



Promoting Best Practice  
**Annual Report 2018/19**

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# Introduction

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**Professor John Moverley OBE**  
Independent Chairman

*John Moverley*

## **The Amenity Forum is the voluntary initiative for this essential and diverse sector.**

What happens in amenity impacts upon every UK citizen every day. Weed, pest and disease management of amenity areas is vital to ensure public safety and health and to provide surfaces fit for purpose whatever the user.

The Amenity Forum promotes best practice and is recognised as the national voice on such matters. It seeks to ensure all aspects of the sector are represented and strives to continue to drive up standards to meet both legal and voluntary requirements and targets established by Government in their implementation of European Directives.

**This report refers to some of the activity over the twelve month period to 30th June 2019. It also looks ahead at some of the challenges and opportunities.**

**“The UK amenity sector sets a very high standard and is proud of its achievements.”**

# What is Amenity?

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For some reading this report, the answer is clear but to many whilst directly affected by our sector, the term remains confusing and is often interpreted wrongly. A complete definition is not possible but suffice to say it includes such areas as:



**Street and Pavement  
Cleaning & Parks**



**Professional  
Lawn care**



**Rail Track  
& Highway**



**Sports Facilities  
& Surfaces**

including golf, football,  
cricket and more



**Public Utility  
Areas**

including supermarkets and indeed  
amenity areas in all public places



**Cemeteries &  
Bowling Greens**

The list goes on and this emphasises why weed, pest and disease management in these areas is so important.

# Some key achievement in this reporting period

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**This has certainly been another year full of change, challenge and opportunity.**

There is much going on at policy level with the Government. Whilst the current UK National Action Plan implementing the Sustainable Use Directive has been declared fit for purpose, there are plans for a full review of pesticide policy later in 2019. The Forum Chairman currently also chairs the UK Pesticides Forum and contributed to a full response by this body to Government on the issues involved. The Forum also in January gave evidence to an enquiry on invasive weeds by the Science and Technology Committee in Parliament.

The year has also seen significant debate and public interest in the use of pesticides. The Forum has sought to respond and fully engage with this focussing on the need for science and evidence to inform discussions. Those engaged in amenity management perform a vital role in maintaining safe and healthy amenity areas. Out of change inevitably comes challenge - but the professional Amenity sector is robust and ready. There is much to be proud of in the professionalism of our sector and the Amenity Forum can report on real progress and achievement over the last 12 months. We have expanded our activity and reached out to increasing numbers of organisations, stakeholders and the public in promoting good practice and providing appropriate guidance to all involved.

**In 2018 we adopted a reviewed and refreshed strategy for the Forum identifying key priorities and actions.**

At the top of our list were three – assisting everyone engaged to further develop integrated management approaches, introduce a sector wide assured standard and to significantly increase communications both to the public and within the sector building upon our successful Get Moving campaign. All three of these will be commented upon later in this report.. We always advocate an integrated approach to weed, pest and disease management examining all the options in any particular situation – cultural, mechanical, biological and chemical. The use of approved safe chemical products remains often the most effective and efficient. However, it is important to always ensure they are used in a targeted way to minimise use whilst gaining effective control.

**The opportunities ahead are great. Amenity management is an essential element of everyone's life.**



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## Increased participation & membership

The Forum is independent and those organisations who join as members, and thus give essential financial support for our work, do so to demonstrate their commitment to best practice and the highest professional standards. They commit to demonstrating to Government and others that the sector can deliver to the highest professional standards and meeting targets set in the National Action Plan arising from UK implementation of the Sustainable Use Directive. Our members, on joining, agree to abide to our code of conduct. We seek to draw membership from all sub sectors of amenity. Growth in membership over recent years has been high and continues to grow. Members include manufacturers, distributors, contractors, local authorities, Water companies, and greenkeepers, groundsman and more. A full list can be found on our website.

**Members fully contribute to our wide range of activities and engage in consultations and networking. The Forum is often described as a ‘lean and mean’ organisation and voluntary contribution to our work is a vital element to our success and ability to deliver.**

## Our Updating Events

This year we held a series of **14 free half day events** at venues across the UK. The theme was **‘Adapting to Change’**.

The total attendance at these events was approaching 500 and there is no doubt that they are a very positive way of taking out our core messages as well as increasing engagement and commitment to best practice.

