

MEDIA RELEASE**1 March 2024****Thamesmead residents boost local biodiversity by adding hundreds of new plants to Gallions Lake**

Miguel Sanabria and Samantha Dhedhi from Thames21

Residents in Thamesmead have helped to add more than 400 plants in and around Gallions Lake in West Thamesmead. Together they have contributed to a new wetland system designed to improve water quality and increase wildlife habitat.

The planting was carried out on behalf of Peabody by charity Thames 21 (thanks to the , wetland designers Aquamaintain and Biomatrix, and the community. It marks the end of a £170k improvement programme at the lake which began in November 2023. Peabody owns and manages five lakes and seven kilometres of canal network in Thamesmead. Looking after the landscape is a major part of the housing association's long-term plan to improve, grow and look after the town.

Local people attended two sessions in February, having voted on the types of plants they want to go into the wetlands. All species are native to Thamesmead and offer a range of environmental benefits. They provide food, cover and habitat for a range of wildlife while attracting pollinators like bees, birds and moths. They also filter pollution. The chosen species include Forget-Me-Not, Pennyroyal, Yellow Iris and Dwarf Ragged Robin.

An additional planting session with Herongate Primary School will take place at the lake in April. Children will embark on a scavenger hunt, do some planting along the nearby meadow and learn about local wildlife, lakes and wetlands.

The newly installed wetlands are made up of several new structures. They include one long mudbank and several smaller ones planted with various aquatic plants, as well as two floating wetlands which are almost seven metres long. With the new plants in place, this system will deliver a range of benefits for local wildlife. This includes providing a nesting habitat and food for waterfowl, providing nectar for pollinating insects and providing cover for fish to lay eggs.

The improvements at Gallions Lake add to the 1,100m² of floating reedbeds that Peabody has created in five canal areas in Thamesmead, as well as Birchmere Lake and Southmere Lake. This is in addition to other improvements made to increase biodiversity and improve the look and feel of these places.

Jack Gower, Peabody's Landscape Activation Manager for Thamesmead, said: "It's been brilliant to see residents come along and get their hands wet to help carry out this work. The addition of the new wetland systems at Gallions Lake should really help to improve biodiversity, and overall be of great benefit to the wildlife that call the lake home. We will be keeping an eye on how the new plants develop at the lake over the next few months, and hope to provide an update later in the year.

"This type of co-creation and collaboration with the community is an extension of the wider work we've been doing in Thamesmead over the past few years, which has seen residents involved in a range of exciting activities like tree planting, landscape design and stewardship of community gardens."

Thames21 Engagement Officer, Toby Dighero, said: "We are delighted to have worked in partnership with our volunteers and partner Peabody to complete this constructed wetland project at Gallions Lake. What a brilliant achievement. A fantastic area for the local community to enjoy, as well as a safe home for wildlife. The 'icing-on-the-cake' final phase of the project is to work with our volunteers to add plants around the wetland, which will help to act as a filter to improve the water quality of the Lake and create a cleaner habitat for wildlife."

Find out more about the work that Peabody is doing to enhance and maintain Thamesmead's landscape [here](#).

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About Thamesmead

Thamesmead is a town in South-East London and is the same size as central London with a population of 45,000 people. Its rich landscape includes 240 hectares of parks and green space; 7km of canals; five lakes; 5km of river frontage and 53,000 trees.

Peabody has been leading the regeneration of the town since 2014, after becoming the town's main landholder. Our mission is to grow, improve and look after Thamesmead for the long term. We aim to bring about thousands of homes and jobs, alongside new leisure, cultural and commercial facilities over the next two decades. The area's green spaces, waterways and lakes will be at the

heart of everyday life, while the West End is just 25 minutes away thanks to the opening of the Elizabeth Line.

About Peabody

More than 160 years after it was established, Peabody is one of the oldest not-for-profit housing associations in the UK.

The Peabody Group is responsible for more than 107,000 homes, with around 220,000 residents across London and the Home Counties. We also have around 17,000 care and support customers. Our purpose is to help people flourish, and we are getting closer to residents by taking a local approach.

We are committed to delivering a responsive and easily accessible repairs service and investing in our existing homes so they are safe and well maintained. Our retrofit projects will make thousands of our homes more energy efficient.

We work with councils and communities to promote economic inclusion, tackle inequality and poverty, and prioritise wellbeing.

Our rents were £621m lower than the market in 2022/23. With an average rent of £127 per week in London and the south-east, we offer significant value for residents and communities.

We are also committed to building much-needed affordable homes.