

Culcheth Life

Magazine

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Editor's Opinion



THE villages of Culcheth, Croft and Glazebury find themselves at a critical crossroads in 2026.

Long cherished as peaceful "outlying settlements" in Warrington, they are now grappling with an identity crisis fuelled by urban sprawl, political friction, and the relentless pressure of national infrastructure.

To many residents, the very character that makes these villages home is under siege.

The most visible battleground is the Green Belt. As of April 2026, controversy has peaked over a proposed Glazebury solar farm, which has seen staunch opposition.

While the planning officer recommends approval, locals warn of "unacceptable harm" to the openness of the countryside and potential land contamination.

This is not an isolated case; from self-build homes on Dam Lane to large-scale housing allocations in the Borough's Local Plan, there is a palpable fear that the villages are being "swamped" to meet distant housing targets, stretching doctors' surgeries and schools to their breaking point.

Infrastructure remains a "nightmare" for many.

The decline of the village centre is also a sore point. The loss of shops at the CPS Centre and its potential conversion into apartments has sparked protests, with residents lamenting the "slow death" of local

commerce and a lack of facilities for young people.

Compounding these physical issues is a breakdown in local governance. Recent months have seen the Parish Council described as a "toxic environment," marred by political infighting and calls for a Governance Review.

When the bodies meant to represent the villagers are mired in infighting, the community's voice in larger planning battles is weakened.

Culcheth, Glazebury and Croft are more than just dots on a developer's map; they are communities with deep roots.

To protect them, 2026 must be the year that local leadership resets its focus. The villages need proactive protection of their Green Belt, a revitalised centre that serves all ages and a unified front against unsuitable development.

Without this, the unique identity of these villages risks being lost to the encroaching tide of "incremental growth."

The forthcoming Culcheth Community Day taking place on Bank Holiday Monday, May 4th, on the village green is a great opportunity for everyone to get together for the good of the community.

The aim of Community Day is

to give various organisations an opportunity to showcase what they offer, while also raising much needed awareness and funds.

Let's hope our elected members can enter into the spirit of the occasion and put their differences aside and put on a united front for the benefit of the local community.

Times are tough enough without ongoing political infighting.

We need a stable community with those elected working together for the benefit of everyone.

I sense the vast majority of people have had enough now.

Finally congratulations to Croft Filters on their 40th anniversary!

Deadline for the June issue is May 19

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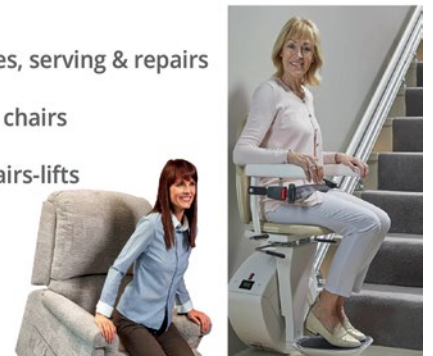
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Councillor opposes plans for self-build homes in the Green Belt

PROPOSALS for up to three self-build dwellings on Green Belt land are being studied by Warrington planning chiefs – together with objections from a borough councillor who claims the site is subject to serious flooding.

Cllr Matt Smith is opposing an application for permission in principle for the properties off Dam Lane, Croft.

He says the section of Dam Lane immediately adjacent to the application site is highly susceptible to flooding.

During periods of heavy rainfall, the Cockshot Brook overtops its banks in this location, rendering Dam Lane completely impassable and creating a significant safety and accessibility hazard.

The proposed development would exacerbate this existing and serious flood risk.

He also objects because of the loss of Green Belt land.

But consultants acting for the applicant say the proposals would redevelop the site in a way that

would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

As such the development would not be inappropriate in the Green Belt.

The properties would contribute to the borough council's 5 year housing land supply and moreover, contribute to the council being able to meet demand for those listed on the council's self build register.

The development would also generate some economic benefits Croft village.

