

# Benefits beyond individual elements

## Broadhurst Clough, Moston, Manchester

### Introduction

Broadhurst Clough was previously an open water habitat. It was filled in 1946 for the building of prefabricated housing, which was subsequently demolished in the 1960s. Since then it has become a declining wetland – remaining wet during the winter months but not retaining its open water qualities. The site has experienced a variety of problems, mainly public pressure from trampling, dumping, burning and off-road motorcycles. The wetland is located immediately next to Broadhurst Park, a formally laid out public green space with junior and senior football pitches which experienced severe drainage problems that adversely affected their function as a sports facility.

The project addressed the two different problems affecting the two adjacent and functionally important green spaces. The solution was to drain the excess water from the playing fields into the neighbouring declining wet area, thus reinstating it as a wetland and enhancing the playing fields' capacity to function as a sports facility. This enabled the creation of two open water areas while still retaining some of the marshy grassland.

### Materials and Methods

#### Site

The site comprises 14 ha of urban countryside in Moston, North Manchester, an area of high deprivation.

#### Method

Consultation involved the local footballing community, residents and archaeological groups to raise awareness and gain support for the planned project. The work involved two phases: the first was the creation of the wetland scrape (using excavators) and football pitch drainage work; the second was the development of wetland infrastructure, access and interpretation, aiming to increase public use and enjoyment of the site. Water mint and devil's bit scabious were planted around the open water area which is on clay soil and so holds water well.

## Results

There has been a significant improvement in the drainage of the junior football pitches. The lower level of the Clough is a steep woodland ravine, while the upper level consists of fields, rough grassland and marshland. Stands of poplar, birch and alder are available as a nesting resource for birds and as invertebrate habitat. Frogs and toads use the ponds. Broadhurst Clough was designated as a Site of Biological Importance in 2005.

## Future plans

Over time there are plans to develop the site further as a high quality resource for both passive and active leisure activities, and an important educational facility for local schools and adults. The Clough will become an important part of the River Irk corridor.

## Reference

Defra (2007). *Guidance for local authorities on implementing the biodiversity duty*. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, London.