

# WIRRAL EVERGREEN



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The magazine of Wirral Environmental Network  
Promoting Wirral's environment and sustainable living

## Blowing in the Wind by Mike Lowe



Many of you will have read about the latest proposal for an expansion of the Burbo Bank Wind Farm. It's claimed that this development would mean the off-shore plant could be capable of generating 250 megawatts of electricity - enough to power 170,000 homes.

Yet wind farms generally face opposition from a vocal minority who raise all sorts of spurious arguments against them. We'd like to take a closer look at just some of these arguments. Also, now that the Government has finally accepted recommendations from the Committee on Climate Change for tougher cuts in UK greenhouse gases (albeit with a get-out clause!), now is the time to encourage such appropriate developments.

Many critics say wind power is more expensive than other forms of generation, which currently it is. However, the cost of generating electricity from wind has fallen dramatically in comparison with other forms of generation over the past few years and should continue to do so. They can now produce electricity more cheaply from wind than from nuclear, and sometimes cheaper than fossil fuels, depending on the seemingly ever increasing price of oil.

Wind farms are **not** heavily subsidised by the government. Like all renewables they do receive "renewable obligation payments", paid by the consumer through their bills. Opponents of wind turbines seem to want to ignore the staggering amounts of subsidies both fossil fuels and nuclear energy receive, both now and in the past. Some say wind farms have a very low productivity level. Research shows modern wind turbines operate for most of the time and produce electricity around 70-85% of the time, although they will produce different amounts depending on the wind speed. Of course the wind blows at variable speed, variable intensity and sometimes not at all. But this variability is not a problem for the electricity grid. Wind is accurately forecast and this can be built into electricity generators short-term plans. Increasing the proportion of wind power in the electricity system does not require greater "back up" capacity, as is often claimed.

We are not saying that all our electricity should come from wind energy. Neither are we advocating a cavalier approach to these important issues. Proposed wind farms, either on or off-shore must be scrutinised properly like all other energy generating projects, to show they meet appropriate planning, economic and environmental criteria. What we need is greater investment in renewables, to help secure a diverse energy generating mix; no one technology will suffice. Far more investment in energy conservation measures is also required to help us become more self-sufficient and sustainable.

Finally, an independent report published last year found that the wind, wave and tidal resource potential of the UK is **six times** larger than current electricity demand and that harnessing just 29 per cent of this could create 145,000 jobs between now and 2050.

Climate change needs us to take radical measures, now! For lots more "myth busters" about wind power have a look at: [www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/ind\\_myths.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/ind_myths.pdf)

### Wirral Environmental Network

Working to advance the education of the public about the environment and its protection.

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**We do not inherit the world from our parents. We borrow it from our grandchildren.**

## Rooting Community Food in an Enterprising Future

This was a very interesting conference in Sheffield organised by CPRE. Dr Charlie Clutterbuck from City University outlined the problems of sustainability including the fact that the food we currently eat in this country requires four times the amount of land in Britain to produce it. With future enterprise in mind we import £15 billion of food which could be grown locally in this country creating jobs and promoting sustainability.

Julie Brown from Growing communities described their extremely successful social enterprise - London's first community-led box scheme run by local people, based in Hackney. They have 20 staff and a £450K turnover with 680 households involved.

Last year, 62% of their vegetables and 23% of their fruit came direct from local farms while overall 88% of the vegetables came from the UK helping to support over 25 small scale organic farmers and growers by providing them with a regular outlet and a fair price for their produce.

In the Field to Fork workshop workers from Sheffield council and Sustain explained

how a Food Partnership had been established including the council, PCT and business to oversee a three year Food Plan. This followed consultation work with the public and local businesses and includes establishing a local food web – a network of links between people who buy, sell produce and supply food – with research demonstrating that local food is worth £13 – 20 million pounds to their local economy.

Overall there are many valuable lessons to be learned here for Wirral to support local food production and purchasing, and it is an idea we will be pursuing at WEN.



# SMITHS CAKES & CATERING FOR ALL OCCASIONS & DIETS

ANY BIRTHDAYS etc. COMING UP?  
**DO YOU NEED A CAKE MAKING?**

ANY PARTIES COMING UP?  
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## Some Reflections on Mary Woolley

All of us at WEN were very sorry to hear the sad news of Mary Woolley's recent death. During her lifetime Mary had worked tirelessly to help both people and the environment. Mary was a patron of the charity for many years and her influence is still with us through a very generous legacy that she has left to WEN, This will help us to continue our work into the future.