Hunter Healey appoints Senior Manager

CULCHETH-based Hunter Healey Chartered Accountants has announced the appointment of Lisa Pope to its management team, due to continued growth.

Lisa brings over 20 years of experience within the accounting practice industry, having worked in Warrington throughout her career. She offers a wealth of knowledge

alongside a strong commitment to delivering high-quality client service. Her expertise and professional approach make her an excellent addition to the firm, and she is a valued fit within our team.

This appointment reflects the company's continued growth and ongoing commitment to strengthening its leadership team to better support its clients and the evolving needs of the practice.

At Hunter Healey, they are committed to providing a personal and proactive service to their clients. They are confident that Lisa will play an important role in supporting their clients and contributing to the continued development of the firm.

Lisa is already settling into her role and beginning to build relationships with their clients. Should you wish to meet with her or discuss any matters, she would be pleased to welcome you to the office.

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Advertiser's announcement

40 Years of Filtration at Croft Filters

WARRINGTON-based SME Croft Filters Ltd are marking 40 years in business, reflecting on four decades of growth, resilience and manufacturing of bespoke filtration solutions for diverse high-spec sectors; including food and drink, power generation, oil and gas, pharmaceuticals, and Formula One.

When brothers Mark and Neil Burns founded the company in 1986—originally established as Croft Engineering Services—they could not have predicted that their filtration business would still be thriving in 2026. Influenced by the town's strong wire-manufacturing heritage, Croft began by supplying products made from metal wire mesh.

Whilst still at school in 1988, Darren Travis joined the team as a part-time Saturday worker—a move that would prove pivotal. Through his unwavering commitment, he rose steadily through the business, eventually becoming a partner, then director.

The Foundation of Success

While the founders were ambitious, establishing the business required vital external support. Neil brought extensive experience in wire mesh, whilst Mark had previously spent nine years as a Jet Engine Fitter in the Royal Air Force.

Through Mark's military service, the Royal British Legion provided an interest-free loan of £2,500—equivalent to approximately £7,500 today—to support former service personnel in establishing their own businesses. In addition, Croft received a £1,000 grant (around £3,000 in today's terms) from The Prince's Trust now known as The King's Trust Enterprise Programme, which supports young entrepreneurs and aims to improve employment prospects. Introduced in 1983, the Nationwide Enterprise Allowance Scheme provided £40 a week—approximately £120.99 today—to the unemployed with entrepreneurial ambitions. In addition to these grants and loans, Croft received an inheritance of £3,500; this support proved vital for the directors during a period of financial constraint, enabling them to purchase essential manufacturing equipment, such as a lathe that is still used to manufacture filters today. Without this initial backing, Croft believe they might not be here today.

Innovation

Mark, Neil and Darren proved early on that innovation would be the key to the company's success. Over the years, this would take many forms; one key pioneering step was in 1997 when they secured the website domain name www.filters.co.uk at a time when the internet was only just

starting to take off.

Throughout the years, Croft have invested heavily in machinery, processes, and equipment despite their SME status, in order to deliver cutting-edge filtration solutions. One milestone demonstrating this was 12 years ago when they purchased their very first metal 3D printing machine, paving the way for enhanced filtration design and development.

From the early days of retailing mesh components in 1986 to pioneering metal 3D printing in filtration Croft's journey has mirrored the evolution of British manufacturing itself.

Leading by Example

After 38 years, founder and director Neil Burns retired from the company, leaving an ethos centred on the importance of supplying quality products and investing in the future.

Neil's profound knowledge of wire mesh and his innovative thinking paved the way for Croft's achievements over the years. His pursuit of excellence resulted in groundbreaking product innovations, advanced filtration processes and pioneering methodologies. Through collaborative research projects with academia and industry partners, Neil significantly contributed to global filtration knowledge.

A Legacy of Loyalty

Croft have a dedicated team of staff which is evident in the fact that many remain with the company for a significant portion of their careers. The firm currently have a workforce of 16 who collectively represent over 220 years of service. In the 40 years since they were founded Croft have provided over 650 years of employment with members of the team working for as long as 23 years right up until their retirement.

