

Culcheth Life

Magazine

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Bog Snorkelling triumph!

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Editor's Opinion



THERE comes a point when we have to stop looking at major developments like the huge rail freight logistics park near Winwick and Croft in isolation and start asking a much bigger question – what happens when you put them all together?

That is the question residents across Croft, Winwick, Culcheth, and neighbouring communities should be asking as plans for the huge Intermodal Logistics Park North move another step closer to reality.

The latest news that Tritax Big Box has acquired around 40 acres of land to help progress its proposals is significant. It doesn't mean the development has been approved – it still has to go through the Development Consent Order process – but it demonstrates that this is no longer simply a proposal on a planning document. The scale is difficult to comprehend.

The scheme could eventually provide up to 767,000 square metres – around 8.2 million square feet – of logistics and warehousing space, together with a major rail freight terminal capable of handling up to 16 trains a day.

Tritax understandably highlights the potential economic benefits, including up to 6,000 jobs and significant investment. It also argues that shifting freight from road to rail can help reduce emissions and support the UK's long-term transport objectives. Those arguments deserve proper consideration. But so do the consequences.

For people living in Croft and

Winwick, this isn't an abstract national infrastructure project. It is potentially an enormous industrial development on their doorstep.

And its impact doesn't stop at the site boundary.

The transport modelling referred to by local representatives identifies 395 two-way HGV movements during the busiest daytime hour, with significant traffic implications extending towards M6 Junction 22, M62 Junction 9 and the Newton Road/Winwick corridor.

That matters enormously when you consider the amount of housebuilding already planned or taking place across the wider area.

Communities such as Culcheth and Glazebury are already dealing with pressure from housing growth, increased traffic and demands on infrastructure. Croft and Winwick face their own development pressures. It is perfectly reasonable to ask whether the cumulative impact is being properly assessed.

You cannot simply say: "this housing development is acceptable on its own, this logistics development is acceptable on its own" – and then assume the combined effect will somehow be acceptable.

Local communities are not collections of planning applications.

They are living, breathing places where people travel to work, take their children to school, walk their dogs, use local roads and expect to enjoy the countryside around them.

Once warehouses, roads, lighting, rail infrastructure and associated development transform open land, it cannot simply be put back the way it was.

This is why the forthcoming further consultation on highways, noise and air quality will be so important. Tritax says this is planned for early 2027.

Residents should engage with it. Parish councils should continue working together. Warrington, Wigan and St Helens need to look beyond their administrative boundaries. And crucially, the economic benefits should be tested against the full infrastructure and environmental costs.

Nobody should oppose investment simply because it is large. Equally, nobody should support it simply because it promises thousands of jobs.

The real question is much simpler: What price will our communities have to pay for this development – and is that price acceptable?

That is a question that deserves a proper answer before the first lorry arrives, rather than after the landscape and road network have already been transformed.



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Where Learning is Fun!

MP and mayor help Culcheth Centurion celebrate



Warrington North MP Charlotte Nichols had a wonderful afternoon with Warrington VIP - Visually Impaired People where she was joined by the Mayor of Warrington Cllr Sagheer Zaman, to celebrate the 100th birthday of Phil Robinson!

Phil lives in Culcheth and is a regular at the VIP, where Ms Nichols had the pleasure of learning about his time as a Bevin Boy during WW2 and hearing some fantastic stories on previous visits, and was delighted to be able to make it back from Westminster in time to join him, his family and

friends in celebrating this milestone occasion.

Ms Nichols said: "I asked Phil what the secret to becoming a centenarian is, and he said "you've just got to keep going!" - good advice for us all. Happy birthday Phil!"



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Winwick steps back through the centuries

HISTORY came vividly to life at St Oswald's Church, Winwick, as visitors were given the chance to explore one of Warrington's most historic buildings and discover the remarkable stories surrounding the village.

The special Heritage Open Days weekend formed part of this year's Heritage Open Days programme and focused particularly on St Oswald's remarkable history, the tragic story of heiress Ellen Legh and the Battle of Winwick, fought nearby during the English Civil War in 1648.

Visitors were able to see historic photographs, displays of weapons and armour from the Civil War period and items discovered during searches of the battlefield and presentations carried out by Revd Martin Fuller and Andrew Abram of the Battle of Winwick Society, who also provided an update on its continuing research into

the 1648 battle, including work towards establishing a permanent monument and information boards at the battlefield site.

St Oswald's is itself a remarkable piece of local heritage.

