

Case study: Stop using Glyphosate campaign

Name of project or group

Sheffield City Council Stop Using Glyphosate. Case study by Graham Wroe, March 2022

What actions for nature did your group want to take and why?

As an active member of Sheffield Extinction Rebellion, I wanted to campaign on something related to the Nature Emergency as well as the Climate Emergency. [Pesticide Action Network](#) had an excellent national campaign to persuade Councils to stop using Glyphosate, so I decided to campaign locally on this.

- Research to find out about the Council's Glyphosate use and the damage it does.
- Outreach to get people involved in the campaign.
- [Petitioning](#) to show the strength of support. (5000 signatures is enough to force a debate at full Council)
- Educating the public with letters to the press, [articles](#), radio interviews and social media to increase our support.



- [Pavement wildflower chalking](#)- pointing out beautiful wildflowers growing on pavements that would otherwise be killed by Glyphosate.
- [Adopting verges](#), insisting they are not sprayed and planting wildflower seeds.
- A big dramatic protest was planned but unfortunately cancelled due to lockdown.
- [Lobbying of Council](#)
- [Street Theatre](#)
- Sharing [memes](#) on social media

Photo credit: Graham Wroe

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What resources or support did you use?

- Resources from PAN.UK
- [Freedom of Information questions to the Council](#)
- 38 Degrees for the petition
- Whatsapp for networking
- Support from many groups including Pesticide Action Network, [Extinction Rebellion Sheffield](#), [Greenpeace](#), [Sheffield Green Parents Act Now](#) (drama group), [Sheffield Wildlife Trust](#), [Sheffield Friends of the Earth](#), [Sheffield Climate Alliance](#), [Sheffield Green Party](#)
- Wordpress to create a blog.
- Social Media Facebook and Twitter
- Articles in Sheffield [Star](#), Sheffield Telegraph and [Now Then](#) magazine
- Interviews on Radio Sheffield

How did you empower or involve others?

In 2019 XR held a big meeting at Theatre Deli to decide priorities for the coming year. Lots of different campaigns were discussed and voted on, and the Glyphosate campaign was one of the most popular. A Whatsapp group was formed, some brilliant banners created, a song was written, the petition was launched and a big protest was planned involving people in full safety gear spraying the plants in the Winter Garden with fake Glyphosate and a die-in by children dressed as bees. Those good at botany took to chalking on the streets to highlight the presence of wildflowers, educating people about their names. Others planted wild seeds on verges and asked the Council not to spray them. Lockdown then intervened and the protest was cancelled but during the lockdown, we recorded the song on YouTube.

As the Covid restrictions were eased and the Council started to meet in person again the petition was submitted, forcing the Council to debate it. A [powerpoint](#) was sent to all the Councillors explaining in detail why they should stop using Glyphosate. There was a big rally outside Ponds Forge where the Council were meeting, including [drama](#) and [speeches](#). Inside I was able to address the Council.

By this time Green Party [Councillor Alison Teal](#) was on the Council Executive with responsibility for parks. She was able to use her influence to successfully press for action on the issue.

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What changes have there been as a result of your actions?

See the [Council Press Release](#) here.

“The council stopped using glyphosate in shrub beds, floral displays, rose beds, hedgerows, channels, permeable hard surfacing and planted areas in October 2021. By April 2022, the aim is to stop the use of glyphosate for obstacle and “mowing strip” spraying in highway verges as well as in Parks and countryside sites. Two cemeteries (Norton and Beighton) will be subject to glyphosate free trials this year. A trial of a completely glyphosate-free area will take place in Brincliffe initially, and further trial areas will be identified in due course. Local residents, affected by the changes, will be informed of the proposals in advance and asked to give their feedback. The council will report on its findings after the trial period and continually assess the impact of the changes throughout the year.”

Have you had any memorable nature encounters while doing this?

Encouraging residents to put signs on verges asking the council not to mow resulted in lovely displays of wildflowers. Using chalk to help the public to understand that 'weeds' are in fact wild plants and naming them encouraged many to take more interest in wildflowers and biodiversity.



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How have your actions been shared or inspired others?

- Sheffield Telegraph articles
- Now Then articles
- Social Media and Blogs
- Radio Sheffield

What's next?

I am currently campaigning to become a Councillor representing Nether Edge and Sharrow, which is coincidentally the ward the first Glyphosate free trial is in. I hope to help make the trial a success by working with local residents, ensuring they understand the damage Glyphosate does and helping organise community weeding sessions if necessary. If the trials are a success I hope they will be extended city wide.



Photo credit: Extinction Rebellion Sheffield