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## Exciting new chapter

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# Editor's Opinion



**WHILE council leaders across Cheshire and Warrington have moved to reassure local rural communities that "no one will be left behind by devolution", I am still yet to be convinced it will be the best deal for Warrington.**

In my opinion little canvassing has been done locally to gauge public opinion and the word on the street, from what I can see, is that many members of the public are opposed to it, seeing it as another level of bureaucracy.

Add to that the political landscape at the moment, you could toss a coin on who would become an elected Mayor. Imagine our labour-controlled authority being answerable to an elected Mayor from an opposition party.

It hardly conjures up a place of harmony and agreement on financial spending.

Add to that the current state of our town's finances and an uncertain future with Government envoys overseeing future spending, there is far too much uncertainty about what the future holds.

Thankfully the proposed Mayoral elections have now been pushed back 12 months and won't happen before May 2027, by which time we might have a clearer picture on the political landscape and the town's finances.

In the meantime, I would encourage those in the corridors of power to fully engage with local residents to find out what people really think and want, instead of relying on PR positive spin stories

on the benefits of devolution.

It is currently a very one-sided argument.

The fears of the rural communities came in response to a government-led consultation that took place earlier this year which showed that some rural communities in Cheshire and Warrington have concerns that a devolution agreement would focus on urban or high-population areas.

Some respondents expressed worry that a Mayoral Combined Authority might not understand or prioritise the needs of rural communities and businesses in Cheshire and Warrington.

Others felt that local rural

communities were not prioritised under existing structures, with people also expressing concerns that market towns and rural areas could be disadvantaged compared to larger towns and cities.

In response to these concerns, Cheshire and Warrington's leaders have made clear that they are collectively determined to ensure that the benefits of devolution are felt by all communities across the area.

Well if that is the case, please ensure meaningful dialogue takes place with your local electorate, the people who will be given the task of voting for an elected Mayor.

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# Exciting new chapter for Belvoir Warrington under new leadership

**AFTER 17 years of dedicated service by founders Gary and Amanda Pemberton, Belvoir Warrington has entered an exciting new chapter under the leadership of local property professional Lauren Hughes.**

With five years' experience in sales and lettings at a neighbouring branch, Lauren brings both industry expertise and deep local knowledge to the role. As a Warrington native, she is well-acquainted with the community and surrounding areas—insight that she says will be invaluable in continuing to build strong relationships with landlords and tenants alike.

"This is a fantastic opportunity to grow a respected franchise that's already built on solid foundations," she shared. "The property industry is ever-changing, and now more than ever, it's important we support landlords in navigating evolving legislation, such as the upcoming Renter's Reform Bill."

In just her first month at Belvoir, Lauren has hit the ground running, describing it as the busiest she has ever been. Her focus is on equipping her team to meet future challenges head-on, maintaining Belvoir's reputation for trusted guidance and service.

"My team's commitment, knowledge and passion are key to helping landlords adapt and thrive. We're not just here to let properties—we're here to educate, protect and grow together."

Lauren's ambition is to challenge

established market leaders in the sales sector and position herself as Warrington's leading estate agent of choice.

After nearly two decades at the helm of Belvoir Warrington, longstanding owners Amanda and Gary have officially transferred ownership of the business to Lauren.

In a strategic share sale, all existing contracts, banking arrangements, and operational structures remain unchanged. The transition marks a new chapter for the agency, with Lauren stepping into the leadership role—bringing a vibrant mix of energy, experience, and a growth-driven mindset.

Gary said: "Amanda and I have had the privilege of building and growing Belvoir Warrington for the past 17 years. It's been an incredible journey."

"We're excited to see Lauren continue our legacy and take the business to new heights, supported by our exceptional team."

The move reflects a seamless handover, ensuring stability for clients and staff while ushering in a fresh era of innovation and development for the Warrington-based property business.





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## Community champion stands down



**AFTER 45 years of dedicated service, including four terms as President at Warrington Lions, community champion Tony Gandy has stood down.**

Tony, who is also well known as Father Christmas on the Lions' annual float, announced earlier in the year that he wished to stand down and enjoy some much-needed time with his family, and spend time with his only Grandson Joe, who is currently playing rugby for Wigan Warriors.

At his recent farewell meeting, fellow Lions told many stories of his time as a Lion, from being Santa for 40 years out in all kinds of weather, to being famous on YouTube shouting, "Sorry can't stop the clutch has gone!"

One of his proudest achievements was one of the biggest donations to date from Warrington Lions and that was a specialist bath for patients at Warrington Hospital.

Tony would like to express his

thanks and how grateful he is to the people who have supported him from all across the town, helping him to achieve great things.

Tony has now handed over the reins to the newly elected president Carol Kilgannon. Carol has over 20 years of community service under her belt and is being joined by new Treasurer Pam Queeney and Secretary Christine McDermott, who also have many years of community commitment.

Tony has offered support where he can to the new president and also offered to do one last year as Santa!

Carol said: "From all at Warrington Lions, we wish Tony all the best for the future and we ask him not to be a stranger."

