

Adult and juvenile grebe, A & J Photography



Wigg Island hide view, Rhian Luned



Heron at Spike Island, Dave Flynn



Redshank at Spike Island, Paula Terry

September 2026 Issue 20

Matters of the Mersey

A monthly newsletter by the Mersey Gateway Environmental Trust (MGET)



Photographs submitted by you...

Thank you for submitting your photos! If you'd like to be featured in our next newsletter, please send your photos to **info@mget.org.uk**

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www.mget.org.uk

Matters of the Mersey

A message from our Chief Executive



Autumn has finally arrived – and aren't we all glad about it, despite wind and rain as our constant companions.

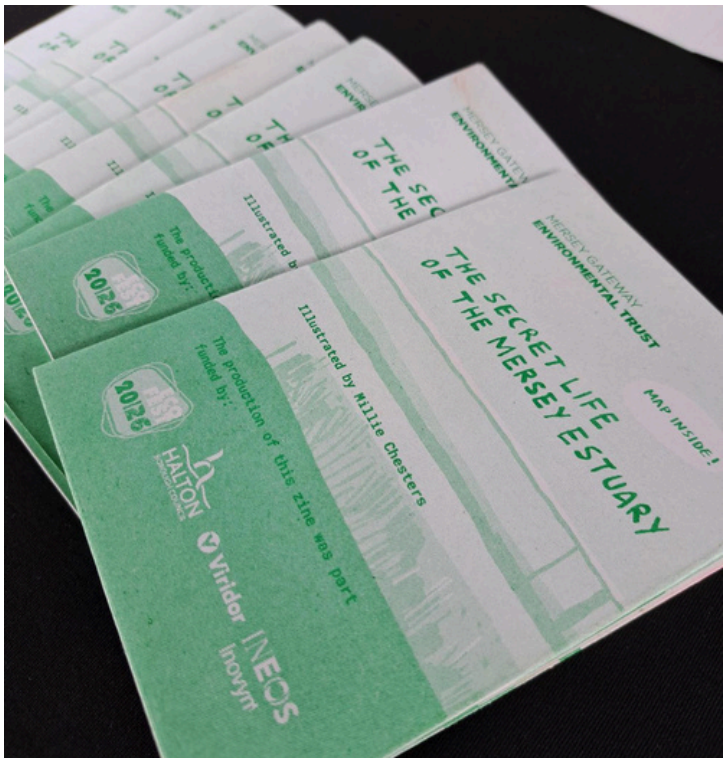
This month's newsletter shows, once again, how much impact a small team can have when dedicated to change. We have been looking at how the marsh has fared over the summer, we have been working with schools and community groups and have been busy starting projects that will hopefully be running for a while.

One of the highlights this month has been the publication of our Zine, produced by local artist, Millie Chesters (a sneak peak below, see page 6 of the newsletter for more information).

If you have not been able to get hold of a copy, have a look in the Catalyst Museum or Widnes Market in Widnes, or Café B at Howard Court in Runcorn.

I hope you enjoy reading this month's newsletter!

- Andrea Drewitt,
Chief Executive.



Matters of the Mersey

Revisiting the saltmarsh

We have been off the saltmarshes over summer, giving the breeding birds some much needed space. This month we have visited both Astmoor and Widnes Warth saltmarshes to see how the interventions we installed last winter have fared over the summer months.



Assessing the marsh.

Although many of the plug plants we planted earlier this year appeared to have been grazed by geese, we are hopeful their roots remain and the plants will emerge again in coming seasons. Diverse plant life was found in scrapes on the marshes, highlighting the importance of interventions that tackle dominant long grasses and reeds and prevent them from taking over.

We had also installed coir rolls and brushwood bundles in some of the creeks earlier this year. Some of these have been succesful in slowing the flow of water, allowing tidal water to stay on the marsh for a longer period of time, as well as enabling sediment to settle in the creeks, slowing erosion.

We will now put a plan together for winter works in 2026/27.



Marsh creek.

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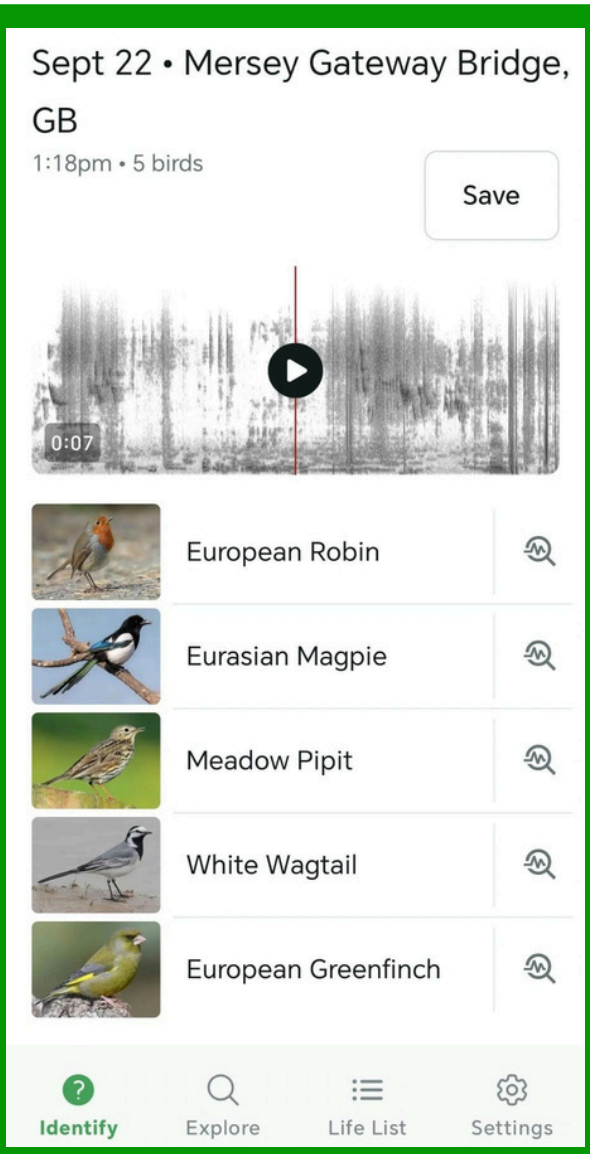
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Recent sightings

