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Issue No. 120  
March 2011

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## Spring is in the air!

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**Editor**

Gary Skentelbery

**Production**

Paul Walker

**Business Manager**

Tony Record

**Advertising**Freephone  
0800 955 5247**Editorial**

01925 623632

**Email**info@warrington-  
worldwide.co.uk**Websites**www.culchethlife.com  
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# Editor's Comment



**CONSIDERABLE optimism was expressed at the annual general meeting of the Friends of Walton Estate - and this can only be good news.**

Plans are afoot to make the hall and grounds more attractive to visitors in the near future, and it seems likely the estate will remain in the hands of the borough council.

But this being the case, we should not expect too much too soon. We are moving through a period when public spending is being squeezed more tightly than ever before and the council's need to save money is well known. The Friends say they expect a "rush of volunteers" to work on the estate and, no doubt, there will be some enthusiasts willing and able to help. But signing up for a Facebook

campaign is one thing - rolling up one's sleeves and actually doing some work may turn out to be another. In any event, it all seems rather different to the council's grandiose proposals put forward only last year, which talked of making Walton one of the North West's premier historic estate attractions.

We warned then about the dangers of comparing a beer baron's pile, dating from the 1830s, with

Tatton Hall, built at the turn of the 15th century, Dunham Massey Hall, built on the site of a 1616 Tudor House or Lyme Hall, which has Camellias growing in its grounds which are older than Walton!

So yes, we wish the Friends well and hope their optimism is not misplaced. But let us not get carried away with any ideas that Walton can become one of the region's premier historic estate attractions.

## Round-the-clock police station

STOCKTON Heath Police Station is to be manned round-the-clock, seven days a week, from April 1.

The station will continue to be open to visitors Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm.

Crimes, other than emergencies, can be reported on 0845 458000 and the number for the front desk is 01244 612630. For emergencies, the usual 999 should be used.

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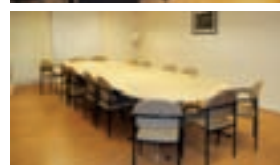
Making Space, the Warrington based national charity for people with mental health conditions - and their carers - can now host first class facilities where people can exchange great ideas and information.

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# Friends plan special memorial garden

**A SPECIAL memorial garden is being created at Grappenhall Cricket Club in memory of a bubbly young woman who tragically died on her 26th birthday from a rare illness.**

Described by friends as "beautiful, young, talented" Candice Roberts, who worked behind the bar at the club, was loved by everyone who met her due to her great warmth, enthusiasm, capacity for friendship and being naturally funny she always cheered people up.

Candice from Chiswick Gardens, Appleton, developed Gullain-Barré syndrome, which is a rare illness that commonly follows a mild illness such as gastroenteritis or 'flu-like' symptoms. The body's immune system then becomes 'confused' and produces antibodies that attack its own nervous system. The nerves lose functionality and paralysis of varying degrees then follows, covering partial areas of the limbs or the full body.

The illness has no preference for the age or health and strength of the sufferer, and although over 80% of people recover, 97% fully, healthy Candice did not and died on August 23 last year - on her birthday.

Her mother Karen has set up a special Trust fund in her memory and friends are now helping with fundraising for the memorial garden.

Friend and local councillor Dr Angie Winnington said: "Candice was a beautiful, young and talented person who was loved by everyone who knew her.

"Now a team of loyal family and friends are working to raise awareness and funds towards more research into this cruel, and potentially fatal, illness and support the Candice Marie Roberts Foundation."

She said they needed people to help with a memorial garden at Grappenhall Cricket Club, which will be opened officially at a fete on

Sunday, August 28.

They are looking for people to donate time, seeds, plants, earth, paint, lights or anything that they can use to make it a fantastic welcoming space.

Anyone who would like to donate money directly to the family to put towards the charity (100% of all money raised will go straight to the foundation) can send it to Karen Roberts at 4 Chiswick Gardens, Appleton, WA4 5HQ.

Meanwhile anyone who would like to be involved in the special Village Fete Day with stalls, stands e.t.c should contact local councillor Dr Angie Winnington on 07967 481594 or 01925 263660 or [angie@cheshireskinclinic.com](mailto:angie@cheshireskinclinic.com)



## Councils to join forces over trees

**THE parish councils at Stockton Heath and Walton are to get together to consider planting more trees in the area.**

Walton councillor Bob Hardy - who lives in Stockton Heath - says his council have planted additional trees in verges in Walton which had brought about a big improvement in the appearance of the area.

