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Back in business!

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Editor's Comment



FOLLOWING on from my last editorial at the end of March, more than three months on we continue to live in uncertain times as we all adapt to the "new normal."

During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic we have certainly seen the best and the worst of society and sadly across the country we have seen many thousands of people lose their lives. Here in Warrington at time of press at least 266 local people had died with more than 1,300 confirmed infections.

Thankfully the infection rates have come down considerably since the peaks of April and May.

While we are now learning to adapt to the new normal, there is

certainly no time for complacency, although witnessing the behaviour of some people, there are clearly those who believe they are "immune" as they continue to live their lives without a care for others, especially those vulnerable people most at risk.

It has been a tough few months for many, especially those who have lost loved ones, or lost their livelihoods. But while there have been lots of negatives there are also lots of positives.

I have witnessed many amazing people in our community, rolling up their sleeves to help others in need, far too many to mention. But for those who have helped others I salute you. I must also say a huge thank you to our amazing NHS and our key workers, in particular the team at Warrington Hospital, who have been a leading light in the way they have cared for those fighting this terrible disease.

There is still a long hard journey ahead and it is more important than ever that we stand strong together as a community. Stay Safe and hopefully we can bounce back stronger as a society.

Vehicle adaption company overwhelmed with response

WARRINGTON based Vehicle Adaptations company BAS has had an overwhelming response to a new range of protective screens suitable for taxis, minibuses, driving schools and other private hire vehicles.

The launch came as a direct response to the Covid-19 outbreak and the need for people to get back to work and resume their transport services as quickly and as safely as possible. The shatterproof polycarbonate screens improve the

safety conditions for both the driver and passengers by providing a head height separation to prevent the spread of infectious respiratory drops.

These screens are the ideal solution for taxi drivers, minibus drivers, care home vehicles, school vehicles, driving instructors and others who are sharing a vehicle with non-members of your household.

The company have had an overwhelming response to the screens so far and have received

orders from large businesses such as Heathrow Airport, Manchester City, Jet 2 and Grosvenor Hotel, to name a few.

Owner and MD Bill Bradley said "We are overwhelmed with the response to the new product and are really pleased with the feedback so far. We understand the need for people to get back to work as quickly but as safely as possible and this is why we felt it was necessary to bring this product to the UK market at this time."

If you would like any further information on these products you can call BAS on 0161 776 1594 or you can visit their website www.basnw.co.uk

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Loyal customers turn out in force at new Warrington Market

A wet and windy Monday morning didn't stop loyal customers turning out in force as the brand new multi-million pound Warrington Market opened its doors for the first time.

First in the queue was Katherine Ellis from Orford, who arrived at 7.30am and braved the elements to ensure she was first through the doors.

She has been visiting the market for more than 50 years and was presented with a £20 voucher by Market Manager Andy Ward as a thank you for her loyal custom.

Other regulars included sisters Barbara Tomkinson and Liz Dunville, who have been shopping at the market for as long as they can remember – around 70 years for Barbara.

As well as new traders and a fantastic new food court area, there were plenty of familiar faces including Dave Carey from the Lock Stall, who operates from the old kiosk which was once in Warrington Baths.

Business was brisk for many, including award winning grocer Rob Leicester, who continued his business throughout lockdown, offering a home delivery service.

The latest addition to the council's flagship Time Square development is home to over 50 local independent operators. It features the main market hall, home to 28 traders and escalators accessing the mezzanine floor, with a further 11 traders plus Radio Warrington's new studio.

The large, open plan building, also features a spacious food court and an outdoor terrace for customers to dine outside during the summer months.

'Cookhouse at Warrington Market' features 12 traders serving a variety of hot and cold cuisines from around the world – from Eastern delights such as Thai and Chinese, to the freshest Italian pizza, Indian street food and Mexican favourites – the new Cookhouse has it all. There will also be two fully stocked bars, serving a range of cask ales, local brews and cocktails.

The council has been working closely with traders to put in place support so the new building can open safely, while protecting people's health and wellbeing. This includes a range of 'COVID-secure' measures such as clear signage, social distancing, people encouraged to wear face coverings, restricting visitor numbers and reduced seating capacity for dining at the Cookhouse.

