

# HS2 threatens years of disruption for villages

**THE villages of Culcheth and Croft are facing years of disruption over the uncertain future of the proposed route for HS2 says local businessman Paul Taylor.**

No decision has yet been reached on the high speed Golborne Link, which would pass through Culcheth Linear Park, destroying over 700 local jobs, and threatening the future of the communities it passes.

However, a representative of HS2 made it clear at a recent consultation meeting at Warrington town hall that it is intended that it will go ahead, despite reassurances given to many including local MPs that it would be cancelled.

It was also made clear at the

meeting that there might be some small adjustments to the route. The HS2 representative admitted that this would mean moving the line away from some communities but closer to others - but would not comment further.

The line to Crewe will go ahead and be built by 2027, and the line north to Manchester and Golborne will be completed by 2033.

Mr Taylor, from the under threat Taylor Business Park, said: "Construction will bring severe disruption, and the line when

completed will bring no benefits to the area.

"The decision on the Golborne Link is being delayed in part at least so it can be integrated into proposals for the so-called "HS3", a line from Liverpool to Manchester, Manchester Airport, and Leeds. These are being planned by Transport for the North.

"A possible route would be along the existing Chat Moss line which runs through Newton-le-Willows station and along the back of the golf course in Culcheth.

"This line could connect to the Golborne Link to provide a route from Liverpool to London and also to Manchester Airport.

Mr Taylor added: "The threat to Culcheth and the surrounding area from HS2 is still very real and in addition we are threatened by the possible HS3 proposals as well."

Local councillor Chris Vobe has added his voice to growing concerns adding: "The sudden suggestion by HS2 Ltd that the "spur" which runs through our eastern villages may yet go ahead will be greeted by resounding dismay by people in Culcheth and Croft.

"HS2 Ltd have implied that the "spur" may be moved towards Croft village, to avoid the Linear Park and the Business Park, putting a cloud of uncertainty over exactly where will be affected and what the impact on Croft will be.

"The Conservative Party have already delayed their final announcement on the route. Now

we are told that we will have to wait until autumn this year before the Secretary of State makes clear his plans. This delay and uncertainty goes beyond even the blight which currently afflicts homes on the proposed route - there is now a real and serious danger to the future of Croft village.

"As a local councillor, I am not prepared to simply sit back in silence while this blight hangs over us. It is callous of HS2 Ltd to suggest that the "spur" could be moved yet fail to give us any insight into what is being considered and which areas of our village are being sacrificed by the Conservatives.

"I will be asking the Leader of Warrington Borough Council to join me in writing to the Secretary of State for Transport, and demand that he provides clarity over their plans for Croft. The Conservatives are putting our homes and our futures in jeopardy by drip-feeding us hints and intimations in place of fact and certainty."

Culcheth and District Rail Action Group (CADRAG) was represented at the meeting and we will continue to oppose these proposals vigorously.

The group continues to need support from the community and will be holding an open meeting in the near future to inform the public, and they welcome anyone wanting to become actively involved in the campaign. Any one interested in offering support should contact Frank Allen on 01925 76 5017.



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## The Sport Relief Mile is back

CULCHETH is to complete its third Sport Relief Mile on Sunday, March 20 and needs local people to take part.

They can walk or run to raise life-changing money for this year's Sport Relief, taking part in one, three and six mile runs, starting from 10am.

Setting off from Culcheth Primary School, the runners will pass through Crow Wood and then be able to enjoy entertainment laid on back at the school.

There will be bouncy castles, fairground rides, food stalls and much more - there will be something for everyone.

Headteacher Amanda Dodd said: "The Sport Relief Mile in Culcheth is here and it's your time to walk or run yourself proud.

"From little ones with their mums and dads, to runners up against the clock, there's something for everyone to make themselves feel proud on this special day."

Sport Relief is back from Friday to Sunday March 18-20 and there are more ways than ever to take part, change lives and feel proud.

People can get sponsored to enter an event at the Sport Relief Games or fundraise with friends and family at home, work or school and by doing so they'll help people living incredibly tough lives.

In fact, half of all the money raised by the public is spent right here at home in the UK, with the other half used to make a difference in the world's poorest communities.

