

Strike Up the Band

Residents and visitors alike have enjoyed the free music events in the Dell this summer. The Port Sunlight Lyceum Brass Band played in July and in August we had bands from the International Beatleweek Liverpool event.

Back in Lever's time at the east end of the Dell was the Auditorium. Planned as an event space for company and village gatherings it was eventually demolished in 1937 because of flooding and poor acoustics.

There was also a Bandstand, sited in the Diamond. Again this was demolished when the Rose Garden was laid out in 1932.

Victorian/Edwardian era bandstands were ornate, octagonal or circular structures built in public parks during the 19th and early 20th centuries, to provide a platform for musical performances. These structures became symbols of the expanding public park movement, providing a focal point for community enjoyment and cultural activity.

Perhaps, such a bandstand, might be a welcome addition to Sundays in our village. A reminder of that bygone era — in a classic English summer.

Of course, we understand such a structure would be bespoke. Would need heritage and planning approval and the possible substantial cost would need fund-raising.

Unfortunately, these days thought would also need to be given to vandalism and theft. So materials used in any potential construction, need to be evaluated with regard to these potential outcomes.

The Residents' Association is just putting the idea out there for discussion. Please let us know your thoughts, at our meetings, on our Facebook Page or by contacting us.



An AI-generated image of a Victorian-style bandstand in the Dell



The Port Sunlight Lyceum Brass Band, 6 July 2025



InterPaul, a Paul McCartney tribute band from Argentina, 23 August 2025

Our streets, our village

Two of the main concerns that come up time and again at our Resident's meetings are speeding and the lack of pedestrian crossings.

In the Trust's 'Have Your Say Survey 2024', 56% of respondents expressed concern about excessive speeds on some village roads and 41% felt that it was difficult to cross some village roads.

Bolton Road in particular has problems with both speeding and safe crossing. It is the main thoroughfare in the village. Rush hour, school, event, Unilever, Garden Centre and tour bus traffic are all heavy users. Multiple reasons for pedestrian crossings include school, event, guided walking tours and visitor attractions. The proposed Lyceum Project will increase pedestrian footfall from one side of Bolton Road to the other.

In 2022, The Highway Code was updated. The "Hierarchy of Road Users" was introduced. A concept that prioritises the safety of vulnerable road users, including pedestrians. This means drivers should be extra vigilant and aware of pedestrians, especially children and those with disabilities. Rule 187 of the Code emphasises that pedestrians have priority at junctions, including roundabouts.

The roundabout on Bolton Road is a particularly complex junction, with five approaches, and is not helped by some of the planting on the roundabout itself. At some times of the year this planting exceeds 6ft high.

Although this Highway Code change was introduced 3 years ago very few drivers appear to be aware of its advice.

Traffic calming measures, while intended to improve safety and reduce speeding, can be a highly



emotive subject. Concerns about vehicle damage, noise, and inconvenience often clash with the desire for safer streets, particularly from pedestrians and cyclists.

At our last Resident meeting in July, this was an issue we discussed. A suggestion was to consider a gentle hump across the width of the road with a pedestrian crossing incorporated. The example residents had in mind was the crossing outside the Dunelm store at the Croft in Bromborough. Albeit, that particular example does not include a painted pedestrian crossing, many drivers recognise it as such. The AI-generated image above gives an impression of what such a crossing might look like.

Road layout is part of a wider public realm strategy, the absence of which we have raised in the last two editions of *The Tally Ho*. (NB: *The public realm is all publicly accessible spaces within an urban area*)

The Trust's recently published Strategic Plan 2025-28 makes

scant mention of the public realm, that being in terms of maintaining and conserving landscapes and public realm.

That would seem to imply a rejection of the ambitious ideas presented in the 2021 report from Planit-IE, Urban Designers and Landscape Architects.

