

Village Life

Issue No. 108
March 2010



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Mum on the run

Page 3

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Editor's Comment



WE are reliably informed that commonsense may be about to prevail in the long-running dispute over the disused rugby pitch in Bridge Lane, Appleton.

A meeting takes place this month between the borough council and Warrington Rugby Union Club which could end the row and, more

importantly, result in the pitch being used again.

For the benefit of those who don't know, the club no longer uses the ground but still holds a lease which has some 50 years to run. They will not surrender the lease because the council will not let them use an alternative pitch on an overflow car park at Walton Gardens.

to see the land used by the community.

We say we are reliably informed that commonsense may be about to prevail because the information comes from no less a person than the Mayor of Warrington, Coun Brian Axcell, who is also a member of Appleton Parish Council.

He said: "It's been seven years since the pitch was last used and there have been a number of fruitless meetings but we have been given an indication that this meeting will be constructive."

We hope he is right. But, such has been the bitterness of the dispute in the past, we are not holding our breath.

Celebrating 60 years of scouting

THIS year marks the 60th anniversary of the scouting movement in Thelwall - and local cubs have been marking the occasions with a number of awards.

Members of the 6th Warrington (1st Thelwall) Scout Group were presented with their Chief Scout's Silver Awards by David Mowat, the Conservative Prospective Parliamentary candidate for Warrington South.

The silver award is the highest a cub can gain and the only one they can go on to wear on their scout uniform. It is awarded only after they have successfully completed six challenges as a cub.

Cub of the year was Matthew Thompson, who won the title for attendance, appearance, behaviour and upholding scouting values.

The cub pack at Thelwall includes a number of girls and is currently one of the biggest in the area.

Annoyance

Neither side has so far been prepared to compromise - much to the annoyance of local sports clubs desperate for playing space.

A survey of local residents also indicated that most people would like

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Gang targets flash cars

RESIDENTS of Appleton have been warned to be extra vigilant following a sharp increase in the number of burglaries by thieves targeting high powered and expensive cars.

Parish Council members heard that nine burglaries and two attempted burglaries had taken place in the area over the previous four weeks. Only one burglary took place the month before.

Unmarked police cars are now patrolling Appleton to try to catch the culprits - suspected to be a gang who are looking for opportunities to steal expensive cars.

A dedicated police team is also looking at all the intelligence they have gathered from residents who have already been targets.

Police Community Support Officer Ben Scholte said: "This report is unsettling but as long as residents take the right precautions there is no need for alarm. Make sure everything is locked away. If you have a garage, make sure that you put your car in it, especially if you own a high powered, expensive vehicle.

"Leave a light on if you're going out. If you're going on holiday, ask a neighbour to check the house, draw the curtains at night and make sure that the post doesn't mount up. Once these criminals are caught we expect to see the burglary rate drop back down to normal levels."

Mum on the run

A NEW-mum from Stockton Heath was so moved by images of hungry children in Haiti that she's going to run five miles to raise cash for them.

Katie Brough is determined to "Run the Bridge" on April 4 to do her bit for the Haiti fundraising, even though her son, Matthew James, is just six weeks old.

The 27-year-old is a former member of Warrington Athletic Club and has represented England in the past, but hasn't trained for over two years.

Now she'll start pounding the pavements of Stockton Heath every day in preparation for the Easter Sunday race across the Runcorn Bridge.

Katie said: "I know five miles may not seem a lot but I only gave birth six weeks ago so it will feel a lot longer than five miles to me! I am confident

that with a lot of hard work I will be able to complete the race.

"I was really moved by the tragedy of the earthquake and the UN need 346 million to help the victims and help rebuild a future for the city.

"If my little boy cries, I can pick him up and feed him - they can't. My husband and I haven't been able to watch the TV reports because it upsets us so much.

"I wanted to do something to help but also something that would be a real challenge for me. I can't ask people to donate money for something that would be easy.

Anyone who would like to sponsor Katie should visit www.justgiving.com and search for her fundraising page.



Katie, with her son Matthew

Jonathan's close shave

PRIESTLEY College student Jonathan Speed, 17, from Appleton, had his flowing locks shaved off to raise money to help fund an aid mission to Mozambique.

