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Issue: 147
June 2015

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**Rose Queen
crowned
again!**

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Editor's Comment



IT is great to see that the long running saga to find a new home for the Wild Wings Bird Sanctuary has been resolved amicably, although sad in some ways that

Teenager plans charity sky dive in memory of grandad

WINWICK teenager Abigail Leavitt is keeping her fingers crossed the weather stays calm for her planned charity sky dive on June 6 after her last attempt was cancelled due to bad weather.

Abbie aged 18, a student at Priestley College, studying law and history.

She is planning the sky dive to raise money for the Alzheimer's Society. She recently got £400 sponsorship from Sale accountants Leavitt and Warmsley Associates.

Abbie said: "My grandad recently died of the disease and I am very motivated to raise as much money as I can as I have witnessed what it does first hand. I took part in the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge last June and raised £255."

She plans to do another event in the future such as Mount Kilimanjaro.

To sponsor Abbie visit www.justgiving.com/Abbie-Leavitt1/

they have had to leave the area.

But the most important thing is the welfare of the birds and they would appear to have found a suitable new home at another garden centre - although there is still a chance they may return to the local area in the future.

Well done to Paul Taylor at Taylor Business Park for all the time and effort he has put in helping resolve the issue.

Full details can be read elsewhere in this issue.

More good news is that the HS2 impact on the Culcheth area now looks less likely to happen - again full details elsewhere in this issue.

Congratulations to all those involved in the campaign against the proposal which would have had a devastating impact on the

local community - none more so than at Taylor Business Park.


Nothing has been decided for certain - but if it has been decided the business case for extending the line to Scotland doesn't add up financially it is highly unlikely to happen.

Finally congratulations to those who won in the elections.

It was again disappointing to see some very negative and personal leafleting in the run up to the election.

It would be better if our politicians spent their time doing what they do well in the community rather than spending time carrying out personal attacks on others.



Any way I suspect the result showed that people don't like negative politics!



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Rose queen crowned again!

NEWCHURCH Rose Queen Lucy Stevenson has been crowned for a second consecutive year at Culcheth - due to a lack of suitably aged girls to take on the role.

Lucy, aged 11, a pupil at Twiss Green Primary School was crowned again as the 2015 Rose Queen. Her attendants are sisters Natalia Fuller aged 7 and Elisabeth Fuller aged 9.

Following the crowning, church members took part in a Walk of Witness through the village.

For more pictures from the event visit www.warrington-worldwide.co.uk



Above: Newchurch Servers and choir lead the church Walk of Witness procession.

Far right: Due to a lack of suitable aged girls last year's Newchurch Rose Queen Lucy Stevenson aged 11 a student at Twiss Green Primary School was crowned again as the 2015 Rose Queen with her attendants left, Natalia Fuller aged 7 and Elisabeth Fuller aged 9.

Right: Tom Smith aged 14 carried the Junior Church Banner in the Newchurch Parish Church, Culcheth Walk of Witness.

Below: Newchurch Servers and choir lead the church Walk of Witness procession.



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Junior Carnival Queen to the rescue

DESPITE the setback of no applicants for the role of carnival queen plans are well underway for this year's Croft Carnival, which will be held on Saturday, July 4.

Sadly, for the first time ever, there were no applicants for carnival Queen. However, in "the show must go on" tradition the Queen was selected by the first name drawn from the princess applicants.

So this year, there is a Junior Carnival Queen – eight years old Rosa Sakhi.

Undaunted by the challenge, Rosa is really looking forward to Carnival Day and is set to continue the long tradition of making a speech!

Rosa's attendants this year are Lexy Haslam and Sophia Houghton.

Eight-year old Rianna Blood joins Rosa as this year's Carnival Princess. Rianna's attendants are Ruby Marshall and Sarah Quinlivan.

Rosebud this year is seven-year-old Casey Skinner. Casey's attendants are Madelaine Geraghty and Charlotte Hiley.

The Crown Bearer this year is Finn Marshall.

The parade of floats leaves The Plough, at Kenyon Lane, Croft at 12 noon and travels through the village and onto the field for the official opening at 1.15pm.

