

Village Life

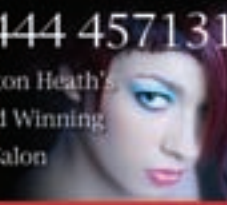
Issue No. 107
February 2010

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Editor's Comment



WHILE the snowfall at the start of the year produced many beautiful scenes around our local villages it also caused a meltdown of council services in the area.

Road gritting and bin collections were the two main issues affecting most people – and now on top of that we have been left the legacy of pot holes caused by the freezing ice and the road clearing. Hopefully lessons have been learned but with all the council cut

backs and efficiency savings I do fear for the future – and it could be another 30 years before we experience snowfall like this again.

I am told the borough council will have improved 'contingency plans' for the future – lets hope so.

Thank you to all the readers who sent us in their snow scenes, some of which we have reproduced in this month's edition, with many more online in our snow galleries on www.warrington-worldwide.co.uk where you can also read all the local stories affecting your local villages in our community section and the latest breaking news stories across Warrington.

You can also download the latest issue of Village Life and its sister publications.

Robin Hood panto

FAMILIES can enjoy all the fun of the classic Robin Hood tale with a modern twist when the Bridgewater Players stage a pantomime next month.

The show promises laughter, music, bright lights and ice cream - as the female Sheriff of Nottingham attempts to keep all parents in order!

'Robin Hood' runs from February 18 to 20, in Thelwall Parish Hall, Bell Lane. Doors open at 7.15pm, the show starts at 7.45pm and is expected to finish before 10pm.

Tickets cost £5 per adult, £3 children (under 12). Family tickets are available. Call 0845 331 2958 or contact any member of the society.

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Village beauty queen aims to go international

A BEAUTY queen who is also a Sunday School teacher has won a place in a prestigious international contest.

Catriona Cameron, the reigning Miss Cheshire, will be representing Daresbury in the final of the Miss Galaxy 2010 pageant. And she will

not have far to travel as the glamorous event is being held on March 27 at the Daresbury Park De Vere Hotel.

She said: "I'm honoured to be representing Daresbury. I attend Daresbury All Saints Church every week and I am a Sunday School teacher. I am also the youngest member of the Daresbury Parochial Church Council so really understand the dynamics of this beautiful village."

Catriona, 22, said Daresbury - normally a peaceful village - had become famous for hosting the "notorious" dance festival Creamfields.

If it goes ahead again this year she hopes to use her new title to influence proceedings.



Beer 'too easy to steal'

COMPLAINTS that a supermarket made beer too easy to steal, were put to Stockton Heath Parish Council.

Resident Patrick Mullee told the council he had complained to the store about its policy of placing promotional beer products by the front door.

He said he had seen a group of youths, gather nearby, nip in and take a case of beer.

His complaints to the store were to no avail as the management said they had been instructed by their head office to place the promotions there.

PC Steve Martin, who was present at the meeting, said police were working closely with stores to try to tackle crime and were trying to raise awareness about security.

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Labour choose their man

LABOUR have chosen a former special advisor to Government Minister Tessa Jowell to be their prospective parliamentary candidate for Warrington South following Helen Southworth's decision not to contest the seat at the next General Election.

Nick Bent, (pictured) who has also worked as a research assistant to MP Paul Boateng, said: "I'm proud to have been selected by the members of Warrington South. The campaign starts here to keep Warrington Labour and I will be fighting on the issues that matter.

"I've had the privilege to work for Labour Government ministers and I learned from them that you must engage and be accessible in the constituency to be effective and credible in the Commons. I will stand up and fight for a fair deal for all in Warrington South.

"I believe Warrington has an exciting future: the Government has set clear choices for the future that protect Warrington schools, the NHS and the Police. But there's no room for complacency.

Labour has taken action to support

the economy, helping businesses and families through the downturn. I am optimistic about the coming year but the recovery is fragile and we need to make the right choices.

"Here in Warrington, people are beginning to see what happens when the Tories and Lib Dems win power; the Council has a £10m budget deficit; Ofsted says child protection is a national disgrace; there's been cuts to voluntary sector grants and even ramping up of burial charges. In this year's election there will be a big choice about the change we want for Britain: to create an age of aspiration or an age of austerity."



Teddy Bears in concert

THE popular Chicago Teddy Bears jazz band are to give a charity concert at Grappenhall Community Centre, Bellhouse Lane on Friday, February 12.

The concert, in aid of the Lymm and Thelwall Group of Contact the Elderly, starts at 8pm and continues until 11pm.

The £10 admission charge includes a buffet and there will be a cash bar.

Tickets are available from Colin Melrose on 01925 756742.

Steve Wright, Chairman of Warrington South Labour Party, said: "We're delighted to have selected Nick Bent and I'm confident that whenever the election comes Labour now has the best candidate for Warrington South.

Nick is currently a Director of national charity Oasis Community Learning. He is a former Special Advisor to Minister Tessa Jowell at the Department for Culture Media and Sport where he worked for more than four years.

Previously he worked as a research assistant to MP Paul Boateng.

Tribute to ex-councillor

STOCKTON Heath Parish Council has paid tribute to a former member who recently died.

