

Wichelstowe: Canalside Infrastructure Works



Wichelstowe is a mixed-use development in Swindon for up to 4500 homes, new schools, retail and employment uses, surrounded by 275 acres of open space. The Canalside Infrastructure Works have facilitated the creation of an active and vibrant centre for the existing and growing community of Wichelstowe, providing access to retail, amenities and educational establishments.

- **Date of completion: July 2019**
- **Cost: £8.5m**
- **Location: Swindon, Wiltshire**

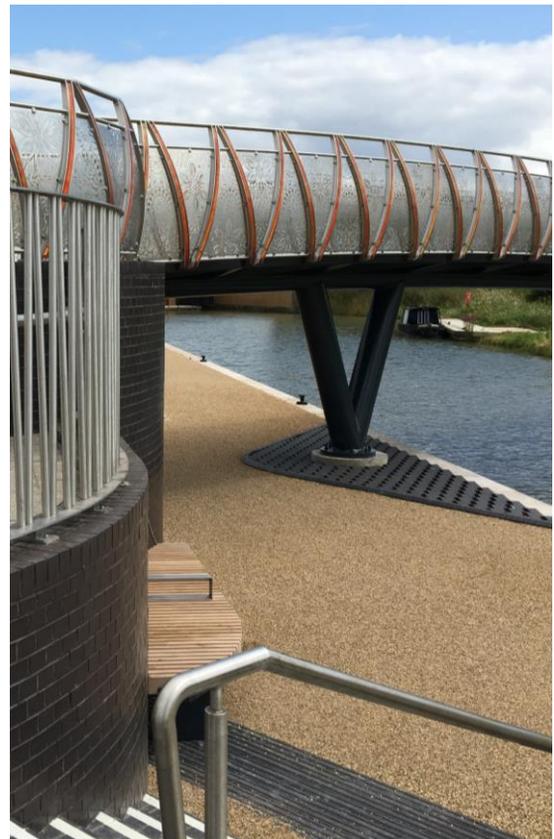
Challenges and solutions

The Canalside Infrastructure Works are a framework of engineering elements designed to form the District Centre of the site and create a place for the community, which is inclusive and provides access to schools and facilities from all modes of transport. The works comprise a new feature footbridge, that also makes a public art contribution, public square, community street, and a restored section of canal.

The Community Street functions as a transport interchange node, facilitating access to the District Centre for all, with on-street disabled parking, new bus stops, and extends the strategic cycle network.

The feature footbridge extends the primary east to west footpath route through the development, providing a safe crossing of the canal for pedestrians and cyclists, linking housing, schools and local amenities. A 3m wide deck and DDA-compliant ramps to the footbridge and between the square and the towpath allow access for the mobility impaired.

The canal restoration includes a marginal aquatic-shelf and 5m ecology zone for native planting that maintains a key foraging route for wildlife.



Benefits and achievements

The project has created a platform for the development of the essential facilities and amenities the growing community of Wichelstowe needs to flourish and thrive. Together these features provide car free access around the District Centre and routes to the wider open space areas surrounding the development and into Swindon along the canal, making the District Centre a great place to meet, shop, grab a bite to eat, or start a walk into the countryside.

As well as framing the District Centre, the Community Street also forms the boundary to the new secondary school and primary school, which is currently under construction, and provides the vehicular access for cars and coaches, with the primary pedestrian route through the public square.

Besides the economic and social benefits to the local community, the restored section of the canal has enhanced a key foraging and movement corridor for wildlife. With the opposite bank being naturalised with a marginal shelf, aquatic planting and an ecology zone providing native planting.

The project has created a genuine centre for the growing community of Wichelstowe and has engaged locals who have actively taken part in various public events in the District Centre square and on the canal. The Wichelstowe Games took place during the summer of 2019 in the square, with activities across the development and on the canal.



Fascinating facts

- ❑ The footbridge bridge parapet was designed by public artist Sebastien Boyeson and includes ornate laser cut steel panels interspersed with coloured resin infill units which reflect the sunlight during the day and are illuminated by feature lights at night.
- ❑ The public square is also a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) with the pavement construction forming a large attenuation tank for the storage of run-off, before discharge into the canal.
- ❑ The Community Street includes wildlife kerbs that provide a bypass to gullies, preventing newts falling in and becoming trapped.

People who made it happen:

- Designer and Project Manager: Stantec UK Ltd.
- Strategic Delivery Partner: Swindon Borough Council
- Contractor (Canal): Alun Griffiths (Contractor) Ltd.
- Contractor (Community Street): Fox (Owmbly) Ltd.
- Contractor (Public Square and Footbridge): Knights Brown Construction Ltd.

More about this project: wichelstowe.co.uk/