Investing in the future

Croft also maintain a strong focus on the future through their apprenticeship and student programmes. For over 20 years, they have supported successful apprentices in roles ranging from metal fabrication to accounts. Furthermore, by collaborating with universities and colleges across the UK and abroad, they have welcomed more than 200 students, providing them with essential hands-on industry skills.



A Blast from the Past

As Croft celebrate their 40th anniversary, they are reminiscing about the stories that still make them laugh today. One that comes to mind for many is the day an employee brought a Second World War bomb into the workshop with the intention to saw it in half and see what was inside. Used for many years as a doorstop, the device was actually live. Fortunately, a member of staff discouraged him before he proceeded to saw into it. The bomb disposal team was called, and a controlled explosion was carried out in a field across from Croft.

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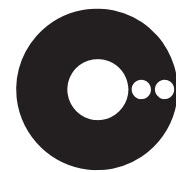
Since 2024, Croft Filters have been a proud sponsor of Culcheth Eagles Girls RL. The company were drawn to the team's dedication and spirit—qualities Croft admire. This has provided a fantastic opportunity for the business to further support the local community and next generation of local sporting talent.

As a long-standing sponsor of Croft Carnival, Croft take great pride in supporting this annual community event. For a number of years now, they have proudly manufactured bespoke medals for the day's competition winners—something they hope to continue to do for many years to come.

Mark Burns director and founder of Croft added: "The last 40 years have presented many challenges

and achievements. It has been a privilege to work with many different characters over the years. I would like to express our gratitude to those who were there at the start and those who have continued to help along the way. We believed in our vision and the future of the company. Here's to many more years and stories to follow."

As Croft celebrate this milestone, they look forward to another four decades of continued success in the filtration industry, driven by their commitment to supplying quality filtration solutions to a diverse range of global markets, whilst continuing to evolve with the same determination that has defined the business since 1986.



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Weird goings on in Culcheth!

CULCHETH Players' latest production will be a double bill of comedy by David Tristram, who is well known for his hilarious madcap comedies beloved by amateur dramatic companies and audiences worldwide.

The first offering is *The Weird Will of Willy Williams*. This unusual comedy with a twist, tells the story of the late Willy Harold Williams – former plumber and keen amateur thespian who was known for being a tad eccentric.

When his only surviving relatives, Tim and Jacky, attended the reading of his will, they may well have expected the odd surprise here and there. But what they didn't expect was to find themselves suddenly entangled in a twisting drama.

With feuding rivals and murderous games afoot, things were about to get very weird. But beware. When huge fortunes are at stake, it's not always sensible to believe the evidence of your own eyes...

The second play, *Last Tango in Upper Culcheth*, is an altogether more different comedy bordering on slapstick.

The Upper Culcheth Amateur Dramatic Society is in trouble. The membership has dwindled to four – the audiences aren't much bigger – and if they don't come up with some rent money soon, they're going to be thrown out.

"There's only one thing that sell

tickets these days", argues Gordon the Chairman. "Sex"

Thus begins the chaotic and hilarious build-up to an evening of extraordinary home-grown drama – an evening the local would never forget!

The plays will be staged over two weekends' on Friday 15th May and Saturday 16th May and the following week Friday 22nd May and Saturday 23rd May starting at 7.30pm in Newchurch Parish Hall (next to Sainsbury's.) The plays are inclusive for all with step free level surfaces throughout the building. Although aimed at an adult audience the production may also be suitable for older children.

Tickets can be obtained from www.ticket-source.co.uk/culchethp. Or you can reserve them on 07943 517710. As always you can also pay on the door. Tickets are priced at £10 for all.

Regrettably Culcheth Players have had to increase their ticket prices, despite managing to hold them for the past seven years. However, they still represent good value with theatre programmes provided free of charge and complimentary refreshments served in the interval.



