



# Houghton Hall Park

## October 2019 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.

### Green Flag Award

You may have noticed that Houghton Hall Park now has a Green Flag proudly flying at the entrance.

The Green Flag Award® scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces.

Mayor of Houghton Regis, Martin S Kennedy, said 'This is a very significant achievement meaning we have reached the national and internationally recognised standard for well managed parks and green spaces.'

We have this wonderful open space which is a haven of nature in the midst of an urban environment. It attracts all members of the community and is exceptionally accessible to people with mobility issues. It supports a variety of interests from casual walkers, joggers, cyclists and dog walkers, bringing people together in such pleasant surroundings.'



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

# What's On

## Dog Festival

**When:** 13<sup>th</sup> October

**Time:** 11am to 2pm

The Dog Festival is almost here and it's going to be bigger than last year, we have lots planned to ensure you and your four legged friend have a great time. We are splitting the classes into two groups this year which means we will keep the registration open longer to enable the second group to register later if they wish. All the timings on the program are approximate.

DJ Big Man Craig from Perfect Personalised Parties is compering the Dog Show and Sue Beeton the Manager at Pets at Home Dunstable (who are also sponsoring the show) is judging. In between the class groups there will be a talk on responsible dog walking by Jay K9.

There are a number of doggy stalls booked including Appledown Rescue, RSPCA Beds South, Accolade Hounds, Dog Krazy Gifts, Roo and Boo Ropes, Pets at Home, Pets as Therapy, Crafty by Fiona Peel & Eve Studio Pottery.

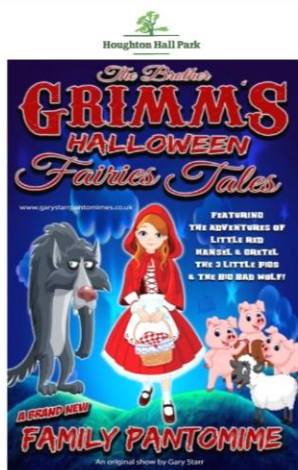
Lisa McGill Photography will also be here taking photographs of all the beautiful dogs.

For the kids there will be two bouncy castles, a face painter and local artist Steve Halton will be here to show you how to draw your dog.

We will also have a family friendly dog trail around the park, a great way to pass the time while waiting for your class.

Please remember our parking is limited so if you can walk your dog to the park it would be much appreciated!





**WHAT: FAMILY FRIENDLY PANTOMIME!**  
**HOW MUCH: £4 UNDER 1'S: FREE**  
**WHERE: HOUGHTON HALL PARK VISITOR CENTRE**  
**WHEN: MONDAY 21ST OCTOBER 11AM TO 12.30PM**  
**HOW TO BOOK: PURCHASE IN THE VISITORS CENTRE CASH ONLY**

## Grimm's Fairies Tales – Family Halloween Pantomime

**When:** Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October

**Time:** 11am to 12.30pm (including interval)

**Where:** Visitors Centre

**Cost:** Tickets £4 (Under 1's Free) available in advance at Houghton Hall Park Visitors Centre, cash only

Join us for a family pantomime featuring The Adventures of Little Red, Hansel & Gretel, The Three Little Pigs and The Big Bad Wolf

SEND friendly!

## Halloween Xplorer – Free!

**When:** Tuesday 22nd October

**Time:** 11am to 1pm (last entry 12.30pm)

**Where:** Visitors Centre

Collect your maps from the foyer in the Visitor Centre and take on the Xplorer challenge! Explore the park, find the markers, complete the challenge & have fun together! Make sure you visit the Centre after completing to get your answers marked. This is a fun, free activity for all the family to enjoy, even the dog!



**Exclusive SEND session**  
**Monday 21st October**  
 1pm - 3pm  
 £10 per person (carers for free)  
 Join us with some great outdoor sensory play, woodland crafts, games & many more...  
 Delivered by qualified SEN staff

**Branch Out FOREST SCHOOL**  
**Fairies & Trolls**  
**Wednesday 23rd October**  
 1pm - 3.45pm  
 £12 per person  
 Build a den & hide from the troublesome trolls. Make fairy potion & much more fun...

**Halloween Special**  
**Friday 25th October**  
 1pm - 3.45pm  
 £12 per person  
 Take part in traditional Halloween activities such as pumpkin/apple carving, spider hunting (slightly), spooky stories & even get to make your own broomstick or magic wand...

