
- Independent environmental and health impact assessments
- Exploration of alternative management strategies (mechanical, thermal, or ecological approaches)
- Reallocation of public realm funding towards sustainable verge and habitat management

Cornwall has an opportunity to lead—not regress—on this issue.

I would be very happy to contribute further insight from my work on the ground, or to support any community engagement around this matter.

Thank you again for taking this seriously and for inviting public input.

Kind regards,
Vix Ryder
Wild Edge
www.wildedgeuk.com

Publicity

Cornwall Council Facebook post – 25th March 2026

Weeds can be unsightly, but how they're managed also needs to protect the environment.

Cornwall Council leader Cllr Leigh Frost and Cabinet member for transport Cllr Dan Rogerson were out and about this week talking to residents and discussing our plans to keep our public spaces neat and tidy.

https://fb.watch/Gt_m5AWk7a/

Cornwall Council Facebook post 16th April 2026

https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1742856687120954&ref=sharing

Let's Talk Cornwall

https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/weed-management

Cornwall Climate Action Network – Facebook post 11th April 2026

https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Rn5Lw56tr/

Are these weeds? Or wild flowers? **Cornwall Council** has made the controversial decision to reintroduce chemical weed control on public roads in towns and villages.

The council's Highways division will instruct Cormac to use the weedkiller glyphosate on all urban roads, unless individual town and parish councils opt out by the deadline on 20 April.

Cornwall Climate Action Network (CCAN) is a county-wide network of more than 40 grassroots environment groups and organisations.

Many of its members are very concerned about the council's retrograde decision to go back to using herbicides and will be discussing how to contest it at CCAN's monthly meeting on Thursday 16 April.

The council says: "This decision follows evidence of declining standards since routine weed management stopped in 2013, resulting in increasing complaints, narrowing footways, damaged surfaces, and perceived reduced community pride."

Cormac workers will be instructed to carry out "carefully controlled, limited chemical treatment" on weeds, using "...modern controlled droplet application methods to minimise quantity and footprint".

Glyphosate (Roundup) is a toxic herbicide used since the 1970s to kill weeds on farmland, public spaces and in domestic gardens.

A growing amount of international research shows that exposure to glyphosate is harmful to the environment, and the health of animals and people, particularly the young.

Among humans, glyphosate is a significant risk factor for a range of serious health conditions including kidney and fatty liver diseases and a wide range of cancers, including leukaemia.

Have a look at the Cornwall Council briefing sent to all parish and town councils:

https://millbrook-pc.gov.uk/.../1.-All-Member-Briefing...

Also its Frequently Asked Questions document:

https://millbrook-pc.gov.uk/.../2.-Public-Realm...

(Thank you to **Millbrook Parish Council - Cornwall** for sharing the details.)

Please share widely within your own local community 🌱

Pesticide Action Network UK

Research from Cllr Dale Moorey

The environmental impact and human safety of glyphosate are subjects of significant debate, with conflicting views between major regulatory bodies and health organizations.

Human Safety:

Regulatory opinions on glyphosate's safety are currently divided, particularly regarding its long-term health risks:

Carcinogenicity Debate: The World Health Organization's (WHO) International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classifies glyphosate as "probably carcinogenic to humans," specifically linking it to non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

Conversely, the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) maintain that it is safe when used according to label instructions.

Acute Exposure:

Direct contact can cause immediate issues such as eye and skin irritation, while inhaling spray mist may lead to throat irritation or asthma symptoms. Severe cases from ingestion can lead to liver or kidney failure. So this be the person carrying out the spray.

Emerging Concerns:

Recent independent research suggests potential links to endocrine disruption, gut microbiome imbalance, and neurotoxic effects like an increased risk of Parkinson's disease.

Environmental Impact

Glyphosate is a "total" herbicide, meaning it affects nearly all green plants, which leads to several ecological consequences:

Soil Health:

It can disrupt soil microbial communities, affecting fertility and potentially increasing the prevalence of certain soil-borne crop diseases.

Aquatic Toxicity:

Glyphosate is highly toxic to aquatic life, particularly amphibians and invertebrates, if it enters waterways through runoff or accidental overspray.

Persistence:

While often described as breaking down quickly, it can persist in soil for several months depending on the climate. Its byproduct, AMPA, is often more persistent and mobile in the environment than glyphosate itself.

