



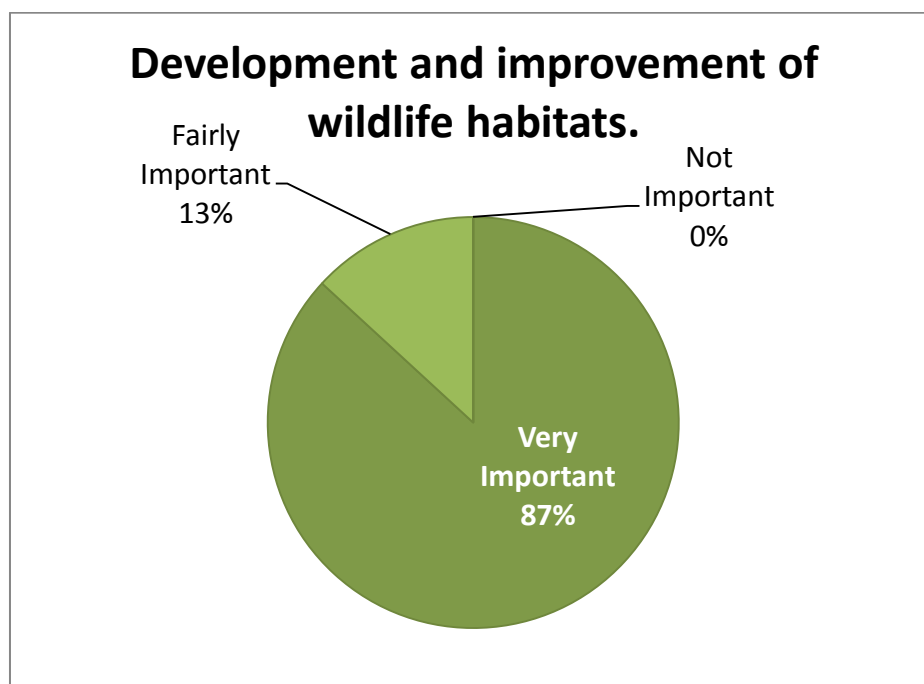
**Draft Proposal for the Lake only in
Cherry Orchard Country Park**

**Response from
The Friends of Cherry Orchard Park
July 2015**



The Friends of Cherry Orchard Park are pleased to be given the opportunity to comment on the draft proposals for the development of the lake prepared by Essex Wildlife Trust and are glad to report a positive response.

The proposals compliment the group's aims for the year ahead. These are based on the result of the recent survey of Friends which showed that in their view the most important area for development in the park is the improvement of wildlife habitats.



The proposals were emailed to members and information was also placed on the group's website and Facebook page. (Comments included at the end of this report.)

Initial questions raised were quickly answered by Marcus Hotten, Assistant Director for Environmental Services as follows:-

Q Will there be a dedicated place where dogs can enter the water without disturbing the wildlife and without erosion to the banks? A shallow entrance possibly a fenced area as described by the Living Landscape presentation at our AGM.

A Yes, most definitely.

Q Will there be safe view points for birdwatchers?

A If there proves to be a need, this could be added

Q Will there still be a path beside the lake?

A Yes, the existing path will be diverted to the south side of the lake.

The matter of the path behind the lake does concern members. The proposal suggests diverting the existing well used path that runs between the lake and the stream to a Public Right of Way (PROW) that runs behind the lake. The old path that ran beside the stream before the lake was excavated is not a PROW, but could help maintain the circular route round the lake area that many park users currently enjoy. **We feel this last point needs to be further clarified as the map is unclear.**

Extending the south west corner of the lake by reprofiling and land forming....

This is welcomed. However, are the planners aware that a natural wet area forms for several months each year closer to the south east corner of the lake? This area is not formed by the lake overflowing onto the meadow, rather as the wet area enlarges it overflows eventually into the lake.



February



April



May

We believe this should be taken into consideration when planning a possible path/route along the southern boundary of the lake.

- ✓ We have noted the water quality and recognise that the proposal aims to improve the level of phosphates and that the Biohaven may improve the ammonia levels.
- ✓ We have also noted that the presence of fish and invertebrates in the lake may be improved from moderate to good/high. We think these are very positive moves.
- ✓ We think the vision to establish the lake to act as a filtration system is a good, sustainable, forward thinking way to improve the quality of the water further downstream.
- ✓ We are delighted that the proposal mentions trying to restore the drainage ditch so that it is once again a suitable habitat for Water Voles. We believe this is a very important aspect of the overall plan.

