

GREEN SKILLS PROJECT

CASE STUDY 1: HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK

1st March - 21st April 2023

WHAT DID THE PROJECT INVOLVE?

The purpose of the project was for the 5 participants to help increase biodiversity of invertebrates and encourage kingfishers to nest on site by creating a new habitat with different organic materials. The project involved:

Construction of bird and bat boxes to support bird and bat life.

Picnic table refurbishment to help make the site accessible for people to enjoy nature.

Construction of a naturally weaved fence acting as a brace for the mound, using willow and hazel branches, moving soil to bring the ground up to the level of the top of the lake and consolidating, adding Type 1 MOT, gravel, sand and limestone in layers to the mound to attract different invertebrates.

OUTCOMES:

INCREASED BIODIVERSITY

The team of participants have made a difference to the available habitat for invertebrates and a nesting site for kingfishers at HCP. This in turn will increase the biodiversity of different invertebrate species including solitary bees and a variety of beetles. The construction of bird and bat boxes have also provided further habitats.

BEFORE



DURING



AFTER





EDUCATION & GREEN SKILLS

Participants were taught a range of information and skills:

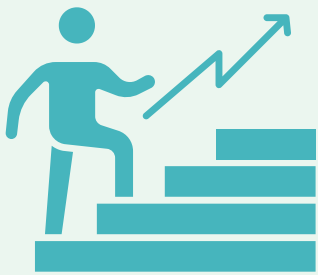
Participants learnt about our natural world, climate change, practical horticulture, biodiversity and conservation.

Recruited 8 unemployed local people, 7 attended the induction day and 5 fully completed the project.

3 participants achieved a City and Guilds Level 1 Award in Practical Horticulture, covering units on using a strimmer, using a leaf-litter blower and staining wood. This qualification will help them to move into employment within the horticulture and grounds maintenance sector of work.



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT



Participants took part in training sessions covering confidence, self-esteem, teamworking, communication, managing conflict, motivation, planning for progression and employability. Many participants had personal barriers and saw this project as an opportunity to develop and grow within a safe and supported environment.

- All participants have stated that the project has helped them to develop their own personal skills including 'better' overall confidence & self-esteem and communication skills.
- The project has also helped with improving well-being by becoming socially engaged in something worthwhile and being out amongst nature.
- Dedicated team who achieved an incredible attendance and retention rate - 4 out of 5 on 100%.

"The best time of my life and the best working experience I have ever been a part of."

"I have really enjoyed it. I felt challenged and supported. I wish it wasn't over."

"It's been a fantastic opportunity to practice interpersonal skills and to demonstrate to myself that in the right setting I can do things I didn't think I could"

THE CHALLENGES:

Challenge	Mitigation
Lots of manual handling and heavy lifting through difficult terrain and water	Staff at HCP used their tractor to construct a causeway to help with moving the aggregates that could only be placed at the edge of the woodland
Cold/wet weather	A training day was swapped around so the team could spend a day warm inside during a bitterly cold spell
Long distance between the project site, amenities and tools in the truck.	Not much could be done about this – boxes used to prevent personal items from getting wet in the rain and longer lunch break giving to account for time used to get back to the facilities
Repetitive manual handling work	encouragement through Donuts and refreshments, learning opportunities, encouragement and support from staff and each other. Breaking up the work a bit with the C&G staining wood assessment and painting a couple of picnic benches, plus completing the other 2 assessments. Training day inside per week – works well on the middle day of the 3.

LESSONS LEARNT:

- Encouragement needed for tasks that required quite a lot of repetition e.g. moving different aggregates or soil in wheelbarrows back and forth. To keep participants engaged, those tasks should be broken up into smaller chunks along with other tasks.
- Need for flexibility in work structure. Due to weather conditions, some days were far more challenging than others causing work to stop in some cases.

