

Meet the MGET team

The Trust's Board of directors consists of:

- 2 elected councillors from Halton Borough Council and Warrington Council
- 2 elected councillors from parish councils in Halton and Warrington. Currently there is one parish council vacancy.
- 2 local residents.



Cllr. Keith Morley

Represents:
Broadheath ward, Widnes.



Yousuf Shaikh

Chair of Walton Parish Council,
Warrington.
Parish Cllr.



Cllr. Geoff Settle

Represents:
Poulton North ward, Warrington,
Steering Group Member Mersey
Forest, Chair Warrington Nature
Conservation Forum



Professor David Norman

Local resident
Honorary vice president of
Cheshire Wildlife Trust and
author of Birds of Cheshire.



Liz Newton

Local resident and who, in her
working capacity, is Director of
Landscape and Geodiversity at
Natural England.

Our measure for success

For the MGET to be a success we need results on the ground. We aim to:

1. Create a 28.5 hectare nature reserve running 200m either side of the Mersey Gateway.
2. Ensure that an area of 1654 hectares is recognised as an enjoyable place to visit that people can be proud of.
3. Bring saltmarsh and reedbeds back into management.
4. Increase bird numbers with accurate and regular monitoring.
5. Generate substantial new funding to come into the area.



Researchers from the University of Salford

Want to learn more?

Along with our regular newsletter, look out for our updates online at www.merseygateway.co.uk and follow our environmental activities on Twitter @merseygateway

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MERSEY GATEWAY ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

Welcome to the Mersey Gateway Environmental Trust (MGET). We've been set-up to deliver lasting environmental benefits associated with the Mersey Gateway, a nationally important new bridge crossing over the Mersey Estuary between Runcorn and Widnes.

We have a visionary approach to long-term management of the natural capital in the Upper Mersey Estuary and related areas over a 30 year period allowing scope for additional innovative benefits. Underpinned by good science, our approach includes educational objectives for the Estuary to serve as a 'Living Laboratory' for people to enjoy, study and understand.

This regular newsletter will keep you up to date on the progress of our environmental works, giving you an insight into the natural life of the Upper Mersey Estuary Area.



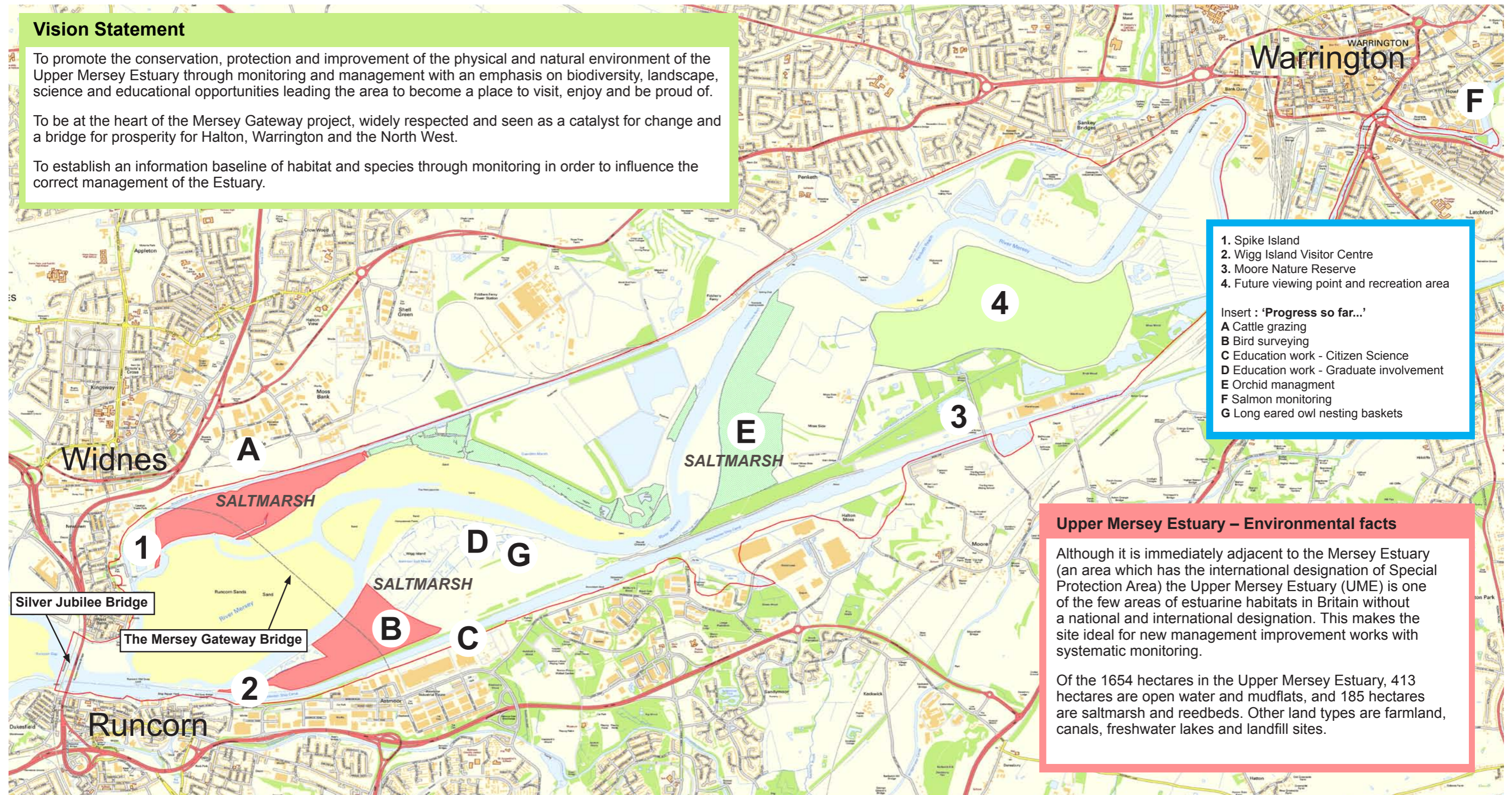
Mersey Gateway Environmental Trust and the Upper Mersey Estuary

