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Warrington Worldwide

Issue No. 247 April 2020 FREE EVERY MONTH



Fashion show a big hit

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Picture: Paul Jackson

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Editor
Gary Skentelbery

Production
Paul Walker

Advertising
James Balme
01925 631592 opt 1

Editorial
01925 631592 opt 2

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Address
New Media Centre
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WE are certainly living in uncertain times during the Coronavirus pandemic and whatever I write this month is likely to be over taken by events.

What I do know is this pandemic is impacting on all our lives and no one knows when we will return to any kind of normality.

My heart goes out to those who are suffering.

It is having a huge impact on the global economy and many local businesses are suffering and will be wondering if they have a future.

Here at warrington-worldwide we will do our best to ride the storm and continue providing news updates online as and when we can. We will also do our best to support the local business community and the many charity and community groups we have worked with for more than two decades.

Warrington has a fantastic community spirit and has shown resilience in the past overcoming adversity and I am sure we will again.

It is more important than ever that we stand strong as a community, follow Government advice and provide support for our loved ones and neighbours during these difficult times.

It is also more important than ever that we try and support local businesses and shop local as and when we can – without the panic

buying that has been going on.

We must also be there for the vulnerable people in our society and offer help and support whenever we can.

Hopefully when things do return to normal, we will bounce back even stronger as a community and

be able to show our appreciation to all those in the health and emergency services who are working so hard in our time of need.

These people are literally putting their lives on the line to help us.

Take care everyone.

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Recycled Runway fashion show a big hit

A CHARITY fashion show event at the Halliwell Jones Stadium proved a big hit with the audience.

The Recycled Runway production was organised by a team of 4 Events Management students from the University of Chester, Warrington Campus, and hosted by The Warrington Wolves at the Halliwell Jones Stadium with proceeds totalling £562 donated to the Warrington Wolves Charitable Foundation.

Twenty volunteer models aged between 10 and 70 including men and woman of all shapes and sizes sported upcycled and ethical outfits in an energy packed performance set to the fab tunes of DJ Funky Monkey.

The team of students, Sam Heathcote, Kim Beardsmore, Georgia Plant and Morgan Griffiths, AKA Unique Events, aimed to raise money for the Warrington Wolves Charitable Foundation to support their work that helps to create and provide life changing opportunities through sport, education, health and the arts, in order to enrich, inspire and celebrate the community of Warrington.

by Paul Jackson

Unique Events worked in conjunction with the River Reeves Foundation who were more than happy to provide the fashion show required for the evening, using their clothing outlet, Vintage Viola. The concept of Recycled Runway being an upcycled, recycled and environmentally ethical fashion show was the perfect fit for Vintage Viola, as they stock various pieces of distinctive, rare and one-off pieces of clothing donated by local people, thus stopping these items going to landfill. A pop-up shop was available for people to purchase items on the evening.

In a thrilling finale costumes provided by Vintage Viola wowed the crowd and the Golden Square based store founder, Sharon Dunne, explained "The River Reeves foundation was honoured to work alongside Unique Events and launch the concept of the recycled runway. We are looking forward to the recycled runway event 2021 where we can showcase our commitment to raising funds for the young performing arts world in Warrington whilst also reusing

fashion and creating alternate futures through reducing landfill of fashion items. Please come and visit us at Vintage Viola and see the amazing stuff we have in store and help us continue Viola Beach's legacy."

Speaking on behalf of the Warrington Wolves Charitable Foundation CEO Neil Kelly added "The Charity fashion show organised by Unique Events was amazingly well organised and everyone involved really enjoyed being a part of it. We thank the team for thinking of us and raising

funds for our young trustees. Every other year we travel to Kenya on a peer education project developing both our young trustees and the children in the schools we visit."

Jessica Louise Music performed an excellent 30 minute live music set to finish off the evening in style.

Many prizes and support were given by local organisations to help with the success of the evening including Warrington RLFC, The Botanist, Grill on the Square, Dark side of the spoon, The Entertainer, The Jungle, Fun 2 be, Gullivers World, Michelle Geritas Photography and Shipton & Co Jewellers.



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Tony celebrates 50th birthday with 185 5ks in 185 days!

TONY Rich decided to mark his 50th birthday by running 185 5ks in 185 days finishing his final event at Warrington Park Run on Leap Year day!

Supported by family and friends Tony from Woolston, Warrington, crossed the finish line carrying an injury raising funds for two causes, Street Treats and Maggies at Clatterbridge.

#185 in 185 days started on 28/8/19 and finished on

29/2/20, the day after his 50th birthday.

It involved running 5km every single day (925km in total) inc. Christmas Day, to raise funds for the above causes.

Tony said: "I am not a club runner or an established athlete, I just like to run. Street Treats and Maggies are two of the three charities that I'd like to help, if possible. ANY donations would be gratefully received."

After completing his marathon effort Tony was looking forward to having a pint or three!

Street Treats are a group of volunteers who, cook, transport and serve food to the homeless and displaced people of Manchester. The group are self funded and rely on the generosity of anybody that can help provide cooking ingredients, catering equipment/cutlery etc. Any of the above items are gratefully received and put to good use. ALL donations go directly

to the people that need them.

Maggies at Clatterbridge is a support centre for people who are undergoing Cancer treatment, or have undergone treatment at Clatterbridge Hospital. As above, these fantastic people rely heavily on the generosity of people, many of whom have received their first class care.

Donations can be made on line here <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/185in185>



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Have you ever thought about learning a new skill? Trying a new hobby? Or perhaps even re-training to pursue a whole new career?

Whatever your ambitions, Warrington & Vale Royal College can help you on your way this spring. After Easter we have a host of courses starting to get you on your way.

Improve your computer skills with our introduction and next steps digital skills courses; or if you are already comfortable with the Microsoft packages why not try your hand at an introduction to Photoshop or website design?

Heading to Europe this summer? Why not brush up on your language skills with a short course in

French, Italian or Spanish before you go. Or perhaps even consider learning sign language!

If you find crafting relaxing why not try one of our art & design courses or pick up some new skills with a short course in floristry or ceramics?

Perhaps one of our well-being courses might float your boat, with everything from building your confidence and resilience sessions through to part-time counselling qualifications.

If you would like to brush up on your work skills

we are offering courses in customer services, administration and IT. Plus, we can help you secure your English and maths qualifications, if you have found that it is holding your back from pursuing the job role you really want!

