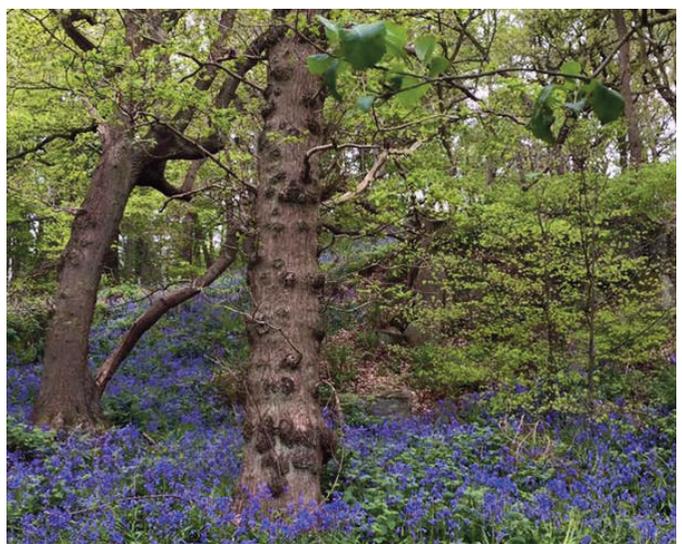


# Loughborough in BLOOM 2017



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Queen's Park beacon



Loughborough wildflowers

# Chairman's Welcome

Another year, another Bloom. Faces change, roles change, new projects come, others drop away.

But there is always one constant and it is one that is often overlooked and unappreciated and that's the hard work of the local councils and their contractors.

I have alluded to this before, but I think it's worth repeating because they are often unsung and are as much of a part of the community as, well, the community!

Yes it's their job, but only up to a point. They don't have to go that extra mile and yet time and time again in Loughborough, they do.

I try to avoid name-checking for fear of upsetting others who also serve, but I'd like to mention a few workers who, over the last couple of years, have made a difference.

The first is Sarah Ritchie at Charnwood Borough Council, who has taken Bloom to her heart. Sarah, with many other tasks to juggle, constantly injects new ideas and plans, ensuring we don't just sit on our laurels and keeps us moving forward and fresh.

Another is Cherry Foster, also from the Council, whose brilliant work and patience ensures we are all on track.

Next is Nicola Clarke, of *idverde*, the Council's green spaces contractor. Her expertise and commitment, above and beyond the call, has been amazing.

Added to this are the actual workers on the shop and garden floor. The proof of the Bloom pudding is the beautiful Queen's Park. I seriously doubt it has ever looked so splendid in all of its history.

So, to all the unsung council staff many, many thanks.

*Andy Rush* chairman, Loughborough in Bloom



# Horticultural Achievement

## Impact

Loughborough has embraced this year's RHS theme of Greening Grey Britain for Wildlife.

The town's colour scheme this year is scarlet. Hanging basket trees in the town centre are planted with red begonias, to complement the dressing of the town centre with red, white and blue bunting. Roundabouts and Epinal Way are planted with begonia million kisses.

This year the swimming pool bed at Loughborough University has been planted with the new university logo.

Sustainable planting in Queen's Park and the wetland area continue to mature. The garden is made up of numerous varieties of moisture loving wetland plants. They encourage insect and amphibious activity and create a habitat that is perfect for this year's theme.

There are two new agapanthus beds this year in Queen's Park. The bulbs have been supplied by Lubbe Lisse Flowerbulbs.

The hanging basket trees at the entrances to the town each hold 21 baskets and are all sustainable and self-watering. There are also five hanging basket trees in the town centre.

The main town centre planting schemes are also followed by local businesses and the Loughborough Business Improvement District. Their hanging basket and trough displays are coordinated by the BID, in consultation with Charnwood Borough Council and *idverde*.

This year as part of the ongoing development of the new inner relief road, we have thirty new barrier boxes which have been sponsored by the Council's waste contractor, Serco and made by Plantscape. They have been delivered in partnership with Leicestershire County Council.



Queen's Park Olympic Garden



Queen's Park floral displays

# Horticultural Practice

Loughborough's open spaces are maintained by *idverde*, community groups and volunteers.

Communication between Charnwood Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council has played a big part in improved horticultural practice this year. The Councils have worked together which has improved grass cutting and weed spraying schedules to compliment other areas of grass owned by the borough council and cut by *idverde*.

