

The Orangery as it might look after the project

The Borough Council submitted the Parks For People bid to regenerate one of the town's hidden gems and will now begin work to conserve and enhance the park's unique heritage as well as provide more attractions for visitors.

The HLF and Big Lottery Fund grant will be supplemented by funding from the Friends of Holywells Park and by the borough council.

Among the improvements made possible by the HLF / Big Lottery Fund grant are:

- a visitor centre in the stable block
- the restoration of the Orangery
- an open-air theatre space
- new toilets
- a fitness trail
- better access
- an outdoor classroom

and other improvements. The funding will also enable a series of events and activities to take place within the park that will encourage its increased use by wider and more diverse audience.

The project will bring to life a beautiful park, formerly the home of the Cobbold family, Ipswich's famed brewing dynasty, that is close to the waterfront and university and to a large part of Ipswich. It will underline Holywells Park's importance to both the heritage and future of Ipswich and its people.

Councillor Bryony Rudkin, Borough Council's Culture and Leisure portfolio-holder, said: "This is great news for Ipswich and for Holywells Park. We asked local people what they wanted to see improved and our bid reflected their views. We will now be able to undertake this important refurbishment to attract more visitors to one of Suffolk's finest parks and to ensure that people who come here have more to see and more to do. I am grateful to the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund for giving us this award and also want to thank everyone who worked on our bid – at the Council, the Friends of Holywells Park and the local community."

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund East of England, said: "We're delighted to be able to provide this much needed support for Hollywells Park, particularly in the current economic climate when it could not be more needed. Parks are an incredibly important amenity for all of us and add greatly to our quality of life, knitting communities together and acting as a green lung for our towns and cities. Hollywells Park in Ipswich is hugely important to the community it serves and now, with HLF / BIG funding we can help to secure its future."

Robin Gape, Chair of the Friends of Holywells Park, added: "We are very much looking forward to the changes, particularly the revival of the Orangery and the refurbishment of the Stable Block. We know play area users will welcome the installation of a toilet block, while the Visitor Centre will be an asset, as will the Changing Places facility. Meanwhile, we want to see lots of people coming to the park this year, when the changes get under way next year and in the years following."

Notes for editors

This announcement can be followed on Twitter #parksmatter.

Today's second-round pass awards are from the Parks for People programme which has a two-round application process. The full grant has now been awarded following a successful second-round application from these parks.

The Parks for People programme uses Lottery funds to support the regeneration, conservation and increased enjoyment of public parks and cemeteries. The programme aims to improve the local environment and put parks and cemeteries 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 2006-2013 the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) has committed up to £92m (in England only) and HLF has committed £140m to public parks across the UK.

HLF is continuing to fund public park projects in 2013/14 with an investment of £24m each year. The next closing date for applications is 31 August 2013. 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 £10m in 2013/14.

The Big Lottery Fund, 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. It was established by Parliament on 1 December 2006. Big Lottery website.

Love Parks Week is taking place this year from 27 July to 4 August 2013.Visit Love Parks Week's website.

Further information

Councillor Bryony Rudkin on 07752 870697

Councillor Judy Terry, opposition Conservative Group spokeswoman on 01473 210469.

Councillor Andrew Cann, opposition Liberal Democrat Group Leader on 07545 289190.

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