

# Culcheth *Life*

Magazine

ISSUE 240 | AUGUST 2023  
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Picture: John Hopkins

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# Editor's Comment



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*Printed by TwentyFourSeven*

## ALMOST five years after it closed its doors the historic Raven Inn at Culcheth is at last set to re-open after a lot of blood, sweat and tears.

Those involved have worked tirelessly to breathe new life into the old building which had been left in a near dilapidated condition after being earmarked for a housing development.

I am sure the new look Raven will be a credit to the community, and it is important that the community truly value what has been achieved.

Congratulations to all those involved in making a dream become a reality. It shows what can be achieved with determination.

Meanwhile down the road at Risley it has not been such good news, far from it.

The damning report on Risley Prison makes shocking reading which you can see more of elsewhere in this edition. Its hard to believe things have been left to get so bad parts of the prison are no longer fit for purpose.

I know many people will think those jailed for crimes deserve the punishment they get but we still need a prison fit for purpose, especially when it comes to trying to rehabilitate offenders. It will be interesting to see what steps are taken to resolve the problem.

A little further down the road there was more bad news for local residents with the approval of the development of the Trident Business Park which will include the

demolition of the former Noggin pub.

Local residents have been left outraged and the Risley Residents Community Group have thoroughly explored their position regarding this application and I am told have taken the relevant advice onboard.

It appears that post determination, they cannot challenge the decision. But after getting the webcast of the DMC meeting transcribed and upon additional advice, the view is they have more than sufficient evidence to challenge both the technical completeness of the application, the assessment of the application by the WBC Planning Officers and the accuracy of the information provided to the committee members

by the planning officer at the DMC meeting.

I know this application decision has caused some heated exchanges politically and it will be interesting to see the outcome of the official complaint.

As of going to press the borough council confirmed to me that the official complaint had been received and would be responded to.

**Deadline for the September issue of Culcheth Life is August 22**



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# High school holds a week of activities to celebrate diversity

## CULCHETH High School held a week of activities to celebrate LGBTQ+ History Month and Schools Diversity Week.

Purpose of the celebrations was to promote equality and diversity for the benefit of Culcheth High School students and to recognise the impact that members of the LGBTQ+ community have had on history locally, nationally and internationally.

Similar celebrations were going on across the world.

Schools Diversity Week is a UK-wide celebration across primary and secondary schools that celebrates LGBTQ+ diversity run by the charity "Just Like Us".

At Culcheth High, activities throughout the week included Pride

Assemblies and a variety of Tutor Time activities, culminating on the Friday with all students being encouraged to wear coloured socks to school to show their support.

On the same day, a 'Pride Bake Off' took place, with all the cakes being sold to raise money for the "Just Like Us" charity and with the winning submission being created by a Year 7 student.

Pride muffins were also provided by the school catering team to raise additional funds for the school's charity efforts. The "CHS Pride Club" hosted a celebratory lunchtime party.



Students with staff, left to right, modern foreign languages teacher Georgi Cockram, headteacher Chris Hunt, head of personal development Joanna Shaw and head of art Vicky Cookson.

## The Crown Jewels

SUNDIAL WI – the former Culcheth and Newchurch WI - found that the speaker, Frances Rafferty, had set up a wonderful display of two crowns, a royal robe, an orb, a sceptre and other regalia.

This was the background to her talk "The Crown Jewels". She used slides and video clips to show Coronations from the 11th century to 2023. Our late Queen's coronation was shown here on small black and white TVs but was admired throughout the world, Thanks to three reels of film transported by the RAF. Charles III's special day this summer was in full colour but followed the old rituals of English kings.

Frances loves jewels and explained the meaning of some of the rings and other regalia. She had made the Crowns and the other display pieces herself - although not with solid gold and gems!

Phyllis Longson gave the vote of thanks and Margaret Barron modelled the robe and crown that Frances had made.

The competition was "A Brooch" and 21 members entered. After tea served by Freda and Ann, Frances explained her choice of winners. Ruth Briggs came first with a sparkling bow brooch like one made for Royalty.



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# Conversion plan for Green Belt barn

**A PLAN to convert a 19th century barn into a dwelling on Green Belt land at Croft has been submitted to Warrington's planning department.**

Oven Back Cottage, in Winwick Lane, Croft is thought to date from the early to mid-1800s and adjoins the barn, currently used for storage only.

Early tythe maps appear to show the barn was larger when it was built than it is today.

But the proposals involve only minor changes in the appearance of the building.