A minute's silence was observed for Ken Renshaw, who had served on the parish council and been a chairman on several occasions. In recent years he was a regular visitor to meetings of the council as a member of the public.

Coun Tudor Pole said Mr Renshaw was a "gentleman" who had always been ready to listen to all different viewpoints.

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In the main market square of Krakow stands the Cloth Hall (built in 14th century) this was the first shopping mall in the world. It still houses many stalls selling amber, lace, woodwork etc Also in the square are an abundance of cafes, restaurants, street performers,

musicians, horse drawn carriages etc Here hosts festivals, concerts, parades and lots of other events. An amazing sight is the Mariacki Cathedral with its famous altarpiece and stained glass. Don't leave until you have witnessed the man playing the bugle every hour on the hour from the top of the cathedral.

In the square if you are feeling energetic climb the steep steps of the Town Hall Tower to the viewing platform and view Krakow from here!

The best way to learn about this city is to take a walking tour as the centre is pedestrianised-these start from the square through the University quarter, All Saints Square with its Gothic Dominican and Franciscan churches then onto Wawel Hill (not for those with limited mobility)

There is also the Jewish Quarter Kazimierz, here there are synagogues, 16th century cemetery and the sites from Steven Spielergs Schindler's List.

Why not sample a traditional Jewish meal with live music at one of the many restaurants or sit and people watch at one of the bars or cafes.

Of course a trip to Krakow is where you would take a tour to Auschwitz this would



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'Health and safety' fence cost £18,000

A FENCE costing £18,119, put up by Warrington Borough Council to keep residents off a field formerly used as a play area has attracted a barrage of criticism.

Stockton Heath Parish Council heard that Cartwright's Field, off Chester Road, had been surrounded by the fence.

The field was previously used for many years by the community for recreation on an informal basis.

Despite massive objections from the parish council and nearby residents, a planning application for 51 affordable homes to be built by Warrington Housing Association was approved some months ago.

But an action group formed to fight the plan is trying to get the land designated as a "village green" which could mean the development could not go ahead.

The parish council heard the site had been fenced for health and safety reasons.

Coun Robin Wilson said: "It appears they are trying to force the hand of the residents."

Coun Stephen Taylor said: "They started the work of putting up the

fence right outside the home of the chairman of the action group."

He complained that the borough had spent the money on the fence, when it was cutting spending on essential services.

Chair Peter Walker said the parish council supported residents at the time, but were not successful and the housing plan was approved.

He said the fence could force residents to proceed with their application quickly.

Clerk Peter Briggs said that anyone going on the land would now be doing so at their own risk.

OBFC - a cut above

THE Original Barber Shop in Stockton Heath are the proud new sponsors of Warrington Town AFC's juniors.

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What's On in the Villages

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

February 10
lymm Afternoon Bridge Club 1.15-4.15pm

February 11
LIVE AT ST WILFRID'S
Stanford Quarter. Laura and Eleanor Stanford (violins), Amy Stanford (viola) and Jessica Cox (cello) play music by Mozart, Janacek and Borodin.
St Wilfrid's Church, Grappenhall. 7.30pm.

February 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) VI
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
MARIFIELD VI
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 first Wednesday
WALTON VI, 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 VI, 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 VI
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 VI
Grappenhall Community Centre, Bellhouse Lane 2.15pm

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

To list your event call **Village Life** on
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Snow scenes create winter wonderland

LOCAL village scenes were transformed into a winter wonderland following the heavy snow fall in January and while it brought misery to road users and business people, it inspired local photographers and enthused school children who enjoyed an extended school break.

Local photographers John Hopkins and Jim Sparks were two of many who submitted dozens of pictures which are displayed on the www.warrington-worldwide.co.uk website.



Appleton Thorn village hall.



Snow on Bridgewater Canal, Grappenhall, Warrington.



Fun in the snow.



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Snow trauma

COMPLAINTS that borough services 'collapsed' during the snow were put to Stockton Heath Parish Council - but there was praise for the postal service.

Resident Patrick Mullee told the council that two people were seriously injured in the village because of snow and ice.

"There have been no bin collections since before Christmas and not enough salting of the pavements," he said.

Twelve cars had been stuck overnight at Fox Covert cemetery.

Coun Helen Dutton said people had been asked to take their bin sacks to collection points, but asked whether those who could not do that would have extra rubbish taken when the bin collection service resumed.

Chairman Coun Peter Walker said the wheelie bins could not be collected, but he understood the bin men were working on gritting. Extra rubbish would be taken when the service resumed.

Coun Stephen Taylor said he did not think the collection points had been publicised enough. The council said the information was on the website - but not everyone had access to the Internet.

Coun Celia Jordan said the snow had arrived early and was "unusually severe" and that the Warrington area had been particularly badly hit.

"There is a health and safety issue as the bin men have to pull the bins over the snow and ice," she said.

But Coun Tudor Pole praised the postal service.

"The postmen have trundled through and delivered the mail. It is a difficult job for them to trudge up and down people's drives," he said.



Snow on Bridgewater Canal, Grappenhall, Warrington.



