

Coronation Lake and Park

A much-loved public park at the heart of the community



Coronation Lake and Park is an important green space and key community asset for Helston and its surrounding parishes. Well loved, with its lake, café, play park, boat hire, skate park, an ‘events square’, walks and grassy areas, it has much potential for supporting community activities and events as well as developing the visitor economy of the town and area.

The Park was established in 1912 to commemorate the coronation of King George V and as such holds a significant place in local history. When the proposal for Coronation Park was originally conceived and presented by Helston born William John Winn, an alderman of Helston Borough Council, it was made clear that the Park was for the pleasure of the people of Helston and was in no way an attempt to make profit.

Presented for the coronation of King George V in 1911 the scheme was finally completed and officially opened in July 1912.



In the opening lecture William John Winn said 'if there is one thing more than another that in my old age I am proud of, it is the child of my brain which will continue to live when I am gone.'

Coronation Park has been in continuous use and open to the public since that time. Over many years the Helston Plum Fair was a regular event along with an annual Water Carnival. Many Helston people hold strong memories of the Park as a social space a recreation area and a place to promenade on a weekend.

The Lake and Park forms the most northern section of a chain of greenspaces which link Helston, via the National Trust owned Penrose estate, to the coast at Loe Bar and Porthleven. A spectacular and somewhat hidden jewel of West Cornwall.



The central focus of the park is a 210m long historic boating lake with resident wildfowl, surrounded by seats, shelters, a circular footpath and a water wheel (installed in 1975 to commemorate the strong watermill heritage of the area). At the town centre end there are formal play facilities including a skate park, café, public toilets, an events space, tree lined avenues and car parking. These were re-configured in 2007, when the park was extended into the site of the former Helston Cattle Market, which had become derelict since ceasing business during the 2001 Foot and Mouth outbreak.

However, by 2017 the Park had undergone a decline which beset many such assets relying on public funding for maintenance and management and had become increasingly at risk of closure. SKA, with wide community support, led a campaign to address the situation and take back the Park for the community. In 2018, via a ground-breaking devolution agreement with Cornwall Council, SKA took on a 99 year lease of the area from Cornwall Council with the Council contributing £109,000 towards capital works improvements.

SKA worked with other funders to raise a further £240,000 of capital funding. This included contributions from the Helston Downsland Charity, West Cornwall Local Action Group through the LEADER programme, SITA, local Rotary groups as well as via community fundraising by young people (including supermarket bag packing, skate events etc.). With additional money pledged directly by SKA this created a £350,000 investment fund for the Park.



Over a 9-month period with the support of numerous local contractors, SKA drained the lake so that the lake walls could be rebuilt, and resurfaced all of the footpaths. Lighting was installed around the perimeter of the previously unlit lake enabling extended winter use and improving safety. Regular flooding of the Play Park was resolved with new drainage and a new Skate Park created.



The works were completed in late 2018 and SKA were then able to establish a management process which ensured the Park's ongoing financial sustainability, with income from the café and car park balancing the employment of a Park Keeper and regular planned maintenance programme. The Park remains, as it has been since its inception, a free to access not-for-profit community asset.

The space has been made fully accessible for wheelchair users and people with visual impairment. The pay & display car park has 32 spaces (including a number reserved for disabled visitors). Pedestrians can easily access the site from the north via the St John's/Penzance Road pelican crossing and an improved and widened crossing point has been created across the Porthleven Road to access for walks and cycle rides through Penrose, along the Cober Valley and Loe Pool to the coast.

In 2020 a full refurbishment of the café was undertaken by leaseholders David and Lucy, and Lakeside Cycles, a cycle hire business based in the Park was created.



Throughout the intervening years SKA has continued to maintain the Park's amenities and seek grant funding for improvement projects. These include the establishment of wildflower meadow spaces, an 'Incredible Edible' community growing space, refurbishment of the water wheel, more tree planting and tree maintenance as well as more public seating.

Habitat conservation is an important consideration, as the site forms the start of the Penrose to Loe Pool natural green corridor that follows the river 2 miles to the sea, which comprises a Site of Special Scientific Interest.



Free-to-access, visitor numbers have continuously increased since its initial refurbishment, attracting locals and people from afar to Helston. The Park is today widely used by all generations within Helston as well as many visitors and remains a very important part of community life.

In a further development in 2024, the Shared Prosperity Fund enabled the construction of an Events Pavilion and the recruitment of an events management staff role. This has allowed SKA to create a programme of events, workshops and activities in the Park including performances, music, markets, theatre and activities for young people.

Regular inflatable fairground attractions appear throughout the summer.



The funding also included further investments in public toilet refurbishment, solar panels for the café and a new Park Office for SKA staff.

With Coronation Park's success, it is a source of pride for SKA that we are able to offer many free activities and events for young people, helping to support our growing community and being true to William John Winn's vision of his creation.