His hair took years to grow, but it disappeared in seconds to help the Habitat for Humanity charity.

Jonathan, pictured with his locks still intact, and fellow student Jack Duggan, 19, raised more than £1,500 and will travel with other students to Mozambique this summer to help build homes for children orphaned by the AIDS epidemic.



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Should village be a 20mph zone?

SHOULD the whole of Stockton Heath be covered by a 20mph speed limit? The suggestion has been put forward by a member of the parish council.

Coun Maurice Leslie - a keen cyclist - said reducing the speed limit to 20mph would be beneficial to the village and would help traffic move freely as well as improve road safety. But his suggestion was dismissed by Coun Sonia Boggan.

She said: "It is a bit extreme to cover the whole of Stockton Heath - you wouldn't get anywhere."

"We should go back to horses and carts if you want to go that slow."

Acting chairman Coun Graham Roughsedge said he had seen a car travelling at about 65mph one Sunday morning in Fairfield Road.

He suggested members consider the proposal at their next meeting.

Reader offer

Tackle hay fever the natural way

IT is estimated that around 9 million people in the UK suffer from this debilitating condition that can affect sufferers for weeks during the late spring and summer months.

Hay fever is usually an allergy to pollen and fungal spores released by flowers, grasses and trees. The exposure to pollen causes cells to release histamine and other chemicals resulting in a running itchy nose, blocked sinuses, sneezing, prickling and watering of the eyes and sometimes a sore, itchy throat. This allergic reaction is an exaggerated response by the immune system to what is essentially a harmless substance.

Hay fever sufferers may show slightly different symptoms, at different times of the year, depending on which particular pollen or spores they react to. The hay fever season may start as early as February with the

release of pollen by trees especially birch and oak. Most people with hay fever are allergic to grass pollens which appear between May and September, peaking in June and July. Later in the year levels of weed pollen and fungal spores rise which also cause reactions in some people.

Keeping an eye on the pollen count can help sufferers to avoid the worst exposure to pollen. Symptoms usually begin when the pollen count rises above 50. Plants release pollen in the early morning when the flowers open up. Levels peak in the late afternoon and evening. The pollen count becomes higher on sunny days as more flowers open. On very humid or windy days pollen may spread further, causing more problems. Rain helps to clear pollen from the air, causing levels to fall.

There are natural treatments that can be extremely effective in helping to combat hay fever, by helping to reduce the body's sensitivity to the pollen. Acupuncture, homeopathy and Herbal Medicine are particularly effective especially when treatment is started before symptoms appear. A short course of treatment may keep the problem at bay for the entire season without the need for further medication. The treatments also have the added benefit of improving the overall health of the individual.

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You can contact us online at info@cheshirenaturalhealth.co.uk, or on 01925 730 123.

Pub sign protest

COMPLAINTS about a brightly coloured sign at the Cat and Lion pub in Stretton will now be reviewed by the company which owns the pub, Appleton Parish Council heard.

Local residents and parish councillors objected to the red and yellow 'two for one' sign outside the pub late last year, as it failed to meet planning conditions, approved in 2008, which stipulated a black a gold sign.

They contacted the landlord, asking for the sign to be removed by February 5, to preserve the character of the building. But the sign remains in place.

Now borough councillor for Stretton, Paul Kennedy, has joined the campaign to get it removed and a representative from the Punch Pub company is to visit to review the sign and take on board any local complaints.

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Advertiser's announcement

Ionian Islands, Greece

Why not visit Lefkas with direct flights from Manchester on a Sunday to Preveza, transfers from the airport take approx 45 mins.

Lefkas was originally called Lefkada and is linked to the mainland by a swing bridge (so you should feel at home there!) The main beach areas are on the east coast with the link across from Lefkas Town. This side of the island is pretty with shingle/sand beaches and is sheltered.

From here you can take boats trips to Kefalonia, Ithaca, Meganissi etc

Motor boats, mountain bike etc can be hired. Lefkas is famous for its wine so worth trying whilst watching the sunset. Nidri is the island's main resort and has a narrow beach and is the yachting centre.

