

Warwick District GREEN SPACES

January 2020



Green Space of the Month

St John's Playing Field, Kenilworth

St John's Playing Field in Kenilworth is named after the nearby St John's Church. It provides a lovely informal space for sport and recreation along with a children's play area. This site was planned as a public open space as part of the post-war public housing development built by Kenilworth Urban District Council and has consisted of a playing field ever since.

During 2014, £120,000 of public amenity reserve funds was spent upgrading the park. This involved the Green Spaces team working closely with the local Newlands residential care home for young people to make the park much more usable for their customers. In Summer 2014, the site was re-opened and went from being rated 'poor' on Green Flag judging criteria to being rated as one of the best parks in the district for its size. Following the refurbishment, St John's Playing Field was used as the blue print for the standard to be achieved with a number of subsequent park upgrades in the district.

Improvements included the installation of a wide range of play equipment for all ages, including a fenced toddler play area, natural-style log walks play mounds and a zip wire; 'kick-about' goals, foot path links; new signage and improvements to trees and shrub beds. Biodiversity has since flourished, with new bird and bat boxes being installed, meadow and spring bulb areas, and the planting of new trees including fruit trees.

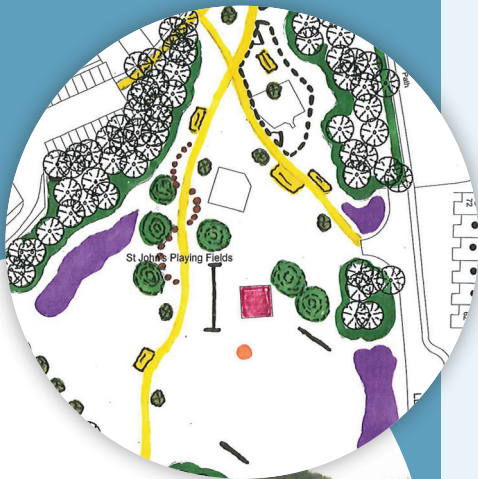
If you haven't visited yet, stop by when you are next in Kenilworth – it is well worth a visit!

Postcode: CV8 1FZ

Public transport: Bus X17 or 11 from Leamington or Warwick

In this edition

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- Meet Manoj Sonecha, Active Communities Officer
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Pump Room Gardens Programme Update Community Workshops

Despite the wet weather, our Community Engagement volunteers have been busy throughout the Autumn and Winter, assisting with community workshops as part of our new outreach programme. They have also helped come up with ideas for a new series of Pump Room Gardens postcards and have run some 'Arty Tots Outdoors Explorer' sessions in the Gardens. In December, our Community Engagement team got together to celebrate the hard work and achievements of 2019, with a festive twist. Following a morning training session, volunteers had a festive lunch and enjoyed games, including local heritage games and a chance to have a go at some of the craft activities we get involved in.

The hard work continues in January though – preparing for our Big Garden Bird Watch event on 25 January (see events listing for details). Last year we spotted Leamington's peregrine falcons, fingers crossed for more amazing sights this year!



Tree Planting

The Green Spaces team plants new trees across the district every year, to replace any that are missing, damage or felled, and to increase our pool of genetic diversity. This year we have planted some fine examples in Jephson Gardens and the Pump Room Gardens, including some rarer species such as Tywyana (Coffin Tree) and a Walumi Pine and some more common ones such as Limes, Malus (Crab Apple), oaks and alders.

Tree planting always happens between November and February as this is the dormant period for most trees and they settle in better, growing away successfully in the spring. We tend to plant larger, standard, established trees (approximately 2m tall) which are better able to withstand the rigours of public open space!

Last month the first of 160,000 trees to be planted in Warwick district was bedded in by Chairman Councillor George Illingworth in Jephson Gardens. The ambitious tree planting initiative – one tree for every resident in the district, accounting for future growth – is part of

the Council's plans to become a carbon neutral district by 2030. Dubbed the 'climate change tree', the tree species 'Kornus Cousa Chinensis' is drought tolerant, frost hardy and is the perfect species for encouraging biodiversity by supporting insects.

If you want to see how a tree grows from seed, you can plant an acorn in some soil in a pot at home. Put the seed into the soil 4cm deep, cover with soil, water and place in an outdoor space over winter. You should see a shoot in April or May. Once your sapling is approximately one meter in height contact your tree wardens who might be able to find it a home in the district.



