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Issue 147 June 2013 FREE

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Home extension may have to be demolished

A HOUSEHOLDER faces the prospect of having to demolish a single-storey extension he had built "at his own risk" after being warned by planners that it did not conform with his approved planning application.

Objections to the extension in Pepper Street, Appleton came from the parish council and from neighbours.

Planning officers made the householder aware that the extension was not being built in accordance

with approved plans but he chose to continue entirely at his own risk.

Now Warrington's planning committee has turned down his retrospective planning application - which means he must either appeal, reach agreement to alter the structure or demolish it.

The committee was told neighbours claimed the extension was "unreasonable", out-of-character, too high and of poor build quality. They claimed the householder had wilfully ignored his original planning approval in an attempt to circumvent the planning process.

Appleton Parish Council believed the extension was too high, bulky, overbearing and out-of-character with adjacent properties. But planning officers, while admitting that the development had not been carried out in accordance with the submitted plans, felt it did not have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the street scene, the amenity of neighbours or highway safety. They recommended approval.

But the planning committee voted 4-2 to refuse permission.

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Address
New Media Centre
Old Road, Warrington
Cheshire WA4 1AT

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Village Life is distributed freely
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the area as well as being
available to pick up from various
outlets, some of which are listed
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Printed by TwentyFourSeven

Opinion

IT is now more than three years since a redundant telephone box at Hatton took on a new life as a book exchange – in effect, a mini-library.

At the time, it seemed to us to be a novel idea, but now books are appearing in old 'phone boxes all over the country – including a few in Cheshire. The latest we have heard of is at Thelwall but there are others at Cotebrook and Lach Dennis. Most, if not all, are as a result of an initiative by the local parish council.

There is even a growing national list of telephone box "libraries" on the internet!

It is, of course, all part of a determined drive by book lovers, partly in response to library service cutbacks but also, perhaps, to try and stem the tide of e-books.

And it is not confined to phone boxes.

A book exchange at Appleton Parish Hall, run by WI volunteers, is flourishing and expanding. Volunteers are running a community library at Great Sankey and, as we reported last month, the Grappenhall Community Library, also run by volunteers, is proving so popular that it has undergone an extensive makeover after receiving grants from Wren and the Big Lottery.

These larger facilities enable the volunteer organisers to expand and offer a wider range of service to the local community.

We welcome all these developments. We understand the need for local authority cutbacks and we are not opposed to e-books – anything that encourages more people to read is useful. You can read an e-version of this magazine at www.village-life.co.uk – and many people do.

But we still believe in the printed word and hope enough people in authority think likewise to ensure there will be no further library closures. If we are to be disappointed in this, all power to the volunteers, whether in phone boxes or village halls.

'KEY to the sustainability of an estate is the ability to know the market in which it operates and to identify its assets and how best it can utilise these.'

The quote is from Brendan Flanagan, visitor economy manager at Tatton Park – and with the park attracting more than 840,000-a-year it is one we cannot argue with.

But do the Tatton team – or rather, the National Trust, which owns the estate, or Cheshire East Council, which manages it – still know the market in which they operate?

We ask the question because of the controversial proposal, apparently supported by both the Trust and the Council, for a £50 million theme park within the estate.

Opposition to this scheme suggests that a sizeable proportion of Tatton's "market" does not want it and while theme park supporters may suggest that they are merely a vocal minority, adopting a "not-in-my-backyard" philosophy, we wonder if this is the case.

According to Tatton's own figures, their most visited attraction is the 1,000-acre parkland, with its deer, its lake and its open spaces.

Will the people who enjoy Tatton for these qualities appreciate the presence of a theme park, with its inevitable noise, traffic, litter and general disturbance? Could Tatton lose on the roundabouts what it gains on the swings?

Foodbank opens at village store

SHOPPERS at a village Co-op store can help make sure local families living below the poverty line can still put food on the table.

The store, in Knutsford Road, Grappenhall, has become an official collection point for Foodbank – an organisation that provides emergency food supplies for local people in need.

Customers are encouraged to buy one extra thing during their weekly shop and place it in the charity collection point at the store. Tinned

foods, dried pasta, cooking sauces, as well as tea, coffee and toiletries are all welcome.

