Four historic UK parks win £6.4m Lottery investment

20/12/2010

All four parks are now set to undergo major redevelopment work. Initial joint HLF / BIG support** and development funding totalling £1m has also been awarded to 11 parks across the UK.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of the Heritage Lottery Fund, said: “Today’s investment is a great way to end the year and will provide these parks with much-needed financial support. A local park is a vital resource for surrounding communities and can often be people’s only available green space for recreation and leisure. We are absolutely committed to supporting historic parks across the UK and by doing so protecting the wonderful legacy that was left to us by the Victorians.”

Anna Southall, Acting Chair of the Big Lottery Fund, said: “The historic parks awarded Lottery funding today are at the heart of their local communities. BIG is delighted to be playing a role in restoring and maintaining these wonderful parks to ensure that they continue to bring joy and to play a vital part in the lives of generations of local residents and visitors alike.”

David Tibbatts, General & Business Development Manager, GreenSpace said: “The support for public parks provided by Lottery funding has always been greatly needed and appreciated; both by the dedicated teams that look after our green spaces and by those that use and love them. HLF and BIG have made the greatest contribution to green space improvement, providing funding that hasn’t just restored and conserved lost and vulnerable heritage features; it has transformed spaces, re-energised them and restored their position at the heart of communities.”

Confirmed funding of £6.4m has been awarded to the following parks:

Wandle Park, Croydon, London – confirmed HLF/BIG grant of £1.9m
Wandle Park, created in 1890, is one of the oldest parks in Croydon. Over the years, the park has lost many of its original historic features, including the River Wandle, which has lain buried beneath the park since 1967. A priority for the project will be unearthing this river for the first time in over 40 years.

HLF and BIG’s investment will help restore the park’s original Victorian character by reviving features such as the bandstand, water-fountain, ornamental planting and part of the original boating lake. An extensive activity plan will also be put in place offering literary and heritage events, volunteer days, environmental projects and school visits.

Silloth-on-Solway, The Green, Allerdale, Cumbria – confirmed HLF/BIG grant of £1.2m
The Green lies between the picturesque North Cumbrian coastline and the Victorian town buildings located fronting onto it. A busy local park it is much loved by the surrounding community and hosts a range of events including: music and food festivals; a vintage rally; markets and a kite festival.
HLF/BIG’s grant will restore some of The Green’s most historic features, including the Victorian Pagoda, the Edwardian toilets and the 1950s Rose Garden which was built to commemorate Queen Elizabeth’s Coronation as well as a providing a new waterplay and events area. Training will be provided for up to 80 new staff and volunteers in nature conservation, restoration and construction skills and how to effectively lead guided walks.

Parks in Scotland and Wales - HLF supported only

Cwmdonkin Park, Swansea - confirmed HLF grant of £820,000
Once described by Welsh poet, Dylan Thomas, as ‘a world within the world of the sea town’, Cwmdonkin Park plays a significant role in the surrounding community. Opened in 1874, the park is located within the Ffynone Conservation Area, forms part of the Dylan Thomas trail and attracts many thousands of visitors a year.

The HLF grant will help restore the park's Victorian character including the bowls pavilion, unique cockleshell path and water garden. Volunteering opportunities will be created through the existing Friends Group which will run guided walks and poetry and writing sessions as well as contributing to conservation and gardening work.

Duthie Park, Aberdeen – confirmed HLF grant of £2.5m
Duthie Park, home to the David Welch Winter Gardens and one of Scotland’s most popular parks, attracts over 500,000 visitors every year. An outstanding example of a late-Victorian park, it is also used for music festivals and community events.

HLF’s grant will help rejuvenate the park by restoring its various ponds and a fountain to full working order, returning the unique mound feature to its original striking design and the original promenade will be re-established. The active Friends Group will lead community activities designed to get local people and volunteers involved.

First-round passes have also been awarded to the following parks:
Initial Lottery support and development funding totalling almost £900,000 has also been awarded to the following 11 parks across the UK. This money will enable projects to develop detailed plans for major restoration and redevelopment, with a view to seeking confirmed funding totalling £15.8m.

Parks in Scotland and Wales – HLF initial support only

• Wilton Lodge Park, Hawick, Scottish Borders - first-round pass of £2m, including £100,000 development funding
Wilton Lodge Park is the town of Hawick’s main green space. Sitting within the park, Wilton Lodge House is today 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 ageing café building will be conserved and extended and horticultural training and education programmes will be provided for the local community.

• Rouken Glen Park, East Renfrewshire - first-round pass of £2m, including £123,233 development funding
Rouken Glen Park, previously a grand private estate in a picturesque glen, is known for its archaeologically important features such as cup and ring marked rocks dating from the Neolithic or Bronze Age period. East Renfrewshire Council, with support from the Friends of Rouken Glen, plans to restore some of the park’s features such as the historic walled garden, boating pond and Glen path. Plans also include utilising a park training centre where there will be opportunities for to provide training in horticultural and landscape skills

• Wepre Park, Flintshire - first-round pass of £598,200, including £30,700 development funding
Situated on the outskirts Connah's Quay, North East Wales, this country park was part of an important 18th-century estate and the backdrop to Ewloe Castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument. In the 1940s, the land was purchased by Flintshire County Council and gradually transformed in the post-war period into a public park. The Council’s plans include restoring the Old Hall Gardens and developing a new community garden which will provide space for learning

and training sessions as well as improved access to these features.

