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Issue No. 119
February 2011

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Printed by TwentyFourSeven

Editor's Comment



WE said it back in November: If the people of Grappenhall wanted to save their library they had to take part in large numbers in the consultation exercise the borough council was planning.

Well, they didn't - and while we have a suspicion that it wouldn't have made any difference if they had, the council can use the apathy of the

local population as one more excuse for the decision to close the Victoria Avenue library. Just 11 per cent of the 1,116 active users took part - and the definition of an active user is someone who calls in once a year!

Overall, across the borough, 63.3 per cent of users favoured closing Grappenhall Library and the Mobile Library Service compared with 31.3 per cent who preferred shorter opening hours at ALL libraries.

But, as Cllr Mike Biggin commented: "They would, wouldn't they!" The majority of them don't live in Grappenhall so are unconcerned about the fate of the library there.

Which makes percentages

irrelevant in a survey of this kind.

All is not lost for library users in Grappenhall. The borough is to explore other ways of providing a service, possibly involving volunteers in other premises. Possibly even in the existing library building, which could be transferred to the local community.

As the borough has indicated no library staff will be made redundant, we can't see the need for volunteers, but let us wait and see.

Cllr Biggin has suggested a book exchange at Grappenhall Youth and Community Centre and this is certainly worth exploring.

We hope, however, we will not be reduced to the level of a "library" in a telephone box. It might work in a tiny village like Hatton but we don't believe it would at Grappenhall.

Tree complaint

TREES overhanging a garden from the Bridgewater Canal are not the responsibility of Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council, members decided.

A resident of Lindi Avenue, Grappenhall has been told to cut back the trees himself.



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Library falls victim to council cuts



be reductions in book stocks and an end to stocking periodicals, along with other savings.

Borough council chiefs made the decision after a public consultation exercise in which 1,709 people expressed a preference to the closures while only 846 favoured the alternative option of reducing opening hours at libraries across the whole borough.

Grappenhall's Cllr Mike Biggin

GRAPPENHALL library is to close on April 1 to help the borough council save £387,000 a-year.

The mobile library service - which is well used across Appleton, Grappenhall and Stockton Heath - will also be axed and there will also

was one of only three members of the borough's executive board who abstained in the vote.

He was told there was no way he could condone any diminishing of the library service in Grappenhall.

He had been disappointed at the lack of response from Grappenhall people, however.

Out of 1,116 active users of the library, only 123 had completed consultation forms, of which 106 indicated they were opposed to closure of the library.

Cllr Biggin said he hoped to see proposals for the future use of the library building.

He said Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council and the Grappenhall Youth and Community Association would be willing to have a book service at the community centre and he would like to see this possibility explored.

"I am very keen that the people of



Grappenhall should not lose out," he added.

The borough stresses that it is to explore all possible options to maintain and improve the library service - including sharing facilities, extending on-line services and introducing book exchanges.

One idea might be on similar lines to an existing service at Hatton (pictured above) where a traditional red telephone kiosk has been preserved as a book exchange, with book shelves where people can pick-up and return books.

• *Village Life understands that two people have already volunteered to help run a book service - one a former librarian.*

Parish hall could be 'book exchange'

APPLETON Parish Council is to explore the possibility of using the Parish Hall, in Dudlow Green Road, as a replacement for the mobile library service.

The council was told that the mobile service - which is to end on April 1 - was more widely used in Appleton than anywhere else in the borough.

Many people, and particularly the elderly, mothers with young children, and the housebound, would suffer from its loss.

Cllr Sharon Harris suggested using the foyer at the parish hall as a book exchange.

She was sure the library service would be willing to trial such a scheme. It may be possible to find volunteers to help out.

Chairman Cllr Brian Axcell said Appleton was a large parish and such a scheme would only benefit the immediate area. But it was certainly an idea worth trying.

The council agreed to consult the library service.

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Youngsters stage town hall protest

GRAPPENHALL based MYP Tom Jennings (pictured right) helped co-ordinate a demonstration outside Warrington Town Hall when an estimated 100 young people protested about proposed budget cuts affecting Youth Services in the town.

The placard-carrying youngsters were protesting about cuts in education spending by the coalition government and by the borough council.

They included Tom, member of the Youth Parliament for Warrington South, who said the demonstration marked the beginning of a long

campaign to make sure young people were always a top priority for Warrington Borough Council.