For council-owned areas, herbicides are used as little as possible and pesticides are only used on sports fields to ensure areas continue to be suitable for play. These are used sparingly so there is no long lasting impact or danger to wildlife.

*idverde* has introduced more sustainable planting along the ring roads, including mechanical bulb planting on Epinal Way. The planters now have a more sustainable planting scheme, and are topped up with more plants in the summer.

In Queen's Park the bedding by the bridge has been reduced by half by putting in a permanent scheme.

Plantscape has provided over 276 elevated planters to brighten Loughborough's streets, main roads and roundabouts and the BID have additional hanging baskets.

This year, *idverde* is part of the RHS Reuse scheme at Hampton Court and Chatsworth House. Materials which are used in the shows and no longer required are donated to local community groups in Loughborough.

There are many green spaces in Loughborough which would not remain as beautiful and well looked-after without the continued support of volunteer groups. There are numerous examples of how local community groups help the Bloom effort all year-round, which can be seen throughout the portfolio.



Queen's Park floral displays

# Business Areas & Premises

Businesses are represented on the Loughborough in Bloom Board by the Love Loughborough Business Improvement District (BID), and the Loughborough Chamber of Trade and Commerce. Together they represent more than 700 businesses within the town, so they play a key part in the Bloom effort.

In October 2016 businesses voted for the BID to be renewed for a second five-year term and it has committed to continue to support Bloom.



Loughborough town centre bunting

## Loughborough Chamber

of Trade and Commerce

“ The Chamber looks forward to continuing its support for Bloom and will be urging local businesses to be directly involved by dressing their premises with hanging baskets and troughs.

This will not only improve their property but also enhance the overall appearance of Loughborough Town Centre. ”

**Dermot Breen, President  
Loughborough Chamber of Trade  
and Commerce**



The Sock Man and Town Hall



“ We’re proud and pleased to be supporting the multi-award winning Bloom in making our town look so colourful, so inviting and so pleasurable to visit, shop and work in.

We, the businesses and our partners will continue to make sure our town centre is not only fit for purpose but a vibrant and fun place to shop and socialise in. ”

**Lez Cope-Newman, Chair  
Love Loughborough**

# Residential & Community Gardening

The hard work of Loughborough's many community groups and individual gardeners is the life blood of Loughborough in Bloom. This year 37 groups are participating in 'It's Your Neighbourhood'.

The Community Participation Group (CPG) meets regularly throughout the year to help existing groups to flourish and encourage new groups to set up and take part.

The Three Close Tenants Association and the Chapman Street Gardeners work hard to keep their communal areas looking welcoming with floral displays.

At John Storer House their 'Digging for Health' project encourages people to get back into nature in the garden and use the physical activity of gardening to help promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

Fearon Hall and Transition Loughborough support Utilise Loughborough, a social enterprise which brings the local community together to help reduce food waste. Each week leftover food from local supermarkets which would have gone to landfill is rescued and served up at the Utilise cafe.

In March the Sidings Park Residents Association planted a new community orchard with eight new trees.

The Tenants Gardening competition was launched in May for all Council tenants to show off their green-fingered skills.

Lots of residents also entered this year's Best Spring Floral Displays competition and the town looked blooming marvellous.

Thorpe Acre Residents Association have been working hard all year and have installed new planters, which were made by Glebe House last year. Residents used leftover flowers from other projects to fill them.



John Storer House garden flower sale



Transition Loughborough Potato Day



Thorpe Acre Residents group receive grant

# Green Spaces

Despite being the largest town in the north of Leicestershire, there are many areas of green space within Loughborough. Some of the largest parks in the town are Queen's Park, Southfields Park and Sidings Park.

## Open Spaces

Queen's Park retained its Green Flag last year and awaits the results of this year's judging on July 19. It remains one of the town's focal points, with all floral displays created by *idverde*.

Last year the park was the principal winner of a prestigious BALI National Landscape Award for its grounds maintenance.

It was also highly commended in the Bees Knees Awards 2016.

Local voluntary group, Friends of Queen's Park also play a key part in helping look after the area and maintaining its Victorian roots by weeding and voluntary work.

The park is brought to life throughout the year with events such as Picnic in the Park, bandstand concerts and Armed Forces Day.



Chapman Street volunteer gardening



Queen's Park receives BALI Award



View from Loughborough Carillon and War Memorial

Southfields Park features a skate-park and facilities for free running and parkour, alongside traditional rugby posts. The park embraces the urban sports alongside its green open spaces.

