

Village Life

Issue No. 111
June 2010

STOCKTON HEATH • APPLETON • GRAPPENHALL • THIELWALL • STRETTON • WALTON

Saving Walton Gardens?

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IT'S good to know that crime figures in Stockton Heath are down. As the police themselves have said, they must be doing something right.

We think it is also good to know that Cheshire's Chief Constable, David Whatton thinks it useful for him to visit the area to see how his local

officers are doing it.

Police Community Support Officer Peter Crellin told Stockton Heath Parish Council: "He wants to see what we are doing right, as our results are better than other areas."

Our local police clearly ARE doing something right and they can only be

encouraged to know that their chief thinks so too.

During the month under review there were 19 incidents of anti-social behaviour. These were minor, including knocking on doors and running away and throwing a tin of pop into a garden.

Three incidents of burglary were recorded, eight incidents of theft, six of which were shoplifting, and one incident of criminal damage to a car.

Obviously it would be nice to be able to record no crime at all. But considering the size of the local population, and the fact that it is an affluent area likely to attract criminals from outside areas, the figures are excellent.

We agree with PCSO Crellin. The police must be doing something right.

Bigger and better!

MORE than 1,000 runners have already registered for the second New Balance English Half Marathon which will take to the streets of South Warrington on October 3 - which aims to be even bigger and better than last year.

The aim is to build on the event each year with the goal of attracting 10,000 runners for 2012 to coincide with the Olympics and the opening of the £30m Orford Park Project. Last year, the event attracted around 2,300 runners and the aim is to get 4,000 people into their running shoes this year, with organisers pledging to communicate with local resident a lot better than last year!

To register for the event visit www.english-half.co.uk or call the 24 hour hotline on 0870 124 1242.

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Can social networking save Walton Gardens?

CAMPAIGNERS fighting to save Walton Gardens have launched a social networking drive to create a 'massive response' to their petition ahead of a crunch meeting with local politicians.

The "Save Walton Gardens" group, which set up at the start of May, fears public access will be restricted if plans go ahead to develop the site into a luxury hotel complex and is angry that residents haven't been consulted about progress with the development so far.

Now the group hopes activity on websites like Facebook and Twitter will increase the number of residents signing their petition and make local politicians take notice.

More than 5,000 people have signed an online petition and the group's Facebook page now has more than 16,000 members.

Malcolm Eldridge, one of the campaign organisers, said: "Facebook and our website are now attracting a huge amount of support as people start to hear about the campaign from friends.

"The response has been really powerful. We're hoping that the sheer

number of people backing us will make the council sit up and take notice."

The "Save Walton Gardens" group has written to the borough council's chief executive requesting information be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act.

The letter asks for detailed plans of how the public was and will be consulted about any future plans. It also asks how public priorities at Walton were taken into account when developing the invitation to tender.

The group claims a lack of consultation about proposed plans by hotel group Contessa to invest £20 million to create a luxury hotel suitable for weddings and conferences.

Borough council chiefs say they will select a development partner in June and widespread consultation will follow.

Work to develop Walton Hall and



Gardens could start next spring - but only if the council is satisfied the proposals will be in the interests of local people.

Meanwhile, the future of Walton Hall and Gardens will be on the agenda at the June meeting of Appleton Parish Council.

Chairman Brian Axcell: "Because feeling is running so high, I think it would be appropriate if we can respond formally as Appleton Parish Council to any proposals that may be put forward."

For more information, visit www.savewaltongardens.co.uk

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Youth project needs somewhere to call home

VOLUNTEERS who run a free youth project for hundreds of Appleton youngsters are hunting for a permanent base for the scheme.

More than 130 youngsters aged between 11 and 17 attend the Broomfields Youth Project every Friday night to play football, take dance classes or hop aboard the "Youth Bus" which offers games consoles, a place to hang out and free advice.

The project was set up last October after police and youth workers were asked to stop youths gathering in Alexandra Park.

Originally the service was simply a "youth bus", funded by Bridgewater Churches Together to offer young people in Appleton somewhere safe to go and something to do.

But by February the scheme was growing and when feedback from youngsters suggested football would go down well, Broomfields Leisure Centre offered the use of four of its

pitches on a Friday night.

Since then the scheme has expanded and is now run as a partnership between Cheshire Police, the borough council, Youth for Christ and Bridgewater Churches Together.

Now the Broomfields Youth Project wants to secure its future by asking local organisations for cash - and ideas - about where it could set up a permanent home - or "hub".

