

## Swanage Town Council

**DRAFT Environment Policy Action Plan****Version 8**

The draft Environment Policy agreed by Council in March 2020 provided six distinct policy areas and, in the sections below, the actions have been categorised under each of these. Swanage Town Council have taken the approach of producing a short action plan with a small number of key actions that can be developed quickly. This is seen very much as an iterative action plan that can grow and develop as we better understand what is required to meet the challenges of the climate crisis. Completed actions are retained at the bottom of the document.

**1. Managing the Town Council in an environmentally sustainable manner**

We shall ensure that sustainability is at the heart of how we manage the Town Council and its functions.

No.	Action	How will we do this	Cost	Date required	How will we measure this?	Progress to date	Officer
1.	Review vehicle & equipment needs and where possible move to electric machines.	Equipment asset list to be reviewed and options for change considered.	Not known	March 2023	Review undertaken.	Officers to produce asset list of machines, including power source, during 2022/23 and take report to 1 <sup>st</sup> February Committee.	OPS1
2.	Develop an environmental monitoring system for the Town Council's business which includes tracking carbon use.	System to be set up and managed by officers.	None	March 2023	System set up.	This task has been allocated to a member of staff to develop a monitoring system including gas and electricity use, waste tonnages, petrol and diesel use, and water use. Once established, the carbon footprint will be provided to the Committee and then at least annually.	OPS1
3.	Develop a system to monitor the Council's waste streams and undertake review.	Identify waste streams and review options for reduction.	Not known	June 2023	Waste tonnages monitored through Management System.	Ongoing and will be reported to Committee when established. (links with action 2 above).	OPS1

4.	Reduce the amount of paper documents printed by the Town Council	Review printing volumes and work towards reducing, beginning with introduction of councillor laptops. External providers.	Total not known. Budget for Councillors' laptops agreed.	June 2023	Monitor through Environment Management System	NEW ACTION Procurement of councillor laptops is ongoing.	TH1
5.	Provide climate crisis training for all STC staff and councillors.	External providers.	Not known	2023	Course undertaken.	Various options are being considered and a report will be brought to the Environment Committee in 2023.	TIC1
6.	Move to a fully renewable energy contract for the electric supply to the Town Council	Reviewing green options and undertaking a procurement exercise.	-	October 2023	New contract set up.	New energy contract with best available green option renewed until 30 September 2023 with a review scheduled for summer 2023.	TH3

## 2. Managing our built environment sustainably

We are directly responsible for both historic and modern buildings and infrastructure which will be managed sustainably

No.	Action	How will we do this	Cost	Date required	How will we measure this?	Progress to date	Officer
1.	Implement energy reduction measures.	Produce report which details various possible measures.	Not known	March 2024	Energy use reduction will be tracked by officers	Solar panels, Building Management Systems and LEDs are to be considered for implementation in during 23-24.	OPS1
2.	Consider options for renewable energy on the Town Council estate.	Undertake research and produce report.	Not known	March 2024	Report produced detailing relevant options.	Currently developing a proposal.	OPS1 / TIC1
3.	Consider options for reducing water use and harvesting rainwater.	Report detailing water use and proposals to reduce.	Not Known	Oct 24	Reduction in water use as measured by water bills	NEW ACTION	OPS1



4.	Ensure all new Town Council constructions have sustainability embedded in their design.	Included in each specification.	Not known	Ongoing	All construction specifications will include sustainability.	ONGOING	TH1
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### 3. Protecting and enhancing the natural environment

We are directly responsible for a wide range of natural environments and shall work to enhance these and look to support initiatives that enhance other natural areas within the town

