**Revealing the Secret Gardens of Loughgall**

**Green fingers and red wellies are the order of the day in Loughgall, Co. Armagh. Residents of the village have been gearing up to give visitors an opportunity to see many of the normally hidden gardens in their village on the weekend of Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th June.**

**Loughgall is renowned in the horticultural world. Growing apples and vegetables is the mainstay of local business, and its floral displays have led to many competition successes over the years. These “well-kept” and floral display competitions are judged on front gardens as seen from the street; Loughgall has until now kept its back gardens secret. The Secret Gardens weekend will be a chance to see behind the scenes into all those hidden corners. Some 24 private gardens in the village will be open.**

**The gardens themselves vary from tiny enclaves offering peace and privacy up to sizeable ornamental and kitchen gardens. Many of them have features built from the attractive local limestone. Some are long-established mature gardens, others are recent or being actively developed. Refreshments will be on offer at St Luke’s Church Hall and other venues, and there will be stalls with such things as plants, books, information about hedgehog rescue, bric-a-brac, and wood turnings.**

**The event is the brainchild of the Improvement Association. Its vice-chairman, Revd Pete Smith, comments “It has been my great pleasure to have already witnessed many of the beautiful gardens in Loughgall in my role as Rector. This great community event will provide a wonderful opportunity for others to discover also an impressive variety of hidden gems within the local area”.**

**Kathleen Orr, one of the organisers, says everyone involved is busy preparing. “The community is really looking forward to welcoming neighbours and friends from near and far. Even the locals will find surprises in our gardens, and those from further afield will be able to enjoy a leisurely stroll through our historic village”.**

**The gardens will be open from 11am - 5 pm on Saturday, and 2 - 5pm on the Sunday. Tickets can be bought in advance (£4) from Loughgall Village Store, or on-the-day (£6) at three points in the village (£6): St Luke’s Church Hall (on the approach from Armagh/Moy); Mervyn Walker’s yard (in the village centre), or 37 Old Road (on the approach from Portadown). Tickets take the form of a passport with full details of the opening arrangements and a map of the gardens. Each open garden will be signalled by a red wellie at the entrance.**

**Proceeds from the ticket sales will go to three charitable causes: Children’s Heartbeat Trust; St Luke’s Church; and Loughgall and District Improvement Association.**

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