



## Gardens in Schools – Celebrating growing success in Wirral

This very successful and much appreciated two year project run by Wirral LA21 Network has now come to an end. A celebration event was held in a marquee in Central Park's beautiful walled garden on 24<sup>th</sup> June, for the schools involved. Displays in a marquee showed examples of what the schools had grown, activities that had taken place, and how the project had enhanced the children's learning across the curriculum.



Eleven schools took part in the project: Cole Street Primary School, St Joseph's RC Primary School, Kilgarth School, Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School, Egremont Primary School, Woodchurch C of E Primary School, Hayfield School, Portland Primary School, Park High School, Prenton High School and Woodchurch High School.



Carol Williams, representing the Grass Roots European funding body, presented framed certificates to representatives of the schools present at the celebration; certificates were also provided for each child.

Project leader Carol Seery said, 'It's been a fantastic success, from an enjoyment and an academic point of view. One school found in recent tests that children who had participated in the garden project were one year ahead in Science compared to those who had not. In some schools teachers have been asked to try to link the gardens in with as many areas of the curriculum as possible. Another school is now hoping to run a BTec in horticulture.'

Jeff Hughes, project worker, commented, 'Parts of school grounds that had been unused are now an asset to the school. The after school club now has a whole new interest.'

One high school where a group of students has been working on a local allotment as part of the project has been working in partnership with Wirral LA21 Network to run a Green Fair.

Project worker Alison Mawdsley said, 'Encouraging an early interest in gardening will stand young people in good stead for the future. Growing your own food is a great thing to do, providing fresh, healthy produce at low cost, and reducing reliance on supermarkets. From an environmental point of view, the issue of 'food miles' becomes irrelevant when the lettuce you have picked has only travelled up your garden path or from a local allotment!'



Project staff organised training sessions recently to give schools ideas on how to keep the gardens going as valuable resources, now that project funding has run out.

There's great scope for making sure today's children grow up with the confidence and keenness to enable them to grow at least some of their own food. As Monty Don, tv gardener and writer said at the Hay Festival recently, 'Everyone should be growing something edible, even if it's only on a windowsill and it's a pot of basil.'

## **STOP PRESS! WE'RE MOVING!**

We apologise for the inconvenience but we will be unable to answer any questions or queries during the week of the 14th of July as we are moving office.

If you have any queries, please contact the office by email on [info@la21.net](mailto:info@la21.net) and we will reply as soon as we can.

Our new address will be the Wirral Environment Centre, Falkland Road, Wallasey, CH44 8ER Phone and Fax remain the same. Our first community planting day at the new site is 24th of July 12-3, first come first served. (*You just can't keep a good charity down—ED*)

## **Ness Garden hidden treasure remembered**

Back in 1994 Wirral Green Alliance (as we were all those years ago) helped plant an environmental time capsule in Ness Gardens. On the anniversary every year, we all get together to celebrate the time capsule and ensure that in the future, people will know where to find it.

During this year's time capsule anniversary celebrations at award-winning Ness Gardens, children were asked what they would put in a time capsule now, to be opened in fifty years to show the people of the future what our lives were like, and the impact we were having on the environment.

Here is a selection of suggestions the children made – some obviously did not grasp the practicalities of sealing something in a time capsule for fifty years, and some suggestions were of things so intangible it's hard to see how they could be represented, but their ideas make interesting reading!

Niall, 11: A tv. A description of myself. Instructions on how to recycle. What to recycle.  
Nessa and Abby, 6: Love and peace.  
Amelia, 10: Candy floss and Neston Fair.  
Bethany, 11: Good and bad things - peace (dove), love (heart), rubbish.  
Maddy, 6: A flower and grass.  
Ronan, 8: A Playstation.  
Niamh, 9: Trees, Brownies, Cubs, clothes, hamsters, tv, Nintendo, garden flowers, chocolate, recycling bins, cool shoes.  
Lucas, 10: My money collection and my Playstation, special stones, empty bottle, cardboard, metal, cotton wool.  
Anonymous: Set of coins with this year's date and a newspaper.  
Anonymous: Picture of a Fairtrade sign, and a rich man giving a poor lady money.  
Anonymous: Mobile phone  
Anonymous (very young writing!): Good - tree, flower, food. Bad – mean, ugly.

