

# Culcheth *Life*

Magazine

ISSUE 202 | JANUARY 2020  
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# Editor's Comment



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**THERE were a few sighs of relief around Culcheth when the borough council threw out proposals for a four-storey block of 39 retirement flats on the site of the former nursery in Church Lane.**

Yes, the site is an eyesore, currently attracting as many fly-tippers as it is prospective developers, so something needs to be done with it as soon as possible.

But four storeys is too high for what is a prominent site in the centre of the village. The building would have dominated the surrounding area and would undoubtedly have created horrendous parking and traffic problems, particularly in Church Lane.

Planning officers were right to draw attention to the "unacceptable impact" on highway safety and the "unmitigated visual harm to the character and appearance of the site and its setting."

Having said all that, the site is a blot on the landscape and something needs to be done about it.

It is not the first time proposals have been put forward for the former nursery but have not progressed. An earlier plan for 31 flats was turned down and although planning consent was given for another scheme, involving 10 houses, the scheme did not go ahead.

The problem seems to be that smaller schemes are not seen as viable by developers while larger ones are not acceptable to planners.

Somewhere between the two

there must surely be a project that will satisfy the demands of both developers and planners and it should not be beyond the wit of the architects to come up with one.

A good starting point may be to look down the road to where there are three-storey properties built many years ago which, while not exactly masterpieces of design, have become an acceptable part of the local townscape.

**Deadline for the February issue of Culcheth Life is January 21**

## Traffic ban

TRAFFIC is to be banned from a stretch of Dam Lane, Rixton, for up to two weeks from January 6 to enable the installation of a new gas main.

The prohibition of driving will apply to the stretch of road between the junction with Pool Road and the junction with Dam Head Lane.. Access will be maintained to properties in the area, under the control of the relevant contractor.



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# Local actor to appear in world premier

**A FORMER Birchwood High School pupil, is set to appear in the world premiere of Back to the Future the Musical when it opens at Manchester Opera House in the New Year.**

Oliver Ormson, who later attended Priestley College and trained in musical theatre at Liverpool Theatre School, will join Marty McFly (Olly Dobson) and Doc Brown (Roger Bart) in the stage adaptation of the 80s cult classic as they embark on a journey in a time-travelling DeLorean. The story follows the pair trying to return to real life and save themselves after making sure Marty's parents fall in love once again.

Featuring iconic songs from the 1985 movie, including Johnny B Goode and The Power of Love, Back to the Future the Musical is set to run for 12 weeks at Manchester Opera House from February 20

before moving to the West End.

Oliver, who has also starred in High Fidelity, The Book of Mormon and The Addams Family, is looking forward to bringing Back to the Future to life on stage.

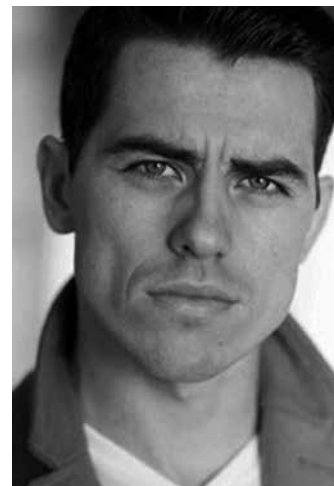
He said: "As a big fan of the cult classic movie, I am absolutely thrilled to be appearing in Back to the Future the Musical.

"And the fact that the world premiere is taking place right here in the north west makes it even more special. It really is set to be a fantastic show and I can't wait for it to open in."

Maxine Ellis, principal at Liverpool Theatre School, said: "As a student at Liverpool Theatre

School, Oliver Ormson was always extremely talented and I am delighted to see his training and hard work is paying off.

"He's already proven to be an outstanding performer in shows such as The Addams Family, The Book of Mormon and High Fidelity and we are all very proud of his latest achievement. I am very much looking forward to seeing him in Back to the Future the Musical when it opens."



