

CASE STUDY
MARCH 2021

Cargo Bike Schemes

a sustainable response to the COVID crisis

Project Steps

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Clean Air Villages programme

This case study was commissioned by Cross River Partnership (CRP), a non-profit and impartial partnership organisation delivering projects that positively contribute to the social, environmental and economic health of London.

This case study was developed as part of the Clean Air Villages 3 project, funded by **Defra's Air Quality Grant**. The project aimed to **reduce emissions** in 16 hotspot 'villages' of poor air quality across the City of London, City of Westminster and the London Boroughs of Camden, Hammersmith & Fulham, Haringey, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Richmond Upon Thames, Wandsworth and The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Within these villages, CRP worked with **businesses**, **communities** and the **health sector** to make deliveries and servicing more efficient and provide economic and environmental support during the Covid-19 crisis.

For more information about the project, and to access further resources and case studies, please visit: crossriverpartnership.org/projects/clean-air-villages-3/



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Camden



Introduction

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK, in March 2020, CRP delivered a flexible approach to the CAV3 project, enabling initiatives to be quickly adapted to be of most use to businesses, communities and the health sector alike.

In response, CRP launched **seven cargo bike schemes** across different air pollution hotspots in London to support **local businesses, community organisations, pharmacies, charities** and **food banks** to move items by **zero emission**. This has had a positive impact on **air quality**, whilst potentially saving time and resources. The cargo bikes have helped a range of businesses, from market traders, to independent stores delivering art, wine, essential supplies and even paint!

The Clean Air Villages 2 and 3 project supported businesses in continuing to operate during the pandemic.



Promotion of the cargo bike scheme taking place in Richmond

① Why use a cargo bike?

Cargo bikes are a sustainable, efficient, zero-emission option that can be used for a range of deliveries and collections.

By using cargo bikes, where possible, instead of a tailpipe emission vehicle, organisations have the potential to:

- **Save money** – by avoiding congestion and emissions charges in central London
- **Save time** – by beating traffic and congestion
- **Improve customer satisfaction** – recipients of deliveries made in a sustainable way provide positive feedback
- **Improve local air quality** – by reducing air pollution and improving the health of the local community.



*ecofleet mindful **delivery** meeting a trader in Tooting Broadway Market at a CRP event*

There are many different types of cargo bikes on the market, from traditional two-wheeled bikes with storage at the front, to larger electric bikes, sometimes with trailers attached for extra capacity. Cargo bikes can carry up to 150 kilos and up to 1.5 m³.

When an electrically assisted cargo bike (e-cargo bike) is used for an average of 20 miles per week, in place of a diesel vehicle, the potential **emissions savings** over a one year period are: 2,718kg CO₂, 9.93kg NO_x, 0.31kg PM_{2.5} and 0.58kg PM₁₀. Enough to save 8,154 square metres of arctic ice from melting.

② Types of cargo bike schemes

There are three different ways cargo bikes can be used by a business or organisation;

