

# Annual Review 2023



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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

With the ever-increasing news of climate breakdown and the huge impact it has on the natural environment and humankind it is increasingly important that we spread the word about the climate and biodiversity emergency and solutions.

On the Wirral, individuals, communities and organisations are joining together to make a difference.

With your help, word is getting out. Not just about the impact of increasing and more frequent extreme weather events such as heatwaves and flooding, that can be seen on the news daily. But about local solutions available and national changes that we need.

Wirral Environmental Network is speaking to more people, running more courses and workshops, attending more events and welcoming more people to our environmental hub.

Still, we meet people who don't know what they can do about climate change, who think it is just too hard or it is too expensive or what they do won't make a difference. Our job is to demonstrate there are some easy steps, that actions to address the climate emergency can also reduce the cost of living and what everyone does, will make a difference.

We are heading on a path of increasing average global temperatures. But as more and more individuals, communities, organisations and government begin to make changes we have a chance to turn this around. To limit the increase in global temperatures.

So please, become a climate champion. If you are reading this, we know you already care. Encourage your friends, neighbours, community spaces, workplaces to make a change, contact local, national and international organisations and your political representatives to tell them that the environment is important to you.

Follow us, support us, join us. Together we can make a difference.

Wirral Environmental Network Trustees.

## Gardening and related projects

The WEN productive garden has again surpassed itself especially with the high number of unusual varieties of tomatoes we decided to grow this year which have been a great success and which we will be repeating again in 2024 and hoping to grow more unusual varieties vegetables in 2024.

The garden classes have been well attended. These include practical gardening, History of Gardening (new for September 2023), Growing Fruit, Vegetables and Salads (again new this September) A- Z of Gardening and the garden group.

We have run Lifelong Learning gardening based courses for a number of years now at WEN but have now ceased running them and instead are running a growing fruit, vegetable and herbs course. 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 FROG and with their help, the craft group contribution with all their creative ideas and produce 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 and we have raised in excess of £5,000.00 for WEN which is amazing, it just gets better and better every year.

I would like to express a personal big thanks to all the people involved including the administration staff, 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, WEN couldn't run without you and it is a pleasure and privileged to work with you ALL , thank you!

Carol Seery.

## Falkland Road Organic Growers (FROG)

Judith reported that the weather in 2023 had caused a few growing problems with a hot drought in June followed by a wet July. However some crops had fared well, tomatoes peppers and grapes did well but potatoes were small. Beans of course grew well and brassicas helped the caterpillars!! The Spring Fair went well and was enjoyed by all. FROG helped with the plant sale but there was no tombola this year.

New members Arthur and Pamela were welcomed as experienced gardeners and now volunteer numbers are very good. Kenny is sorting out the small polytunnel so we can put seedling there next year but they will need to be labelled FROG.

Judith Anton – Chair FROG.

## Environmental Education and Sustainable Lifestyle Projects

Once again, it has been a busy year, huge thanks to the team that deliver and support our activities.

Hub – visitor centres & classrooms for sustainable living

Activities at our Sandon building and community garden in Wallasey have increased and there are days when we are bursting at the seams.

As well as our normal courses, workshops and groups, we have hosted children from the local school, Wirral wide Eco School leads, LIPA students and corporate volunteer days. We have welcomed visitors from other organisations and been used as a stopping point for local walking groups. We are grateful to the volunteers who continue to improve our centre.

WEN continues the Green Hub at St James Community Garden in Birkenhead North. We have been able to welcome more families to the site, promoting nature in the North End and distribute a bumper crop of apples to local families and community groups. Huge thanks to the volunteers who keep the green space going.

Training

WEN continues to offer sessions, workshops, courses at our Hub on topics including 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. Welcome new addition includes bread making demonstrations and talks on crystals.

We have delivered community-based training, workshops and talks for groups across the Wirral. We have also supported highly appreciated visits to other organisations including the Gilmoor Recycling Facility.

We were pleased this year to retain our Matrix accreditation for the quality of information, advice and guidance that we provide.

Network

Our Big Green List now includes nearly 300 groups, charities and businesses which actively work to protect and improve Wirral's environment and reduce our carbon emissions. We continue to work with Transition Town Liverpool on the Mersey Green Map, a regional view of local, sustainable and ethical groups and businesses which also holds bi-monthly networking sessions. We presented at Transition Town gathering as well as to the Rotary Regional Conference.

