

Village Life

Issue No. 117
December 2010

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Christmas comes early

Page 3

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Editor's Comment



IT is now more than a year since the Broomfields Youth Project was set up and, from all accounts, it has proved one of the most successful initiatives to deal with the problems of 'nuisance youths' in the area.

It was received high praise from various quarters, not least from Cheshire Police.

At county level, Assistant Chief Constable Janette McCormick has drawn attention to the way the scheme has reduced the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour.

Locally, Inspector Gary McIntyre from the Warrington South Neighbourhood Policing Unit has been enthusiastic in his

praise. He said: "The project is absolutely fantastic and is working really well. It's great to see the youth of the area with so much to do and getting involved. The partners have worked very hard to get this project off the ground and obtain funding to sustain it. My PCSOs attend every Friday evening and work with the youngsters and it's a really positive vibe".

The project was launched in October last year and is managed by Bridgewater Churches Together, in partnership with the police, Youth for Christ, the borough council and Bridgewater High School.

Its aim was to address anti-social behaviour issues in South Warrington

and it followed on from work carried out by Bridgewater Churches Together at Alexandra Park in Stockton Heath. It started with small numbers of youths playing football but developed rapidly to encompass many other activities such as swimming and dance. The age range involved is 12-17.

The initiative has, apparently, reduced complaints of "nuisance youths" and confirms our view that many of these complaints arise not from any real anti-social behaviour but merely from young people trying to enjoy themselves in, perhaps, not the most appropriate places.

We hope to see the Broomfields Youth Project continue and go from strength to strength. It will, of course, not solve all problems but it is providing a growing number of young people with worthwhile things to do without causing problems for anyone else.

Lions help Santa

STOCKTON Heath Lions will again be helping Santa Claus with his musical sleigh this Christmas, raising funds for local charities.

Warrington Round Table will also be lending a hand for this worthwhile cause.

Santa will be touring streets in the Stockton Heath, Appleton and Grappenhall areas on the evenings of December 7-9 and again on December 13-16. He will also be outside Morrison's supermarket on Sunday, December 12 between 10am and 4pm and against The Forge shopping centre, Stockton Heath on Saturday, December 18 between 9am and 3pm.

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DEVOTION TO PEOPLE

Christmas comes early at Euclid Park

CHRISTMAS came early at Grappenhall's Euclid Park, following the news that the park is to benefit from a £38,000 Play Pathfinder grant.

Santa Claus was a special guest at an open day when members of Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council and the Mersey Forest outlined proposals to broaden the park's appeal and open it up to a broader section of the public.

A place of rest for shoppers

A BENCH which provided a resting place for elderly people until it fell into a state of disrepair, should be replaced Stockton Heath Parish Council decided.

Members were told that the bench on the footway in Walton Road had been removed by the borough council who had asked if there was a demand for it as it would cost £300 to replace.

Coun Dorothy Robb said she had spoken to a number of people who had asked for the bench to be returned.

She said: "Elderly people do appreciate the bench as a place to rest, especially if they are carrying heavy shopping."

"It is a good resting point for people walking back from the village."

Members heard the borough council would assess if there was sufficient demand for a replacement.

Visitors were able to take advantage of free offers, including bulbs for the garden and local produced fruit, and see displays about the new-look park.

They were also asked to take part in a consultation exercise to find out what local people wanted for the park.

A "natural play park" is planned, with improved access for the disabled, a nature trail, wildflower area and an amphitheatre where people can gather.

The parish council and the Mersey Forest are now putting together proposals as the money - which comes from the Government - has to be spent by the end of March.

Parish council chairman Coun Mike Biggin said: "Members of the public have been very supportive and have responded to the consultation

very positively."

The council is also anxious to carry out improvements at the Barley Road Park and Morris Brook Park.

One innovation being considered is "play equipment" for the elderly,

which has proved popular in other parts of the country.

Another idea being considered is setting up a "Friends" group to cover all the parks in Grappenhall and Thelwall.



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Popular PCSO moves on

A POPULAR Police Community Support Officer who is leaving Stockton Heath has been thanked for his work in the village by members of the Parish Council.

PCSO Peter Crellin (left) told the council he would be leaving after exactly six years in the job, to work in the Warrington Police traffic division.

He introduced his successor Ben Blandford (right), who has been a PCSO for a year and has previously covered the Appleton area.

PCSO Crellin said: "I have spent six years in the area and have received a lot of support from the parish council and public. There has been a lot of positive feedback."