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# Hundreds sign petition opposing plan for biogas plant on Green Belt land

**HUNDREDS of people have signed a petition opposing controversial plans to create a biogas plant on green belt land at Winwick, Warrington.**

The development would be used to deal with waste food imported from outside of Warrington on land just 250 metres from new homes being built in the village.

Local Cllr Stuart Mann Borough Cllr for Burtonwood and Winwick said: "It is extremely disappointing that the Severn Trent Biogas planning application has come forward.

"Should this industrial development on the Green Belt and prime agricultural land be allowed it would be devastating for not only the residents of Winwick but Croft, Culcheth and Glazebury too.

"Being situated less than 250 metres from people's homes and the new Bellway development, St Oswald's Close, which I am sure will raise serious concerns for prospective homeowners, cannot be justified in any way particularly as this site would NOT be for the collection of residential food waste in Warrington but from other boroughs imported by hundreds of polluting HGVs weekly, completely negating any argument that such a site supports the wider 'Green Agenda'.

"I take heart that my concerns are shared by ALL FIVE Borough Cllrs and three Parish Councils in

North Warrington and would like to publicly thank them for their support.

No matter of our political differences our community will always come first and we are united in our opposition to something that will affect every man woman and child in our wards.

"I make no apology for asking everyone who opposes this development to visit the resource

page on Winwick Parish Council's website to understand more about how to object and to submit those objections to WBC.

For more details visit <https://winwickparishcouncil.org.uk/biogas>

He added: "Finally, please also sign the petition at the following link BUT REMEMBER you still need to also object too. Do both not just one."

<https://www.change.org/StopTheBiogasPlantWinwick>

Local councillors have also called for a Scheduled Ancient Monument

to be protected, arguing that the site's national archaeological importance makes it wholly unsuitable for development.

The land in question has been officially designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument due to its national significance — putting it on the same legal footing as iconic sites such as Stonehenge, Hadrian's Wall and the Tower of London.

Unlike listed buildings, which are graded according to importance, all Scheduled Monuments are recognised as nationally significant.



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# Market turns five in Time Square and celebrates over 770 years of local history

**Warrington Market is marking five years in its Time Square home, while also celebrating more than 770 years since it first began trading in the town.**

The market's roots go back to 1255, when a royal charter was granted to Sir William Fitz Almeric le Boteler, the 7th Baron of Warrington. It allowed a weekly Wednesday market and a three-day annual fair, establishing Warrington as a place of trade, exchange and gathering that has continued for centuries.

The current market building opened in July 2020 as part of Warrington Borough Council's £142 million Time Square development. It brought the market into a new, purpose-built space in the heart of the town centre. Opening during the Covid-19 pandemic meant a difficult start, but five years on, the market has become one of Warrington's busiest destinations.

Cllr Hitesh Patel, Cabinet Member for Economy, Growth and Quality Work said: "To be part of something that's lasted more than 770 years is pretty special. Our traders, both new and long-standing, have helped shape the market into a place people visit every week. The move to Time Square has brought a lot of new

energy and made us a central part of the town again.

"Today, the market is home to more than 50 independent businesses, along with the Cookhouse food court, which includes 14 street food-style outlets. It offers a mix of services, from groceries and tailoring to tech support, hair and beauty, gifts and global cuisine. In 2023, we

attracted over 2.4 million visits, with the market remaining a major draw."

The market is owned and operated by Warrington Borough Council. As well as being a commercial space, it plays a wider role in supporting business growth, creating jobs and encouraging people to spend time in the town centre.

It also runs a regular programme of events, including seasonal markets, craft fairs, themed

weekends and cultural celebrations. Recent activities have ranged from Lunar New Year performances to community workshops and family-friendly trails.

Cllr Patel added: "We're always looking at how we can keep things moving forward. That could be through new traders, fresh events or making improvements to the space. The market continues to adapt and play its part in the future of the town centre."



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## Divorce Column

By Peter Wilkinson  
Divorce Lawyer at Chambers Fletcher Solicitors

### Understanding Schedule 1 Children Act 1989

What is Schedule 1? When parents separate it's important to make sure that any children of the family are properly supported, financially as well as emotionally, and this is where Schedule 1 may, in some situations, be of help. It's probably fair to say that most, if not all, parents are aware of the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) but in my experience many parents are unaware of Schedule 1 of the Children Act. However, sometimes the CMS isn't enough to meet a child's particular needs and this is where Schedule 1 Children Act 1989 could come into its own.

While Schedule 1 is not limited to unmarried parents it is most frequently used in situations involving parents who are not married or not in a civil partnership. This is because unmarried couples who separate don't have the same automatic financial rights as divorcing couples. In short, Schedule 1 allows one parent to apply to the family court for an order for financial support for a child from the other parent and can be especially useful where some specific or additional financial provision beyond the scope of the CMS may be needed.

Under Schedule 1 various types of court orders can be made such as lump sum payments (one-off payments), periodical payments (regular payments for maintenance – perhaps where the CMS doesn't apply or perhaps in addition to CMS support), secured periodical payments (where payments are secured against assets) and if needed the transfer of property for the benefit of the child to meet their housing needs.

