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Issue No. 75
June 2011

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School's public faces

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Printed by TwentyFourSeven

Editor's Comment



IT is good news that, at long last, the derelict stationmaster's house at Frodsham Railway Station, is to be restored.

For far too long it has stood unused, boarded up and an eyesore - hardly a welcoming sight for visitors to Frodsham arriving by train, or a good advertisement for the town.

Just why Network Rail allowed a Grade 2 listed Victorian building to deteriorate to such a condition in the first place, we do not know. But we are told work will start at the end of August and be completed by

November so we will not dwell upon errors which now belong to history.

Of more importance is the future use of the building.

Over the years, various suggestions have been put forward, ranging from heritage centre, restaurant, café bar and artists' studio to the inevitable offices.

Presumably the building will be offered to let, so everything will hang

on what sort of individual or organisation can be found prepared to rent it.

Is it too much to hope that it could be used for something that will enhance Frodsham as a tourist destination?

We hope not, because it is an attractive building, part of the town's history and something of a landmark.

Last month we reported on a workshop organised by Cheshire West and Chester Council and traders' group Love Frodsham, the express aim of which was to establish Frodsham as a "destination brand."

A restored and revived station house could help in achieving this ambition, something we would hope the planners might take into account when considering future applications for the use of the building.

'Green' group is two years old

KINGSLEY Transition Initiative - the local group that wants to make the village more self-sufficient - has celebrated its second anniversary.

Founder Allan Arthur has given an upbeat assessment of its progress over the last two years and future plans.

Perhaps the most visible of KTI's achievements so far are the quarterly local produce markets, the next of which will be on June 11 at Kingsley Community Centre. Two more are planned for September 10 and December 3.

But the final go-ahead for a new allotment site, with 17 plots, is expected shortly.

Local schools, St John's Primary and Kingsley Primary and Nursery School, are both developing gardens

and orchards and poultry keeping. .

KTI are also promoting energy saving and plan to put solar panels on the roof of the community centre.

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Advice for people with sight loss

CHARITY group Vision Support is visiting Frodsham Community Centre on Thursday, June 9 to showcase their services for people with sight loss.

Trained advisors will be on hand to give advice on the latest equipment, which will be on display.

These include low vision aids and specialised text readers.

More information is available from 01928 582946 or from the web site www.visionsupport.org.uk

High school's 'public faces'

THEY are the "public face" of Helsby High School - the head boy, head girl and their deputies.

Every academic year, the school gives Year 12 students the opportunity to apply for the posts - and this year the successful candidates were William Dunn and Rebecca Glass and their deputies Aisha Bader and Oliver Martin.

Already they are bringing their own talents and experience to the roles, regularly meeting with the head and other staff to represent the views of the student body, holding assemblies for the lower school, carrying out peer

mentoring duties, receiving visitors to the school, assisting at open evenings and liaising with outside agencies.

The four newcomers have a hard act to follow for last year's heads and deputies, Alex Pegler, Abigail Forshaw, and their deputies Francis Hunt, Connor Gamble, Elizabeth Melling and Sarah Feldman carried out their duties with confidence, maturity and boundless enthusiasm.

In a statement, the school said it was easy to overlook some of the work done by the head boy, head girl and their deputies. They were role models, were responsible for promoting the school in a favourable light and were even involved in interviews for new members of staff.

What was perhaps less appreciated, however, was the work they did in ensuring improvement of



provision for students both in the sixth form and the school as a whole.

Pictured, clockwise from the top, Rebecca Glass, William Dunn, Oliver Martin, Aisha Bader.

Forest fire warning

FIREFIGHTERS and forest rangers are warning visitors to Delamere Forest not to light fires or use barbecues to prevent blazes spreading.

During one weekend nine fires at the forest were caused by disposable barbecues.

Late one Saturday afternoon there was a serious incident when three appliances and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's four-wheel drive response vehicle had to be called.

Firefighters spent 40 minutes tackling a six metre square area of peat which started to smoulder as a result of a barbecue being left on bare ground

Other smaller fires were dealt with by the rangers with equipment they keep on site.

Vernon Stockton, Forestry Commission manager at Delamere, said: "The whole forest sits on a huge peat bog, so if it caught fire then we could be tackling it for months. The damage to the environment and ancient woodland would be devastating."

