

Winter 2024-2025

Parklife

January - March

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**Nene
Park
Trust**

Welcome to Winter Parklife 2024 - 2025

Recent visitors may have caught a glimpse of our magical Winter Festival experience that took over the Visitor Centre end of Ferry Meadows throughout December up until Christmas Eve.

We had thousands of happy families enjoying the experience and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Find out more about how the event went on [page 4](#).

We're now into our winter season and the Park Management Team are busy with lots of maintenance and improvement work. The aftermath of early flooding and storm Darragh in December brought some extra challenges but the Park is looking fantastic again under the team's care.

This Parklife issue we're celebrating the work of our fantastic volunteers too, as well as highlighting some of the activities you can get involved in the new year.

This is also the first Parklife edition that doesn't feature our detailed What's On guide for the next three months. That's because we've produced an exciting new separate six month event guide that you can pick up from around the Park and city early in the new year.

In the meantime, we've highlighted some key events on [page 6](#) and also [page 12](#) and you can always find the most up to date event information on our website - nenepark.org.uk/events

We wish you all the best for 2025. Hope to see you in the Park soon!

The Nene Park Trust team

Our photography competitions!

Thank you to everyone who took part in our photography competitions each month in 2024.

Photo of the year!

Well done to Rob Walker whose photograph of Comet A3 over Ferry Meadows was voted by our social media followers as the Nene Park photo of the year!



The photography competition has now launched for 2025!

Each month, please send in your best photographs from around the Park - wildlife, landscapes or landmarks. Once again, we will choose our top three entries and put them forward for you to vote for the winning photo each month!

The twelve winners from 2025 will be entered into a final vote at the end of the year to choose the Nene Park Trust Photo of the Year, with an exciting hamper of goodies from our Visitor Centre for the winner.

Email your photography entries to Marketing.NPT@neneparktrust.org.uk. For all the competition terms and conditions, please visit: nenepark.org.uk/2025-photography-competition



Young Heritage Rangers

During Young Heritage Rangers Week in October half-term, young people aged 14-17 teamed up with artist Rose Croft to research, design and develop a new game based on the history of the Park, Sculpture Collection and Peterborough. Over five days, the Heritage Rangers created the 'Eels and Ladders' history game - which was played by Park visitors and enjoyed by all ages on the final day.

Young Heritage Rangers is part of The Collection Stories project supported by National Lottery Heritage Fund.



January sales in the Visitor Centre

While stocks last you can grab yourself a bargain with up to 50% off festive food and gifts at the Visitor Centre. Don't miss out!

You can see our 12 winners from our 2024 photography competition in our 2025 Fundraising Calendar, which is still on sale at the Visitor Centre. It's now reduced to £6 or even just a bargain £2 if you spend £10 on other items in the shop!



Heritage Highlight



Winter is the perfect time to discover traces of Roman history in Ferry Meadows. Just a short walk from Ferry Meadows Visitor Centre you can explore the outline of a Roman barn and temple.

In the 1970s, when gravel was being removed to create Overton Lake at Ferry Meadows, workers discovered remains of a Roman settlement. The digging was paused so that the features could be recorded before they were destroyed. Archaeologists found the foundation of a barn, a shallow stone lined pond, a well, and a small temple. The Development Corporation decided to alter the plan of the lake, leaving an area of land to preserve the barn's foundations.

The Roman barn would have been used to store crops and tools, as well as a workshop for metal working. Evidence of fires means it may have also been lived in. The temple was a smaller open building with a roof where pagan worship would have taken place.

Look out for a new interpretation board about Roman Point being installed here in 2025!

If you would like to be added to our email mailing list or require this magazine in another format, please get in touch.

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Awards for Nene Park Trust

Over the last few months we've been lucky to have received a number of exciting awards:



Employer of the Year in the Peterborough Telegraph Business in Excellence Awards



We've retained our Investors in the Environment - Green status



We've been awarded the Disability Confident Employer award



We've retained our Investors in People - GOLD status



Nene Park **Winter Festival** Hosted by Nene Park Trust

8000+
visitors

Winter Festival magic!