Specifically with regard to Bolton Road ideas discussed in that project, included breaking up Bolton Road around the Bridge Inn to slow traffic, more crossing points for pedestrians, improvements and widening of pavements, narrowing of roads, and a major rethink at the ambiguous and potentially dangerous junctions at the village roundabout.

Instead, the Trust's plan talks more about commercial opportunities, about diversifying and growing income streams, seemingly, in part, from increased visitor numbers.

Whilst there is acknowledgement of the shortage of parking, especially near to the station, there is no

indication of where the resultant increased numbers of vehicles entering the village might park.

At our July Resident meeting we discussed the possibility of the introduction of a Resident Parking Scheme.

This is another contentious subject. Resident Parking Schemes can have unintended consequences. It can be difficult for multi-vehicle households; for genuine visitors to a property; adds long-term administration costs and can unnecessarily displace vehicles when demand exceeds spaces allocated in the scheme.

Whilst landscape, owned and managed by the Trust forms part of the public realm, the authority for the roads, pavements, lighting, etc. lies with Wirral Borough Council

It is always important to remember that two-thirds of the residential properties in the village are not owned by the Trust. Owners of these properties are entitled to representation on public matters, like any other household in the borough. The Trust does not speak on behalf of private home owners.

The financial situation of WBC is well known, so resource to undertake any potential public realm improvements may be limited. Although, alongside the new housing in the New Ferry Regeneration project, significant improvements are also planned for the Bebington Road area. Almost £5.5m of funding is in place to deliver a scheme of public realm improvements that will address road safety concerns and anti-social behaviour issues, and ultimately create an enhanced, more appealing town centre environment. This will include high quality spaces with greenery, new paved areas, new seating and traffic calming measures.

Our proposal is to engage with the City Mayor's Office, WBC, and the Trust to establish a Port Sunlight Village Public Realm Steering Group.

The Group's remit to take suggestions in the original Planit-IE report as a starting point and consider best use of money to achieve significant traffic calming and create a more attractive village for people to walk, cycle and spend time, supporting a healthier and more active lifestyle.

The original stated intent in 2021 when the Trust and Council sought residents' views read as follows:

'We'd like to hear your views on opportunities for play, recreation, biodiversity and sustainable drainage solutions, spaces for events and gatherings, allotments and productive landscapes, improvements to paving, lighting and signage, along with street design including car parking, traffic speeds and cycling.'

Editorial

The holistic approach

There are a significant number of older residents who are former, or the families of former, Unilever employees. This is a group who have had a long-term relationship with Port Sunlight Village, in some cases over eight decades — the legacy residents.

Some have mobility, visual and other issues. The Residents' Association would like to identify and help this group as much as possible, so please contact us if you think we can help or advise you.

Some managed to buy their property, but many are still tenants and have come to attention because of the several high rent increases imposed on them and a lack of serious improvements to many of their properties. These were significant reasons to establish the Residents' Association initially.

Most of these tenants are in protected tenancies which gives significant rights and protections. If you are in this position you need to be fully aware of this — you cannot be forced out of your home. Moving elsewhere is very likely to increase your rent.

The formation of the Trust did not envisage the current reality; that its main source of income would be from residential tenants, seemingly now changing the Trust's primary role to that of private landlord.

In the Memorandum of Association of the Trust, first published in 1999 (amended in 2017 and 2020) the object was established in two parts.

The first part concerned itself with the preservation and maintenance of the buildings and landscape. The second part reads *'to promote understanding of the ideas underlying the foundation and development of the Port Sunlight Conservation Area and similar foundations, their social and economic context, and their relevance to issues in the modern world'*

We believe the Trustees need to be particularly mindful of this second part of the objective when implementing the Strategic Plan 2025-28. The Trust is undertaking major investment in its housing stock. But this is after a number of years of where spend has fallen behind need, despite extending the maintenance cycle from five years to seven.

The re-purposing of buildings to create new commercial income streams, to pay for these housing stock improvements, must be done with consent from residents.

