

Chairman's Message

A warm welcome to all the new members who have joined us recently. We hope that you enjoy this newsletter and we look forward meeting you soon.

As the result of the very wet Spring, much of our work in the park was delayed. Then came glorious May, with warm sunshine encouraging everything to grow rapidly, including the weeds! In June, at last our main project was under way in the conservation area, with a start made on our new native wildflower meadow.

We have launched our 2018 survey of park users and thank those of you who have already filled one out. Your views really are important to us. We need to know what you think about the park and to pick your brains for any new ideas. We very much hope that you will complete it.

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Photography Competition

For the last four years, our annual competition has brought a wonderful variety of photos of the park, taken by young and older camera enthusiasts. The rules and entry form can be found on our website www.lakemeadows.org.uk



Rob Hartly

The competition is open until midnight on August 31st. Have a go! Entry is free and there are some very good money prizes! Our thanks to all four Service organisations in the town who sponsor

this competition for us each year.

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Footpaths

The repair of the footpaths in the park is evidently going to take place soon, according to our Parks' team. This is a long-awaited improvement that FoLM and parkrun have been highlighting for some time.

The Boathouse area



Charles Novis

There has been a glorious display in recent weeks of the ox-eye daisies under our Christmas tree by the boathouse. We have requested that this area is not cut until late summer so that everyone can enjoy these special flowers each year. The bees have also been busy!

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The Conservation area

After delays, which were beyond our control, the sluice banks were finally prepared, strimmed and rotovated ready to plant the seeds (from Emorsgate - Prince Charles' supplier!) to create our new native wildflower meadow. Yellow rattle plugs were planted to help control the grass and some of the nettles were cut back, so they do not take over the whole area. Watch this space, and keep your fingers crossed, as it will take several years for the wild perennials to become established.

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The Flower Meadow

Again, the weather caused a delay in preparing the flower meadow, which is seeded with non-native annuals each year and gives everyone a lot of pleasure. Look out for cornflowers and cosmos, marigolds and mallows. We shall be doing a bug hunt during the summer to try to find out which insects and butterflies enjoy the flowers. Then next year we plan to add another information board here.

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New Flower Box

Sadly, we lost a beautiful red maple tree at the main entrance to the park last year. The hexagonal metal seat under the tree was a perfect meeting place for friends visiting the park or for parents watching the play area. Now a new flower box is to be provided by Parks to fill the gap and colourful annuals will be planted each season by our gardening team. Watch this space!

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Vandalism

Petty vandalism seems, for some unknown reason, to give some people a real buzz! Plants and young trees continue to be a target, as does the skate board park. Please keep alert and report anything you see to us, the police and on Basildon Steetscene. Photos would help convictions but make sure you don't approach any vandals yourselves!

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Pond Dipping



Sarah Clapton

Like these goslings captured puddle-dipping, you may see some of us having a go at proper pond-dipping in the lake in mid-July. By doing a trial run, we hope to find out which creatures live in the lake besides the fish, so we can encourage them more by perhaps improving the habitat. Depending on what we find, we may be able to offer pond dipping as a future activity.

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Raised Bed

Twice a year, in June and October, our band of gardeners change the design in the raised bed. Usually it is polyanthus in winter and geraniums in summer. However, this year, to commemorate the centenary of the end of WW1, a design, with blue lobelia and white alyssum, has been planted by our team, with the plants provided by the Parks' department. We hope that this will help people remember the many who gave their lives.

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Jazz in the Park



Peter Williams

Make sure that you have noted on your calendar Saturday July 7th from 4 – 7.15pm for our **FREE** Jazz event at the park. As regulars will know, the music is a mixture of jazz, well-known favourite songs and newer compositions, played by our two resident bands led by Nimrod Margalit and John Summerton, as well as guitar duo The Law and keyboard player/singer Drew Levi, who is also acting as our compere this year, introducing the musicians and helping the event to run smoothly. Bring chairs and a picnic and enjoy a relaxed afternoon by the lake.

No tickets needed!

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Let's Go Batty!

On August 21st at 7.30pm, we shall be holding our third annual bat walk at the park. Led by bat specialist Pete Cloughton of Essex Bat Group. It really is an evening well worth joining and you will definitely hear and see several bat species. Free to members, £2 each for non-members. **Booking essential** either on line or through the Secretary on **07843 860 135**

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AGM with live reptiles!



Ray Canfield bringing live examples to share with us. **Everyone welcome! No need to book.**

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Parkrun

We are pleased to congratulate Billericay parkrun on their 1st birthday. Taking place every Saturday morning, their 10.000 finisher crossed the line last month. Open to all ages and abilities, the parkrun gives people the opportunity to improve their personal skills, whether walking or running, and to meet others as they enjoy the early start in the park.

