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Issue No. 266 February 2022 FREE EVERY MONTH

Bouncing back at the double

Page 3

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Editor's Comment



AS many feared and predicted Warrington Borough Council's controversial investment in Together Energy backed fired as the energy supplier ceased trading.

Despite millions of pounds of investment for a 50 percent stake in the green energy company, unprecedented times saw the company become one in a long list of failed energy suppliers over the past two years.

With the council also having to "write down" approximately 50% of its current £32m investment in Redwood Bank, it is certainly worrying times at Warrington Town Hall, with lots of questions to be answered when the dust settles.

Add to this the council accounts still not being signed off from 2017/18, despite numerous statements suggesting they were about to be signed off, even as recently as December, it is difficult for even the most optimistic person to find much to be positive about regarding the council's current finances and investments.

We keep hearing that the majority of the investments, in particular Birchwood Park, are sound and generating circa £20m a year, without which the council would be forced to cut front-line services.

But with a current liability of £1.6 Billion, which is expected to rise above £2 Billion in the coming 12 months, against a revenue budget of £140m alarm bells are ringing, particularly with inflation rising to over 5 percent and fuel costs set to

spiral in the coming months. I don't pretend to be a maths genius but even to me, "investing" circa £40m in a company that ceases trading, to make £20m doesn't add up!

While all investments have a risk, surely it is now time for the politicians who run our town, to go back to the drawing board and review their investment strategy, which they blame on 10 years of Government austerity, which has seen the council lose 60p in the £1 from central Government.

Nearly all businesses and local authorities have had to adapt and change and cut their cloth accordingly during the past two years or more – maybe it is time for those running the town hall to do the same and abandon this risky investment strategy?

I haven't got the answers, but I'm not on a payscale to provide them.

Meanwhile, on a positive note Warrington Smart scrimpers based at St Ann's Church in Orford, have become our latest Legacy Project to receive a donation of £500.

The Scrimpers has been running for several years. They are a group of people who get together over common interests who believe they can save a fortune by applying and sharing their skills, hobbies, or know-how, realising that the cost of living could be lower if they pooled resources. The main objectives of the group are to Repurpose, upcycle, reuse, and budget meal planning. Using traditional values of making something from nothing and doing all things to save money on a tight budget! Maybe the Smart Scrimpers could teach the powers that be at Warrington Town Hall a thing or two!

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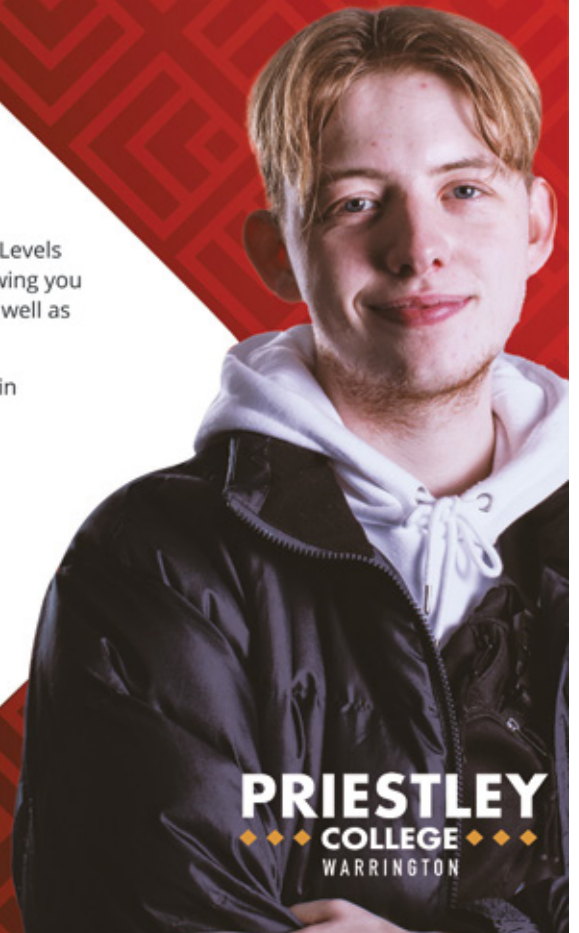
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Bouncing back at the double

AFTER two years of uncertainty local business owner Holly Pirrie is planning for the year ahead for Pageant Girl and The Dress Studio, both heavily impacted by Covid-19 – although still able to raise over £50,000 for charity!

Like so many, the business based in Culcheth, Warrington, simply had to stop trading for much of the pandemic.

Director, Holly said: "Our business relies solely on people being brought together. Our pageants are live events, they are about fun, making new friends and memories – with an audience... it's like one big party. However, there was no way these could be held in 2020 or in the first half of 2021. People kept suggesting that I hold virtual ones but for me, this would not have been close to the same. I

spoke to the pageant finalists and they agreed, they all wanted that special moment to be on stage and to physically be together – and to hug!"

Holly and her team kept waiting and finally from July 2021, they were able to hold their events, including Miss Teen Great Britain.

"It has been a busy six months, it went from 0-100 overnight. I was continuously apprehensive that we may not be able to hold them but we did – and it was worth the wait."

Holly, also runs the prom dress

superstore, The Dress Studio at Culcheth, Warrington. Again, business completely stopped with proms being postponed or cancelled in 2020.

"My friends would say, you could just sell the dresses online... But our issue was that no-one needed the dresses because we could barely leave the house. I did go through all the different worries and concerns for the business but it was fantastic when we could re-open in 2021, prom was back on and everyone was ready to party."

The Dress Studio is now preparing for Prom 2022. They have hundreds of dresses instore and they know prom 2022 is going to be a memorable event for all! The store has over 30 changing rooms and so, there is plenty of space.

"After the two years that we have had, the students deserve the best prom and party. I am loving seeing

all of their happy faces come into the store and I know 2022 will be special for them," added Holly.

The company has raised over £550,000 for their chosen charities, including The Christie and Together for Short Lives. Their fundraising continued throughout the pandemic, raising over £50,000 – they plan to continue this into 2022.

For anyone looking to enter a pageant, you can visit www.pageantgirl.co.uk all events are held in the Northwest and you can be aged 11 upwards – with no upper age limit!

"The pageants are the perfect opportunity if you are wanting to try something new, whether you want to build your confidence or make new friends, it's an incredibly fun experience," added Holly, herself a former Miss England finalist and previous holder of various Pageant crowns.



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Advertiser's announcement

Urgent Treatment Centres

Helping you make the right choices this winter

Accident and Emergency departments are under severe pressure this winter, due to the latest COVID-19 surge meeting seasonal demand for emergency or urgent care. Warrington Hospital's Emergency Department is no different; with record numbers of patients seeking treatment.

Many of these patients, however, do have more suitable alternatives to Warrington Hospital's Emergency Department. NHS Urgent Treatment Centres in Runcorn and Widnes can often be the better choice when you need urgent but not emergency treatment.

Choosing to attend one of the Urgent Treatment Centres has many benefits this winter – not only will you experience shorter waiting times, but you will be freeing up resources at the Emergency Department at Warrington Hospital for more seriously ill patients.

Both Urgent Treatment Centres are open 8am to 9pm, seven days a week, 365 days a year (including bank holidays). Please arrive before 8pm to allow time to be seen before closing.

Urgent Treatment Centres (UTCs) provide x-rays and you can be seen

here for a wide range of issues that require urgent treatment, but are not life-threatening, such as:

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Telephone: 01928 714567

Widnes Urgent Treatment Centre
Health Care Resource Centre,
Oaks Place Caldwell Road
Widnes
WA8 7GD
Telephone: 0151 495 5000

If you travel by car, there is onsite parking (sat nav WA8 7GD). There is also an Urgent Treatment Centre in St Helens at the Millennium Centre

Anyone who has a cough, high temperature or any symptoms of COVID-19 should only attend Runcorn Urgent Treatment Centre when they can provide evidence of a recent negative PCR test.

This requirement applies only to Runcorn UTC

You can find current waiting times for Runcorn Urgent Treatment Centre, as well as Warrington Emergency Department at www.whh.nhs.uk.

A free shuttle bus service runs throughout the day, seven days per week between Warrington Hospital to Halton Hospital/Runcorn Urgent Treatment Centre and takes only 25 minutes.

Not sure where to seek help or advice?

If you need urgent medical advice



and are not sure which is the best place for you to seek help and advice, then please contact NHS 111 free at 111.nhs.uk or call 111. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

You will answer questions about your symptoms on the website, or by speaking with a fully trained advisor on the phone. Depending on the situation, you receive health information and advice and will find out what local service is right for you.