Hiring a
third-party
provider to
deliver or
collect your
goods



Sharing a
cargo bike
as an owned
community
asset



Owning
your own
cargo bike



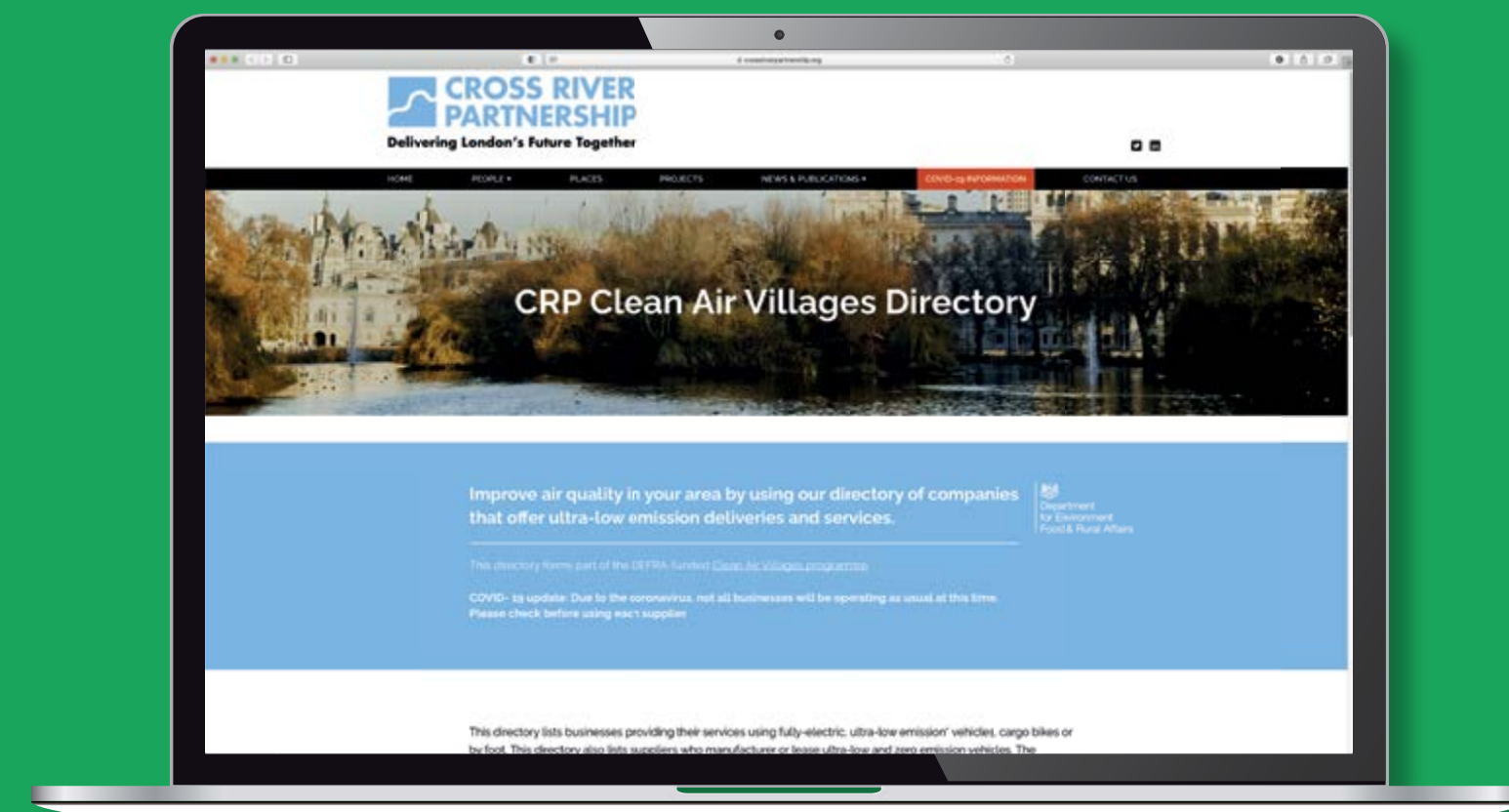
Hiring a third-party provider to deliver or collect your goods



Professional cargo bike services are available who provide a bike and rider. This option also includes **insurance, maintenance, customer service** and **storage**.

CRP's Clean Air Villages Directory

lists businesses providing their services using fully electric, ultra-low emission vehicles, cargo bikes or by foot. The CAV Directory lists cargo bike companies operating in London.



Sharing a cargo bike as an owned community asset

A cargo bike bought, owned and shared by a community of businesses and organisations reduces costs in the long term. The bike would need coordination for it to be managed, stored, maintained and used successfully.

Please see [this case study](#) of a cargo bike bought and owned by InStreatham business improvement district, for further details.



“ The feedback from businesses that have used our cargo bike scheme has been incredibly positive. On top of all of the environmental benefits, it is much friendlier to be able to deliver a locally managed scheme where technology supports the human interactions and not replaces it.”

Louise Abbotts, BID Manager, InStreatham BID

Owning your own cargo bike

Purchasing or leasing your own e-cargo bike provides freedom of access and usage. The bike can also be branded to suit your requirements. Secure storage and training of riders is key.



③ The main challenges for potential users



Understanding costs

- The Defra-funded Clean Air Villages project was able to fund cargo bike schemes. Organisations wanted to know what costs would be beyond the free usage. CRP provided costs for the continuation of services and offered ideas for solutions.



Concerns about the quality of service

- The Clean Air Villages project was able to share testimonials and case studies from previous users
- The offering of free usage provided a trial scenario, with no commitment required.