David Burton recalls how, at an inaugural meeting of Wirral Friends of the Earth back in 1976, he met the person who was initiating the meeting; a larger than life, dramatic, and flamboyant figure - Mary Woolley.

" She told me that she was one of the founder members of International Friends of the Earth and certainly drove the development and growth of Wirral FOE of which I was a member for many years."

Despite her flamboyance, she was a very private person. She had travelled widely and had a dear place in her heart for Bhutan. Mary was, at times, only an occasional visitor to Wirral, was always suntanned, and spoke to me of some very exotic people and places. David continues "Mary was a vigorous

campaigner for Wirral FOE and I remember she managed to get David Hunt, MP for Wirral West at the time, to one of the meetings and drove him home (he told me at a later date that it was terrifying!).

At some point she stepped back from FOE and, as I understand, bought a smallholding on Anglesey and spent her time between there and her Wirral home where, at one time, she kept a goat and an immaculate dairy area.

Mary had an amazing array of ethnic art and artefacts in her bungalow and, as part of a strong connection with a particular British regiment, had various historic military regalia. Mary became a patron of WEN's precursor, Wirral Green Alliance when they were undergoing an injection of energy, drive and vision. David adds, "Mary helped me enormously, not least in helping me to articulate my passion for the environment, and I certainly found her energy energising and while it is with sadness that I learn of her death she must have had a good innings and she's probably urging us on now to protect this beautiful planet ".

# TRANSPORTATION

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## Grandmotherhood calls by Janet Thorning

The time has now come for me to leave my employment with Wirral Environmental Network and give more time to looking after my grandson.

It was back in the '90s that I first became involved in what was then Wirral Green Alliance, with David Burton at its head, when plans (sadly unsuccessful) for a Wirral Green Centre were first mooted. Everything was run on a voluntary basis then; there was no office. Meetings took place in Anne and Les Bufton's garden room.

I remember the first Green Fayre in Arrowe Park, later ones in Royden Park, and the final one, back in Arrowe Park. They were wonderful events, but exhausting and too stressful for the small band of organisers. In 1994 I helped George and Garnette Bowler to sort the children's contributions to the Environmental Time Capsule project, and suggested an anthology be created, which has since been published as 'The Promise'. I was involved in the first days of the Energy Advice Centre in 1995, set up by Pat Sykes, and worked there for just under ten years before leaving; I'm back there again now, part-time. Time passed; the Oxton Shop and the Eco Centre in Liscard were set up, and various people, projects - and premises! - came and went. For a short time I was co-ordinator of the organisation myself.

More recently I was given paid work in the office - first for Youth Exchange Wirral, which we hosted, then for Wirral LA21 Network, as it was called after its merger with Wirral LA21 Forum.

Winter and Summer Green Fayres continued for a while, in partnership with local schools; sadly they are too much work for the small active group we have at present. More input from a wider group of volunteers is needed if they are to be revived as a popular, high profile way of getting the green message out to the people of Wirral.

I set up the Wirral Tree Wardens group, helped by initial funding from Community Foundation Merseyside, and expertise from a wide range of people; it's now co-ordinated by Gen Woodland. I've also done admin work more recently for various school and community gardening projects run by Carol Seery, and in my spare time created a range of fridge magnet designs that sell well when taken to events.

To conclude, my work for the organisation, both voluntary and paid, has been very varied and interesting, and I've met some great people through it. I'd like to thank the staff, trustees and volunteers for their commitment to the cause. Thanks, too, for the impressive leaving present! I'm sure I'll keep in touch.



Very best wishes to Wirral Environmental Network for the future.

*Our Chairman, Pete Exley, does the honours!*

## A.G.M. - A Serious Business? (and Caption Competition)



The AGM took place at The Stork in January this year. We present this photo just to show that some people do take these meetings seriously! We did lighten up later with a fun quiz though.

We invite readers to come up with a witty caption for this image.

The winner will receive a 12 months free number in our supporters draw. Unless you state that you don't want us to we will publish what we consider to be the best caption and the winners name in the next Evergreen. Email captions to [mike@la21.net](mailto:mike@la21.net)

## Perfect Partnership Solves Paint Problem

*Wallasey-based Community RePaint Wirral has teamed up with Bromborough based Bagnall & Morris to solve a pressing paint problem.*

Community RePaint is a national scheme which collects unused paint from manufacturers, shops and householders and passes it on to charities, community groups and people in need. In 2010 the 55 schemes in the UK saved 316,641 litres from landfill, where it is classed as hazardous waste.