NHS 111 can also provide appointment slots for patients at local Urgent Treatment Centres, where appropriate.

If you're experiencing a 999 emergency, which means that it is critical or life-threatening, then phone 999 for emergency help.

Making the right choices helps us all. Please let's do it together this winter.



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Northern Nuclear Alliance and Jacobs, taking nuclear industry forward together

BIRCHWOOD Park-based Jacobs has joined the Northern Nuclear Alliance, demonstrating its commitment to the region's nuclear industry.

As a Partner Member with a seat on the Northern Nuclear Alliance (NNA) Steering Group, Jacobs brings its experience of supporting hundreds of nuclear programs worldwide and more than 60 years of experience dating back to the inception of the industry.

The NNA, based in Birchwood, Warrington, is the fastest-growing membership organisation in the nuclear sector. Its newly launched strategy is built on four pillars: New Business, Social Value, SME Development and Clean Growth and Innovation.

Jacobs Energy, Vice President

Technology and Cyber Solutions, Greg Willetts said; "We are looking forward to harnessing the potential of our NNA partnership. Together we can maximise the impact of our social value actions, working collaboratively to increase the benefits for our communities. The NNA is also championing nuclear for a net-zero future, looking at how nuclear can be part of a reliable, sustainable energy mix, working with other sectors such as hydrogen."

Loren Jones, NNA Chair, said: "Having Jacobs as a partner member adds significant strength

to the power of the collective voice which we use to communicate in the UK and internationally for our members. We are delighted to

have their support and will continue to deliver against our three-year strategy for the benefit of the region and our sector."

Top 20 place for Warrington as a place for new independent businesses

WARRINGTON has been ranked the 20th best town or city in the UK for new independent businesses to set up shop.

It comes above Manchester, Preston, Derby – and even London.

There has been a massive growth in small businesses across the UK over the past five years. More than 800,000 new business registrations have been made since 2018/19 – but this impressive 3.5 per cent increase in growth unfortunately slowed down due to the pandemic and the lockdowns which began at the start of 2020.

However, as the end of 2021 was drawing in and the nation worked its way towards a "new normal", business experts at Bionic, wanted to help local businesses get a running start to their 2022.

They created an index using nine different business metrics to reveal which UK town or city has the strongest independent economy, where small businesses can thrive – and Warrington took 20th place!

The nine factors used were:

Business start-ups per 10,000 population 2019

- Five year survival rate
- Births of new businesses as a proportion of total active businesses (2019)
- Deaths on new business as a proportion of total active businesses (2019)
- % of small active businesses
- Active businesses 10,000 population (business density)
- Commuting on foot (%)
- Unemployment claimant count rate November 2020 (%)
- Rateable value per m² of floor space



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Busy start to 2022

by John Laverick - Warrington & Co

So we seem to be hitting the ground running this year – despite it being February, which is my least favourite month for a number of reasons, it seems that there is a lot going on.

We'll start with the most important and always hugely popular Apprenticeship and Jobs Fair. Previous years have attracted around 900 young people and it will again be run this year. It is scheduled for Thursday 17th March at The Engine Rooms, Birchwood. There are currently 21 employers signed up and we are hoping for it to be a face-to-face event! With the severe pressure on businesses to find and retain staff, I hope that all employers will see this as an opportunity to engage with the great young talent that Warrington has to offer. The 2022 Apprenticeships & Job Fair provides businesses with the perfect opportunity to showcase

their employment and apprenticeship opportunities to 16-18 year-olds who are looking to enter employment this year.

I am also very pleased to announce that Warrington & Co have signed another tenant to Time Square. Parlour - a New York neighbourhood-inspired restaurant and bar concept and will take 3,869 sqft in Time Square. Now, I am not quite sure which bits of New York this is themed upon, but I am excited by the variety of restaurant offers that Time Square will now provide. It is fast becoming the varied leisure destination that we always hoped it would be.

However, we still live in challenging times and on 21st December 2021,

the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak announced the introduction of Omicron Hospitality, Leisure & Accommodation Grant Winter 2021/22. This is an additional £1 billion nationally in financial support for the hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors. Business in these sectors may be able to claim up to £6,000 and applications can be made through the Warrington Borough Council website.

I've written previously about the new Bus Depot that is currently being constructed on Dallam Lane and going well, and how it would pave the way for an all-electric bus fleet if we were successful with our bid. Well the good news is that we have been successful with the bid and we are now looking at how we incorporate the charging infrastructure into the depot, whilst our colleagues within the Council and Warrington's own buses procure 120 new electric buses. Not a small task, but one which has massive impact for Warrington, its transport and its clean air.

Luke Jerram's awe-inspiring Gaia is coming to Warrington - Queens Gardens between 4th and 6th March. Gaia is, according to the dictionary the personification of the Earth and one of the Greek primordial deities. I think all the primordial deities are busy between



John Laverick

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4th and 6th so instead we will have this incredible installation, which gives you the chance to view Planet Earth as astronauts do! Details available on Warrington & Co and Culture Warrington's websites.

And just when you thought it couldn't get any better – we have announced the date of our next annual property review – which will be 22nd April. I will give details in subsequent columns as I am not sure that you can all handle that much excitement in one month and it will give you something to look forward to just in case next month isn't as exciting as this one.



New York-style restaurant signs up for Time Square

PARLOUR – a New York-style restaurant and bar – has become the first operator of the year to sign up to take space in Warrington's Time Square.

The company will bring what it claims will be a unique experience to the town centre, serving food made from locally-sourced produce and commissioning young, local artists to provide one-off pieces for the venue.

Cllr Tom Jennings, the borough council's cabinet member for economic development and

innovation, Cllr Jennings, said: "I'm delighted we've got 2022 off to such a great start by completing this deal with Parlour. It's yet another fantastic addition to the diverse Time Square offer, which continues to evolve and grow."

"It's very encouraging to see new businesses continuing to come on board at Time Square. It demonstrates the confidence businesses have in our vision to drive forward the renaissance of our town centre and build a bright economic future."

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Survey of college life achieves fantastic results

WARRINGTON & Vale Royal College has received fantastic results after asking students to share their views about all aspects of college life.

In total, 2246 full-time students responded to the survey, representing an excellent 83% of the student population.

Some of the key results from the survey were:

- 97% of students felt welcome on their first day of college.
- 97% said they have received sufficient information, advice and guidance in relation to their course.
- 97% said the college promotes a culture of respect.

- 97% agree that their teachers know their subjects well.
- 96% rate the standard of teaching as good.
- 95% feel that staff have made their subject interesting.
- 95% believe they are developing employability skills.
- 94% said their teacher continuously challenges them to do their best.

College Principal Nichola Newton said: "The college is delighted with this brilliant

feedback and pleased that students are enjoying their time at college despite the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic.

"College staff have worked

incredibly hard to help students get back to normality, and their efforts are evident in these impressive results."



ANDY CARTER MP

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Andy

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College secures £2 million investment

WARRINGTON & Vale Royal College's Winsford campus has secured £2m funding as part of the £120m Institute of Technology (IoT) competition.

In collaboration with Cheshire College South & West, Macclesfield College, Reaseheath College, University of Chester, Priestley College and employer partners, the region will benefit from over £13m investment.

The IoT partnership, involving a range of leading names from the world of business, such as Warrington and Halton NHS Trust, Encirc, Alderley Park Ltd and Case IH, will offer world-class training and education and provide the skills that employers need to keep the region at the forefront of industry developments and addressing local skills gaps.

Institutes of Technology are unique collaborations between employers, colleges and universities that specialise in offering high-quality Higher Technical Education and training in subjects such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, digital and cyber security and aerospace, which will support businesses in gaining skilled workforces.

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Meet our students:

Phillippa Makinson - Level 2 Hospitality & Catering



Phillippa Makinson chose to study at Warrington & Vale Royal College due to the excellent reputation of the college and its award-winning restaurant. Phillippa, who previously studied at Culcheth High School, feels she has gained lots of confidence throughout the course, saying: "The course has definitely boosted my confidence. I really like working with the public, and it's a great preparation for the working world. My favourite part of the course is learning how to present the dishes to a professional standard."

Sean Bruce - Level 3 Sport



Sean Bruce has always been passionate about sport, particularly football, and knew he wanted to pursue a career in this field. Former Hope Academy student Sean is thoroughly enjoying his course, saying: "The course is really fun and the teachers are great and easy to talk to." After completing his course, Sean intends to head to university to study physiotherapy. He believes everything he is currently learning about the musculoskeletal system will help him to achieve this goal.