Youth worker John Harper, one of 10 volunteers at the project on a Friday night said: "We believe this project is something the area doesn't have at the moment and it's something we need."

"We're looking for a building which is specifically for young people. It's a big ask, as property is hard to find and expensive and

getting ownership will be difficult."

Fellow volunteer JP (John Paul) Smith told Appleton Parish Council how the project aims to engage young people in activities, about its success so far and its plans for the next 12 months.

They said identifying and securing a permanent "hub" to host the project would allow it to extend beyond Friday nights.

Inspector Gary McIntyre, from Cheshire Police said: "We work with lots of organisations in the area to make youth provision better here. Anti-social behaviour in the area hit a peak at 290 reported incidents in one month and was averaging above 200 per month until late last year.

"Now we're seeing an average of around 150 reported incidents and the main impact on this figure has been schemes like this."

The scheme is looking into opportunities for matched funding from a large corporate organisation but this would require significant contributions from local organisations.

New parish council chairman Brian Axcell said a £5,000 fund was available to support youth schemes in the borough and asked the project organisers to put together a formal request.

The parish council has also now established a youth committee to keep in contact with the scheme.

Falling on deaf ears

A HEARING-aid wearer walked out of Stockton Heath Parish Council meeting claiming he could not hear what was going on.

During the public participation section of the meeting, the man spoke to Coun Robin Wilson briefly and then left the building.

Coun Wilson said: "He could not hear the discussion because he has a hearing aid. He said if we had a hearing aid loop system he could have participated. He left because he could not follow what was going on."

"He said it is a public meeting and he should be able to participate." Members discussed the issue. Some reported that because of the size of the room and the fact that comments are addressed to the chair, they too could not always hear.

It was agreed that members would try to 'speak up' in future.

Pub warning on drink

BANNERS proposed for a village pub limiting the area of drinking were welcomed by Stockton Heath Parish Council.

Members heard that the Mulberry Tree was putting up signs telling customers that it was an offence to drink or take alcohol outside its boundary.

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Advertiser's announcement

Escorted Tours – your flexible friends!

By Jacquilene Ahmed - Manager

Whilst some people want the warm cocoon of a traditional tour, with everything set in stone, increasing numbers of escorted tour providers are recognising that there is a proportion of customers who, despite enjoying the security and hassle-free nature of an escorted tour, would like to introduce elements of choice into their holiday.

Whether it's optional excursions, dining freedom or extra days here and there, many operators have begun adding flexible elements to their tours!

You can be reassured that by booking the right tour you will not have to start every morning with an early wake-up call to pile back on the coach, and end every night at a large table with 20 other couples!

Most operators offer the option to add extra nights pre or post tour, so clients can book-end the trip with time on their own, link up with a cruise or another tour, or visit friends and family in the area. For instance if you are thinking of a Canadian tour, why not cruise up the Inside Passage from Vancouver to Alaska? Or from Latin America you can head out to the Galapagos or into the Amazon. However, if you do not have any extra time, you may be fortunate to have extra cash (not so easy these days!) to up-grade on flights and rooms, enhancing your experience across the tour.

Food is a major part of any holiday, and many travellers enjoy choosing restaurants and finding romantic spots for

an intimate meal. There are preconceptions that escorted tours include big group dinners every night, but this is definitely not the case. While some operators stick to selling tours on a full or half board basis, others are not including meals. This means clients are free to make the most of their evenings as they see fit.

You can pop out for a quick snack and head back to catch up on your sleep if you are feeling tired, or you can make the most of a culinary hotspot with a substantial meal, or even hit the town!

Equally, escorted tours do not have to involve rushing around and living out of a suitcase. Some companies offer 'leisurely' tours, which can offer extra freedom to relax simply because you are based in one location for the entire trip, with sightseeing trips by coach included in the price. Once your party returns to the same base every night, guests can opt to spend a day relaxing in the hotel instead of taking the next excursion. This allows guests to choose between exploration and relaxation.

On Select Journeys, there are fewer inclusions in the basic package level, so you will not feel you are missing out on something you have paid for if you decide not to go on the excursion. Instead you can buy sightseeing packages as and when you like, or just take a look around under your own steam if that is what you



Linda Crowder – Stockton Heath Travel

prefer.

