

'Durlston Pleasure Grounds' Project Update: September

We are delighted to announce that we now have 'Permission to Start' from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund and that work on the project can now get underway. This is the culmination of years of work by Dorset County Council staff, volunteers and partner organisations, especially Friends of Durlston.

About the Project:

Over the next 3 years, the 'Pleasure Grounds' Project will enhance Durlston's Grade II-listed Victorian landscape for nature, history and the local community.

Landscape work will include improvements to paths, new viewpoints, woodland management to improve habitats for wildlife and improve the condition of historic plantings. Victorian features will be restored and new opportunities for 'wild play' will be created, while work will create a landscape which is easier for us to manage.

The project will also provide new ways for people to get involved, including new volunteer opportunities for people with disabilities, dementia or long term health conditions to volunteer. A lift-sharing scheme will support the Durlston Bus, while a programme of training will help people of all ages develop their skills.

Latest News:

- This month, we will be interviewing for a Project Officer, Community Ranger and Administration Assistant to help deliver the Project and our first 'Pleasure Grounds' Apprentice, Izzy has already started.
- Procurement is underway for a Landscape Architect who will develop final proposals and drawings for landscape work – there will be a chance to preview these plans around Christmas.
- We are also appointing an evaluation contractor who will track the success of the project, along with Stone Conservation contractors and a Small Tree and Green Woodwork contractor who will help with some of the early woodland management work this winter.
- Our new 'Pleasure Grounds' volunteer work party started last month. Their first task was to clear out the derelict shed and yard at the Aviaries and they will soon be moving onto dry stone walling and work on managing smaller trees. If you would like to join them for work, tea, cake and laughs, they meet every Tuesday at 10am at the Learning Centre – all welcome! Watch a video about the group on our Facebook page here:
<https://www.facebook.com/Durlston/videos/1821833131257980/>
- Groundwork will be getting underway shortly, ready for the installation of our new, purpose built base for the 'Everyone Needs A Shed!' project at the Aviaries

To find out more about the Project, or get involved, visit www.durlston.co.uk/ParksforPeople.aspx, email us at durlston@dorsetcc.gov.uk or pop in and chat to a Ranger at the Castle.

Ali Tuckey (Project Leader)