Run-down UK parks and cemeteries in National



A mother and child have fun in a park Pixdeluxe

These include:

- Great Yarmouth’s vibrant Venetian-inspired water gardens constructed as part of an unemployment relief programme after the First World War
- Belfast City Cemetery - the final resting place of some of Belfast’s industrial giants, including an underground wall originally built to divide Protestants and Catholics and a ‘poor ground’ where 63,000 people are buried in unmarked graves
- Winckley Square Gardens, Preston - one of Northern England’s finest Georgian squares - with notable residents including suffragette Edith Rigby and seven-times Mayor Nicholas Grimshaw
- Stoke-on-Trent’s Hanley Park – one of the biggest Victorian public parks in the UK, built for local potters and miners to relax and play sports

This money will transform these sites, some of which are situated in the country’s most deprived communities. Disused historic buildings will be restored and used as new cafes or public facilities, helping to attract more people and therefore more income. Innovations include public wi-fi installed in Peel Park, Salford and plans to harness renewable energy from the mill pond at Victoria Park, Stafford.

Heritage Minister, Tracey Crouch, said: "This investment will breathe new life into each of these 16 historic parks and cemeteries, making them great places for people to enjoy. Britain's famous green spaces are so important for giving people a place to get together, relax and exercise, and have a vital role in strengthening our local communities."

HLF's Chair, Sir Peter Luff, said on behalf of HLF and the Big Lottery Fund: "We all benefit from spending time outside in the fresh air, so it's vital that we look after our green spaces, particularly in dense urban areas. National Lottery players' money will give a boost to each of these 16 historic places, helping make sure they have a great future."

Bute Park Opens - a Beaut!

This month sees the opening of Cardiff's Bute Park following a transformational project. £3.1m of HLF funding has helped create a new summerhouse café, restored the park's treasured 'animal wall' and delivered a new education centre built from reclaimed bricks.

Annual visitor numbers have increased 100% to over 2million since the project began and the park now sits firmly within Cardiff's top five attractions on TripAdvisor.

Mike Harper, Chair of the Bute Park Friends Group, said: "Bute Park is a jewel in the crown for Cardiff and to see the recent investment into its improvement is hugely welcomed by all the many residents and visitors who enjoy the park day in day out."

£1m for Great Yarmouth Venetian Waterways

These Venetian-style water gardens on the seafront of the popular seaside resort of Great Yarmouth opened in 1928. Constructed as part of an unemployment relief programme after the First World War, the waterways were known for their whimsical design and lavish planting schemes. With winding rivers for gondolas, rock gardens, picturesque bridges, thatched shelters and winter ice skating, this park was nationally famous. The waterways have deteriorated and have lost much of their special character since the 1980's. A grant of **£1m** will restore the original planting and repair the thatched shelters, bridges and the boating lake walls. A new café will be opened and people will be able to train in gardening and traditional building skills.

A New Life for Belfast City Cemetery

The various monuments and headstones in this Victorian garden cemetery in West Belfast tell the story of finance, empire, the rise of Northern Unionism and the golden era of industry in the city. Tombs include Edward Harland of Harland and Wolff, the shipbuilding company responsible for the Titanic and Thomas Gallaher of Gallahers Tobacco - two figures who dominated 19th-century industrial Belfast. Other notable features include Northern Ireland's only Jewish burial ground, a 'poor ground' where 63,000 people are buried, and an underground wall built to divide Protestants and Catholics. A grant of **£1.8m** will restore the cemetery's listed features, create a new visitor centre and provide information boards, maps and publications to tell the stories of this important site.

Statuesque: Winckley Square Gardens, Preston

One of the finest examples of a Georgian square in the North of England, Winckley Square was the most exclusive address in Preston during the 19th century. Residents included suffragette Edith Rigby and seven-times Mayor Nicholas Grimshaw. The gardens were originally divided into private lots for the square's houses but were opened for public use in the 20th century. A grant of **£950k** will address many years of decline with plans to prevent flooding and new trees and shrubs. A statue of Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, will be restored and the square will be used for all sorts of

activities including guided tours and a gardening club.

To date, National Lottery money to the tune of £770million has been invested in parks since 1996 and many of these major parks projects are now central to their local community's sense of well-being.

Notes to editors

This announcement can be followed on Twitter #parksmatter.

State of the UK Parks

This investment comes at a challenging time for UK's public parks due to local authority budget cuts. HLF's report *State of the UK Public Parks 2014* warned that unless innovative ways of funding parks can be found, they are at serious risk of decline or loss.

The research shows that maintenance budgets are being reduced, capital will be less available for improvements, facilities are becoming more costly to use and some parks may simply be sold or transferred to the care of others. Park usage is increasing and communities are also taking on a greater role. The study ends with a call to action and five key challenges for the future. HLF will commission and publish a second State of the UK Public Parks report in 2016 to monitor changes in the condition, quality and resourcing of the UK's public parks.

The 16 parks and cemeteries receiving funding today are:

HLF/Big Lottery Fund joint grants in England
Earmarked funding

- West Smethwick Park, Sandwell £4,830,700
- Victoria Park, Stafford £1,705,100
- Hunstanton Heritage Gardens, West Norfolk £685,400
- Great Yarmouth Venetian Waterways £1,020,800
- Springfield Park, Hackney £3,194,100
- Thompson Park, Burnley £860,100
- London Road Cemetery, Coventry £1,998,000

Confirmed grants

- Chase Park, Gateshead £922,900
- Peel Park, Salford £1,572,800
- Winckley Square Gardens, Preston £942,600
- Northwood Cemetery, Isle of Wight £1,685,100
- Hanley Park, Stoke on Trent £4,579,300

HLF only funded grants

- Belfast Cemetery (earmarked funding) £1,852,800
- Stornoway Castle Grounds£3,903,600
- Dean Castle Country Park, East Ayrshire £3,338,900
- Wrexham Cemetery £1,190,000

Parks for People applications are assessed in two rounds. A first-round pass is given when HLF has endorsed outline proposals and earmarked funding. A first-round pass may also include an immediate award to fund the development of the project. Detailed proposals are then considered by HLF at second-round and as long as plans have progressed satisfactorily and according to the original proposal, an award for the project is confirmed.

- **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. Find out more about how to apply at our Parks for People programme page.
- **Rethinking Parks -** HLF and the Big Lottery Fund are working in partnership with the innovation charity Nesta on a Rethinking Parks programme. This is supporting organisations and partnerships to explore new approaches to generating income and managing parks. 11 projects were funded in July 2014 with grants totalling £1million. A range of innovative park projects are now being piloted and results are expected over the next year.

Further information

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Big Lottery Fund press office: Nicola Baxter on tel: 020 7211 1888.



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Celebration time for parks! National Lottery money rescues 16 parks



City Cemetery Cross, Belfast

y Cemetery



The Waterways in their heyday

Waterways secures £45,000



Mawson fountain in Hanley Park John James



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Friends of Chase Park celebrate the news of just under £1million National Lottery investment



ttery windfall of just under £1million

Bandstand in typical british weather Brendan Kelly



Gardens

Computerised image of Winckley Square after restoration

Funding for £1.2m Winckley Square gardens restoration is approved