No.	Action	How will we do this	Cost	Date required	How will we measure this?	Progress to date	Officer
1.	Review options to reduce or eliminate pesticide/herbicide use.	Current use will be reviewed and alternatives considered.	Not known	March 2023	By monitoring amount used.	A report is being produced for the February Environment Committee detailing current use and explanation of some available alternatives.	OPS1
2.	Reduce quantity of bedding plants and develop more drought resistant plantings.	Planting more drought resistant plants.	Not known	June 2023	Reduction in water use and more hardy plants	NEW ACTION Trial of more drought-resistant plantings is ongoing.	OPS1
3.	Undertake a 'bio-diversity' audit of all sites owned by the Town Council to assess their importance within the natural environment.	Volunteers could be used from Sustainable Swanage depending on type of work required.	Not known	March 2024	A map demonstrating high, medium or low bio-diverse areas which might include ideas proposals for improvements	Officers are developing a plan and will engage with other partners such as Dorset Council and Sustainable Swanage and its sub-groups.	OPS1
4.	Identify two further sites to be enhanced by Sustainable Swanage	Work with Sustainable Swanage to develop plans	Not known	March 2024	Action Plan developed and work undertaken at sites	NEW ACTION – Northbrook Copse and the former St Mark's Playing Field identified for enhancement. An outline plan will be produced for the February Environment Committee.	OPS1



5.	Work with partners to implement actions identified within the Swanage Green Infrastructure Strategy.	Identify areas within Strategy that can be developed.	Not known	March 2024	Action Plan developed	ONGOING – Need to develop Action Plan for Committee. The Green Infrastructure Strategy is included in the Purbeck Local Plan and will be reviewed during the current preparation of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan.	OPS1 / TIC 1
6.	Continue to plant trees according to the Swanage Tree Policy (approved November 2022) generally with 30 planted each year.	Areas identified and trees planted.	Not known	On-going	Number of trees planted.	ONGOING – 29 trees were planted by STC in 2020 with a further 20 planted by Dorset Council in partnership with Sustainable Swanage. 26 trees were planted in 2021-22 alongside new grasses, shrubs, and bushes. During 2022, Tree Strategy and Policy were approved by Full Council.	OPS1

#### 4. Encouraging, educating and embedding environmental best practice

We shall work with the community and other stakeholders to encourage environmental best practice

No.	Action	How will we do this	Cost	Date required	How will we measure this?	Progress to date
1.	Support Dorset Waste Services to increase the household recycling rate across Swanage.	Support the education teams at DWS, including about composting and food waste.	None	Ongoing	Positive feedback from DWS.	NEW ACTION TIC1
2.	Recommend that all new constructions in Swanage are built according to sustainable criteria.	Include recommendation in all responses.	None	Ongoing	Increase in new builds built according to sustainable criteria.	May be included in the draft Swanage Neighbourhood Plan. TH2
3.	Continue to support Sustainable Swanage and other partners to deliver community based	Through funding Sustainable Swanage Officer for 2 days a week, oversight, and	£20,000 per annum	Ongoing	Successful projects being delivered through Sustainable Swanage and its sub-groups.	ONGOING - Costs included in 2022-23 budget with agreement to fund this role for 3 years. TIC1



	environmental improvements.	management of staff time.						
4.	Develop partnership projects through Town Partnership/Chamber of Trade/National Trust and other relevant organisations /Dorset Council	Through funding, monitoring, and staff time	Not yet known	Ongoing	Successful projects being delivered	TO-REVIEW		T11
5.	Establishment of a Youth Council		None	Ongoing	Council in place	TO-REVIEW		T12

## 5. Protecting local infrastructure

By working with the community and stakeholders we shall strive to protect and enhance local infrastructure to retain a vibrant and sustainable town.

