

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Streetscene Scrutiny Panel (to be confirmed at the next meeting)

Date: Thursday, 26 January 2023

Venue: Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

PRESENT:

Councillor Miss T G Harper (Chairman)

Councillor Mrs P Hayre (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: Ms C Bainbridge, Mrs L E Clubley, D G Foot, Mrs K Mandry and R Bird (deputising for N R Gregory)

Also Present: Councillor Mrs K K Trott (for item 8)



1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor N Gregory.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Streetscene Scrutiny Panel held on 06 July 2022 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has published the consultation response for the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) and highlighted the following points:

Materials in-scope of the DRS include plastic bottles (with lid the attached) and steel and aluminium drinks cans. For all materials, the size in scope is 50ml to 3 litres (no glass included).

The Deposit Management Organisation (DMO) will be responsible for managing the overall operation of the DRS as well as meeting the collection targets set out in regulations. The DMO will be independent, not for profit and a private organisation.

The collections targets will be phased in – 70% in year one, 80% in year two and 90% in year three.

The DMO will have responsibility for setting the deposit amount, abiding by parameters set out in the regulations, including a maximum amount still to be determined.

A network of return points will be established by requiring all retailers selling in-scope containers to host a return point. The retailer will be able to decide whether to take returns through reverse vending machines or a manual takeback service.

Local Authorities and/or waste operators can separate out in-scope drinks containers found in their waste stream and return them to redeem the deposit, providing they meet the required quality standards.

The proposed commencement date for the DRS is 01 October 2025.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISCLOSURES OF ADVICE OR DIRECTIONS

Councillor R Bird declared a personal interest in item 8 on the agenda as he is a member of the Fareham Society.

5. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations made at this meeting.

6. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

There were no items of Executive Business for the Panel to consider at this meeting.

7. THE COUNCIL'S HERBICIDE TREATMENT PROGRAMME

The Panel received a presentation by the Public Spaces Operations Manager which detailed how fungicides and pesticides are used in the Borough to control plant growth. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes as Appendix A.

The presentation gave an overview of what pesticides are, the Regulations that cover them, a summary of the type and purpose of pesticides that are used in the Borough, the safe way that pesticides are used and the alternative options available to use in the control of weeds.

The Panel recognised that in recent years, concerns have increased worldwide about the potential environmental and health effects associated with the herbicide Glyphosate. Councillor Bainbridge referenced a petition that is currently running which requests that Fareham Borough Council ban the use of glyphosate across the Borough. The petition has over 1,000 signatures so far.

The Public Spaces Operations Manager explained in detail, the measures that the Council takes to ensure that glyphosate is used safely and provided a comparison to illustrate its effectiveness against alternative methods of treatment. Members were reassured that the Council's use of glyphosate is minimal and well controlled but noted that a number of other Local Authorities have banned its use and adopted other methods to control plant growth. It was suggested that this could be investigated by officers to determine whether there are any viable solutions identified by other Authorities that could be implemented in Fareham.

Members were very supportive of the suggestion put forward in the presentation that a Policy be developed to regulate the Council's use of pesticides and to provide details of the measures being considered to reduce them.

RESOLVED that the Streetscene Scrutiny Panel notes the content of the presentation and recommends that a Pesticide Policy be developed and adopted by the Council.

8. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN MAINTAINING ADOPTED LAND

Councillor R Bird declared a personal interest in this item as he is a member of the Fareham Society.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Mrs K K Trott addressed the Panel on this item.

The Panel received a presentation by the Public Spaces Operations Manager which provided information regarding ways that local community volunteer

groups participate in maintaining Council land. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes as Appendix B.

Members noted that community involvement in maintaining open spaces can have a positive effect in helping to control plant growth without needing to use pesticides. Members further noted that the discussions at items 7 and 8 on the agenda for this meeting were particularly relevant to the Council's commitment to tackle the effects of climate change.

RESOLVED that the Streetscene Scrutiny Panel notes the content of the presentation.

9. STREETSCENE SCRUTINY PANEL PRIORITIES

Members considered the Scrutiny Priorities for the Panel and requested that an update on the garden waste Clip and Collect service be brought to a meeting of the Panel later in the year.

RESOLVED that, having discussed the Scrutiny priorities for the Panel, an update on the garden waste Clip and Collect service be added to the Scrutiny Priorities Plan.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 7.35 pm).

Streetscene Sustainable Herbicide Use



Pesticides

- Pesticides, also known as 'plant protection products' (PPP) are used to control pests, weeds and diseases. Examples include insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, molluscicides, and plant growth regulators.
- They can exist in many forms, such as solid granules, powders or liquids and consist of one or more active substances co-formulated with other materials.



