

Culcheth Life Magazine

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THE DRESS STUDIO

Business back on track

Page 3

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IT's fantastic to see business is back on track at the locally based Dress Studio run by Holly Pirrie and her team.

Like many businesses, especially in the retail sector, times have been tough since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Add to this the cost-of-living crisis and ever-increasing overheads and it can get very difficult to keep a business going.

But now The Dress Studio is back to where it was prior to the pandemic, which is great to hear.

Having worked closely with Holly for many years it is pleasing to see one of our long-term clients doing well.

One thing Holly has done well since she launched her business in 2012 is marketing using various social media platforms and magazine print advertising.

Far too many businesses see advertising and marketing as an unnecessary overhead (even though it is tax efficient) and rely on a few posts on facebook to try and drum up business.

Here at Culcheth Life, as well as bringing you local news updates we are here to help you promote your business, either locally or further afield in our sister publications Warrington Worldwide and Lymm Life.

Just like Holly and The Dress Studio, we have many long-term

clients who have promoted their business with us for many years – not just in print but online as well.

So, if you have been having a tough time trading, or want to drum up some extra business drop us a line and we will see what we can do to help.

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Deadline for the March issue of Culcheth Life is February 18

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Business back on track at The Dress Studio ahead of busy Prom season

FIVE years on from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic business is now back on track at The Dress Studio near Culcheth.

Owner Holly Pirrie, who launched the business on Glaziers Lane back in 2012 says that with the busy Prom season now getting into full swing, things are getting back to where they were before COVID.

And with over 700 dresses in

stock to suit all budgets and prices starting from just £50, there is plenty to choose from at The Dress Studio.

Holly said: "It feels really good to be coming out of that Covid time frame and it's January so it's our busy time with Prom. It's been

wonderful seeing customers getting back to how they were shopping pre-Covid.

"It has taken us quite a few years to get back from that and there have been all different issues with the economy but I think people are now ready to have a good time and party and celebrate and we are here to provide the perfect dress to help them do so."

Holly added: "When I opened the Dress Studio in 2012 I always wanted it to be a shop accessible

for all."

Prices range from £50 right up to £600 and visitors can try on as many dresses as they like.

The Dress Studio will also guarantee that once a dress has been sold for a Prom it will not be replicated at the same event.

Meanwhile Holly is also busy working on her other business Pageant Girl, with five events planned for this year including one at Warrington Parr Hall later this year.



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Microbrewery plan approved for community pub - despite objections

PLANS have been approved for a microbrewery at the historic Raven Inn at Glazebury - despite objections from three members of the public.

Warrington Borough Council planning chiefs have approved the application submitted by the Raven Partnership.

The scheme involves extending the ground floor of the building and erecting a two-storey extension at the rear of the building. The tap room will be on the upper floor.

The Raven Partnership say although they would like the community pub to be continued throughout the whole building, this

is, unfortunately, unfeasible. The microbrewery and tap room will help support the economic future of the pub.

Objectors fear the development could result in noise, smells, a loss of parking space and spoil the appearance of the historic pub.

But planning officers say the proposals are acceptable and respect the scale and form of the existing building. Overall, the extension will not detract from the

significance of the building. Any harm caused to the building will be offset by the public benefits of introducing a complimentary use which will be linked to the existing community-run pub.

The Raven has a long history, dating back to the mediaeval period. Earliest evidence of the building's history has been

narrowed down to the 15th century when it was a water mill, before being repurposed as an inn around 1562.

The pub was purchased by the local community in April 2022 after a controversial plan to demolish the building and redevelop the site for housing caused a local uproar.

Electric Vehicle chargers refused

PLANS for four electric vehicle charging bays at the Greyhound Service Station, in Warrington Road, Glazebury, have been thrown out by Warrington Planning chiefs after four objections were received.

Planning officers said the proposals failed to show that the layout of the service station and the proposed charging bays would provide a safe area for charging electric vehicles or provide adequate visibility.

In addition the area is in a

flood zone and, historically, there had been flooding caused by the nearby Pennington Brook.

Although flood defences had been built, they did not completely rule out the possibility of further flooding.

The Greyhound Hotel on the opposite of the East Lancs Road had also experienced flooding

Objections from members of the public concerned fears of noise and disturbance caused by round-the-clock use of the chargers.



