

ep projects press release

For immediate release

June 24th 2021

World of Water: Project Azure, Greatbridge Road, Romsey, Hampshire

Planning permission granted for a £10m nature-based redevelopment of Romsey aquatic centre

ep projects are pleased to announce that Test Valley Borough Council have issued planning approval for the proposed £10m green infrastructure redevelopment of The World of Water site near Romsey.

The state-of-the-art facilities and landscaping of the 4.2-acre site, will provide visitor, work and hospitality spaces, as well as enhanced access to the adjacent 170-acre Fishlake Meadows Nature Reserve.

Gary Wilburn, leading the project for ep group, has been working closely with residents, local groups, stakeholders, impact investors Azure One and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust to ensure that the development improves the area for wildlife and offers opportunities for those living, working or visiting Romsey and the Test Valley to enjoy and connect with nature.

The development will be built to the highest "Building with Nature" accreditation standards, which recognises the design and delivery of high-quality green infrastructure. The 21,463 sq. ft buildings will follow Net Zero Carbon status standards and feature extensive use of locally sourced materials. They are also designed to be naturally ventilated and illuminated with minimal energy use. This approach, also known as biophilic design, ensures that the building integrates seamlessly into the natural surroundings and creates a healthy environment.

Winchester-based landscape architects, Strata Design are working with ep projects on the re-wilding of the site to echo the adjacent Nature reserve and encourage biodiversity. Native planting will be complimented with wildflower roofing and living walls to the buildings.

The centrepiece of the scheme will be a 3-storey, timber bird-hide, reached via a 100-metre raised walkway and bridges over Fishlake Stream from the visitor centre and into the water-meadows. The hide and relandscaped site will provide access for all and link the existing pathways providing circular walks around the Fishlake reserve.

It is the intention to create the opportunity for the local community to become investors in the project and pioneer a new and sustainable approach to nature-based developments. This will be enabled via Ethex – a leading UK based impact investing platform that helps everyday people make ethical investments and fund extraordinary organisations creating a positive change in the world.

Construction partners will be selected during July 2021, with the demolition and enabling works planned to start in Autumn 2021. The whole project is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2022.

Expected to bring around 150 jobs to the area, the site will accommodate 450 visitors, an on-site café, retail space and educational facilities, as well as flexible workspaces. It also aims to be a leading example of how redevelopment can be both sympathetic to the environment and deliver real value for local people.

"We would like to thank the community, societies and councillors, as well our partners for their continued support to see the project come to fruition. The scheme aims to set new standards for sustainable construction, and as such it has required everyone to support a vision to do things differently, do things better, a challenge they have risen to fantastically. We look forward to working with the community, our partners and all stakeholders to deliver all-round positive impact and a long-lasting legacy for the site".

Gary Wilburn, MD, ep projects

'This disused site sits next to our nature reserve, Fishlake Meadows – a wonderful wildlife haven on the edge of Romsey. There is a real opportunity to bring nature to the fore here and we are happy to be working with the ep projects team to help ensure that the development is sensitive to the special wildlife of our nature reserve and delivers genuine benefits for both wildlife and local people".

Debbie Tann, CEO of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust comments:

Accompanying visuals and plans: all prepared and supplied by ep projects:

- Location plan
- Site plan
- Aerial and site visuals

Contact

Gary Wilburn
Managing Director, ep projects
+44 (0) 7713 122 566
gary.wilburn@energyproltd.com

Editor's notes

About Ethex

Ethex helps everyday people make ethical investments that fund extraordinary organisations. We list investment opportunities from pioneering grassroots community organisations as well as ethical profit for purpose businesses, connecting them with everyday people who want to use the transformative power of money as fuel for change.

Over the past eight years, Ethex and its sister platform Energise Africa have enabled more than 20,000 people to invest from just £50 in 200+ projects, providing them with more than £100 million in people-powered finance that they critically need to do great things, such as building new renewable energy projects, providing more affordable housing, supporting sustainable transport infrastructure, creating sustainable food and agriculture projects, providing vital community services and accelerating renewable energy access across sub-Saharan Africa.

When investing via the Ethex platform your capital is at risk and returns are not guaranteed.

www.ethex.org.uk | 01865 403304 | help@ethex.org.uk