

# WP News

Westminster Park Residents' Association

## WPRA

Bringing our community alive

[www.wp-ra.org.uk](http://www.wp-ra.org.uk)


@wesparkra

## Final thoughts from the Chair

Thankfully our Christmas Lights Switch On was blessed with good weather and those who joined us enjoyed festive music provided by Belgrave School and Cambrian Chords, and refreshments supplied by WPRA, our Coop and Bebbington's - thank you to them for helping to make it a very special evening.

Our next social event is our **Spring Quiz** on **Saturday 18 April**. Always a popular night, make sure you get your tickets early - just £10 for the quiz and an excellent supper!

The money raised at these events, together with your subscriptions, allows WPRA to carry out improvements to make our neighbourhood a great place to live. To this end, we have recently paid a local builder to mend two corners of the walls by the shops. The other section taken out by a vehicle since is in the hands of CWAC and insurers.

We actively keep our patch in good order too. Local residents are meeting up by WP shops to do a bit of a tidy up at 10.30am on **Sunday 19 April**. Research shows that a place kept clean and tidy will be respected and cared for by its community. If you can spare an hour to help us collect litter and tidy up, we would love to see you.

Another service that we fund for local residents is the photocopier in the Pharmacy. The one we bought three years ago is now due for replacement, hopefully quite soon.

Some members of WPRA hold quarterly meetings with the Kings Moat construction team to catch up on site progress and raise residents' issues. At our latest meeting we asked for an update on the forthcoming work at Overleigh roundabout. Plans have been made to dig trial holes during the Easter holidays. If you have any issues that you want us to raise, please get in touch.

Our **AGM** is taking place at 8pm on **Wednesday 22 April** at which I will be retiring as chair of WPRA after 7 years. During this time there have been trials - planning applications to challenge and Covid to cope with - as well as pleasures - community events to enjoy and improving our environment with planters and a defibrillator.

The committee of WPRA needs new members who value this area and want to see its residents thrive and enjoy life. If that is you, please consider joining us. It is not a difficult role and we all work together for the good of our community. Come along to our AGM and meet us and find out what we do. You'll be made very welcome.

Finally, we send our good wishes to the organisers of the **Westminster Park 80<sup>th</sup> Celebration Day** on **Saturday 9 May**. Please go along to what should be a wonderful event.

*Jennifer Crew*

## Diary Dates: many more inside

### 1st Tuesday of the month 7.30pm

WI, St Mary's Handbridge Centre, page 8

### 1st Saturday of the month 10.00 - 11.30am

Councillor Razia Daniels' surgery, WPark shops

**3rd Sunday of the month 10.30am** Join Incredible Edible at the planters by the shops

### Wednesdays 10.00-12.00

Friends of Westminster Park: Meet behind the café & help maintain the Park, all welcome

### Wednesdays 1.30-3.30pm

Digital Friends: Lache Community Centre Help with laptops, phones etc. £1 appreciated.

### 3rd Thursday of the month 2-3.30pm

Evergreen 55+ club WP Community Centre, p 4

**Friday 6 March 11.00am** Kings Moat Gardening Club. Grosvenor Garden Centre, page 10

**Monday 9 March 8pm** Friends of Westminster Park AGM, WP Community Centre

**Tuesday 10 March 7.30pm:** A talk on "Titanic Survivors" by Mike Roydon, page 11

**13-22 March:** Chester International Film Festival Details on page 5

**Monday 16 March 7.30pm** A talk - Finland, Land of a Thousand Lakes by Sari Kaufmann, page 10

**Thursday 19 March 2pm** Evergreen: History of Overleigh Cemetery with Paul Woods, WP Community Centre, p 4

**Tuesday 14 April 7.30pm:** A talk by Rita Tillinger 'Oversexed and Over Here - GIs in Britain and my father's wartime experiences.' page 11

**Monday 13 April 7.30pm** A talk by :Stuart Wood on Life as a Mersey River Pilot, page 10

**Thursday 16 April 2pm** Evergreen: Chutney and Cheer with Mel Latham, WP Community Centre

**Saturday 18 April:** Croquet Taster Day in Westminster Park—page 8

**Saturday 18 April 7.30pm** WPRA Spring Quiz, WP Community Centre

**Wednesday 22 April 8pm** WPRA AGM, WP Community Centre

**Sunday 26 April 10.30am** Incredible Edible: Spring Planting Day at the shops

**Saturday 9 May 1-4pm** 80th Anniversary Celebration Day in Westminster Park—see page 3

**Tuesday 12 May 7.30pm** A talk by Richard Coakley on the Thomas Brassey Statue, page 11

**Thursday 21st May 2pm** Memory - how it works & why we forget, Sue Foy, WP Community Centre

### Westminster Park Residents' Association



**Come and join us for the  
WPRA Spring Quiz  
Saturday 18 April 2026**

Doors open 7.30pm for an 8.00pm start at Westminster Park Community Centre. Tickets £10, including excellent supper, available from Bebbington's or from Brian Westcott, tel 01244 675431.

## News from our Councillors

### Councillor Matt Carter

Hello everyone, I hope you are looking forward to the sunshine coming back out!

Since my last update, I met up with Cllr Stuart Bingham, cabinet member for Community Safety and Neighbourhood Pride. We walked around the ward through areas where there had been previous issues, like Vernay Green and looked at how the roll out of the new street sweepers will make a tangible difference to parts of the ward, with emphasis on those with numerous trees in situ and main thoroughfares like Wrexham Road and Lache Lane. The sweepers are now on their first pass of the borough, so you should start seeing them in the local area cleaning up detritus and clearing up road edges and high traffic pavements.

We also visited the entrance of Dukes Drive to view the current parking issues. I am hopeful following this meeting and discussions with officers that we will see some improvement in this area, so that those wanting to park to access Dukes Drive can do so and that we can put some restrictions on overnight parking in the area. When I have more information to share, I will let you know.