Matt Nash - Level 2 Carpentry & Joinery Apprentice



Matt Nash decided to enrol onto an apprenticeship after deciding university was not the right pathway for him. He has always been very hands-on and is now looking to secure a highly practical career. Matt is employed by Warrington-based construction company Emerald Bay and is really enjoying his apprenticeship. He says: "Apprenticeships are a great way to learn. I'm earning a wage as well as getting a qualification. What I learn in college ties in with what I'm doing in the workplace."

Layla Thorpe - Level 2 Media Makeup



Layla Thorpe has always had a passion for make-up and loves the opportunity to create new looks each day. Layla, who previously attended St. Edmund Arrowsmith school, especially enjoys special effects and plans to progress onto university to continue her studies. Layla believes the course has really helped improve her skills, saying: "My tutors are amazing and provide lots of feedback on how to improve. We get lots of free rein to be creative and bring our ideas to life."

Apprenticeships Presentation

Warrington Campus, 6.00pm & 6.45pm

Looking to earn whilst you learn? Our friendly and knowledgeable Apprenticeships Team will be on hand to talk to you about apprenticeships.

Come along at 6.00pm & 6.45pm to find out more.



Family of Warrington soldier traced after comrade's granddaughter puts face to name

THE family of a Warrington soldier killed attempting to liberate a Dutch village, have been traced thanks to the granddaughter of a former comrade.

As Dutchman Jürgen Beekers, who helps care for war graves in a village in the Netherlands embarked on his bid to trace the family of Warrington soldier Rifleman Walter Senior, who was killed in action during the Second World War, he came into contact with Jill Fox, a member of the Facebook group Warrington Family tree & Genealogy pages.

After a face was put to the name Jürgen then came into contact with Margaret Condliffe, a daughter of Elsie Senior, a sister of Walter.

Margaret revealed there are many relatives of Walter around the U.K., and also in Australia. All the pieces of the jigsaw came together after Jürgen's search for information caught Jill's attention because she's part of the local annual poppy appeal fundraising team and also her grandfather Sgt. John R. Middleton was born the same year as Walter and lived just a few streets away.

Her grandfather also served in WWII in 7th Armoured Division (The Desert Rats) and the 146th medium Regiment Royal Artillery. Jill's parents also remember the greengrocers on 25 Mill Street (near Wellfield Street), Walter's address in 1939.

Because of the above, she started to inquire more with her parents and "something miraculous happened". It turns out that Jill's grandfather was

friends with Walter Senior.

Jill added: "It has been quite eye-opening for me, seeing many photographs of my grandfather in WWII that I didn't actually know existed. My grandfather died in 1988 and my father thought he had shown these photos to me previously however I have absolutely no recollection of them and as a keen amateur genealogist, I told him how amazed I was to know of them (as I am constantly talking to them about my latest family discovery whilst carrying out my family history research)."

She then provided the photograph Jürgen had been searching for and on the reverse was written, in her grandfather's handwriting, "Walter Senior Border Regt 1939 K/A October 1944."

Jill added: "Our understanding of the relationship between Walter and my Grandfather, Sgt John R Middleton, is that they were good pals and joined up together."

My grandfather lived maybe two/three streets away from Mill Lane (where Walter Senior lived). They were born in the same year, we suspect they will have been educated together".

Jürgen added: "So Jill's parents, unknowingly, were in possession of a photograph of Walter Senior! I now

have this photo in my possession and I am very pleased with it."

Jill also forwarded Jürgen the War-Diary of the 146th medium Regiment Royal Artillery in the period October – November 1944. This shows that Walter was killed near (± 10 miles) the gun emplacement of his friend Sgt. John R. Middleton – Namely, the 146th Medium Regiment Royal Artillery supported the attack of the 9th Battalion Cameronians (of which Walter was a part) in which Walter was killed.

Jürgen said: "So now I am in touch with Walter's family I hope to get more information about Walter himself and perhaps some extra photos."

Jürgen added: "I am really very pleased to have the photo in my

possession. I'm going to put all the obtained information into a file and forward it to the school that adopted Walter's grave. I am also very pleased that Walter's grave now has a face, which I think is very important, especially for the empathy of the children.

"The grave instantly becomes more human through the photo and is no longer just a headstone with a name on it."


The Foundation for Adoption Graves Nederweert War Cemetery is setting up a school project for primary schools in the municipality of Nederweert. This will certainly include the story of Walter. Rifleman Senior, who was born in Warrington and worked as a fruit seller, was killed in action aged 26, serving with the 15th (Scottish) Infantry Division during the liberation of Neerkant and is one of 363 war graves being cared for by local villagers.





Jürgen Beekers at the graveside of Rifleman Senior.


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Warrington Disability Partnership Annual Report 2021



Giving Disabled People
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Introduction

Chairman and Chief Executive's Report

Welcome to our latest annual report. Like most charities, we were hit hard by COVID-19, but that didn't deter us from delivering our core services that enable disabled people to live more independently. Unlike some charities who pulled down the virtual shutters and furloughed all of their staff, we adapted to the changing conditions by for example introducing home deliveries of food and small items of independent living equipment. The social contact was as important as the items being delivered. We also made best use of new technology, moving last year's Disability Awareness Day online and regular use of zoom for our team meetings and Staying Connected Community Forum.

This flexible approach allowed us to deliver a rapid solution to a totally different crisis, when in January 2021, localised flooding affected hundreds of residents across the town. Some of those worst affected live in Rostherne Close, just a few hundred metres away from our Warrington Centre for Independent Living. Swift action of our team saw us delivering hot food and drinks to residents, rescue crews and clean-up workers. We also mobilised our fleet of vans to assist in delivering donated furniture and clothing. Our work was supported by Asda and other local businesses.

COVID-19 brought us new opportunities to use our expertise and grass roots connections. The Community Champions Scheme saw us supporting public health, and leading a partnership with Warrington Voluntary Action and Warrington Speak-Up. We are working with Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust with a Long-COVID Support Service, recently we launched an Employment Scheme targeted at people affected by COVID-19.

Our work continues to be recognised, we received High Sheriff of Cheshire Awards for our general services and for Disability Awareness Day. Two of our young volunteers Ellie and Chloe Thompson also received awards from the High Sheriff and from the Cheshire Community Re-Awards. We were immensely proud to be awarded "Leader Accreditation" for the national Disability Confident Scheme.

Feedback we continue to receive from our clients, customers and partners confirms that each year our services enhance the lives of tens of thousands of disabled people; locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, giving them hope and opportunity. Since our humble beginnings at the Dallam Day Centre, back in 1991, we continue to promote a "can do" culture focussing on "what disabled

people can do", which helps to dispels the myths about what disabled people can't do. We are proud to say that information remains at the heart of our work, underpinning our values as a "user led" organisation. We are proud to have received re-accreditation of the nationally recognised MATRIX Quality Mark for Information, Advice and Guidance services.

We dedicate this year's 30th anniversary report to the dozens of members of Team WDP who we have sadly lost during our journey, especially Eric, Alan and Annette, plus Pete Ives, Colin Whitfield, Charlie Herriman, Keith Menzies, Anne Nunn, Kate Higgins and Nick 'Hoppy' Hopkinson MBE DL, who have died since our last annual report. Our thoughts also extend to other team members who have sustained life-changing illnesses during this time, Brunhilde Munslow and Terry Cook.

We would like to thank everyone who shares and supports the WDP dream, and special thanks to our volunteers, our trustees, our staff, our supporters, our clients/customers and our partners. We are proud to say that during the past 30 years, we have created what has become, one of Warrington's most loved charities that is recognised worldwide for delivering life changing services.

John Gartside OBE DL JP
Chair of Trustees

Dave Thompson MBE DL MBA
Chief Executive



Warrington Disability Partnership
'Supporting Independence throughout Life and Work'

Centre for Independent Living
Beaufort Street, Warrington WA5 1BA
01925 240064

www.disabilitypartnership.org.uk
www.disabilitytradingcompany.co.uk
www.disabilityawarenessday.org.uk
info@disabilitypartnership.org.uk



2020-21 Highlights

The year in pictures



Our Phoenix Project joined forces with Care UK to donate and transport over £100,000 worth of Mobility & Independent Living equipment to Syrian refugees in Turkey.



WDP Young Volunteers, Ellie and Chloe Thompson were winners at the 2021 Cheshire Community ReAwards. They were also awarded a High Sheriff Award for their Community work.



