

Wirral Evergreen



The magazine of Wirral LA21 Network.
Promoting Wirral's environment and sustainable living.

Groups merge

Two of Wirral's leading environmental charities, Wirral Environmental Network and Wirral Local Agenda 21 Forum have merged to become **Wirral LA21 Network**.

The new charity will work with individuals, community and voluntary groups and Wirral Borough Council to provide information and involve local people in projects that improve the present quality of life whilst also ensuring that we act to make our fragile world sustainable in the long term.

Our new mission statement can be defined as;

Wirral LA21 Network is a local charity which aims to advance the education of the public about the preservation of our world's natural environment, ecological sustainability, natural resource conservation, waste minimisation, recycling and the principles of fair trade, within Wirral and the surrounding area.



If you like what we stand for, please join Wirral LA21 Network (from just £5 per year) and make sure you get Wirral Evergreen sent directly to your home.

Email info@la21.net or call 0151 639 2121 and we'll send you full details

Issue 1. January 2006

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We do not inherit the world from our parents. We borrow it from our grandchildren.

Editorial

We hope you enjoy the first edition of our new bimonthly magazine which is very much concerned with 'local action, global change.' You will find a mixture of articles about local Wirral LA21 Network projects and also articles which take a broader view.

To quote from Jonathan Porritt;

"Theoretically, every government is signed up to sustainable development. In reality however, you will not see any visible recognition of the interests let alone the rights of future generations as we set about the business of having as good a time as we can before the whole house of cards comes crashing down around us."

If you are inspired to do more to secure a better future, why not join us?

Team: Phil McHoul, Nikki Henry, Roy Wood, Jim O'Neil, Alison Mawdsley, Jeff Hughes, Janet Thorning and Pete Exley.

Wirral LA21 Network is a registered charity (No 1068306), and a limited company by guarantee.

To advertise in Wirral EG call 0151 639 2121. Our advertising rates are reasonable and are available upon request.

New cycle routes launched

More commuters can cycle to work now thanks to new cycle routes between Wirral International Business Park in Bromborough and the Mersey-rail stations at East Rake Bromborough Rake and Port Sunlight. Primarily designed to link commuters with their places of work, they will also link to Eastham Country Park for leisure use.

Head of Wirral Council's Technical Services Department, Dave Green said: "These routes are another step towards integrated transport on Wirral, helping to provide real alternatives to the car and improve safety for cyclists."

Engineers worked in consultation with Eastham Village Conservation Trust, using cast iron finger posts signs to fit in with the historical local character. Recycled materials were used for parts of the route.

For more information about this, or other cycle routes in the borough, contact Wirral Council's cycling officer Cathy McNulty on 0151 606 2368.

LA21 Transport Topic Group

LA21's Transport Topic Group meet up once a month to discuss their views on local transport issues and to develop their ideas into practical sustainable solutions to improve the quality of life in Wirral for its residents and visitors.

The group is particularly keen to promote cycling in the area and encourage people to make use of the recently developed facilities here in the borough.

We all need to consider the impacts our lives have on the environment and to devise ways to reduce carbon emissions to address the threats of global warming.

If you are interested in getting involved, please get in touch and find out when the next meetings will be held.

**Email info@wirren.org.uk
Phone 0151 639 2121**



Food Miles

The amount of food carried by heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) has increased by 25% over the past 25 years while the average distance travelled has increased by 50%. Food now accounts for 25% of HGV miles. The cost of moving food around in the UK is as much as £9 billion a year, half of that due to traffic congestion. However the food miles debate is a complex one. The best advice is to buy as much local, seasonal and, where possible, organic fresh food as possible from local shops, farms and markets rather than from supermarkets.

Link: <http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/reports/foodmiles/default.asp>

Wirral's greenest school

Grove Street Primary School in New Ferry has won a Green Flag for a third time – making it the greenest school in Wirral.

Grove Street's pupil-led Eco Council has overseen numerous improvements to the school grounds including vegetable plots, trees and wildflowers.

The school is also developing a walking bus to complement a monthly 'walk to school day' in which 85% of the children take part.