Regulations

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) is the national regulator for the UK, on behalf of the UK government and the devolved administrations.



HSE aim to ensure that pesticides do not harm human health or have unacceptable effects on the environment by:

- enforcing the regulations
- ensuring only authorised products can be marketed
- ensuring products are used in a sustainable fashion
- monitoring the impact of the chemicals

Regulations

- Anyone applying for authorisation of a product must provide an extensive range of scientific and technical data. Through this data, they must demonstrate that the product is effective and humane and poses no unacceptable risks to people (including users, local residents and bystanders), wildlife and the environment.
- Only when the Government is satisfied with the above data can authorisation be granted for the product.

Code of Practice for Using Plant Protection Products

- This Code of Practice is for all professional users of plant protection products in England and Wales in respect of Part III of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 (FEPA) and the regulations controlling pesticides,
- The Code's statutory basis means that it can be used in evidence if people are taken to Court for offences involving PPPs.

Pesticide use by Streetscene

- Fungicides and pesticides – used to control disease in turf



- Herbicides – used to control plant growth

How We Ensure Safe Use at FBC



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- All operatives applying Chemicals have undergone accredited training and hold a certificate of competence in the safe use of pesticide.
- FBC roadside grass verges and grass open space chemical treatments are applied using controlled droplet technology. It is a sealed and ready-to-use format and, as such, there is no risk of spillages, while the delivery system allows for extremely accurate application and virtually eliminates spray and run-off.

How We Ensure Safe Use at FBC

- The Council uses a small variety of chemicals including glyphosate-based formulations to treat invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed and to prevent weed growth around street furniture.
- Most herbicide that include Glyphosate based products are usually used just once a year as part of a sustainable integrated control programme in parks, open spaces and on Highway verges to help control growth around obstacles so that the current grounds maintenance resource can maintain a reasonable standard of presentation of the borough's public grassed areas at an affordable cost.
- Japanese knotweed is treated up to three times a year to ensure we safeguard the Council from the plant spreading to neighbouring properties and therefore, potential claims. Glyphosate is the only active ingredient that is approved for use in or near water. This is an essential tool for the control and eradication of hazardous weeds such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed growing near water courses.

Good practice at FBC



Operatives are clearly identified when undertaking herbicide application by wearing hi-viz vests with the wording *Herbicide application in progress* on the back to inform residents of the work.



The Grounds Maintenance page on the Council's website indicates the current Ward that herbicide application on roadside verges and open space is taking place to help keep residents informed.

Pesticide users in Fareham

- Residents – Own gardens, drives, patios etc.
- HCC Highways – Weeds on adopted highway hard surfaces. Roads and footpaths once per annum.
- Farmers – Crop and vegetation management.
- FBC – Areas of responsibility in the Public realm.
- Local Businesses – To keep their sites in good order.

Alternative Weed Control

Hot Water



- **Manual control** – use of strimmers, weed rippers and hand tools



Alternative Weed Control

Flame



Hot Foam



Alternative Control Comparisons

Method	Speed of Application	Root Kill	Staff Resource	Cost	Access	Annual Applications
Chemical	Fast	Very good	Low	Low	All	1-2
Manual	Slow	Partial	Higher	Higher	All	4-6
Hot Foam	Medium Pace	Good	Higher	Higher	Restricted	3-4
Hot Water	Medium Pace	Partial	Higher	Higher	Restricted	4-6
Flame	Medium Pace	Good	Higher	Higher	Restricted	4-6

Next Step?

Pesticide Policy

Create and adopt a Council Policy on pesticide use.

- Policy will ensure the Council continues to comply with HSE requirements to only use approved products passed as humane that pose no unacceptable risks to people (including users, local residents and bystanders), wildlife and the environment.
- The Policy would show how, where, when and why the Council uses pesticides and what measures are being considered to reduce pesticide use.
- The Policy can highlight details on any reductions in pesticide use that have already been achieved, good practice undertaken and what alternative methods are being employed and where.

Questions

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Open Space Community Participation

Groups FBC have been working with in 2022

- Gosport & Fareham Friends of the Earth
- Wallington Village Community Association
- Sarisbury Green Team
- Countryside Volunteers
- Portchester Litter Ladies



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Minute Item 8

How Groups Can Assist

Work parties – Organised and attended by FBC staff

- Set days and times for work events.
- Risk assessments and Insurance cover provided by FBC.
- Tools and equipment provided by FBC.
- FBC officer/employee must be in attendance.

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Self organised – Supported under guidance from FBC Officers but self funded and managed

- Must be self insured and create own safety documents.
- Can work at anytime on site.
- No need for FBC staff to be on site.
- Can access grant funding to support group and projects.