A church at Winwick was recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086, while parts of the present building date back to the 13th century.

The church also contains work by renowned Victorian architect A.W.N. Pugin, who rebuilt the chancel, sanctuary and vestry between 1847 and 1849. Among its historic treasures are the Legh Chapel, ancient memorials and an Anglo-Saxon cross fragment dating

from around AD750.

And there are plenty of fascinating links beyond the Civil War.

The church is also connected to Captain Edward Smith of the Titanic, who married local farmer's daughter Sarah Eleanor Pennington at St Oswald's in 1887.

One of the highlights was a talk by Eileen Monies, a guide from Lyme Park, focusing on the extraordinary and tragic story of Ellen Legh.

Ellen Turner was just 15 when she was abducted from her boarding school by fortune hunter Edward Gibbon Wakefield and deceived into

marrying him at Gretna Green.

Her subsequent connection with the Legh family and her tragic death in childbirth at just 19 have left a lasting memorial within St Oswald's.

The story provided a poignant reminder that behind the grand buildings and historic events are the very human stories which have helped shape Winwick over the centuries.



The Raven Inn, Traveller's Choice Award 2026

STAFF at the Raven Inn in Glazebury, Warrington, are celebrating a top award from Tripadvisor.

The Raven has been voted, by its patrons, on the top 10% of restaurants, WORLDWIDE! This is a wonderful achievement for The Raven and everyone who make it so special.

The welcoming atmosphere, delicious food, friendly service and great value is loved by its patrons and doesn't happen by chance. It's the result of a team that truly cares and a community that endlessly supports their community pub.

General manager Adam commented: "We are absolutely delighted to receive the Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Award for the second year running. It's a wonderful recognition of everything that makes The Raven Inn special."

"This achievement belongs to everyone involved with the Raven — our amazing team, our shareholders, our local community, and all the travellers and visitors who choose to spend their time with us. A huge thank you to everyone who has visited, supported us, recommended us and taken the

time to share their experience on Trip advisor. Every review and every visit plays a part. The Raven has always been about bringing people together, and receiving the Travellers' Choice Award makes us incredibly proud of what we are achieving together as a community"

Spokesperson Peter Sturman says, "This is an absolutely fantastic achievement by the Raven. It would not happen without manager, Adam, and his amazing team, they must be thanked for everything they bring to The Raven each and every day."

"The fact that the Raven has operated at this level for two years running demonstrates both the quality and consistency of the Raven inn."

"As always the Raven will not rest on its laurels. Starting in October, there will be an 'international evening' on the third Thursday of each month. Starting with a Portuguese evening on the 15th of October. Followed by a French (Beaujolais Nouveau) evening on the 19th of November. These innovative ideas are in addition to all of our regular events."



TWISS GREEN COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL Open Days 2026

Join us at our open days for families interested in joining our Reception Class for September 2027 and our Nursery Class for Spring, Summer and Autumn 2027 intake.

Wednesday 14th October: 4pm - 6pm

Thursday 22nd October: 9.30am - 11am

Saturday 7th November: 1.30pm - 3.30pm

All open days will consist of a presentation followed by a tour of the school. Wednesday 14th October will have a presentation at 4pm and 5.15pm. Families will have the opportunity to take part in crafts and Forest School activities on Wednesday 14th October and Saturday 7th November.



To book a place, please ring or email the school office on the below details:



Twiss Green Lane, Culcheth, Warrington, WA3 4DQ



twissgreen_primary@sch.warrington.gov.uk



01925 762346

Delight with drainage works



LOCAL Councillor Neil Johnson has expressed his delight with recent drainage works that have been carried out in the centre of Culcheth.

At Cllr. Johnson's request, the Warrington Borough Council undertook substantial work around Lodge Drive and Culcheth Village Green to clean the drainage system.

Cllr. Johnson was on site with the workmen to speak with the contractors and oversee first hand the work taking place.

He said: "The pipeline between the two manholes on the Village Green has been cleaned out. Two further gully drains along Lodge Drive have also been cleaned. Further work was then carried out to focus on those drains at highest risk of flooding. The team vacuumed out a great deal of dirt and exposed roots which were blocking the pipelines.

"The gully next to the park was then cleaned out, but this needs completely digging out and that should happen over the coming weeks.

"The team then cleaned the pipework which runs across the park towards the bus stop on Warrington Road, removing dirt and exposed tree roots. The manhole cover on the village green which was 'sinking' has also been repaired.

