

Derwent Reservoir: Biodiversity and Leisure



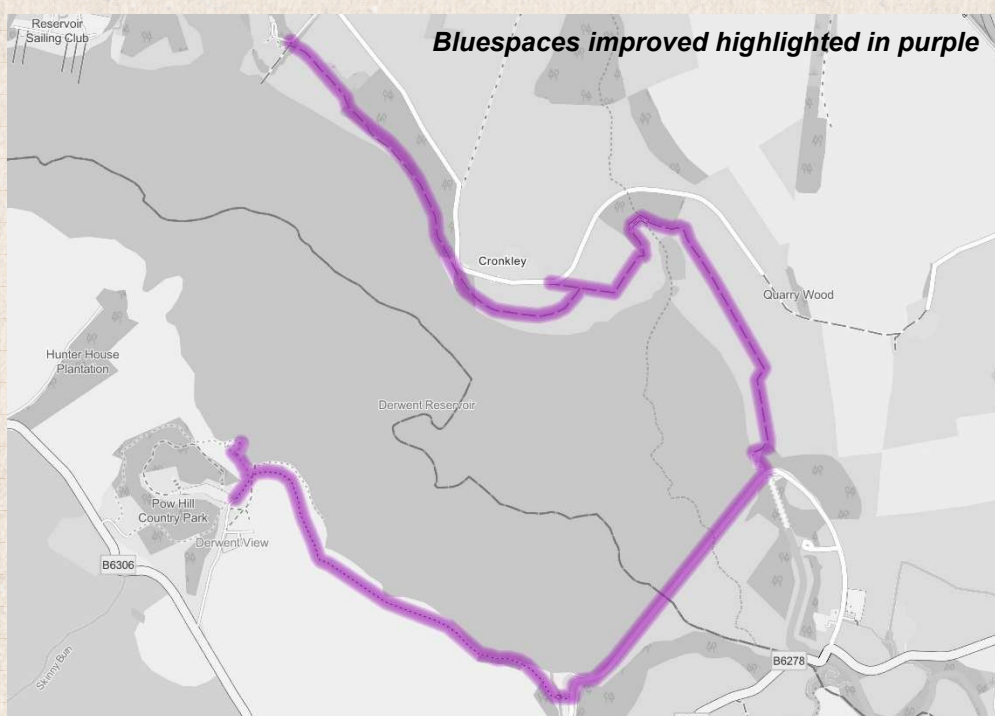
Lead Partner

Durham Wildlife Trust

Location	Bluespaces improved	Delivery Year	Project Value
Derwent Reservoir, County Durham	5.8km	2021	£41,000

Project Overview

Northumbrian Water and Durham Wildlife Trust have collaborated and improved 5.8km of Bluespaces at Derwent Reservoir and Waterside Park. This project has been customer focused, ensuring the area is friendly and practical. Improvements have been made to the pathways, seating has been provided, information boards have been installed and wildlife habitats have been improved. The project has also helped to engage volunteers to enhance the environment at Derwent, this allows for greater opportunity for people to engage with the natural environment at Derwent Reservoir.



Partnership Information

Durham Wildlife Trust is a charity that was established in 1971, originally as the Durham County Conservation Trust in 1988. The Trust operates across the area of the old County Durham, which today includes Darlington, Gateshead, South Tyneside, and Sunderland. The Trust is there to conserve local wildlife.

The Durham Wildlife Trust is one of 46 charities across the UK that together form the Wildlife Trusts and is recognised by a badger in the logo. The Trusts are typically made up of a strong volunteering tradition – each trust was founded by volunteers.

Project Achievements

Access, facilities, and recreation

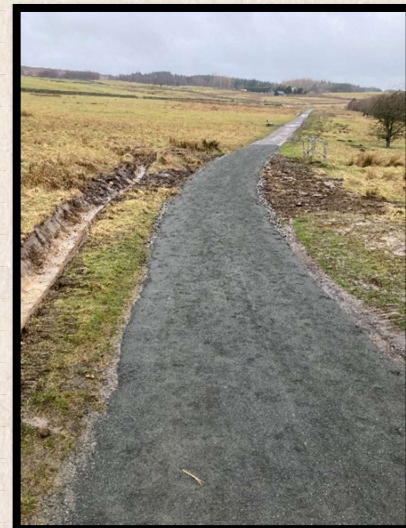
- Six new information boards (topics including Angling, Fisheries and Red Squirrels) were installed.
- 650m of pathway has been made to be multi-user path to allow customers with wheelchairs, pushchairs, buggies, or bikes to enjoy the natural environment and the visitor facilities.
- Seven of the benched seating areas have also been resurfaced.
- Drains have been cleared to prevent the new rolled pathway from flooding and causing erosion.
- Access to the peninsula has been retained to allow customers to enjoy the view and take a picnic.
- A bug hotel (3m x 1m x 1m) has been installed and filled to 50% to encourage future filling by members of the public.

Wildlife and biodiversity

- 1433 trees and shrubs covering 1.35ha were planted. Three wetland scrapes/ponds were also created, and the appropriate maintenance is in place. Wetland areas have been left so that unwanted species aren't attracted.
- It has been shown that wading birds are taking interest - the work to keep the open areas around the water has made it appealing for the birds to feed. It is expected that amphibians may begin to use the wetland habitat areas.

Additional Benefits

- 3.3ha of habitat creation means the capture and store of carbon can be kept in wetland and woodland areas.
- The multi-user path now allows for wheelchair use and customers with small children to access in a safe manner.
- The new information boards look to inspire a younger generation giving information and an indication of 'what to look out for'.
- Businesses nearby may benefit as the project sets to appeal to more customers. It is also expected that customers will use the nearby village facilities too.



Testimonials

“The project will bring several benefits to customers visiting Derwent Waterside Park. I have met several wheelchair users during the planning stages of the footpath work that expressed their approval at plans to resurface the path. The multi-user path is an important feature, allowing wheelchair users and customers with small children to access the countryside in a safe, easy and comfortable manner. The drainage works associated with the project will keep the path in better condition for longer, the previous drains were clogged or shallow and ineffective, with water spilling over onto the path and washing away the top dressing.

“The bug hotel area provides food, shelter and access corridors to the hotel itself. We need to design some information signs for the area to explain this to guests, but the benefits for wildlife should take shape over the summer as the area flowers and flourishes.

“The new information boards installed around the reservoir are of a good quality and will hopefully engage and inspire younger customers. They will provide opportunities to punctuate long walks with points of interest, as well as giving customers clues as to what they can be “on the lookout” for as they walk the footpaths”

Andrew Rodgers, Events Planning and Investment Co-ordinator, Northumbrian Water

