

Friends of Dartmouth Park
Patron: William, 10th Earl of Dartmouth
www.friendsofdartmouthpark.org.uk

Press Release

Friends of Dartmouth Park celebrate a Lottery Award to attract people back into this once grand park

The Friends, a group of local people who want to see the park restored to its former glory, are delighted to announce an 'Awards for All' Lottery Grant of £5,470 to attract people back into historic Dartmouth Park. The people of West Bromwich think affectionately of Dartmouth Park with its happy memories of their own childhood, and that of their children or grandchildren growing up with the park as part of their lives. Dartmouth Park is still a beautiful place to visit to drive away stress and refresh the spirit even before its restoration.

The park was given to the people of West Bromwich 130 years ago by the 5th Earl of Dartmouth and in his speech at the opening he said: "We place this park at your disposal for many years to come. May you all live long to enjoy it, and may your health be better and your happiness greater for your use and enjoyment of it." We want the people of the Borough to again take ownership of Dartmouth Park and follow its restoration so that they will respect and take pride in what will, once again, be a superb people's park.

The grant is helping the Friends to organise events to encourage people to come back into the park, such as weekly 'Health Walks' in conjunction with Sandwell Stride, that start at 2pm from the Reform Street Entrance on Mondays. This is a walk for all weathers and all abilities as it uses the pathways in the park, but it is also interesting because it will take the walker to parts of the park that they may not previously have visited, and gives splendid views over Sandwell Valley. The walk is perfect for mothers with babies in buggies. There will also be regular restoration walks that look at the history of the park and the restoration project with the help of photographs.

The grant is also being used to compile a social history for a permanent display in the new pavilion, an audio history and eventually a book. The social history of the park and its restoration is the subject of a presentation which the Friends Group are taking to community groups across the Borough and the grant will help with the purchase of equipment to facilitate these presentations.

If anyone is interested in joining the Friends of Dartmouth Park they are very welcome to attend their Quarterly Meeting, to be held on Wednesday 24 September at the Masonic Hall, Edward Street, West Bromwich. The meeting commences at 7.30pm, but if you would like a tour of the Masonic Hall before the meeting please arrive at 7pm. The guest speaker is Graham Eyre-Morgan (Borough Archaeologist) talking about West Bromwich, and David Brown, the Project Manager for the Restoration of Dartmouth Park will be updating us on any developments relating to the Heritage Lottery Bid and the restoration. Interval refreshments will be followed by a Quiz on West Bromwich with prizes for the winners.

For further information: Contact: Carol Hartill, Secretary to the Friends of Dartmouth Park, on 0121 588 4747, e-mail: carolh.fodp@btinternet.com