



OUR OPINION

Candid thoughts from our members



Road to value

In our new regular feature, arboriculturists **Sharon Hosegood** FICFor and **Tracy Clarke** MICFor chat about arboricultural matters

Sharon: Is there anything that irritates you about arboricultural consultancy?

Tracy: Well, one thing that immediately springs to mind is the question of what happens after I've worked on a BS 5837 report for a client. I don't always hear back on how things have gone, or whether all the design solutions I've suggested are actually carried out on the ground.

Sharon: I agree. All that agonising about presentation and report delivery; but it's what actually happens to the trees on the ground that's important. I'd like to see stronger planning conditions containing a requirement for arboricultural supervision – I think that's the key.

Tracy: But I also think clients need to understand our role and what we can contribute to make sure it takes place as planned on site. The problem

comes when a client wants to submit a planning application tomorrow.

Unless they have kept me informed of what is happening with site levels, installation of services, etc, giving me a chance to advise, it's hard. I find that these things haven't been considered, yet I'm expected to support their application and by then it's often too late.

Sharon: Like you, we have good relationships with regular clients and speak to them about the value of tree care on site. They like the supervision notes with photographs, which show what's been done, when and why. We send this to the council and to the Code for Sustainable Homes (CfSH) assessor.

Tracy: Why the CfSH assessor?

Sharon: As they work for the client, we can show them that trees, as part of the 'Ecological

value of the site' (ECO 1), will be protected as part of the development (ECO 3). This mechanism is very handy to encourage clients to protect trees when there are no planning conditions. The site notes are an audit trail of what is being done which is useful for the developer, reassuring for the council, and good for the trees.

Tracy: That's interesting. I often give talks to my clients about my role and how I can look after their interests by ensuring planning requirements to protect trees are met. I also explain how, if I'm involved in the project after they've got planning permission, I can help the structural and services engineers and landscape designers minimise design clashes around trees, and that can also save time and money.

Giving presentations to site contractors helps too, so that

they understand that I'm usually mainly concerned with the protection of tree roots and we can discuss the benefits of different construction options around trees.

Sharon: I do that, too. I give them a one-hour CPD session on trees and construction which feedback confirms they find valuable. That said, it can still go horribly wrong – things happen so fast on site and how do we deal with that?

Tracy: That's a whole new column Sharon. Let's catch up again soon.

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