

# GREEN PROPOSALS

## CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT

### INTRODUCTION

The aim of these proposals is to have a more environmentally conscious Gudja, both as a space and its residents. Residents and people who have business interests or other interests in Gudja, Organisations and the Local Council should all work together in order to achieve these proposals.

### PART1: PUBLIC PLACES

- 1.1. Waste is a problem. Public places, such as ġnien il-qari or ġnien iż-Żgħażagħ should have recycling bins and a compost bin, which should have clear instructions in both Maltese and English on what can be placed there and how. These bins should be checked regularly.
- 1.2. Farmers take care not only of our food but also the decreasing green spaces in Malta. To ensure more awareness on how our food is produced and promoted locally, open days in fields could be set up in collaboration with farmers (agricultural and husbandry) who work in fields in Gudja. This would also provide more available green spaces for the public to enjoy from time to time while farmers will have the opportunity to explain their trade.
- 1.3. Food waste is unacceptable. The fruit trees in public spaces (such as olive trees) produce good food which is wasted every year. Volunteers, such as from local organisations, should be identified and each year the fruit should be picked and if needed preserved. This will be repeated several times a year depending on the season. Fruit should be given to identified vulnerable groups or if this is not possible, used in local celebrations. Storage needs to also be identified.

- 1.4. Growing local or climate-resilient flora is beneficial. To green Gudja, growing of flora should be encouraged and facilitated. Local trees, shrubs and plant seeds should be distributed from containers left at premises in Gudja such as the local council and the library along with some instructions, in both Maltese and English, on how to grow such plants. This information is available from Non-Governmental Organisations and Governmental entities. Local plants, especially endemic, should be promoted over alien species unless the aim is to adapt to desertification and so, plants which are do not require so much water such as succulents can be used.
- 1.5. Growing more plants, shrubs and trees have a lot of benefits. Spaces should be identified where trees and other plants could be planted. It is of the utmost importance that these trees and plants are maintained in an appropriate manner (for example not watering them at midday where water is wasted). More flora will mean cleaner air, more pollination (and thus more food) and less flooding.
- 1.6. Sustainable garden management is crucial for better green spaces. Gudja should move towards sustainable gardens and public places management. Services of gardening that throw away annual plants, sometimes even before they wither, and that wastewater are not sustainable. Tendering should consider these factors and if need be, engage a smaller business or its own gardener.
- 1.7. Wild plants are not weeds! Wild plants contribute to biodiversity which in turn contribute to pollination, biological pest control and water quality protection. Wild plants attract useful insects in an urban area. These should not be removed unless they are an invasive alien species, obstructing the way or damaging infrastructure especially if they are adjacent to fields. Instead, a local campaign on the usefulness of wild plants should be engaged. Harmless wild plants should be left to flourish. Wild plants are also more resistant to our climate and require no additional resources compared to cultivated plants.
- 1.8. Wild plants in public gardens can be beautiful. Endemic and indigenous wild plants should also be maintained, rather than removed completely, from public gardens as they serve as a habitat and feeding source for beneficial insects while also providing soil cover and help in efforts against soil erosion and flooding.

- 1.9. Pollination is important for most of our food. Like other Local Councils are planning, it would be a great initiative if there is a pollination garden for pollinators, not just bees especially in light of the fact that there are many fields in and surrounding Gudja.<sup>i</sup>
- 1.10. Gardens bring communities together and could also feed them. Another initiative that is a good environmental and social practice is a community garden. A new designated area or existing public gardens could be identified to have a community garden where people can learn from each other and cultivate edible produce. This will increase food security of residents especially since there now are more apartments without gardens. It will also increase the community's bond and increase green spaces in increasingly urban zones.
- 1.11. Countryside roads are important and needed features of rural heritage. They are important ecosystems and while recognising the need for accessibility, roads should absolutely not be covered in tarmac or concrete as this not only ruins visibly the rural character but increases environmental problems such as: water runoff rather than absorption, little to no water collection, risk of flooding and soil sealing in the surrounding fields. Accessibility should be sought in other ways. It is not really accessible if it is flooded. While recognising that effort and money went into paving countryside roads; these are not sustainable. Countryside roads that are already paved should have tarmac and concrete removed and can focus on accessibility in other manners such as smoothing the road.
- 1.12. Rubble walls are traditional rural features with a lot of benefits. Walls that look like rubble walls but aren't rubble walls are not a substitute for actual rubble walls. Rubble walls not only are a characteristic of Maltese rural heritage, but they also protect flora and fauna and soil from eroding when it is windy. Unfortunately, we are seeing a lot of walls that make use of stones but are not rubble walls. Existing rubble walls should be maintained by competent persons as the law dictates (LEGAL NOTICE 160 of 1997, as amended by Legal Notices 169 of 2004 and 426 of 2007). At no point should concrete be placed on or under rubble walls.
- 1.13. Water is life. Each year, we are seeing less and less rain and when it rains, it floods. Water collecting mechanisms such as wells, should be cleaned and maintained in public spaces. This will not only help in case of an abundance of rain but will help in times of water crisis. Public places such as the library

and the schools, should be used to have courses on saving water and making use of water sustainably. Mechanisms on saving water in public spaces should be discussed with relevant experts and implements as soon as possible.

- 1.14. Experts should be consulted in general. Their names should be public for transparency.
- 1.15. Strays live in Gudja too. Feeding sites around Gudja should be maintained. The Local Council should also commend residents that trap, neuter, and release strays since this results in future decrease of the population which is beneficial for biodiversity while being humane.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/bee-pollination-garden-to-be-set-up-in-san-gwann.872851>  
[https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/109717/san\\_wann\\_to\\_get\\_pollinator\\_garden\\_in\\_300000\\_investment#.Y\\_o\\_LnIRBzcc](https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/109717/san_wann_to_get_pollinator_garden_in_300000_investment#.Y_o_LnIRBzcc) <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2021-05-18/local-news/San-Gwann-to-get-a-pollinator-garden-in-honeybeeprotection-initiative-6736233591>

