

Culcheth Life

Magazine

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Editor's Comment



POLITICS can be a toxic arena these days - especially in the world of social media where an army of keyboard warriors awaits to rip into those elected to represent our communities.

Some of those elected give as good as they get, while others shy away from the social media battlefield.

I had my own taste of being an elected Cllr. at Appleton for three years, so got a feel of what it can be like.

It certainly helped convince me that the world of politics as an elected representative was not for me - even though I apparently said I wanted to be Prime Minister one day when I was about three-years-old and living in Croft!

For those given the honour of representing their local community you have a responsibility to serve ALL your constituents as best you can.

It is also important to take off any political blinkers and work the best you can with those of different political beliefs.

So much energy is wasted with personal battles - as a species, human beings always achieve more when they work together.

The recent issues facing the CPS centre has become a political battlefield. I fear the outcome for the centre will be the same whatever anyone has said or tries to do as it is difficult for politicians or anyone else to influence the decision of a private business.

I just hope all those impacted are able to continue their livelihoods and continue to work in the local community.

Moving forward I hope ALL our elected representatives can put aside their differences and work for the good of the community without

attempting to score points against each other.

Your more likely to pick up votes at the next elections by being positive and working hard for the community instead of continuing with personal attacks.

Here at Culcheth Life we will continue to try our best to highlight the work of those we believe are doing the best for the local community, while always reporting in as balanced way as possible.

Deadline for the May issue of Culcheth Life is April 22

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Housebuilder donates books to Croft Primary

Coinciding with World Book Day, residential developer Bellway has donated £250 worth of new books to Croft Primary School on Mustard Lane in Croft.

Currently building a selection of new build homes at Neptune on Deacons Close in Croft, Bellway chose to approach Croft Primary as it is just a short walk away from the development.

Delighted with the donation, Croft Primary has purchased a selection of the inspirational 'Little People, Big Dreams' biography

books. The series covers the lives of notable people from designers and artists to sportspeople and scientists and is loved by children for its easy to access illustrated style.

Gearing up for World Book Day, Bellway Sales Director Grace Yarlett visited Croft Primary to meet headteacher Mrs Anne Mains and read a number of short stories to

children in the school library.

She said: "Reading is exceptionally important for educational development and we are always looking for ways to improve the selection of titles, genres and authors that we have in the library. We are extremely grateful to Bellway for this donation and are pleased to be able to bring this great series of inspiring reads to our pupils."

Grace added: "With Croft Primary located so close to Neptune and pupils from the school likely to live on our development, it was important for us to provide this

support. The donation will benefit children currently at school and also future pupils who can enjoy the additional books in the library."

A worldwide celebration of books and reading, World Book Day takes place annually in more than 100 countries around the globe encouraging children of all ages to come together to share the joy of reading for pleasure and the many long-term educational benefits that creates.