Perennial Meadow Wallington

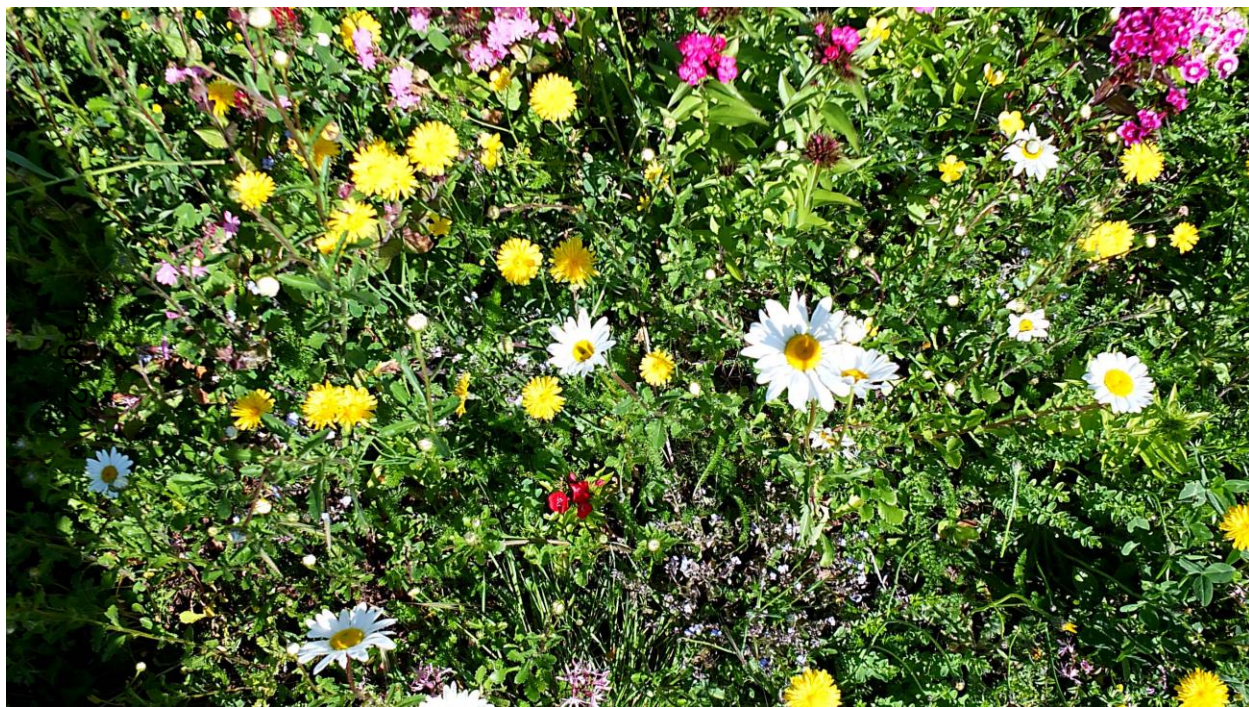
Cost of meadow turf (£1,500) was funded entirely by the Wallington Community Village Association.

Volunteers from the community joined FBC Grounds Maintenance staff to prepare and lay the turf.

Grass area around meadow and seating now managed by village volunteers.



Perennial Meadow Wallington



Perennial Meadow – Wickham Road Cemetery

The Grounds Maintenance team working with Gosport and Fareham Friends of the Earth Trees and Bees Group created a new 200sqm perennial meadow in Wickham Road Cemetery.

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A pre-sown soil and seed mix funded by FBC was spread across the area

The project was designed to help boost the site's biodiversity and contribute towards the Council's Carbon footprint reduction target.



Perennial Meadow – Wickham Road Cemetery



Salisbury Green Team

- Group started over a year ago and the team is growing steadily. It was started by a few Salisbury Green residents who were proud of the area they lived in and with the help of FBC, wanted to improve it further.
- Projects have included litter picking, weeding the tennis courts, planting flowers in borders, mowing, shrub clearance, wild flower planting, church grounds up keep and more.
- They have now formed an association, have a social media page and are putting together plans for the future. Local company Ecosupport Ltd have started sponsoring the Group and provide Hi-Viz vests and safety signage for work events.



Portchester Litter Ladies

- The group was formed during lockdown in May 2020 when 5 woman from Portchester began litter picking on their lunch breaks to help with the increasing litter problems in the area.

The group hold regular beach cleans in the area as well as enlisting an army of litter pickers for events and regular patrols.

- Plans are being made to take part in a tree planting event at Portchester Castle Open Space as the groups focus is expanding into conservation.

