

	AGENDA ITEM 3
	GTP/01/19
Committee:	GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD
Meeting Date:	15 July 2019
Report:	SITE REPORT
Enquiries to:	Steffanie Robertson and Harrison Ewan

Staffing

Claire Bunn has now gone on maternity leave as of April and I am filling in for her until her return next year. My working days will be Thursday and Fridays and every second Sunday to ensure I get time with both rangers.

Frank, our part-time ranger has settled in well since he started in December. He pro-actively completes park tasks and has been shadowing Tom when he can on leading the volunteer group. He is booked in to attend a first aid course and a Brush cutting course in July and will be attending a “Dealing with aggressive customers” course in the near future.

Playtrail and the Park

We are awaiting some remedial works on a number of pieces of equipment and are working closely with our contractor to ensure all pieces are open and in full working order for the Summer holidays.

The waterplay area however, will unfortunately not be open for summer. The quote for repairs far exceeded our budget for play equipment repairs so I am liaising with our contractor to find out whether a full replacement would be better than replacing parts on to pieces that now have a limited lifespan.

We continue to ensure all pieces are checked daily and inspected monthly. We also have our annual independent inspection by the Play Inspection Company which has just been carried out.

Signage was recently painted and grass has been mown on a regular basis given the time of year and level of growth. We are trialling a different solution as an alternative to glyphosate to kill the weeds. An area of shade has been created on the playtrail by cutting back an area of thicket and crown lifting a number of trees, allowing a nice natural area for people to sit in the shade. The lakes and ponds will also be worked on over the coming months with some clearance of litter and pond weed around the fishing swims, algae and willow cleared from the ponds and some

areas cut back to allow better views from the West end of the lake.. Our tree survey was carried out in March, with identified works carried out in the advised time scale.

We were approached by Gigaclear, who will be installing a community cabinet for Bocking West and a related cable will be put down across the park and under/over the A120. During a site meeting, directional drilling was discussed with Gigaclear and a route for this agreed in order to minimise any disruption to park users and avoid destroying any tree roots.

To increase visitor numbers and enhance our visitor's experience, a programme of smaller events has been created by myself and Harri. This is in draft form at the minute but includes Archery, Campfire nights, Skyropes under the stars, trails, Night Safaris, BBQ evening event, Art gallery pop ups and potential TEDx or café scientific events. Larger events are also being held at the park which include Outdoor Cinema screenings in June and September.

Flitch Way

The friends of the flitch way continue to work once a week undertaking light maintenance tasks with the rangers such as clearance and repair work. This however will stop during the busy summer holiday period at the park.

I'm also happy to report that Stanley Davies (of the FOFW volunteers) has been awarded a BEM (British Empire Medal) in the Queens Birthday Honours for services to the community in Braintree. This is for his dedication and tireless work for the FOFW and the Braintree Lions Club. We have passed on our congratulations to Stan and have thanked him, and all the volunteers, for the hard work they put in to maintain the Flitch Way.

Marketing

We are working closely with our Marketing and PR Lead to increase our following on social media as well as our event advertising both on and off site.

Visitor Numbers and Income

We had a busy Easter period with 8450 cars coming to site, and an estimate of 22815 visitors. This compares to 2018 when we had 4246 cars and 11464 visitors. A 99% increase, however this reflects the fair weather we had compared to the not so favourable weather we endured last Easter. Takings were also up, reaching £39,797, compared with £14725 last year. A 170% increase on 2018. Again this reflects the type of weather at this time.