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MEDIA INFORMATION

Interactive Aardman ‘Bug Hunt’ launching at new insect garden at Stratford Cross as ‘Lloyd of the Flies’ named Ambassador of the Royal Entomological Society

An interactive Lloyd of the Flies augmented reality trail will entice families, youngsters and insect enthusiasts to the Royal Entomological Society (RES) Insect Garden at Stratford Cross in East London when it opens to the public this week. Help Lloyd, the first ever non-human RES Ambassador, find his friends and bring them all back to the ‘luxury bug hotel’ in the garden, learning fun facts about the tiny but mighty creatures that support all life on Earth.

Located at Stratford Cross, a thriving destination in East London and the gateway to East Bank, the UK’s exciting new cultural quarter on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, the RES Insect Garden was created by leading garden designer Tom Massey for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2023, thanks to funding from grant-making charity Project Giving Back. The garden has now been rebuilt as a permanent feature at Stratford Cross, adding to the vibrant mix of attractions, shopping, dining and entertainment available to residents and visitors.

The RES Insect Garden is now fully open to the public as a place to learn more about the vital role insects play in urban environments. The relocation of the RES Insect Garden has been made possible thanks to funding from Project Giving Back, Lendlease, SHIFT (London Legacy Development Corporation) and individual supporters of the RES who donated to the Big Give Appeal.

Simon Ward, CEO at the Royal Entomological Society, said: “We are delighted to welcome Lloyd as our first insect ambassador and to partner with Aardman and Lendlease to launch the interactive ‘Bug Hunt’ at Stratford Cross. Our huge thanks go to Lendlease, SHIFT and Project Giving Back for helping bring the RES Insect Garden to East London as a permanent urban haven for insects and insect science. We are passionate about inspiring the next generation of insect scientists – whose fascination with insects often starts in childhood - so Lloyd is ideally placed to help us encourage children and their families to see the world through the eyes of an insect and appreciate their vital role in the health of humans and the planet.”

Guy Thomas, Head of Retail & Place Assets, Lendlease, said: “Sustainability, innovation, and collaboration run through everything we do at Stratford Cross. Nestled just a stone’s throw from some of the world’s most famous cultural and academic institutions at the East Bank, including UCL and the V&A, the new RES Insect Garden will embody all these values. It will not only promote biodiversity and local wildlife in Stratford but be a shared resource for education and research for all ages. We are excited to kick off the garden’s life in Stratford with the arrival of the Lloyd of the Flies ‘Bug Hunt’ and to engage residents and visitors in the fascinating world of insects this summer.”

Lloyd of the Flies is Aardman’s CGI comedy series for children and its hero, the housefly Lloyd, and his invertebrate friends will lead the ‘Bug Hunt’ family trail experience at Stratford Cross. Visitors can use Aardman’s augmented reality ‘Bug Hunt’ app to follow a route around the RES Insect Garden and some of the other insect-rich green spaces at Stratford Cross, as they learn fascinating facts about insects and see the world through the eyes of a fly. Following the festivities, families are welcome to enjoy shopping, dining and entertainment on offer at Stratford Cross.

Matthew Walker from Aardman, creator and director of Lloyd of the Flies comments: “We created Lloyd of the Flies to bring the fascinating world of insects to children in a fun and accessible way so the partnership with the Royal Entomological Society and the team at Lendlease is a perfect way to celebrate Lloyd’s appeal. Having spoken to Lloyd himself ahead of the big Bug Hunt launch at Stratford Cross, I can confirm that he can’t wait to explore the RES Insect Garden for himself and introduce his friends to the fantastic habitats and sources of food for insects that it offers!”

The RES Insect Garden’s centrepiece is an outdoor laboratory with a multi-coloured domed roof, inspired by the shape of an insect’s eye. This eye-catching feature, fabricated by Cake Industries, is constructed from hundreds of laser-cut hexagonal panels that provide plenty of opportunities for insects to shelter and thrive. The garden includes a wide mix of planting chosen to encourage invertebrates and provide year-round food sources for pollinators and other beneficial insects, as well as a range of habitats made from materials that are often discarded including dead wood, rubble and sand.

Tom Massey, designer of the RES Insect Garden, said: “The vast majority of the UK’s population live in urban areas, so we must consider brownfield sites as important for biodiversity as more rural locations. Stratford Cross is a fantastic example of how it’s possible to deliver a sustainable built environment that prioritises benefits for both people and nature. It is great to see the garden come to life in its permanent home as a platform for the RES to raise awareness of insects and their importance in the global environment and to welcome families and young people to enjoy the garden this summer alongside Lloyd of the Flies!”

