Eight parks given a new lease of life thanks to £15.9m Lottery investment

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HLF and the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) have also jointly awarded £3.5m to two further parks in Godalming, Surrey and Nottingham. All parks can now begin major redevelopment work.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of the Heritage Lottery Fund, said on behalf of HLF and the Big Lottery Fund: “Lottery funding continues to provide an essential source of investment for our parks and is ensuring that they remain at the heart of their local communities. We are fortunate to have such a wonderful legacy of public parks, especially in urban areas where they make such a difference to our daily lives”

Alan Titchmarsh, gardener, television presenter and author, said: "Public parks are so great for local people and also support a wealth of wildlife species, making up an important part of the UK's natural habitat. That's why I welcome this Lottery funding that will improve these parks so they can be enjoyed for many years to come."

In the run-up to Love Parks Week[3], Paul Bramhill, Chief Executive of parks charity Greenspace, said: “Parks are essential for healthy, happy and strong communities; the benefits they bring are immense and are now beginning to be acknowledged. Now we must ensure they can continue to contribute so extensively to our environment and this can only be accomplished through continual recognition, reinvestment and sustainable management.”

Confirmed HLF funding of £12.4m has been awarded to the following parks:

Walpole Park, Ealing, London – confirmed HLF grant of £2.4m
Walpole Park’s gardens and lawns are the backdrop to the Grade I listed Pitzhanger Manor. Sitting in the heart of Ealing town centre, the park has a number of historic features including a Grade II* listed rustic bridge, a Portland stone bench and a lodge building. The park was opened to the public in 1901 and since then has hosted a wide range of community events and activities, such as the Ealing Summer Music and Comedy Festival, country dancing and bandstand concerts.

HLF’s grant will help restore the park to its original beauty and improve its visitor facilities. The park will undergo major conservation to recreate the Regency planting and reinstate the kitchen garden. Ealing Council will provide extensive volunteering opportunities aiming to work with over 150 volunteers a year as well as educational activities.

Raphael Park, Romford, Essex – confirmed HLF grant of £1.7m
Romford’s first municipal public park, Raphael Park, was officially opened in 1904 and has changed little over the years. It contains remnants of the Gidea Hall Estate that was in existence from the 12th to the 19th century plus Black’s Lake and the Grade II listed Black's Bridge, built in classical Georgian style by James Wyatt.

HLF’s grant will enable essential conservation work. The Park Lodge will be extended to provide a new cafe, community and education resources and a base for the new Park Manager. Havering Borough Council will also offer a varied range of volunteer activities including the provision of guided walks and talks.

Felixstowe Seafront Gardens, Suffolk – confirmed HLF grant of £2.1m
Seaside holidays have been part of Felixstowe's identity for over 100 years. This project will bring these period gardens back to life for the local community and tourists to enjoy. The grant will enable Suffolk Coastal DC to greatly improve public paths throughout the Gardens, restore the Garden's shelters and ponds, recreate original planting designs and restore lost views.

The location of the gardens means that the site is also an important resting spot for migrating birds and wildlife habitats will be conserved, including the habitat for a locally important population of wall lizards. The project will provide many new opportunities for people to gain new skills and get involved in historic planting, running community events and interpreting the site's heritage

Exhibition Park, Newcastle-upon-Tyne – confirmed HLF grant of £2.4m
Located in the heart of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Exhibition Park is a popular urban green space. There has been a park on this site for over a century and it was originally created as part of the 1870 Newcastle-upon-Tyne Improvement Act. The park has hosted a range of events including the Royal Jubilee exhibition in 1887 and the North East Coast Exhibition in 1929 which attracted 4m visitors.

HLF's grant will be used to conserve the park's Grade II listed bandstand, the boathouse and the croquet pavilion. New wildlife areas surrounding the lake will be created, including reed beds and wetland fens. Local people are playing an active role in the project have taken part in the development of the adventure play areas, environmental training schemes and ongoing maintenance.

Victoria Park, St. Helens, Merseyside – confirmed HLF grant of £3m
Victoria Park, situated on the outskirts of St. Helens, is a busy local park. Originally a private house and garden, it was sold to St. Helens Corporation who opened it in 1886 as the first public park in the town. It was renamed Victoria Park for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887.