Store manager David Appleton said: "The economic climate is tough, and many families are feeling the strain. Donations don't have to be expensive, from a tin of beans to a

packet of pasta, just one extra item in your weekly shop can make a real difference to those in need."

Foodbank co-ordinator John Dolan said: "It's awful to think that any of our neighbours would be going hungry. Having a collection box in The Co-operative food store is a convenient way of enabling customers to help out those people living in food crisis."



■ Staff at the Co-op show off more than 20 carrier bags of food donated since the Foodbank scheme was launched.

New head praised as school improves

STOCKTON Heath Primary School, which was twice placed in "special measures" has improved significantly - and its new head teacher highly commended.

Education watchdog Ofsted has ruled that the school no longer requires "special measures."

The school's overall effectiveness has now been graded as "requires improvement" - the equivalent of "satisfactory" under the old Ofsted framework.

Leadership and management and behaviour and safety of pupils have both been graded "good".

Headteacher Dan Harding (pictured), who only joined the school in September, said: "We are pleased with this outcome and feel it is well-deserved."

"We believe it is a pivotal moment in the school's recent history and is the first important step towards achieving our goal of making this school 'outstanding' in all areas.

"The incredible hard work and commitment of all the staff here and the unwavering support of our governing body and parents are key factors in our continuous development and therefore this recent judgement."

It was originally in June 2008 that Ofsted inspectors stunned the school team by placing it in special measures.

Education chiefs appealed against the ruling - but Ofsted reaffirmed its decision in September the same year.

Former head Lynda Carnes left after a lengthy period of sick leave.

In June 2011, Ofsted ruled that the school should remain in special measures and in January last year, a further inspection revealed it was still making "inadequate progress"

A temporary acting head was brought in from another school.

Mr Harding, formerly acting head of Plantation Primary School, Halewood, Liverpool, was appointed last May and took up his post in September.

He is highly commended in Ofsted's latest report.

Ofsted state: "He has made an excellent impact on school improvement. The very strong team of headteacher and deputy headteacher are providing an excellent lead in driving forward improvements. In particular, previous significant weaknesses in teaching and the leadership structure have been eliminated."

Highlights also include pupil's exemplary conduct and their positive attitudes to learning. The report states: "Pupils feel safe. They are courteous and show respect for the adults who work with them."

A new creative curriculum is highly commended as is the

impact of local authority support. More examples of "good and better teaching" were observed and it is noted that "previously outstanding teaching has been maintained".



Are you a 'bawmer' of 40 years ago?

ORGANISERS of the unique "Bawming the Thorn" festival at Appleton Thorn are searching for people who took part in the revival of the event 40 years ago.

They want the original "Bawmers" - children who dance around the thorn tree in the middle of the village - to come forward so they can be VIP guests at this year's 40th anniversary.

Organising committee chairman Mark Searle said: "We want them as guests and perhaps as judges for this year's special event."

The origins of "bawming" at Appleton Thorn are lost in the mists of time. Originally part of a "walking day" event, the bawming ceremony died out in the 1930s.

It was revived by Mr Bob Jones, then headmaster at Appleton Thorn Primary School, in 1973 and is now a hugely popular annual event.

This year, a Spitfire fly-past has been arranged and a "flight" themed fancy dress parade will take place - marking the area's links with the former Stretton airfield, which closed after the end of World War 2.

But the thorn tree will be decorated as usual and school children will sing the "Bawming" song as they dance around the tree.

According to legend, the hawthorn at Appleton Thorn grew from a cutting of the Holy Thorn at Glastonbury, which was said to have sprung from the staff of Joseph of Arimathea.

The current tree was planted in the late 1960s by the local Women's Institute after the previous one blew down in a storm.

Original "Bawmers" should contact Lisa Baker on 07870 695 177 or lisa_baker@mac.com



Advertiser's announcement

Glorious Guernsey

An hour's direct flight from Manchester is all it takes to reach this unique half English half French retreat. Surrounded by the warm waters of the Gulf Stream it is the most southernmost point of the British Isles, snow rarely falls in winter time so expect to see plants and wildlife that wouldn't survive here in the North.

