



THE HOULTON Signal

SPRING SUMMER 2020

First with the latest messages from Houlton, Rugby

LEARN ABOUT OUR world of wildlife

82 year old artist David Hockney recently said, "They can't cancel the spring" and this is certainly true at Houlton.

Whilst you're all staying home to stay safe, Houlton wildlife has come to life during the warmer days and lighter evenings. Read about our abundance of species in this issue of The Houlton Signal.

We're home to all kinds of weird and wonderful animals, and one of our newest residents is the stunning Kingfisher. One of the UK's most striking birds, you can't mistake their beautiful metallic blue and orange plumage and long bill, perfect for catching fish. These majestic birds have only been spotted in recent months, so keep an eye out for them perched on overhanging branches or swooping towards the water as they hunt for prey.

The rarest of the UK's amphibian species, the Great Crested Newt, lives in Houlton's ponds. During spring, they use the water to breed and spend most of the rest of the year in surrounding marshes and hedgerows.



Rare Great Crested Newts can be found in Houlton's ponds



The kingfisher is one of Houlton's newest residents

Their natural habitats criss-cross the development and have been enhanced to help protect the endangered creatures. You can spot them by their black back, bright orange underbelly and large jagged crest along the body and tail.

As part of our environmental plans, we've also created all kinds of animal habitats to help preserve and support wildlife in Houlton, including bat boxes, bug hotels and hedgehog highways for our prickly visitors to pass safely through residential areas. They enhance the natural habitats at Houlton, like badger sets, rabbit warrens, and surrounding fields with friendly cows and grazing sheep.

Eventually, Houlton will have over 500 acres of luscious green space for residents to explore. From wildlife corridors and open walkways to waterways, wildflower meadows and natural habitats. Since 2016, we've planted over 2,500 mature and semi-mature trees, with 17 different types of trees, from wispy willows to beech and oak trees in Dollman Common alone.



Also inside...

- Make your own bee bomb & Capture Houlton competition **P2**
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Help Houlton's wildlife with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

Everyone can play their part in creating a 'nature recovery network' to help wildlife thrive – even from your own homes and gardens – whether you have a window box, a garden or access to a community green space. Plus, it's scientifically proven that when we interact with the great outdoors we live happier, healthier lives! See our Top 10 Tips (on the opposite page) to get you started.

Gardens provide a vital refuge for all kinds of creatures, creating a home for some species and a 'service station' for others as they stop off on their journey. Simple actions like putting up a bird box, building a bug hotel, sowing some native wildflowers or allowing your grass to grow in some areas can make a real difference. Providing water in the form of a small pond or even just a bucket can help a range of species.

Get involved with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust's #30DaysWild this June to inspire people to connect with nature. With lots of ideas on how you can help wildlife on your doorstep, register for your free pack today... www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/30DaysWild.

Build a bug hotel for creatures



A snail helping out with a spot of gardening



Add water to encourage more species



Plant wildflowers in your garden

CAPTURE HOULTON COMPETITION

Calling all photographers...we want to see your snaps of Houlton in full bloom this spring/summer!

Simply grab your camera and see what you can find on your daily walk through Rugby's stunning surrounding countryside or even in your own back garden, whether its beautiful wildflower, feathered friends or little creatures.

Submit your entries by posting them to the pinned post on our Facebook page. The lucky winners will have their work printed and displayed at Houlton's photography exhibition later this year.

*Good luck and happy snapping!**

For full terms and conditions, visit our Facebook page.

* Please only take photos when you go out for your daily exercise – don't make a special trip out!



Houlton – captured by resident Cat Buffet

TOP 10 TIPS FOR A WILDER GARDEN

By ecologist and presenter, Mike Dilger

You may recognise Mike from the Really Wild events that we hold each May at Houlton. This year, we have had to cancel our event due to the Coronavirus but Mike wanted to send you his top tips and looks forward to seeing you next year.



1. Just add water

Putting in a water feature will make your garden infinitely more attractive to everything, from frogs and dragonflies to thirsty birds and mammals. The size of your pond doesn't matter – you could even use a washing up bowl sunk into the ground.

2. Plant a tree

Adding an extra dimension to your garden will provide both bed and breakfast for a whole range of creatures. You can't beat a crab apple for blossom in the spring and fruit in the autumn.

3. Think pollen and nectar

Herbaceous borders filled with flowers are vital for a whole range of invertebrates needing both nectar as a fuel source and pollen to feed their young.

4. Leave a quiet corner

Gardens can be busy places, so leaving a small undisturbed patch in a designated corner should also ensure the more introverted species will be able to find a refuge.

5. Let a patch of lawn go wild

Don't forget lawns are meadows cut short and so by 'saying no to the mower' in just a small patch you'll give the resident flowers and grasses an opportunity to flourish.