The Wirral project, which is situated at W.E.N.'s address, covers Merseyside and Cheshire, played its part, collecting 3,586 litres and redistributing this to all sorts of projects from single-parent families getting their first home to the Listed World War I Hangars at Hooton Airfield and even to murals beside the canal at Ellesmere Port, underneath the M53!

The problem is that, despite strict rules and careful monitoring, sometimes paint is donated which is totally unusable – old, toxic, or often just dried up, and in the case of Community RePaint Wirral this totals about 7% of what we receive. Over the three years since we moved to our present site this has accumulated to the point where it is using too much valuable space. Householders can get waste collected free of charge through the local waste disposal authority, but trade waste, especially hazardous, costs money, which as a charity we simply don't have.

We are incredibly grateful to Bagnall & Morris Waste Services, a family owned and operated waste management company who have been to see the problem and, amazingly, have taken it all away free of charge, in return for helping them with their publicity.

Neil Curtis, their Managing Director, said "We are delighted to be involved with the

Community RePaint scheme, which fits in perfectly with our community and environmental ethos. By encouraging the re-use of paint, less waste is created and those in need are provided for. The economic and environmental benefits are obvious and we are more than happy to donate our time and expertise to this worthwhile cause."

Bagnall & Morris provide total waste management solutions, designed to reduce costs and meet environmental obligations. The company employs over 160 people in Wirral and Manchester. B&M Waste Services also works with like-minded waste management companies across the UK for total National coverage. Their family ethos runs through at all levels of the business through staff training, sports sponsorship, schools outreach programmes and charity support.

This perfect private sector / voluntary sector partnership has solved our problem and allowed us to continue our good work, and Wirral Repaint can only say, "Thank You" to B&M for their generous help.



### Do you have any surplus or unused paint?

Would you prefer its room to its company?  
If so, your local **Community RePaint** would like it!

Gloss, emulsion, wood stain, varnish, masonry paint – as long as it's in good condition, we can make use of it, even partly used tins.

This diverts usable paint from domestic waste, helps the environment – and gives you more storage space at home too!

(Collection might be possible for larger quantities) Please contact Jim O'Neil on 639 2121 or email him on [jim@la21.net](mailto:jim@la21.net)

## Dibbinsdale Nature Reserve Walled Garden

Hidden away in the Green Flag awarded, Dibbinsdale Nature Reserve in Bromborough is the Walled Garden. Inside lies an exciting eco-project that is run both by and for people with learning disabilities.

The project is an inspirational example of hard work, partnership and commitment from a number of people including community volunteers, third sector and local authority staff from Social Services and the Ranger Service, collaborating to successfully create an exemplary exhibition of sustainability.

The walled garden is funded by the Eastham Conservation Trust, a charity consisting of people with learning disabilities, friends, parents and carers who provide funding and support for a variety of projects within the local community.

The Walled Garden is adapted to suit the needs of the people participating in the running of the project, to ensure nobody is restricted or excluded from contributing physically in activities that take place within the project.

Alongside the obvious benefits of improved healthy eating through growing and

consuming their own produce, the project facilitates and promotes other health benefits including increased levels of physical activity, the concept of “green gyms”, and positive effects that being outdoors, contributing and sense of achievement has on positive mental health and wellbeing.

The garden is normally open on the second Sunday and Monday monthly. They are always looking for volunteers to help with the garden, if you would like to contribute towards this very worthwhile project or would like more information, please contact the Eastham Centre on 327 1007.



## Life in the Slow Lane



# Slow Food® UK

You may have heard of the Slow Food Movement “*that links the pleasure of food with a commitment to community and the environment*”.

The movement started in the 1980’s in Italy as a reaction to the fast food culture hitting the streets of Rome around this time. It has now become an international organisation with lots of local groups around most of the UK.

Their three main aims are to seek positive change in:-

**Biodiversity** - preserving threatened foods and strengthening local economies through assisting small-scale producers and building short supply-chains.

**Taste education** - creating a better understanding and appreciation of the important connection between health, local food culture and agriculture

**Food communities** - connecting producers to consumers and creating an awareness that showcases sustainable agriculture and artisan food production.

They also campaign that food should taste good and be as fresh as possible, food should be clean – that is food should be produced in a sustainable way, with the minimum chemical input and that food producers should not be exploited but receive fair payment for their work. See [www.slowfood.org.uk](http://www.slowfood.org.uk).

