

Pesticide-Free Cambridge and the city's Herbicide-Free trials: a brief outline

Ben Greig, Pesticide-Free Cambridge and On the Verge Cambridge

Julia Shaw, Pesticide-Free Cambridge.



Pesticide-Free
CAMBRIDGE

#PesticideFreeCambridge

pan-uk.org/pesticide-free

www.pesticidefreecambridge.org
info@pesticidefreecambridge.org

Plan of talk

- Pesticide-Free Cambridge / Cambridge City Council Herbicide Reduction Plan: timeline and introduction
- Happy Bee Streets
- Herbicide-Free Trial wards: Newnham and beyond
- Pesticide-Free Schools
- Our work with the university and other stakeholders
- UCL Pesticides and Urban Nature Project
- Rewilding or Ecological Public Health: Public feedback & media distortion
- The way forward



PESTICIDE-FREE CAMBRIDGE

Healthy city, healthy environment, healthy people

HOME WHO WE ARE CAMPAIGNS TAKE ACTION WHY PESTICIDE-FREE? NEWS & BLOG CONTACT

HEALTHY CITY, HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT, HEALTHY PEOPLE

We are a Cambridge based group that bridges activism and academic based approaches to tackling environmental challenges. We follow the Ecological Public Health and Planetary Health principles that highlight the interlinked relationship between environmental, climatic and human health and are working to rid synthetic pesticides from Cambridge's streets, verges, homes, businesses and schools. We believe

Campaign resources

www.pesticidefreecambridge.org.uk

<https://www.pesticidefreecambridge.org/blog/categories/newsletters>

<https://www.pesticidefreecambridge.org/pesticide-free-guide>



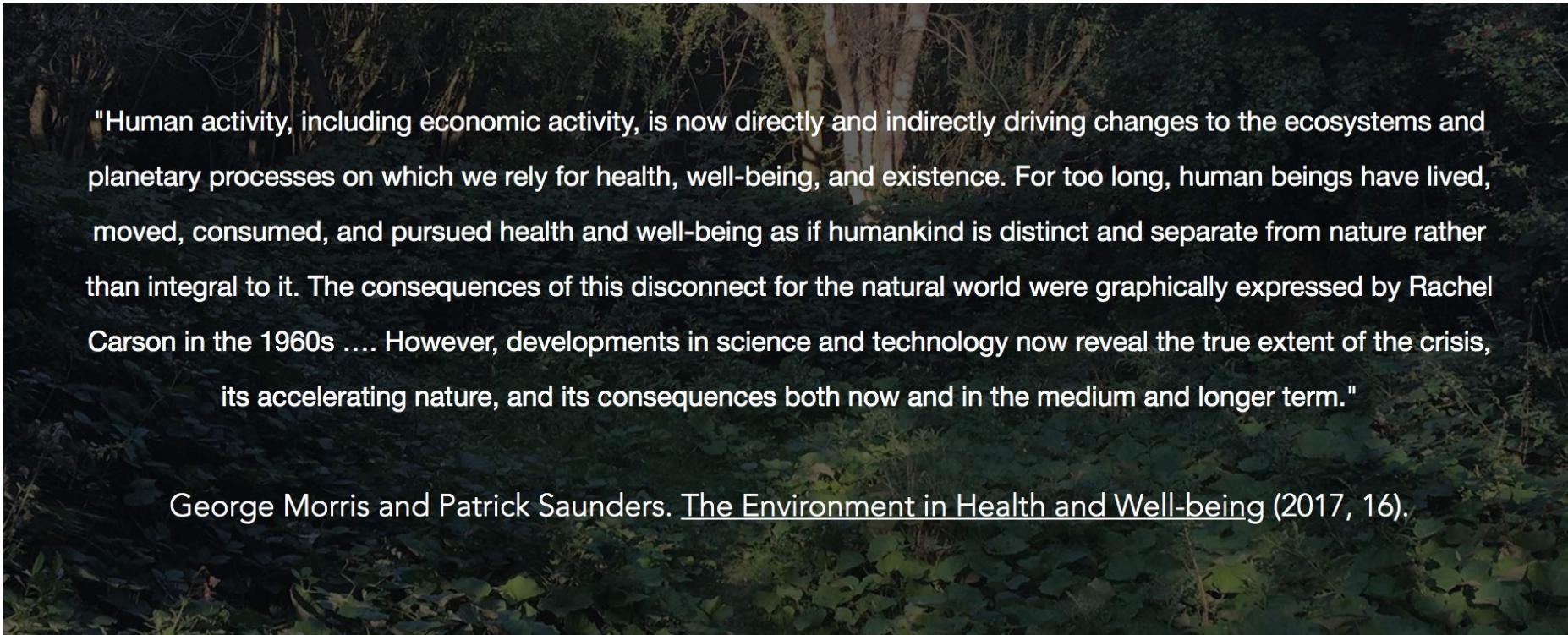
Urban pesticides: terminology and aims

- Phytosanitary chemicals: Glyphosate-based herbicides, garden sprays
- Insecticides used in and around the built environment: fly/wasp spray, insecticidal powder for ants (pyrethroid, carbamates)
- Public health, environment and disability access
- Biodiversity policy
- Accessibility and health equality
- Sunflower Hidden Disability Scheme

