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Issue: 154
January 2016

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**Off to see
The Wizard!**

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Editor's Comment



WHETHER or not the decision by Cheshire Police to set up a new "community base" in Culcheth is a direct response to local concerns about changes to policing in the area, we do not know.

Neither do we know whether the new base, at the Scout Centre in Jackson Avenue, will silence those who were so critical of the changes which were alleged to result in police officers and PCSOs taking two hours to reach their "beat" areas in Culcheth.

But we do know the base has been welcomed by some and it does seem to be an imaginative way of maintaining a police presence in

Culcheth while, at the same time, cutting costs.

The fact that a similar base has been set up at Runcorn suggests the initiative is not purely a response to the very vocal comments emanating from the Culcheth area – indeed we understand it is quite likely that more community bases will be established by the police across the county.

At the end of the day, the proof of the pudding will be in the eating.

Our local councillors can, we are sure, be relied upon to monitor the situation.

We still find it difficult to understand the need for police officers covering the Culcheth area to attend daily

briefing sessions in Warrington when the technology is available for them to be briefed "online" but the police remain adamant that the briefings are beneficial and do not adversely impact local patrols.

Crime, we are told, is at its lowest level for a generation. If it remains so we think the police will have proved their point.

Deadline for the February issue of Culcheth Life is January 19

Extension approved at village hall

PLANNING chiefs have given the go-ahead for an extension at Croft Village Memorial Hall, in Mustard Lane, Croft.

The extension will accommodate a new storage room.

Planners have also approved an application for a detached garage and gymnasium at a house in Lady Lane, Croft and a single-storey rear and first floor side extensions at a house in Gosling Road, Croft.

But an application for an extension and alterations to a restaurant in Common Lane, Culcheth has been refused.



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Culcheth Players off to see the Wizard!

THEATRE group Culcheth Players are set to stage the timeless classic *The Wizard of Oz* in January.

Produced by Emma Holdershaw & Samantha Cartwright the show runs from Friday January 2nd to Sunday January 24th with evening performances at 7.30pm and matinees on the Saturday and Sunday at 2pm.

All Tickets are £5 and a Children's Activity Programme is also available at £1.50.

The show takes place at Culcheth Sports & Social Club (The Daten) on Charnock Road.

Tickets are available from behind the bar at the club prior to event dates or alternatively can be

bought on the door. There is also a Ticket Reservation Line which people can leave a message detailing their name, contact number, number of tickets required and for which performance. Somebody will either text or phone back to confirm that their tickets will be left on the door for that performance, so they know when they get there they can just give their name and pay for the tickets without worrying whether or not there are any left.

The Ticket Reservation Number is:- 07548 598 898.



From Left, Gillian Elliott as the Tinman, Rachael Warren as Dorothy and Peter Graham as the Lion.



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Long serving governor honoured by college

HONORARY Alderman Keith Bland - former leader of the Conservative group on Warrington Borough Council and a long-serving member of Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council, has been made a Fellow of Warrington Collegiate.

The honour acknowledges his long service as a governor of the college - he is currently vice chairman, chairman of the search

and governance committee and a member of the audit committee.

Cllr Bland, who received the MBE for services to local

government and was made an honorary alderman for his service to the borough council, received his award at the higher education award ceremony at St Elphin's Church, Warrington.

He said: "I was delighted and honoured to receive the award.

"It was wonderful to see so many young and mature students, supported by their families completely filling the church and making it an evening of celebration.



Mopheads are moving

CULCHETH based hair salon Mopheads are on the move and although they are leaving their original premises after nine years they are excited to have a new shop for the new year!

It has been a big project to undertake involving completely refurbishing the new premises at 58 Church Lane.

The new premises will have lots more to offer including children's parties, ladies pamper wine nights,

competitions and much more to come!

They are hoping that all existing, new and old customers will join them at their open party on Saturday, January 9, 2016!

Salon owner Gemma said: "It's a massive achievement and we are very proud! I'd like to thank my wonderful staff and loyal clients for all the help and support they've given!



Party time for the WI

NEWCHURCH WI made an early start at its December meeting to allow plenty of time for its Christmas Party. Newchurch Parish Hall had been beautifully decorated by the Craft Group led by Aileen Paterson.

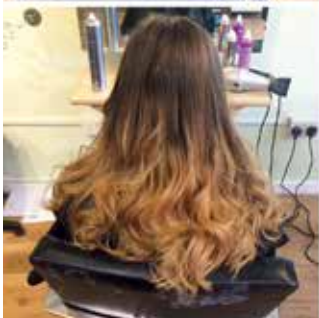
She had extra helpers, including two husbands, and by a happy coincidence her pantomime theme was "Cinderella", which is to be performed by the Newchurch Strollers in the New Year.