Richard Gorst, of the fire service, said: "The recent warm and dry weather has significantly increased the risk of fires in the open. These can spread quickly and pose a real danger to life, property and the environment."

"People should not use disposable barbecues in Delamere Forest under any circumstances. If they do use them elsewhere, it's imperative that they are placed on bricks or paving slabs and are carefully dowsed in water once they've cooled."

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Council row over 'hypocrisy' claim

A ROW flared at the first meeting of the new-look Frodsham Town Council following the May 5 elections.

Former deputy mayor Kyle McGregor (Labour) accused new Mayor Andrew Dawson (Conservative) of "hypocrisy" for proposing a vote of thanks to former councillors who had lost their seats in the elections.

He said it was "disgusting" and hypocritical of the new Mayor to thank former councillors when, during the election campaign, he had criticised them and "sullied their names."

Cllr Dawson said he did not recognise the alleged criticisms of the

former councillors which had certainly not appeared in any election literature which had gone out in his name.

It was a shame, he said, that party politics had "reared its ugly head" so early in the life of the new council.

He believed the council should offer thanks to those former members who had not been re-elected or who had not sought re-election.

Cllr Dawson said he was delighted most of the new councillors were not attached to any political party. The largest group, he admitted, were the three Conservatives, but they were

independent minded people and would not attempt to act as a group. In any case, they were in a minority.

"I want this to be an open and transparent council," he said: "I want us to reflect different views. No single one of us has a monopoly in wisdom.

"We must reflect our own community and do what we can for it. I want our voluntary groups to thrive and I want us to connect with our communities."

Earlier, the council departed from the tradition of recent years of electing the deputy Mayor as Mayor.

Instead, "father of the council" Frank Pennington - a member for 35 years - proposed Cllr Dawson for Mayor and Cllr Rita Shearn as deputy.

Exactly half of the 16-strong council are new members as a result of three

former councillors losing their seats in the elections, four not seeking re-election and one being disqualified because of a slip-up with his nomination papers.

Nine of the new members were elected under the banner of "Independent with Frodsham First (IFF)

The new council is: East ward: Andrew Dawson (Cons); Mark Warren (IFF), Ruth Redhead (IFF), Linda Brown (IFF), Graham Bondi (Ind). South ward: Lynn Riley (Cons), Sara Wakefield (Cons), Fran Sutton (IFF), John Salinas (UKIP). North ward (elected unopposed): Sam Harmer (IFF), Frank Pennington (IFF), Rita Shearn (IFF), Pammi Taylor (Ind). West ward (elected unopposed): Darren Kelly (IFF), John Nield (IFF), Kyle McGregor (Lab).


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New Mayor Andrew Dawson is congratulated by "father of the council" Frank Pennington.



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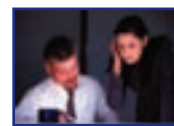


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Shoppers can help heroes

SHOPPERS in Frodsham have a chance to support the Help for Heroes charity - simply by buying a bracelet.

Les Harris Jewellers have introduced From Soldier to Soldier, an awareness and fund-raising campaign supporting wounded veterans and their families.

The campaign is based on the sales of a designer version of the survival and friendship bracelets worn by many British and Allied soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

For every bracelet sold in Frodsham, £15 will be donated to Help for Heroes.

A spokesperson for Les Harris Jewellers said: "From Soldier To

Soldier is neither pro nor anti war. It is pro our young men and women who put their lives on the line for our country and made horrific sacrifices."

In the field, the bracelets are braided by the soldiers with parachute cord. They are known as survival bracelets, because they can be unraveled and the cord used for many purposes in a tight corner. They are also exchanged among soldiers as friendship bracelets.

The designer version has a sterling silver clasp shaped like a uniform button and the cord is extremely

tightly braided. A heart shaped clasp is also available in sterling silver or gold plated on sterling silver with a diamond.

The button clasp symbolizes the uniform and the clasped bracelet symbolizes the bond among the soldiers that can never be broken.

Information about Help for Heroes is available at www.helpforheroes.org.uk

Hidden places - a useful guide

THE 7th edition of "The Hidden Places of Lancashire and "Cheshire" has an attractive new cover and redesigned pages which make the wealth of information inside easier to access.