For a Liverpool contact they have a Facebook page, search for “slow food Liverpool”, or email [slowfoodliverpool@yahoo.com](mailto:slowfoodliverpool@yahoo.com)

## Dates for your diary - forthcoming green events on the Wirral

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> – Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July  
**Transition Network Conference**  
([www.transitionnetwork.org](http://www.transitionnetwork.org))  
Hope University, Liverpool

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> July & Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> August  
**Hilbre Island Open Day**  
Timing to fit in with local tides -  
check The Friends of Hilbre website for details  
[www.deeestuary.co.uk/hilbre/open.htm](http://www.deeestuary.co.uk/hilbre/open.htm)

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> – Monday 28<sup>th</sup> July  
**Children's Fun Days**  
Ness Botanical Gardens, Neston  
10.00am – 4.00pm

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> August  
**Wirral Tree Wardens**  
Staffing the **Coach House Servery** at  
Roydon Park, Frankby, as a Fund Raiser  
10.00am - 4.00pm

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> August  
**Wirral Flower & Vegetable Show**  
Birkenhead Park  
12.00 – 5.00pm

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> September  
**Plant Hunter's Day**  
Ness Botanical Gardens, Neston  
10.00am – 4.00pm

## Wirral Evergreen Distribution

Due to the increased costs of printing paper copies, we have now significantly cut back on how many we print of each issue. We would like to encourage members to read our newsletter on-line at our website [www.la21.net](http://www.la21.net). This will help to both keep our costs down and save some trees!

We now print copies primarily for the events we attend, but if you still wish to receive a paper copy, please let us know by contacting the office.

We hope all our members will understand the reason for this change.

## Supporters Draw – April Winners

1<sup>st</sup> Jack and Anne Cuffe  
2<sup>nd</sup> Tom Harney  
3<sup>rd</sup> June and Colin Davies

If you would like to enter our monthly, supporters draw, please contact Les Bufton on [les.bufton@btinternet.com](mailto:les.bufton@btinternet.com). This is a great way of regularly supporting W.E.N.

## Local Food Directory

Transition Town West Kirby would like to put together a directory of which local businesses support local food. They are encouraging us all to go into local shops and ask for local food. Then please let T.T.W.K. know what you find out!

Email [ttwk.food@gmail.com](mailto:ttwk.food@gmail.com)



## Gardening Classes are Blooming

The popular **Gardening Classes** that are held at W.E.N.'s H.Q. here on Falkland Road will be starting again in September. There will be two separate courses running,

*"The Productive Garden"* for growing fruit and Vegetables.

*Gardening for Beginners* for general gardening.

We have some great gardening facilities here at W.E.N. including a 48 foot polytunnel, raised beds, fruit trees, herb area and an indoor classroom. For further

information please ring 630 3486 (Life Long and Family Learning Service). But please note full details won't be available until August.

### **New Shoots**

An initiative that has "grown" from the Gardening Class is that a group of people are trying to find a piece of land to grow fruit and vegetables, etc.

If you know of an appropriate patch of land, or would like to know more about this initiative please call the W.E.N. office (639 2121) and speak to Carol.

## Wirral Evergreen - advertising rates 2011

	BLACK & WHITE	COLOUR – FRONT PAGE	COLOUR – BACK PAGE
Full page	£50	NOT AVAILABLE	£100
Half-page	£25	£75	£50
Quarter-page	£15	£35	£25

*Wirral Evergreen* has been reaching people across Wirral for many years and is the primary newsletter for the environmental voice in the Wirral. To save trees our print run is only about 150 per issue and those are distributed through members without email, libraries, events, etc. We load it live on the W.E.N. website [www.la21.net](http://www.la21.net) so that it can be read across the planet.

We are pleased to announce that even though we are in a difficult financial climate, the editorial team have decided not to increase the advertising rates this year - and W.E.N. members can deduct 20% from the above prices! What you see is what you pay – we are not VAT registered. We will accept copy on paper to the office address but it is much easier if you can send it directly to the editors via email to [mike@la21.net](mailto:mike@la21.net)

Please remember that *Wirral Evergreen* is funded completely from members' subscriptions, donations and adverts. The editors would like to thank all the members for their support, as a percentage of membership income also goes to help pay for rent, office supplies, etc.

**CUT HERE.....**

### Would you like to join Wirral Environmental Network?

(Members receive 20% off stall fees at our events  
and 20% off advertising in *Wirral Evergreen*)

**£8 waged      £6 unwaged      £12 whole household**  
**£80 individual life membership**  
**£10 voluntary group      £20 commercial organisation**

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**Please cut off this slip along the dotted line and send with your cheque to:-  
Les Bufton, 34 Ford Road, Upton, Wirral. CH49 0TF**

*Wirral Environmental Network publish this newsletter as a community information tool. Please note that the views expressed may not be those of Wirral Environmental Network, its trustees, staff or volunteers.*