On 10 dates between 30 November and Christmas Eve, we welcomed over 8,000 visitors to the magical Winter Festival in Ferry Meadows with all ages enjoying the wonderful festive atmosphere.

The Winter Festival was packed with magical moments, including the beautiful woodland trail illuminating 50 hand-crafted willow sculptures, live performances featuring the talented cast of Eastern School of Performing Arts, and inspiring poetry and storytelling by Charley Genever and Sandy Wardrop from Syntax Poetry Collective and even festive rides on our miniature railway!

Between activities, visitors enjoyed a seasonal menu of food and drink at the Ferry Meadows Café. Plus the Christmas Shop in the Visitor Centre was full of gifts and stocking fillers, including Gruffalo-themed items - perfect for ticking off those Christmas shopping lists.

Well done to the staff and volunteer team for putting on such a magical wintry event. Despite having to close the festival for four dates due to the high winds of Storm Darragh - and then having to do repairs following storm damage, the festival returned to its full glory by the following Thursday.

We're already thinking about what we can do next winter to make it even more magical but we're not sure we can improve on this year's!

Festival goers enjoyed highlights such as live performances by the Nene Park mythical creatures (performed by students from Eastern School of Performing Arts), toasting marshmallows over the open fire, and a screening of *The Gruffalo's Child* beneath the stars.

Children also loved making their own story wands and crowns, which they took into the enchanted woodland trail, inspired by the story of *One Sparkling Night*, our specially created story book produced in partnership with The National Literacy Trust. This beautiful story was written and illustrated by local author Ellie Sandall, and was a magical addition to the event, which every young visitor received as a gift.



50
hand-crafted
willow sculptures

We're meant to flood here!

We fully expect Ferry Meadows to flood – it's part of our Park's double purpose.

Ferry Meadows was created to provide both parkland and facilities for the recreation, education and leisure of our many visitors, and also to take excess water from the River Nene to help protect Peterborough from flooding.

The consequences of flooding are both negative and positive. The negative is clearly the management of the flood debris left behind, consisting of different materials like bottles, wood and paper waste. Removing this debris will always be the first task of the Park Management team once the flood water recedes. Clearing the flood debris is important so it does not have a negative effect on the environment, nature, and our visitors' health.

However, flood water also plays an important role in maintaining the ecosystem functions and biodiversity and adds nutrients to the soil to encourage growth of grass in the spring and as the flood waters subside wetland birds will return to feed.

The winter months can be very challenging for our Park Management team due to the wet ground conditions and flooding. The water levels of the River Nene and both Gunwade and Overton Lakes often rise over the banks a few times over the winter months.

This always results in the submerging of the floodplain meadows (Heron, Short and Long Meadow); footpaths and hedges which mark out boundaries between land, fields and footpaths.



This winter, we saw earlier than usual flooding. We had flooding in September and again in early December. Greg Higby, our Park Manager says that he cannot recall in all his years working here (and that is many years!) flooding happening as early as September.

Our climate is changing and the long-term climate forecast for wetter winters will mean we will see more and more flooding across Nene Park. But we're ready for it and always do our best to make the Park accessible to all, as quickly as possible, once the flood waters subside.





Park developments

As we continue to develop our welcome area in Ferry Meadows there are some new additions to discover and enjoy.

Our new welcome sign doubles up as a very plush bug hotel. We're looking forward to welcoming you to the Park - and our new insect residents to their new home - soon. Thank you to Green Earth Habitats for making this for us - it looks perfect here!

You can now come and explore our new beautiful illustrated map on the side of the Visitor Centre when you first arrive and find walking routes and ideas of things to do on your next visit. This was designed by local designers Paper Rhino and printed and installed by Europress.

