# Wandle Park celebrates Christmas early with £2m Lottery investment

20/12/2010

Created in 1890 the park is one of the oldest parks in Croydon.

The award has been made as part of a £6.4million funding package to four of the UK's much-loved parks by the HLF and BIG.**

Further support for Wandle Park comes from Croydon Council who will be contributing over £1m in capital and running costs, and £400,000 has also been contributed to the project from the Mayor of London's Help a London Park Scheme. The Environment Agency is contributing funds towards funding river restoration.

Sue Bowers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for the London region, said on behalf of HLF and BIG: "Winter may be the bleakest time of year for wildlife and greenery, but our parks are no less beautiful in the festive season. The cold frosty weather and a crisp winter walk can be the perfect time to get out and enjoy our wonderful open spaces. This joint investment from HLF and BIG will ensure our much-loved parks such as Wandle Park continue to be looked after and play a major role at the very heart of their local communities."

At 8.5 hectares in size and on the Council's Local List of Historic Parks and Gardens, Wandle Park has lost many of its original historic features, including the River Wandle. Having lain buried beneath the park since 1967, a priority for the project will be to unearth this river for the first time in over 40 years and deculverting it to follow its nineteenth century route.

HLF and BIG's investment will also help restore the park's original Victorian character by reviving features such as the bandstand, water-fountain, ornamental planting and part of the original boating lake. In addition, the 1950s park pavilion will be upgraded to provide a café, education space, toilets and improved changing facilities. A new skate park will also be created along with an entrance from the tramway and path.

An extensive activity plan will be put in place offering arts and heritage events, volunteer days, environmental projects and school visits.

Sara Bashford, cabinet member for Customer Services, Culture and Sport at Croydon Council, said: "We are absolutely thrilled with this result. Wandle Park will be transformed into an idyllic green and blue destination, just minutes from the bustle of Croydon's town centre, with a great range of attractions for local people to enjoy. The transformation of Wandle Park will be a major contribution towards realising our regeneration ambitions for Croydon town centre. We look forward to working with our partners – the HLF/BIG, The GLA and The Environment Agency to realise our vision for the park."

Boris Johnson, the Mayor of London, said: "This is marvellous news for users of Wandle Park and I'm pleased that the support provided by my Help a London Park programme has helped lever in such significant additional funding. Parks like this are a vital in helping to enhance the quality of life for people in search of a tranquil haven in our great city."

Julie Honey of the Friends of Wandle Park, who have been active since 2007 and highly instrumental in securing the vote for the Mayor's 'Help a London Park' scheme, said: "This is super news! We can't wait to see the River Wandle for the first time in Croydon for 40 years and see people enjoying all the new and restored facilities of the park."

Dave Webb, Biodiversity Team Leader of the Environment Agency, said: "This project restores the river for both the wildlife and people, and is a shining example of how to improve a local park while also managing flood risk and creating a healthy river."

The refurbishment works are expected to be completed in 2012. They will form part of wider aims to offer an understanding of heritage within the community, and will form a key component of the Wandle Valley Regional Park – providing a green link across four Boroughs along the course of the River Wandle. The new Wandle Park will also become an important part of the South London Green grid and link between West Croydon Station and North West Station by providing attractive walking and cycling routes.

**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.

Confirmed funding of £6.4m has been awarded to the following four parks:

**Parks in England – HLF/BIG supported**

- Wandle Park, Croydon, London – confirmed HLF/BIG grant of £1.9m
- Silloth-on-Solway, The Green, Allerdale, Cumbria – confirmed HLF/BIG grant of £1.2m

**Parks in Scotland and Wales - HLF supported only**

- Cwmdonkin Park, Swansea - confirmed HLF grant of £820,000
- Duthie Park, Aberdeen – confirmed HLF grant of £2.5m

**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. 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 past three years, the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) has invested up to £80m (in England only) with £70m coming from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the UK.

HLF is continuing to fund public park projects in 2011 with an investment of £20m each year. The next closing date for applications is 28 February 2011. 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 has allocated £10 million in its grant budget for 2010/11 towards the programme in England.

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 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

Since 1994, HLF has awarded a total of £527m to over 550 public parks across the UK.

The Big Lottery Fund (BIG) rolls out close to £2million in Lottery good cause money every 24 hours, which together with other Lottery distributors means that across the UK most people are within a few miles of a Lottery-funded project. BIG, 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. The Big Lottery Fund and its predecessor bodies have invested more than £1.3billion in environmental initiatives. www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

**Further information**

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