(National Pesticide Information Centre)

There are Effective glyphosate-free weed killers in the UK

Statement from CEO of West Country Rivers Trust

Email received 21st April 2026 from West Country Rivers Trusts' Evidence and Engagement Officer

'Laurence Couldrick, our CEO, has supplied a response for you. I hope the meeting goes well.

'Westcountry Rivers Trust has expressed concern regarding recent proposals to reintroduce glyphosate-based weedkillers on urban highways in Cornwall, echoing calls for local town and parish councils across the County to be granted more time for thorough scrutiny. We are worried that the compressed decision-making timelines prevent a full assessment of the environmental risks posed to our freshwater ecosystems. As chemical runoff from roads and pavements frequently enters the surface water drainage system, the use of such herbicides presents a direct threat to the health of our local waterways so transmission routes to the river do need to be considered in planning.'

Feedback from the Environment Agency

Email received 21st April 2026, Ben Bailey, Asset Performance Advisor

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the Environment Agency's use of glyphosate in managing invasive vegetation.

The Environment Agency has a statutory duty to maintain flood defences and watercourses to ensure effective flood conveyance and asset performance during high-flow events. Certain invasive native and non-native plant species (e.g. Hemlock Water Dropwort, Himalayan Balsalm, Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed, floating pennywort) can obstruct channels, vegetate protruding siltation, trap debris, destabilise embankments, and damage engineered flood assets, thereby increasing flood risk if left unmanaged. Management also ensures spreading of the invasives is minimised.

Aquatic-approved glyphosate, is applied only following site-specific assessment where mechanical or manual control is ineffective, impractical, or poses unacceptable safety or asset risks. This approach is consistent with Environment Agency operational guidance and national invasive species and flood risk management policy.

Where aquatic-approved glyphosate is employed, its use is **strictly controlled and proportionate**, including:

- Application by trained and certificated operatives only
- Targeted methods (e.g. spot treatment or stem injection) rather than broadcast spraying
- Controlled timing and application rates to minimise runoff and environmental exposure
- Additional safeguards when working in or near watercourses
- Avoid spraying immediately after or during rainfall or during windy conditions

The Environment Agency's position is that herbicide application should be avoided wherever possible; however, where unavoidable, it must be limited and well managed to ensure minimal risk to surface water and groundwater quality.

In summary, aquatic-approved glyphosate is used only where necessary to maintain the safe operation of flood risk assets and reduce risk to people and property, and always within a framework of environmental protection, regulatory compliance, and risk minimisation.

Cornwall Council – Full Council meeting on 21st April 2026

https://democracy.cornwall.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=584&MId=13882&Ver=4

11.4 Public Realm Weed Treatment Programme: Requirement for Public Consultation: Proposer: Councillor Creek; Seconder: Councillor La Borde PDF 168 KB

Briefing note 'to follow'.

Additional documents:

- Public Realm Weed Treatment Programme - Requirement for Public Consultation - Appendix 1 , item 11.4 PDF 114 KB

Cornwall Council Full Council meeting – Public questions

Parish Council 'opting out' of Cornwall Council's Public Realm and Re-introduction of Weed Treatment programme

Criteria – should MPC decide to 'opt out'

Extract from Cornwall Council's Opt-out Guidance for Town and Parish Councils

'We recognise that time is limited ahead of the planned start date. For this reason, we propose an initial notification with a temporary hold, followed by a formal agreement process. Initial notification – due by 20th April 2026: submitting the enclosed opt-out form by this date will place a temporary hold on Cornwall Council carrying out treatment in your area'

Formal agreement – due by 20th May 2026: to confirm the opt-out for the 2026/27 financial year, councils must submit an operational plan by this date including:

- a marked-up plan showing streets that will be maintained by the Town/Parish
- proposed method(s) of treatment • expected frequency of visits – minimum of 2
- how weed-related complaints will be managed • how promptly issues will be addressed
- evidence of trained staff or contractors
- appropriate insurance • details of safe working procedures

MPC considerations for opting out :

- Relying on volunteers would present challenges (and Cornwall Council may not agree to this approach).

- MPC would be required to 'legally' commit to agreeing to comply with Cornwall Council's standards
- Council staff would be required to have appropriate training
- MPC would have additional administration costs in dealing with complaints / queries.
- Staff would be working away from the centre of the village and not within close distance of public toilets, refreshments or rest areas.
- If weed control is completed by hand MPC need to be aware of manual handling regulations which require employers to avoid, assess, and reduce risks of injury from lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, or carrying loads.

