

WARWICK DISTRICT GREEN SPACES

Enjoy late summer
in our green spaces
this August

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Oakley Wood



August 2019

Green Space of the Month

Oakley Wood

Oakley Wood is one of Warwick district's Green Flag parks, it has held the award since 2017. Situated to the south of Leamington Spa, near Bishop's Tachbrook, Oakley Wood is a Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) which has been continuously wooded since at least 1600AD. The 117 acre (47 hectare) site is one of Warwick district's largest accessible woodlands and also a local wildlife site.

Previously owned by the Forestry Commission, the wood was purchased by Warwick District Council in 2008 with support from the Friends of Oakley Wood, a local group who formed the previous year to campaign for the wood to be brought into public ownership and to preserve public access. In 2013, Oakley Wood was added to an existing management agreement with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) to maintain and conserve Warwick district's natural open spaces, which means that the site is jointly managed by both organisations. Part of the wood is a crematorium and memorial woodland, which is managed separately from Oakley Wood itself. The Friends of Oakley Wood are also closely involved in the ongoing improvement of the site.

A 4.7 hectare area of the wood, known as Oakley Wood Camp, is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). It is thought to be the remains of a Bronze Age or Iron Age settlement. The SAM is classed as a 'slight univallate hillfort' and has an enclosure of earthen banks and ditches which are still visible today.

Oakley Wood is a great place for taking a quiet walk and a perfect location for spotting wildlife throughout the year with a huge variety of species including;

- Birds - buzzard, kestrel, jay, green woodpecker, various finch and tit species
- Mammals - badger, rabbit, mole, grey squirrel, and deer (including roe and muntjac)
- Flora - bluebell, wood millet, wood sorrel, goldilocks buttercup, yellow pimpernel, honeysuckle, and bitter vetch

Oakley Wood is at its most stunning in spring with a wonderful bluebell display, leaves just coming through and beautiful bird song, but is well worth a visit whatever the season.

Postcode: CV33 9QP

Parking: Oakley Wood Crematorium is situated just south of Bishops Tachbrook near to the M40. There are three car parks. Please note Car Park 1 is used mainly for visitors to the Chapel of Remembrance.

Pump Room Gardens Update

Despite some last minute glitches and a cold and wet month in June we are now at the final stages of the restoration project. The new lamp columns have been delivered and installed and we are liaising with Western Power to get the power reconnected and avoid any disruption to our busy summer events calendar.

We are also hoping to complete the last elements of the bandstand, including the opening up of the undercroft with a new door and covering hatch. The warmer weather will also allow us to finally apply the render to the plinth.

You may have also noticed that railings have been installed along part of York Walk, across

York Bridge. These are part of the restoration project and are in fact the railings recycled from the riverside area of the Pump Room Gardens. We took the opportunity to re-paint and re-use the railings (which we replaced with ones which had a more traditional design.)

Now that the restoration work to the Pump Room Gardens is (very nearly) complete, we are keen to ask local people what they think of the gardens, the recent restoration project and the events and activities that take place here. If you have 3 minutes to spare, please visit www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/pumproomgardens/ and let us know your thoughts! Survey closes on 31 August.



What to look out for in August

In August Victoria Park plays host to one of the most prestigious events on the lawn bowls calendar - the Bowls England National Championships - and the greens are therefore in peak condition. With three years to go until we welcome competitors and spectators from all over the world to the Bowls and Para Bowls for the Commonwealth Games, our ambition is for Victoria Park to be globally recognised as the home of English Bowls.

Look out for the start of preparations to get the football pitches ready for the new season.

The Green Spaces team will be at the Art in the Park weekend in Jephson Gardens (3-4 August) and will be looking for your opinion on new logos and designs to help promote green spaces in the future!



August Events & Activities

Saturday 3 August to Sunday 1 September

Bowls England National Championships, Victoria Park, Leamington Spa

Come and see England's leading bowlers including Commonwealth Games medallists and world champions compete on the greens that will host the 2022 Commonwealth Games. Free entry.

www.bowlsengland.com

Saturday 3 & Sunday 4 August, 10am – 6pm

Art in the Park, Jephson Gardens and Pump Room Gardens, Leamington Spa

A colourful weekend of art demonstrations, workshops, music and performance. Come and see the Green Spaces team in the Pump Room Gardens - we are running a water-themed art competition!

www.artinpark.co.uk

Sunday 4 August, 2.30pm – 4.30pm

Bands in the Park, Abbey Fields, Kenilworth Coventry Festival Band

www.bandsinthepark.org.uk

Sunday 11 & Sunday 25 August, 2.30 – 4.30pm

Bands in the Park, Jephson Gardens, Leamington Spa

Royal Spa Brass, Bletchington Silver Band

Saturday 17 August, 10am – 6pm

Warwickshire Pride Festival, Pump Room Gardens, Leamington Spa

Celebrating LGBT+ diversity in Warwickshire

www.warwickshirepride.co.uk

Saturday 17 August

Warwick Regatta, St Nicholas Park, Warwick

Come and watch competitors of all ages and abilities compete on the River Avon.

