

# ***Culcheth Life***

## ***Magazine***

ISSUE 262 | JUNE 2025

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Picture: John Hopkins

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80th anniversary of VE Day**

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# Editor's Comment



**IT'S not often I comment on wider Warrington issues in this column but the findings of the Government's Best Value Inspection into the financial affairs of Warrington Borough Council, with debts of around £1.8 billion, is something that impacts the whole town.**

While it was pleasing to see the council's leadership team accept the "serious findings" of the Best Value Inspection and promise "decisive action" one word has been missing from the council's response - and that word is "sorry."

So far, no apology has been issued to those who challenged and questioned the level of council debt and some of the high-risk investments.

In fact some of those who raised concerns, were often left to be made to feel like fools, so it is not surprising they are now asking for heads to roll.

One of those who often challenged the council's financial position and investments was former Warrington South MP Andy Carter, who is indeed one of those making such calls.

While Labour leader Cllr. Hans Mundry is saying decisive action is required and has already been working to reduce debt, he was also part of the Cabinet involved in making and approving these financial decisions.

His predecessor and deputy have long left the building and one has to wonder if they knew what was coming?

Accepting the recommendations

of the Government inspectors, Cllr Mundry says it contains important challenges and since taking over leadership of the council, "clear and deliberate steps have been taken to change its direction."

The Best Value Inspection findings include concerns relating to governance, leadership, organisational culture, financial management, and commercial investment activity.

Government envoys will now oversee the ongoing work to try and balance the books but what we don't want is a knee jerk reaction with some of the investments which

give a good return on investment - most notably Birchwood Park.

A marketing exercise is currently underway to evaluate the possible future sale of the business park - in my opinion while it would obviously generate some much-needed revenue, the ongoing revenues it generates would be much better in the long-term, as the value and returns are only going to go in one direction.

Meanwhile, it would be refreshing if someone from the corridors of power could issue a much-needed apology to the people of Warrington for this financial mess, while also looking how to improve revenues from existing assets without making drastic cuts.

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# Carnival celebrates its 100th anniversary

**CROFT Carnival will take place on Saturday, July 5 – and this year will be an extra special one as it will mark the 100th anniversary of the event.**

As usual, the carnival will take place on the village playing field.

The theme for this year is "The Roaring 20's" and the day will start with a parade starting from the Plough Inn at 12 noon, with floats, bands and other participants in fancy dress passing through the village.

A scarecrow competition will also be held, adding more colour to the village.

The Carnival will officially open at 1.15pm at the playing field where there will be a variety of stalls and activities with something for everybody to enjoy, including live music, acrobatic display, dance, children's entertainment, rides and much more.

Weather permitting, the carnival will conclude with the world famous Egg Throwing Competition.



## Open Gardens event will support hospice and church

THE annual Culcheth Open Gardens event is taking place on Saturday and Sunday, July 15-16 from 1:30- 5 pm in support of St Rocco's Hospice and Culcheth Methodist Church.

Tickets are available from Buds 'n Shakes on Warrington Road and Oliver's in The Courtyard Off Common Lane. Tickets bought in advance are £5 and on the day will be £6.

The event has been well supported over many years and the organisers are looking forward to welcoming old and new friends to their gardens.

The gardens that will be open are as follows:

- 29 Culcheth Hall Drive – Plant and Art sale
- 18 Culcheth Hall Drive
- 16 Culcheth Hall Drive
- 2 Chatsworth Drive
- 1 Chatsworth Drive
- 22 Chiltern Road – cakes and refreshments, 1.30-4pm
- 25 Chiltern Road
- 66 Sutton Avenue
- 38 Twiss Green lane
- 23 Ellesmere Road – Culcheth Methodist Church and Community Garden
- Highfield House, 82, Kenyon Lane, WA34AX – garden ceramics sale.



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## Village's vibrant celebration of VE Day

**RESIDENTS** of Croft and surrounding areas came together in a vibrant celebration to mark the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day, with a community gathering in the village park that brought everyone together in a moving tribute to peace and remembrance.

The event, blessed with glorious weather, drew large crowds throughout the day. Villagers enjoyed entertainment from The Rockets ukulele band, music from all generations, a bouncy castle and traditional fish and chips.

Local families, borough councillors, and Warrington North MP Charlotte Nichols attended the event.

The evening culminated in a powerful and solemn ceremony as Councillor Philip Sharpe lit the official "Lamp Light of Peace" — a symbol of hope and reconciliation. This was followed by the reading of the official Remembrance Declaration, a poignant reminder of the day's true significance.

Organisers Croft Parish Council

hailed the event as a great success, with many praising the strong sense of community and the fitting tribute to a defining moment in history.

