

# WIRRAL EVERGREEN



Issue 9 Spring 2008

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

## What a night!

You never know how many people are likely to turn up to an event, but when we held our 'Fair Play' event at the Pacific Road Arts Centre on 4<sup>th</sup> March to celebrate Fairtrade Fortnight, we had over 250 people present – excellent support for such a good cause.

On arrival people were given a Co-op fair-trade cotton carrier bag, and enjoyed the sounds of South Wirral choir, followed by African drummers from Mosslands. There was time to browse the stalls and taste Upton Hall's healthy fruit salad and try their chocolate fountain. Other stalls offered smoothies, Traidcraft and other family traded goods, trade justice



information and news about the Co-op. The Co-operative very generously sponsored the event, as did Wirral Culture for All and Wirral Council.

The Mayor and Mayoress of Wirral were present to launch the new Fairtrade Directory for Wirral. They – and their chauffeur - also took the opportunity to try out the Fairtrade rickshaw! This is available for hire to help promote environmental causes. There are plenty of Fairtrade Directories in stock at Wirral LA21 Network's office; please contact the office for supplies.

It was an entertaining and uplifting evening; the audience rocked to 'Hippys on the Hill', as the lads from Mosslands gave an electric performance. 'Anamel' danced energetically and Holly Green, Wirral's poet laureate, inspired us with a newly created Fairtrade poem. St. Mary's College delivered a provoking drama questioning High Street fashion – the lads looked great in their wigs, as the shopaholic girls! The final band The 'Spangles' consisting of teachers and head teachers, rounded off the evening with toe-tapping tunes.

It was great to see the enthusiasm of adults and children alike, and people went home inspired by the messages put across so well by the dvd, stalls and performances. Sincere thanks go to all those who helped with the event – a good time was had by all!



Steve Maddox, Wirral Council's Chief Executive, supported the event and joined the audience to watch the new Fairtrade in Schools dvd – 'Pick It'. He had been interviewed for the dvd by children from Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School about what the Council is doing to support Fairtrade. The dvd was produced by The Learning Lighthouse and Hoylake Movie makers, and consists of material filmed by children from eight Wirral Schools. Copies of the dvd will be given to all Wirral schools, and can be borrowed by other organisations – please contact Wirral LA21 Network for details on 0151 639 2121.



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

## Everything in the garden's lovely

Although this is traditionally a quiet time of year in the garden from a growing point of view, the Gardens in Schools (GIS) and Woodchurch in Bloom (WIB) projects have been busy. Plans are afoot to run a couple of training sessions for teachers to explore how the GIS can be made sustainable, and continue to provide the schools with a valuable resource after funding from the project is no longer available.

The plants in the community allotment in Woodchurch are settling in, preparatory to bursting into life in spring; an official opening ceremony is planned for 15<sup>th</sup> April, at which the Mayor – himself a keen gardener – will be the guest of honour. Another hanging basket planting session for the community is due to take place in summer.

Work has started on the new reading garden in Woodchurch between the library and Ganneys Meadow Early Years Centre, in an area that has been much in need of brightening up. Plant containers, artwork and mosaics will add interest to the area which will take shape during the spring, with input from the local community.

Community RePaint provided materials to paint a wall at Cole Street Primary School in Birkenhead; the result is a much brighter play area for the children, with cut-out shapes of flowers, insects etc, and a special tree on which can be hung project work on

various themes. A new seating area has also been created at Beckwith Family and Children's Centre in Birkenhead.



All Wirral LA21 Network's horticultural projects are helping people in Wirral communities appreciate their environment more by providing places to grow, sit and play where they can enjoy spending time among plants in the fresh air. In some cases, where produce is being grown, they have the opportunity to talk in terms of 'food feet' instead of 'food miles'!

## Cool Earth – Hot Ideas

Since being launched in June last year Cool Earth has protected over 35,000 acres of threatened tropical rainforest in Brazil and Ecuador, keeping over 9 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere - this is equivalent to the annual carbon emissions of a city the size of Birmingham.

But the organisation is doing more than just preventing carbon emissions. All its projects put local communities at the heart of conservation efforts. Over 100 rangers work in various projects and Cool Earth has recently contributed to building two new schools, six warehouses, a clinic and a new Brazil nut drying facility which allows the local community in Manicore to retain the bulk of the value of this product.

