

# Over 1000 trees planted as Network Rail transforms former Northamptonshire work compound into wildlife haven

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Major progress has been made on a project to transform an engineering compound in Finedon into a wildlife habitat as over 1,000 trees have been planted on the site.

Network Rail and Amey began developing the area in April after vital electrification work between Bedford and Corby completed. Landscaping work has taken place over the past few months, as part of an innovative project to manage protected species.

Teams returned today, along with people in the community, to plant the trees in preparation for the new nature reserve. It's hoped the trees will attract birds, butterflies, and bees.

The site will also contain ponds – which are the right habitat for great crested newts – as well as grassland, wetland areas and open woodland.

Hamish Critchell-Ward, Environmental Manager for Network Rail's East Midlands route, said: "It's really

exciting to see the difference already – from a heavy engineering site to a tranquil home for nature. I’m so proud of our teams for working together to plant around 1200 trees.

“The landscaping was carried out earlier this year, but we needed to wait for the change in the weather to give the trees and other vegetation the best chance of survival. I’d like to thank the community for working with us on this innovative project, which is allowing us to explore new ways to balance biodiversity with improvements to the railway.

Michael Whitehead, Principal Environmentalist, Amey Consulting, said: “This Furnace Lane habitat creation scheme will give a wealth of benefits to four hectares of land that would otherwise have been left unused. While favouring Great Crested Newts, the landscaping and tree planting by our willing band of volunteers should encourage a biodiverse range of flora and fauna to thrive on the land for many years to come.”

Cllr Harriet Pentland, North Northamptonshire Council’s Executive Member for Climate and Green Environment, said: “This is such a great project and it was wonderful to see the progress that has been made onsite since I last visited in August. The planting of 1000 new trees will have so many biodiversity benefits, including the creation of new habitats and contributing to the sequestration of carbon emissions.”

*Photo credit: Network Rail*