

## SHARNBROOK VIADUCT SHARNBROOK, BEDFORDSHIRE

J. Murphy & Sons Ltd

**BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category:** Small Scale Permanent Award

### Project overview

The project involved the refurbishment and strengthening of the 10 span Sharnbrook Viaduct. As part of the enabling works a site compound and access road was created within an improved grassland field. This grassland was considered as having low biodiversity value.

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

The biodiversity conditions on site consisted of scattered scrub, immature trees and an unmanaged tall ruderal area closer to the viaduct. A BAP priority deciduous woodland can be found adjacent to the works, however, this was not to be impacted upon.

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

Works to undertake biodiversity enhancement were carried out on a purely voluntary basis and not as part of any consent or planning condition.



*Ariel view of the viaduct and compound*

*Photo credit: Bedfordshire Police Helicopter for J Murphy & Sons Sharnbrook*

## What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Stock Doves (*Columba oenas*) were observed on the viaduct structure. These species are classified as an Amber species under the Birds of Conservation Concern review. Research was undertaken into bird box design and Murphy's own carpenters were employed to build two bird boxes, from off-cut pieces of timber, to a design that would suit the species. These were installed within suitable habitat close to the viaduct. The bird boxes are to be inspected to monitor their use over time.

Desktop surveys revealed that records of reptiles exist within the general wider area. A decision was made to build an hibernaculum from old logs already present on the site to encourage reptile habitation. Old wooden pallets, along with natural materials gained from the area, were used to build a bug hotel. Site operatives were involved in the habitat creation which aided in promoting the education of site teams in the importance of biodiversity and showing what simple measures can be implemented.



## How would you best describe the project?

Enhancement

## Further information

The measures carried out on site proved what can be achieved to enhance biodiversity without requiring excessive costs or time and using on-site won materials. Involving site operatives throughout aids in promoting and educating site teams in the importance of carrying out biodiversity enhancements and raises awareness.

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

The Sharnbrook construction team wanted to help enhance the local biodiversity within the client property boundary which would be able to stay there and naturally develop over the years to come.

Combining a range of methods such as a log pile, wood chippings and bug hotel allowed us to create a connecting artificial habitat which would enrich the previous environment and even entice new inhabitants into the area. The bird boxes were specially made at the Murphy Cannock depot to accommodate the larger bird species identified within the viaduct area.

Bird box 1



*Photo credit: J Murphy & Sons*