

Culcheth Life

Magazine

ISSUE 251 | JULY 2024
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**Honorary Freeman
for local media founder**

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It was an extremely proud moment for our family when my father David was made Honorary Freeman of Warrington.

When I entered the family business as a 15-year-old Culcheth High School pupil, learning the trade in my school holidays, before joining full-time at 16, he set high standards for me to follow - with a work ethic like no other - and is still working part-time approaching his 87th birthday!

As well as hard working he is also the most modest man I have ever met and will be wondering why he has been honoured for doing his job. I had to conceal the honour from him until the last minute and told him he was coming to the Parr Hall to see me collect an award.

He was completely shellshocked by the honour - but one in my opinion richly deserved, after dedicating a huge part of his life to providing free community news for all in a balanced and independent

way. He has almost 70 years of local news reporting experience across Warrington. He started his career with the Knutsford Guardian, Warrington Guardian and Lancashire Evening Post, before setting up his own local media organisation, Orbit News, more than 50 years ago, while living in Croft, which is now a third generation family business.

Since launching our Warrington-based titles, he has covered hundreds - if not thousands - of community features and stories. His journalism has supported many community and voluntary organisations to receive profile across Warrington.

During the Covid-19 pandemic,


Warrington Worldwide also established its Legacy Project, investing grants into local groups and charities.

What many people don't know is that both of us were nearly not here to tell the tale, when almost 30 years ago he suffered a cricketing injury playing at Glazebury Cricket Club that almost cost him his life, while I almost died after a hospital operation went wrong - both within six months of each other.

So if you ever wonder why I believe in fate - you now know why.

Congratulations Dad- we lived to tell the tale and none of it would have been possible without the support of mum!







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Honorary Freeman honour for local media founder

CO-founder of Culcheth Life and Warrington Worldwide, David Skentelbery, was made Honorary Freeman of Warrington at the town's Parr Hall.

David, a former resident of Croft, is a recognised champion of providing free community news for all, across the current local titles of Warrington Worldwide, Lymm Life and Culcheth Life.

He has almost 70 years of local news reporting experience across Warrington. He started his career with the Knutsford Guardian before moving on to the Warrington Guardian and then the Lancashire Evening Post, before setting up his own local media organisation,

Orbit News, more than 50 years ago.

Twenty five years ago, along with son Gary, he set up Warrington Worldwide, the borough-wide free magazine and news website.

Since arriving in Warrington in 1960 David has covered hundreds – if not thousands – of stories. His journalism has helped many community and voluntary organisations to receive profile across Warrington.

Mayor of Warrington, Cllr Steve

Wright, said: "David has been an exceptional servant to Warrington through decades of dedicated reporting. He has put countless community causes and groups on the map, helping to shine a light on many successes within the borough."

David's son and Warrington Worldwide co-founder, Gary Skentelbery, said: "It is an absolute honour to see my father receive this recognition. He is probably the most modest person I have ever met in my life and will be wondering why he has been given this award for 'doing his job'."

"He has helped to change

the face of the media, spending thousands of hours working in the council chambers over many years, ensuring local people knew what was happening in the corridors of power.

"His invaluable support, working behind the scenes, in the engine room, enabled me to get out and about in the community, ensuring the people of Warrington get a free, independent news source, seven days a week, 365 days of the year. None of this would have been possible without my father's dedication and commitment to Warrington."



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Croft Parish Council News



Valerie Allen MBE
(Chair)
vallen@croftparishcouncil.gov.uk



Carol Benson
(Vice Chair)
cbenson@croftparishcouncil.gov.uk

The local elections in May saw some changes to the Councillors on Croft Parish Council.

Cllr Keith Bland, Cllr Paul Campbell and Cllr Gary Farnworth decided not to stand after several years serving on the Parish Council. Their contributions over the years to the village are acknowledged.

We welcomed three new Councillors, namely Cheyvonne Bower (LAB), Carol Benson (CON) and Sue Ward (CON). We look forward to working with them over the next few years.

Councillors Norman Partington, Valerie Allen and Philip Sharpe remain on the Parish, with Cllr Allen taking over the Chairmanship from Cllr Sharpe at the May meeting.



Cheyvonne Bower
cbower@croftparishcouncil.gov.uk



Norman Partington
npartington@croftparishcouncil.gov.uk

Cllr Allen said, "It is a great pleasure to take over the Chairmanship of Croft Parish Council, something I have had the privilege of doing in the past. I look forward to working with all Councillors for the benefit of the village".

