



ITPAS NEWSLETTER

Volume 22, Issue 1 - January 2019

Green Belt threat increases as WBC confirms ITPAS Area a Target !

Wirral Borough Council (WBC) recently confirmed their plans **DO** include that there **WILL** be new housing in the **ITPAS** Area built on **Green Belt** land despite there supposedly not being any final selections or decisions!!

So said a senior Officer in the Planning Department and this appears corroborated by Council Chief Executive, Eric Robinson, ordered into the firing line along with fellow Officers by controlling Labour Councillors not wishing to face the heavy flak they were receiving from angry residents who have determined, just as have ITPAS and all the other 19 Groups in the Wirral Green Space Alliance (WGSA), that they won't fall for the Council's 'blame game', believing it's the Council's own failures at the root of problems, including their desire to increase Town Hall revenues by developing the 'rich pickings' Green Belt could deliver.

Controlling Councillors and Council Officers alike still insist that local residents have accepted that the whole vast area of Green Belt between Irby, Thingwall and Pensby can be developed with housing as this is merely infill of a single 'Settlement'. They add that there was no public opposition to a past Consultation where *they* split the Wirral into large zones which *they* entitled 'Settlements'. Surely, this cannot be right.

The Council dismisses the argument that this non-English definition and usage of the word 'settlement' was not widely notified or appreciated (buried within a mass of technical documentation), was not specifically enquired about, and would mean that these very distinct towns and villages could be considered to be a single homogenous community - which they very clearly are **NOT**.

Surely, this is total nonsense, if not skulduggery: sheer, disingenuous smoke and mirrors. ITPAS is fighting on and needs your support.

More inside.....



Site at risk between Irby, Thingwall and Pensby.
125 acres, 80+ football pitches, 1500+ houses

Stand out roundabout



ITPAS is always keen take advantage of grant funding opportunities to enhance the built and natural environment of our villages.

We have been successful on a number of occasions over the years, most notably with projects to refurbish public benches, provide public notice boards, Christmas lights and an ongoing daffodil-planting program.

This year we are hoping to continue that success with the Wirral West Community Fund and an opportunity to secure a grant totaling £1,000. If successful, the money would be used to fund our project named '**STAND OUT ROUNDABOUT**' which aims to enhance the planting scheme on Thurstaston roundabout.

Eight years ago WBC undertook to construct the roundabout at Thurstaston, the decision was made to replace the existing crossroads as it was deemed to be dangerous to navigate. The construction was a hugely complex and costly undertaking. Recognizing the importance of its site within the Conservation Area of Thurstaston, the Council invested considerable time and thought in designing an effective and empathetic solution.

Located at the gateway to the Wirral Country Park, Thurstaston roundabout is the access route for all visitors wishing to visit our beautiful coastline, cycle paths, bridleways and footpaths as part of The Wirral Way. Residents are justifiably proud of the Wirral Country Park; in terms of a recreational facility and tourist attraction it is our greatest asset.

Currently, Thurstaston roundabout is not a good advertisement for Wirral's 'Jewel in The Crown'. Over time a number of shrubs had outgrown their allotted space, resulting in pedestrians and motorists sightlines being compromised. In recent

months the Council have cut back foliage, and although this has improved visibility, the scheme now looks very unkempt and weeds dominate.

Our aim is to weed the central bed, prune and feed the existing shrubs and to add additional plants in keeping with the current native planting scheme. This would include mound forming shrubs such as dwarf hebe, viburnum, forsythia, and heather, with an under planting of low growing plants including hellebores and bergenias. The low growing compact shrubs would be easier to maintain being naturally neat in their habit and crucially would not obscure drivers views across the roundabout. The plant selection would ensure an interesting display throughout the changing seasons.

Having submitted our application in which we described our proposal, we are pleased to report that the ITPAS '**STAND OUT ROUNDABOUT**' proposal has been shortlisted to go through to the second stage of the selection process.

This involves the committee designing and manning a stand to showcase the project to residents with the aim of securing votes. Other local groups will be attending and pitching their projects with the same aim and those receiving the greatest number of votes will gain funding.

