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Sharing Enhancing Enjoying Protecting...
Ludwell Valley Park

Planting new trees in the community orchard,
Sunday Jan 19th. Tea, cakes and you?!
Put it in your diary now



Welcome to our October newsletter

It has been some time since we have been in contact with you. There has been a bit of a hiatus whilst Exeter City Council were in negotiation with Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) for them to take over the management of all of the Valley Parks in Exeter. That was finally concluded in May. We have since met with DWT and shared our ideas and hopes for the future. They confirmed that they welcome our role as an independent community group supporting Ludwell Valley Park, which is great news. So now it is full steam ahead again!

Ludwell Life - Be a Friend

A message from David Robertson, our newly appointed Treasurer.

One of the consequences of the uncertainty over the protracted negotiations between DWT and Exeter City Council was that we rather let our Friends of Ludwell Life scheme fall into abeyance. Now that we know DWT welcome our role as a community group supporting Ludwell Valley Park, we are relaunching our Friends scheme and hope that as many of you as possible will sign up as Friends.

We have done very well in attracting grants for the various projects and improvements that have been made to the park. However, grants won't cover basic day to day running costs. And we will be in a much stronger position when applying for future grants if we can show a high level of local involvement and support.

Friends' support has allowed us not only to cover ongoing running costs, but has also meant that we have been able to:

- Run regular conservation and litter picking sessions;
- Begin the Community Orchard, with over 20 fruit trees planted so far and more to be added this winter and beyond;
- Secure funding for the Panny Path project, which was completed in early 2019; and
- Plan for benches to be installed at a site near the orchard by spring of next year

To sign up, or renew your support as a Friend, please visit our website: <http://ludwelllife.org.uk/friends/>



Making Ludwell Valley Park better for wildlife

This winter we will run more conservation sessions. If you'd be interested in helping to run simple, enjoyable conservation tasks, with full support given, do keep an eye on our website: <http://ludwelllife.org.uk/events/> or on [Facebook](#). We hope to arrange some sessions in the next couple of months but one date

for your diary already is Sunday 19th January 2020. Meeting at 11am, we will be planting more trees in the Community Orchard - there will be other jobs to do in the orchard as well, and tea, coffee and cake as usual. More details nearer the time!

New benches near community orchard

Some of you will remember that we have been fundraising to install some suitably rustic benches near the Community Orchard. The idea is to create a safe, relaxing place where walkers in the park, and workers from the Pynes Hill offices, can sit and enjoy the space. We have had several very generous donations and very grateful to those people who have been so generous. A special thank you to AWP and to Redrow homes at Pynes Hill for their donations.

There has been some concern about the best location for these benches, but we are now making good progress to bring the project to fruition. The final location is to be agreed with Devon Wildlife Trust, taking account of the concerns raised but also trying to put the benches where they are most usable, with open views across the orchard.

