



Promoting Best Practice  
**Annual Report 2019/20**

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# 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**

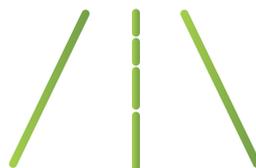
including supermarkets and indeed  
amenity areas in all public places



**Cemeteries &  
Bowling Greens**



**Water**



**Highways**



**Woodland**

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

# Introduction

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This report is written at a time of real uncertainty and challenge for all. The pandemic has changed the way that we all live our lives and its consequences will be long lasting and very painful for many. It has highlighted the importance of health, safety and sustainability. It has also brought to the fore the importance of amenity management, seeking to keep our amenity spaces safe, healthy and fit for purpose, maintaining transport networks, our parks and more. It is vital that all of us can be assured that the operations undertaken are of the highest professional level carried out by trained and qualified staff fully following the principles of best practice and adhering to the standards set.

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

What happens in amenity impacts upon every UK citizen every day. The Amenity Forum promotes best practice and is recognised as the national voice on such matters. It seeks to ensure that 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 national governments in their implementation of the UK National Action Plan. The latter established a framework for community action to achieve sustainable use of pesticides and effective management of weeds, pests and diseases. Supporters of the Amenity Forum set a very high standard and are proud of its achievements.

This report refers to some of the activity over the twelve month period to 30th June 2020. It has certainly been a busy and, we believe, productive year. A key development is the Amenity Standard which was introduced across the UK at the start of 2020. It was formally launched in Scotland at a specially convened conference in Edinburgh hosted by the Scottish Government and introduced by their Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment. Other national launches had to be postponed because of the pandemic but it is already gaining traction across all nations and has been enthusiastically received.

**The report also briefly looks ahead at some of the challenges and opportunities with the on going review of the National Action Plan by national governments and dealing with the aftermath of the current crisis created by the pandemic.**



**Professor John Moverley OBE**  
Independent Chairman

*John Moverley*



# Some key achievement in this reporting period

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## Even without the implications of the pandemic, this has certainly been another year full of change, challenge and opportunity for the Forum.

There is much going on at policy level with the Government undertaking a full review of the National Action Plan and a further review of pesticide policy anticipated afterwards. The Forum is fully contributing to the review where requested.

The Forum continues to respond to a wide range of consultations and has been fully engaged with partners and all stakeholders dealing with the implications of the pandemic. The role of amenity managers during this time has been essential maintaining our transport networks, parks and more. It has not been easy working conditions and they deserve all our thanks.

The year has also seen continued 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. Also it is important to ensure the debate is not an either or but based on an integrated approach making use of all the tools available in the most effective way. The year has also seen the debate widened to take account of the environmental costs of different approaches.

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.

Our strategy for the Forum identifies key priorities and actions. At the top of our list are three – assisting everyone engaged to further develop integrated management approaches, establish a sector wide Amenity 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 in the form of approved and authorised plant protection products. The use of the latter within an integrated approach and applied by trained and approved professionals often remains the most effective and efficient both in action and in impact on the environment and carbon footprint.

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



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## 1. 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 meet 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, greenkeepers, groundsmen and more; a full list can be found on our website. We have increasing numbers of Local Authorities as associate members.

**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. One way to ensure a professional approach is to engage the services or talk to our members.**

## 2. Our Updating Events

This year we had **planned 13 events** across the country because of the pandemic, sadly only 6 were held but each of these was very well attended and received. The events provide a valuable way of updating the sector on current issues and a great networking opportunity. Copy of the presentations for these events are available on our website. A great deal of the issues raised have been covered in a series of video clips produced by our Chairman. These can be found on the Amenity Forum You Tube site along with a range of other short videos on topics of current interest.

**This year, our chairman has created a series of video clips to address some of the current issues, all can be found on our YouTube Channel – Amenity Forum.**



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## Our Conference

The Amenity Forum conference has established itself as the must attend event for all involved or interested in amenity management. Feedback from the 2019 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.

