



Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

North Cave Wetlands straw bale hide - Working with Sam Atkinson LLP

When Natural England's Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund provided us with funding for a new hide to overlook the extension to North Cave Wetlands nature reserve in East Yorkshire we posed our selves the question – how can we make an exciting and sustainable building for viewing wildlife, like nothing we have elsewhere on our reserves? After a few discussions we settled on the idea of a straw bale building with a green roof. Next we had to find someone to design and build it for us.

Sam's company was recommended to me by a colleague, who had worked with him on a partner project elsewhere in East Yorkshire, and handily they were based just down the road from North Cave Wetlands.

A meeting was set up and ideas thrown around – we wanted something large enough to fit a bus full of visitors, or class full of school children in, that would have 360 degree views of the reserve that will develop all around it, with access and viewing areas for all. Sam & the team from Sam Atkinson LLP worked really closely to our brief, were full of ideas and came up with a fantastic design for the building.

In spring 2011 the building came to life, and barring a few delays because of the weather all went smoothly. For me, the real pluses of the building are that it used so many local or sustainable materials – straw from within four miles of the site, hemp from East Yorkshire, and even hazel stakes from YWT's Hetchell Wood nature reserve for the walls. In the roof - off cuts of turf grown in East Yorkshire, waste carpet for one layer of lining and local native wildflowers grown at Mire's beck nursery in North Cave village itself.

Sam's team were also good enough to run several workdays where volunteers got a chance to help with the build. It gave locals and YWT staff and volunteers a chance to learn more about working with straw bales and have a go at getting their hands dirty.

The finished hide is a fantastic space, full of light and character, which will provide fabulous viewing opportunities for visitors to North Cave wetlands as they watch the land surrounding it develop from working quarry to nature reserve over the next few years. It will also be filled with lots of colourful and engaging information giving visitors the story of north cave wetlands.

I can't thank Sam Atkinson LLP enough for all the effort put into the design and build of the hide, and we look forward to using the hide for many years to come.

Caroline Comins, Regional Reserves Manager (Central), Yorkshire Wildlife Trust