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February 2011

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**... and now there are three!**

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Editor  
Gary Skentelbery

Production  
Paul Walker

Advertising  
Freephone  
0800 955 5247

Editorial  
01925 623633

Email  
info@culchethlife.com

Websites  
www.culchethlife.com  
www.frodshamlife.co.uk  
www.lymmmlife.co.uk  
www.warrington-  
worldwide.co.uk  
www.warrington.tv

Address  
New Media Centre  
Old Road Warrington  
WA4 1AT

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# Editor's Comment



**IT is entirely appropriate that money from the sale of the former youth club in Church Lane, Culcheth, should have been used to help set up the new youth club now operating in the community wing of Culcheth High School.**

It is even more appropriate the money raised by members of the old club should be used to help equip the new club.

The old club was a valuable asset to the village, but it was in the wrong place and, consequently, a frequent source of complaint from nearby residents.

## Asset

Now we have a new club, equipped with modern equipment such as television, games consoles and music equipment, which is in the right place and is an even more valuable asset.

It caters for youngsters aged 13-19 and undoubtedly fills something of a gap in local provision.

Cllr Keith Bland, who was chairman of the old youth club committee is enthusiastic about the

new club.

He says: "I am delighted to see the money that these young people worked so hard to raise being put to good use. This is a fantastic facility and I am sure it will benefit a great many people for many years to come."

We agree. The new club has so much to offer young people in terms

of recreation, socialising and sport. It is also a place where youngsters can receive advice and guidance.

## Praised

It complements the excellent work already being done by Culcheth Methodist Church, which is featured elsewhere in this issue, and which has been widely praised over the last year or so.

Let no-one suggest that Culcheth has nothing to offer its young people.

## The Sorcerer

THE Three Towns Operatic Society are to perform Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Sorcerer" at St Joseph's Hall, Leigh, on May 10-14.

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# And now there are three . . .

**LITTLE more than a year ago, youth worker Andrew Cronin arrived in Culcheth with a challenge – to offer guidance to the young people who hang around on street corners and are so often blamed for anti-social behaviour, underage drinking and other problems.**

Today he is still at it - but now leading a team of three. And their work is being widely praised.

Andrew, 34, has been joined by two other youth workers, Anna Costello and Sean Greenall, both in their early twenties but both gaining considerable experience at how to engage with the sort of young people who do not easily fit into the sort of social scene offered by youth clubs or sport.

The initiative is funded by the Methodist Church and it does go into schools and youth clubs. But it also operates on housing estates, street corners and around the village centre where young people often congregate.

It has spread its wings too,

operating weekly at Rixton Youth Club.

All three youth workers visit the youth club. Andrew and Anna do quite a bit of work at Culcheth High School and Anna and Sean work at the Methodist Church youth club on Friday evenings.

Andrew concentrates on the streets however, where he has a good rapport with the local youths.

He believes he can relate well with them because he was once a bit of a tear-away himself.

"They know they are there to help and that I won't snitch on them," he says.

He has a firm belief that most of the youngsters on the streets are decent people and will not cause much

trouble. He doesn't lecture them but simply offers commonsense advice, urging moderation rather than try to stop them drinking and smoking altogether.

"That way they listen to me," he said.

The Methodist Church initiative has been widely praised by police, voluntary groups and local councillors.

Cllr Peter Caswell said: "Andrew made a big difference in Culcheth as soon as he came. First there was one - now there are three.

"We are very fortunate to have them working here in Culcheth and Glazebury."



## Green belt extension approved

COUNCIL planners have given the go-ahead for a major extension at a Green Belt house standing in a wooded, six acre site at Croft.

Members of the council's planning sub-committee decided the heavily wooded nature of the location meant it would not be seen from beyond the site.

Croft Parish Council opposed the development in Kenyon Lane on the grounds it would be inappropriate in the Green Belt - particularly as it involved a 64 per cent increase in the size of the property.

But the committee decided it would have no impact on the Green Belt.

The plan involves two-storey extensions on either side of the existing house, along with the removal of some existing garage space. At present, the house has the appearance of being two storeys from the front, but from the rear, because of differing ground levels, it looks like a single-storey dwelling.

Two adjoining outbuildings are to be demolished, or partly demolished, as part of the scheme.

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## Junior church wins MP's support



Helen Jones receives the church's Micah Challenge promise from Siobhan Beaudin with from left to right: Matthew Beaudin, Andrew Slattery, Anne Stafford, the MP, Siobhan, Charlotte Morris, Amy Kadodwala and Catherine Stafford.

