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Editor's Opinion



THERE are some local success stories that deserve to be shouted about from the rooftops, and the news that Culcheth businesswoman Holly Pirrie has been crowned Ms Great Britain is certainly one of them.

As editor of Culcheth Life, it gives me enormous pleasure to congratulate Holly on this fantastic achievement, which is the culmination of more than 20 years of hard work, dedication and passion for the pageant industry, alongside running her successful Dress Studio business right here in our village.

Holly was crowned Ms Great Britain 2026/27 at a ceremony in Leicester on October 16, an achievement she can rightly be proud of.

But behind the crown is a businesswoman who has spent years building her reputation, supporting others and making a real contribution to the local business community.

Running your own business is never easy. Anyone who has taken the plunge into self-employment knows it takes determination, resilience, long hours and a willingness to keep going when things get tough.

Holly's Dress Studio in Culcheth has become a familiar name for anyone looking for prom, party and pageant wear. Meanwhile, her involvement in the pageant world spans more than two decades, including organising national pageants in the North West.

It is a wonderful example of how local entrepreneurs can build something substantial through hard work, expertise and a genuine passion for what they do.

There is also a personal reason why I am particularly pleased to see Holly receive this recognition.

Through her Dress Studio business, Holly has been a valued advertiser in our sister publication **Warrington Worldwide** for many years. That continued support means a great deal to us.

Local independent magazines such as ours rely on businesses that recognise the importance of supporting their community and keeping local publications alive. Advertising is not simply about buying space on a page; it helps sustain a local voice that celebrates our people, businesses, schools, charities and community life.

So, from all of us, thank you, Holly, for your loyalty and support over the years.

It is always a pleasure to see people who have supported us achieve success themselves, and this latest accolade is thoroughly deserved.

Holly's crown is not just a personal triumph. It is another reason for Culcheth to feel proud of the talented, ambitious people who call our village home.

Congratulations, Holly. Enjoy every moment – you have certainly earned it!

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Daten Theatre stage lighting restored thanks to Glazebury musician's generosity

The stage lighting at Culcheth's Daten Theatre has been fully restored thanks to the generosity and expertise of local musician and lighting engineer David Simon.

Following an article in the Culcheth Life magazine a couple of months ago highlighting David's donations of lighting equipment to help bring the theatre's ballroom stage back to life, the final phase of the installation has now been completed.

David, of GlazeburyMusic.uk, donated equipment from his own lighting stock and has worked to install the replacement lights, helping to restore the stage facilities for future productions.

The final part of the work involved replacing the old, worn-out lights at the front of the stage. This required scaffolding to provide safe access to the remaining fittings high above the stage.

With the final lights now in place, the installation is complete, and both the stage lighting and its control equipment have been restored.

The work represents a welcome boost for the Daten Theatre, helping ensure the venue can continue to provide a stage for performances and productions for the local community.

David said he wanted to provide an update following the earlier coverage in Culcheth Life, confirming that the project had now been completed.

His donation of equipment, combined with the time and technical expertise he has contributed to the installation, has helped breathe new life into the theatre's ballroom stage.

The project is another example of how local people can make a real difference to community facilities by giving their time, skills and resources.

Thanks to David's generosity and hard work, the Daten Theatre's stage lighting is now ready for the next production to take centre stage.



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New community "Shed" initiative planned to bring locals together

A new community "Shed" is being planned at Culcheth Sports Club, The Daten, with the aim of bringing local people together while helping maintain and improve the community facility.

Organisers say the inclusive initiative will provide a practical and social space where residents can work on DIY and woodwork projects, share skills and make a hands-on contribution to the club.

The group has registered with the UK Men's Sheds Association (UKMSA), giving the project access to national guidance, safety frameworks and potential community funding opportunities.

Despite its association with the national Men's Sheds network, the Culcheth initiative will operate as an open Community Shed for both men and women, with people of all abilities encouraged to get involved.

As well as providing a workshop for individual projects, one of the main aims will be to support The Daten itself.

Members could take on practical jobs around the site, including repairing benches and court equipment, refurbishing outdoor areas and carrying out improvements to shared grounds and facilities.

Organiser John Carrigan said the project could benefit both the people taking part and the wider community.

"The Daten is a vital community asset, and the Shed offers a fantastic double win.

