

Contents...

Chairman's welcome 3

Horticulture

Hanging basket competition	4
4,000 free trees given away	5
Songster's wild home at Queen's Park	5
Keep Charnwood tidy!	5
Loughborough University	6
Case study: Incredible Edible	7
Loughborough Goes Green	8
Queen's Baton Relay	9
Vegan market returns to town	9
This year's Bloom calendar	9
Loughborough Town Deal support	10

Environment & Biodiversity

Is not mowing worth it?	11
Case study: Volunteering at the Outwo	ods
	11
Case study: Queen's Park	12
Dawn Chorus	13
Dishley Bioblitz	13

Community

A word from Community Participation	
Group Chair Mike Jones	14
Stonebow Washlands	14
EMiB award for Loughborough	15
Raising funds for Marion's bench	15
Men and Women in Sheds	15
Thorpe Acre Village Green	16
It's Your Neighbourhood	16
Working together	17
LAGS event and harvesting	18
Bandstand concerts return to Queen's Pa	ark
	18
Tenant garden competition	19
Remembering Loughborough's fallen hei	roes
	19
Contributors	20









Chairman's welcome...

Welcome to Loughborough in Bloom! We hope that you enjoy what you see, from our heritage at John Taylor Bell Foundry to Queens Park and the Carillon and everything else in between.

This year we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Carillon War Memorial in Queens Park. To celebrate this momentous year, a ceremony will take place on Saturday July 22, to which everybody is invited to take part.

A lot of hard work has been going on in and around Loughborough (especially in the town centre after the fire in March at the HSBC bank) getting ready not only for Bloom but for the town itself to welcome not only local people that come into the town, but for all visitors.

Community groups are also back to normal being able to meet and work together, which is a big asset to the town.

Many thanks go to Charnwood Borough Council, idverde, Serco, and Love Loughborough (the BID), and the many community groups who all give their time free, and for the support we get from the University, who have all worked hard in keeping Loughborough looking clean, and inviting to all who come into the town.

Pat Cook
Chairman, Loughborough in Bloom





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Horticulture





Hanging basket competition

People in Charnwood are invited to take part in a competition to find the best hanging basket to mark the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III.

The Council's open spaces partner idverde and Loughborough in Bloom are inviting residents across the borough to get creative and plant-up a hanging basket to celebrate the coronation.

The coronation ceremony to mark the King's ascension to the throne took place at Westminster Abbey in London on Saturday May 6, 2023.

The prizes up for grabs are an annual family membership for The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) (first prize) and second and third prize win a £50 National Garden Gift Voucher.

The closing date for entries is Thursday August 31, 2023.

The judging panel will choose the best 10 hanging baskets which will be shortlisted to the final three during the first two weeks of September.

The winners of the 2022 competition were announced in September and were Graham Goggins (1st Prize) and Joint Runners Up were Stuart Rosak & Watermead Nursery. Well done everyone!



Left: 1st place for Graham Goggins Right: Children from Watermead Nursery



4,000 free trees given away

Thousands of residents, community groups and parish councils collected free trees to help make Charnwood even greener.

The council teamed up with its open spaces partner idverde to run a scheme which aimed for 4,000 trees to be planted in the borough.

People were able to choose from four different varieties; Crab apple, hazel, rowan and silver birch.

Trees were allocated on a first come first served basis and people had the option of collecting them the market in Loughborough.



Officers from the council and idverde handing out free trees on Loughborough Market

The free trees were given out during National Tree Week (November 26 - December 4, 2022), an annual campaign by The Tree Council to mark the start of the tree planting season. The Council also ran a stall at Loughborough Market in early December where people could go along and collect a tree if they had missed the chance to apply online.

Songster's wild home at Queen's Park

Queen's Park is home to Songster the war horse, and this time of year he looks wonderful surrounded by wildflowers.

To mark 100 years since the end of the First World War an armature of Songster was created by artist Jenni Cairns. The armature now stands in Queen's Park in Loughborough paying tribute to his service and story.

A project funded by Natural England has identified some biodiversity enhancement and the council are considering relaxing some of the mowing on some of our open spaces. It is expected that relaxed mowing of amenity grassland would lead to an increase in biodiversity, including pollinating insects.