When considering whether to make a Schedule 1 order, and if so what order to make, the court would look at the full circumstances of both parents and the child, including income, assets and needs, including any health or disability needs and also future education plans if relevant.

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## Peace campaigners awarded honorary degrees



**PEACE** campaigners Colin and Wendy Parry have been awarded honorary degrees by the University of Liverpool.

Following the tragic loss of their son Tim in the 1993 Warrington IRA bombing alongside three-year-old Johnathan Ball, the couple established the Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Peace Foundation in 2000. The Foundation works to support young people, victims of terrorism, and communities affected by conflict.

Colin and Wendy received the Honorary Doctor of Laws (Hon LLD) in recognition of their continued dedication to peacebuilding and community support.

On receiving the award, Colin said: "We're deeply honoured to receive this honorary degree. Having been born and raised in Liverpool, it means a great deal to be recognised by such a respected institution in a city that holds a special place in my heart. This award is not just a personal milestone, but a reflection of the work Wendy and I have done through the Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Peace Foundation."

They join a group of distinguished

individuals from the fields of culture, health, science, and research who have been recognised by the University of Liverpool.

Professor Tim Jones, Vice-Chancellor of the University, said: "I am delighted to celebrate and welcome our honorary graduates into the University of Liverpool community—individuals whose remarkable achievements and meaningful connections to the University serve as a source of inspiration for us all."

"As students and their families gather to honour years of hard work and commitment, our honorary graduates not only receive formal recognition for their contributions but also share their journeys, offering wisdom, encouragement, and invaluable insights. These stories help guide our graduates as they prepare to take their next steps, reminding them of the many paths to success and the impact they, too, can make in the world."

## Solicitors welcome new Legal Assistant to team

STOCKTON Heath based Chambers Fletcher solicitors is pleased to announce the appointment of Olivia Bryant as their new Legal Assistant.

Olivia will be providing valuable support within family law in particular and across the firm generally. She brings with her some prior experience gained in the family department of a national law firm and Chambers Fletcher is confident she will be a strong addition to their team.

Senior Partner Peter Wilkinson commented, "We are delighted to welcome Olivia to Chambers Fletcher. Her experience to date and her enthusiastic proactive approach will be a real asset to both our business and our clients."

"We are excited to have Olivia on board and we very much hope that she will become part of the long-term future of the firm."







## Six friends complete cycling challenge in memory of Mike Fogg

**SIX friends have completed a gruelling cycling challenge along Portugal's Algarve, raising thousands of pounds in memory of much-loved Latchford local Mike Fogg, who sadly died from stomach cancer earlier this year.**

So far their efforts from an incredible 265 km ride from Lisbon to Vilamoura, have raised over £17,500 for St Rocco's Hospice, with funds still coming in.

Carl Palmer (Urban Building Projects), Darrel Graham (Smithfield's), and friends Norman, Ally, Ste and Guy recently completed their incredible journey in memory of Mike, who spent his final 10 days under the outstanding care of St Rocco's. His wife, Irene

Fogg, also passed away there 16 years ago, in the room next door.

Mike was a well-known local in Latchford and a regular at Pierpoints Pub.

St Rocco's provides specialist palliative care for people with life-limiting illnesses across Warrington, supporting patients and families in the most compassionate and relaxed environment. Their care for Mike was nothing short of phenomenal from start to finish.

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# Reform UK not getting carried away with by-election success

**THE Warrington branch of Reform UK says it is not getting carried away with success following the recent by-election victory at Bewsey & Whitecross.**

With just an 18 per cent turnout for the Warrington Borough Council seat of Bewsey and Whitecross, Reform UK candidate John Roddy won with 43.7% of the votes, taking the seat off Labour.

However, the local branch, which only formed in February, is not getting carried away.

Jan Balfe, the branch Chair, said: "It was disappointing that the turnout was low, but I am sure that when people see that Reform Councillors do make a positive difference, people will learn to trust some politicians again".

Local businessman Mr Roddy, deputy chair of the local branch, wanted to thank those who voted for him, and promised to work hard to address issues people had raised with him during the campaign.

They mainly raised the issues of flooding, Crime and the surge in HMOs (Houses of Multiple Occupancy).

The by-election success gives Reform UK their first seat on the



borough council after missing out in a by-election at Great Sankey earlier in the year by just 30 votes.

Meanwhile Labour Leader of Warrington Borough Council, Cllr Hans Mudnry says that while the result was extremely disappointing, it was also not surprising in the current political climate.

### Bewsey & Whitecross

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Maitane Akpan Lab 631  
David Crowther Lib Dem 223  
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# New reports reveal challenges of GP access and importance of independent Healthwatch voice

**TWO new reports from Healthwatch have revealed widespread concerns about access to GP services, with residents calling for urgent improvements in appointment systems, digital access, and support for vulnerable patients.**

The surveys across Warrington, Cheshire and Merseyside have also highlighted the importance of having an independent Healthwatch voice, currently earmarked for closure as part of Government cutbacks.

