

Warwick District

GREEN SPACES

JANUARY 2021



In this edition

- Pump Room Gardens Programme Update
- The BandStand Together
- Big Garden Bird Watch
- What to look out for in January
- Woodland management at Oakley Wood
- Nature photo of the month
- A day in the life of Nicola Mills

Green Space of the Month Chesterton Gardens

Chesterton Gardens is the one of the most recent parks to come into our care. It was transferred to the Council in 2020 by developer AC Lloyd following the completion of the adjacent housing. It is located at the bottom of St Fremunds Way, Sydenham and the nearby roads are all named after species of butterfly.

The site is predominantly a wide open space with shrub beds around the edges. There is a new playground which has become popular with local families. Importantly this is the first new public park where we have provided allotments, these have now been transferred to Whitnash Town Council.

Chesterton Gardens is one of many open spaces, previously owned by developers which has been adopted by the Council. The process of bringing this land into public use is often complicated and lengthy, but an important part of the work of our Green Spaces and Development teams;

This involves;

- On site meetings with the developer to draw up a 'snagging list' to identify problem areas such as dead trees or landscaping which has not followed the planning specifications agreed.
- A legal process to transfer the ownership of the land.
- Further meetings and monitoring by the Council with the developer to ensure that the problems identified on the snagging list have been rectified.
- Safety checks and risk assessments on play equipment, quality of landscaping and access.
- Addition of the new area onto the Council's ever growing Grounds Maintenance contract.



Pump Room Gardens Programme Update

A very happy new year to you all. With spring around the corner, I am certainly looking forward to some slightly warmer walks around the gardens!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Community Engagement Volunteers and Casual team, who have stayed on board throughout the pandemic so far, taking part in online training events and supporting the development of digital programmes. I know they're really looking forward to working on events and activities in the gardens, and we are working hard behind the scenes to make this happen as soon as it is safe to do so.

In the meantime, you can follow the PRG team's updates on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, and why not share your photos of the gardens with us: [@PumpRoomGardens](https://twitter.com/PumpRoomGardens)

As I am sure you have already seen, the winning designs from last year's Postcards From Home competition are now printed and available to collect, for free, from the Pump Rooms.

We think they make for a fantastic new set. Who will you send yours to?

www.warwickdc.gov.uk/prgpostcards

Nicky Bellenger, Community Engagement Officer



Woodland Management at Oakley Wood

Earlier this year the Council began a new joint management programme with the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, as part of a ten-year strategy to provide the district's woodlands with better protection for wildlife, resilience to change and future sustainability.

The first phase of the project has seen the start of a restoration programme at Oakley Wood to promote the establishment of native broadleaved trees. The initial work, which is supported by the Friends of Oakley Wood has required the removal of around one third of the conifer trees to create several 30 metre clearings. These new openings in the tree canopy will provide light and space for native trees to grow. Over the winter months the natural growth of the existing trees will be supplemented by further tree planting. While the current programme of work may appear destructive, the woodland will soon recover and attract a bigger range of wildlife and gain more resilience to pests, diseases and climate change.

Nominations still open for 'BandStand Together'



In light of the third national lockdown and ongoing government restrictions, we are extending the deadline for nominations for a special event dedicated to those in our district who have been affected by COVID-19.

'BandStand Together' is a unique online gig, which will be recorded on the newly restored bandstand in the Pump Room Gardens at a future date. To provide the playlist, the Green Spaces team is making a call to local people to

dedicate a song to someone who has made a difference in the community, or has had a particularly difficult time due to the pandemic.

A selection of the dedicated songs will be performed by local musicians who we are inviting to play for a nominal fee. Musicians who are interested in taking part should contact greenspaces@warwickdc.gov.uk for more information.

For more details, updates and to submit a song dedication, please visit Warwick District Council Website. The closing date to submit a song dedication is 12 noon, Monday 15 February.



Big Garden Birdwatch

29-31 January 2021

In previous years we have teamed up with the Royal Pump Rooms to deliver free activities and guided bird spotting walks around the Spa Gardens. Sadly, we are unable to go ahead with the event this year due to Covid-19, but here is one of our favourite activities for you to try at home:

How to make an apple bird feeder – You will need: an apple, raw sunflower seeds, a stick, a piece of string, an apple corer or knife

Instructions:

1. Safely remove the centre of the apple using an apple corer or knife.
2. Tie the string around the centre of the stick.
3. Thread the opposite end of the string through the centre of the apple, so that the apple sits on top of the stick.



