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Hollywood beckons for Big Brother's Lisa Appleton

See Page 10

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Editor's Comment



WHATEVER I write regarding the latest COVID-19 pandemic situation in Warrington it is likely to have been over taken by events, as cases continue to rise across the town.

Sadly as the new cases are increasing so are the numbers requiring hospital treatment and with winter fast approaching the pressure on our health service is likely to get worse before it starts to get better.

It is all so frustrating after the many sacrifices which have been made throughout the initial lockdown last March and many months hard work seeing hospital figures coming right down to almost zero in the summer.

Sadly due to the mindless minority who have been ignoring the recently imposed local lockdown restrictions, the cases spiked sharply towards the end of September and into October.

This is having huge implications on the local economy, with the town centre night time economy almost coming to a standstill and facing further lockdown restrictions at time of press.

The softly softly approach to challenging those who ignore the rules is clearly not working and tougher measures are now required.

It is no good having rules and regulations if they are not enforced.

We are clearly in this for the long

haul and sadly more people are going to die and more businesses are going to go the wall and more people are going to be out of work.

Never has it be more important that we all pull in the same direction, put our differences to one side and apply as much common sense as possible.

Whether you believe COVID19 is a serious health risk or not, we need to think of those members of our community who are more vulnerable.

This is an invisible killer and even if you don't have any symptoms you can easily pass the infection on to others in your household.

Wash your hands, wear your masks, keep your distance and

avoid meeting up in households, unless you are in a proper support bubble.

If we ALL observe the rules we may just start to see some light at the end of the tunnel.

Finally a big thank you to Warrington South MP Andy Carter for highlighting the issues facing many small independent local media organisations like ourselves in the House of Commons recently.

We rely on the hospitality and leisure sector for much of our advertising revenue to cover our overheads. If the Government expect our support raising awareness, surely we should get some of the support to cover our overheads?

COVID-19 test site opens as Cineworld closes

A "WALK through" COVID-19 test facility has opened in Warrington following the significant increase in cases in the town.

The new pilot site opened at the Academy Way car park at the rear of the Cineworld multi-screen complex.

It compliments regional drive throughs but still has to be booked in advance via the government portal.

Meanwhile almost a year to the day after announcing 70 new jobs in Warrington at its new 13 screen cinema, Cineworld has become another victim of the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily closing its UK cinemas.

It is hoped that the Cineworld cinemas will be able to reopen next year, with staff being asked to accept redundancy in the hope of rejoining the company when theatres open again.

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Warrington's history preserved with new digital archive

REGISTRATION documents dating back to the 19th century have been preserved in a digital archive for future Warrington generations, thanks to the completion of a council project.

Around 2,500 books containing the original birth, death and marriage certificates for Warrington residents, going back to 1837, have been digitised.

The new electronic archive will help ensure the irreplaceable books are protected against damage or loss, with registrars able to carry out historical searches for specific certificates or registrations electronically, without having to physically handle the binders, many of which are in a fragile state.

It was decided that the time was right to digitise the archives to preserve the records ahead of the relocation of the books, which were previously stored in the Register Office on Museum Street, to their new home – a high quality, secure strong room in the new council offices at Time Square.

The digitisation of so many registers is a painstaking process that involves individually imaging and scanning the registers and the entries within them into an electronic format. It requires specialist work, to minimise the risk of damage to the documents. The council commissioned Wakefield-based company, Microform Imaging –

who have expertise in handling historical documents – to deliver the project.

The company has produced a high-resolution image of each individual register page/entry, which can be accessed for future certificate re-production. Registrar staff will now be able to easily access the electronic repository, in order to query and produce copy certificates, using secure, encrypted software which ensures the certificates cannot be accessed inappropriately.

Microform Imaging has also produced the scanned certificates in microfilm format, providing an additional failsafe backup for the Registers.

Warrington residents and other customers regularly request copies of historic registration certificates. Previously, only certificates from 1991 onwards were held electronically.

This meant that when a certificate from earlier than 1991 was requested, the registrars would have to search the binders, before producing a hand-written copy of the requested certificate.

Typically, the re-production of a historic certificate – many of which are ornate and decorated with stylistic calligraphy – would take the registrar 25 minutes, in addition to the time taken to search through the binders for the required certificate.

The new electronic format will enable certificates to be printed off, eliminating the searching of the binders (and any damage that causes) and significantly reducing the time taken to produce a duplicate, historic certificate.

Registrar, Lucy Davis, is pictured welcoming Warrington's records to their new home, a strong room in the new council offices at Time Square, following the completion of the digitisation project.



Lucy Davies.

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Daughter completes London Virtual Marathon in memory of her dad



A WARRINGTON woman took on the challenge of a lifetime by running the virtual London Marathon in memory of her dad to raise money for the national disability charity, Sense, which supports children and adults with complex disabilities, including those who are deafblind.

