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CONGRATULATIONS to everyone involved in organising the Warrington Parkrun which has gone from strength to strength since it started six years ago.

The free community event, which is part of a national network, is run by a dedicated team of volunteers and at the start of the year more than 700 people, of varying abilities took part, creating a new record.

Since joining the event just over 18 months ago I have certainly enjoyed the benefits and was proud to receive my 50th run t-shirt in the post after reaching my milestone on Christmas Day.

It has been fantastic seeing various members of the local community taking part in the weekly event which celebrated its

6th birthday event in January.

Being a person who disliked running with a passion, dodging it at every opportunity during my school days and throughout my life, I am still pinching myself that I have collected my 50th milestone t-shirt – which is again provided free of charge. (All you pay for is the postage)

I would seriously recommend any one thinking of new ways of

keeping fit to give the Parkrun ago.

It is certainly infectious and I have even been a tourist on a couple of occasions in Nottingham and Anglesey!

None of it would be possible without the volunteers who get up early every Saturday to set up the course and then take your results as you cross the finishing line, with others around the course cheering you on!

Well done to you all – and thank you for changing my life for the better!



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World Record holder back on the fund-raising trail

NOT content with becoming a world record holder former Warrington soldier Ste Hughes is back on the fund-raising trail to help fellow veterans.

After setting a new world record in the time taken to go from Land's End to John O'Groats in a wheelchair last year, Ste is now planning a 100km sit ski ultra marathon in Germany, a John O'Groats to Land's End on a roller sitski and a 1900 miles push on the Wild West Route 66 in America.

He is aiming to raise funds for the Armed Forces community hub Warrington, Bike Tours for the Wounded and Holidays for Heroes Jersey.

He has been using a wheelchair following nine operations on a degenerative spine condition resulting from an injury picked up while training with the army after serving in the Royal Artillery for 4 years in Germany and Northern Ireland.

As well as injuring his spine on an assault course he also suffers with PTSD and has also undergone four brain operations.

Last year the 49-year-old from Appleton took 14 days to complete the 874 mile Land's End to John O'Groats journey, beating the previous record by six days.

Ste said: "After being a keen runner I had to re-evaluate my life and it has been a hard transition. I suffered depression and anxiety on

top of my PTSD. I was watching the commonwealth paralympic games which gave me inspiration.

"I was inspired by paralympian David Weir and I've had the pleasure to meet and race in the same race as him a few times.

"Then while attending an Invictus taster day I met my skiing coach who encouraged me to try para Nordic sit skiing. I have been doing this for two years now and it is my favoured sport.

"To date I have taken part in countless marathons, ultra marathons and endurance events."

Ste added: "Bike tours for the wounded are my primary beneficiary but I'm also fundraising for the armed forces community hub in Warrington for whom I am an ambassador and Holidays for Heroes in Jersey.

I was recognised earlier this year receiving a highly commended Active Cheshire award for my fundraising.

He is planning to do his ski marathon in February, John O'Groats to Land's End from May 28 to June 6th and Route66 in August.

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Council approves 20-year vision for the town centre

A 20-year vision to make Warrington town centre a vibrant, dynamic destination – and a great place to live work, visit and do business – has been given the go-ahead.

The borough council's cabinet has approved the Warrington Town Centre Masterplan, which aims to guide the regeneration of the heart of the town, and help foster physical development and economic growth.

The masterplan pulls together current achievements, short-term 'quick wins' and longer term transformational investments. It builds upon what's special about Warrington town centre – particularly its cultural assets and architecture, its locational advantages and its waterfronts and green spaces.

A number of key areas form the focus of the masterplan, including:

- Circular Parklands – to enhance the 'green ring' around the town centre – one of Warrington's most unique and distinctive assets – through a programme of specific improvement projects, street enhancements and the delivery of major town centre regeneration schemes.
- Rediscovering the River – progressing 'strong' and 'special' development areas orientated towards the river, ensuring attractive waterfront promenades and walking and cycling routes, enhancing and creating parks and open spaces and improving bridge crossings.
- Changing our main shopping streets – through cafes and restaurants with active

frontages and outdoor eating, transforming former shops into new space for small businesses, converting vacant and under used commercial space into new homes and promoting pop-up spaces for temporary, colourful activities.

- A Place of Culture – reinforcing the town centre's sense of place through new public spaces (Time Square and Riverfront Plaza), enhancing and pedestrianising routes, animating streets and spaces through alfresco dining, public art, street markets, events and festivals and further improving the offer of The Pyramid and Warrington Museum and Library.
- Town Centre Living – working with partners, including the council's own Local Housing Company, to deliver over 8,000 new homes in the heart of the town, and ensuring as many as possible are affordable for local people.
- A Focus for Business – making Warrington town centre a focus for new businesses and hotel development, focusing on four key locations – Stadium quarter (phase 1), Bank Quay Rail Hub, Southern Gateway, Riverfront and Port Warrington.
- Keeping the town centre moving and connected – further enhancing Warrington's transport network and connectivity, tackling

congestion and promoting active travel as laid out in Warrington's Fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP4), and delivering a National Rail Hub at Bank Quay train station, grasping the opportunities of HS2/West coast Main Line and Northern Powerhouse Rail.

Accompanying the masterplan document will be a fully digitised and interactive version, which will provide a proactive tool in supporting developers, designers and decision-makers and promoting and delivering the town centre vision.

Borough council leader Russ Bowden, said: "This is a hugely important plan, which sets out our ambitions, up to 2040, to deliver a thriving, prosperous future for our town centre and the large-scale Warrington Waterfront development area.