The school's work extends into the wider community with the youngsters taking an active part in the regeneration of New Ferry. Security around the school has also improved dramatically, reflecting local pride in the improved school grounds.

Ten Wirral schools have been awarded a green flag, with many more working towards the criteria.

Head Teacher, Na'amet Little said: "The Eco Flag is a confirmation of everything we've

achieved and what we are doing. Every child learns about composting, growing things, measuring energy, litter-picking and recycling."



Green energy

Did you know you Wirral's street lighting is supplied with 100% renewable energy?

Wirral Council has negotiated a deal with Scottish Power to procure as much 'green energy' as possible – and it doesn't cost any extra for the taxpayer. Energy from non-renewable sources is subject to Climate Change Levy at 0.43p per kWh. While green energy costs 0.43p per kWh more, it is exempt from this levy – so the overall cost per kWh is the same for both non-green and green energy.

Wirral Council is committed to minimising the environmental impacts associated with the use of energy. In addition to the procurement of green energy for street lighting, there are a number of other energy related measures being taken including the ongoing replacement of electro-mechanical controllers with electronic items which addresses the problem of lights that do not switch off at the correct time.

ABC Together

ABC Together is a new social enterprise which has been established in Wirral. They recycle corrugated cardboard into animal bedding (particularly good for horses). They accept clean corrugated cardboard, plain or printed, but not glossy. They can collect in Wirral if amounts are large enough or for a donation to cover fuel costs.

Contact: Lizzie Jewkes (manager)
22a Tarran Way, Moreton, Wirral CH46 4UA

Tel 0151 677 4777 Fax 0151 677 4771
Email: office@abctogether.co.uk Website: www.abctogether.co.uk

Opening hours : 9am - 5pm Mon - Thurs.

Booming nations 'threaten Earth'

Earth lacks the water, energy and agricultural land to allow China and India to attain Western living standards, a US think-tank has warned.

The Worldwatch Institute said the booming economies of China and India are "planetary powers that are shaping the global biosphere".

Its State of the World 2006 report said the two countries' high economic growth hid a reality of severe pollution. It also said the planet's resources could not keep pace with such growth.

"The world's ecological capacity is simply insufficient to satisfy the ambitions of China, India, Japan, Europe and the United States as well as the aspirations

of the rest of the world in a sustainable way," the report added.

It said that if China and India were to consume as much resources per capita as Japan in 2030 "together they would require a full planet Earth to meet their needs".

The reports said the US - which continues to consume more of the Earth's resources than any other country - needed to cooperate with China and India to help develop more environmentally friendly practices and technologies.

Link:
www.worldwatch.org



Yell for recycling!

Local schools are set to cash in on a competition to recycle as many old *Yellow Pages* directories as they can.

The Yellow Woods Challenge is the environmental schools competition run by *Yellow Pages*, working with the Woodland Trust and Wirral Council. Schools which collect the most directories per pupil will win hundreds of pounds in cash prizes and for every pound awarded to schools, *Yellow Pages* will give a matching pound to the Woodland Trust, the UK's leading woodland conservation charity.

This year, all schools that participate in the Yellow Woods Challenge will receive free educational materials. Schoolchildren are also invited to create giant sculptures out of their old directories for the chance to win cash prizes of up to £1,000.

The Wirral Challenge ran until 9th January 2006, with directories being recycled into animal bedding by Centrol Recycling Group.

Left: Last year's winners, Orretts Meadow Primary School collected 13 directories per pupil.

The Paper Chase

Of all of the materials used by UK businesses, paper is still the resource most typically taken for granted and unthinkingly squandered. UK office and printing paper has the lowest recycling rate of all paper grades; 86% is sent to landfill, where it adds methane to the atmosphere as it decomposes.

At current levels of consumption, paper production accounts for 43% of industrial forest use. Meanwhile, demand grows faster than for any other kind of wood product and worldwide consumption is predicted to double by 2020.