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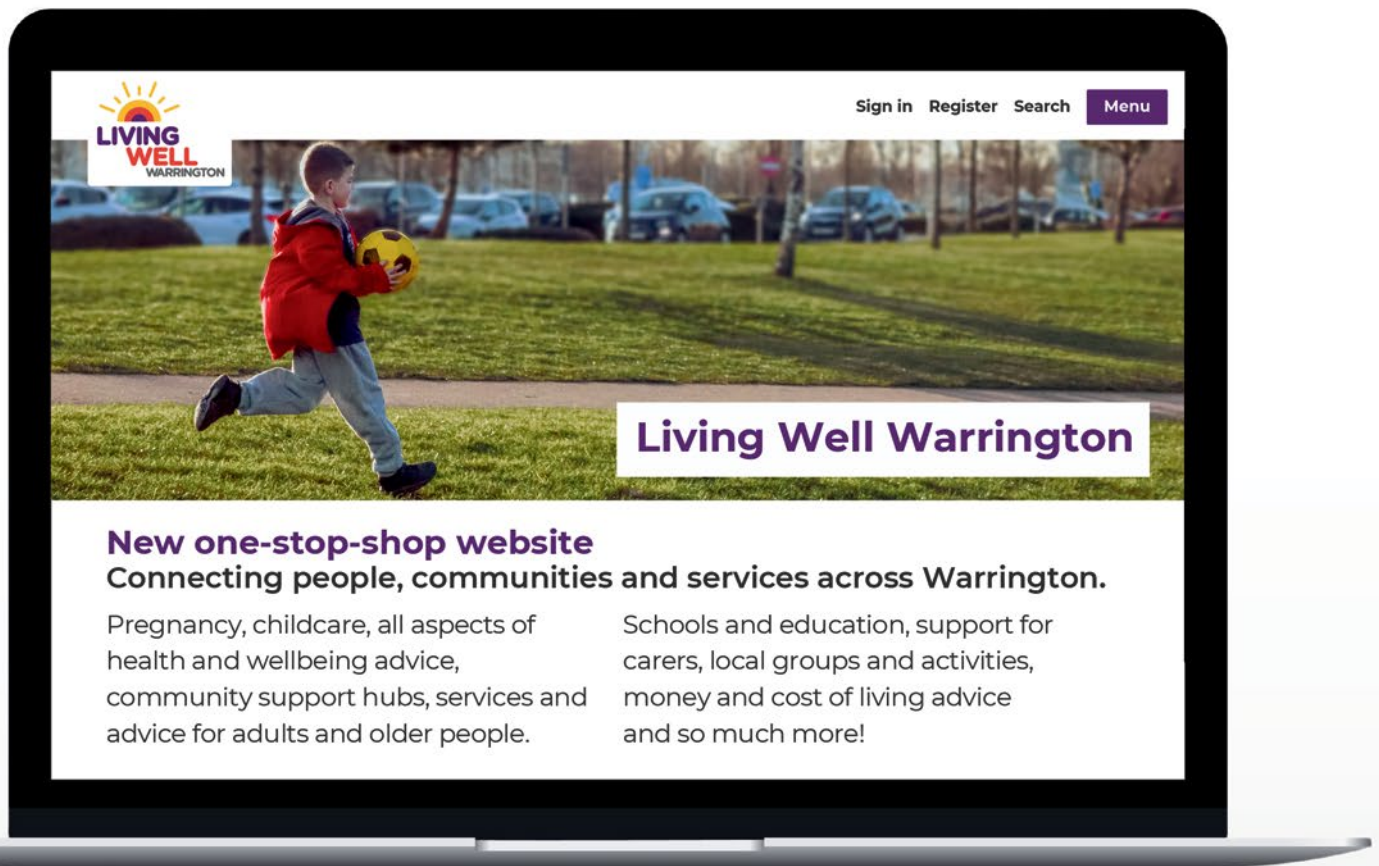
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Local author releases Warrington-based anthology

CULCHETH-based author Chris Vobe has released an ambitious new anthology, combining free verse poetry, a brand new cycle of lyrics, a selection of short stories, and even photographs taken in some familiar Warrington locations.

The Ten People You Meet and Other Writings is steeped in the landscape of the author's North West hometown, with both poetry and prose entries set against the backdrop of some notable Warrington landmarks.

Throughout the text, readers will find themselves transported to Sankey Valley Park, the Halliwell Jones Stadium, St Elphin's Church, Woolston Weir, and the Georgian scene-set Bewsey Street.

And eagle-eyed fans will also be able to spot some iconic locations in the village of Culcheth (a place Chris was determined not

to leave out!) which are depicted through several examples of artistic photography.

Divided broadly into three sections, The Ten People You Meet is a delicately constructed, thought-provoking collection which offers a powerful and fresh exploration of familiar motifs. Through the eyes of its diverse cast of characters, themes such as love and loss are re-examined with a generous honesty, blending sorrowful reflections and candid narratives with the author's customary humour and endearing optimism. Each study is painted large across an original and

authentic canvas, upon which we find a carefully crafted series of still lifes.

