

Sun shines on Belleisle thanks to £1.9million award

20/01/2014



The award is the result of a bid prepared and submitted by South Ayrshire Council in partnership with Belleisle Conservatory Limited, supported by the Friends of Belleisle and local community groups. It will now be used to deliver a five-year masterplan for the rejuvenation and restoration of Belleisle Park.

In total, Belleisle was awarded £1,938,400 through the Parks for People programme and is amongst 15 other historic parks and cemeteries across the UK receiving grants.

Welcoming the great news, Councillor John McDowall, South Ayrshire Council's Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability said: "This really is a sensational start to the new year and will help accelerate our vision to transform the park, developing the landscape, refreshing the buildings and transforming this jewel in our crown.

"In developing the bid proposal, we enjoyed superb support from Belleisle Conservatory Limited, the Friends of Belleisle and local community groups and this success is a real credit to their commitment and their passion for the park."

Professor Gordon Wilson from Belleisle Conservatory Limited added: "The funding news is a massive boost for everyone connected with Belleisle and allows us to take the next step in delivering the masterplan for the area.

"The conservatory dates from 1879 and sits at the heart of the gardens and woodlands. Our aim is to see it returned to a display centre, a wonderful focal point at the heart of the park, once again helping to contribute to the horticultural displays that made Ayr famous."

Norman McLean chair of Friends of Belleisle said: "Despite the wintry weather and storms, the sun has shone on Belleisle and we're thrilled the HLF has made this award.

"To be one of 15 recipients in the UK, makes it an extra special feeling and we can look ahead to reinstate the area as a premier park experience - a park for people to come and enjoy its open spaces and all it has to offer."

The masterplan for Belleisle includes:

- The redevelopment Belleisle Stable Block providing a cafe, toilets and further multi-functional space
- The refurbishment of Belleisle Conservatory
- The development the landscaping and woodland management
- The relocation & upgrading of the play area to cater for all ages and abilities
- Upgrading of the footpath network, improved accessibility, improved park furniture, litterbins & interpretative signage
- The development of events and volunteer participation.

Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: "The Heritage Lottery Fund is delighted to start the New Year with good news for Belleisle Park. This much-loved park is set to return to the popularity of its heyday with help from our Parks for People programme.

"This grants programme has been hugely successful in encouraging many thousands back through park gates by combining people's pride in the history of their green spaces with the need to provide up-to-date facilities and access.

"The transformation of Belleisle Park will make a huge difference to the quality of life for the residents of Ayr as well as bringing a new optimism to the town for the year ahead."

Councillor McDowall concluded: "Through 2014 and beyond, I look forward to working even more closely with the groups to promote and improve Belleisle's unique qualities, building on these to create a vibrant, long-lasting legacy for future generations of South Ayrshire residents – and for visitors from outwith the area."

Further information

For more information on HLF, contact Natasha Hughes or Katie Owen, HLF press office, on 020 7591 6143 / 6036 or 07973 613 820.

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