The committee has been busy booking the various acts and attractions for this year. Back by popular demand are Punch and

Judy, the "Croft Eye" Ferris wheel, Thelwall Morris Men and Eclipse Jazz Band.

New acts for this year will be the Battling Cumberland Giants and K9 Quackers. Bookings are also being taken from local charities

and organisations who would like a stall on the field. The afternoon draws to a close with the customary novelty races and the famous egg throwing competition!

As the Carnival falls on July 4, the scarecrow theme for this year

is 'America'.

There will also be the 'Best decorated street in the village' competition and new for this year the 'Around Croft' – photographic competition.



Junior Carnival Queen Rosa Sakhi and her attendants.

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THE Jockey Club Live presents 'An Evening At The Races' is proud to welcome MADNESS to Haydock Nights on 3rd July 2015 and having previously played on prestigious stages such as on top of Buckingham Palace for the Queens Diamond Jubilee concert and at 2012's London Olympic Games Closing Ceremony, MADNESS's live show is a perfect fit for the Haydock Park Grandstands.

'An Evening At The Races' offers a value for money experience unlike any other this summer. Alongside incredible headlining performances by the likes of Kylie, Madness and Kaiser Chiefs, the action kicks off earlier in the evening with 6 races - giving fans the chance to witness up close powerful equine athletes who are stars in their own right, and enjoy the thrilling drama and spectacle of them racing for glory. Whether you fancy a flutter or a dance with friends and family the event is certain to be an odds on favourite for all, with tickets starting at only £30.

In order to win a pair of tickets please tell us how many members of Madness there currently are?

Email the answer to: info@warrington-worldwide.co.uk, titled: Madness competition - Culcheth Life, with your name and daytime contact details.

Closing date is June 14.

Open garden weekend is back

AFTER an absence of three years, the popular Culcheth Open Gardens weekend is back - offering local people an opportunity to see some of the most attractive gardens in the area.

There will be a well stocked plant stall, tea and cakes and musical entertainment - all in aid of

Culcheth Methodist Church and St Rocco's Hospice.

The event takes place over Saturday and Sunday, July 4-5 between 1.30pm and 5pm.

Tickets cost £4 in advance or £5 on the day and can be bought from any of the gardens, Poynton's florist on Lodge Drive, Culcheth Methodist Church on Saturday or Sunday mornings in June or St Rocco's Hospice.

Coffee will be served in the church hall from 10am until 12 noon on the Saturday morning,

with music around 10.30am and lunches served by Guides and Brownies from 12.15pm.

The last Open Gardens weekend, in 2012, raised £3,430

Gardens opening are 17, Beechmill, 25, Cawley Ave, (teas),

26, Cawley Ave, 1, Chatsworth Drive, Noyna, Common Lane, 5 Culcheth Hall Drive, 29 Culcheth Hall Drive (plants), 44, Severn Rd, 51 Twiss Green Lane, 32 Wadeson Way, Croft. (pond dipping)

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Mumpreneurs are voted Mums in the Know!

THREE Culcheth business mums are celebrating after being voted top for kids and parents in the 2015 Mums in the Know annual awards.

Culcheth's Forget Me Not Toy and Bookshop, owned by local sisters-in-law, Naomi Simpson and Victoria Simpson-Forrest, is well known throughout the village as the place Mums go to for books and gifts, to meet friends, enjoy a coffee and slice of cake and take part in children's activity sessions. Naomi and Vicki have won the Mums in the Know 'Local Star' award which celebrates a local business that goes the extra mile to offer something special to families!

The Jungle family entertainment centre in Warrington, owned by Culcheth Mum Sarah Lott, is celebrating a double award win as Mums in the Know readers voted her business as the 'Best Soft Play centre' and the 'Best Place for Families to Eat' in Warrington.

Parents voted for The Jungle because of its soft play facilities for a variety of ages, its cleanliness, safety and inviting atmosphere as well as good value for money and a pleasant area for parents.

Naomi, Vicki and Sarah are thrilled with their awards and Sarah said, "As busy Mums ourselves we face the same challenges that all Mums face in keeping our children active and motivated and away from the tv and other gadgets.."