Council leader Cllr Russ Bowden, said: "The wait is nearly over as we're now finally able to open Warrington's new, state-of-the-art market. The majority of traders whose businesses are allowed to open, in line with government guidance, are now open, with a few others

following suit over the next couple of weeks.

"We can't wait to show people the results of years of planning and hard work to bring this new, purpose built, contemporary facility into operation. Our traders have worked with us to put measures in place around social distancing to ensure the new building is a safe and welcoming environment for everyone.

"Markets bring a vibrancy to town centres and our new market is a welcome addition to Time Square.

I can't wait to sample some of the amazing new tastes the Cookhouse has to offer. It's not quite the opening we had hoped for, but staff and traders are looking forward to a new beginning and can't wait to serve customers again."

For more information and to see the full line-up of traders in the new Warrington Market, visit warrington.gov.uk/new-warrington-market, or follow @warringtonmkt on social media.



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Hospital's new birth centre nears completion

WARRINGTON Hospital's new £1.5m midwife-led birth centre is nearing completion with a planned opening in autumn 2020.

It will be located on the ground floor of Croft Wing and its development follows research that has shown that births are less likely to need intervention and transfers to a medical setting when women give birth in midwife-led environments.

Over 3,000 babies are born through the Maternity Service each year and the addition of the new suites will mean that even more women will have greater choice of how and where they give birth.

The new Birth Centre will be an addition to the Trust's existing maternity services which currently include an alongside midwife-led unit (MLU), community midwife-

supported home birthing and obstetric-led care for women who require additional support from a multi-disciplinary team.

Maternity Matron Tracy Thomas explained: "The new birth centre will also be a community hub and home to the community midwifery team which will ensure continuity of care. Women will have the same midwife throughout their pregnancy, during labour and afterwards for postnatal care. The midwife will know the woman and her family to enable strong relationships and trust to develop during the maternity journey. Working within a continuity model puts the woman at the centre of

care by ensuring individual needs are met.

"Every aspect of the design has been carefully planned in partnership with new and expectant mums and midwives. We are currently engaging with women and their families on the final exciting elements such as colour choices and a name for the centre.

"Women will be able to access additional complementary services Aromatherapy, acupuncture and massage area will promote a feeling of calm and relaxation."

The four new birthing rooms will be offering a home from home experience creating a welcoming and comfortable ambience. Focusing around state-of-the-art birthing pools, the birthing suites will feature sofas, birthing cubes, cushions and wall art with mood lighting; music and candles creating a relaxed, peaceful and calm experience. This investment has allowed us to redevelop our offering for all mums to be including complex cases who will also experience their maternity care and labour in a more homely environment.

Following birth, a new post-natal suite will enable partners to stay overnight in comfortable surroundings with their new family in ensuite rooms. Contemporary cots, side tables, changing tables, soft lighting and luxurious bedding will make this room feel like a 'special home from home'.

Midwife and antenatal



Maternity Matron Tracy Thomas

appointments will also be held at the new Centre and women can choose this option instead of being seen at their nearest GP practice and Sure Start centre.

Tracy added: "This Provides continuity of care across all areas including antenatal and the postnatal period, it will undoubtedly enhance the experience for our ladies and their families and allows them to familiarise themselves with the environment ahead of giving birth.

"We are just putting the final touches to our birth centre, and will expect our first births in autumn.

Pregnant women can self-refer online by completing the self-referral form: www.whh.nhs.uk/services/maternity or contact Community Midwives on 01925 662092.



Our New Birth Centre is Opening Soon!



Midwife-led Centre offers even more choice for mums-to-Be with four state-of-the-art birthing suites and pools, aromatherapy, acupuncture and massage all promoting a calm, peaceful and completely personalised birth experience.

The Best Start in Life *Starts Here*

Help us raise money for our new Birth Centre & help turn a great birthing experience into an outstanding one for our mums, partners and their families. Visit whhcharity.org.uk/birthcentre or call 01925 662666.

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So, you have everything in place?

Heather Lally, Associate Solicitor, Trust and Estate Practitioner and fully accredited member of Solicitors for the Elderly from FDR Law, considers the next stages for Owners and Managing Directors to ensure their businesses are completely covered when planning for the future.

