

# WIRRAL EVERGREEN

Issue 41 Spring 2024

The Magazine of the Wirral Environmental Network



It's  
Spring!



## **Wirral Environmental Network**

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

**Patrons:** Pat Sykes (MBE), John Guilleband, Jonathon Porritt,  
Charles Secrett, Dr Joanna Sharples.

**Registered address:** Wirral Environmental Centre, Sandon Building,  
Falkland Road, Wallasey CH44 8ER

**Tel:** 0151 639 2121 **email:** wen@la21.net **Website:** www.wirralenvironmentalnetwork.org.uk

**Facebook:** Wirral Environmental Network

**Registered Charity No.** 1068306 **Co. Ltd. by Guarantee no.** 3462312

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

# Cool Wirral Climate Challenge 2024

The **Cool Wirral Climate Challenge** was launched at the start of this year, as an **enjoyable way for Wirral residents to join others in playing a part in responding to the climate emergency.**

The challenge involves choosing to *make one or more pledges every two months*, with the aim of encouraging long-lasting, environmentally beneficial changes in behaviour. Participants can contribute to an online ideas board and are invited to give updates on their progress via a feedback survey.

**A calendar with vibrant and engaging illustrations by local designers [Toucan Tango](#) shows the choice of challenges**, as well as giving the dates of environmental awareness events for each month. The calendar was available from Wirral libraries in January and a downloadable version can be found on the [Cool Wirral Climate Challenge](#) webpage.

There are six themes to the climate challenges for the year:

Food, Waste, Nature, Travel, Energy, Shopping

*As the theme changes every two months, it's not too late to get involved!*

**In May and June the challenge options are all centred around nature**, with the four pledge choices being:

**Go Wild!** Take part in No Mow May

**Grow Together.** Join a community gardening group or allotment

**What's The Buzz?** Encourage bees by planting flowers for pollinators and providing water

**Tree-mendous.** Plant a tree or become a tree guardian

Natural habitats, such as woodlands and meadows, absorb and store large quantities of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. Protecting the green spaces we have and restoring what has been lost will increase their ability to store carbon. To give a little inspiration for each of the nature pledges in the challenge, here are some suggestions for actions you can take to help enhance our local green spaces.

## Go Wild!

- Take part in [No Mow May](#).

97% of flower-rich meadows have been lost since the 1930's but, with over 20 million gardens in the UK, we can take collective action to make space for nature and increase our resilience to the effects of the climate crisis. Joining in with No Mow May couldn't be simpler. In fact, it might be the only challenge that doesn't take any effort! If you have a lawn, leave the mower in the shed in May and watch the grass and wildflowers grow. As well as promoting healthy soil and capturing carbon below ground, your longer lawn will provide habitat and food for wildlife. Not using a mower also reduces energy consumption and lowers greenhouse gas emissions.

The [No Mow May](#) section on the [Plantlife](#) website gives some tips on gardening for nature, getting ready for No Mow May and what to do after the month is over to maximise the diversity and abundance of flowering plants.

## Grow Together

If you are interested in gardening but don't have your own outdoor space, would like support to get started or the company of like-minded people, there are community gardens around the Wirral. Volunteer to help, hone your growing skills, and share knowledge and fresh produce with others.

- Come to our Green Hub at [St James Community Garden](#) in Birkenhead North.

The hub is open every Wednesday from 10am to 1pm (other days by arrangement). We welcome anyone who would like to enjoy the garden, pick some fruit and veg, or join in with our volunteers.

Find the entrance between 192 and 194 Tollemache Road, Birkenhead.

## Cool Wirral contd

- Join in at other community growing spaces, including:  
[Incredible Edible Hoylake](#)  
[Incredible Edible, West Kirby](#)  
[Edward Kemp Community Garden](#) at Birkenhead Park  
[Earth Moves' Telegraph Lane Garden](#) in Wallasey
- Help look after the planting in a local park with a Friends organisation or join a gardening society or Britain In Bloom group. Search for Friends groups on our [Big Green List](#) or check noticeboards at your nearest park for their details. Zoom in on the [map on the RHS website](#) to see where your nearest gardening group is. Many groups have social media pages so you could also search to see if you can find information there.
- Apply for a plot at one of the 40 allotment sites on the Wirral. See the [Wirral Council website to find their locations and apply for a plot](#). Unfortunately demand for allotment spaces is very high with long waiting lists at many sites but you could join one of the community gardening groups mentioned above while you look forward to having your own plot.

