

Loughborough in BLOOM 2019



Loughborough in
BLOOM

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Chairman's welcome...

I would like to start with many thanks and congratulations to all responsible for the work that is making Loughborough so special. More importantly perhaps is that so many people getting to know each other and getting pleasure from the Bloom campaign. This "community spirit" is giving us great results in the East Midlands in Bloom awards, with Loughborough winning the small city category in 2018.

We were delighted to be awarded a place in the Britain in Bloom finals for 2019. This is a terrific result and a great honour for us all and so well deserved. Of course, this does result in an extra workload for many in preparation and organisation for the two judging days.

Already this year we have been treated to amazing spring floral displays in Queen's Park and other areas throughout Loughborough. Blossom has been abundant all over town, signalling a welcome arrival to spring. It is obvious that much work goes on in our groups throughout the year.

I have been privileged to give presentations about our Bloom efforts to many groups in Loughborough most of whom are unaware just how many people and areas are involved.

Of course, the focus of the judging is not just on floral displays but includes conservation, community involvement and the environment.

We are making efforts to involve more of the community including children with a few competitions. Meal in a Wheelbarrow, Pumpkin growing, carving and cooking, Photographic for a Calendar plus a "Scare-Fox" competition for our great students who support our It's Your Neighbourhood groups in many ways.

A special thank you to Andy Rush and the Loughborough Echo who support us throughout the year and of course our Council Officers who do all the organisation and paperwork.

Thank you everybody.

Marion Smith

Chairman, Loughborough in Bloom



Marion Smith, Chairman of
Loughborough in Bloom

Horticultural achievement

Impact

This year marks the launch of the new town centre colour scheme to celebrate the Loughborough Market Charter which was signed almost 800 years ago in 1221. To mark the celebration, new town banners and flags have been designed in vibrant pink, purple and yellow. Hanging baskets in the town centre, main roundabouts and Epinal Way are all planted with Surfinia's, to compliment the new market colour scheme and dressing of the town centre bunting. The beacon within Queens Park will be planted with hot colours including Begonia's and Geranium's.

This year the swimming pool bed at Loughborough University has been planted in the shape of a bee to celebrate the University bee keepers gaining the Bee's Needs Award. This is a joint initiative between DEFRA and Green Flag to recognise projects that provide habitat and food sources for pollinators. The bee's body and head are Marigold Bonanza Gold, Petunia Black Velvet, the wings Begonia Heaven White and the background Begonia Heaven Pink.

Sustainable planting in Queen's Park with the new wetland area continue to mature and create a striking backdrop to the Carillion. 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.

Two agapanthus beds in Queen's Park have been established with bulbs been supplied by Lubbe Lisse Flowerbulbs.



Queen's Park floral displays

The hanging basket trees at the entrance to the town each hold 21 baskets and are all sustainable self-watering systems. There are also five large gateway 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.

Continuing with the development of the Loughborough inner relief road, 30 barrier boxes will be planted with Surfinia's, Begonia's and Verbena's placed at key locations to add colour along the route. The boxes have been sponsored by the Council's waste contractor, Serco and made by Plantscape. They have been delivered in partnership with Leicestershire County Council.



Glebe House trainees and staff at Forest Road Green Belt

Horticultural practice

Loughborough's open spaces are maintained by idverde, community groups and many volunteers through the IYN groups and regular work days.

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 continue to introduce 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 during the summer.

In Queen's Park the bedding by the bridge was reduced by half in 2017 by putting in a permanent sustainable planting scheme. This has proven very successful and increased the amount of sustainable planting in the park showcasing environmentally friendly horticultural practices

Plantscape has provided over 297 elevated planters to brighten Loughborough's streets, main roads and round-a-bouts. In addition, the BID have installed complimentary hanging baskets along the frontage of shops and businesses through the town centre.

Idverde continue to support the reuse of bedding plants used in horticultural displays throughout the town. Materials which are no longer required are donated to local community groups to reuse in their own displays.

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.

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 2018 businesses voted for the BID to be renewed for a second five-year term and it has committed to continue to support bloom.



