

BCM Construction

Cable drum picnic benches and tables – a social performance case study

The project

BCM Construction decided to leave a legacy from their HV Feeder cable installation works between Royal Wootton Bassett and Thingley Junction. To do this we committed to making picnic benches and tables from disused cable drums for the community.

In total BCM made 10 tables and 20 benches.

The cable drums were left over from our electrification works on the rail line. One cable drum made one table and the tops of two benches. The bench legs were made from railway sleepers that were also left over from other project works earlier in the year. All the materials used would have otherwise been classified as waste and sent away for recycling.



The tables were sanded down to ensure a smooth finish, varnished and finally fitted with a Perspex top to protect the tables from the elements and to make it an easier surface to clean for the primary schools using them.

4 primary schools benefitted from the picnic benches:

- Priestley Primary School in Calne received two tables
- Hilmarton Primary School in Calne received two tables
- Longleaze Primary School in Royal Wootton Bassett received three tables
- Noremarsh Junior School in Royal Wootton Bassett received three tables

Andy Marsh-Ballard, Headteacher of Priestly Primary School, told us, "Tables are fantastic! If ever you have any more tables needing a home we've plenty of room here!"

Who was involved?

- BCM worked in partnership with the Network Rail Electrification Team in Swindon
- Supply Chain Operations (SCO)/ Route Services were kind enough to donate the drums,
- Gerry Webbs Transport delivered the finished tables for free
- Mikerry Rail provided the carpenter who completed the tables

The key benefits delivered - Benefit to society

- Primary schools often have minimal funding to provide outdoor furniture for use, this project has provided tables that all the schools can utilise and enjoy. A couple of the schools had 1 or 2 outdoor benches that only 4-6 kids could sit at and were falling into a sad state. These cable drum tables now provide teachers the possibility to conduct outdoor teachings or games, with room for whole classes to have a seat.
- The tables created a lasting legacy from our project in the local community.

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- The tables are also a great education tool to teach school children and subsequently their parents about the railway and the reuse of waste. If this inspires one child or adult to think about reuse of precious material resources, we have done our job.

Benefit to the business

- BCM reduced waste removal costs through upcycling the cable drums.
- It's had a positive impact on our workforce and supply chain - they've observed something that would have otherwise been deemed as waste and 'ugly' turn into something useable and 'beautiful' – it's encouraged people to think about waste reuse and how to apply the concept throughout the business.
- The tables boost the reputation of BCM - from client through to community
- This project has had a high engagement of staff across the business and beyond and demonstrates BCM's commitment to the communities in which we work.

Lessons learned

- Time and cost – the tables took longer to make than anticipated resulting in higher than planned costs however if we were to do this again we now know exactly how to make them which should result in shorter lead times to produce
- Nature of the Materials – the wood used to make cable drums is not of particularly good quality in its rough form. It therefore required a lot of sanding which again lengthened the amount of time it took to complete the works. The Perspex top on the tables saved us a bit of time so we could focus our efforts on the benches. The last thing we want is for the children to get splinters, so the extensive sanding was necessary.
- Size of the Cable Drum – The drums were 2.2m wide so we had to cut them down to 1.8m in diameter which was still large. The size of the drum had a further compounding effect on time as it made for an increased time spent on cutting the drums down to a usable size. Next time, using a smaller cable drum will speed up the construction process resulting in less time lost and cost on labour resources.



Who to contact for more information

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