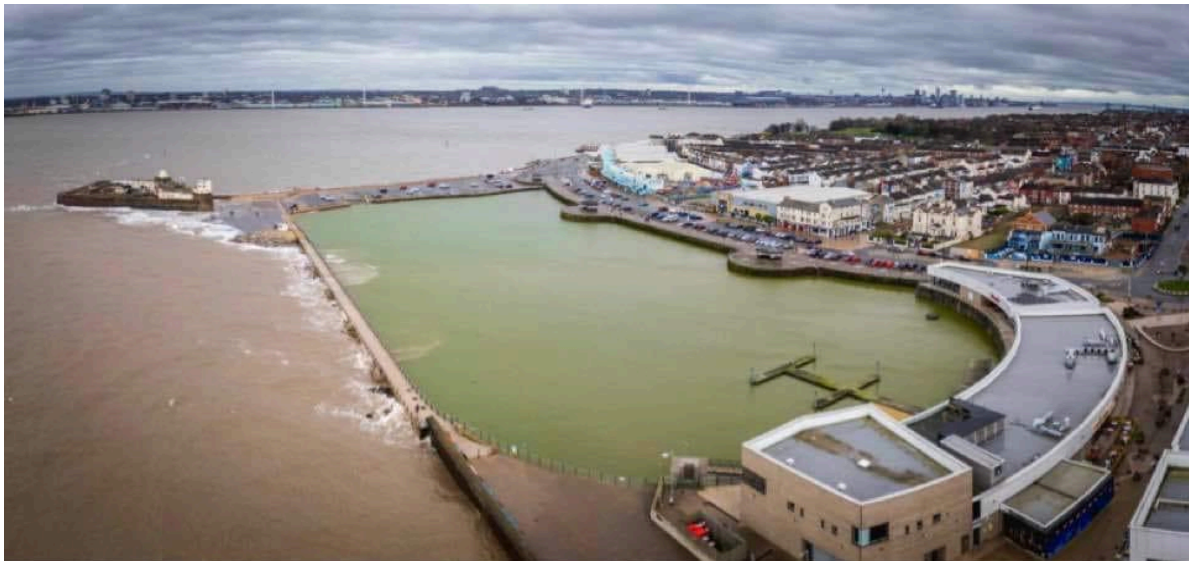


Friends of New Brighton Marine Lake



Annual Report

1st January 2024 – March 31st 2025



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FOREWORD

This paper describes the activities and achievements of the Friends of New Brighton Marine Lake (FONBML) January 2024 – March 31st 2025, and also includes a financial report.

Friends of New Brighton Marine Lake was formed as an unincorporated community organisation on 29th June 2023, when a group of local people joined together with a shared objective to improve the water quality of the Lake.

The Friends currently consist of a committee of nine people: Colin Clayton (chair) Tim Brunsden Clare Mahoney, Karen Wright, Ian Clayton, Kev Quinn, Barry Shillinglaw, Graham Bell, Colin McPherson.

The achievements described in this report could not have been achieved without the support of the wider community, and there are many, many ‘thankyous’ due, more than I can list in full here, but here are some key ones:

- The 42 volunteers who regularly help with keeping the Lake clean and unblocking the sluices.
- The members of New Brighton Outdoor Community who have helped with fundraising events and raising awareness
- Councillors and officers from Wirral Council working behind the scenes to help us protect the Lake for the future. A special thank you to Councillor Ian Lewis, elected member for New Brighton, for his ongoing support and encouragement
- Gareth Prytherch and his team at WCVS for support and advice
- Wallasey Yacht Club and Wallasey Beach CIC for letting us use their club houses for meetings and events
- Colette Whittington for gifting us the Friends of New Brighton Marine Lake logo
- Tim Brunsden, Graham Bell, Helen Kent, Emily Monks, Kev Quinn for providing us with films that delight and inspire
- Colin McPherson for the annual photography competition
- Joe Forrest and the students of Oldershaw School for their work on the Spirit of the Lake mural
- Laguna Science Ltd for the baseline assessment and review of the water quality in the Lake
- Our funders: WCVS Green Grants, West Wallasey Van Hire, Wirral Council, Orsted Burbo Bank Community Extension Fund, Liverpool City Region Community Environment Fund, the Co-op Local Community Fund, Mersey Rivers Trust Plastic Action Fund

To everyone – on behalf of the Committee, I want to offer a heartfelt thanks and look forward to discovering what else we can achieve together over the coming years.