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Authors meet up at book launch

CULCHETH-based author David Costa, a.k.a. Cllr. Paul Campbell met up with fellow author Rob Parker recently while Rob was promoting his recent book *The Troubled Deep*.

The book being published by Bloomsbury Publishing describes a cold-case diver and how he scouts the tranquil waters of Norfolk in search of the lost and the drowned.

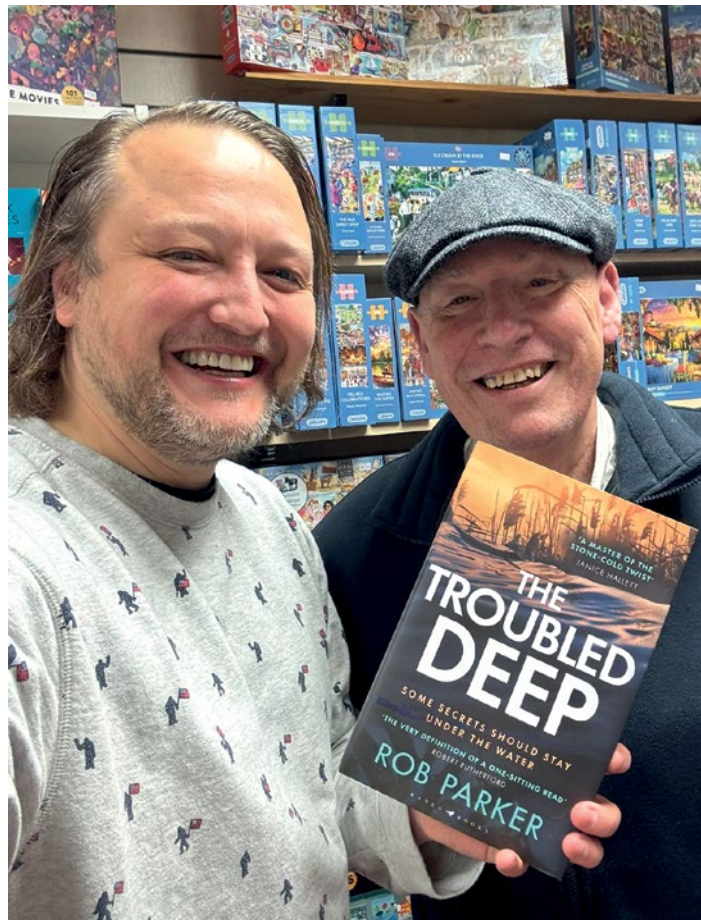
Sometimes the secrets found in the waters are better left there.

Rob, also a local author of many crime books, says he was over the moon that his new book is being backed by a top publishing

company such as Bloomsbury and he couldn't think of a better place to promote it locally than the Forget-Me-Not book sellers in Culcheth.

David called into the bookshop to wish Rob all the best with this new adventure.

Readers can purchase books by both authors in the Forget-Me-Not shop and on Amazon.



Independent calls for urgent review of parish council finances

WARRINGTON Borough Council says it is not the regulatory body to investigate alleged financial issues at Culcheth & Glazebury Parish Council.

It follows a call by independent Cllr Neil Johnson calling on the borough council to investigate alleged financial irregularities at the parish council.

Cllr. Johnson issued a statement, which he published on social media saying he had once again turned "whistleblower" and was calling for an urgent, external investigation into the finances and accounts of Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council over what he describes as "irregularities" that need to be explained.

He said he and fellow Parish Councillors were called to a "Part 2" meeting prior to Christmas, where it was explained that the Parish Council's paperwork and accounts were in a poor state.

Councillors were asked to keep what they were told confidential.

The Parish Council had just appointed a new Clerk, after the previous staff member left in 2024. For some time, the post was held by a temporary volunteer.

Cllr. Johnson explained: "Once again, I find myself in the position of whistleblower, but I will not stay quiet over what I have learned. This is public money, which people pay through their taxes, and they have a right to know."

"Parish Councillors were informed just prior to Christmas of the dreadful state of the Council's accounts and paperwork."

He went on to say: "The new

Clerk is doing his very best to try and get to the bottom of matters. This is not his fault. But we need to go further.

