



There are now 100 plus of these recycled-plastic benches on the prom at New Brighton. An initiative of Wirral Older People's Parliament. If you would like to sponsor a bench contact coordinator, Brian Christian c/o Hoylake Community Centre, 0151 632 5170 or email: brian@wirralopp.co.uk

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENT

As we celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Society's founding, such an occasion provides the opportunity both to look back over those years, at what has happened in the peninsula during that time, to consider how things are currently, and to look forward to how it might fare in the future.

Looking at an Ordinance Survey map of the peninsula, published in the early years of the last Century and just a few years before our founding, it was an interesting reminder to note just how sparsely developed it was.

The country's population at that time was half what it is now, and the Wirral was predominantly rural and sparsely populated. The significant uncontrolled growth that took place as the century progressed was thankfully brought under some measure of control by various pieces of legislation - notably the 1947 Town & Country Planning Act and, later, subsidiary legislation introducing the Green Belt principle in 1953.

Nevertheless, substantial development continued in the post-war years through to the 1960's, which gradually urbanised many of its villages and small towns.

Both former County Councils of Cheshire and Merseyside designated Green Belts. That of Merseyside, which drew a tight Green Belt around north Wirral's urban fringe in 1983, was an inspired move which has been largely maintained by Wirral Council and currently contains further spread. As to the future, the Society will continue to be supportive of new housing. However, we would not wish to see an erosion of the peninsula's unique character by developers who seek to further urbanise the peninsula, by developing protected open land, especially farm land. We are optimistic that this pressure can be resisted.

There are a variety of groups who keep an active watch on Wirral issues including:
ITPAS - irby, Thurstaston and Pensby Amenity Society -

CAW - Conservation Areas Wirral - www.cawirral.org.uk

Wirral Footpaths and Open Spaces Society (Google their name and follow the link to their website)

Also useful - Wirral Rights of Way Officer, Robin Touchings, email - walking@wirral.gov.uk Phone: 0151 606 2480

Editor, production, photos and Instagram - Judith Railton, 22 Bracken Lane, CH63 2LZ
Hon. Secretary - David Casement , 5 Cornwall Drive, Prenton CH43 0RW, 0151-608-3039
Membership - Avril Wilmhurst, 6 Robins Croft, Great Sutton, CH66 2LQ, 0151-200-3920
Website, Facebook and Twitter - Nick Lauro Printer - D.B. Print
Copies of Wirral Matters are available in all peninsula libraries and are sent to all Wirral councillors. Copies go to Archives of Wirral, Chester, The British Library and Scottish Deposits



WIRRAL MATTERS

News and Views from The Wirral Society - founded 1928

The Wirral Committee of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)

President: Professor John Tarn OBE DL FRIBA FRSA FRHistS FSA

www.wirralsociety.net FACEBOOK – The Wirral Society

INSTAGRAM - @the_wirral_society TWITTER - @wirralsociety

CELEBRATING 90 YEARS - SPRING 2018



Chris Cureton of British Divers Marine Life Rescue Service releases, at New Brighton, a young seal that has been stranded on the shallow beach at Southport.

Chris is one of 3500 volunteer medics who pay for their own training and equipment. They rescue live marine mammals, collect data for the cetacean stranding investigation program and collate information on dead animals.

“The thing I like most about our charity is that it is a charity in its purest form - no big salaries, only three employees. Every penny we raise goes on animal rescue.”

Lots more info on www.bdmlr.org.uk

See video footage of the seal release on our Instagram gallery and Facebook pages of both Radio Merseyside and Judith Railton. The release video is on wirralweather.com and appeared on BBC NW Tonight

Not so lucky - washed up on New Brighton beach after more severe storms - an adult seal and a cormorant



Green Belt Matters

Wirral Borough Council Area

At Saughall Massie, we are surprised that the “essential” Fire Station at Saughall Massie has not yet started construction. Perhaps other issues are impacting. We can only hope that the Fire Authority decides that spending some £4.6m to move the Upton Station a mile down the road to Saughall Massie is “not appropriate”.

