



# Holmes Chapel Partnership Community Newsletter Issue 123 OCTOBER 2024

## WELCOME TO THE OCTOBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Last month we were back to school and this month promises a short holiday again already! The life of the village has got back into the swing of things after the summer with plenty of activities on offer, as you can see from the articles and adverts in this issue .



We are working towards the Christmas Market on **Sunday December 1st** - for a full update of what's in store, see inside!

**Wanted - more Tour Guides!** Our original group of young people are moving on with their lives but we still have requests for the Harry Tours.



We warned you that it would look worse before it looked better! At last the restoration of the pond in the **Dane Meadow** got underway in September. Now all we need is rain to fill it up again! More details inside.



What should the speed limits be on the roads in and around Holmes Chapel?



There's a great story to read from the u3a Creative Writing group. It's based on local history and features names and places you may recognise!

Best Wishes from your Partnership Team!  
For more information visit [www.hcpartnership.org.uk](http://www.hcpartnership.org.uk)

## Chairman's News October 2024



As we move into Autumn the Partnership gets very busy with the Christmas Market and Fair, which is now the biggest social event in the village calendar. This year, on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024, it will be the fourth time that we will close the road and allow around 50 market stalls to set-up in the centre of the village. In addition to the stalls, we have a food and drink zone, and Joe White's funfair. The event now attracts over 2,000 visitors and provides a significant boost to our businesses in the centre of our village, together with an opportunity for dozens of local businesses to sell their wares.

But it is also the time that locals see friends and acquaintances which perhaps they have not seen since the previous Christmas Market. For me, it's also a time that I see many new faces, often with three generations of their families in tow. And it is this aspect that I would like to ponder and reflect on here. Indeed, I often think, if only we could get 1% of those visiting the market to help the Partnership throughout the year, we could do so much more to support our village and community.

Volunteering is a powerful way to connect with your community, and the Partnership offers a wealth of opportunities for residents to engage and make a difference. Whether you are looking to contribute your skills, meet new people, or gain experience, volunteering has numerous benefits. The village is known for its close-knit community spirit. By joining the Partnership, you can build relationships with residents and foster a sense of belonging. Engaging in community projects, from organizing events like the market to supporting causes, helps create a supportive environment where everyone feels valued.

One person who knows all about putting something back into our local community is David Savage, and I am pleased to say that David has agreed to join the Partnership and become our new Treasurer from January 2025. In the meantime, he is getting his feet under the table and liaising with Richard Garton our current Treasurer to enable a smooth transition over the Christmas break.

So, if you are reading this and thinking, \* yes I should get more involved in my village community then go to our website now and put your name down to be a volunteer at our Christmas Market, <https://www.hcpartnership.org.uk/jobs/christmas-market-stewards> . All we need is a couple of hours of your time, as we work with a rota allowing people to offer time before, during or after the market depending on what time you can spare.

And finally, by the time you read this article we will have moved to our Autumn operating schedule for the Harry's Home Village Tours (#HHVT) and have completed over 60 Guided tours around our village. Whilst the global media interest has been quite phenomenal the resulting visitor count has been equally impressive. I am told that the number of train tickets sold with Holmes Chapel as the destination has increased fourfold over the last two years, but that's only part of the story. Our local hotels and B&B's have also seen increased bed-night revenue due to #HHVT, many of which have come to us via Manchester Airport from all points on the globe. We said that when we started the Tours that we would use any profits made to support the Partnership and fund projects to enhance the village. On this topic all I can say is that Harry will be making an appearance at our local Station very soon.

Peter Whiers  
Chairman  
Holmes Chapel Partnership

## Christmas Market Update

Plans for the 2024 Christmas Market and Fair are well under way - after all, it's only two months away! The event is always held on the first Sunday in December, which happens to be the 1st of the month so we need to be organized!

The road closure has been approved, the stage has been hired, businesses and residents are being informed, the fairground rides have been booked and The Villages Mag front page has been reserved.



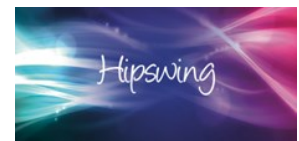
### Stalls

All indoor and outdoor stalls are currently full HOWEVER, the application form is still open on our website for anyone who would like to join the [reserve list](#). Things will and do change between now and the event so those on the reserve list do generally end up with a stall - even if it's a little last minute sometimes!

### Sponsors

We are currently in the process of recruiting sponsors for the event. If this is something you would like to get involved with please email [chair@hcpartnership.org.uk](mailto:chair@hcpartnership.org.uk) for more details.

Thank you to all the local businesses that have already agreed to sponsor the event. These are:



### Volunteers

And if you'd like to get involved and help out on the day we're always on the look out for volunteers. You won't have to be on duty for the whole event, you could just volunteer for an hour and there are plenty of things to do before and after the event is in progress.

For an idea of the sort of things we need help with please visit our website: <https://www.hcpartnership.org.uk/xmas-volunteers>





## Harry's Home Village Tours Need You!



Holmes Chapel Partnership recruited a team of young people to be Tour Guides back in the spring expecting that, at the end of September, the season for tours would draw to a close.

