



Love Solihull - December 2021



This month we catch up with Talking Rubbish in Solihull, discuss the benefits of owning an allotment, hear from schools who are pledging to look after the environment and look back over the achievements of the last 12 months

Love Solihull - a review of the year



The start of 2021 saw COVID restrictions begin to ease, enabling volunteers to get back out into the community, taking part in activities and hosting events, which all contributed to making Solihull a clean, green and safe place to live.

Some of the highlights from this year include:

- Taking part in national campaigns such as the [Great British Spring Clean](#) (May-June), [Love Parks Week](#) (July) and [Great Big Green Week](#) (September)
- Working with schools and businesses to carry out a variety of community activities including litter picking and tree planting
- Supporting local charities like [Social Life Opportunities](#) and [Colebridge Trust](#) to help look after their local area and strengthen community engagement
- Celebrating receiving [Green Flag Awards](#) for 16 of our beautiful Solihull parks (October)
- Our park rangers continued to maintain our parks and open spaces throughout the year, supporting events such as the [Summer Solidays](#) programme (August) and the [Oaks & Shires](#) event at Yorks Wood (October)
- Park rangers assisted the Birmingham and Solihull Midweek Conservation Volunteers on a number of projects, including the management of Willow at Lavender Hall Park
- Selected parks were enhanced through the installation of [bike hire](#) docking stations and [table tennis tables](#) for community use
- Landscape projects such as the [Armed Forces Community Garden](#) (Hillfield Park) and [Hope Coppice](#) (Shirley South) have taken shape throughout the year with the support of our contractors and local volunteers
- Hundreds of trees have been planted as part of the [Planting Our Future](#) campaign which is supporting the Council's pledge to plant 250,000 trees over the next ten years.
- Various school [competitions](#) were held with fantastic entries received for bin sticker designs and [anti-litter video](#) messages.

Due to everyone's collective efforts, it really has been another fantastic year, despite the challenging circumstances of the times.

We thank all volunteers for their amazing efforts and continued support over the last 12 months!

Talking Rubbish in Solihull look forward to 2022



This month, we talk to Jenny Bright, Secretary to the steering group 'Talking Rubbish in Solihull' to hear more about the group and their plans for 2022:

"Talking Rubbish in Solihull is currently made up of ten volunteers, and between us we represent most of the borough's local litter picking groups. We meet on a regular basis to discuss issues, any we cannot resolve ourselves, we seek support from Love Solihull.

"During our meetings we try to have a guest speaker to help us gain a better insight of how to tackle litter in the borough. We also help out with recruitment of volunteers or advise others on setting up new groups.

"As individuals, we hold local group litter picks and encourage local businesses to get involved, either by making donations towards equipment, providing tea and coffee for volunteers or permitting company staff to join litter picks as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility aims.

"Aside from litter picking, we have been involved with tree and bulb planting too, usually on the wettest days of the year! We have also helped with painting children's playgrounds and we meet up annually to take part in Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean, choosing a different location each year.

"We can act as a local contact for volunteer litter pickers who prefer to go out as individuals and provide advice when they find weird and wonderful items that they have no idea what to do with! As well as the Litter Picking Hubs at libraries, we also supply local volunteers with Love Solihull bags and generally like to keep in touch with people to offer our support.

"Some of the group help students taking part in litter picking as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, others have diversified by organising litter picks for adults with learning difficulties or supporting local schools and youth groups. Whatever we choose to do in our own areas, we all share a passion for keeping Solihull clean and well-maintained.

"We are hoping to have more group litter picks restarting next year and are currently planning events leading up to the Great British Spring Clean, which takes place between 25 March to 10 April 2022 - don't forget to save the date! Next Summer we are hoping to organise local meet-ups for volunteers in parks to socialise and get to know each other better.

"In 2022, we will be working alongside Love Solihull to consult on the [Environmental Crime Strategy](#) and the new [Environmental Service Contract](#) with Veolia ES (UK) Ltd, partnered with Idverde."

