

Learning wetland area - Adel Beck Secure Children's Home Leeds

BAM Construction Ltd

BIG Challenge 2015 submission category: Community engagement

Project overview

BAM worked with RE'NEW who have developed a construction enterprise that provides a commercial means of delivering construction projects while achieving social objectives.

BAM – staff x2, Renewal Construction x6, Renew – x2 and Allwodley Primary School x3 (Staff).

Funding was delivered through the 4 Good Funds, which is available under the YORbuild Framework.

BAM supported the school with their application for funding and provided materials, plant hire, management time, design work and project planning expertise. Final cost £20,000.

The school is located in one of the suburbs of North Leeds.

The associated building by BAM was the construction of a Secure Children's Home

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



Photo: Pond dipping

The existing overgrown pond had a broken board walk, which meant the school could no longer use the space with the students.

The school could not afford to complete remedial work to the pond. Despite this, the pond was home to frogs, water spiders and beetles.

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

The project was initially highlighted through a public consultation event held at the school by BAM prior to our works commencing.

The project also as part of the YORbuild framework had Education and Skills Plan targets to achieve. The project exceeded the targets by 492% largely due to the pond project.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

This kind of project is replicable, subject to there being support from a local school or community.

The pond was fully designed to be self-sufficient with planting and access points incorporated to encourage a variety of wildlife to the area.

Also incorporated were overflows and a top up pipe to ensure that it can continue to provide a habitat in both dry and wet periods.

Whilst creation of the pond may not be classed as innovative, the approach to how the project was delivered was extremely innovative.

BAM initially worked with the school council to see how we could benefit the school. We then engaged our designers to create a new pond design.

We then supported the school in their funding bid, whilst engaging with renewal construction to provide opportunities for unemployed people and a skills school.

Our supply chain provided the materials at greatly discounted rates, planned the work and managed the whole process.

The project brought together 18 different organisations in total. The habitat has been extended, approximately 10 times the size of the existing pond with additional grassland, planting and reed beds created.

The habitats are valuable as a learning resource with the area now used as a full outdoor classroom.



Photo: Pond under construction

The large increase in both size and depth of the pond will certainly increase the number of species in the area.

The depth provides frost protection in winter and the access an ingress areas provides access for other small invertebrates.

Local unemployed Jack and Matthew through Renewal Construction the opportunity to redevelop the existing pond, giving them five valuable weeks of work experience, and making them more employable, both have moved onto employment on other projects in Leeds through the scheme.

The large excavation for the pond created 10m³ of soil which was used to create an

elevated play area at the bottom of the field.

The existing fence was dismantled and decking, sorted and reused for the new fence, planters and raised beds.

All topsoil was either re-used around the pond area or on the play mound resulting in no skip requirements.

Existing pond plants were retained along with a tree sapling, and replanted them as part of the new design.

Even the existing water was recycled which contained several dozen tadpoles.

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement.

Further information

The works involved changing an overgrown pond area of approximately 2m x 1m into an outside pond nearly 10 times larger complete with dipping jetty, cobbled beach, outside classroom space, bog planting area, fully accessible by new footpaths and walkways.

The works took 4 weeks, week one was excavation, and preparation, week 2 was pond construction, week 3 was footpaths and Jetty and week 4 was fencing and planting .

The new pond will be used as a valuable outdoor teaching resource and is a fantastic example of how BAM's collaborative approach can produce a lasting legacy for local communities.

The pond is supporting a health amount of pond life along with a definite increase in the bird numbers visiting the area.

Lessons learnt: involve more people in the design and consider a bigger budget for planting the surrounding area.



Photo: Completed pond