

**NEW LOOK CAFÉ  
IS FULLY OPEN**

# Parklife

**MORE NEWS INSIDE...**

June 2021

Howbery Business Park - Wallingford

# Parklife



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# A more heartening scene

It felt such a positive milestone to be able to open the café fully again, after a year marked by Covid-19 restrictions. We're really enjoying the buzz as more people gradually return to the café and park as a whole, with the number of more people working on site gradually rising.



Another extremely heartening point for me is that all the organisations based on the park have kept afloat so far, with some businesses even thriving. The small number of tenants that decided it was wiser to relinquish office space are still in business too. A few tenants have moved offices within the park, as their business changes shape – some expanding and some deciding to continue with some home-working. We've also welcomed new tenants – Pure Network Engineering, Wallingford HydroSolutions, Ecosystems Knowledge Network and Cody Holeran – which has helped keep our occupancy levels high. As we go to press, there are only two vacant office spaces. Ensuring the safety of people working here remains paramount, and our Covid-19 procedures and enhanced cleaning measures of course remain in place. We have also been keeping the grounds in good shape. Tree surgeons spent a week on site pruning trees with safety in mind and tidying up undergrowth near the riverbank. Nurture

Landscapes have continued gardening around the park, as well as supporting us in our biodiversity work – this year focusing on birds (see p6). They also look after our honeybees, which are doing well this year. I was lucky enough to see them swarming in May when one hive produced an extra queen – it was fascinating to watch.

We are talking to Nurture Landscapes about timescales for starting up lunchtime workshops again, and will share those details soon. More activities from the Howbery Park Sports and Social Association are also on the horizon with a new committee (with me as General Secretary) having just been voted in – see p10.

I hope that there will be plenty of opportunities to get together again as a community later in the year, and look forward to seeing you then.

Donna Bowles, Estates Manager

## New tenants

A warm welcome to our new tenants:

- Pure Network Engineering**
- Wallingford HydroSolutions**
- Ecosystems Knowledge Network**
- Cody Holeran**

## Honey sale

We have jars of Howbery honey from last year's harvest for sale.

We've a special offer of two jars for £5.00. Please see Donna at the Estates Office if you'd like to buy a jar.



# New look café is fully open

Our new look Manor Café is now fully open, looking extra smart after its recent refurbishment. Our customers can now sit indoors or out, and we are offering a takeaway service.

Last year, we extensively refurbished the indoor areas moving the food and drink service counter into a new spacious spot in the former restaurant. We combined the restaurant, café and shop during the refurbishment, which was planned with safety in mind.

The redesign has created a café space with seating at tables and a more informal area with sofas. With new plants and a fresh look we hope it offers a relaxing dining space to meet with colleagues and friends. We have introduced a one-way system for going inside the café, whether to eat, or place or collect orders, entering from the outside patio. Outdoors, there are new parasols for the patio tables.

We first re-opened the Manor Café in December (to tenants only as Covid-19 infection rates were rising), but had to close the seating areas in January in line with government restrictions. We offered a takeaway service until April when outdoor seating was allowed to open. Finally, on 17 May, we were able to welcome everyone working on the park or from the local community inside the café.

Our indoor areas have been refurbished



Orders can be placed using our app, QR code or at the counter





The coffee lounge is open again

The new look counter area continues to offer great coffee. Our chef has redesigned the menu to reflect the new style of service to include new dishes. But don't worry, you'll still find some of the usual favourites on the menu. Each day there's a choice of breakfast baps, hot and cold lunches, hot and cold drinks, confectionery and homemade cakes.

The redesign of the cafe offers a relaxing dining space



You can order via our app <https://manorcafeathowbery.touchtakeaway.net/menu> or by using our QR code that can be found on the tables. Orders can also be made at the counter (by card payment only). We are also continuing to provide a takeaway service. Our opening hours are 9am-4pm, Monday to Friday.



Our patio area offers plenty of seating, and great views of the grounds

Howbery operations manager Mark Baxter said: "We are so pleased to have the café fully open again. For people who are still wary of coming inside, we have a large patio with plenty of space to spread out and orders can be placed online from the table. We will of course be complying with the government's Covid-19 guidelines and we ask customers to observe these at all times."

# Looking out for birds

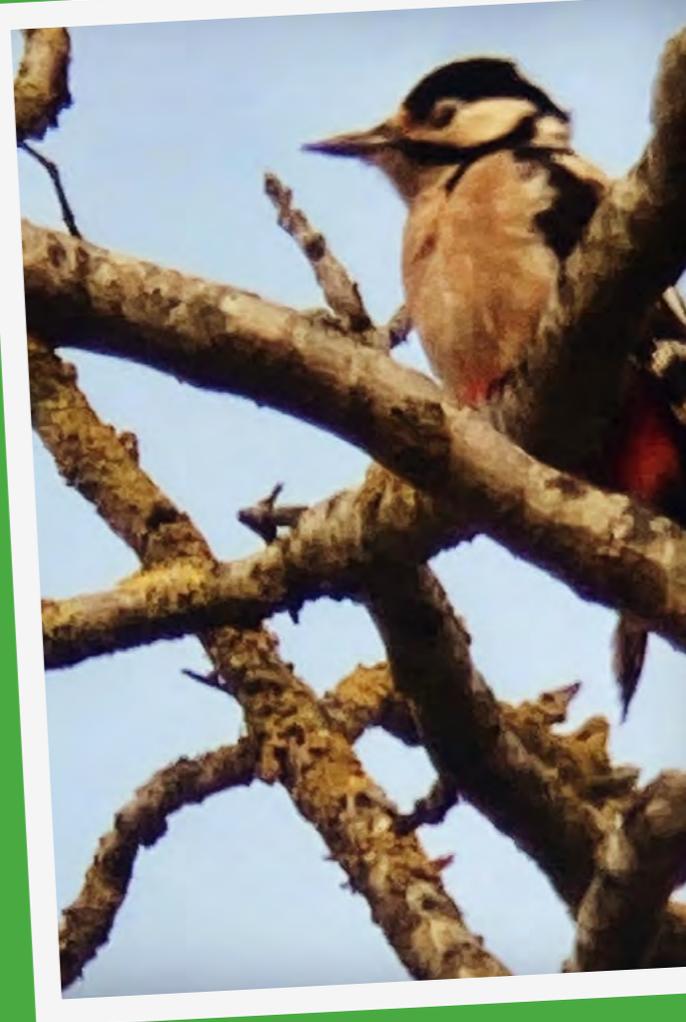
We are now mid-way through our second year of the Nurture Biodiversity Awards, and have already taken lots of steps to enhance conditions for bird life on Howbery Park. Our grounds team are working towards objectives set out by Nurture Landscapes in conjunction with the British Trust for Ornithology.



