

Chairman's Message

A warm(!) welcome to all our recent new members. We are delighted that you have joined us! We hope that you have all managed to enjoy the park this summer, despite the intense heat.

I should particularly like to thank all our gardeners who have done a sterling job during the recent heatwave. They are all volunteers, who give up their Tuesday mornings to look after all the gardens in the park. Despite the heat we have had between 9 and 11 people every single week, even when the temperature was in the 30s. They have continued to water, weed and dead-head as much as they possibly could, and have done a really superb job! So a big Thank you to them!

Thank you also to all of you who completed our recent survey. The results, which are interesting, will be shared with you in our next newsletter and at our AGM soon. We hope to see you at the event!

Photography Competition



The hot weather may have meant fewer opportunities to take photos for our competition this year. As a result, we are extending the closing date to October 31st. So come on, have a go. £100 first prize, thanks to the Round Table, both Rotary Clubs and the Lions!

Adult and Junior classes. Rules & entry form on our website. We plan a display in the library again

Snakes alive at our AGM!



A reminder that our AGM this year is to be held on Thursday September 27th at 7.45pm at Christ Church Hall. We have the added bonus of an interesting talk about Essex Amphibians and Reptiles, with speaker Ray Canfield bringing live examples to share with us.

Everyone welcome! No need to book.

Footpaths

You will be pleased to know, especially if you use a whellechair or scooter, that the council have managed to find funds to resurface large



areas of the footpaths. We hope that this has improved the quality of your park visits!

New Flower Box

Our suggestion for a flower box to replace the red maple that died last year, near the main park gate, was agreed by the parks' managers, who provided the box. Although it arrived rather late in the planting season, we managed to obtain some geraniums. Next season, we hope to improve the display with a better assortment of plants that to enhance the park .

Data Protection & Your Privacy

As a member of FoLM, you are required, under new data protection legislation, to give your consent to us keeping your personal data and for us to contact you. Many of you responded in June to our emails and letters. Sadly, if you have not responded by the end of September, then we shall have to remove your details from our records and this will be the last newsletter that you receive. Please contact the secretary on 07843 860 135 or email:

secretary@lakemeadows.org.uk

Vandalism

Sadly the Skate board park has again been vandalised. It was originally provided by Billericay Town Council and has since been maintained by them, but the cost of constant repairs has brought their decision to close the facility. They hope to investigate other facilities resistant to the destructive damage of vandalism.

More young trees have also been damaged recently in the park, including memorial trees planted in memory of loved ones. It really is sad that just one or two thoughtless idiots feel that they must cause anguish to others. Why, oh why? What do they get from it?

If you see the two boys believed to be causing this damage, or any other vandals, please report them to the police on 101 and to the park staff or the Friends. Do take photos of culprits if you can, but please DO NOT remonstrate with them.

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Pond Dipping

Some pond-dipping was trialed in late July, with the assistance of Wat Tyler education team, but it would seem that there is very little of interest in the lake. Probably anything that moves gets eaten by the huge carp and catfish, as well as the smaller fish.

The planting of a reed bed will be reconsidered, in the hope of finding some shelter for insects and small amphibians.

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Raised Bed



A number of people have been asking what the 100 is for on the raised bed in the gardens area. Most of you will be aware that it is a hundred years since the end of World War 1, but did you also know that it is the centenary of the foundation of the RAF, as well as 2018 being the 100th anniversary of votes for (some) women, campaigned for by the Suffragettes.

We remember all those who served our country, gave their lives, and changed our world.

Sadly the plants have suffered from the drought – we did our best!

The Conservation area

We really did choose the wrong year to start our wildflower meadow in the conservation area! For a start everything was delayed due to a contractor failing to do the groundwork. So by the time the Parks' team had helped to rotovate and strim the areas, it meant the seeds were not sown until late in May. Although there was some rain immediately after they were sown, the hot weather soon kicked in. Despite watering being done by Richard and Nigel, our 'park keepers', the drought may have just been too much for the young seedlings and yellow rattle plugs. Not daunted, we live in hope and shall try again and keep trying until we succeed!

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The Flower Meadow

The flower meadow was also late in being sown and has struggled through the hot weather, but is now showing some colour. Maybe next year everyone can get going a bit earlier with these areas?