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***



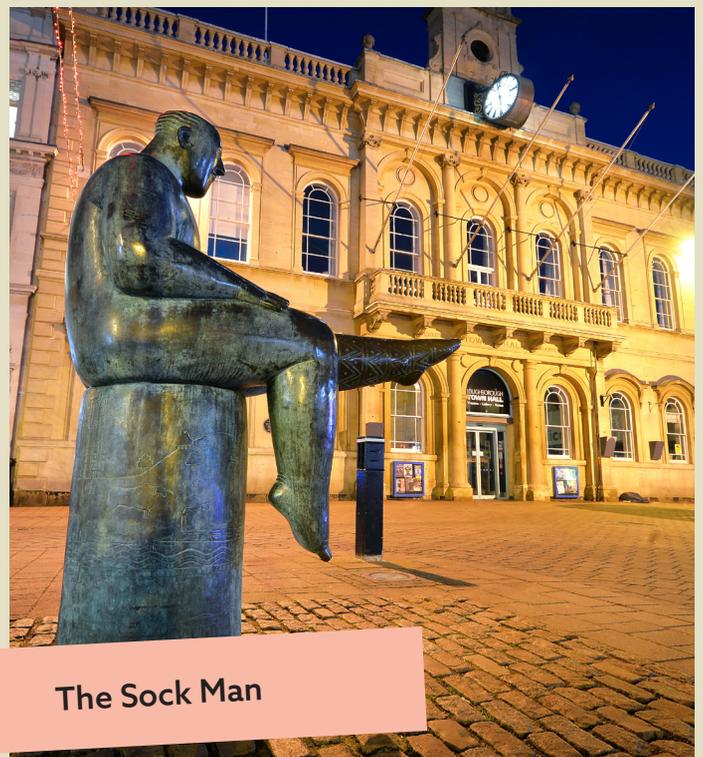
Town centre at Christmas



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***



The Sock Man

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 39 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 just gone to landfill is rescued and served up at the Utilise Cafe.

The annual tenants gardening competition was launched in May for all Council tenants to show off their green-fingered skills. Gardens can be entered under one of the following categories:

- house or flat garden
- hanging basket, window box or balcony
- the Norman Storr award for communal garden
- sheltered court garden
- best newcomer
- fruit and vegetable garden

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



Glebe House project

Green spaces

Despite being the largest town in the north of Leicestershire, there are many areas of green spaces within Loughborough. Some of the largest parks in the town are Queen's Park, Southfields Park and Sidings Park. All three parks have recently benefited from over £300k of additional funding to ensure they continue to be vibrant green spaces.

Open spaces

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

In 2016 the park was the principal winner of a prestigious British Association of Landscape Industries' (BALI) National Landscape Award for its grounds maintenance. Receiving a BALI National Landscape Award is one of the landscape industries' highest accolades and is a recognition of a high level of achievement, from within the industry.

The new Aviary bed is the latest addition to Queens park. The bed has been planned to provide contrasting areas of planting which reflect the unique geology of Charnwood Forest. The bed includes a stumpary, dry river bed and rock outcrops.

Local voluntary group, Friends of Queen's Park, also play a key part in helping look after the area, maintaining its Victorian "roots" by undertaking much appreciated weeding and voluntary work. The park is brought to life throughout the year with events such as Picnic in the Park, regular bandstand concerts and Armed Forces Day.

Southfields Park features a well-used skate-park and facilities for free running and parkour. The skate park has recently been extended following consultation with local users and an outdoor gym installed to increase options for physical exercise in the park. The park embraces the urban sports alongside its more traditional use as a community open space.

Several smaller parks throughout Loughborough have been revamped by Charnwood Borough Council in recent years. Kirkstone Park has received a £50,000 upgrade to include new paths, play structures, seating and additional landscaping. The Bell Foundry estate received £67,000 improvements to create a new pocket park, raised beds and natural play to provide a much-needed community focal point.

Sidings Park and Great Central Park have recently undergone improvements to provide improved play offer to families with small children. Included for Sidings park is the refurbishment of two brick planters which have been established with sustainable planting.

Park improvements are both funded from an internal capital improvement scheme and from section 106 agreements from local developments built in the area, in order to meet their commitment to the Council to improve the community in which development is taking place.

