

50th Skylarks!

Summer is here and you can read all about our successful events in this 50th edition of your Skylarks newsletter. There is still more to come too – the ever popular high flying Kite Festival! Enjoy our 50th edition and we look forward to seeing you all at our next events.

A Message from the Chair

Dear Friends

We are delighted to be sending you this special 50th edition of Skylarks.

We have come a long way from those early days in 2004. Back then we had a membership of 19 households and now it stands at 101 and rising.

Our events grow in number, size, ambition and popularity. The Friends of the Wick Country Park have been instrumental in improving the wildlife habitats in the park with bat and owl boxes, a stag beetle pyramid, relining the dipping pond and the wonderful bee chambers and green roof on the container.

Visitors to the park have not been forgotten either, as we have provided benches, picnic tables, cycle racks and notice boards. We have purchased all manner of tools and equipment which are used at our events and in the pavilion garden which we maintain.

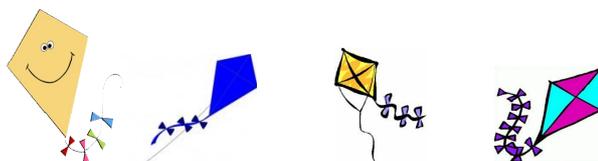
This is a story of success of which we can all be proud. I wonder what the next 12 years will hold in store.

Nikki Gibson, Chairperson



Mark the Ranger with some of the Committee Members

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



Kite Festival

Make and fly a kite 

Sunday 11th September 2016
11am – 4pm (*allow at least an hour*)

Wick Country Park
Tresco Way, Wickford, SS12 9GP

Plus



A Classic Car Display

A FREE event. Refreshments available

For details phone Nikki on 01268 734293 or website
www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk

PAWS IN THE PARK 2016

After months of planning, the great day eventually arrived! For the organizers, the day started soon after 8 a.m. - with gazebos to set up, chairs and tables to position, stalls to set out, not to mention marking out the arenas for the judging and the 'Doggie Games'. By 11 a.m., as registration opened, we were just about ready. Unfortunately, the weather began to close in, but spirits were not dampened.

Many thanks to all participants and attendees on the day, who all contributed to making it a great success - despite the awful weather, which was particularly challenging through the middle of the day! We were forced to condense the programme a little as the brave attendees and organisers became more and more 'soggy' as the day wore on!

The main focus of the day was, of course, the judging in the arena; Linda, had a very hard task making her choices – all the dogs deserved to win! There were 117 entries spread over the 9 different classes – plus a 'Best in Show'. For a complete report on the winners of each category, please visit <http://www.friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk/paws2016.shtml>. The overall 'Best in Show' was 5 year old Riley, a Jack Russell, shown by Amanda; Riley qualified for the final as the *Most appealing scruff*.



Alongside the main arena events there were loads of other things to do, courtesy of the side stalls and other attractions. The *Essex Flyball Team* provided a spectacular display in the main arena during the lunchtime break in judging, and they also brought along their own 'have a go' course where dogs could try out a sample course. Several charities had stalls where they were able to promote their causes and sell some of their products, and two external catering vans also served us all well. Our supporters in 2016 were: One Stop Vans, Chengs Doughnuts, Barking Benstead's Healthy Dog Treats, Maggie's Pet Rescue and Re-homing Service, Many Tears Animal Rescue, Olivia's Star Engraving, Dogs Trust, Essex Pet Supplies, Forever Living, and The Rottweiler Welfare Association.

Inside the Pavilion, the *Friends* organized a Tombola and craft activity, and offered drinks and biscuits. Outside, The *Friends* also ran a Plant Stall and *The Doggie Challenge* – an obstacle course for dogs.



Some of the stalls - finishing touches to set-up.



The world (?) famous *Paws in the Park* Plant stall – ready for customers. Those plant stocks went down very quickly!



Ava, taking on the Doggie Challenge - steering her pet Papi through the 'Slalom' - or was it the other way round?

It was worth all the blood, sweat, tears - and rain - just to see all the smiling faces and exuberant dogs!