Colin Clayton

Chair, Friends of New Brighton Marine Lake

BACKGROUND

Friends of New Brighton Marine Lake volunteer on behalf of the hundreds of people who regularly use the Lake, collaborating with Wirral Council and other local groups on actions that will protect the Lake for generations to come.

While the appearance of the Lake has visibly improved over the past year, thanks to volunteers coming together for regular clean-ups and maintenance, the water remains green and opaque. Without interventions designed to change the ecology of the Lake, blue-green algae could resurface, posing a threat to swimmers, children and young people, tourists, dogs and wildlife.

“The really sad and frustrating thing about this is whilst clearly hundreds of (mainly) locals are concerned about the lake, it’s cleanliness and it’s appearance, literally thousands don’t give a damn.....as things are the lake is little more than a large open drain collecting all the debris the elements want to throw at us....while a lot of the surface rubbish is cleared by the volunteers, much of it sinks.”

This comment was posted on a local facebook group earlier this year, and is one of many similar remarks expressing the frustration and concern felt by local people and businesses. For too long, there has been a sense that the poor state of the Lake is just something that the community has to live with. Creating a clean and attractive community space with a healthy biodiversity has the potential to benefit many groups in the community. If the water were cleaner and healthier, it can be promoted as a focal point for all kinds of activities, such as photography, walking, running, swimming and paddle-boarding, training in boat crafts and water safety, to name but a few. Marine life would return and the Lake would stand as a beacon of hope, a visible testament to the power of community action and technology in bringing life back to forgotten, polluted places.

One of the most important first steps has been to create some ambition for the Lake, so these improvements are getting closer as people in New Brighton and on Merseyside get behind the mission to improve the Lake. To this end, over the past year the Friends group have been networking with the Council and local community groups, and this is what we have achieved:

ACHIEVEMENTS

Fundraising

- The Friends have raised over £40,000 through selling merchandise, running events, applying for small grants.
- We have been successful in applying for a grant of £13,000 in order to install mussel ropes and improve water quality monitoring.
- Our crowdfunder was backed by over 85 people [Bringing the Marine Lake back to life \(spacehive.com\)](https://www.spacehive.com/bringing-the-marine-lake-back-to-life)

Survey and baseline assessment of water quality

- FONBML appointed Laguna Science Ltd to do a full survey of the Lake’s marine ecology and identify the actions needed to kickstart the Lake’s natural cleaning

cycles, in particular to optimise levels of oxygenation, water circulation and salination. This cost circa £5000.

Purchasing equipment to look after the Lake

- We have purchased equipment for keeping the lake clean, including a new and unsinkable boat with an electric motor, nets, four drysuits and life-vests for volunteers.

Recruiting and training volunteers

- The Lake is now looked after by an active group of 42 volunteers.
- 19 volunteers have been trained in first aid
- Volunteers have been meeting regularly to unblock the sluices and ensure that the Lake is replenished with salt water at spring tides.
- At one clean-up, over 40 people from various community groups came to help: Wirral Bluetits, Wirral Ice Swimmers, Clean Mersey, The Reluctant Runners, Coastal Communities, Friends of New Brighton Quarter, Paul Lavelle Foundation. More than 150 bags of rubbish were collected, and over a ton of scrap metal in the form of trolleys and bikes were pulled from the water.