### What's The Buzz?

- Care for the bees in your garden or community space and in return they will pollinate flowers, fruits and vegetables. Plant flowers and herbs that will provide nectar and pollen for bees and other insects. Make sure you have a range of species that flower at different times of the year so that there is food for pollinators from March to October. The [Bumblebee Conservation Trust](#) has produced a guide to [creating a bee-friendly garden](#) and [Cheshire Wildlife Trust](#) shows how to set up a [nectar cafe for bees and other pollinators](#).
- Pollinating insects need to drink water too so fill a shallow dish with tap or rainwater and place it in a shady spot in your garden. You can use an old plate or plant pot saucer. Place some small pebbles or stones in the dish to give the bees somewhere to perch while they drink. Make sure the water is below the level of the stones so that the bees don't drown. The [Moral Fibres](#) website gives more guidance on [making your own bee watering station](#).

### Tree-mendous

Trees store carbon and so planting them and allowing existing woodlands to naturally regenerate decreases the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Tree planting season is between November and March but there are actions you could take before then:

- Research what type of tree would suit your garden or other land you have permission to plant a tree on. The [RHS](#) and [Woodland Trust](#) have some good advice on native species to choose from.
- [Suggest a tree planting location](#) on land owned by Wirral Council.
- If you have already planted a tree, [let the council know](#) and you will receive a certificate in recognition of your contribution to Wirral's tree canopy.
- Bookmark [Wirral Council's Community Tree Planting webpage](#) for later in the year so you can find out when there are tree planting events taking place.
- Become a guardian to a tree near where you live. If we have a dry spell this summer, and you know of a recently planted tree near you, give it some water. If you have planted your own tree, you could add some organic mulch around the base to retain water and suppress the growth of other plants.
- Join the [Wirral Tree Warden Network](#) and enjoy activities such as tree planting, tree walks, a book club and educational workshops.

For more information on helping nature thrive and other ways to do your bit to tackle climate change, see the [Wirral Community Climate Action website](#).

## Neston Community Energy Scheme



The latest climate figures are frightening. We have already breached, at least temporarily, the +1.5°C figure agreed at the 2015 Paris Agreement to 'keep within the safe limit' and we have just had the warmest February on record. Global ice is melting dangerously, and worldwide flooding is now a certainty for many low-lying islands and coastal areas, including our cities. Weather patterns are becoming more unpredictable, with fires, increasing storms and desertification. Hunger from climate change now affects almost 70 million in the worst affected areas. We are losing animal and plant species. And we haven't much time to make the changes we need.

But, there are signs of progress, with new technologies, money and people fighting for change world-wide. Many governments are finally investing in more green energy. It has become more apparent that 'doing our bit' to slow global warming has become both more challenging and exciting as new ideas and opportunities arise. In Neston, a group of us from the Neston Earth Group had the slightly mad idea that we might look at a Community Energy Scheme.

So what is a Community Energy Scheme? It is a way of people coming together to produce, and manage the electricity use locally in their town, city or other local area. Community Engagement is a vital way of contributing in a more meaningful way and scale to have their own 'piece of the story' in reducing global warming in a practical and ambitious way and one that benefits whole local communities.

There are several community energy schemes across the UK already, and they are 'popping up' all around the UK, according to Community Energy England, (<https://communityenergyengland.org>). So, we are not alone in our ambition, and there is plenty of advice we can call on.

There are different ways energy can be produced locally, based on the local geography, land available, requirements etc.: wind and solar are the most used, the latter either on local land or farms; on the roofs of factories & other commercial and community buildings; on housing, or a mixture of several.

Neston is a very suitable place to set up such a scheme geographically. We are a 'connected' town, with Parkgate, Little Neston and Ness, and surrounded by countryside. We have businesses here, especially on the Clayhill Estate, as well as the Neston Leisure Centre, Neston High School, three primary schools, a Youth Centre and other community buildings, several churches and church buildings. The objective of any community energy group would be to work with all of these local amenities, as well as those living within our community.

So how do you finance energy schemes? Most energy schemes are set up using a 'co-operative' system; where local members of the community contribute by buying shares, or just a share, depending on their financial ability to invest. There are grants available too, and we are already exploring these <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-energy-security-and-net-zero>, and <https://www.localenergynw.org/page/community-energy-fund> These sites also offer



## Neston Community Energy Scheme contd

technical help on what would suit your area best; setting up battery stations etc. as well as the solar and wind power. The support of local authorities is vital (for us, Cheshire West and Cheshire) and our local Neston Town Councillors.

Why would we people go to all the trouble of setting up a community energy project? Surely, it is easier to continue to use the grid? Yes, it is easier, but it has been shown that community energy projects have great benefits; the main ones being to both reduce the power use from the grid and reduce the cost of electricity to help those struggling with fuel poverty. They bring the local communities together in a meaningful way as well as reducing the effects of climate change on our future. Therefore, there are a financial and moral reasons why setting up such a scheme is a good idea. They inspire others to become involved, with the expertise they may have, and/or contributing financially, and should include all our businesses and community buildings. Our early research showed these schemes are something that are not to be taken on lightly, but we – even our small group, feel very committed towards the project and finding our variety of skills work well together, each taking responsibility when required for certain roles.