The event will take place on

**Tuesday 22 January 2019 between
5.30pm and 7.00pm
Venue Hoylake Parade Community
Centre.**

**You do not need to visit the event to vote and
can do so by visiting the link**

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WWCommunityFundPublicVote>

**Voting closes at 12 noon on Friday 25th
January 2019**

**Or you can vote using a paper copy available
at Irby branch Library**

**Please support the ITPAS project to
enhance your local environment.**

**Play your part and vote to make this
project a reality.**

MEMBERSHIP

New members are vital to the future of ITPAS. When you have read this Newsletter please pass it to a friend or neighbour to read mentioning, of course, that the cost of membership is just £12 per household per year. If you manage to stir any interest please let me know and I will take it from there.

Latimah Sinclair Membership Secretary 648 2444



It was quite a night on Friday 30th November when the whole community came together for the annual Christmas lights switch on.

ITPAS is just one of the Irby organisations and business representatives on the collaborative group who arrange the erection of the lights and the switch on event itself. The other representatives are from the Shippons, the Irby Club, Irby Village Hall, the Evangelical Church and the Shippons Bikers, with welcome input from Irby Primary School, 1st Thurstaston Scout Group, Aroma, Friends of Irby Library, Irby Methodist Church, St Chad's Church, local songstress, Jenny Barkley and local DJ Joe Hollywood.

Many will already realise that the lights themselves consist of displays mounted on the street lighting columns, the strings of roofline lights above the shops and a string of lights in the sycamore tree at the end of the village. ITPAS member and Village Hall manager, Mike Ireland, has to apply for the council licence each year and arranges for the erection of the lights by an independent electrical contractor. Mike has robustly opposed the council's plans to charge for the electricity.

Each year we need to raise around £1200 to pay for testing, repair, erection, and taking down of the lights as well paying the contractor to attend on the night to do the simultaneous lights switch on following the countdown. We are grateful to Irby Motors, Aroma, the WI's and FOIL for their donations, plus those from the general public who donate through the shop counter collecting tins. Also, Irby Primary school children held a Christmas Jumper day and donated their funds towards the lights.

We were most grateful to Irby Vet, Rob Forrester, who generously funded the extension of the roofline lights between the pet shop and the old doctor's surgery.

Many contributed to a festival atmosphere on the night. Steve Edmunds, landlord of The Shippons, provided the Thwaites shire horses and dray to transport Santa and Mrs Christmas (two of the Shippons Bikers). He also provided the showman's traction engine and steam organ as well as free Glow Sticks for the children. Local enthusiasts came along with the vintage car (to transport the school's prize winners) plus the model steam engines.

Our local DJ, Joe Hollywood, acted as announcer and bringer of seasonal music. He kept everyone informed over what was happening. And our local songstress, Jenny Barkley entertained us as "The Greatest show woman". Irby Primary School loaned us a stage.

This year the grand parade was successfully timed to avoid any confrontations with the Liverpool bound 471 bus.

Locally, The Irby Club members always provide a free grotto for children and this seemed as busy as ever with people still queuing at 7 pm. In the Evangelical church people appreciated the warm, pies and coffee and Friends of Irby Library served refreshments.

Around the village several businesses remained open. Aroma sold out of homemade burgers, McColl's staff were "run off their feet", Rogers the jeweller had a busy night with mulled wine and business enquiries, Claire House provided Claire Bear – a popular attraction for small children, and Occasions, the card shop, said it was worth staying open. The convenience store was still busy serving at 7pm and the chip shop had a queue outside for the whole of the evening.

As we said earlier, a great team effort leading to a great community event.

And for those who are already looking forward to next year, the switch on night will be **Friday, 29th November 2019**.

PLANNING OFFICER UPDATE

Your **ITPAS** Committee continues its 'Planning Watch' over all new Applications as well as unresolved ones of enduring significance. We touch on some of them at the end of this piece.

But we make no apology for concentrating our main efforts on the worsening 'Local Plan' debacle which now sees Irby, Thingwall, Pensby and part of Barnston as principal targets for being joined up with a massive housing scheme, *"infilling between existing developed areas, which (the Council say) will have no real effect on Green Belt"*. Clearly, they are on a different planet and cannot have walked across those fields, unless they were blindfolded.