The book covers a wide area, including Frodsham, Helsby, Tarporley, Antrabus, Delamere - some of the most attractive places in Cheshire although hardly "hidden." "Hidden Places" is published by Travel Publishing at £8.99.

It's good to talk

KEEP talking – this is the message to separating or divorcing Frodsham parents from local law firm Forshaw's Davies Ridgway (FDR), following the biggest shake-up of family law for many years.

The Family Justice Review Panel has just published an interim report which recommends that couples should be urged to avoid lengthy courtroom battles and settle their disputes over children and finances by themselves or through mediation.

Frodsham-based family law partner Ruth Hetherington agrees with the report's author, former civil servant David Norgrove, court battles are unpleasant, expensive and take too long.


The report stops short of recommending an automatic presumption of 'shared parenting' but suggests courts should be able to order reductions or suspensions in maintenance where the resident parent refuses contact to their former partners. It also reinforces the important role grandparents play in the life of a child and wants contact arrangements to recognise these key relationships.

She said: "Resolving children and financial matters through mediation and the collaborative law process is a much better solution for everyone. A decision is reached much more quickly and hopefully the bitterness and recriminations created by expensive, lengthy courtroom battles are reduced.

"Keep talking is certainly the message that comes from this report. We all want to make the process of separation and divorce as painless as possible. It is in everyone's interests if couples can reach agreement and certainly far better for the children."

For guidance on taking a more amicable approach to divorce, contact Ruth Hetherington at Forshaw's Davies Ridgway, Frodsham, on 01928 739300

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Students' farewell concert

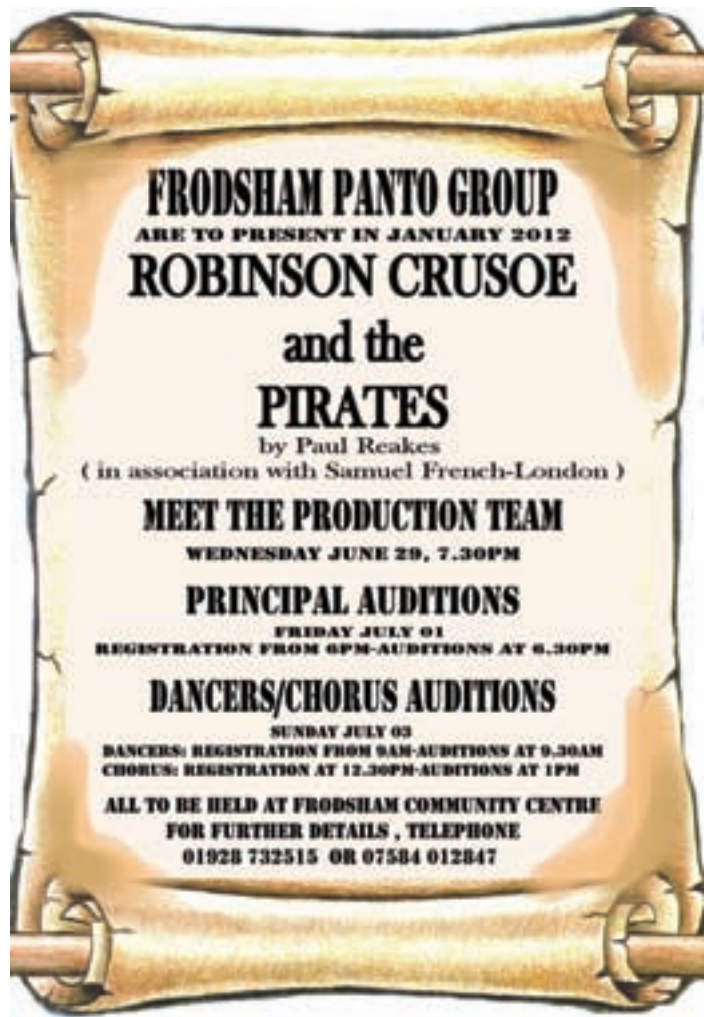
HELSEBY High School's annual spring concert saw more than 30 Upper Sixth students showcasing their musical talents at their last concert with the school.

