FRODSHAM NEWS

ISSUE 1 DEC 2024

Welcome to the first edition of Frodsham News Forum. This news platform for the local community is compiled by a committee of volunteers. We plan quarterly issues in our first year and hope you find it of interest. If you would like to know more about the committee, and would like to offer writing or managerial skills, please email **editor@frodshamnews.co.uk.**

Jo Fiennes, Events Manager of Independent Street, taken by Lisa Crowley of Independent Street

CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL 2024 - THEN AND NOW

After another incredibly successful Christmas Festival, you may be interested to know how it all started.

In 1997, local businessman and former Councillor Mike Pusey, along with Keith Darlington of KDE and Mark Avis of Mavis Plant Hire felt Frodsham should have Christmas lights. Frodsham Town Council backed them and funded a string of lights from Barclays Bank to The Old Hall. The Silver Brass Band played, and Mike did a count-down with a megaphone for the first switch on with about 100 on-lookers. Three years later the lights were extended along Main Street and by year 5, Church Street was lit up too. By 2004 the event had become so popular that a Parade was introduced, with tractors and trailers provided by local businesses and farms, and in 2012 the event changed from a Friday to a Saturday.

In 2019 the lights were changed to LED sets, and in 2020 the present imitation Christmas tree was donated by a group of local business men, saving money on a yearly tree.

The Festival is manned by volunteers who work all year arranging bookings, road closures, traffic management, waste disposal, site plans for stages and attractions. A First Aider and a CPSO are provided. The Festival is financed by grants and part funded by Frodsham Town Council and the generosity of local sponsors.

This year the popular Independent Street Artisan Market joined in, with stalls along Main Street selling delicious food and Christmas gifts. There was a festive dog walk and Spirit of the Herd brought ponies to pet. The life size Snow Globe in the Parish Hall was very busy with pre-booked tickets to eliminate queues as was Father Christmas's Grotto, where each child received a gift. The Library hosted storytelling, and the Leisure Centre hosted a very busy food court and gift market. From the three stages, local talent entertained, thanks was given to the generous sponsors and Local Hero Awards introduced. Our fantastic community choir Frodsham Sings performed and then with Matt Baker led a Christmas sing-song before the traditional 6pm switch on signaled the start of the Parade through the town, with an appearance at the end by Father Christmas waving from his sleigh.

With enthusiasm, hard work and commitment from volunteers plus financial support, it just shows how a chat with three friends can grow to an extravaganza that draws thousands of visitors to our special town. Happy Christmas to all!!

If you would like to give financial or organisational support or to help on the day, please get in touch on the website **www.christmasinfrodsham.com** in order to keep this magical event for our community.

FRODSHAM FILMING BRINGS POLICE RACING!

Frodsham recently made headlines when filming in the town for a gangster drama 'Semolina Pilchard' didn't quite go to plan. Actors and camera crew were forced to stop abruptly after armed police swarmed their set and ordered them to drop their guns.

Producer Matthew George Walsh, a Frodsham resident, said they were filming a sequence where the robbers stormed the post office with their fake machine guns "so even though we had about 30 members of crew on the pavement someone must have thought something was going on and called the police".

He said the scene had taken months to organise and the crew had permission from the post office and police to carry fake firearms. Happily the misunderstanding was soon resolved and filming continued.

The film's unusual title derives from a famous line in the song "I Am the Walrus" by the Beatles. It tells the story of a terminally ill Liverpool gangster who summons his estranged eldest daughter back to their hometown after a five year absence. Liverpool actor Joe McGann stars as the mob boss dad, alongside Sarah Louise Chadwick and former Brookside star Louis Emerick. TikTok viral sensation Philip Regan – best known as the Queen of Scotty Road – plays a comedy Post Office clerk.

The producer has praised the people of Frodsham for helping make the film happen and he hopes it will shine a light on the community. Localities including Castle Park Café, the Red Lion pub, former restaurant the Yuet Ben and St Lawrence's Church were used as film locations, and viewers may recognise local friends who were included as extras! A special charity screening will be held at the Community Centre in 2025.