The Warrington GP Access Survey Report, based on feedback from over 150 local residents, highlights frustrations with long phone queues, limited appointment availability, and digital tools that often fail to meet patient needs. While 93% of those who secured appointments were satisfied with the care they received, many described the process of getting there as "stressful" and "disheartening."

Meanwhile, the Cheshire and Merseyside GP Survey Report, which gathered responses from nearly 7,000 people across nine boroughs, paints a broader picture of systemic issues. The findings show that:

- 66% of patients relied on phone contact, with many facing long waits and repeated call attempts.
- Digital exclusion remains a major barrier, particularly for older adults and those without internet access.
- Only 6% of patients received a

set time for online consultations, leading to uncertainty and delays.

- Alternative care routes, such as pharmacies and NHS 111, were used but often failed to fully meet patient needs.

Despite these challenges, both reports found that once patients were seen, satisfaction with care was high. In Warrington, 89% were happy with how their appointment was delivered, and 88% felt they saw the right professional. Across the region, 92% of respondents said they were satisfied with their appointment experience.

Carl Marsh, Warrington Place Director, acknowledged the findings, stating: "We are committed to ensuring patients are seen by the right clinician the first time and that enough appointments are available."

Lydia Hughes, CEO Healthwatch Warrington and Chair Healthwatch Halton, added: "This is just one example that supports the need for Healthwatch and our independent voice, to support local residents and patients' experience for Health and Social Care services in Warrington and beyond."

The reports will be shared with



the NHS Integrated Care Board and local partners to inform future planning and service improvements. Healthwatch organisations across the region will continue to monitor progress and advocate for patient-centred care.

Meanwhile, Warrington South MP Sarah Hall has pledged to campaign for independent advocacy following a meeting with the under threat Healthwatch Warrington team.

With the Government planning to axe Healthwatch organisations Warrington would lose an independent champion for people using health and social care services.

It acts as a voice for the

public, gathering feedback and experiences to improve services.

Ms. Hall recently met with the Healthwatch Warrington team, including Chief Executive Lydia Hughes, to hear directly about the vital work the independent body carries out on behalf of residents. The meeting explored the impact of national changes, key local campaigns, and plans to support community voices across health and care.

Healthwatch has long served as an independent, confidential voice advocating for health and social care users. It offers free, impartial advice, collects feedback, and ensures decision-makers hear people's experiences.



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# Chance to win cinema tickets and gifts in new community partnership with ODEON

**WARRINGTON-WORLDWIDE** has teamed up in a new community partnership with **ODEON Warrington**, offering chances to win tickets to see the latest movies to hit the big screen, with plenty of blockbusters heading to Warrington in the coming months.

To kick-start the partnership there was an online competition to win tickets to see the new Smurf movie.

Lucky winner was Jeanette Taylor who correctly identified pop star Rihanna as the celebrity singer featuring in the movie.

The lucky winners are pictured receiving their Smurf gifts ahead of viewing the movie at the Westbrook-based multi-screen cinema.

Watch this space for more competitions and details of the new releases heading our way.



Vicky Wilcock from Odeon with Editor Gary Skentelbery.

## Computer recycling company donates laptops to local charity

WOOLSTON-based computer recycling company CRT UK has donated some laptops to local charity, Warrington Disability Partnership (WDP).

The laptops will be used by clients of their New Leaf employment and training project, which the partnership runs with the Torus Foundation. The project is designed to help people with complex barriers get back into work.

Stephen Rakestraw, Managing Director of CRT UK, said: "We were approached by the New Leaf Project to provide some laptops for people who need them to apply for employment. As a responsible IT recycling company, we like to donate a proportion of laptops to local schools and charities. I met up with Lorraine Woolley, Employment Adviser at WDP, during the recent Disability Awareness Day and presented her with some refurbished laptops".

Lorraine said: "The laptops will make a huge difference to the lives of our clients and will enable them to do courses and find jobs that are much needed. You have removed the barriers that stop them from doing the basic things needed to find work. The impact of your kind gesture is huge and will make a great difference to

those who need them."

CRT UK provides a free collection and certified data destruction service to businesses that are upgrading their IT equipment. They collect laptops, computers, monitors, servers, network equipment and all of the associated ancillaries.

Stephen added: "Our first responsibility is to ensure that all data is properly destroyed, which is done by using specialist software or by removing the hard drive and destroying it. We then provide a detailed asset report and certificate of destruction. However, a lot of redundant IT equipment still has plenty of useful life in it, so it can then be reloaded and reused. If not, it is stripped down to its component parts for recycling."

As businesses invest in the latest technology, the redundant IT is still useful to others. It makes sense to reuse rather than send to landfill. It also makes sense to use a Warrington company to recycle your IT rather than using one from out-of-town. Because we are local, we can provide a quick, efficient collection and data destruction service to Warrington businesses for free.

For more information, go to [www.crtuk.co.uk](http://www.crtuk.co.uk)



Stephen Rakestraw presenting the laptops to WDP President Pam Thompson and Lorraine Woolley, Employment Adviser.



