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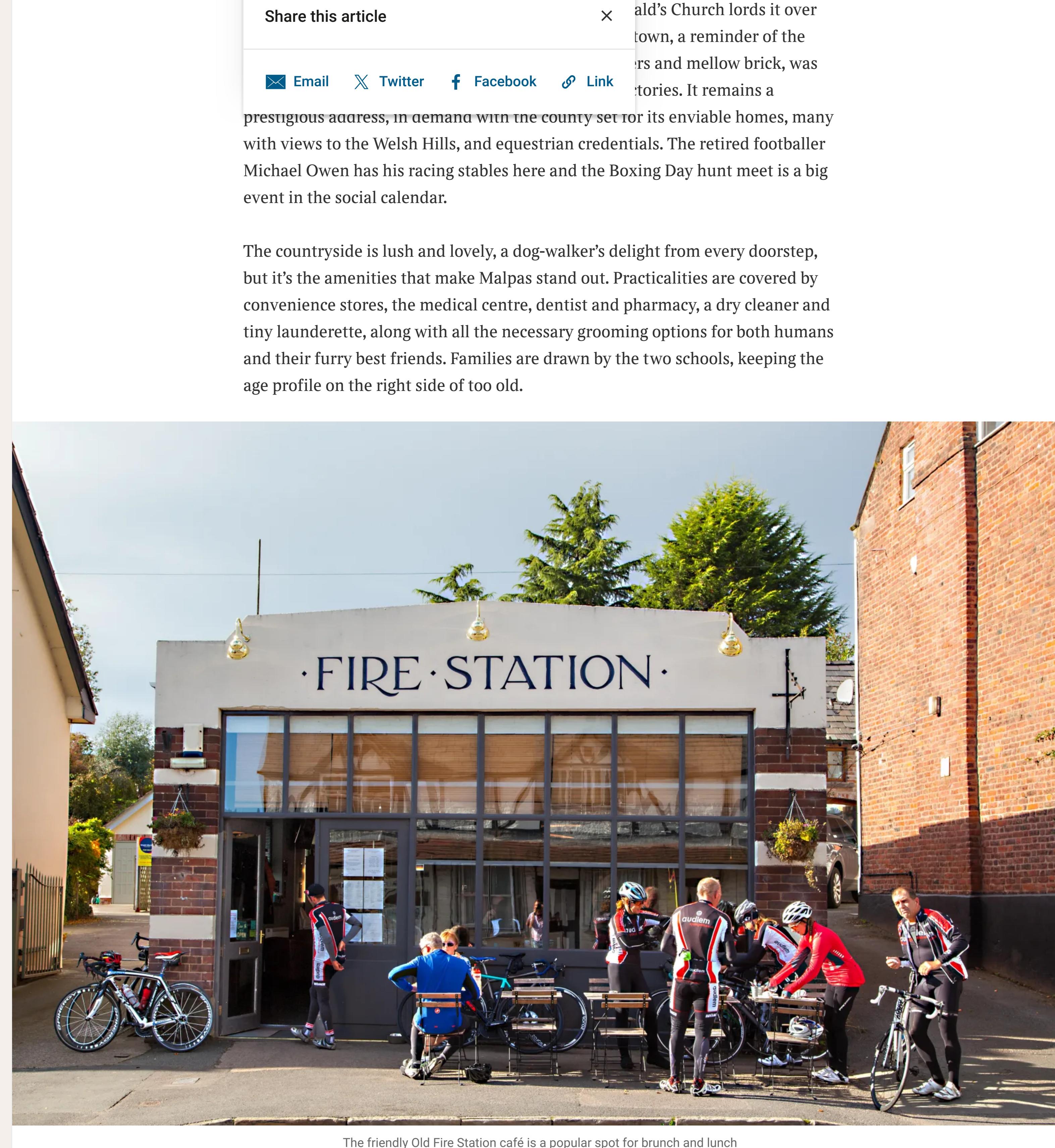
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NORTHWEST

