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Editor's Comment

NO-one would suggest for one minute that the bridge works in Wilton Lane, Culcheth, which have been aggravating local motorists for months, are not important.

But we find it surprising that no-one at the borough council apparently thought it inappropriate to schedule the work for the pre-Christmas period.

Halle concert raised £1,150

THE concert given by members of the Halle Orchestra and friends at Culcheth Sports Club in November raised more than £1,150 for Rotary

charity work.

A Rotary Shelter Box, as sent regularly to disaster areas throughout the world, was on display at the entrance and donations were also received for that cause.

The concert was organised by the Rotary Club of Newton and District

Other fund-raising by the club was carried out over the Christmas period, with Father Christmas visiting Culcheth

with Father Christmas visiting Culcheth and Glazebury on his sleigh.
Last year's Culcheth Beer Festival, also organised by the club, raised more than £5,000.
The club is now considering requests from organizations searching for financial assistance who should initially contact Barnard Groom on 01925 733893.

In fact, of course, unforeseen problems have resulted in the work continuing until sometime next month-much to the anguish of local shopkeepers who rely so much on the run-up to Christmas to balance their books.

Our experience, over many years of Town Hall watching, is that one

or lown Hall Watching, is that one thing can always be foreseen when major road works take place - that the unexpected will, in fact, happen.

But in this particular case, it wouldn't really have mattered if it hadn't. Even if the work had been completed an time, it would till been completed on time, it would still have been the wrong time of the year. And some of the traffic diversions which were put in place exacerbated the

situation.
We fully support those shopkeepers who are calling for compensation for lost trade. We doubt if they will be successful as officialdom seldom seems to recognise the difficulties

under which small businesses labour.
But it would certainly be a good
start to the New Year if we were
forced to admit our doubts were

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Hot punch boost for panto!

CULCHETH Players have used new marketing tools to try and boost audiences for their forthcoming panto - free hot mulled punch and mince pies!

The goodies were on offer on Victorian Day - and the group hopes they will result in more people attending Jack and Beanstalk at

Culcheth Sports Club next month

Chairman Steve Beech said: "Over the past few years the numbers of people who attend our performances



have fallen.
"Obviously the current financial climate does not help but after the group attended the Victorian Day to promote the panto, winning punters over with free hot mulled punch and mince pies, we found that a large part of the Culcheth community did not even know of our existence.

Bigger

The group hopes that raising its profile in the community will mean bigger audiences.

Members have also commissioned a new logo to create a new brand and re-launched their website, which is now more interactive, with links to its Facebook and Twitter pages to make it more informative.

Mr Beech said: "It also gives information on the group's past history. You can look at past production posters, photos and video clips along with the availability now to book tickets for performances on

New members are also needed for both acting and backstage roles.

The panto will run from Friday February 22 to Sunday February 24 and all tickets are £6.

More information is on the web at www.culchethplayers.co.uk



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70 'not out' - Culcheth Thomas Cook team prove there's no substitute for experience

They say there's no substitute for experience, and with a combined 70 years' in the travel industry under their belts, the Thomas Cook team in Culcheth have proved just that. In the latest in a number of accolades over the years, the team at Jackson Avenue has recently topped the Thomas Cook regional performance league table, taken 22nd spot out of some 680 Thomas Cook stores nationwide and the team is thereby now classed as Thomas Cook 'A' performers.

To celebrate, the branch is offering customers a special discount on bookings from now until the end of January. Customers simply need to bring the voucher at the bottom of the page into the branch to claim their discount.

Gill Walters, Branch Manager at Culcheth has been in the industry for 14 years, 13 of which with Thomas Cook. Gill's seen many changes over the years, not least the popularity of the internet. "Obviously, lots of people now book their holidays online thinking that there are great deals to be had - which there certainly are. But booking holidays this way means that people are, to some extent, booking blind. What's not common knowledge is that more often than not, we at the branch can match and often beat web prices. Add to this the fact that customers booking with us can also draw on the teams' considerable travel experience and that can make the difference between a holiday and a great holiday.

"Lots of people also think that we just book package holidays – which is not the case," Gill continues. "We book everything from UK holidays to multi-centre, round the world trips – and everything in-between."

