



PRESS RELEASE

Date: 28 January 2020

For immediate release

New grants scheme promotes community involvement in Leeds parks

Thirteen environmental groups and community organisations have been awarded funding to improve their local park by a new grants scheme aimed at promoting community involvement in urban parks.

The groups received grants of between £500 and £2500 for projects of environmental benefit to public green space in Leeds to highlight the important role parks play cleaning the air, promoting biodiversity and mitigating the impact of climate change.

It follows the declaration of a Climate Emergency in Leeds in March 2019 and comes at a time of growing recognition of the wide ranging benefits of urban green space.

The fund is part of a partnership initiative called Love Leeds Parks, involving Leeds Community Foundation, Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum and Leeds City Council, and is funded by business donations, as well as visitor donations at busy park sites.

Love Leeds Parks aims to protect and improve public green space in Leeds - over 4000 hectares of woodlands, recreation grounds, cemeteries, nature reserves, and allotments, as well as formal parks.

Projects awarded funding include, the restoration and extension of a heavily silted pond in Gledhow Valley Woods, tree planting to provide shade and improve biodiversity around a Halton play area, and strengthening river banks around Meanwood and Woodhouse to reduce flooding risk.

Martin Calvert, chair of Friends of Gledhow Valley Woods, which received a grant said: "We are delighted and very grateful for the Leeds Parks Fund grant which will help us create a permanent, sustainable pond and new habitats for wildlife including newts, dragon flies, insects and butterflies."

“The pond can be visited by the general public and we hope it will encourage local schools to get involved in our work.”

Kate Hainsworth, Chief Executive of Leeds Community Foundation, said: “It’s great to see so many key projects funded as a result of the Leeds Parks Fund. Protecting and developing green spaces is key to offering experiences for all in Leeds and investing in our environment by supporting schemes that play their part in tackling climate change.”

The grants round was heavily over-subscribed and the partners involved in Love Leeds Parks plan to fundraise for another grants round later this year.

Simon Burke of playground supplier KOMPAN which gave a donation to support the grants programme, said: “KOMPAN are honoured to support Love Leeds Parks which offers groups the opportunity to improve their local spaces with localized grants – an invaluable gift to communities.”

“We understand the importance of these vital community spaces within Leeds as they assist communities to engage together; play, relax, and simply enjoy the fresh air.”

Contact Hannah Coyle at Love Leeds Parks by emailing hannah.coyle@leeds.gov.uk or calling 07891275289 for information or media queries.

Photos supplied are of two groups awarded funding, Leeds Coppice Workers and Friends of Gledhow Valley Woods, Love Leeds Parks merchandise and KOMPAN visiting a Leeds Parks Fund roadshow at Cross Flatts Park

-ends-

Notes to Editors:

1. Love Leeds Parks is a charitable initiative made up of Leeds Community Foundation, Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum, and Leeds City Council. Its aim is to protect and improve public green space in Leeds by highlighting the wide ranging benefits of urban green space, promoting community involvement in parks, and fundraising for community-led improvements. See www.loveleedsparks.org.uk

2. The Leeds Parks Fund is a grants programme overseen by Love Leeds Parks and hosted by Leeds Community Foundation. A full list of the groups awarded grants, with details of the funded projects, is as follows:

- Friends of Gledhow Valley Woods: restoration of a heavily silted pond, including planting to increase biodiversity.
- DAMASQ: provision of guided walks around Leeds parks combined with activities such as plant species identification and outdoor yoga.
- Beeston in Bloom: installation of an information board and new litter bin.
- Friends of Cross Flatts Park: planting of a bulb border and wildflower bed and installation of a new information sign.
- Hyde Park Source: the Our Rosebank! Project will engage local people in practical and educational activities to make a green space more accessible and beautiful.
- Halton in Bloom: tree planting around a play area to increase biodiversity and provide shade and security.
- Collingham with Linton Parish Council: the Collingham Beck Wood Project will provide an outdoor area for local people to enjoy and take pride in.
- Kirkstall in Bloom: bulb planting and flowerbed development.
- Boston Spa Parish Council: improving the accessibility of a new park by adding wooden shelters.
- Leeds Coppice Workers: strengthening river banks to reduce erosion, flood risk, habitat loss and water pollution.
- The Conservation Volunteers: the Wild in the Winter project will provide environmental education for children, and offer volunteer leadership opportunities.
- Rodley Nature Reserve: creation of an accessible birch tree copse.
- Ouzlewell Green in Bloom: improvements to the environment for community, wildlife and visitors.

3. There is growing awareness of the importance of green space to urban environments. Leeds Climate Change Citizens Jury made creating more green space and restoring abandoned space one of its recommendations to the city of Leeds in November 2019, alongside more green funding sources and improved communication to galvanise civic action.

