

Chairman's Comments

Some Current Casework

It's good to report some good news concerning the proposal for a major new housing estate on the site of the former Cadbury/Burton factory at Pasture Road, Moreton. The application has been approved by Wirral Council's Planning Committee, conditional on the water feature being restored. The Society is keen that schemes such as this be promoted as, being sited within the urban envelope they have the benefits of good transport links and could help boost the local retail economy.

We have made representations to the Council over concerns at Gilroy Nature Reserve at West Kirby. The scrape – an area of exposed mud and water has been drained. It is home to resident birds but also summer visitors, most notably Black-Tailed Godwit that mass in flocks of up to 2000 from July to October each year.

Wirral Wildlife have taken a lead in liaising with the Council to try and find out how this decision was made. Fortunately, once resolved it is expected that the water can be restored to its normal level.

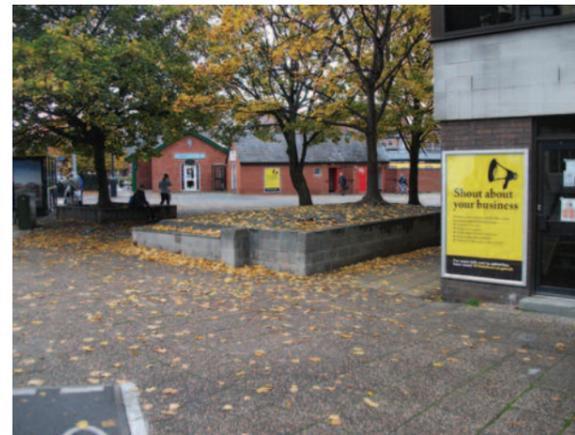
Large advertising boards being installed on public buildings may help bring in a few extra pounds for the cash-strapped Council. But is yet more distracting, officially inspired clutter the right way to do this? Motorists already have to contend with road side traffic accident statistic signs and roadside advertising boards set up often at critical locations such as roundabouts.

The proposed new fire station on Green Belt at Saughall Massie was rejected as the site was too near sheltered housing. However there are fears that the Fire Authority will now appeal to the Government,

We are delighted that the Council is to take action to tackle 'grot spots' - reinvesting some of the proceeds from littering fixed penalty notices many of which are on privately owned or unregistered land.

The Government has withdrawn funding from the underground Coal Gasification process which was expected would have affected the Dee Estuary.

A Mayor for the New Liverpool City Region, which includes Wirral Borough, will be elected in May and will have strategic powers over the whole area. We are trying to clarify what impact this will have on the Wirral. We will be lobbying to see that land presently under-used is made the first priority for any housing development.

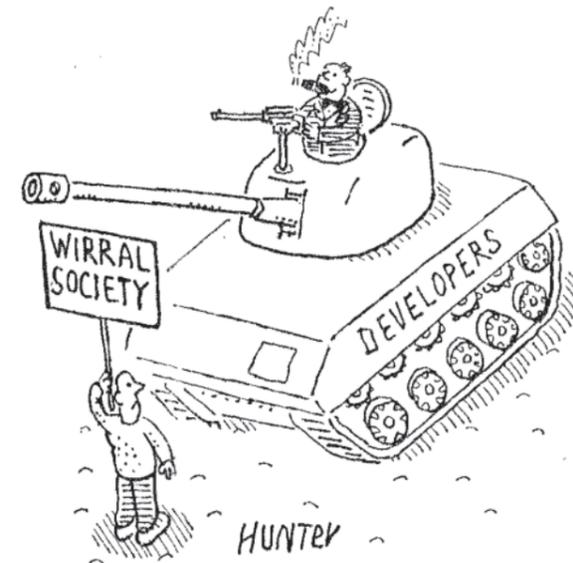
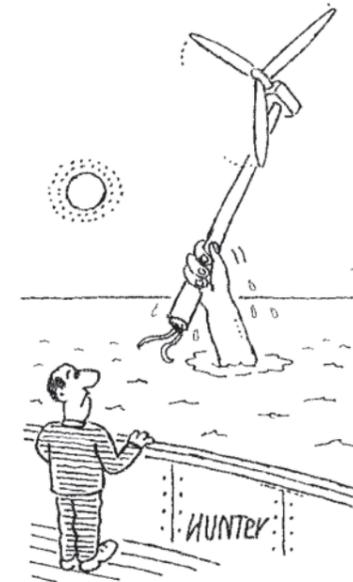


