

# Houghton Hall Park

## February 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.

February is here and there are signs that spring is on the horizon in the park, the snowdrops are flowering in abundance in the West Woodland, they are a sight to behold and well worth a look. If you can't get to the park in the next couple of weeks here are some photos of the brilliant display.



**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, **February's theme is: Snowdrops**. We had to choose this theme for February as we believe that ours is the best local display of snowdrops, we hope we receive some amazing photos of them!

Please send your submissions to [hbp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hbp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk). The images must be taken between 1<sup>st</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> February 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](http://www.houghtonhallpark.org/photography)

Below are some entries from January's theme: An Active Start to the New Year in Houghton Hall Park, a great selection of pictures.



Deborah Hamill 2



Deborah Hamill 3



Deborah Hamill 4



Deborah Hamill 5



Deborah Hamill 1



News Year Day Run Zoe Wright

## What's On

# Half Term Activities

## Wildlife Trail

**When:** Tuesday 18th

**Time:** 1pm – 3pm (last entry 2.30pm)

Take part in our Free trail around the park and find out what lives here. The Greensand Trust will be on hand to answer all your wildlife questions



## Future Proof Parks



**When:** Wednesday 19th

**Time:** 1pm – 3pm (last entry 2.30pm)

We are looking for young people aged 11+ to take part in our Kick the Dust: Future Proof Parks project. Opportunities vary from conservation and practical activities, through to planning and running events, designing a crowdfunding campaign and more. Training and mentoring is provided by Groundwork East to help bring your social action project to life and to create sustainable volunteering opportunities for all ages. Activities can be used towards your Duke of Edinburgh award or a John Muir Award.

This session will be an introductory session to the project where we will find out more about the heritage of the park, complete some practical tasks and plan ideas for future sessions.

Booking essential – visit our Facebook page or website for more information



Art & Culture  
**Event**

great  
lifestyles

**Cafe Window Display**

Come to the Visitors Centre and make your own mini mummy, tell us why you love her. Each entry will be put on display in the cafe windows

Anyone who takes part will go in a prize draw to win their mum/carer some flowers for Mother's Day

Event date: 20th February  
Event time: 10am to 1pm

I ♥ Mum

Find out more online at [www.houghtonhallpark.org](http://www.houghtonhallpark.org)

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## Mini Mummy Crafts

**When:** Thursday 20th

**Time:** 10am – 1pm (last entry 12.30pm)

We would love you to help us create a fantastic window display for the café. Make your own mini mummy/carer and tell us why you love her on a heart. This activity is free and anyone who takes part will get entered into a prize draw to win their mum/carer some flowers for Mother's Day.

## Xplorer

**When:** Thursday 20th

**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!




**HOUGHTON REGIS  
PANCAKE RACE**

\*\*\*\*\*Flipping fun!

**February**  
25th, Shrove Tuesday

Houghton Hall Park  
Visitors Centre at  
**10am!**

**Teams**  
(of up to four people)

Must complete a short course. The team that completes this in the shortest time (whilst flipping the pancakes of course!) will be crowned the Winners of their age category!

There are prizes up for grabs which will be presented by the Town Mayor.

**\*\*All spectators welcome!\*\***

If you'd like to enter a team you need to complete an entry form.  
or email [sarah.gelsthorp@houghtonregis.org.uk](mailto:sarah.gelsthorp@houghtonregis.org.uk).  
Alternatively if you would like more information about this event, please call 01582 708540

## Pancake Race

**When:** Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 10am

**Where:** Visitors Centre

Hosted by Houghton Regis Town Council teams of up to four people must complete a short course. The team that completes this in the quickest time (whilst flipping pancakes of course!) will be crowned the winners for their age category.

If you'd like to enter a team please email [sarah.gelsthorp@houghtonregis.org.uk](mailto:sarah.gelsthorp@houghtonregis.org.uk)

## 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 16<sup>th</sup> February 10am-3pm**, is the annual park litter pick. We'll provide tools, bags, snacks and drinks. We'll be going off the beaten tracks and digging out all the rubbish hiding in the bushes. If you would like to come along, please email: [hhp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hhp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) to let us know. This is open to everyone so please join us, we hope to see you there!



