

Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund

Rock Environmental Treatment Scheme (RockETS)

Annual Report 2006/07



Foreword

This second RockETS annual report covers the 2006/07 financial year.

Following the success of the first year of RockETS in 2005/06, communities in Devon have continued to enjoy the benefits of grants from the Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund.

RockETS has benefited communities in Devon with grants for parish councils, community groups, sports clubs and private trusts. These grants have been used for diverse projects including the provision of new windows for church rooms, improvements to a children's play area, the restoration of an ancient wall and schemes to improve wildlife habitats, all of which have improved community facilities and the environment throughout Devon.

Uncertainty over the future of RockETS was mentioned in last year's annual report however DEFRA has recently confirmed that the grants scheme will run again in 2007/08. It is the success of previous grant allocations which has ensured the future of RockETS for at least one more year.

This report describes the projects in Devon, including Torbay, Plymouth and Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks, which were funded in 2006/07. Again it is clear how beneficial the RockETS scheme has been in improving facilities and the environment in communities affected by aggregate extraction.

The wide diversity of schemes for which RockETS awards were made is an interesting reflection on the communities given grants and the perception of their needs and reflects varying approaches towards compensating communities for disadvantage they may have experienced as a result of aggregate extraction, despite the benefits of employment.

I would like to thank those who have worked to implement the RockETS scheme, those communities that have made applications, and DEFRA for enabling Devon to administer it. I hope that RockETS will continue to be funded and that Devon will continue to deal with its administration.

Councillor Margaret Rogers
Environment Portfolio Holder
Devon County Council



Introduction

The extraction, transport and eventual disposal of aggregates (sand, gravel and crushed rock) have significant environmental effects. In response to this Government established the Aggregates Levy in 2002. This scheme is designed to reduce the demand for primary aggregates by increasing their cost and improving the viability of recycled and secondary aggregates in order that the environmental impacts of the aggregate industry are reduced. The Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) aims to reduce the environmental impact per tonne of aggregate extraction and helps to stimulate the market for recycled and secondary material. It has four main objectives:

Minimising the demand for primary aggregates;
Promoting the environmental friendly extraction of transport;
Addressing the environmental impacts of past aggregation extraction; and
Compensating local communities for the impacts of aggregate extraction.

The ALSF for Devon was launched in June 2005 under the banner of Rock Environmental Treatment Scheme (RockETS). This scheme delegates central government funding to projects within Devon to compensate for the impacts of aggregates extraction. The area for RockETS includes the area administered by Devon County Council together with Torbay, Plymouth and Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks.

The minerals industry is vital to Devon's economy. Within Devon there are some 3000 hectares of land with planning permission to extract minerals. The minerals industry also accounts for a significant 3.46% of the county workforce in the primary industries. Many of these jobs are in rural areas where other forms of employment are limited. However, quarrying can also negatively affect communities through noise pollution and haulage congestion.

The rural nature of much aggregate extraction can cause environmental conflicts. Devon enjoys large areas of statutory designations, including two World Heritage Sites, two National Parks and five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as well as 210 Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Although quarrying can create habitats for indigenous wildlife it can also destroy habitats and scar the landscape.



RockETS in 2006/07

Following the success of the first year of RockETS which saw 13 applications receiving funding, in 2006/07 Devon County Council received 22 grant applications for a total of £531,404. Of these, 12 were successful, each receiving a proportion of the £112,000 total grant. Devon County Council retained 7% of the total awarded which covered administration costs of the RockETS programme. As in the first year of RockETS successful applications came from across the County.

Marketing of RockETS

Due to the specialist nature of RockETS, likely applicants have again been targeted directly. This proactive approach has been economically beneficial in terms of directing resources to the most suitable schemes.

