

# Clean Streams Project

***“The sessions were educational, fun and allowed the children to gain a real understanding of the importance of streams and woodlands!”*** Sarah Prunty, teacher at St Elizabeth’s Primary School

## Background

A number of streams across Manchester suffer from poor water quality and increased flood risk as a result of fly-tipping, overgrown vegetation, historic modification, and neglect. Some of the watercourses are open channels (approximately 38km) and others are culverted (approximately 107km).



## Project

Manchester City Council’s Flood Risk Management team received 150k of Clean City funding to work with the community to restore five open sections of channel across the city.

Working alongside local schools, resident groups and businesses, a number of measures have been implemented to reduce flood risk, improve the habitat, and make the neighbourhood a nicer place to live. In addition to this, the project made steps towards fulfilling the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Council’s responsibilities as Lead Local Flood Authority, by providing morphological and water quality benefits.

Works included:

- Re-naturalising channel banks
- Planting wetland vegetation
- Tree planting
- Adding woody debris to channel
- Creating offline storage
- Removing in-channel structures and replacing with footbridges
- Clearing the channel and replacing trash screens
- Clearing Himalayan balsam
- Installing interpretation panels

**Charlestown,  
Gorton, Didsbury,  
Wythenshawe,  
MANCHESTER**

## BENEFITS



**Recreation  
& Leisure**



**Quality  
of place**



**Land and  
biodiversity**

## COST



## TIMESCALE



## Outcomes

The project cleaned and restored (where appropriate) 4.5km of watercourses, with tonnes of rubbish removed, habitat improved by planting marginal wetland plants, two new community orchards established and around 200 trees planted. Over 1,000 local people were engaged, including local schools, youth groups, businesses and residents. They were encouraged to get involved and to take some ownership of their local watercourse. Working with schools and youth groups provided valuable opportunities for formal and informal learning, and for raising awareness of a range of environmental issues.



## Learning

The project demonstrates how small-scale improvement works can provide multiple benefits including flood risk and habitat improvements, and also learning opportunities for the local community. Furthermore, community engagement can build valuable connections between people and their local environment, contributing to a sense of pride and the long term sustainability of the project.

The project has received over £200,000 of additional support from the Environment Agency, to be extended across more watercourses in the City for a second phase of works. The impact of the works carried out in the first phase will be monitored to inform the works to be carried out in this second phase (2017-2018).

## Future

In-channel works such as re-naturalising channel banks and replacing trash screens will result in a lasting improvement to flood risk. However littering and fly-tipping are on-going issues, and to tackle this we are working with the community to reconnected people with their local environment and give them a sense of ownership. Furthermore, local community groups and schools have signed-up to undertake routine litter picks, and also to act as guardians of the trees where orchards have been planted. It is hoped that engaging with the community and long term volunteers in this way will help to reduce littering and fly-tipping in the future, and the Council will monitor the sites to assess whether they remain cleaner and whether this model could be used at other sites in the future.

## For further information

<https://m.facebook.com/cleancitymcr/>