



The Partnership

Parks were created for people, and park restoration is not simply a matter of renewing worn out infrastructure or designing new facilities. Equally important is the regeneration of the local communities' use of the park and the value it has as a place in which to develop a range of activities which help to bring all sections of society together and give local people a chance to develop their skills.

The Dunwood Community Partnership is being developed as a means of reaching as many individuals, groups, and organisations as possible who may have an interest in the park or can make use of it to meet their own aspirations. The Partnership is already supported by Oldham Council, Shaw and Crompton Parish Council, The Parks and Countryside Service, and the Friends of Dunwood Park. It needs to gather support from all sections of the local community: from school-children to pensioners, clubs and societies, shops and offices, schools and churches, businesses and public agencies. Anyone can sign up, whether to contribute or simply to express support. The more support we get, the better the chances of the Big Lottery / Heritage Lottery Fund joining in as well (and they come with an offer of a £1,090,000!)

To express an interest or join the partnership, you can contact:

The Friends of Dunwood Park:
Phone 01706 845 041 Website: dunwoodpark.co.uk

Keith Bennell, Group Manager, Oldham Parks and Countryside Service
0161 770 4088 keith.bennell@oldham.gov.uk



Dunwood Park, Shaw

The project to improve Dunwood Park has been successful in the first stage of the bidding process for financial support by the Heritage Lottery / Big Lottery Fund. Over one million pounds will be made available to help restore the park and provide improved community facilities and opportunities IF the project succeeds at Stage 2 in October 2009.

It is now essential that all sections of the community become involved and contribute their ideas, expertise, local knowledge and aspirations. To enable this process, the Friends of Dunwood Park, together with their partners in the Council, have set up the

Dunwood Community Partnership

The purpose of this leaflet is to tell you more about the aims of the project, the proposals made so far, the work that still needs to be done, and how you and your organisation or club can join the partnership and get involved with ensuring that Dunwood secures the resources it needs to become a better park and a centre for community activity well into the future.



History

Dunwood Park was built on land gifted to the people of Shaw by Captain Crompton in 1911. His aim was to provide a green space which could be used by the community for rest and relaxation.

His philanthropy was matched by the local Councillors, who provided the first facilities. In 1912 these worthies gathered to open the park to the public in the midst of a torrential downpour!



Today, after nearly a century, many parts of the park are worn out and in need of fresh investment. The buildings are ramshackle, leaking and unfit for public use. The paths and tracks are uneven and muddy, while the trees and shrubs that remain are overgrown and of little interest. Nevertheless, there is a good bowling green, a new children's playground and attractive woodland walks.

In spite of its decline, Dunwood retains a special character and charm and is a popular walking place for local people, many of whom used the park as children and retain a particular fondness for its blend of town park and rural riverside woodland.



Activities which you can plan or support which will help ensure the project's success

- activities related to physical design, management and maintenance, including building maintenance, horticultural activities, woodland management, habitat development, infrastructure work, planting, fencing, and walling.

For instance: Work shadowing of design staff by schoolchildren, volunteering for woodland clearance projects, learning dry-stone walling.

- activities which support social interaction, understanding, and cohesion, including use by social care workers, community refreshments, events, support groups.

For instance: setting up and running a cafe or a creche, organising a fete / craft fair / games day for children, arranging regular visits for house bound people to enjoy the park.

- activities which support and encourage health and well-being, including outdoor recreation, sports training and development, children's play, and guided walks.

For example: organising a walking group, teaching tennis etc to children, organising a camping weekend.

- activities which support education, including trails, teaching resource packs, primary and secondary project support.

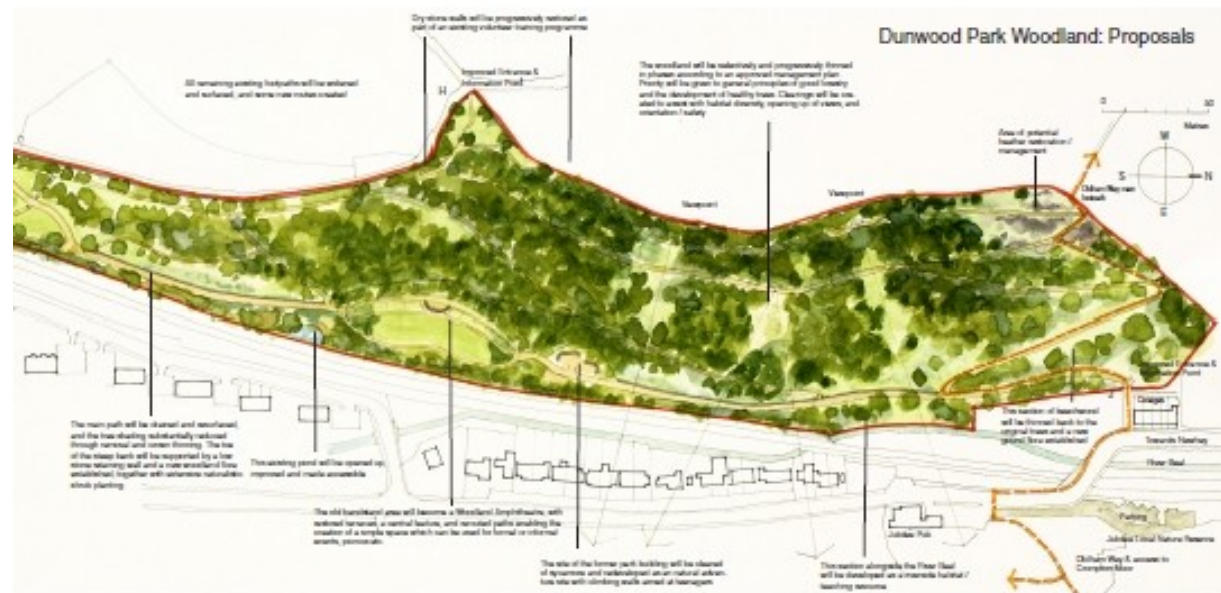
For example: preparing information on the park's history, geology, wildlife, and using the park for a variety of educational projects.