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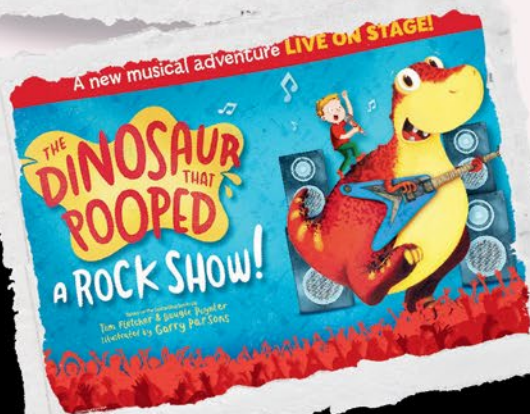


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\*Minimum age applies. Extra discounts refer to Saver Mondays discounted tickets for ODEON Extras members at ODEON cinemas in the UK and NI. Criteria for earning additional benefits applies. Points are earned at a rate of 25 points per £1 spent (category exclusions such as alcohol purchases apply). For full terms and conditions and details of membership benefits, visit [ODEON.co.uk/extras](https://www.odeon.co.uk/extras).  
Information correct as of March 2025.



# WHAT'S ON AUTUMN 2025



**Wed 3 Sep - What's Love Got To Do With It?**

**Fri 5 Sep - Everton Double Winners of 1985**

**Sat 13 Sep - Dinosaurs Live!**

**Tue 16 Sep - Swan Lake**

**Fri 19 Sep - The Beast - Iron Maiden Tribute**

**Sat 4 Oct - Comedy Store (Parr Hall)**

**Sat 11 Oct - Northern Live**

**Sat 25 Oct - Sounds Familiar Music Quiz**

**Mon 27 Oct - The Dinosaur that Pooped a Rock Show**

**Thu 30 Oct - Skindred**

**Fri 31 Oct - Antarctic Monkeys**

**Sat 1 Nov - Greatest Hits of Motown**

**Sat 1 Nov - Comedy Store (Winmarleigh House)**

**Sat 2 Nov - A Night at the Darts**

**Thu 6 Nov - Alan Davies - Think Ahead**

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- Fri 7 Nov - Sugar Pie Honey Bunch
- Sat 8 Nov - Gareth Malone - 50 Years of Song
- Fri 14 Nov - Luke Combs UK Tribute
- Sat 15 Nov - Symphonic Ibiza
- Fri 21 Nov - The ABBA Reunion Tribute Show
- Sat 29 Nov - Peter Price
- Fri 5 Dec - Inspiral Carpets
- Sat 6 Dec - Comedy Store (Parr Hall)
- Fri 12 Dec - Sounds Familiar Music Quiz
- Fri 12 Dec - The Houghton Weavers
- Thu 18 Dec - Taylormania
- Fri 19 Dec - Live/Wire: The AC/DC Show
- Sat 20 Dec - Warrington Male Voice Choir  
Christmas Voices Christmas Brass
- Sat 3 Jan - Panto 2026
- Sun 11 Jan - Beauty and the Beast



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SCAN ME





# Mission accomplished at Disability Awareness Day as planning starts

**AFTER possibly the hottest Disability Awareness Day on record, plans are already in the pipeline for next year's event, with a rallying call for new sponsors.**

Bathed in near-unbroken sunshine and warm conditions, the sunny weather enhanced the inclusive atmosphere, encouraging families and individuals alike to explore the extensive offerings across the garden grounds, while also seeking a break from the sunshine in the shade.

Organised by Warrington Disability Partnership, the 34th DAD featured over 200 exhibitors showcasing everything from mobility aids and vehicle adaptations to inclusive sports, education services, health support, and arts initiatives. The event's principal sponsors were proudly highlighted at the opening ceremony: Expanse Learning Group, a nationally recognised disability education specialist, and United Utilities, the North West's water supplier.

Mayor Mo Hussain, along with former mayors of Warrington, applauded the event's spirit and significance. In a message of support he reinforced the local council's strong support for disability inclusion.

Reflecting on another "mission accomplished" post event at Walton Hall and Gardens, event

founder, Dave Thompson CEO of Warrington Disability Partnership, is already looking ahead to next year's event, scheduled for July 12th 2026.

While the hardworking volunteers from DADs Army are recovering from their endeavours, plans are already being formulated for next year at Walton Hall & Gardens.

Dave founded the charity and Disability Awareness Day after breaking his neck playing American Football, more than three decades ago when he was aged just 31.

He says the Scuba tank was one of the busiest places to escape the heat at the weekend, with many of the volunteers taking advantage of it post event to cool down.

Now he has issued a rallying call for new sponsors for next year's event, while also thanking those who ensured this year's event could take place, most notably Principal sponsors United Utilities and Expanse Learning.

