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Remembering Brianna

Page 3



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IT'S hard to put into words what the family and friends of Brianna Ghey must be going through following her shocking death at Culcheth Linear Park

As a former Culcheth schoolboy who grew up in the area, I am struggling to comprehend how this incident, which catapulted a small rural village into national headlines, happened.

With two teenagers currently awaiting trial accused of murder I can not write anything which could prejudice the case.

My thoughts are with Brianna's family and friends at this difficult time.

I sadly reported on the incident from within a few hours of it happening with updates throughout the following week - not the kind of local news I enjoy reporting on.

The overwhelming outpouring of support from the local community, will hopefully bring some comfort to the family as they try and come to terms with their sad loss.

Meanwhile we are fast approaching the 30th anniversary of the Warrington bombing - another dark day in the history of our town, when two young boys went out shopping, the day before Mother's day, never to return home, after the IRA placed two bombs in litter bins on Bridge Street.

It is a day I will never forget as a local journalist and pre-dated social media and online news - but still managed to make shockwaves not just around the country - but the

whole world.

While it was a terrible atrocity, it did see some light in the dark, thanks to the bravery of Colin and Wendy Parry and their family, not forgetting Marie and Wilf Ball, and the late Bronwen Vickers and her family, as the town rallied to show good could triumph over evil.

The Warrington Peace Centre became a legacy to the memory of the two boys, Tim Parry and Johnathan Ball and while it has faced a somewhat uncertain future

I remain hopeful that it can continue to offer a safe space for young people.

Wherever you are on March 20th spare a thought for all those who suffered, while also looking to the future with hope in such uncertain times.

**Deadline for the April issue
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is March 14**



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Family overwhelmed with messages of support following tragic death of “beautiful, witty and hilarious” daughter

THE family of Birchwood teenager Brianna Ghey, have been overwhelmed with the messages of support they have received, following her death from multiple stab wounds at Culcheth Linear Park.

A fundraising appeal has already reached more than £100,000, to help cover funeral costs and support her family, as vigils took place across the country in her memory.

The death of the 16-year-old on a Saturday afternoon, in a local park, rocked the community.

DCI Adam Waller, the Senior Investigating Officer in the case, said: “I would like to pass on my sincere thanks to the community of Culcheth for their support in relation to the investigation.

“We have been inundated with pieces of information from members of the community wanting to help and assist the enquiry. Many of our officers have been approached to offer their best wishes to us and, especially, to Brianna’s family.

“I know that the family have also been overwhelmed by the messages of support, positivity and the compassion across the country and beyond – and the thoughts of everyone at the Constabulary remains firmly with them.”

The creators of the Go Fund Me page said: “We would like to help the Ghey family who has had their

beautiful daughter cruelly taken from them in the most shocking and heartbreaking way.

“Brianna was an outgoing, confident girl. She brought a lot of laughter to those who knew her. She was looking forward to taking her exams this year and beginning her journey into the adult world.

“We have set up this page to help the family at this truly devastating time. We need your support to help them with funeral costs (we want to make this pink and colourful to match her personality) and ask if you can spare anything no matter how small to try to relieve their stress and allow them to grieve their beautiful daughter.”

Donations can still be made via www.gofundme.com/f/brianna-ghey

Following her death a family tribute read: “Brianna was a much-loved daughter, granddaughter, and baby sister. She was a larger-than-life character who would leave a lasting impression on all that met her. Brianna was beautiful, witty and hilarious. Brianna was strong, fearless and one of a kind.

“The loss of her young life has left a massive hole in our family, and we know that the teachers and her friends who were involved in her life will feel the same.

“We would like to thank everyone for their kind words and support during this extremely difficult time. We would like to thank the police for their support, and witnesses for helping with the investigation.

“The continuation of respect for privacy is greatly appreciated.”

Meanwhile two teenagers accused of the murder of 16-year-old Brianna at Culcheth are set to face trial in July.

The 15-year-old girl from Warrington and a 15-year-old boy

from Leigh appeared at Liverpool Crown Court.

The two defendants, who cannot be identified for legal reasons, appeared in court via video link from youth detention accommodation.

The teenagers only spoke to confirm their names and dates of birth and sat during the hearing each separately accompanied by a member of the detention centre staff.

The trial has been set for July 10 and is estimated to last three weeks.

The defendants were both further remanded to the youth detention accommodation to next appear at the court on May 2 when they are due to enter their pleas.





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Advertiser's announcement

What is the Business Improvement District (BID)?

The Business Improvement District (BID) is a partnership between the businesses and organisations in Warrington town centre and a range of partners and stakeholders. The BID's vision for Warrington town centre is to create a destination of choice for residents, visitors, investors, employers, and shoppers, making Warrington a location where business and the community grow together

Businesses within the town centre pay a small additional supplement through the business rates system (the BID levy) which is ring fenced and invested in a range of improvement projects and services within the town centre.

What has the BID delivered/funded in year 4?

The BID has continued to work with our appointed marketing agency, to support our social media strategy with activities to engage visitors and increase our social media reach. We're pleased to report growth in our social channels throughout 2021/22, with a key part of this outcome being the team's attendance in the town centre at least once a week and at all large events.

During 2021/22 the BID supported a number of events such as the world-renowned art installation, Gaia, the Welcome Back Festival, Tour of Britain and the Rugby League World Cup,



In November, the BID delivered the town's first Christmas event since 2019 – Warrington's Weekend Wonderland. Working with the business community, partners and community groups we welcomed and entertained the people of Warrington and further afield. Over 60,000 people descended into our town centre for a weekend of festive fun and free activities.

The weekend was filled with Christmas markets, a visit from Santa Claus, family friendly free activities, carol singing, a parade led by drummers and a spectacular projection show at the Town Hall. Dates for the 2023 Warrington's Weekend Wonderland are scheduled for 25 & 26 November.

At a key gateway into the town centre, along Winwick Road the BID installed lamppost banners to promote the Rugby League World Cup. We have also recently installed lamppost banners around the Cultural Quarter to make visitors welcome and to communicate the key themes and attractions our town centre has to offer.

The BID has continued to work with the dedicated town centre Policing team, town centre businesses, public services and voluntary and community groups throughout the year to address issues relating to shoplifting, theft, anti-social behaviour and homelessness. This partnership is for the benefit of levy payers, businesses and visitors to the town.

Through the BID partnership with the #SaferStreets initiative several schemes and improvements have been delivered, these include:

- Enhanced CCTV and surveillance in Warrington town centre
- Further improvements to street lighting on Bridge Street, Winwick Street and the bus station area.
- Development of training for local businesses to help them recognize predatory behaviour, identify vulnerable individuals and provide safe interventions.

Warrington BID is committed to ensuring that our businesses can continuously develop and adapt to a rapidly changing trading landscape. To do this, we provide free training to our BID members, monitor visitor trends and footfall and provide business support to new or expanding businesses.

WE ARE

Warrington BID

During 2021/22 the BID funded training courses with the following accredited topics covered:

- Level 3 Emergency First Aid in the Workplace
- Level 3 Award in Mental Health First Aid in the Workplace
- Fire Marshal Training
- Level 2 Award in Principles of Manual Handling



What projects will be supported or funded by Warrington BID in 2023/2024

From 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024 the following projects will be delivered:

We want to further develop the town centre experience, ensuring that Warrington remains relevant and attractive to a broad range of consumers and visitors.

The BID will continue to make investments into the aesthetics of Warrington town centre through the Watch this Space project, ensuring that we have an attractive environment that people will want to visit.

We'll make investments into landscaping, sustainable planting schemes, introduce hanging/railing baskets across the town centre and to key gateways in to Warrington.

We will work with stakeholders and community groups in Warrington Town Centre to develop a portfolio of projects to enter into the RHS in Bloom Awards.

Work with the culture and arts communities to develop public art installations across the town centre.

We will deliver and support an enhanced programme of events and initiatives to attract visitors and consumers to Warrington:

- Introduction of the Crazy Races event to be held in the summer of 2023
- The return of Warrington's Weekend Wonderland will be bigger and better this year, and will include the Cultural Quarter area
- Artisan Markets to support and wrap around high profile events
- Support the development of PRIDE celebration for Warrington
- Introduction of a Chinese New Year Celebration
- Introduction of town centre trails
- Heritage and Cultural events that portray the story of Warrington

For more information and updates on Warrington town centre, follow @wearewarrington on social media, or visit our website <https://wearewarringtonbid.co.uk>



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More than 50 Optionis employees engaged in an apprenticeship in last 12 months

WARRINGTON-based professional services provider Optionis Group has revealed that one in ten employees are actively working on an apprenticeship, with around 50 new apprentices engaging in new schemes every year.

