



Houghton Hall Park

May 2020 Newsletter

The Houghton Hall Park Renaissance and Renewal Project is being managed by Central Bedfordshire Council in partnership with Houghton Regis Town Council and is supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery Fund.

It's May and it looks like we are going to be in lockdown for the next few weeks, whilst we cannot have the activities we had planned for May we hope you are still enjoying the park for your exercise, we are lucky that the weather has been good to us during this time. It was VE Day on May 8th and the picture below from the Houghton Regis Heritage Society shows the people of Houghton Regis celebrating on the green in 1945, we can't wait until we can party again and what a party it will be!



A great place to live and work.

Monthly Photography Themes

We welcome photographers of all abilities from the age of 16 to get creative, use your imagination and enter our monthly themes, **May's theme is:** 'Wildflowers at Houghton Hall Park', there is an abundance of flowers in the park at the moment, see how many you can spot.

IMPORTANT: Please remember to practice social distancing when coming to the park, only come with members of your household and keep two metres apart from other park users. Please refrain from using the play equipment.

We know that some of our regular park users cannot visit the park at the moment, if you would still like to take a picture of some wildflowers near you please do and send it in.

Please send your submissions to hhp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk. The images must be taken between 1st – 31st May 2020 and each person can submit up to 5 entries. We will not accept any overly photoshopped images that do not represent the reality of the subject in the photo. Some images will be featured on our website, social media platforms, notice boards around the visitor centre and in our monthly newsletter.

Please see our website for the full terms & conditions before you submit your work: www.houghtonhallpark.org/photography

Below are the entries from April's theme: 'Thank you Key Workers', we really enjoyed seeing these photographs and we've even had the local police tweeting about the posters and how nice it was to see them on their patrols!

Art & Culture Event

Central Bedfordshire **great** lifestyles

May's Photography Theme

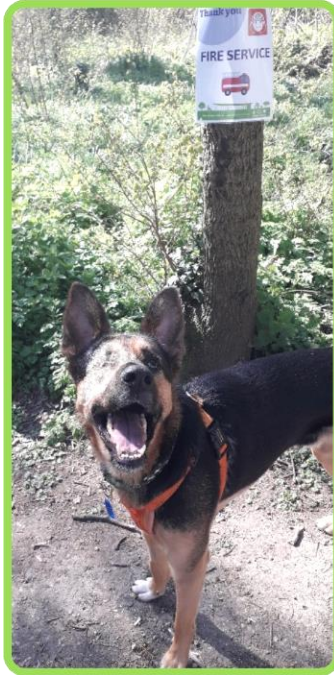
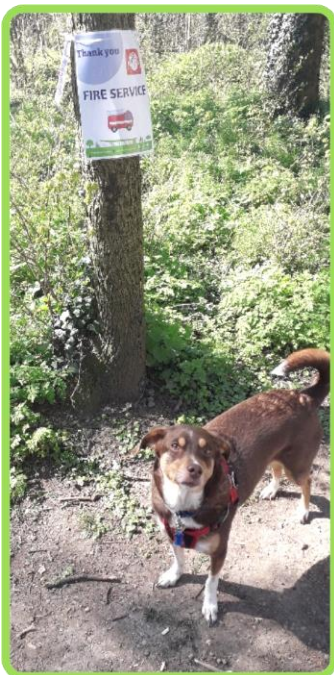
Wildflowers at Houghton Hall Park

We hope you have fun capturing some pictures of wildflowers in Houghton Hall Park.

- Up to 5 entries per person
- Images must be taken in May
- Some images will be featured on our website, social media platforms, notice boards around the visitor centre and in our monthly newsletter
- Send them to us at: hhp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
- Deadline 31st May
- Full terms & conditions at our website

Find out more online at www.houghtonhallpark.org

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What's On

All the events planned for May had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 response in the UK. The park remains open as valuable green space for the community for independent exercise and access to the outdoors, please abide by the social distancing rules.

VE Day Display

Our VE Day event couldn't take place however we have created two displays in the Visitor Centre windows, one has some historical facts about World War 2 and pictures from the Houghton Regis Heritage Society, we have also used bunting that has been made by one of our volunteers. The other display is a celebration for VE day, this includes photos of local residents celebrating and also some popular war time recipes.

We hope you enjoy looking at the displays when visiting the park.



Wellbeing
Event

great
lifestyles

Buggy Exercise at Home

A FREE class you can
enjoy in your own
home!

Every Wednesday at
10am

For more information contact:
hayleyclear@gmail.com



Find out more online at www.houghtonhallpark.org

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Buggy Exercise at Home

When: Every Wednesday

Time: 10am

Cost: Free













Buggy Exercise cannot take place in the park but fear not you can still take part at home! The class is being offered via Microsoft Teams. If you would like to take part please contact Hayley at hayleyclear@gmail.com, you don't need to have a baby the class is open to everyone.

