

# Culcheth Life Magazine

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## Exploring Safety Central

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WA4 1AT*Culcheth Life is published monthly by Orbit News Ltd.**The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and nothing may be reprinted or reproduced without prior permission of the publishers.**The publishers are not liable for any statement made or opinion expressed by third parties in this publication.**Printed by TwentyFourSeven*

# Editor's Opinion

**IN this month's issue you will see content from Culcheth & Glazebury Parish Council and Independent Cllr. Neil Johnson - both paid content as part of advertising deals.**

It is the last booked content from the parish council and the first from Cllr. Johnson, who has chosen Culcheth Life as the platform he wants to use part of his borough council allowance, to do so.

This is his right and as you will see at the bottom of his page, it is nothing to do with my opinion, or that of Culcheth Life magazine.

The magazine is here for any person or organisation, or business to promote their activities.

As always we will remain politically neutral - I can't say independent any more as I don't want to be accused of taking sides.

Like most people we want everyone in our local communities to work together to get the best outcomes.

That has always been our stance

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and will remain so.

But as I have stated previously we can only publish information we receive. "No comment" will generally result in only one side of a story being published.

An explanation for the "no comment", will help us make a judgement on what we publish and in what context.

Like any self-respecting journalist, if something is said to me in confidence, it remains in confidence.

While there is clearly still a lot of bad blood in and around Culcheth & Glazebury Parish Council, we will continue to try our best to encourage all members of the community to work together.

We will also try our best to give both sides to a story when necessary - but we will not be silenced if we are ignored.

While the Parish Council has decided we are no longer their platform of choice, we will always have an open door to receive local news items of public interest - and that is the same to any members of the council who wish to highlight issues in their wards.

**Deadline for the March issue is February 17**



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# Call for more responsible approach from housing developer

**Independent Councillor Neil Johnson is calling for a more thoughtful approach from housing developer Story Homes, following reports from the community.**

Neil has spoken to dozens of residents who have expressed their dismay at the amount of mud and detritus left on the pavements and carriageway of Warrington Road at the entrance to the site.

Neil is concerned that no wheel washing facilities are in place, leaving the road open to accidents and other misadventures.

Cllr Johnson says: "Story Homes may be bringing us new neighbours, but they are not currently being good friends to the rest of the community.

"The entrance to the site is not well-maintained. The levels of mud and dirt



being carried onto the main road are totally unacceptable. This is a main arterial route from which children are taken to and from school. We run the risk of a real accident here as the road and the pavements become slippery and dangerous.

"I am calling on Story Homes to take a more responsible approach to their development and consider the wider community.

"I am also in touch with Warrington Borough Council to insist that they visit the site and ensure that all relevant safety protocols are in place. At the very least, we need wheel washing to be carried out when large vehicles come on and off site. Nothing we are asking for is unreasonable, but it will make a big difference.

"The noise, disruption and traffic congestion caused by this development has already adversely affected Culcheth following the Labour council's decision to approve this building. If it is going ahead, it should be done so in a way which minimises the effect on everyone who already lives here."

A spokesperson from Story Homes said: "Story Homes takes its responsibilities to the local community seriously and understands the concerns that have been raised.

"Several measures are in place to manage mud and debris on the

highway, including the use of a road sweeper and the installation of a 'drive-through bath' wheel wash to reduce the risk of material leaving the development. The site is monitored daily by the management team, with checks and photographic records maintained.

"These arrangements have been spot-checked on a number of occasions by Warrington Borough Council Highways who are satisfied with the measures in place, and we continue to work closely with the

local authority to ensure the highway remains safe. While additional measures have been suggested, these have been reviewed and are not considered proportionate, as they would increase congestion without materially improving conditions.

"As with any construction site, particularly during winter, there may be periods where mud and debris is present. However, this is actively managed, and we will continue to closely monitor conditions, especially during poor weather."