Songster's home amongst the wildflowers at Queen's Park

Keeping Charnwood lidy!





Litter picking groups

The Great British Spring Clean returned for its eighth year in 2023, from March 17 – April 2.

The council supported the initiative by loaning litter picking packs to individuals and organisations so they could take part in Keep Britain Tidy's scheme.

The council also arranged for its waste partner Serco to pick up litter bags collected by local groups.

The council supported litter picks in a host of villages and towns across Charnwood including Anstey, Birstall and Loughborough.

Loughborough University

Sampling and filming on the Wood Brook / Forest Road green belt

Professor Paul Wood from the department of Geography and Environment at Loughborough University and his students have been collecting samples from Wood Brook over a number of year and the University University Public Relations Office recently prepared a short video and resources for families/children on sampling invertebrates in small stream.

The video can be viewed on the University's website at www.lboro.ac.uk/news-events/videos/2023/fantastic-minibeasts.

Burleigh Wood

Burleigh Wood is an ancient woodland which, though originally part of the medieval Burleigh deer park, appears to have been mostly used as a Coppice Woodland. (hazel and oak)

Ecologically, the woodland is diverse, with acidic conditions predominating in the Eastern half. Here oak, silver birch and hazel make up the canopy, with bracken, bramble and bluebells forming the ground flora.

In contrast, the canopy of the Western half is more dense and contains ash. The ground flora here is more diverse and includes lesser celandine, wood anemone, bluebells, bramble, red campion and ramsoms. There are also some very old holly trees worth noting.

The woodland is at its best in the spring, where the bluebell displays are without doubt one of the best in the region, if not the country. Visitors are asked to keep to the footpaths to avoid trampling the flowers.

The woodland is owned and managed by Loughborough University, using a wide variety of volunteers.

Richard Fenn-Griffin MSc, BSc - Assistant Gardens Manager



A screenshot from Prof Wood's video







Beautul bluebells at Burleigh Wood

Case study: Incredible Edible

The Incredible Edible Network has 148 groups in the UK and around 1,000 worldwide, growing free, healthy food for local people on local land, with minimal CO2 emissions and no damage to wildlife or soil.



Incredible Edible Loughborough have been busy transforming the Corner Garden in Loughborough by planting all manner of

flowers and vegetables in the small park on Cambridge Street and Charles Street. These include potatoes, squashes, sunflowers, lettuce, beans, herbs and much more.

All members are volunteers and now the scheme has branched out to include green areas around Fearon Hall and recently the group planted runner beans, courgettes, lettuces and squash at the flats on the corner of Warwick Way and Braddon Road, and filled one raised bed with mains potatoes, in partnership with 3 Close Tenants Association.

They hold a number of events throughout the year, and you can find out more on the IE Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/368547475219206.



Business areas & premises



Businesses within the Town Centre area are represented on the Bloom Board by the Love Loughborough BID (Business Improvement District) and the Loughborough Chamber of Trade and Commerce. Love Loughborough play a big part in the promotion of Loughborough in Bloom to attract the public into the vibrant, colorful and diverse market town.

Loughborough Goes Green

A Loughborough BID proposal

The Loughborough Goes Green proposal is unique in the area would be a 'first' for Loughborough!

Devonshire Square has seen multi-million pound renovation, new road layout, up-market stone paving, new street furniture and the addition of more plants, trees and planters giving the square a fresh, greener and more welcoming, character.

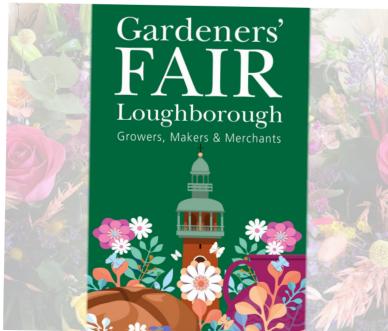
The Loughborough Goes Green Project aims to turn the facade in Devonshire Square into a

beautiful living feature, creating an outdoor Living Wall. Already established and making attractive ecofriendly features in other urban locations 'Living' or 'Green Walls' are now gaining popularity and appearing in many more urban locations around the country and around the world to great acclaim. A Living Wall helps to purify the air and regulate the temperature, reduces the ambient temperature and promotes sustainable biodiversity in urban areas. Living Walls are part of climate-proof construction.

