

# **Acton Park**

## **Seasonal Report Update**

01/04/24 - 30/06/24

### **Seasonal Ranger:**

Hannah Farnell



**Park  
Maintenance**

**2  
Events**

**4  
School  
Sessions**

## **Contents**

<b>Completed Seasonal Work</b> .....	3
<b>Park maintenance</b> .....	3
Path Clearing and Wood Chipping .....	3
Noticeboards.....	3
History Information Board .....	4
Picnic Bench .....	4
Former Rose Garden .....	4
<b>Community Engagement</b> .....	5
<b>Events/ Schools / Volunteering/ Social Media</b> .....	5
<b>Events</b> .....	5
<b>School Sessions</b> .....	7
<b>Acton Park Voluntary Group</b> .....	8
<b>Social Media</b> .....	9
<b>Park Flora and Fauna</b> .....	10
<b>Flora</b> .....	10
<b>Fauna</b> .....	10
<b>Personal note from the park ranger</b> .....	11

## **Completed Seasonal Work**

### **Park maintenance**

The park requires year-round attention to ensure paths are clear and shrub beds are tidy. Maintenance involves hedge cutting, strimming, blowing the paths, weeding, pruning, clearing, painting and laying woodchip on muddied paths. Below is a summary of the main works completed in the park between April and June 2024.

#### **Path Clearing and Wood Chipping**

Hedges and trees have been trimmed back to ensure clear access along the paths. Path edges have been strimmed to keep them clear of stinging nettles and over hanging grass/weeds (picture 1), including the boardwalks behind the Japanese garden. Paths have also been blown clear of leaves, twigs and dirt.

Some paths in the park start to have soil build up at the edges, often near slopes, where rain washes the soil down; the mud has been scrapped away to ensure the tarmac doesn't continue to narrow (picture 2).



#### **Noticeboards**

Another of the Friends' notice boards has been vandalised and removed, leaving only one remaining by the Japanese garden.

Two new notice boards are in the process of being ordered, which will be metal framed and therefore won't rot like the wooden frames of the old Friends' boards have. Metal frames will improve their longevity in the park.

### History Information Board

The history information board has also suffered aging and vandalism, with the frame edges being pulled away. It has been temporarily removed, so it can be fitted to a new wood backing board and can then be reinstated. Enquiries have been made to the history museum to see if there are any interested parties to re-design the information board and bring it up to date, including the Tree of the Year win.

### Picnic Bench

A picnic bench closest to the children's playground has been sanded and stained.



### Former Rose Garden

The flower beds known formerly as the rose garden have been weeded with fresh woodchip laid, as well as the bed edges (sleepers) being sanded and stained.



## **Community Engagement**

### **Events/ Schools / Volunteering/ Social Media**

#### **Events**

Free community events are highly valued by the local community, with attendance increasing over the past few years, seeing between 100-400 people attend each event. Event topics vary with many including a trail around the park as well as games, craft and refreshments.

Two events have been held at the park in the last three months. At each event, the ranger has had the help of several members of the Acton Park Volunteer group who work hard to keep the event running smoothly and make bigger events possible. A local coffee company, Meet Me In The Morning, attend the events to serve refreshments, which has been an excellent addition to the event days.

#### **Cinnamon Trust “The Big Walk” Event**

**Date:** 06/05/24

**Details:** Arranged by an Acton Park volunteer, Ruth, and supported by the park ranger, Acton Park was one of the chosen locations for the Cinnamon Trust’s “The Big Walk” events. Three routes were mapped out around the park, varying in length for people to choose from. People could attend the walk with family, friends and four-legged companions. It offered people the opportunity to explore all areas of the park and talk with a Cinnamon Trust volunteer, who could explain the great work they do matching volunteer walkers up with dogs whose owners are no longer physically able to give them a walk.

**People attended:** 30



## The Great Mammal Mystery Trail

**Date:** 02/06/24

**Details:** Following on from the popular insect-themed event last year called “The Honey Thief”, The Great Mammal Mystery followed the same design; Participants had to follow the trail, find the clues and eliminate one suspect from their list to eventually determine who stole the nuts from the squirrels. We also had Meet Me In The Moring coffee van attend, ice cream van, face painting, games and craft activities. Unfortunately, although the weather was good, attendance was lower than usual. This could have been due to the timing of the event, as it was held on the last Sunday of Half Term when families were perhaps busy either returning from holiday or preparing for the school term ahead. This may suggest that events are better held at the start or middle of school holidays, rather than the end.

