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HALL AND GARDENS

Issue No. 288 | December 2023 | FREE EVERY MONTH



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Editor's Comment



THE old saying "a week is a long time in politics" certainly rang true in the corridors of power at Warrington town hall.

First leader Cllr Russ Bowden and his deputy Cllr Cathy Mitchell, both announced in the space of 24 hours that they would not be seeking re-election in the elections next May.

This was soon followed by news that they would both be stepping down from their roles and now the Labour group has a new leader and deputy, to be ratified at a meeting of the Full council on December 4th.

Cllr Hans Mundry, Transportation, Highways and Public Realm, has been selected as leader while Cllr. Janet Henshaw, Sustainability and Climate Change has been selected as deputy following a group meeting at the Town Hall.

Cllr. Mundry represents Latchford East while Cllr. Henshaw represents Great Sankey North & Whittle Hall. While the announcement was sudden, it was maybe not surprising following the ongoing pressures at Warrington Town Hall with the huge £1.8b debt hardly ever out of the headlines.

This has resulted in a lot of noise on social media and a lot of it personal attacks on Cllr. Bowden and Cllr. Mitchell.

Cllr Bowden announced he would not be standing next May due to "significant personal challenges" putting immense strain on his family, while Cllr. Mitchell took the "difficult decision" to stand down due to the challenges faced as a woman, the

personal exposure endured and the "lack of effective and timely safeguards" hindering professional, personal and family life.

Having been a victim of trolling



Cllr Hans Mundry

myself I know how distressing this can be and my only advice to the new leadership team is engage with social media at your peril. You will need extra thick skin!



Cllr Janet Henshaw

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All set for return of popular Santa's Grotto

WARRINGTON Disability Partnership's famous Santa's Grotto takes place at Walton Hall and Gardens from Saturday 25 November 2023 to Thursday 21 December 2023.

Booking is strongly recommended as this very popular event sells out quickly every year.

It costs £9 per child and includes the booking fee, a visit to see Santa, a present and a reindeer puzzle trail.

There will be photographs and gifts to purchase of your magical moment on the day.

Whilst there is no charge for Adult Tickets, please consider adding a small donation (£1 per adult) to your booking to support the charity further.

There are also lots of other wonderful festive activities to take part in, including craft activities to

keep all the family busy! There are multiple time slots available each day to choose from.

Book online at www.disabilitypartnership.org.uk/events/christmasfun.shtml

Meanwhile the annual 3k Santa Dash/Walk supported by Birchwood Shopping Centre takes place on Sunday 10th December 2023 at Walton Hall & Gardens.

Walk, Push, Jog or Run, whatever you are able and join in the fun. Entry fee is just £10 which includes a five piece Santa outfit, a certificate and a Christmas-themed medal upon completion



No Neighbourhood Weekender in 2024

THERE will be no Neighbourhood Weekender event in 2024 with organisers of the popular music festival giving no reason for pulling the plug on next year's event.

The announcement was made on social media with a simple message from the organisers stating "Neighbourhood Weekender will be taking a break in 2024 but we'll be back in 2025. More news on dates and line up next year!"

Attracting thousands of music fans to Warrington's Victoria Park over the May Bank Holiday Weekend since 2018, apart from

during lockdown, the event has proved hugely popular, with Pulp making a triumphant return to the town at this year's event.

There has been speculation that the organisers were looking to relocate to Manchester and although stating the event will return for 2025, no venue has yet been confirmed.

While hugely popular for many and mainly trouble free, some local residents will not be too disappointed by the news due to the traffic issues and noise.



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Tuesday 19 th December	
Wednesday 20 th December	
Thursday 21 st December	
Friday 22 nd December	
Saturday 23 rd December	Normal Saturday Service
Sunday 24 th December	Sunday Service with earlier finishes at around 19:30
Monday 25 th December	No Service
Tuesday 26 th December	
Wednesday 27 th December	Saturday Service with additional CAT5/X5 journeys and service 96
Thursday 28 th December	
Friday 29 th December	
Saturday 30 th December	Normal Saturday Service
Sunday 31 st December	Sunday Service with earlier finishes at around 19:30
Monday 1 st January	No Service
Tuesday 2 nd January	Normal Service (school day timetables)

Warrington's
own buses

Steve set to sparkle for Strictly St Rocco's

WARRINGTON Borough Council's Director of Growth Steve Park is set to sparkle for Strictly St Rocco's Hospice.

Steve is one of eight contestants hoping to be crowned Strictly St Rocco's Hospice champion – and has a form on his side, with his dance partner, professional dancer Natalie Goodier, a previous winner – several times!

