

## KINGSTON COURT SNEINTON, NOTTINGHAM

Hosta Consulting

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Small Scale Permanent Award

### Project overview

Kingston Court is one of three newly refurbished blocks of high rise flats in Sneinton, Nottingham. We wanted the regeneration of the area to flow into the gardens and create a space for residents to enjoy as part of the Nottingham City Homes on their Decent Neighbourhoods Scheme. Located in the city, the site includes a car park and rear garden area. The objective was to create a space that would promote biodiversity in an urban area and somewhere that residents could interact with nature. Hosta Consulting wanted to incorporate a wildflower meadow into the project to demonstrate how car park design can offer more value than traditional amenity planting. The total cost of the project was £22,000.

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

The site contained a number of well-established trees but very little else in the way of ground cover and flowering plants. Grass growing around the front of the building and along the side was always closely mown rather than left to grow to provide a habitat for overwintering wildlife.

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

On the site previous to the implementation of the project, a large patch of bare earth existed in the rear garden area. During heavy rainfall the ground would become sodden due to the lack of drainage from compacted soil and lack of planting leading pooling of rain water. This was exacerbated by the recent construction traffic on the site following the regeneration of the accommodation blocks.



*Flowering Geum at Kingston Court*

### What were the biodiversity measures taken?

The site is one of three enhancement schemes to be implemented in the area and has sought to reconnect the residents of the building to the surrounding gardens. The scheme can be replicated in the sense that plants can be used in an urban context to promote biodiversity in the city.

The scheme was designed to be low maintenance and yet still contribute to biodiversity in the city. Hosta will also work closely with maintenance teams and residents so that the scheme has maximum benefit to wildlife. This means that plant debris is left throughout the winter to provide an overwintering habitat for animals. It also means that only sustainable methods of maintenance are used, for example no use of herbicides or pesticides.

The project has proven to be ecologically valuable by providing plenty of flowering plants for pollinators to feed on. As the site is in the city it is vital to promote biodiversity.

The implemented scheme has provided an area for wildlife where there was very little for them previous to this.

The steps taken to implement the scheme will result in biodiversity net gain as it has transformed a disused area of land into a species rich biodiverse area.

The scheme also compliments DEFRA's National Pollinator Strategy due to the addition of a wildflower meadow in the front car park area. The wildflower meadow provides essential food for pollinators due to the wide range of flowering species that are included in the mix. Only plants that have easily accessible flowers for insects were chosen for the scheme.



*Planted Lavender Bed at Kingston Court*

### How would you best describe the project?

A landscape intervention / enhancement

### Further information

The design and installation process included:

- Carefully selecting plants that were listed as providing the maximum benefit for pollinators.
- Ensuring there were no nesting insects or birds that could be disturbed during the installation of the project.
- Engagement with residents, construction teams and designers to ensure biodiversity was being promoted and fully understood.
- Using horticultural trained people to assist with planting so that plants had the best possible start.

Hosta Consulting has visited the scheme on a monthly basis to ensure establishment of plants and monitor wildlife that visits the garden by observation and speaking to residents. There has been a very positive response from residents who have spotted a number of insects including bees, butterflies and hoverflies.

A space like this in the city will have a long-term beneficial effect on wildlife as it gives insects food as well as shelter throughout the winter when it is needed most when perennial seed heads will be left in-situ.

The objective of creating a space that could promote biodiversity in an urban area has been achieved through the implementation of this scheme. Having completed this project, there is further potential for the installation of planted schemes around Nottingham in areas that will benefit from regeneration.



*Planted bed at Kingston Court*

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

The motivation for carrying out this enhancement was to show that any un-used space in a city can be transformed and not only provide a space for the public, but mainly a space that can promote biodiversity in the city. Pockets of green in cities are vital for sustaining a healthy population of beneficial wildlife.