



Big Tree Plant Assessment Panel

Venue: Groundwork London, Morley Street

Date and time: Wednesday 9th October 2013 10.00am – 3.00pm

1. Attendees:

Chair:	Peter Wilkinson (PW)	- The Next Field Ltd
	Alison Millward (AM)	- Alison Millward Associates Ltd
	Nerys Jones (NJ)	- Strategic Greenspace Consultant
	Tony Kirkham (TK)	- Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
	Tim Hughes (TH)	- Defra
	Mark Durk (MD)	- Forestry Commission
	Hannah Clay (HC)	- Groundwork London
	Laura Williams (LW)	- Groundwork London

1. PW introduced the meeting.

2. a. Progress to Date

MD provided an update on the latest figures including total number of trees committed and total amount of grants approved. It is anticipated that the 500,000th tree will be planted during National Tree Week. In addition to promoting Round 6 through the usual channels, the Forestry Commission has been working with a PR company which has resulted in a noted increase in additional applications from groups who are new to BTP. MD informed the group of the strategy for the remainder of the programme.

b. Silvanus Trust Research

TH informed the group that Defra's social research carried out by the Silvanus Trust is now complete. The report will soon be available on Defra's website and will be circulated through various mailing lists. It is hoped that the research will help inform the development of future grant schemes.

c. Monitoring and Interim Feedback

HC highlighted the main outcomes of a recent mid-programme review where projects have been requested to complete additional information on their projects to allow Gw and the FC to plan more effectively for variances in the coming year. Gw has also be carrying out monitoring visits of 10% of successful projects this summer, with final visits scheduled to complete by the end of October. It was been noted that the warm weather over the summer has adversely affected a number of the projects. AM suggested further support and guidance to groups on tree maintenance.

d. Guidance to Panel

MD provided guidance to the panel based on the agreed approach to assess projects. It was agreed that projects would be assessed in order of lowest unit costs first,

those projects scoring highest against the range of agreed criteria for quality (i.e. including deprivation and community engagement). MD advised that BTP should seek to approve projects which would give an overall running average of no more than £4.17/ tree, approve applications on condition of cost reduction where it is practicable and to be sympathetic to projects in rural areas having low costs per tree where deprivation may be more subjective.

3. Applications

All potential for conflicts of interest were highlighted when discussing and approving applications. It was also noted that all decisions would be ratified by Dominic Driver, of Forestry Commission, following the meeting.

4. Summary of Decisions

HC provided an update following the Panel decisions which highlighted the overall unit cost to the scheme.

5. AoB

The Panel was thanked for their help in deciding the six grants rounds and for their continued support to the Scheme.