NNR – AGM – 2nd November 2020

Attendees

Vanessa Smith Committee member/Chair

Dean Griffiths Committee member/Project Lead Designer/Vice Chair

Colin Cooper South West London Environmental Network (SWLEN)

Adrienne Collins Committee member/Secretary

Alan Smith Member: FoNNR

Stephen Lloyd Member: FoNNR / TCA

Ben Driver Member: FoNNR / TCA

Apologies

Lynn Halstead

Surya Cooper

Welcome to the first NNR zoom AGM. It’s been a difficult year with Covid-19.

Update from Dean

Statutory approval application has been submitted through Hounslow. This was previously not considered necessary, but it was deemed that the volume of displacement on site meant we needed to do this. We recently completed an ecological assessment, and the Flood Risk assessment also completed, with environmental consultants. Japanese knotweed management plans also submitted, co-ordinating with Tidal Crane Assoc., and we are in contact with Environment Agency to overlap the information on knotweed.

Another soil Analysis has been carried out (deep geo-technical survey). The last one was over a year ago, but since then the scope of the terracing has been reduced (now just the first 25 metres on south end of the site) so another borehole was done here to check, but nothing unexpected found. Some shallow contamination from recent use of the site and the layer of topsoil put on by LBH.

Approvals process was submitted a few weeks ago. Will be looking at this and will hopefully have determination on this by the beginning of December. Given the upcoming lockdown we are looking to adjust the timelines of things happening on site. We originally wanted this to begin before Christmas, but concern if work needs to stop partway through (especially on the river edge). Anticipating February start to major works, which still fits in well with the nesting seasons etc. 4-5 weeks excavation works, followed by the planting works over March (initially contractor planting, followed by community involvement in the planting programme).

Various preparatory works have been happening over recent months (entrance gates at the front which has improved the approach and visibility of the site). This gives us the ability to controls the gates during the main works. Planting nursery will be set up at the front, but ongoing restrictions may impact on this.

We have increased the habitat walls across the site, with hedgehog dens incorporated into the structures on these, and building up to constructing a series of bird (and bat) boxes. Considering sponsored bird boxes to get the community involved.

Funding and fundraising – we are continuing to approach and pursue various opportunities. Vanessa and Dean have been looking at some smaller applications, and Dean has also been working with Hounslow on some larger applications, but the current funding purse is looking quite good. Applying to the Grow Back Greener fund (£40K) which will help start establishing a longer-term structure for education and community engagement.

Collaborations (NNR & FoNNR) – we are pushing collaborations from an academic point of view to establish some substance at the site and the green research that NNR can provide (King College and Cardiff University). Also recently worked with Abundance London to identify and followed through with the planting of trees and a wildflower meadow on the London Road, which has had a positive effect on the local community and will enhance the ecology and habitat and will link with other green spaces including NNR.

Update from Hilary – Environment Agency managed to spray on the main riverbank in early October. Cordial and productive relationship. Paul Needham will continue to liaise to ensure that this mapped and managed. We are uncertain if LBH sprayed in NNR. Hillary has now left the area but has previously worked with Paul Needham mapping out the knotweed as her final part of the handover.

Kingfishers - Dean spent time with some experts recently which was informative and enjoyable, especially as a Kingfisher made an appearance while they were in the river. Locations established, and some adjustment made to where were will put one of these kingfisher nesting boxes, but others to remain where is originally planned. The smaller terracing plan has also input these decisions. We will of course keep the timescales in mind.

Debris Question - If there is there a plan about this going in the river/ending up in the river? The control of debris during the works as a full construction strategy, which has been approved by the EA. The river terracing is an exercise that will only be done at low tide, in 2 or 3 phases. This is a quick process because they are pre-constructed materials. Downstream there will be a silt barrier to catch anything that comes off these localised spots. Most of the inlet construction will take place with a dike type barrier, which be opened up at the last stage, and again a barrier downstream to catch any debris.

We are anticipating receiving a message from LBH soon advising us to stop any activity that may be going on due to Covid. Communication with LBH might appear to be sporadic at the moment, but a lot of technical communications are going on in the background. We are in a good place with progress. Funding may become more and more difficult in the future given the current circumstances, but NNR is a good position. Many funding opportunities are overwhelmed by responses, but we have chosen our options quite carefully. Mostly capital funding, but there are some applications that follow on with training and educational opportunities, and there will be other funding opportunities for these aspects in the future. Many funding opportunities are either times specific or project specific, and the applications through Local Authorities can be very challenging. If there are anybody with funding experience, we would appreciate their assistance.

Question - If there are other changes to the plan, how will these be communicated to the community? We will use mailouts and the new notice boards. FoNNR & TCA contact list used to communicate recently – this was successful, but was undertaken by FoNNR, not LBH. If people can also share these messages, it helps spread the word when things are happening.

AGM general business – There is no AGM voting actions required this year, as we voted to change members for the last 2 years.

Hopefully we can get as many people as possible to volunteer in the future, so please share