Water Environment Improvements
Project Evidence Form

Scope & Purpose

This form is to be used by the Water Environment External Governance Group (WEGG), to review, validate and formally approve the length of Water Environment Improved for each project. The form will be completed by the Water Environment Team with support from project partners and presented to the WEGG. Upon formal WEGG approval, the km water environment improved will be recorded against the ODI and projects marked as completed on the Water Environment Scorecard and Mapping Portals.

Project Name

Greening the Marina

Project Lead

Company/ Organisation	Named Lead	Position	
Groundwork North East	Hellen Hornby	Programme Development Manager	

Water Environment Improved

Year	Claimed	Proposed	Reason For Any Change
Year 2	0.4km	0.4km	N/A

Project Assurance

This project has been reviewed internally to ensure it has delivered benefits above and beyond our baseline and regulatory obligations to improve the water environment accessible to customers across at least two out of three aspects. Following our assurance process, the project was approved by both our internal and external groups for review before delivery. This form presents evidence of project completion and the outputs achieved, to request project sign off.

Level	Project Acceptance Date	Project Approval Date	Completed Project Sign Off Date
Project Team	July 2021	NA	NA
Water Environment Steering Group (Internal)	July 2021	July 2021	NA
Water Environment Governance Group (External)	July 2021	July 2021	November 2021

Water Environment Project Timescales

Candidate Project Approved	Project Initiated	Project Completed
July 2021	July 2021*	September 2021

**This is a Branch Out project and delivery started earlier after Branch Out approval in August 2020*

Project Summary and Highlights

Summary

Groundwork NE and NWG have delivered improvements to 0.4km of publicly accessible water environments at Royal Quays Marina in North Shields.

This project has helped revitalise the Royal Quays Marina on Tyneside and helped to regenerate a barren, lifeless, man-made harbour at Royal Quays Marina on Tyneside, and create a sustainable green ecosystem for native wildlife to flourish, through a range of improvements to benefit people, wildlife and the environment. It is part of a wider programme of improvements for the strategic Tyne Estuary Partnership (TEP). The TEP has a bold vision to develop a healthy and vibrant river estuary with a strong, strategic, influential partnership invested in long-term environmental and economic enhancement.

Improvements include the installation of a 50m^2 floating ecosystem, anchored in place and planted with native salt tolerant plants. This greenery softens an otherwise hard urban environment and provide additional habitat for plants, birds and invertebrates. There is also a surprise under the water where baskets filled with natural materials provide a nursery for fish and other marine organisms such as sponges, seaweeds, and bivalves to become established, so creating a small reef system in the marina. These improvements deliver wildlife and biodiversity gains whilst providing picturesque views that will encourage people to visit this iconic area and understand the link between these habitats and the historic Tyne Estuary environment. New interpretation has been installed relaying information to visitors and helping to engage visitors with the environment.

The Covid-19 pandemic created great difficulty in carrying out any face-to-face consultation/engagement with local communities, however some was achieved through the Royal Quays Marina Swans group, The Tyne Estuary Partnership and Newcastle University.

Some highlights for this project are detailed here: Tyne Estuary Partnership video

