

PRESS RELEASE

20 July 2022

Southall Grand Union Canal Wellbeing Way project launching with information event

A £1 million two-year project to link together parks and green spaces in Southall via the Grand Union Canal will be launched on Monday with a canal-side information event taking place from 1pm-2.30pm at Havelock Green Space, Havelock Road/Isambard Road, Southall, UB2 4GF.

The event on **Monday 25 July** will be the start of a programme of engagement and workshops to encourage people to get involved in shaping what the future canal improvements will include, together with a proposed range of community wellbeing activities.

Partner organisations Canal & River Trust, Ealing Council and its Let's Go Southall programme, and housing association Catalyst will demonstrate a mindfulness session, together with a multi-faith blessing to launch and celebrate the project.

The Southall Wellbeing Way project was awarded £700,000 of Green and Resilient Spaces funding by the Mayor of London in March. The improvements will provide opportunities for Southall's community and visitors to lead more active lives and boost their wellbeing, while enhancing the biodiversity and climate resilience of the area.

The Southall Wellbeing Way will connect Spikes Bridge Park on the Grand Union Canal Paddington Arm to Glade Lane Canalside Park and the Hanwell Lock Flight. The route will also link Southall Recreation Ground, Bixley Field, Havelock Canalside space and Norwood Top Lock.

Local people will be empowered to step away from the urban streets and connect with nature. The funding will be used to integrate the canal with nearby green spaces and to carry out a series of enrichments, including waterside place-making, creating new habitats for wildlife, works to the towpath to improve the surface and allow better access to the canal, play and interpretation, flood resilience, and gardening and stewardship to allow nature and people to thrive.

Ros Daniels, Canal & River Trust regional director for London & South East, said: "In urban areas, perhaps more than anywhere else, canal towpaths provide breathing space and a chance

Canal & River Trust, National Waterways Museum Ellesmere Port, South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire

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to connect with nature. The Southall Wellbeing Way will encourage more people to get to know their local canal and enjoy the benefits of being by water.

“I’m delighted that with funding in place we are now able to start delivering this project and opening up this green and blue space to communities who may not have used it in the past and provide towpath improvements which will mean it is more accessible all year round.”

Councillor Peter Mason, leader of Ealing Council said: “Securing the future of our beautiful green spaces will always be a key commitment for the council, which is why I am delighted to have secured this funding to transform our canals and towpaths in Southall for the benefit of residents and local biodiversity.

“This project will link a section of the Grand Union Canal to a range of parks in Southall, meaning that local people will have easier and quicker access to vital green spaces and nature on their doorstep. High quality, accessible canals and towpaths are also really important networks for local people, particularly those using more active forms of travel.

“We are ensuring that Southall, and its residents get the investment and support that they deserve. Our ongoing partnership with the Canal & River Trust and Let’s Go Southall, which is empowering local communities, businesses and volunteers to make a real difference, is allowing us to do just that.

“We would also remind everyone to take care around water at all times and follow the guidance, particularly during the current heatwave.”

Councillor Deirdre Costigan, cabinet member for climate action said: “Cycling and walking are fantastic ways to get around, keep fit and build exercise into the daily routine - all whilst helping to reduce carbon emissions and fight the climate crisis, which has been brought into even sharper focus with the recent extreme temperatures.

“Like many, I discovered myself during lockdown how wonderful walking along the canal can be, full of wildlife, shady trees and gorgeous views. These significant improvements we have secured for the canal and towpath network in Southall will make it easier, quicker and more pleasant to move around the local area for residents, whether they are getting on a bike, going for a walk or just stepping out to enjoy the nature on their doorstep.

“The project will also protect and enhance our biodiversity in and along these canals and waterways, which I know is a really important local habitat and has significance on a London-wide level.”

Nicola Wheeler, Head of Community Investment for Catalyst, which is a subsidiary of the Peabody Group, said: “We are inviting local people to join us in shaping and delivering this fantastic project - whether it’s putting forward ideas for outdoor activities, helping us design the enhanced canal-side spaces or volunteering to take on a stewardship role in future. By working

together, we can maximise the results of our efforts now and secure the best possible long-term benefits for the community and the environment. Our launch event and forthcoming workshops are the perfect opportunity to find out more and get involved – so if you are interested in participating, please come along.”

Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy, Shirley Rodrigues said: “I’m delighted to see this fantastic project get under way. It will provide so many benefits to the local area, including enhancing climate resilience, improving access to nature which is beneficial for people’s health and wellbeing and providing a vital habitat for local wildlife.

“Southall Grand Union Canal Wellbeing Way is one of six large-scale projects across London funded by the Mayor’s Green and Resilient Spaces Fund. Each project will strengthen London’s climate resilience, increase biodiversity, improve access to green space and build green skills.

“As London experiences the impacts of climate change first-hand, it’s essential that we improve the quality of our green and blue spaces to ensure they help our city adapt to heatwaves and flooding.”

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Notes to editors

You can find out more about the Southall Wellbeing Way here

canalrivertrust.org.uk/southall-wellbeing-way

Canal & River Trust

The Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England & Wales. We believe waterways have the power to make a difference to people’s lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to make a difference to their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day.

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

Canal & River Trust and Ealing Council have been working together with Transport for London and other councils to improve the towpaths in the borough of Ealing and beyond for walking and cycling.

London Borough of Ealing

The council has three priorities:

Creating good jobs – returning good well-paid jobs to our borough and delivering the next generation of genuinely affordable homes.

Tackling the climate crisis – cleaning our air and ensuring the borough we build is sustainable.

Fighting inequality – that blights too many lives and disproportionately holds back all too many people from achieving their dreams and aspirations.

www.ealing.gov.uk

Let's Go Southall

Let's Go Southall is a local initiative to get the town of Southall more physically active. Funded by and driven by Ealing Council, we have brought together local community groups, businesses, faith groups, charities, volunteers and a variety of service providers to help people in Southall to get moving.

The overarching ambition behind the Let's Go Southall pilot is to change the relationship of Southall residents and stakeholders with their neighbourhood to encourage a universal increase in physical activity levels. Specifically, the programme will help those target groups who are currently doing less than 30 minutes physical activity a week.

- We want to make it easy for people to get active as part of their everyday lives and for the ways they get active to help them meet their basic needs.
- We want people to walk and cycle when they are making short journeys, instead of driving.
- We want to positively impact on the overall social and economic wellbeing of our target groups as well as on their levels of physical activity.
- We want to help people make Southall a better place to live.

www.letsgosouthall.org.uk

Catalyst

Catalyst recently joined together with Peabody. More than 160 years after it was established, Peabody is one of the oldest and largest not-for-profit housing associations in the UK, and following the recent merger is responsible for over 104,000 homes and 220,000 residents across London and the Home Counties. We have 20,000 care and support customers. Our purpose is to help people flourish, and we will do this by providing great homes and services, making a positive difference to the communities we serve, and providing an inclusive and inspiring place to work. Catalyst joined together with Peabody on 1 April, with Catalyst initially becoming a subsidiary of the Peabody group. The intention is to move to full integration by April 2023.

Greater London Authority Green and Resilient Spaces Fund

The Green and Resilient Spaces Fund is part of the London Recovery Board's Green New Deal Mission, one of nine missions jointly developed by the Mayor and London Councils to guide the capitals recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Green New Deal Mission aims to tackle the climate and ecological emergencies and improve air quality by doubling the size of London's green economy by 2030 to accelerate job creation for all. The Green and Resilient Spaces Fund projects should help deliver the Mission's four overarching objectives:

- improve London's natural environment, improve air quality and tackle the climate and ecological emergency
- promote and incentivise activities that sustain and grow London's green economy
- prioritise interventions reducing health inequalities and social injustices
- engage Londoners and businesses in the journey to become a zero pollution and greener city.

Greening London's public realm, improving access to and enhancing green spaces, and increasing the capital's resilience to the impacts of a changing climate are critical to achieving the aims of the Green New Deal Mission. In his manifesto, the Mayor also committed to bringing nature close to Londoners, to protect, restore and improve green spaces in the city, and set a goal for all Londoners to live within a ten-minute walk from green space.

The Green and Resilient Spaces Fund is supporting London boroughs and other organisations with responsibility for public spaces to contribute to a green recovery by delivering exemplar projects at scale.

In March 2022 the Mayor awarded £4m of funding to 19 Green & Resilient Space projects.

For more information please see: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/parks-green-spaces-and-biodiversity/green-and-resilient-spaces-fund>