The plans seek to create a three-bedroom dwelling, making use of existing features where possible. Most of the existing fabric would be retained. Existing traditional apertures showing the building's historic use would be infilled with glass, including a hay cart opening.

A porch would be added, but this would add interest to a plan elevation. Historic stairs would be retained. The west wall would be clad with timber because removal of existing cement rendering would only reveal bricks in a poor condition.

All proposed landscaping would be of a simple design, in keeping with the surroundings.

Only minor alterations are proposed to the external appearance of the barn and the proposal would result in sustainable re-use of a redundant building.

Planning officers will now consider the proposals.



## Improvements made to animal rescue centre

IMPROVEMENTS have been made to weather-proof an animal rescue centre thanks to a community fund set up by housebuilder Redrow.

Little Nest Rescue successfully applied for a £500 grant from the company to lay new stone paths at the centre to allow the community to visit during the winter months. The fund was launched to help community groups, charities and other good causes based in, or serving, the area around Redrow's new development Oakwood Fields, in Lowton, near Warrington.

Katy Pinder, director of Little Nest Rescue, said: "We are trying to create a safe area for our volunteers and the community to be able to access the rescue and enjoy the therapy our animals offer. We haven't been able to open our doors to the community during the winter months due to mud preventing access to our fields and woodland. But thanks to Redrow's community fund we will be able to do that this year."

For further information about Little Nest Rescue visit [www.littlenestrescue.weebly.com](http://www.littlenestrescue.weebly.com)





# CULCHETH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



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# Unannounced inspection reveals astonishing failures by the prison service with parts of HMP Risley beyond repair!

**AN unannounced inspection of HMP Risley by the Chief Inspector of Prisons has revealed an “astonishing failure by the prison service” with unstable leadership and some parts of the prison now beyond repair!**

With 1,032 prisoners at the time of the inspection last April, the mixed sex offender and general category C resettlement prison had a myriad of problems, including inadequate public protection arrangements, higher than average violence among the general population, high levels of self-harm, and very poor time out of cell and access to education or employment.

Living conditions at Risley prison had deteriorated since the last inspection and the proportion of men serving sentences for sexual offences had increased significantly representing 40% of the population. However, there were still no accredited programmes for these prisoners, which was described as an “astonishing failure by the prison service”.

A report by Charlie Taylor HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, said: “For the last two years, the leadership had been unstable, with temporary governors being in post for most of that time. The current acting governor had worked hard to maintain stability and set an

agenda that sought to improve decency in the jail and support his staff team, but the prison was still not fulfilling its function as a category C resettlement prison.

The many prisoners who were unemployed were locked up for 22 hours a day, in a prison that had not created enough places in work or education for the size of the population. The jail operated a split regime which meant that most prisoners were only in poorly paid, part-time work or education. They did not have enough time out of their cells, with no evening association and an even worse situation at the weekend. Only those on the excellent, enhanced living unit had a regime that was commensurate with the category of the prison.

“Inspectors were particularly concerned about the public protection arrangements at Risley. The offender management unit was understaffed and there was insufficient support from probation services; this meant that some of the public protection arrangements were inadequate, men were not

supported to reduce their risk of harm, and preparations for release were often not good enough. Some high-risk prisoners were released homeless, systems to monitor phone calls and other contact were not managed effectively, and some were leaving having had little or no interaction with a prison offender manager.

“Since the last inspection the proportion of men serving sentences for sexual offences had increased significantly, and they now represented 40% of the total population, but there was a failure to provide for them. Despite HMI Prisons raising this issue in 2016, there were still no accredited programmes for these prisoners. This represents an astonishing failure by the prison service, which has been far too slow in putting provision in place. Although the effectiveness of these programmes has, at times been questioned, if the prison service believes they are effective and necessary, they should make sure that the right prisoners get access to them.

“Other prison service bureaucracy was hampering progress. The lack of suitable dentist facilities meant that there was a huge waiting list and prisoners

had to be sent in small groups to HMP Thorn Cross for treatment. The governor was waiting to hear if he could have the funds to refurbish the existing dental suite, but progress on this application was slow.

“Since our last inspection, when we commented on poor living conditions, the situation had deteriorated, with parts of the prison now beyond repair. Progress had been slow in refurbishing the showers, some of which were in appalling condition; this had not been picked up by leaders’ decency checks.”

He added: “If Risley is to prepare prisoners adequately for their eventual release, it must provide far more purposeful activity that gives prisoners the skills and experience they need to settle successfully on release. The prison must also make sure that its critical public protection function is being met, particularly for the large population of prisoners convicted of sexual offences.