Our next step was to have a community energy meeting, open to the local and wider community, for them to find out more about the scheme and also hopefully gain some new members, with new knowledge and enthusiasm. The meeting went better than we could have hoped, and was well attended, including elected members of our Town Council, a member of the North West Net Zero Hub (NWNZH), who has already been helpful in our early stages of investigation; officers from both Wirral Borough Council (WBC) Chester and Cheshire West and Cheshire Council (CWaC) climate groups - as both councils are looking to support similar groups; and a representative of Energy Projects Plus. There were several others from our wider local community as well as local representatives of charities.

We had a presentation looking at similar projects to those we propose, plus further possibilities we might use in Neston, both to start and further any scheme. A description of how funding via a co-operative scheme works, it being the most flexible for start-ups and expansion. Schemes like these have been shown to help those in fuel poverty, businesses, community buildings, as well as the wider community. Some new 'windmill technologies' (the ability to attach to buildings), were also explained.

There were many questions post the presentations and very useful help and information from those who have been involved professionally, and across Cheshire for many years, including those from NWNZH and CWaC. Since the presentations, there have been several expressions of interest from those attending who wish to join us on our journey of community energy here in Neston. The Council have expressed not only an interest in general, but a practical partnership. Our community buildings' management have already agreed that we might work with them. Our next objective would be to work with the schools. This would be a positive step, not only to reduce the schools' electricity bills, but by hopefully engaging with the pupils, many of whom, research shows, already suffer from Climate Anxiety. We could encourage the students to see a future for themselves by using such positive and practical schemes. All this will be an ongoing process, with sharing information into the community and further expansion as we move forwards, gaining both community and financial involvement. But ... one step at a time.

We need to work fast as a world to reduce the speed of global warming. This scheme would be one small contribution to that but many small contributions add up, and the more we encourage each other, the more we will be able to slow climate change and reduce the effects worldwide.

Christine Wetherell: on behalf of the Neston Community Energy Group  
[nestoncommunityenergy@gmail.com](mailto:nestoncommunityenergy@gmail.com)

## Warmer Homes Article

### **‘Just Insulate!’**

Britain’s homes are some of the ‘leakiest’ in Europe. When we heat our homes escaping heat means that we use more fuel than we should have to, leading to greater fuel costs and excessive levels of CO2 emissions. Whilst there are a range of actions that can be taken to remedy this, the simplest and most effective is to improve the standards of home insulation.

Britain’s housing stock is older than that of most of the rest of Europe. The design of many older houses was such that air flow through buildings was encouraged as a means of preventing condensation. A second problem affecting British households has been the poor insulation standards imposed on developers and property builders. The outcome of this situation is that 18% of the UK’s CO2 emissions are generated by our domestic heating systems, whilst in many parts of our region the figure is significantly higher (on Wirral home heating accounts for 42% of emissions). Whilst emissions are an obvious cause for concern in the face of the climate crisis, the jump in fuel prices since 2022 has also seen increasing numbers of households fall into fuel poverty (where a household can be kept warm without bringing their income below the poverty threshold). In common with the general patterns of UK wealth distribution, the geographical distribution of this effect is skewed and areas of the country such as Merseyside have fuel poverty levels above the national average.

The government assesses the energy efficiency of our homes via the use of Energy Performance Certificates (EPC’s). Inspectors grade properties based on the heating source and insulation levels. The best rated (‘A’ grade) properties will most likely have renewable heating sources and be highly insulated. The government’s target is to have all homes at a ‘C’ level rating by 2030. The task involved here is demonstrated by looking at the data for Wirral. Figures from the Energy Efficiency Information Group ([theeeig.co.uk](http://theeeig.co.uk)) show that there are approximately 114,000 Wirral homes that have EPC ratings below C level and which therefore need upgrading.

The situation regarding privately owned homes is stark, but many people live in rented property and here the current situation is worse. Rented properties have poorer standards of insulation such that the government’s targets are to see these homes raised to an EPC rating of ‘E’ rather than the C target for private properties. Inevitably, the levels of fuel poverty and emissions are higher amongst households in the rented sector in comparison to owner occupied properties.

Improving the energy efficiency of our homes will require a number of actions. The source of domestic heat is clearly important. The National Audit Office (NAO) has recently published a report suggesting that the low uptake of air source heat pumps (predominately to replace gas boilers) is an urgent issue that the government has to address if it is to achieve decarbonisation targets. By December 2023, 18,900 pumps were installed as compared to government expectations of 50,000 installations. The government has a stated target of 600,000 installations by 2028. The NAO has suggested that the government needs to ‘engage every household to achieve its objective to decarbonise home heating as part of the transition to net zero’, according to NAO head Gareth Davies.