This type of product really does give you the ability to make as much or as little use of the classic escorted tour benefits as you wish. Travel and bed-and-breakfast accommodation are included, as are free airport transfers, an orientation tour of each city and the help of a tour director. You can even decide on the spot whether to join the optional half or full-day excursions, depending on what mood you are in when you wake up! For guests who want to utilise no more than this, then you can almost look at the trip as a series of city breaks with some of the hassle and extra cost taken out!

Travelling alone to faraway places isn't always the best way. Being with someone knowledgeable always helps! That is why, we even know a company who will escort you before you leave the UK till when you return. You actually meet your Tour Manager and fellow travellers in a private lounge after check-in at no extra charge.

However, for those of you who want the hard work done for you, but to retain an element of independence, these tours offer the best of both worlds!

Any more information on any cruises or any advice you need on other cruise lines then pop in for a coffee or ring on 01925 269400

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Festival fever returns to village

FESTIVAL fever will come to Stockton Heath for four days in July as organisers promise a jam-packed weekend of entertainment at this year's event.

Over seventy pitches have already been sold for the giant farmers market and craft fair which runs throughout the two main days of the festival on Saturday July 10 and Sunday July 11. Youngsters can enjoy Jo Jingles, a mad hatter's tea party or try out a climbing wall, organised by the scouts. Competitions will also run all weekend, including a fun dog show. Families are reminded to wrap up

warm to watch the film 'Up' when it is screened in the open air on Friday July 9. It was chosen by pupils at Bridgewater High School, shoppers and traders in a poll. Other shows include 'Comedy Night' at The Cape and Alan Bennett's 'Talking Heads' at the Methodist Hall. Dr Jazz and the Cheshire Cats, The Fairy (Geneva) Brass Band and CODYS will all play

concerts in the Big Marquee on Mill Lane Field. DJ Pete Pinnington will be at on Mill Lane Field on Saturday July 10 until 2pm. Shopkeepers will kick start the occasion early with a scarecrow competition, starting on July 5. Villagers will be asked to vote for the favourite using ballot boxes in Sainsbury's, The Coop and the Post Office. A full programme for the Festival will be delivered through resident's doors during the first week of June.

Lions' helping hand

SCOUTS who are to travel to Kenya to help on a scheme to help local people survive periods of drought have been given a £200 helping hand from Stockton Heath Lions Club.

Club president Julian Holt presented a cheque for £200 to Warrington West Scouts during the interval at their talent show at Latham Hall, Penketh.

He told the audience: "I have experienced first hand, the dedication and hard work that these young people are prepared to undertake to raise funds to help those less fortunate. It is a pleasure that Stockton Heath Lions can contribute to this project in some small way."

The show, organised and presented by the scouts themselves, was geared towards helping them raise funds to send a party of Explorer Scout volunteers to Kenya later this year.

They will work directly with the local people building "sand dams" - a type of water conservation project to help the local population to survive lengthy periods of drought.

Stockton Heath Lions Club is part of Lions Club International, a worldwide organisation dedicated to

raising funds for a variety of causes on both global and local levels.

Anyone who would like to know more about the Lions and how to help others, can contact Martin Ottewill on 07738 629227.



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What's On in the Villages

June 1
STOCKTON HEATH FLOWER CLUB
 Eleanor Griffiths, of Helsby:
 The Charms of Cheshire
 Appleton Parish Hall,
 Dudlow Green Road, 7.30pm.

June 8
STOCKTON HEATH PARISH COUNCIL
 Sandy Lane Centre, 7.30pm

June 10
LIVE AT ST WILFRID'S
 James Wilshire (piano) plays Scarlatti,
 Revel, Schubert.
 St Wilfrid's Church, Grappenhall. 7.30pm.

June 15
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) VI. 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 Tuesday
COFFEE MORNING
 St Cross Church, Appleton Thorn.
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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
 Ram's Head, Grappenhall.

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 Appleton Parish Hall. 1.15-4.15pm

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

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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
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 740272.

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



Volunteers wanted to help growing Scouting movement

SCOUTING is growing in popularity - and in Stockton Heath could grow further but for a shortage of adult volunteers.

The Stockton Heath group is one of the largest in the Warrington area with a membership of more than 130.

Nationally, a fifth year of growth

has taken membership in the UK to more than 500,000 - the largest co-educational youth movement in the country.

A spokesman said: "Scouting taps into the fun and adventure that young people look for.

"It offers challenging opportunities as part of a development programme

for an age group of 6-25. Adults can get just as much out of Scouting as young people - not only through enjoying the same activities, but also by developing skills that can be transferred into other areas of their lives."