"Several major town centre projects are already coming to

fruition here. The Time Square development has started to trade and our Palmyra Cultural Quarter is coming alive as a colourful destination of high quality restaurants and bars. We have also recently given the go-ahead for over 700 new homes in the heart of our town.

"This masterplan aims to build on our success and support the delivery of a vibrant and attractive town centre which is a great place to live and work, a cultural and leisure hub and a destination our residents and businesses can be proud of.

"At the heart of this is the firm aspiration to deliver inclusive growth so that everyone can participate in and enjoy the benefits of a distinctive, diverse, safe, vibrant and green town centre."

To read the Warrington Town Centre Masterplan in full, visit warrington.gov.uk/town-centre-masterplan



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PRINCE 2 Foundation Starting 24th April

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The Modern Slavery Act – what do you need to know?

The Modern Slavery Act is an act of Parliament that came into force on 29 October 2015 with new requirements for businesses to report on slavery and human trafficking.

Any organisation in any part of a group structure will be required to comply with the provision and produce a statement if it:

- Is a body corporate or a partnership, wherever incorporated
- Carries on a business, or part of a business, in the UK
- Supplies goods or services
- Has an annual turnover of £36m or more

If your company is covered by the legislation, you must produce an annual statement setting out the steps you have taken to ensure there is no slavery in your business and supply chains. If you have not taken any steps, you must say so.

The statement must be published on your company website with a link in a prominent place on the homepage. If you do not have a website, then a copy must be provided, on request, within 30 days. This has to be published each year, within 6 months of your company's financial year-end.

The Government guidance is quite clear on what will happen if your company does not comply:

"If a business fails to produce a slavery and human trafficking statement for a particular financial year the Secretary of State may seek an injunction through the High Court... requiring the company to comply. If the company fails to comply with the injunction, they will be in contempt of a court order, which is punishable by an unlimited fine."

Aside from legal penalties, failing to comply could cause reputational damage to your company. It is important to bear in mind that the Government is not simply asking companies to produce statements but is actively looking to increase transparency on human rights issues in the hope that greater peer and consumer pressure will drive improvements in this area.

If you would like further advice on this matter to ensure your company is compliant then please get in touch with us today on 01925 626253 – we would be happy to help!

Ellen Parkin

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Business couple receive Queen's New Year Honours



A WARRINGTON business couple have been honoured in the Queen's New Year Honours List for 2020.

David and Wendy Maisey, co-Founders and Directors at Warrington based ICC Solutions, have each become proud recipients of an O.B.E. in recognition of their outstanding contribution to International Trade and the British Economy with over 20 years of exporting through their company ICC Solutions Ltd.

The honours are the "icing on the cake" for David and Wendy, and the result of 23 years of hard work running their company from St James Business Centre, developing IT based test tools for the payments industry and exports to over 100 countries. The company has previously won four Queen's Awards for Enterprise – two for Innovation and two for International Trade.

David was recently appointed as a Deputy Lieutenant in Cheshire and is Chairman of the Cheshire Commonwealth Association – working closely with the Department for International Trade.

Both David and Wendy are keen to help others and support many charities including The Duke

of Edinburgh's Award and, more locally, Warrington Youth Club.

Not content with just being a contributor to the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards, ICC Solutions has successfully developed an exporting skill, which helps young people achieve their DoFE Award through education – and helping to inspire future British exporters.

David said: "I am absolutely elated and truly honoured to be the recipient of an O.B.E. This award is the pinnacle of my career so far and I feel privileged to be the co-founder of ICC Solutions and have the opportunity to make such a positive influence on the British Economy."

Wendy, who recently stood in the General Election as the Conservative candidate contesting the Warrington North constituency, added: "We are delighted that we also have the opportunity to help others with our knowledge and skill and hope that our passion for helping young people provides a new generation of exporters in the UK".

No slow down in growth for Cheshire and Warrington economy

CHESHIRE and Warrington continues to be the second highest performing economy in England outside of London, according to new figures.

Average income per head has risen by an impressive 3.3 per cent and the overall size of the economy is now worth £32.48 billion.

The figures cement Cheshire and Warrington's position as an economic powerhouse.

New Office for National Statistics (ONS) data shows that for every resident, goods and services are produced worth £34,896, the second highest in England outside of London, and growing at a faster rate than the rest of the North West of England.

The Cheshire and Warrington economy continues to outpace that being achieved across the majority of England and is now bigger than those of Sheffield, Leeds and Birmingham.

Christine Gaskell, chairman of Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) said: "Cheshire and Warrington's economy is continuing its strong performance, with all three local authority areas positively contributing to consistent and sustainable growth."

"The LEP, together with our partners, is forging ahead with plans to grow our economy, by focusing on our key strengths in high-value manufacturing, clean energy and life sciences."

The data comes as the LEP prepares launch a £30m skills programme early in the New Year which is set to benefit almost 20,000 residents and in turn improve the performance of our businesses.

Cheshire and Warrington LEP covers the three local authority areas of Warrington, Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester.

What's in store for 2020?

by Stephen Fitzsimons

I'm sure many people are delighted when the festive period is over, with a bulging waistline contrasting with a thinning wallet.

However, it does showcase the town centre at its finest with the Business Improvement District funded lights in Palmyra Square highlighting one of the more historic parts of Warrington.

Elsewhere, the Golden Square Christmas tree was the focal point of a more recent addition to the town centre. I personally enjoyed the hospitality of the Botanist pre-Christmas, although every time I tried to leave, another colleague arrived...

So what's 2020 got in store for us? We have two new faces in Westminster and whilst thanking Helen Jones and Faisal Rashid for all their support, we look forward to working closely with Charlotte Nichols and Andy Carter over the next five years. They join us at quite an exciting time, although the same challenges remain across the Council in trying to get more done for less. We do have the (Stronger) Towns Fund to focus on which could result in £25m of transformative projects across the borough.

