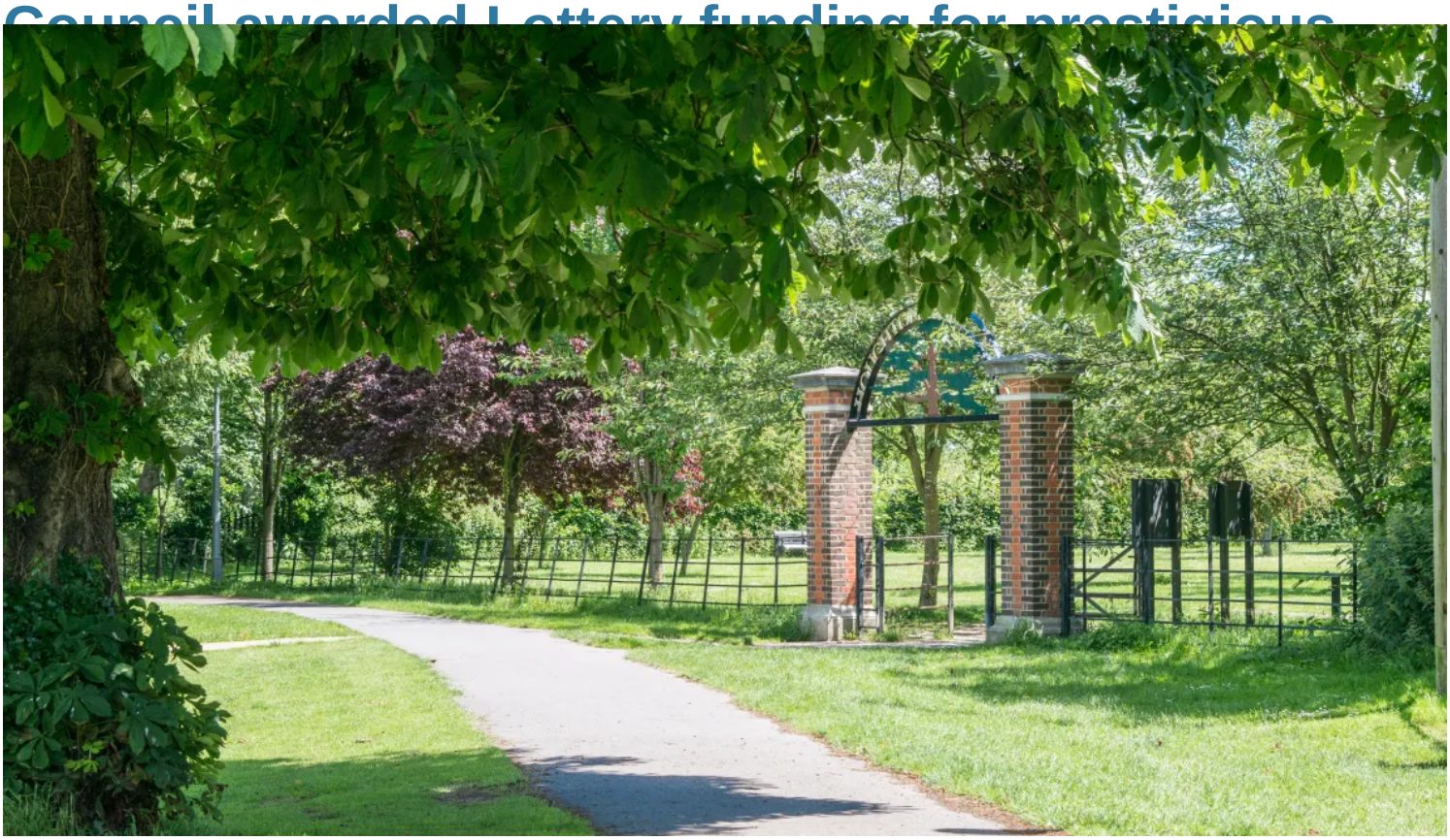
Council awarded Lottery funding for prestigious



The Parks for People programme - a joint initiative between the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) - will support Houghton Hall Park – Renaissance and Renewal Project which aims to restore the vitality of the historic Houghton Hall Park.

Parks for People funding helps conserve the heritage that makes both historic parks and cemeteries special, giving local people a say in how they are managed in the future. Projects improve people's wellbeing and knowledge of their area and make communities better places to live, work and visit.

Central Bedfordshire Council's Countryside Access Service, in partnership with Houghton Regis Town Council and the Greensand Trust, intends to celebrate the heritage of Houghton Hall Park while improving facilities to meet the needs of the community. The project will include exciting initiatives such as the restoration of the kitchen and formal gardens. There are also plans for heritage-based activities and a volunteer programme, among a range of innovative approaches to engage hard to reach communities.

The major award will fund the project until 2020 enabling Central Bedfordshire's Countryside Access Services to work with partners to create a unique leisure space. With local development pressures increasing, the plans will also create an important strategic green space for residents.

Cllr Laura Ellaway, Houghton Regis Town Mayor, said: “On behalf of the Town Council and residents we are delighted to have been given the opportunities that this Lottery funding offers, not only will we be seeing the protection and enhancement of a valuable piece of our towns heritage but we will be seeing the creation of a valuable community asset for us all to enjoy now and in the future. The award of this grant is the direct result of a considerable amount of hard work from Central Bedfordshire Council, Houghton Regis Town Council and many local organisations and local residents. What an exciting and positive way to start 2015.”

Cllr Brian Spurr, Executive Member for Community Services at Central Bedfordshire Council, said: “The awarding of this joint HLF and BIG funding is an endorsement of Central Bedfordshire’s innovative approach to serving its community, an encouraging sign of confidence in the area and testament to the sterling work of the Countryside Access Service and our partners.

“Houghton Hall is a key, legacy project with real economic impact in terms of employment and developing assets. With increased pressure from population growth, the project also offers premium green space, with history and heritage, of lasting benefit to current and future residents. We’re delighted to be able to deliver a leisure facility that will be used by residents for generations.”

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said on behalf of HLF and BIG: “Since HLF's 'State of UK Public Parks 2014: Renaissance to Risk' 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 - including £2.19m for Houghton Hall Park - will not only help regenerate seven historic parks, ensuring local people have access to high quality green spaces, but also brings to life several exciting plans that will see parks used for training, events and activities.”



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£20.6m Lottery boost for public parks