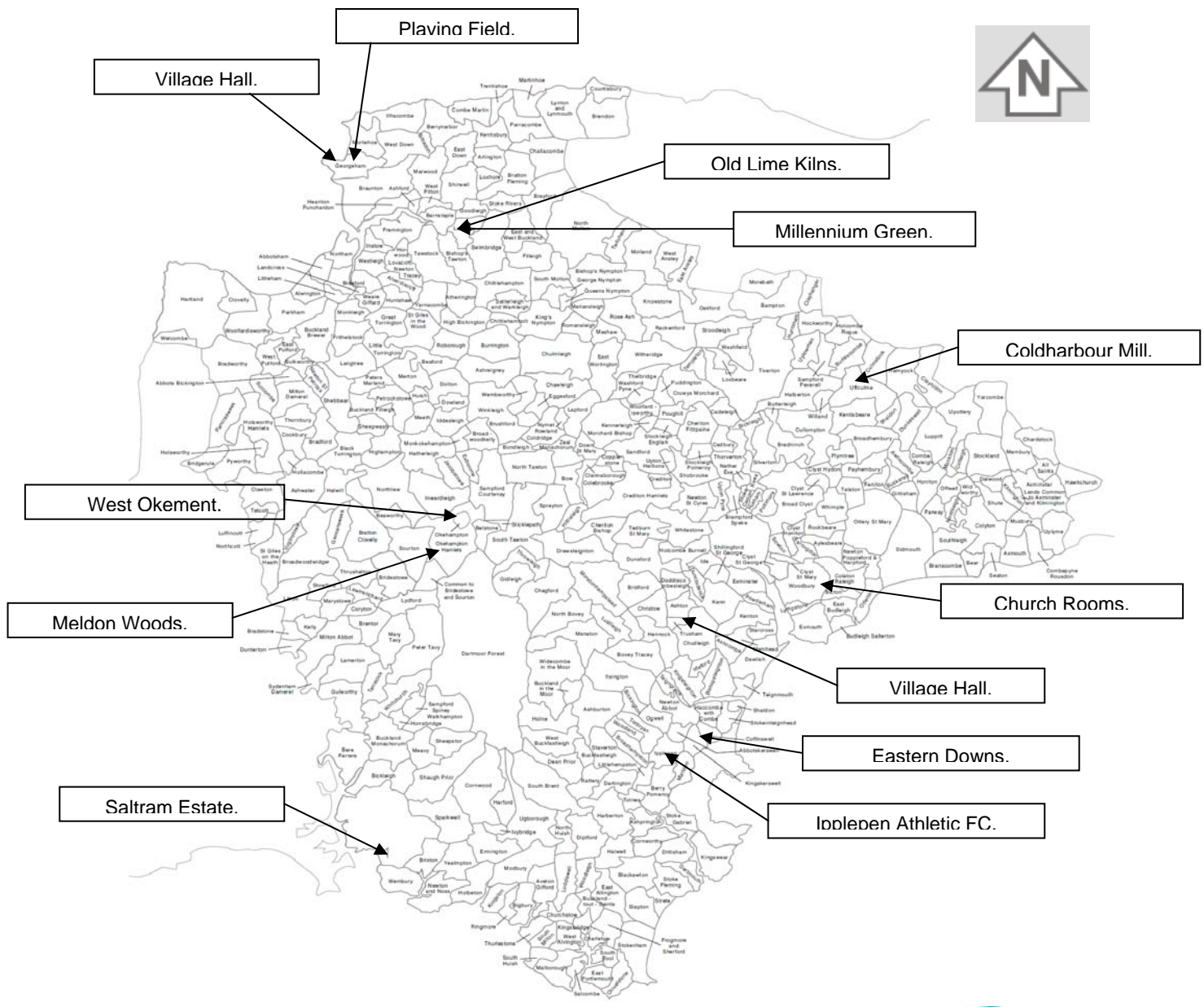
All successful applicants were requested to state RockETS and DEFRA support in all publicity, including press releases, interpretation panels, website information, parish council newsletters and opening ceremonies.



