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Issue #1
Autumn



A Quarterly Insight into the Victoria Park Project

Victoria Park Ashford



Volunteering News >>>

Conservation Roles Available

Covid restrictions have caused delays to our volunteering launch but we're delighted to announce that we have opportunities for you to get involved launching now!

Our partners at KSCP are looking to start their conservation activity shortly and will need a whole bank of volunteers to help. Our website will be updated with more detailed information in the coming weeks but for now there is further information on the last page of this newsletter for all interested in getting involved.

Further volunteering roles to be launched shortly!



Responding to the Pandemic

Activity Plan and Capital Works update

Covid has had an impact on communities worldwide and the consequences continue to be felt. As well as delays to the capital works plan we have made revisions to the activity plan programme to ensure we can deliver community activities that are engaging and beneficial to the community, whilst keeping everyone safe.

On March 23rd the country went into lockdown, and this coincided with the first members of the Victoria Park team coming on

board. As the park team has grown over lockdown we have been able to explore adaptations and potential ways forward. In an ever changing environment this has been challenging, so we have created a programme that has the flexibility and resilience to be able to deliver the project

outcomes whilst protecting public safety. We have already delivered online versions of in-person activities and worked to make the park accessible from a digital perspective. Our social media presence has increased, with accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. We are currently working to increase the website content to keep the community up to date with opportunities and activities, and to make it

possible to access project activities from home. The capital works programme is in the planning phase, reviewing delivery dates and

The project end date has been extended from 2023 to 2024, to enable all works to be properly completed

the impact on the park calendar. We are very lucky to have such strong support from both the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Ashford Borough Council, enabling the project to maintain its strong vision for the park's future by extending the project end date from 2023 to 2024, to

enable all works to be properly completed. We will also be putting a temporary 'meanwhile' hub building in the park to bridge the gap in the capital works programme. This will allow us a presence in the park and covered location for activities to take place. In the meantime, we will continue through winter with activities online and the start of our in-park volunteering programme.

Quarter in Review >>>

'Barklife' Online Dog Show attracts 396 Entries!

We held a fun online dog show throughout July and August to celebrate all of our wonderful doggy community!



The categories were Dapper Gentleman, Beautiful Lady, Most Appealing Eyes, Cutest Puppy, Most Regal Pensioner, Best Rescue, Fanciest Dresser, Waggiest Tail, Best Child Handler and Best Trick.

Lots of Competition

In July we launched 'Barklife', our first virtual dog show to celebrate the vibrant and diverse dog community we have both around the park and people using the park from further afield. There were ten categories plus Best in Show.

The event was run as a Facebook event which people could interact with. We were overwhelmed by the response with an immediate uptake that was sustained for the weeks leading up to judging day. We were very lucky to attract judges Emma Betts, owner of A-Z



Animal Care in Bethersden, Shannon Springford, member of Team GB's Agility team and Agility champion and our very own David Robinson, Heritage Officer at the council. The top seven in each category were awarded rosettes and certificates and we had fantastic feedback from all involved. Thanks to all who took part!

Coming soon >>>

Our Winter Edition will be out in January!

Quarter in Review >>>

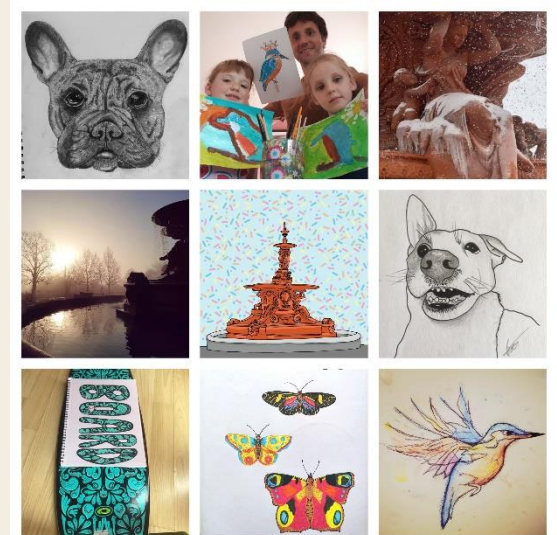
Arts Challenge Attracts Stellar Talent

Back in May we started a weekly arts challenge on our social media accounts. The challenge is aimed at young people from ages 4-18 but we encourage anyone that wants to, to get involved.

Every week we set a new theme based around the park and its community.

Some of the themes so far have included The Hubert Fountain, kingfishers, butterflies, pet portraits, and wheels. We love seeing the creative entries that people send in.

To find out how to take part head over to our social media accounts on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.



