

Wirral Borough Council

At Saughall Massie, we have formally objected to the re-application for the 'Imposed on the community' Fire Station. The Fire Brigade have carefully moved the car parking round on the plans to respond to the objection of the residents. There should be a law about such re-applications. We can only hope that the Planning Committee again realizes the faults in this application - to develop an industrial site in the Green Belt and arguably place the residents of Upton and Woodchurch at unnecessary risk

At Eastham Village, the local Rugby Club is applying to sell off some of its land for housing as an 'Enabling Development' to enable the club to continue.

We have objected as the Green Belt is not to be used as a cash cow just because an enterprise is in difficulties. We fear there would be a repeat of the problem a few years down the road and yet more of the Greenbelt will be sacrificed. The application is muddled by the inclusion of a replacement Community Facility for which our Council has pledged some £350,000...if it decides that the planning application should be approved **by its own committee**. There are many issues that are worrying with this application.

At Storeton Hall there is another 'Enabling Development' application for a housing estate – the funds from which will be used for the restoration of Storeton Hall, a listed historic building. Enabling development seems to be the new phrase for destruction of the Greenbelt. *Photo - Rod Tann*



At Thornton Hough, there are proposals for a Retirement Complex development of flats and assisted living accommodation, all on the Green Belt in this historic village. We have contacted the two groups opposing it and hope they will work together and that we can assist in opposing the Application when it arrives.

In Hoylake, the local Councillors have now decided to oppose the 15 year long Council sponsored (taxpayer funded) Hoylake Golf Resort. A small 'Hooray' but tempered with the fact that they now seem to have found another Golf resort scheme, apparently one proposed by a local Hoylake group. Perhaps one day a proper review of the land and its possible uses will be undertaken...if the Council have any money left. How about a farm? Food is more useful, even than golf!

The website <http://www.stophoylakegolfresort> has many interesting revelations. Any issues on the Green Belt in Wirral please email planning@wirralsociety.net

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Copies go to the Archives of Wirral, The British Library and Scottish Deposits

WIRRAL MATTERS

NEWS and VIEWS from THE WIRRAL SOCIETY - FOUNDED 1928
THE WIRRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND (CPRE)
President: Professor John Tarn OBE DL FRIBA FRSA FRHistS FSA

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=====SUMMER 2017=====

The Wirral Society – Civic Award

The new Wirral Met College Building for Construction Students

'An incredibly well built shed'

From the outside this new college build on Tower Road fits in with the industrial dockland setting. Inside it is rigorously designed with specific discussions with students, staff, employers and the 'Places Matter' design panel as to what would make a great learning environment to create an employable future workforce. Previously the different construction departments had been housed in poor facilities which equalled low morale. The happy learning atmosphere in this new building is palpable.

It is designed for this place, this landscape, with huge windows looking over the water, Liverpool and the docks from workshops, classrooms and the café area. There are cycle racks and tree planting. It was deliberately not made into a fortress – passers by can look in and see what's going on and there is no barrier to the water. Intense design considerations kept costs down as no expensive changes were needed during the build, which was completed in 40 weeks instead of the 48 estimated.

This is just the start of development of the Wirral Waters dockland area and should give Wirral Borough Council confidence in future projects here. We look forward to the restoration of the old hydraulic clock tower and its becoming a Maritime Learning Hub.

Members of the Society's Committee were given an enthusiastic guided tour by Richard Mawdsley from Peel Holdings, Michael Norton, Deputy Principal and Sally Wysocki the Marketing officer and tutors from different departments.



Wirral Met College Outside View



View from Cafe

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Following the selection of Steve Rotherham to the position of Metro-Mayor of the new Authority we await with interest to see what impact his new strategic planning powers will have – especially as they affect Wirral Borough. He will be a key player in directing the type and location of development across the 6 Boroughs. We will be pressing for the Mayor to aggregate respective Council house building targets as a way of honouring his pre-election pledge to protect Green Belt and direct new development onto previously used (Brownfield) land.

Trees

Trees make a unique visual contribution both to our urban and rural landscapes, as well as the benefits they bring in cutting pollution. It is always sad to see trees being cut down, which happens for various reasons.

There appear to be an increasing number of trees lost, both on the roadside and on private land in the peninsula.

The trees that we often know best are those on verges and adjacent to the roadside. It is accepted that these trees need to be carefully maintained and where seriously diseased, felling needs to be carried out. This cumulative loss seems particularly the case in the north of the peninsula, to judge by the number of tree stumps protruding from verges.

Our concern is that trees, once felled, seldom seem to be replaced. Indeed some stumps are so old that they themselves are in an advance state of decay. We are trying to establish for the council whether there is any replacement programme planned and who decides which trees are to be taken down.



Photos by Rod Tann and from Google Earth

Trees within Conservation Areas are supposed to be automatically protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Two aerial photos show the extent of tree loss far in excess of the 'footprint' of the new flats in Hoylake's King's Gap Conservation Area. The case is being investigated by representatives from the Conservation Areas Wirral group.

Flyposting

Illegal flyposting on Council property such as railings and lamp-posts is a continuing problem which has become worse, since staffing cuts to local Council's Planning Enforcement sections has become more evident.

For some time we have had a website and active Twitter and Facebook pages – all designed and managed by Nick Lauro . Current issues appear quickly and there can be worldwide interest and interaction.

Similarly, our new Instagram account which is run by Judith Railton has 76 followers and rising. These include local residents and groups and environmental groups from Norway, America, and Britain. Photos of The Wirral Society issues are posted – coastal changes, litter, beach cleaning, saving historic buildings, civic pride, wild life, lectures and society awards.



Chairs dumped on Rock Ferry beach



recycled plastic seating at New Brighton

**Footpaths where there were none
Continuing the series by Gareth Lovett Jones**

Chapter 5. Heswall/ Pensby/ Irby/ Thurstaston Common

A stretch of country that has been 're-wilded' is also country with great potential for new paths, and to my mind there is one in particular in Wirral which would – all things being equal – make an outstanding candidate for such change. It lies to your right as you finally emerge northwards out of Heswall along Telegraph Road, and the big view towards Thurstaston and Caldly Hill opens up in the windscreen.

As this stands this is occupied by a single (in Wirral terms) very large area of cultivation, backed onto by Pensby School, plus some smaller tilled fields lying to the north and framed by vestigial hedges. The soil has some sand in it, as well as a great number of small pieces of the red sandstone.

Dare we imagine – should it no longer be needed for farming – it might be turned into, not another golf course, but a kind of southern extension of Thurstaston Common? Though it lacks the Common's topography, it would surely be possible to establish some of its heath and woodland species, with an emphasis of maintaining long and open views.

Heswall itself was always a settlement on heaths – look at the old photographs – and if Wirral Council is serious about attracting tourists to the peninsula, then it would do well to give some rein to its wilderness area, all but invisible as they currently are to people travelling here by road.

'Wild' land in the area I suggest would give an immediate and vivid sense of arrival in the place.

Gareth is a writer, professional photographer and film maker and has a deep affinity with Wirral. He is the author of English Country Lanes, The Wildwood, Railway Walks and several novels.