Approved Schemes 2006/07

Site Address	Project	Total Cost	Amount Requested	Amount Granted	Amount Claimed
Eastern Downs, Kingskerswell	Ancient stone wall restoration, repairing gaps in wall and replacing gates	£20k+	£20,000	£10,000	£9,900
Playing Field, Georgeham	Re-surfacing children's play area & providing new play equipment	£16,030	£12,825	£5,000	£5,000
Ipplepen Athletic FC, Moor Road, Ipplepen	Conservatory extension to clubhouse, to provide community access	£28,897	£14,950	£9,500	£9,500
Landkey Millennium Green, Landkey, Barnstaple	Enhancements to the green	£6,080	£2,580	£2,580	£2,547.83
Meldon Woods, Meldon, Okehampton	Environmental enhancement of, and tree planting at, Meldon Lay-by	£2,500	£2,000	£2,000	£1,600
Coldharbour Mill, Uffculme	Memory Wood - tree planting and bench installation	£6,024	£1,000	£1,000	£596.90
Trusham Village Hall	Village Hall windows replacement	£5,625	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000
Rosemerry House Okehampton	West Bridge Weir & Leat Restoration - to manage river to encourage local wildlife and vegetation to return, to repair weir and restore old unused leat	£87,623	£17,223	£17,223	£17,223
Church Rooms, Woodbury	Restoration of Church Rooms	£11,000	£8,800	£8,800	£8,800
Georgeham Village Hall	Provision of disabled toilet & improvement of existing gent's toilet	£30,000	£20,000	£15,000	£15,000
Old Lime Kilns, Landkey	Exploratory works and interpretation of lime kilns	£25k+	£20,000	£20,000	£19,998.51
Saltram Estate, Plymstock	Upgrading of paths and roads at Saltram trails	£292,625	£8,000	£8,000	£7,978.25
TOTALS		£531,404	£132,378	£104,103	£103,144.50

Location of approved schemes 2006/07



Eastern Down, Kingskerswell

Summary

Project:	Ancient stone wall restoration and gate replacement.
Total project cost:	£20,000+
Amount requested:	£20,000
Amount granted:	£10,000
Amount claimed:	£9,900
Related Minerals Site:	Stoneycombe Quarry

Stoneycombe Quarry is a major limestone site which has operated under various permissions since the 1940s. It lies adjacent to Eastern Down.

Eastern Down is an important site of unimproved Devonian limestone which has been designated as County Wildlife Site. As the area has not been grazed for over 60 years, natural vegetation predominates. The site was given to Kingskerswell Parish Council by a local landlord and is now managed by a local committee. Due to its attractive wildlife, walking on Eastern Down has increased in recent years and the dilapidated condition of the ancient wall detracts from the appearance of local woodland.

Kingskerswell Parish Council made the application to allow the restoration of the ancient wall dividing East and West Down. Overgrown vegetation is damaging the wall which has significant gaps in its fabric.

A grant of £10,000 was awarded and the project was completed in spring 2007.



The ancient wall prior to restoration

The restored gateway



Georgeham Playing Fields

Project:	Re-surfacing of children's play area.
Total project cost:	£16,030
Amount requested:	£12,825
Amount granted:	£5,000
Amount claimed:	£5,000
Related minerals site:	Vyse Quarry

Vyse Quarry is a sandstone quarry on the edge of North Buckland which produces aggregates and materials for concrete production. Haulage vehicles use local roads through Georgeham to access the site.

Georgeham Parish Council provides a children's play area which required resurfacing. New playground equipment including climbing frames, swings and see-saws was also required to modernise the site. The facility is particularly important to create a safe area away from the highway where children can play. The highway has experienced significant increases in traffic resulting from the working of Vyse Quarry. The facility is well used by the children of the community and the grant was needed to maintain this facility for future use.

A grant of £5000 was awarded and the project was completed in September 2006.



The resurfaced play area provides a safe place for children to play

New play equipment and benches in play area



Ipplepen Athletic Football Club

Project:	Conservatory and car park extension.
Total project cost:	£28,897
Amount requested:	£14,950
Amount granted:	£9,500
Amount claimed:	£9,500
Related minerals site:	Stoneycombe Quarry

Ipplepen is situated within 2km of Stoneycombe, a limestone quarry on the edge of Kingsteignton. Operations at Stoneycombe involve blasting, crushing and screening to prepare the rock for sale. The site also has concrete production operations. Ipplepen is an attractive, vibrant village which retains its rural charm. A particular feature is its 14th century church.