Looking for something to really get your teeth into and push yourself forward in your career? Then why not consider taking up a project management qualification, a digital marketing qualification or studying for a qualification in leadership and management?



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Take action today and book your place, or get in touch for further details about a course you are interested in. View our latest course guide at www.wvr.ac.uk/spring, call in to see us or contact us on **01925 494400** for more information or to enrol.

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The impact of the coronavirus in the workplace

COVID-19, otherwise known as coronavirus has been instilling fear across the world as the disease continues to spread, but just how will that impact the workplace?

With confirmed cases constantly on the rise, it can be a big worry having to share confined spaces with colleagues daily. Not to mention having to tackle public transport getting to and from work.

Lots of questions are coming our way about what should happen and what rights do both the business and the employee have, so we thought we'd put together this handy blog to help...

- **Self-Isolating Staff**

Anyone who has recently visited a high-risk country (Italy, China and South Korea at present) or have been in contact with someone who has had the virus are being told to self-isolate for two weeks. If this occurs, then it should be expected to receive at least SSP (statutory sick pay) until the 14 days have passed. A new announcement recently from Boris Johnson advises companies to pay SSP from Day 1 rather than allowing the 3 waiting days as was previously the case for sickness. In the budget release, the government will reimburse small businesses (with less than 250 employees) for the SSP.

Where possible, if there is the opportunity to allow staff to work from home then this should be implemented however, this is not feasible for all roles or businesses.

If you notice an employee suffering with symptoms of the virus, do not panic, but discuss this with them privately. Check whether they have sought medical advice and encourage them to use the NHS111 service and follow the company absence reporting procedure for staying at home. Any colleagues that have come into contact with the symptomatic employee should be made aware of this in order to follow NHS guidance.

- **Holiday Protocol & business travel**

Travel restrictions may well be in place if the area the employee is traveling to is high risk. Any low risk areas that the employee decides to travel to would invite a protocol on return, only if the employee is symptomatic or has been in contact with someone who has the virus. In this case, the self-isolation process would kick in. We are seeing companies cancel or postpone unnecessary business travel until further notice.

- **What if I need to close my business?**

If there is a real risk to your business then you may decide to temporarily close. Get in touch with us to discuss short-term layoff provisions.

Also look at whether you have Business Interruption Cover in your commercial insurance policy. However, check the small print to see whether you have an extension for notifiable diseases.

At the time of submitting for press release, this information was up to date however the changes with advance is continuously changing with speed.

There is a lot of information on the Covid-19 virus, too much to put in an article, so please see the full blog on our website or get in touch if you need specific guidance. Simply get in touch on 01925 626 253, or alternatively, you can send us an email on info@spirehr.co.uk.

Ellen Parkin

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Shop local app shortlisted for national technology award



THE pioneering Warrington Buyers Club app, launched by local entrepreneur Sam Fox (pictured) is going from strength to strength and has now been short listed for a national technology award.

Sam, who also helps run local family business Warrington Mortgage Centre based in Penketh, launched the app last year to encourage local people to "shop local" and support businesses based in Warrington.

Now six months on from its launch the app has over 3,300 local users that are being rewarded daily with the most fantastic offers from local businesses.

Members can now benefit from over 320 local businesses, encouraging you to buy local, and save money along the way. This month there are new offers from:

A la Turka - 20% Off Food
Piccolino - 20% Off Food
Village Hotel - 25% Off Food
The Loft - 25% Off Drinks
Gin Ally - 15% Off Drinks
Bus Stop Bistro - 10% Off Food
Woyo - 10% Off Food

Meanwhile Warrington Buyers Club has also been shortlisted by National technology Awards for Retail tech of the Year. This prestigious event is held in London on the 7th May and it is up against the likes of BT and Interflora.

Sam said: "We're truly humbled by the support we've been shown so far and we know that this is just the start of our journey in Warrington."

£250 million deal secures 1,000 local jobs

WOOD Nuclear, which employs 1,000 people in Warrington, has been acquired by the Jacobs Engineering Group, an American-owned international engineering group, for £250 million.

Jacobs already employ about 250 people in Warrington and another 850 in Manchester working on nationally important projects for Sellafield Ltd, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, the Environment Agency, Highways England, Network Rail, and other clients in the North West.

Wood also employ 250 at Knutsford and the acquisition means Jacobs will have a UK workforce of around 11,000 with plans to recruit up to 400 more in highly-skilled jobs over the next year.

The combined team in the North West supports projects and programmes across nuclear and defence, transportation, environmental, buildings and other sectors.

Jacobs' plans also include investment in the UK's largest independent nuclear research, development and testing facilities at Birchwood Park, Warrington, to provide capability such as remote handling, cyber, inspection technology capabilities and test rig facilities.

The acquisition expands Jacobs' UK employee base to nearly 11,000 and increases access to specialist talent – particularly in locations across Cheshire and Cumbria, as well as expanded reach into Europe, Japan, Middle East, South Africa and the US.

Warrington's resilience through turbulent times

AS I write this month's update, the subject that everyone is talking about is the Coronavirus and this raises the serious question of resilience.

The Warrington economy has suffered a number of economic shocks in the last decade, including a recession, austerity, Brexit and now this.

Thankfully, we are not dependent on one sector in the way that other locations are such as South Wales with Steel manufacturing. We do have the UK's largest Nuclear cluster, however this is supported by long term, government funding.

These shocks aren't something that we would ever wish for, however Warrington companies of all shapes and sizes regularly respond with an unwavering level of resilience.

I recently took the Department of International Trade (DIT) around Warrington to demonstrate how successful we have been in attracting companies into the town.

We started by looking at a site for a (confidential) potential investment of up to £300m and 1,000 jobs, before visiting Omega to see who has already arrived.

They were very impressed as we drove past the global brands that

by Stephen Fitzsimons

have made Warrington their home in recent years, such as Amazon, Asda, Travis Perkins and Plastic Omnium.

We finished with a presentation at Birchwood which is 96% full, mainly with well-paid Advanced Engineering jobs. This will increase with US owned Jacobs taking over the Nuclear arm of Wood, creating an extra 300-400 jobs here and in Knutsford. The most common response from visitors is "I didn't know you did this here", which is why we need to shout louder when we do something great (which is frequently!).

We also work with companies who are leaving Warrington or closing all together. This is the case with one of the most instantly

recognisable sights in the North West. Built in 1971, Fiddler's Ferry power station has been a looming presence, standing watch over the towns along the River Mersey. Whilst it doesn't have the architectural appeal of its cousin in Battersea, it will take some getting used to it not being part of the western skyline.