If you would like to find your local litter picking group, visit our [website](#) for details.

If you are interested in becoming a group leader or would like to find out more about Talking Rubbish in Solihull, email lovesolihull@solihull.gov.uk.

Thank you to all of our litter picking volunteers, group leaders and supporters - we are looking forward to working with you in 2022!

Community spirit grows at Coppice Road allotment



We had the opportunity this month to meet Laura at Coppice Road Allotments (Elmdon) to find out why she enjoys having a plot and how she has developed her voluntary role as allotment representative:

Laura and her father first took on a plot at Coppice Road during the COVID pandemic. They both found it was a great way to get outdoors, stay active and meet neighbours, whilst being able to socially distance. They really started to get into growing their own, especially Laura's father, Graham.

Laura told us: "Dad would often be found down at the allotment with a head-torch on in the evening, having been there since 9am! He's really enjoyed having a plot and its been great for our mental health and allowed us to bond as father and daughter."

Laura then responded to a council advert looking for an allotment rep at Coppice Road. Since taking on the role, she has helped grow a sense of community spirit amongst plot holders, including setting up a 'sharing table' for extra produce and spare seeds, as well as starting a WhatsApp group for everyone to easily communicate with each other. She also organised a

Scarecrow Competition this year, won by John with his 'Olaf' scarecrow inspired by Disney's 'Frozen'.

Photo caption: Laura and her four-week old daughter Imogen at Coppice Road allotments

The allotment is a great place for different generations to mix, share knowledge and support each other, and it's clear to see Laura has made a huge difference to the local community. Neighbours now check-in with each other through the group and they also sent well-wishes to Laura when she recently gave birth to her daughter, Imogen.

Laura continued: "The allotment looks fantastic in the summer, it's really colourful and we had lots of bees in the garden area. This year we harvested around 50 pumpkins and shared them with local school children to carve for Halloween."

Laura is amazed by the variety produced by some of the veteran plot holders. She said:

"Andrew grows some really interesting things, like purple beans, olives and goji berries. He's had his plot since 1987, so it's as old as I am!"

Laura has some advice for anyone thinking of starting an allotment or a vegetable patch at home:

"Be prepared for plenty of hard work! It can be easy to get disheartened - our first batch of carrots were not great, but if you put in the effort to prepare the soil properly, it will make it much easier for things to grow."

The future of Coppice Road allotments certainly looks rosy, with a planned communal area for seating and BBQs, growing competitions and making sure plots no longer in use are made available to those on the waiting list.

There are currently ten allotment sites managed by Solihull Council, alongside five managed by independent associations and a further six by Parish Councils.

To find out more about allotments, visit our [website](#).

Thank you to all the volunteers involved with allotments this year - we look forward to working alongside you in 2022!



Balsall Common Primary pledge to take on the litter louts



Photo caption: Balsall Common pupils and teachers alongside local litter picker Rachel (second from right)

The Year 5 School Council at Balsall Common Primary School took part in a litter pick of their local area on Friday 10 December. A few weeks before, the group attended a workshop with Love Solihull to discuss the impact of litter in the area and how as a school they can pledge to do their bit to help combat the issue. This included writing an article for their school newsletter and asking parents to pledge to dispose of their waste properly. The group also promoted the opening of the litter picking hub in the local library and made further plans to put up posters around the school to highlight the problem to their peers and teachers.

The litter pick itself was a great success, and they were joined by local resident Rachel who belongs to Balsall Common litter picking group. The children spent around 90 minutes searching the local streets and green spaces for litter, even finding rubbish hidden in bushes! They also found a number of fly-tipped items, including broken garden furniture, which were reported to the council for removal.

The school plans to continue their work by taking part in next year's Great British Spring Clean, and has invited Rachel and Love Solihull back to the school in the new year to feature in a podcast to raise awareness about litter.