## **How important are Bees anyway?**

**In October 2006** Pennsylvania beekeeper Dave Hackenberg delivered 400 beehives to a Florida farm to pollinate crops. When he returned several weeks later, the bees had completely disappeared. This was the first recorded case of Colony Collapse Disorder. This has now spread throughout 24 states in the USA, with some beekeepers losing up to 70% of their hives.

A range of possible causes is being explored. In the USA huge monocrop farming systems are removing natural diversity. Bees have been lumped together in the millions, in a factory farm type environment not so unlike that of our chickens and other livestock animals. Many of these bees are transported across several states to orchards and farms around the country. Today they are in contact with

substances they shouldn't have to deal with - pesticides, herbicides, antibiotics, and pollen from genetically modified crops.

Not only are bees important for the honey they produce, but much, much more important as pollinators of many fruit, vegetable and nut crops. Bees pollinate more than \$14bn (£7bn) worth of US seeds and crops each year. The US almond crop, for example, is entirely dependent on pollination by bees.

Accumulating reports tell us that the problem is not constrained to the U.S. alone - but that, to one degree or another, empty hives are becoming common in Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Switzerland, Poland, and now possibly the UK.

<http://www.britishbee.org.uk/>

## Tree Wardens Step Up during Trees Love Care Season

At their quarterly meeting, Wirral Tree Wardens stepped up to the organisational problems facing many voluntary groups, allocation of officer roles.

A call went out to all tree wardens registered on Wirral to register their willingness to take on one of the roles to help take the tree wardens into the future. In the past few years since the group started, Wirral Tree Wardens have helped plant hundreds of tree, including fundraising to buy nearly a hundred trees, and have been donated nearly the same amount. They have raised awareness of trees at risk, run tree identification walks with Wirral Rangers and even helped in the big tree give-away in Dibbinsdale country park. All this organised by one woman, Janet Thorning with the help of a small but dedicated team.

Now Wirral Tree Wardens has grown to big for just one person to run, so the members have all been asked to form a proper committee to help with the expansion of the tree wardens activities.

Anyone wishing to find out more about the Wirral Tree Wardens Scheme should contact the office on 639 2121 or go to [www.wirraltreewardens.co.uk](http://www.wirraltreewardens.co.uk)

Our tree nursery of donated trees is looked after by the volunteers of the community gardens and we thank them for their help. We are always looking out for a project in which to plant the future more established members of our tree nursery.

We will happily help you plant your trees, giving you advice on all aspects of maintenance including summer watering (always water trees at least once a week. In a drought three times a week is best, even if it's throwing the contents of the washing up bowl over them after dinner) Winter maintenance (check at the beginning and end of the growing season to see how tight the tree ties are and loosen if necessary.)

For more tips on the Trees Love Care campaign please go to our website as shown above.or call us at the Wirral LA21 Network Office on 639 2121.

## Clean foil recycling is back

The can recycling project has changed its name to **Re-Can**. The project was seasonally nominated for an award throw the Community Foundation for Merseyside. This was under the section of green projects.

Re-Can provides a can recycling project within the day centre for adults with learning disability. The project is supported by a member of the staff team and by volunteers, the project currently processes around 2,000 cans per month. Re-Can are also collecting and processing old ink cartridges and unused mobile phones.

Re- Can are going to start recycling

aluminium foil! This is going to be collected though the use of two collection bins on Wirral, one placed at Iceland in Moreton and the other in Tesco in Heswall. You can also bring foil to the Moreton Day Centre on Pasture Road.

Re- Can at present needs volunteers and students to process its cans, but we are always looking for more help and funding, in order to expand the project.

