
Ludwell Life

Sharing Enhancing Enjoying Protecting...
Ludwell Valley Park



November 2022 Newsletter

The nights draw in, the leaves are turning golden and the cows have gone (did you see the video posted on Facebook of some of them being unceremoniously rounded up?) Winter can't be far away! But winter, when vegetation has died back, birds are no longer nesting and lots of mammals, reptiles and amphibians are starting to hibernate is when when practical conservation tasks can happen again.

In this newsletter, news of what's happening in the valley; three hedge laying sessions being run by DWT; planting more trees in the Community Orchard (and hopefully having our first wassail); and things starting to happen in Northbrook. And we have the latest in our "Why I Love Ludwell" series.

Also, in the last newsletter we asked if anyone could give some time to help strengthen the Steering Group. We are so pleased to have welcomed Adele Thomas onto the group, and to have the IT skills of Adam Ainsworth to support us.



What's Happening in the Valley

Amongst other things:

- The old sports field next to the park has been handed over to Devon Wildlife Trust to manage and will be made accessible for the public to enjoy. As you can see in the photo, DWT has been busy putting up new fencing and signs to identify boundaries and there may be opportunities to get involved with tree planting in the future - watch this space!
 - DWT has replaced the vandalised noticeboards (let's keep an eye on them);
 - the cows have gone;
 - the grass in Cuckoo Field is recovering well after the fire in September;
 - the drought has had its effect: the pond is still almost empty and even the blackberries mostly shrivelled up. But now the rains are back!
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Hedge laying

Devon Wildlife Trust are going to be running three sessions in Ludwell; on Tuesday 29 & Wednesday 30 November, and Sunday 4 December, all from 10am to 3.30pm

This is a chance to learn how to lay a hedge in the traditional Devon style. DWT will supply full tuition and tools. You'll need to be fairly physically fit as the work is tiring to the arms and back. There will be just 8 places each day, so if you are interested, you can find more information and reserve your spot at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hedge-laying-at-ludwell-valley-park-tickets-450571991957>



Community Orchard

We haven't set the date yet, but in the new year we will be planting more trees in the orchard - and we are talking with Wren Music about the possibility of holding our first wassail in January. If you've never been to a wassail, it is an old traditional ceremony, great fun, to encourage new growth and a bountiful harvest from the apple trees.

A wassail starts at dusk with the preparation of a special drink made in a wassail bowl. The drink is carried to the orchard where are rhymes to be chanted to the trees, music and maybe a fire! If we can make it happen, we'll let you know the date and time.



Photo: Andrew Carpenter

Northbrook Approach

The proposal to create a new wildlife haven at the former Northbrook golf course is going to become a reality! The public consultation last year showed overwhelming support for the park to be developed for wildlife and as a peaceful community space and now the City Council have given the project the go ahead and allocated £222,615 towards the costs. Devon Wildlife Trust will be working in partnership with Exeter City Council to create a wild arboretum, involving the community throughout - we hope to have more news soon.



Why I Love Ludwell

Each newsletter we are sharing stories from our followers about why they love Ludwell. Maybe you could write a piece for January? It can be long or short, maybe just a sentence or two. Please contact us at: ludwelllife@gmail.com.

Here is Adele Thomas' story (featuring a much loved dog!):

"I've never lived in a city before, and it's been made much easier seeing Ludwell park from the windows at the back of my house. I was able to trick myself into believing I still lived in the country and I was still very close to nature.

It was even better when we got a dog to help my husband recover from mental health problems and we started to walk in the park daily, the red mud being brought inside by muddy paws seemed insignificant compared to the laughter and happiness she brought us by prancing through the long grass like a gazelle or clumsily chasing crows and squirrels with her tongue hanging out and a big smile on her face. She never caught anything, but her enthusiasm and

happiness never subsided.

But it was through lockdown we really saw the benefits of Ludwell. One daughter, her husband and their two children lived nearby in Southbrook Road and we are a very close family. Having them come to our fence to wish me happy birthday in March led to tears, our granddaughter heartbroken she wasn't allowed in for a cuddle. So we met in the middle in the park to swap gifts; home made biscuits, drawings, games new clothes, we had picnics together, far enough apart to avoid angry reactions. Anything to stay connected and make our family feel whole again. When I reflect back, Ludwell Park saved us many times from the challenges of what at the time were extreme difficulties.

So these are the reasons I love Ludwell and owe it my gratitude. I will fight to protect it from development and help to keep it wild and beautiful. So others can enjoy and reap the same benefits we have."

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Ludwell Life is an independent community group, set up to protect and enhance Ludwell Valley Park

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