

# WIRRAL EVERGREEN

Issue 36 Summer 2021

## The Magazine of the Wirral Environmental Network



As the saying goes, every cloud has a silver lining! It's amazing what can be achieved with good communication and working in partnership.

As co-ordinator of Caldy Open Gardens, I realised a few months' ago that we'd have to cancel this year's event due to social distancing restrictions. One of the consequences was needing to find homes for the hundreds of plants we'd been cultivating to sell at the event and to raise money for Koala North West, [www.koalanw.co.uk](http://www.koalanw.co.uk) our chosen charity for 2021 - 22. A great charity, based in Birkenhead, which supports children and their families across the Wirral.

As a student of A to Z of Gardening, one of Carol Seery's fantastic gardening courses, I approached her and she came to our rescue with a multi-pronged plan!

Firstly, we provided plants for one of WEN's projects which involved working with local residents installing planters in alleys in Birkenhead. She then agreed to circulate our list of plants for sale amongst her students and, for a couple of weeks, Judy Wilcox, another Caldy garden opener and I operated a click and collect service, providing quality plants at substantially lower prices than garden centres.

On Sunday, 23 May, Judy and I held a Charity Plant Sale in Caldy and again Carol promoted the event, helping to ensure it was a huge success.

Finally, we supplied the plants we had left to Carol for use in an upcoming schools' project which aims to engage teachers in gardening in fun ways to foster a love of gardening in the next generation.



So, what might have resulted in a bulging compost heap of discarded plants has generated over £2,750 for Koala North West, and WEN has accessed a large number of plants at very low prices and for free. It's a great example of what can be achieved with good communications and working in partnership.

Hopefully, we'll be able to run Caldy Open Gardens 2022 and welcome Evergreen readers to a wonderful afternoon of quality gardens, delicious refreshments with of course, a wide range of plants for sale.

A big thank you to everyone involved with WEN who supported us this year.

Rachel Summers, Co-ordinator Caldy Open Gardens

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### Wirral Environmental Network

Working to advance the education of the public about the environment and its protection

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

## Echo Environment Award for Environmental Champion 2021

At the end of April, **Wirral Environmental Network trustee** Nick Drew won the Echo Environment Award for Environmental Champion 2021, and was interviewed by *BBC NorthWest Tonight's* Roger Johnson.

**Roger's introduction:** Nick's wide-ranging work isn't widely known, but his important contributions and trailblazing environmental initiatives will leave a legacy of a greener Wirral, a Liverpool City Region that's greener, and ultimately help the Northwest of England ...and just expand it and expand it – the whole of the planet!

He encouraged the development of a green map for the Liverpool City Region, getting the concept adopted in the 2018 Cool Wirral strategy.

He recognised the need for an evidence-based and independent look at the Liverpool City Region's environment and was instrumental in the Heseltine Institute report being produced for the Liverpool City Region Year of the Environment.

Now, after going on a course to become officially 'Carbon Literate' in January 2020, Nick then educated his fellow Wirral Environmental Network Trustees on the importance of Carbon Literacy, resulting in that local Environmental Education Charity becoming the first Carbon Literate organisation in the Liverpool City Region, and showcasing the path for other organisations to follow.

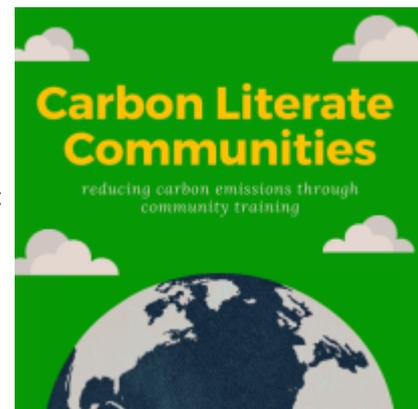
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## the interview

RJ : Listen, congratulations first of all. Just tell us a little bit about the Carbon Literacy course, and why you think that is so important...

ND : Yeah, sure. Well I think that we all know now, that Climate change is just such an important issue for our times and we've got very little time to make a real impact on that...but a lot of people don't really have the understanding of what their carbon footprint is made up of. Carbon Literacy is a programme that was originated in Manchester as sort of the birthplace of the industrial revolution and thinking 'we need to help people understand about, you know, what our longer term impact is on the planet'.



So Carbon Literacy is really a set of training, for individuals or for organisations, which just gives them that sort of understanding of how their carbon footprint is made up, and what they can do to reduce it, so they are making less of an impact on the planet.