The Culcheth team is made up of Gill, Michelle Simm, modern apprentice, Jess Gorton and Geoff Douse – who ranks as Thomas Cook's top Foreign Exchange consultant out of 773 in the country!

During their 70 years combined experience in travel, they have quite a few interesting and often funny tales to tell – Geoff recounts his favourite:

"I was on a hotel transfer coach

from Ibiza airport in the 1970s – when hotels didn't have TVs," he says. "An elderly lady produced a small, old-fashioned portable TV from a holdall and asked the tour operator representative how she could tune in the TV to watch 'Coronation Street' at the hotel!"

Gill, Michelle, Geoff and Jess are all looking forward to welcoming customers old and new to the branch over the coming months and wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year



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Skipping for charity



MEMBERS of the 6th Culcheth Brownies took part in a sponsored skip for the British Heart Foundation.

The Jump Rope for Heart activity was part of their work towards their

Healthy Hearts badge which the girls have been working on for some time. As part of the project, the girls learned about the effect exercise has on their pulse, alongside taking part in a range of skipping exercises. During the evening the girls completed individual skipping

completed individual skipping challenges, paired and trio skipping, skipping relay races as well as seeing

how many Brownies could skip inside a long rope at the same time.

Juice and biscuits were provided throughout the night to keep the girls hydrated and their taste buds satisfied.

Anyone who would like any further information about Rainbows, Brownies or Guides in Culcheth should contact Sara Isles on 01925 766057 or sara.isles@btinternet.com

Training centre plan withdrawn

A CONTROVERSIAL plan for a training centre for excavator drivers on farmland at Croft has been withdrawn, following an uproar from nearby residents.

Croft Parish Council had lodged strong objections to the scheme for land off

The Green Belt site is currently used for grazing but had the plan gone ahead, two buildings would have been erected and the site would have been used for training excavator drivers.

Trainee drivers would have excavated areas of the site and then restored it. Nearby residents complained about the potential for intolerable noise and traffic problems.

Cllr Les Hoyle said: "We are pleased the plan has been withdrawn. This just wasn't the right place for such a scheme.

Car park to end 'school run' problems

PEOPLE living near Croft's St Lewis' RC Primary School are to be consulted on a new plan to ease "school run" parking problems.

The church authorities have found money towards the cost of creating an onsite parking area, with "in and out" gates, to remove the need for parents to park

Borough council highways have also found money to contribute to the scheme. Currently cars park outside the school in Mustard Lane, effectively reducing the busy road to a single lane and causing problems for drivers attempting to pass through at drop-off or pick-up times.

The council originally considered creating designated parking places on both sides of the road, leaving gaps for through traffic.

It is thought the on-site parking solution will be welcomed by residents.

But the plan will still involve waiting restrictions on the road to ensure the new





Culcheth High Community Campus

Adult Learning Courses January 2013







Culcheth High School is working with Warrington Collegiate & LiveWire to offer **Adult Courses**

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Basic I.T. Computer Skills

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Discover Pottery

Learn how to work with clay, create your own pots, beautiful plates and tiles. This is a free course with a cost of £25 for materials. One class every Tuesday evening for five weeks starting on the 15th January 2013, 6.30pm-8.30pm

Discover Floristry

An introduction of how to create beautiful bouquets and button holes. This course costs £35, however learners can access one free course this academic year with a cost of £15 for materials. One class every Wednesday evening for five weeks starting on the 16th January 2013, 6.30pm-8.30pm

Discover Digital Imaging

Learn how to upload, edit, print and save your photographs. This course costs £35, however each learner is entitled to one free course each academic year. One class every Thursday evening starting on the 17th January 2013, 6.30pm-8.30pm

Discover Jewellery Making

An introduction to the craft of jewellery making. This course costs £35 with a cost of £15 for materials, however each learner is entitled to one free course each academic year. One class every Wednesday evening for five weeks starting on the 16th January 2013, 6.30pm-8.30pm

For more information on enrolment or guidance regarding our courses please contact: Debbie Porrin via email: dporrin@livewirewarrington.org Or ring Debbie on 01925 768500

Room for one more award!

BUSINESSWOMAN Ruth Thomas, 33, owner of Room31 based on Taylor Business Park, Risley has won yet another award, making it four prestigious awards in the last 12 months!

Ruth won Start Up Business Woman Of The Year at the Forward Ladies Women In Business Awards 2012 held at The Midland Hotel, Manchester sponsored by Barclays.

Manchester sponsored by Barclays. The Forward Ladies Women In Business Awards are judged by an independent judging panel, comprising of professional men and women, successful entrepreneurs and business people. Ruth started her string of awards success by winning Small Business Sunday in November 2011, a competition run by Theo Paphitis, followed by WOW (Women On Wednesday) initiative run by Jacqueline Gold that celebrates female entrepreneurs in June 2012 and Start Up Business of The Year at Warrington Business Awards 2012.

Her online clothing business has been so successful they have had to move into larger premises on Taylor Business Park and have also opened a shop in Culcheth on Common Lane.

Ruth came up with the name for her business as she ran a stall on Bury Market for two years when she was aged 31 on stall number 31.

She opened an ebay business to sell her surplus stock and discovered the potential of marketing online receiving orders from across the world!

She now employs eight full time staff and a group of interns who concentrate on website design, competitions, blogging and social media









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Victorian day ha

CULCHETH'S annual Victorian Day has been hailed a great success.



Staff from McDee's Cafe Culcheth in Victorian Day dress. From left, Mary McDonough, Duncan McDee and Angie Williams.

Organised by Culcheth Lions and the Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council, Victorian Day saw the village play host to a range of stalls and themed events.

There was also the opportunity for local children to visit Santa's grotto, the Methodist Church hosted a Christmas fair, and the day culminated with the village's Christmas lights being officially switched on and a fireworks display on the Common.

Supported by the local parish council, councillor Chris Vobe said: "Victorian Day has become a staple in the village calender and this year's event was yet another resounding success."

"Congratulations must go to Culcheth Lions, the Methodist Church, and local retailers, who organised a great array of stalls and events for all the family."

"The feedback from residents suggested that, despite the showers, people enjoyed the day just as much as previous years. As well as kicking off the festive season, the day also raises big sums of money for charity





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led great success

and it was really pleasing to see that, even in these tough times, local people were giving generously to good causes."

At 4.30pm, crowds lined Lodge Drive and the village car park for the official switch on of the Christmas lights.

Councillor Vobe led the crowds of

children in a "shout for Santa", who arrived right on cue to press the plunger and light up Culcheth for Christmas!

Thankfully, the rains held off until the fireworks display (donated by Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council) on the village green brought the day to a close.



Warinus Strode's Fairground Organ provided the music at the Culcheth Victorian Day. Left, Warinus Strode and John Adams.



The Gardening Guide

January...



- Time to start planning your garden for the year ahead.
- Tools will benefit from sharpening & oiling to prepare for the coming season.
- Start tender vegetables in a heated greenhouse.
- Keep up rooms humidity for Houseplants by standing them on trays of moist gravel.
- Pots & bowls of Hyacinths, Daffodils, etc that have been outside may be given a little heat to encourage early flowering.
- Ensure protective straw & fleece is still in place on tender plants overwintering outdoors. Remember to remove if the weather turns mild.

Happy New Year from Bents!



www.bents.co.uk



Wine buffs 'Call my bluff'

CULCHETH Wine Circle held their own version of "Call My Bluff" when they met at Culcheth Sports and Social Club.

Six wines were tried, all of which had three descriptions as proposed by the panel. The wines were wrapped to hide their label and members had to pick the correct description.

A spokesperson said: "It was a pleasant and successful evening, with a range of wines from the European countries.

Mrs Doreen Groom preparing the plates of cheese and biscuits that always accompany the tasting





The panel (left to right) Tim Yates, John Cropley and Mal Casson

Shopkeepers seek compensation for lost trade

SOME shopkeepers at Culcheth are seeking compensation from the borough council for trade lost in the pre-Christmas period because of traffic congestion caused by road works.

Bridge works in Wilton Lane, which were originally intended to be completed before Christmas, will now continue until the middle of next month.

Traders say shoppers - especially those travelling from the Lowton and Golborne areas - were put off from visiting the village because of hold-ups and lengthy diversions.

To make matters worse, temporary traffic lights were erected in Heath Lane, Croft while the council cleared a main gully to help prevent flooding of a number of houses which were inundated twice last year.

Naomi Simpson, of the Forget-me-Not toy and book shop in the CPS centre said:
"We were told the bridge works would be completed before Christmas, but apparently there were unforeseen problems which mean the work will go on until the middle of February.

"This had a serious impact on trade in Culcheth. For many businesses, December is the busiest month of the year and some were badly hit. We know what our figures should be for that time of the year and they were definitely down. Some shopkeepers are seeking compensation from the council through a reduction in our business rates."

The council also failed to communicate properly with either the traders or the

Cllr Chris Vobe said: "The Wilton Lane road closure has been a fiasco and someone needs to hold up their hands and admit, 'We got this wrong'.

"The repairs to the bridge are important and need to be carried out - that cannot be disputed. But the way in which the council have liased with local traders has been a monumental farce. In these difficult economic times, the council should be doing all it can to support small businesses who not only provide jobs for local panels but help to keep aux town's concern, waying."

doing an in can be support sinal businesses with only provide Jobs for local people, but help to keep our town's economy moving."

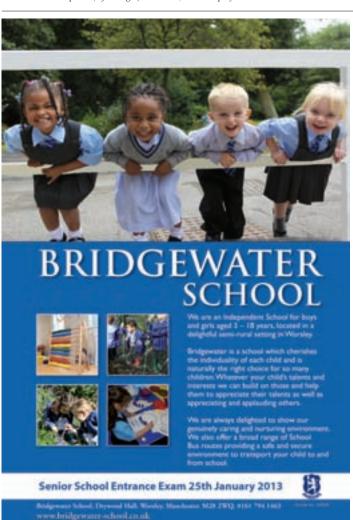
"Scheduling this work at the tail end of the year means that Christmas trade has fallen. We saw that evidenced on Victorian Day when visitors from Lowton and Golborne tailed off. I can see no credible reason why this work wasn't carried out over the summer, during a naturally quieter period, instead of impacting so heavily on the fetting reason."

Cllr Vobe said he was supporting the traders' demand for compensation.
Cllr Les Hoyle said the borough had originally intended delaying the Heath Lane
work until after the Wilton Lane scheme had been completed.
But because several houses had been flooded twice this year, it was decided to

bring the work forward.

"It was unfortunate the two schemes overlapped, but it was important to carry out work to prevent houses from being flooded yet again. One family has had to go and live elsewhere for almost a year because their house is taking so long to dry

... United Utilities are installing a new pumping station to further protect the properties.







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Did George Osborne play Father Christmas for the UK?

On Wednesday 5 December the Chancellor, George Osborne made his Autumn Statement – effectively a mini Budget.

You'll have heard about it in the press but what does it mean for you and your

Below are some of the highlights and lowlights:

1. Investing in equipment for your

business
From 1 January 2013, a business can invest in up to £250,000 pa in plant and machinery and claim an immediate 100% tax deduction.

VERDICT: Definitely on the Christmas wish list! A tenfold increase from current rules will be a real boost to capital intensive businesses such as hauliers and manufacturers

2. Corporation tax rates
The main rate will fall to 21% by 2014 with small companies continuing to pay

VERDICT: Another nice gift in the Christmas stocking! The UK should remain a competitive tax environment

for companies in the worldwide economy but will the multinationals be prepared to pay tax here?

3. Capping of tax reliefs

3. Capping of tax reliefs
There was no about turn on the
announcement earlier this year that
income tax relief will be capped. From
April 2013 individuals will only be
able to claim reliefs worth the higher of
£50,000 and 25% of their income.
Charitable donations are not affected. Pension contributions on which tax relief can be claimed will be restricted

relief can be claimed will be restricted to \$40,000 from 2014 onwards.

VERDICT: The equivalent of a novelty Christmas tie for high income generators! The days of investing in businesses in sectors such as media, and gaining immediate tax relief in order to shelter income from tax are now numbered. It demonstrates the determination of the government to stop what they see as aggressive tax planning.

Charities which receive small donations (up to £20) of up to £5,000 per year (up to £20) of up to £5,000 per year can now claim a top-up payment without using Gift Aid and all the necessary accompanying paperwork. VERDICT: The wrapping is better than the gift inside this one! Unfortunately this scheme involved a number of complexities which may prevent many small charities being able to benefit.

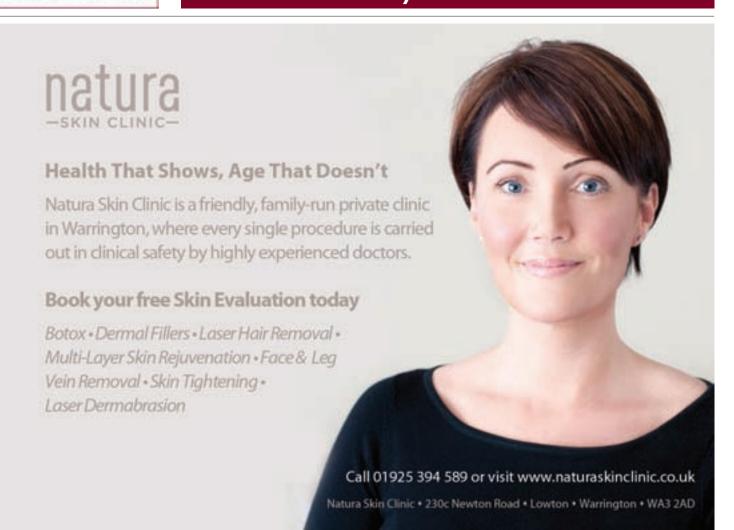


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Planners to inspect extension scheme

PLANNING chiefs are to make a site inspection before reaching a decision on a home extension plan in Deacons Close, Croft.

borough's Members of the planning committee decided to visit the site after hearing of an objection from a neighbour who claimed the part-two storey, part-single storey extension would have an oppressive impact and would be out of character with other adjoining properties.
The committee was told the scheme

would involve the demolițion of an existing conservatory and porch to make way for the new extension. Planning officers recommended the

scheme be approved. They said the property had an unusual layout in that both the front and rear elevations had the appearance of a rear elevation.

The extension would by at the front, but given the presence of an existing conservatory and the enclosed nature of front gardens by a 1.8m high boundary fence, resembled a rear elevation

Officers said the extension would have no detrimental impact on neighbours.

Green light for stable block

PLANNERS have given the go-ahead for a stable block on Green Belt land at Croft - despite claims it will mean the loss of the most outstanding view in the village.

Croft Parish Council had opposed the scheme on land to the south of New

Croft Parish Council had opposed the scheme on land to the south of New Lane and there were objections from two residents of New Lane.

But the borough's planning committee decided the scheme could go ahead because stables are an appropriate development in the Green Belt and the loss of a view is not a valid reason for withholding planning consent.

The committee was told the development involves timber-clad, pitched-roof stables for private recreational use. It would accommodate seven horses, all owned by the applicant. There would also be a yard area and a new vehicle access onto New Jane. access onto New Lane.

The field would be used for the riding, training and exercising of horses. But it would not be a commercial riding or equestrian centre.

Gazebo in the garden

RESIDENTS at Culcheth's Holcroft Grange care home are looking forward to the warmer weather when they will be able to take full advantage of a new

gazebo in the home's garden.

The gazebo has been built following a request from residents and a two-year fundraising effort, supported by local businesses and members of the local community

It has a seat for residents to relax with their thoughts and offers views of the

garden.

Jean Ince, 78, thinks that the gazebo is wonderful.

She said: "I absolutely love the new gazebo as it gives me a place to sit in the fresh air and watch the birds and enjoy the flowers. Even when it's a bit chilly, it's made it that much nicer to sit and enjoy the gardens under shelter."

Pauline Shaw, manager at the CLS Care home added: "Holcroft Grange would like to say a huge thank you to the local businesses and the Culcheth community for donating all the wonderful prizes for the numerous fundraisers, tombolas and fairs we have held to reach our target. All their support and generosity has meant so much to the older people, who are now able to enjoy their lovely gazebo."



Three awards - and a job -for Jack!

ALL-rounder Jack Warhurst picked up three awards at Glazebury Cricket Club's annual presentation night - and was also named as 1st XI captain for the coming season.

He won the 1st XI batting trophy, the Player's Player trophy and, appropriately, 'the "Run Getter" trophy.

Finest

This award was introduced some years ago in memory of Jack's grandfather - also named Jack - who was arguably the club's finest batsman of the post war era

Keeping it in the family, the 2nd XI batting trophy went to Jack's dad, club chairman Paul Warhurst.

Other trophy winners were: 1st XI bowling: Jon Gibbons; 2nd XI bowling: Chris Ayre; 3rd XI batting: Sean Caine; 3rd XI Chris Ayre; player: Ho bowling: Most improved Hakeem Dahou; Young player of the Year: Patrick Hutchinson.

David Nicholson was named 2nd XI captain for the coming season.

Martial arts success

THE Culcheth-based Kuk Sool WonTM school, which specialises in traditional Korean martial arts, achieved success in the annual UK tournament, in Liverpool.

School owner and instructor Ching Lee, and students Oscar Hondow, 14 and Nathan DeOliviera, aged nine, entered the competition.

They competed in several events including sparring, self defence techniques and traditional forms.

Oscar received a gold medal in self defence techniques, a silver medal in sparring and a bronze in traditional forms. Nathan received a silver medal in sparring and a bronze in self defence techniques.

Instructor Lee said: "I am extremely proud of their participation at their first ever tournament. It just proves that with enough hard work, discipline, determination and most importantly, perseverance we can excel and do well in everything we put our minds



Council adopts 'Living Wage'

CULCHETH and Glazebury Parish Council had unanimously voted to adopt the "Living Wage" for their employees.

Councillors voted on proposals tabled by Cllr Chris Vobe and Cllr Peter Caswell to increase the wages of all staff on minimum wage to the Living

Cllr Vobe said: "Paying the Living Wage is a responsible step and a stance which should be adopted by every other parish council in the

He said the council greatly valued the work their staff did and recognised the quality service they help to provide for the village.

"We also know that increasing pay means more money in people's pockets, which they can spend in local shops and businesses, which will in turn keep our economy moving.

Stand-in speaker to the rescue

STAND-in speaker Christine Seddon came to the rescue at Culcheth WI when the promised speaker had to cancel at short notice because of family illness.

Christine spoke about Jacob's Well, a charity which supports disadvantage people in countries such as Ghana, Afghanistan, Romania and Pakistan.

She asked members to bring suitable gifts to the next meeting, such as hand knitted items, pasta, breakfast cereals, writing and drawing materials and toiletries etc

These will be delivered to Margaret Ruxton, area representative for Jacob's

Ann McCormick thanked Christine for stepping in at such short notice.

Two new members attended the meeting, which was opened by the president, Lillian Houghton. Flowers were provided by Eileen Williams.

Tea hostesses for the afternoon were Lydia Howard, Martha Head and Chris Lake. Birthdays celebrated were Christine Rankin, Christine Seddon and Edna Worthington. Raffle winners included Crid Lewis, Sheila Stephenson, Fanny Verienusch Lilliam Houghter and Cline Leve

Hainsworth, Lillian Houghton and Olive Lee.

Treasurer Brenda Seddon gave her annual report and this was followed by reports from the committee and the president.

Joan Jarvis was elected as the new president.



Motoring

A car to reflect your personality

ADAM, Vauxhall's all-new three-door hatchback, which arrives in the UK early this year, offers unprecedented levels of personalisation with more than a million different specification and trim combinations.

Measuring 3.70 metres in length and 1.72 metres in width, the car comfortably seats four people and arrives with prices ranging from £11,255 to £14,000.

Personalisation begins with the selection of one of three trim levels - ADAM JAM (fashionable/colourful) - ADAM GLAM (elegant/sophisticated) and ADAM SLAM (racy/sporty). The next level of customisation comes with the addition of option packs, and from here the

possibilities are virtually endless, with the choice of 12 body colours, 15 seat designs, 20 alloy wheel styles, three printed headliners and no less than 18 interior décor panels, to mention just a few.

An exclusive on-board infotainment system, integrates the owner's smartphone (Android and Apple iOS) with the car, making internet based applications available on the facia

mounted touch screen. Other features include a new-generation Park Assist that automatically parks the car, a Side Blind Spot Alert and a power steering system including a 'light touch' CITY mode.

Vauxhall believe the car will attract young and young-at-heart fashionconscious customers who want their car to reflect their personality.



If you missed our previous open events - or just want to have another look around the College - come along on 31 January



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