

Duchess of Northumberland at the revitalised Berwick park

The Duchess cut ribbons in each of the parks and was joined on a tour of the grounds by Councillor Kathy Graham, civic head of Northumberland County Council; Berwick Mayor Isabel Hunter and Berwick Parks volunteer Jennifer Mosley.

The Berwick Parks Project was set up to revitalise the two parks which sit on either side of Berwick's train station, and contain a wealth of heritage and natural history.

A grant of £943,900 was awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Big Lottery Fund. Funding from Northumberland County Council, Berwick Town Council and Castlegate Residents Association has taken the total project value to £999,051.

Restoration works have upgraded facilities such as footpaths, entrances and garden spaces and also provided a welcome return of water lilies at the lily pond in Castle Vale Park.

Councillor Kathy Graham, civic head of Northumberland County Council, said: "It is great to see the construction work completed on this community focused project. It has been a great demonstration of partnership working and I would like to acknowledge the fantastic work and support of everyone involved in getting the project to this stage.

“Taking place during Love Parks Week, this official launch is also a great demonstration of the importance that the council and its partners put on high quality green spaces that benefit both residents and visitors.”

Berwick Parks volunteer, Jennifer Mosley, said: “I have really enjoyed my involvement in the project to date, and it is fantastic to see the impact that the renovation is having. The parks are looking beautiful and it is great to see them restored to their 1930s splendour. They are amazing places, and I hope that more and more people will come along and experience them for themselves.”

Northumberland County Council owns the parks and has worked in close partnership with Berwick upon Tweed Town Council, Castlegate Residents Association (CARA) and members of the local community, ensuring a project that meets the needs of the residents and visitors to the town.

Town mayor, Cllr Isabel Hunter, said: “The regeneration of these parks has provided another great attraction for the town, where you can find lovely aspects and particularly good views of the remains of Berwick Castle. The scheme has brought them back to life and back to the heart of the Berwick community. We are very grateful to everyone who has given their time to the project.”

As part of the scheme, students from Berwick Academy have designed a community sensory garden behind Meg’s Mount, while Berwick Youth Project has made a film about the restoration.

During a tour of the parks, the Duchess met members of the project steering group, representatives of the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery, volunteers from Berwick Academy, and members of the Berwick Youth Project.

Ivor Crowther, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North East, said: “Our recent report, State of UK Public Parks 2014, confirmed just how valued public parks are by people and communities and how essential they are to our physical and emotional well-being. That’s why HLF and Big Lottery Fund have invested more than £700million in parks since 1996.

"The report also highlighted that parks face an uncertain future so it’s exciting to see communities working together to restore parks such as Castle Vale and Coronation parks in Berwick-upon-Tweed so generations to come can continue to enjoy and benefit from them.”

Work is set to continue in the parks as a development officer has been appointed as part of the project who is responsible for organising and leading events, volunteer activities and school and group visits to the parks.

Dozens of people have already volunteered in the parks, and attended events and other activities. If you would like to get involved contact Kate Morison by phone on 0787 639 8026 or email Kate.Morison@northumberland.gov.uk.

Notes to editors

State of UK Public Parks 2014: Renaissance to risk?
To establish a national picture of the state of UK parks HLF commissioned three new UK-wide surveys: a survey of local authority park managers, a survey of park friends and user groups, and a public opinion survey undertaken by Ipsos MORI. The research has also drawn on other pre-existing data to assess how the condition of parks has changed over time, and to cross-check our results. Details of the report findings can be found at State of UK Public Parks.

The Parks for People programme uses Lottery funds to support the regeneration, conservation and increased enjoyment of public parks and cemeteries. 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. Find out more about how to apply at our

Parks for People programme page.

Big Lottery Fund

The Big Lottery Fund is responsible for giving out 40% of the money raised for good causes by the National Lottery. The fund is committed to bringing real improvements to communities and the lives of people most in need and has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK since its inception in 2004. It has awarded close to £6bn.

Further information

For more information contact Sarah Wilson, Communications Officer at Northumberland County Council. Call 01670 622 417 or email Sarah.Wilson@northumberland.gov.uk.



State of UK Public Parks 2014