He believed the two councils should work together to get more trees in both areas.

Stockton Heath councillors have agreed - and invited Cllr Hardy to attend a meeting of their Village Committee to discuss the matter further.

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## Claire follows in Mum's footsteps

CLAIRE Berry, aged 14 has been selected to be this year's Thelwall Rose Queen.

The Lymm High School pupil will be following in Mum Lorraine's footsteps because she is a former Rose Queen.

Claire, who previously attended Thelwall Junior School, is an enthusiastic member of the Guide movement, having been a Brownie and a Guide and now a Ranger.

She's keen on running, computer games and pets - particularly Guinea Pigs.

Claire will be crowned Queen at the annual festival in June.



## Robert runs marathon for cancer charity



APPLETON resident Robert Bates is to take part in this year's London Marathon to raise £4,000 to help children affected by Britain's most common childhood cancer.

Robert, a chartered surveyor, will join the Mr Men and Little Miss team running for Children with Leukaemia.

The team will be one of the largest in the marathon and the runners will be easy to spot in their trademark Mr Happy and Mr Tickle running vests.

Robert, 36, said: "It is a once in a lifetime opportunity to raise money for this very deserving charity".

Children with leukaemia was set up by Eddie and Marion O'Gorman after their 14-year-old son Paul died from leukaemia. Just nine months later they lost their daughter Jean, also to cancer.

It is now a leading national charity dedicated to the conquest of childhood leukaemia through pioneering research, new treatment and support of leukaemic children and their families.

More details are available at [www.leukaemia.org](http://www.leukaemia.org)

## A pay freeze for the unpaid!

PARISH councillors at Stockton Heath and Appleton do not claim expenses or allowances - even though they have been entitled to do so for eight years.

This has emerged following confusion caused by a request from the borough council that parish councils freeze members' allowances because of the current economic climate.

Puzzled councillors at Stockton Heath agreed to the request - but queried how they could freeze an allowance they didn't receive anyway!

Clerk Peter Briggs - who is also clerk to Appleton Parish Council - explained that historically, allowances and expenses had not been claimed by members of either council, even though they were entitled to.

Rules relating to parish council expenses and allowances were

amended in 2003, and allow parishes who choose to pay a basic allowance each year either to its chairman only or to each of its members to do so. In the event of all members receiving an allowance, the chairman can receive a larger

allowance.

Expenses, travelling and subsistence allowances can also be paid under the rules.

All payments are overseen by an independent parish remuneration panel.

## 'Good result' on crime



JUST seven crimes were reported in January in Stockton Heath - a "good result" according to Police Community Support Officer Ben Blandford.

He told the parish council there was just one incident reported in a village pub on New Year's Eve.

"Given the numbers of people about, that was a good result," he said.

He said there 15 incidents of anti-social behaviour, four incidents of noise nuisance and two road rage incidents.

Chairman Cllr Celia Jordan said: "These are low-level crimes. It is good to know you are onto them."

## Murder mystery at the parish hall

DRAMA group The Bridgewater Players is to stage a thriller, "Dead Man's Hand", at Thelwall Parish Hall on April 14, 15 and 16.

The story involves two couples who are lured to a remote location to be murdered one by one.

Who is the murderer? What links the victims? The tense drama by Seymour Matthews contains a number of twists and turns and will keep the audience on the edge of their seats.

The Bridgewater Players, which originates from Lymm, is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year and is planning a number of special events.

Originally it had intended to stage "The Killing of Sister George" in April but had to abandon this for the time being because of casting difficulties.

The group has also decided to stage a murder mystery evening at Thelwall Parish Hall on April 9 to help raise funds for new lighting and sound equipment.

## Planters 'saved'

DECORATIVE planters in Stockton Heath, damaged by the severe winter weather, have been saved.

Members heard the contractor who supplies the planters has provided new plants and offered to do the work free as a goodwill gesture.

Members agreed to accept the free labour, worth £70, and pay £70 for extra plants.



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**FAMILY FUN** – There will always be plenty to do on a 'Family Fun' park, whatever the weather. With superb facilities and entertainment, there will be lots to keep the whole family amused day and night. Whether you are looking for a base from which to explore the local area or a safe family haven where children can play and have fun (mum and dad too), these parks are the perfect choice for you! You need to check out the facilities on each park to see what is on offer as some of the parks have more comprehensive programmes than others and vary depending on the time of year.