President Doreen Procter announced that Irene Bromilow was the 2015 winner of the monthly competitions.

Two guests from Culcheth WI were welcomed and a delicious hot meal was served by Warren Bibby's team from the Village Club. Presents were exchanged and the Fetters, the evening's entertainers, were introduced.

The Fetters, one guitarist and one accordion player, then performed a mixture of songs, jokes and music, including an amazing accordion solo from Brazil. They delighted members with songs from "the foreign city of Liverpool" and finally members had to join in the singing of many old favourites.

Trudy MacDonald thanked them on behalf of everybody and later there was another happy coincidence - one of the Culcheth WI guests had been to primary school with one of the Fetters!



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College ranked first in the country

EACH year Carmel College's students achieve outstanding results and 2015 was no exception.

Confirmation of this consistent performance was released by the A Level Performance System (ALPS) which analyses the performance data of Sixth Form Colleges across the country and measures the progress students make from GCSE to A level.

ALPS' findings show that Carmel is ranked 1st in the country for the progress made by their students over the last three years, confirming that the college provides excellent teaching and learning for all its students.

Measuring the progress students make is a great way to compare the performance of colleges.

Principal Rob Peacock said: "We are delighted to hear the news that we are the top Sixth Form College nationally. Staff and students worked incredibly hard to achieve such fantastic results."

"Staff at Carmel are enthusiastic and committed to working with young people. They are able to inspire and support our students to get the best out of them and to ensure they make the best possible progress during their time with us."

Carmel, in Prescot Road, St Helens, provides students with outstanding opportunities for academic success and personal growth. The college has invested £23 million in facilities in the last few years and has an impressive range of courses to choose from, as well as opportunities to develop additional skills through the Enrichment and Skills Programme. Alongside Carmel's high standards of teaching and learning, students of all abilities are supported and encouraged, enabling them to reach their potential and leave college feeling well prepared for the future.

House plan approved despite objections

PLANS for a detached dwelling on the remaining part of the former Fourways NHS residential facility at the junction of Stainforth Close and Twiss Green Lane, Culcheth have been approved by borough planners – despite objections from local residents, Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council and local borough councillors Chris Vobe and Matt Smith.

Objectors claimed the house would be unacceptably prominent on the street scene, would involve the loss of mature trees and have a dangerous access onto a busy road. But planners said the property would have a distinctive character and the proposals had been amended to remove concerns about trees.

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Shadow of HS2 still

THE shadow of the controversial HS2 high speed rail line still hangs over the Culcheth area following the Government's announcement that it is to accelerate construction work as far north as Crewe.

No decision has been made yet regarding the route beyond Crewe, including the Golborne Link, which threatens Culcheth in particular.

But buried in the detail of the announcement is a passage which indicates that the Golborne Link is still favoured.

The report states: "The Government believes there remains a clear case for a connection to the West Coast Mail Line from the Western Leg of HS2. This connection will help ensure that the Western Leg is fully integrated into the wider rail network in North West England and that the benefits of HS2 will be felt across that network."

"On balance, we continue to believe Golborne is likely to be the best location for such a link, as it strikes the best balance between overall costs and benefits."

Frank Allen, chairman of CADRAG, the Culcheth and District Rail Action Group said: "If the Golborne Link goes ahead, it will be devastating for the people of Culcheth and the other surrounding communities who are affected."

"Over 700 local jobs will be lost, local amenities will be destroyed, and there will be major environmental damage."

"The alternative, to undertake local upgrading of the West Coast Main Line, will cost less and

provide more and better benefits.

"The Government will announce its decision in a year's time so there are 12 months for us to convince the Government not to build the Link."

Mr Allen says anyone who wants to help fight the proposals should contact him on 01925 765017.

The indication that the spur line through Culcheth is still favoured, plus the 12 month delay in announcing a decision, has angered Warrington North MP Helen Jones and local councillors Chris Vobe and Matt Smith.

The MP said the delay would mean another year of misery for people suffering from "planning blight."

She said: "After the optimistic noises coming from government over the past year about changing the route it is very disappointing to read the Secretary of State's Command Paper which suggests he is minded to keep the Golborne Spur but won't announce any decision until Autumn 2016."

The MP said the decision rested firmly with the government who, when the original report by David Higgins, chairman of HS2 Ltd, was published, promised an announcement by mid-2015.