Warrington & Co are helping the staff transfer their excellent skills and experience to other local companies and we will be watching with mixed emotions as the decommissioning begins.

So spring 2020 brings a fair amount of trepidation and uncertainty, however Warringtonians are made of stronger stuff.



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And they're off!

It was a horsey theme to the launch of the latest group of real5 Networking as guests headed over to the stunning Manor House Stables, owned by Michael Owen for the first event in Whitchurch. Over 50 local business leaders and entrepreneurs met for drinks, canapes and an overview of the real5 concept.

There was a fantastic take up on the night meaning the group is off to a flyer. The first official lunch club is planned for later next month. Now with over £10 Million in new business referred and 7 groups the network is starting to take the north west by storm. Closer to home it was Trudie Newhouse of TLN Consulting who scooped members of the month for being super proactive and doing some great work for fellow members.



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Volunteers needed for pioneering 'People's Panel'

Healthwatch Warrington is searching for volunteers to join its ground-breaking 'People's Panel', the first of its kind in the North West, dedicated solely to improving health and wellbeing services across the town.

Healthwatch Warrington, an independent health and social care organisation dedicated to championing the views of patients and social care users in the borough, is searching for Warrington residents to become part of its innovative 'People's Panel'.

A pioneering grassroots programme for Warrington, the People's Panel allows users of health and social care facilities in the town to offer constructive feedback based on their experiences. This format is the first of its kind in the North West and allows for improved communication between service users and service providers.

The People's Panel is currently made up of delegates from mental health, social care, health services and the voluntary sector, including a former GP and a former principal manager of social care, who is the Vice Chair of the panel. All panellists have experience of receiving health and social care services in the borough and use their understanding to inform the

panel.

With this latest recruitment drive, Healthwatch Warrington is keen to diversify the panel's offering by attracting people from a variety of age ranges, backgrounds and life experiences.

Collate

Lydia Thompson, Manager at Healthwatch Warrington, said of the panel: "The People's Panel is a brilliant way to collate the views of our townspeople, which is pivotal to improving our services. In our monthly meetings, we discuss all aspects Warrington's health and social care offering, covering everything from mental health services for adults and young people through to the tone and vocabulary of our hospital discharge letters.

"Gaining insight from those using our services is extremely effective and we really appreciate the time and energy that our panellists put into communicating their feedback.

"We're very keen to diversify the panel with our next batch of volunteers and ensure we have representatives from a variety of ethnicities, social groups, and health and social care backgrounds to help ensure the panel encompasses the views of the entire town."

Simon Kenton, Programme Director of Warrington Together, is currently working to unify and streamline health and social care services in the town. He said: "The People's Panel is a unique and exciting offering for our town. It helps us to create a well-rounded view of the current health and social care services provided and build upon them.

"The Panel has been very useful in helping us to identify how we can work to improve services and programmes in Warrington. Receiving further input from a wider variety of sources will only serve to broaden the feedback we receive. We're encouraging our townspeople to spread the word about the panel to ensure that all groups are equally represented.

"We also have a virtual People's Panel which allows people to give their views on our town's health and social care offering online."

For further information on the People's Panel and how to apply to become a panellist, please visit www.healthwatchwarrington.co.uk/Peoplespanel/ and to find out more about the online panel, please visit: www.warringtonva.org.uk/warrington-peoples-panel



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The Importance of Being Found Online

Getting your name out there is the key to success for any new business starting out.

Without exposure, any new business will falter before it gets the chance to shine, and this is particularly true in the online marketplace. The internet is a leveller where many smaller start-ups can go toe-to-toe with established brands, and if they are innovative enough, David can beat Goliath. Many companies are realising just how much more affordable marketing your business can be online.

Traditional formats of marketing such as newspapers, direct mail, radio and television can cost tens of thousands of pounds, which normally rules them out for most new businesses.

Online, however, pay per click advertising with search engines, banner advertising campaigns and email marketing run at a much more accessible level. With these methods of being found readily available on the internet, in most cases, businesses can use smaller test campaigns to see what works for them, and then upscale the campaign as they see a return on their investment.

In recent years the breadth of the marketing opportunities available to businesses has expanded significantly, offering even more ways to get a company's message or products in front of potential customers. Targeted advertising, such as being able to serve up adverts based on a user's interests or browsing behaviour, even down to promoting products they may have seen on a website, is turning online advertising into an incredibly personal experience. When formulating a company's marketing approach, it is important to consider all of these avenues, as well as other areas such as social media.

Some businesses may feel the nature of their business "isn't exciting enough" or "worthy of being on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram" but as a way of engaging with an audience, it is essential.



Some aspects such as PPC (Pay Per Click) and display advertising can be tested, paused or increased depending on how they perform, but businesses need to understand how these channels factor in the buying process for a site's users. Sometimes channels such as social media or PPC may not be driving the actual conversions or sales, however, they serve as introducers to the brand or website.

Traditionally tools such as Google Analytics attributed sales and enquiries to whichever channel was used when the user converts, however many users will visit a site many times before making a purchase.

This is where being able to identify what gets a company's website found in the first place is crucial for businesses. This additional knowledge can help smaller businesses to be more competitive and capitalise on areas where their business is being found, whether this is in organic search rankings, paid listings, display, email or social media.

It's the job of the marketing department or digital agency to analyse the various channels which allow people to find them. They can then adopt an approach which gives the business the best chance of being seen by potential customers.

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

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Driving made accessible for all – and right on your doorstep

by Jo Bradley



IT is fair to say that most people want to learn to drive, they crave the freedom and independence that driving gives you.

For a person without disabilities this is a fairly straightforward process; you find an instructor local to you (of which there will be many), you take your lessons, prepare for your tests and then, fingers crossed, pass. You are then on the road to freedom and independence. But what about those people with disabilities who can't drive a standard vehicle, is the process still as straightforward?

In the UK there are a limited number of driving instructors who have vehicles which are adapted to meet the needs of disabled drivers and I truly believe this is due to a lack of knowledge surrounding vehicle adaptations and what would be required to teach a person to drive who has a disability. Based on last year's figures there is a 43% increase in the amount of people on the Motability scheme who are having adaptations fitted to their new vehicles and this is set to increase year upon year. So, where to start?