Anyone interested in supporting next year's event can email Dave at [DaveThompson@disabilitypartnership.org.uk](mailto:DaveThompson@disabilitypartnership.org.uk)

Pictures: John Hopkins





# Disability Awareness Days for DAD 2026







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# Special plaque commemorates history of Warrington Borough Police Force



**A special ceremony took place commemorating the history of Warrington Borough Police force which existed from 1847-1969.**

Cheshire Chief Constable Mark Roberts QPM performed the official unveiling of a bronze plaque which has taken pride of place on the historic Arpley Street building, the last remaining operational police building of its kind in cheshire – and home to the Cheshire Police Museum run by a team of dedicated volunteers.

Two of those volunteers, Chris Upham and Pete Hampson (pictured above) were instrumental to organising the plaque which honours officers and staff who were members of Warrington Borough Police 1847-1969 and worked in the current Arpley Street police station. The station was first opened in 1901 and was called the Palace of Justice.

The Borough Force was amalgamated with the Lancashire

Constabulary in 1969, and in 1974 there was a further amalgamation with the existing Cheshire Constabulary.

Those attending included around 15 of the 30 surviving members of Warrington Borough Police, the Chief Constable and Senior Officers of Cheshire Police.

Also attending was Mayor of Warrington Cllr Mo Hussain, and the town's MPs Sarah Hall and Charlotte Nichols and Cllr Hans Mundry Leader Warrington Borough Council.

Members of the public, organisations and school visits are all welcome and admission is free of charge. It is situated within the working Police station on Arpley street in Warrington, so for security reasons people are asked to book before visiting.



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Hi all. It's holiday's time again, so I am faced with 'Out of Office' responses or 'OOO' I guess we all need a holiday, and time to reflect and recharge for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the year.

Ameritz never stops though; we are planning releases for Q4 2025 and 2026.

One fantastic new signing is George Gallagher. Some say "Liverpool's Michael Buble" I think that is a little unfair on George. Dare I say George can hold his own, even up against Michael Buble.

Plans are now in place to take George to "the next Level" beyond Liverpool. He certainly has the talent to exceed all our expectations. After years of gigging he had a break on the BBC drama 'The City is Ours' George appeared as the crooner performing 'The House of Bamboo'

We invited George to Ameritz to record 'The House of Bamboo' live with the Mike Smith band. I have worked with Mike on numerous projects, and he is top draw! His players will be appearing on George's debut album – Out soon on Ameritz!



Also, this month we welcome a new person to our A+R team. My son Lenny Green! Lenny (*who is 15 years old*) is very into his music, Hip Hop to be precise. He is going to advise us on the next big UK Hip Hop artists to talk to.

One thing I have learned from my 30+ years in the music business is that the kids always know what will be next big thing.

The Beatles were discovered by Brian Epstein when several 15/16 year old kids came into his shop saying 'Have you got anything by The Beatles?' Brian had never heard of them, so he found them, and signed them. The rest is history! The kids found them first.

According to Lenny and his mates at school Hip Hop is as big as ever!

Who am I to argue?

Until next month, keep singing, playing and performing.

Dave Green



George alongside saxophonist Mike Smith and his Band.



Are you an artist or in a band? Want to get in touch?  
We'd love to hear from you.  
Go to [www.ameritzradar.co.uk](http://www.ameritzradar.co.uk)



# Spectacular UFO and alien experience brings curtain down on Warrington Arts Festival

**A spectacular UFO experience and alien invasion hovering over Bank Park brought the curtain down on Warrington Arts Festival in style.**

The close encounter for true believers and family audiences of all ages landed in Bank Park for a mysterious open air show called StarSaucer.

Outdoor theatre specialists, The Dream Engine, kept the details of

this newly developed performance a surprise – and didn't fail to deliver to the watching audience who patiently waited for the magic to begin.

Amid a haze of smoke and the whirl of a warp drive, this arts festival finale delivered a strange spectacular experience as enigmatic alien figures emerged to respond to their new environment.

Youngsters ran around screaming with excitement as the aliens mingled with the crowd as ET met Close Encounters.

As with many of the festival's performances, StarSaucer was a free to attend event thanks to funding and support from Arts Council England, Warrington Borough Council and Warrington BID.

Video clips of the performance can be seen on the Warrington-Worldwide's Facebook feed.



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## A fond farewell to bodybuilding legend Walter O'Malley



**WARRINGTONIANS** turned out in force to bid a fond farewell to legendary bodybuilder Walter O'Malley, who sadly died recently, aged 85.

The former Mr Universe runner-up paid one last visit to his famous gym on Norman Street, Warrington, before a funeral service at Walton Lea Crematorium.

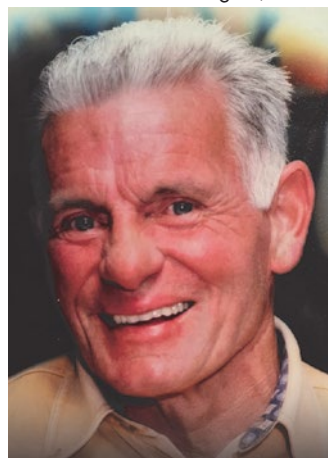
Several hundred well-wishers broke out in applause as the hearse arrived outside the gym, with hundreds more attending the service at Walton Lea.