Chairman Coun Graham Roughsedge - himself a former police officer - said: "On behalf of the parish council and residents I would like to thank you for the work you have done."



Oil leak closes police station

A MAJOR oil leak has caused the temporary closure of Stockton Heath Police Station on health and safety grounds.

Members of the public have been concerned that the station is to be closed permanently, but Warrington South Police Inspector Gary McIntyre said this was not the case.

He told Stockton Heath Parish Council the station was closed temporarily for maintenance and his officers were working out of

Warrington and Lymm police stations.

Earlier PCSO Peter Crellin told the meeting that the fuel tank in the station had collapsed, and that 1,000 litres of oil had drained into the concrete. Fumes were strong and officers were only spending a "minimum time" on the premises.

Insp McIntyre said the old boiler was being taken out and a new gas central heating system installed.

The station would be open again as soon as possible.

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No free bus service

LATE night revellers in Stockton Heath over the festive season will not be provided with a free bus service to Warrington.

Stockton Heath Parish Council, which has previously funded the service, has decided not to do so this year.

Members heard the costs of providing the service for six nights

would be £688.

Chairman Graham Roughsedge was in favour of the service, and said he would rather pay the money than have people "hanging around" the village.

But other members were opposed to the scheme saying there were plenty of taxis available.

Worry over safety rails

DAMAGED safety railings in the centre of Stockton Heath village are worrying members of the parish council.

Coun Peter Walker said some of the horizontal bars on the railings had fallen out. The vertical bars could be prised apart to allow removal of the horizontal bars.

Members were concerned there could be a safety hazard posed by the missing bars as people could wander onto the road. They agreed to ask the borough council to look at the stability of the railings.



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Advertiser's announcement

Barbados by Jacqueline Ahmed

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Yet what originally made the island so popular - its coral sand beaches, turquoise waters and friendly people - is still very much in evidence. Flying time from Manchester is approximately 9 hours and GMT - 4 hours. Virgin Atlantic offers a direct service from both Manchester and London Gatwick, or British Airways direct from London Gatwick. Barbados has a balmy, tropical climate, cooled by constant sea breezes. The dry season is generally from December to June, with rainfall and humidity increasing during summer/autumn.

Barbados was settled by the British in 1627, but won independence in 1966. Independence day is a big celebration for the Barbadians at the end of November. English is widely spoken, but you will hear the occasional Bajan dialect. The island is 21 miles long and 14 miles wide. Surfers flock to the East coast for big-wave action, while families prefer the calmer waters of the West coast. Many of the beaches in the South have reefs that invite snorkelers. Currency is the Barbadian dollar, but US dollars are widely accepted.

I have just returned from a fantastic five night stay at the Fairmont Royal Pavilion, which is situated on the west coast of the island. The hotel has seventy-two rooms, all facing the ocean and spread out over eleven acres of beautifully manicured gardens alongside a delightful beach. The hotel was closed in September 2010 for a total refurbishment and was scheduled to



open again on the 1 November 2010. Sadly, Barbados was hit by hurricane Tomas (albeit not as bad as St Lucia) and their re-opening was delayed slightly. However, somebody from above was taking care of us because as we arrived at the hotel on November 7 to find that the hotel had just opened its doors that day! I would like to add that this was made possible by the hard work and dedication of ALL staff members at the hotel.

As soon as we were greeted in reception with a cool towel and fruit cocktail I knew we were in good hands! Guests at this hotel (and believe me there are many repeat guests) are sure to find their own private slice of paradise. In fact, a stay here can often feel like you have arrived at your very own colonial, west coast mansion with each Deluxe Oceanfront room boasting a private terrace with beautiful sea views. All the ground floor rooms have been up-graded to Junior Suites with spacious outdoor terraces and can take service levels one step higher with a butler service. Personally, the Deluxe rooms are more than adequate and one major plus point for me was the generous wardrobe/drawer space, where you will even find your own umbrella for those unfortunate rain showers, which thankfully we did not encounter!

Getting around on the island is definitely a unique experience if you take the 'yellow' buses. There are two types of buses, one being the blue bus (correct change required) and the 'yellow reggae' bus as we christened it, which is like a roller coaster ride (hang on to your seats and bring your ear plugs!). We had so much fun on our journey to Bridgetown and it was so nice to see some manners. Whenever an elderly person, or mother with a young baby boarded the bus, the youngsters

would promptly jump up and offer their seats (we could learn a thing or two!).