When members of the local community were affected by the devastating floods in January 2021, Team WDP with the support of Asda Cockhedge provided free hot food and drinks, as well as much needed cleaning supplies.



Our 29th Disability Awareness Day was held virtually on 25th October 2020. Headliners included Britain's Got Talent winner 'Lost Voice Guy' and the fantastic 'Ella Performance Group' as well as a virtual 'fly over' by the Red Arrows.



In partnership with WBC and Warrington Public Health, our Community Champions have provided a wide range of information and advice to the local community in relation to Covid-19.



WDP Patron Pete Pinnington raised over £1,400 for WDP with his online Bingo Bedlam events.

Who we are and what we do

Warrington Disability Partnership (WDP) is an internationally acclaimed user-led charity. With over 30 years of experience in developing and delivering mobility and independent living services. We aim to support disabled people and those living with long-term health conditions. We are proud of our wide-ranging services, which include:

Promoting Independent Living

Visit our **Centre for Independent Living (CIL)** - located on Beaufort Street; the **Disabled Living Centre** at the Lifehouse on Brunswick Dock, Liverpool; and two **Mobility and Independent Living Stores** located at Sankey Street and Birchwood Shopping Centre. Our showrooms offer the latest equipment from baths, showers and kitchens, to beds, wheelchairs and stairlifts, plus a short-term hires service of wheelchairs and scooters. Our **"Smart Flat"** based at the CIL, demonstrating the latest assistive technology solutions, and the **Mobility and Independent Living Service** located in Warrington Hospital. Additionally, our **Scoota Safe** Campaign promotes road safety to mobility scooter users and prevent accidents and injury whilst using equipment.

Our two **Shoptobility Schemes** in Legh Street Car Park and Birchwood Shopping Centre offer scooters and wheelchairs for use within the local shopping centres Monday to Saturday (9 am to 5 pm). They are available for hire to both members and day visitors. A six-month membership costs just £10.

Our **Disability Helpline** (01925 240064) offers advice and support about local support groups and services, accessibility, transport, and more. The **OWCH Pain Management support group** helps and supports local disabled people in relation to the self-management of Chronic Pain.

Our **Independent Living Team** provides a support service for Warrington residents who use the Direct Payments scheme from Warrington Borough Council, assisting with all aspects of employing a Personal Assistant (including assistance and advice in relation to recruitment, DBS checks, pension schemes and contracts, with support from our in-house payroll team).

Our Care and Support advisor promotes the use of **Personal Health Budgets** throughout the Warrington area, allowing greater choice and control over how and when care is delivered. The advisor works with the client to produce a support plan, liaising with the Clinical Commissioning Group with regards to individual budgets.

The Disability Trading Company Limited

WDP's trading arm – Disability Trading Company (DTC), offers high-quality, independent living products at competitive prices. Running as a Social Enterprise, all profits are donated to WDP to support many of our unfunded services. For details of the services offered through the trading arm, please see page 6.

Employment & Training

Our award-winning **Employment Team** is proud to specialise in supporting local disabled people with a health condition (including mental health); ESA claimants and those in receipt of incapacity-related benefits. The team support individuals through all stages of the employment process; job searching, CVs, application forms, preparing for interviews and when gaining employment. We also support people who are in work, and employers by giving information about reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Learning and Development

Visit the **Marjorie Griffiths Learning Centre (MGLC)** on Beaufort Street and take advantage of a whole host of courses designed to educate and inspire. The range of courses include 'Computers for the Terrified', OCR qualifications, pre-employment IT, creative writing and flower arranging.

WDP delivers a variety of training, including **Equality & Diversity and Disability Confident** for health and social care providers, voluntary organisations and individuals, in addition, half-day training sessions to help build knowledge on these issues and consequently gain valuable insight. We work closely with a number of local charities and voluntary organisations to provide a place for groups to meet and offer support to their members. Our well-equipped meeting and training rooms are also available to hire at a reasonable cost, with a catered option, from our on-site Galleries Community Café.

Accessible Holidays & Days Out

Our fully accessible holiday home in North Wales and our adapted, accessible narrowboat **The Wizard** are available for hire at competitive rates. With a range of options, they give the opportunity for a bargain break or a day out on the water!

Opportunities to Socialise

We run a variety of **Luncheon Clubs** for individuals looking for friendship, activities, fun and lunch. Our **over 55's clubs** run every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 am to 2 pm. As well as enjoying a two-course lunch and drinks together, attendees also enjoy: playing bingo, games, quizzes, chair-based exercises, and guest speakers. Our **Monday Club** caters for under 55's with a wide variety of activities, including social, arts and crafts, bingo and photography. There is a charge of £7.50 for the sessions and individuals are required to attend using their own transport.

Our **Galleries Community Café** offers a wide range of hot and cold meals, snacks and drinks in a warm and friendly atmosphere. The Café is open to members of the public, visitors to the Centre and Support Groups.

Listening and Advocacy

Get your voice heard locally by attending our monthly virtual **'Staying Connected'** meetings, which provides a forum to exchange ideas and information about local services. Sessions are open to all who have been affected by long-term health conditions or disabilities (physical, mental health, sensory or learning difficulty), carers, representatives of support groups/organisations and statutory services.

Our **Your Voice** young disabled person's forum aims to provide young people a safe space to communicate their views and the opportunity to grow, learn and socialise with other like-minded individuals.

We organise the **Warrington's Appreciation of Efforts Awards**, providing an opportunity for people to nominate local employers, businesses, service providers or individuals who deserve recognition for promoting independence, delivering accessible or inclusive services or maintaining exemplary employment practices for disabled people and/or carers.

For further information on any of these services, including how you can be involved as a WDP Volunteer, please contact the team on 01925 240064

2020-21 Highlights

The year in pictures



During Disability Awareness Week 2021, an event was held in Walton Gardens to celebrate 30 years of supporting local disabled people.



With support from Asda Birchwood, our team distributed over 200 Afternoon Teas to local people.



DAD's Army received the High Sheriff of Cheshire Award for services to the community at this year's Disability Awareness Day.



Warrington Disability Partnership's

£8 PER ENTRY

VIRTUAL WALK IN THE PARK

Warrington Disability Partnership

THROUGHOUT JULY & AUGUST 2020

Could you take on the 5km challenge as the famous 'Walk in the Park' goes virtual!

Our first virtual event 'Virtual Walk in the Park', enabled our supporters to continue to raise funds for WDP.

Development of Warrington Disability Partnership's Social Enterprise – The Disability Trading Company

In April 2011, Warrington Disability Partnership launched a social enterprise 'the Disability Trading Company'. Their first retail service was launched from the Warrington Centre for Independent Living, and in October 2011 they opened the Mobility & Independent Living Store (MILS) in the Golden Square Shopping Mall.

In early 2013 DTC opened a large Mobility Workshop & Service Centre which provides servicing and repairs for individual customers, and businesses including Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, nursing homes and local Shopmobility Schemes. In late 2013 DTC launched a service aimed at recycling mobility equipment, scooters, wheelchairs and power-chairs which are sold from WDP's Shopmobility service located in Warrington Town Centre.

In October 2016 WDP and DTC, in partnership with St Mark Universal Care, launched 'the Phoenix Project', refurbishing and shipping wheelchairs and other mobility aids to countries including Egypt, Thailand and Syria. So far over £1million worth of equipment has been salvaged and donated.

In 2017 DTC joined the British Health Trades Association, underlining their belief in the BHTA "Buy with Confidence" scheme that is accredited to Trading Standards. Receiving "approved dealer" accreditation to the national Motability Scheme was also achieved, which allows disabled people to use the enhance mobility component of DLA or PIP to lease a powerchair or mobility scooter.

In 2018 DTC added two new services with a retail store at the rear of Warrington Hospital and the Smart Flat, assistive technology showrooms located at the Warrington Centre for

Independent Living.

In 2019 in partnership with the Golden Square Shopping Centre, DTC moved their Mobility & Independent Living Store (MILS) from inside the Centre to a larger brighter store in Sankey Street.

In 2020 in partnership with Birchwood Shopping Centre, DTC open a Mobility and Independent Living Store (MILS) in the Centre, it also includes Birchwood Shopmobility Service.

What makes DTC unique?