RJ : We mentioned the Green map that you drew up – correct me if I'm wrong, but the Year of the Environment for the Liverpool City Region was a couple of years ago wasn't it – am I right?

ND : That's right, it was 2019, so I was involved in the lead-up to that in 2018 and then through some of the launch events in 2019, and helping to plan the Green Summit as well

RJ : I mean, as I mentioned earlier on in this event, I've been involved with this now for three years – it never ceases to amaze me, you know, the innovative work that is done by so many different groups across Merseyside and the Liverpool City Region, and I'm sure it is done in other parts of the North West, other parts of the country as well...do you feel optimistic for – I mean as you said, the environment is so important, time is running out...are you optimistic?

ND : Ummm – I think there is hope out there, Roger, but I feel that we've had a number of years where we've been trying to make reductions in our emissions and we still have these COP conferences where we sort of feel "this is our last chance to make a change" and I think we really are at that point now where we really have to make significant changes to our lifestyles, and you know, we've got to start today, really. There's no time to waste.

RJ : Cos COP26 is in November isn't it, in Glasgow, which we're...we're hosting. And I know we've reported on North West tonight about the Cumbria coalmine, and the kind of contrast with, on the other hand, trying – be part of leading this global conference, and you know, some people say that that's not compatible and etcetera etcetera but ... how do you win over the...sorry, I'm taking you off, away from your thing but it's just - how do you win over, you know, countries like China, like India, who will say "well you had the benefit of burning fossil fuels to become economically powerful – it's not fair to deny it to growing nations"?

ND : yeah, and I think there's a real difficult social challenge around this, there's the historic legacy of all the emissions that have gone on in the past. We started – as I mentioned before – the Industrial Revolution, so we've played a part in this. Over time, the emissions have come from different countries, and now I think, we've seen America and then China increasing to the point where they are the largest emitters.

But I think that it's really around 'we have a common home, a common planet'. You know, we all have a stake in whether we've got an environment fit for our children and grandchildren to live on. So to some extent, trying to say who's got the biggest stake in reducing the emissions – whilst that's important – you know, we've all got to play our part. I think that's the message from me – we've all got to do what we can, and act very quickly.

RJ : Many congratulations on your award and thank you for taking the time to be with us. Our Environmental Champion of 2021, ladies and gentlemen, who was Nick Drew.

## Reaching net zero

### Advancing offshore wind

As the goal to reach net zero in the UK rapidly approaches, E&T magazine examines Boris Johnson's 10-point plan for a green industrial revolution. In this edition of EG, Peter Exley presents 2 extracts.

Offshore wind is already a UK success story; Britain boasts the largest installed base and project costs are falling rapidly. Its perhaps unsurprising, therefore, first on Johnson's list is quadrupling capacity to 40GW by 2030. To achieve this the government will 'aim' to double capacity procured through the Contract for Difference auction set for next year to 12GW, including 1GW floating wind.



The investment appetite for the sector is

strong, says Daniel Grosvenor, head of infrastructure at Deloitte: "Offshore wind is a now opportunity, with a well-known pipeline of projects". According to September data from Renewable UK, there are 10GWs operating already, with a further 30GW either under construction, with planning permission, in the planning process or under development.

However, a key challenge will be managing the extra electricity capacity into the grid, more about which should be explained in the Offshore Transmission Network Review expected in 2021. In the delayed Energy White Paper (EWP) published in December, the government highlight the potential of using wind power for hydrogen electrolysis and for electric heat for homes. However, as Emma Champion, analyst at BloombergNEF, notes: "That's not really a bridge that's been crossed yet."

### Driving the growth of low-carbon hydrogen

The government is aiming for 5GW of blue hydrogen production capacity by 2030, produced with carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS) which will make it 'low carbon'. Currently a handful of extremely early-stage projects are underway, mostly centred around the government's net zero industrial clusters initiative. If final investment decisions are made they could possibly start producing between 2024-2026. However, while there is faith in the various technologies and their cost reduction potential, lack of clarity on business models and direction of deployment is a much-highlighted stumbling block.

It's hoped the long delayed – now expected in 2021 – Hydrogen Strategy will provide some answers. Key points of uncertainty are: where will the hydrogen be used – for transport, heating, in the aerospace and maritime sector or in all of them - and crucially, when will it arrive? What are the pathways to deployment? Time is running out if the UK is to keep up with its competitors, such as Germany. As a recent Deloitte report notes, financial decisions need to be made now: 'In the absence of a nationally coordinated effort hydrogen development might be fragmented and limit cost reduction'.

