

CHESHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

WIRRAL WILDLIFE LOCAL GROUP

46TH ANNUAL REPORT April 2017/March 2018

Wirral Wildlife Committee has had a remarkable year following the announcement in June 2017 that we have been given the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award for Voluntary Service for "Inspiring, informing, educating and encouraging people to protect nature in Wirral."

The Award was presented to us by The Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside on 10th November. We have never seen a celebratory cake so emphatically and enthusiastically cleaved with a hedging bill hook in our lives. I believe that the QAVS is the culmination of the work of all those who have served the Group on the committee and of countless volunteers assisting in every aspect of our work and activities from the day of foundation 47 years ago. We have enjoyed celebrating with current and former members of the Group which has included Mrs Ruth Dann who recently celebrated her ninetieth birthday. We are delighted to have been nominated for the Award. It is clear that the Group has established its identity and purpose throughout Wirral and is respected for the contribution we make across the spectrum of wildlife and environmental concerns locally.

We are indeed fortunate to have the active support of so many highly qualified people who give of their time most generously across our events and activities.

We have around a hundred volunteers who enable the Group to record and survey wildlife sites, assist in running stalls at events which includes providing wildlife related activities for children, warden cover at wildlife reserves and in leading walks and other activities. Active conservation is undertaken which includes coppicing, hedging, heathland management and sometimes baking potatoes to sustain volunteer life! We greatly appreciate the work of our volunteer managers at our reserves in the Dibbinsdale area and at Cleaver Heath. Regular work parties are held and new volunteers are always most welcome. Production of plants and cakes for fundraising is much appreciated. Highly technical reports are made in response to planning applications and to public consultations. Every Wirral Planning Application is considered for potential impact on wildlife, such as the need for badger or bat surveys or for

when other protective conditions are needed. Public consultations are now an established feature of national and local government policy development, many of which have an environmental or wildlife component. We are able to give a detailed, professional response often involving much time and effort.

We enjoy close and constructive relationships with Wirral Countryside Volunteers and New Ferry Butterfly Park Committee, many of whom are also members of Cheshire Wildlife Trust [CWT] and Wirral Wildlife. It is good to have the active support and encouragement of the CWT trustees and staff team at Bickley Hall Farm. We thank them for our new gazebos, display equipment and clothing which enhances our corporate image.

We are determined and passionate to engage with the public so that we may enthuse people of all ages about the wonders and concerns of both the wider natural world and of our local area.

We aim to provide a comprehensive programme of inspirational and educational experience balanced, both through the current year and over a period of years so that the widest spectrum of subjects can be addressed. This year has been no exception.

Topics covered in our talks at Heswall Hall have included bats, non-native invasive species, conservation post Brexit, bees, wasps and ants, sea bird ecology, Chester Zoo's work with local wildlife and the mountain flowers of Snowdonia.

We have been treated to high quality presentations demonstrating ground breaking science and technology, all of which were presented in comprehensible lay terms. The talks are well attended and are self-financing.

Outdoor activities have included a bluebell walk, dawn chorus walk, Cleaver Heath and Heswall Dales guided walks and a geology walk. We have counted natterjack toads.

We ran a plant sale and cake stall at New Ferry Butterfly Park Opening Day and attended Ness Children's Day, EarthFest at West Kirby, 'Science Under the Stars', for Primary aged children, assisted at a bioblitz at Port Sunlight River Park and attended Family Science Day at Ness Gardens. We assisted at the Wader Festival and ran Apple Day at Eastham Country Park. We took a fundraising table at Heswall Animal Charities Fair.

We take our responsibilities under Health, Safety and Safeguarding seriously and risk assessments are completed as necessary.

We have our own website, www.wirralwildlife.org.uk where you will find our programme of activities and a Blog. We also have a Facebook page www.facebook.com/wirralwildlife. I am most grateful for the effort made to maintain this vital communication system. We are happy to add your name to our mailing list so that you are kept up to date.

I am, as ever, indebted to all our volunteers and to the Committee, so many of whom go far beyond the extra mile so that we may not only fulfil our charitable purpose but truly inspire people about the wonders of the natural world.

I do believe that we punch above our weight and we would love you to join us in reaching out to people. As you have seen from this report there are a wide range of options to explore and enjoy. You will be most welcome.

We look forward to the next year for which we already have a great programme lined up.

STEPHEN R. ROSS

CHAIRMAN