In the UK we get through 4.8 million tonnes of printing paper every year - almost double the 2.6 million tonnes we use for newsprint over the same period. Encourage your office not only to sign up to a scheme to recycle paper, but to use recycled paper as well, preferably from as local a source as possible. Office paper is the highest quality paper in circulation, meaning that it can be successfully recycled up to five or six times, working its way down the paper chain until it is converted into toilet or kitchen paper. Ask your supplier for a recycled alternative.

Age Concern Wirral needs your unwanted Christmas gifts

Why not donate all of your unwanted Christmas gifts to charity this year? Each year Age Concern Wirral's charity shops help to recycle several hundred tons of potential landfill and encourage people to reuse and renew instead of throwing away useable goods. The shops generate vital income for the work of Age Concern Wirral and every penny generated is spent on supporting local older people. The shops sell a range of goods, including nearly new clothing, bric a brac and small furniture items.

Age Concern Wirral is proud to announce the opening of two new charity shops, bringing the portfolio of charity shops in the Borough to 7. The new shops on Borough Road, Prenton and Liscard Road, Liscard, urgently need donations of stock and are also looking for new volunteers to work in the shops, drive collection vans, sort stock and lots more. If you can spare a couple of hours a week, would like to meet new people and new enjoy a challenge or could fill a collection bag, we would love to hear from you - ring us on 0151 666 2220.

Contact Age Concern Wirral for help, advice and support on a range of issues and information on all of our active age activities and a copy of our new guide to all of our services. www.ageconcernwirral.org email enquiries@ageconcernwirral.org 0151 666 2220 Registered charity number 1034510

Alternatively, visit one of our shops at: 700 Borough Road, Prenton : Liscard Road, Liscard :
34 Upton Road, Claughton : 3 Dee Lane, West Kirby : 46 Pensby Road, Heswall :
Unit 4 Hoylake Road, Moreton : 33/33a Poulton Road, Wallasey

Fair trade status for Wirral

LA21's Fair World group has been working with local organisations, churches, schools and the council to achieve Fairtrade Borough status.

This formal recognition awarded by the Fairtrade Foundation acknowledges that the principles of Fairtrade are actively supported throughout the area and that Fairtrade products are widely available in shops, cafés and restaurants.

We have produced window stickers (below) for supporters to display.



For more information on Fair trade contact the Fairtrade Foundation at:

www.fairtrade.org.uk

Tales from the Community Garden

LA21's Plants on Plates Project offers local residents the opportunity to grow organic produce in the community garden and allotments. **Garden Manager Jeff Hughes** takes us through recent developments in the garden

As we wade our happy way through Jerusalem Artichokes, Parsley, Leeks and Winter Purslane, it is a pleasant diversion to provide some stories of the soil of the community garden.

We have recently won a competition with John Moores University who will provide 15 tonnes of household compost. This will help build the soil structure of the whole site, including our two allotment sites that we have steadily been improving.

We are shortly to provide a temporary home for some trees destined for the Friends of Bidston Hill and in return there are some bat boxes winging their way to us. Cheshire Landscape Trust have donated native trees and shrubs to our garden such as Field Maple, Silver Birch, Crab Apple and Guelder Rose which we hope will help improve the bio-diversity of the community space. We have also created some mini-ponds around the site out of old barrels.



There are several new things planned for early in the New Year. We are to run a Greenwood Craft Course making rustic Garden furniture (March). There are also 12-week gardening courses with Carole Seery from Lifelong Learning (Levels 1-3, Wednesdays). There will be harvest, cook and eat sessions with Wallasey Time Bank and the project as a whole has just joined this. We are also aiming to set up a tool & seed bank.

There is also a new course planned with the WEA in Herbal Remedies. This will be partly using the plants collected from the garden and we hope to extend our range of medicinal plants.

We are already looking for funding for the garden as the funding from Community Chest and Awards for All is due to run out at the end of February. We are hoping to run a Garden Open Day with a Green Fayre in Mid-summer at the Manor Trust site.

Volunteer days continue on a Monday. If you would like more information contact Jeff Hughes 0151 639 2121 or email jeff@wirren.org.uk

Human population size is "green priority"

Solving the Earth's environmental problems means addressing the size of its human population, says the head of the UK's Antarctic research agency.

