

School children take part in tree planting to help improve the environment

The Egremont flood scheme not only reduces flood risk to the local community it also improves the town by providing more green spaces for local use. Children from Orgill School have taken part in planting roughly 200 trees to increase biodiversity and improve local access to green spaces. Single tree and shrub habitats provide the biggest hit by way of species and threatened species. Re-connecting woodland habitats and planting appropriately is one simple way to increase the diversity and function of our countryside.

Planting of trees also helps to combat CO2 emissions thus making the air cleaner for humans and wildlife. The trees planted include plum, apple, damson and cherry trees, all of which will be able to be picked by the children in the future. The Environment Agency worked with the school to help them combat anti-social behaviour. The planting of trees and shrubs inside the perimeter of the gates of the school has reduced the anti-social behaviour around the school and the school would like more planting to continue to help reduce this behaviour even more.

The Environment Agency plan to continue working with Orgill School soon by creating mini allotments which will consist of vegetables and plants in a bid to make pupils more active and have a better knowledge of where their food comes from. As well as this, a local angling club are working with the pupils of Orgill school to offer them the chance to take part in fishing activities.

Julie Irving, Headteacher at Orgill School said:

Our children, in Nursery, had a wonderful time planting fruit trees with 'Safari' Mike and his team. The children are incredibly excited to watch the trees grow and can't wait to start harvesting the fruit!

We are busy preparing for our next project and are delighted that Mike will be able to support again. Our allotment garden has been in the pipeline for a few years and was halted due to the pandemic. We are eager to get our children more involved in growing their own produce and have a space to enjoy throughout the year.

A huge thank you to everyone involved in supporting our projects, this year.

Since planning approval of this important flood scheme in October 2019, the Environment Agency have completed culvert works at Croadalla Avenue and property resistance measures have been delivered to 43 properties across the town. As well as this, construction on flood storage areas, consisting of

flood walls and flood embankments, at West Lakes Academy, Falcon Club and How Bank Farm have been completed.

The channel of Black Beck have also been completed as part of this scheme. The completed project have created meanders and bends, to allow the natural channel of the beck to be found again. The meanders and in stream features such as natural bed material have provided essential habitat for fish and insects to thrive. Other features found in natural rivers and on floodplains have also been introduced at Black Beck to slow the flow. They help to store more water during times of flood. This will help to reduce downstream flood risk by storing more flood water further upstream.

Paul Robertshaw, from the Environment Agency said:

We would like to thank the children of Orgill school for helping us plant trees, in bid to boost biodiversity, as part the flood scheme in Egremont. We look forward to seeing the benefits this will bring to wildlife and the local community. We also hope to continue this work by growing an allotment garden where children can grow their own produce.

The Skirting and Whangs Beck Flood Risk Management Scheme will not only better protect people and property from flooding but will create a better place for the community by providing an enhanced environment for wildlife to thrive. We are delighted to see the progress on this scheme and look forward to the benefits its completion will bring.

You can find out more about the scheme by visiting www.thefloodhub.co.uk and checking 'Your local area' to see a summary of what the scheme is proposing and for general information on how to prepare and respond to all sources of flooding.