After initially wondering what he had let himself in for after agreeing to take part in the event with a "wobbly moment", he is now relishing the challenge and with more than six weeks training under his belt at Cadmans Dance School he says he is "in it to win it!"

He launched his fund-raising campaign at the Pyramid Studio in town, where Kim Marsh rehearsed for Strictly Come Dancing last year.

The event takes place on Sunday 10th December where he will be performing in front of 400 people at Nunsmere Hall.

Steve said: "Please support me with this challenge by donating what you can. Your donations will help motivate me to get onto the dance floor, and all the money raised will help the hospice continue its amazing care for the Warrington community."

Donations to support Steve's fundraising for St Rocco's Hospice can be made via www.justgiving.com/fundraising/steve-park-2023



Temporary measures to discourage town centre traffic set to become permanent!

TEMPORARY measures to discourage traffic from Warrington town centre are set to become permanent after being deemed successful by highway planners.

The temporary measures on Winmarleigh Street, Barbauld Street and Sankey Street in the town centre were introduced as part of a package to prevent and discourage through traffic movements within the core of the town centre.

Warrington Borough Council says the routes on which these measures are located are ones that have historically been subject to

significant through or rat-running movements to avoid congestion on the adjacent 'A' roads.

They say the restrictions have been successful in reducing the level of through movements to very low levels, creating an improved environment within the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists.

Now a traffic notice has been issued to make the temporary measures permanent. Any objections can be made to the council by December 7 via TRORrepresentations@warrington.gov.uk





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Birchwood Community Hub Now open!



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Multi-million pound investment will breathe new life into landmark Grade II Listed buildings

NEW life will be breathed into two landmark buildings in Warrington town centre with another multi-million-pound investment to create a second boutique hotel offering.

Following on from the success of the first Deuce Hotel development at the nearby Old Post Office Building, local property developer Danny Inman has successfully bid to be the preferred developer for the Grade II listed buildings on Sankey Street, next to the town hall.

With the nearby Old Post Office facility already proving to be a great success, Danny sees the new buildings as a natural progression.

Bank House (No 88) has been vacant since 2014 when it ceased to be used by Golden Gates Housing Trust as an operational office.

Danny said: "Work won't start until early 2024 as we have to go through the planning process and listed buildings process with the council to get approval for the conversion."

"We spent circa £3m on Deuce one, and we would expect around the same investment to hit the same high-quality finish we are looking for."

He added: "Demand for Deuce at the Old Post Office Building has been through the roof, and that, alongside the incredible reviews

we have received, has given us the encouragement to invest further in the model in the Warrington area, along with my completely biased faith in and belief in the future of Warrington as a town of course!

Land to the rear of Bank House is currently an operational council-operated public car park, and a condition of the sale is that this provision remains somewhere within the redevelopment scheme.

The new scheme replaces one put forward in 2019 when a developer proposed to convert Bank House and 86 Sankey Street into a boutique hotel, restaurant, spa and swimming pool.

Warrington Borough Council see the proposal as regenerating an area of unused vacant land, providing a quality development next to the Town Hall and bringing two landmark buildings back into use.

They say the scheme is deliverable and has planning and financial viability compared to the previous and other proposals.



Local EV charge point company named 'Installer of the Month'

WARRINGTON-based EV charge point installation company, 247EV, has recently been named as 'Installer of the Month' for one of the UK's leading EV charge point manufacturers.

The team were praised by OHME for the level of customer service and quality of the installations carried out by their team of salespeople and engineers.

One customer of the company reviewed: "Excellent service all around from initial enquiry to installation. They were really helpful in arranging the installation and ensuring we had everything we needed for a smooth installation

in place. The guy who carried out the installation was great as well, he was very polite and friendly and did a tidy job and cleaned everything up afterward. Would highly recommend 247EV!"

Working with a number of the UK's leading manufacturers, 247EV pride themselves on listening to the requirements of its customers and offering the charge point that most suits their needs.

Chris Ridley from 247EV said: "The award is an excellent reflection of the hard work carried out both in the office prior to installation and the great engineers that carry out the work".



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Christmas on the right track

by John Laverick - Warrington & Co

So I guess that this is the Christmas edition. A time for peace and goodwill to all men, woman and children. And of course, a visit from the big man himself with gifts for all. For us the bringer of gifts came in the unusual form of the Minister of Transport. Now I know that that is an odd way to look at a visit that happened in November and a slightly unusual version of the Christmas tradition, but for Warrington it is potentially significant.