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Perhaps you fancy a change of pace and are keen to try something new, then 'GO ACTIVE' breaks is an exciting collection featuring 10 great locations. From thrills and spills of white-water rafting to a relaxing walk through stunning countryside, each of the Go Active break locations offers a wide range of activities to suit everyone. Ideal for those amongst us who are looking to enjoy a healthier lifestyle!

What about the dog? Many properties offer the warmest of welcomes to the family pet so



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## Spring is in the air!

### SPRING is in the air - particularly at Tatton Park's Home Farm.

The farm's 34 ewes have been scanned - and all are pregnant.

In total, 11 single lambs, 19 sets of twins and four sets of triplets are expected.

Twenty three of the ewes will be lambing within days of each other during mid-April.

Visitors to the farm during Lambing Week (April 16-22) and in the preceding week can expect to see many woolly new arrivals!

It is the first time in many years that there has been 100 per cent conception rate among the farm's mainly Suffolk cross flock.

There are also four rare breed Leicester longwool ewes expecting six lambs between them.

The Leicester longwools are considered 'vulnerable' on the Rare Breeds Survival Trust watch list and so the addition of potentially six more to the Home Farm flock is very special.

Farm assistant Elly Edwards said: "It is extremely gratifying to have this fantastic success rate. We were quite concerned that the ewes may have suffered due to the particularly harsh winter weather. However, it looks like we will be overrun with lambs by mid April!"

## Festival for young scientists

BUDDING young scientists from schools across Cheshire will be taking part in a festival celebrating the appliance of science this month.

Organised by the University of Chester, the Cheshire Science Communication (SciComm) festival involves whole classes from primary schools taking part in a competition to showcase their scientific and engineering ingenuity.

The theme is communication and entrants are invited to demonstrate their ideas to a team of judges at the university.

### Communication

Peter York, from the Department of Biological Sciences, said: "The theme of communication can be interpreted in many different ways, from the calls birds make to radio waves flying through the air. This event is a great way to exhibit what your school is doing to celebrate science week."

Pupils have until March 11 to develop their project which will be demonstrated at the SciComm event which takes place at the Northwich Memorial Hall, on March 15.

As well as the competition, there will be a variety of stands where local science-related businesses and organisations will provide educational and entertaining demonstrations to capture the children's interest in science and communications.

Mr York added: "The event will contribute to the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum and develop teamwork, creativity and communication, by engaging students in maths, technology and science."

## Council unhappy over 'paperless' plans consultation

APPLETON Parish Council has reluctantly agreed to take part in a six month trial of "paperless" consultation on planning matters.

This follows a request from the borough council who claim 1,200 copies of planning applications, each at least 10 pages long, are sent to parish councils across the borough.

As full information on each application is available on the borough council website and lists showing applications submitted for each ward are sent out by email to parish councils weekly, it was

suggested that if the paper copies were not sent, between £7,000 and £15,000 could be saved in a year.

It was also suggested the parish council could forward comments and objections to the borough council through its website.

Some parish councils in the borough do not review domestic planning applications, it was claimed.

Members of the parish council's planning sub-committee are unhappy about the proposals.

They say there are numerous

problems with viewing planning applications on line, including slowness, cumbersome measuring tools and the difficulty in making comparisons on screen between existing and proposed plans which are not to scale.

They feared it would be necessary to print off plans to enable proper assessment by the committee - with increased costs to the parish council.

Members also suggested it would not be possible to review planning applications as thoroughly as in the past.



## Pupils present history musical

PUPILS at Grappenhall Heys Primary School presented a musical "The Great Fire of London".

Pictured From left, Charlie Ford as the narrator Max Webb as a soldier, Alfie O'Donnell the baker, Freddy Garbutt as Samuel Peeps, Toby Holmes as King Charles II and Lucas Evans as the Lord Mayor.

# Brighter future for Walton estate?

**A BRIGHTER future is being predicted for Warrington's Walton Hall Estate following the collapse of the controversial plan to lease it to a hotel company.**

This is the view of the Friends of Walton Estate, following their annual general meeting.

Acting secretary Malcolm Eldridge said: "Things are moving. After a difficult period when the future of the estate was in doubt, various developments have encouraged the Friends of Walton Estate.

"We have been thanked for our efforts by Warrington Borough Council staff.

"We have heard that the Heritage Yard will soon be re-open, that the vandalised band stand will be replaced by Spring and that work is in hand to provide playground equipment for 8-13 year olds.

