

Rosendale Allotments Community Depave Herne Hill, South London

Mace Foundation & London Wildlife Trust Partnership

BIG Challenge 2015 submission category: Community engagement

Project overview

Part of a community led water management strategy for Herne Hill, The Rosendale Community Depave project was undertaken by Mace and London Wildlife Trust (LWT) between spring 2014 and summer 2015.

The area is at risk from surface water flooding due to flow paths representing the historical route of the 'lost' River Effra, with increased population and high proportion of impermeable ground cover putting further pressure on the area.

The Rosendale Allotments plot is of particular concern, where a large area of hard standing allowed significant volumes of water to flow into Rosendale Road, contributing to flooding in the suburban residential area of Herne Hill.

LWT and Mace worked together with the design and construction team from Broadgate to design, install and plant a 300m² SuDS attenuation and planting scheme which created 80m³



Photo: Rosendale plot prior to works

of floodwater attenuation and 100m² of high value wildflower meadow.

The project is permanent with construction cost at £18,000, however it was installed completely free of charge to both the landlord (Dulwich College) and the community tenant, Rosendale Allotments Association. This was achieved through funding from Defra (£5,000), Mace Foundation (£4,000) and supply chain (£9,000).

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

Following flash flooding in Herne Hill in 2004, there was a strong response from the local community to support ways of managing local flood risk.

In response to this, LWT undertook the Lost Effra project with the aim of persuading and enabling local people to increase the amount of green space on their properties and communal areas, providing habitats for wildlife, slowing water run-off and cleaning water before it re-enters the sewage system.

The main enabler to delivering this project was

the partnership between Mace Foundation and London Wildlife Trust, bolstered by the 5 Broadgate and Broadgate Circle teams wishing to take on an exciting, community based volunteering project. No BREEAM, planning or other conditions were in place.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Rosendale Allotments is an 18 acre, steeply sloped site that contributes heavily to local flood risk, flooding neighbouring gardens and roads passing through Herne Hill.

The existing forecourt to the plot created a 'funneling' effect, allowing water to pass quickly over hard standing and running into the road.

Prior to enhancement, conditions to support biodiversity and the appearance of the plot were very poor, with the poor image of allotments cited as a major reason for the loss and decline of local biodiversity amenities in the Lambeth Biodiversity Action Plan.

A high proportion (270m²) of land cover was concrete and tarmac, with most green space consisting of amenity grass with little biodiversity



Photo: Demolition phase at Rosendale



Photo: Community volunteers spreading grass seed

value. The lack of flowering plants on the forecourt and path areas did not facilitate habitat connectivity for pollinators and provided little shelter for wild birds and insects.

To address this, a scheme was designed by a landscape architect and

drainage engineer which would provide 300m² of green space, including 270m² of innovative recycled plastic 'Grass Grid' paving block and two wildflower meadow verges.

This required the removal and consequent recycling of 100 tonnes of concrete by

Lambeth Council as well as substantial structural work to cover existing drainage channels.

The completed plot also needed to withstand HGVs which meant a high-specification product needed to be installed.

Following the major construction work, community volunteers joined Mace to sow wildflower seeds and plant perennials, which will support local wildlife and soak up the rainwater runoff.

Training was carried out by LWT's Lost Effra Co-ordinator to ensure the long term maintenance strategy for the new scheme was effectively communicated, with a permanent community interpretation board installed to engage members of the public about the benefits of the scheme.

The site is now publicly available and is used and enjoyed frequently by plot holders, yoga classes and community events in the evening and at weekends.

The planting scheme for the site was tailored to bring maximum wildlife benefit and presents a thorough consideration of biodiversity. Multiple wildflower mixes were used



Photo: Wildflower meadow at Rosendale

to support pollinating insects including perennial meadow species, cornfield annuals and a grass and clover mix for the main grass area.

A variety of nectar rich species were planted to provide a reliable nectar source for pollinating insects, as well as grasses and perennials to provide shelter and feeding opportunities for birds and insects.

As well as the biodiversity benefit there is a substantial flood alleviation benefit with the replacement of the hard standing on the forecourt and path with cellular paving meaning that the area can now absorb up to 80,000 litres of water – enough water to fill 1,000 baths.

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement.

Further information

The Lost Effra works closely with community partners to empower people to take control of local flood risk in ways that benefit people and wildlife in the area, promoting practical projects which work hand in hand with nature.

The Rosendale Allotments project provides a flagship example this ideology, showing the benefits of depaving in a residential area and explaining the principals behind it in an engaging and accessible way via ongoing engagement and interpretation.

Key to this engagement process was community involvement in the design of the scheme which culminated in a presentation to raise community awareness about the reasoning behind the project by Mace and LWT at the Rosendale AGM in 2015.

Catriona Andrews of the Rosendale Allotment Association said: "Participating in the project has helped us educate our members... [it's] provided a great benefit to our site and a model example to the local community, promoting practical ways of helping communities work with nature and rainwater to prevent local flooding."

Mace actively promotes employee volunteering with community partners whose cause they support, and encourages all construction projects to take on interesting and ambitious volunteering activities.

The Rosendale project was a culmination of Mace's volunteering offer where we were able to donate materials, technical knowledge and access to contractors, demonstrating that management combined with expertise in the supply chain can deliver real benefit to communities.

Karina Reed, Acting Chair of the Rosendale Allotment Association said: "...we are so very grateful to have been fortunate enough to receive your funding, planning and construction for the benefit of the members and the local population."

Following completion of the project Mace and LWT have confirmed further community based volunteering projects across London in 2015.

The planning, design and project management documents were made available to LWT to allow other project teams to replicate the project in other areas of London.

[What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?](#)

A core Mace value is the pursuit of a better way, and the Rosendale community depave project proved to be an excellent example of how public-private partnerships can come together to form a pioneering approach to community based volunteering.

Matched with the enthusiasm needed to deliver a complex flood alleviation project on a pro-bono basis we have proved

that it is possible to go beyond normal business practice to bring about real biodiversity benefit and local action on flooding, using the wealth of expertise which is prevalent in just one construction project team.