

WARWICK DISTRICT GREEN SPACES

January 2018



Green Space of the Month

Wych Elm Drive

This unusual green space located just off the Tachbrook Road in South Leamington was purchased by Leamington medical man and philanthropist, Dr John Hitchman in 1851. He established the site as an arboretum, bringing in what were then exotic conifer seedlings from around the world. They may not be unusual now, but at the time they were planted in the mid-1800s they would have been the height of fashion. This was the first time that trees such as Deodar Cedar and Wellingtonia had been brought to the UK and many of these magnificent trees still stand today.

New interpretation boards have recently been installed on the site, allowing visitors to identify its beautiful trees and find out more about its interesting Victorian history. If you've never been to the site, why not pay a visit and use the tree trail to admire the many historic trees, enjoy the play area and take a look at the wildlife pond.

Postcode: CV31 3QR **Parking:** Wych Elm Drive (on street).

Public Transport: Bus U1, U2, G1.

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Pump Room Gardens Programme Update



Work continues on the Pump Room Gardens, with the bandstand beginning to be reassembled in January – this will probably take 4-5 weeks. Planting to the Rain Garden feature and the rest of the site has begun, and will be completed shortly.

Works to the wider gardens will largely be completed by early February, with benches being installed, new bins and bollards arriving and installing the new swale at the west end of the site. The swale is a shallow depression which will collect surplus rainwater and allow it to drain into the river. The tarmac surfacing to the paths will be going down in early January and the fencing will be put in soon after. The final resin-bonded path surfacing is temperature sensitive

so this will follow in due course once the weather warms up!

Watch this space for details of a special event in March to celebrate its return.

If you want to find out more about the Pump Room Gardens project and the history of Leamington's Spa Gardens and parks, then visit the Leamington Spa Art Gallery and Museum.

www.warwickdc.gov.uk/royalpumprooms

prgproject@warwickdc.gov.uk

www.warwickdc.gov.uk/parks

www.pumproomgardensfriends.org



LOTTERY FUNDED



FRIENDS OF THE PUMP ROOM GARDENS



LOST ART HISTORIC LANDSCAPE FURNISHING



January Events and Activities

Every Saturday 9am
Leamington Park Run

Newbold Comyn

www.parkrun.org.uk/leamington

Every Wednesday 11.45am
Walking for Health Walk

98 Brunswick Street CV31 3BD

www.warwickdc.gov.uk/healthwalks

Saturday 19 January
Helping Hands Awareness Day

Jephson Gardens

www.helpinghandscharity.org.uk/



Saturday 26 January,
10.30am-12.30pm
Big Garden Bird Watch

Royal Pump

Rooms. Join in with the RSPB's annual bird count!

Make an apple bird feeder, create some birdy craft, and take part in a bird spotting walk around the Pump Room Gardens, finishing in Jephson Gardens. Free, all ages welcome.



What to look out for in January

- The autumn's fallen leaves are proving to be very useful in our green spaces. We have mowed over the leaves in most of our grass areas to shred them and have then left them in place, enabling them to rot more quickly. Worms can then ingest the leaf mulch, which improves the structure of soil, keeping it aerated, and helping with drainage.
- While enjoying a winter walk take a look at the bird life in the hedges and watch how birds take the berries from plants such as holly and cotoneaster. While you are out you may see some of the winter flowering plants such as Snowdrops, Christmas Rose (Hellebores) and Witch Hazel coming into bloom. If there is snow or ice do take care on slippery footpaths!
- Did you know that we have 500 bird boxes across our parks, nature reserves and cemeteries?

Most of them are

woodcrete boxes which provide nest sites and roosting locations for birds, and can be lifesaving for smaller birds such as wrens, blue tits and great tits during cold weather.

We have just finished cleaning and maintaining these for the start of nesting season. You can sponsor a bird box by visiting www.warwickdc.gov.uk/info/20245/parks/920/donations_and_sponsorships/4



Coventry and Warwick Year of Wellbeing

2019 is the Year of Wellbeing! This is an initiative running across Coventry and Warwickshire to showcase the many local activities available to connect people with all aspects of health and wellbeing. The aim of the Year of Wellbeing is to encourage each of us to make one positive change in 2019 to improve our physical and mental health. We are hoping to hear inspirational stories from local people about how getting out and about in the district's parks and green spaces for walking, playing, running, to find peace or to seek company has helped you to improve your health and wellbeing!