There is, however, still demand for the Tours but many of our Tour Guides were only available for the summer and have moved on to Higher Education or permanent employment - and in the case of one, has finished her course and moved back to her native USA!

The Tour Guides have really enjoyed the opportunity to meet people from all over the

world, share their enthusiasm for Mr Styles and promote Holmes Chapel. Most have been involved in media interviews, some have been on the TV - and been paid for the privilege. As casual employment, it has a lot to offer!

You don't have to have any direct connections with Harry beyond your knowledge of his music and persona (although that of course is an added bonus for Harries) but you do need the confidence, willingness and initiative to engage with our visitors to make sure they get the most out of their Holmes Chapel experience.

If you think you could step into their shoes, we would love to hear from you. Please contact us at [info@hcupartnership.org.uk](mailto:info@hcupartnership.org.uk)

## New Treasurer

David Savage responded to this advert which appeared in the July edition of the Community Newsletter.

David has masses of experience in community affairs and was a member of the Parish Council for many years, so we are very pleased to have recruited him! He will be getting involved in the Christmas Market and learning the ropes with Richard Garton, who, as Treasurer, has done an excellent job of sorting out the finances which have become considerably more complicated since we started running the Harry's Home Village Tours!

We look forward to working with David and thank Richard who will enjoy a bit more leisure time from now on!



## The Graffiti Issue

As you will have seen in the September issue of the Community Newsletter, Network Rail has now provided boards on which the fans of Harry Styles can write messages to their idol. This is an acknowledgement by Network Rail that the compulsion of the visitors to leave their mark on what has become a sort of shrine is overwhelming. Even the national media are in sympathy with the move.



Lucy Mangan from The Guardian wrote:

*"I think it is all rather lovely. Usually fandom – especially teenage female fandom, which forms the core though not the entirety of Styles' followers – is treated with disrespect bordering on contempt. This time, the powers that be have accommodated it as best they can. A rare grace note that almost made me shed a tear."*

Iain Davidson, a Holmes Chapel resident, has taken a deeper dive into graffiti and its significance:

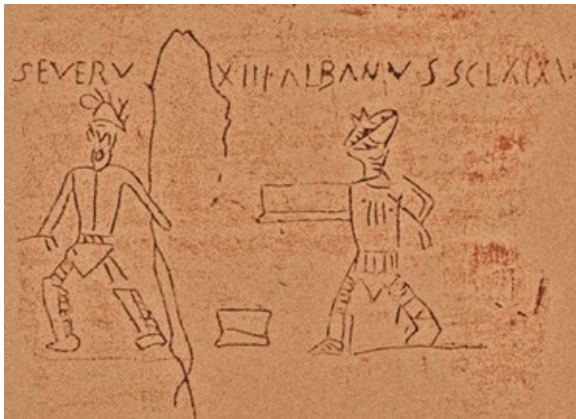
### Is It Just Graffiti?

"You show me a power that is strong enough to bring sun to the darkest days."

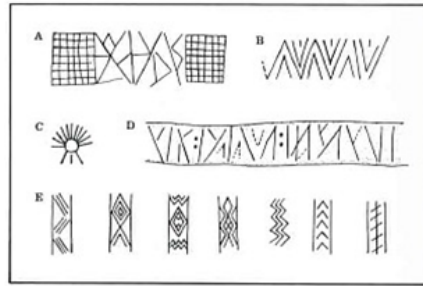
Graffiti is a practice with a long and contentious history. Since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has largely been associated with gang culture and antisocial behaviour, but examples of these informal markings, this human urge to leave a mark of existence, commemoration, or communication, have their traces much further back in history. Graffiti is found the world over, in various contexts and from all time periods. From thousand-year-old Viking runic inscriptions inside Maeshowe on Orkney and crusader graffiti in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, to the walls of Elvis Presley's Graceland estate and the politically motivated murals of artists like the infamous Banksy.

But not all graffiti is created equal. The term graffiti comes from the Italian word *graffiato* "scratched" and was originally used in reference to markings found on the walls of ancient Rome and Pompei. In these original contexts, graffiti were an accepted way of communicating with others and did not carry the negative social baggage that they so often do today. Graffiti provides us with a glimpse of society and individuals of the period in which it was written, from a perspective often outside the 'official' version of history provided by those in positions of power at the time. It gives us what scholars have called "a source of insight into social, political and domestic life".

Cont/...



Graffiti from Pompei



76 Proto-writing  
 A Symbols on spiked object, Skara Brae  
 B Zig-zag symbol outside House 7, Skara Brae  
 C Sun symbol in chamber at Newgrange  
 D Symbols on bed in House 7, Skara Brae  
 E Symbols on the Brodgar Stone, Stenness

Graffiti from Orkney

In Holmes Chapel, we have our own increasingly celebrated example of such graffiti in the form of Harry's Wall on Twemlow Viaduct. The viaduct, built in 1841, is a Grade II listed monument, protected for its special architectural or historic interest. The structure, however, represents just one stage in the history of our village. What we see in Harry's Wall is the manifestation of another chapter of the village's history being literally written out on the walls of the viaduct's piers. Since 2013, when Harry was filmed scratching his name onto the stonework of the viaduct, countless names, messages of love, and song lyrics have been added, long since obliterating the singer's name.