6. Put up a nest box

A lack of old trees means nesting locations in gardens can be at a premium. This housing shortage can be simply remedied by putting up a nest box.

7. Build a bug hotel

Bug hotels offer the perfect opportunity to get rid of all that garden rubbish, such as pallets, old bricks and roof tiles, and in the process build the perfect accommodation for tens of thousands of invertebrates.

8. Start composting

Creating compost will not only improve the soil for flowers, fruit and vegetables but it will boost the numbers of earthworms, millipedes and centipedes too.

9. Say 'no' to slug pellets

Slug pellets can be very bad news for hedgehogs and song thrushes as they bio-accumulate all the toxins. Explore more environmentally-friendly ways of keeping the slugs at bay, or choose plants more resistant to those pesky slugs.

10. Dead wood is good

Resist the temptation to overly tidy your garden as dead wood provides an important habitat for all manner of fungi, beetles and woodlice. Why not create a log pile in a shady corner!



ABOUT MIKE

Mike is an ecologist, natural history presenter and writer. He holds a life-long passion for British and tropical flora and fauna, of which he has profound experience and encyclopaedic knowledge.

He is committed to bringing the beauty of the natural world to a broader audience with enthusiasm and insight, rather than sensation or gimmicks.

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Throw it and grow it!

Want to help us boost Houlton's bee population? Why not make your own bee bomb, positively buzzing with nectar rich wildflower seeds to feed our bumblebees and honey bees.

You will need:

- Meadow flower seeds or seeds collected from the garden
- Peat-free compost
- Water
- Powdered clay (found in craft shops)
- Mixing bowl.

Creating your seed bomb:

1. In a bowl, mix together 1 cup of seeds with 5 cups of compost and 2-3 cups of clay powder (you could use clay soil instead if you have it).
2. Slowly mix in water with your hands until everything sticks together.
3. Roll the mixture into firm balls.
4. Leave the balls to dry in a sunny spot.
5. Now for the fun bit! Plant your seed bombs by throwing them at bare parts of the garden and wait to see what pops up!



Latest news



WORK PROGRESSES TO CREATE RUGBY'S NEWEST SECONDARY SCHOOL

Work began back in March on the transformation of the Grade-II listed Rugby Radio Station into the new Houlton School.

Huge efforts have been made by our contractor Morgan Sindall, to make changes to the way they were working to enable social distancing and keep work underway during the country's lockdown. This has enabled progress to take place and it is amazing how much has been done in this short time.

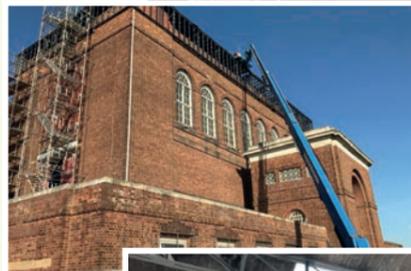
The project will include inserting a new 5-story structure into the shell of the radio station Transmission Hall, where the pioneering tuning coil used to be located.

The former Power Hall will retain original features and be converted into an assembly hall and canteen, serving over a thousand freshly-cooked meals a day. Two additional teaching blocks will be built, as well as a Sport England compliant sports hall.

Work will continue and the school is expected to be complete and open for September 2021



A CGI of Houlton School's entrance



Work is underway to restore the Grade-II listed building



Mike van den Berg (Urban&Civic), Councillor Ian Picker, local historian Malcolm Hancock, Councillor Kathryn Lawrence and Johanne Thomas (Urban&Civic)

Follow the project on a blog hosted by our architects van Heyningen & Haward Architects at www.vhh.co.uk



TUNING FORK & THE BARN

We're sure you're all missing lunch at the Tuning Fork and of course their wonderful coffees and cakes. The Tuning Fork team will reopen in line with government advice, once safe to do so. We will also reopen The Barn and get community life back to normal as soon as we can. Keep an eye on houltonrugby.co.uk and follow us on social media to stay up to date.

STAY SAFE



A message from Johanne Thomas, Communications & Communities for Urban&Civic

"It has been a very challenging and unusual time within the UK – as we work together to fight the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Houlton residents, like many of you, have come together to support each other, entertain each other and play their part in Rugby's wider community. We are incredibly proud of their spirit and resilience – for a new community who in many cases have not lived there or known each other for very long.

"To the rest of Rugby, on behalf of Houlton – stay safe and we look forward to some great parties and get-togethers when all of this is behind us!"

Stay home at
HOULTON

Our housebuilders will be back on site building and selling homes as soon as it is safe to do so. In the meantime, you can still search online through their websites and Rightmove for homes available at Houlton.

All the housebuilders are maintaining a sales presence online and over the telephone if you are interested in finding out more, or when you might be able to visit.



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houltonrugby.co.uk/buy-a-home