

# Pesticide Free Policy 2024

## Background

According to Pesticide Action Network (PAN UK) a survey was carried out in April 2018 revealed that there are 38 different types of pesticides used in UK towns and cities. PAN UK states there is an increasing concern from residents, local authorities and governments about the impact of pesticides on human and environmental health. As a result, towns and cities across the UK are considerably reducing, if not completely eradicating the use of pesticides in urban spaces and are switching to non-chemical methods of weed control.

PAN UK works with local councils to develop a policy framework for a transition to non-chemical alternatives and have successfully worked closely with Councils like Bristol, Brighton and Lewes to achieve this. There are also a number of town councils in the South West who have declared pesticide free status, although as they are in unitary authority they are largely responsible for the parks and open spaces in their areas.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2019 Faversham Town Council declared an Environmental Climate change and Biodiversity Emergency and pledged to make Faversham carbon neutral by 2030, to work with Kent County and Swale Borough Council to determine and implement best practice methods.

As Faversham Town Council is not responsible for the open spaces within the town, we do not ourselves use pesticides. The Facilities team has investigated the use of pesticides by the County Council and the borough council, housing association, schools and there is an expectation that no pesticides will be used on any of the Town council allotment sites.

On 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2020, it was resolved that the Town Council write to KCC to inform them of our goal to become a pesticide free town and to carry out further investigation for an action plan to become pesticide free. The Town Council met with KCC on a number of occasions and as yet KCC have not agreed to substantially reduce the use of pesticides as part of their highways contract. Swale Borough Council has committed to significantly reduce and eventually phase out the use of Glyphosphate in their grounds maintenance contract.

In 2021 the Town council developed an action plan to reach pesticide free status and in December 2024 Faversham was recognised for the work that the town council and community groups had done and given the pesticide free logo by Pesticide Action network.

Following the completion of the action plan, Faversham town council has worked to put together this policy in order to keep the elimination of pesticide something that the Council prioritises and empowers residents to work towards in their own lives.



## Pesticide free policy 2024

### What are Pesticides and how are they used?

Pesticides are chemical substances designed to kill pests and are commonly used to control or eliminate a variety of pests. The most common forms of pesticides are:

1. Insecticides – Kills insects
2. Herbicides – Kills plants
3. Rodenticides – Kills rats and mice
4. Fungicides – Kills fungus, mould and mildew
5. Bactericides – Kills bacteria

### What are the benefits of going pesticide free?

A range of benefits can result from adopting a pesticide-free approach, with environmental being the main advantage. Overview of benefits:

- Safeguarding of the general public's health by reducing their exposure to potentially harmful pesticides.
- Potential financial savings for councils due to the reduced spending on chemicals and compulsory training for staff applying pesticides.
- Improved health for council employees and contractors due to reduced exposure
- Positive message for the public
- Compliance for environmental health legislation
- Better habitats for bees, pollinators and other wildlife
- Reduced contamination of water bodies which could lead to safer water for the public.

## Commitments 2024

- 1> Faversham Town Council will work with local community gardening organisations and environmental action groups to keep the elimination of pesticides a local priority. This could be through social media information campaigns, the Faversham buzz environmental e-newsletter and the physical newsletter with regular articles and updates.

- 2> Faversham Town Council will work with Swale Borough Council and Kent County Council and subsequently the Unitary Authority and Combined authority Mayors and encourage the use of other methods of highway and green space maintenance than relying on pesticides.
- 3> Faversham Town Council will work to raise public awareness through clear communication of the benefits of being a pesticide free town.
- 4> Faversham Town Council will work to increase the understanding of the value of “weeds” which are fundamental to halting the decline of bees, birds and other wildlife.
- 5> Faversham Town Council will promote good work and best practice in the community.
- 6> Faversham Town Council looks to enlist the support of community volunteers/groups for pesticide free tasks such as hand weeding and creating pollinator corridors and wildflower areas.
- 7> Staff and Councillors will be fully briefed to keep the community informed if they are approached with questions
- 8> Faversham Town Council will work with PAN UK to keep up to date on pesticide elimination progress and innovation and will support other Council’s that want to learn from the work that we have done.
- 9> Faversham Town Council commits to review this policy annually through the environment committee.