Also included is The Gospel – a unique, interconnected cycle of lyrics encompassing meditations on faith, distance, remorse and redemption – featuring Conversations with God, Ascension and the breath-taking Amor.

Incorporating poetry, prose, and a selection of Chris Vobe's own photographs, The Ten People You Meet defies the traditional conventions of, and seeks to redefine the nature of an anthology, delivering a commanding, immersive portrait of life, death and our relationship with God.

Also featured are the short stories The Christmas Bauble, The Wolf and Fishing – a brand new tale set in Little Bassington featuring the characters Adam Chapman and Clarissa Clements from Chris Vobe's 2023 debut novel, The Water Tower.

Commenting on his latest book Chris said: "I'm really proud of The Ten People You Meet. It is an intricate tapestry of a work which talks about life, death, faith and love – all the subjects that really drive me as a writer. But I wanted to set those conversations against the backdrop of my home town. The first section of the book is rooted in Warrington – we go walking through Sankey Valley Park in the rain; a man whose name we never learn makes a life changing decision outside the Halliwell Jones



Stadium; and we close a chapter of one couple's story on a bench overlooking Woolston Weir. I wanted to write something that wasn't autobiographical, but was really reflective of the place I grew up, and the people who live here.

"The anthology is designed to resonate differently with different people. To that end, it can be whatever you want it to be. You can read it from cover to cover, or just dive in and take pot luck. However people choose to engage with it, I really hope they enjoy it, and find something fulfilling within."

Chris, a former local councillor, is already at work on his next novel, which he anticipates will be released towards in early 2026. He promises readers a "North West novel" which tells a "dark story".

The Ten People You Meet and Other Writings is available now worldwide from booksellers including Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Angus & Robertson, Apple, Google Play and more.

Chris Vobe's author page: www.facebook.com/ChrisVobeAuthor/



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Volunteers at the heart of improvements to

CULCHETH Linear Park has been undergoing a bit of a makeover during the past year thanks to the efforts of a team of volunteers.

The Friends of Culcheth Linear Park has been tackling a number of jobs including improving the drainage, repairing benches and painting signs.

The Friends group has also been focusing on improving the ecological health of the park by planting native bulbs and installing a selection of bird boxes to attract more wildlife to the park.

Alastair Baker, Chair of The Friends of Culcheth Linear Park, said: "The Friends group is now very active with volunteers from the local community regularly joining our monthly 'working parties'. People really enjoy helping out and seeing the difference that can be made from their efforts. We are always pleased to see new volunteers. Organisations such as Leigh Golf Club, the 1st Culcheth Scouts and Thelwall Men's Shed are also helping out."

"In addition, Culcheth High School is currently running a competition for pupils to design and make a new welcome sign for the park, and we look forward to sharing the results of that later in the year."

As well as the 'working parties' the Friends group has introduced a series of seasonal guided walks to encourage more people into the park. These walks help showcase the work being done to improve the park and also highlight the wealth of nature that makes the park its

home.

Joining these walks provides an opportunity for people to get out in the fresh air, keep fit and meet some new friends as well as supporting anyone who may feel nervous about walking in the park on their own.

Alastair said: "Visitors to the park have commented on the improvements being made - with a recent survey highlighting what people enjoy about the park and what else they would like to see. This information will help us with our plans for the future as well as providing useful data for grant applications."

The Friends group has gained some financial support from the Co-op Community Fund, Culcheth & Glazebury Parish Council, Warrington Charities Trust and local businesses such as Culcheth Village Stores.

Why not take a trip to Culcheth Linear Park to see for yourself the improvements that have been made so far. If you want to get involved with future 'working parties' or join one of the guided walks - details are available from the Facebook site -

<https://www.facebook.com/TheFriendsofCulchethLinearPark/>



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Charlotte Nichols MP Warrington North

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Culcheth Linear Park



The Gardening Guide



“ Spring fertiliser can be applied to your lawn, but remember to water it in if there's no rain. ”

Simon Bax,
Plant Area Specialist

- Spring vegetables such as peas, beans and lettuce seeds can be sown now.
- Try spring cleaning your houseplants; remove spent flowers, dead leaves and rinse the dust from the leaves with a sprayer as clean leaves allow the plant to breathe!
- Plant up hanging baskets with fuchsias and other basket plants and then hang them up in your greenhouse to establish.
- Many of the birds (that you put up nest boxes for!) will have young now and need help with food.

