

Message from the Chairman

It has been a joy to see the park blossom into Spring this past few weeks. The daffodils have been a picture, especially in the Rhododendron Walk, as are the cherry trees. It will be interesting to see how the park weathers last summer's drought and this winter's rain.

We continue to monitor the parking situation, which has certainly had some effect on numbers using the park on some days of the week. It was good to see that the Easter visitor numbers were encouraging. Basildon Council have just given four hours extra free parking on Saturdays and Sundays for most of their Council run car parks for late morning to early afternoon (10am-2pm), However we only get one free hour extra, as the parkrun normally has free parking from 8 – 11am, so we just get 11am-noon! We hope you make the most of it!

Charles Novis



New Website

We thought that it was time for a change or two, so you will find that our website has been refreshed and there is lots of useful information there about the park – its history, biodiversity, facilities and events, as well as much, much more. Take a look at www.lakemeadows.org.uk

You will note that the format of this newsletter has also changed in line with the website. We hope that you find it easier to read.

Coming Events



Early Morning Bird Walk: Sunday May 3rd 7am

Join us for our very popular early morning Bird Walk around the park led by our bird specialists Neil Sumner and Ben Mapp. In previous years, about 35 birds have been spotted or identified by their bird song.

You might even spot a goldcrest. It is a tiny bird often found in conifer woodland, scrub, parks and gardens. The birds migrate to the UK in autumn, resident birds being joined by large numbers migrating here. It is our smallest songbird, but can lay up to 12 eggs in a clutch. They typically weigh just 5grams, which is the same as a 20p coin!

Places are limited and are on a first come, first served basis. Book on line at: www.lakemeadows.org.uk Free for FoLM Members and £4/head non-members

Jazz in the Park: Saturday July 11th 4pm – 7.30pm

Just to give you advance warning that we shall be running Jazz in the Park again this year. We shall have our usual brilliant line up of musicians, which we hope you will all enjoy! Remember the event is free, but we do make a collection during an interval, which covers the costs of the event and adds to our funds for making improvements to the park. We appreciate that many of you do give generously, but every penny helps. Wonderful value – where else could you get 3½ hours of good quality jazz and light music for that price?



Natural Capital Values for Parks in England

λ Annual economic value £6.6 billion λ Annual saving to the NHS of £2 billion

λ Asset value of over £200 billion λ Every £1 spent provides £7 to £10 of quantified benefit.



Love Parks Week – July 24th to August 2nd

is an annual campaign celebrating parks and green spaces throughout the UK, the people who care for them, and the countless benefits they bring to people, communities and our planet. The week is promoted by 'Keep Britain Tidy', which is a registered charity.

Our committee will be planning an event one day that week, but it would be lovely to have an event going on in the park everyday. We haven't the manpower to do it ourselves, so we are inviting any groups in Billericay, who use the park, to get involved and hold an event. So, if you belong to any group, please ask the organiser to get in touch. We'd love to hear from you!
secretary@lakemeadows.org.uk

Children's Corner

- Q.** What do you call a rabbit that tells funny jokes?
A. A funny bunny!
Q. What kind of bunny can't hop?
A. A chocolate bunny.
Q. How many Easter eggs can you put in an empty basket?
A. Only one— after that it's not empty anymore.

How many words can you make out of 'Easter Eggs'?

Why not have a competition in your family to see who gets the most!

(Answer is 91 words!)



Photography Competition 2025 and 2026



Congratulations to our 2025 winners; *Nature's Blessing* by Nigel Harris in the General Park section and *Woodland Wonderland* by Sarah Clapton in the Nature section. We hope to have a selection on display in the Park soon.



This year's competition is already under way, check out the details on our website at www.lakemeadows.org.uk/



Volunteers needed

Like all voluntary organisations we are always looking for volunteers. Billericay has a population of about 36,000 and we have only just over forty active volunteers working in the Park. Over the past three years we have put in almost 5,000 hours of voluntary effort mainly through our gardeners but not exclusively. Events and projects, as well as the organisation all need volunteers.

You may be surprised, seven of our volunteer gardeners are in their 80s! If you enjoy using the park, whether it is on parkrun, with your family, enjoying some sport or a regular walk around the lake, then please do seriously think about giving an hour or two every week or month to help us keep the park looking so good. **Come on Billericay, give us a hand!**

Send an email or give us a ring & we can discuss what you would like to get involved with!



What to see in the park this month?

Coltsfoot has been seen by the cornus beds at the head of the lake, near the Garden of the Child in the Park. Cowlips are out on the Conservation area near the sluice. There are violets popping their purple heads out here and there and of course daisies too. An old saying says that if you can put your foot over six daisies, then Spring is here!



Look out for the pair of Egyptian Geese, which are currently raising a brood of 8 goslings – the first we have had since FoLM started in 2012.

Two New Information boards

Our Spirit of the Child in the Park project was finally completed recently, with a new information board about it. We hope that it helps you find all the creatures on the sculpture, and that it reminds you of the statue of the Child.

Whilst doing that, we have also renewed the Habitats board near the café and play area, as it had been damaged. We hope that our next project will be something **amazing**! We'll leave you to guess what it might be.

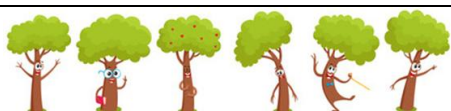
Spring Wordsearch

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

Ants	Daffodil	Nest
Bee	Daisy	New
Bird	Drake	Primrose
Blossom	Duck	Rain Rainbow
Bluebell	Egg	Seeds
Breeze	Equinox	Showers
Bud	Flowers	Slugs
Bugs	Fly	Spring
Butterfly	Gosling	Sunshine
Caterpillar	Ladybird	Tadpoles
Chirping	Lambs	Tulips
Coot	Nature	Violet

Gardening

Hey Ho! Hey hoe, it's off to work we go! Our volunteer gardeners have been out and about this past month, clearing up after the winter and preparing for summer days ahead. There are always more jobs that need doing, we just don't have enough of us to do all we'd like to. There is lots of weeding waiting to be done, pruning and of course 600 geraniums to plant up in the raised bed in May. So, if you would like to enjoy a couple of hours on a Tuesday morning pottering in the gardens with a great group of people, then please do join us, we start at 9.15am. Just come along, wear stout shoes and bring gardening gloves, we provide the tools. **We hope to see you soon!**



Woodland

If you are a regular dog walker or enjoy a walk through the woods, you will have been aware that a number of trees have been cut down recently. A large tree fell near the compound, destroying the gates, which have now been repaired. Other trees had been damaged by lightening or disease, so have been removed. This has given the opportunity to open up the woods and to plant new trees; something we in FoLM identified many years ago. Don't hold your breath, that could take some time to achieve!

What happened to the lake bank? Why was it cut down?

We had many questions about why the vegetation on the lake bank near the sluice had been cut right down. Our committee did raise our concerns with the Head of Neighbourhood Services, who said they wanted to encourage the establishment of reeds along that side of the lake, so the brambles and other vegetation needed to be removed. Unfortunately, this year, it has meant fewer duck, moorhens and coots nesting there, but hopefully this will change in future years. You may have noticed that the reeds are already beginning to show along that water edge.

And finally: Birmingham City Council commissioned a study at ways to unlock the potential of its parks and green estate to maximise the benefits for the city's citizens and visitors. The study found that every £1 that the council invests in its parks and green spaces returns over £24 to society.

The Parks Alliance Report 'Making Parks Count - The Case for Parks' 2020

[Making Parks Count – The Case for Parks – The Parks Alliance](#)

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.