In late December I pulled together a few local volunteers to tidy up the entrance of a local park in Handbridge on Appleyard Lane, I will be looking to do other areas in the next 12 months so any suggestions in Westminster Park area are welcome.

In a previous update I provided details of a planning application on Lache Lane I had called into planning committee, on the grounds of overdevelopment. I am happy to report, that following allocation of a planning officer, the application has been refused without the need for a planning committee

My last item to report is a worrying issue, as some councillors within Cheshire West have criticised Storyhouse for holding an inclusive arts and craft event catering for children who may have same sex parents. I believe this is an appalling position to hold and is contrary to everything I stand for as a councillor.

A group of councillors have gone as far as to call an extraordinary meeting that will have a motion before Council to try to remove the funding the council gives to Storyhouse. I will be standing up for Storyhouse at this meeting as it is a great asset of the city, to be treasured not attacked and threatened with its funding!

Surgery and contact details—see page 11. I also complete door knocking sessions talking to you about what matters most and what I can do to help.

### Councillor Razia Daniels

Thank you to everyone who has been in touch with me recently. A few updates:

#### **Westminster Park – 80th Anniversary**

Happy 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary! And many congratulations to everyone who has helped make our park what it is today. I wish the Friends of Westminster Park every success in their preparations for the celebrations.

#### **My campaign for a safe pedestrian crossing on Wrexham Road**

In 2023 I presented a petition of 545 names to the Council calling for a safe crossing by Jigsaw Nursery/ Ash Grove bus stop. The response from Council officers was extremely disappointing. At the December Council meeting, I raised the issue again.

Unfortunately, the answers provided still did not offer any commitment to progress the crossing. However, the council has agreed to carry out a pedestrian crossing survey in 26/27 to establish if demand has increased since the last assessment in 2021. But even if the location meets the criteria for a crossing, installing it is a significant investment—zebra crossings typically cost over £70,000.

Nevertheless, I want you to know that I will continue to campaign for a safer crossing.

#### **Damaged Car Park Walls at the Shops**

Thank you to WPRAs for arranging the repair of the damaged walls at the junction of Five Ashes Road/Claypit Road and Castle Croft Road. I have requested an update regarding the remaining section of damaged wall and have also reported the 20mph road sign and blocked drains on Castle Croft Road.

#### **Westminster Park Shops Car Park**

The disabled bays by the Coop have been repainted and potholes repaired. Residents have contacted me about further issues with the disabled bays, which I have reported. Highways have requested a quote for the works.

#### **Sherbourne Avenue**

Concerns have been raised about motorbikes, and occasionally cars, using the cycle path to cut through to Roman Crescent, damaging the grass verge. I have raised this with the appropriate departments and requested that the barrier be extended.

#### **Double Yellow Lines**

I have followed up the request for double yellow lines at the junction of Vincent Drive and Bartholomew Way. Unfortunately, the response was not favourable. Highways located the original enquiry from September 2024 and advised that, as there has been no significant change to road layout or usage, they are not prepared to alter the previous decision. Residents should report parking concerns to the Police.

#### **Medical Centre**

I am working closely with our MP, Aphra Brandreth, to push for the delivery of the new medical centre, needed more than ever with additional housing at Kings Moat.

Please contact me if I can help with anything. You are also very welcome to come and see me at my monthly street surgery at 10 -11.30 am on the first Saturday of the month.

## Westminster Park Residents' Association

# A.G.M.

At the Community Centre

Wednesday 22 April at 8.00pm

Your chance to have your say—and join the community



## Westminster Park 80th Anniversary Fun - Saturday 9 May 2026

On Saturday 9 May, there will be a Celebration Day in Westminster Park to mark its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary and also the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Golf course. A special guest, to be announced later, will attend.

In 1946, the 2nd Duke of Westminster generously leased the land to the City Council for 999 years at a peppercorn rent, for the purpose of creating a much-needed sports and recreation facility for the people of Chester. Now, in 2026, the park is still extremely well used offering tennis, golf,



croquet, bowls, BMX, football, cricket, walking groups, dog walking, fitness groups. We have

swings, lawns, woods and mindful walks. We have a lot to celebrate!

On 9 May we'll have displays by all of these groups. In addition, the Lord Mayor and Sheriff will visit and there will be music, food and fun activities for all.

If you have any photos or special memories of the park through the years, please send them to the Facebook page or contact [park@macfadyen.net](mailto:park@macfadyen.net) and they will be included in a social history display.

**So, save the date and let's really mark the occasion.**

## Hedge laying in our park

In the park, several hedges date back to at least the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the area was still fields. The 1842 tithe map shows these field boundaries:

<https://maps.cheshireeast.gov.uk/tithemaps/>

Plans from the 1970s refer to preserving the hedgerows and preventing loss of natural beauty and birdlife but since then, ivy has taken over. Consequently, many hedge trees are dead or dying. Here's how our volunteers are improving the health of the hedges.

Firstly, we remove ivy and dead branches, then lay the remaining branches and plant whips (saplings) to fill in gaps. The whips, all native species, are blackthorn, hazel, rowan, dog wood, dog rose, crab apple, elder, goat willow, hawthorn, English oak, silver birch, downy birch and wild cherry. Each has a protective plastic sleeve for a couple of years but, once removed, we should have beautiful leaves, flowers and berries. We have planted

thousands over the last few years, all provided free by the Woodland Trust.

This process will improve the hedge health, ensure its survival and preserve our heritage for another 150 years or so. But why do we bother? Well, hedges are important for wildlife, and you've probably read that the UK is one of the most biodiversity depleted countries. From woodlice to birds and small mammals, many creatures live in hedges or use them when foraging. When we find insects living on decaying branches, we create a habitat pile with them. Larger birds use bigger trees for perching and roosting so healthy taller trees are left in place as 'standards' every 6-8 metres or so.