This is especially true for the UK's heating needs and industrial players, says Dr Mark Burrows, strategic client lead at npower Business, "They will struggle to convert their processes and plants without a firm understanding of when hydrogen will come online," he says.



## Wakening the Womble Spirit in Wirral

On January 15<sup>th</sup> 2021, two sisters, Andrea and Lindsey, were enjoying a socially distanced walk. The younger was celebrating a birthday [I dare not say which!] but spirits were rather dampened by the amount of litter encountered on their regular perambulations through the wonderful Wirral countryside. Apart from the aesthetic aspect of this problem, they knew that litter was polluting both land and ocean environments, and causing immense damage to wildlife. Their effort at removing this litter was continuous, but something more was needed.

And then the lightbulb moment



Why not form a Facebook group of a few family and friends to encourage them to become litter-pickers. And so, the adventure began!!

A name was chosen, “Wirral Wombles” of course, and the group was launched. Within days the numbers began to rise beyond original expectations and within a period of three months over 2000 people had joined [the current figure is 2,500]. A community spirit had been awakened and soon Wombles could be seen across the peninsula removing detritus that had been left, carelessly or deliberately, to spoil our beautiful home territory. It was rapidly apparent that there were already many individuals and small groups at work – The Little Collector, the New Brighteners, Irby & Thurstaston Rubbish Friends and several Rotary Clubs, - as pioneers in the field [and roads and beaches, parks etc], setting a great example to others.

It is difficult to comprehend the mindset of folks who choose to “soil their own nest” and are too lazy to walk a few paces to deposit rubbish safely, or to take it home for disposal. Of particular concern are the plastic bags full of dog excrement left by pathways and astonishingly hung on bushes and trees. [is this some weird art form?] The pandemic has produced its own problem with hundreds of facemasks carelessly discarded. They will, in all probability, take decades to break down and will end up as a serious pollution problem for a long time into the future. Another revelation is the number of small metal Nitrous Oxide canisters that are being found, often in considerable groups. Youngsters are apparently using this gas to get a transient “high” – both foolish and dangerous.

On a more positive note, Wirral Council officers have been helpful in supplying bags for collection of litter, and Biffa, the waste collection organisation, have both donated litter-pickers and removed collections of rubbish left by groups and individuals.

Why not join the steadily growing numbers of community minded residents and help with this great anti-litter crusade? Go to Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/3627256424058003>

Oh! And by the way, the two sisters are my lovely daughters!

Keith Foggin [AKA Great Uncle Bulgaria] West Kirby resident.



## Countdown to COP26

Most people will be aware that there are some important UN climate change talks happening in Glasgow this November. A few weeks ago, during the G7 summit, New Brighton beach was used to send a message to World leaders.



As we get closer to 1-12 November, we'll be hearing more and more about COP26 in the news. David Attenborough has been appointed as the people's advocate for the event. It is seen as being a last chance to make commitments to reduce our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and give ourselves a chance of preventing run-away climate change. But what is it all about, and what does it mean for us?

COP stands for "Conference of Parties" and is an annual meeting of the countries (parties) who signed up to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, back in 1995. They have met 25 times since then, with the 26<sup>th</sup> time being this year in Glasgow – COP26. Some key COPs in the past were in Copenhagen (2009) and Paris (2015) – the first where high expectations of a deal weren't met, and the latter where an agreement was finally reached by 192 countries to reduce emissions, with the aim of limiting global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5°C, compared to pre-industrial levels. This year is about taking forward the ambition from the Paris agreement and ratcheting it up, through the pledges that each country makes to reduce their emissions – their Nationally Determined Contribution, or NDC. The goal is to get to global net-zero by 2050.

Since 2015 and the Paris agreement, the level of concern – and urgency – around climate change has risen sharply. Currently, even if the pledges made by all the countries actually happen, we are on course for much more than 2°C of warming, setting off the possibility of runaway climate change. More ambition is needed – and urgently – and COP26 in Glasgow is being seen as a 'make or break' event for the future of the planet.