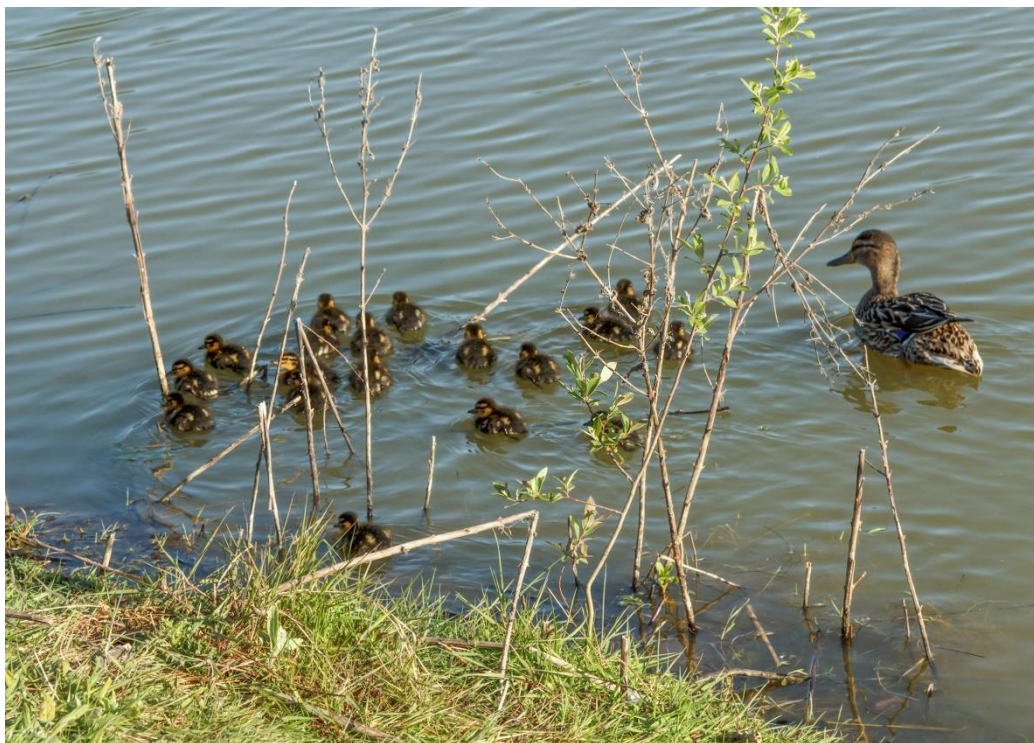
- ✓ We are glad to see that monitoring will take place before and after the proposed project and would be glad to be included where possible in any observations that can be made.
- ✓ We note that the estimate of costs includes interpretation panels, something that the Friends group believe will greatly enhance the value of the lake area for park users.

We look forward to seeing these proposals become an actuality and the improvement of the lake and surrounding area for wildlife and for park users.

We would like to see less of this.....



...and more of this.



May 2011

We would greatly value the opportunity to meet and discuss the project further when more detailed engineering or technical drawings are available. At present it is hard to fully understand how the proposal will affect the path at the west end of the lake and the weir.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposals, we hope our response will prove helpful.

Other Comments and questions received from Friends



November 2013

Totally support measures to help the beleaguered water vole and encourage more bird life. Well done!

I am fully behind the improvement and look forward to seeing it completed. I walk my dogs in the park and they enjoy nothing more than having a dip when it is warm. I am pleased that the improvements will still allow me to do this. The improved water quality is fantastic news and I can not wait to see more wildlife enjoying the new habitat that is planned. Many thanks to the wildlife trust and everyone else involved in this venture.

Agree with all the points raised, just one that bothers me is the anglers disturbing the wildlife and whether they take care with their fishing line and hooks? There seems more of them lately?

Although I completed the survey and believe I said wildlife habitats are important in the park, I am dismayed to see the answer to one of the questions raised includes the removal of the path on the north shore by diverting it along the south shore. The circular walk around the lake is one of our favourites, as was sitting on the bench that use to be there to watch the birds. I understand the reasons for the removal of the bench due to erosion but I cannot see why it is necessary to close the path.

I am very disappointed with this proposal, especially as there are already a number of paths in other areas in the park, particularly in the woodlands, that are becoming difficult or impossible to access. These include a couple of previously well trodden routes that we enjoyed. Having said this, I am very pleased to see that the Bridleway has been resurfaced.

The proposals to improve the water quality and reinstate the ditch are necessary. I am very aware of budget constraints but, in view of this, I would prefer any money allocated to go towards maintaining what we already have before any additional work is contemplated.

We are both completely behind it but have some real concerns about the costings, which appear very modest given what appears to be a massive movement of soil, (Ditch deepening, huge lake

restructuring etc.) and landscaping – the PMG cost more than £15k and they are budgeting only £40k for all this.

How will the plan impact the 'sandy path' at the west end of the ditch and where will this path be 'blocked' – at the west end of the ditch or at the end of the lake?

At the moment it is nothing more than a toxic body of rapidly disappearing water. The few ducklings that have hatched this year have a very poor survival rate and I've watched with dismay as 7 ducklings become 4 then 2 and finally 1 knowing there is nothing that anyone can do to prevent this. Anything done to the lake in recent years seems only to have made it worse not better. The water from the ditch which feeds the pond has been stopped and there is no water flowing in or out of the pond at the moment.

We were told the fence was temporary but it's still there. The decreasing level of the water was supposed to discourage fishing but has only meant that fishermen climb over the fence and fish in the fenced off nesting area showing no regard for any birds attempting to nest there. I think on paper the proposals seem excellent but I despair of them ever coming to fruition and if they do what will be put in place to stop human activity disturbing any nesting sites? Without bylaws or regular monitoring of the lake this is a pipe dream. I hope I will be proved wrong.

Facebook 412 people reached. Positive "likes" received. No negative comments.

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