

## Company Initiative/Target Across UK

RG Group

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Temporary

### Project overview

In 2015/6 we set a corporate aim for all main projects to include one biodiversity initiative. In 2014 we carried out 2 initiatives across the business, in 2015 16 initiatives an increase of 800%. In 2016 we are already at 10 initiatives. In addition we entered a corporate partnership with the RSPB and commissioned a Biodiversity Best Practise Guide for construction sites and 3 project reviews, the first 2 of these have been carried out. Each project has a budget of £200 to include environmental signage and initiatives and our corporate engagement with the RSPB cost £6k. Our projects are located across the UK mainly in urban and suburban settings. Our projects can be new build, extension or refurbishment and range from Retail, Student Accommodation, Hotel Developments and Developers Shell works.

Each project has one site based environmental champion who is responsible for organising and overseeing the biodiversity initiative.

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

Realising the impact on biodiversity that construction works have we decided although our sites are temporary we will endeavour to have a positive impact on the natural community where we work. Primarily sites are urban & biodiversity struggles, we take the opportunity to create new habitat or help existing areas.

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

Some of our projects are BREEAM and they always tend to have initiatives such as bird/bat boxes, planting schemes etc but they are small % of our projects and we



Left photo: Bird box with new inhabitant; Right photo: Dormouse box and bird boxes

wanted to ensure that we view every project for biodiversity not just ones where there is an external condition to meet. We want to promote the importance of biodiversity to all our lives especially within urban settings and what impact the construction industry has on it.

## What were the biodiversity measures taken?

We have done a number of different initiatives from the RSPB surveys enabling native/biodiversity friendly planting and pond schemes to be realised, to bird/bat boxes, insect hotels, Dormice homes, herb gardens & planters on site, local school lecture on biodiversity all the way through to litter picking. All of the things we have done could be easily replicated perhaps with the exception of the Dormice boxes which were specific to Bluewater environment. Most of the things that we have done do not require long term management plans however the majority of them will have an ongoing impact such as the insect hotels and wildlife boxes. Both new areas of habitat have been created, some temporary as in our herb gardens/planters on sites and some permanent such as the 14 Dormouse homes that were done with the local ecology group at Bluewater, photo attached. We also purchased 10 sets of bee bricks for use across our projects and these were sometimes incorporated into the build in the form of the timber crib wall such as our project at Heathfield, photo attached. We organised a corporate day at our local reserve so that our office based staff did not miss out on the opportunity to get involved in biodiversity and we helped to restore natural habitat at RSPB Broadwater Warren. By liaising with the RSPB to do our Best Practise for Construction Sites guide we will be running a series of posters/info graphics across all our sites this summer which help promote net positive gains and will engage not just RG staff but all visitors and other sub contractors on our projects. Wherever possible materials from our works on site have been utilised in the construction of boxes and insect hotels meaning less waste is produced on our projects.



*Top: site environmental board with herb garden underneath; bottom: turnstile entrance with planted pipes which were off cuts; Right: retaining wall with bee bricks in situ*

## How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement



### Further information

The process of our initiatives have been very simple which has been part of the reason of the success of the uptake. Most are simply boxes constructed from off cut materials on site and sited in suitable locations. The maintenance and need for revisiting initiatives has been avoided where possible, where not as in the instance of the Dormice at Bluewater we have joined forces with local conservation groups so they can take on the maintenance going forward. Quite often we have been lucky enough to see birds/bees & insects take up residence within their new habitat whilst we are still on site.

I believe we have achieved what we wanted as everyone within the company had an opportunity to get involved & has at least once this year considered biodiversity & how they impact on it - both positive & negative ways. I think that companies setting biodiversity targets across all their business activities is a great way to raise awareness and engage people.

Ashley - RSPB - **“Over the year, RG has shown a real commitment to installing nature-friendly friendly practices into their work by partnering with the RSPB. With many of RG’s construction projects being urban developments, they have taken the initiative to help boost urban biodiversity by implementing green infrastructure at both pre and post development stages. With the use of our best practice guide for boosting biodiversity, RG are hoping to imbed knowledge amongst staff and benefit wildlife on all future constructions projects “**

Glenn – Construction Manager – **“With plenty of dormice boxes installed and also remaining in Bluewater’s stock, creating homes for many years to come. We also learnt that the diverse ecology present at Bluewater also means that our boxes will get use during all four seasons in the year, and not inhabited solely by dormice. We can leave this project and move on to the next knowing we made a positive environmental impact “**



RG Team Volunteer day RSPB Broadwater Warren

Lynda – Accountant **“The day was a chance to reconnect with nature & help restore the land to its natural habitat. It was both fun and educational & promoted team work. A great sense of achievement and satisfaction felt through doing something worthwhile within the local community.”**

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

Having corporate environmental responsibility I wanted to find a way of engaging employees to think about & interact with the environment. Whilst some environmental topics can be hard to interest people in, biodiversity, the important role it plays & how it touches all aspects of life lends itself perfectly to this challenge.