No.	Action	How will we do this	Cost	Date required	How will we measure this?	Progress to date	
1.	Develop Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy to increase the number of charging facilities in STC car parks.	Consider options and bring a report to Committee.	Not known	July 2023	Chargers installed.	NEW ACTION - STC is working with Dorset Council and other partners to better understand future delivery models. Strategy to be developed by summer 2023.	TIC1
2.	Support businesses in their efforts to be more sustainable	Working with Sustainable Swanage to provide information and support to businesses	None	Ongoing	Positive feedback from businesses.	NEW ACTION - All new leases between Swanage Town Council and its business partners include a section on environmental considerations. Sustainable Swanage works with businesses to identify effective ways to provide support.	TIC1
3.	Support, where possible, the establishment of a community bus in Swanage.	Review options around a community bus for Swanage	Not yet known	Ongoing	Options exist around improving the route of the Durlston Bus but a community bus serving	ONGOING – Discussion currently being held with the Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust.	TIC1



					the whole community could take some time to develop.		
4.	Campaign to ensure essential services are retained in Swanage in accordance with the Swanage Local Plan, to minimise travel requirements.	By working with SPDT Dorset Council, P-TAG, and other relevant organisations, such as DCCG, and supporting community initiatives to maintain services.	None	Ongoing	By recording and reviewing the actions undertaken and reporting to Full Council.	ONGOING – Working in partnership with SPDT on developing the Chapel Lane community services. Working with other groups such as Wellbeing Swanage and will be included within the draft Neighbourhood Plan.	TH1

## 6. Supporting Sustainable Tourism

We shall support the town's tourism economy through the promotion of sustainable tourism

No.	Action	How will we do this	Cost	Date required	How will we measure this?	Progress to date	
1.	Enhance the beach 'toy bank' to include a provision at the Ocean Bay end of the beach.	Identify a solution and implement it.	Not known	July 2023	Enhanced Toy Bank in place.	NEW ACTION – Beach Toy Bank currently successful at the Information Centre.	TIC1
2.	Develop a sustainable tourism vision.	Work with stakeholders to develop a vision of what a sustainable destination might mean for Swanage.	£0	November 2023	Report to Tourism Committee.	ONGOING - This has been built into the Marketing Strategy that the Marketing Working Group are developing and it is likely that a new strategy will be developed during 2023-24	TIC1
3.	Promote sustainable transport and walking in and around the town to reduce the need for visitors to use cars.	Look at alternative forms of transport and promote these on website and digital media.	-	Ongoing	Customer feedback and uptake.	ONGOING - Sustainable Swanage now has an 'Active Travel Group' which is looking at ways to optimise sustainable transport. So far this includes the installation of 3 bike racks to accommodate	TIC1

							over 30 bikes and a car club survey, a free bike repair event in July 2022.	
4.	Enhance electric facilities on event fields and the market site to eliminate the requirement for fossil fuelled generators.	Report produced detailing costs of upgrades to sites.	Not known	Ongoing	Upgrades undertaken		ONGOING - Two electric points installed and in use at the market site.  Further work required for PAG and Sandpitt Field – to be included in the Phase 2 Seafrost Development.	OPS1

### Completed Actions

No.	Action	How will we do this	Cost	Date required by	How will we measure this?	Responsible Committee	Progress to date	
1.5	Make climate impact a determinant in all grant giving.	Add section to grant application form.	None	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021	Revised application form	Full Council	COMPLETE – Criteria now included within application form.	NIKI
2.1	Undertake an energy audit of all Town Council buildings and identify ways to reduce energy consumption.	Review options to procure a consultancy to undertake this work.	£2,000	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021	A report will be produced once complete	Operations	COMPLETE - A report was procured which provided a range of options for the installation of LED bulbs and solar panels across the Council's estate. This will be incorporated in further work being undertaken by the Council in 2022-23.	CULVIN
3.5	Develop The Downs as a Local Nature Reserve.	Continue to work with Sustainable Swanage to deliver this.	Not yet known	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023	Nature Reserve established	Operations	COMPLETE - Customer survey released in January. Sustainable Swanage Open Meeting in early 2021. A Management Plan is complete.	OPS1



