Dacorum Borough Council wins Lottery support for Water Gardens

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The project aims to restore Hemel Hempstead's Water Gardens to reflect their historical significance. By revitalising the gardens, the council will be aiming to encourage more people to visit the gardens and stay for longer, reinstating Jellicoe’s original vision of a 'city within a park'.

Development funding of £106,000 has been awarded to help the council to progress its plans to apply for a full grant at a later date.

Designed and built in 1962 by the foremost twentieth-century architect, Geoffrey Jellicoe, the Water Gardens are starting to show their age. The council's restoration project will bring out the best in the Grade II listed registered park and garden by improving its links to the rest of the town centre, restoring the garden's original structures including bridges and viewing platforms and replacing benches and lighting to be more sympathetic to the overall feel of the gardens.

Cllr Terry Douris, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, said: "The importance of the Jellicoe Water Gardens to Hemel Hempstead town centre cannot be overstated. We're working hard to regenerate and revitalise the town centre as a destination of choice for residents, businesses and visitors. The Water Gardens are central to that work and restoring them to their former glory will provide a catalyst for the town’s wider regeneration."

The Water Gardens are an important landmark for the town centre's residents and visitors and by working with voluntary groups such as the newly established Friends of the Water Gardens group, Sunnyside Rural Trust and the Hertfordshire Gardens Society, the council will be seeking to enhance a sense of community ownership and pride.

Cllr Andrew Williams, Leader of the Council, said: "The Water Gardens are a key feature of Hemel Hempstead town centre and were a source of pride for the community when first built and an important facility for the local community. Our aim is to restore that sense of pride and provide a high quality natural environment for local people. I am delighted that we have been successful in the first stage of the bid."

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of HLF East of England, said on behalf of HLF and BIG: "The Water Gardens are central to the design of the New Town of Hemel Hempstead and thoroughly deserving of initial support from HLF and BIG. We are looking forward to working closely with Dacorum Borough Council as plans to restore this hugely important landscape progress over the coming months."

Notes to editors

A first-round pass means the project meets our criteria for funding and we believe it has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award. On occasion, an applicant with a first round pass will also be awarded development funding towards the development of their scheme.

The Parks for People programme uses Lottery funds to support the regeneration, conservation and increased enjoyment of public parks and the conservation of cemeteries. The programme aims to improve the local environment and put parks firmly back at the heart of community life. HLF and BIG will continue to fund public park projects from FY 2013 / 2014 to FY 2015 / 2016 with a joint investment of £100m.

HLF is continuing to fund public park projects in 2012 / 13 with an investment of £24m. The next closing date for applications is 28 February 2013. 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 with an allocation of £5m in 2012 / 13.