This year several parks have been revamped by Charnwood Borough Council. Shortcliffe Park had a £125,000 upgrade to include a new ball court and skate-park, along with footpaths and log seating.

A further £25,000 was invested by installing new play equipment at Cumberland Park. A play house, slide, climbing frame and basket swing were added to the park, alongside a new picnic table and log seating.

Both upgrades were funded from section 106 agreements from local developments built in the area, in order to meet their commitment to the Council to improve the community they are building in.

The Outwoods is 110 acres of ancient woodland to the north of Loughborough and is one of the oldest surviving woodland sites in Charnwood.

The Outwoods was gifted to the people of Loughborough in 1946 by two local benefactors, Alan Moss and George Harry

Bowler. It is managed by the Outwoods Management Committee and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

In 2016, for the ninth year running the Outwoods was awarded the Green Flag, a nationally recognised mark of excellence.

The woods consist of a variety of different routes and walks, including an easy access path with a bird feeding station which is currently being renewed.

Walkers with mobility issues can also use the trampers which are provided by the borough Council.

May is a blooming time for the forest as it becomes carpeted with bluebells.

Charnwood Forest is a distinctive area of rugged landscape, which extends across Leicestershire within Charnwood Borough, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough and the North West Leicestershire District.

The Charnia fossil was also first discovered in Charnwood Forest in 1957 and it is now a protected fossil site.



Bees and bluebells at the Outwoods

## How we maintain our open spaces

The borough council is responsible for managing and maintaining Charnwood's green spaces. It is supported by its grounds maintenance partner, *idverde* which provides high quality services to ensure the town looks its best all year round.

Leicestershire County Council carries out all maintenance to roundabouts and roadside grass verges. This year the county council has introduced new machinery to improve the quality of grass cutting in the borough.

## Help from our community groups

Local community groups work hard to support the maintenance of the town's green spaces, including Thorpe Acre Residents Association. The group maintains a spinney within Thorpe Acre and has worked hard to enhance the area.

The Forest Road Green Belt Gardeners and in particular Harry Cook, have created a magical experience at the Forest Road Green Belt with a fairy trail and bug gardens. Their hard work was rewarded in 2016 with a Community Green Flag award.

## The Green Gym

Gorse Covert Green Gym initiative is run by the borough council in partnership with *idverde* and is a refreshing approach to outdoor exercise, designed to improve people's health and wellbeing and make a positive impact on the local environment.

During each session the Head Ranger will guide volunteers through conservation activities such as coppicing, fencing and path laying.

The activities are also designed in order to benefit the local area, depending on what is required throughout the year.



Green Gym volunteers rake a new path



Bug House at Forest Road Green Belt

A new wild area has been developed off Epinal Way near the John Storer House allotments which is filled with dandelions and buttercups. It has been specifically designed to encourage bees and other pollinating creatures in line with this year's theme.

## Allotments in Loughborough

The borough council manages around 375 allotment plots over nine sites across Loughborough. Allotments are an important part of our culture and provide a wide range of benefits to communities and to the environment. They have many advantages such as providing fresh vegetables, fruit and flowers, free from pollutants and at a fraction of the cost paid in supermarkets.

They also provide valuable recreational opportunities for healthy physical activity and social contact, a place where people can relax and unwind. Allotments make a significant contribution to our green spaces, and provide habitats for many forms of wildlife.

## Case Study: The 6th Loughborough Brownies Community Project

The 6th Loughborough Brownies are based at the United Reform Church on Frederick Street. Their Brown Owl leader, Helen Cliffe, wanted to organise an activity with her pack in Queen's Park in response to the 'helping our community' aspect of the Girl Guiding programme.

*idverde* and the Friends of Queen's Park were delighted to be of assistance and help them with their project.

The first task for the girls was to sow the wild flower seed that was sent to them from Royal Botanical Kew Gardens onto the aviary bed to give it some temporary colour whilst it is under construction.

The next task was for the group to pull out the old spring bedding under supervision from *idverde* staff, the Friends of Queen's Park and their leaders to make way for the new summer bedding.

The Brownies then turned their attention to helping the birds that also reside in the park by making some extra special bird feeders.



The Brownies at Charnwood Museum



Brownies learn how to make bird feeders



Stonebow Washlands

# Environmental Responsibility

## Conservation and Biodiversity

Grange Park, Stonebow Washlands and The Outwoods regularly benefit from the work of volunteers to ensure Loughborough continues to enhance local wildlife.