After a successful bodybuilding career on stage, O'Malley continued to be an important figure back home in Warrington, where

he opened a gym on Norman Street where he could interact and help others build the best versions of themselves.

Many took to social media to share memories of Walter O'Malley following his passing, including WWE legend Davey Boy Smith Jr.

He competed in the Mr. Universe competition in the Tall division five times, finishing as the runner-up in 1973 and 1974. He is also a former champion of the Mr. World – AAU, Most Muscular and Tall.





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— Spotlight on Local History with James Balme —

# The Dukes Cut - A History of the Bridgewater Canal

**The Bridgewater canal has often been described as Britain's first canal. Built under instruction by its owner and creator the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater Francis Egerton it was opened on the 17th July 1761.**

Living close to the Bridgewater canal myself I decided to visit Agden Wharf close to the village of Lymm to take a four mile walk along the canal and see for myself this magnificent feat of industrial engineering created during the 18th century.

The canal was originally built securing its place in history as being one of the first ever canals that didn't follow a natural watercourse. So successful was the construction and design of the canal that it was to become the standard format of construction for future canals across Britain.

The Bridgewater canal became known affectionately as 'The Duke's Cut' and it marked a golden era for canals in England if indeed not the whole of Britain. When Francis Egerton was a young man he decided to take the Grand Tour of Europe and was highly impressed with the canal systems that he saw on his travels. He was so inspired that he came up with the idea for building his own canal system in England and hopefully that idea would spread to the rest of Britain. On his return home the Duke was to employ the services of one John Gilbert to help with the surveying and levelling of the initial canal site. In 1759 Francis Egerton was to hire the services of James Brindley to build a ten mile stretch of his canal to carry coal from Worsley to the textile manufacturing centre at Manchester. Brindley was born in Derbyshire and lived much of his life in Leek, Staffordshire and he became one of the most notable engineers of 18th century Britain. The Duke certainly hired the best people money could buy.

In 1760 construction work began on the Bridgewater canal and by the end of 1761 the canal had reached as far as Stretford.

By the end of 1765 the canal had reached Castlefield Wharf right in the heart of Manchester.

Over the following years the canal was to reach many other areas passing through Agden, Lymm, Grappenhall, Stockton Heath, Higher Walton and beyond before being completed in 1776 connecting Manchester to Liverpool, a stunning feat of engineering for sure.

It was in the year of 1885 when the Bridgewater canal was sold to the Manchester Ship Canal Company for the princely sum of 1.7 million pounds. In 1975 the Bridgewater Canal trust was set up following a serious breach of the canal at nearby Dunham Massey. The cost to repair the damage to the canal was in excess of a quarter of a million pounds. Today the Bridgewater canal is used by many thousands of people for recreational purposes. Boats cruise along the canal and some wonderful countryside walks can be found along its length stretching from Manchester and through the Cheshire countryside and beyond. The stretch that runs between Agden and Lymm is particularly interesting where you will find the very old Agden Wharf as well as the original three storey warehouse built during the construction of the canal in the 18th century. If you enjoy mixing nature with history then I can certainly recommend this stretch of the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater's canal that revolutionised transport during the 18th and 19th centuries.

My film, 'The Duke's Cut' shot at Agden near Lymm, takes you on an aerial tour of the canal and can be viewed for free with many other local history films by visiting my history channel, [youtube.com/Tvpresenter4history](https://youtube.com/Tvpresenter4history).



The 'Tvpresenter4history' History channel was launched in July in 2007 and has grown into a rich historical archive with over seven hundred video features and documentaries available to view for free highlighting ancient churches, buildings and historical sites across Cheshire and beyond. Many of the films are also featured on the National Churches Trust website. Why not take a look at my history channel where you can follow my latest history series 'Rambles through History' and my earlier series 'History Walks'.



Francis Egerton 3rd Duke of Bridgewater

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# Financially yours

## Making Tax Digital for Income Tax: The clock is ticking

It's hard to believe, but we're now less than a year away from Making Tax Digital (MTD) for Income Tax becoming a reality. For those affected, it's going to be the biggest shake-up in tax reporting since self-assessment was introduced back in the 1990s.

Now, I know what you might be thinking: "Great — more admin and another thing to keep on top of." And yes, there will be extra steps involved, but with the right preparation it doesn't have to be a headache. The key is to start getting ready now, so you're not scrambling when the deadline arrives.

### Who's Affected and When?

MTD is being introduced in phases. From 6 April 2026, it will apply to sole traders and landlords whose gross income — that's your income before expenses — is over £50,000 a year. A year later, from April 2027, the threshold will drop to £30,000, and from April 2028 it will come down again to £20,000.

It's worth stressing that this income test looks at your total from all sources of self-employment and property. So if you've got £30,000 in trading income and £21,000 in rental income, you're over the £50,000 mark and will be in the first group starting in 2026. Even overseas rental income is included in the calculation.