Then it was hinted it would be December 2015 and now the date had been put back another 10

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hangs over Culcheth

months.
 "This is simply adding more misery to those suffering from planning blight. Whatever his decision, the Secretary of State needs to make it quickly rather than stringing the process out."

Cllrs Vobe and Smith issued a joint statement: "A very strong case has been made for why this part of HS2 Phase 2 is unnecessary."

"The proposal has been a blight on properties within Culcheth, Glazebury and Croft for two years. Those people who have been unable to sell their houses during this time deserve an end to the ongoing uncertainty."

"It's completely inconsiderate to local people to extend the blight they are suffering so far into next year. I hope that the minister making this decision will apply common sense and consideration for the people of this ward by making the right choice within a more reasonable time frame."

If the Golborne spur line goes ahead it will also cut through the Rixton area.

Paul Taylor from Taylor Business Park added: "The station at Crewe is great news for Cheshire, however we were hoping that the fact that Crewe station would connect most of the north west now would remove the need for the spur to Golborne. From the recent announcement and the documents released which can be found on HS2's website it certainly does appear that HS2 Ltd still intend to use our stretch

of the line to avoid most of the complications on the existing west coast mainline between Warrington and Golborne before it joins the west coast mainline to take the classic compatible trains up to Scotland.

"It certainly isn't helping that decisions have been delayed again, and it doesn't make it easier for those of us that are currently in its path but at least they aren't making any snap decisions. We need to use this time we have now to see if any diversions are possible so that the route can avoid as many of the affected areas that we can as it passes though. This is an important time for our village and while we all want to find out what's happening as soon as possible it's certainly not something we should be rushing."



The Gardening Guide JANUARY

- Time to plan any changes in the garden and new varieties you might like to try
- Tender vegetables can be started from seed in a heated greenhouse
- Start thinking about where you could locate a nest box, as the birds start scouting out suitable sites during this month
- Now is a good time to sharpen, clean and oil tools ready for the new season and check whether any of them need replacing
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MP finds a local store convenient

MP Helen Jones dropped in at a convenience store in her constituency to help promote Small Business Saturday.

Ms Jones visited the family-run Moorland store at Mee Brow, Culcheth – a shop she described as “a real community asset.”

Small Business Saturday is a not-for-profit campaign, which highlights small business success and encourages the UK to support small businesses.

Now in its third year, it saw 16.5 adults supporting small businesses on last year’s day.

Ms Jones said: “I was delighted to visit the Moorland which has established itself as a real community asset over the past decade.

“Small independent businesses here in Warrington make an

enormous contribution to our community. People really value the choice they get from smaller shops which add to the character of the area.

“Running a small business can be really hard work with long working hours and, in these difficult times, great uncertainty about the future. That’s why I am always pleased to help promote Small Business Saturday and encourage people to shop locally and support businesses in their local communities.”

In previous years the MP has visited a small café in Paddington and a children’s hair salon in Orford.



Rhona hula-hoops her way to a world record

A STUDENT from Culcheth has become a world record holder for hula-hooping at the highest altitude ever.

Rhona, Mackay, 21, set the record on a 6,057m volcano called Chachani near Arequipa - Peru’s second largest city.

Rhona joined a group of 18 Peruvian and international charity workers from a Peruvian organisation called Helping Overcome Obstacles Peru (HOOP) for the record attempt.

As well as becoming world record holders, the team raised more than \$11,000 for the charity, which works with children and their families in a disadvantaged community in the city of Arequipa.

The team climbed five hours through the night to reach the summit at 7am.

Of the 18 people in the team, 14 made it to the summit to hula-hoop their way into the record books – including Rhona.

She said: “At one point I wasn’t sure if I would make it. Many of us were suffering from the effects of altitude – headaches, nausea, shortness of breath, and dizziness.

“But we all tried to encourage

each other to keep going. It was an amazing feeling when we made it to the top. The conditions for hula-hooping were perfect – clear skies and almost no wind. We hula-hooped for at least 30 seconds to secure the record and I still really can’t believe we did it!”

The team had an initial fundraising goal of \$10,000, but surpassed the goal three weeks before the world record attempt.

Tom Hornbrook, Director of Communications and Development at HOOP, said: “Climbing Chachani was a huge physical and mental challenge for the team, and I was very impressed by everyone’s strength and commitment. It was amazing to see the generosity of people around the world in supporting this great achievement. With their help, we surpassed our ambitious fundraising goal, with all the money raised helping us have a real impact on the lives of children and their families in the community.”