"It provides a relaxed, social workshop where people can work shoulder-to-shoulder and combat isolation, while giving members a hands-on way to take pride in and care for the facilities at the club.

"You don't need to be a seasoned tradesperson to get involved; enthusiasm and a willingness to help out are all that matter."

The project is now looking to establish an informal steering group to help finalise the workshop space, source tools and equipment and explore potential community grants.

Organisers are particularly keen to hear from local residents, tradespeople, club members and people with experience of fundraising or running community organisations.

People may also be able to support the project by donating tools or materials.

Anyone interested in becoming involved with the steering group, offering equipment or finding out more can contact John Carrigan at culchethshed@gmail.com



Croft Parish Council News



Stuart Mann (Chair) smann@croftparishcouncil.gov.uk



Alicia Edwards (Vice Chair) aedwards@croftparishcouncil.gov.uk



Valerie Allen MBE vallen@croftparishcouncil.gov.uk



Cheyvonne Bower cbower@croftparishcouncil.gov.uk



Norman Partington npartington@croftparishcouncil.gov.uk



Philip Sharpe psharpe@croftparishcouncil.gov.uk

It's been another busy couple of months for Croft Parish Council, with planning matters, community events and protecting the character of our village continuing to be priorities.

Turret Hall Farm Development - The Parish Council has formally objected to the proposed development of up to 200 homes at Turret Hall Farm. Our concerns include the loss of Green Belt, increased traffic, road safety, flooding and additional pressure on local infrastructure, particularly around Croft Primary School. We continue to monitor the application closely and ensure residents' concerns are represented as it progresses through the planning process.

Proposed Traveller Transit Site - We are also keeping a close eye on the possibility of a planning application coming forward for a Traveller Transit Site within Croft. As of 14 October, no planning application has been submitted. Should an application come forward, the Parish Council will carefully consider the proposals and their potential impact on Croft and neighbouring communities.

Tritax Intermodal Logistics Park North - Croft Parish Council has attended cross-boundary working group meetings to discuss the proposed Tritax Intermodal Logistics Park North development. Although the main development is outside the parish, there are concerns that soil and spoil excavated from the site could be deposited on land within Croft Parish. This is in addition to wider concerns about increased HGV movements, pressure on local roads and the cumulative impact of major developments across the area. The Parish Council will continue to monitor the proposals closely, particularly any plans involving land within our parish, and ensure Croft's interests are represented as the project progresses.

Working Together on Planning - On 30 September, Croft Memorial Hall hosted a well-attended public meeting bringing together representatives from Croft, Winwick, Burtonwood and Westbrook, and Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Councils to discuss major planning proposals across north Warrington. The meeting gave residents an opportunity to hear about proposed developments, ask questions and understand how they can have their say. While each parish council remains independent and makes its own decisions, there is a shared recognition that development in one area can have a significant impact on neighbouring villages. We believe continuing to work together and share information is increasingly important as further development proposals come forward.

Remembrance Sunday – 8 November - As Remembrance Sunday approaches, Cllr Bower has been organising the display of poppies to honour those who served and sacrificed their lives for our country. We would like to thank Cllr Bower for taking the lead on this important initiative and helping ensure our village continues to remember those who gave so much. The village's Remembrance Sunday service will take place at Christ Church, Croft, on Sunday 8 November. We encourage residents to come together as a community to pay their respects and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Christmas Lights Switch On - Friday 27th November with a reserve date of Friday 4th December. People can gather from 17:45 for the event to start at 18:00.

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

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Twenty years in the making as I Ms Great Britain as she tu

A Culcheth businesswoman with long-standing links to the local community has been crowned Ms Great Britain 2026/27, achieving a lifelong ambition 20 years after first stepping onto the national pageant stage.

Holly Pirrie, owner of The Dress Studio in Culcheth, will celebrate her 40th birthday in December with a national title to her name after being crowned at the Miss Great Britain National Final at Athena in Leicester on Friday, October 16.

The achievement marks a remarkable full-circle moment for Holly, whose pageant journey began at the very same venue back in 2006.

Then, competing as Miss Wigan, she had spent two years trying to qualify for a national final but did not place in her first competition.

Undeterred, she returned in 2007 as Miss Warrington and secured an impressive top-seven finish from a field of 91 contestants.