There are a wide range of adaptations available to meet the varying needs of disabled drivers. One of the most popular adaptations available is the Push/Pull Brake/Accelerator. This adaptation brings the control of the foot pedals to the hands and is a simple operation where you pull to accelerate and push to brake. These are available as column mounted and also floor mounted, the floor mounted option providing the benefit of being able to adjust the steering wheel height, an important feature for a driving instructor who is teaching lots of different people.

In terms of hand controls there is also the Ring Accelerator which is placed under/over the steering wheel, a Twist Grip Accelerator which is used like a motorbike handle and even a Thumb Touch Accelerator which is operated by either the left or right thumb.

A Left Foot Accelerator pedal is an excellent adaptation for those drivers who struggle to use their right leg. Fitted to the left of the brake, it is operated by a dash mounted switch which enables you to choose between left and right accelerator. As with many adaptations, this can be easily removed if required.

Another excellent adaptation for disabled drivers is a Secondary Remote Control, which brings the secondary controls such as lights, wipers, horns, indicators to the driver's fingertips. The device will also act as a steering aid, providing greater control of the steering wheel.

As a driving instructor who currently doesn't teach disabled drivers, this process might seem quite daunting and complicated, but this really doesn't have to be the case. There are specialist vehicle adaptation companies who will provide you with all the advice and guidance needed on choosing the right adaptations in order to be able to teach people with a range of disabilities. Most of the adaptations are designed to be removable, meaning that you can still use the original controls of the vehicle. Some of these companies will also provide 'driving school packages', which will give you a discount when choosing a selection of adaptations. There are also companies out there who will provide training on each adaptation, so you can feel completely confident when delivering your lessons.

Driving shouldn't just be a privilege for people without disabilities, it should be accessible for all and there's never been an easier time to make this the case!

For more information on any of the above you can visit www.basnw.co.uk or phone their office at Rixton on 0161 776 1594 and one of their team will be able to help you!

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Regulars celebrate as planners reject bid to demolish historic Orford pub

PUB regulars are celebrating after members of Warrington's planning committee unanimously threw out controversial plans to demolish the historic Blackburne Arms pub at Orford.

The application to demolish the 92-year old Blackburne Arms at Orford Green to make way for a block of retirement homes was thrown out by the borough council's development management committee.

Around 40 regulars, many with placards marched on the town hall to voice their opposition to the plans to demolish the historic pub at the heart of the local community.

Prior to the meeting local Cllr Mike Hannon, who was unable to attend, said: "If this application is granted we lose a part of Warrington's History."

The pub has already been designated an Asset of Community Value following a campaign by The Friends of the Blackburne Arms.

More than 1,000 letters opposing the scheme were sent in and an online petition attracted 272 signatures. There were also objections from Orford War Memorial Recreation Club and the local allotment society.

One of those attending the meeting and helping to lead the



campaign against the planning application was former landlord Mark Moran.

"After the meeting he said: "This is absolutely fantastic news for the local community. The decision was unanimous. We will be celebrating tonight and hopefully this decision can help secure the future of the

pub."

Members of the committee threw out the application on the grounds of over development of the site, traffic issues caused by lack of car parking for the proposed development and threat of flooding.

Boxing could deliver knock-out blow to school exclusions

A BOXING programme which is aiming to reduce school exclusions in areas of Cheshire is set to be extended to Warrington.

The 12 Rounds Programme – funded by Police and Crime Commissioner David Keane – uses sport and physical activity as a preventative method to reduce the risk of young people becoming involved in crime or being excluded from school.

Positive behaviour

It uses practical boxing as a tool to promote respect, discipline and resilience among hard-to-reach young people to ensure positive behaviour and engagement within school and their local community.

The students on the programme are also provided with opportunities to listen to real life stories from individuals involved in serious offences including drug-dealing and knife crime.

At the end of the programme, participants receive AQA Unit Award qualifications, England Boxing JBO Awards and work towards a number of

outdoor educational qualifications.

PCC Keane said: "Over the last few years we've seen youth activities outside of school decimated as austerity has taken a hold of our communities, closing many youth centres and pushing our young people onto the streets where they are more likely to engage in violence and other criminality.

"Young people need a focus and the opportunity to come together with their peers outside of school to engage in positive and worthwhile activities.

"Excluded pupils are significantly at risk from being involved in criminality with 42 per cent of serving offenders having been permanently excluded from school. Education is key to reducing these figures and keeping young people in school will have a huge impact on reducing violent crimes such as knife offences.

Potential

"Programmes like Queensbury Alternative Provision are helping to provide an outlet for young people in Cheshire to build skills and confidence in order to fulfil their potential, this not only has great benefits for the individual but the communities that could be affected by criminality and anti-social behaviour further down the line."

Restorative justice also underpins the Queensberry AP model of work and this approach is what the founders say is pivotal in challenging the current issues such as the increase in school exclusions across Cheshire and the amount of young people becoming involved in drug dealing and knife crime across the county.

Paul Cooper, joint-founder of Queensbury Alternative Provision, added: "We are really pleased that the police and crime commissioner has chosen Queensberry AP as a benefactor of his Safer Communities Fund.

"The funding will be used to deliver our 12 Rounds intervention programme which will benefit a number of young people within Cheshire and support them with their education and positive choices both of which will impact positively on their communities."





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MP secures £5000 boost for Foodbank



WARRINGTON North MP Charlotte Nichols has delivered a donation of £5000 to Warrington Foodbank having successfully nominated it for grant funding from the T.U.U.T. Charitable Trust.

The T.U.U.T charitable trust was set up by the trade union movement in 1969, to support causes which should broadly be those that would be supported by the movement. Trade unions – and indeed individuals – are free to nominate favoured causes, all of which are reviewed by the trustees before any payment is made.

Charlotte said, "Having visited Warrington Foodbank during the General Election campaign, I knew how urgent the ongoing need for funding is."

"Unfortunately this need looks set to get more severe due to Covid-19, as many people over the coming months may be losing income as a result of moving onto Statutory Sick Pay while self-isolating or losing their work altogether in some sectors. We know that demand during school holidays increases, as families eligible for Free School Meals have to find those extra meals, and there is concern that possible school closures will see demand rise. The Foodbank needs to be able to support people in all eventualities.

"I am delighted that the T.U.U.T. Charitable Trust has recognised this and made such a generous donation. I would urge anyone in the area who can follow suit- whether it is individuals, groups, or businesses- to do so to ensure no-one who needs help has to be turned away"

Warrington Foodbank said, "We are so grateful to the T.U.U.T. for this donation, which couldn't have come at a better time as we prepare for increased demand on our services as a result of Covid-19. This money will help ensure we can support families in Warrington."

