

Official opening at Lochend Park this weekend

A new viewing platform and planting beds have been created around the pond in Lochend Park – just in time for Biodiversity Week. This Saturday 28 May 2011, the official opening will be held in the park. There will be a range of free environmental activities for the whole family between 11am and 2pm. The official ‘ribbon cutting’ will take place at 12 noon with representatives from the Council, the Friends of Lochend Park and WREN attending.

The viewing platform will give people greater access to see wildlife, while new planting, including yellow flag iris and water mint, will enhance the biodiversity of the pond, providing more habitats and food for the local wildlife.

The project which cost £36K was funded by WREN and the City of Edinburgh Council.

Other improvements to the park include new signs and notice boards, gates and railings, bins and seats.

Over the past year, pupils from Hermitage Primary School have been busy working with park rangers to create a bee café. And a range of plants have been planted to provide a food source for insects.

The Friends of Lochend Park have also been involved with a number of projects including tree planting and clean-ups.

Councillor Robert Aldridge, Environmental Leader, said: “I’m very pleased this work has been completed. The Council undertook a study with local people to find out how the park could be improved for the better and I would like to congratulate the local school and community for all their hard work. Both Council and WREN funding has made huge improvements

which will benefit people's enjoyment of the park. The new plants will also encourage wildlife to thrive and contribute to the beauty of our city as a whole."

WREN Grant Manager Caroline Sanderson, said: "WREN previously funded the successful viewing platform at Figgate Park, so we're delighted to support the City of Edinburgh Council once again to provide a similar one in Lochend Park. This is a fantastic space for local people to get outdoors and have fun and the new platform provides a great opportunity for everyone to get close to local wildlife."

Ailsa Laing, from Friends of Lochend Park, said: "Back in 2009, our main request for improvements was for a better habitat for birds and better signage. The Council put a lot of work into the WREN application and we're delighted by the outcome. We look forward to the margin planting providing an increasingly safe haven for the pond's birdlife to nest in. The viewing platform provides a great focus and will help children and adults alike get closer to the wildlife and really see what's going on in there."

Pat Brown, Deputy Head Teacher at Hermitage Park Primary School, said: "Working in the park has been a wonderful experience. Pupils' and staff have been amazed at the variety of wildlife and we all look forward to continuing to help improve the park over the coming years."