'Opting out' potential costs.

When MPC's caretaker first standard clearing the weeds along The Parade (by hand / using a blow torch) – he was regularly taking out 20 bin bags of material. This took him several weeks. He relatively is now on top of it.

A resident spoke to our caretaker and said her neighbour cleared outside their home (approx. 30 yards) and it took them all day.

The distance is estimated to be approximately 5.75 miles but based on the fact that not all the areas will require weed treatment I estimated this figure at 3 miles. Based on this distance I have estimated the cost would be approximately £15,840.

Our caretaker did a test patch on the near Dawes Lane / end of New Street. It took approx. 20 minutes to fill say a quarter of a wheel barrow.

There was evidence of dandelion roots in the tarmac which could not be cleared by hand.

Additional costs = disposal of the vegetation.

Training requirements – if 'opting out'.

If we were to arrange an off-site course for you at your own location, it would cost £730 + VAT for this one-day course.

You would need to have at least 6 candidates up to a maximum of 12.

This is an In-House course recognised only by Cormac; it is not nationally recognised.

Currently we don't have any Chapter 8 Awareness scheduled at one of our own locations.

If you only had one or two candidates to attend, I estimate the cost to be approx. £125 + VAT per person.

We have locations at Scorrier, Bodmin and Notter Bridge.

I could add you to the Waiting List and let you know when the next course is scheduled.

There are other alternatives such as Streetworks Signing, Lighting and Guarding which is a two-day course that is nationally recognised.

This would cost in the region of £475-£495 and is a qualification that lasts for 5 years.

Clerk's recommendations to support decision making process.

1. The Parish Council has not been given sufficient notice to prepare a business plan with costs for alternative chemical free weed control methods to consider 'opting out' at this time. The Parish Council's caretaking staff are at full capacity and the Parish Council's budget was approved in January 2026**. The Parish Council should consider requesting an extension of at least six months. These timescales will enable the Parish Council to obtain alternative chemical free costs and methods and seek clarification from Cornwall Council whether these would be acceptable. The Parish Council should be cautious about opting out and taking on taking on responsibility for Cornwall Council Highways as this would be an additional financial burden for the Parish Council and there is no guarantee of Cornwall Council reducing funding contributions.**
2. Cornwall Council appears not to have carried out any consultation. The extremely short notice has not given Millbrook Parish Council the opportunity to consult with its parishioners. The considerable short notice shows a lack of respect and value for Town and Parish Councils. **Millbrook Parish Council should request evidence of the number of complaints specifically about weeds on the kerbside in Millbrook and the number of complaints from Millbrook residents about the proposed use of glyphosate.**
3. Cornwall Council's Community Link Officer has responded to the Parish Council's questions promptly and efficiently but there has been no opportunity for the Council to meet in public to review the documents and discuss or raise any questions. The timescales are insufficient to consult with our community. Since submitting our list of 27 questions the Parish Council has further questions:

i) It is our understanding that glyphosate approval in Great Britain currently runs until December 2026, pending regulatory review. Could they advise what contingency plans are in place should approval not be renewed?
ii) Given that non-glyphosate alternatives are available, could Cornwall Council clarify why glyphosate continue to be used and whether any comparative assessment has been undertaken in relation to environmental impact, and operational practicality?
iii) The information provided is ambiguous. At the time of presenting this report it is unclear whether the new scheme includes both kerbside on the roads, kerbside on the pavements and the weeds on the pavements MPC cannot provide an alternative chemical free cost solution without knowing the detailed proposals on what is expected.

A request should be made for a TEAMs meeting with our local ward member (Cornwall Councillor Kate Ewert) all the members detailed on the Public Realm 'All Member Briefing'.

- Dan Rogerson – Portfolio Holder for Transport
- Loic Rich, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change
- Jon Mitchell, Environment Manager, Cornwall Council
- Dan Evans, Acting Highway Asset Manager, Cornwall Council

This would demonstrate a willingness to 'work together' addressing climate and environmental concerns, local needs and the deterioration of Cornwall Council owned highways in our community.

