

Community Skills for Climate Change

Newstead Enterprise

°Climate east
midlands



Background to the Community

The Newstead Earth Centre is an exciting project that is underway on the land of the former Annesley pit tip, the overall aim of which is to regenerate the tips into a country park with a sustainable eco visitor centre acting as the core hub of the site. This innovative eco building, which will form the basis of a visitor centre, functional space and educational facility, will be incorporating as many carbon neutral, 'green' and renewable technologies as possible. Some of these techniques are being taken from best practice models already adopted in other locations around the world, such as the Hockerton Housing Project and the Earthship Brighton.

This large-scale project is being delivered by Newstead Enterprise, a local community group that is made up of committed local volunteers. Within this group there are representatives from Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire (a local charity), Future Newstead (residents of Newstead) and CAST, an alternative education programme which uses angling and land-based

skills as a means to engage hard-to-reach young people.

Project Aims

The aim of this project was to install a wet reed-bed system for the disposal of sewage from the centre. By recruiting local volunteers from the community who were keen to develop new green construction skills, a reed-bed was to be constructed. This was to be complemented by a Klargestar sewage treatment unit which would add an extra level of filtration to the system, ensuring that the water which flowed into the angling lake (over which the visitor centre looks), was of the right quality. Although elements of this system have been adopted in other projects, this reed-bed system would evolve using knowledge acquired from the lessons learnt from previous systems, and so doing, would create another showcase for this sewage treatment methodology.

Achievements

- A functional operating sewerage system has now been constructed at the Newstead Earth Centre.

Project

Newstead Earth Centre Reed-Bed System

Grant
£2000

- A means of disposing the centre's waste in an eco-sensitive way has been successfully developed.
- 24 local volunteers have been engaged in the project each provided with new construction skills.
- The park's own reed-stock was utilised and re-planted to form the final stage of a sewage treatment system.
- The Project team, who previously knew nothing about such systems, have learnt about new techniques.

Impact on the Wider Community

This reed-bed system is part of a much bigger project, but plays an essential role, which will enable the visitor centre to open its doors to the public in the imminent future, becoming a functioning space which can be used as a learning resource for local people. It has acted as the spring board to help NE to develop the rest of the site.



www.climate-em.org.uk/projects/community-skills

Newstead Enterprise



A key achievement from this project as a whole is that as word spreads about the development of the Earth Centre and the rest of the work being done in the park, and interest into the eco-techniques being adopted grows, local knowledge, understanding and attitudes towards the need for climate change mitigation and adaptation are improving.

Challenges Faced / Lessons Learned

With the Newstead Earth Centre project being so big, funding is always a challenge for Newstead Enterprise. In the case of the reed-bed project, unforeseen problems with cash flow coupled with a lack of funds meant that the project was stalled as the group were unable to repair a piece of faulty, but vital, machinery. Although risks assessments had been prepared to aid project management and plan for any problems that may have arisen, the project staff were dealing with a project with which they were not familiar. This problem also happened in conjunction with the changing design of the reed-bed throughout the course of the project, as a result of increasing knowledge and understanding, contributing to the evolution of the initial design into what has been constructed now.

The visitor centre and the reed bed are located on an ex-colliery site where the ground is not only contaminated, but is difficult to work on. Rain transforms the ground from a hard baked surface to a bleak landscape of knee-high thick mud. This means that the weather has also stalled the project at key points, and the only way to get round this, is to wait until the ground has dried out again.

Coordinating some of the more technical aspects of the product design and specification has proved difficult, partly due to the project team being reliant on external expert knowledge to help them proceed.

This community was granted a smaller amount of funding than they applied for, and so the project had to be quickly tailored for a smaller fund.

In the Future?

This reed-bed system project is linked in with the wider development of the visitor centre. The development has been broken down into 2 phases. Phase 1 is due to be completed in Summer 2012, when the centre will be open at certain times to the public.

Phase 2 consists of equipping the building with all the 'shiny bits' and having the visitor centre open full-time. This phase is reliant on the community acquiring additional funding to complete the work and pay for key staff to run the site and centre. NE is continuously hard at work writing bids.

To help with this funding, the park will open for angling from Spring 2012 which will generate some income.

Contact Information

Architect

Anthony Thistleton-Smith

E: Anthony@waughthistleton.com

T: 0207 6135727

Project Coordinator

Penny Halewood

E: phalewood@rcan.org.uk

T: 01623 727600

Project Coordinator

Mark Waterhouse

T: 07773 240292

Useful Web Addresses

Village SOS Learning Campaign

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_village_sos?tab=3

Cornerstone Angling Skills Training (CAST)

www.castangling.co.uk

Newstead and Annesley Country Park

www.newsteadandannesleycountrypark.com

Rural Communities Action Nottinghamshire

www.rcan.org.uk

Plan LoCaL

www.planlocal.org.uk

Planning for Climate Change

www.planningforclimatechange.org.uk

Climate East Midlands:

www.climate-em.org.uk

Groundwork East Midlands

www.eastmidlands.groundwork.org.uk