So, you have done your succession plan, you have the right legal documents in place covering your commercial and personal affairs, you have a Shareholder cross option agreement, key man insurance, you have reviewed your Will, what else is there?

Now it's time to think about a Lasting Power of Attorney to cover your business affairs.

A Lasting Power of Attorney allows you to appoint an Attorney or Attorneys over your financial decisions for your business which will continue if you lose mental capacity in the future and are unable to run your business finances. How is this different to a Lasting Power of Attorney to cover your personal finances?

You may have a different person in mind to run your business finances from your personal finances, someone you trust with the knowledge of your business, who has the necessary skills and abilities to make business financial decisions if needed. Without a Lasting Power of Attorney in place if something happens such as an accident or injury meaning that you are not able to run your business, this can have serious consequences

for your business, your income and your livelihood. Without the right Attorney in place, your business may not survive despite all your other planning.

A Lasting Power of Attorney document allows you to decide if you have more than one Attorney in place whether they are to act together, independently of each other or together for some decisions and independently for other decisions. Attorneys would act as signatories to enable creditors and employees to be paid, the tax to be dealt with and all other financial business matters. They would be able to formally retire an incapacitated business owner to ensure the continuation of your business.

It is important that if you are appointing more than one Attorney that they do not have conflicting interests and to also consider any possible conflicts between your personal and business Attorneys. It is possible to appoint Professional Attorneys to act solely or alongside your trusted Attorney or as a replacement.

Covid-19 has taken crisis management planning to a new level for some businesses that may



well have already had measures in place covering floods, cyber-attacks, terrorism and such like, but the simple fact of accident or injury leading to lack of mental capacity may ironically have been forgotten along the way.

By making your business Lasting Power of Attorney, you take control, you avoid the need for someone (that someone not necessarily being who you would have chosen) to have to apply to the Court of Protection to be appointed as a Deputy over your finances. The Court of Protection route is more expensive and time consuming and you do need to think, whether your business would survive if there is potentially a 6 month wait for a Deputy Order to come through and for that Order to be registered with all concerned?

FDR Law can assist in advising on both business and personal Lasting Powers of Attorney, General Powers of Attorney and Deputy applications.

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Tough times ahead but encouraging signs as footfall returns to town

by Stephen Fitzsimons

WHEN we entered the Covid-19 lockdown in March, like many people I was anticipating a few weeks working from home and some inconvenience shopping for items such as toilet rolls.

We were all looking at China and then Italy and viewing it as a far off emergency that would never happen here. And then it did.

The human cost has been heart-breaking and the economic fallout alarming. The government support offered a significant number of businesses a fighting chance of re-opening, however some were not covered and sadly have not survived.

On our doorstep, large manufacturers such as Airbus, Jaguar Land Rover and Bentley are shedding thousands of jobs which will have an impact on local residents and companies in their supply chains.

Warrington went into the pandemic as a strong, diverse economy and this will greatly strengthen our resilience.

However, we need to brace ourselves for some tough times ahead which is why we are working closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Department of Work & Pensions to proactively help those whose jobs may be at risk.

Elsewhere however, there are some positive indications that things are slowly getting back to normal.

The Council, Business Improvement District (BID), Golden Square and Warrington's Own Buses worked tirelessly to introduce Covid compliant signage, queuing areas and sanitiser ahead of shops re-opening in June. We want to ensure that the town centre is as safe as it can be so that visitors have the confidence to come back and continue buying locally.

You may have seen the recent Faces campaign from the BID and Real 5 that captured the pictures of many of the independent traders in town – they will need our loyalty in the months ahead.

Initial intelligence has been encouraging, with the Centre for Cities reporting that Warrington was the number 1 UK location for footfall returning to the town centre.

Shops in Golden Square have reported strong sales of multiple items as shoppers receive their long overdue retail therapy.

As I write this, bars and restaurants are preparing to open at the weekend. They have suffered more than most with revenue disappearing overnight in March.

The Council is working with them by extending their serving areas into the public realm and taking traffic away from areas such as lower Bridge Street.

We just need some nice weather and the Las Ramblas of the North West will be complete!