A kingfisher spotted on site by head gardener Ben from Nurture Landscapes

The team has added more bird boxes to the grounds, along with bird feeding and monitoring stations. We now have four feeding stations, each with a water bowl and various types of feeder – containing peanuts, suet balls, mixed seed and meal worms – to attract a cross section of bird types. Nurture Landscapes has also added more bird boxes to the site that are suitable for blue tits, tree sparrows, great tits, crested tits, coal tits and pied flycatchers, and some larger ones for tawny owls (see p7).

When Howbery completes the year's objectives in November, the British Trust for Ornithology logo will be inscribed on the blank petal of a flower-shaped award, joining that of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. In our first year, we championed bumblebees, completing the necessary criteria by October to earn our first petal of six. We will pick another area of biodiversity to focus on for the following year.



A woodpecker spotted on site by head gardener Ben from Nurture Landscapes



The small bird boxes are suitable for blue tits, tree sparrows, great tits, crested tits, coal tits and pied flycatchers

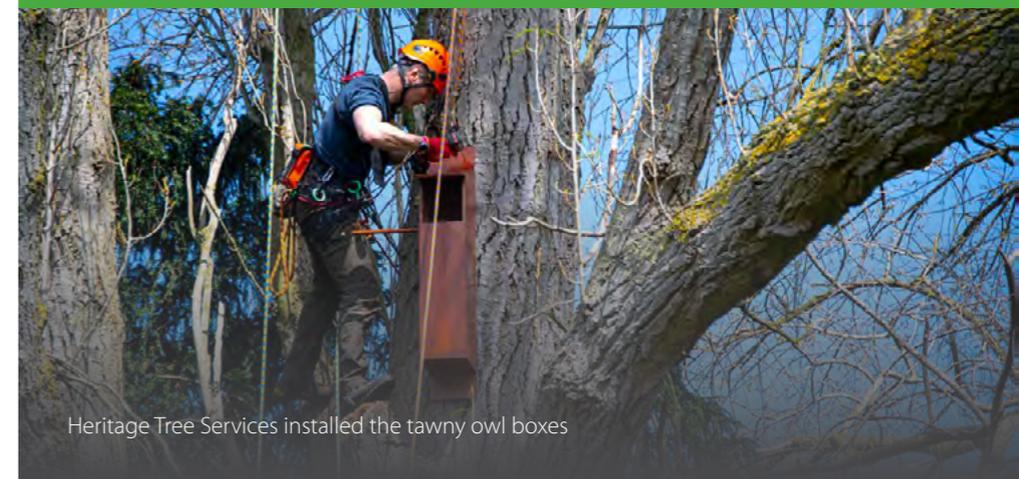
“We already know there is a rich variety of bird life in the park and on the bordering stretch of the Thames, including woodpeckers, red kites, spotted flycatchers, nuthatches and an occasional kingfisher, and we want to make sure conditions are right here and enable as many species as possible to thrive,” said Nurture’s Business Development and Biodiversity Manager Simon Blackley. “The aim of Nurture’s scheme is to improve biodiversity in small, manageable steps, and we are starting to see the differences that these actions can make. Birds are important to biodiversity for many reasons – they spread seeds, control pests, clean-up road-kill and give early warnings about the planet.”

Bird feeders installed in the grounds



## New boxes installed for tawny owls

Nurture Landscapes teamed up with Heritage Tree Services and HR Wallingford’s workshop to design, build and install three tawny owl boxes. Adam Huxley from HR Wallingford made the boxes, which were put up in April at three different locations around the site. Robin Sergi from Nurture decided to instigate the nesting space collaboration, having talked to Alan Brampton (who worked for HR Wallingford at Howbery for many years) about the species seen on the park over the past few decades. Alan observed that tawny owls had been present but not seen recently. Nurture Landscapes is monitoring the boxes and hopes to observe some activity within the next 12 months.



Heritage Tree Services installed the tawny owl boxes



# Birds of a different feather flock to the park

During the almost 50 years that Alan Brampton was based at Howbery Park while working for HR Wallingford, he observed bird life on the park. In this article, he looks at how bird life on the park has evolved over that period, also drawing on a record of bird species made in 1990 by his colleague Tom Stevenson.

The mature trees in Howbery Park provide all-year accommodation for species such as nuthatch, goldcrest, coal tit and treecreeper. These resident species are joined in winter by birds that have crossed the North Sea from their breeding grounds in Scandinavia and east Europe. Song thrushes and redwings arrive first to feed on the yew and holly berries before being joined by fieldfares. In severe winters these 'northern thrushes' have very occasionally been joined by much rarer visitors, for example bramblings, hawfinches and waxwings.

