



WIRRAL MATTERS

News and Views from The Wirral Society - founded 1928

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

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Winter 2019/20 - THERE'S A LOT ABOUT TREES

INSPIRING GOOD NEWS

**A Friends group work together to restore Benty Hey Woods in Bebington
Awarded the status of 'Asset of Community Value' for 6 years.**

Their aims -

- **To manage the woodland effectively, develop community involvement, restore and improve security and access, bring affordable events to the woods, educate on and protect the varied wildlife ,history, heritage and legacy, promote health, fitness and inclusion**
- **The Friends have cleared rubbish and undergrowth to make a safe health walk, where bluebells and wild garlic grow once more. Fruit trees have been planted, hedgehogs have been reintroduced.**
- **In a special ceremony, late in November, 5 trees from the Woodland Trust under the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy Scheme were planted, by local schoolchildren, MP , WBC councillor and vicar , with the support of Rangers from Port Sunlight River Park and representatives from scouts and guiding. The Friends welcomed all, including the youngest and oldest Brackenwood residents, under an auspicious rainbow and sun filtering through the tracteries of the trees.**



- **Dr. Hilary Ash , Honorary Conservation Officer for Wirral Wildlife Trust has made a survey and advised.**



Proposed Hoylake Golf Resort Saga: The Council in 2016 entered into a development agreement with the developers Nicklaus Joint Venture Group - NJVG.

This would put the Council at risk (our money again) if it were to withdraw. Nothing has been heard of what NJVG may – or may not - be doing 'behind the scenes' in finding private finance.

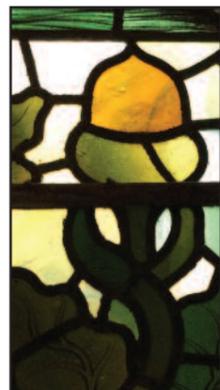
Hopefully the Council's new realisation of the value of Green Belt and farmland will keep this land undeveloped and available for food production, which is quite useful after all.

The Wirral Society has contacted the West Kirby Charity, one of the landowners key to the Hoylake Golf Resort development to try and understand how they got involved in this Golf Resort "scheme".

Boathouse Lane in Parkgate: There has recently been an Application to build a house , which was to be largely underground. Whilst the building would barely be visible, the Society still supported the Parkgate Society in its objection to the scheme, on grounds that it would set an undesirable precedent in the Cheshire Green Belt. Cheshire West and Chester Council agreed with this view and has rejected the proposal

Proposed Care Home development on Glebe land at Rectory Road, West Kirby: A public meeting was held recently in a packed St Bridget's Church. Various presentations in opposition were heard, including one from us in the Society. Unanimous political support to oppose such proposals was voiced. St Bridget's Church Parochial Church Council (PCC) has met with Diocesan representatives, who own the land, and left them in no doubt of the strength of opposition to the proposals. A newly-formed local group is very active, pursuing all possible avenues of opposition to the scheme. This Society is ready to ensure the Council upholds its own strong policy for the protection of this land within the West Kirby Old Village Conservation Area, should a planning application being received.

Photos: Public Meeting at St Bridget's Church (Courtesy: Olivia Lightfoot-Ward).
Rectory Road field, (The Wirral Society)



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Copies are available in all peninsula libraries and sent to all local councillors and MPs.
Sent to the Archives of Wirral, Chester, The British Library and Scottish Deposits

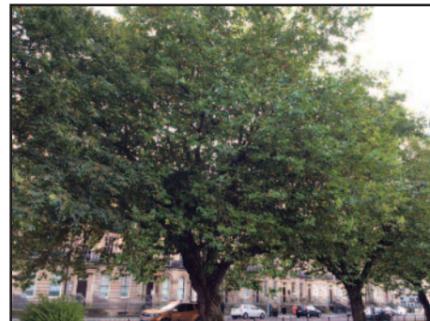
Trees in a changing climate - conference at Birkenhead Town Hall

The Tree Council Forum for the North of England in partnership with Wirral Borough Council & Wirral Initiative on Trees - October 2019

Trees are now seriously considered to be good for health, the economy, carbon offset, in government, in planning, in economics. Businesses consider relocating to places with thoughtfully planted trees, or consciously decide not to move to barren spaces.

