

	AGENDA ITEM 3
	GTP/01/18
Committee:	GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD
Meeting Date:	31 May 2018
Report:	SITE REPORT
Enquiries to:	Claire Bunn, Senior Ranger

Staffing

Country Parks staff have recently gone through an organisational restructure. As part of this restructure we will be recruiting a part time ranger at the site. We currently have one full time ranger and one part time Park Manager, one caretaker plus the Sky Ropes Manager and three full time Sky Ropes Instructors. An extra member of staff will be a welcome addition to the park.

Play Trail

There has been some resurfacing work carried out along the play trail on the cable way, wobbly sheep and the sound roller. This was carried out by the Roaming Ranger team, who are based at Cressing Temple, but carry out different tasks at all of the seven ECC country Parks. More resurfacing work is needed at the chain path and the giant suspension bridge and the tiger bark surfacing also needs to be looked at as it is becoming worn on some pieces.

As the play equipment ages more repairs are needed on the structures and we have had work done on the mushroom pump, rotating plate and timber houses, for example. We also have planned work to be completed on the climbing frame rope, the tower slide, the hexagon swing, the wind pumps and some of the swing seats. The rubber seats on most of the swing elements of the play equipment are continually being chewed by dogs, which means they need to be replaced. This will be carried out by Timberplay, our play equipment suppliers.

Our wind pipes, which are currently fenced off, are due to be repaired, but there is currently a family of blue tits sitting on a nest within the structure, so we are waiting for the young to fledge before work continues on this piece of equipment. Tom, the ranger, is currently working on repainting the whirligigs ready for the May half term.

Car Parking

Country parks have recently gone through a consultation regarding the car parking charges in all of their country parks including Great Notley. The consultation closed on 18th March. Feedback from the consultation is currently being reviewed and we are waiting to hear the outcome from this. Details on the current and proposed prices can be found here:

<http://www.visitparks.co.uk/car-parking/>

Visitor Numbers

We had a slow start to the spring season, as the majority of spring was cold and wet. The Easter holidays were very wet and for the most of it our overflow car park field was water logged. When the weather improved and our visitor numbers increased the field remained water logged and so we struggled to get everybody parked on a handful of days.

As the weather picked up for the bank holiday weekend, so did the number of visitors. Our overflow field had fully dried out by then, so we were able to fully open it up. Over this weekend we were the busiest park out of the seven ECC country parks across Essex.

Sky Ropes and Zip Line

The visitor numbers for Sky Ropes have been increasing with the warmer weather, as you would expect. We generally find around 5% (in the winter periods) to 20% (in the summer periods) of all visitors visiting the park have a go on Sky Ropes.

The plans for the zip line continue to go ahead, although, it is now looking like work might start after the school holidays. The plans are currently with Braintree District Council.

Events

The general park events, such as the Astronomy events, two dog shows, Park Run and Junior Park Run, the Compost Give Away, the Dawn Service, PARC events, cross countries and other races continue in the park.

Welly Wednesdays, which is an activity for pre-schoolers, is going well. Toddlers and their parents meet on Wednesdays morning to do nature themed activities, crafts and games out in the park. Last month also saw the introduction of another pre-school activity, called Messy Mondays, which is run and organised by café staff. The children get a chance to get messy with paints, gluing and sticking, play sand, play dough and other indoor sensory activities.

School visits continue in the park, in the form of education ranger lead visits and teacher lead visits. Both type of visits involve the children being outside in the park for the day, with the focus being on the outdoors.

Flitch Way

Work continues along the Flitch Way with the volunteers mainly involving clearance work. Work parties are twice weekly on a Tuesday and Thursday and are supervised by ranger Tom. The work parties will be stopping soon for the summer break, as we are not able to devote the staff time over this busy period and also the range of tasks are reduced over summer, due to nesting birds. The work completed by the volunteers has been up to their usual high standard and we thank them all for their hard work and effort.