

## Parish Magazine – October 2024

Well, it sadly looks like summer is all over judging by the rain currently driving against my office window! Still, it will soon be the season of gorgeous autumn colours, crunching leaves beneath your feet on walks and the excuse to drink hot chocolate regularly.

It is the time for tidying and getting the garden in best possible shape for strong flowering next spring. Our beautiful new wild flower meadow continues to flower and should do so well into Autumn. It has lovely to see so many people enjoying the mown paths through it over the summer.

We currently have a new *Sublime Sculpture Trail* in situ, with stunning sculptures positioned throughout the estate. This runs until 6<sup>th</sup> October and is included in annual admission ticket.

Looking ahead to Autumn and Winter, we have daytime *Hallowe'en* & Christmas experiences. During October Half-Term, children are invited to become Spell Seekers and interact with six magical beings around the Estate, before joining the Hallowe'en Ball and Fancy Dress competition. This was hugely popular last year, so we are hoping for good weather so everyone can enjoy it.

Shortly after October Half Term, we will be going into the *Fireworks Spectacular Weekend* on 9/10<sup>th</sup> November. This is always a fantastic spectacle and is already selling very fast, so do buy your tickets quickly if you want to attend.

From 23<sup>rd</sup> November to 31<sup>st</sup> December, the Castle will be transformed into scenes from *The Nutcracker*, with live performers at weekends and during the school Christmas holidays. Many of you will have enjoyed *Narnia* in the Castle last year, so we hope you will join us for this magical experience too. Both *Hallowe'en* and *The Nutcracker* are included in your 12-month ticket. We will also have a bookable *Nutcracker* themed Afternoon Tea (adults & children).

Christmas Lights Trail is returning for a third year, with 80% of installations new for this year, we also have great catering, marshmallow toasting and fairground rides, including a Big Wheel giving great views over the Castle!

Looking forward to the New Year (yes – already!), we will be running a Wedding Fair in January for those newly engaged couples who want to get married at the Castle. Aside from the Castle itself and the Maiden's Tower, we can also offer our newly refurbished Castle View Restaurant and marquees in several stunning locations for weddings. We know that couples want that unique touch on their wedding catering, so now offer a variety of different caterers for weddings and functions too.

We will be carrying out some conservation works during the winter. The Castle Moat Bridge will undergo stonework repairs, including a significant amount of re-pointing below the waterline. We will also be refurbishing the sluices that control the waterways on estate.

Hope you have a lovely Autumn.

Helen Bonser-Wilton, Chief Executive