Similarly, the new market will have opened by the time this goes to print. I admit to being a big fan of the old market – it seemed to have a multitude of secret entrances and more sweet shops than Willy Wonka.

Not sure why we needed so many butchers though? That said, I can't wait until the food court is open in the new market.

I love a bit of street food and am looking forward to sampling the international cuisine. Before that, I think a trip to one of the barbers may need to be my first port of call...

Hopefully, we are over the worst effects of this horrible virus. We still need to stay vigilant, however if it does return, we'll be ready for it. Either way, that first pump-pulled pint is going to go down a treat

(naturally, non-alcoholic alternatives are available!).

Take care and continue to stay safe.



Stephen Fitzsimons
Investment & Growth

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Anti-viral waterproof Lycra masks – FLEX-masks are here to help

FLEX-masks are a new product from Warrington-based printed fabric specialists FLEX-display UK Ltd.

The company have been producing fabric display products for 17 years and turned their attention to the development of a fabric face mask/covering which is both protective and comfortable to wear.

Many masks are often uncomfortable, ill-fitting and in a lot of cases, not re-usable, causing a huge problem for the environment. They also often become very wet inside from breathing, especially if worn for long periods.

The FLEX-mask was created to help overcome these issues and it offers quite a unique range of features:

- The fabric is treated with an anti-viral & antibacterial agent during textile manufacture
- This treatment also renders the fabric very waterproof
- Our masks are then printed, die cut & sewn in sizes to suit children and adults
- The lycra fabric is very lightweight (<10g) and far more comfortable than other styles of mask
- The unique shape, stretch & mask design helps prevent it dropping down & so keeps your nose covered as well as your mouth
- FLEX-masks are washable up to 30 times & re-usable
- They are ideal everyday-wear as well as for sport and leisure activities
- A carry case is also available using the same fabric to keep your mask clean & with you

FLEX-masks are available from stock across a range of stylish designs. They can also be custom printed to your own design (minimum order quantity of 25 pieces). Ideal for sports teams, companies, schools or anyone really who wants a high quality branded face covering.

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Birchwood High School undergoes major transformation during lockdown

BIRCHWOOD Community High School has been undergoing a major transformation during lockdown to provide a "fantastic learning environment."

Over the last number of week's since school closed to learners a team of staff and contractors have been working hard to transform the school, which also recently unveiled a huge mural depicting the history of the town and some famous former pupils.

Josie Evans Communication & Events Manager said: "Along with our rebrand, the first thing you will see is a new frontage to school which has been created with some very clever window wraps. These wraps also adorn our English rooms to cut out glare and really improve the look of the exterior.

"We have taken birchwood blue

and silver grey back into Birchwood to create a sophisticated feel to our corridors and classrooms with some amazing pieces of learning wall art which will really complement our curriculum.

"So far, we are nearly there with our main English corridor and classrooms with a huge timeline of authors in the corridor complemented by more detailed timelines within classrooms, plus recommendations of reading for pleasure books for learners to try.

"Our languages department love a good fiesta, so they have a gigantic bright and fun wall to echo this.

"Maths, which has moved upstairs

in our main block has great displays on famous mathematicians, useful equations and a wall which will answer that old question 'Why do I need my maths' and shows the wide and varied jobs that you can get with a good maths qualification!

"Still to go are redecorating and a huge piece of work in our new computing, IT and business suite.

"We hope you like our new look and we can't wait for our students to return to see the newly improved BCHS in real life."




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It's time to get you back!

Following the easing of Government restrictions, LiveWire has reopened seven of its library sites across the borough for book borrowing - with safety and hygiene measures in place to protect customers and staff.

The libraries that have reopened are Great Sankey, Orford Jubilee and Woolston Neighbourhood Hubs, Stockton Heath, Lymm and Warrington Museum and Library. Burtonwood Library was open during lockdown for Post Office services only but library services have also resumed there.

The procedures put in place to safeguard the safety of customers and staff have worked very well and the next phase of library reopening will see Culcheth looked at in August followed by the remaining libraries in the coming months.

Reopening plans centre on the safety of customers and staff, and are aimed at giving customers the confidence to borrow books in a friendly, safe and hygienic manner.

