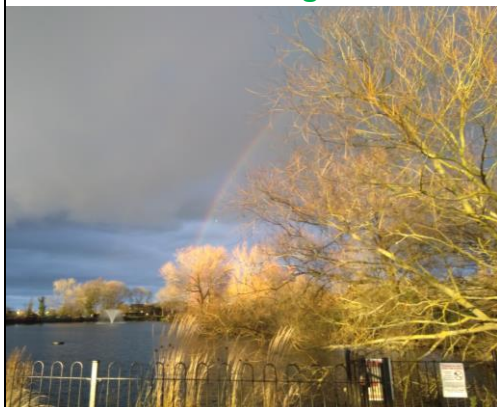


www.lakemeadows.org.uk

Tel: 07843 860 135 (answerphone)

E: secretary@lakemeadows.org.uk

Chairman's Message



Winter is a special time at the park. Whilst the visitors enjoy the quiet and beauty of winter scenes such as this taken last New Year's Day, the trees and creatures

sleep away the chilly months and we all have a well-earned rest!

I should like to thank everybody who has supported the Friends during the year; the trustees, the gardeners and working party helpers, the ecology group and information hut helpers especially, but also everyone else in the community who has helped Lake Meadows in winning the following award and raising funds for the park.

May I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Healthy, Happy and Peaceful New Year.

UK's Best Park Award 2019



Lake Meadows was voted by park users as the East of England Region winner this year, making it a 'Much Loved Park' and in the top 20% of parks in the whole country. Thank you to all of you who voted for the park! It just proves how many people enjoy it each week. See *last item at end of newsletter.*

Basildon Council Grant

Council leaders have been so impressed with all that the Friends do at the park, that they made a donation recently of £3,000 towards the cost of our water station project. We are, of course delighted! Now we just need a fairy godmother to find the final £2,000 or so, and hope she is not too busy with Cinderella at this time of year!

Billericay Community Police Officer

Billericay Town Council appointed their own part-time community police officer in July.



In October, our chairman had a useful meeting with him to share some of the issues that affect the park, such as vandalism, and youngsters taking drugs and starting fires.

If you see anything suspicious, please either contact the police direct on 101 or ring us on the above number. Evidence, such as scooter numbers or photos, is helpful, but please don't approach anyone yourself. Meanwhile SPC Tomas Simons plans to visit the park regularly to keep an eye on things.

Waitrose Community Matters Green Tokens

Thank you to all the shoppers in Waitrose, who helped raise £480 for the Friends by adding their green tokens to our box at the store. The money was quickly spent! Our gardeners paid a visit to a lovely garden centre in October and had an exciting time buying lots of new plants for the herbaceous beds in the garden area. By moving some of the shrubs and adding variety and colour, we hope to have improved the beds for next summer. Daffodil bulbs were also purchased for the Hillhouse path and more tulips for the flower boxes, by the main entrance, to go with the winter pansies.

Recent Events

At October half term, we ran a new event for children. A number of families took part in our ‘**Art in the Park**’ event, when they gathered leaves, twigs and natural materials and designed amazing pictures and artefacts together.



Designs varied from this heart, to a hidden dinosaur, as well as leaf garlands and pompoms. The mums seemed to enjoy it as much, if not more, as the children! We hope that they were all inspired to do more next time they are at the park. Just watch out because, you never know, dinosaurs may be lurking somewhere amongst the autumn leaves.



New Park gates

Another welcome investment by Basildon Council has been the installing of new steel gates in October, at the main park entrance and at Lake Avenue. They certainly have improved the entrances. No-one is sure how many years the old ones had been there, but they have been installed just after World War II!

Toilets

Please note that the toilets are only open between 9am and 2pm during the winter.