Michelle Brown-Crowther was inspired to run the London Marathon in memory of her late father who was registered as blind. He supported Sense throughout his life and passed away in April, so for Michelle it was important to take on the challenge in honour of him raising money for Sense. This was Michelle's first London Marathon and first time running in aid of Sense. Her three daughters and grandson were cheering her on to help her get to the finish line.

Michelle said: "I started my marathon from the Liverbird building next to the River Mersey which is where we spread some of my dad's ashes then finished at St Helens crematorium which is where he also is."

"My family were waiting for me at the crematorium, they had made me a finish line to cross, also had a balloon and a Lucozade which was needed. I am feeling very grateful for all of them and for all

the support I've received. "It has been an honour to run for Sense and my Dad."

Richard Kramer, Chief Executive at Sense, said: "We are so grateful and thrilled that Michelle has chosen to support Sense by taking on the incredible challenge of running the virtual London Marathon. During these challenging times, we need virtual support from you more than ever."

"It's thanks to people like Michelle that Sense is able to support people with complex disabilities, including those who

are deafblind, to communicate and experience the world."

The virtual 2020 Virgin Money London Marathon took place on Sunday 4 October. For the first time ever, participants were able to run, walk or jog the 26.2 miles in their local area – making the event the most inclusive London Marathon ever.

To sponsor Michelle, go to <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/MichelleBrownCrowther>. For more information about Sense please visit www.sense.org.uk

Charlotte Nichols MP

Warrington North

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Major deal with US bank for ICC Solutions

WARRINGTON-based ICC Solutions – run by husband and wife directors David and Wendy Maisey – has secured a deal with a major US acquiring bank to implement and safety test contactless payment methods.

With an increasing number of businesses moving to contactless payments worldwide, the deal is set to increase the company's turnover by 35 per cent over the next five years.

Wendy said: 'This is great news for employment in Warrington, the local and UK economy.'

'Whilst we are living in very uncertain times, as directors David and I, along with our fantastic team have ensured that Covid-19 has not stopped ICC Solutions from going forward and finalising this deal.'

'We export 95 per cent of our goods and services and all development and distribution is done solely from our Warrington headquarters. Trading in a buoyant export market with clients spread across all global economies gives us resilience to get through a situation like Covid and spreads risk factors.'

'Newly signed UK Trade deals and those currently under negotiation will only add to this growth. The international aspect also makes it very exciting for the team who are keen to commence

travel again and meet with our clients face to face when restrictions are eased.'

David and Wendy founded ICC Solutions in 1996 out of the need for businesses to securely test card payments and prevent fraud.

They were each awarded the OBE in the 2020 New Year's Honours for services to the UK economy and international trade.

Today, ICC Solutions technology is used by banks and merchants to implement secure payments such as Chip & PIN, contactless and mobile phone in more than 100 countries worldwide, with the business employing 45 full time staff and looking to grow this in the coming months.

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has been providing support and opening networks, enabling the company to generate significant international growth. As a DIT Export Champion ICC Solutions has also been supporting and mentoring other businesses in their exporting journeys.

Wendy added: 'We started ICC Solutions after noticing that there wasn't a way to safely test tools for card payments. This was a real gap in the payment industry. We then set out to design and create a software solution that took care of all the testing and certification, preventing fraud and saving large

acquiring banks and businesses a great sum of money.'

'Exporting has a significant impact on revenue, it has given us resilience to get through a situation like this, and it makes it exciting for the team.'

Minister for exports Graham Stuart said: 'It is fantastic to see such an innovative company adapting to the challenges of coronavirus and thriving in new markets. Our new free trade agreements will have a

strong modern and digital focus, allowing British technology to thrive across the world in the coming years.'

'The US is our largest trading partner and we will continue to champion free trade because we know that an agreement between our nations will provide UK exporters with a wealth of new opportunities.'



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A year like no other!

NORMALLY at this time of year there is plenty of excitement in the air with Halloween, Bonfire Night and Christmas to look forward to.

However, 2020 is a year like no other and it's really difficult to look forward to something that is more fun together.

Warrington went from having one of the lowest Covid 19 infection rates to giving us cause for concern in just a few weeks.

The local lockdown was bitterly

by Stephen Fitzsimons
disappointing for local companies who had incorporated all of the recommended safety measures.

Businesses did their bit, however there was clearly a small minority who felt that they didn't need to.

Time Square is a good example of the topsy turvy economy that we currently find ourselves in. Cineworld has temporarily closed its doors.

Not because they have no customers – it is because of a

shortage of new film releases, with the latest Bond adventure delayed again until next year.

Elsewhere, we know about the success of the new market and the confirmation that Heavenly Deserts are taking one of the new units.