He said: "We saw approximately 100 young people come out in the freezing cold and in the dark, during the exams period, to fight for services, provision and representation and we raised our concerns in the loudest way we possibly could. And yet not one member of the executive board, or officers, even came out to acknowledge the protest or our concerns, which really is a disgrace considering their roles as representatives and the passion of the young people who came to make their voices heard."

Among the protesters was Nick Bent, unsuccessful Labour candidate for Warrington South at the General Election.

He said it was heartening to see the youngsters making their views known and a clear rebuke to those older people who wrongly claim that young people neither know nor care what's going on in politics.

He added: "It was a non-party political event that the young people planned, organised and led themselves, and as expected it was entirely peaceful."

Inside the Town Hall, council leader Ian Marks, referred to the demonstration but pointed out that the issue was not on the agenda for this particular meeting. However, the council would be meeting IMPACT, the Warrington Youth Council, the following day, when their concerns would be addressed.

After the meeting, Cllr Marks said: "The Council strongly believes that consulting with young people on a variety of issues that concern them is very important. We have a very good track record at this."

"IMPACT is a representative cross-



section of young people and we will listen to what they have to tell us with interest."

But he added: "The protest outside the Town Hall appears to have been encouraged by the Labour Party. Some of the information in a leaflet they handed out is misleading and some is just plain wrong."

"The Labour Party has left the country in a huge financial mess and sadly no group in society is immune from making their contribution towards putting this right."



• Youngsters protesting outside the Town Hall.

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We attribute our continued success to the experience of our staff, their dedication and hard work and, most importantly, the loyalty of our fantastic customers.

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We have continued to evolve and adapt to the fast growing pace of change that is synonymous with the travel industry. In the last 15 years we

have embraced many different initiatives to keep us at the forefront of the market. Amongst the most memorable were our "Santa flights, concert/theatre breaks and coach trips. Our Independence status as a Travel Agency means we can offer clients total flexibility and tailor make their holiday to suit their needs. We have many years experience in organising complex long haul itineraries and honeymoons/wedding packages/hen & stag weekends. Plus we offer a gift service for your guests to pay towards your honeymoon. This is helping us to grow from strength to strength. We can book flight only, beach holidays, worldwide itineraries, cruise, winter sports, city breaks, villa holidays, tours, car hire, UK & Ireland breaks, plus airport hotels, lounges & parking etc

Of more importance than ever in the current economic climate is the security of our customers'

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A surprise for Dot



It came as a big surprise for veteran councillor Dot Edwards when she attended the usual monthly meeting of Appleton Parish Council.

Chairman Brian Axcell presented her with a bouquet before the meeting started - to mark her 25 years continuous service on the council.

Dot, from Appleton Thorn, said: "I had no idea it was 25 years - it doesn't seem that long."

"But I have enjoyed the work - it is very rewarding."

Clerk Peter Briggs had hidden Dot's bouquet behind a curtain to make sure the presentation came as a surprise.

Village to be given a facelift

STOCKTON Heath will be given a facelift by a team of workers in the village from March 21.

The parish council heard the village had been chosen for a "Look of the Borough" project by the borough council.

Workers from the council's environmental and highways maintenance teams will work on improvements to the village for a six week period. Labour will be provided but any materials, such as paint, will have to be paid for by the parish council.

Officers from the programme have been given a list of possible projects, compiled by parish council members.

Work is expected to include painting railings in Victoria Square and Walton Road, repairing damage to pavements caused by tree roots, removing graffiti, cleaning street signs and repairing deep potholes.

Improvements carried out by the three-man team may also include work at Alexandra Park and Ackers Pit.

Members have compiled a long list of suggested work projects, and are to prioritise the projects for the team.

Flowers will cost more

AN increase in costs for hanging baskets and planters in Stockton Heath has been approved, despite concerns from members of the parish council.

Members were concerned that the cost for next year had increased from £3,670 to £3,790.

The quote includes 19 hanging baskets in winter and summer and 15 planters, also in winter and summer, together with maintenance and watering.

Church group plans a 'murder'

A CHURCH group in Stockton Heath is planning a "murder."

But there is no need for alarm - the event is a staging of the classic play "The Killing of Sister George" by Stockton Heath Methodist Dramatic Society.