**Following a further review of the current external environment and changing restrictions from the intended venue, it has been decided to deliver the 2020 conference in an online format using specialist professional conferencing facilities.**



### 3. Communication

The need to communicate with the public, stakeholders and indeed across our sector has never been so important. There is much more public interest in amenity management in all its forms 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 both 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. It has had a full refresh in the last year and seen as a vital tool in communicating what the sector does and its importance. Why not take a look at the website and help us cascade its content as widely as possible.

**Www.getbritainmoving.uk**, 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.



The Forum continues to be 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 in the national and local press as well as trade, amenity and sports related publications.

Two other significant developments in the year has been much increased social media activity with excellent responses from all. Our chairman has also produced a number of video clips on a wide range of topics disseminated to both members and our wider audience. The Amenity Forum You Tube site is well worth a look.

Each month, there is newsletter sent out to supporters highlighting examples of good practice and keeping all informed.

# Amenity Forum Conference 2020

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## AMENITY FORUM CONFERENCE 2020

THURSDAY 15TH OCTOBER 2020

*“Amenity Management - Planning for the future”*

**Via Zoom video conferencing**

**BOOKING:** Admin@amenityforum.net

**COST:** Registration is **£50.00** + vat

Full programme available on the Forum website:

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

## 4. 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 along with considering 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)**

Also, in 2019, we produced two documents giving a full guide and toolkit for preparing Integrated Weed Management Plans. These are available to download for members free and at a small charge to others. Please contact Kate at [admin@amenityforum.net](mailto:admin@amenityforum.net) for further information.



## 5. Why Amenity Matters

This year we have produced a double sided A5 leaflet for wide distribution and for linking especially to our Get Moving website. A summary of the text of the leaflet is given below and for further information or assistance in circulating, please contact Kate at [admin@amenityforum.net](mailto:admin@amenityforum.net).

*Amenity is the sector that ensures roads, rail, pavements, parks, sports areas, lawns and indeed all green spaces are maintained in an effective manner seeking to provide a safe, healthy and sustainable environment with green spaces and areas fit for purpose.*

*Amenity affects all of us, every day of our lives. Whether you are visiting a park, playing golf or football, simply driving to work or taking the train. Without amenity, none of these things would be possible.*

How can the Amenity Forum work with you?

- Are you an organisation that works in the Amenity sector?

**Find out more about the value of membership!**

- Are you a stakeholder that would like to show your support to our work and ethos?

**Get in touch to start a conversation!**

**The management of weeds, plant diseases and pests in amenity impacts upon every UK citizen every day.**

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## 6. Local Authority Initiative

In 2018 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.

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 its integrated management planning toolkit, also worked with member organisation, Parks for London, to produce a version of this specifically geared to meet requirements of Local Authorities and help in creating policy documentation. This was launched early in 2020.

We recognise that there is more for us to do in this area and encourage all Local Authorities across the UK to get involved.



## 7. Amenity Standard



At the 2019 Amenity Forum conference and exhibition, the new Amenity Standard was introduced. It was formally launched in Scotland early in 2020 by the Minister for the Environment and Rural Affairs. A launch event was planned for Wales in May, but this had to be postponed and will be re-arranged. However, the Standard is now all systems go.

This Standard is akin to the Red Tractor in food and agriculture. Those operating to the Standard and displaying its logo will demonstrate their adherence to recognised assured standards in all tasks undertaken.

There is much greater public and political interest related to weed, pest and disease management, especially linked to chemical use. The reasons why plant protecting product need to be used, as part of a fully integrated approach, in seeking to provide safe, healthy amenity spaces and sports surfaces, is not always clear to the public and stakeholders.

The wider public users of amenity spaces need to have clear assurances that all those involved in creating and maintaining safe, healthy sports grounds and other amenity spaces, operate at the highest professional standards; and whether using chemical or non-chemical methods, such operations are undertaken by competent, trained personnel following well designed and managed plans.



