



CONSERVATION
AREAS WIRRAL

Promoting & Protecting in Partnership

W: www.cawirral.org.uk | E: enquiries@cawirral.org.uk

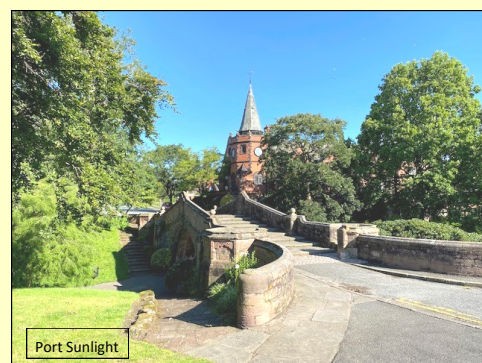
AUTUMN 2023 NEWSLETTER

NEWS FROM CAW'S AUTUMN CONFERENCE

Chairman's Opening Remarks:

Alan Chape commented upon the last three years since Covid which had resulted in CAW's committee meetings being held "virtually" proving a challenge in the early stages. However, there were some tangible successes and other issues to report:

- i) **The Local Plan:** CAW was able to make a significant contribution by ensuring that every Conservation Area had its own policy statement whereas the first draft of the Plan had merely contained one generic statement covering all the CAs which was clearly not sufficient in our view. All our statements for each of the areas were now included.
- ii) CAW has concerns about the **Local Authority's ability** to protect all the CA's and their unique features through enforcement action. Properties and other features that are listed in the Appraisals as "making a positive contribution" are definitely not being protected.
- iii) One of the biggest recent issues is the "**net zero**" target. Merseyside Region have sent out leaflets promoting the use of solar panels on the roof – however the message needs to be put across that it is not as straightforward as that in a Conservation Area. *(We have taken up this issue with Chris Han – Wirral's Conservation Officer – who is preparing a policy.)*
- iv) Wirral has "**Jewels in the Crown**" such as Hamilton Square, Port Sunlight and Birkenhead Park. Hamilton Square in particular needs significant attention and the fate of the others is in the hands of the Council.
- v) CAW has been working to get a Memorandum of Understanding with the Council to encourage them to be more "sensitive" to local issues and concerns. This has now been agreed and "signed off" by WBC and will be circulated to all CA committees, where possible, so that they can benefit from the terms agreed in it.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT

- 1 CAW's Annual Report had been sent out by email before the meeting.
- 2 Financial Statements

Accounts had been made available for 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. John Pyke (CAW's Treasurer) advised that for 2019 the list of donors was on the reverse of the page.



AUTUMN NEWSLETTER CONTINUED ...

(Financial Report continued ..)

2020 was the final year of CAW organising and running the Blue Plaque scheme which provided a significant percentage of our income. John Pyke thanked Peter Bolt for his significant work in organising the plaques, completing the documentation where needed and physically installing them in their various locations around the Wirral.

2021 brought in donations from Gillian Bolt for talks and a walk around Clifton Park.

2022 also brought in donations from the Wirral Society for an update of the home page of the CAW website.

John Pyke thanked all the donors and also Mrs Sonia Oldershaw FCA who has been auditing the accounts since 2014 until this year and John now thanked Robert Lewis who has kindly taken over the role of auditor.

There were no questions and the accounts were unanimously agreed. Proposed by John Heath and seconded by Peter Bolt.

3 Election of Committee members

Gillian Bolt (Secretary) asked if there were any other nominations to join the committee but there were no volunteers. She advised that the current committee members were agreeable to continuing in their roles and the committee was unanimously re-elected "en bloc".

That concluded the business of the CAW Annual General Meeting 2023.

- 4 Alan Chape thanked everyone for coming and advised that CAW was currently waiting for a meeting with Kath Lawless and the new Assistant Director of Planning — a Mandy Lewis, who we hoped to meet at the end of November. It was also important that members of Conservation Areas were alert to any problems arising in their areas and said that CAW would always be happy to support them.
- 5 Another CAW project for 2024 will be to update the CA Heritage Trail and get it to a point where it can be printed as booklets to go out to all the Information & Visitor Centres as well as into libraries so that the general public are encouraged to find out more about their local Conservation Areas. CAW are working with Robin Tutchins, the Rights of Way Officer, to get this project off the ground.
- 6 The Blue Plaque leaflets have recently been updated and reprinted (thanks to Jane Morgan of WBC). (*They were given out at the AGM to all those attending*). Supplies have been taken to the various libraries and other information centres so that they are available to the public.

The Annual General Meeting closed but was followed by presentations by Alan Brighthouse on behalf of Birkenhead Park and David Allan. Unfortunately Ian Parkinson could not show his presentation but a brief update on the Wirral Waters project - along with those by Alan and David - follows this report.