<https://www.wirralglobe.co.uk/news/24583910.newbrighton-marine-lake-cleaned-90th-anniversary/>

Arts and Culture

- We ran two public events about the Lake and over 70 people came to each.
- Christmas 2024 marked the fourth annual photography competition celebrating the Lake and the people who use it, judged by Colin McPherson, local resident and acclaimed photographer. [Colin McPherson – images & words](#).
- Some of these photos were exhibited in the Floral Pavillion.
- The Lake has also inspired a number of short films, particularly the award-winning film *Flowerdew – Legend of the Lake*, celebrating the Lake, and also Peter Flowerdew who has been looking after it for many years. [Flowerdew – Legend of The Lake – Tim Brunsden](#)
- The Lake now has a logo to mark the 90 years anniversary, designed by a local artist, Colette Whittington. This has been used on hoodies, tote bags and swim caps.
- We made a film about one of the Reluctant Runners whose photographs are often featured on North West Tonight: [Kentavarus Way? – Friends of New Brighton Marine Lake](#)
- The Friends of New Brighton group networked with other local community groups, and we were able to act as a point of contact for the recent Borough of Culture celebrations, supporting *Walk The Plank* to bring the wonderful 'Monty the Mersey Monster' to New Brighton. It was estimated that it attracted 15,000 visitors to the area, highlighting Wirral as a cultural destination. The event would not have been viable without the work the Friends and volunteers have done over the past few years, cleaning and maintaining the lake as a space where these large events can take place. See also [Liverpool River of Light 2022 Highlights – Pete Carr Photo](#)

- We were successful in winning a £7,000 Wirral Borough of Culture grant to work with local schools on the design and installation of a mural on the Lake's seawall, facing New Brighton at the Marine Point end.
- The mural, painted by local artist, and co-designed with students from Oldershaw, will be unveiled on Thursday 1st May at the Floral Pavilion. It will then be installed on the wall of the Lake in June.

Website and social media

- We set up a website [Friends of New Brighton Marine Lake – keeping the Lake clean and safe for the enjoyment of all.](#)
- We also have an Instagram and Facebook account

Working towards a lease for the Lake

- To be able to progress with fundraising, it is essential that we are able to demonstrate to funders that the Council and the Friends are working in partnership to the same end.
- For this reason, we have been working with WMBC to become leaseholders for the Lake, which will enable us to progress with fundraising for the aerators needed to keep the water fresh and oxygenated.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial statement for the year ending 31st March 2025

		Unrestricted funds	Designated Funds	Total 01/01/2024 – 31/03/2025
Receipts	Donations	2080.40		
	Sales	6518.56		
	WCVS Green Grant		4690	
	West Wallasey Van Hire		1000	
	LCR Community Environment Fund		4925.62	
	Wirral Borough of Culture		7000	
	Co-op Local Community Fund		500	
	Burbo Bank Extension Fund		12,900	
	Plastic Action Fun		600	
				£40,214.58
Payments	Communications		575.00	
	Merchandise		2,301.80	
	Boat & Mooring		1,873.99	
	PPE & cleaning		709.80	

	Nets & cleaning		141.58	
	Water monitoring		4,762.80	
	Installation of mussels		0.00	
	Mural		6063.74	
	Volunteer training		540.00	
				£16,968.71

Overview of financial position:

At the year end 31st March 2025, FONBML had raised £40,214.58, and spent £16,968.71, creating a balance of £23,245.87.

Of this amount, £6,297.16 is unrestricted funds ie £8598.96 raised from donations and sales, less the costs associated with materials for merchandise eg hoodies and swim caps. A further £12,900 has been put aside for the installation of mussels and equipment for regular water monitoring. This leaves a balance of £4048.71 required to pay for the installation of the mural and further training for volunteers. We also have a grant for security and storage which we cannot spend until we have the lease in place, giving us access to the pontoon and decking.

FUTURE PLANS

Friends of New Brighton Marine Lake have a clear and shared mission to keep the Lake clean and safe for the enjoyment of all. The Lake is an extraordinary and much-loved asset, and a critical element of the regeneration of New Brighton. Through working together and sharing effort and resources, we are making improvements for the benefit of local people, tourists and the business community.

Our next priority objectives for the next 12 months are as follows:

- In order to take out a lease on the Lake, we need to become a formalised , we are working towards becoming a charitable incorporated organisation.
- By far the biggest element of fundraising plans to restore the Marine Lake will be the installation and maintenance of aerator equipment. This will cost in the region of £200,000.