

Chairman's Message

Winter is at last over, we hope, with longer days and warm sunshine spreading a little happiness. Perhaps time to get out of your winter armchair and to think about how you might help the Friends.

We have a committee of twelve Trustees, most of whom have served on it since we started in 2012. Apart from the fact that we make strange noises when we stand up or pick something up off the floor, we are a pretty capable group of people, but let's face it, some of us are getting older!

So, we are putting out a plea to anyone who has recently retired or has some spare time to give. We need some help in running the Friends! We are a friendly, well-run group and I am sure that you will be made to feel most welcome. It need not be a big commitment, just a few hours a month.

Do please email me or ring me if you would like to have a chat. You can get me on 07843 860 135 or via the secretary@lakemeadows.org.uk

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Water Station

Sometime in March, our new water station will be installed outside the Community Hut next to the café and the FoLM Information Hut. It is a powder-coated steel unit, produced in America, which is robust and billed as vandal-proof. There are three units to it: a bottle-filling unit, a water fountain and a dog bowl. The unit is strong and durable and has passed stringent tests to ensure clean water is delivered easily at the touch of a button.

Thanks go to Basildon Borough Council and Essex County Council for funding this project. Both will be sending representatives to the official unveiling ceremony. Details of the event will be on our website soon.

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Photography Competition 2019

Once again, we had a very successful competition last year and the display in the library in January brought a number of very positive responses. Many of the finalists' photos are on our website.

Many congratulations to the winners:
The Adult winner was Sarah Clapton with 'Harmony':



And the Junior winner was 'Autumn happiness is my life in Lake Meadows' by Hugh Somerville-Cutting



We should particularly like to thank Billericay Lions, Billericay Rotary Club, Billericay Rotary Club Mayflower and the Round Table for their generous support of this competition.

Do enter your photos for this year's competition!

Gardeners

The FoLM gardeners are back at work after a couple of months break over the winter. Although we have about 20 gardeners, they are not all able to come every week.



There is always room for more people to join us and plenty of gardening jobs to do. You don't need any special skills, just an enjoyment of gardening and a wish to give your time to help the park. We have lots of tools. We are a friendly crowd, so do drop in and see us any Tuesday morning, or contact Rosie by phone or email – see newsletter heading.

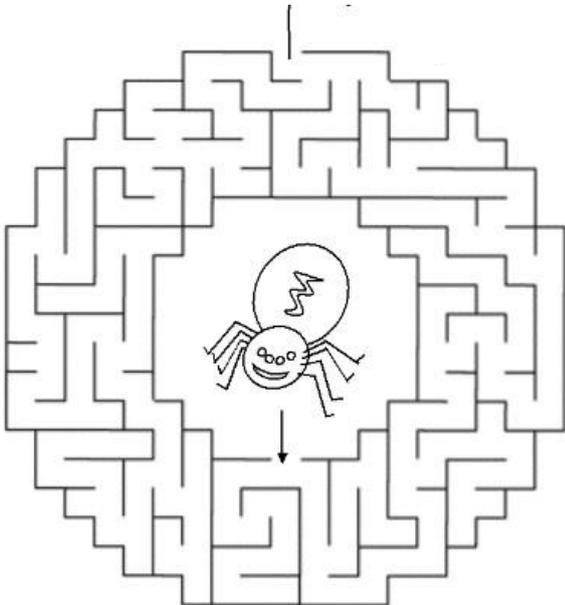
Children's Corner



Did you know:

- March 14th is 'save a spider day'
- No two spider webs are the same
- A snail can sleep for 3 years
- The lifespan of a squirrel is 9 years
- There are more insects in the world than all other animals combined
- Owls are the only bird that can see the colour blue. So should see our new water station!
- Butterflies taste with their feet

Help the spider get out of her web



The next working parties

Please watch the website for details of our next working parties, will be on Saturdays March 21st and April 18th at 9.30am. Weather permitting! More help is always needed, so do please think about joining us on one of those days.

