

P-06-1535 Ban plastic mesh netting in grass turf in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 6 Hydref 2025
Petitions Committee | 6 October 2025

Reference: SR25/11930-9

Petition Number: P-06-1535

Petition title: Ban plastic mesh netting in grass turf in Wales

Text of petition: The practice of incorporating plastic mesh netting in grass turf has been an increasingly worrying development over the last few years. It has an awful effect on our environment, can lead to wildlife becoming caught up in the netting once it becomes exposed and is something that is simply not needed.

The plastic netting itself never actually goes away, it just breaks down into smaller and smaller microplastic particles, polluting our soil and releasing the chemicals contained in it.

Some turf producers use this plastic netting to save themselves money as they can lift the turf sooner rather than waiting for the grass root system to become fully established.

What they are actually doing is deliberately putting plastic into the soil at a time when we need to be taking urgent action to reduce our use of single use plastics.

The plastics industry is the fastest growing source of climate emissions in the world. It emits around 3.4% of world climate emissions and is forecast to rise to 19% by 2040 if we don't tackle it now. The UK Turfgrass Growers Association has recently voted to ban plastic netting in turf by its producers (which will take effect from 31st October 2026).

We call on Welsh Government to follow suit and amend housing regulations to ban the use of this turf in new housing developments in Wales.

<https://www.dlf.co.uk/news/2025/january/tga-bans-plastic-netting-in-turfgrass-production>



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1. Background

Plastic mesh netting can be used when growing turf. The netting is placed when grass seed is being sown and holds the plants together, making it easier for turf to be lifted and transported. Growing turf with netting can be quicker than conventional methods because the turf can be removed before an extensive grass root network has grown.

Plastic turf netting is usually made from polypropylene or nylon, according to Turfonline. These plastics are made of many distinct chemicals. Plastics left in the environment will break down over time into microplastics that infiltrate soil, freshwater, and marine environments. These microplastics can then accumulate in living structures, potentially impacting human and environmental health. Some “chemicals of concern” in plastics can affect human nervous and hormonal systems and others are known to increase cancer risk.

The Turfgrass Growers Association (TGA) is an industry body comprising around 50 organisations who collectively produce “approximately 70% of the cultivated turf grown in the British Isles”. In January 2025, it announced its members had voted 17-to-1 in favour of banning the use of plastic netting in turf production from October 2026. Its press release addressed the current lack of suitable alternatives to plastic netting in turf production:

Despite industry efforts to develop alternatives, there are currently no proven, cost-effective bio-degradable netting solutions widely available that meet the practical and economic requirements of turf production. While some options, such as degradable or biobased netting, have shown promise, challenges remain regarding durability, affordability, and large-scale adoption. This underscores the importance of continued research and innovation to find viable, sustainable solutions.

The TGA decision to ban plastic netting only applies to its member organisations.

2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government has introduced a number of measures aiming to curb plastic pollution, including:

- introducing a charge on single-use carrier bags;
- banning microbeads in wash-off personal care products; and
- banning commonly littered single-use plastic products, most recently legislating to ban the supply of wet wipes that contain plastic from December 2026.

In responding to this petition, the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, said a consideration of the potential risks of plastic turf mesh will contribute to an upcoming review of the Welsh Government's Natural Resources Policy before the end of this Senedd. He further says that housing developers are required to “consider positive biodiversity outcomes when new development is proposed and to promote more sustainable behaviours and outcomes whenever possible” as part of the Welsh Government's Planning Policy Wales and Future Wales planning framework.

3. Welsh Parliament action

On 13 May 2025, Janet Finch-Saunders MS tabled a question for the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government, Jayne Bryant MS asking:

What consideration has the Cabinet Secretary given to requiring all new build housing with gardens to only have turf that is plastic free?

The Cabinet Secretary responded on 22 May 2025:

The Welsh Government is committed to tackling plastic pollution. We regularly review and update our policies to ensure they effectively address environmental challenges. We are currently considering the potential risks posed by microplastics as part of an evidence gathering process to inform potential further measures to reduce plastic pollution and promote the use of sustainable alternatives in various sectors.

Future Wales and Planning Policy Wales set out our approach to providing a net benefit for biodiversity as part of all new development. Whilst Planning Policy Wales does not explicitly cover the use of artificial grass or plastic netting turf in new build housing with gardens, the principles of good placemaking require housing developers to consider positive biodiversity outcomes when

new development is proposed and to promote more sustainable behaviours and outcomes wherever possible.

Additionally, there has been extensive Senedd action considering potential prohibitions of artificial grass, which is distinct from plastic turf meshing. Further information can be found in the [November 2024 research briefing for petition P-06-1472](#) "Protect our wildlife...ban plastic grass in Wales!".

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