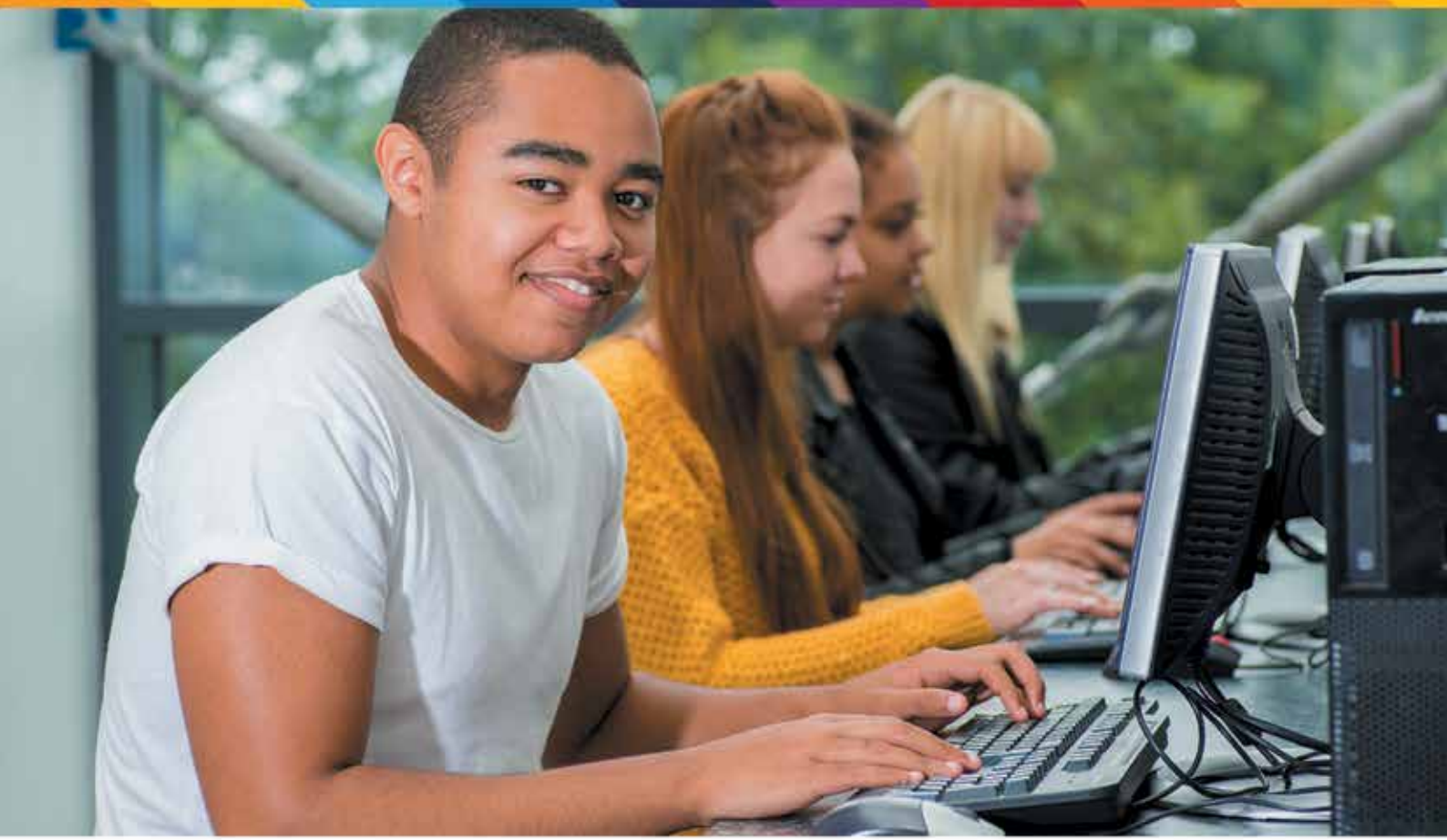
You can still help support the fundraising campaign at www.hoopperu.org/hulahoop, with 100 per cent of funds helping sustain HOOP.

The money raised by the campaign will be spent on school rental, schoolbooks and supplies, teacher training, a new maths programme, and a new social work programme. The social work programme is a new service being offered by HOOP to improve the wellbeing of families in the

community.