If you would like to make a donation to Warrington Foodbank, please visit <https://www.justgiving.com/supporting-warrington-foodbank-in-2020> or contact the Foodbank directly on 07583 080 521.

Highway improvements move forward



WORK has started on the latest phase of a package of major highway improvement schemes, which will bring significant benefits to residents, motorists and businesses in west Warrington.

Phase 3b of the Omega local highways project is now under way, which provides a series of junction improvements at the Whittle Avenue/Lingley Green Avenue roundabout.

The scheme forms part of a wider series of highway initiatives along this corridor to provide additional highway capacity and enhance network resilience, and improvements to cycling and pedestrian facilities for the west Warrington highway network.

It will also support over 12,000 new jobs at Omega as well as supporting 7,000 existing jobs on Omega and Lingley Mere employment sites.

This phase of the work – which will be completed in July 2020 – will see a range of improvements being made, including the renewal of the toucan crossing on Whittle Avenue, while a new toucan crossing will be installed on Lingley Avenue.

A new shared footway from Stanhoe Drive to link with Sophia Drive will also be installed, together with general upgrades to footways and cycleways. An extra lane will be introduced on each approach to the roundabout, incorporating carriageway resurfacing works.

Warrington Borough Council Leader, Cllr Russ Bowden, said: "The Omega Local Highways project is an important part of our work to improve our highways network and stimulate on-going development and investment in our key employment areas. It's fantastic to see the project progressing so well."

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Awards for people who did so much for WDP over the last year

PEOPLE and organisations who made outstanding contributions to the work of Warrington Disability Partnership over the last year have been rewarded.

The 25th "Appreciation of Efforts" awards took place at the charity's annual meeting and volunteers, members of staff and others were among those receiving accolades.

The event celebrated a busy and very successful year which made a positive impact on the lives of disabled people.

Awards were open to the public to nominate individuals and organisations who they felt had gone the extra mile to improve the lives of local disabled people.

Those receiving awards were: Ruben and Elena, the youngest-ever award winners. This inspirational brother and sister raised thousands of pounds for Warrington Hospital, alongside being National Young Ambassadors for ADHD.

Steve Park and David Boyer, executive directors at Warrington Borough Council for encouraging

the involvement of disabled people in the design stages of buildings and developments.

United Utilities for their support for disabled people and ensuring that accessible facilities are available for staff and visitors at all of their sites.

Birchwood Shopping Centre who have worked with WDP for over 27 years and have recently become host to the latest Mobility and Independent Living store and the extended Birchwood Shopmobility Scheme.

The Duck Pond Social Group for their extensive support given to WDP throughout the past year, which included their Five Years Face Your Fears Challenges: Creepy Crawly Day, Sexy Bingo, Santa's Grotto, Disability Awareness Day and the Three Peaks Challenge.

Sarah Mathews, marathon runner extraordinaire. She completed 52 marathons in just 52 weeks, raising awareness of unseen disabilities and raising funds for WDP.

Pat McLaren, director of partnerships at Warrington and

Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust for her ongoing support to WDP including the development of the Mobility and Independent Living Service in Warrington Hospital, Disability Awareness Day and personally supporting WDP's fundraising events.

Beth Trainer, a carer and a charity champion who supports a number of local charities and is Princess Elsa, or maybe Princess Jasmine from the Santa's Grotto and Disability Awareness Day.

Westy Silver Service and Friendship Group for providing a variety of services in the local community which help reduce isolation, offers both social and educational activities for those who need it.

The Staff and Volunteer Awards also took place at the annual meeting. Nominations were taken for the various awards categories from staff and volunteers for people who made outstanding contributions to the work of the charity last year.

The successful nominees were:

Volunteer of the Year Winner: Ellie Thompson; Volunteer of the Year Certificates: Ben Gemmill and Janet and Debbie from the OWCH Pain Management team.

Best Newcomer (Volunteer) Winner: Sue McMillan; Best Newcomer (Volunteer) Certificates: Leigh Walmsley and Louise Trivass.

Best Newcomer (Employee) Winners: Julie Darbyshire and Hilary Evans; Best Newcomer (Employee) Certificates: Debbie Gorveff.

Employee of the Year Winner: Veronica Hudson; Employee of the Year Certificates: Sam Calderbank and Jane Pendlebury.

Personal Development Winners: Paddy Toole and Laura Atkinson.

Team of the Year Winners: Santa's Grotto Volunteers; Team of the Year Certificates: The Independent Living Team.

Business couple receive their OBEs together

WARRINGTON entrepreneurs and business owners Wendy and David Maisey, who were both awarded the OBE in the New Year Honours, have received their awards.

The investitures were carried out by Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace and were in recognition of their contribution to international trade and the British economy with more than 20 years of exporting through their company ICC Solutions Ltd.

Wendy Maisey said: "I grew up

on a council estate and I am the first person in my family to receive an honour. To be recognised for our commitment and services to the UK economy and international trade is so humbling, to be at the Palace with my family means the world to me.

"We work hard to create employment and opportunities for local people in Warrington, and we're looking forward to a celebration that we have planned at the end of the month.

David Maisey added: "It was a surreal day. We've been to the Palace before as ICC Solutions has been granted four Queens Awards for Enterprise previously for international trade and innovation, but this was very personal and special.

"To also have our longest serving member of staff with us Paula Turner, who has been with ICC Solutions for over 23 years, was the icing on the cake. We feel it's very much a team effort'.

ICC Solutions employs around 45 highly skilled people at St James Business Centre in Warrington. It has also successfully developed an exporting skill, which helps young people achieve their skill section of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award through international trade education – and helping to inspire future British exporters.

The couple support many local charities including The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and Warrington Youth Club.



WHO'S IN?

A NEW MARKET EXPERIENCE

So, the big question is, *who's in* and *what's in* store at the all new Warrington Market?

The major building work has now been completed and the final fit out work has commenced in earnest as both existing traders and a range of new independent operators begin preparations for when the new market opens this spring.

When complete, the new market hall will provide a modern, bright environment and house over 50 retailers over two floors. An escalator and a public lift will service the large mezzanine level, which will be home to a range of hair, beauty and lifestyle operators, such as artists, designers and a music shop. The area will also host a series of regular specialist pop up events. The large, open plan ground floor will accommodate dry goods, food and beverage retailers and small pop-ups.