"The Friends are well-represented on the Walton Estate Advisory Group (WEAG) which is reviewing possibilities for the estate.

"Expecting that the estate will remain in the hands of Warrington Borough Council, the Friends have pledged their support for future developments and anticipate that there will be many opportunities for voluntary work.

"The tremendous public support in the campaign to 'Save Walton Gardens' suggests that the public at large are very keen to take on some responsibility for the gardens and this has been confirmed by responses to various surveys that have taken place recently.

Mr Eldridge said dates would be published shortly when members of the public would be encouraged to give some time.

"The Friends are starting a recruitment drive and will help organise the expected rush of volunteers. The area beyond the two bridges at the entrance will soon be tidied up and the zoo is looking for volunteers to do some painting."

The Friends' financial report showed a "profit" of more than £2,000 for the year.

"It has been difficult to spend money while the future was cloudy though the Friends have bought equipment for the zoo this year. The group is in a good position to help other developments."

Anyone who wishes to contact the Friends should visit their website [www.fowe.btck.co.uk](http://www.fowe.btck.co.uk)



## Village wants to be 'safe' at night

**DESPITE its reputation for attracting late night revellers, Stockton Heath is hoping to achieve a quality award for excellence in 'safe' evening management.**

Stockton Heath Parish Council heard that the borough council was hoping to get a Purple Flag accreditation for the village.

The recognition, awarded by the Association of Town Centre Management, is a new accreditation scheme that recognises excellence in the management of town and city centres at night.

It is awarded to entertainment areas that offer "a better night out" to visitors and aims to raise standards

and improve the quality of towns and cities at night.

Dave Watson, the borough's community safety and licensing manager, told parish councillors: "The award recognises the area as 'safe' for people to use. It has been awarded to places such as Liverpool and Birmingham."

He was working with police, licensing authorities and businesses in the area, to try to achieve the award. A risk assessment was being carried out at licensed premises to ensure they were operating at a high standard.

"We are surveying people to find out what they think about the area and what they think about using the village at night," he said.

"We want to ensure that residents and businesses are valued and that all ages use the village. We want to all work together to make the area safe."

Cllr Marilyn Timmins pointed out

there were a lot of public houses, restaurants and licensed premises in the village.

'Positive impact'

Mr Watson said that although the council could not impose a limit on the numbers of licensed premises in the village, it had adopted a new policy under which people applying for new licences would have to prove they would have a "positive impact" on the village.

Resident John Woods said he thought the village should be more "pedestrian friendly" and that the speed limit should be lowered.

"This would make a huge difference to the feel of the village in the evening," he said.

Mr Watson said he would pass on the comments to transport planners.

"We want people to feel relaxed when they are walking around the village."

## Bloom in pregnancy and blossom in birth!

**A whole new approach to birth preparation will be available in Stockton Heath from March 18.**

Whilst new to Warrington, Daisy Birthing classes have actually been mentoring and supporting mums to be since 2004 (over 1500 of them in fact), when it was set up by Suffolk based founder and mum of five, Julie Long.

The weekly programme has been designed to bring together some of the most popular and holistic techniques for comfortable and confident birthing including movement (reminiscent of yoga, tai chi and dance), relaxation and self hypnosis based exercises, breathing and self massage. In fact this really is one of the most inclusive birth programmes out there, priced to ensure it is accessible for a vast number of expectant mums.

The key intention is to help all mums feel confident and to look forward to birth - whatever journey they hope for or plan. This means even those knowing they may need a c-section or be closely monitored during labour can still benefit!

Daisy Birthing attracts a variety of mums to its teaching apprenticeship programme.

All Daisy Birthing Teachers are approved by the Federation of Antenatal Educators and hold full insurance. For further details on classes in this area please contact [Lindsay@LazyDaisyBirthing.co.uk](mailto:Lindsay@LazyDaisyBirthing.co.uk) or 07725538857 or visit [www.lazydaisywarrington.co.uk](http://www.lazydaisywarrington.co.uk) Classes must be pre-booked.





