

A1 Leeming to Barton Improvement Scheme (A1L2B) – Hackforth and Hornby School Biodiversity Awareness

North Yorkshire JV – Carillion & Morgan Sindall

BIG Challenge 2015 submission category: Community engagement

Project overview

The A1L2B project is a £350 million highways scheme, upgrading the A1 from dual carriageway to motorway across a 19km section through North Yorkshire.

The project is predominantly within a rural setting; however it passes through urban areas at Catterick and Brompton On Swale.

The project commenced in 2014 and is due for completion 2017, with over 600 people employed on the scheme.

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

The project took place at a local primary school where beyond existing hedgerows, biodiversity enhancement features were minimal.

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

There were no specific conditions associated with this work; the community event was carried out as part of the project's aim to leave a lasting legacy in the area.



Photo: Primary school children

A wide range of work is undertaken with community and charity projects and this particular event was aimed at increasing environmental awareness with biodiversity enhancement also considered.

A successful session on archaeology was run previously and the school expressed an interest in environmental issues.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

In autumn 2014, the A1L2B project environmental team visited Hackforth and Hornby Primary School in North Yorkshire to raise

environmental awareness and create wildlife habitats in the school grounds.

The school is located in close proximity to a major construction project and this is a great opportunity for the children to learn about local biodiversity and how a project protects local wildlife.

Reusing logs from site clearance activities, a number of 'tree cookies' were made and following an initial presentation by the Environmental Advisor, the pupils were asked to draw pictures of the wildlife in their local area on the 'tree cookies'.

The children learned about the wildlife encountered on the project and how to protect them and enhance their habitats and the cookies were then hung in the school's outdoor classroom.

Following this were some classroom activities aimed at increasing awareness of UK wildlife with exercises such as 'Match the Tracks' and 'Who Lives There' where we matched animal tracks to the animal and looked at which animals might live in certain habitats.

Finally, logs, branches and twigs from site clearance were reused to build animal hibernacula in a suitable area of the school gardens. The children helped to make the small mammal shelter and learned about the species that would use it.

The whole afternoon was aimed at delivering the message that construction projects have a duty to protect and enhance the environment and whilst tree felling is negative, good things can come from using tree materials, such as 'tree cookies' or animal shelters.

New habitats were created and the pupils' awareness of biodiversity in their locality was increased in a fun and creative way.

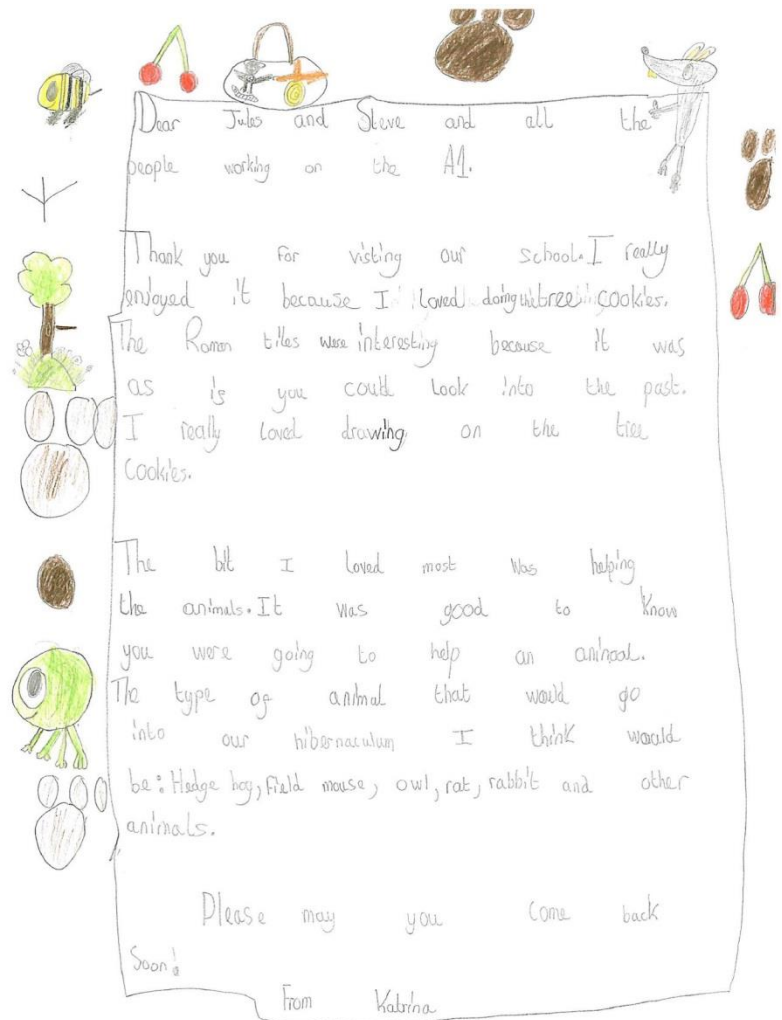


Photo: Thank you letter

How would you best describe the project?
An enhancement.

Further information

The project team returned to the school in summer 2015 with an endoscope to check for signs of use in the animal shelter and the children told us that they regularly check for hedgehogs and other small animals.

This was excellent news and shows that following our visit, the children remained interested in what they had learned.

The project team has now established an excellent relationship with this local school and will continue to work with them whilst working in the area.

There are many long term benefits of educating today's children on the importance of biodiversity and of the various things people can do to protect and enhance wildlife and habitats.

Following the sessions a number of wonderful thank you letters were received from the children which included pictures of native UK wildlife, further reinforcing that the aims for the environmental education lesson were met and biodiversity awareness has been raised.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

A key focus area for the project is working with local schools and this was a fantastic opportunity to work with the community, within the context of biodiversity education and habitat creation.

Aiming to play a part in educating the next generation to protect biodiversity.



Photo: Small mammal hibernacula