The Outwoods is 110 acres of ancient woodland to the north of Loughborough and is one of the oldest surviving woodland sites in Charnwood. It is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by Natural England, which means it is protected by law to conserve its wildlife and geology. It was gifted to the people of Loughborough in 1946 by two local benefactors, Alan Moss and George Harry Bowler, and is managed by the Outwoods Management Committee.

In 2018, for the eleventh year running the Outwoods was awarded the Green Flag, this is a nationally recognised mark of excellence for a well-managed greenspace. The woods consist of a variety of different routes and walks, including an easy access path with a bird hide and feeding station. Walkers with mobility issues can also use the trampers which are provided free of charge by the Management Committee.

May is a blooming time for the forest as it becomes carpeted with bluebells. The former Outwoods keeper's cottage and surrounding area is currently undergoing a transformation with the injection of £140,000 from the European Structural and Investment Found (ESIF) and £200,000 from the Council. A new natural play area has been installed and the cottage itself will be redeveloped into a visitor interpretation centre and café.

Over 900 native trees were planted at the Outwoods during the winter of 2017 to help the woodland area flourish. The work is part of a five-year Countryside Stewardship scheme run by Natural England and the Forestry Commission which aims to preserve the fragile ecology and habitats found in the site.

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.

Rare fossils have been discovered in the hard. Precambrian rock outcrops which are found throughout Charnwood Forest, including the Outwoods. The fossils are of international importance to the understanding of the early evolution of life forms. Examples of the 'Charnia' fossils can be viewed in the New Walk Museum in Leicester and Charnwood Museum in Queens Park, Loughborough.



Bluebells in The Outwoods



Young helpers at Rendell School



Garendon Green

How we maintain our open spaces...

The Borough Council is responsible for managing and maintaining Charnwood's green open 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 council has introduced new machinery to improve the quality of grass cutting in the borough.



Green gym volunteers

The Green Gym...

The 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 Ranger team guide volunteers through conservation activities such as coppicing, hedge laying, fencing and renewing footpaths. Volunteers learn new skills whilst improving their health and fitness. In fact, almost a third more calories can be burnt in some Green Gym sessions than in an average aerobics class!

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



Student volunteers at Green Belt

Help from our community groups...

Local community groups also work hard to maintain 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.

Local residents and the Forest Road Green Belt Gardeners 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. Since then the Green Belt has gone from strength to strength and is hopeful for its 4th Green Flag award this year.

Allotments in Loughborough...

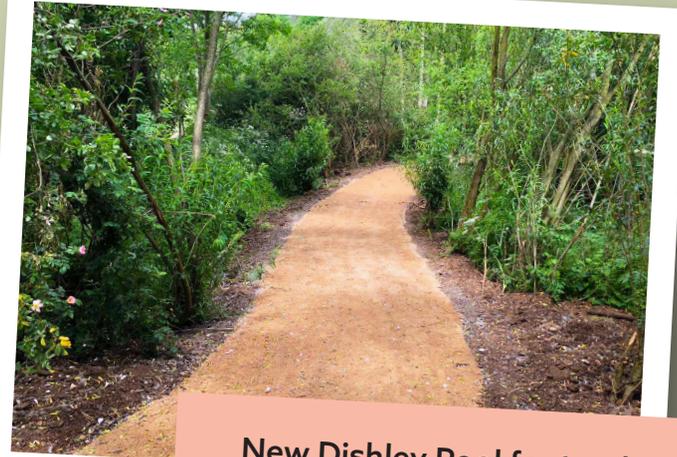
Allotments are an important part of our culture and provide a wide range of benefits to communities and to the environment. They have many advantages such as providing fresh vegetables, fruit and flowers, free from pollutants, at a fraction of the cost paid in supermarkets.

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: Dishley Pool access improvements

A project between the Council and CR Civil Engineering has delivered over two kilometres of new footpaths at Dishley Pool Local Nature Reserve, a site which is a local favourite destination for fishing, running and walking.

CR Civil Engineering offered their services to the community as part of their corporate social responsibility scheme, donating over £30,000 in manpower and equipment towards the project. Footpaths have been widened, constructed and resurfaced so that there is now a two-kilometre network which makes the site more accessible for visitors of all abilities.



New Dishley Pool footpath



Workers from CR Civil Engineering

The footpaths at Dishley Pool are regularly used by running clubs and now forms part of the weekly Loughborough Park Run. Feedback from the park run participants, volunteers and other path users has been overwhelmingly positive."

