

Appendix 2: Town Centre Manager Feedback

N.B. The feedback below has been submitted by Community Leads, Business Groups, Individual Businesses, Town Teams and Traders. For data protection purposes, names and identifiable information have been redacted from the original submitted text.

Harlesden

Resident A

“It has been a blessing to have someone on the ground who knows how Brent Council works, where the funding is to support the businesses and has long term plans to make Harlesden a better place for all.

[The Town Centre Manager has] Helped provide festive lights to Harlesden, has put Harlesden back on the forefront of Brent Council plans and supported Harlesden business Association set up action plans; has helped increase HBA membership from 100 to 321 to date; and has empowered local community leaders to step it up a gear.”

Resident B

“[...] I support Brent Council’s decision to appoint a Town Centre Manager.

Grace Nelson’s appointment is a bonus for Residents, Visitors, Investors and Businesses.

It has not been an easy role to ‘get into’ and Grace, from my observation, is doing her level best to engage the local community.

It has not been easy for her as persons/groups have very little positive views of what the Council is trying to achieve, what it is able to do and what is not in its remit to do. As a result, Grace Nelson must sit through meetings with local groups or encounters with individuals to listen to the unfair criticism of the Council and to explain what the Council is able to do, this she does professionally and with diplomacy.

The local community has benefitted to date from Grace’s involvement by her regular presence in the area, her ability to communicate at every level with the local community and to ensure our concerns/needs are conveyed to those able to meet our needs.

We get feedback from her personally, in writing and in telephone conversations.

In the future the Town Centre Manager must be allowed to continue the work that Brent Council has identified as being necessary to promote Harlesden as a desirable place to invest in, reside in, to visit and to shop.

Harlesden faces a lot of challenges at present and it is vital that the Council continue to attempt to make it the vibrant community that it could be.”

Willesden Green

Resident C

“Since Grace’s appointment to the role in late 2017, she has been extremely supportive of our projects and ambitions for Willesden Green, and has been instrumental in helping to obtain CIL funding [for projects].

These projects include Murals for Willesden Green high street, Branding and Website creation for Willesden Green Town Team (WGTT), implementation of a Resident Review programme. In her role as Town Centre Manager, Grace has been a great cheerleader for Willesden Green and through her interaction with the community and businesses, is able to clearly understand some of the ongoing issues we face. We very much appreciate her support, positivity and boundless enthusiasm and look forward to continuing our working partnership!”

Resident D

“I am delighted we have a town centre Manager at long last. The difference for me so far is the fact that we (shop owners) have been brought together by Grace Nelson to try and make Willesden Green great again.”

Resident E

“It has been a pleasure working with Grace Nelson over the past months. [...] Initially, I think she was taken aback by the level of antipathy towards the council by local businesses. There is an almost universal feeling that the council are an obstructive force. Planned meetings were initially poorly attended, because dealing with the council was seen as a pointless, futile exercise.

Over the months, Grace has worn down much of the negativity, visiting all the shops and businesses and bringing a human, caring approach to her role. She has listened carefully to concerns and persuasively suggested solutions. She is now widely seen as the go to person for any issues involving the council. As the point of contact, she has successfully resolved many problems by directly approaching colleagues that are otherwise difficult for businesses to contact or deal with. She is unfailingly prompt with replies and information. She has helped with matters as diverse as waste collection to licensing applications.

Grace has formed key partnerships by bringing together various local groups, including the Residents Association and the Town Team and various other artists groups etc. This has increased the sense of neighbourhood and community in the area and is continuing to produce a more cohesive vision for the future of our area. Grace has clear strategies and vision, yet is always concerned to listen to what local businesses want and finds ways to encompass that.

Funding is always a problem and often a stumbling block for good ideas. Grace has managed to secure £10k funding designated specifically for the improvement of local businesses. We are constructively discussing exactly how the money should be spent, and are presently working towards food hygiene and other training. We were also thrilled that nearly £25k has now been earmarked for the murals and creation workshops which will celebrate our diversity and history.

We are working towards creating a "Willesden Day" to showcase the best of what the area has to offer, this will mean the closing of parts of the High Road and /or Walm Lane and the redirection of buses and cars. Grace will be using her contacts at the council to facilitate this. We have begun speaking about our approach to the Borough of Culture year in 2020. Grace has managed to enthuse previously ambivalent traders to become more involved.

Grace is grappling with forward thinking projects for the improvement of the area, including promoting ways to produce more footfall and to keep people in the area for longer. This would include placing tables and chairs on the pavements outside shops and restaurants. Residents and traders all agree that this is a great way to foster community and a feeling of safety

I very much look forward to working closely with Grace in the future, working towards an improved town centre."