If you take time to read the messages, you will sense a theme, very much reflecting Styles' call to 'treat people with kindness' - you will see 'TPWK' recurring often, along with hearts, and the word 'love', as well as more affecting messages of thanks and salvation.

These are notably similar to messages left at memorials to David Bowie, another famous singer who commanded a devoted following. These messages represent a community coming together, supporting each other, expressing thanks to an idol beyond their earthly grasp - this is a shrine to Harry, a place to play an active part in the positive culture he encourages. It is for this reason that fans are drawn from around the world to leave their mark, to be a part of something bigger than themselves.



Harry's Wall paints for us a picture of part of contemporary society. It is a reflection of current events and concerns, of unfiltered behaviour, of attitudes towards mental health and sexuality, expressed by an inclusive group of passionate, positive, supportive young people coming of age and building their own culture as a way to cope in an increasingly complex world. It is a living monument to things that are important now, and as such is a vital resource and integral part of the ever-evolving history of Holmes Chapel.



## What do you think about the speed limits in and around Holmes Chapel?

In mid September we received the following email from Paula Nicholas

Good Afternoon, I hope you are well? 😊

Have we ever considered moving the 50 speed limit (currently at the cemetery on the A50) to further up the A50, past the Cranage estate please?

Concerns -

1. A number of crashes coming out of the village (north), one quite serious recently.
2. The lack of signage to highlight exit/entrance to the Vicarage hotel/pub, is an accident waiting to happen.
3. The approach to the village (south) frequently shows speeds of almost 50 at the cemetery (this probably why the PCSO is often found at the top of that road)

A limit of 30 would be ideal, with concealed entrance signs, though I expect this would be a step too far without street lights, but even 40 starting near the Cranage estate (south) to help alert drivers to start to reduce speed could be beneficial.

Just wondered if you had any thoughts please?

Holmes Chapel has grown further out into the surrounding countryside in the past decade but it seems like the appropriate speed limits for residential areas have really not kept pace with the developments.

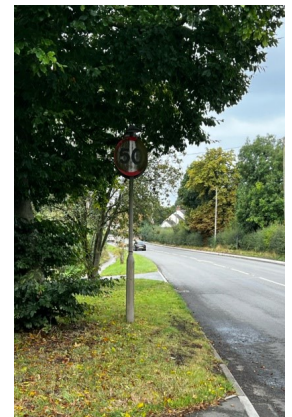
**A50 north** – Paula makes the case that 50mph is too fast. Although heading north, what with the tree and the moss, actually spotting the 50 mph sign is a job in itself!

**A50 south** The Bluebell Green development residents are even worse off as they have to join the A50 with no speed limit whatsoever, the Dunkirk Farm housing development is before the 40mph limit too. Just after the Croco comes Alum Court just within the 40mph limit. The actual 30mph limit suitable for a residential area is only after Victoria Avenue.

**A54** Middlewich Road. Why is there a 40mph limit straight away as you get off the M6 and head west but no restriction heading east when there are more houses? The Cottons estate does exit onto Middlewich Road at a point where there is a 40mph limit at least. But a pedestrian crossing in a 40mph limit on a bend?

**A535** The former 30mph has been moved out to the top of Twemlow Bank to accommodate Saltersford Gardens and its accompanying roundabout. However it doesn't seem to stop drivers speeding along Macclesfield Road!

The Parish Council are well aware of these problems and have been trying to work with Cheshire East Highways to make the speed limits more appropriate to their locations. Unfortunately neither the residents nor the Parish Council have the power to make these sorts of changes - even though we are the people who live with the consequences. If you have opinions on these matters, please get in touch, like Paula Nicholas, who emailed [info@hccpartnership.org.uk](mailto:info@hccpartnership.org.uk).



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## Speedwatch

At long last we have the go-ahead to re-start our Speedwatch sessions, so we will be out on Macclesfield Road in our hi-viz with the speed gun monitoring the traffic speeds.

We chose Macclesfield Road because it is very dangerous, especially for children coming from Saltersford Gardens and Victoria Mills who have to cross it to get to the Hermitage Primary School. We have campaigned for:

- THE RESTORATION OF THE SCHOOL WARNING SIGN ON THE BRIDGE
- A PEDESTRIAN CROSSING BETWEEN VICTORIA MILLS AND HERMITAGE DRIVE OR A SCHOOL CROSSING PATROL
- THE TRANSFER OF THE 20MPH LIMIT FLASHING SCHOOL SIGNS TO MACCLESFIELD ROAD FROM HERMITAGE DRIVE

By recording all vehicles travelling in excess of 35mph our Speedwatch sessions have amply demonstrated the need for one or more of the above, if children and parents are to walk safely to school. The alternative is yet more car journeys and congestion.

The Speedwatch team also has permission to monitor speeds on Chester Road at the junction with Grasmere Drive but we currently don't have the man / womanpower to do it. Each team has to have 3 members: one to use the speed gun, one to call out the registration of any vehicle speeding and a third to write it down along with the time and the speed. The information is passed to the PCSO who sends a letter out to the owner of the vehicle. The team monitors for half an hour.