4. The highways are the responsibility of Cornwall Council not the Parish Council. However, Town and Parish Councils represent their communities at a local level. Cornwall Council has stated '*The default position is that all Cornwall Council maintained areas are opted in, this will include all adopted highway within urban areas as it was in 2013. An opt-out option is available for Town and Parish Councils that wish to manage their areas without chemical treatment, provided they can meet the required standards and protect asset integrity.'*
Should MPC vote not to support the use of glyphosate) in the parish (and a request or outcome of a TEAMs meeting is unsuccessful) an official complaint is submitted to Cornwall Council.

Public realm weed treatment plans debated at full meeting of Cornwall Council - Cornwall Council press release 21st April 2026

A motion calling for Cornwall Council's public realm weed treatment proposals to be reconsidered was strongly supported at a meeting of the full Council today.

The debate followed significant public and member concern about proposals to reintroduce targeted chemical weed treatment, including concerns about the time given to town and parish councils to respond and the wider level of public confidence in the process.

The motion, submitted by Cllr Drew Creek and seconded by Cllr Karen La Borde, called for the proposed reintroduction to be paused to allow for greater consultation to take place.

It was carried by 61 votes to seven.

Council leader, Cllr Leigh Frost, said he and his cabinet colleagues would take time to consider the points raised.

"We understand that people have very strong feelings about our public realm proposals," he said.

"Members have expressed clear concerns, and we have also heard the strength of feeling reflected in the public questions raised today, including about the way these plans were communicated to town and parish councils.

"We accept that the process was not good enough, and we recognise the need for a clearer timetable.

"Our responsibility is to keep Cornwall's streets, footpaths and kerbsides safe, accessible and well maintained.

"But we also recognise that this must be done in a way that earns the confidence of members, town and parish councils and the wider public.

"We'll now carefully consider the points raised both in the motion and during the debate – including opt-out arrangements, and how any next steps are communicated."

Today's meeting also saw three other motions approved, one calling for improvements to dentistry in Cornwall, one on fair access to school transport for families in Mevagissey, and one calling for Government not to ignore deprivation in Cornwall.

You can watch today's proceedings back via the council's webcast service, and read the full agenda online.

ENDS

Extract from Parish Council minutes of meeting held on 21st April 2026 at 7:30pm

Minute 185 - Cornwall Council Public Realm Improvement and Re-introduction of Weed Treatment (A.I.7)

The Council noted receipt:

i) Documents circulated from Cornwall Council's Localism Team on behalf of Cornwall Council Connectivity and Environment Service and an email stating: 'Cornwall Council's Cabinet has instructed Cornwall Highways & Environment Services to begin a new programme of weed treatment
and public realm improvements across Cornwall. This decision follows evidence of declining standards since routine weed management stopped in 2013, resulting in increasing complaints, narrowing footways, damaged surfaces, and perceived reduced community pride.' (for full details of the email see Appendix 1, page 9 and 10)

ii) A report from the Parish Clerk containing:
- Feedback from other Town and Parish Councils
- Feedback from Cornwall Wildlife Trust
- Feedback from the Founder of 'Wild Edge'
- Research on the Parish Council 'opting out'.
- Publicity from Cornwall Council and Cornwall Climate Action Network
- Questions from the Parish Council and responses received from Cornwall Council.

The Parish Council noted that due to the outcome Cornwall Council's cabinet meeting today (21st), no further action needs to be taken however, Cllr S Lewis asked if the Parish Council wishes to submit a formal complaint to Cornwall Council. Cllr Reilly recommended the Parish Council produce a statement to express the Council's views regarding the process. Cllr George highlighted the impact on nesting birds and Cornwall Council's obligations to consider the Wildlife Act. The Clerk highlighted feedback from the Environment Agency and West Country Rivers Trust. The Council resolved to produce a statement which will be circulated to all Councillors before being published.
Proposed Cllr Reilly. Seconded Cllr Moorey. Unanimous.

A Statement from Millbrook Parish Council regarding Cornwall Council's meeting on Tuesday 21st April regarding the reintroduction of chemical weed treatment.

Millbrook Parish Council (MPC) welcomes the recommended decision taken at Cornwall Council's (CC) Full Council meeting to pause the rapid reintroduction of glyphosate for weed control, following an overwhelming vote in support of the motion.

However, MPC is clear that this pause must be seen as a necessary corrective step in response to a process that was fundamentally flawed. The approach taken by Cornwall Council failed to properly engage Town and Parish Councils and did not reflect the principles of transparency, fairness or meaningful partnership working.

