

Meeting Report 2nd June 2026

Item 18. Lych Gate

Email from Heritage Roofing Southwest

I am writing to set out the background and sequence of events regarding the works carried out to the Lych gate, in order to provide clarity.

At the outset, when we were first approached by Mel, a schedule of works had already been established by the surveyor. Our specification for the repairs was discussed and, as we understood at the time, agreed by all relevant parties, including the conservation officer.

As the works progressed, it became increasingly apparent that the extent of deterioration to the timber was more significant than initially anticipated. In particular, it was evident that moisture was being absorbed through the granite plinths and subsequently trapped within the sealed oak, contributing to the decay.

In light of these findings, I contacted Mel to discuss whether a revised approach would be more appropriate. I recommended that the oak be stripped back as far as practicable, with all impermeable paint coatings removed. My professional advice was that the timber should either be left bare or treated with a breathable finish, such as hot-mixed limewash, in order to improve moisture management, provide weather protection, and extend the lifespan of the structure.

Mel informed me at that time that an application had been made by a councillor to have the structure listed. She expressed concern that any deviation from the agreed specification could constitute an alteration requiring approval through the diocese, which would cause delays and disruption to public access. She was clearly under pressure, and I treated those concerns seriously.

Due to low temperatures, I initially delayed completing the originally specified painting works, as the conditions were not suitable. However, I was subsequently contacted by Mel, who expressed urgency and asked that the works be completed in accordance with the original specification. On that basis, and despite my earlier reservations, I proceeded as instructed.

It should be noted that the paint was therefore applied in suboptimal conditions. Since completion, there have been issues with the coating, including areas of flaking. We have also returned to site on two occasions to carry out remedial works, including repairs following vandalism.

Given the circumstances, and in particular the fact that alternative recommendations were made at the time and not adopted, I do not consider it reasonable to continue returning to address ongoing issues associated with the original specification and conditions under which the work was carried out.



TotalEnergies Gas & Power

Item 19

Step 1

Review your renewal offers

Step 2

Sign your contract

Below are your new renewal rates. Select a rate from the list below to complete your renewal process.

Your Tariff Rate

Daily Standing Charge

256p

Unit Rate per kWh

12.79p

Est. Monthly Cost

£127.89

Est. Yearly Cost

£1,534.63

Falls in on Contract Expiry

12 Month Contract

Daily Standing Charge

107p

Unit Rate per kWh

7.56p

Est. Monthly Cost

£62.11

Est. Yearly Cost

£745.34

Choose this Rate

24 Month Contract

Daily Standing Charge

108p

Unit Rate per kWh

7.19p

Est. Monthly Cost

£60.97

Est. Yearly Cost

£731.63

Choose this Rate

36 Month Contract

Daily Standing Charge

110p

Unit Rate per kWh

7.03p

Est. Monthly Cost

£60.95

Est. Yearly Cost

£731.42

Choose this Rate



North Tawton Town Council: Valda Energy

Company Name	MPRN/MPAN	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date	Contract Term (months)	All/Day Unit Rate (p/kWh)	Night Rate (p/kWh)	Eye & Wind (p/kWh)	Standing Charge/Meter Charge (p/day)	Capacity Charge (p/kVA)	Agreed Capacity	Day/All Consumption	Night Consumption	Eye & Wind Consumption	Estimated Annual Cost	Estimated Annual Saving
North Tawton Town Council, 14A The Square, North Tawton, EX20 2EP	9318449110	Dec '26- TBC	Dec'28	24	8.290			43,000			4935			£566.06	£88.39
North Tawton Town Council, 14A The Square, North Tawton, EX20 2EP	9318449110	Dec '26- TBC	Dec'29	36	8.010			43,000			4935			£552.24	£102.21

North Tawton Town Council: YU Energy

Company Name	MPRN/MPAN	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date	Contract Term (months)	All/Day Unit Rate (p/kWh)	Night Rate (p/kWh)	Eye & Wind (p/kWh)	Standing Charge/Meter Charge (p/day)	Capacity Charge (p/kVA)	Agreed Capacity	Day/All Consumption	Night Consumption	Eye & Wind Consumption	Estimated Annual Cost	Estimated Annual Saving
North Tawton Town Council, 14A The Square, North Tawton, EX20 2EP	9318449110	Dec '26- TBC	Dec'28	24	8.104			36,880			4935			£534.54	£119.91
North Tawton Town Council, 14A The Square, North Tawton, EX20 2EP	9318449110	Dec '26- TBC	Dec'29	36	8.173			37,590			4935			£538.07	£116.38