@ Houghton Hall Park  
 Park Road  
 North Houghton  
 Regis  
 LE15 5FL

(under 5's must be with guardians)

TO BOOK A SPACE PLEASE CALL ROSIE ON: 07706753260 OR  
 EMAIL: [branchoutforestschool@gmail.com](mailto:branchoutforestschool@gmail.com)  
 Find us on Facebook & Instagram @branchoutforestschool

## Forest School

**When:** 21<sup>st</sup> October 1pm to 3pm SEND exclusive

23<sup>rd</sup> October 1pm to 3.45pm Fairies & Trolls

25<sup>th</sup> October 1pm to 3.45pm Halloween Special

**Cost:** £10 per person for SEND session

£12 per person for other sessions

**Booking:** To book a place please call Rosie on 07706753260 or email [branchoutforestschool@gmail.com](mailto:branchoutforestschool@gmail.com)

Join Branch Out Forest School for some great outdoor sensory play, woodland crafts & games and much More!



## Day of the Dead Mask Workshop – Free!

**When:** Tuesday 22nd October

**Time:** 11am to 12.30pm

**Where:** Visitors Centre

For children aged 6 - 12 years.

Create your own Mexican-inspired Day of the Dead mask with artist Anne-Marie Abbate.



Parents do not need to stay at the workshop but must complete all information on the booking form which can be accessed on our Facebook event page. Children should be collected promptly at the end of the session.

If you book your place and then find out that your child will not be able to attend after all, please let us know as soon as possible so we can offer your child's place to someone else. Spaces are limited.

Part of Houghton Half Term, free activities for children in Houghton Regis during October half term.



## Clay Gargoyles Workshop – Free!

**When:** Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October

**Time:** 2pm to 3.30pm

**Where:** Visitors Centre

For children aged 6 - 12 years

Create your own Clay Gargoyle with artist Anne-Marie Abbate.

Parents do not need to stay at the workshop but must complete all information on the booking form which can be found on the event page of our Facebook page. Children should be collected promptly at the end of the session.

If you book your place and then find out that your child will not be able to attend after all, please let us know as soon as possible so we can offer your child's place to someone else. Spaces are limited.

Part of Houghton Half Term, free activities for children in Houghton Regis during October half term.

## Monster Mash Halloween Dance Workshop – Free!

**When:** Wednesday 23rd October

**Time:** 10am to 12pm

**Where:** Visitors Centre

Brought to you by Houghton Regis Art Town a fun dance workshop for children

Learn a spooky dance routine with professional dance practitioner SJ.



For children aged 6 - 12 years.

Parents do not need to stay at the workshop but must complete all information on the booking form which can be found on the event page of our Facebook page. There will be a sharing of the dance 10 minutes before the end of the session.

If you book your place and then find out that your child will not be able to attend after all, please let us know as soon as possible so we can offer your child's place to someone else. Spaces are limited. Part of Houghton Half Term, free activities for children in Houghton Regis during October half term.



## The Book of Life Film Screening

**When:** Wednesday 23rd October

**Time:** 2pm to 4pm

**Where:** Visitors Centre

For children aged 6 - 12 years.

Watch The Book of Life, an animated comedy telling the story of Manolo, who embarks on an incredible adventure that spans three fantastical worlds. You will also have the opportunity to do your own Day of the Dead face-painting after the film.

Parents do not need to stay at the screening but must complete all information on the booking form which can be found on the event page on our Facebook page. Please be prompt when collecting your child.

If you book your place and then find out that your child will not be able to attend after all, please let us know as soon as possible so we can offer your child's place to someone else. Spaces are limited.

Part of Houghton Half Term, free activities for children in Houghton Regis during October half term.



## Volunteer at the park this month

Take part in valuable conservation work at Houghton Hall Park with the Greensand Trust one Sunday a month! In September the trees at the front of the car park all got their short back and sides and a shave, and they look much better for it. The whip area is looking very good, though the bindweed is getting to be a problem.

This month on October 20<sup>th</sup> at 10am it will be the annual bird box survey, the boxes will be cleaned we'll see if we can determine what's used them. We'll replace any damaged boxes while we're at it. It will be interesting to see what's used the Tawny owl box this year!



## Monthly Photography Themes

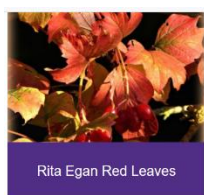
If you ever take images in the park, even if they're not for our monthly photography themes, we would still love to see them and feature them in our newsletter so please don't forget to show us your snaps from your visit!

We welcome photographers of all abilities and ages to get creative, use your imagination and enter our monthly themes; **October's Theme is: Autumn in Houghton Hall Park**

Please send your submissions to [hbp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hbp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk). The images must be taken between 1<sup>st</sup> – 31st October 2019 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:

[http://houghtonhallpark.org/assets/documents/Photography\\_Theme\\_TCs-1.pdf](http://houghtonhallpark.org/assets/documents/Photography_Theme_TCs-1.pdf)

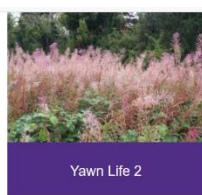
Here are the entries from September's theme: Natural Colours in Houghton Hall Park, fantastic interpretation of the theme.