Cllr Cheyenne Bower said: "This is about honouring the past while looking forward to a future of peace. It's wonderful to see the village come together in such a meaningful way."

Cllr Janet Seddon and Cllr Matt Smith added: "Marking the 80th anniversary of VE Day is a crucial act of remembrance, and the residents of Croft did so magnificently. The high attendance, with so many families and people of all ages present, highlighted the deep respect our community holds for those who sacrificed for peace. It was a truly fitting and poignant tribute."



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At the hub, guests can enjoy a wide range of soul-nourishing

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The space is also a vibrant base for in-house corporate wellbeing events, blending mindfulness and professional development with ease.

We offer healing and energy

workshops to name but a few.

Currently, Louisa is channeling her energy into an exciting new project—The Spirit Chair, a podcast designed to bring spiritual conversations and real-life stories to a wider audience.

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# Community Day 80th annivers

**THE annual Culcheth Community Day, which this year included celebrating the 80th anniversary of VE Day, has been hailed a great success.**

The event, held on the Village Green, and organised by Culcheth & Glazebury Parish Council and volunteers, saw entertainment provided by the Kevin Parry Big Band, whose appearance local councillor Neil Johnson organised, and also helped the village to celebrate the 80th anniversary of

VE Day.

Commenting on the event Cllr Johnson said: "What a brilliant day we had celebrating Culcheth Community Day. I was pleased to be on the Village Green to set up in the morning and spent the day supporting the event, meeting many local voluntary organisations, worthy causes and community groups. As well as Wolfie!

"Community Day brings out the best in our area. Thank you to everyone who came along to support it. I hope you enjoyed the stalls and the fair. Thanks also to the amazing volunteers who man stalls on the day and help to make this event what it is.

"The Kevin Parry Big Band were a huge hit and I was pleased to have helped to book them for this year's event.

"I look forward to working with all the wonderful volunteers and my fellow organisers on another Community Day next year."



## Bents donates over £29k to C

Customers and colleagues have shown enormous generosity in helping Bents Garden & Home raise an incredible amount for Children's Adventure Farm Trust, its 2024 Charity of the Year.

A total of £29,785.60 has been presented to the Children's Adventure Farm Trust (CAFT), a place which is dedicated to fun and laughter for children whose lives are impacted by illness, disability or social disadvantage.

Helen Crowther from CAFT visited Bents to accept the donation and was joined by a team from the Warrington Youth Zone, the Centre's 2025 Charity of the Year.

Says Matthew Bent, Managing Director at Bents Garden & Home: "A big thank you to all our customers and colleagues who have helped throughout the year to make the campaign such a success. We are absolutely delighted with the amount that has been raised and believe it will be used to help support the brilliant day visits and residential

breaks that CAFT provide for young children who have suffered hardships from a young age."

In addition to Bents' Annual Charity Ball and regular fundraising raffles and collections, colleagues also embarked on a two-day static cycle ride to raise money for this fantastic cause. Easter Eggs were also donated and toys at Christmas, bringing smiles to lots of faces.

Helen Crowther from CAFT said: "There's absolutely no way we could run our facility without the support of all our amazing donors and incredible volunteers. Without companies like Bents and their hugely supportive customers and colleagues the CAFT magic simply wouldn't happen."

Referring to Bents' 2025 charity of the year, Matthew says: "Having previously helped the Warrington Youth Zone with donations of a wooden bar and blankets we are now looking forward to working with the team throughout the year to raise money. And hopefully our



# ay celebrates ary of VE Day

Pictures: John Hopkins



## Children's Adventure Farm Trust

fundraising efforts will be similarly successful to CAFT."

The fantastic, purpose-built facility, based in Warrington town centre, aims to inspire young people to achieve, gain new skills, and enjoy life. Open to anyone aged 7 - 19 (up to 25 for people with

special needs) it provides fun and engaging activities from sports, arts and music to drama, cooking and enterprise workshops. The money raised by Bents will be used to help facilitate these activities for the young people of Warrington to enjoy.



## The Gardening Guide



“Lawns will need mowing regularly to keep them in good condition.”

Simon Bax,  
Plant Area Specialist

- This is the month to get those gaps in your borders filled. Choose vibrant perennials and shrubs for instant impact, we have a huge choice.
- Watering is especially important during dry spells - also soak the ground before carrying out any new planting.
- Plants in containers and pots can be particularly greedy and will need feeding regularly with plant food to maintain blooms.
- Your first salad crops should be ready this month - including lettuce, radish and new potatoes.



Discover great garden and lifestyle tips from the Bents team. Visit our Bents Experts Instagram page or scan the QR code to find out more.