The evening consisted of performances from 10 different ensembles including the Senior Band, Folk Group, Chamber Choir, Jazz Band and the newly formed "Only Lads ALOUD" choir.

There was a variety of music from "Mr Mistoffelees" to "Pachelbel's Canon" along with a beautiful performance of "Bring Him Home" from "Les Miserables" which left very few dry eyes in the house.

The concert ended with the traditional Upper Sixth leavers "Surprise item". The concert and ensembles were organised by Helsby's dedicated team of staff, led by Briony Wells and Leigh Mason. Friends, family and teachers came to support the pupils.

Headteacher John Dowler said: "I am so proud of all the pupils who have worked hard throughout their time here and achieved such outstanding performances. They are a credit to the school".



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First election for 15 years

THE first election to be held for Manley Parish Council for 15 years resulted in five new councillors being elected.

New members Jeremy Ellis, Steve Frood, Christopher Fryar, Sean Gamble and Peter Sherlock joined existing councillors Pam Brook, Sue Johnson, Jane Challoner and Mary Baldwin.

Cllr Pam Brook was elected chairman for the coming year and Cllr Steve Frood was elected vice chairman. Cllr Sean Gamble was elected to serve as the parish council representative on the Village Hall Committee.

Police target speeding drivers

POLICE targeted the A56 Chester Road at Helsby - and handed out £60 on-the-spot fines to speeding motorists.

The operation followed complaints from residents that drivers were ignoring a speed reduction sign at the entrance to the village. Inspector Phil Hodgson said the operation had been one of the most successful ever and pointed out that the road was near a school and community centre.

"It is a dangerous stretch of road where children frequently have to cross," he said.

"The drivers have plenty of warning, and I am extremely pleased that my officers stopped eight drivers who were exceeding the limit and endangering lives."

'Eyesore pub' could be protected

ANGRY councillors at Helsby are furious at being kept in the dark over proposals to designate the disused Robin Hood pub a protected building.

They fear the semi-derelict building - already an eyesore - could remain a blot on the local landscape for years if English Heritage decide it should be listed as a building of historic or architectural interest.

Cllr Sam Johnson, chairman of Helsby Parish Council, said: "We had a public meeting about the future of the Robin Hood some time ago when developers put forward excellent proposals to redevelop the site for housing."

"Nobody had any objections and the plans were submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWC).

"But then we discovered they had been referred to English Heritage who are now considering whether the building should be protected.

"Nobody told us - the local, elected representatives - and we only found out from the developers. By that time it was too late for us to make representations.

"We are really angry about this.



We have spent more than £100,000 on a children's play area right next to the pub and it stays there in its present condition it could attract all sorts of undesirables."

Cllr Frank Thomas added: "We face the prospect of have a Grade 2 listed eyesore in the village."

The problem is made worse by the existence of the disused Horse and Jockey pub just down the road. Planning consent has been granted for it to be converted into flats but there is no sign of the development taking place.

New jobs as charity moves in

A NATIONAL charity that supports pre-school learning groups has opened an office in Frodsham creating new jobs.

The Pre-school Learning Alliance has created a dedicated Cheshire office at Frodsham Business Centre offering payroll and other administrative and management support to more than 300 childcare providers across the county.

Karen Gardner, the charity's area manager said: "Previously support for members in Cheshire was co-ordinated from our office in Lancashire but the new locally-based centre will enable us to provide a much more dedicated service to our members.

"Many of the people we help are voluntary groups that don't have the resources to manage their administrative responsibilities without our support.

"We had looked at several locations for the office but we chose Frodsham because of its great transport links that will enable our staff to cover the whole county easily."

The charity has also created two new accountancy and office administration jobs to work from the new office.

The charity is the second to be based at Frodsham Business Centre - joining the cerebral palsy charity Scope, which has been there more than 12 years.

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Stephen Lawson, head of litigation at Forshaws Davies Ridgway, is a nationally-recognised CSA specialist, secretary of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers and chairs the Cheshire Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners.

He explains: "Many people do not realise, if they've suffered physical injuries or financial penalties as a result of someone else's incompetence, they are entitled to compensation. It is our job to obtain a fair settlement for you. We have an **impressive track record** for resolving complex issues that end up in the courtroom but we are also experts in obtaining swift and successful settlements for more straightforward cases too."