The library service has seen a huge increase in the number of e-books borrowed during the closure period, and the focus on the digital offer will continue. Also being expanded is the Library at Home offer for vulnerable customers, and a new Order and Collect service that allows readers to get a selection of books tailored to their personal tastes selected for them by library staff..

Other key points are:

- There will be no charges for overdue books and other items issued from 1st March.
- Items on loan have had their loan period extended until 30th September.
- Social distancing in all areas of

the library to keep both customer and staff safe.

- Restrictions on the number of people accessing the library at any one time and the duration of visits will be limited.
- A contactless returns and issue process.
- New one-way systems around parts of library buildings will be in operation, with floor markings and directional signs.
- All returned books will be quarantined for 72 hours before being returned to the shelves for people to loan.

Emma Hutchinson, Managing Director of LiveWire, said: "We recognise the importance of libraries to our communities and the huge amount of work that has gone into raising the profile and developing these libraries over the past few years by both LiveWire staff, our partners Warrington Borough Council, the Friends groups and the wider community. This is why we have been working very hard to put in a place a range of measures that will allow us to reopen seven library sites across the borough in a safe manner for both customers and staff.

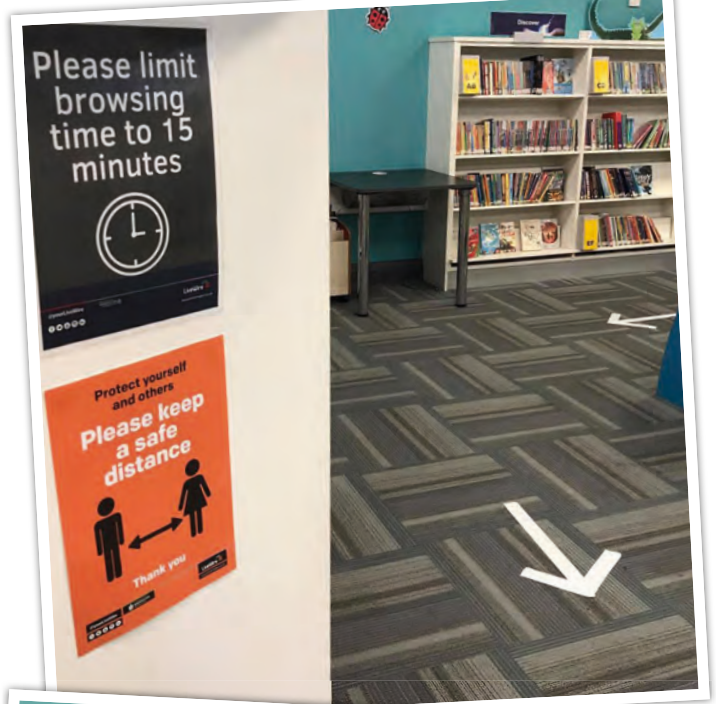
"I'd like to thank our customers for their patience and loyal support during the months we have been closed, as well as Warrington Borough Council and our partners for their continued support."

Clr Tony Higgins, Warrington Borough Council's Cabinet Member

for leisure and community, said: "A great deal of work has taken place to ensure local people can visit the library with confidence, with a range of measures put in place, including more staff to manage social distancing, enhanced hygiene and a new system of quarantining books.

"Safety will be at the heart of everything we do, as we continue the work to re-open every library in the borough, as soon as possible."

For more information on the reopening of libraries, including new opening hours, plus a list of FAQs for customers, visit www.livewirewarrington.co.uk/news



"Thank-you Warrington, we'll see you soon!"

To Sam and Charlotte Fox Warrington is more than just a place, it's home.

A little over a year ago, they had a spontaneous idea to develop a mobile platform that; supports local businesses, promotes the amazing work of local charities and makes sure that the community is rewarded for shopping local.

Sam explained: "We wanted to create a platform that the town can be proud of and call its own."

"For each business partnered with us, we made sure that they gave back to help with something special.

"We have truly been humbled by the support that we have been shown and are proud to announce, that as a business community, we've raised £7,000 for local charitable causes, to help them continue to deliver vital services.

