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Ludwell Life

Sharing Enhancing Enjoying Protecting...
Ludwell Valley Park



Photo credit: Julie King. Shortlisted for the [South West MS Centre 2023 Calendar](#)

September 2022 Newsletter

There are two main items in this newsletter, both a little longer than usual, but we think both justify the extra space. We hope you'll agree! One is a report back from our recent meeting with Devon Wildlife Trust, the other is the third in our new regular feature, 'Why I Love Ludwell'.

But first, a quick update on what's been going on in the Valley; on Burn the Curtain

and the Imaginarium of Us, in the Valley on 23rd and 24th of this month; and we need help to keep Ludwell Life developing...

What's Happening in the Valley

- DWT have replaced the vandalised noticeboards (let's keep an eye on them);
- the cows are back;
- the grass in Cuckoo Field is recovering after the fire last month;
- the drought has had its effect: the pond is almost empty and even the blackberries are mostly shrivelled up. But now the rains are back.



Burn the Curtain & the Imaginarium of Us

Burn the Curtain and the Imaginarium will be in the Valley on 23rd and 24th of this month. If it's anywhere near as good as last year, it'll be worth going. Especially good for familiars. You can book a place at: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/burnthecurtain/736672/#>

Steering Group

There are four of us on the Steering Group and we need fresh blood and we need skills we are lacking (notably IT!) We meet only infrequently, including a meet up with DWT once every few months and otherwise we sort out things as they arise, mainly by e-mail. It isn't onerous, you can be involved to whatever degree suits you, but if we are to keep developing Ludwell Life and implementing new ideas, we do

need reinforcements. If you'd like to consider joining us, please do e-mail me, Laurie, at ludwelllife@gmail.com.



David and Andy recently met with Anya and Chris from DWT. They covered a lot of ground; news we'd like to share with you, so what follows is quite a bit longer than our usual articles.

The first bit of news is to announce the departure of Anya Oliver from DWT as she is moving on to pastures new. Ludwell Life wishes Anya every success in her new venture and to say how much we have appreciated her contribution to the success of the collaboration between us and the Wildlife Trust. It's been superb and we will miss you.

As yet we do not know if Anya will be replaced, as there is a remodelling of the structure within DWT to achieve new outcomes. The new structure will focus on 'wilder living' incorporating human involvement in the environment. No details as to exactly how this will impact on the valley parks as yet. We will still have Chris Moulton as the warden, but he will be losing Anya's support and also has five other valley parks to manage! So we should assist him as far we as we are able.

Litter isn't too great a problem at the moment in the valley, partly due to the kind people who do litter picks and this is gratefully acknowledged by all. However, vandalism has become more of an issue and DWT is giving consideration as to the best ways to minimise the impact.

Some specific points:

- The fence around the Scrape is temporary and is due to be removed in November. If thought worthwhile it may be replaced next summer. What do you think?
 - The pond plants we put in back in the winter, thanks to a very generous grant from Countess Wear Village Hall, have taken a bit of a bashing from the lack of a protective fence until late in the day and now the drought. DWT recognise
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this and have committed to put in some new plants in the middle of the scrape where they will be safer.

- With the help of DWT, we hope to install some bird and bat boxes in the park using the funds generated by you good people to enhance the park and its biodiversity.
- There are other plans for future events involving the community and we will keep you informed as best we can.
- The Parkland Drive gate is to be widened to allow the hay ballers to get in.
- DWT will continue to seek grants to improve the Topsham Road to Panny Bridge aspects of the park.
- Northbrook park negotiations with the Council continue. A report goes to Council on Tuesday recommending a phased approach with phase 1 to be funded now. You can read more at: https://news.exeter.gov.uk/plans-are-progressing-to-create-a-new-wildlife-haven-in-exeter/?fbclid=IwAR16aIMAtvpNoeahN_4-Boz9DVZwgW2mAFmTrM7UNIYpmZaqIEvJKFytA
- Plans to improve the Northbrook stream are still alive but costs may mean a slow roll out with most likely starting point at the Mincinglake end of the system.
- Good news: DWT has entered into a ten year agreement with Wesleyan Assurance to manage the land behind the tennis courts (which are not included). This will involve tree planting funded by Wesleyan and the addition of some fencing but improved access from the Valley. Wesleyan would like to see community involvement in the planting - so watch this space.

Finally, DWT is always looking for volunteers wardens to assist them in managing its sites so if you fancy this role then please go to DWT's web pages. It doesn't have to be an onerous task and DWT will give advice and support to anyone interested. Having said that, DWT is extremely grateful for Ludwell Lifers being the eyes and ears for them. People care about Ludwell and the other valley parks and this has been demonstrated on many occasions. Thank you.

If you've managed to read to the end of this then well done and thanks!



Why I Love Ludwell

Each newsletter, we are sharing stories from our followers entitled 'Why I Love Ludwell'. Who is going to write November's story please?! It can be long or short, maybe just a sentence or two. Please contact us at ludwelllife@gmail.com.

This time, Ann-Marie shares this heart-warming piece:

"Of all the paths you take in life, make sure a few of them are dirt".

• ***John Muir***

It wasn't until March 2020 when I bought my first home in the area that I knew Ludwell Valley existed.

Little did I know a couple of weeks into a global pandemic what a saving grace this place would become for me.

Not only did it provide me ample exercise for the last half of pregnancy (have you seen those hills?!) but for the first year of motherhood it provided me routine, changing landscape and appreciation for nature so close to the city.

I would like to think I handled our time in lockdown quite well but this would have been a very different story if it wasn't for Ludwell Valley.

Not only was I kept physically fit, especially with my daughter strapped to the

front of me for all walks, but it also kept me mentally sane.

Surrounding yourself in nature is so important on many levels and I loved nothing more than doing it with my daughter, her head resting on my chest, usually asleep but there to kiss whenever the urge arose.

Lockdown was very isolating and Ludwell provided the opportunity to be a part of a community. Seeing dog walkers, walkers, other mums all enjoying their time out the house for that one daily exercise, it reminded me that I wasn't alone in this strange time. We were all in it together.

I must admit, now that the pandemic is somewhat over and life is returning back to "normal" my Ludwell walks aren't as frequent.

Last year I was lucky enough to have a an apple tree planted in the orchard to commemorate the birth of my daughter May. She even helped to dig the hole! Ludwell Valley will always hold a special place in my heart and now my daughter has a tree that will grow along side her in this beautiful valley that I will be forever in awe of its beauty, come win, rain or shine."

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

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