Hedge laying is a traditional skill, usually associated with creating barriers to keep cattle in or out. In the park, we are using the technique to restore our ancient hedges.

There are a number of stages of the process:

- Saw part way through the trunk, low down, making sure not to cut all the way through.
- 'Pleach', or thin, the trunk to allow the trunk to bend rather than break.
- 'Lay' the trunk down at an angle and trim to required size.
- Hammer in stakes for support and weave in loose branches.



New growth will sprout from the basal cut and along the branch, creating a bushy hedge with healthy new growth.

Some of our volunteers have many years' experience of hedge laying with the National Trust. Others have been trained by Chester Zoo. We are enjoying using this heritage skill and hope you are all enjoying the results.

## Glan Aber Tennis Club

We are looking forward to some warmer brighter weather as we head into a new season of tennis.

Our coaches, Lydia (07889 979801) and Phil (07540 082727) continue to run the usual group coaching sessions: children (all ages), adult beginners, intermediate and advanced. Pay & Play junior and mini sessions will be resuming in March once the weather improves. See our website and Facebook page.

Please book via the All Court Tennis Academy (ACTA) app. Adult P&P runs all year and is managed through WhatsApp (coached sessions re-start in July). Please message if you'd like to be added. Easter Camps will run 7-10 April and 13-17 April. Sessions need to be booked.

We are planning to run free junior tennis sessions on Saturday 9 May as part of the 80th Anniversary Celebration Day in the park. Come along and see everything the park has to offer.

Glan Aber Tennis Club welcomes new members – visit our website [www.glanaber.com](http://www.glanaber.com) for more details.





**Deva Podiatry**  
**Foot Health Clinic**

Sarah Webber BSc (Hons) MRCPod  
**Your Feet In Safe Hands**

Nail Cutting | Diabetic Foot Care  
Corn and Hard Skin Removal  
Verrucae Treatment  
Nail Surgery | Fungal Nail Treatment

Please get in touch for advice  
or to book an appointment

The Shippon Church Road  
Dodleston

[devapodiatry@gmail.com](mailto:devapodiatry@gmail.com)  
[devapodiatry.com](http://devapodiatry.com)  
**01244 680 365**

  @devapodiatry  

## Road safety and local services: MP update

One of the issues I've continued to focus on is road safety across the constituency and in particular along Wrexham Road, where there is both the King's School and the Jigsaw Nursery. Outside the nursery there is no safe crossing point, and parents and carers have told me how difficult it can be getting young children across the road safely. Whilst the speed reduction along the Wrexham Road



was an important step forwards, I'm supporting our fantastic ward Councillor Razia Daniels to stress to the council the need for a proper crossing outside the Jigsaw Nursery to enable safer access on this very busy road for both the nursery and nearby bus stops.

Last month, there was a debate in Parliament on road safety, and I took the chance to raise this directly. My point was simple: when councils set speed limits, they should take into consideration nurseries and schools located nearby. The tragic accident just over a year ago on the Wrexham Road shows exactly why this is such an important issue. I will continue pressing this point.

I'm also continuing to work closely with local health partners. I recently met Dr Charlotte Rowland and Jamie Ducker from Handbridge Medical Centre for a helpful discussion about access to healthcare and the needs of the local community. They deliver excellent care, but clearly the building is no longer fit for purpose. I know that Westminster Park residents who use this practice rely on their services so I'm working closely with Cllr Daniels, the NHS, and the practice on a long-term solution for a new site. There is progress being made and I will continue to support this work and share more information as soon as it is available.

If I can be of any assistance, please get in touch with me at [aphra.brandreth.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:aphra.brandreth.mp@parliament.uk).

## Evergreen—55+

January was the start of Evergreen's 14th year and we are looking forward to another successful and enjoyable year.

Our 2026 programme is again well planned with a good variety of speakers, activities and planned trips. The programme is displayed with full details on the Community noticeboard and the [wp-ra.org.uk](http://wp-ra.org.uk) web site and at our monthly sessions.

Our popular Supper Club has its own planned programme for 2026 with something for everyone's taste and palate.

For those who are undecided if Evergreen is for them, why not come along for a taster session as a guest for £2. Whether you come with a partner, friend or on your own a warm and friendly welcome is always assured. We meet on 3rd Thursday of each month at 2.00 – 3.30p.m. in the Westminster Park Community Centre. Membership is £12 per year with complimentary tea/coffee/biscuits. For insurance purposes all Evergreen members need to be members of Westminster Park Residents' Association. For further enquiries contact: Sandra Magilton: 01244 677373 / [sandymagilton@googlemail.com](mailto:sandymagilton@googlemail.com) or Penny White: [pennywhite@sky.com](mailto:pennywhite@sky.com)

### Save the date - Sunday 19 April at 10.30am - Community Tidy Up Morning

A short time spent by willing volunteers can really improve the whole area around our local shops.

So please get out your hoes, rakes, trowels, brushes and gloves and come along to give us a hand.

Just an hour's work by the group makes such a difference to the look and feel of the shops at the heart of our estate. Thank you!

