



PRESS RELEASE

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Wirral street tree programme launched

The first of more than a thousand trees has been planted in Birkenhead, as part of a project to enhance the transport links connecting local neighbourhoods to the Wirral Waters regeneration area.

Project funders Forestry Commission, BIS and Merseytravel joined Peel Holdings, Wirral BC and The Mersey Forest team to plant a Chinese Ginkgo tree at Ilchester Park to mark the beginning of the Wirral Green Streets project, with a community launch event to follow later this year.

The Mersey Forest is set to plant more than a thousand trees over the next three years as part of the project, which aims to green the transport routes leading to key employment areas.

Around 300 of those trees will be planted this year on streets including Laird Street, Duke Street and Hoylake Road. This follows consultation with local residents about which species they would like to see planted on their streets.

Paul Nolan, Director of the Mersey Forest, said: "Street trees provide many benefits, including helping urban areas adapt to projected climate change and providing much-needed shade in summer, as well as creating attractive routes for walking and cycling.

"The street trees that we will plant as part of this project will improve the appearance and image of Birkenhead and Wallasey, providing a green "gateway" to the opportunities at Wirral Waters.

“We are already planning a community launch event, which will be held in the summer to celebrate the greening of the local area.”

Stella Shiu, Chairman of the Samwa Group, Peel’s joint venture partner for the Peel International Trade Centre (ITC), said: “We are delighted with the tree planting project. We are also honoured that a number of Ginkho Biloboa trees - the national tree of China - are being planted as part of this project.”

The project is being funded by Merseytravel, through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund; Wirral Council; and by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) through the Forestry Commission's Newlands programme.

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Notes to editors:

Wirral Waters

Wirral Waters is a once in a lifetime opportunity to bring about the regeneration of Inner Wirral, creating over 20,000 new jobs and 14,000 new homes over a 30 year delivery timeframe. The vision is to create a new international city waterfront destination centred upon East Float, part of the Birkenhead and Wallasey docks.

Since the initial launch of the proposals, Peel Holdings have been working with Wirral MBC and stakeholders to set in place a shared regeneration strategy for Inner Wirral. The East Float Outline Planning Application was approved in August 2010. Wirral Waters has recently been granted Enterprise Zones Status, demonstrating the governments support for the proposals.

Peel are now working with delivery partners to begin delivering the early stages of development. This includes the International Trade Centre at West Float.

www.wirralwaters.co.uk

Newlands

Launched in the summer of 2003, Newlands is a unique scheme that has reclaimed large areas of derelict, underused and neglected (DUN) land across England’s Northwest. Newlands responds to local and regional economic and social needs,

tackling some of the worst areas of neglected land in the Northwest and transforming them into thriving, durable, community woodlands.

Newlands is a Forestry Commission scheme, previously funded by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and now funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) as part of a portfolio of ex-NWDA live projects transferred to BIS through regional development agency closure. Newlands also works with a wide partnership to make a real difference to local economies, communities and environments. Newlands is also helping to make the Northwest region an even more attractive place for investment; with projects based around key gateways to the region as well as close to major cities and conurbations.

www.newlandsproject.co.uk

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) is making a difference by supporting sustained growth and higher skills across the economy. Almost everything that BIS does – from investing in skills to making markets more dynamic and reducing regulation, and from promoting trade to boosting innovation and helping people start and grow a business – helps drive growth. www.bis.gov.uk

The Mersey Forest

The Mersey Forest is a growing network of woodlands and green spaces spread across Cheshire and Merseyside, which has been creating 'woodlands on your doorstep' for 20 years.

The Forest is one of the leading environmental regeneration initiatives in the North West. Through community and partnership working, we have planted more than 8 million trees - equivalent to five new trees for every person living within the Forest area.

The Forest helps our towns and cities adapt to climate change and has won the Brian Redhead Award for Environmental Sustainability, creates woodlands that 20% of local people visit at least once a week, and by improving the image of our towns and cities sets the scene for growth within the region's £98 billion economy.

We achieve all of this and more through our partnership of local authorities, landowners, the Forestry Commission, Natural England and businesses including United Utilities.

www.merseyforest.org.uk