

**Portrush Train Station – Bee Planters**  
**Portrush, Northern Ireland**  
**GRAHAM - TRANSLINK – MEN's SHED Portstewart**

## BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award Category: *Pollinator Award*

### Project overview

The GRAHAM site team at Portrush Station have demonstrated a high level of commitment towards ecological enhancement. Acting as linchpin in a community project involving donated barrels from Bushmills whiskey distillery and Portstewart's 'Be Safe Be Well, Men's Shed' who converted the barrels into a train shaped pollinator planter.

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

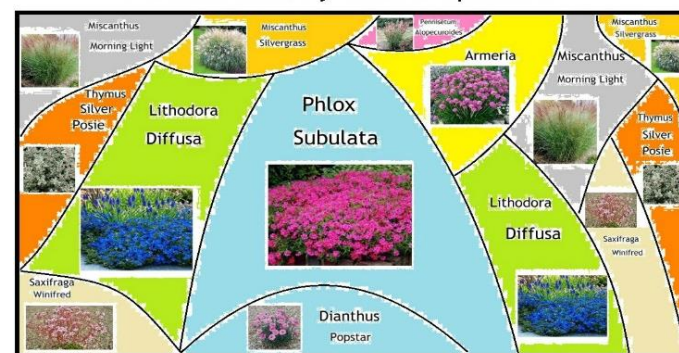
Portrush is a coastal town, the train station is located in the town centre and adjacent to the town's funfair and amusement centre. There were nesting birds on site and the project team revised the programme so the birds could remain undisturbed during the nesting season. The area was fenced off, signage erected and tool box talks delivered.

### What were the reasons behind this project?

Coastal regions on the north coast are often hardy and the flora and fauna species that inhabit it need to be able to survive harsh conditions. Introducing the train barrel planters of varying species influenced by the regions weather cycles. Species that will be well suited to the native pollinator species, that will not become an invasive issue and can survive the yearly weather providing shelter and food for pollinators year-round.



*Bushmills Distillery barrels converted into pollinator planters*



*The proposed planting scheme for Portrush Train Station*

### What were the biodiversity measures taken?

- Due to the areas marine SAC the site team engaged in some beach cleaning removing rubbish and litter, primarily debris and stones, from the shoreline line near the site to help promote a cleaner coastline. These cleans continued throughout construction in partnership with the Causeway Coast and Glens, Coast and Countryside Officer.
- The wider landscaping planting scheme was completed as soon as possible to help it establish before the official opening on 25th June. Species such as Thyme, Saxifraga and Armeria have been planted around the site and this theme will be replicated in the train planter on the platform.
- Before the planters could be utilised it was important to determine the correct pollinating plants for the area. Coastal pollinator species can differ from inland due to the landscape with sandy shores and tufts of marram grass there would be less bumble bees or honey bees and more solitary bee species, burrowing bees, butterflies and moths etc. because of this the correct plants had to be selected that could cater to the difference in coastal pollinators that could survive the harsh winter months and not become a potential invasive species themselves.
- The planters themselves were made from old Bushmills Distillery barrels and waste timber from site, this upcycling using the barrels for pollinator provision was carried out in collaboration with local company “Be Safe Be Well Men’s Shed”. A local workshop group that helped to create the planters with local crafts men using local reusable materials.



*GRAHAM site staff taking part in beach litter removal*



*GRAHAM machinery for removal of beach litter*



### Further information

GRAHAM and Translink have been working closely in partnership to deliver a modern, accessible railway station that is sympathetic to the local built environment and includes provision for local biodiversity. We were keen to ensure that the local community could get involved in transforming the space and have sought to enhance the station by creating modern waiting facilities, installing improved passenger experience as well as expanding cycle storage to encourage active travel and 'greener' tourism links. The train barrel planter allows natural blooms to adorn the space and travellers will be delighted to see the craftsmanship of Portstewart 'Be Safe Be Well Men's Shed' on display.

### Project Team

- GRAHAM
- Translink
- Be Safe Be Well Men's Shed

### What was the motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

Biodiversity is very important to both GRAHAM and our client Translink. Pollinator numbers are in serious decline worldwide. Pollinator species are very important to all ecological systems and the protection of native species is paramount as many of these species can often be more efficient than introduced species to help out. Collaborating with local companies such as Bushmills and local groups to help create pollinator havens in a coastal, urban setting will help to promote pollinator populations. Extending GRAHAM's commitment to ensuring safe and lasting environmental practices.



*The train planter (installed 06.06.19) with landscaping scheme visible in the background.*