And as a change from their usual productions the group will stage the production of Frank Marcus' 60s comedy in the round.

Director David Matthews said: "Although this style of production reduces the number of seats for our audience, we felt that it would create a more intimate approach and allow the actors chance to really explore the space."

The play runs for three nights from Thursday March 3 at the Methodist church hall, Walton Road.

Tickets priced at £6 (£5 concessions) will be available on the door but anyone interested in advance tickets should call 01925 264179.

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SAVINGS THAT REALLY ADD UP!



Councillor quits party on 'point of principle'

A LIBERAL Democrat councillor at Stockton Heath has quit the party claiming its actions nationally have been "bad for democracy."

Cllr Tudor Pole, a member of Stockton Heath Parish Council, says he has resigned on "a point of principle" because he feels the party leadership's actions since the Coalition government was formed have contributed to a situation where "no-one trusts politicians."

The 80-year-old had never been a

member of a political party until the outbreak of the Iraq War, which he strongly opposed.

He then joined the Liberal Democrats because they were the only major party to oppose it.

Cllr Pole said: "I have been thinking about resigning for quite a while now, but hoped the party would change its

ways. I have gone along with it as far as my principles would allow.

"But now it is time to part company - I am quite disappointed with how the party has acted.

"Nobody believes a word politicians say any more. We are in a sorry state when a politician's word means nothing - nobody trusts politicians now and the Lib Dems have contributed to this attitude.

"It is bad for democracy - that more than anything is why I decided to jump ship."

Cllr Pole said he had joined the parish council to keep himself busy in retirement.

He will continue in office as an Independent until the next election to



avoid the cost of a by-election.

Cllr Pole is chairman of the popular Stockton Heath Festival, which he helped found in 2008.

He said he had no criticism of Liberal Democrat members of the parish council who he described as "fine people."

Walled garden bid clears first hurdle

GRAPPENHALL and Thelwall Parish Council has cleared the first hurdle in their bid to save the historic glasshouses at Grappenhall Heys Walled Garden.

The council has passed the first stage of their application for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

The initial grant will finance the research and development work required to compile a full application to the HLF for a grant, due for submission in August.

A key part of the submission will be consultation and involvement of local community and other interested groups to define how the garden and glasshouses can best be developed to suit the needs and aspirations of the local population. Community outreach officer Carolyn Hassall has been appointed to co-ordinate a strategic consultation exercise across the borough, and put together an activities plan and outreach strategy for the garden and glasshouses, which will be included in the Heritage Grant application.

Residents' views are important to this project. Anyone who wants to contribute should contact Carolyn with their impressions, ideas for improvements, potential new facilities, difficulties or ideas for events and activities.

Alternatively, an on-line survey can be completed at www.surveymonkey.com/s/GKM2W6H.

Carolyn can be emailed at carolyn@ghwalledgarden.org.uk or telephoned on 01925 264918.

A public consultation event will be organised shortly.

The grant bid will be for more than £750,000 and proposals include restoration of the derelict glasshouses, with some areas brought back to working order, plant propagation, demonstrations, displays, an exhibition space, meeting room and café.

Bakery plan approved

PLANS for a bakery in a former shop in Stockton Heath have been approved despite objections from the parish council.

The application, by Mrs S Kelly, for a bakery with sales of hot and cold food and drink, is for 6-8 Walton Road.

The parish council had objected on the grounds there would be problems with parking, ventilation, deliveries, refuse storage and collection.

But the application was approved, with conditions, by the borough council's planning committee.

The conditions include restrictions on opening hours and delivery times, improvements to the refuse system and a scheme for extraction of odour and fumes.

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Sandy Lane Centre. 7.30pm
- February 9**
LYMM AFTERNOON BRIDGE CLUB
Appleton Parish Hall. 1.15-4.15pm
- February 15**
APPLETON PARISH COUNCIL
Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road. 7.30pm
- February 17**
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St Wilfrid's Church, Grappenhall. 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.
8pm. Details: 01925 265773.
- 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.
- COFFEE MORNING
Appleton Independent Methodist Church
Appleton Parish Hall, 10am-12 noon
- Second and Fourth Tuesday of each month**
STOCKTON HEATH & DISTRICT LIONS
Ram's Head, Grappenhall.
- 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 fourth Wednesday**
ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY
Support Group, Brampton Lodge Day Centre, Bridge
Lane, Appleton. 6.30-8.30pm
- 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 740419
- 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**
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Tackling crime and disorder

POLICE are working to make Stockton Heath a safer place to live by heading a campaign to tackle alcohol-related crime and disorder.

