

		AGENDA ITEM 4
		GTP/01/13
Meeting:	GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD	
Date:	9 January 2012	
Great Notley Country Park Site Report July - December 2012		
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The latter half of 2012 has proved to be very busy for the team. During the summer holidays, the overflow car park was opened nearly every day due to the large numbers of visitors entering the site. There were over 4000 cars in the overflow car park throughout the summer holidays. At the end of the year, the rangers organised and ran three large events at Cressing Temple. The park budget is on line and we are hoping all income targets will be achieved.

Events and User Groups

In the last six months there have been eleven third party events and activities on the site. The North Essex Astronomy Group, along with Notley staff, are still hosting their monthly meets on site and are becoming popular with the public, especially families. The group's membership numbers are ever increasing due to these events.

There have been a number of sports orientated events on site, including Born to Tri Duathlon cross country runs, organised by athletic organisations, and also monthly orienteering events, organised by Essex Stragglers. The orienteering events ranged from ones for beginners and families and also an evening event for advanced orienteers.

The Greyhound Walks organised their yearly event on site. However, unfortunately this event had to be cancelled due to bad weather but the organisers rescheduled the event for September and the event was a success. The Greyhound Walkers are a regular feature on the park and hold their monthly walks here.

The scouts and guides have visited the park throughout the year and we were even part of the nationwide Scouts Jamboree. The scouts visited us during the Jamboree and completed a task of willow coppiced within the country park. This willow was then used by the scouts to complete another task at Danbury Country Park.

Macmillan held one of their charity events on the site. This was a 5km to 10km walk, the route of which also ventured onto the Flitch Way. Trailnet, the cycle hire facility, held a couple of 'All Ability Bike Days' on the green outside the Discovery Centre. These

events are aimed at encouraging adults and children with varying physical abilities to have a go at cycling using a variety of push bikes and trikes.

The Rayne Festival was held at Rayne Station for its second year and was popular with the locals. There were three differently themed evenings, including a variety of music, sketches, comedy and poetry. There was also a family event day on the Sunday.

Braintree District Council dog wardens organised a free health check day for dogs where owners could bring their pets to the park to get them checked over.

Birthday parties and Puddleducks events are still being delivered at the park.

The rangers ran three large scale events at Cressing Temple: Spooky Fun, Cursed and Cressing Unwrapped. All three events were well attended and well received by the visitors. Cursed was run over four nights in order to increase visitor capacity. Over 3000 visitors attended the event and enjoyed being scared by our team of clowns, zombies and ghouls. Spooky Fun was well attended and maintained its number of visitors from last year. Cressing Unwrapped sold out but was perhaps too busy and will need to be reviewed for next year. One comment from one of our visitors was that their child no longer believed in Father Christmas before the event. However, after attending our event and seeing our Father Christmas, he changed his mind and now believes in Father Christmas again – priceless!

Services

Conference room bookings are still down. This could be due to the lack of facilities our conference room has, including inadequate heating and a temperamental WIFI connection and this will be further investigated. Over the summer there was a photography exhibition in the conference room and also the rangers have run ten birthday parties.

There have been six school and nursery trips to the park which have been run by the Education Team. There has also been a number of independently run school and nursery visits to the park.

Maintenance

Cutting and strimming of the grass has been carried out throughout the park in accordance with the management plan. A mosaic effect has been adopted in order to cut different areas of our meadow to improve the botanical diversity of the site. This involves cutting the areas by using a specialist machine designed for cutting on slopes. The slopes then have to be raked and removed from the site.

A newt survey was carried out over the summer period. The survey was specifically looking for great crested newts, which are present on site. We are still waiting for the full report of this survey. 1500 snakes head fritillary bulbs were planted to improve the visual appearance around the Discovery Centre and also to create an extra nectar source for bees.

The main hay meadow has been cut. This is the first time we have managed to cut the majority of the meadow due to the weather being on our side this year. General site maintenance, including litter picking, fencing repairs and play equipment checks, repairs

and maintenance, have been carried out. Two members of staff have attended a mini digger and side arm flail course which will enable us to carry out a wider variety of maintenance jobs on site and on the Flitch Way. Mowing was carried out along the whole of the Flitch Way and the Black Water Rail Trail in the past few months. This has improved visitor access on both sites.

Volunteers

Over the summer we had two Duke of Edinburgh students completing their bronze and silver awards. They helped us with small tasks and maintenance jobs on weekend mornings. We have also had six HCS students from a variety of local schools completing their two week work experience with us.

Green Flag

We have received the Green Flag award again this year, for the fourth year, and the team are very proud of this achievement.

The Country Park and team have had a good year and are looking forward to 2013.