Follow Us>

 Victoria Park Ashford

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Email: VictoriaPark@ashford.gov.uk

Friends of Victoria Park

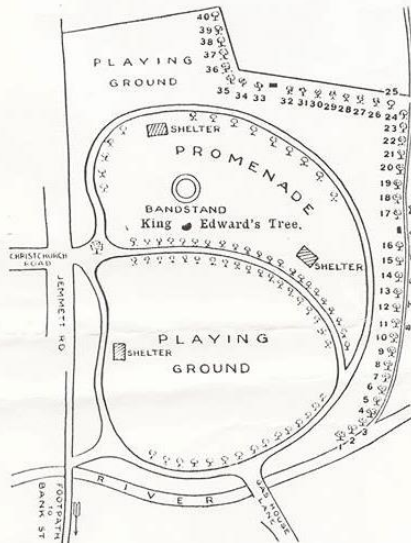
If you're interested in becoming a Friend of the park, please look at the website: victoriaparkashford.uk/

Hidden Heritage: Arbor Day

This project has really shone a light on the history of the park, including some of the more forgotten elements of it's past. Here we explore Arbor Day.

The Centre of Seaside Kent.

VICTORIA PARK.



Plan of Park showing position of the trees planted on Arbor Day, the names associated with which are given underneath.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. GANON ALCOCK. | 31. EDWARD BALLARD. |
| 2. FREDERICK HYLAND. | 32. CAPTAIN WELLDON. |
| 3. FREDERICK LEE. | 33. JOSEPH EDMONDS. |
| 4. HENRY HEADLEY. | 34. WILLIAM DENNESS. |
| 5. HENRY IGGLESDEN. | 35. WILLIAM RICHARDSON. |
| 6. ALFRED HART. | 36. S. C. HOOKE. |
| 7. JOHN RUTTER. | 37. HENRY COWAN. |
| 8. THOMAS THURSTON. | 38. WILLIAM MAPPERSON. |
| 9. WILLIAM HANDCOCK. | 39. RICHARD HARRISON. |
| 10. THOS. EBENEZER SCOTT. | 40. CHARLES HYLAND. |
| 11. WILLIAM HARVEY. | 41. T. G. KETHER. |
| 12. WILLIAM JARVIS. | 42. CHARLES IGGLESDEN. |
| 13. J. U. BUGLER. | 43. HARRY CLEMETSON. |
| 14. JOHN BARLING. | 44. JOHN BROAD. |
| 15. JOHN FLAR. | 45. WILLIAM FERRELL. |
| 16. JOHN GREERY. | 46. GEORGE MEACHELL. |
| 17. GEORGE WILKS. | 47. GEORGE KNOWLES. |
| 18. GEORGE HARPER. | 48. GRAHAM WALLAS. |
| 19. H. S. GIBBS. | 49. JOHN HARVEY. |
| 20. JOSEPH HATCHELOR. | 50. JOSEPH GAGE. |

The two shelters at the top end of the Park were presented by Messrs. LEWIS & HYLAND, and the other one by the ALFRED JOINT, STOCK Bread and Flour Co. The Bandstand was presented by the late Mr. W. G. Hancock.

Arbor Day (or Empire Day) was an annual celebration started in 1910 where trees were planted in the park by local dignitaries, dedicated to local and national figures. We particularly love how Ashford is described as 'The Centre of Seaside Kent' as it gives a real feel for how the town and county were viewed at that time. We are currently looking at further investigating the details behind this day and the trees planted.

To celebrate this heritage moment we will be introducing a new annual event on May bank holiday 2021. This event will be called Arbor Day and will be a celebration of the parks plant life and community. There will be family games and activities, and opportunities for local community groups to get involved. We will also be planting a tree dedicated to a local person nominated by the community. To ensure we are able to hold the event regardless of the climate we will be preparing both an online and a socially distanced option and will decide which one will run nearer the time.

If you have any ideas or would like to get involved in helping with the event, please contact Victoria.fannon@ashford.gov.uk.



Mr Harper's Birthday

We assisted Create Festival by offering a birthday card activity and a blog post all about who Mr Harper was. We had a great take up on the activity and are already planning what next year's event will look like!

Call for Community Groups

We're holding monthly zoom calls for all community groups interested in getting updates about the park activities or wanting to have a forum to ask questions and put points across. If your community group would like to call in on the next call, it will be on **Monday 7th December at 7pm on Zoom**. For meeting details and to attend, please contact: victoria.fannon@ashford.gov.uk

Regular Social Media Posts

Our social media presence has increased throughout the start of the project. Our regular features include the Wednesday Weekly Arts Challenge and Fitness Fridays. Our YouTube channel also hosts a variety of interesting pieces including craft tutorials for individuals or families to try.

If you haven't checked them out yet, give them a try!

Quarter in Review >>>

Social Media Youth Takeover!



During the 13th to the 18th of July local young people aged 12-18 were given the opportunity to take over the Victoria Park social media accounts for the week.

The week featured videos and post from groups such as MGD Dance Crew, Sk8side, Ashford Vineyard and We Are Kidz 2. There was also a crafty tutorial from Animate Arts who showed how you could make your own festival flag at home. The week ended with Create @Home a virtual celebration of Create Festival, as we were unable to invite people to celebrate in the park this year.

If you missed Kids Takeover Week you can catch up with all of the content on our social media accounts.

