

# Building

## A Garden Room

Top tips from a landscape designer.

# Vibrant

## Veggies

Get sowing now for a bumper crop of tasty veggies.

Issue 05 | Spring 2022

# OUTDOOR LIVING & LIFESTYLE



## Pot Plants

Tips for low maintenance garden pots



## Colour All Year

Plant these now for stunning year-round colour



# Welcome to your magazine



**Orla McGoldrick**

Consumer Marketing Manager at Tobermore

With a new year comes new ideas and a fresh list of projects for the home and garden. Whether you're planning to revamp your planting or take on a whole garden renovation this year, now's the time to get started.

As many of us continue to work from home, outdoor rooms are becoming a common feature in gardens across the UK and Ireland. We asked landscape designer, Vanessa Drew, to give us her top tips for planning and building a garden room – turn to page 12 to see her recommendations.

Elsewhere in this season's mag, we're looking at some ways to bring year-round interest to your garden, as well as some tips for low maintenance (and beautiful!) outdoor pot plants.

We travelled to Colchester to speak with a Tobermore customer whose garden needed a re-design after 20 years of neglect. And finally we take a closer look at one of the most popular Tobermore paving products, Tegula.

Happy gardening!



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# Spring Garden checklist

As your garden emerges from hibernation, here are some things to do to help you get ready for the year ahead.



## Get weeding

With the arrival of warmer weather, weed growth is never far behind! Staying on top of the weeding is a chore, but an important one. Regular weeding – either by hand or with a spade – while the weeds are still small will help to keep them under control. Use a few treatments of boiling water to get rid of weeds between paving slabs.



## Sow vegetables

The ideal time to sow your vegetable patch is early to mid-April. First of all, clear the area so it's free of weeds. Then fertilise it well. Once the soil reaches 6°C, you'll be safe to sow your seeds straight into the ground. **Turn to page 14 to see our recommendations for vibrant veggies to sow this spring.**

## Deadhead your flowers

Now's the time to deadhead any of your early flowering bulbs, such as tulips and daffodils. But be sure to leave the foliage alone so it can die back naturally.

## Feed your garden

After a long winter, your garden will thank you for giving it a good feed where needed. Add a layer of mulch to the base of shrubs and trees. And give hedges a good feed of slow release fertiliser. The upside is they'll put out strong, healthy growth – just be prepared to go to work with your shears later on in the year!



## Watch out for late frosts

It's easy to get lulled into a false sense of security once the warmer weather arrives. But frosts are still possible in spring, so keep a close eye on the weather.

Be prepared to protect your flowers and buds, in particular. If frosts look likely, cover these vulnerable plants with a cloche or use a horticultural fleece.



# LARGER POTS NEED LESS ATTENTION

Small pots dry out much faster than larger ones. So if you don't want to be watering your pot plants too frequently, **avoid having too many small pots.**



You can mix the compost with a water-control product too, such as Phostrogen Slow Release Plant Food and Moisture Control. The moisture retaining granules help to hold on to moisture for longer – **meaning you may only need to water your pots once a week, rather than a few times a week.**

# BRING IN SOME TOPIARY

Topiary is a fantastic thing to introduce into any size of garden, and it works especially well in pots.

**It can give your garden instant structure and create a dramatic focal point.**

Topiary is expensive, but generally makes for a fairly low maintenance pot option. Typical varieties that can be found in topiary form are box, bay, privet and yew. They are all fairly hardy to our climate, but some can still succumb to frost if they aren't kept in a sheltered position.



# Top Tips for Tip Top Pots

Follow these pointers for low maintenance pots to be proud of..

## LEAVE YOUR POTS EMPTY OVER WINTER

You may opt to find some evergreen plants to fill your pots, or use winter flowering varieties to ensure year-round interest.

If you have particularly attractive pots, however, why not leave them empty over winter? **There's nothing more low maintenance than an empty pot.** Just be sure to plant it back up for spring!



## PICK EASY-CARE PLANTS

No plant is 100% self-sufficient. At the very least they will need watering and feeding.