Maps

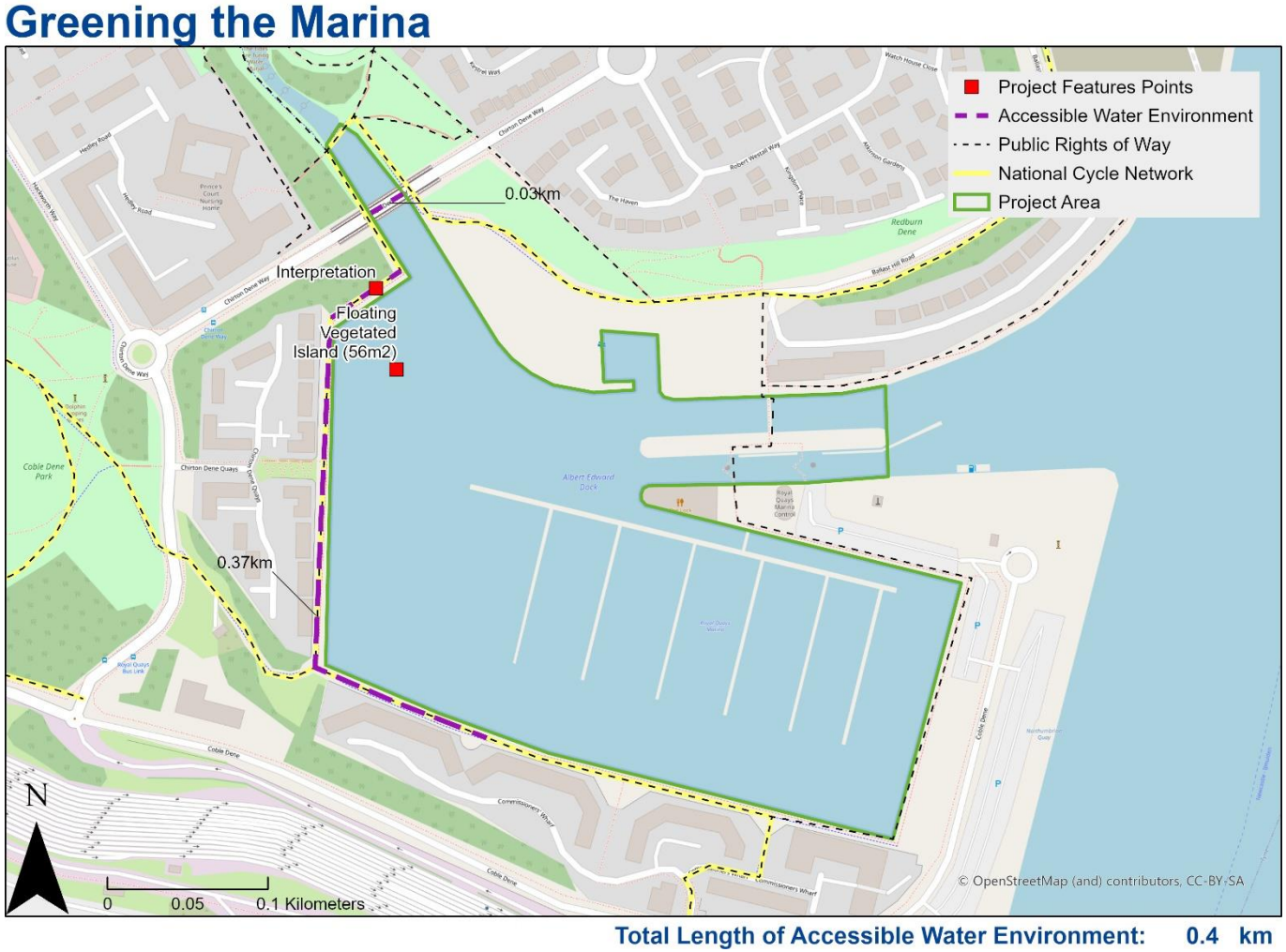


Figure 1: Accessible water environment at Royal Quays Marina impacted by the Greening the Marina project

Note the limit on the length of accessible water environment impacted is the view across the water to the floating island, restricted by the marina infrastructure

Figure 2: View from the path at Royal Quays Marina

Project Outputs, Benefits & Evidence Against Criteria

Access, Facilities & Recreation	
Expected Project Outcomes	**Benefits**
▪ Enhanced enjoyment of the site through the addition of more natural habitat enhancing the visual experience for visitors. ▪ Visitor signage and interpretation to highlight and explain the purpose of the floating vegetated islands increasing customer engagement with the environment •Community engagement will improve health and wellbeing and engage and educate visitors about the biodiversity enhancements	➢ A1: Increases access to, engagement with and enjoyment of the water environment ➢ A2: Benefits health and wellbeing through: ➢ A3: Influences positive environmental behaviors
Outputs	
• Creation of a new ecosystem, adding a natural element to a barren, lifeless, man-made harbour, and viewable to visitors from the shore and marina • Production of interpretation panel at the site and promotional video featuring the floating ecosystem	
Evidence	