Exploring the island can all be done via local bus service, cycling, walking or by car hire; if you can manoeuvre down the narrow streets! The bus service circles the entire island and with a set fare of just £1 it just may be the cheapest one hour tour you have ever experienced.

St Peters Port is the capital of the island where you can treat yourself to boutique style tax-free shopping down its cobbled streets before finding one of the many terrace tea rooms or bistros overlooking its attractive harbour with commanding views of its sister islands Herm and Sark.

Sandy beaches are in abundance in Guernsey from large stretches of golden sand to private coves only accessed by stairs down a steep cliff edge. If relaxing on the sand isn't enough water sports are a favourite pass time with the locals; kayaking,



canoeing, sailing, fishing, surfing and more are all available to take part in.

Local produce is common around the island so expect to see unmanned booths and honesty boxes outside many homes selling home grown vegetables along with other produce. With this strong appreciation you will experience fine cuisine throughout the parishes serving freshly caught seafood and locally sourced meat; no McDonalds or fast food franchises in sight!

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Hotel unveils new look after £100,000 investment

Following a £100,000 investment, The Park Royal at Stretton, one of QHotels' award-winning collection of 21 four star hotels, has unveiled its newly refurbished Conference Café and refreshed spa and leisure facilities.

Located in The Garden Suite, The Park Royal's new Conference Café, designed to provide a breakout space for delegates, has been completely refurbished, giving it a fresh look and modern feel with new tables and chairs, as well as top quality new equipment such as a bean-to-cup coffee machine.

In addition, the hotel has also spruced up its spa and leisure facilities, redecorating throughout and replacing soft furnishings, such as cushions and curtains, to ensure guests have a comfortable and relaxing experience. The Park Royal's tranquil spa includes seven beauty treatment rooms, two duo treatment rooms - all with a range of Elemis products and treatments - and a relaxation room. Guests can also make use of an indoor swimming pool, Jacuzzi, steam room and sauna, as well as a superb gym with a range of cardio and resistance machinery.

Finally, The Park Royal has invested in mobile phone signal boosters to ensure guests and delegates are better able to keep in touch with family, friends and colleagues while at the hotel.

General Manager Paul Gallon said: "This investment is simply our response to feedback and part of our commitment to total guest satisfaction. We've already had some great comments from guests and employees alike, which makes a significant investment like this so

worthwhile."

The Park Royal is perfectly situated with excellent links to the cities of Chester, Liverpool and Manchester, but on the doorstep is the scenic Cheshire countryside teeming with beautiful villages and buzzing suburbs. With over 146 luxurious bedrooms and 15 conference and meeting rooms for up to 400 delegates, it's the perfect venue for business or pleasure.

The Park Royal is an award winning hotel; in the last 12 months, the team has achieved the prestigious Gold Venue Verdict accreditation, Gold in the Green Tourism Business Scheme, as well as winning the QHotels' Hotel of the Year Award 2012.



Lymm 2013 Festival
June 20 -30



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Historic Transport show takes to road

MOTORISTS in Cheshire may be forgiven for thinking they have slipped back in time on Sunday June 23 when hundreds of cars and motor bikes will be making their way to Lymm for the first ever Lymm Historic Transport Day.

One of the key supporters of the event is "North West Casual Classics" club who meet at Penketh Sports and Social Club every month. The club, originally formed in 1995 welcomes all makes and marques of car and is involved in many events during the year even providing cars for film location shoots. "The event organiser - Alan Williams from Lymm Festival came over to one of our meetings in January and we were impressed by their professional approach" said club spokesman Ian Trimble "An event like this is a just what Warrington needs. We are especially excited to be part of a show that includes so many other forms of transport and Lymm with the canal seems like the ideal location".

Another local supporter will be Warrington Model Railway Club who will setting up five layouts in Lymm Village Hall. One of the highlights here will be a detailed reproduction of Glazebrook station as it would have looked in its heyday.

The Historic Transport Day will feature everything from hundred year old working boats to Penny Farthings and Ferraris. "We are aiming to make it a fantastic great value day out for the family with plenty of rides and activities including vintage buses and boats" explained organiser Alan Williams. Find out more at www.lymmtransport.org.uk

The event is just part of the eleven day Lymm Festival which kicks off this year as always with the Foodfest at 6pm on Thursday 20th.



