

Culcheth *Life*

Magazine

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Editor's Comment



TO be or not to be - that is the question? Of course I am talking about the proposals for HS2 - and most importantly the impact on Culcheth and surrounding areas.

In this month's issue HS2 is certainly a hot topic, especially with the Wildlife Trust's impact report highlighting the devastating impact it would have on our countryside.

From day one, like many others I have questioned the need for HS2, especially in the modern world where many of us can complete our daily work tasks almost anywhere in the world on our computers, laptops or mobile phones.

For example I managed to report on the Challenge Cup final at Wembley last summer from my family holiday in Menorca.

I even managed to enjoy the homecoming thanks a colleague streaming it live on social media.

Yes face to face meetings are still important but we can already get to London in under two hours from Warrington, so why the need for even faster trains?

The current journey time is an ideal amount to catch up on emails and social media.

A lot of work needs to be done to bring our existing rail networks up to speed, let alone a brand new one which will rip up our precious countryside and smash through homes and businesses.

Warrington and in particular Culcheth, would suffer all the pain with little gain.

The project is still so far away from

getting off the ground I doubt it will impact on my business life but we have to think of the future.

Our planet is already suffering and the more we destroy the green belt and countryside the more damage we will do.

Pollution, in particular from small particulates is getting worse and literally killing people.

The way HS2 is stacking up it is becoming too costly and too damaging to our environment.

So let's all keep our fingers crossed and keep on lobbying those in power to put the brakes on and protect our green fields for future generations to enjoy.

Meanwhile it was disappointing to hear that the period before Christmas

was the busiest time for local police in more than a year with incidents of anti-social behaviour involving mainly younger people, especially around the times of Halloween and bonfire night, including increased incidents of "egging."

I think it is time again to appeal to all parents and guardians to keep a check on the whereabouts of your children and make sure they are not misbehaving.

Deadline for the March issue of Culcheth Life is February 18



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Jack is back!

MEMBERS of Culcheth Players are currently rehearsing for their annual pantomime. - which this year is "Jack and the Beanstalk."

The story is the familiar one which has been entertaining children - and adults - for generations.

Jack is living in great poverty with his mother and brothers. His mother owes rent money to the evil squire, so Jack is sent off to market to sell their last cow for a good price so his mother can pay her debts.

On the way he is tricked into selling the cow for a bag of worthless beans. His mother is deeply disappointed and throws the beans into the garden. The next day the beans have grown into a huge beanstalk. Jack climbs the beanstalk where his adventures begin.

Can Jack manage to escape the clutches of the giant at the top of the beanstalk and return home safely with riches for his family.

The pantomime will be staged at Culcheth Sports Club (The Daten) on Friday and Saturday, February 7-8 at 7.30pm and on Sunday February 9 at 2pm.

The cast will be joined by dancers from the Rosemary Powell School of Dance.

Tickets are £7 for adults and £5 for children under 16. They can be purchased from the venue or reserved by telephoning 07943 517710. They can also be purchased on line at www.culchethplayers.co.uk or you can pay cash on the door at the performance.



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Culcheth Hall Drive – before and after the axe fell



IT was a sad day for many residents when, in October last year, the rhododendron shrubs along both sides of the bottom part of Culcheth Hall Drive were severely cut back.

They had been there for decades and had lined the avenue leading up to the old Culcheth Hall – providing ground cover and habitats for wildlife, including hedgehogs and many species of bird.

In Spring they were a sight to behold when in bloom.

It had long been realised that some pruning was needed – but not

in such a radical manner.

It will take a long time before they recover and flower again as they did each spring.

But residents are hopeful that they will grow back more strongly – as the borough council say they will.

Meanwhile they are left looking at some sorry looking stumps and quite a few gaps.



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Ultrafast broadband arriving in Culcheth and Croft

OPENREACH has outlined plans to make ultrafast, ultra-reliable and future proof broadband available at 19 sites in market towns and villages across Cheshire, which include locations at Culcheth and Croft.

It's part of a bigger announcement involving 227 "harder to reach" areas across the UK, with building to start in the next 14 months and a target of reaching four million homes and business with full-fibre technology by the end of March next year.