"I am delighted with the progress that has been made so far. As your Independent voice, I have specifically asked for this area to undergo a proper cleaning operation so I'm glad that we are seeing something of that at last."

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Mayor serves up new padel era

CULCHETH has officially entered the padel era – with the Mayor of Warrington helping to launch three new courts at The Datan.

Mayor of Warrington Cllr Sagheer Zaman visited Culcheth Sports Club to officially open the new Ace Padel facilities, marking the latest chapter in the transformation of the popular community venue.

The three covered courts at The Datan, on Charnock Road, form part of a wider investment aimed at creating a modern sport and fitness hub for the village.

The courts have been developed by Ace Padel alongside the existing facilities at Culcheth Sports

Club, with the aim of making the increasingly popular racket sport accessible to local people of all ages and abilities.

Padel has exploded in popularity in recent years, combining elements of tennis and squash and generally being played in doubles on an enclosed court.

The new Culcheth facility gives residents the opportunity to try the sport on their doorstep rather than having to travel elsewhere.

It also adds to the growing range of sporting and fitness

facilities available at The Datan, which has undergone a significant transformation in recent years.

Alongside the new padel courts is the Legacy Health & Fitness Club, offering gym facilities and fitness classes, with Reformer Pilates also planned.

The development follows planning approval granted by Warrington Borough Council for three padel tennis courts under a covered canopy at Culcheth Sports Club.

Ace Padel says the Culcheth development is about more than simply providing courts, describing it as an opportunity to create a space where the community can come together to play sport, exercise and socialise.

The arrival of padel represents another major change for The Datan, which has been at the heart of Culcheth community life for decades.

The venue has previously undergone a major refurbishment, including improvements to its café, ballroom and wider facilities, while continuing to provide a base for a

wide range of community activities.

The club dates back to the Second World War when it was originally built as a social club for employees of the UK Atomic Energy Authority before subsequently becoming a community facility for Culcheth.

Cllr Zaman, who was formally appointed as Warrington's 142nd Mayor earlier this year, has made promoting unity, inclusion and civic pride key themes of his Mayoral year.

The opening of the new courts provides another example of investment in community facilities outside Warrington town centre – and gives Culcheth residents another reason to get active locally.

With padel continuing to grow rapidly across the UK, the new courts at The Datan look set to become a familiar sight in Culcheth – and potentially introduce a whole new generation to a sport which has gone from holiday novelty to mainstream British pastime.

And for The Datan, the message is clear – the village's much-loved community venue is continuing to evolve.



Charlotte Nichols MP Warrington North

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The Gardening Guide



Now is a good time to extend water gardens or construct stunning waterfalls.

Simon Bax,
Plant Area Specialist

- This is an excellent time of year to construct paths, patios and terraces. Remember they will look best if they complement the materials used for the house
- The last mow of the year will probably take place this month
- Plant traditional favourites such as Wallflowers, Forget-me-nots and Polyanthus in prepared ground for a colourful spring show
- Clean and oil your garden tools for storage. An easy way to do this is put some oil and sand in a bucket and then slide them in and out of the sand



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Croft siblings make a splash with double World Bog Snorkelling triumph

TWO young sporting stars from Croft have swapped the swimming pool for a muddy Welsh bog – and returned to Warrington as world champions.

Siblings Emily and William Hall have both won titles at the World Bog Snorkelling Championships in Llanwrtyd Wells, with Emily producing the outstanding performance of the day to claim three titles and William taking the Junior Male crown.

And the remarkable story began with little more than a family dare.

Competitive swimmer Emily, who is moving to Ellesmere College on an academic and swimming scholarship, jokingly claimed she could beat the world bog snorkelling record after discovering the bizarre sport.

Her family challenged her to prove it. She did – although she fell just short of the long-standing world record.

Emily produced a stunning 1 minute 27.97 seconds over the 120-yard course at Waen Rhydd bog, the fastest time of the entire competition. That saw her crowned Junior Female Champion, Overall Female Champion and Overall World Champion.

Sweden's Adrian Sandstrom had looked set to take the overall title after recording 1:28.30, but Emily knocked 0.33 seconds off his time to snatch victory.

And there was more family success to come.

Her younger brother William also completed the full championship course and was crowned Junior Male Champion, meaning the Croft family returned home with two World Championship titles.

The achievement is even more remarkable given Emily's sporting background. She is an experienced competitive swimmer, but bog snorkelling is a very different proposition.

Competitors have to complete two 60-yard lengths – 120 yards in total – through a trench filled with peat water, wearing a snorkel, mask and flippers.

