



THE “GREEN” PICNIC

The “Green” any time picnic had originally been planned as an outdoor event to encourage lots of families and friends to get together to participate in this favourite of British pastimes and to enjoy sunshine, games and fun at the Kennet Way Park. Unfortunately, this can no longer happen because of new Covid 19 restrictions. This is disappointing.

But before winter sets in and whilst there are still hopefully some lovely, light, warm days to come, why not let us prepare “green” picnics either to enjoy in our gardens or to go further afield for example when we go for a cycle ride or a long walk. When you need to, you can re-fuel with delicious food, rest and relax.

The main aim is to encourage us all to be outside having fun and to think about what food we prepare, which is both delicious and healthy (some of which we may have grown in our own gardens or allotments), how we wrap it and transport it and then to think about how not to generate waste. We should also be thinking about how we could use left overs and what to do about our rubbish. Also, consider eating vegetarian, as raising animals for food increases carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere, contributing to global warming.

Here are some ideas:-

- ❖ We need to think about how we should carry our picnics. The main aim is to use what we already have... Perhaps a sturdy supermarket bag.
- ❖ Next, what are we going to sit on? Many of us will be happy to sit on the grass, but if not, why not use an old rug or tablecloth ... Whatever we already have, we can re-use. Don't buy anything new! We don't want to add to landfill. If we do have to use anything disposable, try to keep this to a minimum and ideally choose a biodegradable option.

- ❖ Then comes the question of what are we going to eat and drink? Try to get everyone involved. Cooking and preparation are fun. Try for home-made - perhaps bread or may be a cake (kids love baking), or be adventurous and make delicious and healthy dips made from home-grown produce perhaps. And enjoy vegetables and fruit (again perhaps home grown) and try to buy local as well if possible. For example, Hampshire has some delicious cheeses and Hampshire honey is absolutely scrumptious. We can fill our sandwiches with whatever we like, but the less processed the better. Whilst buying processed foods and things like packaged cakes may be convenient and time saving, they are filled with chemicals and allergens and require tons of energy to produce.
- ❖ We should all try to avoid drinking from several small, single use plastic bottles or aluminium cans. It is better to take our reusable drinking bottles filled with water or what ever else we enjoy ... perhaps home-made elderflower cordial (or something else) if there is any left after Summer? Or if we want something alcoholic, how about trying a beer brewed locally. And please don't use single use plastic drinking straws.
- ❖ Avoid packaging as much as possible and plastic cling film. Keep sandwiches fresh in tupperware boxes which are endlessly re-usable or even better, washable, cloth covers (Christine Mullard makes these if you are interested).
- ❖ So what do we eat off and with? Ideally, anything that is reusable and doesn't generate waste. Finger foods are great because they don't require plates or cutlery. And use cloth napkins that can be washed. And whatever waste we do make, we need to clear up and dispose of properly, recycling and composting what we can which is hopefully everything. In our own gardens, we would do this, but if we are enjoying a trip out, it is especially important to leave somewhere unspoilt by our presence so that no-one would guess we had been there. Also, other wildlife may not thrive on our leftovers.
- ❖ If we have leftovers, think of sharing them with neighbours at home to give them some joy too. Don't let leftovers fester in the back of the fridge and then be wasted.

Apart from just enjoying the sunshine and fresh air, let's make use of what we already have and have fun and cherish time together in these difficult Covid times. Invite your teddybears if you like? Play some garden games too. Let's enjoy our picnics!