

PROJECT RIVER CHANNEL WORKS



Working with an ecologist, Stonbury recently cleared 650 metres of dry channel, including the removal of obstructions to flow. Site won, green materials were then used to enhance the stream. Gloucester Wildlife Trust commissioned this work as part of the ERDF Wild Towns Project, which had been developed to create, connect and enhance green spaces for wildlife across Gloucestershire.

Prior to the works, a toolbox talk on the Great Crested Newt (GCN) was delivered to the site team, as the habitat was thought to be suitable for overwintering individuals. GCNs are a protected species, including their eggs, breeding sites and resting places.

Due to heavy rainfall, the water levels had risen, and the flow meant that the habitat was less suitable for GCN. It was decided that a new hibernacula was to be created.

The team worked to clear felled trees and remove brash, using the arisings to shape an ephemeral pond - a pond that holds back floodwater and drains slowly - located on the channel and built a suitable habitat for newts which were identified during the channel clearance.

The bioengineering and channel clearance redefined the edges of the channel, and logs were used as flow deflectors to scour the bed of the stream to expose the underlying gravel. The stream banks are now passable and less overgrown, allowing emergent aquatic plants to flourish.