

WARWICK DISTRICT

# GREEN SPACES

January 2022



## Green Space of the Month

### Kenilworth Common

Kenilworth Common is located on the eastern side of Kenilworth and borders Common Lane and Finham Brook, (CV8 2HR). The 12 hectare site is split in two by the Coventry to Leamington train line. The common consists of mixed woodland on hilly land - gentle slopes, steep climbs and beautiful wooded valleys.

It is designated as a Local Nature Reserve and is jointly managed with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. The history of the common goes back to its creation in 1756 when it provided rough grazing as it was predominantly heath and acidic grassland. After the 1800's when grazing ceased, oak and birch trees were established to provide the woodland we see today.

There is an impressive range of wildlife that can be seen on the site with kingfishers and brown trout in Finham Brook, slow-worms and common lizards to be spotted close by, and a variety of woodland birds such as jays, woodpeckers, finches and tits. There is also plenty of fauna, the common still retains some remnants of the original heath with wavy hair grass, broom and heath bedstraw. In the autumn fungi appear including amethyst deceiver, ugly milkcap and fly agaric.

There are also 11 brass rubbing posts around the site featuring different species, these can be found on the 'red trail' and the 'blue trail' - follow the signposts around the common.

It is an ideal spot to visit, with undulating slopes and something different to see and do all year round. Sturdy walking shoes recommended. Due to the nature of the site, it is not suitable for wheelchair users or buggies.

[www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves/KenilworthCommon](http://www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves/KenilworthCommon)

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## Ash Dieback in Warwick District

Ash dieback (*hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) is a fungus originating in Asia that affects our native ash trees which have no natural defence against it. It was introduced to Europe about 30 years ago and was first recorded in the UK in 2012.

The fungus overwinters in leaf litter on the ground and produces small white fruiting bodies between July and October. These release spores into the atmosphere spreading the disease. This causes fungus to grow inside the tree, eventually blocking its water transport systems. Symptoms include:

- Leaves develop dark patches in summer, before wilting and discolouring to black, and sometimes shedding early
- Shoots and leaves dieback in summer
- Lesions develop where branches meet the trunk, often diamond-shaped and dark brown
- Inner bark looks brown/ grey under the lesions
- New growth from previously dormant buds further down the trunk – a stress response

We believe that the UK is likely to lose around 80% of its ash trees, which will have a big impact on the landscape and biodiversity of woodland areas. We have over 2,000 mature ash trees within the district's green spaces and are already experiencing this deadly disease. Sadly, although

our trees are regularly inspected and managed when the disease is identified, we may lose most of our Ash trees in the coming years.

There is some good news – research suggests that some trees may be tolerant to ash dieback, so the population could recover over time. Within the district, we have begun planting 3,500 trees as part of our wider 160,000 tree planting project, with much more planned for 2022. The newly planted trees consist of a variety of trees and shrubs, but no ash trees.

You can help to prevent the spread of the disease by: cleaning your shoes before and after visiting a wood, not taking cuttings or plant materials and washing your car or bike wheels to remove mud or plant matter.

**If you think you have spotted signs of ash dieback visit the Tree Alert link ([www.forestresearch.gov.uk](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk))**



## Tree Sculpting in Priory Park

Local community organisation ARC (Achieving Results in Communities) were recently invited by the Friends of Priory Park to initiate a nature trail around the park engaging the community in this wonderful green space in Warwick Town Centre.

With funding from Warwickshire County Council Councillors' Fund, and guidance from Warwick District Council's Green Spaces team, ARC commissioned woodcarving expert Graham Jones to co-create a number of sculptures out of deadwood in the Park.

The wood carving demonstrations took place on two (fortunately) glorious sunny days in November and early December.

In creating the pieces, Graham takes creative guidance from the people

and places around him – as well as the wood itself. Using a small chainsaw as well as hand tools – the creatures quickly appeared from the woodwork!

People were invited to watch and give their ideas and suggestions.

Woodpeckers have often been seen in the oaks along the brook – and therefore a woodpecker design was decided upon for the first Oak tree carving.

Along the ridge, nuthatches were spotted the morning of the demonstrations, so were incorporated into the work. Along with a mouse, dragonfly and 'nessie' the dinosaur of Priory Park!

There are plans for Graham to return to the park in the spring for some further creations. The friends of Priory Park also hope to develop the Nature Trail further this year.

For information on this and ARC's other projects visit: [www.arccic.co.uk](http://www.arccic.co.uk)

Friends of Priory Park have a website and Facebook group you can also join: [www.prioryparkwarwick.org](http://www.prioryparkwarwick.org)



Photos by: Kristie Naimo

## New play equipment for Victoria Park

In addition to hosting the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games lawn bowls and para bowls competitions, Victoria Park is soon to see the installation of a brand new play area. An extensive online survey of park users was carried out in collaboration with the Friends of Victoria Park in 2018 and showed an overwhelming enthusiasm for a new and more exciting space. Six play companies put forward their proposals.