"There should be an urgent, external investigation commissioned into the Parish Council's finances, accounts and paperwork. This should be overseen by Warrington Borough Council, but should be independent of them."

A Warrington Borough Council spokesperson said: "We are not the regulatory body for parish councils and have very limited powers in relation to the activities of parish councils."

"We can investigate alleged breaches of a parish council's Code of Conduct by individual members and make recommendations about that to the parish council, but these recommendations do not have to be accepted by the parish council."

"There is also a requirement under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 for Parish Councils to keep accounts and to appoint an independent and competent auditor and co-operate with that audit."

"If a parish council does not comply with the law, then members of the public may take legal action through the courts or engage with the Local Auditor. If you have cause to believe that activity has taken place at the Parish Council which might constitute a criminal offence, you may wish to report the matter to Cheshire Police."

Culcheth & Glazebury Parish Council was approached for comment.

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Significant investment required to tackle flooding issues says MP

WARRINGTON North MP Charlotte Nichols says it is clear "significant investment" is required to tackle flooding issues in the town and is lobbying for extra support.

During the recent floods, which included on the main Warrington Road at Glazebury, she met with the Minister for Flooding Emma

Hardy, DEFRA, MHCLG, the Met Office and the Environment Agency to discuss the flooding experienced in Warrington over New Year.



Following the meeting, Ms Nichols said: "MHCLG have primary responsibility for flood recovery, and emergency response costs, both of which are discretionary and I am lobbying Alex Norris as the Minister with responsibility in this area for additional support for Warrington. Potential support in terms of match funding was also mentioned, which we will be exploring, particularly for those who struggle to get adequate insurance coverage as a result of previous flooding or who may struggle going forward."

"Affected constituents I have spoken to have rightly made the point that this is the second major event in a short space of time, and raised concerns about resilience for flooding and what maintenance work has been undertaken."

"The Government review of the flood formula is coming up, and I will be feeding in to ensure that maintenance work is part of the calculation, and not just remedial work which will hopefully help mitigate future risk."

Commenting on flooding in other parts of the town Ms Nichols added: "The Environment Agency made the point that dredging is

only a very short-term help, and walls, nature-based infrastructure, property level protection and temporary barriers are more effective in preventing flooding.

"It is clear we need significant investment in our regional infrastructure as all the flood basins across the region filled and overtopped, with the River Mersey 50cm higher than its previous record. With extreme weather becoming more frequent as a result of climate change, better preparedness is vital to prevent future incidents."

"They are also investigating a reported failure of the local pumping station, which may have contributed to some of the flooding experienced locally. I am waiting to hear from the Area Director of the Environment Agency with further information on this, as well as seeking to arrange a meeting with residents and the agency to talk about future resilience and what can be learned from what's happened."

For any other questions related to the flooding, please email charlotte.nichols.mp@parliament.uk

Plan to create living accommodation above stables

PLANS have been submitted to Warrington Borough Council for a complete refurbishment of a stables building – including the creation of an upper floor with living accommodation for a groom.

The building is in Cross Lane, Croft, opposite Eaves Farm.

It is a steel framed building, of double height with elevations consisting of part blockwork and part Yorkshire boarding and a metal clad roof.

It is currently used for stabling and agricultural storage associated with Eaves Farm.

The plan is to refurbish the external appearance of the building and provide a first floor level with residential accommodation for a groom to keep and rear the horses

kept on the site and at Eaves Farm.

The groom currently has 10 horses which she breeds and rears for competition. They do not require grazing in the traditional manner, grazing in fields for only two hours a day as they need to be kept in stables most of the time for their safety. The ground floor of the building would remain as at present, but with a staircase to the new first floor, which would extend to the full width and height of the building.

The building would retain its existing scale and agricultural appearance.

Borough council planning officers are currently studying the proposals.

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Charlotte Nichols MP Warrington North

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Glazebury's festive floral extravaganza



TALES of foreign travels and the everyday travails of modern life were threaded through Glazebury's festive floral extravaganza.

Sisters Jill Cruickshank and Sue Leather were joined in All Saints Church, Glazebury by family friend Jane Roddy. Together the three created a stunning array of floral decorations fit to grace the tables and halls of stately homes.