There is a real cosmopolitan feel to

Nidri with lovely restaurants round the harbour. Lefkas is ideal to multi centre with Parga, Sivota Meganissi, Epirus. Ring us for more details.

Another option is Paxos which is the smallest of the Ionian Islands and is approx 10 miles south of Corfu. Most of the Paxos's beaches are shingle and white sand, for sand beaches you would have to take a trip to Anti Paxos which is a mile away and can be reached by water taxi. Paxos is ideal for walking and you can walk across the whole island in the day as it is only 7 miles x 3 miles.

Kefalonia is the largest island in the Ionian group with its lovely beaches,



Linda Crowder – Stockton Heath Travel

pine forests and small coves. Kefalonia is where Captain Corelli's Mandolin was filmed.

Fiscardo in the north is the most picturesque and pretty upmarket village on the island of Kefalonia where you can hire motorboats. There are lots of cafes, restaurants and shops.

Other islands in the Ionian Island group are Zakynthos, Ithaca, Meganissi, Corfu. We have access to some lovely accommodations in the unspoilt areas of Greece and would be happy to do a quote including flights from Manchester for hotels, apartments or villas.

Contact us for more details on 01925 269400 or email for your quote enquiries @island-villas.co.uk. Why not pop in for a coffee while we prepare a quote for you.

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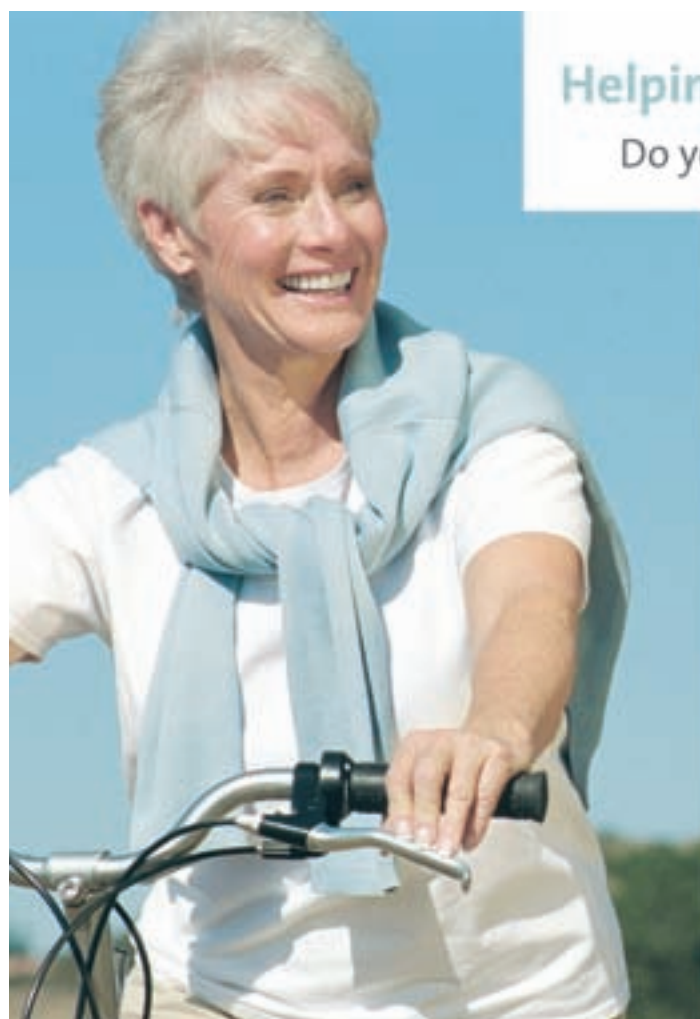
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Noise: the worst cause of stress

NOISE from bars in the centre of Stockton Heath is being monitored to prevent disturbance to residents.

Phil Ramsden, principal environmental health officer with the borough council, said: "The effect of noise disturbance is vastly greater than any other disturbance."

He told Stockton Heath Parish Council that noise at the bars in the Victoria Square area was monitored and kept within allowed limits.

Other noise disturbance in the village, such as barking dogs, was also monitored.

"The impact of barking dogs can be debilitating," he said. "Noise is one of the worst causes of stress and anxiety among people in the community."

