

Project Number : R2 Hey Brook Revival



Project Overview: To deliver a pilot restoration of the riparian habitat within the Low Hall Local Nature Reserve between through the creation of a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) between 2017 and 2021. The project will reconnect local people with their landscape by offering opportunities for volunteers to survey the Hey Brook and to deliver a series of practical habitat creation projects.

Project lead organisation and other organisations involved: Mersey Rivers Trust

Project Location: Low Hall

Project dates: June 2018 to 2021

Project Outputs

Measure	Target	Delivered	Notes
2 wetland SuDS facilities created	2	2	
1.3ha of improvements to riparian habitat	1.3ha	1.3ha	
2 water quality improvement projects delivered	2	4	Reed planting for filtration Leaky dams for slow the flow Removing balsam Ponds for wildlife
8 people trained as citizen scientists to monitor water quality	8	21	Significant over achievement
Additional outputs delivered			
People engaged with the project		220	
Number of volunteer days delivered		136	

Reflecting on the last 5 years, what's the one thing that you're most proud of that has come from your project being part of the Carbon Landscape?

We installed reed beds, created a new pond and re-landscaped four existing ponds in Low Hall Local Nature Reserve. As well as landscaping around the ponds, planting reeds and seeding native wildflower there, we cleared large areas of Himalayan Balsam and scrubland and installed leaky dams to help reduce flood risk. The ponds are now larger and functioning better. They now provide valuable wetland habitat to a range of wildlife. The reed beds are now acting as a filter to help improve the water quality in Hey Brook which eventually feeds into the River Mersey. The 21 volunteers that we trained as 'River Guardians' now have the skills and equipment to monitor and gain knowledge about their local watercourses, which has enabled them to take ownership of their local water environment. We engaged 220 people from the wider community.

What difference has this project made to the cultural and natural heritage of Carbon Landscape?

The water quality and habitat of the Hey Brook Corridor has been improved. The planting of 1,500 Common Reed (Phragmites) plugs in and around the new and re-landscaped ponds provide habitat and act as a filtration system to remove pollution. Volunteers built leaky dams to 'slow the flow' to help reduce flood risk - we have become human beavers. Large areas of Himalayan Balsam and scrubland were cleared and the excavated spoil was landscaped around the ponds and sown with a native wildflower mix. An interpretation panel was installed next to one of the re-landscaped ponds in January 2021. The board includes information about the Carbon Landscape, the purpose of the wetlands and photographs of the Hey Brook Revival project.

What difference has this project made to people?

The project has reconnected local people with their landscape by offering opportunities for volunteers to survey the water quality of Borsdane Brook and Hey Brook and to deliver a series of practical habitat creation projects. In June 2018, 21 citizen scientists were trained to monitor water quality as 'River Guardians'. The volunteers included residents from Hindley, Platt Bridge and Warrington, Salford University students and Carbon Landscape Trainees. Other training offered included Invertebrate Kick Sampling, Balsam Bashing, Water Vole Surveys and creating Leaky Dams.

With the kick sampling training, 100% of trainees felt inspired to play an active role monitoring their local river. 80% of attendees would be interested in encouraging others to monitor their local river. 'Thank you so much for putting on the training session yesterday, it was a great day. Looking forward to getting the kick sampling and water quality sampling surveying' 'I just wanted to say it was a good turnout and a good session' 'The session yesterday was great, thank you to you and your colleagues' 'Thank you for organising that training yesterday, it was brilliant and a great addition to the water quality training we did!'

From the local community

'It's a fab bit of work, it will look great by this time next year. Hopefully it will give us more insects reptiles and fish too. Well done' - Facebook comment

'Great hard work gone into that' - Facebook comment

'It will look superb once it's all bedded in and provide some more habitat. Great job all round' - Facebook comment

'What a great project - it's looking really good!' - Tweet by Natural Course

Useful Links

www.merseyrivers.org/index.php/projects/carbon-landscape

Future Plans and Legacy

Following the project delivery, the learning has enabled us to look at the Glaze catchment as a whole and we have now identified more areas for similar works to reduce flood risk, improve habitat and address water quality issues.

Lessons learned?

When building wetlands:

- Start earlier with designs rather than later, more time will be needed if both the designer and contractor are external organisations. Ensure agreements are in place with the landowner and contractor before any works take place. We did this as part of this project and it was very worthwhile! Again, don't underestimate how long this will take. As part of the landowner agreement, ensure the landowner provides all information that could possibly impact the works.
- Keep Friends groups and volunteers updated on the progress of the works so they feel included.
- Take photographs of everything on/around the site before works start. Photograph during delivery and again after the work is done.

Photographic Evidence



River Guardians



Balsam Bashing with Volunteers



Volunteering at Low Hall



Water vole surveys

Funding Partners