Warrington is often (unfairly) criticised for its transport infrastructure. It is true that the New Town initiative only planned for a population of 120,000 and

we are now at nearly 210,000 so still trying to keep up with extra commuters. Warrington West station is now open for business, giving residents the opportunity to ditch the car. Over in Birchwood, the extended dual carriageway up to the M62 will shorten journey times and we may also have a new service station there as well. (This would cater for the M6 to M60 traffic, not the M62 from Liverpool so no competition for Burtonwood Services.)

The Cheshire & Warrington Local

Enterprise Partnership (LEP) needs to grow the sub regional economy from £25 billion to £50 billion by 2040 and they have received some central government funding to invest in areas such as skills.

Several Warrington organisations will be receiving grants to help inspire the next generation of workers in the digital sector so watch this space for further details. If this doesn't excite you, then as I write this there are only another 346 days until Christmas!



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Awards Finalist!

2020 has got off to a flying start for the real5 Network. The innovative brand of business networking has been shortlisted as a finalist in The High Sheriff Business Awards for Cheshire in the Micro Enterprise category.

The business formed its first group in Warrington 2 years ago and now has 6 groups across the Region with another 3 to follow in the first quarter including the latest innovation, real5 Women.

Founder and MD Andrew Hibbert said 'Absolutely delighted to be recognised in these prestigious local business awards, it's been an amazing 2 years with the network generating over £10 Million in new business opportunities for our members, I can't wait to see what the year ahead will bring'.



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Advertiser's announcement

LGBTQ+ Estate Planning

Estate Planning is often seen as just a tool for married couples with children to limit their Inheritance Tax liability. However, Estate Planning covers a much wider range of matters than this. LGBTQ+ adults may have additional concerns to take into account when preparing for later life or deciding how their assets are dealt with after death.

Inheritance

In 2016 over 70% of LGBTQ+ adults identified as single or never married. Couples who are not married or in a Civil Partnership do not enjoy the same rights as married/Civil Partnership couples to inherit their partner's estate.

In 2018, around 12% of all adoptions in England involved same sex couples. If an LGBTQ+ adult has a biological child of their own, or if they have adopted a child, that child will be entitled to inherit their estate. However, a non-biological child who has not been formally adopted will not be entitled to inherit any assets from the estate if there is no Will.

If you wish to leave any assets to an unmarried partner or to a non-adopted non-biological child then a Will is essential.

Lasting Powers of Attorney

Advanced age and certain diseases such as HIV, Aids and Hepatitis C increase the risk of dementia and loss of mental capacity. Lasting Powers of Attorney are important to allow a partner, family member or close friend to make decisions on your behalf about health and care or

your finances, should you lose capacity to make decisions for yourself.

Executors and Attorneys

It is common to appoint family members as executors of a Will or as Attorneys under a Power of Attorney. However, according to research from Stonewall, LGBTQ+ adults are more likely to be estranged from their biological family than heterosexual adults and so not have this option.

Making a Will or Lasting Power

of Attorney is even more important for someone who is estranged from their family so that they can ensure that the people they actually want to be involved in their care and inheritance aren't excluded.

How can we help?

At FDR Law our Private Client team have the skill and expertise required to ensure that your wishes are met. If you have any questions or are unsure how to plan your estate, take advice and let us clarify matters for you.

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Seen a drop in Google ranks after moving to your new website? Here's why.



It doesn't matter how cutting edge your website was when you first launched it, at some point, it will start to look stale or outdated, or maybe it just no longer meets what Google is looking for and you've started to drop down the rankings.

It's at this point that companies often decide to refresh their existing website or build an entirely new one.

If this sounds like your scenario, and you've recently launched a redesign, you were likely excited to see your brand new or reworked website and looking forward to more traffic, conversions, and sales.

And when everything is done in the right way, those are exactly the type of results you'll get.

Unfortunately, this often isn't the case and many website owners will notice a dip in traffic. In fact, a business we spoke to recently said that their stylish new website had caused a dip in traffic that saw them drop from 20 leads per month down to only 1 or 2.

If this sounds like your situation, then don't worry! We're going to outline the things that are most likely to have caused your dip and what you can do to resolve them.

1. Redirects

Easily the most important thing to consider when launching your new website is how you're going

to redirect people from your old one.

This is easier if your website URL stays the same, but unless your website pages stay exactly the same as your old website...you're going to have to make sure that the pages that no longer exist point towards relevant pages on your new website.

If you're using an entirely new domain, you'll have to redirect the entire website page by page to ensure you don't lose out on any traffic and so that Google can connect the old pages to the new ones.

2. The layout of your website

Changing the layout of a website can cause problems if we don't let Google know what the new structure is. Submitting the new structure to Google (via Search Console) and making sure that when Google indexes (scans) your website it can find all the pages you want it to is important. As a result, if you don't set up a sitemap for your new site and upload it to Google it's likely to negatively impact where your website ranks.

3. Your content

Good content plays a huge part in ranking well and ensuring that traffic keeps pouring in, and content is also something that usually gets updated when a website is rebuilt. This is only a problem if the new content is written with one eye on the target keywords and phrases you want your website to show up for.

Unfortunately, this problem can be the hardest one to fix, as translating what worked well with your old website to a new design can be tough.

So, you've missed one of the areas identified above, and you're seeing a drop in traffic as a result.

That's great! Why? These problems are all fixable, and it's unlikely that the damage done can't be reversed. There is no reason why your web developer or a good digital marketing agency couldn't quickly fix them and get your rankings and traffic back on track.

