



Project Reedbed, Lee Navigation

“Creating reedbeds benefits aquatic birds and other wildlife as well as improving water quality, improving the appearance of a waterway and they are of educational value” - John Archer, Tower Hamlets Biodiversity Officer

The story so far

Ease of travel on this waterway has been the main purpose of its locks, towpath and straightened banks. The aptly named Lee Navigation, which runs from rural Hertfordshire through the heart of urban London struggles with pollution from road run-off. Project Reedbed was set up to enhance existing reedbeds and create new ones; not only to provide habitats and a place for fish to spawn, but also to improve water quality by filtering pollutants.

The river was restored by

- Installing 600sqm of vegetation, mostly a mix of common reed and native pollution-busting vegetation
- Installing 250sqm of state-of-the-art floating ecosystems on the surface, attached to waterway walls
- Planting 324sqm of vegetation along the banks
- Enhancing and maintaining more than 1500 sqm of existing reedbed

How has it helped wildlife?

- Two wildfowl nesting platforms are in use by swans and coots, and a kingfisher was spotted on the Tottenham installation.
- Reedbeds provide sheltered habitat for coarse fish such as carp, bream and roach, plus invertebrates such as dragonflies and damselflies.
- Introducing native plants, such as marsh marigold, water mint and yellow flag iris, is helping to increase biodiversity.

How has it helped people?

- A chance to connect with nature within a heavily urbanised area
- Improved angling and birdwatching
- People are volunteering with Thames21 to help maintain the river & its reedbeds
- Thames 21 is training local Londoners in habitat management

Partnership organisations

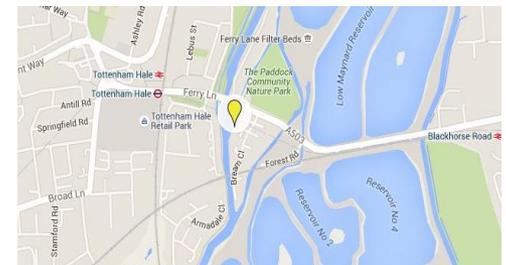
Thames 21, Environment Agency, Canal and River Trust, Lea Valley Regional Park



AFTER – a completed reedbed smartens up the river’s appearance and provides vital habitat for wildlife



BEFORE – Thames21 volunteers help install the reedbed



Nearest Station: Tottenham Hale