BIRKENHEAD PARK'S WORLD HERITAGE BID

An update by Alan Brighthouse

Alan told the meeting that the Park had a “good case” to get on the Unesco Tentative list as it was the first municipal park in the world and became the blueprint for many public parks around the world since then whilst still retaining most of Paxton’s original design.



Alan credited Robert Lee who has consistently lobbied for the Park to become a WHS, forming a committee to push it forward and without his determination, there would have been no bid. He also persuaded the Council’s senior leaders to support it — both financially and verbally.

Alan also felt that Brexit had played a role because then the Government came “on board” as well. Incidentally there are nearly 1200 WH sites in the world with Italy having the most. However the process that starts now is quite a long one. There will be a technical assessment so a panel will be appointed to do that. UNESCO will also do a separate assessment and these items will take around 12—18 months. Significant revenue and capital sums will be required before going to the nomination stage (in around 3 years) with a further 3 years or more before a decision is finally made. However — Alan was sure that it would make a difference. Staffing will increase, the “spend” on the park will also have to rise and it should have a positive impact on the whole area through increasing tourism.

“DOES WIRRAL NEED A HERITAGE CENTRE?”

David Allan, Vice Chairman of CAW, poses a question

David spoke eloquently about the unique position of the Wirral peninsula and its very diverse heritage from the early Roman times, the arrival of the Vikings, Anglo Saxons and then, of course, the Normans. The Viking legacy, in particular, can be found everywhere in Wirral’s placenames such as Irby, Raby and many others. Frankby, of course, denotes the Norman (French man’s homestead).



David told the meeting that Wirral is home to over 70 Heritage groups and he feels we need to direct all this expertise into a project that will benefit Wirral. The Daily Telegraph recently rated Wirral as the “best holiday destination”.

David projected pictures of other heritage centres, such as the Jorvik centre in York, where immersive experiences take visitors back to the early history of the city so they could experience how people actually lived in those times.

An ideal location would be the Grade 2* listed Birkenhead Town Hall, with its central location and ease of access as well as being a huge attraction in its own right. Local businesses could display what they had to offer, there could be an open top bus tour service which would pick up and drop off outside the Town Hall. The Tram museum is within easy reach as well as the station and ferry service of course. Displays and information about all Wirral’s wonderful heritage assets could also be promoted.

His presentation was very well received by the audience at the Conference and it is hoped to set up a group of enthusiasts to take the project forward.



AUTUMN NEWSLETTER CONTINUED ...

FLAYBRICK TEAM ACHIEVES ROYAL RECOGNITION

THE KING'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE

The Friends of Flaybrick are proud to confirm that it was formally announced at 9.00 am on 14th November, 2023 in the Gazette UK that we have been given the King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS); within the voluntary sector, this is an honour which is equivalent to an MBE and the highest award given to voluntary groups in the UK.

Our charity was established in 1993 by John Moffat, who today works as secretary of the group, with the intent of bringing Flaybrick back into the community and members and volunteers have worked tirelessly since then to achieve that aim despite occasional setbacks which only make us more determined to succeed.

Chair of The Friends of Flaybrick, Rob Dolphin, stated

'We are such a wonderful hard working group with a range of skills and abilities which suit the tasks we undertake and it is my great joy and honour to accept the award on behalf of our charity. This gives true recognition to all members and volunteers, both past and present.'

We would like, in particular, to express our thanks to Lord Field of Birkenhead who kindly sponsored the award bid, and also Councillor George Davies, former Mayor of Wirral and Elizabeth Davey, the prominent local historian, for their wonderful letters of endorsement.

The group would also like to take the opportunity to express our thanks as ever to the people of Wirral and beyond who support us in all weathers and attend our guided walks, Services of Remembrance and open days in great numbers."

CAW is delighted that the Friends of Flaybrick have been recognised at such a high level and congratulate the team on their superb efforts. The Award is very well deserved.





AUTUMN NEWSLETTER CONTINUED ...

RENAISSANCE AT BROMBOROUGH POOL CA

Our newly established Bromborough Pool Conservation Committee intends to inject new life into the village making it more attractive for residents and visitors alike. As a committee we look forward to now being consulted on new developments to ensure the heritage of the village is not compromised any further .

What are our Aims?

- i) We would like to have new signage erected in the village so visitors can learn about the history of the village and see maps of the architecture/points of historical interest.
- ii) We would also love to have a Heritage Trail and Heritage Tour.
- iii) We are going to push to have the Cycle Route updated too to encourage more visitors into the village.
- iv) We want to link in with local businesses in hope they might support financially with aesthetics in the village like planters, flower baskets and seating.

Bromborough Pool is the 'forgotten village', it is a travesty that such an important industrial village has been left alone. Its historical relevance has been compared with Saltaire in Bradford which is on the UNESCO World Heritage List, yet we are barely noticed.