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Final speakers favorite three

THE guest speaker at Frodsham Recorded Music Society told members he had not one but three equal favourite composers.

Treasurer John Grenside, who is also a member of the Frodsham Choral Society, was the presenter at the last meeting of the season.

His subject was "Three Not of a Kind" - featuring works by his three favourite composers J S Bach, Maurice Ravel and George Gershwin.

Works included Bach's "Adagio" from his Easter Oratorio, followed by some of the best of Ravel namely his "Ma Mere L'Oye," and George Gershwin's piece "Promenade."

He then spoke about the choral aspects of his boarding school days with an excerpt from Bach's "Double Concerto."

During the interval the society's AGM was held, led by chairman Colin Walker.

John continued his presentation with the "Adagio" from Bach's "Concerto in C minor" featuring both oboe and violin. A variety of pieces were played before moving onto the finale which was highlights from Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess."

A vote of thanks was presented by Barbara Price. The next event will be the traditional annual dinner at The Bull's Head, Frodsham, on June 7.

Garden centre outing



GROUP of pensioners who meet regularly at Frodsham's Main Street Community Church enjoyed a trip out to a local garden centre - thanks to volunteers who were able to help with transport.

The group meet at the church every Wednesday afternoon for tea and cake, a chat and social activities such as talks, bingo, etc.

A recent speaker was a local Police Community Support Officer who talked about personal safety.

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Landmark inspires name of new street

ONE of Frodsham's most recognisable landmarks has provided the inspiration for the name of a new multi-million pound housing development.

Overton Hill - also known as Beacon Hill or Frodsham Hill - is the most prominent site in Frodsham and home to some of the area's earliest settlements and buildings including St Laurence Church.

This historical importance has led Weaver Vale Housing Trust to name the road at its 65-home development "Overton Close". The green in the middle of the houses - which are nearing completion - will be named Overton Green.

The £4.3million project is being built by Seddon Construction on site of the former St Luke's Catholic Primary School.

Open Air Theatre returns

THE popular Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre returns from July 7 to August 21 with an impressive cast of some of the country's finest actors.

Evening and matinee performances of Shakespeare's 'As You Like It' and 'Merlin and the Woods of Time' by Glyn Maxwell are set to please and delight both new and returning audiences at the only full time professional open air theatre company outside of London.

The unique outdoor theatre at Chester is constructed 'in the round' to create a close connection between the actors and the audience. There is an area in front of the stage to enjoy picnics and there will be concession stands selling wine, summer drinks and nibbles plus blankets and cushions.

Tickets for Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre are available from as little as £12 and can be booked online at www.grosvenorparkopenairtheatre.co.uk or by phoning the box office on 0843 241 7868.

Competition

Frodsham Life and associated publications have five pairs of tickets to give away for the performance of Merlin and the Woods of Time on Thursday, July 28 at 7.30pm.

To be in with a chance of winning, simply answer this question.

Merlin was a famous...

A. Politician; B. Architect; C. Wizard

Entrants should send an e-mail entitled Grosvenor Park Competition with the correct answer to info@warrington-worldwide.co.uk by Friday July 8.

MP visits village fair



WEAVER Vale MP Graham Evans dropped in at the annual Manley Spring Fair and spent some time chatting with local people.

Our picture shows him with Manley residents Ian Milburn, Ruth Frood, Juliet Compton and Donald Currie.

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Celebrating at the double!

FRODSHAM residents celebrated the Royal Wedding at the double with street parties in Coniston Drive and Arran Drive.



While residents of Coniston Drive decided to show the flag and celebrate the wedding big style with the areas only "official" street party, an unofficial one was also taking place at Arran Drive.

Nearly 100 people agreed to join in and help Elaine Speedy set up an organising committee for the one in Coniston Drive.

She said: "I think some of us are being patriotic and some of us are just

out to have a good time.

"But let's face it, if a Royal Wedding isn't a good enough excuse to have a party, what is?"

At first, Elaine was a bit surprised to discover Coniston Drive was the only official road in Frodsam to hold a party.

But when she discovered how much red tape was involved - special orders to close the street to traffic, etc., - she began to get an idea why.