If you're interested in talking to us about this, email me, Kerri at marketing@dreamscape.solutions or call 01925 755960.

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£7m congestion busting road scheme is completed

THE Warrington East project – a series of transport and highways improvements on Birchwood Way – has officially been completed.

Completion of the third and final phase of the project is a significant milestone for east Warrington. It brings to an end the major programme of improvements for the area – following the completion of phase 1 (the Birchwood Pinchpoint project) in 2016, and phase 2 (Birchwood Way junction improvements) in September last year.

Phase 3 consisted of the dualling of the A574 Birchwood Way between the Moss Gate/Daten Avenue junction and M62 junction 11 and was opened to traffic last month.

The new carriageway has been constructed on land reserved for this purpose since the Northern Expressway was first built in the mid-1970s as part of the Warrington New Town highway network.

Overall, the project now complete, will play a key role in supporting the local economy, including the Birchwood Enterprise Zone, Birchwood Boulevard, Birchwood Shopping Centre and all other employment sites in the area.

Minister for the Northern Powerhouse and Local Growth Jake Berry said: "Congratulations

to Warrington Borough Council and Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership on the successful completion of this important infrastructure project which will help reduce congestion, improve local connections and support businesses to grow.

"This £6.9 million investment from the Government's Local Growth Fund into the Warrington East Highway demonstrates our commitment to boosting economic growth, levelling up and connecting communities across the Northern Powerhouse."

Warrington Borough Council's cabinet member for transportation, highways and public realm, Cllr Hans Mundry, said: "I'm absolutely delighted that this hugely important project – delivering major transport improvements on a key gateway into Warrington – has been completed on time and well within budget. These improvements will make a huge difference to motorists travelling into and out of Warrington along this key corridor, now and in the future."

Leader of the council Russ Bowden, said: "The completion of the Warrington East programme is a major success for our borough, and an important part



of our ongoing investment in our highways infrastructure.

"Keeping East Warrington moving, with a safe, reliable transport network, will bring huge benefits, not only to the travelling public, but to local residents, who will see a reduction in the impact of traffic on them.

"What is also very important is that these improvements are just one part of a much wider programme of transport improvements across the town. The council will have delivered over £100m worth of transport improvement schemes in just 5 years between 2016 and 2021. These include

improvements at M62 Junction 8, further improvements to a number of junctions around Omega and Lingley Mere, the recently opened Warrington West Railway Station and the Centre Park Link scheme which is due to open to traffic before the end of 2020."

The final project cost is expected to be around £7.0m. Funding has come from council borrowing and grants from the Local Growth Fund, managed by the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership, and the National Productivity Investment Fund, managed by the Department for Transport.

Police chiefs meet schoolboy who wrote "thank you" letter



A WARRINGTON school boy who wrote the police thanking them for their work was invited to meet Cheshire's top police leaders.

Police and crime commissioner David Keane and chief constable Darren Martland invited Noah Dean to meet with them at the Gateway on Sankey Street, Warrington.

It was after the nine-year-old sent them both a letter thanking the local policing team in Warrington for their work and highlighting how he feels his local area could be made safer.

Noah, who is a Junior Safety Officer at St Vincent's Primary School in Penketh, also praised the work of his local PCSO Stephen Heaps who regularly visits the school. In his letter, he said:

"Dear Chief Constable Darren Martland and PCC David Keane, I live in Penketh and am a Junior Safety Officer (JSO) at St Vincent's. I think it's good policing where I live. I think it's great when PCSO Stephen Heaps comes in.

"I think the police could go to the park. Sometimes the park gets

damaged by some people. I think if the police talked to them they will stop.

"At school they keep us safe by making sure people don't park on the yellow lines. PCSO Stephen Heaps comes in and does assemblies to help us be safe and has given me ideas for posters."

PCC David Keane said: "It was a pleasure to meet Noah and talk to him about how important community safety is to him and other pupils at St. Vincent's. It was also great to hear all about the invaluable role Noah plays in his local community through his work as a Junior Safety Officer to keep his school and local area safe.

"It's really important to me that young people have a positive experience of policing and have the confidence to approach a police officer or PCSO when they have a problem. Schemes like school Junior Safety Officers and Mini Police are helping build trust in local policing and I hope they'll help young people turn into responsible and active citizens of the future."

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Students gain internships with top computer games firm

THREE students from Warrington's Priestley College have secured internships with one of the most high-profile computer games companies in the world.

Sam Sharp, Mitch Weir and Courtney Cunliffe met with TT Games – which is part of Warner Brothers – through their computer games design course at Priestley.

Now they have been taken on by the games giant and given some extraordinary opportunities such as working on the Lego Star Wars: The Skywalker Saga game.

"They threw me straight in at the deep end using their software and hardware," said former Helsby High pupil Sam.

"I thought there would be a huge difference between being an intern and everyone else, but I've been treated the same.

"I never thought I'd be doing this so young. People spend a long time trying to work on such a high-profile game."

Priestley tutor Matt Wilson forged the partnership with TT Games after inviting its head of design, Arthur Parsons, into his classroom.

Impressed and inspired by what he saw, Arthur offered to look at the possibility of internships for some of those who completed the Level 3 course.

Successful candidates then continue on the Art Foundation course at Priestley while being paid to work at the company.

So far, the team at TT Games have been impressed by the contributions made by Sam, Mitch and Courtney.

"You'd struggle to know they were interns," said Arthur. "They've all been accepted as being part of their teams and being expected to deliver work like any other team member. This experience will be completely invaluable as they are learning how to make games in the best way possible, by actually working on some of the biggest hit games of the future."

Each of the interns has been placed on a different project and integrated into a development team with meaningful work to complete.