David Adams, from the Friends of Victoria Park, said 'We were delighted to be part of the team who evaluated the supplier submissions and joined the Council experts in voting unanimously for the inspired presentation from the winning company, Kompan'.

The new £350k play space which has been partly funded from the Council's Section 106 agreements (from local housing developments) will feature a unique 6 metre high tree house with a spiral slide. There will also be a trim trail, modern swings and trampolines, a bigger sandpit and toddler area and zipwires. Work is due to commence in late spring, and most items will be made from Robinia wood sourced from FSC approved suppliers.

Simon Richardson, Green Spaces Development Officer says 'the surfacing will be a mixture of sand, woodchip, wet pour and tiger mulch providing different colours and textures as well as well as being a good surface to play on. It will be a flagship play area for the district!'



Share your

## COMMONWEALTH CONNECTIONS

So, 2022 is finally here! As we prepare to welcome spectators and competitors from throughout the Commonwealth in a few months' time when St Nicholas Park, Warwick and Victoria Park, Leamington will be playing their part in hosting the Birmingham 2022 Games, we are aiming to make a local connection with each of the 54 participating countries.

From Antigua and Barbuda to Zambia, Bangladesh to Singapore we would love you to share your memories, stories and experiences of any part of the Commonwealth be it through family, work or a holiday, by submitting photos, a story or a short video to be posted on our Commonwealth Connections website page.

Visit [www.warwickdc.gov.uk/commonwealthconnections](http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/commonwealthconnections) to find out how you can be part of creating a piece of local history.



## Santa Dash in Victoria Park

Our beautiful green spaces play host to a wide variety of events and activities throughout the year, even in mid-winter! On Sunday 12 December, Victoria Park hosted the annual Santa Dash, raising money for Myton Hospice. Over 1,100 Santas of all ages turned up for the event in full costume, running, jogging and walking 5km around the park and local area in glorious sunshine, often with an excited 'reindeer' on a lead or a 'little elf' in a buggy and plenty of visitors to watch the spectacle.

The event also featured an inflatable snow dome, a friendly reindeer called George, and of course a visit from the (real) big man himself. Everyone completing the race went home with a recyclable medal and there was even a prize for the best dressed dog!





# A day **in the** life of Amanda Wildman

## Civil Enforcement Officer/Ranger

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

No two days are the same! Our main duties include the running of the district Council's car parks, maintaining the machines, checking for parking contraventions and issuing penalty charge notices if necessary. The nicer part is to be a presence in our parks and talking to the public. We need to check that local byelaws are being adhered to, such as dogs on leads and no cycling in certain parks and to ensure nobody is fishing or swimming where it's prohibited. I also watch out for incidences of anti-social behaviour reporting damage to park furniture or play equipment. I also update the notice boards, help out with events and make sure the parks are clean and litter free.



### What's your favourite part of your job?

I love interacting with the public and giving advice and directions and being outdoors where I can be involved with the day-to-day life in our parks.

### What training and skills do you need for your role?

You have to like people and being outside! To issue Penalty Charge notice you need to successfully complete a NVQ qualification in parking and conflict management. I've also done other courses such as First Aid, Fire Safety, Health and Safety training. In cold weather you need to be able to keep warm, so I have several layers of thermals under my uniform, a scarf or snood and thick socks. I also try to keep moving and get a hot drink on my breaks.



Kenilworth Abbey Museum

### What are the most memorable things that have happened to you at work?

There was one day when I was asked to patrol the parking in Leamington's Old Town. Whilst there I stumbled across a film crew who were on location for 'Dude where's my donkey'. After chatting to security, I managed to get onto the set and meet Martin Clunes and Catherine Tate who gave me their autographs on an old PCN envelope!

The saddest day was a couple of years ago when I was told not to go to St Nicholas Park in Warwick as our lovely little green hut had burnt to the ground.

### Do you have any New Year's resolutions?

Well for many years now my resolution has been to go on a diet. In 2022 I am optimistic that I might achieve my aim, as I have recently joined a slimming group and have just received my ½ stone award so I am hoping I can keep up the momentum! I would really like to get fitter and still be doing this job in my 60s.

### What's your favourite green space?

It has to be Abbey Fields, Kenilworth, a beautiful open space with great walks and running space for people and dogs. I love the river and large lake with all its wildlife. I also enjoy the fascinating history of the fields where the Abbey once stood and the small barn where the history group display artefacts. A place I always visit is a small tree I was asked to help plant in memory of a family's loved one. I had the task on a windy wet day to return the earth and lay bark around the foot of the young tree – my how it has grown!

To sign up to this e-newsletter, please visit:  
[www.warwickdc.gov.uk/gsnews](http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/gsnews)

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

✉ [greenspaces@warwickdc.gov.uk](mailto:greenspaces@warwickdc.gov.uk)  
🌐 [www.warwickdc.gov.uk/parks](http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/parks)

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