



# Creating a pond

## Linnvale Primary School

Linnvale Primary School created an amazing pond as part of their LEAF activities. They faced barriers along the way but hopefully the story of how they overcame them will help inspire you to create one yourself!



**Barrier:** Initial concerns from senior management about safety.  
**Solution:** We found out whether any other schools within our local authority had a pond already (only one at the time). We then asked an expert in to give advice (Mark from the Woodland Trust who had installed the pond in the other school). We used this information to discuss with the school management team about possible safety issues. We discussed things that had been put in place to reduce risk at the other school and how we could adapt to suit our own site to make it safe. They were reassured and gave us the go ahead to move the idea forward.

**Barrier:** Obtaining permission from our local authority to put a pond in.

**Solution:** We spoke to the Education Support Officer from Learning Estate & Resources at our local council (West Dunbartonshire) to find out what we needed to do to get permission. We then followed the checklist we were given and contacted the council's health and safety officer to organise a site visit. The visit was carried out and after initial approval, a risk assessment was submitted. Further discussion and modifications were put in place, and it was passed.

**Barrier:** Where to put the pond and what size etc.

**Solution:** Further advice was sought from the Woodland Trust and clarification of what they would be able to do and what we would need to do ourselves. They also gave us an approximate cost for the work they would carry out.

**Barrier:** Funding for the project

**Solution:** We spoke to our senior management team about what funds were available and discussed how we could raise more. We raised extra funds through a gift from our Parent Council, fundraising activities by pupils and we also approached local businesses such as ASDA who gave us a hose, wildflowers and other items.

**Barrier:** Digging out the pond

**Solution:** This was a HUGE issue! Prior to commencing with the project we had approached builders that were meant to be working in the school grounds until the summer but unfortunately, they were taken off site unexpectedly and did not return. We did not have the money to hire a driver and digger and it was not feasible to do manually. Eventually after trying many avenues we managed to secure a local building firm who very kindly did the work for us free of charge. We took photos to say a big thank you to the digger driver.





There was a lot of mud and rubble left over from the hole. We could not afford to get this removed so we covered the mounds in grass seed and wildflowers.



**Barrier:** We needed to fill the pond with water before the liner was damaged, ideally with rainwater. (The pond liner can be damaged from exposure from the sun. We also have a lot of vandalism in our outdoor space so we were very anxious when we then had an unprecedented dry spell for weeks after the pond was dug out and the liner put in that the liner would crack or it would be intentionally damaged.)

**Solution:** We bought water butts and a solution that you can add to tap water and it will remove the harmful chemicals. The tap water had to be left for 24 hours for the solution to work and our outside tap was a considerable distance from our site. It was a long and laborious process. After weeks of no rain and not getting very far with our manual additions of the treated water, we contacted our local fire brigade and asked them to come and fill it for us, which they kindly did. We added some of the solution that kills the chemicals to the pond and after a week or two we tested the water with a kit we bought, and it was okay.



**Barrier:** Vegetation for wildlife

**Solution:** We were concerned that we did not have any plants in the pond and didn't know when we should add them. We contacted the Woodland Trust again and our local council's biodiversity officer. They came out after examining the pond and surrounding area (we had planted trees, added wildflowers and let the grass grow wild.) They said that we already had lots of life in the pond and the time to add plants would be in the spring. Hence maintenance is a one of our ongoing aims for LEAF for next year.

**Barrier:** Preventing access of young children and potential vandals.

**Solution:** We added a fence around the area to protect our sapling trees from vandals pulling them out and to act as barrier between the nursery children and the pond. The fence is gated and locked so that pupils can't just run over and access the pond without supervision. We also put in a 'jaggy hedge' behind the fence - again to deter vandals and children climbing over.



We held a 'Picnic by the Pond' open afternoon for parents and carers to show them all the work we have been doing outside and to talk to them about our learning. We are very proud of our fantastic new pond.