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Culcheth Players

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"Growing together at the heart of God's community"

Croft Primary School pupils enjoy 'dusty boots' tour at housing development

A group of pupils from Croft Primary School, on Mustard Lane in Croft, have enjoyed an exciting 'dusty boots' tour of Bellway's Neptune development in Warrington.

Located on Deacons Lane, Neptune neighbours, Croft Primary School, and the educational visit was designed to give the local children the opportunity to explore up close how new homes are built and enjoy a safe, guided walking tour of the development hosted by Bellway site manager, Andrew Graham.

Over the course of the visit, the pupils saw properties at various stages of construction including those at foundation stage, those with the timber frames in place and those ready for roofing and nearing completion.

They were introduced to trades personnel and contractors to learn about the many different skills involved in the housebuilding process and also the importance of health and safety on site.

The overall aim of the visit was to give the youngsters a hands-on insight into the construction industry to inspire interest in future careers within the sector.

Headteacher at Croft Primary School, Anne Mains, said: "The children thoroughly enjoyed

their visit to Bellway's Neptune development. Seeing first hand how homes are built was a fantastic learning opportunity for them, bringing some of the discussions around careers, apprenticeships and learning valuable skills to life. It was a great afternoon and a memorable experience for them all."

Site manager at Neptune, Andrew Graham, added: "We were delighted to welcome the children to site for a tour and are pleased that the visit was informative and educational - while also highlighting the importance of health and safety and staying safe around building sites."

Bellway's Neptune development is a beautiful collection of thoughtfully designed three and four bedroom high quality new homes that is fast resulting in a vibrant new community in Croft, Warrington. Prices currently start from £349,995 and there are two stunning show homes to view. For further information please visit www.bellway.co.uk



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Community Day returns with World Cup themed celebration



RESIDENTS across Culcheth, Glazebury and beyond are being invited to come together for one of the area's biggest and most anticipated annual events, as Culcheth & Glazebury Community Day returns on Bank Holiday Monday 4 May 2026.

The event is once again being organised by Culcheth & Glazebury Parish Council, working with local partners, volunteers and community groups to deliver a full day of activities, entertainment and family fun — with a vibrant World Cup-themed celebration bringing a real festival atmosphere to the village.

Visitors are being encouraged to fully embrace the theme by wearing their favourite national football team shirts and colours.

Whether it's England, Brazil, Argentina, Germany or any nation close to your heart, organisers are hoping to see the field filled with colour and friendly international spirit.

The event will run from 11:30am to 6:00pm, with the main programme starting at 12:00pm, giving families a full afternoon of activities to enjoy.

Visitors can expect over 60 stalls featuring local businesses, community groups and crafts, a wide range of funfair rides, vintage cars and tractors on display, a lively bar and food court, and family games and activities throughout the day.

For younger visitors, there will be plenty to keep them entertained, including face painting, football fun and games, donkey rides, and magic shows from Brad the Magic Man.

A highlight of the day will be the fantastic line-up of live performances on stage, headlined by a spectacular ABBA Tribute act.

They'll be joined by the Black Eagles Acrobats, a Ukulele Band, dance school displays and a traditional Brass Band performance.

Community Day continues to be a key date in the local calendar and is made possible through the ongoing work of the Parish Council alongside local organisations and volunteers.

This year's event has been led and coordinated by Cllr Alicia Edwards, Vice Chair of Culcheth & Glazebury Parish Council, who has been working with partners to bring the programme together.

Cllr Edwards said: "Community Day is all about bringing people together. It's a chance for residents of all ages to enjoy a fantastic day out, support local groups and celebrate our community spirit. This year's World Cup theme adds something a bit different, and we'd love to see people getting involved by wearing their team colours and creating a great atmosphere across the whole event."

With something for everyone — from live music and entertainment to family activities and great food — Culcheth & Glazebury Community Day 2026 is set to be a fantastic day out.

