

Warwick District GREEN SPACES



JULY 2020



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Your next edition

With our team so busy with projects behind the scenes, we have decided to release our Green Spaces newsletters bi-monthly, so your next edition will land in your inboxes in September, packed full of our latest news and features. Until then enjoy your summer and don't hesitate to contact us using the details at the end of the newsletter!

Meanwhile you can check out some of our activity videos here:

www.warwickdc.gov.uk/greenspaceactivities



Trees for our Future

Warwick District Council is starting an ambitious 'Trees for our Future' campaign with the aim of planting a tree for every person in our district, a number which is projected to grow to 160,000 by 2030.

Working in partnership with the Woodland Trust, Forestry Commission, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Warwick Tree Wardens and Town and Parish Councils our aim is to bring local communities, schools, businesses and landowners together in a project which will not only make our post COVID-19 district a healthier and more beautiful place to live, work and visit, but will also enhance wildlife and help to combat climate change.

The Council's project team will be facilitating a number of schemes to encourage tree planting on both Council and third party land and we are hoping to gain the support and involvement of everyone in our community.

For more information visit
www.warwickdc.gov.uk/treesforourfuture

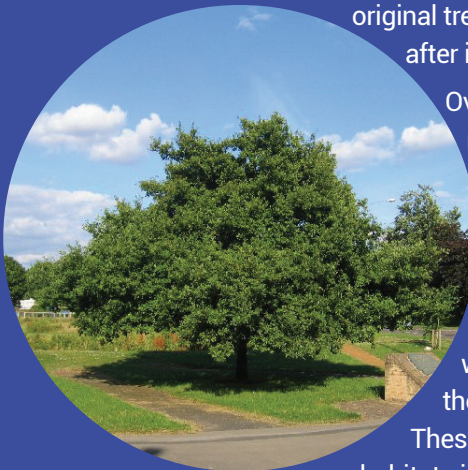


Green Space of the Month

Midland Oak, Leamington Spa

Midland Oak is a site located on the boundary of Lillington. The site benefits from a newly developed Play Area, meadow grass areas and a flood attenuation area which provides wildlife habitat.

The site is reputed to have the original Midland Oak tree which marked the centre of England. The current Oak tree on site was planted in 1988 from an acorn from the original tree which was felled after it died in 1967.



Over recent years meadow areas have been brought to the site to improve biodiversity and enhance the exposed Bins Brook which runs through the centre of the site.

These provide valuable habitats in quite an urban area and more information about wildlife to spot here can be seen on the interpretation sign on site.

In 2019 the playground was redeveloped and is a welcome improvement to the site. The playground is fenced off due the close proximity of the Brook and the site is fairly flat and accessible by surfaced paths.

There is an active 'Friends' group who hold some events throughout the year, including an armistice day memorial.

Access from Heemstede Lane

What to look out for in July

The showers in June were a welcomed respite for our green spaces, and now all of the displays are looking their best, with bedding and hanging baskets brightening the town up.

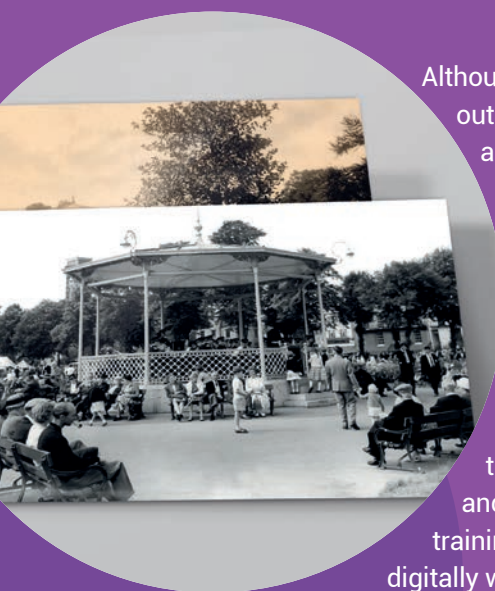


It's a fantastic time to spot emerging wildlife whilst out on walks too. Our team work hard to encourage wildlife to our green spaces: look out for areas of unmown grass, wildflower and grassland meadows, bird boxes, hedgerows and habitat piles.

It's a competitive time of year for birds; with so many fledglings to feed it's important to keep feeders full, if you have them. Ducklings and cygnets can be spotted on the canal and the peregrine falcon chicks are beginning to fledge from their nest box on top of the Town Hall.



Pump Room Gardens Programme Update



Although we're unable to be out delivering projects and events at the moment, there is still a lot happening behind the scenes...

Our brilliant volunteers and casual team are continuing to support the project from home, and we are delivering training and development digitally with the team

during this unexpected quiet time.

A range of outreach workshops and a storytelling project are currently being developed, ready for when we can begin working with the public again, as well as continued work on the new interpretation panels that will be installed in the Pump Room Gardens. We are also working on a new postcard competition, where we will be calling out for your photographs and creative responses to the gardens: watch this space for further updates!



**HERITAGE
FUND**



**COMMUNITY
FUND**



Deadwood Habitats

You may have noticed that the carved elephant's foot in Jephson Gardens was recently removed, due to significant rotting. However, it has taken on a new life as a deadwood habitat in the wood area in the gardens.