But some great, easy-to-care-for plants to use in pots include hydrangeas, plectranthus, grasses, nepeta and heuchera.

Box is another great option for pots, or any slow-growing evergreen – such as yew. **Simply buy it at the size you want it, then trim it when it gets too big.**





# Bringing *year-round colour* to your garden

The summer months needn't get all the glory. **This year, follow these quick tips to bring interest and colour to your garden through every season.**



**Summer is the season our gardens really come to life. But why should it be the only season? With the right planting, you can bring interest to your garden all year round.**

## Start with structure

Shrubs, trees and hedging are the key here. Structural plants like these will help bring interest in winter, when other plants are dormant. **Think about the interest you'd like in each season and choose shrubs and trees that bring something different to your garden.** For example, *Parthenocissus henryana* or Chinese Virginia creeper, which has gorgeous white-veined leaves in summer, turning a rich red in autumn.

## Winter

Winter needn't be a season of desolation in your garden. **You can still enjoy wonderful displays of colour, with**

**flowers such as crocuses, snowdrops and cyclamens** – many of which can be planted in autumn and will flower in winter and early spring.

## Spring

**To bring spring colour to your garden, opt for perennials** that don't mind being deadheaded or chopped back. This will help

to encourage new growth and an abundance of beautiful spring blooms. Try dahlias, cosmos and lupins.



## Summer

Most of the time, summer is the season your garden really comes to life. **But to keep the colour and interest, you need to keep your plants well watered and fed, particularly through hot and dry weather.** Use summer as your opportunity to take cuttings from different plants. It's a great way to make sure you have a stock of new plants to provide colour at other times of year.

## Autumn

**For vibrant colour in autumn, try planting up containers such as pots, old crates or tubs.**

Grasses, evergreens and plants with colourful stems all look great in autumn – such as Fisher's Form and dogwood.





*Starting*  
**afresh**

Lynda Albrow and her family decided to turn their large suburban garden into the outdoor space they'd always wanted.



With a garden in need of a lot of TLC, Lynda Albrow decided to get stuck into an ambitious makeover, transforming her home's entire outdoor space.

"Our garden hadn't been touched since we moved into the house 20 years ago," says Lynda. "It was in such a sorry state. But we decided to take the plunge and finally create the garden we'd always wanted."

**Lynda didn't hold back when it came to designing the garden of her dreams.**

"We wanted to completely redesign the driveway, from the side gate up to the garage which is situated in the back garden, as well as add a new patio and small circular paved area for our garden table and chairs."

With a north-facing garden, Lynda was also keen to ensure the new patio could capture some sunlight through the day.

"Beyond the hard landscaping, we wanted the rest of the garden laid out lawn," continues Lynda. "Ultimately, we wanted a blank canvas to then develop the planting and landscaping ourselves over the coming years."

**For Lynda, the end result is a big success.**

"We are extremely happy with the completed project," she says. "The quality of Tobermore's products is exceptional and we've been especially pleased with the professionalism of our contractor, Bespoke Services."

"Next we plan on planting up the beds, making new beds, erecting a pergola and hopefully planting a few trees, too. It's going to be an ever-evolving project, but we hope to complete the front garden landscaping using the same Tobermore products and our contractor in the next couple of years."



