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March 2014

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Editor's Comment

THE proposal to close Culcheth High School's Sixth Form is certainly an emotive subject and as a former pupil it would be very easy for me to let my emotions run away with me on this subject.

But looking at the issue logically, if the student numbers have declined so dramatically there comes a point when something is

no longer viable.

Schools are run like businesses and if the numbers don't stack up any more - tough and unpopular decisions have to be made.

I am sure everyone in Culcheth and surrounding areas would love to see a vibrant and successful sixth college educating our young people without the need for them to travel far and wide to continue with their education.

But it would appear for whatever reason the parents and students of Culcheth have decided there are better options further afield.

You would think it would make sense for local people to use local facilities, rather than the added

expense and hassle of travelling far and wide.

I would love to see the campaign to save the sixth form to be successful - as I am passionate about supporting local facilities whenever possible - but not at any cost.

I will be watching the outcome of the campaign and hopefully be reporting on some success - but I am not holding my breath.

Deadline for the April issue of Culcheth Life is March 18

New access for farm

PLANNING chiefs have approved proposals for a new vehicle access at the front of Poultry Farm, Stone Pit Lane, Croft.

The plan involves a new brick, boundary wall and entrance with sufficient space for a vehicle to pull clear of the highway while the gate is being opened.

Croft Parish Council has expressed concern about an additional entrance near a bend on a busy road. They pointed out that there was already an access to the property and an additional one would result in a total of six access points within a few hundred yards of each other on either side of a bad bend, over a narrow bridge.

But members of the borough's planning committee decided the existing access was more dangerous than the proposed new one.

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Councillors campaign to keep sixth form open

COUNCILLORS at Culcheth have reacted angrily to Warrington Borough Council's decision to press on with moves to close the sixth form at Culcheth High School.

Councillors Matt Smith, Chris Vobe and Paul Campbell have pledged to support residents opposed to the closure.

Warrington North MP Helen Jones has also joined the campaign. She said: "Culcheth Sixth Form is an important facility for young people in this part of the borough. If we lose it, people here will have to travel much further for their post-16 education.

"Why was the problem of falling post-16 numbers not flagged up at a much earlier stage by the governors? What actions were taken to try to tackle the problem and attract more students?"

The borough council's executive board has agreed to support the school governors' proposal to publish a statutory notice in respect of closing the sixth form.

If the change is implemented, it will mean the school will no longer admit new students into the sixth form from September, although students already enrolled in the sixth form will be able to complete their studies.

Pupils in the current Year 11 at the school, who would have liked to join the sixth form, will be supported in identifying an alternative suitable provision.

Kath O'Dwyer, the borough's executive director for families and wellbeing, said: "No decision to close learning provision is taken

lightly and is based on many factors. One of the main reasons behind the overall review was that the number of students choosing to study at Culcheth sixth form has decreased in recent years with many students opting for an alternative to a 'school' setting for their post 16 education.

"This is no reflection on the school and pupils achievements as there has been a consistent rise in attainment at GCSE over the past five years. Last year saw the best ever results with 79 per cent of students achieving five A*-C grades including English and Maths, making the school the highest performing in the borough."

In a joint statement, Cllr Smith and Cllr Vobe said: "It is important to understand that this does not represent the final decision – it is the beginning of a representation period, during which everyone is encouraged to submit their views over the prospect of our sixth form closing."

The two councillors pledged to support residents opposed to the closure and actively encourage members of the public to submit their opposition to the borough council and the school. They would show community leadership on the issue and fight for the best interests of young people in Culcheth, Glazebury and Croft, doing all they could to retain a functioning

sixth form in Culcheth.

Cllr Campbell said: "I personally regret it has come to this and would question why this issue has suddenly arisen. The parish council was unanimously opposed to this.

"But it appears to be fait accompli – there may be nothing we can do about it.

"Alongside any campaign to save the sixth form I will be working with the head teacher, the governors, the staff and the parents to ensure that any money which becomes available as a result of the closure is pumped back into the rest of the school to make sure it remains one of the most outstanding

high schools in Warrington."

Residents of neighbouring villages, such as Glazebury, Croft, Winwick and Rixton, where a large number of young people attend Culcheth High are being urged to oppose the closure.

Petition forms are being distributed with a FREEPOST reply form, making it easy for them to join the campaign.