THE MYSTERY OF THE

VICTORIA PARK STAGS

We are looking at the history of Victoria Park and are hoping to help solve a long held mystery - What happened to the iconic stags of Victoria Park?!

The stags were gifted to the park by Mr George Harper along with the Hubert Fountain. They had also come from Olantigh House in Wye where they resided alongside the fountain. They were magnificent life sized iron models so will not have been easy to move. However, we have no record of when or why they disappeared! It was assumed they may have been taken during the war for metal until a photo surfaced dated circa 1950, depicting the stags on their plinths without their antlers.

The Evidence:

(Image 1) The fountain after installation - Stags are on their plinths

(Image 2) The fountain undated- Stags are present but with broken antlers

(Image 3) The fountain dated circa. 1950- Stags are still present, but without their antlers (picture must be accompanied by 'Copyright The Francis Frith Collection')

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So can you help?

If you have photos from the 1940's onwards of Victoria Park and, particularly the fountain area, or have any record or relative with memories of the park throughout that time, then please get in touch with Victoria Fannon on victoria.fannon@ashford.gov.uk

We are also looking for willing participants in a project gathering oral history about peoples living memories of the park so if you would like to be involved as a volunteer memory collector, or have memories to share from 1900- today, then get in touch.



NATURE'S NOTEBOOK

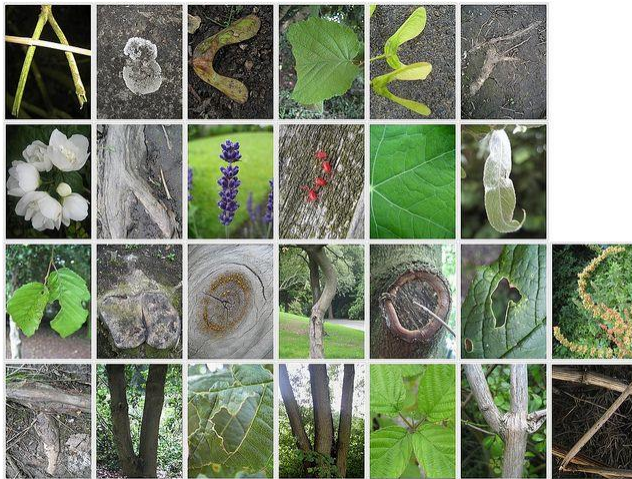
THE A-Z OF NATURE IN VICTORIA AND WATERCRESS PARKS

What you need: A camera (the one on your phone will be fine)
Access to a computer (to download and edit images)

What to do: Explore Victoria Park and Watercress Fields and, in no particular order, capture images of nature that can illustrate the alphabet. Some letters will be easy like A for acorns or autumn, Z will be more challenging but could be a photograph of something shaped like Z or...?

When: As soon as you are ready to start. You might even want to make this a seasonal challenge and do it in spring, summer, autumn and winter!

What then: Once you've taken all the photos you want then it's time to get creative with editing and presentation. Create your own unique A-Z and send it in to us, so we can share it on Victoria Park's Facebook and Instagram sites*.

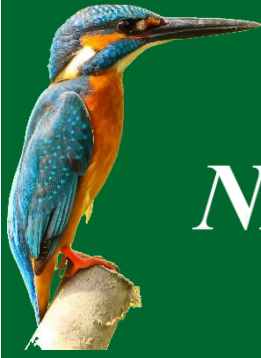


***How to share:** Email to Victoria.Fannon@ashford.gov.uk

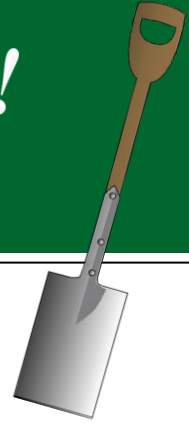
Your file will be quite large, so send using a free file sharing site like Objective Connect or We Transfer. If you have a photographic question Email: diane.comley@kent.gov.uk

There are several free application software packages available to help you compile images, (Fotojet/Canva/Fotor/PhotPpad/Pizap). Have a look and see what you prefer.





WE NEED NATURE NATURE NEEDS YOU!



Join the VICTORIA PARK CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS

all welcome over 16 years old

Meet people, get active, enjoy the outdoors and make a difference.

There will be an introduction to the different kinds of habitat and wildlife that can be found in the parks.

Talks and workshops will be given by professionals on some of the many different species of flora and fauna that can be found here.

Help manage and create space for nature to thrive and for people to enjoy.

THE CONSERVATION TASKS

- 5 tasks spread out over the year - dates to be confirmed
- Tools will be provided with a tool talk on safe use of different equipment
- Each task will start with a short talk on the work and how it benefits specific species or biodiversity in general
- Tasks days will start at 9:30 and finish around 3:30 (with breaks of course!)
- All you need is your own packed lunch, refreshments, sturdy footwear, waterproofs and a love of the outdoors.



To find out more and sign up to be a volunteer contact:

Diane Comley from the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership

Email: diane.comley@kent.gov.uk or victoria.fannon@ashford.gov.uk

Telephone: 03000 410900 (leave a message if no answer)



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