## What's the latest in the gardens?

*Happy new year to you all!*

*We are extremely excited to begin the year with some new volunteers in the group: Heather, Linda, Irene, Denise and Paul. We hope you will enjoy the experience and become a regular part of the garden team.*

### **So where to begin?**

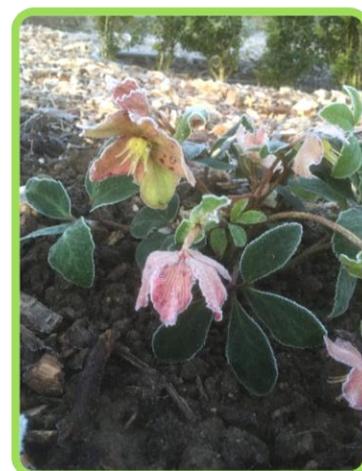
*The start of the year has continued to be extremely wet underfoot, so we have been turning our attention to the kitchen garden as our predetermined paths have meant that we are not disturbing the soil structure.*

*We have given the soil a light dig over and then a generous covering of manure. This allows the worms, of which there are plenty, are doing the work for us. This has greatly reduced our weeds as we are not constantly exposing them to the light for germination.*



*Thanks to Houghton Regis Town Council who have provided us with a generous amount of bark chippings we have been able to replenish the walkways on the beds so that even in drizzly weather we are able to walk on the beds without getting too muddy.*

*We have a couple of new beds to share with you this year, bed 7 which was the fairy story bed last year is now to become the pollinator bed which will have a wonderful collection of plants for bees, moths, butterflies and wasps. You may have already seen the great array of bulbs showing their green shoots above the soil. It has recently had a bird feeder added to it and it is already attracting a great variety of birds. This bed will be developed and planned by the*



*volunteers using a wide range of planting schemes and props. It is intended to be walked around and to be enjoyed once it is in full bloom.*

### **Dig for victory**

*In order to mark the 75 years since the guns fell silent, we are marking the occasion by doing a dig for victory garden on bed 4. This has been entirely designed by students from Weatherfield Academy and supported internships. It is a way of showing how people across the country were encouraged to grow their food in times of hard rationing. Open spaces were transformed into allotments, from domestic gardens to public parks – even the lawns outside the tower of London were turned into vegetable patches.*

*We hope that this bed will provide a useful insight into how to make the most of your space, except ours is going to have an Anderson shelter and some other quirky props. By the end of this week the children and volunteers will hopefully have made a fully working chicken run!*



## **Sowing and Growing**

*Behind the scenes we are busy sowing the crops in earnest. As we don't have the luxury of heated benches and warm polytunnels we are collaborating with our friends and colleagues at Silsoe Horticultural college. They have been extremely helpful in assisting with the sowing plan and already we have good germination of aubergines, leeks, lettuces, herbs and flowers.*

*And then we must talk about tomatoes. For those of you that love growing new varieties and experimenting you will be pleased to know we have 56 different varieties that we will be sharing with you by having 'Tomato day' at the visitor centre on April 16<sup>th</sup>. This is where you will have an opportunity to purchase at a reasonable cost some heirloom, coloured and fantastic beefsteak varieties. Although Jen's tangerine may be in great demand for the name alone!!! More details will be available shortly on the web site.*

*As we begin to have some drier days, we will turn our attention to the formal garden which is about to have the roses pruned and the herbaceous perennials cut down and if necessary lifted and divided. It is nice to know that the soil has had a good soaking so it should start them off in good stead for the year.*

*The mild weather has been lovely to work in but the price you pay is the germination of the annual weed seeds already rearing their heads. We will get there, but that's gardening for you; there is always something to do. It just gives us all such pleasure to know as a community and regular park users you appreciate the hours and time given by this wonderful group of men, women and children, and that is the best reward we could have.*



*We hope that you will enjoy watching the garden developments unfold as we go through the seasons*

**Happy Gardening!**

**Jenny**



## Become a friend of Houghton Hall Park

### 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)

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)

### Current Opening Times

#### Monday to Friday

10:00am - 15:30pm

#### Saturday and Sunday

9:00am - 16:00pm



Central  
Bedfordshire  
Council



heritage  
lottery fund



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