Malpas, Cheshire, named one of the best places to live 2025

This tiny town with a big-hearted and hearty community remains a prestigious address



Malpas, dominated by St Oswald's Church, is in demand for its enviable homes

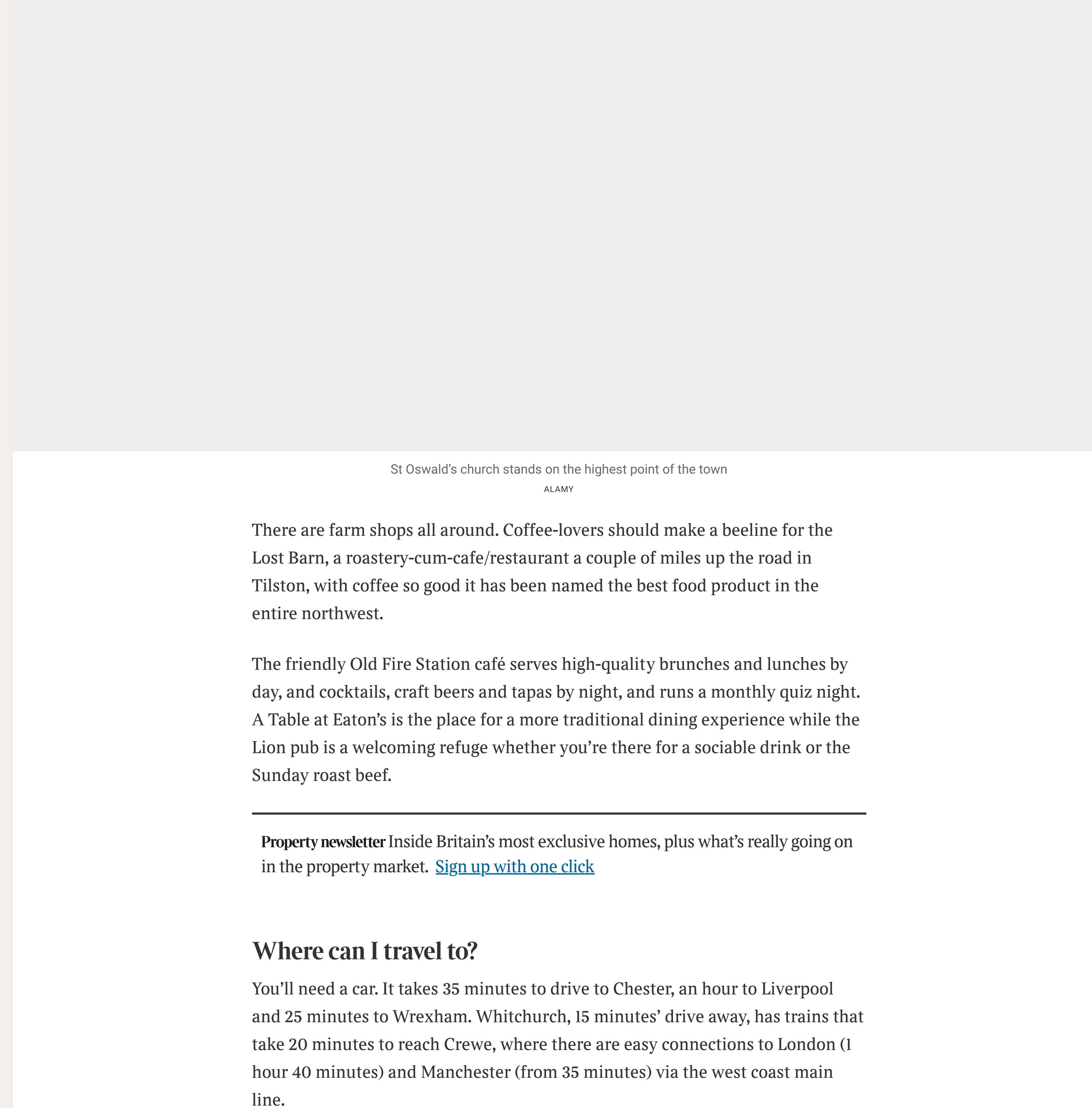
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Tim Palmer Friday March 21 2025, 6.00am, The Sunday Times