Bridgetown, the capital, is a great city filled with historical importance as well as excellent shops and stores. Cave Shepherd is a must for your duty free shopping.

There is an abundance of fine restaurants on the island that offer local cuisine, seafood and continental cuisine. The wide range of dining options available in Barbados ensures that there is something to suit every taste and budget. By day informal attire is acceptable in most Barbados restaurants, but at night a more formal dress code is enforced. It is also recommended that dinner reservations be made in advance, especially during the winter (some restaurants take reservations 12 months ahead).

Obviously this is a very brief overview of a fantastic holiday destination with something for everyone. I can understand why so many visitors return to the island year after year (and lots own their own homes). Barbados is a relatively small island with a large heart. Everyone we met, from hotel staff to the elderly gentleman in the street sitting in the shade of the tree, bid you 'good day', and you knew it was genuine. We left the hotel and the island feeling relaxed and I can honestly say Barbados has it all. Oh and don't forget to try the signature rum!

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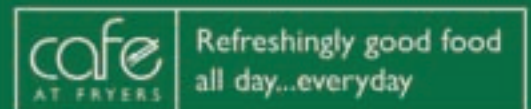
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Shopkeeper launches CCTV petition

A STOCKTON Heath shop owner who has been burgled three times in a year is spearheading a campaign to get more CCTV cameras in the village.

Tracy Dolan, of Dude's n Diva's on Walton Road, has collected about 800 signatures on a petition calling for round the clock CCTV cameras to help prevent crime.

She has been liaising with Inspector Gary McIntyre, of Warrington South Police, and they are seeking the views of people and business owners in the village.

Insp McIntyre told the Parish Council there was some CCTV coverage in the village, which could be targeted at traffic or the "night time economy" to prevent trouble.

He said Tracy had been burgled three times and, as a result, had decided to try to get more cameras in

the village. The extra cameras she proposed would give police a "starting point" in finding offenders.

Tracy said: "About 85 per cent of people who signed my petition come into the area to shop because they like the area."

But she was concerned about the impact of crime in the village, especially in the Walton Road area. A jewellers which had been raided three times had now closed and was not re-opening.

She told the council she had installed new alarm systems and shutters at the front and rear of her property but was concerned that she would have problems getting

insurance when the premium needed renewing.

"We may not be able to get insured and would then have to close - that would be another shop closing," she said.

"They came in when the shop was closed - what would happen if they came in to rob when people were in the shop," she added.

Action was needed before someone was hurt.

Insp McIntyre said: "It is a nice area and attracts criminals because there are nice shops, selling nice things."

He said police were investigating providing cameras on the major exits from the village - London Road, London Road down the Wilderspool Causeway and Walton Road. If offenders' vehicles were identified by the cameras it would give police a starting point.

Police were investigating various types of CCTV system and were visiting other businesses in the village to see if they wanted to get involved in the project.

Bakery café plan opposed

PLANS for a Chinese bakery/café in Stockton Heath were strongly opposed by the parish council.

Members were concerned the site was in a conservation area, and that there would be extra traffic congestion, problems with deliveries and waste materials. Objections have been lodged with the borough council.

The application is for a change of use from a jewellers in Walton Road. The proposal is for a 20-seat café on the ground floor and bakery on the first.

The parish council was concerned the property is only accessible through the front and is on the narrow part of Walton Road near the junction with London Road. Members were concerned at the lack of an on site refuge storage area and parking restrictions.

Walking for a brighter village

TEN villagers from Stretton walked 10 miles to raise money to help brighten up the village over the festive period.

The 10 - members of the parish council and the Twinkling Stretton Committee - walked from the Cat and Lion to Lymm Cross and back.

They were raising money to plant a second Christmas Tree in the village which will be decorated with fairy lights during the festive season.

Last year the fundraisers planted a tree in Summit Close, in Lower

Stretton. This year they hope to plant one in a prominent position on the other side of the motorway in the main village.

Parish clerk Linda Crewe - who took part in the walk herself - said: "These are living trees so they should last for many years."

"We are not sure how much we raised with the walk but we could always do with some more money so if anyone wants to donate they should call me on 01925 450759."

Farmers' market moves closer

A PLAN to get a regular farmers' market in the centre of Stockton Heath has moved a step closer.

Stockton Heath Parish Council heard charity group the Walton Lea Project - which has previously organised a market - is interested in pursuing the idea.

