

PRESS RELEASE

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New Welsh Harp Joint Vision launched

The Welsh Harp Strategy Group has published a new joint vision for Welsh Harp, also known as Brent Reservoir, one of London's most significant urban wild spaces. The vision includes steps to enhance biodiversity, reduce pollution and increase community access at the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Made up of representatives from the Canal & River Trust, the Greater London Authority, the London boroughs of Brent and Barnet, London Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency, Natural England and Thames21, the Welsh Harp Strategy Group was formed in 2022 to work together to create a Joint Vision for the future of the site as a place for wildlife and people.

National canal charity Canal & River Trust cares for the reservoir, while the London boroughs of Brent and Barnet share responsibility for the land around it.

To help inform the Vision, the group carried out a consultation asking people who use the reservoir to say what they love about the site, what worries them about it, and ideas for how it should change in the future.

The new Welsh Harp Joint Vision includes:

- The Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at the heart of the site will be properly cared for and maintained, carefully balancing people's access and the needs of wildlife;
- The conservation and enhancement of the SSSI, Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation and Local Nature Reserve will build upon the sustained efforts of diverse individuals and organisations;
- Recent 'joined-up' working by the various bodies and groups will be expanded to build a collaborative, open process of change and conservation;
- The Welsh Harp will be easily accessible to its surrounding communities and well-connected to both its local context, and to the wider city.
- Diverse people from across London will visit to connect with nature, access excellent sports, recreation and educational activities, come together as a community, and learn about the natural environment; and

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

E: press.office@canalrivertrust.org.uk **W:** www.canalrivertrust.org.uk **Twitter:** [@CanalRiverTrust](https://twitter.com/CanalRiverTrust)

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- Outstanding facilities will be available to host and promote these activities, managed and facilitated by a unified and accountable management structure.

Ros Daniels, the Canal & River Trust's director for London & South East, explains: "By working together, we can achieve so much more for the healthy and sustainable future of this incredibly important place for people and nature. The Welsh Harp and Brent Reservoir offer Londoners a unique mix of biodiversity, sport, recreation and heritage, with huge benefits for health and wellbeing. But, in face of climate change and other external pressures, sustained and strategic action is needed to conserve and enhance its environmental quality and ecological value, and role in climate and flood resilience.

"The new Welsh Harp Joint Vision sets out our aims for the future, including steps to enhance biodiversity, reduce pollution and increase community access. Some actions can be easily implemented in the short term, for example further rubbish clearance, while others are likely to take longer, as they depend on additional funding or staff."

Shirley Rodrigues, Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy, says: "The Welsh Harp is one of the capital's most important urban wildlife spaces and a vital way for Londoners to connect with nature.

"The Mayor and I welcome the new Welsh Harp Joint Vision. This collaborative approach will support the successful management of this outstanding open space as we work to build a better, greener London for all."

To find out more about plans for the Welsh Harp, go to <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/welsh-harp>

For more information on Canal & River Trust including how you can donate money or volunteer to support our work visit www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

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For further press information contact:

Alex Paterson, Communications & Campaigns Manager, Canal & River Trust Tel 07796 543319
email alex.paterson@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Debbie Walker, PR Consultant Tel 077486 40577 or email walker.debbie@sky.com

Notes to Editors

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 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

Also known as The Welsh Harp, Brent Reservoir was built in 1835 to supply water to the Grand Union Canal. Today, surrounded by buildings and fast roads, it provides valuable green open space for people and wildlife. It's a place for physical and mental health and wellbeing and for

connecting with nature. Brent Reservoir is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), with the open water and associated habitats supporting an unusually large selection of plants and wetland birds for an inner city reservoir, including great crested grebes and 16 protected plant species.