Activities including wildflower seeding, coppicing, shrub clearance and the creation of paths are organised throughout the year.

Stonebow Washlands is part of Natural England's Higher Level Stewardship Scheme and is managed by *idverde*, on behalf of the borough council. The area was created in the 1980s to alleviate the flood risk to Thorpe Acre and is a rich wildlife site and recreational space for people to enjoy.

Last year, Stonebow Washlands was designated a Local Nature Reserve. This has given the area greater protection from any possible development and could help attract funding for improvements in the future.

Stonebow's important habitats include semi-natural grassland, standing water bodies, streams and wet woodland. There is also a

good range of grassland species including hairy sedge and marsh marigold and significant communities of common frog and toad.

The meadows are in the HLF and are specifically managed to encourage the Brown Meadow Butterfly for whom it is an important habitat.

This year a Friends of Stonebow community volunteer group has been formed. The group looks after the local area at Stonebow and has helped with projects including a bat walk.

Loughborough boasts two other stewardship scheme sites at Bishops Meadow and Pignut Spinney; these are grassland sites which are full of a diverse number of species. The natural management of these areas is designed to enhance the floral value. At Bishops Meadow grazing takes place in partnership with a local farmer.

In 2010 wildflower planting was introduced across Loughborough and continues to spread across the town. Since 2014 the town has embraced the Bloom theme and encouraged more pollinating insects to the area.

There are more than 40 species of birds that nest on the Loughborough University campus, including pheasants, kingfishers and buzzards. Specifically designated wildlife areas have been created across the site to further boost woodland and other species. A colony of bees was introduced in 2013 and the University produced its first home-grown honey in 2014.

This year the university has celebrated five years of its outstanding fruit routes and a new book has been produced, which explores the routes in detail.

Bird boxes have also sprung up across the town, with instant habitats installed in the Outwoods and Queen's Park. Members of the Thorpe Acre Residents' Group have also provided bird and bat boxes for use on the Forest Road Green Belt, adding to the small collection introduced in 2014.

## Conservation Volunteers

*idverde* runs a successful Conservation Volunteer Programme once a week. The programme encourages projects at some of Loughborough's most important wildlife sites.

The volunteers learn new skills, make new friends and enjoy access to some wonderful wildlife, under the supervision of *idverde*'s ranger service. Tasks range from renewing the pathways at Stonebow Washlands to removing invasive species and fence replacement.



Loughborough Landscape and Gardening Society garden

## Resource Management

During the dry seasons, *idverde* has access to a 600 gallon water storage tank at Charnwood Water. Water from the man-made lake is used for the nearby beds if they are threatened by drought.

Water butts are used by a number of community groups to gather water in an environmentally friendly way and ensure natural resources are used as much as possible before the need for hose pipes.

*idverde* uses mulch, including bark, to retain water in beds, alongside gel beads to hold some of the water and keep it in the soil, reducing the need to water the areas.

The Plantscape hanging baskets help reduce the town's carbon footprint as they are self-watering and fully recyclable.

When large beds are replanted, leaving plants in need of a new home, any remaining flowers or shrubs are donated to local community groups for them to be re-used. This can represent the start of a new flower bed for different groups and provides a splash of colour while waiting for seedlings to mature.

Loughborough University continues to use a mechanical bulb planting programme alongside their traditional annual programme; this has led to more than 30,000 bulbs from supplier, Lubbe Lisse, being planted across various vast

campuses that will continue to bloom in the future.

Mechanical bulb planting has also been undertaken by *idverde* on Alan Moss Road and Epinal Way to plant daffodils. They are looking at plans to continue this elsewhere.

Serco provides a mixed recycling service which makes it much easier for residents to use and in turn reduces the amount of rubbish going to landfill.

Charnwood Borough Council's allotment tenants are offered composting facilities and free green waste collection to ensure that all waste produced is used in the most effective way possible. Composting is also promoted by Leicestershire County Council, who offer reduced-price compost bins for anyone looking to use the nutrients from leftovers.

Composting skills are also shared by a network of Master Composter volunteers. Individuals are encouraged, by Leicestershire County Council, to use their experience of composting to help those who have never given it a go.

The Council's annual Student Clean Up, held before the summer holidays, encourages students to have a tidy-up of their homes and gardens, while also encouraging donations to charity. In June 2017 the initiative resulted in 23 tonnes of rubbish being collected during the day, 16 tonnes of which were recyclable.



