

ADEPT President's Awards

Somerset Rivers Authority submission

Category 3: Improving the environment, promoting health

Somerset Demonstrations Rain Garden Pilot was a successful partnership approach to addressing issues around the better management of water to reduce flood risk, enhancing the environment and improving physical and mental health of residents in a sheltered housing complex.

Somerset County Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Country Rivers Trust undertook a detailed planning and consultation programme which included property managers and sheltered home residents to deliver a relatively simple but very effective series of 'rain gardens' that were accessible to people with varying degrees of mobility.

The project team met with residents over several months to understand both the flooding issues they had experienced and also to ensure that the rain gardens would not only serve a flood management function but be a welcome asset for the small community.

4 raised raingarden planters were delivered on two council owned housing sites in Taunton. The planters, which are a bespoke design developed by Westcountry Rivers Trust, have a combined volume of 12m³ and provides approximately 6m³ of storage / attenuation reducing run off from an area of 220m².

The raised planter design was chosen based upon feedback from the residents for easy access and maintenance. The careful design enabled the planters to be included on a site with limited space. The planting follows recommendations for dementia friendly planting to ensure the benefits are felt by all residents.

This pilot was seen as a great opportunity to test an approach that would inform plans to create a number of showcase SuDS across Taunton as part of the much larger Interreg 2 seas funded SPONGE 2020 project. Through SPONGE a range of SuDS will be retrofitted into existing urban areas to showcase what can be achieved and raise awareness of this approach to water management. Community engagement in the identification and development of these schemes is fundamental to this project. As a result of this smaller raingarden demonstration SPONGE partners will be able to more effectively deliver their outcomes based upon the valuable lessons learned. This project is an important step towards a much bigger goal.

Funding of £10,000 was provided by the Somerset Rivers Authority and Wessex Water to enable the rain garden project.

Twitter summary:

Small but beautiful: Somerset rain garden project that is helping improve mental and physical wellbeing AND improving water management.

Further Information:

David Mitchell, Senior Manager, Somerset Rivers Authority

01823 356789

dpmitchell@somerset.gov.uk