

PRESS RELEASE

16 November 2021

Canal charity and volunteers clean up significant commercial waste incident at conservation area in North West London

Volunteers from the local community and charity the Canal & River Trust have removed 1,398 tyres from much-loved beauty spot and Site of Special Scientific Interest, Brent Reservoir, also known as the Welsh Harp.

The removal proved to be a large-scale logistical operation, with the tyres fly tipped in woodland on the southeast side of the reservoir. Volunteers from the group Friends of the Welsh Harp recovered the tyres from the woodland and, with the additional help of corporate volunteers from Argent, the Trust moved the tyres to a car park where a sustainable waste management company could collect them. The irresponsible and illegal fly tipping was reported to the Environment Agency waste crimes team.

Ros Daniels, director for London & South East at Canal & River Trust, said: “It is shocking to think that a local business has dumped hundreds of used tyres in one of London’s precious Sites of Special Scientific Interest. As a charity, we have had to divert precious funds away from other important environmental and heritage maintenance to pay for the sustainable removal of the tyres.

“The removal of this industrial waste is part of the commitment of the Trust and partners at Brent and Barnet councils to overcome the historic issues that have overshadowed this treasured habitat, and ensure the vision the community has tirelessly worked towards for the Welsh Harp is realised.

“I am delighted to announce that the Trust has successfully secured £100k of funding from players of People’s Postcode Lottery to carry out further works this winter to improve the reservoir for people and wildlife.”

This funding will pay for extensive works that will address two of the most serious concerns expressed by the community that have previously proven the more challenging to resolve: clearance of debris on the East Marsh, including from the River Brent inlet downstream of the

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Environment Agency's debris screen; and removal of plastics and debris by boat from silt and shallow marsh.

In November, The Trust began a scheduled programme of 'winter works' as part of the charity's statutory duty of maintaining the reservoir structure. As recommended by the inspection earlier this year, the Trust will spend £85k on remedial works, with the reservoir remaining fully operational, and water levels not adjusted at any time.

Other works taking place this winter include a geophysical survey of the reservoir and a review and upgrade of all electrical works associated with the operation of the sluices controlling the water within the reservoir. These works are due to take place between January and March 2022.

The Trust is creating a Joint Vision for the future of the Welsh Harp Reservoir which will help address the fly-tipping and littering that continues to spoil the site, working with the London Boroughs of Brent, and Barnet, the GLA, Thames21, London Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency, and Natural England.

Local people were invited to share their views this autumn, to contribute to an action plan for improvements and routes for funding to deliver the Joint Vision. This plan will be published by the end of 2021.

ENDS

For further information contact Lucy Greenwood, comms & campaigns manager, on 07880 671 211 or email lucy.greenwood@canalrivertrust.org.uk

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 people's lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By 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

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