Vision Statement

To promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of the Upper Mersey Estuary through monitoring and management with an emphasis on biodiversity, landscape, science and educational opportunities leading the area to become a place to visit, enjoy and be proud of.

To be at the heart of the Mersey Gateway project, widely respected and seen as a catalyst for change and a bridge for prosperity for Halton, Warrington and the North West.

To establish an information baseline of habitat and species through monitoring in order to influence the correct management of the Estuary.



Upper Mersey Estuary – Environmental facts

Although it is immediately adjacent to the Mersey Estuary (an area which has the international designation of Special Protection Area) the Upper Mersey Estuary (UME) is one of the few areas of estuarine habitats in Britain without a national and international designation. This makes the site ideal for new management improvement works with systematic monitoring.

Of the 1654 hectares in the Upper Mersey Estuary, 413 hectares are open water and mudflats, and 185 hectares are saltmarsh and reedbeds. Other land types are farmland, canals, freshwater lakes and landfill sites.

Timeline of environmental works

2013 Advanced Works: completed bird surveys, pilot cattle grazing and PhD research.

2014 Signing of the contract to manage saltmarsh for 30 year period from 2017.

2015 -2017 Establish science credentials and Living Laboratory.
2015 -2017 Implement robust and independent scrutiny during construction.

2017 Bridge opens and Saltmarsh management begins.

2020 The habitat will now be attractive to both salmon and osprey.
2020 Estuary habitats are managed to reduce pollutants and risk of flooding.

2020 -2044 New opportunities to discover, enjoy, understand and value the Estuary.

2044 the Estuary will be conserved and greatly enhanced, adapting well to the impacts of climate change.

Progress so far...

A Cattle grazing

Did you know that we currently have English Longhorn cows grazing on the saltmarsh alongside the Estuary at Widnes? We have conducted a study with the University of Salford to investigate the effects of the cattle grazing there. The results are showing that saltmarsh changes are bringing breeding, feeding and loafing benefits to a number of bird species such as Redshank and Teal.



B Bird surveying

We have assisted in two systematic bird surveys in order to collect bird monitoring data for the Mersey Gateway Project. The surveys took place at various locations in the Borough such as, Widnes Warth, Astmoor Saltmarsh, Wigg Island and the intertidal sands and mudflats in part of the UME.

During construction, we will help to monitor the impact of the bridge building works on the Estuary. The longer term aim is to create a saltmarsh which in time will be a similar quality to the Middle Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) which supports high bird concentrations.



C Education work – citizen science

During 2013, a series of environmental education sessions took place which looked at an area of tree clearance on Wigg Island underneath the line of the new bridge. The sessions explored the short term ecological change in land prior to its use as part of the construction site. Similar activities are planned for 2015 -16.



D Education work - Graduate involvement

We're working closely with graduate and post graduate students. Already, over 100 environmental and engineering students from Liverpool, Manchester and Salford universities have visited the Trust area as part of their studies. The scope of their investigations has included water, canal sediments, invertebrate distribution, shrimp biology and visitor centre design.



E Orchid management

The new bridge will have a shadow effect, requiring the translocation and management of orchids and other grassland species. This work has already started on the Local Wildlife Site on the Manchester Ship Canal bank at Astmoor in partnership with Norton Priory Museum Trust. During 2012, 22 orchids were removed from the future shaded area, along with seed collected from the flowers and other species to be grown in seed trays at Norton Priory Walled Garden. The plants are currently being well looked after and monitored by the horticultural staff at the museum. Once established, this source of local wild flowers will be available for use once the construction has been completed.



F Salmon Monitoring

The Trust is working with the University of Salford on new techniques looking at environmental DNA, to help with the future monitoring of salmon in the Mersey from 2017 onwards.

G Long eared owl nesting baskets

Seven Long Eared Owl nesting baskets were erected in suitable trees during Autumn 2013, replacing a nesting site lost to the route of the new bridge. We worked in partnership with landowner Ineos Chlor and Norton Priory Museum who wove the baskets as part of a community workshop. The success of the new baskets will be monitored.