Rita Egan Red Leaves



Yawn Life 1



Yawn Life 2



Rita Egan Bee At Work



Alexis Weedon 4



Alexis Weedon 1



Rita Egan Berries



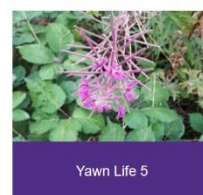
Rita Egan Pink Flowers



Rita Egan Red Admiral



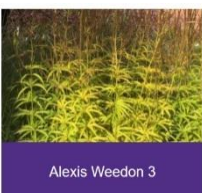
Yawn Life 4



Yawn Life 5



Yawn Life 6



Alexis Weedon 3



Alexis Weedon 2

# What's the latest in the gardens?

## Formal Garden

We are busy cutting back the leaves and tidying up the perennials, some of which we will be dividing in the next few weeks to fill the beds where we have some gaps. This is a great time of year to move herbaceous plants around as it is warm enough for them to establish but not too cold that it will kill them. You can do this in the spring, but I prefer to do this now as it means they have more time to establish a root system before the heat sets in, to do this you simply dig up the clump and with a spade divide it into smaller pieces. We are also just clipping some of the new straggly growth that appeared on the box hedging to tidy it up again before winter.

The grass is going to respond well to this drop of rain as it has become very straw like these past two weeks. Not many more cuts now before the winter weather sets in. We have nearly finished shaping the law edges which give the grass a more manicured effect

## Kitchen Garden

I am still amazed at how much produce we are still picking from the garden, there seems to be no stopping the beans! Produce days are still being very well supported and we really do appreciate you coming down with your bags on Thursday's. Hopefully the weather will allow us to continue for a few more weeks yet.

The squashes will be cut soon and hardened off for storage, three of my favourites are:



### Turks Turban

I treat these as a normal squash but they are equally as decorative for an autumnal display. I would probably take the top off take out the seeds and stuff the cavity before baking for around an hour until tender.

Save the seeds, rinse, dry and season and then toast for a crunchy topping

### Trombochini squash

The beauty of these squashes is they taste superb as a summer squash but somewhat diminish in flavour as cured for a winter squash. However, for architectural interest you cant beat them!

I will count up and see how many we had from 3 plants next month!



### Urchi Kuri squash

Harvest the red kuri squash as soon as leaves dry up and skin darkens.

Fruits should start to mature as early as September, but best is to harvest your squash when the stem has dried up and foliage has turned yellow. That is why we usually start harvesting at the beginning of October. They must be harvested before the first frost spells when their colour is a deep orange. Keep the stem as long as you can when cutting the red kuri squash off. After the harvest, red kuri can keep for almost a year, in a dry room with a temperature ranging between 50 to 60°F (10 to 15°C).

### **Job of the month**

As we are rapidly approaching October, it is important that you harvest your tomatoes before they start to get affected by blight. This is a devastating fungal disease whose symptoms include sudden and severe yellowing, browning, spotting, withering or dying of leaves, flowers, fruit and stems. Being incredibly prolific to spreading this is where good cleanliness of gloves and tools is imperative. Ensure that crop rotation is followed to not plant the same crop in the same space next year to reduce the chance of a repeat attack.

Any good green tomatoes can be placed in a brown paper bag with a ripe banana to speed the ripening process. Alternatively look out some green tomatoes chutney recipes.

Here is a great one I use below:

#### **Green Tomato Chutney Recipe**

Easy green tomato chutney recipe with green tomatoes, red onions, malt vinegar, and spices. This is a delicious condiment that pairs well with cheese and bread and cured meats. You can make it in an hour and the jars last up to a year.



#### **Equipment**

- Stainless steel pan
- Clean and sterilized jars

#### **Ingredients**

- 500 g Green Tomatoes 1lb
- 500 g Red Onions 1lb
- 75 g Raisins 2.6oz or about 1/2 cup
- 2 Garlic cloves
- 1/8 tsp Cayenne pepper
- 1/8 tsp Black pepper
- 1 tsp Sea salt
- 250 g Brown sugar 3/4 cup
- 500 ml Malt Vinegar 16fl oz or about two cups



## Instructions



*Prepare the vegetables. Chop the tomatoes, onions, and raisins roughly and mince the garlic.*

*Place all ingredients into a stainless steel pan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and then simmer*