Wild Flower Spotting






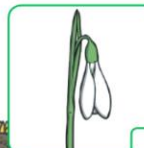
There are flowers everywhere in the park at the moment, both wild and also in the formal gardens, using the hunt sheets below see how many you can spot next time you visit.


Plants and Flowers Hunt Sheet

Tick the plants and flowers that you have found!

 daisy	 buttercup	 clover
 nettle	 dandelion	 ivy
 bramble	 rose	 bluebell
 dog rose	 sunflower	 poppy

Tick the plants and flowers that you have found!

 pansy	 thistle	 tulip
 lily	 primrose	 snowdrop



What's the latest in the gardens?



I am thankful to have been one of the few lucky people able to continue working in these tough times. I still get to see all the regular faces and keep in touch with you on a daily basis. They say gardening is therapeutic and it really has felt like it of late. The bees are out, the trees are bursting with buds, birds have beaks full of grubs and for a while I could almost be in a bubble of my own. Our volunteer numbers are understandably reduced in the current situation, but we are managing to keep in touch, and some are even providing support to the park by potting on plants, making displays and props and even building things! Our volunteers made this wonderful display board which has been sitting in the front of the kitchen garden. It is lovely to see everyone pulling together.

It is in times like this you realise how important our volunteers, school groups and internships are to the park as without my normal team around me it certainly has a different feel to it. This has become a community garden in every sense, and I can't wait to see all of them back where they belong. In the meantime, I will continue to keep on top of things as much as I can but, there may be a few more weeds than normal!

So, what have we been up to then:

Well the strawberries are looking brilliant and flowers are appearing at a tremendous rate now, which will make for a promising crop.

We have been picking rhubarb and lettuces regularly and leaving at the gate for people to enjoy. This weekend we were giving away tomato plants and there will be more to follow when the warmer weather starts again.



We have finished planting the summer cabbage, kale and Brussel sprouts.

The parsnips and carrots have germinated well and with the mix of rain and sun are doing extremely well.



The structures are in the process of being built for the runner beans, with our rustic hazel sticks from the park. We have even managed to get around the social distancing when you need a hand by 'bringing your wife to work day'!

And these pictures made me think we will look back at these one day and laugh, so I couldn't resist taking them, my volunteers having a tea breaks 2m apart!



You may have noticed that we have also been busy painting some planters in the kitchen garden, and contractors have been on site making paths to go around them.

This will provide another area to grow produce for people that are less able to get around the garden or find it difficult to get onto the beds.



We are also pleased to have been able to organise the old Houghton Hall Park sign into the formal garden. The contractors were very helpful in moving this into place as long as we dug the holes; Mark was happy to oblige! As soon as we have chance these will be getting a coat of paint and we will be designing a planted area underneath to provide a real focal point.



As you are aware, we had a lot of events planned this year, one of which was a great tomato day in conjunction with Silsoe Horticultural Centre. There were going to be over 50 different types of tomatoes on sale for you to buy including heritage, blue, pink, white and giant ones; the choices were vast. However, once the event was cancelled that left us with 700 tomato plants too many! I have been busy helping to plant them with Simon, the unit supervisor and staff at Silsoe. A whole greenhouse has become the focus on these delightful little plants. In a few months' time it is hoped that we will be able to pick a bumper crop

and redistribute them around the care homes and sites of central Bedfordshire.

We will reschedule this event for next year, so this is your advanced notice!!



The formal garden is well and truly bursting into colour now and we are enjoying the daily splash of colour from the iris.

We also have a new planter built against the wall opposite the kitchen garden which will be planted up with annuals to attract pollinators.



This is only a snippet of what has happened in this last month, but as restrictions ease, I hope we will see more of you about and enjoying the wonderful green space of Houghton Hall Park.

Until next month

Happy gardening, stay safe

Jenny



Houghton Hall Park

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Twitter

@BedsCountryside

Website

www.houghtonhallpark.org

Email

hhp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Current Opening Times

Visitors Centre closed until further notice.

Thinking of joining the Friends of Houghton Hall Park? Then get in touch with us to see what you can do to get involved. Here are some ideas below:

- Observational Surveys
- Community engagement
- Weeding and clearing
- Cleaning
- Watering
- Growing food and encourage healthy eating
- Teach younger generations (if you have a skill or qualification, let us know!)
- Become a community leader
- Support other volunteers
- Contribute to the annual park events calendar
- Volunteering assistant at events running at the park
- Curate local history talks at visitor centre
- Habitat enhancement work in the woodland and meadow

There are many opportunities to take part. If you would like to volunteer and join the Friends of Houghton Hall Park, please email hhp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



Central Bedfordshire Council



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