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## LAND TRUST CHARITY LANDS IN WALES

The Land Trust, a national land management charity, is expanding its portfolio of services into Wales - and marked the launch with an event at the Welsh Assembly in Cardiff on Wednesday 31 January.

The Trust currently manages 63 country parks and estates across England, representing a total of nearly 2,400 hectares of public green space.

The Land Trust is keen to offer its expertise to Welsh developers, government departments and local authorities as an ethical, health-promoting custodian of public land.

It mirrors the British Government's aspirations to protect and enhance the environment, particularly its emphasis on using public green space for promoting health and well-being activities, as laid out in the new 25 year national environment plan.

The Trust was formed 14 years ago to ensure that brownfield sites, like ex-coalfields, which had been restored as country parks, were then cared for long term for the benefit of their local communities.

The charity has also recently expanded its land management model by taking on the public open space of large residential and commercial estates after developers have left – to protect it for residents.

At a meeting organised by Assembly Member Vikki Howells, Land Trust chief executive Euan Hall reinforced the importance of community green space and the innovative land management business model offered by the Land Trust charity.

Euan Hall explained: "We are very keen to introduce our special brand of ethical land management into Wales. Our charity offers a unique approach to caring for green open spaces which values local communities as much as caring for the land itself.

"We are proud to report that last year nearly 55,000 people benefited from health activities or guided walks across our country parks and estates – a 40 per cent increase on 2016. This is in addition to the hundreds of thousands of walkers, joggers and families who visited on an informal basis.

"Volunteers delivered 11,500 days of improvement works to key sensitive environmental sites and the next generation were encouraged to explore the big outdoors, with over 7,500 students taking part in 300 separate education visits.

“We are also proud of our positive contribution to the natural environment. The decline of bees and other vital pollinators across the country has encouraged us to identify and support declining species by sowing more wild flowers. We’ve also planted hundreds of trees and installed dozens of bird and bat boxes and bug hotels.

“We would love to bring our special land management model to sites in Wales that could benefit from this type of approach.”

The charity’s high quality maintenance, community-based approach recently won it the prestigious ‘Newcomer of the Year’ award at the Property Week Residential Awards. This was in recognition of its diversification into the management of green infrastructure and urban drainage schemes around large residential developments, such as the Beaulieu housing development in Chelmsford, Essex, and East Ketley in Telford, Shropshire.

Euan Hall added: “The Trust works to ensure these developments become desirable places people want to live, work and play - providing a secure exit for the developer and protecting their legacy and reputation.

“We have always recognised that good quality, well-managed green spaces have a positive effect on communities, creating an important sense of place. I am delighted we have seen an enormous increase in people taking part in organised activities and events on our sites. We are extremely proud of what we’ve achieved.

“Being kind to the environment makes good economic sense too. Our recent Hidden Values report shows that well-maintained green spaces provide economic value by absorbing air pollution, storing and removing carbon, and reducing and preventing flooding.”

The Green Flag, a kite mark for well-managed green spaces, is held by four sites at Beam Washlands, near Dagenham, Elba Park in Sunderland, Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park and Silverdale Country Park in Staffordshire – a regenerated former colliery site.

For more information about the Land Trust go to the website [www.thelandtrust.org.uk](http://www.thelandtrust.org.uk).

**ENDS**

## **Notes to Editors**

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The Land Trust is a national land management charity that provides a cost effective management solution for open space and green infrastructure. We use our spaces to deliver positive interventions that provide significant community benefits, including improving health, social cohesion, providing an educational resource and uplifting the local economy. Further information at [www.thelandtrust.org.uk](http://www.thelandtrust.org.uk)