Objections can be sent to: Kath O'Dwyer, Executive Director, Families & Wellbeing Directorate, Town Hall, Sankey Street, Warrington, WA1 1UH or by email kodwyer@warrington.gov.uk and sbroomhead@warrington.gov.uk

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£18,540 boost for church hall

WORK can start on a new roof at Newchurch Parish Hall thanks to a grant of £18,540.

The Veolia Environmental Trust has agreed to award the grant towards the cost of replacing the roof at the hall, on Common Lane, Culcheth.

Built around 1960, the main roof of the hall has deteriorated badly and needs replacement.

The Trust agreed to the grant at its quarterly board meeting when 77 grants totally almost £2.5 million were awarded to community and environmental projects across the UK – a record total since the trust was set up in 1997.

Veolia awards grants through the Landfill Communities Fund and in the last five years has awarded £642,192 to projects in Cheshire.

Rector of Newchurch, the Rev Chris Stafford said: "It's great to receive this grant just as we are putting on our annual pantomime, which raises funds to keep our hall in good repair. The grant means we can push the project forward and get on with the much-needed replacement of the roof."

Executive director of the Veolia Environmental Trust, Paul Taylor, said: "This is a brilliant start to 2014, both for us and the projects we have awarded grants to. This scheme will give this hall a new lease of life, benefiting the community of Culcheth, and I look forward to seeing it start and take shape."

Care home's outstanding results

HOLCROFT Grange, the CLS care home in Culcheth has returned outstanding results in the nationwide Your Care Rating survey – designed to give residents a voice and put their care at the heart of understanding more about how well care homes perform.

The home achieved an overall performance rating (OPR) score of 878/1000 (or 88 per cent) ranking it highly in the four themes of staff and care, home comforts, choice and having a say, and quality of life.

Respondents also awarded the home 100 per cent for overall satisfaction, while the same proportion said that staff treat them with kindness, dignity and respect.

Pauline Shaw, home manager at Holcroft Grange said: "We're delighted with our results from the 2013 Your Care Rating survey as it demonstrates how fulfilled our residents are. All of our scores across the four main themes are high and it just goes to show that the reality of day-to-day life in a care home such as ours is very good, something which is often at odds with the public's perception.



Outstanding results - Holcroft Grange residents take part in a "Strictly Come Dancing" session to mark Dignity Action Day.

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As our loved ones' care needs increase, things can become just too difficult. Being there for them more frequently and having to take care of the most fundamental daily tasks, can take its toll both physically and mentally. So it's a comfort to know there is another way...

Once you've made the difficult decision that a care home offers the best solution for your loved one, choosing a home that satisfies their needs – and yours, is the next step.

Holcroft Grange is a quality care home operated by the

not-for-profit organisation CLS Care Services.

The home offers a pleasant and welcoming environment, appetising and nutritious meals and a wide range of activities that help older people live with the dignity, companionship and care they need and deserve.

So if you'd like a loved one to try a change of scene in a warm, friendly environment, give us a call.

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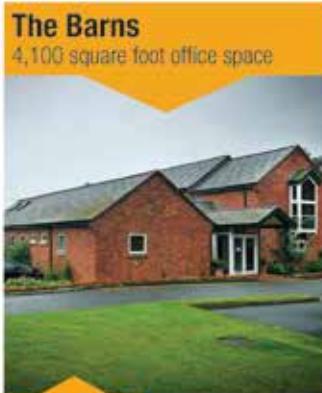
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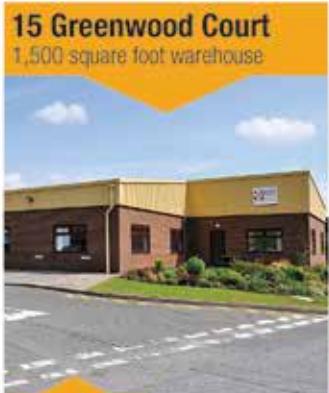
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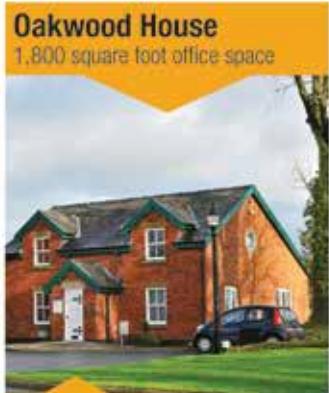
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WI learns about reflexology

REFLEXOLOGIST Tracey Turton gave a talk on this alternative medicine to members of Croft WI.