The traditional holly and ivy were clearly evident but exotic blooms from the far reaches of the globe were brought to bear to create a total of eight displays that were later raffled in aid of church funds.

A total of £700 was raised through the raffle and the sale of the tickets. To keep the winter chills at bay there were refreshments served, including traditional mince pies.

The annual event has become one of Glazebury's most anticipated. Each year the women produce some truly stunning creations. For many attendees the event marks the start of Christmas and has brought visitors from far and wide.

Local author Frank Melling book signing event

Local author Frank Melling will be signing copies and reading excerpts from his latest romantic fiction novel, "Grace – A Cornish Love Story" at Bents Garden & Home in Glazebury from 10am until 4pm on Saturday, 8 February.

Frank said, "I have been wanting to visit Bents Garden & Home for ages because it has such a wonderful, nationwide reputation.

"When I came a few weeks ago I was so impressed not only by the vast range of high quality products on sale but by the warm welcome we received.

"Grace is a lovely, traditional story of romance – but with some very modern themes. As you'd expect, it's a boy-meets-girl story but this time with some unexpected twists added to their tale by Artificial Intelligences who take a real interest in what they are doing!

"The book has been a best seller and is about to go into re-print. At £5 it is the perfect Valentine's Day gift."

Bents' Managing Director, Matthew Bent, added, "We're so excited for Frank to join us and share his wonderful novel with our customers. It's a perfect opportunity for book lovers to pick up a signed copy and meet the author behind such a compelling story."



The Gardening Guide



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Simon Box,
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Under fire MP says she is working to help those missing out on Winter Fuel Allowance

INDEPENDENT Councillor Neil Johnson says that Labour MP Charlotte Nichols should "hang her head in shame" over her Party's decision to scrap Winter Fuel Allowance payments for millions of pensioners.

But the Warrington North MP has hit back saying she has been working to help ensure those most in need and missing out on Winter Fuel Allowance, are now getting Pension Credit.

It follows criticism from Cllr Johnson who said the "cruel and heartless" decision had affected dozens of pensioners throughout his ward of Culcheth, Glazebury and Croft, and the effects have been felt particularly acutely during the recent cold snap.

Cllr Johnson said: "The Labour Party picked the pockets of pensioners when they voted to scrap the Winter Fuel Allowance last year. This cruel and heartless decision is being felt by people all over the villages I represent. The recent spell of snow and ice has seen some of the coldest temperatures experienced in our country for over 15 years. This was not the time to take between £200 and £300 away from our senior citizens.

"I have been out throughout the cold spell, helping to support the most vulnerable, whether collecting their shopping or helping them to claim additional money for their heating bills through things like pension credit. Yet there are still some people worried about turning their heating on because of the cost.

"Labour said that only those with the broadest shoulders would bear the burden of economic recovery. So why have some pensioners whose income is only £13,000 been hit? Those are not the broadest shoulders!

"Disgracefully, our MP Charlotte Nichols told people on Facebook that she would vote to keep the Winter Fuel Allowance in place. Then she did the exact opposite and voted to scrap it. How can we ever trust a word she says again? Her behaviour has been beyond contempt and she should hang her head in shame.

"While some of us have been out helping the elderly get through this cold snap, Ms Nichols hasn't been seen. I suspect she will have had her feet up with the heating on. It's alright for some!

"I now challenge her to join me in writing to the Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, to call for the Winter Fuel Allowance to be reinstated for all pensioners. I say it was the wrong decision and it should be reversed. Will she join me in this call? It would be a very powerful statement if representatives of different political colours – one Labour, one Independent – made the same argument. What do you say, Charlotte?"

In response, Ms Nichols said:



"The new Labour Government came to power with a dire economic inheritance and public services crumbling after 14 years of mismanagement by the Conservatives. Difficult decisions have had to be made in an effort to turn this around by the Chancellor Rachel Reeves, including addressing a £22bn in-year black hole in the nation's finances.

"Labour committed to the Triple Lock for pensioners in our manifesto, and this has rightly been prioritised in order to protect the incomes of all pensioners, leaving even those no longer eligible for the Winter Fuel Allowance better off overall. The changes to the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme have also further boosted the incomes of many pensioners living locally, by an average of 32%.