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Seeing beyond





***It is November 2021 and as we are applying a final coat of paint to the outside of the practice, a passer by said:  
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We are Joanne and Ashley Baren and here is a bit about how the business came about.

Qualifying as dispensing opticians in 1994, we each have over 30 years of experience in the optics industry. Having worked in both multiple and independent practices, we were confident that we could deliver a unique experience in the provision of eyecare and eyewear.

### ***Premises became available.***

Could we? Should we? Having worked in Culcheth for 14 years, Jo knew lots of people. If we were to set up a business, it would be prudent to do it where people knew her.

And so it began. Plumbers, electricians, plasterers, Jo's Dad and ourselves. We worked tirelessly to create an environment where people would feel relaxed and welcomed. And when it came to equipment, we needed the best we could find, as well as a great Optometrist to use it.

Step forward Mr David Cross an optometrist who we had worked closely alongside for many years. David brings a wealth of experience and we were delighted that he came onboard.

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# New 3G pitch to become permanent home for Culcheth Walking Football Club

**CULCHETH Walking Football Club is taking full advantage of a brand-new 3G football pitch at Culcheth High School by making it their new home.**

Culcheth Walking Football has booked the whole pitch for an hour each Tuesday evening and will now

make it its permanent home for its weekly 7-8pm training sessions, its League and Cup matches, and also



its own tournament in September.

Walking football is played as 6 x 6 or 7-a-side games and the whole pitch allows the club to hold three games at the same time, for up to 42 players.

It is a well structured sport with its own rules and it is well organised at local and County level. Culcheth's club participates in Lancashire Football Association's over-50s and over-60s leagues and a Cheshire FA over-60s league, as well as the FA's and the WFA's national Cup competitions.

The club also participates in tournaments, including one in

Portugal every year.

It is a popular game and an excellent set up.

Yannis, the club's Secretary said: "We always welcome anyone over 50 who loves football to come and give it a try. We are a club of all abilities and we are especially keen for more 50-59 year olds to bolster our teams. We are also looking to set up a women's team, as other clubs have done."

There is no membership fee, it's just £5 pay-and-play. For any further information email yannis0131@yahoo.com

## Bents Garden & Home honoured with special Jury Prize at European Retail Awards

GLAZEBURY-based Bents Garden & Home has received the prestigious Special Jury Prize at the first European Retail Awards, held in Amersfoort, Netherlands.

The award, presented by EK Retail as part of its centenary celebrations, recognises Bents' customer understanding and its ability to create a meaningful "Next Level Shopping Experience."

Having been invited to enter the awards, Bents were visited by a team of judges who were looking for owner-managed, independent retailers from across Europe who are making a mark in highly competitive markets with exceptional entrepreneurial activity.

Finalists were chosen from the UK, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Austria with four overall winners: German based F.S. Kustermann GmbH for 'First Class Shopping Address'; Austrian based Krawany for 'The Future of Tradition'; German based Electroplus Zimmerly for 'Dedication to Local Engagement' and UK based Bents Garden & Home for 'Next Level Shopping Experience'.

Martin Richrath, CEO of EK Retail said: "This award ceremony showcased something far more significant than just best practices and concepts. It was a celebration of entrepreneurial spirit, local expertise, and the enduring relevance of independent retail in a rapidly changing world."

"In a landscape dominated by global chains and online giants, independent retailers are holding their ground by delivering what large-scale players cannot: curated assortments, real personal connection, exceptional advisory competence, and a genuine commitment to their local communities. These businesses are not simply stores – they are community anchors, cultural hubs, and critical components of a resilient economy."

Jury chair Claudia Wasser commented: "The level of talent and innovation among the nominees was outstanding, making our decisions very difficult. But I believe we have selected winners who truly represent the best of European retail."

Helen and Katherine Bent

accepted the award on behalf of the company and speaking after the event, Marketing Manager Helen Bent said: "We are absolutely thrilled to receive this recognition on such a prestigious European stage. At Bents, we are passionate about creating a destination that inspires and delights every visitor. This award is a testament to the hard work and creativity of our incredible team, and we're so

proud to represent UK retail in such a positive light."

The European Retail Awards are part of EK Retail's centenary initiatives and mark a new chapter in recognising excellence across the European retail sector. Bents' achievement highlights not only its commitment to innovation, but also its dedication to delivering meaningful experiences that go far beyond traditional shopping.



## Villagers commemorate 80th anniversary of VE Day with Street Party in the Park

HUNDREDS of Winwick and Hermitage Green residents turned out in the sunshine to take part in a 'Street Party on the Park' organised by the Parish Council as part of a week of events to mark the VE Day 80 commemorations.

Picnics were a plenty as families and friends were entertained by 1940s classics as well as being treated to a brilliant live set of new music by John Anderton featuring Martin Haskayne.

