From London to Lanarkshire: Autumn brings £10m Lottery windfall for six UK parks

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The parks, located in London, Kent, Shropshire, Lancashire and Lanarkshire in Scotland, range from inner city pockets of green space to the heart of the countryside.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said on behalf of HLF and BIG: “Parks are a crucial part of this country’s heritage and this money demonstrates our on-going commitment to looking after them, making sure they continue to be safe and enjoyable places to spend time. It’s not just the important restoration work that matters. These grants are far-reaching and provide great opportunities to protect our precious wildlife, for volunteers to learn new skills, and get local people involved with taking care of their local park.”

Communities Minister Andrew Stunell, said: "I am delighted to welcome the HLF and BIG’s funding for the six parks. This funding supports the Big Society as the initiatives will help to bring volunteers and the community together for the benefit of all. We know that parks are not just green lungs for our towns and cities, but offer venues for many community activities such as local education projects such as hedge-laying, gardening and dry stone walling. Involving local people can also spark further innovation and community activities.

"The parks were set up with great foresight - setting aside land to be enjoyed by the public. This continues today as the funding will see new trees planted by volunteers that will grow for many generations to see in the future."

Chris Packham, environmentalist and broadcaster, said: “It’s thanks to Lottery players that these precious parks will be properly maintained and remain at the heart of local communities. We’re lucky enough in this country to have an abundance of open spaces that play an important role in many people’s lives. They are home to wonderful wildlife habitats and this money ensures they will be conserved. It’s great to know that our local public parks continue to be looked after.”

The six parks receiving support are:

Mote Park, Maidstone, Kent - £1.8m
Mote Park, orginally a country estate, was converted into a landscaped park at the end of the 18th-century and is now one of the largest public parks in Kent. Its name comes from the old English word ‘moot’, meaning ‘a place of assembly’.

HLF/BIG’s investment will complete improvements as part of a wider restoration programme including rejuvenating the currently empty 19th-century pavilion back to its former glory and providing a meeting point for visitors and staff. Volunteers will help maintain the park’s extensive grounds and new activity programmes for local residents will be set up.

Telford Town Park, Shropshire - £2.1m
Established in the 1970s, Telford Town Park has provided local residents with a much-loved green space for many years. The park, containing signs of Telford’s rich industrial heritage such as old pit mounds, chimneys and railway tracks, is connected to the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site.

Plans for the park include conserving chimneys and pit mounds and uncovering more of the park's history relating to iron and coke smelting and brick-making. Education trails will be introduced with opportunities for volunteers to take part in wildlife and horticultural workshops.

Whaley Bridge Memorial Park, Derbyshire - £478,000
Whaley Bridge Memorial Park was created in 1920 to commemorate the loss of 108 men in World War One. The park, on the edge of the Peak District National Park, is bordered by the River Goyt and is popular with both local residents and visitors to the area.

Plans for the park include restoring the war memorial and maintaining woodland and wildlife habitats. Volunteers will get involved with the long-term maintenance of the park through activities such as hedge-laying, flower planting and dry-stone walling.

Lordship Recreation Ground, Tottenham, London - £3.8m
Lordship Recreation Ground sits in the heart of the London Borough of Haringey and was opened to the public in 1932. The grounds include a model traffic area which was created in the late 1938 and designed to teach children about road safety.

HLF/BIG's support will enable the extensive woodland and flower beds to be properly maintained and the model traffic area, Shell Theatre and River Moselle to be restored. Training for staff will include mentoring volunteers and improving their horticultural skills, involving the local community in the maintenance of their park. A new environment centre will be an exemplar low-energy building constructed with natural, robust materials to house a new café and community facilities.

Mesnes Park, Wigan - £1.9m
Mesnes Park began life as predominantly meadow land forming part of the Wigan Rectory Glebe Estate but by 1847 it was home to two collieries. Opened to the public in 1878, Mesnes Park was Wigan's first municiple park and today sits in the heart of the town centre and attracts 2m visitors a year.

This grant will complete the restoration of this listed park enabling it to play a full role in the life of the town. The bowls pavilion and lodge building will be restored giving them a new lease of life as a permanent base for the park's friends' group and volunteers. As well as creating a 'community hub' for the park, it will also provide education workshops and gardening sessions which will teach skills such as flower identification and crafts such as willow weaving.

Cambuslang Park, South Lanarkshire - £551,500 (HLF funded only)**
Created in 1913, Cambuslang Park spans 27 acres and is home to a World War One memorial, a bandstand and the Borgie Glen, a steep tree-lined ravine which sits adjacent to wide open park land.

This HLF investment will enable the restoration of the park including renovating the arena area to allow more events to take place, a new play area and conserving the woodland areas. The introduction of a full-time Park Keeper will help develop new activities encouraging visitors to interact with the park and the friends' group will be given training in local history, wildlife and tree management enabling them to support volunteers in a number of activities ranging from guided walks to woodland conservation.

Notes to editors

* Today's second-round pass awards are from the Parks for People programme which has a two-stage or two-round application process. The full grant has now been awarded following a successful second-round application from these parks.

** Cambuslang Park in Scotland is HLF-funded only.

The Parks for People programme uses Lottery funds to support the regeneration, conservation and increased enjoyment of public parks. The programme aims to improve the local environment and put parks firmly back at the heart of community life. In England the two Lottery Funds have been working in partnership from 2006 to deliver a multi-million pound investment in public parks of £150m. Over the past three years, the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) has invested up to £80m (in England only) with £70m coming from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the UK.

HLF is continuing to fund public park projects in 2010 with an investment of £20m each year. The next closing date for applications is 28 February 2011. The Big Lottery Fund (BIG) remains committed to working in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in making a success of the Parks for People programme and has allocated £10 million in its grant budget for 2010/11 towards the programme in England.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

HLF has invested £527m in over 530 historic public parks, gardens, squares and promenades right across the UK.

The Big Lottery Fund (BIG) rolls out close to £2million in Lottery good cause money every 24 hours, which together with other Lottery distributors means that across the UK most people are within a few miles of a Lottery-funded project. BIG, the largest of the National Lottery good cause distributors, has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK since its inception in June 2004. The Big Lottery Fund and its predecessor bodies have invested more than £1.3billion in environmental initiatives. www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

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