Tracey (pictured) became interested in reflexology after deciding to try it out on her husband, after traditional medicine proved useless in relieving the chronic pain he suffered, due to a serious accident.

The technique was so successful that Tracey decided to study the subject in more detail and went on to become a trained specialist who has now been practising for 20 years.

By massaging "reflex areas" found in the feet and hands, reflexologists treat diseases in parts of the body related to those areas. Exactly what happens when the reflex areas are massaged is not fully understood and cannot be explained scientifically.

It is thought that illness occurs when "energy channels" in the body become blocked causing damage to different areas and the massage is aimed at destroying these blocks allowing the energy to flow freely again and so heal the damage.

Reflexology is said to have originated in China some 5000 years ago and the ancient Egyptians also used a form of the therapy, as shown in tomb wall paintings. Around 1913 the therapy was introduced to the West and over the years since then has become

increasingly popular as a form of medicine that does not require the use of drugs or instruments.

After demonstrating that areas on the palms of the hands correspond to areas of the body, Tracey suggested members try the technique on each other, which they proceeded to do very enthusiastically, as many aching body parts needed relief!

Leaflets were distributed on the subject and a vote of thanks was given by president Doreen Clare.

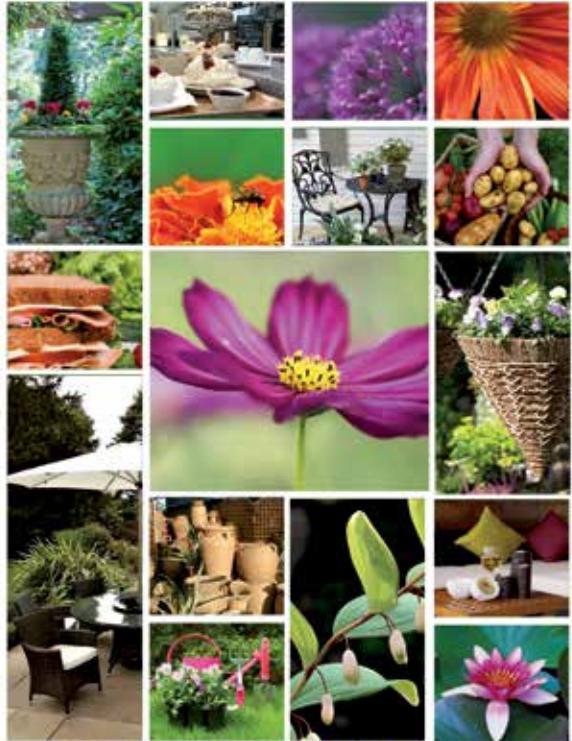
The competition was won by Nicky Adams, with Anne Tansey second and Louise Geekie, third.



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Awards for 'ArcAngels'

CULCHETH'S "ArcAngels" have received awards for their work in helping to tackle alcohol-related crime and disorder.

They are the pub and club landlords and licensees who are in the front line in the battle.

Mayor Cllr Peter Carey presented them with certificates in a ceremony at Warrington Town Hall.

The ArcAngel initiative brings together police, the borough council and local licensees to tackle the problems of alcohol-related crime and disorder, underage drinking and alcohol-related incidents, in order to promote a safer environment for customers of local pubs, clubs, bars and restaurants.

Premises receiving certificates on this occasion were The Cherry Tree, The Culcheth Arms, Culcheth Sports Club and The Pack Horse.

Other premises which have signed-up for the scheme in Culcheth so far are The Common Room, Soprano's Restaurant, Don Luigi Restaurant, The Spice Lounge Bar and Restaurant, Thai Paragon Bar and Restaurant and the Raven Inn.

The ArcAngel initiative seeks to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and improve health by encouraging responsible drinking and discouraging binge drinking and drinking in public places.

It aims to give recognition to venues that adopt good practice and encourage others to follow their lead and targets hotspot locations and prolific and persistent offenders of alcohol-related violent crime.

It also aims to improve care and support for victims and witnesses of alcohol-related violent crime and to help people feel safer and reduce negative perceptions during a night out.

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Introduction to Creative Writing On this five week course you will learn basic techniques to get started with writing creatively in both prose and poetry styles. Starting on Tuesday 22nd April, 6.30pm - 8.30pm.