For more information please contact Dave Hughes and Marie Nelson at Moreton Day Centre on 0151-604-3666

## Woodchurch Community Garden

Wirral LA21 Network have created, with the residents of Woodchurch, a garden outside the Library and Ganneys Meadow Early Learning Center. it is for anyone to use and is already in use by the adult and children's reading groups in the few sunny days that we have had.

It contains flower and herb beds, seating which includes a story teller's chair made especially for the library from oak by a local

tree surgeon. It also contains quotes which have been put around the garden.



## Plants on Plates

Plants on Plates is a community gardening and allotment project that does exactly what it says – it puts plants on plates!



The community project has been running since 2000, when we began on the waste land at the back of the Manor Trust buildings on Gorsey Lane. It started by running an introductory course on Organic Gardening, which was a NVQ accredited course. The garden and links grew over the years, attracting a number of volunteers, running various courses, including willow weaving, organic gardening courses and herbal medicine. We made links with various groups throughout the building over those years. The children's nursery was given some space in the garden, where they grew fruit and vegetables, having great fun outdoors and harvesting what they had grown. The café inside served some of the salad over the summer months and we ran a healthy eating day in conjunction with Wallasey Time Bank. This was where we provided produce and they came in and prepared a lunch, which was shared by all. We accumulated points which could then be exchanged for other services, such as dog walking, babysitting, repairs and alternative therapies.

Social Services Central Park project were involved for several years on a weekly basis, helping people with learning difficulties and mental health issues to be involved in the community. Wirral Metropolitan College was based at Gorsey Lane and many groups from there benefited from having a peaceful and beautiful space to sit out in during breaks and

lunchtimes. We even saw people from Energy Projects Plus, our Sister Charity, venture out into daylight!!

A couple of hugely successful open days were put on, inviting the public from the local community and surrounding area to come and see what was on offer and help to raise funds for both the project and the organisation. These were great fun with BBQ's, live music, stalls, produce from the garden and SUNSHINE – yes we really did provide sunshine for these events!!

The project was hugely successful and ran up until a couple of years ago, when the council announced that the whole of the Manor Trust site was to be closed and demolished. This was a huge blow to our project and everyone else within the Manor Trust buildings, especially as the community network had really built up and the site was well used. Unfortunately this meant we lost all our facilities too, including access to the office, space to run courses from - which means loss of a kitchen area, washing area, hot water and clean toilets and income for both the charity and project. We had a plan up our sleeves though (sort of!) – in approximately 2003 the council kindly provided a special gateway into the secret garden – better known as the allotments on the Ilford Avenue site! This allowed us to extend the project and was a blessing in disguise after the closure announcement. Our work had not been in vain after all!

Since 2003 our plots have grown in number to four – maybe it is the chemical free ethos we employ in our growing methods?! We have recently moved the polytunnel onto one of the plots, which is up and running and has given us our first of many harvests this season. We are inserting another new pond and hoping to rebuild one of the dilapidated sheds on the site.

We currently have an average of 12 volunteers, with a mixture of new and old faces, with new people coming in all the time. As well as individuals, we have links with Social Services, Alternative Futures (a project that works with people who have learning disabilities and/or mental health issues), New Deal, Wirral CVS and more recently, local primary schools are bringing groups of children to visit and get some hands on experience in the allotments. People have expressed various reasons for wanting to be involved in the project; to learn new things, hands on gardening rather



than classroom learning, rewards of what has been sown, to learn within a group environment as gardening/allotment for complete beginners is too overwhelming to do it alone, enjoyment of being outdoors, socialise, meet new people, to name a few.

We currently have two funding applications in and have just been successful in receiving £3000. We are hoping to secure further funding so that we can open for 2 days, enabling us to attract more groups from the local community and employ a project worker to take overall responsibility for the groups. We are hoping also to continue offering various courses, such as willow weaving and healthy eating days – depending on suitable premises.