The Gardening Guide



Plant out warm weather crops such as tomatoes, squashes, cucumbers and peppers.

Simon Bax,
Plant Area Specialist

- Start applying summer lawn foods now - remember to water them in well
- Help the environment by composting as much of your garden waste as possible
- Evergreen hedges can be given their first trim of the season - if the clippings are not too woody, they can be mixed in to the compost heap
- Remove flowers that have finished to ensure a continuity of bloom - this stops the plant wasting energy in producing seeds that are unwanted



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Scout group wins £10,000 grant from National Lottery

THE 3rd Warrington (1st Culcheth) Scout Group has been given a £10,000 grant from the National Lottery – enabling them to start work on improvements to the Scout Centre in Jackson Avenue.

Improvements will include a new eco-friendly heating system and roof repairs.

Group operational team member Daphne Eastburn – who this year celebrates 50 years uninterrupted voluntary work for the scouts – said: “Work started in April, after seeking quotes and a local builder.

“This project will make a big difference to all our scout group and community users.”

The scouts are looking forward to Culcheth Community Day on the village green on May 4 when they

are hoping to raise money for scout funds.

They are also planning a family day on July 11.

Members of the group will be attending Chamboree '26 taking place on the Cheshire Show Ground from August 8-15 – an international camp attended by more than 6,000 scouts, guides, etc.

Theme of the camp will be “The Animal Kingdom” and it will be a week of fun, adventure, friendship and forever memories.



Raven aiming for a bullseye

AS part of its continuing quest to work with and for the local community, the Raven Inn at Glazebury, will be hosting Leigh Darts Academy on Wednesday evenings.

Space is being provided in the function room, at the Raven, for aspiring young darts players to practice and hone their skills.

There is already a well established jam night on Wednesdays, in the bar, where locals come along with their acoustic instruments and jam the night away.

Now the two will tie in with each

other.

Spokesperson Peter Sturman says, “We are delighted to host Leigh Darts Academy. The Raven is always looking to work with and for our local community. Parents will have the option of some refreshment, whilst supporting their budding darts players.

“It is, of course, open to anyone to come along, enjoy the evening and add their support.

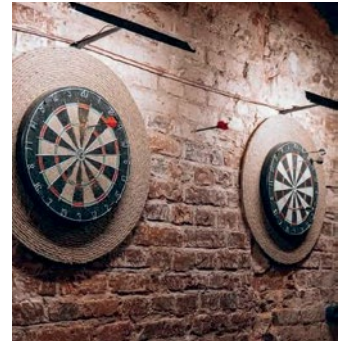
“Who knows, we could have the next Luke Littler in our midst?”

The Raven aims to offer an array of events to provide something for

everyone.

Their ‘Feel Good Fridays’ are really going down a storm, freshly Battered Haddock, hand cut chips, homemade mushy peas & tartare sauce. Dine in or takeaway. In addition they have entertainment on Friday May the 8th, 22nd & 29th.

As if that’s not enough their legendary Sunday roast provides yet another opportunity for everyone to come along to the Raven and soak up the atmosphere whilst enjoying a pampered Sunday afternoon.



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Parish Meeting cancelled by independents

TWO Independent councillors cancelled what they had described as a “unique Parish Meeting” to discuss the current governance and leadership of Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council.

Calling it an “unprecedented move” at the time, Cllrs Neil Johnson and Bernie Kingston said it would provide an opportunity for the community to make a stand, after claiming they have been blocked from even speaking at meetings.

But after Culcheth Life went to press last month they issued a public statement cancelling the meeting.

Public Statement From Cllrs Johnson & Kingston re the Cancellation of the Parish Meeting

“We are formally cancelling the Parish Meeting that we convened earlier this year in our capacity as Parish Councillors.

