



2022



Wirral Environmental Network



## Annual Review 2022

Registered Office: The Sandon Building  
Falkland Road, Wallasey, Wirral,  
CH44 8ER England.

Tel: 0151 639 2121.  
Email: wen@la21.net  
Reg Charity 1068306. Reg Company 3462312.  
<http://wirralenvironmentalnetwork.org.uk>

Wirral Environmental Network is a non-profit, non-party political coalition of individuals, groups and organisations, working together for a more sustainable society and the respect for nature and the environment. The aim of the organisation is to advance the education of the public about the preservation of our world's natural environment, ecological sustainability, natural resource conservation, waste management, recycling, and the principles of Fairtrade within Wirral and the surrounding area.

Current activities: Lifelong learning, Learning In Deprived Communities, WEN Crafters, WEN Reclaimers, Falkland Road Organic Gardeners, Green Hub @ St James Garden, WEN Flower Arranging, Alleyways project, Aquaponics, Re-use & Recycling Projects, Cool Communities. E news & quarterly newsletter (Wirral Evergreen) - website - information service.

## **Trustees' report**

In a year when the climate change conference (COP26) came to Glasgow, we have continued to see an increase in public awareness and concern about environmental matters. This is reflected in the ongoing community-level engagement role that WEN play as a key partner in the Cool Wirral climate change strategy partnership and helping embed some of the behaviour changes through our accredited learning programmes and wider outreach actions.

Two key events stand out for me – our accreditation as a Matrix organisation, which recognises our professionalism in training delivery, and WEN's recognition as the first Carbon Literate Organisation in the Liverpool City Region, at the Carbon Literacy Awards held in Manchester earlier this year.

Beyond those, our work with the St James' hub, thanks to funding from the MetroMayor's Community Environment Fund, is now moving beyond its project phase and is leaving a lasting legacy. It is also a great example for others to learn from, showing what can be achieved through local projects on the ground, delivered by committed local volunteers.

Wirral Environmental Network is still growing – in its local profile, in its membership numbers, and in its reach and impact. As we look towards difficult times ahead, it feels that Wirral Environmental Network is well placed to play a key role in responding to environmental challenges that we will all face in the future.

**Nick Drew.** On behalf of the WEN Trustees.

## **Gardening and related projects**

I am writing this report while eating some of the lovely grapes and apples picked from the fantastic crop that we have had this year from our fruit area at WEN after the up and down weather of the spring and summer.

It was not just the weather which has been good this year, the garden classes and events have been well attended as well. These include Practical Gardening, A- Z Of Gardening, and level 2 Royal Horticultural Society course which allows people who want to obtain a formal qualification to take the exams at Ness Gardens if they like or just do the course for increased knowledge which most of the class want this time.

We are still running Lifelong Learning courses and we have introduced a new course which we are hoping to run each half term, "Gardening in a Changing Climate". This includes composting, how climate change might affect us, recycling, what Wirral is doing with tree planting and each learner picks two gardening topics they would like to look at. It has been very well received. We have also been running learning in deprived community workshops and courses which Kenny will discuss.

The gardens (including propagating all plants for events) are still being looked after wonderfully by F.R.O.G and with their help and ALL our volunteers (which is growing all the time) we have been able to put on two garden events this year – Christmas and early summer event. The summer one raising for WEN over £1200.00 which is amazing.

The craft group are now in full flow meeting every other Tuesday making all sorts out of donated materials. Since April (excluding what they sold at Christmas and summer open days) they have contributed over £400.00 to WEN funds. The reclaimers are getting back on board as well after a break over the summer and are on hand to start fixing and creating shelving units and other items to help with the running of WEN.

I would like to express a personal big thanks to all the people involved including the administration staff and Karen our volunteer coordinator who are making a huge difference to WEN, not just the huge monetary contribution towards our running costs, but all the other things that you all do that make anyone who comes feel welcome and wanted - you are what WEN is all about!

And on final note the 2022 Christmas Fair, to be held on 26th November will be bigger than ever hopefully so please try and support us by spreading the word.

