



# Tree success stories

Chair: **Tony Kirkham MBE**, author, tree expert, TDAG Patron and former Head of the Arboretum, and Horticultural Services at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

## A project that has stood the test of time

**Jane Findlay**, Founder, Fira and Past-President of the Landscape Institute

## The importance of social and cultural values for resilient treescapes

**Rachel Bryan**, Green and Healthy City Project Officer, City of Portsmouth

## Achieving tree success in complex, dense urban environments

**Sharon Durdant-Hollamby**, Director, Sharon Hosegood Associates

## Regeneration led by landscape – Sighthill, Glasgow

**Rory Wilson**, Director, LDA Design

## Partners:

**Landscape Institute, Town and Country Planning Association, Urban Design Group**

**NB:** All recordings and presentations are on the TDAG website along with the information and links from the chat. <https://www.tdag.org.uk/past-events.html>

## QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND REFERENCES

All the talks were inspiring with a common theme demonstrating what could be achieved if the with the right approach and delivery.

**Jane Findlay** provided some very useful insights and lessons showing what has made Derwenthorpe an ongoing success over time for trees, landscape and residents. One of the key takeaways was the importance of having quality nursery stock (as well as a good team and a responsive client!)

**ACTION:** Let us know if you are interested in a seminar on tree procurement).

Question for Jane: You mentioned that the Trust retained stewardship - how were the ongoing stewardship cost issues handled?

- It would be great to hear more about the long-term stewardship (by residents?) - what it looks like and how it has been supported
- Question - what happens when the stewardship time frame runs out after 20 years?
  - From Chris Baines: I worked for a year with JRF to develop the brief, emphasising the need for integrated surface water management and long-term landscape management. This client is pretty exceptional.

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- From Jane: JRHT continue and will continue to manage the village. The Management plan we produced was for 20 years.

Question for Jane, beautifully designed site: Do you have any information on the quantity or percentage of existing trees retained through the project and potential for increased canopy with the new trees that have been established (in other words, trees and canopy now vs. pre-construction)? Thank you!

- Very inspiring approach Jane. Thank you for your answer! I love the mindset to "work with what is there" rather than you as you say, "engineering it out."

Question for Jane: What made JRF decide this was the right way to develop, and how can we ensure others take this approach?

- From Jane: Important question, they have experienced poor GI outcomes on some of their earlier developments where they didn't have control. So, it became their policy

Question for Jane: It would be great to hear more about the long-term stewardship (by residents?) - what it looks like and how it has been supported

Question for Jane: Is there a mechanism in place to manage long term external amendments? Do residents need consent for extensions/removal of GI within properties?

Question for Jane: You mentioned that the existing hedgerows were laid, within the management plan have they been relayed?

- From Jane: Good question, not sure.
- Are they planned to be managed hedgerows, or left now to reach their natural form?
- From Jane: The original laying was to invigorate and thicken the overgrown hedges. Our 20 plan was to allow them to become a more natural form, with laying and trimming where they may interfere with watercourses, swales, cycleways and footpaths.

Question for Jane: Were any trees planted in the highways on Derwenthorpe? If so, were these planted before the roads went in or after?

**Rachel Bryan** gave an inspiring talk about the approach taken by Portsmouth City Council on dealing with low and not well distributed canopy cover with a focus on the social and cultural value of trees to local residents. She made the point that the council aimed to 'plant trees for benefits' and not be driven by planting targets! The council is also focusing on getting more trees planted in private gardens

Question for Rachel: Are you also working with the Planning Officers to embed the tree planting into policy?

- From Rachel: We have a Resilient Treescape Group – with colleagues from Parks, Landscape Architects, Planning, Housing and Highways who all sit on the group

Comment: It's great to see an interest from locals in Tree Wardening- our Portsmouth and Southsea Tree Warden Network are a fantastic group of volunteers doing some truly impressive work across the city — not only planting trees, but also nurturing young trees in local tree nurseries and engaging the community through initiatives like working with local schools

Comment for Rachel: Great to see enthusiasm for planting in private gardens to bolster urban tree canopy / benefits.

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Were the trees planted in residents' gardens funded via any specific programme, like UTC or LATF?

- From Rachel: Residents purchased the trees themselves. The offer allowed them to purchase at a reduced rate compared to garden centre prices.
- Recent research by the tree council showed that free trees [which some councils are offering] have a lower establishment rate than those with a nominal cost:-  
<https://treecouncil.org.uk/first-of-its-kind-study-shows-tree-schemes-can-establish-trees-cost-effectively-at-scale/>

Question for Rachel: Great work Rachel - do the property owners have a choice on what will be planted in their gardens ? in Bournemouth in the past we had a two for one policy for TPO tree loss and replanting - one of the trees to be planted was chosen by the property owner with advice as well. Patrick.

**Sharon Durdant-Hollamby** outlined the challenges that constricted urban sites can present when providing housing with all the benefits of trees and green infrastructure that people need for health and wellbeing. The approach also demonstrates that the 3-30-300 rule can be put into practice effectively. One of the key elements for the success of the projects was the effective collaboration between all those involved and the innovative approach of having regular Arboricultural Solutions Meetings where issues could be resolved across the team. The high standards imposed by the local authority planning department also raised the standards. This and regular site inspections at RIBA stages 5 and 6.

Question for Sharon: Did this scheme need to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain targets to mitigate the loss of linear habitats?

Comment: Arboricultural Clerk of Works - Something I've always offered as an independent service.

Comment: Sharon - I am glad that you said that trees can be close to buildings - we have a TDAG seminar at Futurebuild on this on 14th May - all the details will be in the February newsletter.

- From my experience, developers are very keen to squeeze in trees close to buildings to reduce the quantity of open space they provide, so I'm not a big encourager of that. Admittedly there needs to be a cultural change to reduce 'fear' of trees.
- Not sure the residents with trees close to their windows will be a fan of those trees.
  - Perhaps they will increasingly in summer as they experience the shading value of trees?
  - From Sharon: It is important to understand the benefits and disservices of the trees close to the buildings. A residents' survey would be useful
  - SFAIK all research indicates that proximity to trees is beneficial to mental, and indeed physical health.  
However, I live in a small estate surrounded by mature trees, and some residents complain about the shade, gloom, damp, mould, leaves in the gutters etc, etc. and indeed we have to have lights on all the time even in midsummer. The trees are gradually failing due to age, but my proposals for replanting, which require the approval of a majority of residents, have so far failed to gain it.

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Sometimes the qualities manifest to those aware of ecosystem benefits are not appreciated by those directly affected.

- Making rooms dark and gloomy, depressing mood and diminishing mental health, for some.
- Birch only casts light and dappled shade anyway
- Energy saving? The US Forest Service (USFS) research paper on energy saving of urban trees  
[https://www.fs.usda.gov/psw/publications/mcpherson/psw\\_2003\\_mcpherson005.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/psw/publications/mcpherson/psw_2003_mcpherson005.pdf)
- What about shading of playgrounds - rather than having them be deserts of gravel? Children need shade too.
  - From Rachel: In Portsmouth we used a UTCF grant last winter to plant trees around playgrounds specifically to provide shade in these locations
  - Always something I've done wherever possible. I've planted such a tree south of playgrounds at each of the schools our children have attended
  - Regarding trees in school yards, there is a great organization in the States. They have monthly webinars (free) <https://www.greenschoolyards.org/>

**Rory Wilson** demonstrated the benefits of a landscape led approach to development at Sighthill near Glasgow City Centre which focused on outcomes and changed a locked in, former industrial site into a quality place to live with a short active travel route into the city centre.

Question for Rory : With the local authority taking on maintenance, did you specifically look for low maintenance options for the garden spine which sounds like the most 'maintenance' heavy element?

Question for Rory: Can you explain a bit more about the SMART element in the SuDS scheme? (Answer provided online)

Question for Rory: I believe that Stockholm system was used for some of street trees - how are the trees performing in comparison to those in cells?

Answer provided online – the trees using the Stockholm system had smaller trunks after 5 years than the other trees.

Did oak processionary moth arrive on the new trees or were they discovered in the area? Yes, from imported trees. This raised the suggestion of having a tree procurement session.

- Re the difference between growth rates - Is that on the same species?
- Picking up on the Stockholm system, is it a time issue i.e. the trees take longer but get there eventually...or perhaps all these systems are still at an early stage in the long life of trees.

The spectre of OPM highlights the dangers of imports. There is a growing list of pests and diseases that we need to be mindful of.

- Indeed. ..and the importance of species diversity for bio-resilience
- Do UK nurseries have the capacity to meet the demand? No, because prices for imports are much cheaper. How then can UK production be supported?

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Comment on the involvement of young people as ‘Ambassadors’ at Sighthill:

Yes, great that young people are involved, since Public Health Scotland has shown that if young people don't have gardens, they're less likely to engage with green and natural spaces in the wider environment.

### REFERENCES

The Tree Care Manual by Kenton Rogers and Tony Kirkham. A new and updated edition available here:

<https://www.trees.org.uk/Book-Shop/Products/The-Tree-Care-Manual>

Portsmouth Urban Forest Masterplan

<https://treeconomics.co.uk/welcome-to-portsmouths-urban-forest-master-plan/>

How to value the social and cultural value of trees

<https://treecouncil.org.uk/guidance-resources/how-to-measure-the-social-and-cultural-value-of-trees/>

3-30-300 Principle <https://nbsi.eu/330300-principle/>

PLANTING BEDS IN THE CITY OF STOCKHOLM - A HANDBOOK (2017):

<https://web.archive.org/web/20241204155653/https://www.fao.org/sustainable-forest-management/toolbox/tools/tool-detail/en/c/522328/>

Stockholm Tree Pits: <https://stockholmtreepits.co.uk/>

Sheffield Street Tre <https://sheffieldstreettrepartnership>

### THANKS

- Thank you. that was really positive and inspiring.
- Many thanks for this event and the speakers who made it such a success
- Thank you for this webinar it has been very informative and thanks to the speakers
- Great set of talks. It is two years since I was working in north Glasgow and it is great to see the progress at Sighthill. LDA has done a fantastic job. Also great to hear about how JRHT - a model client but showing how this role should be carried out.
- Thank you all ,really useful presentations
- Thank you very much for the excellent session and presentations!
- Thanks all - great talks!
- Thank you all for this webinar, really interesting and very informative.
- Thank you for another excellent TDAG forum
- Thank you all, great and interesting presentations of what can be achieved!
- Excellent talks. Thanks.
- Really good to have such heartening stories of brilliant designs and execution, thanks very much to all contributors, including the chatterers!
- Many thanks. Good morning from Las Vegas NV