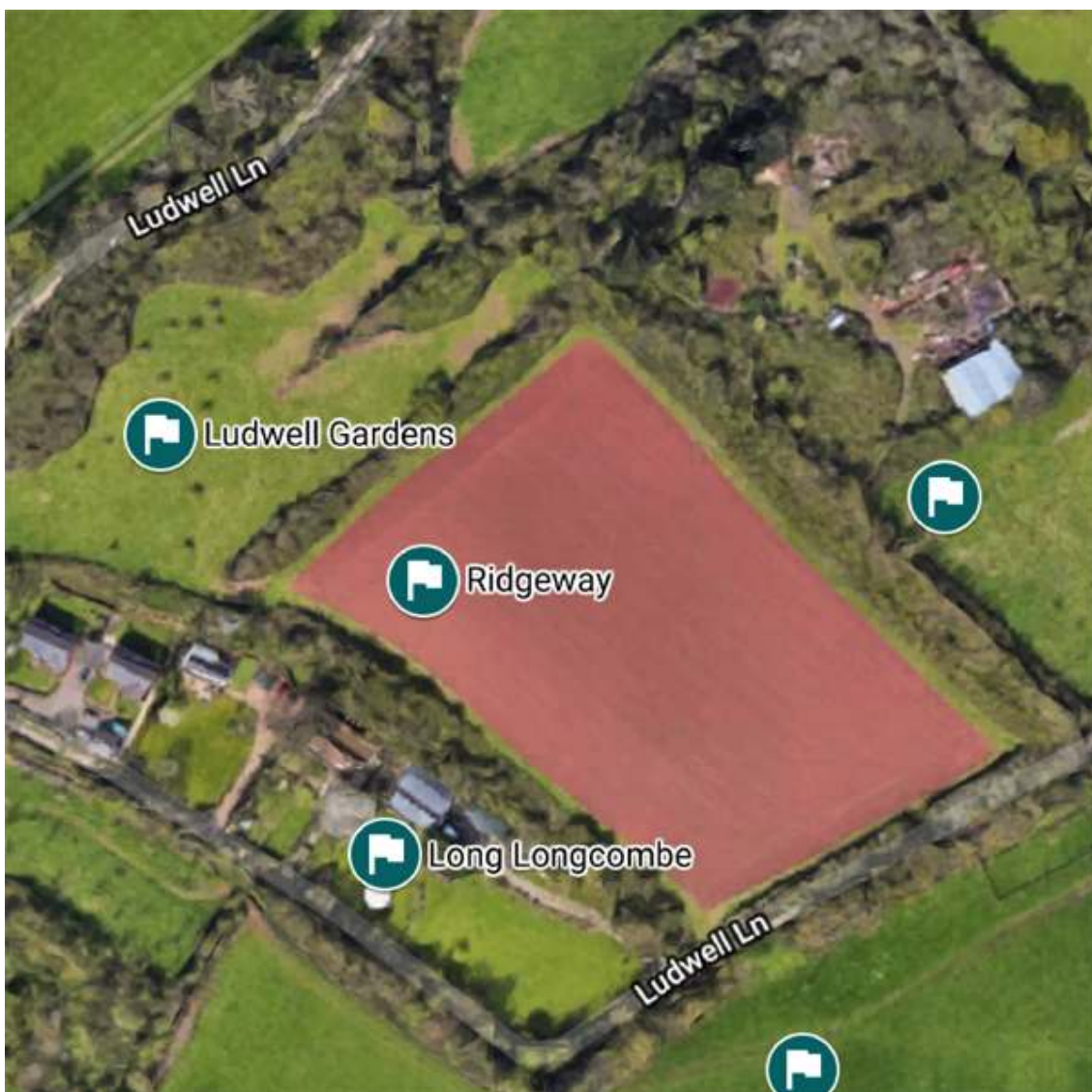
The benches that will look something like this.



History of the Ludwell Valley

One of our Ludwell Lifers, Laurie Fentimen, recently gave a talk to Heavitree Local History Group on the history of our valley. Laurie included the story of the Snow family, who were the landlords of the Country House Inn but also bought two fields in Ludwell Valley in the 1920s and built up a successful market gardening business. On the map below, the two fields they bought are the ones called Ridgeway and Ludwell Gardens. They grew flowers that were cut and sent up to Covent Garden in London. Remarkably, some of these flowers were sold to Dutch traders – tulips to Amsterdam!

If you'd like to know more about the fascinating history of the valley, have a look on our website at <http://ludwelllife.org.uk/history/>



Ash dieback

Finally, we're afraid there is some bad news. Glance around Ludwell Valley – or any of the Valley Parks in Exeter - and you will see the much-loved European ash tree in the hedges and copses. Sadly, you may also spot the signs of ash dieback, a serious fungal disease which causes the ash tree's branches to die, making the limbs more prone to snapping and falling and eventually killing the tree.

Estimates are that at least 90% of the UK's ashes will be affected. There is ash dieback in Exeter, and in all of the Valley Parks including Ludwell, and it will continue to spread. We are going to lose many, many trees.

What to expect and what we can do

To keep people safe in the Valley Parks, Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) are monitoring ash trees, and they may need to start removing some this winter - especially those next to paths, boundaries and other infrastructure. They will aim for minimal disruption to visitors, and to wildlife, but may need to close some paths during removal work. Look out for specific information, which will be posted online.

We understand all too well how the loss of ash trees will affect the landscapes and the wildlife in the parks. DWT will be replacing ash with other trees where possible. If you want to help out, look out for information about projects and volunteer tasks where you can get involved in planting trees in Ludwell - and the other Valley Parks.

Peter Burgess, DWT's Director of Conservation and Development, has written a really good article, explaining all this more fully. It is well worth reading.

If you want to know more, do have a look at DWT's webpage on ash dieback: <https://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/ash-dieback>. There is also a very good website if you want to keep up to date with developments, called Devon Ash Dieback Resilience Forum: www.devonashdieback.org.uk

If you want to contact DWT directly about this, you can do so by e-mail to: valleyparks@devonwildlifetrust.org

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.

For more regular updates, please follow us on Twitter or join our Facebook group and like our Facebook page

Ludwell Life **Facebook group** : for people who want to share news and views about the valley park. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ludwelllife.org.uk/?ref=bookmarks>.

Facebook page which can be shared, especially when we put on events. <https://www.facebook.com/LudwellLife/>

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