On Merseyside we have seen a recent move to improve home energy efficiency through the Liverpool City Regions (LCR) success in gaining funds through the competitive bidding processes that the government operates. This has led to households whose homes have EPC ratings of D or lower and with household incomes below £30,000, being able to apply for funding that, via the LCR’s contractor, leads to their home being upgraded to C rating. This is achieved through various measures, according to the specific nature of the property, but can include internal and external insulation and alternative energy sources (solar or heat pumps). We have also seen other helpful local initiatives. Liverpool City Council have introduced an innovative scheme aimed at improving the efficiency of rented properties. This scheme involves a ‘carrot and stick’ licensing and grant approach whereby properties are assessed and where landlords whose properties fall below an EPC E rating have access to grant funding for improving but who equally face sanction if improvements aren’t achieved.

## Warmer Homes Article contd

The measures above are to be welcomed and whilst it is certainly not the intention here to suggest that the move to renewables along with other measures are not necessary and welcome, there is a question about urgency, priority and cost effectiveness. Around 33% of UK homes have less than 125mm of loft insulation and 7.7 million homes with solid walls (91% of the total) have no solid wall insulation. On Merseyside insulation levels fall generally below the national average and, partly in consequence, the numbers of properties failing to reach EPC C standard, are above average.

The cost efficiency of targeting improved insulation is clear. For a detached property an installation cost of £630 will lead to annual cost savings of £590 per year. For a semi-detached property, installation costs of £480 will lead to annual savings of £355 per year.

Friends of the Earth, along with a number of other organisations, are calling for improving home insulation to be the first priority in the campaign to decarbonise our homes and help people either avoid or move out of fuel poverty. In addition to the financial savings, there is of course the reduction in emissions. Popular consumer website moneysupermarket.com quotes the CO2 saving of improved loft insulation for a detached house as being typically 1000kg per year, for a semi-detached property as being 620kg and for a terraced house being 550kg.

The call is for the government to implement a national home insulation strategy as a matter of priority. The benefits of this would be not only to address the urgent issues of fuel costs, fuel poverty and carbon emissions, but such a scheme would also create jobs and avoid the skills shortage that is currently causing blockages in the renewable industry. There does have to be an acknowledgement of the fiscal position facing the government in the short and medium terms but the argument is that an insulation scheme should form part of necessary expenditure and that it would surely form part of the 'green growth' strategy lauded by all the major political parties. As part of the next step in the Liverpool Friends of the Earth campaign we shall be writing to City Region MPs and candidates asking for them to commit to lobbying for such a scheme as a matter of environmental and economic priority.



For more information on the Friends of the Earth Campaign 'United for Warm Homes' visit <https://unitedforwarmhomes.uk/>

## Article on Climate Anxiety

How do you feel when you hear or read the latest figures about global warming? Do you worry that we have already reached the 1.5°C that the Paris Agreement agreed was the minimum 'safe level' for humanity to turn things around? Or that February is likely to be the warmest ever recorded globally? Or that the Arctic and Antarctic are now past the 'tipping point' of melting and parts being unable to refreeze, with global flooding the natural outcome. Tipping points are now past the 'tipping point' of melting and parts being unable to refreeze, with global flooding the natural outcome. Or many animals and other creatures are going extinct? Maybe you try and do your 'small bit', individually, or as part of a group or community, to slow down the effects of climate change.

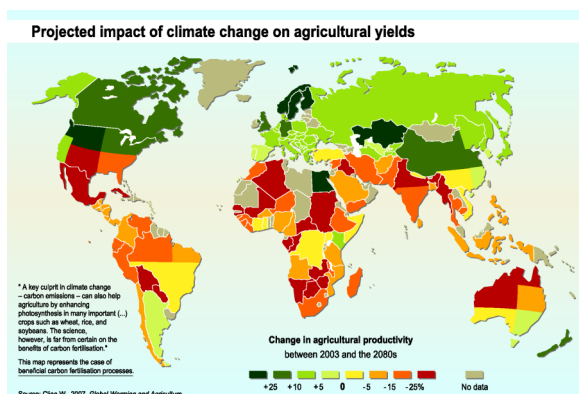
Or, do you ignore it all, and carry on with your normal lives because it is just too enormous, and you are comfortable with your lifestyle, Or, you may feel making small changes is just not worth it, the problem is too large, out of our control, but – every action is worth it. It is called 'the snowball effect' and every snowflake that sticks to the snowball increases its size and effectiveness.

Every action matters.

And your age and gender, does that make a difference? Studies across the western world show that between 75% and 80% of younger people, from secondary school level up, are 'terrified' of the future, and feel helpless, hopeless, that everything is now out of their control. They often refuse to speak to their parents about their fears, it being just too overwhelming. This factor is known as eco- or climate-anxiety. And although some schools are trying to help through 'eco-schools' and groups such as climate cafes (<https://www.climatepsychologyalliance.org>), this is yet another issue that leads to young peoples' anxiety about the future; many already (for instance) deciding not to have children themselves.