The Parish Council leases the site to Ipplepen Football Club. An extension to the clubhouse and car park was needed to improve a community facility which encourages participation in sport and promotes a healthy lifestyle. The heavy use of local unclassified roads by haulage vehicles renders them unsafe. The project demonstrates the close relationship between minerals extraction and the local community which is seen in Ipplepen.

A grant of £9,500 was awarded and the project was completed in August 2006.



The clubhouse prior to the extension



The completed extension, paving and fencing

Landkey Millennium Green

Project:	Green enhancement scheme.
Total project cost:	£6,080
Amount requested:	£2,580
Amount granted:	£2,580
Amount claimed:	£2,547.83
Related minerals site:	Venn

Venn Quarry lies within Carboniferous age sandstones and shales which show evidence of marine deposition. The quarry was mothballed in 2006 but it formerly produced aggregates for the construction industry, coated roadstone and for use in the on-site concrete plant.

Landkey is situated approximately 3 miles from Barnstaple and is known for the discovery of the mazzard fruit in the early 1900s which had been in danger of extinction. The Millennium Green project has incorporated a mazzard tree orchard to recognise the significance of this fruit in the heritage of the village.

Increases in traffic as a result of the quarrying at Venn have been felt in Landkey. The RockETS grant allows the continuation of the Millennium Green project. Work to the Millennium Green included path and access improvements to increase disabled access. Information boards referring to the quarry and the village also identify the importance of the quarry to the life of the village.

A grant of £2,580 was awarded and the project was completed in March 2007.



A view of the green along one of the paths improved for safety using RockETS funding

A view of the orchard within the Millennium Green



Meldon Woods, Meldon, Okehampton

Project:	Meldon lay-by environmental enhancement.
Total project cost:	£2,500
Amount requested:	£2,000
Amount granted:	£2,000
Amount claimed:	£1,600
Related minerals site:	Meldon Quarry

Meldon Quarry near Okehampton is a source of hornfels, a basic, micro-granular igneous rock which is used as high quality roadstone and railway ballast.

Meldon Wood is an area of rural beech woodland which displays attractive carpets of bluebells in the spring. It is located close to the A30 in the parish of Okehampton Hamlets. Nearby Meldon Quarry uses the B3260 for access through the woods while haulage vehicles frequently used a large lay-by to park. This was compacting soil in the lay-by, creating a litter problem and was harming the tree within it. Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council submitted a RockETS application to improve this area.

The enhancement scheme has created an attractive grass area surrounding the tree which has been separated from a new passing place with a line of boulders. The former lay-by has also been planted with saplings to improve the ecology of the area. The operators of the quarry have provided an alternative rest place for drivers within the quarry.

A grant of £2,000 was awarded and the project was completed in January 2007.



The lay-by prior to work

The lay-by newly planted and returned to nature



Coldharbour Mill, Uffculme

Project:	Memory Wood tree planting and bench installation.
Total project cost:	£6,024
Amount requested:	£1,000
Amount granted:	£1,000
Amount claimed:	£596.90
Related minerals site:	Hillhead Quarry

Hillhead Quarry works Triassic Budleigh Salterton Pebble Beds which comprise rounded pebbles in a dark-red sand and silt matrix. The quarry produces high quality sand and gravel and coarse aggregates for use in construction, concrete production and road building.

Coldharbour Mill is a trust-run historic spinning mill in the village of Uffculme. It opened as a museum in the early 1980s and continues to produce knitting yarn on its period machinery. The mill experiences continuous background noise and dust as a result of operations at nearby Hillhead Quarry and so Memory Wood was recently planted adjacent to the mill as a tranquil area for locals to relax in. The RockETS application has allowed the provision of two benches and tree information boards to improve the wood as a destination for short walks.

A grant of £1,000 was awarded and the project was completed in July 2006.