"I have made the case to the Government since the decision that the Pension Credit eligibility threshold should be lifted, and my office and I have been supporting affected

residents in ensuring they are claiming what they are entitled to. We have had a number of constituents who had not previously claimed Pension Credit, wrongly believing they were not eligible, now in receipt of this support including back payments and I would encourage anyone struggling to reach out to me or to the Citizens Advice Bureau for a Benefits Check.

"For those confirmed as above the current Pension Credit threshold, energy providers, including Octopus Energy, have schemes which provide support including payment breaks, standing charge holidays and clearing energy bill debt, that we have referred people to, and the Household Support Fund is also available through the Council to anyone concerned about meeting the cost of their energy bills.

"While the Winter Fuel Allowance decision was not one which anyone wanted to take, I am doing all I can to ensure support is there for anyone who needs it"

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PARISH NEWS

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.

Community Day 2025

Planning is underway for a combined Community Day and VE Day 80th Celebration on the 5th May 2025. The event will take place on the village green. This year the Parish Council would like to invite a few local groups to put on short displays in the arena to publicise their activities to residents. If you are interested in attracting new members on Community Day, please contact clerk@culchethandglazebury-pc.gov.uk

Cheshire Constabulary Residents Voice

Help Cheshire Constabulary by completing the residents voice survey linked using the QR code opposite. Help direct Cheshire Police to the things you want them to deal with locally and highlight any concerns or worries you may have about life in Culcheth & Glazebury.



Culcheth & Glazebury Parish Plan

What is good about living in Culcheth & Glazebury? How can we make it even better? Would you like to influence how our villages develop? Would you be willing to be part of a steering group? If the answer to all of these questions is yes, and you would like to share your experience and enthusiasm contact clerk@culchethandglazebury-pc.gov.uk to volunteer.

Next Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 11th February in Culcheth Library at 7:30pm

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.gov.uk

Brunch Sandwich Bar supporting Warrington Youth Zone with hot meals initiative

BRUNCH Sandwich Bar, located in the heart of Culcheth has proudly announced their latest initiative to support underprivileged children in the community.

By partnering with Warrington Youth Zone, they are aiming to provide 3,000 hot meals to children in need in 2025, funded through their commitment to donate 5p from every sale made in their Culcheth shop.

They also plan to host a series of fundraising events throughout the year to further help support the town's young people, ensuring those who may otherwise go without can enjoy warm, nutritious meals.

Every £1 raised will be enough to provide one hot meal, and Brunch say they intend to increase the number to 10,000 meals once they've reached the initial 3,000

milestone. Owner Ian Barker shared his personal motivation for supporting the cause, saying: "As a community, we are incredibly fortunate to have food on the table every evening."

"However, not everyone is as lucky, and it's heartbreaking to think of children going without."

"Through this initiative, we hope to make a difference in their lives by giving them access to something as basic yet essential as a hot meal."

For over 16 years, Brunch Sandwich Bar has been a cornerstone of the Culcheth community.

Owned by Ian and supported by his fantastic team of dedicated staff and loyal customers, they have become known for their fresh-to-order breakfasts, lunches, and homemade traybakes.

Accompanying these are their excellent coffee options, served with care and attention. Beyond serving the local community, Brunch also deliver high-quality office catering across Warrington daily.

Brunch have also set up an online GoFundMe page: <https://tinyurl.com/yzy2yvh> where donations towards the hot meals initiative can be made.



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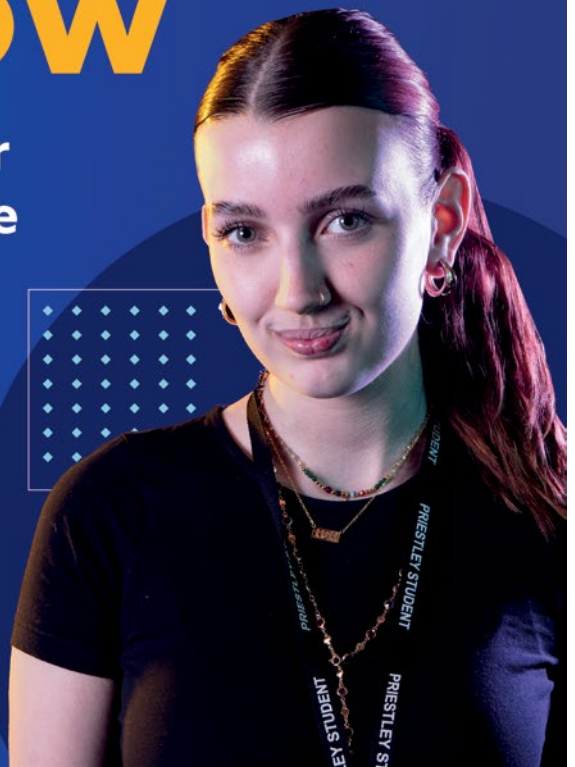
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Former Rector stepped into the breach