Cooking Around the World On this four week course Chef Paul Ratcliffe will guide you as you create a range of cultural foods. Starting on Tuesday 22nd April, 6.30pm - 9pm. A cost of £15 for materials applies to this course.

Basic Computer Skills This five week course will give you the skills needed to type a letter, access the internet, send e-mails and more! Starting on Tuesday 22nd April, 6.30pm - 8.30pm.

Sew Crafty On this five week course you will learn how to create and craft fabric gifts, decorations for the home and fashion accessories using a variety of fabrics and hand sewing techniques. Starting on Wednesday 23rd April, 6.30pm - 8.30pm. A cost of £15 for materials applies to this course.

Wedding Floristry This 5 week course will introduce you to various wedding floristry techniques to enable you to create your own wedding floral arrangements. Starting on Wednesday 23rd April, 6.30pm - 8.30pm. A cost of £15 for materials applies to this course.

Holistic Therapies Relax and unwind while learning new skills in Holistic Therapy on this five week course. Starting on Thursday 24th April, 6.30pm - 8.30pm.

Art & Design On this five week course you will learn a number of art and design techniques and learn about contemporary artists. Starting on Thursday 24th April, 6.30pm - 8.30pm. A cost of £15 for materials applies to this course.

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Road repairs come to Culcheth

LONG awaited road repairs are set to come to Culcheth and Croft.

Common Lane, Hob Hey Lane and the junction of Wigshaw Lane in Culcheth are to benefit from resurfacing, along with additional works on Stone Pit Lane, Kenyon Lane and Heath Lane in Croft.

Local councillors Matt Smith and Chirs Vobe are delighted by Warrington Council's commitment to finally place these areas in their forward programme of repairs. They say that they are amongst the areas worst affected by pot holes and defects, and the four-week programme of works will ensure that these problems are improved

at last.

Cllr Smith said: "Thanks to investment from the Labour-run Council, Common Lane and Hob Hey Lane will now benefit from resurfacing, and the appalling damage to the junction with Wigshaw Lane will finally be addressed.

"I have campaigned forcefully on the need for improved repairs to our roads and pavements. Patch up jobs just aren't good enough, which is why we as local councillors have been determined to make sure that our villages get their fair share of

An oak with a tall story – that's true!



TALL oaks from little acorns grow... so wrote the newspaper editor and poet David Everett (1770-1830).

But a fine oak which has been growing for more than 40 years on land off Warrington Road, Culcheth is not only growing taller...it has an interesting story behind it.

In the autumn of 1970, David and Catherine Poole, of Clifton Avenue, Culcheth went to stay with friends at Wantage, Oxfordshire. While there, they collected a few acorns, intending to grow a bonsai tree.

When they returned home, they planted one acorn in a pot on the

kitchen window ledge. However, as it showed no sign of life after several months, they threw it out into the garden.

The following spring it started to grow...and grow. Eventually it became a fine oak – but rather too close to the house.

Mr and Mrs Poole were reluctant to chop it down so contacted the parish council who agreed to replant the tree on a piece of their land in Warrington Road where it flourished and still stands today.

Mrs Poole said: "The interesting thing is that the tree first appeared the same spring that our son, Michael, was born.

"Michael now works as a scientist at Harwell – and lives in Wantage."

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Fashion fund-raiser

PINK Cow Boutique in Culcheth is holding a fashion show on March 20 from 7pm at the Common Room in Culcheth in aid of Breakthrough Breast Cancer.

Culcheth and Croft - at last!

the funding available.

"I am also delighted that, following the works carried out in May and June last year, Stone Pit Lane, Heath Lane and Kenyon Lane in Croft will also benefit from further improvements."



Cllrs Smith and Vobe inspecting the damage to Wigshaw Lane – which is soon to be repaired!

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Dining Out with ^{Culcheth} Life

at the China Rose by Gary Skentelbery

IF you know anyone who has fallen out of love with Chinese food - the China Rose in Culcheth is definitely the place to re-educate them.

Having become a fan of Indian food in the past couple of years, Chinese restaurants have been off the radar for a while - but following a recent trip to the China Rose I have fallen back in love with the food delights of oriental cuisine.

Quality

Run by Matthew and his friendly team the restaurant isn't big on size - but it is certainly big on food and I don't mean the size of the portions - but the quality of the taste.

