

		AGENDA ITEM 5
		<b>GTP/05/15</b>
Meeting:	GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD	
Date:	29 April 2015	
<b><u>Great Notley Country Park site activity and project report</u></b>		
Enquiries to:	Tim Dixon, Head of Country Parks, Essex County Council <b><u>Tim.Dixon@essex.gov.uk</u></b> , 07717 867628  Nick Day, Parks and Open Spaces Manager, Braintree District Council <b><u>nick.day@braintree.gov.uk</u></b> , 01376 332314	

## 1.0 Introduction

This report provides an update to the Board on all aspects of activity taking place in the Park, with updates from both Essex County Council (ECC) and Braintree District Council (BDC).

## 2.0 Infrastructure Update

There have been some major resurfacing works taking place within the country park in the first section of the year, totalling an investment of over £60,000. These have included the majority of the main car park being resurfaced with tarmac, a new path installed in the car park and also path resurfacing works in various areas of the country park. The resurfacing in the car park has greatly reduced the amount of pot holes and has created a better impression to the visitor, along with the new path in the car park making it safer for pedestrians, as soon as they arrive on site.

A number of footpaths have been resurfaced around the country park to improve access during the wetter months. The previously water logged paths are now looking much drier and have been already appreciated by different user groups including the popular Park Run group.

ECC will be investing a further £250,000 into improving the sewage system at the park in 2015/16. Work towards this is in progress, with the aim to commence on site

in late June to complete works by mid-September, subject to a successful tender process.

### **3.0 Sports Facilities Update**

The sports facilities at the Country Park (the AGP and MUGA) continue to be well used with the total number of bookings received during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2015 – January to April – amounting to 735 hours of activity resulting in income of £16,178 being received during this period.

If this level of income is maintained throughout the coming year the annual income figure would be over £64k which compares well with the projected figure of £45k of total annual income for 2014-15 reported at the last meeting in January 2015.

In addition to the regular football sessions detailed above a Soccability Festival for disabled children was held at the AGP on 26<sup>th</sup> March, this was a joint venture with the Essex section of the FA which saw about 50 children turning up all with varying disabilities and having a very good day of fun and physical activity. The next one is planned for 14<sup>th</sup> May when we are hoping for a similar or even larger turn out of young people.

There was also a Soccer Camp held in February in aid of the Farleigh Hospice at which a total of 32 children turned up and enjoyed themselves with the local branch of McDonalds providing lunches and a total of £480 being donated to the Hospice.

### **4.0 Staff Changes**

Jenny Russell, the new ranger, started in early February replacing Duncan Fisher's role. Jenny has been settling in well and is keen to work a busy summer season at the park.

### **5.0 Equipment Updates**

Following the annual play inspection, the team has completed works on the sand play and building site, queen swing, wooden sheep, rotating plate, water play, hexagonal swing and giant see saw.

A bid for a new tractor and flail was accepted and we are also purchasing a new on-site utility vehicle. These vehicles will be essential for the maintenance of the country park and the Flitch Way.

## **6.0 Activities**

The Friends of the Flitch Way volunteers have been working hard along the Flitch Way. They have completed clearance work along the Felsted to Little Dunmow section of the Flitch. This clearance work benefits visitors and wildlife alike.

Great Notley Country Park saw a number of 10k and 5k races and school cross country runs at the start of the year. Claire Jones is also working with Park Run organisers to set up a junior park run on the site for Sunday mornings. This will be a completely separate event from the adult's park run.

## **7.0 Project Update**

Following the consultation around new car parking charges, works for the new car parking equipment to enable payment on exit is planned to commence 11 May to be in place for use on 1 June, subject to approval by the Joint Venture Partnership Board.

The High Ropes project is progressing well, with the structure in the process of being built. Installation of the structure is on track to be in place by the end of June. A slight variation to the planning permission is required, which does not impact on the project timescales is due to be submitted by the end of April. Stakeholders have been notified.

Work on the lease for the Country Park is nearing completion; aiming for signature at the end of April.

Recruitment of staff to run the course is about to commence, which will comprise of a Manager and two instructors.

New signage will be planned and installed as part of the project and landscaping will be carried out around the High Ropes area by the rangers.

In addition to a unit for equipping and preparing users of the course, the old Cycle Hire room will be renovated to create a new reception and refreshment space for the High Ropes course. People will be able to check in or book a place in this room, before going over to the high ropes course to start their session. It is currently being ascertained whether permission for change of use is required for the reception.