Jackdaw pair



From a bird's eye view, Howbery Park provides a mixture of woodland, riverside and grassland habitats which, in many areas, have little in the way of disturbance. As a consequence it attracts and retains many species that are scarce or absent in the surrounding areas of farmland and housing.

Thirty years ago a visitor to Howbery Park might have noted the jackdaws on the roofs of the Manor House and The Stables as the most obvious birds. Apart from a short summer break, they are almost always evident, usually flying as couples and continually calling to reinforce their bonds. These still remain as do mistle thrushes; they have, over many years, spread mistletoe across the Park by wiping sticky berries off their beaks onto the branches of other trees.

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Mistle thrush

Redwing



Over the last 30 years, habitats in the park have gradually altered, as has the climate, and so the numbers and species of birds have changed as well. Now the most obvious birds, often noticed and remarked upon by visitors, are the red kites. As recently as 1990, seeing this species anywhere in Oxfordshire was a very rare event. But the RSPB and English Nature re-introduced these birds onto the Chiltern Hills leading to red kites breeding not only in Howbery Park but very widely over much of Oxfordshire. Now they are hard to miss as they drift effortlessly overhead, rarely flapping but still making progress even into a head wind by subtle movements of their wings and tail. It has to be a very calm day for these not to be seen in skies above the park.

Buzzard



Red Kite  
Photos courtesy of Roger Wyatt

While the kites were given a helping hand, in the last 25 years both buzzards and ravens have returned to Oxfordshire unaided, save for the reduction in their persecution by game-keepers. Both can now be seen in the park; Buzzards in winter will swoop majestically from trees onto earthworms on the main lawn. Other recent arrivals include cormorants, Egyptian and grey-lag geese and even the occasional peregrine falcon.

Over the same period, and in common with most of southern England, many species have disappeared from the park. Lesser spotted woodpeckers haven't been seen for over 10 years but green and great spotted woodpeckers are thriving and almost ever-present. Turtle doves were never numerous and are now a distant memory but the northward expansion of collared doves is perhaps some compensation. House sparrows used to be ever-present around The Stables but have become just an unusual visitor in recent times. Spotted flycatchers, usually often the last of our summer visitors to arrive, still hang on in the park but in much reduced numbers. This is a species affected by climate change and gradually its breeding areas have moved further north.



Spotted flycatcher

The River Thames provides an obvious north-south 'fly-way' for migratory birds and sometimes the odd local rarity pauses to add further variety to bird-life in the Park. Ospreys have been seen in the autumn on their way south to Africa while spring visitors have included wood warbler and pied flycatcher, both notable anywhere in the county.

As things have changed in the past, there is little doubt they will continue to do so in the future. Already little egrets have been seen along the edge of the Park and it seems the few sightings of ring-necked parakeets will become more frequent; these are likely to become regular visitors, perhaps even residents, in the next decade or so.



Ring-necked parakeet – the future?

## Sports and social club plans new events

Howbery Park Sports and Social Association (HPSSA) has recently elected a new committee and will be launching a new programme of events. Members of the Association can participate in the various activities and events offered, and can use the MUGA (multi-use games area).

Membership also provides access to the Boat Club, with the opportunity to hire its river boat (the Howbery Spark), two canoes, paddleboards, and four kayaks.

All Howbery Park tenants and HR Wallingford Group members are eligible to join the HPSSA. To find out more, take a look at its website - <http://www.hpssa.org.uk/>

The Howbery Spark, which can be hired by HPSSA members.



## Tidy trees

Tree surgeons carried out essential works around the park in March. Their activities included pruning the distinctive redwood near the Fountain Building, and tidying up the undergrowth beneath the line of trees along the riverside.

Our trees on the park include many different species from around the world. Our programme of tree management run by Heritage Tree Services is key to the maintenance of their ongoing care.

Can you spot the tree surgeon in the redwood?

Find out more about Howbery's trees in a video on our website: [bit.ly/HowberyTrees](http://bit.ly/HowberyTrees)

Tree surgeons prune the redwood





## Lift sharing scheme

The Howbery Park team is currently looking at setting up a lift sharing scheme for all those working at the park – to replace our previous arrangement with an external provider. More details to follow.

## Bug hotels

The start of 2021 saw the arrival on site of bug hotels for our smallest residents.

By recycling unused materials, the Nurture Landscapes team built these new homes for the insects, bees, spiders and other creatures living in the grounds.

Made in a range of materials and placed in different locations, the bug hotels are another way we are helping encourage the biodiversity of the park.

## Solar stats

The wonderfully sunny spring of 2020 helped make it the best year for our solar park since it was installed in 2011.

The electricity generated by the solar farm in 2020 was an amazing 824,163kWh, up from 797,407kWh in 2019. It was also a bumper year for the amount of electricity exported back to the National Grid with a 77% increase – 196,960kWh compared to 111,159kWh in 2019. The combination of reduced electricity usage on the park due to lockdown, and higher than average solar generation in the spring, contributed to higher stats than in previous years. According to the Met Office, 2020 was the eighth sunniest year since 1919 for the UK.

This year, in the first four months of 2021, the park didn't quite match last year's outstanding figures, generating 228,309kWh, compared to 240,894kWh last year. However, output in April 2021 was higher than April 2020 – 112,992kWh, compared to 107,481.



# Park's position attracts power industry supplier

In moving onto Howbery Business Park recently, IPEC is planning ahead for a time when its clients from the international power industry can visit its characterful office in the former stables.