“Do we still raise [children] who roam through woods or fields and might even explore the margins of a river? If so, who guarded the poisoned area to keep out any who might wander in, in misguided search for unspoiled nature? Who kept vigilant watch to tell the innocent stroller that the fields he was about to enter were deadly and all the vegetation coated with a lethal film?”

(Rachel Carson, Silent Spring 1962)

Urban pesticides and ecological public health



"Human activity, including economic activity, is now directly and indirectly driving changes to the ecosystems and planetary processes on which we rely for health, well-being, and existence. For too long, human beings have lived, moved, consumed, and pursued health and well-being as if humankind is distinct and separate from nature rather than integral to it. The consequences of this disconnect for the natural world were graphically expressed by Rachel Carson in the 1960s However, developments in science and technology now reveal the true extent of the crisis, its accelerating nature, and its consequences both now and in the medium and longer term."

George Morris and Patrick Saunders. The Environment in Health and Well-being (2017, 16).

- Miller, G.W. & Jones, D.P. 2014. The Nature of Nurture: Refining the Definition of the Exposome. *Toxicological Sciences: An Official Journal of the Society of Toxicology*. 137(1), 1–2.
- Rayner, G. & Lang, T. 2012. *Ecological Public Health: Reshaping the Conditions for Good Health*. Oxford: Routledge.

Campaign timeline

- 2019 Cambridge City Council declared Biodiversity & Climate emergency.
- 2019 Declared phase out of herbicides in parks and open spaces, but no date for city-wide ban.
- Our petition to City Council: <https://www.change.org/p/cambridge-city-council-make-cambridge-pesticide-free>
- July 2021 PFC & Lib Dem Motion:
 - Two-ward herbicide-free trial in Autumn 2021, with commitment towards city-wide ban by end of 2022.
 - Signage to indicate herbicide-treated areas and those left untreated.
 - Online publication of spraying schedule.
- April 2022: Happy Bee Street adoption scheme launched
- Summer 2022: Herbicide-Free working group launched
- June 2022: Pesticide-free schools campaign
- Spring 2023: Herbicide-free wards extended to Trumpington and West Chesterton
- Spring 2023: Cambridge City council stops herbicide use across whole city apart from in council-owned housing estates outwith the four herbicide-free wards, following County decision to stop using herbicides on Highways.



Herbicide-Free Trials, Newnham and beyond



Herbicide Reduction Working Group records:

<https://www.pesticidefreecambridge.org/post/record-of-our-meetings-with-councillors-schools-and-partners-groups>

Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee PFC records :

<https://www.pesticidefreecambridge.org/post/pesticide-free-cambridge-public-questions-at-council-meetings>



Happy Bee Streets



Pesticide-Free Schools

- Herbicides and other phytosanitary chemicals
- Insecticides in Estates/Facilities
- Working with pupils:
 - Cambridge city council Environmental Education Programme
 - Keep Britain Tidy Green Flag Award (rewarding pesticide-free practices)
- Staff training programme, 2023-4



LINKS:

<https://www.pesticidefreecambridge.org/schools-campaign>

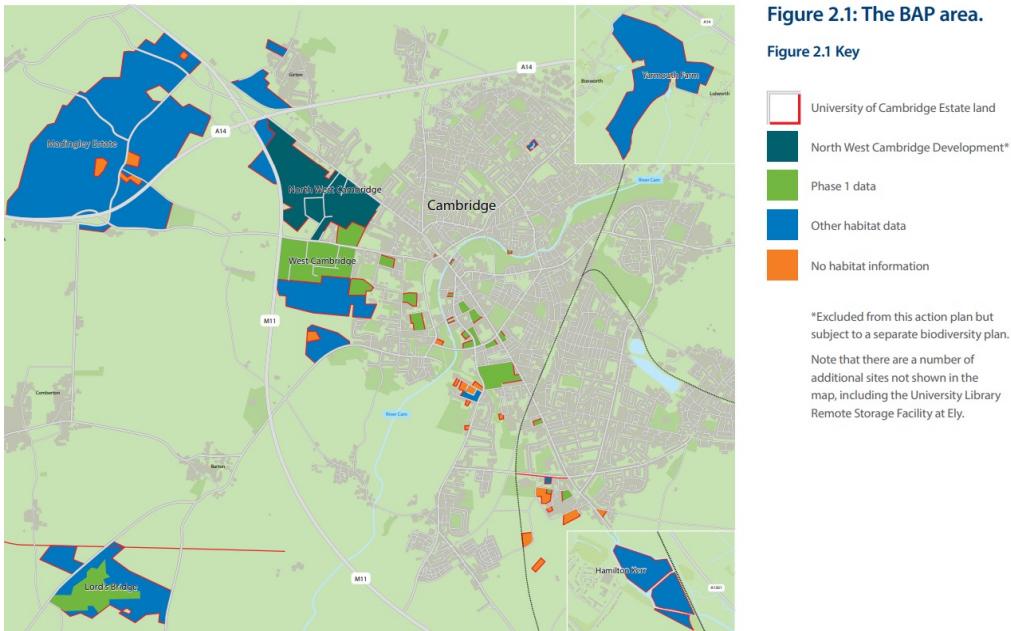
<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/environmental-education-visits-for-schools>