Now, almost two decades later, she has returned as a wife, mother and successful entrepreneur to claim the Ms Great Britain 2026/27 crown.

In a further twist of fate, Holly even found herself in the same changing room spot she had occupied during the 2007 competition.

Holly runs The Dress Studio, a prom, party and pageant dress boutique based in Culcheth, and has spent more than 20 years working in the pageant industry.

She also organises national beauty pageants in the North West, helping other women pursue their own ambitions in an industry that has played such a significant role in her life.

Her business has long-standing links with the local community and has been a regular advertiser in Warrington Worldwide magazine, supporting the local publication over many years.

Alongside running her business, organising pageants and raising her young family, Holly has now taken on the role of Ms Great Britain, with plans to use her new national platform to champion causes close to her heart.

One of Holly's key priorities during her reign will be encouraging young girls to understand the importance of financial independence and making informed decisions about their futures.

Earlier this year, she hosted her first Independent Girls, Independent Futures workshop in aid of A-Sisterhood, encouraging young girls to develop the confidence and knowledge needed to build independent lives.

As a female entrepreneur and mother, Holly believes financial education should play a greater role in preparing young people for adulthood.

She hopes to expand the workshops throughout her reign, helping the next generation develop the skills and confidence to make their own choices.

Holly also hopes her personal story will inspire women who have experienced setbacks or feel they have not achieved their original ambitions.

Her message is that success does not always happen at the time or in the way people expect — and that dreams can be revisited at any stage of life.

Holly's crowning comes during a successful year for the Miss Great Britain organisation, with the 2026 finalists collectively raising more than £130,000 for Cancer Research UK and A-Sisterhood.

The fundraising effort highlights the charitable work undertaken by contestants alongside their preparations for the competition.

For Holly, whose financial independence workshops have supported A-Sisterhood, the





Holly crowned urns 40

achievement has particular significance.

National Director of Miss Great Britain Saffron Elliott said Holly's journey captured the spirit of the organisation.

"Twenty years ago, she stood on the Athena stage with a dream. Two decades later, she returned as a mother, wife and successful businesswoman, with a wealth of life experience behind her, and achieved something incredibly special," she said.

She added that Holly's commitment to helping young girls understand financial independence and develop confidence in their futures made her a strong ambassador for the title.

Saffron also praised the finalists for raising more than £130,000 for the two charity partners, describing it as a reflection of their dedication and determination.

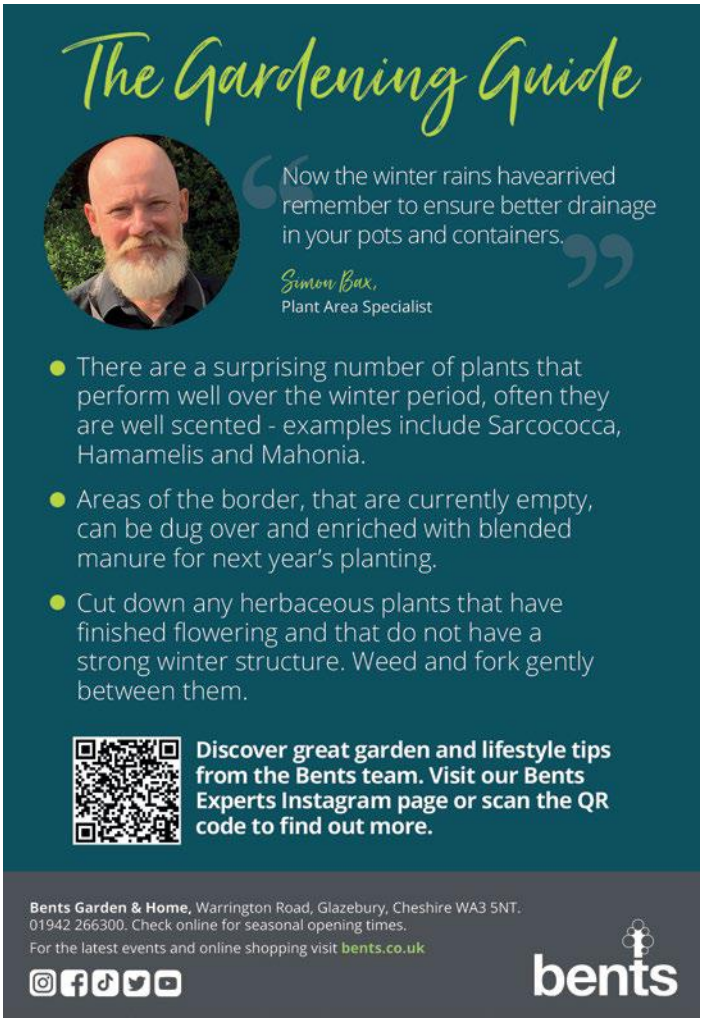
"Holly's journey is a beautiful reminder that dreams don't have an expiry date, and we couldn't be prouder to welcome her as our new Ms Great Britain 2026/27," she added.

