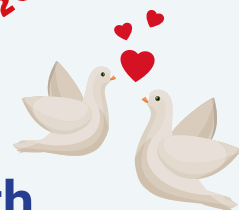


Warwick District **GREEN SPACES**

February 2020



In this edition

- Pump Room Gardens Schools Programme
- Tach Brook Country Park public drop-in sessions
- Bird feeding in our parks and open spaces
- Meet Alice Ellis, Sustainability Officer



Green Space of the Month

Whitnash Brook Local Nature Reserve

The little known Whitnash Brook and associated Whitnash Brook Local Nature Reserve is located on the eastern boundary of Sydenham between Leamington Spa and Radford Semele.

The 2km wildlife corridor features a range of habitats including brook, marshy grassland, swamp, woodland, dry grassland, tall herbs and scrub and also has a small play area. This valuable wildlife corridor was once dominated by rough, species-poor grassland and scrub but was enhanced recently with the creation of a number of pools. These already support a significant variety of wetland plants such as brooklime and lesser water-parsnip, and provide an excellent place to watch dragonflies in the summer.

A footpath runs along the side of the brook from the canal at the back of Portland Close all the way to Whitnash – access is past the play area, Otters Rest, Mill Pond Meadows and Marbled Close.

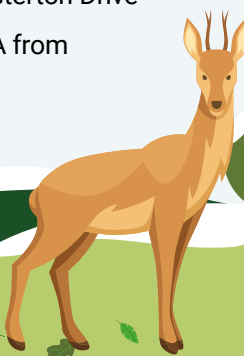
There is reputedly a holy well along the course of the brook, believed to have healing powers and to foretell the future. Unfortunately, this ancient landmark has now been drained, but some water still trickles into the brook.

The Brook is managed in partnership with **Warwickshire Wildlife** trust visit www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk for further information

Postcode: CV31 1YJ

Parking: Otters Rest, off Chesterton Drive

Public Transport: Bus 67, 67A from Leamington town centre





What to look out for in February

With Spring around the corner, bulbs such as crocus and early daffodils are now beginning to show. Our teams are busy working on hedges – rejuvenating old hedge rows and thickening up new ones.

This is a great time to enjoy a romantic Valentine's Day walk. Perhaps wait for a beautiful frosty February morning and take in the wonderful views and natural wide-open spaces at Newbold Comyn or Priory Park.

Events and Activities

Saturday 1 & Sunday 2 February, 11am - 4pm

Snow Drop Weekend, Hill Close Gardens, Warwick

Find out about the different varieties of snowdrops and winter flowers in the gardens.

Adult £4.50 Child (5-17) £1.00

www.hillclosegardens.com

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 Thursday 11am (meet at 10.50am)

**Clarendon Park Walkers,
Clarendon Lodge, Leamington Spa CV32 5SS**

Join the Clarendon Park Walkers group for a walk of approximately one hour and enjoy the riverside walks in the centre of Leamington including Jephson Gardens, Pump Room Gardens and Victoria Park. Walk meets inside the Clarendon Lodge Medical Practice with opportunity to chat over a tea or coffee afterwards at the Oxford Café.

For a full list of local 'walking for health' walks visit:

www.warwickdc.gov.uk/walkingforhealth

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.



Pump Room Gardens Programme Update

Our Big Garden Bird Watch on the Pump Room Gardens 25 January was a success, with 20 bird species being spotted between 12 and 1pm and 130 people taking part in activities including creating bird hats, designing bird feeders using apples and sunflower seeds, and taking part in the RSBP's annual garden bird count. Local residents young and old enjoyed the event, especially the spotting of a Peregrine Falcon and a Kingfisher on the river Leam.



Inside-Outside Schools Programme

As part of the Heritage Lottery funded Pump Room Gardens restoration project, Leamington Spa Art Gallery and Museum have now expanded their workshops for school groups. Workshops take advantage of the wonderful learning resources of the grade II listed Royal Pump Rooms building (with a collection of over 13,000 objects) and opportunities for outdoor learning in the recently restored Gardens next door. Visits are available for Key Stages 1 and 2 and are led by experienced learning facilitators. Topics include Victorian Leamington, Dynamic Drawing and Creative Clay and can be booked throughout the year as either whole or half day workshops.

To book a visit or for further information:

E. schooltrips@warwickdc.gov.uk

T. 01926 456944



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Bird feeding in our parks and open spaces

The care and welfare of both visiting and native birds in our parks and open spaces is of great importance to our Green Spaces team, particularly during the winter months.