The request for this meeting was made by Cllr Johnson at the February Parish Council meeting and was followed up, the next day, in writing by Cllr Kingston on 11 February to ensure that arrangements could begin promptly. Under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, Part III, residents have a statutory right to a Parish Meeting, and the Parish Council has a duty to ensure that such a meeting is arranged “at a time and place suitable for the inhabitants of the parish.” The legislation is clear: Parish Meetings must be accessible, timely, and free from obstruction.

Despite this, the Parish Council Chair delayed and failed to take the basic organisational steps required in a timely manner. By 24 April 2026

(the proposed date of the Parish Meeting), almost 10 weeks will have passed since the request was first made in the February PC meeting.

The date proposed is a Friday night, a timing that is neither reasonable nor consistent with the democratic purpose of a Parish Meeting. A Friday evening meeting predictably limits attendance for residents. It cannot credibly be described as “suitable for the inhabitants of the parish” as the law requires.

Compounding this, on 19 February 2026, the Parish Council published a Q&A statement on its website that presented a partial and misleading account of the Parish Meeting process. Rather than offering neutral information, the document framed the meeting in a way that discouraged participation and cast doubt on its legitimacy. This is not the role of a Parish Council, which should support—not influence—the statutory rights of residents to assemble and speak.

In addition, the potential presence of security personnel at the meeting raised serious concerns about the atmosphere residents would face on arrival.

Parish Meetings are intended to be open, welcoming, and community-led. The possibility of security being stationed at the door risks creating an intimidating

environment for those wishing to attend, particularly for residents who may already feel hesitant about speaking publicly.

These issues cannot be separated from the wider conduct that has characterised recent Parish Council meetings. If the behaviour displayed by the Chair and several Councillors in recent months were to set the tone for the Parish Meeting, residents could reasonably expect further examples of the hostile and discouraging environment that your Independent Councillors have endured. This has included dismissive comments, personal remarks, and behaviour that has made constructive participation extremely difficult. No Parish Meeting should take place under conditions that risk replicating such an atmosphere or deterring residents from speaking freely.

The Parish Council have also attempted to apply unfair and disproportionate costs to the organisation of the meeting and more importantly, a Parish Poll that may follow.

Parish Meetings are a statutory right of the electorate, not a discretionary event. To discredit the convening of a Parish Meeting on the basis of potential costs undermines the process of residents seeking to exercise their rights and contradicts both the spirit and the letter of the legislation.

Alongside these concerns, residents have now completed a petition for a Community Governance Review (CGR). This will

trigger a formal process conducted by Warrington Borough Council, which is transparent, open, and independently managed. A CGR provides a structured and impartial route for examining governance arrangements, ensuring that residents’ voices are heard without the barriers, delays, or pressures that have characterised the handling of this Parish Meeting.

Taken together—the delay organising the Meeting, (almost 10 weeks will have passed), the publication of a biased Q&A by the Parish Council, the attempt to undermine the process based on costs, the likelihood of reduced resident capacity due to external attendees, the potential presence of security, and the wider pattern of conduct at recent council meetings—the process has been neither democratic nor transparent. It has not met the statutory requirement to support open participation by the parish electorate.

Given these circumstances, we cannot endorse a meeting arranged in a manner that restricts attendance, misinforms residents, and undermines the democratic intent of the law. We therefore withdraw our original convening request and will not proceed under the conditions imposed.

We remain committed to open, accountable local governance and to ensuring that residents have fair, accessible, and lawful opportunities to participate in parish affairs.



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Council checking criteria for Parish Council Governance Review

WARRINGTON Borough Council has confirmed it has received a petition for a Governance Review at Culcheth & Glazebury Parish Council, and is now studying the petition to see if it has met the necessary criteria.

More than 650 local residents have signed up to a formal request for the Borough Council to undertake a Community Governance Review in the Parish, after local Independent Councillors Bernie Kingston and Neil Johnson assisted with the collection of signatures.

Cllr Johnson travelled to Warrington Borough Council's offices in Times Square to submit the signatures and the formal request in person.

He says it will afford local people the chance to "decide their own futures" and aims to put an end to "the culture of secrecy" surrounding the Parish Council.

