

Press Release

10 March 2020

City reservoirs receive funding boost to become health and wellbeing hubs

Two city centre reservoirs, which are currently undergoing major restoration work, have secured a financial boost to support the ecological resilience of the site whilst reconnecting people with the well-loved area creating a future hub for health and wellbeing in the capital.

Lisvane and Llanishen reservoirs, which are the responsibility of Welsh Water, have been successful in securing a £930,000 grant from the Welsh Government's 'Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being (ENRaW)' Scheme. The grant supports projects that improves the quality of the local environment and biodiversity, developing resilient ecological networks, whilst broadening access to sustainable green infrastructure linked to the wider population's well-being.

Since taking over the site in 2016, Welsh Water has been engaging with the local community to understand their views regarding opening the site to the public in the future. Recognising the potential the reservoirs offer for the environment and wellbeing, the not for profit utility company partnered with the Reservoir Action Group (RAG), Cardiff Council and Cardiff and Vale University Health Board to apply for the grant.

The site is a unique natural resource of significant ecological value. Located in the residential area north Cardiff it encompasses two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and has a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The Lisvane & Llanishen ENRaW project has been developed through an innovative partnership which harnesses the expertise from 3 sectors: water utility, statutory and voluntary. The partnership will reconnect people with water and our beautiful environment; whilst maintaining, protecting and enhancing the ecological value of the site.

The formation of the partnership will allow Welsh Water to work in collaboration to enable natural resources and wellbeing, whilst protecting and enhancing biodiversity for the benefit of future generations.

The grant will enable the development of green infrastructure and the co-creation of a community engagement programme with volunteering, education and social prescribing strands. This includes creating conservation areas and a learning zone, installing foot paths, interpretation and bird hides to view the rich variety of wildfowl which reside at the reservoirs.

Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths, said: "This ENRaW funding will make a massive difference to the two reservoirs, boosting their biodiversity and enhancing their surrounding environment. Not only will the local community be able to enjoy and learn about the wonderful nature around them, helping them improve their own

health and wellbeing, but they will also be able to take responsibility themselves and engage with the sites through activities and volunteering opportunities.”

Peter Perry, Welsh Water’s Managing Director said: “We are delighted to have been successful in securing the ENRaW funding. By harnessing the enthusiasm and commitment of the local community, the funding will support the development of some key facilities, that maximize recreational opportunities to meet the health and well-being needs of the people of Cardiff and south Wales; whilst also protecting and enhancing the special features, ecology and biodiversity of the site.”

Richard Cowie, Chairman of the Reservoir Action Group said: “As a group that battled for over 15 years to save the reservoirs from a housing development, we are delighted to be working in partnership with Welsh Water to ensure that this historically and ecologically important site is enjoyed and protected for generations to come”.

Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport, Cllr Peter Bradbury, said: “Bringing the reservoirs back into use will create a real asset for the people of Cardiff and this funding is an important step on that road. Once work is completed the reservoirs will provide significant health and wellbeing opportunities for residents and importantly, by linking up with other local green spaces, they will also give a real boost to wildlife and biodiversity in Cardiff.”

Cheryl Williams, Principal Health Promotion Specialist at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board said: “Cardiff and Vale University Health Board is very pleased to be a part of this exciting project which focusses on regenerating an important community facility. A range of community groups will be able to use the reservoirs and surrounding paths for walking, watersports and enjoying the natural environment and this will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the health and well-being of individuals. Local residents will be able to use this facility as part of a social prescribing approach to health improvement, with links being made across a number of existing projects.”

To ensure the benefits of the facilities that the funding will support are fully realised, the partnership will be collaborating with a wide range of local groups and organisations in and around the capital to develop links between the community and the reservoir site. The aim is to engage as many people as possible in activities or volunteering opportunities at the site ; learning about the ecology and to help care for the precious site in the future.

Since 2016, Welsh Water has been working to restore the reservoirs while also engaging with the local community to help shape plans for public access and recreation in the future. A variety of suggestions have been received for the kinds of activities people would like to see offered at the site in in future, which include water sports – especially sailing, canoeing, kayaking, open water swimming; fishing; walking and running routes, dog walking and a café. The company aims to finalise its proposals for the site in the Spring.

Any organisations, community groups or charities which would be interested in finding out more about the partnership opportunities which could be available at the site should contact Welsh Water at lisvaneandllanishen@dwrcymru.com

Ends

Enquiries to Welsh Water press office on 01443 452452

Notes to Editors:

Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being (ENRaW) Scheme: ENRaW grants supports projects that make improvements in residential areas by delivering benefits for people, businesses and their communities, following three themes of action:

1. Developing, regenerating and broadening access to sustainable green infrastructure through nature-based solutions;
2. Improving the quality of the urban and rural built environment; and
3. Developing resilient ecological networks and nature-based solutions.

The Grant supports businesses, organisations and communities to work in collaboration under the umbrella of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

Lisvane & Llanishen ENRaW Partnership: Welsh Water is the lead ENRaW partner working with Cardiff City Council (CCC), Cardiff & Vale University Health Board (CVUHB) and Reservoir Action Group (RAG).

Welsh Water is the sixth largest of the ten regulated water and sewerage companies in England and Wales. It is a 'not-for-profit company' and does not have shareholders. Any financial surpluses are reinvested in the business for the benefit of customers.

The company operates 91 reservoirs varying in size from 2 acres to 1,026 acres. These include Visitor Attractions that are hubs for enjoyment, health and wellbeing. Welsh Water is developing proposals to enable Lisvane and Llanishen reservoirs site as an urban hub for health & wellbeing reconnecting people with water and the local environment, whilst maintaining, protecting and enhancing the ecological value of the site.

Cardiff City Council is the largest local authority in Wales and Cardiff is one of the fastest growing cities in Britain. CCC is committed to work with partners to: develop an ambitious Sport and Physical Activity Strategy to increase participation; promote active travel; protect and enhance Cardiff's parks, green space and usable open space; develop further the network of "Friends of" through a range of partnerships and programmes to maximise the social value of citizenship; and return sailing to Llanishen Reservoir.

Reservoir Action Group is a grass-roots community group with around 700 members. It was founded in 2001 to fight plans by an American owned company to build a large housing development at Llanishen Reservoir. Since the development plan was dropped RAG envisages becoming a "Friends of Lisvane & Llanishen Reservoirs" providing conservation volunteers to help with habitat management and others to assist in developing interpretative materials and helping to care for the site in general.

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board: Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (UHB) was established in October 2009 and is one of the largest NHS organisations in the UK. As a Health Board, they have a responsibility for around 475,000 people living in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. The Health Board works increasingly closely with partner Health Boards and Trusts across south Wales as well as local authority and third sector partners to provide a full range of health services for our local residents. CVUHB is working to strengthen the preventative agenda by improving the links between primary care and the community through the use of social prescribing approaches.

CVUHB is also a teaching Health Board with close links to Cardiff University, which boasts a high profile teaching, research and development role within the UK and abroad.