Could you spare half an hour every couple of weeks to slow down the traffic around Holmes Chapel. If so, we would love to hear from you. Contact [info@hccpartnership.org.uk](mailto:info@hccpartnership.org.uk).

## Holmes Chapel Chorus

A quote from John Rutter.

*"Choral music is not one of life's frills. It's something that goes to the very heart of our humanity, our sense of community, and our souls. You express, when you sing, your soul in song."*



It's never too late to join a choir and if this is something you've always wanted to do, but didn't have the courage, please do come along to Holmes Chapel Chorus. We rehearse every Monday evening 7.30pm - 9.30pm at Holmes Chapel Methodist Church and you will be made very welcome. We would particularly like some more tenors and basses to join us. We rehearse for 2 concerts per year (Christmas and Summer) and our summer programme is mainly songs from musical theatre and contemporary pop.

Rehearsals restart on Monday 23rd September 2024, when we will be looking at our programme of music for our Carol Concert on Friday 20th December 2024.

We have a new accompanist joining us in September - Wendy Nugent. Wendy is a superb pianist and accompanist and we are extremely lucky to have her joining us. She will be a great

asset to the choir. The Chorus are just about to begin their 40th Anniversary year, so if you or any past members would like to join us for this very special year, just come along to any rehearsal on Monday evenings. If interested, please come along to any rehearsal or contact our MD, Julie Barker at [julie.barker1952@gmail.com](mailto:julie.barker1952@gmail.com). We look forward to meeting you!



## The Holmes Chapel Health Centre

Following a national ballot of GP's the BMA (British Medical Association) have advised GP's that they should push back re current proposals to reduce central government funding. This advice has been handed down in several forms, but the most significant direct effect is that the BMA are advising GPs to limit patient contacts (ie appointments in all forms, face to face, telephone etc) to no more than 25 per day per GP.



As you would expect our Health Centre here in Holmes Chapel operates at a significantly higher level than this figure of 25 contacts per day per GP. Dr Tate and the team have decided to take on board the BMA advice to reduce the number of same day appointments by 3 per day per GP working that day. There is still a significant amount of admin that means realistically GP's are working above this figure of 25 per day.

This is an immensely tough decision for the team but it does show that whilst they take the advice, they believe patient care is still the most important issue.

In reality this means that in the short term full capacity will be reached by the triage system a little earlier each day than previously experienced - under normal circumstances it rarely reaches capacity each day. However once capacity is reached then patients will be referred to NHS 111 for onward care. The GPs have also decided on the advice of the BMA not to use a number of templates and processes introduced by hospitals to save them time but generates work in General Practice, such as not following the Advice and Guidance process and also referral templates. Please be assured that all referrals will still be completed but will be in the form of a letter.

Phil Holt, the Practice Manager, Dr Tate and the Patient Participation Group (PPG) are in full agreement that this news story needs to be broadcast by both the Health Centre and the PPG. They want patients to have the opportunity to contact our new MP in an attempt to change central government's thinking concerning these funding cuts to primary care.

Please remember the figures:

90% of patient contact is with Primary Care, (GP's etc).

8% of NHS budget goes into Primary Care whilst 92% goes to Secondary Care (Hospitals).

Below is a link to the fuller documentation regarding the BMA advice should you wish to read around the topic more deeply.

<https://www.bma.org.uk/our-campaigns/gp-campaigns/patients/gps-are-on-your-side>

To summarise:

- HCHC are only slightly reducing the number of same day appointments available each day This is not strike action, it is collective action which is aimed at encouraging central government to re think the current funding strategy.
- We advise all HCHC patients to channel their frustration by contacting our new MP to help focus her mind on this key matter. She can be contacted by email on: [sarah.russell.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:sarah.russell.mp@parliament.uk)

### Patient Participation Group

## Harry's Home Village Tour Shortlisted for Awards

Holmes Chapel's Harry's Home Village Tour has been shortlisted for two prestigious Prolific North Marketing Awards 2024. The Tour has been recognised in the categories of **Best Tourist and Leisure Campaign** and **Best Not-for-Profit Campaign** at the awards which celebrate exceptional campaigns, brilliant teams and bold leaders from across the North of England and Scotland.

The marketing and PR campaign for Harry's Home Village Tour has been delivered pro bono by Lower Withington based, Calvin Marketing. Working alongside volunteers from Holmes Chapel Partnership the team have raised global awareness of the walking tour welcoming international visitors from as far afield as Bangladesh, Australia and Canada over the summer months.

Karoline Peach, Account Director at Calvin Marketing, commented: "We are incredibly proud of the global impact we have created with Harry's Home Village Tour. Our team has worked tirelessly alongside the Partnership to ensure the campaign not only highlighted the charm of the village but also promoted community safety and heritage conservation.

"This recognition means a great deal to everyone involved in delivering the Tours, including the wider Holmes Chapel community which has been hugely supportive. It reflects the passion, collective effort and dedication of all those involved."

Setting a new benchmark for community focused marketing, Calvin delivered two crucial messages: promoting safe walking routes for tourists and protecting the iconic Twemlow Viaduct from further 'vandalism' by Harry fans.