*uncovered for an hour. Keep an eye on it and stir occasionally.*

*The chutney will turn brown and will have reduced down within that hour's cooking time. It will smell really good too.*



*Spoon the chutney into warm, sterilized jars and seal with lids. It's common in the UK to reuse supermarket jars for this preserve. If you'd prefer you could also use purpose made canning and preserving jars. There is no need to water bath chutneys.*

*Label the jars when cool and store in a dark cupboard. Refrigerate the jars once opened and try to use it within a year.*

## Nutrition

*Serving: 1Tbsp | Calories: 35kcal | Carbohydrates: 9g | Fat: 0.1g | Fiber: 2g*

## Plant of the month

### Pansy and Viola



*Pansies are derived from several species of the viola family hybridised from the much smaller-flowered wild forms of this plant, particularly native Viola tricolor, also called heartsease or love-in-idleness.*

*Wild pansy has been used to treat skin diseases, eczema, asthma and epilepsy and asthma. It was also believed that the flowers wild pansy were good for the heart, hence its popular name of heartsease. Today, wild pansy is used to treat eczema, acne, pruritus and impetigo.*

*The modern hybrids are varieties of Viola x wittrockiana and they bloom in an amazing array of colours, from yellow, purple, orange, white and blue to almost black. The size of their flowers also varies, ranging from large blotched cheerful 'faces' to the smaller, more elegant forms.*

*They are best treated as biennials or short-lived perennials; pansies look delicate but are in fact resilient and long-lasting and can withstand frost and harsh weather. A lovely bit of colour on a winter's day.*

### Community Links

*With the start of the new term it is lovely to welcome back students from Weatherfield school in Dunstable who have been working really hard to help tidy up the gardens for Autumn.*

*Some of you may have seen the local scout group who are currently doing their gardening badge. It is down to their planting skills we have been enjoying such lovely beans and courgettes!*

*I would also like to welcome a new starter from a scheme called Develop which is a platform to give young people a chance to learn additional skills which could assist them into work in the future. This will be a year placement and we are looking forward to working with him.*

*I have also been approached by some more local residents about volunteering recently and would like to extend a hearty welcome to my newest additions. I hope you find your time with us rewarding and again thank you for your time and dedication.*

*Have a great month tidying, planting, assessing and planning, but most of all .....*

**Happy gardening!**

**Jenny**

## AUTUMN IS HERE

### Written and Photography by Mark Hogan

Have you noticed the Cold Winter winds are now upon us and soon the leaves will start to change colour and we will be surrounded by beautiful autumn leaves, reds, golds and oranges, it is a beautiful time of year.

The arrival of the Winter Waders overhead and flocks of Geese honking away as they fly back to their winter breeding grounds. We will soon get the Winter birds arriving here, like the Redwings and Fieldfares looking for fruit trees to forage on.



But what can you do to help the Wildlife? Make sure your feeders are full

up with sunflower hearts or suet fat balls, these are great for encouraging birds like blue tits, great tits, goldfinch and even goldfinches too. You may want to throw out old scones and bread for the Blackbirds, Robins and Song Thrush who normally look for worms and insects. You could also buy a bird bath which is great because most evenings the Starlings go and have a bath, splashing water everywhere and it also gives the birds somewhere

to drink from.

I went to Wicken Fen recently, it is just the other side of Cambridge, it is a National Trust property but well worth a visit, you can hire bikes out and it has loads of hides for you to sit in and watch the wildlife. As we walked along we saw loads of small birds like Long Tailed Tits in big blocks and also Reed Buntings. Then, all of sudden a Big Brown bird came into view, swooping around the tree line, it was a Marsh Harrier, they quite stocky looking birds and feed and live in the Reed beds and nest in them too. We also saw a lot of Little Egrets flying over and also fishing for their lunch by the waters edge and also in the very shallow parts of the lakes.



Somebody asked me the other day. How did you first get into birdwatching? Well, it all started when I was about 5 years old, my parents bought a Trailer Tent and we would go off for long weekends, Friday night after school we would set off to the New Forest in Hampshire or the Wye Valley. We would go out for long walks with our binoculars and see what we could see. We did also once go up to the Lake District in Cumbria for 2 weeks one summer, at night we would walk to a local pub and sit and hear stories about the wildlife in the area, on the way home we often saw a Barn Owl swooping across the fields in front of us like a ghost, it is a wonderful sight to see.

If you have 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 if it is good we might even put it up in the Visitor Centre or put it in next month's newsletter.



## 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)

## Current Opening Times

### Monday to Friday

10:00am - 15:30pm

### Saturday and Sunday

9:00am - 16:00pm



## 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)



Central  
Bedfordshire  
Council



LOTTERY FUNDED