5.1	Support a Rights of Way survey to encourage walking in the area	Identify solution and work with partners or other stakeholders	£250	Summer 2021	Survey completed with areas for improvement identified. STC will present findings to Dorset Council for implementation, if necessary	Operations	COMPLETE – Survey complete, Rights of Way Open Meeting on 21 <sup>st</sup> June 2022 – setting up volunteer hub to undertake grading of ROWs.	TIC1
6.3	All events held on Town Council land to be single use plastic free	No single use plastic will be permitted	£0	Nov 2021	No single use plastic in use	Tourism	COMPLETE - 1 <sup>st</sup> November 2021 - Full Council confirmed that all events should now be single use plastic free	TIC1
6.5	Enhance the supply of free drinking water solutions across the town	Produce signage for current drinking water taps to make them more obvious and consider if any further are required	Budgeted in 2020-21	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021	Signage implemented	Tourism	COMPLETE - Signs have been added to all drinking water taps to make them more visible.  A water refill station has been installed on the seafront; part funded by a grant from 'Sea Changers'.	TIC1 / OPS1
6.6	Work with event organisers to ensure that sustainability is embedded into their events	All event applications to detail what positive and negative impacts their events will have on the local environment	£0	Immediate	Event application form updated	Tourism	COMPLETE - All events during 2021 were required to complete an 'Environmental Impact Assessment'. These will be reviewed at year end and a report produced	TIC 1



# Swanage Town Council : Herbicide Use

## Introduction

As part of Swanage Town Council's drive to become more environmentally responsible, it was decided to review the use of herbicides within the town area.

During my tenure as Interim Grounds and Estates Manager at Swanage Town Council, I was able to review the use of herbicides first hand, (during the period August 2021 to September 2022).

## What is a herbicide?

Herbicides, also commonly known as weedkillers, are substances used to control undesired plants, also known as weeds. Selective herbicides control specific weed species, while leaving the desired crop relatively unharmed, while non-selective herbicides (sometimes called total weedkillers in commercial products) can be used to clear waste ground, industrial and construction sites.

Chemical weed control has been used for a very long time and a number of simple weed killers were used before 1900. In the 1940's more chemical became available and usage increased significantly around the world. Some of these herbicides were linked to poisoning in humans and animals and in recent years substantial controls have made the development of new herbicides more difficult and the availability of existing herbicides has reduced dramatically.

Glyphosate has become an incredibly popular and effective herbicide over the last three decades. Research has shown that the chemical can persist in the environment and despite established research still indicating that the toxicity of the chemical is relatively low, the case against this herbicide is gradually building. There have been a number of substantial compensation awards in the USA, where the case against Glyphosate has been developing in recent years, but not always based on scientific evidence. The case against Glyphosate in respect of the insect kingdom is complex and unclear at present,

Controlling vegetation with herbicides such as Glyphosate is a very cost-effective approach compared to many non-chemical options. The ground is left relatively undisturbed during and after treatment and this results in reduced subsequent weed growth from seedlings. Where the ground is disturbed by mechanical weed control methods, such as hoeing, this can create an ideal environment for new weeds to emerge.

## Reasons for use of herbicides by Swanage town council

To control unwanted vegetation-in vegetated areas and in hard surfaces.

Historically, weeds in public parks have been perceived as undesirable/ unwanted. However public attitudes are changing over time and the public appear to be more tolerant of weeds in less formal settings. However, as more evidence becomes available regarding the need to protect the

environment, the emphasis needs to be on moderating any activity that could be perceived as environmentally damaging.

Without treatment some weed growth can be damaging to structures such as footpaths and walls, particularly more woody weeds such as *Buddleia davidii*. In other cases, weeds in putting greens can affect play.

## **The law in relation to the use of herbicides**

Herbicides fall under a more general group of chemicals known as pesticides.

The Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 is a critical piece of legislation covering the development, sale, supply, storage and use of pesticides.

Schedule 3 of COPR 1986 (Use of Pesticides) is most relevant as it refers to the protection of humans, creatures and plants, mixing of chemicals, training and certification of competence.

