

## A1 Leeming to Barton Improvement North Yorkshire

Carillion Morgan Sindall JV

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Community Engagement

### Project overview

The A1 Leeming to Barton Improvement project is a £380 million road improvement scheme funded by Highways England, one of the largest highways schemes in the UK at present with a workforce of approximately 700 people. The works involve upgrading the existing A1 from current all-purpose dual carriageway to 3 lane motorway including the demolition of 9 structures, modification of 7 existing structures and construction of 15 new structures plus numerous communications and gantries. The key drivers for the scheme were to increase road safety and reduce journey times through this section of the network connecting the south to the north-east of England and Scotland.

Due to its size and the nature of works required, there is a large amount of interface between this major infrastructure project and local biodiversity.

### What were the biodiversity conditions on site, prior to the enhancement?

The conditions in relation to the this particular submission were varied with enhancements taking place within local community sites, generally on managed areas including road verges and school playing fields.

### Were there any specific conditions that led to you carrying out this work?

Our vision states *'a successful scheme will be a sustainable scheme, as we look to demonstrate sustainable construction, both within the project and reaching communities in which we **work**'*. This means going beyond our primary purpose of building a road and leaving a lasting legacy within surrounding communities.



The CMSJV Environmental Advisor pictured with the school children following the tree planting event.

These community engagement initiatives demonstrate how we are working towards our aims of raising environmental awareness and engaging with our communities. In line with our **client's 'raising the bar' mantra, we want to go beyond environmental protection and enhance the natural environment around us, within the project and into the wider community.**

### What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Since construction commenced, we have led a wide range of biodiversity initiatives and awareness events within our local community. Going beyond minimising environmental impacts from our construction works, we have looked to enhance biodiversity and educate both staff and the communities in which we work.

Following from involvement in a pollinator corridor project in 2015, we recently planted a tree for each pupil at a local school as part of a poster competition on **'protecting the environment'**. A lesson on protecting the environment and biodiversity was delivered to a local primary school class and as a prize for some excellent posters, a tree was donated to each child within school grounds. In addition to learning about wildlife in their area and how they can help safeguard local biodiversity, additional habitat was created and pupils were able to take ownership through involvement in the planting. Tree species included oak, cherry and birch which also provide an important food source for birds and insects.

Other community engagement activities include working with Leeming Bar Residents Association to build flower planters at entrances to the village, with a view to brightening up the area and supporting local pollinators. The planters were created using recycled timber and surplus topsoil from our scheme.

We have also run some biodiversity-related volunteering events involving our staff, supply chain and local community.



*CMSJV volunteers hard at work at Foxglove Covert Local Nature Reserve*

13 project members took the time to volunteer at a local nature reserve, restoring footpaths and translocating plants around important bird-watching hides allowing visitors to continue to appreciate the reserve and its wildlife. Volunteers were given a guided tour across various habitats and learned more about local wildlife. Working with our supply chain, we have also held an environmental walk including bird-watching at an adjacent SINC site where members of the public learned about local bird-life.

## How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement

### Further information

During the local school tree planting, we worked with our landscaping subcontractor and involved the children during planting. Pupils picked the tree species they liked and learned about that species before helping the operatives to plant. This was supplemented by wildlife-related outdoor games and a lesson on biodiversity. This school visit contributed to our KPIs and objectives for educational visits and helps us achieve our overarching aim of leaving a legacy in the locale. To complete this legacy project, a sign was installed informing visitors about the planting scheme and contained each pupil's name.

Prior to the footpath restoration and biodiversity awareness session at the local nature reserve, we had an established relationship following the donation of 300 tree and shrub plants in 2014. We also used the reserve's classroom for environmental team meetings, taking staff away from the project to a beautiful, environmental setting to provide focus. 13 volunteers attended the reserve for a day to restore reserve footpaths and translocate species-rich grassland turfs within the park. Our actions provided tangible benefits by allowing easier access through the reserve and through the creation of new habitat areas with the translocation of species-rich grassland and trees.

Large infrastructure schemes offer several opportunities to engage with communities; however I believe our successful engagement results from sustainability being embedded within the project, demonstrated through involvement from staff, operatives, client and supply chain. Simple actions can make big differences and biodiversity improvements allow people to physically see benefits from such projects as discussed.



*Flower planters installed throughout the local village to enhance biodiversity and appearance.*

### What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

Our attitude on A1L2B is that "it's more than just building a road" as we aim to leave a lasting legacy in the local area and its communities. These community engagement activities are facilitated by a proactive, enthusiastic team and leadership of an environmental advisor motivated by enhancing biodiversity and safeguarding the natural environment.