To mark National Apprenticeship Week 2023, the company has released data highlighting how many of its employees have committed to apprenticeship schemes alongside their day-to-day roles.

Optionis has a strong track record of supporting apprenticeships, winning a number of awards and just last year ranking 34th in the national league of Top Apprenticeships Employers.

The company partners with six UK apprenticeship providers and has recently worked to expand its scope of apprenticeship schemes, which now include Accountancy, Management, Customer Service, Sales, HR, Payroll and IT.

The group currently delivered almost 100 live apprenticeships with around 95 per cent of Optionis' apprentices completing multiple apprenticeships last year, allowing them to progress through to higher levels of education and learning, helping them to upskill and evolve within their roles.

All school leavers aged 16-18 are engaged in an apprenticeship

at Optionis, alongside one in five employees aged 21-23.

Karen Pay, Chief People Officer at Optionis Group, said: "We're really proud of our apprenticeship offering at Optionis, and have worked hard to expand the range of schemes available to both new starters and our existing employee base.

"We are dedicated to supporting our apprentices, providing a full support structure that allows them to really develop professionally.

"2022 was a fantastic year for our apprenticeship offering, seeing us onboarding aspiring new talent as well as upskilling our current employees, allowing them to expand their knowledge in different areas of the business.

"We have big plans to further grow our apprenticeship scheme and look forward to celebrating another year of success in 2023."

Optionis has a resource bank of information about their apprenticeship scheme on their website <https://optionis.co.uk/apprenticeships/>



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Utter joy as Weekend Wonderland brings 60,000 visitors to town centre

by John Laverick - Warrington & Co

I had the pleasure of presenting to the BIDs annual general meeting last month.

The meeting is a chance to reflect on achievements for this year and to look forward. I mentioned this last month as the Warrington BID or the Business Improvement District will be engaged in a 28 day postal ballot from 18th April through to 20th May, which has been delayed from its original planned dates in March, to be conducted by UK Engage on behalf of Warrington Borough Council to decide if this should continue and I would encourage businesses to get involved.

So why mention it again? At the AGM the BID played a video of 'Warrington's Weekend

Wonderland' which saw over 60,000 visitors to the town centre over the Christmas period last year and had a host of events, too numerous to mention here, but which are well covered in the video. The video was, for me, an utter joy.

So why was this especially good for Warrington & Co? Because it shows a huge variety of people enjoying a revitalised town centre as was always the intention. The physical regeneration and new buildings are just one part of town centre regeneration, the buildings are pointless without the people and the BID has, along with other

organisations, made the buildings and the spaces around them come alive with activity and life.

There are a couple of scenes in the video that really hit this home, my particular favourite is the look on a child's face as they receive a present from Santa – utterly priceless. But don't just take my word for it – go and have a watch and you will see what I mean. It can be seen on the website; wearewarringtonbid.co.uk.

So from BID to BUS, or buses to be precise. This month will see the opening of the new Bus Depot on Dallam Lane and the closure of the old Bus Depot on Wilderspool Causeway.

Most people won't notice this as the excellent service provided by Warrington's Own Buses and the operations at the bus interchange will not be affected. The relocation does however, allow a couple of things to happen. It allows the site to be brought forward for comprehensive redevelopment alongside the rest of the works planned for the former stadium site and the Southern Gateway,



John Laverick

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but also allows Warrington's Own Buses to deliver their services more efficiently, an issue that becomes all the important when you factor in the potential for this to enable an all electric bus fleet in the coming months.

And last but not least, Warrington & Co. hold a property review every year and this year is the 25th Anniversary. It is quite humbling to think that this process has been in existence for so long and has the distinction of having seen some truly seismic changes in Warrington and its property and regeneration activities. More to say on that in the coming months.

New managing director for Warrington-based SME lender

WARRINGTON-based SME lender, Riqueza Business Solutions, has appointed Tom Ryan as managing director to support its continued growth.

Mr. Ryan has been with the business funding brokerage since 2020 and has been promoted from director.

The firm facilitated £32m of loans and funding solutions into businesses and their owners in 2022, its sixth year of business.

The company employs 8 staff from Grade A offices in The Base on Dallam Lane and will recruit at least 2 more this year as part of the firm's 'ease of business' strategy, which focuses on the requirements of business owners, funding partners and introducers.

Commenting on Mr Ryan's appointment, founders Carl Oates and Neil Rustage said: "Tom has been with us for more than two years, although he's been operating within the funding and asset-based

lending sector for over 10 years. His experience, passion and trustworthiness made the decision for us to appoint him MD very easy. We are very proud of him and look forward to the continued growth and evolution of Riqueza Business Solutions under his stewardship."

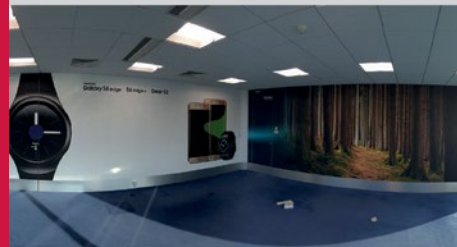
Riqueza Business Solutions is part of the Riqueza Group. The company provides invoice finance, stock finance and business loans to the SME sector, drawing on a panel of 30 high net worth individuals to guarantee a robust and continuously refreshed funding stream.



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Health Minister sees first-hand why town needs a new £350m hospital

WHILE there has still been no update on a bid for a new £350m hospital in Warrington, health minister Helen Whately was in town to see first-hand the pressures on the frontline.

The Minister for Social Care visited Warrington Hospital following calls from Warrington South MP Andy Carter in the House of Commons, to address delays to patient discharges from hospital.

The Minister met with senior doctors and nurses and spent time looking at the pressures in the Accident and Emergency Department, Frailty Unit and

discharge lounge, where she spoke to staff about the challenges in finding accommodation in local care homes and providing support for residents in their own homes.

The Minister also saw the recently opened Same Day Emergency Treatment Unit which is helping to relieve pressure on A&E and reduce the number of people admitted to the wards.

Mr Carter said: "Our Hospital services are under significant pressure and I want the Ministers to know that we're facing particular challenges here in Warrington because the healthcare infrastructure isn't big enough to cope with the growth in the local population. We have too many patients spending too long in acute care, when they're well enough to leave hospital there are often delays in finding convalescence care and support for people returning home.

"Seeing the pressure I hope it will also demonstrate to the Department of Health why I'm so determined to secure a new hospital for Warrington. Working together, with NHS Leaders and the local authority we've made a strong

argument for a £350 million which would allow us to secure a new purpose-built hospital for the town and improved parking, which is so often a criticism when patients and visitors go to the current hospital."

The Minister started the day at Warrington and Vale Royal College's new Health and Social Care Academy, which was funded with £1 million from the Government as part of Warrington's £25 million Town Deal. The Minister spoke to students and was given a tour of the learning centre which houses an Independent Living Flat, a Simulation Hospital Ward and life-like early years settings, designed to train and develop the health and social care workforce.

ANDY CARTER MP

Member of Parliament for Warrington South

I hold regular constituency advice surgeries at my Warrington South office and around the area.

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Anna Kiriakoulakis
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Sword dedicated in memory of soldier killed in action 50 years ago



A SWORD that belonged to an Army officer killed in action in Oman 50 years ago has been dedicated at Peninsula Barracks, Warrington.

Major Paul Wright was a Royal Engineer who later joined the SAS, who was killed in action during the Dhofar War on February 6 1973 at the age of 27, while seconded from the SAS to the Sultan of Oman's Armed Forces.

For his actions, he was awarded the Sultan's Gallantry Medal, Oman's highest military award.

A memorial service was also held at Major Wright's graveside at St Mary's Church, Rostherne, which was followed by the dedication of his sword at the barracks in Warrington.

As an ex-Royal Engineer, 75 Engineer Regiment (the Royal Engineer Reserve unit in the North

West) hosted the event. At the same time, Royal Engineers based in Oman conducted a similar memorial where Major Wright was killed.

The sword was recently gifted to the regiment and has already been used ceremonially by a member of 75 Engineer Regiment during the proclamation of King Charles.

Major Wright has no surviving immediate family but friends, veterans he served with, representatives of the Royal Engineer Association and Special Forces Association attended, along with the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire, the Mayor of Warrington and members of 75 Engineer Regiment.



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Husband and wife team produce hat-trick of novels

LOCAL husband and wife author team - Nick and Pat ffrench have now produced three novels - "Taken in Africa", "Forever Friends?" and "Retribution".

They have used their life experiences to bring their stories to life, mixing fact with fiction, and thus ensuring a very 'real' experience for the reader.

Nick was brought up in South Africa and his vivid descriptions of the landscape of this beautiful country provide a fitting backdrop for the adventure which unfolds in his book.

