Canon Hall Park

In the UK, we love our public parks.

They’re one of our most valued and heavily used public assets with more than 34 million of us regularly visiting our local greenspace.

That’s why the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Big Lottery Fund (BIG) have invested more than £700million in over 700 historic parks across the UK, making sure they are in good shape.

Today, we’re committing a further £20.6m of Lottery funding to seven historic parks. This money will pay for important regeneration work, create new facilities and help deliver a range of activities that will generate income and encourage volunteering.

[quote=Stephen Williams, Minister for Communities]Parks can be active centres for the local community[/quote]

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.”

The Grade II listed **Stanmer Park** is one of the parks receiving today’s investment. Set inside the South Downs National Park, it 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. The £4m investment will help restore the parks historic features, improve the visitor facilities and encourage more local people to use the park. The Walled Garden and greenhouses will also be extended from a council run retail nursery to include a student training centre with Plumpton College where it will run horticultural courses.

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. £2.8m will repair important features including an ice-house and deer shelter. The lakes will be dredged and a gardeners’ cottage will be turned into a volunteers’ hub. Apprenticeships will be offered in association with local colleges.

Other parks awarded grants include: Houghton Hall Park, Bedfordshire; Highfields Park, Nottingham; The Canons, Mitcham, South London; Poole Park, Dorset; and Bishop’s Park, Carmarthenshire.

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 HLF and BIG. This investment will encourage volunteering and help bring communities together.

Find out more about this new Lottery investment in parks here.

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[State of UK Public Parks 2014]