YOUNGSTERS from Newchurch Junior Church have enlisted the support of Warrington North MP Helen Jones in their fight against injustice.

The group has been interested in tackling social injustice since 2005, when they noted that the Bible said people should tackle unfairness.

In 2006 they launched a Fairtrade stall, selling tea, coffee, sweets and biscuits. This has become a regular fixture in Newchurch and at local community events.

Five years on Newchurch Junior Church is still concerned about social justice. Recently, together with about 60 million Christians from throughout the world, they took part in the Micah Challenge when each person made a promise to try to live in a way that remembers those who live in poverty.

Anne Stafford, one of the leaders, said: "Our young people show a real concern for unfairness in the world and want to take action against injustice. The Micah Challenge is a good way to join with others who share our concerns."

As part of this the group met the MP and reminded her of the Government's commitment towards the Millennium Development Goals - one of which is to see the number of people living in poverty halved by 2015.

The MP said that while progress has been made in relation to the numbers of children attending school in developing countries, there is still a long way to go in terms of improving maternal fatality rates. She promised to pursue the issues raised.

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# Dining Out with Culcheth Life

at The General Elliot

It is good to see things buzzing again at Croft's attractive General Elliot pub – and it is easy to see why they are.

Co-owner Kirk Garbutt's more than 20 years experience as a chef, including a lengthy spell in top class restaurants in the south of France, is drawing diners from far and wide and making sure they don't go away disappointed.

The "Elliot" always had a comfortable atmosphere and with the restaurant frequently full and the bar providing a nice blend of ancient and modern, the pub has regained its character. It is certainly difficult to believe that a couple of years ago it was closed and shuttered up and looking as if was going to be added to the sad list of lost country pubs.

On a cold winter's night, we thought

there was nothing better to start with than a piping hot vegetable soup. And we were right – it was delicious.

But for those who prefer something different there were plenty of other starters, including Prawn Cocktail, Caramelised Scallops, Portobello Mushroom and Spicy Lamb Koftas.

Kirk has laid on a wide range of main courses to suit all tastes.

We chose Whole Sea Bass and Beef Stroganoff and found both meals cooked to perfection.

Looking around other tables we could see the many other dishes looking equally tempting, including Roasted Lamp Rump, Crispy Belly Pork, Thai Green Chicken Curry and Crispy Chinese Duck.

There were also traditional favourites like Cottage Pie and Cumberland Sausage Casserole and



grilled steaks, gammon and chicken breast – all tastefully presented with either seasonal vegetables or salad.

We finished off with Sticky Toffee

Pudding and Chocolate Fudge, both served with ice cream, and went happily homeward bound – vowing to return again soon.



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## Village Plan survey extended

**THE major consultation exercise for the Culcheth and Glazebury Village Plan has been extended to the end of the month - and even then organisers are prepared to be a little flexible.**

There is still time for residents to have input to a plan which could shape the future of the two villages.

The consultation got off to a flying start back in November with the distribution of survey forms to most houses in the parish.

But then came the snow and the Christmas break which stopped organisers in their tracks as they slipped and skated their way around, finishing the distribution.

The Village Plan offers a chance to influence what happens in Culcheth and Glazebury - it will be a vision and action plan for the future.

It will help the steering group working on the plan to develop new ideas, influence changes that take place in the villages and support the case for funding and grant applications

Every household, business and school should now have received a survey form. A steady flow of completed forms are being returned, but it has been decided to extend the

period for completing the survey to the end of January to cater for latecomers.

Steering group chairman Sally Probert said: "Don't worry if you need a few more days after that - your views will still be really important to us."

The forms, when completed can be returned to any one of the collection points which are: CPS Centre - first floor; Glazebury Village Store; Mee Brow General Store; Culcheth Library; Parade Newsagency; Victorian Sweet Shop, Glazebury; Bents Garden Centre.

Alternatively the survey can be completed on line at [www.cgplan.co.uk](http://www.cgplan.co.uk)

Anyone who has misplaced their survey form can get another at the Library.

Completing the survey need only take a few minutes - and could help set the vision for the future of Culcheth and Glazebury and create an action plan which will help to bring the vision to fruition.

## Scouts aid charity

A DVD charity night organised by Culcheth Methodist Scouts raised £63.90 for the group's nominated charity, Action for Children.

Senior Scouts arranged for a showing of Toy Story 3 and also served refreshments.

