

Merseyside
Environmental
Trust
Working for the
environment on
Merseyside since 1984

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Spring 2015

Welcome to our Spring Edition

There is, and has been for the last few years, a furore of activity across Merseyside focussed around the environment . Following the enthusiasm to take up the challenge of vying for the prestigious award of Green Capital of Europe the University of Liverpool and the Low Carbon Liverpool team conducted a very thorough and robust piece of research which has been very revealing.

Although the challenge for the award has been postponed for the moment the Trust is hoping for a change of heart from the City leaders. Bristol is the 2015 winner and Cork is bidding for success in 2017. The Green Partnership which was formed to engage with enthusiastic supporters has done well in bringing much attention to the weaker elements of the report.

The success of the 'Tale of Two Cities' a Joint Project between Liverpool and Manchester ,as the winning Grow Wild England Landmark Project. The activity continues when they recently held a 'BiG DiG' at Everton Park and at the National Wildflower Centre where they considered the success of their 'home grown food' plots.

The City has just released the interim report from the Chair of the Sustainable Commission, Prof. Nigel Wetherall [see <http://liverpool.gov.uk/mayor>]. At the launch in the Cunard Building the gathered audience were reassured by the Mayor's words of encouragement that a post would be **seriously considered** to oversee the improvement in the **environment** in it's many forms

Nature Connected [Local Nature Partnership] has started work in earnest with meetings supported by a number of members from both public, private and Voluntary Groups link via <http://www.natureconnected.org> The Board is looking at further opportunities to engage with the Local Economic Partnership.

The Green Strategy Review Board is charged with scrutinising the Liverpool Green Space and has been holding open public meeting across the city with a report due in June. The group chaired by Simon O'Brien was prompted my the Mayor, Joe Anderson.

The Board will be continuing with specific workshops in May.



News from the North West

The North West has been found the most-littered region of England. Litter Action supports the growing number of individuals and community groups tackling litter problems across the UK, while Keep Britain Tidy focus on litter but also run a range of other campaigns, awards and standards. Check them out, help them out, start a local campaign and let's do better!

British kids have never been more disconnected from the natural world. The roaming distance that children play from their home has shrunk by 90% in 30 years with time spent playing outside down 50% in just one generation. At the same time study after study shows time spent outside in nature increases happiness, health and wellbeing in kids (and adults too!) 50 Things, The National Trust's toolkit to get kids outside and engaging with nature is nearly a year old. Launched following the Trust's Natural Childhood report into children's disconnection from nature, it's an invaluable aid to any organisation (or individual!) who wants to help making those connections again. In the same vein, The Wild Network's Project Wild Thing aims to encourage people to help kids (their own, or ones they work with) to swap half an hour's screen time for 'wild time' outdoors. The sun's shining, get out and get some fresh air! <https://projectwildthing.com/>

Last word.....trees are good for us!

Doctors prescribe fewer antidepressants in urban areas with **more trees** on the street, according to recent UK research. The study examined the link between **mental health and wellbeing** and the **presence of trees** in London neighbourhoods. Its findings support the idea that maintaining a link to nature, even in an urban area, may help provide a **healthy living environment**.

Follow link to : <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/>

Life along the Railway Line....

Dr Hilary Ash

New Ferry Butterfly Park was started by local people in 1993. It is run by a community group of local people (all volunteers), with backing from Cheshire Wildlife Trust. New Ferry is densely built with little "natural" habitat. We offer a small, secure, wardened place to introduce people to wildlife, at no charge. We have paths, maps, trails and volunteer wardens to help visitors see and appreciate the wildlife. The lower half is fully accessible. We pride ourselves on re-using and recycling materials. There is an outdoor art trail, several pieces made from recycled materials. We had a Green Flag community award 2013/4 and have just re-applied.

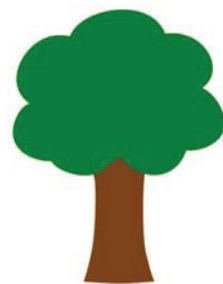
The Park is an invertebrate nature reserve, so it supports large variety of wildlife in a small area. It is a Site of Biological Importance especially for the butterfly populations. We do education about the value of invertebrates, from ants and bees to water beetles and woodlice, with butterflies as the flagship species.