• Margam Country Park, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council - first-round pass of £1,313,700 including £37,500 development funding
Margam County Park, overlooking Swansea Bay, is an important historical landscape and home to the remains of a Cistercian Abbey. The park annually attracts 200,000 visitors and features 12th-century monastic remains, 19th-century Margam Castle and Georgian Orangery. Plans for the park include making important repairs to the landscape and improving training and volunteer opportunities

Parks in England - joint initial HLF / BIG support**

• Eastwood Park, Chesterfield, Derbyshire – first-round pass of £988,300, including £50,800 development funding
Formerly part of the Hasland House estate, Eastwood Park was given to the community in 1913 by Alderman Eastwood. The house was demolished in the 1930s but the park still contains historical elements such as the red brick village hall and lodge. Alongside making vital repairs to the park's historic features, new volunteering opportunities and community events will help involve local people who are passionate about it.

• Richmond Park, Isabella Plantation, Richmond, London – first-round pass of £1.5m, including £164,300 development funding
Richmond Park, the largest Royal Park in London, is home to 650 deer and a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest. The park's Isabella Plantation is an enclosed woodland garden which houses collections of historically important camellias and rhododendrons plus many other rare trees and shrubs. Plans include improving and conserving the existing plant collections and providing educational activities for visitors.

• Runcorn Hill Park, Runcorn, Cheshire – first-round pass of £949,600, including £40,000 development funding
Runcorn Hill Park, officially opened in 1922, has been in use as a public space since 1898 when Halton Borough Council acquired it from the Cholmondley Estate. The park has a rich industrial history, the remains of which can still be seen in the form of several quarry faces and mineral tramways. The Council plans to restore and conserve historic features and the landscape, as well as creating new activities encouraging the local community to get involved.

• Drake's Place Gardens and Reservoir, Plymouth – first-round pass of £592,300, including £56,700 development funding
The original site dates back to the 16th century with strong connections to Sir Francis Drake. 'Drake's Leat'***, completed in 1591, brought water from Dartmoor to Plymouth; Drake also had corn mills on the site. The increasing demand for water led to the construction of two reservoirs in the 1800s. The project aims to restore this historic area as a focal point for the community with opportunities for leisure, learning and conservation skills training.

• Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge, Dudley – first-round pass of £1.9m, including £116,100 development funding
Mary Stevens Park, comprising formal gardens and open parkland, is located just outside the town centre. The park surrounds Heath House which once displayed a collection of historic glass and was used as a hospital for injured soldiers in World War One. Plans include restoring the park's historic features such as the ornamental main entrance gates, the bandstand and Heath Pool. The Friends and other active user groups will play an important part in developing activities for local people.

• West Park, Goole, North Humberside – first-round pass of £674,300, including £24,800 development funding
West Park was laid out in 1923 in the shape of a crown during the last national depression. Most of the work was

carried out by the unemployed people of the town. In 1933, HRH Prince George visited Goole to present the Charter to the people of Goole turning the town into a municipal borough. He also visited the park to plant an oak tree to celebrate the event; the tree still remains to this day. The project aims to carry out vital refurbishment work and offer community events for local residents.

• Cliffe Castle Park, Keighley, West Yorkshire – first-round pass of £3.3m, including £149,500 development funding

The gardens of Cliffe Castle were created by wealthy mill owner Henry Isaac Butterfield in the 1870s. Now a public park, it is home to an abundance of fascinating historical features including a series of cascading terraces, two ornamental fountains, rockeries, a grotto, an isolated tower and an ancient highway called Dark Lane. Bradford Council aims to restore the most significant landscape features, improve links between the house and grounds and run a programme of activities and educational events.

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.

** 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.

*** A watercourse, constructed in the late 16th century, to tap the River Meavy on Dartmoor in order to supply Plymouth with water.

Six projects involved in today's announcements did not receive BIG funding and were HLF funded only. The projects, in Scotland and Wales are as follows: Cwmdonkin Park, Duthie Park, Wilton Lodge Park, Rouken Glen Park, Wepre Park and Margam County Park. Projects in England received joint HLF/BIG funding.

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 from 2006 to deliver a multi-million pound investment in public parks of £150m. Over the past three years, the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) has invested up to £80m (in England only) with £70m coming from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the UK.

HLF is continuing to fund public park projects in 2011 with an investment of £20m each year. The Big Lottery Fund (BIG) remains committed to working in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in making a success of the Parks for People programme and has allocated £10 million in its grant budget for 2010/11 towards the programme in England. To find our more about Parks for People programme.

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. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

Since 1994, HLF has awarded a total of £527m to over 550 public parks across the UK.

The Big Lottery Fund (BIG) rolls out close to £2million in Lottery good cause money every 24 hours, which together with other Lottery distributors means that across the UK most people are within a few miles of a Lottery-funded project. BIG, the largest of the National Lottery good cause distributors, has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK since its inception in June 2004. The Big Lottery Fund and its predecessor bodies have invested more than £1.3billion in environmental initiatives. www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Further information

Laura Bates or Katie Owen, HLF Press Office on 0207 591 6027 / 6036 / 07973 613 820 or lbates@hlf.org.uk / katieo@hlf.org.uk

Julia Sweidan, BIG Press Office on 020 7211 1818 julia.sweidan@biglotteryfund.org.uk