Understanding the capabilities of a cargo bike

- CRP highlighted payload and volume capacity
- Cargo bikes were shown to organisations interested in using them. There was often surprise at their capabilities.



Planning use in advance

- These cargo bike schemes required organisations to plan trips in advance. Same day and last minute use was often not preferable by the providers.
- Organisations wanting to book on very short notice would not be advised to use these schemes.



No system in place for customers to order online

- Show what system other organisations use
- Show what platforms are available
- Support organisations in using websites, the phone and social media for sales.



Concerns about insurance

- The project provided insurance details
- It was made clear what level of security would be provided and who would be liable if there was an issue.



Making it work for their business

- The free cargo bike hours offered provided a way for organisations to try out these zero emission vehicles to see if it worked for them.

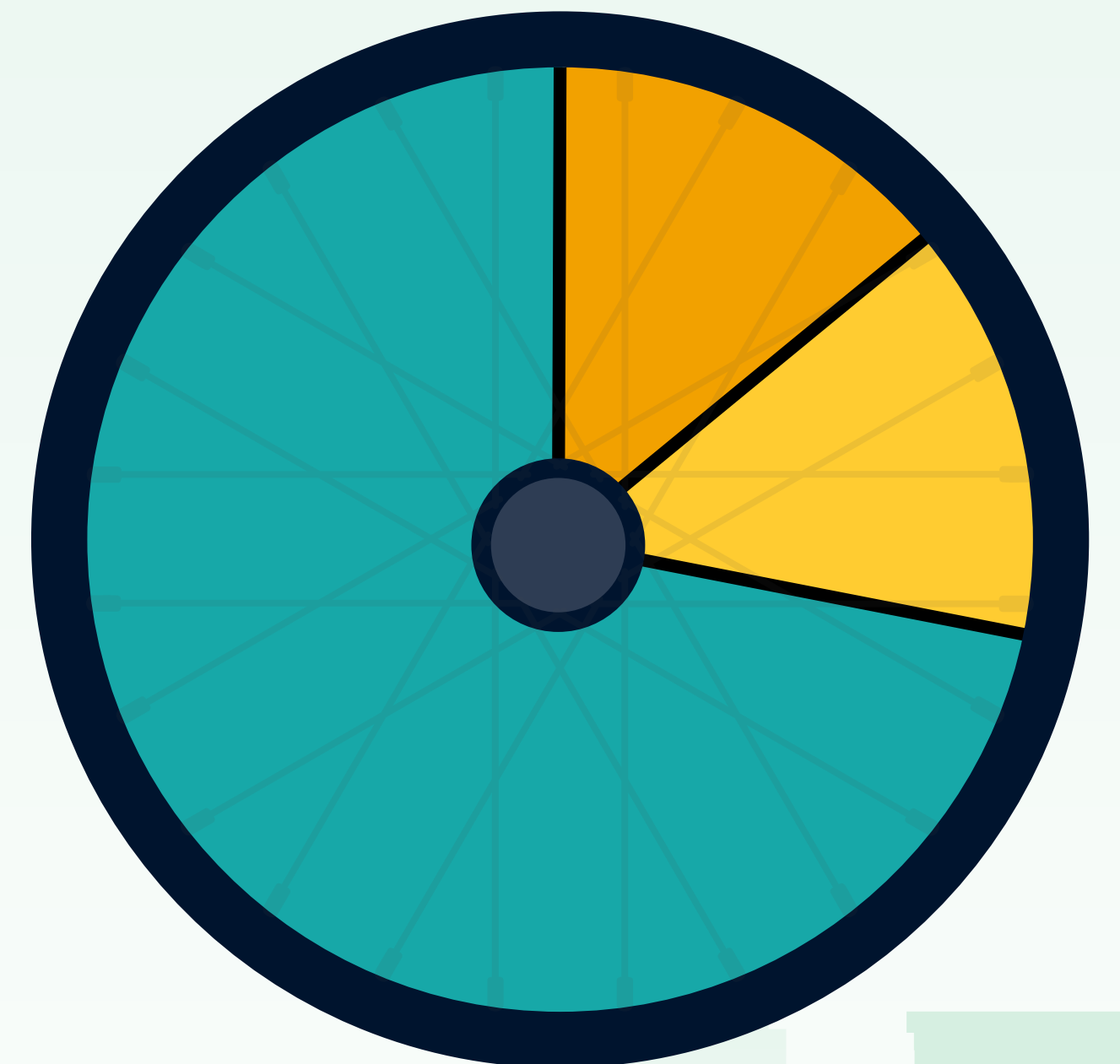
It is worth noting that a cargo bike scheme is not suitable for every organisation.