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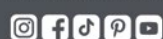
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MP responds to "bizarre" request for more details on CPS Centre closure

WARRINGTON North MP Charlotte Nichols has responded to a "bizarre" request for more details on the closure of the CPS centre at Culcheth.

Independent local Cllr. Neil Johnson challenged the Warrington North MP to give more details on follow-up actions for the CPS Centre following her recent Prime Minister's Question where she highlighted the plight of traders in the CPS Centre.

On Wednesday 12th February, Charlotte Nichols asked the Prime Minister Keir Starmer:

"Long standing traders in the CPS Centre in Culcheth were devastated to receive an eviction notice giving them just 28 days to vacate entirely out of the blue and on a spurious pretext by the new owner, shell company Shivat Haminim Capital. So far, the owner and legal representatives have failed to hear tenants' concerns and mine, and to negotiate a way forward. So, does the Prime Minister share my concerns at this situation and will he set out our plans to protect independent businesses which are at the heart of our high street and communities?"

Keir Starmer replied: "We do, Mr Speaker, expect landlords to meet their obligations to make buildings safe and we support robust enforcement action from the regulator if they fail to do so. I will make sure that she gets a meeting with the minister to discuss what

steps can be taken in her particular case to support the business that her constituents rely on."

Cllr. Johnson said: "Charlotte Nichols read out a question to the Prime Minister from her iPad over a month ago, to great fanfare by her supporters. This was being treated as a crucial intervention in the campaign to save the CPS Centre. However, since then, we have heard nothing more, either from the MP, the Minister she was due to meet, or in fact anyone in the Labour Party."

"Simply asking a question to another MP, even if he is the Prime Minister, does not achieve anything. What has happened since?"

"I am asking Charlotte Nichols to publicly provide more details on the outcome of her question. Residents of Culcheth, Glazebury and Croft deserve clarity."

"Specifically, can she tell us:

1) Which Minister will you be meeting (or have you met) and when did/will the meeting take place?

2) What are you asking the Minister to do? What outcome do you hope to reach from the meeting?

3) Has the Minister agreed to take any action in respect of the



CPS Centre or the landlords? If so, what action have they agreed to take and when will this happen?

4) Can a representative from the Save Our Shops campaign attend your meeting with the Minister, if it has not already taken place?

"I believe these questions are fair, balanced, and reasonable. They can be summarised in two words: 'What now?'."

"I look forward to Charlotte providing clear and unequivocal answers to these questions. If we are going to safeguard our shops, and protect our village identity, we must know what our MP and the Government are committed to doing."

In response to his questions regarding the CPS Centre Ms Nichols said: "I find Cllr Johnson's assertion that 'we have heard nothing more' frankly bizarre, not least because I remain in regular contact with affected businesses, but because among the meetings I have had since raising the issue at PMQs was with Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council where Cllr Johnson was actually present."

"Since that meeting, I secured an extension to licenses and access to storage for affected businesses to allow them greater time for making arrangements. The landlord has stated that the evictions remain necessary for improvement works to the building, however, and a period of closure will be going ahead. There is not, politically, anything further that can be done

to challenge this decision – it would require a successful legal challenge by the affected businesses through the courts."

"I met with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Housing, Communities and Local Government), Alex Norris MP, and his departmental officials on 25 February. This was to discuss greater protection in legislation for small traders, independent businesses, and our high streets more generally, and where there are opportunities for this in upcoming legislation on planning and English devolution to stop a situation like this from being able to happen again."

