



# Houghton Hall Park

## October 2018 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.

### Halloween is creeping round the corner...



The Houghton Hall Park team love Halloween and we are so excited that it's coming around so quickly. Have you seen Zelda's witching corner in the visitor's centre? If not, come and take a peek and see what Zelda is up to, here is an image of Zelda so you know who to look out for!

### Halloween half term activities:

#### Ghoulish Games in the Gardens!

Our Community Gardener Jenny is running *Ghoulish Games in the Gardens*, please head down to the formal and kitchen gardens at the village green end of the park to have some spooktacular fun with garden games turned Ghoulish! There will also be the chance to make your very own wand! The nearest entrance is from Houghton Regis Green.

Date: Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> October

Time: 10am-1pm

Cost: FREE

How to book: Just turn up & enjoy!



**A great place to live and work.**



## ...returns Halloween style!

This is a FREE activity for all the family to enjoy, this half term we bring you the Halloween version! Explore the park, find the markers, complete the challenge and have fun together. The meeting point for the activity is in the foyer at Houghton Hall Park Visitor Centre, Park Road North, Houghton Regis, LU5 5FU. Parking is free for up to 3 hours, but parking spaces are limited so please arrive with plenty of time. For further information about the activity please visit [www.xplorer.org.uk](http://www.xplorer.org.uk).

Date: Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> October

Time: 10am-12pm (last entry 11:30am)

Cost: FREE

How to book: Just turn up on the day! The meeting point is in the visitor centre.

## Children's Yoga & Craft

Join Natalie Herbert from Happy & Healthy with Natalie for a unique children's yoga and craft session at Houghton Hall Park including Yoga, a themed story, craft and games for ages 6-12. Enlighten young minds with the magic of yoga, meditation and mindfulness. Have fun, be present and leave energised!

Date: Friday 26<sup>th</sup> October

Time: 11-12:30pm

Cost: £5 per child

How to book: Contact Natalie on 07725 115284. Or see Natalie's website for more information [www.HappyandHealthywithNatalie.com](http://www.HappyandHealthywithNatalie.com).

## Pumpkin Painting!



Yes, that's right! Using our very own Kitchen Garden produce grown by Community Gardener Jenny and volunteers, why not try something different and paint your Houghton Hall Park pumpkin with our help! This is a great and fun alternative to pumpkin carving, make your pumpkin stand out with these quirky designs!

Photo credit: [www.agirlandaglugun.com](http://www.agirlandaglugun.com)

Date: Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> October

Time slots available: 10-10:45am, 11-11:45am, 12-12:45pm

Cost: £2 per child

How to book: This event is by booking only due to a limited amount of pumpkins available, you can book into a time slot by emailing [hbp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hbp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) with your preferred time slot and if this is full we will advise what is available. There may be an opportunity to join on the day if there are cancellations but we cannot guarantee any spaces will be available.

## Have you noticed the activity in the gardens recently?

*Well what a wonderful start this has been for me, I am your new gardener responsible for the kitchen and formal gardens in this idyllic setting of Houghton Hall Park. From the very beginning I have been welcome with open arms into your community and I am really looking forward to getting to know you all better.*

*As some of you are aware, I started to come down to the site in the summer and put in some late crops so that when I arrived in September we would have some produce to start using. Well, that has resulted in a bumper crop which is still going strong. Despite the lateness of the sowing, it has resulted in an excellent source of vegetables which the fantastic café staff have been busy using for soups and salads. From the extensive taste sessions, I can honestly say you won't be disappointed! The excess produce has been utilised by visitors to the park and I know a few of you have tried 'those funny squash things'!*

*Although some people hate the darker nights and cold mornings I embrace the changes with open arms as I love the seasons which mark our year. This is a time for harvesting the remaining crops and preparing the ground for the busy year ahead. And what plans I have!*

*My aim is to share my enthusiasm and passion for growing vegetables as well as to educate our young people. Food grown yourself is far tastier than any that you will buy. If you have an interest in gardening and would like to find out more, please do not hesitate to contact the team: [hhp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hhp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk). Please don't think you have to be strong and agile to make a difference. There are many jobs in gardening which are suitable for all abilities and ages and we can work out what your personal strengths are and tailor the jobs accordingly. Taking part and becoming involved in your community space is key to its success.*

### Autumn jobs

*The list is long but by spring I know you will all start to see a difference. The hot summer proved too much for many of the plants and shrubs so a little restorative work will need to be done. That said, plants are much tougher than we think and some may just have taken themselves into a dormancy until the weather turned more favourable. I have spent some time cutting back the herbaceous plants in the border and they are already responding by sending out new shoots and some have even started a second flowering. With a little more rain, I may even be able to get my fork in! The ground is still incredibly dry which just goes to show how resilient the plants are.*

### Harvesting



*So what have we been harvesting these past few weeks: courgettes, summer squashes, cucumbers, parsley, basil, chard, spinach, lettuces, carrots, tomatoes, garlic, leeks, onions, beetroot and beans, beans, beans!*