Huw Merriman came to visit Warrington as part of a visit to Manchester, Warrington and Liverpool on the back of the announcement last month by the Prime Minister of the cancelling of HS2 and replacing it with a new line between Liverpool and Manchester, through Warrington Bank Quay.

We were afforded an opportunity to present our case to the Minister and officers from the Department for Transport and I was able to set

out just how positively impactful this will be for Warrington, but as importantly how this potentially positive economic and regenerative impact would also make a more compelling case for the initial investment in rail.

What we need to do next is to understand how the £12bn promise will actually work in practice and the next few months will be critical in understanding how we move from good thoughts and words into effective action and delivery to

complement what we have already achieved in the Town.

In a more traditional theme of Christmas, Time Square is coming alive with Christmas fun and activity and a packed calendar of events throughout December. Visitors to the Time Square can look forward to a host of exciting spectacles, from music, bingo and Christmas elves, and of course Father Christmas himself, rather than the Minister for Transport.

The Elf who forgot Christmas on Saturday 2nd December and Sunday 3rd December which brings a Christmas theatre experience to the square. Over the course of the weekend, there will be 10 immersive trails leading families to help the Jolly Elf find the true meaning of Christmas. Join in by singing, dancing and sharing your favourite part of Christmas!

Christmas Makers Market – Saturday 9 December and Sunday 10 December, 11am to 4pm. The Makers Market returns to Time Square for a weekend long Christmas special! Get your Christmas presents sorted with their huge selection of the finest makers, sample some of the most delicious food around, and get into the festive spirit.

Santa's Grotto at Warrington Market – Saturday 16 December



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12noon 2pm £5 – meet Santa and receive a Christmas gift. here are other festive events around the square from Saturday 2nd to Sunday 31st. To find out more about what's on at Time Square this festive period, visit timesquarewarrington.co.uk/whats-on.

For more information about Warrington's Weekend Wonderland, visit wearewarringtonbid.co.uk/weekend-wonderland-2023, and to keep up to date with Christmas in Warrington, visit warrington.gov.uk/Christmas.

I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and as always spare some thought for those who will not be having such a merry Christmas this year.



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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College breaks records with its autumn Year 11 Open Evenings

WARRINGTON & Vale Royal College's 2023 Open Evenings have come to a close after welcoming thousands of young people, their families and friends to discover the fantastic range of courses and impressive facilities on offer.

The college, which is Warrington's leading provider of technical education and skills training, specialises in delivering a broad range of technical qualifications (BTECs), apprenticeships and T Levels for 16-18-year-olds. These increasingly popular qualifications have a strong industry focus which, combined with the college's dedication to supporting students' ambitions and career goals, are ensuring that young people leave the college prepared for successful roles in some of the country's most in-demand sectors.

Since October, the college has seen pupils from more than

50 secondary schools across the North West join them for a series of exciting Open Evenings. Warrington campus was aglow with activity, with four Centres of Technical Excellence showcasing innovative, state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, thanks to over £12 million of recent investment.

Future students were guided through these remarkable facilities, experiencing true-to-life simulations of work environments, including an immersive hospital ward, assisted living flat and nursery classrooms in the Health & Social Care Academy, motion-capture suite and TV studio in the Advanced Creative & Digital

Skills Academy, and welding bays, lathes and mechatronics in the Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering Academy. Visitors also received a sneak peak of the college's latest investment, the Construction & Civil Engineering Academy, where traditional construction training methods will be combined with emerging technologies.

Pupils were greeted with a host of delights at the campus, including dance performances by the college's talented performing arts company, sampling Italian cuisine in the college's award-winning restaurant Buckley's, as well as an illuminating talk from the college's Principal & Chief Executive Nichola Newton about the bright future of the college.

For those who missed out, the college will be hosting its final School Leaver & Adult Open Evening at the Warrington campus on Tuesday 6th February 2024. The college has already seen an unprecedented influx of applications and interest for school leaver courses starting in September 2024, making it more essential than ever for young people to submit their applications and begin the admissions process early. Submitting an application to Warrington & Vale Royal College could not be simpler, whether digitally or on paper. To apply online, request a paper application form in the post, or register for the college's Open Evening, visit: wvr.ac.uk/16-18



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Adult Enrolment Evenings:

Monday 5th December

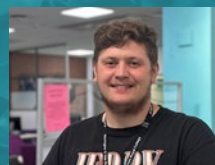
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Tuesday 9th January

Warrington campus, 5.00pm - 8.00pm

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Exhibition chronicles changing face of Warrington

AN exhibition chronicling the changing face of Warrington amid the town's fading industrial backdrop has opened.