## Parish opposes service area plan

CROFT Parish Council has lodged an objection to proposals to build a new service station at Junction 11 of the M62, on land next to the old Risley Landfill site.

The council says the site is on Green Belt land and the need to protect the Gren Belt is greater than the need for a service area at the location proposed.

The proposed development would be on peat soils which form part of the extended Risley-Pestfurlong, Astley and Chat Mosses which provide a significant carbon reservoir to protect against climate change.

If development takes place it could lead to significant destruction of peat, putting tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.



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# Birchwood Park to earn £5m for borough council this year

**WARRINGTON Borough Council is expected to receive a net income of £5 million from its ownership of Birchwood Park during the current financial year.**

The forecast compares with a net income of £4.70 million last year and £3.20 million in the part year following acquisition of the business park in 2017.

Now a new business plan has been drawn up covering the next three years which will aim to ensure the park carries on making money for the authority.

Deputy leader of the council

Cathy Mitchell presented a report to the cabinet.

The council completed the acquisition of the park in September 2017 and now receives the income from rent paid by businesses on the park.

Birchwood Park was acquired for investment and economic regeneration purposes and it continues to provide a significant

contribution to Town Hall finances to enable the authority to continue to provide services.

But it must be operated on a commercial basis and a key document to enable this is a business plan, which was approved in February last year.

It is now considered appropriate to develop a new business plan to reflect what has happened both locally on the park and economically since then.

The new plan reflects vision and direction for the park and a strategy for the council's reason for ownership – financial income and economic growth.

Details cannot be made public to protect both the tenants and the council's financial interests. This was considered by the cabinet in private.

But Cllr Mitchell's report stresses the need to take account of climate

change.

Birchwood Park is very focused on the need to minimise the environmental impact of its activities.

No waste goes to landfill, all electricity used on the park is 100 per cent green energy, as buildings are refurbished energy saving measures are introduced and more energy efficient communal lighting is being installed.

In addition some 80 trees have been planted, electric car charging points installed, there is a free shuttle bus service to Birchwood station and Birchwood Park occupiers receive a 50 per cent discount on Warrington's Own Buses season tickets.

Cabinet members approved the new three-year plan to ensure the park continues to be managed commercially and in the best interests of the council.

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## Village may no longer have its resident MP!

CULCHETH will not have its own resident MP for the first time in more than 20 years – unless the new MP for Warrington North decides to follow in the footsteps of predecessor Helen Jones and move into the village.

Ms Jones decided to retire as MP as soon as the snap General Election was called and saw the 9,000 Labour majority she enjoyed in 2017 shrink to just 1,509 as Conservative Wendy Maisey fought hard to win a seat that has always been Labour.

For a time, it looked as though the constituency could fall beneath the Conservative landslide which swept

the country – indeed the Exit Poll announced only seconds after the polls closed predicted that the Tories would gain Warrington North.

But in the end Labour's Charlotte Nichols clung on to the seat with 20,611 votes to Mrs Maisey's 19,102.

Both candidates must have been left wondering if the result might have been different had there not been a Brexit Party candidate. But what was clear was that Warrington North can no longer be seen as the safe Labour seat it was in 1997 when Ms Jones's majority was 19,527.

The full result was:

Charlotte Nichols (Lab) 20,611;  
 Wendy Maisey (Cons) 19,102;  
 David Crowther (Lib Dem) 3,071;  
 Elizabeth Barbade (Brexit Party) 2,626;  
 Lyndsay McAteer (Green Party) 1,257.

If Culcheth may no longer have home to an MP however, Croft nearly gained one!

Val Allen, who lives in the village and is a member of both Culcheth and Glazebury and Croft parish councils, came a strong second for the Conservatives in the Labour stronghold of Washington and Sunderland West

The Labour majority was 3,723 – less than a quarter of what it was in 2017. And again there was a Brexit candidate who could have made the difference!



