

Wirral Term Highways Services Contract PRENTON, BIRKENHEAD, WIRRAL

BAM NUTTALL

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Temporary

Project overview

The team working on the Wirral Term Highway Services Contact (WTHSC) based at Prenton depot are working on behalf of Wirral Borough Council and are involved in undertaking traditional highways maintenance and improvement works. The scope of activities can range from small footway/carriageway repairs to larger coastal protection schemes depending on the urgency of works. The project started in April 2014 and will continue up until September 2018.

The works mainly take place in the urban environment however can be more remotely located. The site team base themselves from a site depot which they rent off the council. There is only a small team based out of the depot in the region of 20 people. There a small gangs of 3 to 5 people (but can be more) at the work areas depending on the jobs at hand. Working for the council has meant very small budgets to get the work completed.

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

The biodiversity conditions on site at the main compound were very poor. Their footprint at the site compound consisted of site cabins sitting on tarmac on a trading estate.

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

Because of the poor biodiversity status at the site compound the team wanted to introduce conditions which would attract new species to the area. And because the project would be running for a number of years consideration for putting something in place long term which would regenerate every year was key. The team were not working towards BREEAM or a planning condition. It was just about doing more better things rather than a tick box exercise.



Wildflower meadow located at the entrance to the site depot.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

The site team looked into possible biodiversity enhancement areas within the site compound. The front of the compound had a bare concrete area which was unused. They decided to topsoil it, using recycled material from the smaller, local sites and **buy some wildflower seeds to see if they would take to the area. By the team's surprise, the growth of wildflowers took to the new area and suddenly became a haven for many different species. As you can see from the pictures, many bees, butterfly's, ladybirds and other insets use the wildflower meadow at the front of the compound.** The team have tried to count the number of bees at one time in this area have calculated over 40!

The team were elated with the fact something so simple like planting wildflower seeds could be so successful, cost a small amount and bring so much joy to people's life at work. You don't always have to be on a large project surrounded by many key environmental features to enhance biodiversity on site.

The management of the area does not take much time and only a small amount of water to keep the area hydrated. The area was constructed mainly by one person so the amount of additional volunteers required was low. This new area of habitat is **now home to many bee's which is fantastic as these species are in decline.** This area is helping support and sustain bees into the future.

Because the wildflower meadow is visible from the road, it is encouraging other businesses in the area to think about biodiversity enhancement on projects with limited space, time and budgets.



Close up on wildflower meadow outside the front of the depot.

How would you best describe the project?

I would describe the project as environmental enhancement.

Further information

The concrete area was covered with recycled topsoil from local projects which would have otherwise gone off site for disposal. The topsoil was placed to a desired depth for sustaining wildflower seeds. The wildflower seeds were obtained at a small cost and planted in the topsoil. The seeds were then watered over the coming weeks enabling them to thrive in their new habitat. The wildflowers have grown at such a rate and diversity that a number of different species such as bees now enjoy the area.

There are many long term benefits such as giving a thriving environment to special pollinators which we depend on so much for food. It is so important that we offer opportunities to enhance and sustain the number of pollinators found around the world.

A crucial tip for other projects is that simple, inexpensive measures can be taken on site which have outstanding benefits not only to wildlife but also those working on site. And although you may be faced with a small site area with limited opportunities anything can be done to enhance biodiversity.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

The personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement was to bring some benefits to wildlife and for people to enjoy at the site compound which offered very few opportunities due to the nature of its location.



Bees enjoying and making use of the wildflowers in front of the depot.