

## **Countess of Chester Country Park Opens to the Public**

The new Countess of Chester Country Park, located in Upton next to the Countess of Chester Hospital, is now open for the local community to enjoy.

The first phase of work on the park has now been completed, creating a series of pathways wide enough for walkers, cyclists and wheelchair users to share. The new paths connect the park to local footpaths and the Shropshire Union Canal towpath, providing local residents, as well as hospital staff, patients and visitors, with more opportunities to explore the area and be more active.

The park will be managed and maintained in perpetuity by the Land Trust, a national charity dedicated to looking after open spaces for public benefit. The Land Trust acquired the former landfill site from the Home and Communities Agency in 2012, along with a dowry of £650,000, used to restore the land and continue improving the space for the public over the next few years. An additional £49,350 funding was provided by WREN, a not-for-profit business that awards grants to community projects.

Euan Hall, CEO at the Land Trust, commented, “We are delighted to open the Countess of Chester Country Park and welcome its first visitors. The new network of all-weather paths not only opens up new ways for the residents of Upton and Blacon to stay fit outdoors, but it also provides local people with alternative and more environmentally-friendly ways to travel to work. In the coming years we plan to continue developing the park as a relaxing, green space for the local community and a haven for wildlife.”

The Land Trust has worked in partnership with landowners, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, NHS Property Services and Groundwork Cheshire to transform the disused land into a peaceful space within a busy urban area. Natural England’s Paths for Communities and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund also provided funding contributions to build paths improving the park’s connections with local destinations, including Chester town centre, the Countess of Chester Hospital, the Chester Millennium Greenway, the canal and other waterways.

An official opening ceremony for the new park will take place later this summer.