The full report can be read at [www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprison/inspections/hmp-risley-3/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprison/inspections/hmp-risley-3/)



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# Villagers tune into Croft Carnival with

**AFTER a blustery start to the day and showers the sun eventually came out at the annual Croft Carnival as villagers paraded through the village on an array of fancy dress floats with a theme of Children's TV shows.**

After the parade through the village, which included Warrington Pipe Band and Thelwall Morris Dancers, activities took place on Croft playing fields with a wide variety of stalls and activities, including the crowning of the carnival queens.

Local MP Charlotte Nichols, who attended the event, said: "Lovely to see so many families enjoying themselves at Official Croft Carnival this afternoon!

"A huge thank you to everyone involved in putting on such a huge

range of events and activities for all the family to enjoy, and glad to see the sun shining on the day too."

Festivities continued into the evening with live music at the General Elliot pub.

After the event organisers said: "Hope everyone enjoyed Croft Carnival 2023 as much as we did. Huge thank you to all of the volunteers, local businesses, stall holders, acts, friends and families for making it such a memorable day!"

Pictures: John Hopkins



**Charlotte Nichols MP**  
**Warrington North**

If you live in Warrington North and have an issue you need help with or would like to book a surgery appointment, please get in touch.

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Promoted by Charlotte Nichols at Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub, Jubilee Way, Orford, Warrington, WA2 8HE.

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# Children's TV theme



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*Simon Box,*  
Plant Area Specialist

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- Animals are starting to prepare for the winter so ensure you are offering a wide range of food
- Stop feeding roses now as you will encourage them to produce soft sappy growth which will be more prone to winter damage or disease and dieback

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### PARISH NEWS

#### Cheshire Special Constabulary

If you would like to support your neighbours in Culcheth & Glazebury by volunteering your time as a special constable, Cheshire Constabularies website gives lots of details about what the role entails and how to volunteer. The QR code opposite links to these details.



#### Planning Concerns

The Parish Council is consulted on planning applications. If you have an opinion on an application, please let the clerk or councillors know as soon as possible within the 21-day consultation period.

#### Newchurch Primary Pupils Win Award for Team Safety Project

Cllr Carol Benson was delighted to be invited to present the award to Lewis and Harry from year 5 at Newchurch Primary School. As nominated Safety Officers they worked with their class colleagues and across the school to come up with ideas for projects and campaigns to raise the profile of safety in school & the local community. This included playground checks, making posters and advertising how to use equipment safely and even running a leaflet campaign for residents to encourage them not to leave cars idling to reduce emissions. They held a bike tagging session and invited the local PCSOs to come to school to discuss community safety. The competition was open to all Primary Schools across Warrington, this year Newchurch were the winning school.

#### Warrington Own Bus Fare Reductions

Warrington's Own Bus fare reductions have been under way from the start of July. Reduced £2 single fares for adults are available at any time and on any route. Single bus fares for children and young people up to the age of 18 will be reduced to just £1 on most routes in Warrington. Simply bring proof of your age and travel at any time of day for £1. Unlimited concessionary pass use, catch the bus from any Warrington bus stop with no need to wait until 9.30am for your pass to be valid. The QR code opposite links to more information.



#### Fly Tipping in our Local Area

To report fly tipping or littering you'll need to contact Warrington Borough Council. You need to give as much detail as possible about the location of the fly-tipping or littering, give an approximate date of when the rubbish was dumped, or when you first noticed it. A description of what has been dumped, and the quantity. The QR code opposite links to information on how to report Fly Tipping.



**Next Parish Council Meeting - Tuesday 12th September at 7:30pm at Glazebury Methodist Church**

#### 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](http://www.culchethandglazebury-pc.org.uk)





# Planners reject bid to extend former Chinese restaurant

**PLANNERS have rejected a bid to extend the former China Rose Chinese restaurant premises in Culcheth, saying the development would be "over-dominant, over-bearing and create an intrusive feature" in the village.**

The premises on Common Lane, Culcheth, have been empty for around three years and are currently semi-derelict.

A planning application by Red23 Property Ltd involved the demolition of porch to front, proposed two-storey front extension, single storey first floor rear extension on columns, proposed external staircase, cladding and new window and door openings to side elevation, together with relocation of external ventilation flue on rear elevation.

The application site is a two-storey, end of terrace 20th century property

in an end terrace. The proposal seeks to substantially extend the property and the restaurant capacity by the addition of a two-storey front extension. The total proposed capacity would be 89 covers and with 5 full-time staff and 10 part-time. There had been one letter of support and one of objection.

Culcheth & Glazebury Parish Council had responded that they have no objections but noted consideration should be given to the licencing hours.