The group decided to support Action for Children this year following the annual Toy Service at the church when a representative of the charity explained how they helped less fortunate children and their families.

The evening was the first of a series of events to raise money for the charity.

Group spokesman Dave Sanderson said: We feel very pleased with the start made so early in the year and are working on ideas for other events and in addition, the scouts will be collecting toys and gifts all year so that even more will be available at next December's Toy Service.

## After school tuition centre opens

A NEW after-school tuition centre is opening its doors at Culcheth High School Community Campus.

Core Tuition is run by Culcheth residents Rebecca Hughes (teaching co-ordinator) and Mark Blakey (centre co-ordinator) and specialises in English and Maths tuition for students aged 7-19, covering Key Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Rebecca said: "With an informal setting, small classes of up to five pupils and a welcoming atmosphere, we help the students develop an enthusiastic approach to learning, whether the aim is exam preparation, reinforcing the basics or simply boosting class grades."

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## Joel's story is a winner

**A CULCHETH High School pupil has won a regional writing prize for an original and funny short story.**



Four aspiring writers from Warrington were put forward for regional prizes in the 'Flashback Fiction' competition. Entrants were asked to write a historical tale of no more than 500 words and submit them online.

Joel Davies, aged 12, was a local winner in the under 16 category and has now come first in the North West with his story 'Time Collapse'.

Although he has been writing for a while he almost didn't enter the competition.

He said: "I wasn't confident that I would stand a chance against 16 year olds! I'm really happy to have won and will probably use the prize to buy a book of Shakespeare's plays."

The story tells of the day that time 'collapsed' and a group of 21st century children met Henry VIII and set him right on his sexism and misogyny.

The judge, writer Patricia Dunker, said: "The situation here was very funny and well introduced. The story was funny and strange and had a sting to it all. Very enjoyable."

The competition was run as part of "Pages Ago", a promotion of history reading in public libraries and historic venues across the region. The promotion included author visits, readers' days and events with a historical theme, as well as the writing competition.

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# Fighting crime in



## School helps in war on crime

CULCHETH HIGH School has joined in the fight against crime.

The school is working in partnership with officers at Warrington East Neighbourhood Policing Unit.

The technology faculty at the school has created a special display box that neighbourhood officers can store equipment in while taking part in local community events.

PCSO Steve Dodd and his colleagues at Risley Police Station regularly visit local schools, senior citizens' groups and local community organizations to talk to them about safety and security - and give out valuable crime reduction advice. As part of those talks they take along a variety of crime busting items - including personal safety alarms, timer switches and locks.

The new display cabinet, which was designed and built by teacher Chris Smith - with the help of students, will allow local officers to keep all of the equipment together in one place - and to transport it easily to each event.

PCSO Dodd said: "We are really grateful to the school for all their help and support. The crime reduction talks are an important part of our role and we spend a lot of time out and about in the local community, meeting people and talking to them.

"The display case will be a valuable tool as it will allow us to keep all the items we need together in one place and we can easily take it with us to each of the talks we do.

"We work closely in partnership with local schools in the area and projects like this help to strengthen those links."



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# the community

**A SPECIAL crime prevention event took place in Culcheth organised by local Police Community Support Officers.**

Free bells that can be attached to a purse or bag to deter theft were handed out at the crime reduction and safety advice event.

Almost 100 people attended the event, in Sainsbury's car park, organised by PCSOs Steve Dodd and Wendy Stanley.

Cheshire Police's exhibition vehicle was on site. Officers talked to residents about a variety of issues including security in the home, keeping your vehicle safe and personal safety. They also handed out the free bells, which can be attached to a purse or bag.

Officers security marked valuable items, including approximately 20 bicycles, 30 mobile phones, lap tops and ipods.

PCSO Stanley said: "This event provided the ideal opportunity for people to come along and meet local officers face-to-face and have a chat.

We were on hand to offer key crime reduction advice and community safety advice to members of the public and we also encouraged local people to bring along any valuable items to be security marked.

"Many people who turned up on the day brought along valuable items that they had been given for



Christmas."

He said valuable items should be security marked so that they can be returned to the owner if stolen and recovered.

PCSO Stanley said: "We do recover many items, which we suspect are stolen, but one of the issues we have is that we are often unable to trace the owners as there are no security markings on the item. This makes it very difficult for us to trace who the items belong to as there is very little to go on."

Wardens from Stronger Together also attended. They gave advice to visitors and handed out items including personal attack alarms, shed alarms and door chains.