Interpretation design screenshot

Interpretation in situ

View of ecosystem from northern edge of marina

View of ecosystem from A187 roadbridge

Wildlife & Biodiversity

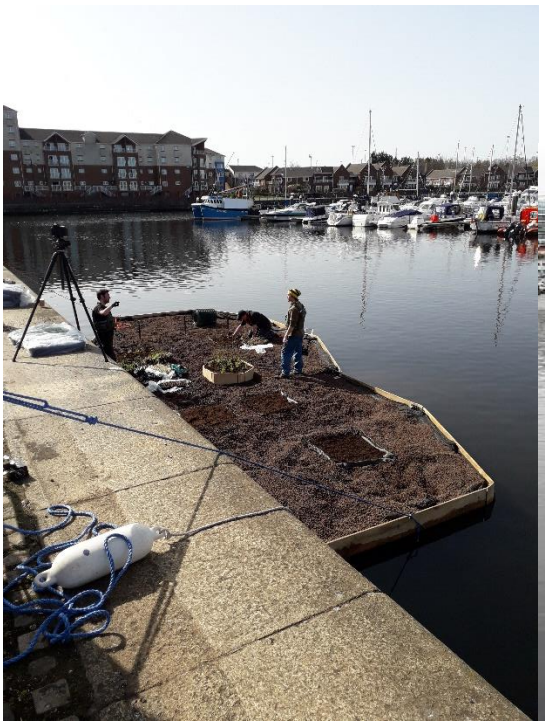
Expected Project Outcomes	Benefits
▪ Increased habitat connectivity of the estuary landscape through creation of floating island, coupled with other habitat creation projects in the Tyne Estuary ▪ Floating vegetated island at marina edges will introduce natural habitat into the area, to attract fish, birds, and invertebrates ▪ Islands will provide nesting sites for birds of conservation concern as well as refuge for migrating fish	➢ B1: Improves the quantity, quality and connectivity of habitats ➢ B2: Improves the conservation status and or abundance or distribution of species

Outputs

- Installation of a 50m^2 floating ecosystem at Royal Quays Marina, planted with native upper salt marsh / sand dune plants including marram grass, lyme grass, sea holly, sea plantain, sea club rush, saltmarsh rush, European alkali grass and grey club rush. Submerged baskets provide shelter for fish and surfaces for colonisation of marine invertebrates and plant/algae.
- Additional biodiversity improvements include a swan step (added by the contractor Biomatrix at no extra cost) following a request from the local swan group.

Evidence

Video of construction and installation of ecosystem created by the contractor Biomatrix:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTa8CUr6PT4



