

Kettering's treasured Wicksteed Park, birthplace of the playground, avoids permanent closure thanks to our Heritage Emergency Fund.

In the heart of Kettering, you may be surprised to find the oldest theme park in mainland UK – Wicksteed Park.
The park's founder, inventor and engineer Charles Wicksteed, famously created the first modern-day swings, slides and roundabouts.



On the slide at Wicksteed Park

Like many other attractions, the park has suffered during lockdown. Although the park grounds have remained open, most of its income has dried up following the closure of rides, attractions and public events. Wicksteed Park Ltd, which ran the park, was unable to avoid going into administration.

Incredible support

With the threat of permanent closure, a fundraising appeal was launched by park owners The Wicksteed Charitable Trust. The National Lottery Heritage Fund came to Wicksteed Park's aid, providing Heritage Emergency Fund support of £247,000, and a glimmer of hope. In a show of how much Wicksteed Park is valued by the local community, a further £130,000 was raised in just two weeks.

Oliver Wicksteed, chairman of the Wicksteed Charitable Trust, said the amazing support received from local people, coupled with the money from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, would go a long way to helping the park recover and prosper.



Rollercoaster ride

He said: “The response from local people has been truly outstanding and we can’t thank them enough for what they have done and what they continue to do.

“We are also extremely grateful that, thanks to The National Lottery and its players, The National Lottery Heritage Fund is also supporting us at this crucial time – it’s a lifeline to us and others who are passionate about sustaining heritage for the benefit of all.”

Keeping the park going

The £377,000 generated so far will help Wicksteed Park continue to support free access to the park and will be used for staffing, security, insurance, utility bills, park maintenance, refuse collection and to look after its animal attractions, including zoolab and aviary. A new company will be set up to run the park and build for the future.

Supporting heritage during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

Have you applied for support yet?

The National Lottery Heritage Fund is committed to helping the heritage sector through this crisis.

Our £50million Heritage Emergency Fund is open until 12noon on 31 July for grants from £3,000 - £250,000. We want to support as many organisations as we can. Submit an application before the deadline so we can help your organisation too.

Additional support includes:

- Digital Skills for Heritage: increasing sector skills and confidence to bring heritage to more people
- maintaining our financial commitment to all of our 2,500 existing projects
- help and advice from our UK-wide teams

Find out more.



S.E.5e biplane



to emergency funding





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