At Eastham Village, we were very disappointed and surprised that the Council voted to accept the “enabling development” for the rugby club. The support for the development by the local Liberal Democrat Councillors may have been significant.

At Storeton Hall, the Planning Committee voted unanimously to reject the “enabling development” to fund the preservation of Storeton Hall.

The value of the “enabling development” and to what it would be applied was questioned.

We have objected to the proposals for a “Retirement Complex” at Thornton Hough along with the local group. Whilst we can see the need for such a development, the location “out in the wilds” of Thornton Hough with the loss of Green Belt land would not appear “sustainable”.

The great Hoylake Golf Resort saga drags on. We now know that the Labour Cabinet have approved a loan of up to £26m that they will take out (at our risk) and then lend to the developer.

What happens if the developer fails needs to be fully defined.

The Local M.P., Margaret Greenwood, called a public meeting in December, that was packed out with objectors. Many more had to be turned away due to lack of space.

To support The Wirral Society’s pressure on Margaret Greenwood we would encourage all members in the locality to write to Margaret and the local Councillors expressing your concerns. The more letters the politicians receive the more likely they are to “move”. We need to remember there are local Council elections this year in May!

We are awaiting the decision by the Secretary of State, Sajid Javid, whether he will take over the Local Plan from Wirral Council. This may result in a plan with a more realistic economic growth forecast, and hence a much reduced, but relevant housing “need”, perhaps removing the need for the Green Belt review that the Council is imposing.

It’s good news that Peel Holdings is pressing ahead with plans to develop over 1,000 housing units at the “Northbank” site at Wirral Waters on the Wallasey side of the dock system. We are also hopeful that this will significantly help in the Council’s need to demonstrate a 5-year supply of developable land without the need to force the release of Green Belt land for development.

Cheshire West and Chester Council Area

In comparison to The Wirral, this borough is nearing finalisation of its Local Plan, defining areas of development, green space etc., resulting on much reduced planning “activity”.

We understand that the proposal for “Fracking” at Ellesmere Port has been refused.

If anyone has any issues with their local Green Belt, please contact

planning@wirralsociety.net

T Neil Parry, Green Belt Coordinator, The Wirral Society, CPRE Wirral



Hooton Hangars

The Wirral Society recently gave a donation to The Hooton Park Trust for their work in repairing the World War 1 aircraft hangars which form part of a fascinating museum. Visit their website for more info and how to donate, they are looking for funds to complete the roof and ends so the building can be put into use.

The Trust is also happy to announce an exciting new project - a community archaeological dig at Hooton. www.hootonparktrust.co.uk

Before and after photos - credit The Hooton Park Trust



Alan Brack - a tribute

From potholes to politics, from the NSPCC to wind farms

Alan was the Editor of Wirral Matters for 15 years after 3 years in the demanding position of Minutes Secretary. He continued to contribute his column for several years after I took over the newsletter. He commented on the original space age artist’s impressions for Wirral Waters and the possible uses for Birkenhead Town Hall.

Alan received a guinea (105p) for a humorous verse in 1937 when he was sixteen and told me he’d never said ‘no’ to an editor ever since. He wrote on the technical, the trivial, the moving, and interviewed a vast range of people in his long career. He wrote widely on the Wirral Peninsula in an array of books, articles and newspapers.

JR

Be a litter picker-upper

There are various local groups of volunteers you can join - On footpaths, cycle routes and coastlines.

Text Janet Gregory on 07719 282243, for Bromborough, Port Sunlight and cycle route 56 to Neston...

The High Tidiers meet at West Kirby locations. www.wirralview.com and on Facebook

The New Brighteners, see their Facebook page, collect at New Brighton and are constantly working on a free community fairy village in Vale Park and The Black Pearl driftwood pirate ship.

Or if you have a bag just do a 2 minute beach or countryside clean wherever you are.