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Jazz in the Park



The event was well-supported again this year, despite it being the semi-finals of the World Cup and the first of the hot days in July. We were entertained by Andy Evans and Tiv Taylor of 'The Law', along with Nimrod Margalit and his band and students and John Summerton and his band. Drew Levi compared for us and also played keyboard and sang. It was great that so many people turned out for the event, especially those that came after the match!

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Working Parties

Our next working parties will be held on the following Saturdays September 15th, October 20th, November 17th and December 15th.

Please check our website for any changed dates! A wide variety of jobs are undertaken and helpers are always welcome! Meet as usual at the compound by the gardens at 9.30am. No special skills needed, tools provided!

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What to look for in Autumn



Sarah Clapton

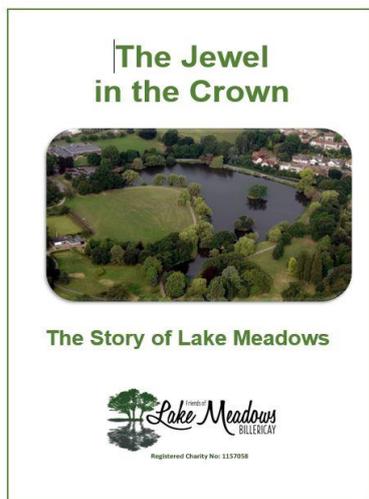
Summer will soon be over and signs of approaching autumn will start to appear in coming weeks. Fungi will be seen on rotting wood and in damper places such as the woods. As cooler weather comes, the trees stop producing chlorophyll for photosynthesis and leaves begin to change colour. The timing of leaf colour-change can vary depending on the site, summer heat and lack of rain. Squirrels and jays will be burying acorns, butterflies and ladybirds finding secret places to hibernate. At the busiest time of the year for bats, as they seek mates, they will be 'singing' for the attention of females in hidden places, such as the sluice tunnel. Blackberries have ripened early this year and in some areas are already over, but there are plenty of berries on cotoneasters and other shrubs, perhaps warning of a harsh winter to come.

Late Summer Quiz

- Who owned the land before it became Lake Meadows?
- When did it become a park?
- Why is the lake that shape?
- When and how was it made?
- How old is the woodland?

The answer to these and countless other questions can be found in our history booklet; copies are available at the Information hut for £5.

The hut is nearly always open on Monday mornings and some times other mornings, including some Saturdays.



Let's Go Batty!

Our bat evening in late August was again well-booked and we even had a waiting list. The event is popular amongst all age groups and Peter Cloughton of Essex Bat Group gave an excellent talk. All five species of bats were 'heard' or seen flitting over the lake and in the canopy of the woodland trees.

We hope to run other small events next year, for all ages including children and linked to the ecology of the park.

Children's Corner



Did you know ...

- About 107 billion people have lived on our planet since man first evolved. Today there are around 7.3 billion people in the world and by 2050 9.7 billion;
- There are about 3.5 trillion trees in the world;
- Approximately 10 quintillion insects live in the world; (that is 10,000,000,000,000,000,000);
- Almost two thirds of all species in the UK have declined in the past 50 years
- 20% of wild flowers threatened with extinction;
- 72% of British butterflies are declining;
- 36 million hedgehogs in 1950, 1 million today.



It's never too early to start! Our youngest recruit tries on a hi-viz jacket for size. We do understand that not everyone is able to help in the park, but we can always use more volunteers. A special thank you to those who have recently offered to help – we shall be contacting you soon. If anyone else can spare a little time to help us, just occasionally, then do email us, or ring if you'd like a chat about helping.

And finally ...

Don't let the sun set on our parks

The UK's parks save the NHS more than £111m a year, with an estimated £34bn of wellbeing benefits improving mental and physical health, according to a report 'Revaluing our Parks and Green Spaces' by the Fields in Trust.

A 'Charter for Parks' was launched on June 21st this year by a coalition of twelve national organisations, representing 6,000 local Friends of Parks Groups throughout the UK. The charter calls on the leaders of all four home nations to take action to ensure these essential and highly-popular public resources are properly funded, managed, maintained, and protected for current and future generations.

For more information see: www.natfedparks.org.uk