

RELAXING CALM IN BUSY CITY

The Commonwealth Park on the island of Gibraltar includes a publicly accessible grassed area of 4,000 square metres – a landscape first for the country – on which local people can relax, just as they do in parks and public gardens throughout the world. Flanked by the city walls with a range of water features it offers an oasis of calm from a hectic and busy city.

The soil for the project was produced from spoil from various sites within Gibraltar with material screened and the earth from the process being mixed with nutrients to create a soil which would support the trees and shrubs – as well as form a substrate for the turf.

Everything was done to the specification devised by Tim O'Hare Associates – who are pre-eminent in the field – to ensure that planting could cope with the local conditions.

Once the ground was prepared, UK-based turf producer Inturf delivered and installed turf to a specification, which would both withstand the anticipated pounding the sward would receive, while delivering the aesthetic appeal sought in the design concept. “As well as producing the turf at our Yorkshire turf farm the challenge was to deliver it field fresh to Gibraltar – four days drive away,” says Alex Edwards, Inturf Joint Managing Director. “To help the turf establish in such challenging conditions we incorporated TerraCottem into the substrate to improve water retention and the accessibility of nutrients in the soil.”

Once the turf had established a trained team of groundsmen were employed to maintain the park and the general public started to enjoy the significant benefits of using the only ‘green open space’ on The Rock. Outdoor events, government receptions, picnics and even cinema screenings have been a huge success, which has brought the people of Gibraltar even closer together. Following the positive feedback the next park is already at the planning stage.