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Fond farewell for long serving council employee

A LONG-serving employee has been honoured for 42 years of service at Warrington Borough Council.

Dave Yates, from Culcheth, started at the council in 1973 and has worked in a variety of roles in the environment and regeneration team.

A special presentation was held to celebrate Dave's career and was attended by his colleagues and David Boyer, assistant director for transport and environment, who was delighted to give him a farewell speech.

In July 1996 Dave transferred from the highways team to the refuse section, where it is estimated he has walked about 54,720 miles

- more than walking round the world twice!

Dave said: "I have been working for the council so long that when I started I was on 76p per hour! I have really enjoyed my 42 years here and have worked with some really good people who I thank very much for a lovely send off."

During the send-off, David Boyer said: "Dave has given fantastic service to the council and I am proud to honour his achievements. He has always been a dedicated and committed team player and he will be greatly missed by colleagues and residents."

Dave plans to spend his free time taking his dog Zeppelin for long walks.



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Superhero Commu

CULCHETH and Glazebury's "superhero"-themed Community Day was a resounding success as crowds took to the Village Green on Bank Holiday Monday.

The event, organised by Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council, was led by local councillors Chris Vobe and Matt Smith. Enthusiastic children took part in a fancy dress competition, attending in costumes as their favourite superhero characters – from Marvel's Thor to DC Comic's Clark Kent (Superman).

Dr Diablo entertained crowds with his open air "sideshow" throughout the day, with performance highlights ranging from fire-eating to the terrifying "bed of nails"!

There were a host of competitions and prizes to be won, with a Rixton couple awarded a trophy for the "Best Tractor" in the classic cars and vehicles display. The annual Pet Show provided the opportunity for local families to show off their family's best friends with four prizes awarded to the best entrants.

Cllr Joan Grime hosted "The Great Culcheth Bake-Off" to raise funds for the Culcheth to Soweto Appeal and the Glazebury Play Area Group. Her stall was one of the most successful of the day with superhero-themed cakes auctioned off for charity.

This year's Community Day also saw the debut appearance of a Ferris Wheel – nicknamed "The Culcheth Eye" – which gave villagers the chance to get a bird's eye view of the community!

Trumble the Clown entertained children on the village green, and local schools provided their own "superhero" display for the main stage.

The event also served as a way to recognise "local superheroes" – those who have given their time and energies to the local community through voluntary and charitable activities. The Parish Council launched their search for a Community Superhero earlier this year and Cllrs Vobe and Smith praised the wide-ranging entries that had been received.

The winner was announced on the day – local resident

Carrie Anderson from Stonyhurst Cresent received her prize on the main stage. Mrs Anderson has contributed a great deal to village life, working on a voluntary basis with local schools, helping out in organisations which assist the disabled, and even running errands for elderly members of the community. Mrs Anderson was visibly moved as she accepted her award.

Cllr Vobe said: "This year's Community Day was a roaring success, with great weather throughout the day and a real enthusiasm from local people over our "superhero" theme. We said on the day that it is people who make communities, and that's especially true in Culcheth, Glazebury and Croft where we have many people who work selflessly for the betterment of our villages."

"We were delighted to award Carrie the Community Superhero award – we know from working alongside her on local planning issues that she is a credit to our community. We had a number of strong applications, but Carrie's work really stood out as selfless and generous. She was a worthy winner of our Community Superhero prize!"

Cllr Smith added: "We were delighted that there was such enthusiasm from local people for our competitions. We were really pleased to see so many people engaging with the theme, and our entertainers once again drew enormous crowds for their open-air shows. We'd like to thank everyone who contributed to the day and once again made it such a huge success for the village."

Mrs Anderson was awarded a framed, hand-drawn illustration of "Spider-Man", which was drawn by Lee Townsend – the illustrator from Marvel Comics who works on the "Spider-Man" comic book range. Mr Townsend had personally signed the original piece. Mrs Anderson was also handed a framed certificate which recognised her as the first winner of the Community Superhero award.



70th Sqd Croft and Culcheth Air Cadets at their Tombola and Sweets stall at Culcheth Community Day.