Whilst re-visiting the saltmarshes this month, we have been spotting lots of signs of wildlife activity. A visit to Widnes Warth picked up the bird song of the species shown to the right; we also saw bird species including stonechat, great white egret, linnet, buzzard, snipe, teal, curlew, grey wagtail, redshank, and kestrel.

The photos below may look fairly inconspicuous, but they are sure signs of species visiting the marshes. Underneath a log, we uncovered this small vole nest (left), no longer in use. Some digging and scat indicate that foxes are also visiting (right).

It is great to see so much life and signs of activity on the marshes.




Vole nest.


Fox scat and signs of digging.

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Recent work: Eco-Fest

Guided walks

We ran two guided walks this month as part of Halton's Eco-fest, at Spike Island and Wigg Island. We highlighted the wonderful wildlife that is to be found in Halton, as well as the work we are doing in the area to protect green spaces around the Mersey estuary. It was lovely to meet residents of Halton and beyond, who shared their memories and knowledge of nature around the Mersey.





Performer at Eco-fest

Victoria Park event

Eco-Fest concluded with an event at Victoria Park, Widnes, bringing together local environmental and sustainable organisations. It was wonderful to see the people of Halton coming together to celebrate all things eco.

We had a stall discussing the wildlife of the Mersey and looking for wildlife in the park; we certainly weren't expecting to add a dodo to our species list!

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Recent work: Eco-Fest

Zine

Eco-fest, as well as Halton Borough Council, part-funded the production of our new zine. ‘The Secret Life of the Mersey Estuary’ explores the wildlife of the Mersey and the work we are doing to protect it in a creative way.

The zine was brought to life by local artist, Millie Chesters, and was printed on recycled paper using risograph printing. We were thrilled to showcase and distribute this work at Eco-fest.





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Recent work with schools

Mersey Estuary Ambassadors

Now that children are back at school after summer break, our Mersey Estuary Ambassador programme has re-started. With updates shared with existing schools about what has been happening around the estuary.

2 new schools have joined the programme too! Assemblies were delivered this month at Ditton and New Brighton primary schools, as well as workshops for pupils to become Estuary Ambassadors.



Ambassadors at New Brighton Primary.



Hermit crab at LWM aquarium

Liverpool World Museum

This month we joined forces with the aquarium team at Liverpool World Museum once again, to deliver sessions for school pupils on the wildlife found in both the Mersey and the aquarium.

Delivering these sessions at the aquarium is a great opportunity for pupils to see species such as dogfish, mullet, and hermit crabs up close, so they can imagine what life in the Mersey is like.

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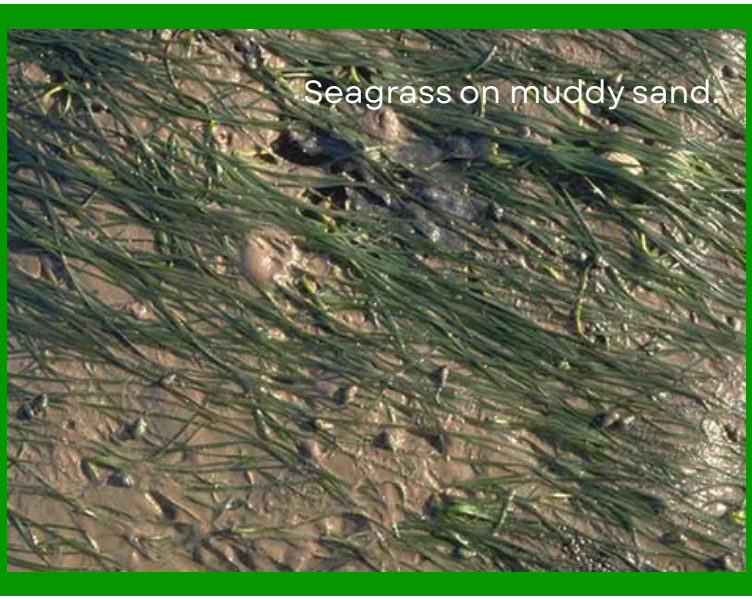
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Blog post: Mersey seagrass

This month's blog, written by our Chief Executive, Andrea, is all about seagrass. Andrea explores how the MGET team are trying to understand if the Mersey estuary could support seagrass in the future and what benefits that would bring to the area.



Seagrass submerged.



Seagrass on muddy sand.

Seagrass are flowering plants that grow in sediment that is entirely or regularly submerged in water. Unlike its name would suggest, seagrass is not actually a grass, it is more closely related to lillies and ginger. Like many habitat types, seagrass meadows have undergone a huge decline. The plant is sensitive to pollution, so following the industrial revolution, seagrasses had a hard time surviving.

Seagrass stabilises sediment, acts as a nutrient filter, offers shelter for animals, and captures carbon. With this wide range of benefits, it is a great candidate for estuarine conservation projects. We have been fortunate to secure funding from the Environment Agency to pursue seagrass work. Andrea explores the work we have done so far and what we hope to do in the future in this months blog.

Head to www.mget.org.uk/news to read the full blog.

Thank you for reading!

Look out for our next Newsletter in October 2026.

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