

WARWICK DISTRICT GREEN SPACES



SEPTEMBER 2018



Welcome to our new Green Spaces newsletter

Here you will be able to keep up to date with news about parks, play spaces, nature reserves, woodlands and other green spaces and find out about upcoming events and activities. You can also get an insight into the work of our Green Spaces Team and what's involved in maintaining and improving the 179 green spaces we manage. This is the first edition from our team – please let us know what you think!

Cllr Moira-Ann Grainger

Portfolio Holder Neighbourhood Services

In this edition

- Summer events in our parks
- A hat trick of Green Flag Awards
- Green Space of the Month – Newbold Comyn
- Exciting new equipment and facilities in our play areas
- Upcoming events and activities
- Work begins on the Pump Room Gardens restoration project
- What to look out for this autumn
- A day in the life of – Jen Wharton

Summer events in our parks

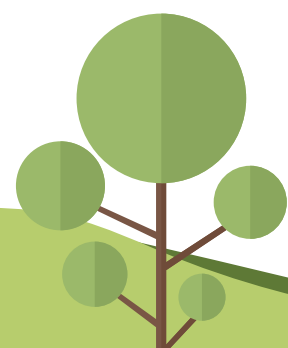
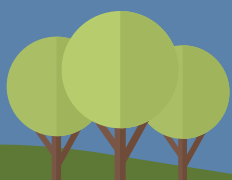
Summer events in our parks have included band performances and outdoor plays, 'Art in the Park', The Lions Grand Show, Kenilworth Carnival, Leamington Peace Festival, Warwickshire Pride, the Leamington Carnival, stages of the Leamington Half Marathon, Whitnash Community Fun Days and Warwick's Party in the Park. Most recently our Leamington parks played host to the finish of Stage 4 of the Tour of Britain, and the Food and Drink Festival. Thank you to all visitors who attended events in our green spaces!

We also hosted lawn bowls events on our world class bowling greens in Victoria Park, these included the National Bowls Championships, Men's British Isles Championships, the Men's Senior International Series and the Women's Junior International Series and Championships.

A hat trick of Green Flag awards

In July came the news that three of our green spaces had been awarded Green Flags, the benchmark national standard for publicly accessible spaces. The three parks and open spaces receiving the awards are Jephson Gardens, Oakley Wood and Crackley Woods. This is the twelfth year in a row that Jephson Gardens has received a Green Flag and a second for Oakley Wood. Crackley Woods, an ancient woodland and nature reserve just north of Kenilworth, has received its first Green Flag thanks to the huge amount of work by our team in conjunction with the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and their active volunteer group to improve the visitor experience in this beautiful place.

Did you spot
Phil and Kirstie in Jephson
Gardens in a recent edition
of Location, Location,
Location?



Green Space of the Month

Newbold Comyn

Newbold Comyn is a 300 acre (120Ha.) country park on the outskirts of Leamington Spa. The southern half is used for recreation, sport and wildlife conservation.

The history of Newbold Comyn can be traced back to the Domesday Book. Despite its name it has never been a 'common' (Comyn is a variation on the name of a Norman family who owned the land from 1160 until 1200.). The land was owned by the Willes family for around 400 years until it was sold to the Council for £28,300 in 1943. The Newbold Comyn Arms was previously a farm house and is one of a number that would previously have been on the land. Newbold Comyn is a large area almost as big as 120 international rugby pitches! It includes a number of facilities such as Newbold Comyn Leisure Centre, football pitches, the Leam Valley Nature

Reserve and a newly upgraded play area. It also hosts a popular Parkrun every Saturday at 9am.

Following the closure of Newbold Comyn golf course in January 2018, the council is exploring the options available for the land and has recently undertaken a survey to find out the views of local people. You can visit the council's website for the latest information.

Opening hours: **All day, every day**

Postcode: **CV32 4EW**

Parking: **Newbold Terrace East and Radford Road**



Autumn Events and Activities



Every 4th Saturday, 9am-2pm.

**Farmers Market,
Pump Room Gardens.**

Every Saturday 9am.

**Leamington Park Run,
Newbold Comyn**

This is a weekly 5km timed run for anyone who wants to join in. The event starts and finishes at the football pavilion where you can meet for a post run coffee. **Sat 29 September.**

**Alzheimer's Memory Walk,
Victoria Park**

An Alzheimer's Society sponsored Memory Walk offering two routes. A short, fully-accessible route (1.5km) and a longer route (5.5km) which is slightly more challenging. The event starts and finishes at the event site in Victoria Park and explores the Pump Room Gardens and Jephson Gardens. Funds raised go to the Alzheimer's Society charity work. www.memorywalk.org.uk



Saturday 3 November.
**Warwick Town Bonfire,
Warwick Racecourse**



PRG Programme Update

Our Heritage Lottery funded restoration programme to restore and improve Leamington's Village Green began in earnest in June. Phase 1 is now reaching completion, this includes:

- Removal and off-site restoration of the bandstand
- Renovation of York Bridge and its surrounds
- Wildlife and landscaping enhancements along the riverbank
- Flowerbeds around the bandstand
- Drainage, lighting and path improvements
- Tree planting
- New bins and benches

We are running an exciting programme of events and activities alongside this project.

To kick this off, the PRG Restoration Project team met members of the public at this summer's Art in the Park and asked what they wanted to use the newly renovated bandstand for – ideas included everything from traditional brass bands to Motown, yoga and circus skills workshops.