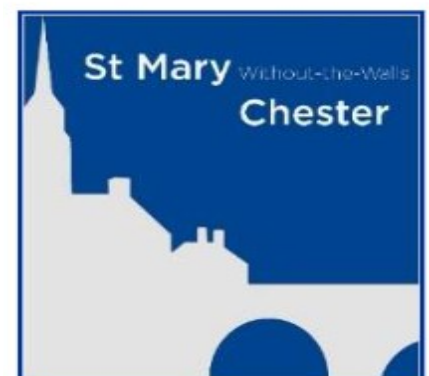
Brian Westcott



## Lent and Easter Services at St Mary's, Handbridge

- Mondays 23 February – 23 March, 6:30pm: Stations of the Cross
  - Palm Sunday 29 March, 10:30am: Sung Eucharist with procession and dramatic Gospel
  - Holy Monday 30 March, Holy Tuesday 31 March, Holy Wednesday 1 April, 6:30pm: Eucharist
  - Maundy Thursday 2 April, 7:30pm: Sung Eucharist with stripping of the altar followed by The Watch
  - Good Friday 3 April, 10:00am: Children's service; 2:00pm: Last Hour at the Cross
  - Easter Day 5 April, 8:00am: Holy Communion (followed by bacon baps in St Mary's Handbridge Centre)
  - 10:30am: Sung Eucharist
- ### Upcoming Events
- 13 March, 7pm: Music by the Bridge with Upton Community Choir
  - 10 April, 7pm: Music by the Bridge with Henry Smith – Organ
  - 8 May, 7pm: Music by the Bridge with The Dee Ensemble
  - 11 May: Christian Aid Afternoon Tea
  - 22 May: Cabaret Night with Ron Iveson, The Singing Vicar
  - 12 June, 7pm: Music by the Bridge with St Mary's Church Choir
  - 28 June: Handbridge Summer Festival

Please contact St Mary's Parish Office for more information: [office.stmaryschester@btconnect.co](mailto:office.stmaryschester@btconnect.co) 01244 671202



## Events at GreenDay Café and Golf

Running every Thursday morning (10.30am-12) we have Grandparent Hour; come and try our special weekly flavoured latte - the flavour changes every week. On 21 March we will hold a Vegas Night with live music (raising money for charity) and we also have an Easter Wall of chocolate eggs donated for the kids at the Countess Children's Ward

For the Easter Holidays (2-20 April), we have an Easter Trail in the Park (play Golf and get the trail included); Hidden Easter Bunnies around the Mini Golf course and a Kids photography class (8 April) run by Chester Zoo. You could win first prize of £100 in our Nature Photography Competition (April) for the best photo taken in the Park, Anniversary Celebrations: On the 9 May there will be big celebrations to mark the 80th Anniversary of the Park and the 50th Anniversary of Westminster Park Golf Course including a 70s Themed Golf Tournament, a free-to-enter Big Mini Golf Competition, Woodcraft Skills

*Our bear has now been named Gimli. The winning name, drawn out of the hat, was suggested by Sue.*



Exhibition, live music, and awards presentations.

More details can be found on the Events page of our website: [greendayuk.com](http://greendayuk.com).



## Local Vocals

Local Vocals is a fun, sociable singing group where anyone is welcome, regardless of age or experience. There's no need to read music and you can choose the songs! Group singing has been proven to reduce stress and make you feel good, so come along to meet new people and have a good sing!

Join us to sing a selection of show tunes, pop songs and jazz classics on Mondays 3.15pm All Saints Church, Hoole CH2 3HZ; Fridays 2pm St Mary's Centre, Handbridge CH4 7HL. Please get in touch to book a free taster session.

Email: [michaelreynoldsmusic@gmail.com](mailto:michaelreynoldsmusic@gmail.com)  
07786 323946 Facebook: [localvocalsgroup](https://www.facebook.com/localvocalsgroup)

## Chester International Film Festival 13-22 March

CIFF returns with another inspiring celebration of world cinema. Founded in 1980 by Chester Film Society and now run in partnership with Storyhouse and the University of Chester, the festival showcases a hand-picked programme of international film previews, locally curated short film collections, and special guest speakers, all championing global, bold storytelling.

The festival opens with DJ Ahmet, winner of the Audience Award in its section at the Sundance Film Festival. Set in rural North Macedonia, the film follows 15-year-old Ahmet as he navigates first love with a girl who is already promised, while daring to dream of becoming a DJ - challenging both his parents' expectations and the weight of societal conservatism.

Festival audiences can rate each eligible film following each screening and these combine to determine the Audience Award winner, announced at the Closing Drinks Reception on Sunday 22 March.

This year's festival runs alongside the 12th annual Chester Animation Festival.



## Chester Music & Theatre Company concerts

Chester Operatic Society has changed its name - we are now Chester Music and Theatre Company, to reflect the range of material we offer. Our next concert is called Top of the Pops - music of the 60's to the 90's, full of well-known songs to remind you

of those days!

The concerts are at the St Mary's Centre (by the castle) on April 10 & 11; tickets £16 from Brian Westcott on 01244 675431 or from Ticketsource.

## Incredible Edible—get sowing

As we come to the end of winter and move into our fifth growing season, it is a delight yet again to see how well our autumn planted broad beans and garlic are doing.

We are busy planning what vegetables we'll be sowing and planting this year and will be holding our spring planting day on Sunday April 26th at 10.30am; keep an eye out for more information closer to the time and please do come along.

If you would like to get involved in championing the use of public spaces for growing food, please do get in touch via email [ediblewestminsterpark@gmail.com](mailto:ediblewestminsterpark@gmail.com), Facebook or Instagram: @ediblewestminsterpark or come along to our Sunday meet ups starting again on a weekly basis from May 17 at 10.30am.

Volunteers and ideas for new projects are always welcome!



## Chester Literature Festival returns

The annual celebration of books, poetry and storytelling fills Storyhouse with talks, performances, workshops and more from 12 May to 14 June 2026.

Headline appearances include Maggie O'Farrell, Lenny Henry, and Hamza Yassin.

There's no better time to celebrate reading, as 2026 marks the National Year of Reading dedicated to encouraging reading for pleasure, wellbeing and connection. Chester Literature Festival offers a timely reminder of how stories can help us unwind, feel connected and support and sustain us in everyday life. Join us for books, poems, talks, events, workshops, performances, activities...

Words can appear in many different forms, and so our literature festival is never just one thing. Each year we celebrate all things written, spoken, sung and signed with a programme spanning right across different genres, formats and art forms. From book talks and poetry performances to workshops and activities, there's plenty to explore in Storyhouse.