We are a member of Cool Wirral, leading on the Cool Communities strand and contributing to ensuring events in Wirral's Year of Culture are as environmentally friendly as possible. We attended Neston Earth Festival, Cool Heswall, Wirral Makefest, Science under the Stars, Wirral Primary Science Network Conference, the Plastic Pledge Market and



Earthfest, 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.

WEN was delighted to support the start of Wirral CVS which supports a strong, vibrant and resilient Voluntary, Community, Faith & Social Enterprise Sector. We have had the pleasure of attending and presenting at a number of the Community of Practise mornings.

### Projects

WEN are very grateful to a private donator who gave a significant donation to support projects at 15 schools across the Wirral and at Dibbinsdale Nature reserve. We are looking forward to the schools celebration event later this year.

We were able to facilitate the start of the Wirral Repair Café which has gone from strength to strength.

WEN continue to be a collection point for Wirral Free Uniform for Schools (FUSS). There continue to be bookings for our giant pollinator sculptures. of local wildflowers, made of repurposed materials.

### Members and Volunteers

My review of the year would not be complete without a massive thanks to all our members and volunteers. Greater membership gives us a bigger voice when talking to others. Financial support helps us deliver services and projects with communities and groups.

Volunteers help run projects, events and fundraise, and are busy behind the scenes managing membership, supporting others, answering queries, running our communications, promoting environmental solutions and helping make sure our centre is suitable and welcoming to all. Thank you!

Naomi Graham.

### Learning In Deprived Communities / Cool Communities

We have delivered this learning programme now for over 10yrs to an extremely high professional level often exceeding set targets and receiving praise from OFSTED inspections.

Last year WEN achieved the matrix standard for delivering of advice and guidance related to educational achievement. This year our tutors, Carol and Naomi are delivering short courses on sustainable food systems and climate change as part of our organisations goals to educate the public in living more sustainably and within the 1.5 degree target of global warming limitation.

Kenny Peers.

## Accounts Summary for 2022-23 financial year

<b>INCOME FINANCIAL YEAR</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Bank Interest	7	2
Centre Support	117	451
Donations	20688	783
Grants	15670	56477
Events & Sales	4355	9228
Membership	606	626
Other Income	1347	1173
Room Hire	2384	3333
Service agreements (SLAs) and other income	4834	3165
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>50008</b>	<b>75236</b>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>		
Environmental Education	40178	52198
Management of the Charity	7068	6166
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>47245</b>	<b>58364</b>
NET INCOME FOR THE YEAR	2763	16872
Balance brought forward (Excl shares)	55130	38257
<b>CASH BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>57893</b>	<b>55130</b>
Current value of shares held	6345	5778
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>64238</b>	<b>60908</b>

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

## Trustees

Dave Brown (Treasurer), Katrina Chapman, Dom Griffiths, Dave Jones (Chair), Anne Litherland, Perle Sheldricks, Ben Shoebridge, 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 69, Group 25 (as of November 2023).

We were honoured to work with a huge range of community groups and organisations including:

- |                                  |                              |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ) Bee Wirral                     | ) St James Centre            |
| ) Bidston Avenue Primary School  | ) St Vincent de Paul         |
| ) Callister Gardens              | ) Transition Town West Kirby |
| ) Eco Schools across Wirral      | ) Voice of Egremont          |
| ) Egremont Primary School        | ) Wirral FUSS                |
| ) Energy Projects Plus           | ) Wirral Lifelong Learning   |
| ) Joint Rotary Environment Group | ) Wirral Tree Wardens        |
| ) Heart4Refugees                 | ) Wirral Makefest            |
| ) Holy Cross Primary School      | ) Wirral Repair Cafe         |
| ) Make it Happen, Birkenhead     | ) Wirral Unplugged           |
| ) Mid Wirral Rotary              |                              |
| ) HYPE Merseyside                |                              |

With thanks to the support of

- ) Cradle to Career
- ) Eureka
- ) Kirkland Grant
- ) Open Golf Championship
- ) RSA Insurance Group
- ) Soroptimists International
- ) Wirral Borough Council