£19m of Lottery money to reinvigorate parks across the UK

18/12/2011

HLF has awarded confirmed funding[1] of £11.3m to restore seven parks from Fife to London, while HLF and BIG have jointly awarded £7.8m to a further four parks in Goole, Manchester, Brighton and Crawley.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of the Heritage Lottery Fund, said: “Parks are an important resource whatever the time of year, even in the winter months when our natural inclination is to stay at home curled up on the sofa. Our parks are invaluable to people’s well being and an integral part of local communities. The Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery Fund are working with local authorities and communities to ensure that public parks continue to receive the essential investment they need to safeguard their future.”

Nat Sloane, England Chair of the Big Lottery Fund, said: “These historic parks are at the heart of their local communities; by investing in parks we are making them safer, cleaner, protecting the environment and most importantly help communities connect with each other and improve opportunities for local people to get the most from their park. This is a lovely example of where Lottery funding adds value and reaches into parts of local life for which it is so valued by restoring and maintaining these wonderful spaces to ensure that they continue to bring joy to generations of local residents and visitors alike.”

Successful projects include:

Alexandra Park, Manchester – confirmed HLF/BIG grant of £2.2m. Alexandra Park, regarded as one of the finest Victorian parks in the North West, will undergo major restoration works. The park’s historic features, including a 19th-century pavilion, will be restored with original planting designs reinstated. An interactive learning programme will encourage people to learn more about the park’s proud social, political and industrial heritage through a series of guided walks and talks, environmental workshops and art projects.

Located just outside Manchester City Centre, Alexandra Park is made up of sweeping paths, long tree avenues and a lake. The park was designed with dedicated spaces for sporting activities and community events and still hosts an annual Caribbean Carnival and frequent 5k runs. The active Friends Group and volunteers will receive conservation and horticultural training and will help support visitor events and activities.

Forty Hall Park, Enfield, London – confirmed HLF grant of £1.7m. HLF’s grant will help Enfield Council uncover Forty Hall Park’s original 17th and 18th-century country-estate landscape and restore its most historic features, including the much-loved walled garden. A new volunteering programme will encourage people to take part in the conservation work and help run community events. Up to 90 volunteers will contribute an impressive 1,056 days work over the five-year project.

The park, which surrounds Grade I-listed Forty Hall, contains a Walled Garden, Pleasure Grounds, Lime Avenue, Ferme Ornee, Lakes, Pond Groves and the visible earthworks of the Royal Palace of Elsyng. It provides a peaceful green space for the people of bustling North London.

Cyfarthfa Park, Merthyr Tydfil – confirmed HLF grant of £1.96m. Surrounding the Grade I-listed Cyfarthfa Castle, Cyfarthfa Park is the largest public park in Merthyr Tydfil with impressive views over the town and what remains of the historic Cyfarthfa Ironworks (once the largest in the world). HLF's grant will enable Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council to carry out vital restoration works to this historic landscape, including vital repairs to the bandstand, walled garden and glass houses, all adding to the wider regeneration of the area.

The restored gardens and glass houses will be a base for the dedicated Friends Group allowing them and new volunteers to take part in a range of visitor events and activities. An apprentice programme will form a key part of the project and will give people the chance to get 'hands-on' construction and horticultural training, particularly in traditional skills such as stone wall building.

The other parks benefiting today are:

HLF/BIG funded
• West Park, Goole – £996,200
• The Level, Brighton – £2.2m
• Worth Park, Crawley – £2.4m

HLF funded
• East Park, Wolverhampton – £981,900
• Bentley Park, Doncaster – £2.4m
• Grosvenor Park, Chester – £2.3m
• Pettencrieff Park, Fife – £708,900
• Haddo Country Park, Ellon, Aberdeen – £1.075m

Notes to editors

Today's second-round pass awards are from the Parks for People programme which has a two-stage or two-round application process. The full grant has now been awarded following a successful second-round application from these parks.

The Parks for People programme uses Lottery funds to support the regeneration, conservation and increased enjoyment of public parks. The programme aims to improve the local environment and put parks firmly back at the heart of community life. In England the two Lottery Funds have been working in partnership since 2006 to deliver a £150m investment in public parks.

HLF is continuing to fund public park projects in 2011/12 with an investment of £20m. The next closing date for applications is 28 February 2012.

The Big Lottery Fund (BIG), the largest distributor of National Lottery good cause funding, is responsible for giving out 46% of the money raised for good causes by the National Lottery. BIG is committed to bringing real improvements to communities and the lives of people most in need and has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK. Since June 2004 BIG has awarded over £4.4bn. Website: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

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