Culcheth Life

Magazine

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Editor's Comment

SHELLSHOCKED is possibly an understatement for the village traders based at the CPS Centre in the heart of Culcheth village.

The Centre has been part of many peoples' lives for many years and for many traders their livelihoods have been swept from under their feet in the blink of an eye.

I have followed the ongoing story from within hours of the bombshell email landing and such is the pace of events it is almost impossible to keep up to speed with the unfolding

Having spoken to traders and received regular updates from elected members, including Warrington members, including Warrington North MP Charlotte Nichols and Independent local Cllr. Neil Johnson, I suspect even more drama is yet to

But reading between the lines, and that is all I can do having received no direct feedback or response from the landlords, it would appear they don't want to make the necessary investment to sort out the health and safety regulations.
Again, this is a bone of contention,

Scan for all the latest news



with the landlord stating closure was necessary while fire inspectors said works could be carried out without interfering with trade.

While an extension notice has been secured, giving traders another 30 days to find new premises or close their businesses, this will be little comfort for those with mortages. little comfort for those with mortgages

with hindsight, operating a business on a monthly license agreement is probably not the ideal situation - but when a shopping situation – but when a shopping centre has been operating for many years, you could be forgiven for not expecting it to suddenly close, with little pre-warning.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of the situation, and believe me they mostly seem to be wrongs, I fear this

is another sign of the ongoing retail climate, combined with the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. I sincerely hope that a long-term solution can be found and I wish

every trader every success in keeping their business alive. Being a family business owner for many years - I know how tough it is at the best of times!

If the SOS campaign to save the CPS Centre is sadly lost and if Culcheth Life can be of service helping traders promote their new premises in the future, drop me a line – the first bit of promotion will be on us!

Deadline for the April issue is March 18



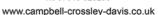
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Plans for electric vehicle charging bays refused

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 weré 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 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 side of the East Lancs Road had also experienced flooding issues.

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



New chat group voted a success

A NEW chat group for people who are lonely or have been bereaved in the Culcheth area was voted a success by the 16 people who attended the first meeting.

They all said the initiative was a good idea and said they would attend the next meeting at Culcheth Library, which will take place on Thursday March 6 from 2pm to

Tea, coffee and biscuits will again be available and attendees will be able to chat with people who are in a similar situation. No sign-up is necessary.

Further infórmation available by emailing Culchethbereavedchatgroup@





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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 "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.

Councillors "Parish 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."

naependent 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 allowed."

"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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Brunch Sandwich Bar supporting Warrington Youth Zone with hot meals initiative

BRUNCH Sandwich Bar, located in the heart of Culcheth Village, 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

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 the Culcheth of cornerstone community.

Owned by Ian Barker 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

Brunch have also set up an online GoFundMe page where donations towards the hot meals initiative can



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CPS Centre traders given 30 days stay of

LOCAL traders at the CPS Centre in Culcheth were given a 30 day stay of execution.

It came following etween local MP dialogue Charlotte Nichols, who had been working with local traders, councillors and the owners of the centre to help save the businesses.

The CPS Centre has a unique

mix of traders, many of which have been trading for decades. It serves the villages from the local areas and attracts visitors to Culcheth from outside the area. For many, this centre is the hub of the local community and a lifeline for those who rely on the services provided.

Charlotte met with traders, members of the local community and councillors, who were devastated by the news of the closure, with traders given just 28 days' notice to vacate the premises. Charlotte also received many emails from concerned locals and traders who were seeking assistance with this out-of-the-blue decision to close the

Charlotte says: "As promised, I am pleased to let you know that I have had an update regarding the negotiations that I have been involved with.

Following on-going discussions with Landswood de Coy, I have today, Thursday 20 February, received confirmation from the CPS Centre owners that there is a 30day extension available to traders. In addition to this, the traders will be allowed continued storage and access of stock within the property beyond the closure date, whilst seéking alternative space.

To secure this 30-day extension, traders need to email Sam Hecksher as soon as possible sh@ landswood.com

Can you please copy myself (charlotte.nichols.mp@parliament.

uk) in your response.
"I would be grateful if you could make other CPS Centre traders aware of this information, as I have not been contacted by all of the those concerned.

'If you have any further questions about this, please do get back in touch."

Some of the traders have managed to find alternative to find Others premises. are premises. Clisis desperately looking for suitable locations, in order to continue

Previously traders and local politicians had spoken of their shock and dismay following the sudden closure notice on the CPS Centre which initially gave them just 28 days to vacate the premises.

Many of the 20-plus traders, some of whom have run businesses

from the premises for many years, said they faced an impossible situation as they look set to lose their livelihoods, with mortgages

and bills to pay.