The Living Wall proposal, in conjunction with the regular Gardeners' Fair, will be a unique offering, providing significant additional benefits.

Loughborough Gardeners' Fair aims to create opportunities for Charnwood-wide businesses to come together under one trading roof for the Gardeners' Fair, with the ability to create an outdoor Green/Gardener's market which will not only showcase the businesses in Charnwood, but provide an exciting open air market for residents and visitors. The Fair aims to also attract makers and artisan foods to create a robust and exiting event to increase footfall and economic prosperity to the town.

The Living Wall and Gardeners' Fair will enhance local communities, benefit Charnwood businesses and support Loughborough's urban development as a growing and thriving market town.



Loughborough BID has received approval of funding through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Queen's Baton Relay



Loughborough was honoured to welcome the Birmingham 2022 Queen's Baton Relay to Loughborough on Monday July 11, 2022.

The Queen's Baton made an epic journey across the Commonwealth visiting all 72 nations and territories and came to Loughborough as part of it's 29 day tour of England. Hundreds of residents lined the relay route through Queen's Park and the Market Place to celebrate the Baton and the inspirational Batonbearers who carried the Baton through the town centre.

Loughborough was proud to welcome three Paralympic athletes who took on the relay through the town: Paraswimmer James Hollis, paracanoeist Emma Wiggs MBE and para-athlete Dan Greaves.

Vegan market returns to town

The second vegan market of the year took place in Loughborough's historic market place on Sunday, May 21. Vegan Markets and Co. operate the vegan market, which made its return following its success both last year and in March. It featured a variety of vegan street food, artisan bakes, craft cheeses, handmade cosmetics, ethical clothing and jewellery, arts and crafts and charity stalls. All items are created by a handpicked selection of talented, ethical and sustainable businesses.

The event took place during the Love Your Local Market campaign for 2023 which took place from May 12 – May 27. Love Your Local Market celebrates markets across the country and encourages people to visit and use their local market to support traders.

Loughborough Market operates a retail market on Thursdays and Saturdays with a vintage market taking place on Fridays. The vegan market returns to the town in October.



Vegan market stalls in Loughborough

This year's Bloom calendar

Loughborough in Bloom's 2023 calendar was printed at local company, Quickprint, and contains photos taken at various Bloom sites throughout the town.

Each photograph used reflects both the correct time of the year and our all-year-round working. Individual community groups were invited to submit entries to be considered for the calendar, were chosen by a small panel of representatives.

All of the calendars were sold and made a small profit for Bloom.



May's entry in the 2023 Loughborough in Bloom calendar

Loughborough Town Deal support

A section of the historic canal towpath in Loughborough has reopened after the Canal and River Trust completed the latest phase of improvements, making it easier for people to access the canal.

The canal improvement is one of 11 projects Loughborough Town Deal is supporting after securing £16.9 million of Government funding. In total, the projects are worth over £40 million of investment for the town.

Working in partnership with Loughborough Town Deal, the Canal and River Trust are improving a 2km stretch of the River Soar towpath running between Moor Lane Bridge and Belton Lane in the town. Most of the new wider towpath has reopened, with a few short sections still being completed. A final stone chip top surface will be laid later this summer as it requires warmer temperatures to bond with the base layer.

As well as widening and resurfacing the towpath, the project has installed 24 additional moorings for visiting boats and strengthened a 100-metre stretch of canal bank between Moor Lane and Little Moor Lane.

The project, made possible thanks to a £885,000 grant from Loughborough Town Deal, is part of our ongoing work to protect and preserve the canal for boats and wildlife, and to make it easier for people to use all year round.

With research showing that time spent by water can help people feel happier and healthier, and with more people looking for a local escape on their doorstep, the works make it easier and more appealing for people to get out and explore the local canals and other routes on their doorstep.



The new and improved pathways of the Grand Union Canal in Loughborough

Environment & Biodiversity

Is not mowing worth it?

The gardeners at Loughborough University have purposely been allowing the grass to grow longer in recent months in order to improve the quality of the grass in the long run and not suffocate any wildflowers growing in the lawn by having recently cut grass drying on top.

The long-term plan is to deliver more beautiful and interesting green spaces. By not mowing, long grass has more structure and niche habitats. The grass and flowers don't all grow at the same rate, and this creates opportunities for different insects to feed and live in the area. For instance, spiders will set up webs between the longer grasses catching flying insects. Other insects will forage nectar from the flowers. These can be prey for spiders and birds. In time, it's possible that we may start to get small mammals such as voles feeding in the longer grass. These will in turn provide food for kestrels and owls.

The managed mown areas are richer in wildflowers than the mown grass areas. These include Cow Parsley, Dandelion, Daisy, Field woodrush, Meadow buttercup, Germander speedwell, Meadow foxtail and rough meadow grass. The university has a vision for a wilder campus that is more diverse in wildlife. Please venture out and explore these incredible areas.





11



Case study: Volunteering at the Outwoods

All Green Gym sessions throughout January have been continuing with the removal of sycamore within the woodland. Due to its invasive power and rapid propagation from seed, this task is highly important to reduce potential smothering of the woodlands native healthy species. As part of the clearing processes, habitat piles have also been created to encourage shelter and a sustainable food supply for the woodlands wildlife.



Case study: Queen's Park

Play areas were checked on a daily basis, raking sand and playbark within the areas. Litter picking and bin emptying were checked on a daily basis and emptied as required.

Shrub bed maintenance continued covering Browns
Lane area, around pond and beds in front of the toilets.
Weeding of spring flowering beds were carried out and waterside planting beds weeded, edged and mulched.
The last of the leaves were collected within the park.

Areas around the bandstand were tidied and grass mown in preparation for the Holocaust Memorial Day event on January 27. A new ramp had been constructed and placed in front of the commemoration stone to make easier access for the less abled. This was removed after the event.



Holocaust Memorial Day in Queen's Park

Members of the public laid pebbles on the commemoration stone as a mark of respect to those who have lost their lives during the Holocaust.

idverde were also delighted to welcome students from Leicester College back to Queens Park for another year as part of their student placement/work experience programme. The students will work within the park every fortnight throughout the academic year.







Volunteers from Leicester College in action

Dawn Chorus

A programme of spring events were launched to coincide with the Easter school holidays. The first being the Dawn Chorus which was arranged by Ross and held bright and early on Tuesday April 12, 2023.

With the ending of Wild Isles on BBC One the previous week, we were approached by BBC Radio Leicester who were keen to conduct live interviewing to promote our events and compliment their own 'Get into Nature' week.

Ross started bright and early to carry out the interview on Ady Daymon's Morning Breakfast Show. The interview was a chance for the idverde/RSPB partnership to showcase the events and explain the importance of communities engaging more with greenspaces and the wildlife within them.

Ross drafted in local support from Charnwood Bird Ringing Group to co-lead the early morning Dawn

Chorus walk around the beautiful and tranquil Dishley Pool. This was a booking only event which reached capacity within a few days of being advertised, meaning that twenty-five eager people braved a chilly, but sunny morning to meet up at 6am on the site.

In total 23 species, including Blackcap, Willow and Cetti's warbler were heard. Several of those on the walk were novices for bird identification, but they brought enthusiasm and passion for wildlife which allowed them to learn from experience guide and bird ringing group leader, Nigel Judson.





Dishley Bioblitz

A spring bioblitz was held at Dishley Pool on Wednesday April 12, 2023 with further eager members of the public which was also supported by idverde's Ranger Team.

In total nearly a hundred species were identified in a few hours. Interesting finds recorded included early emerging meadow plants, migratory birds such as the house martin, and invertebrates.

Despite the cool, windy weather conditions, a few rays of sun in

shady spots brought out the bees and a few butterflies to test the skills of those attending. The event was a great success, with locals discovering the site for the first time and remarking on the diversity of nature 'once you get your eye in.







Communities

A word from Community Participation Group Chair Mike Jones

Our Community Groups continue to be the lifeblood of Loughborough in Bloom. Throughout the year, hundreds of Community Group Volunteers can be seen working across the town, enhancing their local environment and making Loughborough a great place to live, work and visit.

Activities of the community groups are co-ordinated via monthly Community participation meetings of the "Community Participation Group" (CPG) to which **Group Chair Mike Jones** representatives of each group can attend. The "CPG" has a structured distribution network, through which group news is shared, together with information from East Midlands in Bloom (EMIB), Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), Royal Society Protection of Birds (RSPB), and funding sources.