"Taken in Africa" tells the story of a rescue mission which uncovers the criminal underworld and the people and drugs trafficking which now pervades this undoubtedly dangerous part of the African continent. A page-turning, fast-moving story which grips the reader from start to finish.

Pat has spent her working life in the field of Further and Adult Education and used this experience to full effect in her first novel "Forever Friends?" which centres around the lives of four friends working in Further Education where adultery, domestic violence, addiction, betrayal and murder thread their way through the story. Pat's recently released second novel "Retribution" takes up the

story featuring a sociopathic anti-hero who threatens to bring their lives down in his murderous search for retribution.

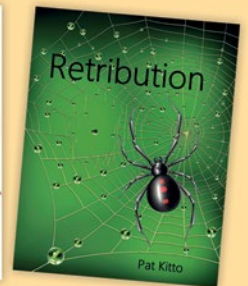
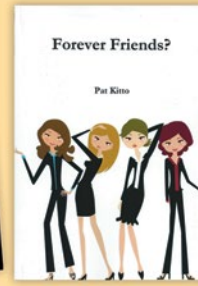
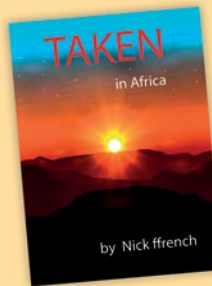
The three books - "Taken in Africa" by Nick ffrench; and "Forever Friends?" and "Retribution" by Pat Kitto are available through www.lulu.com and www.amazon.co.uk for both paperback and Kindle versions.

Their websites are: www.nickffrenchwriting.com and www.patkittowriting.com



Local Husband and Wife Author Team Nick and Pat ffrench (Kitto)

Using their own experiences to bring their stories to life.



Nick's upbringing in South Africa and Pat's working life in the field of Further and Adult Education provide the backdrop for their three novels - "Taken in Africa", "Forever Friends?" and "Retribution".



Themes of a rescue mission, people/drug trafficking and the criminal underworld run through "Taken in Africa" while themes of adultery, domestic violence, addiction, betrayal, murder and retribution run through "Forever Friends?" and "Retribution".

All three books are available at www.lulu.com and www.amazon.co.uk (Paperback and Kindle versions)

www.nickffrenchphotos.co.uk and www.patkittowriting.com

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During 2022 we received fantastic support from our patients, their families, community partners and our staff and there are many highlights which are shared on our website www.whhcharity.org.uk

These included old school friends Tony Jenkinson and Nikki Dak who took on the Three Peaks Challenge to fundraise for the Moobs and Boobs campaign, which supports our breast cancer services.

Tony, who works as a HGV driver for Morrisons and volunteers for the Northwest Ambulance Service as an Enhanced Community First Responder started at Pen Y Ghent on the Sunday 9th October, and finished all three peaks in eight hours. Nikki, who is a self-employed Sports Therapist also accomplished the challenge in memory of her sister, who sadly lost her battle with breast cancer. Between them, they raised £2,371.59 for the Moobs and Boobs campaign from this challenge and in total have

raised over £5,000 for WHH Charity through this and previous fundraising activity. The Moobs and Boobs campaign provides above and beyond items, to support patients, including 'first-fit post operative bras' for mastectomy patients that would otherwise cost them £60.

Also completing another amazing personal challenge, Dr James Melling, the trust's colorectal surgeon and lead for paediatric general surgery, who cycled to the height of the summit of Mount Everest raising £1,357.93 for WHH Charity. James biked up Peaslow Hill in the Peak District 68 times in one day during the summer to cover the 8,848m height of the world's tallest mountain. Starting at 4.30am in the mist and moonlight, James completed the challenge in 19 hours and 30 minutes in temperatures above 30C, clocking up 68 ascents and just over 8,900m at around midnight. James previously completed a challenge to cycle from Land's End to John o' Groats and has also raised over £5,000 for the charity.

There are many ways to support our charity including volunteering. In

late 2022 our WHH Charity Garden Crew of Volunteers were recognised for their hard work, within the hospitals Dementia Forget Me Not Garden. They received a Level 5 Outstanding Award – the highest level – in the Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in Bloom 'It's Your Neighbourhood' competition. The award followed Bernard Pendleton visit to the garden, Chairman of Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) North West in Bloom, where he witnessed the wonderful creative work the volunteers have achieved within this beautiful outdoor space, provided for the use of our patients.

Helen Higginson, Head of Fundraising at WHH Charity, said, "Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals Trust is fortunate to have so many excellent volunteers and those who work on the garden

certainly make a difference. This "Outstanding Award" is recognition of the wonderful work of the garden volunteers linking with the nursing and support staff on the Forget Me Not Dementia ward to provide a delightful outdoor oasis for patients, staff, volunteers, and visitors alike."

WHH Charity welcomes people of all ages, backgrounds and interests as volunteers and there are many ways to support fundraising for the charity.

If you would like to find out more about the many different ways to give back to your local hospitals, please visit www.whhcharity.org.uk or contact our fundraising team by email at whh.Charity@nhs.net 01925 662666. You can also pop in and see the charity team in Warrington Hospital main entrance Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm.



Warrington and Halton
Teaching Hospitals Charity
AN NHS CHARITY

CHARITY NUMBER: 1051858



Registered with
FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR

JOIN OUR TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS

"Volunteering gives me a sense of purpose and satisfaction.

I feel that I make a difference and that what I do is appreciated."

– Carole Baker

Carole is currently a WHH Staff Thank You Awards finalist for helping achieve so much within our community for the charity.



Join our volunteers today!

Without our on-site volunteers we would be unable to provide the variety of help required to support our wonderful community of donors and fundraisers.



whh.charity@nhs.net



01925 662666



Warrington Disability Partnership Annual Report 2022/23



Giving Disabled People
Hope & Opportunity



Introduction

Chairman and Chief Executive's Report

Welcome to our latest annual report. As a charity focussing on disabled and older people, the effects of COVID-19 have sadly continued to adversely affect our services throughout the past year. This did not deter us from delivering to our purpose, which is "to improve the lives of people affected by disability and long term health conditions".

We continue to work with our clients and partners to find solutions to a range of problems, including expanding our Long-COVID Support Service in collaboration with Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. We also worked with Torus to launch the Springboard Employment Support Service that focusses on people affected by the pandemic.

Our "Leader Accreditation" for the national Disability Confident Scheme has enabled us to share our expertise, supporting a range of small, medium and large employers, including delivering awareness training to over 300 senior managers from United Utilities and Royal London Insurance.

Information, advice and guidance remains at the heart of our work, underpinning our values as a "user led" organisation. We were delighted to have received re-accreditation of the nationally recognised MATRIX Quality Mark.

Feedback we receive from our clients, customers and partners confirms that our services enhance the lives of tens of thousands of disabled people; locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, giving them hope and opportunity. We continue to promote a "can do" culture focussing on "what disabled people can do", which helps to dispel myths and misconceptions.

Our social enterprise, the Disability Trading Company continues to grow in popularity, attracting many new suppliers including AKW Medi-Care who installed their first Onyx Care Pod at our Liverpool showrooms. We were excited to hear that we are now the 15th largest medium sized Motability dealer of mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs, in the UK.

As we look ahead to 2023 and beyond, the cost of living crisis will be high on our agenda, as disabled people are disproportionately affected, balancing the costs of energy, food, care and support. In addition to higher use of standard household appliances such as washing machines, tumble driers and heaters, disabled people are often faced by additional costs of necessary equipment, wheelchairs, scooters, hoists, stair lifts, suction and

feeding pumps, and ventilators. This led us to collaborate with Warrington Community Energy, successfully bidding for funding to operate an Energy Efficiency Scheme, which will commence after Easter.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone who shares and supports the WDP dream, especially our volunteers, our trustees, our staff, our supporters, our clients/customers and our partners. We are proud to say that during the past 31 years, we have created, one of Warrington's most loved charities that is recognised nationally and 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



2022 Highlights

The year in pictures



WDP were honoured to be chosen as one of four local charities to feature on the Warrington Monopoly Board.



Our Galleries Community Café received a 5* Food Hygiene rating. The team were also named one of the best places for breakfast in Warrington according to Trip Advisor reviews.



DTC Director, David Jones and his team from Fairview Windows organised a successful Charity Golf Day at Lymm Golf Course raising almost £3000 for WDP.



Members of the DAD team were invited to hold the Rugby League World Cup flag prior to the France v Samoa World Cup match.



Local Residents presented Team WDP with a framed picture to thank us for supporting them during the 2021 flooding.

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; and two **Mobility and Independent Living Stores (MILs)** in Sankey Street and Birchwood Shopping Centre. We offer showrooms full of the latest equipment from baths, showers and kitchens to beds, wheelchairs and stair lifts. Advice is available from our team of trained staff and volunteers, and a short-term hires service for various equipment.

