

# Leicester's River Monster Project

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# Leicester's Natural Environment

- Parks & Open Spaces Services is responsible for the management and maintenance of over 3088 acres (1,638 hectares) of parkland and open space across the city approximately 22 per cent of the city's area.

Including:

- 12 Major parks
- 3 National Green Flag Award winning sites
- 8.5 Mile Riverside Corridor
- 3200 Allotment sites
- 4 Cemeteries and 1 Crematorium
- 223 Equipped play areas
- 31 Outdoor gyms
- Over 149,000 trees
- Sport facilities
- Community based events and activities on parks
- 8million users per year



# Leicester Environmental Volunteering Achievements 2018/19

- Engaged 10745 volunteers .
- 65,254 volunteer hours.
- Based on £8.75 living wage
- Equates to a £570,972 boost for Leicester's environment
- National APSE Greenspace Innovation Award winner 2017.
- KBT Community Engagement Award Winner 2018



# Project Overview

**Project Aim:** Raise profile of the scale of plastic ending up in the City's 8.5mile section of the River Soar.

1. Engage and educate people of all ages on the impact of plastic pollution.
2. To increase buy in from members, stakeholders and corporations based in Leicester.
3. To highlight the impact of plastic on the ecology and water quality locally and nationally.
4. To work in partnership with the University of Leicester to undertake a piece of research around the impact of waterflow & how it affects plastic accumulation, transport and stranding (Willowbrook).

# Key Engagement Areas

Success linked to engagement of local people, community groups, councillors, directors, local business, schools and National Citizenship Scheme. The project engaged people of all ages into every aspects of the projects delivery.

- River cleaning session to collect the waste
- Cleaning of the waste collected
- Design & Build of the sculpture
- Creation of educational displays for wider public pop up events
- Comms & Marketing of all aspects of the project.

# Project Video

<https://www.facebook.com/BBCRadioLeicester/videos/1137773153037884/?t=9>



# Project Stats

- 2 National Citizenship Schemes Engaged (24 young people 16-18 years)
- 1560 Hours of volunteering by NCS young people
- 183 Hours of volunteering from group cleaning sessions
- 13 pop up educational stands (382 People Engaged)
- 6 River locations used for sculpture around the city
- 95k Facebook view of project video created in partnership with BBC Radio Leicester
- ITV Central News & BBC Regional News coverage
- Good morning Britain coverage
- Project costs £26k

# Research Overview

## University of Leicester

### Aim

This project aims to quantify the abundance and type of litter in the Willow Brook and to determine whether litter stranding is linked to water level or and/or to characteristic zones of the river system.

### Objectives

1. Design a robust surveying and monitoring protocol for riverine litter quantification, and critique
2. Measure the flow depth (as proxy for discharge) of the Willow Brook over a five month period
3. Undertake litter surveys at intervals to determine the type, abundance and distribution of litter
4. Determine whether litter type and abundance is related to flow
5. Determine whether different zones of the river cross-section in the river system are more frequently associated with litter, and different litter types

**Request a copy of report: [victoria.hudson@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:victoria.hudson@leicester.gov.uk)**



# The Willow Brook - Leicester

- The Willow Brook (EA id GB104028046980) flows eastwards & joins the River Soar in Leicester City.
- It has a catchment area of approximately 2164 ha, a length of 11.73 km and is physically highly modified.
- This site was selected because it is recognized by Leicester City Council Environmental Rangers as a “grot spot” characterized by high litter loads.



20<sup>th</sup> March – 0.68m



3<sup>rd</sup> April – 0.42m



1<sup>st</sup> May – 0.45m





# Research Key Findings

In 161 days along a 36 m stretch of the Willow Brook we collected **2323** litter items

Scaled to 1 km of the Willow Brook this would be **64,527** litter items

Scaled to approximately half the Willow Brook length (5 km) that would be

**322,638** litter items: a minimum of just over **2000** new pieces of litter each day!

In a year that is **73,000** litter items a year for 5 km stretch

The largest item we found was a **bicycle**

**77%** of litter was plastic

**10** years in **10** km of the Willow Brook nearly **1.5 million** items

# Questions?



# Project Partners

