

Annual Review

2023

It has been a busy year for the Trees and Design Action Group and the first task of this report is to thank all those who have given time and support for our various activities. TDAG's "success" depends on this collaborative, cross-disciplinary engagement.

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Our key challenges for 2023 remained the need to take action to address the existential threats of climate change, biodiversity loss and deliver the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Trees, of course, can only be part of the solution but they have risen up the agenda as having a significant role to play in our urban environments.

Below are some key TDAG activities in 2023 and some tasks for 2024.

Futurebuild

In 2023 we had a busy stand with great sponsorship support and a visit from Minister Trudy Harrison from Defra who spoke at the conference and told the audience that her visit to the TDAG stand was going to be a highlight. In TDAG's Futurebuild newsletter for 2023 we highlighted an opinion piece on why we must all work together for trees. The full text is [here](#).

Futurebuild 2024 will take place at ExCel, London from 5-7th March. TDAG will have a stand (C42 in the Sustainable Infrastructure area) and we will focus on 'working together for trees' with a number of partners: Forest Research, Greater London Authority, Manchester City of Trees, The Mersey Forest, Trees for Cities and the Woodland Trust. Treeconomics will be providing an interactive workshop on 7th March from 12.30-13.15 on 'finding your way through the urban forest' as this is an opportunity to move the discussion to a wider, cross-disciplinary audience.

Generally, there is an excellent conference and seminar programme across several stages. Entry to the show is free and you can register [here](#).

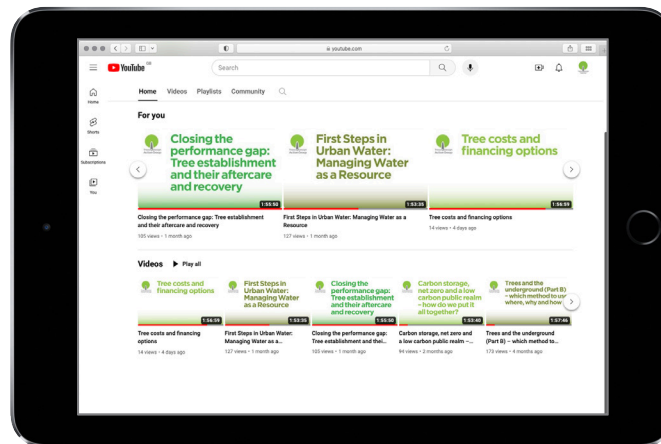
Online Seminars

We started to use Zoom during the Covid lock-downs and then found that this has benefits enabling people to join in the discussion from across the UK and from overseas with regular audiences of 150+ people. We have decided to continue to offer an online seminar programme responding to topics raised by TDAG supporters.



Futurebuild 2023: Minister Trudy Harrison, Kieron Doick (Forest Research) and Sue James on the TDAG stand

Full details of our 2024 seminars are on our website [Events](#) page as part of a rolling programme. Recordings of past events are available on TDAG's [YouTube Channel](#), and via our [Past Events](#) page.



TDAG's growing YouTube Channel holds all of our seminar recordings

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The first seminar for 2024 will take place on 16th January and will look at tree-related activities from around the UK – you can register [here](#).

Other TDAG in person and hybrid events Creating climate resilient urban treescapes

Held in April 2023 in Birmingham and organized by TDAG and the RECLAIM Network.

Trees, Planning and Development in Scotland – How can the planning system, policy and practice help protect and expand our trees and which make up our Urban Forests?

This in person session organized by Fiona Melville and Sue James under a ‘TDAG Scotland’ banner was held on 19th May. We hope that more regional events can be held in the future.

Trees, People and the Built Environment 5 (TPBE5)

Sue James was pleased to be invited to chair the steering group for this triennial conference hosted once again by the Institute of Chartered Foresters. A great deal of time and discussion has been taking place throughout the year in planning the conference and it will take place on 23rd and 24th April 2024 in Birmingham (full details [here](#)).

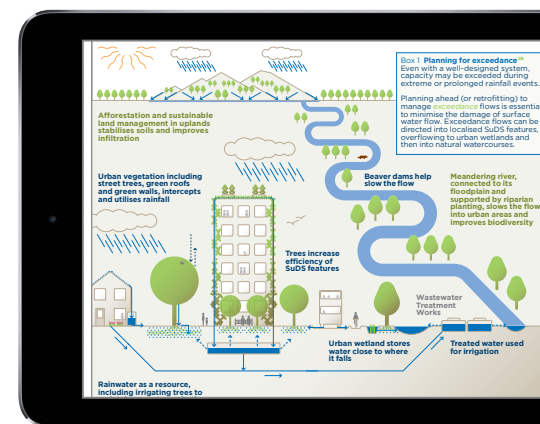
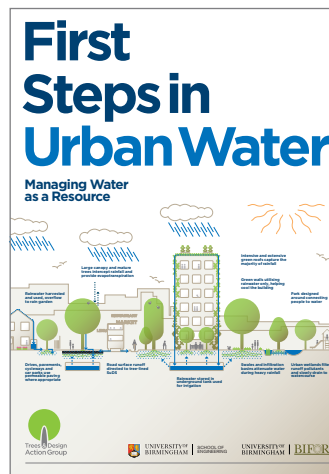
There will be a change for 2024 with less focus on pure research and more on the two very different roles for trees – how they can improve the quality of place for both people and nature and how they can contribute to the net zero carbon ambition for buildings and the built environment plus, of course, supported by the evidence needed for effective practice.

Consultations

We have not been able to respond to as many consultations as we would have wished, but we did respond to the *Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy*. All TDAG consultation responses are on the website under [Resources](#).



Trees, Planning and Development in Scotland seminar held at the University of Stirling



First Steps in Urban Water – the fifth guide in our ongoing series

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TDAG publications

First Steps in Urban Water: Managing Water as a Resource was published in July. It was produced by TDAG, Birmingham Institute of Forest Research and the School of Engineering of the University of Birmingham in 2023. Emma Ferranti acknowledges EPSRC Fellowship EP/R007365/1. We are grateful for the Steering Committee who guided content – in particular Susannah Gill (Mersey Forest) and Sue Illman (Illman Young).

Trees, Planning and Development: A Guide for Delivery – Section Two: Planning the urban forest: how to develop a Strategy that delivers was published alongside an update to Section One, an appendix with Urban Forest Indicators and a Briefing Note 01 with the key laws relating to trees in all four countries of the UK. As these are planning documents, they will be subject to regular updating.

We are planning a **First Steps in Urban Canopy Cover** guide for publication later in 2024.

TDAG contributions to publications by others

Subsidence of low-rise buildings published by the Institution of Structural Engineers (2023).

Manual of Blue-Green Infrastructure published by the Institution of Civil Engineers (2023).

Continuing work for 2024

Highway tree management – operations note 51

TDAG is working with the Forestry Commission and others on technical/construction drawings for street tree planting. This is intended to provide the necessary technical support for the forthcoming update of *Manual for Streets*.

Subsidence

We hope to continue working with the NHBC and others on low carbon foundation design for new housing which is also tree resilient so that we don't perpetuate the problems of subsidence into new homes in the future.



Trees, Planning and Development: A Guide for Delivery – Section Two compliments and builds on Section One

All are welcome to join our seminars, make suggestions for seminar topics or offer to take part, as well as suggest subjects for future guidance documents. We look forward to more positive actions for trees in 2024.

Sue James, Emma Ferranti and Deanne Brettle for the Trees and Design Action Group.



tdag.org.uk

**Working in collaboration
for better places**