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## What's On in the Villages

March 8

STOCKTON HEATH PARISH COUNCIL  
Sandy Lane Centre. 7.30pm

March 10

LIVE AT ST WILFRID'S  
Richard Uterley (piano - overall winner of the Haverhill Sinfonia Competition, 2010) and Tamara Zivadinovic (soprano - highest placed singer).  
St Wilfrid's Church, Grappenhall. 7.30pm

March 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) VW  
Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road. 7.30pm

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 VW  
Independent Methodist Chapel, Knutsford Road,  
Grappenhall. 7.30pm

Every Tuesday

COFFEE MORNING  
St Cross Church, Appleton Thorn. All welcome.  
10am-12 noon

PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

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

COFFEE MORNING

Appleton Independent Methodist Church  
Appleton Parish Hall, 10am-12 noon

Second and Fourth Tuesday of each month

STOCKTON HEATH & DISTRICT LIONS  
Ram's Head, Grappenhall.

Every first Wednesday

Walton VW  
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 VW, 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

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

Every second Thursday

STRETTON VW  
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 VW

Grappenhall Community Centre, Bellhouse Lane  
2.15pm

Every Friday

APPLETON 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**



## £4,472 raised through 'indulgence'

**PAST and present Warrington Wolves players and a team of firefighters were on hand to help at a 'Ladies Indulgence Evening' in Grappenhall.**

More than 200 local mums and their friends met for the event organised by The Friends of St Wilfrid's CE Primary School, Grappenhall, and helped raise £4,472.



Wolves player Jon Clarke and former player Chris Hicks served the welcome drinks, and firefighters from Stockton Heath were on hand to support the evening.

The celebration included music and fashion shows. Staff from a local hair salon styled 40 models for the evening - who were mainly mums from the school and the local lollipop lady!

One of the organisers Jayne Jones

said: "The evening was an incredible community event. It was a great success from both a fundraising and social perspective.

"The atmosphere was magical, the venue was perfect and everyone had a fabulous time. The support we received from local businesses was overwhelming, and raising £4,472 is a fantastic amount of money, which will be put towards purchasing much needed library books."

## Celebrating 10 years of community life

VILLAGE Life will be celebrating its 10th anniversary next month and to mark the occasion the publication will be given a new look and now be delivered to around 5,000 selected homes in the area.

It will still be available to pick up in the usual major outlets ensuring the best possible coverage of the area.

As part of our service we can now also design, print and deliver up to 5,000 leaflets for local businesses, which has proved hugely popular with our sister titles in nearby Lymm and Frodsham.

Village Life has reported on Community Life every month for the past 10 years and will continue to do so.

If you want to ensure your community group or local business gets coverage in our 10th anniversary issue please call us now on 0800 955 5247.

## Meet your MP David Mowat

David Mowat, MP for Warrington South, holds regular surgeries throughout the constituency. If you would like to arrange an appointment to discuss an issue of concern to you please e-mail him at [david.mowat.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:david.mowat.mp@parliament.uk) or telephone **01925 267580**.



**David Mowat**  
Member of Parliament  
for Warrington South

[www.davidmowat.org](http://www.davidmowat.org)

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

## Slimmers raise money for Heroes

**SUCCESSFUL** slimmers at Appleton hit on an idea to solve the problem of what to do with clothes that no longer fit them - and raise money for the Help for Heroes charity at the same time.

Members of Sara Murray's Slimming World group held a 'clothes swap' - exchanging garments for ones of the right size for a donation to the charity.

Sara said: "Members lose weight so successfully with Slimming World's generous healthy eating plan and with the support of such an amazing group, that we walk around in clothes we have shrunk out of.

"But we are reluctant to spend money on new clothes because we know that in a few weeks these clothes will be too big as well.

"With this dilemma in mind, some of the members came up with this great idea of a clothes swap, raising money for Help for Heroes in the process."

The group meets at Broomfields Junior School at 6pm or 7.30pm on Wednesday and Sara can be contacted on 07948 375250.



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# Wedding festival starts year of celebrations

**A YEAR of special events to celebrate the 125th anniversary of St Cross Church, Appleton Thorn, got under way with a two-day wedding festival.**

Visitors were invited into the church to see an exhibition of wedding dresses - many worn by brides who were married in the church - dating from the 1940s to the present day.

Our picture shows Sue Woolley, co-ordinator of the event with a 1962 wedding dress.

## Anniversary

Other events to mark the anniversary include an art competition for local schools and a booklet on the history of the church is being prepared.

St Cross Church was built in 1886 by Edgerton Warburton of Arley Hall to a design by the Liverpool architect Edmund Kirby.

It maintains links with the Royal Naval Association originally forged during the war when the Royal Naval Air Station, HMS Blackcap, was at Stretton. There are war graves in the

church yard and a war memorial outside the church.

Also outside, of course, is the Thorn Tree, an offspring of the famous Glastonbury Thorn which, according to legend, was brought to Appleton by a Norman knight and planted there.