The Stockton Heath group has a team of more than 30 adult volunteers supporting youngsters in the Beaver (6-8 years), Cub (8-10) and Scout sections (10-14) or helping with the development and administration of the group.

But more adult support is needed to meet the growing demand - especially as part of the leader team.

The spokesman added: "Enthusiasm is all that is required as support and training is offered."

Further information can be obtained from Mike Bromwich, email 4thwarringtonscouts@googlemail.com or call 01925 486373.



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Danger junction

A CALL for drivers in Stockton Heath to slow down at a busy junction was made at a meeting of the parish council.

Coun Tudor Pole said drivers in Ackers Lane going towards Ackers Road needed to take extra care.

"It is a very dangerous spot and has a blind bend," he said.

People parking near the junction forced cars onto the wrong side of the road reducing their visibility.

Coun Sheila Dean said: "They do hurtle along that road."

Blooming marvelous

HANGING baskets and planters are to be provided in Stockton Heath village centre at a cost of £3,670.

The parish council has approved the scheme, which includes summer and winter displays, maintenance and watering.

Park improvements

IMPROVEMENTS costing £680 on two parkland sites have been approved by Stockton Heath Parish Council.

Work at the Alexandra Park/Mill Lane area includes repairs to railings and flags and cropping a hazardous tree.



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No Lib Dem-Tory alliance here!

THE new national political alliance between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats seems to count for little in Stockton Heath.

An angry row erupted at the parish council's annual meeting after a Liberal Democrat was voted in as deputy chairman in preference to a Conservative with a 100 per cent attendance record.

Members elected Lib Dem Celia Jordan as deputy chairman - which effectively means she will become chairman next year.

Last year's deputy, Graham Roughsedge, Independent, was elected chairman in succession to Lib Dem Peter Walker.

Only two names were put forward to be the new deputy - Coun Jordan and Tory Stephen Taylor.

The council voted 7-2 in favour of Coun Jordan - provoking an outburst from a member of the public, local campaigner Patrick Mullee.

He complained that as both Coun Jordan and Coun Roughsedge had been chairman in recent years there was effectively "no change."

"There is a lot of fresh blood on the council - other people should be given a chance," he said.

Mr Mullee then walked out of the meeting but later, Green Party councillor Robin Wilson raised the matter again.

He said party politics should have no place on parish councils.

Referring to a report on attendance, he noted that only two members - Coun Taylor and Coun Tudor Pole - had 100 per cent attendance records.

He said Coun Taylor had done a lot of work on local issues and had campaigned to improve Ackers Pits and for public toilets in the village.

Members should have given more consideration to his nomination for deputy chairman.

"It is a great shame we are snubbing people who want to serve this council. This was a great

opportunity to give Coun Taylor a chance to play a part in the council," he said.

"If this is to do with party politics, I don't think it is appropriate."

Coun Wilson said he had no criticism of Coun Jordan, who had a long career in politics and had held many positions of office. But "new blood" was needed.

He challenged members: "Can anyone explain this to me, or disagree with me?"

There was no response from Liberal Democrat members but Coun Roughsedge pointed out that he was an Independent.

Coun Helen Dutton, Labour said: "I have no axe to grind. I just made a choice."

At Appleton, former Mayor of Warrington Brian Axcell found himself with another chain of office - as chairman of the parish council.

Val Davies was elected as his deputy.

Cycling dilemma

TO cycle or not to cycle along the Bridgewater Canal tow path was a dilemma for visitors, Stockton Heath Parish Council heard.

Coun Wendy Emsley asked whether cycling was permitted.

"I see people cycling along and also people walking with bikes. I wonder what the situation is."

Keen cyclist Coun Maurice Leslie said there was a possibility that cycling along the path was permitted.

• According to Waterscape, the official guide to canals, rivers and lakes, cycling is not permitted along much of the Bridgewater Canal, but the Trans-Pennine Trail and local routes pass the waterway at various points.

Pet blessing service

Stockton Heath Methodist Church on Walton Road held a special Blessing of Pets Service at their church hall.

Pictured back left, lay preacher Hazel Bradley blessing some of the congregations pets.