He told members that other work of his department included animal welfare and dealing with stray, dangerous or nuisance dogs.

Mum comes highly recommended – by her daughter!

A SATURDAY girl at Window Dreams enjoyed her work so much that when a vacancy for a sales consultant came up – she recommended her mum.

And now Janet Lord has joined the team at the Egypt Street store, just at an exciting time for the shop when the new season's curtains, wallpapers, fabrics and accessories come in.

Owner of Window Dreams Christina Houghton said Janet was originally a customer who heard the shop was looking for a Saturday girl. She recommended her daughter Rebecca, who was studying textiles at Nottingham University.

When Rebecca returned to university she returned the favour and recommended her mum for a part time post.

Janet, who lives in Thelwall, previously worked for Hancock and Woods in Warrington and Stockton Heath for six years.

She is thrilled to join the award-winning business and is 'fascinated' by the variety and quality of the materials on offer.



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	STABLING AND GARAGING
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WASH LANE, LATCHFORD CHESHIRE

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	5 BEDROOMS
	3 BATH/SHOWER ROOMS
	LARGE GARDENS
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What's On in the Villages

March 6
LIVE AT ST WILFRID'S
Meryon Trio. Angus Meryon (clarinet), Jitka Vlasankova (cello), Richard Saxel (piano) play Beethoven, Brahms, Zemlinsky and Archduke Rudolph of Austria
St Wilfrid's Church, Grappenhall. 7.30pm.

March 9
STOCKTON HEATH PARISH COUNCIL
Sandy Lane Centre, 7.30pm

March 16
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

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.

ST MARY MAGDALENE BINGO
2.3.30pm

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

Second and Fourth Tuesday of each month
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Every Wednesday
Lymn Afternoon Bridge Club
Appleton Parish Hall. 1.15-4.15pm

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

First and third Wednesday each month
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS
Sandy Lane Centre, Stockton Heath.
8pm. Details: 01925 268311

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

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

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

Every second Thursday
STRETTON WI
Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road. 2.30pm.

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

GRAPPENHALL WI
Grappenhall Community Centre, Bellhouse Lane 2.15pm

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

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



Hitler killed my canary

A BRAND new theatre company, founded by a former Appleton resident, is to give three performances of a highly acclaimed play locally.

The Broken Cloud Theatre Company was launched by Johnny Kindersley with a commitment to creating innovative and exciting theatre and promoting and performing it in the North West.

Its first production, "Hitler killed my Canary" will be presented at Cinnamon Brow Community Centre, Fearnhead on April 2, at Stockton Heath Methodist Hall on April 3 and at Appleton Thorn Village Hall on April 6. Each performance will be at

8pm.

The play, a comedy with tragic undertones, is one Johnny has worked on several times previously. It was co-written by Paul Stebbings who has directed a number of plays for Johnny over the last 10 years. It has been performed at the Edinburgh Festival and numerous other venues.

Johnny was born in Appleton and grew up in the local area before spending 10 years touring Europe with Munich-based TNT Theatre.



Council concern over 3-year festival licence

GRANTING a three-year licence for the Creamfields music festival would limit the amount of control police and councils had over the event, according to Stockton Heath Parish Council.

The parish's Planning, Finance and General Purposes Committee, heard that festival organisers had applied for a licence for the event to be held each August on land at Daresbury for the next three years.

Members agreed to write to Warrington Council expressing concerns that an annual licence was important to maintain "democracy and flexibility."

School receives IT award

PUPILS and staff at Grappenhall Heys Primary School are celebrating after being awarded ICT Mark accreditation by Becta, the government agency for technology in learning.

The school was accredited with the ICT Mark in recognition of the its innovative and forward thinking approach in using information and communications technology in education.

Making it even more special for the school was the fact that it received the award on the Naace stand at the BETT Show - the largest education and technology show in the world, where the most cutting edge and innovative technologies in education are showcased.

The ICT Mark is only awarded to

schools following an external assessment in which the school's progress and success in placing technology at the heart of learning, as well as wider school management is rigorously judged.

ICT has helped to enhance teaching and bring lessons to life at Grappenhall Heys showing clearly how technology makes a difference, not just in the classroom, but at home, within the family and across other school activities.