Not only is Howbery attractive and easy-to-access, but it's also well situated for IPEC to take clients to London to show them its monitoring and control equipment in action at power substations. Having a southern office is useful, as the company's developing and manufacturing base has stayed in Manchester where it was first established in the 1990s to transfer cutting-edge electronic technology from academia to industry. A few years ago, Managing Director Colin Smith decided to return to Wallingford – where he grew up – to make the most of relatives' support as he started his own family.

"I've been based on a nearby business park, but I knew Howbery through family visits to the café, and I've been keen to move here for a few years. I was therefore very pleased when a suitable office became available, coinciding with the end of the other office's lease," he said.

"I'm now able to walk to work at Howbery and am really enjoying the grounds. I'm also keen to look after one of the allotments.

"The park will be ideal for receiving our international clients. Eighty per cent of our business comes from them, which has helped cushion our business during the pandemic. Many of our customers are from countries that exited lockdown ahead of the UK, which meant they were back up and running earlier too. We provide them with complex instruments and systems for detection and location of partial discharge – a spark that can occur in high voltage electrical insulation. By detecting partial discharge, our systems can identify defects, allowing maintenance to be conducted. This avoids outages with their associated costs and even serious health and safety implications."

<https://ipec.co.uk/>

Managing Director Colin Smith outside his office in the converted stable block.



# High-tech parts supplier slots into historic Howbery Park

Pure Network Engineering Group, which supplies high-tech industries with engineered components, moved into an office in Howbery Business Park's historic Manor House.

Managing Director Carl Joy needed a professional environment to run his business which supplies manufactured parts to clients of varying size in sectors such as motorsport, medical equipment, electric vehicles, aerospace, energy, defence and science.

"The Howbery office is ideal," he said. "Not only are we working from an impressive building steeped in history but it offers us scope to grow into new facilities on site whilst we expand our team and it offers lots of work-life-balance opportunities for our staff. I'm looking forward to collaborating with other companies on the park and getting involved in social activities when more people return to their offices."

Since moving to Howbery, Carl has recruited two new sales support staff, and has just moved into a bigger office in the Manor House. The new recruits will help project manage the production and supply of anything from one-off prototypes to high-volume manufactured parts in all material types, by CNC machining or even 3D printing in metal.

Managing Director Carl Joy in the Manor House with a Lamborghini Aventador sculpture made by Pure Network Engineering Group.



# Mini-gardeners get growing

The preschool children at Puddleduck Nursery have been busy gardening this spring – with some help from grown-ups.

We have overhauled our allotment area and installed two new raised planters for growing vegetables. We are using recycled tyres to grow some herbs, which the children have loved tasting and smelling. We have signed up to the RHS schools gardening award and successfully completed our level 2 certificate. We're looking forward to working towards the other levels and tasting our summer salads and winter vegetables.

We have created a colourful welly wall along one of our fences with flowers for the bees and butterflies, and plan to introduce some more pollinator friendly plants to the gardens as we go along.

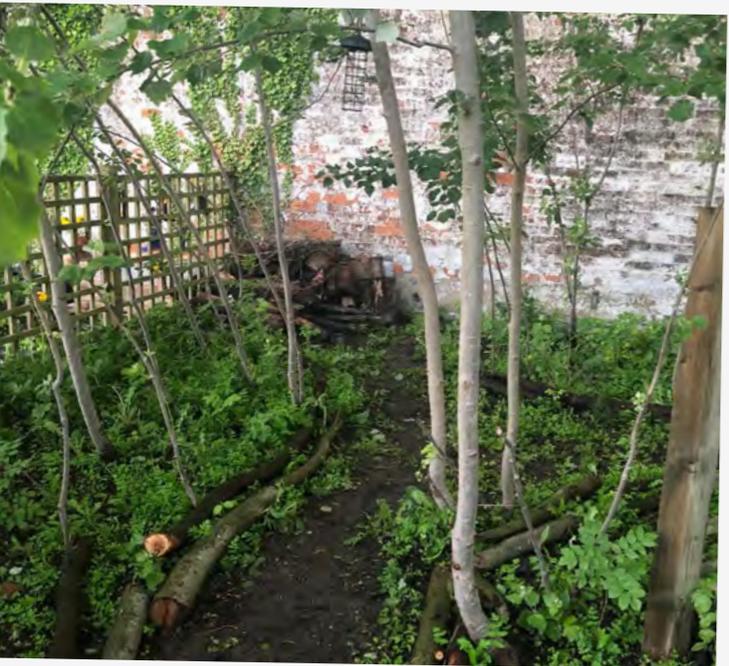
We have also been working on our woodland area. We have used logs to line the pathways which were kindly donated by the gardeners and we have planted bluebells and made bird feeders to help support the local wildlife. We are slowly making bug hotels and pockets of wildlife friendly sections of our woodland area. We have loved finding insects to add to the log piles to help start it off.

We are very much looking forward to the growing season ahead.

