

Warwick District GREEN SPACES



JUNE 2020



In this edition

- Green Space of the Month - Eagle Recreation Ground, Leamington Spa
- What to look out for in June
- Rebranding Green Spaces
- Keeping St Nick's looking good
- Looking out for bats
- A Day in the Life of Nicky Bellenger, Community Engagement Officer

Connect to nature from home

Our Green Spaces team have some handy tips and crafts for you to try at home this Spring and Summer. All activities are clearly explained in our videos and need minimal resources. If you give one a go, we'd love to see your results!

www.warwickdc.gov.uk/greenspaceactivities

 YouTube

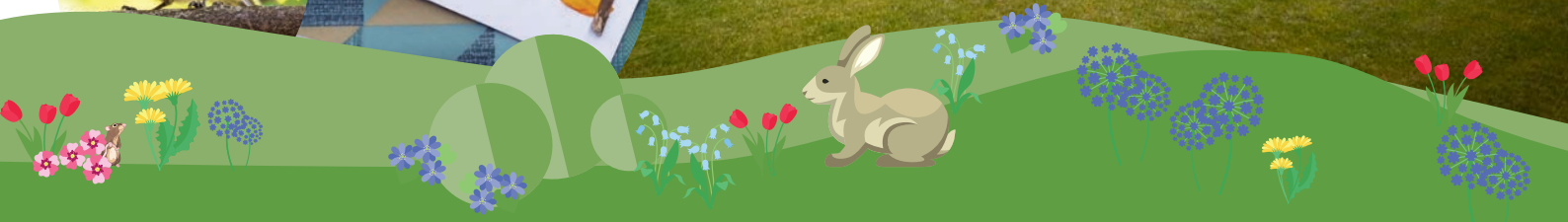
Coronavirus – Advice and Guidelines for Green Spaces

At the time of publishing, new government guidelines mean that you can now spend more time outdoors in our green spaces and enjoy a wider range of activities for any length of time, subject to social distancing rules in groups of up to six people from different households.

As summer is here you can now enjoy time in our parks. Alternatively take a walk in the woodlands or nature reserves. In addition to the parks and open spaces looked after by Warwick District Council, the Country Parks operated by Warwickshire County Council including Ryton Pools will have a phased re-opening with a booking system for car parking at the main sites.

A number of outdoor sports facilities have now reopened in line with the latest government guidance. These include the tennis courts at Victoria Park and Christchurch Gardens in Leamington Spa, St Nicholas Park in Warwick and Abbey Fields in Kenilworth, which are open daily from 10am to 7pm. You also have access to some of the bowling greens in Victoria Park.

Although Group Fitness sessions are not permitted you can now use the parks for one to one personal training whilst observing national health and safety requirements.



Green Space of the Month

Eagle Recreation Ground, Leamington Spa

A much loved and appreciated green space that lies at the centre of its local community, Eagle Rec comprises a large grassy area bordered by mature trees and hedge line, a play area and natural planting. It is accessed from Aylesford Street, Shrubland Street, Alexander Road and an ancient footpath from Whitnash runs through the park and over the iconic Ladder Bridge to Leamington town centre.

Many people have memories of the park in its heyday and can recall a bandstand, public toilets, a kiosk to hire rounders bats, football pitches, changing rooms and even its own Park Keeper. By the 1980's the park became run down, facilities removed and the football pitches and changing rooms were abandoned.

In 2003 The Friends of the Eagle Rec was formed, who have since worked hard with Warwick District Council to improve the facilities and ensure that the park is accessible, pleasant and safe for the wider public to use. Most recently they have received a small grant to create a community vegetable patch with the aim of encouraging children and families to participate in growing fruit and vegetables that they can share whilst learning about healthy lifestyle choices. Although the play area and veg patch are currently closed to the public due to COVID-19 there are plans to continue to develop this gardening project when lock-down restrictions are relaxed.

Friends of the Eagle Rec, local residents and regular visitors share feelings of thanks and gratitude for being able to enjoy The Eagle Recreation Ground during the coronavirus outbreak. With limited opportunity to exercise it is evident that the Rec has been an essential lifeline to many of the people who live nearby, many of whom do not have a garden or access to the countryside.

Postcode: CV31 2AG

Romy Dixon, on behalf of the Friends of the Eagle Rec. For information on how to join, contact recfriends@mail.com



What to look out for in June

The district's beautiful hanging baskets and summer bedding have been planted and you can see some wonderful displays if you walk through the town centre or our larger parks. If you look closely while you are out and about, you should be able to see fruit forming on fruit trees following the spring blossom including apples, plums and pears. Trees across the district are showing off their greenery at the moment, and looking their finest for summer.



There are plenty of butterfly species flitting between flowers and plants to feed on nectar. Look carefully for camouflaged Brimstones, with their green leaf-like wings and Red Admirals showing off their vivid red stripes, among many others.



Rebranding Green Spaces

Earlier this spring, our design team got busy developing some new branding guidelines for the Green Spaces team, incorporating our new logo, colour schemes and design elements. Inspired by the Green Spaces

Newsletter and using ideas gathered from the community at last summer's public events, the new guidelines will be used whenever the team develop new signage, posters, leaflets or other items for use in our parks and open spaces.