For further information, advice and guidance, we have our **“Smart Flat”** demonstrating the latest assistive technology solutions, based at the CIL. Our popular **Disability Helpline (01925 240064)** offers advice and support about local support groups and services, accessibility, transport, and more as does our Over 55's Disability Information Officer, in addition to attending local events.

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

COVID recovery can include symptoms that can last weeks or months after the infection has gone. This is sometimes called Long Covid. Our **Long Covid Support Service** is available specifically for Warrington residents and those registered with Warrington practices. Access to workshops, groups and services is not possible without the inclusion of Warrington & Halton Long Covid Support Service via your GP.

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 regarding recruitment, DBS checks, pension schemes and contracts, with support from our in-house payroll team.

Our Care and Support Advisor promotes **Personal Health Budgets (PHBs)** for individuals with complex health needs throughout Warrington and Halton. PHBs aim to allow greater choice, flexibility and control over how and when NHS-funded care is delivered. The Advisor works with the clients to produce individual Care and Support Plans, liaising with NHS Cheshire & Merseyside concerning individual budget allocations.

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 further details of services, please see page 6.

Employment & Training

Our **Employment Team** specialises in supporting local disabled people, people living with long-term health conditions (including mental health), ESA claimants and those in receipt of incapacity-related benefits; as well as those with diverse and complex needs and barriers who have been affected, either directly or indirectly, by the Covid pandemic. 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, as well as employers, by giving information about reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Learning and Development

Visit the **Marjorie Griffiths Learning Centre** on Beaufort Street and take advantage of a whole host of courses designed to educate and inspire. Many courses are held in the Discover IT Suite and include 'Computers for the Terrified', vocational OCR qualifications and pre-employment IT. In addition, several other courses are available, which include flower arranging and creative writing.

We work closely with numerous local charities and voluntary organisations including the Stroke Association and After Silence, 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. The **OWCH Pain Management Support group** helps and supports local disabled people with the self-management of Chronic Pain.

WDP delivers a variety of training, including **Equality & Diversity, Disability Confident and Disability, and Sex Matters**. Half-day training sessions are available to service providers, voluntary organisations and individuals to build knowledge and insight on these issues.

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 allow a bargain break or a day out on the water!

Opportunities to Socialise

We run multiple **Luncheon Clubs** for individuals looking for friendship, activities, fun and lunch! Our **over 55's club** meet every Wednesday from 10am to 2pm. As well as enjoying a two-course lunch and drinks, attendees also enjoy playing bingo, games, quizzes, chair-based exercises, and guest speakers. Our **Monday Club** caters to under 55's with a variety of social activities, including crafts, bingo and films. There is a £7.50 charge 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 and visitors to the Centre and Support Groups.

Listening and Advocacy

Get your voice heard locally by attending our monthly **‘Staying Connected’** meetings via Zoom, 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, carers and 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**, which provide an opportunity for disabled people and carers 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 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

2022 Highlights

The year in pictures

LONG COVID SUPPORT

For some people Coronavirus (COVID-19) can cause symptoms that last weeks or months after the infection has gone. This is sometimes called Long-COVID.

Recovery from Long-COVID is different for everyone, most will recover within 12 weeks. However for some it may last much longer.

If you are experiencing symptoms of Long-COVID and require information, advice and guidance or support please contact us.

Difficulty sleeping or Shortness of breath

Extreme Tiredness (fatigue) or Feeling sick

Tinnitus or Joint pain

Memory loss and concentration loss (brain fog)

Chest pains or Palpitations

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

WE PROVIDE SUPPORT THROUGH SELF HELP GROUPS



ONE TO ONES



TELEPHONE CHATS



ONLINE CONTACTS



WDP Young Volunteer, Ellie Thompson won the Young Volunteer of the Year Award (16-24 category) at the 2022 Community Rewards. Chloe Thompson was runner up in the 12-16 category.

The launch of the WDP Long Covid project, has seen our team offer information, advice and support to over 200 clients with Long Covid.



Following the end of Covid-19 restrictions, we were pleased to welcome both our Older Person's and Young People's Lunch Clubs back to the Centre for Independent Living.



A successful bid to the National Lottery Heritage fund, enabled us to purchase display equipment to support the WDP Heritage Project.



Former Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Chloe Smith, visited the Centre for Independent Living to talk to local disabled people about current issues and concerns.



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.

In 2022, DTC launched a new online shop designed so customers across the UK can purchase high-quality mobility & independent living products from the comfort of their homes. All our products can help increase your ability to live independently. We pride ourselves on a fast delivery service, and promise to pick up and send you your order before the end of the next working day. If you are unsure what products best fit your needs or have any questions, visit our website's contact us page.

For more products to make life easier, visit our website: <https://disabilitytradingcompany.co.uk/collections/all>.

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

Centre for Independent Living
Beaufort Street
Warrington
WA5 1BA

Mobility & Independent Living Showrooms
Email: [ShowRoom@disabilitypartnership.org.uk](mailto>ShowRoom@disabilitypartnership.org.uk)

Workshop and Service Centre
Email: Workshop@disabilitypartnership.org.uk

Galleries Cafe

Payroll Services

Tel: 01925 240064

Mobility & Independent Living Showrooms
Lifehouse
Summers Road
Liverpool
L3 4BL

Tel: 0151 709 0121
Email: Liverpoolmils@disabilitypartnership.org.uk

Mobility & Independent Living Store - Birchwood
Unit 6
Birchwood Shopping Centre
Dewhurst Road
Birchwood
WA3 7PG

Tel: 01925 251079
Email: birchwoodmils@disabilitypartnership.org.uk

Loved B4 Mobility
Unit 8
Gatewarth Industrial Estate
Barnard Street
Warrington
WA5 1DD

Tel: 01925 240064

Mobility & Independent Living Store - Warrington
Golden Square Shopping Centre
30 Sankey Street
Warrington
WA1 1TD

Tel: 01925 416624
Email: Mils@disabilitypartnership.org.uk



owned and operated by



Our Impact in 2022

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 throughout 2022.

“ We have been very fortunate to have maintained a very positive and mutually beneficial partnership relationship with Warrington Disability Partnership (WDP) despite the unprecedented challenges faced over the last few years with the Covid-19 pandemic. Dave, Derek and the team have been incredibly supportive to employers, organisations and disabled people alike offering advice, support and guidance to ensure the best outcomes for all. Their Disability Awareness Day is well recognised both locally and nationally as exemplar in championing/showcasing inclusiveness and accessibility. ”

Warrington Jobcentre, December 2022

WDP services provide a new beginning for many who are searching for a way forward in life one with hope for the future and opportunities for training and work placements'

98%

of our Team agree that 'WDP Promotes and Enables Hope & Opportunity'
WDP Team Survey, November 2022



Ian Rafferty – Volunteer Casestudy

What year did you start volunteering for WDP?

2022 – Galleries Café.

How did you start volunteering for WDP?

I heard about volunteering opportunities at WDP when I was at their annual Disability Awareness Day and met CEO Dave Thompson.

Why do you like volunteering?

- I enjoy socialising with staff and customers.
- It has given me an increased level of confidence.
- It gives something back to the community.

About Ian:

I enjoy going to football and rugby games with my dad. I live independently with friends with disabilities. I go to lunch club on Monday and choir/ band on Wednesday. I volunteer with WDP, Warrington Speak up and Warrington Wolves Foundation.



What has WDP done for you?

Volunteering has given me a more positive mind-set on life and stability. I now have a routine, made great friendships.

Our Impact

“The WDP Long Covid Peer Support Self Help Groups have “helped me understand my symptoms and made me feel like I wasn’t alone.”

Mrs H is now a regular attendee at our in person Self Help groups, and following a referral by WDP to WBC’s Public Health Team, she is voluntarily sharing her employment experiences with the Council’s Health Protection Practitioners to develop Borough wide employer training, to support staff with Long Covid and long term conditions.

£400,000+

Spent in the past 12 months by Shomobility Members and Visitors in Warrington Town Centre, helping to support the local economy

90

New social worker referrals for direct payments support from 1st April 22

Ian Mullin – Volunteer Casestudy

What year did you start volunteering for WDP?
2012 / More than 10 years ago.

How did you start volunteering for WDP?
Through the new leaf programme, I started volunteering for WDP after hearing about the range of opportunities available. I was painting the CIL and other premises keeping the areas looking tidy. Recently, I have found joy in working with the Galleries café team and interacting with service users. I have also been supporter of WDP volunteering at Disability Awareness Day and the annual Santa’s Grotto.

Why do you like volunteering?

- It gives me a daily routine and gives me motivation to go out of the house.
- I like interacting and talking to people.
- I like cooking.
- I like helping people in any way I can.
- Volunteering gives me a sense of stability in life.



