

A HOUSING group is reaching new heights to promote its environmentally friendly ethos by creating a giant wizard.



Muirlin the 14ft giant created by Muir Housing Association will be draped in a cloak featuring designs of 'the house of the future' by residents and children of the association's Gorse Hill supported housing scheme in Blacon.

The giant has been based on the Wizard of Oz who presided over the perfect society – the Emerald City – and will make his debut not on the Yellow Brick Road, but on the streets of Chester as part of The Carnival of Giants.

"We wanted to do something a little bit different and creative to promote our commitment to environment sustainability," said John Bellis, chief executive of Muir.

"Our giant will be wearing a cloak of Muir Group's corporate colours, purple and green, to symbolise our dedication to working in an environmentally responsible way.

"This is something that has a serious message behind it but has also been a lot of fun for staff and residents who have all been involved with the project."

A staff competition was held to find the name of the giant and the winners were Helen Brown and Alison Vaughn, who work in the housing group's finance department.

During the carnival on June 12, residents and staff will walk alongside the giant and as well as an arts workshop to help design the giant's costume, a drumming and dance workshop was held at Gorse Hill to help them practise their moves.

Local artist Roy Mohn, a volunteer with the Giants Festival organisation, has already started work on the giant who will be made out of fibreglass, wood and metal – next year Muirlin, in the true spirit of recycling, will be offered to a community group elsewhere in the country to allow them to come up with their own theme and design.

The Carnival of Giants will see some 100 giants parade through the city's streets and has been organised by Chester the Giant City.

Kristine Szulick from Chester the Giant City said: "We are delighted to have Muir Group on board with their own green themed 'wizard' giant.

"On June 12, Muirlin will join some 100 giants in what promises to be the biggest and best parade through Chester's streets yet."