More pictures online at www.warring

Community Day takes off!



Carrie receives her Superhero Award.



Raising funds to send students from Culcheth to Soweto by selling cakes at Culcheth Community Day from left, Shannon Walker aged 13, Kirsty MacDougall aged 14 and Paige Waldron aged 14.



Whats cooking XXX 3rd Warrington East 1st Culcheth Scout Group sold bacon butties to raise their funds at the Culcheth Community Day.

The Gardening Guide JUNE

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Keith Bland
01925 766641



Helena Campbell
01925 766658



Paul Campbell
01925 766658

New Parish Council Chairman

Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council have begun the new civic year with the appointment of a new Chairman. Cllr Chris Vobe, who represents the Newchurch ward, took up the post at the Annual Meeting in May. Cllr Vobe's appointment makes him not only the youngest person ever to fill the role in Culcheth and Glazebury, but also the youngest parish council chairman in Warrington's history. Cllr Joan Grime, who represents Glazebury and Mee Brow, will take on the role of Deputy Chairman for the coming year. Both councillors look forward to meeting the many community groups and organisations who undertake a tremendous amount of work throughout our villages.

Culcheth and Glazebury in Bloom - Update

Nomination forms are still available for any resident who would like to nominate a garden in this year's "Culcheth and Glazebury in Bloom" competition. The competition as a means of encouraging local residents to take an interest in the gardens and give the village more colour – you can nominate your own, or someone else's garden, for the award. Nomination forms can be picked up in Culcheth Library and are returnable to the Parish Council Clerk. The deadline for submissions is the end of June, after which an independent judge will select the winner.

Policing changes

Parish Councillors are very concerned at the recent announcement that organisational changes are to be implemented in our local police, and scheduled to come into place on the 18th June. These changes mean that our PCSOs will be required to begin and end their day in the town centre and will have to travel into the villages at the start of their shifts. Parish councillors are alarmed that this may result in our parish experiencing a reduced service. In response, councillors are convening a meeting with the local Police Inspector and making strong representations to the Police and Crime Commissioner about these plans. We will keep residents throughout the parish informed as this matter progresses.

Alleyway between Beech Avenue and Warrington Road

The Parish Council has responded to concerns expressed by local residents about the alleyway which links Beech Avenue with Warrington Road. Councillors were sorry to learn that the weeds had become so overgrown that parents were finding it difficult to navigate a pram through the ginnel. We have liaised with Warrington Borough Council's street services team and expect the issue to be resolved very soon.

Glazebury Play Area

In Glazebury, parish councillors have continued their support of the Community Play Space. The official opening will take place on June 4th and will be attended by members of the Parish Council, Helen Jones MP and the Mayor of Warrington. Councillors recently took the opportunity to visit the project and were delighted to see it at a stage of near completion. They have passed on their congratulations and warm wishes to everyone involved in the project, which has demonstrated a real community spirit and determination which our villages should be rightly proud of.

New hopes that HS2 will miss Culcheth

THE prospect of the HS2 high speed railway project slicing through Culcheth appears to be receding.

A new announcement by HS2 Ltd – the company planning the project – indicates they have decided there is no business case for extending the line to Scotland.

And that could be good news for Culcheth, according to local businessman Paul Taylor, from Taylor Business Park.

The Golborne link – the part of HS2 that would run through Culcheth – was intended to provide a link to a train service depot at Golborne and a potential continuation north to Scotland.

It has already been hinted that the train service depot is likely to be relocated to Crewe – already a rail hub for the North West – where there is plenty of brownfield land to develop.

Dropping the extension to Scotland – while it has caused fury north of the border – means the line through Culcheth is even less likely to be built.

Mr Taylor said: "This is great news for Warrington and Culcheth. We would benefit from the increased connectivity at Crewe which will still service HS2 compatible trains from Warrington Bank Quay which can use the high speed track from Crewe, and it might well mean that the expensive link that runs through our village is finally struck off the map.

"The run up to Scotland has always been a very expensive part of the proposed route that doesn't speed up journey times by much, and that part of the West Coast Mainline doesn't suffer from capacity issues in the way that it does when it reaches the North West of England. Let's keep our fingers crossed. Hopefully there will be more information coming soon now that the election is out of the way and government departments are no longer in purdah."