Some of the Sites/Views which would be lost if Council proposals prevail include:



We are suggesting to WGSA (Wirral Green Space Alliance) that a series of Conducted Walks takes place soon across the main Sites at risk of being 'released' from Green Belt and then developed for *'the wrong homes in the wrong places'* (Government Paper refers: 'right homes in the right places'). The public would be invited to attend as well as principal Council Officers and Councillors - to see first-hand the sheer scale and destruction their terrible, selfish plans would wreak upon the beautiful and irreplaceable asset of open farmland.



ITPAS is not suggesting that additional housing is not required on Wirral: simply that the huge numbers the Council say they are being "forced" to provide is clearly and massively wrong; that the type of houses required are generally of smaller types to suit First Time Buyers, those wishing to Downsize, others wishing to get onto the Housing Ladder, and those looking for homes offering better standards of accommodation - and NOT the large, luxury dwellings sought by the ruling Council in its "Vanity Golf Resort Project" in Hoylake - 200 dwellings on a Green Belt flood plain - and many hundreds more large houses (as 'social housing' is deemed non-viable by developers) across beautiful Green Belt sites around the ITPAS Area, Barnston, Caldby, Clatterbridge, Eastham and more. i.e. ***fewer, less grand and appropriately located.***

The same Council not so long ago was trumpeting that it had a massive housing capacity, much greater than could ever be required by any legal Local Plan process (including the latest 'Standard Method' of assessing Housing Need) **WITHOUT** recourse to **ANY** Green Belt land. In 2014, the Head of Planning wrote to **ITPAS** confirming the Council's Green Belt Policy and said: ***"The Core Strategy concluded***

that it would not currently be appropriate to provide for any additional development within the Green Belt in the period to 2028". So what has changed? Well, certainly the projected growth of Wirral's population and local economy have both gone **DOWN !!** So how is it possible that the Council now says we need up to 12,000 **MORE** homes? You don't have to be a highly paid Council Consultant, Statistician or Barrister to see that the Council's contention is ridiculous and can only be based on increasing Town Hall revenues through sales, developer contributions and high Council Tax receipts.

To demonstrate that **ITPAS** and all other 19 Groups in the 'Wirral Green Space Alliance' are not protesting on the basis of **NIMBY** (not in my back yard), the release and development of the Green Belt Sites on the Council's Shortlist of 48 Sites would involve the loss or damage to:

- Historic settings, buildings, archaeological remains and a Scheduled Ancient Monument;
- Ancient Woodland and areas of outstanding landscape value;
- Biodiversity, including loss of protected and endangered species and their habitats;
- High grade, scarce farmland, just when the Country needs to increase food-production;
- Important Ponds, Waterways, Wetlands and Floodplains, unsuited to house-building;
- Iconic Views and Walks formerly praised by the Council for 'essence of Wirral's character';
- The current separation and celebration of Wirral's various distinct towns and communities.

Recent images of Great Crested Newt in Londymere area behind Irby Hall. Main colony recorded in the Backford Road Pond. Also shown: bird foraging areas and significant Pond activity.



The Council's rushed and poorly thought-out single approach to reviewing Green Belt boundaries (which **IS** a requirement of the Local Plan process) is **NOT** in accordance with either the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) or the '5 Purposes of Green Belt' as they suggest it is. Reliance on the terms 'Settlement' and 'Infill' is flawed. There is precisely **NIL** reference to 'Settlement' in either the Glossary or text of the NPPF or the '5 Purposes' but both require the separation of distinct towns and communities by Green Belt to be maintained; and, the scale of any 'infilling' is stipulated to be much less than in Wirral's Plans, which by the proposed extent of infilling would constitute unacceptable 'urban sprawl'.

The Council admit that they have not appraised the shortlisted Sites fully and are appointing yet further consultants and legal representatives, who (we are advised) are to be briefed NOT to follow up the inherent flexibility in the Government's Standard Formula Methodology, despite the Secretary of State pointing out that Wirral is not an area of high housing pressure and there being examples of local authorities allowed to deliver fewer homes than called for by the Formula on the basis of 'exceptional circumstances', of which loss of Green Belt is one.