The charity had decided to discontinue its farmers' market at the Scout Centre, Parkgate Road, Stockton Heath, as after the first one it had proved unsuccessful.

Coun Stephen Taylor said he and two staff from the project recently met staff from Warrington Market about a proposal to hold a market in Victoria Square.

He said: "There is some resistance from Warrington Market regarding a Saturday market. They are worried about the village market drawing trade away from Warrington Market."

"I doubt if it would be the same people shopping there who would shop in the Stockton Heath market. We suggested a trial period and it seems to be that Sunday would be the best day."

Members agreed to invite representatives of the Walton Lea Project to its next meeting to talk about the proposal.

Coun Taylor said if the market went ahead, Warrington Market would loan stalls and equipment.

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Members of the Walton Lea Project show its market produce.

Radiographer Paula wins UK title

AN Appleton woman has won the UK 'Radiographer of the Year' title after being nominated by her colleagues at Warrington Hospital.

The award is given by the Society of Radiographers to a radiographer who has made a significant contribution to the profession.

Paula Evans, aged 35, clinical lead for plain imaging at Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Trust was nominated for her work in setting up new, innovative initiatives and systems of work to smooth the patient's pathway through the department.

Senior radiographer Maureen Taylor, who nominated her for the award, said: "She is very focused on the quality of service we provide for the patient and has driven forwards a patient centred approach regarding their experiences and care received within the x-ray department.

"This is an ongoing process incorporating patient satisfaction surveys and teamwork in sharing best practice and innovative ideas across the trust.

"She has taken a lead in improving quality and has set up a theatre co-ordination system to ensure smooth and effective utilisation of both staff and image intensifier. She has also developed links and communication between the radiographers and orthopaedic staff, resulting in improved understanding and relationships between the two professions."

Paula, who picked up the North West Radiographer of the Year title on the way to the UK final, started her career in plain imaging at Warrington

Hospital in 1997 after graduating from Liverpool University.

She said: "I love it here at Warrington. It is a great department with fantastic people and even though winning these awards at the moment is rather overwhelming it means a lot to our department and to me.

"Patient contact is the best bit of the job, but the team I work with are important as you couldn't make ideas happen if it was not for their backing to take them forward and make them work. So without them I would not have been nominated or won this award."

Paula received her award at the House of Commons.



Paula (centre) with Christine Caine and Louise Harding, two of the colleagues who nominated her.

Parties support same candidate

CONSERVATIVE and Liberal Democrats are to support the same candidate in a by-election at Stockton Heath on Thursday, December 9.

Reflecting the national Coalition Government's joint working, the two parties are backing Independent candidate Dr Angie Winnington.

This followed discussions between Coun Stephen Taylor (Cons) and Coun Peter Walker (Lib Dem)

Two other candidates, Laurence James Murphy (Labour) and Mike Smith (Green Party) are also standing in the election in St Thomas's ward, caused by the resignation of Coun Liz Jewkes (Independent).

Coun Taylor said: "The seat vacated was an Independent seat and we came to the conclusion that there is too much party politics at parish level.

"We think the banner of Independent candidates should be flown much higher."

Coun Taylor added: "We think there is no place for party politics at the parish council level. We should all do our best for the village.

Festive lights switch-on

THE switch-on of the Christmas lights in Stockton Heath will be in Victoria Square at 6pm on Friday December 3.

This year a smaller tree has been bought to keep costs down to a total of £2,975. Decorations will also include the lights in five adjacent real trees. There will also be lights in St Thomas' Churchyard, London Road/Orchard St, Pilling Gardens and Walton Rd/Whitefield Rd.

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What's On in the Villages

December 7

STOCKTON HEATH FLOWER CLUB
Dawn Weaver, of Chester: Snowflakes and Icicles
Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road, 7.30pm.

December 14

STOCKTON HEATH PARISH COUNCIL
Sandy Lane Centre. 7.30pm

December 21

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

Every Monday

THE EVERGREENS Senior Citizen's Club
Bellhouse Community Centre, Grappenhall.
Details: 01925 261381

ST MARY MAGDALENE MONDAY CLUB
1.30pm

FOLK DANCING CLUB

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

BRIDGE CLUB

Grappenhall Village Sports Club
Stockton Lane. 7.30pm. Details 01928 712233

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

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.

