



Love Solihull - September 2022



This month we invite you to join in with the annual Great Big Green Week, share volunteer achievements across the borough, and take a look at the highlights from our project work with various corporate groups.

Supporting The Great Big Green Week in Shirley



As part of The Great Big Green Week, the [Friends of Shirley Park](#) group is hosting a litter pick, alongside Love Solihull and [Talking Rubbish](#), on Saturday 1 October, 2-4pm in Shirley.

Existing volunteers who have their own equipment are welcome to come along to support this event, as well as anyone new to litter picking who would like to have a go with the support of a group.

There will be two groups that will set off at different locations and will eventually join together at Shirley Park.

The first group will meet at 2pm outside Sainsbury's (B90 4AJ) before setting off along the Stratford Road towards Shirley Park with equipment for this group provided by Love Solihull.

The second group will meet at 2pm next to the War Memorial (near Asda, Parkgate) and they will focus on cleaning the park itself. For those families with young children who want to get involved, we recommend joining the second group. Equipment for this group will be provided by Friends of Shirley Park.

We hope that you will be able to join us in support of [The Great Big Green Week](#) to make a huge difference to Shirley.

For more information about the event, please email lovesolihull@solihull.gov.uk

Cerys has bags of enthusiasm for litter picking



This month, we caught up with school pupil Cerys Brannon, who started litter picking this year whilst she worked towards achieving the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Bronze Award.

"I began litter picking as part of my DofE volunteering. I would go for half an hour on a Saturday and Sunday. After trips to Tudor Grange Park with my dad to pick up litter, I suddenly started noticing just how much litter was on the streets.

"At the beginning, every time I went back to Tudor Grange, I found there was more litter, even in the places I had previously cleaned up! After a while, I noticed a gradual change and the park started looking cleaner, of course this wasn't all due to me - I had seen some other litter pickers around the park which made me happy! I also litter picked through Solihull town centre with my mum and joined volunteers from Friends of Solihull Station for two days in July.

"As long as a fair few people care about litter, then we can make Solihull a cleaner, greener place. I think people should be better educated about litter and mindsets need to change. If people cared a little more, then together we could make a real difference. I would encourage everyone to take part in volunteering and register with Love Solihull."

Any young people who are considering litter picking as part of their volunteering for the DofE award, can get in touch with lovesolihull@solihull.gov.uk to find out more.

Cerys has also vowed to continue litter picking long term:

"Whether I live in Solihull or somewhere else in future, I am eager to make a change to the environment."

Well done Cerys, you are a true #LitterHero!

Photo caption: Cerys litter picking in Tudor Grange Park

Friends of Solihull Station celebrate garden award



Congratulations to [Friends of Solihull Station](#) who recently received a Community Garden Award from the [National Garden Scheme](#).

The group do an amazing job planting and maintaining a number of floral displays outside the front of the station, as well as on the platform, providing visitors to the borough with an attractive welcome and some colourful cheer for regular commuters and residents.

Well done to all those involved in achieving this award - we think its *bloomin'* marvellous!

Follow Friends of Solihull Station on [Facebook](#) to stay up to date with all their latest news and activities.

Photo caption: The Community Gardens Award

Young residents tackle litter around their block



This month, we met a trio of litter pickers who recently registered through our community litter picking initiative, receiving free litter picking kit courtesy of Love Solihull.

Alongside Sophie Ashford from Solihull Community Housing (SCH), we joined Lauren, Paul and Kian for a pick around their block (Mansfield House, Chelmsley Wood). Both Lauren and Paul are residents, with Kian living locally, and together they share a common interest in looking after where they live.

Lauren, who heard about Love Solihull through a friend, also started to care for the communal garden outside her apartment, keeping it litter free. She has added bird feeders and boxes, as well as a bench and potted plants, which all help to make the area look more appealing for other residents.

The group often meet up in the garden after picking, with several neighbours showing their appreciation for their hard work to maintain the area. If you have been inspired by their story and want to get involved with litter picking, register [online](#) to receive your own free kit.

To find out how you can also get involved with supporting an SCH property and meet other residents, visit the [SCH](#) website.

Photo caption: (left to right) Kian, Paul and Lauren outside Mansfield House

Milestone reached for Castle Bromwich litter pickers



Castle Bromwich Litter Pickers reached another huge milestone last month, filling 7,000 bags since the group formed over four years ago.

With more than 20 active members, this dedicated group carry out litter picks (in all weather!) on a weekly basis to help keep their area clean and tidy.

The group celebrated their latest achievement with a visit to the local curry house for a social gathering.

Thank you to all the volunteers for your continued support from everyone at Love Solihull.

If you are interested in joining the group, you can find out more information on their [Facebook](#) page.

Kier revamps sensory garden at Merstone School

Merstone School contacted Love Solihull to look for willing volunteers who could maintain the school's sensory garden; a space used by pupils to connect with nature during break times.

Kier, a construction company based in Blythe Valley Business Park, were looking for employee volunteering opportunities, so proved to be an ideal match for the project, having been involved with constructing the school back in 2006.

The colleagues were excited to get stuck in and arranged a project day in July, however, due to the UK heatwave, the original date was cancelled. Luckily, we were able to rearrange to a new date once the school re-opened for the new term.

Colleagues from Kier with support from Love Solihull, used various hand tools on the day to tackle overgrown vegetation, in particular bramble, which had taken over large parts of the garden.