The historic setting of Coldharbour Mill

The benches provided by the RockETS grant



Trusham Village Hall

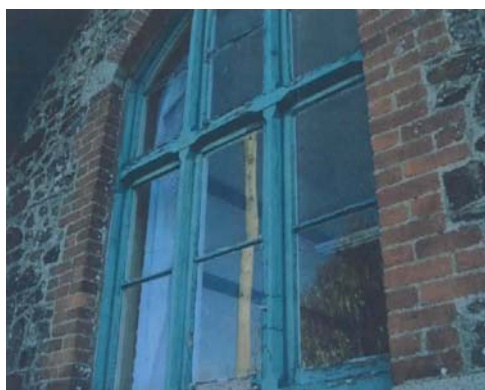
Project:	Village hall window replacement.
Total project cost:	£5,625
Amount requested:	£5,000
Amount granted:	£5,000
Amount claimed:	£5,000
Related minerals site:	Trusham

Trusham Quarry lies about 1km to the south-west of Trusham village and comprises the two sites of Trusham and Old Trusham Quarry. The quarries work two dolerite intrusions into Lower Carboniferous black shales. Rock is removed from the quarry face, crushed and screened and the majority is used in the manufacture of coated roadstone and aggregate.

Trusham village is situated in the Teign Valley and the 13th century Norman Church and the village hall are within the designated Trusham Conservation Area. The working at Trusham Quarry produces dust and noise pollution in the village, particularly resulting from vehicle reversing alarms, and quarry traffic often deposits mud on the highway.

The RockETS grant to the Trusham Village Hall Management committee has allowed the replacement of the eastern and western arched windows of the village hall. These were in need of repair due to the rotting of timbers and the resultant draughtiness which were a particular problem in winter. This had limited the use of the hall. There were also safety concerns regarding falling timber and glass. The replacement of the windows removed these safety concerns and will improve the use of the hall by the community.

A grant of £5,000 was awarded and the project was completed in February 2007.



The Village Hall window prior to restoration



The new Village Hall window

Rosemerry House, Market Street, Okehampton

Project:	West Bridge Weir and leat restoration.
Total project cost:	£87,623
Amount requested:	£17,223
Amount granted:	£17,223
Amount claimed:	£17,223
Related minerals site:	Knowle and Meldon

Knowle Quarry lies 1km north of Okehampton and works two bands of sandstone within shale sequences. Rock is removed from the quarry by hydraulic excavator and is used to supply bulk aggregate to the local market. Meldon Quarry is a source of hornfels which is used for railway ballast and in road surfacing.

Okehampton is a flourishing market town on the West Okement river within easy reach of Dartmoor. The two quarries are within 7km of the town and so affect the local environment; vehicles accessing the quarry add to road congestion, quarry operations produce dust and noise and the quarries affect local views. Discharge of water into the West Okement river may also affect wildlife.

The West Okement Improvement Group applied for a grant to undertake work on an 800m stretch of the West Okement, including West Bridge Weir and leat in Market Street. Works undertaken include river bank management, weir repairs, and a fish enhancement scheme. These works aim to attract spawning salmon and trout, create bird habitats and improve the aesthetics of the area to divert attention from a sewage pipe. The scheme improves the watercourse and the environmental understanding of the local community and is part of a wider project for the East and West Okement rivers.

A grant of £17,223 was awarded and this phase of the project was completed in February 2007.



Weir prior to clearance work

Water freely running over the weir as a result of work funded by RocketS



Church Rooms, Woodbury

Project:	Restoration of Church Rooms.
Total project cost:	£11,000
Amount requested:	£8,800
Amount granted:	£8,800
Amount claimed:	£8,800
Related minerals site:	Blackhill Quarry

Blackhill Quarry lies on the Western side of Woodbury Common adjacent to the B3180 and works the Budleigh Salterton Pebble Beds. Material is removed from the quarry face by hydraulic excavation and then washed. The resultant products are sand and coarse aggregates of various sizes and grades.

Woodbury takes its name from the earthworks known as Woodbury Castle on the ridge to the east of the village. The church of St Swithin, with which the Church Rooms are associated, was rebuilt and reconsecrated in the 15th century. The town experiences high levels of traffic associated with the transportation of material from Blackhill Quarry and the restoration of the church rooms partly funded by a RockETS grant will go some way to mitigating against this impact.