The agency's strategically timed campaign ensured global media exposure. This included securing TV interviews on NBC America, BBC News, CNN, and Sky News, alongside a raft of further media interviews and feature articles. Within the first six weeks of the campaign, Calvin secured 885 media mentions, reaching a total audience of 1.9 billion people.

Such has been the success of the Harry's Home Village Tour this summer, that the initiative has been extended into the Autumn with tickets now available for Saturday Tours until the end of October.

The Prolific North Marketing Awards 2024 will take place at Manchester United Old Trafford Football Club on 31<sup>st</sup> October.



## Parish Council News



### Reclaim the Pavements



Last year, the Parish Council launched a campaign to 'Reclaim the Pavements' in Holmes Chapel. This involved walking the pavements of the village and looking for hedges, trees etc.... that are overgrown and impeding the footpaths. We wrote letters to households and contacted Cheshire East and other bodies, where vegetation was overtaking the pavements We had some good results with many hedges and vegetation being cut back.

A huge thank you to all those households who listened and acted on our concerns. Now the bird nesting season is over, it's a great time to cut back your hedges and trees! Representatives from the Parish Council are once more going to be walking the streets and we will send letters to households where simply cutting back vegetation would make the pavements much more accessible to all residents. Why not make a head start and cut back your hedge today! Thank you!

### Public Meeting – an update

The Parish Council were delighted to meet with residents and hear your views about the proposed housing development on London Road. We took these views on board and have responded to the Developers sharing these concerns. A report of what we have submitted can be found on our website by clicking this link: <https://www.holmeschapelparishcouncil.gov.uk/post/parish-council-s-response-to-the-london-road-development-consultation-1>

### Olympian Tribute

In honour of the fantastic achievements of our two Olympians Tom and Emily Ford, the Parish Council has agreed to paint the telephone box outside Mandevilles gold and place a plaque acknowledging their achievements.

We also plan to host a short ceremony to "open" the phone box followed by a drinks reception at a suitable location, for the Olympians and some invited guests.

### Cheshire East Consultation on Household Waste Collections

Have your say! Respond to Cheshire East's consultation on household waste collections before their deadline of 20<sup>th</sup> October.

More information by clicking the following link: [Household Waste Collection Consultation 2024 \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/household-waste-collection-consultation-2024)

### 'Tuesday Friends'

**Do you need a change from sitting at home?  
Is Tuesday Friends for you?**

**An opportunity to come on your own, with a family member or a friend for a chat, cup of tea / coffee and cake.**



**A quiz on the tables if you fancy a challenge, live music and laughter are always part of the afternoon.**

**We look forward to seeing you on**

**8 October**

**at**

**Holmes Chapel Methodist Church**

**2.00 – 4.00pm**

No set charge but, if you are able, please pop a donation in the pot.

**Should you require more details, please telephone 01477 537679**



## Dane Meadow Update

It seemed in August that, with all the rain we had over the summer, everywhere in the Dane Meadow was getting overgrown and, especially on wet days, some of the **paths** were almost impassable. The Friends of Dane Meadow did their bit in their monthly sessions and then Ansa brought in their mowing machinery to tackle the path edges, the picnic area and the parking spaces, so by September the paths were easily navigable once more.

The contractors came and mowed the **Wildflower Meadow**. They baled and removed the cut grass because otherwise it would rot down and enrich the soil, making it even more difficult for the wild flowers to compete with the grass. We look forward to next year's crop of perennial wild flowers!

The big news of September was the restoration of **the pond**! You may remember from photos in previous issues of the Newsletter that the liner was no longer watertight and consequently the water level dropped, the area got overgrown and was mostly dry during the summer months. This pond project was going to happen earlier in the year but by the time the contractors were ready to start, the frogs had started mating and producing frog spawn so a delay was called for!

The self-seeded willow trees from the edge were removed as they were sucking water out of the area and some of the vegetation at the back as well, so that it will be possible to walk around the pond.



The diggers made short work of scooping out the vegetation from the old pond. After a very wet start, the weather improved so that the contractors could install the new liner which has three layers. Hopefully, we will now be able to provide a pond habitat all year round and not just in winter.



The intention is for the pond to fill up naturally with the rain and run-off from the slope. The fencing is going to remain in place until the pond is full to protect the liner.



However, just after the work was finished we had over an inch of rain, so the process is well underway already! The spoil from the project has been left on the site and will hopefully provide the opportunity to plant some more wild flowers.

# Welcome to Anna, the new Minister for our Local Churches

### Anna writes,

'Hi, my name is Anna Carrington, and I have recently joined the area to be Methodist Minister at Goostrey and Holmes Chape I Methodist churches.

My husband, 9-year-old son and I moved to Holmes Chapel this Summer from a town called Farnham in Surrey.

For the past 3 years I have been studying at the Queens Foundation, which is an ecumenical theological college in Birmingham. As part of my training, I also gained experience of chaplaincy at the University of Surrey.

As a family, we enjoy watching movies and listening to music. I am currently (trying) to teach myself to play the bass guitar. I am a big musical theatre fan and love going to the theatre whenever I can.

