



# Skylarks

Summer is here and we look forward to seeing you soon at our events. All the latest news from the Friends of the Wick Country Park is here to keep you up-to-date with all that is happening in the park.

## Message from the Chair

Hello to you all, hope you are enjoying the summer. Life at the Wick Country Park has been busy, already three successful events and also the achievements of the pond clearing work party.

On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> June we held our best ever 'Paws in the Park'. The weather this year was kind to us and we had a record attendance. All the 8 dog classes were well entered, well judged and an excellent time was had by all. Thank you to all who came along to support us to make it such a wonderful event. A date for your diaries, next year's 'Paws' is already scheduled for Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

A further two events were held in July, our second Skylarks 3k Race and then the Crickets & Dragonflies Walk. Both were successful and well attended, we even had sunshine for the nice afternoon walk in the park!

Reviews on all the events are featured in the following pages, this includes two excellent articles written by Trudie, our resident reporter, on the success of Paws in the Park and the Pond Clearing activities.

Please do not forget our next events in the next couple of months. Firstly there will be our second biggest event of the year, Nature Quest on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> August and then the Kite Festival on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> September, looking forward to seeing you all soon.

Eileen Cattell  
Chairperson

## **Nature Quest**

**A free family day out at  
the Wick Country Park!**



Be a nature detective and explore some of the wild wonders of the Wick Country Park. Explore and investigate the underwater world of the dipping pond, join in the bug hunting. Enter the quiz and be a nature detective and there will also be children's activities in the pavilion plus a tombola!

Please do not forget, come along and join us on:

Sunday 12th August, 11.00am to 4.00pm  
The Wick Country Park, Tresco Way, Wickford  
SS12 9GP

Admission Free

Refreshments available

For full details see our website

[www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk](http://www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk)



## PAWS IN THE PARK - A SUCCESS!

It was successful and dry at the **Paws in the Park** event on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> June. The good weather brought out approx 700 wonderful visitors - with their canine friends naturally! A wide range of breeds of dog were there to be shown and admired.

Have a look at the website gallery – there are some wonderful pictures ([www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk/gallery](http://www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk/gallery)). All the class shows had a high number of entrants but, as usual, the most popular categories were “Handsome Dog”, “Prettiest Bitch” and “Cutest Puppy” which became full very quickly – and this year “Scruffiest Dog” had a great number of entrants also.

Halfway through the day the Billericay Dog Display Team gave an amazing demonstration of dog obedience and dog tricks. This was definitely a case of “dogs NOT behaving badly”. Spectators were spell bound by the range of hand signals, whistles and secret code words which ensured the dogs did as they were told - always with wagging tails of course.

As this is the year of the London 2012 Olympics Friends of the Wick Country Park (FOWCP) wanted to join in with the spirit of the games and set up a games area for doggie entrants to prove they could move faster than Usain Bolt or jump the Fosbury Flop.



Our judge did an excellent job in assessing the dogs and colourful rosettes were awarded from 6<sup>th</sup> place to 1<sup>st</sup>. Well done to all the winners listed below! The Best in Show is the grand finale – consisting of all the first place winners from each category – although CoCo as best puppy didn't make it. Apparently she was too sleepy and couldn't keep her eyes open any longer so left early with her owner. We can only assume this was due to all the excitement.

### Paws in the Park 2012 Classes and Winners

Handsome Dog – Barney owned by Sue  
Prettiest Bitch - Pippa owned by Angela  
Cutest Puppy - CoCo owned by Bradley  
Best Veteran – Kaya and Neo owned by Sue  
Child Handler - Skye owned by Abbey  
Best Rescue - Maggie owned by Darran (also Best in Show)  
Scruffiest Dog – Lulu owned by Kharis  
Best Trick - Ludo owned by Frankie

A special mention must go to the white Great Dane – majestic in stature and colour with amazing bright blue eyes. The owner informed us that blue eyes in this breed are a sign of deafness. His dog was indeed deaf and he communicates basic commands to his pet with a form of sign language. How amazing!



The pavilion was also a popular place to “be seen”. Children enjoyed the creative activities available at the craft table – another big hit. FOWCP tombola and book stall proved popular and of course – refreshments were on offer. (Out of interest we must count how many cups of tea get made!). A variety of stall holders turned up to promote their causes or sell their goods and everyone seemed to enjoy a browse followed by a wander around the park and lake.

It was a great day and thanks go to all the stall holders plus burger and ice cream men for their support and generosity in helping FOWCP make “Paws in the Park” 2012 another great event.