We opted for the banquet option A which including drinks averaged out at around £25 per head, offering excellent value for money.

While chicken and sweet corn soup can often be bland and full of corn flower, the soup was well blended, very tasty and accompanied by two types of prawn crackers!

Tasty

The crispy combination consisted of tasty salt and pepper ribs, spring rolls and prawn toast - again with two different dips.

For our main courses we opted for beef and green peppers, chicken curry, chicken and cashew nuts and sweet and sour chicken.

All dishes were well presented and

full of flavour.

We could have opted for an ice cream dessert - but everyone declined politely, well satisfied with

what we had eaten.

In conclusion the China Rose offers high quality good value food and is well worth a visit - made even better value if you make use of the £10 off voucher in this month's edition of *Culcheth Life* magazine. (See below).



China Rose Restaurant

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Open Evening for Fertility and Gynaecology

REPRODUCTIVE Health Group are delighted to welcome anyone with an interest in women's health to their Open Evening at the Centre for Reproductive Health, Daresbury Park, on Wednesday March, 19 6.30pm - 8.30pm.

The team of consultants, specialist nurses, embryologists, counsellors and complementary therapists will be on hand to provide the latest information on the full range of fertility treatments, investigations and diagnostics, plus common gynaecological conditions including endometriosis, polycystic ovary syndrome, fibroids, menstrual disorders, menopause, urogynaecology and recurrent miscarriage.

The Centre for Reproductive Health, conveniently located two minutes from Junction 11 of the M56, is the North West's newest assisted conception centre offering the most up to date technologies and clinical facilities. For more information please see www.reproductivehealthgroup.co.uk.

To reserve places at the Open Evening, please email aekersley@reproductivehealthgroup.co.uk or book online at www.reproductivehealthgroup.co.uk

Free parking and refreshments provided.



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Tax on residential properties – the goalposts move again!

There have been various changes to tax rules applying to residential properties over the last 12 months. We haven't got space here to cover them all but we wanted to highlight the most recent change which applies to Principal Private Residence PPR relief – it could catch you out!

PPR exempts an individual's residence from capital gains tax (CGT) on its sale provided it has been occupied by the individual as his/her main residence. For some time now there has been what's called a 'final period exemption' which basically means the final 3 years' ownership of a property that was your residence at

some point, are automatically treated as exempt from CGT whether you lived there or not.

From 6th April 2014 the final period exemption will be reduced from 3 years to 18 months.

The relief was originally intended to improve employee mobility by not penalising people for moving home for work purposes and not being able to sell their old property quickly. Unfortunately there has been much publicised abuse of this fairly generous exemption, notably by MPs, and HMRC have been keen to tighten up on this area.

That means if you moved house recently and couldn't

sell your old home or were considering renting it out in the short term, you may need to rethink to ensure you maximise your tax relief.

If you would like to discuss any of the above issues then please contact Sarah Salton on 01925 761600.



Sarah Salton

The Styles Files are provided by Styles & Co, if you would like further information call 01925 761600

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School celebrates Green Flag award

ST Lewis' RC Primary School, Croft, held a 'Green Day' to celebrate winning a Green Flag.

Pupils, parents and staff were delighted the school had been recognised as an Eco-School, following a visit by the Eco-Schools Assessors in December.

Year One teacher Mrs Sandie Taylor said the prestigious award had been received as a result of the continued dedication of members of the School Council and the Eco-Schools co-ordinator Mrs Wendy Povey.

The "Green Day" gave pupils a chance to show off their environmental projects.



Dog grooming studio approved

PLANNING chiefs have given the green light to a plan for a dog grooming studio in the garden of a semi-detached house at Culcheth.

Members of Warrington Borough Council's planning committee visited the site of the application in Prestwich Avenue, Culcheth – and then decided there was nothing wrong with the application.

Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council had lodged an objection to the scheme.

But there was no objection from neighbours and officers recommended the scheme be approved.

The committee was told there was currently no outbuilding in the garden, but planning consent had been given for one last year and the current application added the business use.

Members of the parish council pointed out they indicated last year that they would oppose any business use in the building.

They argued that a dog grooming business would be an inappropriate use, affecting the amenity of neighbours because of the noise of barking dogs. Parking provision was inadequate in a narrow, residential road with no pavement and only a small turning head.

