

Culcheth *Life*

Magazine

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Editor's Comment



Editor
Gary Skentelbery

Production
James Bryan

Advertising
James Balme
01925 631592 opt 1

Editorial
01925 631592 opt 2

Email
info@culchethlife.com

Websites
www.culchethlife.com
www.frodshamlife.co.uk
www.lymmlife.co.uk
www.warrington-worldwide.co.uk
www.warrington.tv

Address
New Media Centre
Old Road Warrington
WA4 1AT

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CHRISTMAS certainly came early for the Friends of the Raven Inn following a grant of over £100,000 from the Government's Community Ownership Fund – especially after the campaigners had been told they had little chance of securing the funding.

While the future of the Raven was never in doubt following the highly successful shares offer – this new funding will make life a whole lot easier when it comes to refurbishing the premises.

Now it is full steam ahead with the aim of having the Raven back open as a community pub for next Easter, 2023.

It really has been an amazing journey and I again take my hat off to all those who have worked so hard to make their dreams come true, especially those who have invested their own hard earned cash.

Having witnessed their enthusiasm from the very start of the campaign, I have absolutely no doubt what so ever, that they will make this a successful enterprise – and we can't wait to help cover the opening.

Meanwhile there was more good news breaking as Culcheth Life was going to press with Government inspectors telling Warrington Borough Council its proposed Local Plan was not sound and will require some significant modifications, including reducing the impact on Green Belt.

This will be music to the ears of those who have been campaigning to save our precious green belt, not

just locally but borough wide.

However, they say the Local Plan process can now proceed to the main modifications stage, with no need for any substantial additional work, and no need to identify alternative site allocations.

But their findings will be welcomed by those who have been campaigning against proposed development on Green Belt land. Full details on the Local Plan can be read on our website www.warrington-worldwide.co.uk and search "Local Plan."

Finally as we head into 2023 I would like to wish everyone all the best for what I suspect will be

another difficult year, especially with the cost of living crisis.

Looking at the figures on my SMART meter during the cold snap did not make good reading, with gas alone going through the £300 barrier by mid-December! One money saving tip I have found useful is, if you have a combi boiler, turn down the temperature on the radiator and water settings (Mine had been in the red) – this can make a huge difference!

Happy New Year!

Deadline for the February issue of Culcheth Life is January 24



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Government steps in to save the Raven

FOLLOWING a successful community shares offer, the cooperative running the Raven has now secured £102,000 of government funding from the Community Ownership Fund (COF).

The COF is a £150 million fund over four years to support community groups across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to take ownership of assets which are at risk of being lost to the community.

It is part of the government's levelling up initiative.

Friends of Raven Inn Spokesperson Peter Sturman said: "This is absolutely fantastic news, we are bowled over by it."

"There was never any question the Raven qualified for the COF, however we were aware the first round (last year) was massively over subscribed and we were advised that we were unlikely to be successful.

"Since submitting the application in August, we have worked on the assumption that we would not get it.

"One of the things we had to demonstrate was the level of community support. Well that was easy for us.

"We have said, time & time again, this is all about our amazing community.

"Without the four years of community action, resolve and commitment we would not have secured this grant.

Peter added: "We now have sufficient funds to fully restore the Raven and it's kitchen and provide what our community have always wanted from the Raven Inn Community Pub.

"We will, of course, always be prudent. We fully recognise the responsibility on our shoulders in handling the funds entrusted to us from those shareholders and now, the government.

"We have 180 amazing shareholders, who now become members of the cooperative running the Raven.

"We are getting together with our members to discuss the plans for the future.

"We know from the 2019 community survey the main things our community want from the Raven is a dog friendly community pub, serving home cooked pub grub.

"We can do all of that and a lot more. We have plans to introduce initiatives such as a sensory garden, indeed our gardening crew have been working on that.

"Also our 'No one alone' scheme, where people who may have difficulties getting out of their homes, will be given the opportunity to socialise at the Raven.