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ald's Church lords it over town, a reminder of the town's history. The town, with its mix of timber-framed and mellow brick, was a thriving market town in the 13th century. It remains a prestigious address, in demand within the county, set for its enviable homes, many with views to the Welsh Hills, and equestrian credentials. The retired footballer Michael Owen has his racing stables here and the Boxing Day hunt meet is a big event in the social calendar.

The countryside is lush and lovely, a dog-walker's delight from every doorstep, but it's the amenities that make Malpas stand out. Practicalities are covered by convenience stores, the medical centre, dentist and pharmacy, a dry cleaner and tiny launderette, along with all the necessary grooming options for both humans and their furry best friends. Families are drawn by the two schools, keeping the age profile on the right side of too old.



The friendly Old Fire Station cafe is a popular spot for brunch and lunch

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"Malpas has absolutely everything you need for daily life and if you want a smart boutique for a nice new dress then Tarporley isn't far away," Helen Burrell, a counsellor who has lived in the area all her life, says. "It sounds vacuous but it's just a nice village with nice people and enough going on."

• The Sunday Times Best Places to Live 2025 revealed

Those goings-on range from an annual village fair – highlights include a parade and a dog show – and a "Yesteryear Rally", showcasing unfeasible quantities of vintage machinery, to super-sociable Friday night gatherings at the Lion pub, often with live music. There are all kinds of sports – football, cricket, bowls and tennis at the sports club, and yoga, Pilates and much more at the Community Church.

Chester is easily commutable, Liverpool manageable and Manchester doable. Wrexham is even closer – where jobs are plentiful, social cachet less so.

What are the best shops and restaurants in Malpas?

There's a restaurant, excellent pub, fish and chip shop and a fine café bar for fun. There are two convenience stores, but Huxley's is the place for takeaway cakes, bacon baps and local produce – from Cheshire cheese and its own smoked mackerel pâté to homemade Caroline's Pesto, fresh from a kitchen in the village.

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St Oswald's church stands on the highest point of the town

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There are farm shops all around. Coffee-lovers should make a beeline for the Lost Barn, a roastery-cum-café/restaurant a couple of miles up the road in Tilton. So good it has been named the best food product in the entire northwest.

The friendly Old Fire Station café serves high-quality brunches and lunches by day, and cocktails, craft beers and tapas by night, and runs a monthly quiz night. A Table at Eaton's is the place for a more traditional dining experience while the Lion pub is a welcoming refuge whether you're there for a sociable drink or the Sunday roast beef.

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Where can I travel to?

You'll need a car. It takes 35 minutes to drive to Chester, an hour to Liverpool and 25 minutes to Wrexham. Whitechapel, 15 minutes' drive away, has trains that take 20 minutes to reach Crewe, where there are easy connections to London (via the West Coast main line).

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What is the mobile coverage in Malpas?

Good – a strong signal from the four main network providers.

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How fast is the broadband?

Airband's full-fibre rollout is well above average at 84 per cent availability. Airband's full-fibre service is also present, along with fixed wireless services.

What are the best schools in Malpas?

Malpas Alport Endowed Primary School was found to require improvement in some areas by Ofsted when it was last inspected in 2023. However, Bishop Heber, the town's comprehensive, was rated good in 2023.

The King's School (mixed, annual fees £19,037) and Queen's School (girls, £19,317) in Chester offer an independent alternative.

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What is the best address in Malpas?

Church Street, where you'll get not only a historic house but also a grand view of Bickerton Hill. Prices here range from £350,000 for a two-bedroom cottage up to £2 million for a Georgian family home.

What are the house prices in Malpas?

Average property price: £150,000

Source: Halifax using Land Registry data

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