FORMER Rector of Croft Alan Litton stepped into the breach when the arranged speaker failed to turn up for the monthly meeting of Croft WI.

He gave an interesting and amusing talk about his life as an Anglican priest which involved him serving in many parishes in the North of England, before finishing at Christ Church, Croft and then retiring to become a counsellor.

Many of his stories caused great hilarity – especially those involving home visits.

On one occasion he was visiting an elderly widow and, on getting no answer at the front door, looked through the letter box to see right through the house to see the lady sitting in the outside toilet.

He was in the middle of giving her Holy Communion when she suddenly asked what size shoes he took. It turned out he took the same size as her late husband so

she asked him to go upstairs and take all his shoes. He took them – but had reservations about walking in dead men's shoes!

On another occasion he was visiting a sick parishioner and asked the local milkman if he knew how he was. The milkman replied: "He's in a better place now" which he took to mean the man had died. But when he went to visit the widow he found the man sitting up in bed.

In later life, Alan became a parish councillor and found himself dealing with different sorts of problem, ranging from traffic noise to waste management.

The competition was won by Brenda Simm, 2nd Christine Sylvester and 3rd Jill Hillam.

Chat group for the lonely

A NEW chat group for people who are lonely or have been bereaved is opening at Culcheth Library.

The group will meet on the first Thursday of the month, between 2pm and 4pm, starting on February 6.

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available and attendees will be able to chat with people who are in a similar situation. No sign-up is necessary and the format will be decided by those attending.

Further information is available by emailing Culchethbereavedchatgroup@gmail.com



Sundial WI members treated to musical memories

SUNDIAL WI met in Newchurch Parish Hall on 21st January and President Eileen Griffiths welcomed members and two visitors and guest speaker David Payne and his theme "They don't write them like this any more."

David spoke about his early life in Altrincham and the highlights of his childhood and teenage years. He remembered early TV and his love of music – starting with an out of tune piano.

He came to Sundial with a very grand organ! He got his first record player in the 1950s and his first record cost 10s6d! A teacher in his 6th Form taught him more about playing and in 1975 he got £5 for playing in public. Later he played in many clubs and pubs in South Manchester. He regretted the end of family TV on Saturday nights. He enjoyed the Boys' Brigade and Sunday School, also camps in the Wirral and Saturday morning cinema for children at 6d a seat and later dancing at the Blackpool Tower Ballroom. Sundial were given song sheets and sang to David's music - hits from the 50s to the 70s. Di Mitchell gave the vote of thanks and David judged the competition (A joke or a piece of

music).

After tea served by Ann and Margaret Fletcher the business meeting began with the N.F.W.I resolutions. Gill Berry read these out and members had to choose one of four.

These dealt with life-saving by passers-by using CPR, with the problems of incontinence, with the need to repair instead of throwing things away and with the problem of medical waste going into landfill. Sundial's choice will be confirmed next month. Eileen thanked Gill for the table flowers and greeted the 4 "Birthday Girls", one of whom, Marian Simpson, won the table bouquet. The competition winners were Maire Haake and Janette Leatherbarrow. Eileen went through the details for the Celebration Dinner at the Village Club on 23rd January and announced one space free on the outing to Stockport. Cheshire Federation is meeting at Winsford on 29th March and on 16th April Mosslands Group will hold its spring meeting at the Village Club. Sundial's next meeting will be on 18th February and Frances Rafferty will speak about Florence Nightingale. The meeting closed with the raffle.

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