New Year heralds £1.2m investment for Devizes historic park

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This money from the two Lottery distributors will give a vital boost to plans for this popular local park.

Nerys Watts, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South West, said: “What better time to be investing in Hillworth Park than at the beginning of the New Year! People often look to their local public park as a place to get fit, spend more time with family and friends or just take time out for calm reflection. We continue to invest in parks because we know that people really benefit from all these sorts of activities and from having green open spaces to enjoy.”

Mark Cotton, the Big Lottery Fund’s Head of Region for the South West, said: “Hillworth Park is a popular stopping place for local residents and visitors to the area alike. It already offers a great number of activities for people of all ages and interests and the lottery funding will contribute towards the necessary restoration and further development of this much-loved green space that will allow it to continue to live up to its great potential.”

Chris Packham, environmentalist and broadcaster, added: “It looks like 2010 will be another bumper year for parks! This is great news bringing some much-needed New Year cheer to communities in three different parts of the country. We know what a big difference a well-maintained park can make to people’s lives and this investment from HLF and BIG will do just that by making these three parks just that little bit more special for visitors.”

Originally part of the extensive gardens of a large country house, Hillworth Park first opened to the public when the estate was purchased as a response to the post-war housing shortage. The park still retains fragments of its designed 18th/19th-century landscape and is now a popular venue for a variety of events such as the town’s Picnic in the Park.

This funding will enable a number of features to be restored including the Grade II listed Garden Pavilion and the children’s play areas. A volunteer ranger scheme will be introduced to help two newly-created posts of park wardens to manage the park. Local people will also have the opportunity to involved in activities in the park, through a fully funded arts programme and by contributing to the ‘people’s history’ recording that will be compiled as part of the project.

Sarah Todhunter, Town Clerk at Devizes Town Council, said: “What a way to start the New Year for our little town of Devizes. We are absolutely delighted that, thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery Fund, we will be able to restore Hillworth Park to its former glory as well as providing sports, play and community facilities for both our local people and visitors alike. It is a tribute to the huge amount of hard work that has gone into the bid, which will help to develop this very special place for generations to come.

“Hillworth Park is a community park and from the start this has been a true community project with massive involvement from local organisations and people, including the Friends of Hillworth Park. We would like to thank them for their huge support and enthusiasm in helping to shape the plans and proposals.”

Hillworth Park is one of three parks across the UK who are receiving confirmed grants totalling £9.3m* from HLF and BIG. Lloyd and Aveling Park in Waltham Forest, London has been awarded £3.48m to restore the park's historic features, revitalise the landscape and enhance the wildlife habitat. Walsall Arboretum, one of the oldest parks in the country, has been awarded £4.57m for a wide range of works, including restoration of the boathouse, two lakes, a

bandstand and the historic clock tower.

Notes to editors

* Today's Stage Two 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 Stage Two applications from these parks.

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 2009 to deliver a multi-million pound investment in public parks of £150m. Over the 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 2010 with an investment of £20m each year. The next closing date for applications is 1 March 2010. Parks for People programme grants range from £250,000 to £5m with two rounds of funding each year.

Every completed park project will be expected to achieve the annual prestigious Green Flag Award and in doing so demonstrate quality standards of care and upkeep.

Details of other parks funding announced today:

Lloyd and Aveling Park, Waltham Forest – £3.48m
Lloyd and Aveling Park is as popular with Walthamstow residents today as it was over a century ago. Once home to the artist William Morris as well as newspaper publisher Frank Lloyd, Lloyd Park was opened in 1900 with Aveling Park added in 1912. HLF and BIG's £3.48m grant will be used to restore the park's historic features, revitalise the landscape and enhance the wildlife habitat. New facilities include a café, gallery and community space, with an extensive programme of skills training and educational opportunities.

Walsall Arboretum – £4.57m
The Arboretum, located on the edge of Walsall town centre, is one of the oldest parks in the borough having opened in 1874. It attracts visitors from both Walsall and the rest of the Black Country and has developed over the years to reflect the changing population of the area. Features that will be restored thanks to HLF/BIG support include the Grade II listed boathouse, two lakes, a bandstand and the clock tower. The project will offer a wide range of activities involving schools and community groups.

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. HLF has invested £525m in 500 historic public parks, gardens, squares and promenades right 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. BIG has invested more than £700million in wider environmental initiatives www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Out of every pound spent on a National Lottery ticket, 28p goes directly to good causes. BIG is responsible for distributing half of the money to improve communities and the lives of people most in need. HLF distributes 16.67% of the money to heritage projects across the UK. www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk

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