Holly will now represent Ms Great Britain throughout 2026/27, continuing her work to empower young girls through financial education while encouraging women of all ages to pursue their ambitions.

Applications for the 2027 competition are now open, with no upper age limit and entries welcomed from mothers and married women.

For further information, visit www.missgreatbritainofficial.co.uk











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Culcheth Scouts create another amazing Remembrance Day display

Scouts from the local Culcheth 19th Warrington Troop have teamed up with Culcheth Methodist Church and local knitting groups to produce a large and colourful Remembrance Day display.

The display is at the local Methodist church on Ellesmere Road and will enable local people to reflect and consider the fallen in wars gone by and those affected by conflict around the world.

It can be seen in the windows of the Methodist church and also spills out onto the lawn under the main window display. This display has been a team effort from the local community with the scouts, aged 10 – 14, taking time and effort to create the amazing display in the Church window.

Local scouts decided to create their display as part of their community commitment and understanding of the impact conflicts have on people, past and present. They have been busy cutting out hundreds of paper poppies and using the knitted ones generously supplied to the Troop by local knitting groups.

Residents of Culcheth can easily visit the display, which is just off Lodge Drive, at the Methodist Church in Ellesmere Road. Please come along and pay your respects and add a poppy or cross if you wish.

Scout Leader Dave Sanderson said: "We are delighted the Methodist Church actively encouraged us to create the display and also the fantastic display created following so much help from our young scout members. I am really proud of them and what they have achieved. This display shows the commitment of our young residents to the village and we really hope you enjoy their hard work."

"Come along and have a look at the display and pause to "Remember them because they gave everything."



Culcheth Library hosts sell-out celebration of the English alphabet

A unique evening combining poetry, music and imagery proved a huge hit when Culcheth Library hosted 'Meet The 26 – A Celebration of the English Alphabet'.

The event, held on Tuesday, September 29, brought together words, music and art for an unusual multimedia performance which had the audience captivated from start to finish.

With the library packed to capacity, guests were taken on a journey through the letters of the English alphabet, exploring the sounds, shapes and meanings of letters and the ways in which they can come alive through poetry.

The performance featured 26 poems by David Horner, each associated with a different letter, accompanied by music and a sequence of vivid images.

Adding to the distinctive atmosphere was a harpsichord, played by David Francis, while Mike Jackson provided the accompanying illustrations.

The combination proved to be something rather different for a local library – and that was exactly what audiences loved about it.

Organisers described the evening as a "huge success", with a full house and guests "totally enamoured" by the performance.

The unusual setting and combination of poetry, music and imagery were particular talking points, with the sight of a harpsichord inside Culcheth Library proving an especially memorable feature.







Make a wish... Christmas has arrived at Bents

Christmas has officially arrived at Bents Garden & Home, with the doors now open to another spectacular festive season.

The Mayor of Warrington, Cllr Sagheer Zaman, recently joined Matthew Bent and crowds of customers to officially open Christmas 2026, unveiling the spectacular displays and festive experiences created by Bents' talented in-house team.

After weeks of planning, designing and creating behind the scenes, customers were given the first opportunity to step into Bents' Christmas wonderland, with this year's displays bringing together a mix of festive inspiration, creativity and plenty of surprises.

The official opening also marked the start of a Christmas season which promises to be one to remember, as Bents prepares to celebrate its 90th anniversary in 2027.

Matthew Bent said: "This Christmas is particularly special for us as we look ahead to our 90th anniversary next year. We're incredibly proud of our family history and of how Bents has evolved over the years, but what makes me most proud is the team we have today and the creativity, passion and care they put into Christmas.