High visibility patrols, during both day and night, have been set up to help shoppers and those using the restaurants and bars feel safer.

The campaign will also see extra police on the nearby Cobbs estate, at Appleton, specifically targeting Bridge Lane during the evening to reduce crime and reassure local people.

Officers launched the drive during the festive season to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour - and then decided to continue it into the New Year.

Sergeant Lee Harrison said: "Officers in Stockton Heath have helped to make the area an even safer place to live, work and visit, thanks to the operation dedicated to cracking down on crime and disorder.

"Police have targeted troublemakers in a bid to reduce alcohol-fuelled offences, leading to five people being banned from local licensed premises over the festive period."

He said the community based scheme Pub Watch has already seen 25 people excluded from bars in the village over the past year, which helped reduce anti-social behaviour by almost 15 per cent.

"High-visibility patrols have reassured not only late night revellers but daytime shoppers, leading to a drop in the number of thefts being reported," he added.

Firms are being encouraged to join a new Business Watch group, which will target thieves and raise awareness and communication between local companies.

Sergeant Harrison said: "Officers are continuing to drive down alcohol-related nuisance with the launch of an initiative aimed at tackling underage drinking. Anyone found supplying alcohol to the under 18s will be identified and dealt with robustly. We continue to listen and take action in response to community concerns including issues around anti-social behaviour. Engagement with members of the public has enabled us to identify hotspot areas and target our patrols accordingly."

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SNOWBALLING incidents boosted crime figures at Stockton Heath in December - with 43 incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour recorded.

But Police Community Support Officer Ben Blandford said they included 14 acts of anti social behaviour.

He told Stockton Heath Parish Council: "This includes incidents of snowball throwing - a lot of them directed at me!"

There had also been a number of incidents at night near the taxi rank in the village centre - including one of an assault on a female officer.

There were four burglaries - two in sheds and two in homes - and five incidents of criminal damage. He reported that two young women tried to get into village pubs using stolen passports as ID and there was an incident where 18 car aerials were ripped off cars parked in Fairfield Road.

Chairman Cllr Graham Roughsedge said: "The figures are a lot higher than the previous month, possibly because of Christmas."

Meet your MP David Mowat

David Mowat, MP for Warrington South, holds regular surgeries throughout the constituency. If you would like to arrange

an appointment to discuss an issue of concern to you please e-mail him at david.mowat.mp@parliament.uk or telephone **01925 267580.**



David Mowat
Member of Parliament
for Warrington South

www.davidmowat.org

Produced by David Mowat MP,
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Charity jazz night

A CHEQUE for £325 was presented to St Rocco's Hospice following a jazz evening organised by the Walton and Moore Friends Charity Committee at Warrington Sports Club

The presentation was made by Diane Ross to Alan Farquharson, past chairman of St Rocco's, who stressed the importance of charity donations to augment the £1 million annual grant the hospice receives from the government. Cost of running the hospice is more than £2.5 million.

Music was provided by the WirrOrleans Jazz Band.

Hospice grant

A GRANT of £50 has been given by Stockton Heath Parish Council to Hope House Children's Hospices.

Members heard the service was open to any life limited child in the Warrington area.

Allowance freeze

STOCKTON Heath Parish Council has voted for a freeze in members' allowances because of the current economic climate.

Members received a letter saying the borough council recommended that there should be no increase in parish councillors' allowances for 2011/12. They agreed to support the recommendation.

Rosie to tackle Everest challenge

A STUDENT from Grappenhall, who decided she wanted a challenge, is planning an 11-day trek to Everest base camp.

Rosie Thorley, 21, of Richmond Avenue, will set off on June 5 for the charity challenge to reach the 5,500m high base of the Himalayas peak.

So far she has raised £450 towards her £2,400 target and is hoping that local people will help her fundraising. Details are on her website <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/RosieThorley>

Rosie, who is in her final year of a graphic design degree at Leeds Metropolitan University, hopes to go on to study for a teaching

qualification.