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# Jazz guitar duo hoping to find an audience

**MERE MORSELS**, who claim to be Warrington's only jazz guitar duo, are to host an evening at Culcheth Village Club on Friday, March 6 - and are hoping to find an audience!

Tony Harn and Nick Caldwell have played together regularly in Warrington since 2022 at Marmars.

Outside of town they have played at well-known North West jazz venues such as Matt and Phreds in Manchester, Zeffirellis in Ambleside, Jazz at the Propaganda Room in Frodsham and the Castle Park Arts Centre, also in Frodsham.

Tony said: "We have travelled further afield and appeared at the Jaguar drivers convention in Warwick where we had actor David Suchet in our audience!

"We have also played countless

restaurants among the more prestigious gigs."

But the pair admit they struggle to find suitable venues for a "proper night of jazz guitar" in the Warrington area.

Tony said: "We are not even sure whether there is in fact, an audience for it, but we want to try since this is our home town - I'm currently living in Birchwood, I grew up in Culcheth and Nick is in Appleton.

"We realise what we do is quite niche but we also believe it's accessible enough to appeal to quite a few people if they are

aware that we're out there playing on their doorsteps."

Mere Morsels can be seen and heard at [www.youtube.com/@meremorsels](https://www.youtube.com/@meremorsels).

Nick Caldwell can be contacted on 07383 108232.

The evening at Culcheth will start at 7.30pm. Advance booking £10 or £12 on the door.



## Busy start to year for Friends of Culcheth Linear Park

The Friends of Culcheth Linear Park have been busy with a fresh year, fresh start

There was a fresh start 'weather wise' to the day for their first volunteer working party of the year. And also a few 'fresh' faces amongst the volunteers - which was great to see.

With a pretty big list of jobs to tackle the volunteers soon got going and over the course of the morning made quite an impact in different areas of the park

The work at the bench by Farmers Bridge was completed - providing a pleasant place to sit.

Further down the park a mass of

brambles were tackled and a hidden picnic bench was released - although it's not looking too comfy yet to welcome you for a brew!

And the carved panels of one of the old benches were rescued - hopefully these will be renovated and put back in the park for everyone to see.

At the other end of the park volunteers were busy with coppicing and clearance work. One of the volunteers involved told us: "In this area there was a requirement to fell one of the larger trees. All the natural material has been left to decompose in situ with the smaller branches and twigs used to create 'dead' hedges.

"This work provides an opportunity both to enhance biodiversity and to create a valuable wildlife habitat."

Some volunteers helped by moving logs and others walked the length of the park picking up litter. The volunteers have access to a range of tools to help with their work - recently there's been a generous donation from Wickes and a wheelbarrow donated by a Culcheth resident.

One of the new volunteers shared their reasons for getting involved with the park.

They said: "I visit the park regularly and am impressed with the work that the volunteers do. I realised that there was more that could be done - so

thought the best way to do this was by getting involved myself. I really enjoyed the session - being out in the fresh air and working with the other volunteers. And at the end of the morning it's great to see the results of our labours."

The next volunteer working party is Saturday 21st February at 9:30am.



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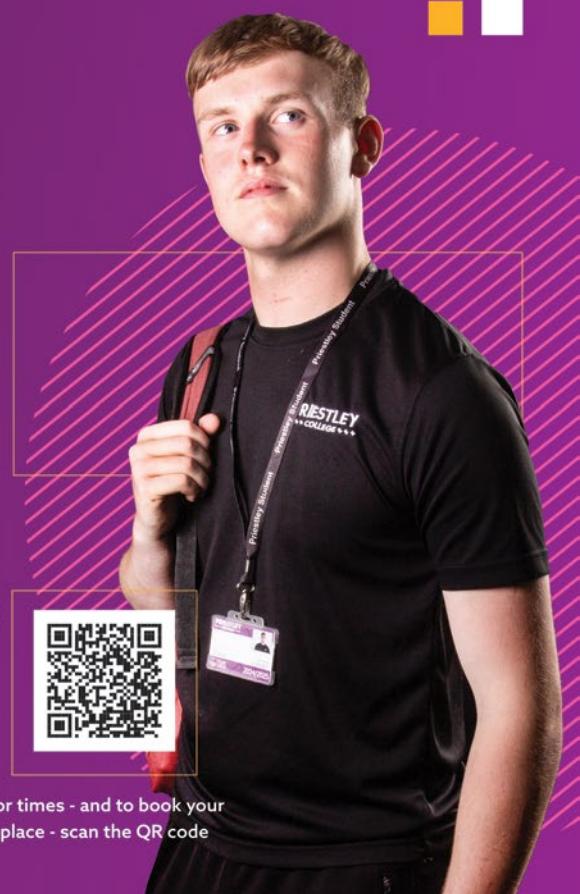
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# State-of-the-art pharmacy opens its doors