Wirral LA21 Network's project continues

with its ethos of wanting to awaken and spark people's interest in sustainability, environmental and issues, helping to promote the health and well being of individuals, communities and our planet. The charity's project has been g(r)o(w)ing for eight years now. There are still two of the original members from the community garden working with the project, which I personally think is brilliant. I think the charity should be very proud of this fact, as I don't believe there are many charities that can say they have long standing volunteers or a ongoing project for eight years now? Maybe we are the Mare's Tail or dandelions of the charity?! It doesn't matter what you put on us, we just come back and keep on growing!!

Plants on Plates community allotment project currently meets on Tuesdays, any time from 9am. If you have any ideas, comments or suggestions or would just like more information, please contact **Jeff, Clare or Lena on 639 2121 or email [info@la21.net](mailto:info@la21.net)**.

***So the name's the same – it's just the plot that is different!***

**By Clare Roberts**

WLN is a registered charity no. 1068306 and a company Limited by guarantee registration no.3462312

## Get into Gardening with W L N

Did you know that Wirral LA21 Network can help you learn even more about growing plants and food? If you have a Wednesday morning free, come along to our ten week starter course in Horticulture and find out the science behind growing successfully. Carol Seery is an experienced Horticulturist and Tutor, who works for us teaching people from school children to the happily retired and everyone in between. Her years of experience make her the ideal tutor to work with us on helping anyone learn the skills needed to grow any plants more successfully and add to your hands-on knowledge base. If you don't have this and still want to learn more, then this course is still for you as Carol is an expert ***(as a long term grower, I have no problem asking her the simplest of questions—Ed)***. The course itself will actually take you part of the way to a

qualification in horticulture and starts again in September at our new site, in Falkland Road, Wallasey. For more information or details of how to register for the horticulture course please call 639 2121.

But if a formal education with practical course doesn't appeal why not join on of our community allotments currently running? Details are listed above and below. Or if you are in the Tranmere area, why not drop into Tranmere alliance's allotment, details from their office on church road.

Wednesday Mornings 10am—1pm. The walled garden in Central Park Wallasey is secure so tools can be left on site. Woodchurch planning sessions are held at the Methodist Centre on the last Thursday of the month 3-4pm and the work changes monthly.

## Energy from Waste – To Burn or to Bury

I am sure many of our members object to having an 'energy from waste' facility near the peninsula and at least one has written at some length voicing his objections.

Coincidentally, in the space of a week, I have read unbiased articles about the subject, visited a site in the Isle of Man and attended a presentation by an academic on the subject. I would like to present some extracts from the article in 'Engineering & Technology' about a 'Tridel' plant in Switzerland..

"A barrel of crude oil contains 42 US gallons or 159 litres. The energy in it is about 1,600kWh, depending on the quality. A tonne of household rubbish averages an equivalent energy of about 3,000kWh, yet most of it is thrown away. Every tonne that we landfill is like pouring almost two barrels of crude oil down the drain.

Let's put this in perspective; in the UK and much of Europe, we throw away the energy of almost three barrels of oil per man, woman and child each year. At 90 dollars a barrel, that's worth over £8bn per year in the UK alone, not counting the cost of maintaining landfills!

Let's assume that one-third of the dry rubbish (hopefully, mostly organic, because the glass bottles and aluminium cans will have been sorted for recycling) is carbon. In a landfill, over time, one tonne will decompose roughly into equal parts of 200kg each of carbon dioxide and methane, which will be uselessly emitted into the atmosphere.

Methane has a global warming potential of 21 to 50 times that of carbon dioxide. Taking the most conservative figure, this means that the emitted greenhouse gases are the equivalent of 4.4t of carbon dioxide per tonne of rubbish, and we gain not a single joule from the energy. Worse still, household rubbish is often transported vast distances before it is landfilled emitting further carbon dioxide and other pollution from the trucks.

Yet we already have the technology to extract energy from what we tuck into an ordinary plastic bin bag and, at the same time, emit less than 400kg of equivalent carbon dioxide per tonne and almost no other pollution. The cinders from the process take up only one-tenth the volume of landfill and are almost inert, so that pests like rats and insects find no home where they are dumped, nor are there nauseous smells. The fuel that we recycle into energy is

abundant, sustainable, renewable and easy to collect locally."