Environmental responsibility

Conservation & biodiversity

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

Activities including the management of wildflower meadows, coppicing, scrub management, hedge laying, and the creation and maintenance 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.

Stonebow Washlands was designated a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) in 2017. This has given the area greater protection from any possible development and could help attract funding for improvements in the future.

Important habitats at Stonebow 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 a significant community of common frog and toad.

The meadows are specifically managed to encourage Butterfly's and other native invertebrates for whom lowland meadows are an important habitat.

The friends of Stonebow community volunteer group continue to go from strength to strength



Nesting swan at Stonebow

since its formation. The group looks after the local area at Stonebow and has helped with projects including a bat walk.

In addition to Stonebow, the Borough Council are designating three more new Local Nature Reserves in Loughborough. Gorse Covert is an important community woodland site in Thorpe Acre, primarily composed of oak and ash high forest. The site will be designated as a Local Nature Reserve this year. A new management plan for the site has been developed and volunteers have already started improving access for the local community.

Loughborough boasts two other Higher Level Stewardship scheme sites at Bishop Meadow LNR 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 low intensity grazing with rare breed cattle 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 continues to introduce bee friendly planting to encourage 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.

A group of kestrels have returned to their nest at the Loughborough campus this year. The kestrels (known collectively as a flight, soar or hover) have been nesting at the University for four years. Initially, they nested on a site that was difficult to monitor, so a nest box was set up in a more accessible area. In the first year, the mother had three chicks, four in the second year, and last year she produced five.

The University has installed a nest box with a fitted camera, so their activity can be monitored, and a live stream provided on YouTube for people to watch. This will also help monitor what the chicks are feeding on, so that management of the grounds can be adapted to encourage more of that type of wildlife and balance the habitat.

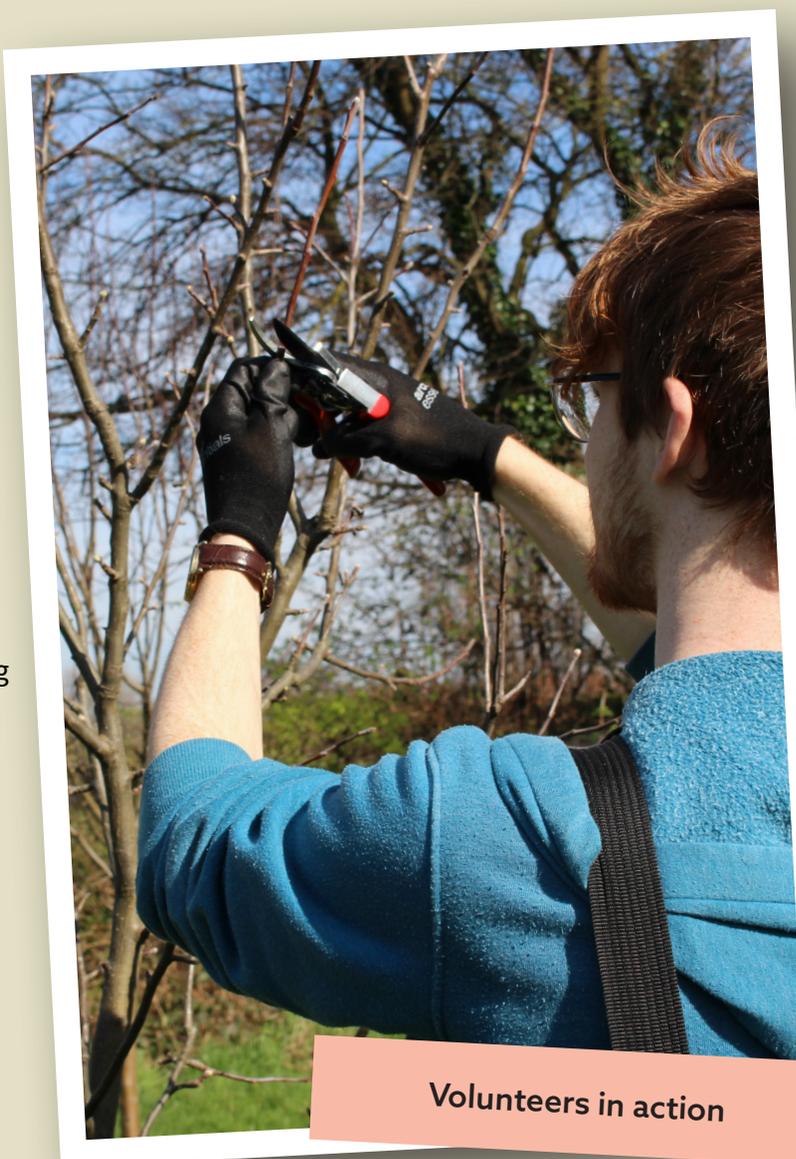
Bird boxes have also sprung up across the town, with instant habitats installed in the Outwoods and Queen's Park. Members of the Thorpe Acre Residents' Group and the Forest Road Green Belt have also placed bird and bat boxes, as well as bug hotels, feature extensively across all communal open spaces and are a popular feature with children, 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 pathways at Stonebow Washlands to removing invasive species and fence replacement.