A festive scene at Appleton.

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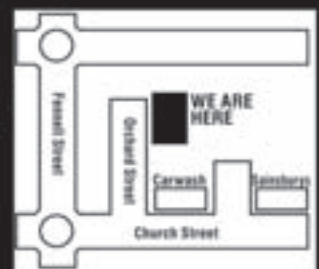
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Money Column

By Margaret Black

Legal question mark over new HMRC Penalties

We have recently received a publication from one of our advisors which reads

"As you may be aware, since the new Construction Industry Scheme came into force there have been arguments that the new penalty regime is too harsh and open to legal challenge as it is completely out of proportion.

Penalties have been seen running into many tens of thousands of pounds, and many operators have been successfully defended by including this argument in their defence. Until recently HMRC has avoided taking any cases to a Tribunal.

However, doubts over the validity of the scheme have now been confirmed by a recent case heard before the new First-Tier Tax Tribunal earlier this month. Judgment in the case of SKG (London) Ltd v HMRC was handed down on 3 December 2009, in which the Tribunal for the first time analysed the new scheme in light of safeguards in European law which protect against arbitrary or disproportionate penalties. The Judges in the case ruled that:.... "the Tribunal is left in doubt as to whether or not the statutory provisions for the penalty for late filing of a return...satisfy the requirements of the Human Rights law principle of proportionality".

As neither side appointed Counsel for the hearing, the Tribunal has not yet had the benefit of detailed legal submissions and has adjourned its final decision until further legal arguments have been considered - this should be sometime between March and July 2010.

HMRC has been quite devious by taking a case where the penalties at stake were a mere £2,800 - whereas under the new scheme in theory the penalties can run to over £70,000. It seems that HMRC could be in for a rough ride and the entire new late filing penalty regime could suddenly be swept away"

Example of some of the penalties charged:

| Number of Subcontractors on the return | Automatic penalty for late Return (including Nil returns) | Additional penalty for each extra month late (continues up to 12 months) | Extra final penalty where a return is over 12 months late |
|--|---|--|---|
| 101 - 150 | £300 | £300 | £3,000 |
| 151 - 200 | £400 | £400 | £3,000 |

The penalty keeps increasing with the number of subcontractors on the return. So if there were 500 subcontractors, for example, the late return penalty would be £1,000 - and so on.

Returns with no subcontractors on them - nil returns - also get a £100 penalty if they're



David Watkinson and Margaret Black

late. If you have any CIS penalty cases this judgment will affect you so watch this space

As this is breaking news we are unable to deal with specific cases at this time. Currently this article is for information only and any further developments will be reported in due course.

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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DIVISION OF PEOPLE

Fears dismissed over hall

FEARS that the public would be denied access to parts of the historic Walton Hall and Gardens if it is sold to a private investor have been dismissed by a local councillor.

In fact, the public may have more access to the hall and grounds than they do now, if current plans get the go-ahead, according to Paul Kennedy, councillor for Walton.

Stories have been circulating for weeks among local residents that any deal with a private hotel company would include a plan to prohibit the public from part of the grounds – in particular the much-loved rose garden.

Patrick Mullee, a former Stockton Health Parish Councillor visits the park every day. He said: "I do agree that we need some investment in Walton Hall and Gardens. I'm all for that."

"The place is being run on a wing and prayer at the moment so something needs to be done. But it's what sort of investment and what price are we going to pay for it, that concerns me."

"The rumour is that we might lose public access to the rose gardens. I hope not, as people have donated benches and memorials over the years and it would be very sad if they were to lose access to them."

But both Councillor Kennedy and a spokesperson for the Council have denied this would be the case, if the current deal goes ahead.

Warrington Council has confirmed it is in early talks with a private, family run company about running the site as a joint venture.

Under the proposed deal, said to be worth £23m, the Council would continue to own the hall and grounds

with the private company in as long-term tenants.

The private company, which has not been named, would pay to renovate the Hall into a five star boutique hotel as well as covering the cost of developing the stables, coach house, glass houses and heritage yards and adding a conference centre.

Warrington Council would cover the cost of maintaining the grounds and formal gardens - and the public would have access to all of it.

Paul Kennedy said: "My understanding is that the hall and all of the grounds including the formal gardens will continue to be available to the public as part of this deal."

"If anything, the public would have more access than they do now because some of the facilities are in such bad repair that they are closed at the moment."

"If they were restored, they'd be open to the public again. I am keeping a very close eye on how this progresses but if a deal can be reached on this basis then it could be an ideal solution."

A spokesperson for Warrington Council said a joint venture on this basis was being discussed and that a full public consultation of any development of Walton Hall would take place once an agreement has been reached.

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Police seek 'hard to reach'

POLICE are seeking help to contact 'hard to reach' sections of the community at Stockton Heath.

PC Steve Martin told the parish council police were anxious to reach the whole community.

He said: "We are trying to reach all the people. We are trying to reach those people who feel they are not in contact with us."

"We are trying to increase our availability to these people. We want to know if there is anyone or any groups of people we could provide a better service for."

He asked members to let him know if they had any suggestions on how to increase contact with the community.

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