Cool Earth has also been working hard to develop strategic partnerships across the environmental sector and outside, recently joining forces with the Co-operative bank to launch a new carbon positive credit card, **think**.

Pressure is being put on the Government to take action on rainforest destruction. Frank Field MP, co-founder of Cool Earth, has recently written to the

Prime Minister asking him to take up the offer from the President of Guyana (a former British colony that sits between Brazil and Venezuela) to place the whole of that country's rainforest under British-led stewardship, in return for development aid.

In the UK over 200 schools have signed up to be involved with a new Schools Programme. Each school will have its own acre and as part of a dedicated schools website within [coolearth.org](http://coolearth.org) will be able to use Google Maps to zoom down, view their acre and the arc of destruction, as well as interact with local schools in Brazil, Ecuador and Guyana. The site will also include teacher packs and lesson plans to make it easier to integrate engagement with rainforest across the curriculum.

To kick start the launch of this programme Cool Earth will be distributing Assembly Packs to bring rainforests alive in the classroom. If you know of any schools in your area which might be interested in getting involved with this scheme contact the organisation directly at [info@coolearth.org](mailto:info@coolearth.org)

More info at [www.coolearth.org](http://www.coolearth.org)

## Experiences of a Climate Camper

### *A Diary series by Rosie Bland*

*Following some enquiries, Rosie has provided this preamble to explain Climate Camps—Ed.*

*This year the Camp for Climate Action was at Heathrow, the world's busiest airport and a bigger source of CO2 emissions than most countries. It's sheer lunacy in this time of ecological crisis, but the aviation industry is pushing to almost double the airport's capacity by increasing flights and*

*building a third runway. The battle to stop them will be one of the most important environmental battles in Western Europe. There were eight days of low-impact living, debates, learning skills, and high-impact direct action tackling the root causes of climate change.*

*Following on from last issue:-*

#### **Direct Action and Police Overreaction**

The day of action finally came and to say everyone was raring to go would be a bit of an understatement. I took part in a march where everybody had pages of the Tyndall report stuck to their hands, and a banner saying “We are armed.....only with peer-reviewed science.” It was quite moving, especially the part where everybody stood in silence to remember the people already dying from climate chaos (represented by the faces that people were carrying).

When everybody set off to stage the protest at the headquarters of BAA, the police were apparently taken by surprise because we had gathered in the main marquee and were unspotted by the helicopter. There were hundreds of us, linked together in long lines, suddenly streaming out the back gate of the camp. None of us knew exactly what the police mood would be, but we had been warned not to expect too much affection. I wasn't expecting however to be threatened with truncheons for trying to access a public road, galloped around by mounted police and then surrounded and detained by a riot squad. Fortunately my group managed to just escape the latter but many were held there for hours.

Despite provocation from police, protesters were calm, self disciplined but resourceful and determined. Many of them displayed far more courage than I could ever hope to muster, as I had

come for peaceful protest and did not enjoy the confrontation.

I was taken aback at the level of police aggression and did find myself thinking “are we still in the UK?” The main clashes took place in a bean field so were not widely reported. (Indymedia had good coverage [www.indymedia.org.uk](http://www.indymedia.org.uk) ).

So I never actually made it to BAA, but we were assured that we provided a useful diversion allowing others to do so. The irony was that people just went round the other side and caught buses to join the siege, so I don't know what all the fuss was about. What exactly did they think we were going to *do* with those pieces of paper anyway?!

On return to the camp we went in to the very efficient legal tent to give witness statements for the incidents of police brutality that we had seen, and were even offered counselling.

#### **Unrequited Protest**

Annoyingly I had to head back home in the middle of the occupation of BAA Headquarters, I would have liked to join them. It was frustrating to abandon the team in the middle of all the excitement, but updates were available by SMS, which cheered me up on my journey, for example a cycling organisation called Bicycology had delivered hot food, drinks and tarpaulins to the group at BAA.

[www.climatecamp.org.uk](http://www.climatecamp.org.uk)

## **Think before you shop!**

Ethical buying is not as complicated as you might imagine, with informative websites like [www.gooshing.co.uk](http://www.gooshing.co.uk) to explore.

