



NEWSLETTER

MWanimalpark@hotmail.com



Welcome to the very first newsletter celebrating the Maryon Wilson Animal Park. Local people were shocked when in December 2010 the Council announced that they intended to withdraw funding from the Animal Centre. An amazing 7,500+ people signed a petition to save the animals, and the strength of local feeling forced the Council to rethink and agree to keep the Animal Centre going until an independent charitable Trust could be set up to fund and run it. This new Trust is now coming together and if you would like to know more about how you can help make sure this unique and wonderful attraction stays open then please read on...



Progress report

- The Trust is currently organised as a registered limited company and will seek charitable status as soon as possible.
- We are looking for sponsors to support the Centre, and planning fundraising events.
- We will be recruiting volunteers to join in with a variety of tasks, which will help sustain the animal park in the future.
- We have ambitions to improve the facilities and would really like to see a thriving cafe and education room in the Maryon Wilson Park.
- We are enquiring about having a temporary cafe in the park for the summer.
- We intend to work closely with local groups like RDA and the Friends of the Park.
- We would value support from local people who signed the petition and if you would like to help please give us your email address. If the animal park is special to you and your family - please contact us:

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Meet our animals: Peking, the imprint duck

Peking is a pet duck housed in the children's animal centre. He was hatched on site from one of the older ducks living outside. He is a charismatic and much-loved addition to our ever-growing family here at the park: he is so tame and friendly he allows us to get hands-on and provides great entertainment to visitors, especially children, and thankfully he adores all the fuss and attention.

To develop an 'imprint' duck requires time and energy: you have to hand-rear the duckling from the very first day of life, allowing him to imprint – or bond – with a human rather than a parent. I achieved this by taking Peking home with me and having him live with me for three months. He was the most adorable duckling, who liked to clamber onto my chest to sleep on my shoulder.

One of my favourite sounds is the pitter-patter off Peking's feet as he runs behind me, early each morning after I let him out off his pen. I have a very soft spot for Peking, and he is my most treasured sidekick while I'm at work.



A stockman's diary...

Summer is on its way and already exciting changes are afoot: our stag has finally dropped his antlers (a little late this year) and a new, larger and prouder set will soon grow, taking about two to three months to develop. All the deer are currently shedding their winter coats so look a little rough around the edges, but with warmer weather coming they will look beautiful again in no time. We currently have four does of breeding age, and are hoping for at least half of them to be pregnant and expecting fawns in late June, early July. Please remember that the does will leave the fawns hidden in the long nettles for protection and they have not 'abandoned' their little ones: the does are extremely attentive and caring mothers. Also due to the weather warming we hope to see more chicks hatch in the coming months. And the peacocks are displaying to the peahens and making it clear that they think the warm weather is here to stay.

Both articles by **Richard Gregory**, MWAP stockman, currently employed by Royal Borough of Greenwich.

Contact the Trust if you are interested in supporting our animals or would like to hear more about progress and events:

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On the board:

Kat Breese

Helen Cleary (Vice Chair)

Andrew Donkin, MWP Friends Rep

Councillor John Fahy

John Goodwin,

Carol Kendall, RDA Rep

Councillor Allan MacCarthy (Chair)

Charlton Park Riding for the Disabled

The group was founded in 1974 by Liz McDermott, and is the only RDA team in Greater London that owns horses and does not pay staff to care for them but depends on volunteers who also raise funds. The Royal Borough of Greenwich Council provide shelter for the horses and an area for riding lessons. Riding is provided for up to 60 disabled riders each week, during term time. The group aims to provide riding for a diverse range of disabilities as long as riders meet height and weight restrictions and are medically capable. Riding can help people of varying disabilities. For the physically disabled it can help build core muscles to improve movement, and for learning difficulties like autism it can be extremely therapeutic, calming and a great way to socialise. Some children have said their very first words while at the RDA!

New volunteers are always welcome and will receive full training. For further information please contact Charlton Park RDA on 0208 317 1528 or Carol Kendall (Chief Instructor, Trustee) on 07877320406.



Meet the ponies...

Minstral: a piebald mare, bought in 2005 with money given by Greenwich and Woolwich Rotary Club. She is aged 13.

Honey: a chestnut (golden brown) mare, bought in 2006. She is also 13 years old.

Teddy: a gelding, bought in 2010 with money raised by the Westcombe Park Society. He is 9 years old.