Existing Tariff

Company Name	MPRN/MPAN	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date	Contract Term (months)	All/Day Unit Rate (p/kWh)	Night Rate (p/kWh)	Eye & Wind (p/kWh)	Standing Charge/Meter Charge (p/day)	Capacity Charge (p/kVA)	Agreed Capacity	Day/All Consumption	Night Consumption	Eye & Wind Consumption	Estimated Annual Cost
North Tawton Town Council, 14A The Square, North Tawton, EX20 2EP	9318449110				8.380			66,000			4935			£654.45

Advice to the Council on the use of Glyphosate.

Introduction

The term 'pesticide' is an umbrella term used for all herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, and the like. Glyphosate is a broad-spectrum herbicide and is used as a key protection product on a global scale, with usage noted in 130 countries across the World (Bou-Mitri, et al., 2025). Structurally, glyphosate is within the organophosphonate grouping (Rott, et. al., 2018), and acts by blocking the pathways of the enzyme known as 'EPSPS' and usually kills plants within a weekly timeframe (Chang and Liao, 2002). Initially made in 1950 by Henry Martin, a Swiss chemist, it was also discovered in 1970 in the US by scientists working for the company Monsanto. The chemical was brought to the market as a herbicide in 1974 by Monsanto with the now well-known brand name of Roundup (Duke and Powles 2008) and remains the most used agricultural herbicide in the world.

On a much smaller scale in the domestic environment, when applied to weeds, there are four potential pathways for glyphosate to enter a plant, via the tissues, roots, emerging shoots or via the trunk or stem (Sharma and Singh, 2001) resulting in plant death by its enzyme blocking mode of action. In recent years glyphosate has gained a reputation, and its usage is widely controversial, much of which derives from its association with Monsanto and its development of genetically modified glyphosate resistant crops (DeSesso et. al., 2017). Concerns have also been noted regarding residues in food products (Cressey, 2015), impacts on aquatic life and marine animals (Evalen, et. al., 2024), impact on soil biota (Nguyen, et. al., 2016), and potential toxicity to humans and other mammals especially in terms of acting as a carcinogen (Morini, 2025) and endocrine (hormone) disruptor (US Environmental Protection Agency, 2007).

Research from 2020 states that the risk of cancer in humans from glyphosate remains inconclusive (Agostini, et. al., 2020), and the International Agency for Research on Cancer rates glyphosate as a 'Group 2a' chemical, meaning it is only a potential human carcinogen. One of the standard toxicological tests, known as a Hazard Quotient, is a ratio between the level (or amount of) exposure with a reference dose. The Hazard Quotient for glyphosate suggests it has a very low level of risk (Bou-Mitri, et al., 2025). The impact of glyphosate on the environment and pollinators is well researched and documented, and the main concerns being the noted alternations in ecology and population dynamics of pollinators (in a research paper published by the author) and aquatic life.

The Pesticide Action Network UK states that glyphosate contributes to approximately 90% of pesticides used in public spaces in the UK. Therefore, it is used and or authorised for use by contractors employed by local Councils across the UK. Some Councils, notably Cornwall County Council, have voted to be chemical and pesticide

free, based on inconclusive scientific evidence, and more importantly for Town and Parish Councils, public opinion. Alternatives, such as the treatment of weeds with acetic acid and the use of flames, can be considered.

Acetic acid solutions carry their own environmental concerns. Specifically, on heating corrosive and irritant fumes can be released, there are some noted impacts on aquatic life and non-target plants (Lewis, *et. al.*, 2016), and many of the categories to assess the risks have very limited data. Whilst not as controversial as glyphosate, products are still environmentally harmful to some degree, and potentially harmful to human health. Likewise, flame treatments are generally based on the use of butane which carries its own significant human health risks ranging from inhalation risk (Field-Smith *et. al.*, 2007), neurological effects, skin and eye irritation, cardiotoxicity and gastrointestinal effects (Vahabzadeh, and Mégarbane, 2022). Proper use of and disposal of canisters of butane would be essential, although the risks would be limited to the individual using the equipment, and proper storage would be required. In this context exposure levels to the individual and to members of the public, are lower than that of glyphosate. Butane fuelled flame treatments of course, do present the issues of the release of the potent greenhouse gases Nitrogen Oxide and Carbon Dioxide, and the accumulation of these in the atmosphere. The real risk of alterations to air quality in the immediate area whilst treatment is being applied would need to be considered and would be more substantial than airborne risk from glyphosate, and a COSHH assessment would be advised.