The work builds on successful cost busting village trials launched at the tail end of last year - including Tarporley and Mickle Trafford - which have seen engineers developing a range of new tools, skills and techniques to help Openreach build full fibre in areas previously considered too complex or expensive to upgrade.

Robert Thorburn, Openreach's Partnership Director in the North of England, said: "This is great news for people living and working here and builds on Openreach's strong track record of working in rural areas, for years playing a key role alongside local councils to upgrade more than 97 per cent of the North West to superfast broadband. Today's announcement is about taking that next step and building

a full fibre network that is not only faster, but also more reliable and future-proof for generations to come."

There are clear economic benefits to building full fibre in rural areas. In a report by the Centre for Economics & Business Research (Cebr) - "Full fibre broadband: A platform for growth" - commissioned by Openreach last year, revealed that connecting everyone in the North West to 'full fibre' broadband by 2025 would create a £5.5 billion boost to the region's economy.

The report also revealed that 54,000 people in the region could be brought back into the workforce through enhanced connectivity. This could include roles within small businesses and entrepreneurs - as well as allowing thousands more people to work remotely, by unlocking smarter ways of working, better public services and greater opportunities for the next-generation of home-grown businesses.

Openreach's CEO, Clive



Selley, said: "Our full fibre build programme is going great guns - having passed over two million premises already on the way to our 4m target by March 2021. We're now building at around 26,000 premises a week in over 100 locations - reaching a new home or business every 23 seconds. That's up from 13,000 premises a week this time last year.

"Openreach has always been committed to doing our bit in rural Britain - delivering network upgrades in communities that are harder to reach and less densely populated.

"Our ambition is to reach 15 million premises by mid-2020s if right investment conditions are in place. Currently, the biggest missing piece of this puzzle is getting an exemption from business rates on building fibre cables which is critical for any fibre builder's long-term investment case."

Openreach recently reached over two million homes and businesses with full fibre technology and a quarter of its existing footprint already falls within rural areas. More than 120,000 homes and businesses - including around 7,000 in North West - have also signed up to Openreach's Community Fibre Partnership (CFP) scheme. The CFP programme enables the company to work with a local community to build a customised co-funded solution and bring fibre broadband to areas not included in any existing private or publicly subsidised upgrade schemes.

To view the full list of market towns and villages included in this phase of build, please visit - <https://opnr.ch/200locationsp>

More than 3,500 Openreach people live and work in the North West.

Christmas Market review and re-think

MEMBERS of Culcheth & Glazebury Parish have decided to have a re-think on the objectives of the annual Christmas Market.

Members noted another good turnout and a successful first Santa Hunt. However, the installation of gazebos was delayed and the wrong sizes of gazebos delivered. Also, there were too many of the same type of stall i.e. beauty products.

It was agreed that a total re-think of the objectives of the Market should take place including liaison and possible integration with the indoor events taking place on the same day and more emphasis on entertainments i.e. fairground and Carols and festive food/drink stalls, and less on beauty and jewellery etc.



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Half term happiness at Bents Garden & Home

It doesn't seem long since they went back to school after the Christmas break, but believe it or not half term is almost upon us.

And if you're wondering what to do to keep the little ones happy during the holidays, then look no further than Bents Garden & Home, where there are some very special craft based events planned to keep them entertained.

Little ones can roll up their sleeves and let their creative juices flow at Bents' Creation Station. They can make, stick, colour and paint their very own masterpieces every day during half term at the

Creation Station which will be located between the Children's Boutique and C-Crafts. And the team from C-Crafts will ensure the Station is re-stocked with new crafts on a daily basis all of which are completely free to use.

Whilst Creation Station is a place where children can create and improvise, a number of organised workshop sessions have also been planned. On Tuesday 18th and Thursday 20th February

Bents' popular pottery painting workshops return where children will be able to decorate their very own ceramic coin bank (Tuesday) or watering can (Thursday).

Workshop places can be pre-booked online between 10.00 – 10.45 and 11.00 – 11.45 (bents.co.uk) or drop in sessions will also be taking place between 2 – 4pm when there's no need to book.

A rose themed treasure hunt will

be on throughout the break with face painting also planned for the Tuesday 18th, Thursday 20th and Saturday 22nd February. Add to this a choice of dining destinations, outdoor play area, indoor beach and Bents' Jurassic Cove Adventure Golf there's every opportunity to treat yourself whilst the little ones play.

