

Warwick District GREEN SPACES

March 2020

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Green Space of the Month

Rushmore Street, South Leamington

Well connected by pathways from the Grand Union Canal and neighbouring residential streets, Rushmore Street Play Area has just been refurbished and reinvigorated by the Green Spaces team. As a result, it is now a fantastic family facility in south Leamington.

A 'road traffic' theme runs through the play area which includes traffic lights and zebra crossing graphics, providing a fun new play feature for young scooter and trike riders. Toddlers can also enjoy the inclusive car springer, roundabout and multi-play unit. For adults there's free parking and a buggy park next to a refreshed seating area.

Children of all ages will find plenty to entertain and enjoy at the play area, which now boasts informal natural play trails and a swing area with a basket swing and flat swings to one side of the new pathway. On the other side of the path the net pyramid has been renewed and there are new dynamic play items such as the hip hop and double perch which provide exhilarating and interactive experiences for users.

In addition to the play items, new sensory planting near each park entrance makes the area welcoming for visitors and there is plenty of informal grassland space for free play and picnics.

Postcode: CV31 1JA

Parking: Free parking on site

Public Transport: Bus 67A from Leamington town centre or 15 minutes' walk





What to look out for in March

This month we'll see the first stirrings of spring as many animals come out of hibernation and plants begin to flower.

Peacock, comma and brimstone butterflies all fly on sunny days whilst in more rural areas young rabbits are coming above ground for the first time in fields and on roadside verges. Grass cutting is starting in our green spaces in mid to late March and hedge cutting is finishing as birds make their nests in the hedgerows – keep an eye if you are doing any pruning in your own garden. Daffodils are already in flower and tulips are starting to come through. The spring bedding is showing its colours in Jephson Gardens, Leamington and St Nicks, Warwick.



The Harry Sunley Memorial Project

(Registered Charity 1166561)

The Grade I listed 'Tantara' Gatehouse in Abbey Fields, Kenilworth is a very important medieval building. It is a rare example of a gatehouse of the Augustinian monastic order, and is the most significant remaining structure of the Priory (later Abbey) of St Mary, founded in 1119. The Gatehouse was remodelled in the 14th century, mainly in the time of Prior Henry Bradway (1361-75), and is contemporary with the great hall at Kenilworth Castle, built by then owner John of Gaunt.

The aim of the Harry Sunley Memorial Project (HSMP) is to make the interior of the 'Tantara' Gatehouse in Abbey Fields accessible to the public. The Project has been named in honour of the late Harry Sunley FSA, who was the authority on the Abbey until his death in 2011.

The work that the HSMP is currently carrying out in co-operation with WDC, involves removing the existing metal storage racking to expose the interior walls and floors of the Gatehouse and to make room for a mezzanine floor in the north chamber. The carved stones and boxes of floor tiles displaced by this operation will be rehoused on the new mezzanine platform. Some of the heavier objects will be stored on new shelving and in a specially made octagonal storage/display unit in the south chamber. Space will be freed up to allow members of the public to enter the interior of the Gatehouse where they will be able to see artefacts such as the 14th-century effigy of Prior John Salle, which is currently in storage in the Abbey Barn.

Opening the Gatehouse to the public will extend the attraction of the Abbey site, encourage more visitors to Abbey Fields, and provide an educational resource for school groups. The Gatehouse, like the Abbey Barn, will be open to the public on Sunday afternoons in summer and will be available to groups for pre-booked guided tours.

Events and Activities

Sunday 1 March

Warwick Half Marathon, Warwick Racecourse

The race will follow its traditional route through lovely Warwickshire countryside – an excellent opportunity for athletes to compete in a traffic free road race.

www.thejockeyclub.co.uk

Saturday 21 March, 6.30pm

Glow Warwick, Warwick Racecourse

Memory Walk's brand new event, GLOW, will be shining a light on dementia, with an after dark walk. £10 registration fee. www.memorywalk.org.uk

Sunday 29 March, 9am

Regency 10K

Race start Newbold Terrace East, Leamington Spa

Founded in 2004, this 10k run attracts around 2,500 runners each year and raises money for good causes.

www.regency10k.co.uk

Tach Brook Country Park drop-in sessions

Following a public survey in late 2019, Warwick District Council would like to invite local people to come and view and comment on the exciting ideas and proposals we are putting forward as a result of your feedback, at these drop-in sessions:

Saturday 21 March, 10.30am – 3.30pm

Heathcote Primary School,
Heathcote, Warwick CV34 7AP

Saturday 28 March, 9.30am – 3pm

St Chad's Centre, Bishop's Tachbrook CV33 9RJ



Pump Room Gardens Programme Update



The Green Spaces team is pleased to announce the development of a new youth performance programme for the Pump Room Gardens, as part of the Heritage Lottery funded restoration project. The team has commissioned locally based and internationally renowned dance-circus company Motionhouse to further the work of their 'Youth Board' in creating a variety of free performances with young people. The newly created performance pieces will be performed on or around the renovated bandstand during Summer 2020.