See you at Nature Quest on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> August and the Kite Flying extravaganza on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> September.



## **THE POND CLEARING WORK PARTY - WHAT AN ACHIEVEMENT!**

Members of Friends of the Wick Country Park (FOWCP) volunteered at a work party on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> July to clear the small pond next to the Pavilion. The pond had overgrown with weeds and bulrushes – these are particularly a nuisance as they suck up the water. However, due to the extremely heavy rainfall during June and July the pond was still quite deep. Volunteers were issued with waders and slowly but surely cleaned the pond of overgrowth each side of the wooden bridges which cross over the top of the water. The pond will be used during the FOWCP “Nature Quest” event for children to spend time pond dipping. We hope the bug life show on the day! Please join us on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> August.

Improvements to the Pond:-

The ‘education’ pond, which was lined with puddled clay, has over the years cracked and the water level has gradually been getting lower and lower. This year with the excessive rainfall there is a reasonable amount of water. However, under normal weather conditions unless something is done it will soon be impossible for children to use the pond for pond dipping and a variety of wildlife would be lost. The FOWCP applied to Basildon Council Diamond Jubilee Celebration Grant and to Veolia Pitsea Marshes Trust and were successful on both accounts. We are very grateful to both resources and with an additional amount donated by the FOWCP we are now able to have the pond re excavated and lined with butyl. The work will take place in the autumn and by early summer the ‘Jubilee’ pond will be ready to be used by the FOWCP, schools and youth organisations for pond dipping. The shelving and planting of the pond will make this a four star wildlife habitat! More news and pictures on the improvements to the pond will follow.

Before:



After:



## **OUR SECOND SKYLARKS 3K RACE OF THE YEAR**

On Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> July our second Skylarks 3K Race of the year took place and again a grand group of runners plus supporters filled the park. The weather stayed fine, athletes raced along and supporters cheered - and a record time was set for the course! All ages took part and a great time was had by all. Bravo to all the athletes!!



Lots more photos of the runners can be found on our website [www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk](http://www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk)

## CRICKETS & DRAGONFLIES

A fine summer's day and we were out with our sweep nets, bug boxes and identifying kits. A fine team came along of all ages and we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves sweeping, identifying and just the afternoon in general.




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## Events for 2012

The Friends' Committee has arranged the following events with the Wick Country Park Ranger. Some events are organised by the Friends of the Wick Country Park (FOWCP) and others by Basildon Council (BC). *For all events meet at the Wick Country Park Pavilion.*

**Wick Weeders (FOWCP)** 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month, starting at 1.30pm (see website & posters) - please note there will no Wick Weeders in August, the next date is Monday 10th September.

**Work Parties (BC)** These are bi-monthly on the 3rd Sunday of the month, 10am – 12noon, the next one is to be advised soon. **Come and have fun and help the Ranger with improvements to the park.**

**Nature Quest (FOWCP)**  Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> August, 11am to 4pm

Be a nature detective and discover some of the wild wonders of the Wick. A fun day for all the family. Explore the park and investigate the underwater world of the dipping pond. Parental supervision required.

**Kite Festival (FOWCP)**  Sunday 16th September, 1pm to 4pm

Join in the kite making competition and pick up some top flying tips. Children to be accompanied by an adult.

**Yule Ramble & AGM (FOWCP)**  Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December, Starting at 2pm

Finish the year with a sociable walk round the park with the Ranger and *Friends*. Enjoy some mulled wine and mince pies, stay for the AGM, meet the committee and have your say about the park.

For any more info on the above please contact Nikki Gibson on 01268 734293 or email [mikenikki@supanet.com](mailto:mikenikki@supanet.com)

Latest information on events throughout the year can be found on our website: [www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk](http://www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk)

### **Membership**

If you are not a member but would like to join the *Friends of the Wick Country Park* please contact Nikki on 01268 734293 or email [mikenikki@supanet.com](mailto:mikenikki@supanet.com)

### **The Friends of the Wick Country Park Committee:**

Eileen Cattell – Chairperson, Nikki Gibson – Treasurer, Christine Lee - Secretary  
Committee Members: Peter Bates, Paul Clarke, Maxine Crow, Trudie Crow, Hilary Sim

### **Basildon District Council Countryside Services:**

Mark Williams - Countryside Ranger, Telephone: 01268 562921  
Steve Prewer - Countryside Officer, Telephone 01268 550088

**Neighbourhood Policing Team:** Telephone 0300 333 4444 or 07875 00350