Logs now line the woodland area paths



The allotments flanked by the pollinator-friendly welly wall

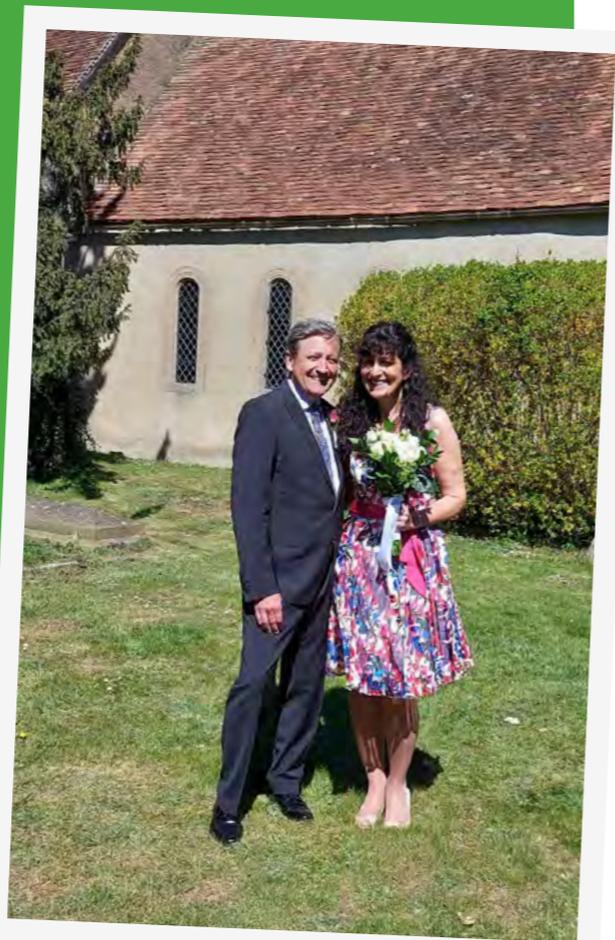


# Congratulations to the happy Howbery couple!

Two of Howbery Park's long-standing tenants, Tim and Sara, got married in April at Crowmarsh Church. The couple went on a delayed honeymoon in May to Highcliffe in Dorset.

Tim and Sara operate as Stretch Learning and Stretch Coaching, helping their global clients to explore and improve their gaps in their communication and coaching. Stretch Learning moved into Howbery Park in May 2004. We wish them much happiness together.

Sara and Tim on their wedding day



# Run the Oxford Half Marathon for Style Acre



If you join the Oxford Half Marathon team on behalf of the Howbery-based charity Style Acre, you will have the chance to raise funds while running 13.1 miles through the historic streets of Oxford. Take on the challenge on 17 October and you will help raise much-needed funds to support people with learning disabilities and autism.

To get one of our places head to <https://styleacre.org.uk/events/oxford-half-marathon-2021>.

If you have any questions, contact Lisa Hanton, our Community & Events Fundraiser: [lhanton@styleacre.org.uk](mailto:lhanton@styleacre.org.uk)



# Outdoor yoga works wonders for wellbeing

We're lucky enough to be surrounded by natural beauty at Howbery Park. At Grace and Gravity Studio we love to celebrate that as much as we can.

Now is the perfect time for outdoor classes with their plentiful benefits. When the weather fights against us, our yoga studio on site has been designed to be a place of tranquil and calm, recreating the restorative conditions of being in nature.

Being in the great outdoors is scientifically proven to be good for your health. Some of our favourite benefits are:

**Sweet dreams** – Your eyes need light to ensure your body's internal clock is working properly. This becomes even more important as we age. Being outdoors ensures your eyes get enough light, which helps you drift off when it's time to hit the hay.

**Sunny D** – Your body needs just 5-15 minutes of sun (in summer) to produce Vitamin D and this is so important for our bones, our blood cells and our immune system. It also helps us to absorb minerals like calcium.

**Wear your favourite smile** – Our mood is scientifically boosted by sunlight. It raises our levels of serotonin which makes us feel happy, more energetic, calm and positive.

**Sharpen your focus** – Some studies have shown that the green hues of outdoor space can help us focus better on tasks. Creativity is also shown to be improved after taking a break outside.

## Why we love yoga outdoors

When we practice yoga outdoors, there is the unique, unrepeatable tune of local wildlife and the swaying of trees. Yoga teaches us to be in the present and appreciate our surroundings. When we allow ourselves the time to pause, be still and listen, we open our eyes and ears to all the wonderful gifts of nature.

Lastly, it's just fun! Being outdoors gives you the space to experiment with yoga, the energy to push yourself and try something new. Come and join us and feel all the wonderful benefits of being in nature. We challenge you not to feel better afterwards!

[www.graceandgravity.studio](http://www.graceandgravity.studio)



Yoga classes outdoors at Howbery Park have many benefits



# New website is 'all about the people'

You HR, leading experts within HR and organisational development, specialising in supporting public sector, small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and not for profit organisations (NfPs), have launched a newly redesigned website at [www.youhrconsultancy.co.uk](http://www.youhrconsultancy.co.uk).