*Just recently, I have started picking the cabbages which have been making the coleslaw, and very soon I will start to bring through the beautiful winter squash 'red kuri'. This little squash is packed with vitamins and*

*has a nutty flavour similar to butternut squash. I would like to thank the café for their positive approach to my endless barrows of produce which have always been received with open arms. How nice to know that you are enjoying the food, some of which has travelled ten minutes down the path!*

*Happy Gardening!*

*Jenny*

## What happened in September?

What a busy month it was for Houghton Hall Park and the team. Running our very first Dog Festival was fantastic and we are so pleased for all the positive feedback received from this event. We would like to thank everyone who attended with a special thanks to Dunstable Pets at Home for sponsoring the dog show and providing all the wonderful goody bags; Rob the judge for giving up his spare time on a Sunday to make some very difficult decisions! Denise Price Dog Instructor for performing her fantastic & educational Dog Yoga Demonstration; Fiona Peel for holding her craft stall on behalf of her CraftybyFiona business, selling handmade dog walking bags and so much more! A thanks to Pawtrait by Julia for also holding a stall Julia's pet portraits are truly beautiful! And Pet's Sit 'n' Stay for promoting their fantastic pet sitting services! And one last thank you goes to all the staff and kind volunteers who generously gave up their time on a Sunday to help run this event. But ultimately, thank you to all those who attended for making it such a success... until next time!



To see the full gallery, please head over to our Facebook Page:

[https://www.facebook.com/pg/houghtonhallpark/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=886811004857160](https://www.facebook.com/pg/houghtonhallpark/photos/?tab=album&album_id=886811004857160)

**NEW!**

## Healthy & Happy with Natalie

If you haven't noticed already Natalie Herbert from 'Happy & Healthy with Natalie' is using the indoor space at Houghton Hall Park to run some health & wellbeing classes which started in September. Starting off with Monday afternoon Pilates and Tuesday morning yoga, they have been very successful leading to a secondary Yoga class on a Monday morning and a recently introduced Mum & Baby yoga on a Monday afternoon! Please see below for more information:

### **Mondays**

Yoga 11:15-12:15pm £6 drop-in

Pilates 12:30-1:15pm £4.50 drop-in

Mum & Baby Yoga 1:30-2:30pm £6 book in advance

Or both Yoga & Pilates for £10

### **Tuesdays**

Yoga 10-11am £6 drop-in

Mats are provided in all of the above sessions, beginners are most welcome and the classes run term time. For more information or to book, please contact Natalie on 07725 115284 or see Natalie's website for more information [www.HappyandHealthywithNatalie.com](http://www.HappyandHealthywithNatalie.com).

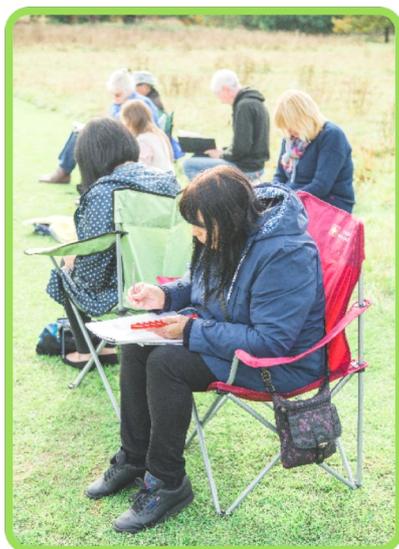
## Runetwork returns!



Runetwork also ran their very first business networking run which was very successful, a further date has been released so if you would like to put one foot in front of the other for half an hour, followed by the opportunity for refreshments and business talk with like-minded individuals... join Runetwork on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2018 at 10am, it is free to attend and you can register at [www.runetwork.co.uk](http://www.runetwork.co.uk). Registration is compulsory for your safety during exercising.

## Autumn Sketching walk

We recently ran our first sketching walk, a special thanks to Steve Halton, Central Bedfordshire Council's Senior Countryside Officer and local wildlife artist for leading this relaxed and creative activity. Thank you to those who attended, it was great fun meeting you all and sharing artistic experiences and techniques. We are glad you all had a great time and we look forward to running this activity again!



## Living Countryside Awards 2018



We are so proud to have been awarded Highly Commended in the Biodiversity and Landscape Improvement category at the bi-annual CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) Bedfordshire Living Countryside Awards this week! These awards celebrate and promote the people and projects that are making a positive impact in our county. We are delighted to be a part of these awards and even more so to have been highly commended! The awards were presented by HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Helen Nellis. Also present was the Deputy Mayor of Luton Cllr Mark Rivers.

## Monthly Photography Themes: September's WW1 Special running until 15<sup>th</sup> October!



September's WW1 Special Photography theme is still running until 15<sup>th</sup> October so if you don't have plans this weekend, why not head to the park and get creative?