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Pupils celebrate a decade of dance



DANCE pupils aged from two to 62 took part in the 10th annual show to be staged by the Palms School of Dance.

More than 50 pupils from the school's three venues across Warrington and Manchester took part in the show, "Movie Magic", at Culcheth Sports Club – a show that celebrated a decade of dance.

Principal Jennie Palmer said: "It is a huge achievement for the dancers to perform in front of their family and friends and they have all done a fantastic job and made me so proud of each and every one of them."

The show culminated in a finale featuring all the dancers performing to the popular song "Let it go" from the Disney film "Frozen" and they were delighted to be joined by snow queen "Elsa" herself on the stage.

The dancers are now looking forward to returning to class to begin work for their next exam session in November when they will take medal tests and grades following the Allied Dancing Association syllabus so this is the perfect time for new dancers to start.

If you would like to join them please contact Miss Jennie on 07939 614406 or see the website www.palmsschoolofdance.co.uk for all information. You can also get in touch via twitter @palmsdance or on the facebook page or group: Palms school of dance.

Croft in bloom

THE annual "Croft in Bloom" competition is under way again.

Members of the parish council will be strolling around the village looking for front gardens which will be drawn to the attention of a panel of independent judges.

Gardens can be nominated by local residents, although there is no need for them to be nominated.

Owner of the winning garden will receive a bouquet – and a meal for two at a local restaurant.

New chairman



CLLR Merrill Cummerson has been unanimously elected chairman of Croft Parish Council for the coming year, in succession to Cllr Jeff Shelley.

Her deputy will be Cllr Val Allen.

Police tsar invited to joint meeting

CHESHIRE'S Police and Crime Commissioner, John Dwyer has been invited to attend a joint meeting of Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council, Croft Parish Council and Birchwood Town Council to discuss proposed changes to deployment of Police Community Support Officers in the three villages.

Councillors are concerned that under the new system, PCSOs will have to "clock on" at a central point in Warrington before travelling out to their beat and then "clock off" again in Warrington at the end of their shift.

They believe this may result in them spending less time "on the beat" than at present.

Play grant

CROFT Parish Council has agreed to make a grant of £200 to Playability, a Warrington-based charity which provides play facilities for children with disabilities.

Residents win footpath battle

RESIDENTS are celebrating after an inspector ruled that footpaths across farmland in Culcheth should be re-instated as a public right of way.

Local resident Les Evans, who has been leading the campaign, said: "It has involved a lot of hard work and I would like to thank all those who turned out in support of keeping the footpaths."

"As we understand it the inspector's decision is non-negotiable unless new evidence can be shown that the footpaths haven't been a public right of way for a period of 20 years."

"We are absolutely delighted and it will add an amenity to the village providing an attractive walk through a wooded area and along a stream."

The two designated footpaths are on land at Culcheth Hall Farm behind a barn conversion on Withington Avenue.

Warrington Borough Council had previously successfully applied designated footpath status on the public footpaths - but landowners Peel Estates appealed against the decision, resulting in a public inquiry which took place at the Culcheth Sports Club. The footpaths had been ploughed over by the tenant farmer but Warrington Borough Council, supported by local residents, successfully applied for them to become designated footpaths and a public right of way.



Sue retains her council seat

VETERAN councillor Sue Bland held on to her Culcheth, Glazebury and Croft seat on Warrington Borough Council in the May elections, with a 350-vote majority over her nearest rival.

Cllr Bland (pictured), who was first elected to the borough council in 1991, was defending her seat for the Conservatives following Labour gains in the ward over the last two years.

Other local wards also remained unchanged, with Labour holding their seats at Birchwood and Rixton and Woolston.