The university gardens team encourage the students to get involved with their woodland management, over the year. The Action students have assisted with coppicing trees, building nature habitats and natural fences.



Volunteers in action

Resource management

Conservation of and appropriate use of water resources is key to the management of our open spaces. 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 to water 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 wherever possible to retain water on 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 our carbon footprint as they all have a water reservoir to enable self-watering, reduce wasted water during watering visits and are fully recyclable.

When large beds are replanted, 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 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 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.

No green waste leaves the University campus, everything is shredded and left to compost, turned over the years and then either reintroduced to the campus shrub beds as a soil enhancer or sieved and used as topsoil for reinstating grass areas.

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 just one year the initiative resulted in 23 tonnes of rubbish being collected during the day, 16 tonnes of which recyclable.

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 a grade II listed building and forms the central feature of the space. From the viewing gallery at the top of the Carillon, located in Queens Park, Loughborough, there are excellent views of the Charnwood area.

Built in 1922, the memorial and carillon houses 47 bells were crafted by the world renowned John Taylor & Co. Bell Foundry. Inside the building there is a wealth of exhibits relating to all branches of the armed services including local materials from both World Wars.

The landmark is also a musical instrument for which Edward Elgar wrote the opening ceremony score.

The Carillon underwent a major refurbishment in 2018 costing £280,000 to ensure that the memorial is protected for future generations to enjoy.

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 Loogabaroo festival of children's illustrated literature returned for its fourth successive year in October 2018. The nine-day festival originally started in 2015 as a celebration of 100 years of Ladybird Book's, authors and illustrators, showcasing new and existing children's books in this interactive and fun-filled festival.

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.



Queen's Park

Local environmental quality

The Borough Council 2020 carbon pledge aims to reduce its carbon footprint by 15 per cent by 2020.

In order to meet its ambitions target, 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 in Council buildings.

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

The Council's Recycle Right campaign aims to encourage people not to put clothing and

textiles into 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 in Leicestershire.



Welcome to the Green belt

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.

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. The litter bins have been replaced with brand new stainless steel 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 the five Gateway hanging-basket trees in the town centre will all be planted in pink, purple and yellow to match the new Loughborough Market colours. Bunting in the new colours is also dressed throughout the town centre.

Public Realm 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 in Devonshire Square 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.

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's award-winning market and annual fairground has been part of the town's history for almost 800 years and is rich in character, atmosphere and colour.

In 2017 Loughborough retail market won the Best Large Outdoor Market of the year award. It was recognised for the support it gives to traders and its work with Loughborough University.

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.



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 Bloom board is chaired by Marion Smith and meetings take place throughout the year to ensure the campaign continues to grow.

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

Over the last year Loughborough University has continued to extend the fruit route. In excess of 150 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 Grape Vine.



Students on the fruit route



Volunteers at LAGS

In addition to this a small heritage orchard has been created independent to the fruit route consisting of local apple varieties of Burton-Leicester Pippin, Martins Custard, Barnack Orange, Langton Nonesuch & St Ailred. This will be added to over the next few years.

The Loughborough Men in Sheds charity has also helped the Bloom effort by building and improving upon the planters which have been positioned outside John Storer House as an extension of their allotments. The planters will be maintained by the volunteers and are part of a scheme to encourage community access to allotment produce.