Traditional swimming strokes are banned, with competitors relying largely on their legs and a restricted doggy-paddle action beneath the water.

And there is another small problem. You can't see where you're going.

The peat-filled water is virtually opaque, while competitors also have to negotiate the turn around a post before battling their way back through the bog.

This year's championships attracted 201 competitors and marked the 40th running of the extraordinary event.

Emily admitted afterwards that the experience was considerably

harder than swimming in a conventional pool.

But her competitive swimming background clearly paid dividends.

She used a streamlined technique and powerful leg kick to propel herself through the bog – and when she emerged, she had posted the fastest time of the day.

There was then a long wait while the remaining competitors attempted to beat her. Nobody did.

The current world record remains 1 minute 12.34 seconds, set by Neil Rutter in 2023, so Emily's 1:27.97 did not break the overall record.

But she did something arguably just as memorable – she became Overall World Champion at her very first attempt.

The World Bog Snorkelling Championships may sound like a novelty, but the event has developed into a major international attraction.

The championships began in 1985 and this year's 40th anniversary event attracted competitors from around the world to Llanwrtyd Wells.

There is also a strong emphasis on fun, with fancy dress forming a major part of the event alongside the

serious competition.

But for the Hall family, the focus was very much on the stopwatch.

And after Emily's remarkable performance and William's junior victory, they now have two very unusual additions to their sporting CVs.

Two Warrington youngsters. Two world titles. One very muddy Welsh bog. Not bad for a challenge that started with a family dare.



Independent Voice

by Independent Councillor Neil Johnson



It has been another very busy summer, I can hardly believe we are entering the autumn months of 2026 already!

As the INDEPENDENT voice of the community, I have continued to represent you at the Town Hall, on the Parish Council and in the community. This column gives you a flavour of just some of the issues I've taken up on your behalf.

I have been working with residents and the Council to cut back some dangerous, overhanging trees on **Crossfield Avenue** and **Poplar Avenue** in Culcheth. As you have probably seen, one of the bigger branches on a tree backing on to the gardens opposite the New Inn actually came down recently, so I was on site with the maintenance team ensuring that was attended to properly.

I am following up a request by residents on **Wigshaw Lane** for double yellow lines on the junction with **Jackson Avenue**.

I have been out with volunteers cleaning up the ginnel that runs between **Langcliffe Close** and **Pendle Gardens**. The broken knee rails that were pointed out to me have also been fixed after I arranged for repairs to be carried out.

The flooded alleyway between **Withington Road** and **Culcheth Hall Drive** has seen some progress. I know that my colleague Cllr Bernie Kingston has been taking this issue up as well on residents' behalf. The gulleys have all been cleaned and jetted, but the Council have identified part of the drain that has collapsed and so some further work will be carried out soon to rectify that.

I have been on site meeting with the contractors who have been cleaning the drains around **Lodge Drive** and **Culcheth village green**. There has been some substantial work carried out here, with pipelines jetted and dirt and tree roots removed. The sinking manhole on the village green has also been repaired. I'm very pleased that this has been carried out because it is something that I have been requesting for a long time.

Finally, I continue to hold my weekly surgery in the Daten on Saturdays with very good attendance by residents. I have also circulated newsletters to the areas of the village affected by the housing development proposals to make clear my opposition. I will outline the position around these in my next column when more information is available. I hope that we will be able to come together as a community to resist the efforts of the greedy developers and protect our cherished green spaces.

As always, please don't hesitate to get in touch if there is anything you would like to discuss.

Neil

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

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

Neil Johnson – Independent Councillor for Culcheth, Glazebury and Croft

This page is funded and paid for by Cllr. Neil Johnson and does not represent the views of Culcheth Life or its publishers Orbit News Ltd.

Local author releases 'challenging and remarkable' new novel

A Culcheth author has released his latest novel – a challenging and emotionally charged story with strong roots in the North West, including scenes set in Warrington.

Chris Vobe, who lives in Culcheth, has published *The Birthday Party*, a novel which explores love, regret, family, relationships, politics and the lasting impact of trauma.

Described as his most ambitious and emotionally charged work to date, the novel has taken three years to complete.

At its centre is Teddy Alderton, a restless young man approaching his 30th birthday who remains haunted by two devastating events from his teenage years – the disappearance of his childhood sweetheart Katie and a sexual assault committed against him by a woman who had taken him under her wing.

The story follows Teddy as he attempts to build a new life while struggling to come to terms with a past which refuses to stay buried.