- activities which support the development of community management and marketing skills, including research, information and interpretation, computer and website development, community TV, and local surveys.

For example: Researching and preparing a leaflet about the park's history, undertaking satisfaction surveys among park users.

For projects / activities of this nature Council and the Lottery Award can provide support in the form of:

- Practical assistance and informal training by Parks & Countryside staff
- Access to formal training leading to qualification as appropriate
- Material resources and equipment



The Plans:

- Complete refurbishment of all paths and landscaped areas
- New gardens enclosing the Bowling Green
- Bowls Pavilion refurbished and extended to provide shelter, refreshments, and toilets
- Gardeners Hut refurbished and extended to provide Community Meeting Room and toilets
- New tennis courts / multi games / community activity area
- New adventure play facility
- Improved parking facilities
- Extensive woodland management and habitat improvement

The Lottery Bid

In 2006 the Council authorised the Parks and Countryside Service to submit a bid to the Big Lottery and Heritage Lottery Fund 'Parks for People' Programme for the restoration of Dunwood Park.

The process of securing larger awards of lottery grant is a protracted one, involving three stages of increasing complexity. Following submission of a basic expression of interest, a description of the park's potential, and evidence that the local community supported the proposal, the Council was awarded a grant of £35,000 to work up the necessary information for Stage 2.

Stage 2 required background research and surveys, outline restoration plans and proposals, building designs, and a variety of reports, schedules and tables concerning history, heritage values, community value, audience development, training, maintenance, costs, and timing. This work was carried out by the Parks and Countryside Development Team, supported by consultants and the Friends of Dunwood Park.

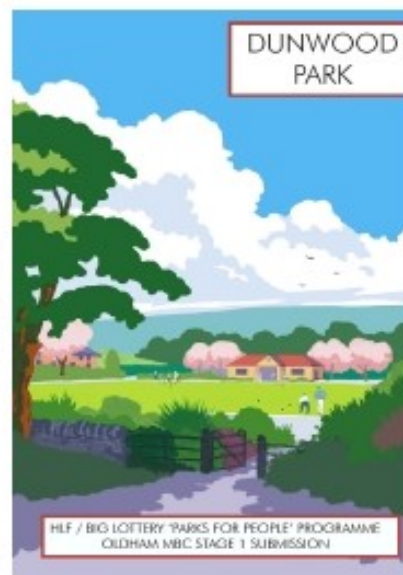
The Bid was submitted in March 2008 to be judged in competition with many others from the North-west and the rest of the UK. Oldham was visited twice by lottery trustees during the summer, who were impressed by the transformation of Alexandra Park with HLF grant, and enthusiastic about the character and potential of Dunwood. Following expert assessment, further work to strengthen the training and audience development aspect of the project was undertaken and submitted, and on the 9th October the Council was informed that the project had passed Stage 2, with an award of £1,090,000 reserved pending success at Stage 3, and a grant of £45,800 to support the further development of the proposals.

The Council now has until October 2009 to work up the details and submit for the final stage.

It must be emphasised the **success in the early stages does not guarantee an award**, and there is still a significant amount of work to do before we can be sure that there will be a new park by the time of the Centenary in 2012.

The big difference between this bid and previous park restorations is that the Big Lottery trustees are at least as interested in developing the local community as they are in restoring the infrastructure of the park- and they are prepared to invest money in doing so.

The project offers many opportunities for community action, training and learning linked to the planning, construction, management and future use of the park. It is vital that we identify these opportunities and the individuals and groups who will contribute and benefit.



The Friends of Dunwood Park

About 5 years ago, some of the people who were concerned about the declining state of the park got together to try and do something about it. They formed the Friends of Dunwood Park, a community group which now has over 150 members. The Group has conducted a number of surveys of park users and Shaw residents seeking views on the development needs of the park. They sought and received the backing of the Parish Council and the Shaw & Royton Area Committee and established a good working relationship with the Council's Parks and Countryside Service, who manage the park.

This collaboration has produced a number of significant improvements to the park:

- a Master Plan has been produced,
- drainage has been improved
- woodland paths have been widened and surfaced
- street lighting installed,
- repairs carried out to the pavilion roof,
- a new children's playground provided (opened by the Mayor in , yes, a torrential downpour!)



The commitment and work of the Friends Group has been a major factor in persuading the Big Lottery and Heritage Lottery Fund Trustees that the Dunwood Park scheme is worthy of their support.

An important objective of the project, therefore, is the development of the Friends Group and other community groups to provide them, where appropriate, with the skills and resources to help organise a range of park based activities, promote the park to a wider audience, and to influence the park's management into the future.

A website is currently under construction, and the group would welcome new members.