But the committee decided there was plenty of room for parking and that a small-scale business could be accommodated without causing undue harm to highway safety or residential amenity.

Reader's letter

Send your correspondence to: The Editor,
Culcheth Life, New Media Centre,
Old Road, Warrington WA4 1AT
or email: info@culchethlife.com

Let's make our village more attractive

Frank Hughes, Culcheth

Having lived in the village for many years, and supported many ideas to improve our community I decided that it's about time I thought of something myself!

With parking being awful and traffic none stop, I feel it's time we slowed down and made our village green more attractive and useable !!

Let's imagine a beautiful' Band stand 'in the middle surrounded by pretty flower beds, benches and spots where one can relax and appreciate what a village green is for!

A place were people young and old can appreciate a few moments of rest and pleasure (when the Band Stand is a live with Music) a wonderful dream can be realised with your help and support!

A plea to the people of Culcheth! For a fund raising campaign that I feel sure would welcomed!

I like many others would be happy to get involved in making this happen!

Ps. It could also help the council in that it would make sense to extend the car parking area (across from the coop. The parade!) easing up an existing issue. Our village needs this kind of development, not the others that create more "issues and problems".

Thank you, Frank Hughes.



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TV extra braves the elements

TV extra John Noughton gave a fascinating insight into his show business adventures at the monthly meeting of Newchurch WI.

President Sylvia Brown thanked some brave members and their guest speaker who had battled their way through stormy conditions to reach the Parish Hall.

During his talk "So You Could Be An Extra" John took up his new career following early retirement from the Post Office and voluntary work with his wife at Dunham Massey. This work involved portraying Victorian "characters" for schoolchildren. While still involved at Dunham John also joined a Wigan dramatic group and finally joined an agency.

After photos and measurements were sent to casting agencies work assignments began. Over the last few years he has appeared in TV series and plays and films, often for only a few seconds. He explained the hierarchy of the extra's world - crowd scenes pay least, "support artists" appear to talk and get more money and a "named part" (Featured Support Artist) pays best.

The free meals are always good but hours are spent standing around. He has enjoyed meeting famous actors and directors and other extras and crew members. One special job was a TV commercial for toast (product of Irwin's, a famous Northern Irish bakery).

John was a "dancing granddad" complete with grandma, doing a dance routine in a rented living room in Chorlton.

They had to catch toast slices as they danced! John is also very involved with Wigan Little Theatre and after Paddy Poulter gave the vote of thanks he urged members to support all local drama groups.

One sad announcement was of the death of Vicky Selway.

New councillor appointed

LOCAL resident Dave Robb has been co-opted as a member of Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council.

Cllr Robb was unanimously appointed to the council following the departure of Dr Eddy Estlin, who has stepped down for health reasons.

Tributes were paid to Dr Estlin for his community-minded work and his contribution to health and issues affecting young people in the villages.

Cllr Robb lives in the village with his family, and currently works for the North West Ambulance Service.

He will represent the Glazebury and Mee Brow ward, alongside Cllr Angela Duncombe.

Cllr Robb said: "I am delighted to have the opportunity to serve my local community on the parish council. I am looking forward to rolling up my sleeves and getting stuck in, working alongside Cllr Duncombe, Chris Vobe and Matt Smith on the issues that matter to people in Glazebury and Mee Brow."

The new councillor has already identified a number of priorities to take forward over the coming months, including progressing the Glazebury Play Area project.

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Works Commencing: 24 March 2014
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Working Hours: 9:15am to 3:15pm

Essential Roadworks

Motorists, Residents and Businesses are advised that major road works to resurface large sections of COMMON LANE, HOB HEY LANE and WIGSHAW LANE in Culcheth, are programmed to commence in March 2014 and will take up to 5 weeks to complete.

Phase 1 - Hob Hey Lane 1

Phase 2 - Hob Hey Lane 2

Phase 3 - Common Lane



Daily Road Closures between 9:15am and 3:15pm, Monday to Friday, will be used to allow resurfacing of the roads.

Alternative Routes: The alternative route will be as follows.

