Time for celebration at historic park

20/05/2011

The free celebration event is open to all, and includes face painting, willow weaving, craft activities, story telling and live music in the newly refurbished bandstand. It takes place from 12 noon until 4pm.

Barnes Park has undergone a raft of improvements over the last 18 months, thanks largely to a grant of £2.4m from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This was furthered by significant contributions of £800,000 from Sunderland City Council, £150,000 from CDENT, £200,000 from Play Pathfinder and £100,000 from Local Transport Plan.

Councillor Paul Watson, Leader of Sunderland City Council, said: “I am absolutely delighted that the redevelopment of Barnes Park is fully complete and we can now invite the public in to start enjoying everything it has to offer.

“The council has worked closely with key partners including the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the park has undergone an extensive regeneration to a very high standard. The community, including local schools and disabled advocacy groups have been kept involved throughout the redevelopment, and this is reflected in the finished product.

“The park is now one of the most accessible in the country, and is jam packed with family friendly facilities. I am sure everyone will have a fantastic time on Saturday.”

A key element of the redevelopment has been to make the whole park - and particularly the play areas - accessible to all, including those who are severely disabled.

As well as specialist play equipment there is a changing/toilet pavilion fully equipped to support those caring for disabled children and adults and parking – including a number of disabled parking bays. It is the only park in the region equipped with disabled changing facilities.

Andrew Cowe, from disabled advocacy group, Sunderland People First, said: “The park looks excellent and I am really pleased with the work which has gone into making it accessible for disabled people. I’m really looking forward to the celebration event to mark the opening.”

Some of the other key features of the Barnes Park regeneration include:

- The restoration of historic features such as the cannon, bandstand, railings and gates
- Disabled and able-bodied play space for all ages including an adventure play area
- A sensory and formal garden
- Rejuvenation of the lake and surrounding area, including a new bridge for the lake
- Removal of excess shrubbery and tree coverage to improve the security of the park and deter anti-social behaviour
- A multi-use games area
- Car parking facilities
- CCTV coverage

Ivor Crowther, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in the North East, said: “It’s brilliant news that Barnes Park is now open to the public again after the extensive restoration works that have taken place over the last 18 months. This park is

a great resource for the local community and I’m sure that more people than ever will now visit to relax and enjoy the scenery, walk the dog or have a picnic. The Heritage Lottery Fund is proud to have played an important role in this project and it is a great example of how funders and local authorities can work together to make projects like this a reality."

Councillor James Blackburn, Sunderland City Council Portfolio Holder for Attractive and Inclusive City, added: “The work which has gone into redeveloping Barnes Park over the last 18 months has been significant and the park is now looking absolutely tremendous.

“Saturday will be a fantastic occasion for families to come in and see for themselves all of the improvements made.”

Notes to editors

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 more than 30,000 projects allocating £4.5billion across the UK.

Further information

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