My colleagues at Warrington & Co have three other food & drink providers ready to sign up so the long term prospects are exciting – we just need a time machine to fast forward through the rest of the year!

Finally, I write this column on the eve of the funeral for a genuine Warrington legend. Colin Daniels served the town with commitment and distinction. Most people know him for his work at the Chamber of Commerce and the College. I recall him telling me all about being a soldier at the (in)famous Checkpoint Charlie in divided Berlin – fascinating to have experienced a period in history that the rest of us can only Google (other search engines available!). Colin was also Warrington & Co's Deputy Chair and whilst he will be missed, his legacy lives on through the Construction Centre at Warrington & Vale Royal College, aptly named in his honour.

As always, take care and do get in touch if you need any help with your business.

Death of business community stalwart Colin Daniels

BUSINESS community stalwart Colin Daniels, long-standing Chief Executive of Warrington & Vale Royal Chamber of Commerce has sadly died after a short illness.

As well as the Chamber of Commerce, he was leader of the Conservative Group on Warrington Borough Council in the early 1980s and a long-standing Chair of Governors at Warrington & Vale Royal College.

In 2016 he was honoured with the degree of Doctor of Business Administration, honoris causa by the University of Chester.

He was Chairman of the Corporation of the college since 1989, where he took a very proactive and strategic role, including the complete re-building of the college.

He played a significant role in the successful transfer of the College's Higher Education provision to the University of Chester in 2002.

Mr Daniels served continuously on the board of the Colleges National Association and was chairman of the National Employment Committee and the National Joint Forum for Further Education until 2002.

He was one of the joint architects of the introduction of the flexible employment contract for the Further Education Sector. He was a former member of both the Further Education Governors National Council and the National Self-Regulation Group for Further Education.

He was also a Senior Council Member of the University of Chester and a former member of the Court of the University of Salford. From 1978 until 2012 he was chairman of Governors of his Thelwall Primary School. He also served on Cheshire County Council's education committee from 1994 to 1999.

A past President and Treasurer of the Warrington and District Association of the National Builders Federation, and a former member of the North West Regional Council of the National Federation of Building Trade Employers, he was a Life Member of the National Builders Federation.

He was also a former chairman



of Warrington 2000+ Ltd, which owns and operates two office developments. He was also deputy chairman of Warrington & Co Ltd, which actively promotes the economic expansion and inward investment of Warrington.

Mr Daniels was also chairman of Cheshire Chambers Enterprise Ltd, which serves the sub-region of Cheshire and Warrington. A former director of Chambers of Commerce North West Ltd, he coordinated the work of the 16 Chambers of Commerce in the North West Region. He was also very involved in the establishment of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Council.

Mr Daniels was both a borough councillor and parish councillor from 1977 to 1986, leader of the Conservative Group and chairman of the parish council.

In 1992 he was a Parliamentary Candidate at the General Election and, for five years, chairman of the Warrington South Conservative Association.

He served with the Royal Artillery in BAOR (British Army of the Rhine). His charitable work included Cancer Macmillan Nurses, Ryfields Retirement Village and as a trustee of the Warrington Charities Trust.

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Darren's "virtual" marathon raises £1,500

SCHOOL attendance officer Darren Willcock raised more than £1,500 running in the "virtual" London Marathon.

He was one of some 45,000 people who ran the marathon in various parts of the world and he ran the last seven miles on the playing fields of his school – Warrington's Sir Thomas Boteler CE High School.

Sixty students and a number of other members of staff joined him for the final part of the run – spaced out in their "bubbles".

Mr Willcock, who had been training for six months for the run told the other runners: "I could not have done that without all of you as well. We never do things by halves do we? Every one of you on this field now: we've done this together."



School graphic designer and publicity manager Alice Roberts said: "Our school's team spirit soared high today. Darren's sheer determination, coupled with his unwavering care for the people around him is inspirational. We are incredibly lucky to know and work with him."

Mr Willcock was running in a charity place for the National Autistic Society, and has raised over £1,500 for them.

Headteacher Mrs Beverley Scott-Herron commented: "Events like this are the true epitome of everything we stand for as a school. Hope, compassion and endurance are our values, and this is what has been shown today. To watch a member of the Boteler team achieve a lifetime goal is so emotional and heartwarming. It gives me inspiration."

Mr Willcock said: "At the beginning, I couldn't even run a mile. And then I built up to 19 miles. And I never passed that until today. It just shows what you can do when you put your mind to it. Anything's achievable. I'm proud that I've finished, but I'm even more proud of all the students that took part. I couldn't have done it without their support. The staff and students were absolutely amazing. I've not done it – we've done it. And that's what we do best at Boteler. We do things together."

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Big Brother's Lisa Appleton ready for her Hollywood big break!

