

# WARWICK DISTRICT GREEN SPACES

Welcome to  
our February  
Green Spaces  
newsletter

## In this edition

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- Search dog training in our parks
- New play spaces plans
- Day in the life of volunteer, David Rennison



Photo by Friends of Christchurch Gardens

## Green Space of the Month

### Christchurch Gardens

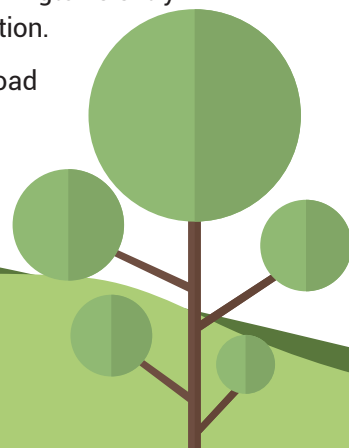
This Valentine's Day, take a stroll up to Christchurch Gardens, the much-loved open space at the top of The Parade in Leamington, to admire the impressive crocus displays. The gardens, which are also known as Beauchamp Square, feature tennis courts, a basketball court, herbaceous planting, carefully mown grass and mature trees. It is a popular location for workers and school children to sit down and enjoy some fresh air during their lunch break.

The site used to be the location of the Christchurch before it was dismantled in 1959 after falling into disrepair. There were ideas to replace the church with a block of flats, but this met with opposition from local people and instead the space was turned into the gardens you see today. There is still an open air Easter Service, when a cross is erected.

The site has some stunning trees which provided welcome shade during last year's hot summer. In 2011 the gardens were redeveloped, with new footpaths and new planting schemes replacing the old and tired shrubs. The benches were also revamped and fencing put in place to prevent the grass from being worn away. In addition, the walls were rebuilt to help retain the grass and provide alternative seating. During this time, thousands of crocuses were planted with help from local schools, the Friends of Christchurch Gardens and Warwick District Council. The display in late February is fantastic, and heralds the start of spring. In folk law, it is said that the crocus is always in bloom on 14th February, which is why it is sometimes known as the St Valentine flower! The Gardens also form part of Leamington's entry into the Heart of England in Bloom competition.

**Postcode:** CV32 5TE **Parking:** Beauchamp Road  
**Public Transport:** Buses to the Parade

February 2019



## Pump Room Gardens Programme Update

We hope you are as excited as we are to see the beautifully restored bandstand being gradually reassembled. To celebrate, we are proud to launch a fantastic new video created by Leamington's own, Madebysonder. The short film captures a flavour of the intricate skills and craftsmanship that have gone into restoring the original MacFarlane Victorian bandstand. The video was filmed in Wigan at the workshop of Lost Art, one of the country's leading specialists in restoring heritage and stars some of the people involved in bringing the bandstand back to life.

In the meantime, the Pump Room Gardens themselves are gradually being revealed as the fencing is pulled back and the new fencing and benches are being installed.

Come and join us on Friday 15 March from 1pm to 2:30pm at the Royal Pump Rooms for a special event to welcome back the bandstand. Watch this space for more details of the event.

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



## February Events and Activities

**Every Saturday 9am**  
**Leamington Park Run**  
Newbold Comyn  
[www.parkrun.org.uk/leamington](http://www.parkrun.org.uk/leamington)

**Every Friday at 12.30pm**  
**Walking for Health Walk Abbey Fields**  
Abbey Medical Centre, 42 Station Road, CV8 1JP  
[www.warwickdc.gov.uk/healthwalks](http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/healthwalks)

**Sunday 3 March, 9am start**  
**The Warwick Half Marathon**  
Warwick Racecourse. Over 2,000 runners take part in this traffic-free route around Warwick and surrounding countryside. Starting and finishing at Warwick Racecourse, this run is suitable for all abilities and wheelchair users.  
[www.runbritain.com](http://www.runbritain.com)

**Friday 15 March, 1pm-2.30pm**  
**The Bandstand Returns**  
Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington. Not to be missed - join us for a talk on the restoration of Leamington's Victorian bandstand and listen to the first band to perform on the 'new stage'! See 'Pump Room Gardens update' for more information.

**Saturday 19 – Thursday 24 March**  
**The Netherlands Circus**  
St Mary's Lands, Warwick.  
**See [www.thenetherlandscircus.com](http://www.thenetherlandscircus.com) for ticket information**

## New Playground Developments

New play equipment in the recently refurbished Newbold Comyn Arms Play Area

The Green Spaces team aims to provide places where people can explore, meet and interact, and where children and young people can learn, socialise and play outside. We are currently working on a project to improve a number of play spaces across the district, and we are inviting quotes from play companies. We have consulted with families and children living nearby and collected ideas of the sorts of improvements people would like to see. Once the outdoor play companies and equipment providers have submitted their quotes, they will be evaluated before we award the contract. We hope to have the play areas completed by summer 2019.

Our play spaces are designed so that children and young people can safely access and explore their local environment. We will be monitoring the success of our new play spaces once they have been installed.

Ophelia Drive, Othello Avenue, Twycross Walk (Warwick), Midland Oak and Rushmoor Street (Leamington) are seeing full play area improvements, while Sabin Drive (Weston-under-Weatherley) is having additional equipment added, Glendale Avenue (Kenilworth) and Mander Grove (Warwick) will have new park furniture and improved grounds maintenance. Watch this space for updates on progress!