The grade 2 listed Church Rooms within the Woodbury Conservation Area were in need of repair particularly in respect of improving the damp-proofing of the building. Work to the meeting room, kitchen, toilet, roof and the cob and stone wall was also undertaken. This will increase the safety and longevity of the building as well as improving disabled access and the aesthetics of the building. The subsequent increase in community use will ensure its economic viability.

A grant of £8,800 was awarded and this phase of the project was completed in March 2007.



The restored church rooms at the opening event



The new kitchen and skylight

Georgeham Village Hall

Project:	WC improvements.
Total project cost:	£30,000
Amount requested:	£20,000
Amount granted:	£15,000
Amount claimed:	£15,000
Related minerals site:	Vyse Quarry

Vyse Quarry lies within the red and brown sandstone shale of the Upper Devonian sandstones. The quarry has been unworked since the 1980s. When worked, the site produced aggregate and concrete products.

Georgeham is situated approximately 1km east of Croyde and 3km north-west of Braunton. The village is compact and has retained its character despite growth in the 1970s and 1980s. Its coastal location is an important tourist attraction for the village. Although the quarry is currently unworked, noise, dust and lorry movements in the past have had negative impacts on Georgeham. The intrusive appearance of the site continues to scar the local landscape to some extent.

The provision of new disabled toilet facilities and the improvement of the existing toilet facilities is part of an extension to the village hall being organised by the Georgeham Village Hall Trustees. The RocketS grant allows the building to meet current accessibility legislation and will benefit the local community. It also improves the appearance of the village hall for locals and visitors alike and demonstrates the important historic link between the quarry industry and the village.

A grant of £15,000 was awarded and this phase of the project ongoing in spring 2007.



The rear of Georgeham Village Hall prior to the construction of the extension

Progress on the extension for the WC underway by the end of 2006



Old Lime Kilns, Landkey

Project:	Exploratory works and interpretation of lime kilns.
Total project cost:	£50,000+
Amount requested:	£20,000
Amount granted:	£20,000
Amount claimed:	£19,998.51
Related minerals site:	Venn Quarry

Venn Quarry lies within Carboniferous age sandstones and shales which show evidence of marine deposition. The quarry was mothballed in 2006 but it formerly produced aggregates for the construction industry, coated roadstone and for use in the on-site concrete plant.

Landkey is situated approximately 3 miles from Barnstaple and is known for the discovery of the mazzard fruit in the early 1900s which had been in danger of extinction. The lime kilns produced quick lime for use in agriculture and as a mortar. Venn Quarry and Landkey have been linked through aggregate extraction for many years with the quarry providing employment for locals. However, the landscape effects and transportation of stone through the village have had negative impacts on the village.

This project restores an important industrial landmark and, in conjunction with the provision of interpretation boards, will explain the interaction of Landkey and Venn Quarry. Improved access from the Tarka trail also facilitates disabled access.

A grant of £20,000 was awarded and this phase of the project was completed in March 2007.



An example of one of the historic lime kilns

Saltram Estate, Plymstock

Project:	Upgrading paths and roads at Saltram Trails.
Total project cost:	£292,625
Amount requested:	£8,000
Amount granted:	£8,000
Amount claimed:	£7,978.25
Related minerals site:	Moorcroft Quarry, Plymouth

Moorcroft Quarry is worked for mid and late Devonian limestone. Stone extracted from the site is used in asphalt and roadstone, concrete production and for construction.

Saltram House is a National Trust Georgian property and estate on the outskirts of Plymouth. Situated high above the River Plym, its gardens and trails provide important green space for the city and surrounds. Noise, dust and the visual intrusion of the quarry all have impacts on the local area and the traffic generated by the site has safety implications for road users.

Sustrans applied for a RockETS grant to undertake work on local tracks. Paths and roads have been upgraded to cycle route status to create a network of short and medium length circular routes complete with seating, signage and information boards. This is a safe use for reclaimed land which provides traffic-free trails. Trail boarders are also planted to screen quarry activity and the use of poor quality quarry material for track surfacing reduces the scale of spoil heaps. These trails also provide wheelchair friendly routes.

A grant of £8,000 was awarded and this phase of the project was completed in March 2007.



A trail before the RockETS grant

Resurfaced trail after the RockETS grant