NATIONAL VEGETABLE SOCIETY

Cheshire District meeting
Grappenhall Ex-Servicemen's Club, Chester Road, Grappenhall.
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Quays Community Centre,
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STOCKTON HEATH & DISTRICT LIONS
Ram's Head, Grappenhall.

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.

BRIDGE CLUB

Grappenhall Village Sports Club
Stockton Lane. 7.30pm. Details 01928 712233

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 740419

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.

**To list your event call Village Life on
01925 623632**



More pictures from the past

GRAPPENHALL Local History Group has produced a second book of pictures from the past, following the success of "A Selection of Local Images", published some 12 months ago.



"A Second Selection of Local Images" has again been put together from old photographs collected by the 80 members of the history group, now in its 11th year.

Some modern pictures are included for comparison purposes.

The group has now published four books - two anthologies of memories and two of photographs. Together they make up a unique record of the history of Grappenhall and surrounding areas. The editorial team of Margaret Fellows, Ian Gault, Ron Phillips and Carole Whibley have plans for more in the future.

The earliest pictures date from before 1890 and show construction of Latchford Locks.

There are pictures of Grappenhall Village around 1900, an early drawing of Grappenhall Hall and, of course,

several pictures showing activities at St Wilfrid's Church and school

An interesting pair of photographs from the mid-1930s show an unofficial swimming pool off Broad Lane and there is a fine shot of Grappenhall Home Guard taken outside the Rectory.

Grappenhall Independent Methodist Church also figures prominently as do organisations such as the long vanished Darby and Joan Club, the Women's Institute, Rotary Club of Warrington and Miss Holden's Keep Fit classes for girls.

Long vanished village shops, Thelwall Railway Station and, ironically, Grappenhall Library, now threatened with closure, are all shown.

The book is available at £4.50 from the library or by calling 01925 263712.

Filling a gap in a family's history

A WOMAN from Canada has managed to fill a gap in her family history - with a little help from Stockton Heath Parish Council.

Cathy Ker, of Thorold, Ontario was trying to find information of World War 2 veteran Phillip Fussey, who was believed to be living in Stockton Heath.

She contacted parish clerk Peter Briggs who sought the aid of councillors.

Cathy knew Mr Fussey had served in the RAF and was the sole survivor when a plane piloted by her second cousin, Bobby Cartmell, was shot down over Germany on September 14, 1942.

He was captured by the Germans and was held as a prisoner-of-war.

Cathy was anxious to learn something about the incident and found a posting on a wartime memories website by Mr Fussey's daughter, Hilary Morphy.

She emailed Hilary, but her emails were returned as undeliverable.

The posting was undated, but stated that Mr Fussey was 86 and living in a nursing home in Stockton Heath.

Cathy contacted the parish council in the hope that Mr Fussey might still be alive or that members of his family might be in the area.

As a result Cathy received an email from the Summerville Nursing Home, where Mr Fussey once resided.

They have been able to put Cathy in touch with his daughter, Hilary Morphy of Appleton, and they are now communicating.

Mr Fussey has now died but left a written account of what happened the night his plane went down, which is being sent to Cathy.

In an email from Canada, Cathy said: "The people of Stockton Heath are so helpful."

It's panto time

STOCKTON Heath-based theatre group The Playmakers is to stage the pantomime "Dick Whittington" at the Farm Club in Perth Close, Cinnamon Brow, Warrington from Thursday, January 20 to Sunday, January 23.

Evening performances are at 7.30pm while the matinees are at 2pm on the Saturday and Sunday.

Further details on 01925 261099 or email playmakers@hotmail.co.uk

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An early drawing of Grappenhall Hall and its grounds.



Church Lane, Grappenhall Village



The Grappenhall Home Guard are seen with the Rectory in the background.

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Wind turbine threat to airport safety

AN 18 metre high wind turbine at Appleton could confuse air traffic controllers at Manchester Airport, leading to pilots receiving wrong information, a planning inspector has ruled.

He has thrown out an appeal against the refusal of planning consent for the turbine and awarded costs against the appellant because he pursued his appeal in an unreasonable manner.

The appeal related to a plan to erect a wind turbine at Oakleigh Lodge Farm, Barleycastle Lane, Appleton to provide electricity for a home and smallholding.

Borough planners had earlier refused consent for the development.

The appellant argued that the turbine would be sited 40 degrees off the runway alignment and planes approaching the airport flew at high altitude over his property.

