

Seven much-loved public parks are set to be revitalised thanks to new investment by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Big Lottery Fund.

The historic public parks are receiving grants today totalling £20.6m for important regeneration works, new community facilities and a range of activities that will generate income and involve volunteers.

This Lottery investment in parks comes six months after the publication of HLF's report State of UK Public Parks 2014: Renaissance to Risk which revealed that the UK's public parks are at serious risk of decline unless innovative ways of funding and maintaining them are found.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said on behalf of HLF and the Big Lottery Fund: "Since our report was published, it's become even clearer that parks are facing an uncertain future, in spite of being more popular than ever. Today's investment will not only help to regenerate these historic parks, ensuring local people have access to high quality green spaces, but it also brings to life several exciting plans that will see parks used for training, events and activities."

Currently unused structures including walled gardens, gardener's cottages and historic halls and houses will be repaired and used as volunteer and training centres, event spaces and community facilities.

The parks funded are also partnering with schools and colleges, ensuring that the local community can learn a range of horticulture and other skills, enabling them to get involved in the restoration and future management and maintenance of their parks. Several apprenticeships will also be offered.

Community sports facilities, including those previously used by Olympic champions but currently in a poor state, will be restored for both informal and organised sports.

Stephen Williams, Minister for Communities, said: “Parks provide much needed green space for physical activity as well as a nice spot to relax and while away a free moment.

“But equally, as these projects demonstrate, parks and the buildings contained within them can also be active centres for the local community, providing training for young people and encourage volunteering.

“This significant new funding to revive their original character, to repair sports facilities and restore much-loved listed buildings will help ensure that these parks work for local communities for generations to come.”

Helen Grant, Minister for Tourism, said: “I am thrilled that several of our historic public parks will be rejuvenated thanks to the investment of £20.6m by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery Fund.

“This investment will encourage volunteering and help bring communities together.

“Around 34 million people make regular visits to our parks. With improved facilities, I am sure many more will be drawn to our great outdoor spaces.”

Stanmer Park, Brighton
Set inside the South Downs National Park, the Grade II listed Stanmer Park was designed in the 18th century as the setting for Stanmer House, church and estate village. Now the largest public park in Brighton and Hove, it is used by 500,000 people annually. As part of a wider plan to rejuvenate the whole of this large estate, a grant of over £4m will restore historic features, improve the visitor facilities and encourage more local people to use the park. The use of the Walled Garden and greenhouses will be extended from a council run retail nursery to include a training centre with Plumpton College to run horticultural courses. Students and volunteers will help deliver some of the restoration work and a Friends’ Group will be re-established.
The Canons, South London

Dating back to the 12th century, The Canons were originally created as the grounds of an estate administered by the clerics of St Mary Overie of Southwark. The park is now in a Conservation Area in Mitcham, South London and includes three listed buildings. A grant of nearly £4m will restore the house and grounds and fund a host of cultural and educational activities. Canons House and Madeira Hall will be restored to host events, community facilities and sports and a café will be built to link the two. The cinder running track where Dorothy Tyler (silver medallist at the 1936 Berlin Olympics) trained will be repaired for informal use by joggers and young cyclists learning to ride. A sensory garden, new wildlife pond and natural play area will be created and the park will also host food production, composting and rainwater harvesting.

Cannon Hall Park and Gardens, Barnsley
Cannon Hall Park and Gardens is a popular country park to the west of Barnsley. Significantly remodelled in the Georgian period, the park features a traditional orchard, walled garden and a series of lakes including a ‘fairyland’ area designed by the previous owners of the hall. A grant of £2.8m will restore and repair important features including an ice-

house and deer shelter. The lakes, subject of a long running local campaign, will be dredged and restored and a gardeners' cottage will be turned into a volunteers' hub. Apprenticeships will be offered in association with local colleges.

The seven parks receiving Lottery funding today are:

HLF/Big Lottery Fund joint grants in England

Confirmed grants

Houghton Hall Park, Bedfordshire	£2,196,600
Highfields Park, Nottingham	£3,240,500

Earmarked funding*

Stanmer Park, Brighton	£4,077,800
Cannon Hall Park and Gardens, Barnsley	£2,834,000
The Canons, Mitcham, South London	£3,981,500
Poole Park, Dorset	£2,970,200

HLF only funded grants

Bishop's Park, Carmarthenshire	£1,264,800

Further information

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