Former Penketh High pupil Mitch applied for the internship because it offered the chance to gain industry experience without having to move far away.

"A lot of people at work have been surprised with the knowledge I

already have – especially when they find out I haven't been to university," said Mitch.

To apply for the TT Games' internships, Priestley's students put together a portfolio like the ones they prepare for university applications. They attended an interview and were struck by how informal it was. Interviewees were simply keen to get the best out of them so created a friendly atmosphere.

Courtney, who attended Hope Academy before Priestley, said the interns had felt ready for their new role.

"College prepared us really well

because before we started work we had covered all the software we would be using," she said.

"In our second year we worked in teams which was really useful because it helped us develop our

communication skills."

Following their one-year internships, the students might receive an offer of full-time work, but also have the option of university or applying to another company.



New book covers fifty momentous years for Warrington

THE 50 years that have elapsed since the designation of Warrington as a "New Town" in 1969 must be among the most momentous in the town's long history.

It was a period that saw the construction of Thelwall Viaduct, the birth of whole new communities such as Birchwood and Westbrook, the enlargement of the old Town Council under the 1974 re-organisation of local government, the construction of new out-of-town shopping centres and housing areas, two new bus stations, three new bridges over the Mersey and much, much more.

At the same time, the Burtonwood Air Base – once the biggest military establishment in Europe – disappeared, along with numerous historic buildings, Woolworth's and many old family firms which did much to give the town its character.

The story is told in an important new book by Janice Hayes, heritage manager at Warrington Museum and author of numerous books on the town's history, which marks the 50th anniversary of the birth of the New Town.

Superbly researched, the 96-page book is packed with photographs of the changing face of Warrington which will bring back many memories for

older residents who will doubtless wonder how it would look today if it had not been for the New Town Development Corporation.

Certainly, some of the early artists' impressions of how the New Town would look when it was completed suggest that perhaps all did not go to plan. But at least things are a little better than in 1961 when a journalist visiting the town wrote: "The first impressions of Warrington come through the nose. Within a minute of leaving Bank Quay Station, I found myself coughing savagely – as the smoke crept down my tongue towards the lungs."

Perhaps the most interesting illustrations in the book are

the paintings of Warrington's own Lowry, Eric Tucker, who depicted the town accurately but affectionately.

His 1995 study of Lower Buttermarket Street shows his characters from the 1950s wandering like ghosts past Yates Wine Lodge, perhaps looking for the Odeon Cinema which had stood there previously.

While the book chronicles many of the changes for the better, it also draws attention to the still inadequate highways and the almost daily gridlock that occurs when an accident on any of the motorways diverts traffic into the town.





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1,000
Children's meals served as part of the "Fit and Fed" project



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1,371

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COMMUNITY

LiveWire's Sports Development Team made important contributions to community and youth outreach work in our town in 2019. Our "Fit and Fed" school holiday support scheme served over 1,000 free meals to youngsters attending.

Over 350 volunteer hours were delivered. The summer saw a wide range of free drop-in local sports sessions for young people that saw over 500 kids take part. And November saw the launch of LiveWire's innovative and free new community bike-based project that aims to promote cycling as a form of exercise as well as reducing anti-social behaviour. Warrington Community Bike Project is a partnership between LiveWire, Warrington Police and the Cycling Projects charity that sees participants renovate and repair a reclaimed bike – that they get to keep. The project is set to continue and develop in 2020.



3 MILLION

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- Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub Library
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- Warrington Library
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The Garden Spa is located in Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub.

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Warrington wins award for tackling hate crime



WARRINGTON has won a prestigious award for tackling hate crime.

The accolade was given in recognition of the Warrington Hate Crime Action Alliance's commitment to diversity and partnerships with local services and charities.

The alliance is made up of Cheshire Police, Warrington Borough Council, Warrington Disability Partnership, Youth Council, Warrington Ethnic Community Association (WECA), Speak Up, community representatives, NHS Warrington CCG and North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

The Alliance won the prestigious national award at the NO2H8 award ceremony.

The group won the Local Authority Upstander Award for its partnership approach to tackling hate crime in Warrington. This particular award is given to a local authority that has implemented or undertaken extensive work on tackling hate, intolerance and bigotry.

The flagship initiative of Hate

Crime Action Alliance is the Wise Up Awards scheme which celebrates schools in Warrington who work to combat hate crime and bullying. The annual awards ceremony will be held on February 5.

Warrington Hate Crime Action Alliance was nominated by Bewsey Lodge Primary School. The nomination went into detail about the work the partnership does in association with the police, communities, volunteers and charities as well as the Wise Up Awards.

Cabinet member for leisure and community, and deputy chairman of the alliance, Cllr Tony Higgins said: "Winning such an important award is a delight for the Warrington Alliance."

"We're so happy that the efforts of the partnership have been recognised and commended, not only by the people of Warrington, but also nationally through the NO2H8 awards."

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- Sat 15 Feb **Menopause The Musical 2**
- Sun 16 Feb **Colin Thackery**
- Wed 19 Feb **Milton Jones in Milton: Impossible**
- Thu 20 Feb **An Evening with Carl Fogarty**
- Sun 23 Feb **The Sooty Show**
- Fri 28 Feb **Sounds Familiar Music Quiz**
- Sat 29 Feb **Circus of Horrors - 25th Anniversary**

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- Sat 1 Feb **Comedy Store**
- Fri 7 Feb **The Noise Next Door - In Charge**
- Sat 22 Feb **Tom Stade - You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet**



St Rocco's Christmas tree collection raises £33k for patient care

ST ROCCO'S Hospice, Warrington has seen a huge success for the eighth year running, with their annual Christmas Tree Collection.

