Christmas comes early for Scottish parks

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HLF has also given initial support for multi-million pound grants to breathe new life into Rouken Glen Park on the outskirts of Glasgow and Wilton Lodge Park in Hawick.

Colin McLean, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland, said: “This is good news not just for the individuals that have worked hard to develop these projects but for the hundreds of thousands of people that use and treasure these parks.

“Our parks are a wonderful legacy from our ancestors which are enjoyed by all ages and are often a community’s only available green space for recreation and leisure. That’s why HLF is committed to protecting these precious places. Through our Parks for People programme, parks across Scotland are being turned around, encouraging more people through the gates, forging new links with communities, reducing crime and often kick-starting further local regeneration.”

Duthie Park, Aberdeen
Confirmed HLF grant of £2.5m
Duthie Park, home to the David Welch Winter Gardens, was bequeathed to the City by Miss Elizabeth Crombie Duthie in remembrance of her brother and uncle. Opened in 1883 by Princess Beatrix, it attracts over half a million visitors every year. A popular venue for music festivals, community events and cricket clubs, this favourite of the North East is an outstanding example of a late-Victorian park.

The transformation of the park will include the restoration of the linked ponds with the top pond reinstated for boating; Duthie fountain will be restored to full working order and moved to its original setting; the unique mound feature with its spiral pathway will be returned to its original striking design and the original promenade will be re-established. Where necessary, the stone boundary walls will be rebuilt, and railings and some seats replaced using castings from the original designs.

As well as protecting the heritage of Duthie’s original design, new elements will be introduced to provide up-to-date facilities and access. The listed 1920s bowls pavilion will be converted to provide office accommodation for the parks ranger staff and kitchen facilities for visiting groups, volunteers and trainees. The redundant tennis courts will be converted into a horticultural training area, including a model allotment, where a range of activities will take place to encourage adults and children to try out their horticultural skills.

Council Leader John Stewart is delighted with the award. He said: “This is excellent news and a tremendous boost for the city.

“It is great that with the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund we now have the opportunity to restore Duthie Park to its former Victorian glory.

“I look forward to witnessing the transformation of the park as the project progresses.”

Initial Lottery support and development funding for a further two parks has also been announced today. This money will enable projects to take forward major restoration and redevelopment plans in preparation for securing a confirmed grant.

Wilton Lodge Park, Hawick
First-round pass* of £2m, including £100,000 development funding
Wilton Lodge Park is the town of Hawick's park. Sitting within the park, Wilton Lodge House is used as the Hawick Museum and Scott Gallery and receives approximately 12,000 visitors every year. The surrounding landscape is made up of mature wooded areas, formal landscaping and gardens. Plans for the park include reinstating the lost bandstand, restoring the war memorial and the Macnee fountain. The redundant café building will be conserved and extended, horticultural training and education programmes will be provided for the local community and the important history of rugby and motorbike racing will be appropriately celebrated.

The Heritage Lottery Fund last year invested £700,000 in the regeneration of Hawick through its Townscape Heritage Scheme.

Len Wyse, Executive Member for Environmental Services at Scottish Borders Council, said: "This is excellent news for the Borders and the town of Hawick. This reflects all that is good about the Borders and seeing communities working together to achieve shared goals. I hope to join in the celebrations for the 500th year of the Common Riding in the restored/refurbished park in 2014 following a successful stage two application."

Rouken Glen Park, Thornliebank, East Renfrewshire
First-round pass* of £2m, including £123,200 development funding
Covering 58ha, Rouken Glen Park is one of Scotland's largest parks and is a popular destination being only 6 miles from Glasgow city centre. One side of the park is laid out formally, reminiscent of its beginnings as Estate Grounds to Thornliebank House, with paths and mown grass while the other is covered in woodland and meadow hiding the picturesque 19th-century landscape of walks and waterfalls. It is known for its geological and archaeological importance including features such as a cup and ring marked rock dating from the Neolithic or Bronze Age period. The park has also acted as the backdrop to a number of films including Trainspotting. East Renfrewshire Council, with support from the Friends of Rouken Glen, plans to restore some of the park's features, including the walled garden, boating pond and glen path (Lovers' Walk). Volunteers will help uncover the natural and historic interest in the park which will be presented in a new exhibition space in the refurbished pavilion.

Environment convener, Councillor Eddie Phillips, said: "I am delighted to hear the wonderful news that lottery funding is to become available to East Renfrewshire Council to regenerate Rouken Glen Park. Since the park opened in 1906 people of all nationalities have found peace and tranquillity walking along its paths admiring its beautifully landscaped gardens, waterfall and glen. In fact being a few miles from the city centre the park has become a popular location for TV and film companies. Programmes such as Rab C Nesbitt and films such as Trainspotting and Shallow Grave were filmed in Rouken Glen.

"Rouken Glen Park is a major tourist attraction in East Renfrewshire and thousands flock to events such as the annual running festival, Tartan Day and our family fun day. We are currently developing proposals to enhance the events programme and improve promotion and marketing."

Notes to editors

*A first-round pass means the project meets our criteria for funding and we believe it has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award.

The Parks for People programme uses Lottery funds to support the regeneration, conservation and increased enjoyment of public parks. Over the past three years HLF has invested £70m across the UK.

HLF continues to fund public park projects in 2011 with an investment of £20million each year. The next closing date for applications is 28 February 2011.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage.To date it has invested over £500million in Scotland's heritage.

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