There are other pieces of relevant legislation such as the Weed Act 1959 and the food and environment protection act 1985.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) 2002 is another critical piece of legislation which requires organisations such as STC to carry out risk assessments of any material that could cause harm to its employees or the public.

The Health and Safety Executive has a major role to play in ensuring that local authorities such as STC work closely within the relevant legislation.

There are regulations in place regarding invasive plant species and the need to control them. This includes plants such as Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*). There is also a duty of care to control Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*).

STC only permit operatives who have passed the appropriate certificates of competence to apply herbicides.

## **Current herbicide application equipment used by STC**

Weed control by herbicide is very flexible and effective. On a small scale, application is normally by either knapsack sprayer or by Controlled Droplet Applicator (CDA). Both have their benefits, but CDA is very convenient due to the minimal weight of the equipment and chemical.

With CDA equipment the risk of chemical drift onto desirable vegetation is decreased as the droplets are larger and less likely to evaporate/drift.

STC invested in new CDA equipment in Autumn 2021.

Swanage TC uses both methods as deemed most appropriate for the task in hand.



## Locations where herbicide is used in Swanage

In general terms STC will only apply herbicides to areas that it either owns or directly manages on behalf of another organisation.

### Weed control to hard surfaces

Most hard surface weed control is carried out in paved areas within parks, car parks, boat parks owned by STC. This is considered good practise in terms of protecting the integrity of the council's assets and from an insurance perspective, would help to protect STC from claims in respect of trips and slips.

The council also maintains a number of footpaths. In some cases these are not formally constructed and probably do not need herbicide treatment as long as foot traffic is sufficient to keep weeds under control and avoid them becoming a trip hazard.

In some cases the council has chosen to apply herbicide to some highways within Swanage (owned by Dorset Council), because of a perceived need to reduce weeds, particularly during the main tourism times. It is suggested that this practise is kept under review due to the labour input and the cost of materials.

The council does not apply any herbicide to its beaches, but will occasionally pressure wash the two main slipways at the Boat Park and Heritage Square, due to the build up of sea weed.

### Selective weed control

This is mainly carried out on putting greens at Beach Gardens, where weeds are undesirable and could affect play by causing ball deviation.

The council also undertakes selective weed control of Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*). Some of this work has been contracted to a specialist contractor (North Beach car park), who may use slightly different herbicide products to STC's in-house team. STC have a general obligation to stop the spread of this invasive weed and it has taken a robust approach to controlling this invasive weed.

The council is in the process of establishing a new cemetery extension at Godlingston cemetery and as part of the specification a selective weed control treatment will be required to the new grass sward in spring 2023.

Generally, established areas of grass at STC are allowed to develop naturally and can contain a diverse range of species, including clover, yarrow, plantain, self-heal etc, which can be beneficial to the biodiversity of the area.

There are a number of constraints to the use of herbicides in Swanage:

1. Weather conditions. Herbicides should not be used in windy or wet conditions
2. Public acceptance. It is likely that the public would see too many applications of herbicide as unnecessary and potentially harmful.
3. Work specifications. References to keeping areas "weed -free" are now considered (by many) to be unrealistic and undesirable.
4. Cost. Every application of herbicide will result in a material cost, even if the labour cost can be accommodated within the existing budget. Chemical costs are rising each year , but are

still deemed to be relatively inexpensive at present, especially when compared to other modes of weed control.

5. Season. Although the seasons are becoming less predictable, most weed growth occurs between April and October each year. However, in 2022 this report is being completed on the 17<sup>th</sup> November and there have been no frosts to date. Many weeds are still growing at a fast rate. Weeds will usually grow at temperatures over 6 degrees Celsius and while weeds are actively growing, herbicides such as Glyphosate will normally be efficacious, even if they take longer to have an effect.
6. Trained and certificated operatives. STC has a number of trained and certificated operative, but this will need to be kept under review to ensure that holidays and sickness can be covered during main application periods

### **How much herbicide is used by STC each year?**

I would deem STC's approach to the use of herbicide as low- moderate. This is not a scientific statement but is based on the following criteria:

- STC only carry out a maximum of 2-3 treatments per annum of most target areas (as opposed to 3-5, which is quite common)
- STC tolerates weeds in some areas (bearing in mind that the definition of a weed is a "plant growing in the wrong location"). This is particularly true at less formal parks, closed cemeteries and field perimeters , composting areas.
- The approach is planned but not prescriptive. By this, I mean that areas that do not require treatment will be avoided and areas that become more of a problem will receive additional attention.

