



Skylarks

Spring is on the way and we look forward to seeing you soon at one of our planned 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.

A Message from the Committee

Dear Friends

Hello everyone and a belated Happy New Year to you all. We start 2018 with changes to the 'Friends' organisation, unfortunately 3 important members of the committee have decided to leave - Nikki Gibson our committee chairperson, Dorothy Cundy our treasurer and Richard Rowsell our 'jack of all trades' who came to our rescue at the events. Fortunately we have some new committee members joining but we are currently in a transition stage so as you will see by the Events Calendar changes have been made compared with our previous year's events. The main change is the reluctant cancellation of Paws in the Park, we do not feel at the moment we can maintain the previous success of this event. We are now having a 'Nature Day' instead of the previous 'Nature Quest', this will still be a fun family day out which will still include some of the old favourite activities. The Quiz Night will now be in October, the exact date will be advised soon to put in your diaries. Thank you for your support and we hope to see you at the events.

Tribute to Nikki

It is with great sadness we say goodbye to Nikki who has been the mainstay of the Wick Country Park for many years now. Nikki has decided to go onto pastures anew and she will be sadly missed by all. Nikki's enthusiasm, motivation and excellent organisational skills have driven the events and she will be irreplaceable! Good luck Nikki in all your new ventures.



Nikki and Dorothy ready for action!

**PLEASE COME ALONG TO THE NEXT
EVENT IN THE WICK COUNTRY PARK**

BIRD SONG



WALK



Sunday 8th April

10am to 12 noon

at the Wick Country Park



Tresco Way, Wickford, SS12 9GP

Led by the Park Ranger

FREE EVENT



*For further details: email
chair@friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk*

www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk

'The January Jaunt & AGM 2018'

I had been monitoring the weather all week and hoping the forecast was going to be wrong for Sunday, the day of the January Jaunt and AGM. If only we had decided to hold it on the Saturday which turned out to be a cold and bright day.



As the time approached to leave for the park on Sunday afternoon the snow started to fall and it got heavier and heavier. We went suitably dressed in waterproofs and wellies. However, just from walking from the car to the pavilion we looked like the abominable snowman. It wasn't looking good for the walk. More people arrived (18 in total) all covered from head to toe in snow and all suitably dressed, some in very brightly coloured wellies. What should we do next, go ahead with the walk or not?? It didn't take much for us to agree that the walk should be cancelled. Our ever faithful provider of refreshments, Chris, was ready with the Mulled Wine and fruit pies (there

wasn't a mince pie to be found in the whole of Wickford) so we all tucked in and were feeling much better after a warming cup of Mulled Wine and a pie or in some cases two.

Now that everyone was feeling nice and relaxed we got down to the business of the AGM. Sadly this would be Nikki's last message as Chairperson and Membership Secretary of the Friends of the Wick Country Park. I am sure it goes without saying that we would like to thank Nikki for all the hard work she has put in over the last 13 years. Not only would we be losing Nikki but Dorothy our faithful Treasurer had also decided to retire and would be hanging up her Account Ledger Books. Richard our very 'Handy Man' (never to be seen without a screwdriver or some other tool to tackle anything that needed doing) had also decided to retire as a Committee Member. We would like to wish them all the very best for the future and hopefully it will not be too long before we see them out and about in the Park.

Nikki reported on all the events that had been held over the year which totalled 11 which was a record number. A new event for this year were the two Bat Evenings, these were very well attended. It is good to know that there are bats in the park as they are a very important species to have. Nikki also reported on the General Meeting that was held in November to discuss the future of the Friends of the Wick Park. There was a slide show and refreshments and an opportunity to meet the current Committee Members. It turned out to be a very fruitful event with people offering to help out and join the Committee. Nikki has been at the forefront of organising two new information boards which should be in place in the very near future. A draft copy was available at the AGM for all to look at.

Nikki put on her Membership Secretary's 'hat' next and reported that we now had a membership of 129 households compared to just 19 when the 'Friends' first started. I am sure you will agree that this is a great achievement.

Next it was Dorothy's turn to report on the state of the Finances. Thankfully we still have a healthy bank balance despite having had some big expenditure in 2017. This included the purchase of some new gazebos and the Information Boards.

Mark the Ranger reported that the Kestrel box had been a success with a pair taking residence and raising young. He hopes that sometime in the future Bat boxes would be installed around the park. Fly tipping had virtually ceased due to the main gates to the park being closed in the evenings.

