

Country Park
Westhill, Kettering, NN15 7RH
Kier Living Eastern

BIG Biodiversity Challenge: Medium Scale Permanent Award

Project overview

Kier Living Eastern is creating a new country park, in partnership with the landowner BQ Farms, adjacent to our Westhill development in Kettering to provide recreational opportunities for existing and future residents. It was also our aim to create new habitats for wildlife.

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

Part of a parcel of land allocated for housing but used by the local community for dog walking, etc.

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

It was part of the agreement between Kier Living and BQ Farms on sale of the land for housing, that a country park for use by residents and the wider community would be created.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Our new £300,000 country park, which is off Northampton Road in Westhill, offers the residents and public approximately 770,000 sq ft (7 hectares) of new open space to enjoy.

We are creating extensive areas of new woodland, thicket and native hedgerow planting within the existing grass swards of the site. This supplemented the existing vegetation and created a visual and acoustic screen to the nearby A14.

We came across a number of site constraints during the works, including existing power cables. This meant the planting of substantial parkland tree species was limited. However, it did give us the opportunity to create community orchards alongside the Heritage Fruit Tree Company.



A large amount of new planting has taken place at Westhill to enhance the country park and to screen it from the adjacent major road.

The country park therefore contains traditional orchard varieties as well as some locally sourced heritage species.

The works also included the planting of native hedgerows and thickets, marginal aquatics and ornamental shrub planting. One of the focal points of the site is an extensive new attenuation basin which is surrounded by wetland thicket and wildflower meadows.

Elsewhere, a new network of surfaced footpaths has been created, complementing existing footpaths and providing a circular route around the country park and attenuation basin.

A permanently wet micro pool has been created to promote wetland habitats, while a new boardwalk crossing point has been constructed using composite timber. This provides a shortened route around the park and allows access across the basin during wet conditions. There is also a picnic area for use by the public with picnic tables provided and a number of benches for use around the country park.

How would you best describe the project?

Mitigation



The country park in progress as it looks now with paths and benches in situ.

Further information

Our landscape contractor is currently providing the management and maintenance of the country park and, ultimately, a management company will take over its handling.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

In creating the country park at Westhill we are aiming to create something for the residents and the wider community and hope that it will be well used.



Picture shows the country park as it is today, looking back towards the houses at Westhill