

## London Bridge Station Redevelopment Project

### London

### Costain

**BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category:** Community Engagement Award

### Project overview

The London Bridge Station Redevelopment Project (LBSR), part of the Thameslink Programme, will completely transform the 180 year old station to meet growing transport needs by increasing capacity by 40%. The project will regenerate the wider area and deliver a more accessible, better connected station.

Since the beginning of the project we have achieved sustainable excellence and are proud of our achievements in creating a lasting legacy with our community and school outreach programmes. As part of our ongoing partnership with Snowsfield's Primary School we aimed to refurbish and enhance their wildlife garden while getting the students involved to help teach them about the importance of biodiversity.

With the students, our team of nine volunteers weeded and replanted the garden and built a bug hotel. Tools and materials were donated from Team London Bridge, the local charity 'Putting Down Roots' and the project, therefore no financial cost was incurred.

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

Snowsfield's location is in a heavily urbanised area of London with minimal biodiversity. Its garden was in desperate need of an upgrade to create a wildlife friendly area. With large areas of concrete and weeds taking the garden under their control, there was a lot of room for improvement!

### Were there any specific reasons that led to this project?

Due to the location of the school many of the students don't have gardens at home, so we aimed to create an area for them to get outdoors and appreciate nature. The driving factor behind the project was to create a green space to educate the importance of urban biodiversity that the children helped create and will continue to nurture.



*Volunteers at the start of the day.*

The London Bridge project does not impact biodiversity rich areas and so we aimed for small enhancement changes to establish a net biodiversity gain in the local area and have a continued positive impact on the environment.

### What were the biodiversity measures taken?

The garden and bug hotel are easy to replicate due to being created from mostly recycled materials – the bug hotel is comprised mostly of things you can find in your garden!

The nine volunteers from LBSR were joined by volunteers from the local community and a group of students. Everyone was fully engaged and reports of their good work have been fed back to the rest of the project team which fed into our engagement with staff for World Environment Day.

The long-term management of the garden is to be undertaken by the school's Gardening Club, therefore making the garden not only a beautiful place to visit but a sustainable educational tool! Their team of four Science Leaders who are keen to be at the forefront of looking after the garden and they are to present an assembly in front of their peers to tell them of the importance of looking after the garden.

The increased number and variety of plants have contributed to a biodiversity net gain, while the bug hotel will also contribute to this by attracting more insects and wildlife to the area. The large variety of materials used in the bug hotel will provide habitats for various different creatures, therefore making it potentially a very valuable habitat. This will include providing habitat for pollinators, further contributing to biodiversity net gain.

The learning that the children gain from this initiative will also help educate and inform a new generation on the importance and beauty of urban biodiversity.



*Our 5\* Bug Hotel (AKA Bingham Palace!)*

## How would you best describe the project?

Enhancement

## Further information

The garden was created first by going and removing weeds and overgrown plants from the area and flattening an area to provide a stable surface for the bug hotel. Planters donated from a local charity were then brought in and filled with soil. Later in the day, the children came out to plant sage, mint, mallow, broad beans, and other plants.

The bug hotel was created using stacked recycled pallets. These were filled with bamboo, rocks, bricks, pine cones, twigs, dried leaves, polystyrene and other items donated from gardens of the staff at LBSR. The children helped complete the hotel and discussed what wildlife the different materials would attract.

Upon revisiting the site a couple of weeks later spiders, snails, bees and birds were using the hotel. It will keep improving biodiversity as the plants grow and bug hotel becomes home to more wildlife. It also has the additional benefit of teaching the children about wildlife and showing what they can do to improve biodiversity at home, therefore creating a widespread positive environmental impact.

We planned to go back to the school on World Environment Day and have an assembly led by the year 4 Science Leaders, with a session outside focusing wildlife and biodiversity. Unfortunately given the events that occurred on London Bridge on 3rd June, our further engagement day was deferred and is to be undertaken in later in June.

Overall the day was a massive success with many positive comments from both the children and volunteers involved.



*The final product after the children had planted the herbs and plants.*

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

We aimed to inspire the next generation's passion for wildlife, encourage them to look after the environment, and understand the importance of urban green spaces. We wanted to connect people to nature, show even the smallest green area is important, and prove biodiversity can be increased even in urban areas.