

## Carillion Rail – Great Western Route Modernisation South West of England and Wales

Carillion Rail

*BIG Challenge 2015 submission category: Community engagement*

### Project overview

The Great Western Route Modernisation is an infrastructure Project enabling the electrification of the railway. Work scope involves demolition, jacking of bridges and track lowering close to neighbouring communities.

Spread across a vast geographical area the Western and Wales project sites are located in various rural and urban areas.

In every setting the potential environmental impact is assessed especially to protected species and the habitat they depend on.

The ecological consultant's recommendations are adhered to and communicated to site personal. Workforce and locals are engaged with to generate awareness on Sustainability in construction.

So far over 30 members of the team from various departments have volunteered to engage with local schools, Sea cadets, Rainbows, Brownies,



*Photo: Nursery engagement*

Guides and nursery groups. Resource allocation is mainly 2-3 hours of staff time to travel and time out of work but this time counts toward Carillion employee 6 days paid leave.

The project wishes to continue this level of engagement and in the spirit of collaborative working and encourages all involved in the scheme to take part.

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

Conditions range from moderate to good. Most sites are overgrown with weeds bramble, heavily

littered and contain invasive weed species.

Only land needed for the completion of the works was taken, with the aim to retain as much habitat as possible to maintain the green corridor for the safe migration of wildlife.

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

The project supports Network Rails strategy for no net loss in Biodiversity. The aim is to offset all work for 'like for like' or better to enhance habitats on project completion.

Where offsetting cannot be achieved onsite, local groups such as Wildlife Trusts are supported to compensate and enhance habitats offsite such as participating in local balsam bashes and volunteering at local Wetland Centres.

Carillion's 2020 Sustainability Strategy commitment includes Biodiversity assessments/ action plans for every site, 6 days paid leave for volunteering, training, health and wellbeing of employees. Wildlife detectives accounts around a third of this engagement.

### What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Carillion's Community Needs Plan identified multiple engagement opportunities along the route section.

Therefore a suite of 'to hand' activities was created. Using positive feedback from other community events we started to develop an activity which took account of different abilities and that could be adapted to most age groups.

The resulting activity sheet was to encourage good team building and generating awareness on Biodiversity. Career opportunities within the industry are promoted.



*Photo: Rainbows engagement*

Seeing a woman in construction in orange overalls in a school assembly at a young age may inspire other young ladies to seek a career in Sustainability, engineering or similar.

The laminated Velcro cut-outs and sheets are reusable and wipe able. Children really enjoy learning about wildlife and it's surprising how much they know about which animals live in which habitats.

They can practice spelling and communication skills. They learn interesting facts and how they can make changes in their gardens at home to encourage wildlife to flourish. The concept of wildlife detectives is replicable and may be

adapted to suit a range of ages and abilities. Changing behaviours or inspiring others to care can make a difference.

### How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement.

### Further information

The activity has been developed over time and now it is ready to use in most engaged opportunities and can be adapted to suit almost all ages.

The design and creation of the activity was time consuming but once made the activity is ready to use with minimal preparation and resourcing which makes it such a great success.

Over time the experience has been enhanced by bringing along day old chicks for the children to have the opportunity to handle and have their picture taken.

The children were also asked to name the chicks. The top names were pulled from the hard hat and announced as Chick, Elsa and Olaf.

Further visits have been scheduled and the hope is to take along Barn owl chicks for the children to see. Good networking and lasting contact with surrounding communities have been established and repeat visits have been requested for next year.

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

As Sustainability Advisor for the Framework, responsibilities include and generating wildlife awareness in all age groups.

Inspiring children to take a career route in Sustainability and teaching them why it is important to respect their environment for the sake of future generations.



*Photo: Activity in action*