The William Lever holistic sense of community, working together to achieve the greater good, should be an approach fundamental to Port Sunlight Village.

Connect to the future?



In the Trust's 'Have Your Say Survey 2024', less than 5% of respondents said that they currently owned an electric vehicle. Twenty per cent indicated that they were thinking about changing to electric.

One of the biggest barriers to the uptake of electric vehicles is the lack of easy access to home charging. Home charging can cost as little as 7p per kilowatt hour (kWh) — many times less than public chargers, which have a current average cost in the range of 50p to 79p per kWh.

As far as we understand, for village properties with access to service roads (*WBC adopted*) and provided the charging unit remains on your property with charging leads going directly to your vehicle, parked as closely as possible to your back gate, not causing an obstruction, there is no problem.

For properties without this access, the position is more complicated. Running a cable across pavements, causing an obstruction, is an offence under the Highways Act. We've checked with the Council and currently WBC policy regarding cross-pavement EV charging is in a state of flux.

A further complication is that the land in front of most of the properties is owned by the Trust, effectively private land. Right of access to your property is a legal right, but we do not know what the Trust's position is on EV charging cables.



The access ramp, which has been outside Hulme Hall for years, was stolen in the early hours of Thursday, 21 Aug 2025. If anyone has any information please call Hannah Louise Pilling at Hulme Hall on 0151 644 8797.



A warm welcome to the Nettle Café (old NatWest Bank) in Greendale Road.



Pleased to announce that WBC has finally, after a 10-year long battle, agreed to install a Unilever directional road sign at the A41/Bolton Road interchange. Combined with a reported more robust attitude, on the part of Unilever, to carriers, who fail to obey or pass-down to their sub-contractors, correct delivery instructions, this should result in the end of Unilever-bound HGVs in the village.



However, on August Bank Holiday Monday a Eurospeed HGV parked up on Park Road and didn't leave the village until the following morning. Still work to be done!

As for community charging this again seems to be a quagmire. We believe there are schemes, often organised by energy companies, where a house that already has a home charging system in place, can allow small numbers of neighbours to use the facility and the electricity used is then charged to the neighbour, with the original home-owner receiving a credit. We don't know if all the users have to be part of the same energy company.

Are you aware that the Trust, through the Village Voice Portal, is seeking suggestions for how to use space left by proposed removal of some village garages. Perhaps, community EV charge-points at an **economical** rate, could be an option for this space.

committee

(all officers are open for re-election at each AGM)

chair	Clive Ransom (<i>founder</i>)
treasurer	Ian Birbeck
secretary	TBC
communications	Paul Sibbald
tenant liaison	TBC
heritage	Lee Nichols
adviser	Ian Crockett

The Tally Ho

editor	Paul Sibbald
distribution	Residents; PSVT Trustees; local MP; ward Councillors; City Region Mayor's office; Community Policing Team; Unilever & local media

funding

annual membership is £2 per household

thanks to our grant providers

Wirral Together Fund

National Lottery Community Fund (*pending*)

connect with us

email

✉ portsunlightresidentsgroup@gmail.com

✉ thecockywatchman@gmail.com

social

📘 facebook.com/groups/703823424017873/
(*administrator approval required*)

🦋 @thecockywatchman.bsky.social

✂ @Cocky_Watchman

member of parliament

✉ justin.madders.mp@parliament.uk

councillors

✉ jobird@wirral.gov.uk
07970 075704

✉ kieranmurphy@wirral.gov.uk
07513 535509

✉ ruthmolyneux@wirral.gov.uk
07954 849012

We would encourage any village resident to come along to our quarterly meetings. You can raise any points of concern about the village.

There is an Agenda structure but we are an Open Forum. Everyone is entitled to express their opinion.

We do not tolerate any abuse or intimidation at our meetings.

Our next meeting is our AGM on Tuesday 16th September at The Bridge Inn starting at 7pm

A reminder that you are only able to vote at the AGM if you paid your annual membership at/or prior to the last meeting