

Message from our Chairman

I hope that you have enjoyed the recent long, hot days of summer or maybe are looking forward to cooler autumn days.

I was delighted that our three members' events have all been so successful this past two months, although I was a little surprised that more of you members did not take advantage of joining us! September is the highlight of our year, with both the Bark in the Park dog show and our AGM for you to enjoy. So, please support us!

And do think about joining our committee – ring me if you would like to know more about what this involves – or we are always happy to welcome you to observe our meetings before making a decision.

Charles Novis

Bark in the Park Our amazing dog show is on

Saturday September 17th from 11am until 4pm. Even better than previous years, we have lots of lovely classes for your dog to enter, plus displays and stands offering all you and your pet could wish for. Even if you don't have a dog, bring a chair and you can spend many hours enjoying the antics of dogs and their owners. Details, including registration form and show rules are on our website.



Members events

- **Our next free Members' Coffee morning** will be on Thursday September 15th from 10.30am. Last time we chatted about the history of the park, this time it will be about the wildlife. Do join us! Members are welcome to bring a friend.
- **Making bat and bird boxes:** event for families to be organised for a Saturday in October. Watch our website for details coming soon.

Dates for your diaries

Bark in the Park: Saturday September 17th
AGM & Speaker: Thurs September 29th 7.45pm
Carols in the Park: Saturday December 17th

AGM with speaker

If you fancy a free, fascinating evening of entertainment, then book Thursday September 29th at Christchurch hall at 7.45pm for an evening that you will long remember!

fascinating evening of



As 'The People's Gardener', Jim Buttress has spent a life in horticulture, working his way up from a boy with no qualifications to being Superintendent of the Royal Parks. With all his experience at work and also as a judge for the RHS and of the popular TV programme 'The Great Allotment Challenge', he draws on some wonderful stories about his life, such as having a gin with the Queen Mother on one occasion. Of course, he also has lots to relate about his life in the Royal Parks about which he will talk. See you there!

The evening starts with our short AGM when we shall report back on the past year's activities and elect the committee for the next year. We welcome new members to join the committee or one of our informal sub-groups. For more information, do contact us on the above mobile number or email: secretary@lakemeadows.org.uk

Photography Competition 2016

The competition had more entries this year than any year since the Friends was founded. The judges will be choosing the winners very soon and there will, as usual, be a display in the library from Monday September 26th until Thursday October 20th. The winners will be announced at a short event at the library on Saturday October 1st at 2pm.

Flower Meadow

Once again, we have had many delighted visitors commenting on the flower meadow. However, thistles and an aggressive weed called redshank, or spotted lady's thumb, have invaded the area and will have to be thoroughly sprayed next Spring to try to eradicate them. The seeds may need to be sown in April next year, so the flowers may be later appearing.

However, some mother's sure do have 'em! Why, oh why, do some thoughtless people have to make inroads into the flowers instead of keeping to the 'S' shaped path? The wooden fence has helped but still a few thoughtless people feel that they need to spoil things for the majority of us, who love the flower meadow. And as for the Garden of the Child see page 3!

Children's Corner

With children back to school this month, here are a few school jokes:



Q: What did you learn in school today?

A: Not enough, I have to go back tomorrow!

Q. Why is $2 + 2 = 5$ like your left foot?

A. It's not right.

Q. Teacher: What do you get if you add 4,657 and 7,854, subtract 678 and divide the answer by 62?

A. Child: A headache

October is a good month to learn about the trees in the park. So why not ask someone to get a tree sheet for you from the Information Hut and fill in the answers.

Information Centre



Our little Information Centre is usually open on Monday and Friday mornings and sometimes occasionally on other days. Visitors are always surprised how much information we have

managed to squeeze into such a tiny space.

It will close for the winter at the end of half-term, so if you have not visited yet, do call in soon. More helpers are always needed! So if you enjoy talking to people, why not give it a try before the end of the season? You only need to do a trial hour or two, with another helper just the once. Contact us in the usual way by phone or mail – see head of newsletter.

Jazz in the Park



We had another wonderful musical evening in July! The weather was fine, despite weeks of rain and uncertain forecasts, but a crowd of about 500 turned out to hear an excellent performance from all our players and singers both young and old.