Deadwood is crucial for biodiversity conservation and is an ideal home for a diverse range of species to live in, as it is full of nutrients and the wood is soft enough to make holes in. Birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, reptiles, fungi and plants all benefit from deadwood. A single tree can provide food and shelter for invertebrates, such as beetles, centipedes and wood lice, who in turn become food for birds and bats. Deadwood is also very good for the environment as it stores carbon and steadily releases nutrients into the soil as it decays, which then feed the plants around it.

Our Green Spaces Development Officer, Jon Holmes, made a brilliant discovery when cutting the elephant's foot in order to move it: 20 plus lesser staghorn beetles and 10 or so larvae! These were relocated with the wood.

These beetles are generally found in the deadwood of ash, common beech and apple trees and their larvae depend on the holes in these trees to live in and feed on. You may spot the adults flying at night. They mate and lay their eggs in a suitable piece of decaying wood. Larvae take 1-2 years to develop, and adult beetles can live up to two years.

The team try, wherever possible, not to throw things away. The timeline beech, also in Jephson, was carved from the trunk of a tree that was felled several years ago and two other sections were left as wood play, now very popular and enjoyed by many.

So, next time you're walking past some deadwood, take a good look and see what you can spot!



Brilliant Butterflies

This is the perfect time of year to keep your eyes peeled for butterflies and we're lucky to have a wide variety currently on the wing in the district. Here are just a few you can look out for:



Comma – we'll start with an easy one! Comma's could be regular visitors to your gardens and green spaces if there is plenty of nectar for them, but can also be found in hedgerows, disused

railway lines and country lanes. Deep orange/brown in colour with scalloped edges; they are masters of disguise as they can hide amongst dead leaves. Fascinatingly, the larvae are flecked with brown and white markings and bear close resemblance to bird droppings!

White Admiral – a beautiful woodland butterfly with an impressive flight pattern, the White Admiral beats its wings only a few times and then effortlessly glides along forest rides, often close to the ground. Adults can also be seen feeding on bramble flowers and moist soil. Their wings are dark brown/black with a white band and some beautiful patterns and colourations that can be seen on closer inspection. If you're lucky enough to see underneath you'll spot a range of colours, including sky blue and a white band that matches the upper wing pattern.



Silver-washed Fritillary – due to our work with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust to increase numbers of this beautiful butterfly, it is likely you will spot them (we've recently spotted them in Oakley Wood!). They are large butterflies and differ from other fritillaries by their pointed wings and silver streaks on their undersides – hence the name. The male is a distinctive bright orange and can be found flying through woodland, sometimes pausing to investigate something with an orange hue to see if it's a potential mate! The female is paler, with more prominent spots.



Beautiful Demoiselle – a damselfly, not a butterfly, but we couldn't resist including it as one of our team members recently spotted one in Crackley Wood – his first spot in 19 years! So perhaps a little harder to find, but well worth looking out for: they live on fast-flowing rivers and are on the wing from May to August. The male has a metallic blue-green body and dark brown wings with iridescent blue veins. The females have green bodies and brown wings. Look out for their distinctive fluttery flight.

Males tend to perch on vegetation and flutter their wings to attract a prospective mate, and are very protective over the eggs after they have been laid by the female.



A day **in the** life of

Pyn Stockman, Storyteller & Creative Facilitator

Can you tell us a bit about your work, and how you're currently working with the Green Spaces team?

I work professionally as a storyteller and a creative facilitator. Which means that I perform stories, make things and work with groups to get them telling stories and making things. I work freelance but am also artistic co-director of an arts organisation called Secret City Arts.

I'm working with the Green Spaces Team to create a story that looks at some of the history of the Pump Room Gardens. The story will become part of a walk around the gardens. The story is imagined but based on a research document.

I've also told stories and delivered storytelling training for volunteers as part of Green Spaces projects and I'm looking forward to doing that again!



What's the most interesting thing you've discovered about the Pump Room Gardens in your research so far?

There's quite a lot! But I will go with the fact that Charles Blondin walked across the Pump Room Gardens on a high wire! The news report describes people sitting on rooftops. And I can sort of picture it and get a sense of that excitement, the spectacle of it all.

What is the funniest/ strangest/ most memorable thing that has happened to you in your career?

My most memorable projects all involve working with groups in the natural world. One Autumn with a group of children playing with leaves in the Lickey Hills (and trying to catch the moment of throwing leaves in the air on film!), Taking an old folk tale and placing it on Spinney Hill in Warwick with a group of young people, Walking in winter along the city centre canals of Birmingham and telling stories of horses that were once stabled at the Roundhouse...

What do you do with your free time?

I live on a boat so there's always plenty of boat-y things to do! But when I'm not doing that I swim (not in the canal), I read (although that's often work related) and I listen to podcasts. I also walk with my dog and have been known to try to grow vegetables in a slightly haphazard manner (I have a lot to learn there)

If you were a tree, which species would you be and why?

Now there's a question! I love tree folk lore and performed a storytelling piece at Birmingham Literature Festival last year called "The Wild Woods Brew"

I'm going to pick Elder mainly because it's linked to some of my favourite stories and old folk traditions! But also because it's my favourite tea. I also love the way it grows wild along the canals.

Who was your childhood hero?

I didn't really have one. But if I had to pick it would probably have been Lassie or Snoopy.

What was the last gift you gave someone?

A paper bird.

Joke of the Month

What did the big flower say to the small flower?

What's up bud!



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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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