About Ian:

In daily life, I enjoy socialising and playing pool. I am a painter/ decorator and have been a security guard. I look after my mother by helping her to cook and with anything challenging around the house.

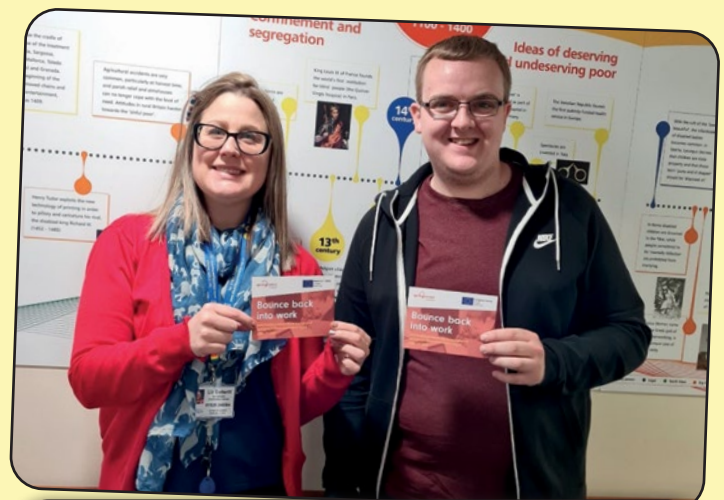
What has WDP done for you?

Through WDP, my life now has a routine, which I never had before. Volunteering has given me stability and confidence to face life and the world going forward. WDP had been a massive support system and lifeline to me. The last 10 years have been the best years of my life.



200+

Christmas Dinner’s served in our Galleries Café during December 2022



“The help and support I received from my advisor was totally different to anything I had before, she took the time to listen to me, and supported me to access the jobs I wanted to in the sector I wanted.”

Jake Morris – Springboard Participant

et in 2022

200

People with Long Covid already supported by our new project in partnership with Warrington & Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



Recommending Appropriate Equipment

Why is it important to our Team?

- Increased Independence
- Better Health Outcomes
- Reduced Injuries & Hospital Admissions
- Safer and more comfortable when using equipment
- Enabling people to remain in the own homes
- Quicker and safer Hospital Discharge
- Improved quality of life

WDP Team Members 2022

Springboard supports participants with diverse and complex needs and barriers and affected, either directly or indirectly, by the Covid pandemic. Our success rate for supporting participants into sustainable and meaningful employment is an outstanding

85%

In your opinion, what are the best things about WDP?

1 Offers support and advice 71

2 Champions the rights of disabled people 66

3 Employs disabled people/it is user led 65

4 Services provided helps people stay independent 63

5 Offers a friendly welcome 56

WDP Social Impact Survey 2022

62

Digital skills courses completed in our Learning Centre

Benjamin Ng – Volunteer Casestudy

What year did you start volunteering for WDP?
September 2022 - Showroom

How did you start volunteering for WDP?
I started volunteering at WDP after a referral from an external employment programme.

Why do you like volunteering?
I like volunteering for WDP as I was in a new country and I feel like I am integrating with the community. I feel like I am doing something within my comfort zone as I have specialised in mobility and customised wheelchairs so it is nice being involved in something I am quite familiar with.

About Ben:
I moved from Hong Kong to the UK last year with my family for a better way of life. I have worked for a charity that specialises in mobility aids for children with disabilities.



What has WDP done for you?
Volunteering has given me more confidence after moving to England and integrating with the community. It has also helped me to understand UK culture better.

Our Impact in 2022

INFLUENCING CHANGE

Invited to join the national working group for the development of the Disability Confident Scheme with the Employment Related Services Association (ERSA)

Developed and delivered a Disability Confident Training Package to over 200 managers both locally and nationally

Using our Disability Confident Leader - Level 3 status, to support and work with local and national organisations

Continue to influence local developments and projects worth over £30million to ensure inclusive access and facilities including:

- New Youth Zone
- Health & Social Care Academy
- New Bus Depot
- Health & Wellbeing Hub
- Major refurbishment of the Pyramid Arts Centre
- Both the Hub and the Pyramid will include modified Changing Places Toilets

Supported the Covid-19 vaccine programme, assisting over 700 personal assistants to receive their vaccination alongside social care staff

Supported Local Authority recruitment campaigns for Social Care staffing

Over 1 million items of PPE equipment distributed to personal assistants, carers and disabled people from the Centre for Independent Living

Led the development of a Long-COVID Support Service

Invited to join the National Wheelchair Alliance which aims to influence best practise in the provision of manual and powered wheelchairs

“ Since my mobility has decreased, I have found it hard to go out and keep my independence. I am having to rely on my family for more support. My family member contacted Warrington Disability Partnership to request help. The team came back to us with a solution. I want to say a huge thank you to WDP for giving me my independence back. ”

WDP Service User

“ I emailed (the Disability Helpline) with a couple of questions as I have a rare neurological condition that even Dr's don't know much about. I just want to thank you for a fast response. Not just that, but I have seen GPs, Consultants, Specialists, Neurosurgeon Specialists and NONE of them have provided as much information as one little email (from a member of Team WDP) ”

WDP Visitor

“ This is the first time I've been to DAD and I found it really useful and enjoyable and well organised, with great variety. Having only recently been registered severely sight impaired (blind) and learnt to use a long cane, I met people on the day who made me feel very welcomed into a community and hence more confident to just be me, and that meant a great deal to me. Thank you. ”

DAD 2022 Visitor

2022 Highlights

The year in pictures



Our team has supported local organisations running activities through the Health Activity & Food Programme by providing over 2,000 healthy lunches to attendees.



Successful Charity Dinner, held at the Village Hotel, raised over £4000 to support our work.



Disability Trading Company
Online shop

Good Grips Cutlery
For those with weak or limited hand grip. Comfortable to hold. Adaptable to any grip. Stainless steel and latex-free.

www.disabilitytradingcompany.co.uk

disability
trading
company

**energy
saving
trust**



Submitted a successful funding bid through the Energy Redress Scheme to support vulnerable people to make savings on their energy bills.



The Penketh High School Leadership team visited the Centre for Independent Living to learn about our work and help to raise awareness, as well as organising a number of fundraising activities.



The Launch of the DTC online shop is helping to support independence for many more disabled people across the UK.



Team WDP supported local organisations to distribute essential items and mobility equipment to people in Ukraine.

Christmas 2022 at WDP

This Christmas we were back again at Walton Garden's Indoor Riding Stables hosting our Santa's Grotto Winter Wonderland from the last weekend of November, right up until Christmas week.

After a mega build that started in late October, our team produced our biggest and best ever Santa's Grotto. It included a meet & Greet with Mrs Claus, followed by an amazing walkthrough themed on an Enchanted Forrest and Santa's Workshop. Supported by our Teddy Tombola, Yule Log decorating, letters to Santa and colouring, sale of Christmas gifts, a Reindeer Trail, a WDP/DTC information stand and

new for 2022, an incredible Sensory Zone that added to the inclusive nature of the Grotto. In addition to full wheelchair access, we offered weekly Quiet Hours, catering for people with a range of conditions such as Autism and Alzheimer's, and we accommodated children and families who communicated through British Sign Language.

The opening event included festive music from members of Signature Brass Ensemble, with Warrington Wolves mascot Wolfie and WDP's Ollie Owl keeping the children entertained. We had young Olivia, assisted by our Deputy Mayor Councillor Graham Friend and his wife Diana, cut the ribbon to open the Grotto.

Our friends at F11 Photography were on hand capturing the magical moments that we provided to 2,919 children who were accompanied by 1,000s of parents, grandparents, other family members and friends. Warrington South MP Andy Carter dropped in to add his support. The children's favourite surprise was Warrington Wolves players Josh Drinkwater, Jake Thewlis and Thomas Mikaele, who called in to show their support, sign autographs and have photographs taken with their fans.

On Sunday 11th December, we hosted our annual Santa Dash sponsored by Birchwood Shopping Centre, a 3km walk/dash where nearly 100 Santa's ran the dash on one of the coldest days on record.

What makes our Grotto unique?

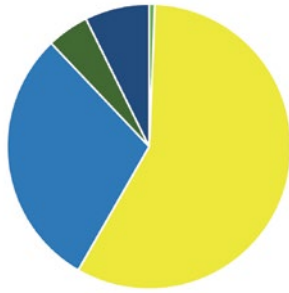
- Not only is the grotto fully wheelchair accessible, so too is the undercover winter wonderland scenery that is held in the indoor riding school at Walton Hall and Gardens, Warrington. Warrington Disability Partnership have over 20 years' experience of running a fully inclusive Santa's Grotto, which can be visited by all.
- WDP's Santa and some of our elves can communicate with deaf children and parents through British Sign Language.
- After listening to parents, WDP have included Quiet Hours, where the individual needs of children, parents and grandparents can be met, including Autism, Dementia and Alzheimer's.
- The Quiet Hour also caters for people who have sight loss, with trained sighted guides offering guided tours and interactive experience including touching, feeling and smelling a Christmas tree and other display items, within the sensory area.



