

Minehead Town Council
Report On The First Weeks of MTC's Foamstream Trial



Background

At the February Full Council meeting, Councillors agreed to a 6-month trial of Foamstream, an alternative method for controlling street weeds that does not rely on chemical controls like Glyphosate. Foamstream utilises hot water insulated by a biodegradable foam to eliminate weeds.

The hire unit was delivered on Monday, April 8th, and staff were trained on its operation. The Foamstream unit has been in daily use since having been put into service the following day.

To inform the wider community about this trial, the Town Council used social media and its website to promote the initiative. Staff have also been provided with informational handouts and a QR code that links to further details on the Town Council's website.

Key Findings from the Initial Weeks

The first few weeks of operation have produced the following observations. However, this list is not exhaustive and is expected to grow over the course of the trial:

Positives:

- Significant ground coverage has already been achieved, considering the amount of vegetation and extensive paving in certain areas.
- Treatment areas show immediate wilting of vegetation.
- Most vegetation appears to be killed in a single treatment.
- Operations have been successful in all weather conditions.
- Public feedback has been generally positive.

Potential Challenges:

- Minehead has a significant number of areas still requiring treatment, which may create challenges in managing public expectations.
- A minimum of one staff member is needed to operate the unit, with two required in busier areas.
- The hose reel is heavy for operators.
- Fuel usage adds to operating costs.
- Dead vegetation remains in place after treatment.

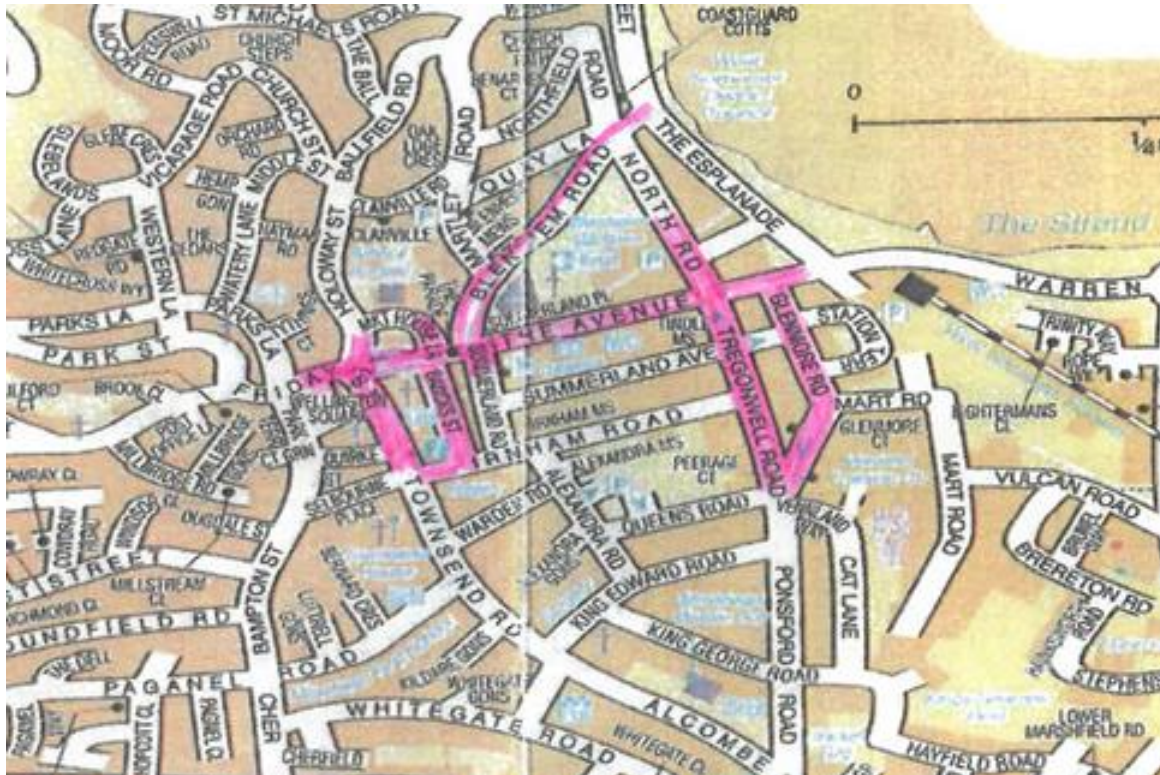
The Town Council will continue monitoring the Foamstream trial and provide updates on its progress and findings. The goal is to evaluate the effectiveness and viability of this alternative approach to weed control.

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Areas Treated

The highlighted sections on the map below indicate the locations that have received an initial treatment of Foamstream. Correct as of 16th April.



Future Treatments

In the coming days, we aim to treat the seafront areas, including The Quay, The Esplanade, and Warren Road, before moving towards Alcombe via Townsend Road and nearby residential streets. Given that this is the first time using the Foamstream equipment, it has been challenging to accurately predict its effectiveness and the rate at which we can treat various areas.

However, the initial findings regarding the ground coverage have been generally positive. Our intention is to cover as much of Minehead as possible during this trial period, as we continue to assess the efficiency and viability of the Foamstream method for weed control in the town.

Ben Parker, Town Clerk

April 2024