"Dine out with dementia", which has been pioneered by some pubs in Norfolk, allowing people with dementia and their carers, to dine and socialise in a dementia friendly environment.

"These are just some examples of what our community pub intends to offer. Of course we will see so many members of our community

just coming along for a drink and a natter.

"The surge of feeling has been so strong to just get our local back. We can announce you will not have to order a meal in order to have a drink at the Raven Inn community pub.

"It is intended to have the Raven

open in time for next Easter.

"All being well, exactly one year after the Raven was purchased by our local families, she will be buzzing again.

"It's taken longer than we hoped, however we did not expect our Raven to be in such a dire condition."



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Labour hold on at Winwick as just 81 people vote in one of the lowest ever election turn outs

JUST 81 people voted as Labour hung on in a by-election at Winwick Parish Council winning in one of the lowest election counts ever recorded in Warrington by just eleven votes.

Lisa Secker from Grasmere Avenue, Orford, beat Independent Andy Griffiths, from Winwick, in a dismal turnout for a seat on Winwick Parish Council. She retains the Labour seat for the ward of Peel Hall, with a turnout of just 6.77 percent.

The ward has a catchment area of up to 1,197 individual votes but freezing weather conditions were attributed to one of the lowest turnouts recorded. Elsewhere, on the same day, a referendum in Cheshire attracted only 2% of its catchment area.

With 46 votes Lisa has managed to maintain the Labour seat that has been held for decades on the parish council, against the 35 votes gained by Mr Griffiths. There were no spoil ballots recorded.

On winning, the 46-year-old mother of four said: "It was a respectful fight. At the end of the day, we both want to see the same things for the Peel Hall Ward. I am genuinely looking forward to meeting everyone. This is something quite new to me. I am keen to stand up as much as I can

and to stand up for what everyone wants."

Andy commented: "I want to congratulate Lisa on her election to the parish council and I look forward to hearing her plans and support of the ward. I'll continue to support the Save Peel Hall Campaign Group in the fight to ensure developers keep to their promises and to get the best result possible for local people. My campaign encompassed the entire ward and all its issues."

Spokesperson for the Save Peel Hall Campaign Group Wendy Johnson-Taylor said: "I am really saddened by the apathy presented by local people, especially with regards to the huge development which is only just around the corner. It will impact every single one of us and I do not look forward to the day I tell them 'I told you so.' Residents really need to wake up and realise the seriousness of what is to come. By not voting is pathetic. I'm stunned. Despite this our group remains 100 percent committed to making sure we get the best deal we can out of this."



Independent candidate Andy Griffiths.

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First pre-let agreed for Birchwood Park's £16m development

WORLDWIDE leader in Specialised Diagnostics, Werfen, is close to completing a pre-let deal for the latest development at Birchwood Park, after expanding its warehouse space following a period of growth.

A pre-let agreement, Werfen is the first deal secured in the latest phase of the successful Cavendish Warehouse development at Birchwood Park, which is due to complete in Q1 2023.

Werfen's core business offer is in the areas of Hemostasis, Acute Care Diagnostics and Autoimmunity. Through its Original Equipment Manufacturing (OEM) business line, the company researches, develops and manufactures customized assays and biomaterials.

Werfen will be doubling its space to 35,000 sq. ft. and will ensure its UK base in Warrington can become the company's dedicated distribution and logistics centre, increasing its efficiency and output with three times the previous storage capacity.

This latest development is an evolution of Birchwood Park's 'modern hybrid' design, providing versatile units to accommodate businesses looking for high quality, secure warehouse space with the flexibility to increase office space as required.

Werfen confirmed its interest in the new warehouse space not long after construction officially commenced in June 2022. An occupier at the park since 2016, it was the community-focused environment and the diversity of its offering that brought Werfen to Birchwood Park six years ago, as well as the on-site nursery that Werfen staff has utilised to support

their wellbeing and work life balance.

Werfen General Manager Richard Hames commented: "We're delighted to be expanding our warehouse space here at Birchwood Park, allowing us to further improve the processing of customer deliveries, as well as supporting our business-wide sustainability objectives in 2023.

