

LCF Case Study

Teigngrace Meadow Nature Reserve

Devon Wildlife Trust
funded by Viridor Credits Environmental Company

Total project cost:
£19,598

LCF contribution:
£19,598

'Wildflower project'

Background

Teigngrace Meadow nature reserve will be familiar to anyone who regularly uses the A38 as it passes the Drumbridges roundabout close to Stover and Bovey Heathfield. Its towering mound sits just to the south of the major road and was created from spoil – the discarded workings of large scale local clay extraction projects.

The 33 hectare site became Teigngrace Meadow nature reserve in 2016 when Devon Wildlife Trust took over its care and management. The introduction of cattle on to the site was an initial priority for the charity which wished to improve the reserve's grassland areas for wildlife. However, a lack of good fencing and a water supply remained barriers which frustrated this ambition and threatened the future of the site's rich mix of wildflowers, which include the rare green-winged orchid; insects, including grizzled skipper butterflies; and birds, including skylarks and meadow pipits.

LCF project objectives

Landfill Community Fund (LCF) funding from Viridor Credits Environmental Company was secured to protect and enhance the species-rich grassland habitat at Teigngrace Meadow nature reserve. Since its restoration as lowland meadow, gorse and scrub had taken over much of the former quarry site. The project aimed to clear the scrub to encourage the diverse and colourful wildflower displays that support the ecosystem.



Project details and outcomes

The project involved invasive scrub removal, together with the facilitation of grazing to prevent the scrub regrowth. Removal of the scrub turned the treated areas from the previous monocultures of gorse or birch into open areas which will naturally become colonised by a range of smaller flowering plants.

The grazing infrastructure included installing fences and gates; a pumped water supply from the River Bovey to a new tank on the reserve's plateau area; and gravity-fed pipework, drinking troughs and livestock operated pasture pumps enabling various areas to be grazed independently. The introduction of low-intensity seasonal grazing keeps the scrub regrowth in check. Furthermore, the livestock create a more patchy environment with diverse sward heights, allowing different and more diverse plant communities to develop.

The nature reserve is open to the public 365 days a year and is free to visit.

Devon Wildlife Trust's Andy Bakere manages the nature reserve. Andy said: *"Funding from Viridor Credits Environmental Company has allowed us to make some key changes which will help local wildlife. The provision of a water supply and stock-proof fencing has meant we're now able to bring cattle on to the reserve. In turn the cattle are providing us with a valuable 'workforce'. Their grazing will keep in check the rough grasses and scrub which could otherwise overwhelm the site and dominate the orchids and other wildflowers that grow here."*

Andrew Taylor is one of 70 local volunteers who worked for a collective total of 59 days on the Teigngrace Meadow project. Andrew said: *"It's a wonderful nature reserve to visit. It's easily accessible via the popular Stover Way cycle route between Bovey Tracey and Newton Abbot. Then a short, steep climb on foot takes you to the top of the reserve. Here visitors will get wonderful views across a fascinating landscape where you can see the massive changes brought about by local clay extraction, plus the rugged outline of Dartmoor."*



Teigngrace Meadow nature reserve, scrub cleared

Further information: www.devonwildlifetrust.org/nature-reserves/teigngrace-meadow
Background, history and images courtesy of Devon Wildlife Trust