The artist and photographer spent 18 months drawing inspiration from Warrington's rich industrial heritage and, in particular, the poignant closures of iconic giants like Fiddler's Ferry and Unilever, where once hundreds of people were united through their work and shared sense of identity.

Through an array of mediums, including striking images, immersive installations and multimedia elements, the exhibition promises a multi-sensory experience that encourages self-reflection and conversation about the town's changing character and what it means to the community.

One of the common themes running through the work includes an exploration of the connection between technological progress and isolation – the paradox in modern society where individuals can experience seclusion despite tools that allow ever growing interconnectedness.

Pete said: "A notable highlight of the exhibition is the homage paid to Warrington's distinguished wire industry through a striking neon and wire installation. Moreover, the imminent demolition of Fiddler's Ferry, the town's historic coal power plant, scheduled for December 3, serves as a poignant backdrop to the changes afoot in the town,

adding depth and importance to the narrative.

"Having dedicated 18 months to this project, the work has continuously evolved, responding to the dynamic landscape shaped by the rapid advancements in technology. The exhibition serves as a testament to the ever-changing relationship between art, technology and the evolving societal perspectives."


Pete was born and grew up in Madrid before his family moved to north west England. He then studied an Art Foundation course at Priestley College, Warrington and said his life was transformed when he was given a camera.

His new work for Warrington Museum builds upon the themes and production values of his previous exhibition, De Profundis.

Pete added: "I've been fortunate to receive substantial support from Culture Warrington, particularly from Warrington Museum and Art Gallery, which has been instrumental in my artistic growth and development."


We're All Alone in this Together also coincides with the launch of another exhibition at Warrington Museum – Priestley College's Diversity: Explored Through Abstraction which runs from November 18 to January 14.

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Breakfast with Santa

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Divorce Column

By Peter Wilkinson
Divorce Lawyer at Chambers Fletcher Solicitors

Q. Am I right in thinking that if myself and my ex can't agree on the arrangements for our children over the Christmas period we can ask a court to decide?

A. Christmas is a special time of year for families and for young children in particular and I would encourage the pair of you to work very hard at trying to agree and to find a fair compromise but if you really can't agree then yes, either of you may apply to the family court for an order to determine the arrangements. But there would of course be a cost associated with this and for many people Christmas is expensive enough without adding to it with legal fees. If the court does have to decide it will make whatever decision it thinks is best for the children because whenever the family court has to make decisions about a child the paramount consideration is the child's welfare. Depending on the specific circumstances I would expect the court to take the view that it is best for the children to see both parents over Christmas and so to find a way of enabling them to spend some time with each.

Q. I have discovered that earlier this year my husband had an affair with another woman but he says he ended it months ago and that anyway he'd deny it in court if I tried to divorce him for it. I don't feel that I can trust him anymore so how do I go about proving it?

A. Actually you don't have to. Gone are the days when you need to prove fault or wrongdoing as we now live in an era of 'no fault' divorce which means there is no longer any need even to allege blame let alone prove it. If you feel that your marriage has irretrievably broken down and you want a divorce then you're entitled to apply for and be granted a divorce without alleging any basis for it and regardless of your husband's wishes and denials. The process would likely take about 6 months but there may be other aspects to resolve which could take longer, such as sorting out a financial settlement and / or settling child arrangements.

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Pendergast's – more than just a steakhouse!

by Gary Skentelbery

THE recently opened Pendergast's is another welcome addition to the dining offer in Warrington town centre – and is certainly much more than just a steakhouse, with vegan and gluten-free offerings!

For my recent visit, I decided to go for the lunchtime special – which includes a starter, main and house drink for just £20 per head, or an extra £5 if you go for the mouthwatering Steak Frites (usually £18.95pp) – a flattened 6oz rump steak French fries & garlic butter.

It's one of several new events and offers at Pendergast's Warrington which offers the ideal venue to drop in after shopping or ahead of a night out on the town or a visit to a show at the nearby Parr Hall. The atmosphere is relaxed and chilled and a great place to recharge your batteries after a hectic shopping trip in the run-up to Christmas.

- These include:
- £35 Bottomless Brunch with free-flowing beers, prosecco, cocktails and soft drinks (every Saturday)
 - Steak frites for two and a bottle of house wine just £50
 - Sunday Roasts with live music on the last Sunday of every month
 - Christmas and NYE bookings now being taken

During my visit, I was recommended the sticky chilli buttermilk chicken, which certainly delivered a tasty kick followed by the Gluten-free Pendergast's Classic bacon double cheeseburger with fries served with house slaw, which proved to be plentiful and filling, washed down by a pint of Estrella.