We are looking forward to getting to know this area and getting involved in the life of the village!

A warm invitation to all to the **Harvest Celebration** at Holmes Chapel Methodist Church on Sunday 5 October at 10.00am. The service will be led by Revd Anna and the celebrations will also support Barnabus, the charity for the homeless and the Middlewich Food Bank.



## Home Grown

It's that time of the year when we're all picking fruit and vegetables and storing them for the winter.

The apple trees that we planted around the village are ready at different times, from September up to November: The Kid's Orange in the Dane Meadow will not be ready until mid October but the Discovery was ready in September. You can tell if an apple is ready to pick by carefully cradling it in your hand. Give it a little twist but if it doesn't come away easily then it's not ready to take.

In the beds at the Health Centre there are lots of vegetables that will be good until the spring. One of these is radicchio. This is slightly bitter but super in a salad. The kale is another of our vegetables that over winters well. Only take the lower leaves, never the top. This is because the plant will continue to grow but not without the top. To cook it, always strip away the central stem as it's a bit rough. Then chop the leaves and cook as you would spinach. Lovely with a knob of butter!

Many people are making green tomato chutney. It needs a few months to mature, so any made in the next few weeks will be perfect for Boxing Day lunch. And if you do make a big batch, consider giving some to Home Grown so we can sell it on our stall at the Christmas Market. We have a big project in the pipe line for next year.

Our next dig will be on **Saturday 5th October, 10am until noon**, when we will be planting our garlic. This will be ready to pick in July next year. We will also be having a visit from Robin Noon from the Northern Network and Groundworks Trust. He is interested in finding out what we do and how others could also benefit from what we do.





## Holmes Chapel Railway Station Corner

by Tony Wright - October 2024

This month I am pleased to say that a new team member has joined the Volunteers and Friends of Holmes Chapel Railway Station & Viaduct! Bill has been a passenger frequenting Holmes Chapel Railway Station for many years and knows the Station Master well. If you see Bill working on the Manchester or Crewe platforms, or elsewhere around the station, please say hello - he will be glad to meet you!



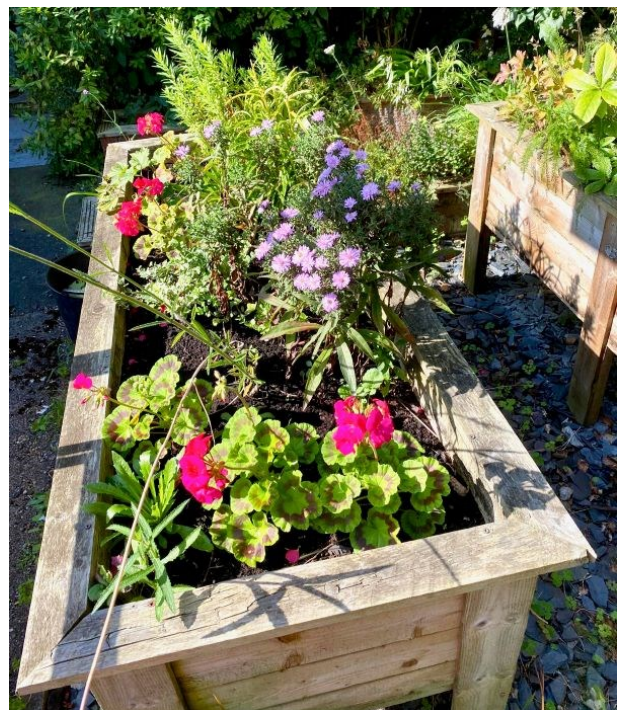
Another team member, Lindsay, who is our principal horticultural adviser took a photograph of the Michaelmas Daisies in one of the wooden planters on the Manchester platform. See if you can spot them if you are travelling to or from Holmes Chapel Railway Station!

You may have come across the poem 'The Michaelmas Daisy' by Letitia Elizabeth Landon published in 1820:

*Last smile of the departing year, Thy sister sweets are flown;  
Thy pensive wreath is far more dear, From blooming thus alone.*

*Thy tender blush, thy simple frame, Unnoticed might have past;  
But now thou contest with softer claim, The loveliest and the last.*

*Sweet are the charms in thee we find, Emblem of hope's gay wing;  
'Tis thine to call past bloom to mind, To promise future spring.*





## Memory Café

'Shut the Box' was a new game introduced to challenge some attending Memory café last month, it was a good find and certainly brought out a few competitive streaks!

After not attracting great interest for a few weeks, jigsaws have once again become very popular, we especially can't keep up with this lady!

Chatting over coffee/tea and biscuits, and attempting to complete the quiz on each table, always seem to be popular but, as these two ladies show, it's good to have a quiet time to concentrate on the task in hand which, on this occasion, led to producing some very colourful art work.

Last month, the indoor curling came out as a change from the games of skittles, that created much fun as did the lively sing song.

If you think Memory Café is a place for you, a family member or friend, do come along in October – Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> 10.00am – 12.00pm at Holmes Chapel Methodist Church. On Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> Memory Café will go out together for coffee.