But, older people too suffer from severe eco-anxiety. Often the 'grandparent' generation, because not only do they remember a different world that they grew up in, but they often have a sense of guilt, that they unknowingly contributed to the issues we have now. As a result, they fear for their children and grandchildren and the future they could have. Often too, they remember the fear they had as children of a potential nuclear war (and we got so close ...), and relate to those childhood fears. Women are more likely to be conscious of this and more active than men (so the figures show!).

Climate change is felt more keenly in areas of poverty across the world. In colder climates, this is due to poor housing, little or no insulation in their homes, expensive heating, poor ventilation, leading to mould and other health issues. Their diets tend to be nutritionally poorer, full of microplastics and additives, because they are cheaper; or that is all that is available locally. In hotter climates, food is failing due to drought, unexpected floods, storms, loss of homes, habitat. This has ongoing social effects too, with families split apart, their local cultures damaged or disappearing. Floods are causing devastation to small low-lying islands, particularly in the southern hemisphere, again causing loss of homes and habitats. Climate change not only affects nature; it has a devastating effect on many people globally in much wider ways.





## Climate Anxiety contd

Yet it isn't all bad news. Many who freely admit to climate anxiety, including older people, use that to be proactive, to take small steps, to work together, to make a difference. Some will march, or protest; others will keep an eye on the science, or be part of a local group (or two); and share information and activities. There are simple ways to measure your own carbon footprint so that you know where to make improvements (WWF; Climate Hero; Giki; etc.) There are always 'tips' available online or they can be distributed to those who don't use the internet or those less deeply involved, demonstrating that everyone can make those small differences, step by step. And, we can always write letters, sign petitions, and if you are of a faith – pray and work within your faith community, or even better, across faith communities and non-faith communities.

But, it's not all bad news. People across the globe realise that time is short, so are working hard in many areas to alleviate the worst effects of global warming. There is progression in science, in new technologies in reducing plastic waste, and even the need for it; in green energy, as well as building materials such as green cement and steel. Nature can and is adapting, and we can all help that, even in small ways, but bigger ways too. We can make sure our diets are as environmentally friendly as possible, make sure we don't litter; that we recycle, and if we have a garden, use it well. If you have spare money, use it wisely, thinking of our children and grandchildren, and for others across our beautiful world. We do have some control over this issue, and we must use it to the best of our individual ability.

Since COP28, many international and national pension and investment companies are making the move away from oil and fossil fuel investments, and even the oil companies and countries are now making changes. Governments are, and must follow. And it all needs to be fast to gain the greatest benefits for the future. Greed for the 'quick buck' must be isolated, and shown up for the issue it is by us and for the future generations. We need to fight for a more equal world, and more equal society, so that poorest people can remake their lives in the places they call home, and do it well. And fighting for the reduction in global warming can be the trigger for all these needs.

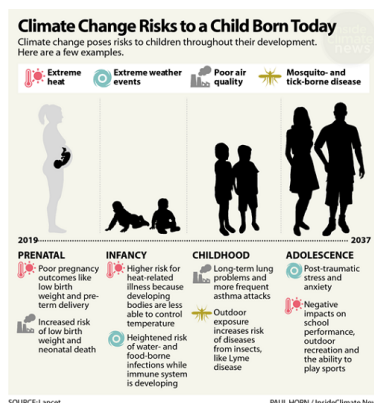
We are herd animals. At first, one or two animals might stray from the group and find better grazing, and then curious – one or two more follow, and soon the whole herd is on a different path of better food and living. We *can* do this; we *can* save the planet from the worst of climate change. We just all need to come together. To use our fear positively and not run or hide from it. To be generous and not selfish; to think of others before ourselves, and make this world a new, greener, safer place for the future generations that many of us may never see.

We have this one chance, right now.

Let us use it, right now.

Christine Wetherell.

Heswall Parish, Faiths4Change, Neston Earth Group. Chester Diocesan Environmental Group



## The Streets of London or No Faith in Fossil Fuels Lent Vigil

Why did I find myself on the streets of London overnight reflecting on the words of the folk song written by Ralph McTell? *'Let me take you by the hand and lead you through the streets of London show you something to make you change your mind...'*

Ralph McTell was singing about those in poverty after the Second World War. Today we are still experiencing poverty caused by wars but also by climate. In the words of Pope Francis, we need to 'hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor (Laudato Si' #49). It's just not fair that those who have done the least to cause the climate crisis are suffering the most. Creation is crying out with floods, wildfires, heatwaves, loss of biodiversity, famine which is wrecking lives, livelihoods and land. As UK is the sixth highest historic global emitter of greenhouse gasses, we have a duty to repair the damage we have done. This is climate justice. I took part in the Lent vigil to petition for climate justice and quite simply, because I could. Not everyone can travel to London and so I felt I should represent those who couldn't. I knew it would be a challenge, but Lent is a time to challenge ourselves.