BIG Brother 9's MOST infamous lodger, Warrington based Lisa Appleton's dreams were shattered in the spring of 2018 after the reality TV star had been left ravaged by her habitual addiction to sausages, and her weight had skyrocketed to worrying levels.

But now after some real lows, she is set to feature on *The Witches of the Sands*, a supernatural thriller about a deceased occultist, Makarta Abaddon, and stars Eileen Dietz (*The Exorcist*), Dawna Lee Heising (*Blade Runner*) and Brandon Crane (IT), with cameos from Pauline Peart (*Carry on Girls*) and Elijah Wood (*Lord of the Rings*), with SFX by Matt Westrup (*Underworld: Evolution*).

Now aged 52 Lisa's life had become a cycle of disturbing tabloid antics, and fans of the star had become worried about her mental health.

In 2019 Lisa moved from her then agent to Miami Fox Talent and began work on her autobiography *BALLS* after a chance meeting with bestselling author Bryn Curt James Hammond (*A Case for Murder* Brittany Murphy Files), who is currently appearing in the Investigation Discovery documentary *'Brittany Murphy: An ID Mystery'*.

"It was the change I needed; they allowed me to develop my skills



Lisa Appleton (C) Miami Fox Publishing and Miami Fox Talent 2020

through new avenues and I began my growth by really developing the inner me."

"I'm 52 and I am aware my shelf life is limited and the image I had was tiring with the public. Whenever I went out people would yell 'sausages' or 'Where's Lauren Harries'. It was devastating that I had been in the industry for

almost a decade but people only recognised me as Harries' sidekick and a sausage addict! I didn't know Harries very well and my addiction wasn't a laughing matter."

Lisa, who appeared on the Jeremy Kyle show alongside Harries, said that was her biggest regret and was a huge career low for her. "I wasn't in the best head space, and if I'm honest I didn't even know her," Lisa concluded. "When she said I'd lied on the show to make it better, I was flabbergasted. One thing I'm not is a liar, and to suggest I needed to lie about an antique dealer for a headline is preposterous and downright ludicrous. I wish her all the best and I hope she can get the help she needs - I'M NOT A LIAR!"

Lisa completed her autobiography in early 2020 with Miami Fox Publishing, and had planned to release the book this summer alongside her organic beauty range, which would tie in with her summer book tour. However, the Big Brother-rumoured curse struck Lisa once more. "Covid-19 really put the kibosh on everything. I was ready to roar and my projects were halted. It was a difficult time as I had undergone an inner and outer development, and to have things placed on pause affected me personally and financially. However, I discussed with Miami Fox the idea of a cookbook and they got behind me and I released *'Cook With Lisa'*."

Besides the eBook *'Cook With Lisa'*, Bryn Curt James Hammond, who had just completed filming a show for Channel 5 on botched surgery when Covid-19 struck, suggested the duo collaborate on a podcast for the platform Podbean. "Bryn and I have a real energy and we share each other's spotlight and he isn't an energy vampire like people I've had in my life in the past. Doing the podcast was an opportunity for me to shine as a presenter and show people I'm not just a one-trick pony. I don't need to gyrate on Instagram to remain relevant."

Lisa and Bryn launched *'SO...*

Bryn & Lisa DO Wine & Crime' during the third week of lockdown and they now broadcast the True Crime conspiracy theory show live at 10pm each Wednesday. "It's fun and full of energy. However, it also has a serious edge to it as we cover unsolved murders and missing people with a focus on the black community," Lisa said.

"Due to Lisa's warmth, she's really suited for the show," added Bryn. "Since we began working together in 2019 we have grown very close and being able to bring awareness to cases that haven't been given much coverage in the media is a blessing and I hope we continue to see growth. Lisa was born for this role."

"I really do hope at some point we can develop it into a TV show. That is mine and Bryn's dream," said Lisa.

Meanwhile *The Witches of the Sands* is a supernatural thriller about a deceased occultist, Makarta Abaddon.

Lisa said, "I'm thrilled. The cast are wonderful, and secretly deep down I'm a huge horror fan, so to be working with Linnea Quigley (*Return of the Living Dead*), Lynn Lowry (*The Crazies*) and Brenda Lamb (*Blade Runner*) is so, so exciting."

She continued, "It's strange to have gone to the cinema and watched *'A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master'* and now I'm going to be filming alongside Toy Newkirk, who played Sheila in it... I keep pinching myself."

The director, Tony Mardon (*Spider-Man: Far from Home*), said of the casting, "It's going to be a lot of fun working with Lisa and Bryn, whilst maintaining a professional approach to produce the best results possible. I'm sure Lisa has what it takes to make a great *Scream Queen*."

SO... Bryn & Lisa DO Wine & Crime airs at 10pm each Wednesday on Podbean. *The Witches of the Sands* will receive a limited theatrical release in 2021.