### Who's Not Included?

If you're under the threshold,

you're safe for now — though the lower limits in later phases could still bring you in. Partnerships, including LLPs, aren't part of MTD yet, and limited companies are excluded completely. But if you're in a partnership and also have rental income or a separate sole trade on the side, that extra income could still put you into MTD.

### Exemptions for Special Circumstances

HMRC knows not everyone is able to use digital systems. If you're unable to keep digital records because of your age, a disability, poor internet access or other practical reasons, you can apply for an exemption. Certain religious groups whose beliefs are incompatible with electronic record-keeping can also be exempt.

The key here is that you have to apply — it's not automatic. So if you think you might qualify, don't leave it until the last minute.

### How Will You Know if You're In?

Before April 2026, HMRC will look at tax returns from 2024–25 to see whose income puts them in the first phase. If you're over the £50,000 threshold, you'll get a letter telling you that you must start using MTD from that April. The same process will happen for each later phase as the income limit drops.

Once you're in scope, you (or your accountant) will need to:

1. Choose suitable software from HMRC's approved list.
2. Sign up for MTD through HMRC.

And no, you won't be able to use HMRC's old self-assessment portal — everything will have to be submitted through compatible software.

### What Changes Under MTD?

The main difference is that instead of keeping your records all year and filing one return, you'll need to:

1. **Keep your records digitally** — every bit of income and expense for your business or rental properties will need to be recorded in MTD-compatible software, including the date, amount and category. This can include spreadsheets.
2. **Send HMRC quarterly updates** — every three months you'll send a summary of your income and expenses. These aren't full accounts, and you don't need to make adjustments for things like depreciation or allowances yet — just the raw figures.
3. **Submit an end-of-year declaration** — after your final quarterly update, you'll finalise everything, make adjustments, add other income, and claim any reliefs and allowances.

If you're in the first phase, your quarterly update deadlines will be 7 August, 7 November, 7 February and 7 May.



Thomas Coyne and Stuart Barr

### Dropping Below the Threshold

If your income falls to £30,000 or less, you won't automatically drop out. You have to stay under that level for three years in a row before you can stop using MTD.

### What If You Miss a Deadline?

MTD will introduce a points-based penalty system. Every time you miss a deadline, you get a point. Hit the limit and you'll get a £200 fine. Keep missing deadlines and the fines will keep coming. Points will eventually expire if you stay compliant, and you'll be able to appeal if you think a penalty is unfair.

### Getting Ready Now

I know April 2026 sounds far away, but it really isn't when you think about how many changes this involves. You'll need to get comfortable with your new software, possibly change your bookkeeping habits, and get into the routine of quarterly reporting.

The good news? If you start now, you can ease into it. Try out some software, get your records organised digitally, and maybe even practise sending a mock quarterly update so that when the real thing arrives, it's second nature. The bad news? If you wait until the last minute, you could be juggling new technology, changing processes, and looming deadlines all at once — not a combination anyone enjoys.

**WatkinsonBlack** have considerable experience in all areas of taxation and business services. This includes providing a very cost-effective **payroll bureau service**, as well as assisting to ensure compliance with the latest **Making Tax Digital** legislation. If you are **employed or self-employed** either as a sole trader, partnership or limited company and want to arrange a **no-obligation initial meeting on any taxation or accounting matter** then please contact us by telephone on **01925 413210** or by e-mail to **info@watkinsonblack.com**. Please note that these ideas are intended to inform rather than advise and you should always obtain professional advice before taking any action.

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# Dragon boat racers raise over £20,000 for St Rocco's Hospice



**THIRTEEN teams of courageous individuals met at Warrington Rowing Club ready to race Dragon Boats along the River Mersey helping raise over £20,000 towards patient care at St. Rocco's Hospice.**

Hundreds of spectators watched in anticipation as each team took part in three races, competing for a place in the final. The final race and presentation were also streamed live on Facebook for those unable to attend in person to join in on the excitement.

Cadent Dragons Red were crowned this year's winners, followed by Biking Rowers in second, and Amandas Marauders in third!

The runner up teams taking part this year were: Cadent Dragons blue, LMS, DAL Electrical, Dante Group, Rudy's Pizza Stockton Heath, David Lloyd Warrington, Torus, Halliwell Jones Warrington, Young's Roofing and Ship Faced.

The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Sagheer Zaman attended on the day and kindly supported in presenting medals and the trophy to the winning teams.

St. Rocco's would like to thank

Warrington Rowing Club, ARC training for providing first aid, Brian Tuohy and Moore Camera Club for volunteering their time, the food and drink vendors – Barista Ze, Out to Lunch and Matt's Ices and to all their volunteers who gave up their time to attend.

Thank you to Halliwell Jones BMW Warrington and John K Philips for sponsoring this fantastic event.

A huge thank you also goes out to everyone who came to watch and show support and, of course to all the rowers and drummers, and amazing team of volunteers.

If you would like to hear more about their upcoming events or about the services offered by St. Rocco's, you can visit [www.stroccos.org.uk](http://www.stroccos.org.uk). You can also contact the Events Team on 01925 575780 or by emailing [events@stroccos.org.uk](mailto:events@stroccos.org.uk)



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