"Our warehouse space at Birchwood Park has helped to support the evolution of our business over the years due to its ideal location in the heart of the North West, as well as looking after the workplace wellbeing of our staff with its many facilities and wellbeing initiatives. We're excited to continue our work here and we're thankful that the unique and flexible offering at the Park has allowed us to expand our space and grow the Werfen team accordingly."

Birchwood Park Commercial Director Martin O'Rourke added: "I am delighted that Werfen is the first occupier to expand into one of our new units, which incorporates all the lessons from previous developments to offer modern facilities to help attract and retain staff for our occupiers. More importantly, we have been able to incorporate within the design the latest measures to help Werfen achieve its sustainability goals.

"Alongside the flexible, hybrid design of the office, we understand the staff at Werfen often enjoy the

various amenities across the Park, namely the on-site gym and the EngineRooms lunchtime offering. We hope as Werfen's operations continue to grow, more and more of the team nationwide and perhaps globally will be able to visit us here at Birchwood Park."

As well as existing occupiers growing their offices and warehouse space, the Park has

also welcomed several other new businesses in the last few months, including foreign exchange traders FX Cartel and engineering consultants Richter.

To find out about the diverse range of office spaces available at Birchwood Park, please head to www.birchwoodpark.co.uk/space-to-let or call the team on 01925 851536.



Police clampdown on cars blocking footpaths at Birchwood

POLICE clamped down on cars blocking footpaths at Birchwood as a total of seven fixed penalty notices were issued.

Officers were called to Brock Road in Birchwood due to reports of several vehicles obstructing the footpaths in the area.

They were able to locate most of the drivers at a nearby event who despite repeated requests from the organisers to clear the pavements hadn't bothered.

Police had to inform them that they would exercise police powers to remove offending vehicles for several owners to come forward and quickly move them.

Warrington Borough Council parking enforcement also joined police, as a total of 7 fixed penalty notices were issued.

A police spokesperson said: "If anyone wishes to criticise our actions, there was a large car park available for drivers to use however, the actions of these drivers had forced several pedestrians, including those with limited mobility to walk into the road which, given the road conditions was far more dangerous than normal."



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Students dazzle audiences at s

STUDENTS of Culcheth High School dazzled three sell-out audiences with show-stopping performances of ABBA MIA! - their musical theatre extravaganza featuring the hit songs of ABBA.

CHS shows are always spectacular but this one raised the bar even higher.

Energy, enthusiasm and talent really shone on stage as the audiences sang and danced to the likes of 'Gimme, Gimme, Gimme' and 'Voulez-Vous' and cried through the beautifully delivered 'One of Us' and 'Slipping Through My Fingers'.

The show ended with a surprise encore of 'Waterloo', complete with 70s style costumes and microphones, which had the audiences on their feet screaming and waving.

Audiences were 'warmed up'

each night by members of the senior leadership team and on the final night, headmaster Chris Hunt pulled out all the stops in a flower-power costume and wig!

It took a cast and crew of 103 students and ex-students, led by Miss Longden (director/choreographer), Mr Morris (technical director), Miss Bailey (creative director) Mr Austin and Mrs Morris to put on the show.

Collectively, as a team, they worked together for 12 intense weeks totalling 142 hours of rehearsals at lunchtimes, evenings, weekends and half terms to create a magical show.



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Simon Bax,
Plant Area Specialist

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Foreign Exchange traders expand to Birchwood Park

BIRCHWOOD Park has welcomed foreign exchange traders FX Cartel to the park.

FX Cartel provides education and training to those working in the foreign exchange trading space (also known as FX trading), which involves the conversion of one currency into another. FX is one of the most actively traded markets in the world, with individuals, companies and banks carrying out billions worth of forex transactions every single day.

FX Cartel has quickly established itself as a leading education provider within the foreign exchange trading space. The new office space at Birchwood Park will be home to over 30 traders, in addition to more than 600 members that FX Cartel will be training remotely across the globe.