Integrating pesticide-free and wildlife planting programmes



Our work with the universities, colleges and other stakeholders



https://www.environment.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/uoc_biodiversityactionplan.pdf

Marshall, C. A. et al 2023. 'Urban wildflower meadow planting for biodiversity, climate and society: An evaluation at King's College, Cambridge' *Ecological Solutions and Evidence*, 4, e12243.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/2688-8319.12243>

Cambridge Colleges Environmental Sustainability Report:

<https://www.environment.admin.cam.ac.uk/Annual-Report/cambridge-colleges-environmental-sustainability-report>

<https://www.christs.cam.ac.uk/sites/default/files/inline-files/Environmental%20Sustainability%20Strategy.pdf>

<https://www.cai.cam.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Environmental%20Policy.pdf>

<https://www.murrayedwards.cam.ac.uk/about/policies-and-procedures/college-policies-and-procedures/environmental-issues>

Public feedback and media distortion: the ‘rewilding’ problem

‘Cambridgeshire resembles a “post-apocalypse movie”

Cambridge Independent 30th Oct 2023 <https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/news/we-didn-t-get-our-weedkilling-regime-right-admits-cambridg-9337266/>

‘Roadside gully’s and drains will become blocked more often, this will undoubtedly increase the likelihood of flooding. The sight of rapid decay in our Town and village centres is unacceptable’ Reintroduce weedkilling petition to Cambs County Council autumn 2023 https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccc_live/ePetitions/tabid/115/ID/65/Reintroduce-weedkilling.aspx

“It’s all very well for trendy city-dwellers to say: ‘Let’s rewild our pavements’ ... They probably haven’t got any friends who are elderly or disabled.”

‘Council accused of taking ‘rewilding’ too far as weeds take root in Brighton’

The Guardian 22nd Aug 2021 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/aug/22/council-accused-of-taking-rewilding-too-far-as-weeds-take-root-in-brighton>

‘Bayer’s Monsanto To Pay More Than \$1.5 Billion Over Claims Weed-Killer Caused Cancer’

Bloomberg 18th Nov 2023 <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-11-18/monsanto-ordered-to-pay-over-1-5-billion-in-roundup-verdict>

‘France to continue compensating farmers with Parkinson’s disease linked to glyphosate use’ (Euronews.com 17th Nov 2023)

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/reduced-use-of-herbicides>

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/report-a-street-that-needs-cleaning-or-clearing>

<https://highwaysreporting.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/>