The Cairo Street venue situated in the all-new Hive development, is already receiving rave reviews from customers who love the relaxed vibe, decadent interiors and quality dining options at affordable prices.

"We've had amazing feedback," says Laura Harvey, one of the business brains behind the Pendergast's concept, who was keen to bring a feminine side to the traditional steak house image.

"Of course, people are loving our steaks, but they're often surprised that we offer a wide selection of mouth-watering small plates and lighter dining options for those who don't want a huge meal. We're not like other steakhouses, lunch with us doesn't have to be an expensive occasion. Lots of our regular customers come in for coffee and a few of our small plates – whether that's for a lunch date or



a daytime business meeting."

The venue has a five-star rating on Trip Advisor – and alongside the food, many guests are rating the restaurant's unique décor, welcoming hospitality, atmosphere and ambiance, highly. One recent guest commented:

"Fantastic lunch at a great venue. The decor is great, staff were brilliant and accommodating. The food was exceptional. Very affordable prices."

Pendergast's is also becoming a magnet for the local business community, who are finding it's a fabulous setting for business meetings, lunches and (with an eye on the festive season), the perfect place to hold the annual Christmas party.

Jackie Emson of Warrington Business Exchange recently held a networking event at the restaurant and was massively impressed, she said: "The Warrington Business Exchange recently held their ladies' lunch at Pendergast's. The venue is fabulous, and our members were really impressed. We had a choice of small plates for lunch and each and every dish was delicious, served by the most attentive staff. Great choice of dishes too. We will be back soon!"

Bookings are now being taken for Christmas and New Year's Eve. Ticketed options will be released this week, with food and unlimited drinks available. Keep an eye on the Pendergast's website and social channels for more information: www.pendergasts.co.uk





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Birchwood Community Hub re-opens after £1.5m renovation

FOLLOWING seven months of works, the re-developed Birchwood Community Hub has been officially opened.

As part of the £1.5million project, funded by Warrington Borough Council and delivered in partnership with LiveWire, the facility has undergone extensive renovations and improvements, including:

New-look reception area and changing rooms – the reception area and changing rooms have had a complete makeover, creating a warm and inviting entrance and brand-new changing, shower and toilets facilities for customers, and improved staff spaces.

Fitness suite revamp – featuring an improved design and state-of-art Technogym cardio equipment, expanded free-weights area, and more space for functional training.

Newly refurbished indoor tennis courts – with the installation of a new floor, curtains and court dividers, the courts are now open and ready to welcome tennis players of all ages and abilities.

Modern library – the unused bar area has been transformed into a modern library, with a wide selection of over 10,000 books, a dedicated children's area with

4,500 books, five public network PCs and free WiFi – it's the perfect place to work, read, study and connect.

Extended fitness studio – located on the first floor, group exercise classes are now taking place in the newly refurbished and extended fitness studio, which features improved lighting and sound systems.

Brand-new spin studio – created on the ground floor, a dedicated spin studio equipped with the latest Matrix kit will elevate group cycling classes to the next level, and there's also a new digital screen for additional on-demand sessions.

All works were undertaken in phases to ensure that the centre remained open and to minimise disruption to customers.

The new-look hub was officially re-opened by Council Leader, Cllr Russ Bowden, and representatives from LiveWire, the council, contractors Schofield & Sons, and other key partners involved in the project.

Cllr Bowden said: "It was fantastic to be able to open the newly re-developed Birchwood Community

Hub today. It's great to see that it's already bustling with activity and being enjoyed by people of all ages. The extensive improvements made to the hub now means people have access to state-of-the-art facilities that will help them to live active and healthy lifestyles, alongside a modern library space that meets the needs of the community, both now and in the future.

"The council has made a significant investment in leisure and library services across Warrington in recent years and I'm so pleased to see this continue in Birchwood. We were able to use the income

generated from the sale of the former St Oliver Plunkett school site – which is now a successful housing development of over 60 new homes – to invest back into community facilities that will be of huge benefit to people who live in Birchwood and neighbouring areas."

The new-look Birchwood Community Hub has been redeveloped in line with the borough's established hub model that places leisure, library and other community services under one roof, to encourage people to participate in new activities to support mental and physical wellbeing.



Steve Park (WBC), Cllr Russ Bowden, Eleanor Blackburn (WBC), Cheryl Sidall (LiveWire), Cllr Tony Higgins

Care home placed in special measures

A Warrington care home has been placed in special measures after being found to be "inadequate" following an inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The inspection of Callands Care Home followed concerns about the management of the service, medication, and people's nursing care needs with a requirement to improve following four previous inspections.