- DTC has no private shareholders, 100% of its profits go to support WDP's charitable services which include subsidised Lunch Clubs for disabled people, accessible narrow-boat offering daytrips on the Bridgewater Canal and an accessible caravan in North Wales,
- DTC staff do not receive any incentive bonuses, which results in us providing advice verses high pressure selling,
- Free impartial home and work assessments based on the philosophy of information, advice and guidance, not just sales,
- DTC is a user led social enterprise; many staff and all volunteers have used their experience of living with a disability or long-term health condition to develop the services and ensure they sell the right products
- Nearly £2,5million has been saved by disabled people who have purchased mobility and independent living products from WDP's Mobility and Independent Living Stores (MILS) rather than from commercially driven businesses

Services, Locations and Contact Details

Mobility Independent Living Showroom
Centre for Independent Living
Beaufort Street
Warrington
WA5 1BA

Tel: 01925 240064

Mobility Independent Living Services
Lifeline
Summers Road
Liverpool
L3 4BL

Tel: 0151 709 0121

Mobility Independent Living Services
Golden Square Shopping Centre
Sankey Street
Warrington
WA1 1QB

Tel: 01925 416624

Mobility Independent Living Services
Warrington Hospital
Lovely Lane
Warrington
WA5 1QG

Tel: 01925 240064

Mobility Independent Living Services
Birchwood Shopping Centre
Dewhurst Road
Birchwood
WA3 7PG

Tel: 01925 251079

Workshop and Service Centre
Centre for Independent Living
Beaufort Street
Warrington
WA5 1BA

Tel: 01925 240064

Payroll Services
Centre for Independent Living
Beaufort Street
Warrington
WA5 1BA

Tel: 01925 240064

Refurbished Mobility and Independent Living Equipment
Warrington Shopmobility
Legh Street Car Park
Legh Street
Warrington
WA1 1QU

Warrington Disability Partnership
Centre for Independent Living
Beaufort Street
WA5 1BA

Tel: 01925 240064

Galleries Cafe
Centre for Independent Living
Beaufort Street
Warrington
WA5 1BA

Tel: 01925 240064



Owned and Operated by:



Our 30 Year Impact

WDP Purpose

'To enhance the lives of disabled people and their families by enabling independent living'

The business directory describes social impact as being the effect of an activity on the social fabric of the community and well-being of the individuals and families. Whilst many people are aware of the wide range and scope of the services that Warrington Disability Partnership provide, the direct effect that they have on a persons' life, is not necessarily always apparent. This supplementary report has been produced by us to show the impact that our services have on local disabled people, their families, friends and carers over the past 30 years.



Our 240064 telephone number has handled

OVER 1 MILLION

incoming calls many from people desperately seeking assistance with life changing matters



A massive THANK YOU to Warrington Disability Partnership and all your team for the support you have provided us the last two weeks. Since the morning we had the flood you guys have been the smiling faces we love to see each day, from cleaning products to lovely tasty food you've kept us going. The community spirit really has been amazing to see and be a part of. We can't thank you enough!

Flood Victim - January 2021



**OVER
85%**

of WDP's trustees, staff and volunteers are disabled people, a true user-led organisation.

Our Shopmobility scooters and wheelchairs have been used over

260,000

times, enabling our members to spend over £13million in the town centre

Our Impact

98%

of customers said they would recommend WDP to family and friends.

I am very impressed with the total package of WDP's Direct Payment Service, Keep up the excellent work and thanks for everything

Direct Payments recipient



Our Independent Living, Personal Health Budget and Payroll teams have supported over

7,000

clients and over

4,000

of their employees, providing choice, control, independence and employment opportunities

16,800

people have enjoyed a day out on our Wizard accessible narrow boat



Our team have engaged with over

2,160,000+

people through our community engagement programmes, providing valuable information, advice and guidance.

Our Employment Team have supported over

10,000

clients, with over 2,500 into full/part-time sustainable employment



5,000

people have attended training courses in our IT Learning Centre

The bespoke training support from Nick gave me the confidence to apply for different kinds of jobs and recognise the skills I already have.

IT Suite Learner



165,000+

meals served in our Galleries Community Café, mostly for vulnerable people

36,000

People supported by our Wheelchair Loans Service, helping many to leave hospital earlier



£2.5 MILLION

saved by disabled people who have purchased mobility and independent living products from WDP's Mobility and Independent Living Stores (MILS) rather than from commercially driven business

Our Impact

30 Years of Disability Awareness Day



Inspired and supported events in

13
COUNTRIES
worldwide

30 YEARS

600,000 VISITORS

Reasons for attending DAD 2021

- Gain Information and Advice
- Access Support Groups
- Enjoyable Day Out
- Find Support to Improve Quality of Life
- Gain Information on Developments and Products

DAD was well and truly a fabulously run event which I would expect no less from the incredible team at WDP. Really well thought, I think the exhibitors, the structure and the events you held on the day really captured the goal of promoting independence

DAD Exhibitor 2021

An absolutely brilliant event - year after year I'm blown away by how inspirational it is for so many.

DAD Visitor 2021



£1 MILLION+ RAISED

for other charities involved in DAD events

Our Team

Apprenticeship Programme

Ellen Houghton:

Ellen started Volunteering for Warrington Disability Partnership (WDP) when she was 12 years old through a family member. She would support in the office leading up to annual events and with fundraising event such as Disability Awareness Day.

When Ellen was just 15 years old she was diagnosed with Osteosarcoma bone cancer. During this time period Ellen said, 'WDP supported me when I got sick, treating me like family and even fundraising on my behalf.' Ellen rang the bell being cancer free just before her 17th birthday in 2018 after 18 months of intense treatments. Following this, Ellen went back to college to continue her education and has since completed a Health and Social Care course, alongside returning to volunteer at Warrington Disability Partnership.

In 2019, Ellen helped launch WDP's first Young Disabled Person's Forum known as Your Voice and became the chairperson of this group and has since been co-opted as a Young trustee in January 2021 for WDP's board of trustees. Ellen was employed by Warrington Disability Partnership in May 2021 as a Covid Community Champion Apprentice in which she has begun her Business Admin Apprenticeship alongside her Community Champion role. When discussing her time at WDP Ellen said 'staying at Warrington Disability Partnership and joining as an apprentice felt like a natural progression, where I feel supported, fit in and can use my experiences to help others.'

Lyndsey Woods:

In 2009 Lyndsey had been looking for employment and support coming across Warrington Disability Partnership in her search and decided to get into touch due to her disability. Through the support of WDP's employment advisors, Lyndsey initially volunteered at WDP's Shopmobility Service for 4 years in the Town Centre alongside her college course. Following this, she began to expand her skills and volunteering within the charity by supporting with administrative work within the main office. However, in 2015 Lyndsey decided she wanted to try a different challenge within the organisation and agreed with the support of the team that the best route for her would be to begin volunteering within the workshop. For 6 years Lyndsey had volunteered within the workshop being a wonderful addition to the team, when in May 2021 the opportunity to do a customer service apprenticeship was offered to her in the workshop alongside supporting the Covid Community Champion project. Lyndsey has explained, being employed through this apprenticeship has enabled me to not only advance my customer service skills but spend some time as a support worker within the workshop for other team members. I have enjoyed my years at Warrington Disability Partnership because of the stability and growth it has given to me.'



During the pandemic WDP has effectively adapted their approach to remote delivery providing extra advocacy while ensuring that the principle of empowerment and independence is still there for each individual

Matrix Report 2021



Star Fundraiser – Jackie Emson



Despite not being on a bike for over 6 years, Jackie cycled from from St Asaph to Colwyn Bay and back raising over £300.



Star Fundraisers – Bill Bradley and Ian Northey



To date, Bill and Ian have completed 4335 miles out of an epic 5000 mile cycle challenge, which they are hoping to complete by the end of January. Good luck to both of you!



Star Fundraisers – Sue McMillan and Colin Hale



During WDP's Anniversary year, Sue and Colin are completing a shared "triathlon" of cycling together, Sue's swimming and Col's running, aiming to reach a total of 1000 miles. With 850 miles already completed, we're sure that they will reach their target soon.



Christmas 2021 at WDP

Christmas activities at WDP are always one of the highlights of our fundraising and community engagement calendar. After the cancelation of last year's activities due to COVID-19 restrictions, we were delighted when the management team at Walton Gardens invited us back to run a Santa's Grotto and Santa Dash. As the new Luminate Light Show had already booked use of the Heritage Yard, we were offered use of the Indoor Riding School, a huge area to fill, and fill it, we did.

