

Embankment End Marsh, Connect21, Peterborough, PE1 5AY,
Kier Living Eastern

BIG Biodiversity Challenge: Medium Scale Permanent Award

Project overview

Kier Living Eastern's environmental works at our Connect 21 site in Peterborough aimed to ecologically enhance and secure the future management of Embankment End Marsh. This including reinstating historic water channels which had silted up, creating new ditches and ponds, and preventing the marsh from drying out. This would then protect the marsh's integrity as a wetland habitat for future generations.

We also planned to tackle invasive species and provide new habitats for otters, water voles, bats, barn owls and many others.

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

The marshland area of the site was overgrown and unusable prior to work taking place. It was home to a variety of animals, insects and plants which we wanted to preserve.

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

Kier Living Eastern has worked closely with a number of different organisations during the course of the Embankment End works. These include Bioscan (UK) Ltd which provided expert ecological advice on the design of the scheme. Peterborough City Council has been a consultee throughout the process, as have Natural England and the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire. The otter holt creation, hoggin path and viewing platform works were carried out under licence from the Environment Agency.



Part of the marshland at Connect21

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Starting in autumn 2015, we created one large pond, two small ponds and associated ditches at the southern end of the marsh. The large pond incorporates embankments suitable for water vole burrow creation, while it has a range of depths, shallow shelves and sinuous edges providing diverse habitat for water voles and other wildlife, such as aquatic invertebrates and kingfishers. Aside from the reclamation of the northern edge of the marsh for development, all the remaining habitats have been either retained or enhanced. The works to the site off Potter's Way in Fengate included the reinstatement of Cat's Water Drain channels at the north of the marsh, a project which was carried out in autumn 2011.

Elsewhere, a new wildlife habitat was created in the form of an artificial otter holt. This incorporated a sunken main chamber which was constructed using concrete blocks, with two flexcoil pipes providing access for otters. An owl box, ten bird boxes and 15 bat boxes were also constructed.

We installed a hoggin path as well as two viewing platforms and interpretation boards to describe the wildlife interest of the site. We're currently removing a stand of Japanese knotweed, work which is expected to be completed by autumn 2018.

The management plan is subject to annual review, with a formal biodiversity audit to be undertaken in spring 2019. The management of the marsh will then be handed over to Peterborough City Council.



Work gets underway at Embankment End Marsh

In the long term, the marsh's management will increase the area of open water within the marsh and act to combat its drying out. It will also be valuable for a wide variety of species, including water voles, otters, birds such as barn owls, cuckoos, kingfishers and reed warblers. Indeed, a barn owl occupied the new owl box within 48 hours of its installation. Other species to benefit include bats, fish and invertebrates.