**Products used:**

**Sienna Setts**  
- Sandstone

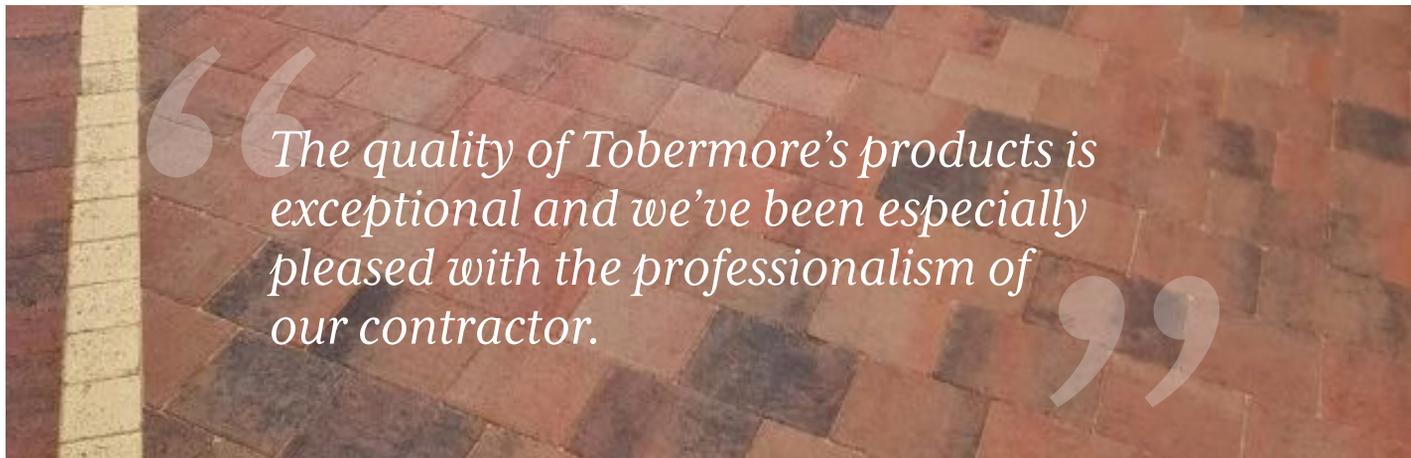
[View](#)

**Shannon**  
- Heather

[View](#)

**Historic Flag**  
- Heather

[View](#)



*"The quality of Tobermore's products is exceptional and we've been especially pleased with the professionalism of our contractor."*



# Focus on... *Tegula*

One of our best-selling block paving products, Tegula is ideal for driveways, patios and garden paths.



*Whether your home is traditional or contemporary, Tegula will bring a subtle yet stately finishing touch to your property.*

Tegula block paving is one of our most popular products, chosen by customers for everything from driveway renovation projects, to patios and garden paths.

All our Tegula blocks are made at the Tobermore factory using a process called 'tumbling', which gives the blocks an aged, antique appearance.



Tegula is paving that's designed to evoke the feeling of timeless sophistication and elegance. The tumbled effect gives the stones an antique appearance, offering the perfect balance of old and new.

These rich and textured stones will add style and character wherever you choose to use it, working well with both modern and period properties. Available in a range of vibrant and long lasting colours from Bracken or Heather to Charcoal, you can tailor the paving to your home.

Find out more about Tegula and get inspiration for your outdoor space. [Go to the Tobermore website.](#)





# Building a Garden room

*Garden rooms have become a popular way to add space for a home office, kids' play room or hideout. Tobermore's resident landscape designer, Vanessa Drew, shares six things to consider when building an outdoor room.*



## 1. Building regulations

Whatever you want a garden room for, its proportions will be determined by the size of your garden – and also how much you're willing to spend. Think about the style and appearance you'd like your garden room to have. These days, anything from a traditional wooden-clad building to an all-glass box can be achieved.

**To create a truly comfortable and usable space, you'll need to insulate your garden room and place it on solid foundations to avoid damp problems.** The base can be concrete, or a raised wooden frame – which has the added benefit of helping with airflow under the building.

Of course, all of this depends on whether you'll need planning permission or not. Thankfully, for most projects where the floor area of the building is less than 15m<sup>2</sup>, building regulations won't apply. **Always check with your local planning authority.**



## 2. Planning and positioning

Positioning your garden room in the right place in your garden is key. Will you be placing it in a sunny or shady place? Think carefully about the direction it faces, too. For example, a glass-fronted garden room that faces south will likely get very hot in the summer months.

**You should also consider how your garden room interacts with your house. When you look out onto your garden from your home, would the garden room look attractive?**

Something that's a little boring to think about but an absolute must when planning your garden room is access for building materials and equipment. You may need to consider removing fences or walls to allow access for deliveries and machinery, for example.



### 3. Budgeting

The big question is always, “how much will it cost?”. This really depends on whether you intend to go for a bespoke design or a ready-made option. **The size, types of materials used and finishes will also have a big impact on cost.** A kit-build garden room will typically start at around £1,500, reaching more than £30,000 for a luxury kit option. If you want to have one built to your own specification, you should allow around £1,000 per square metre.