# Rotary concert raised £1,300 for good causes

**MORE than 200 people attended the 15th annual Roy Harrison Memorial Concert at Culcheth Sports Club - and helped more than £1,300 for the Rotary Foundation.**

The concert of light classical music was by members of the world famous Halle Orchestra with friends from other major orchestras and was organised by the local Rotary Club

On Monday 25th November, over 200 people attended the 15th Roy Harrison Memorial Concert at

The programme included works by Schubert, Tchaikovsky, Sullivan and Elgar as well as popular Christmas favourites and a rousing version of Strauss's Champagne Polka.

The audience was surprised and delighted by composer Jan Bradley when he played the percussion element in his own creation "For Strings and Percussion".

Rotary would like to thank all who attended for their generosity in helping them raise more than £1,300 for a charity dedicated to helping people in all parts of the world when circumstances beyond their control leave them destitute or otherwise disadvantaged.

Rotary locally would welcome new members. They meet at Culcheth Sports Club, visit places of interest, enjoy an active social life and recently formed a club choir.

Contact: Bernard Groom: 01925 733893.



## New look skate park opens at Mee Brow

THE final piece of the jigsaw in the £185,000 revamp of Mee Brow park is in place with the completion of work on a new look skate park.

It means youngsters from across the area have a first class facility for skating, skateboarding, scootering and BMXing.

The refurbished skate park is a major part of the Mee Brow park improvement project with the rest of the work - including brand new play area equipment - completed several months ago.

Previously, there was a lack of

outdoor play equipment for young people who wanted to keep fit and active using skateboards, scooters and bikes. A community consultation revealed there was great support for a skate park to be included in the overall Mee Brow improvements.

A total of £60,000 was given to introduce skate park facilities - part of the £185,000 project to regenerate the whole of Mee Brow park.

Warrington Borough Council's cabinet member for leisure and community, Cllr Tony Higgins, said: "We're very excited to introduce

the skate park to the Mee Brow site, especially as it has been highly sought after and supported by the community. It's great to be able to provide a park that caters for a diverse collection of interests and opportunities for play and exercise. We'd like to extend our thanks to the contractors, Kompan UK Ltd, for their hard work and delivering a quality facility for local residents."

Funding for the whole project came from the borough council, FCC Communities Foundation (formerly WREN) and Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council.

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# A wonderful Wizard of Oz – re-imagined!

**CULCHETH High School’s annual stage production was again a huge success.**

“Oz Reimagined” was written by head of drama Victoria Longden and was loosely based on the much-loved story of the Wizard of Oz.

The show ran over three evenings, 800 tickets were sold and more than 100 students, ex students and staff were involved.

The cast provided a real theatrical spectacle through their talents.

An array of songs from the 80s and 90s provided the musical background, with such numbers as “We Built This City on Rock and Roll”, “If I Could Turn Back Time” and the Genesis classic “Invisible

Touch” plus a show-stopping encore which was a rendition of Take That’s power anthem “Never Forget”.


The performers were incredible and many of the audience members commented on the slickness of the choreography, the quality and talent of the vocal performances and acting. The technical elements were no less impressive.

Each night was a sell out and the audiences gave the students a thoroughly deserved standing ovation after every performance.

ICT technician John Morris supported the sound and lighting.




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# Christmas Market a

**A cold and frosty morning gave a fitting wintery feel to the annual Culcheth Christmas Market which was again very well supported.**

Locals and visitors could browse for unique and original gifts from gazebos and market stalls taking place in the Parish and Methodist Halls. On offer were jewellery, collectables, antiques, cakes, fabrics, crafts, gift wrapping, boxes, ornaments, flowers, toys and more. Stalls and refreshments were also available in the Scout Hut and there was a fantastic Art Exhibition by members of the Culcheth Art Group in the Culcheth Centre which was visited by the Mayor of Warrington Cllr Wendy Johnson.