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The introduction of the Standard has already generated widespread support including from the national governments of the UK.

At its formal launch, Professor John Moverley, Chairman of the Amenity Forum, said *“We feel this to be exactly the right time to introduce this Standard which we hope will be sought and demanded from all who operate in amenity management. It will give assurance that work undertaken is of the highest professional standards by those committed to best practice in every aspect of operations. Those who work in amenity management undertake important and essential operations seeking to create safe and healthy amenity and sports spaces fit for purpose. Introduction of the Standard is we believe a major step and demonstrates once again the high levels of professionalism to be found in our sector”*

The Amenity Standard is a bespoke quality management standard that has been developed, as a partnership, by all sides of the amenity sector. Those operating to the Standard will be committed to an integrated approach to amenity management and to the highest professional standards. They will be members of an approved assurance scheme recognised by the Standard. The cost of operating the Standard is covered by fees from providers of these recognised assurance schemes and there will be no extra cost to individual organisations.

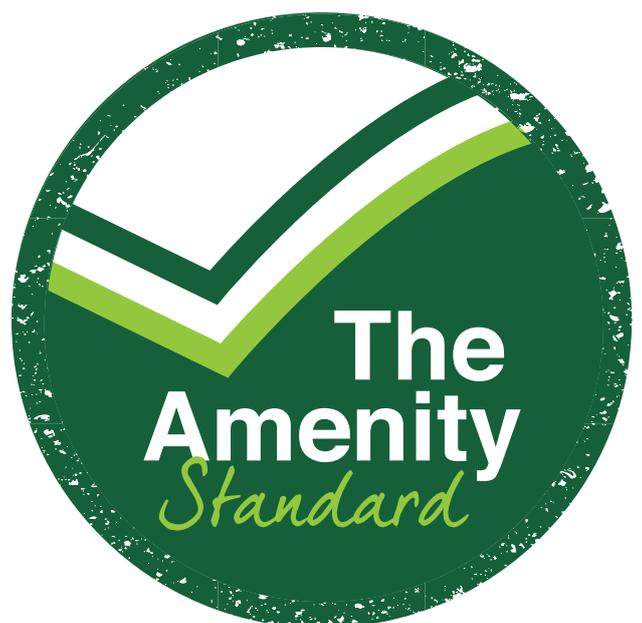
The Amenity Standard will be operated by the Amenity Forum who will maintain, review and regularly update matters as required. They will audit each scheme operator to quality assure that they are operating to agreed standards. In turn, the scheme operators audit their members and approved organisations to assure that they are meeting the requirements of the Amenity Standard. At its launch, three Assurance Schemes are to be recognised by the Standard – the Property Care Association Scheme for Invasive Weed Management and two schemes offered by BASIS Registration, Lawn Assured and Amenity Assured. The aim is for more schemes to be recognised as the Standard develops so that all sectors of amenity are covered.

The need to move quickly on this is recognised by the sector. Clearly embedding the Amenity Standard will need time; it is not a quick fix. Its introduction will need to be accompanied by a communication strategy both externally and internally. However, if this step is not taken, the great progress made to date in increasing the recognition of the professionalism within the amenity sector may be threatened. It will not always be easy, but it is the right step, at the right time.

Hopefully the logo will soon appear on amenity areas across the UK and be upheld with pride by operators. For more information contact [Admin@amenityforum.net](mailto:Admin@amenityforum.net).

