



Newquay Council

Corporate Service

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Councillor D Rogerson
Portfolio Holder for Transport
Cornwall Council
New County Hall
Treyew Road
TRURO
TR1 3AY

Your ref.

Our ref. 26/04/20/PRI-WT

Date: 20 April 2026

Sent by email: cllr.dan.rogerson@cornwall.gov.uk

Dear Councillor Rogerson

Public Realm Improvement and Re-introduction of Weed Treatment

I have been instructed to write to you in connection with the letter from Cornwall Council's Connectivity and Environment Service dated 30 March 2026 regarding the introduction of the new programme of weed treatment and public realm improvement across Cornwall.

I can advise that this matter was discussed at Newquay Town Council's extra-ordinary meeting of its Environment and Facilities Committee meeting on 16 April 2026.

Newquay Town Council is extremely disappointed with the approach Cornwall Council has adopted with this 'directive' to local (parish and town) councils which does not in any way resemble a meaningful partnership model. This letter, giving local councils an imposed timescale from 30 March until 20 April (and over the Easter period) to respond to the proposed new



programme and the 'opportunity' to opt out of a chemical weed treatment plan with insufficient time to formulate a credible plan.

As Cornwall Council will be very aware, local councils must set their precept by no later than the end of January in any year to enable the unitary authority to manage the council tax demand process. Town and parish councils have therefore already set their budgets for the 2026/27 financial year which makes this opt out letter tokenistic and poorly thought through at best. During the lively and emotive debate on this issue, it was noted that Cornwall Council's timescales do not give local councils the opportunity to explore innovative options to control weeds that are not reliant on glyphosate, irrespective of any chemical concentration levels and method of application in the environment that Cornwall Council asserts of 'safe.'

If Cornwall Council was serious about this issue, it would give local councils sufficient advance notice and time to consider options on how they would tackle weeds locally, while also exploring potential innovation with larger town councils that could cluster together, pooling experience and procurements for capital purchases to control weed growth. While this agglomeration idea is very embryonic and has not been discussed or tested with other towns, it does show a willingness to explore opportunity around developing a weed treatment programme that does not involve the use of chemicals.

The Cornwall Council letter has however highlighted that the unitary authority is still treating local councils with contempt and provides the sector with options that are simply not workable in the imposed timescales. This unfortunately does not feel like we are working with an open and willing partner that appreciates our role in the democratic process and the solutions to issues such as weed control that we might bring forwards. Cornwall Council, since unitary status in 2009, stated and promised an undertaking to the local council sector that it will work through a mutual and constructive partnership and on a policy of 'no surprises.' This letter significantly undermines that premise and serves as yet another example of the authority ignoring its own policies, processes and commitments.

Apart from the operational issues with the timing of this letter, which makes any alternative unworkable in the timescales, Newquay Town Council is strongly against the use of artificial herbicides, pesticides and fungicides and will not use synthetic pesticides or non-organic methods with its estate management/areas it manages. This is in line with Newquay Town Council's Biodiversity and Nature Protection Policy (adopted December 2024). The Town Council is therefore staggered to receive this proposed weed treatment programme, enacting the decision by Cornwall Council's Cabinet to implement an approach which undermines its credibility to deliver against its organisational commitments and declarations including: Climate Emergency (2019), Ecological Emergency (2021) and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025).

Newquay Town Council considers the ongoing use of glyphosate by Cornwall Council to be harmful to our environment and poses a significant health risk to the residents of Newquay and communities across Cornwall. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is currently assessing glyphosate to see whether it continues to meet the legislative approval criteria for an active substance, taking into account any new scientific, technical and regulatory knowledge. Glyphosate is currently approved for use by the HSE until 15 December 2026 and while that process

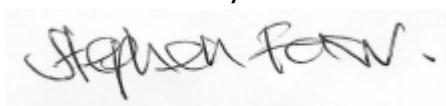
may lead to its use being renewed for up to 15 years (subject to its own findings), there needs to be a conscious and significant effort by Cornwall Council to move away from this harmful practice for the benefit of its residents and the environment.

A recent study by Virginia Tech is only one of numerous papers which demonstrate the impact that exposure to glyphosate can have on nature. Newquay Town Council calls for Cornwall Council to delay implementation of any weed programme that is reliant on chemicals and that it works constructively with the local council sector to develop chemical free weed treatment and public realm improvement programmes so that this harmful practice can be phased out. This will require open and honest dialogue by Cornwall Council and a willingness to explore options and opportunities with a greater window than the current 30 March to 20 April timescales afford. The Town Council also wished to understand whether this is a fixed three year period of 'recovery' or whether there is likely to be ongoing, longer-term funding, given the yearly reduction in weed control funding we have experienced previously, as this will impact any major investment or front-funding of alternative models that could be extremely costly and require a longer-term payback period.

To emphasise, this Public Realm Improvement and Re-introduction of Weed Treatment approach is unreasonable, top down and not conducive to working in partnership. Cornwall Council has simply brought heat and light to this issue and damages reputations for Cornwall Council and indeed wider local authorities, as the public rightly expect local authorities to work more closely on these sorts of important service delivery issues. Newquay Town Council is heavily involved in devolution discussions with Cornwall Council and has demonstrated an open and active willingness to engage on asset and services being delivered locally. The Town Council therefore finds this approach out of sync with how Cornwall Council usually engages and conducts its business, and a review should be undertaken to establish how this was allowed to happen. Public resources are now being taken up, responding to petitions, angry residents, complaints and significant media interest – all of which was wholly avoidable and has been directly caused by Cornwall Council.

Newquay Town Council therefore urges Cornwall Council to reconsider options for weed treatment across its maintained areas and that it works with local councils over the coming months so that alternative arrangements and innovative solutions can be explored, jointly.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Facer'.

Stephen Facer
Deputy Chief Executive
Newquay Town Council

Cc: Councillor Leigh Frost (Leader, Cornwall Council)
Kate Kennally (Chief Executive, Cornwall Council)
Councillor Drew Creek (Cornwall Councillor, Newquay Trenance)

Councillor Heinz Glanville (Cornwall Councillor, St. Columb Minor & Colan)
Councillor Joanna Kenny (Cornwall Councillor, Newquay Central & Pentire)
Helen Fincham (Community Link Officer, Saints Coast Community Area
Partnership)
Cornwall Association of Local Councils (CALC)

~ For and on behalf of Newquay Town Council ~