The last inspection was published on 21 March 2021. The provider completed an action plan after the last inspection to show what they would do and by when to improve. At this inspection, inspectors found the provider remained in breach of regulations.

Callands 'care home' provides accommodation, nursing and personal care for up to 120 younger and older adults; some of whom live with dementia or physical disabilities. At the time of the inspection, 109 people were living at the home across four separate units. Issues found at the home, included only one activity coordinator for 109 people, with limited activities available.

The CQC expect health and social care providers to guarantee autistic people and people with a learning disability the choices, dignity, independence and good access to local communities that most people take for granted. Right support, right care, and right culture is the statutory guidance which supports CQC in making assessments and judgements about services providing support to people with a learning disability and/or autistic people. They considered this guidance as there were people using the service who have a learning disability and or who are autistic.

The inspectors found that people were not involved in their care planning. Care plans were not reflective of people's needs and lacked person-centred details. Risks were not always assessed. There was only one activity coordinator available to provide support to 109 people, there was limited activities available. The environment was not supportive of people living with dementia there was limited signage to promote independence.

People were not supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff did not support them in the least restrictive way possible and in their best interests; the policies and systems in the service did not support this practice.

The service had an inconsistent staff team and high agency use. This meant staff were not always aware of people's needs. People's communication needs were not always recorded and there was a lack of awareness of how to apply national best practice supporting people with a learning disability and autistic people.

Some inappropriate language was used when referring to people who used the service.

Although some people had individual ways of communicating, using body language, Makaton (a form of sign language), pictures and symbols, this was not documented which meant staff were not aware of how best to communicate with people to provide effective support and encourage independence.

Staffing levels and shift patterns were insufficient to enable all people to access the community to pursue their leisure interests and form meaningful relationships within their local community.

Staff did not always have the

training and skill needed to support people effectively. Some staff had poor relationships with each other and management. Staff did not always feel management were approachable and supportive.

Governance processes were not always effective in the monitoring of the service. Whilst some of the concerns were identified through the service's own provider audits, they had failed to rectify the concerns raised.

The overall rating for this service was 'Inadequate' and the service was therefore in 'special measures'. This means the CQC will keep the service under review and, if they do not propose to cancel the provider's registration, they will re-inspect within 6 months to check for significant improvements.

For adult social care services, the maximum time for being in special measures will usually be no more than 12 months. If the service has demonstrated improvements when next inspected and it is no longer rated as inadequate for any of the five key questions it will no longer be in special measures.

At the time of the inspection, there was not a registered manager in post. A new manager had been

in post for 4 months and had submitted an application to register. The CQC is currently assessing this application.

A spokesperson from HC One who operate the Callands Care Home said: "Our priority is the health and wellbeing of our residents, and we always take all feedback from the regulator seriously. We are disappointed in the outcome of the latest CQC inspection, and acknowledge that we fell short of the high standards of care our residents expect and deserve."

"Since the CQC inspectors visited our home in September, we have already made progress in line with our comprehensive action plan. We have implemented additional leadership in the home, and have provided our staff with enhanced refresher training."

"With the support of the Local Authority and CQC, and under the guidance of our new experienced Home Manager, we are continuing to work hard to make and embed the changes needed at the home. "All of us are united in our mission to ensure that our Residents receive the best possible quality of care."



Former office building to become children's home



A FORMER office building at Orford can be converted into a children's home, planning chiefs at Warrington have decided.

The property – originally built as a shop – is in Catterall Avenue and has stood empty for some years.

A new bungalow will be built on the site to enable the development to house six children with complex needs and up to 11 staff.

Nearby residents have been consulted on the scheme and there were no objections.

Warrington Borough Council planning officers recommended the

scheme be approved and indicated the proposals would result in an improvement in appearances.

A number of trees would be lost, but these would be replaced and the development would be complemented by soft landscaping.

The borough's development management committee was told there would be 11 staff on duty during the day and four at night.

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Action ongoing after residents raise concerns over hotel-based asylum seekers

A Woolston Cllr. says he will continue to press the Home Office for action over young male asylum seekers being housed at the Holiday Inn following a recent Working Together meeting in the area.

Cheshire Police recently hosted a meeting in Woolston to discuss various concerns, including the housing of asylum seekers at the hotel and anti-social behaviour in the area.

A number of matters were discussed at the meeting and officers are now working closely with Warrington Borough Council, Woolston Parish Council and the local community to

address the concerns.

Following the meeting, local cllr Rob Tynan said: "Since it was announced that Woolston would be housing asylum seekers under the Asylum Dispersal Scheme I have continually supported residents and worked with them to end the use of hotels in our area. While I know people are sympathetic to the plight

of asylum seekers, they are worried that they have not been consulted on exactly who is being housed there.

"I am grateful to Superintendent Adam Ross for increasing the police presence across Woolston, especially around anti-social behaviour hotspots.

"Residents are rightly concerned, and I share their concerns, I hope that the increase in police visibility will help make residents feel safer.

"Cheshire Police have reiterated, and I echo their comments, if you are in an emergency, please call 999 or if you witness anti-social behaviour please call 101 even if it is a minor incident.

"I continue to press the Home Office for action over the housing of young male asylum seekers in our area given the burden on our local services. Small boat crossings are down, and the Government are taking action to secure our borders compared to Labour who not only have no plan to stop the boats, but they also has no desire to either. At every opportunity they do everything to stand in the way of action that would make a real difference – voting against our small boats legislation over 50 times."

A spokesperson for Woolston Parish Council said: "The Parish Council welcomed the response from Cheshire Constabulary and Warrington BC in organising the Warrington Working Together event



on 2 November.

"The open meeting for our community at the Church of Ascension allowed a frank and open discussion with residents and representatives of the Police and the Borough Council.

"Residents explained their concerns and were listened to respectfully. Explanations from the officers of actions already taken in supporting our community were reported.

"The Police and Borough Council will continue liaising with the parish council and further information is to be published, including through the local social media.

A spokesperson for Cheshire Police added: "On Thursday 2 November officers from Cheshire Police hosted a meeting in Woolston to discuss concerns which were raised at a recent Working Together event in Warrington.

"A number of matters were discussed at the meeting and officers are working closely with Warrington Borough Council, Woolston Parish Council and the local community to address the concerns."

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Local mortgage centre pledges to donate toys, clothes and food to families in need this Christmas

UK Mortgage Centre (UKMC) is aiming to help families across Warrington and the surrounding areas this Christmas.

After a year of financial uncertainty and many families struggling to afford their mortgage and other household bills, UKMC want to ensure no child or family in Warrington goes without.

Founder Sam Fox said "We may have rebranded from Warrington Mortgage Centre, earlier this year, but for many of us working here, Warrington is our home. We want to make sure, now more than ever, that we help as many families as possible during this cost of living crisis. Everything has increased in price, not just mortgages and interest rates and we know first hand from our customers the difficulties many are facing."

UKMC are asking their fellow partners to donate to our appeal instead of delivering presents for their team! Instead of gifting Christmas treats to introducers of the business will also be donating the value of those treats in toys and food to further aid the appeal.

Anyone who wishes to donate

can drop off their toys, books, etc to their central office during their opening hours.

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Sam Fox added "If anyone is able to donate, either a toy, a book, clothing or food we would be grateful for your support."

UKMC, formally Warrington Mortgage Centre, launched a similar appeal last year and hope to double the success.

UKMC will continue to work closely with charities both locally and nationally throughout 2024 and give back to the community.

Contact UKMC For Mortgage Help: If you're ever in any doubt about affording your current or potential mortgage then it's worth speaking to an expert mortgage adviser who can help guide you through the process and help find a solution for you.



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By David Watkinson

Merry Xmas everyone!

In years past we have spoiled your Xmas build-up by giving you details of what was in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement. Unfortunately, as we write this there is still nearly a week to wait until we know what we will be facing next year. We could speculate, like many of the other papers, but will only depress you once when we actually know what the new measures are.

However, there are a couple of things that we already know.

Firstly, the Chancellor has already confirmed that he will safeguard the "Triple Lock" this year. Under the Triple Lock, pensions increase by the greater of:

- Wage inflation in the year to September, which this year was 8.2%,
- Consumer Price Index for the same period, which was 6.7%, or
- 2.5%

There is some speculation that he may exclude certain one-off pay rises awarded to public service employees. If he does then the increase of 8.2% as above would be

reduced to 7.8%. Either way, the increase will make a further substantial contribution towards offsetting the freeze in pensions of a decade ago.

The "New State Pension" for the current year is £10,601. If the full increase of 8.2% is applied then this would increase to £11,470 per annum, or £220.58 per week. If the smaller wage inflation figure is used then the new rate would be £11,427 per annum, or £219.76 per week.

The second thing of which we are already aware is that the Personal Allowance is being frozen at the current level of £12,570 until at least 2028. This is the amount that you can earn before you pay income tax. Ignoring the cumulative effect of the freeze last year, this is effectively a tax increase for basic rate taxpayers of about £210 per annum.