In fact, numerous trees had died and the present one is of much more recent vintage.

But it still forms the centrepiece of the annual Bawming the Thorn festival, in which children dance around the tree and decorate it with flowers and ribbons.



## Newsletter grant

A GRANT of £40 has been given by Stockton Heath Parish Council towards the cost of a newsletter in the village produced by the warden at Alexandra Park.

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# Village centre farmers markets

**REGULAR farmers markets may soon be held in Stockton Heath village centre with a range of local produce and goods on offer.**

Walton Lea Project, which also runs the Long Lane Garden Centre in Warrington, plans to hold the markets on the last Sunday of the month, starting on April 24 or May 29, in Victoria Square.

The charity, which offers supported employment and training to adults

with learning disabilities, previously ran farmers markets at Walton Gardens and the Scout Hut in Stockton Heath.

Kate Fitch, the project's horticulturist, said the farmers market successfully ran at Walton Gardens for two years. Following proposed

redevelopment of the site, the market found a new home at the scout hut in Parkgate Road.

"We went to the scout hut for three or four months, but there was not the same footfall as we were a bit too far out of the area," she told Stockton Heath Parish Council.

The project had been approached a few months earlier by the parish council to see whether it would consider running a farmers market in the village.

Mrs Fitch told members she had met the Warrington Market manager who had said he had no objection to the market operating on Sundays, but could have problems with it operating on any other day.

She said there were plans to have between eight and 10 stalls and she had up to 15 possible traders who were interested in joining in. Farmers markets had to sell products sourced within 30 miles and that goods on offer would include food, drink and

crafted items.

Police supported the idea and the park warden from Alexandra Park was also involved in the project.

The project has received a grant of £1,000 from the Stronger Together group towards providing gazebos to cover stalls and for advertising the events.

Cllr Tudor Pole questioned whether the market would be reliable, as he said space had been reserved for the project at the Stockton Heath Festival and it had not attended.

Mrs Fitch said the previous markets at Walton and the Scout Hut had always run on schedule.

She asked if the parish council could help fund trestle tables which would also be a community resource available to other groups. Members agreed to research organisations who may be able to offer tables on loan.



## Alice meets the white rabbit

THE new "Alice" chosen by the Warrington-based Lewis Carroll Society had a very special meeting with white rabbits.

Ros Bayton, age nine, from Moore, has been chosen to be Alice this year. She visited the children's zoo at Walton Hall Gardens especially to meet the white rabbits.

The society supports the zoo's adoption scheme, run by the friends of Walton Estate, by taking out an annual adoption of the rabbits for their current "Alice."

This year Ros will receive a rabbit fact pack, certificate, keyring, newsletters, and birthday card and will be invited to a special adopter's evening during the summer.

Adoptions start at only £12, and anyone interested in more information should contact the rangers on 01925 601617 extension 2.

## Road improvements

**ROAD improvement works in Appleton will start early in March - with inevitable hold-ups for traffic.**

Affected roads are Lumb Brook Road between Grappenhall Road and Witherwin Avenue, and Dingleway between London Road and Bridge Lane.

Stretches of road will be closed each day between 9am and 3pm to undertake the works safely. Pedestrian access will be maintained and it is expected that no work will be carried out at weekends.

The work is expected to take about eight weeks.

Clearly signposted diversions will be in place for the duration of the works.

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## Motoring

# Is 20 plenty for you?

**MOST drivers believe their cars use more fuel and create more pollution at lower speeds - a view perpetuated by car manufacturers who claim that the optimum speed for fuel efficiency is between 50mph and 60mph.**

But a number of recent surveys indicate that the reverse is the case and that for some models the highest mileage is achieved at speeds as low as 20mph.

This has been seized upon by the

"20s Plenty for Us" campaign, founded by Lymm resident Rod King but now a national organisation, as further justification for their initiative to make the roads safer for all users - particularly cyclists and pedestrians.

So what is the truth of the situation? One study, involving five different vehicles ranging from a 1 litre Toyota to a 2.2 litre Landrover Freelander, show that the most efficient speed for all five was below 40mph and, in the case of two, was 20mph.

Another study found that fuel consumption increases sharply above 40mph and by 90mph has halved.

When 30 km/h (18.6 mph) zones were introduced in Germany, it was found drivers changed gear 12 per cent less often, braked 14 per cent less often and required 12 per cent less fuel. At the same time, cycling increased by 23 per cent.

