

## **Not so secret anymore... Oxton's gardens open up to 'virtual' visitors**

A WIRRAL resident has come up with a blooming great idea to cheer up garden lovers this month.

When the annual Secret Gardens of Oxton had to be cancelled because of Covid-19, Kevin Donovan decided to bring the gardens into people's homes instead - via 'virtual' videos and pictures on social media.

Kevin and a group of volunteers have set up a Facebook page called Oxton's Virtual Gardens which will go live at 10am on Sunday, May 10 – the day the original event would have taken place.

"The Secret Gardens of Oxton is a wonderful event that takes place every May and attracts thousands of visitors. Around 20 gardens are usually open to the public," said Kevin, who has lived in the village for more than 30 years.

"All public events have had to be cancelled because of the pandemic, but I decided that if people couldn't come to the gardens this year, then the gardens would come to them!"

Throughout the day an array of videos and pictures that have been taken by garden owners and residents will be posted to the page so that people can take a 'virtual' tour of the village.

There will also be videos from entertainers who were due to perform at the original event, as well as contributions from local artists and craftspeople.

"The garden owners have spent a lot of time and effort preparing for the Secret Gardens of Oxton so this way people still get to see the result of all their hard work – albeit online," said Kevin. "Hopefully it will be a great interactive day. The initiative has the blessing of the Oxton Society, which runs the Secret Gardens of Oxton.

"It's free to view, and all we ask is that people who visit the page consider making a donation to Wirral Foodbank which is doing such invaluable work during this crisis. The details on how to donate will be published on the Facebook page."

To take part, simply search for 'Oxton's Virtual Gardens' on your Facebook page – or in your browser if you're not on Facebook but have a computer - but not until 10am on Sunday, May 10, when the page will be made public.

The event, which will be officially opened online at 11.30am by local councillor Allan Brame, runs until 5pm. The Facebook page will remain open for three months for donations and to allow leisurely visits to the gardens.

