UK coastal towns set for economic boost as



Great Yarmouth's Venetian Waterways opened in 1928 Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Big Lottery Fund are announcing grants totalling more than £33million that will help restore and revitalise 13 public parks across the UK.

Five of the grants being awarded will directly benefit parks situated in coastal communities, many of which suffer from higher than average levels of deprivation.

When complete, these projects will not only provide improved green spaces for local people to enjoy but will also help attract more tourism to these areas and as a result, have a positive impact on local economies.

The coastal parks receiving grants are: Great Yarmouth’s Venetian Waterways; South Cliff Gardens in Scarborough; Ellington Park in Ramsgate; Mount Garden in Fleetwood, Lancashire; and Stanmer Park in Brighton.

HLF’s Chief Executive Ros Kerslake, said, on behalf of HLF and Big Lottery Fund: “It’s well-known that public parks play a vital role in our health and well-being. But for coastal communities their role is even more critical. Often a central part of their tourism offering, this investment from National Lottery players will empower local people to maximise the potential of their local park to boost local economic well-being.”

The coastal projects

Confirmed awards*

£1.8m 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 £1.8m 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.

£4m for Stanmer Park, Brighton

Set inside the South Downs National Park, the Grade II listed Stanmer Park was designed in the 18th century as the setting for Stanmer House, church and estate village. Now the largest public park in Brighton and Hove, it is used by 500,000 people annually. As part of a wider plan to rejuvenate the whole of this large estate, a grant of over £4m will restore historic features, improve the visitor facilities and encourage more local people to use the park. The use of the Walled Garden and greenhouses will be extended from a council run retail nursery to include a training centre with Plumpton College to run horticultural courses. Students and volunteers will help deliver some of the restoration work and a Friends' Group will be re-established.

Earmarked funding*

£4.99m for South Cliff Gardens, Scarborough

South Cliff Gardens are located on steep cliff slopes above the seafront in Scarborough's South Bay. The Bay became England's first seaside resort after spa waters were discovered in 1626 and later evolved into a tourist destination with a seafront spa complex, promenade and beach chalets. The 15 hectare gardens were designed by Joseph Paxton in 1856 but today they are in critical decline and at risk of sliding into the sea. The local authority is leading a project to stabilise the cliffs whilst this money will restore the gardens' historic features and pathways; create a new sensory garden; install new fitness equipment; and make improvements to cycleways.

£1.7m for Ellington Park, Ramsgate

Ellington Park was laid out in 1893 on land once part of the estate surrounding Ellington House. The park was designed by the Victorian landscape company Joseph Cheal and Son, known for their work at Hever Castle and Kirkstall Abbey. Today, this 12 acre park lacks basic amenities and much of the park's heritage has been damaged or neglected. This money will renovate the bandstand; restore the best features of the original 1893 Joseph Cheal landscape scheme; improve play facilities; and provide a much needed cafe and toilets.

£2.1m for Mount Garden, Fleetwood

Mount Garden is a Grade II listed, 2.5 hectare public garden on the seafront in Fleetwood, Lancashire. When built in 1836, it was the centrepiece of the Regency town with all its streets radiating from it. Its circular path leads visitors up to the top of the Mount with its spectacular views across Morecombe Bay. In recent decades the gardens have become tired and this injection of money will restore historic buildings and features and renew pay facilities.

A further eight parks across the UK are receiving National Lottery funding today and include:

HLF/Big Lottery Fund joint grants in England

Confirmed grants*

- Beckenham Place Park, South London: £4,999,900
- Cannon Hall Park and Gardens, Barnsley: £3,063,200
- Thompson Park, Burnley: £913,700

Earmarked funding*

- Castle Park, Bishops Stortford: £2,190,400
- Fairhaven Gardens and Lake: £1,652,200
- Stevens Park, Dudley: £1,533,100
- Sydney Gardens, Bath: £3,012,100

HLF only

- Cyfartha Park, Merthyr Tydfil: £1,170,000

The money has been awarded through Parks for People, a joint programme funded by HLF and Big Lottery Fund. The programme uses money raised through sales of National Lottery tickets to support the regeneration, conservation and increased enjoyment of public parks and cemeteries.

Notes to editors

*First-round pass

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.

State of the UK Parks

In September 2016, HLF published State of UK Public Parks 2016, a follow-up to its 2014 report.

This second report revealed there is a growing deficit between the rising use of parks and the declining resources that are available to manage them. Without urgent action the continuing downward trend in the condition of many of our most treasured parks and green spaces is set to continue.

Whilst new ways of working and generating income are showing potential, more support, shared learning and collaboration is needed to support those that manage public parks. Therefore, this research calls for collaborative action to deliver new ways of funding and managing public parks to avert a crisis.

CLG Select Committee – Public parks inquiry

HLF submitted evidence to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee Inquiry in to the future of public parks. The Committee's recommendations are due to be published in early 2017.

Further information and images

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