More than 2400 trees have been collected and an astounding £33,000 has been raised for patient care at the hospice!

On Saturday January 11 more than 130 volunteers donated their time and help picking up used Christmas Trees. Residents were able to discard of their Christmas Tree by making a donation to St. Rocco's and the trees were then recycled and disposed of in an environmentally friendly way.

Charlotte Howard, Events Fundraiser for St. Rocco's Hospice said, "We're so happy that this year's Christmas Tree Collection has been so successful and we're thrilled that the people of Warrington continue to support patient care at the hospice through their very generous donations year

after year. We'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who made a booking and a donation and of course would like to say thanks to all of the volunteers from local businesses who worked so hard on the day- we really couldn't do it without them all!"

This year Warrington Borough Council, BT Skips, HMS Urban Building Projects, VPS Specialists, SP Energy Networks, nmcn, Ensign, Beesley & Fildes, Warrington Electrical Supplies, Beechwood Industries Ltd, Omega Access North, Bmec, Sandstone Supplies, and Bagnalls all had vans on the roads from 6.30am.

Notification of next year's event will be available at www.stroccos.org.uk soon.



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Primary schools top the national league tables

A GROUP of primary schools in Warrington and Widnes has topped the national performance league tables.

Warrington Primary Academy Trust (WPAT) was joint first in England for the percentage of pupils reaching expected standards in the Key Stage 2 SATs tests carried out in the summer, first nationally for performance in maths and fourth for writing.

The tables are based on the performance of Year 6 pupils across the schools that have been part of the trust for three or more years.

WPAT chief executive Louise Smith said: We're absolutely delighted at our national standings in these performance tables, which are a reflection of the hard work that has been done in all our schools since we were formed in 2016.

"We are committed to the education of children in the communities we serve and we have been steadily expanding, welcoming Ditton Primary in Widnes recently. Our aim is to continue growing and working together to drive forward the improvement of all of our schools.

"WPAT provides its schools with a range of benefits – schools get the support, expertise and professional development from staff from across the trust so that they can provide the very best education standards for their children."

WPAT school Bruche Primary was among the top performing schools in the country in the table for individual primary schools, with every Year 6 pupil meeting their

age-related expectations in the tests in reading, writing and maths. The national average for this measure across all three subjects is 64 per cent.

WPAT is a community of over 1,700 children aged 2 to 11 in

six primary schools and a teaching school, employing over 280 people. The trust was formed in 2016 and has quickly developed a national reputation for excellent standards.



Pictured: WPAT chief executive Louise Smith (centre) with the trust team (back, from left): Emma Fenton (headteacher of Ditton Primary, Widnes), Louise Stokes (deputy headteacher, Beamont Primary, Warrington), Laura Tate (assistant headteacher, Beamont Primary, Warrington), Jenny Hindley (headteacher, Evelyn Street Primary, Warrington) and Chris Jones (executive headteacher, Bruche Primary, Warrington). Front row, from left: Rebecca Kayll, (headteacher, Penketh Primary, Warrington) and Paula Warding (headteacher, Alderman Bolton Primary, Warrington).



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Great Sankey hub secures world's first public building 'gold' dementia-friendly award

WARRINGTON'S Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub has officially become the world's first public building to achieve the University of Stirling's Dementia Services Development Centre 'Gold' Award.

The award has been presented following a rigorous audit process which has seen the multi-million-pound hub praised for its dementia-friendly architecture and design.

Operated by LiveWire on behalf of Warrington Borough Council, the community hub has become the world's first public building to secure a major global 'gold' standard.

The cutting-edge community health and wellbeing facility has achieved the prestigious DSDC (Dementia Services Development Centre) Gold Award from the University of Stirling – one of the leading educational institutions in the world for dementia design standards.

The community facility in Warrington, Cheshire opened its doors in February 2018 as part of a phased opening after an extensive refurbishment, which included redesigning the building to meet leading dementia-friendly standards throughout, creating a safe and welcoming environment for people living with the condition.

The building's new state-of-the-art fitness suite includes a comprehensive selection of equipment approved by the Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI), and provides easy-to-use kit enabling those with dementia to stay physically active.

The facility has been praised for its carefully-considered features which include free-flowing reception pods, natural and artificial lighting, clear signage and floor finishes, and fully accessible toilets.

Staff have received special training in order to raise awareness of dementia and the impact it can have on people, their family and friends.

Dr Martin Quirke, Dementia Services Development Centre at University of Stirling, said: "Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub provides a groundbreaking example of how public organisations, businesses, and the construction industry can, through the design of public buildings and the services they contain,

make meaningful contributions to maintaining and improving public health and social-inclusion within our communities – including the increasing number of people living with dementia.

"Warrington Borough Council and LiveWire's success in achieving the highest quality of dementia and age-friendly design literally sets a new standard in dementia design quality for public buildings. We hope that the example set by this project shines a light for other organisations to show that it can be done, well, and beautifully."

Warrington Borough Council Leader, Cllr Russ Bowden, said: "As our population gets older, it's more important than ever that we deliver services which are able to fully meet their needs. That was key to our plans for Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub – to place dementia-friendliness at the heart of the facility, at every stage of its development – from the building's design, to signage, equipment and staff training.

"Receiving this recognition from the University of Stirling is great news for Warrington and is testament to the work carried out by the council, LiveWire and partners to deliver a modern, welcoming, dementia-friendly facility for our community. I'm very proud of everyone who has contributed to this achievement."

The Council's Cabinet Member for Leisure and Community, Cllr Tony Higgins, said: "Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub is a fantastic asset for Warrington, a first-class facility designed for everybody in the community. From the outset, our vision was to deliver a fully inclusive, dementia-friendly facility, delivering accessible health and wellbeing services which are so vital to some of our most vulnerable residents.