The project will see young people involved in the creation of performances from start to finish, taking responsibility for managing projects, planning performances, rehearsal schedules and on-the-day event coordination. As Amy Dalton-Hardy Motionhouses' Creative Learning Producer explains:

“ We're really excited to start this project which will give local young people the chance to shine in a leadership role, to take real ownership of the planning, development and delivery of the youth performance programme and to encourage younger audiences into the gardens. Our Youth Board can't wait to get started and will no doubt bring their enthusiasm and fresh energy to the Pump Room Gardens this summer. ”



The finished result is certain to provide some innovative and talented entertainment for visitors to the Gardens! Watch this space for updates and performance details.



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Hedge laying in Warwick District

Hedge laying is the art of making or maintaining a hedge by cutting branches partway through, laying them horizontally and pegging them in position to create a strong, thick hedge. The Green Spaces Team lays hedges in the district's parks and open spaces between November and February each year, when trees are dormant and birds are not nesting in the hedges. Specialist hedge layers are taken on in many areas, although we also have teams of experienced volunteers who lay hedges in the district's local nature reserves, led by our partners at Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. In total, we lay approximately 500 meters of new hedgerow each year.

Hedge laying is a centuries-old skill, and styles of hedges often vary across the country. Laying a hedge creates a living fence, encourages new growth, restores old, tired hedges and increases biodiversity. In the past, hedge laying was also used to thicken hedges in order to keep livestock contained.

When the new hedge is laid, selected stems are 'laid over' by cutting and bending, and then kept in place using stakes and binders. This encourages the hedge to regenerate and thicken – the end result providing excellent wildlife habitat and the continuation of the hedge for many years.

The hedge can then be re-laid to repeat the process in a sustainable manner – once laid, a hedge can be kept in good order for decades.

Hedge laying at Newbold Comyn, Leamington Spa



A day in the life of

Mike Finch, Head of Sports, Idverde Warwick

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

I lead a team that supervises and maintains all the sports pitches throughout the district, including football, tennis courts and the bowls greens.

Currently, we are reconstructing two bowling greens at Victoria Park, in preparation for hosting the Lawn Bowls and Para Lawn Bowls for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. Its very weather dependant, but our job is to make sure that the greens are always ready for the start of the National Bowls Championships in August.

What's your favourite part of the job?

Maintaining standards and quality on our sites: Victoria Park's bowls greens are the pinnacle of Bowls England. I was brought in to raise standards each year and try to get the best greens possible.

How did you get into this line of work?

I've been in this industry for 35 years. Back in the '80s when I had a young family I worked for Stoke Bowling Club in Coventry for a year. I then went into groundsmanship at Coventry City Football Club and have held Grounds Manager positions ever since. I'm now back where I started out, working with fine turf on bowls greens.

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

Experience, passion, drive, leading by example, being open to ideas, team management and consistency.

Joke of the Month

Yesterday, I bought some fruit trees and the seller gave me some insects to help with pollination. Great, I thought - free bees!

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

Dew the greens - this means taking the morning dew off them with a 3m wide brush. It takes 10-15 minutes per green, and we have five altogether. It helps get the grass ready for cutting each day and prevents diseases.

What do you think will be your greatest challenge in the run up to the Commonwealth Games?

The Commonwealth Trials in 2021. We have international teams coming over to practice before the big event. There is likely to be a lot of interest in the standard of our work. Hopefully we'll get it flat as a piece of glass, always a challenge when you are working with a living thing.

We'll start preparing for the Commonwealth Games 5-6 months prior to the event and we will be under a lot of scrutiny! The staff won't really get a day off until after the main competitions are finished.

Which is your favourite green space in the district?

I love seeing the bowling greens here in Victoria Park on a match day with the scoreboard, and the Nationals when all the flags are up.



What's the strangest thing that has happened to you at Victoria Park?

Last year, in the middle of the Nationals, a visitor's pram fell into the River Leam, with her keys, mobile phone and glasses - fortunately not the baby. She asked us for help, so I ended up wading in up to chest height - I was drenched, but I managed to find everything except the glasses.

Tea or coffee?

Coffee, two sugars please!

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www.warwickdc.gov.uk/gnews

For more information about green spaces in Warwick District please visit:

 greenspaces@warwickdc.gov.uk

 www.warwickdc.gov.uk/parks

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