Professor Chris Rapley argues that the current global population of six billion is unsustainably high. Unless it is addressed, the welfare and quality of life of future generations will suffer, he adds.

"If we believe that the size of the human [ecological] 'footprint' is a serious problem, and there is much evidence for this," he writes, "then a

rational view would be that along with a raft of measures to reduce the footprint per person, the issue of population management must be addressed."

A number of studies suggest that humankind is consuming the Earth's resources at an unsustainably fast rate.

Even so, the issue of population is hardly ever discussed at environmental summits or raised by green lobby groups.

Professor Rapley, Director of the

British Antarctic Survey, acknowledges it is a thorny question, invoking the spectre of forced population control and even eugenics.

He does not make suggestions about how the current upward trend, from the current six billion towards eight or nine billion by 2050, can be reversed.

He says population is one of a number of issues leading to environmental degradation of various forms, and needs a higher priority than it currently receives.

Energy Detectives; saving energy, saving money

Wirral LA21 Network's latest project will help hundreds of primary school children to become 'Energy Detectives'. We will be visiting schools to give a presentation about how electricity is generated and how energy can be wasted. Children will be involved in simple experiments in class.

They will then go home with and Energy Detectives booklet to enable them, with the support of their parents, to understand how energy is used in their home, how much it costs and where money can be saved.



When they successfully complete the booklet they will each receive a badge and a certificate. Project coordinator, Ann Barclay commented "This project will inform the next generation of consumers about energy and will help families to reduce energy usage and save money now".

For more information call 0151 639 2121.

Wirral schools lead way with fair trade

LA21 has been successfully working with local schools over the past year to raise the profile of Fairtrade issues among the young people of the borough.

We have successfully presented assemblies and lessons to over twenty five schools and are working with some to develop a recognised award for schools and pupils committed to the cause.

Awards were recently presented to Upton Hall School and West Kirby Grammar School for Girls, who have made inspiring contributions in the year to make poverty history.

The photograph below shows the

Mayor presenting the award certificate to pupils at Upton Convent School.



Wirral Tree Wardens taking root

The Wirral Tree Wardens network was launched officially in November at the Winter Green Fayre in West Kirby. During National Tree Week at the end of November, the network had a brief mention on ITV's Paul O'Grady Show, and a live interview direct from a very cold, damp Upton Meadow took place with Radio Merseyside.

The first two planting schemes have been identified: the Wirral branch of the RSPCA on Cross Lane, Wallasey, and the field at Moreton Scout Hut on Upton Road. Work is expected to start on both those sites soon. Other possible sites have been suggested, and will be investigated shortly.

As well as practical work, other projects related to trees are being considered; a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund is being put together with the aim of gathering a collection of reminiscences, anecdotes and information concerning trees on Wirral. That will act as a record of memories and a useful resource of facts and contacts, as well as information on locally

significant trees. The whole network will be able to help with that project, which is a good contrast to practical tree work, and something in which those less physically able can participate.

It's early days yet for the network, but it's off to a steady start. We are looking for more members; people who would like to give a little time to act as community liaison in their home areas, wherever they are in Wirral.

Email jan@wirraltreewardens.co.uk or ring Wirral LA21 Network on 0151 639 2121.





The Wirral Freecycle group offers a facility to all those who want to recycle that special something rather than throw it away. Whether it's a chair, a fax machine, piano or an old door, feel free to post it. Maybe you are looking to acquire something yourself. Non-profit groups are also welcome to participate.

This group is part of the Freecycle Network, a non profit organisation organised by people interested in keeping good quality items out of landfill.

Link:

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/freecyclewirral>

Waste & Recycling Topic Group

LA21's long established waste & recycling topic group includes community representatives from a wide spectrum. The group is currently involved in various projects.

These include, ongoing discussions with the council and community groups on plans to improve recycling facilities in the borough.

A series of five community exchange events are also being organised in the new year following successful funding requests from the local community initiatives forums.

Following our success of the two day event at Wirral Museum earlier this year, we are working on plans for a similar event in the new year.

If you care about recycling and reducing waste in the area, why not come along to our next meeting? See details on the back page.