Headteacher Davina Woods said: "We are delighted to be awarded the ICT Mark. It recognises our positive approach to ICT and the benefits it is bringing to our children."

"We believe that ICT can be used in every aspect of learning, and that it is an essential tool for ensuring our children are equipped for the modern world. To be awarded the ICT Mark at BETT, surrounded by some of the most cutting edge technologies in the industry, made it even more special for us as a school."

Niel McLean, executive director for schools and families at Becta said: Grappenhall Heys thoroughly deserve the accolade of an ICT mark accreditation. They clearly demonstrate how important it is to take a holistic approach to using ICT in schools. Their investment in new technology has contributed to substantial improvements in learning within the school."

Rogue trader alerts

A SCHEME designed to alert the community to potential criminals - including rogue traders and distraction burglars - is growing.

Stockton Heath Parish Council heard that the iCAN consumer alert scheme now has 3,000 members - and is expected to have 5,000 by the end of the year.

The scheme, run by Trading Standards, offers free text or land line message alerts if there are problems such as bogus doorstep sellers, distraction burglars or anti-social behaviour in a member's home area.

Principal environmental health officer Phil Ramsden said: "These people tend to target vulnerable or older people and the service warns if there is a risk in their area."

He said the service is open to everyone and uses the "eyes and ears" of the community. People can report information on the trader's work such as sales pitch, type of ID and advertising material.

The information is reported and then passed on to other members.

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Pupils African adventure

A GROUP of pupils from Bridgewater High School are visiting its 'linked' school in South Africa.

Bridgewater has had links with Forte High School in Soweto since 2005.

As part of a series of on-going visits between the two schools a group of teachers and pupils from Appleton are visiting the Johannesburg school this month - to find out about its culture and education system.

They will attend Forte High and work on joint lessons in Science and Geography, and on various scientific projects related to their eco-gardens.

The Bridgewater pupils will visit the

Apartheid Museum and the former home of Nelson Mandela.

Bridgewater has been raising funds for Forte pupils to visit them this summer.

Twins Laurence and Ralph Sparks, aged 15, of Year 10 completed a 35-mile sponsored bicycle ride along the Trans Pennine Trail in December and raised £1,270.

They presented the cheque to Mr Tim Long, head teacher and Mrs Gerrie Shadwell, assistant head teacher.



Laurence and Ralph Sparks presenting a cheque to Mr Long and Mrs Shadwell.



Laurence and Ralph Sparks outside Bridgewater Upper School at the start of their ride



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Residents 'fed up' over parking

RESIDENTS in the Chapel Lane area of Stockton Heath are fed up with not being able to park outside their homes.

They have asked the parish council to support their request for a "resident's only" parking scheme.

One woman told the council that parking in the area was "getting ridiculous" and that new businesses were adding to the problem as customers and staff parked in the street.

She said people parked across driveways in nearby streets. Drivers were like "praying mantis" waiting for cars to leave and jumping into the spots.

"It's awful when you come home from work exhausted and then have to park down the street or walk from a neighbouring street," she added.

Residents complained that although some of the businesses have car parks, drivers do not use them and still park in the street. They claimed they had been trying to get residents' only parking for some years but had been unsuccessful.

George Baker, of Chapel Lane, said he was fed up with the parking problem and that drivers did not consider residents.

"It is getting so bad that if you left the front door open, they would park on the stairs."

Coun Graham Roughsedge said parking was a problem in many streets in the village including East Avenue, Victoria Road and

Warburton Street. The borough council was considering extending residents only parking to areas of Stockton Heath.

Coun Wendy Emsely suggested contacting the businesses to see if they would ask staff and customers not to park in the street. But members agreed this may only be a short-term solution.

Members agreed to find out what progress the borough council had made regarding residents only parking.

22-hour pizza people?

A PIZZA shop in Stockton Heath wants to open almost round-the-clock.

The London Road shop has applied to extend its opening hours right through the night to 5am.

It would then re-open two hours later at 7am.

Members of Stockton Heath Parish Council decided to oppose the application.

They felt the longer hours would encourage people to stay out later in the village, leading to disturbance for residents.

It could also lead to more public disorder and crime.

