

River Diversion
Farnham, Surrey
 Hanson UK

BIG Challenge 2015 submission category: Large scale permanent

Project overview

A project at Hanson's worked-out Farnham quarry in Surrey has created a new 300-metre channel for the River Blackwater which runs through the site.

The new channel will help reduce the potential for flooding in the area and enhance the river's value for fish and other wildlife.

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

Not particularly good due to quarry workings and a straight river channel.

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

Principally to reduce the risk of flooding but also to enhance biodiversity value.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

This section of the River Blackwater was very artificial in nature and had a limited value for fish and other wildlife.

This project has created a more natural river channel, to help reduce the potential for flooding in the area, and



Photo: River diversion

to enhance access and enjoyment of the Blackwater Valley for the local residents.

The work is just the latest in a long term project to improve the River Blackwater and it isn't the first time that work has been done on this section; back in 2006 the project group completed phase 1 by improving 500m of river directly upstream of the current project.

Phase 2 works have created a new route for the Blackwater to the south of its current alignment. While this means that the river will

be moved further away from the residential properties, access will be maintained using crossing points leading to the new river channel and the edge of the quarry site.

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement.

Further information

The Blackwater River Restoration Project was led by the Environment Agency working closely with Hanson, Surrey County Council, the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership and Scottish Southern Electric.

It was pleasing to see how the previous phases of quarry restoration and wetland habitat creation had developed in the last few years and with the numbers of bird species, invertebrates and reptiles that the site already supports, as recorded by all the keen local birdwatchers and ecologists who visit the site.

The new river realignment will be a great addition to the biodiversity value of the complex.



Photo: River diversion