You can make a real difference by using GOOSHING - the free ethical shopping tool from *The Good Shopping Guide*. GOOSHING makes it easy to buy brands from the most responsible companies at the cheapest price... and boycott those corporates that don't care about animal

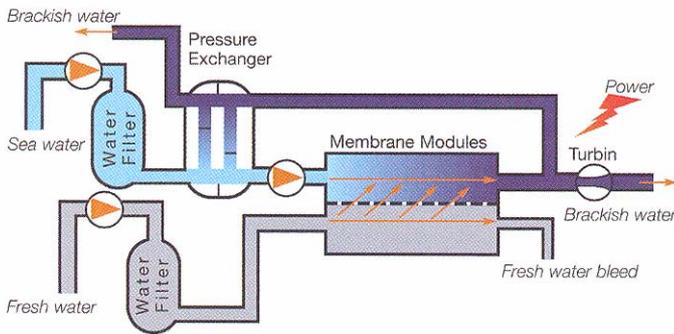
welfare, human rights or the environment.

A price search facility is also available, to help you to find the lowest prices - on 250,000 products from over 350 shops. Next time you need to buy electrical goods, a kitchen appliance, or pretty much anything in fact!

– go gooshing before you go shopping and make your ethical buying count.

## Sustainable Energy – Another Option? Osmotic Power

When a river runs into the ocean and the fresh water mixes with salt water, huge amounts of energy are unleashed. Statkraft, one of Europe's leading renewable energy companies, is looking at way to harness some of this energy using the principle of osmosis (which is how a tree gets water from its roots to the leaves).



The osmotic power process

Statkraft have developed pressure-retarded osmosis (PRO) from an academic idea to a new,

environmentally friendly power technology concept. It is similar to a reverse-osmosis desalination plant running backwards.

The osmotic power plant is very area efficient. A 25MW plant would only require some 40,000m<sup>2</sup> of land even if it is located above the ground. Compared to a wind farm or the area required to harvest biomass to produce the same amount of energy, the osmotic power plant is very compact.

The investment cost for an osmotic power plant is relatively high per installed power compared with other renewable energy sources as, for example, wind or solar power. The main difference is that osmotic power plants will be designed for base load operation and are thus qualitatively different from most other new renewable energy sources.

This means that, although a high investment per installed MW, the annual energy cost per kWh is comparable and competitive with the other renewable energy sources. Although osmotic power development needs long term commitment, recent results represents leaps in the development of a potentially important future energy technology.

## Recycling – keep on top!

Most Wirral residents are really getting to grips with sorting their waste for recycling now, apart from the recalcitrant few who run the risk of being fined in future (after three official warnings) if they do not 'get it sorted'.

There is still some confusion over the correct way to recycle plastic bottles; some charity collections ask for plastic bottle tops, which might lead people to think that they cannot be recycled with grey bin waste.

After a visit to the MRF with her gardening group, Carol Seery confirmed recently that plastic bottles should be rinsed and then put in the grey bin *unsquashed, with the tops on*. Squashed bottles, although they take up less space in the bin, are more difficult to sort. The sorting process involves blowers and screens; plastic bottles with tops on are more easily sorted by this method, cutting down the amount of sorting by hand that has to be done.

The bottles will be pierced, compacted and baled after sorting, then sold to companies that will use them as raw materials for making other items.

There is still no foil recycling facility in Wirral, but there is a glimmer of hope on the horizon. A new pilot project is likely to be starting soon; keep a keen eye on the press and the Council website for further details. In the meantime, try to avoid buying items packed in foil.

## Green Machine Fund

Grants of up to £500 (possibly more for exceptional projects) are available for voluntary and community groups working in Wirral on environmental projects.

Projects should enhance or conserve the natural environment in some way such as improving community wasteland, cleaning up a local 'grot spot', creating a nature trail or protecting existing wildlife habitats.

Funding for this programme has been provided by Unilever UK and the fund is administered by the Community Foundation for Merseyside.

For more information on the fund and to get an application pack contact the Community Foundation 0151 966 3551 or email

[joan.ford@cfmerseyside.org.uk](mailto:joan.ford@cfmerseyside.org.uk)



**community  
foundation  
for merseyside**

## The chicken revolution by Patrick Cleary

Keeping chickens is something that was often taken for granted just a couple of generations ago. I can certainly remember my grandparents keeping their own chickens as well as growing much of their own food. However, the era of cheap energy and mass-produced food led to a rapid decline in chicken keeping. Thankfully, more and more people are now starting to realise the benefits, especially now that more recent innovations have made keeping your own chickens easier than ever.