Step inside the Visitor Centre to have a look at our new visitor interpretation panels that introduce you to a bit of our hidden history, how the Park was made and ways you can support us into the future.



Our littlest visitors can enjoy spotting a kingfisher, otter, dragonfly and a bee on each of our four spotter boards too! These beautiful panels were designed by Paper Rhino again and produced and installed by interpretation signage company Leach.

Our new interpretation boards were funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of Your Community Greenspace project.



In the new year we will be introducing family activities just inside the entrance to the Visitor Centre. There will be activities that explore our Roman history or children can play with figures, animals and trees on our interactive table map! **Keep an eye out for more news about this in 2025!**

Lynch Farm planning submitted

Planning permission has been submitted to Peterborough City Council to allow an interim change of use at Lynch Farm and have an enclosed dog paddock and also camping for school or uniformed groups. If successful, this will be the first phase of much needed renovation and care for this much-loved site.



Our recent conservation projects

Through funding from the Environment Agency, we are continuing our fish habitat improvement work in partnership with the P&DAA throughout the winter. This funding will pay for more tree hinging and pinning, berm creation and other marginal refuge habitat in key areas that will help ease the predation pressure on our fish as well as provide other benefits such as bank erosion protection.



Tree Hinging

New Tern Islands on Overton Lake



We have also launched two new Tern Islands on Overton Lake. One of these was paid for by Compare the Market and some of their staff volunteered to help to build it. The other was funded by Cambridgeshire Community Foundation. Terns successfully bred on the existing island this year for the first time in around 10 years so we are hopeful that the launch of two more islands will help to increase the breeding Tern colony in the Park next spring.



We have also completed the work to create a new spillway at Westholmes, Sutton. This process of lowering the river bank and creating a spillway means that the river will overtop the bank in a controlled way when the river level rises above the normal limit.

With the help of our volunteer Hit Squad, we have created a new boardwalk over the new spillway which will ensure the footpath remains accessible.



New spillway at Westholmes



Thorpe Meadows café will open in spring

After a number of delays beyond our control, our new café at Thorpe Meadows is set to open in the spring. **Keep an eye out for opening announcements!**



Lakeside improvements

Over the next few months we will be refurbishing the Lakeside toilet block, adding more accessible parking and improving Lakeside Road. **Look out for updates on how we're getting on!**

New Year – new you!

Boost your fitness and wellbeing with Nene Park Trust by getting involved with one of our many groups or sessions aimed at improving health and happiness.

Saturday watersports

Get out on the water for a bracing paddle or pedal with our Saturday watersports sessions throughout the winter! Open between 11am and 2pm every Saturday in January and February, there's no excuse not to have a go!



Try Running

Do you want to give running a go for the first time in a safe and supportive group? Or perhaps you want to get back into running after a break? These welcoming sessions, run by our keen volunteer run-leaders are held every Tuesday 6pm and Wednesday at 10am at Thorpe Meadows.

On the first Sunday of the month, we also hold a 5-mile run at Ferry Meadows for those a bit more experienced at running or who want to push themselves a bit further.

The upcoming 5-mile run dates are Sunday 5 January, Sunday 2 February, Sunday 2 March.



Try karate – with Oubaitori Karate

Through our lottery-funded project Your Community Greenspace, we've been supporting the work of Oubaitori Karate, a family-run, not for profit karate group in Peterborough. If you'd like to find out more and give it a go, get in touch through oubaitori.uk.



Wellbeing Wanders

Not sure where to go for a walk or not keen on walking on your own? Join a small sociable group for a walk around Ferry Meadows or the wider Nene Park. We hold these free group walks twice a month on different routes. The walks are approximately 5km long and take an hour and half with most starting and finishing at the Visitor Centre in Ferry Meadows.



Take up a new craft skill

Throughout the year we regularly hold craft workshops – fused glass, willow weaving, wreath making, felting and more! Keep an eye on our events pages to see what's coming up but here are a few to kick start your year with.