www.warwickboatclub.co.uk/rowing-regatta/

Sunday 18 August. 2.30pm – 4.30pm

Bands in the Park, St Nicholas Park, Warwick Kidlington Brass

www.bandsinthepark.org.uk

Floral Displays

We are sure you have seen the wonderful summer displays and hanging baskets in and around the district's towns! These are designed by our Green Spaces team, with planning starting in November or December to make sure the plants needed are ordered in plenty of time for the coming year. The colour schemes are changed each year and if there is a special commemoration or centenary this will be reflected in the choice of colours. The towns have different designs and plants which are in keeping with the surroundings: for example in Leamington town centre the baskets need to have bright colours to stand out

against the pale stone of the buildings, while in Jephson Gardens we try and use flowers with single blooms to attract bees and pollinators.

The winter bedding is designed in April and May and our team changes the species and colours each year. A spectacular effect is achieved by choosing bulbs which can provide different plant heights and a splash of colour late in the season.



Abbey Fields Management Plan Update

We are pleased to announce that idverde's Green Spaces Development Team have been appointed to help develop and prepare a comprehensive management plan to guide the efficient and effective management of Abbey Fields over the next 10 years. This is set against a background of significant planned housing growth for Kenilworth which will bring increased numbers of visitors to our green spaces such as Abbey Fields.

This plan and subsequent consultation process will provide us with an opportunity to speak to interested parties and to develop a clear vision and approach for how Abbey Fields should be managed.

idverde will be carrying out a series of events and workshops over the next few months, so watch out for information as to how you can get involved and contribute.



Tach Brook Country Park

We have just appointed Wood plc to lead on the design and masterplanning of the new Tach Brook Country Park situated to the south of Warwick and Leamington. The park will become a key part of the green infrastructure of Warwick district, closely linking with the network of green spaces running through the surrounding area.

Wood bring an experienced design team based barely a mile from the site and are keen to use this local knowledge and range of skills to consult with people in the district to create an exceptional new park. The team has worked on other major projects, notably the land off Europa Way and the Heathrow Expansion Programme and the work is expected to take 12 months.



A day in the life of India Wilson

Learning & Engagement Assistant,
Leamington Spa Art Gallery and Museum



Tell me a little about your role and what you do on a normal day?

As a Learning and Engagement Assistant my main role is to help with the organisation of trips and visits and the redevelopment of the programmes available.

On a practical level, I help with Arty Tots (under 5's), Museum Explorer's (afterschool club), and Primary School sessions at the Pump Room Gardens. This involves setting up the craft studio, making sure everyone has what they need and clearing up afterwards.

What's your favourite part of your job?

I love running school trips. You get quite a big group split into smaller groups that each do different activities like crafts, archery and storytelling. They come up with brilliant stories and it's great to see them improving their skills and confidence.

How did you get into this line of work?

I studied Art History and Curating at the University of Birmingham and as part of this chose to do a placement here in Leamington in 2018. I loved it and they asked me if I would stay on. I've since completed my Master's degree and have been able to continue working here.

What's the most memorable thing that has happened to you in your career?

Taking three elephants for a walk in the Pump Room Gardens! They are large plastic sculptures and are linked to the history of Leamington. They are often painted bright colours. The reaction from the public is amazing and the younger children love it.

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

You need to be able to adapt and change your plans very quickly. You also need to know how to engage children and make the session fun – it's not school!

Do you work independently or in a team?

I'm very much part of a team – all of the school trips and children's activities are a collaboration between artists, Learning Officers and other casual staff.

What is your favourite artwork in the gallery?

There is one called Jane Posing by Cathleen Mann from the 1930s. This one is special to me as it's one of the first things I worked on – I helped to put a handling collection together to go alongside the painting. The painting is of the artist's daughter but apparently the artist didn't like it!

You recently curated the Pump Room Gardens exhibition that was displayed in the foyer. What challenges did you face?

The biggest challenge was getting large pieces of the bandstand structure and park benches into the space and imagining how it might look, before we had the pieces. I also researched the museum collections – there is so much here that is not on display. I found an amazing tile with a watercolour painting of the bandstand – most of the museum staff had no idea of its existence!

Which is your favourite green space in the district?

I'd go for Pump Room Gardens as it's the space I've spent most time in. The bandstand is looking lovely and I get to explore the space with children. It's also a great place to have lunch and watch people passing by!

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

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