We are currently looking to replace worn out signage in some of our play spaces using the new branding guidelines, and are introducing some t-shirts and sweatshirts for our public-facing Community Engagement Team to wear when they are out and about in the district! This will be followed by a snazzy new Green Spaces marquee, perfect for running family activities at some of the district's outdoor events.



Pump Room Gardens Programme Update

Pump Room Gardens
RESTORING THEIR HERITAGE TO HEALTH



While the finishing touches to the bandstand and wider Pump Room Gardens restoration project are being planned, the Community Engagement team in Green Spaces have been busy working on non-contact elements of the 'PRG activity plan'. This has included the re-design of two leaflets – one exploring the Pump Room Gardens and its heritage and features, and the other detailing a guided walk around the wider Spa Gardens. Both new leaflets will be available soon and have been improved and updated with new maps, graphics and updates on the restoration of the Gardens.

Other current projects include the development of exciting new content for the permanent noticeboards in the Gardens, and ideas for some new educational interpretation panels exploring their Victorian heritage focusing on the bandstand, raingarden and other areas. Watch this space for further updates.



Keeping St Nick's looking good

You may have noticed that a lot of hard work has gone into making improvements at St Nicholas' Park, to ensure that it continues to be a beautiful and popular park for both local residents and visitors. The work on both infrastructure and landscape has been part of a four-year programme funded by developer contributions with the aim of improving the park and landscape.

Works have included resurfacing and realigning the central paths, installing bespoke fencing and new seating and re-landscaping the brook border and other beds in the park. Tree planting throughout the park has helped to replace trees damaged or lost through bad weather, adding to a treescape for future generations to appreciate. Additions of an oak tree trunk sculpture, solitary bee home and the planting of perennial flowers, shrubs and bulbs have created an environment that both people and wildlife can enjoy: the beds are currently buzzing with life!



Looking out for bats

It's that exciting time of year to keep your eyes peeled for bats!

The best time to spot them is at dusk on a dry, warm evening, and in places where insects are likely to hang out: think woodlands, rivers, gardens, ponds and hedgerows. You could make your garden bat friendly by creating a source of water, such as a pond, bird bath or fountain, keeping pets indoors at night and planting night-blooming flowers and aromatic plants to attract insects.

Bat populations are in decline in the UK, with threats including building and development work, attacks from cats, loss of habitat and chemicals used on building materials. Under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside

Act and Rights of Way Act 2000, bats are amongst the most protected animals in Britain, making it illegal to intentionally harm a bat or damage its habitat.

We are lucky to have a variety of bats in the district, including the brown long-eared bat, Daubenton's bat, pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and the noctule. Breeding females tend to roost in warmer areas, and will cluster together to retain body heat. They also gain heat from gaps in trees, including oak, ash and beech, but any trees with gaps in the trunk, loose bark or thick ivy will do the trick. Some ideal places in the district to go bat spotting include Abbey Fields, Priory Park, St Mary's Lands, Jephson Gardens, Victoria Park and Leam Valley Nature Reserve.

Happy bat spotting!



A day **in the life** of

Nicky Bellenger, Community Engagement Officer

Can you tell us a bit about your new job with the Green Spaces team?

Yes, I'm covering for Lucy Stockley whilst she is on maternity leave. My primary focus will be on the outreach element of the HF funded Pump Room Gardens Project, supporting our brilliant casual team and volunteers to run workshops and events to enable more people to engage with all that we are doing. And fear not, I'll also be keeping this newsletter running - those jokes won't write themselves!



What are you most looking forward to getting started with?

Well it's a tricky time with many activities and events being cancelled or postponed. It's also hard not being in the office with the team, so I'd say I'm most looking forward to lockdown being lifted so I can have a coffee with colleagues and get going with delivering the brilliant work that has been planned.

How did you get into this area of work?

My background is in the arts: I have predominantly worked in theatres in learning and outreach teams. I have also always loved the outdoors, and my passion for green spaces and their health and wellbeing benefits has grown considerably over the last year or so. Being able to apply that passion whilst continuing to work with communities on projects that have such positive outcomes feels like an exciting challenge for me.

What has helped you stay cheerful while social distancing at the moment?

Spring! Watching brightly coloured leaves and flowers emerging and hearing the birds singing loudly has really kept me going.

Have you always lived in the area?

No, I moved to Leamington in August 2019. I grew up in Portsmouth and have also lived in Derby. I love the sea, and have been lucky to live so close to the Peak District, but now I'm settling somewhere in between and really enjoying getting to know the area. I may sound biased, but there really are so many beautiful outdoor spaces in the district!!

Which is your favourite green space in the district?

There are so many to choose from, but I'm going to go for Whitnash Brook. I'm lucky to live nearby, so I go there a lot and usually find a spot by the brook to sit and listen to the birds and watch the water trickle by; it's my place of calm.

What was the last thing you made from scratch?

A lemon drizzle cake, with fresh lemon thyme that I'm growing in my garden. I have to say, it didn't last long!

Tell us about something you're particularly passionate about?

I volunteer with the Alzheimer's Society, running Dementia Friends information sessions and helping out with a Singing for the Brain group. A few of my family members have had dementia, and I've also worked on creative projects in care homes & with people living with the disease so I'm really passionate about creating dementia friendly communities.

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

Joke of the Month

What is a thistle's favourite MC Hammer song?

Can't touch this



www.warwickdc.gov.uk