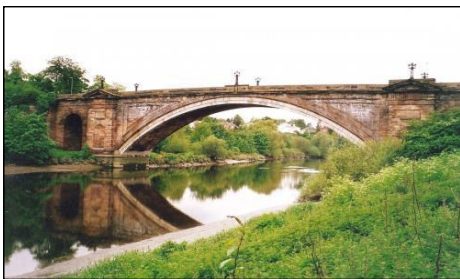
## Chester's 'One City Plan' background and update

The Chester 'One City Plan' (OCP) was originally published in 2012 and for the last 10 years this has guided the council's development decisions around Chester. Positive outcomes for the original OCP include the Storyhouse, the Boughton corridor, Northgate Development phase 1 and the Gorse Stack Bus interchange.

A new revised and up-dated plan sets out a "vision of a unique City proud of its history and its future, that prioritises inclusivity and sustainability to build a healthier, greener, fairer place for everyone."

The 4 Themes of the OCP include

- City Experience and Play
- Develop a city experience placing people and play at its heart that celebrates its heritage and becomes a modern, well-connected culturally rich place with a vibrant evening economy.



- Connectivity and Accessibility: an accessible city with seamless transport links providing safe passage for all modes of transport.
- Thriving People and Communities: Prioritise and ensure the people living in the city and surrounding neighbourhoods thrive by having the necessary infrastructure and supporting services.
- Business Friendly Economy and Skills: Make Chester the place to invest and grow by supporting innovators, individuals, graduates, SME's, and multinationals with quality co-working hubs and investing in skills and training to retain talent.

### How Will it be Delivered?

The Council plan to deliver the OCP through a governance structure set around 5 working groups covering the following:

- Being in Chester
- Experiencing Chester
- Making Chester
- Connecting Chester
- Visiting Chester

The next phase of the Chester Northgate development aims to create a new flagship residential community of over 400 sustainable homes, including affordable homes, in the heart of the historic city. It will also deliver public spaces and supporting infrastructure to

support economic growth by attracting investment and increasing footfall.

A Pre-Development Agreement has been signed by CWaC with VINCI UK Developments Ltd, who will deliver the scheme through a joint venture with ION Property Developments Ltd. This partnership brings together extensive experience in urban regeneration and a shared commitment to delivering high-quality, sustainable development.

Chester One City Plan, Making group Chair, Andy Farrall, said: "The Northgate Project is one of the One City Plan's highest priorities. It will make a huge contribution to the future of the place, building upon the successful Northgate 1 scheme and other recent investments in the City. This is a significant milestone to its delivery.

"All One City Plan working groups will be positively contributing to and collaborating in the design and development of the project to create a new mixed use scheme that reinforces the city centre and strengthens it as a place to live, do business and enjoy."



The scheme will re-purpose existing buildings where possible and demolish any buildings at the end of their life to open up a forgotten quarter of the city centred around Hamilton Place, and maximise its proximity to the vibrant retail and leisure areas of Northgate, including the award winning Chester Market and Storyhouse, successful restaurants and Picturehouse Cinema, the magnificent Chester Cathedral, Watergate Street and Town Hall Square.

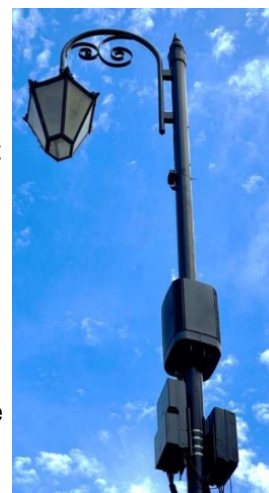
A spokesperson for VINCI ION said: "We look forward to replacing the 1960s empty shops and buildings with a range of new modern and sustainable homes that will be a major boost for the city, helping drive its future growth and success."

The latest update from the One City Plan is that the first provider offering increased 4G and 5G mobile coverage in the City Centre is Virgin Media O2. The locations were chosen to provide maximum capacity whilst respecting

the city's rich architectural heritage but with minimum disruption. The first phase of the network will particularly benefit areas previously having poor coverage across the city centre including Northgate Street, Foregate Street and Eastgate Street with more phased coverage later in the year.

Bense Burnett, Chester OCP Experience Group Chair, said: "This initiative marks a significant step towards becoming a SMART, digitally connected city and serves as the foundation for future digital advancements.

Ibis has signed a franchised agreement with



property developer TAG Chester to open a 144-room hotel in Chester city centre next to the canal, it is expected to open from 2028.

Purple Flag Award Chester has retained the prestigious Purple Flag accreditation for its evening and night-time economy. Areas awarded the Purple Flag are recognised for providing a vibrant and diverse mix of dining, entertainment and culture while promoting the safety and wellbeing of visitors and residents.

It's a double celebration this year, along with retaining the Purple Flag status (held by the city since 2018), Chester will also be hosting this year's Purple Flag awards on 17 March.

Finally, Chester is the strongest performing North West city in the UK's beleaguered hospitality sector, bucking a trend of 0.8% decline in new licensed venues in London with an increase in 2% for the historic city. All five of the country's fastest-growing hospitality cities are located in the North and Scotland.

What does it mean for us? See page 7

## Our thanks to our Chair ....

As residents of Westminster Park will probably concur, this is a remarkably pleasant place to live, to bring up children, to shop, to pursue sports and enjoy nature - all on one's doorstep. When I was younger, if I had given it any consideration at all, I would have said that this was due to 'the authorities' making sure that the infrastructure was in place to ensure that the area was kept clean, safe and habitable and that public funds were put to good public use. Many years later, older not wiser but more aware, I realise that the community should have a vested interest in ensuring that these 'authorities' are held accountable for local affairs.