**Patients will have even quicker access to medical help and advice in a new state-of-the-art pharmacy at Birchwood.**

The Mayor of Warrington cut the ribbon at the official opening of the next-generation Well Pharmacy in the Birchwood Shopping Centre.

The new branch has two consultation rooms where patients can speak to a trained professional about a range of health issues. More than 10 services are on offer, including NHS and private vaccinations (flu, pneumonia, travel immunisations), health screening, weight management programmes, male hair loss, ear wax removal, and expert advice on supplements and lifestyle.

The pharmacy also has new areas for simpler customer navigation and

access, including the "Pharmacy-Only" medication section, which has a separate counter for advice and recommendations, giving customers faster consultations with qualified professionals.

As well as selling a completely new healthcare range of over-the-counter medicines and services, the new branch will stock an array of Holland & Barrett products, including supplements, nutritional products and specialist foods, as part of a wider collaboration with the wellness giant.

The Birchwood branch marks the first collaboration between the two UK health leaders, showcasing



the largest combined offering that strengthens both clinical care and everyday wellness on the High Street.

Patients will also be able to skip the queue and collect prescriptions from an automated collection point, allowing customers to get their medicines quickly and privately while safe in the knowledge they have been checked by a pharmacist.

Jenna McLaren, Area Operations Manager at Well Pharmacy said: "Our new Well Pharmacy Birchwood branch represents the future of our pharmacies across the UK.

"We want to ensure that every time a customer sets foot in one of our pharmacies, they know their questions will be answered quickly, professionally and with compassion.

"We've been fortunate to build strong connections with the people of Warrington, and our new, larger branch will allow us to deepen those relationships and continue supporting this wonderful community."

The new Birchwood branch can be found on the ground floor (next to New Balance) in the Birchwood Shopping Centre.



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# Youngsters enjoy fantastic day exploring Safety Central

**YEAR Two pupils from Croft Primary School had a fantastic day at Safety Central learning all about how to keep themselves safe.**

The youngsters had lots lots of fun at Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's award-winning lifeskills education centre.

Housed in a striking circular £4.5 million building located at the junction of the M6 and M56 near Warrington, and shared with the operational Lymm Fire Station, the facility provides immersive safety training for all ages.

Visitors begin their journey in a 270-degree immersive cinema before exploring a "indoor village" featuring four themed zones:

**Safe as Houses:** A full-sized three-bedroom home used to demonstrate domestic hazards and independence-promoting technology;

**Streetsafe:** A realistic urban

environment including a road, railway station, pelican crossing, and canal side.

**Ruralrisk:** A zone recreating Cheshire's countryside, highlighting dangers in forests, lakes, and farms.

**Safer Choices:** Interactive scenarios such as a police custody suite, courtroom, and cyber-room to explore the consequences of personal decisions.