She was inspired to take the challenge following a talk from the charity Childreach International, which helps care for youngsters in countries such as Nepal, China and Tanzania. She is part of a group of 17 from the university who will be making the trip.

Rosie said: "I am really looking forward to challenging myself. I know it will be difficult - but I still want to do it."

"Compared to the highest mountain in Great Britain which is Ben Nevis, which is 1,300m, this is quite a challenge."

The group will stay in lodges on the lower stages of the trek and later in tents as they progress.

Rosie, a former member of the 3rd Thelwall Guides and former village Rose Queen, is a member of a hiking society at the university and raises funds for charity.

She regularly completes hikes with the group, and has started running as part of her training for the adventure.

"Those of us going on the hike are planning a social to get to know each other," she said.

Rose has already raised funds from a dinner party in Warrington, is planning a series of events and looking for sponsorship.



Wedding festival

NUMEROUS events are being planned for what is a very special year for St Cross Church, Appleton Thorn - its 125th anniversary.

The next event is on Saturday and Sunday, February 12-13, when there will be a wedding festival.

The church is to be specially decorated and there will be a display of wedding memorabilia.

A special service is being held on the Sunday when anyone who wants to re-affirm their wedding vows is invited to attend.


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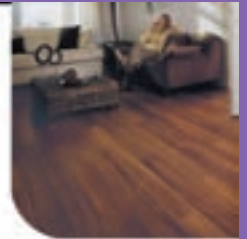
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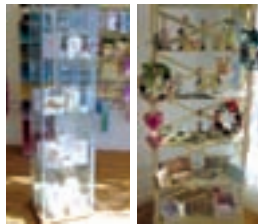
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'Scary' cycling on footpaths

PEOPLE riding bikes on pavements are frightening pedestrians, Stockton Heath Parish Council heard.

Cllr Angie Winnington said she was concerned that parents were allowing children and teenagers to cycle on the pavements. She was also concerned that youngsters were not wearing cycle helmets.

"In some areas this is scary, especially to older people.

"In Appleton there are lots of cycling areas - but not in Stockton Heath," she said.

Chairman Cllr Graham Roughsedge said: "I have also seen adults who think that they can ride on the footpath. Then when they get to the traffic lights, they get off and walk."

He said there was no law saying that people have to wear safety helmets. Cllr Maurice Leslie runs cycling proficiency training in local schools, he said.

Cllr Roughsedge said: "I am sure that Maurice pushes the message that people should not ride on the footpath, should have lights on their bikes and should wear helmets."

Some members were concerned about the safety of children, if forced to cycle on the roads. Others were concerned about teenagers riding at speed on pavements.

But Cllr Roughsedge and Cllr Winnington thought youngsters should not ride on pavements.

Members agreed to pass on their concerns to the police.

Road has become 'war zone'

A TINY Appleton close has become a 'war zone' - because of chronic parking problems.

Neighbours who are normally friends have turned against each other because they find it impossible to find anywhere to park, the parish council was told.

Residents in Beverley Avenue attended the council meeting for the second month in succession to plead for action to solve the problem.

They told councillors that 20 years ago there were only three cars in the then quiet close. Now there are 15 - with five at one house alone.

One resident said: "It's like war zone. It is beyond a joke. Some people want to sell their houses and can't because of the parking chaos."

"Some residents haven't got a car and complain that others park outside their houses."

The meeting was told that most houses in the close are rented from Golden Gates Housing Trust, although a few were owner-occupied.

Some cars were parked on pavements, some in a turning head and others in the road. At night, some residents had to park in the next street. Police have visited the scene on several occasions.

Councillors decided to visit the close of an evening to see the problem for themselves.

Residents undertook to organise a petition to send to Golden Gates Housing and police also agreed to look into the matter.



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Motoring

Fun-to-drive Mazda2 comes in 11 models

THE Mazda2 line-up for 2011, available at Warrington Mazda, features an 11-strong model range with either three-door and five-door hatchback body styles. Customers in Warrington have a choice of three petrol and one diesel powertrains, three generous equipment levels (TS, TS2 and Sport) and typical 0% APR* or low-rate finance on every model until March 31. Available at Warrington Mazda, prices for the regular Mazda2 range start at £10,305 (on-the-road), with TS2 models beginning at £11,130 and Sport models from £12,940.