Councils were given just 20 days' notice to respond to a significant policy change (which included the Easter break period), at a point when budgets had already been set, leaving them with an unacceptable choice: either accept the proposal without sufficient scrutiny or opt out and attempt to comply with ambiguous and insufficiently defined standards. This placed Town and Parish Councils in a 'no win' situation. The information provided by CC was ambiguous. CC did not provide clear specifications of the specifications of works meaning Town and Parish Councils could not analyse the workload and subsequent costs.

CC has a statutory responsibility to maintain all highway controlled areas and MPC acknowledges that "weeds" are damaging infrastructure and that a weed management programme is required. The manual removal is beyond MPC's current financial position. CC has not supplied evidence on the costs of alternative environmentally friendly methods.

MPC welcomes the acknowledgement by several Cornwall Council cabinet members, including the leader of the Council, that this process fell short and recognises the contribution of our local ward member in clearly articulating both the procedural failings and the serious concerns regarding workforce safety associated with the use of glyphosate.

Furthermore, MPC remains concerned that the proposed reintroduction of glyphosate appears to be at odds with both the spirit and intent of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as well as Cornwall Council's own Nature Recovery Programme and stated environmental commitments. This raises important questions about policy coherence and the Council's long-term environmental leadership.

In 2013, Cornwall Council made a decision not to use glyphosates. We understand this decision was reaffirmed in 2016.

In July 2025, we received an email from Cornwall Highways stating '*Cornwall Council no longer has a budget for general weed spraying and, in accordance with its Pollinator Action Plan, it has restricted the use of pesticides, particularly where they are glyphosate based, in order to reduce the potentially harmful effects on the environment. Any spraying is now restricted to the treatment of noxious weeds such as common ragwort and Japanese*

Knotweed or for areas where weeds are causing significant structural damage. Weed removal will only be considered where it is causing a genuine highway safety hazard or if removal is organised by third parties'

MPC expects full and timely responses to the outstanding queries that have yet to be addressed. We also emphasise that any forthcoming consultation must be genuine, transparent, and inclusive, allowing Town and Parish Councils sufficient time and clarity to engage meaningfully in decisions that directly impact their communities.

MPC will continue to advocate strongly on behalf of its residents for a fair process, clear standards and environmentally responsible policies.

Questions submitted to Cornwall Council

REF	Date query submitted	Question	Date response received	RESPONSE FROM	Response
1	02/04/2026	Has there been any consultation / publicity prior to the Improvement Maintenance of the Public Realm being implemented?	07/04/2026	Cornwall Council's Community Link Officer on behalf of Connectivity and Environment Services	The Council's communications team is currently preparing the public-facing materials and the Let's Talk page. An All-member briefing was conducted on the 6th March, as you know information has now been sent to Town and Parish Councils. Town and Parish Councils can Opt-out (subject to the details and process sent) if they or their community feel strongly about what's proposed but they must but in place an equivalent alternative arrangement and deal with the related comms and complaints. The service is working to implement the cabinet instruction and cabinet have considered public feeling before issuing this.

2	02/04/2026	What impact will the use of glyphosate have on Cornwall Council's duty under the Environment Act 2021 to conserve and enhance biodiversity. In 2025 I was advised Cornwall Council's Pollinator Action Plan restricted the use of pesticides, particularly where they are glyphosate based.	07/04/2026	Cornwall Council's Community Link Officer on behalf of Connectivity and Environment Services	The use of chemicals is limited to hard surfaces the adopted highway only, and I want to reassure you that, as outlined in the FAQ, only the targeted weeds will be treated, and this will be done using a heavily diluted solution of glyphosate. The product will be applied using Controlled Droplet Application (CDA), which is designed to place the treatment directly onto the weeds. This method is not a spray in the traditional sense and produces larger, heavier droplets specifically intended to minimise drift and prevent the chemical from becoming airborne or affecting unintended areas. The Council's policies have been reviewed at a senior level, and we are content the intended usage does not contradict what is said in them.
3	02/04/2026	The Parish Council is likely to receive a lot of questions about the weedkiller run off. Have the Environment Agency been consulted? Please see feedback from the Environment Agency (pages 17 and 18) MPC requests this is taken into account during the public consultation	07/04/2026	Cornwall Council's Community Link Officer on behalf of Connectivity and Environment Services	As above the weedkiller will be sparingly used and we will not undertake treatment when it is wet or windy, the majority of chemical will be absorbed by the weeds. The intention is to setup a 'Let's Talk' page on the Councils website where repeated questions are answered. We are not required to consult the environment agency, as per the FAQ the treatment will be in accordance with UK guidance and requirements.