Cllr Neil Johnson said: "I am pleased to report that the requisite number of signatures has been collected to begin the process of a Community Governance Review in Culcheth and Glazebury.

"This is something that residents have been calling for for some time.

"A Community Governance Review is a legal process where the Borough Council can review how people are represented. As well as the Parish Council, reviews can also consider electoral arrangements, such as the number of councillors and individual warding arrangements in parishes.

"The process should be transparent, open, and independently managed. A Community Governance Review provides a structured and impartial route for examining governance arrangements, ensuring that residents' voices are heard without the barriers, delays, or pressures that have characterised the current management of the Parish Council.

"A full consultation will follow, and residents will have the opportunity to make proposals

for how the governance of our local area might change. Options available include the dissolution of the Parish Council in its current form, in the event that enough people feel strongly enough".

Cllr Johnson added: "Kick-starting a Community Governance Review is a landmark moment. More than 600 residents have signed the petition to commence the process, which is now in the hands of the Borough Council solicitor. I will be urging the Council not to delay, but to act quickly to get this consultation fully underway.

"As your independent voice, I am committed to ensuring that democracy is put back into the hands of the people. I want to see an end to the culture of secrecy, the lack of transparency, and the constant safeguarding of vested interests that characterise our Parish and Borough Council. I will be on hand to discuss and assist all residents with the submissions they make to this Review.

"This is our chance to decide our own futures. Let's make the best of it!"

A Warrington Borough Council spokesperson said: "We have received a petition for community governance review for Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council and are currently checking that all the criteria is met. Once agreed, we have to draw up terms of reference and publish them. The Terms of Reference is a prompt to local consideration, initial discussions and the exchange of ideas in a review, which will in turn assist the council to prepare draft proposals. We have one year to complete the review. As part of this, a full consultation takes place, involving parishes, ward members, local stakeholders and residents. Given

that there is a Boundary Review taking place it is likely that any review will be deferred until that is complete in accordance with Boundary Commission guidance.

"A Community Governance Review can be triggered by a petition presented to the Council. For a petition to be valid, certain conditions need to be met. For areas with more than 2,500 local electors, the petition must be signed by at least 7.5% of them.

"A review deals with matters including naming, mergers, alteration, abolition, and electoral arrangements. This is to make sure

that local governance is effective and convenient, and that it reflects the identities and interests of local communities. A review generally deals with structural issues and does not deal with dissatisfaction with the operational decisions of a Parish Council and its members, which are more appropriately dealt with through the electoral process and engagement with the Parish Council and its auditors."

Culcheth & Glazebury Parish Council was also given the opportunity to respond to the call for a Governance Review, but as yet none has been forthcoming.



Solar Farm plan approved despite opposition

CONTROVERSIAL plans for a solar farm on Green Belt land at Glazebury have been approved despite more than 40 objections.

Planning officers at Warrington recommended the scheme be approved when was considered at a meeting of the borough council's development management committee.

The scheme involves two agricultural fields at Duckinfield Farm, Hurst Lane, Glazebury.

The scheme would require the laying of an underground cable to Culcheth, crossing Jibcroft Brook and a number of fields before joining Fowley Common Lane and the A574 Warrington Road and then following Culcheth Hall Drive, Lodge Drive and Ellesmere Road to where it will link with an existing substation.

Access to the site would be via Hurst Lane, which also provides access to Hurst Hall Farm, a small residential development, Glazebury CE Primary School and Glazebury Cricket Club.

Larger construction vehicles would be able to access the site via a level crossing on the nearby railway line, however.

Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service has warned about the possible impact on the Tudor origins of the adjacent Hurst Hall Farm.

The solar farm would consist of rows of solar panels, either fixed in place or tracking the movement of the sun. It would have an operational life of 40 years, after which it would be returned to agriculture. During its life, it would still be available for grazing sheep.

A public footpath crosses the site which would be subject to management measures to ensure the safety of users.

