Hemel Water Gardens secures £2.4m of Lottery



Hemel Water Gardens

The project will deliver:

- a restored flower garden (opposite Bank Court) with colourful planting inspired by the original scheme designed by Susan Jellicoe
- a new and exciting play area, specially designed for the Gardens with features' based on Geoffrey Jellicoe's serpent theme
- widened terrace and restored lime avenue, with space for a coffee kiosk and seating overlooking the play area and flower displays
- a growing area with raised beds and picnic tables, where horticultural sessions will be held for volunteers to pick up gardening tips and help care for the gardens
- a striking new community building to provide facilities for Friends, volunteers, school groups and learning organisations to get involved in maintenance and environmental tasks
  • enhancements to the river to improve water quality and create a better environment for fish
- access improvements to make it easier for everyone to enjoy all of the gardens
- new lighting to highlight the gardens' features and provide safe routes to the car parks
- new interpretation boards to explain the Gardens' history, and the plants and wildlife that can be discovered

Councillor Andrew Williams, Leader of Dacorum Borough Council said: "Our historic Water Gardens are an important part of the story of Hemel Hempstead, so it is fantastic that with this grant we will be able to restore the gardens to their full glory. This is a marvellous opportunity for Hemel Hempstead that, together with our exciting plans to transform the town centre, I'm positive will make the people of Dacorum proud."

Dacorum Borough Council will also be contributing £1million towards the project, which aims to restore Jellicoe's important new town garden into an outstanding public space and source of pride to local residents.

The detailed designs of the restoration project will now be prepared, with works expected to start in Spring 2015 and last for approximately one year.

Claire Richardson, Chair of Friends of the Water Gardens said: "This is fantastic news! The Friends of the Jellicoe Water Gardens have worked closely over the last year and a half with Dacorum Borough Council supporting the different stages of the bid. We, the Friends are delighted with the outcome and welcome more Friends to join our group to get involved at this exciting time."

This grant is part of a wider investment of £34.5million of Lottery money to 13 parks across the UK. It follows the publication of HLF's recent report *State of UK Public Parks 2014: Renaissance to Risk?* on 26 June. This revealed that two decades of public and Lottery investment has ensured that the majority of UK parks are in better condition but are at serious risk of decline unless innovative new ways of funding and maintaining them are found.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said on behalf of HLF and the Big Lottery Fund: "Our report revealed how valued public parks are by people and communities and how essential they are to our physical and emotional well-being. That's why HLF and the Big Lottery fund have invested over £700m in parks since 1996. But the report makes clear that our parks face an uncertain future and so it's exciting to see how this new investment is going some way towards helping parks like Hemel Water Gardens to find new ways of funding and maintaining them so they are still here to be enjoyed long into the future."

The restoration project is part of Dacorum Borough Council's £30m regeneration project to make Hemel Hempstead Town Centre, from the plough roundabout through to the Old Town, a busy, more vibrant place that more people want to live, work and visit. Find out more at Hemel Evolution website.

Notes to editors

This announcement can be followed on Twitter #parksmatter.

State of UK Public Parks 2014: Renaissance to risk?
To establish a national picture of the state of UK parks HLF commissioned three new UK-wide surveys: a survey of local authority park managers, a survey of park friends and user groups, and a public opinion survey undertaken by Ipsos MORI. The research has also drawn on other pre-existing data to assess how the condition of parks has changed over time, and to cross-check our results. Details of the report findings can be found at State of UK Public Parks.

The Parks for People programme uses Lottery funds to support the regeneration, conservation and increased enjoyment of public parks and cemeteries. 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. Find out more about how to apply at our Parks for People programme page.

Stay up to date with the project by following @DacorumBC on Twitter or visit the Hemel Evolution website.

Further information

Dacorum Borough Council: Claire Covington, Strategic Planning and Regeneration Officer on 01442 228 788, email claire.covington@dacorum.gov.uk.