Third Meeting of the Tree Warden Pilot Advisory Group  
Daubeney Laboratory, Magdalen College, 7 Dec 2019, 10.30am – 4pm

Attending:
1. Dave Ellwand – Wirral (North)
2. Diane Woodward – Warwick (West Midlands)
3. Dick Walters – Eastleigh (South Central)
4. John Fleetwood – Broadland (East Anglia)
5. Julie Bolton – West Sussex (South East)
6. Mike Higgins – Pembrokeshire (Wales)
7. Sam Village – Leicestershire (East Midlands)
8. Spencer Keys – South Hams (South West)
9. Sara Lom – CEO, The Tree Council
11. Clare Bowen – Director of Programmes, Partnerships & Comms, The Tree Council
14. Ian McDermott, Birmingham Tree People
15. Richard Ellison, Deputy Rep, East Midlands
16. Kevin Mason, Deputy Rep, East Anglia

Apologies - Catherine Lloyd – Perth and Kinross (Scotland), Mary Parker – Deputy SE

11 – 12pm  **Tour of Oxford Botanic Garden, led by Curators of the Botanic Garden**
12 – 1pm   **Working sandwich lunch @ The Old Kitchen Bar, Magdalen College, Oxford University**
1 – 4pm    **Meeting at Daubeney Laboratory, Oxford University**

1. **Welcome & actions arising from previous meeting**

Sara Lom welcomed the group and thanked them for travelling from far afield to attend this final PAG meeting of the year. She warmly welcomed two deputies Richard and Kevin who joined the meeting for the first time and Mac, invited as a guest to share his huge experience on the Tree Warden training.

The actions arising from the previous meeting were checked and had either been delivered or were covered in the meeting agenda.
2. **Overview of TW scheme in 2019**

Clare gave an overview of the Tree Warden Scheme in 2019.

- 5 x successful Tree Warden Regional Forums
- 1 x National TW Coordinator Workshop
- 3 x Pilot Advisory Group meetings
- 5 x Ash dieback events including two in Wales, instigated by Mike Higgins and one led in Chichester by Julie Bolton – both PAG representatives
- 1 x Trial tree training day with the Arboricultural Association
- Network Rail local consultations with TWN including on the Reading Line working with the TWN.
- Development of a parish level ADB toolkit with support from Suffolk TWN
- TTC led many Tree Warden walks / talks / AGM support
- TTC supporting c 10 new network enquiries
- Grants awarded to TWN that applied to Tree Council Tree Futures fund
- GLA funding secured for three planting projects in London
- Consistent and ongoing comms between TC / Regions / Networks
- Increased proactive media opportunities at local and national level
- National Media Partner for National Tree Week
- Rise in profile of trees means that there are a lot of other local community tree groups including from Woodland Trust, Friends of the Earth, Extinction Rebellion etc. Opportunities to work with these groups but also huge opportunity to keep supporting and encouraging new TW networks.

3. **Coordinator Workshop report**

- As agreed at the second PAG meeting in 2019, following the 5 regional autumn forums, and before National Tree Week, TTC organised a national coordinator workshop in London’s Richmond Park on Friday 15 November to brings networks together and maintain momentum within the scheme.
- 17 networks from around the UK attended with a total of 33 people
- Tree warden training and materials, local tree strategies, media coverage and the direction of The Tree Council brand were discussed.
- We were then led on a guided walk of Richmond Park (NNR & SSI) by the Assistant Park Manager
- The Tree Council received really positive feedback from the day from delegates
- Diane and Sam commented that more information could have been sent out to delegates beforehand so that they could have had more time to familiarise themselves with the resources
- Delegates enjoyed meeting other tree wardens and making new connections.
- There was discussion about hosting events on a Friday due to heavier than normal traffic and having London as a venue. South London is not convenient for those travelling from the North but it’s always incredibly hard to make it convenient for everybody. The venue for national TW events changes annually to try and accommodate as many networks are possible. TTC will try to avoid Friday meetings where possible.
- There was discussion about the value of having field visits on the same day as a meeting. Mixed views on this. Some appreciated the opportunity to explore a new site, having taken the trouble to travel there, and others felt that the business of the meeting was more important and the meetings should last longer. TTC will bear this in mind when organising future meetings.
• John felt that the huge disparities between volunteer and LA-led networks needed to be addressed in greater detail. Volunteer-led groups often have fewer resources available. Funding can be a challenge for both.