## The Gardening Guide

February...



- Summer flowering shrubs can now be pruned to improve their shape.
- Remember to check on tender plants outdoors during winter.
- Actively growing houseplants will benefit from a shot of liquid plant food.
- Roses can also be pruned now, especially hybrid teas & floribundas.
- Let your creative side take over when planning summer bulbs. Just consider colour, height & flowering time.

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Motoring

# L-drivers duped by rogue websites

**THE Office of Fair Trading is taking action against websites that charge administration fees to learner drivers to book their driving theory or practical tests without clearly explaining the additional fees.**

Action was started after the AA highlighted cases where learners unwittingly paid surcharges of up to 65 per cent by booking their test through third-party websites rather than directly through the Driving Standards Agency (DSA).

The complaints related to commercial websites that invite learners to enter their details and preferred dates for a DSA test. The details are the same as the learner would enter if booking directly with the DSA - which charges no booking fee. Some sites include 'DSA' in their Google search listings or web page headings, which can make it confusing as to whose site a learner is on.

Learners were then charged more than £50 for a theory test for which the DSA charges £31, with the difference being described as an "administration fee".

Others were hit with fees of up to £30 to book a practical test - on top of the standard DSA fees of £62 for a weekend or £75 for a weekday or weekday evening - while bookings for extended tests attracted booking fees of up to £40.

The AA's Simon Douglas said: "There is no place for websites that charge learners huge fees to book

their test without clearly explaining those fees. Learners can easily book directly with the DSA for no extra charge. 'Lookalike' sites that rip off learners must be shut down.

"Learning to drive is an investment in a valuable skill for life. But forking out big admin fees for do-little test

'booking services' is a waste of money few families can afford."

To avoid extra charges learners should book directly with the DSA, for the standard fee of £31 (theory test); £62 (practical test, weekday) or £75 (practical test, weekend or weekday evening).

## Volvo sales on the up!

VOLVO has announced that global sales were up by 11.2 per cent last year - a total of 373,525 cars.

Top selling model was the XC60, with sales of 80,723, with the V50 second with sales of 56,098.

The UK was the Swedish company's third biggest market, with 37,940 cars sold compared with 34,371 in 2009.

Increased production led to Volvo recruiting about 500 additional people at plants in Torslanda, Sweden and Ghent, Belgium.



Pictured: The Volvo S60.

## A satnav that says sorry?

HELP could one day be at hand for drivers who feel the urge to destroy their satnav after it has led them up the garden path.

In the future, satnavs will be able to tell when they have upset their driver and respond accordingly, possibly by saying sorry, according to Prof Peter Robinson, of Cambridge University's emotional robotics department.

He said: 'I love gadgets like GPS satellite navigation systems but I hate the fact they are so difficult to use. I think they were designed by sadists. The problem is computers don't react to how I feel - if I'm pleased or annoyed they just ignore me. We're building emotionally intelligent computers that can read my mind and know how I feel.'

"Computers are really good at understanding what someone is typing or saying. But they need to understand not just what I'm saying, but how I'm saying it."

The technology being developed utilises a number of sensors, capable of tracking things such as facial expressions, hand gestures and voice. So the driver who shouts, waves his arms about and scowls at the satnav might one day get a sympathetic response rather than the more usual, bland suggestion that he should do a U-turn on a dual-carriageway!

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# Reader's Letters

Please send your correspondence to:  
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or email: info@culchethlife.com

## Planning problems

Mike Webb, *Culcheth*

YOUR January editorial on the latest Risley Landfill site decision, highlights one of the problems caused by giving delegated powers to planning officers without auditing their decisions taken on behalf of our elected members. Apart from complying with planning regulations, the planning process should also be democratically and transparently conducted to enable the public to fully understand and voice their concerns about schemes which might have serious impacts on their lives and amenities. Not forgetting that most planning consents usually undertake to protect the amenities of those closest to the scheme. This does not always happen with delegated responsibility.

As you point out, planning officers - certainly those in Warrington judging by the weight of complaints in the local press - regrettably seem to consider that the planning regulations are paramount, which they have "no alternative" other than to apply, whilst considering the democratic process to be a minor irritant.

The problem with this sort of delegated responsibility is that it amounts to all delegation, and no responsibility. Planning Officers do not have to seek re-election. If and when they face the people most affected by their decisions, they claim expediency and shelter behind the latest copy of the planning regulations.

