

The Friends of Hilbre Newsletter



Hilbre is one of three tidal islands in the Dee Estuary. The Friends of Hilbre aim to help preserve all aspects of this Local Nature Reserve.

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New Task Lists for 2022.

We are happy to announce that we have a full calendar of volunteer events on Hilbre for 2022 (subject to current Coronavirus guidelines).



There is a wide variety of tasks available, with something to suit everyone. You may enjoy physical tasks helping to maintain the unique maritime habitat that the islands provide, or helping to restore and maintain the historical buildings. There is the popular seal watch, providing information to visitors and helping with fundraising. We are a friendly group and we always welcome new members.

No prior experience is needed and someone is always on hand to provide training or advice.

Attachments: 2022 Tasks



Contacts:

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Volunteers for Tasks:

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Mid-week 343 9405
or 07806 749 653

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Website: <https://hilbreisland.info/>

Facebook: The Friends of Hilbre Island

Tides: Wirral Country Park: 0151 648 4371

The Last Weekend Task of 2021

The last Weekend Task of the year on the Island took place on Saturday, October 16th. We all set off at various speeds from West Kirby at 12 noon. The weather was kind to us and we got some good work done: tidying up the garden on the eastern side of the 2 storey house, cleaning the Telegraph Station and the Day Room, (both had been left in a very unsatisfactory state), repairing the door to the Goat shed, a certain amount of tidying the tools in the Goat Shed and one member did a litter pick. She was pleased to report that there was not a lot of it about.



There were quite a lot of visitors and I spent some time chatting with them and distributing our leaflets. We enjoyed the company of Matt the Ranger for the whole day. There was a bit of excitement caused by a young male kestrel who spent quite a long time perched on the top of the flagpole in the Paddlers' garden.

As we set off for home we were met by the sight of 13 or 14 "arrangements" of stones scattered around the south end of the Island. We were all rather surprised and very impressed to see such works of art, which had all been done during the afternoon - they were not there when we arrived. The smallest was about 30cm (1ft.) and the tallest about 1m20 (4ft.) See photo.

There are still 2 Mid-week Task Days on the calendar and next year's Programme of Events is being finalised.

Allen Burton

Changes to Committee:

At the AGM in September there were 2 changes to the Committee. Allen Burton stood down after 14 and a half years as Chairman and Dave Gregson was voted into the post unanimously. Congratulations and best wishes go to him. The resulting gap in the committee was filled by unanimous election of Tony Lamberton, who is in the process of setting up a new website for the Friends.



FoH Current Committee:

David Gregson: Chairman
Christine Longworth: Secretary
Richard Hughes: Treasurer
Barbara Burton: Membership Secretary and Minutes Secretary

Tony Lamberton: Website Design and Editor
Nicky Norriss: Newsletter Editor:
Andy Williams: Weekend Task Co-ordinator
Peter Hinton: Committee Member

Treasurer needed: Please contact Dave on 343 9405, if you can volunteer for this post.

Richard Hughes, wishes to step down as Treasurer this year, but he is prepared to stay in post until a successor is found. We are grateful for the work Richard has done to keep FOH finances in order, for providing the necessary reports to help us to keep our charitable status, and in helping us to make the best of our funds.

Outgoing Chairman:

We would like to give a heartfelt thanks to Allen Burton who is our outgoing Chairman. He was one of the founder members of the Friends of Hilbre (FOH) and has worked tirelessly on behalf of FOH for the welfare of the Hilbre Islands. Even before the FOH was created, he regularly worked on the Islands for many years as a volunteer to help to preserve this rare island habitat and buildings.



He was our FOH Chairman for 14 years; he continued to dedicate his time to supporting all things Hilbre. This ranged from liaising with other organisations e.g the Council, Charities; raising issues of concern eg the disturbance of the seals by boats; working on practical tasks on Hilbre etc. His most important role was being the Chairman and helping us to identify and address our priorities in helping to preserve these beautiful islands.

Photo of Hilbre:



Anna Patterson, one of our FOH members, shared her Impressive photograph of Hilbre with us.

It is an excellent picture from an unusual point of view. In the foreground we can see the sluce which was used for the float which would measure the height of the tides. To the right is Jacob's Ladder,

If you look carefully you can make out the roof of the building which used to house the tide gauge - it is just above the ladder, peeping over the top of the cliff. To the left we see the remains of the old slipway and the old Lifeboat Station, which now houses the Northern Bird Hide used by Hilbre Island Bird Observatory.