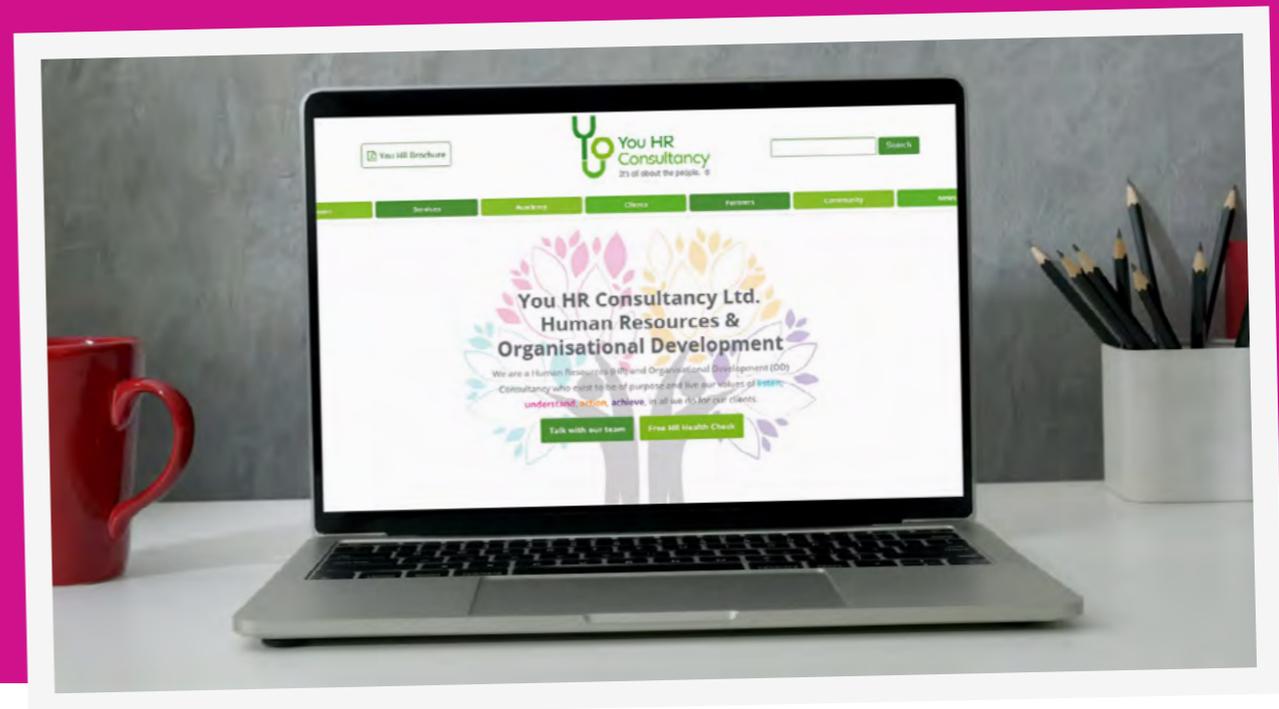
The new site features a streamlined, modern design with improved functionality and outlines the different types of services available to businesses. Spanning from assisting businesses with their day-to-day HR support, training, managing change, or focusing on workplace wellbeing, You HR's proactive approach provides personalised service packages to every client.

You HR's passion for demonstrating return on investment for NfPs and SMEs ignites their energy to achieve sustainable and measurable outcomes and give back to the community as a result of their work. With their strapline, 'it's all about the people', the launch of the new website will continue to allow You HR to support organisations reach their full potential.

"We are thrilled to debut our new website to our clients, stakeholders, and prospective clients who are looking to understand the breadth of our service line tree," says Jonna Mundy, You HR's CEO and Founder. "This website redesign allows us to better showcase the work that we do and provide a more user friendly experience for those looking to review their current HR offering. Book a meeting directly through the website with the team to allow us to explore where we can be of assistance."

You HR's new website continues to host the consultancy's online Academy, a large content library with 100s of best practice templates, guides and standard operating procedures and e-learning environment, providing training packages from online induction to The Institute of Leadership and Management approved programmes.

"You HR are advocates of ensuring that all businesses have the fundamental basics of HR in place," Jonna adds. "If you have not yet had the opportunity to evaluate your current HR practice, why not try our free on-line HR Health Check on our website. It takes a few minutes to complete and will give you an instant outcome of how your business complies with the latest HR best practice and legislative employment requirements or where you need to improve practice and minimise any risks to your business: [www.youhrconsultancy.co.uk/hr-health-check](http://www.youhrconsultancy.co.uk/hr-health-check)."





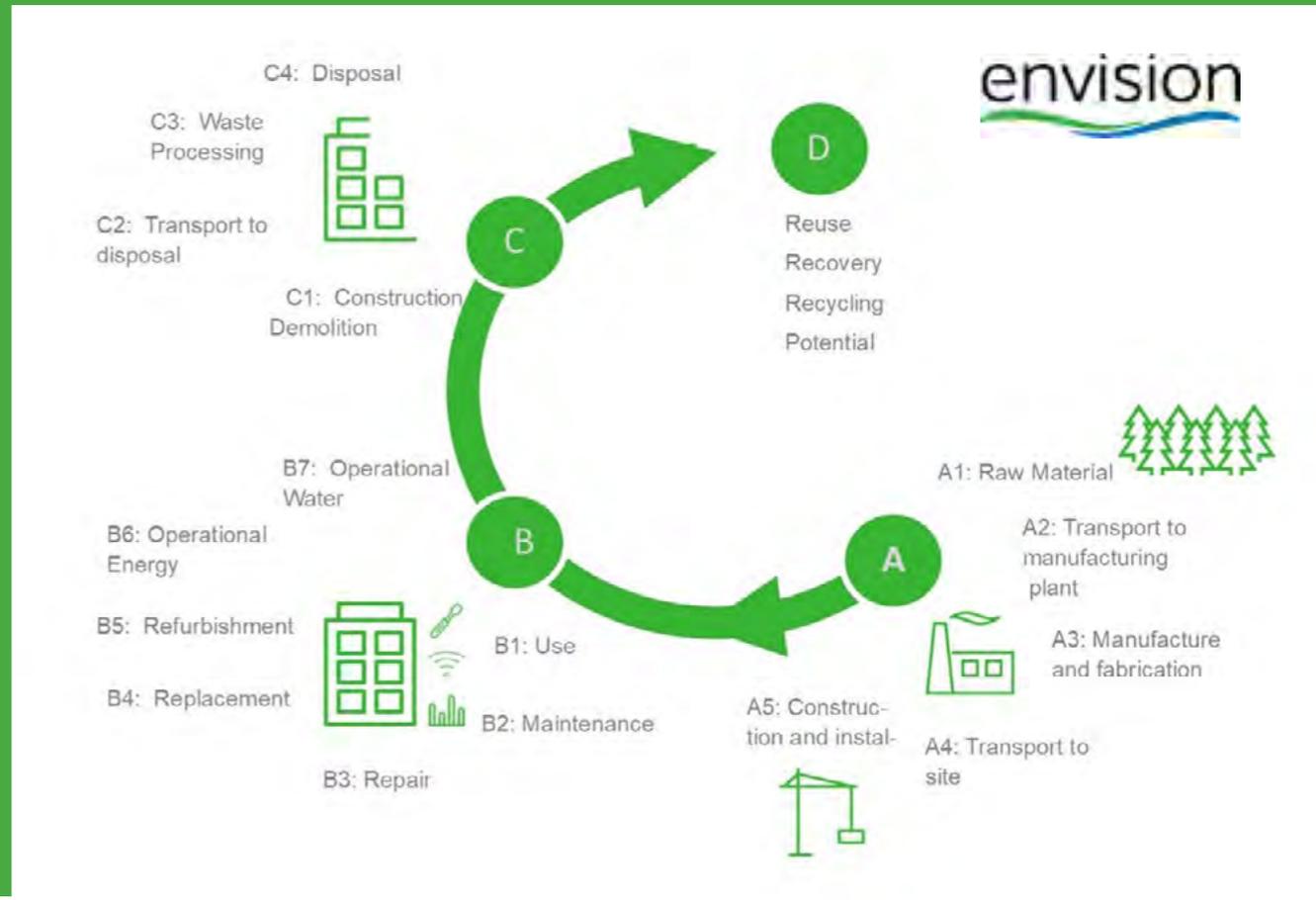
## Envision helps to 'build back better'

