**Friends of Wickford Memorial Park**

**Annual Report for the year ending March 31st 2021**

**Chairs Report:**The Friends of the Wickford Memorial Park was formed in February 2020 to care for and improve the park.
We have a committee of nine members and have worked hard to during the last year to enhance the park.
We have achieved so much this year and have noticeably improved the park alongside the Basildon Council park staff.
There are volunteering opportunities in the future especially for the Beauchamps Site and the planned Rhododendron Walk.

**Our Objects:** require us to:

* help care for, improve and maintain the park , protecting the land;
* raise the profile of the park in the local community;
* improve the wellbeing of members;
* improve the habitat value of the park for wildlife;
* secure funds to improve the infrastructure of the park;
* campaign for improving the existing facilities in the park;.
* work and liaise with Basildon Council for help and advice.

**Our key aims:**

1. to establish our brand image;
2. to develop a team of volunteers
3. to improve the park
4. to encourage biodiversity

**Review of activities and achievements:**We have successfully established our brand image by developing a logo, creating regular newsletters and a website.
Our team of volunteers meets regularly, normally Wednesday and Saturday.
We have encouraged volunteers to undertake a range of activities including gardening; Home Front Garden and painting fences and barriers and refurbishing the Crazy Golf area.
We have improved the park by enhancing the garden areas by planting shrubs, trees and bulbs elsewhere in the park.

Our interest in encouraging biodiversity has seen us install bird boxes and a bug hotel.

**Promote, maintain and enhance the park**

The Friends have promoted the Memorial Park through social media, including our Facebook Site and other Wickford Sites, via our Website through newsletters and Website articles. We have worked with Basildon Communications Team in promoting the park through short videos and articles about our work in the Together Borough magazine.

We arrange maintenance walkabouts with the park staff and have carried our maintenance and litter picks in the park.

We have made contact with local children’s groups for them to be involved in projects in the park.

**Our Trustees and Volunteers**

Our committee this year has included 9 committee members who have met bi-monthly to plan activities at the park:

Kim Oakes: Chair
Marian Scott: Vice Chair
Derek Harrison: Secretary
Tracy Render: Treasurer
Stephen Oakes: Committee Member
Margaret Clarke: Committee Member
Janet Dunn: Committee Member
Estelle Mickelborough: Committee Member
Geoff Whiter Committee Member

We have developed a team of volunteers and continue to welcome new members.

**Advisors**

TheFriends have establisheda strong partnership with park managers, who provide support and guidance and regular contact is maintained with Council officials and members.

**Sources of Funding**

The Friends have been fortunate during our first year to receive grants from:

* Basildon Borough Council,
* Wickford Community Fund,
* Hutton’s Café
* and Essex County Council.

We opened a bank account with NatWest