HLF's grant will help St. Helens Borough Council carry out much-needed restoration work to the park. This includes: conserving the original entrance gates; the lodge house; the pond and folly, walled garden and conservatory. Volunteers will receive a whole host of training including event planning and tree identification, whilst staff will have the opportunity to develop skills including grounds' maintenance and wildflower meadow creation.

Dalmuir Park, Dunbartonshire – confirmed HLF grant of £859,600
Dalmuir Park was established in 1906 from the former landscape of Dalmuir House to provide the local community with an essential green space in the industrial town. Built on a hill top, the park still reflects its 18th-century heritage: the fountain and former bandstand were constructed in 1907 and turned the park into the focal point of social activity including a number of political rallies between 1945 and 1963.

HLF's grant will help restore the park and its most historic features including repairing the ornate Edwardian fountain and canopy, duck pond and ornamental planting. It will also enable West Dunbartonshire Council to offer a range of training opportunities for the Friends Group including park management and volunteer development. Work placements and horticultural apprenticeships will also be made available.

Joint HLF/BIG confirmed funding – total investment £3.5m

Nottingham Forest Recreation Ground – confirmed HLF/BIG grant of £3.2m
The Forest Recreation Ground has played an important part in the city since 1845 when the Inclosure Act made Nottingham's local fields open to the public to ease overcrowding. The park design was influenced by prolific garden designer Sir Joseph Paxton; it is a fine example of a Victorian park for outdoor recreation. Over the years the Recreation Ground has been home to a cricket ground and a racecourse that was once reputed to be the best in the country.

The joint HLF/BIG grant will help restore the grounds, including the Grade II listed lodge and pavilion building, transforming them into new visitor facilities. An extensive range of valuable training opportunities, including construction training, will also be offered as a key part of the project. Specialist heritage and horticulture skills will also be made available.

Phillips Memorial Park, Godalming, Surrey – confirmed HLF/BIG grant of £335,000
Phillips Memorial Park, situated at the heart of Godalming, runs alongside the River Wey and dates back to 1913. The park is made up of three distinct areas: the original Phillips Memorial Ground; an additional pleasure ground; and the Burys Youth Field. The Cloister was built in 1913 to commemorate Jack Phillips who was the Chief Wireless Telegraphist on the *RMS Titanic*. The project will coincide with the 100th anniversary of the *Titanic*'s voyage.

HLF/BIG's grant will enable Waverley Borough Council to make extensive repairs to the Cloister, restore the original landscape and planting design and improve the pond and surrounding wildlife habitats. A number of volunteers will help with a new park maintenance and management programme and community activities. They will also be trained in horticulture, garden design and plant identification. Local people will benefit from a range of events based around the park's fascinating *Titanic* connection.

Initial support[2] has also been awarded to the following parks:
Initial Lottery support and development funding totalling £725,427 has also been awarded to the following 10 parks across the UK. This money will enable the projects to develop detailed plans for future major restoration and redevelopment work.

Joint initial HLF/BIG support

- **Boultham Park, Lincoln – initial support for a £2.7m bid, including £22,500 development funding**
  Boultham Park, originally part of a large private estate, dates from the 1800s. The park is made up of both natural and man-made features including a large open lake, mature woodland and flat grassland. The project will carry out much-needed conservation work to the whole site (a key natural habitat in the area) transform the disused stable block into a heritage skills training centre for people with learning disabilities and the general public and enable volunteers to take part in grounds' maintenance and conservation projects.
- **West Hackney Recreation Ground, London – initial support for a £639,200 bid, including £45,700 development funding**
  The West Hackney Recreation Ground is a former burial ground in the heart of East London, and one of the first sites to be supported by the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association. The project plans to re-integerate the 3 key spaces of the site; the recreation ground, St Paul's burial ground and the churchyard. Activities will include stabilising headstones and recreating the original planting designs as well as increasing community involvement in the site through new volunteering opportunities and local school visits.
- **Alexandra Road Park, Camden, London – initial support for a £1.2m bid, including £90,000 development funding**

Alexandra Road Park, located within a distinguished Grade II* 1970s housing estate and designed by landscape architect Janet Jack, is a linear park with a series of outdoor rooms with different characters for relaxation and play. It is a visionary example of the landscaping and architecture of post-war London. Camden Council working with the Tenants and Residents Association plans to restore the park and improve wildlife habitats including installing bird and bat boxes and bee hives.