Set against a distinctly North West backdrop, the novel moves between locations including Liverpool, Wigan and Warrington, giving the story a strong sense of place.

Vobe says that rooting the novel in the region was important to him.

"When I first set out to bring the story of Teddy, Alicia, Paul and Laura to life, I wanted to write a novel that was firmly rooted in the North West.

"That's why you'll discover scenes set in places like Abercromby

Square in Liverpool, or the post-industrial landscapes of Wigan and Warrington."

He says bringing the characters to life was particularly rewarding – but the subject matter made *The Birthday Party* his most challenging book to date.

The novel is Vobe's latest publication following his 2025 anthology *The Ten People You Meet and Other Writings* and his five-volume novel *The Water Tower*, published in 2023.

The *Water Tower* recently

reached the Amazon Top 10 in Contemporary Literary Fiction, underlining the growing profile of the Culcheth writer.

Vobe says his latest book represents a departure from his previous work, although many of his familiar themes remain.

The Birthday Party is now available in Kindle, paperback and hardcover editions, with the book available through major retailers including Amazon, Waterstones, Barnes & Noble, Apple and Kobo.

The novel is intended for adult readers and contains material which may not be suitable for younger audiences.



New fence helps protect Library garden

A new knee-high fence has been installed outside Culcheth Village Library in a bid to protect the planting around the community facility.

The area surrounding the library was landscaped when the building was renovated in 2023, with shrubs, perennials and annuals very generously donated by Bent's Garden Centre.

However, many of the plants planted at the front of the library were soon damaged or lost, with some being pulled up or stolen, while others were trampled or ridden over by bicycles and motorcycles.

Since then, four further batches of plants have also been lost after being trampled.

Friends of Culcheth Library (FoCL), working in discussion with Warrington Borough Council, considered installing a small fence around the front planting area to provide greater protection for future planting.

To help raise funds for the project, FoCL organised a Family Fun Run on July 11, led by local character David the Culcheth Fairy.

Culcheth Rotary also supported the event with a donation and practical

help on the day.

Friends of Culcheth Library hope the new barrier will make a lasting difference and prevent further damage to the plants surrounding the much-loved village facility.



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Records tumble as Birchwood 10K brings hundreds of runners together



RECORDS tumbled as hundreds of runners took to the roads around Birchwood and Croft for the 41st Birchwood 10K, organised by Warrington running club Spectrum Striders.

The popular annual race got underway at 10 am from Birchwood Shopping Centre, with competitors tackling a fast, accurately measured 10km course through Birchwood and towards the rural village of Croft before returning to a finish near the shopping centre.

The event is regarded as one of the area's established summer running fixtures, attracting runners of a wide range of abilities, from experienced club athletes chasing fast times to recreational runners taking on the distance.

The race was once again supported by a large team of

Spectrum Striders volunteers, with marshals and other helpers playing an important role in keeping competitors safe and ensuring the event ran smoothly.

Spectrum Striders had warned motorists in advance of rolling road closures between 8 am and 1 pm, with restrictions affecting a number of roads, including Dewhurst Road, Admirals Road, Ordnance Avenue, Cross Lane, Lords Lane and Birchwood Boulevard.

The event had a limit of 1,000 runners and featured chip timing, race photography, texted results and an extensive prize structure covering individual and age-

category performances as well as club team prizes.

Every finisher also received the race's distinctive memento and bespoke medal.

Jack White from Salford Harriers and Emma Taylor from City of Stoke AC were the leading male and female runners at the event, both achieving new course records.

The 41st staging of the popular Warrington race attracted a strong field, with the official Nifty Entries results showing 331 male finishers and 228 female finishers.

Male results

1. Jack White – 30:23
2. Daniel Cliffe – 30:52
3. Tom Charles – 32:00
4. Ryan Davis – 32:09
5. Dan Morgan – 32:52
6. Jack Pilkington – 33:11
7. Stephen Tomlinson – 33:46
8. Kieran O'Brien – 33:55
9. James McLeod – 34:58
10. Martin Peck – 35:02

Female results

1. Emma Taylor – 35:11
2. Kirsty Longley – 37:07
3. Donna Sherwin – 37:21
4. Louise Blizzard – 41:31
5. Elizabeth Horne – 41:54
6. Jennifer Houghton – 42:27
7. April Stewart – 44:11
8. Aimee Ellen O'Keeffe – 44:40
9. Olivia Brown – 44:45
10. Rachel Alves – 44:46



Male Winner Jack White



Female Winner Emma Taylor

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