Mayflower Oak Tree

A new oak tree is to be planted to commemorate the sailing of the Mayflower ship to America 400 years ago.



The tree is a gift from the Friends to the park and people of Billerica and we hope that it lives for several hundred years and gives pleasure to many, whilst providing homes for hundreds of insects and birds.

The planting depends on the weather and ground conditions over the next few weeks, but we hope to get it planted sometime in March.

Interesting facts about Oak trees

Charles II hid in an oak tree from the Roundheads in 1651, after the Battle of Worcester. Oak Apple Day used to be May 29th and commemorated the restoration of the monarchy in 1660.



Oak trees

- belong to the beech family;
- usually live about 200 years but can live 1,000;
- spend 1/3 of life growing, 1/3 resting and 1/3 dying
- grow 70ft tall, girth 9ft and branch spread of 85 to 135 feet;
- have deep root systems that can extend two-and-one-half times their height;
- are deciduous and have male catkins and small female flowers;
- shed up to 70,000 leaves each autumn;
- can produce 2,200 acorns a year when mature;
- can produce galls or oak apples, due to a type of wasp laying an egg in a leaf bud;
- can support 280 types of insects, as well as birds and lichens.

Acorns used to be used for flour and coffee, and also for feeding pigs.

Acorn shoots used to be used to make alcohol.

Barrels for whiskey and wine are made from oak.

Galls were used for making writing ink until 1959.



The Information Centre



We very much need more helpers in the hut. It is a pleasant job to sit and chat to park visitors for a couple of hours a week. So, why not offer to help us out? We hope to hear from you soon!

We have many beautiful photographs of the park, so that we thought we would like to share them with you. We have made some notelets featuring some of the best photographs. These will be available at our Information Hut when it reopens in April.

Spring Wordsearch

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

Ants	Daisy	New
Bee	Drake	Primrose
Bird	Duck	Rain
Blossom	Egg	Rainbow
Bluebell	Equinox	Seeds
Breeze	Flowers	Showers
Bud	Fly	Slugs
Bugs	Gosling	Spring
Butterfly	Ladybird	Sunshine
Caterpillar	Lambs	Tadpoles
Chirping	Nature	Tulips
Coot	Nest	Violet
Daffodil		

Spring bulbs

We hope that many of the bulbs planted last autumn will be in flower soon. Our thanks to RHS Hyde Hall, for free daffodils and tulips given recently - rather late for planting, we know, but we have put them in the raised bed and main flower beds. Fingers crossed that they all flower!



Future events

Due to a change of dates for the Spring Bank Holiday this year, and other events in the town moving dates, sadly, we shall not be running the **Great Lake Race** this year.

The **Early Bird Walk** will be on Sunday May 17th at 7am. **Places limited, please book online.** Members free, non-members £2. For further details and booking form see our website or contact us by phone on the number at the top of the newsletter. Other small events to be announced soon.

Our next big event will be **Jazz in the Park on Saturday July 4th**. We hope to see you there for our special event to celebrate Mayflower 2020. The event will have an English/American theme. Bring a picnic and chairs. The event is free, no tickets required. More details next newsletter.

NFP&GS

The Friends are now members of the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces (NFP&GS), which is a grass roots organisation that supports Friends' Groups throughout the UK. Over 7,000 Groups belong and many of these form into local Forums, where they can exchange ideas and skills.

Defibrillator

Help is at hand if you should have a heart attack at the park! Parkrun have donated their defibrillator, which has been installed by the council on the side of our hut. Anyone can use it; training is not essential – clear instructions are given verbally.

Information Boards

Our small Ecology group has been working all winter on the design for our next two information boards for the park and we are hoping that these can be installed before the summer. One is for the Conservation area, whilst the other covers all the Gardens. Similar in size to the water birds and habitats boards, they will have information and photos of flowers and wildlife to be seen in these two different, but equally important, areas of the park.

Hot off the Press!

We have just heard that we have been awarded just over £500 from Basildon Council for polo shirts for our gardeners and new gardening tools. Hooray!

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.