



REDUCE
THE USE
OF HERBICIDES



INTRODUCTION

Reducing the use of herbicides is an important step in creating more biodiversity-friendly football facilities. While herbicides can play a role in maintaining certain areas of Club grounds, their use can also have unintended impacts on pollinators, wildlife, soil health and water quality.

Many of the plants often considered "weeds" provide valuable food sources for bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects. By reducing herbicide use and adopting alternative management approaches, Clubs can create healthier habitats and support local biodiversity.

This resource provides practical guidance to help football Clubs across Wales review their use of herbicides and identify opportunities to reduce reliance on chemical controls while maintaining safe and functional facilities.

This resource will support your Club to:

- Understand how herbicides can affect biodiversity.
- Identify opportunities to reduce herbicide use.
- Explore alternative vegetation management methods.
- Protect pollinators, wildlife and watercourses.
- Improve the environmental performance of Club grounds.
- Support biodiversity recovery and nature-friendly management.





Together Greener Programme

BENEFITS

Why Reduce Herbicide Use?

Herbicides are designed to control unwanted vegetation, but they can also affect the wider environment.

Reducing herbicide use can help:

- Protect wildflowers that provide food for pollinators.
- Improve habitat quality for insects and wildlife.
- Reduce the risk of water pollution.
- Improve soil health and biodiversity.
- Support nature recovery objectives in Wales.
- Enhance the environmental value of Club grounds.

Even small reductions in herbicide use can create significant benefits when combined across football Clubs throughout Wales.



SPECIES

Understanding the Impact on Pollinators

Pollinators depend on flowering plants for nectar and pollen throughout the year.

Many common wildflowers found around football facilities provide valuable food sources, including:

- Dandelions.
- Clover.
- Bird's Foot Trefoil.
- Self Heal.
- Knapweed.
- Vetches.
- Dead Nettles.
- Buttercups.

When herbicides remove these plants, important food sources for pollinators are lost.

Reducing herbicide use allows many of these species to thrive naturally and support local biodiversity.





PROTECT WATERWAYS

Protect Water Quality

Protecting rivers, streams and drainage systems should be a key consideration when managing Club grounds.

Herbicides entering watercourses can affect aquatic ecosystems and water quality.

Clubs should:

- Avoid spraying near rivers, streams, ponds and ditches.
- Maintain vegetation buffers adjacent to watercourses.
- Prevent spray drift into drains.
- Follow all manufacturer guidance and legal requirements.
- Store chemicals safely and securely.

Football Clubs located near watercourses have an especially important role to play in protecting freshwater habitats.



REVIEW USAGE

Review Where Herbicides Are Used

Many clubs apply herbicides routinely without reviewing whether they are genuinely needed.