Speakers included Prof Alan Simson on Urban Forestry, with imaginative and successful examples from both Europe and Britain: Kenton Rogers, co-founder of Treeconomics, works on high profile tree projects in Canada, Germany, Cyprus and North Africa. He encourages the mapping of the trees in your area using the iTree app. We heard Dealga O'Callaghan, Arboricultural Consultant and Michael Anders the Tree Risk Management Coordinator for WBC. Sara Lom and John Stokes from The Tree Council gave an overview of the work of the Tree Council and talked about ash dieback and its potentially huge impact on tree numbers.

Wirral's Tree Strategy over ten years aims to raise tree cover in the Borough to at least 10% . Based on the right tree for the right place. Diversity not mono planting. For every tree felled , two more will be planted. Working together with groups and individuals.



If you could only save one tree in Hamilton Square what would it be ?

The discussion pointed up the sort of arguments that go on with tree policies everywhere.

Do we save the holly as it could well be one of the few original trees in the design of the gardens?

Another may be rare, old, or the case of an ash , the one that survives the ash die back disease that is promising to destroy many thousands of mature trees.

Do we cut down a tree because is diseased, dangerous, needs too much maintenance?

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Flooding - consider a permeable surface for your drive or garden. Run off from hard surfaces adds to water rush and local flooding.

The Society Supports WCV and the Hedge Layers - by David Casement

On Saturday, 16th November, 2019, The Countryside Volunteers held a hedge laying training day, supported by twenty folk who were willing to learn or train others.



Folk came from as far away as Northwich and the Isle of Man as well as from Liverpool John Moores University Conservation Society. This event was a repeat of the event held in November 2018 when 150 yards of hedge were layered. That length of hedge now shows a growth of 5 feet on the hawthorn stool and 8 feet of growth on the hazel stool and the hedge is thickening, the expected outcome.

Now, a further 150 yards has been layered and this reaches the bus stop and beyond on the opposite side of Woodchurch Road to the Woodchurch estate near the Asda store. The photographs show some of the folk who attended and their handiwork.

The Society supports the work of the Wirral Countryside Volunteers financially though buying much needed tools for their work on the peninsula.

Photos by David Casement.

This page, John Barnett , Wirral hedge-layer, between Jess and Shaun

Previous page - from L - Paul Loughnane, Paul Arnold , Cheshire Ploughing and Hedge-laying Society judge, Colin Chapman - Open Cheshire Class Champion at the National Hedge-laying Competition and Phil Pullen , a hedge-layer from the Isle of Man

Chair's Report and Current Society Casework - for updates , visit our website

Wirral Borough Council's Local Plan

There is continuing uncertainty over Wirral Council's long overdue draft Local Plan. The Council says its publication is now "on target", and will feature no Green Belt release. However, we learn that whilst the 'Preferred Option' is of no Green Belt Release /Development, other Options would involve the release and development of Green Belt. So we still consider there to be a continuing threat.

The Society is convinced the best way such a threat can be removed is for the Council to undertake a proper assessment of the Borough's actual housing needs, which it seems unwilling to do. We are currently in correspondence with the Government asking why it is not insisting on the Council undertaking this work.

It appears that the latest approach for desecrating our Green Belt is to gradually increase the number of stables and barns, and then to look for an allowance of this space to be used for a residence.

Whilst stables and barns MAY be permitted in the Green Belt the Wirral Society is, with local groups, strongly opposing these developments.

So, the fight to Save Wirral Green Belt in the Borough, goes on!!

Climate Change

Both Wirral Council & Cheshire West Councils have agreed to take action to decide what measures they can take to address various environmental issues. It would seem that what will underpin the success of the whole initiative, is what funding can be made available. The most obvious short-term plan would be planting more trees - by both encouraging private initiatives and especially via the Mersey Forest organisation, Whilst Cheshire West Council subscribes to it, the Wirral Council currently does not. We do know however that Wirral Council has committed itself to a major tree-planting programme. The Society will be keen to give support to such aspirations, wherever possible.

Contact the Society if you know of a good place for trees to be planted.

Thornton Hough: Although the application for a "Retirement Complex" in the Green Belt at Thornton Hough has been refused by Wirral Council, it is likely there will be an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate!