

Bickershaw - slow the flow and habitat creation

Partners:

Wigan Council
Lancashire Wildlife Trust
Environment Agency

Themes



Urban



Water Quality



Green Infrastructure



Water Quantity



Community Engagement



Volunteers sowing seeds

Date carried out

Project delivery is being carried out between December 2017 and March 2018

Location

Bickershaw Country Park, West Leigh

Background

The project involved modifying damaged landscapes and habitats on a former colliery site to deliver water storage and slow the flow services. The project will also help reduce flood risk to communities downstream in the borough's lowest lying area. In addition slowing the flow of water off the site will help to reduce the impact on the watercourse and downstream waterbodies. The site is well used by local people for recreation, however it also suffers from illegal activities. The works will help to reduce these activities whilst improving the recreation and biodiversity value of the site.

Project

The site, which is on tipped colliery spoil has developed some areas of high quality habitat, whilst others were still dominated by post-industrial tipping. Landscaping and restoration has allowed habitat to develop and the site to store water. The project has created 16 hectares of new wetland habitat on areas that were previously bare pit dirt and heavily damaged by off road vehicles. As well as creating new wildlife areas, this has increased the amount of water able to be stored on site. The project has also restored 4 hectares of wet grassland and fen type habitats. The stream and ditch network has been modified and rationalised to slow water flowing into Common Lane brook and these modifications have allowed the site to be made secure from off road vehicles, preventing further damage. By modifying these waterbodies and storing more water on site it is expected that the volume of sediment entering the watercourses will be reduced. Levels in these ditches and watercourses have been formalised with rock riffles to further slow the flow and provide aeration.



During site works

Outcomes

16ha of new wetland created and 4ha restored. It is anticipated that properties downstream of the site will benefit from a reduction in flood risk and the negative impact of past industry has been reduced over a further 7ha. The project has also helped to encourage the involvement of the local community in the ongoing maintenance of the site and the establishment of a Friends Group.

Learning

Management and maintenance of this site is ongoing and monitoring has been put in place to see how effective the works have been. It is too early to fully understand the level of success, particularly with regard to the impact on flooding, but early indications suggest that the habitat creation has been successful for wildlife as a bittern has been spotted on site, and impacts of illegal activity have also been reduced.

Next steps

A further £50k of funding has been secured which will help to deliver additional water storage, the creation of approximately 30ha of habitat and increased flood protection to nearby homes

Quotes

"It has been great working with the Environment Agency to improve the hydrology and habitats of Bickershaw, alongside the slowing the flow and flood risk reductions that this project has delivered"

Mark Champion, 2018



After landscaping

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