



## Chair's Report 2015

### 31 and Still Counting

Another year and another Chair's Report! This year has seen the publication of the Liverpool Mayoral Commission on Environmental Sustainability Report Published March and the establishment of a Liverpool Strategic Green and Open Spaces Review Board.

Slightly further afield fracking was rejected by Lancashire County Council and in May we had the General Election with a majority Conservative win but with the Greens gaining a 2.8% increase share of the vote.

However, the Conservative majority has seen some change of direction on some environmental policies – perhaps we are now seeing the influence that the Lib Dems had in coalition?

In the ever increasing cyberspace world of Social Media US President Barack Obama has finally joined Facebook - and used his first posting to issue a warning about climate change. Obama's warning came on the same day it was announced the average global climate for 2015 is on course to be 1°C higher than the global average prior to industrialisation between 1850 and 1900.

And here today we find ourselves at the midpoint of the Conference of Parties 21<sup>st</sup> meeting (COP 21) in Paris, which France is chairing as well as hosting to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, from 30 November to 11 December 2015. The conference is crucial because the expected outcome is a new international agreement on climate change, applicable to all, to keep global warming below 2°C.

For MET, this year has been one of consolidation and strategic alliances – as you will see throughout this report.

The Trust still continues to function with the active and energetic support of volunteers and the Executive Committee; and financially we continue to be moderately healthy.

### Trust Structure for 2014 – 2015

Stephen Yip MBE DL	President
Dr Geoff Woodcock	Vice President

#### Executive Committee

Stephen Sykes	Chair
Don Thompson	Vice Chair, Treasurer and Editor of Metmail
Patience Jones	Secretary
Dr Geoff Woodcock	
Dr Stella Shackel	
Prof. Derek Gould	
Chris Hennessey	Membership Secretary
Richard Fassam	
David Holland	
Graeme Moore (Co-opted)	Communications

### **Goodbye, Hello and Farewell**

During the course of the year we said good bye to Patience Jones as she took early retirement and left the UK for foreign shores. The Executive would like to register a vote of thanks for all the support, effort and contributions that Patience made in her time with us.

During the summer we said hello to Graeme Moore who came to us as an intern from the University of Liverpool to update the Trust website, revise two Trust publications and help increase our social media traffic. When his internship finished Graeme agreed to come on board in a Communications capacity to maintain the website and Twitter posts.

And now as the year comes to an end we are saying farewell to Dr Geoff Woodcock our longest serving member who is stepping down from the Executive but is still staying on as our Vice President.

This year, Geoff was awarded the Duncan Society Medal in recognition of his outstanding service to the Trust and the environment of Merseyside. The medal was presented at a joint Duncan Society and MET event by Stephen Yip



Image courtesy of Derek Gould

### **Focus / Activity**

#### **Spring – <sup>1</sup>Green Infrastructure Futures - From Planning to Delivery – Maritime Museum, Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2015**

MET along with other partners supported the Mersey Forest / Green Infrastructure Partnership's high-profile conference bringing together leading experts from academia, the public and private sectors and beyond, to take stock of what has been achieved, and to consider where next for green infrastructure in the North West and beyond.

#### **Summer – <sup>2</sup>First Annual Gary Mahoney Memorial Debate - Britannia Adelphi Hotel, Thursday, 4 June 2015**

In partnership with Liverpool Friends of the Earth we organised the first of what we hope will be an annual debate in honour of Gary Mahoney, who died in November 2014. Gary was well known in local and environmental circles as the long-time coordinator of Liverpool Friends of the Earth and as air quality manager at Sefton Council.

The debate brought a stimulating panel of speakers, chaired by **Roger Phillips** of BBC Radio Merseyside, the theme "**Green Routes to Justice: how we can achieve human fairness and planetary survival**" - in the light of the recent General and local elections, among other factors. The panel consisted of:



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**Simon O'Brien**, well-known Liverpool actor (formerly a regular on Brookside and Grange Hill), television and radio presenter and film-maker. Simon's environmental passions include 'the entire subject of Bicycles' and ecologically sound property renovation (Channel Four's The Renovation Game is among his many presenting credits). He also chaired Liverpool's Green and Open Space Strategic Review.