The Park is the former railway goods yard to Bebington station, so we have excellent public transport links to rail and bus. We are increasingly promoting our industrial history. The Park is used for public events, such as our annual Open Day, and training courses on wildlife-related matters such as hedge-laying and plant identification. Our public opening times are currently limited by volunteer availability, to Sundays 12-4pm, from May to mid-September. We have an Open Day to launch the season on 3rd May, with plant sale, children's activities, craft stalls, BBQ, cake stall. The year the Mayor of Wirral will open it at 11am, when he will officially open our new composting toilet!

Free Trees from the Woodland Trust

Could planting trees benefit the community you are a part of? By planting free trees you have the opportunity to bring people together as well as enhance your surroundings, attracting wildlife, improving health, providing colour, shelter and shade and screening property.

Trees also store carbon, generate oxygen and can help prevent and alleviate floods. Choose your packs from their website and fill in their online application form. The packs come in three



sizes – 30, 105 and 420 saplings in various themes such as hedge, copse, wild-life, wild harvest, year-round colour, working wood, wetland and wild wood. Any community group can apply for up to a maximum of 420 saplings from a combination of these themes. They accept applications all year round with deliveries taking place each November and March. Link: www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Food for Real Film Festival

Liverpool grown Food for Real Film Festival – the only festival of its kind in the UK – enjoyed a highly successful third event at the weekend with a record number of attendees.

More than 2,000 people enjoyed film screenings, food and activities at venues located across the city, all making the most of the beautiful spring weather across the four days of the festival

Merseyside Open Spaces

Keen to see what Parks have got organised round the UK we found this site www.parksandgardens.org. Disappointed not to find much history about our Parks except Sefton Park. Events around the Palm House are promoted on their site at www.palmhouse.org.uk. The City promote events in our Open Spaces at <http://liverpool.gov.uk/leisure-parks-and-events/parks-and-greenspaces>. Information about 'Friends groups' are available by a link from this page and it's excellent and encouraging to identify the work being done by these groups. If your local open space or park does not have one then take the initiative and create one and have a say how it is managed or even better 'get involved' Another initiative on Merseyside is www.projectdirt.com/cluster/liverpool? What's this? Well go and have a look!

Liverpool revives green space - Alt Meadows

The name was chosen after the local community was asked to put forward ideas about what to call the new green space. More than 50 names were suggested by schoolchildren, residents and community organizations. Alt Meadows was chosen by an overwhelming majority.

The park has been created on a brownfield site which has been transformed by extensive civil engineering work, the diversion of almost 1km of the River Alt, the creation of accessible paths, meadow, wetland and woodland habitat.

Liverpool based charity, The Cass Foundation, have led the project in partnership with the Community Forest Trust.

The Mayor of Liverpool, Joe Anderson, said: "It is a great example of how we are converting disused sites and giving access to green space through all parts of the city. Alt Meadows is a really attractive new green space which will benefit local people and visitors."

The creation of the park was funded by DEFRA's Catchment Restoration Fund, via the Environment Agency and Liverpool City Council. The Catchment Restoration Fund was available to charities to deliver projects that would contribute towards improving biodiversity or water quality within catchments that were failing to reach good standards within the EU Water Framework Directive.

Helen Rawlinson, The Cass Foundation, Project Manager said, "Over 2000 trees, nearly 4,000 shrubs and 2,100 wetland plants have been planted by volunteers and the contractor. Sixty miles have been covered during our regular Walk and Talks. Twenty conservation volunteering and tree planting days have been held and the project has received support from 300 volunteers. Birds have been surveyed, mosaics have been created and 1400 people have attended our events and activities. The community involvement has been fantastic."

Alt Meadows was officially opened by the Mayor on Sunday 29 March, the event included fun, family -friendly, activities with seed sowing, environmental art and crafts.