"Over the past 12 months, we've been able to partner with 350 amazing business from all parts of Warrington and across a huge variety of sectors.

"Warrington as a community has saved thousands by experiencing the best our town has to offer - delivered through our exclusive Warrington Buyers Club App.

"We've learnt a lot this last year, and shared so much passion with the businesses and the community for how great our town is becoming.

"But one thing we must continue to show, is solidarity, in a time where the world is such an unforgiving place.

*Support local businesses.

*Experience the events held throughout the town.

*Remember, this our home.

Sam added: "After much consideration, we feel that it's right for us to press pause on the entire Warrington Buyers Club project for partners and members, until the

world can dust itself off and get back to business.

"It also provides us with the time we need to focus on our family business too.

"Thank-you. To our partners.

"Thank-you. To all of our amazing supporters.

"Thank-you. Warrington.

"This is us."



Lockdown can't stop Male Voice Choir award handover

WHILE Warrington Male Voice Choir are unable to rehearse together for real, perform live or even stage an AGM thanks to the current COVID-19 lockdown situation, it hasn't stopped the annual presentation of the Higham Award.

Funded by and named after the late Geoff Higham, who had been a member of the choir for nearly 62 years when he died in 2016, the award each year recognises the effort of a particular member.

Announcing 1st Tenor Keith Read as the 2020 winner, during the choir's zoom rehearsal on Monday (6 July 2020), Chairman Bob Williams said: "Keith is a supportive, committed, enthusiastic, caring and occasionally funny, member.

He's always willing to get involved - do jobs when needed and thankfully he's got a pretty decent voice, decent enough that he's performed as a concert soloist.

He's recovering from recent surgery but, as is typical of him, he was back on these zoom rehearsals as soon as he could be. Keith supports that Merseyside team who, have taken temporary charge of the Premiership trophy, now he has his own trophy to get excited about".

The award was presented by one of the choirs' hard working tea ladies - who also happens to be

Keith's lovely wife. Anita.

A very surprised and embarrassed Keith, who's been a member of the choir for over 26 years, said: "I've chuffed to mint balls. I feel like Jordan Henderson (Liverpool FC captain). It means a lot to me receiving this award. Geoff Higham was a great friend of mine in the choir."



Charlotte Nichols MP Warrington North

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You can also keep up to date with my work in Warrington and Westminster via my website or social media.

0207 219 3000

CharlotteNicholsMP.com

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From brewers to “milkmen” with doorstep deliveries!

WARRINGTON'S own micro-brewers, Modern Day Monks, have been transformed into “milkmen” thanks to an eCommerce website built by local web developers Carpe Diem.

Modern Day Monks started out at local Maker Markets, showcasing their craft all around the UK. They even reached the finals of the ‘Young Traders of the Year’. But when the UK went into lockdown and all the bars and restaurants they were selling through closed their doors, they needed a solution to continue supplying their customers and to stay in business.

“Innovation and adaptation are watchwords at Carpe Diem and supporting our clients as the world continues to change around us is second nature”, shares Bill Carr, CEO of Carpe Diem. “So, when Jon and Jim said – “Why don’t we deliver beer to peoples’ doorsteps?” – we set about making that happen.”

Giving potential customers the means to order and evolving the delivery concept, Carpe Diem built a Shopify eCommerce solution that lets ‘locals’ book regular deliveries. The site was built at speed, from initial sketches to launch in just five days, working directly with the Monks co-founder Jon on product page design, content and how the subscription model should work.

Orders came flooding in the moment the site was launched, with Facebook ads driving conversions

in the Warrington delivery catchment. In fact, in the first six days of running the ads Modern Day Monks reached 15,136 people and converted online sales nearly 300% better than the industry standard.

And with over 20% of all orders being subscriptions for regular deliveries, the recurring orders and regular income has made all the difference for the two brothers and the brewery they founded.

Brother Jon (pictured below) says; “We’ll be looking to open up deliveries in more areas as quickly as demand can be met, so if you’d like to support a local business and order fresh beer to your door then please visit www.mdmbrewery.co.uk.”