With regards to the concerns that people have about pollution, the article goes on to say: "**Air**

Obviously, the major product from incineration is gas, mostly nitrogen from the air used for combustion and carbon dioxide but with a myriad of other chemical compounds, including infinitesimal quantities of dioxin and its derivatives.

Subsequent to generating the superheated steam, the gas goes through an electrostatic precipitator to remove the bulk of the fly ash. After that, it is passed through a heat exchanger and then into a water quench which cools it down and removes any residual dust. From there, it goes through a series of scrubbing operations which remove most of the chemicals, including mercury and other heavy metals, and back to the heat exchanger to warm it up again to nearly 300°C. The scrubber also removes some of the carbon dioxide. From there, it goes through a catalytic converter, similar to a scaled-up version of the one on a car. It is then forced up the stack.

Switzerland has very strict laws governing emitted pollutants; in all cases bar one, the gas discharged from the stack has pollutant concentrations of about one-tenth the permitted levels for each chemical (including dioxin).

The one exception is nitrogen oxides, mostly removed in the catalytic converter, which are down to about half the permitted levels. These pollutant levels are continuously monitored (separately from each of the two lines) and, if necessary, an excess will cause automatic corrective action to be taken or even a shut-down of the offending line. This proves that air pollution from burning organic waste can be kept to negligible levels.

### **Water**

Water is used in the gas and fly ash purification processes. It becomes polluted and must be rendered harmless before disposal. To a large extent it is recycled, but inevitably there is a waste stream.

The water source is mainly rain run-off from roofs and paved areas to reduce the consumption of mains water. The raw waste water is acid and contains heavy metal salts and all the fly ash, including from the precipitators. The acidity is neutralised with lime water, so that

most of the acids are converted to insoluble calcium salts which are filtered out, along with the fly ash. These are added to the clinker. The remaining water is treated with sodium hydroxide to precipitate out the heavy metals as hydroxides. They are then separated in a filter press and bagged for despatch by rail to a recycling plant that recovers the cadmium, lead, chromium, nickel and other valuable metals. A final neutralisation and the water conforms to the strict Swiss legislation for discharge into a public sewer.

### Solids

This leaves the solid waste stream. It is mostly in the form of clinker to which the washed fly ash and lime products are added. By weight, this is as much as 20 per cent of the compacted waste but, by volume, it is only about 10 per cent.

The size of the landfill to where it is sent by rail is very small compared to what it would have been if the garbage had been sent there without extracting its value. The solid waste is almost inert (there is a small proportion of elemental carbon in it), so that the long-term pollution from the landfill is acceptable.”

**The talk** I went to was quite broad, covering all aspects of energy provision in the UK and beyond: historical, political, etc. In particular the environmental policies in Scandinavia and Germany as opposed to those in the UK. Each energy option was discussed in turn, and the now accepted fact that the UK needs a mix of several ‘types’ of power generation was reiterated. I was disappointed to learn that with all the will in the world, wind power could not possibly achieve 20% of our requirements (as suggested in a government paper).

The final ‘slide’ in the presentation summarised the drawbacks of the various options for power generation. It was interesting to note that ‘waste’ had a blank next to it. Finally, this is the pros and cons of waste from energy as summarised in the magazine article.

### Advantages:

- Sustainable supply of renewable fuel
- Much reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Virtually no pollution
- Recovery of precious and other valuable metals
- Landfill volume reduced by about 90 per cent
- No landfill pests, odours or emissions
- Able to recycle paper/plastics into energy where material recycling is impractical
- Energy available as electricity and heat
- Energy efficiency typically about 50 per cent for a combined heat and power plant
- Flexible, according to the type of available waste
- Can be adapted for large cities with economy of scale
- Known and mature technology with long experience
- Cost-effective

### Disadvantages:

- Relatively high capital cost (national or international grants or subsidies may be available)
- Requires waste to be partially pre-sorted (recyclable and non-combustible materials removed)
- Less suitable for sparsely populated rural areas

**By Pete Exley**

### Everyclick

Well done to everyone who has registered Wirral LA21 Network as their charity on everyclick. We have raised over £100 in a few months just by surfing the internet.