The vigil was organised by many partners: Christian Aid, CAFOD, Salvation Army, Tearfund, Operation Noah, Arocha, Green Christian, Christian Climate Action (CCA) and more. They had worked together at the Big One in London in April 2023. Starting on Ash Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> February, it lasted for 10 days with people praying the whole of this time outside the House of Westminster literally on the street (actually the pavement). Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent, a time in the Christian year when Christians are asked to pray, fast and give alms, inspired by Jesus who spent 40 days in the desert before starting his ministry. The vigil started with an opening service at St John's Waterloo. On 18<sup>th</sup> February there was a multi-faith gathering and the vigil closed with a service outside Downing Street.

We were and are, asking for the UK government to:

1. Make the UK's biggest polluters pay for climate action.
2. Deliver and build on the UK's international climate finance pledges and pay into the UN's Loss & Damage Fund.
3. Ban new UK-based fossil fuel projects.

I took part from 11pm on 15<sup>th</sup> to 7am on 16<sup>th</sup> February and the same the following night. We were well prepared with warm waterproof clothes, a sleeping bag and chair, snacks and prayers. The first night there were four of us all night, myself from Wallasey and the others from Bristol, Abergavenny and South Shropshire. It was mild-I didn't need the sleeping bag, but it did rain for two hours, so we got a bit wet despite the survival bag. Several people who lived locally, in hostels or on the streets talked to us. It was so sad hearing their stories. Parliament Square was busy and noisy with traffic and sirens all night. Cyclists on bikes weaving in and out of the traffic, rickshaws with disco music and lights, delivery drivers, buses, and police in and out of the Carriage Gates as their shifts changed. It was always busy, never quiet, and bright enough to read by. From 2am whenever there was a lull in the traffic a blackbird could be heard singing each night. That felt hopeful.

The second night I had expected to see the same people on the street but didn't. Just after 11pm a group of young adults in their finery emerged from Westminster after a dinner engagement. They were Cambridge University students who talked to us about nuclear energy, air source heat pumps and climate protests. One student from Holland was amazed that we were out at night. He said the protest in the Netherlands were from 10am to 4pm, never this late!

After they left the friendly policeman came to check we were okay, but we didn't talk to anyone else that night. There were seven of us at times, two living locally joining for a few hours. It was good to be there and pray together. Sometimes we chatted. At other times we were quiet. The stamina of the others was amazing. One lady did a shift from 6pm to 7am after travelling from Bristol and then returning home. I slept for a few hours in the daytime didn't suffer from lack of sleep.

The support of the organising groups made the vigil possible. Local people in CCA provided accommodation and meals. During the daytime groups from all over the country arranged to come and lead prayers. Christian Aid also supported people with prayers to join in at home.

## Lent Vigil contd



Did you see any of the news coverage? The No Faith In Fossil Fuels Vigil featured in around 300 media outlets, including: The Evening Standard, The Church Times, The Daily Express and The Tablet.

It was featured on LBC radio, Radio Merseyside and in an interview by Jacob Rees-Mogg on GB News. I sent an invitation to my MP but didn't expect her to arrive overnight! Other MPs came out to join the vigil in the daytime. To prepare for my radio interviews I used the Climate Almanac (subtitle It's Not Too Late) and found it very useful having all the facts and figures to hand in one volume. Of the nine most important things we can do to make an impact on Climate Change, top of the list, according to Imperial College, London (Climate Almanac p21) is to make your voice heard by those in power. So please do so!

With an election looming take a look at Project Climate Vote [Project Climate Vote | Greenpeace UK](#)

Now I'm home I am very grateful to have taken part, to have met so many generous people committed to pray for justice and climate action. I'm encouraged to take part again when needed and would encourage others to do so. We can make a difference by praying and acting together. both for those on the streets of London and those around the world.

My parish, Holy Apostles and Martyrs in Wallasey, works with Faiths4Change in the Cool Wirral partnership helping us to live sustainably, reduce our carbon footprint and share best practice.

Please contact [zarah@faiths4change.org.uk](mailto:zarah@faiths4change.org.uk) to find out more and join in.

Anne Litherland



## CHESTER OAKS AND LIXWM LOGS – environmentally friendly tree surgeons

C.E.O John Joinson's lifelong passion for trees has led him to spearhead Chester oaks and Lixwm Logs, in Nanerch, North Wales. With 15 years as a tree surgeon, he coordinated the shift to electric saws, addressing his company's environmental commitment amid growing climate change concerns.

The shift from petrol to electric saws was initiated in 2022, yielding a multitude of benefits. Users experience significantly diminished noise levels as well as no exhaust fumes from the petrol engines. The batteries' capacity mirrors a tank of fuel in the chainsaw which also means fewer trips to buy petrol and 2 stroke oil, saving the environment with less driving to refuel.

