



WILLESDEN GREEN TOWN TEAM

MEETING MINUTES

AGENDA: CIL Trees-In-Tank Project ('Willesden Green Wood')

DATE (TIME): Wednesday 6th March, 2019 (5.30pm)

LOCATION: Delipod Hub, Willesden Green Library

ATTENDEES PRESENT: Cllr Lia Colacicco (Mapesbury Ward), Cllr Tom Miller (Willesden Green Ward), Cllr Elliot Chappell (Willesden Green Ward), Grace Nelson (Brent Town Centre Manager), Philip Stagles (Neighbourhood Manager), Elayne Coakes (WGTT COO), Shadi Jian-Zibae (WGTT Director), Deborah Mahs (WGTT Greening), Beth Downes (WGTT Greening), Marilyn Naden (WGRA Secretary), Ollie Mabley (Heritage Lottery Project –Jewish Cemetery)

APOLOGIES: Annie Walshe (Business Association Chair), Gerry Weston (MAPRA Chair), Cllr Janice Long (Dudden Hill Ward), Cllr Fleur Donnelly-Jackson, Abraham Ryan (WGTT Greening), Ursula Mitchell (WGTT Greening)

MINUTES PREPARED BY: Shadi Jian-Zibae

1. INTRODUCTIONS & BACKGROUND OF CIL TREE-IN-TANK PROJECT

After a brief introductions by those present, **Shadi Jian-Zibae (SJ)** set out the purpose of the meeting which was to discuss and reach a consensus on questions around the appearance, size and placement of the tanks along Willesden Green high street, for the new CIL Tree-in-Tank project.

Elayne Coakes (EC) provided a brief background of how the project developed and why the Willesden Green Town Team (WGTT) had proposed the use of galvanised steel tanks. WGTT, in discussions with Brent Council and Grace Nelson (GN) about planting more trees along Willesden Green high street, was informed that no further trees could be planted directly into the pavements. This is due to the difficulty of navigating the underlying road infrastructure. Therefore the solution proposed by Brent Council was to use moveable planters containing trees and plants. For Health & Safety reasons, Brent Council advised that these planters would have to be impact resistant- ie steel pots that could withstand a vehicle collision and cost in the region of £200-£400 each. However, WGTT were able to find a more environmentally friendly and economical alternatives in the shape of recycled, galvanised steel water tanks and through a supplier who was prepared to sell them for a more affordable amount of £10-£20 each.

2. CIL TREE-IN-TANK PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

Shadi (SJ) explained that in developing the project, the Town Team had debated the different options for the appearance and preferred size of the tanks and the type of underplanting.

A) Tank Aesthetics

Two different treatments of the tanks had been explored and the Group was invited to inspect these and select their preferred option.

- i. **Buffed 'natural' steel finish** – tanks were cleaned by volunteers using wire brushes, removing any blemishes and rust that had tarnished the surface. No other coating or finish was added to this.
- ii. **Spray Painted finish** - tanks were professionally spray painted by a local car body workshop – two sides were sprayed with a silver primer (to prevent rust) and the other two sides with the primer and a coat of matt black paint.

WGTT presented the pros and cons of each treatment.

- i. **Buffed – PROS:** Uniformity - keeping the same natural (unpainted) surface will ensure the new 'CIL Tree' tanks complement and match other existing tanks on the high street (e.g at Library). Environment - By retaining their original surface, the tanks are upcycled in the most environmentally friendly and sustainable way possible. Maintenance - Should the tanks become discoloured, rusted or graffitied, they can easily be rebuffered in situ and/or



cleaned using graffiti remover products. **CONS:** Rust - Tanks may rust and will discolour over time, giving the high street the appearance of being less well maintained. Manpower/Logistics - Local volunteers required to carry out initial and ongoing maintenance work

- ii. **Painted – PROS:** Professional Finish - A more 'polished' and professional finish to the tanks can be achieved, which would more easily hide blemishes. A black or silver painted surface is also more in keeping with existing street furniture (eg. bins, railings and lampposts etc). Manpower/Logistics - Local Car body workshop will take tanks to their workshop and complete the spray painting ready for collection according to an agreed time schedule and at no cost. **CONS:** Maintenance – Onsite respraying would be difficult (due to cost, safety and obstruction of pavement) and moving the tanks back to the car body workshop to be re-sprayed, would not be possible due the weight of the soil and plants. Environment – spray painting the tanks would diminish their sustainable/recycled credentials, with the process of spraying releasing more toxins into the environment.