**People attended:** 100

<h1>The Great Mammal Mystery</h1>		
<div><div><p>The MDA (Mammal Detective Agency) need your help, someone has stolen Skippy the squirrel's nuts and they need your help to find out who!</p><p>Below is a list of suspects, one of them is the nut thief.</p><p>Follow the trail around the park to find the clues and use your detective skills to cross off one suspect at a time!</p></div></div>		
<b>Nut Thief Suspects:</b>		
<div><p>Magpie Legs:2</p><p>Foot type: Claw Coat type: Feathers Digs tunnels?: No Can live in groups</p></div>	<div><p>Field Mouse Legs:4</p><p>Foot type: Paw Coat type: Fur Digs tunnels?: Yes Solitary</p></div>	<div><p>Hedgehog Legs:4</p><p>Foot type: Paw Coat Type: Spines Digs tunnels?: No Solitary</p></div>
<div><p>Rat Legs:4</p><p>Foot type: Paw Coat type: Fur Digs tunnels?: Yes Lives in groups</p></div>	<div><p>Fox Legs:4</p><p>Foot type: Paw Coat type: Fur Digs tunnels?: Yes Solitary</p></div>	<div><p>Mole Legs:4</p><p>Foot type: Paw Coat type: Fur Digs tunnels?: Yes Solitary</p></div>
<div><p>Badger Legs:4</p><p>Foot type: Paw Coat type: Fur Digs tunnels?: Yes Lives in groups</p></div>	<div><p>Deer Legs:4</p><p>Foot type: Cloven Hoof Coat type: Fur Digs tunnels?: No Lives in groups</p></div>	<div><p>Stoat Legs:4</p><p>Foot type: Paw Coat type: Fur Digs tunnels?: No Solitary</p></div>
<b>Detective's Name:</b> _____		<b>The nut thief is:</b> _____

## **School Sessions**

The park ranger hosts one-hour educational sessions at the park, which are popular with the local schools and brownie clubs. The sessions aim to engage children via a mix of written and practical work. They will fill in handouts, often by exploring the surrounding area for hidden information and will then take part in a practical/craft activity. The goal is to encourage the kids to get active in the park and have a hands-on, fun experience out in nature. Learning outside can be hugely beneficial to children, often increasing information retention.

Acton Rainbows have been to visit the park, planting some wildflowers near the standing stones of the stone circle.

Acton Park Primary have attended a session on the plant life cycle where they competed a scavenger hunt around the park, spotting various stages of the plant life cycle and completed a seed bomb making activity.

Barkers Lane Primary have attended a session on minibeasts in the park, looking at what a minibeast is, where they live and what they eat. They went minibeast hunting in the woods, created their very own minibeast habitat piles, as well as decorated a wood cookie by drawing their favourite minibeast.

A session was also held at the Park with A-level geography students from Coleg Cambria. They looked at how to identify an ancient tree and worked through a calculation to find out how much CO<sub>2</sub> the sweet chestnut (which won Tree of the Year) stores. They also answered questions designed to provoke thoughts on why and how trees are a sanctuary for us and animals. They finished the session with leaf bashing, to print the leaf or flower pattern onto a piece of cloth.



Acton Rainbows



Barkers Lane Primary



Acton Park Primary



Coleg Cambria

## **Acton Park Voluntary Group**

The volunteer group continues to provide essential help for the upkeep of several areas of the park. The group meets every other Tuesday for a two-hour practical session followed by a well-earned cup of tea and biscuits. There are multiple enthusiastic members who care greatly about the park and who work hard to help maintain it. Between April and June, the volunteers have worked on multiple areas including: weeding the Japanese garden, painting benches, weeding the shrub bed by the playground, as well as weeding and mulching trees.

The volunteer sessions will continue to run every two weeks, led by Hannah, until another ranger is placed in the role, when they can then over-see the group.

Emily  
weeding  
cobbles by  
Japanese  
garden



Martin and Ruth  
Painting a bench



Emily and  
Ruth  
weeding  
Japanese  
garden



Before



Kate and Martin weeding  
shrub bed by playground



After

After weeding, fresh mulch  
was applied.

Ruth and  
Kate  
weeding  
tree bases



## **Social Media**

Engaging and educational information continues to be posted on the Acton Community Council's Facebook page, covering a range of topics relating to the park such as: wildlife and plant life in the park, progress pictures including ranger work, voluntary work completed by the Friends group and event advertising. Facebook is an excellent tool for: educating the public park ecology, providing updates on maintenance works that are completed by both the ranger and volunteers, as well as advertising park events.

## **Park Flora and Fauna**

The park is host to an array of plant species and animals, from fungi to bluebells and beetles to buzzards, it is a valuable place not just for visitors but also wildlife. Surveys have been undertaken over the years, recording wild flowers, bats and more. Over the past three months the following has been observed:

### **Flora**



Bracket Fungus



Muscari bulbs  
planted by volunteers



Tulip bulbs planted  
by volunteers



Native blue bells

### **Fauna**



Canada geese with goslings



Great crested grebe



Moorhen Juvenile

## **Personal note from the park ranger**

To Acton Community Council,

I would like to offer my sincere thanks for extending my contract and keeping me on as Acton's park ranger. As this was a career change, I was incredibly lucky to have the opportunity to work for yourselves in such a beautiful park. I have gained valuable experience, which has helped me to develop in an area I am passionate about. I have absolutely loved my time as Acton's park ranger and I am sad to be leaving the role. The opportunity for career progression has presented itself which I am eager to take but with a heavy heart. Acton Park is a beautiful place, much loved by its visitors and has become a special place for me too. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity and I wish the Community Council all the best with future projects in Acton Park.

Best regards,

Hannah Farnell