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

Community & 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 within the weekly paper and the Editor, Andy Rush, continues to develop the campaign as a member of the Loughborough in Bloom Board.

Residents are kept updated on Bloom initiatives, work of volunteers and other environmental projects through the Council's social media channels and The Loughborough in Bloom blog.

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 Forest Road Green Belt regularly engage with Probation Service trainees to tend and improve the local areas.

The Community Participation Group are given regular talks by local experts to help support their activities. Examples include; community grants and funding, beekeeping, horticultural good practice and composting.

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

Street Wardens deal with environmental crime and on and off street parking enforcement. They issue parking tickets and fines for dog control offences, littering and other environmental crimes. There are also enforcement officers who deal with fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and waste issues, they have a very good reputation for tackling the issues head on.

Each year the Council works to design new and innovative ways to discuss the issues.

This year's campaign is a county and city wide campaign about fly tipping and duty of care. The #IfOnly campaign is a far reaching video and radio campaign with case studies of characters based on real life stories about people who got it wrong and how to do it right.

Prosecutions for these offences are one way of deterring people from dumping their rubbish or failing to clean up after their pet. In 2018 the council investigated almost 800 incidents of fly tipping, dropped litter and dog fouling and issued 50 fixed penalty notices.

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 2018 Loughborough's recycling rate was 45 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 volunteers. The quality of a number of areas, from individual patches of land to estates is also maintained by members of the community.

Charnwood Borough Council provides free garden waste bins to the various Its Your Neighbourhood groups so that green waste can be composted and not go to landfill.



Brownies 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, this year a total of 39 organisations have signed up to take a very active role. 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.

A University owned hotel, The Link, continues to get involved with the Bloom initiative, the three flower beds that were created in 2016 to enhance the entrance and grounds of the hotel are still being maintained each season.

Transition Loughborough organised the annual Potato Day at Loughborough Market. 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 the local community. Charnwood Borough Council currently runs a Tenant Garden Competition to judge the best house or flat garden, hanging basket, window box or balcony, Norman Storr award for communal garden and sheltered court garden.

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.



Tenant garden competition winners 2018

Case study: The Outwoods

The Outwoods is 110 acres of ancient woodland to the north of Loughborough and is one of the oldest surviving woodlands sites in Charnwood. It is designated a Site of Special Scientific interest by Natural England, which means it is protected by law to conserve its wildlife and geology.

The Outwoods was gifted to the people of Loughborough in 1946 by two local benefactors Alan Moss and George Harry Bowler, and is managed by the Outwoods Management Committee.

Earlier this year, the Council secured funding to upgrade visitor facilities at the popular woodland site. A children's natural play area and an events shelter was installed so more woodland activities could be held throughout the winter months.

Thanks to the weather, the bluebells in the Outwoods bloomed slightly earlier this year. Around 30 people enjoyed this year's annual bluebell walk which is organised by the rangers to let people see the blanket of bluebells at their best.

The Sculpture Trail is a show of sculptures created by eleven artists from Loughborough Artspace which are displayed on a 1.2 mile trail which weaves through the Outwoods. The sculptures are made from a range of materials including willow, natural materials, felt and ceramics.



Photo credit: Janina Holubecki



Children's natural play area

Case study: Isaac Newton Tree at Loughborough University

Professors of Mathematical Sciences and members of the Grounds and Gardens team headed to Newton's childhood home Woolsthorpe Manor and attended the ceremonial clipping of the apple tree that caused the English physicist and mathematician to question why objects always fall straight down to the ground – leading to his discovery of the law of gravitation.

The apple tree is an old variety known as 'Flower of Kent' which is not commonly grown nowadays. The University was gifted five cuttings due to an informal co-operation between Loughborough University Mathematics department and the National Trust at Woolsthorpe.

The University Grounds and Gardens team grafted each of the tree cuttings to underground stems known as rootstocks. It is hoped the grafts will take permanently and continue to grow as a single organism – creating 'clones' of Newton's Tree.