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ANDY CARTER MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR WARRINGTON SOUTH



Thank you to everyone who has stepped forward to help others during the coronavirus outbreak, and everyone for listening to, and heeding Government advice. For the past couple of months I have been conducting online surgeries, and I am still committed to providing advice and support to all Warrington South residents. So if you need help, please don't hesitate to get in touch using these details.

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Warrington tops town centre footfall recovery chart



A "Centre for Cities" report released at the end of June positioned Warrington as having the highest increase in footfall since lockdown was relaxed and non-essential retail started to reopen.

According to the report large towns and smaller cities are generally having faster recoveries due to the concentration of shops and jobs in a single city centre, whereas large cities have multiple neighbourhoods spread across the city-region. After Warrington, the English cities and large towns with the most footfall include Hull, Telford, Bournemouth and Sunderland.

Figures are taken from monitors which are positioned on the four main high streets: Bridge Street, Horsemarket Street, Buttermarket Street and Sankey Street. Reports from the first week in July, when many of the hospitality businesses reopened show that the upward trend continues to rise.

Golden Square and Cockhedge Shopping Centre have reported similar increases with retailers reporting that average basket spend is up.

Warrington BID Manager, Harriet Roberts said: "The slow, steady upturn in the number of visitors is a sign that people are feeling confident in the measures

that have been put in place to make the town centre safer and that as a partnership, we have got the messaging right across all our channels.

"We are all working together to position the spotlight on those people behind the headlines who are still in the eye of the storm and adjusting to new ways of working to create a Covid-19 secure, safer environment for customers and staff."

Cllr Tom Jennings, Chair of Supporting the Local Economy Policy Committee Bewsey & Whitecross Ward who is also on the board of Warrington BID said: "Having one of the highest increases in footfall with rising average spend reported, shows how vital collaboration is between businesses and partners to keep people safe whilst encouraging them to spend well. The Council will continue to play its part in helping establishments get back to business."

The opening of the brand new multi-million pound Warrington Retail Market, will help boost footfall further.

Care home residents go back to their "pub"

RESIDENTS of Keate House care home, Lymm were able to visit their "in-house pub" for the first time since before the COVID-19 lockdown.

The pub – the Keate Arms – has been refurbished during the lockdown but it was decided not to re-open until after "Super Saturday" when all other pubs re-opened.

Proprietor Malcolm Clarkson cut a ribbon and raised a glass to everyone.

There was beer and a game of darts for the men and prosecco and a chat for the ladies.

Next thing on the menu will be regular "high teas" at the pub.

It is hoped families will soon also be to enjoy a tippale at "The Keate".





Warrington is open for business

Warrington has got back to business with new safety and social distancing measures in place throughout the town centre. We're asking all those coming into our town centre to shop safely and follow some simple steps to help keep yourself and others safe.

Checklist for shoppers

- Maintain the gap, keep your distance from others
- Stay left, stay safe
- Follow designated one-way routes
- Keep in mind that not everyone will understand social distancing – please be kind and understanding
- Wear a face covering in shops and confined spaces to protect yourself and others
- Practice good hand hygiene – wash your hands thoroughly and more often, for at least 20 seconds each time, using soap and water. If you haven't got access to soap and water then use alcohol-based hand sanitiser



warrington.gov.uk/back-in-business

Warrington's COVID-19 recovery supported by funding from:



Financially yours

By David Watkinson

What strange times...

Well. What a strange time we have had over the last three months. It has been a horrendous time for anyone caught by this disease. We are all grateful for having got through it to date, and our condolences go to the families of those not so fortunate. So welcome back to everyone at Warrington Worldwide. You have been missed. We are pleased to say that our offices are now fully re-opened, although staff are still working from home where possible and visits are still be appointment only.

The effect of Coronavirus on the economy has been equally horrendous. It is estimated that the economy will shrink this year by 14%. Unemployment could potentially increase from under 4% to 15%. It is to attempt to mitigate these crises that the government has thrown huge amounts of public funding into the economy. We are, indeed, currently "at war".

Looking back, we have kept clients informed of the various steps put into place by the government to assist people and businesses. Many of these, such as the furlough scheme and the first tranche of the Self Employed Income Support Scheme ("SEISS"), will have either ceased or are closed to new applicants. The Bounce Back and other loans are still available, and applications for the second tranche of the SEISS opens on 17th August. Further information on these are available in our various

blogs which are still available on our website at www.warringtonaccountants.co.uk.