Well done Balsall Common Primary School - you are making a huge difference to your area!
#LitterHeroes

Eco-clubs at local secondary schools take action

This month we share the inspiring work taking place in two secondary schools in the borough - Arden Academy (Knowle) and Langley School (Olton), as reported by the student reps from each school's eco-club:



Photo caption: Students from Arden Academy eco-club at the Council Chambers

"Arden Academy eco-club was invited to attend the [Solihull Schools Climate Conference](#) in the Council Chambers in November.

"We were asked to get into teams and represent countries and regions; our school represented Brazil, European Union and Gabon. We prepared speeches and gathered information on our countries, then discussed future plans about how we can help and what we are struggling with.

"All the countries and regions shared their views and concerns and we had several debates about how countries could help each other and all tried to come to an agreement. At the end of the conference, many unanimous decisions were made, concluding that we believe help is needed for the oceans and cities, and also with food and poverty.

"Back at school, we have been working hard to prepare our greenhouse ready for growing our own produce. We are also looking to build bug houses and hedgehog houses in order to help the local wildlife and we hope to also get involved with the Great British Spring Clean in 2022.

"Our club has weekly debates about current environmental issues, as well as coming up with ways that we can try and make our school more sustainable."

Student from Arden Academy Eco-Club



Photo caption: Students from Langley School eco-group

"Recently COP26 dominated the news headlines globally, with two weeks where climate change was the focus of much debate and negotiation and delegates from across the world assembled in Glasgow to share their concerns over the environmental crisis. Now, the world leaders might have gone home, but our work to ensure that we are all contributing to looking after our planet must continue.

"Langley School, under the guidance of Mrs Botley, has just started a new eco-group. Currently it has eight student members and focuses on encouraging all Langley students and their families to adopt a 'greener' lifestyle.

"Langley will be participating in the following activities next year - The Great British Bird Watch (22 January), The Energy Audit's 'Switch Off Power' (22 January) and The Woodlands Trust Tree Planting (22 March).

"In addition to this, there will be a new eco-board in our Maths corridor, a Fairtrade baking Competition on 22 February and Langley School has just become a member of [Planet Super League](#) to take on climate change challenges.

"More activities and events will also take place throughout the year, to ensure that the Langley community are playing their part in helping to combat climate change. In the words of David Attenborough: 'If working apart we are forces powerful enough to destabilise our planet, surely working together we are powerful enough to save it.' "

Aoife, Student from Langley School Eco-Group

Well done to all the schools who have helped to take care of the environment during 2021 and continue to make plans for the future!



In case you missed it, Planting Our Future celebrated **National Tree Week** this month, the UK's largest annual tree celebration. Across the UK, people come together by planting thousands of trees to mark the start of the winter tree planting season. To mark the occasion here in Solihull, the Planting Our Future team planted hundreds of trees along the borough's highways, as well as releasing a refreshed Shirley Tree Trail, developed with Solihull Tree Wardens and Friends of Shirley Park.

Read the full story here: <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/news/celebrating-national-tree-week>

Don't forget to check out the Planting Our Future review of the year on the Love Solihull [YouTube](#) channel to see all the fantastic work that has been achieved this year!

Community work begins to restore picnic area next to Kingshurst Brook



Earlier this year, the community group Clean & Green approached Love Solihull with a proposal to improve the picnic area alongside Kingshurst Brook, opposite ASDA in Chelmsley Wood.

The area had become overgrown, picnic benches were no longer easily accessible and views of the brook hidden, so it was identified as being in need of some TLC.

Pablo Sultana, group leader of Clean & Green, helped kick-start remedial work at the end of November, supported by local volunteers, alongside Colin Smart (Community Development Team), Becki Winkles (Solihull Community Housing) and Sam (Community Champion for ASDA, Chelmsley Wood).

Supported by Love Solihull, work will continue into 2022 to cut back more vegetation, install a new picnic bench in the paved area next to the bridge and restore existing benches, as well as adding some plants for an injection of colour.

Students from Solihull College (Woodlands Campus) have also agreed to support the project, helping with practical tasks and hoping to raise funds to install a commemorative plaque to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

The area is known informally within the Council as the 'Queen's Garden', possibly acknowledging when The Queen visited Chelmsley Wood to officially open the shopping centre in 1971.