Festival goes indoors

THE annual "Lymmfest" goes indoors this year with simultaneous live music in four venues around the village on the evening of Saturday June 22.

Event organiser Dave Sawyer explained "With a huge outdoor event – Historic Transport Day – scheduled for the next day we decided it would just be too much to go for another open-air session the day before.

"The more we started to think about the multi-venue approach the more we liked it".

Lymmfest goers will be able to buy an open ticket for the whole evening and either stay in one place or move around from venue to venue to catch a variety of acts.

The four venues – The Spread Eagle, The Venue, The Bridgewater Club and The Narrowboat at The Golden Fleece will each have a theme.

As an example the Narrowboat is gearing up for a night of Jazz, Americana and Western Swing while

other venues will feature, folk, singer songwriters plus some talented young local bands.

"It is a great opportunity to hear your favourite music but also sample something new by moving from venue to venue," added Dave.

Tickets for this and all the other events including poet/ comedian John Hegley as well as Mark Radcliffe (pictured) and Foes are on sale now on-line at www.lymmfestival.org.uk or via the order form in the Lymm Festival programme – out mid-May.

There is also a special advance ticket deal for the Historic Transport Day (available only on the order form or via Box office) with a family ticket available for just £10 including a FREE souvenir programme.



A chance to get creative at festival

AMATEUR photographers and artists are being urged to get involved in this year's Stockton Heath Festival.

The festival, which runs from June 20-23, will feature an art exhibition and a photography competition in addition to a whole host of other events designed to bring out people's creativity.

Local artists are invited to submit works of mixed media to the art exhibition where prizes will be on offer to the best works, as judged by a panel of experts and the public.

There will also be an opportunity to buy an original piece of art.

Entry details are available from helenjayne.dutton@virginmedia.com or call 0798 341 2630. The exhibition will be at Grappenhall Independent Methodist Church.

The photography competition will have a "pets" theme, giving pet owners a chance to submit pictures of their fur and feather friends.

Again there will be prizes for the best entries as chosen by judges and public vote. The photographs will be displayed in the festival arts tent.

For details contact photography@stocktonheathfestival.co.uk

The festival is a true community event and everyone is invited to join in.

There will be a treasure hunt and other competitions on the Festival Field, a chance to write a poem or enter the dog show.

Even those who feel they cannot contribute directly can always get involved by voting for their favourites in each category.

Ashley is all gold

APPLETON'S Ashley Terron has won gold at the Global Skills Challenge in Australia.

Ashley, 20, is no stranger to these competitions, having first won the Skillbuild competition at the age of 16, and plans to challenge for gold at the Skills Olympics in Leipzig in July.

The former Warrington Collegiate student said: "I'm over the moon. The competition was the fiercest I've ever faced so I'm delighted to win gold. I'll now be training hard to make sure I win gold at the WorldSkills International Competition in Leipzig.

Ashley combines his competition exploits by studying Construction and Property Management at the University of Salford, and working for family firm Peter Terron Brickwork Contracting Limited.

Paul Gould, Curriculum Manager for Construction and the Built Environment at Warrington Collegiate, said: "From the start I knew that Ashley would do well. He was an exceptional student, talented and totally focused on being the best. I have high hopes of his achieving gold at Leipzig in the summer."

Ashley was chosen to represent the UK at the Skills Olympics after finishing second in an International Bricklaying Competition in Denmark in January.



Celia's 30 years' service



CLLR Celia Jordan was presented with a bouquet at the monthly meeting of Stockton Heath Parish Council to mark her 30 years' service on the council.

She was first elected on May 5, 1983 and has since served as chairman on several occasions.

CLLR Jordan has also been a member of Warrington Borough Council for more than 30 years and has served as Mayor.

The former chairman of St Rocco's Hospice was awarded the MBE in 2005 for her long service to the community.



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Tatton – ‘outstanding e

TATTON Park is being held up as an outstanding example of how to sustainably manage parks and public open spaces.

The park is being used in an innovative new national “toolkit” designed to help secure a sustainable future for thousands of financially threatened parks and public open spaces across the country.