"Demand for Mazda2 continues to be very strong, with its generous specification, the incredibly fuel-efficient diesel Sport models, offer uniquely attractive small car motoring," enthuses Stuart Dempsey, sales manager at Warrington Mazda.

"Practicality, generous equipment and fun-to-drive dynamics for which Mazda2 vehicles are rightly famous, combine with distinctive looks and extremely competitive pricing to guarantee a winning small car ownership experience," he adds.

A new special edition Mazda2

Takuya is available in March from £11,940. Based on the already generously equipped TS2 the five-door Takuya incorporates exterior sports styling with fog lamps, larger 16-inch alloy wheels, a Bluetooth(r) system, sporty interior and free metallic paint. The name 'Takuya' - pronounced 'tah-koy-yah' - is taken from the Japanese for forerunner or pioneer.

Thanks to its lightweight



construction and sophisticated aerodynamics, the new Mazda2 combines spirited performance with outstanding handling and dynamics, for a truly spirited sporty drive. The 1.3-litre petrol engine is available in two power outputs (75ps and 86ps), the 1.5-litre petrol

generates 103ps, while the 1.6-litre turbo-diesel produce 90ps.

Top speeds range from 101-to-117mph and acceleration times from 0-to-62mph are between 10.4 and 15.5 seconds - depending on model. Fuel economy varies between 49.6 and 68.9mpg (combined cycle), while CO2 ratings spread from 107 to 135g/km.

Small on the outside and spacious on the inside, the Mazda2 features clever design solutions to ensure that the interior offers excellent passenger space plus a competitive boot volume. Despite its compact exterior, the 3.9-metre long Mazda2 still has 250 litres of cargo volume in the boot which becomes 787 litres when the rear seatbacks are folded.

Equipment levels on the 2011 Mazda2 range are extremely generous. Every model comes with air-conditioning, electric front windows, CD radio with Auxiliary jack and a Thatcham Category 1 alarm.

Moving up the range, TS2 models feature 15-inch alloy wheels, while Sport models gain

16-inch alloys, a Sports Styling Kit, Dynamic Stability Control, front fog lights, auto-lights and wipers, climate control air-conditioning and a host of other features.

Special finance offers

Warrington Mazda is currently offering Mazda2 buyers three finance packages available for retail sales only, until March 31. 1, Typical 0% APR finance on Mazda Conditional Sale (with a 50% minimum deposit) up to 36 months. 2, Typical 3.9% APR finance on Mazda Conditional Sale and Mazda Personal Contract Purchase (no minimum deposit) up to 24 months. 3, Typical 5.9% APR** finance on Mazda Conditional Sale and Mazda Personal Contract Purchase (no minimum deposit) up to 36 months.

For more information on the Mazda range or to arrange a test-drive, contact Warrington Mazda or visit the showroom on Bewsey Road.

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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the upgraded Mazda2 range: Urban 34.9 (8.1) - 55.4 (5.1), Extra Urban 53.3 (5.3) - 76.3 (3.7), Combined 44.8 (6.3) - 67.3 (4.2). CO₂ emissions (g/km) 146 - 110. subject to terms and conditions, on vehicles registered before 31st March 2011

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Money Column

By Margaret Black

VAT - 20%

If you are in business have you considered utilising the Flat Rate scheme?

What is the Flat Rate Scheme?

The flat rate scheme is designed to help small businesses by taking some of the work out of recording the VAT element of sales and purchases. If you use the flat rate scheme you apply a single percentage to your turnover in a VAT period. The result is the VAT you pay to HM Revenue & Customs.

How will it help me?

The main benefit of the scheme is the time saved recording the VAT on sales and purchases. This can also take some of the stress out of completing VAT returns at the quarter end. And because you can easily calculate how much VAT you owe on takings, it can help you to manage cash flow.

Will all businesses benefit?

Not every business will enjoy all the benefits of the scheme. For example, you will still have to calculate the VAT and issue VAT invoices in the normal way. Businesses who buy and sell goods from outside the UK can find the

scheme more complex and you may wish to take further advice. Also, it is worth calculating the effect on a period of say 6 months which you have already accounted for by applying the flat rate scheme and compare it to the standard rate which you have used as some businesses using the flat rate scheme may pay more VAT than they would on normal accounting. This is because the flat rates are averages

What about input tax?