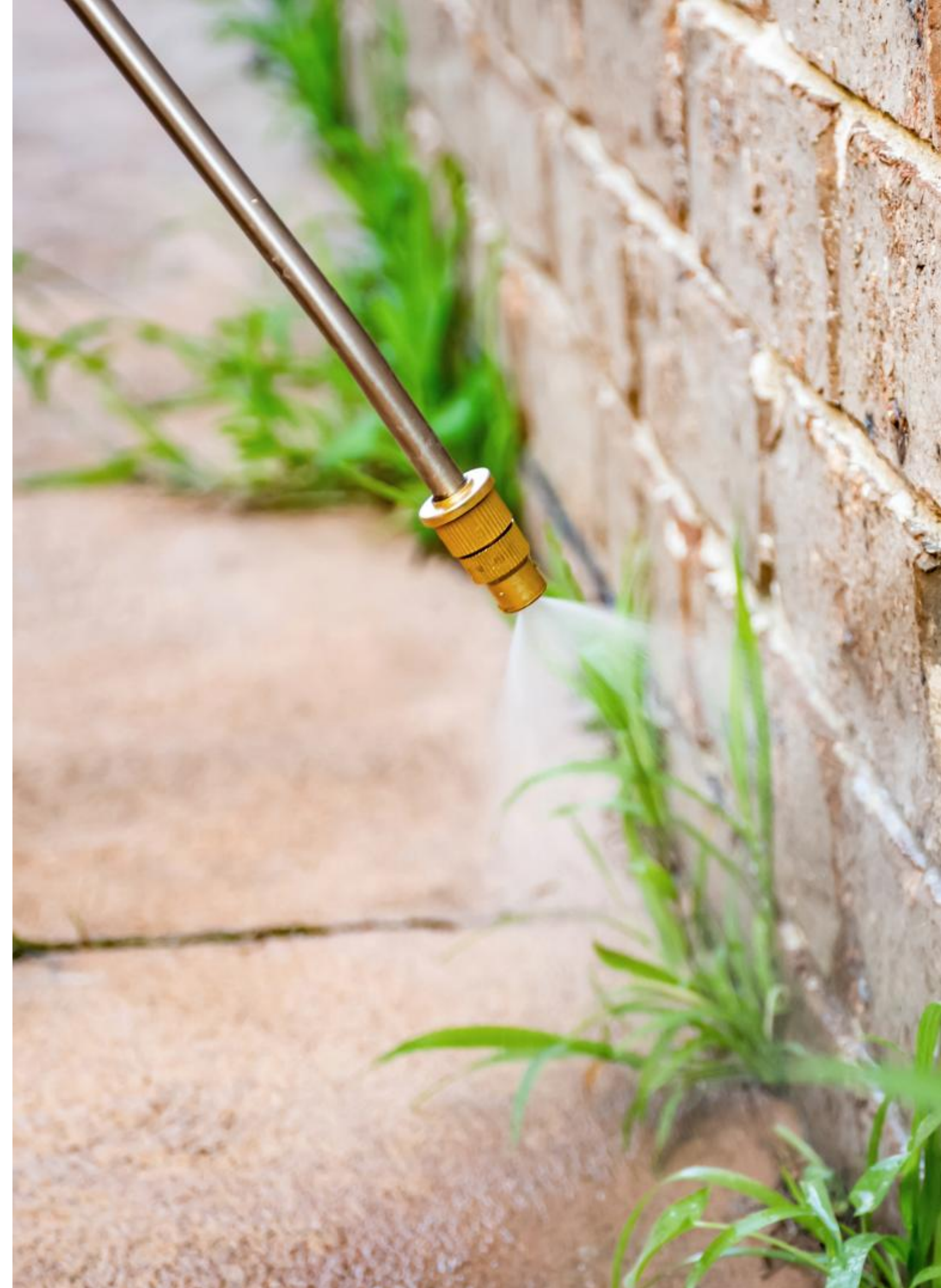
Start by identifying:

- Where herbicides are currently used.
- Why they are used.
- Whether alternative approaches could be adopted.

Common areas include:

- Fence lines.
- Goal surrounds.
- Building edges.
- Hardstanding areas.
- Car parks.
- Pathways.
- Around signs and lighting columns.

A simple review can often identify opportunities to reduce chemical use immediately.





ALTERNATIVE METHODS

Adopt Alternative Management Approaches

In many situations, non-chemical methods can provide effective alternatives.

Strimming and Mowing

If necessary regular mowing or strimming may be sufficient for:

- Fence lines.
- Boundary areas.
- Around infrastructure.
- Access routes.

This can often reduce or eliminate the need for routine herbicide applications.

Hand Weeding

For smaller areas:

- Manual removal may be practical.
- Volunteer workdays can support management.
- Spot removal avoids wider impacts on biodiversity.

Mulching

Mulching can suppress unwanted vegetation while improving soil quality.

Suitable materials include:

- Woodchip.
- Bark mulch.
- Leaf mulch.