As we write, there are also a number of new measures being announced by the Chancellor in his summer statement, all of which are designed to give the economy a kickstart.

Employment

As expected, the furlough scheme is being wound down by October this year. Many jobs have been protected by this scheme, and the big fear was that a large proportion of these would be made redundant when the scheme finished. Therefore, the Chancellor has announced that, to encourage the retention of staff after October, there will be a "job retention bonus" of £1,000 paid to employers for every employee who has been furloughed and which are retained in employment until January next year.

In addition, the Chancellor has recognised the risk of youth unemployment especially with school leavers entering the job market. He has, therefore, announced that the government will fund "kickstarter" jobs. These will consist of a six-month work placement offered to young people aged between 16 and 24. It will cover 100% of the National Minimum Wage ("NMW") for 25 hours per week. Employees must be paid at least £520 per month on average during November, December and January. Employers will be able to top-

up these wages. The NMW is £4.55 per hour for 16 and 17 year olds, increasing to £8.20 per hour for those aged 18 and above.

Hotels, Restaurants and Hospitality

One area of the economy which is recognised to have been severely hit by the virus lockdown is the hospitality sector. He has therefore announced that for the period from 15th July to 12th January 2021 the Value Added Tax charged on hospitality and tourism will be temporarily cut from the current rate of 20% to 5%. This reduction will not apply to alcoholic drinks, but will cover:

- Accommodation in hotels and guest houses
- food and non-alcoholic drinks in restaurants, cafes and pubs
- hot takeaway food, and
- entrance to attractions across the UK, including cinemas, theme parks and zoos.

In addition, meals eaten in any participating business will enjoy a 50% discount on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays during August. The discount will be up to a maximum of £10 per person, including children. In order to participate in this scheme the business will need to register. This can be done through a website that will be available from 13th July.

Stamp Duty on Property

A further measure is a temporary reduction in stamp duty payable on property transactions in



Margaret Black and David Watkinson

England and Northern Ireland. It will take effect with immediate effect on 8th July and apply to all property sales until next 31st March. It has the effect of exempting the first £500,000 of each property transaction from stamp duty.

Normally, only the first £125,000 is exempt from stamp duty except for first time buyers for whom the exempt amount is £300,000. Above these limits Stamp duty of between 2% and 12% is payable.

Landlords pay an additional 3% on the whole price paid on buy-to-let properties, and this additional charge remains unchanged.

Other Measures

The Chancellor had previously announced a number of measures over the past week. As well as a substantial package of loans and grants for organisations in the arts and heritage sector these include:

- Vouchers of up to £5,000 for energy-savings home improvements
- A grant of £1,000 per trainee in respect of 30,000 new traineeships for young people in England

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Priestley footballers crowned lockdown FIFA Xbox champions

PRIESTLEY College's football team has become national lockdown champions - in a FIFA Xbox tournament.

Sport Priestley's footballers are used to success after winning their division in the North West Colleges Western Conference earlier this year.

Now they have pocketed the FIFA 20 College Lockdown Championships, which was organised by the British Esports Association and AoC Sport, finishing ahead of 35 other teams.

"I put our success down to belief in each other," said former Bridgewater High pupil Ben Mason.

"We always believed we would win and through the game we'd send each other texts to encourage whoever was playing."

Teams from across the country played in the Swiss format where the winner is the competitor with the highest aggregate points across all rounds.

In the final, Priestley came up against a local rival in Winstanley College but the team of Ben, Chris Green and Alex Flint won 5-4.

Former Cardinal Newman pupil Alex said: "It's something I enjoy doing and wanted to test my



Alex Flint, one of the winning Priestley College team.

FIFA skills on a national scale by representing the college.

"A lot of the fundamentals remain the same when you play virtual football, but I am able to incorporate a lot more flare because you can be more precise and there are no external factors to consider like the weather and type of pitch."

With lockdown affecting students' ability to take part in college sport, the FIFA 20 Championships enabled them to continue to represent their college online in a national competition.

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