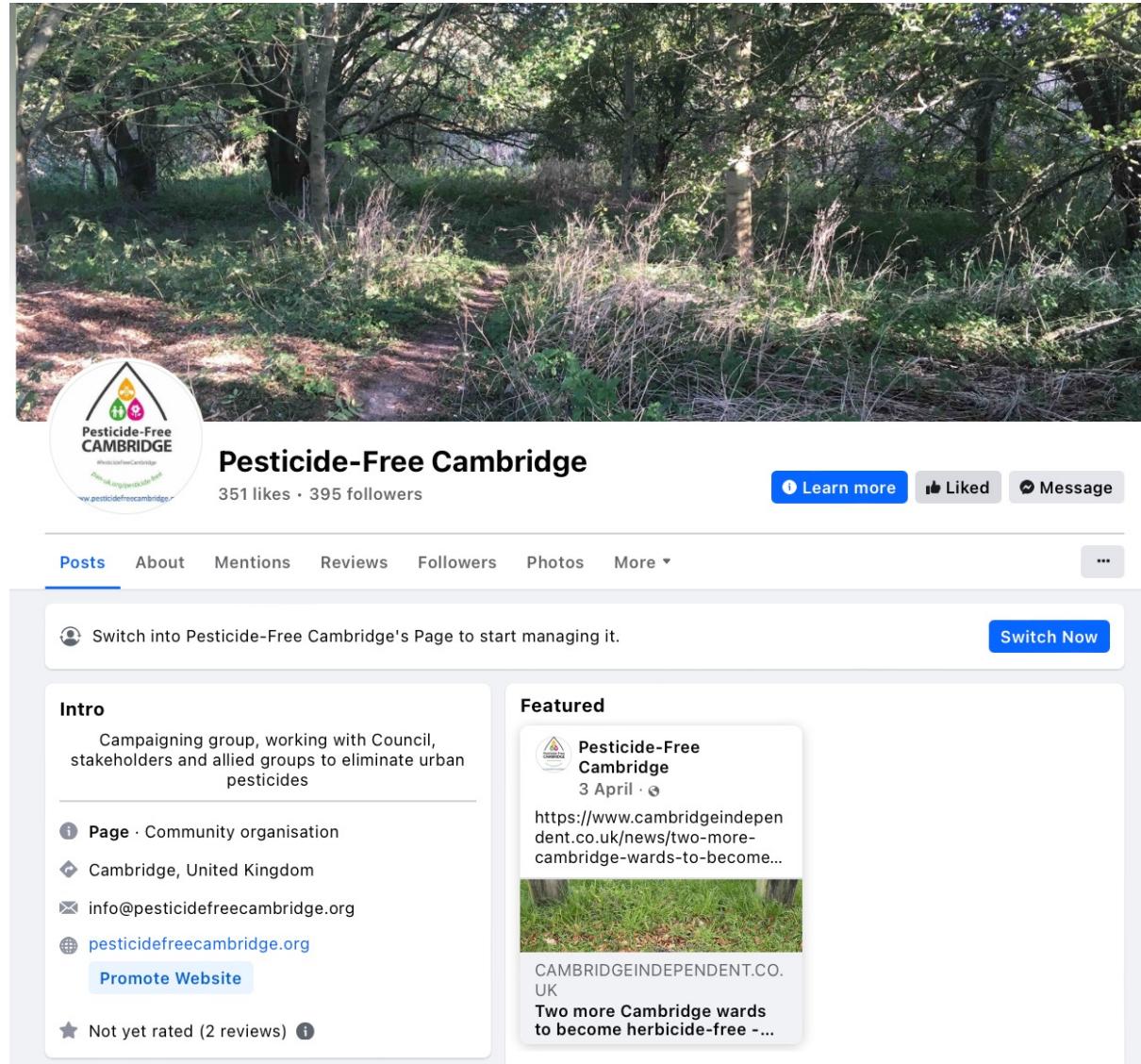
Research

- UCL Pesticides and Urban Nature Project (Principal Investigator: Dr Julia Shaw, UCL Institute of Archaeology, with Prof Andrew Barry, UCL Geography).
- Cambridge case-study, includes in part public feedback on Herbicide-Reduction Plan
- Preliminary results: Shaw, J. Forthcoming (2024). “Urban Pesticides, Environmental Attitudes, and ‘Everyday’ Chemical Exposure Perception”, in L. Sabin, S. Gibbon, E. Glazer, and A. Barry (eds.), *Chemical Exposures: Toxicity in the Anthropocene*. London: UCL Press.



Questions?

- Email:
info@pesticidefreecambridge.org
- Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100069575551941>
- X/Twitter:
<https://twitter.com/PANUKPFC>



Pesticide-Free Cambridge

351 likes • 395 followers

[Learn more](#) [Liked](#) [Message](#)

[Posts](#) [About](#) [Mentions](#) [Reviews](#) [Followers](#) [Photos](#) [More](#) [...](#)

Switch into Pesticide-Free Cambridge's Page to start managing it. [Switch Now](#)

Intro

Campaigning group, working with Council, stakeholders and allied groups to eliminate urban pesticides

Page · Community organisation

Cambridge, United Kingdom

info@pesticidefreecambridge.org

pesticidefreecambridge.org

[Promote Website](#)

Not yet rated (2 reviews)

Featured

Pesticide-Free Cambridge 3 April

<https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/news/two-more-cambridge-wards-to-become-herbicide-free-1.100069575551941>

CAMBRIDGEINDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Two more Cambridge wards to become herbicide-free - ...

No Herbicides in 2023



Where did the herbicides go after spraying?



This or this??



Splendid green mini-verges along both the gutters and fences each side of the road, so a total length in Newnham Croft of 7.2km new greenery.



Survey August 2023

- Eltisley Ave alone, **100 species of plants**
 - 19 garden escapes
 - 81 native plants
 - 10 non-flowering plants
(grass/sedge)
 - 18 in flower
 - 5 baby trees
 - 5 woody shrubs