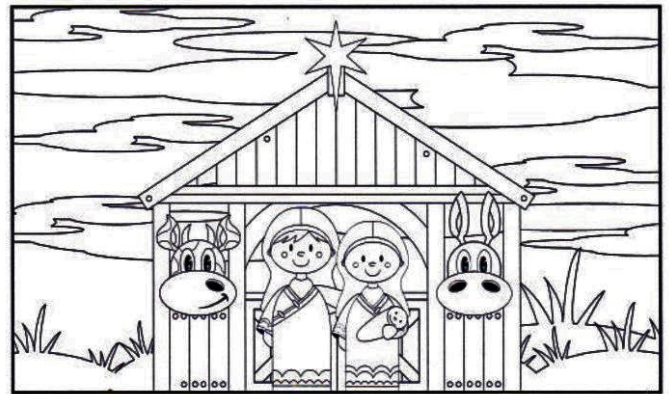
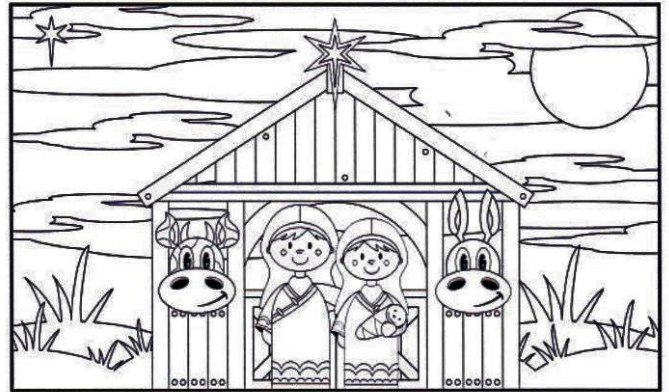


Children’s Corner



- Q. Which carol do monkeys sing?
- A. Jungle bells.
- Q. What is green, white & red all over?
- A. A sunburnt elf.
- Q. What did Adam say the day before Christmas?
- A. It’s Christmas, Eve.

Spot the difference – find 11 differences



Mayflower 2020 Celebrations



Preparations are well under way for a whole variety of activities next year in Billericay to celebrate the sailing of the Mayflower ship to America 400 years ago. Co-ordinated by a local group initiated by the

Mayflower Twinning Association, details are due to be announced in the early Springtime. See <https://billericaytwinning.org.uk/mayflower-2020/>, as well as their Facebook and Twitter pages.

The Friends are planning three celebrations for the anniversary. In March, we plan to plant an English oak tree near the entrance to the park. This will be followed in May by a special design in plants on the raised bed in the gardens area. Finally, Jazz in the Park on July 4th (Independence Day) will have an American theme. So far, we have some of our regular players, Nimrod Margalit and friends and The Law, as well as the popular Daisy Bowlers, who we enjoyed several years ago.

Bluebells in the park



Thanks go to members of our ecology group, who planted over a thousand bluebell bulbs under the trees at the Perry Street entrance earlier in the autumn. The bulbs were kindly donated by a neighbour to the park last Springtime.

Christmas Wordsearch

K	W	S	A	M	T	S	I	R	H	C
R	E	I	N	D	E	E	R	E	D	A
A	L	O	H	O	H	S	K	T	A	R
D	E	C	O	R	A	T	I	O	N	D
V	O	E	L	F	J	A	N	Y	G	A
E	N	G	L	P	y	R	G	S	E	T
N	U	T	Y	Q	U	M	S	B	L	N
T	R	E	E	S	L	O	R	A	C	A
M	I	S	T	L	E	T	O	E	F	S

Angel	Holly	Reindeer
Card	Ho Ho	Santa
Carols	King	Star
Christmas	Mistletoe	Toys
Cracker	Noel	Tree
Decoration	Nut	Yule
Elf	Red	

First Strokes Swimming Pool

Good news! The swimming pool at Lake Meadows has just re-opened, after complete renovation following the fire last year. On production of your FoLM membership card they will be pleased to offer our members 10% off their 'Just Swim Passes'. We hope that everyone who enjoys swimming will take advantage of this offer – a great additional perk to your membership of the Friends!



Which was the first park opened in the UK?