**Elaine Gilligan**, has worked for 20 years with Friends of the Earth in a range of roles, from campaigning on roads and climate change to leading environmental justice projects with directly affected communities in the UK and abroad. Currently Head of Campaign Programmes (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and chairs Friends of the Earth International's Activities Committee.

**Bryan Lipscombe**, a local authority sustainability practitioner. Bryan has worked for several different Merseyside councils over the last 20 years covering issues from local Agenda 21 to climate change. He is also a volunteer and director with environmental social enterprise Sticky Exhibits.

### **<sup>3</sup>State of the City 2015 - 'Empty Spaces Healthy Places' - The Bluecoat, Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June.**

For the third year MET supported the Merseyside Civic Society's event for National Civic Day. The event aimed to encourage residents from across the Liverpool City area to engage with issues surrounding community involvement and to consider how they as residents can make a positive impact in our city and make it a healthier, happier and more sustainable place in which to live.

### **<sup>4</sup>CBRE Envirolive 2015 – Exchange Station, Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July**

This year we supported property management company CBRE's annual Environment Day Envirolive 2015 by providing and manning a stand in their exhibition and hosted the Gather Liverpool session on the Mayoral Sustainability Commission entitled 'Delivering the recommendations of the Mayoral Commission on environmental sustainability'. Professor Nigel Weatherill, Chair of the Commission set out how they reached these recommendations and their hopes for its implementation. Participants also heard how progress is already being made in several areas from key delivery agencies such as Merseytravel and Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority.

### **<sup>5</sup>Green Drinks Liverpool – Part of the Green Drinks International Network**

During the summer MET took over the coordination of Green Drinks Liverpool which is held the first Thursday of each month at Dr Duncan's. This provides the opportunity for MET to have a monthly event and allow us to fulfil our role as stated in our purpose

"MET, founded in 1984, exists to raise awareness of environmental issues through promoting open discussion of global and local concerns, stimulating scientific enquiry and debate through our unique position as a politically neutral charitable body".

## Autumn

### **<sup>6</sup>Developing a Natural Health Service – Sherrington Building, University of Liverpool, Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September**

Together with the Duncan Society we organised an evening lecture from Paul Nolan OBE Director of the Mersey Forest Team.

The lecture examined some of the wealth of evidence to show how high quality natural environments can support health and wellbeing. How specific programmes such as Green Gym, Forest School, Cycle for Health and Walking for Health, use the natural environment as the basis for their work.

However, these types of intervention are still not integrated fully into the health and social care systems, are often funded as short-term projects and can lack robust assessments of health outcomes. The lecture also featured the work of the newly established Natural Health Service Research Centre of Excellence – no doubt the focus of another event in the years to come.

## Finance and Other Support for the Trust

The Trust still receives modest membership fees and still maintains a moderately healthy bank balance, but we cannot continue as we are for many more years as our accounts will attest. A priority for the Trust going forward will be to develop a more strategic fundraising strategy, but more of those ideas later in my report.

Again we have to thank the University of Liverpool for their continuing support in providing office space for the Trust which is a very valuable asset to us.



This year we also were selected by the workers of the Speke site of Beckers (a multinational coatings company) as one of their charities of the year and we gratefully accepted a cheque for £1000

## Grants

- Audrey Walk Residents Association – Forest Schools Project
- Friends of Renshaw Street – Hanging Baskets
- Mersecycle – refurbishment and repair of bicycles and training.