A small ceremony was held at the Memorial Hall War Memorial to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings on the 6th June, attended by members of the public and councillors, a wreath was laid by the Chair Cllr Valerie Allen, who read a tribute to those who had sacrificed their lives on that day.



Lt Col QM (Retd) David Atkinson RE with his dog, Eva, Cllr Val Allen (Chair) and Cllr Carol Benson (Vice Chair)



Philip Sharpe
psharpe@croftparishcouncil.gov.uk



Susan Ward
sward@croftparishcouncil.gov.uk

Croft Carnival Committee is busy organising the annual Carnival, with the whole village looking forward to this spectacular event on the 6th July 2024

Residents may contact Croft Parish Council's Clerk on Email: clerk@croftparishcouncil.gov.uk
The Parish Council issues updates and information on Twitter: @croftparish
Facebook: @croftparishcouncil Web: www.croftparishcouncil.gov.uk

Advertiser's announcement

Freedom Fibre brings the future of broadband technology to Culcheth

For the past three years, Freedom Fibre has been building a full-fibre broadband network in Culcheth and its surrounding areas, bringing lightning-fast broadband technology to homes and businesses. Now, approximately 5,000 homes and businesses can access speeds of up to 1000Mbps, with a network that is 10 times faster and 5 times more reliable than any previous network.*

In addition to building the infrastructure, Freedom Fibre has partnered with over 10 internet service providers (ISPs), including TalkTalk, Fusion Fibre Group, Squirrel Internet, and Yayzi Broadband. These partners offer competitive packages on Freedom Fibre's network, catering to various budgets and bandwidth needs. These partnerships are a crucial step in providing Culcheth residents with more broadband choices.

In providing this network in Culcheth, Freedom Fibre has been working tirelessly to replace the existing copper network with full-fibre, actively working towards the UK government's target of having gigabit-capable broadband available nationwide by 2030.

The retirement of the old copper network has been long overdue. Copper signals deteriorate over distance and are affected by environmental factors, resulting in reduced speeds and an unreliable connection. In contrast, full-fibre networks (FTTP) eliminate copper, using fibre optic technology

delivered directly to homes and businesses. This ensures unmatched reliability and speed. With many UK areas still relying on copper, even through standard fibre (FTTC) networks, it is crucial to replace these with full-fibre technology to futureproof homes and businesses as copper is phased out.

Beyond futureproofing, a 2018 report by Regeneris** highlighted several benefits of a full-fibre broadband network:

- Increased productivity through improved connectivity.
- A competitive advantage for businesses.
- New employment opportunities, both directly through the network build and indirectly through improved business outputs.
- Enhanced digital inclusion by providing access to essential resources like banking, healthcare, and education.

In addition to providing the above benefits, Freedom Fibre is dedicated to working with local communities to offer world-class broadband technology while

supporting the social, economic, and environmental goals of the towns. One example is the Freedom Fund, Freedom Fibre's community fund that has granted thousands of pounds to Culcheth non-profit and community groups for their good and green initiatives.

Residents not yet on the network can view our partners' full range of packages and enhance their connectivity by registering on

Freedom Fibre's website www.freedomfibre.com/connect.

*Based on data from Ofcom reports 'UK home broadband performance, measurement period November 2020' and 'Building a full-fibre future 2018'.

**Regeneris, *The Economic Impact of Full Fibre Infrastructure in 100 UK Towns and Cities*, 2018

Afternoon tea to support breast cancer sufferers

A SPECIAL afternoon tea is to be held at the Scout Hut in Jackson Avenue, Culcheth on Wednesday, July 31 to raise money to support people affected by breast cancer.

It is being organised by CanCare, a group set up by local resident Karen Hill who knows from personal experience what the word "Cancer" can mean – especially to a person receiving that diagnosis and the families supporting them.

Knowing how that word can change a person's world, Karen had the idea to organise a group coffee morning once a week at the Scout Hut and that is held on Wednesdays, from 10.30am to 1.30pm.

The group has grown and the discussions grow with it, bringing experiences from far and wide.

The special afternoon tea on July 31, 11.30am to 2pm will widen the group's activities – and everyone is invited!

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All the fun of the fair at Birchwood

AFTER a rallying cry for volunteers it was on with the show at the annual Birchwood Carnival which included all the fun of the fair.

The event at Birchwood Park started with a procession led by the local Batido Rio drummers and included "Pedal Power vs Parkour," an All Breeds dog show run by the Greyhound Trust Merseyside and Cheshire. Other activities included a fancy dress competition, Northern Starr Dance, Sankey Gems Morris Dancing, fairground attractions, circus workshops, donkey rides, magic shows and a wide variety of charity stalls.