Floating ecosystem June 2021

Common tern sitting on nest, June 2021

Swan step added by Biomatrix Water

Saltmarsh/dune plants growing on the island

Additional & Secondary Benefits

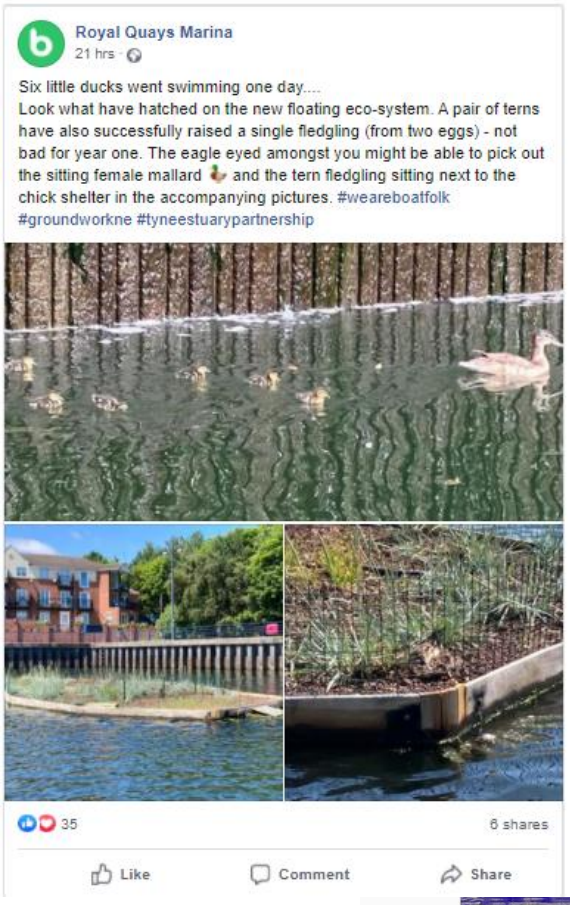
Expected Project Outcomes	Benefits
• Engagement events will provide benefits for the local community • This project will revitalise the Royal Quays Marina on Tyneside and is part of a wider vision for habitat connectivity and estuarine improvements to be delivered through the strategic Tyne Estuary Partnership	➢ D2: Provides benefits to local communities, the local economy or NWG ➢ D3: Supports strategic project or investment into strategic partnership or landscape/regional activity

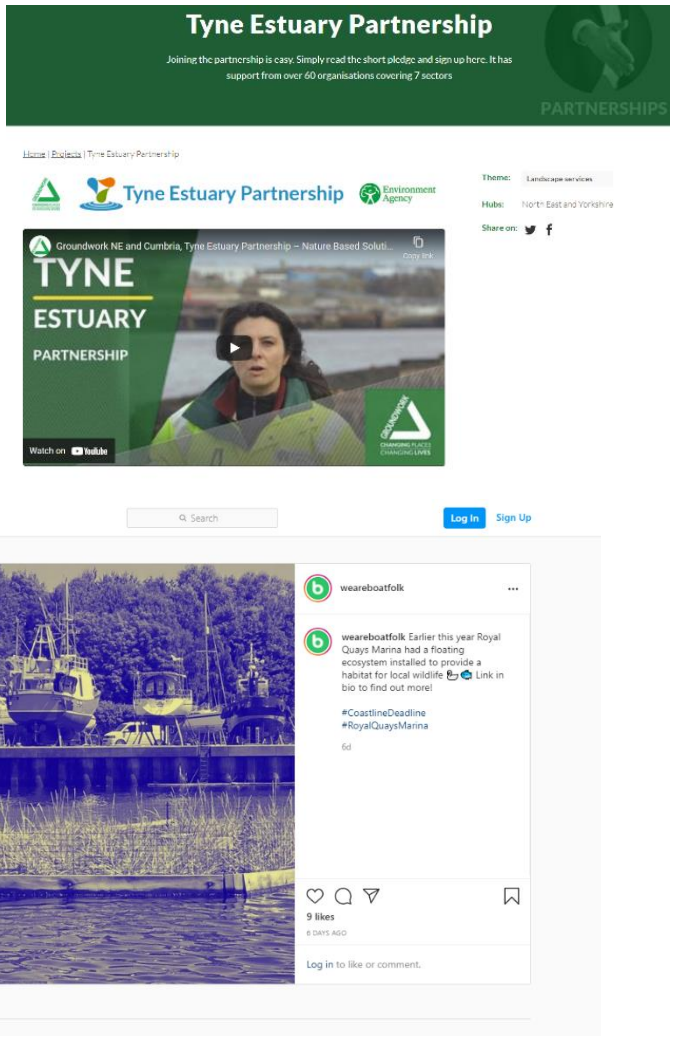
Outputs

- Online engagement with the community through Facebook/ twitter/TEP video and interpretation panel - 1000 interactions
- Volunteers engaged in environmental activity- (3 volunteers from Royal Quays Marina Swans Group and University of Newcastle)
- Virtual events held to promote the scheme amongst partnership members – 2 Tyne Estuary Partnership events

