

**Give detail and an explanation of the entry for your particular Business Unit plus any inspiration stories from this competition...**

We introduced a garden area for our staff to tend to during lunch breaks and benefit from the produce providing a healthy free snack, we have planted:

- Herbs - mint, parsley, sage
- Fruits - strawberries, various tomatoes, and chilli peppers
- Vegetables - courgettes, lettuce and sugar snap peas

We also wanted to utilise the space at the front of the office so have introduced a seating area for outdoor meetings, we used a large drum for the table with four smaller drums for seating which is extremely effective and comfortable and is being regularly used! We had the idea to make cushions from recycled PPE which we stuffed using plastics and bubble wrap from deliveries.

We have reused an old wheelbarrow as a planter with some lavender and petunias to attract bees, butterflies and insects as well as an old hard hat from the recycled PPE Bin in which we have planted some sweet peas. We also used some cones which were going to be recycled; one as a planter, the other as a hanging basket and planted some marigolds which are vibrant orange.

We also wanted to include our branded colours at the entrance of the depot so we utilised some planters which were donated by Milton Keynes Council and planted a selection of red, white and blue bedding plants. There are additional planters located around the depot with red petunias which look fantastic. This is also an area to attract birds, we have put up a bird feeder and a bird box as well as introduced a bird bath out of a recycled lighting globe.

We have a number of containers (which were donated by our Routine Contract Manager) one has been set up in the garden area to harvest rainwater, providing us with an environmentally friendly water supply for watering our plants around the depot so we can avoid using water from mains. The other has been set up as a compost bin with the introduction of food waste caddies situated in the three kitchen areas in the offices, all waste will be taken to the compost bin daily along with any waste from our plants e.g. weeds / dead heading.

MK Snap have made us a number of bug hotels. This was an ideal opportunity for us to positively engage with the charity that we have recently built a relationship with – a win-win for both parties (and the insects!).

We have displayed information about our 'In Bloom' Project in the reception area which describes everything we have introduced, including the information cards about the produce / plants to ensure all staff are made aware of how to care for them.

## Bleak Hall Depot in Bloom

### What are we growing? Herbs, Fruit & Vegetables

- Various types of Cherry Tomato
- Mangetout
- Courgette
- Baby Leaf Lettuce
- Strawberries
- Sage
- Garden Mint
- Black Pepper Mint
- Various types of Parsley



### What are we growing? Plants

- Marigold; African Orange & French Orange
- Various Bedding Plants; Geraniums, Petunias
- Lavender



### Other ways to encourage pollination; wildlife, insects and improve our carbon footprint!

- Robin Nesting Box
- Bird Nesting Box
- Bug Hotels
- Bird Bath
- Bird Feeder
- Log your e-scooter Journey
- No idling in the Depot
- Recycled Outdoor Seating Area
- Compost Bin

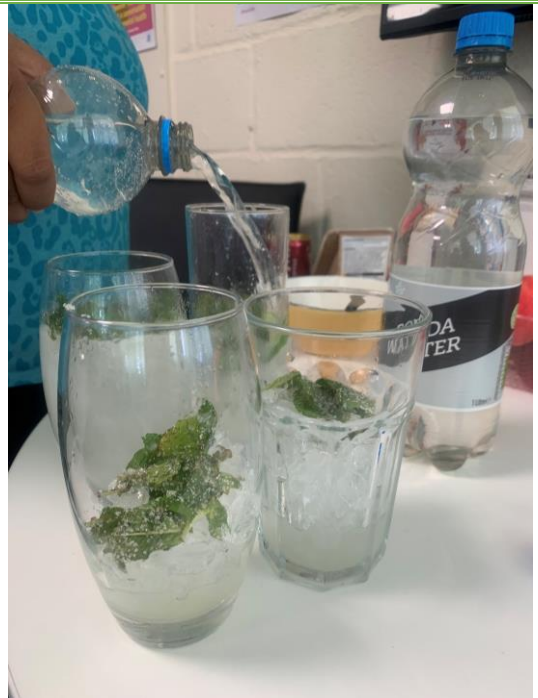












Using the mint for a virgin mojito on a hot day!











Portfolio Holder (left) and Cabinet member with responsibility for Sustainability, Climate Action and Transport (right) for Milton Keynes Council along with a photo with the team (far left)



### Why should this entry be a Winner?

We are really proud of our entry, we feel that we have introduced an excellent mixture of bloom to attract insects and bees, produce to share with our staff and client and recycling and reusing items in line with our targets for circular economy, encouraging our teams to get out for some fresh air during breaks which will benefit mental health and it is fantastic to receive feedback from our operational colleagues as they pass on their way into the depot!

Our client, Milton Keynes Council are impressed with what we have done we were approached by the Portfolio Holder and Cabinet member with responsibility for Sustainability, Climate Action and Transport who visited the project to find out more and for a photo shoot to share what we have done with the wider council! They were excited to see how we had repurposed items and were generally impressed that the company was running the competition to encourage us to create the area!

Our entry should be a winner because it promotes a whole host of environmental and wellbeing benefits such as;

- Generally brightening up the depot, improved outlook, lots of beautiful colours along with much needed tidy / weeding
- Educating us all on gardening, plants, flowers and veg & fruits
- Raising awareness of taking care of all pollinators
- Providing food, water and housing for birds
- Encouraging reduce, reuse and recycle, how items can be repurposed
- Having an outdoor area for meetings
- Encouraging our staff to bring their own lunches to eliminate visits to local shops reducing our carbon footprint and to make the most of their breaks
- Health eating, freshly picked fruit and veg for snacks, we have already benefited from chilli's, tomatoes and strawberries with many more growing every day
- Herbs which are being taken home for cooking, our staff have been sharing their favourite recipes
- Team building exercise – this campaign brought the team together, e.g., during making cushions from PPE during lunch
- Some innovative ideas e.g. for reusing items that could be adopted in our own gardens

And lastly, collaborative working, demonstrating to our staff and client how important looking after our environment is along with the health and wellbeing of our staff.