In 2025, Safety Central reached a record 6,094 learners, including over 4,600 visitors to the centre. The facility offers tailored, free programmes for Cheshire residents, led by "Volunteer Rangers"

More details at [www.safetycentral.org.uk/discover-safety-central/safety-centre/](http://www.safetycentral.org.uk/discover-safety-central/safety-centre/)



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# Parish council responds to "serious concerns" over Freedom of Information requests

**CULCHETH & Glazebury Parish Council has responded to "serious concerns" over Freedom of Information requests from independent Cllr. Neil Johnson.**

Councillor Johnson has expressed his "serious concern" at the way Freedom of Information requests are being handled by Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council.

The Parish Council has recently employed a new Clerk, after the post remained vacant for much of 2025. Since the new Clerk's commencement in post, responses to Freedom of Information requests have been issued to a number of residents.

Cllr. Johnson has been contacted by several of those people and has been given sight of the replies.

He says the content makes him extremely worried that the Parish Council could be issued with fines or other sanctions from the Information Commissioner's Office. The responses, he says, are "incomplete" and, in a number of instances, the Freedom of Information Act has been "wrongly applied".

Cllr. Johnson says: "I am seriously concerned at the abrupt and unhelpful tone being used by the Parish Council in their responses to Freedom of Information requests.

"Documents have not been released on the grounds that they are still being processed, or do not exist as 'finalised information'. This is unacceptable. Under the Freedom of Information Act, the Parish Council is required to release all relevant information, even if it is in draft or unaudited form.

"The Parish Council has failed to explain what information it does hold, and has offered residents no right of appeal or mechanism for requesting an internal review of the outcome of their request. Sections of the Act used to deny information have, in my view, been wrongly applied.

"The responses come across as extremely defensive, whereas the Parish Council has a duty to assist residents in obtaining the information they seek.

"I am shocked at what I have been shown, but I am most concerned about Freedom of Information requests which relate to the use of private security at meetings.

"The Parish Clerk has told residents that 'no documentation exists because no formal resolution was required' and that the decision to hire security was taken by the Parish Council's 'administrative team'. The Council does not, and has never had, an 'administrative team'. Even if it did, I am extremely uncomfortable with the idea of paid, politically neutral employees taking it upon themselves to spend



public money on private security guards.

"I am also very perturbed by the claim that 'no documents' exist relating to the hiring of private security. This is untrue. I have sent emails about the matter to the Clerk's email address and fellow Parish Councillors. Those emails are documents held by the Parish Council and fall within the scope of the request. If they have been withheld, what else has?"

"I find it incomprehensible that private security could have been hired for three consecutive meetings dating back to October, yet not a single document exists within the Parish Council's records relating to this. That is absurd. How were the bookings made? Where is the audit trail? The invoices? Other internal emails besides my own? This does not stand up to scrutiny."

Cllr. Johnson has asked a series of questions to the new Clerk on a range of topics and is currently awaiting a response. Ironically, his own Freedom of Information request has yet to be answered!

Cllr. Johnson says he is now in touch with the Information Commissioner's office and is seeking an investigation into the way FOI responses are being handled.

In response Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council issued the following statement: "All Freedom of Information responses were provided in line with the Act and after discussion with relevant staff at the Information Commissioner's Office. The Parish Council has sought to ensure that requests were handled correctly, proportionately, and in accordance with ICO guidance. Any suggestion that responses were issued without due consideration or without regard to applicants' rights is incorrect."

## The Gardening Guide



Snowdrops should have finished flowering so it is the perfect time to split the clumps and re-plant. You can never have too many snowdrops.

*Simon Bax,  
Plant Area Specialist*

- Find a home for a compost bin in your garden – even a small garden can accommodate one
- Potatoes can be chitted now to give them a head start. An old egg box is ideal to put them in.
- If it's dry enough work on raking out moss and thatch from the lawn prior to feeding next month
- This is a great month to prune repeat flowering bush roses. Roses can be fed now too after pruning
- Make sure greenhouses, tools and pots have all been sterilised to avoid potential diseases



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# Controversial plan to create 14 flats at CPS Centre refused

**COMMUNITY** campaigners are celebrating after a controversial bid to convert part of the former CPS Shopping Centre at Culcheth into 14 residential units was refused by town planners.