Frodsham filming brings police racing!

SAM SCOOPS TOP PRIZE!

Images: Joanne Venet

The Manchester heat of the UK finals of the Gelato Festival World Masters 2024 was won by Samantha Cunliffe of Bene Gelateria, Frodsham. Sam's entry, "Chocolate orange cocoa crunch" – a custard based gelato, infused with ginger cinnamon and orange, and decorated with dark chocolate and diced candied ginger – wowed the judges.

After gaining experience in the Gelato industry, Sam sold her house to buy the shop on Church Street, Frodsham. All her gelato is freshly made onsite in Frodsham, using locally sourced Ingredients.

In 2023, just three years after opening, the shop won 'Best Dessert Shop, Cheshire'.

Along with her fellow winners from the London and Hereford heats, Sam will now represent the UK in the European finals of the Gelato Festival World Masters in Italy in 2025, competing against more than 40 Gelato chefs from across the globe. Good luck, Sam!

NEW HOMES AT THE OLD HALL

Archway Homes, a Cheshire based, award winning, family run new home developer, is excited to announce the acquisition of the iconic Old Hall Hotel. The 17th century property will undergo comprehensive renovation and redevelopment at the rear of the existing buildings. The development has secured planning permission for five newly built homes as well as the renovation of the two original buildings into three dwellings. For now, the property is being secured, with essential repair works to address critical structural issues and to ensure it is safe and stable, ready for the next phase of development.

Holly Bunkell, Sales and Marketing Director of Archway Homes said, "We understand the sentimental value of this building to the local community, and we are fully committed to restoring it with the care and attention to detail it deserves".

THE CURIOUS CAT BOOKSHOP

Have you been curious about the new bookshop in town? Have you entered the bijou repository, stroked the laid back cat, browsed the carefully curated books or made purchases? Can you remember what was there before?

Owner James Caldwell, supported by his partner Lisa and their son Dean, opened the door of 50, Main Street on 15th March 2024. James turned the old key cutting shop into a small yet inviting space and filled it with furniture bought, or donated locally, to create a calm and homely atmosphere.

James came to the decision while sitting chatting in a Vienna café that he wanted to go it alone using their passion for books – and for cats! They have several cats at home but Crackers has made the shop her own until the weekend when she vies for attention with her sister Cheese and friends. There is an eclectic mix of books, from well known writers to local authors. James is keen to encourage the latter, and has established book launches and signings which are very successful. He has a thriving book group and a monthly book swap. There is a lovely area for children's books, as James strongly believes in the importance of reading from an early age. He is keen to engage young writers, has initiated a Short Story Competition with local schools and has a contract with publishers Scholastic for a book containing entries. He is already planning more competitions, so look out for the opportunity to get your young person's writing into print!

Christmas is coming and it will be the shop's first in Frodsham. James has quickly established himself into the local business community and, like many other businesses in town, is excited to take part. He is now selling festive mystery boxes filled with all sorts of goodies including, of course, a book. James and Lisa's first date was in Frodsham, and they are now making their mark on our lovely town and intend to stay!

Search **www.TheCuriousCatBookshop.co.uk** for further information

Photo courtesy of James Caldwell

KEEP WARM THIS CHRISTMAS!

Cheap tips for you to help reduce heat loss.

- Seal gaps by draught excluders on windows and doors, or use draught excluder tape
- Replace flattened seals on UPVC doors and windows
- Close internal doors
- Seal around pipes and cables
- Seal any gaps between floor and skirting boards, and between floorboards
- Save heat loss out of windows by tucking curtains behind radiators

For more information visit **www.climateactionfrodsham.com.**

RECOGNITION OF LOCAL HEROES

A new addition to the Frodsham Christmas Festival is the inaugural awards to local groups or individuals for outstanding contributions to the community. This year the recipients have been picked by the Festival Committee in association with Frodsham Town Council. It is planned that this will be put to public nomination and votes in future years. Certificates were awarded from the Main Street stage throughout the afternoon to:

THE COMMUNITY WELLBEING AWARD

Bee Friends and Main Street Memory Café
For exceptional efforts in promoting health, wellness and social connection within our community

THE NATURE CONSERVATION CHAMPIONS AWARD

Friends of Hob Hey Wood, Frodsham WI for Manley Road Copse, and Frodsham Frombles
Honouring dedicated stewardship in preserving and enhancing our local natural environments and woodlands

THE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AWARD

The Scouts and The Guides
In recognition of outstanding commitment to youth development, leadership and community service.

THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY AWARD

The Round Table and The Rotary Club
Acknowledging remarkable generosity, service and contributions that enrich the Frodsham community

NEW PLANS FOR FRODSHAM LEISURE CENTRE

In November 2024, the Leisure Centre hosted a public engagement drop in to give an update on proposals to spend the £1 million funding that has been ring fenced by Cheshire West and Chester to secure the building's future. Helen Pakpahan, Economic Growth Programme Manager at CWAC, Matt Parker, Managing Director of Brio, and local CWAC Councillors Mike Garvey and Lucy Sumner were also present. Last minute publicity had an impact on the numbers attending, however the representatives were kept busy answering questions for the whole three hours.

Following an online consultation during lockdown, Brio and CWAC have been considering structure, energy and future usage on the site. The Leisure Centre currently hosts 21 sports clubs, 33 weekly classes, and hosts national sports competitions. As sports memberships increase, facilities must be improved. Two plans are under consideration:

1. The ground floor to be refurbished and the first floor to be let to a public service provider, as yet unannounced.
2. Partial demolition of the two storey building, with the Library and Sports Hall unaffected. A rebuild of the gym, changing rooms, studios and well-being facilities.

Extra parking and the removal of the synthetic football courts are being discussed. Kydd's Wint may be developed as a public pedestrian access from the town.

The plans will be submitted to CWAC in Spring 2025, meanwhile further sources of funding are being explored to extend the reach of the project. For further information, speak to a member of the Brio Leisure Team or visit the webpage **cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/A56-leisure-corridor.**

DON'T MISS THE 39TH ANNUAL OPEN ART EXHIBITION!

The popular Annual Open Art exhibition opened with a "Meet the Artists" evening at Castle Park Arts Centre, bringing 116 local artists together, showcasing over 300 individual pieces. George Davies was chosen to win the Local Business Award by James Caldwell of the Curious Cat bookshop, for "Watching the Gannets", and the overall winner was again George Davies for "Red Dawn". The exhibition runs until Saturday 21 December from 9.30-16.00, Tuesday to Saturday. Free entry for all!

SECURITY AWARENESS AT CHRISTMAS!

Neil Flanagan, Police Community Support Officer for Frodsham, will be offering free security leaflets and giveaways at Morrisons during December on these dates: 10th, 12-1; 18th, 4-5pm; and 22nd, 2-3pm. He will also take free security goodies to Bee Friends on a Thursday morning, and Main Street Memory Café on a Wednesday morning.

Bogus callers and rogue traders will be featured in the next edition, but if you have a concern dial 101.

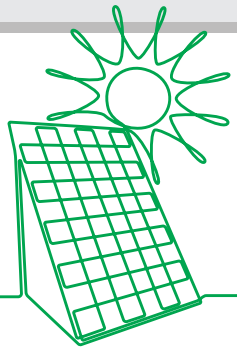
neil.flanagan@cheshire.police.uk

FRODSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN RESULTS

Work on Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan commenced in 2014, and after a decade of consultation and meetings, residents were finally asked to vote in a referendum in November 2024. The Plan includes a detailed vision for Frodsham and policies relating to four topic areas: 1. Future housing development; 2. Economic Development and the visitor economy; 3. Green spaces, recreation and leisure; 4. Connectivity and access. The turnout was 13%, 79.4% of those who voted said 'Yes' to the Plan.

FRODSHAM SOLAR CONSULTATION DEADLINE

Proposals for the Frodsham Solar renewable energy installation are under statutory consultation ending on 19th December. The 740 acre site stretches between the M56, River Weaver to the Manchester Ship Canal. To make your views known, visit: www.frodshamsolar.co.uk.



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