



ANNUAL REVIEW 2024/25



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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: WEN Crafters, WEN Reclaimers, Falkland Road Organic Gardeners, Green Hub @ St James Garden, WEN Flower Arranging, Re-use & Recycling Projects, Cool Communities. E news & quarterly newsletter (Wirral Evergreen) - website - information service.

Trustees' report

This year, WEN has strengthened its role as a hub for environmental learning and action, expanding community engagement, membership, and impact. At our Seacombe-based Environmental Hub, we've enhanced facilities with a new craft gift shop, woodwork workshop, and expanded hireable spaces.

Despite setbacks like Storm Darragh damaging our polytunnel, our team and volunteers ensured swift recovery and continued improvements, including new garden seating and a second polytunnel.

We delivered a rich programme of environmental education, from gardening and biodiversity workshops to creative sessions like willow weaving and wreath-making. We welcomed diverse groups—from Wirral Met College students to eco-schoolteachers—and hosted events for Big Green Week, City Nature Challenge, and Wirral Walking Festival. Our training extended to topics like climate change, composting, and upcycling, reaching new audiences and organisations such as Wirral Mencap.

Our Big Green List now includes over 420 local eco-groups, and our digital reach continues to grow, with Facebook content viewed over 30,000 times monthly.

Projects like Clothes Swap Cafés and biodiversity improvements, supported by grants, have empowered communities to take sustainable action. We're also developing an 'eco-tool' library for schools and groups.

None of this would be possible without our incredible volunteers and members, whose dedication fuels our mission. We're proud to collaborate with over 30 community partners and supporters across the Wirral and beyond.

Dave Jones (Chair of Wirral Environmental Network)

WEN Crafters

The WEN Crafters continue to meet on alternate Tuesdays to produce items from recycled materials and to rehome new donations. This year, as well as making sales items for our newly established shop area in WEN, we have participated in the following:

3rd March

Members of the Crafters held a Craft Demonstration day. A range of activities were covered including the following makes: EARRINGS, RAG RUGS & NO SEW ANIMAL BLANKETS. All participants said how much they enjoyed the day, especially as they had something tangible to take home.

22nd MARCH

We provided some items for demonstration & sale for the wildlife fair at Birkenhead Park.

Throughout March and April we were busy making & selling Easter gifts and establishing a new display area to enable more flexible hire space in the building.

10th MAY WEN SPRING FAIR.

As well as an opportunity to interact with the local community we made a number of sales to boost the fundraising pot.

17th MAY. COOL HESWALL EVENT

Again an opportunity to interact with general public and network with other groups. It also resulted in many sales & adhoc donations that again have boosted our income stream.

3rd June NHS STAFF MINDFULNESS TRAINING DAY.

We were asked to participate in the above where we demonstrated techniques for no sew pet blankets & fabric wreath making. This session was very well received and resulted in a lot of very positive feedback, appreciation and thanks to WEN.

10th JUNE.

We did an open morning of our shop as part of WEN's Green week.

25th JUNE. COOL YOUTH WALLASEY TOWN HALL.

A representative of the craft group attended for the morning along with other WEN reps to raise the profile of the organisation.

JULY

We were offered a large donation of fabric & other materials from Alan, the husband of a much missed group member. Pat had been a professional seamstress and was an enthusiastic member of the group until her sudden death in January 2024. Like most crafters she had amassed a substantial variety of different materials. Two of us from the group spent the afternoon with Alan sorting through the collection. Taking this to WEN might hopefully help him move forward a little from her untimely death.

To accommodate the collection we recognised that there would have to be an overhaul of the storeroom, a mammoth task which a few of us undertook during July/August.

SEPTEMBER.

A Meeting with Liz from the Hedgehog Trust who gratefully took all the spare fabric unearthed from the overhaul. Liz & her colleagues, like us, make items to sell at events in support of the various charities they support. We have also been preparing an autumn display in advance of the WEN Cool Wirral Fest.

Linda Toseland.

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 2026 and hoping to grow more unusual varieties vegetables.

The garden classes have been well attended. These include practical gardening, History of gardening, Growing fruit, vegetables, and salads, A- Z of gardening, and the garden group. Plus a number of willow weaving workshops.