④ Cargo bike user types and purpose



Sectors using the cargo bike

18%	Food and beverage
9%	Food bank
24%	Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beauty spa - DIY - Florist - Football club - Office - Paint shop - Pet shop - Record shop - Zero waste
27%	Pharmacy
11%	Groceries/super market
9%	Charity/not-for-profit
2%	Business improvement district



Journey type

11%	Business to business
78%	Business to consumer
11%	Both

5 Cargo bike schemes and the COVID-19 response

Map

The Clean Air Villages 2 project was coming to an end when the United Kingdom went into the first lockdown in March 2020, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Some of these cargo bike schemes were continued as part of CAV3 and new ones were also launched. During the pandemic, with lockdowns, tiers and subsequent changes to rules and regulations for the operation of businesses, many non-essential organisations had to close their doors to the public and adopt takeaway or delivery operations. The demand for **prescriptions**, **medicines** and **food** for **vulnerable** people also increased.

Click on the individual shops below for testimonials.

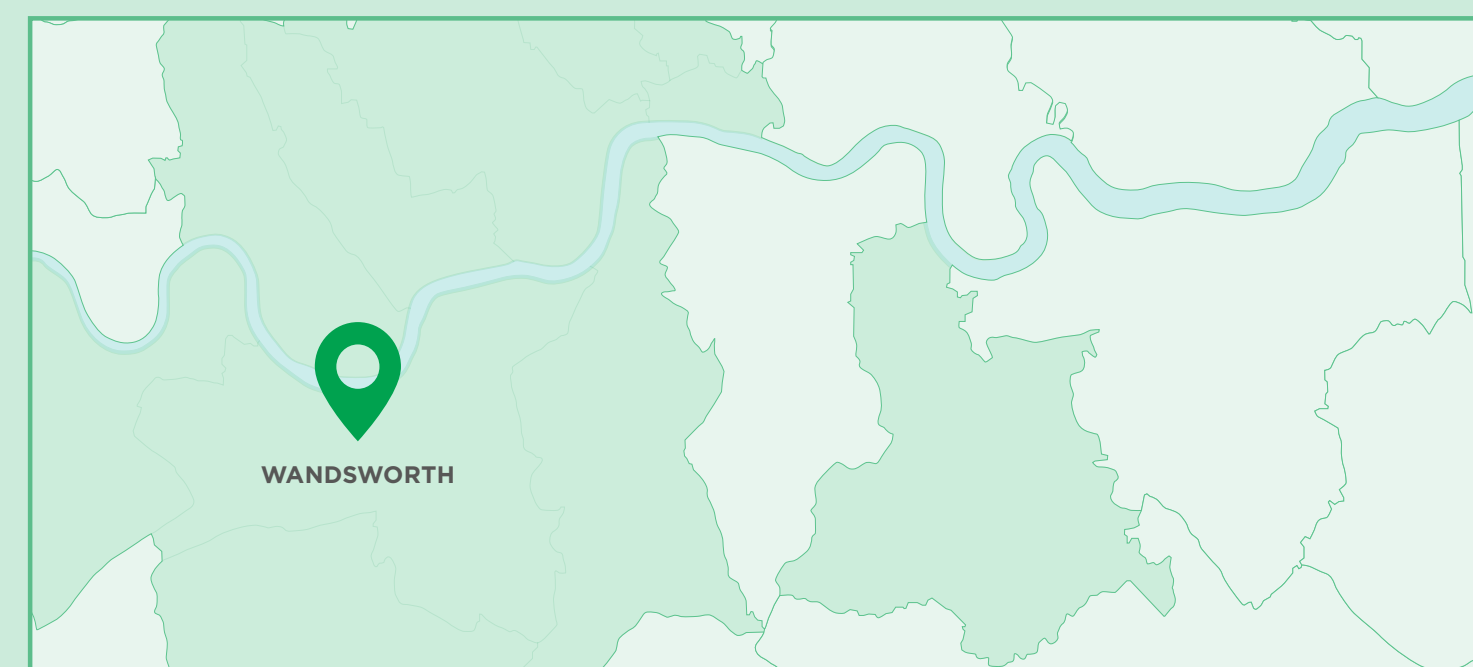




Tooting Works Community Projects



Contact: Leigh Richards
Position: Operations Lead
Sector: Charity/not-for-profit
Village: Tooting



“ We joined the scheme as we believed it to be an **excellent, sustainable initiative**. We’ve found the **service level** to be **extremely high, very efficient with friendly and accommodating riders** who ensure parcels are delivered safely and securely.

