



Hugh Pearl (Land Drainage) Limited

New Farm
Bobbingworth
Ongar
Essex CM5 0DJ

Case Study

Site Netteswell Pond - Harlow
Client Harlow Town Council
Contract Reed removal & Desilting
Duration 3 Months

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Netteswell Pond is a large body of water approximately 0.5 of a Hectare located off 2nd Avenue in the centre of the town of Harlow. It is fed predominately from an incoming stream but also potentially from an underground spring located somewhere deep underneath. Although we have been unable to find much history on the pond it is likely it was a small natural pond expanded to its current size when the town was developed after WW2. The pond is currently maintained under a joint venture with Harlow Town Council and the Stort Angling Society. Netteswell is a popular fishing location with locals and has various species including Bream, Roach, Rudd and some large Carp.

The main driving force behind these works was the removal of an invasive species of reeds which had been accidentally planted previously and to remove deep deposits of silt. Earlier in 2018 a large oxygen drop had been detected within the pond causing the death of thousands of fish. This oxygen drop was found to be a combination of incredibly hot weather and large deposits of decomposing material in the base of the lake causing the oxygen to drop to dangerous levels. After this, the decision was made to remove such materials in order to stop this happening again in future.



The project had various phases and many challenges were faced in order to get the job complete. The first problem encountered was the draining of the lake for the resident fish to be caught and temporarily removed while the works were carried out. When the project started the area was hit by unseasonably heavy rains, this meant as fast as the lake was being pumped out it was quickly refilling by surface run off and the incoming stream. To counter this two six inch silent pumps were bought in order to empty the lake, when the level was sufficiently drained a single pump was kept running in order to maintain the water at a satisfactory level for the works to be carried out.

Another problem encountered that was linked to the lake drainage was public interference from residents and local fisherman. Under guidance from the Environment Agency and the company tasked with catching the fish (Framlingham Fisheries) the lake had to be drained to an extent that the wildlife could be either netted or electro stunned. Despite Harlow Council sending out information and reassuring residents that the drainage was necessary and not harmful to the fish our teams still encountered hostility from local people,



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pumps being turned off and sabotage of equipment. However, through a campaign of spreading information, council talks and face to face interaction with the public we were able to overcome this problem and carry on with the works.

With the heavy rains encountered during the project the decision was made to bring in low ground pressure machinery by the way of tracked dumpers in order to minimise bankside damage and with a higher ride height enabled them to enter the lake to be loaded. Coupled with a large long reach excavator plus two 14 tonne 360 machines it enabled us to

efficiently and methodically remove the materials.

Excavated materials were to be deposited in 3 locations in the vicinity of the pond behind an earth bund to contain the silt & mud. These 3 areas were quickly identified as not having the capacity to store all the excavated materials, so another spoil site had to be sought. After negotiations from Harlow Town Council and a local farmer a much larger site was found for the material to be deposited. This however brought its own set of challenges as the materials would have to be transported off site. Using a local agricultural contractor, we were able to move materials using large tractors and trailers to the tipping area and a local road sweeping firm to ensure the highways were kept safe for motorists.

Once all materials were removed the site was made good using the existing machinery and fish released back into the pond once the water levels had reached a suitable level. Silt deposit areas were fenced off and signs placed warning of the dangers of the wet materials.



The project was completed on time, on budget and to the satisfaction of the client.



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