Crocuses at Loughborough University campus

# Local Heritage

Loughborough has a very rich local heritage that continues to be celebrated by local artists and organisations.

The Victorian Queen's Park opened in 1899 to commemorate Queen Victoria's jubilee and continues to showcase vibrant plant displays and events throughout the year.

The park is also home to Charnwood Museum, originally a swimming pool, which celebrates the history of Charnwood, including its Jurassic past.

The Carillon War Memorial is the central feature of the park. From the viewing gallery at the top of the Carillon there are excellent views of the Charnwood area.

Built in 1922, the carillon houses 47 bells, crafted by Taylor's Bellfoundry. Inside the building there is a wealth of exhibits relating to all branches of the armed services including local materials from both World Wars.

Taylor's Bell Foundry, one of the oldest Loughborough-based businesses, is famed for casting the largest bell in Britain, Great Paul, which is hung in St Paul's Cathedral. The bell case used to cast the bell is also proudly displayed within Queen's Park as a focal point for planting displays.

Angel Yard has been awarded a Green Plaque from Leicestershire County Council. The plaque celebrates the building's heritage as the original home of Ladybird Books.

The Loogabaroooga Festival returned for a second year in October 2016. The nine-day festival celebrates children's illustrated literature. Children and adults alike were invited to attend workshops and activities.

Loughborough's Cattle Market is brought to life with a bespoke piece of artwork created by Wei Ong.

The piece covers Loughborough across the seasons and references the town's people, landmarks and history.



Loughborough Carillon

# Local Environmental Quality

The borough council has launched its 2020 carbon pledge which aims to reduce its carbon footprint by 15 per cent by 2020.

The Council has drawn up a Carbon Management Plan with the Carbon Trust which sets out measures to reduce the borough's carbon footprint, including reducing LED lighting in communal areas of sheltered housing and improving heating at Council buildings.

Residents in Loughborough are provided with an alternate weekly recycling and waste collection service. This has reduced the amount of waste going to landfill and has encouraged more recycling from residents.

This year the Recycle Right campaign began. Its aim is to encourage people not to put clothing and textiles in their green recycling bin.

Last year more than 700 tonnes of textiles were put into recycling bins which then had to be incinerated.

The #RecycleRight campaign, in partnership with Serco, Loughborough University and local

charities, is asking people to think twice and take their clothes to a recycling bank, or give them to charity.

In addition to recycling, a garden waste service is provided to residents for a reasonable cost and reduces the journeys by car to local waste disposal sites.

Real Christmas trees are also collected as part of the service. All garden waste collected is then composted at an outdoor composting facility and sold on as a soil improver to residents of Leicestershire.

The Conservation Volunteers are an army of outdoor enthusiasts who work on a variety of green projects, from hedge laying to litter picking. The Council and local communities also work with the Probation Service to encourage young offenders to help keep green areas tidy while developing new skills.

This year the Council and partners took part in Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean and supported local community groups to come together to litter pick over one weekend.



Charnwood Water

# Pride of Place

Street furniture in Loughborough town centre, including bus shelters and benches, are cleaned and maintained by Charnwood Borough Council's partners, *idverde* and Serco.

Community wardens and street wardens also patrol the town and report problems, including fly-tipping, litter and graffiti. Stainless steel litter bins replaced the old bins to ensure they remain looking clean and tidy.

Signs welcoming people to Loughborough are at the seven entrances to the town. The signs celebrate one of the town's most iconic features, the Carillon war memorial.

This year there will be five hanging-basket trees in the town centre, which will be planted in red. Bunting has also been put up around the town.

Art has been used in another part of the town to enhance the look and feel of the area.

Bristol-based artist Wei Ong (Silent Hobo) designed the 60m artwork after speaking to local people and visitors about what

Loughborough meant to them. Wei also created a piece about Lady Jane Grey, which is on display in the Market Yard.

The borough council and *idverde* continuously engage with local people to ask how they feel about the town's open spaces and then act upon suggestions.

In May 2016 a new Cineworld complex opened, which is part of a multi-million pound development in the heart of the town. The area will also have a number of new restaurants and bars, which will boost the town's night-time economy.

Loughborough Market was crowned Best Large Outdoor Market in Britain at the British Market of the Year awards in January.

The market was praised for supporting traders with its 'Try a Trade' offer, which allows people to have a free stall on the market for a day and 50 per cent off a stall for three months, to help local entrepreneurs grow their business.