Department for Transport guidance is that, generally, driving more slowly at a steady pace saves fuel and carbon dioxide emissions, unless an unnecessarily low gear is used.

### Evidence

So there is plenty of evidence to support the argument that lower speeds result in lower fuel bills, as well as reduced pollution and improved road safety.

Despite this, the issue is plagued by controversy, with many motorists refusing to accept arguments based on either cost, the environment or road safety.

Locally, the borough council is to introduce 20mph limits in many residential areas after experiments which are claimed to have reduced the accident rate, so drivers are going to have to show some restraint whether they like it or not.

## MPVs are getting sportier

THE popularity of the MPV remains unabated and manufacturers are moving towards sportier looking models to counter claims that multi-purpose vehicles are necessarily rather dull.

A range of new or re-vamped models are offered for 2011 including the first ever diesel hybrid, the Peugeot 3008 HYbrid4.

This is really a crossover car, combining SUV feature such as four wheel drive with the practicality of a people carrier.

It's stylish, with plenty of load space, flexible seating and CO2 emissions as low as 99g/km, making it exempt from both road tax and the London congestion charge.

By contrast the re-styled Chrysler Grand Voyager is bigger than most other MPVs with almost mini-bus proportions, seating for seven and a reputation for reliability.

The Mazda5 was introduced last year, but the New Year has brought a 1.6-litre diesel model in addition to the petrol options. It is a better drive than most, boasts practical sliding doors and has a dramatic style that will impress the kids and also improve the aerodynamics to help reduce CO2 emissions to just 138g/km - and a yearly road tax charge of £110.

Vauxhall's seven-seat Zafira remains a popular choice due to its flexible and versatile seating system and is being given a facelift this year.

New engines seem likely to be introduced, possibly including a low-CO2 ecoFLEX version.

Chevrolet are entering the MPV market with the Orlando, a seven-seater with a high roof and a massive 1,487 litres of boot space with the rear seats folded.

It's a large, distinctive looking



vehicle with a 2.0-litre engine and will be available in diesel and petrol versions.

The Toyota Verso S is a stylish, supermini-size MPV with a high roofline to make more space for rear seat passengers. It will come with 1.0 and 1.33-litre engines producing low running costs and little environmental impact which is probably why there is no hybrid version on the horizon.

Honda, however, has added hybrid technology to its supermini-MPV, aiming it at younger buyers with distinctive colours and fresh design. Low running costs will give it more practicality and space than most similar sized cars.

## Separation or Divorce? Consult the Family Law Experts



Marriage and relationships – we all hope they will last for life. But sadly sometimes they don't. And if you find yourself dealing with a break-up, with or without children, it can be a traumatic time.

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# Money Column

By Margaret Black

## VAT recovery on fuel expenses

Fuel costs represents a considerable amount expenditure in any business with many ways of dealing with the VAT on these expense. How can you ensure that you claim the most back with the least amount of admin time.

### Different methods

The basic options for recovering VAT on motoring expenses are:

- Claim all the VAT back on road fuel and pay the motoring scale charge
- Keep a detailed mileage record and calculate the proportion of VAT relating to business mileage
- Pay a mileage allowance and keep the petrol receipts; or
- Don't claim back the VAT on road fuel.

### VAT scale charge

If you reclaim VAT on road fuel for private motoring, the VATman will insist that you pay the motoring scale charge. This is based on the CO2 emissions of the car and not the actual amount of private usage. The scale charge must be added to the output tax, which is entered in box 1 of the VAT Return. If the business has a second or more cars and private fuel is provided, even with low mileage, there is a second or subsequent, scale charge. The only way around this is to have no fuel

provided for private motoring for the second car.

If a company car driver repays the business in full, for the fuel that they use for private motoring, then no scale charges are due, but the payment they make automatically includes VAT which will have to be added into box 1 on the return. On the plus side, the VAT on all road fuel, both business and private, can be reclaimed, and the system is easy to use. On the down side, you need quite high mileage for it to be financially viable.

### Mileage records

If you do not want to use the motoring scale charge because the charge you pay is more than the VAT on the road fuel that you can claim, you can record all of your mileage in a log showing the business mileage and the total mileage. So if 5,000 miles have been travelled in the quarter and 1,000 are business miles then 20% of the VAT can be recovered. This system is accurate and it is possible to reclaim all of the VAT on the business mileage, but it is complicated.