The election of the Committee took place and we would like to welcome Hannah, Hazel and Alan who are our new Committee Members.

Finally 'Any Other Business' was dealt with and the meeting closed.



By the time the AGM was over the snow had stopped and Mark the Ranger and a couple of members braved the cold and walked around the park. However, for most of us it was goodbye and we headed home to a warm house.

(Written by Marie Singleton)

Wick Country Park Information

The Information Board Project is nearly at completion. Thanks to Nikki's dedicated work the draft design will soon be ready for production and you will see the two new boards with maps and information about the park to enhance your visit to the Wick Country Park.

The Litter Blitz took place on the morning of Tuesday 13th February. It was a bitterly cold day but a hard working team of workers turned up of all ages to tackle the growing problem of litter in the park. Loaded up with bin sacks and varying lengths of 'pickers' litter was collected from all areas of the park and around the lake, also from the car park and play area. It was unbelievable the amount and types of litter that is discarded in the park, which of course affects the enjoyment of visitors who care about the park like you.



Two of the younger members of the Litter Blitz Team at work!

Membership as you know is not payable for this year, we are able to maintain this year's events for you all to enjoy. We will very much like to see you at the next event the Bird Song Walk and of course all our other events this year!



If you are not a member but would like to join the Friends of the Wick Country Park please contact by email: membershipsecretary@friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk

Friends of the Wick Country Park Committee:

Christine Lee - Acting Chairperson, Hazel Broomfield - Treasurer, Marie Singleton - Secretary,
Hannah Cooper – Membership Secretary, Alaric Cundy - Webmaster
Committee Members: Ali Riley, Peter Bates, Alan Higley

Basildon Borough Council Countryside Services:

Mark Williams - Countryside Ranger. To resolve an issue go to www.basildon.gov.uk/street or customer service on 01268 533333 (option 5). Any site enquiries to 01268 206665

Rob Baker - Parks and Countryside Supervisor, Telephone: 01268 553992

Neighbourhood Policing Team: Telephone 0300 333 4444 or 07875 003503

EVENTS PROGRAMME 2018

The following events for 2018 have been organised by the Friends of the Wick Country Park in consultation with the Park Ranger. *Except for the Quiz, all these events start at the Wick Country Park Pavilion and booking is not required. Toilets, car-parking, cycle racks, and refreshments are available at all events.*

EVENT	DATE	DETAILS
Wick Weeders	<i>Usually twice each month</i>	Starting at 2 pm Details: http://www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk/Wick_Weeders.shtml , or visit our Facebook page, or see the posters at the park, or contact weeders@friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk . Equipment is provided. Help is always needed to maintain these gardens.
January Jaunt & AGM	Sunday 21st January	Starting at 2 pm . Start the year with a sociable and leisurely walk of approx 1 – 1.5 hours around the Park, led by the Park Ranger. Dogs are welcome but must be on a lead. Afterwards, enjoy some mulled wine and mince pies. Everyone is then invited to the AGM. <i>We all know that AGMs can be boring, but ours offers you the opportunity to have your say about the Park and the Events held there.</i>
Bird Song Walk	Sunday 8th April	Starting at 10 am (two hours) . Both experienced and novice bird watchers are welcome. Last year we spotted, or heard, more than 20 species.
Skylarks 3K Race	Wednesday 18th April	7.30 pm This race is organised in conjunction with the Pitsea Running Club . Open to all runners and power walkers. Supporters welcome.
Skylarks 3K Race	Wednesday 18th July	7.30 pm The second race this year organised in conjunction with the Pitsea Running Club . Open to all runners and power walkers - or why not just come to support?
Nature Day	Sunday 22nd July	12 am to 4 pm Activities will include Bug Hunting and Pond Dipping. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Dogs are welcome but must be on a lead.
Kite Festival & Classic Car Display	Sunday 16th September	12 am to 4 pm Another great family day out - held in conjunction with the Essex Kite Group and the South Eastern Vintage and Classic Vehicle Club . Allow at least an hour . Learn how to make and fly a kite.
Quiz Night (Provisional)	Friday in October	A light hearted quiz, for tables of up to eight. At Barnhall Community Centre, Alderney Gardens, Wickford, 7.30 pm for an 8 pm start. Booking is essential – please contact the Chair, as below.

For the latest information, please email chair@friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk, or see our website: www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk