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Page 8

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# Editor's Comment



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## THEY say a week is a long time in politics – well now 24 hours is a long time in politics!

Shortly after Warrington South MP Andy Carter announced he was not seeking re-election, three of his colleagues, including former Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced they were quitting the Government with immediate effect, sparking by-elections.

While I'm sure Mr Carter's decision not to seek re-election had nothing to do with the decision taken by his colleagues, it does reflect the state of Government at the moment which does little to steady the ship in such uncertain times.

Putting politics aside and having worked with many MPs representing both the Conservatives and Labour over the past four decades, I know Andy has been a hard working constituency MP, who is highly thought of by many in the community and while the next General Election is not expected until later next year, I would like to

take this opportunity to wish him well for the future – where ever and whatever that may involve.

The decision by the boundary commission to move Lymm out of Warrington South into Tatton clearly played a big part in Andy's decision making process – as it wiped out a huge chunk of his majority – and with the Government's current ratings, almost zero success of holding the seat at the next General Election – although like I said at the opening of this piece – 24 hours is a long time in politics – so the political landscape could be completely different this time next year-although I very much doubt it!

Meanwhile, the actual decision to place Lymm in Tatton, while retaining services from Warrington Borough Council, appears to be completely ludicrous. It means we will have an MP from Tatton, who has no working relationship with our elected Warrington Borough

Councillors.

When people want to escalate local issues they will have to deal with local Borough councillors and an MP down the road in Tatton.

I see absolutely no logic in it whatsoever and would love to hear from anybody who can highlight the benefits to me?

Meanwhile deepest condolences to Cllr Graham Friend following the sad death of his wife Diana from cancer, during his term of office as deputy mayor. His decision to stand down from forthcoming Mayoral duties is totally understandable as Diana would have been his consort.

This means former Mayor, Cllr Steve Wright, will now take over from retiring Mayor Cllr, Jean Flaherty after Warrington Walking Day, from July 1st, being given the rare honour of a second stint as Mayor.

Having known Steve for many years, including his time as Mayor more than a decade ago back in 2012, I am sure the chain of office will be in a safe pair of hands.

Finally, congratulations to Jean on her term of office. She has been a great ambassador for our town and I am sure she will continue to remain busy as a hard working local councillor and as a volunteer at the Friends of St Elphin's Park.



Andy Carter MP

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Ian



'I am no longer the mum who can't help with homework, who doesn't know and doesn't understand'

Hanicka



'I'd say it's changed my life'

Samantha



# Former soldier to compete at Invictus Games

**WHILE a freak training exercise brought his military career to a premature end, Liam Guatella, managed to transform his life overcoming mental and physical challenges and is now in training to represent Team UK at the Invictus Games from 9 - 16 September 9-16.**

Former Kingsman Liam, now aged 42, and a Head of Year at the Kings Leadership Academy in Woolston, joined the 1st Battalion The Kings Regiment at the age of 16 and served for three years before transferring to the Royal Military Police where he served around the world for the next eleven years. His overseas postings included Northern Ireland (x2), Hohne (Germany), Iraq x 2 (Telic 1 & Telic 7), Bosnia and Afghanistan.

After sustaining a freak injury during a training exercise he was left with a permanent disability in his left leg and forced to accept a medical discharge in 2012. After leaving service Liam struggled to find a suitable job and was diagnosed with chronic PTSD, which he still tackles on a daily basis. However, despite his mental and physical challenges, coupled with a lack of academic qualifications, Liam found his calling in a youth engagement role, funded by the Royal British Legion, which then helped Liam to find work in mainstream education as a Learning Support Assistant. In a remarkable turnaround, Liam is now a Head of Year at the Kings Leadership Academy.

Having watched his closest friend Mark win medals at the last Invictus Games, Liam was determined to follow in his footsteps and applied for Team UK 2023, where he will compete in athletics (shot putt & discus) and indoor rowing.

The Royal British Legion helped to support Liam after Service, funding his work with 16-25-year-olds on a youth engagement programme, which helped him to secure employment in mainstream education. But Liam says he faces a daily battle with PTSD.

He has already joined Warrington Athletics Club to prepare for the Games.

He said: "I refuse to let my disability hold me back, I'll give it a right go. It'll hinder me, but it won't stop me. More than anything I want to be part of a team again!"



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# New vision to make borough's libraries more attractive

**A NEW vision has been launched to make Warrington's libraries inclusive, creative, modern and attractive places for the whole community, now and in the future.**

Warrington's new three-year strategy, 'Transforming Warrington's Public Libraries 2023-26' aims to build on the ambitions of the town's library strategy of 2019-2022 – to ensure the borough's library service remains sustainable, relevant and valuable, by meeting the needs of all sections of the community.

Delivered by the borough's Libraries Partnership Board, the strategy reflects on achievements of the past three years, including the work to improve library buildings, work more inclusively with local communities and partners, and to deliver a more varied and inclusive libraries activity and outreach programme. It then looks at the next steps to help libraries thrive in the future and meet the challenges of falling library users, exacerbated by the Covid pandemic.

The strategy places a key emphasis on making Warrington libraries "valued community spaces that make a positive difference to the lives of the people that use them. They are welcoming spaces for all and offer the opportunity for reading, learning, enjoyment, reflection, calm, safety,

creativity, insight and inspiration."

Included in the strategy are the stories of local people, who share their experiences of using their community library and the positive difference it has made to them and their families.

Warrington has set out six, key strategic aims for the months and years ahead:

- Encourage and promote enjoyment of reading, learning, creativity, culture, imagination and play.
- Provide children and young people with an engaging and relevant offer to help them fulfil their full potential.
- Embrace technology and digital formats, supporting greater inclusivity in accessing new media.
- Support positive physical and mental wellbeing.
- Enable access to up-to-date, accurate and trusted sources of information.

\*Provide attractive, welcoming, inclusive and environmentally sustainable community spaces – a safe and social space for all.

The borough council's cabinet member for leisure and community,

Cllr Tony Higgins said: "We remain fully committed to investing in the future of our libraries. We've made great strides in recent years in transforming services by modernising our buildings, engaging with local people so we can better meet their needs and working hard to make our libraries a focal point for communities.

"The Covid-19 closure period had a huge impact on libraries across the country, and that impact is still being felt. That's why we need to work innovatively with LiveWire and other partners to protect and sustain them for the future and drive forward their growth.

"This strategy will help us achieve

these ambitions and will be a valuable tool in guiding our ongoing work to make our libraries places of learning, inspiration and inclusivity – places which help people forge vital networks and help support the wider wellbeing of all our communities."

Warrington's Libraries Partnership Board – made up of representatives from the council, LiveWire, the third sector and Friends of Libraries groups – was established at the end of 2017 to help sustain and develop libraries as important community spaces.

You can view the strategy, 'Transforming Warrington's Public Libraries 2023-26' at [warrington.gov.uk/libraries](http://warrington.gov.uk/libraries)



## Multi-million pound bus transformation journey given green light

THE next phase of ambitious plans to transform bus services in Warrington, including a new bus priority scheme on the A49 Winwick Road, with cheaper fares, increased reliability and high quality, accessible vehicles – is under way.

Warrington Borough Council's Cabinet has approved the new plans – as part of Warrington's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) – to move ahead with improvements to services across the board, working in partnership with local bus operators.

It means Warrington's Enhanced Partnership – set up between the council and all local bus operators – can drive forward with its work to improve all aspects of bus services. This includes just under £10m investment in bus priority measures and over £6m investment to fund a local fare cap and introduce additional bus services until March 2025.

The council will now enter into contracts with local bus service operators to put the BSIP funding into use over the next two years. This work will focus on the provision of additional, more frequent, punctual and reliable services, reduced fares and better ticketing, along with higher quality, more accessible vehicles – including 105 new electric buses.

All Warrington passengers will now benefit from plans to extend the duration of the maximum £2 single fare cap on all bus journeys. While the national scheme ends on 31 October 2023, Warrington will be keeping the cap at £2 for adult fares all the way through to March 2025.

In addition, a fare cap of £1 per single journey for all child fares is

being introduced in Warrington – also running to March 2025 – with eligibility extended to all bus passengers aged under 19 years of age.

The local fare caps – which will be promoted by the council and local bus operators – will launch on Saturday 1 July, providing low travel costs for the school holidays and for days out over the summer.

Cabinet has also improved proposals for the development of a new bus priority scheme on the A49 Winwick Road southbound. This will speed up bus services through measures such as sections of new bus lane (which would be via an additional southbound lane, maintaining the existing two lanes for other traffic to use), bus gates and enhanced traffic signal technology.

This scheme will be funded with the support of just under £9.9m of capital funding awarded to the council by the Department for Transport to progress BSIP infrastructure.

Meanwhile, good progress continues to be made in delivering the ZEBRA project, which will see the replacement of Warrington's Own Buses' entire fleet of diesel buses with 105 new electric buses, giving Warrington one of the largest all-electric bus fleets in the country.

With work on Warrington's brand new bus depot – which will house the electric fleet – now complete, the next steps are for the council to place the orders for the electric buses and chargers.

As required, the council has referred its proposals to pass the buses and chargers to Warrington's Own Buses at nominal cost to the Subsidy Advice Unit (SAU) of the

Competition and Markets Authority. The SAU has now reviewed and published its formal report on the matter, which means the council can place the orders for the buses and chargers – with the new vehicles coming into service during 2024.

The next phase of Warrington's bus improvements programme will build on a range of improvements carried out in recent months, including:

- the Better By Bus initiative – with cheaper fares and more frequent evening services
- a borough-wide bus shelters replacement programme
- a new evening service for a key bus route – the 329, which runs from Warrington to St Helens via Burtonwood and Winwick

Warrington Borough Council's Cabinet Member for transport, Cllr Hans Mundry, said: "I'm delighted that our ambitious plans for the future of bus services in Warrington have been approved. We are committed to delivering the highest quality bus services, as part of our work to increase bus usage and achieve a mode shift from the

car. It's a vital part of our Local Transport Plan (LTP4) and climate emergency commitment.

"To make this vision a reality, we need to deliver a modern, attractive, reliable and affordable bus service – and the next phase of Warrington's bus improvement programme will enable us to make huge strides in achieving this.

"Our Enhanced Partnership will play a key role in this transformation, giving us a fantastic opportunity to work with all operators locally to make significant improvements that will benefit existing passengers and encourage more people to choose the bus for their journeys.

"The improvements planned will ensure that our state-of-the-art, electric buses will be just one part of a much wider package of improvements – including cheaper fares, increased accessibility, faster journey times and improved punctuality, supported by effective bus priority measures.

"It's an exciting time for bus travel in Warrington, as we continue on our journey towards delivering a first class service which is truly fit for the future."



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# Laboratories in Warrington to have major role in robotics research

**LABORATORIES in Warrington will play a major role in research into the future of robotics it has been revealed.**

Global nuclear engineering giant Jacobs and the University of Manchester are to create a new international research centre to develop robotics and autonomous systems that will play a key role in climate response.

The Centre for Robotic Autonomy in Demanding and Long-lasting Environments (CRADLE) will research new technologies for challenging and heavily regulated industry sectors such as space, nuclear-decommissioning,

energy generation and urban infrastructure.

The centre will be co-funded to a total value of £9 million over five years by Jacobs, the University and the U.K. Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's (EPSRC) Prosperity Partnerships program, which fosters links between academia and industry.

"Securing this prestigious Prosperity Partnerships grant allows Jacobs and The University of Manchester to research the autonomous systems that industry needs to solve today's challenges and create a more connected and sustainable world," said Jacobs' energy, security and technology senior vice president Karen Wiemelt.

"Robotics is already a core strength of Jacobs' work in the energy and space sectors and this research collaboration will enable us to develop advanced technologies to help achieve net zero targets, such as autonomous inspection and repair systems to extend the life of water and energy networks, roads, bridges and railways."

Jacobs, which is investing more than £3 million, will have the opportunity to commercialise

technologies developed at CRADLE to bring a step-change impact to clients in urban infrastructure, energy generation, nuclear power, decommissioning and space exploration, where robust and reliable autonomous robotics are crucial for efficient asset management and operations.

"CRADLE will allow the university's recently established Manchester Centre for Robotics and AI to build a relationship with one of the leading organizations involved in applied robotics, helping us to progress our fundamental research in this area and to deliver impact from the robotic and AI systems that we are developing," said centre co-director Professor Barry Lennox.

CRADLE's research remit covers mechatronics, software and how communities and regulators will engage with future robotic systems. Jacobs staff will support 12 PhD students in conducting research and performing prototype demonstrations at The University of Manchester and at Jacobs' robotics laboratories in Warrington.

## 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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## DAD WEEK 2023



Tuesday  
11<sup>th</sup> July

**Disability Confident** 10.30am-1pm Walton Gardens

Event for employers. Recruitment & retention, reasonable adjustments & funding. For more info contact [J.Balshaw@disabilitypartnership.org.uk](mailto:J.Balshaw@disabilitypartnership.org.uk) or telephone 01925 240064.

**One Time Only** 7pm-9.30pm: Arts Marquee, Walton Gardens.

Creating Adventures present a variety show with a difference: Live band, Choir, Singing and more. Licensed bar. Tickets £5 available on DAD website.

Wednesday  
12<sup>th</sup> July

**Ignite your Life** 10.30am-3.30pm: Arts Marquee, Walton Gardens

Merseycare NHS Foundation Trust, mental health and wellbeing event. Workshops, talks, activities, information stands Free refreshment available, including buffet lunch. For more info contact [dennis.dewar@merseycare.nhs.uk](mailto:dennis.dewar@merseycare.nhs.uk) or telephone 01925 664850.

**Ella Summertime Special** 7pm-9.30pm: Arts Marquee, Walton Gardens

Top entertainment from the teams at the amazing Ella Performance Group. An evening of dance, singing and much, more. Licensed bar. Tickets £5 available on DAD website.

Thursday  
13<sup>th</sup> July

**Customer Vulnerability Summit** 10am-3pm: Arts Marquee, Walton Gardens

United Utilities present an event highlighting support services available to vulnerable customers, including Priority Services and much more. Open to staff working in welfare rights, advice services, social prescribing, etc. Contact [Amanda.Phillips@uuapl.co.uk](mailto:Amanda.Phillips@uuapl.co.uk).

**Carers Wellbeing Festival** 10am-2pm: Marquee 8, Walton Gardens

Warrington Carers Hub presents an event to thank carers with health and wellbeing activities including massage, mindfulness, music, crafts, dance and lunch. Contact [deborah.fitzsimon@warringtoncarershub.org.uk](mailto:deborah.fitzsimon@warringtoncarershub.org.uk) or telephone 07734 872412.

**Party in the Park** 6pm-9.30pm: Arts Marquee, Walton Gardens

A collaboration between Warrington Disability Partnership, Warrington Youth Zone, Warrington Wolves Foundation, and Warrington Carers Hub. A fun-filled evening of sports, arts, dance, chat and chill out, crafts, karaoke, music, silent disco and fun areas. Free refreshments and free admission. Contact Kate on 01925 240064.

Friday  
14<sup>th</sup> July

**Bjorn to be ABBA** 7.30pm-11.30pm: Arts Marquee, Walton Gardens.

Top tribute band perform a range of Abba's most loved hits. Dance the night away to great music! Licensed bar. Tickets £10 available on DAD website or Contact Ellen on 01925 240064.

The big event - Disability Awareness Day  
Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July @ Walton Gardens - 10am - 4:30pm

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01925 240064



# AI and future employment concerns

by John Laverick - Warrington & Co

**I hoped you found last month's slight divergence to the work Warrington & Co does in relation employment development interesting. The article got me thinking about future employment, not mine particularly but in general and the role of Artificial Intelligence - AI and how that might affect the type of jobs that people train for in the future.**

I was reading an article about 4 people who had lost their jobs as copywriters and had the strong opinion that they had been replaced by an AI system of some description and another article about the New York lawyer who is facing court as he undertook legal

research using AI which turned out to be made up. Perhaps AI is more realistic than we think and perhaps AI has more of a sense of humour than we think. I won't go on about these examples as the internet is full of articles about how smart/dangerous/dumb/funny AI can be,

except for the AI in charge of an armed drone that decided (virtually I might add) to kill its operator to give it the best chance of achieving its mission - all very Terminator 2.

But it got me wondering if I could be replaced by AI to write this column. I am really tempted to start calling it AI, by the way. Now I know some would say that I should be replaced by AI to write this column but that's not the exam question and there is of course only one way to find out, so I looked up ChatGPT on the internet and.... and....what did I do? Did I ask it to write this column or did it tell me that it was busy writing end of term essays and could I ask it again in the summer holidays when it was less busy, or did it make a note of this column and ask its cousin in the drone to find out where I live?

Luckily though as I was looking up at the sky and falling into an AI controlled dystopia, the dustmen arrived (its Friday). And it reminded me that not everything can be achieved by AI and that some things will and can only be done by people.

Which brings me seamlessly although on to things that are going to be done by people in Warrington over the next few weeks. There are a number of events on in the Town Centre, some as part of



The partnership for driving growth



John Laverick  
01925 442 243

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Warrington Pride and some not. Glitter, Cookhouse Comedy Club, Walking Day, Steam Fairs and in Time Square, International Food Market on 12th - 16th July, Go Wild Warrington on 22nd July with Dinosaurs and other visitors, Crazy Golf 26th July, Street Games 29th July and best of all we see the return of the giant puppets on 30th July. Details on Time Square website.

So the question is; have I been replaced by AI? Answers on a postcard to the usual address please and either I or AI will reveal the answer next month along with a probable return to business as normal or not depending on what AI says.

## College student wins a prestigious award



MILITARY and emergency services student and aspiring Detective Constable, Ruby Dolphin, has been formally recognised for her outstanding achievements during her time as a Volunteer Police Cadet at Cheshire Constabulary.

After leaving school in 2021, Ruby joined Warrington & Vale Royal College with little self-confidence on the Entry 3 Vocational Studies course. Here, she was nurtured to develop her employability, communication and social skills, whilst trying a range of experience days in various subjects to help her decide on a course that was right for her the following year. It was during these experience days she found that military & emergency services was the perfect option for her, having

always dreamed of working in the police and hopes of becoming a Detective Constable one day. This time also gave her the confidence to apply for Cheshire Constabulary's Police Cadet Programme which, after impressing police staff in an extensive application process, she was successfully accepted onto.

Ruby and her family were recently invited to an inspiring graduation ceremony at Cheshire Constabulary Headquarters to celebrate her, along with her fellow Cadets, passing out of the programme.

Feeling inspired? The college is still accepting applications for military & emergency services courses starting in September 2023. Find out more here: <https://wvr.ac.uk/subject-areas/sport-military-emergency-services>

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# Local businesses support prestigious Miss International UK Pageant

**MORE than 50 delegates and their families from all over the UK were hosted at the Village Hotel in Warrington for the return of the prestigious Miss International UK pageant organised by local business woman Holly Pirrie and her team.**

Alisha Cowie, a model and photographer from Newcastle, beat the competition to take the prestigious title at Warrington's Parr Hall, securing her place to compete for her country in the Miss International contest in Japan this October.

The event brought together lots of local businesses from Warrington, who all contributed to making it a huge success!

Local business White Lace Bakery, located in Golden Square, sponsored the competition by gifting the winner a celebration cake as part of her prize package.

The 56 delegates were also provided lunch from Culcheth based business Brunch Café, with the team visiting local tapas restaurant, Las Ramblas.

The Miss International UK competition is organised from the Pageant Girl office, which is situated in Warrington at The Dress Studio – Prom & Pageant Superstore.

Miss International is one of the top four pageants in the world but that won't faze Alisha. The Miss International UK crown sits comfortably on her head and it's no surprise ... she is no stranger to the pageant stage. Alisha won Miss England in 2018 and went on to

compete in Miss World, another of the top 4 pageants. She is now the only British beauty queen in recent times to have achieved such an accolade.

Alisha's winning photoshoot the following day used the beautiful Golden Gates as a backdrop, and the photos from Brian Hayes Photography will be used to promote the pageant both nationally and internationally.

Culcheth based Holly Pirrie, director of Miss International UK, said: "I am thrilled for Alisha, and she truly deserved to win. Alisha will be an incredible representative for the United Kingdom at Miss International and I know that she will have the trip of a lifetime in Tokyo!

"It was an honour to host the event in my hometown of Warrington, and heart-warming to receive such an amazing response from lots of local businesses. I am excited for future events that we plan to hold in Warrington.

"If you are reading this and want to be a part of it, either as a contestant or sponsor, our next events in Warrington are planned for March & May 2024. You can contact the team directly via email at [info@pageantgirl.co.uk](mailto:info@pageantgirl.co.uk)"



## Why Charity Retail is the Future

### When was the last time you visited a charity shop?

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### Our Environment

We are passionate about sustainability. By using charity shops, you are helping us to promote our recycle, reuse and re-love motto. Donating items to us prevents them from ending up in landfills and buying from us reduces the carbon footprint of the economy.

### Our Community

Last year, we had the privilege of working with 270 volunteers in our charity shops. They bring skills, knowledge and passion and we provide training, mentoring and a copious amount of gratitude. By working together, our shops are a joy to visit.

So, whilst many people still associate charity shops with rummaging through musty old clothes and piles of jigsaw boxes held together with parcel tape, we are proud that we are leading the way in the future of charity retail. If you haven't visited one of St Rocco's Hospice shops in a while, make it your mission to see for yourself how things have changed.







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### Meet our student, Megan Stanley

Marketeer and aspiring manager Megan Stanley enrolled on to the college's Level 2 Certificate Team Leading distance learning course to develop her team-leading skills.

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There will be a series of seven interactive displays with words, pictures, videos, objects and activities for adults and children, with opportunities for fun and learning as you go around this free event.

There will be no real animals but last time, many people said the knitted ones of all sizes, which will be on show again, had to be seen to be appreciated.

Joy Holmes, one of the project's leaders, explained the significance of the rainbow, which will again be part of the experience. "The

rainbow is a part of the story in the Bible. Its seven colours speak of the beauty of diversity."

One change from last time is that everything will be available in Cantonese as well as English, as a result of the involvement of a number of people from Hong Kong now living locally.

It will be open Monday to Friday from 1.30 to 5.30 pm and Saturday 15th from 9.30 am to 5.30 pm at St Paul's Church, 221 Warrington Road, WA5 2RX.

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# Plan for a joint approach to tackle fly-tipping

**WARRINGTON has joined other Cheshire councils, the police, Environment Agency and the National Farmers Union to discuss a joint approach to tackle fly-tipping.**

Police and Crime Commissioner John Dwyer has brought the various bodies together to discuss a joint approach to tackling waste crime – and believes the public can play their part too.

He said: "It's not difficult to find someone on social media conveniently offering to collect large amounts of waste or scrap, but did you know you could be inadvertently supporting criminal activity? And if illegally dumped waste can be traced back to you, then you could be fined up to £5,000."

Anyone who sees someone offering to collect waste or who is looking to approach someone to dispose of waste for them should ask the following simple questions that any legitimate company should be able to easily answer:

- What is your official company name?
- What is your waste permit number?
- Will you be able to provide a waste transfer note?

Mr Dwyer added: "I talk about tackling waste crime in my Police

and Crime Plan, and it's really important that we bring all relevant bodies around the table to discuss a shared approach. Whether you're in an urban or rural area, illegally dumped waste is a blight on communities. We all share the same goal, so it makes sense that we work together and share data to enable us to tackle it.

"But we also know that prevention is better than the cure, and there are easy steps that people can take to stop their waste getting into the hands of fly tippers. Be vigilant and ask those three simple questions. That way you can protect our local environment from waste crime and save yourself from a potential £5,000 fine."

Data on waste crime is often collected by local authorities – who are responsible for clearing incidents of fly tipping – but it is not necessarily shared with the other authorities, the police or other agencies. By working together and sharing data, it will enable the police to build intelligence and target waste crime hotspots across the county.

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# Work well underway on 32nd Disability Awareness Day

**WORK is well underway on the 32nd annual Disability Awareness Day which takes place at Walton Hall & Gardens on Sunday, July 16.**

Organised by Warrington Disability Partnership, it is the UK's and possibly, the world's largest voluntary led pan disability exhibition.

Event founder and co-ordinator Dave Thompson MBE DL said; "We are very pleased to announce that disability education specialists Expanse Learning Group and the North West's water supplier United Utilities, are leading our list of sponsors for DAD 2023".

The aim of this year's event is to promote independent living through the theme "It's what disabled people can do that matters". DAD 2023 exhibitors will highlight solutions supporting independent living and

mobility, with equipment, products, transport, employment, education, training, health and social care, leisure activities, alongside over 100 charities/support groups.

Most of this year's exhibitors will be housed in a huge tented village of marquees that will be supported by; an extended Sports Zone, a Centre Arena, a huge Performing Arts Marquee, two further Arts Marquees for art and crafts, featuring Goofus Theatre, a Silent Disco, a children's fun fair and play areas. Entertainment will also be available adjacent to the entrance bridge and Heritage Yard.

On the day, visitors can gain an insight into the help and support

that is available locally, regionally and nationally from statutory organisations, businesses and voluntary sector groups.

They can "have a go" at sports activities including Tennis, Cricket, American Football, Snooker, Rugby League, Martial Arts, Tai Chi, PowerChair Football, CrossFit and Scuba Diving in the on-site pool. In addition, Warrington Youth Zone's giant sports inflatables.

For those looking for those looking for a more relaxed day we will have a fantastic line-up of talent in the Arts Marquee with some of the UK's leading disabled artists including Ella Together, Carly Ryan, Creating Adventures, BSL Choir, Stars Drama, Wolf Print Dance and Groovy Movers. Supported by Rock Choir, Warrington Male Voice Choir, Signature Brass, Chester Ladies Choir and Wired for Sound. BSL interpreters will support all acts.

Alternatively, sit alongside the Main Arena watching Guide Dog display team, Reach Sled Dogs Display Team, Batida Rio Samba Band, Royal Marines Corps of Drums and sports demonstrations.

Children can visit the funfair rides or accessible onsite zoo, crazy golf, high ropes and pitch and putt.

DAD 2023 will be the finale of a week of complimentary events that includes Disability Confident Employers Workshop, Creating Adventures "One Time Only" variety show, Merseycare NHS Trust "Ignite Your Life", Ella Together "Summertime Special", United Utilities "Customer Vulnerability Summit", Warrington Carers Hub

"Wellbeing Festival", "Party in the Park" for disabled young people and young carers. The finale of the week will see the UK's top tribute band "Bjorn to be Abba".

Support services at DAD 2023 will include a free accessible Park and Ride service, free accessible buses from Warrington Town Centre, a free scooter and wheelchair loan service with trained enablers, British Sign Language interpreters, additional unisex wheelchair accessible toilets and over 100 trained stewards and helper's eager to make it a day to remember for everyone.

DAD continues to capture the imaginations of organisations around the UK and worldwide with events planned in Cameroon, India, Uganda, Abu Dhabi and more. It is no wonder that DAD continues to be recognised as the world's largest voluntary led pan disability independent living exhibition and family fun day covering physical, sensory and learning disabilities and mental health, and all ages.

Dave recalls the day it all started from a brief conversation with the rangers at Walton Gardens back in 1992; he said "Nobody would have expected the event to still be running nearly 32 years later, and that it would have grown to be recognised not just locally, but now internationally. It is testament to all of the team involved who are aptly named DAD's Army".

For any enquiries, please contact Warrington Disability Partnership on 01925 240064 or visit [www.disabilityawarenessday.org.uk](http://www.disabilityawarenessday.org.uk)



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## WHAT'S ON

- Sat 17 Jun - The Bohemians
- Sat 1 Jul - Comedy Store
- Wed 5 Jul - Kings of Europe
- Fri 14 Jul - Shed Seven - SOLD OUT
- Sat 2 Sep - Jimmy Carr
- Sat 2 Sep - Comedy Store
- Sat 9 Sep - 90s Live
- Wed 13 Sep - Tom Allen
- Fri 15 Sep - Tom Stade
- Fri 22 Sep - Phil Wang
- Fri 29 Sep - T.Rextasy
- Thu 5 Oct - The Smooth Rock Show
- Fri 6 Oct - Fastlove

- Sat 7 Oct - Comedy Store
- Sun 22 Oct - Fireman Sam
- Thu 26 Oct - Most Haunted
- Sat 28 Oct - Greatest Hits of Motown
- Thu 2 Nov - Frankie Boyle
- Fri 3 Nov - Beyond Supervet
- Sat 4 Nov - Comedy Store
- Wed 8 Nov - Gabrielle
- Sat 11 Nov - Magic of the Beatles
- Sat 18 Nov - Adam Rowe
- Sun 19 Nov - The Illegal Eagles
- Fri 24 Nov - The ELO Show
- Sat 25 Nov - Maet Live



## SATURDAY 24TH JUNE

CELEBRATE LOVE, UNITY AND DIVERSITY

TIME	EVENT	VENUE
10am - 4pm	Express yourself through art - Young people's exhibition and workshops	New Art Spaces, Old M&S building on Sankey Street
9am - 6pm	LGBTQ+ Information Support Hub	Golden Square - outside Customer Services Desk
11am - 4pm	Crafty Fox Face Painting	Golden Square - Old Market Place (next to Baked Potato stall)
11am - 4pm	Bath bomb making workshop, hand/arm massages	Golden Square - outside Lush
11am - 12 noon	Pride Messages - Rolling messages, videos & sound bites	Golden Square - Old Market Place stage
12 noon - 2pm	Pride Parade	Warrington Youth Zone
12 noon - 12:20pm	Queering through the years round 1 - Gender Neutral Fashion Show	Golden Square - Old Market Place stage
1pm - 1.20pm	Queering through the years round 2 - Gender Neutral Fashion Show	Golden Square - Old Market Place stage
1pm - 3pm	Craft Activity	Warrington Museum & Art Gallery
1pm - 3pm	Drag Queen Story Hour UK, 3D Printing Rainbows, Arts & Crafts & Pixel Art	Warrington Library, Museum Street
1:30pm - 1.50pm	Live performance by Jasmin	Golden Square - Old Market Place stage
2pm - 2.20pm	Queering through the years round 3 - Gender Neutral Fashion Show	Golden Square - Old Market Place stage
2pm - 5pm	Family friendly Transgender Cabaret led by Jacqueline Fontaine	Mamars at the Old Bank on Bridge Street
2.30pm - 4pm	Silent Disco	Golden Square - Old Market Place stage
6pm - 11pm	Glitter 2023 - A celebration of Warrington Pride featuring Fleur East, Crystal (Ru Paul Drag Race) DJ set and Aerial display, also MX World Set.	Golden Square - Old Market Place stage
8pm	Elton John Tribute Act	Warrington Market Cookhouse

## SUNDAY 25TH JUNE

TIME	EVENT	VENUE
12pm - 3pm	Global Beatles Day - Beatles Tribute	Cookhouse Terrace - Warrington Market
11am - 4pm	Express yourself through art - Young people's exhibition	New Art Spaces, Old M&S building on Sankey Street

## FOLLOWING PRIDE WEEKEND

DATE	TIME	EVENT	VENUE
Thu 29th June	7:30pm	Queer Scratch Night <a href="http://www.culturewarrington.org/whats-on">www.culturewarrington.org/whats-on</a>	Pyramid Arts Centre



# Celebrating 40 years of Birchwood Carnival with glorious sunshine

**WITH music, colour and plenty of entertainment Birchwood Carnival celebrated 40 years with glorious sunshine.**

The annual event at Birchwood Forest Park included a colourful "Coronation" themed procession around the park led by Batida Rio Samba Band.

There was also the fancy dress competition judging and prize-giving.

The afternoon's arena acts included Little Nippers Terrier Display, Batida Rio, and local acts such as Northern Starr Dance.

There was also be a fun dog show running throughout the afternoon, a large funfair and more than 30 charity, craft and commercial stalls to visit.

Other attractions included a range of food outlets, Zoo 2 U Animals, a climbing wall and rodeo dinosaur, magic shows,

giant Lego, donkey rides and local history displays.

There was also the chance to join a range of workshops, including drumming, craft and circus skills. Most of the activities were free of charge so there was lots to do for the whole family!

Now in its 40th year, Birchwood Carnival is organised and run by Warrington Borough Council's Ranger Service and Birchwood Carnival Committee, with funding and support from Birchwood Town Council, Warrington Borough Council's Community Initiative Fund, Sellafield Ltd, Your Housing Group, Birchwood Park, Birchwood Shopping Centre, The Friends of Birchwood Forest Park, Birchwood Lions, and The Buddha Group.

Pictures: John Hopkins



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# Hundreds of people help raise thousands of pounds for Cancer Research in Race for Life

**HUNDREDS** of people descended on Warrington's Victoria Park recently to take part in Cancer Research's Race for Life fundraising event.

One of the sponsors of Race for Life was Slimming World and local consultant Anne-Marie McCulloch, led a group from her Slimming World sessions at Hood Manor, Westbrook and Fearnhead to raise £1.5K for Cancer Research.

The group has lost an incredible 32 stone between them by making healthy habits and getting the confidence to get active with Slimming World's physical activity support programme, Body Magic. Starting small with short walks, they have made active habits a part of daily life before building up to cross

the finish line, feeling full of pride.

Anne-Marie said, "I'm just so proud of everyone coming together to raise money for such a worthy cause. It was a really enjoyable day, in really warm weather. The atmosphere was really heartwarming. Well done to all the team and a big thank you to everyone for their generous donations. We're really grateful".

Many entrants dressed in pink and fancy dress, with some displaying messages on their backs in memory of loved ones or those fighting cancer.

Pictures: John Hopkins



## Primary school's Race for Life raises over £3,000

PUPILS and staff from Brook Acre Primary School at Padgate, have raised over £3000 for Cancer Research UK by holding their own Race for Life.

The event was enjoyed by 230 pupils, from Foundation Stage to Year 6, accompanied by their teachers and teaching assistants.

The sun shone and laughter filled the air as the whole school took part in a high-energy aerobic warm-up before setting off on their race around the school grounds. Running, walking or jogging, there were smiles on every face with one pupil managing to complete an impressive 27 laps – running a distance of over 10km!

The event was held as part of Brook Acre's Health Week, during

which pupils also learned about healthy diets and enjoyed a wide range of active workshops. The School Council nominated Cancer Research UK as their chosen charity this year and was delighted by the generosity of the parents, friends and families in the school community.

A spokesperson said, "We had a wonderful day with everybody participating, encouraging the children to be part of their community and caring for others. We are overwhelmed by the amazing response from parents and carers in raising over £3000. This will help Cancer Research UK to prevent, diagnose and treat Cancer and improve survival rates even further."



# Fun in the sun at Great Sankey Summer Fun Day and Dog show

Pictures: John Hopkins

**ICE creams were the order of the day as the sun blazed over the annual Great Sankey Summer Fun Day and Dog Show at Dakota Park, Chapelford.**

Funded and organised by Great Sankey Parish Council the free fun packed day provided entertainment for all the family.

There were free fairground rides, stalls, hot food, ice cream, doughnuts, pick n mix, a Helter

Skelter, Bumper cars, fun house, carousels, face painting, twister ride, music live performances, dance display teams and Cheshire Police free bike marking.

The Dog show proved popular with prizes and treats for all!



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# Work ongoing to resolve long-standing issues over derelict Old Rectory and school



**LOCAL Cllrs have been working closely with Warrington Borough Council to find solutions for the long-standing issues relating to the derelict Old Rectory and Grappenhall Hall school sites in the village.**

Cllrs. Marke Browne and Helen Speed have been involved discussions including a proposed community park on the school site and another option of a new school.

Commenting on the latest situation Cllr. Browne said: "We are working closely with Warrington Council's officers to ensure that any proposals for the Grappenhall Hall School site take into account the needs of the whole village, including those of the pupils of St Wilfrid's, whose entrance is opposite to the exit from the former School."

Cllr. Speed added, "Two outline proposals for the redevelopment of the school site and the creation of a community park are being developed ready for consultation. A third proposal has now been received for a new school but is still in its early stages. A comprehensive consultation process on proposals for the site is planned and it is hoped that these will be advanced sufficiently for this to take place in the autumn."

A joint meeting, between the former Executor of the estate of the

Old Rectory, the local Councillors and a senior member of the local authority team was held recently. The probate issues, which have been ongoing for 28 years remain complex, but steps are being taken to try to break the deadlock preventing progress.

Cllr. Speed added, "It is likely that progress resolving these issues will still take some time. We made proposals at the meeting on improving the site by the erection of scaffolding, covered in a picture of the Old Rectory as it was in its heyday and the introduction of wildflowers into the garden area. The family representative said that these will be fully considered by the Executor to see if it is possible to put these proposals in place."

Cllr Browne concluded, "We committed to fight for a fair deal for Grappenhall and Appleton Thorn when elected last September. We want to work as closely as possible with the Council and the Executor of the Old Rectory to ensure the best outcome possible for Grappenhall Village and to retain as much as possible of the building's beautiful characteristics."



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# New £25.8m care facility approved on former school site

**A NEW intermediate care facility is to be developed on the former Bewsey Old School site in Warrington, following approval at a meeting of Warrington Borough Council's cabinet.**

The proposals for the new £25.8million intermediate care facility on Lockton Lane will replace and extend the current provision across multiple sites in the town.

Intermediate care is a free short-term service where patients receive intensive support from a range of professionals, either in a bed-based facility or via community services, to help them recover from illness or injury and regain their independence so that they can live safely at home for as long as possible, without the need for long-term care.

A report to members outlined the purpose, rationale, benefits and proposal for the provision of a new intermediate care facility for Warrington. The report put forward the preferred option for a new facility on the former school site, to seek approval for the new-build proposals, and to gain approval for progress to Royal Institute of British Architects 'stage three' design and development, which includes a pre-planning and formal planning application.

The proposal sets out plans to develop a modern and sufficient bed-based facility in the centre of the town that will meet current and future need for the borough.

Bed-based intermediate care means that people will receive care and support at the facility, with a place to rest and recover, on a temporary basis. Plans therefore include the provision for up to 80 beds, split into five wings over three floors, which would enable the closure of all other intermediate care beds as delivery will be from this single, state-of-the-art site.

The site will also feature office space and provision for community intermediate care services, and parking for staff and visitors. External facilities also include

ambulance parking, patient drop-off, delivery access and waste storage.

The proposals for this facility are in line with the overarching joint local strategy to grow, modernise and improve the reablement and intermediate care offer and facilities in Warrington.

Cllr Paul Warburton, cabinet member for statutory health and adult social care, said: "Intermediate and reablement care services provide essential support for a short time to help people recover from an illness, injury or crisis, to optimise their current and future independence.

"Timeliness of access to responsive and effective intermediate care services is vital to help people achieve and maintain independence at home and help to reduce delays in discharge from hospital. It has been recognised for some time that our current intermediate care facilities are unable to meet existing demand and the future needs of an ageing population.

"Our current bed-based intermediate care provision is dispersed across the town and, although great improvements have been made to service provision, the bed-based building – Padgate House – is dated and lacks capacity. This new facility will meet the requirements of the intermediate care and reablement services for the residents of Warrington.

