

ROUKEN GLEN PARK NAMED BEST IN UK AT FIELDS IN TRUST AWARDS

Thursday 1 December, 2016

- Wins follows nationwide search to find the **UK's Best Park, as voted by YOU! 2016**
- **214 parks across the UK were nominated**
- **More than 10,000 votes cast**

Rouken Glen Park has been named the *UK's Best Park, as voted by YOU! 2016* after a search by national charity Fields in Trust to find the country's favourite local green space. The win was announced at the Fields in Trust Awards Ceremony last night at Lord's Cricket Ground in London.

The East Renfrewshire park won the public vote ahead of three other shortlisted local green spaces to take the 2016 title. A total of 214 parks across the UK were nominated by park users with over 10,000 votes cast in the search to find the nation's favourite.

The Fields in Trust Awards, now in their fifth year, are a celebration of the achievements of individuals and organisations who have worked over the last year to ensure that everyone has access to protected outdoor recreational space.

Rouken Glen Park was described in its nomination for the Award as 'a place for people and nature'. Opened in 1906, visitor numbers last year reached nearly 1,000,000. The park is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, has been awarded Green Flag status and has received investment from Heritage Lottery Fund grants.

Councillor Vincent Waters, East Renfrewshire Council's Convener for Environment, said: "*Rouken Glen Park is a special place to many people in East Renfrewshire and beyond. It is the heart of the community in Giffnock, and visitor numbers reached nearly 1,000,000 last year.*"

"The park has a rich diversity of habitats, including gorge, river, meadow, woodland, pond and amenity grassland. It is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest, due to the interesting geology found in the gorge, which dates back 350 million years. It supports a range of wildlife including otter, badger, roe deer and fox, as well as a high number of bird species such as kingfisher, dipper, buzzard and goldcrest."

"Rouken Glen Park is just coming to the end of a £3m project involving the Heritage Lottery Fund which helped to transform and develop a number of areas within the park. Thanks to this project there is a new play park, forest walk, renovated walled garden, improved pond and a refurbished visitor centre."

Rouken Glen Park was one of four parks from across the UK shortlisted for the Award. Castle Gardens in Antrim, Pontypool Park in Torfaen and Preston Park Rockery in Brighton had also been in the running and were named the best park in Northern Ireland, Wales and England respectively at the Awards Ceremony.

The Award was presented by former international footballer, and trustee of Fields in Trust Graeme Le Saux and TV sports broadcaster Jill Douglas. Collecting the Award, **East Renfrewshire Council** Parks Manager **Donnie McManus** said: "*We would like to thank everyone who voted for the park. Also a big thank you to all the staff who work tirelessly keeping the park up to a very high standard. This award shows that the public of East Renfrewshire and the many visitors to the park hold it in such high esteem.*"

The competition asked members of the public to nominate their favourite parks, with any local green space across the UK eligible, followed by a three week public vote between all those parks nominated. A total of 214 nominations were received across the UK with over 10,000 votes cast.

Helen Griffiths, Fields in Trust Chief Executive, said: "*Many congratulations to Rouken Glen Park on being named the winner of our UK's Best Park, as voted by YOU! 2016 award. It's a beautiful green space and well deserving of the accolade. The number of parks nominated this year and the votes cast across the competition show just how much the public cherish their local green spaces.*"

"The Fields in Trust Awards help recognise the role that parks play in our communities, bringing people together and creating a safe outdoor environment that everyone should have access to no matter where they live. We believe that as a nation it is time to revalue these green spaces and consider the positive impact they have on our physical, mental and social health and well being and the savings to the public

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purse they represent in terms of preventative medicine.

“The UK’s Best Park Award is unique in that it is open to any green space regardless of whether or not it is protected in perpetuity with Fields in Trust. The people of East Renfrewshire have sent a clear message that they love their local park and I hope that East Renfrewshire Council will recognise this by working with us to safeguard Rouken Glen Park as a place for community sport, play and recreation forever.”

Rouken Glen Park becomes the second recipient of the UK’s Best Park accolade. Last year Telford Town Park in Shropshire beat 121 other nominated parks to be named *UK’s Best Park, as voted by YOU! 2015* in the award’s inaugural year.

Fields in Trust is a national charity whose mission is to ensure that everyone – young or old, able-bodied or disabled and wherever they live – should have access to free, local outdoor space for sport, play and recreation.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- -*UK’s Best Park, as voted by YOU!* is an annual Award run by national charity Fields in Trust to find the nation’s favourite local green space.
- -Nominations for UK’s Best Park 2016 ran from Friday 23rd September to Wednesday 19th October. Any local green space was eligible to be nominated as the UK’s Best Park. 214 nominations were received across the UK.
- -Voting ran from Thursday 20th October to Wednesday 9th November between all parks to have been nominated. Over 10,000 votes were received in total.
- -The shortlist comprised the parks to have received the most votes in each of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

ABOUT FIELDS IN TRUST

Fields in Trust is a national charity that operates throughout the UK to safeguard recreational spaces and campaign for better statutory protection for all kinds of outdoor sites.

Founded in 1925 as the National Playing Fields Association by King George V, their mission is the same now and as it was then: to ensure that everyone – young or old, able-bodied or disabled and wherever they live – should have access to free, local outdoor space for sport, play and recreation. These spaces are vital to building happy and healthy communities and sadly continue to be threatened by all kinds of development.

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