As well as the main talks in Glasgow from 1-12 November, there will be lots of side events and exhibitions in the conference village, with a wide range of organisations having applied to be part of the event. As the hosts, the UK government wants to use COP26 as a way to encourage us to make more changes towards the target of net-zero Carbon emissions by 2050. Initiatives such as "Race to Zero" are aimed at encouraging business to make the changes. There is also a pre-COP meeting in Milan from 30 September to 2 October, and just before that, a COP26 youth summit from 28-30 September in Milan, with almost 400 young people aged between 18 and 29 from the 197 member-countries, to feed into the negotiations. And of course there are lots of behind-the-scenes discussions to lay the ground for the talks in Glasgow.

<https://ukcop26.org/sir-david-attenborough-named-cop26-peoples-advocate/>

## Our contribution

### From Global to Personal

You may be thinking “What’s it got to do with me?”. Back in 2015, John Ashton of E3G gave a public talk in West Kirby, organised by Transition Town West Kirby. John was a senior UK climate diplomat, and part of the UK delegation to the ‘failed’ Copenhagen climate talks in 2009. He explained that politicians will only sign up to stretching climate agreements if the voters will back these. So if the politicians are going to sign up to ambitious climate targets in Glasgow, they need to hear from lots of people that there is backing for doing this. Which means we need to make our views heard on climate change, and what we want to see happening at the COP26 talks.

### From Global to National

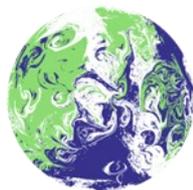
Despite the efforts of the UK to be seen as ‘world leading’ on climate change, and a credible host nation, we are falling short on action. The UK’s independent Climate Change Committee (CCC) have told us that not enough is being done. Two reports from them in June 2021 (their annual report to parliament, and their third assessment of climate change risks - CCRA3) showed that we are behind where we need to be, across both reducing emissions and preparing for the effects of climate change that is already ‘baked in’. In fact, the gap between the scale of climate risks we face and the actions we are taking has widened since their previous report in 2019. So we have a lot to do.

### From Global to Local

What are Wirral Environmental Network doing for COP26? We are looking at holding some roadshows in the lead-up to COP, to help raise awareness in different communities across Wirral. And you can expect to read more on this in the next edition of Evergreen.

<https://racetozero.unfccc.int/>

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/independent-assessment-of-uk-climate-risk/> ; <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/2021-progress-report-to-parliament/> .



**UN CLIMATE  
CHANGE  
CONFERENCE  
UK 2021**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY



Winter Trees Reflected in Water  
Winter Trees Reflected in Water

I have seen your reflection,  
In a pool left by rain,  
Your winter twigs bare,  
Your companions the same,  
Peering into water to see your reflection.

Mud and grass crowd edges,  
Frame the mirror made by water,  
Tomorrow you will be gone,  
But I have made this memory,  
And can see you this February day,  
In reflection.

By Shelagh

## Bringing the St James Allotments back into use for the community.



Wirral Environmental Network, Wirral Council, Magenta, Wirral Tree Wardens community groups, neighbours and other volunteers are creating a Community Green Hub in Bidston & St James, bringing the St James Allotments back into use.

There is allotment training and outdoor craft-upcycling space, a local tree nursery, community allotment beds and a wildflower area. A new hedge has been planted around the site. Still to come are additional fruit trees, a pond, bug house and community trail.



A trainer is on site once a week and has covered topics such as how to prepare the growing areas – building raised beds, preparing the soil, sowing, planting and plant care. Wirral Tree Wardens have led sessions planting a nature rich hedgerow and tree care.



We've been able to give seeds, plants and trees to local residents and have received some incredible donations. We've created potting tables, cold frames and benches from pallets, raised beds from old decking. Like many allotment holders we've survived snow and heat wave conditions....sometimes in the same day! But from a standing start at the end of March (see before pictures above) we have had our first harvest!

We've had support and volunteers from many community groups including Birkenhead North Development Trust, Cradle to Career, Wirral Change, Options for Supported Living and the Rotary. And of course, the wonderful Bidston & St James community. A huge thanks to all those who are involved.

We meet on site Wednesdays and Fridays 9.30-4.00. A group is also now meeting regularly on a Saturday. Other days by arrangement. There is still a lot to do! If you would be interested in getting involved please get in touch with [wen@la21.net](mailto:wen@la21.net).

This project was funded by Liverpool City Region Community Environment Fund.