#### The Amenity Standard is designed to:

- Provide an industry benchmark
- Provide a basis for continuous improvement
- Focus on quality as an objective
- Provide assurances about the quality of the approved organisation and maintenance of the amenity space
- Ensure that quality assurance scheme operators recognised under this Standard use auditors with technical knowledge and experience of the sector concerned
- Promote confidence in organisations operating and providing resources in the amenity sector by provision of a robust and transparent standard



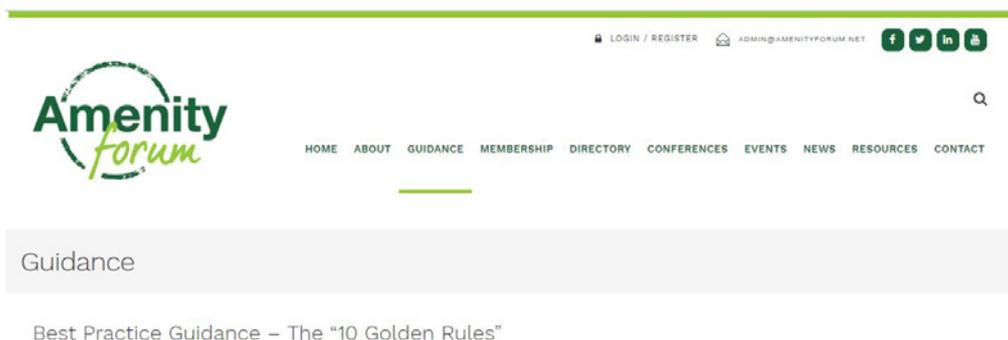
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## 8. Website and Guidance Notes

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.

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

The Forum's guidance notes have been expanded in the year both in topics covered and also to include specific guidance to Local Authority members and our important fact sheets for the wider public and general stakeholder groups. As said, these are available on our website. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact [admin@amenityforum.net](mailto:admin@amenityforum.net)



## 9. Sprayer Operator of the Year Awards

These awards seek to recognise the quality and high level of performance by sprayer operators in our sector. In 2019, we saw a record entry with category winners announced at the Forum conference in October. The overall winner was announced at BIGGA's BTME Event in January 2020.

The results for 2019 were:

**OVERALL WINNER –  
SPRAYER OPERATOR OF THE YEAR 2019**

Paul Gater, Caldy Golf Club

**Landscape and industrial -  
using handheld & tractor mounted equipment**

Winner: Ian Millward, Millward Forestry

Runner Up: Daniel Lewis, Manchester City

**Sports turf -  
using tractor mounted & handheld equipment**

Winner: Paul Gater, Caldy Golf Club

Runner Up: Jason Garlick, JMG Amenity



The awards seek to highlight the real professionalism that exists within operators throughout the amenity sector. Sadly we are not running the event in 2020 because of the pandemic but it will return in 2021. We are very grateful to our sponsors for making this award possible along with all the high standard of entrants keen to participate.

# Conclusion

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**This document has set out some of the Forum's key achievements in 2019/20. There has been significant progress in achievements and in lifting both the profile and practice across the sector.**

The year has seen major challenge and the impact of the pandemic will be felt by us all for quite some time. It has however highlighted how those in our sector are quick to adapt and ensure the tasks they undertake seek to provide safe, healthy, sustainable amenity spaces and sports areas fit for purpose for everyone, and to do this in a way minimising impact on the environment and carbon footprint. What happens in amenity management impacts on every UK citizen every day.

**For further information on Forum activities,**



[www.amenityforum.co.uk](http://www.amenityforum.co.uk)  
[admin@amenityforum.net](mailto:admin@amenityforum.net)



[www.getbritainmoving.uk](http://www.getbritainmoving.uk)



[www.amenitystandard.co.uk](http://www.amenitystandard.co.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 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 conference



Production of a regular Newsletter and Chairman's Update



Dialogue with government, media, stakeholders, etc. influencing and more



Social media activity, video presentations



The Amenity Forum is a company limited by guarantee Registration Number 10204434

**[admin@amenityforum.net](mailto:admin@amenityforum.net)   [www.amenityforum.co.uk](http://www.amenityforum.co.uk)   [www.getbritainmoving.co.uk](http://www.getbritainmoving.co.uk)**