Whilst it can be seen from the above that a pensioner with no other income is currently below the tax threshold many pensioners do have additional incomes, such as savings income or

private pension income. Currently, pensioners need to have additional income of £1,969 before they start to pay tax. Next April, the additional income needed to bring a pensioner into tax will fall to at least £1,143. It is estimated that this could affect as many as 200,000 people! It is also interesting to note that even if pensions increase by the lowest of the triple lock amounts, ie 2.5% each year then by 2028 the whole of the personal allowance will be used by the state pension.

For those pensioners that are affected, there is a further affect which they should be aware of if that additional income comes from sources other than earnings or private pensions. Employees and people with private pensions will generally have any tax due deducted at source under Pay As You Earn (PAYE). However, PAYE cannot be applied to savings income or to state benefits. Therefore, many of the pensioners who are dragged into tax by these provisions will only become aware that they owe tax after the end of the tax year and will then be faced



Thomas Coyne and Stuart Barr

with having to meet their tax liability as a lump sum.

However, enough of all this talk of taxes. Whatever 2024 holds for us, we still have Xmas to look forward to. The directors and staff of WatkinsonBlack would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Happy Xmas and a prosperous New Year

And finally, I am sure that Mr Warrington will be telling you elsewhere that 2024 marks the 25th anniversary of the birth of Warrington Worldwide. WatkinsonBlack is pleased to have made a monthly contribution for the vast majority of that time. We would like to congratulate Gary and the staff of Warrington Worldwide for reaching this milestone, and we look forward to continuing our support for the next 25 years.

HAPPY XMAS EVERYONE!

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More challenges ahead for Warrington Town



by James Gordon Photo courtesy of Sean Walsh

PLANS for required ground development at Cantilever Park have been approved by town planners, but Warrington Town chairman Toby Macormac admits there are still plenty of challenges ahead.

The Yellows have brought the highest level of football the town has ever seen this season, and currently sit eighth in National League North – the sixth tier of the football pyramid.

Following their promotion, there is a requirement to upgrade Cantilever Park to meet the next level of ground grading as stipulated by the FA.

This includes the creation of a self-sufficient, segregated away end – comprising of seating and terracing, toilets, food/drink facilities and separate turnstiles – as well as numerous other improvements within the ground.

One of the most costly is the requirement to widen the concreted areas around the pitch to ensure capacity is maintained in those areas, as well as the installation of steel handrails in all standing areas.

The projected cost of that work has already put paid to plans to install two additional terraces to accommodate home supporters, which were shelved until a further date when the planning application was submitted back in September.

The current application was approved by the development management committee meaning focus can now turn to the funding and execution of the plans.

Work has to be done to satisfy the FA's ground graders by the end of March 2024, otherwise the Yellows face relegation from National League North – regardless of their league placing.

Macormac said: "Even though the planning application has passed, it doesn't alter the fact that we've now missed the November funding window due to delays in various areas.

"It now means we're going to have to do as much work as we can ourselves and reduce the grant application (to the Premier League Stadium Fund), so that when the money does drop in February, we can complete the work before the March 29th, as we'll need ground grading visits ahead of the deadline.

"The plan now is to take some stuff out of the funding application – things like the snack bar, toilets, some of the pathway work and handrails, and try and get as much of this work done ourselves.

"Then hope the money drops in February and pray to God we get all the work done by March 29th.

"It's easier to remove stuff that you can only qualify for 50% funding for, rather than the ones you get 70% for. Fans will have seen we have started to tape off some areas where some work will be done.

"We've had a hammer blow from United Utilities too, that the cost to connect the sewage up from the toilet block to the sewer in the adjacent road is going to be between £6,000 and £12,000 because of the depth we have to dig down, so we're going to alter the design and fit a septic tank behind the 3G area.

"The hole in funding that we anticipated was £80,000, and we estimate around £20,000 will be covered by the groundfunding campaign going on."

The Yellows average crowds have risen by a further 50% in the 2023/24 season, with the average up to 1,040 for this campaign.

They are yet to welcome some of the bigger supported clubs to Cantilever Park too, with the likes of Scunthorpe United, Hereford and Chester all still to visit.

Performances on the pitch, with one of the lowest budgets in the league, have them just a point off the play-off places.

But as Macormac has said previously, this season is about staying in the division – both on and off the field.

The club explained in a statement that no funded works are allowed to commence until the money lands, leaving a tight deadline for the Yellows to meet come the spring.

More than £10,000 has so far been raised by an online fundraiser by the club.

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