Summer Lottery boost for UK’s parks

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The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) today announced confirmed funding* of over £6m for four parks across England through their joint Parks for People programme. The parks in Wallsend, Dudley, Leeds and Burnham-on-Sea can now go ahead with major redevelopment work.

Over £1million of development funding was also announced today for a further 11 parks across the country.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said on behalf of HLF and BIG: “Summer is finally here, and it’s the perfect time to enjoy our public parks. It’s important everyone in our towns and cities has somewhere free, green and open to enjoy in their leisure time. This joint investment from HLF and BIG is helping to do exactly that by ensuring parks continue to be looked after and have a major role to play at the very heart of their local communities.”

Chris Packham, environmentalist and broadcaster, said: “Public parks are places that really give back in spades to local communities and they're in pretty good shape at the moment thanks to the massive investment - £600million in total - from the Heritage Lottery Fund and BIG Lottery Fund.

“We're so lucky in this country to have so many green spaces to enjoy nature, especially in our towns and cities, but we must not take them for granted. I’m passionate about them and see them as one of this country's great heritage traditions so I believe it’s essential that investing in them remains a priority.”

The four parks receiving confirmed funding today are:

Wallsend Parks, Wallsend, North East - £2,607,000
Located in North Tyneside on the edge of Wallsend town centre, Wallsend Parks are made up of three connected sites: Prince Road Arboretum; Richardson Dees Park; and The Hall Grounds. All three, were originally part of the Wallsend Hall Estate and home to mining pits dating back to the 1700s. The mine shaft within Richardson Dees Park was used to try and rescue miners trapped in the Wallsend Colliery disaster of 1835.

Plans for the parks include restoring the Vinery Wall and Fernery in the Hall Grounds, training volunteers to be leaders and guides, and an education and training plan for people to learn essential horticulture and maintenance skills.

Priory Park, Dudley, West Midlands - £1,786,000
Priory Park is on the north side of Dudley just outside the town centre and was once part of Dudley Castle’s vast estate. It was also the site of the Cluniac Priory of St James founded in the 12th century, the remains of which can still be seen in the grounds today.

The park will undergo major redevelopment including, repairing the priory structures, improving the site of the lily pond and rose garden, refurbishing the 19th-century parklands and improving the Park Pavillion as a community facility and Green classroom. The project, involving a wide range of volunteers from the local community, will offer training in parks management, landscaping, horticulture and sports coaching skills.

Middleton Park, Leeds, Yorkshire - £1,465,000
Middleton Park, covering a huge 254ha, includes ancient woodland dating back to the 1600s. The park is rich in wildlife

and is also known for its mining heritage.

The HLF / BIG grant will widen the parks audience through education visits and new visitor and Cafe facilities. Interpretation will be introduced covering the parks history and wildlife and the project will also involve the local community, providing opportunities for training staff and volunteers in park management, ecological surveying and conservation skills.

Burnham-on-Sea, Marine Cove Gardens, South West - £344,200 – HLF funding only**
Marine Cove Gardens were originally part of an old vicarage site until they were gifted to the council in 1926. The Gardens came with a condition that they must only be used for 'the purpose of public walks or pleasure rounds or such other pleasure purposes'.

Plans include: reinstating the original lions head fountain and pool and the restoration of the sunken gardens and flower beds. Local people will be able to get involved through a range of training opportunities such as developing planting schemes and water feature refurbishment.

Eleven parks secure initial HLF / BIG support
Initial HLF/BIG support (a first-round pass) was also announced today for 11 parks across the UK. Development funding totalling just over £1million was awarded and will help to progress plans for wider restoration work for the following parks:

Wandle Park, Croydon – first-round pass of £1,521,700, including £94,600 development funding
Wandle Park was opened in 1890 and was previously watermeadows belonging to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Harlow Town Park, Essex – first-round pass of £1,676,300, including £104,000 development funding
Established in 1957 with the creation of the 'New Town', Harlow Town Park is a fantastic example of 20th-century park design, right at the heart of the community.

Worth Park, Crawley – first-round pass of £2,189,000, including £237,000 development funding
Originally thought to be a medieval deer park, Worth Park hides the remnants of a high status late Victorian pleasure garden and landscape, constructed by James Pulham and Son.
The Phillips Memorial Park, Godalming, Surrey – first-round pass of £314,000, including £25,600 development funding
Dating back to 1913 and stretching over 4.5ha, this park was originally developed as public grounds for the Phillips Memorial Cloister, built to commemorate the brave act of the Chief Telegraphic Officer on the RMS Titanic, when it sank in 1912.

The Level, Brighton – first-round pass of £1,841,300, including £106,400 development funding
Located in the Valley Gardens Conservation area, The Level was originally laid out as a park in the 1800s with a unique playground designed to obtain 'as much of the picturesque as possible' by Captain Bertie MacLaren, Chief Superintendent of Parks in the 1920s.

Alexandra Park, Manchester – first-round pass of £2,038,500, including £138,500 development funding
Designed in 1869 Alexandra Park is considered one of the finest examples of a Victorian park in the North West, characterised by sweeping lawns and a lime tree avenue. Its innovative design made it one of the first public parks to combine facilities for sport with the Victorian fashion for promenading

Northumberland Park, Northumberland – first-round pass of £2,223,700, including £109,000 development funding
Opened in 1885 by the Duke of Northumberland the site contains ruins of a medieval leper hospital dating from the 13th century.

Walker Park, Newcastle – first-round pass of £1,412,300, including £65,250 development funding
Officially opened in 1891, Walker Park provided a much-needed open space for the local people in a time of mass industrialisation.

Markeaton Park, Derby – first-round pass of £2,264,000, including £142,500 development funding
Markeaton Park was originally part of the grounds of Markeaton Hall, built by the Mundy family in 1755 and demolished in 1964. The park is of huge importance to the local residents and home to the Mundy Play Centre given to the children of Derby in 1903.

Eureka Park, South Derbyshire – first-round pass of £370,300, including £7,000 development funding
Dating from 1926, part of the park was originally a deep mine shaft collecting coal from the Eureka Coal Seam run by the Eureka Colliery, known locally as 'Owd Shoddy'.

Dock Park, Scotland – HLF funding only, first-round pass of £987,800, including £34,250 development funding**
The oldest park in Dumfries Dock Park was originally a cattle park managed by the town.

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.

Two projects involved in today's announcements - Burnham-on-Sea, Marine Cove Gardens and Dock Park - did not receive BIG funding and were HLF funded only.

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.

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 31st August 2010. 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.

HLF, BIG and parks charity Greenspace have launched their national photography competition, 'Postcards from the Park'. It serves to highlight the important role our public parks play in our communities through encouraging people to try can capture what they love most about their local park.

Further information

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