Wembley and Ealing Road

Resident F

"[We are] very proud to have Rubina Charalambous, our Town Manager. Since her introduction Wembley has a voice, adviser and a representative that wants the area to become more established and more recognised. We believe that our town manager has helped develop our association and in fact seems to be as much as a member as much as she is our town leader.

Our town manager has brought the district together to become an individual voice and also opening our eyes to what as traders we can achieve, gain and fight for. She has also introduced us to all key members of Brent's Business world and helped us become recognised to all the major companies in Wembley today.

Even though we couldn't really ask for more, we would like to think that Rubina would be our town manager for the foreseeable future and continue her valued work"

Various Traders

1

"[...] supports and welcomes the BIA Mural as it has brought colour and spice thus enhancing the distinct Asian identity (and hopefully the footfall) of Ealing Road. It is proving popular as an eye catcher, head turner and a slight but positive traffic jammer or even better as a speed breaker when motorists stop with a 'wow' smile to admire the mural."

2

"We are indeed not only pleased but are grateful for what we consider a "Messiah" instead of a mere 'Town Manager'.

With a new imposing Ealing Road library structure she has brought a lot of promise and projects in pipeline. There is a new sense of belonging amongst businesses/traders on Ealing Road with Rubina's legwork in recent sweltering heat, good PR, interpersonal skills and efforts. Projects namely exciting introduction of concept of Business Improvement District (BID) and commissioning Clockwork City for a data research report on BID, Paan (Indian beatle) spitting, parking solutions, networking amongst three main districts of Wembley by inception of WERTA (Wembley & Ealing Road Traders Association), inviting ZEE TV

marketing and promotions, Marquee permission for businesses that were struggling for same, and of course the head turner 'wow' Mural achieved for Brent India Assoc are all parts of her achievements with several others missed in this rushed list or in the pipeline

She has been rather overactive (as a compliment) that keeps us on toes and sometimes we cannot catch up with her (joking!) .She is doing a great and selfless job with an honest dedication and passion as if it's her own business same as we all do with proverbial 'blood and sweat' to survive or succeed our businesses. The only (humble) advice I gave her was to encourage businesses to cultivate transparency and democracy so that they must go through their Traders Association [...] instead of bypass it and go to Town Manager from side/back door to get things done from the Brent council. I mean total democracy and transparency should be maintained regardless of a big business or a hawker so that all can enjoy the fruits and support [of their Traders Association]. There has been citings of big businesses to massage their personal influence via Town Manager (to get things done at council without any intimation to [or knowledge of the Traders Association] for self-serving interests instead of unselfish goodness and betterment of whole of Ealing Road. All objectives, promise and action must flow through [the Traders Association]. This is a request not criticism."

3

Rubie is an excellent Town Centre Manager and has exceeded our expectations. She is sincere, hard working and enthusiastic. With Rubie's help, support and expertise, we now have permission for temporary marquees for the next 5 years. Well done Rubie and thank you once again."

Mural at BIA

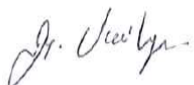
On behalf of the Executive Committee of BIA I would like to thank you for all your help and effort in making our Mural project a successful venture.

We have had a lot of positive comments from the local public which is evidenced in the survey forms attached and we believe BIA has become a focal point on Ealing Road generating a lot of interest in people who come to the area as they are constantly stopping and taking photos in front of the mural.

A lot of people have inquired who the artists are and what a great job they have done. We have also had the mural featured in the Brent and Kilburn Times and a press reporter from an Asian news channel has also promised to televise it.

This project would not have been possible without the grant we received from CIL.

Yours sincerely



Hiten VAidya

Chairman

"We would like to thank Rubina for her excellent work she has done between the planning team and traders of Ealing Rd,

- Rubie has done amazing work between the planning team and the traders of Ealing Rd
- As Ealing Rd has had a long term history of planning issues especially with the marquees/shop Front
- Rubina promised the Planning team the dates of the marquees when they were going to be made the planning team realise how important the marquees are for the local business
- Rubie has made council realise how important Ealing Rd is to Brent and how Diwali is important
- Rubie has also saved us the hassle of applying for planning every year
- I think without Rubina and the co-operation of the council that she has brought new life to Ealing Rd
- If we had more officers like Rubina who would do their job with so much effort not looking at the clocks till as all meetings generally tend to last till 9.00p.m. about 15 years ago we would not need a re-generation officer, the high streets would be buzzing.

Thank You"

Keivin Jariwala

Angela Gill (Managing Director, Bio Productions)

"Hi Rubie

Thank you for the recommendation for the eatery Desi Zaika, I went Thursday about 6pm. I told them you had sent me and they made me very welcome and the food was amazing! I was in there for two hours!!!!

