

**Wilbury Way Wetlands
Submitted by Enfield Council**

**Awards category
Regeneration and retrofit – large scale (more than one hectare)**



Lead or collaborating organisation(s)	Enfield Council
Location of SuDS	N18 1UY

1. SuDS overview

SuDS components used	Wetlands
Size of the scheme and its local context	The project area within the park covers approximately 1.3 hectares, while the entire park spans around 3 hectares. Historically, this park, located in the southern part of the borough, has been significantly underutilized. Public consultations revealed that the park primarily serves as a shortcut for crossing the A406, rather than as a recreational space. The park's landscape is mainly grassland, featuring a small hill to the east and some natural play areas that are often unusable due to persistent wet conditions. Additionally, Pymmes Brook, which flows through the northern section of the park, is obscured by a palisade fence and situated 3 meters lower than the surrounding land. The site is also of archaeological significance, likely being part of the historic Weir Hall estate.
Approximate age of scheme (years)	Under 1 year (Started in March 23 finished in August 23)
Benefits of the scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages local flood risk. • Provides biodiversity. • Improves water quality. • Reduces pressure on Thames Water surface water sewer. • Provides access to a lost section of the Pymmes Brook. • Provides new footpaths, formalising informal pathways and improving access around the park. • Solves long standing issue of the park being wet and un-usable in winter months. • Public realm improvements. • Promotes healthier streets (TfL) and urban greening.
Briefly describe the scheme	<p>Wilbury Way Open Space was an underused grassland park which suffered from seasonal flooding making much of the park unusable. It is surrounded by major roads and a relatively new housing estate. The park was mostly used as a cut through to get to the A406 underpass. The park falls within the Pymmes Brook Catchment which is prone to flooding.</p> <p>This project aims to improve the space with new wetlands that help drain the wet areas and improve the habitat, it also aims to reconnect the Park with the Pymmes Brook and help make the park a better place for people and nature.</p> <p>The Scheme diverts a surface water sewer into a series of wetlands which relies on infiltration but has an overflow back into Pymmes brook. A small bunded footpath also provides additional flood storage during a larger rainfall event. The wetlands have been planted up with various wetland plants which will help slow the flow and clean the water before it enters the Brook.</p> <p>We have also formalised some existing informal footpaths which now give residents better access to different areas of the park and have used stone found during the works for seating around the park.</p>




2. SuDS details




No.	Question	Answer
1	What difference has this scheme made to the local community or area?	<p>The transformation of this once neglected space into a thriving community oasis is remarkable. Residents, especially young people, and students, take part in leisurely walks, wildlife sightings, and conversations by the stream. The revitalization of this area has also had a positive ripple effect on the surrounding environment, the park's usability once limited in winter is now fully accessible year-round together with the restoration and clearing of the brook. What was once a dumping ground behind the A406 has evolved into a sanctuary away from the hustle and bustle of the main roads, with a serene stream flowing through it.</p>
2	What is exceptional about this scheme beyond a standard approach?	<p>This scheme is different to normal wetland schemes because it is right next to a lost/forgotten section of open river. The scheme looked at opening up the Pymmes Brook which people didn't even know ran through the park. Not only did we formalise informal paths which integrate into a flood bund to store more water during large storms. But we also uncovered a variety of large boulders when we regraded the riverbank which we then used to make seating around the park. Nothing was removed from the site; it was all re-used and landscaped with the park.</p>
3	How much work went into getting this scheme realised?	<p>This scheme took considerable collaboration to come to fruition. Firstly, we worked alongside the Principal Arb officer to make sure we could carry out the vast changes in levels necessary to achieve the outlook we wanted without being detrimental to any large existing trees. The design work was very challenging as we changed levels within a restricted space by almost 3m. The site was of archaeological interest so we had to work alongside an archaeologist who found petrified wood from the ice age, these caused delays but proves if you work with the right people anything can be delivered.</p>