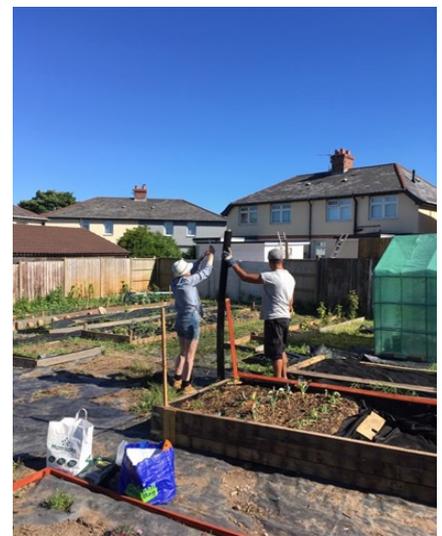
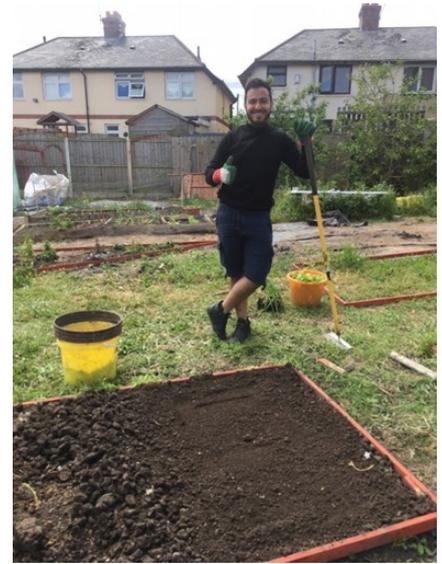
There are many other community allotments across Wirral who would be welcome volunteers. Including:

- Bee Wirral Plots in Arkle Road, Bidston
- Edward Kemp, Birkenhead Park
- Gilroy Road Community Allotments, West Kirby
- Pemberton Road, Woodchurch
- The Meeting Place, Wallasey & Tranmere
- The Village Community Garden, Wallasey

If you know of any more, let me know and we can signpost allotment requests to the community allotments as well as put on the waiting lists.



and the work goes on.....



## Best foot forward for February

Once we knew we were all in lock down again and that classes were not going ahead, myself and a few friends decided to try the 10,000 steps a day challenge and then I thought—could I encourage the classes to do it too?

Since walking seemed to be something a lot of people were doing last year, I was hoping that with a bit of encouragement we could get people out in February and just make a rough note of their steps – not 10,000 just what ever they could manage. The idea was for them to get outside and to look at what was happening early on in the year in the great outdoors, to try places they had not been to before and to be working together and sharing experiences - and it didn't matter how many or few steps they managed to do - this is how Best Foot Forward for February was created .

I found that not much encouragement was needed. We had 25 people walking, age ranges from mid 30's to 80.

We walked a total of 5526017 steps which is equivalent to walking 2616 miles!

It is 231 miles to London from the Wirral, so there and back 5 times.

It is 2568 miles to Turkey and 2528 miles to the North Pole – (but we would have to get lift back from there!!)

Calories burned – very difficult to determine but assuming burning 85 calories per mile , at normal walking speed = 214880 calories burned.

But it is the wellbeing aspect that is hard to quantify and the most important - but some pictures hopefully show that.



There have been some lovely sunrises and skies and the bird song from thrushes, blackbirds, robin and wrens sounds really loud now - so spring is on the way despite the cold.

Every afternoon I take a longer walk with the dog of about 6000 or 7000 steps. I go to Central Park, to Bidston Moss where catkins are coming out and to Roydon Park with lovely snowdrops at Benty Farm (right).

But best of all a was walk in Birkenhead Park where I came across an old man feeding a robin by hand. He says he does that every day. It was really tame and then flew right by my head and sat on a tree behind me singing. It was a real lift. I really needed the encouragement to do this as it was very cold, thank you!



It was really fantastic being part of a group and lovely to be able to share my pictures with everyone.



## Welcome to our new volunteers!

**Emily Arrowsmith. Sustainable solutions volunteer.** Emily's first degree was in Geography and she is also recent Environmental Policy and Governance graduate. She has lots of personal volunteering experience, empowering young people, and co-ordinating educational activities. Emily has been reviewing some of our policies and will be assisting with Cool Communities as well as helping groups establish their carbon footprint and the appropriate actions to take. She is also a Mersey Green Map Champion, assisting Laura with getting Wirral organisations onto the Big Green List and the Mersey Green Map



**Karen Hawthorne. Volunteer Coordinator.** Karen has lots of experience working with people, training and development. She is looking after our growing numbers of volunteers across our projects. As well as matching new volunteers with opportunities, she will be making sure we give them the best volunteering experience we can including training and skills development if wanted.