"The Hub is now making a huge difference to people's lives on a daily basis. I'm delighted that this has been recognised with this prestigious global award."

LiveWire's Managing Director, Emma Hutchinson, said: "It's



important to remember that people with dementia can – and want to – remain physically active, and while most leisure centres facilitate for those with physical enablement's, it was incredibly important to us to design facilities that cater for cognitive impairments.

"To be the first public building in the world to achieve the University of Stirling's DSDC Gold Award is an incredible step forward in so many ways and I'm extremely proud to be part of a team that has developed a thriving community facility that truly delivers for those people living with dementia and Alzheimer's."

The hub also offers dementia-friendly exercise programmes, which include weekly quiet hours in the gym, and a group exercise class. The class focuses on the physical and mental health of people affected by dementia and includes 40 minutes of low impact exercise, followed by a period of relaxation.

Emma added: "Taking the time to understand dementia friendliness was key from the very beginning of this project. LiveWire worked closely with Walker Simpson Architects to make this site one of the most dementia-friendly community facilities in the world, and now it is.

"As our ageing population increases, so will the need for

accessible, dementia-friendly environments and we're determined to lead the way in designing and building facilities that acknowledge this challenge."

Charles Johnston, Property Director at Sport England, said: "The Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub is a fantastic facility for the whole community and we're delighted to hear that the centre has won this design award.

"At Sport England we're determined to help everyone in England to get active – and that includes people with long-term health conditions such as dementia.

"It's inspiring that the Great Sankey Hub facilities have been designed to be as inclusive as possible, which will help many more people realise the benefits of regular physical activity."

The project has been constructed by BAM, and supported with funding from Warrington Borough Council, NHS England, Sport England, Football Foundation and Lawn Tennis Association.

For more information about the facility or for membership enquiries visit <https://livewirewarrington.co.uk/great-sankey-neighbourhood-hub>

For more information on the DSDC bid, visit <http://dementia.stir.ac.uk/blogs/dementia-centred/2018-03-14/designing-future-primary-healthcare>.





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Town's only licensed sex shop going up market with new boutique

WARRINGTON'S first and only licensed sex shop is on the move to new up market boutique premises on Sankey Street after trading in the town for more than 18 years without any known complaints.

While many retailers are abandoning the high street, Nice 'n' Naughty is moving from its existing premises under the arches on Crown Street, to new premises on Sankey Street, after successfully gaining a new licence from Warrington Borough Council.

They are currently finalising the design and finishes for the boutique opening on the February 10.

Director Simon Prescott, who launched Nice 'n' Naughty in 1999 said: "We have invested significantly to ensure the store will attract customers, old and new, as we continue to market to women and couples of Warrington and the surrounding areas.

"The location of the new store was selected as it is in a retail shopping area, surrounded by specialised businesses, licensed bars and eateries and is in keeping with the new boutique image we are opening.

"We are a multiple award-winning company across 14 towns and cities and have worked with 14 different councils.

"The change in the High Street has resulted in us streamlining, redesigning and modernising our stores, as many retailers are doing,

to survive the challenges of online shopping competition.

Simon added: "Nice 'n' Naughty is proud to have traded in Warrington town centre for nearly 18 years. We have been licensed by Warrington Borough Council since July 2002 and have had our licence renewed each consecutive year without any objection.

"Nice 'n' Naughty have never received a single complaint to our knowledge and have worked closely with the licensing department to ensure that we fully comply with all licensing conditions."

The company achieved Investor in People status in 2005 and were nominated for the Cheshire Business Awards in 2008.

During the past 20 years they have integrated closely with the community and several local sporting clubs, including Warrington Wolves, supporting several players testimonials including, Mark Hilton, Ben Westwood, Mike Wainwright and Lee Briers. They have received numerous Industry awards such as Retailer of the Year, Best Retail Chain and Simon was personally awarded Services to the Industry.

Explaining the need for a "Sex Shop" licence Simon added: The

1982 Miscellaneous Provision Acts states that we are applying for a 'Sex Shop Licence.

"A sweet shop sell sweets. A fruit & veg shop sells fruit and veg. We are determined as a Sex Shop, but we do not sell Sex. We prefer the label "Adult Retail Store/Boutique" which is more in line with the image of 2020 and the female and couples' market that we attract.

"The 'Sex Shop' label quite often generates an image in people's minds of blacked out seedy shops of the 1970s & 80s

"We have spent 20 years working to change the stigma and preconceived ideas of adult retail stores to help alleviate these concerns."

Nice 'n' Naughty have employed an interior designer and local shop fitting company to complete the work on the new Sankey Street Boutique.

The entrance and interior have been designed to allow wheelchair access as they want to be accessible to all and already have several customers who are wheelchair bound.

The window design will be changed four times a year, and will be similar in design to Victoria's Secret or Agent Provocateur boutiques.

All the Warrington Nice 'n' Naughty staff are parents and driven by family values.

Simon does a lot of work with local charities in the North West and has raised a lot of money for the local area, including children's charities as well as volunteering with numerous homeless organisations.

The new shop premises are set to open on February 10 in time for Valentine's Day.



Warrington's Own Buses champions St Rocco's Hospice

St. Rocco's Hospice are thrilled to have their very own branded bus which will be seen across routes in the town, after being chosen as Warrington's Own Buses' next Charity Partner.

St. Rocco's, plays a vital part in providing essential services to people within the community and are looking forward to working in partnership with the bus company in 2020.

The promotion of the hospice on the specially branded bus will help to get the message out that St. Rocco's are there for the town's residents when they need it most.

