



Wicor Primary School
Portchester, Fareham, Hampshire
Skanska

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award Category: *Community Engagement*

Project overview

Partnership with Wicor Primary School to develop their biodiversity agenda in alignment with their existing accreditation with the World Wildlife Fund. The project helped landscape their existing space into a biodiverse environment, planting bee friendly plants, planting new trees and donating a large trunk.

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

The first space where we have undertaken landscaping was a low grade grass verge of approx. 30sqm adjoining the staff car park. The second space where we donated a large trunk was a left over section of the car park, of approx. 10sqm, which was previously used as a dumping ground for left over ground maintenance materials. These areas were both identified as having limited biodiversity as advised by the project's environmental advisor, and identified as ideal spots to enhance biodiversity. This work was a voluntary project to give something back to community.

The Skanska agricultural team used their expertise to plant and stake 15 apple trees, whilst advising and being able to improve the stakes for existing trees .

What were the reasons behind this project ?

Wicor Primary School approached Skanska to develop a strategic relationship to support both organisations environmental commitments. The ambition was to support learning for both the school students and Skanska's operatives in the importance of improving biodiversity.

We felt it was important to use the project as a tool for conversation, operatives took part in a workshop on wider ecology which included a focus on Hedgehog awareness. The school students used the new biodiverse space to bring their science lessons to life!



One of the 15 new trees planted and staked.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

The site was identified by the school as an area of unused ecological space with limited biodiversity as it was only a low grade grass verge. The school were keen to maximise the ecological learning opportunities available for their students. The school were very thankful for the work and we have since been working with them to identify further opportunities to improve the schools biodiversity.

The project can be and will be replicated with other local schools in Hampshire, and we have been working with Hampshire County Council to identify which schools are prepared to maximise the learning opportunities. Further to this we are evaluating the potential of installing bee hives/houses in these schools and our own depots in order to further development of our own and our community activities related to biodiversity.

The management of this area will be maintained by the students of the school as a commitment to their environmental strategy. The project has been successful at creating a new habitats, as the large trunk will become an ecological feature great for bugs and fungi. The new plants are native and great for encouraging bees and other pollinating insects. These features have contributed enhance the biodiversity of the grounds.



Before: Low grade grass verge prior to work, Skanska helping to turn this into a space for wild flower meadow



After: New wildflower seeds blooming

Further information

Since our partnership and work in these areas the school has won two more national awards and one that connects with the new pollinator area Skanska enabled them to create. Wicor Primary school have won the chance to launch Bees'Needs Week in Carnaby Street London with Defra.

All those involved in the project have felt the benefit, with staff and workers more aware of how small changes are important to helping wildlife grow. The team also felt a great sense of pride in helping their local community and this was fed this back to their colleagues.

What was the motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

Motivation was to engage with local communities in a way that also benefited the environment which is part of our core value of "Care For Life".

As well as engaging with the school, and the students we have also engaged our own staff on the project and the wider ecological benefits of creating even small areas of biodiversity enhancement.



Skanska's grass cutting equipment have reminders to look for hedgehogs before starting work.