

'350' Celebration Tree Planting East Leake, Loughborough, Leics

British Gypsum

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Large Scale Permanent Award

Project overview

1665 trees were planted by employees and local school children to improve an area of brown field land at the head Office site, in conjunction with Saint-Gobain birthday celebrations during 2015. Prior to this, the area of land was mowed on a regular basis, not allowing any trees or other flora to seed in the area.

The legacy project was to develop a woodland area for further generation of employees, as well as an improvement to the types of biodiversity found at the Head office site. The cost of the project was £26,000, and over 219 employees and school children involved during.

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

Prior to 2015, the brown field site at East Leake Head Office was maintained by close mowing on a fortnightly/monthly frequency.

All grasses and wild fauna mowed regularly and no active encouragement for insect and species to develop. There were no trees in the area, with self-seeding being mown to stop development.

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

British Gypsum employees were invited to plant a tree in the brownfield area, dedicated to employees & individuals.



BritishGypsum Team starting the tree planting in 2015

The aim being to develop a woodland area, to improve the habitats on site with opportunities for ongoing development and engagement in support of Saint-Gobain's 350 anniversary celebration: part of our sustainable legacy. 1665 trees were planted (1665 the year Saint-Gobain was formed).

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

A variety of Native and Naturalised trees were planted to encourage biodiversity with the support from Nationwide Forestry Solutions Limited. The species were chosen that are designed to promote interaction with the environment in the form of edible fruit for human consumption and various berry and fruits and seed to encourage all types of wild life. All species are mixed to spread the diversity across the project site (for example Crab Apple - *Malus sylvestris*, Horse Chestnut - *Aesculus hippocastanum* and Common Oak - *Quercus robur*). In total, 30 different species of trees were planted at the site. By encouraging employees and local school children to be involved in planting the trees during work hours, and by using individual identification tags, the individuals can return to see the progress their trees makes over the coming years.

In terms of management, the area is no longer mowed and there has been an observed increase in the number of invertebrates, butterflies, moths, bees, beetles and ants within the project area. The natural fauna and flora has developed rapidly and created an area of outstanding biodiversity in a very short space of time, this will only increase as the trees mature and the habitat develops. It also helped connect pockets of habitat across the site. In terms of the local Biodiversity Action Plan, tree planting for woodland creation supports the output from the Rushcliffe Biodiversity Opportunity mapping Report (2015) and the Nottingham BAP in creating new woodland, especially in areas of low wildlife value, such as the brown field site at East Leake. The model is designed to be replicable and is the 5th project of this type within the last 2 years.



Tree planting area, November 2015



Tree planting area, July 2016

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement

Further information

As a living legacy we thought long and hard about the future potential of this land and ensuring it would be protected from commercial development as well as ensuring we continue to develop the wood with the employees and local communities as an amenity, learning environment and protected habitat, giving additional homes to the protected species on site, in sympathy with the kinds of woodland that would be native to this area.

We learnt a lot in year 1 about how to get school children involved and how we could bring them back onto site to learn more about the natural surroundings as their trees develop, as well as how to best engage groups and teams of employees all year round.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

To enhance and improve an area of land at the British Gypsum Head Office site to ensure that there is a long term legacy area for future generations in terms of carbon capture, biodiversity improvement and well-being for employees from the woodland area



British gypsum Environmental Pillar meeting team reviewing the area, December 2015