WDP Financial Position 2021-22

Income £1,259,473

Expenditure £1,172,521



- Voluntary Income (£8k)
- Charitable Activities (£726k)
- Trading to raise funds (£373k)
- Investment Income DTC (£60k)
- Other (£92k)

- Charitable Activities (£1,148,150)
- Raising Funds (£24k)

The above information has been taken from the audited Warrington Disability Partnership (WDP) Accounts for the financial period 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022, 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
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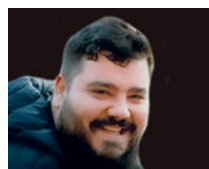
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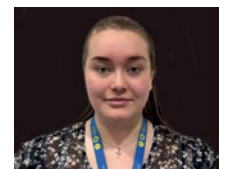
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Disability Awareness Day 2022 (DAD31)

The sun came out beaming for the 31st annual Disability Awareness Day event held at Walton Hall and Gardens in Warrington on Sunday 17th July 2022.

Disability Awareness Day (DAD) is the world's largest 'not for profit' voluntary-led disability exhibition, held annually in a huge tented village within the grounds of the Hall. The late Peter Powell, the Town Crier got proceedings underway opening our event at 10am at the Walton Gardens Bridge.

Disability Awareness Day has grown immensely over its three decades and has taken place in 13 countries worldwide. Since its launch in 1992 over £1 million has been raised by charities attending DAD events, which have also attracted over 600,000 visitors, with over 20,000 attending this year's event.

The show ran until 4:30pm with free entry and a free programme, and a wide variety of support services including free wheelchair and mobility scooter loans, BSL interpreters, free park and ride and bus services. With nearly 200 exhibitors displaying mobility and independent living equipment, transport, holidays, leisure, employment, support groups and services, a Sports Zone, an Arts Marquee, a Visual Arts Marquee, Main Arena, a marquee hosting a Silent Disco and family entertainment.

Entertaining the crowds in the Arts Marquee were acts including nationally acclaimed Ella Together, Warrington BSL Signing Choir, Creating Adventures, Stars Drama, Warrington Concert Band, Carly Ryan, Wired for Sound, and Chester Ladies Choir.

This year's event had the continued support of our two principal sponsors, Expanse Learning and United Utilities. We were

humbled by the response from our supporters including our corporate sponsors; BAS (NW), Disability Trading Company, Protive Security & Surveillance, Terry Lifts, LiveWire, Culture Warrington, Warrington & Vale Royal College, Warrington & Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Cheshire Community Foundation, the Steve Morgan Foundation, Torus, Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, Cheshire & Merseyside NHS, Unison, Warrington Borough Council, Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Catalyst Choices, Cheshire & Merseyside Health and Care Partnership and show supporters Warrington's Own Buses, Warrington Youth Zone, the University of Chester and the team at Walton Hall and Gardens.

On the day, the Lord-Lieutenant of Cheshire Alexis Redmond MBE and Warrington's Mayor Councillor Jean Flaherty came to support the work of DAD's Army.

DAD's Army were encouraged by the line-up of exhibitors from, statutory, private and third sectors, including over 100 charities. For the second consecutive year, support from the Steve Morgan Foundation and Cheshire Community Foundation enabled local charities and community groups to attend and exhibit free.

A week of five complimentary events was held leading up to the big day including a Comedy and Curry night hosted by award winning comedian and PDRL player Adam Hills supported by Britain's Got Talent 2020 finalist Steve Royal, winner of Stand Up Britain TV series Lea Roberts and Comedian Michelle Shaughnessy; Ella Together and Creating Adventures Variety night and Pete Pennington's Bingo Bedlam.

Our next DAD event will be held Sunday 16th July 2023. For more details visit the DAD website at www.disabilityawarenessday.org.uk



Warrington BSL Signing Choir



Wellell Exhibition Stand



Lord-Lieutenant of Cheshire Alexis Redmond MBE and her Husband Sir Phil Redmond CBE



Adam Hills, Steve Royal, Michelle Shaughnessy and Lea Roberts



The Late Peter Powell – Town Crier

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 Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care System
- United Utilities
- MerseyCare NHS Foundation Trust
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Gary donated £500 to support the renovation of our outdoor eating area to make it more weatherproof, private and friendly.



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“Mersey Flat” provides glimpse into town’s historic past

RECENT works on the River Mersey, resulting in lower water levels, revealed a glimpse into Warrington’s historic past when the remains of a “Mersey Flat” came into view.

Following a tip-off members of the New Cut Trail group, including local history enthusiast Mike Kenwright, went off to investigate after the Mersey Flat had come to light at Howley Lock while the river level was dropped to allow maintenance work.

The flat could be viewed from the stern with the rudder still attached along with what remained of the stem, a metal strip and hook which is attached to the stem at the anchor point for the mast forestay.

Mike said: “If I have got it right the angled metal bar would have been bolted over the prow and the hook that is fixed to it may have been part of the gear for holding the mast stay. The masts of the vessels could be lowered allowing them to pass under low bridges. They would have needed a secure anchor when they were upright with the vessel under sail, hence the metal bar over the prow. Of course I could be totally wrong with my ideas!

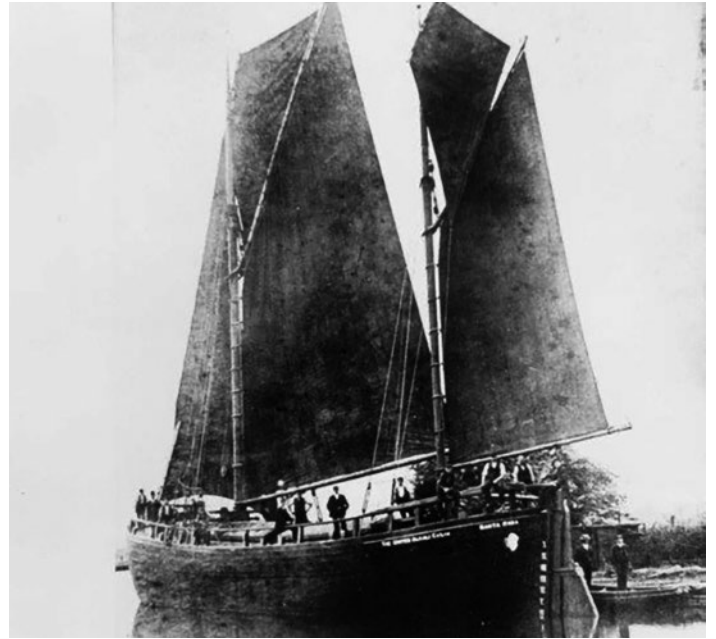
He added: “Most of the flats were single-masted but some of them carried two masts, and were often called “Jigger Flats”. These Jigger Flats were sea-going vessels and were regularly worked on the Irish Sea, some of them sailed round the coast to London with cargoes of Cheshire Cheese.

The last sailing flat to be built was the Santa Rose. It was built for the United Alkali Company Ltd.

Mike added: “These sailing barges were named Flats due to the fact that they had very little keel and a rounded flat bottom.

“In areas where there was no harbour or wharf but there were flat sandy beaches the vessels could be sailed into shallow water at high tide and allowed to settle on the beach as the tide ebbed. Horse-drawn lorries and carts could then pull alongside and the cargo would be discharged into them. Depending on the type of cargo it could often take more than one tide to finish the unloading. When the job was done the flat would lift on the tide and could be sailed away. When sat on a good level beach the Flatmen reckoned that they sat upright like a church steeple. On inland waterways, masts and sails were often dispensed with and the vessels towed for the whole journey. In the early days when towpaths were poor or even non-existent in places teams of men did the hauling.

“Later when proper towpaths were constructed horses were used, sometimes in pairs. The Mersey and Irwell Co built stables for their horses at Runcorn, Manor Lock at Latchford, Cadishead and Barton,” added Mike.



*The Santa Rose
Picture: Warrington Museum*



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Do you want to make a difference to healthcare in Warrington?

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The past 2 years have been difficult for everybody trying access local health and social care services, with providers dealing effects of the pandemic which has left them with backlog of appointments and long waiting lists for many. As the pandemic has eased, the NHS and other health and social care providers have prioritised working through the backlog of healthcare cases, but this will take time and is expected to be impacted by the cost of living crisis and an already stretched health service. This is where our Healthwatch volunteers can really help make a difference.

