Case study #10

October 2024

ResilienTogether is one of 25 Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme (FCRIP) projects funded by DEFRA, with an aim to demonstrate how practical innovative actions can work to improve resilience to flooding and coastal erosion.

These case studies highlight learning and innovations from ResilienTogether. They share new approaches and techniques that can be replicated by schemes and organisations across the country.

Oscar the Otter's Riverside Ramble

Using Hello Lamp Post technology paired with Bonfire® graphics to create an interactive, AI-powered educational nature trail

Figure 1. Riverside Ramble sign for the Water Play location

ResilienTogether

ResilienTogether is creating a Smart Catchment, through use of innovative technologies and techniques, to reduce flood risk to people and places, enhance the water environment in the Pix Brook catchment and improve community resilience in the face of climate change.

The project is achieving this through a close-knit partnership that collaborate to deliver six inter-related work packages. This case study relates to the Communications and Engagement Work Package, which aims to build community resilience through novel engagement approaches.

Challenge

ResilienTogether recognises the need to increase public awareness and understanding of local environmental issues, particularly relating to the local watercourse. Some of the community are not currently valuing their local environment. This is leading to issues such as fly-tipping and pollution of the Pix Brook. Typical engagement methods, including council communications and social media posts, are not having the desired impact.

Raising awareness and educating the public is crucial so they can actively contribute to conservation efforts and play a role in safeguarding their environment. There is also a need to engage diverse audiences - school children, families and adults alike - in learning about these critical issues and to connect them with their local urban environment in an accessible and interactive way.

Innovative Solution

The innovative solution is an interactive, AI-powered educational and wellbeing trail. Developed in partnership with Hello Lamp Post and Bonfire®, the trail uses interactive AI technology and attractive signage to engage visitors of all ages in meaningful conversations about climate change, local wildlife and environmental preservation.

This guided experience allows visitors to interact with digital characters, Oscar the Otter and friends. Visitors can scan QR codes (Figure 1) at eight locations to talk to the characters about nature and local features. This creates a fun way to learn about and connect with the environment, transforming a community space into a conversation. The trail offers insights into the importance of chalk streams, the Pix Brook's history and ongoing conservation efforts, as part of ResilienTogether.
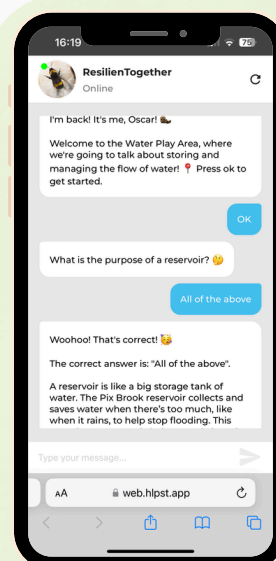

Figure 2. Riverside Ramble sign for the Reservoir View location

Figure 3. Hello Lamp Post conversation with Oscar the Otter

HELLO LAMP POST

Located at Standalone Farm, Hertfordshire, visitors collect an activity booklet at the start of the trail. The booklet includes a range of activities, fun facts and a map of the trail. There is a prize for completing the trail.

The creation of the trail was a collaborative effort between ResilienTogether project partners, Hello Lamp Post and Bonfire®. It included designing child friendly branding, characters and signage with Bonfire®. Numerous workshops were run to develop the character designs and the educational topics that Oscar and his friends would talk about through the Hello Lamp Post platform.

As well as being a tool to share information, Hello Lamp Post technology can gather real time data from the community. ResilienTogether gains monthly insights into the effectiveness of the engagement tool via monthly statistics on interaction at each sign location. This includes the number of people who have used the Ramble, the number of user messages, the percentage of questions answered correctly and the most popular locations. This data is being used to better understand public perceptions, engagement and community resilience.

Figure 4. Front cover of the Riverside Ramble activity booklet

Benefits

1. Engaging Environmental Education
The trail makes interactive learning about the environment and climate change possible while being in nature. It's a fun way to talk about important topics.

2. Increased Awareness
By raising awareness of local environmental issues like water and ecosystem conservation, the innovation empowers the public to take action and be part of sustainable solutions.
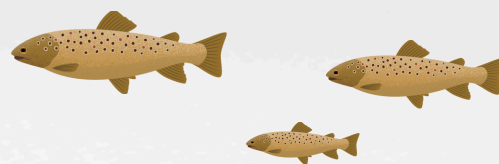
3. Community Involvement
The trail fosters a sense of community by connecting residents and visitors with their local environment, encouraging active participation in conservation efforts and to take ownership of their local environment.

4. Interactive Learning
The AI-powered trail provides a dynamic and interactive learning experience. It allows visitors to engage with digital characters like Oscar the Otter, which is shown to enhance retention and understanding.

5. Support for Conservation Initiatives
The trail supports wider environmental goals, including increasing the awareness of ResilienTogether, by educating the public on flood risk, water quality improvement and preservation of natural resources.

Louise Barker

Head of Community Engagement, Hello Lamp Post

"We're thrilled to see how this interactive trail has brought communities closer to their local environment. By making learning enjoyable and engaging, we're encouraging people of all ages to see how they can contribute to protecting our natural resources. It's wonderful to see the positive impact that collaboration can have on education and conservation efforts, guiding us toward a more sustainable future."

Use Our Learning
We encourage and offer our learning to be adapted and used across the country by Lead Local Flood Authorities and other organisations who are seeking to create an engaging, educational experience that connects the public with their natural surroundings.

If you want to hear more, please contact ResilienTogether.project@Centralbedfordshire.gov.uk or visit our website https://resilientogether.org.uk/