To emphasise still further the perverseness of the extent of Wirral's Green Belt 'at risk', which is causing widespread concern/blight, the Shortlisted Sites total around **12** times the average area of other English local authorities' Approved Local Plans over the last 8 years, including those in the hard-pressed South and all those without Wirral's vast capacity of 'Brownfield' sites, redundant Dockland, undeveloped Waterfront, Vacant Homes and Sites with Approvals.

Contrary to NPPF guidance, Wirral Council appear to be trying every device available to **minimise** the capacity and availability of non Green Belt Sites and, despite their 'warm words' about protecting Green Belt, appear to be doing all they can to augment and bolster their contention that significant Green Belt will have to be released for development. Why?

If we let this go, future generations will rightly look upon us all with disdain. For once Green Belt, prime farmland with fantastic footpaths, views and its biodiversity are lost, they cannot be regained. **ITPAS** and **WGSA** will not give up but we will continue to need your support.



Site SP060 South of Thingwall Road
(joining Irby, Thingwall & Pensby)

ITPAS 'Planning Watch' Headlines:

LDC/18/01217 - Wellington Barn, Mill Hill Road, Irby, CH61 4XQ:

The Council has recently issued a Lawful Development Certificate for this Site - Equestrian Use for more than the last 10 years over the whole Site. We have sought clarification:-

- How does Approved Drawing 18-102-100 **Rev B** differ from **Rev A** on their Webpage?
- Whilst Equestrian Use is now certified, has the whole Site thereby got 'Previously Developed' and/or 'Brownfield' status, or is the Site still protected Green Belt land?
- Is the accepted 'Equestrian Use' specific to commercial use or merely for the Applicant?
- Is there to be any action or consideration in relation to the alleged/apparent contravention of Planning Approval Condition or absence of Planning Consent for various additions?

The concern here is that this may be a prelude to an application for housing on Green Belt land. And, if so, it could have implications for the very many 'horsefields' across Wirral.

APP/18/00826 - Brookfield, Sandy Lane/Thurstaston Road, Irby:

Application was 'Validated' on **19/06/18** but is still 'Undecided'. There were several Objections, including one from ITPAS, to this proposed large agricultural building between housing. The current position and the Council's stance on this Application within Green Belt is sought.

APP/18/00362 and LBC/18/00361 - Hillbark Hotel:

Applications were 'Lodged' on **09/03/18**, 'Validated' on **12/06/18** but are still 'Undecided'. There were several Objections, including one from ITPAS. Clarification is sought regarding the current position and the Council's stance on these Applications within the Green Belt?

We advised again that the Marquee has still not been taken down as required by the Council but is stated as having been taken down within the Application Documentation. We also advised that ITPAS would be content to see the Planning situation regularised, including an appropriately designed and located Marquee, storage containers and staff residential accommodation and supports a successful 5-Star Hotel on this Site.

APP/17/01237 (Refused) and APP/16/01079 (Approved) - Heatherlands:

ITPAS enquired whether there been any progress with the proposed development of this Site which is currently cleared but unsightly, being bounded by attractive Green Belt land?

APP/18/01161- 'White Owl' Extended Hours of Operation:

ITPAS strongly objects to the Approval of this Planning Application and is considering an Appeal and also an Objection to the Licensing Committee. There are no apparent changes to justify the overturning of the Council's prior objections based on the grounds of disturbance to wildlife and quiet enjoyment of residences within this sensitive SSSI Green Belt area.

Wirral Green Space Alliance

A very real threat to our treasured Green Belt emerged during 2018 with the publication of WBC's Draft Local Plan. The consultative document identified 48 separate Green belt sites that the council would consider planning applications for over the next 15 years should the draft plan be ratified.

As shown in our front page article the ITPAS area is heavily targeted. We felt that as a group we needed a greater say in the debate, the need for a Wirral wide voice and access to professional advice.

ITPAS floated this idea past other Wirral based societies, charities and action groups together with the Campaign for Rural England. As a result the Wirral Green Space Alliance has been formed and meets monthly in Irby Library to continue the fight to preserve your greenbelt. The Alliance covers the entire Wirral. Its constituent bodies are shown below

Via the CPRE we gained access to funding to secure the services of a professional planning consultant to assist in our preparation of a very comprehensive and resolute document of objection to the WBC Local Plan proposals and call for ZERO building on Wirral Green Belt This was submitted to WBC before the end of the consultation period at the end of October 2018.

