Sheffield General Cemetery secures National



First steps towards transforming Sheffield General Cemetery

Initially the council's Parks and Countryside service will receive development funding of £429,000 to progress their plans for the cemetery over the next two years, and then apply for the full grant in 2018.

The overall aim of the project is to transform the site into a well-used heritage and wildlife park that will be enjoyed and explored by people of all ages and interests.

This will include sympathetic restoration of existing features, such as the collapsing catacombs, ensuring structures throughout are safe and enhancing habitats to attract more wildlife. The project will also play a big part in strengthening the Outdoor City's links from the centre to the Peak District for walkers, runners and cyclists.

The Sheffield General Cemetery opened in 1836 as a response to overcrowding and poor conditions in Sheffield's churchyards. It was one of the earliest commercial cemeteries of its kind in the UK, conceived at a time when Sheffield was at the cutting-edge of cultural reform and technical innovation.

The Grade II* registered park is one of the city's finest historical assets and is home to 10 listed structures/buildings including catacombs, monuments, gateways, the Non-Conformist Chapel, the Anglican Chapel and the Gatehouse lodge.

The cemetery charts the fascinating history of the city's growth, through those who are buried there, such as Mark Firth (1880) the highly successful Sheffield Industrialist, benefactor of Firth Park and founder of The University of Sheffield; George Bassett (1886) founder of Bassett's Sweets; and the Cole Brothers, owners of the well-known Sheffield store. Several members of the world's first football club, Sheffield FC are also buried there including William Prest co-writer of the first rule book, his funeral procession in 1885 saw the roads lined with several thousand mourners.

Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, said: "Today's announcement is fantastic news for the city. We're delighted that the HLF have recognised the importance of this project and to have their support in making this happen. The General Cemetery is one of Sheffield's hidden gems and now we can really put it on the map. Since we rescued the site in 1978 we've maintained it as best we can, with the considerable help of volunteers from the Friends of the General Cemetery and Sheffield General Cemetery Trust. But due to its unique structure, age and wear and tear this is becoming increasingly difficult.

"The site is just 10 minutes from the city centre, so as well as attracting people from the surrounding communities, we hope it will become a favourite for people who work in the city and those who are visiting other attractions near the centre. The cemetery is already valued for its unique historic character, abundance of plants and wildlife and links to the Peak District, and it's our duty to protect and enhance that. This investment means we can do that and look at realising the true potential that lies within this beautiful, historic cemetery for current and future generations."

Whether it's a gentle stroll, a picnic, bird spotting, a history tour, a lunchtime run or ride out to the Peaks, the plans for the new improved Sheffield General Cemetery Community Park will make it a great host for people of all ages to fulfil their Outdoor City pursuits.

The Sheffield General Cemetery is bordered by Cemetery Road, Montague Street, Stalker Walk and the Porter Brook, it is open to the public at all times.

Notes to editors

To date, more than £776million of money raised by National Lottery players has been invested in parks since 1996.

Parks for People applications are assessed in two rounds. A first-round pass is given when HLF has endorsed outline proposals and earmarked funding. A first-round pass may also include an immediate award to fund the development of the project. Detailed proposals are then considered by HLF at second-round and as long as plans have progressed satisfactorily and according to the original proposal, an award for the project is confirmed.

Further information

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Hirst Park is where the three Ashington youngsters - Bobby and Jack Charlton and Jackie Milburn - began their journey to footballing legend



n brothers' childhood park

Hirst Park in Ashington is where footballers Sir Bobby Charlton, Jack Charlton OBE and Jackie Milburn first began to play and train

Football returns to sporting heroes' childhood park