Our volunteers are at the heart of what we do, from talking to people about their experiences of health and social care, to writing

reports, to updating our social media - volunteers are vital to our work. Whether you have a few hours to spare or are looking for a regular commitment, we've got a volunteering role to suit you:

Virtual Voices Volunteers - Get involved by taking part in email polls, online questionnaires and surveys. (15 minutes per month)

Enter and View Volunteers - Help observe health and social care services at the point of delivery; speaking with staff, patients, residents, relatives, and carers, and producing reports with recommendations to improve service delivery. (3hours per month)

Events and Engagement Volunteers - Support Healthwatch Warrington at local and county-wide events.

Our volunteers make everything we do possible and love helping to make local services better for everyone.

If you want to know more and get involved, check out the Healthwatch Warrington website - healthwatchwarrington.co.uk/how-can-i-volunteer



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Freemasons made donations of more than £26,000 to charities



WARRINGTON Freemasons made donations to charities totalling more than £26,000 last year.

A total of £21,566 was donated to local, non-masonic charities while £4,518 was donated to Masonic charities.

This was announced at the Warrington Masonic Group's annual charity giving day at the Masonic Hall, attended by the Deputy Mayor of Warrington, Cllr. Graham Friend, representatives from the charities the group had

supported, Warrington Group, officials, the Provincial Charity Steward, Paul Shirley and Colin Rowling representing the Province of West Lancashire.

Each of the attending charities gave a short talk and members were amazed to hear of the work they do each day, week and months of the year.

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Heather Small in fine voice



POP legend Heather Small was in fine voice when she performed to thousands at Manchester's AO Arena – thanks in part to pupils from Warrington's Beamont Primary School.

A group of 86 children from Years 4,5 and 6 took part in a mass choir of more than 8,700 schoolchildren at the huge concert venue, singing the rousing chorus to the former M People singer's 2000 solo hit Proud and a medley of other tunes.

The concert was organised by Young Voices, an education programme designed to use music to develop skills such as communication, collaboration, creativity, mindfulness, and innovation. The organisation has been organising concerts at venues around the country since 1997.

Karen Morris, headteacher of Beamont Primary School – part of Warrington Primary Academy

Trust – said the children loved their performance experience.

She said: "It was amazing day. We left school at lunchtime for the afternoon rehearsal and during a break some of the children took part in a short workshop with The Beatbox Collective who were performers during the concert.

"The evening concert started at 7pm and by then the audience had filled the arena. We were so pleased to see some of our parents and carers there, and hear they had a great time too.

"It was a truly memorable experience for everyone and we're already looking forward to next year!"

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MP announces Jobs and Apprenticeships Fair

WARRINGTON South MP Andy Carter has announced that his annual Jobs and Apprenticeships Fair will take place on Friday March 10 at the Parr Hall.

Following on from last year's successful fair, which attracted over 1,000 attendees and more than 40 businesses, the event will again help people to understand their opportunities and build relationships with local employers. The Jobs and Apprenticeships Fair will welcome stallholders from a number of industries such as engineering, healthcare and logistics. The fair is open to all ages who are seeking more information about vacancies and potential employment opportunities. The jobs fair attracts dozens of local and national businesses that offer some of the best and most recognised apprenticeship and graduate schemes, as well as companies with vacancies for both new and experienced candidates. Mr Carter said: "This is an event for anyone looking for advice on starting a new career, wanting information about what's next after school or looking for a change in job.

"Apprenticeships are a fantastic way to learn and earn and are an increasingly popular options for young people as they consider what to do when they've finished their exams.

"The event is taking place at the Parr Hall in Warrington Town Centre, it's totally free to enter and runs from 10am to 2pm.

"Once again local employers have stepped up and we've got a wide range of businesses coming from lots of different sectors, including logistics, healthcare, nuclear, engineering and the energy sector. This will be a great event for parents, young people and anyone wanting career advice." Event sponsors who have already confirmed their attendance include: BGEN, Bridgewater Community NHS Trust, Flex, Kinaxia, Novelis, Omega Warrington, United Utilities, and Warrington and Halton NHS Trust.

If you require any more information about the fair please do let my office know by emailing andy.carter.mp@parliament.uk

The Jobs and Apprenticeships Fair is open to all with no need to book. It is taking place between 10:00 and 14:00 on Friday the 10th of March at the Parr Hall, Palmyra Square South, Warrington, WA1 1BL.



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Litter pickers celebrate first anniversary with 85 bags of rubbish and cake!

VOLUNTEERS from the Howley and Fairfield litter team held a special celebratory litter pick from Orford Park to celebrate their first anniversary.

In a joint venture with the neighbouring Orford Litter Team, an amazing 85 bags of litter were collected by more than 20 dedicated volunteers.

The party started with the "Orford Park Can-Can" (their own can-crushing hi-vis team dance)



and later the teams sang "Happy birthday" and even shared cakes!

Using four separate teams, all the streets and alleys between Norris St, Orford Avenue, Marsh House Lane and O'Leary St were tidied, after the volunteers "swarmed" along Quebec Rd.

The volunteers from Orford, Howley and Fairfield all got seriously stuck in with the litter.

The teams logged 80 bags of litter to be collected by Warrington Borough Council the next day, while another five bags of crushed drinks cans will be recycled.

Warrington Litter Networks spokesperson Tony Dixon said: "This has made a big difference to the residential areas of Fairfield and Orford. We hope people will notice how much better their streets look and want to keep it that way. Please do go and see – it looks SO tidy!"

Julie Campbell, Hannah Austin and James Witty have led the HFLT in their first 12 months. It has created a strong local focus for the litter-picking network.

Hannah said: "We know there's a lot more to do. Walking home from



our joint pick on Sunday I noticed Marsh Street to the Barracks was particularly bad. So we're always looking towards where needs our attention next."

James added: "This year our group picked 807 bags of litter. WBC supports us, but if people want this to happen, please volunteer if you can! We are a growing movement, a network of teams working together. We are only just getting started."

Keep Britain Tidy's GB Spring Clean 2023 (GBSC) also starts soon, from 17th Feb until 2nd March. Local KBT Ambassador Tony explained: "We are tackling

the litter problem one bit at a time. Our litter picks fit together like a jigsaw. We have been busy along Orford Lane, Longford St, Watkin St and many other areas. Yes, we need more teams, and more solos. For the 2023 GBSC we want to hear from new Warrington volunteers to multiply the process".

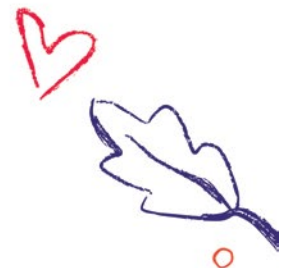
Howley and Fairfield Team hold their next pick on Sunday, February 19th, 9.45-12 starting from Marsh St Car park.

To volunteer, please register on the Howley and Fairfield page at www.litternetworks.org. This site includes groups all over Warrington.



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College's ACDS Centre teams up with theatre



PERFORMING Arts students at Warrington & Vale Royal College's Advanced Creative & Digital Skills (ACDS) Centre have teamed up in a new relationship with the Liverpool Empire Theatre.

The partnership provides students with opportunities for frequent theatre visits, complimentary tours whilst there and access to bespoke workshops.

The Liverpool Empire Theatre has been an established name in the industry for over 150 years and Warrington & Vale Royal College is absolutely delighted to be working with them so closely.

A particular highlight of this partnership is the access students have to the theatre's 'Young Ambassadors Programme' which will provide valuable placement opportunities such as working backstage, within the hospitality team or even performing on-stage. As well as this, students will have access to question-and-answer workshops with performers, access to digital resources and masterclasses, and the chance to use the theatre's stage as a performance space.

Representatives from Liverpool Empire Theatre recently visited the ACDS Centre to deliver two bespoke workshops to performing arts students: a dance call audition and a monologue or singing audition. The dance call was delivered by Beth, while the monologue or singing section of the auditions led by Dan, another talented member of the team who is both an actor and a musician. All workshops were overseen by Ben, a member of Liverpool Empire's Community Outreach Team, who works with partner schools and

colleges.

The purpose of the visit was to give students a real insight into the industry and how intense the audition process can be. Both Beth and Dan have experienced first-hand the highs and lows of the industry and so they were able to provide students with real and honest feedback on their performances. Rosanna Rigby, Performing Arts Tutor at the college, said: "The session provided an essential experience for students to develop the skills that will be assessed throughout the academic year. They need to understand the expectations that will be placed on them in the industry, so this session will be invaluable."

Those participating in the dance call were taught a routine by Beth, who chose the student she believed performed best and explained what they did well, compared to those who weren't chosen. This was incredibly authentic to how a real dance call works and was an amazing learning experience for our students. Students participating in the singing and monologue auditions faced Dan, who assessed their performances and gave valuable tips for improvement, such as how to use pauses effectively.

