

London Borough of Bexley

News Release

For Immediate Release

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ANCIENT ARTEFACTS DISCOVERED IN LESNES ABBEY WOODS PARK

Significant archaeological artefacts have been unearthed close to the foundations of the old 1930's amenity building in Lesnes Abbey Woods Park during works to improve the site.

Some of the artefacts found, which include human remains, are currently being examined offsite by specialist professional teams. In order to safeguard the find the foundations and steel structure for the new Lesnes Lodge building have been redesigned. This redesign has impacted on the timings for construction of the new building which is expected to be complete in early 2016.

Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Environment and Leisure Councillor Peter Craske said,

“This is an exciting discovery that highlights the historical significance of Lesnes Abbey Woods which we want to preserve for the local community. The find was made a while ago but it was imperative that we protect the immediate area before releasing any information on it. We are continuing to work with specialists to manage and safeguard the site's unique archaeology and will update the local community as things progress. In the meantime we would urge people to treat the park with respect and refrain from metal detecting, in particular, as this is illegal and could cause irreparable damage.”

The construction of the new Lesnes Lodge on the site of the old amenity building is just one of a number of significant improvements which are being made to Lesnes Abbey Wood Park to encourage more visitors and to unlock the rich history of the site. The improvement work is on schedule to be completed by summer 2016.

Work to highlight the Lesnes Mulberry tree as a feature is almost complete. New fencing and temporary information lecterns have been installed to share the tree's special history with visitors. Landscape work will begin in the autumn on other new facilities which include a new trim trail, outdoor gym, table tennis and picnic tables. In addition several outdoor learning experiences such as a heathland classroom, a Monk's Garden and a new skyline viewing point, will be created.

The Lesnes Abbey Woods Enhancement project team will be holding another of the regular 'Meet us at the Park' sessions on 28 August to update the community on how

plans to improve the park are developing. The event is free and will feature activities such as medieval tile making, stone masonry and guided walks around the semi ancient woodland at Lesnes.

The Meet us at the Park session will also include demonstrations of parkour activities along with workshops to introduce people to the sport and enable them to make full use of the parkour zone at Lesnes, which is the first of its kind in the borough. These will be run by Parkour Generations, the largest UK professional freerunning organisation, who have performed all over the world and whose previous work includes performances in Hollywood movies such as District 13, Babylon A.D., World War Z.

For more information on the improvements at Lesnes Abbey Woods visit http://webdefence.global.blackspider.com/urlwrap/?q=AXicJcwxDslwDEBRX6Erd8Ct6EDLhMQBOEMTGyhwamS7Sxt1JkD89Um_uQA2AO8dgPJ26G9oWjBPiaPMrsIYJYMfryPJGrtuGlceMuVAanuegix6DrQybXiXgssTHu6vU9vWWrEkS85kM9I388N_H5GmJVA&Z

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The improvements at Lesnes Abbey Woods have been made possible by a 'Parks for people' programme grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The £4.2m project is funded by the London Borough of Bexley and the Heritage Lottery Fund (which is investing £3.5m).