

## Transformation of carpark into a Community Wildlife Garden Daubeney Road, Hackney, London

JV – Costain & Skanska (CSJV) - National Grid

*BIG Challenge 2015 submission category: Small scale permanent*

### Project overview

National Grid worked with a local community group to build a vibrant 'Pocket Park' on a disused carpark in Daubeney Road, Hackney, as part of its ongoing community outreach programme.

Costain-Skanska JV (CSJV), National Grid's principle contractor on the London Power Tunnels project, helped transform this space into a much-loved centre piece for the local community to enjoy as part of Costain's Wildlife week.

The "garden in a car park" has now become home to a bug hotel, a recreational seating area, 20 grow tubs - some of which are decorated with fantastic designs from the local primary school and a living wall to act as a climbing frame for hops and other plants.

CSJV donated over 450 volunteering hours with the help of its subcontractors Fannerys, Kilnbridge, Swords, Southgate and J O'Doherty, and £3000 to help remove large sections of concrete to make way for



*Photo: The team taking a break*

further planting and improve drainage across the site.

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

Prior to any enhancement the site was an abandoned concrete covered car park with concrete bollards and little biodiversity. Ivy covered most of the car park wall and nesting birds were observed in the ivy on house adjacent to the park.

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

As part of Costain's Wildlife Week, an annual campaign to raise awareness and do something positive for the environment, CSJV took this

opportunity to launch the Pocket Park volunteering project.

The project coincides perfectly with CSVJ's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Policy to encourage all employees to use two of their working days towards any volunteering project they choose.

Furthermore, this pocket-size wildlife garden is part of an ongoing community outreach programme currently underway throughout the whole of the London Power Tunnel project.

### What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Pocket parks are part of the Mayor's London's Great Outdoors - the programme aims to improve areas across London by creating small areas of inviting public space for all people to enjoy and to provide relief from the hustle and bustle of the city.

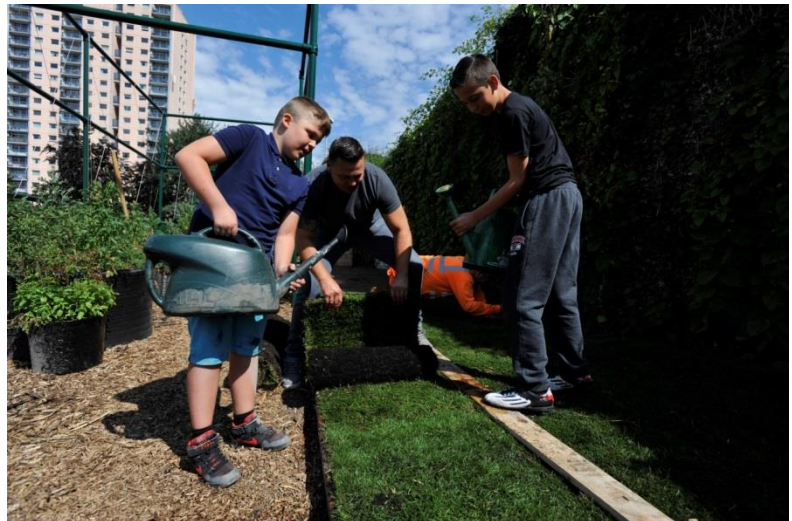
We believe that the transformation of a disused or abandoned site however small or large into a Community Wildlife Garden is a replicable project.

The Wildlife garden is to be given back to the community. Gerry Tissier, Chair of a local charity that aims to improve the neighbourhood, is the community representative and a local resident and has been given a handover file for all long term management.

The local school shall also participate in long term management of the park, using the area for science classes, etc.

A water bowser has been installed to ensure water supply and pots and seeds are available to all local residents wishing to plant.

All information and contact details are available on a notice on site.



*Photo: Community helpers*

The initial site was relatively bare and provided little habitats for local wildlife.

The project has created ecologically valuable foraging land and habitats for a range of insects, bees and birds, resulting in a biodiversity net gain within the Hackney area.

The community garden enhances the Hackney Biodiversity Action Plan and further develops the local Council's initiatives and commitments.

During Wildlife Week we briefed via meetings and toolbox talks about the importance of biodiversity, actions they could undertake to help preserve or enhance local wildlife and more specifically the Pocket Park project for which everyone could volunteer to help.

This resulted in over 450 volunteering hours of London Power Tunnel staff and subcontractors.

To create the pocket park, waste materials were reused from various LPT sites, for example wood offcuts were recuperated from all sites.

### How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement.

### Further information

The transformation took place over a two week period, firstly welfare cabins were installed and floor cutting was undertaken.

The cut area was then broken out in order to perforate the tarmac to ensure water drainage. Borders were then installed for topsoil and turf.

A second area was then broken out to install concrete posts and the surface was levelled in preparation for the construction of the seating area.

A communal seating area was then installed with recycled timber and cable drums. This was followed by topsoil being delivered and spread around the park.

On the 30th July, we held a wildlife week volunteer day where volunteers took part in turf laying, planting and creating an insect hotel.

Finally the site was tidied up and the welfare cabins removed before the Pocket Park was handed back to the community.

These projects are a unique opportunity to recycle construction waste and many hardware stores are more than happy to donate materials.

Our advice for any future project of the same nature would be to reach out to a variety of local stores.



*Photo: Bingham Palace – little nature sanctuary*

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

I've always had an interest for environmental issues. It started out with a love of the natural world and evolved in an elaborate network of beliefs about the importance of environmental equity and of reversing some of the harm that we humans had done to the Earth.

I am also very passionate about helping others and giving back to the local community and this project was an ideal project to combine both these interest.