Workshops are £6 per child which includes all materials.



Rhiannon is knocking on TV's door

FORMER Birchwood High School pupil Rhiannon Lawrence has been knocking on TV's door for some time.

A couple of years ago, she won a prestigious place with BBC Children – home of the popular channels CBeebies and CBBC – while studying television production management at Edge Hill University.

Now she was credited on screen with her first big television job as production management assistant on the BBC children's programme Crackerjack.

Rhiannon's love of editing, production and the world of media started while studying GCSE media at Birchwood High and led to her achieving a first-

class Honours.

She has been working on Crackerjack as a production management assistant for some time, a role which deals with the many and varied administration tasks involved in producing a popular TV show. She was excited to make the big time as her name appeared in the credits for the show.

Staff at Birchwood High have kept on Rhiannon's progress ever since she left school and always knew she would do well. She was talented, always worked hard and was motivated.

A school spokesperson said: "I felt so pleased and proud to see her work credited on TV."





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New report reveals impact of HS2

THE construction of the controversial HS2 rail network will have a devastating impact on nature according to a new report published by the Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

The report, which claims to be the most complete assessment of the environmental damage that HS2 will cause, reveals, the vast scale of the destruction and impact it will cause to nature across the county, including Warrington.

One of the areas under threat is Holcroft Moss. This wetland reserve near Glazebook is the only known area of lowland bog in Cheshire that hasn't been cut for peat.

Combining data from 14 Wildlife Trusts, other charities and landowners along the route, the report shows that HS2 will destroy huge areas of irreplaceable natural habitat and protected wildlife sites across the country. This will cause permanent loss of nature, the separation of natural spaces, and the local extinction of endangered species.

Cheshire will be impacted by both phases 2a and 2b of the controversial railway project. Phase 2a will see the destruction of wild spaces from the West Midlands to Crewe. The important habitats affected include woodlands, wildflower meadows, important wetlands and peatlands. One local species particularly affected is the water vole which is already facing possible extinction in Cheshire.

Phase 2b will then run from Crewe, past Northwich before splitting to the north-west of Knutsford. The west branch will head past Lymm and Warrington while the east branch will pass Altrincham, cut through Wythenshawe before finishing in Manchester. The east branch will result in significant losses of ancient woodland.

Dr Rachel Giles, Cheshire Wildlife Trust's Evidence and Planning Manager, has been a leading figure in the creation of the report. Her team's work has identified a number of key sites that will be severely impacted,

including: Randilow and Bunker Hill, a Local Wildlife Site near Crewe and Erlam's meadow, a Local Wildlife Site near Knutsford.

Dr Giles comments: "HS2 is the biggest infrastructure project this country has ever seen and will cut a swathe through the landscape up to half a mile wide in certain particularly sensitive locations in the North West. Although sold as a sustainable transport system, the truth is the environmental impacts will be truly devastating and the measures put forward to mitigate the impacts to wildlife are hopelessly inadequate."

Cheshire Wildlife Trust are saying that the Government must stop and rethink HS2.

CEO Charlotte Harris remarks, "Cheshire Wildlife Trust are supportive of sustainable transport but, if HS2 is to go ahead, a new greener approach must be taken. Under the present plans, the scheme is simply too damaging to local and national wildlife to allow it to continue. We must see dramatic changes in order to bring it in line with Government policy. Our local wildlife deserves and so desperately needs better consideration than what is being given. HS2 should be creating green corridors that feed into a nature recovery network, instead it stands to fragment our wild spaces and isolate them further."

Cheshire Wildlife Trust is urging people to add their name to the Stop and Rethink HS2 campaign (wtru.st/ReThink-HS2). Members of the public will be able to send a message to the Prime Minister which will be presented to him in the coming weeks.

For more information, visit: www.cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/HS2

The report finds that HS2's current proposals will risk the loss of, or significantly impact:

- 5 Wildlife refuges of international

Minister's "gut feeling" that HS2 will go ahead.

A CABINET minister says he has a "gut feeling" that the HS2 rail project will go ahead – but campaigners in Culcheth remain optimistic that it could be scrapped.

Cllr Frank Allen, chairman of CADRAG – the Culcheth and District Rail Action Group – said: "We are hopeful that at least the Golborne Link – the part that would affect us locally – could be dropped."

"I don't think anyone has made up their mind yet – the decision could be on a knife edge."

Brexit secretary Stephen Barclay gave what was described as "the clearest indication yet" that HS2 would go ahead when he told the BBC he had a "gut feeling" that the review into the controversial project would result in the scheme going

ahead.

He also said he believed the project was vital to for "levelling up" the UK's transport network. But his comments came against a background of a growing row over the spiralling cost of HS2 – now put at £106 billion.

Cllr Allen said: "It would cost a lot of money to cancel the scheme, although not as much as to continue with it. We have, in the past, had other hugely costly projects that have been cancelled."

"But the Golborne Link could be dropped and save a lot of the cost. The line is not needed and it is not cost effective. For every £1 spent on it, you would only get 15p back."

"Another problem is that the line would be built to a really high standard, capable of carrying 20

HS2 deals devastating blow on nature

- importance, protected by UK law
- 33 Sites of Special Scientific Interest which are protected by UK law
 - 693 Classified Local Wildlife Sites
 - 21 Designated Local Nature Reserves
 - 26 Large landscape-scale initiatives, including:
 - 4 Nature Improvement Areas awarded £1.7 million of public money
 - 22 Living Landscapes – partnership schemes to restore nature
 - 18 Wildlife Trust Nature Reserves – many are also designated wildlife sites
 - 108 Ancient woodlands, an irreplaceable habitat
 - Other irreplaceable habitats such as veteran trees, wood pasture, old meadows
 - Extensive further areas of wider natural habitat
 - Barn owls and endangered wildlife such as white-clawed crayfish, willow tit and lizard orchid. Rarities like dingy skipper may become locally extinct.

But Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA General) Secretary, Manuel Cortes, challenged the findings of the study saying the high-speed rail project would make a "very significant contribution towards cutting our carbon emissions" while actually "safeguarding our plants

and wildlife".

In response Cortes called for the project to go all the way to Scottish cities, citing both environmental and economic reasons for pressing ahead.

Cortes said: "The time for debate on HS2 is well and truly over. It should be given the green light and should go all the way to Scotland so that we are able to shift people and freight from road to rail.

"HS2 not only builds much needed rail capacity and puts rocket boosters under regional economies – but crucially will also make a very significant contribution towards cutting our carbon emissions.

"These are a major cause of climate change which is itself the greatest threat to our plants and wildlife.

"Of course, we expect HS2 to do whatever possible to protect wildlife along its route. Also, we know from the Olympic Park in London – which teems with plants, animals and insects – that much can be done to protect and enhance wildlife when building major infrastructure projects.

"I'd say to the Wildlife Trusts – the bigger picture on HS2 can't be ignored. There is not a moment to lose in pushing ahead, the evidence shows this high-speed rail project is vital for our country in so many ways."



ahead but campaigners remain hopeful

trains a day in each direction. But the design of the full GHS2 network would not allow more than three trains a day in each direction. It just would not make sense."

Cllr Allen said CADRAG was continuing to work behind the scenes to oppose HS2 and was pleased that, since the General Election, all the local MPs were opposing the rail project.

These included the MPs for Leigh, James Grundy, Warrington South, Andy Carter and Altrincham and Sale, Sir Graham Brady.

If the Golborne Link is built it will slice through Culcheth, devastating the village, blighting many properties. A wider area including High Legh, Agden, Broomeedge, Lymm, Heatley, Warburton, Dunham, Partington, Rixton-with-

Glazebrook and Lowton would also be affected.

Originally, the Golborne link was intended to avoid congestion at Crewe, provide a depot at Golborne and a link to the West Coast Main Line for trains to Scotland.

But in 2014 plans were announced for an HS2 station and a depot at Crewe, along with a direct connection to the West Coast Main Line. Campaigners say this removes the need for the Golborne Link.

In the past, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has indicated that he did not support HS2, but more recently he has been more ambivalent.

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Simon Bax,
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PARISH NEWS

Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council Christmas Market

November the 30th was cold, but happily there was no rain. The decision was made four years ago to create the Christmas Market and link with the other events in the village. The other aim was to bring more people into the village to see and use all the shops and services. Young people were also involved and it was good to see their excellent competition entries displayed in the library. We have also invested in new LED Christmas lighting in Culcheth and Glazebury, an environmental as well as a financial improvement.

The local plan

As reported in December the next stage, publication of the Plan for examination, with the decisions made by an independent planning Inspector, was delayed until this year. Note that the Plan has to comply with national planning policies and any green belt changes are decided by the Inspector.

Play areas

We are very pleased with the Mee Brow play area and our next work is the improvement of the play area on Culcheth's green.

Traffic

We have opposed the Parkside Link Road and the plans to put a weight restriction on Winwick Lane because of the impact on traffic through our villages. Since the trial weight restriction there have been more large vehicles on our local roads with a large increase on roads in Glazebury.

Glazebury community speedwatch is working with the Borough Council and Councillors to assess the situation and work to a solution.

We have objected to the proposals for a motorway service area at J11 of the M62. Although this is in Croft there would be changes to Culcheth through diversion of the Silver Lane Brook and the impact on groundwater, as well as traffic and noise issues.

Reporting

To report a pot hole, go to www.warrington.gov.uk go to Traffic and Travel or ring 01925 443322.

To report a crime that isn't an emergency dial 101

Culcheth Police Surgery times are in Culcheth Library and on the Cheshire Police website.

Note Culcheth Library opening times now include Fridays 11am to 5pm.

Best wishes to all for the New Year

Publication of Information

The Parish Council has adopted a publication of information scheme. Details of who we are, what we do and how the public can access information is published on the main notice boards, Common Lane, Culcheth and Culcheth Library and on our website:

www.culchethandglazebury-pc.org.uk



Charity expands with new Birchwood Mobility & Independent Living Solutions

LOCAL charity 'Warrington Disability Partnership' will open their latest Mobility & Independent Living Solutions store in Birchwood Shopping Centre on Monday, February 10.

It is their latest expansion following the launch of a social enterprise 'the Disability Trading Company' in April 2011.

Their first retail service was launched from the Warrington Centre for Independent Living off Evelyn Street and in October 2011 they opened the Mobility & Independent Living Store (MILS) in the Golden Square Shopping Mall in Warrington Town Centre, recently moving to a larger store in Sankey Street.

Since then WDP have added a full-scale Mobility Workshop & Service Centre, next they launched a recycling scheme, focussing on mobility equipment, scooters, wheelchairs and power-chairs, which are sold from WDP's Shopmobility service located in Warrington Town Centre.

In October 2016 WDP partnered with St Mark Universal Care, to launch 'the Phoenix Project', refurbishing and shipping wheelchairs and other mobility aids to countries including Egypt, Thailand and Syria.

So far over £750,000 worth of equipment has been salvaged and donated.

More recently, WDP's retail services were accredited to the

British Health Trades Association, as their services values are aligned to the BHTA's "Buy with Confidence" scheme that is accredited to Trading Standards.

WDP offers customers "0% interest free finance" and they have gained 'approved dealer' accreditation to the national Motability Scheme, which allows people to use their enhance mobility component of DLA or PIP to lease a powerchair or mobility scooter. During the past two years WDP opened a retail store at the rear of

Warrington Hospital and the Smart Flat, which focuses on assistive technology.

So what makes WDP's MILS unique?

- DTC has no private shareholders, 100% of its profits go to support WDP's charitable services which include subsidising weekly Lunch Clubs for older and young disabled people, accessible narrow-boat offering daytrips on the Bridgewater Canal and an accessible caravan in North Wales,
- DTC staff do not receive any incentive bonuses, which results in their staff providing advice

verses high pressure selling,

- Free impartial home and work assessments are based on the philosophy of information, advice and guidance, not just sales,
- DTC is a user led social enterprise; most of their staff and nearly all of their volunteers use their experience of living with a disability or long-term health condition to ensure they recommend the right products, not just any product
- Hundreds of volunteer hours contribute to reducing WDP's overheads, which result in savings that are passed on to the customers.






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Library now open on Fridays

CULCHETH Library is now open on Fridays – offering greater accessibility to the library for local residents.

Historically the Warrington Road library has been closed on Fridays, but from now on the library will be open from 11am to 5pm every Friday – including the lunch hour.

