

The Barony Campus
Cumnock, East Ayrshire
Morrison Construction & East Ayrshire Council

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award Category: *Community Engagement*

Project overview

The Barony Campus incorporates 5 schools by amalgamating both Cumnock and Auchinleck: providing sustainable modern facilities for local school children. Key aspects, in terms of biodiversity and community, include working with groups from the community, educating them on the importance of biodiversity on projects of this magnitude.

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

The site of the new school was previously a public park and primarily consisted of a low diversity amenity grassland. This project at the beginning was controversial as it was abolishing a huge green space. The Morrison Construction project team identified this to be an opportunity to work with the local college, school children and community groups to develop ways that they could give back to the environment and the community by being resourceful with their waste and surplus materials.

What were the reasons behind this project ?

This project boasts a huge community benefit package for the community where Morrison Construction identified key opportunities to add value and optimise design, without compromises to the quality. Our policy of going far beyond contracted requirements in social, economic and environmental contributions is not an obligation and simply a case of 'doing the right thing'. This project is still ongoing with lots planned on site and with many community groups. This project was not part of BREEAM and did not have any specific planning conditions related to biodiversity.



Site Manager Jamie McCaffery at Greenmill Parents evening discussing the plans with pupils and parents



Press Pack Visit with pupils from Greenmill and Barshare with the site team. Cameron Kelly and Jamie McCaffery pictured.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Pupils from both Greenmill and Barshare Primary Schools take part in the fortnightly Community Press Pack site visits throughout the construction phase, reporting findings in joint newsletters. This idea was adopted in a previous school we built (Watriggs Primary School) where we believe it acts as a transitional platform for both the pupils and the teachers and remedies any trauma that the children may feel about the new school.

During these Press Packs we come up with innovative ways of engaging the kids that also educates them on the importance of biodiversity. We try to involve different community groups in these activities. One example of this is donating recycled wood to Ayrshire College who then cut and skimmed it for us to then assemble bird boxes with the kids at the site. We had the kids decorate the bird boxes and we have now hung them on the trees that surround the site. Another example of an initiative on site is donating topsoil to different community groups including the Boswell Centre which is creating a community garden, where there are plans to grow plants and vegetables to sell locally.

We held a charity cycle on site with all our subcontractors, community groups and the client to raise money for CLIC Sargent, cycling a total of 800+ miles in two days. This was to mirror the journeys parents had to do to get their child to the nearest hospital for treatment ultimately raising awareness and promoting health and well-being on site.



Cameron Kelly and Amanda Bryson of Morrison Construction pictured with East Ayrshire council and pupils of Greenmill and Barshare primary school

Further information

This project has involved true stakeholder and community engagement from design through to construction realising benefits for pupils to connect with nature and inspire imaginative learning. The site team understand the importance of the community being involved in this project. They have cornered-off a safe viewing area for the kids that come to the site and our team have built planters from wooden pallets that we are going to get the children to plant sunflowers in. We have also built a bug hotel from pallets for the kids so that they have ownership of something when they come to the viewing area and that they know that this is their space.

We are working with a local group in Cumnock to create a memory garden to address mental health issues, by looking at certain flowers and herbs to put in the space that will trigger memories for those with dementia as well as creating a quiet safe space that members of the community can utilise.

We have donated the extra crowd barriers we had on site to the local highland games. We have also donated boulders, rocks and topsoil to local residents so that they could enhance their gardens. Following this we will be running a 'Village in Bloom' competition locally with a £500 prize for someone with the best and most innovative garden. The extra pallets we had on site were donated to our neighbours Scottish Water to allow them to build a fence.

Project Team

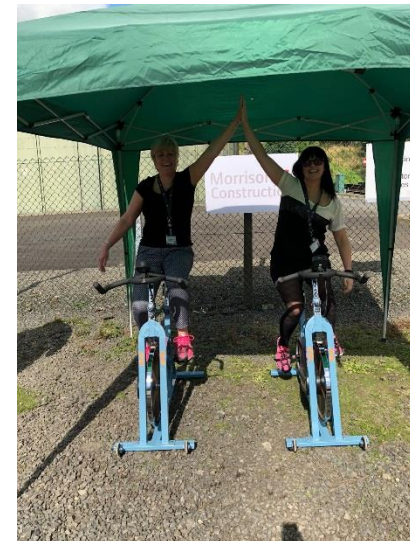
- Client – East Ayrshire Council
- Design Team – Sheppard Robson

What was the motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

The goal we set for this project is to exceed minimum contracted targets on community benefits and to establish a model of best practice in delivering social and economic benefits, as well as environmental benefits which would impact beyond construction and create a meaningful legacy for the wider community to enjoy.



Pupils study the bug hotel with during their Press pack



East Ayrshire Council taking part in our Charity Cycle for Clic Sargent