## If you go down to the woods today...

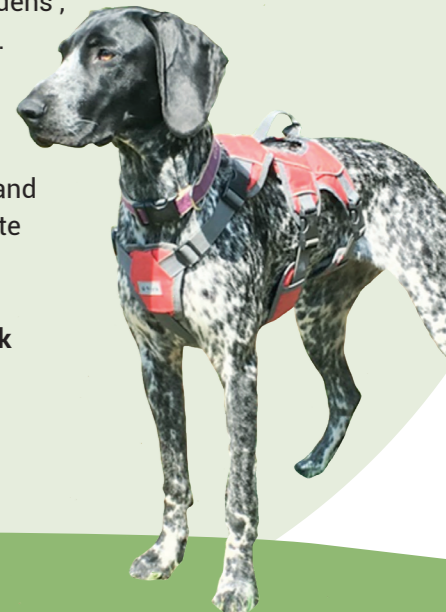
One of the more unusual sights you might come across in the district's green spaces is Warwickshire Search and Rescue training their search dogs. Lowland Rescue teams cover the areas that Mountain Rescue and the RNLI don't. They work with the police searching for and recovering vulnerable missing people.

It takes around two years to train and qualify a dog for search and rescue. They are usually family pets with a drive to work. Air scenting dogs look for any human scent in an area and will follow it to the source. Trailing dogs follow a specific scent on the ground. Fully trained trailing dogs can follow day old trails for over 2 kilometres.

### Play with a Serious Purpose

It's always a game for the dog with handlers taking the dogs away for a reward after a find while team members handle the missing person. "It's a very valuable part of the mix for Lowland Rescue teams across the country. Sue Hastwell, Dog Training Leader for Warwickshire Search and Rescue said "Dogs have amazing noses and a natural instinct to hunt and follow scent. They can follow minute traces of scent that humans can't detect which makes them essential in dense undergrowth and woodland. We can use this to our advantage when searching for vulnerable missing people and it is something the dogs really enjoy doing."

If you are lucky, you can spot dogs training at Newbold Comyn and Leamington's 'Spa Gardens', and at Kenilworth Common. If you think you and your dog would be suited to this, then you can find out more from Warwickshire Search and Rescue through their website [www.warksar.org.uk](http://www.warksar.org.uk) or email the team using [searchdogs@warksar.org.uk](mailto:searchdogs@warksar.org.uk)



## What to look out for in February

- Look out for early signs of spring in our green spaces this month. Crocuses and early daffodils will be making an appearance and are not to be missed. Crocuses are associated with St Valentine's Day.
- Eco-hedges, and tall herbaceous borders will be pruned this month, as the wildlife will have eaten most of the berries and seeds by now, to help them get through the winter.
- During the winter our bird feeding stations will have been

- well used. Two new stations have been installed on St Marys Lands, Warwick.
- We are currently finishing off the winter works in our nature reserves, including coppicing, scrub and general habitat management. These are all volunteer tasks led by the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust – for more information visit [www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk) or email [enquiries@wkwat.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@wkwat.org.uk)
- Grass cutting machinery is being

checked over and any repairs made in preparation for the new grass cutting season, starting soon.



# A day **in the life** of

## David Rennison

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust  
Volunteer at Crackley Woods



### Tell me a little about your volunteering role?

I'm registered as a volunteer for the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and volunteer at Crackley Woods every Sunday between September and March. We do coppicing, hedge laying (we lay about 100 meters of hedges per year) and other tasks, in any weather.

### How did you get into doing volunteering?

I used to live near Crackley Woods, and I was walking my dog one day in 1990, when I saw a couple of guys cutting trees down. I asked to know why, and they explained that they were doing some coppicing. Coppicing helps give varying degrees of growth throughout the wood and encourages biodiversity. I decided to join them, and we now coppice 1,000 sq meters per year! It's done on a 13 year cycle, and were on our third cycle since then.

### Do you work independently or in a team?

We usually pair up, depending on how many of us there are. There's usually 4 to 8 of us, and we keep an eye on each other, which makes the work safer.

### What are you working on at the moment?

We've finished coppicing the third coup (section of woodland), there are 13 to do in total. We've covered up the hazel stools that were recently cut, to keep the deer away from them. We've also planted out new hazels, and we're now cutting a scallop into the circular walk –

is a 'c' shape that we cut into the vegetation near the path, which opens up the woodland, letting light in and encouraging butterflies.

### What do you enjoy most about volunteering?

It's good when people come and say we are doing a great job – we get this more now that people are aware of what we are doing. It's nice to get out in the fresh air, exercise, and there is camaraderie with the other volunteers. Sometimes we go out for a curry, attend one of the volunteer events at Brandon Marsh, or help out at other sites.

### What do you do when you're not volunteering?

I have a groundworks company, we deal with foundations, drainage etc.

### If you were a tree, which species would you be and why?

(Pam – David's wife): He'd be an oak tree, nice and strong, as he's a strong person!

### How would you spend your ideal Valentine's day?

I'd take my wife out for a nice meal – Italian is our usual. There's a very nice one in Earlsdon, where we now live.

### Which is your favourite green space in the district?

Obviously I'd say Crackley Wood! I also like the Spa Gardens in Leamington, which are lovely for a stroll in the summer, and the dog enjoys Abbey Fields in Kenilworth!

To sign up to this e-newsletter, please visit:  
[www.warwickdc.gov.uk/gsnews](http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/gsnews)

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

 [greenspaces@warwickdc.gov.uk](mailto:greenspaces@warwickdc.gov.uk)

 [www.warwickdc.gov.uk/parks](http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/parks)

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