



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



### **Members Walk Out to Hilbre.**

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb 2025  
Meet 10.00am  
Leave Hilbre 2.00pm  
Chance to meet members new and old.  
More details to follow.

The last year has seen many changes on Hilbre and we are now in the position to confirm that we are one of the three members of The Hilbre Community Land Trust Ltd. Becoming part of the Hilbre Community Trust (CLT) will enable us to apply for grants to fund significant improvements to the historic buildings on the island

I would like to thank all of our members for your continued support and welcome new members who have joined The Friends over the last year. I would also like to thank the many volunteers that have helped on the Island over the last year.

There have been significant improvements to the Day Room which will be the centre of our operations and we are now turning our attentions to renovating the Telegraph station. We will now make haste in restoring the buildings for future generations to enjoy without impacting on the natural beauty and wildlife of the island.

Merry Christmas!  
David Gregson Chair of The Friends of Hilbre.



### **Community Land Trust Developments.**

At the start of 2025 the historic buildings on Hilbre will be signed over to The Hilbre Community Land Trust Ltd.

This has been the result of over three years in negotiations and many obstacles have been overcome. The Trust consists of The Friends of Hilbre, The British Art and Design Association and Hilbre Bird Observatory. A three-year lease will be granted to allow planning permission to be approved on the listed buildings and this will be followed by a 30-year peppercorn lease. The Trust aims to restore the buildings whilst retaining the unique character of the island.

### **Why has it taken so long?**

Any one of you who have volunteered on the island will know that there are many obstacles to overcome. Just getting out to Hilbre is an adventure. Negotiations with the council have been long with many different departments involved in the changeover. The island has no postal address so getting insurance and bank accounts have been problems to overcome. On top of this the buildings have had to be surveyed, business plans and constitutions written and hand over arrangements made.

### **Pop up Task Days**

Extra task days will be arranged in 2025 for those volunteers who would like to work on the Telegraph station. Tony Lamberton will contact you by email when there are favourable weather and tide conditions. The Telegraph Station is the most iconic building on the island and is in much need of some love and care.



## Progress on The Day Room

We have worked on the Day Room in the last year and now, being part of the CLT will enable us to make even more alterations and developments. The building has had new guttering to the front, painting to all woodwork on the front and rendering to the side and garden wall. We have purchased paint ready for the back wall in Telegraph Garden to be completed in the spring, together with installation of new guttering and a water harvesting system. The system has already been priced and is on order.

Work is also underway on the flashing between the Tool Shed and Day Room. Once this has been completed the Tool Room will be restocked following a recent audit.

Attention has also been given to the interior of the Day Room. Most of the old existing furniture has been removed and the main floor area has been cleaned and polished. All documentation has been sealed into vacuum packs to protect it from the Hilbre climate. By the new year it is expected that the old central heating and sprinkler system will have been removed and the interior walls and beams will have been painted.

To complement the new gas hob, we intend to put in new kitchen cupboards. This has all been achieved using existing funds and many hours of volunteer input.



Before and after images of Day Room Floor.



All hands to the deck!  
Goodbye to the old furniture.





## Ann Cleeves Visits Hilbre.

In September we were pleased to host our patron, Ann Cleeves to Hilbre as a guest of Liverpool John Moore University. For Ann it was a trip down memory lane as she lived for four years on the island between 1974 to 1978. On the day, we were also pleased to host Ann's friends, Margaret Murphy (British internationally acclaimed bestselling author of psychological thrillers) and Steph McGovern (journalist and television presenter).



Ann surveys the interior of Telegraph House where she lived for four years with her husband Tim. The photographs give some indication of the poor state of the building.

Friends with guests and members of LJM



Steph, Ann and Dave



Ann at lifeboat station



Margaret Murphy



Emma and Ann





## Hilbre Butterfly Transect



This year, we completed a butterfly survey on Hilbre in association with the British Butterfly Conservation Association. The transect was plotted (shown above) to circumnavigate the island so as to include as many different habitats as possible. A team of volunteers attempted to record the type and number of butterfly species along the transect weekly. We were particularly trying to identify if the Grayling butterfly (left) had made its way back onto the island.

As also reported nationally, the butterfly numbers on Hilbre in 2024 were disappointing with no sign of the Grayling butterfly. There were times when our recorders became a little despondent when making the effort to choose the best day of the week to make the journey out only to find and record no butterflies. Even on the nicest day there tends to be a breeze on Hilbre.