Isaac Newton Tree

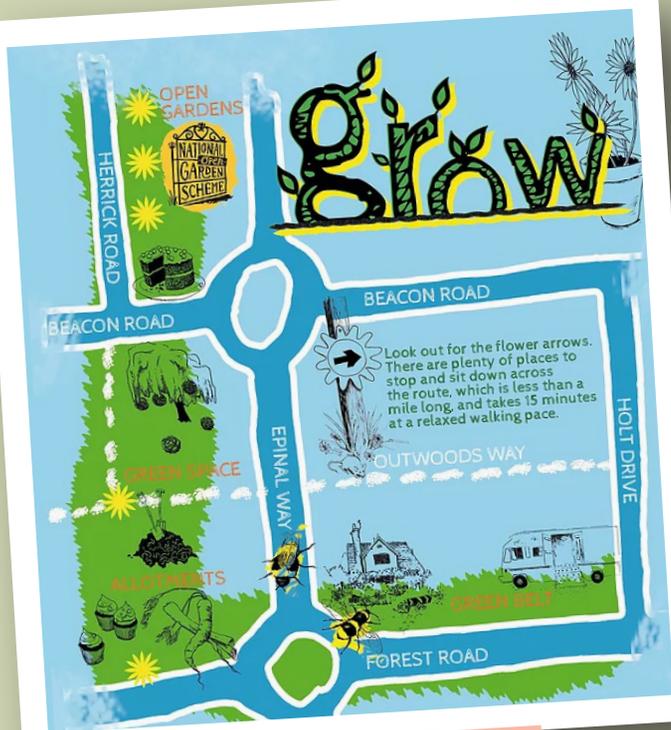
Case study: GROW Loughborough

GROW Loughborough is a weekend event showcasing local projects with a social ethos. The projects are open to the public and promote the connections between creativity, gardening and wellbeing.

The project originates from the National Garden Scheme (NGS) Open Gardens and Secret Craft Fair on and around Herrick Road in Loughborough since 2013, which grew to have a wellbeing theme in 2016.

This year Janet Currie (freelance creative project manager) and Lisa Pidgeon (Director of Little Bird SOS) are working with a range of partners to raise awareness of local projects that offer activities to increase wellbeing, reduce social isolation, encourage creativity, support participation in community gardening, and encourage growing your own food.

A series of events will take place throughout July and into August based around Open Gardens, Allotments and Community participation and volunteering.



GROW event map for 2019

Case study: Loughborough University Landscape and Gardening Society (LAGS)

The LAGS garden is open to students, staff or other members of the Loughborough community who wish to volunteer in a communal garden.

The garden has a mixture of wild and garden flowers, as well as herbs and vegetables, all grown in an environmentally friendly way to encourage wild life. We advise and encourage people to learn about growing local produce in an organic way and in turn, they learn how to cook what is grown.

Students start the year in October, and some of them join the LAGS society for the duration of their studies and form a little gardening community.

LAGS members learn about growing flowers and edible plants, cultivation, seed saving and preserving and cooking produce grown in the garden. Students learn that some foods that are expensive to buy from the supermarket can be grown very easily in the garden.



Students in action

Case study: Marios Tinenti Centre

The Marios Tinenti Centre is a vibrant community hub that was set up to engage local residents in exciting social opportunities on their door step. Their aim is simple - to bring together everyone in the community.

The Centre is the initial spark behind many activities and events, although it's the residents who add their own energy to every special occasion! The centre arranges fantastic, memorable volunteering opportunities that bring local people together to achieve something for all to enjoy, thereby sparking a sense of shared ownership and friendship.

During the summer of 2018, in partnership with Charnwood Borough Council, a new green meeting space in the centre of the Bell Foundry estate was created. The new space has provided local people with a warm sense of pride in their neighbourhood and attractive neighbourhood garden. Volunteers from the centre and local community have dug over the beds and planted a rainbow of lovely flowers.



Bell Foundry estate garden

Funding & 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, Charnwood Conservation Volunteers, Loughborough Tow Path Pickers and G&S Services have also kindly offered their support to man

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 have again kindly provided a further £5,000 towards the Bloom effort this year, while Plantscape are sponsoring a hanging basket tree in the town centre. 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.



Loughborough in Bloom Team

Year round involvement

Bloom participants are kept up-to-date of 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.

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.

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.