We deliver weekly care packages to roughly **80** vulnerable residents referred by the NHS and other care agencies. It is important to us that the majority of our volunteers **deliver on foot or by bicycle**. Therefore, the scheme aligns with our mission. Should we have the appropriate funding we would certainly continue to use the scheme. It is an **excellent, sustainable service**.

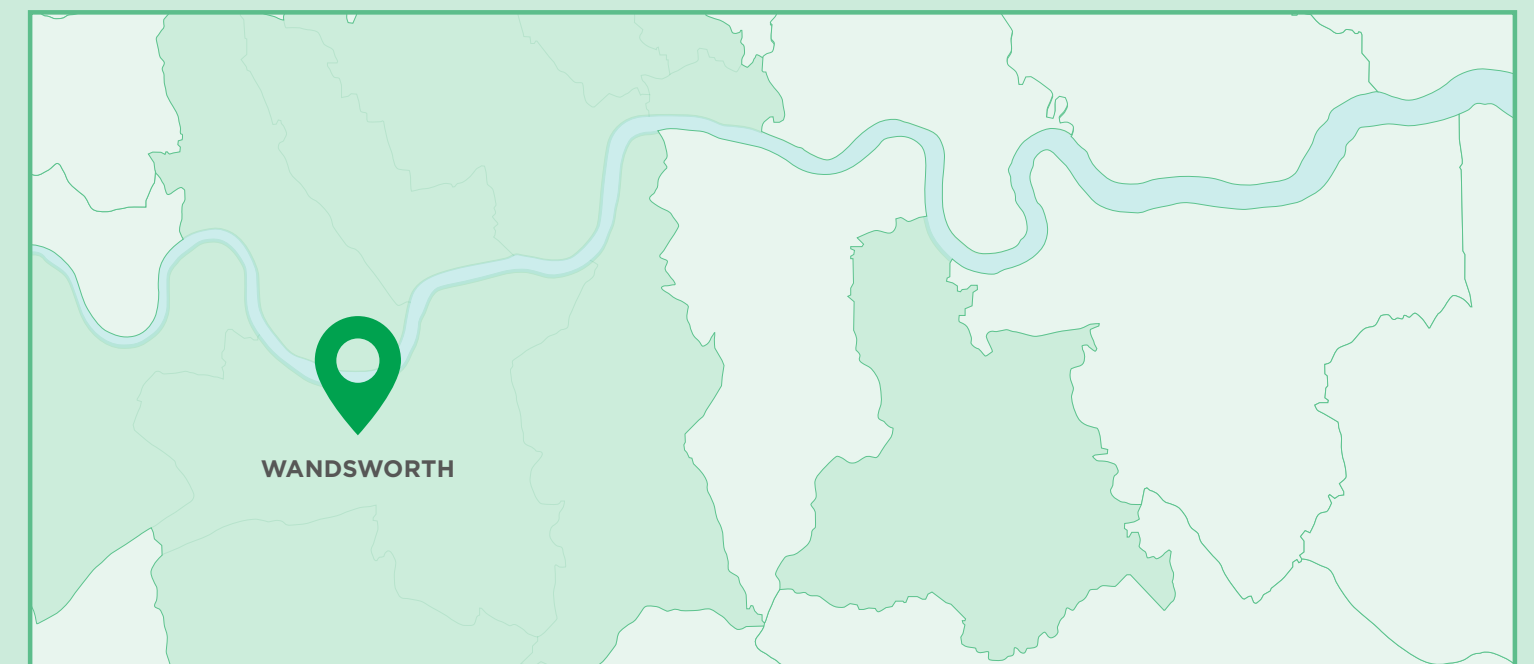
The availability has been extremely accommodating and the customer service and follow ups have been great. The cargo bike scheme has **helped our community outreach work tremendously**. We are pleased to be part of a wonderful initiative supporting us to reduce pollution within the borough. ”





Unwined

Contact: Kiki Evans
Position: Co-owner
Sector: Food and beverage
Village: Tooting



“ We thought that local, energy efficient deliveries was a great opportunity to explore. It has been a **great financial help** during lockdowns when delivery options have significantly increased. It has allowed us to offer an **efficient and environmentally friendly delivery service**. ”

Click here for [video feedback from Katie Littlewort](#).





