

**THE ROUGHAM REFUGE FOR NATURE.
SUFFOLK HIGHWAYS, ROUGHAM DEPOT, SUFFOLK, ENGLAND.**

Kier Group: Local Highways Division

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Small scale permanent

Project overview

Following recent work to raise awareness of environmental issues at Kier Local Highways, operational and management team staff working together with the SHE team, were able to successfully identify and enhance a small area of woodland alongside the Rougham Highways Depot and adjacent to the A14 carriageway.

A small team of approximately 5 people, led by the Depot Manager cleared the area of any litter and overgrowth. Logs were stacked to provide home to insects, vegetation was used to create wildlife refuge and bird feeding areas were also incorporated. A bench was included to provide a pleasant outdoor area for staff to enjoy this environment as a permanent feature and continue to raise awareness of environmental issues. Materials were sourced from skips and chippings received as a donation. Therefore, the improvements did not see a cost to the project.

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

The area was previously overgrown and encroached by weed and nettle growth. Trees had not been managed and some limbs needed safe removal. Very little natural light was able to penetrate the overgrowth and allow species to flourish and provide food for other wildlife. Litter was evident in the hedgerow.

Were there any specific reasons that led to this project?

Kier Local Highways at Suffolk, have been working to improve awareness of environmental issues and the difference that even the smallest project or improvements can make. This has inspired a myriad of interest in and improvements to, sites which would otherwise remain neglected.



Photo (taken by Andy Moore, Rougham Depot Manager); shows the site after improvements to enhance biodiversity. Natural light now envelopes the area, weeds have been removed and small habitat enhancements incorporated. This is also a pleasant outdoor area for staff to enjoy.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

This project provides an inspirational and easily replicable enhancement for similar sites and highways depots. The improvements have not resulted in a cost, which might otherwise have prevented any work from being approved. Alterations to existing natural resources, to create insect hotels, together with the use of waste wood chip and donated materials for producing bird feeders, otherwise destined for disposal have provided an easy solution with the potential to make a big difference to biodiversity. This has also been beneficial to staff, raising awareness at the site/contract and by inspiring others with the evidence that even small improvements can make a significant difference.

In addition, this biodiversity area can be easily maintained in the future, with real opportunity for further enhancement, such as the addition of bat boxes and further careful vegetation management to promote the growth of new floral species.

The project overall, needs to be valued for its contribution to preventing habitat fragmentation, typical within the highways environment. Habitat corridors alongside our road networks are a vital source of support for the long-term survival of biodiversity and this is a key aspect of the importance of recognising this work. By encouraging further gain in habitat corridors, we can ensure we furnish our manmade assets with biodiversity rich potential.

This work has served to raise the understanding and importance of environmental issues and biodiversity conservation and it is hoped that it will serve as an inspiration to implementation of further similar projects across Kier Local Highways contracts.



Photo taken by Andy Moore, Rougham Depot Manager: Image shows the biodiversity area before enhancements have been implemented. Weed growth is evident, very little natural light able to penetrate the natural canopy and trees are unmanaged.



How would you best describe the project?

Enhancement.

Further information

This type of project can often be met by concerns of budget constraints on the capacity to spend additional funds on environmental improvements. This project demonstrates clearly how a team or contract can make first steps towards implementing changes which do not result in financial burden.

Further still, the value of engaging staff in this work delivers a positive experience for all involved, creating a team building environment and delivering added value to our work and community. It is hoped that this project will inspire attention, not just to areas alongside a highways depot, but also to inflict a change in approach to recognise that small changes can be added to any scheme or site, with minimal cost and effort and maximum benefit to the environment.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

Work to increase awareness of environmental issues within Kier Local Highways has led to this project being implemented. The BIG Biodiversity Challenge has inspired us to make this work a reality.