



## DELIVERING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

*..& mutually-beneficial partnerships for business and communities..*

*A Case Study in long-term added value 2003-2017*

### Conservation Area - no public access

**Warning:** This conservation area has been created and is being maintained for the benefit of breeding, migrant and wintering birds. Wilful or reckless disturbance of certain bird species in this area, such as Little Ringed Plover, is punishable by law. For further information go to [www.calderdalebirds.co.uk](http://www.calderdalebirds.co.uk)

Supported by  the Hanson environment fund  GREEN BUSINESS NETWORK  Marshalls plc

*(updated May 2017, originally published 2006)*



*Habitat improvement for wading birds at Ringstone Reservoir in the South Pennine Moors notably the Calderdale Priority Species: Little Ringed Plover.*

### Background

October 1st 2003 saw the introduction of a new category to the Landfill Communities Fund ("Object DA"), related specifically to the conservation and preservation of the Nation's biodiversity - habitats and species.

This extended the scope of the Scheme to include projects on land that need not have public access, in order to conserve, restore or enhance sensitive sites or fragile habitats.

The **Green Business Network (GBN)** and its partners, including Calderdale Bird Conservation Group, Calder Future, Compass Bridge, Pennine Prospects & 'Project ABLE', have been at the forefront of the DA fund, through habitat creation & management and species conservation determined e.g. by priority species lists and Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP).

### Wading Birds

Across Europe, many bird species have begun to "decline alarmingly" (Birds of Conservation Concern 1996-2015 #BoCC4). Of particular concern are Lapwing & Curlew. Little Ringed Plover (LRP) breeding populations, whilst up to 20 times smaller, are stable, but can be transient and in

decline at the local level. A summer visitor from Africa, the LRP favours post-industrial sites which are often only temporarily vacant. A Schedule 1 bird ("protected by special penalties at all times"), it is one of only four such species breeding locally.

### Ringstone Improvement Project

Pioneering in many ways - *not least of which that Ringstone Reservoir is acutely exposed at over 1000' (300 metres) above sea level* - the project was the very first 'on the ground' under Calderdale's LBAP. It addressed a bird of national significance, in a moorland habitat area of international importance, and was one of the first twelve biodiversity (DA) proposals in UK to be both approved and funded. The project led to a specialist social enterprise **Green Future Building (GFB)**.

A purpose-designed wetland area (two scrapes) was created, overlooked by a robust observation hide built entirely through volunteer effort. The 2 ha reserve mitigated for 6 ha 'lost' to a 98,000 sq. ft commercial shed development at a prime location during 2004. The new site (SE 051184) is viewable from the B6114, readily accessible by public transport or the West Yorkshire Cycle Route

## Project Timeline

<b>July 2003</b>	Project first proposed
<b>Oct. 2003</b>	Category DA introduced
<b>Mar 2004</b>	ENTRUST Registration
<b>April 2004</b>	Trial pits dug on site
<b>Sept. 2004</b>	Yorkshire Water approval
<b>Sept. 2004</b>	£5,950 HEF# grant secured
<b>Oct. 2004</b>	Hard landscaping (13 days)
<b>Dec. 2005</b>	Long-term access secured
<b>April 2006</b>	Hide completed (23 days)
<b>2008-2012</b>	GFB (initially 'ABLE2BUILD') launched

## "vision-design-build"

Bespoke hide with views over new wetland scrape



**#Hanson Environment Fund, managed by Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts, distributed more than £17.75M over nine years using landfill tax generated by Hanson Aggregates**

## History

Calderdale Bird Conservation Group has its origins in Halifax Birdwatchers Club founded 1991 (part of BTO's Bird Clubs Partnership). Its founder members - who include the semi-professional ecologists now at GFB - have monitored Ringstone regularly since at least 1973, but earliest published records date back to c. 1914.

Now owned by Yorkshire Water, Ringstone was built for Wakefield City Council in 1886. Two cylindrical wheel-houses are Grade II Listed. Mesolithic worked flint, including an axe found in 1923, has been noted and there are Scheduled prehistoric monuments (including a circle of stones) nearby. The area is thought to have the potential to produce archaeological remains of high regional importance and may have been a settlement on the shores of a small lake. See [www.geograph.org.uk/photo/52165](http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/52165)

Little Ringed Plover first nested in UK in 1938, reaching Halifax by 1967. Its social history is detailed in "*Birds Britannica*" (M. Cocker and R. Mabey, September 2005).

## Measures of success

**1. The key contribution was the GBN's award-winning expertise\* in #TheLCF which secured over £11,000 funding. [\*200+ projects/20 years, worth £4.7M]**

2. The project was unlocked by donations of over £1,500 from **Marshalls plc**, major local employer and leading manufacturer of landscape products. "Final brick" funds came from HEF# who featured Ringstone on its 2004 Annual Report. Planning gain (£18k) secured longer-term sustainability.
3. Public Liability and other insurance was obtained cost-effectively through a BTCV Group Association scheme, [www.tcv.org](http://www.tcv.org)
4. Full support and advice was given by Yorkshire Water (including using its grid to maintain water levels at a crucial time), Police Wildlife Officers and the RSPB.
5. Publication of "*Birds of Ringstone Edge, Records from 1900-2005*"; ongoing daily updates at [www.calderbirds.blogspot.com](http://www.calderbirds.blogspot.com)
6. Follow-on DA projects included a Tenth Anniversary Award (now RSPB's England Twite Recovery Project), and best Natural Environment project in UK (ABLE2BUILD)
7. GBN decided to spin out GFB Ltd - now a double Gold Award winner, ESF model of best practice and 'apprenticeship' hub:

## [www.greenfuturebuilding.org.uk](http://www.greenfuturebuilding.org.uk)

- not for profit social enterprise training underachieving young people in green building and nature conservation
- highly-regarded "vision-design-build" supplier of hides, nesting boxes, rafts, viewpoints & wetlands to The Wildlife Trusts, RSPB and others nationally