Lai Loi Oriental



Contact: Nhung Wehe
Position: Owner
Sector: Groceries/supermarket
Village: Deptford



“ Joining this scheme has **reduced our car and van use**, so **reduced our emission**. **ecofleet mindful delivery** have been **fast and easy to communicate** with. We have **attracted more customers** who would not have set foot in Deptford. The feedback is they **love the service**. ”





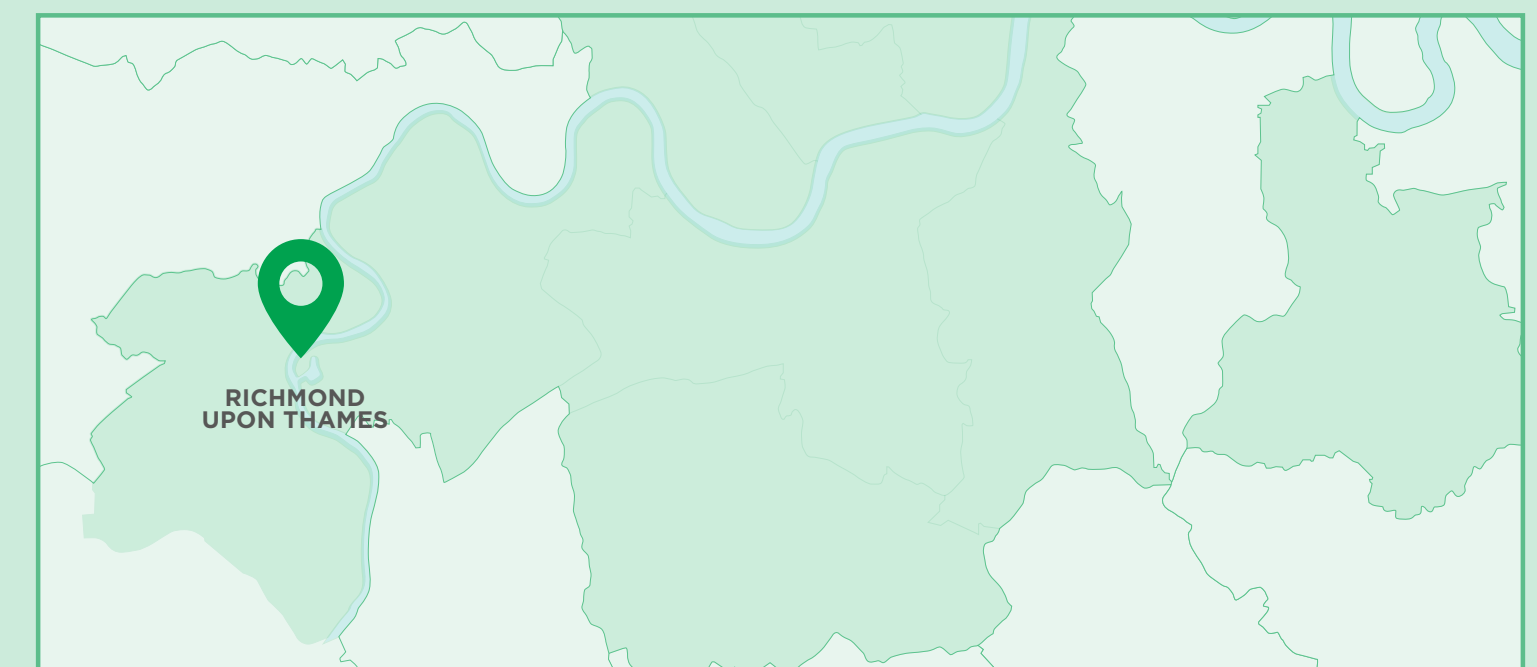
RV Tass

Contact: Matt Allard

Position: Owner

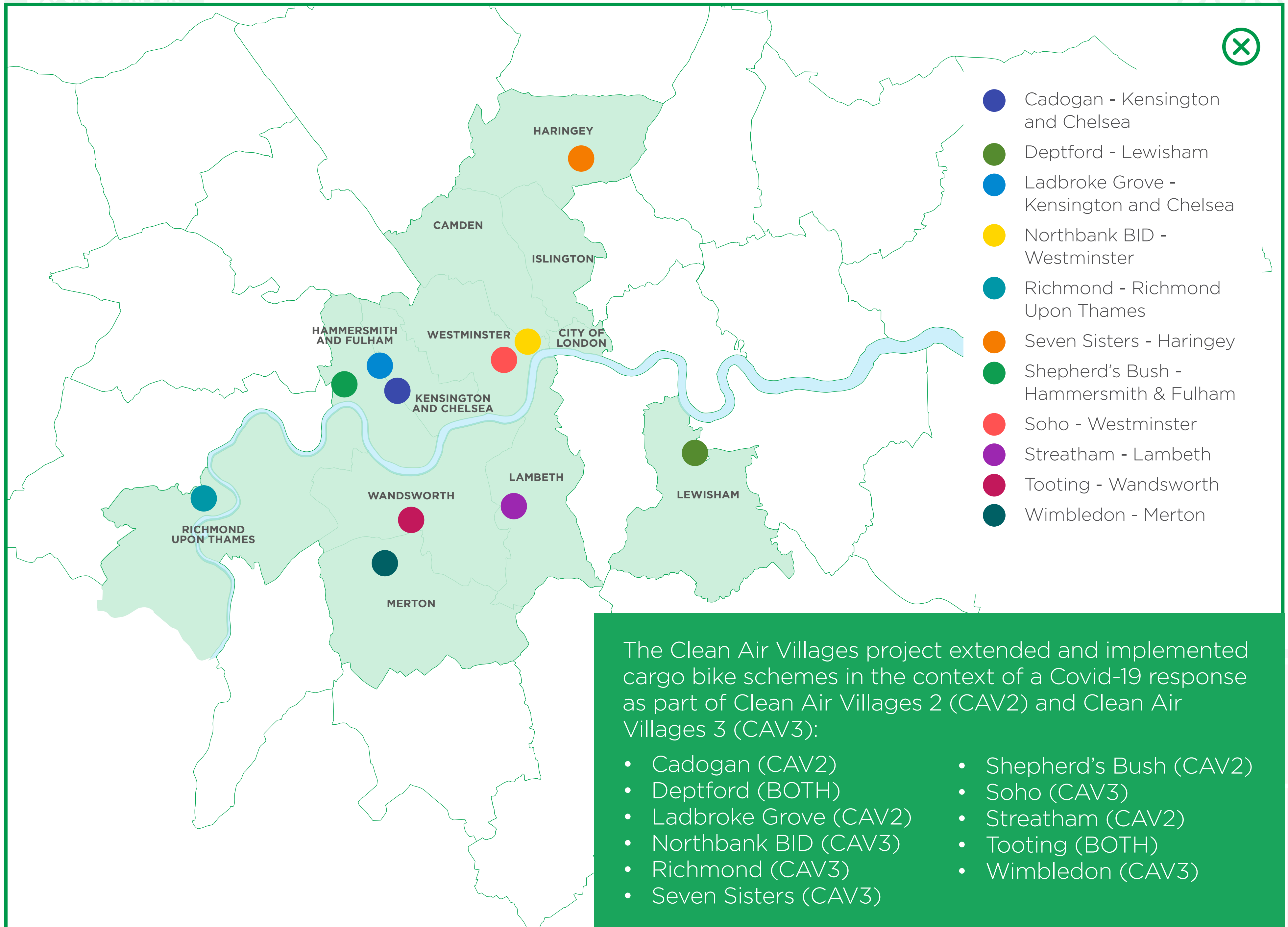
Sector: Other – Paint shop

Village: Richmond



“ It’s a unique and eco-friendly way to have paint delivered to your door. Our customers have loved it. ”





Clean Air Villages 3 partners



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CRP has delivered the Clean Air Villages 3 cargo bike schemes in collaboration with **ecofleet** mindful **delivery** and Zedify.



mindful **delivery**



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In 2021-22, the project is expanding into new areas as part of [Clean Air Villages 4](#).