Envision Sustainability Ltd, based in the ISIS Innovation Centre at Howbery Park, has been busy over lockdown working with real estate investors and property developers helping them embed sustainable best practice principles in design and construction.

At Envision, we are very passionate about achieving significant improvements in the approach to new build and refurbishment projects that these tools can deliver. With the growing recognition amongst real estate investors of the importance of minimising environmental and social impact, as a fundamental part of the post-COVID recovery plan, we are excited to see what can be achieved.

Never has it been more important to consider the impact on the environment and our own health and wellbeing. To support our clients, we have developed new tools to look at the whole life carbon impact of new developments, to be able to achieve net zero carbon in both construction and operation of buildings. As the name implies, we now look not only at reducing the carbon associated with the building in operation, but also at the 'embodied carbon' of the materials used in construction and ongoing maintenance and replacement. This provides us with a much greater awareness of the true impact on new developments and refurbishment projects and allows us to target the 'hot spots' to drive down the carbon emissions over the whole life.

In addition, we have also developed our own method of considered circular economy principles for large-scale refurbishment projects. Rather than considering waste as part of a 'linear economy' model (make – use – dispose), we consider all materials as resources, looking to maximise their value through reuse and recycling. As well as reducing waste going to landfill, we are also reducing the carbon emissions associated, which ties in with our whole life carbon approach.





# Kite Creative serves up a sustainable kitchen

Kite Creative has just delivered an eco-kitchen using more than 75% sustainable materials. The company aims to create renewable, traceable, re-useable and beautiful kitchens.

We are designing and building contemporary kitchens that both look good and are environmentally and sustainably better for you and the planet. Our design helps to keep toxins low, improve air quality, and contribute towards reducing our carbon footprint.

In our first commission with Greencore Construction and Ssassy Property, we've delivered an eco-kitchen for one of their Passive House properties, using over 75% sustainable materials. For example, we have used recycled surfaces which are food-safe, durable and made from long-lasting materials.



Located at Springfield Meadows in Oxfordshire, which is a climate positive, net-zero energy development of 25 homes near Abingdon with a focus on high quality design, the beautiful, shared spaces include a wildflower meadow, orchard, and pond, designed to help to create a thriving community and maximise biodiversity.

Kite Creative eco-kitchen (photographer: Paul Craig)

For our kitchens, we source responsibly, searching for the most eco-sustainable materials we can find to help minimise environmental impact and enhance the recyclability of materials, increasing energy and material efficiency. We work with recycled, upcycled and natural materials with low formaldehyde content and low volatile organic compounds to help reduce pollutants in the atmosphere and source locally wherever possible.

We are working towards all products that we use or manufacture being fully traceable to help us calculate the carbon footprint of all our kitchen components. We are also developing a circular process for our kitchens to follow throughout their entire lifecycle, from raw materials, through production, to final kitchen furniture and finally re-purposing and recycling.

The modular, mobile and flexible furniture that we use can be updated with new parts, be re-used or integrated into new contexts. We place a strong focus on designing long-lasting quality products, that will both help the environment and be beneficial to you.

At every stage of production, we ensure as little wastage as possible is created from our materials. For example, when you dispense water from a Quooker tap, you use the exact amount of water you need. Unlike with a kettle, whereby people often boil more water than needed...or decide to re-boil because the water has cooled down.

[www.kitecreative.co.uk](http://www.kitecreative.co.uk)

# ABHI contributes to sustainable procurement for healthcare technology

Sustainability is of increasing significance to our lives, but is not a straightforward issue for the health technology industry. A working group organised by the Association of British HealthTech Industries (ABHI), which represents healthcare technology suppliers, is engaged in helping draw up sustainable procurement principles.

Last year, the NHS set out a bold ambition to become the world's first carbon net zero national health system by 2045. As a key part of the global supply chain, and its subsequent footprint, the HealthTech industry has an important role to play. However, for an industry with regulation at its core, and many other facets that determine the adoption and spread of technologies, such as NHS procurement, health policy and funding, a holistic approach needs to be taken on how this is implemented.

Sustainability is not straightforward for the HealthTech industry because there is a complex interplay between clinical risk and environmental impact. The recent surge in demand for single-use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to combat the Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated this. Regulation can be used as a useful tool for driving new sustainable practices, but for an industry that is made up predominantly of SMEs, who in recent years have experienced an increasing cost to serve the NHS, we need to be mindful that any changes to regulation must be reflective of this balancing act. SMEs are the backbone of the industry and responsible for a lot of innovation. Tying them down with unnecessary regulatory hurdles could prevent new innovative and sustainable products from reaching patients.