Also due to the simplicity of electric engines compared to petrol engines means lower maintenance costs and replacement of equipment - using less of the planets resources.

Often tree surgeons are called into look at trees when people have a problem or need to remove a tree but Chester Oaks realise that trees are great sequestrators of carbon, oxygen produces, wildlife habitats and part of flood reduction, to name just a few of their attributes. Yet responsible tree management is essential for the on going life of many trees especially in urban environments and so opting for machinery that minimizes environmental harm proves beneficial to all.

All hardwood waste is repurposed into affordable fire wood for wood burning stoves, which has been barn dried for at least 18 months so again using the sun's warmth to dry the wood (not kiln dried - using precious resources). All wood not suitable for burning is chipped which people use in their gardens, stables and community schemes (most recurrently supplying green hub at St James Birkenhead and Wirral Environmental Network, WEN, with free wood chip) which all is working towards making Chester Oaks/ Lixwm Logs as carbon neutral as possible.

Their next steps include looking into how to create a log splitting machine which works off solar and electric vehicles.

They are based in Flintshire and cover Cheshire, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Wirral and Wrexham. For more information on this environmental company just look at their website at [chesteroaks.co.uk](http://chesteroaks.co.uk)



## Some gardening tips from Isabelle MacKenzie (aged 7)

WHAT TO DO IN SPRING:

FIRST YOU CAN PLANT SOME FLOWERS OR VEGEDEBULS.

WHAT YOU NEED:

Seeds

Plant pot

Water

Watering can

Soil

Sun

Voice

Gardening gloves

Gardening tools

WHAT TO DO:

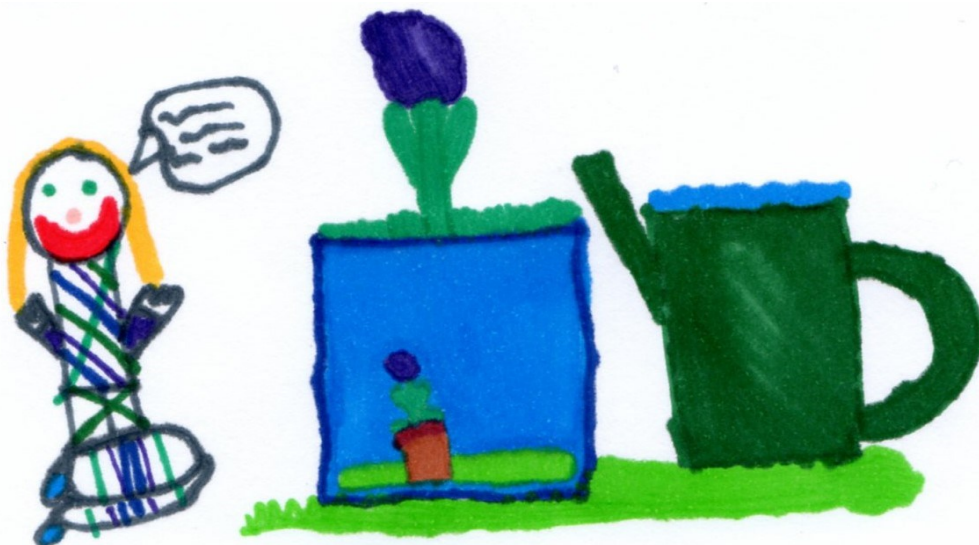
First get out all the things you need, put your gardening gloves on and make a hole in the soil.

Then put a few seeds in the hole, grab your spade and cover the hole.

Next put some water into your watering can and the spot where the hole was.

After that move your plant to a sunny place and make shore the rain can get to that spot.

Finally you can speak to your plant and remember to water and speak to your plant twice a week.



Fantastic gardening tips Isabelle—thank you!



**WEN News**

## Obituary



It is with great sadness that I am writing this tribute to our lovely friend Pat who sadly passed away in January 2024.

Pat was a founding member of the Wirral Environmental Crafters. She contributed a lot of her skills from her previous occupation as a seamstress.

Pat was very patient, happy, with a dry sense of humour that would have the group in fits of laughter. She was a lovely soul who would happily help anyone who needed it, as well as being a meticulous crafter who would undertake any challenge.

SHE WILL BE GREATLY MISSED BY ALL OF US



## Workshop—Cooking at WEN

WEN has been running a number of cooking sessions as part of 'Cool Wirral Climate Challenge' with Wirral Council and Bernie from 'Stripe and Spot Catering' to help residents join in the challenge.

Over the past few months there have been 2 main themes, love food hate waste and cooking from your allotment (seasonal cooking).

We looked at why we end up buying too much food? Wondering what to do with the leftovers? According to WRAP - in the UK 70% of food waste comes from households, equivalent to a value of over £14 billion a year and 20 million tonnes of greenhouse gas! Depending on the size of your household this could equate to approximately £720.00 per year!