The detailed results were as follows:

Culcheth Glazebury and Croft:

Sue Bland (Cons)*; 3024
Cathy Mitchell (Lab); 2674
Eddie Sloane (Lib Dem). 532
Turn out 72 per cent

Rixton and Woolston:

Paul Bretherton (Lab)*; 2395
Robin Sloan (Cons); 1498
Geoff Siddall (UKIP); 914
Diana Grylls (Lib Dem); 241
Turn out 68.26 per cent

Birchwood:

Chris Fitzsimmons (Lab)*; 2404
Nigel Balding (Cons); 1549
Michael Johnson (UKIP); 827
Tracey Valentine (Green). 288
Christine Oliver (Lib Dem); 267
Turn Out 64.35 per cent



Burtonwood and Winwick:

John Joyce (Lab)*; 1926
Frank Allen (Cons); 1062
Robert Littler (Lib Dem). 295
Turn Out 65 per cent

There was a by-election for a seat in the Southworth Ward of Croft Parish Council, following the retirement of Conservative Jim Allen after serving for 30 years.

In a straight fight, the Conservatives retained the seat.

Martyn Griffiths (Cons) 649
Norman Partington (Lab) 598
Turn out 71.08 per cent

*Denotes sitting councillor



New Home for Wild Wings

THE Wild Wings Bird of Prey Centre has left Bents Garden centre and relocated to White Moss Garden Centre near Penketh, Warrington.

They had been hoping to move to land near Taylor Business Park at Culcheth but were refused planning permission by Warrington Borough Council.

The team at Wild Wings are delighted to have found a home and can now resume trading and get settled in at their new location.

They are still hopeful to relocate one day to the land adjacent to Taylor Business Park but for now they intend to carry on doing what they do best, which is looking after birds of prey and educating visitors about the birds at their centre.

They have also received more good news as Bents have announced that they no longer intend to continue legal proceedings and will not be pursuing Wild Wings for costs now that they have vacated the site.

Paul Taylor from Taylor Business Park said, "We're over the moon that Wild Wings have found a new home. The offer of the use of land near our business park is still there in case they wish to relocate in the future but for now we're extremely happy that they can put all of this behind them and the gesture of drawing a line under the whole thing and not continuing with legals, or pursuing Wild Wings for costs by Bents Garden Centre was very welcome indeed. It means that Wild Wings can continue to provide the wonderful service that they do, right here in Warrington."

"I imagine both parties are relieved that this is all finally over."

Chris is the youngest parish council chairman

THREE years after joining Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council, Cllr Chris Vobe has been unanimously elected the council's youngest-ever chairman at 25.

He was installed in office at the council's annual meeting when Cllr Jan Grime was also elected as deputy chairman.

Upon taking the chair, Cllr Vobe revealed that he would not be wearing the traditional chain of office, preferring to carry out his role "without ceremony."

Cllr Vobe's appointment makes him not only the youngest person ever to fill the role in Culcheth and Glazebury, but also the youngest parish council chairman in Warrington's history.

He said: "It is a privilege to be elected as chairman of Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council – a role I neither expected nor sought – by members of both political parties."

"I grew up here and am immensely proud of our community. I will represent the villages to the best of my ability over the next 12 months, and work hard alongside my colleagues to ensure that the Parish Council continues to provide a high standard of service for all residents."

Cllr Vobe also represents Culcheth Glazebury and Croft on Warrington Borough Council and is a member of Croft Parish Council.

Pictured: Cllr Chris with Cllr Joan Grime after being elected chairman and deputy chairman of Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council.



Pupils raise money to replace stolen laptops



FOUR children from Culcheth got together to raise money to buy new laptop computers after several were stolen in a burglary at their school.

Ben Hall, Sophie de Jong, Mia Hancox and Taylor Bielinski, pupils at Newchurch Primary School, made loom band bracelets and sold them at

their school disco.

They managed to raise £100 – and when local restaurant owner Anhar Miah heard of their achievement he decided to match the sum and gave a meal voucher for two as a raffle prize.

Campaign to renovate Mee Brow playing fields proceeding well

A CAMPAIGN to improve facilities for young people on Mee Brow is proceeding well, according to latest feedback from Warrington Borough Council.

Culcheth councillors Chris Vobe and Matt Smith launched their efforts to upgrade the provisions on the Mee Brow Playing Fields earlier this year.

