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Ambitious Vision for Corporation Park Conservatory Celebrated

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Efforts to restore Corporation Park Conservatory have taken a positive first step forward thanks to a cash injection of £136,800.

Historic England has contributed a £68,400 'Repair to Heritage at Risk' grant with the rest coming from Council funds.

The park on Preston New Road is registered by Historic England as a park and garden of special historical interest. The conservatory dates to 1900 and has been a popular central feature since.

Karen Heverin, Surveyor with Historic England, said: "It's a lovely example of late-Victorian park architecture, but its sad state has detracted from people's enjoyment of the park for some time. Working with the Council and the supporters' group, our funding will help with plans to restore this amazing building for the use of the local community. The project will also improve Historic England's understanding of how historic glasshouses like this one can be heated and cooled efficiently, so that other places can benefit from lessons learned here."

Their grant will be used to support work which will put the project in a better position to attract the further investment needed to return it back into use. The wider project development works will identify the most appropriate methods to restore the conservatory. This will include a building condition survey including architectural, structural, mechanical, and electrical services, an assessment of historical significance and heritage impact. Also plans to manage maintenance, security, including CCTV and lighting.

The Leader of Blackburn with Darwen, Councillor Phil Riley, said: "It's good to celebrate that we have got this award. There is a real appetite in the town to return it to its former glory and we are committed to having an ambitious vision for it. This is a small but significant step in that journey. The full restoration will of course run into millions of pounds."

Councillor Jim Smith, Executive Member for Environment and Operations, added: "The conservatory dates to 1900 and deserves investment. There has been a lot of vandalism which has been devastating. The Corporation Park Supporters Group are passionate and positive, we are lucky to have them. We really hope to do a lot of improvements in the park to make the most of it."

As part of the project, the Council with support from the Corporation Park Supporters Group, will also consult with people interested in the conservatory to identify the most appropriate uses for the conservatory once it is restored.

Nicola Beswick, Chair of Corporation Park Supporters Group, said: "Corporation Park Supporters Group have been working with the Council for many years to try to find a way to restore the conservatory and create a long-term sustainable future so it can benefit the local community for years to come. We welcome the steps taken by the council to prevent further damage to the structure and the new efforts to bid for funding.

"We will be continuing to contribute to the restoration process until the conservatory is back in use and beyond. Community support for the restoration will be vital for the success of a funding bid."

Anyone wishing to join in the efforts or should contact: info@corporationparksupportersgroup.com

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