Schools poetry competition winners

LA21's annual school competition, encourages local children to think and reflect on issues relating to waste and recycling.

This year, pupils were asked to write a poem on this theme. The winners were lucky enough to meet the Mayor of Wirral and present their entries at the Wirral Show and at a recent council meeting. Two of the winning poems are shown below.



PUT YOUR TIN IN THE BIN

Be it Tango or Fanta
Or maybe a coke,
Cans are just thrown
By all kinds of folk.

The place that we live in
Is not quite so green
The people who throw them
Are just acting mean.

And each of us all,
The earth she will thank
If we just take the time
To find a can bank.
So hold on to your litter
And if it's a tin
But sure to show everyone
It's in the right bin.

Lucia Boner, Birkenhead High School for Girls.

YOU DIDN'T KNOW?

Too late to say you're sorry now.
The damage has been done
It might not affect our generation
But the one that's yet to come.

Could it have been avoided?
Yes, I believe it could
We should have paid attention
It could have been so good.

It could have been recycled
Turned into something new
And who could now be bothered
Alas, but just a few.

It would have taken time
Which now one seemed to have
But stop and look at our world
It's turned so very bad.

The landfills are all full now
Where will the rubbish go?
Don't tell me it's all news to you
Don't say you didn't know.

James Cowgill, Wirral Grammar School For Boys

Meetings and Events

All are welcome. Please ring or email if you would like any more information.

Waste & Recycling Topic Group

(first Mon every month) 6th Feb, 6th March. 6.15pm @ Wirral LA21 Network office, Gorsey Lane, Wallasey.

Energy Topic Group

(second Mon every month) 13th Feb, 13th March. 5.30pm @ Treasury Annexe, Cleveland St, Birkenhead.

Fairworld Topic Group

(first Wed every month) 8th Feb, 1st March. 6.00pm @ Oxton Community Shop, Christchurch Rd, Oxton.

Wirral Tree Warden Meeting

Thu 26th Jan, Tue 21st Feb. 7.00pm @ Wirral LA21 Network office, Gorsey Lane, Wallasey.

Organic Gardening Course

Sat 18th, Sat 25th March (details tbc). Wirral LA21 Network office, Gorsey Lane, Wallasey. Phone WEA 0151 243 5340 .

Volunteering opportunities

There is a garden volunteers day every Friday at the Plants On Plates Community Garden. It is based at our Gorsey Lane centre in Wallasey. All are welcome to attend and get hands-on experience of organic gardening. For further details, contact the garden manager Jeff Hughes on 0161 639 2121 or email jeff@la21.net

Mersey Basin Conference 2005

Last year, I took the opportunity to attend the annual Mersey Basin Conference at the Marriot hotel Liverpool as a representative of WEN. I had heard of the Mersey Basin Campaign but did not know much about it.

Looking through the list of 200 or so distinguished delegates representing a plethora of organisations throughout the Northwest, I felt somewhat privileged to be there.

After a welcome by the Chair, Professor Peter Batey, we were treated to the 'keynote address' by Jonathon Porritt CBE (right, currently of the Sustainable Development Commission and one of our Patrons). He started by giving us some interesting and amusing quotes on environmental matters in the form of a mini quiz. His main points were that the environment should be seen as a driver for wealth

creation (eg through tourism). 'Think of the environment as a force for economic good'. Jonathon pointed out that although he had been preaching for years about considering the environment for our children etc, this was not a message that was getting across to young people. For most people en-



vironmental action needs to have immediate personal impact for it to be taken seriously. Environmentalists have won the argument but are losing the world.

I should also mention that United Utili-

ties made the event possible by sponsoring it. They also provided a speaker who did not manage to deter from his notes and spent too long talking about the company. The spiel about their contributions to and investments in improved water quality, although commendable, was tagged onto a lengthy boring speech about the enormity of UU as a company.

So what is the Mersey Basin Campaign? Well, formed in 1985, it seems to be like LA21 Network, only much *much* bigger. Regeneration, Environment, Sustainability and .. of course WATER.

Link: www.merseybasin.org.uk

Pete Exley (trustee)

Working with you to make Wirral into a more sustainable community.