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Leasing: A better way to sell your equipment

By Nigel Garner

With competition hot on your heels, you need to find a better way to sell your equipment to secure more deals. And leasing could be the perfect tool.

In the catering and hospitality market, equipment is often crucial to the successful running of the business, affecting productivity, output and quality. If equipment fails or isn't efficient, then service can drop and profits can plummet. And when the business is cash flow dependent, often companies make do and don't upgrade or replace particularly during these challenging times. However, now could be the time when a review of existing equipment would prove beneficial in the longer term.

Catering equipment can be expensive and your customer may often find it hard to justify the outlay, so you miss out on the sale. By offering a leasing facility through MBM Capital, you are making it an affordable option – your customers get the latest technology, they can spread the cost out over an agreed period, they can manage the monthly or quarterly repayments and benefit from the tax deductions.



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- You know the customer's lease is due to finish so you can encourage them to upgrade their kit at the appropriate time – keeping your competition at bay.
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And if you already offer leasing and are familiar with it, then MBM Capital could provide you with the perfect excuse to review and add another funder to your offering, giving you better rates, higher acceptances and happier customers!

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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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Health walks leading the way - to better health!



LiveWire's relaunched Health Walks are proving a popular way for people to take the first steps to better health as well as offering the chance to explore and enjoy the great outdoors in Warrington.

Recent guided walks led by LiveWire have included a 90 minute walk around Sankey Valley Park as well as the popular carbon landscape walks that have resumed this month in the east part of the town.

With new national campaigns such as 'Better Health' encouraging us all to reduce the risk of health complications by losing weight, it is a great time for anyone improve their fitness by simply going for a walk.

Brisk walking offers so many benefits to your health, much of which measures up to those achieved by running - but with far less impact on the body's joints. So it's perfect for beginners or those who haven't been able to exercise for a while.

Other health benefits of walking include improved circulation, lifting your mood, strengthened muscles, better sleep, boosted energy and burning calories.

Striding out with complete arm swings will enhance your body's design – it's why soldiers march!) and help you get the most out of even the shortest walk.

Believe it or not just 10 active minutes like this where you are noticeably breathing deeper but can still hold a conversation will really make a difference.

Make progress at your own pace to build up to regular 30 minutes like this and you should notice better mobility in your back, shoulders and hips. And you could see other health improvements too like lower blood pressure and blood glucose readings. And it can give your immune system a boost too.

Matt Fairhurst, Lifestyles Advisor for LiveWire, said: "The longest journeys do indeed start with the first step so why not give a brisk walk a go this week."

Attendance on LiveWire's Health Walks must be prebooked in advance as places are limited.

For more info about joining one of LiveWire's walks please contact Matt Fairhurst on: mfairhurst@livewirewarrington.org or visit www.livewirewarrington.co.uk/lifestyle/health-walks

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MUM says housing association helped save her family's life

A WARRINGTON mum says a local housing association helped save the lives of her and her family after living through the trauma of childhood abuse, foster care and bereavement, abusive marriage, and the spectre of homelessness.

Not many understand the real meaning of a true home more than Warrington Housing Association tenant Margaret, who told her story on #HousingDay, (October 7) now in its eighth year, which celebrates 'the importance of home', the key role a decent, safe and genuinely affordable home plays in people's lives.

In fact, the former teacher would go as far as to say, being able to access affordable social housing when she needed it most "saved her life".

Margaret ended her abusive marriage after becoming afraid for her small children's safety. Her husband left the family, sold the house from under them, and went back to live with his parents.

With no family of her own to turn to, Margaret said: "We were left without a home. I had nothing of my own; no money, but we could not stay in that situation. I needed to protect my children, with my very life if necessary. That is when I was put in touch with Warrington Housing Association."

Margaret, then in her thirties, was determined not to let history repeat itself.

She said: "I only had a small teacher's pension and social security but WHA was so kind and, I would say, saved my life. If it had not been for their support, my little brood may not have survived without being put into care. I was determined not to let that happen as it had to me."

"They provided me and my three small children a lovely home that I still live in now. I and my three toddlers began a new life in this lovely house."

That "decent, safe and genuinely affordable home" gave the family the safety and springboard they needed to thrive.

Margaret added: "I'm so proud of my three children. My son is now an architect. My middle daughter is a staff nurse at Warrington General Hospital and my oldest daughter is a very experienced care worker for the disabled."

"I am so grateful for all the help and support I have received from Warrington Housing Association for saving my life and that of my children, who are now serving the community as their life's work."

Margaret, now 70, still enjoys the support of Warrington Housing Association as she plays an active role at WHA's over-50s centre LifeTime. She spent the lockdown taking part in quizzes and exercise classes over Zoom and Facebook art tutorials, in between helping her keyworker daughter with childcare.

She added: "Thank you WHA for all the support throughout this Covid crisis. God bless you."



