

**University Of Northampton Garden Project**  
**Northampton, England, NN4 8RR**  
**Kier Construction Eastern / Delapre Primary School**

**BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Community Engagement Award**

**Project overview**

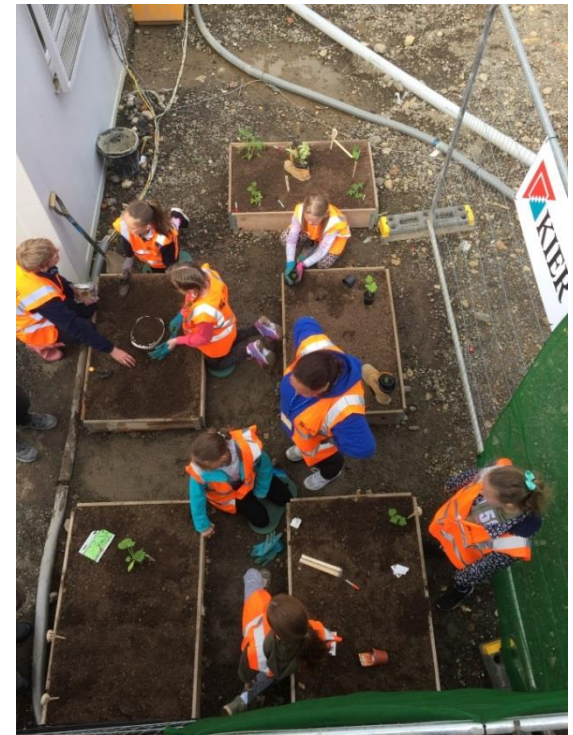
The University of Northampton garden project was undertaken as a temporary ecological enhancement during the construction of student residencies by Kier Construction Eastern. The project involved the planting of recycled wooden pallet collars in collaboration with Delapre Primary School. Six pupils from Delapre Primary School gardening club and accompanying adults were invited by Kier project management, who facilitated and arranged the day. The area utilised for the planters was roughly 5m<sup>2</sup> in size and located adjacent to the temporary welfare units on the project. The cost of the project was limited to two tonnes of suitable topsoil; further materials and equipment were either supplied by Kier, or Delapre School. Seeds and seedlings were obtained via the lottery funded 'Grow Wild' initiative, or supplied by members of the Kier site team.

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

The biodiversity of the site prior to the temporary enhancement was extremely limited. The site had been widely remediated and levelled prior to the temporary accommodation being delivered. The area utilised was completely bare, open ground, consisting of exposed soil / aggregate.

**Were there any specific reasons that led to this project?**

The project was an initiative undertaken as part of Kier's vision to minimise the impact our operations have on the environment. The project was also seen as a good opportunity to involve the local school and promote wider community engagement within the local area. The initiative has also been showcased during part of Kier's membership of the 'Considerate Constructors Scheme'.



*Pupils from Delapre Primary School Gardening Club undertaking planting of Native Wildflower Seeds and Vegetable Seedlings.*

## What were the biodiversity measures taken?

The biodiversity measures taken were focussed around increasing the availability of food sources for local pollinators in the area. The native wildflower seed mix obtained from the lottery funded 'Grow wild' initiative, comprises species which will provide a variety of heights and colours to showcase the variety that exists in nature. The mixture of 'annual' and 'perennial' flowers will provide a valuable food source for a sustained period throughout the summer months. Pollinators will be attracted to the area benefiting the overall biodiversity of the site and the surrounding habitats.

Vegetable seedlings were also planted as an initiative to provide site grown vegetables to project team members and operatives. The pupils from Delapre Primary School will also be invited back to site to harvest vegetables to be taken back to the school and consumed by both pupils and teachers.

The raised planter beds were formed from wooden pallet collars which were destined for disposal prior to the scheme. The planters were filled with two tonnes of recycled topsoil obtained from a local builders merchants. The decision to use externally sourced topsoil was made in order to give the seeds and seedlings the best possible growing medium. Other recycled materials utilised for the planting included 'brick guards' used to form climbers for the peas and beans, a redundant hard hat and old pair of boots used as additional planting features, debris netting used to shelter the area from dust and wind.



*The pupils from Delapre Primary School enjoying the planting at the University of Northampton Garden Project.*

## What were the biodiversity measures taken?

The day was arranged and co-ordinated by both Guy Osborne (Construction Manager) and Sarah Tudno-Jones (Site Secretary). Guy Osborne also supplied the vegetable seeds and seedlings for the project. The planting equipment such as trowels and watering cans was supplied by Delapre Primary School.



## How would you best describe the project?

Enhancement

### Further information

Although the project is a temporary biodiversity enhancement, the pallet collars which were utilised to form the raised beds are reusable and will potentially be translocated to a secondary site for reuse. If a suitable Kier site isn't available then the planters will be donated to Delapre Primary School for continued use as part of the schools ongoing gardening club.

As part of the follow up visit from the Delapre pupils, provisions will be made by Kier in terms of materials and design for the creation of a bug hotel. The overall scheme is deemed to have been a success with both Kier project team and members of Delapre Primary School enjoying the day. The project has enabled Kier to engage with and integrate into a key aspect of the local community, reducing the social impact of the project. In addition, the project has enabled school children to get a rare insight into the world of construction.



*Guy Osborne (Kier Construction Manager) with pupils from Delapre Primary School standing behind completed planters.*

### What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

Kier have developed a close relationship with the school as part of trying to engage with the wider local community. By undertaking the project it has created a small area of the site which enables all to relax and enjoy over the coming months. It has also helped to educate both young and old of the benefits of plants/vegetables for both the environment and people.