



Press Release | 23 August 2014

Hundreds attend community celebration at Ilchester Park

Over four hundred people descended on Ilchester Park, near St James' Centre, today to attend a community celebration in Birkenhead.

The park was transformed for the day for "Ilchester Festival", with teepees and gazebos housing activities such as face painting, drumming workshops, flower-pot planting and arts and crafts.

There were singing and dancing performances from St James Harmony Choir and Espire Morris Dancers, and attendees were also given the opportunity to take part in the street parade that passed through the park in the afternoon.

The event was opened by local MP Frank Field, who thanked the event's organisers in his opening speech for their support: "Well done for beginning to form a new community in Birkenhead."

The event was organised by The Mersey Forest and North Birkenhead Development Trust, and was held to celebrate the transformation of Ilchester Park, a former housing demolition site, into a natural play area. This work is ongoing and is being funded by The Veolia Environmental Trust through the Landfill Communities Fund. It also celebrated local creativity through the street parade, which was put together by local businesses, community groups and residents.

The event follows weeks of natural play sessions organised by local charity Play Out, with the aim of reconnecting children with their local green spaces.

Local mother Emma said: “This is a fantastic event. My little girl has made a headdress and we’ve made a flowerpot for our garden, and it was all free!”

Paul Nolan, Director of The Mersey Forest, said: “It was fantastic to see so many families enjoying themselves during Ilchester Festival today.

“We hope that the changes taking place at Ilchester Park over the coming months will have a lasting impact on the local community and encourage people to take ownership of the park.”

The Mersey Forest is set to continue transforming Ilchester Park into a space where children can reconnect with nature. The completed site will feature wildflower meadows, improved pathways, and natural play equipment.

Paul Taylor, Executive Director at The Veolia Environmental Trust added: “

“We look forward to seeing the transformation of Ilchester Park. It is wonderful to see Landfill Communities Fund money being used in this way.”

ENDS

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Notes to editors:

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

Landfill Tax and the Landfill Communities Fund Any waste that is discarded which cannot be reused, reprocessed or recycled may ultimately be disposed of in a landfill site. To encourage Landfill site Operators (LOs) to re-use, recycle, recover more value from waste and use more environmentally friendly methods of waste disposal, Landfill Tax is charged on each tonne of waste sent to landfill.

LOs are able to redirect a small proportion of landfill tax liability (currently 5.1%) to support a wide range of community and environmental projects in the vicinity of their landfill sites through the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF). The LCF is regulated by ENTRUST on behalf of HM Revenue & Customs, and the projects are delivered by enrolled Environmental bodies (EBs).

Since its inception in 1996, over £1 billion has been spent on more than 32,000 projects across the UK. For further information, please visit www.entrust.org.uk or [see HMRC's general guide to Landfill Tax](#)

The Veolia Environmental Trust has been supporting community and environmental projects for over 16 years. Since we were established in 1997, Veolia has supported us by contributions of over £58 million to 1790 projects.

We have helped fund a diverse range of projects, including the repair of woodland footpaths, the renovation of community halls and the installation of playgrounds and play areas. For more information, or to find out how to apply for funding, visit our website www.veoliatrust.org.