25 January – Choose from our Intermediate fused glass inclusions workshop 10am-1pm or our Dragonfly fused glass workshop 2-3.30pm

1 February – Adult beginner fused glass workshop – necklace pendants. 2-3.30pm

2 February – Adult beginner introduction to fused glass workshop 10.30am-12pm or 1-3.30pm

15 February – Adult Tile Mosaic Coaster workshop. 10am-2pm

16 March – Willow weaving workshop 10-12.30 and 1-3.30pm

25 March – Wet felting for Adults



Fundraising round up

Our Fundraising team are always on the lookout for grant funding to help us do more projects across our spaces. Our appreciation and thanks goes to the following funders who have recently offered grants for our charitable work.

- The Hobson Charity have kindly provided funding of £8,570 for the purchase of brand-new Bell Tents for community group and education visits to Ferry Meadows.



- We have gratefully received £7,998 from Morrisons Foundation to purchase equipment and supplies for Nene Nursery, our popular horticulture space.



- A big thank you to Peterborough Home & Garden (Blue Diamond Garden Centres), for kindly donating daffodil bulbs for our Nene Nursery

- Our continued thanks goes to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, who have funded the new information boards in our redesigned Visitor Centre through the Your Community Greenspace project.



Christmas stars and our Christmas appeal

Thank you to everyone who took part and decorated a Christmas star this year. We have loved seeing your decorations and messages on display as part of the Winter Festival. Thank you for all the kind donations we received too.

At the time of writing, we have so far raised around £650 through this campaign. This money will support the work of Nene Park Trust and help the future of all our parks and spaces.



Contactless donations

If you have been into the Visitor Centre lately, you may have spotted our new contactless donation machine! This is an easy and quick way to help support our work whilst paying us a visit.



Volunteering

Celebrating our volunteers

As we come to the end of another busy year across Nene Park Trust we want to shout from the rooftops about the amazing work our team of volunteers do across our green spaces. From our busy conservation volunteer groups, events or Visitor Centre volunteers to our Education, admin or Longthorpe Tower volunteers – and so many other roles too – we now have over **170 volunteers** who give up their time to improve the Park for our visitors.

Across all our volunteer roles, our volunteers have dedicated **3,825 hours** (as of mid November – that figure will have increased even more now!). Some of our volunteers give their time on an ad hoc basis – and some can't keep away from the Park! **One volunteer has given over 100 hours of time this year.**



Our conservation volunteers have taken part in weeding, dead hedging, landscaping at Thorpe Meadows, ragwort removal and coppicing.

Our events volunteers have helped at events such as Peterborough Celebrates Festival, our Easter Trail and our Summer Nights film screenings.

Our education volunteers have supported 58 different school sessions (approximately 2,500 children!)

Thank you to all our volunteers for giving up their time to help us. We appreciate you so much! We couldn't do everything we do in the Park without you!



Volunteer opportunities to sign up for!



Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award Volunteering Opportunity for 14-16 year olds

We're launching this opportunity for the first time for 14-16 year olds doing their Bronze Awards. We'll be running weekly sessions on Tuesdays from 4.30pm – 5.30pm starting 25 February 2025 so if you have an interest in horticulture, gardening and conservation come and join a small group of 8 young people.

Find out more and sign up at: nenepark.org.uk/duke-of-edinburgh-bronze-volunteering

Volunteer Welcome Rangers

As part of the new developments to our Visitor Centre, we are looking for people to join our volunteer Welcome Ranger team. You'll be based in the entrance to the Visitor Centre or in the Welcome area of Ferry Meadows, and will provide that all important smile to our visitors, be on hand to answer questions, offer directions and suggest ideas for what visitors can do during their visit. You could also have the opportunity to lead short guided walks to areas of interest!

Find out more at: nenepark.org.uk/welcome-ranger



Social Walk Leaders

We are looking for new volunteers who would like to support one of our staff members with our Wellbeing Wanders that take place twice a month. If you like walking and are happy to chat and welcome visitors for a gentle walk, get in touch!