After the huge success of the food hall in the temporary market, the new facility will provide a much larger communal area, with 300 seats and a 100 seater alfresco terrace.



There will be much more choice too, with 12 independent food and drink retailers and 2 new bars, which will open in to the evening.

A spokesman said, "*We recognises the changes that are happening on our high street and we've changed our opening hours to reflect modern living. The main market will open later, with the food section extending its hours even further until 10pm from Thurs to Sat and Sundays.*"

A full trader line up detailing who's in and further insight in to what's in store will be released on the Markets facebook page from Monday 23 March @warringtonmkt

Cycle training rolls on

THOUSANDS more children across Warrington are set to become more skilful, confident cyclists thanks to the renewal of a successful cycle training partnership.

After a rigorous procurement process, Bikeright has retained its contract with Warrington Borough Council to provide Bikeability cycle training in Warrington for the next four years.

It means Warrington schoolchildren can continue to benefit from high-quality cycle education, which is encouraging cycling take-up, improving children's safety and contributing to better health and wellbeing.

Bikeability is the tradename for cycling proficiency for the 21st century, and gives children important skills for cycling on busy roads.

The rolling training programme is funded by an annual grant from the Department of Transport. All Warrington primary schools offer the beginner and elementary courses, with every Year 6 child getting access to level 2 training.

To celebrate the renewal of the partnership, Council Leader, Cllr

Russ Bowden, Deputy Leader, Cllr Cathy Mitchell, and Cabinet Member for transportation, Cllr Hans Mundry, joined children at Barrow Hall Primary School for a Bikeability session.

Cllr Bowden said: "Cycling brings so many benefits – it's a great way of staying fit and healthy, it's a cheap, environmentally friendly way to get around – and it's a lot of fun!

"Building sustainable travel into Warrington's future is a key ambition within our Local Transport Plan, so it's crucial that children are given every opportunity to become proficient cyclists at an early age, gaining vital skills that will last them a lifetime.

"That's why it's great news that our fantastic partnership with BikeRight will be continuing for the next four years. I'm looking forward to it giving many more local children the confidence and education they need to cycle regularly – and safely."

Cllr Mundry added: "Giving our next generation the confidence to be skilled, safe and responsible cyclists is an important part of our



vision for the future of transport in Warrington. We want to create a place where people have a range of sustainable travel options when moving around the town.

"Our Bikeability training has been a huge success, providing thousands of young people in Warrington with invaluable cycling skills, which they can carry forward into adulthood. I'm delighted we will be continuing with this fantastic partnership."

As part of the renewed contract, the council will now be working to increase the uptake of the more advanced courses for teenagers in

high schools.

The advanced Bikeability training is perfect for year 7 and 8 students who are starting to become more independent and cycling to high school, and parents and teachers are being urged to encourage children to take it up.

More information can be found on the Bikeability Trust's website bikeabilitytrust.org or from the council by emailing travelwarrington@warrington.gov.uk

Therapist uses her own experiences to help treat Endometriosis

NUTRITIONAL therapist Fiona Hutchinson has joined the team at Lymm Osteopathic Practice offering advice on how changing your diet and lifestyle can help tackle gynaecological conditions like Endometriosis.

Endometriosis is a common gynaecological condition where cells that normally are found inside the uterus, migrate to other areas of the body, most commonly the ovaries, fallopian tubes, bowel and bladder and although rare, in some cases the nose and even the lungs.

Fiona has first-hand experience of the chronic and debilitating condition that causes painful heavy periods and can lead to fatigue, bowel and bladder problems as well as infertility.

It is estimated that around 1.5 million women in the UK are currently living with the condition and unfortunately there is currently no cure.

Treatment for endometriosis is mainly about managing the symptoms and can include invasive surgery, hormone treatment and pain relieve. But what if there was another way?

Fiona is a registered Nutritional Therapist that specialises in female hormone balance. Fiona, based at Lymm Osteopathic Practice, is passionate about helping women regain control of their hormones via nutrition and lifestyle.

Fiona knows what it's like to suffer at the mercy of your hormones because she has herself experienced the devastating consequences of being diagnosed with endometriosis.

She said: "After trying to get pregnant for two years with no luck, it was during investigations that I was diagnosed with stage 3 endometriosis which unfortunately had caused severe scarring, ovarian cysts and had blocked my fallopian tubes. My only hope of achieving pregnancy was via IVF. Even though I had always suffered painful, heavy periods, I felt my symptoms were normal so didn't

question that it could be anything more serious."

After having received the devastating diagnosis, she was told that there was nothing that she could do to help her condition, and it was this that spurred her on to do her own research into nutrition where she discovered that there was actually a lot that she could do.

Fiona started to change her diet and lifestyle and after a few months she started to notice that she was feeling less tired, bloated, her skin improved, she had more energy and her periods were lighter and less painful.

The change in diet and lifestyle were having an amazing impact and even though she had to embark on IVF due to the damage that the endometriosis had caused, she did go on to conceive and give birth to her daughter in 2011.

Fiona discovered that she needed to know more about nutrition and how it impacts on hormones, so she studied naturopathic nutrition with the prestigious College of Naturopathic Medicine and

qualified at the end of 2018.

Fiona helps women with all hormonal imbalances ranging from endometriosis, fibroids, Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS), Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD), Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), perimenopause and menopause as she understands that women do not need to just put up with their symptoms.

She always offers a free discovery call to ascertain whether nutritional therapy is the right approach for the client. Prior to the first consultation, Fiona will then undertake a detailed health assessment and then uses a personalised approach for her clients, taking into consideration their lifestyle using nutrition and at times, supplements to help women manage their symptoms and gain control over their hormones naturally.

Fiona is registered with BANT and CNHC and appointments can be made by contacting Lymm Osteopathic Practice or emailing fionamhutchison@gmail.com

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Blooming Art launch brand new studios

Celebrating 6 years in June 2020

Warrington based Bloomingart has gone from strength to strength. They continue to make such a magnificent difference to the whole community.

Founder Gail Stubbings said: "We now have multiple staff, volunteers and approx 175 members. We offer art classes for children and we house multiple adult art classes, These include accredited classes funded via The Learning Curve Group. Free Visual Art Classes through Creative Remedies and Art in Life for those that want to do art for recreation. Please get in touch if you would like to find out more, as we'd love to hear from you



ART SOCIAL EVENTS

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IKEA, Bloomingart Launch

Blooming Art is delighted to be chosen by IKEA to be their chosen Art organisation to launch their companies new "Art in the Community" area.