In winter 2018/19 we installed two bird feeding stations on St Mary's Lands, Warwick which are working well, particularly as we have the support of the golf course for the upkeep of one of the stations. The Council also has two feeding stations in Jephson Gardens which are maintained as part of our grounds contract and for which we supply the seeds and feeders.

We recently celebrated a district 'first', planting 3000 square metres of wild bird food mix at Newbold Comyn, Leamington. This new innovation not only offers feed for our birds on a large scale, but also provides valuable nectar for our pollinators. It has also given a great use for some of the soil excavated when the Newbold Comyn Leisure Centre was developed.

This process will now be repeated on St Mary's Lands, in Spring 2020 when we plan to seed a 5000m² area of ground and in the winter we will seed the Radford Road Meadows.

The wild bird food crops have been selected to attract farmland birds such as finches, buntings and sparrows - these species are in dramatic decline and desperately need our help.



Bird Feeding tips

Jon Holmes, Green Spaces Development Officer

- If you feed the birds please feed all year round with appropriate foods and fresh water
- Remember the food we put out is the birds' supermarket! If we fail to provide our birds with food or stocked feeders in winter, it can have catastrophic results
- Don't leave out mouldy kitchen scraps
- Always keep feeders clean

For more information and advice visit: www.rspb.org.uk

Tach Brook Country Park

Following the recent public survey asking for options for the district's new Tach Brook Country Park. The feedback and ideas received have been analysed by our consultants and will now be put into plans which will be available to view and comment on at public drop-in sessions on:

Saturday 21 March

10am - 4pm
Heathcote Primary School,
Heathcote, Warwick CV34
7AP (to be confirmed)

Saturday 28 March

9am - 3pm
St Chad's Centre,
Bishops Tachbrook
CV33 9RJ



Abbey Fields Management Plan

The Green Space team in partnership with our consultants Iverde are putting together a 10-year management plan for Abbey Fields so that these beautiful fields can be protected and enhanced for years to come.

At the end 2019 we undertook an information gathering exercise for Abbey Fields, collecting as much feedback as possible from our communities and key stakeholders, to allow us to shape the future management and maintenance of the Fields. Through a combination of an online survey and seven public consultation events we received over 1000 responses. We are currently analysing this feedback and will be sharing the results on our website in the next couple of weeks. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who participated in the consultations.



A day **in the life** of

Alice Ellis, Sustainability Officer

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

My role is very varied, I cover all aspects of the Council's sustainability and environmental improvement agenda. This week, I am involved with developing our fuel poverty strategy to raise awareness of home energy efficiency and at the same time I'm looking at a bike share scheme.



How has your role changed recently?

In June last year, the Council declared a 'Climate Emergency' and since then a large part of my job has focused on how we can meet our targets of becoming a net-zero carbon organisation by 2025 and reducing the total carbon emissions within Warwick district to as close to zero as possible by 2030. This is a massive task, thankfully there is great buy-in from everyone at the Council to really deliver on this and make positive long-lasting change.

Who do you work with closely in your job?

Everyone, my role affects all areas of the Council! We have a core Sustainability Officer Group who are working on delivering a number of projects, plus my colleagues in the Community Partnership Team, Elected Members, and Senior Management including our Chief Executive.

Parkie's pun of the month
A handsome man sprinted past me in Jephson Gardens. I thought, 'He's dashing!'



What keeps you motivated to go to work each day?

The variety of work and the enthusiasm and passion of my colleagues and the many local organisations, partners and volunteers who are committed to sustainability.

What could our readers do to help address the 'climate emergency'?

Small and simple things that really help, are making sure your home is really well insulated, using the car less and growing your own vegetables. Act on Energy is a local organisation who can offer free advice on energy saving, visit www.actonenergy.org.uk for more details.

How will you be spending Valentine's Day?

I wasn't expecting this question at all! I'm married with two small children, so it is quite likely that we will stay in and perhaps have a slightly posher meal than normal... and reminisce about when we used to go out on Valentine's Day!



If you were an animal, which species would you be and why?

Maybe a monkey, because I'm a bit cheeky at times!

If you could have dinner with anyone from history, who would you pick and why?

Maybe not someone from history, but I was sad to learn that David Bellamy passed away recently. I recall his energy and passion for the natural world from his younger days, he would probably be quite a funny dinner date!

Which is your favourite green space in the district?

I've always really liked Jephson Gardens, it is close to town and has something for all ages. My kids love having a run about there followed by a trip to a local café.

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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