4	Is this scheme part of a masterplan or integrated into other initiatives?	Wilbury Way was identified as a pivotal site for mitigating flood risk within the Pymmes brook catchment. Enfield Council's initiatives, including rain gardens, wetlands, and river restoration projects, strategically connect to curtail flooding and bolster our borough's climate resilience.
5	What value does this scheme provide to the local area and beyond?	The park transformation enriches local life by restoring connections to nature through flowing water, diverse flora, and wildlife. This immersive experience fosters well-being and encourages frequent visits, strengthening community bonds and enhancing safety perceptions. Beyond the local area, the revitalized park becomes a beacon of positive change, attracting interest and admiration. As enjoyment spreads, so does the perception of the area, evolving into a destination that radiates positivity and inspiration for neighbouring communities.
6	What challenges/problems needed to be addressed to realise this scheme?	Realizing this scheme posed several challenges. Addressing ground levels necessitated lowering the park by nearly 3 meters to reroute the surface water sewer. Transitioning from bunds to accessible graded slopes by the riverbank was essential, as the area previously featured fenced-off riverbanks with sheer drops. Combatting winter nuisance flooding which rendered much of the park unusable. The wetlands now solve the issue and create great habitats. Additionally, archaeological considerations mandated a comprehensive monitoring strategy throughout excavation, which was conducted in layers to facilitate archaeological assessment.
7	How does the scheme address related issues such as water scarcity, nutrient neutrality, or biodiversity net gain?	The scheme at Wilbury Way open space addresses various related issues effectively. The installation of four wetland cells totalling over 850m ² provides significant benefits in terms of water scarcity by promoting natural infiltration and storage. These wetlands also contribute to nutrient neutrality by aiding in the filtration and purification of water, thereby improving overall water quality. Moreover, the creation of wetlands fosters biodiversity net gain by providing habitats for various plant and animal species, enhancing ecological diversity within the area.

8	Is learning from the scheme continually captured and communicated? Please give examples.	Learning from the scheme is consistently captured and communicated. Examples include early public consultations and a further public consultation before finalizing the design. Collaboration with archaeologists to prevent delays which involved tree officers at the design phase. Regular site meetings throughout the project facilitate ongoing communication and knowledge sharing. Additionally, post-project evaluations and community feedback mechanisms ensured continuous learning and improvement.
9	What approaches/measures are taken to ensure the scheme is properly managed and maintained?	To ensure proper management and maintenance of the scheme, the parks department collaborated with designers on-site to review the wetland management plan. They also engaged with local residents and are in the process of establishing a 'Friends of the Park' group. Additionally, close cooperation with the charity group, 'the Pymmes Brookers', has led to three organized litter picks on the site and in the river since access was opened.
10	Have you collected any feedback on your scheme? What do people say about it? Can you provide any quotes?	Marc Ellul, who is a local resident, sent me this via email: People on the local community groups love the new look. In particular many are very fond of the new wildlife; a number of residents have commented they weren't even aware a river ran through the park.

3. Supporting materials

Image (low resolution)	Caption	Image credit
	<p>This shows the site before works started in summer 2022. From the West</p>	<p>Michael Shorey LBE</p>
	<p>Same location of the site mid-way through the construction. This shows the changes in levels, but these are not the finished levels as we had to dig down in strips and sections working alongside the archaeologist.</p>	<p>Michael Shorey LBE</p>
	<p>Same location during our planting event in August 2023. Thames 21 the Pymmes Brookers and local residents came out in numbers to plant over 1000 plants, including wetland plants, and shrubs.</p>	<p>Michael Shorey LBE</p>

	<p>Same location but in May 2024, wildflowers in full bloom and trees doing well. Everything has settled in and grown to the point you would never know this was a flat field which was almost 3m higher in places just 1 year ago.</p>	<p>Michael Shorey LBE</p>
	<p>Overview of the wetlands from the East of the site. This shows the wetlands in all their glory and also many of the reclaimed stones we found during the excavation works which now provide informal seating all around the park. Shot taken mid-way up the hill where we extended and improved access to with all the spoil generated on site.</p>	<p>Michael Shorey LBE</p>
	<p>A view of the Pymmes brook. This river was hidden behind a palisade fence and scrub. Many residents did not even know a river ran through the park. Now not only can you see the river it is also accessible. This has provided an interesting place for people and animals alike, and also allows us to carry out volunteer litter picks.</p>	<p>Michael Shorey LBE</p>



This photo shows one of the semi-circles of stones we have placed on the site, which were all reclaimed from the earthworks. These stones are smaller than the others so this is more of a play on the way feature but can also be seating for children.

Michael Shorey LBE



This photo is actually a huge hibernaculum. We buried a lot of the logs and bark chippings etc from some of the minor tree work generated from lowering the riverbank. It is 20m long and 5m wide. This was then soiled and planted up. You can see the poppies growing and can only imagine the wildlife out of sight underground.

Michael Shorey LBE