

Improved Harrison Park reopened

Local children welcomed Councillor Donald Wilson and other guests to officially celebrate the new environmental and access improvements at Harrison Park East, on Friday .

The local community has been working with a variety of groups including South West Neighbourhood Office, The Waterways Trust Scotland and Urban Design Futures to improve the park and access to the Union Canal. Earlier consultations carried out by the community group, Friends of Harrison Park, with local residents revealed that access from the park to the Union Canal for people with disabilities and cyclists needed to be improved.

The park has been improved by the planting of 10 semi-mature trees (Sweet Chestnut, Lime and Rowan) and the construction of 380 metres of pathways within the 2.9 hectare development area. The park will offer improved access to and through the park for cyclists, walkers, prams and people with additional needs

The steps and handrails have been changed and ramps have been formed on key access routes. The direct links from the park to the canal towpath have been improved and four metal and glass tree guards designed by two local primary schools have been installed.

Pupils from Dalry and Craighlockhart Primary schools also worked with artist Merlin Currie from LX Arts to design metal tree guards for the park. The designs are based on the historical and environmental aspects of the park and canal, and reflect the diversity of cultures living in the area.

Funding for the £180,000 project came from the South West Neighbourhood Partnership, The City of Edinburgh Council,

Sustrans, WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Limited), which is a not for profit business which awards grants to community, environmental and heritage projects across the UK. Its funds are donated by Waste Recycling Group (WRG) to the Landfill Communities Fund and private donations through The Waterways Trust Scotland.

Councillor Donald Wilson said:- “As convenor of the South West Neighbourhood Partnership, which covers this area, it gives me great pleasure to officially launch these new improved facilities. This has been a major project and I wish to thank the hard work of all the community and partners involved. I believe that the work that has been carried out has further enhanced a great community resource and ensured that this park is accessible to *all* members of the community. This is evident in not only the path improvements themselves but in the different cultural references that the pupils of Dalry and Craiglockhart primary schools have incorporated in the design of the tree guards. “

Karen Moore, Development Director, The Waterways Trust Scotland: explained:- “These improvements have significantly improved access to the Union Canal. Both the park and the canal are now much easier and more inviting places to visit for people of all abilities.”

Peter Cox, Managing Director of WREN, said:- “WREN makes a difference to people’s lives by awarding grants to community, environmental and heritage projects across the UK. We’re delighted to support the new environmental and access improvements at Harrison Park East and the valuable work going on in and around the Union Canal.”

John Lauder, National Director, Sustrans Scotland, added:- “Sustrans Scotland was delighted to work with the Project Team to deliver this exciting project which gives people another great option for getting outdoors in their local area.”