

Chairman's Message

It has been heartening that we have had a number of new members join us since lockdown was eased, boosting our numbers up to nearly 300 households again. Welcome to all the new members - we are delighted that you have joined us and look forward to getting to know you all.

Thank you to all our gardeners, who are again doing a sterling job in caring for the acre of gardens. The pansy bed has been magnificent this year and many people have commented on it!

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The Information Centre



Thanks to our team of dedicated helpers, our hut will be open several times a week over the summer months.

There is lots to see inside - displays of

old photos, the history of the park, information about the Child in the Park sculpture and the Wizard and Dragon, and lots more! You will find things for sale, including books on the history of the park called 'The Jewel in the Crown' and story books for children about the wizard and dragon, as well as notelets featuring park scenes, souvenirs and some free Tree Walk sheets for both the grown-ups and the children.

Do come and visit on:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday mornings, Tuesday & Wednesday afternoons and occasional other times. Times of opening and days may vary. If you could spare a couple of hours each week or fortnight and enjoy talking to people, then we can always fit more helpers into the rota! Do ring Rosie on 07843 860 135 (answerphone)

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Photography Competition 2021



Danny Guy

Following last year's very successful event, this year's competition is already under way, so if you enjoy taking photos, why not join and take part? You can submit up to 4 snaps of anything in the park, but they must be taken this year.

Rules and entry form are on our website. Closing date: Midnight on October 31st. There are good prizes, so do have a go!

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The Garden of the Child

Our gardeners were horrified to find in March that the Garden of the Child has suffered during lockdown. Incredibly, parents have allowed children to trample everywhere, despite there being a notice requesting them to keep to the paths. Hundreds of plants have been lost, path edges broken and young shrubs destroyed.

Now the gardeners have come up with a plan to refurbish the garden in the coming year, which will mean much hard work to improve the paths and, in time, to add new plants, providing we can achieve a regular supply of water to the garden.

The Flower Meadow

Recently the meadow was reseeded, in preparation for another show of cultivated flowers in the summer. The path was fenced off, but again children have been spotted running all over the seeded area. Words fail us!

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Children's Corner

- Q. Why can't pine trees sew?
 A. They always drop their needles.
 Q. Why is grass so dangerous?
 A. Because it's full of blades.
 Q. What did the flower say after it told a joke?
 A. I was pollen your leg
 Q. What kind of tree do you find in a kitchen?
 A. A pantry.



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Shopping



Why not join the other Amazon users who have registered The Friends of Lake Meadows with Smile.Amazon and make the Friends of Lake Meadows your chosen charity. For every £ you spend, they will donate 0.5% to our funds. It may not seem much, but every penny counts! All your purchases, screens and systems are identical to ordinary Amazon. An easy way for you to help the Friends! Take a look.

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Things to look out for in Summer



Sarah Clapton

Fred & Ginger, our resident Great Crested Grebes, are again nesting on the lake. Look out for the baby grebes nestling amongst the soft feathers on their parents' backs as they all go for a swim round the lake. Meanwhile, young coots, moorhens and mallard chicks are fun to watch as they chase about following mother, whilst searching for things to eat.

Other birds that have been spotted recently included a goldcrest and goldfinches, whilst a kingfisher was spotted near the boathouse area.

After a wonderful crop of cowslips and bluebells this year, other wildflowers in the park this month will include red campion, cow parsley and dog roses. Just a few of the eighty varieties that have been surveyed by our Ecology team.

Park Wardens



Basildon Council has recently employed Park Wardens on a three-month trial to patrol all the parks in the borough. They will do several regular walks a day between 9am and midnight, to deal with any anti-social behaviour they find. If you spot anything untoward happening at the park, please do not approach the culprits yourselves, but **text 60060** stating exactly where and what is going on and the wardens say that they will aim to get there within ten minutes.

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Co-op Community Fund



Select us as your cause

As one of three local organisations nominated for funding from the Co-op Community Fund this year, we have already received one large cheque which we shall be spending at the park in the coming months.

There is still time for you to get involved with fundraising for us, before the current scheme ends in October. Register in one of the stores or at: <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/46853> And then choose us as your chosen charity.

When you shop at any Co-op in the country, including both Billericay shops and the Co-op Funeral Home, your purchases of selected goods and services will trigger 2p in £ to our organisation and the same to you too! So we all benefit!

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Crazy Golf

Long past its best, the Crazy Golf area has been used very little in recent years. Many of the 'holes' have seen better days and despite receiving emergency work two years ago, are now deemed unsafe. It will be replaced during the summer and picnic benches will be added to the area.

Memorial Trees and Benches

Anyone wishing to have a bench or tree in the park in memory of someone needs to contact Basildon Council Parks on 01268 552992 or to email glen.owers@basildon.gov.uk

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Jazz in the Park

Sadly, our Committee decided that it would not be practical so soon after lockdown to hold our annual music festival. Although restrictions will most probably have been lifted by the proposed date, we still have to think about the safety of performers, those erecting the stage and collecting donations, as well as ensuring the audience's safety. Fingers crossed for a return to normal next year.

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Information Boards



The cold dry weather prevented the two new Information boards being erected during April. The ground was just too hard to dig! Sometime soon there will be a new board in the garden area and another in the conservation area. Both give information about the importance of the two areas for wildlife and show examples of the plants and creatures that you may see there. Thanks to the work of our Ecology Group in preparing these.

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The Dragon in her new Spring Coat



Thanks to the efforts of our chairman and vice-chair, the dragon is looking smart ready for the summer, Sadly, she is getting rather elderly, so we shall have to think of where old dragons retire to and what will replace her in the next year or two! Ideas welcome!

Did you know?



There are specimens of three unusual deciduous conifer trees in the park. These trees lose their leaves in autumn yet are a form of fir trees. In the Garden of the Child there is a swamp cypress, a dawn redwood and a ginkgo biloba, all fairly close to one another. The ginkgo is related to the maiden-haired fern and is believed to be the oldest tree still in existence. It has unusual leaves as can be seen in the photograph. Further examples of these trees can also be found in the Crazy Golf area. You can obtain a Tree Trail map in the hut or from our website, so you can find all the marked trees, of which there are about forty, on our trail.

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The Ten Most Beautiful UK Parks

A recent study done for Flowercard by Trip Advisor lists St James' Park as top of the league, with Hyde Park second, Princess Street Gardens, Edinburgh third, Kensington Palace, fourth and Regent's Park in fifth place. A shame that Lake Meadows was not included in the top ten! After all it did win the East of England Region Final in 2019! Maybe nobody from Flowercard came to look at it this year?

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Bird boxes

Additional bird boxes have recently been put up on the trees in the copse at the south end of the conservation area. Within days, bluetits were seen using one of them. Obviously, they are very desirable properties!

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And finally ...

"A positive, healthy attitude is contagious but don't wait to catch it from others. Be a carrier."

Tom Stoppard

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Copies of this newsletter for our postal members have been printed by the Co-op Funeralcare Billericay, whom we should like to thank for their generosity and continued support.