Keeping people entertained throughout the day were children's roundabouts and crafts, music, Bell ringing, carol singing and a

fabulous barrel organ. The aroma of mulled wine filled the air which helped keep the cold out and there were purveyors of traditional festive fayre such a mince pies, roasted chestnuts and lots of other yuletide treats. Radio Warrington provided music and entertainment throughout the day.

The event was organised by Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council. Birchwood Lions were out in force, bringing Santa and his Grotto to the Methodist Church

The day was brought to a fitting climax with carols followed by the switching on of the Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council Christmas lights.





# Draws many visitors



## The Gardening Guide



“ Pots and greenhouses can be cleaned thoroughly so they are ready for the new season ”

Simon Box,  
Plant Area Specialist

- Hang up bird feeders if you haven't done already, look out for cat and squirrel resistant designs
- Recycle your Christmas tree. Shred it and use it as mulch – especially round acid loving plants
- Don't leave houseplants on windowsills behind curtains on cold nights as temperatures can drop suddenly
- Now is a good time to sharpen, clean and oil tools ready for the new season and check whether any of them need replacing

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## Stunning performance of 'Aladdin'

**BIRCHWOOD High School's production of "Aladdin" had all the features of a traditional pantomime – and a good deal more.**

Staff, pupils and the school band combined to produce a memorable version of the familiar story.

There was a princess, a sweet couple who wanted only to "live

happily ever after", two despicable "baddies", Dame Twanky, the genie and, of course, Aladdin.

There were stunning dance routines, tuneful songs and some

classic comedy – all backed up with superb lighting, sound and costume and lots of behind the scenes magic to make sure everything went well.

The talented musicians in the school band made sure there was live music throughout the show

Months of hard, dedicated work had gone into the show and the whole team thoroughly deserved the applause the audience provided and the praise from the performing arts staff.





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# Former pupils launch their own clothing brand



**TWO former pupils of Birchwood High School are making a name for themselves in the world of fashion after launching their own clothing brand.**

Frida Waywell and Jack Ratcliffe met at school but for a while went their own separate ways – Frida moving to Sweden, her mother's country of birth while Jack stayed on at Birchwood College before gaining a place at Manchester Metropolitan University to study business and management in the fashion industry.

Then Frida returned to the UK, joined a BA (Hons) course in fashion at Leeds and re-kindled her friendship with Jack.

It was then they realised they had the same goal in mind – to start an ethical clothing brand.

With Frida's creativity and Jack's natural business head the business, simply called Frida, was born.

The ethos of their brand is to raise awareness of fashion as a sustainable item that their customers will love and hold on to. They are not saying don't shop but want to ask their client base think about what they are shopping for and be aware of the ethical production of their garments.

Or as Jack puts it: "Shop out of the old and into the new with sustainable eco-friendly, good value clothing."

Their style is minimalistic with everyday basics in tonally neutral colours and all their fabrics are GOTS certified and Dyes OEKO Tex certified making for a range that is organically friendly and totally sustainable. Even their packaging is made from 100% recycled paper.

The young entrepreneurs do everything themselves, Frida designing, sourcing fabrics and sewing the garments while Jack looks after the marketing, photoshoots, and delivery. They sell mainly online but also are starting to venture into makers markets.

A school spokesperson said: "We are so proud of these two vibrant young adults who have such a clear vision of how they want to see their brand and clothing in general develop, in an age where it is becoming so apparent to us that we are damaging the planet in an enormous way with our consumerism."

# New seat is legacy of horticultural society



Culcheth and District Horticultural Society had its final Annual General Meeting in February 2018 when it was decided to donate surplus funds to benefit the community.

Their generosity has provided a new public seat on Culcheth Green with a suitably inscribed plaque.

# St Rocco's Hospice finds its first 'Face'!

**ST Rocco's Hospice has launched its #100Faces campaign – and the local charity has already found their first and second and third faces!**

Throughout 2020, **Culcheth Life** editor Gary Skentelbery will quite literally be the face of St Rocco's Hospice – on their Wall of Fame, across their advertising and online.

