**HOME OF GYMNASTICS OPENS DOORS TO NEW FACILITY FOLLOWING £1M RENOVATION**

**5 March 2020 –** Lilleshall National Sports Centre has re-opened its artistic gym following a £1m investment by Sport England. The home of British Gymnastics has undergone a three-month refurbishment to renovate and create a redeveloped world-class facility to support and prepare athletes on the road to the Olympic Games in Tokyo and beyond.

British Gymnastics Sport England, Serco and Gymnova worked in partnership to transform the facility, which has supported a number of top medal-winning athletes across European, World and Olympic competitions, including Beth Tweddle MBE, Louis Smith MBE, Max Whitlock MBE, and current world champion Joe Fraser. The gymnastics centre will also support the next generation of athletes within the podium potential and squad programmes for Paris 2024 and the extensive talent pathway.

The gym is available to support an extensive programme of regional, club and wider community use. In 2018/19 over 40,000 young gymnasts accessed Lilleshall National Sports Centre for training and competition from local clubs and school. Lilleshall is also a regular host of coach development and education programmes. The enhanced facility will enable British Gymnastics and Serco to expand these programmes.

Yesterday (Wednesday 4 March) British Gymnastics celebrated the refurbishment by inviting key stakeholders for an exclusive first look at the new facilities and to hear more about the impact of the renovation in such an important year for the sport.

Jane Allen MBE, British Gymnastics Chief Executive, said: "We are delighted to introduce the fantastic new facilities here at Lilleshall. Thanks to our performance teams and the input of our creative staff, we have one of the best training facilities in the world which compliments the standard of our World Class Programme. British Gymnastics is extremely grateful for the invaluable support from Sport England, Serco and Gymnova for making this possible. I look forward to seeing more of our gymnasts making use of the new facility in the coming months as our preparations step up towards Tokyo 2020."On setting foot in the new artistic gym, World medallist and former European champion Ellie Downie said:“When we walked through the gym doors for the first time everyone was blown away with how incredible the gym looks, and we just wanted to get started with training. We’re fortunate to travel the world and train in lots of different facilities and from my experience I can now proudly say that Great Britain has the best training centre in the world here at Lilleshall. With the Olympics so close its really important to me to put in the best training possible and being at Lilleshall definitely enables me to do that.”

Nick Bitel, Chair of Sport England, in attendance at Lilleshall, commented: “Sport England is delighted to have funded the refurbishment of the gymnastics centre at Lilleshall to incorporate the latest world class facilities. It is our hope that as well as providing elite gymnasts with the resources they need ahead of Tokyo it will inspire the next generation of British gymnasts and drive greater community participation in the sport.”

Charles Johnston, Planning and National Centres property director at Sport England, commented: "We’re delighted to have funded the update and refurbishment of the gymnastics centre at Lilleshall to incorporate the latest world class facilities. These will not only assist our elite gymnasts but also support future talent and grassroots programmes - enabling British Gymnastics to drive community participation together with expanded coach development and education programmes. Congratulations to all those involved in delivering such an exciting development."

Sir Hugh Robertson, Chair of the British Olympic Association, added: “The artistic gym at Lilleshall truly is a world-class facility and will be fundamental to supporting our British gymnasts on their journey to the Olympic Games. I’ve seen the impact that elite success has on grassroots gymnastics and hope to see our British talent continuing to inspire the next generation.”

To find out more about British Gymnastics and follow athletes on their Olympic journey, visit [british-gymnastics.org](http://www.british-gymnastics.org).

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