This is additional to the library's current hours and is aimed at creating opportunities for residents to access the library services on a day when it is usually closed.

The decision to open on a Friday was taken by LiveWire – the community interest company that manages the library service for Warrington Borough Council – in conjunction with the Friends of Culcheth Library group.

The "Friends" is a volunteer group set up 18 months ago to support Culcheth Library, working alongside LiveWire library staff and Warrington Borough Council on the long-term sustainability of the library.

Since then the library has hosted a number of popular clubs that have encouraged people to use the library including games and jigsaw clubs, murder mystery events, children's reading challenges and much more.

LiveWire managing director Emma Hutchinson said: "We hope Culcheth Library users will welcome the extension of the opening hours and really see a

benefit from the library being open on Fridays – which we feel is a really exciting development for the site.

"The extended opening hours is testament to the great work being done by the staff at the library to deliver the services on offer there – as well as the dedicated contribution to the promotion of the library by the Friends group. As such I'd like to thank the Friends for their sterling work promoting Culcheth Library and supporting library staff."

Janef Evans, a member of the Friends of Culcheth Library, said: "This is really good news for the library. We feel Friday opening will be better for families, for older people, for anyone who would like to get books out ahead of the weekend. But libraries are not just about books – we offer lego, crafts, jigsaws – so much more. The Friends have worked really hard to help grow the library, and we look forward to the future, and Friday opening."

The new opening hours for Culcheth Library are as follows:

Monday: 2.00pm to 5.00pm;
Tuesday: 10.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 6.00pm; Wednesday: Closed; Thursday 10.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 5.00pm;
Friday: 11.00am to 5.00pm
Saturday: 9.30am to 13.00pm;
Sunday: Closed.



Anti-social behaviour back on the agenda

THE back end of last year was the busiest for police in more than 12 months involving incidents of anti-social behaviour.

Many of the calls made were in relation to seasonal events with the hangover from Halloween and several jobs being reported involving fireworks. In all, 10 reports were made to the Police during November.

Nine in Culcheth and one in Glazebury.

Members of the Parish Council heard that these included egg throwing, fireworks being set off, groups of youths congregating and a nuisance male reported in a retail premises.

Great time to start your new fitness journey

We're now well into 2020 – and a new decade is a great opportunity to either kick-start or freshen up your exercise routine.

LiveWire's gym at Culcheth Community Campus is a well-equipped boutique gym that offers everything you need to get back on that path to fitness, right on your doorstep.

There's the latest Techogym equipment including treadmills, stationary bikes and cross trainers, a free weights area and a fitness studio hosting a variety group exercise classes throughout the week.

And if you're struggling to fit exercise into a busy life, or finding your current workout a bit stale and need a bit of extra motivation, why not try getting yourself a gym buddy? There are lots of benefits to working out with a friend:

Fewer skipped workouts
Scheduling a gym session with a friend helps hold you accountable for getting your workout in. Meeting someone at the gym not only motivates you to show up, but to work harder. Exercising with another person pushes you to do your workout and do it to the best of your ability. Another bonus – if you work out with a friend who is stronger or faster than you, you'll

be more likely to test your own limits.

Try new exercises
Hitting the gym with a friend is the perfect time to try a new exercise or class as you can support and encourage each other.

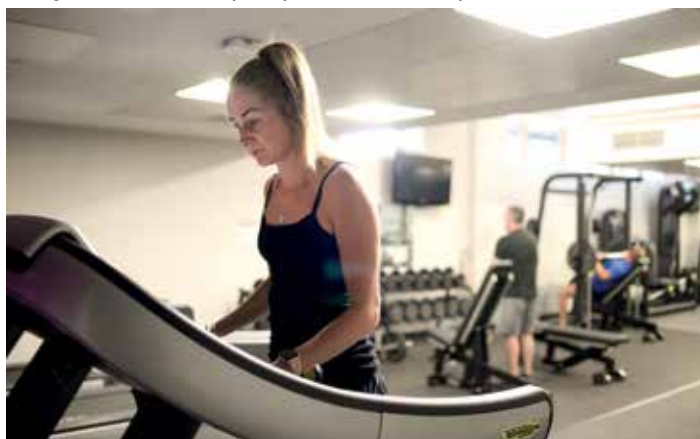
Work out longer
Time flies when you're having fun...or at least when you are distracted. Having someone to chat with between sets lets you focus on something other than just your workout making the time go by faster.

