

# WARWICK DISTRICT GREEN SPACES

Get out and  
about for free  
in our green  
spaces this April



## In this edition

- Happy Easter Everyone!
- Peregrine Watch 2019
- Saltisford Meadows springs to life
- Day in the Life of Will Pritchard, new Catering, Events & Bar Manager at Royal Pump Rooms



## Green Space of the Month

### Priory Park, Warwick

Although Priory Park is situated close to the centre of Warwick, it is a piece of countryside within a town – a place to relax and get away from it all.

Much of Priory Park is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. There is archaeological evidence of the land being used over many centuries. Excavations have found evidence of Romano-British cremation urns and Norman lime kilns.

In the early 12th century, the Priory of St Sepulchre was constructed on the site. The priory was seized during Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries and sold to Thomas Hawkins in 1546. The priory was demolished and rebuilt as a prestigious house with 40 acres of parkland and was even visited by Elizabeth I. The mansion was sold in the 1920s and shipped to Virginia USA and rebuilt as Virginia House for an American couple.

The land was transferred to the local council and was opened to the public as Priory Park in 1953. The park is now managed for wildlife and biodiversity and to protect the archaeology below the ground.

When Warwick District Council closed its tree nursery in the mid-1980s, an arboretum was planted in Priory Park to use up the tree stock.

This has resulted in a number of interesting tree species being established including a Fox Glove Tree (*Paulownia-tomentosa*).

The site also features a number of ancient oaks. Meadows were planted in the mid-2000s to improve biodiversity – wildflower species include yellow rattle, pignut and meadow buttercup.

Today, Priory Park offers natural open space with meadow and woodland walks. The Council is currently in year three of an eleven-year restoration project supported by the Friends of Priory Park ([foppwarwick.org](http://foppwarwick.org)). The project involves tree works (felling, thinning, coppicing), the restoration of grassland and thinning of the original arboretum to prevent trees from out-competing each other. An excellent place for an egg hunt this Easter!

**Postcode: CV34 4XW**

**Parking: Cape Road**

**Public Transport: Train, Bus, Warwick Station**

# Pump Room Gardens Programme Update



The Bandstand is Back! The bandstand was officially re-opened by the Chairman of Warwick District Council Cllr Stephen Cross at a well-attended ceremony on Friday 15 March. There were speeches by Archie Pitts representing the Friends of the Pump Room Gardens (who began and helped fund the project) and Deputy Chief Executive of Warwick District Council, Bill Hunt, followed a performance by Royal Spa Brass on the 'new stage'. Visitors were then invited to take a guided tour of the newly landscaped gardens, listen to a talk by Dominic Liptrot of Lost Art, the company responsible for the bandstands restoration and enjoy refreshments including a piece of 'bandstand' cake made by local company 'The Cakery'.

The re-opening of the bandstand coincided with the launch of a new exhibition on the Pump Room Gardens in the foyer of the Royal Leamington Spa Art Gallery and Museum, celebrating the history and restoration of the bandstand. The exhibition features historic

photos and artwork relating to the bandstand, original items from the bandstand itself, and a short film by 'MadebySonder' featuring the story of the restoration project.

[prgproject@warwickdc.gov.uk](mailto:prgproject@warwickdc.gov.uk)  
[www.warwickdc.gov.uk/parks](http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/parks)  
[www.pumproomgardensfriends.org](http://www.pumproomgardensfriends.org)



LOTTERY FUNDED

FRIENDS OF THE PUMP ROOM GARDENS

LOST ART  
HISTORIC LANDSCAPE FURNISHING

## April Events and Activities

**Sunday 7 April (9am start) and Kids Run Free (10.30am start)**  
**Wright Hassall 10km Regency Run**  
Leamington Town Centre: multi-terrain running race open to all abilities, raising money for local charities.  
[regency10k.co.uk](http://regency10k.co.uk)

**Thursday 25 April**  
**Charity Race Day**  
Warwick Racecourse: Tickets from £14  
[warwickracecourse.com](http://warwickracecourse.com)

**Saturday 20 April, 10am–3.30pm**  
**Peregrine Watch, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust**  
Regent Grove, Leamington Spa: Stop by and see if you can spot Leamington birds of prey!  
[warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/peregrine](http://warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/peregrine)

**Sunday 28 April, 2–3pm**  
**Sponsored Walk for Greyhound Compassion**  
Warwick Racecourse: Help raise money for rescued greyhounds. Contact [greyhoundcompassion@gmail.com](mailto:greyhoundcompassion@gmail.com) for information.

**Sunday 5 May, 10am–4pm**  
**EcoFest 2019**  
Pump Room Gardens: Come along and find out how you can embrace low carbon living, help the environment, eat more healthily, be active and get outside more! This is a fun family-friendly event with activity taster sessions, local eco-friendly products, 'have a go' crafts, delicious vegetarian food options, information stalls and music on the bandstand! Its sure to be a day to remember. Free entry.