Attendees were asked to vote for their preferred option. Of the 11 present, 8 voted in favour of keeping the tanks in their original colour and simply buffing them versus painting. Three abstained (including EC and SJ). It was generally felt that the natural metal colour enhanced the project's environmental / green credentials and emphasized the fact that the tanks were recycled. **Cllr Tom Miller (TM)** supported the 'natural' state of the tanks as he felt the spray painted tanks could be seen as part of the Council's street furniture and that for him, the idea was to show this as a distinctive community project.

B) Tank Placement & Adopting-a-Tree

Shadi (SJ) provided a map showing the Allocated and Proposed sites that had been identified for placement of the 31 tanks, stretching from Willesden Green station along the High Road up to the junction with Duddenhill Lane. Locations were selected on the basis of pavement width and the position of existing trees and for those already allocated, the willingness of local businesses to 'adopt' and maintain a tree. Seven businesses have already committed to adopting a tree along the high street.

Shadi (SJ) –asked **Grace Nelson (GN)** or **Philip Stagles (PS)** (and anyone else present) to introduce any local businesses who might be interested in adopting a Tree-in-Tank near their premises.

Elayne (EC) explained that a concern had been raised by **Cllr Janice Long (JL)** about the potential risk for tanks causing an obstruction for those with disabilities, particularly the blind and that tanks should therefore be placed at the edge of the pavement along the curb or within the boundary of curtilages of premises.

Cllr Tom Miller (TM) - agreed with this concern and suggested that WGTT contact the Disabilities Forum for advice.

Philip Stagles (PS) - offered to contact the Disabilities Forum and arrange a meeting when he, a representative from the Disabilities Forum and WGTT could walk the high street to agree on tank placements.

Action – Philip Stagles (PS) to contact the Disabilities Forum : **Update 13.3.19 – Philip (PS)** –reported after consultation with Brent Council Senior Management, that they were unable to authorise the placement of tanks on public highways. That means tanks can only be placed within the curtilages of premises on the high street and not at the edge of the curb as recommended by Cllrs Long and Miller.

Action – Shadi (SJ) to email Philip with dates to meet to walk the high street (to assess placement in accordance with above restrictions). **(SJ emailed 11.3.19)**

Action – Philip Stagles (PS) and Grace Nelson (GN) - to put local businesses in touch with WGTT, if they are interested in adopting a tree.

Philip Stagles (PS) - asked if the Adoptive Businesses would be given clear instructions regarding care and maintenance of the Trees and Tanks. **Shadi (SJ)** –confirmed that a 'Care and Maintenance Pack' would be supplied to each business with their tree and agreed that if complaints were received about the maintenance of the tree, they could report this directly to WGTT and adoption would be reviewed.

Deborah Mahs (DM) – suggested that WGTT could hold a competition for the 'Best Looking Tank' to encourage care and ongoing maintenance.

Action – Shadi (SJ) & Elayne (EC) to prepare costs for a 'Care and Maintenance Pack' to be provided to each shop/business agreeing to adopt a tank. The Care pack would also include some cleaning equipment (e.g to buff tanks and remove graffiti).

Action – Shadi (SJ) & Elayne (EC) to look at the possibility of incorporating a competition date/guidelines to be distributed with the 'Care and Maintenance Pack'



Tank Dimensions- Shadi (SJ) provided approximate dimensions for two tank sizes – large [around 100 gallons = 26 inch (d) x 27 inch (h) x 37 inch (l)] and small [around 60 gallons = 22 inch (d) x 24 inch (h) x 29 inch (l)]. Due to the narrow pavements of Willesden Green, WGTT proposed that the smaller sized tanks (closer to 60 gallons) would be better suited for the Trees project, and would be less costly to purchase and fill with soil and plants. Attendees were in agreement that the larger tanks would be more difficult to accommodate.

