

Northern Hub – Ordsall Chord Community Engagement Manchester

Northern Hub Alliance (Network Rail, Skanska Bam, Amey Sersa & Siemens)

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Community Engagement Award

Project overview

The Ordsall Chord consists of the construction and operation of a new 340m two-track line which will cross the River Irwell and the Manchester Inner Ring Road. The proposed Ordsall Chord development will be elevated throughout and will be located on a combination of new and existing bridges and viaducts

The project is located on the edge of Manchester and the area is highly urbanised with minimal green spaces to enjoy. As part of the projects commitment to engage with the local community The Friends of the Roman Garden were contacted with a view to looking into ways to improve the biodiversity in the Roman Garden and surroundings areas that they look after. Two different events, bulb planting in the garden and the relocating of 5 large planting boxes to a lawned area near the garden have been organised so far and further volunteer days are intended this year.

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

Prior to the bulb planting the Roman Garden's biodiversity was very limited as it contained trees and grass but very few flowering plants and the area where the planting boxes were relocated was lawn without any flowering shrubs or plants.

Were there any specific reasons that led to this project?

No, planning conditions dealt only with landscape & lighting. There were no specific requirements to undertake a community engagement programme. We took the opportunity to work with the Friends of the Roman Gardens for a variety of reasons, including; their scheme being the most local to the project it made sense to work with them, it has helped to improve the biodiversity of a largely urban area and helps the project to leave a positive legacy.



Roman Gardens, Castlefield Manchester

Engaging with the Friends of the Roman Garden was seen as an opportunity to go beyond the conditions originally required of the project.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

To date there have been two different volunteer days undertaken with the Friends of the Roman Gardens. These involved both the office staff and workers allowing them to engage with the local community. The first activity was helping to plant over 1600 bulbs that the Northern Hub Alliance had bought on behalf of the Friend. A group from both parties met up in December 2016 and planted the bulbs across the garden in previously bare beds. (See the photos on slide 4) We planted over 11 different species of flower including 2 types of crocuses, 3 species of snowdrops, 3 different hyacinths, anemones, daffodils, irises and allium chosen for both their aesthetic benefits as well as their ecological value. As you can see from the picture on the right come Spring 2017 the garden was transformed into a riot of colour.

The second scheme involved moving 5 large planting boxes that would have otherwise been discarded across Manchester to install them on a lawned area near to the Roman Garden. The group had been promised these planters by Manchester City Council but had no way to transport them owing to their size and weight. The Alliance stepped in and provided a tele-handler and some of our workforce to enable the movement of the planters. The photos on slide 5 show just how amazingly the lawned space has been transformed since the planters have been installed.

Both of these schemes are clearly in line with Manchester City Councils Biodiversity Action plan which includes the development of strong community links through the establishment of Friends Groups, bulb and wildflower planting events city wide and their Green Streets projects which are designed to reflect local circumstances and individual preferences that mean that a variety of project types are delivered.



Rachel Mutters

Yesterday at 16:50

Spring has sprung in the Roman Gardens! Thanks for all the hard work and donations from the Northern Hub, Olliers and local residents. **#greenfingers**
#community



Facebook excerpt showing flowering bulbs in the Roman Gardens

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Delivering projects of this nature makes a significant contribution towards biodiversity through the ability of the plants to attract bees, other insects and birds.

How would you best describe the project?

Please state: Enhancement

Further information

It was a real pleasure working with the Friends of the Roman Gardens and their appreciation of the help that we provided was very valued by the project team. We have formed a successful long term relationship with this group that will enable us to continue supporting the local community and going further in increasing the biodiversity of this part of the city. There will be further days spent volunteering in the garden and hopefully the opportunity to help the Friends group with their long-term vision for the Garden which is currently being processed by Manchester City Council. It will see the garden opened up and made even more species rich to further promote Manchester's biodiversity strategy and enable future generations of the city to fully enjoy the area.



What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

This project was located in an extremely sensitive area very close to a number of residential properties which lead to unavoidable disturbance to some residents. By involving ourselves with the local community we had the opportunity not only provide a positive experience but also a lasting legacy that many people in Manchester will enjoy for years to come.



Bulb Planting in the Roman garden



Moving planters across Manchester





Lawned area prior to planter installation



Planters in place – Dec 2016



Planters May 2017