But technical information submitted by the National Air Traffic Services suggested that air traffic controllers would see an X on their screens which would be indistinguishable from an aircraft.

Such an unexpected reading could lead to planes receiving instructions to take avoiding action at a busy and critical location.

The inspector concluded the scheme was "totally unacceptable."

Andy Farrall, the borough's director of environment and regeneration, said costs had been awarded to the council because the appellant had pursued the appeal in an unreasonable manner because his

evidence failed to show that the scheme would not affect the safe operation of the airport's radar system.

The appellant had also refused to

reduce or reposition the turbine to overcome the problem even though the council had notified him the application had no reasonable prospect of success.

Now Catriona's an 'eco-queen'

FORMER Miss Cheshire Catriona Cameron, 24, was chosen to host this year's 'Vegetarian Society Approved Awards' ceremony in London.

Catriona - a former Sunday School teacher at Daresbury - was selected for the role by the Vegetarian Society.

She said: "It was surreal to be in London, standing on the stage addressing all these successful, high-profile people when I'm just a northern lass! But it was an absolute honour to be involved in the event and I really enjoyed the evening".

Catriona has been a committed vegetarian for more than 12 years and, as a spokesperson for the society, attends events all over the country.

She said: "I believe it's important to acknowledge the individuals and companies who have made such an impact on the mainstream consumer market with their 'vegetarian friendly' products. Thanks to their dedication and innovation it is now easier than ever before to combine vegetarian principles with the fast-pace of modern living."

Vegetarians have long been considered to be hippys or fussy eaters, but Catriona believes this

stereotype is changing.

"I am proud that vegetarianism is no longer marginalised and seen as an 'alternative' life choice, but is instead considered to be a flourishing element of British culture.

"It has been embraced by many as the foundation of an ethical and environmentally aware lifestyle. This is mainly thanks to the tireless work of the Vegetarian Society and the businesses, individuals and projects that they support."



School gates approved

PLANS for a pair of 2.4m high entrance gates to an existing sub-station compound at St Wilfrid's CE Primary School, Grappenhall have been given the go-ahead by borough planning chiefs.

The scheme had been opposed by Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council on the grounds it would have a negative impact on the street scene in Church Lane.

Members of the borough planning committee heard the plan was to install double gates and extend existing fencing.

Both would be powder coated green to blend in with the existing environment and although the partial removal of a holly hedge was necessary this would have only a temporary effect because of the fast-growing nature of the hedge. Existing mature trees would not be affected.

The gates were to maintain a secure site access to the sub-station for maintenance engineers. They would be used infrequently.

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Ackers Pit a 'superb green oasis'

DESPITE a catalogue of problems at Stockton Heath beauty spot Ackers Pit, most people still think of it as a 'superb green oasis', according to the parish council clerk.

In a report to the council, Peter Briggs said work on Ackers Pit had taken a "considerable amount of time, effort and management," over the past few years.

But he added: "It must be stressed that the overall view from the majority of users is that Ackers Pit is now a superb green oasis in the middle of a suburban area and is much appreciated by all."

Mr Briggs said that following desilting/redevelopment of the site, members had agreed a vision statement to support pit management in July last year.

Day to day management of the site had been undertaken by the Ackers Pit Management Group, including parish councillors and members of Warrington Anglers Association.

Work had been ongoing since then including planting trees and

shrubs, repairing eroding banks and building up the banks.

Mr Briggs added: "A hard standing area of approximately 15 square metres for duck/swan feeding was established in April adjacent to the weir on the Mill Lane footpath side."

"This is to encourage the concentration of feeding from here instead of the nearby banks with the consequential damage to the grassed area. This has proved its worth with the subsequent seeding of the bare area successful."

Other work has included tackling the continuing problem of weeds overgrowing paths. A damaged bench has been replaced, footpaths strimmed and hedges cut.

The group is also looking at provision of a 5-10 year management plan for the pit, but costs have so far proved too expensive.



Local councillors Graham Roughsedge and Sheila Dean pictured at the green oasis last year.

Walton Hall: advisory group starts work

MEMBERS of the Walton Estate Advisory Group - the group set up by the borough council in the wake of the uproar over the ill-fated plans to develop Walton Hall and Gardens - have started work on alternative proposals.

A major survey of public opinion has been taking place and the advisory group is to present their proposals to the borough council's executive board in March.

Deadline for giving views to the group is December 9 and it can be done by filling in forms available at Stockton Heath and Warrington libraries, calling 01925 443061 or emailing kkellett@warrington.gov.uk or visiting visitchesterandcheshire.co.uk/waltonhall.

