

## APPENDIX 2: Eco schools activity in 2023-24

### Background

Eco Schools is an international award programme that is managed in the UK by Keep Britain Tidy. It has 10 environmental themed project topics. The programme is child led and guides them through project management and evaluation of their impact. Each year schools need to renew and work on three project themes and three related curriculum topics. We make sure that we provide a programme to meet this and enable children to take positive action to apply their learning in practical solutions.

### Themes for 2023/24

Litter, biodiversity, marine, school grounds, transport, energy, healthy living, global perspectives, waste, water,

### Wirral approach

The Eco School Programme Manager provides bespoke support to guide schools through the programme and advice for their setting.

Wirral Wide Eco Council of representatives from eco schools across Wirral, the structure and how the group operates was devised by eco council and they have focussed on a theme this year and practical activities that they want to take part in.

A Teacher network meeting is held every half term, with additional training provided. On average 35 teachers attend each twilight meeting, (not always the same ones, depends on school commitments).

Working in partnership to add value, create unique experiences for schools and support emerging local cultural practitioners, community organisations and charities.

### Teacher training



Training is provided for teachers at the start of each project, we also offer level 3 forest school, outdoor based curriculum learning and have a nature steering group with teachers and a cross department council steering group with rangers and library staff to develop climate and nature learning hubs in four libraries and two park settings.

## A year of activity

Spring 2023

Paper meadow project / biodiversity



Working with paper artist Ling, we began by training teachers, then 26 schools took part looking at how pollination works. Each school created a variety of paper wildflowers to encourage close observation, which was then “planted” together to create a paper wildflower meadow as part of Wirral Country park’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The exhibition then toured Birkenhead Park and the Lady Lever to enable as many families as possible to visit. You can now see Ling Warlow’s work at The World Museum and in national magazines.





### School growing / school grounds / healthy living



Partnership with Carol Seery and WEN providing training and starter vegetable plant packs, supported 40 schools to grow in school, developing allotment areas as part of the healthy living topic

Summer 2023

### Green flag schools

53 eco schools achieved Green flag status with assistance from the Eco school Programme Manager. Wirral has an extremely successful eco school programme with many participating schools and is one of only a few local authorities to have over 50 Eco schools within their borough. This is testament to the investment in environmental education and the dedication of the Eco school Programme Manager.

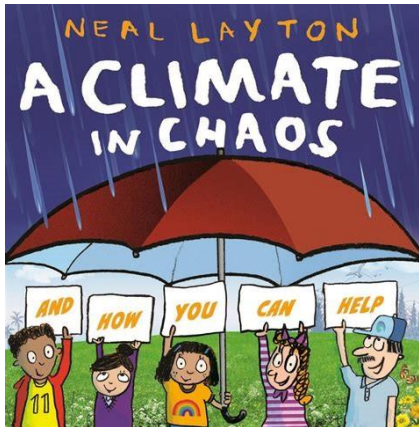
### Cool Climate Challenge

Eco teams from primary and secondary schools come together to take part. A challenge is released on the day, children then come up with ideas to solve it and take it in turns to present. Their ideas help to determine the projects for the year. Summer 23 was held at the Floral as the first one post covid, the size enabled 17 primary school teams and 9 secondary teams to attend.

### Clean Air Conference / transport / healthy Living



Grove Street Primary school challenged other schools to increase active travel. We worked with Living Streets, Asthma and Lung charity and Roy Castle lung charity to raise awareness about the impact of cars on air quality and health. The children devised their own card game as an incentive with pollution monsters and collectible power characters, that children were awarded when they actively travelled. The children helped to organise a conference at Eureka when other schools also presented their campaigns and then took part in activities, we were pleased to have Alder Hey, Eco Schools England, and Liverpool John Moores too.



#### Climate films

Each year we have worked with Heswall primary and other schools to create a film based on Neil Layton's books with Impossible arts. This year we showed them at The Light Cinema.

#### Tiny Forest / biodiversity



Citizen science workshops based on resources shared with Earthwatch, for schools, community groups and work experience students. Our Citrine site is particularly useful as we carried out control planting, so we have 600 trees in the Tiny Forest and 600 trees traditional planted in the field. It shows a dramatic contrast in growth rates and the ability for trees to endure drought periods. We will look at developing more citizen science-based projects on that site.

#### Autumn 23

#### Wirral Wide Eco Council





Children representatives from our eco schools created plans for the year. They focused on biodiversity requested practical activities which they divided into water, earth and air themes. In partnership with Bidston Golf club we have managed to deliver everything on their list, especially hedgehog friendly schools after meeting Greer from Jacksons.

### National Nature Parks

Training delivered with Jenny Lobo from RHS, with teachers trying out new app and resources, also supported the 20 schools eligible for the £10,000 grants, site visits, help completing form, sharing ideas. Now supporting post 16 co design.

### Spring 24

#### BAS Live event at Eureka



This was an exciting event with partners including Friends of the Earth, Cammell Laird and The British Antarctic Survey and Eureka. Students hosted the event which included visiting secondary schools asking live questions to scientists on the RRS Sir David Attenborough research vessel in the Antarctic. Cammell Laird also explained how they built the vessel and took questions from the students. The scientists gave clear messages about the impact human actions are having on climate change and how 1 degree temperature increase elsewhere equated to 8 degrees increase there.



#### Eco Arts Day / Marine / Biodiversity / waste

To launch our Borough of culture, schools gathered at St Georges and worked on our big projects, bamboo as a sustainable material, hedgehog animation with graduates from Wirral Met and plastic mutant fish to raise awareness of Single use plastic and its impact on our oceans.

Exhibited at Birkenhead Park with posters made by Comics Youth that works with marginal young people. Included a family

workshop over the holiday.



Water day Bidston golf



Wirral Wide Eco Council (WVEC) took part in water-based activities from their action plan with Bidston Golf Club, this included pond conservation and looking at natural pond habitats with the Amphibian Society, making mini ponds to take back to school, water conservation and tree planting as flood management.

Hedgehog friendly schools / biodiversity / school grounds /litter



Pleased that 35 of our primary schools have taken part in the Hedgehog Friendly Campus Programme (usually only 30 nationally)

The children created storyboard and designs for a hedgehog animation that with voices of children and Mrs Barker from Christ the King Primary School, we used graduates from Wirral Met Illustration and Animation Degree to help the schools and also gave the graduates their first commission.

We have provided wildlife cameras and mammal tunnels, so children can track wildlife in school and have a month-long series of competitions.

#### Eco lab



The Climate emergency team funded wildlife cameras and other equipment to form part of the new eco lab range of science equipment that schools can borrow and use at our new Nature education hubs at the two park sites and four libraries. The library staff have now had den building training with Hannah, the Forest School Lead, so they can run the activities in learning dens at the libraries.



## Bamboo Day



Working with Ness Gardens with funding from LCR, students looked at sustainable materials, how bamboo is grown and harvested and worked with eco artists to build on the imagine Bamboo as part of our Borough of Culture.

## Looking forward to Summer term 2024

### Earth day

Our next big Wirral Wide Eco Council activity day at Bidston Golf, looking at Hedgehogs, homes, bug hotels, seed bombs, bulbs.

### Cool Climate Challenge

This year the primary challenge will be hosted by Cathcart Street Primary School, last year's winners.

### Big picnic

An eco celebration event at Thurstaston to celebrate the impact of the Kirkwood Grant on 17 eco schools

### Air Day

Our last WWEC activity day for this academic year looking at air, all things flying; birds, bats and butterflies. Our student chair will also lead the planning session for next year's focus projects.