



University of Liverpool, Room 209, Roxby Building, Chatham Street, Liverpool, L69 7ZT

Email: [merseysideenvironmentaltrust@gmail.com](mailto:merseysideenvironmentaltrust@gmail.com)

Registered Charity Number: 517132

## Chair's Report 2014

### 30 Years and Still Here!

Where has 2014 gone? It does not seem like a year since I typed up my first Chair's Report for the 2013 AGM and at that point the previous year was all about change. This year the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Trust crept upon us whilst we were busy with issues and debates around bus lanes, Mayoral Commission for Environmental Sustainability, the proposed selling off of parks and green space and fracking to name but a few!

The Trust still continues to function with the active and energetic support of volunteers and the Executive Committee; and financially we continue to be moderately healthy.

#### Trust Structure for 2013 – 2014

Stephen Yip MBE DL	President
Dr Geoff Woodcock	Vice President

#### Executive Committee

Stephen Sykes	Chair
Don Thompson	Vice Chair, Treasurer and Editor of Metmail
Patience Jones	Secretary
Dr Stella Shackel	Social Media
Prof. Derek Gould	
Chris Hennessey	Membership Secretary
Richard Fassam	
David Holland	

Last year I reported that we had moved offices, still hosted by the **University of Liverpool** we are located on the second floor of the Roxby Building and like all moves that presented us with some communication disruptions, plus like all mature organisations we had accumulated a significant amount of information, correspondence and "stuff", but over the year the Executive have sorted, sifted, retained and cleared out (recycled / donated) a fair amount to make the office functional.

I also decided that as I was new to the role I should invest in some CPD and enrolled on LCVS's "Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees" which was quite instructive.

The Executive Committee took the opportunity of our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary to take stock of where the Trust is today, asking ourselves are we still relevant in today's society and what is our role and function – but more of that later.



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## Focus / Activity

This year we continued our focus of **Climate Week** (March 3<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>), Climate Week is Britain's biggest climate change campaign, inspiring a new wave of action to create a sustainable future. We supported this Campaign by joining forces with Friends of the Earth Liverpool and Green Drinks Liverpool for a very interesting, challenging and fun Pub Quiz. The winners, the local branch of the RSPB donated their winnings to the RSPB's Save the Albatross Campaign

June came with our traditional **Environment Week** and with the continued and much valued support of the **PH Holt Foundation**. We awarded a number of very different MET Environment Week Grants ranging from £250 - £500

- The Friends of Renshaw Street: Keen to build on the recent refurbishment of the highway and footpaths the Friends of Renshaw Street are looking to soften and brighten up the street scape with hanging baskets come the spring. (*approved last year implemented this year*).
- The Friends of Renshaw Street: Working with local primary school St Nicholas, the children were asked to create an image for an eco-friendly shopping bag. 200 plus bags were then given to the school for distribution to parents and friends.
- Save Sefton Meadows Campaign: Grant given for materials to support community engagement in this high profile campaign.
- Northwood Community Allotments: Grant awarded for the installation of raised planting beds, engaging various community groups.
- That Bloomin Green Triangle: Grant given to support more plants, bulbs and materials in order to further brighten up the 4 Streets of the Granby Triangle.

## Support and Engagement

Executive Committee members continue to engage with various fora such as:-

- Liverpool Green Partnership Engagement Group and Round Table Events
- Merseyside Local Access Forum
- Trans Pennine Trail
- Merseyside Waste Recycling and Disposal Authority
- Merseyside Civic Society
- The Duncan Society
- Mersey Estuary Forum
- Transition Towns
- Friends of the Earth Liverpool
- Liverpool Centre for Innovation in Urban Food
- Friends of Otterspool Park
- Friends of Liverpool Parks



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- COMTECHSA
- Mersey Forest
- University of Liverpool
- North West Environment Link
- Local Solutions
- Liverpool Chamber Energy & Environment Committee
- Nature Connected (Board)
- Faiths 4 Change

We have made submissions to Liverpool City Council regarding the potential loss of green space specifically Sefton Park Meadows and Woolton Woods. A submission was made regarding the Liverpool Local Plan and the suspension of bus lanes.

The Trust has supported several events of the year in terms of time and active engagement such as:-

- Merseyside Civic Society's "State of the City"
- LCVS' "Big Event"
- Liverpool Green Partnership various round table forums
- Sustrans "BioBlitz"
- Landlife "Grow Wild Bunch" launch
- Mersey Forest "Setting the Scene for Growth"
- National Wild Flower Centre "Seeding Tomorrow"

Executive Committee members also contribute in strategic policy fora such as Healthy Liverpool, Bus Lane Scrutiny panel and Transport & Climate Change Cabinet meetings.

Whilst no direct submission was made to the Mayoral Commission on Environmental Sustainability from MET, MET's points were put through our contributions to other groups such as the Liverpool Green Partnership, Nature Connected and Merseyside Cycle Campaign.

## Communications

Our website continues to be developed and stats on visits the website monitored, we now have active Twitter and Googlegroups accounts as well as a growing Linked In Group with 107 members.

MetMail has continued to be produced seasonally with more being sent electronically than by post.

## Are We Still Relevant?

As people get older / mature, it is quite common for them, in quiet moments of reflection to ask those fundamental questions such as "What am I doing here"? "What have I achieved"?



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During late summer the Executive took the opportunity to reflect on MET's 30 years, look at our current membership, our activities and ask ourselves is there still a place for MET as an organisation today? If so what is our purpose, what direction should we take?

We engaged an outside facilitator, Ronnie Hughes of Sense of Place to help us tease out are we still relevant? Are we still needed? Do we need to change? If so how?

Out of this process the conclusion was that we are still relevant, we are still needed and a new definition of the purpose of MET was penned;

***“The Merseyside Environmental Trust exists to raise awareness of environmental issues through promoting open discussions of global and local concerns, stimulating scientific enquiry and debate through our unique position as a politically neutral charitable body.***

***We also provide a programme of small grants to local voluntary organisations carrying out practical work on the Merseyside environment and act as a signposting body for environmental events and activities in the City Region”***

## **Going Forward**

From our review of the Trust as mentioned above the embryo of an action plan was distilled, this to be worked up and delivered during 2015. The headlines of the plan are:-

1. **Develop** a seminar / conference programme of 4 events over 2015 with an overarching health theme with 2015 being the mid-point in Liverpool's Decade of Health and Wellbeing. Suggested working titles so far are:-
  - Environment and Health – the parks of Merseyside
  - Food in the City Region – including the roles of health and allotments
  - Waste and Health in the Environment
  - Marine Pollution on Merseyside
2. **Review** membership, our offering and subscription structures
3. **Develop** a fundraising strategy
4. **Improve** communications and engagement activities

2015 could be a very interesting year!

Stephen Sykes  
Chair

26<sup>th</sup> November 2014