4	02/04/2026	Due to the proximity of Millbrook Lake, Millbrook Parish would require higher levels of manual and targeted weed removal. I note your email states manual and targeted weed removal will be one per cap. Is that limited to one treatment for one selected area in South East Cornwall Area Partnership? Could you expand on this please?	07/04/2026	Cornwall Council's Community Link Officer on behalf of Connectivity and Environment Services	For year 1 yes that is correct 1 area per CAP. In years 2 and 3 it may be we can expand this programme.
5	02/04/2026	Once the areas have been sprayed strayed how will the debris be collected? Because the weeds have been in situ for over a decade, subsoil has been created (see images below). What are Cornwall Council's plans for removal of the subsoil. Will there be an increase in street cleansing?	07/04/2026	Cornwall Council's Community Link Officer on behalf of Connectivity and Environment Services	As the response to question 2 we are not spraying any of the chemical. Were we are undertaking the treatment we have linked in with Biffa via the waste contract to collect the detritus a number of weeks after the treatment when it has died off.
6	02/04/2026	Chapel Way, Southdown Road and Mill Road appeared no to be shown as included on the map. Is there a reason for this? (I am not aware of these areas being under private ownership).	07/04/2026	Cornwall Council's Community Link Officer on behalf of Connectivity and Environment Services	I presume these routes were maintained by another authority in 2013, as explained in the documents sent the intention is to update the maps for the 2nd treatment
7	02/04/2026	Is there likely to be an increase in the maintenance of public rights of ways in our parish?	07/04/2026	Cornwall Council's Community Link Officer on behalf of Connectivity and Environment Services	Not as part of this initiative. The Environment service are however looking at this separately : Rights of Way Improvement Plan | Let's Talk Cornwall

8	02/04/2026	Has Cornwall Council's policy changed regarding the management of urban verges? We created a website post showing some information provided by Cornwall Highways in June 2023 - https://millbrook-pc.gov.uk/cornwall-highways-grass-cutting-update/ Millbrook Parish Council has been working with Trevor Jones (Cormac Environment Area Manager). Last near Cormac scarified the grass verges around the lakeside and Millbrook's community volunteers sowed wildflower seeds.https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/parks-leisure-and-culture/parks-and-open-spaces/making-space-for-nature/ What is the programme for grass cutting of the road verges in Millbrook. Will Cormac be completing a 'hay' cut.	07/04/2026	Cornwall Council's Community Link Officer on behalf of Connectivity and Environment Services	This question will be relayed to NAME REDACTED Cormac (Landscape) as it is not related to this initiative
9	07/04/2026	Could I ask you to respond to Question 8 (highlighted below) please	09/04/2026	Cormac Landscaping	Currently there is no plan to change how Cormac manage the roadside verges and we will continue to work with the parish council to promote the wildflowers in the verges as in previous years

10	13/04/2026	Please could you respond to the following queries in respect of opting out: 2.3 The Parish Council shall carry out the said Services in accordance with the requirements of the Highways Act 1980 and all other relevant statutory provisions. OBLIGATIONS OF THE AUTHORITY The Parish Council will ensure that all persons involved in the exercise of the Services shall hold the appropriate recognised qualifications. Could you be more specific on the relevant services requirements of the Highways Act 1980 please?			
11	13/04/2026	2.4 The Parish Council will ensure that all persons involved in the exercise of the Services shall hold the appropriate recognised qualifications . What qualifications would be required please?			
12	13/04/2026	Should MPC vote 'not' to opt out will there be an opportunity to review the arrangement at a later date?			
13	13/04/2026	a) Would Cornwall Council's contractors be removing weeds from both the kerbside and pavements (see image below). b) If yes, presumably if MPC were to 'opt out' by clearing the weeds by hand, without the use of weedkiller MPC would be expected to keep to the same standard.	14/04/2026	Cornwall Council's Community Link Officer on behalf of Connectivity and Environment Services	The feedback in relation to b) is yes – which would be the area as per the maps, 2 effective treatments and removal of all waste. Note there has been no response to Question 13a

		Cornwall Council have not made it clear whether the proposals include clearance of the weeds / vegetation on the kerbside of the public pavements.			
14	16/04/2026	Email sent to West Country Rivers Trust asking for their feedback. MPC requests that feedback from WRT is included as part of Cornwall Council's consultation.	21/04/2026	Response received from Laurence Couldrick,CEO	*'Westcountry Rivers Trust has expressed concern regarding recent proposals to reintroduce glyphosate-based weedkillers on urban highways in Cornwall, echoing calls for local town and parish councils across the County to be granted more time for thorough scrutiny. We are worried that the compressed decision-making timelines prevent a full assessment of the environmental risks posed to our freshwater ecosystems. As chemical runoff from roads and pavements frequently enters the surface water drainage system, the use of such herbicides presents a direct threat to the health of our local waterways so transmission routes to the river do need to be considered in planning.'*

15	16/04/2026	How does CC see this switch in stance on using chemicals fitting in with their wider environmental policies & what they called their "Climate Emergency"? Is there any offset to balance this?			
16	16/04/2026	If "kerbside appeal" is now a factor to take into account for CC then will their grass cutting scheme for roadside verges also be amended? Will these existing maintenance tasks reduce in quantity for their contractors? How will they be managing the increased maintenance workload for their contractors? Are CC hiring more people to take on this additional work or will other areas of work diminish?			
17	16/04/2026	Cornwall Council have said funding will be provided equivalent to the cost of chemical treatment that would otherwise have been applied locally — provided the Town or Parish council demonstrates through the application process that it will deliver an equivalent level of treatment and customer complaint management. For 2026/27, the expected contribution is £343.45 per km. Is this figure per annum? In order to compare costs please could you tell me the coverage for per km for Millbrook. If MPC can find an alternative method using non chemicals but the cost is higher that the funds CC have offered			

		will there be an opportunity to negotiate additional funds.			
18	16/04/2026	The all member briefing states ;Alternatives trialled have higher costs, increased labour/energy requirements and reduced effectiveness for root kill'. Please could MPC have copies of any professional reports / analysis showing what the additional costs were for alternative methods.			
19	16/04/2026	It is unclear what Cornwall Council plans to treat. Are only kerbside weeds being treated, or will this also include the treatment of weeds on the edge of the pavement and on the pavements.			
20	16/04/2026	The notification to Town and Parish Council was provided with very little notice. Our budget was prepared at the end of last year and approved in January 2026. Why were we not notified sooner? Why was there no public consultation? Please send copies of the minutes when this was the Public Realm Improvement and Re-introduction of Weed Treatment was approved by Cornwall Council			
21	16/04/2026	The same Public Realm FAQ document implies that the weedkiller spraying would only run for 3 years (page 6) then we would return to non-chemical control. Have we interpreted this correctly?			

22	16/04/2026	Could MPC have an option whereby either MPC Volunteers or employees carefully weeded roadsides at the start of May and August (particularly of the lakeside ones) - perhaps under Rebecca Dickson's volunteer scheme. If so, presumably CC's contractors would not need to spray there as they would only spray on visible weeds. Would this be an option?			
23	16/04/2026	If our interpretation is correct that The Public realm FAQ states in three years we would return to non chemical control why can't that apply now with CC just doing the weeding and not using toxic chemicals ?			
24	16/04/2026	Are all Town and Parish Councils being offered the same 'opt out' rate per km?			
25	16/04/2026	How many Millbrook residents have specifically complained to Cornwall Council about the weeds on the kerbside?			
25	16/04/2026	This is some feedback we have received from an ex-beekeeper? This product stays in the soil for many years, our bees and other pollinators are affected, it goes into our rivers and soil and eventually our food. At what cost? Please use the money that you would to buy these weed killers to plant trees or wildlife areas which will do us and our pollinators a lot more good. What is Cornwall Council's response to concerns relating to the bees and wildlife?			

26	16/04/2026	Cornwall Council's response to Q3 states you are 'not required' to consult with the environment agency however, given Millbrook's in close proximity to the creek, does CC not consider it has a moral responsibility to communicate with the Environment Agency and Defra?			
27	16/04/2026	What does Cornwall Council define as a weed? See images. For example, would this be classed as a weed 'The Cambridge Dictionary defines a weed as, 'any wild plant that grows in an unwanted place'. Would some wildflowers be protected? What does Cornwall Council consider to be a unwanted place?			