

COUNCIL – 19 NOVEMBER 2019

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR C SEWELL TO COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN

- a) What consideration has the Council given to the safety of glyphosate?
- b) What would be the cost to the Council of -
 - (1) an immediate cessation of its use of glyphosate
 - (2) phasing it out over two years
 - (3) minimising its use?

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR A WOODMAN

“Glyphosate is used and, as with all chemicals, usage is strictly controlled and kept to an absolute minimum. All the recommended safety precautions are adhered to, including the use of appropriate PPE, the delivery of regular training, and we are in close contact with our suppliers for any health and safety updates that are released so we can modify our approach. In addition, we do proactively attempt to reduce chemical usage, an example of this being a steam machine that was recently purchased that can be used to kill weeds. We keep abreast of developments within the industry and are made aware of new products and methods coming onto the market that are safer and more environmentally friendly to use.

We are aware of the concerns around Glyphosate and the fact that it's been banned in some countries and that some local authorities in this country are also reviewing the use of it. This needs to be balanced against the fact that the US Environmental Protection Agency have stated it's unlikely to cause cancer in humans, the German pharmaceutical company Bayer have stated that Glyphosate based products can be used safely and that it is not carcinogenic, and that the EU has a 5 year licence to use Glyphosate until the end of 2022. Currently there are no comparable effective alternatives to Glyphosate that control weeds and their roots. Using steam, manual removal, or any alternative methods to kill weeds is far more time consuming, not as effective, and would prove extremely problematic on some of the more difficult areas that need treatment.

Our intention is to continue keeping its use to an absolute minimum with a view to stop using it totally when there is an equally effective alternative. To know the cost of ceasing its use immediately or phasing it out over 2 years is a complex piece of work and more time would be needed to assess this - not using Glyphosate and retaining the same levels of service would require additional manpower, equipment and vehicles”