

Southmere Lake improvements

Southmere Lake is a place for people to enjoy and wildlife to thrive. Over the past four years Peabody has invested more than £2.5 million to improve the lake.

The case for change

In 2019 we commissioned a group of landscape architects, scientists and planning experts to look at the quality of the lake and suggest how it could be improved. They produced a report which showed a range of problems including:

- poor access
- a build up of too much silt, resulting in pond weed and algal blooms (algal blooms can be harmful to animals and people)
- poor water quality, making it difficult for wildlife to thrive
- planted areas providing habitat for different species were limited



SOUTH-WESTERN EDGE - BEFORE



SOUTHERN TIP - BEFORE

What we've done

In response we made the following changes:

Removed the built-up silt and created floating wetland islands

Water now flows through the vegetation on the islands, which helps to remove impurities and improve water quality. The vegetation will also create new habitats for wildlife, including birds and fish.

Planted a new reedbed

The reeds help to remove impurities and improve the water quality.

Installed a 23m high fountain

This puts more oxygen to the water which benefits wildlife.

Installed a sand martin nesting wall and kingfisher perch

We installed these near the islands in the hope of attracting these species.

Improved access to the water's edge

This has made it easier for people of all ages to get closer to the water.

Created four new boardwalks

These wooden platforms are peaceful places for people to stop and enjoy the view or to fish from.

Installed bat boxes and bat monitoring equipment

The boxes give the bats a safe place to live and we hope it will encourage them to breed.

Planted wildflower meadows

Wildflowers not only look beautiful but also attract a range of insects which pollinate other plants.

Created a fish-free channel

Using silt from the lake, we created a channel which fish can't access. It means tadpoles and insect larvae can live there without being eaten.

Relocated the fishing container from the water's edge

This means vehicles no longer have to drive near the water.



What's next

Peabody is working with RSK Wilding, independent expert ecologists, who are monitoring the different species of insects, plants and animals at the lake. They will look at the habitats in the area, examine the quality of the water and let us know how the wildlife are getting on. They will also give us their thoughts on what more we can do to encourage nature to thrive at the lake. The monitoring will finish in spring 2024, and we will share the interim findings later this year.