The Alliance will continue to work on behalf of all ITPAS members and all Wirral residents.

Alliance constituent bodies are ; CPRE, Wirral Society, Heswall Society, Barnston Society, ITPAS, Greasby Community Group, Defend Wirral Green Spaces Group, Saughall Massie Conservation Group, Eastham Conservation Group, Storeton Conservationists, Thornton Hough, Wirral Footpaths, Conservation Area Wirral.



VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

From time to time we have a campaign that we need to publicise to either our membership, or as in the case of the Green Belt issue, to every household in the area. In order to do this without incurring huge postage stamp fees we try to do a leaflet drop by hand. It would help our hard-pressed Committee if there was a list of volunteers with a set pattern of roads local to them who could deliver the leaflets for us. If you would like to help in this way please contact any of the Committee. Even if you could only deliver fifty leaflets to your own road it would be a help.



Thanks.



The flower beds around Irby Library are planted and maintained by ITPAS. We have a monthly rota involving two volunteers who come and do a tidy-up of the beds, clearing weeds and rubbish and a quick prune job if needed. It doesn't take too long if done regularly. There are a couple of spaces on the rota, so if you are keen to help in this way get in touch with any Committee member. We do have some ITPAS tools if you haven't any of your own.

During our recent campaigns we have had lots more printing of leaflets, banners and other information plus postages and other costs. We have come to realise that our long-standing membership fee of £5 per household is inadequate for funding big campaigns such as the Green Belt issue. We therefore propose that the fee rises to £12 per year which is only £1.00 per month and includes all the residents of your address in the membership. Still good value. **You will need to contact your bank** to alter the amount from £5 to £12 per year or to £1.00 per month with immediate effect. Contact Latimah on 648-2444 if you prefer to have new standing order forms.

ITPAS Committee 2018-19



Chairman

Melanie Walker – 648-6780

Vice Chairman / Newsletter / Web

Roy Fisher - 648-7671
roy@royfisher.co.uk

Secretary

Janet Trigg - 648-8821

Treasurer & Membership

Latimah Sinclair - 648-2444

Planning & Footpaths

John Heath- 648-6015
johnheath@barnstables233.co.uk

Beach/Conservation Officer

Jim McCormac - 604-0376

Committee Members

Carole Penrose - 648-4116
Iris Stubbs - 648-7260
David Bromwell -
Ken Burnley -

Charity Commission Liaison

Lukman Sinclair - 648-2444

Members should check their subscription payments to see if they owe for the coming year. Please talk to our Membership Secretary for details of how best to pay.

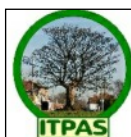
Can members ensure that their contact details are up-to-date please. Contact the Membership Secretary to inform of changes to address, telephone or email.

We are hoping that our new members become involved in shaping future policy and events by coming up with ideas and suggestions and maybe by offering to serve on our committee for a time. New blood and new contributions are always welcome. Please contact us if you feel you would like to be more involved.

DIARY



All meetings are at 19:30 in Irby Library unless otherwise stated. Free for members.



IRBY THURSTASTON & PENSBY AMENITY SOCIETY

Founded 1974
www.itpas.org

Registered Charity No: 1150756
itpas2018@gmail.com

Chair: Melanie Walker 0151-648-6780

Secretary: Janet Trigg 0151-648-8821

present

Wirral Villages



A talk by Gavin Hunter

On Wednesday, January 23rd, 2019 at 19.30

in Irby Library (doors open at 19.00)

Members free - Non-members £5

raffle and refreshments

Contact Chairman or Secretary for details (above)

Please pass this Newsletter on to a friend or neighbour to encourage interest in our society. We need more people to join ITPAS at £12.00 per household. In this way we can keep the subscription costs at this rate and continue to do the work we do for the community. The £12.00 is excellent value giving you two Newsletters each year plus four free talks in addition to obtaining grants, monitoring planning and organising actions on your behalf in our area. If every household got one other to join it would make a huge difference.

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