Together Greener Programme

SPOT TREATMENT

Focus on Spot Treatment Rather Than Blanket Spraying

Where herbicide use remains necessary, Clubs should minimise the area treated.

Good practice includes:

- Treating individual plants rather than large areas.
- Applying herbicides only where required.
- Avoiding routine blanket spraying.
- Monitoring results before reapplication.

Targeted treatments can significantly reduce overall chemical use.





POLLINATOR PLANTS

Protect Pollinator-Friendly Areas

Some areas of the Club grounds should be managed as pesticide-free zones wherever possible.

These may include:

- Wildflower meadows.
- Pollinator planting schemes.
- Hedgerow margins.
- Long grass areas.
- Biodiversity zones.
- Wildlife gardens.
- Pond and wetland habitats.

These areas provide critical resources for insects and other wildlife.





Together Greener Programme

PROTECT HABITATS

Protect Nesting and Overwintering Habitat

Pollinators and beneficial insects often nest or overwinter in areas that may appear untidy.

Avoid unnecessary spraying around:

- Bare soil banks.
- South-facing slopes.
- Long grass.
- Stone walls.
- Hedgerow bases.
- Dead wood habitats.

These features can provide important shelter for wildlife throughout the year.





Together Greener Programme

HERBICIDE CODE

Follow a Pollinator-Friendly Herbicide Code

Where herbicides are required, Clubs should adopt responsible management practices.

Do

- ✓ Read and follow product instructions.
- ✓ Use the minimum effective quantity.
- ✓ Spot treat where possible.
- ✓ Protect nearby wildlife habitats.
- ✓ Observe buffer zones.
- ✓ Store chemicals securely.
- ✓ Dispose of chemicals responsibly.
- ✓ Monitor weather conditions before use.
- ✓ Keep records of applications.

Don't

- X Spray flowering plants used by pollinators.
- X Spray wildflower areas.
- X Spray near watercourses or drains.
- X Spray during windy conditions.
- X Spray before heavy rainfall.
- X Spray nesting habitats.
- X Spray standing water.
- X Apply more product than necessary.



Together Greener Programme

ENGAGE GROUND STAFF

Engage Grounds Staff and Volunteers

Successful herbicide reduction often depends on those responsible for maintaining facilities.

Consider:

- Providing biodiversity awareness training.
- Reviewing grounds maintenance plans.
- Sharing environmental objectives.
- Encouraging volunteers to support alternative management approaches.
- Celebrating successes and improvements.

Building understanding can help overcome concerns that reduced herbicide use means reduced maintenance standards.





BIODIVERSITY GOALS

Supporting Wales' Biodiversity Goals

Reducing herbicide use supports several national priorities, including:

- Nature recovery in Wales.
- Pollinator conservation.
- Water quality improvement.
- Climate resilience.
- Sustainable land management.

Football Clubs can play an important role in contributing to these wider environmental objectives while creating healthier and more attractive facilities.



FURTHER SUPPORT

Reducing the use of herbicides is a practical way for football clubs to support biodiversity while maintaining safe and welcoming facilities. By reviewing current practices and adopting more targeted and nature-friendly approaches, Clubs can create healthier habitats for pollinators and wildlife while reducing environmental impacts.

You do not need to eliminate herbicides completely overnight. Start by identifying areas where alternative approaches could be introduced and focus on gradual improvements over time.

Use what you have learned in this resource to:

- Inform one of your two mandatory Green Goals.
- Complete your Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Review current herbicide use across your site.
- Identify opportunities to reduce chemical inputs.
- Protect pollinators and wildlife habitats.
- Improve water quality and environmental performance.
- Support nature recovery across Wales.

Even small changes, such as replacing routine spraying with strimming or protecting wildflower areas from treatment, can have a significant positive impact on biodiversity and help create a greener future for football in Wales.

Further information on Biodiversity can be found at www.faw.cymru/TogetherGreener-biodiversity

If you require support with this resource, please contact sustainability@faw.cymru