The applicants London-based Shvat Haminim Capital Ltd were applying for Prior Approval for the proposed change of use of part of the CPS Centre, 7-9 Common Lane, Warrington, WA3 4EH (the Site) to provide 14 residential units.

They were seeking a General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) which allows the change of use of a property that currently falls within Use Class E (commercial, business and service) to Use Class C3 (dwelling houses/ residential units).

But Warrington planners confirmed that prior approval was required and refused under delegated powers.

The decision has been welcomed by the recently formed Culcheth & Glazebury Residents Association.

Spokesperson Gill Stott said: The refusal of the latest planning application by Shvat Haminim Capital Ltd to convert office space at the CPS Centre into 14 residential flats marks a significant and hard won moment for Culcheth and Glazebury. This was the fourth application submitted by the same developer, and once again the community responded with clarity, unity, and determination.

"The newly formed Culcheth &

Glazebury Residents Association has been at the heart of this effort. Though only recently established, the Association has already shown the strength and purpose of a long standing community body. Members worked tirelessly—both publicly and behind the scenes—to ensure residents were informed, supported, and empowered to take part in the planning process.

"A key part of this work included a series of open workshops held across the community: at the Olive Branch Café in Glazebury, Culcheth Library, The Daten, and Sundial Community Kitchen. These sessions offered residents welcoming, accessible spaces to understand the proposal, ask questions, and receive guidance on preparing their own objections. The impact was clear: 135 residents submitted formal objections, a remarkable demonstration of local engagement and shared concern.

"Behind the scenes, volunteers reviewed planning documents, drafted guidance, and helped coordinate responses. In public, neighbours rallied, shared information, and stood together to protect the character and wellbeing of the village. The refusal of the application is not just a planning

outcome—it is a testament to what a united, informed, and organised community can achieve.

"For the Residents Association, this decision marks an important early milestone. It reflects the power of collective action and the value of residents having a

strong, independent voice. And for Culcheth and Glazebury, this is only the beginning," added Gill.

For further information, contact the Culcheth & Glazebury Residents Association via email at [protectculchethvillage@proton.me](mailto:protectculchethvillage@proton.me) or follow on social media



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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.

### Appointment of Clerk to Culcheth & Glazebury Parish Council

Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council is pleased to announce the appointment of its new Clerk, Cheyonne Bower. The Parish Council is confident that Cheyonne will be a great asset and looks forward to working with her. Email: [clerk@culchethandglazebury-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@culchethandglazebury-pc.gov.uk) Phone: 07516 291333

### Parish Council Precept

The Parish Council has produced the Budget for the coming year resulting in no increase to the precept for residents of Culcheth and Glazebury. The agreed budget will allow the Parish Council to continue to support important projects in our villages, such as Community Day, Remembrance Sunday, Christmas Lights and Warrington Youth Zone. We will also be able to continue with the upkeep of the playground and our garden projects in both villages.

### Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Plan

The steering group met on Saturday 10th January in the community room of Culcheth Library to discuss the outcome of the recent survey with community members. This event was well attended and gave residents an opportunity to discuss the progress of the plan. A follow up questionnaire has been developed to gather further responses from residents. The QR code opposite can be used to access the Parish Plan Questionnaire.



### Warrington Youth Zone Culcheth Satellite Club Report

December was a positive month for the Culcheth satellite youth club, they saw a clear increase in engagements with young people, along with higher levels of interaction and confidence. Young people have been getting more involved with activities, chatting with peers and youth workers, and helping to create a welcoming space where everyone feels included. Festive activities and conversations helped build excitement and strengthened friendships in the group. The month ended on a high with Christmas parties for both juniors and seniors, which were well attended and gave everyone the chance to celebrate together.