Yes, this is a little bit different and we are extending the last submission date to **15<sup>th</sup> October**. It has been 100 years since the guns fell silent on the world's first truly global war. It's time to think about all of those who lived through this tragic and remarkable time putting Britain on the path to becoming what it is today.

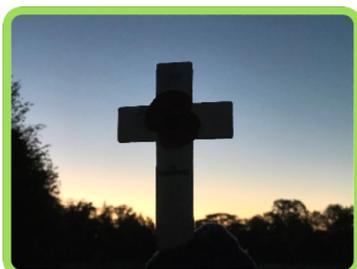
Find a way to say 'Thank You' to the veterans of World War One in a photo and send this to us to go in a display at our WW1 Tea & Cake event being held in November to mark 100 years. Feel free to use your imagination for this month's theme and take some time to consider how you can say thank you; maybe it's letters put together from natural materials in the park to spell thank you, maybe it's a single red poppy in the field you spot, maybe it's a photoshop creation (which we will allow for this month's theme!), we look forward to seeing what you can create to give thanks.

Please send your submissions to [hbp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hbp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk). The images must be taken between 1<sup>st</sup> September - 15<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and each person can submit up to 5 entries. 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 and conditions before submitting your work: [www.houghtonhallpark.org/photography](http://www.houghtonhallpark.org/photography).

Here are some entries that have been sent in already to give you some inspiration, thank you very much Alan & Mike for your beautiful and very thoughtful photographs below:



Mike Harrison (all 4)



Alan Winter

## October's Photography Theme: Autumn Colours

With some beautiful autumnal colours appearing in the park, we can't wait to see what you send us. Please send your submissions to [hbp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hbp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk). The images must be taken between 1<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018 and each person can submit up to 5 entries. 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 and conditions before submitting your work: [www.houghtonhallpark.org/photography](http://www.houghtonhallpark.org/photography).

## The first signs of Autumn *By Mark Hogan*

Autumn, which is also known as Fall in North America is one of the colder seasons of the year. It also marks the transition between summer and winter, when daylight becomes shorter and the temperature cools down too. It can be quite beautiful when all the leaves in the trees change colour to yellow, red or even russet and fall to the ground. This occurs because of the lack of sunlight which stops the trees producing chlorophyll, which is what makes the leaves green, so without it they change colour dramatically. As you drive along roads you might notice the wonderful colours.



Summer visitors like Swallows start collecting together in mid-August, they form huge flocks before heading off on an incredible journey to South Africa of over 6,000 miles to their Winter roosts. But you might be lucky to see our Winter arrivals like a delightful bird called a Redwing, it is a little bit like a thrush but has a white stripe above its eyes and a patch of reddish brown under its wings, which is where it gets its name from.

The last fruits and berries of the year should be in their prime in late August to early September, blackberries and even elderberries should be out in abundance and the starlings will be the first to find and enjoy them, but other birds do also enjoy them too.

Something I also love to see are conkers on the ground from Horse Chestnut trees, Sycamore helicopters twizzling around in the wind and also Grey Squirrels chasing each other around and then finding an acorn and holding it in its tiny little hands. They look so cool when they do that.



At the end of August, you might also see fungi spring up on the barks of trees in the woodlands, they come in all sorts of colours and some weird shapes too but remember some are poisonous, so look but don't touch. You may notice one in particular if you're lucky, a Puffball Mushroom, it is white and looks a bit like a golf ball. If you see one don't touch it, instead if you want to see something wonderful, get a small stick or twig and poke it gently and watch it perform its magic.

Autumn is also the time of year when some animals hibernate, like the Hedgehog, Dormice and even some insects like bumblebees and ladybirds, sometimes they may wait until the end of November, it really depends on how cold it gets at night. If you're lucky enough to be able to see a Hedgehog in your garden, keep feeding them for a few more weeks. Feeding the birds at this time of year is important and the variety of food you put out could help all sorts of birds like Goldfinches, they like sunflower hearts; nuts attract Blue Tits, Great Tits and even a Woodpecker, if you're lucky. Suet fat balls can attract Long Tailed Tits and your local Robin too. If you can throw some mealworms on the ground, these will feed a Song Thrush or Blackbird.



If you've seen a bird in your garden and you're not sure what it is, get in touch with us and we will identify it for you. If you get a picture of it, send it to [hhp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hhp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) and it will feature in next month's newsletter and potentially go up in the Visitor Centre!

Written and Photography by Mark Hogan

# Keep in touch

## Facebook

HoughtonHallPark

## Instagram

HoughtonHallPark

## Twitter

@BedsCountryside

## Website

[www.houghtonhallpark.org](http://www.houghtonhallpark.org)

## Email

[hhp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hhp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

# Opening Times

**From Monday 15<sup>th</sup>  
October:**

## Weekdays:

10am - 4pm

## Weekends:

9am - 4pm



# Become a friend of Houghton Hall Park

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](mailto:hhp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)



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