I wonder if the Biffa application might not just be the tip of the iceberg of delegated responsibility? How many more planning decisions taken on the expedient grounds of "no alternative" without any democratic input? I doubt we will ever find out because those decisions seem not to have been audited.

## Village green drainage

John Donnachie, *Culcheth*

I REFER to your latest issue in which the parish councillors of Culcheth and Glazebury are seeking £33,000 to drain Culcheth village green. What planet do these people live on? At a time when the economy of the country is in a mess, with VAT now at 20 per cent, people losing their jobs, our streets not being cleared of snow and bins not being emptied, etc, they have the audacity to seek more money from the inhabitants.

And why? So that the field can be used once a year!

I understand that Cllr Paul Campbell has a job with Warrington Borough Council to ensure that they get value for money on projects they undertake. Surely he has not allowed this one to get through? Also, I'm sure some of our local farmers would gladly carry out the work for a fraction of £33,000.

Solution: One of the benefits claimed for the new high school was that the people of Culcheth and Glazebury would benefit from the facilities therein. Why not hold the Community Day there? There would be no chance of it being rained off since we could go indoors if it did rain. Also, parking would be a lot better with the likes of Lodge Drive, Kirby Road, etc, free from the chaos they currently suffer.

Before the Community Day was moved to the Green it was held successfully for many years in the Shaw Street playing fields. It would be like "going home."

What's wrong with ducks inhabiting The Green? Every village green in England would be envious!

## Risley landfill site

Jim Carr, *Culcheth*

PLEASE accept my congratulations in applauding local councillors who refused to accept Biffa's excessive time request to complete the Risley Landfill site. I would, however, like to point out that those councillors were picking up the direct suggestion of the Risley Landfill Opposition Group, who were not mentioned in your report.

The combined pressure of the Opposition Group and the councillors also forced council officers to put in place ongoing monitoring measures to ensure completion this time around.

If it were not for the efforts mounted over the last four years, the landfill site would have blighted our environment for at least another 10 years.

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# CULCHETH & GLAZEBURY PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

## Your Parish Councillors

### CULCHETH WARD



Keith Bland  
01925 766641



Paul Campbell  
01925 766658



Mrs Lilian Houghton  
01925 762935



Mrs Ilayne Hutchinson  
01925 765131



Roger Rankin  
01925 766038

### NEWCHURCH WARD



Mrs Jacqui Johnson  
01925 763435



Mrs Christine Rankin  
01925 766357



Mrs Helena Campbell  
01925 766658

### GLAZEBURY & MEE BROW WARD



Mrs Sue Bland  
01925 766641



Peter Caswell  
01942 671938

## Community Day

Community Day this year will be held on Monday, May 2nd on the Village Green. If you are an organisation that would like to raise funds or just to let people know who you are, this is a great opportunity to do it. Letters will be sent out to past participants during February giving details of the event, or you can contact Sue Bland on 01925 766641.

## Bulb planting

There is to be a follow up of the successful bulb planting event that took place last October involving pupils from local Primary Schools. Another event is planned for 2011 in conjunction with local Scouts and Cubs, planting on other areas of the Village Green and on Shaw Street Playing Field.

## Parish precept

The January meeting of the Parish Council voted to retain the Parish precept at £16.82 for 2011/12.

This remains one of the lowest rates in the Borough.

## Youth club

Warrington Borough Youth Service and local Borough Councillors have been instrumental in the setting up of a Youth Club at Culcheth High School. Early indications are of a successful start with good attendances.

## Work party

Despite recent poor weather conditions, tidying up work at two local electricity sub-stations, and turf laying and bulb planting at Warrington Road lay-by has now been completed.

## February council meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council is on Tuesday February 15, 2011 at 7.30pm at Glazebury Methodist Church.



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**THE STYLES FILES** styles

**'It was at this point that Les said: anyone who wants a pay-rise, please step forward.'**



**And the winner is...**

We would like to thank everyone who entered our caption competition in December. We were given a very difficult decision to make when choosing our favourite caption and the winner of the iPod Touch.

Eventually, we came to a unanimous decision and the winning entry, above, was sent in by Adrian Wood. Adrian received his prize along with a framed copy of the photograph and his caption last

month.

Once again, we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who entered and assure you that no accountants were harmed during the taking of this photograph.



If you would like more information on this or any of the previous subjects we have featured, please contact Les Styles or Ian Lloyd on 01925 761600.

The Styles Files are provided by Styles & Co  
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