Loughborough traders win Best Large Outdoor Market award

# Community Participation

## Development and Community

The Loughborough in Bloom campaign is supported by the Bloom Board, which is made up of key decision makers from across the town.

The Board is chaired by Loughborough Echo Editor, Andy Rush and meetings take place throughout the year to ensure the campaign continues to grow.

Local residents join the chair of the Community Participation Group, Marion Smith, alongside representatives from Charnwood Borough Council, Leicestershire County Council, Loughborough University, the Business Improvement District the Chamber of Trade and Commerce and *idverde*.

Over the last year Loughborough University has continued to extend the fruit route. In excess of

112 trees have now been planted on a specific trail around campus. Some of the trees planted include, Apple, Cherry, Plum, Pear, Apricot, Sweet Chestnut, Fig and a grape vine.

This year Chapman Street Garden has created a new vegetable patch in a previously bare and unused area. They received grant funding for new equipment and seeds from the borough council.

The Loughborough Men in Sheds charity has also helped the Bloom effort by building the new planters which will be placed outside John Storer House as part of their allotments and will be maintained by the volunteers.

The compost for the planters has been donated by Leicestershire County Council's site at Lount and their contractor, Suez.



The Mayor of Charnwood with the Bloom Board and volunteers

# Community and Education

The town's local newspaper, the Loughborough Echo, has been at the heart of the Loughborough in Bloom campaign since it was launched in 2009.

Regular updates and Bloom news are included in the weekly paper. The Editor, Andy Rush, continues to develop the campaign as chairman of the Loughborough in Bloom Board.

The Loughborough in Bloom blog has regular updates throughout the year and the work of volunteers is shared on social media.

*idverde* has a community website which features the latest case studies on activities with volunteer and third sector groups.

The town's Scouts movement has continued to engage youngsters in growing, planting and celebrating wildlife.

Both the Three Close Tenants Association and Harry and Pat Cook of Forest Road Green Belt have worked with Probation Service Trainees to tend and improve the local areas.

In March 2017 the community groups were given a presentation by Alison McGrath of Garden Organic supported by Ted Boyd a Master Composter to help them support community groups with their planting.

The award-winning Don't Muck Around campaign carries different themes each year to engage different target audiences.

Street wardens deal with environmental crimes, from littering to dog fouling, and the Council has

a very good reputation for tackling the issues head on. The annual Don't Muck Around campaign has been recognised by a number of awarding bodies for raising awareness of littering, dog fouling and fly-tipping.

Each year the Council works to design new and innovative ways to discuss the issues. Last year's campaign featured a local rapper called Jonezy and his dog, Goldie Chain. The Council produced a rap video to spread an anti-littering message.

Prosecutions for these offences are one way of deterring people from dumping their rubbish or failing to clean up after their pet. In 2016 the Council investigated 547 incidents and had 10 prosecutions. The total amount of fines and costs that had to be paid was £6,460.

The Council also works alongside Serco and Leicestershire County Council to increase recycling rates in the town, reducing the amount of waste from the area that goes to landfill. In 2016 Loughborough's recycling rate was 48 per cent.

Bloom groups continue to contribute to recycling, by producing their own compost and sharing it with other groups, and taking advantage of free garden waste collections from the borough council.

Litter picking is carried out throughout the year by various community groups and with the help of volunteers who lend a hand to projects. The quality of a number of areas, from individual patches of land to estates is also maintained by members of the community.



Floral displays in Queen's Park

# Community Participation

Community participation in Loughborough continues to drive the Bloom campaign. Each year the number of It's Your Neighbourhood groups increases. A total of 37 organisations have signed up to take a very active role, with four new groups joining this year. There are other groups, individuals and businesses who also contribute in other ways.

Loughborough Student Action continues to urge as many of the University's students to pick up a trowel and support projects under the Bloom umbrella. Each year, more than 2,000 volunteers take part in litter picking and gardening and maintenance projects across the borough.

This year staff at the university and local business, 3M carried out weeding a Loughborough station. A group of students also weeded Loughborough cemetery to keep the area looking tidy.

A university owned hotel, The Link, has continued to get involved with the Bloom initiative and has asked that the three flower

beds that were created last year to enhance the entrance and grounds of the hotel remain in place this year.

Transition Loughborough organised a Potato Day at Loughborough Market in January. People could buy cheap seed potatoes to grow their own crops. They also arranged a seed swap at Fearon Hall Community Centre, where people brought their surplus seeds and exchanged them with other people. The seeds were harvested from previous year's plants.