**Next Parish Council Meeting  
Tuesday 10th February at Glazebury Methodist Church 7pm**

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



# Care home working on improvements after inspectors raise safety concerns

**A CULCHETH care home has been working to improve after inspectors from the Care Quality Commission raised safety concerns following a recent inspection.**

Holcroft Grange Residential Care Home on Jackson Avenue, Culcheth, was rated overall "Requires improvement" following the inspection which took place between October 27 and November 5 last year.

Holcroft Grange is a care home without nursing and provides accommodation and personal care for up to 40 people. At the time of the assessment, 36 people were living at the home.

The assessment included 33 quality statements from the key questions of safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led.

During this assessment, the provider was in breach of regulations in relation to people's safety and treatment and good governance.

At their last assessment, this key question was rated good. At this assessment, the rating has changed to requires improvement.

This meant some aspects of the service were not always safe, and there was limited assurance about safety. There was an increased risk that people could be harmed.

This service scored 50 (out of 100) for this area.

It was found that people were not always provided with safe care and treatment. Risks to people were not consistently identified and monitored. People's care plans did not always contain accurate and consistent information.

Processes to analyse safety

were not always reliable and robust, meaning that correct action taken to prevent further occurrences could be missed. Care monitoring records were poorly completed, so inspectors could not be assured that people had received the care they needed at the right time to mitigate risk.

Medicines were not always managed safely. For people who were prescribed as and when medicines, protocols to manage these medicines were insufficient.

The provider's governance systems and processes did not always operate effectively. For example, care plan audits did not take place.

However, inspectors received positive feedback about the manager who was described as being 'hands-on' and 'approachable'.

There was a wide range of meaningful activities for people which had a positive impact on their well-being. People's relatives were able to visit without restriction. The home had a warm and homely atmosphere and people appeared at ease in their surroundings.

Both the manager and registered provider were receptive to feedback and began taking action to remedy the shortfalls identified at this assessment.

People and their relatives spoke positively about the care and support they received. People told inspectors they were supported by



a consistent and caring staff team. Comments from people included, "Staff are marvellous", "Couldn't wish for better staff" and "I love my room - I've got everything I want." Relatives reported, "Staff are fantastic" and "I am so happy [Name] is being well looked after."

Although some people's care plans were not wholly reflective of their needs, people said they felt staff knew them well, met their needs and were kept safe. A relative confirmed, "I don't worry when I leave after a visit."

People and their relatives told inspectors in addition to using formal ways of providing feedback, they knew who the manager was and would not hesitate to raise any concerns.

A spokesperson for Holcroft Grange said: "We are disappointed that the CQC found a number of gaps in our processes, but the report also acknowledges that we were receptive to the observations and have made

significant improvements since the inspection took place.

"A new care planning system was being introduced at the time of the inspection. This is now fully operational and has already made a positive impact to address the shortfalls identified.

"The most important thing for any care home is the quality of care it provides, and we are pleased that this was rated as 'good' by the CQC.

"Our staff team is caring and extremely dedicated, and the report praised the fact that the home has a warm and homely atmosphere where people are at ease in their surroundings. We also provide a wide range of meaningful activities for our residents, which has a positive impact on their well-being, and relatives are able to visit without restriction.

"We look forward to welcoming the CQC back and we are confident they would rate us as 'good' in all areas."

## MP joins Friends of Culcheth Library to visit the new bookworm statue carving

WARRINGTON North MP Charlotte Nichols visited Culcheth Library recently with members of the Friends of Culcheth Library community group to see the newly unveiled Reading Child statue carving.

The visit followed the official

unveiling by Prof Steven Broomhead last year where local residents and students at Culcheth High School chose to name the carving "The Bookworm".

The piece was carved by local Cheshire artist Andy Burgess and funded by local fundraising

activities organised by the Friends of Culcheth Library community group.

Charlotte Nichols MP said: "It was a pleasure to join Friends of Culcheth Library to see the newly installed Bookworm carving. It's wonderful to see how much local residents and students want to encourage young people to visit Culcheth Library and make the most of the fantastic resource we have on our doorstep."