Pupils from Class 5 also joined in helping to maintain their raised planters, which were installed earlier in the year after a successful funding bid. The pupils showed great enthusiasm for removing any weeds that had grown over the Summer and preparing the soil for new planting, with their volunteering efforts counting towards their Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Staff from Kier helped to re-stake some of the fruit trees donated by 'Planting Our Future' earlier in the year and planted by Sixth Form pupils at the school. The trees were doing well, with pupils continuing to water them throughout the year to help them fully establish.

After completing the garden tasks, the team from Kier also carried out a litter pick around nearby Smith's Wood, collecting a total of six bags of rubbish.

Kieran Ryan-Grealish, Assistant Head Teacher at Merstone School said:

"A huge thank you to Love Solihull and Kier for supporting and developing the sensory garden here at Merstone School, especially working alongside Class 5 with their volunteering! It is of huge value to our students to be able to connect with professionals such as yourselves."

Thank you to Kier for being involved in this worthy project, we look forward to working together again in the future.



Photo caption: Highlights from the day with staff from Kier at Merstone School and Smith's Wood

Businesses help with conservation at Elmdon Park



Several businesses have been working alongside Love Solihull over the last few weeks to transform a body of water known as the 'scrape' at Elmdon Park.

The scrape, which was created in 2001, helps with drainage from the park and naturally fills with water all year round. The water also provides a haven for wildlife, with insects such as dragonflies breeding during the Summer, and waterfowl including ducks, swans, and even a Heron, using the area for nesting or protection amongst the surrounding Willows and Alders all year round.

During the last few years, the scrape has become overgrown, which can cause issues with the water quality due to the lack of natural light reaching the water. The project aimed to reduce

some of the tree height with the help of volunteers from Marks & Spencer (Sheldon), Ridge & Partners LLP and Marsh Ltd, supported by our Park Rangers.

Thank you to each group for supporting this project with your time - the results are fantastic!



Photo caption: Colleagues from Marks & Spencer, Ridge & Partners LLP and Marsh Ltd

Residents from Hong Kong join volunteer groups



Thank you to several Hong Kong nationals living in Solihull who have recently registered to volunteer through Love Solihull.

Kerrie Grandison, from the Council's Community Development Team, has been supporting a number of new residents by highlighting some of the community activities they can get involved in, as well as introducing them to volunteer groups like Friends of Shirley Park and Friends of Solihull Station.

One resident who recently started litter picking said:

"We are so lucky to start a new page of life here in the UK. We recently started litter picking and have made a lot of new friends whilst volunteering. We are delighted to be able to

integrate into life within Solihull and contribute towards improving the community."

If you would be interested in learning more about how you can volunteer, visit our [website](#).

Photo caption: Friends of Solihull Station volunteers from Hong Kong

Green Lane Park gets a makeover by BNP Paribas



Love Solihull staff were joined by colleagues from Solihull based finance company, BNP Paribas, during August for a project day at Green Lane Park in Shirley.

The team of 12 did a fantastic job of re-painting tired benches, cutting back overgrown vegetation and restoring the bridge over the River Cole.

The results are fantastic and hugely appreciated by regular park users who stopped to say how amazing their efforts were in supporting this lovely park.

With such a varied and busy day, it was surprising that the majority of the group managed to keep their crisp white t-shirts relatively paint free! But the question on everyone's lips as we reached the final stages was 'How many colleagues does it take to finish painting the bridge?' Turns out...nearly all of them!

Thank you for a fantastic day volunteering and supporting your local park!



Photo caption: Staff from BNP Paribas painting the bridge at Green Lane Park

u3a continue gardening support for Olton Library



Thank you to the volunteers from u3a for once again maintaining the garden around Olton Library.

The group is dedicated to supporting this green space, which attracts lots of birds and wildlife with its beautiful smelling lavender and colourful bulbs throughout the year.

The group not only look after the garden, but also clear the area of litter, and sweep both the alleyway and frontage of the library, making it more inviting for visitors.

The library staff are also hugely grateful to these dedicated volunteers and popped out to extend their gratitude during the last meet up.

To find out more about the Olton & District branch of u3a, visit their [website](#).

Photo caption: u3a volunteers at Olton Library

Clean & Green and North Solihull Sports Centre join forces for fitness



Regular volunteers from [Clean & Green](#) joined with staff from North Solihull Sports Centre last month to host their first 'Fit & Pick' event.

The litter pick was a great opportunity to demonstrate how litter picking is an ideal way to meet new people and stay active. The event also allowed volunteers the chance to see what other activities are offered by the Sports Centre for the local community.

Several customers saw the event taking place and were keen to join Clean & Green for future litter picks. Following its success, it is hoped a similar event can be repeated in the future by both the volunteer group and the Sports Centre.

This is a great example of a community coming together to share ideas on how to maintain an active lifestyle in an inclusive and diverse way.

Photo caption: Clean & Green volunteers with staff from North Solihull Sports Centre

Solihull drivers reminded to take rubbish home



Following consultation with a number of volunteers, the use of existing Variable Message Signs (VMS) around the borough is being trialled by Love Solihull to remind all drivers of their responsibility to take their rubbish home and not discard litter along the highways.

With support from the Council's Highways team, these traffic information boards have been programmed in a number of locations with a simple request for drivers to help keep Solihull tidy.

We hope the use of these boards will drive down the amount of litter thrown from cars, which can lead to a penalty fine for those caught doing so.

If you wish to report litter in any problem areas, you can do so [online](#) using the Council's website or call Solihull Connect on 0121 704 8000

Love Solihull actively encourages residents and businesses to make a difference to the environment and support those who co-ordinate their own projects.

Email alerts will be sent out throughout the year giving information on environmental projects including what is happening in your area and how you can get involved.

More information can be found at www.lovesolihull.org

For more information about Council services, please see our [website](#).