Utilising two of our marquees, we built a Winter Wonderland Trail with North Pole backdrops, blackout roofing, picket fencing, forests of Christmas Trees, large inflatable and thousands of lights. Santa's Grotto was housed in a huge

OVER 29,000

children have visited our Santa's Grotto's in Warrington Market and Walton Gardens



log cabin and outside we offered our Teddy Tombola, Yule Log decorating, Santa's Colouring competition, Christmas Raffle and outside offered a Reindeer Trail.

Visitors were greeted by not just Santa, but also Mrs Clause, who together, handed out some amazing presents, and to capture the magic moments were our friends from F11 Photography.

With amazingly positive feedback received on Facebook from the first weekend, the online bookings soon rocketed, proving more popular than ever. What was really nice, was seeing so many disabled children, parents and grandparents. Our Autism hours proved very popular, and the feedback we received from parents was humbling.

There are several magical moments we will take away from this year's Grotto, including the comment from 40ish year old father of two who had recently been given weeks to live. He thanked us for providing wheelchair access, as ours was the only Grotto he could find that was accessible and he loved seeing his young children in awe of Santa.

On Sunday 12th December we also held our Santa Dash, supported by Birchwood Shopping Centre and Warrington Worldwide, over 60 runners and walkers filled the route around Walton Gardens in a sea of red. Friend of WDP, and WIRED Amputee member, Jill Keast Doran, provided inspiration to everyone as she completed a circuit on her hands and bottom. Jill said afterwards, losing both her legs hasn't stopped her from wanting to participate in events. She finished to an applause from nearly 100 people.

During 11 incredible days over 2,500 children visited Santa, and including their parents, grandparents and families, we entertained over 10,000 visitors. It took an amazing team effort, foresight and commitment from our team. Huge thank you to everyone involved.

"Took the kids to see Santa Claus, Mrs Claus and the elves. They really enjoyed it and the staff were very friendly, understanding and patient with my sons who have autism. The boys also loved the presents, and won a toy at the tombola. This was the second year we've been and it was even better than last time. Will be bringing my boys back here again next year!"

Grotto visitor – 2021

"Visited the north pole this morning and what a magical experience for the children. So well organised and every volunteer there couldn't be more polite and welcoming. Although out of their hands the snow did make it extra special. Would definitely return again! Thank you so much for a wonderful morning even managed to get a scrooge like me into the Christmas spirit!"

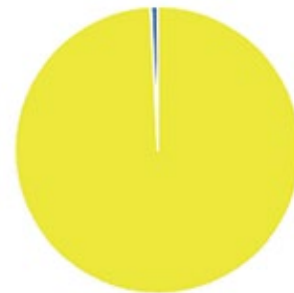
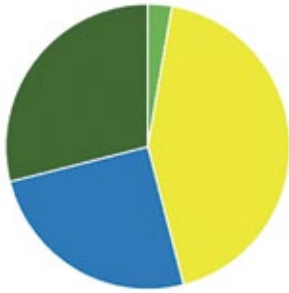
Grotto visitor – 2021



WDP Financial Position 2020-21

Income £995,306

Expenditure £977,433



- Voluntary Income (£27k)
- Charitable Activities (£430k)
- Trading to raise funds (£250k)
- Other (£288k)

- Charitable activities (£969k)
- Income Generation and Governance (£8k)

The above information has been taken from the audited Warrington Disability Partnership (WDP) Accounts for the financial period 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021, as reported to the Charities Commission. These accounts, as well as accounts in relation to the Disability Trading Company Limited (WDP's Subsidiary Company) have been reported to Companies House.

WDP Board of Trustees & DTC Directors



JOHN GARTSIDE OBE JP DL
Chair



PAT KITTO
Vice-Chair &
DTC Board Member



DAVE WILLIAMS
Secretary &
DTC Board Member



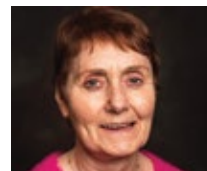
PAUL CLANCY
Treasurer



MIKE DAWBARN
Retired - Jan 2021



LATHAM PARRY
Retired - Jan 2021



EILEEN MACDONALD



JAN PRITCHARD



GARY SKENTELBERY



ANITA CAWLEY



SUE McMILLAN



DAVE KELSALL



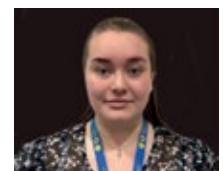
CLAIRE TOBIJANSKI



ADAM HAINES



TONY BROWN



ELLEN HOUGHTON
WDP Young Trustee



DAVID JONES
DTC Chair



ANDREW STEVENSON
DTC Non-executive director



BILL BRADLEY
DTC Non-executive director



JAMIE BOYD
DTC Non-executive director

Disability Awareness Day 2021 (DAD30)

After months of speculation over if our 30th annual event would be held live in 2021, we finally got the green light to go ahead, but with only 12 weeks to plan and deliver the event, our team worked tirelessly to hold DAD30 on Sunday 12th September.

Led by our principal sponsors Expanse Learning Group and United Utilities, we were overwhelmed by the positive response from our corporate sponsors; BAS (NW), NRS Healthcare, Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, Warrington Borough Council, Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Torus, the Steve Morgan Foundation, Cheshire Community Foundation, Culture Warrington, Livewire and supporters Warrington's Own Buses, Active Cheshire and Chester University.

Six events were held during the week before DAD30, with something for everyone, employers, mental health, disabled children, young disabled people, carers and our 30th anniversary celebration evening.

With nearly 200 exhibitors displaying mobility and independent living equipment, transport, holidays, leisure, employment, support groups and services, a Sports Zone

including Scuba diving, an Arts Marquee with live acts, a further Arts Marquee dedicated to arts and crafts, Centre Arena with bands, dogs and bird displays, a marquee hosting a Silent Disco and family entertainment.

Entertaining the crowds in the Arts Marquee were acts including nationally acclaimed Ella Together and Warrington BSL Signing Choir, Creating Adventures, Dream Team Drama, Warrington West Concert Band, Bridgewater Singers, Wired for Sound and Corey Scene and AM3.

With around 19,000 visitors, this was higher than expected given the disproportionate effect COVID-19 has had on the disabled community. The positive feedback received has been very encouraging, with many visitors said that DAD was the first large event they had attended in over 18 months.

Special guests included the High Sheriff of Cheshire, Robert Mee DL, Mayor of Warrington, Councillor Maureen Creaghan and Andy Carter MP and Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner John Dwyer. Best exhibitor awards, Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioners Office won Best Statutory Service, Limb-Art won Best Business and Stanley Grange won Best Voluntary Sector.

Huge thank you to members of the DAD Management Team, DAD Site Team, DAD Admin Team, DAD's Army of volunteers and everyone involved in getting the job done in a very professional manner.

The icing on the 30th anniversary cake was hearing that our colleagues in Cameroon from the Closing the Gap charity, delivered their DAD festivities to coincide with ours.

DAD 2022 will be held on Sunday 17th July. Visit disabilityawarenessday.org.uk for more details.



Working in Partnership

A Big Thank You

Warrington Disability Partnership would like to thank everyone that has supported, donated and worked alongside us during the past 12 months - including:

- Warrington Borough Council
- Torus
- Expanse Learning
- NHS Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group
- United Utilities
- MerseyCare NHS Trust
- Livewire Warrington
- Skills For Care
- Culture Warrington
- BAS (NW) Ltd
- NRS Healthcare
- WBC Community Champions
- Disability Positive
- Warrington & Vale Royal College
- Active Cheshire
- Warrington & Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Trust
- Liverpool City Council

- Liverpool Community Healthcare Trust
- Catalyst Choices
- Warrington's Own Buses
- National Lottery
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- The Steve Morgan Foundation
- Cheshire Community Foundation
- Voisey & Co
- Chapel Ford Farm
- Golden Square Shopping Centre
- Pete Pinnington Presents
- F11 Photography
- Walton Hall and Gardens
- Asda - Warrington Cockhedge
- Asda - Birchwood
- Birchwood Shopping Centre
- Warrington Worldwide
- Today Team
- Warrington & Co
- The Hoppy Trust
- Dunky's Day Nursery
- Mechtech Installations
- Foden Estates Ltd
- Toni & Guy Stockton Heath
- Central Self Drive
- Protive Security
- Cheshire Scuba Academy
- Thorn Marine
- Warrington Guardian
- Tesco Community Fund
- Warrington Youth Club
- Warrington Wolves Foundation
- Skillzone Ltd
- Leonard Cheshire
- Fairview Windows
- Mayor of Warrington
- The Duckpond
- Miss S Shaw
- WBC - Highways Assets Team
- Bright Futures Care
- Radio Warrington
- Radio General - Hospital Radio
- HCC Printers
- Cheshire Times
- Magical Memories
- MD Media
- Job Centre Plus
- Ash Integrated Services
- BT Skips
- Thorn Cross
- Relay Technical Transport
- Bruntwood
- NSL Parking
- Ella Performance Group
- Ellie Thompson
- Chaigeley Education Foundation
- University of Chester
- Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust
- WIRED Carers
- Steve Hull
- Ken Mardle
- Lees Johnson
- Flex
- JK Ross
- Direct Line
- Warrington & Halton Hospitals Charity