4. The Tree Council Brand update
• Holly presented an update on the refreshed Tree Council brand work. She thanked the group for their input. TTC has consulted widely with partner organisations, digital experts, tree warden coordinators workshop, web surveys, Tree Council Trustees.
• The communication of a strong, coherent and resonant brand will support all The Tree Council’s organisational priorities in 2020, including nurturing and growing the Tree Warden Scheme in its 30th anniversary year.
• More broadly, trust in the charity sector is low in the UK. Brand is an essential tool in protecting and promoting the reputation of the organisation – which will be of particular importance to TTC as we seek to raise awareness of the charity and become more externally focused.
• Holly shared the proposed mission statement and brand values, and the working strapline – ‘Working Together for the Love of Trees’.
• Holly also shared the proposed new Tree Council logo and explained that next steps would be to explore how best to adapt this for the Tree Warden Scheme and individual networks.
• TTC were also working on a new Tree Warden section on the website – focusing on info for coordinators / info for new tree wardens / resources. All the content will be open access – no more password protected sections on the website.
• PAG will be sent a preview of the new pages for comment before the new website goes live.
• It is intended for the new logo to be rolled out at the beginning of 2020.
• Mac enquired about the budget for the rebrand work. Holly said that it came to a total of £10k including the redevelopment of a new website.
• There was discussion about the rebrand. It was welcomed to give the tree wardens and the tree council clarity of purpose and enable us to gain greater recognition at a local and national level.
• Diane felt that the TTC should do more to promote tree wardening nationally.
• Mike was very grateful to TTC for working with him to host the first hugely successful Ash Dieback conference in Wales in Spring 2019. He valued the skills and national context that TTC brought to the event and used it as an opportunity to promote tree wardening in Wales.

5. Training update
• Jon presented an update on Tree Warden training following feedback from the Coordinator Workshop and Arb Association trial training event.
• The feedback from tree wardens on the accredited ‘Arb for Non Arbs’ training was very good but would need to be tailored to tree wardens to make it fully relevant.
• Based on the feedback gathered so far, the core modules required for all new tree wardens were agreed as:
  o Trees & the law
  o Tree identification
  o Tree planting and care
  o Tree biology
  o Threats to tree health
• A full programme for each topic needs to be devised as well as developing the delivery mechanisms for the networks.
• These could include delivery in the classroom, by Local Authority officers, other experienced TW, through dedicated online courses e.g. Future Learn, videos on TTC website etc
• There is a strong desire to continue to include paper materials and update and review the handbook.
• Pros and cons of accreditation were discussed and overall it was felt that Tree Council accreditation should be explored, partly as an opportunity to enhance its strong brand, but it should not be mandatory.
• There was nervousness about providing volunteers with formal qualifications which may lead to tree wardens taking their responsibilities too far.
• It was felt that Parish Councils would welcome some sort of formal tree warden standard so that they could work with more confidence with tree wardens. This was not necessarily the case in urban areas.
• At the very least a certificate of training attendance should be issued to participants.
• These are all too familiar challenges of different networks in a hugely diverse scheme – the differences are especially noticeable in rural vs urban networks.
• The use of a Tree Warden logbook to record training and practical activities was well received.
• A common Tree Warden code of conduct outlining the dos and don’ts is crucial and needs to be issued centrally by TTC. Some networks already have this e.g. Pembrokeshire.
• Mac’s excellent tree warden training in the Birmingham was well established and successful and also very popular with new recruits. A good model to try and replicate where possible but relies heavily on the goodwill of expert individuals.
• Mac suggested creating a PAG sub-committee focused on training so that more in depth progress could be made. However, some of the group felt that as it was relevant to all the representatives, everyone should remain involved in the conversation.
• The group agreed that a training solution is now urgently required.
• It was agreed that no sub-committee would be formed, and that training should be the main focus of the next PAG meeting in February 2020. TTC would take the lead in , especially exploring realistic delivery mechanisms for the core modules.