As Chair of the Residents' Association for the past 7 years, Jennifer Crew has quietly undertaken to represent views of residents at

council meetings and hearings relating to the area. She has regularly liaised with our councillors, ensuring that decisions are reached on environmental, educational and welfare issues to the benefit of us all. Her organisational skills have also been put to brilliant use in the many events that have become a regular part of the Westminster Park calendar including the Christmas Lights' Switch-on and the Community Fun

Day. Her deft and elegant touch is evident in the content and design of a much-appreciated newsletter. There have been many challenges; global, local and personal over this time and Jennifer has dealt with them all with characteristic competence, intelligence and dignity ensuring that

Westminster Park continues to evolve as a welcoming and vibrant environment for us all.

Jennifer has decided to hand over the reins and we would like to thank her for the many ways in which she has made an invaluable contribution to the

community's well-being. She will be greatly missed as Chair, although being who she is, we suspect that she will still keep a weather eye on local developments and we're delighted that she will continue on the committee as Newsletter Editor - that's just the kind of person she is!



Jennifer and Penny White enjoy cream tea in the garage during Covid—a 'Thank You' for her work in helping the community during those strange and difficult times.



## Chester One City Plan—what does it mean for us?

### So, what does it mean for us, in Westminster Park?

Perhaps the main aspect is 'connectivity and accessibility.' There are currently a lot of road works underway, all essential and necessary, but causing residents living south of the river much inconvenience and time. The bridge has been damaged again and is partly blocked off for pedestrians. The Overleigh roundabout work to ease congestion has not yet started and has been repeatedly delayed.

It is maybe worth reminding newcomers that plans for an additional river crossing were abandoned and it seems there is no way forward on that, so queues will only get longer if the area south of the river is further developed by additional housing and road surfaces worsen.

Grosvenor bridge is Grade 1 listed which complicates repairs. When it is closed for any reason, traffic has to be directed via

Handbridge, across the even older one-way bridge.

Bus services from our area are limited, with Hough Green being better served but still a walk away from our estate. The bus stop along the Wrexham Road at Jigsaw Nursery has no crossing, an issue which our Councillors and MP are seeking to address.

When Kings Moat was planned, arguments were made by the developers that people could, should and would walk or cycle into

Chester, but the cycleway seems little used except at school opening and closing times. Similar arguments were made for the Decoy Farm development at the bottom of Lache Lane. Although some work has been done to cut back trees and ivy along pavements, it needs to be regularly maintained, and improved, if pedestrians are to be encouraged.

But with council budgets stretched, will any of this be done to fulfil the delivery plan for those living south of the river?



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## Children's mental health week

Belgrave Primary School has been proudly marking a number of special events this term, including Children's Mental Health Week. Our week opened with an assembly inspired by Place2Be's Children's Mental Health Week. The theme this year was 'This is My Place' based around belonging and how we can feel a sense of belonging and help others feel like they belong.

The whole school has embraced the theme with enthusiasm, taking part in activities, discussions, songs, and creative tasks that help children understand the importance of looking after their wellbeing. It has been a wonderful opportunity for pupils to express themselves, support one another, and build positive habits that strengthen their emotional resilience. Moments like these remind us how important it is to nurture not only academic growth but the whole child, and we are delighted to share these experiences with our school community.

We had a particular focus on singing and how this helps reach parts of the brain that other activities can't do.

In Reception the focus on love and friendship tied in nicely with Valentine's Day! Children have been talking about the things we love about ourselves and each other.

All children have been celebrating feeling included, safe and comfortable, creating maps of all the different places we belong with wonderful ideas.

## Katie at Kreative Rooms writes...

A little update from Kreative Room, above the Westminster Park shops.

Thank you everybody for a fantastic year. As a thank you, we've started Fizz Fridays, a relaxed end of week treat - a glass of fizz whilst getting pampered and having your hair done - a great way to ease into the weekend!

Our treatment room is home to two established local beauty brands: Cheshire Browtique offers brows and microblading, specialising in soft, natural, low-maintenance results. Catherine Reed Beauty offers massage treatments, from proper relaxation to easing out everyday tension and tight shoulders. On the hair side we work with O&M colour and products, focusing on hair health, a low-toxic approach and a calm, friendly space you can properly relax in.

If you're already a regular....thank you again. And if you're nearby and haven't popped in for a while, we're right upstairs and ready to go with all your hair needs.

We will look forward to welcoming you soon.

## It's all go at the WI!

The New Year began with a demonstration from Pippa Lace who prepared Indian snacks and shared some of her tips. In February we had a talk on the Blue Plaques of Chester. We have been very active too, taking part in the Chester Santa Dash and entering a darts team in the Cheshire Federation Competition.



In the coming months we have talks about Staying Safe

Online, Victorian Chester and Robot Companion cats. Alongside those we will be visiting the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool to see The Turner Exhibition and Elizabeth Gaskell's House in Manchester.

Meanwhile, our Chat and Craft group will be having a go at Needle Felting, Dotting, Fabric Tulips, Birthday Card Piercing and Iris Card Folding.

Come and try us - first three visits free! Contact Jane 07801 184570 for more info.

## Golden Brownies

This term we congratulated Alice and Sophie for gaining their Gold Awards, the highest award a Brownie can achieve. We wish them well as they progress to Guides.

Thank you to two parents who kindly organised activities to celebrate the Chinese Year of the Horse. The girls enjoyed painting, dressing up and experimenting with chopsticks.



## Come and have a go at croquet

Croquet is essentially just 6 hoops, 4 balls, 2 mallets and a patch of grass. But it's also a game of skill and strategy, and offers friendship, fun and competition. Moreover, it doesn't need strength, so men and women play on an equal footing.

The handicap system allows people to successfully play at all levels and our members range from 25 to 87!

Interested to find out more? Played before but a long time ago? Come along to our taster session to learn all about the sport and



be introduced to one of the friendliest clubs in the North West based in Westminster Park.