There were also craft activities, a drum workshop and local history displays.

Sponsors included Birchwood Town Council, Warrington Borough Council, Friends of Birchwood Forest Park, Birchwood Lions, Your Housing Group, Sellafield Ltd, Orano, Birchwood Park, Birchwood Shopping Centre, Buddha Group, PPL PRS Ltd and Aldi.

Pictures: John Hopkins



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Wood Carnival



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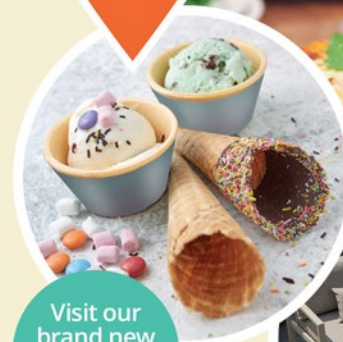
- July is the month for hedges - newly planted hedges will need watering regularly and if they are straggly they can be lightly trimmed to encourage growth
- Watering is crucial this month so remember to look after your containers and baskets
- You can still sow crops such as carrots, turnips and fast maturing salad crops
- Remember to sit down and enjoy what you have created - an ideal time to relax with friends, a glass of wine and a barbecue!

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Croft pupils meet rail consultancy experts

PUPILS at Croft Primary School welcomed professionals from independent rail consultancy SLC Rail for an inspiring visit.

Thomas Coon, regional lead for the North and Emma Massey, project manager, captivated the youngsters with presentations on the world of civil engineering relating the examples to local infrastructure projects.

Addressing 90 children from years 2, 4 and 5 over two interactive sessions, Emma and Thomas shared their expertise and passion for rail projects, particularly those transforming the North of England, including the development of the nearby Golborne station.

Thomas Coon said: "Croft Primary School is situated in an area which has significant opportunities for rail development, including the proposed Northern Powerhouse Rail route between Liverpool and Manchester Piccadilly.

"Improved connectivity in Warrington will be a game-changer for this generation, creating new job opportunities and fostering economic growth. Engaging with young people early on is crucial to spark their interest in civil engineering and show them the diverse opportunities and career paths available in the rail industry."

The older students from years 4 and 5 also had a unique opportunity to channel their creativity by designing their own railway stations. Their designs conveyed an instinct for understanding what a rail passenger needs, such as ensuring there were retail outlets

and spaces for EV cars and scooters.

Emma Massey said: "We thoroughly enjoyed our time with the children, helping them realise

that their hobbies can translate into exciting careers in civil engineering. Whether it's ecology for animal lovers or engineering for Minecraft enthusiasts, there's a discipline for everyone in this field."

Head teacher Anne Mains said:

"Visits like these can change our students' lives by broadening their horizons and introducing them to real-world professionals.

"The children thoroughly enjoyed their time with Tom and Emma."





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Thriller enthusiasts to get a chance to chat with authors

THRILLER enthusiasts will get a chance to chat with two local best-selling authors on Saturday, July 13.

David Costa, from Culcheth and Rob Parker, from Croft, will be at Forget-Me-Not Books in the CPS shopping centre, Culcheth from 11am to 2pm.

A selection of their books will be available to buy.

David Costa is the pen-name of former local councillor Paul Campbell, who in an earlier life was a police officer who spent many years working in counter-terrorism.

He had always wanted to write a book and used his knowledge of the shadowy world of counter-terrorism to produce a trilogy – "Tested by

Fire", "Outside the Shadows" and "Light of the Sun" which are all available as paperbacks and as e-books.

If you wonder where he got his pen-name from, it came to him while he was enjoying a drink in a certain coffee shop!

Rob Parker is the author of the Ben Bracken thrillers, the Thirty Miles Trilogy and the standalone Crook's Hollow and Blackstoke.

In addition to writing full time – mainly crime writing – he organises author events across the country.

Passionate about inspiring a love of the written word in young people, he spends a lot of time in schools across the North West, encouraging literacy, storytelling and creative-writing.

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Plans to convert a five-bedroom house into children's care home are opposed

PLANS to convert a five-bedroom family home into a children's care home in an isolated rural area are being opposed by local residents.

Police have also said they could not support the application by Care 4 Every Children at The Oaks, in Holly Bush Lane, Rixton-with-Glazebrook.

Most of the objections relate to the possibility of increased traffic on a narrow, unadopted lane where there are no pavements or street lighting.