Birkenhead Park was the world's first publicly funded park. It was opened in 1847 by Joseph Paxton with the aim of creating a 'park for the people.' The park influenced the design of Central Park in New York.

The Friends of Birkenhead Park was formed in 1976 and still plays a vital role in helping the Park staff and liaise closely with the local authority on matters concerning the Park. Why not Google that park?

Fungi Foray

During October, many different fungi were to be seen in the park, some of them colourful, some potentially dangerous, all sizes, shapes and colours. About 24 types were found; here are just a few:



What we have done in the park this year?

- Run seven successful events
- Spent over 1,000 hours tending the gardens
- Planted 1,500 bedding plants, 1,000 bluebells and 600 daffodils and a new hedge
- Created the wildflower meadow on the sluice bank and added wildlife homes
- Funded & installed a new baby changing unit
- Installed wooden mushroom stools in the Garden of the Child
- Repainted and repaired the wizard & dragon
- Made plans to install the water station
- Had working parties – cleaned the signs, raked the meadow, added chippings to beds etc.
- Held regular meetings with Parks staff and councillors to maintain and improve the park



Christmas Myths and Traditions

Evergreens have long been used at Christmas time to decorate homes and churches, often supposed to fend off evil spirits – perhaps by bringing indoors the hidden good fairies to protect us. Christmas Eve was traditionally the time to collect evergreens – before that quarrels were supposed to occur.

Holly symbolised the male god carrying life through the winter in its evergreen leaves. In England holly is grown close to the house to keep witches away. In Ireland it is grown away from the house so as not to disturb the fairies who live in it.



Ivy, the goddess, was often used around doorways, traditionally hung up to protect against fire, injury and all ills, driving away evil spirits. It was also hung in

cowsheds to encourage cows to produce milk and to improve the health of the herd.

It is said that poinsettias were first part of Christmas in 16th century Mexico, when a poor girl was told by an angel to offer weeds as a gift and the angel turned the leaves into a beautiful red display.

Christmas roses were supposed to have been growing outside the stable where a little shepherdess picked them and gave them to Baby Jesus – as He touched them, they blushed.

Superstition has it that all evergreens must be removed by dusk on Twelfth Night. In the 'olden days' we used to burn them on the household fire – sadly no longer possible, so we must recycle them.

* * * * *

Carols in the Park

Come and join us for carols around the Christmas tree by the old boathouse.

**Saturday
December 14th
starting at 4pm.**



A free event with mulled wine and mince pies. Everyone welcome, no booking needed. Do bring a torch! And please watch the website for any changes due to the weather.

Our volunteers ... continuing our series ... 'A Saturday Working Party member'



"I had been wondering how I could do something useful to help locally that fitted in with my busy life, and when I heard that the Friends were looking for helpers just once a month on a Saturday morning, this seemed just right. The group is only a small one, but everyone seems friendly and the work is varied and not too strenuous.

There is always something to do in the park, whether it is to help the gardeners do an extra job, or to do something for the park team. One of my first jobs was cleaning the signs around the park during the annual Spring clean. Since then, I've helped with planting a new hedge and carting wood chippings to add to some flowerbeds.

I look forward to my Saturdays and can really see that I am helping to improve the park, which I love and use regularly anyway. We could get lots more done if we only had a few more helpers. Why not give it a try like I did? And there is also the chance for a coffee and chat afterwards!" *Anon*

The next working parties will be on

Saturdays March 21st and April 18th at 9.30am
Weather permitting!

Please watch the website for details.

More help is always needed, so do please think about joining us on one of those days.

* * * * *

And finally ...

Fields in Trust is a UK-wide charity that actively champions parks and green spaces by protecting them in perpetuity. It is their view that few public services have such a wide-ranging, positive impact on local communities as parks and green spaces on which to play. See www.fieldsintrust.org

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Copies of this newsletter for our postal members have been printed by the Co-op Funeralcare Billericay, whom we should like to thank for their generosity and continued support.