Culcheth people can enter at [www.sportrelief.com](http://www.sportrelief.com)



# Heavy vehicle ban would cause 'traffic chaos'

**PLANS to ban heavy good vehicles from a busy road at Lowton could cause "traffic chaos" in the quiet village of Croft, according to MP Helen Jones.**

She has joined forces with Croft councillor Chris Vobe and Culcheth and Glazebury councillor Matt Smith to oppose the proposals being considered by Wigan Borough Council.

The plan is to "de-prime" Winwick Lane in Lowton where local residents have been complaining about HGVs using the road as a "cut through" to the East Lancashire Road after leaving the M6.

Winwick Lane runs through Croft before crossing the borough boundary into Lowton.

The Warrington North MP and the two councillors fear "de-priming" would mean heavy lorries would still leave the M6 at Junction 22 but instead of using Winwick Lane could divert through Croft village instead.

Cllr Vobe said: "Although we sympathise with the noise and the problems residents in Lowton have experienced due to the high volume of heavy good vehicles using Winwick Lane, it remains a primary route.

"If large vehicles are barred from using the lane, and the motorway is

busy, they will clearly divert through Croft to access the East Lincs.

"This has the potential to cause traffic chaos in our village. Many of the roads the HGVs would use are narrow and do not have pavements - they are totally unsuitable for this type of traffic. Our highway infrastructure cannot cope with an increase of this type of traffic through our village, and the disruption to residents' lives and amenities will be devastating."

Cllr Vobe said he would work with villagers to oppose the proposals.

Ms Jones said: "The 'de-priming' of Winwick Lane will cause more problems than it solves.

"We do not want to see large

numbers of HGVs being re-routed through Croft. Shifting the problem is not an acceptable solution and I am not

prepared to support any scheme which detrimentally affects residents of Warrington North."

The MP is urging Warrington Borough Council to oppose Wigan's proposals.

## Play area facelift to go ahead?

LONG-awaited investment in a children's play area at Mee Brow - half-way between Culcheth and Glazebury - looks set to go ahead after the proposal was given the "green light" for inclusion in the borough council's capital investment programme.

A complete refurbishment of the play area and equipment seems on the cards.

Cllr Chris Vobe has been campaigning for a "substantial" investment from the council to regenerate the playing field at Eden Avenue for several months.

He has met with council chief executive Steven Broomhead and lead member for Culture, Leisure and Sport Kate Hannon to make the case on behalf of residents.

Now, after a meeting between councillors and officers, the project looks set to come to life.

Cllr Vobe said: "Mee Brow has often 'fallen between the cracks' as far as the council is concerned, because of its location between Culcheth and Glazebury. I have always been determined, however, that residents here should benefit from the same high quality services and amenities that are afforded to everyone.

"When local councillors consulted with residents, they told us that their biggest priority for investment was the play area and sports facilities on Eden Avenue - they are simply not fit for purpose anymore!

Cllr Matt Smith and I visited the site with young people from the area, and they spoke to us passionately about what needed to be improved and how much residents would benefit from up to date equipment and provision.

"We have been very forthright and determined in our campaign, and have simply not let the matter drop with the council. Now, it appears that our lobbying has been successful.

"Once the project is placed in the council's capital programme, the next stage will be to consider a range of designs and consult with local people on the specifics - what kind of equipment they would like to see installed, which design they prefer."



## Guides receive D of E awards

A SPECIAL presentation evening was held at The Village Club, Culcheth to celebrate the successful completion of Bronze, Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards by members of Girlguiding, Culcheth District.

Julie Bell, regional chief commissioner and Bekky Ashmore, assistant regional commissioner, presented the awards.

County commissioner Rachel Aldus presented a special award to Jessica Burke, leader with 7th Culcheth Senior Section, to mark 10 years of continuous volunteering.

Special thanks were given to Simon and Pam Ogunlana from Challenge Expeditions who had supported the girls through the expedition phase of the awards.

Those who have successfully

completed their Gold Award will also receive an invitation to St James' Palace to receive a certificate from a member of the Royal Family.

Anyone interested in volunteering with Girlguiding or who would like to join the senior section should visit [www.girlguiding.org.uk/joinus](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk/joinus)