We first started keeping chickens two years ago. The motive was simply to have our own eggs and to bring a bit of life to the garden, especially for our two young children. However, we little realised the many advantages that come from keeping chickens. Not only do we have a ready supply of eggs but the quality is immeasurably better than the mass produced battery fare that passes for eggs in most of our supermarkets these days. Additionally, chickens are great recyclers and will eat a host of kitchen scraps. This not only cuts down on waste but helps produce wonderful garden compost. During the peak laying season in spring and summer we have surplus eggs to give to

friends and family. Moreover, **with food prices soaring and increasing concerns regarding climate change, collecting your own eggs from the garden is an easy way to save money and cut down on food miles.**

Although chickens are easy to keep, there are a few things you need to consider beforehand. Foxes can be a problem after dark. In our case we



bought the innovative Eglu ([www.omlet.co.uk](http://www.omlet.co.uk)). This is a brilliant design which is really easy to clean and comes with its own run in which to keep the chickens safe at all times although ours normally roam free during the day. This is also good if you are away from home for a few days but for

longer periods you will need a friend or neighbour to keep an eye on things and top up the food and water. Ready-made poultry houses are also available via [www.forshamcottagearks.com](http://www.forshamcottagearks.com). You will also need to keep chickens away from any vegetables you grow. However, the many benefits outweigh these concerns. If you would like to know more feel free to contact me on 0151 632 5366 or [cleary@thephone.coop](mailto:cleary@thephone.coop)

### Appleby's Free Range Eggs

Green House Farm, Greasby, Wirral, Tel 0151 677 1615

Appleby's sell very special eggs from very special hens. All the hens are allowed to roam free on permanent pasture and scratch in deep straw litter. They are fed on a non GM diet with no artificial additives. Eggs are delivered to shops within a couple of days of being laid so freshness is guaranteed. Appleby's is a local family farm which has been producing eggs for 40 years, and looks after its customers almost as well as it looks after its hens!

pots, aromatic carrots or tasty new potatoes plucked from a bucket of (peat-free) compost... If you've never eaten these things fresh from the ground, you're missing a real flavour sensation. Fresh herbs like rosemary, sage and thyme can add real zing to your food, too, and are tough and drought-resistant.

Why not give it a try? Many salad greens are easy to grow and, as long as you keep the slugs off them, they'll give you plenty to pick at. Strawberries can be grown in hanging baskets, as can some of the small cherry tomatoes. An old bucket with some holes punched in the bottom can provide a home for root vegetables, and edging a path with thyme will give you scent as well as savour. Now is the time to buy a few packs of seeds and start planting for summer and autumn harvests; look in supermarkets and garden centres for outdoor varieties of tomatoes, mixed packs of salad greens, small container varieties – some are even marked 'easy'! - or start off with small plants and grow them on. A whole packet will be too much for a small plot – so why not share them with a friend?

### Turn your food miles into food feet!

How? Grow your own! Even in a very limited space, it's possible to set up a small area - or even containers if all you have is a yard - and grow fresh, tasty chemical-free food to supplement your diet. Imagine picking salad greens still with the morning dew on them, tomatoes warmed by the sun in your garden, tangy chives from a border edging, lettuces or strawberries from ornamental

## May the Centriforce be with you by Ann Barclay

The WLN Waste Action group would like to thank Barry Keeling for giving us a talk and tour and also for his enormous patience in answering our many questions. The plant was impressive and the information inspiring.

This visit developed from interest in the plastic recycling process after our visit to the MuRF at Bidston. At that time, June 2007, the plastic bottles once baled were sent directly to Centriforce. The recycling industry changes rapidly and mixed recyclates are already of less value so the mixed plastic bales now go to Royden Polythene, Rochdale to be sorted by plastic type before being returned to Centriforce for processing. The main message is that mixed recycling doesn't work and sorting recyclable materials is the critical element in making recycling pay for itself. Plastic sorting used to be done manually, now by infrared sorting, floatation, air currents or a mixture of all these.

Plastic, once the poor relation of the recycling industry, as a low weight though high volume material, is now a valued commodity. Plastic milk bottles, even with lids and labels, are the most valuable bottles. Drinks bottles made of PET are also valuable but only when uncontaminated with other plastics. Transportation is a significant factor in cost effectiveness with good balers needed to pack a minimum of 15.2 tons necessary for economically viable transportation.