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Run for your life

THE smell of slurry on fields in parts of South Warrington is sometimes so bad it makes you want to 'run for your life' according to a local councillor.

Coun Tudor Pole told Stockton Heath Parish Council he notices the problem when driving along roads and motorways near farmer's fields.

"In some conditions the smell of slurry on farmer's fields is so bad that it makes you want to run for your life," he said.

Principal environmental health officer Phil Ramsden said regulations meant that when slurry was spread on

a field it must be ploughed in on the same day.

"Once it is ploughed in then 90 per cent of the smell is gone," he said.

"There are some really offensive smells, but they are generally short term."

He said officers did their best to ensure the odour was minimised and that each field was spread only once every two years.

No more hot food, says council

NO more restaurants, bars or hot food outlets should be allowed in Stockton Heath - in order to protect the village's "daytime vitality."

This is the view of the parish council, responding to a discussion document from the borough council looking at the local development framework.

The document says: "Stockton Heath is thriving as the main retail and service centre in South Warrington, and is a popular evening destination where people feel safe."

Parish councillors agree - but feel the number of restaurants and other food outlets should not be increased from the present level to ensure enough retail outlets are retained to maintain daytime vitality and a balanced and substantial economy.

Coun Graham Roughsedge said the parish council should monitor the development of the village.

Care home changes approved

REVISED proposals for a three-storey care home have been approved by planning chiefs.

The scheme in London Road, Appleton involves the demolition of two detached houses opposite the junction with Delphfields Road and the construction of a 76-bedroom residential care home on the site.

Developers Villafont Ltd won planning consent for the development a year ago - for 73 bedrooms.

But they submitted an amended

plan increasing the number of rooms by three and planning officers recommended approval because it involved minor internal alterations.

Appleton Parish Council opposed the scheme on the grounds of overdevelopment of the site and highway and pedestrian safety in the area.

Neighbours did not object and there was support from seven residents of the wider Stockton Heath and Grappenhall areas.

Friends fight tip closure

FRIENDS of the Earth staged a protest at Stockton Heath's Sandy Lane Recycling Centre to fight its possible closure.

They were joined by Nick Bent, Labour Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Warrington South, to protest at the borough council's plans to save money by closing the centre, along with a similar one at Woolston.

John Wesley, from Friends of the Earth, said "These two recycling centres take several categories of recyclable waste that the kerbside collections and the local recycling bring sites do not accept - including furniture, excess garden waste, electrical items, wood and timber, batteries, and scrap metal."

"If these sites are closed, the only way to recycle these items will be to take them to the Gatewarth Recycling Centre, involving a round trip of about seven miles from Stockton Heath or Woolston, passing through the already crowded town centre and further adding to the traffic at Gatewarth."

The group thinks waste would end in the black bin, and taken to landfill, or would be dumped or fly tipped, damaging the environment and costing the council money to clear up.

Mr Bent said: "The council is crazy to propose closing two of the borough's three recycling centres, which would put more pressure on the Gatewarth facility at Sankey Bridges and clog up local roads there."

"The council's attitude to the environment really is rubbish."



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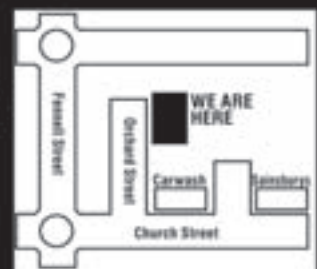
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Money Column

By Margaret Black

Employment law

OUR column this month is an extract taken from a professional publication and is intended to inform rather than advise. Professional advice should be taken before taking any action.

Question: An employee has been summonsed to attend jury service for two weeks. Is the employer able to claim compensation for the inconvenience this cause and will there be an expectation for the employer to pay the employee during their absence.

Answer: Unfortunately only the employee can expect compensation, this will be for the following: - travel costs, - a subsistence allowance and an - allowance for loss of earnings. On the other hand the employer cannot expect any allowances. They do not, however, have any legal requirement to pay the employee their normal salary whilst they are away attending jury service.