More details: [dedavidson1@aol.com](mailto:dedavidson1@aol.com) Tel: 01477 537679.



## Monthly u3a Meeting

...will take place on **Thursday October 10th** at Holmes Chapel Methodist Church.

As usual, the meeting will start at 10:00 am

The speaker this month is David Skillen whose talk is entitled:

### **Can You Hear Me Mother?' – The Art of the Monologue**

David describes himself as a "consumer of history" and is an engaging, animated and entertaining professional speaker on a variety of historical subjects.



## The Highwayman

The year is 1763.

A fox trots into the undergrowth. The last evening blackbird trills its alarm. Out of the gloom canters a small bay horse. She knows the road and trusts her rider. They can just see the turnpike at the end of the Rudheath sanctuary. The tollgate keeper is waiting for them and opens the gate. "Thank you sir," he calls as the rider slows to pass him a pistol and a couple of florins, far more than the toll for a single horse. "Look after it for me, Joseph. I'll be back later."



As the road curves by the walls of Cranage Hall, the rider slows to a stop, quickly dismounts and pulls a drawstring sack from his saddlebag. In goes his hooded grey cloak, his scarf, the soft black mask that had been over his eyes and some small shiny objects that he takes from his pocket. Closing the sack, he lowers it over the wall into the undergrowth, against a tree he knows well. Now he looks every inch the country gentleman in a fashionably cut, plain green suit and waistcoat with breeches cut just below the knees showing off his well-shaped calves. He takes the tricorne hat from his saddlebag, jumps back into the saddle and sets off at speed down the hill, across the River Dane bridge and up towards Church Hulme. The late April evening is pleasantly mild and the full moon is beginning to rise. He feels good to be alive.

As he reaches the top of the hill, seeing the church straight ahead, he veers to the east, slows Moth, his horse, to a walk and makes his way south across the common. "Such a small place" he thinks, "even though Mr Hall has rebuilt some of the cottages lost in the fire. Was that really ten years ago? Now there's no one to control law and order unless Mr Hall sends his boys out." When he reaches the Congleton Road he turns Moth back into the village and trots up the main London Road to the Red Lion. Once in the stableyard, he gives the lad a generous tip to feed and water Moth. If the boy is curious enough to look in the saddlebags, all he will find will be gloves and a roll of papers purporting to come from a business in Hanley.

The inn is warm and welcoming. A hand comes over the bar. "William Scott, innkeeper, at your service, sir."

He takes off his hat. "Good evening William. A pint of your best ale please and some bread and cheese. Do you have any hot food?"

"There's some very good beef broth if that would suit. Are you looking for a bed, because I'm expecting the Birmingham coach any minute and the passengers are taking all my rooms."

"Thank you, but I'm just giving my horse a well-earned rest before we finish our journey to Knutsford."

He makes himself comfortable on a bench in the corner of the room. A young woman appears with broth, bread and cheese. "The coach is very late tonight, but it means there's food ready for anyone who cares to order it." She smiles as she puts the tray on the table, which broadens when he gives her sixpence for her trouble.

Refreshed and on his second pint, he hears a commotion outside as the southbound coach comes past the window and swings into the stableyard. The door bursts open and the coach driver shouts "We've been robbed and held up and there's not a damned thing any of us could do."

"Woah," says William. "Have a drink and tell me what's happened."

With hardly a pause and loudly enough for everyone to hear, the driver carries on. "We were on the Rudheath stretch when this horse and rider appeared from nowhere. He's got a cloak and a black mask over his eyes and a scarf pulled up over his nose. He's waving a pistol and grabs my dozy so-called guard and takes his pistol off him and tucks it in his belt. So then he gets all the outside passengers down at gunpoint and tells them to walk to the edge of the wood. The one feller who made a move for him got a kick in a very painful place. Then he got all the inside passengers out and took their jewellery, watches and whatever he could find in their pockets.

Then as quickly as you like he's back on his horse, lobs the guard's pistol into the darkness, calls "Goodnight" and races off in this direction. Then, of course, it takes us so long to get everyone back in and on the coach and I'm trying to stop Archie looking for his gun. I've got ladies in tears and men telling me how it shouldn't have happened. Then we get to the tollgate and the keeper's gone to sleep so it takes an age to get the gate opened. My God, if you'll excuse the expression, these turnpikes were supposed to improve the roads, not slow us down. I'll probably lose my job, although I doubt if they can find a wretch stupid enough to do it instead."

The driver took a gulp of air and a larger one of ale.

"You've come up the London Road." William calls over to the rider. "Did you see a horseman an hour or so ago?"

"No," comes the reply. "Just a gig near Brereton."

The rider watches the passengers. A beautifully dressed young lady is sobbing with an avuncular man trying to comfort her. An older woman is furiously telling another just what she thinks of the whole escapade. A couple of young men are debating what they would like to do to the perpetrator. Worried faces mourn the loss of their money and valuables and wonder how they are going to pay for their night's lodging.

Leaving the money for his meal on the table, the rider stands up, picks up his hat and tips it with what he hopes is a sympathetic expression towards the passengers. "I will take that stretch of road as fast as the horse will go." He leaves.

