



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**2<sup>nd</sup> February 2011**

### **THE HELIX HERALDS START OF £43 MILLION LAND TRANSFORMATION PROJECT**

- **Recipient of Scotland's largest Big Lottery Fund award starts work on major project**
- **Land between Falkirk and Grangemouth will be transformed into an international visitor attraction**
- **Development will feature world famous horse sculptures, The Kelpies®**

Something fantastic is happening in the heart of Scotland.

A 300-hectare site of unused land between Falkirk and Grangemouth is to be transformed into the Helix, a superb, vibrant new parkland set to become an exciting international visitor attraction.

Whether it's walking or running, cycling or sailing or simply taking in the beautiful natural setting, the Helix promises something for everyone.

Key developments in phase one will include a dramatic central park, with its own enclosed lagoon and outdoor events space. Boaters will be able to navigate a new canal link connecting Grangemouth and the Firth of Forth to Scotland's extensive canal network.

The centrepiece of the new canal link will be the stunning Kelpies® lock: two 30-metre-high sculptures in the shape of horse's heads.

Other planned developments include pathways and cycle networks, a major public artwork and a range of community facilities.

The Helix has been awarded £25 million by the Big Lottery Fund's Living Landmarks programme, the largest single grant to be made to an individual project. Phase one of the project is scheduled to be completed by summer 2013.

The first contractor to start work on the Helix is Land Engineering. The company is carrying out a series of landscape improvements in the southern zone of the Helix site.

To help mark this symbolic moment, a group of special guests planted the Helix project's first new trees. The Helix will incorporate a thriving blend of new and existing woodland as part of a sustainably managed natural habitat.

Planting the trees were Craig Martin, leader of Falkirk Council; Anne Widdop, chairman of the Helix Trust board; local youngsters Grant Woodburn (15) and Charlotte Laing (15), who originally helped the Helix celebrate the award of Big Lottery Funding; Kirsty Nairn, programme manager Big Lottery Scotland; Steven Pressley, manager of Falkirk Football Club, whose stadium sits adjacent to the Helix site, and pupils from Victoria Primary School in Falkirk.

The next piece of work to start will be the construction of the main public access road into the Helix site. The road will allow other important areas to be constructed, such as the central park and canal elements. It will also act as the main access road for the many visitors expected to visit the completed Helix site every year.

Work on the road is scheduled to get under way in March and is due for completion in the summer.

Throughout 2011, work will also start on the construction of central park, the canal hub, canal extension and the fabrication of the full-size Kelpies®.

**Councillor Craig Martin, Leader of Falkirk Council**, said: “The Helix is a unique and inspirational project and I’m delighted we’ve reached this milestone. The scale and ambition of the Helix has already generated great excitement locally and nationally. This is set to grow as we start to transform the site and move towards delivering this landmark environmental initiative which will create real opportunities in the Falkirk Council area for communities, visitors and businesses.”

**Anne Widdop, chairman of the Helix Trust Board**, said: “I’m extremely proud to be involved with the Helix on such a momentous day for the project. Today represents the culmination of years of hard work by our public, local and national partners. The planned greenspace will provide a tremendous and much-needed recreational facility for local people and visitors. It will deliver a key tourism and growth opportunity for the region, putting the Falkirk and Grangemouth area firmly on the map.”

**David Lamont, acting chief executive of the Helix Trust and head of Operations, British Waterways Scotland**, said: “It is hugely exciting to think that, from now, people will really begin to see this major new landscape taking shape. A stunning blend of waterway and parkland, I am confident it will become a real heartland for the local communities of Grangemouth and Falkirk as well as a great visitor attraction in its own right.”

**Alison Magee, Chair of the Big Lottery Fund Scotland Committee**, said: “I’m thrilled that the dedication and effort of the partnership here in Falkirk is now coming to fruition. Today marks the physical start of this wonderful regeneration project, which I hope will continue to capture the imagination of people living and working in Falkirk and Grangemouth. When we made the award we saw the potential to leave an indelible mark not only on the local landscape but also on neighbouring communities, who will reap the rewards of the project when it is completed. The input from local people will ensure the success of the Helix in the long term and we hope that those communities will continue to play their part in shaping its future.”

**Simon Rennie, Chief Executive of Central Scotland Forest Trust (CSFT)**, said: “The Helix project is an excellent example of partnership working at its very best. CSFT congratulates all those involved in carefully steering the project towards the start of construction. I look forward to watching the Helix vision become reality.”

**Pamela McMahon, Regional Director VisitScotland**, said: “I am delighted to see work starting on the Helix Project. It promises to be a major attraction for the area, and I wish the Trust every success in its completion.”

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For further information regarding this press release, please contact **Bill Moore**, The Helix Trust, tel 01324 590717 or email [bill.moore@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:bill.moore@falkirk.gov.uk)

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### **Notes to Editors**

**The Helix** is being driven by a partnership of Falkirk Council, British Waterways Scotland and Central Scotland Forest Trust through the Helix Trust.

As well as the award of a £25 million grant from the Big Lottery Fund as part of its Living Landmarks Programme, significant funding and land has also been committed by Falkirk Council and British Waterways Scotland.

For more details about the Helix, visit [www.thehelix.co.uk](http://www.thehelix.co.uk)

**The Helix Trust is a company limited by guarantee and is a charity registered in Scotland, number SC040959**