The largest volume of material received by Centriforce is polythene film from transit packaging. This comes from direct contracts, for example from Waitrose, because post consumer waste via the MuRF would not meet cleanliness standards.

The second largest volume is from farm film – silage wrapping. Farmers are no longer able to burn it and must dispose of it safely. The Solway bins provided to farmers to store silage wrap are made from silage wrap, a complete closed loop system. Next Solway bins will be marketed as large composting bins.

The third group of materials is plastic bottles. Centriforce also recycle plastic pipes and any waste material from production so they produce only one skip of waste material per week from a large production site.

Centriforce produce the 'raw material' for future manufacture of products elsewhere as well as their main product, which is Stockbord. The boards have many purposes, the most fascinating being cable protection made from transit packaging and silage packaging. Consider the number of holes in the road and you will see the potential market both in

the UK, throughout Europe and exported worldwide and all exported out of Liverpool. It goes into the ground for a purpose rather than as landfill and can be recycled over and over again. How good is that!

We watched machines extruding 'planks' for use by Marmax to produce benches, play tables (see these at Tam O'Shanters), etc. A typical Marmax bench uses 15,000 bottles. Boardwalks (see boardwalk around the lake at Bidston Moss), planters, waste bins, compost bins and paths are being used widely as low maintenance and environmentally friendly alternatives to wood by many land management concerns such as the National Trust – at Borrowdale; English Heritage and the Ponds Trust

PET bottles are turned into cloth products, fleeces, gloves and sleeping bag liners. If high enough quality materials were available it is possible to recycle these to make new drinks bottles.

It comes down to what we are prepared to do. Are we prepared to penalise those who fail to sort recyclables by type – not just fail to recycle? Can we stimulate the market and look at whole life cost? Are we going to demand that our local Council procurement officers follow a strong rule of no concrete or wood where a recycled plastic substitute is possible – for example kerbstones, bollards, signage, fences, boardwalks? Will you refuse to buy plastic items, including packaging, with no recycling route? Are you up to lobbying every outlet to change from –for example plastic trays for fruit and vegetables to compostable (or recyclable) cardboard trays? Can we persuade the Council that it is not too expensive to pre-sort materials, but a cost effective method of preserving resources?

We can take the easy route and do the minimum required by legislation or work to preserve valuable commodities and turn our waste into a valuable asset. Where do you stand on this issue? Send your views to [info@la21.net](mailto:info@la21.net) and let us make your views known.

For more information on recycling call the WLN office on 639 2121 - and before you ask - plastic trays, yoghurt pots etc are not yet of commercial interest so the action required is to avoid them if possible and lobby suppliers to find a recycling route or change their packaging. *(or you can use them to start off your seedlings in—Ed)*

To find out more about Wirral Council's grey bin recycling scheme please visit <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/recycling> or visit our green pages for information on things not able to go in your grey bin., e.g. electrical appliances or clothes on [www.la21.net](http://www.la21.net)

## Events

- 15 March 08 : Community Carbon Reduction, Westbourne Hall, West Kirby, 12.30-4.30pm**
- 20 March 08 : Local Vegetable Shows (talk), Lauries Centre, Birkenhead, 7.45pm (NVS)**
- 1 April 08 : Transition Town West Kirby (talk) U3A, Melrose Hall, Hoylake, 2pm onwards**
- 17 April 08 : preparing for local shows (talk) Lauries Centre, Birkenhead, 7.45pm (NVS)**
- 26 April 08 : TTWK @ Wirral Country Park, Thurston, 10am—4pm**
- 10 May 08 : Family Treasure Hunt details on [www.transitiontowns.org/westkirby](http://www.transitiontowns.org/westkirby)**
- 15 May 08 : Talk or Trip TBA contact Dave on 652 8477 for details (NVS)**
- 22 May 08 : A Crude Awakening (Film) United Reformed Church, West Kirby, 7pm**
- 1 June 08: Garden Party and Market, walled garden, Central Park, Liscard 11am – 4pm**
- 7 June 08: Ness Gardens environmental time capsule event - details tbc see website**
- 5 July 08: Prenton High School's Green Fayre, Hesketh Avenue, Prenton 10.30 - 4.00**

### **Spring cleaning your cupboards? We need your help!**

At our main summer events we hope to run a Tombola stall. This is a reliable way of fund-raising, as well as a bit of fun; it finds new homes for all sorts of interesting odds and ends, edible and otherwise. Please help us to gather the material for our stall!

I'm sure you know the sort of thing we're looking for; we'd like small ornaments, vases, colourful mugs, unwanted Christmas gifts e.g. (unopened!) toiletries, and of course the traditional tombola ingredients of cans, bottles, jars and packets of food, sauces, drinks etc. In fact we'd be grateful for pretty much anything that you think someone else might like!

If you can gather some items together for us, even if only one or two, we'd be delighted to accept them at the office, during office hours Monday to Friday. Every little helps! If you can't make it to the office in office hours, and don't know anyone who could drop things off, give us a ring on 639 2121 and we'll see if we can sort something out.

And please feel free to come along to the two summer green fayres running this year. The first is being held on the 1st of June in Central Parks Walled Garden and the second in conjunction with Prenton High School on the 5th of July. Both are detailed above.

**Don't forget, Volunteers as always welcome too.**

### **STOP PRESS!!**

**Wirral LA21 Network are moving again!**

**Details are to be confirmed but at the time of going to print, we are sure this will be the last issue to be sent from the Gorsey Lane premises.**

**The community allotments will be staying at Ilford Ave and will still meet on a Tuesday, all welcome.**

**But Community RePaint Wirral, FairTrade in Wirral, Gardens in Schools and all the many other projects run by Wirral LA21 Network will be relocated to the former site of Egremont Nursery.**

**As WLN are relocating within the same telephone exchange, the phone number should remain the same. But we do ask for patience as during the move our website will not be updated and we will be unable to return calls within our normal 24 hour time frame.**

**We will miss our current home but look forward to the new site and the opportunities it will bring.**

**0151 639 2121 [www.la21.net](http://www.la21.net)**

## Member Profile:

## **Wirral Wildlife Group** by Linda Higginbottom

Wirral Wildlife is the local group of the Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

Local wildlife is threatened by building developments, modern farming techniques and climate change which lead to disturbance of wildlife habitats. To help counter this we keep records of wildlife in Wirral, respond to planning applications and manage six nature reserves.

Red Rocks has the only breeding colony of natterjack toads in Wirral. Thornton, Foxes and Intake Woods are ancient woodland in Dibbinsdale, Cleaver Heath is lowland heath and New Ferry Butterfly Park is an urban reserve where 26 species of butterfly have been recorded. Volunteers can help in the management of these areas.

We also run a programme of fund-raising activities, talks and guided walks open to the public and a WATCH club for young people.

We are committed to a Wirral richer in wildlife. We welcome your support!

Contact us on 342 1395 or via our website [www.wirralwildlife.co.uk](http://www.wirralwildlife.co.uk)



### **COLOUR ME HAPPY!** at Wirral Community RePaint

The Wirral branch of the *brilliant* national *Community RePaint* scheme has paint available for *your* community group!

Community RePaint is unique in Britain and in Europe. It is one of the most innovative and practical waste minimisation/reuse initiatives in the UK and represents a pioneering solution to the problem of leftover paint. Over 377 million litres of paint are sold in the UK each year (retail and trade) of which an estimated 75 million litres (*enough to fill 50 Olympic-sized swimming pools!*) is stored in homes and garages or just thrown away, usually straight into landfill.

We have been given excellent support by Bromborough Paints, Robinson & Neal, Hankinsons and many others. When paint arrives it is sorted and passed on to local community groups in return for a small annual membership fee.

This is £50 per year which entitles your groups to as much paint as you can use in the year. We do realise that even this small amount – equivalent to less than £1 per week – can sometimes be hard for a small group to find, so we have two “easy payment plans”.

Your first year is half-price, yes, just £25. If you are one of the next 50 groups to sign up we will give you a free groovy bright red RePaint Pound Pot – just pop in £1 coin, same day, same time, every week and by the time your renewal comes you have the £50 – painlessly!

We are open Mon/Wed/Fridays from 1pm to 5pm without appointment, and possibly other times, including weekends and evenings if you wish, but an appointment is ESSENTIAL.

Full details are on our website [www.la21.net](http://www.la21.net) (go to Projects then Repaint) or ring Jim on 639.2121 or email [jim@la21.net](mailto:jim@la21.net)

[Feel free to cut out this article and bring it with you when you register with Community RePaint Wirral](#)