**Carol Seery.**

## **Falkland Road Organic Growers (FROG)**

This was a year of extremes of weather which is a challenge for all gardeners and growers. The spring was cold and wet with storms and wind which delayed seed germination and battered early plantings. Then summer came with heat and drought so that all we seemed to do was water the Polytunnel and beds as much as we could. Even the weeds did not thrive. Some crops did very well. Tomatoes love the warmth, and we managed a harvest of borlotti beans despite a really late sowing. Pumpkins, sweetcorn and grapes all did well. However, potatoes were small as they like plenty of water and most of the brassicas were devastated by caterpillars. We let the wild rocket flower late as the bees love it

We worked with Carol to sow seeds and plants to sell at the spring fair which was a success. FROG ran the tombola as usual. FROG helped demolish the raised bed at the side of Falkland Road with a plan to make more space but initially a wild-flower bed with the gardening classes. FROG members also dug out the very successful leaf mould bin to make sacks of leaf mould which is a great medium for adding to the raised beds.

We no longer work at the Barking Mad café in Royden Park which was our main source of income as this has now closed after COVID. However, with seed sharing and Carol's help with compost we manage well. The first AGM after COVID was held at the Egremont Ferry Pub in May and some members enjoyed the Southport Flower Show which eventually opened in August.

We have some new and very welcome members in Pam and Alan who are both experienced growers and we all look forward to next year's gardening.

### **Judith Anton – Chair FROG**

## **Learning In Deprived Communities / Cool Communities**

Due to illness support work this year has been limited but is progressing for next year. I have written two tenders for WBC for room rental and the Learning in Deprived Communities grant ( LIDC ) and Naomi is delivering courses on climate change and Carol on self sufficient food production on allotments as part of this.

I have met with the council allotment team regarding developing a course for new tenants and delivering training to council management and team leaders on how allotments will be part of a national food strategy in the future. The reclaimers group is currently being supervised by myself and I have engaged with various groups in an outreach capacity to explore new avenues for educational environmental work.

As part of the Cool Communities partnership I am a member of the adaptation group looking at community resilience. It's been enjoyable working with other team members on events such as biodiversity day and Heswall Ecoday and Carol and I have delivered several more Alleyway projects often in pouring rain !

### **Kenny Peers**

## **Environmental Education and Sustainable Lifestyle Projects**

**It has been a busy year, huge thanks to the team that deliver and support our activities.**

### **Hub – visitor centres & classrooms for sustainable living**

We have been working from two locations – our Sandon building and community garden in Wallasey and the Green Hub @ St James Community Garden, Birkenhead North. The Sandon building has seen courses on gardening, climate change, environment, food, energy, reuse and recycling, upcycling and IT, as well as hosting the successful WEN craft group, Falkland Road Organic Gardeners and WEN reclaimers.

The St James Community Garden has moved from project start up to full on use (and maintenance!) by the community and volunteers. We love that children from St James Centre run in and explore during Easter Egg Hunts and Summer Holiday Clubs. It was great to be able to welcome members of the Chinese community and new residents who have taken on plots, Bishop Julie, HAM Community Garden, other groups to use the space. Huge thanks to the volunteers who keep the garden going.

### **Training**

WEN supports the community element of Wirral's Climate Change Strategy (Cool Wirral). We have been delivering community-based training, workshops and talks for groups across the Wirral. Courses and sessions on gardening, composting, trees, volunteering, reuse and recycling. All with an environmental theme. Particular thanks to all at St James Centre and Make It Happen for getting involved in environmental solutions. We were particularly pleased this year to be awarded Matrix accreditation for the information, advice and guidance that we provide.

### **Network**

Our Big Green List now includes nearly 280 Wirral Community Groups, Charities and businesses which actively work to protect and improve our environment and reduce our carbon emissions. It has been used by many local and regional organisations to support their work and continues to be a key asset. Thanks to our volunteer Susan, we continue to help groups put their details on the Mersey Green Map, a regional view of local, sustainable and ethical groups and businesses which also holds bi-monthly networking sessions.

Alongside Wirral Tree Wardens, WEN are members of the Tree Strategy Advisory Board. We attended Cool Heswall, Earthfest Picnic and Summer Cycle, promoting environmental activity on the Wirral. The number of subscribers to our fortnightly e-news and social media channels is growing and Evergreen continues to be well received. Thank you to Laura and Pam for their hard work.

