

City Council - 12/07/2022 - Cllr I Knowles - Petition No. 2543

Presented by Councillor Izzy Knowles Moseley Ward on 12th July 2022

Jointly presented by Cllr Majid Mahmood – Cabinet Member for the Environment.

Petition from Bee Friendly Brum to Birmingham City Council – can be found online:

<https://www.change.org/p/birmingham-city-council-save-the-bees-ban-the-use-of-pesticides-in-birmingham-s-public-green-spaces-8ac8d785-098e-4b5e-9d39-f60648ec1b92>

As of 11th July 2022 this petition has 97,347 signatories of which at least 12,166 are Birmingham residents.

A downloaded list of signatures can be forwarded electronically on request by Cllr Mahmood or Knowles

The petition states:

Birmingham City council routinely sprays verges, pavements and parks with Glyphosate-based pesticides, which include herbicides, despite the negative impact this controversial chemical has on Bees, health and the local environment.

Many Birmingham residents are concerned about the use of pesticides being applied in spaces where our children, pets and local wildlife may come into contact with it. Many countries, including France, Belgium and the Netherlands have already restricted or banned their use due to the many issues associated with them, and within the UK over 60 councils are now implementing programs to phase out their use (1).

Glyphosate has both direct and indirect effects:

Glyphosate is detrimental to invertebrate well-being. **Bees are crucial pollinators that are in serious decline globally.** Glyphosate has been shown to affect their navigation, sleep, larval development, and immunity to deadly infections. This could be due to the direct effects of glyphosate on the bee, or by glyphosate detrimentally altering their gut microbiome. **Furthermore, bees rely on the presence of pollen and nectar-rich flowers; as 95-97% of British wildflower meadows have disappeared since the 1940s, the additional removal of so-called 'weeds' by glyphosate destroys available foraging sites for them.** Earthworms and snails have also been shown to be adversely affected by this pesticide. (4)

Glyphosate is suspected to have a direct effect on human health. The World Health Organisation says that Glyphosate is "classified as probably carcinogenic to humans" (5), and research continues to confirm this. (6)

Birds and other animals are indirectly affected by the widespread use of pesticides due to the wiping out of weeds and wildflowers, destroying habitats and food supplies (2).

What do we want?

We are simply asking Birmingham City Council to hear the concerns of its citizens and to work with council contractors to phase out all use of pesticides, including glyphosate, in Birmingham.

When approached about the use of this pesticide (March 2021), the council responded saying there was no viable alternative. However, there are many safe and environmentally friendly methods of weed control available. These could include Acetic acid dilutions that are completely biodegradable, mulching, foamstream, steel brushing or Electronic control systems (7). Alternatively, where possible, leave the weeds altogether! Bees and other insects rely on weeds such as dandelions as their first source of food in the Spring.

At a time of rapid biodiversity loss, we need to protect and restore our green spaces. Other local authorities have already transformed grass verges into wildflower havens, including our neighbouring Solihull (8). As well as being a necessary boost for biodiversity, wildflower verges also provide beautiful green spaces for our city.

In 2019 Birmingham City Council declared a climate Emergency and committed to "embed climate action into its decision-making process" and to "cleaner and greener places" for Birmingham*. Passing a motion to ban pesticides (including glyphosate) and opting for non-chemical weed management alternatives will show the Council is serious in its commitment to taking a "leading role"(9) in tackling the causes and impacts of the climate emergency.

Further Information:

1. Countries that have banned Glyphosate

(Source: <https://www.baumhedlundlaw.com/toxic-tort-law/monsanto-roundup-lawsuit/where-is-glyphosate-banned-/>)

2. Glyphosate found to have adverse effects on earthworms and beneficial insects.

(source: <https://www.pan-uk.org/glyphosate/>)

3. Roundup is particularly harmful to Bees, studies show.

(Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/sep/24/monsanto-weedkiller-harms-bees-research-finds>)

4. Report on Habitat loss, climate change and pesticides (Source:

https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-05/EofE%20bee%20report%202019%20FINAL_17MAY2019.pdf

5. Glyphosate 'probably harmful to

human's (Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/21/roundup-cancer-who-glyphosate>

6. Impact of Glyphosate on human Health (Sources:

[https://issuu.com/pan-](https://issuu.com/pan-uk/docs/glyphosate_monograph_complete?e=28041656/43997864)

[uk/docs/glyphosate_monograph_complete?e=28041656/43997864](https://issuu.com/pan-uk/docs/glyphosate_monograph_complete?e=28041656/43997864)

<https://sustainablepulse.com/2021/03/26/bayer-admit-defeat-in-roundup-cancer-case-as-lawyers-push-back-on-future-payments/>

7. Alternative Weed control solutions

(Source: <https://www.pan-uk.org/pesticide-free/>

*Birmingham City Council's Commitment to respond to the climate emergency

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20015/environment/2026/climate_emergency/3