

## A HAVEN FOR WILDLIFE & SHOPPERS ALIKE, MARKS & SPENCER



### BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT OVERVIEW

Opened in August 2012, Cheshire Oaks is Marks & Spencer's (M&S) biggest greenest store. At Cheshire Oaks, encouraging local biodiversity was key to the entire build process, informing both the landscape design and the appearance of the store. [Biodiversity features](#) at the site include green living walls, a pond and wetland area, trees, hedgerows and wildflowers. These features help to enhance the shopping experience for customers and are also enjoyed by the local community including schools and wildlife groups.

In order to ensure continued protection and enhancement of the site, we applied for the [Wildlife Trust Biodiversity Benchmark](#) which involved a series of audits in which we were rigorously assessed against the standard. We had to demonstrate knowledge and compliance against legislation, set objective and targets and actively engage with local interested parties.

M&S was the first retailer to gain this standard and the journey from initial enquiry to certification took only 29 weeks. This was testament to the fact that biodiversity was integrated into the site plans from the beginning. The company also has an excellent working relationship with its ecological consultants and its' land management company.

#### Fact box

**Company name:**  
Marks and Spencer

**Project name:**  
A haven for wildlife and shoppers alike

**Location:**  
M&S Cheshire Oaks, Ellesmere Port

**Biodiversity enhancement:**

- Relocating species at risk
- Pond and bat roots
- Hedgerows installation
- Swift boxes

**Size:**  
N/A

**Cost:**  
£3250 - initial certification  
£850 - maintain certification  
£1000 - annual cost

#### **Tips:**

- Please see our [biodiversity manual](#) for guidance
- Checkout Wildlife Trust Website or book yourself onto the introductory workshop
- Make sure you are in a robust place before embarking on the audit process
- Make sure roles and responsibilities are clearly defined

**Year completed:**  
2012

#### Categories:

- Large scale permanent
- Community engagement
- Most innovative

## METHODOLOGY

- From the point at which the development took place wildlife was protected by relocating species at risk from the building into nearby areas. Following this an extensive plan was put into action to incorporate wildlife-friendly features into the state-of-the-art eco-friendly construction and the surrounding landscaping.
- At the heart of the scheme is a new pond and 'swale' which is already attracting common and soprano pipistrelle bats. This work has been backed up by bat roosting boxes being included on the existing mature oak trees on the site.
- Additional hedgerows will in time provide for nesting birds like the declining house sparrow, whilst wildflower meadows are already providing vital nectar sources for bumblebees and butterflies, including swathes of fragrant lavender on the main approach to the store. Black poplars, one of the region's rarest trees, have also been introduced to the site, just a few miles from mature black poplars at Cheshire Wildlife Trust's Gowy Meadows nature reserve.
- One of the most exciting elements of the construction has been the inclusion of common swift boxes into the building itself. These globe-trotting birds - which may fly up to a million miles in their lifetime - have suffered massively from changes to modern housing which has vastly reduced nesting opportunities during their brief summer stay in the UK. It's hoped these new high-res residences at the store will prove to be a des-res for these enigmatic birds.
- Shoppers are able to find out more about the habitats and species around Cheshire Oaks, a popular destination for local schools, from information boards or from their phones, by scanning Quick Response codes.

### Pictures of the enhancements



If you would like to sign up for the BIG Challenge, please contact Louise Clarke, CIRIA by email [louise.clarke@ciria.org](mailto:louise.clarke@ciria.org)