Nicola Henshaw, Corporate Fundraiser for St. Rocco's Hospice said: "It's exciting to be partnered with Warrington's Own Buses as Charity of the Year for 2020 and we're very excited to see

the amazing fundraising that the company will be doing throughout the year.

"St. Rocco's is dedicated to providing an important service to the people of Warrington, much like Warrington's Own Buses are, so it's always lovely to be able to work with companies that share our vision."

Bus Driver Tony Hughes and Staff Manager Tom Chisnall joined staff at St Rocco's to launch the partnership.

Ben Wakerley, Managing Director of Warrington's Own Buses added: "It is terrific to support St Rocco's, who have been there for so many of our friends and family. Our team has already raised over £1000 and hope to do much more this year."



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Financially yours

By David Watkinson

The accountant's New Year

It is that time of year again – the accountant's New Year. The annual maelstrom of the tax return deadline has passed.

I have enjoyed my usual celebratory double scotch (I wonder whether I can get away with claiming tax relief on that either as annual tax free employee entertainment or alternatively as wholly and exclusively incurred in maintaining my sanity?) followed by a few days break. And guess what! The tax office have now published the top 6 ridiculous excuses of the decade provided by taxpayers for not submitting their tax returns on time.



Margaret Black and David Watkinson

Unsurprisingly, these excuses did not succeed, but it is no wonder that the taxpayer tried it on. Not submitting your tax return on time can prove very expensive in automatic penalties. An immediate penalty of £100 is imposed on 1st February. From 1st May if the return remains outstanding then daily penalties of £10 are imposed, up to a maximum of 90 days (or £900). On 1st August, a further penalty of £300 is charged, followed by a further penalty of £300 on the following 1st February. These last two penalties will be increased to 5% of the tax payable if that is greater. That is a total of at least £1,600 even if no tax is payable.

So what are these top 6 excuses?

In first place is the enchanting excuse that the taxpayer's mother-in-law was a witch and put a curse on him to stop him completing his tax return. Enchanting, but not enchanting enough for the tax office.

In second place is an excuse that might be considered a little more specialist. It was advanced by the DJ at his local bowls club who found himself too busy spinning the discs and living the party lifestyle. The taxman wasn't exactly bowled over.

Equally exclusive, in third place is the taxpayer who was sailing aboard his luxury yacht and could only pick up the post when he found himself in port. However, this is another excuse that didn't float with the taxman.

More mundane were numbers four and five, both of which were perennial and involved the family pets eating the return. The taxpayers blamed, respectively, their hamsters and their dogs. Unfortunately, the taxman was not hooked.

And finally, in sixth place, was the rambling plea made by the taxpayer who found himself high on a Welsh mountain and who was apparently unable to find a post-box or get an internet signal. Unfortunately for him he found out that he was due for a fall.

The moral? Don't ignore the taxman. He tends to take umbrage.

WatkinsonBlack have considerable experience in all areas of taxation and business services, including the provision of a very cost-effective payroll bureau service. If you want to arrange a no-obligation initial meeting on any business matter then please contact us. Please note that these ideas are intended to inform rather than advise and you should always obtain professional advice before taking any action.

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Record breaking Warrington Parkrun celebrates six years



New MP for Warrington North Charlotte Nichols and Council Leader Russ Bowden are regular runners.

A record breaking Warrington Parkrun saw an impressive 717 finishers at Victoria Park recently as the free community event celebrated six years in January.

Commenting on the record Course directors Cal Bardi and Huw Jones said in an email to their Parkrun volunteers: "Thank you for all of your efforts, both out on the course, around the finish area and the carpark! (the car park was full just before the start at 9am).

"We couldn't do it without you. We had an amazing 717 runners and walkers today, which was 94 more than our previous record of 623. We beat all our local Parkruns by over 250 runners, which is impressive."

This time of the year always see good attendance, but this Christmas and New Year also saw great numbers. The mild weather has helped as has the number of people following up on their new year's resolutions, to get fit, lose weight, improve their mental health and make new friends.

The Parkrun is a fantastic way of achieving these goals cheered on by the enthusiastic volunteers, great organisation and course management to mitigate any issues caused by surface water from the

park fondly named Lake Victoria, near Mayor's Corner. Potholes along the park path are due to be tackled as soon as funding can be raised from a grant application.

The course directors went on to say that "Considering the vast numbers, I think the course coped well, and the queue at the finish area never went back over the finish line!"

To date more than 14,000 people have taken part from the record holders Male 14:59 and Female 17:54 to the walkers who finish in just over an hour. All are cheered on by the volunteers with the slower walkers encouraged and accompanied by volunteer "Tail Walkers".

Participants have covered 525,800 kms or thirteen times around the world amounting to a total hour run of 5 Years 322 Days 0 Hrs 45 Min 56 Secs which is exceptional for many reasons.

Parkrun is free, to learn more about Parkrun so that you can register, volunteer etc. go to www.parkrun.co.uk



Members of the community taking part to keep fit.

New Year Honour for former Wire Prop

Former Warrington Wolves forward Mike Nicholas has been awarded an MBE for his services to rugby league in Wales.

Mike, known by many as "Nicko", who joined the Wire in 1972 described it as "a really proud day for myself, my family and for the game of rugby league."

He is currently president of Wales Rugby League, but still lives in Warrington continues to support the game, particularly in junior development.

Nicko played for three rugby union clubs in Aberavon,

the Harlequins, Green Stars and Wizards, before turning professional with Warrington in 1972, making 142 appearances, a number as captain.

He was capped by Wales six times before ending his playing career at the newly formed Blue Dragons in Cardiff, which he helped set up alongside fellow international player Dai Watkins.



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