If you aren't on everyclick yet, it's easy to join. Just go to [www.everyclick.co.uk](http://www.everyclick.co.uk) and join up. You can nominate Wirral LA21 Network by selecting your charity and looking under W.

*(You can also set it up at work so double the benefit, That's what I've done—Ed)*

Remember, this is a normal search engine and therefore you can still find everything you need and give to charity without paying a penny.

### Lammas

*Loaf-mass, also known as the **Feast of First Fruits**, Lammas is a festival of the first harvest when the corn was made into bread and offered in churches.*

*Lammas lands were opened for common winter grazing. Trees (especially oaks) put on a second flush of bright leaves, known as Lammas growth.*

<http://www.england-in-particular.info/new/n-aug.html>

## Transition Town West Kirby

The two toughest challenges facing humankind at the start of this 21st century are Climate Change and Peak Oil.

You may not have encountered the principles of Peak Oil in the media. Don't let that lull you into a false sense of security. There was a time when Climate Change suffered the same lack of exposure.

Peak Oil is not about "running out of oil" – we'll never run out of oil. There will always be oil left in the ground because either it's too hard to reach or it takes too much energy to extract. Ponder on a fact that the economists conveniently gloss over – regardless of how much money you can make selling oil, once it takes an oil barrel's worth of energy to extract a barrel of oil, the exploration, the drilling and the pumping will grind to a halt.

Peak Oil is about the end of cheap and plentiful oil, the recognition that the ever increasing volumes of oil being pumped into our economies will peak and then inexorably decline. It's about understanding how our industrial way of life is absolutely dependent on this ever-increasing supply of cheap oil.

From the start of the 1900s, plentiful oil allowed a coal-based industrialised society to massively accelerate its "development". From that time, each year there has been more oil (apart from the two oil shocks in the 1970s when Middle East crises caused worldwide recessions). And each year, society increased its complexity, its mechanisation, its globalised connectedness and its energy consumption levels.

The problems start when we've extracted around half of the recoverable oil. At this point,



the oil gets more expensive (in cash and energy terms) to extract, is slower flowing and of a lower quality. At this point, for the first time in history, we aren't able to increase the amount of oil that's coming out of the ground, being refined and reaching the market.

At this point, oil supply plateaus and then declines, with massive ramifications for industrialised societies. Very few people are paying attention to this phenomenon, and it's easy to understand why.

Yet Peak Oil, heralding the era of ever-declining fossil fuel availability, may well challenge the economic and social stability that is essential if we are to mitigate the threats posed by Climate Change.

In response to the twin pressures of Peak Oil and Climate Change, some pioneering communities in the UK, Ireland and beyond are taking an integrated and inclusive approach to reduce their carbon footprint and increase their ability to withstand the fundamental shift that will accompany Peak Oil. These communities are known as Transition Initiatives.

Your local Transition Initiative is Transition Town West Kirby. If you would like to find out more, then visit the website at [www.transitiontownwestkirby.org.uk](http://www.transitiontownwestkirby.org.uk), or telephone 0151 632 5366.

**Remember, if you have picked your copy of Evergreen up early enough, WLN has worked in partnership with Prenton High School to bring you a green fair at the School on the 5th of July, 10.30am—3pm. This was advertised in the last issue. If you missed it, why not join Wirral LA21 Network as a member and have Evergreen delivered to your door or email inbox. Contact Wirral LA21 Network's office on 639 2121 or email [info@la21.net](mailto:info@la21.net). Wirral LA21 Network is registered Charity (no.1068306) and a company limited by guarantee (no. 3462312)**