**Richie Hopkinson. Membership Secretary.** Richie is a highly experienced IT professional with a wide range of experience. He is taking over the membership secretary role from Pam. He is responsible for responding to new and existing member enquiries and membership applications and renewals. He is also managing and improving our membership database to make it easier for people to join. Richie is also looking at improving member benefits!

### Discover Courses at Wirral Environmental Network, WEN, from September 2021

#### PRACTICAL GARDENING - including fruit and vegetable growing

Discover and practice tasks you can do in your garden including pruning, taking cuttings, composting, sowing seeds, looking at YOUR garden for the following year, gardeners question time, what to do each week and much more!

Cost of above is £60.00 for each 10 week term  
*You can do one term or as many as you like all are different!*

All to be held at WEN, Sandon Building, Falkland Road, Seacombe CH44 8ER

For more information, book on course or find out about other courses  
phone 0151 639 2121, 07932 355742 or  
Email [carol.seery1@btinternet.com](mailto:carol.seery1@btinternet.com)

#### OTHER COURSES WITH DATES, COSTS AND DETAILS TO BE CONFIRMED INCLUDE:

- Flower arranging including how to grow your own flowers for cutting
  - Willow Work shops

So please keep in touch via our web site, face book or ensure you on our email list to be sent information

**WEN email is [wen@la21.net](mailto:wen@la21.net)**

If you have any special requests/ideas for courses please contact us at the email address above

## Sustainable Swaps for individuals, community groups and organisations

Cool Wirral encourages local climate-related action in support of the climate change strategy for Wirral. It is for everyone on the Wirral – individuals, businesses, organisations large and small. Wondering what you could do?

**Instead of...** Using electricity from fossil fuels.

**Try...** Switching to a green energy supplier. They can often be found in the best buys or via the Merseyside Collective Switch - [www.epplus.org.uk/projects/merseyside-collective-switch/](http://www.epplus.org.uk/projects/merseyside-collective-switch/)  
If your community group or organisation uses a building with energy supplied, ask the landlord if they can switch. Groups or organisations can also use bulk buying power to get green energy.

**Instead of...** Eating meat and dairy with every meal.

**Try...** Making weekday meals plant based. If your organisation or community group uses a building that provides food, ask the kitchen, café or restaurant team to make it mainly plant based.

**Instead of...** Travelling by car.

**Try...** Cycling or walking for distances of under 2 miles. Use the Cycle Streets journey planner to find quieter routes that you can share with your group: [www.cyclestreets.net/journey/](http://www.cyclestreets.net/journey/)  
When arranging meetings and events, choose venues that are accessible by public transport.

**Instead of...** Throwing away unwanted items.

**Try... Passing them on....** Become a collection point for school uniforms through Wirral FUS and FUPS. Contact us about donating furniture to the Refresh project in Birkenhead. a collection pack from St John's Hospice, who will pick up clothing and other accessories from businesses. Use Wirral Freecycle or Wirral Freegle

**Instead of...** Providing drinks in single use plastic cups.

**Try...** Setting up a water refill point and encouraging people to bring their own reusable bottles, flasks and coffee cups. Act as a 'Refill' point so that others can use your tap to refill.

**Can you commit to taking a swap each month for the rest of 2021?**

## Support our charity by becoming a member

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**Membership category subscription rates:**

- **Individual £8 (waged) £6 (unwaged), Household (same address) £12**
- **Group (voluntary/community) £10, Businesses £20**

Name/Name of Group or Business .....

Membership category (eg group/individual) .....

Contact Name and Address: Name .....

Address: .....

Phone: .....

Email: .....

Position in Group/organization (if applicable) .....

I/We apply for Membership of Wirral Environmental Network and send payment of £.....

By: Bank transfer/standing order/cheque (Please circle payment method, Reference should be your name/group name)

Bank Transfer/Standing Order to: Sort code 08-90-86      Account number 50113675

Signed ..... Date .....

WEN is an educational charity with 25 years experience of working with schools and community groups. Our aims are to educate the public about living sustainable and healthy lifestyles. We achieve this through running courses on growing your own food, public discussions, organised events, working in schools to support teachers and in many other ways. Our work is supported by a large number of members and volunteers committed to the charity ideals.

*Wirral Environmental Network publish this newsletter as a community information tool. Please note that the views expressed may not be those of Wirral Environmental Network, its trustees, staff or volunteers.*