"Under the framework for High Street Rental Auctions, established in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and brought into force in December, local authorities have been given greater powers to take action where landlords have not taken sufficient steps to rent property – auctioning off leases on premises that have been vacant for more than a year – and granting local businesses and community groups the 'right to rent' empty commercial lots at market prices. We discussed how these existing powers could be used if the CPS Centre is left vacant, in order to ensure the building works are undertaken in a timely manner and the centre brought back into use as soon as possible for the community it serves."



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WI given fascinating insight into Fashion and Beauty through time

MEMBERS of Sundial WI were given a fascinating insight into Fashion and Beauty through time at their March meeting.

President Eileen Griffiths welcomed members to Newchurch Parish Hall and the meeting began with "Jerusalem" accompanied by pianist Margaret Jones.

She then introduced the speaker, Jackie Mafi, who gave us an amazing look at Fashion and Beauty through time "Out of Fashion – The Pride and the Pain".

In ancient Egypt lead-based eye make-up was used to stop disease spread by flies and in later times lead was used to make white paste as a cosmetic foundation.

Jackie reminded us that today UK cosmetics and perfumes and women's fashions and men's

grooming products raise millions.

Heavy make-up covered the sores of syphilis and mouse-skin eyebrows were popular in the 1700s.

Wigs got very dirty and needed boiling. Later on crinolines caught fire and green dyes were full of arsenic. Tight corsets affected breathing and men's celluloid collars could choke.

Clothes became more comfortable by the 20th century but women's perms were unsafe. In China foot-binding lasted into our own time. (Jackie pointed out that botox and sunbeds would have seemed stupid to our ancestors!)

Ann Hambleton thanked Jackie for a marvellous talk which all enjoyed.



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PARISH NEWS

Community Day & 80th VE Day Celebration

Planning is well underway for a combined Community Day and VE Day 80th Celebration on Bank Holiday 5th May 2025. The event will take place on the Village Green, starting at 12 Noon. There will be many attractions such as 'Mighty Smith' Strong Man Show, Brass Band, Fairground, Tug of War competition, 1940's Best Dressed Competition, The Great Parish Bake Off. The most important part of Community Day is the stalls hosted by local charities who are there to raise awareness and donations for their organisations. Come along and support these charities and meet with the rest of the community to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day. If you are interested in hosting a charity stall on Community/VE Day, there are still some places available, for more information please contact Cllr Alicia Edwards aedwards@culchethandglazebury-pc.gov.uk WE look forward to seeing you on what promises to be a great day!

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 please contact clerk@culchethandglazebury-pc.gov.uk to volunteer.

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.

Next Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 8th April 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



MP visits Battle of Winwick site

Alongside the Battlefields Trust and the Battle of Winwick Society, Warrington North MP Charlotte Nichols recently visited the battle site to learn more about the history and future preservation of the site.

The Battle of Winwick was the final battle in the Second English Civil War. The forces of the English Parliament were led by Oliver Cromwell defeated a Scottish Army that had invaded England with the aim of putting Charles I back on his throne. The site of the battle is located in the fields just to the north of the village of Winwick.

Charlotte said: "Thank you to Paul and Richard from the Battlefields Trust and the Battle of Winwick Society for taking me out for a really interesting tour of the battlefield, to discuss how we can preserve this vital piece of our local history for future generations and give more people the opportunity to learn about it!"

"We got absolutely soaked through but, as Richard pointed

out, it made the tour even more historically accurate as that was very much how the weather conditions had been when the battle took place back in August 1648."

Paul Wright, North West Region Chair for the Battlefields Trust and Chair of the Battle of Winwick Society said: "We were delighted to have Charlotte come along to visit the battlefield with us. And mightily impressed that she was happy to brave the inclement weather. It demonstrated to us that she has a very real interest in this nationally important registered battlefield, a battlefield that really ought to be better known."

Alongside preserving the site for future generations to learn and enjoy, the Battlefields Trust and the Battle of Winwick Society working in

partnership with others, would like to add features for commemorative and educational purposes. These include information boards at

certain points on the battlefield, and a monument.

Sadly the site was blighted recently by illegal fly-tipping.