Annual usage of Glyphosate would typically be less than 40-50 litres of product.

In addition to Glyphosate herbicide, STC uses approximately 20 litres of Qualgex annually. This is a moss killer and is deemed essential in some locations such as paths and netball courts where slips and trips could otherwise occur. The general application period for Qualgex is between October and March in typical years and possibly at other times during wetter spells.

### **Opportunities to reduce use of herbicides in 2022 and onwards**

It is generally accepted that many alternative forms of weed control can be over ten times more expensive than herbicidal control.

A number of parish and town councils have contacted me for advice about alternatives to Glyphosate in 2021/22 and concerns are likely to increase, whether in fact these concerns are supported by scientific evidence or not.

#### **Hard surfaces**

There are a number of systems available for removing weeds form hard surfaces, mainly by the use of thermal techniques such as hot water/foam, steam, extreme heat, electricity or mechanical removal including weed brushes.



I have some safety concerns about the use of high pressure systems and the use of high temperature water/steam and very often the systems are relatively bulky. I have trialled weed burning systems and witnessed vegetation reigniting after treatment.

Some weed removal brushing systems can be messy to use and create lots of disturbed waste to collect. This is fine if part of the process is cleansing as well as weed removal, but otherwise can make the weedkilling operation very difficult logistically. Some heavier duty brushes can actually damage paved surfaces if used too aggressively.

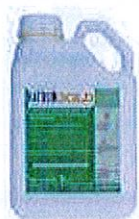
Pressure washing is generally not recommended as high pressure water jets can cause damage to paved areas. However, the use on slipways where there are environmental sensitivities to consider is worth continuing with.

What many of the above machines have in common, is that they rely on the use of fossil fuels. From a climate change perspective some experts argue that the use of herbicides is less harmful than machinery using fossil fuels.

### **Soft Landscaped areas**

There are alternative chemical products that have limited efficacy. There have been some trials of vinegar (acetic acid), but this cannot be relied upon to control a wide range of established weeds and is not fully approved as a herbicide unless the product has a MAPP number such as New -Way Weedspray from Headland Amenity.

There are chemical formulations containing Pelargonic acid that are gaining some interest and a product called Katoun Gold – Mapp 17879 is currently available as a professional product:



- [Katoun Gold 5l – MAPP 17879](#)

SKU 0488290-05

Katoun Gold An emulsifiable concentrate formulation containing 500 g/L pelargonic acid. A non-selective contact herbicide for use on amenity vegetation (bare soil around trees and woody shrubs), natural surfaces not intended to bear vegetation and permeable surfaces overlying soil including gravel pathways, forest nursery and hardy ornamental plant production. Katoun Gold is a contact acting total herbicide containing pelargonic acid which is derived from sustainable plant origins (Sunflower & Oilseed Rape meal). Once applied the product degrades rapidly and has no residual herbicide activity. The speed of control is dependant on temperature, light intensity and application quality.

Pelargonic acid is only approved for soft surfaces and does not kill perennial weeds like bramble, dock, couch grass etc.

Mulching. STC is increasing the amount of mulching it carries out on beds each year. Not only does this help suppress weed growth, but it helps cool the soil in hot conditions and helps to reduce evaporation of moisture in hot conditions, thereby leading to healthier plants. In the winter of 2021/2022 when labour availability was less acute operational staff at STC spread over 20m<sup>3</sup> of composted wood chip on beds and borders. This mulch material is a by product of maintaining trees and shrubs, however the STC team do not possess a chipper. Going forward this would be a good addition to the armoury of equipment and could be rear mounted on the new tractor that STC has just acquired.