The “Prosperous Parks” income generation toolkit has been produced by The Land Trust, in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery Fund.

Tatton Park is one of 21 outstanding examples of how funding can be raised

For more than 50 years it has provided a wide variety of visitor experiences to generate sufficient income to offset the significant costs of maintaining the park.

These include a number of diverse attractions, the most visited of which is the 1,000-acre parkland, more than 100 events a year, shopping and dining, comprehensive corporate

and function facilities and an award winning education programme.

Tatton has a five year plan to develop its visitor activities – a key part of which is the controversial plan for an outdoor adventure attraction for families to be operated by a company who already run a similar operation in Norfolk.

The proposal has the backing of Cheshire East Council, who manage the park on behalf of the National Trust, who own it.

Visitor economy manager Brendan Flanagan said: “Key to the sustainability of an estate is the ability to know the market in which it operates and to identify its assets and how best it can utilise these. For most parks their main asset is the wide open spaces that provide huge benefits for the local community in terms of health, work opportunities and the economy.”



All set for Disability Awareness Day

VOLUNTEERS are busy preparing for the 22nd annual Disability Awareness Day at Walton hall and Gardens which this year takes place on Sunday July 14 - with Your Housing Group once again agreeing to be principle sponsors.

Described by visitors as “Inspirational and motivating” Disability Awareness Day (DAD), has inspired organisations across the UK, Europe and Worldwide to emulate the event. Towns and cities across the UK, Gibraltar, Denmark, and Sweden have all run DAD events, and for the past two years the MESSAGE Institute based in the Punjab in India have organised their events to coincide with Warrington’s big day.

Held in the grand settings of Walton Hall Gardens, located off the A56 in Warrington, DAD 2013 will be the climax of a week long of activities and will also include a family fun day from 10am till 5pm.

A huge tented village will house the exhibition involving over 250 exhibitors promoting independent living, supporting activities including a wide range of performing Arts, inclusive Sports, and children’s and

family entertainments. Over 25,000 visitors are expected to travel to Warrington from across the UK and beyond. DAD will be the finale of a week consisting of 12 complementary events that will attract thousands more visitors.

Inclusive Arts is just one of the highlights of the event with disabled performers and an exhibition of Artwork produced by disabled artists. This year’s Sports Zone will include archery, rifle shooting, climbing wall, wheelchair basketball, golf, sailing and scuba diving, with the opportunity to do a taster dive in the onsite temporary swimming pool. Children and families won’t be stuck for things to do with entertainers and a funfair.

With a free accessible Park & Ride service from the Old Greenall Brewery site and free bus from Warrington Bus Interchange, British Sign Language Interpreters, a scooter and wheelchair loans service, trained assistants, the event is built on promoting inclusion and independence.

The strap line for this year’s event is “promoting independence throughout life and work”.

Event founder Dave Thompson MBE

example' of how to manage a park



DL said: "Overall DAD focuses on what disabled people can do, not what we can't do."

Meanwhile organisers are also looking for a "Dads Army" of volunteers to help at the event. Head steward Terry Cook said: "Being part of this event is a very rewarding experience. It's hard work but it's also really good fun and the people you meet are amazing".

This year's event will include a scuba area, kiddies water boats, a sports for all zone, and many more attractions and fun family entertainment alongside a wide range of information and displays.

Anyone who would like to join in the fun and be part of this year's DAD's Army should contact Donna Hubbard or Caroline Thompson on 01925 240064, email d.hubbard@disabilitypartnership.org.uk

Alternatively they can attend the DAD Stewards' information meeting at Alford Hall Sports and Social Club on Manchester Road on Wednesday, June 19 at 8pm. All stewards must attend one of a health and safety briefing session during Disability Awareness Week. These will be held on Wednesday July 10 at 8pm or Saturday July 13 at 2pm.



Help to find our ancient trees

THE Woodland Trust is calling on people across Cheshire to go out and record old trees and add them to its Ancient Tree Hunt database - a living database of ancient trees started nearly 10 years ago.

More than 100,000 trees have been recorded, mostly by volunteers - including 314 in Cheshire, of which 16 are classed as being "ancient."

Others are classed as "veteran" or "notable" trees.