Bouncy castles and party games with prizes kept the younger generation busy and a surprise visit from Riley's Ice cream added the perfect topping to a perfect day all round.

The Street Party in the Park followed hot on the heels of the monthly quiz at the village community centre which on this occasion was transformed into a

1940s theme with fancy dress and raffle raising funds for local veteran charities.

Parish Councillor Emma Lavender helped lead and co-ordinate the special events along with the Chair of Winwick Parish Council Cllr James Herron and Vice Chair Cllr Andy Griffiths said: "It is always great when the community of Winwick & Hermitage Green comes out to celebrate together and this weekend has shown me once again just how important it is for us as a Parish Council to continue to commemorate key moments in history that shaped the way we live today."

"We have had such an amazing couple of days and raised over £100 for a local veteran's charity, which makes it even more special."

"I would like to say a great big thank you to everyone who came

and supported the events, and we promise to do more events like this for the community in the future."

"It is a lovely and fitting way to honour the service so many people

gave for our freedom during World War 2 and in particular the 6 Winwick residents who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our tomorrows."





# "From stately grandeur to a shopping centre"

**SPEAKER Judith Popley gave a talk entitled "From stately grandeur to a shopping mecca" at the monthly meeting of Glazebrook WI.**

Members learned that the de Trafford family came over with William the Conqueror, and were given much land, in the area. They had connections in the Civil War, but their Palladian house and deer park, was eventually sold with 1180 acres to a Mr Hooley, of Long Eaton. His 'man' Marshall Stevens, turned this into a veritable hive of industries. Many firms came to Trafford Park – and some, such as Jacobs, are still there.

A village for workers was built, with 1,200 houses, mostly gone now. One church remains, almost as a museum.

During World War II, the Luftwaffe

bombed the area as Lancaster bombers were made there. Later, Peel Holdings bought the area and turned it into the Trafford shopping mecca.

There is a ski centre, Media City, a new controversial bridge, The Quays, with apartments, and so much more. Not forgetting the Ship Canal influence.

Although the de Traffords moved away, they all seem to have married well, some with near Royal connections, but far from their northern home.

Afterwards, there was a special birthday to celebrate as member Elsie Shawcross was 93!

## Retired police officer makes return visit to WI

**SPEAKER** at the monthly meeting of Lowton WI was retired police officer Mebs who was returning after giving a talk last year.

He told some very interesting and entertaining stories of his time policing in Preston.

Members had been really looking forward to the evening as they had enjoyed part one of his talk which gave an insight into how Mebs came to this country as a nine year old child from a rural village in Pakistan.

They are now looking ahead to hearing Mebs part three!

The June meeting is the traditional strawberry tea, this is a treat members look forward to. Who doesn't love a scone with jam, cream and nice juicy strawberries on the side!

Anyone looking for a new interest, should give Lowton WI a try. Their meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month at Lowton Social Club on Newton Road, at 7.15 pm. For further details and to arrange a visit, please phone Val Barrow on 07419 335330.

## New look and feel to brand new menu at historic Raven Inn

THE arrival of Spring has seen The Raven Inn at Glazebury, Warrington, deliver its own new 'look and feel', with a brand new food menu, 7-days-a-week opening and further additions to its repertoire of events.

The Raven Inn is one of the oldest pubs in the North West, with archival records showing it started as an Inn in the 16th century, with some notable regulars such as Colonel Blood, famous for stealing the Crown Jewels.

The pub was acquired by the Raven Inn Community Benefit Society (CBS) and now, fully renovated and under new management, it is in its 3rd year of operation.

The pub's new menu features the already popular Peppered Chicken, Steak Frites and Lamb Chops. Food is served daily and the pub now boasts a new vegan-only menu, the first zero-alcohol draught beer in the area, as well as additional garden seating from where you can enjoy lovely summer sunsets.

Last month the CBS hosted a

very successful 2-day plant sale at The Raven over the early May Bank Holiday, and aside from the weekly Quiz Night on Tuesdays and \*live music nights\* on Fridays, there are some major events in the fields opposite the pub this summer: last year's Sealed Knot battle re-enactments will be staged again on the weekend of 12/13 July (<https://www.TheSealedKnot.org.uk/event/Culcheth-Warrington/>) and the inaugural Glaze'n'bury (<https://Glaze-n-bury-music-festival.co.uk/>) for all the family will take place on Saturday 23rd August.

CBS spokesperson Yannis commented: "We are always looking to make The Raven as good as it can be. We listen to feedback and we aim to offer our patrons what they want, as well as responding to ever-changing demands."

Support this wonderful community-run pub by booking online at [info@theraveninn.org](mailto:info@theraveninn.org) or by calling 01925 390466.



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