Recover together.
Keep on track with your nutrition post-workout. A friend who's worked up a sweat with you is likely to want to join you for a healthy post-exercise meal or snack.

Helps keep you on track

If you and a friend are doing it together, it can help you maintain your goals and you're more likely to encourage each other to keep in your positive routines.

So why not make the most of the free day pass to LiveWire's Community Campus that is in this month's Culcheth Life on the back page – and come along and kickstart your 2020 exercise kick.



Business park raises record £11,000 for charity

BIRCHWOOD Park raised more than £11,000 for charity last year – and is aiming to raise more this year.

The total of £11,578 was its largest fundraising total to date and will be distributed between the RSPCA Warrington, Halton and St Helens and Hand on Heart.

In order to achieve their grand total, the team at Birchwood Park put on a series of events throughout the year, including summer fairs, bake sales, sponsored challenges and the park's now infamous annual Duck Race, all open to companies on the Park and local residents alike.

Martin O'Rourke, commercial director at Birchwood Park, said: 'It's fantastic to see that we've once again broken our previous fundraising records, and the money raised couldn't be going to two better local charities.'

'I'd like to thank each and every member of staff, local resident and

Park occupier that got involved in any way during our fundraising and those who donated their hard-earned cash for their contributions. To be able to give back to those organisations within our local community in need of help and funding is crucial and something we always strive to do at Birchwood Park.'

Catherine McGee, operations manager at the RSPCA Warrington, Halton and St Helens, said: 'We're over the moon to have been one of the chosen Birchwood Park charities over the past year, and can't thank the team there enough for everything they've done to raise money for our branch and the animals we care for.'

Lesley Appleton, fundraising co-ordinator at Hand on Heart, said: 'It's fantastic to have such a boost and support from businesses in our own community, and the money raised will go a long way in helping us to raise awareness for

sudden cardiac arrest in children and provide essential funding for in-school defibrillators.'

In addition to monetary totals raised throughout the year, Birchwood Park also held special festive appeals for local causes, including collecting food, warm clothing, blankets and toiletry items for Warrington Open Door at Christmas (WODAC), a local charity supporting the homeless,

lonely and vulnerable over the festive period.

Fundraising efforts will continue into 2020, as Birchwood Park is pleased to announce its newly chosen park charities St Rocco's Hospice, Warrington and Dogs for Good, a charity which explores the ways in which dogs can help people overcome specific challenges and enrich and improve lives and communities.



Girl's rugby team wins its first game

A VERY inexperienced girl's rugby team from Birchwood High School entered their first Under-13s tournament – and won their first game.

They defeated the hosts – Sir Thomas Boteler High School – in the opening game at Latchford, a

comfortable 30-10 victory.

Shiloh Lee scored five tries, Amy Groves two, and Eva Lowe,

one.

Then they played King's Academy and, after a tough battle, lost narrowly 12-10. It was a massive team effort and the girls worked well together.

The team was very inexperienced compared with some of the other teams and there were some great, standout performances which will be built on to create a winning team.



Former high school girl now a familiar face on TV

A FORMER Birchwood High School pupil has been something of a regular on our TV screens in recent times – fulfilling the promise her former teachers always knew she had.

Yemisi Oyinloye appeared in the second series of ITV's "Bancroft" playing a young police officer to Sarah Parish's title role and then starred in the new series of the Bafta-winning comedy drama "Cold Feet" – also on ITV.

Add to that appearances in BBC's "Casualty" and the daytime show "Doctors" and you can see why she is becoming a familiar face on television.

Yemisi, 26, is from Locking Stumps and attended Birchwood High and Birchwood College between 2005 and 2012.

Teaching staff soon marked her out as a hard worker and high achiever. She always wanted to be an actor and she learned much from appearing in a number of school shows, working her way up from bit parts to main character roles.

She was still at college when she landed her first professional part, performing in a two-month stage production at the Leeds Playhouse and then returning to Birchwood to pick up her studies.

After leaving college, Yemisi followed the normal route of an aspiring actor, taking run-of-the-mill jobs to pay the rent while pursuing her dreams of stardom.