Due to ongoing concern by local residents regarding the usage of glyphosate by contractors employed by North Tawton Town Council, the advice to Council is to consider the alternatives, to compare these to the use of glyphosate products, and for Council to make an informed decision on which weed treatment to use on Council maintained land.

Alternatives

Table one below shows the name, ingredients, potential hazards and identified concerns for both glyphosate and a range of alternative approaches to weed removal. It needs to be noted that in using glyphosate, the Town Council are not acting illegally, but nor are they ignoring the opinions of the residents which they represent by conducting a review of their own policies and practises. The comparison of approaches to weed control presented here are therefore unbiased and balanced, and designed to inform not to lead or influence the Council in making its decision. The personal and professional opinion of the author of this report, as a trained environmental toxicologist, is not stated, as the decision remains strictly with the democratic process of the Council vote when considering the way forward in the Full Town Council meeting in June 2026.

Table One: The main methods used for weed removal, the active ingredient of named products and the concerns to be noted for each.

Product name	Ingredients	Signal word & noted hazards	Considerations
Roundup	Potassium salt of glyphosate alkyl polysaccharide, Nitrotyl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toxic to aquatic life with lasting effects • Avoid risks to humans and the environment • Comply with proper usage instructions • IARC Group 2a designation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the three ingredients collectively, chronic / ongoing aquatic issues, eye damage, and skin irritant • A full COSHH assessment would be advised • Average cost per Litre: £46-£70
Weedol Gun! Fast Acting Weed Killer	Acetic acid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No signal word • Skin, eye and respiratory irritant • Corrosive • IARC Group 2b designation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible health or environmental hazard and work exposure limit, biodegradable, bioaccumulation is not known to date • A full COSHH assessment would be advised • Average cost per litre: £4-£7
New Way Weed Spray	Acetic acid solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signal word: Danger • Skin, eye and respiratory irritant • Corrosive • IARC Group 2b designation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible health or environmental hazard and work exposure limit, no existing information on biodegradability, bioaccumulation is not known to date • A full COSHH assessment would be advised • Average cost per litre: £8-£16
Flame treatment	Generally, canisters of butane are used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butane is highly toxic if inhaled • Highly flammable • Pressurised container / aerosol • IARC designation Group 2b 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant inhalation risks • Skin and eye irritation • Neurological effects • Gastrointestinal effects • Average costs vary considerably
Manual removal by digging	No chemical involvement in the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No risk from exposure to chemicals to be considered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive manual work • Increased costs from number of hours worked

For all the above chemicals and other liquid treatments, all manufacturer's instructions, and advice on prevention, response, storage and disposal need to be followed accordingly.

Options

The recommendations and options made to the Town Council for consideration are as follows:

- To continue to use glyphosate to treat weeds within the town, following strict COSHH and health and safety procedures, and ensuring that a copy of the relevant certificates by those using the product are both seen and a copy kept by, the Town Clerk.
- To use one of the chemical alternatives, with the same level of scrutiny over usage as noted above.
- To use a non-chemical spray, such as the acetic acid-based solutions noted in Table One, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, and to ensure any regulations regarding usage are also met, should there be any.
- To use a different alternative, such as the use of steam or flame treatment methods. These also need sufficient health and safety assessments if agreed for use, which is necessary before use in the first instance.
- To use mechanical methods, such as digging, for hand removal of weeds.

There also needs to be the consideration of costs and expenditure, to taxpayer and the Town Council would need to balance any environmental considerations against and alongside the financial implications of each method of weed removal method. Single treatment methods would be most cost effective in terms of the cost of the product and the number of work hours / time taken to apply it, as opposed to mechanical treatments that would require more work hours and potentially more than one application or treatment.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the Town Council has several options regarding which method of weed removal is chosen. All chemical treatments will carry some level of risk, and these risks ideally need to be balanced against the other aspects, such as cost, time and also considering the opinions and voices of the residents of the town. Something less controversial than glyphosate does not necessarily mean there is less human and environmental risk.

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