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How Dreamscape brought the buzz to Bumblebee's lead generation



"We're buzzing about service"

Bumblebee Plumbing and Heating's motto rings true, but to build on their success and beat the competition, they decided to enlist our team here at Dreamscape to help with their digital marketing strategy.

Bee on target

Our challenge was to stimulate further growth within Warrington and its surrounding areas. Enhance Bumblebee's brand awareness and generate more traffic to the site. We did this by implementing a digital strategy that generated high-quality leads and conversions.

A hive of activity

After a virtual discussion with Bumblebee, we quickly established our approach and decided which social channels were the most appropriate for their business goals. By working with them to understand their customers, we were able to identify various personas of their target audiences.

Setting the campaign live in May 2020, we formed tailored adverts and messages, so when they were delivered, the audience would be shown the right adverts and messaging. We evaluated the ads regularly to see what was working and what needed tweaking to encourage further clicks and conversions. After the success of the initial campaign, we outlined a progressive Facebook ads strategy.

Show me the honey money

In just over four months, we generated 104 enquiries for Bumblebee. The ongoing campaign had the desired effect in driving significant lead generation for boiler installation, including long-term awareness of the brand.



"Dreamscape have transformed our business."

Buzzing about the future

Bumblebee's return on investment has shown the success of our Facebook ads campaign. Bumblebee is now eager to build on the success of the campaign and dive into more marketing opportunities with Dreamscape.

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MP urges residents to apply for Green Homes Grant

NEW Green Home Grants worth up to £5,000 of energy-efficient home improvements funded by the Government, are now available to Warrington residents as part of a new scheme.

The Green Homes Grant will not only enable households to improve their energy efficiency and cut down on bills, but help protect the environment and jobs, livelihoods and the local economy by creating more work for the local tradespeople.

The new scheme, which opened for business recently, includes a range of energy-saving measures at home including insulation for floors and roofs, double or triple glazing and draught-proofing.

Under the terms of the Green Homes Grant, the Government will offer vouchers to cover up to two-thirds of energy-efficient home improvements – worth up to £5,000.

The improvements mean families could be saving £600 a year on bills.



Warrington South MP Andy Carter is encouraging residents across Warrington South to apply for the vouchers for the many benefits they will bring.

"This is going to be a brilliant scheme for many hard-working families across Warrington South. Not only will more energy-efficient homes help people save money on their bills, but it will also support our efforts to cut down on emissions.

"With winter fast approaching, anything we can do to make our homes warmer and more efficient is a real boost.

"This scheme will also provide opportunities for local tradespeople across the town to support in the delivery, so I hope as many people as possible across Warrington sign up and take advantage."

The Green Homes Grant also offers vouchers up to £10,000 for low-income families and is available to some landlords as well as homeowners.

For full details on the Green Homes Grant, who is eligible and how to apply, go to www.gov.uk/GreenHomesGrant

Historic plaque returns home

A PLAQUE commemorating Warrington's links with prison reformer John Howard has been returned to its home after an absence of several months.

It was unveiled by deputy mayor Cllr Maureen Craghan 113 years after it was originally installed in Bridge Street in 1907, when it marked the 130th anniversary of Howard publishing his works on prison reform in the 18th century.

John Howard's famous book was printed in Warrington and while the work was being carried out he lodged at a silversmith's shop which stood on the site of the new Warrington Market building.

John Howard travelled England and Wales in the 1770s, visiting hundreds of prisons, before writing his great work "The State of the Prisons" which was printed in Warrington.

The plaque was originally erected by The Warrington Society. It displays the words: "Lodged at a silver smith's shop, which stood upon the site of these premises, whilst printing his great works on Prison Reform. 1777-80-84-89".

The plaque was temporarily removed to avoid any damage being caused during construction work on the new market.

“

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Council to delay Local Plan

DUE to the impact of COVID-19, along with the Government's proposed planning reforms and new housing calculation methodology, Warrington Borough Council is pausing work on its Local Plan.

The delay aims to give the council time to reflect and be confident that the Local Plan submitted for examination is the right one for Warrington, given the events of this year and the effects they are likely to have for years to come.

It is anticipated that the council will now be in a position to progress with the Local Plan in the summer of 2021.

Warrington consulted extensively on its 'Proposed Submission Version Local Plan' in the summer of 2019, attracting approximately 3,500 written representations from members of the public, landowners, developers and stakeholder organisations, as well as statutory consultees.

In late 2019, the council informed residents that taking account of all of the representations and bringing forward the right plan, with the

right infrastructure, had been a complex and challenging process and would take time.

While the council has continued to make good progress with the plan, a number of developments this year are impacting on the work:

- The global impact of the coronavirus pandemic

- The Government's White Paper for a reformed planning system, which may bring a fundamental transformation in the way the planning system is administered.