As trees age at different rates, they are said to be ancient at different ages.

Yews, for instance, have to be at least 800 years old to be considered ancient and it is generally believed the oldest specimens may be older still.

"Veteran" trees are 500-1200 years old and "notable" specimens are 300-700 years old.

Interesting trees recorded in Cheshire include the Ancient Marton Oak, which could be more than 1200 years old and is the largest oak tree and one of the oldest trees in England and the yew tree in St Boniface churchyard, Bunbury. Still growing, the yew has a girth of around 19ft 6

inches, including a "new" stem.

Other "ancient" trees in Cheshire include an oak at the junction of Peacock Lane and Broadoak Lane, High Legh, a hawthorn and an oak in Tatton Park, a willow at Pedley House Lane, Great Warford, an oak and a yew off Sand Lane, Nether Alderley, a hawthorn between Mobberley and Ashley and an oak off the A34 at Marton.

Many old trees are on private land and cannot be viewed without the permission of the landowner. Others can be seen from public roads.

Information on the Ancient Tree database can be used locally or nationally to highlight the importance of trees, promote their value and encourage their conservation.

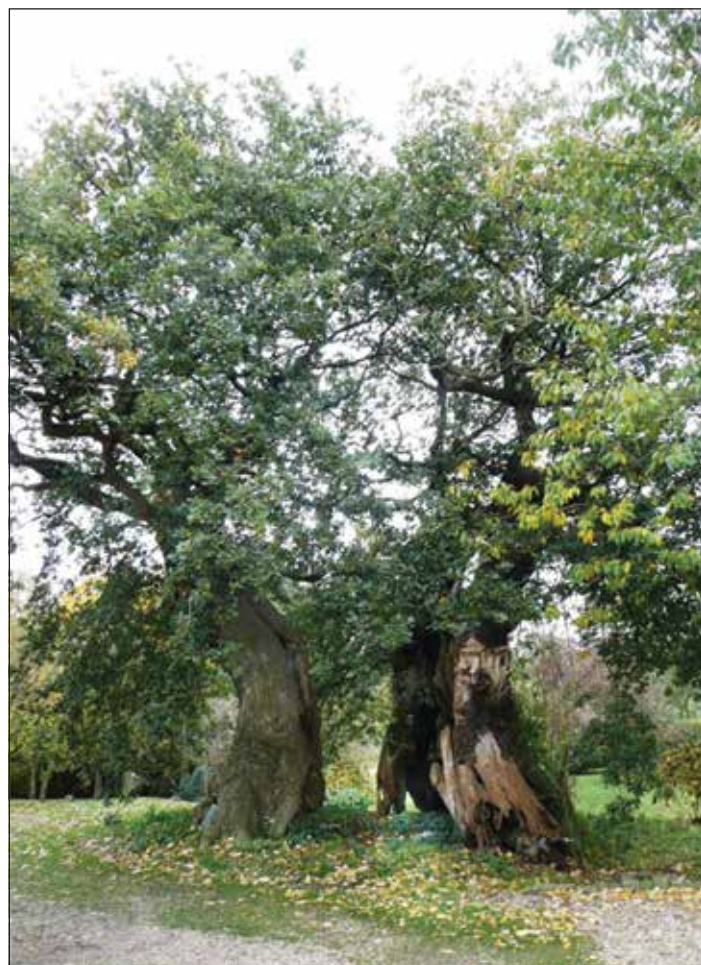
Most of the old trees on the Woodland Trust database have been recorded by volunteers - and the information on the database can be used to oppose developments which

threaten ancient trees - many of which provide unique habitats for wildlife.

The locations of ancient, veteran and notable trees can be found on the website www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk - and the Woodland Trust welcomes

information about old trees which have not yet been recorded so they can be added to the database.

The website offers a facility to record trees - and photographs are welcome.



New Mayor pledges to re-build civic pride

COUNCILLOR Barbara Coan (pictured right) has been elected as the 40th Town Mayor of Knutsford.

She was elected at the annual meeting of the Town Council, when Cllr Neil Forbes was also elected as Deputy Mayor.



She told the meeting: "I am very proud of Knutsford, and I will encourage and promote our beautiful town whenever possible. I pledge to you now that during my period as Mayor I will, with your help, rebuild civic pride and respect for our town and its council.