Allen Burton

Letter from our New Chairman:

Hello Members

When I took early retirement from working in education six years ago someone said to me that I should take my time about deciding what activities I should get involved in. However I knew from the start that Hilbre Island was a unique place where I could use my drive and enthusiasm to make a difference. I am delighted to become the chair of FOH and will aim to enhance and continue the good work that was started twenty years ago. All our thanks should go to Allen for holding the reins for the last fourteen years and to the group of people who conceived the idea of the Friends of Hilbre..



Over the last eighteen months, due to the pandemic, the island has been somewhat neglected and our activities restricted but the good news is that we are now up and running again. We have new proposals ahead for improvements to the buildings on the island and we will continue to support the council and join with other stakeholders to bring forward ideas for developing the island whilst maintaining its natural beauty. My aim will be to grow the membership and encourage more diversity.

I do appreciate that there will be many members who could offer creative ideas and I would like to invite anyone interested in sharing these ideas to write to me with suggestions or concerns you might have. You may have desires to become more involved or have skills that we can utilize. I want to hear from you!

You can write to me at our new e mail address which is Infohilbreisland@gmail.com.

Also take a look at our new and developing web site...<https://www.hilbreisland.info>

You can also join our Facebook page that we have developed over the last year and has now over 400 members. This is a good place to look for up to date information about developments on the island.

Welcome to any new members that have joined and a big thankyou to all other members for their support over the years.

David Gregson

Hilbre: a Special Place for Marine Fauna and Flora:

Other very important roles of the Friends of Hilbre are to help to maintain and protect this unique maritime environment and to inform the public about how to preserve it for future generations to enjoy.

The island has significant archaeological and historical heritage. There is so much special and rare wildlife living on and around the Islands that Hilbre sits within several environmental designations related to the Dee Estuary and the islands themselves. These include: Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Wetlands of International importance (RAMSAR). It is more important than ever (in the context of global warming) that we aim to help preserve this special wildlife habitat.



Some of the rare flora and fauna include the Sabellaria worm, Rock Sea Lavender, Marine Heather, and Atlantic Grey Seals to name but a few.

New Information Boards:

The new information boards have finally arrived! These were paid for by a grant from Orsted, formerly Dong. This is the company which laid the electric cable in the Irish Sea to bring electric power created by wind turbines from Scotland to Wirral.



Here is Dave Gregson pictured at the south end of Hilbre by the new information panel. This is the place where most visitors arrive. There are 12 more panels distributed around the Island:- in the Slate Shed, in the Telegraph Station and in the Bouymaster's Workshop / Museum.



Slate Shed



The Telegraph Station



Contributions for Newsletter?

Please send your contributions for the newsletter to: The Editor FoH Newsletter, 26 Woodside Road , Irby. CH61 4UL.

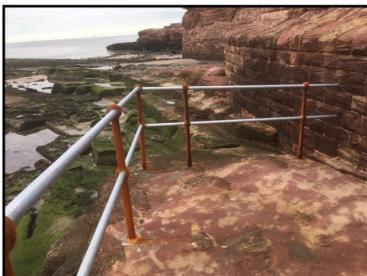
Times are A-changing

The Friends of Hilbre are following what is a common trait these days. We are in the process of updating our website. The original is still operative and is still being used by the public. The number of visits to the website in 2021 so far number 27,000. This site was set up for us by local birder Richard Smith, with assistance from Valerie Burnett, generally known to everyone as Val, both Members of the Friends.

Richard already had a website—Dee Estuary Birding (www.deeestuary.co.uk) - FOH approached him in 2004 and he agreed not only to design a website for us, but to host it as part of his own website. Val worked with Richard on the content of the FoH site, putting in a lot of time and knowledge to spread the information which many of the public were searching for. This was not all she did. She had a breadth of knowledge of history and a work ethic that kept her occupied. Sad to report, Val died in June 2015 but the time and knowledge she brought to the website should not be forgotten. The new site is being developed by Tony Lamberton with contributions from Richard Smith's own site. It is already accessible at <https://www.hilbreisland.info>

Allen Burton

Safety Warnings:



New railings put up to keep people away from unstable cliffs by the cave



Collapse of sandstone bricks above the doors of the old generator building.



New signage on Hilbre to warn of unstable cliffs, following cave fire.