

Swindon Network Growth Upgrade

Swindon, Wiltshire

J Murphy & Sons Ltd

BIG Challenge 2015 submission category: Large scale permanent

Project overview

Construction of 1200mm gravity sewer through the Rivermead Wiltshire Wildlife Trust site.

The construction work involved both open cut excavations and directional drilling.

The site has important local interest as it provides important nature walks. The site is situated on the suburban area of Swindon. The project value was approximately £1.2m and involved 25 full time staff.

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

The works were situated predominantly within the Rivermead Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Reserve. A local wildlife site noted for its populations of reptiles, water voles and otters.

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

A Reptile mitigation strategy was created prior to the works and submitted for approval to the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.



Photo: River Mead reptile fencing

A detailed reinstatement plan was also drawn up following detailed discussions with the WWT and Swindon Borough Council.

The reinstatement plan outlined details for recreating existing ponds and habitat enhancements.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

The reptile mitigation strategy was implemented. It involved installing reptile exclusion fencing around the reserve, two step strimming under ecological supervision, and trapping and relocating reptiles outside of the works area for 30 days.

The ponds and scrapes were recreated as before. Deep and shallow areas were created and plug planted with aquatic/marginal species. 2no. reptile hibernacula and 2no. log piles were installed within the reserve.

The most suitable locations were identified with the wildlife trust. 10 no. bat boxes were donated to use in the surrounding areas.

A species rich wildflower seed mix was planted within the reinstated topsoil to restore the reserve to its pre construction condition.

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement.

Further information

The reptile fencing was installed using a mini digger under ecological supervision.

Strimming to an ankle height was completed by the workers using hand held strimmers and an ecological hand search followed.

Artificial refugia in the form of roof tiles were placed along the reptile fencing. Reptiles were trapped and translocated to a receptor site close to the works for 30 days.

The pipeline was constructed after given the all clear from the ecologist. The reinstatement plan was then implemented following completion of the works.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

Having a minimal impact on a site of local importance both to the community of Swindon and the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. Leaving a positive image of our company to the local area.



Photo: Slow worm Wichelstowe