But objectors also point out that Holly Bush Lane is off the busy A57 close to an accident "hot spot".

The application is to change the use of a large house standing in its own grounds into a care home for up to four children.

There would also be three care staff and a manager on-site, with

two care staff on duty overnight.

The applicants say there is parking for around 10 cars in a spacious gravel courtyard area and the property has its own entrance through private gates leading to secluded private grounds.

Children living at the property would be unable to live at home due to unfortunate circumstances such as abuse and neglect. The care provided would be "as close to a family environment as possible."

The children would cook meals with the adult, go on activities of an evening, such as cinema trips, restaurants, days out, etc, and have the childhood they deserved.

They would be encouraged to help around the house with chores, making meals and gardening, etc. They would be in the 8-18 age range.

There would be no material change made to the property which

would retain its current layout and use as a family home. There would be no increase in traffic and staff would be recruited locally.

The proposals are currently being considered by Warrington Borough Council planners.



Community pub asks local people what they want

GLAZEBURY'S community pub, The Raven, is continuing to consult with local people to make sure it provides what they want.

A recent example involved developing a new menu.

Spokesperson Peter Sturman said: "The Raven was set up according to what our community said they wanted from a community pub.

"We have continued to consult with and listen to feedback from our customers and shareholders – a recent example being the new menu.

"This was in response to feedback from diners over recent months. However we took it a step further by trailing proposed new menus for a week and inviting diners to complete a questionnaire

on their experience.

"That allowed the chefs to adjust and tweak the menu according to the specific feedback. It has been a lot of work but very much worth it.

"Of course it doesn't stop there. We must always listen to what our customers are telling us. Our views, tastes and preferences can change over time - and The Raven will always move with the times.

"Last month we introduced our volunteer's initiative. This is really taking off, helping the Raven to maintain its high standards, whilst allowing those who are able, to become even more involved in the Raven."

Anyone wishing to become involved as a volunteer can contact the Raven on info@theraveninn.org



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Special badges for High School readers

CULCETH High School's "Silver Readers" - a group of Year 8 students who read to local senior citizens - have received special badges to mark the first anniversary of the group starting up.

The badges have been presented by Silver Stories, a charity-based project which aims to provide enriching reading experiences for young people by connecting them with older members of the community.

Student "Silver Readers" telephone older people - "Silver Listeners" - by telephone every week and read to them.

It can be anything from an extract from a book to a poem.

The experience helps the youngsters enhance their reading fluency and accuracy and also combats the loneliness and isolation

experienced by some older people. Visitors to the school from the local library service were really impressed when they saw the Silver Readers in action.

Over the last 12 months the group has grown.

Latest reading volunteer is Billy McLinden.

He is looking forward to meeting his "listener" and already choosing a text he would like to share.

A school spokesperson said: "Our Silver Readers are making the school very proud and are wonderful ambassadors for the school."



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WI members hear about working men's club

THE monthly meeting of Sundial WI, Culcheth, began with a minute's silence in memory of Ruth Briggs, a member of both the original WI's in Culcheth.

The speaker, Gary Conley, began a lively account of the Working Mens' Clubs in the North West. Gary, a former miner, had several career changes, including TV work and rock music but the clubs, were the main focus of "Ay up! The pies have come!".

The clubs began about 150 years ago in Northern England, Wales, the Midlands and Australia and they were run by volunteer committees who had to learn as they went along. Gary had many tales about the members-grabbing the best seats for friends by leaving drinks there, booing entertainers they didn't like, but also organising family days out. He sang in gaps

between his stories and lots of members sang along with him.

But there was one sad note - the number of clubs has fallen sharply with changed fashions in entertainment. Phyllis Longson thanked him for an afternoon of fun and he went to judge the competition (Anything Lancashire). He chose Margaret Jones and Marian Simpson as winner and runner-up.

President Eileen Griffiths gave an account of her time in London as a delegate at the National AGM. She thanked Margaret Fearn for the table flowers and greeted seven "birthday girls".

WI's D Day celebration

MEMBERS of Glazebrook WI arrived to find the room at the village hall decorated with flags, for their D Day Celebration Tea and entertainment.

Cream teas, with scones, jam and clotted cream were much appreciated and there was entertainment from The Dukes of Lonbarn, a ukulele band. Members were invited to sing along.

Details were given of a trip to Lytham with Woolsto WI and it was announced that the craft group were having a "bring your own" day at their next meeting with lunch, if required, at the Red Lion.

Notice was given of the village carnival in September.



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