

<b>AGENDA ITEM 4</b>	
<b>GTP/03/13</b>	
<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>31 July 2013</b>
<b>Great Notley Country Park Site Report January – July 2013</b>	
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The start of the year saw snow in the country park, which encouraged visitors to the park and helped increase car park figures during this usually quiet time. The team are looking forward to the summer holidays and, with the recent change in weather, are hoping this summer holidays will be a bumper year for visitor numbers. Although, from previous experience, if the weather is too hot visitors tend to go to coast to cool down.

### **Events and User Groups**

There have been a number of third party events on site including Go Bonkers inflatable days, Girl Guides and school orienteering events, including a school orienteering festival, a sponsored dog walk in aid of Ostara Dog Rescue, The Great British Grey Hound Walk, the mid Essex cross country race, schools cross country finals and compost and compost bin giveaways.

The North Essex Astronomy Group events have become a popular event at the park and this summer they will be hosting solar observing events throughout the holidays. The Rayne Festival was held at Rayne Station for its third year and was popular with the locals. There were three differently themed evenings, including a variety of music, sketches and comedy. Birthday parties and Puddleducks are still being held at the park.

Cursed, the Halloween event run by Notley rangers at Cressing Temple, won the Best Seasonal Halloween Event of 2012.

In the next few months we have a variety of events including the Big Bear Fest music festival and the Greyhound Fun dogs show.

### **Services**

A five year lease was awarded to The Booking Hall café at Rayne Station to carry on running the venue as a café. At Notley Drakes Bistro finished in March and a new contract was offered to the Wooden Spoon. The Wooden Spoon took over in March and we are receiving good feedback form our visitors.

## **Maintenance**

The rangers have been busy getting the park ready for the summer holidays, by mowing the edge of the pathways and clearing the path ways of any overhanging vegetation.

The play trail has seen numerous repairs carried out, including major works of resurfacing the water play. This four week project was carried out by the rangers and we have already received plenty of positive feedback on the new look water play.

A new storage area has been created in the park for the storage of materials such as woodchip and sand, which has helped to neaten to the previous storage area.

A new path has been created towards the back of the main car park to improve the access for our season ticket holders and other customers who work in the industrial park at the rear of the site.

The rangers have been busy out on the tractor and side arm flail cutting the bridle way around the park and also the whole 17 miles of the Flitch Way.

Rangers have worked alongside a local scout group and volunteers and planted oak and willow trees in the overflow car park field. These trees will help improve the biodiversity in the park, by creating different habitats in this area. The tree line will also help distinguish the parking rows when the field is in use as an overflow carp park and also, as they mature, to provide some much needed shade on site. A new hazel area has also been planted in the park to help increase the sites habitat diversity.

## **Volunteers**

The rangers work closely with the Friends of the Flitch Way volunteer group, carrying out a volunteer task twice weekly for most of the year. This year tasks have included clearing areas along the Flitch Way to create wildlife hotspots, installing benches and litter picking along the Flitch Way and giving Rayne Station a facelift. The Friends are also activity seeking funding for a railway carriage to be sited at Rayne Station for the use of visitors. The carriage will be used as a small museum and exhibition centre.

There has also been a variety of HCS students on site and also a student from Bournemouth University doing some work experience as part of his university course.

The Country Park's team are looking forward to a busy summer.