Moth gives him a whinny of recognition as he checks the saddle and bags. There is no rush now. The moon has risen. He will stop to collect his belongings a mile up the road and then give the tollgate keeper another coin when he collects his pistol. It is a beautiful night for Edward Higgins to ride home.

## **Julia Forbes Leith – u3a Creative Writing Group**

*Historical Notes: Edward "Gentleman" Higgins was a highwayman who lived in Knutsford from 1756 to 1767.*

*Rudheath was worthless heathland, and as it was church property it became a sanctuary where criminals were able to hide from the law.*

*Stagecoaches typically travelled at not much more than walking pace until the faster, lighter mail coaches became the norm in the 1780s.*

*Thomas Bayley Hall, whose family owned The Hermitage, bought Cranage Hall in 1756. He was a benefactor to the area and built or rebuilt some houses in Holmes Chapel after the fire of 1753.*

*Illustration: Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=687405>*



# Goosfest

The Heartbeat of Arts & Music in Cheshire



## The Chicago Blues Brothers at Goosfest 24

This award-winning Chicago Blues Brothers performance has been previously staged in London theatres and will now be headlining at the Goosfest Arts and Music Festival.

The show brings enough relentless high energy to blow your white socks off and require you to wear sunglasses. Everything about this high-octane show has quality and fun running through it from start to finish. Jake and Elwood will take you on a journey where you will be pulled into their crazy adrenaline-pumped world of toe-taping music and riotous laughter. They are supported by a band of professional musicians who are worthy of a show just by themselves, as well as the sensational Sweet Soul Sisters.

This show has had audiences singing and dancing at every performance they have given. It is just pure distilled 100% proof entertainment.

**Tickets** £30 via [www.goosfest.com](http://www.goosfest.com)

**Date:** Sunday 13 October 2024

**Bar** opens at 7pm. **Performance** starts at 8pm

**Location:** Clonter Opera Theatre, Swettenham Heath, Trap Road, CW12 2LR

# What's On



Holmes Chapel  
Community Centre

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### A MILLION DREAMS TRIBUTE ACT

Inspired by The Greatest Showman  
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15th November 2024



### AUTUMNAL WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP

4th October 2024



### CHRISTMAS WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP

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25th October 2024



### What's on at Holmes Chapel Community Centre?



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Call: 01477 689557 or speak to a member of our reception team.

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# What's On



so let's  
**Keep Singing!**

**Saturday 12 October**

**10.00am**

**Holmes Chapel Methodist Church**

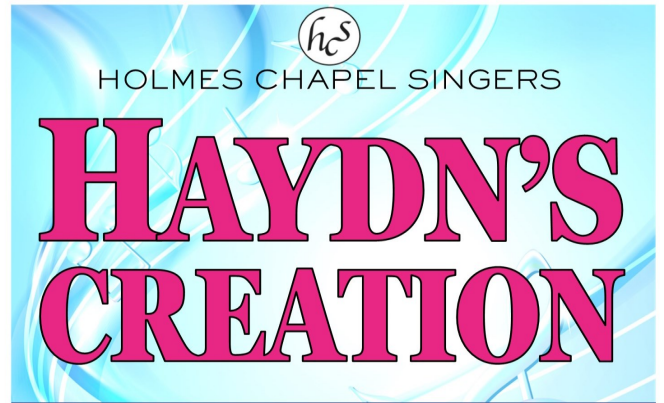
At the time of going to print, the repertoire has not been decided but rest assured, there will be favourites from musicals, pop songs, well know hymns, all chosen from suggestions by those who come along.

If you haven't been before, do come and see what Keep Singing is all about.

No musical talent necessary, just come and enjoy!  
18+ years only please.

**We sing for about an hour followed by chatting over coffee/tea and biscuits.**

Keep Singing - 2nd Saturday of every month



Celebrating 40 years of performing choral music in Holmes Chapel

Musical Director Mel Levy

Organist Stephen Haigh

Joined by guests Rivendell Singers  
(Musical Director Paul Morley)

**Saturday 23rd November**  
**7.30pm**  
**at the St. Luke's Church**

Tickets £14 inclusive of programme and glass of wine after the concert.  
Available from Peter Cotton 07734 407836 or online from  
[www.ticketsource.co.uk/holmes-chapel-singers](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/holmes-chapel-singers)  
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Scouts

Saturday 23rd November 2024  
**1st Holmes Chapel Scouts**

1st Holmes Chapel Scout Hut, Holmes Chapel, Crewe, CW4 7BA  
Doors open 6.30pm, show starts 7pm

Tickets: £10 includes a welcome drink (alcoholic or non alcoholic) & a raffle ticket  
Tickets to be purchased in advance

Raffle: FABULOUS prizes to be won at the show!

For tickets and more information please contact:  
Giovanna Facciponti Moore email: [gfacciponti@hotmail.com](mailto:gfacciponti@hotmail.com) or tel: 07896988553  
Please scan the QR code to purchase tickets

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**Autumn  
LITTER PICK**

**6 OCTOBER 2024 10AM**  
**MEET AT CRANAGE  
VILLAGE HALL**

TEA AND BISCUITS FOR ALL AFTERWARDS



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