Pickleball has arrived in Culcheth

THE popular racket sport Pickleball has arrived in Culcheth.

Pickleball is a racket sport in which two or four players use a smooth-faced paddle to hit a perforated, hollow plastic ball over a net until one side is unable to return the ball or breaks a game rule. Think sophisticated beach bat and ball! Pickleball can be played indoors and outdoors.

With an estimated 35,000

active players in the UK, pickleball has seen a huge growth in the past year, with Pickleball England the governing body of the sport, reporting a 60% increase in membership in October 2024.

A new pickleball club has recently been started in Culcheth and they are currently welcoming new and experienced players. Culcheth Pickleball is currently offering sessions at an indoor

venue at Culcheth High School twice a week on Friday evenings from 7.30 – 9pm and on Sunday mornings from 10am – 12pm for adults.

In April, the club will be running sessions, during the day, outside on Culcheth tennis courts when the weather allows. A social session will run from 10 – 11.30am and a beginner's coaching session will run on Tuesdays from 12 – 1pm with the opportunities to stay and play games after the coaching session.

Junior players aged 8-16 years are invited to play on the courts between 4.15 – 5.15pm for a social session. Please contact the club to discuss further details for any of these sessions.

Culcheth Pickleball have been supported in setting up their club by receiving funding from the Warrington Empowering

Communities fund. This is in order to provide opportunities for members of the community to play this engaging and fun sport at a reasonable cost.

Pickleball appeals to people of a variety of different ages and skill levels, is easy for beginners to pick up, and is relatively inexpensive. Playing pickleball is not only a fun and engaging activity, but also offers numerous health benefits including cardiovascular fitness, joint health and flexibility. Very importantly it also allows for social connection, not to mention, it's an absolute joy to play!

Please feel free to get in touch with the club if you have any questions and they are happy to arrange a free taster session for you to give it a try. Everyone welcome!

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All-weather sports pitch approved for former bowling green



PLANNING chiefs at Warrington have approved a retrospective application for an all-weather sports pitch on a former bowling green at Culcheth Sports Club – formalising the existing situation.

The bowling green at the club in Charnock Road had not been used for about four years and the green was no longer fit for purpose.

Now the Sunflower Community Café and Connections Constituted Group have obtained permission for the change of use.

A total of 42 letters and a petition were received by the borough council supporting the scheme – together with two letters of objection relating to possible noise and floodlight concerns.

The 3G all-weather pitch includes fencing, seating, car parking and a children's play area.

Planners were told the Sunflower Community Café provided an income for Culcheth Sports Club and a service to the community – including the Ukrainian Family Hub, which catered for Ukrainian

people from all over the borough.

The site was now operated by a community hub used by local people and by refugees from the war in Ukraine. The proposals sought to retain the 3G all-weather sports pitch, an area of, hardstanding, fencing, associated seating area and children's play area, to enable the community hub to continue operating. Without this scheme, the community hub would be forced to close.

The site employed 10 members of staff and many more volunteers.

Officers said the proposal demonstrates that the community benefits resulting from the existing facilities outweighed the loss of the former bowling green, which was no longer in use by the local community and was no longer needed.

Century old shop can be converted into modern offices

PLANS to convert a century-old shop into a modern office building in a prominent part of Culcheth village centre have been given the go-ahead by Warrington planning chiefs.

The development at the junction of Warrington Road and Church Lane was opposed by two nearby residents who feared contemporary-style zinc cladding might deteriorate over time and would be out of character with the area.

But three other neighbours supported the scheme, welcoming a new use for a dilapidated vacant shop last used for the sale and

repair of E-bikes and E-scooters.

Warrington Borough Council planning officers said the zinc cladding would revitalise and enhance a rather dilapidated older building.

Two previous applications to change the shop to offices, in 1978 and 1980 were refused.

Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council did not oppose the scheme.

The ground floor will have open plan offices, with a toilet and kitchenette at the rear and there would be offices upstairs.

The zinc cladding will be on the front of the building and the roof.



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