

How to choose an effective and economical herbicide-free alternative for your local borough.

Client: Glastonbury Town Council, Somerset

Sector: Municipalities

Background: Glastonbury Town is home to 10,000 plus residents. It was the first council in the UK to ban herbicide use in its borough. It trialled Foamstream in 2015 and adopted it in 2016

No. of machines: 1 MW-Series

Areas treated: Town centre, cobbles and stone streets, residential areas, playgrounds, parks, around school edges

Previous methods used: Traditional herbicides

Website: <http://glastonbury.gov.uk/>

BACKGROUND

Glastonbury as a council were concerned about exposing their residents and their workforce to potentially harmful chemicals, knowing they have a strong duty of care to protect the people and environment in the borough. As a result, they decided to take a precautionary approach by looking for herbicide-free alternatives.

Historically, the council had always used chemicals to control weeds but with the community becoming concerned about herbicides being sprayed in their town and around public places such as schools, they wanted the council to move away from using chemicals. In light of this, Glastonbury voted to ban herbicide use.

TESTIMONIAL

"Weedingtech and Foamstream were the only viable option in terms of financial viability and also effectiveness. A lot of our residents, myself included, are concerned at the use of chemical herbicides around the places where our children play. One of the greatest things about Foamstream is its complete non-toxicity, it's Soil Association stamp, which backs that up even further as far as I am concerned, and its viability on all types of weeds and all types of surfaces."

Cllr Emma George – Glastonbury Town Council.

PROBLEM

1. Parents have growing concerns about the use of herbicides in public spaces and around their children.
2. Needed a solution safe for use around people, including children, animals and waterways.
3. Needed a financially viable and effective solution in order to make the move away from herbicides.

ACTION

Glastonbury were unsure which alternative to take on due to budgetary cuts and not being able to afford capital equipment outright. Their existing contractor agreed to do a third party validation on both the use of Foamstream and a combined approach of hand weeding and strimming. The trial was to use both methods to treat a designated area in the same timeframe and look at the associated costs of doing so. The trial looked at the time taken to apply /carry out the treatments, the effectiveness of the treatments in terms of immediate dieback and the level of regrowth following the treatments.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

With the results analysed it was clear that Foamstream came in 900% cheaper than the manual approach as well as being a faster and more effective method of weed control.

	Cost per treatment	No. of treatments per season	Total per season
FOAMSTREAM Costing based on actual works undertaken	£425.89	3	£1,277.67
HANDWEEDING - based on WAGS estimates	£2,160.50	5	£10,802.50
HANDWEEDING - based on Curo Contract - Liner cost Housing paved areas	£3, 443.98	5	£17,219.88

As cost for various products was a determining factor in choosing a solution, Foamstream, due to its high efficacy and ability to treat all weeds, on all surfaces in any weather came out more favourably than other trialled methods. Investment in a Foamstream system meant that the council could start saving money from year 1, something which is unusual when purchasing capital equipment in the municipal space.

The results when using Foamstream were immediately evident. Foamstream's ability to be used in adverse weather conditions without inhibiting effectiveness was a strong consideration point, especially when compared with glyphosate which cannot be used in the rain or wind (neither of which affect Foamstream). Furthermore, any rain following a glyphosate treatment would also result in further treatments being needed.

Glastonbury council have found that Foamstream becomes more economical the more the system is used. Despite the capital cost outlay of Foamstream, due to its highly effective kill rate, the council are finding its effectiveness increases over time due to a dramatic decrease in regrowth. Application time was found to be similar to glyphosate, however the immediate die back was also found to be much higher when using Foamstream.



TREATING OUTSIDE A SCHOOL IN GLASTONBURY