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What to look for in Summer

The best time to get to know bees, moths, lace wings, dragonflies, crickets, grasshoppers, beetles, bugs and all our other amazing minibeasts is during the summer months, when insect life is most abundant.



Lee Rayner

Watch the flower meadow in particular, where our Ecology group will be undertaking a survey of what is there. Other areas include all the gardens and possibly the conservation area, where we know that butterflies love the nettles.

Our new bird boxes have been well-used by blue-tits this past couple of months and a number of birds were heard and seen on our successful Dawn Chorus in May.

Of course, the trees are now in full leaf. Can you



Ginkgo biloba

spot some unusual ones, such as the walnuts or the ginkgo biloba trees, both distinctive in their leaf forms? The walnuts and one ginkgo are

by the path by the crazy golf, but there is also another specimen of the ginkgo in the Garden of the Child. Or maybe join our tree walk on July 3rd to discover even more trees...

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Children's Corner



Sarah Clapton

Did you know ...

- There are about 10 million brown rats in the UK, like this one snapped at the park.
- There are more than 600 species of spider in Britain.
- Every adult hedgehog has around 7,000 spines covering its back and sides.
- One British field slug can potentially produce about 90,000 grandchildren.
- The barn owl's hearing is the most sensitive of any creature ever tested.
- An 80-foot beech tree can absorb the daily carbon dioxide output of two family homes.

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Volunteers

We recently took part in Billericay Volunteer 2018 at the library, which resulted in several new members joining up., although no new volunteers.

We have also joined Brentwood CVS and they have added us to the Volunteer Essex website. We always welcome any new helpers and can find something interesting for you to do! Please make contact with us!

RESEARCH FOUND THAT PEOPLE WHO VOLUNTEER



are happier



feel better



live longer

Overall, we think that we give about 1,500 hours a year in volunteers' time to the park. Nationally volunteers contribute £22.6bn to the UK economy. So not only are we helping to care for the park, we are helping the economy, as well as improving lives!

A big thankyou to everyone who helps us!

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Tree Walk



We are fortunate in having such a variety of trees at Lake Meadows. A number of unusual trees were planted in the past to enhance the original oak trees, thanks to the foresight of Major Spitty, who once owned the land, and also the Park's team, since the park was acquired by the council in the 1930s. Do join us on July 3rd at 7.30pm for an evening walk around the park to find out more. **Booking essential** on line or via Rosie on **07843 860 135**

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Summer Word Search

P	S	E	I	L	F	R	E	T	T	U	B
O	W	N	I	A	T	N	U	O	F	C	L
P	Y	Y	K	S	E	U	L	B	I	L	M
P	I	C	N	I	C	S	G	D	W	O	E
Y	J	M	S	S	G	B	B	Q	S	U	A
B	U	T	T	E	R	C	U	P	S	D	D
S	T	R	A	E	A	H	T	O	M	S	O
E	A	E	B	B	S	W	A	L	L	O	W
S	E	E	W	A	S	P	Q	S	E	C	I
O	H	S	U	N	S	H	I	N	E	A	X
R	Y	S	I	A	D	V	A	N	T	S	F

Ants	Daisy	Picnics
BBQ	Fountain	Poppy
Bats	Grass	Roses
Bees	Heat	Swallow
Blue sky	Ices	Swift
Buttercups	Leaf	Sunshine
Butterflies	Meadow	Trees
Clouds	Moth	Wasp

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Working Parties

Our next working parties will be held on:
 Saturday July 21st and Saturday September 15th
 Meet as usual at the compound by the gardens at 9.30am. Helpers area always welcome! No special skills needed! A wide variety of jobs are undertaken.

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Rock & Grasses Area

The area near the play area end of the lake, which was planted with ornamental grasses last June, and funded by Greggs, is already beginning to look well-established, with the Californian poppies adding a splash of orange colour.



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Data Protection

New European GDPR legislation came into force at the end of May, which means that we have had to contact all our members to seek your consent for us to keep your personal details on our database and for us to continue to contact you.

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Funding for Parks

Recent research by the Ramblers and the Town and Country Planning Associations found that rapidly dwindling funds had resulted in poor maintenance and a drop in people visiting parks in the UK. Safety, cuts in park ranger services and a reduction in maintenance funding were all an issue.

We are aware that funding is very limited for Lake Meadows. The Park managers work hard to ensure that basic care and maintenance is undertaken but there is no money for additional expenditure. So that is where the Friends can help by finding funds for additional projects to improve the park, such as the Wizard & Dragon and the improvements to both ends of the lake. Some of these funds come from grants and sponsorship, whilst your membership fee adds to the pot available for smaller improvements, such as new plants for the garden areas.

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Cheering up the Dragon



Well-loved by many young visitors to the park, our dragon has long been due for a repaint. She is getting very tired and one day may well fly off to build a new nest in another park. Meanwhile, she will be repainted in July by two committee members, in the hope of persuading her to stay just a little longer!

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