The demonstrations focus on reducing our food waste and using up any leftovers. Saving the planet, whilst saving you money! We did a poll of what people tend to throw away and the reasons why then addressed these issues.

The sessions covered how to use food leftovers, how to grow more vegetables, and salad greens from your scraps and the bits that we throw out and then a food demonstration on making meals from foods you often have leftover in your fridge. Tasters were provided for attendees and recipe cards to take away and recreate at home.

We also ran a number of sessions linked with seasonal food that you could make from items from your allotment garden and the growing area based at Dibbinsdale walled garden, Spital and how we could possibly get the walled garden back into the public interest – all sessions were well attended so watch this space.



From one of the demonstrations by Bernie - love food, hate waste

WORKSHOP

# Slow Stitching

*with textile artist  
Sally-Anne Thompson*



Come along for a creative hand stitching workshop. We will learn some simple stitches which you can use to embellish, embroider and draw on beautiful vintage fabrics with a delicious range of coloured threads. An opportunity to slow down, relax, reflect and chat as you stitch and create your own story on cloth to take home and display!

**TASTER SESSION AT WIRRAL ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK  
FALKLAND ROAD, CH44 8ER**

**\* MONDAY 15TH APRIL \* 1-3.30PM \***

**£25 INCLUDES MATERIALS, NOTES AND TUITION**

**MOBILE : 07982 306 176 E MAIL : SALLYANNE1509@ME.COM**



**DATES FOR THE DIARY**

**WIRRAL ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK**  
Environmental education charity



# **SPRING FAIR**

**The Sandon Building**  
**Falkland Road, Wallasey CH44 8ER**  
**on Saturday 11th May 2024**  
**11am until 2pm**

**Stalls to include:**

**Plants inc flowers and edibles**

**Crafts**

**Crystals**

**Wood products**

**Bric a brac**

**Raffle**

**Delicious homemade cakes**



**CASH ONLY PLEASE**



*Donations are welcomed and much appreciated*

*Reg Charity No: 1068306*



## WEN Classes

### **GROWING FRUIT and VEGETABLES**

#### **Concentrating on salads and herbs for summer eating**

Discover and practise tasks you can do in your garden including growing and nurturing your plants from seed.

**Start Date Thursday 18th April, 9.30 - 12 noon**

**Cost £75.00 for 10 weeks**

To be held at WEN, Sandon Building, Falkland Road, Seacombe CH44 8ER  
For more information and to book on the course  
phone 07932 355742, 0151 6392121 or Email [carol.seery1@btinternet.com](mailto:carol.seery1@btinternet.com)



### **GARDEN HISTORY**

#### **To include visits to local gardens and green spaces**

Discover the history of gardens and enjoy visits to local gardens and interesting green spaces

**Start date Wednesday 17th April 12-2pm**

**Cost £60 for 10 weeks**

To be held at WEN, Sandon Building, Falkland Road, Seacombe CH44 8ER  
and around the Wirral

For more information and to book on the course  
phone 07932 355742, 0151 6392121 or Email [carol.seery1@btinternet.com](mailto:carol.seery1@btinternet.com)



WEN attends events across the Wirral – to learn more about events and activities that are taking place sign up to our fortnightly newsletter via <https://wirralenvironmentalnetwork.org.uk/about/newsletter>

# Support our charity by becoming a member

## WIRRAL ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK—MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

### Individual/Group

Join Wirral Environmental Network and show your commitment to an Eco Wirral!

#### Members receive:

Members newsletter – An exclusive newsletter for our members with the latest environmental activities, opportunities and events.

Content contribution – Advertise, write an article or share a story which can reach environmentally conscious audiences through our quarterly Magazine 'Evergreen', our wider email distribution list and our FB group.

Connections and network events – meet and learn from other groups and individuals to help you move your environmental goals forward.

Use of the building and gardens – Want to run a visit or host a class? Subject to availability, we allow our members to book and use the space.

Reduced education rates – Selected workshops and classes will have a WEN Member discount applied

#### Membership category subscription rates:

- Individual £12 (waged) £6 (unwaged)
- Household (same address) £18
- Group (voluntary/community) £18
- Businesses £36

Please circle your required membership

#### Payment by:

Bank transfer (with reference)

Standing order (with reference)

Direct Debit

Cheque (payable to Wirral Environmental Network)

Reference should be your name/group name

Bank Transfer/Standing Order to:

Sort code 08-90-86

Account number 50113675

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)

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

Please return this completed form to Wirral Environmental Network email: wen@la21.net or by post to WEN, Sandon Building, Falkland Road, Wallasey CH44 8ER

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 volunteers committed to the charity ideals.

**For Membership information, or for any other information contact Annie Jackson on 639 2121 or wen@la21.net**  
*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.*