



## The newsletter of the Friends of the Wick Country Park

ISSUE 4 2005

# Skylarks

Welcome to the first of our quarterly newsletters for 2005. With warmer, brighter weather hopefully on its way we have planned some events with Mark, the Wick Ranger. Do take a look and make a note of the dates. We look forward to seeing you.

### A message from the Chairperson

This is the first newsletter you will have received since joining the 'Friends' or renewing your membership, so welcome to our new members and thank you to those who have rejoined. Our membership is growing steadily as more people become aware of the park and you can help by telling friends and family about it too.

Members of the Friends' committee recently attended the Wick Fun Day at the Wick Community Centre with Mark Williams. We had a very busy and interesting time talking to lots of people about the park and trying to recruit some more 'Friends'.

If any of you would like to become more involved with park activities there are a variety of options. Mark is looking for volunteers to help in a number of ways and they don't all involve getting your hands dirty! Don't forget to complete the volunteer questionnaire that you would have received with your membership card. If you need another copy please contact Mark.

The 'Friends' are also looking for a computer wiz! - someone who would be able to set up a web site for the group. If this takes your fancy or you know someone who would be interested please contact me.

Finally, do come along to some of the events we have planned for the next few months. They are very informal and friendly and it is always nice to meet up with people with a shared interest in the park.

**Deborah Belverstone**

### A message from the Countryside Ranger

Although the managerial requirements of our beautiful park are rarely far from my immediate thoughts, a management plan still has to be on the short list of must have items for any Country Park Ranger.

The structure of a management plan typically begins with a 'Vision'. This outlines a site's perceived value, usually transcribed in broad holistic aims. This is then followed with the 'Objectives'. These are specific targets that constitute a statement of purpose.



So far I have put together in draft form two alternative versions of the 'Vision' that I have yet to choose from, and a possible final list of the 'Objectives' (famous last words).

#### Vision – 1<sup>st</sup> Draft

To deliver a pleasant green space with the accessibility and security that is normally associated with the best of the formal parks, while managing the land in a way that continues to benefit the existing and increasing diversity of desirable flora and fauna within this already prevalent ecosystem. This will be achieved by maintaining and wherever possible improving the parks 'natural' environment, thereby providing a valuable educational and recreational resource for all our patrons.

#### Vision – 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft

To deliver a pleasant green space with the ease of access and security that is normally associated with the best of the formal parks, while managing the land in a way that continues to benefit the existing and increasing variety of desirable plants and animals within this already wildlife rich haven. This will be achieved by maintaining and wherever possible improving the parks 'natural' environment, thereby providing a valuable education and recreation resource for all our patrons.

#### **Objectives - Draft**

1. Provide an accessible and quality environment for public recreation, education and health
2. Maintain and improve the diversity of wildlife
3. Provide a sense of place within a 'natural' landscape
4. Promote the park's amenity and wildlife value
5. Strengthen and broaden links within the community
6. Promote Basildon District Council and the park's public and corporate links
7. Meet all legal obligations

If you have a preferred 'Vision' or any other ideas relating to the above please feel free to contact me.

**Mark Williams**



## January in the Park

It seems an age since we walked across the bed of the lake, during excavation in 2001/2, with what seemed like mountains of sticky yellow clay all around. This now forms the islands and hillocks that are developing as the vegetation matures.



As frequent visitors (with our faithful Golden Retriever, Pippa), we usually do the whole circuit, (lake and top meadow) as many others do. Not much for amateurs to see at this time of year in the way of growth but everything is tight-budded waiting patiently for that first warm splash of sunshine in a month or so.

After a few weeks when there didn't appear to be much movement on the lake, suddenly there were large numbers of waterfowl. These were mostly Canada Geese who are not always welcome in such large numbers as they do tend to 'take over' the lake, while more attractive visitors like swans can't seem to get a look in. The swans do appear from time to time, singly or in pairs, but never seem to stay long. The vegetation on the islands is still perhaps a bit sparse, but as this grows it may provide a greater abundance of nesting material for the swans. Also the site at the moment may not provide enough seclusion for them.



As the trees mature, the park will take on height and depth and encourage more wildlife to take up residence. Look out for the new planting of 'whips', which will take place soon.

The park was never designed for lawns and flowerbeds although there are plans for developing the immediate area round the pavilion. The Country Park is mainly a habitat for wildlife, and for the local residents to enjoy as such. Perfect for joggers too.



Also, it is a great place to meet dog walkers who all seem to have time for a chat so there is the opportunity to make new friends.

The 'Friends of the Wick' committee keep active, though we do need support from time to time, and are always open to suggestions as to how to promote interest in the park. There are a few events planned for the coming months which need your support so do make a note of them in your diary.

**Maurice and Alison Sweetland**

## Events

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

### Wildflower Wander

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 11am start

Take a look at some of the wildflowers starting to appear with the arrival of spring.

### Spot the birdies!

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May 10am start

Bring your binoculars (if you have some) and we'll set off in search of the Park's bird life.



### Nature Quest

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May 1.30pm start, approx. 2hrs

Fun for all the family.

Solve the clues and win some prizes.



### Investigating Insects

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June 11am start

Join us on a hunt for insects and other creepy crawlies.

## Wickford Wildlife Society

If you're interested in wildlife you may like to know about the Wickford Wildlife Society. The Society has illustrated talks every second Wednesday of the month between October and May. These are held in the Roman Catholic Church Hall, 61 London Road, Wickford and start at 8pm. Previous talks include one by Steve Prewer, BDC Countryside Services Manager about the development of the Wick Country Park. Outdoor meetings are also organised.

## Membership

If you are not a member but would like to join the Friends of the Wick Country Park please fill in the application form and return to the address at the bottom.

## The Friends of the Wick Country Park Committee:

Deborah Belverstone - Chairperson  
Maureen Bradford - Vice Chairperson  
Nikki Gibson - Treasurer  
Tricia Marshall - Secretary  
Alison Sweetland  
Maurice Sweetland  
Dave Mullender

Contact Deborah on 01268 572732 or email [dbelverstone@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dbelverstone@yahoo.co.uk)

## Basildon District Council Countryside Services:

Steve Prewer  
Countryside Services Manager  
Telephone: 01268 550088

Mark Williams  
Countryside Ranger  
Telephone: 01268 562921

## Membership Application

FRIENDS OF  
THE WICK COUNTRY PARK

(PLEASE USE BLOCK  
CAPITALS THROUGHOUT)

If taking a household membership please list all those to which it applies.

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age, if under 18: \_\_\_\_\_

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age, if under 18: \_\_\_\_\_

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age, if under 18: \_\_\_\_\_

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age, if under 18: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of membership requested  
(please tick):

New

Renewal

**Membership fees**  
**£3 per household**  
**£1.50 individual**

I hereby apply for membership to the Friends of the Wick Country Park, and agree to be bound by its constitution.  
(Copy available on request).

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheques payable to 'Friends of the Wick Country Park' and return to:  
Nikki Gibson  
126 Church End Lane  
Wickford  
SS11 7DP

OFFICE USE ONLY  
Membership no:  
Renewal Date:

