

# Village Life

Issue No. 112  
July 2010

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Thelwall Rose Queen  
Grappenhall Walking Day**

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**Editor**

Gary Skentelbery

**Production**

Paul Walker

**Business Manager**

Tony Record

**Advertising**Freephone  
0800 955 5247**Editorial**

01925 623632

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# Editor's Comment



## WHAT are we to make of the controversy surrounding Walton Hall and Gardens?

Firstly, surely, we must recognise that the public uproar is an indication of the affection local people feel for the hall and its grounds.

Secondly we must agree - and the borough council has already accepted this - that the council's communication with the public on this issue has been poor.

Thirdly - and now we begin to stray into difficult areas - we should try and accept that it is not too late to put things right.

We can accept the council's

argument that they could not consult until there was something to consult on - but only to a certain extent.

The public deserved to be consulted as soon as the idea of a partnership with a private sector company was even thought of. Certainly before the partner was chosen.

Councillors can hardly be surprised there is public disquiet when the consultation starts only after the partner has been chosen and the identity of that partner leaks out.

The fact that the partner was selected from a "shortlist" of just one only makes matters worse. The public is bound to see it as a "done deal" and to distrust everything the council now says.

So how to put things right? Ideally, the council and the Contessa hotel group should come up with a proposal that will remove the fears of local people that public access to the hall and grounds will be lost.

If they can't, probably the only solution will be to scrap the so-called master plan, go back to square one and start again. Openly and transparently.

## Sponsored toilets?

RESIDENT Michael Foxall has been invited to join the working party trying to get public toilets after suggesting the parish council investigate a sponsorship scheme to provide funding.

## Summer play schemes

TWO summer play schemes for children aged 5-12 are being held in Appleton, funded by the Parish Council.

The first will be at Cobbs Infants School, between 10am and 12 noon for the two weeks commencing July 26.

Then there will be a second at Appleton Parish Hall, also between 10am and 12 noon, for the two weeks commencing August 9.

There will be an entrance fee of 50p per child per attendance.

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# Walton Hall: Council faces a challenge

**THE borough council's controversial plan to go into partnership with a private company to develop Walton Hall as a luxury hotel and conference centre is to be examined by Town Hall scrutiny chiefs.**

Coun Terry O'Neill, leader of the Labour opposition group on the council, has "called in" the executive board's decision to continue talks with hotel group Contessa, despite assurances from the council that full public consultation will take place before a final decision is taken.

He questions the legality of the decision because, he maintains, the consultation will be only on a "master plan" drawn up by the council and the company.

There was no prior consultation on the vision for Walton Hall and no proper, open procurement process, he says.

Scrutiny chiefs will now examine the decision process closely - although they cannot force the executive board to change its decision.

The strength of public feeling - reported in Village Life last month -

was demonstrated when more than 200 angry residents demonstration outside the Town Hall when the executive board met to consider the issue.

A petition signed by more than 7,000 people was handed in and the meeting heard more than 17,000 people had supported the "Save Walton Hall" campaign on the social networking site Facebook.

After a lengthy debate, the board unanimously approved two proposals - to agree a draft master plan as a basis for public consultation, with the results of the consultation to be reported back to the board for consideration, and to approve continued discussions Contessa.

Council leader Ian Marks admitted



the council's communication with the public had not been ideal. But he argued that until the master plan had been drawn up there had been no detailed proposal on which to consult the public.

"The proper consultation starts tonight," he said. "The irony is, we are

all on the same side. We all want to save Walton Hall and Gardens."

The meeting was told there would be widespread consultation with exhibitions, leaflets, and copies of the draft master plan in libraries and other public buildings. The council wanted everyone to contribute.



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# Playing field could be 'tribute to the Queen'

A CALL has been made for a popular playing field in Stockton Heath - threatened by housing development - to be saved as a tribute to the Queen.

Resident Michael Foxall told Stockton Heath Parish Council that he was anxious to save Cartwright's Field. He suggested the land should be included in a campaign headed by Prince William to save hundreds of playing fields across the country.

They would be named as Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields, to mark the Monarch's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

Mr Foxall complained the land, which has planning permission for affordable housing, had been fenced off and children denied access.

He said: "Since I moved to the area in 1982 this land has always been available to children. This is an ideal spot for a possible park."

"What better tribute to Her Majesty during her Diamond Jubilee?"

In the 1930s King George V, then Prince of Wales, had a programme to make playing fields available for youths, he said.

Chairman Coun Graham Roughsedge said Alexandra Park had originated in this way. Mr Foxall said Stretton Parish Council was considering the scheme and that he

planned to also talk to Appleton. The field was a "perfect place" for such a playing field.

"I am asking the parish council to back me to make sure that Cartwright's Field stays as it has been for the last 20 years as a place for children to play."

*Advertiser's announcement*

## Paul will bring barbecues back to life

PROFESSIONAL oven cleaner Paul Clark is offering help to people who have let their barbecues get a little worse for wear.

The weather men have again promised a barbecue summer and, even if they turn out to be wrong, the World Cup is tempting more than a few people to try some alfresco dining.

Paul, from Ovenu Warrington, said: "For many households, taking advantage of the warmer weather and cooking up a feast to enjoy in the garden with friends or family is a much anticipated treat. But the thought of

cleaning a grease-encrusted oven or grill is no-one's idea of fun.

"When the weather's nice the last thing you want to be doing is staying inside to clean the oven! Barbecues also quickly become covered in meat juices, coal dust and burnt on debris, which can be very unpleasant to remove.

"Many barbecues may have been left sitting idle in the shed for months on end, with leftover grease and fat creating an ideal breeding ground for germs.

"The good news is that even the worst offenders can quickly come up looking good as new and be ready to cook up a feast in no time."

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Advertiser's announcement

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footwear and take a coat!! Mount Rigi can be reached by lake steamer to Vitznau and then take the railway to the top the views from the top are stunning. There are other summits that can be reached from Lucerne by taking various boat trips. The paddle steamers and boats operate a good regular service from Lucerne. The area is excellent for walking and also bikes can be hired locally.

Lucerne's medieval buildings in the old town make this a lovely area to explore



Linda Crowder - Stockton Heath Travel

on foot, through the pedestrianised areas with its frescoed buildings, pavement cafes, bars, shops etc. The Swiss Transport Museum is worth a visit and also the Picasso museum. Not to be missed is the 14th Century Chapel Bridge, the Lion Monument, Glacier Park and visit Titlis Glacier Cave.

Activities include swimming, golf, paragliding, fishing, horseriding, watersports, canyoning, tennis etc

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# Vandal attack on historic garden

POLICE are stepping up patrols around the historic Grappenhall Heys Walled Garden following a third attack by vandals.

Hooligans broke into the garden overnight and caused extensive damage to plants, shrubs and property - the main target apparently a fruit cage which has now been vandalised three times since it was installed last year.

In addition a pair of gates were heavily damaged and a newly installed marquee in the rear courtyard was also vandalised. A tree was pulled down and a wide range of fruit and vegetable plots were damaged.

Bob Jennings, age 67, of Appleton found the damage on a Sunday morning when opening up the garden.

Volunteer worker Bob, a member of the Friends of Grappenhall Heys Walled Garden, who has been helping out there since 1991, said: "I was completely taken aback to see the devastation again. It really makes you wonder if it is all worth it."

Police are investigating the incident and have confirmed that patrols would now be increased in the area.

## Green belt home given the go-ahead

A PLAN to convert a Green Belt stable block into a new home has been given the go-ahead, despite fierce objections from local councillors.

The borough council's planning sub-committee approved the scene at Birch Tree Farm, Appleton in the face of claims that applicant John Bryan had deliberately circumvented planning regulations.

Strong objections were lodged by Appleton Parish Council.

Coun Brian Axcell claimed the building - erected less than nine years ago - had never been used as stables.

He said: "If permission were to be granted for residential use, planning regulations would have been circumvented. Permission would have been gained for something which would certainly have been refused if an application for residential use had been made at the outset."

Appleton Parish Council argued that the application was contrary to borough council policy on managing the housing supply which stated that

conversions of farm buildings for residential development would not be allowed.

Planning officers admitted a residential application in 1991 would probably have been refused but said the issue now was for the re-use of a building in the Green Belt.

## Residents only parking

PLANS to set up "residents' only" parking schemes in Stockton Heath have moved a step closer.

Parish Council members heard the borough council was shortly to start consultation in one of the areas - bounded by Fairfield Road, Alexandra Road and Victoria Road

- where parking problems occurred.

Clerk Peter Briggs said he felt it was a "positive step" that consultation was starting. Other areas had been defined and would be considered in the future.

Coun Sonia Boggan said the defined area included Gaskell Street and Warburton Street, where parking had been a constant problem. Many properties in the area were flats and there were many cars parked there in the evenings and at weekends.

## Holiday club

A THEMED holiday club, based around the story of a fish and shop, is being held in Stockton Heath.

Children, aged five to 11, will be welcomed to the summer club called Rocky's Plaice, being held from July 26.

Admission to the club is free and will be at Stockton Heath Christian Fellowship, Walton Road, from 6pm to 8pm each evening.

Activities will include games, crafts, stories, DVDs and puppets. On the Sunday morning, the whole family

will be made welcome at an "Ice Cream Sundae" session.

John Dolan, church press officer, said: "This club has been operating under different titles for about the past 15 years and continues to be very popular. Children come not just from Stockton Heath but from the surrounding villages."

Parents wanting to book sessions for their children should ring 604384 or via the church's website [www.shcf.info](http://www.shcf.info) and go to Rocky's Plaice.

## Mystery posts

TWO mystery posts in Stockton Heath are to be removed.

No-one seems to know why the posts were erected at Pilling Gardens and they are to be removed, clerk Peter Briggs told the parish council.

A month ago, Coun Celia Jordan reported that a local residents had asked why the two posts had been erected on a grass verge.

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# Megan is new village queen



TWELVE-year-old Megan Roylance has been crowned Thelwall Rose Queen at the annual village carnival.

Megan, (left) from Grappenhall, is a pupil at Lymm High School and a member of the 3rd Thelwall Guides.

She is a keen swimmer, likes walking in the country and is an animal lover with a cat named Purdie.

Villagers paraded through the village on a variety of floats displaying well known TV advertising brands, including Thelwall Infants School (pictured below) who had a Cadbury's theme float.

Megan was crowned on the Thelwall Parish Hall fields where local community groups put on various events.



Above: Thelwall Rose Queen Megan Roylance.

Right: Thelwall Rose Queen Guard of Honour.

Below (inset): Thelwall Rose Queen Attendants.

Below: Loosenders Bassetts float.

Bottom: Thelwall Infants School Cadbury float.



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## What's On in the Villages

**July 6**

**STOCKTON HEATH FLOWER CLUB**  
David Robertson, of Rossendale:  
Summer's Delight  
Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road.  
7.30pm.

**July 13**

**STOCKTON HEATH PARISH COUNCIL**  
Sandy Lane Centre. 7.30pm

**July 20**

**APPLETON PARISH COUNCIL**  
Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road.  
7.30pm

**July 26**

**SUMMER PLAY SCHEME**  
Daily for two weeks at Cobbs Infants School.  
10am to 12 noon.

**Every Monday**

**ST MARY MAGDALENE MONDAY CLUB**  
1.30pm

**FOLK DANCING CLUB**

St Thomas' Primary School, Parkgate Road,  
Stockton Heath.  
8-10pm. Details: 01925 262356

**LADIES' FRIENDSHIP CLUB**

The Quays Community Centre,  
Thelwall New Road, Thelwall.  
8pm. Details: 01925 264099

**Every second Monday**

**PARK (APPLETON) WI**  
Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road.  
7.30pm

**Second and fourth Monday**

**PARK (APPLETON) WI**, Appleton Parish Hall,  
Dudlow Green Road. 7.30pm

**Second and fourth Monday**

**WARRINGTON ART GROUP**  
Bellhouse Community Centre, Bellhouse Lane,  
Grappenhall. 7-9pm.

**Every third Monday**

**STOCKTON HEATH  
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**  
St Mary Magdalene's Church,  
Dingle Way, Appleton. 8pm.  
Contact: Linda Pearson 01925 602803.

**Every fourth Monday**

**MARFIELD WI**  
Independent Methodist Chapel,  
Knutsford Road, Grappenhall. 7.30pm

**Every Tuesday**

**COFFEE MORNING**  
St Cross Church, Appleton Thorn.  
All welcome. 10am-12 noon

**PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY**

Quays Community Centre,  
Thelwall New Road, Thelwall. 7.30pm.  
Contact: 01925 757582.

**Second and Fourth Tuesday of each month**

**STOCKTON HEATH & DISTRICT LIONS**  
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**Every Wednesday**

**Lymm Afternoon Bridge Club**  
Appleton Parish Hall. 1.15-4.15pm

**Every first Wednesday**

**Walton WI**  
St John's Church Community Hall. 7.30pm

**First and third Wednesday each month**

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS**  
Sandy Lane Centre, Stockton Heath.  
8pm. Details: 01925 268311

**Every third Wednesday**

**HIGHER WALTON WI**, St John's Community  
Hall, 7.45pm. Details 01925 262001.

**Every Thursday**

**THE SILVER QUAYS Senior Citizen's Club**  
The Quays Community Centre,  
Thelwall New Road, Thelwall.  
Details: 01925 753474.

**Every second Thursday**

**STRETTON WI**  
Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road.  
2.30pm.

**Every third Thursday**

**NORTH EAST CHESHIRE FLOWER CLUB**  
Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road.  
2pm  
Details: 01925 740272.

**GRAPPENHALL WI**

Grappenhall Community Centre, Bellhouse  
Lane 2.15pm

**Every Friday**

**APPLETOTS TODDLER GROUP**  
Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road.  
9.45-11.30am. Details: 01925 268153.

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# Villagers turn back time



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VILLAGERS at Appleton Thorn near Warrington, were transported back to medieval times during the annual Bawming the Thorn ceremony.

Youngsters from Appleton Thorn Primary School performed the traditional Bawming the Thorn Dance, while other youngsters dressed in fancy dress as pupils danced around the Bawm tree, which has origins dating back to the days of the crusades.

Each June, the village hosts the ceremony of "Bawming the Thorn". The current form of the ceremony dates from the Nineteenth Century, when it was part of the village's "Walking Day".

The ceremony stopped in the 1930's, but was later revived by the then headmaster, Mr. Bob Jones in 1967.

"Bawming the Thorn" occurs on the Saturday nearest to Midsummer's Day.

"Bawming" means "decorating" - during the ceremony the thorn tree is decorated with ribbons and garlands.

According to legend, the hawthorn at Appleton Thorn grew from a cutting of the Holy Thorn at Glastonbury, which was itself said to have sprung from the staff of Joseph of Arimathea, the man who arranged for Jesus's burial after the Crucifixion.



## Festival spreads its wings

**THE third annual Stockton Heath Festival gets under way on Thursday, July 8 - and for the first time 'officially' spreads its wings outside Stockton Heath.**

Events are also being held at Appleton and at Grappenhall as the four-day event expands to offer an wider range of entertainment for all the family.

Shopkeepers in the village will be helping to build the sense of

anticipation with a spectacular scarecrow competition which starts on Monday, July 5 and gives shoppers a chance to vote for their favourite scarecrow.

Already, some events are proving extremely popular.

"A Midsummer Nights Dream", being performed by theatre group Oddsocks at Grappenhall Heys Walled Gardens on July 10, has broken all records and sold out well in advance.

Festival director Tudor Pole said: "We could have sold the show twice over there was such a demand."

Another show proving popular is the CODYS production of "Billy Elliot in Concert" on July 9 on Mill Lane Field.

The Farmers and Craft Market, which runs over the Saturday and Sunday, has also broken all records, with more than 80 stalls booked and all pitches taken up.

Steve Evans, who is taking part in an expedition to Mount Everest next year, will be displaying photographs and arctic clothing and equipment.

Of course, Stockton Heath Walking Day on Saturday is still one of the biggest and most popular events, starting from Alexandra Park at 2pm and then winding its way through the village.

Other events include: Thursday, July 8: Allan Bennett's "Talking Heads" performed by the Methodist Drama Group at the Methodist Hall; Comedy Night at the Cape; North Cheshire Wind Orchestra at St Thomas's Church.

Friday July 9: Gardeners Question Time at Appleton Parish Hall.

Saturday July 10: Jo Jingles fun for toddlers; World Cup Football Competition, Morris Dancers, Marching Band, Steel Band, Mad Hatter's Tea Party, Photographic Competition at the Scout Centre; Dr Jazz & Cheshire Cats, Gospel Choir, all on Mill Lane Field, Boat Trips on the Bridgewater Canal from Thorne Marine.

Sunday, July 11: Open Day at Red Lane Allotments; Presto Puppets at Scout Centre; Fun Dog Show at Mill Lane Field; Poetry Read in Marquee;

Festival of Praise at St Thomas's Church; Fairy (Geneva) Brass Band in Big Marquee.

The official programme is being delivered door-to-door and is also available from The Forge Precinct between 10am and 4pm on Fridays and Saturdays up to the festival.

## Allotments tour

**STOCKTON Heath Parish Councillors are planning their annual visit to the village allotments in Red Lane, Appleton, on Friday July 23. Members usually enjoy a tour of the allotments, followed by refreshments, at the invitation of allotment holders.**

## Wolves star set to work, rest and clay!

WARRINGTON Wolves star Paul Wood and club mascot Wolfie will be officially opening the new Coffee au Clay coffee house in the centre of Stockton Heath on Saturday 17th July at 11.30am.

Coffee au Clay in West Avenue, opposite the Co-op car park entrance, is a new venture where all the family can choose to paint a

piece of pottery, making the perfect gift or keepsake, whilst indulging in fabulous cakes and a delicious cup of coffee.

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# Crowning glory for Rebecca

THE annual Grappenhall Walking Day was blessed with glorious sunshine when local girl Rebecca Mitchell was crowned St Wilfrid's Rose Queen.

Meanwhile Roise Walton Ryder was crowned Rose Bud at the annual event, when hundreds of villagers took part in the annual walk of witness by members of St Wilfrid's Church in the village, followed by various activities on the school playing fields.



St Wilfrid's Rose Queen 2010  
Rebecca Mitchell



St Wilfrid's Rose Queen 2010, Rebecca Mitchell  
and her attendants.



Grappenhall Rainbows.



Grappenhall Beavers.



St Wilfrid's Rose Queen 2010, Rebecca Mitchell  
and her attendants.



Retiring St. Wilfrid's Rose Queen 2009 and attendants  
from left, Ella Slater, Phillipa Hyde, retiring Rose  
Queen Rachel Groves, Maddie Hardern and  
Rebecca Collins.



Retiring St Wilfrid's Rose Bud and Attendants from left,  
Evie Burton Baddeley, Lauren Smith, retiring Rose Bud  
Rosie Walton Ryder, Emma Davies and Martha Percival.



Grappenhall Guides.



St Wilfrid's Rose Bud 2010 and Attendants from left,  
Pollyanna Whitenburgh, Hannah Murray, Rose Bud 2010  
Ellie Davies, Christie McAlpine and Ellie Simpson.



St Wilfrid's Rose Queen 2010, Rebecca Mitchell  
and her attendants.

# Councillors accused of 'closed shop' approach

**LONG-standing members of Stockton Heath Parish Council have been accused of operating a "closed-shop" approach over the posts of chairman and deputy chairman.**

Conservative councillor Stephen Taylor told Village Life that he lobbied nine members of the parish council about his plans in May to stand as deputy chairman.

Despite all indicating they would support him, he was beaten by Liberal Democrat Coun Celia Jordan

(pictured), who was voted in by seven votes to two. Only councillors Sonia Boggan and Robin Wilson supported him.

Coun Taylor said he was disappointed that Coun Jordan stood for office as she knew of his intentions and had agreed "not to stand in his

way."

In an email to the parish council Coun Taylor said he was disappointed in the change of support.

He wrote: "Because of the manner in which this had been brought about, and in particular having spoken with Coun Jordan on the matter, who then decided to stand in opposition to my appointment, I do feel very let down, particularly after I have made great strides to ensure that feelings about past battles undertaken before I joined the parish council were not brought into play in council business."

'Opportunity missed'

He told members he cared greatly about residents and the parish and saw the action as an "opportunity missed" to develop newer members to take on leadership and share the burden of responsibility.

After his email was read out Coun

Jordan said that she was aware that Coun Taylor was planning to stand, but had not promised to support him.

Coun Wendy Emsley said she had not been approached by him.

After the meeting Coun Taylor told Village Life some of those lobbied had not been present but others had voted with the majority. He found this "bewildering and strange."

He could only assume it was a deliberate ploy to ensure the roles of chairman and deputy chairman stayed firmly in the hands of an "inner circle."

Other parish councils in the area rotated the roles in a more fair and equitable way.

"I am energetic and keen to serve the residents of Stockton Heath, and would have brought a new dimension to the role. We, as councillors, need to engage more with borough council officers to get things done, rather than relying upon the clerk," he added.

Advertiser's announcement

## An estate agent with a difference!

WELL established property and portfolio management company Harwood Lettings, who have traded locally for three years, have undergone a change – and a re-brand.

The company is now "HLGB" and is offering what managing director Rob Harwood describes as a "local on-line agency" able to handle residential sales and lettings, along with commercial business.

He says: "There are many good estate agents serving Warrington. What we offer is the same service but with lower fees and more coverage on the internet."

HLGB operates from offices at the old Greenall's brewery, opposite Morrison's, to gain the benefit of lower overheads than a High Street frontage.

Mr Harwood says: "We are applying the same principle to our estate agent operation as we did to lettings three years ago and the

service has been introduced as a direct result of demand from our customers. We believe we offer the right balance of a web based estate agency together with the reassurance of dealing with experienced local estate agents.

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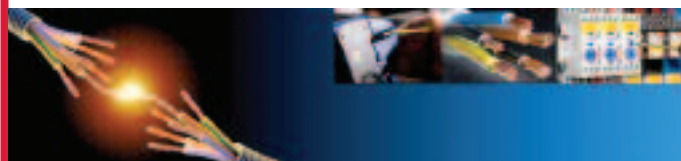
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# Money Column

By Margaret Black

## Budget not as bad as first feared

So we now have the first budget from the Tory/Libdem coalition, and in many ways it is not as bad as many people feared.

Firstly, the widely expected increase in VAT from the current rate of 17.5% to 20% has been confirmed. However, the implementation of this increase has been delayed until 4th January 2011. It is to be hoped that this delay is sufficient to avoid the 'double-dip' recession that many commentators fear will be the result of this increase. It will certainly enable everyone to time any major expenditure that they may be planning over the next twelve months to avoid this increased cost.

Secondly, Capital Gains Tax has been increased from 23 June 2010 as expected from prior announcements by government spokespeople. However, the increases are again not as large as many commentators feared. There is now a 'basic' rate of CGT which remains at 18%. If, however, after all allowances have been taken the total of a person's income and capital gains is enough to breach the higher rate threshold for income tax then any capital

gains above that threshold will be taxed at 28%. This compares with the worst fears of some commentators who expected all capital gains to be taxed at the taxpayers marginal rate, which would have meant tax rates of 20% and 40%, with some larger gains even being taxed at 50%.

And there is even better news on capital gains in that the rate for assets qualifying for Entrepreneurs Relief has remained at 10%. Not only that, the lifetime limit on the value of gains that are eligible for Entrepreneurs Relief has been increased from £2m to £5m.

Thirdly, progressively lower rates of Corporation Tax have been announced as follows:

Year from 1 April	Standard rate	Small companies rate	Marginal rate
2010 (current rates)	28%	21%	29.75%
2011	27%	20%	28.75%
2012	26%	20%	27.5%
2013	25%	20%	26.25%
2014	24%	20%	25%



David Watkinson and Margaret Black

The vast majority of companies are one-man owner managed companies paying at the small companies rate and so the reduction is not huge for those, but it is still better than the rises planned by the previous government.

It is not all good news, however. The planned reduction in government spending, for instance, will have a huge impact on the economy in this area. And there are increases in other areas of taxation. We have run out of space but we would be pleased to advise further on the whole budget.

The Money Column is provided by WatkinsonBlack Chartered Accountants  
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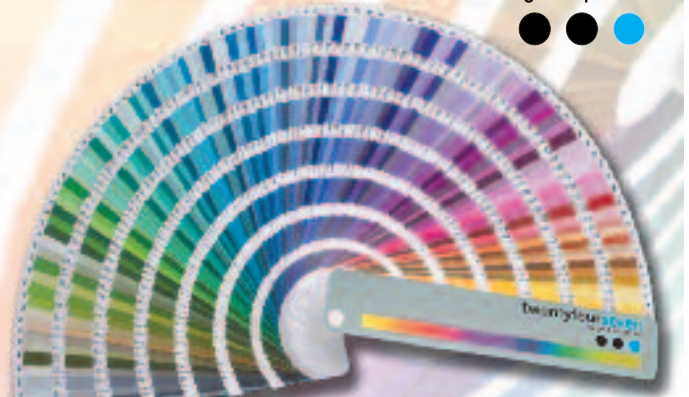


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## Charity tennis tournament

A WOMEN'S charity tennis tournament at Stockton Heath Tennis Club resulted in £600 being raised for St Rocco's Hospice.

The tournament was organised by member Coral Houston, assisted by Catherine Burgess, Maria Boundy, Aileen Minjoot and coach Craig Barnard.

Winner was Joanne Gale while second equal were Jane Tenquist, Jane Argent and Kimberley Fleetwood.

More than 40 club members and friends took part.

St Rocco's were represented at the event by community fundraiser Malcolm Kindon.

After the tournament, a buffet lunch was enjoyed in the clubhouse.



## Craig is 'coach of the year'

CRAIG Barnard, coach at Stockton Heath Tennis Club, has been named Cheshire Coach of the Year.

This follows a year which has seen him get two teams at the 12-and-under age level into the Aegon Premier National League, where they compete against other top players from across the country representing Stockton Heath and Craig's own Performance Tennis Academy.

He said: "It has been an amazing year for me, having so many young players competing at such a level throughout the country."

"With the quality of the new additions I have made to the coaching team, I am confident we can do the same again, in other age groups also."

Two of the country's strongest players, Mathew James and Simon Morris, have joined the team.

In addition, Matthew Rickaby is back from a year working in America and Australia - at the Australian Open venue, Melbourne Park.

Craig himself and Anthony McCarthy have also continued to prove they can produce regional standard players in just one year of working with them.

"All in all, it's a very exciting time for everyone involved at the Academy and the Stockton Heath club," said Craig.

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### Re: 'Falling on Deaf Ears' Sylvia M Sherburn, Appleton

I read the article "Falling on Deaf Ears" in Village Life (June) where a gentleman had walked out of a meeting as he could not hear as he was wearing a hearing aid. He suggested that if there was a loop system in the room he could have participated in the discussion. The councillors answer to this was that they would try to talk louder.

May I suggest that that is not the answer and if anyone has experienced deafness they would realise this! Very many people, however loud they talk, do not look at the person they are talking to, do not speak clearly and also often put their

hands over their mouths. Deaf people to a certain extent lip-read even fairly unconsciously. The best and only answer to deafness is a loop system; these are very often available in theatres, churches and public buildings, the best ones often being in crematoriums. Deaf people very often feel left out in many social events as they tend to hear only half a conversation and feel disinclined to contribute to the conversation in case they have misheard and throw something spurious into the conversation. We can always have a laugh about it, not hearing or mishearing, but it is embarrassing. I speak from experience. The gentleman at the meeting was disenfranchised which is a fundamental right of all British people. The council carry the legal obligation to cater for disabled people, a right enshrined in law.

The cost of the hardware for a loop for the Village Hall would be £300/£400 and is obtainable from suppliers on line, as is confirmation of the price. Installation would be additional but many husbands of deaf people have the experience to install the item having done it at home and would do it free of charge.

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