### 4. Power and lights

If you want your garden room to be truly usable, you’ll want to have it wired for electricity. It may not seem essential, but at the very least you’ll want some lighting for darker days and evenings. Plug sockets may come in useful if you want wi-fi internet access or simply to be able to vacuum your outdoor room. **Be sure to use a qualified electrician to carry out the work.**



### 6. Paving and planting

When planning your garden room, you should also think carefully about how the building will integrate with your garden. If you simply drop a structure in with no thought to the immediate area around it, there’s a risk it could look ‘stuck on’.

**A great way to successfully integrate a garden room with your house and garden is to add a path to it.** A physical link like this will help to tie your garden room into its surroundings and draw the eye towards it.

To soften the structure and help to blend it with your garden, think carefully about planting and paving. A patio area outside your garden room can be a great feature and provide useful outdoor space, while further linking the building to your garden.



### 5. Renewable power

A big plus for anyone interested in a garden room is the current crop of renewable power options. If you are sustainably minded – or perhaps don’t want to dig up your garden to install chunky power cables underground – you may want to consider powering your garden room from an off-grid source, such as solar panels.

**You shouldn’t need planning permission to install solar panels, but if you live in a conservation area, you’ll need to double check with your local authority first.**

A well-built, sturdy garden room will be able to take the weight of solar panels, but you’d be sensible to get a qualified installer to check before you make a final decision. Solar panels can be a hefty investment, so planning ahead really is key.



Photo credit: Garden Room Sales, Magherafelt, Northern Ireland





**Carrots** are easy to grow from seed and take up little space. You can even grow them in containers – an old metal waste paper basket is perfect. Sow small batches from early spring onwards – this will give you harvests for most of the year.



**Beetroot** is easy to grow, doesn't need much space and is perfect for beginner veg growers. It's also nutritious, tasty and a very versatile ingredient. Sow beetroot seeds little and often, for a continuous crop. Harvest your beetroot when the roots are young, and just about golf ball sized.

# Vibrant veggies

## to grow at home

Growing veg is a great way to bring colour to your garden, with the added bonus of tasty, home grown food on your table. Here are five vibrant veggies you can sow this spring.



**Cauliflowers** can be grown all year round. But be warned – they take up a lot of space, need rich, deep soil and plenty of water, particularly in warmer weather. You don't have to stop at the common white varieties – attractive and tasty yellow, green or purple ones can all be enjoyed