They have tried to display a variety of work, from children, art work from L C accredited courses, Creative Remedies & Art in Life.

Gail said: "Any organisation which promotes Art in the Community, is a fabulous way to showcase not just artwork, but it shows how important having a space to be creative is to people."



Bloomingart Academy Hub

Time-Table

Monday:

Adult's, Creative Craft
9.45 – 4.15 pm. LC.
Children's, Art after School
4.15 – 6.15 pm (6 – 11 yrs)

Tuesday:

Adult's, Art & Design level 3
9.45 – 4.15 pm. LC.
Teenagers, Art after School
5.30 – 7.30 pm (12 yrs plus)

Wednesday:

Adult's Visual Art, Creative Remedies
1 – 3 pm
Children's, Art after School
5.30 – 7.30 pm (mixed)

Thursday:

Adult's, Photography
9.45 – 4.15 pm. LC.

Friday:

Adult's, Art & Design, level 1 & 2
9.45 – 4.15 pm. LC.
Adult's, Art in Life, 11 – 1.30 pm., Recreational Art

Saturday:

Children's, Art Camp. 11 – 1 pm, age 6 – teens

Prices:

Children's classes are £7.50 per session.
Accredited classes are free, funded via our associates The Learning Curve Group.
Creative Remedies: Free
Art in Life: Subsidised, a small fee applies

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Australia is fully open, cant wait to meet you, I can assure anyone looking travel, holiday or look to emigrate, I can help you, as I've covered each area of these options at the age of 21, on my working holidays as a chef, and becoming a resident in Manly, Sydney, New South Wales.



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Chris running 5k a day for a year in memory of his mum



NOVICE runner Chris Lee is running 5k a day for a year raising funds for Cancer Research in memory of his mum.

Chris, aged 38 from Birchwood, Warrington, lost his mum Karen Lee to cancer very suddenly in March 2011 and is now nearing the end of his marathon journey.

He said: "My mum was a massive part of my life and to the community in Birchwood. She worked at the primary school that myself and all my siblings went to and now my current children go to and she was a friend to many around the area.

"Over the last few years I have tried to do various "race for life" 5k and 10k runs and other smaller fundraising events, but to try and gain a longer period to fundraise over and to make it a challenge that people will remember and really get behind, I thought I would try and run at least 5k outside, every single day without a day off for a full year, with no major running experience prior!"

"It's been gruelling, both mentally and physically and I've run through hamstring and Achilles injuries, storms and snow, the premature birth of my son in December, running my 5k around the hospital car parks over those weeks and so far clocked up 1500km/950 miles of the 1825km challenge

"After learning that one in two are affected by cancer I wanted to try and let others do their part in the challenge so every milestone run (50th, 100th, 150th etc) I hold a group run, where all are welcome to come and run/walk a 5k with me and wear a white T-shirt with the name of who they are running for written on, which has gained some traction and now sees almost 100 people coming along on the day to run 5k for 100 different reasons, which is amazing and has helped me towards the £4500 I've raised so far.

"The support I have received and how people have gotten behind it is my driving force and the reason I keep putting my trainers on everyday."

His final run is approaching on April 25th at 11am at Birchwood forest park, when hopefully he will get a good turn out and see an amazing end to this long journey.

Anyone who wants to follow this journey can catch him on all the normal social media sites under "chris82lee"

Donations can be made via his fundraising page <https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/chris-giving-page-470>
 People can also text EVERYDAY3, EVERYDAY5 or EVERYDAY10 to 70180, to donate £3, £5 or £10.

Ten schools join forces for Sport Relief

TEN Warrington schools joined forces in a sponsored run to raise funds for Sport Relief.

The Challenge Academy Trust's network of schools were led by Andy Roberts, assistant headteacher at Bridgewater High School, who ran the 15 miles between the schools to raise their money.

He was joined by staff and students from each school along the way. The run started at Penketh South Primary school and finished at Bridgewater High.

Mr Roberts said: "A big thanks to Jo Smith from Broomfields Junior School and John Welsh from 1985 Sports, for running the whole 15 miles with me. Thank you too to all the staff and students who joined in along the way. The reception in particular we received at each of the primary schools was fantastic and very motivating: I thank you for all you did in supporting the event."

The JustGiving page for the event currently sits at £270, but individual schools are still to add their totals to that amount.

The schools involved were: Penketh South Primary, Penketh High, Great Sankey Primary, Padgate Academy, Meadowsdown, Beamont, Priestley College, Sir Thomas Boteler CE High, Broomfields Junior and Bridgewater High.



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t: 0345 680 1895

e: nigel.garner@moorebizmgt.co.uk

w: www.moorebizmgt.co.uk

Asset Refinance: Making Your Business Assets Work Harder for You



By Nigel Garner

Capital is the lifeblood of every business. Without it, it can be incredibly challenging to fund your day to day operations.

Having money tied up in your current assets can stifle growth considerably. To avoid a progress stunt, it is a clever idea to optimise the cash flow that you have readily available to you by leveraging the money in your current investments: we refer to this process as asset refinance.

Asset refinance has increasingly become a preferable alternative to the traditional routes of obtaining funds. Tapping into the money you already have available tied up into your current business possessions opens up a goldmine of resource. Quite like when you remortgage your home, or, in the family wrecking favourite, Monopoly.

Examples of stock that can be refinanced include commercial property, vehicles, or machinery.

Let's look at how asset refinance would look in a real-life scenario:

George's logistics company has a small fleet and is looking to raise capital to invest in new vehicles. Instead of taking out new finance deals, he looks at his existing options.

One of George's vans is worth £10,000. As he owns the vehicle outright, he would be entitled to 100% of the equity; it would be a straightforward refinance.

If we looked at a slightly different situation, and George's van is on an incomplete finance deal, he would still be able to utilise this asset; but for a slightly lower amount. Hypothetically basing this example on having already paid off £8,000 he would have the same value in potential equity. In this situation, George could consider refinancing his vehicle for 70% of the item's overall value.

The refinancing lender would take ownership of the asset, pay the original hire-purchase firm the remainder of the original loan, and lend George capital based on its remaining value.

If a lender is willing to accept assets as security, you can apply the same principles. If George owned a warehouse worth £500,000 with a remainder of £200,000 left to pay, he technically owns an asset with a value of £300,000. It would be possible to agree on a loan or finance agreement on that basis.

