

## Wild about Kidbrooke Village – Community Consultation and Engagement Kidbrooke, London

Berkeley Homes (East Thames) and London Wildlife Trust

**BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category:** Community Engagement

### Project overview

Berkeley Homes (East Thames) Ltd have partnered with the London Wildlife Trust (LWT) to deliver a programme of free community events called ‘Wild about Kidbrooke Village’. This is part of a wider project looking for opportunities to enhance the ecological value of the green spaces within the Kidbrooke Village development and encourage the local community to become an active stakeholder in their long term use and management. The Kidbrooke Village development involves the regeneration of what was the Ferrier Estate in South East London into a vibrant New Village community with 35ha of green parkland as the centrepiece. The Wild about Kidbrooke community events took place between October 2016 and February 2017. Over 600 local residents and school children have participated in a series of free events, workshops and consultation sessions to date.

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

The early phases of the Kidbrooke Village development have delivered large green spaces (Cator Parks) and living roofs of moderate biodiversity value, however a resident survey by LWT suggested that people mostly walked through the Parks but didn’t normally spend time in them.

### Were there any specific reasons that led to this project?

The main purpose of the event programme was to connect local residents with the wildlife on their doorstep. We had no planning or other obligations to do this. Feedback has shown that Kidbrooke Village residents highly value their greenspace (45% say that nature and wildlife is what they value most about living at Kidbrooke Village), and the events help residents better understand the value of the biodiversity around them. Consulting the community

also ensures that we deliver spaces the whole neighbourhood can enjoy and use, as well as enhancing biodiversity.



*Local residents and Community Engagement Officer inspect invertebrate samples from the Kidbrooke swales.*

## What were the biodiversity measures taken?

- Various ecological features have been included in the Kidbrooke Village development to date, including an extensive parkland area with integrated lakes, swales and planting, as well as brown roofs on the buildings. The community engagement project was developed to help residents better understand the biodiversity already present. It is now part of a larger project with London Wildlife Trust, which is looking at how the existing and proposed green spaces can be further enhanced to maximise biodiversity gain and community benefits.
- The community engagement events are an early step to ensure local residents are involved in the plans and become an active stakeholder with a long term interest in the outcome of the project.
- Berkeley Homes (East Thames) engagement with LWT started with the drafting of a Kidbrooke Biodiversity Action Plan in March 2016 and included Berkeley's own staff volunteering for the LWT at the Birdbrook Nature Reserve (just north of the Kidbrooke development) in September 2016.
- Since October 2016, numerous free events hosted by Berkeley Homes (East Thames) and LWT in Kidbrooke Village have increased residents' awareness and interest in the nature on their doorstep. Activities included craft events, nature talks, pond dipping, mini beast hunts, mammal surveys and a trip to Woodbury Wetlands in North London. We have also facilitated 7 wildlife workshops at local schools (including Wingfield and Thomas Tallis), which reached over 430 children. To date, over 600 local people have enjoyed and attended Wild about Kidbrooke events.
- This frequency and range of community engagement was a first for Berkeley Homes (East Thames) but it is something we will seek to continue and replicate on other developments.



*Local children enjoying pond dipping in Kidbrooke. This is one of many free events connecting residents with the wildlife on their doorstep.*

### How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement: engaging the community to improve understanding and protection of biodiversity.

### Further information

- The community engagement initiatives were well received by the residents and will help develop an environmentally conscious community spirit at Kidbrooke.
- The main lesson learnt was that organising the events during the autumn and winter months significantly limited the type of activities that could be undertaken and variety of wildlife that could be seen. The intention is to continue the community engagement with further activities during the warmer months.

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

Community engagement encourages residents to recognise the value of the green space surrounding their homes as more than just attractive landscaping. The aim is to instil community spirit and pride that will ensure these areas remain loved and well managed in the long term, even after Berkeley leave the site.



*Berkeley Homes (East Thames) staff volunteering at Birdbrook Nature Reserve in Kidbrooke. Traditional methods are used where possible, in this case scythes are used to cut back undergrowth.*