Payment of wages is entirely a contractual matter and unless it has been agreed by the employer to pay them their normal level of salary whilst they are absent any payment made is purely discretionary. If the employee does not receive any wages from the employer or only part of their normal wage they can complete a Certificate for 'loss of earnings' This document can then be presented at the court to make the claim. For periods up to and including four hours in the first 10 days of jury service, the maximum loss of earnings payment is currently £31.56 per day. For periods of more than 4 hours in the first 10 days of jury service, the

maximum loss of earnings payment is currently £63.12 per day.

Please note jury service does not normally last more than 2 weeks. If you are the employer check any employment insurance documents you may have as there may be cover for employee costs for jury service included, i.e additional costs you may incur for replacement staff.

Question: Is it true that from April 2010 it will be compulsory for an employer to give employees time off to undertake training if they want to. If so what are the employees' rights and entitlements?

Answer: For employers who have at least 250 employees, the new statutory rights for employees in England to request 'time to train' come into effect on 6 April 2010. For those employers with less than 250 employees, this will not come into force until at least April 2011. The right to request 'time to train', which is set out in the new 'Apprenticeships', 'Skills', 'Children and Learning Act 2009', will work by giving an eligible employee a legal right to ask their employer to give them time away from their main job to undertake relevant training. The employer will be expected to treat the request fairly and seriously, the working model for time to train will closely follow the one already in place which




David Watkinson and Margaret Black

The Money Column is provided by WatkinsonBlack Chartered Accountants 113, Orford Lane, Warrington. Please telephone 01925 413210 or e-mail on margaret@warringtonaccountants.co.uk

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Rugby League 'school' plan



Part of the 22-acre site with the Park Royal Hotel in the background.

PLANS have been drawn up for a major junior Rugby League training facility on a 22-acre green belt site at Stretton.

The land is currently owned by a national housebuilder, but is unlikely to be granted planning consent for housing in the foreseeable future.

It is being offered for sale - and a consortium headed by lawyer Lionel Hurst, founder of the National Summer Rugby League Conference, and including the Cheshire Cats junior Rugby League club, has funding in place to buy it.

A planning application will be submitted to the borough council in the near future.

The consortium has already given a presentation to a public meeting organised by Stretton Parish Council and attended by more than 30 local residents.

Mr Hurst said: "There were some people in support of the proposals and some against. But overall, we were very pleased with the positive response."

"We think this development would be very much to the benefit of the local community - and it would effectively preserve a green belt site in perpetuity."

"Although the present owners would be unlikely to get planning consent for housing in the foreseeable future, who can say what the situation would be in 20 years' time?"

"Hundreds of houses could be built - totally changing the character of a rural area."

The plans involve four rugby pitches, a children's play area and a

small pavilion on land roughly bounded by the A49 Tarporley Road, Stretton Road, Spark Hall Close and the M56.

Details have yet to be agreed, but access would probably be from the Stretton Road end of Spark Hall Close.

Existing trees, shrubs and evergreen hedging would be retained.

Mr Hurst said: "This would become the home of Cheshire Cats, which caters for youngsters aged 4-18. But it could also be used by Warrington Wizards and we would welcome approaches from other football, hockey, cricket clubs, etc, or even other local organisations, so it could become a real community facility."

Parish council clerk Linda Crewe said: "Our role at the moment is in keeping people informed. We leafleted every house in Stretton to tell people about the presentation and we were very pleased with the turnout."

"When a formal planning application is received we will probably call another public meeting."

Borough councillor Paul Kennedy said: "I will be working with the parish council on this and taking local soundings and seeking the advice of the borough's development control department. I will obviously represent the views of residents."

Reader's Letter

Please send your correspondence to:
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Disgusted

Mrs P Brookes, *Antrobus*

WE are more than disgusted about the lack of public toilets in Stockton Heath. It is going from bad to worse.

My husband holds a key which should enable him to use the disabled toilet. Up to now this has been available. But no more, we discovered last week. It is diabolical.

Surely the council can do something about this. Money can be found for other things.

We holiday in Scotland and a village there has arrangements with some shop owners to use their facilities and a notice board is displayed on the car park with the names of the participating shops.

It is many years since the toilets in Stockton Heath were closed and the council should be ashamed that they can't come up with a solution.

Perhaps our trips to Stockton Heath will have to be curtailed?

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