Hand weeding. This is carried out in some borders where the use of weed killers and mulches would be logistically difficult. However, this operation is very time consuming and needs to be kept at a minimum due to labour capacity constraints.

## Conclusion and recommendations

In my opinion, STC's current weed control approach is balanced and not in any way excessive in respect of herbicide use. A large percentage of the herbicide that is currently applied, is to DC Highways. However, the approach needs to be kept under regular review to ensure that it is still in step with current best practise.

It is quite possible that the use of all herbicides will be curtailed in the future, but for now, I would recommend caution before ceasing its use because it is a very effective way of controlling weeds and I would be concerned about the impact on the current labour resource.

**Steve Harris**

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Partner

Managing



Professional Garden Consultants Association



17<sup>th</sup> November 2022

### Summer bedding planting proposals

Bright and showy displays of formal summer bedding have been a popular feature of seaside towns since Victorian times and are a site that many visitors as well as residents value and enjoy.

In Swanage, the volume of summer bedding (half hardy annuals) purchased by the Council each year is circa 4,200. These are planted out in late May and last for one season, being removed at the end of their life in October/November (depending upon climate conditions). A very limited amount of winter bedding is used at the War Memorial and sometimes the badge (adjacent to the hardstanding) and the Welcome to Swanage signs. Summer bedding is currently planted at:

- The badge
- Visitor Information Centre
- Boat on the hardstanding
- Sandpit Field
- War Memorial
- Railway station
- Road bed near Heritage Square
- Swanage library planter
- Beach Gardens beds and pots
- Welcome to Swanage signs at Ulwell and Herston

Over recent years there has been a growing recognition that summer bedding may not be the most environmentally beneficial form of planting for the following reasons:

- It requires intensive watering
- It has a very short one season life span and may therefore be considered as 'single use'
- It is often not the most attractive plants to pollinators
- It is intensively produced often in heated greenhouses and can be transported long distances

The Town Council has in recent years invested in additional perennial plants which have been planted in a range of locations within the town. The Council also benefits from the knowledge of a Horticulture Specialist who routinely takes and develops cuttings, splits plants and through their interest and informal networks, introduces and brings on new plants across the estate.

Permanent perennial planting has the following benefits:

- It helps to create eco systems and habitats enabling bugs, bees and birds to flourish
- It can be selected to be drought tolerant and suitable to their location whilst also providing colourful flowers and scents
- It can be split thus creating new plants 'in house'
- It reduces intensive cultivation of the beds associated with summer bedding, enabling soil ecosystems to develop encouraging earthworms and mycorrhizal fungi

On this basis and recognising the balance between environmental ambitions and the popularity of summer bedding, a recommendation has been formulated for 2023.

Summer bedding is retained at the following locations:



- The badge
- The railway
- The Visitor Information Centre
- The boat on the hardstanding

Summer bedding is reduced but complemented with additional perennial planting at the following locations:

- Sandpit Field
- The road bed near Heritage Square
- Beach Gardens

Summer bedding is replaced with perennial bedding at the following locations:

- The War Memorial
- The library planter
- Welcome to Swanage at Ulwell and Herston

Perennials will be selected based on their suitability for the location, drought resistance, flowers and texture and scent.

It is suggested that this planting proposal is reviewed at the end of the summer season 2023 and proposals for 2024 planting are discussed at this time. This approach would not be unusual to Swanage with other areas such as Sidmouth and Cheltenham adopting similar approaches. There is no financial impact in respect of this decision as any savings made to the budget for summer bedding plants would be used for additional perennial plants.

**For decision**

That Councillors consider approving the proposals set out in respect of summer bedding and perennial planting for the 2023 season.

Gail Percival  
Assets and Compliance Manager  
January 2023