The location of the Park, coupled with the on-site facilities were leading factors behind the relocation – in particular the on-site gym, which the team believes will provide a great wellbeing service once settled in at the new office.

FX Cartel founder Sebastien Dubois commented on the move: "We're delighted to continue our expansion at Birchwood Park. As well as being a hotbed for entrepreneurship, to be situated right in the heart of the North West region and close to the M62 will be a great benefit for our team."

"As well as the location, the various amenities and high-quality office space will only improve the wellness of our entire workforce,

which is something we know Birchwood Park prioritises amongst its occupiers. As a company, wellbeing is also something we care very deeply about, so to have our own ambitions so closely aligned with the Park's own culture made the decision to move that much easier."

Birchwood Park Commercial Director Martin O'Rourke also added: "It's great to have our first foreign exchange traders here at Birchwood Park, something we're all excited to learn more about when the team are settled in at Bridgewater Place."

"Like FX Cartel, we champion workplace wellbeing here at Birchwood Park and we're proud to hear those the Park's facilities, including the various food & drink

outlets available to our occupiers and visitors alike, were driving factors behind the move. We hope to see members of the FX Cartel team both nationally and across the globe visit our Park in the coming months."

FX Cartel is now in the process of fitting out its offices at Bridgewater Place, one of the Park's most stylish office blocks, accompanied with elegant landscaping and waterworks surrounding the offices.

BE Group and JLL were the acting agents for Birchwood Park.

To find out about the diverse range of office spaces available at Birchwood Park, please head to www.birchwoodpark.co.uk/space-to-let or call the team on 01925 851536.



Solar farm plan for former landfill site

PLANS are being drawn up for a solar farm on about 9.6 hectares of land at the former Risley Landfill Site.

The scheme has not yet been formally submitted to Warrington Borough Council, but planners have indicated that an environmental impact assessment is not required as part of the application.

Warrington Borough Council planners have been told the solar farm would produce up to about five megawatts of electricity at maximum capacity and would be operational for up to 25 years.

The planning application will include a number of technical reports including:

- Planning Statement (including Design and Access Statement);
- Ecological Assessment including Preliminary Ecological Appraisal,

wintering bird, breeding bird and reptile surveys;

- Biodiversity Net Gain Report;
- Flood Risk Assessment;
- Landscape and Visual Assessment;
- Glint and Glare Assessment; and
- Transport Statement and Management Plan.

The site, off Silver Lane, Risley, is about 1.3km from Risley Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and 1.5km from Holcroft Moss SSSI, about 1.3km from both the Risley Moss Local Nature Reserve and the Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation.

However, the development is unlikely to have any impact on these sites.



Local businesswoman brings national beauty Pageant back to Warrington

LOCAL businesswoman, Holly Pirrie, is bringing the sparkle back to Warrington by preparing for the annual finals of the Miss International UK beauty pageant.

The pageant will be held at Parr Hall Theatre in Palmyra Square on Saturday, June 10, and will see over 50 families travelling to Warrington to attend and support the event. The event has also confirmed the attendance of the Mayor of Warrington, who will be watching the show on the evening.

The contestants of the competition will compete in the glamorous grand finals, with on-stage rounds such as Swimwear and Eveningwear, in the hope to become the next Miss International UK winner. Alongside an amazing prize package, which includes an official sparkly crown and voucher to spend at The Dress Studio in Culcheth, the winner of the Miss International UK competition will win a trip of a lifetime to Japan.

She will compete in the prestigious Miss International Official Pageant, against beauty queens from across the globe as the representative for the United Kingdom! The pageant has been

running annually for over 60 years and is among the top 5 pageants in the world.

The winner will also travel to India on a humanitarian visit with the not-for-profit organisation A-Sisterhood. The newly crowned Miss International UK will be an ambassador for the cause and support a host of Women's Charities such as Stop Acid Attacks over in India.

The reigning Miss International UK Evanjelin Elchmanar, who won in 2021, travelled to Japan recently to compete against other national winners from all over the world, for the official Miss International crown!