"I will encourage improved communications, and encourage the town to flourish."

Cllr Coan's first act was to introduce a new Civic Awards scheme where individuals, business and community groups will be up for awards in recognition of their contributions to the local community.

She also chose, as her charities of the year, Knutsford Lions, and Cheshire Search and Rescue, which has recently relocated to Knutsford town centre.

Meanwhile former police officer Cllr Graham Roughsedge (pictured left) was elected chairman of Stockton Heath Parish Council.

Cllr Roughsedge was first elected to the council as an Independent in 1996 - a year after retiring from the police - and has been re-elected at every election since. He has been chairman on five occasions.

He was born in Stockton Heath

and served most of his 30-year police career in the area, during which time he helped to start more than 200 Home Watch groups.

Cllr Roughsedge said: "I have been very proud to have been born in, play my part in and involve myself in

village life."

Chartered engineer Cllr Tony Haigh was re-elected chairman of High Legh Parish Council.

A member of the council for some 10 years, he is also currently chairman of the finance committee.



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Money Column

By Margaret Black

Rights to holidays and holiday pay

This month we will look at the rights of employees to holidays and holiday pay. These rights are in the Working Time Regulations, and cover all workers without exception.

The regulations give the right to 5.6 weeks' paid holiday including bank holidays. This equates to 28 days for someone working 5 days per week. New employees accrue holiday at a rate of one-twelfth of the entitlement, rounded up to the nearest half day, on the first day of each month of the first year worked. All holidays up to the statutory minimum must be taken within the holiday year, but additional days over this minimum may be carried forward by agreement.

If a leaver has taken fewer holidays than their entitlement then they should be paid in lieu of the holiday. This does not need to be rounded up. Alternatively, if they have taken more than their entitlement then a relevant agreement may provide for the excess to be deducted from their pay.

An employee must give notice in writing of his or her intention to take any holiday. The notice required is twice the length of holiday requested.

If the employer is unable to let the employee take the time off they must tell the employee in writing within a further time period equivalent to the length of time of the holiday request. An employer can fix some or all of the holidays in which case they will need to give notice in writing to each worker, which should be equivalent to twice the length of time of the holiday to be fixed.

Payment for statutory holidays is based on the normal weekly hours worked at the workers' normal rate of pay. If hours or pay rates fluctuate then holiday pay is based on the average pay received in the previous 12 weeks. Additional holidays, if any, are paid by agreement.

All workers are covered including part-time and casual staff, as well as the self-employed. Complaints about holiday entitlement are made to an employment tribunal, and employees can claim unfair dismissal if they are dismissed for asserting their rights under the Working Time Regulations. The usual two years' service requirement does not apply. Therefore, it is vital that these matters



are covered by a written contract of employment. WatkinsonBlack have contacts with a number of organisations who can help with these if necessary.

Please note that these ideas are intended to inform rather than advise and you should always obtain professional advice before taking any action.

Telephone 01925 413210 or e-mail on margaret@warringtonaccountants.co.uk

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Cricket 'star' Rob spreads some joy

ONE of Cheshire's most promising young cricketers is back home after leading the England Under-17 team to four wins out of six matches in South Africa – and also bringing some joy to some of the country's poorest children.

Rob Jones, aged 17, from Stockton Heath is a regular member of Knutsford-based Toft in the premier division of the Cheshire County League.

A student at Priestley College, Warrington, Rob was selected as captain of the England team for the tour of South Africa.

But in addition to playing cricket, he delivered supplies – paid for by fellow students at Priestley – to South African township youngsters.

He said: "What I learned was to never take anything for granted and what a fortunate position I am in."

"We met children who had to walk a couple of miles to school every day, but all of them seemed so happy and had big smiles on their faces when we turned up."

It was an eye-opener for Rob, formerly a pupil at Bridgewater High School, who was amazed to see the children take a nap during the day – on the bare stone of the schoolroom floor.

"They are only 10 hours away on a plane, but their lives are completely different to ours," he said.

"When they saw us they wanted our autographs because they thought we were famous, but I am just a normal kid who is at college."

