

Mawson fountain in Hanley Park John James

Stoke-on-Trent City Council has been successful with a multi-million pound bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund for restoration work at the popular 60-acre site. News of the huge grant, which can be officially announced today, has been welcomed by community leaders and campaigners alike.

It means a raft of exciting improvements can now go-ahead to help breathe new life into the park, including:

- Refurbishing the main pavilion, which was built in 1896, to create a café, toilets and space for meetings, private functions, as well as restoring the clock tower
- Revamping the boathouse, which could be used as a second café and a boat hire facility, or as a space for education and community use
- Repairs to the small bowls pavilion and 1960s bowls pavilion
- Improving the formal terraced garden including restoring the bandstand which will be connected to power supplies
- Restoring the two canal bridges, including reinstating the decorative iron lighting columns
- Fixing the lake’s retaining walls and the rockery and ravine which feed the water
- Restoring the terracotta fountain and pool in the Cauldon Grounds
- Removing ‘self-seeded’ trees to open up historic views and allow more light in

In submitting the bid, the council had outlined how the improvements would not only unlock the park's potential through a comprehensive restoration of its historic features, but attract more visitors of all ages and contribute to the wider social, economic and environmental regeneration of the city.

The Grade II* listed park, which opened in 1897, is among 34 sites throughout the country to share a £34million Lottery pot from the HLF and Big Lottery Fund, receiving a £4,579,300 grant. The total project cost, which includes factors such as maintenance over the next five years, is just over £6million, with the remaining funds coming from a combination of Section 106 agreements, the city council and volunteers, including the Friends of Hanley Park.

The park's restoration will result in nine new jobs being created, including a park co-ordinator, two park liaison officers and four apprentices. The new staff will be tasked with increasing the number and range of visitors to the park, and to make sure it is kept to a high-standard.

The delivery of the restoration project was dependent on the council's Lottery bid – which was supported by the Friends of Hanley Park and Stoke-on-Trent College – being successful. Now that the bid has been given the green light, the main improvement works will start at the park in spring 2016, with the entire project taking around 18 months to complete.

Speaking on behalf of HLF and the Big Lottery Fund, HLF's CEO Sir Peter Luff, said: "We all benefit from spending time outside in the fresh air, so it's vital that we look after our green spaces, particularly in dense urban areas. National Lottery players' money will give a boost to Hanley Park, helping to make sure it has a great future."

Designed by landscape architect Thomas Mawson, the park currently attracts nearly 1million visitors per year. It is hoped with the restoration work, that this will increase by 40 per cent to 1.4million people by 2020.

The plans for the park's restoration have been developed over the last three years following extensive consultation with the local community and park users. This included more than 700 visitor surveys and questionnaires, and three stakeholder forums enabling local groups and partners to feed back to the architects and project team.

The Friends of Hanley Park, an independent community group that works with park staff to improve the park for everybody, played a full part in developing the restoration project.

Group chairman, Carole Ware, said: "As a group, we are delighted for the city as a whole that this bid has been successful. It's a beautiful park that fully deserves to be restored and this fantastic news is the culmination of three years of hard work for everyone involved.

"The restoration will not happen overnight as there is a lot of work to be done, however, we know now that it will definitely happen because the funding is in place."

Mark Whittaker, Director Of Marketing And Admissions at Stoke-on-Trent College, said: "This is great news for Hanley Park and for the local community, who will benefit from the investment and restoration work that is now able to go ahead.

"The regeneration of this area is key for local residents and college users alike, as well as being very positive for the wider reputation and image of the city of Stoke-on-Trent."

Residents can find out more about the proposals every Wednesday at 2.30pm at the former bowls pavilion by the Oval Green. People can also visit Stoke City Council's website.

Further information

For all media enquiries please contact Adam Blakeman in the communications department at Stoke-on-Trent City Council on 01782 232 987.



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