Dr Janet Evans, Vice-Chair of Friends of Culcheth Library said: "I

am proud of Culcheth Library and the fact we have such a wonderful facility in our village. We need to encourage as many people as possible to come and take advantage of what Culcheth Library has to offer as the Jewel in the Crown of Warrington's libraries. If we don't use it, we'll lose it is my approach and I hope that we can keep Culcheth Library going for future generations to enjoy".

Culcheth Library is open every day except Wednesday and Sunday



## Get set for Bark Fest!

CELEBRATE all things dogs on Saturday 28th Feb and Sunday 1st March at Bents Garden & Home 'pawfully' brilliant Bark Fest, where they will be



celebrating all things dogs! Their Mini Crufts Comp returns on Saturday, 28th February, hosted by Happy Radio, where they'll have different categories being judged with prizes for 1st, 2nd & 3rd place!

Bartley Studios will be on location for the full weekend with their mini studio set up, where you can have a FREE professional photo of your dog!

They will also be joined by PetMedics, Prestige Paws Groomers & Cheshire Dogs Home who will be hosting fun activities & giving top tips for all things dog related!

Bents Bark Fest is the ideal way to spend the weekend with your furry companions!

# Various road and footpath closures for up to nine weeks

**VARIOUS** road and footpath closures will come into force at Birchwood next month (February) for up to nine weeks for surfacing works.

Works are set to start on February 2nd, between the hours of 8:30 am and 5:30 pm, as and when signed on site.

Warrington Borough Council has given notice it intends to make an Order under Section 14 of the

Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The effect of which will be to introduce the following:

Prohibition of Driving & Clearway: Entire lengths of road: Armstrong Close; Chaffinch Close; Culbin Close; Dove Close; Dunley Close; Stainmore Close; Part length of road: Warrington Road from the junction with Garrett Field to the junction with Delenty Drive; Glover Road from the junction with Carrington Close to the junction

with the access to Locking Stumps Community Primary School; Warrington Road full length of residential spur road off A574 (No. 680 to No. 700).

The Order will be effective from 2nd February 2026, for 9 weeks, between 8:30 am and 5:30 pm, as and when signed on site. Access will be under the control of the relevant Contractor for the duration of the works. The alternative route for Glover Road will be via Birchwood Park Avenue and vice versa. The restrictions are required for road or footway surfacing.

## Belated Christmas extravaganza for Croft WI

A belated Christmas "Extravaganza" party was enjoyed by members of Croft WI for their January meeting.

The new committee had organised entertainment in the form of games, singing, competitions, bingo and a raffle, along with a delicious buffet consisting of a variety of savouries and "yummy" desserts.

There was also a choice of either alcoholic or fruit juice drinks available.

The new committee is headed by President Merron Mitchell, ably supported by Secretary Lesley Lloyd and Treasurer Janet Wood.

Merron thanked everyone for attending her first inaugural meeting and asked for a show of hands for proposed changes at future meetings. Voting slips were also distributed for the National WI Resolutions for 2026.

Committee member Kim Jones did a splendid job of being MC and announced the overall competition winners for 2025, along with distributing the prizes.

1st - Louise Geekie  
2nd - Janet Wood  
3rd - Lesley Lloyd

Crackers, party poppers and table lighting added to the party atmosphere, along with an illuminated photo booth constructed by Janet Hughes and Louise Geekie, where the ladies could take turns taking photos to record the festivities.

President Merron thanked the committee for organising the party and an enthusiastic rendition of Auld lang Syne was sang by everyone at the end of the evening. A good time was had by all.

Diary Dates:  
Scrabble Group - 1st Wednesday of month 7pm The Plough, Croft  
Singing for Fun - 1st Wednesday of month 2pm Christ Church Hall  
Bowls & Chat - For info contact Vicki Gaskell 01925 764129  
Walking, Netball - Every Thursday 5.15 to 6.15pm Croft Memorial Hall  
Darts - Every Tuesday 7.30pm contact Jill Hillam 07850 185949  
Readers Group - Last Tuesday of month 10am Christ Church Hall  
WI Meeting - 3rd Wednesday of month 7.30pm Croft Memorial Hall



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# Independent Voice

by Independent Councillor Neil Johnson



I am pleased to begin this, the first of my regular pages in Culcheth Life magazine, by wishing all residents a very Happy New Year, and every success in 2026.

