



HEADCORN HEADCORN, KENT KIER CONSTRUCTION SOUTHERN

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award Category: Small scale

Project overview

The project being submitted is a new build school in Headcorn, Kent. The site directly adjoins a tributary of the <u>River Beult Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI</u>). Such high statutory designation of the river warranted extra protection and measures to ensure no impact upon this valued ecological receptor.

An important part of this project was engagement with all stakeholders who have an association with the R., including the school, our subcontractors and the local river association. Contact was made with all necessary stakeholders to ensure that they knew the works being undertaken to ensure good communication channels were being established from the onset and that suitable and sufficient protection/mitigation was in place to protect the tributary which feeds the R. Beult. The R. Beult flows for most of its length over Wealden clay which influences its diverse and interesting ecology. It is one of the few clay rivers in England which retains a characteristic flora and fauna. This type of river occurs predominantly in central England and has usually been canalised for land drainage purposes.

Initiative-The environment team began by establishing a knowledge baseline by first conducting a desktop survey to enable us to understand the designation of the river and flood mapping the area. This information was added into the site specific environmental management plan, aspect and impact register and constraints plan. The designation and desktop information demonstrated that extra methods of protection and monitoring would need to be undertaken for this project.

Daily river monitoring included two different sampling locations (U/S and D/S of the site) for pH, turbidity and notes on weather conditions ATS (at the time of sampling) coupled with a visual inspection of the river. This was completed by the site team daily for the duration of the project. The team were trained to take & recognise river monitoring results & understand what the results mean.



River Beult



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What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Measures taken include the analytical and sampling equipment supported by extensive training which focused on the implications of silt/hydrocarbon ingress into the water and specifically blinding of the substrate and its effects on invertebrate life and higher food chain fauna and macrophytes.

There were regular emergency spill tests and robust surface water drainage protection including drain guards and drain blocks for an emergency situation. Results of monitoring were completed via a specifically designed electronic monitoring sheet which could be interrogated back in the office.

This project has not created new habitat but ensured the protection and preservation of an ecologically sensitive and nationally important watercourse. The Environment Agency were also invited to site and praised the team for their diligent and conscientious approach to monitoring.

In continual support of the project, the environmental team delivered further to the local primary school emphasizing the ecological importance of this valued resource. There were ecological poster competitions, organised by Kier and prizes were awarded to the winners alongside the winning posters being added to the hoarding.

What were the reasons behind this project ?

The reasons behind the project were to protect and preserve a type of river which is scares in the UK and educate the future generations (hopefully of naturists) about the importance of preserving and enhancing the ecology they have on their doorstep.



Image of site team completing the river monitoring



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Further information

The experience gained at this site in respect to sensitive/unsual watercourses has been transferred into all pre-con information which identifies the measures that MUST be taken to protect these natural resources. As a result, the use of river monitoring and drain protection has now been established at ALL of the KCS' sites which highlights how this good practise has been adopted into KCS culture and behaviour.

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

Biodiversity within the R.Beult prior to and during the project seemed to be very good with high diversity of Dragon Flies Damsel flies and a variety of different marginal vegetation which provided shelter being recorded. The biodiversity status of the R. was unchanged by the end of the project.

What was the motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

The motivation for completing this project was to ensure that KCS did everything possible to protect and maintain the ecological integrity of a nationally valued watercourse.



Image of drain guards :



KCS Environmental Logo