Most of our forty or so Community Groups enter "It's Your Neighbourhood" each year and following a suggestion made by judges a few years back, are now increasingly working together on various initiatives, such as seed & plant swaps, cross volunteering and the building of Bird & Bat boxes and planters for each other.

Finally, our CPG vice-chair, June Bush, and myself, must record our personal thanks, plus those of our excellent Statutory and Business Partners, to the many unsung heroes who regularly give willingly of their time to make Loughborough in Bloom such an enduring and sustainable initiative - Long may it continue!

Stonebow Washlands

Stonebow Washlands is a rich wildlife area, on the North side of town, which is managed in partnership between the Friends of Stonebow and Charnwood Borough Council, via its green spaces' provider, idverde.

Three small pools provide an attraction for water birds such as Mallard, Moorhens and Swans, and most of the grassed areas are allowed to grow until Autumn to encourage wildlife. A variety of Fruit trees have been planted by the friends of Stonebow and have started to bear fruit. The views shown include the same main walkway in February and June, as one demonstration that the volunteers work all the year round.







Top: The main walkway in June. Bottom: The same walkway in Feb.

EMiB award for Loughborough

Loughborough was delighted to host the EMiB Award Ceremony in September at Loughborough Town Hall. To cap it off, the town managed to win the award of Least Littered Town. Well done to everyone who helps to keep Loughborough clean and tidy.



Pat Cook at the EMiB awards

Raising funds for Marion's bench



The Loughborough in Bloom community have been busy raising funds for Bloom and to have a bench dedicated to former Bloom Chair Marion Smith, who died in 2020 after a short illness. The bench will be installed in July in Queen's Park, with Marion's family in attendance.

A cake stall was held at Loughborough Market last year, which also sold copies of the Loughborough in Bloom calendar.

Thank you to everyone who has donated so far, and those who have helped out with fundraising.

Men and Women in Sheds

Men and Women in Sheds, on the Oaks Industrial Estate, is run under the auspices of Age UK Leicestershire & Rutland and offers a safe place for individual pursuits and community projects. Those who attend use their various skills including Woodwork,

Metal Work, Pottery and Knitting & Needlework.

The Gardening arm is strong in volunteers and has developed a pleasing outdoor Flower, and Vegetable Garden.

The volunteer gardeners also maintain the planters outside John Storer House on Wards End, near to Queens Park and enter It's Your Neighbourhood each year.





Left: The meticulously carved bench produced for Loughborough Outwood's Right: Fifty bird boxes produced for Watermead Country Park.

Thorpe Acre Village Green

Thorpe Acre Village Green is maintained by Thorpe Acre Community Association, which is a regular participant in It's Your Neighbourhood.

As well as maintaining floral displays throughout the year, the Association, works with the scouts and local

church to organise various well-attended events on the green, including for St Georges Day, Remembrance Day and of course more recently the Coronation of King Charles III.

The floral displays are sponsored locally and sourced from local garden centres, often at concessionary prices.



Top: Snowdrop walk through Thorpe Acre Green Spinney. Bottom: Remembrance display on the Green.

It's Your Neighbourhood

This year, Loughborough in Bloom is acting as the umbrella for 32 It's Your Neighbourhood schemes, which have amazing numbers of volunteers working across the town and throughout the year. The groups are kept in touch via an e-mail distribution network and meet regularly via Zoom video conferencing. Local presentation events are organised each year and usually elicit 100% attendance. Informal displays can also be seen in the town, by individual householders who have been enthused by the efforts of our IYN volunteers.





Left: Bill and Ben themed householder display on Forest Road. Right: IYN certificate recipients in 2022 on Thorpe Acre Green.

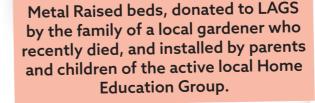
Working Together

Some years ago, while congratulating us on the number of local IYN schemes, Judges asked if it would be possible to get them working together. We worked hard on that and now more than half of our community Groups work with, or alongside, at least one and often several, other groups. An excellent example is the joint seed swaps and plant stalls by Transition Loughborough, LAGS, Fearon Hall, Incredible Edible and Rectory Wildlife Garden. In addition, Loughborough Lions provide Volunteers to work at the local Hospital and Rainbows Hospice plus Glebe House and Men & Women in Sheds produce all manner of Bird & Bat Boxes, Insect Houses and Planters for various other groups.