- Sue Emery & Fearnhead Community Group
- The Holroyd Foundation
- Steff Manfredi
- M62 Connections
- Cottons District Convalescent Fund

Birthday Fundraisers:

- Eilidh MacDonald
- Tony Longmore
- Karl Davies
- Dave Thompson

Around the World Challenge Participants:

- Bill Bradley & Ian Northey
- Gary Skentelbery
- Sarah Matthews
- Aaron & Partners
- Veronica Hudson
- Tommy Hammond
- Pam Rouse
- Jan Pritchard
- Team Thompson
- John Gartside
- Tom Coleridge
- Derek Jones
- Elliot Worthington
- Dave Thompson
- Rachel Taylor
- Pat Kitto
- Garry Coleridge
- Julie Longmore
- Sue McMillan
- Colin Hale

Donations in memory of:

- Peter Ives
- Nichola Mathias
- George Rouse
- Michael Smith
- Anne Nunn

★ Star Fundraiser – Gary Skentelbery ★

During 2021, Gary took on his year-long challenge to run the equivalent of 30 half marathons (660km). Completed on the 30th December, Gary has raised a fantastic £4,000 for WDP. Well done Gary!

Gary said: 'I thought I had bitten off more than I could chew but the overwhelming support and donations drove me on, although the final month which involved running 95k often alone on dark, cold wet nights, nearly finished me off! Thrilled by the amount raised!'



★ Star Fundraiser – Pam Rouse ★

During the last 12 months, Pam has walked a total of 500 miles (including 30 x 10km walks), with a combination of local walks as well as walks further afield in Somerset and Staffordshire.



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Library opening times return to pre-lockdown hours

OPENING times at LiveWire's libraries across the borough have now returned to pre-lockdown hours.

The move, which came into effect this month, is a culmination of the dedicated work of the Library team since the start of the pandemic to ensure library members continued to have access to library services despite the challenges created by Covid-19 restrictions and concerns.

Since March 2020, from in person borrowing, Order and Collect and the Home Library services, LiveWire staff have gone the extra mile to ensure Covid-19 restrictions and concerns didn't stop readers being able to access books.

Since reopening following the lockdown periods, library hours have been reduced but from this month have reverted to pre-pandemic opening times.

As well as this, the town's 13 libraries have a range of events running at them, from crafts to coding clubs, rhyme times to story sessions, meaning there's so many reasons to return back to the libraries.

Emma Hutchinson, LiveWire Managing Director, said: "From our online e-book and e-audio platforms to our Order and Collect and Home Library services, our brilliant Library team was dedicated to helping keep people reading during 2021 despite the challenges of the ongoing pandemic – and

we look forward to continuing our work in the year ahead. As such, it is fantastic that 2022 has started with a return to our pre-lockdown opening hours, which is a real cause for celebration. We can't wait to welcome even more customers back through our doors in the weeks and months ahead."

Councillor Tony Higgins, WBC's cabinet member for Neighbourhood and Communities, said: "We know what an important role our 13 libraries play in our communities, and our staff have worked tirelessly over the past two years to keep local people connected to library services. This has meant responding to the challenges of the Covid-19 restrictions with creativity and innovation.

"I'm delighted that we are now able to restore our library opening hours to pre-lockdown levels, with a range of activities planned for the coming months. It will put our libraries in an even stronger position to meet the needs of local people, and welcome many more customers, new and old."

For more information on LiveWire libraries, visit www.livewirewarrington.co.uk/libraries. There is also a dedicated LiveWire libraries Facebook page @ YourLivewireLibraries

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Planet Earth to land in Warrington

AN awe-inspiring sculpture of Planet Earth, which aims to make us think about our world in a new way, is coming to Warrington's Cultural Quarter.

Luke Jerram's floating three-dimensional artwork, Gaia, will be in Queens Gardens between 4 and 6 March. An imposing 7m in diameter, Gaia accurately depicts the Earth's surface as it would be viewed from space using detailed NASA imagery.

Culture Warrington is again collaborating with world renowned artist Luke Jerram after he brought his hugely popular 'Museum of the Moon' – which has been seen by more than three million people in 25 countries – to Parr Hall in October 2019.

But unlike the Moon, which we have been gazing at for millennia, the first time humankind got to see Earth as a blue marble floating in space was in 1968 with NASA's Apollo 8 mission.

For this project, Luke was commissioned by the Natural Environment Research Council, the UK Association for Science and Discovery Centres and Jodrell Bank's Bluedot festival to communicate a sense of the fragility of our planet – and how urgently we need to protect it.

The thought-provoking installation will be made even more atmospheric thanks to a surround sound composition created by BAFTA award-winning composer Dan Jones.

The sculpture got its name from Greek mythology in which Gaia

is the personification of the Earth. Visitors will know what it is like for astronauts when they gaze at the planet with a new and profound understanding of the interconnection of all life.

It is hoped it will give people a renewed sense of purpose in taking care of the environment, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic which has reminded us that we all have a responsibility toward one another.

As such, Gaia will also kick-start an environmentally themed month-long programme of events in Warrington with full details to be announced in the coming weeks.

Leah Biddle, Cultural Manager at Culture Warrington, said: "I'm sure everyone will remember back in 2019 when Culture Warrington presented Luke Jerram's other work, Museum of the Moon, at Parr Hall and the positive impact it had upon the town.

"So I am delighted to be able to present Gaia within Warrington town centre this March. Like last time, we aim to create a vibrant and inclusive programme surrounding the work that is unique to Warrington and accessible to all."

Cabinet member for public health and wellbeing, Cllr Maureen McLaughlin, said: "When Museum of the Moon made its debut at Parr Hall in 2019 we had some brilliant

feedback and the installation itself was breath-taking.

"I'm delighted that the council is able to support this thought-provoking, three-dimensional artwork of Earth, our unique and magnificent home. I expect will be just as popular – if not more so – than the Moon installation we hosted in 2019."

Amy Dawber, Warrington

BID Manager, added: "We are delighted to be involved with Gaia coming to Warrington this spring. It ties in perfect with the environmental theme and events, which will be happening across Warrington town centre over the upcoming months."

Gaia will be in Queens Gardens between 4 and 6 March and will be free to view.



Earth viewed at Liverpool Cathedral. Picture: Gareth Jones



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College in partnership aiming to create world-class education

WARRINGTON'S Priestley College is playing its part in a partnership that aims to create world-class education and a workforce with the skills needed by employers.

Priestley is part of the collaboration that is Cheshire and Warrington Institute of Technology (IoT), which has just been awarded £120million by the Government.

Its vision is to ensure young people entering the workforce have the skills needed by employers to keep the region at the forefront of industry.

Priestley College Principal James Gresty said: "We fully support this investment and the Institute of Technology's plans to develop the region's dynamic workforce through the outstanding teaching and range of courses we offer."

Cheshire College is the lead organisation for Cheshire and Warrington's Institute of Technology.

Other collaborators include Macclesfield, Reaseheath and Warrington and Vale Royal colleges as well as the University of Chester.

The partnership, involving a range of leading names from the world of business such as Encirc, Warrington and Halton NHS Trust, Alderley Park Ltd and Case IH,

will offer world-class training and education.

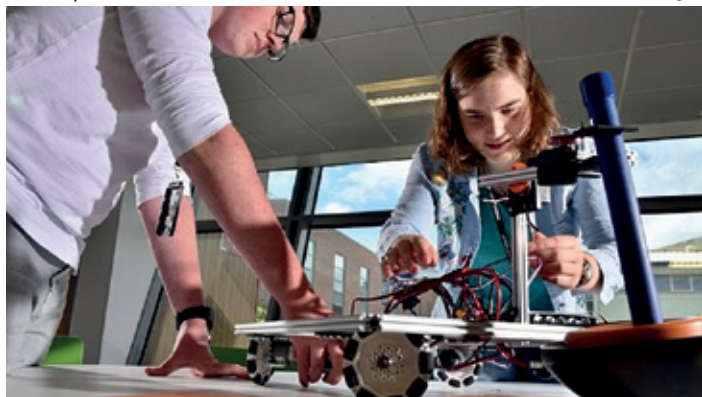
It will provide people with the most in-demand skills and address any gaps in the local workforce.

