

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

4 October 2023

Council agrees motion against County Council weed spraying decision

Members of Fenland District Council will be writing to Cambridgeshire County Council to call for the re-introduction of weed spraying alongside roads and pavements, following a motion at Full Council on Monday (2 October).

Cllr Tim Taylor, district member for March West and Benwick, who put forward the motion, said: "It's getting out of hand, they say it was to save money and protect wildlife – No. You don't create a huge amount of wildlife off weeds, it needs managing and managing properly."

In April 2023, Cambridgeshire County Council made the decision to cease the process of cyclical spraying, which helps to suppress weeds on pavements, roads and gullies across the district.

The motion was made following numerous complaints from residents that roads and footpaths in Fenland have become unsightly and dangerous as a result of the County Council's decision.

Further concerns were raised following intense periods of rain in late September, which saw road surface water in Manea, March and Whittlesey draining slower than would otherwise have been possible due to weed and grass growth in drains and gullies.

During discussion on the motion, councillors questioned the motivation for the policy change, with some suggesting it was more likely to be financial than environmental. They also shared concerns that it was making the area feel "unkempt, uncared for, unloved and potentially unsafe".

The increase in Ragwort, a poisonous weed particularly dangerous to horses, was also raised as part of the motion. The motion states that resumption of cyclical spraying should be an important preventative element as part of the County's control strategy in respect of Ragwort.

The motion also questioned Cambridgeshire County Council's justification for their decision, specifically as it relates to the safety of the commonly used chemical glyphosate, a weed suppressant approved for use in the UK and by the European Union.

- See the agenda and read Cllr Taylor's motion in full at: [Agenda for Council on Monday, 2nd October, 2023, 4.00 pm - Fenland District Council](#)
- View Fenland's Full Council meeting on YouTube at: [Council - 02/10/2023 - YouTube](#)

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Notes to Editors

For media enquiries, please contact the Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226 or email: communications@fenland.gov.uk