Festive cheer for Cwmdonkin Park with £820,000 Lottery investment

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Opened in 1874, the Grade II listed Cwmdonkin Park is one of Wales' oldest public parks and plays a significant role in the surrounding community. Made famous by Dylan Thomas who once described it as 'a world within the world of the sea town', the park is located within Ffynone Conservation Area and forms part of the Dylan Thomas trail. It attracts many thousands of visitors every year.

The City and County of Swansea will use the HLF grant to help restore the park's Victorian character including the Bowls Pavilion and unique cockleshell path and other historic features. The project will also focus on increasing interpretation of its links with Dylan Thomas and improving facilities to establish it as a tourism destination for the city. The aim is to complete work in time for the centenary of the poet's birth in October 2014.

The continued involvement of community groups and committed volunteers, in particular the Friends of Cwmdonkin Park and the Dylan Thomas Society, is vital to the success of the project. More volunteers are needed and local people are being asked to get involved and support the Friends.

All volunteers will be given training on a range of skills from wildlife identification to events organisation and IT, and will help run guided walks, poetry and writing sessions as well as contributing to conservation and gardening work.

The project will also fund the employment of a seasonal park keeper to ensure the future management and maintenance of the park. Primary and secondary school packs will be created to help schools get the most out of their visit to the park with research and activity guides.

Dan Clayton-Jones, Chair of HLF in Wales, said: "Today's investment is a great way to end the year and will provide Cwmdonkin with much-needed financial support. This 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 and this award brings our total investment across Wales to well over £25 million."

Cllr Graham Thomas, Swansea Council's Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation and Tourism, said: "Dylan Thomas is Swansea's most famous son and Cwmdonkin Park is one of the locations in the city that's synonymous with the poet.

"It's therefore very fitting that plans are in place to revamp the park in time for the 100th anniversary of his birth and I'm delighted we've received such a generous grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to help us realise our goal.

"The revamp will not only commemorate a man who put Swansea on the world stage but it will also give the people of Swansea an enhanced environment for recreation and relaxation."

HLF also announced today it has awarded a grant of £37,500 to Neath Port Talbot County Council (NPTCBC) to develop proposals for the £1.3m redevelopment of Margam Country Park. Margam Country 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 includes the 19th-century Margam Castle and Georgian Orangery. The first round pass** means NPTCBC can now develop their plans for the park which include making important repairs to the landscape and improving training and volunteer opportunities.

Notes to editors

* HLF made an initial grant of £19,400 to develop the proposals of Cwmdonkin Park in December 2009. The announcement confirms the full grant of £820,,000 has been secured.

** 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.

HLF has made 147 awards in Swansea amounting to £17,443,680 including the refurbishment of Swansea's Brynmill Park which was successfully completed in 2010.

HLF is continuing to fund public park projects in 2011. 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. 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.

Further information

Kate Sullivan or Helen Newton on 02920 764100 or hlf@equinoxcommunications.co.uk