The Committee are so pleased to be linked to Conservation Areas Wirral and will appreciate any advice and guidance you can give us. We plan to make contact with Price's Candle's to see whether they might support some of the work we are looking to do - after all, this used to be called Price's Village.

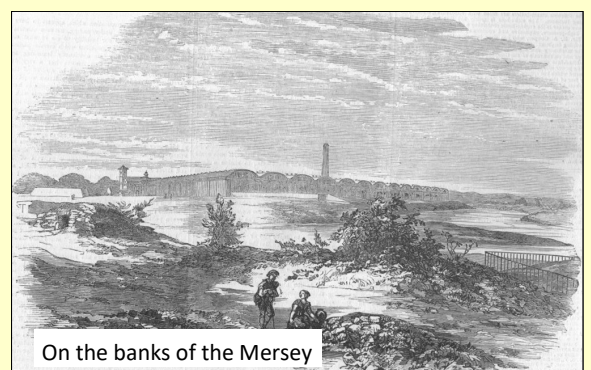
(Ed. It is worth noting that the Bromborough Pool village was established 30 years before Leverhulme started his Port Sunlight project, yet few visitors would know that as Port Sunlight industrial village is always treated as unique in the area.)

The Committee look to have community events in the village to raise funds and we are encouraging residents to volunteer with groups such as Port Sunlight River Park to help carry out much needed repair work on the boundary walls.

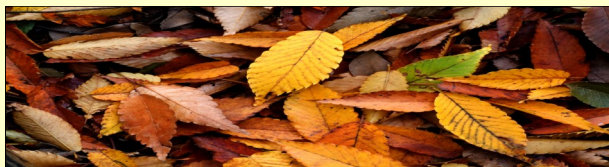
CAW is delighted that the new Committee is keen to promote the history and heritage of their Industrial village and will be pleased to help in any way that we can.



Inside the Candle factory



On the banks of the Mersey



AUTUMN NEWSLETTER CONTINUED ...

A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

But what is it — and more importantly, what will it mean for Conservation Areas?



Hugh Batterbury explains ...

Wirral Council's Local Plan is nearing the final stage of adoption by the Planning Inspector. Once adopted, the plan sets out how, over the next fifteen years, the Borough's planning decisions should be made.

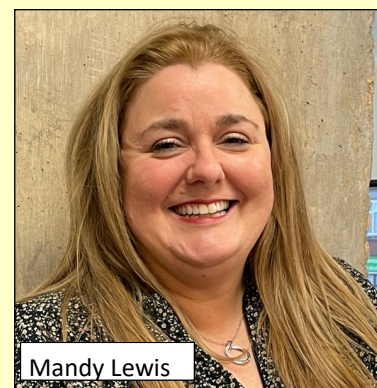
Understanding the importance and implication of the Local Plan, CAW worked together with Wirral's Permanent Officers and Elected Members to ensure that, within its Local Plan, Wirral Council had the appropriate means/ wording/policies to conserve the characters of its 26 conservation areas.

That work made sure that the plan contains separate policies that reflect the conservation area appraisals and management plans for each conservation area. In turn, those policies **provide the criteria** by which Wirral Council will **conserve, preserve, and maintain** the characters of its current 26 conservation areas.

In a further development, Wirral Council's Chief Executive, Mr Paul Satoor, suggested that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between CAW and his Authority, would be a constructive development. The MoU provides a focal point and interface between Wirral Council and its conservation advisory committees. The MoU is drafted to protect and retain the independence of each of those CAW affiliate Conservation Advisory Committees; it is only with their consent or request that CAW may represent their interests. Simultaneously, the MoU provides a mechanism by which CAW can act as the conservation area advisor for those conservation areas that, for whatever reason, are without an advisory committee at that moment in time.

As defined in the MoU, formal recognition between CAW and the Council means that CAW can provide the uniform and authoritative advice Council officials require to enable them to make good decisions affecting Wirral's conservation areas. It goes without saying that Council Officials and elected Members must make decisions that comply with the Council's statutory and legal obligations. Along with CAW's advice and assistance and referring to the local plan conservation area policies and the Council's adopted 'conservation area appraisals and management plans', it is believed that the Council will make good, appropriate, and timely decisions that maintain, conserve, enhance and, where appropriate, preserve the characters of its conservation areas.

CAW representatives will be discussing the adoption of the MoU (*which was painstakingly put together by our committee member, Hugh Batterbury, Chair of Wellington Road CA — thanks to Hugh for his amazing work on this*) with Kath Lawless and her replacement, the new Assistant Director of Planning & Regeneration, Mandy Lewis, at the beginning of December. We believe that Mandy Lewis (pictured) was previously a Director of Planning and a Planning Consultant prior to joining WBC but have yet to receive confirmation of that.





AUTUMN NEWSLETTER CONTINUED ...