- A separate Government consultation on a revised method of calculating housing numbers when developing a Local Plan. While it is not yet clear how the new methodology would impact on the Local Plan, it could potentially affect the number of homes required for the borough.

Council Leader, Cllr Russ Bowden, said: "Our Local Plan will shape Warrington's future – and that's why it's vital we get it right. We have been working hard for many months to analyse each and every one of the representations we have received. This has taken time, but it's a crucial, central part of our commitment to balancing the housing and employment needs of the borough with protecting the green belt, while following government policy.

"We have been steadfast that roads and infrastructure must be delivered ahead of houses being completed – in particular in the proposed Garden Suburb area in South Warrington. We've been working closely with landowners and developers to ensure that this infrastructure can indeed be

delivered, and this work continues.

"However, the landscape has now changed. Our efforts to deliver a Local Plan that works for Warrington have been impacted by developments beyond our control. The unprecedented challenges of the coronavirus pandemic – challenges which will be with us for some time to come – have undoubtedly had an impact on the way society interacts, the way the town moves, and in particular the way Warrington does business.

"This, combined with two rounds of Government consultation on planning reform and housing calculation methodology – mean that we are currently in a period of uncertainty. It would, therefore, be inappropriate to move ahead with the submission of our current plan to the Planning Inspector at



this time.

"It's only right we pause. We don't want to rush ahead with a Local Plan that wouldn't be the best fit for Warrington's future."

ANDY CARTER MP

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Andy

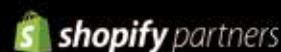
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C A R P E D I E M

MAN v FAT football launches in Warrington

A NEW football league which aims to help men tackle obesity has kicked off in Warrington at Orford's Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub.

Taking place every Tuesday night outdoor team sport is not currently affected by the rule of six, or any national or local Covid restrictions as long as the facilities adhere to COVID-secure guidance.

In nearby Wigan, where 41 players take part in the league, the combined total weight loss has been as high as 700 pounds – or 50 stone a season and some players have been known to drop as much as 70 pounds during a 14-week league.

The FA-endorsed scheme was created by Andrew Shanahan, who fed-up with traditional weight loss classes primarily aimed at women, decided to develop a programme that combines the beautiful game with achievable weight loss goals for men.

Before matches, the players are weighed, which is followed by a 30-minute game of six-a-side, with extra goal bonuses awarded to teams based on the amount of weight players have lost.

Public Health England data covering the time between April 2019 and March 2020 found that 62% of adults in England are overweight or obese, with four of the top 20 areas where rates are the highest being within the North West region – with four of the top 20 areas where rates are the highest in the North West, they are Knowsley (73.7%), Halton (70.6%), Wigan

(70.5%) and Tameside (70.5%).

Furthermore, a study by University of North Carolina (UNC), Saudi Health Council and World Bank published in August found that people with obesity are at a greater risk of hospitalisation (113%), admission to intensive care (74%) and death (48%) from COVID-19:

MAN v FAT's Head of Football, Richard Crick explains, "We're really excited to be launching another league in the North West and encourage anyone from in and around Warrington, who feels that the programme might be right for them to head to our website and sign up for the league."

"We still have places remaining

ahead of our 'pre-season', so come down, meet your new teammates and have a kick about – we'll be with you every step of the way."

Players can join up at www.manvfat.com/football and they can get more information by calling 0345 163 1042 or emailing football@manvfat.com



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By David Watkinson

Recent Government support for businesses and employees through Coronavirus pandemic

Over the past few weeks the Chancellor has announced a number of measures to support businesses and employees through the Coronavirus pandemic.

Job Support Scheme

The Chancellor has confirmed that the Job Retention Scheme will cease at the end of October as anticipated. He has now announced a new scheme, the Coronavirus Job Support Scheme (JSS), commencing on 1st November and lasting for 6 months. It has been designed to, hopefully, provide support to employees in "viable" jobs.

The scheme will be available to all small and medium sized businesses (SME) across the UK but there will be additional conditions on large businesses. SMEs are businesses that meet at least 2 of the following 3 conditions:

- Turnover below £25m
- Fewer than 250 employees
- Gross assets of less than £12.5m

In other words, the majority of businesses and employees!

Grants made under the scheme will be based on the employee's usual pay. The amount of the grant will be capped at a maximum £697.92 per month.

To be eligible for the scheme an employee must work for a minimum of 33% of their usual hours, and must be in a "viable" job. The wages for these worked hours will be paid by the employer as usual. For any

hours unworked the employee will receive 2/3rds of their pay, and half of this (ie 1/3rd) will be met by the government under the scheme. The result is that an eligible employee will receive at least 77% of their pay.