Case study: One Hundred Military Boots and One Pair of Gardening Boots

The hundred donated military boots that were displayed in Loughborough town centre in June to help celebrate Armed Forces Day made another very special appearance in Queen's Park on Remembrance Sunday in a fitting tribute to help Loughborough mark the centenary of the end of the First World War.

Knitters from across the town were called to arms over the summer to help make the display possible. In all over five hundred red poppies were made by the Loughborough Women's Institute, Friends of Queen's Park, Friends of Old Loughborough Cemetery and crafters from Purple Pumpkin Patch.

With the help of the Forest Road Green Belt Gardeners, Friends of Queen's Park and idverde, over 300 school children from 7th Emmanuel Scouts, 1st Nanpantan Beavers, Hardwick House, Mountfields Lodge School and Cobden Primary School used the poppies to make a unique floral display in each boot.

In a very special tribute Harry Cook's boots, containing handmade white poppies, were placed at the front of the display to acknowledge his life-long contribution to fostering community cohesion and support of Loughborough in Bloom. Sadly, Harry passed away unexpectedly earlier in the year.



Harry Cook's boots

Future plans

- In partnership with the Council, idverde will continue to work towards establishing more Green Flag green spaces and new Local Nature Reserves within Loughborough.
- Funding is in the process of being secured to create a wood carving at the Forest Road Green Belt. Residents and local school children have been consulted on the design which will provide a long-standing memorial to Harry Cook.
- Idverde is working with community groups throughout Loughborough to increase sustainable planting, wildflower areas and mechanical bulb planting.
- Plantscape continue to provide support to Loughborough in Bloom by sponsoring a hanging basket tree within the town centre.
- A new country park is proposed at the former Allsopps Lane landfill site which will provide a significant area of green space and recreation in Loughborough.
- The Outwoods – cottage and natural play area will be completed before the end of 2020.
- As part of the Council's commitment to enhance the borough and make it the healthiest place to live in the country, Cabinet have pledged that over 100,000 trees will be planted across Charnwood over the next four years.
- New ideas for town centre planters and hanging baskets are being considered. In particular, new artistic designs to represent the rich culture and heritage of Loughborough are being developed.
- A new cemetery for Loughborough is being developed on the edge of Nanpantan Sports Ground. This presents an excellent opportunity to develop a rich landscape and planting plan to compliment the new cemetery and wider setting.



The Outwoods Bluebell Walk



Green belt bug hotel



Contributors

- The Abbeyfield Loughborough Society Gardens
- Age UK Men in Sheds
- Ashby Road Estate Green Fingers
- Beacon Road Flats Gardeners
- Chapman Street Gardeners
- Charnwood Borough Council
- Clear Cut Conservation
- Emmanuel Church
- Fearon Community Association
- The Flower Pot People
- Forest Road Green Belt Gardeners
- Freehold Street Bloomers
- Friends of Queen's Park
- Friends of Loughborough Cemetery
- Garden Buddies
- Garendon Green Gardeners
- Glebe House Work Skills Project
- Great Central Railway
- Green Gym
- Grow Loughborough
- Holt Green Gardeners
- idverde
- John Taylor Bell Foundry
- John Storer Charnwood Allotment
- John Storer House Cottage Garden
- King Edward Road Gardeners
- Knightthorpe Methodist Gardeners
- Loughborough Baptist Church
- Loughborough Lions Club
- Loughborough Student Union Landscape and Gardening Society
- Leicestershire County Council
- Leicestershire & Rutland Fire Service
- Loughborough Business Improvement District
- Loughborough Chamber of Trade and Commerce
- Loughborough District Scouts
- Loughborough Echo
- Loughborough University
- Loughborough United Reformed Church
- Marios Tinenti Centre
- Peter Le Marchant Trust
- Plantscape
- Primary Schools of Loughborough
- Rainbow Children's Hospice
- Rectory Wildlife Garden and Hospice
- Rockingham Road Gardeners
- Ronald West Court
- Rosebery Community Centre
- Sacred Heart Church
- Serco
- Shelthorpe Community Garden Project
- Siding's Park Area Residents' Association
- Stonebow Washlands Group
- Student Action Volunteers
- Thorpe Acre Residents Association
- Three Close Tenants' Association
- Transition Loughborough – Community Allotment
- Wolsey Way Gardeners

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Loughborough in
BLOOM