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Ludwell Valley Park

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## December 2020 Newsletter

December: the year is nearly done - thank goodness some might say! So we are going to have a little look back, but then look forward to what 2021 might be like in Ludwell Valley. We'll talk about mud as well - on which point, see the stop press article below!

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## Mud!

If you've ventured much into the Valley in recent weeks, you'll have seen how it is even muddier than usual. The worse spot has been near the scrape, down near the Panny, where the soil from the scrape has been used to create a new stretch of traditional Devon bank. We have planned with Devon Wildlife Trust to plant up the bank in November and tidy up the whole area - but then lockdown intervened... So thank you to DWT, who have made it passable again, as you can see from the inset photo, for which thanks to Jane Martin.

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## STOP PRESS: more mud expected!!!

As the next stage in the improvements funded by the Viridor Credits grant, hedge-laying and fence installation is due to go ahead this next week. It will make more mud, but hopefully everyone will agree it will be worth it. The laid hedges will quickly grow back to form a continuous, thick hedgerow. It's a traditional way of enclosing farm fields that will be beneficial to many species of wildlife.

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## 2020: Looking Back

It's been frustrating and difficult year, but as many of you have said: "Thank goodness for Ludwell Valley!" It's been a place an increasing number of people have enjoyed, a pocket of countryside in the midst of the city. We watched the spring unfold, the blackthorn blossom, the wildflowers bloom, the wild cherries ripen, the cattle graze (they were such handsome creatures this year that there were two separate offers to buy one or two to save them from their intended fate!) Then the changing autumn colours, dramatic fungi, and now the skeletal trees - and mud!

It's not all been good: there has been a lot more litter than usual, but thanks to a lot of very public spirited people, it has always been picked up and disposed of very quickly, so keeping the place looking good - and safer for wildlife. There was the horrible incident with someone leaving traps in one of the copses; and then just recently someone vandalised the noticeboards by the Community Orchard. This was reported very quickly, the Ludwell Life board cleaned up well but the DWT one is going to have to be replaced - what a waste! But frustrating as this is for anyone reading this newsletter, we need to keep it in perspective and remember that the great majority of people who come into the Valley value and look after it - and enjoy it!





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## 2021: Looking Forward

2021 will be an exciting year in the Valley, with many changes as the Viridor Credits project comes to fruition. We will have six more wildflower fields; those layed hedges quickly establishing themselves; and the scrape down near the Panny becoming a semi-permanent pond, alive with frogs, newts, dragonflies and all sorts of pond life. And maybe the odd bathing dog! (Not to be

encouraged though!)

If enough of us can get vaccinated quickly enough, we hope to be able to start up conservation tasks again, plant more fruit trees in the Community Orchard, develop the guided walks idea - and just enjoy being out there! Happy new year!

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## Finally, we wish you all a Happy Christmas!

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Ludwell Life is an independent community group, set up to protect and enhance Ludwell Valley Park  
Our mailing address is: 50 Well Oak Park, EX2 5BB

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