Our **TASTER SESSIONS** are on **SATURDAY APRIL 18**, morning OR afternoon. Drinks are provided as is all equipment. Places are limited, so if you are interested in coming, please contact Sally Slater on 07711 374927 / springboard\_sally@hotmail.com Also look at [www.chestercroquet.club](http://www.chestercroquet.club) Come and have fun in the fresh air!

In March, Ruth and her Hearing Dog are visiting the Pack, to tell us how her dog changed her life and on Tuesday 24 March the Brownies are organising a Bingo night to raise funds for Hearing Dogs.

Meanwhile, excitement is building for our Pack Holiday at PGL in Shropshire in May....





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## Welcome to Chester 1824 - Lache and Westminster Park Local History Group

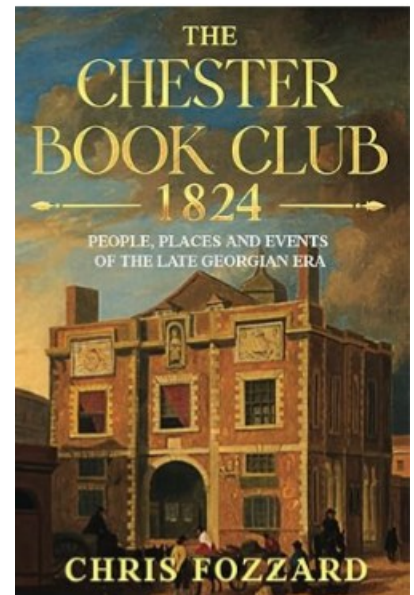
**Wednesday 4 March 7.30pm** Lache Community Centre, Hawthorn Road, Chester, CH4 8HX

Chris Fozzard is a Chester-based local historian and writer. He's also a regular speaker at venues in and around the city, including at last year's Chester Literature Festival. He's had two books published to date and will talk about the most recent of these, *The Chester Book Club, 1824*, which shines a light on a little-known society and the world they inhabited two centuries ago. Much of the content of the talk is based on newspaper reports of the time. Some of you may recall

Chris speaking to us previously about his first book, *A Short History of Newton Hall, Chester*.

Chris will have copies of his latest book available to buy on the night. All welcome, no need to book. £2 pp on the door. Carly will have Café La-Chez open from 7-7.30pm for tea, coffee, soft drinks and snacks before the meeting.

**Wednesday 6 May 2026 at 7.30pm.** 'The Architects who have shaped Chester' by Stewart Shuttleworth  
Lache Community Centre.



## Chester Golf Club—125 years old!

Chester Golf Club, the city's oldest and most historic golf club, is proudly celebrating its 125th Anniversary.

Founded in 1901, the club has spent more than a century shaping the local golfing landscape, welcoming generations of players and building a strong sense of community that continues to thrive today.

The parkland course on two levels is bordered by the River Dee and Chester Racecourse and is less than a mile from the city centre. Its unique setting provides both stunning scenery and a memorable playing experience for golfers of all abilities

To commemorate this major milestone, the club has planned a special yearlong programme of events for members and



guests. A highlight of the celebrations is the unveiling of a striking wooden wolf sculpture created by Andy Burgess, a highly regarded wood sculptor based in Knutsford. Inspired by Chester's historic wolf emblem, the sculpture will serve as a lasting tribute to the club's rich history.

The golf club welcomes golfers of all abilities. The clubhouse has a restaurant, function room that can accommodate up to 100 people, and a bar equipped with Sky Sports.

Social Membership is available for those who want to benefit from the Club's varied social events and clubhouse facilities.

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I know in the past that you have published a 'letter to the editor' or two and, having read in the December WP News that the WP Gardening Club are 'hanging up their trowels', I wanted to make a point about the organisations that help make our community as good to live in as it is.

I have served on quite a few community committees over the forty years we have lived in Westminster Park, from Mother and Toddler groups to Evergreen – full circle! I know those who are busy bringing up children and working hard to support themselves do not have much time to volunteer in the community, and many do not like the idea of being on a committee, but for those who are newly retired, empty nesters, new to the area or on their own, it is a good way to meet new people, get involved, find out how things work and inject new energy, ideas and thoughts to what we do in Westminster Park.

I did read recently that sadly there will not be a Summer Fun Day this year which is hugely popular and a great community event. Likewise, Evergreen provides interest, friendship and outings for the older members of the community as it has for the fourteen years it has existed. Many of the committee were founder committee members, which means they are all fourteen years older, and will not be continuing for ever.

I do hope there are those living here who will get involved, or one by one these groups will fade away which will be a great loss to Westminster Park.

Penny White

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## WP Gardening club closes, but Kings Moat GC starts up

Thank you to everyone who attended our first Gardening Club meeting at Grosvenor Garden Centre - it was great to see such an encouraging level of enthusiasm.

We were delighted by the warm welcome from Grosvenor Garden Centre staff, who have kindly offered for us to meet in the restaurant again. We'll also be exploring opportunities for evening and weekend meetings to ensure that as many people as possible can join in the Club.

Members were treated to a very informative talk from Vince, Plant Manager at the Garden Centre, who shared practical advice on preparing new-build gardens, choosing the right plant for the right place at the right time, and the importance of staking trees correctly. He also spoke about challenges faced by growers, the importance of plant quality, ideas for creating a monthly programme of topics, and gave insights into his own garden and approach to planting.



We have ambitious plans for a wide range of Club activities and would love members to take the lead in developing these, with plenty of support from one another.

It was particularly lovely to welcome members from the Westminster Park Gardening Club, whose strong presence and encouragement were greatly appreciated.

Our next meeting will take place at 11am on Friday 6 March at the Grosvenor Garden Centre, where we hope to hold a seed swap. Support was also requested for forming a working party in April to help clear the pond on Neptune Street, preparing it for spring and summer enjoyment.