- **Plashet Park, Newham, London – initial support for a £1.7m bid, including £66,000 development funding**
  An example of a 19th-century municipal park, Plashet Park was opened in 1891. The name 'Plashet' means 'enclosure in the wood' and comes from early local history reports from the area. The London Borough of Newham's plans include restoring the wider landscape, introducing new and improved facilities and working with the Friends Group and volunteers who will participate in reinvigorating the park through activities and community events.
- **Wharton Park, Durham – initial support for £1.5m bid, including £44,000 development funding**
  Opened in 1858, Wharton Park was originally land that formed part of the Dryburn Hall Gardens owned by W. L. Wharton, Chairman of the North Eastern Railway. Durham County Council plans to restore the park and its historic features, including the amphitheatre dating back to 1896. The park is the site of the first Durham Miners' Gala held in 1871, and the project will explore the history of this important event with the local community.
- **Castle Vale Park and Coronation Park, Berwick-upon-Tweed – initial support for a £1.04m bid, including £53,200 development funding**
  Coronation Park and Castle Vale Park are located adjacent to the castle in the heart of Berwick-upon-Tweed. Coronation Park was created in 1937 to commemorate the coronation of George VI and Castle Vale Park was built in 1929. Plans will restore both parks' original 1930s features, including the lily pond and rose garden, as well as conserving the 19th-century Conqueror's Well in Castle Vale Park.
- **Moor Park, Preston – initial support for a £1.5m bid, including £51,000 development funding**
  Moor Park, Preston's largest and oldest public park, was formerly known as Preston Moor, and was designated a public park in 1833. It was later landscaped by Edward Milner, a renowned landscape gardener, and his early design elements still remain today. Preston City Council plans to undertake a wide range of restoration work including to the Serpentine Lake and ornamental bridge. Horticultural training will also be offered to staff and volunteers.
- **Westgate Gardens, Canterbury – initial support for a £689,900 bid, including £37,600 development funding**
  Westgate Gardens is made up of formal gardens, recreation and play areas and semi- natural open space. The formal gardens were created for the Tower House, built as a private residence in the 1830s, and include the remains of the first Roman town wall. Canterbury City Council plans to conserve the gardens and involve the Friends Group and volunteers in park maintenance and community events.
- **Lightwoods Park, Sandwell – initial support for a £2.7m bid, including £250,900 development funding**
  Lightwoods Park was gifted to Birmingham Corporation in 1902 for use as a public park and ownership was transferred to Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council in 2010. It retains most of its early Edwardian lay-out and is home to the grade II listed Lightwoods House, a 19th century bandstand, two ornate drinking fountains and the Shakespeare Garden. Plans for the project include restoring many of the park's historic features and a range of community events, activities and educational and training opportunities.

HLF initial support only

- **Belleisle Park, South Ayrshire – initial support for a £1.5m bid, including £56,000 development funding**
  Belleisle Park was originally designed by Dr John Campbell of Wellwood, a local businessman who made his

fortune in the coalmining and tobacco trade, and bought the estate in 1775. South Ayrshire Council aims to conserve the park's remaining historic features such as the stable block, walled garden, lodge house and rockeries. The Friends Group will also support various volunteer training activities and public events.

Notes to editors

• [1] 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.

• [2] 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.

• [3]Love Parks Week (23-31 July 2011) is an annual campaign, organised by parks charity GreenSpace. Founded in 2006, the campaign has grown steadily and is now established as a major event that is celebrated in parks across the country. Each year hundreds of events take place enabling thousands of people to get out and enjoy their parks and help put forward the case for reinvestment.

• 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 period 2006-9, the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) 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 2011/12 with an investment of £20m each year. The next closing date for applications is 31 August 2011. 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 will allocate £5million in 2011/12 and another £5m in 2012/13.

Since 1994, HLF has awarded a total of £530m to over 550 public parks across the UK

• Big Lottery Fund (BIG)
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.

Further information

- Contact Laura Bates / Katie Owen, HLF Press Office, on 020 7591 6027 / 6036 or 07973 613 820 or lbates@hlf.org.uk / katieo@hlf.org.uk
- Julia Sweidan, BIG press office, on 020 7211 1818 or Julia.sweidan@biglotteryfund.org.uk