Each year competitions are run to engage new and existing contributors to Bloom. The Loughborough Echo's annual Best Spring Gardens is going from strength to strength and sees different competitors put their gardening gloves to the test to produce the best horticultural display.

Fearon Hall runs the Utilise Social Café in partnership with Enactus and Transition Loughborough. The café serves delicious meals for the community made from ingredients which would have otherwise gone to landfill.



Winning entry for the Best Spring Garden competition

This year's RHS Britain in Bloom campaign is Greening Grey Britain for Wildlife, whereby local communities are encouraged to transform grey spaces into great green places for people and wildlife using plants, community action and enthusiasm. The campaign highlights the vital role gardens and open spaces play to provide valuable habitat to support and nurture wildlife.

## Case Study: Forest Road Green Belt Gardeners & The Loughborough Scout Group

Pat and Harry Cook invited the Scouts for an evening session of building bird boxes, bug hotels and making various bird feeders to further improve the site they care for.

Together, a great deal of fun (and mess) was had making natural bird feeders from pine cones, which were collected from the Green Belt, dipping them into honey and rolling them in bird seed. The group also cut up apples and stuck sunflower seeds into the flesh.

The feeders were then hung onto a frame. Once the frame was full of bird feeders it resembled a Christmas tree - full of 'goodies' for the local birds!



The Loughborough Scout Group



Sidings Park Residents Association

## Case Study: Fruit trees for Sidings Park

Local families joined forces with the Residents Association, *idverde* and the Council's Ranger Team to help plant eight new half-standard fruit trees in a secluded area at the bottom end of Sidings Park.

Having planted all their trees, the children then set about giving them all names: 'King Richard' the quince, 'Athanasious' the apple, 'Gum' the plum, 'Woody' the apple, 'McBeth' the pear, 'Aslan' the apple, 'Lightening McQueen' the concorde pear and finally 'Queen Lucy' the apple!

It's hoped that the trees will provide bountiful crops of fruit and create added interest in the spring as they blossom prolifically. This will help to increase biodiversity within the park by providing an important nectar source for bees and other pollinating insects.

## Case Study: University students at Loughborough cemetery

A group of student volunteers from Loughborough University volunteered at Loughborough's Old Cemetery every Wednesday afternoon during February.

The students spent their afternoon helping to remove self-set holly trees from the graves within the closed cemetery known locally as, 'the old cemetery', and raking through the shrub borders.

Paul Day and Peter Hancock, who are looking to form a Friends of Loughborough Cemetery group, were delighted to see so many young volunteers in the cemetery.

Paul commented, "It's wonderful to see the younger generation take such a genuine interest in Loughborough's heritage whilst helping to make the place look smarter. We're very grateful to them".



Loughborough University students



Marios Tinenti volunteers

## Case Study: Marios Tinenti Centre Community Litter Pick

Residents, along with the local PCSO from Leicestershire's Local Neighbourhood Police Force, were inspired to volunteer for a few hours and get outdoors to pick up some of the litter in the Bellfoundry residential area.

With the support of *idverde* and the borough council's community housing officers, the volunteers managed to collect over 10 bags of litter and other rubbish which included plastic tubs, lengths of hose pipe and other unwanted bits of junk which had been flytipped in the streets. The bags were later taken away by Serco to be disposed of correctly.

Following all that hard work the volunteers were rewarded for their efforts with a buffet lunch which was kindly supplied by the Marios Tinenti centre.

One volunteer said, "It's amazing how much litter we all managed to collect in such a relatively short space of me. Thanks to the support we feel we've improved our local area."

# Year Round Involvement

Bloom participants are kept up-to-date with events taking place across the year through the Loughborough Echo and the Loughborough in Bloom website. Community groups meet regularly at the Bloom Community Participation Group.

Events that take place outside of the judging season continue and are embraced by the town to ensure that Loughborough continues to bloom all year round.

Harry Cook leads the town's Christmas efforts, annually transforming his garden into a Santa's grotto.

Spring is always a colourful time at Loughborough University. A mechanical bulb planting program has been running for the last five years to supplement its annual program, naturalising approximately 30,000 assorted

bulbs at various locations across campus which will continue for the foreseeable future.

This year the first Loughborough in Bloom festival was held at Fearon Hall on June 17 and was a celebration of Edible Loughborough.

There was the opportunity to learn how to grow your own food, get involved with community gardening projects and take part in plant swaps.