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## Support and Engagement

Executive Committee members continue to engage with an increasing fora such as:-

- Liverpool Green Partnership Engagement Group and Round Table Events
- Merseyside Local Access Forum
- Trans Pennine Trail Steering Group
- Association of Liverpool Allotments
- Merseyside Waste Recycling and Disposal Authority
- Merseyside Civic Society
- The Duncan Society
- Mersey Estuary Forum
- Transition Towns Liverpool
- Friends of the Earth Liverpool
- Liverpool Centre for Innovation in Urban Food
- Friends of Princes Park
- Friends of Otterspool Park
- Friends of Liverpool Parks
- COMTECHSA
- Mersey Forest
- University of Liverpool
- North West Environment Link
- Local Solutions
- Liverpool Chamber Energy & Environment Committee
- Nature Connected (Board)
- Faiths 4 Change (Board)
- Local Access Forum
- Liverpool Cycle Forum
- Cyclists Touring Club
- Friends of Renshaw Street

We have made submissions to Liverpool City Council regarding the potential loss of green space specifically:

- Notice under section 122(2a) Local Government Act 1972: Proposed appropriation from open space to planning purposes of land at Woolton Wood, Liverpool, and Notice under section 233(4) Town and Country Planning Act 1990: Proposed disposal of land
- Planning application 15F/0110: Proposal to develop Sefton Park Meadows adjacent to Park Avenue, Mossley Hill.
- Planning applications 15F/0067 and 15L/0072: Proposal to develop St Julies Catholic High School, Woolton: ARTICLE 25 REQUEST FOR CALL IN
- Green & Open Spaces Review - 13th May, Isla Gladstone, Stanley Park. A written submission was made.



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## Communications

Item	2014	2015
<b>Website (<a href="http://www.met-net.org.uk">www.met-net.org.uk</a>)</b>		
Page Views per Week	100	1000
Individual Viewers	60	350
<b>Twitter</b>		
Followers	147	188
Tweets	131	294
<b>Linked In Group</b>	107	226

MetMail has continued to be produced seasonally with more being sent electronically than by post.

During the summer we managed to acquire the services of an intern from the University of Liverpool, Graeme Moore. Graeme worked with the Executive to revamp and refresh our website and social media offering. The table above demonstrates the effectiveness of Graeme’s contribution. We have managed to then convince Graeme to stay on board with us.

Some of you may remember two documents that MET produced a few years back on behalf of the Liverpool Community Environmental Network (LCEN) namely “**Your Environmental Policies**” and “**Your Environmental Checklist**” – I am pleased to say that Graeme also worked on revising and updating these two documents which will be available shortly as free downloads from the website.

## 2016 – All Change

Going forward as I have already stated we need to change, we need to engage with more people Mersey-wide especially young people and communities. Our web presence will continue to be developed and expanded to increase our reach and engagement.

We need to move our events around the city region and reflect that we are the Merseyside Environmental Trust.

We need to bolster our finances and engage with the private sector more.

To this end the Executive and myself are looking to recruit new members to the Executive Committee to bring new ideas and initiatives to the activities of the Trust.

## 2016 Key Activities

**Events / Debates** - During 2016 we hold the monthly Green Drinks Liverpool Gatherings and will look to have in addition a quarterly event / debate in partnership with other environmental groups / organisations wherever possible – the topics to be informed by the membership.



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**Fundraising** – Develop and deliver a strategic fundraising strategy, exploring the greater use of the website to engage a wider community and to investigate the potential for on line donations.

**Associates** – To progress the Trust and to become more effective we are proposing to recruit a team Associates. The associates will be self-employed practitioners, approved by the Executive Committee and affiliated to MET, with a broad range skills, qualifications and experiences to enable the Trust to bid for funds and be in a position to deliver activity of engagement with communities, schools and businesses.

2016 is looking to be interesting, tough and certainly a challenging time year for us!

Stephen Sykes  
Chair

17<sup>th</sup> November 2015

#### References

1. <http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Events/GIF.pdf>
2. <http://www.wherevent.com/detail/Liverpool-Friends-of-Green-Routes-to-Justice-How-We-Can-Achieve-Human-Fairness-and-Planetary-Survival-Gary-Mahoney-Memorial-Debate>
3. <http://www.liv.ac.uk/mcs/lfs/docs/poster150620.pdf>
4. <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/delivering-the-mayoral-commission-on-environmental-sustainability-tickets-17319406812?aff=erelexpcat>
5. <http://www.met-net.org.uk/green-drinks.html>
6. <http://www.merseyforest.org.uk/news/event-developing-a-natural-health-service/>