Cllr Lia Colaciccio (LC) suggested that WGTT could approach Veolia about the compost that they produce from their Green Bins and the possibility of obtaining some of this free of charge. **Philip Stagles (PS)** - offered to contact Veolia to assist with this enquiry.

Action – Philip Stagles (PS) to contact Veolia : **Update 13.3.19 –Philip (PS)** – advised that WGTT can apply through Veolia’s Community Recycling Fund for ‘Pro-Grow’ their branded soil conditioner. If successful this could be supplied free of charge.

C) Other Tank Details

Plaques -Shadi (SJ) advised that each tanks would have an engraved metal plaque attached which would include some information that included: ‘Brent CIL Funded Trees 2018’, a tree reference number and reference to this being a WGTT initiative. (And space permitting notice about not littering or sitting on tanks). Cllr Lia Colaciccio (LC) advised that she had the contact details for a good sign manufacturer and could share this with WGTT.

Action – Cllr Lia Colaciccio (LC) to provide contact details of signage manufacturer to WGTT.

Anti-Sitting. Security Device and Drainage blocks - **Shadi (SJ)** advised that the tanks would also be fitted with ‘anti-sitting’ devices (exact specs to be confirmed) as well as metal bars and wooden posts to secure trees and prevent theft. There was some discussion around the option of raising the tanks onto wooden blocks to allow for better drainage. **Elayne (EC)** raised concerns about the possibility that this might make it easier for tanks to be stolen.

Action – Shadi (SJ) / Elayne (EC) – to continue to explore options and costs for these solutions.

3. TREES AND UNDERPLANTING

Shadi (SJ) distributed a summary of the initial underplanting scheme for the Trees. The planting scheme in the CIL proposal included a variety of plants that were perennials, attractive to insects, could grow well in planters and wouldn’t over power the tree (ie. smaller growth), hardy and provided colour throughout the seasons.

Marilyn Naden (MN) – suggested underplanting with grasses that are known to absorb air pollution. **Marilyn (MN)** subsequently provided the name of this grass (Miscanthus) but advised that these were unsuitable for the tanks as they would grow too tall.

Action – Shadi (SJ) / Elayne (EC) – to continue to explore options and costs for underplanting together with WGTT Gardening Team. Once approved, a bulk order will be placed ready for the first round of tree planting.

Elayne (EC) confirmed that two Brent Council Tree Officers (Lawrence Usherwood and Garry Rimmer) had been consulted and approved of the trees selected by the Town Team for this project. **The Trees**, Ornamental Amelanchier, were chosen on the basis of their hardiness, attractiveness to insects and birds (bearing flowers and fruit), providing not only a source of food but interest and colour to the high street throughout the seasons, and finally their suitability to the planters (growing to a maximum height of 4-5 meters over 20 years). An initial order of 20 Amelanchier trees planted in pots (10x pink, 10x white - approx. 2 metres in height) have been purchased and delivered, ready for planting.

Philip Stagles (PS) - asked about the life expectancy of the tanks since, although they were designed to hold water, the tanks were not designed to be exposed to the elements in the long term. **PS** – suggested that a contingency should be made for repairs and disposal of any damaged tanks in the future.

Elayne (EC) and Shadi (SJ) – agreed that the tanks were sufficiently durable – being made from steel and anticipated a life expectancy of at least 5 years, however agreed to look into a contingency fund for future disposal of any damaged tanks.



Philip Stagles (PS) - asked about the time scale for planting of the trees in tanks and placement along the high street.

Elayne (EC) – advised two planting seasons – April to June and September to October.

Shadi (SJ) – advised that planting would be organised in batches (approx. 3-5 tanks per batch), as tanks, soil and plants would have to be purchased, transported and stored somewhere secure in preparation for planting. Volunteers would be needed to assist with this planting. **Shadi (SJ)** asked **Marilyn Naden (MN)** if WGRA members might be interested to help with planting/transportation maybe offer storage solutions etc. **Marilyn (MN)** agreed that an email could be sent to their database to recruit volunteers for this project.

Action – Shadi (SJ) to review costing and adjust budget to allow a maintenance and disposal contingency.

Action – Shadi (SJ) to provide **Marilyn Naden (MN)** with details of activities and planting dates in order to circulate to WGRA membership.