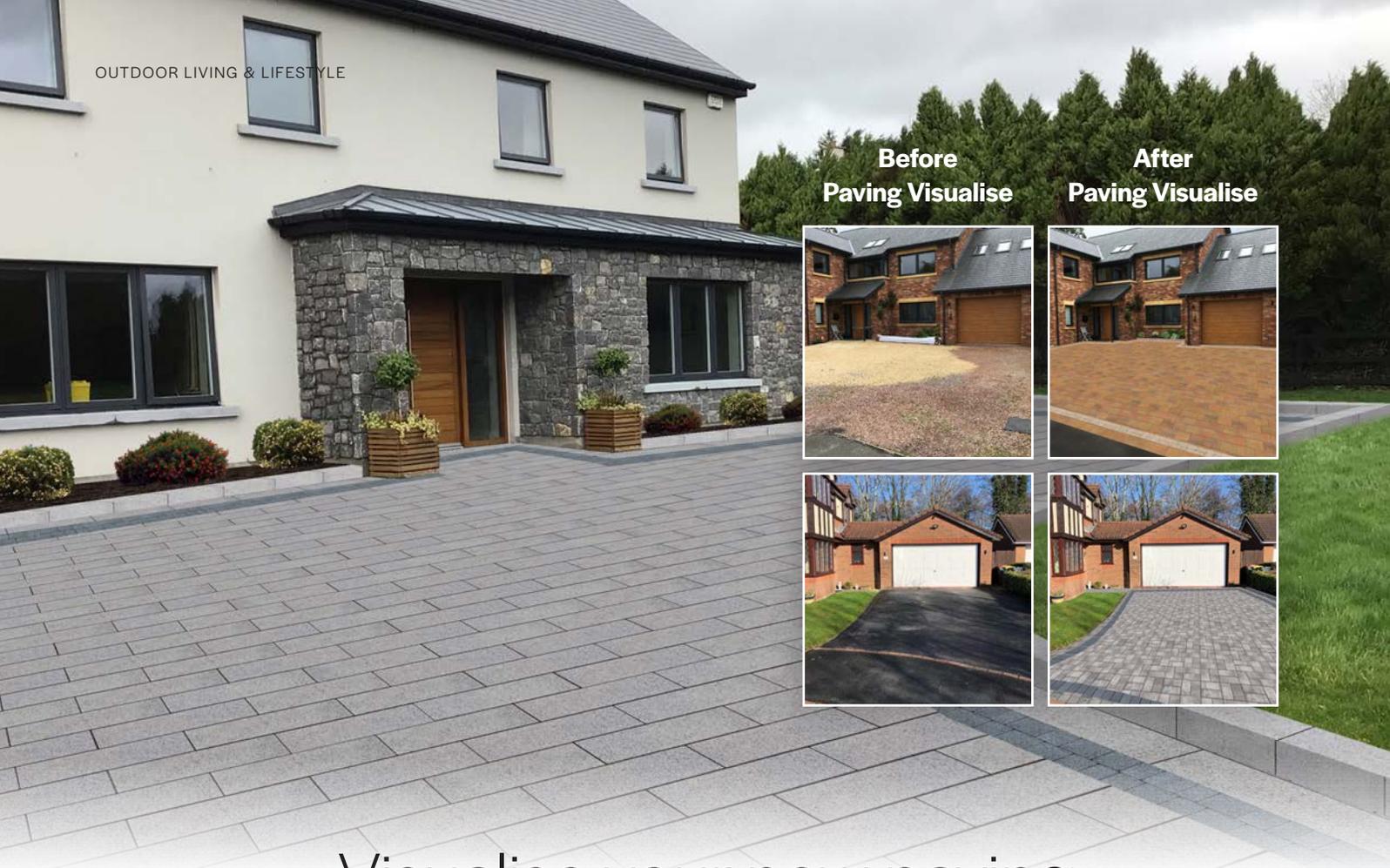


**Swiss chard** is a delicious alternative to spinach. Plus, it's easy to grow and fairly low maintenance. It has beautiful ornamental stems and leaves, and is at home in containers, borders and vegetable plots.



**Kohlrabi** may look strange, but it has a delicious broccoli-like flavour. Green varieties should be sown from mid-spring to mid-summer for cropping in summer. Hardier purple varieties can be sown from mid-summer for harvesting in autumn and winter.





# Visualise your new paving **At Your Home**

Use our Paving Visualise Service to get a computer generated image of your new paving at your home.

