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Newsletter

Winter 2020

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Chairman's Message

A cheerful newsletter to hopefully make you smile!

First, I should like to thank you, our members, for your continued support during the current difficult times. Many people have renewed their membership, and new people have joined us. To know that we have your backing as we continue our work at the park, has really helped. Many people talk to us when we are gardening or send lovely messages thanking us, so we must be doing something right!

Although the next few months will be difficult for many of you, we hope that you will be able to get to the park to enjoy it in it's winter costume. Every season brings special things to see - do send us any snaps of anything unusual! And you never know who you may meet to brighten your day and bring a smile to your face, albeit at a distance!

I wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas with hopefully some positive things to enjoy, whether you are with family or on your own.

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Our new Committee

Although our AGM was cancelled this year because of the Covid restrictions, we have a number of new committee members who were co-opted onto the committee by the trustees at our first Zoom meeting of the year. All happen to be or have been, gardeners, so are already involved in helping out. We have been looking at new projects that we might develop next year and have formed several small Task & Finish Groups to look into the different options. Watch this space!

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Car parking at the Park

Earlier in the Autumn, Basildon Council decided not to charge for car parking in the town, including at the park, right through until Christmas. Just as we highlighted, the system was abused and so new rules have now been enforced. Parking is FREE for up to 3 hours now, but after that people will be charged at the usual rate and fines will be given! Tickets still need to be obtained from the machines to cover the two half-hour sessions.

Benefits of a Winter Walk in the Park



Photo by Peter Williams

How do you feel after walking in the park? Do you feel better after your walk? Well-being restored, more relaxed, more energy? Did you talk to some friendly people? Did you enjoy nature? We all appreciate being able to get outdoors and a recent study has shown that those who spend two hours a week in green spaces have significantly better levels of health and well-being than those who do not venture out.

Being in the park can give us a feeling of escape and getting away from hum drum things; it gives us space to reflect; provides physical activity; brings opportunities to learn about new things; gives us a purpose; develops relationships with family and friends and provides shared social experiences.

With mental health problems reported as being an issue during lockdown, our parks are even more important than ever. We are so fortunate to have such a lovely park. Enjoy every minute and get out there, especially if you are feeling a bit down!

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"Every day may not be good... but there's something good in every day." *Alice Morse Earle*

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Our Gardeners

Once again, we must thank our gardeners for doing a tremendous job this year. Since lockdown, our group has grown to nearly 30 gardeners and the new members have been very welcome. Of course, not everyone comes every week, but most weeks we have had at least 15 gardeners at the park and sometimes more. In total this year, they have contributed over 800 hours, keeping the beds tidy, as well as clearing brambles and opening up old areas and looking after nearby hedges. If they were paid the minimum wage, then it would have cost the council around £7,000, but, of course, they are all volunteers who do it for nothing! Well done everybody!

The Information Centre

The Hut is now closed for the winter. Thank you to our few steadfast helpers who have opened it occasionally in the early autumn months. We look forward to re-opening in the Spring,

Children's Corner

Q. What do Santa's little helpers learn at school? A. The ELF-abet.

Q. How did Mary and Joseph know Jesus's weight when he was born? A. They had a weigh in a manger.

Q. What does Santa call his three-legged Reindeer? A. Eileen!



Can you guess what these Christmas things are?



Christmas Shopping



If you use Amazon for deliveries, then do please register with Smile.Amazon and make the Friends of Lake Meadows your chosen charity. For every £ you spend, they will donate 0.5% to our funds. It may seem much, but every penny counts! All your purchases, screens and systems are identical to ordinary Amazon. An easy way to make money for the Friends! Take a look.

Co-op Community Fund



Select us as your cause

We are delighted that we have been chosen as one of three local charities to be nominated for funding for the year ending next October.

You need to register in store or at: <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/46853> And then choose us as your chosen charity.

When you shop at any Co-op in the country, including both Billericay shops and the Co-op Funeral Home, your purchases of selected goods and services will trigger 2p in £ to our organisation and the same to you too! So we all benefit!

A Cheerful Wordsearch

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

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|----------|----------------|----------|-----------|
| Alive | Glad | Kind | Smile |
| Beaming | Good Spirits | Laughter | Sunshine |
| Better | Happy go Lucky | Likes | Upbeat |
| Bright | Hopeful | Love | Thanks |
| Cheerful | Hug | Luck | Warm |
| Chipper | Humour | Magical | Wonderful |
| Content | Jokes | Merry | Yippee |
| Enjoy | Joy | Optimism | |
| Fun | Joyful | Perky | |

Art in the Park

At half-term we launched our competition for children to design pictures in the park, using autumn leaves and other natural materials. Sadly, the weather was very wet but we are pleased to announce three winners:



Eloise Pickup Dylan Law Evie Winterman

Congratulations to all of them, who all won a small prize, which will help them enjoy nature more.

Nature Notes



Ivy is one of our most familiar native plants, growing in woodland, urban areas, parks and gardens. It provides food and shelter for all kinds of hibernating insects and small animals, as well as roosting sites for birds and bats.

There are two main types of ivy. *Hedera helix* ssp. *Hibernica*, which spreads across the ground and *Hedera helix* ssp. *Helix*, which is a woody climber that can grow to a height of 30m, with glossy leaves and round clusters of berries in winter. It's yellow-green flowers appear from September to November and are a great source of nectar for insects, such as hornets, honeybees and red admiral butterflies. Often accused of strangling trees, ivy is not actually a parasite and doesn't harm them, but only gets support from its hosts.

Ivy's evergreen nature made it an especially powerful symbol during the dark winter months of times past; sprigs of holly and ivy were brought into houses to keep evil spirits away. If you put an ivy leaf under your pillow, you will dream of your lover, however if you dream of an ivy plant it may foretell of a forth coming breakup. Ivy was frequently used in spells for love magic (though it should definitely NOT be eaten).

Ivy, is the plant for the month of October and is the vine of the Greek god Dionysus, who wore a crown of ivy leaves. At a celebration honouring him, a young maiden named Cissos overdid the dancing, dying of exhaustion, so Dionysus turned her into an ivy plant.

When you look at the leaves of an ivy plant you can see the face of a wolf. In the Celtic alphabet, ivy represents ruthlessness and achievement, symbolizing adaptability and a powerful survival instinct. It is a reminder of the power we all have to overcome obstacles and break down barriers of our own.

Continued in next column ...

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In ancient beliefs, ivy has always had some connection with fertility: the sinuous, entwining stems were seen as a feminine plant compared to the masculine holly. It was also supposed to have magical healing properties on grazing cattle, often being fed to sick animals, who then made a startling recovery. On Shropshire farms, every animal would be fed a piece of ivy before midday on Christmas morning to keep away the Devil for a year. In the 18th century, it became fashionable to include ivy in Christmas wreaths and indoor decorations.

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Photography Competition 2020



We have had a record number of entries for our photo competition this year, in both adult and junior sections. Our three judges have been busy the last few weeks deciding on the winners and details will be published on the website in the New Year. Look out for details on our website about the prize-giving in January. The 2021 competition will also be launched then – so get ready to start taking winter photos!

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And finally ...

One night, a Viking named Rudolph the Red looked out of the window. He turned to his wife and said, "Oh dear! It's going to rain again."

"How do you know that?" she asked.

"Because," he replied, "Rudolph the Red knows rain, dear."



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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.