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Early bird season ticket offer



SEASON tickets for the 2010/11 season are now on sale with a special early bird offer. Tickets are priced at just £100 for adults and £80 for concessions if purchased before the end of June - a saving of almost 30% on gate prices. This offers excellent value for money at less than £5 per game next season. To help generate additional funding season tickets will not include cup games next season - but still offer excellent value for money



After the end of June tickets will be priced £120 and £100. To encourage young supporters there will still be FREE admission for children aged under 12. Under 16's will also still be able to gain free admission if they are students at Warrington Collegiate or Warrington Borough Transport saver Card holders. There will be a new admission price next year of £2 for Under 16's who can get a season ticket for £20. Chief Executive Gary Skentelbery said: "We have just experienced our best league finish for 15 years and we want to push on and be going for promotion next season."

"To do this we need to increase our income and hopefully some good cup runs next season will help us continue to move the club in the right direction. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking every single supporter for their fantastic support throughout the season."

"A special thank you to the young members of our Barmy Army who have helped improve the match day atmosphere both home and away. I know your vocal support is greatly appreciated by Joey and the players and everyone connected with the club - Keep up the good work!"

To obtain a season ticket simply send a cheque for the relevant amount made payable to Warrington Town FC c/o of New Media Centre, Old Road, Warrington, WA4 1AT to take advantage of the early bird offer



Police 'doing something right'

POLICE in Stockton Heath are "obviously doing something right" as crime figures are down considerably.

Police Community Support Officer Peter Crellin told Stockton Heath Parish Council that Cheshire's Chief Constable, David Whatton, was visiting the area.

PCSO Crellin said: "He wants to see what we are doing right, as our results are better than other areas."

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Sporting students rewarded at Priestley



MORE than 80 trophies were awarded to a whole host of sporting talent at Priestley during the college's annual awards ceremony.

Sara Bayman, an English international on the netball court, was the guest of honour and handed out the trophies to those who had been successful both on the sporting field and also academically in the classroom.

The main two awards for the Sports Personality of the Year went to Brian Gallagher and Jodie Cunningham.

Brian is currently representing the North West in a Youth Ambassador role and as well as being an accomplished runner was also involved in numerous volunteering projects including those associated with the Wolves Foundation.

Jodie, meanwhile continued to excel on the rugby league field making some stand out performances

for Warrington Wolves Ladies and England.

The two main awards were all the more special as they were voted for by the college community using an on-line poll on Priestley's virtual learning environment.

Curriculum Manager, Nige Howells, commented, "Once again it was really great to unite all of the people involved in such a fantastic year for Sport Priestley under one roof."

He added: "I'd like to relay my own words of praise to all the award winners as we look forward to another year of success and the completion of our new all weather pitch facilities, which will allow our students to develop yet further."



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Financially yours

By David Watkinson

Taxman penalises someone for paying too much

A taxpayer who paid too much tax to HM Revenue & Customs has been fined £1,400 for making a mistake when he asked for a rebate.

Just under 3 million taxpayers claimed a rebate last year, nearly a third of all nine million self-assessment taxpayers, according to HMRC.

This article is in respect of a self-employed, un-named man from Kent who tried to reclaim overpaid tax of £3,000 for the year to April 2009. Revenue & Customs re-calculated his figures and believed that he was only owed £1,000 and proceeded to fine him £1,400 for the error.

Under new penalty regulations, the Revenue can fine taxpayers up to 30 per cent of tax owed for careless mistakes and up to 100 per cent for errors that it believes were deliberate and/or "concealed" mistakes. Lawyers said that this was the first time they had ever heard of someone being fined for a mistake on their request for a rebate.

This taxpayer was fined 70% of the £2,000 difference between the sum

that he felt he was owed and the sum that HMRC calculated it would repay him. A director of the tax investigations department of the law firm that represented the taxpayer, is quoted to have said: "Calculating a rebate can be complicated and the taxpayer in question was unrepresented by an adviser, yet the HMRC refused to take any of this into consideration."

He continued by saying "We believe he made an honest mistake, so for HMRC to be fining him is outrageous. HMRC has charged this taxpayer with a higher penalty than someone committing a serious fraud under the old penalty regime." It was the first time that his client had filled in a tax return as a self-employed person, so he added "This is very worrying if under the new penalty regime, HMRC are going to charge 70 per cent for such mistakes".

A spokesman for HMRC said he could not comment on individual cases, but said no one would ever be fined for "making an honest mistake".



David Watkinson and Margaret Black

"The fines reflect whether a taxpayer has taken due care and attention, and whether the mistake is deliberate or not, and whether records have been kept correctly." Under the new penalty regime a "careless" mistake merits no more than a 30 per cent fine.

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