

Ed Miliband with the Bentley Park and HLF teams

Doncaster Council won support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in 2011 to help restore the park and its pavilion to its former glory.

The park was built in 1923 in the centre of Bentley as a Miners' Welfare Recreation Ground and was originally rich in features and facilities and renowned for its ornamental bedding and herbaceous displays. The splendid 'pleasure ground' was at the heart of the community, which had a strong sense of ownership and pride. Sadly during the 1980s and 1990s, the historical features within the park were either mothballed or removed, and the park suffered from a decline in investment, maintenance and an increase in vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

The project saw the complete overhaul of the pavilion offering better access, new catering facilities, a veranda and an area for outdoor events. The pavilion is a key building in the park, created in 1931, not long after the park originally opened, and represents an early example of 'Ferro concrete' used in the modernist movement, as well as having links to The Pavilion Suisse, Paris-Le-Corbusier.

The project has also restored the horticultural quality of the park through well-designed formal ornamental garden areas, retaining the integrity of the original design and facilities. The park entrances have been improved, the railings and gates renovated, footpaths upgraded and new gardens created including a water fountain. There are new seating areas, better lighting across the park, new play areas and a new bandstand for outdoor performances.

These revamped features have made the park very popular. Thousands of visitors were attracted to the reestablished annual Bentley Fireworks display and the Bentley Bonanza and over 200 children and young people attend the weekly Gymnastics and Trampoline club.

Ed Miliband, MP for Doncaster North, said: “Bentley Park has been at the centre of the community for nearly 100 years and has been a major asset for the people of Bentley. The improvements from the investment of HLF have enhanced the Pavilion and the Park, by bringing it back to its former glory, and will be welcomed by residents from Bentley and the surrounding areas.”

Fiona Spiers, Head of HLF Yorkshire and Humber, said: “Bentley Park is an important green space in the heart of Bentley and has played a key role in the lives of local residents for over 80 years. HLF is delighted to have supported this project that to transform Bentley Park into a place that even more people can use and enjoy.”

Mayor of Doncaster Ros Jones said: "People are very fond of their park and the new look pavilion and park is a wonderful asset for Bentley and other neighbourhoods across Doncaster. The local community has really got behind this project and it has made a real difference in their area.”

Following the renovation, the park re-opened in September 2014.

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