Organising the event took since mid-December!

Arrangements were made to borrow tables from the local school. There were also Union Jacks, bunting, balloons and music entertainment for the children.

Meanwhile the residents of Arran Drive also joined in the celebrations with their own street party.

They had games for the children, and the children spent the days running up to the event making bunting and a banner.

One of the organisers Angela Hitchen said: "During the day we had Frodsams got talent and each child performed entertainment with dancing, singing and magic tricks.

"The whole day was a great success proving that community spirit still exists.



Motoring

Cars that come tailor-made

THE new Volvo S80 Executive and V70 R-Design top-of-the-line saloon and sporty estate car come in refined special versions tailor made for buyers who want a car with that extra exclusive look and individual touch.

Both cars are designed around the growing number of people who appreciate the possibility of tailoring their cars to suit individual tastes, according to Lex Kerssemakers, senior vice presidents, product strategy and vehicle line management at Volvo.

He said: "The Executive version of the S80 radiates exclusive luxury while our R-Design models are developed for buyers who want an extra sporty look."

The Volvo S80 is the most exclusive Volvo saloon - and the Executive version features details that emphasise the Scandinavian design, sophisticated comfort of the spaciousness.

It is the first Volvo model with an instrument panel top in leather, available in espresso brown or off black. Among other interior details are ventilated soft leather seats with massage function, leather door panels, an integrated analogue clock on the instrument panel and the aluminium centre console storage.

The V70 R-Design comes with a number of specially developed exterior and interior design details.

The exterior has unique design details in the front, LED turning indicators integrated into door mirrors with silk metal covers and a unique, diamond cut 18-inch wheel.

Inside, there is leather upholstery trimmed in off black, leather around the gear selector, and black floor-mats with contrasting stitching.

Both cars feature the latest Volvo Sensus infotainment system, all information presented on a five or seven-inch colour screen positioned to make it easy for the driver to keep his or her eyes on the road.



The V70 R-Design estate car

Japanese cars in short supply

JAPAN's eight major vehicle manufacturers have reported that their combined domestic production facilities are only operating at about 50 per cent of the normal, as a result of disruption caused by the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster.

Toyota - for a long while the world's biggest vehicle maker - appears to have been hit worst and expects to be overtaken by General Motors in the production stakes.

Mitsubishi has fared better than the others and suffered a reduction of only 25.7 per cent.

The Tohoku region hit by the disasters does not have many assembly facilities for car companies but it is a key area for making many

of the parts required to build cars. As a result, parts are in short supply and in some cases, entire assembly lines were halted because vehicles were missing just one or two parts.

The impact has been felt globally as well, with overseas production plants, including those in the UK, also unable to secure sufficient parts to carry on.

Car manufacturers say continued shortages are inevitable and output figures are likely to remain low.

So for some time to come, Japanese cars seem likely to be in short supply on forecourts around the world - and could well lose out to makes from other parts of the world.

Roads continue to decline

A SURVEY of councils by the RAC has revealed that road conditions across the country are continuing to decline because Town Hall chiefs are being forced to undertake short-term repairs rather than permanent solutions.

Twelve out of 20 councils reported that government funding cuts mean they are concentrating on short term repairs to fill potholes caused by the harsh winter.

Eight councils have cut road maintenance budgets, two have dipped into reserves to make up for shortfalls, and two more have set up private finance initiatives to pay for road maintenance.

One council has axed £5.8 million from its road maintenance budget despite having a backlog of £160m in repairs.

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Impressionist Les wows golf club audience

SOME of the world's biggest sports stars made a surprise visit to Frodsham Golf Club - courtesy of impressionist/comedian Les Gibson.

Padraig Harrington, Phil Mickelson and Tiger Woods were among those wickedly taken off by Les - currently starring in TV's "Britain's Got Talent."

He also provided a hilarious special edition of Master Chef with David Beckham, Jose Mourinho, Carlo Ancelotti, Fabio Capello, Rafa Benitez and Sir Alex Ferguson. Coronation Street's Kevin Webster also turned up.

Les, already a big favourite with local club audiences, was supported by popular local comic PJ Lane and plenty of audience participation. The evening proved a huge success with Les's impressions brilliantly observed - not least for knowledgeable golfers.

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