(Written by Alaric Cundy)

NATURE QUEST 2016

100 children, 23 volunteers, nine activities and the vagaries of the British weather, what could possibly go wrong? NOTHING! The day ran like a dream (well apart from when the answer sheet was handed out by mistake and that was down to me!) We even provided carrier bags for transporting home the children's handmade candle, decorated pot of cress, willow weave, balloon model, butterfly art work, bird pencil, origami, bird feeder, bee chamber and not forgetting their well-earned certificate.



It was wonderful to see so many families picnicking, enjoying the park and learning and appreciating the wildlife around them.



and we cannot forget the Nature Detective 'Wall of Fame'



The most frequently asked question was how could such an event possibly be provided for free? The answer is, it is down to the hard work of the committee, donations and thrifty spending. Our main fundraising events are the Quiz night, Paws in the Park and the two 3K races. The thing that all these events have in common is the help and support we receive from our wonderful volunteers. The smiles, the laughter and tired little legs of so many children who had spent most of the day in the fresh air enjoying Nature Quest is your just reward.

Thank you!

(Written by Nikki Gibson)

CRICKETS & DRAGONFLIES 2016

Eleven families joined Mark the Ranger and his volunteers for the annual Cricket and Dragonfly event, on a nice bright sunny afternoon, although there was quite a breeze which wasn't ideal for insect activity.

All of the children and a few of the adults were armed with sweep nets and bug boxes ready to catch some interesting insects and other small creatures. Some of the children were in pushchairs - we like to catch and train them early!



The following insects and creatures were caught and identified:

Roesel's Bush Cricket, Meadow Grasshopper, Field Grasshopper, Meadow Brown Butterfly, Gatekeeper Butterfly, Mirid Bug, Cinnabar, Moth Caterpillar, Soldier Beetle, Harvestman, Buff Tailed Bumblebee and the Brown Hawker Dragonfly.

We spent over an hour sweeping our nets through the meadows by which time we were ready for some refreshments. We made our way back to the pavilion where Chris was ready to hand out a welcome drink and biscuits.

(Written by Marie Singleton)

SKYLARKS 3K RACE - WEDNESDAY 15th JULY 2016

It was another great evening for the Skylarks 3k race at The Wick Country Park, with 60 runners competing to win this ever successful athletic event. Many thanks to all the helpers, without your help the race would not have been the undoubted success that it was, also to Peter Bates who does all the hard work organising the proceedings.

All proceeds after expenses go towards the further development of the Park. Many - but by no means all - of the entrants come from local Running Clubs / Groups, but we also see a significant number of 'unattached' runners.

The full result sheet is on our website, prize places as follows: -

First Man – Sam Nigh in 10:23

First Lady – Jackie Sibthorp in 15:18

First Boy - Freddy Taiani (aged 11) in 12:29

First Girl - Rebecca Omer (aged 11) in 15:36



Please come along to our next Skylarks 3K Race in April 2017!



WICK COUNTRY PARK EVENTS 2016



The following events have been organised by the Friends of the Wick Country Park in consultation with the Park Ranger.
With the exception of the quiz night, all events start at the Wick Country Park Pavilion and booking is not required. Refreshments are available at all events.

EVENT	DATE	DETAILS
Wick Weeders	Usually the 2 nd and 4 th Monday of each month	Starting at 1.30 pm (see the website & posters for confirmation of the dates). Equipment is provided. Help is always needed to maintain these gardens.
Kite Festival & Classic Car Display	Sunday 11 th September	11 am to 4 pm Another great family day out. Allow at least an hour. Learn how to make and fly a kite; This event is held in conjunction with the Essex Kite Group and the South Eastern Vintage and Classic Vehicle Club
Yule Ramble & AGM	Sunday 11 th December	Starting at 2 pm Finish 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.

For the latest information, please contact Nikki Gibson on 01268 734293 or email chair@friendsofthewickcountrypark.co.uk, or see 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 nikkigibson621@btinternet.com

The Friends of the Wick Country Park Committee:

Nikki Gibson - Chairperson/Membership Secretary, Richard Rowsell - Vice Chair, Dorothy Cundy - Treasurer, Marie Singleton - Secretary, Alaric Cundy - Webmaster
Committee Members: Peter Bates, Christine Lee

Basildon Borough Council Countryside Services:

Mark Williams - Countryside Ranger, Telephone: 01268 562921
Rob Baker - Parks and Countryside Supervisor, Telephone: 01268 553992



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