Ms Nichols, who visited the premises with local Cllrs Matt Smith and Janet Seddon, said at the time: "This news has come like a bolt from the blue for all traders, some who have traded here for decades, while some new traders appear to have been mis-sold their tenancies.

"There are lots of different issues facing the businesses and we are speaking to them to see what they need moving forward." Meanwhile, Ms Nichols, who

has now received a copy of the fire inspection report, with the owners citing health and safety issues as the reason for the sudden closure notice, says she is awaiting to speak to the Chief Fire Officer to discuss some "inconsistencies in the narrative.

She added that it was "unacceptable" for traders to have no building manager in place during this difficult period.

One of those impacted is John

from JCal who has been trading from the CPS Shopping Centre for

Tom the Cr3 Snopping Centre for 16 years.

"One email was sent to all traders on Thursday afternoon saying we had to go. I feel terrible. I'm going to end up with no job and a mortgage to pay.

"They want us out in 28 days.

I'm looking to relocate but have no chance in the timescale given.

Meanwhile, the longest-serving tenant, Abdul, who has run the

Sundial Terrace Coffee Shop with his wife for 27 years said: "We are devastated. This is going to financially cripple us. We are going to fight this and are seeking legal advice."

As well has impacting their livelihood he said the sate also

livelihood he said the cafe also provides an important role in the

local community.
Dave from Culcheth Model
Railways, which has been based in the CPS Shopping Centre for eight years, said they faced an "impossible situation" as it would take at least a month-and-a-half to vacate the premises, with the need for specialist help to remove heavy display cabinets from the premises. He described the CPS Shopping

Centre as a unique facility which provided a one-stop shop for everything from furniture, model railways, toys, haircuts, trouser pressing and repairs and much

Meanwhile, a fire safety report said the premises could remain occupied and operational while works were carried out.

Independent Councillor Neil Johnson revealed the contents of the letter from the Head of Prevention and Protection at Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service which casts serious doubt on claims made by the landlords of the CPS Centre that tenants need to leave the building

on fire safety grounds.

The reasons for the closure cited urgent electrical and fire safety works which could not be undertaken while they were in situ.

Cllr. Johnson made the "bombshell" letter from Steve McCormick, Area Manager at

Cheshire Fire and Rescue, public.
The summary report from Mr
McCormick said: "The Service completed a routine inspection of Culcheth Provisional Stores on 4th December 2024 which focussed on the common areas of the building.

"There were some issues identified, which resulted in an informal notice (Notification of Deficiencies) being issued to the managing agent for the building. The deficiencies included issues previously identified within a fire risk assessment that had been prepared by a third-party company, commissioned by the building owners. These issues had not been rectified at the time of our latest inspection. Further to this, a previous electrical safety inspection







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execution on closure

(conducted by a third party) had not been rectified.
"There were other issues identified are all third in the state of the

"There were other issues identified around the logging of staff training, testing and maintenance of fire safety features, and lack of an appropriate fire safety plan in the event of fire.

"I believe that the deficiencies identified during the inspection can be remedied whilst the building remains occupied and operational. I do not believe that any works associated with remedying the deficiencies need impact upon the businesses carried on by the unit holders.

"Our Protection teams work with businesses to ensure compliance with the Fire Safety Order, and we try to minimise the impact on them, where possible, complying with the Enforcement Concordat to consider proportionality when issuing either formal or informal notices. In the case of CPS, we considered the use and occupancy of the building, the means of escape from the building and the method to raise the alarm in the event of fire. Because we were assured as to their current provision, the action taken was in the form of a Notification of Deficiencies as opposed to more formal action.

"The informal notice we issued requires no follow up action from our Protection officers; it is expected that the works could be completed over a period and that the deficiencies would be remedied by the next time we inspected, in line with our inspection regime for

such premises."

In response Cllr. Johnson said: "This is a watershed moment in the campaign to Save Our Shops at the CPS Shopping Centre

CPS Shopping Centre.

"I am pleased to have obtained this written evidence from Cheshire Fire and Rescue, which will be crucial in strengthening our arguments that there is no need to terminate the leases of any traders operating from the CPS Centre. I thank Mr McCormick for making his position clear so comprehensively.

"The disruption to businesses, and the anxiety around loss of jobs and livelihoods, now needs to be properly re-considered. The Fire Service are clear in their letter that tenants do not need to vacate the building in order for any works to be carried out. Shops can stay open. Traders can keep on trading.

"Contrary to what was suggested by the landlords, there are no reasons on fire safety grounds for the CPS Shopping Centre tenants to be evicted. The reasons they gave for terminating the leases are not supported by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service."