Each year, the Miss International UK competition receives hundreds of applications to the Warrington-based office from all over the UK. It is one of five national beauty pageants organised by Holly and her team, who plan to bring more events to the town for 2023. Watch this space!



Culcheth Library improvements given the go-ahead



LONG-awaited proposals for an ambitious upgrade to Culcheth Library have been approved by Warrington planning chiefs.

Members of Warrington Borough Council's development management committee have given the green light to the scheme submitted by the borough council itself on behalf of library operators LiveWire.

The scheme involves infilling an existing courtyard to create an additional room, removing the existing entry porch, installation of a gantry canopy to service the library entrance and an extension to the front entrance.

It will mean the loss of a number

of trees but these will be replaced.

The committee was told the extension work at the rear of the building was to create an atrium room and was being funded by the Friends of Culcheth Library.

This would be a meeting space, independent from the library itself.

Work at the front of the building would increase the size of the foyer and modernise the appearance of the building.

It was hoped work could start early in the New Year for completion by the Spring.

The proposal would result in improvements to the building giving a better provision without detriment to the character of the area.

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Council chairmen's "night out" with the Air Training Corps

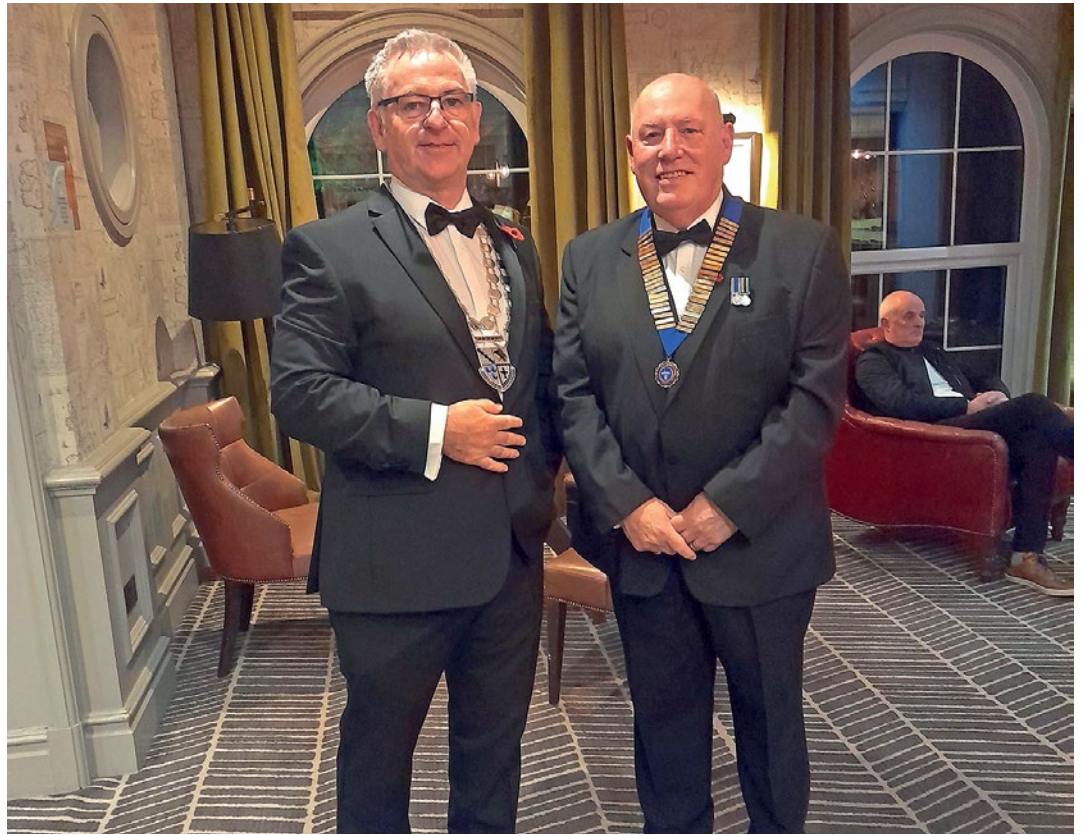
TWO parish council chairmen got together for a night out with the 70 (Croft and Culcheth) Squadron Air Training Corps at their "Dining In Night" at the Mercure Hotel Haydock.

Cllr Paul Campbell, Croft Parish Council and Cllr Neil Johnson, Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council joined the officers, cadets and guests at the event when cadets received performance awards for outstanding commitment during the past year.

Both councillors set aside politics for the evening to show their support and that of both parish councils for the young cadets who not only represent the RAF and themselves but the communities in which they live.

Cllr Campbell said, "I was a cadet myself many years ago. I know how these years as cadets can help form their future, and how through their efforts help the community in which they grow. It was a great evening and a pleasure to be there."

Cllr Johnson said: "It was wonderful to join these young people and their officers to help celebrate their achievements. I know that both parish councils will always support and welcome the work of the cadets and their officers in our village communities."



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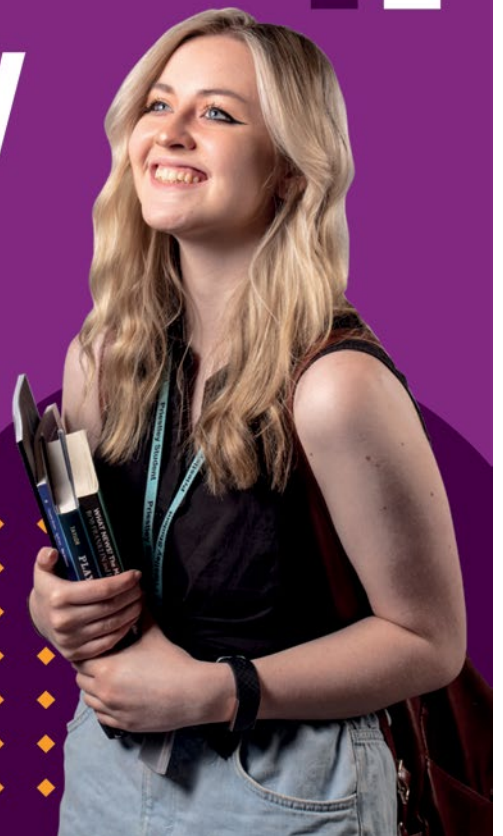
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School's "right good Christmas do" for local residents

STAFF, parents and some of the pupils from Culcheth Primary School put on a Christmas party for local residents.

There was bingo, Play Your Cards Right, prizes galore, the school bellringers and the school choir.

All topped off with an excellent Christmas dinner.

Parish councillor Sue Bland said:

"It was a right good do.

"Many thanks to the school and everyone involved on the day... from the headmistress down to the little helpers who catered for all our needs."



WI members celebrating Christmas twice!

MEMBERS of Culcheth and Newchurch WI are celebrating Christmas twice - once early and once late!

The early celebration were at their December meeting while the "late" celebrations will be on January 26 - a celebration dinner at the Village Club.

At the first celebration, members enjoyed almost an hour of music and song provided by Chris Hughes and his band of ukulele players.

The players and their music stands were covered with tinsel and the audience was urged to join in. There were memories of the Beatles and George Formby, followed by some 60s hits and even a couple of Irish songs. Christmas wasn't neglected either, with carols and songs about Santa and of course "Jingle Bells" and "Figgy Pudding".

Trudy MacDonald gave the vote of thanks and then everyone including the musicians enjoyed afternoon tea boxes arranged by Doreen Procter. The boxes were accompanied by tea brewed by Freda Wilcock and Ann Hambleton.

President Eileen Griffiths thanked Ann for the table flowers and they were won by Irene Bromilow in the draw of the December "Birthday Girls". Irene's husband had recently passed away and she could not be at the meeting, so members were very pleased that she had won.

The celebration dinner on January 26 will be a carvery with entertainment. Although Christmas will be over there will be a "Secret Santa" to mark the end of the festive season.

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