Input tax is the VAT charged to you by other businesses. Under normal VAT accounting, you claim this back on your quarterly VAT return. If you use the flat rate scheme, you do not recover input tax or VAT on imports as the allowance for input tax is built into the flat rates. There are special rules when you buy high value capital goods, it would still be possible to claim back the VAT on these larger purchases.

Who can join the scheme?

The scheme is for businesses with a



David Watkinson and Margaret Black

turnover of no more than £150,000 a year, excluding VAT. There are some additional rules to stop abuse of the scheme. If you want to know more, either take further advice from your advisor or visit the Inland Revenue website

The flat rate scheme is a simpler method of working out the VAT you have to pay over to HM Revenue & Customs, however, it is unsuitable where you regularly receive repayments.

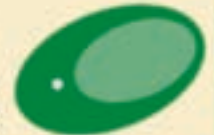
This article is only meant to inform, if you require more advice please do not hesitate to contact us telephone 01925 413210 or e-mail on margaret@warringtonaccountants.co.uk

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Join the great Swapathon

A LOCAL hotel is urging local people to make a positive start to the New Year by swapping their daily routine for something more active. It's all part of the Great Swapathon - a new campaign from Change4Life, the nationwide movement to help everyone eat well, move more, drink less and live longer.

The aim is to achieve one million healthy swaps - things as simple as swapping an evening watching television for a swim at the local pool, swapping white bread for wholemeal bread, swapping four wheels for two feet or swapping sugary fizzy drinks for water, milk or pure fruit juice.

To help kick-start swapping locally, the leisure club at Stretton's Park Road Hotel is offering non-members the chance to try out a gym taster package at a heavily discounted rate, plus half price family and individual swim sessions.

Joe Cravagan, regional leisure manager at The Park Royal Hotel said: "We're delighted to be able to offer the people of Warrington something to help increase their activity levels. Often New Year resolutions are short lived but the Great Swapathon is all about achievable, simple steps to long term better health."

More information is about the Park Royal Hotel is available at www.photels.co.uk or call 01925 730706.

Farmer wins planning permission - for a new gate!

A FARMER has won planning permission to create a new, gated access to one of his fields - despite strong opposition from Stretton Parish Council and two of his neighbours.

The access will be from the A559 Northwich Road, Stretton and will involve removal of five metres of hedging and reducing the height of a further 1.7 metres.

Planning officers say the hedge is not considered to be ecologically important because of the proximity of the road.

Stretton Parish Council had opposed the application by farmer Stephen Mayne, arguing that the access would be on a bad bend on a very narrow main road where traffic heading towards Warrington was travelling at 60mph. Slow moving agricultural vehicles entering or leaving the field would add to existing dangers.

They claimed the A559 was a "Red Route" - one of the top 10 most dangerous roads in Cheshire - and was used by young children going to school.

But planning officers pointed out that this section of the road was not included in the Red Route, which only started at the borough boundary. There was no record of accidents in the vicinity.

The new gate would be agricultural in appearance and not out of character with the area.

Members of the borough planning committee visited the site before reaching their decision.

'Rural watch' is launched

POLICE have started work on establishing a "Rural Watch" scheme to try and reduce thefts of farm machinery, livestock and feed.

The project is starting with the registration of isolated properties and farms in the Grappenhall and Thelwall areas and will then be expanded to other parts of the South Warrington area.

After registration has been completed, meetings between police and rural residents will take place every three or four months.

Cheshire Fire Brigade are linking in with the project, offering free domestic alarm checks for rural properties and farmhouses.

Cricket club research history of ground

MEMBERS of Appleton Cricket Club are researching the history of their Lyons Lane ground and are seeking the help of older residents.

The club - which currently plays in the Cheshire Cricket Alliance - was formed in 1976 from an amalgamation of Radiation CC, who had played at Lyons Lane since the early 1950s, and Winwick CC.

Prior to that, the use of the ground is somewhat obscure and the club would welcome any information on its use, either for cricket or for any other purpose.

It is believed it could have been used by the former Stockton Heath CC from before the First World War up to 1939, when the Second World War ended most local cricket.

It is believed it may have been used by the military during the Second World War and also by Warrington Corporation Transport Department up to the early 1950s.

Anyone who can help is asked to contact club member Graham Whibley on 01925 263712.

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