The world record attempt is currently going through the officiating process with Guinness World Records. More information and regular updates on the world record attempt are available at www.hoopperu.org





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Theatre company in 'Good Spirits' for new production

LOCAL group, Consensus Theatre, are set to complete a trio of comedy classics when they perform Noel Coward's 'Blithe Spirit' during February.

"It has been fascinating to compare 'Blithe Spirit' with 'Private Lives', another of Coward's plays and also with 'The Importance of Being Earnest' which we performed last year," said producer Phillip Wade.

"We constantly look for ways to bring out the humour of the piece – which in this case is of a much more physical nature. There are hilarious moments when the audience, along with only one character are able to see the ghost of 'Elvira', but no-one else can! It's probably the most technically challenging production we've staged."

"Blithe Spirit" was first seen in the West End in 1941 and was later adapted for film starring Rex Harrison. It has enjoyed several stage revivals- most recently on Broadway starring Angela Lansbury as the eccentric medium and clairvoyant 'Madame Arcati'.

Now this fabulous play is coming to Culcheth and Runcorn.

Audiences at Culcheth Sport's Club on February 19-20, and at The Brindley Theatre, Runcorn on Saturday, February 27 will join Charles Condomine, a successful writer, as the ghost of his first wife is 'brought through' during a séance, and will witness the confusion and chaos that ensues! An evening of laughter is guaranteed.


Tickets are available from Culcheth Sport's Club 01925 763096 www.daten.co.uk and from The Brindley 0151 907 8360 www.thebrindley.org.uk




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- Creative Writing for Pleasure (8 weeks)** - £40 Friday 10.00- 12.30pm starting 22nd January 2016

EVENING COURSES

- English (20 weeks)** - FREE Monday 6.30 - 8.30pm starting 18th January 2016
- Sports Massage (8 weeks)** - £48 Monday 6.30 - 9.30pm starting 18th January 2016
- Painting and Drawing** - £32 Monday 7.00 - 9.00pm starting 18th January 2016
- Floristry (8 weeks)** - £40 plus £10 for materials : Monday 6.45 - 9.15pm starting 18th January 2016
- Beginners Spanish (8 weeks)** - £40 Monday 6.45 - 9.15pm starting 18th January 2016
- Life Coaching (8 weeks)** - £32 Monday 7.00 - 9.00pm starting 18th January 2016
- Jewellery Making (8 weeks)** - £40 plus £10 for materials : Monday 6.45 - 9.15pm starting 18th January 2016 (8 weeks)
- Oil Painting (8 weeks)** - £32 Tuesday 6.20 - 8.20pm starting 19th January 2016
- Paediatric First Aid (8 weeks)** - £40 plus accreditation fee : Tuesday 6.30 - 9.00pm starting 19th January 2016
- Beginners Italian (8 weeks)** - £40 Tuesday 6.45 - 9.15pm starting 19th January 2016
- Counselling Skills (Introduction) (8 weeks)** - £48 Tuesday 6.30 - 9.30pm starting 19th January 2016
- Beginners Egyptian History (6 weeks)** - £30 Tuesday 6.45 - 9.15pm starting 12th January 2016
- Maths (20 weeks)** - FREE Wednesday 6.30 - 8.30pm starting 20th January 2016
- CPCAB Counselling Skills Level 2 (20 weeks)** - £735 plus accreditation fee Wednesday 6.30 - 9.30 pm starting 20th January 2016
- Abstract Art and Acrylics (8 weeks)** - £40 Wednesday 6.45 - 9.15pm starting 20th January 2016
- Family History for Beginners (8 weeks)** - £40 Wednesday 6.45 - 9.15pm starting 20th January 2016

WEEKEND COURSES

- Colour Mixing (2 weeks)** - £20 plus £5 for materials : Saturday 9.30 - 2.30pm starting 27th February 2016
- Felting (1 day)** - £10 plus £5 for materials Saturday 9.30 - 2.30pm starting 27th February 2016
- Comic Book Workshop (2 weeks)** - £30 Saturday 9.30 - 2.30pm starting 27th February 2016
- Ceramic/Pottery Workshop (2 weeks)** - £30 plus £10 for materials Saturday 9.30 - 2.30pm starting 27th February 2016
- Angel Card Reading Workshop (2 weeks)** - £20 Saturday 9.30 - 2.30pm starting 27th February 2016
- Springtime Floristry Workshop (2 weeks)** - £20 plus £10 for materials Saturday 9.30 - 2.30pm starting 27th February 2016
- Beginners Russian (2 weeks)** - £20 Saturday 9.30 - 2.30pm starting 27th February 2016
- Calligraphy Workshop (2 weeks)** - £30 plus £10 for materials Saturday 9.30 - 2.30pm starting 27th February 2016
- Easy Sewing Makes Workshop (2 weeks)** - £20 plus £10 for materials Saturday 9.30 - 2.30pm starting 27th February 2016
- Trading and Investing in Financial Markets (2 weeks)** - £20 Saturday 9.30 - 2.30pm starting Saturday 27th February 2016

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Please look at our website for a full description of each of our forthcoming courses

Mayor and firefighters join Santa Dash

MORE than 200 runners braved a cold Sunday morning to take part in the annual Brainwave Santa Dash at Birchwood Shopping Centre.