In 2013, she moved to London to take part in a 12 months theatre course during which time she appeared in shows in London and the Edinburgh Fringe.

When she landed her first TV role she said: "All I did was cry as things were becoming real."

Yemisi literally beat thousands of other hopefuls to get the job of playing DC Sally Read in "Bancroft".

Asked about her first day of filming, she said: "I was terrified, but I soon found out that there was no reason to be worried as the cast and crew were amazing, so kind and supportive".

As for working with Sarah Parish, she said: "It was a real honour. Sarah was lovely and a real pro. Working with such a good actor makes your performance better. She really gave me something to aspire to. Even when not acting myself it was fabulous to watch and learn from such a great cast."

Kelly Forster, Yemisi's former drama teacher, said "It is wonderful to see Yemisi doing so well and very exciting to see her

on TV and watch how well her career is progressing. She has already been in to speak to our next rising performers at school. They can learn so much from her.

We are proud that her acting roots were laid at Birchwood. She deserves every success as she is a talented and determined young woman."



Ex-miner tells story of colliery sculpture

FORMER miner Gary Conley was the speaker at the monthly meeting of Newchurch WI and his topic was "Dream" - the sculpture on the site of the former Sutton Manor colliery.

This huge piece of concrete and Spanish dolomite was created by Jaume Plensa from Barcelona, inspired by his admiration for William Blake.

After the closure of the colliery in 1992 St Helens Council gave the site to the Forestry Commission and a large mixed forest was planted. The families of Sutton Manor still loved the old mine and in 2005 Gary led an application to Channel 4's "Big Art Project" for funds to create a piece of public art there. The site was too large for the TV programme but St Helens councillor Jock Whaley found the money from the Arts Council and elsewhere. The miners' group wanted to look forward so Jaume used a picture of a 9-year-old girl, elongated to 20 metres, and created a landmark in the forest beside the M62.

Gary told this story amid many hilarious details of his life in a mining family. Kath Hanley

thanked him warmly and he judged the competition (A Small Garden Ornament). He chose Jean Riley as winner, followed by Doreen Procter and Margaret Harrop. Freda Wilcock and Margaret Wilkinson served tea.

Earlier, secretary June Cope had opened the meeting with memories of Newchurch's Christmas Party. There had been a delicious supper served by Warren Bibby and his helpers, presents from "Secret Santa" and a wonderful entertainment by the singing group "Nearly Tuneful".

The Craft Group's decorations had transformed the Hall and Newchurch was joined by two friends from Culcheth WI. Lesley Lloyd was the 2019 Competition winner and there were three "birthday girls".

President Eileen Griffiths thanked Margaret Mellows for the bright bouquet for the president's table.

Walking Football Group to hold tournament

CULCHETH Walking Football Group is to hold a tournament on Saturday, March 21 to raise money for The Christie Hospital in Manchester.

This follows the success of a similar event last year which raised more than £3,000 for Prostate Cancer.

The event will be at Culcheth High School, from 11am until 2pm.

Group chairman and manager Denis Sutherland said: "At present we are working on the principle of 16 teams competing for the Culcheth Cup, donated by the Culcheth Arms public house.

"Last year the winners were Blackburn Rovers, worthy winners who, we hope, will be entering this

year.

"Volunteers and sponsorship or donations are urgently required to make the day a big success and raise money for a great hospital.

"This is a tournament for the Over Fifties and an activity the encourages well being, physical activity, mental stimulation and social bonding with people of similar ideas.

"It also helps the elderly ones to get out of the house and engage in a community group."

Anyone interested in getting involved can do so at utherlanddenis@yahoo.co.uk or YannisNicolaidis0131@yahoo.com



Cricket club gears up for summer

GLAZEBURY Cricket Club is gearing up for the coming season with indoor net practice due to start on February 9 for 10 weeks.

The Hurst Lane club will again be fielding two teams in division four of the Cheshire Cricket League after finishing in a respectable sixth position in the division last summer.

As usual, new players - particularly juniors - will be welcome.

Anyone interest in joining the club and attending the winter nets should contact Jack Warhurst on 07780 460500 (for Over 17s) or Nirpal Bansal on 07761 824698 (for juniors).

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