The group, chaired by Coun Jousuf Shaikh, chairman of Walton Parish Council, includes members of the Save Walton Hall campaign, Friends of Walton Estate, borough council officers and members, the Walton Lea Project, the Bridgewater Canal Trust and tourism group Visit Chester and Cheshire.

Numerous suggestions have been put forward by members of the public and by various groups.

But in most cases, substantial funding would be required - and there have been fewer ideas on how to raise the necessary money.

A number of people have suggested the estate could be managed through a community action trust - an idea originally put forward by Hatton, Stretton and Walton borough councillor Paul Kennedy.

Parish councils oppose election charge

STOCKTON Heath Parish Council does not believe it should have to pay to hold parish elections.

Members voted unanimously against being charged for election

services by the borough council.

The council was told the borough council was reviewing its charging policy for parish council elections and were presented with a series of charging options.

But members voted unanimously to stick the present arrangement - under which they are not charged at all.

Coun Peter Walker said: "We should ask the borough what the real additional costs are of having a parish council election on the same day as a borough council election."

He pointed out the borough council had to provide polling stations, staff and ballot papers for its own election.

"As far as I can see the only additional cost is the actual cost of counting parish votes," he said.

Appleton Parish Council has also voted to stay with the status quo.

Members felt that to add to existing costs through additional administrative calculations for the contributions from parish councils seemed inappropriate.

They also felt that to impose the cost of any by-elections on parish councils would deter such elections being called due to the cost that would be incurred by the parish.

This was likely to impinge on democracy.

Home alterations approved

A GRAPPENHALL couple have won planning consent for alterations at their home involving a new garage and a balcony.

Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council had objected to the scheme at The Red House, Cinder Lane on the grounds it represented over-development in the Green Belt and because of its visual impact.

But borough planners said the changes would improve the appearance of the existing house and a neighbour said the alterations would remove an eyesore.

Mr and Mrs Ian Johnson's plan will replace an existing garage with a new one with a room in the loft space. There will also be an external staircase leading to a balcony over a single-storey part of the original house.

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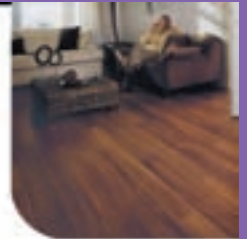
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Legends on the ball for Town



A 'Legends Night' at Warrington Town FC helped raise more than £3,000 for club funds thanks to the generosity of two former football stars who gave their services free of charge to the club.

Warrington Town ambassador Gary Owen, the ex-Manchester City star and former Everton legend Graham Sharp, both gave their services free of charge alongside former Grappenhall based FIFA referee Joe Worrall at the fund-raising dinner.

Town manager and former player Joey Dunn joined the panel for the event at the club's Cantilever Park Ground.

Highlight of the evening was the auctioning of a signed shirt by former Warrington Town, Liverpool and England legend Roger Hunt, which raised £1,100 for the club.

The item was then donated back to the club to be donated to the Help the Heroes charity - as a truly remarkable gesture of kindness and generosity by club director Jeff Greenwood and local businessman

Steve Hannah, who split the costs between them after some frantic bidding for the treasured item.

Other auction items included hospitality for two at a Warrington Wolves' home game next season, donated by Wolves' Chairman Steven Broomhead, tickets for a Liverpool game donated by former Chairman Dave Hughes and a signed Town shirt from their historic league clash with Chester FC at the start of the season.

Club Chief Executive Gary Skentelbery said: "It was a fantastic occasion and I would like to personally thank Gary Owen, Graham Sharp and Joe Worrall for giving up their free time to show their support for our club - they are true legends!"

Plans are in the pipeline for a follow up event early in the New Year.

Risk assessment on goal posts

A RISK assessment is to be carried out before new goal posts are put up in a Stockton Heath playing field.

The parish council heard the borough council would provide "rustic" goal posts at the marked football area in Mill Lane.

Chairman Coun Graham Roughsedge said the posts were "like cut down telegraph poles."

Coun Tudor Pole wanted to ensure the posts could be removed, to allow for events for the annual village festival.

Coun Stephen Taylor suggested the parish council, which owns the land, could be liable if anyone injured themselves on the posts.

Clerk Peter Briggs agreed to do a risk assessment on the project and to check if the posts could be removed for the festival.

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