It’s a Lottery Christmas cracker for parks!

17/12/2012

Nine parks in England are getting in the festive mood today thanks to joint support totalling £13m from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Big Lottery Fund (BIG). A further £4.8m has been awarded separately by HLF for three parks in Scotland and Wales.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said on behalf of HLF and BIG: "We're delighted to be bringing a bit of seasonal cheer to a number of popular parks especially as demand for funding continues to be very high. It's been a tough year for those caring for our public parks but HLF and BIG's commitment to this important part of the UK’s heritage is unwavering.

"Parks enrich millions of people's lives on a daily basis – providing room to relax and reflect – and it's vital that we continue to value and protect them not just for ourselves but for the next generation too."

A wide range of locations – from former mining areas such as Staffordshire and Newcastle upon Tyne to London's bustling metropolis - are benefiting from today’s investment:

HLF / BIG joint confirmed grants - England

Hednesford Park, Cannock, Staffordshire – £2.2m
Hednesford Park, on the edge of Hednesford Town, was opened in 1931 and developed thanks to money being raised through a coal levy – with one penny per ton produced by local mines ensuring that £15,000 was raised. This restoration project will enable the park’s layout to be greatly improved with new fencing around the exterior as well as the First World War memorial located there plus an improved play area and new green gym. The pavilion will be refurbished and will provide a range of community and education facilities as well as a café. Two roles – a community and education officer and a community gardener – are being created to encourage greater involvement with the daily workings of the park.

Walker Park, Newcastle upon Tyne – £1.8m
Walker Park was opened in 1891 with the aim of catering for a large and growing industrial population. Surrounded by housing this green space is the only formal park in the area. It is well used by the local community and provides a range of recreational opportunities, from football to bowls. With HLF’s support, footpaths will be improved and a number of historic features restored and reinstated. The local community will also work with a range of artists to create an imaginative sculpture garden and a park ranger will be appointed to oversee a wider programme of activities and events.

Eureka Park, Swadlincote, Derbyshire – £547,300
Eureka Park in rural South Derbyshire is set to undergo a five-year restoration project. Plans will improve the physical appearance of the landscape and also emphasise the park's social history due to its strong links to both industrialisation and as a memorial to the two World Wars. A key aspiration is to increase the range of visitors, currently 50,000 annually, and a full-time community engagement officer will be employed to implement an increased programme of events and activities.

Plashet Park, Newham, London – £1.3m
Plashet Park, an example of 19th-century municipal park design, is enjoyed by over 600,000 visitors annually. Despite now being an urban space, the landscape was described in the 11th-century Domesday Book as being partly made up of woodland and marsh. The project has different strands including the repair of railings, footpaths and park furniture as well as improvements to the children's play area; one of its strengths is an active group of residents who are involved with aspects of the park's management.

The other five parks that have received confirmed funding today are:

- Drake's Place Gardens and Reservoir, Plymouth – £601,600
- Harlow Town Park, Essex - £1.8m
- Castle Vale Park and Coronation Park, Berwick upon Tweed - £890,700
- Runcorn Hill and Heath Park, Halton, Cheshire - £1.3m
- Markeaton Park, Derby, Derbyshire - £2.5m

HLF confirmed grants – Scotland and Wales

Scotland

Wilton Lodge Park, Hawick - £2.6m
Wilton Lodge Park, a private estate until 1889, welcomes about 240,000 visitors each year making it the second most-visited free attraction in the Scottish Borders. It is also home to the former Wilton Lodge mansion, now Hawick Museum and Scott Gallery. The park is made up of semi-natural mature wood areas, formal landscaping and gardens and the River Teviot which runs to the south of the 43ha site. Plans include reinstating the bandstand to its original design and location, improving the Riverside Promenade and paths and creating a new café with views of the river. Training and volunteering opportunities will be developed – focusing on an improved walled garden area - and overseen by an activity plan officer and a volunteer co-ordinator.

Wales

Margam Country Park, Port Talbot - £1.6m
Margam Country Park, overlooking Swansea Bay and parts of industrial Port Talbot, has a history spanning over 800 years and attracts over 200,000 visitors each year. The historic core contains a number of important buildings such as the remains of a 12th-century monastery, the 19th-century Margam Castle and the Georgian Orangery. The lowland wood pastures and parkland host a range of plants and wildlife and there is also a walled deer park. Plans include repairing and restoring the historic core of the park, providing better facilities and capitalising on the existing strong community involvement with the landscape by employing a volunteer co-ordinator.

Wepre Park in Connah's Quay, Deeside has also secured a grant of £583,400.

Projects in the pipeline – initial indication of support

Initial support plus £666,500 development funding has been awarded to four projects which can now progress plans in order to apply for a full Lottery grant:

- Hanley Park, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire – initial support for a £4.9m HLF / BIG bid, including £420,000 development funding

- Victoria Park, Ikeston, Derbyshire – initial support for a £682,400 HLF / BIG bid, including £60,600 development funding
- The Water Gardens, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire – initial support for a £2.4m HLF / BIG bid, including £106,000 development funding
- Ampthill Great Park, Bedford, Bedfordshire – initial support for a £450,700 HLF / BIG bid, including £79,900 development funding

HLF initial support – Scotland

- Dean Castle Country Park, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire – initial support for a £3.1m HLF bid, including £45,500 development funding

Notes to editors

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.

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. On occasion, an applicant with a first round pass will also be awarded development funding towards the development of their scheme.

The Parks for People programme uses Lottery funds to support the regeneration, conservation and increased enjoyment of public parks and the conservation of cemeteries. The programme aims to improve the local environment and put parks firmly back at the heart of community life. HLF and BIG will continue to fund public park projects from FY 2013 / 2014 to FY 2015 / 2016 with a joint investment of £100m.

HLF is continuing to fund public park projects in 2012 / 13 with an investment of £24m. The next closing date for applications is 28 February 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 with an allocation of £5m in 2012 / 13.

Over 170 delegates gathered at the Royal Geographical Society on 25 October for the HLF / Big Lottery Fund UK Public Parks Summit. The day included presentations from park experts from the USA and Denmark, as well as the UK, including an address from Communities Minister Don Foster.

Further information

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