

# Planting at Reading station

[Connecting communities with the environment] - a social performance case study

## The project

Over two days, 20 people from Great Western Route Modernisation (GWRM), Reading Station, Reading Maintenance Unit, Reading University and Kew Gardens, transformed a neglected strip of land at Reading station from 'urban scrub' into a wild flower meadow.

The land, alongside the station's multi-storey, was once sidings. Its hard surface first had to be cleared of rubbish and broken up with rakes, before sachets of tiny wildflower seeds were carefully broadcast. Expert supervision was provided by Kew's 'Grow Wild UK' project team, who arrived with a large box of seeds bearing names like 'Red Campion', 'Ox Eye Daisy', 'Corn Marigold' and 'Meadow Buttercup'. The varieties are specially selected to suit the English climate and to attract wild bees and other pollinators.



## The key benefits delivered

**Benefit to society:** The clean up activity removed some 50 sacks of rubble, litter and chipped vegetation and it took just two days for the first shoots to start appearing. Whilst the planting improves the appearance of Reading station, the project also contributes to GRWM's commitment of biodiversity offsetting.

**Benefit to the business:** The activity improved relationships with environmental stakeholders who are keen to see clear plans of Network Rail's commitment to positive environmental performance. The work was also a great example of collaborating with numerous industry partners who came together for the benefit of the local community and Reading station passengers.

## Lessons learned

- Safety planning is essential ahead of any environmental work. On this project, Siemens scanned the site for buried services before work started.
- Take a lot of pictures; they are invaluable when you are sharing the story with others and the area changes so much during the year.
- Plan for future maintenance. To help the flowers establish themselves on the site, this meadow will be cut once a year in late July the station's landscape contractor.
- Make sure all Network Rail employees record their volunteer leave in the right way on Oracle. If it doesn't get measured, doesn't get recognised.

## Who to contact for more information

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