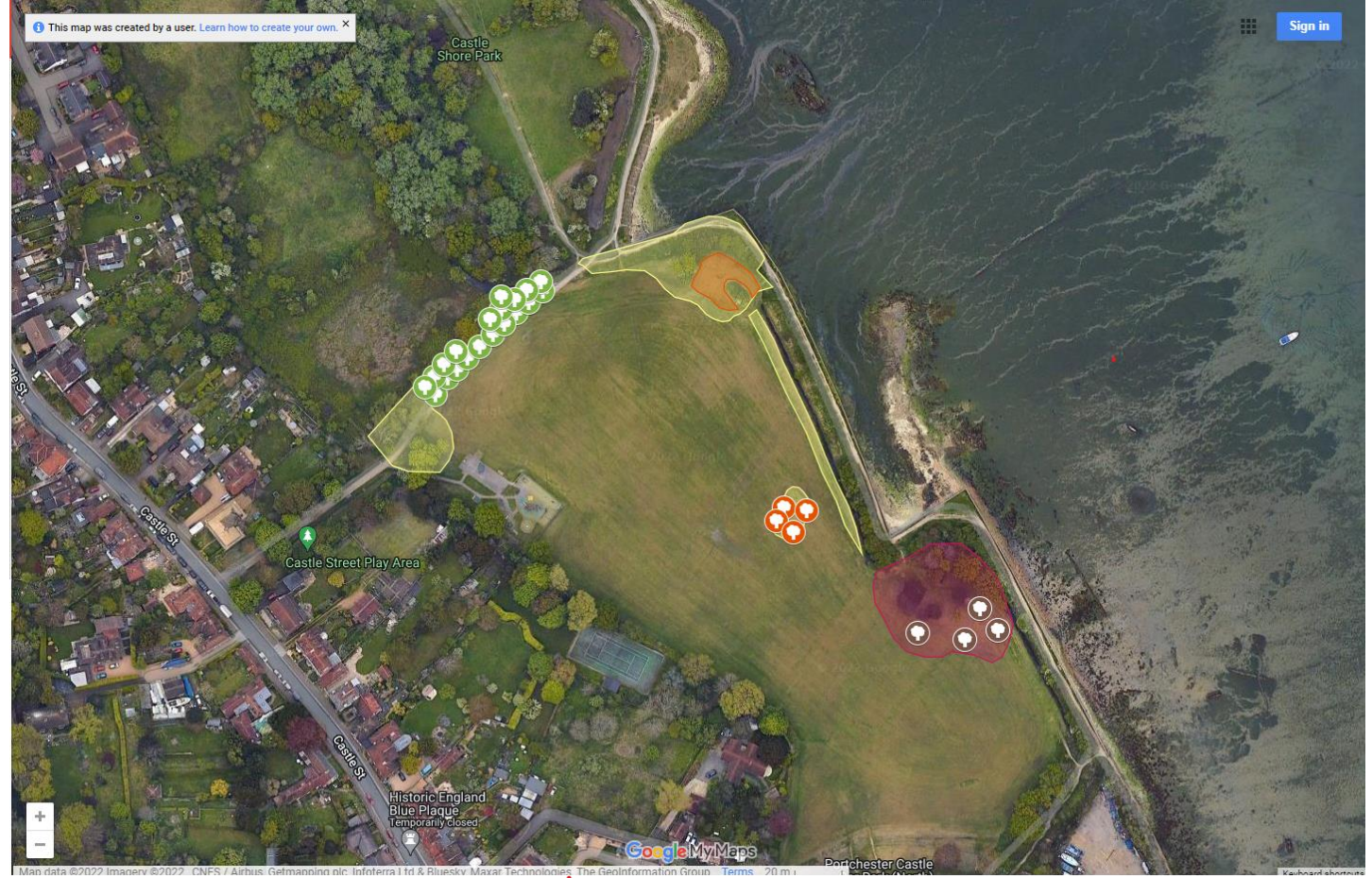


Portchester Litter Ladies

Tree Project January 2023

Trees funded by the Tree Council and scheme partnered by FBC Streetscene and HCC Countryside.

Mix of tree species to include Black Poplar, Whitebeam, Aspen, Mirabelle, Sea buckthorn, Field maple.



Countryside Volunteers

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- 5 Volunteer Groups (around 80 individuals) working across a number of sites.
- Regular weekly work days are held at the Holly Hill and Coldeast sites managed by the FBC Countryside Ranger Team. Volunteers assist with a wide range of allocated tasks.



Summary

- Encouraging the community to start up self supported groups for new and existing sites.
- Fareham does not have any Friends of the Parks Groups that seem to be common elsewhere.
- Insurance costs are low and is available from around £100 a year for £5 million public liability cover.
- All help is welcome but resource to manage groups is limited.

