



22 September 2025

Hounslow Friends of Parks Forum
Hounslow Parks Team
Greenspace
Cllr Salman Shaheen

Dear everyone

Use of Herbicides in Parks

I understand from the Parks Team that, following the Council's review earlier this year, herbicides may once again be used across all parks, including Watermans Park, where Greenspace lacks the resources to maintain areas by hand. The Parks Team has asked that Greenspace exercise particular care, especially near well-used areas.

I raised the following questions with the Parks Team in August but, at the time of writing, have not yet received a response. I believe the answers to these questions would also be of interest to members of the Hounslow Friends of Parks Forum and request that they are shared at the next meeting:

1. Please could you share the specific protocols or guidance that Greenspace staff will follow when using herbicides in parks? Simply asking staff to be 'careful and judicious' seems too broad to provide meaningful assurance to park users.
2. The 2025 Park Management Plans (see extract below) relating to herbicide use need to be updated to reflect this change of approach — could you share a draft version?
3. Does Greenspace keep a record of where, when, and why herbicides have been applied? The minutes of the last Forum noted that 59 sites across the borough were identified as having invasive species, which may justify herbicide use in particular circumstances. Publishing such records would help build trust and demonstrate that herbicide use is proportionate and carefully targeted.

Extract from Watermans Park Green Flag Management Plan 2023 – 2028 (updated 2025)

Pesticides

As a part of our commitment to ensuring a cleaner and greener Hounslow, the use of chemicals to treat weeds was stopped in 2020. This decision supports the Council's ambitions for a cleaner and greener borough and promotes biodiversity and encourages wildlife. This approach is now fully supported by GS in parks and open spaces, enabling the borough to become even more hospitable to plants and animals.

The use of specific herbicides will only be considered when it is not viable to use non-chemical alternatives, for example, controlling the spread of an invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed, as they are especially damaging to the environment.

Removing the use of herbicides does present operational challenges, herbicides have always been considered a cost-effective solution due to their less labour-intensive results. As such GS continue to assess and review their operational schedules to ensure that an adequate resource and suitable approach is applied to control weed growth.

Regrettably, I will be unable to attend the Forum on 15th October but I hope the responses to this note will still help to inform the discussion.

Sincerely,



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