Again, so many people said how much they had enjoyed the relaxed, family atmosphere and the easy-to-listen-to music, which this year ranged from the 1920s through to modern popular songs. The children certainly enjoyed dancing to the Daisy Bowlers and it is hoped will long remember the annual event.

Our thanks to all the performers, to John Summerton for the sound system and to Michael Barnard, who so generously sponsored the evening and enjoyed listening to the music with us as well.

Growing membership

We challenged you this summer to find new members to join FoLM and there is certainly a steady flow of new applications each month. A warm welcome to all you new members.

Many have come through our wonderful ladies who man the Information Centre for us, to whom we must give our thanks. If you still have not got around to inviting those friends or neighbours to join, then now is a really good time to do it, so they can come and join us at our September events.

Membership forms are on our website, or can be obtained from the Information Hut or by contacting the secretary

Today, there are more than enough public parks to give all 64.1 million people living in the UK somewhere peaceful to picnic and enjoy the sunshine. Lake Meadows is 80 years old! It was opened in 1936 by Billericay Urban District Council after it was bought for £1,400 (2016 equivalent of £90K) to prevent it being used for plot land houses.

The Lake Project



The committee has long felt that the north-east end of the lake could be improved.

After discussions with our Parks' Manager, we are about to apply for funding to make improvements so that everyone can enjoy the area more and the habitat can be improved.

When the project goes ahead, the invasive weeds will be removed from the lake bank below the Garden of the Child in the Park, a soil bund (raised bank) will be created at the bottom of the bank, and the silt dredged from the lake and deposited behind the bund. Once the bank has drained, landscaping will take place, with new plants to enhance the area, a reed bed planted and habitat interpretation board added. All being well, work should start later in the year and be completed by next Springtime.

LET'S GO BATTY



Our FoLM 'Bat Evening' was well attended on 18th August and started with an interesting talk by local expert Peter Claughton, from Essex Bat Group.

Peter was quick to dispel the myths and fears that people may have of bats, perhaps conjured up by vampire movies and other tales. After tuning our bat detectors to around 45 KHz, as most bat species' calls sweep through this frequency, the bat walk kicked off around 8.40 p.m.

A Soprano pipistrelle was the first to be detected near the bowls green followed by Common & Soprano pipistrelles in the woods. A Nathusius' pipistrelle was detected over the flower meadow and perhaps a brown long-eared bat and lots of Daubenton's bats flying over the lake.

The evening finished with a spectacular full moon that glowed orange, adding to the mystique of these wonderful creatures. With all that fun and interesting bats to see, we hope to run another bat event next summer! *By Sue, a member of our Ecology Group*

Gardeners

The last two months have been a challenging time for our team of gardeners! First came the rain and the weeds, which seemed to grow and multiply even as we watched them. Then came weeks of drought and many sleepless nights worrying about the hundreds of pounds-worth of new plants that had been planted this Spring. Most have survived, thanks to frequent watering, but a few trees and some plants in the Garden of the Child have been lost.

WE 

**OUR GARDENING
VOLUNTEERS**

The main gardens have looked beautiful and are beginning to be established after their third full summer season. Our thanks go to all our gardeners!

Despite notices in the Garden of the Child, and a temporary stick fence, parents have allowed children to run through the new plants damaging them and trampling the soil. Words fail us!

In coming weeks, as the weather cools and children are back at school, we plan to do extra work in the garden, so we can start to return it to its intended glory.

To do this, we really could do with a few more gardeners! If anyone can help with gardening it would be much appreciated. We meet every Tuesday morning at 9.30am at the gardens near Lake Avenue entrance. Ring us if you need more information.

New projects

One of our projects for this coming year will be the development of our wildlife programme. Our Ecology group has been discussing the different habitats in the park and we shall be looking into how these can be improved to encourage more wildlife.

We have clearly established that we have an active bat population using three different areas in the park. With the waterfowl count, and ongoing bird count, we are gathering information about our resident birds and annual visitors.

You will have seen that areas on the sluice banks are being left uncut in the hope of bringing more wild flowers to tempt butterflies and insects to these areas, and the area near the boat house already has a wide variety of wild flowers growing. We plan to add an insect hotel in this area, as well as making bat and bird boxes for the woods.

Our next job is to undertake a survey of the woodland, and also one of all the plants growing naturally in the park. More about these next time!