

Newsday - Dennis & Gnasher themed Easter event at Kew Gardens.

More than 33,000 people have signed up for a huge Dennis and Gnasher Easter event at Kew Gardens starting this week.

The event consists of a bespoke comic strip that was written with Beano for Kew and Wakehurst to celebrate Dennis the Menace's 70th birthday year. This is launching at Kew and Wakehurst with a classic Beano story, interwoven with the Royal Botanic Garden mission and some expert characters on the way and lots of pranks and jokes. It consists of a selection of 12 comic frames, with three interactive points that create a live comic strip in the gardens. The comic strip has been fabricated as painted panels to make them life size in the gardens, picking out scenes that visitors can interact with.

The programme producer, Katie Ambrose, said they have capped the number of people that can come through the gates, so they are not "overwhelmed". She said there could be over 100,000 ticket time slots for the full event over the two weeks. Time slots are how they manage numbers - visitors go online and book a slot in for the day they want to go. This can range from a single person or up to a family of four booking in.

"In the current climate we are conscious of this and monitor it. This is to ensure we can get as many people as possible to enjoy it but to also ensure we are not encouraging too many people in one place at the same time, always working within government guidelines," Ambrose added.

With the organisation of the event taking just under a year, the team said they are "very pleased and excited to see it in action". Last year, Kew Gardens organised a Gruffalo themed Easter event, but it was postponed until autumn when restrictions were lifted.

Mother of two, Katie Louise, 32, is a regular visitor of the grounds. As a local, she said: "I take my two sons to Kew's Gardens all the time - the scenery is just so beautiful and never gets old."

She added: "After taking my sons to their last event, I decided to get tickets for the Beano Bonanza because they always have a joyful experience, no matter what the occasion. As they are quite young it can be hard to keep them occupied and find something fun to do with them when everything is closed, but we can always rely on a stroll through the trees and past the lakes."

After five smaller events were cancelled due to lockdown, Kew wasted no time and planned a Secret World of Plants event for the middle of May.