



## Press Release

### Welsh Water open £500,000

#### sustainable playground at Llanelli primary school

- **Stebonheath Primary School - first school in the UK to have a sustainable surface water scheme retrofitted**
- **Dŵr Cymru opens RainScape scheme at Stebonheath School, Llanelli**
- **The school scheme cost nearly £500,000 and was built during the summer holidays**
- **Project forms part of RainScape - a £15 million investment in sustainable drainage schemes in the Llanelli area to manage surface water**
- **Scheme will help reduce wastewater flooding in the area**

Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water will officially open a £500,000 playground today at Stebonheath primary school, Llanelli. The playground is the first scheme of its kind in the UK and has been designed to reduce the amount of rainwater entering the local public drainage systems, helping to reduce the risk of sewer flooding and pollution.

The playground is part of the company's £15 million RainScape scheme that includes 13 projects that will be delivered between now and 2015 in Llanelli and Gowerton, which are anticipated to remove around 20% of the surface water runoff currently entering the sewerage network in the area. The scheme is particularly needed in the area as Llanelli sees almost as much storm water in its network as Swansea, despite the fact that Swansea serves three times the number of properties, and three times the area compared with Llanelli.

The investment at the school has transformed the playground by incorporating a pond, a swale (a vegetated channel), a range of trees and plants, planters, an outdoor educational area and

water-saving water butts. These features help to absorb the surface water which used to run straight off the playground into the sewer network.

The school used to generate 10,000m<sup>3</sup> of storm water annually. That is enough to fill four Olympic sized swimming pools. The transformed playground is anticipated to remove 3,000m<sup>3</sup> from the sewer network (equivalent to 6 million bottles of drinking water), and will instead now put the water back into the natural water cycle through the new plants and trees.

The school children were involved in the design of the scheme and participated in a workshop with the engineers where they inputted into how the playground should look. A pond and an all weather outdoor classroom were added to the end design as a result of feedback from the pupils.

Steve Wilson, for Dŵr Cymru, Welsh Water says: “We are delighted to have been given the opportunity to work with Stebonheath School to create a sustainable, future-proof playground that not only looks fantastic, but that also plays a significant part in reducing the risk of wastewater flooding in Llanelli. The school is the first school in the UK to have a surface water removal scheme retrofitted into the school grounds. The school is already becoming a flagship school with visitors coming from as far as Scotland to learn about the scheme.”

Stebonheath School Council Chair Paige Daniels (Year 6) says: “The development of our playground has been fantastic. It has changed from a dreary looking area to a fabulous, neat and eye-catching area. It is going to provide the pupils with lots of opportunities for education now and in the future. We will be able to study mini beasts, trees, birds, the water cycle, art, measuring water, studying pond life and much, much more. We are so grateful.”

Stebonheath School Eco-Council Chair Rebecca Mann (Year 6) says: “We have learnt a lot about why Welsh Water decided to try a project such as this. We understand that this school is now playing an important role in reducing surface drainage in the locality and we are glad that we can help reduce possible flooding in our community. At the same time, the development is making a new home for nature right here in our school. And it all looks great. Thank you Welsh Water.”

Cllr. Mike Burns, Town Mayor says: “I welcome the investment Dwr Cymru Welsh Water is making in the infrastructure here in Llanelli. I am particularly delighted with this exciting project at Stebonheath School, it will be an example of good practice for other schools across Wales to learn from.”

Carmarthenshire County Council Executive Board Member for Technical Services, Cllr Colin Evans says: “We are very pleased to be working with Dwr Cymru Welsh Water to develop innovative surface water management techniques to reduce flooding in the Llanelli area. Dŵr

Cymru is investing £15 million as part of the RainScape scheme in order to reduce the amount of surface water which flows into local public drainage systems and will therefore reduce the risk of flooding. The scheme is anticipated to remove around 20% of the surface water runoff currently entering the sewerage network in the area”.

Keith Davies AM says: “This is an original and innovative idea, that not only attempts to provide a solution to flooding but has also engaged with local education providers at the same time. I’m sure the children and teachers at Stebonheath Primary School are proud of being part of a project which is the first of its type in the UK. At the launch of the Rainscape project I saw firsthand the enthusiasm displayed by the children in the school who had come to see the project on their doorstep, and I am sure they see it as an valuable education opportunity as much as we value it for flood prevention.”

Mary Youell, from Natural Resources Wales, says: “This scheme is a fantastic demonstration of what our environment does for us. It is this kind of natural, sustainable solution for people in Llanelli that will benefit this community, the local economy and wildlife over the long term.

“By investing in green spaces and improving the quality of our environment, this scheme will reduce the risk of flooding, further improve water quality in the area and enable communities to develop for the future.”

## **Ends**

Enquiries to the Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water press office on 01443 452452

Notes to editor:

- Welsh Water is a ‘not -for-profit company’ which has been owned on behalf of customers.
- It is a ‘not-for-profit company’ which has been owned by Glas Cymru since 2001. Welsh Water does not have shareholders, and any financial surpluses are reinvested in the business for the benefit of customers.
- Welsh Water is investing heavily and working hard to ensure top quality services to all the communities it serves. The company is investing £1.5 billion in its water and sewerage network between 2010 and 2015.
- Customers wishing to find out more about our assistance tariffs should call us on 0800 052 0145.