£9.3m New Year 'hat trick' for historic parks

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Three parks in London, Walsall and Devizes are celebrating the beginning of the New Year following confirmed grants totalling £9.3m* from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Big Lottery Fund (BIG). This money from the two Lottery distributors will give a vital boost to plans for these popular local parks.

Carole Souter, HLF Chief Executive, said on behalf of HLF and BIG: “What better time to be investing in parks than at the beginning of the New Year! People often look to their local public park as a place to get fit, spend more time with family and friends or just take time out for calm reflection. HLF and BIG continue to invest in parks because we know that people really benefit from all these sorts of activities and from having green open spaces to enjoy.”

Chris Packham, environmentalist and broadcaster, added: “It looks like 2010 will be another bumper year for parks! This is great news bringing some much-needed New Year cheer to communities in three different parts of the country. We know what a big difference a well-maintained park can make to people’s lives and this investment from HLF and BIG will do just that by making these three parks just that little bit more special for visitors.”

The three parks benefitting are:

Lloyd and Aveling Park, Waltham Forest – £3.48m

Lloyd and Aveling Park is as popular with Walthamstow residents today as it was over a century ago. Once home to the artist William Morris as well as newspaper publisher Frank Lloyd; Lloyd Park was opened in 1900 with Aveling Park added in 1912. The combined 12ha of land provides an essential recreational space for the surrounding community and includes what is thought to be a Medieval moat and island and an original set of entrance piers and gates. HLF and BIG's £3.48m grant will be used to restore the park's historic features, revitalise the landscape and enhance the wildlife habitat. New facilities include a café, gallery and community space, with an extensive programme of skills training and educational opportunities.

Walsall Arboretum – £4.57m

The Arboretum, located on the edge of Walsall town centre, is one of the oldest parks in the borough having opened in 1874. It attracts visitors from both Walsall and the rest of the Black Country and has developed over the years to reflect the changing population of the area. The park is particularly important for local schools which have no green space within their grounds and also acts as a substitute garden for many of the 21,000 inhabitants who live nearby. Features that will be restored thanks to HLF/BIG support include the Grade II listed boathouse, two lakes, a bandstand and the clock tower. The project will offer a wide range of activities involving schools and community groups. There will also be volunteering opportunities alongside the expanded ranger service.

Hillworth Park, Devizes, Wiltshire – £1.2m

Originally part of the extensive gardens of a large country house, Hillworth Park first opened to the public when the estate was purchased as a response to the post-war housing shortage. The park still retains fragments of its designed

18th/19th-century landscape and is now a popular venue for a variety of events such as the town's *Picnic in the Park* (part of the annual Carnival programme). This funding will enable a number of features to be restored including the Grade II* listed Garden Pavilion and the children's play areas. Additionally a volunteer ranger scheme will be introduced to help two newly-created posts of park wardens to manage the park.

Notes to editors

* Today's Stage Two 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 Stage Two applications from these parks.

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 2009 to deliver a multi-million pound investment in public parks of £150m. Over the 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. Parks for People programme grants range from £250,000 to £5m with two rounds of funding each year.

Every completed park project will be expected to achieve the annual prestigious Green Flag Award and in doing so demonstrate quality standards of care and upkeep.

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 £525m in 500 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. BIG has invested more than £700million in wider environmental initiatives. www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Out of every pound spent on a National Lottery ticket, 28p goes directly to good causes. BIG is responsible for distributing half of the money to improve communities and the lives of people most in need. HLF distributes 16.67% of the money to heritage projects across the UK. www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk

Further information

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