Photos by Rod Tann – Water Feature, Gilroy scrape, Advertising Boards



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



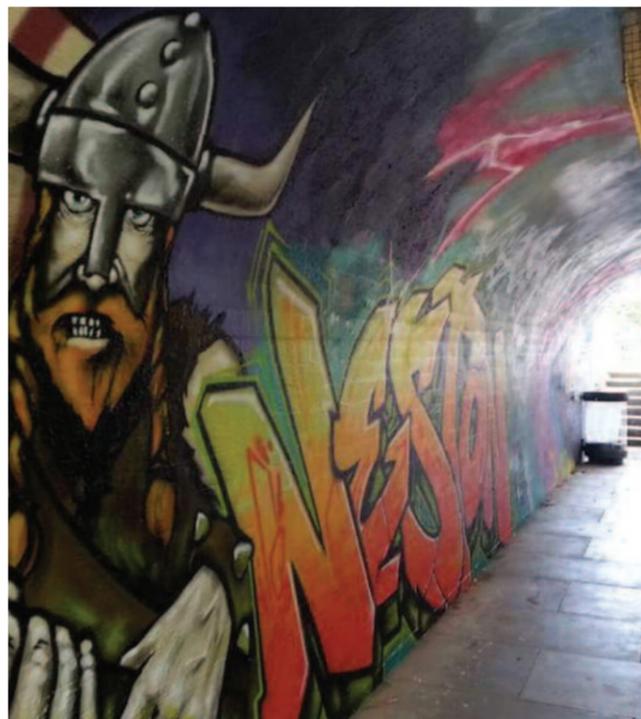
A tribute to Jim Hunter, who, for so many years contributed visual comment on the state of affairs in Wirral to Wirral Matters.

Jim was an architect and his cartoons often appeared in Private Eye and The Spectator

Civic Projects

The foot tunnel under the tracks at Neston Station now entertains with Vikings and wildlife illustrations

The initiative is led by Neston Town Council with input from Arriva Trains Wales, The Neston Station Adopter Group, Neston Primary School and Neston High School



Green Belt Matters by Neil Parry, our Green Belt Coordinator

In Wirral Borough Council our dear ‘public servants’ have kept us far too busy. At Saughall Massie, we have been supporting the efforts of the residents who are under threat of having an industrial site (a Fire Station) built on Green Belt land owned by the Council, adjacent to the retirement bungalows. We are heartened to read that the Planning Committee has refused it, but by a very narrow majority. We are most concerned that the Fire Service is, in the local press, talking only of the time to get to West Kirby and not that moving away from Upton will increase the risk for residents in Upton, Arrowe Park (and Hospital) and Woodchurch and the M53.

This Labour Council is now infamously spending another £600,000 of our money pursuing its vanity Golf Resort between Carr Lane, Hoylake and Saughall Massie Road...which may just become the Hoylake Housing Resort. Are the developers so concerned about the viability of this scheme that they have got the Council to fund the investigation phase?

The Council told us last year that it would be getting the developers to fund all further stages! One has to wonder what else this Council will suddenly have to fund to keep this 15 year long fantasy going. At the same time we read in the local press that the Council is desperate to fill its financial ‘black hole’ and it has already made severe budget cuts to social services. £600,000 would provide a lot of care! There has to be great concern that this vanity scheme will just become a housing estate in West Wirral joining Carr Lane and Greenbank Road, destroying the farmland, scaring off the wildlife – especially the Icelandic Godwits, and threatening adverse changes to the land drainage and hence flooding potential. With regard to the Godwits there has been much concern over the Council’s apparent request that the Scrape used by the Godwits had to be drained. Hopefully it will be resolved, refilled and the Godwits will return.

The website :-<http://www.hoylakegolfresort.uk> has many interesting revelations.

The residents of Hoylake have now voted in their Neighbourhood Plan. We wait to see how this subset of the Council will work in practice. It is heartening to read that they are neutral about the Hoylake Golf/Housing Resort.

On a general issue, we are seeing an increase of applications to develop or sell off sports fields, the hoped-for funds to enable the local sport to continue to be viable. One must wonder where this ends since smaller sports facilities may mean less sport, probably requiring more sports fields to be developed.

In South Wirral. - Redrow are building the first of the housing estate on the farm land off Ledsham Road.

Any issues on the Green Belt in the Wirral please email:- planning@wirralsociety.net

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Wirral Matters are available in all libraries and sent to councillors and MPs in the Wirral peninsula. Copies go to the Archives of Wirral, The British Library and Scottish Deposits

Upton Fire Station – photo credit Rod Tann



The new noticeboard, sponsored by The Wirral Society and designed by Judith Railton is now installed on the clifftop at Thurston Visitors Centre. Members of the committee, rangers and visitors attended an unveiling ceremony, toasting with fizzy water



Black and white, ‘colour in’, prints of the noticeboard design are available at the Visitors Centre