Each of the charity's 100 Faces will pledge to raise £1000 to help fund the vital work the hospice does for people with life-limiting illnesses in Warrington.

So do you think you have what it takes to be a Face?

How you raise the money is entirely up to you - but St Rocco's will be behind you every step of the way.

They'll be helping with

fundraising tips, motivational moments, meet ups and all the information you need to kickstart your challenge.

But they won't stop there – they will keep in touch all year, finding out how you're getting on and shouting about your fundraising to all their followers.

At the end of the year, they'll celebrate your achievements in style, with awards for the best (and most inventive) fundraisers.

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Where will the money go?

Every single penny raised by the 100 Faces will go directly to helping those with life-limiting illnesses, their carers and their families.

It costs £4.2 million every year to provide all of the care. That's £80,000 a week, £11,000 a day or £8 a minute! Whichever way you cut it, it's a huge amount.

Your generous support will make sure that their care is available, free of charge, for anyone in Warrington who needs it.

With thanks to **Culcheth Life**, 100 Faces Media Partner.



## Historic past mapped out beneath library users' feet

A glimpse of the borough's historic past can now be seen beneath library users' feet – thanks to a new large floor map installed by LiveWire and Culture Warrington.

The new map – made of specially printed carpet tiles – measure three meters by three meters and can be seen in the main atrium of Warrington Library.

It is a replicate of an 1844 map that is held in the archives at Warrington Museum & Library, one of a number of fascinating historical maps kept in the Searchroom.

Philip Jeffs, Archives Officer at Culture Warrington, explains: "The map dates to 1844 and is produced from the Ordnance Survey 'six inch to the mile' map series.

"Every road, railway, field, fence, wall, stream and building is shown, and even smaller features such as post boxes, bollards on quaysides, mile posts, and flag-staffs.

"Some aspects of the map were simplified to make it easier to view at the time - separate buildings in a row were blocked together and temporary or 'insignificant' buildings were omitted, but many notable buildings are named and distinguished, including many public houses and factories.

"The original of this map and many others, both earlier and later can be seen in the Local History Searchroom at Warrington Museum and Library. All of our maps are available to the public

for them to look at for research or enjoyment."

Some familiar features or points of interest included on the map include:

- St Elphin's Church.
- The crossroads at Market Gate.
- Bank Hall – now the Town Hall – has a view across fields and meadows down to the River Mersey.
- Where the Museum & Library now stands was private gardens for the town's 'well-to-do'.
- Orford Lane and Marsh House Lane only have the odd cottage and farm on them.
- The first signs of industry appearing, such as Cockhedge Cotton Mill, Mersey Tannery and Bewsey Foundry.
- All around the outskirts of the town are brickfields, where clay is being dug and bricks being made for the vast areas of new terraced housing and factories that will be a feature of Victorian Warrington.
- Nods to historical 1840s events can be seen, such as Waterloo Place and Wellington Place at Wilderspool.

The bespoke map, funded by a grant award, is the latest in a series of improvements made to Warrington Museum & Library following a recent revamp by LiveWire and Culture Warrington, aimed at re-energising the building and transforming it into a creative

hub.

There are increased links between the museum and library services and a more integrated approach to activities and opening hours – including Sunday opening for the first time in the library and museum.

Emma Hutchinson, Managing Director of LiveWire and Culture Warrington, said: "We are always searching for new ways to encourage people to visit the Museum & Library and are thrilled with this engaging new addition. We hope it offers a fun and interactive way for people to learn

more about our town's fascinating history. Why not come and have a closer look – perhaps you can spot your part of town from 1844!"

The original map and others can be viewed in the Searchroom at Warrington Museum & Library. The opening hours for the Searchroom are as follows:

Monday-Tuesday: Closed, Wed - Fri: 10am to 4pm, Saturday: 10am to 2pm, Sunday: Closed

For more information on Warrington Library & Museum please visit [www.livewirewarrington.co.uk](http://www.livewirewarrington.co.uk) or [www.culturewarrington.org](http://www.culturewarrington.org)



Could you be one of St Rocco's 100 Faces of 2020?