Mayor of Warrington Geoff Settle and firefighters from Birchwood Fire Station joined in the fun at the sixth annual 5k event which was won by 42-year-old Tim Campbell from Lowton, in an impressive 18:16.

First female was 17-year-old Ella Pollard from Padgate in 24:20. First youngster was 12-year-old Birchwood High pupil George Houghton.

The event which is organised by Joanne Freeman from Brainwave and sponsored by Birchwood Shopping Centre with support from Birchwood Lions, helps raise thousands of pounds for the charity which aims to improve children's mobility, communication skills and learning potential, through a range of educational and physical therapies.



Police chief opens community base

CHESHIRE Police and Crime Commissioner John Dwyer joined local police officers, councillors and members of the local scout group to officially open a new police community base at Culcheth.

The new base is at the Scout Centre on Jackson Avenue and has been established as a result of an agreement with the 3rd Warrington East (Culcheth 1st) Scout Group.

It is one of two new community bases set up by the police – the other being at Runcorn.

Mr Dwyer was greeted by local PCSO Maurizio Luchesi, who along with Scout leaders, took him on a guided tour of the centre and talked about the benefits the facility has provided and how it has enabled him to spend more time in the local community.

Mr Dwyer said: "The police community bases in Runcorn and Culcheth will help to further embed policing at the heart of the local community.

"Keeping connected with our communities is crucial. I am investing in police community bases to support the Constabulary in delivering on the Chief Constable's 'We're Here' commitment to the people of Cheshire.

"Local community policing remains one of my priorities and I am committed to maintaining a high level of service through innovative and modern means.

"The community bases in Runcorn and Culcheth provide a place for the local officers or PCSOs to work, with all the information they need at their fingertips so they can spend even more time on the beat."



(l to r): Ruth Watson, Warrington Scouts, PCC John Dwyer, Christine Housing, Scouts, PCSO Maurizio Luchesi and Rob Anderson.

Clay extraction approved - but with a stern warning

ANGRY planning bosses have given the go-ahead to proposals to extend the life of major clay extraction and tipping operations at Rixton – but issued a stern warning to the site operators.

Ongoing work will be closely monitored and if stringent conditions are not observed, the borough council will immediately commence enforcement action.

The proposals involve Green Belt land at Moat Lane, Rixton and at the nearby Collier waste tip.

The decision means the life of the site – originally due close this year – will be extended to March 2024.

Members of the borough council's development management committee expressed concern at the site operators "cavalier attitude" to existing planning conditions.

But planning officers recommended the proposals be approved.

They said clay extraction was an acceptable use of the site and any harm caused by landfilling would be outweighed by the need for the clay for brickmaking.

If the work did not continue it would not be possible to restore the site to an acceptable landform by 2022 as originally intended.

Objectors say operations on the site will cause noise, smells, litter and flash water issues.

Borough councillor Bill Brinkman opposed the scheme on the grounds the site had knowingly been overtopped and that the site operators had failed to comply with conditions.

The committee agreed to impose more strict conditions.

The site is near the Rixton Claypits nature reserve – a Site of Special Scientific Interest. But Natural England did not oppose the application as they said continued operation of the site was unlikely to have any impact on the reserve – home to the protected Great Crested Newt.

Councillors were told that some areas of land currently known to provide habitats for the newts would be affected – but they were not ideal habitats.

Clay extraction has been carried out at Rixton since 1949. But there is a long history of controversial applications to extend the life of the operation over a period of many years.

Homes plan appeal rejected

AN appeal against the refusal of planning consent for four houses on greenfield land adjoining the historic Culcheth Hall Farm Barns has been rejected by a planning inspector.

The proposals were originally refused by borough planners in June but the developers appealed against the decision, which was contrary to the advice of planning officers.

But the inspector decided the proposed houses would not harmonise with existing nearby homes nor reinforce the distinctiveness of the area around the historic barns.

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