Find out more: nenepark.org.uk/walk-leader-volunteer

Events Volunteers

Are you looking to gain some experience preparing and running events? Whether it's the Winter Festival, Easter Trail or Summer Nights cinema showings, all of our volunteers are vital to ensuring the smooth running of these events.

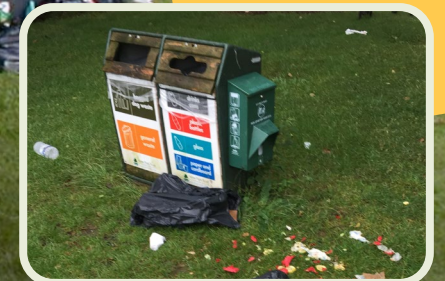
Discover our volunteer roles and register your interest at: nenepark.org.uk/volunteer



Our wonderful volunteer rangers

Volunteer Rangers are an enthusiastic invaluable bunch who support our Park Rangers in looking after the Nene Park Trust Estate throughout the year. The Volunteer Rangers can be seen around Ferry Meadows assisting visitors, reporting damage, noting wildlife sightings and helping to collect rubbish.

Most visitors to Ferry Meadows either take their rubbish home or place it in the bins provided. Unfortunately due to the large numbers of visitors, particularly throughout the summer months, there is still a large amount of rubbish left in our picnic area, play parks and on our meadows, which not only looks a mess but is harmful to our wildlife.



We really appreciate the extra hand from our volunteers to help clear all this up! Our volunteer team gathered hundreds of bags of rubbish over the summer, making a huge difference both to the Park and to the work of the Park Management Team.



Steve's Q&A

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Q Why did you decide to volunteer?</p> <p>A As a regular park user I noticed litter in the park whilst walking around Ferry Meadows and wanted help with the upkeep of the park, give back and meet new people</p> <p>Q What do you enjoy most about volunteering?</p> <p>A Contributing to the upkeep of Ferry Meadows. I enjoy spending time with other volunteers and visitors. I also love being out in the fresh air in the early morning while litter picking – you notice the seasons changing. The Park is such a fantastic resource and I feel so lucky to have it on my doorstep. I want to do my bit to look after it.</p> | <p>Q What would you say if anyone is thinking about volunteering at Ferry Meadows?</p> <p>A Give it go, don't hesitate. You will enjoy the experience of volunteering and you will help the rangers look after Ferry Meadows. You'll also meet new people from different backgrounds and make friends from all walks of life.</p> <p>Q How do you feel when you see the rubbish that has been left behind by visitors to Ferry Meadows?</p> <p>A Disappointed in the attitude of people who visit and leave rubbish for volunteers and rangers to pick up. People should appreciate this space – we are lucky to have the Park in Peterborough.</p> | <p>Q Do you have a message to visitors to Ferry Meadows regarding leaving rubbish?</p> <p>A Think about the environment you have arrived at and leave it in the same manner. Please take your rubbish home as it looks unsightly and can cause injury to the resident wildlife. Ferry Meadows provides plenty of bins to deposit your rubbish in.</p> |
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Look out for our new What's On Guide

We've decided to launch a brand new 6-month event guide which sits alongside Parklife – so that's why you're not seeing our detailed What's On guide on these back pages. Pick up a copy of the new guide around the Park early in the new year – as well as other key locations in the city.

In case you haven't got a copy yet – here are some key event dates to look out for in 2025:

February Half term events – these include our popular Holiday Trail, archery and climbing sessions and some family nature activities.

We are also offering 30% off watersports hire over February half term!

All events are already on the website so book your spot at nenepark.org.uk/events

Our Easter Trail will be back throughout the Easter holidays – keep an eye out for announcements about that!

Peterborough Celebrates Festival is back the weekend of 17-18 May 2025



nenepark.org.uk

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