## 4 simple steps...

Send a picture

Describe your project

Choose your paving

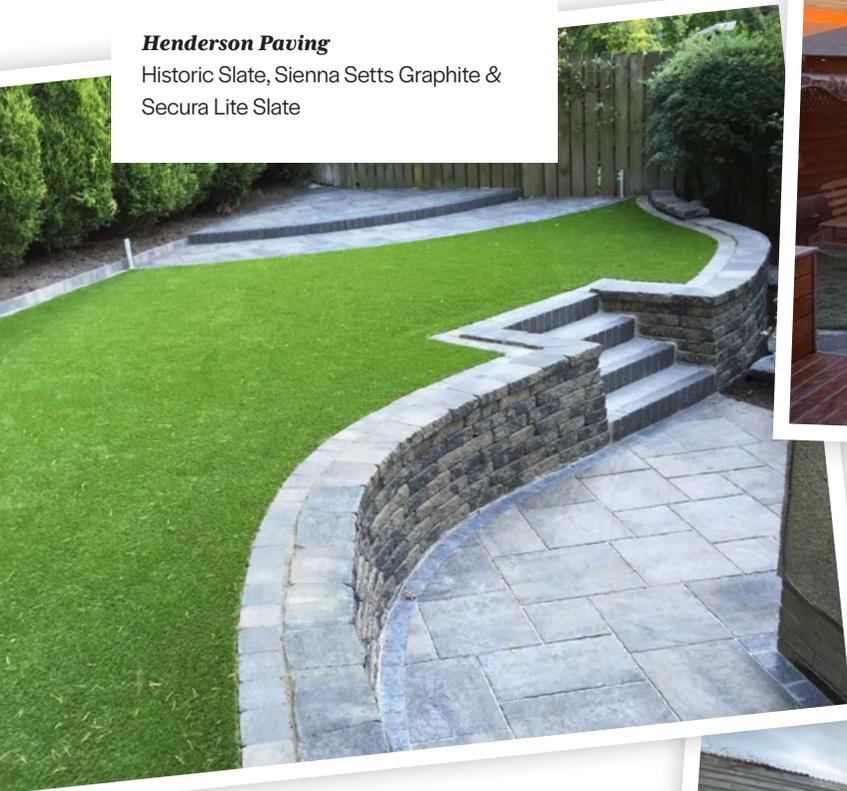
Receive your image

[Try the Paving Visualisation Service](#)



**Henderson Paving**

Historic Slate, Sienna Setts Graphite & Secura Lite Slate



**AK Paving Southport**

Tegula Slate

# Quick Project Pics

Take inspiration from these project photos, sent in by our Approved Contractors.



**Parkmill Paving & Landscaping**

Historic Bracken



**West Wales Paving**

Sienna Graphite & Silver

Looking to avoid the summer rush to find a contractor? Get in early and find a Tobermore Approved Contractor for your next project.

[Find a contractor](#)



# Online Tools for Perfect Planning

The Tobermore website is home to a host of digital tools and services to help you plan, design and build your outdoor space.



## Landscape Design Service

Our landscape design consultation service is available in a range of packages to suit all projects and budgets. Consultations are provided on-site for our customers in Northern Ireland and ROI, and by video call for our customers in England, Scotland and Wales.

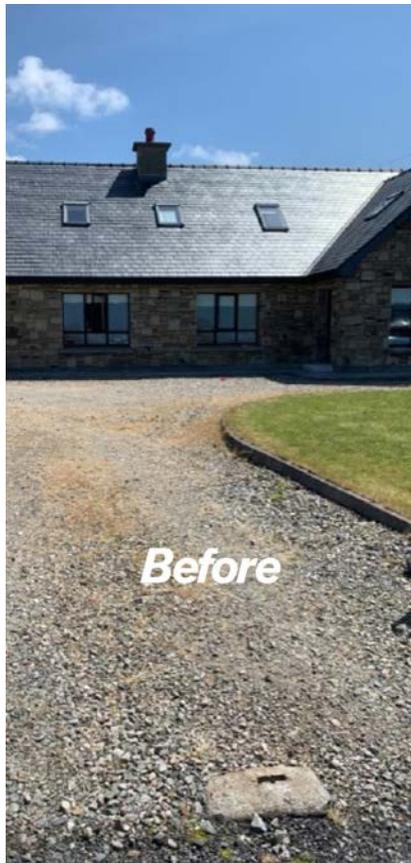
[Click here to find out more about our landscape design service.](#)

## Paving Creator

Paving Creator is our free tool to help you experiment with various paving design options and products. Simply specify whether you're designing a driveway or patio, choose a 'scene' in which to view your paving, and get creative! If you like what you create, you can easily request a quote for the paving products directly through the Paving Creator tool.

[Click here to find out more about Paving Creator.](#)





## Paving Visualisation Service

Bring your paving project to life by visualising your paving choice at your own property. Send us a picture of your driveway or patio area with a description of your project, advise us on what products and colours you would like for your project, and we'll send you a computer generated image of your paving choice at your home.

[Click here to find out more about our paving visualisation service.](#)

## How To Buy Your Paving

You can find information on the Tobermore website about how to choose and buy paving products.

**Click here to find a Tobermore stockist in your area.**





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