"The overall aim for this new facility is to enable more people to live independently for as long as possible, which impacts positively on outcomes for them and reduces the long-term cost of care, and it will also provide wider benefits across the whole health and care system in Warrington."

NHS partners across Warrington



have been involved in the development of proposals for the new facility, with cabinet agreeing to progress discussions with key partners and place leads regarding future funding and revenue costs.

The capital cost of the preferred option is currently estimated at £25.8 million, with future funding arrangements subject to ongoing discussions with NHS Cheshire and Merseyside's Integrated Care Board and local system partners.

Carl Marsh, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside's Place Director for Warrington, said: "In Warrington, most of our intermediate care services are provided by a partnership of the council and Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. Intermediate care staff work closely

with colleagues from the hospital, primary care, community services, paramedics, and the voluntary sector to ensure that patients and their carer's needs are met.

"Currently there are a number of patients with 'no right to reside' in hospital who are experiencing a delayed discharge, which can negatively impact on their health and wellbeing and ability to recover and regain their independence. We recognise that by working together as a system to create a new care facility, we can help people to stay independent and well for longer, better manage demand and flow both in and out of the hospital and respite care, and manage current and future costs more effectively by delaying the need for long-term care services."

Advertiser's announcement

## Healthwatch Warrington wants to hear about your experiences with Hospital Discharge

Healthwatch Warrington is your local health and social care champion. From North to South Warrington and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care.

This Year you voted for your priorities for health and social care, and we listened. Our focus in 2023-2024 is Hospital discharge and looking into Urgent Treatment Centres.

As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure NHS leaders and other decision-makers listen to local feedback and improve standards of care. We can also help you

to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice. Last year, the Healthwatch network helped nearly a million people like you to have your say and get the support you need.

It's important that you share your experiences – whether good or bad, happy or sad. Remember, your feedback is helping to improve people's lives. So, if you need advice, or you're ready to tell your story – we're here to listen.

Head over to [www.healthwatchwarrington.co.uk/hospital-discharge](http://www.healthwatchwarrington.co.uk/hospital-discharge) to have your say and share your experiences of Hospital discharge for yourself or someone you care for.



Share your experiences of being discharged from Hospital



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By David Watkinson

## Taxpayers will now have an extra two years to make additional payments to their National Insurance (NI) contributions to increase state pension entitlements

The cut-off point for voluntary NI contributions from April 2006 to April 2017 has been extended to 5 April 2025 to help people to plug gaps in their NI record - an extension of nearly two years.

HMRC's original plan had set the deadline to 5 April 2023, but in March this

was extended to 31 July, following capacity problems on government helplines.

Extending the deadline until 2025 means that taxpayers will have more time to properly consider whether paying voluntary contributions, which could boost their state pension entitlement, is right for them.

All relevant National Insurance contributions payments will be accepted at the rates applicable from 2022 to 2023 until 5 April 2025.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) hopes the extension will grant staff more time to cope with the high level of interest - as



Margaret Black and David Watkinson

thousands of people are expected to take advantage.

This follows a number of reported problems back in March, as people struggled getting through to either the DWP or HMRC.

## HMRC has confirmed that from tax year 2023 to 2024 onwards, the self assessment threshold for taxpayers taxed through PAYE only, will change from £100,000 to £150,000

Affected taxpayers do not need to do anything now as the self assessment threshold for 2022 to 2023 tax returns remains at £100,000.

They will receive a self assessment exit letter if they submit a 2022-23 return

showing income between £100,000 and £150,000 taxed through PAYE and they do not meet any of the other criteria for submitting a self assessment return.

For the 2023-24 tax year onward taxpayers will still

need to submit a tax return if their income taxed through PAYE is below £150,000 but they meet one of the other criteria for submitting a self assessment return, such as:

- receipt of any untaxed income;

- partner in a business partnership;

- liability to the High Income Child Benefit Charge;

- self-employed individual and with gross income of over £1,000.

## HMRC closes taxpayer Self-Assessment helpline until September 2023

Due to huge backlogs of correspondence that HMRC has not been able to deal with following the pandemic, they

are directing staff away from handling telephone calls over the quieter summer months and as a result closing their self assessment helpline until

4th September 2023.

The agent helpline will remain open meaning that taxpayers with an authorised agent

such as WatkinsonBlack will still be able to access HMRC call handlers to deal with any queries during this period

**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](mailto: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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# Ben Currie "over the moon" to sign new three-year deal



**WARRINGTON Wolves' Ben Currie says he is "over the moon" after signing a new three-year contract extension until the end of the 2026 season.**

The second-rower is currently celebrating his Testimonial season and the new deal will take his time at the club to 15 years.

An Academy product, the 28-year-old has made 245 appearances for the Wire to date, scoring 91 tries.

Currie has lifted the Challenge Cup and League Leaders' Shield during his time with the Wire and has eight England appearances to his name including the recent mid-season international win over France.

On the new deal, Currie said: "I'm over the moon to be staying at the club.

"I knew I was coming into the last year of my contract and my intention was to stay if the club came in with an offer which I'm grateful they did. Myself and my family are happy and settled here and to be a one-club man is a long-term ambition for me.

"We've had consistency as a left edge this year which has helped my own form when you're used to playing with the same players either side of you. I feel like I'm getting back fit, fast and strong and I'm really enjoying myself out there.

"I'm only 28 but I look around the squad and I'm one of the senior boys now. There's a lot of eyes looking up to me so I need to be setting an example and that leadership aspect is one I enjoy and want to keep growing."

Warrington Wolves Head Coach Daryl Powell added: "Ben's been an outstanding servant to the club and is currently celebrating his Testimonial year.

"He's been a special player for Warrington over the years and it's good to see him commit his future to the club. I still think there's areas he can improve on and I'm looking forward to working with him to drive that over the coming years."



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