"There's something very special about the moment we officially unveil our displays. So much work goes on behind the scenes to create the experience and after months of planning and preparation, it's great to finally see customers enjoying it."

Following this year's Christmas opening there's another adventure waiting to be discovered when The Magic Lamp in the Hidden Garden – Bents second winter light trail – launches on Friday 20th November.

Visitors will be invited to make a wish and let the adventure begin as they journey through the Hidden Garden, where dazzling lights, theatrical scenes, magical projections and colourful characters bring an Aladdin-inspired story to life.

Back inside the Centre, Bents' popular Winter Food Market, which is now open and offering a wide range of festive favourites, will provide the perfect place to continue the celebrations.

With Christmas now officially open, the countdown to the festive season at Bents can begin, with a packed programme of events and experiences planned throughout November and December, including Father Christmas' Arrival Parade (Wednesday 4th November), festive workshops and family events.

For further details about Christmas at Bents, including all events and The Magic Lamp in the Hidden Garden Light Trail, visit bents.co.uk



Make another wish at Bents and let the adventure begin

Step into a world of wonder as 'The Magic Lamp in the Hidden Garden' brings the adventures of Aladdin to Bents Garden & Home this Christmas.

Following the success of last year's hugely popular Light Trail, Bents Garden & Home is once again inviting visitors to leave the everyday behind and embark on an enchanting journey through its Hidden Garden – and this time, there's a magic lamp waiting to be discovered.

The 'Magic Lamp in the Hidden Garden' promises to transport visitors to a world filled with dazzling lights, theatrical sets, magical projections and atmospheric sounds, all inspired by the timeless tale of Aladdin.

From the moment visitors enter the Hidden Garden, they will be swept into a story filled with imagination, mystery and enchantment. Along the way, they'll discover colourful characters, immersive scenes and spectacular light installations as they follow the magical storytelling adventure.

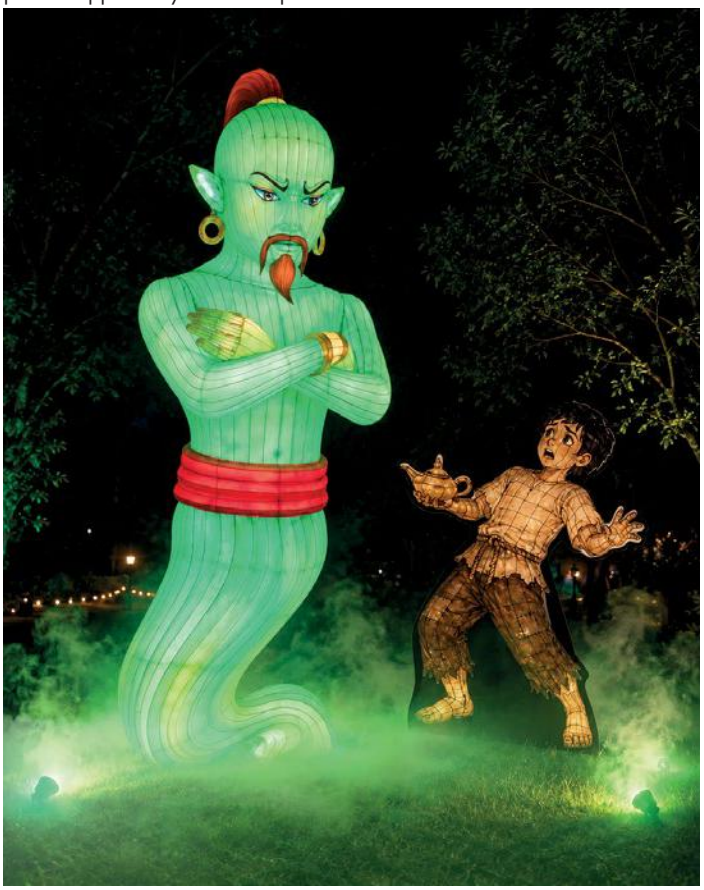
Once again, Bents' Hidden Garden provides the perfect setting. Tucked away behind the Centre's outdoor plant area, this beautiful area of gardens has been carefully developed by Bents over the past 12 years. Following its transformation for last year's first ever Light Trail, the Hidden Garden will shine this Christmas with a completely new story and experience for visitors to discover.