Do you want to be the fundraising face of St Rocco's Hospice 2020?

We are looking for 100 people to join our 100 faces campaign.

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# Focus on nature for Bents photography competition



Last year's winning entry. Picture: Ron Budgen

**As Christmas comes to an end and a new year begins Bents Garden & Home will be welcoming in 2020 the launch of its annual photography competition, looking for the very best images of nature which capture the beauty of our surroundings.**

Once again the Glazebury based garden & home centre is calling on amateur photographers to focus their lenses or angle their iphones to take photographs of gardens and flowers, landscapes and wildlife. The winning entry, as voted for by Bents' customers, will receive £50 worth of Bents

vouchers and a framed copy of their image.

Matthew Bent, Managing Director said: "We always have an incredible response to this competition with some fantastic photographs submitted over the past few years. The number of entries makes shortlisting a very

tricky task but also a hugely enjoyable one as the images are always so varied.

"We're looking for as many entries as possible again this year so get snapping and send us your photographs of your favourite piece of nature."

Bents would like to see a wide range of nature photography from sweeping panoramic landscapes to close up shots showing the intricate beauty of plants and flowers, or animal shots which can be both

beautiful and sometimes very amusing!

The closing date for the competition is Sunday 26th January and 20 short-listed entries will be displayed in store throughout February.

Customers will be able to vote for their favourite image with the winning entry announced in early March.

Entry forms are available from customer services or entries can be made online at [bents.co.uk](http://bents.co.uk)

## Pensioners Christmas Party

A FREE Christmas party for pensioners packed Culcheth's Village Club.

After a delicious three course meal, followed by a sing-along, there was entertainment from a banjo band and a performance by pupils and teachers

from Culcheth Primary School with the school choir and team of bellersingers.

The senior citizens were full of praise and thanks to Warren and Wayne Bibby and their team of helpers.



# WI looks forward to New Year programme

**GLAZEBROOK WI's Christmas meeting included details of some interesting forthcoming events, including a taster session in archery in May, Home and Garden "posh pud and flower arrangement" day in April, and the Centenary Concert at Chester Cathedral in February.**

There was a "Call for all Knitters" from the Warrington and Halton Hospital Trust to create puppets from any scraps of wool.

These could be teddies, rabbits, or even frogs, etc and will provide a comforting gift to any child with hospital appointment.

On January 3 members have a homemade Christmas meal in the community centre to look forward to and on January 5 there is a guided walk around Rixton Clay Pits followed by refreshments in the Rangers centre.

Mosslands group have arranged a trip to Entwistle Mill on June 20 with the opportunity to shop till you drop. The craft group in January have decided to regenerate their knitting skills so they can take part in producing puppets for children in hospital.

## New "welcome space" at Methodist church

CULCHETH Methodist Church has a new "Welcome Space" – and on Saturday, January 18 will hold an Open Day to introduce it to the community.

The church has recently completed a project to improve their entrance area and have created a new, open plan space for everyone to use, to be called "The Welcome Space".

It is a space to rest, chat, use the WiFi, work, meet friends, or join one of the groups that meet there, and anyone will be welcome to use it whenever the building is open.

The minister, Rev Viv Smith said: "It is wonderful to see the new space completed, and it is a lovely place to meet with others. I can't wait to see the way our community make use of it".

The open day will be from 10am-

4pm and will include children's fun activities in the morning, crafts, jigsaws and games all day and some musical entertainment. There will also be youth activities in the afternoon, with Hannah, the church's youth worker.

Open Doors, a coffee shop that opens every Saturday morning, will extend throughout the day providing refreshments and lunch.

Everyone is invited to drop in during the day and see the space for themselves. See www.leighandhindley.org.uk for up to date information on the day.

The project was part funded by a grant from WREN's FCC Community Action Fund and the church is very grateful for the support, without which the project could not have been carried out.



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