Procurement is another important way for the NHS to achieve net zero targets. However, it needs to be well thought through in collaboration with industry. The HealthTech sector is strongly engaged with the sustainability agenda and seeks to make sure that this does not become a tick box exercise, designed with good intentions, but with ineffective results.

A set of sustainable procurement principles, designed in collaboration with the NHS and industry, could be a way to ensure NHS organisations are all engaging with sustainable suppliers, with a consistent level of effective criteria that embeds sustainability into purchasing decisions. To realise such aims, ABHI's dedicated Environmental Sustainability Group will be heavily engaged with the NHS and the wider healthcare community.

The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the value of close collaboration between the HealthTech industry and the NHS. Health Minister, Lord Bethell, remarked at ABHI's recent regulatory conference that it was the HealthTech sector that "stood up first at the onset of Covid, and, it is the HealthTech sector that the NHS will depend upon as it looks to restore its services to pre-pandemic levels".

If the NHS net zero targets are to be achieved, we must maintain this level of collaboration and engagement well into the future, with sustainability at its core.

# HR Wallingford's courses go online

One of the ways HR Wallingford has adapted to the Covid-19 restrictions has been to reformat its classroom training courses to be delivered online.

When lockdown started in early 2020, we had a number of courses planned for the spring in the Howbery Park conference rooms. They have been the venue for our training courses for many years with hundreds of delegates having attended. Keen to continue providing training, and in response to requests for online courses, we decided to go virtual.

The first course to be developed into an online format was our one-day classroom course about sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), which help reduce the risk of flooding from sewer overflows. This classroom course has been extremely popular for several years. When designing the online course we decided to incorporate both pre-recorded and live sessions. The students view the pre-recorded lectures and exercises in their own time, as and when convenient.

The live sessions then provide an opportunity for questions and discussion with the course tutors.

The first online course went live in June 2020 and was a great success with another six taking place since. More than 300 people in total have signed up to participate, with delegates seeing this as an opportunity to continue with their training and development.

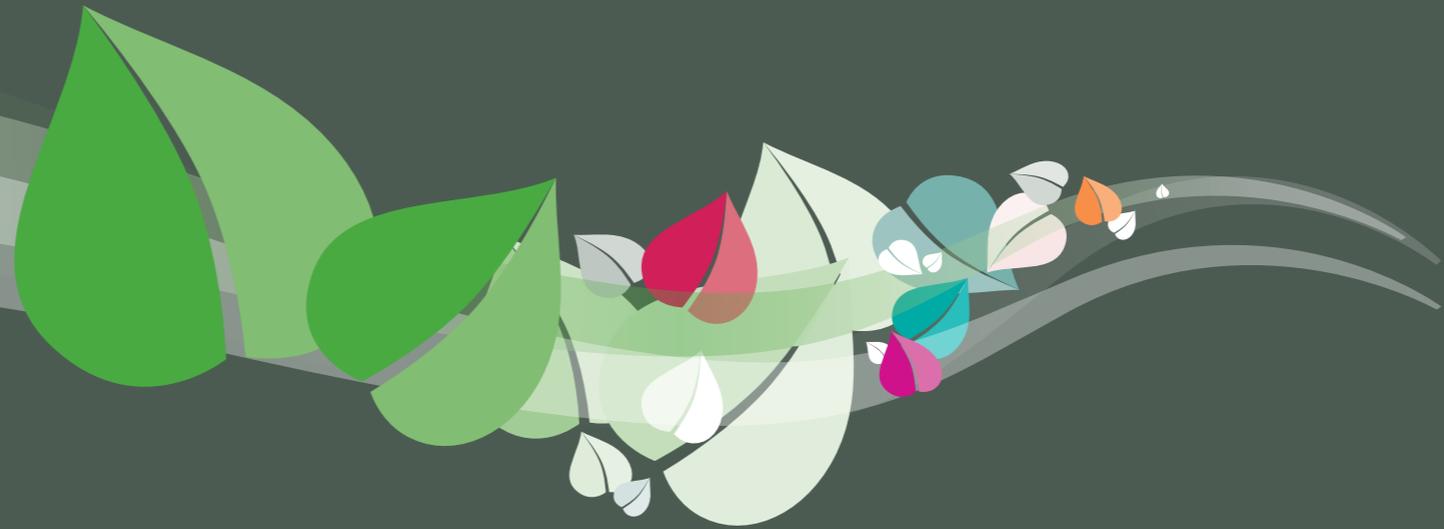
Our second course to transfer from classroom to a virtual format was our Dredging Management Course. The two-day classroom format was redesigned to be delivered as 16 hours of live content over four days. We ran the course for the first time in February and received very positive feedback from delegates. The virtual format enabled delegates to easily join the course from outside the UK, and we had people from all over the world take part.

Having seen the benefits and drawbacks of virtual training, we will be looking at developing our online programme, alongside our classroom courses. We are looking forward to be able to welcome students back to the park.

## At work in the modelling hall

Work in the Froude Modelling Hall continued throughout the pandemic, with extra protocols in place to ensure the safety of our staff. Its vast size allowed our people to work at safe distances from each other. Pictured is one of our apprentices, Osbourne Chant, at work in the hall. He is studying for a degree in civil engineering.





# News... News... News

## A Note From The Editor:



Keep us posted – to include your news and stories in Parklife, please email them to me, Donna Bowles [d.bowles@howberypark.com](mailto:d.bowles@howberypark.com)