To find out more about Warrington & Vale Royal College's new ACDS Centre and the courses on offer, please visit: wvr.ac.uk/acds

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End of an era at Warrington Male Voice Choir

AFTER a decade as the first-ever non-singing Chairman of Warrington Male Voice Choir, the original "Silver fox" Bob Williams is saying a hearty farewell following a 30-year association with the group.

Bob has stepped down from his role as Chairman of the 'award-winning' choir, a position he has held for the past 10 years.

Bob has a long history with the choir, which stretches back more than 30 years. The association began around 1991 when the then secretary, Angus Thorburn, a work colleague at British Nuclear Fuels Ltd (BNFL), introduced him to their concerts. Bob, involved with Community Relations at BNFL, jumped at the chance to help the choir, so much so that by 1996 he had become the choir's regular compere at major concerts and their Press & Marketing Officer, principally in charge of concert programme design.

With Bob's assistance the choir secured a substantial 8-year sponsorship deal from BNFL which, in combination with other fundraising activities, kept the choir financed for many years and enabled them to go on fabulous tours around the world, with Bob accompanying the choir on almost all their visits to Ireland and Northern Ireland, helping to promote peace.

In March 1997, Bob became an associate member of the choir and in 2013 he was elected to become the choir's first 'non-singing' chairman since its formation in 1898.

When Bob joined the choir, it had a membership of approximately 80 men and at its Centenary fittingly achieved 100 men singing on the Parr Hall stage. These days the choir membership is in the 40's with plans to increase this to 50 by the end of the year.

At concerts, most people recognise Bob by his distinctive silver locks and his red-compere jacket. Within the choir, he has earned the nickname 'The Original Silver Fox' and the red jacket is a regular feature at the choir's wonderful 'Christmas Voices Christmas Brass' concerts staged, with regular guest Leyland Band, at the Parr Hall every December.

Commenting, Musical Director Russell Paterson said: "It's been an absolute pleasure working with Bob in his role as Chairman for the past 10 years. He has been nothing but supportive throughout that time and will be remembered as the Chairman who led the choir through the pandemic, surely the most difficult time the choir has endured."

Commenting, Patron of Warrington Male Voice Choir, Terry Waite CBE said: "As Patron of the Warrington Male Voice Choir I would like to thank Bob Williams for all that he has given across the years. For something like 30 years Bob has been a supporter of the

Choir and in recent years took the role of Chairman. Most people will know him as the compere of the many concerts that the choir performed both in Warrington and beyond. On behalf of the choir and its supporters, I would like to thank him for all that he has done."

The choir cordially invites anybody interested in joining, or finding out who the new chairman and committee will be, to attend any of their rehearsal evenings, which are held on a Monday and Thursday evening from 7.30pm at their regular rehearsal venue, Alford Hall Sports & Social Club, Manchester Road, Warrington.

Warrington Male Voice Choir thank Bob for his long service to the choir and, particularly, the last 10 years as Chairman and wish him and his wife Louise all the very best for the future.



Charlotte Nichols MP

Warrington North

If you live in Warrington North and have an issue you need help with or would like to book a surgery appointment, please get in touch.

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By David Watkinson

Make sure you have checked your NI National Insurance record before 5th April

If you are planning to claim the UK state pension at any time in the future then you should check your National Insurance (NI) record before 5 April 2023.

Currently, if you have a shortfall in your contributions record then voluntary contributions can be made to plug gaps in your record as far back as April 2006, but this will be curtailed from April.

National insurance contributions are typically made by employed and self-employed individuals based on their earnings in any tax year. Individuals may also receive National Insurance credits if they are eligible. These NI contributions or credits make up that individual's NI contributions record, and that may affect their entitlement to the state pension as well as other benefits, such as employment and support allowance.

In general, to qualify for the maximum 'new state pension' (received by those retiring on or after 6 April 2016) a person must have at least 35 qualifying years of NI contributions. If you cannot reach that number of qualifying years then you may receive a reduced pension. For part payment of the 'new state pension' a person must have contributed for at least 10 years.

Please note that the new State pension was introduced on 6th April 2016, and if a person's NI record started before that date then different rules may apply; the number of required years of NI contributions/credits to obtain the full state pension may be higher.

If individuals have not contributed for sufficient years prior to reaching state pension age then they may not be able to claim state pension, or to receive the full state pension amount. However, it is possible to top up their record by making voluntary contributions. To protect state pension and other benefits it may be beneficial for people to make those voluntary "Class 3" NI contributions to top up their contribution history, potentially increasing the amount of state pension they will receive.

At this point we must make the usual disclaimer. Specific financial advice is recommended when making that decision as it requires predicting, to an extent, what contributions will be made before state retirement age and the risk of future changes in the rules.

Normally, it is only possible to make voluntary contributions for the past six tax years. However,

currently there is an extension in place. Individuals can fill any gaps in their NIC history from 6 April 2006 to the present date by making voluntary contributions. However, from 6 April 2023 this extension is withdrawn, and the timeframe for making voluntary contributions will revert to the normal six years. This means that in the 2023/24 tax year, it will only be possible to make contributions going back to the 2017/18 tax year.

Individuals should therefore take the opportunity to check their NI record to identify any shortfalls in their NI history during the period 6th April 2006 to 5th April 2017. To help with this then you can go to <https://www.gov.uk/check-national-insurance-record> where you will be able to enter your details to view your record.

To make use of this link then you will need a Government Gateway User ID and password.

Taxpayers should also check that their contribution record includes all NI contributions paid through PAYE and self-assessment, as well as any NI credits earned. If you find any errors then you will need to contact HMRC at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/>



Margaret Black and David Watkinson

national-insurance-enquiries-for-employees-and-individuals to have any errors corrected.

A summary of actions for taxpayers to take before 5 April 2023 is as follows:

- Check your NI record
- Identify any discrepancies between NI contributions paid and those showing on HMRC's system
- Identify any NI credits that are missing from periods in which they should have been received (eg, on receipt of universal credit or child benefit)
- Identify any shortfalls in contributions
- Contact HMRC if you think there are any errors
- Decide whether to make voluntary NI contributions

Please note that self-employed taxpayers who do not make sufficient profits in any tax year to pay sufficient NI contributions can avoid a gap by making an election on their self-assessment tax return to voluntarily pay Class 2 NI contributions. This can be a less expensive way of avoiding a gap than paying voluntary Class 3 contributions.

WatkinsonBlack have considerable experience in all areas of taxation and business services. This includes providing a very cost-effective **payroll bureau service**, as well as assisting to ensure compliance with the latest **Making Tax Digital** legislation. If you are **employed or self-employed** either as a sole trader, partnership or limited company and want to arrange a **no-obligation initial meeting on any taxation or accounting matter** then please contact us by telephone on **01925 413210** or by e-mail to **info@watkinsonblack.com**. 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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PUBLIC NOTICES
LICENSING ACT 2003: NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR GRANT OF A PREMISES LICENCE

Notice is hereby given that we Aiko Store Ltd have made an application on 13th February 2023 to Warrington Borough Council to Vary a Premises Licence at Booze Bazaar, 196 Chester Road, Warrington, WA4 6AR. The application is for the delivery of alcohol (off sales) Sunday to Saturday 00.00 – 00.01. Representations to this application must be made in writing by the end of 13th March 2023 to the Licensing Section, Warrington Borough Council, Town Hall, Sankey Street, Warrington, WA1 1UH. The register of licensing applications can be inspected at the above address: between 09.00 and 16.00 Monday to Friday or at www.warrington.gov.uk. It is an offence on summary conviction, to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with an application. (183/23)

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(5/21)

LICENSING ACT 2003: NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR GRANT OF A PREMISES LICENCE

Dine Contract Catering has given Warrington Borough Council an application for the grant of Premises Licence for The Engine Rooms, Birchwood Park, Birchwood, Warrington.

The licensable activities which it is proposed will be carried on at the premises are, the sale of alcohol by retail. Provision of regulated entertainment and Late Night Refreshment's.

Provision of regulated entertainment
 Monday to Sunday 08:00 - 00:00
 Provision of late night refreshment
 Monday to Sunday 08:00 - 00:00
 Supply of alcohol (On/Off sales)
 Monday to Wednesday 08:00 - 23:00
 Thursday to Sunday 08:00 - 23:30

The Licensing register of Warrington Borough Council is held at East Annexe, Town Hall Sankey Street, Warrington, WA1 1UH, where applicable, at www.warrington.gov.uk. The record of the application may be inspected during normal office hours at the Council's above address and, where applicable, at any time on the above website.

Representations which shall be made in writing may be made by a responsible authority or any other person to Warrington Borough Council to be received at their above address no later than 13/03/23 (183/23)

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