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 it just gets better and better every year.

We, with tremendous support and help from Bernie (volunteer) also grew and provided vegetable and pollinator plant packs for 60 schools this year and had representatives for the schools at WEN over a couple of days – that was a busy week.

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, very often unseen such as brushing the poly tunnel – thank you Nadine, to providing plants from home that just turn up, that make anyone who comes feel welcome and wanted - I say it every year because it is true, 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)

As usual when writing these reports the weather is the main topic. We all experienced a hot and a very dry spring and summer. This meant that fruit and tomatoes did well, but potatoes onions and beans suffered mainly from lack of water as well as the heat. This was despite great efforts from Alan who was a star with the hosepipe. Cabbage white caterpillars did exceptionally well this year and decimated all our brassicas at least twice. Not so many slugs though so that's one advantage.

A great success noticed by everyone who visited Falkland Road was the floral display provided by opium poppies, borage and foxgloves. These grew naturally in the raised beds and were left alone to provide pollination opportunities as well as fabulous colour.

FROG also helped Carol to prepare plants for work in schools and for sale at the fair. They helped at the WEN fairs and managed the tombola for the charity.

A grant to provide wood to mend the raised beds has been applied for with help from Naomi and we await the result.

Sad news as one of our members Chris Pitt died in May of MND. Judith had written an obituary. The funeral was well attended and a rose called Chris's Rose has been planted in the garden to remember him.

Judith Anton – Chair FROG.

Environmental Education and Sustainable Lifestyle Projects

We continue to act as a central point where individuals, communities and organizations learn about the environment and develop skills to address local and global challenges.

Over the course of this year, we have increased our community engagement and action, increased our reach and increased our membership.

Huge thanks to the team and volunteers that deliver and support our activities.

Environmental Hub – visitor centre & classrooms for sustainable living

WEN operates an environmental centre in Seacombe, providing formal and non-formal education including courses, projects and volunteering opportunities.

Thanks to recommendations by a volunteer, we have been steadily improving the centre and now have a **craft gift-shop, woodwork workshop** and enlarged **space** available for individuals and group members **to hire**.

Outside, our polytunnel didn't escape Storm Darragh and we lost the cover but swiftly dealt with by our insurers and recovered by our team and volunteers in time for the growing season. Volunteers have also been **improving the garden** with a second smaller polytunnel back in use and expanded seating areas.

Gardening and woodwork classes and **sessions** with a focus on the environment remain popular. Alongside our ongoing gardening and environmental courses, we hosted **WEN Crafters, WEN Reclaimers**, willow weaving and Christmas wreath sessions, pop up events, **garden parties, walker groups, corporate days** and our regular **eco fairs**.

We welcomed **external groups** including **young people** with learning difficulties from Wirral Met College, **work experience** students, writers and librarians as part of nature novel sessions, slow stitchers, **eco-schoolteachers**, sessions on the four elements, precious stones and history and **Cool Communities** meetings.

We ran sessions for the **Big Green Week** and the **City Nature Challenge** and led walks as part of Wirral Walking Festival.

Thanks to the Postcode Neighbourhood Trust we **improved the biodiversity** of our centre in Seacombe, St James Community Garden in Birkenhead North and the surrounding areas.

Training

During the year we finished the last of our training for Lifelong Learning, but continue to offer workshops, sessions, and courses at our hub on topics including **gardening, climate change, composting, energy, environment, food, reuse and recycling, upcycling**. Our **new woodwork** sessions and biodiversity sessions have attracted and engaged with a new audience.

We have delivered community-based training including to Wirral Mencap and workshops and talks for groups across the Wirral.

Network

Our Big Green List has grown by 60 organisations and now includes over **420 groups, charities and businesses** which actively work to protect and improve Wirral's environment and reduce our carbon emissions. We are grateful to a work experience student and a WEN volunteer for increasing and improving the list. We continue to work with Transition Town Liverpool and support the **Mersey Green Network Map**. We are a member of Cool Wirral and are particularly involved with **Cool Communities**.