Landscaping would be carried out, including planting, to screen the solar farm from public viewpoints. Existing trees would be retained and enhanced. Minimal waste would be produced by the development and there would be unlikely to be any significant noise impact.

But Planning officers said the proposal is considered to use "Grey Belt" land and would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

The loss of agricultural land and landscape harm are considered to be outweighed by the environmental

benefits of renewable energy and the impacts of the development on the local highway network including public rights of way are acceptable subject to conditions.

There would also be no unacceptable harm to residential amenity.



The rise of Newchurch Tennis Academy

THERE is a new energy on the courts at Culcheth Tennis Club with the rise of the Newchurch Tennis Academy.

For the past four months, a powerful community partnership has been transforming how local children experience sport.

John Carrigan, Tennis and Pickleball and Culcheth Tennis Club are proud to showcase the success of the Newchurch Tennis Academy.

This isn't just about hitting a ball; it's about building a legacy. By bridging the gap between the

classroom and the clubhouse, they are giving young people in Culcheth a clear pathway to health, confidence, and community belonging.

After four months of regular lessons, the progress has been incredible. Watching the pupils develop coordination, fitness, and—most importantly—a genuine love for the game has been the

highlight of their coaching year. By hosting lessons at the club rather than just on a school playground, the children feel part of something bigger. They aren't just students; they are becoming tennis players.

While the Academy serves Newchurch pupils, the momentum is growing across the entire junior programme. Whether your child is a complete beginner or looking to take their game to the next level, there is a place for them at Culcheth.

Ready to start? They offer sessions for all ages and abilities, including their popular junior subscriptions and their new Summer Pickleball sessions.

For more details contact Johnny Carrigan, Head Tennis and Pickleball Coach on 07931 181600.



Attracting wildlife into your garden

AN enlightening presentation on attracting wildlife into your garden was given by George Pilkington at the monthly meeting of Croft WI.

George has had a passion for wildlife since his childhood and after serving 20 years in the police force he left to study for an MSc in Countryside Management (Cert. Ed). He now designs wormeries, bumble bee and solitary bee nest boxes as well as teaching children and special needs adults about looking after wildlife in our gardens.

George focused his talk on feeding wild birds as this is a subject currently in the news. This April the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) issued new guidance on the use of bird feeders during the summer months 'Feed Seasonally Feed Safely'. The guidance is to pause filling bird feeders with seeds or peanuts from May 1 to October 31.

Small amounts of mealworms, fat balls or suet can still be put out for the birds but there should be plenty of insects, seeds and fruit available for birds to find in the garden at this time of year.

From November 1 to April 30, seeds or peanuts can be used in bird feeders. The best seeds to use are black sunflower seeds, sunflower hearts, nyjer seeds and crushed peanuts as these are mineral and oil rich. (Mixed seed may contain a lot of wheat which has a lower nutritional value).

George explained that these measures are designed to stop the spread of Trichomonosis, a highly contagious disease caused by a protozoan parasite. It is causing a massive population decline in garden birds such as Greenfinches and Chaffinches. The birds appear fluffed up, lethargic and have difficulty swallowing food due to throat lesions - leading to death by starvation. The disease can be spread by pigeons but also via contaminated food or water at feeders.

Water for birds should be changed every day and George recommended using a plastic paint roller tray as a birdbath as it has a sloping surface and can easily be washed and dried. Bird feeders should be cleaned weekly and left to dry before refilling. He also suggested moving feeders around the garden so that mess

doesn't build up in one place. Last summer the RSPB stopped selling bird tables and hanging tables because the parasite can survive in any mess that accumulates on the tables.

Anne Lamming gave the vote of thanks to George for such an informative and topical presentation.

The competition "A photograph of wildlife and/or your garden" was won by Liz Jones, 2nd Janet Hughes and 3rd Lesley Lloyd. Croft WI meets at 7.30 pm at Croft Memorial Hall on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, visitors are welcome.

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