Visitors painted nearly 400 'Park Rocks' over the weekend. Check out Twitter **#ParksRock** to see how far they've travelled! Watch this space for more events and activities on the bandstand in 2019!

What to find out more?

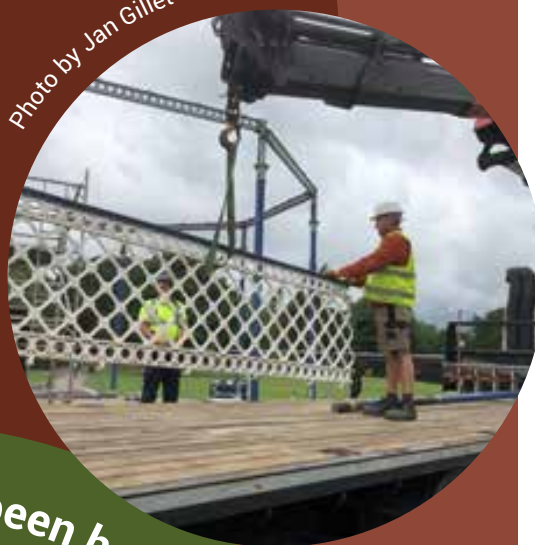
Visit Leamington Spa Art Gallery and Museum in the Royal Pump Rooms and pick up a leaflet about the Pump Room Gardens.

prgproject@warwickdc.gov.uk
www.warwickdc.gov.uk/parks
www.pumproomgardensfriends.org



LOTTERY FUNDED

Photo by Jan Gillet



A lot's been happening in our play areas!

Over the summer several of our play areas have been upgraded with some innovative and fun new equipment...some of it is suitable for big kids too! All of the following green spaces have something new ranging from trim trails, gym equipment, toddler and junior multi-play to football pitches and goal areas, basketball, aerial zipwires, skate areas and wildflower meadows. If one of these parks is close to you, why not check it out?

Saltisford Common, Warwick; Mason Avenue, Lillington; Kennedy Square, Leamington; Newbold Comyn; Bates Memorial, Kenilworth; The Holt, North Leamington; The Dell and Stamford Gardens, Milverton.

What to look out for this autumn

Summer meadows have been cut, which helps keep them full of biodiversity. In some parks, only half of the meadows have been cut, leaving the remaining standing for overwintering insects and larva.

Despite the dry weather this summer, park boundaries and hedges have produced bumper crops of blackberries. We have all enjoyed them for jam, crumbles and pies, but they are also an important source of nutrition for a host of wildlife including hedgehogs, badgers and our resident birds (Blackbirds, Robins and House Sparrows). In the depths of winter, the berries that dry out on the bushes make great food for Blue Tits and Coal Tits.

We also have elderberries, rich in Vitamin C, which are good for making cordials and wines, and are great for migrating birds like Blackcap, Whitethroats and Garden Warblers to increase their fat reserves before heading back to warmer climates in Africa after breeding in the UK.

Swifts are summer visitors that have left already – a sure sign that winter is on its way!

At the end of September, we will be removing our summer bedding from parks and giving it away to anyone who would like it – while supplies last! Look out for posters in Jephson Gardens and St Nicholas Park to find out where and when.



A day **in the** life of Jen Wharton



Tell me a little about your position and what you do on a day-to-day basis?

‘I look for opportunities to improve the play and visitor experiences of our parks and open spaces. I am part of a team who are responsible for making sure we have play spaces that are safe and enjoyable to use. I work closely with officers who manage and maintain and undertake regular site visits to address any issues and identify opportunities to make improvements.’

How did you get into this line of work?

‘I did work experience in a garden centre when I was 16 and as a result they offered me a weekend job. After my A Levels, they offered to fund a garden design course and after completing this I attended Myerscough College to study horticulture and landscape design. House relocation resulted in a job with a contracts management company, followed by an opportunity at the local district council as a Landscape Officer. This has progressed to today’s job at Warwick District Council as Green Space Development Officer’



What key skills do you need to succeed at your job?

‘To be a people person with good horticultural knowledge and plenty of patience!’

Describe your perfect day at work

‘To visit a park or green space on a dry day making notes on ideas to enhance the area, designing new planting schemes and creating play space designs’

Which is your favourite green space in the district?

‘I really like Mason’s Avenue Park because it offers something of all ages and all abilities, and is surrounded by woodland and meadows which are great for biodiversity. But there are loads of amazing green spaces within the district that have loads to offer’

When you were younger, what did you hope to be when you grew up?

‘When I was little my family took me to Bodnant Gardens in Wales. Since that day I always wanted to be a Head Gardener for a stately home’

What do you do with your free time?

‘All of my family love being outdoors, so we spend a lot of our time playing in the garden or visiting parks and National Trust Gardens but more recently I have started training for my first ever London Marathon to raise money for a local charity’

What’s the strangest thing that has happened to you in your career?

‘I once worked with Carol Vorderman and David Domoney on a TV gardening programme where I scooped cement out of a pond using a spotted spoon from the kitchen!’

For more information about green spaces in Warwick District please visit:

 greenspaces@warwickdc.gov.uk

 www.warwickdc.gov.uk/parks

 [WarwickDCNews](https://www.facebook.com/WarwickDCNews)

 [@Warwick_DC](https://twitter.com/Warwick_DC)