Along with parish councillor Joan Grime, they brought officers from the Council to the site to illustrate the need for improvements to be made. They pointed to out of date playing equipment, and the need for improvements to the facilities which would bring them to a standard comparable with those on the nearby Culcheth Village Green and Croft Playing Fields.

The two councillors also conducted a consultation exercise with residents to discuss the kinds of provision they would like to see.

They have now submitted an extensive dossier to the council's Chief Executive Professor Steven Broomhead, which sets out the case for a complete refurbishment of the provision.

Clr Vobe said: "Matt and I are regularly in touch with residents in Mee Brow and Fowley Common, and we have been working constructively with local people to champion this issue."

"We strongly believe that new play equipment and upgraded facilities are needed on the Playing Fields at Eden Avenue, for the benefit of all the young people in the area."

"After bringing officers from the Town Hall to the village to see the current provisions for themselves, we were pleased to put an extensive document forward to the Council which makes the case for funding."

"We have been successful with similar projects that we have worked on – such as our bid to secure investment on Shaw Street. We are pleased that this latest campaign to bring significant funding to Mee Brow is already progressing well. We have had meaningful discussions with the Chief Executive and are pleased to have his support."

"We will be updating residents on Mee Brow in the next few days – both Matt and I are firm champions of this part of our village, and we're really keen to ensure that people here don't get left behind."

Any residents in the Mee Brow and Fowley Common area who want to express their support for upgrading the equipment on the Playing Fields can add their names by emailing Clr Chris Vobe at chrisvobe@googlemail.com.

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Lettings is on the up

AMENITIES in Culcheth really are top notch: our WA3 postcode boasts excellent schools and healthcare facilities and we enjoy easy access to a range of sports facilities as well as the motorway network, which opens up the rest of the region for work and leisure, and that's before you consider the pubs and restaurants that are within walking distance for most of us. It's little wonder then that the **cost of properties in this area tend to retain a high price**, something that often puts buy-to-let investors from purchasing as the return on their investment could be greater elsewhere. The result: a shortage of rental properties locally coinciding with a high demand from potential tenants who want to enjoy the lifestyle and amenities that Culcheth has to offer.

Perhaps this could open up an **opportunity for you that you haven't yet considered**. Are you currently thinking of downsizing to a smaller property, or looking to buy a bigger home to accommodate a growing family? Maybe you are looking to move out of the area altogether. Keeping hold of your current home and renting it out - viewing it as an investment rather than a property you must sell - could be an option. There are various ways of financially facilitating this, which is something we at Courtyard can

discuss with you. We often visit properties where the owners are unsure whether to keep their home and rent it out, or give it up and sell it. Ultimately, you need to do what is right for you, but it is worth considering that property can be an excellent vehicle to provide you with a steady income, whilst building up a nest egg for the future: maybe to help your children get onto the property ladder, or to provide a pension pot for you.

Last year it was revealed that home ownership had fallen to its lowest level for a quarter of a century. Government figures showed that the number of people living in private rented accommodation has risen from 2.2million in 2002/03 to nearly 3.9million by 2013. And this isn't just because people can't afford to buy their own home. Increased mobility, and work opportunities are rising on national and even global scale, means that some people don't want to be tied down by owning their home. Many work long hours - they don't always have the time to maintain a property, and the flexibility of six to 12-month rental contracts often appeals to those who travel and move around with their jobs.

Of course, this upturn in demand for rental

properties is accompanied by greater expectations of the part of the average tenant. This increases pressure on landlords to regularly maintain their homes; to keep them up-to-date with decorative trends and being prompt with any issues the tenant may have. These are not matters a landlord can overlook - by keeping their tenants happy they can maximise a properties rental value and potential secure a tenant who wants to keep re-signing their lease. All this might sound daunting, but here at **Courtyard we can help buy-to-let investors** every step of the way. Whether you want to call upon the services of our building and repairs team who are on hand for any maintenance issues, or would prefer to hand over every aspect of managing the property for you, we really do have everything covered.

The WA3 postcode has always been sought after by prospective tenants, and modern lifestyles mean that the numbers of people looking to rent rather than buy and be tied to a mortgage are increasing year on year. Our own rental portfolio here at Courtyard has doubled in less than a year, which speaks volumes.

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