The Master Gardeners were on hand to offer support and Steve King from Transition Loughborough held a workshop about gardening for health and wellbeing.

There was also information on bee keeping, a crop club and the University Fruit Routes.



Charnwood Water in winter



Three Close Tenants



Herrick Road & Transition apple pressing



John Storer House allotments



Serco clear fallen leaves



Thorpe Acre Residents Association



Landscaping & Gardening Society



Loughborough University gardens

## Funding and Support

The Loughborough in Bloom campaign is underpinned by volunteers and keen gardeners who work to keep their area blossoming. Some volunteers have taken part since 2009, while this is the first year of entry for others.

Every year the Loughborough Students Union Action Volunteers, a team of more than 2,000 volunteers, works with community groups and organisations to complete a range of activities that benefit the town. Work includes litter picking, planting days and supporting groups with regular events.

Voluntary groups including Transition Loughborough, the Conservation Volunteers, Loughborough Tow Path Pickers and G&S Services who offer their support to many green causes too.

To boost the voluntary effort, Charnwood Borough Council, Serco, idverde, Leicestershire County Council and the Business Improvement District provide funding to ensure that Loughborough continues to Bloom. Some of the

funding covers a range of initiatives, while others, such as that from Mike and Marj Jones, pay for hanging baskets or displays in specific areas. Individual community groups are also supported by sponsorship and assistance from local businesses, such as Hathern Nurseries, Pinnacle and B&Q.

Serco will sponsor a further £500 towards the Bloom effort this year. The Markets and Fairs team at Charnwood Borough Council will also sponsor a hanging basket tree.

Local groups also raise funds by selling plants and items that they have created. John Storer House continues to sell plants to fund the cottage garden and allotment, to allow their Bloom efforts to be self-sufficient.

Utilise Cafe at Fearon Hall has also agreed to support the Bloom effort by providing catering in Queen's Park on the judging day. The cafe will create a delicious array of dishes made from leftover local produce, which otherwise would have gone to waste.

# Future Plans

- *idverde* will continue to work towards establishing more Green Flag green spaces
- Funding has been secured to create a wood carving at the Forest Road Green Belt. Residents will be consulted on what design they would like to see
- *idverde* is working with Three Close Tenants to increase mechanical bulb planting
- A successful application has been made for funding for a community noticeboard for the Friends of Queen's Park
- Plantscape will sponsor a hanging basket tree



Outwells bluebells



## Contributors

- The Abbeyfield Loughborough Society Allotments
- Ashby Road Estates Green Fingers
- Chapman Street Gardens
- Charnwood Borough Council
- Charnwood Conservation Volunteers
- Corner Garden Community Group
- Clear Cut Conservation
- Emmanuel Church
- Fearon Community Association
- Forest Road Green Belt Gardeners
- Freehold Street Bloomers
- Friends of Queen's Park
- G & S Services
- Garendon Green Gardeners
- Glebe House Allotment Project
- Great Central Railway
- John Taylor Bell Foundry
- John Storer Charnwood Allotment
- John Storer House Cottage Garden
- Knightthorpe Methodist Gardeners
- Landscaping and Gardening Society (LAGS),
- Loughborough Student Union
- Leicestershire County Council
- Leicestershire & Rutland Fire Service
- Loughborough Baptist Church
- Loughborough Business Improvement District
- Loughborough Chamber of Trade and Commerce
- Loughborough Crematorium
- Loughborough BID
- Loughborough District Scouts
- Loughborough Echo
- Loughborough Endowed Schools
- Loughborough All Saints Parish Church Garden Group
- Loughborough Tow Path Pickers
- Loughborough University
- Marios Tinenti Centre
- Peter Le Marchant Trust
- Peter Minshall, Photographer
- PHS Greenleaf
- Primary Schools of Loughborough
- Quadron Services Ltd
- Rockingham Road Gardeners
- Scott Cooper, Photographer
- Serco
- Shelthorpe Community Association
- Sidings Park Area Residents' Association
- Student Action Volunteers
- Thorpe Acre Residents Association
- Three Close Tenants' Association
- Transition Loughborough – Community Allotment
- Transition Loughborough – Community Orchard
- United Reformed Church
- Val Wilson Court Gardening Group
- Warwick Way Action Group (WAGS)
- Hardwick House Gardeners
- Staveley Court Gardeners
- Holt Drive Quad
- Wolsey Way Gardeners
- The Secret Garden
- King Edward Road Gardeners



Queen's Park



*Loughborough in*  
**BLOOM**