I will be using this column to keep you updated on the latest developments in our villages and my work as your Independent Borough and Parish Councillor here in Culcheth, Glazebury and Croft.

I was sad to learn that Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council will no longer be continuing with its advertising space in Culcheth Life. By launching this page, I hope to be able to compensate for their absence. I am committed to being the most accessible, pro-active and in touch representative our community has ever had. I value openness, communication and accountability. When we work together, we win together.

## In the villages

My first and foremost priority will always be the people of Culcheth, Glazebury and Croft. I am committed to putting residents at the heart of everything I do. Over the Christmas and New Year period, I was pleased to join other volunteers helping to grit the worst-affected roads in our community during the inclement weather and assisting those residents who were unable to get out and about easily by collecting their shopping. This kind of community spirit is always heartening to see, especially in these cynical times we live in. It shows us why Culcheth, Glazebury and Croft are one of the best places to live.

I welcome the recent formation of a Culcheth and Glazebury Residents Association, with whom I shall arrange regular get-togethers. This group (made up of many long-standing and respected people) provides a valuable insight into the views and feelings of the local community. I look forward to working closely with them in the months ahead.

I am continuing my work to support the restoration of the clock chimes at Newchurch Parish Church. A meeting is due to be scheduled soon with all affected parties. I look forward to sitting round the table with the Council and I hope that common sense will prevail!



## At the Town Hall

I have added my voice to those campaigning to secure the future of nearby Woolston Hub. Although this valuable facility sits in the neighbouring ward, I have been contacted by several Culcheth, Glazebury and Croft residents who attend classes or use the facilities there. I know that local people do not want to see the Hub close. I am concerned that the consultation launched by the Borough Council is flawed and seriously lacking in important financial detail. I supported a Motion at a recent Full Council meeting to keep the Hub open, and I hope that my fellow ward councillors will join me in opposing the loss of this well-regarded provision.

The Borough Council will soon set its annual Budget. The prospect of a Council Tax rise has been well-documented in the local press. I was taken aback at a recent meeting when a majority of Councillors voted to increase their own pay, at the same time they talked about imposing Council Tax increases on local residents. To my mind, this is simply not tenable. My position was (and remains) very clear: I opposed an increase in Councillor's pay and I have requested that the Council pay me at the same rate as before. I also oppose an increase in Council Tax. I believe there are many more efficiencies and savings that can be made without having to resort to such an uplift.



The Council is in a very precarious financial position following the damning Best Value Inspection Report. I will be asking to meet with the Ministerial Envoys later this year to request an update on the steps they have taken to rectify the problems.

## On the Parish Council

The Parish Council has completed the appointment of a new Clerk, who commenced in post at the beginning of January. I have tabled a series of questions to the Parish Clerk on subjects including:

- The cost of private security, hired to police recent Parish Council meetings;
- The cost of last year's Christmas lights; and
- The way in which communications from members of the public have, and are, being responded to.

These are all discussion points which residents have raised with me. I am working to obtain full and transparent answers, which I will publish online and in my regular newsletters. In the meantime, I will work positively to ensure that public money is spent wisely for the betterment of our villages.

I look forward to keeping you all updated in future editions of Culcheth Life. I'm always pleased to hear from residents, so feel free to contact me if there is something you'd like to raise.

*Neil*

**Cllr Neil Johnson** | Independent Councillor for Culcheth, Glazebury and Croft

**Get in touch: 07977 825296 | CllrNeil.Johnson@warrington.gov.uk**

** Neil Johnson – Independent Councillor for Culcheth, Glazebury and Croft**