As well as providing a year-round destination for visitors to Stratford Cross to explore and enjoy, the RES Insect Garden will become the focal point for ongoing education and engagement on the subject of insects in urban green spaces. The RES is working with Newham Council on an adult learning course about biodiversity that will use the garden as a centre for study, and is designing a new education programme to offer primary school aged children an opportunity to study insects on the garden. For further information about the Royal Entomological Society Insect Garden visit <https://www.royensoc.co.uk/the-res-garden/>

For further information about Stratford Cross, visit: <https://www.stratfordcross.co.uk/>

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For more details about the Royal Entomological Society Garden at Stratford Cross, visit <https://www.royensoc.co.uk/the-res-garden/>

For media enquiries about the Royal Entomological Society Garden at Stratford Cross, please contact Clare Johnson or Jennie Spears at Bloom PR & Communications at hello@bloom-pr.co.uk

For media enquiries about the wider Stratford Cross development and Lendlease, please contact the LCA team at lendlease@londoncommunications.co.uk

NOTES FOR EDITORS

About Royal Entomological Society

The Royal Entomological Society (RES) is devoted to the understanding and development of insect science. It exists to advance insect science through research and global scientific collaboration and to increase public understanding and appreciation of insects and the diverse and important roles they play in our global ecosystems. It is one of the world's leading authorities on insect conservation and control, supporting international collaboration, research and the publication of insect science discoveries and understanding. It funds, organises and supports events and activities for anyone that wants to learn more about insects and entomology through its outreach and education programmes. Find out more and become a member at www.royentsoc.org

About Stratford Cross

Stratford Cross is an emerging cultural and creative workplace destination by Lendlease, an international real estate and investment group with core expertise in shaping cities and creating strong and connected communities. Nestled between 560 acres of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, the creative institutions of the East Bank – the UK's newest cultural quarter – world-class sporting facilities including the London Stadium, and a vast array of shopping, dining and entertainment, Stratford Cross offers something new to explore every day.

www.stratfordcross.co.uk/

About Lendlease

Lendlease is a globally integrated real estate group with operations in Australia, Asia, Europe and the United States. We create places where communities thrive. Headquartered in Sydney, Australia and listed on the Australian Securities Exchange. Lendlease has approximately 7,800 employees globally. Our core capabilities are reflected in our operating segments of Investments, Development and Construction. The combination of these three segments provides us with a sustainable competitive advantage in delivering innovative integrated solutions for our customers. www.lendlease.com

About Aardman

Aardman is an employee-owned company, based in Bristol (UK) and co-founded in 1976 by Peter Lord and David Sproxton. An independent, multi-Academy Award® and BAFTA® award winning studio, it produces feature films, series, advertising, games and interactive entertainment. Current animated productions include a brand-new Wallace & Gromit film which is set for release in 2024, the studio's first in-house game Chicken Run: Eggstraction, series 7 of Shaun the Sheep and a third series of The Very Small Creatures.

Its productions are global in appeal, novel, entertaining, brilliantly characterised and full of charm reflecting the unique talent, energy and personal commitment of the Aardman team. The studio's work – which includes the creation of much-loved characters including [Wallace & Gromit](#), [Shaun the Sheep](#), [Timmy Time](#) and [Morph](#) – is often imitated, and yet the company continues to lead the field producing a rare brand of visually stunning content for cinema, broadcasters, digital platforms and live experiences around the world. Recent celebrated projects include the BAFTA® nominated feature film Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget, Academy Award® nominated short film [Robin Robin](#), International Emmy® award winning Shaun the Sheep: The Flight Before Christmas, BAFTA® nominated preschool series [The Very Small Creatures](#) and the recent CGI comedy series for kids [Lloyd of the Flies](#).

The studio runs the [Aardman Academy](#) which has a commitment to nurturing talent by delivering excellence in film and animation training and mentoring. The Aardman Academy offers a variety of courses from intensive one-day workshops teaching production skills and storyboarding, to comprehensive twelve-week courses for professionals in craft-based subjects from model making to animation.

In November 2018 it became an Employee-Owned Organisation, to ensure Aardman remains independent and to secure the creative legacy and culture of the company for many decades to come. www.aardman.com