Lottery chiefs give East Park restoration bid £1m boost

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The grant for £981,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) will enable Wolverhampton City Council to press ahead with its wide-ranging refurbishment plans for the Victorian park.

They include the restoration of the bandstand, boathouses, lake terrace, the lake bed and event space and the clock tower – including the installation of a new clock face on the western side – and the renovation of the main entrances to the park.

Other work will be carried out to further develop the 18-hectare park's recreational facilities and woodland areas, including horticultural improvements.

Councillor Elias Mattu, Wolverhampton City Council's Cabinet Member for Leisure and Communities, said: "This is absolutely fantastic news and means we can now press on with our exciting proposals to breathe new life into East Park. East Park has a proud history dating back to 1896 and what we have got planned will help restore it to its former glory. Already we have carried out a number of improvements at the park, including the installation of a fitness trail, a natural play area and a multi-use games area. We have also refurbished the interior of the pavilion and carried out extensive horticultural works and are looking to develop a new water play facility.This Heritage Lottery Fund money will enable us to take things to the next level."

The work, costing around £1.5m, will be carried out in three stages. Work to stabilise the mineshafts under the park will begin in February 2012, with the restoration of the bandstand by a specialist contractor starting around June 2012.

Anne Jenkins, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund West Midlands, said: "East Park is an important and much-loved green space in Wolverhampton and has played a key role in the lives of local residents for many years. The Heritage Lottery Fund is delighted to be supporting this project that will transform the park into a place that even more people can use and enjoy."

The main restoration of the park, including improvements to the boathouses, lake terrace, the lake bed and event space, the clock tower and the entrances, is scheduled to begin in late 2012.

Wolverhampton City Council's bid was approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund in two phases. It approved the outline proposals in December 2009 and then invited the authority and other organisations around the country to submit more detailed bids to the second stage of the process.

Councillor Mattu added: "This was a very tough application process and we had to convince Heritage Lottery Fund representatives as to the value of our proposals at two different stages. I am delighted that the hard work put in by the council has paid off and I am now looking forward to seeing the transformation of East Park begin next year."

Further information

For further information, please contact Wolverhampton City Council on 01902 554 076, 555 497 or 551 956.

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