**This year, one of the events was filmed and clips from this is on our YouTube Channel – Amenity Forum.**



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## Our Conference

The Amenity Forum conference has become the must attend event for all involved or interested in amenity management. Feedback from the 2018 event held at the Pirelli Stadium at Burton on Trent was extremely positive with the high quality of speakers and topics highlighted and the implementation of well-timed punchy presentations proved to be a hit.

There was also an associated exhibition area which proved very busy where delegates could hear of new innovations and products. **Over 200 attended** and the event got extensive media coverage.

The 2019 conference is being held at the same venue on **Thursday, October 10th, 2019**. This year's title is appropriately '21st Century Amenity Management' and there are again some excellent speakers on offer as well as the opportunity to network with others and discuss topical issues.



## Get Moving

The need to communicate with the public and indeed across our sector has never been so important. There is much public interest in the use of chemicals for weed management and it is important to provide factual information to help guide opinions and decisions. Our chairman has been involved with many discussions with politicians, opinion formers, press and public. He always emphasises the need for an integrated approach and to operate at professional standards. Nobody would support any practice that might impact upon public health or safety.

Our Get Moving campaign seeks to communicate why weed, pest and disease management is so important and essential and impacts upon every UK citizen every day. It is vital to ensure public safety and health and to provide amenity surfaces fit for purpose wherever their location. The campaign has three core key targets – key stakeholders, those working in the sector and very importantly, the public.

Get Moving comprises a resource of printed and electronic material including video clips highlighting aspects of amenity management in everyday situations which are continually being added to. These have proved very popular and have been well received. There is a website [www.getbritainmoving.uk](http://www.getbritainmoving.uk) and this focusses upon the Colins's family – Jim and Lynne and their children. Jim has his own blog, Twitter account and email and addresses issues from a member of public perspective. During 2019, significant developments in this work are taking place.



# Amenity Forum Conference 2019

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## AMENITY FORUM CONFERENCE 2019

THURSDAY 10TH OCTOBER 2019

“21st Century Amenity Management”

**VENUE:** The Pirelli Stadium, Burton on Trent

**BOOKING:** Admin@amenityforum.net

**COST:** Tickets are **£95.00** + vat  
or **£85.00** + vat if booking is confirmed by 1st September 2019

Full programme available on the Forum website:

**[www.amenityforum.co.uk](http://www.amenityforum.co.uk)**

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## Integrated Management Planning

A key focus in the UK National Action Plan is the adoption of an integrated approach to weed, pest and disease management. This seeks to ensure that in planning a weed, pest & disease management programme, you consider the level of control required for specific areas and circumstances and consider all options available to achieve the required outcome efficiently, effectively and economically.

Best practice is to produce such a plan, known as an IPM, for every different situation. It need not be complex but demonstrates full consideration has been given to all options and that where pesticide is used, it is applied at the correct place and optimum level.

**The Forum has produced best practice guidelines and these are available via the website: [www.amenityforum.co.uk](http://www.amenityforum.co.uk)**

It has been a key focus in updating events and through all activities.

Also later in 2019, we will be producing a document giving a full guide and toolkit for preparing Integrated Management Plans. More information will be available on our website in late Autumn 2019.



## External events & Communications

The Forum has been asked to speak at a large number of conferences and events throughout the period and are always pleased to do so.

The Forum is a regular contributor to publications including the Greenkeeper, Groundsman, Pitchcare, International Pest Control, Horticulture Weekly and Professional Horticulture. It regularly issues press releases and responds to media requests and is fully engaged in social media, an activity which has grown considerably in the last year.



## Pressures on pesticides

The year has seen further increased pressures on pesticide availability with the European authorisation and review process becoming more focussed on risk to human health. We live in a world of instant communication and 24 hour news. The power of social media means any story can be transmitted instantly by the press of a button. It is exciting and fantastic technology. Yet it holds dangers. It has created the phenomenon of fake news enabling one individual to release a fact or facts without any real verification and, in an instant, what subsequently turns out to be fiction, becomes fact.

Best practice is founded on an integrated approach to weed management in amenity, ensuring correct cultural and design practices, making use of mechanical and biological control where appropriate and using approved and authorised chemicals. In keeping our amenity areas safe, clean and healthy – whether that's on our streets, railways, sports surfaces, or parks - chemical control often provides the most economic and effective approach. The herbicides that are used are subject to extensive approval processes and are constantly monitored. Indeed the authorisation is far tougher and rigorous than for many other everyday products.