If you'd like to support the Club with ideas, enthusiasm, or by leading an activity, please do get in touch - we'd love to hear from you. [gardeningclub@kingsmoatcommunity.co.uk](mailto:gardeningclub@kingsmoatcommunity.co.uk)  
Website: [www.kingsmoatcommunity.co.uk](http://www.kingsmoatcommunity.co.uk)

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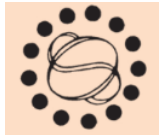
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## The Society of Thirteen

This society, formed in 1963, offers public lectures at the Grosvenor Museum on a wide range of subjects, given by local and national experts. From time to time, excursions are arranged to places or events of interest.



There is a £15 annual subscription and each lecture is £5.00 Non-members are welcome— £8.00 at the door. Refreshments are included. Meetings start at 7.30pm.

Our future programme is:  
16 March 2026: Finland, the Land of a Thousand Lakes with Sari Kaufmann  
13 April 2026: Life as a Mersey River Pilot with Stuart Wood  
18 May 2026: American Declaration of Independence by Dr. Michael Hopkins.  
We hope you can join us!

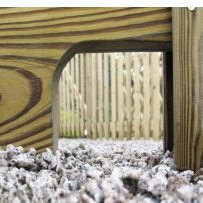
## Residents helped Hedgehog Watch, but we can all help further...

A couple of years ago we encouraged you to take part in Hedgehog Watch, organised by Chester Zoo. The report of the study, which saw 400+ residents across Chester using night-time cameras in their gardens, is now out. The map shows the location of WP residents who took part, the green spots indicate sightings of hedgehogs. Hedgehogs travel up to two miles to find food and a mate.



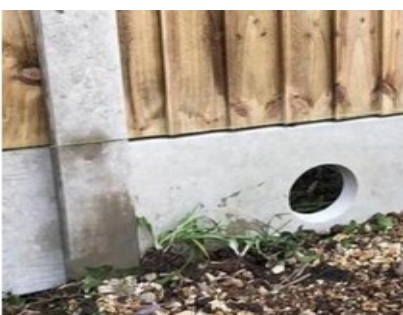
Food was by far the most important factor in attracting them: they were in 78% of gardens that supplied hedgehog food and 53% where bird food was left on the ground, but sightings fell when no food was left out.

But wooden fences round gardens, (or as separation between WP and King's Moat!) are often barriers that prevent them from finding either food or a mate. We can help by buying from fencers who can offer 'highway holes,' or making them ourselves in wooden fences.



In new developments, builders such as Taylor Wimpey have committed to support nature by integrating hedgehog highways into their schemes.

Examples of hedgehog friendly fencing





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## Titanic, GIs, Statues and Detectives ...

The Grosvenor Museum Society 2026 programme continues on Tuesday 10 March with a talk by Mike Royden on "Titanic Survivors", followed on Tuesday 14 April by "Oversexed and Over Here - GIs in Britain and my father's wartime experiences" by Rina Tillinger.

On Tuesday 12 May, in a change to the published programme, Richard Coakley will speak about the newly-installed statue of Thomas Brassey in its prominent position outside Chester Railway station, whilst the postponed talk by Barry Cave, "A Detective's Lot" will now take place on Tuesday 9 June.

All talks are held in the Lecture Theatre at the Grosvenor Museum and start at 7.30pm (doors open 7pm). Entry costs £3 for members, £6 for guests.

WP News is published by the Westminster Park Residents' Association with the understanding that from the information presented therein, there can be no responsibility as to the accuracy or legality of the content on the part of the WPR.A. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the WPR.A Editor or Committee.

## Your subs make a big difference

Thanks to everybody who has paid their £3 subscription for WPR.A. It helps pay for e.g. the Christmas lights and planters by the shops, this newsletter and projects such as the defibrillator installed at the shops.

On the membership form, you can also donate £2 to Friends of Westminster Park, who are making such a big difference to our largest local amenity. You can check if you have paid on our website: [www.wp-ra.org.uk](http://www.wp-ra.org.uk), or you can check with me, Colin Dollimore Membership Officer on 01244 629167



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 Handbridge Park Ward'  
[matt.carter@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:matt.carter@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

### Clubs and organisations in Westminster Park

**Belgrave Badminton Club:** Khal 07711 009041  
 07786 080089  
**Belgrave Pre-School:** Ashley Middleton 01244 671202  
 07761 816891  
**Bowls:** Martin Amesbury 01244 679271  
**Bridge Club:** Nick Ryan 01244 675923  
**Chester Road Runners:** Gill Warburton  
[chesterroadrunners@gmail.com](mailto:chesterroadrunners@gmail.com)  
**Cricket:** Tirumala Dayama  
[dayamatirumala@googlegmail.com](mailto:dayamatirumala@googlegmail.com)  
**Croquet:** Sally Slater 07711 374927  
**Digital Friends** Keith Scott  
**Evergreen (55+):** Sandra Magilton  
 01244 677373  
**Friends of Westminster Park:**  
 Steve Telford 07976 712339  
**Junior Football:** Jonathan 07747 848676  
**Lache & Westminster Park Local History Group:** Linda Shuttleworth 01244 679791  
**Local Vocals Michael Reynolds** 07786  
 3239460 [michaelreynoldsmusic@gmail.com](mailto:michaelreynoldsmusic@gmail.com)  
**National Women's Register:** nwr.org.uk  
**Nordic Walking Grp**  
 Elizabeth Kerley [kerley@walxwithkerley.co.uk](mailto:kerley@walxwithkerley.co.uk)  
**Shotokan Karate Club:** Dave Craggs

**St Mary's Church Office:** 01244 671202  
**Tennis - Glan Aber Club:** Sue Britton  
 07775 577995  
**Westminster Park Community Centre:**  
 01244 671243  
**Westminster Park Walking for Health Club:** Alan Brooks 01244 674998  
**WI, Handbridge** Jane 07801 184570  
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