They told me all about Ealing Road and even offered to chaperone me the next day to ensure I got discount in shops. However, I had to go in the morning so the times did not match up. I had a great day on Ealing road in all the shops, bought some great summer dresses from My Fair Lady and had some lovely street snacks. I also was invited in to a Hindu temple to see a lunchtime ceremony. On my way back to the hotel I stopped for lunch again at Desi Zaika and they were really pleased to see me. They would not take any money for my lunch! The owner (with the ponytail) was such a lovely man.

I will be back with my husband to spend some more time in your great borough.

Thank you once again."

Niral (Babla's Jewellers and Watch Repairers)

“Hi Rubie,

I hope you are well. I can confirm we have received the guides and they look great! Good work.

Regards,

Niral”

Mohammed Faisal (Owner, Desi Zaika restaurant)

“Hi Rubina,

Thank you for all your help, marshallah my business is doing much better since you helped with photo in Brent Magazine and telling people about the food I cook.

When I opened I wasn't sure if I would do well, but people are coming back again and again because you are helping me.

Mohammed Faisal
Desi Zaika”

Sugaal (HK Boutique)

“Hi Ruby,

Thank you for being unbelievably helpful to me when I opened my new business. I didn't know anything about how to dress my mannequin's in shop window and with your help I immediately making money, customers looking at my shop window and buying immediately.

I now have a steady flow of customers who look out at my shop window and buy from my shop.

You have helped me so much, that I know that my business would have closed without your help, thank you

Sugaal
HKBOUTIQUE”

Kilburn

Sara Smith (Business Against Crime Coordinator)

“I have found Richard to be instrumental in getting harmonisation between the businesses and police in Kilburn. As you are aware Kilburn is a challenging area and it is essential to have the good will of the shops, businesses and pubs to ensure that we as a team can reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and make Kilburn a safer place to live, work and shop in. Richard is key to this!!

Regards

Sara Smith
Business Against Crime Coordinator
OS Communications “

Colindale

Nelio Jardim (Area Manager, Hurricane Room Snooker Club)

“Hi Richard

I would like to thank you for your help and advice on dealing with the issue we have been having at the back of Hurricane Room snooker club in Colindale, the police have contacted me as well and I met up with GED PC483QK, also had a meeting with him and we both had a walk at the back of the club discussed some of the problems and how he might be able to help with some of the issues.

I know there are quite a few issues to deal with, e.g. fly tipping, drinking and dumping drink cans and bottles on the back access road and my property, also some bigger issues that I can't deal with by myself... [CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION REDACTED] and a few businesses dumping their rubbish, and like I said be health and safety issues at some of these restaurants and takeaways.

Please keep me updated and let me know if there is anything I can do, I soon will be updating the CCTV and putting in more cameras where possible.

Kind Regards

Nelio Jardim
Area Manager, Hurricane Room”

Neasden

Rob Harrison (Vicar, St Catherine's Church, Neasden)

“Neasden town centre has been run down for some while and, left to its own devices, the businesses have a very defensive and insular disposition. My belief is that a sense of common purpose and partnership is very much needed, and that needs to come from an independent source. It is a reassurance that the Council are investing staff time into the area. There is a long task ahead.

My contact with Anna has been in my capacity as chair of the Neasden Festival Group. Our main purpose as a group - in organising festival events for Neasden - is to enhance the sense

of community in and around the Town Centre area, and to encourage people to feel more positively about the Town Centre area. From its start, the Festival Group has been a cooperation between local businesses and local community groups.

I am encouraged by the contact that Anna is developing with a variety of businesses, and the success that she has already had in helping them to see, and begin to appreciate the bigger picture. I believe that Neasden Festival is a worthwhile (though small scale at the moment) venture. This year's festival would simply not be happening if it were not for the support and encouragement that we have received from Anna. At the festival, local businesses will be working together to bring a sense of celebration to the Town Centre.

Anna is still relatively new to this task. I hope that she will be patient, for what is a long term task, and I hope that the Council will be patient to. What is required is a change in the underlying culture of the Centre, and that cannot be changed quickly."

Church End

Mike Duggins (Proprietor, Classic Brent Autos)

"Dear Anna

In response to having Town Center Manager.

Having contact point and getting response to our concerns, with the development of the area has been greatly appreciated by myself and others local residents.

Seeing the anti-social behaviour drop!! ie dumping rubbish has been great help.

I look forward to the development of the area and breath of fresh air Anna has given it.. Dealing with traffic calming would be great help in the local area and residents.

Mike Diggins, Proprietor"