6. National Tree Week update
• Sara gave a round-up of National Tree Week activities, including the successful media partnership with the Daily Mail.
• TTC are collaborating with other organisations in the tree sector including Trees for Cities, TCV, The Orchard Project, GLA, Woodland Trust, National Forest, FC, Defra and FoE to raise the profile of National Tree Week and awareness of the value of trees more broadly.
• The campaign pre-launched on 13 November and then formally on the first Saturday of National Tree Week. This is the first time in the paper’s history that the paper has been so focused on trees and climate change.
• The Daily Mail has a circulation of 1.1 million print copies daily and 6.6 million visits daily to their digital platforms.
• The campaign was multi-faceted with the following aims
  o Raise awareness of the importance of trees
  o Encourage tree planting with free tree give-aways
  o Raise funds for tree planting
  o Raise funds for planting 1,000 orchards in 1,000 schools
• The tagline was Be A Tree Angel – Help Make Britain Greener
• There were tree-related news stories and features, celebrity interviews, NTW listings, social media activity, podcasts and tree giveaways every day since Sat 23 Nov and this is anticipated until Christmas.
• The campaign so far has succeeded in hugely raising the profile of The Tree Council and National Tree Week and a number of tree wardens have been contacted by the Daily Mail for their stories.
• Fundraising is slow and steady so far with £21,000 raised from Daily Mail readers to help plant trees [To note: this grew to more than £1.5m pledged by Christmas].
• It was discussed that the concept of National Tree Week should be more closely associated to TTC. DM campaign will have helped with making this connection but still work to be done.
• Aside from the DM campaign, TW networks have been incredibly busy planting all over the country. Suffolk for instance had their most successful year yet distributing over 9,000 Woodland Trust whips to tree wardens around the county.
• Many of the Future Trees grantees (TTC grant fund) were also out and about planting in their schools and communities.
• The TTC team have also been out and about supporting events including a mass tree plant organised by the GLA / TfC in East London, oak woodland with young conservationist Amy Bray in Cumbria, a commemorative copse in Portsmouth, fruit trees for the community with the Tree Wardens in Sutton.

7. Fundraising update
Sara updated in recent fundraising activity
• GLA grant for three Tree Warden projects in London – successful!
• Urban Tree Challenge Fund application – unsuccessful
• People’s Postcode Lottery for Tree Warden training – successful!
• Daily Mail – fundraising starts 23 November
• Corporate enquiries – in development
• Trustee networking event – first event held!
• Other applications in the pipeline for 2020
• One small scale opportunity that the group might like to consider for their networks is the Sun’s 50th birthday grant fund. Opportunity to apply for between £2 - £20,000 funding for a local project. Clare to send round the link.

Diane asked whether TTC received any government funding and Sara responded that TTC does not receive any core funding from government but works closely with Defra and receives contracted work, (such as Ash Dieback planning) which is reviewed on an annual basis.
8. **The future of the PAG**
- It was felt that the group was gaining momentum and that it should continue into 2020.
- A lot of progress has been made in 2019 but there is still much work to be done.
- All those in the room were keen to continue in their role.
- It was agreed that Clare would get in touch with other Deputies and ask if they would like to continue or stand down. New Deputies might need to be appointed.
- Sam requested that the Regions should be re-defined and the group agreed to this.
- Sara said TTC was looking to appoint a Tree Warden Scheme Coordinator to support Clare in 2020.
- 2020 aims and objectives for the Advisory Group to be agreed by the group at the next meeting.
- The terms of reference of the group to be recirculated and reviewed for 2020 as well as the number of meetings per year.

**Next meeting**
Looking for a date w/c 10th February. Meeting place – Birmingham

*Action: Clare to set up a Doodle poll and find a venue.*

Sara thanked everyone for their commitment and the meeting closed.

**Summary of actions:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Who?</th>
<th>When?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 TTC to share new tree warden section on the website for comment before the new website goes live</td>
<td>Holly</td>
<td>Late Jan</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 TTC to circulate a tree warden code of conduct for review by the group</td>
<td>Clare</td>
<td>Late Jan</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Send around the Sun fundraising opportunity</td>
<td>Clare</td>
<td>December</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Review definition of the regions</td>
<td>All – Clare to coordinate</td>
<td>January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Review terms of reference and agree objectives and number of meetings for 2020</td>
<td>All – Clare to coordinate</td>
<td>January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Set new meeting date and venue</td>
<td>Clare</td>
<td>January</td>
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