Cllr. Johnson also launched a

"Save Our Shops" campaign.

He has produced a special poster for traders and villagers to display to show support for the campaign and also sought legal advice on the situation.

As Culcheth Life was going to press for the March edition some of the remaining traders said they were considering legal action to fight the closure.



The Gardening Guide Now is a good time to split your herbaceous perennials (cottage garden plants). Now is the ideal time to mulch to retain moisture; suppress weeds and improve the appearance of your beds. Remove perennial weeds first! Early spring is an ideal time to plant herbaceous. perennials e.g. Geraniums and Oriental Poppies If tender bulbs produce new shoots quickly, protect them with fleece or mulch until the Weeding should start in earnest! Weeding now will save you so much time later on in the year Bents Garden & Home, Warrington Road, Glazebury, Cheshire WA3 5NT. 01942 266300. Check online for seasonal opening times. For the latest events and online shopping visit bents.co.uk 0 f 0 P 0



Bents' dining destinations recognised as best in UK

BENTS Garden & Home has been recognised as a top dining destination at this year's national Garden Centre Association Awards with the Glazebury-based centre taking first place in the coveted Catering Excellence category.

Bents offers a wide choice of dining destinations including The Fresh Approach Restaurant, Caffe nel Verde and Mediterranean style Tapas Bar, where all food is freshly prepared on the premises by an expert team of in house chefs and pâtissiers. This award recognises the entire catering operation which includes all dining colleagues and serves an average of 248,790 hot drinks and 94,740 sandwiches each year.

Managing Director Managing Dir Bent, said: "Food really is one of our favourite things and we are delighted with this award! It's an area of the business my father started to focus on in the early 80s at a time when garden centre dining wasn't even a thing. He was one of the first in the industry to introduce food and drink and at the time it was even mocked by some competitors, but is now an expected part of any garden centre.
"It's something that has evolved

over time and we continue to add to our customer experience with new additions such as our Airstream Trailers serving Bents style fish and chips and fresh pizzas. But despite our new additions we never waver on our commitment to quality and this award is a fantastic recognition of the hard work and dedication of all our catering colleagues.

The GCA awards recognise the very best in the garden centre industry and the Catering Excellence Award was just one of several accolades that the family owned and run centre was recogned with on the pight, which presented with on the night, which also saw Bents awarded as a Garden Centre of Excellence, just

one of only 10 in the UK.

Bents also took the award for
Best Indoor Lifestyle Retailer in
the Destination Garden Centre category and accolades for Best Outdoor Living Retailer and Best Food Hall.

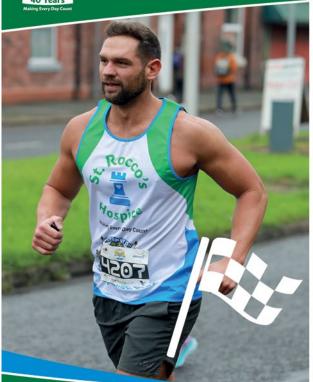
The GCA awards are based purely on quality standards which are measured by the strict annual audits held at all member garden centres throughout the year. Centres are judged not only on quality of products and departments, but also people, service and surroundings.

Matthew added: "The whole philosophy of our business is of family, and people feeling valued and part of something. These awards are a fantastic recognition of all our colleagues throughout the Centre, who work together to create something really special for our customers.









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We are returning to the streets of Manchester for the Great Manchester Run on Sunday 18th May 2025 and in celebration of our 40th anniversary we are once again the official Charity Partner for the 2025 Warrington Running Festival on Sunday 21st September.

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Warren with his son Adam holding the Warrington & District Football League Guardian Cup

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"In appreciation of everyone who has helped Warren on his challenging journey he has decided to hold a 16-hour charity marathon (no running required) at the Village Club, Wigshaw Lane, Culcheth on Saturday March 22. This will be a fun filled day catering for all age

Charity marathon at the Village Club but no running required!

A 16 hour "non-running" charity marathon will be held at Culcheth's Village Club to raise money for two good causes – MacMillan Cancer Support and the Intensive Care Unit at Warrington Hospital.

The event will be hosted by Warren Bibby, in appreciation of everyone who has helped him on his challenging journey since he was diagnosed with bowel cancer

Warren's brother, Darron said: "The odds were slim, but thanks to the incredible doctors and all the team at Warrington Hospital, they pulled off an 8-hour miracle

got the all-clear that the cancer has gone. He'll be monitored for the next few months, but things are looking up!