Phase 1 Hob Hey Lane 1 - Wigshaw Lane, Mustard Lane, Heath Lane, Kenyon Lane, Wilton Lane and Brosely Lane

Phase 2 Hob Hey Lane 2 - Mustard Lane, Heath Lane, Kenyon Lane, Wilton Lane, Brosely Lane and Common Lane

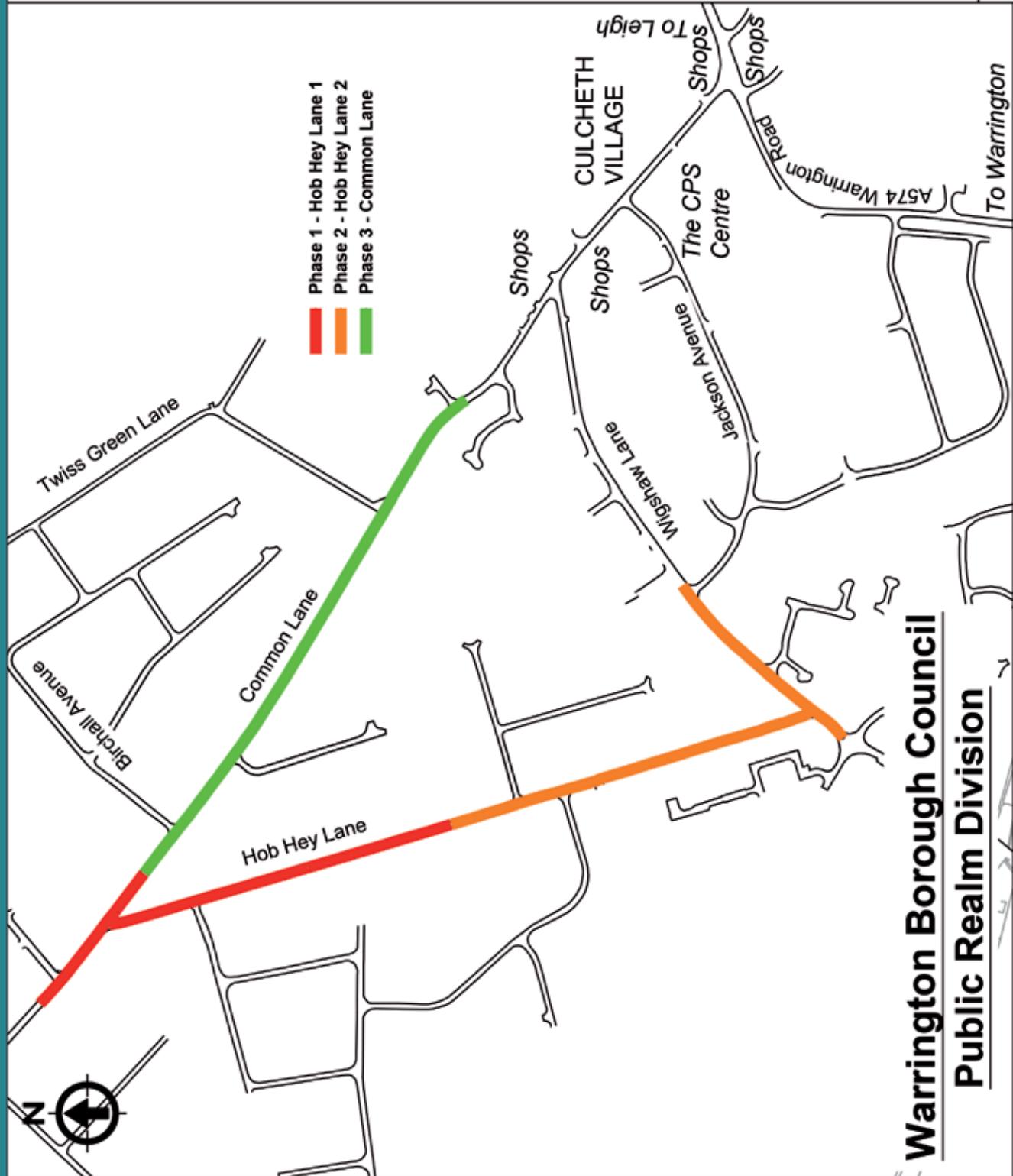
Phase 3 Common Lane - Hob Hey Lane and Wigshaw Lane

Pedestrian access will be maintained at all times during progress of the works.

Vehicular access will be under the control of the contractor as directed on site.

Cones, barriers and signs are there for a reason - to protect our workers from danger and to keep the public safe. We urge drivers to pay close attention to safety when driving near roadworks.

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Warrington Borough Council
Public Realm Division

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David Boyer
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For further information
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