Lottery funding success for Berwick parks

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The funding will now help to improve Castle Vale Park and Coronation Park, also known as Tommy the Miller's Park – which are located on either side of Berwick railway station and contain a wealth of heritage and natural history.

Improved features including footpaths, steps, handrails, horticultural displays, entrances and signage in each of the parks are just some of the plans which can now be implemented by the project team.

As well as the works 'on-the-ground', a park development officer will be employed to increase community use of the parks by involving local schools, more volunteers and providing events and activities.

Northumberland County Council has been working in partnership with Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council and the Castlegate Area Residents Association (CARA) to develop future plans for the parks, in close consultation with local people.

Councillor Alan Thompson, Executive Member responsible for Neighbourhood Services at Northumberland County Council said: "Achieving this funding is fantastic news and we look forward to working with our partners to see the project come to fruition. This is an excellent example of partnership working between local residents and local authorities to upgrade and enhance important public assets."

Town Mayor of Berwick-upon-Tweed, Councillor John Robertson, said: "This is excellent and exciting news for Berwick, and a perfect way to round off the year. The award of this grant is richly deserved after the very hard work of officers and volunteers, and the restoration of these parks will be warmly welcomed by the community and add to the attraction of Berwick to visitors."

Mrs Jessie Dodds, chairman of Castlegate Area Residents Association, said: "This is absolutely wonderful news. We have been cleaning up the parks and doing other pieces of work since back in 1999, with the benefit of small amounts of funding. This however will take it to a whole new level – it really is the icing on the cake. Berwick has such a rich history and I am particularly pleased that we are able to create a garden rich in history to match that of the town."

Speaking on behalf of HLF and BIG, Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said: "We're delighted to be bringing a bit of seasonal cheer to a number of popular parks, including Castle Vale Park and Coronation 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."

The plans have been drawn up in conjunction with TGP Landscape Architects, and seek to build on the excellent work done by CARA over the past ten years. This has included restoration of rock gardens and refurbishment of the rose garden in Castle Vale Park.

Berwicks Parks Project website.

Notes to editors:

Castle Vale Park

Castle Vale Park lies to the east of Berwick train station, on the northern banks of the River Tweed. A long and narrow park, it was renowned for its horticultural displays and its heyday is fondly remembered by older Berwick residents. The park land was donated to the town of Berwick by Mr John Cairns in 1928 and opened to the public in 1931.

The park contains a lily pond, that once was filled with water and now with soil and plants, a rose garden, spectacular views of the Royal Border Bridge. It links the north end of Tweed Street and Castlegate in the town centre to the New Road, a riverside walkway built in 1815.

Castle Vale Park is the starting point, or the finishing point depending on your direction of travel, of the Northumberland Coastal Path.

Coronation Park

Coronation Park, found just to the west of the train station is also known as Tommy the Miller's Park. It was planted and opened to the public as a park in the Spring 1937 for the coronation of King George VI, although it had been originally intended to celebrate the coronation of Edward VIII, before his abdication.

This is a small park of about one acre, bordered to the north by Castle Terrace and to the south by a privately owned grazing field known as Tommy the Miller's Field.

This park contains shrub beds and shelters, stunning views of the River Tweed and excellent views of the White Wall of Berwick Castle. Berwick Castle was demolished in the 1840s by the North British Railway so they could complete the railway line from Edinburgh to Berwick.

Notes to editors

Today’s second-round pass award is 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.

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.

Since 1994, HLF has awarded a total of £640m to over 700 public parks across the UK.

Big Lottery Fund (BIG): 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.

The Big Lottery Fund, the largest of the National Lottery Good Causes 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 Fund website.

Further information

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