Institutes of Technology are unique collaborations between employers, colleges and universities that specialise in offering high-quality Higher Technical Education and training in subjects such as advanced manufacturing, digital and cyber security, aerospace and healthcare.

Across the region all industries have existing employees that will require ongoing re-skilling and up-skilling because of the rising impact of automation and digitisation.

The Institute will deliver world-class higher technical skills in: Computing, Engineering, Health and Life Sciences, Agri-Tech, Construction and The Built Environment, Science and Maths.

Those studying at the institute will benefit from state-of-the-art equipment and facilities, providing an ideal environment for learning.



Charlotte Nichols MP Warrington North

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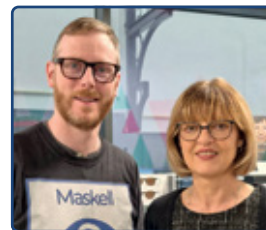
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Maskell + Josephson the eco-friendly optometrists

By Anthony Josephson



Maskell + Josephson The Optometrists are continuing their mission to be more eco-friendly. The previously promised iGreen frames are now in-store. These frames use eco-conscious acetates. Manufactured from cotton, with a revolutionary process so that every frame is made using 50% less water and 50% less electricity. Not only that, but they are lightweight (just 5 grams per frame), and fully customizable.

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So if you're one of those people who thinks that glasses don't suit them – think again! Maskell + Josephson say they'll accept that challenge any day!

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A hive of activity

at RAF Burtonwood Heritage Centre



By Heritage Centre manager John Cotterill

Throughout December and into January, the RAF Burtonwood Heritage Centre has been, and still is, a hive of activity, with the team hard at work constructing a new display building.

Twice the size of any that have been added in the expansion of the Heritage Centre in recent years. This building will house a variety of previously unseen items, as part of a new engineering exhibition.

We've also dedicated some time during these months, to rearranging some of the existing displays in the main Heritage Centre building, allowing us to create more space for the addition of numerous items, that have been generously donated over the last two years. With the

promise of more donations, it's safe to say that the work is by no means over - we may even have to expand into yet another building!

We are constantly amazed by people's continued generosity in donating artefacts and are proud to be able to provide them with a home, whereby visitors are able to view items and displays that make up and sustain an aspect of Warrington's cultural history. For as long as the generosity of the general public continues, we will endeavour to provide a place for people to experience this!

Maintenance work and updates to the Heritage Centre will continue at pace, as we work towards reopening on 19th February, when we look forward to opening our doors to many new and returning visitors, in 2022.



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By David Watkinson

Statutory Sick Pay - Respective rights of employers and employees

Many employers are experiencing difficulties with staffing levels due to self-isolation absences. This can frequently be seen daily in reduced bus and train services, or in problems with postal services. And whilst these are examples of large national employers it can affect businesses of all sizes.

Because of this, many are looking for ways to mitigate the impact this is having on their business and its performance, and one much publicised way of doing this is to reduce sick pay for the unvaccinated to Statutory Sick Pay levels. We do not wish to enter into a discussion of the wisdom or otherwise of getting vaccinated. However, employers are under no obligation to maintain full pay for periods of self-isolation (unless contracts provide this), but only have to meet SSP requirements for eligible employees. Indeed, some may see this as a way of encouraging behaviour which they think may reduce the number of employees who need to self-isolate.

So what are the respective rights of employers and employees in this?

Firstly, employers must ensure that any rule introduced does not treat employees unfavourably, particularly those with underlying health issues. Employees who are medically exempt from getting

the Covid jab, or those with reasonable other grounds for not getting vaccinated, may raise claims of discrimination if they are put at a detriment as a result of following Government isolation guidance. A detriment in this situation includes loss of pay. Businesses which wish to adopt this approach, must first consider the wider impact this may have on staff and put in place adjustments where needed, to avoid any potential risk of claims. It is unclear what are reasonable other grounds. Some people may consider pregnancy to be a reasonable ground, other people may disagree.

Secondly, where full pay has been given for periods of isolation over the past 18 months to two years then this may become an implied contractual term even though it's not expressly written into employment contracts. Therefore, employers will need to undertake the same consultation processes that they are obliged to do for any other changes to terms and conditions. This includes the requirement to complete collective consultation if the changes impact 20 or more employees. Failure to do this could lead to employees being able to make claims of unfair dismissal, constructive dismissal, breach of contract and protective awards.

There may be other

consequences of the reduction of sick pay for unvaccinated staff. For instance, there are the risks of creating a two-tier workforce, which could have detrimental impacts on the employer/employee relationship, potentially leading to unrest and workplace disputes, or to reputational damage to the business. Also, it may increase the risk of unvaccinated staff members attending work when they might have the virus, thus spreading Covid to others in the workplace. Employers would also need to ensure that they have an effective monitoring system in place to easily understand which of their employees are vaccinated or exempt. This information must be stored in line with normal data protection rules, and employees may not be willing to provide this information.

The Government has recognised the widespread difficulties associated with staff shortages due to the increase in the numbers of people having to isolate as Omicron cases soar. As a result, from Monday 17 January 2022, the self-isolation period in England for people who test Covid-positive has been reduced to five full days. To be eligible for early release from isolation, individuals must complete a lateral flow test on day 5 and the start of day 6, with 24 hours between each test. As long as both tests are negative, isolation can end. If



Margaret Black and David Watkinson

either of the test are positive, it is possible to complete further lateral flow tests every 24 hours until two consecutive tests results are negative.

This amendment to self-isolation rules may be welcomed by many businesses that are struggling with staff shortages. Others may be pleased by the reduction in outgoings to cover SSP payments for isolating employees. However, the re-opening of the Coronavirus SSP Rebate Scheme will further assist employers to remain in business.

Finally, employers may wish to consider amending existing policies and procedures relating to contractual sick pay entitlements and eligibility requirements for Covid-related absences. For instance, they may want to update the evidence required for those who test positive for Covid, especially because a confirmatory PCR test is no longer needed for asymptomatic individuals.

Whilst, perhaps, we should be looking at this in the same way as we look at influenza, there are still many problems resulting from this virus.

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Death of well-known local cricketer Jim Phythian

FAMILY and friends bid a fond farewell to well-known local cricketer James "Jim" Phythian, who sadly died over the Christmas period, aged 87.



Known by many on the Warrington cricket circuit, Jim worked for his dad, ploughing fields and operating all sorts of heavy machinery around the Burtonwood and Widnes areas, then the Penketh farm, which later became Phythian Crescent.

He played cricket for Monks Hall alongside brother Alan and where he forged friends for life. His wife Margaret also did the teas while sons Andrew and Jon did the scoring.

Jim and Alan then went onto to play at Thames Board where Jon also played under his captaincy, Margaret also did the teas joined by daughter-in-law Gill.

Jim also loved his working life at Monks Hall steel works, where many strong and lasting friendships were formed and spent most of his working life there and was highly respected and loved. Alan, Andrew and Jon also worked there. He later worked part-time with his wife Margaret, helping deliver Warrington-Worldwide and associated magazines – often taking a flask and picnic on their travels.

Left heartbroken by the death of

his son Andrew and wife Margaret, he was a passionate family man and is survived by his brother and sister, Alan and Margaret, son Jon, daughter-in-law Gill, daughter Janet, son-in-law Gary, six grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren and will be sadly missed, for his great humour and wit.

His funeral took place at Walton Lea Crematorium followed by a celebration of his life at Warrington Sports Club.

Donations in his memory can be made to Leukaemia UK and The National Brain Appeal at <https://jamesphythian.muchloved.com>

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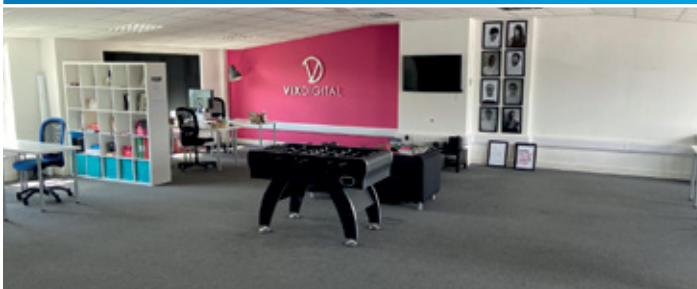
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