### **Projects**

This year we put on the Sustainable Seacombe Pop Up trail which included planters for residents to put outside their homes, Dr Bike sessions, energy efficiency advice and support from Energy Projects Plus, upcycling from Urban Vintage, low carbon food at WEN and nature-based activities with the Eco Schools officer at the Tiny Forest. WEN continue to be a collection point for Wirral Free Uniform for Secondary Schools (FUSS) and Free Uniform for Primary Schools (FUPS).

We also ran Eco Art in the Park. A collaboration between WEN artist Alison Bailey Smith, Wirral Unplugged and Wirral Council's Eco Schools programme. We held a biodiversity event at Castlefield and commissioned giant sculptures of nature wildflowers and grass, made of repurposed materials. The sculptures are accompanied

by a free activity booklet and available to borrow for events. Through the project we aim to raise awareness of Wirral's biodiversity and the importance of pollinators, as well as inspiring creativity and highlighting the need to reduce waste.

My review of the year would not be complete without a massive thanks to all our volunteers. Not only do they help run projects, events and fundraise, but they are busy behind the scenes managing membership, supporting volunteers, answering queries, running our communications, promoting environmental solutions and helping make sure our centre is suitable and welcoming to all. Thank you!

**Naomi Graham.**

### **Urban Vintage - upcycling**

This year due to the Urban Vintage's affiliation to Wirral Environmental Network, we were able to obtain funding to support 25 local community members on four upcycling Urban Vintage held workshops at the shop. These were funded by the Involve Northwest community funding available to groups in Wirral who were charities or groups associated to local charities. Due to Urban Vintage's affiliation to WEN we were able to apply.

The workshops were held over the summer, and over a three-day period to support community cohesion, reduce isolation, and build community links. These sessions were extremely successful with 23 attendees from 25 places. With the support of WEN it is hoped that more funding can be sourced to continue the success of this project.

**Katrina Chapman.**



## **Accounts Summary for 2021-22 financial year**

<b>INCOME FINANCIAL YEAR</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Bank Interest	17	2
Centre Support	528	451
Donations	719	783
Grants	47399	56477
Events & Sales	5587	9228
Membership	469	626
Other Income	1159	1173
Room Hire	2465	3333
Service agreements (SLAs) and other income	3103	3165
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>61447</b>	<b>75236</b>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>		
Environmental Education	37979	52198
Management of the Charity	9640	6166
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>47620</b>	<b>58364</b>
NET INCOME FOR THE YEAR	13827	16872
Balance brought forward (Excl shares)	24430	38257
<b>CASH BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>38257</b>	<b>55130</b>
Current value of shares held	5805	5778
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>44062</b>	<b>60908</b>

All accounts held with Co-operative Bank. Summary prepared by Dave Brown.

## **Trustees**

Judith Anton, Dave Brown, Katrina Chapman, Nick Drew, Dave Jones, Brian Parry, Perle Sheldricks, Peter Stephens.  
Dave Pye (Secretary).

## **The WEN team**

Naomi Graham (Office Manager, Sustainability Officer).  
Maria Harper-Cain (Horticultural Wildlife & Conservation Trainer)  
Karen Hawthorne (Volunteer Co-ordinator).  
Laura Higginbottom (Online Communications)  
Annie Jackson (Membership Secretary)  
Susan Kirkham (Sustainability & Office support)  
Pam McCarron (Marketing & Communications).  
Phil McHoul (Finance).  
Kenny Peers (Sustainability).  
Carol Seery (Garden Courses).

## **Patrons**

Tina Fox, John Guillebaud, Jonathon Porritt, Charles Secrett, Dr Joanna Sharples, Pat Sykes MBE.

## **Membership**

Individual 98, Corporate 31 (as of November 2022).

## **Funding**

We would like to thank all our funders including:

- Bee Wirral
- CVF Renewal Grant Fund
- Cradle to Career
- Sparks Fund
- Wirral Council Lifelong Learning & Learning in Deprived Communities

And all the projects that have used us to deliver activities.