4. Stick your sunflower seeds into the apple – the more the merrier! Why not make a pattern around your apple?
5. Hang your apple up using the string, in a location that the birds will easily be able to access.

You can still take part in the BGBW from home by submitting your results on the RSPB's website. There also downloadable resources, including bird identification sheets - www.rspb.org.uk

What to look out for in January



This is a particularly important time of year to keep an eye on our feathered friends, ensuring they have access to the food they need to see them through the winter. You can help by keeping bird feeders well stocked and providing a regular supply of fresh water for them to drink and bathe in, particularly in icy temperatures when other water sources may be frozen over. If you have a bird bath, you can prevent it from freezing over by putting a light ball on top that will float and move around in the wind, keeping a section free from ice, or pour on hot water when it ices over.

Keep an eye out for snowdrops, as they start to appear through the frosted soil of woodlands creating a beautiful, white carpet. This is a particularly good time of year to spot animal tracks, either on snow or muddy ground. January and February are the best months to spot the Green Woodpecker, as they begin nesting in trees to mate. Listen out for their loud, distinctive call known as a 'yaffle'.



Nature photo of the month

As we enter a new year, we thought this was a great opportunity to try something new, and to invite you to share your local nature finds with us. Each month we will feature our favourite nature photo, so get snapping when you are out on your walks!

If you would like your photo to feature in a future newsletter, here is what you need to do:

- Send your photo to greenspaces@warwickdc.gov.uk, with the subject 'Newsletter Photo'.
- Please only send one photo at a time, but feel free to share a new one each month!
- Your photo must be of something in nature and/or one of our green spaces.
- Please include your full name and 1-2 sentences explaining where you took your photo, which will be included in the newsletter if your photo is selected.



A day **in the life** of

Nicola Mills, Marketing & Communications Officer



How long have you been working here?

I've been with the Council for six years now. Previously I worked in tourism for the British Tourist Authority in London, Berlin and Dublin. I then got a role with Cardiff Marketing, the day of my interview I had to take the bus tour twice as I'd never been to Wales' capital before. I'm glad I did, as it was there I met my partner Ian and our daughter was born there. When Ian's job was relocated to Birmingham, I got a post at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, a great privilege with a stunning office overlooking the Birthplace gardens...allegedly the building is haunted, so it was a bit spooky if you were there by yourself after dark.

What's your favourite part of your job?

Being a member of the Media Team means that I can get involved in all aspects of the Council's work. It's rewarding to be there right at the beginning of a campaign and bring something through to a successful outcome e.g. 2019 was the 100th anniversary of Council Housing in the UK and we wanted to come up with a way to celebrate and gain local and national press coverage. We ended up inviting 100 of our oldest tenants to a special lunch and created a video where they shared some of their memories of their first Council homes. From start to finish it was a great team effort.

What's the most challenging part of your job?

Currently it's dealing with the volume of work created as a result of the pandemic, regular communication with the public has been vital in an ever changing situation. I have huge respect for our staff who have been on the front-line e.g. those who helped to set up the shielding hub, or had to respond to new regulations, sourced accommodation for the homeless or worked around the clock to distribute grants.

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

There are lots especially with BTA on overseas trips where we enjoyed many post exhibition evenings with town criers, police, jesters, as well as colleagues from all over the UK. But perhaps

the most memorable was being part of the filming for the mystery guest for BBC's Question of Sport at Anne Hathaway's Cottage. When I messaged friends and family that I was appearing on it, the response from my cousin was 'that they would never get it!!'

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

Definitely not famous, but I would love to have met my Great Grandfather 'Professor' Mills. He was a phrenologist who gave readings and shows to audiences in Blackpool in Victorian times...I've seen some of the posters!

Which is your favourite green space in the district?

I'll have to say St Nicholas Park, so many happy memories of when my children were younger...the playground, train, picnics, ice-cream and feeding the ducks. My son still spends a lot of time on (or sometimes in) the river.

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

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