### Pay a mileage allowance

If you don't want to pay the scale charge and the mileage log is too much of an admin burden, then you can pay a



David Watkinson and Margaret Black

mileage and claim back the VAT on the element relating to road fuel. The AA and RAC publish mileage rates that give the fuel costs per mile for the different engine sizes; these can also be obtained from the VATman's website. It normally works out at between 10p and 15p per mile depending on the engine size. You then apply the VAT fraction to that figure and claim it back. You do need to produce expense forms and petrol receipts to back up the claims. This system is simple and gives good VAT recovery. Where possible this should be the recommended method. The alternative is not to claim back the VAT on any road fuel at all, but that does seem pointless.

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

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## Tennis women serve up a celebration

WOMEN members of Stockton Heath Tennis Club got together for a special luncheon to celebrate the 80th birthday of one of their members - Helen Miller.

Helen, from Grappenhall, a former sister at Warrington Hospital, is a long-standing member of the Delphfields Road club and usually plays twice a week.

Fellow members who play with her on Mondays and Thursdays attended the lunch at the Bear's Paw inn at High Legh.

## Independent wine retailer award

STOCKTON Heath based independent wine specialist Corks Out has been named Independent Wine Retailer of the Year at the prestigious Drinks Retailing Awards 2011.

Corks Out was short-listed and subsequently voted overall winner of this specialist award by excelling in all aspects of the judging criteria and impressing the judges by demonstrating its dedication to customer service,

the knowledgeable team, depth and variety of range, ability to adapt through innovation in such a competitive environment and more importantly, striving to offer something unique setting it apart from the competitors.

More than 300 guests attended the awards ceremony held at London's Dorchester hotel. The eventual winners in 17 categories included the big name supermarkets and the multiple specialists. The multi award winning independent Corks Out was also named runner up for the title of Drinks Retailer of the Year.

The Awards reflect and reward best practice across the spectrum of the take-home drinks market and are unique in recognising excellence among both independent and multiple retailers.

Rosie Davenport, Editor at Off Licence News said: "Corks Out is widely recognised as one of the UK's leading independents, continually evolving and investing in its growing



number of stores. This year has seen even more development as owner Ruth Yates moved the art of hand-selling wines up a gear by installing wine 'taster' machines. Corks Out is simply a fantastic place to shop and to be inspired about wine."

Owner Ruth Yates commented: "We are over the moon to win this award; it's something that we have been striving for over the last few years. I am grateful for the support we get from our loyal customers and very proud of the commitment of the Corks Out team. They all deserve this award as they work extremely hard, they are passionate beyond most and are totally committed to customer satisfaction. Corks Out means such a lot to me and ultimately the aim is to continue to provide excellent service, a point of difference and most of all help to demystify wine. With 17 awards behind us we are proud of the recognition and feel we are doing something right."

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## Residents petition for parking

RESIDENTS of Beverley Avenue, Appleton have signed a petition calling for improved parking provision in the tiny close.

The petition, sent to Golden Gates Housing - who own some of the properties in the close - suggests that a grass verge at the head of the close be converted to a parking area.

Members of Appleton Parish Council were told about the petition at their monthly meeting.

Residents have been attending meetings of the council for three months pleading for action to solve

the chronic parking problems which exist in the close of a night.

One resident claimed the close had become a "war zone" with neighbours turning against each other because of the situation.

The problem has been caused because the houses were built at a time when few people owned cars. Twenty years ago only three cars parked there but now there are 15.

## Free card making sessions

CARDS By Samantha Craft Boutique in Thelwall are offering a unique opportunity to try card making at one of their FREE taster sessions running in March.

The sessions, which will last approximately one hour, will give an insight into the wonderful world of card making and the endless opportunities for enjoyment this hobby provides. All materials and light refreshments will be provided - Just book, turn up and enjoy.

Call 01925 602848 to book your place on Thursday March 17, 2pm to 3pm or Saturday March 19 - 10am to 11am.

## Book exchange scheme

A BOOK exchange scheme is to be launched at Appleton Parish Hall - subject to the availability of volunteers to run it.

The scheme - which would initially be run as a trial - will be started with books supplied by the borough council as a one-off starter pack.

Users will be encouraged to donate unwanted books to enlarge the stock.

Members of two Women's Institutes who hold their meetings at the hall are to be asked if they would be prepared to act as volunteers.

Appleton Parish Council will fund any shelving, storage cupboards, etc., required for the scheme, which is intended to fill the gap left when the mobile library service ceases at the end of March.



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