Refreshment stops will offer a selection of hot and cold drinks and delicious Christmas treats, all with a Bents twist, giving visitors the perfect opportunity to soak up the atmosphere before continuing their journey.

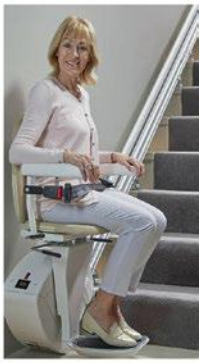
The trail will culminate with a special selfie opportunity, before visitors make their way back into Bents and the ever-popular Winter Food Market and Chalet Bar, where the festive experience can continue.

Following the popularity of last year's first ever and award winning light trail, 'The Magic Lamp in the Hidden Garden' promises to be another spectacular Christmas experience at Bents – bringing together storytelling, lights, theatre and festive fun to create a magical adventure for all ages.

Tickets are now available at bents.co.uk



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Matthew Bent (MD Bents Garden & Home); Jan Bashforth (Cheshire NGS County Organiser), Marian Jones (Lancashire NGS County Organiser), Mark Llewellin (High Sheriff of Greater Manchester), Brian Jones (Lancashire NGS County Organiser) and John Bent.

Bents Garden & Home's John Bent honoured after raising more than £25,000 for charity

A 93-year-old member of the Bent family has been recognised for 34 years of charitable fundraising through opening his beautiful garden to the public.

John Bent, whose family helped establish Bents Garden & Home, has raised more than £25,000 for nursing and caring charities supported by the National Garden Scheme (NGS).

John has opened Weeping Ash Garden, located next to the family's garden centre, to visitors for 34 years as part of the scheme, combining his passion for horticulture with a long-standing commitment to good causes.

His contribution was recently celebrated at a special presentation attended by National Garden Scheme representatives from across the region.

The High Sheriff of Greater Manchester, Mark Llewellin, presented John with a certificate in recognition of his remarkable fundraising achievement.

Also attending were Marian and Brian Jones, NGS County Organisers for Lancashire, Merseyside and Greater Manchester, and Jan Bashforth, NGS County Organiser for neighbouring Cheshire.

Weeping Ash Garden is particularly admired for its winter and spring planting, offering colour, interest and inspiration throughout the seasons.

John and his brother Ron took over the family business from their parents, Alfred and Margaret Bent. After leaving the business in the 1980s, John devoted his time to creating and developing the garden.

Although he now receives some help with its upkeep, John can still often be found tending to and enjoying the garden he has lovingly developed over many years.

Matthew Bent, Managing Director of Bents Garden & Home and a member of the third generation of the Bent family, said the family was incredibly proud of John's achievements.

He said: "We're incredibly proud of our Uncle John and everything he has achieved through his garden. To have opened Weeping Ash to the public for 34 years and raised more than £25,000 for such worthwhile causes is a fantastic achievement.

"At 93, John gets a little help with the garden's upkeep, but he can still often be found tending to and enjoying the garden he has lovingly developed over many years.

"His passion for plants and the pleasure he gets from sharing his garden with others are an inspiration to us all."

John's recognition comes as the family-owned business prepares to celebrate its 90th anniversary in 2027.

From Alfred and Margaret Bent's original rose-growing business to the destination garden centre it is today, Bents Garden & Home has remained rooted in a love of plants, gardening and bringing people together.

John's 34 years of fundraising through Weeping Ash Garden represent a lasting contribution to the charitable causes supported by the National Garden Scheme.

Three Towns Operatic Society to perform annual concert in Culcheth

Culcheth Methodist Church is looking forward to welcoming back the Three Towns Operatic Society for its popular annual concert on Saturday, December 5.

The concert has been held on the first Saturday in December for many years and has become a much-anticipated occasion for music lovers in the local community.

The society has maintained a high standard of performance over the years, with this year's programme promising a varied selection of popular music to appeal to a wide audience.

The repertoire will range from the much-loved works of Gilbert and Sullivan to arrangements of popular hit songs, offering something for everyone to enjoy.

The concert will take place at Culcheth Methodist Church, on Ellesmere Road, at 2pm, with refreshments available during the interval.

Tickets cost £10 and can be obtained by contacting David on 07586 299397 or Janet on 07948 256264.



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