Rivington Terraced Gardens get the green light

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The new plan to secure the future of historic structures and features within the gardens has been created by landowners United Utilities and environmental charity Groundwork through their flagship United Futures partnership, working together with the Rivington Heritage Trust.

They have been awarded a development grant of £60,000 in order to develop detailed proposals for the restoration work, before moving to the next stage of the grants process.

Steve Fraser, United Utilities' Managing Director, said: "For years we have been working with Rivington Heritage Trust to find a way of safeguarding this historic site. It's fantastic news that we've reached this first stage, and testament to a lot of hard work behind the scenes. There's more hard work to come but I'm confident that this is the start of a brighter future for the Gardens and the visitors who enjoy them."

Rivington's Terraced Gardens, near Rivington Pike, Lancashire, were designed in the 1920s by Edwardian designer, Thomas Mawson, for the soap magnate Lord William Leverhulme. They later fell into disrepair and became overgrown.

The conservation project aims to carry out repairs to decaying structures such as the Pigeon Tower, preventing further decay. It will also improve access around the Gardens and make targeted landscape improvements to give visitors a tantalising glimpse into the Gardens' past. These improvements to the Gardens will enable them to be better managed in the future, safeguarding their heritage for generations to come.

Andrew Darron, Groundwork's Executive Director, said: "We're over the moon that we've jumped this major first hurdle in securing the future of Rivington Terraced Gardens. These 'lost gardens' were once a rich man's plaything, but we aim to ensure they're able to be enjoyed by everyone and used as a site where people can develop new skills."

If successful, the project will also research the Garden's fascinating history and display it in various formats - including digitally - for future visitors. The Gardens could become a future heritage attraction for the region as well as a much-loved green space for the local community.

There will be lots of opportunities for people to be involved in the future of the site with a programme of training courses and volunteering taking place in the Gardens as part of the redevelopment work.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said on behalf of HLF and the Big Lottery Fund: "We're delighted to be able to provide this much needed support for Rivington Terraced Gardens, when it could not be more needed. Many public parks are really suffering in the current economic climate so this is particularly good news for the area. Parks are important to all of us and add so much to our quality of life. Rivington Terraced Gardens will help to bring the local community together and now, we can help to secure its future."

Notes to editors

* A first-round pass means the project meets HLF 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. The programme aims to improve the local environment and put parks firmly back at the heart of community life. Visit the programme page for more information.

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 Fund website.

United Utilities provides water and wastewater services to 7 million people across the North West. As part of their regular business activities, United Utilities manages nearly 57,000 hectares of water catchment land, of which Rivington Terraced Gardens is a part. The company encourages public access and recreation while protecting water quality, wildlife and habitats. United Utilities website.

Groundwork is the community charity with a green heart. We change places and change lives in the areas that need it most. We do this by improving people's prospects, promoting greener living and working and creating better places. Groundwork Lancashire West & Wigan website.

United Futures is the flagship community partnership between United Utilities and Groundwork. The scheme has invested over of £5.5m in local communities across the North West to support worthwhile local initiatives. Projects address a range of economic, social and environmental issues.

The Rivington Heritage Trust's primary activity is to consult with stakeholders on the use and development of Rivington Terraced Gardens for the benefit of the public and the environment. Comprising a board of voluntary Trustees, RHT operates strategically to enhance the quality of, and access to, the environmental and heritage assets of the Terraced Gardens. Rivington Heritage Trust website.

Further information

HLF press office: James Steward on 020 7591 6056 / james.steward@hlf.org.uk or Laura Bates on 020 7591 6027 / lbates@hlf.org.uk