The fundraising events are as

* 9.00am - 11.30am - The Great Breakfast (Tickets £6.00

* 1pm - 4pm - The 160 Club Carvery (Tickets £7.50 each) * 4.00pm - 5pm - Kids Disco

(Tickets £2.00 each)

7.00pm - 12.00am - A Royal Variety Evening (Tickets £10.00 each)

group of volunteers helping throughout the day and they are hoping to raise as much money as possible for the two very worthwhile causes, Macmillan Cancer Support, an incredible organisation dedicated to providing care and assistance to those affected by cancer and also the brilliant team in the ICU unit at Warrington Hospital.

Tickets can be purchased directly from the Village Club Tel: 01925-763562





WI members given fascinating insight into the work of Florence Nightingale

SUNDIAL members were given a fascinating insight into the work of Florence Nightingale at their monthly meeting at Newchurch Parish Hall.

Griffiths President Eileen welcomed members and three visitors while "Jerusalem" was accompanied by pianist Margaret Jones and the afternoon's speaker Frances Raftery gave her talk on Florence Nightingale.

In a time of great poverty Florence's family were rich because her father had adopted the surname of a wealthy relative.

Florence and her older sister
Parthenope were taken all over
Europe. Florence was named after
the city of her birth in 1820.
At 17 she wanted to be a
nurse, not a respectable job then.
She learned about patient care in

Germany and France and began a

hospital for poor women in London.
The Crimean War in 1854 let her work in a war zone, based in Scutari, a hospital barracks in Turkey. She had about 36 helpers and cleaned out the filth there.
More patients survived, although the British Army did nothing to help. the British Army did nothing to help.
She made 3 trips to Sebastopol

to collect more wounded and was very ill after one crossing. Money for this work came from supporters at home and Victoria and Albert believed in her.

She had the idea of that time that disease came from foul smells and

in her hospital designs there were long corridors and open windows and flowers in the wards. In 1856 she went home and set to work.

A Royal Commission proved that the Army had neglected the wounded. Florence set up a training school for nurses and new hospitals, even in workhouses. Her statistics proved that disease killed

many more than fighting.

She won the Order of Merit.

After years as an invalid she died in 1910 and soldiers carried her coffin through London.

Barbara Delve thanked Frances and tea was served. Frances chose Jean Riley and Barbara Delve as competition winners (Medical larges)

The business meeting began with thanks to Ann Hambleton for the table flowers which went to Helen Slattery, the one Birthday Girl in

February.
The trip to Stockport for "Evita" is on 29th March and Mosslands has a meeting on 16th April at the Village Club. On 18th June there is a trip to Barton Grange. Eileen read out some Cheshire news items and announced the speaker on 19th March – Jackie Mafi, Out of Fashion, the Pride and the Pain. A raffle closed the meeting.

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WI members enjoy a taste of Bollywood

LOWTON WI members enjoyed their first meeting of the year in February and kick-started it with some Bollywood dancing for fun, led by Vivian Bentley-Eagles and some of her dancers.

There was plenty of audience participation from members which led to a really fun evening.

They also held a cake sale in aid of the North West Air Ambulance which raised a wonderful £97.



At their next meeting they will welcome guest speaker George Pilkington talking about Wildlife Gardens.

If any ladies are looking for a new interest why not give the WI a try, for further information and to arrange a visit please phone Val Barrow on 07419 335330.

Lowton WI meet at 7.15 pm on the first Thursday of the month at Lowton Social Club Newton Rd.





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Whether you need support in the office or on-site, our apprentices can help. Contact our Apprenticeships Team today to find out how we can help you grow your business!

Warrington & Vale Royal college have a pool of apprentices ready to kickstart their careers in areas such as:

- · Accounting
- · Brickwork
- · Data & ICT
- Hairdressing
- Marketing
- Plumbing
- Team Leading and more!

01925 494 271
apprenticeships@wvr.ac.uk
wvr.ac.uk/employers/apprenticeships



It's not too late to apply at Warrington & Vale Royal College!



Warrington & Vale Royal College

Want to kickstart your future? Choose a path that leads to success with Warrington & Vale Royal College - the region's leading provider of technical education and skills training.

Our wide range of technical courses (BTECs), T Levels, and apprenticeships for school leavers provide real-world skills, hands-on experience, and nationally-recognised qualifications that open doors to exciting career opportunities.

Subject areas include:

- · Accountancy & Business
- · Art & Design
- · Creative & Digital Media
- Computing & IT
- Construction
- Engineering
- Fashion Innovation
- · Hospitality & Catering
- · Health & Social Care
- Science
- Sport
 - and more!

Don't miss out! Study at a college where you will feel "welcomed, well supported and cared for" (OFSTED, 2024).

Apply now for September 2025!