On the cricket field, Rob led the England side to four victories.

He said: "The South Africans played tough, competitive cricket so it was good for me to learn about how to manage my players."

"I would have liked to have scored more runs, but I felt my leadership



was good. "I felt some pressure as captain, but our goal while we were out there was to improve as competitors and our skills and not necessarily to win the matches."

It was the second foreign tour for Rob who played in India last year where he was named man of the match for his performance in the Cricket Club of India stadium after taking 4-29 off 10 overs.

Now he is re-focusing his efforts to ensure another appearance for his country next year.

"I'm hoping to perform well this summer and be chosen for the World Cup squad for the Under-19s next year."

"I've got a lot of games coming up this summer for Toft and I will be doing my best for them."



Rob in his England cap – and with some of the children he met in South Africa.

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What's on in the villages

June 11
STOCKTON HEATH PARISH COUNCIL
Sandy Lane Centre, Stockton Heath. 7.30pm

June 20
LIVE AT ST WILFRID'S
Absolution Saxophone Quartet playing works by Dvorak, Piazzolla, Jean Rivier, Joe Cutler, Will Gregory, Barbara Thompson, Gershwin and Gavin Whitlock.
St Wilfrid's Church, Grappenhall. 7.30pm

June 18
APPLETON PARISH COUNCIL
Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road. 7.30pm

Every Monday
ST MARY MAGDALENE MONDAY CLUB
St Mary Magdalene Church, Appleton 1.30pm

COUNTRY 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
NATIONAL VEGETABLE SOCIETY
Cheshire District meeting
Grappenhall Ex-Servicemen's Club, Chester Road, Grappenhall.
8pm. Details: 01925 265773.

Every fourth Monday
MARLFIELD 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

Every Wednesday
APPLETON HALL BADMINTON CLUB
Starting Decembarat Hall Drive, Appleton. 7.30-10pm.
Details: 01925 262356

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

STOCKTON HEATH PROBUC CLUB
Warrington Sports Club, Walton Lea Road, Higher Walton.
Details: 01925 268540

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.

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



Wildlife crimes officer appointed

CHESHIRE Police have appointed a new Wildlife Crimes Officer to cover the North Cheshire area.

PC Debby Marshall is based at Stockton Heath and she will cover wide areas of open country across the boroughs of Halton and Warrington.

Her appointment has been welcomed by Warrington Nature Conservation Forum.

Secretary Helen Lacy believes that one of the benefits of the appointment will be that PC Marshall will be able to pull together information and turn it into intelligence to improve the police fight against wildlife crimes locally.

She said: "I very much hope that PC

Marshall's role will provide the public with a point of contact and help to greatly reduce some of the practices that are going on, for example badger bating, cruelty to hedgehogs, woodland and grass fires, all of which have been reported over the last 12 months".

New team at Saracen's Head

THE Saracens Head on Wilderspool Causeway has a new licensee at the helm.

Gemma Truscott and her partner Paul Dickinson who have previously worked at the Stretton Fox, Red Lion and Warrington Town Football Club, took over the running of the J W Lees pub in March.

Gemma said: "We are really excited about managing such a fantastic pub. We have introduced regular quiz nights and live music and these are going down great with our regulars. Families are welcome in the pub and our new beer garden."

Meanwhile if you are in a local band and would like to play at the Saracens Head call Gemma on 01925 452335.



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Village walking day

THE annual Grappenhall Walking Day takes place on Saturday, June 22 – followed by St Wilfrid's Primary School summer fair.

Hundreds of villagers will take part or line the route to watch the procession go passed. Community groups such as the Scouts and Guides will join the congregations of St Wilfrid's Church.

After the procession, the new Rose Queen will be crowned and the summer fair will provide a wide range of activities including a barbecue, face painting, tombola, craft village, bouncy castle, wellie-throwing and a visit from Warrington Wolves' mascot Wolfie.

Grappenhall Walking Day has its origins in the larger Warrington Walking Day, established in 1832

Historically, the walker wore their Sunday Best and onlookers gave money to the children in the procession which was meant for the church. These days, most children spend it at the summer fair on the school field afterwards!

Events get under way with a service on the school field at 12.45pm and the summer fair starts at 2pm.

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