

WARWICK DISTRICT GREEN SPACES

July 2019

Enjoy long summer days in our green spaces this July

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The Dell

Green Space of the Month

The Dell

The Dell is a small urban park in the centre of Leamington situated between Beauchamp Hill (Milverton) to the north and Warwick Place to the south. This small green space gets its name from the fact that it is surrounded by steep banks and dense shrubbery, this makes it a sheltered, secluded and peaceful place to sit.

While Warwick District Council maintain the children's play equipment and grass area, a small band of volunteers known as 'GALS' (Gardening Around Leamington Spa) care for the banks, shrubbery and flower beds at the park entrance. In addition, the Friends of the Dell organise popular social events including the 'Party in the Dell', which takes place in May.

As Annabel from 'GALS' explains, conditions for gardening are quite difficult, with large trees along the top of all the banks making everywhere dry and shady.

'When we first started, these banks had become neglected, drab and uninspiring. Over the years, we have been able to clear lots of the dead material and plant more attractive shrubs, bulbs and perennials'. This transformation has been made possible with grants from Leamington Town Council and plant donations from nearby gardeners.

Annabel continues: 'We are always aware that The Dell is a public park, so we have left a path which runs through the shrubbery and right around the top of the banks for children to explore. We do have some challenges with small feet, and sometimes bigger ones, running down the banks and trampling the flowers, but we try not to get too uptight about this! We have planted a fragrance border with herbs which runs beside the path and smells lovely on warm days. Our current project is to rejuvenate some of the older shrubbery with new plants'.

GALS meet on a Thursday morning around 10am-12pm (weather permitting) for friendly, informal gardening. The group welcome newcomers, and you don't need to be an expert, just willing to have a go!

Postcode: CV32 5BH

Parking: On street upper Grove Street, Warwick Street.

Public Transport: Bus X14 or X18 Kwik Fit or Milverton Terrace.



Pump Room Gardens Update

With a packed summer programme of events scheduled for the Pump Room Gardens, we very much hope that the weather will now hold for all visitors and organisers. Following the cancellation of the event on 8 June we are very pleased to announce that the Big Victorian Picnic has been rescheduled for Saturday 27 July from 11am - 3pm. We are planning the same line-up of entertainment, crafts, activities, food, drink, storytelling and all things Victorian, so get your picnic blankets and chairs at the ready for a fun filled day!

The Big Victorian Picnic



What to look out for in July

- All the bedding is now looking at its best, just in time for judging to take place this month for the Heart of England in Bloom competition we enter each year.
- Preparations being made around the Victoria Park Bowls Greens for the national Bowls Championships in August.
- July is a great time to spot butterflies in the district – the best places to spot them are in our meadows in Abbey Fields, Kenilworth; St Nicholas Park and St Mary's Lands in Warwick; and the Leam Valley Nature Reserve.
- Look out for swifts swooping over parks and towns this month, before they depart for warmer climes in August.

July Events & Activities

Friday 5 July to Sunday 7 July
Pub in the Park, St Nicholas Park
www.pubintheparkuk.com/warwick

Sunday 7 July
Leamington Spa Half Marathon
In its second year, a traffic free course through scenic villages and countryside, finishing alongside the Pump Room Gardens. Features free to enter Kids Fun Run.
www.leamingtonspahalfmarathon.co.uk/

Tuesday 9 – Monday 22 July
Barkers FunFair, Pump Room Gardens

Saturday 13 July, 11am – 4pm
SPLAT Children's Arts Festival, Jephson Gardens
www.splatartsfestival.co.uk

Saturday 13 July, 11am – 6pm
Leamington Carnival, Pump Room Gardens
Yearly event featuring a parade, floats, stalls and a funfair.
www.leamingtoncarnival.org.uk/

Sunday 14 & 28 July, 2.30pm – 4.30pm
Bands in the Park, Jephson Gardens
www.bandsinthepark.org.uk

Saturday 20 July, 2pm – 6pm
Lillington Community Fun Day, The Holt

Saturday 20 July, 10.30am – 1pm
Free Tennis Coaching, Christchurch Gardens
Facebook Friends of Christchurch Gardens

Sunday 21 July, from 10.30am
The Monty 5k, Edmondscote Athletics Track
Pay/enter on-the-day.
www.leamingtoncyclingandathletics.org.uk/lcacwww/monty-5k/

Saturday 27 July
Commonwealth Games Countdown Event, St John's House/St Nicholas Park Leisure Centre
(See article).

Saturday 27 July, 11am – 3pm
Rescheduled Big Victorian Picnic, Pump Room Gardens
(See article).