In wide scale operations, not using approved chemicals for weed management comes with significant cost. Research undertaken by Oxford Economics last year showed that a ban on weed killers would add at least £228 million to the UK's council tax bill each year. The additional requirements for funding the alternatives would require an increase in the average household council tax bill of £7.80.

Recently there has been a particular media 'discussion', if that is the word, about herbicides and their safety. This is welcomed provided it is based upon proper science and evidence – fact not fiction. Stories featuring headlines such as "killer pesticides" within such discussion do nobody any good. They can cause unnecessary fear and are generally accompanied by information far removed from verification. No professional amenity operator would advocate using any product that could danger nor would it be allowed.

**We recognise concerns can arise but, in dealing with them, we need a rational debate based upon science and facts. The management of weeds and pests in amenity impacts upon every UK citizen**



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## Local Authority Initiative

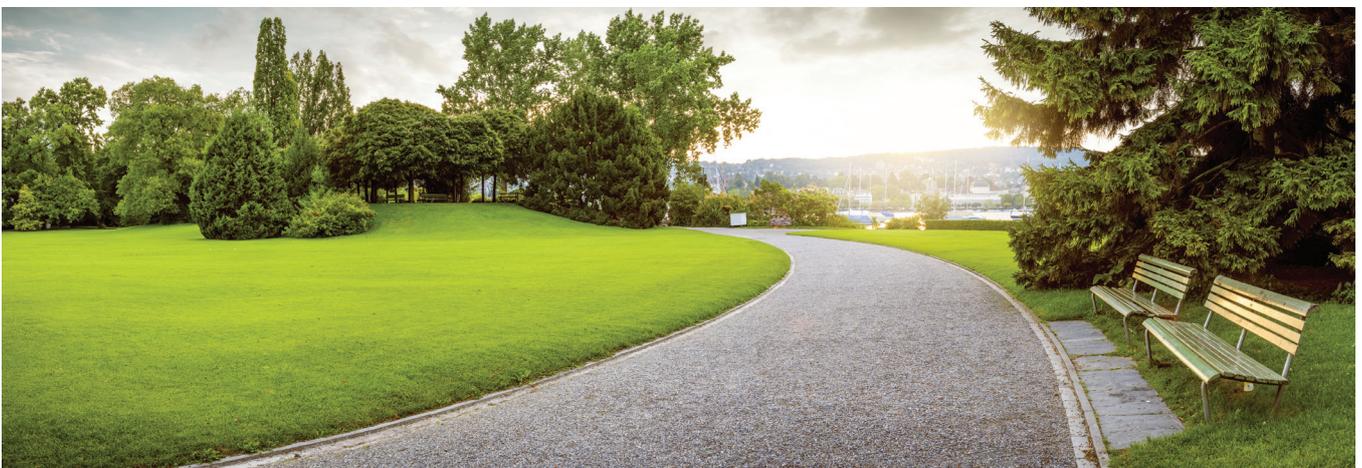
In the last year with the support of members we launched a special initiative seeking to increase participation of local authorities in Forum activity and increase their access to up to date information on all aspects of weed, pest and disease management. We have been pleased with the response to date but recognise that there is more for us to do in this area. However a significant number of authorities have joined the Forum as members and a specific set of guidance material has been developed. The Forum, as part of its work in developing an integrated management planning toolkit, is also working with Parks for London to produce a version of this specifically geared to meet requirements of local authority members and their officers.

**We are also engaged with establishing regional groups in England and increasing our links and activity in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.**

## Amenity Standard for the Sector

After much consideration and consultation, a new national standard for amenity management is to be launched. This will be akin to the Red Tractor in food production, familiar to many when visiting food stores and supermarkets. It will be known as The Amenity Standard. Holding the Standard and displaying the accompanying logo will show to all that the amenity areas covered by that standard are managed professionally in terms of weed, pest and disease control and fit for purpose. It is not another assurance scheme but in order to display and hold the Standard, those operating at the sports or amenity facility will need to demonstrate their competence and, as such, will be part of a recognised assurance scheme.

