

Investment in facilities makes fishing more accessible

Angling enthusiasts are set to benefit from facilities designed to make fishing accessible to all abilities at a Northumberland County Council country park from Friday 5 June.

The Wansbeck and Cramlington Angling Club raised a total of £30,000 from the Coal Field Regeneration Trust, the Environment Agency and the Wansbeck Sustainable Communities Fund to improve and install 14 wheelchair accessible fishing platforms at QE2 Country Park, Ashington.

The construction of the platforms, which disabled drivers can access by vehicle along a lakeside path, was carried out by angling club members assisted by a Probation Service "Community Payback" team.

The Country Park is owned and managed by Northumberland County Council, a member of the council said: "I am delighted that we have been able to work with the angling club to improve fishing opportunities at the QE2 Country Park for disabled people. This project is a credit to the club, the council officers and other partners who worked together to make it happen."

Brendan Heslop, Treasurer of the Wansbeck and Cramlington Angling Club, said: "Our thanks go to council staff, Ian Graham and Terry Garnick, for giving the angling club this opportunity and also to the Probation Service for their support. Above all though, the committee and the members of Wansbeck and Cramlington Angling Club would like to thank club member Howard Pattison whose commitment to the project and determination to oversee the work made this achievement possible."

John Ball, Northumbria Probation Area's unpaid work manager for Northumberland, said: "This is a perfect example of how offenders on unpaid work sentences can add real value to communities through Community Payback. The angling club is extremely committed to increasing their provision of disabled facilities and we are very pleased to be able to support such a worthwhile and extensive initiative."

For more information about fishing at QE2 Country Park Ashington and access to the new platforms, contact the Wansbeck and Cramlington Angling Club on 07729784660.