Other things happening during the year include projects to encourage children to become more active every day, the promotion of social spaces and groups to help tackle loneliness, and wellbeing at work initiatives.

The importance of investing in mental health can't be underestimated. So why not make your pledge for 2019 to get out and enjoy Warwick district's beautiful parks and green spaces, perhaps by getting involved with one of our health walks or volunteering schemes or simply taking a short walk each day? Share your pledge on social media using **#LetsDoThisTogetherCW** or by dropping us a line. Help us to help you make 2019 the best year for your wellbeing!



Health Walks

Why not start the new year by joining one of our regular Walking for Health walks in Leamington, Warwick, Kenilworth or Hampton Magna. They are a great way to keep a healthy mind and body, meet new people and prevent illness. Walking gives us energy and helps our brains release chemicals that make us feel good. What's more, walking is a great way to explore the district's open spaces. Our walks include the Pump Room Gardens, Newbold Comyn and Jephson Gardens in Leamington, Abbey Fields in Kenilworth and Priory Pools Park in Warwick.

Walking for Health is funded by the Ramblers and players of the People's Postcode Lottery and are led by a friendly team of volunteers. They vary in length and distance from half a mile to four miles depending on your walking ability and most cater for wheelchairs.

Hampton Magna walk leader Caroline says "Seeing the friendships forming amongst our group and their fitness levels improving is so encouraging. We look out for wildlife and discuss the countryside as the seasons change and I'm sure our tree and plant knowledge is improving as we share each other's knowledge! Our walkers often tell us how much they look forward to the walk and how much fitter they are feeling".

To find out more about a walk near you please visit www.walkingforhealth.org.uk or call Joanna Dagg on 07912774529.



Community

Engagement

Volunteers Needed!



Do you want to make a difference to your local community? We are looking for volunteers to support the work we are doing with local people, groups and organisations to encourage use of our green spaces, with a particular focus on the Pump Room Gardens and Spa Gardens' projects. The roles can include planning and assisting with events and activities, communications and publicity (including this newsletter!), helping to manage bookings for our newly-renovated bandstand and supporting school workshops. So if you enjoy working with people, have a keen interest in our parks and open spaces, or want to gain some great experience as part of a friendly and supportive team, we would love to hear from you.

For more information please email greenspaces@warwickdc.gov.uk



A day in the life of

Gary Rudd, Contracts Officer

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

My role is to help oversee the smooth running of three of the Council's major contracts; street cleansing, grounds maintenance and refuse collections. This includes responding to incidents of fly tipping and abandoned cars in the district. I also assist with the grounds maintenance contract for the district's major parks and cemeteries.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

I'm proud to be able to work in and make a contribution to the lovely district of Warwick, the place where I was born and bred. I work with a great team and this role allows me to help people living in our local community.

Who do you work with?

I work closely with park staff, Rangers, and our contractors Suez, Veolia and idverde, who do the grounds maintenance – cutting hedges, grass cutting, maintaining shrubs as well as collecting refuse and recycling and keeping our streets clean. I support the work of the green spaces, culture and events teams and also ensure that enquiries from the public are monitored and responded to. Last summer I particularly enjoyed facilitating the judges' visits for 'Leamington in Bloom', which involved visiting lots of the district's stunning green spaces.

What do you do with your free time?

I enjoy cooking and travelling. I've recently been on two tours to Ireland which I found very scenic, with friendly people. My favourite type of cooking is Indian, probably followed by Italian or a good Sunday roast. I like to have some quality time at the weekends to spend at home pottering around the garden.

If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?

Sometimes I wish it was a little less hectic!

If you could have dinner with somebody famous, who would you pick and why?

Tricky question! I'm going to pick Liam and Noel Gallagher because I think it would be a pretty crazy dinner! It would have to be somewhere rock and roll, a big city with bright lights. I'd ask them about their normal everyday lives rather than what you read in the press.



Which is your favourite green space in the district?

I'd have to say Jephson Gardens, which I've always found very impressive, it's the jewel in the crown, and this year's Leamington in Bloom judges certainly agreed.

What's your new year's resolution?

My new year's resolution is to let my colleague Jamie, also a contract officer, win more games of table tennis. I would also like to lose a few pounds, maybe I'll try one of the Walking for Health walks!

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www.warwickdc.gov.uk/gsnews

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

 greenspaces@warwickdc.gov.uk

 www.warwickdc.gov.uk/parks

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