Displaying the logo and hence holding the Standard will give confidence to those who employ them and the public that what is being done is fully compliant with regulations and have assurances concerning safe, healthy amenity spaces fit for purpose. Adoption of the Standard will not happen overnight but it seen as a very important step if we are to continue to be able to do our job and retain our enviable reputation for producing and maintaining quality sports areas. We would wish to see the Standard displayed with pride at public and sporting venues, a clear commitment to driving up standards and providing reassurance and trust in those who use our facilities.

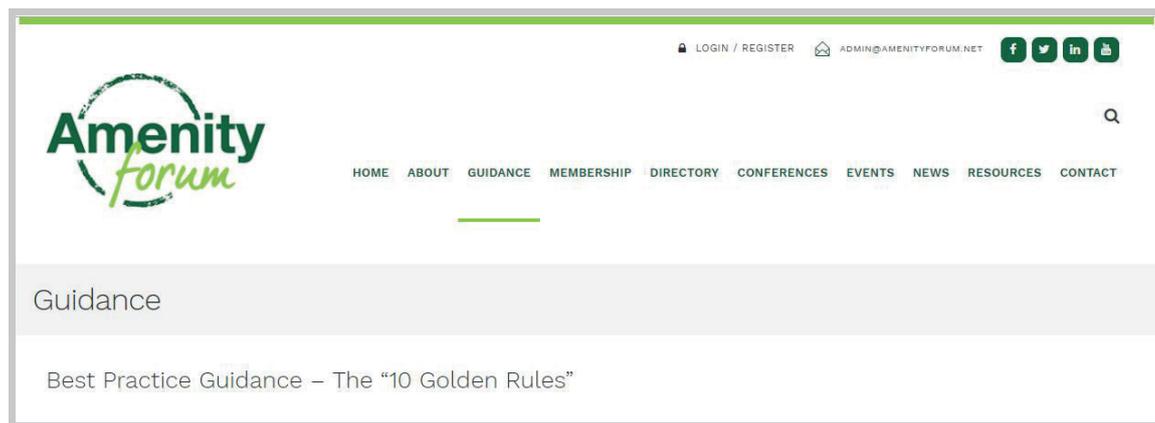


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## Website and Guidance Notes

The Forum website is an invaluable resource with its informative guidance notes, presentations and other information. It is now regarded as the first point of call for any questions on weed, pest and disease management in amenity. A full refresh and redesign took place in the year improving its lay out and capability.

**If you haven't already, do check it out at [www.amenityforum.co.uk](http://www.amenityforum.co.uk)**



## Sprayer Operator of the Year Awards

These awards seek to recognise the quality and high level of performance by spray operators in our sector. 2018 saw a record entry with category winners announced at the Forum conference. The overall winner was announced at BIGGA's BTME Event in January 2019. Coverage has been excellent. The awards seek to highlight the real professionalism that exists within operators throughout the amenity sector.



# Conclusion

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This document has set out some of the Forum's key achievements in 2018/19. There has been significant progress in achievements and in lifting both the profile and practice across the sector. It was pleasing to see this highlighted in the Pesticides Forum report published in 2019.

Our key role is helping maintain safe, healthy and sustainable amenity areas fit for purpose.

For further information on Forum activities, please go to our website [www.amenityforum.co.uk](http://www.amenityforum.co.uk) or contact us at [admin@amenityforum.net](mailto:admin@amenityforum.net)

For further information on our Get Moving campaign [www.Getbritainmoving.uk](http://www.Getbritainmoving.uk)



# Objectives of the Amenity Forum and how they are delivered

The key objectives can be summarised as follows:



To promote and encourage proper and responsible use of both chemical and integrated methods for the control of pests, weeds and diseases



To lead, coordinate and encourage achievement of “Best Practice” objectives in weed, pest & disease management



To ensure that all practices are sustainable and protect the environment with minimised risks to public health



To run a communication programme to support these aims and to promote the image of the sector among stakeholders and the public



To coordinate and encourage the establishment of sustainable qualifications, training and CPD activity, specifically for the Amenity sector



To organise activities within the Amenity Forum membership and linked organisations, such that Amenity Forum objectives are developed in a coordinated way

To achieve these the Forum’s principal activities involve:



Production of best practice guides principally via the web site, publications, newsletters, articles etc.



Regular email update service.



Organisation of seminars, workshops and our conference.



Production of a regular Newsletter and Chairman’s Update



Dialogue with government, media, stakeholders etc  
Influencing and more



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