Over the season we recorded just seven species of butterfly. These included Small White, Large White, Painted Lady, Red Admiral, Common Blue, Green Veined White and Peacock. There was a period of nine weeks when the volunteers didn't record a single butterfly. Despite the poor results, we look forward to resuming the transect count in March 2025. Anyone who wants to be involved and join the team should contact Dave Gregson at [dj.gregson1@virginmedia.com](mailto:dj.gregson1@virginmedia.com).



# The Friends of Hilbre Events Calendar 2025

## Task Days 2025:

Date	Day	Meet at Slipway	Leave Hilbre
9 <sup>th</sup> January	Thursday	10am	2pm
6 <sup>th</sup> February	Thursday	10am	2pm
23 <sup>rd</sup> March	Sunday	10am	2pm
25 <sup>th</sup> March	Tuesday	10am	2pm
20 <sup>th</sup> April	Sunday	9.30am	1.30pm
22 <sup>nd</sup> April	Tuesday	10am	2pm
22 <sup>nd</sup> May	Thursday	10am	2pm
24 <sup>th</sup> May	Saturday	12 midday	4pm
5 <sup>th</sup> June	Thursday	10am	2pm
21 <sup>st</sup> June *with Open Day	Saturday	11am	4pm
3 <sup>rd</sup> July	Thursday	10am	2pm
5 <sup>th</sup> July	Saturday	10am	2pm
1 <sup>st</sup> August	Friday	10am	2pm
31 <sup>st</sup> August	Sunday	10am	2pm
14 <sup>th</sup> September	Sunday	9.30am	1.30pm
16 <sup>th</sup> September	Tuesday	10am	2pm
15 <sup>th</sup> October	Wednesday	10am	2pm
13 <sup>th</sup> November	Thursday	10am	2pm
12 <sup>th</sup> December	Friday	10am	2pm

Midweek Task Coordinator: Dave Mobile 07806749653

Weekend Task Coordinator: Andy Mobile 07513059065

## Open Days & Seal Watch 2025:

Date	Day	Starts	Leave Hilbre
29 <sup>th</sup> March	Saturday	10am	3pm
6 <sup>th</sup> April	Sunday	11am	3.30pm
10 <sup>th</sup> May	Saturday	2pm	6pm
21 <sup>st</sup> June *with Task Day	Saturday	11am	4pm
20 <sup>th</sup> July	Sunday	11am	4pm
17 <sup>th</sup> August	Sunday	10.30am	3pm
6 <sup>th</sup> September	Saturday	2pm	6pm
4 <sup>th</sup> October	Saturday	1pm	5pm

Refreshments Team Coordinator: Barbara 07870 390584

Seal Watch Team Coordinator: Julie 07719655805

\*Please note that there is a joint Task Day and Open Day on 21<sup>st</sup> June.

## Annual General Meeting

The Friends of Hilbre AGM  
Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025  
The United Reform Church (main hall)  
Meols Drive  
West Kirby  
CH48 5DA  
Doors Open 6.30pm  
Ends 9.30pm

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### Advice and Precautions for Hilbre Tasks.

The information below will help you have a safe and enjoyable time on Hilbre.

- Please contact the coordinator beforehand to confirm attendance at the task so that we can let you know about any changes to the publicised task.
- The islands are cut off from the tide twice a day, so please keep to the 'meet' and 'leave' times stated.
- We always welcome new volunteers. If it's your first time please make yourself known to the Task Leader at the meeting point.
- Due to insurance restrictions under 18's cannot volunteer to work on the islands. In addition, only FoH members are insured to volunteer.
- There is no drinking water on Hilbre. Take enough drinks for the day and a snack. Wear warm clothing and bring waterproof - wellies maybe a good idea. Bring gardening gloves for the physical tasks on Hilbre.
- For your safety, please ensure you have read the FOH Risk Assessments (available in the Day Room and on request).

### Volunteers.

Volunteers are always needed for the following events:

**Open Days**.... seal watch, serving refreshments, giving talks in the historic buildings. Help guide people with special needs around the island.

**Task Days**...variety of tasks from clearing invasive plant species, general island maintenance and supporting the island ranger.

When the Day Room becomes part of the community trust more volunteers will be needed to improve and manage the building. Extra pop-up task days will be introduced.

**Island walks**...accompany the ranger on sunset walks. Accompany people with special needs to walk out to the island.