

NEWSLETTER

Haysden Country Park

ISSUE 1

28.4.20

Welcome to the first Haysden Country Park newsletter, this year it replaces the User Panel meeting that we usually hold in the Spring of each year, because we are unable to hold a meeting at this time.

Top stories in this newsletter



Coronavirus



New sewage system



Educational visits



Management plan

Coronavirus



The Council has made a number of changes to our services in response to the coronavirus outbreak. We have had to close the Country Park car parks as large numbers of people were congregating in these areas in breach of social distancing rules which help protect people from coronavirus. We would therefore advise against driving to our parks and encourage residents to exercise locally wherever possible. We will keep these arrangements under review and adjust our approach in line with any changes in national guidance.

For the latest details on how TMBC are dealing with Coronavirus, please visit our web page <https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/services/health-and-social-care/health-and-medical-advice/coronavirus-covid-19>

New sewage system



The new sewage eco plant system for the toilets, has been designed to cope with the ever increasing numbers of people using the park, and its toilets. The new tank can be reduced in size for the winter months. Whilst not the most glamorous and high profile project, these are essential works. Despite the delays caused by flooding on several occasions over the winter months, the project is now completed.

Educational visits



We have commissioned a local sculptor to carve some wooden seats and a table to create a new outdoor learning area. These will be installed near to the dipping platform for educational visits. Staff are also redesigning the 'Ranger led activity pack' which is aimed at primary school and youth group visits to the park. The new pack should be available from the autumn.

Management plan



The new park management plan has now completed the public consultation stage. We are grateful for all the comments received which will be considered by the Communities and Housing Board, before the final adoption of the plan.

Other news

Major flooding in the park occurred earlier in the year, which has caused damage to the paths around Barden Lake which are awaiting repair.

At the time of writing all events at the parks have been cancelled until the end of May 2020, and this may yet be extended. Subject to the restrictions being lifted we hope to run the planned events later in the year. Updates can be found on the Councils website, and on Eventbrite if booking is required.

Work completed

- Park guide leaflet reviewed and reprinting
- Volunteer leaflet and booklet reviewed and reprinted
- Annual inspection of the children's play area
- Events programme and leaflet printed
- EA have completed initial surveys in preparation for the Leigh Barrier major works
- The boiler has been cleaned
- Thinning the overcrowded trees in Friendship Wood, to allow light to the ground for plants, and the remaining trees to mature



Other work in progress

- Health and safety re-inspection of trees – more work on order
- Report to the Housing and Community Board about the new management plan
- Toilet roof replacement on building delayed
- New entrance signs being made
- Renewal of the Town Sailing Club agreement
- Repairs to paths delayed by coronavirus outbreak and awaiting new start date
- Canadian pond weed growth being monitored in Haysden Water and advice being sought
- Leigh Barrier major works still are being discussed with the EA along with mitigation measures
- Work from the Annual inspection of the children's play area



Volunteering update

Highlights of work completed

- Bluebell and woodland wildflower planting in Friendship Wood, spending the £172 raised through Crowd Funding
- Hedge planting along the new railway fence
- Cutting back scrub in the meadow, so that the meadow is not overrun and the grassland shaded with bushes
- New wildlife garden created near to the catering unit
- Coppicing trees, to allow in light onto the ground living plants
- Hedge maintenance
- Assisting the ranger with the Feed the birds and Halloween events
- Estate management, replacing gates, repairing litter bins, cutting back vegetation and fallen trees
- New shipping container provided for the volunteers

Number of volunteer hours

Haysden Country Park Volunteers -1024 hours

Community Payback - 660 hours

Tonbridge School - 45 hours

Scouts - 85 hours

Total -1814 hours

Call for recorders

In the past we have found volunteers to undertake field surveys in the park to record the plants and animals present, but unfortunately many of these volunteers are no longer able to continue. We already have a volunteer undertaking the Breeding Birds Survey. We would like to re-start the other surveys by finding some new volunteers willing to undertake regular visits to the park to undertake these surveys. Ideally these people would have some experience, but don't worry if you have no experience as these skills can be learnt. We are looking for volunteers to carry out the following surveys:

- Wildflower surveys in the meadows in June/July
- Recording of amphibians, pond surveys and egg searches, in April and again in June
- Pond surveys in July see <https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/projects/surveys/psym-method/>
- Bat surveys, in the months of June, July, August and October
- Monthly survey for reptiles, between April to October
- Small mammal surveys, monthly between January and April

(Note with the current restrictions in place, it may not be possible to start any surveys this year)

If this is something you would like to assist with, please contact Chris Fox email Leisure.services@tmhc.gov.uk

Green Flag Award judging

The Green Flag Award Scheme will go ahead this year. The judges will using a revised approach that ensures the safety and wellbeing of visitors, judges and park staff.



User Panel

Subject to the restrictions being lifted, we intend calling the next meeting of the panel in the Autumn of 2020.

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