[greenspaces@warwickdc.gov.uk](mailto:greenspaces@warwickdc.gov.uk)  
[warwickdc.gov.uk/info/20245/parks/1356/ecofest\\_2019](http://warwickdc.gov.uk/info/20245/parks/1356/ecofest_2019)

## What to look out for in April

- Grass cutting is now in full flow in all of our parks and green spaces
- Ground staff are preparing the bowling greens for the start of the new season at the end of April.
- The spring flowers are in full bloom and our bedding plants are at their best over the Easter period. Towards the end of the month pay a visit to Oakley Wood to see the wonderful display of bluebells.
- We have just finished planting 28 new trees across the district's parks and open spaces – have you spotted any?
- This is a great time to visit our nature reserves to see migrating birds that have arrived to breed for the summer including chiff chaff and black cap.



**Sunday 5 May, 10am to 4pm**

# Nesting Peregrines in Leamington Spa

Since 2017, in partnership with Warwick District Council & Focus Optics, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust has been hosting Peregrine Watch events giving information on our local urban peregrine falcons. Peregrines are extraordinarily adaptable; traditionally living on cliff faces making a nest site, known as an Eyrie, usually on cliff-ledge, quarry or other inaccessible undisturbed location but they are now increasingly seen in urban centres thanks to tall buildings and an abundance of pigeons. We are delighted that a pair have chosen Leamington Spa as their home and continue to nest and raise their chicks, in the Town Hall each year.

With the help of Focus Optics, who very generously lent us telescopes, we are able to give visitors the perfect view of these majestic creatures, whose top speed is over 200mph. Why not visit the Peregrine Watch stand which can be found on Regents Grove (between the Town Hall & the Police Station) between 10am & 3pm on one or more of the following dates.

Saturday 20 April, Saturday 11 May, Saturday 27 May, Saturday & Sunday 9-10 June.

We are also pleased to announce that our webcams showing the nest site will be up and running again very soon. These can be viewed 24 hours a day by visiting the following pages and will enable everyone to see the whole process from egg laying to the chicks finally leaving the nest.

<http://www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/peregrine>

<https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/falcons>

Philippa Arnold  
Membership Engagement Officer  
Warwickshire Wildlife Trust



# Saltisford Common Meadow Enhancements

We are very pleased to announce that we have signed up to our first 'Eco-credit' scheme in partnership with Warwickshire County Council. As a result of recent housing developments across the district, funds have been made available through this scheme to improve, restore or re-create ecological sites for the benefit of wildlife and we have chosen Saltisford Common as our first location.

As a result of this funding, the two areas of meadow either side of Saltisford Road will be enhanced and improved over the next ten years. The initial phase of works has already been completed, which comprised cutting the meadow, removing arisings (the top section of meadow) and scarifying, which involved scuffing the surface of the grass to expose some soil, improving germination for the yellow rattle seeds which were then sown. This is a semi-parasitic annual

flower that seeds itself every year and is a very good pollinator; it was chosen because it reduces the vigour of coarse grasses, that would otherwise prevent the other wild flowers in the meadow from growing.

The next step will be to monitor the meadow and identify further improvements needed. This is an exciting new project, fully funded by the Eco Credit scheme.



# A day **in the life** of *Will Pritchard* Royal Pump Rooms, Catering, Events & Bar Manager



## Tell me a little about your position and what you will be doing now that the Royal Pump Rooms café has reopened

Since the relaunch of the Assembly Rooms and Café in the Royal Pump Rooms and the appointment of Just Inspire, to manage the catering and events a few weeks ago, we've been really busy. I'm in charge of all the catering and food and drink services and the management of events such as weddings and concerts as well as hosting the café on a day to day basis, managing the team and making sure that everything runs to plan!

### The café re-opened March 1 – what sort of atmosphere are you trying to create?

Relaxed, casual dining. Somewhere right in the centre of town where people can come for tea and cake, lunch, or even a cheeky glass of wine or G&T on the terrace.

### The most important question - what sort of food will be on offer?

The key word is fresh – all our food is freshly prepared on site daily. We offer a selection of hot dishes, sandwiches and salads, including vegetarian and vegan options, homemade cakes and sweet treats, and classic British dishes. The emphasis is on fresh food, and local wherever we can get it. Breakfast is also served from 9am.

### What were you doing before you took on this job?

I've worked in pubs, cafes and restaurants for about 20 years, since I finished university – it's gone by in a blink! I'm from Chester, but I've been in Leamington for 14-15 years so I see myself as a Leamington lad now.

### What do you think is going to be the biggest challenge over the next 6 months?

The Royal Pump Rooms are amongst Leamington's most prestigious venues and we would like to re-establish them as a focal point, somewhere to meet with friends and enjoy great food and drink. Over the next few months we need to find out what people are looking for, so that we can get our offer exactly right and of course provide an exemplary service so that word gets out.

### What is the first thing you do when you get to work in the morning?

At 7.30am I arrive and turn the coffee machine and music on. I walk around the site and create a briefing sheet for when my team arrive. Then I go through the menu with the chefs so we know we are ready for the day.

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

I like St Nicholas Park in Warwick – I take my daughter there quite a lot – it's very family friendly, and there is lots of space for kids to play. You've also got the river which is always lovely, it has

good parking, and within walking distance of the middle of town!

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

A pub landlord or a P.E. teacher.

### What is your all-time favourite sandwich filling, and who would you most willing to share it with?

A club sandwich – and aside from my wife, I'd share it with Sir Alex Ferguson, Clive Woodward and Freddie Mercury. Freddie to provide the entertainment so I can talk about sport while Queen sing!

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)

 WarwickDCNews

 @Warwick\_DC



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