Sunday 28 July, 10am – 5pm
Original Bounce, Pump Room Gardens
Giant inflatables.

Commonwealth Games Countdown Event

Starting this summer the Council's Commonwealth Games project team is organising an annual 'Countdown Celebration' on 27 July each year until 2022, the day when the opening ceremony of the Birmingham Games will take place. These events will involve a variety of sporting, arts and cultural activities rotated across the district's four towns (Warwick, Kenilworth, Whitnash and Royal Leamington Spa) with the first being held at St Nicholas Park Leisure Centre and St John's House in Warwick on Saturday 27 July. Come and enjoy a variety of free fun activities to celebrate three years to go until competitors from all over the Commonwealth come to the district to compete in the Lawn Bowls and Para Bowls Competition in 2022. This includes fun New Age Bowls activities for families and children on the St John's House Bowling Green Garden,

'Come & Try' activities at St Nicholas Park Leisure Centre and a Commonwealth themed Treasure Trail between these venues and around St Nicholas Park, with free vouchers and spot prizes up for grabs.



Victoria Park Fishing Platform

The Green Space Team in partnership with the Environment Agency and the local angling club, 'Leamington Angling', have installed a new fishing platform in Victoria Park. This will be used by Leamington Angling Club to help teach angling to new starters. For further information please visit www.leamingtonangling.co.uk/



Playground Improvements

The Council has recently awarded contracts to two play companies to create five new play areas across the district. In Warwick, Kompan will be designing and installing new playgrounds in Othello Avenue and Ophelia Drive (Warwick Gates) and Twycross Walk in the Woodloes estate. At the

same time, Proludic will be providing new play areas at Midland Oak and Rushmore Street in Leamington. We will update you on progress on these as well as our plans to install additional equipment at the play areas in Sabin Drive, Weston-under-Wetherley and Mander Grove, Warwick.



A day in the life^{of}

Archie Pitts

Volunteer Chairman, Friends of the Pump Room Gardens



Can you tell me about your role in the Friends of the Pump Room Gardens group?

We started 11 years ago when the Council's CEO invited the Leamington Society and CLARA (Central Leamington Residents Association) to help raise money to restore the physical features of the gardens. We agreed and were joined by the Warwickshire Gardens Trust and the Royal Leamington Spa Buildings Conservation Trust. The Friends were led by six core volunteers and many helpers – I became the Chairman.

Have volunteers and the public been involved in the restoration?

Yes, very much so. We conducted public surveys prior to the project to identify key areas. We were told these must include the bandstand, riverbank and seating. We started with the Linden Arches. Having keen volunteers with a wide range of skills has been crucial to the success of this project.

Which elements of the recent restoration works are you most pleased with?

It must be the overhaul of the bandstand. I am delighted to see it being used by various groups like the very popular Spa Strummers. Charitable organisations can use the bandstand without charge,

through the WDC events team events@warwickdc.gov.uk. After that comes the new rain garden and rockery, instead of the dingy and overgrown area that was there before. The opening up of the riverbank to the west of York Bridge so the river can be seen has also been satisfying – it has been planted to maintain a wildlife corridor along the Leam and it is encouraging to see otters in this stretch of the river. There are also now three times as many benches in the gardens – these are very like those that were in the gardens in the late 19th century.

What have you enjoyed most about volunteering with the group?

The willingness of the volunteers to get things done, and their ideas.

How have the public reacted to the works?

Very positively. The evidence comes from the greater public use of the gardens, comments on social media and to me whenever I am there!

What else are you involved in or around Leamington?

Since 2004 I have worked with a group of volunteers to restore and maintain the gardens at Leamington Station as well as work to

protect the heritage features of its listed Art Deco buildings. I've been retired for 15 years but I sometimes wonder if full-time employment wouldn't be easier!

Before you retired, what did you do for work?

My first job was with the University of East Anglia in Norwich, where I taught for 30 years. I came to Warwick University in 1994 and stayed until I retired.

Can you describe yourself in three words?

Enthusiastic, dogged, hands-on.

Other than the Pump Room Gardens, which is your favourite green space in the district?

Newbold Comyn – It's a large site with huge potential and a valuable asset to the people of Leamington. I also like Guy's Cliffe Walled Garden – a real wilderness transformed in just five years!

To sign up to this e-newsletter, please visit:
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
-  [WarwickDCNews](https://www.facebook.com/WarwickDCNews)
-  [@Warwick_DC](https://twitter.com/Warwick_DC)



www.warwickdc.gov.uk

