

		AGENDA ITEM 6
		GTP/05/16
Committee:	GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD	
Meeting Date:	20 July 2016	
Report:	Country Park Site Report	
Enquiries to:	Tim Dixon, Head of Country Parks Essex County Council	

The park is looking very fresh and green as we go into the summer season due to the warm, but wet weather we have been having of late. Whilst the grass and hedgerows are looking good the vegetation is growing very quickly, which means there is plenty of mowing and strimming to be done.

The new changing places facility is now complete. This facility comprises of an additional disabled toilet and an adults changing area complete with hoists. The facility will be open during the day and into the evening when staff are on site. The disabled toilet can be accessed by all and the changing places room can be accessed using a radar key. For those who don't have a radar key, but still need to use the facility they will be able to collect a key from the reception.

The Discovery Cafe opened in April. The new café managers have been settling in over the past month or so and some of the staff from the old café are employed by the new café managers. The café offers sandwiches, paninis, specials, cakes and ice creams. The kiosk, which is located by the reception in the basement of the building, is now open on a regular basis and is popular with visitors who want ice creams and drinks.

The car parking system has improved due to new software being installed onto the cameras. We are currently reviewing the system, but expect this new software will have solved a number of problems with the system.

We have one new seasonal ranger to help with staffing over the summer period. She is on a part time contract for 22.5 hours per week. Rhiannon has settled in well with the team and has already got to know the park well. She will be assisting the other rangers with practical tasks during the weekdays and visitors service duties over the weekend and school holidays.

There has been lots of ground maintenance work carried out over the last few months and also more maintenance work is planned including:

Part of the hedge along the bridleway has been laid. This was carried out by the volunteers, the Friends of the Flitch Way. Some of the members from the group have been on a traditional hedge laying course and used their skills to teach other members of the group to lay hedges along the Flitch

Way and also at the park. We plan to work with the volunteers this coming winter to lay some more hedges along the Flitch Way and at the park.

Some of the bridges around the park where beginning to show signs of rot so the rangers have been replacing these. One of the bridges will be removed entirely as it is sited along a path which is no longer used.

90% of the signs around the park have now been repainted. New signage is planned for some of the pieces of play equipment. This signage will be made out of a more permanent material and will be consistent in appearance with the existing signage along the play trail.

With the help of the volunteers two of the fishing swims are currently being replaced, as the supports have become rotten. This is a large job to complete, but we estimate this should be complete after the third work party.

There has been a general site tidy up where rangers have removed redundant fences and posts and installed new benches.

Work has been carried out on the play equipment, including repairs to various pieces of equipment including the hexagonal and hammock swings, suspension bridge and piano keys. The woodchip safety services have also been topped up ready for the school holidays.

A new culvert is planned between the Discovery Centre and water play. This will enable the visitor to access the building better from areas such as water play. The application is currently with ECC's Water Course Team and we expect to find out if we have permission to create the culvert in the next week or so.

The park has been entered for the Green Flag awards this year. Judging took place on the 22nd June.

We are hoping for good weather over the summer holidays to encourage visitors to come to the park, as we experienced a fair amount of rain over the Easter and May/June half term holiday.

Claire Bunn Senior Ranger