Events and Activities

Every Saturday 9am:

Park Run , Newbold Comyn, Leamington, Warwick Racecourse, Warwick
5km run, come and join in whatever your pace!
www.parkrun.org.uk/leamington or
www.parkrun.org.uk/warwickracecourse

Every Monday 10am

Priory Pools Gentle Walk, Packmore Community Centre, CV34 5EP

Walk meets every Monday at the Community Centre for a gentle stroll around the park (the walk is a measured mile). Visit the link below for a full list of local 'walking for health' walks.

www.warwickdc.gov.uk/walkingforhealth

Saturday 25 January, 11am-1pm

Big Garden Bird Watch, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa

Join us for 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 event, all ages welcome, just turn up.

greenspaces@warwickdc.gov.uk

Second Saturday of the month

Farmers' Market, Pump Room Gardens

Over 15 producers sell meat, game, cheese, olives, honey, breads, cakes, fresh and smoked fish, and a large variety of fruits and vegetables.

www.warwickdistrictmarkets.co.uk/leamington



What to look out for in January

Your garden, balcony or local green space could be a life saver for birds and other wildlife at this time of year. Remember to put feeders out for the birds, especially unsalted nuts and seeds. Fallen apples can also be a good food source as well as sliced fruit from your kitchen. Piles of leaves, grass-cuttings and rotting branches can provide a home for a variety of wildlife from ladybirds and other insects to hedgehogs.

Visit our green spaces and admire the frost on a cold morning – but be careful on icy paths and do not walk on frozen ponds or lakes. The first of the spring bulbs may be starting to show as well – look out for green tips emerging! Our grounds maintenance team will be busy with hedge cutting, laying of any new hedges and preparing for the coming year.



Happy to Chat bench

The Green Spaces team has installed a 'happy to chat' sign on a bench in St Nicholas Park, Warwick, mirroring successful schemes in other towns across the UK, with the idea of combatting loneliness and getting people talking. The sign will read 'Happy to Chat: Sit here if you don't mind someone stopping to say hello'. We very much hope that people in our district who feel isolated in their daily lives will use the bench to make connections with someone new or simply enjoy passing the time of day! So head over to St Nick's and see if you can spot it.

Tach Brook Country Park

Thank you for taking part in the recent survey about the design options for the district's new Tach Brook Country Park. We had over 900 responses, which is fantastic. Your feedback and ideas will help us to develop options for the what will be become of the district's largest green spaces. These will be available to view and comment on at public drop in sessions we are planning in March – look out for details in February's newsletter.



Thank you for completing our survey!

A big thank you to all our readers who completed our recent online survey about this newsletter, we really appreciate your feedback. We are delighted that 80% of respondents rated all the elements of the Green Spaces newsletter as good or excellent. In future editions we will take on some of your ideas for improvements including new topics to cover and making it easier to view online.

A day in the life of

Manoj Sonecha, Active Communities Officer, WDC

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

It's very varied – we work with sports clubs and organisations in the district and support them to get more people active by helping them with grants funding, accessing facilities, increasing memberships and sharing useful sport contacts. We work with local, regional and national partners to promote physical activity, including Everyone Active, who now run the WDC leisure centres. The team I work in also manage the tennis courts and football pitches in our parks.



What are you working on at the moment?

I'm currently putting together an A-Z list of clubs and groups in our district that provide opportunities for sports and physical activities. It's a massive task, as there are hundreds of clubs and groups.

What's your favourite part of the day/ your job?

Working with lots of different groups and helping them with their challenges – each one is different, you never know until the phone goes! I also enjoy working with 'like minded' people.

What inspired you to work in this industry?

I did a youth training scheme in sport in 1987, which was coordinated by former Olympic athlete Dave Moorcroft. I've always had an interest in sport, so I then went on to complete a degree in Recreation Management.

What would you be doing if you had chosen a different career path?

I'd probably have gone into property – I'd love to work for an estate agent, helping people to find their dream home.

If you could have breakfast with any sports personality, who would you pick and why?

Marvin Hagler – he's a former American World middleweight boxing champion. I think it would be very interesting to have a chat about his career, his training regime and how he achieved such enduring success in his field.

Which is your favourite green space in the district?

It has to be Victoria Park. It's right next to work, so perfectly located for a lunch time walk or an occasional run. The park is very peaceful during the day and beautiful in the summer. It's also got a circular path, so you can measure your walk or run – twice around the park is a mile!

Do you have any New Year resolutions for 2020?

Not really - I think if you want to make a change in life, why wait until January! One day I might decide to become vegetarian, but it might be tricky especially when I go on holiday with my family!

If you had a choice between being invisible or flying, which super ability would you choose?

Flying absolutely - you could get around quicker and it would definitely beat sitting in traffic jams!

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

🐦 @Warwick_DC

 Parkie's pun of the month

'Who investigates crimes in Parks? Special branch.'



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE



www.warwickdc.gov.uk