Parks protected in perpetuity to support active communities

Tuesday 25 September, 2018

Four UK parks are set to benefit from £100,000 of investment which will encourage local people to get active in their local park. Capital grants from **The London Marathon Charitable Trust** have been awarded through the Active Spaces programme delivered in partnership with **Fields in Trust**. The four recipients of a capital award of £25,000 each are **People's Park** in Ballymena, Mid and East Antrim; **Halewood Park** in Knowsley, Merseyside; **West Pilton Park** in Edinburgh and **Gelligaled Park** in Rhonda Cynon Taf. Each award will enhance a vibrant green space to encourage good health and physical activity.

Well-designed and well-maintained, accessible green space can have a positive impact on public health. Recent research by Fields in Trust demonstrates the significant health and wellbeing benefits for those who visit parks and green spaces regularly. An estimated £111M per year is saved by the NHS immediately, just from prevented GP visits alone. Encouraging those who do not currently use parks regularly to do so could save further health expenditure.

Learning from these insights, the Active Spaces programme is supporting physical activity projects to inspire the most inactive communities to get active and use their local outdoor spaces. Funded by The London Marathon Charitable Trust this programme pays for the cost of protecting open green spaces in perpetuity for future generations to use and enjoy. The programme also offers each site £5,000 to help initiate community participation in sports and physical activities on local parks and green spaces across the UK. Four £25,000 capital grants, one in each home nation, will also allow substantial improvements to parks and green spaces which have been protected.

Active Spaces is the first UK-wide funding programme from The London Marathon Charitable Trust which makes grants to projects that encourage people to get active. The funding comes from the surplus generated by the iconic mass participation events organised by London Marathon Events Ltd.

Sarah Ridley, Chief Grants Officer for The London Marathon Charitable Trust, said:
"Congratulations to these four deserving winners; each has demonstrated remarkable potential to transform physical activity opportunities for its local community and visitors. Since 1981, The London Marathon Charitable Trust has funded a huge range of projects that have inspired millions of people to get active, and now we look forward to seeing these projects deliver more such opportunities well into the future."

Chief Executive of Fields in Trust, Helen Griffiths, said: *"We know that parks and green spaces contribute to health and wellbeing; people enjoy greater life satisfaction including both improved physical and mental health, directly as a result of regularly using parks and green spaces. We congratulate each of the recipients on their award which will contribute to happier and healthier local communities able to enjoy their parks in perpetuity."*

One of the award recipients **Mayor of Mid and East Antrim, Councillor Lindsay Millar** said: *"I'm delighted People's Park will be benefitting from exciting new facilities. This initiative means the park is also protected from future development, so it remains an active space for recreational use. Active spaces are proven to help people stay physically and mentally well, they are where memories are made, and precious spare time enjoyed, so it's great to see them continue to do that for generations to come.*

"Health and wellbeing is one of council's priorities and it's reassuring to see this commitment supported by long establish organisations like Fields in Trust in partnership with The London Marathon Charitable Trust."

The four recipients of capital awards are:

- **People's Park** in Ballymena, Mid and East Antrim will improve already popular walking trails within the park and create a trim trail, with the addition of outdoor fitness equipment manufactured from natural timber, to ensure Peoples Park retains its scenic environment along the paths and trails amongst the most beautiful areas of the park.
- **West Pilton Park:** Edinburgh City Council will be installing an outdoor gym in this park to the north of the Scottish capital. The new gym will provide a focus for physical activity in the park enabling groups to meet for exercise in their own time and at no cost.

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- **Gelligaled Park:** Rhonda Cynon Taf County Borough Council in south Wales are undertaking extensive park improvements to encourage greater informal sport and active recreation including a ‘Learn and Burn’ trail; walking / running routes; bike trails; a family fun area and a wellness zone.
- **Halewood Park:** Knowsley Council on Merseyside are initiating a total redevelopment of this well used park including new cycle / walking / exercise route, seating, safe woodland areas and diversifying wildlife habitats and creating an accessible entrance way. The project will enhance a vibrant green space which will encourages good health and physical activity.

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For further information, and photographs of capital award winning sites please contact:
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Notes to Editors

- **Fields in Trust** champions and supports our parks and green spaces by protecting them for people to enjoy in perpetuity. Because once lost, they are lost forever. Fields in Trust is an independent charity with over 90 years’ experience protecting parks and green spaces. We work with landowners, community groups and policymakers to champion the value of our parks and green spaces to achieve better protection for their future at both local and national level. Further information available from the Fields in Trust website www.fieldsintrust.org

- **London Marathon Charitable Trust** *was created in 1981 by London Marathon founders Chris Brasher and John Disley. Their vision ensured that the profits from the race, and future events organised by London Marathon Events Ltd, would go to The London Marathon Charitable Trust in perpetuity. To date, LMCT has awarded grants totalling in excess of £72 million to more than 1,300+ projects in London, Surrey and other areas where London Marathon Events Ltd has organised events. London Marathon Events Ltd donates 100% of its profits to The Trust.* Further info available from the London Marathon Charitable Trust website www.lmct.org.uk

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