If anyone has any historical images of this green space being used or has any further details about The Queen's visit in relation to the area, please email: lovesolihull@solihull.gov.uk as we would love to know more about its history.

Photo caption: Pablo (front) and project volunteers in Chelmsley Wood

Dedicated litter picker rewarded by local shop



One of the borough's most active volunteers, Sue Quarterman from Elmdon, had a welcome surprise recently. She was gifted a Christmas hamper from the One Stop on Hatchford Brook Road, for her dedication to the local community as a volunteer litter picker.

Sue goes out litter picking every day and has collected a whopping 531 bags this year! She was even awarded a prize in March by Jenny Bright (Talking Rubbish in Solihull) for collecting the most amount of bags in Damsonwood & Elmdon.

"I litter pick every day as it drives me crackers! Even though I sometimes feel we are fighting a losing battle, I remind myself how much worse it would be without our contribution."

Sue, like all community litter picking volunteers, is a real inspiration and it's fantastic that a local business has recognised her efforts to keep the community clean.

We want to thank all of our registered litter pickers across the whole borough - there are now **over 700** of you! We really appreciate your hard work and commitment to helping Solihull look clean and litter free all year round.

Photo caption: Sue with her Christmas hamper from One Stop

Have your say on the Environmental Crime Strategy and Action Plan

Solihull Council would like to hear your views on its revised [Environmental Crime Strategy and Action Plan](#), which sets out the Council's approach to tackling environmental crime up to and including 2026.

This draft strategy shows how the Council aims to prevent environmental crime by educating and engaging with residents. It also shows how the Council will use its investigatory and enforcement powers in response to incidents of environmental crime in the borough.

Following COVID lockdowns when people ventured out into local areas more, there has been increased public awareness of issues such as fly-tipping and littering. Consequently, the Action Plan within the Environmental Crime Strategy is focused on addressing these issues directly and robustly. It also provides a clear framework to report and monitor the levels of environmental crime within the borough.

The Council is keen to hear the views of residents and interested community groups on the revised strategy.

The consultation opened on Monday 13 December 2021 and will close on Sunday 23 January 2022. If you would like to respond to this consultation, please do so by sending your comments via email to pprotection@solihull.gov.uk

Christmas Recycling and Waste Collections

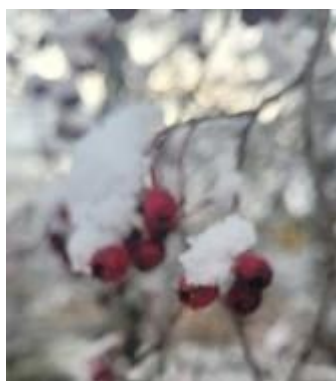
As Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day all fall at the weekend this year, recycling and waste collections in Solihull **will not change** over the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Collection crews are working as normal from Monday 27 December to Monday 3 January. However, crews may collect at different times over the holiday period due to the extra amounts of rubbish and recycling.

There's no limit to the amount of recycling that can be collected on your scheduled day over Christmas and New Year, but any additional recycling should be placed in a suitable container. This could be your old recycling box or a hessian or jute bag. Please don't use carrier bags/plastic bags or cardboard boxes as they get soggy and the contents fall out.

For more information about what can and can't be recycled – including what to do with Christmas cards, crackers and Christmas Trees - please visit [Christmas Collections 2021](#)

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



A huge thank you to all volunteers, partners and supporters we have worked with for a fantastic year looking after Solihull to make it cleaner, greener and safer for everyone to enjoy!

Please note, our offices will be closed from 23 to 28 December and from 31 December to 3 January. If you need to report anything during the holidays, please visit the Council [website](#).

We hope that you have a restful break with loved ones over the holidays and we look forward to working with you in 2022!

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

keep doing the
right thing
for Solihull



Hands



Face



Space



Fresh air



Get a test



Get a jab

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

