

Skylarks

Winter is here but Spring is not far away, all the latest news from the Friends of the Wick Country Park is here to keep you up-to-date with current and future events.

Message from the Chair

Happy New Year to you all for 2011.

A successful and well supported Yuletide ramble was held on a very cold but pleasant day and was followed by mince pies and hot mulled wine in the Pavilion! We then had our AGM and we now have 6 new committee members, which we welcome with open arms. We have a very full year ahead of us with many events planned, so please support us as much as you can so we can improve various parts of the park for all your enjoyment.

In this first edition of 2011 we have a very interesting article written on our work parties that are held every two months in the park. Also there is a feature on the Wickford Wildlife Society, an excellent organisation promoting local Essex wildlife.

The 2011 timetable is on the last page of Skylarks, we look forward to seeing you at these events. A new addition to our agenda is our first ever Quiz, not held in the Pavilion but still in Wickford.

Eileen - Chairperson



One to note in your diaries - our next Wick Weeding session is on Monday 14th February, Valentines Day!

Quiz Night



The date: Friday 18th February 2011
The time: 7.30 for an 8.00 pm prompt start
The place: Barnhall Community Social Club, Alderney Gardens, off Brock Hill, Wickford
The price: £4 per person

Support the 'Friends' first ever Quiz Night. Make a team of 6-8 or join one of ours. Enjoy very reasonably priced drinks from the bar. Individual prizes for each member of the winning team. The questions will cover a wide variety of subjects. Also a chance to win great Raffle prizes.

For more info. or to order tickets ring Nikki on 01268 734293

How many of you ventured to the park in the snow? Well done if you did!



Friends of the Wick Country Park 'Work Parties'



How would you like to get some fresh air, keep fit and help your local community? Why not come along and volunteer for a work party at The Wick Country Park? The volunteers work alongside the Park Ranger to help out on a wide range of tasks - this could be anything from building a bat box, to digging and tidying the boundary of the lake, to pulling out weeds in the play area. The bat boxes are designed from a template - bats are very fussy home owners apparently. The boxes were built using wood which had to be cut to size - I found it a real challenge as I have never used a saw before.

Feeling very pleased with my result, the entertaining part came when I then had to position the box quite high up in a large oak tree as I had never climbed a ladder before either! The Friends are hoping a bat colony will take to their new residences.

My favourite activity is clearing the pond and keeping the water areas free from weeds - I think that might be because it's the most mucky task and also because rather attractive waist-high waders have to be worn! The experience was made even more 'watery' last time because it poured with rain. It certainly makes a change from sitting in the office. It's great to experience the park at a hands-on level, whilst enjoying the lovely views and nature life.

The work parties are held on a bimonthly basis and next date is scheduled for 20th March between 10:00 and 12:00. The Ranger is there every step of the way to supervise. Equipment is supplied and all levels of fitness are accommodated! Come along to meet at the Pavilion - it's great fun and a cup of tea is even on offer.

Hope to see you there - Trudie (Friends of the Wick Country Park)



WICKFORD WILDLIFE SOCIETY



The Wickford Wildlife Society was formed in 1983 and offers local people the chance to see wildlife presentations on a wide variety of topics and to visit some of the excellent nature reserves for which Essex is famous.

Indoor meetings are held locally during the winter months, in the Roman Catholic Church, 61 London Road, Wickford, on the second Wednesday of each month. These usually consist of a slideshow presentation by a wildlife expert or enthusiast, on a variety of wildlife topics.

Outdoor meetings largely take place during the spring and summer months, and are mainly on Sunday mornings. Normally, we visit Essex Wildlife Trust reserves but have travelled further at times.

If you are interested in learning more about your local wildlife and visiting some of the excellent sites in Essex, please visit our website at: www.wickfordwildlife.co.uk and drop us an email at Info@wickfordwildlife.co.uk with your contact details and a member of the committee will be in touch.

Our next indoor meeting is to be held on February 9th at 8pm where Neil Phillips will present a talk on The Wildlife of Wat Tyler and South Essex where he will be taking a look at the wildlife to be found in Wat Tyler Country Park and surrounding marshes, plus other parts of South Essex.

Events for 2011

The Friends' Committee has arranged the following events with the Wick Country Park Ranger. *For all events please meet at the Wick Pavilion.*

Wick Weeders

2nd & 4th Monday of each month
Starting at 1.30pm

Work Parties

These are bi-monthly on the 3rd Sunday of that month, 10am – 12noon (the dates for the rest of this year are 20th March, 15th May, 17th July, 18th September, 20th November) .
Come and have fun and help the Ranger with improvements to the park.

Our first ever Quiz Night

Friday 18th February at Barnhall Community Centre, Alderney Gardens, Wickford – 7.30pm for an 8pm start. A fun evening that will be as light hearted or as serious as you wish to make it.

The Skylarks 3K Race at the Wick Country Park

Wednesday 13th April
Official start at 7.30pm
Come along and give it a try, come along and cheer on a friend, come along for the cup of tea!

Bird Song Walk

Sunday 17th April
Starting at 11am

Join the Ranger and Friends of the Wick Country Park in a spring stroll and try to spot and identify birds in a variety of habitats.

Paws in the Park

Sunday 12th June
11am to 4pm

All dogs and responsible owners are invited to this very popular annual event. Fun dog show, display of dog obedience and agility, stalls, refreshments, games and children's quiz.

The second Skylarks 3K Race

Wednesday 20th July
Official start at 7.30pm
Run for the Skylarks through the delightful Wick Country Park!

Cricket & Dragonflies

Sunday 24th July
2pm to 4pm
Come and search for these fascinating creatures. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Dogs welcome on a lead.

Nature Quest

Sunday 7th August
2pm 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

Sunday 18th September
1pm to 4pm
Join in the kite making competition and pick up some top flying tips. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Yuletide Ramble & AGM



Sunday 4th December
Starting at 2pm
Finish the year with a sociable walk around 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. Latest information on events throughout the year can be found on our website.

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

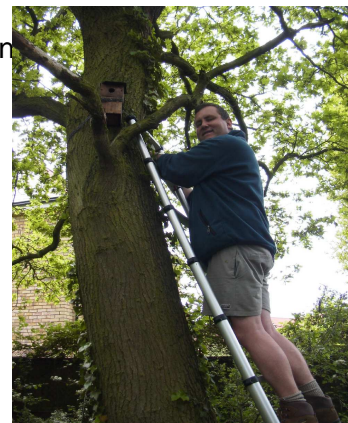
The Friends of the Wick Country Park Committee:

Eileen Cattell – Chairperson
Nikki Gibson – Treasurer
Christine Lee - Secretary
Peter Bates, Phil Honour, Trudie Crow, Maxine Crow, Hilary Sim, Sharon Hunt, June Lilwall, Peter Buckle

Basildon District Council Countryside Services:

Marcus Hotten
Countryside Officer
Telephone: 01268 550088

Mark Williams
Countryside Ranger
Telephone: 01268 562921



Neighbourhood Policing Team:

Telephone: 0300 333 4444 or 07875 003503