



# **Helston Town Council**

## **Pesticide & Herbicide Policy**

Approved: January 2023

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Helston Town Council aims to provide a high standard of grounds maintenance for all the open spaces and play areas for which it is responsible. This standard also applies to the maintenance of verges on behalf of Cornwall Council.
- 1.2 In addition, the Town Council aims to provide residents with a clean and tidy town by carrying out weed clearance of kerb edgings throughout Helston and the kennel system in the town centre.
- 1.3 The Town Council does not use pesticides for the routine maintenance of its open spaces, play areas or verges. However, to control weed growth along kerb edgings and throughout the kennel system the Council has previously relied heavily on the use of pesticides.
- 1.4 With the ever-increasing awareness of the undesirable effects of pesticides on health, environment and eco-systems, alternative methods of weed control are being identified and researched.
- 1.5 It is the aim of the Council to stop using pesticides by a phased reduction on land it maintains, although the Council recognises that it may not always be possible to avoid pesticide use for certain circumstances.
- 1.6 This policy relates to pesticides used by Helston Town Council on land it maintains and does not include land maintained by other authorities including Cornwall Council, Coastline Housing, Sanctuary Housing and the Ministry of Defence. However, where possible, the Town Council will encourage pesticide free/ reduced pesticide use across the town.

## **2 Definitions**

- 2.1 'Weed' – is defined as the growth of wild plants in unwanted locations and is used within the policy to refer to plants causing undesirable effects such as trip hazards or damage to structures and to avoid naming specific plants which in appropriate locations would not pose a problem.
- 2.2 'Pesticide' – is used as the collective term for herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides and insecticides.

## **3 Weed Control**

- 3.1 The Town Council will investigate the use of non-chemical methods on an ongoing basis and where possible will trial alternatives to determine feasibility.

3.2 All methods of weed control will be evaluated on the basis of:

- Cost;
- Effectiveness;
- Environmental impact;
- Health & safety concerns; and
- Time and use of Council resources.

(Listed in alphabetical order, not order of priority)

3.3 The council aims to use feasible non-chemical methods of weed control as its first choice wherever possible.

3.4 Where the use of pesticides is required the Council will:

- Use a method that uses/ applies the least amount of chemical i.e. Total Droplet Control (TDC);
- Use a chemical which contains the least amount of active ingredients i.e. Glyphosate;
- Use chemicals in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines ;
- Carry out a spot application to non-flowering weeds; and
- Ensure that due consideration is given to forecasted weather conditions to reduce the risk of drift or run-off.

3.5 The Council will seek to phase out chemical methods of weed control, where possible, within 3 years following successful trial of non-chemical weed control system as per Appendix A.

#### **4 Invasive Plant Species**

4.1 This Policy will not affect the Council's obligation to eliminate the presence of Japanese Knotweed and other non-native invasive species. Where management of these plants involves chemical treatment this will be carried out by trained personnel in accordance with Government guidance and legislation.

4.2 Ragwort is a native species of the British Isles and is a specified weed under the Weeds Act 1959. All parts of the plant are poisonous and are a hazard to grazing livestock. However, Ragwort is very important for wildlife in the UK supporting a wide variety of invertebrates and is a major nectar source for many insects.

4.3 The Government 'Code of Practice on How to Prevent the Spread of Ragwort' does not seek to eradicate the plant, as in many situations ragwort poses no threat to horses and other livestock. However, it is necessary to prevent its spread where this presents a high risk of poisoning horses and livestock or spreading to fields used for the production of forage.

4.4 Where land is affected by Ragwort the Council will:

- review the risk of spread to land used for grazing or conserved forage production on a six-monthly basis;
- take appropriate action where a high, medium or low risk is identified as outlined in the Government's Code of Practice;
- dispose of ragwort plants in an approved manner, the normal short term measure is to pull the plants up when they are flowering, but prior to seeding, and burning;
- follow safety guidelines contained in the Code of Practice; and
- monitor the impact of clearance action to ensure its effectiveness for up to six months or to the end of the growing season if sooner.

4.5 Links to the relevant guidance are provided at Appendix B.

## **5 Treatment of Wasps/ Rodents**

5.1 Treatment of wasps and rodents will be considered on a case-by-case basis to determine the appropriate course of action.

5.2 Pesticides will only be used in exceptional circumstances as a last resort when the presence poses a health and safety risk, for example a wasp nest in a children's play area. In these cases a professional contractor will be employed to ensure the safe use of pesticides.

5.3 An appropriately qualified contractor is employed to provide and monitor rodent control measures at Town Council owned buildings to prevent the associated health and safety risk to Council staff and members of the public.

## **6 Training**

6.1 Any employee/ contractor engaged to apply pesticides will have the correct formal training and specified certification to apply pesticides properly and safely complying with Health and Safety legislation.

## **7 Storage, Handling and Disposal**

7.1 The Council will take reasonable precautions to ensure that storage, handling and disposal of products, their remnants (old products and unused tank mixes) and packing and cleaning of equipment do not endanger human health or the environment.

7.2 The following measures will be undertaken:

- In the case of non-professional products - following instructions on storage and disposal of the product in accordance with instructions on the product label.
- In the case of professional products - identifying and mitigating any risks and following good filling, storage and disposal practice.
- Limited stock will be held of any herbicide product to ensure that it is used by the expiry date.

- Should a product become withdrawn from use, any remaining product will be disposed of via an authorised hazardous waste carrier.

## **8 Record Keeping**

- 8.1 Records of pesticide applications will be kept for 21 years as part of our health and safety records and will detail date, location, area covered, operator and weather conditions.
- 8.2 The Town Council will publish annually details of locations and dates where pesticide applications have taken place.

## **9 Ongoing Maintenance, Future Design and Planning Considerations**

- 9.1 Ensure required maintenance is carried out in Town Council owned areas to minimise weed growth.
- 9.2 Where opportunity exists to influence the design of new features or modify existing ones on Council property, control of weeds will be considered when determining materials, siting, angles etc. This would include consideration of planting and types of surfacing.

## **10 Review**

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

### Year 1 – Jan to Dec 2023

- Carry out trial of thermal lance on town centre pavements and kennel system and evaluate performance;
- Raise awareness with other organisations & associations and the public to highlight non-chemical methods of weed control and encourage participation;
- Continue to seek viable non-chemical methods of weed control, initiating trials where feasible.

### Year 2 – Jan to Dec 2024

- Subject to successful outcome of trial with thermal lance, switch maintenance of half of remaining kerb edgings within the town to non-chemical maintenance using the thermal lance.
- Raise awareness with other organisations & associations and the public to highlight non-chemical methods of weed control and encourage participation;
- Continue to seek viable non-chemical methods of weed control, initiating trials where feasible.

### Year 3 – Jan to Dec 2025

- Subject to successful outcome of trial with thermal lance, switch maintenance of the remaining kerb edgings to non-chemical maintenance using the thermal lance achieving the Council's aim of becoming pesticide free.
- Raise awareness with other organisations & associations and the public to highlight non-chemical methods of weed control and encourage participation;
- Publicise that the Council has become pesticide free.
- Continue to seek viable non-chemical methods of weed control, initiating trials where feasible.

## Appendix B

**Government guidance on how to stop invasive non-native plants from spreading:**

[Treatment of Non-Native Invasive Plants \(Published 23/09/14, last updated 02/02/22\)](#)

**Government Code of Practice on How to Prevent the Spread of Ragwort:**

[Code of Practice - Ragwort \(Published 18/04/11\)](#)