



Houghton Hall Park

January 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.

What is your New Year's resolution?

Perhaps you would like to get more active, become more involved with the local community or pick up a new hobby? We have plenty of opportunities here at Houghton Hall Park to help you with your resolution. Come and join in a Junior Parkrun on a Sunday morning at 9am, join one of our volunteering groups to help Houghton Hall Park maintain its landscape and biodiversity or join in our recently launched Photography scheme, we set a new theme every month, you can send in up to 5 entries and they may feature in our publications.

Monthly photography themes



We would like to welcome photographers of all abilities from the age of 16 to enter our monthly themes, January's theme is: Natural World & Wildlife within Houghton Hall Park.

The images must be taken between 1st – 31st January 2018 and each person is allowed to submit up to 5 entries. Please send your submissions to hhp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk. 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 and go to the Photography tab.

A great place to live and work.

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Has anyone noticed something new flying over our houses?



Image: Paula Western

We are quite fortunate to have an abundance of wildlife near our homes and also roaming around our streets in the early morning when most of us are still fast asleep in our beds- like foxes and the occasional badger. If you're lucky at this time of year, you might see Redwings and Fieldfares in the fields surrounding the visitor centre and in the surrounding countryside. Redwings look similar to a Thrush.

However, you may have noticed something new in the sky above Houghton Regis. No... it's not a Buzzard, Sparrow hawk or Kestrel... it is in fact a majestic bird called the Red Kite, they are beautiful birds and if you're lucky and the sunlight hits their backs, you will see how red they are. They were introduced initially to the High Wycombe area in 1989 and then a few years later were released in the fields between Luton Airport and Hitchin. They have been doing really well all over this area mainly because of what they eat - road kill. You may have noticed on your daily travels how many rabbits, foxes, badgers and other animals are run over, this is food for the Red Kites. Contrary to what you might hear - they don't eat cats, dogs or children and will not hurt you! They are marvellous birds to watch, enjoy them if you spot one!

It is my intention to help educate the people of Houghton Regis about Birds and Wildlife in this area. In late February, the Grey Heron starts building its nest, so it will be on the look out for ponds which have fish in. So if your pond is not covered with netting, beware.

This time of year you might see all sorts of birds in your garden, if you see a bird you don't recognise then try and get a picture of it and send it to hhp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk and I will do my best to identify it for you. Images may even be displayed in the visitor centre!



Image: Mark Hogan

Written by Mark Hogan

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Are you currently a volunteer at Houghton Hall Park?

If so, please join us at our Volunteer Afternoon Coffee & Cake event where we would like to catch up over some complimentary tea, coffee and cake to kick-start 2018! The afternoon will include a Nature & Wildlife Presentation, discussing your volunteering experience and gaining valuable feedback to improve your experience in 2018 and there will be branded clothing available.

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Volunteer at the park this month...

Take part in valuable conservation work at Houghton Hall Park with the Greensand Trust one Sunday a month! This month, on **Sunday 21st January 10am-1:30pm**, the activity will be West Woodland Management.

Assist in reducing the populations of Box, Snowberry and self-set trees in the Western Woodland to increase light to the woodland floor and promote wildflowers. If you would like to come along, please contact hph@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk to let us know then simply show up! Instead of the usual meeting spot at the Visitor Centre car park, this time it will be meeting on Red House Court (the entrance road for Houghton Hall House off of The Green) as this is closer to the area of work. This is open to everyone so please join us, we hope to see you!

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Your Photos at Houghton Hall Park

We love to see your images of the park so we are dedicating this section of the newsletter to you! Please email in your photos and any stories to go with them and they might just feature in next month's newsletter! Here are some of our snowy scenes sent in from last month. We are glad that so many have enjoyed their time in the snowy winter wonderland like park. How beautiful are these photos? Especially the untouched fresh snow that those little furry friends of ours love to roll in!



Image: Carol Waller



Image by Amber of Megan



Image: Carol Waller



Evan Hart receiving his Elf certification after completing Santa's Christmas Trail



Image: Jenny Muskett



Our dog-friendly Café



Did you know that dogs are more than welcome in our Café within the visitor centre? If you're on a dog walk, feel free to drop in and have a nice hot drink on a winter's day or a bite to eat. Or organise a doggy date with one of your friends, the possibilities are endless! Please just remember to keep all dogs on leads both in the Café area and in the outdoor enclosed seating area. We look forward to meeting your furry little friends!

Hazel Coppicing

What beautiful work from the Greensand volunteers & Young Rangers with their hazel coppicing monthly task in December! Coppicing is a traditional, sustainable and productive form of woodland management which exploits species of trees to put out new shoots from their stump or roots after being cut down.



Santa's Christmas Trail made elves of the children of Houghton Regis



Last month, Santa's Christmas trail brought the children of Houghton Regis to Houghton Hall Park on the hunt for Santa's lost presents! They all did a wonderful job locating them and in return received a certificate confirming that they have become one of Santa's Christmas Elves of 2017. Here is a photo from the afternoon. We thank all those for joining in and look forward to running more family events throughout 2018!

Reasons to visit and use the park

- Walking, exercise & social benefits
- Stop by our café for a nice hot drink or bite to eat
- Volunteering opportunities within your local community
- Take part in our events and make suggestions towards the schedule

Keep in touch

Twitter

@BedsCountryside

Facebook

HoughtonHallPark

Instagram

HoughtonHallPark

Website

www.houghtonhallpark.org

Email

hhp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Opening Times

November to March

Monday to Friday

10:00am - 15:00pm

Saturday and Sunday

9:00am - 15:00pm

April to October

Monday to Friday

10:00am - 17:30pm

Saturday and Sunday

9:00am - 17:30pm



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
- Watering
- Cleaning
- 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
- Maintain the horticulturally intensive kitchen & formal garden
- 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



LOTTERY FUNDED