But Warrington Borough Council planners ruled that by virtue of

its location, scale and design, the proposal would result in a development which would be over-dominant, over-bearing and create an intrusive feature, out of keeping with its surroundings and which would consequently have

an unacceptable and detrimental impact on the street scene and harm the visual amenity of the area, contrary to Policy CS1 and QE7 of the Warrington Local Plan.

The decision was made under delegated powers.



## Live comedy returns to The Daten

COMEDY Night Live will return to The Daten, Culcheth on Saturday, September 16 with three top comedians and compere Bobby Murdock set to provide an evening of belly laughs.

Headline act will be Jonny Awsum, an award-winning comic who has charmed audiences all around the world with his high energy performance style and unique brand of musical comedy.

After building his reputation on the UK comedy circuit he shot to national fame on Britain's Got Talent.

Yorkshire born Kev O'Brian

worked around the world as an engineer, teacher and project manager but started writing and performing stand-up comedy in 2018. He specialises in family-friendly, dead pan, quickfire one-liners and self-deprecating jokes.

Sam Avery is friendly and enthusiastic and his observational style instantly puts audiences at ease, allowing him to regale them with his tales of everyday life.

The doors will open at 7.15pm and the show will start at 8.15pm.

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# High School bid to upgrade all-weather pitch



**CULCHETH High School is seeking planning permission to replace a sand based 2G Astroturf surface with a 3rd Generation Artificial Grass Pitch (3G AGP) carpet surface to meet the needs of local football teams.**

With the existing pitch now 19 years-old, the school is seeking permission to upgrade it following a decline in hockey use and the increasing needs of local football teams.

The school approached the Warrington Borough Council Sports Infrastructure Development Manager in November 2019, with the aim of developing a business case to enable Sport England and England Hockey to release the Culcheth High School pitch for the change of carpet to a 3G AGP surface. In January 2020, three years of previous hockey bookings on the Culcheth High School site were shared by Livewire, the onsite leisure company at that time. From January 2017 to January 2020, there had been a total of 31 bookings made on site for Hockey, however 23 of them in 2019 were due to the displacement of a hockey club, following poor pitch maintenance and flooding at the main playing sites. This was rectified in 2020.

Historic bookings show an average of 4 booking per year at an average of 3 hours per booking. Due to limited sports participation through lockdown, the collection of evidence of the level of Hockey bookings from March 2020 to March 2021 was impacted at times due to COVID measures but unlike other sports, there were no hockey bookings made during that time.

Since 29th March 2021 up to 31st March 2023, there have been 28 bookings due to delayed opening of other pitches for various reasons following COVID and works carried out on other pitches in the borough. Both England Hockey and Sport England are aware of the site's need to change the surface.

A recent playing pitch assessment undertaken at the end of 2022, shows the demand for hockey has changed since the last assessment in which the Culcheth site was included as part of the Hockey need. As a result, the assessment releases the Culcheth High School site form this provision and recognises the need for a 3G surface to replace the current 2G surface, to meet the demand of the school's curriculum and local

community.

There is significant demand for football in the Culcheth area and the Culcheth High School site Astroturf pitch is used predominantly by Culcheth High School (CHS) and for community Football. Although the sites sand based pitch is designated as a hockey site by the Warrington Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) pre 2004 when the pitch was installed, the pitch is protected by Sport England from change of the carpet to 3G AGP unless there is sufficient hockey provision elsewhere in the borough, which following the latest playing pitch strategy assessment, shows the demand has changed and identifies the Culcheth High School site as being the prime location to change the carpet from 2G to 3G.

The works have no environmental impact as the current pitch is not being changed in shape or size, simply just the old carpet removed and new carpet lay on top of the current shock pads. In line with the recent playing pitch strategy, the historical bookings show there has been very little hockey use of the sand-based pitch at Culcheth. The two hockey clubs in Warrington are based in the south neighbourhood area.

The school says the 3G AGP conversion going ahead, would satisfy the changing school curriculum needs which at present are needed to be supported by the use of other 3G pitches within the borough and in some occasions having to use pitches at neighbouring boroughs. The playing pitch strategy assessment shows significant football demand based on a 3G AGP supporting 38 teams. The Lancashire County FA reported 31 teams in the Culcheth Area. Additionally, the changing of the carpet means no loss of grass provision nor impact to the environment.

"Upgrading to a 3G surface makes strategic sense for the education of our students and commercial sense for CHS Hire, benefiting our local community immensely."

Warrington Borough Council Planners will make a decision under delegated powers.

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