An explanatory talk, at LAGS allotment, during the University Fruit Routes event.









Volunteers on the Transition Allotment, enjoying a brief rest during the "Good to Grow" National Day of Action

LaGS event and harvesting

On Saturday October 8, 2022, in the dappled autumn sunshine, the Landscaping and Gardening Society (LaGS) hosted their reunion event in collaboration with the Fruit Routes annual harvest.

This is an event which the Gardens Team support every year with harvesting and preevent preparation and although a little earlier than other years, the Team managed to collect a good crop of fruit for pressing and baking.

There was a walk of the Fruit Routes, a scavenger hunt, apple pressing, the long-anticipated bake-off, nature collage and crafts, and pumpkin carving!

The Bake Off was judged on the day by Dan from Bom Bom Patisserie.

The Gardens Team, along with Andy and Jamie from Furniture and members from the Sustainability Team helped make the event a huge success, which was attended many and enjoyed by all.



Bandstand concerts return to Queen's Park

Queen's Park in Loughborough will host a variety of exciting concerts for residents and visitors to attend this summer.

The bandstand concerts made a triumphant return in 2022 following the coronavirus pandemic, with well-attended performances from the Charnwood Symphonic Wind Orchestra, Loughborough Male Voice Choir, New Orleans Hotshots Jazz Band and more.

Residents of all ages are invited to come down to Queen's Park and enjoy an afternoon of music on the following dates:

Sunday June 11 - Loughborough Salvation Army Band

Sunday June 25 - Loughborough Concert Band

Sunday July 2 - Melbourne Town Band

Sunday July 16 - Loughborough Male Voice Choir

Sunday July 23 - Charnwood Concert Band

Sunday August 6 - The New Orleans Hotshots Jazz Band

All concerts commence at 2pm and are free to attend.

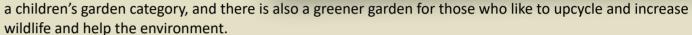


Tenant garden competition

The council tenant and leaseholder garden competition opened between December 1, 2022 and June 2, 2023. This year , the council introduced new categories and the chance to send photos of gardens throughout the year.

The competition is a great way to allow our tenants and leaseholders to showcase their impressive gardening skills and the pride taken in them.

The council encouraged the younger generation to take part by including



All entrants are invited to an award ceremony later in the year where entrants are able to meet other and staff from the council.



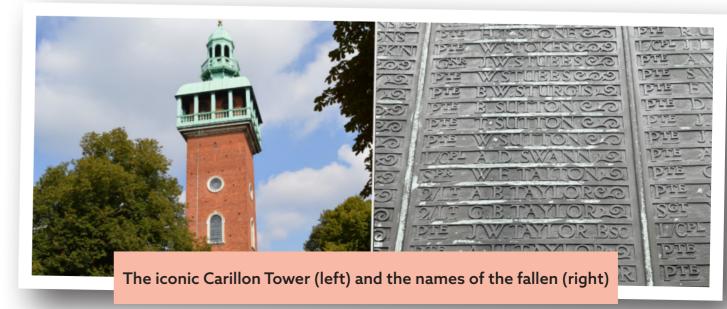
Remembering Loughborough's fallen heroes

The Carillon Tower in Loughborough is marking its 100th anniversary this year.

Charnwood Borough Council will be holding a ceremony to celebrate the tower's momentous year on July 22, exactly 100 years since it was officially opened.

Other events are also being planned and we are using 2023 as an opportunity to uncover some fascinating stories about the Carillon.

The Carillon Tower is the town's war memorial and around its base are the 478 names of servicemen who lost their lives in the First World War, Second World War, Korean and Falkland Wars and the conflict in Cyprus. You can find more out about the stories of those whose names are shown on the side of the Carillon Tower by visiting the Carillon Museum roll of honour at www.loughborough-rollofhonour.com.



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

With thanks to Mike Jones, Pat Cook, June and John Bush, GROW Loughborough, idverde, Glebe House, Loughborough University, Leicestershire County Council and Charnwood Borough Council for providing the images used within the portfolio.