Evidence

Examples of online engagement

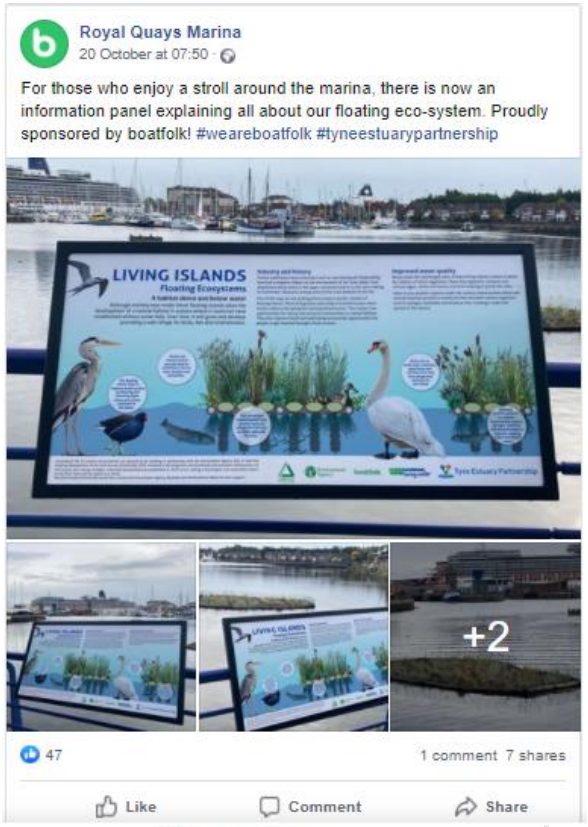


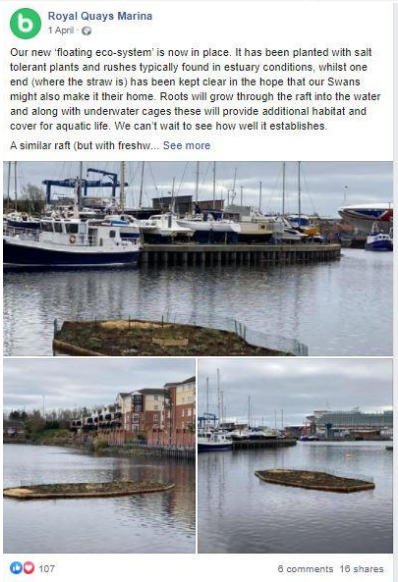


Customer Testimonies & Media

Cllr Carl Johnson, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport said:

"We are pleased to hear about Groundwork's new project – which hopes to provide wildlife habits, both above and below the waterline, for a range of species. A similar project in Killingworth Lake has proved very successful and is an example of how the introduction of a new ecosystem in an urban environment can allow wildlife to thrive. This is another feature of the many ongoing plans for a more sustainable North Tyneside."





- Interview on BBC Radio Newcastle.
- Local newspaper articles.
- Boatfolk Blog
- Royal Quays Marina Facebook Page
- Royal Quays Marina Swans

Lead Partner Quotes & Testimonials

Hellen Hornby, Programme Development Manager, Groundwork NE/ Tyne Estuary Partnership

""We were pleased to be able to install the first floating ecosystem on the Tyne thanks to support from the environment Agency, Northumbrian Water and Boatfolk Ltd. In such a man-made setting this living island will provide a home for animals and plants that would naturally have found the Tyne their home before the industrialisation of the river changed the natural environment."

Other Supporting Evidence

- Ecological monitoring is being undertaken by Newcastle University including water quality directly around the ecosystem and monitoring species establishing and using the platform both above and below water: one pair of Common Tern and one pair of Mallard have been recorded nesting on floating ecosystem in summer of 2021 whilst juvenile herring have been observed underneath