



Barnston
Bidston Village
Birkenhead Park
Bromborough Pool
Bromborough Village
Caldy
Clifton Park
Eastham Village
Flaybrick Cemetery
Frankby Village
Gayton
Hamilton Square
Heswall Lower Village
Lower Bebington
Meols Drive
Mountwood
Oxton Village
Port Sunlight Village
Rock Park
Saughall Massie
The Kings Gap
The Magazines
Thornton Hough
Thurstaston
Wellington Road
West Kirby CA

Wirral Conservation at Risk Conservation Team to be Disbanded

In a shock announcement at a meeting between Forum officers Alan Chape and David Allan and the Council's Head of Regeneration David Ball, it was disclosed that Wirral's Conservation team, together with the post of Tree officer, was being disbanded.

David Ball gave an assurance that the Council will still deliver its Conservation service but in a different way. It would mean they would cease to employ specialist in-house officers but would set aside a sum of money to buy-in specialist advice previously provided by the Conservation team and Tree officer.

At the moment the conservation officers provide advice to the case officers on planning applications that have conservation and heritage implications. In the future, where specialist advice is required, this will be provided either by in-house, re-trained case officers or by buying in such advice from external sources.

In relation to the Tree officer the Council has a Technical Services department responsible for the care and maintenance of 6000 trees. This resource of staff would be linked to tree work applications together with specialist advice provided by external sources.

The Forum representatives expressed deep concern that the consultation process was being limited to staff and trade unions to the exclusion of the Conservation committees.

Given the statutory obligations of the Council to Wirral's 26 Conservation Areas, including two of international renown and several which had been designated 'at risk' by English Heritage, it was felt that the proposals would lead to an unacceptable diminution of service. They pointed out that the proposals did not address a whole range of other matters relating to maintaining the character of Wirral's

Conservation Areas such as overseeing their simple day to day care and management.

Forum chairman, Alan Chape has written to Wirral's Chief Executive, Graham Burgess expressing concerns about both the process and the content stressing the need for wider consultation with local Conservation and Civic societies who make up the Wirral Conservation Areas' Forum.

Subject to agreement by the Chief Executive, David Ball will attend the General Meeting of the Forum scheduled for 15th October at Port Sunlight where he will explain his proposals and answer questions.

Conservation at Risk

A Meeting/Conference
of WCAF will be held
at
The Museum Tea Rooms
Port Sunlight
on
Thursday 15th October
6.30pm for 7.00pm

Principal Speaker
David Ball

Given the implications for
Conservation in Wirral of the
Council's proposals you are strongly
urged to attend this vital meeting

Forum Friends!

Conscious of the need to keep Forum members closely informed about the work of the Forum Committee it has been decided that each committee member will take responsibility for three or four Forum members. Their task will be to keep in close contact with their delegated conservation committee to advise them of

general issues and to listen to concerns which will be reported back to the Forum Committee for action or advice.

The adjacent panels shows all Wirral's Conservation Areas with their designated 'Forum Friend' together with contact details. Please use them!



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From the minutes:

An extract from the minutes of the last Forum committee meeting

Invasive Species.

Currently WBC has no policy on invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam

Conservation Area Buffer Zone

The committee felt that there was also a need to define the value of a 'Buffer Zone.

Planners have to make a decision based on how a proposal would impact on a Conservation Area but it may well be important for them to consider what effect it might also have on the CA's immediate setting and whether this requires some additional control. Where a boundary is clearly defined, as in Port Sunlight this is not an issue. Where it is not so defined it could be an issue.

Local Development Framework

The LDF makes reference to a 'Heritage Local Plan' but as yet nothing has been published other than a commitment to prepare such a plan. Conservation areas and other heritage assets are referred to in the proposed specific settlement area policies but there is no overriding policy. A meeting will be requested with Andrew Fraser of Forward Planning to clarify this issue.



Heswall Conservation Area - centre of Heswall