By working smart, you can make your investments work hard for your business, improving your bottom line in the process. Equity is the golden key to refinancing; before looking at new ways to raise capital, make sure you consider all the available options within your assets.



MBM Capital offer flexible finance solutions to suit your business and would love to discuss your needs to show how we can help give your business a quick cash injection. Contact us by calling us on 0345 680 1895.

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Financially yours

By David Watkinson

Deadline for digital link for VAT is upon us

If you are VAT registered then life may just be about to get more complex.

The "soft landing" introduction of Making Tax digital (MTD) for VAT comes to an end after 31st March this year for most businesses. After this date, all eligible businesses must have a digital link between their data and compatible software in order to submit a VAT return.

This does not mean that businesses need to move from spreadsheets to cloud accounting software. However, a spreadsheet on its own isn't enough. A business will require a "digital link" in order to receive the return.

HMRC classifies a "digital link" as an exchange of data between two systems within a business, or the transfer of data to an agent, such as your accountant. Examples of digital links includes:

- Emailing a spreadsheet containing digital records so the information can be imported into another software product.
- Transferring a set of digital records onto a portable device (such as a memory stick, pen drive or flash drive) and physically giving it to someone who imports that data into their own software.
- XML, CSV import/export, and download/upload of files.
- Automated data transfer.
- API transfer.

There must be "Digital Links" between software programs or applications where more than one part of the software makes up the digital data submitted to HMRC. You cannot enter data into a spreadsheet, then manually copy this into a different bit of software, as there will be no digital link.

Under MTD, records must be kept digitally within functional compatible software, which is a software program, or set of software programs, products or applications, that must be able to:

- Record and preserve digital records.
- Provide to HMRC information and returns from data held in those digital records by using the API platform.
- Receive information from HMRC using the API platform.

A spreadsheet or other software product that is capable of recording and preserving digital records may not be able to perform the other 2 functions listed above, but can still be a component of functional compatible software if it is used together with one or more programs that do perform those functions.

The complete set of digital records to meet MTD requirements does not all have to be held in one place or in one program. Digital records can be kept in a range of compatible digital formats. Taken together, these form the digital records for the VAT registered entity.

From April 2020, these digital records must have digital links if held in separate places, before submission to HMRC.

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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Sport cuts anti-social behaviour by 35 per cent



ANTI-social behavior levels have been slashed by 35 per cent in the Padgate area of Warrington since a new community sports club was set up.

Padgate Sports Club was set up in February last year following a spate of incidences which were having an impact on local residents, small businesses and the local library and high school.

A grant from police and crime commissioner David Keane funded the regular drop-in sessions for young people and their families which aim to address issues like anti-social behaviour and criminal damage.

The sessions at Fearnhead Cross Community Centre include sports activities and are being run by leisure provider LiveWire supported by Warrington Police and local residents to provide assurance and increase public confidence.

Mr Keane said: "It is clear to see from these statistics how much of a difference this project is having on the local community.

"Organisations like LiveWire are working tirelessly to provide activities which give young people a focus and the ability to develop discipline and respect."

Paul Flannery, LiveWire sports community and engagement officer, added: "LiveWire has made a really positive impact in the Padgate area with this weekly session that offers a range of sports and games for young people to get involved in.

"We look forward to continuing to work with police and other local partners in the coming months to continue to break down barriers in the local area."

Building that stood empty for years sold for £19m

A THREE-storey building which stood empty for several years at Warrington before eventually opening for the purpose for which it was originally intended has changed hands for £19.50m.

The North West Fire Control Centre at Lingley Mere has been purchased by private clients of Deutsche Bank.

Dating from 2009, it was built at a cost of around £14m it is the home of the fire authorities Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Lancashire and Cumbria to jointly handle 999 emergency calls and mobilise fire fighters.

Fire Control North West have a lease running to June 2033 on the building.

Craig Barton, who along with Jason Winfield at Cushman and Wakefield, represented the vendor (AAIM), said: "We are delighted to conclude this disposal on behalf of our client. The process was highly competitive, as there is strong appetite for quality buildings with long-term income, to good tenants. It is also another a reflection of the strength of Warrington, both as a destination which occupiers desire, and which investors want to secure real estate within."

The purpose-built centre, which received planning consent in 2005, was one of nine across the country to the specification of the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, at the time of the Blair Labour Government.

But it was surrounded in controversy from the start, with planning consent being opposed by Great Sankey Parish Council and others on the grounds that it would be an eyesore and was too close to residential property.

It was due to go live in 2009 but in fact stood empty for several years because of computer problems.

It was still mothballed in 2011.



Priestley College awarded UK's first Dual Rugby League Development Academy

PRIESTLEY College's rugby programme has scored a national first after introducing a successful women's squad and becoming the UK's first ever Dual Rugby League Development Academy.

The Rugby Football League has awarded the college Dual Rugby League Development Academy accreditation thanks to the ongoing successful partnership with Warrington Wolves.

Speaking to the young players at Victoria Park, RFL player development manager Phil Jones said it was a historic moment for all those involved.

"This is a first and that can never be taken away from any of you, Priestley College or Warrington Wolves," he said.

"I'd like to congratulate Priestley because we see this as a model for how these academies should work."

Priestley set up its rugby academy three years ago and it was initially just for boys.

However, the growing number of girls taking up the sport led to enough demand for a women's team.

With the men currently unbeaten in the league and two of the Priestley women playing for Wolves, both sides of the academy are enjoying success.

Speaking at the presentation at Victoria Park, principal Matthew Grant paid tribute to the staff at Priestley, Wolves and to the Rugby League for backing the academy.

"This was about having faith in young people that they can benefit from something like this academy," he said.

"I am a great believer that you can learn from sport, so this is all about taking the new skills you have learnt and using them in whatever you do next."

In its second year, the academy's men's captain Karlton Bates went on to train with Warrington Wolves and secure an Academy Contract. While this year our top try scorer Alex Speakman has also been training with the Wolves academy.

Community rugby league manager Lee Mitchell also has high expectations for the women.

"Their programme will become more intensive next year and that's just a natural progression as the women's game at Priestley continues to thrive," he said.

Head of sport at Priestley Nigel Howells said many of the players would progress to a higher level of rugby, but that being a part of the academy prepared all of them for different futures.

"You are not just getting good rugby league, you are getting a good education and academic qualifications," he said.

"That's what we are about. It's a marriage between the two and doing things well on the pitch and off the pitch."



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