As an example, an employee normally works 5 days a week and earns £350 per week. If they work 2 days under the JSS then the employer will pay 2/5th (£140) for these days. They will then receive a further £140 for the remaining 3 days. Of this, the government will pay a grant of £70 to the employer. Therefore, the employee receives a total of £280, of which £210 is paid by the employer and £70 is paid by the government.

A couple of things to note:

- There is no contribution towards the additional employment costs, ie Employers NIC and Pension contributions.
- The employer will continue to be able to benefit from the Job Retention Bonus in respect of employees paid under the JSS. This is a one-off grant of £1,000 for all previously furloughed employees who are still retained at the end of January 2021.

Value Added Tax

The temporary reduction in VAT from 20% to 5% for restaurants, hotels, and cinemas will be extended to 31st March 2021. The reduction covers all turnover from these sources with the exception of the sale of alcoholic beverages.

Also, businesses who deferred their VAT payment will no longer need to pay this in a lump sum on 31st March 2021. Instead, they can pay this over the following 11 months in equal instalments. No interest will be payable.

Self Assessment Tax Liability

Taxpayers with a liability under self assessment in January 2021 can extend their outstanding bill over the following 12 months. This liability includes any payments on account that have been deferred. However, unlike the VAT extension, interest at the normal rate for late tax payments will be payable.

Self Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS)

A further extension of the SEISS has been announced. The new extension will cover the periods from 1st November 2020 to 31st January 2021 and from 1st February 2021 to 30th April 2021.

The conditions for eligibility are as follows:

- The trader must be eligible for the current scheme, although they did not have to claim the grant
- They must be currently trading and declare that they intend to continue to trade
- They must have been impacted by reduced demand due to Coronavirus in the "qualifying period". In respect



Margaret Black and David Watkinson

of the first period of extension the qualifying period is from 1st November 2020 to the date of the claim.

For the first period commencing on 1st November 2020 the grant will be a taxable sum equivalent to 20% of the average monthly trading profit. The grant will be capped at a total of £1,875. Details of how and when to claim the grant for this period will be announced by HMRC, who are responsible for administering the scheme, in due course.

Details of the grant for the second period commencing on 1st February 2021 have not yet been published.

Coronavirus Loan Schemes

Loans taken out under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme will be extended from the current 5 years to 10 years. As before, interest will be payable by the government for the first 12 months, after which the liability will pass to the person taking the loan.

A new loan scheme will be introduced in January 2021, details of which will be announced in due course.

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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Wolves' Joe Philbin gets to "Gripz" with new business venture



WARRINGTON Wolves' Joe Philbin, who started out with Culcheth Eagles, kept himself busy during lockdown by getting to "Gripz" with a new business venture, launching a new clothing brand with his good friend Jack Hodgkiss.

Working alongside local online web developers Morgan Branding, the new business got off to a flying start as they sold out of 200 pairs of special compression socks in just 48 hours.

Philbin, aged 25 and with more than 100 first-team games under his belt for the Wolves, is already planning for his future after teaming up with Jack to launch Gripz, a fresh clothing brand. Having already enjoyed success in rugby league, representing Great Britain and Ireland, Philbin now wants to see Gripz thrive in the sporting world.

Commenting on the business venture Philbin said: "I've been thinking of this for years. I've always followed a few brands and I've always fancied giving something like this a go."

Opportunity

"Lockdown gave me the opportunity to act on it because previously I was always doing rugby. I got together with my good mate Jack Hodgkiss and we spent a good few months putting things in place."

"We have been friends for a long time. We've both had similar ideas with what we wanted to do. He's already got a successful construction company and I was looking to start this so we got talking to each other, shared ideas and we decided to use his expertise in the business world and my expertise in the sporting world, so we've put them ideas together and hopefully it is a good recipe for success."

The first item of clothing launched is a compression sock, which has been specifically designed to give an extra boost to performance – and they are looking to launch an activewear range as well.

Philbin added: "Our first product, the Gripz sock, can be worn for playing any sport, or for walking or going to the gym."

"Boots are getting a lot lighter these days and your feet can move around your boot quite a bit so the compression sock will give that extra boost."

"They have got silicone grips on the bottom of the sock and it gives you that extra 1% in the change of your direction and extra power. The grips we have got go up the back of the sock so they help prevent blisters."

Philbin and Hodgkiss are determined to turn Gripz into a huge success – and they also want to give back to their local community in the process.

Philbin continued: "We want to build a solid brand. We want to do it properly and we want to make this a brand that people want to wear."

"We want to let the business grow organically and we've set a target that we want to be sponsoring the clubs that we both played for at amateur level within six to 12 months."

"Jack played for Culcheth Football Club and so did I. I played rugby for Culcheth Eagles and Latchford Giants so we want to be sponsoring those teams down the line and give back to the clubs that gave so much to us."

One of our main goals is to give back to the community so hopefully it all works out well."

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