We attended numerous **events** to promote environmental activity and organisations on the Wirral including Neston Earth Festival, Wirral Primary Science Conference at Eureka Science and Discovery, Wirral Primary School mock COP, Cool Heswall, Wirral Makefest and Earthfest.

There are a growing number of subscribers to our fortnightly e-news and social media channels highlighting environmental news and activity taking place on the Wirral. Our Facebook has over **3,000 followers** and on average content is viewed by followers and others over 30,000 times each month. Most viewed in 2024-25 included Clothes Swap Café at the Quirky Café in Hoylake, WEN Spring Fair in Seacombe, Wetland Restoration project in Hoylake, Wirral Climate Come Back event in Wallasey by Cool Youth and a wildlife event in Birkenhead Park.

Projects

We have grown our **library of equipment and materials** for schools and community groups to use. This work continues as we put together an 'eco-tool' library.

We worked with Wirral Borough Council, Energy Projects Plus and Faiths 4 Change to deliver environmental training and activities for **Climate Champions**.

Thanks to a grant from Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority, we ran **Clothes Swap Cafes** at cafes and community centres across the Wirral. The project has finished, but we are delighted that many of the community organisations and others are now continuing with Clothes Swaps, fashion shows and 'fill-a-bag' events. We support with kit, equipment and publicity.

The grant from the **Postcode Lottery** resulted in nature-based sessions and improved biodiversity around Falkland Road and

WEN continued to be a collection point for Wirral Free Uniform for Schools (FUSS) but are delighted that Egremont Community Centre has now taken on this role as a collection and distribution point. Huge thanks to the centre for all that they do.

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.

None of our work would be possible without the extraordinary help from our team of volunteers. 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.

Accounts Summary for 2024-25 financial year

INCOME FINANCIAL YEAR	2024-2025	2023-2024
	£	£
Bank Interest	378	58
Donations	8174	952
Grants	34053	28457
Events & Sales	5809	5242
Membership	972	540
Other Income	8805	5844
Room Hire	1919	1590
Service agreements (SLAs) and other income	3186	2703
Total Income	63296	45386
RESOURCES EXPENDED		
Environmental Education	47370	44839
Management of the Charity	12318	4410
Total Expenditure	59688	49249
NET INCOME FOR THE YEAR	3607	-3863
Balance brought forward (Excl shares)	54030	57893
CASH BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD	57637	54030
Current value of shares held	6669	6561
TOTAL ASSETS	64306	60591

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

Thank you

Trustees

Dave Brown (Treasurer), Dom Griffiths, Dave Jones (Chair), Anne Litherland, Dave Pye (Secretary), Claire Shields, Ben Shoebridge.

The WEN team

Annie Jackson (Membership Secretary)
Carol Seery (Sustainability & Horticulture)
Kenny Peers (Sustainability)
Laura Higginbottom (Online Communications)
Naomi Graham (Office Manager, Sustainability Officer)
Phil McHoul (Finance)
Raya Summerfield (Sustainability, Biodiversity, Volunteer Support)
Volunteers in our groups, at our events, for our projects and premises

Patrons

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

Membership

Individual 98, Group 31 (as of November 2025)

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

- Bee Wirral
- Callister Gardens
- Diversity Hub 67
- Eco Schools across Wirral
- Energy Projects Plus
- Eureka Science and Discovery
- Faiths4Change
- Joint Rotary Environment Group
- Grow Wellbeing
- Heart4Refugees
- Heswall Rotary
- Hope for the Future
- Liscard Links
- Liverpool City Region Households into Work
- Make it Happen, Birkenhead
- NEO
- St James Centre
- St Vincent de Paul
- Transition Town West Kirby
- Wirral CVS
- Wirral Council
- Wirral FUSS
- Wirral Lifelong Learning
- Wirral Makefest
- Wirral Metropolitan College
- Wirral Repair Cafe
- Wirral Unplugged

We are grateful to the support from

- B&Q
- Mayfield Woodlands Burial Ground
- Merseyside Recycling Waste Authority
- Postcode Lottery
- Radio Merseyside
- Veolia
- Wirral Borough Council
- Wirral CVS