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UNDER NEW OWNERSHIP



**Elves busy preparing
Santa's grotto**

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Editor's Opinion

Let us all hope Warrington Borough Council's six-week consultation over the future of Woolston Neighbourhood Hub results in a positive outcome for the thousands of local people who rely on the community facility.

Ever since Warrington Borough Council changed course on its investment policy to raise additional funds to plug holes in budget shortfalls, cutbacks have been coming thick and fast.

They say they have been listening to the people over their investment concerns.

Well now it is time to listen to the people over the loss of an important community facility which provides vital services for health and wellbeing, both physically and mentally.

Even if the £3m quoted to bring the facility back into use is correct – it is a small price to pay to keep the hub open.

Not long ago, Warrington Borough Council's leadership didn't think twice about investing millions of pounds into a private bank, an energy company which went bust or lending money to private enterprise for a return on investment.

Now they are having to think twice about investing money in maintaining a vital community facility which helps people remain active by swimming, or using a gym, or visiting a GP to maintain their health and wellbeing or visiting a library to help children appreciate the benefits of reading

a book.

I'm sure the money required could be borrowed cheaply over a period of time, to ensure this much-needed community facility can remain open and continue to provide the facilities local council-tax payers contribute to. It is the council's duty to provide these services.

I know difficult decisions have to be made – but this should be an absolute no brainer. Warrington Borough Council made the decision to take LiveWire back in house –

did they not think about their duty of care maintaining their asset?

With the consultation due to end in the New Year, let's hope the council can see some common sense, keep the facility open and then run it so it can maintain itself – like any other leisure centre run by a private business.

With all the housing developments taking place, including just down the road at the former Padgate campus site, there is going to be some section 106 monies available.



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Elves busy preparing Santa's grotto

THE elves have been very busy preparing Santa's grotto at Walton Hall & Gardens for the children of Warrington.

The now famous indoor fully accessible Santa's Grotto will be in Walton Hall and Gardens each weekend from Saturday 30th November to Monday 23rd December 2025.

Book using the link below but don't delay as this very popular event sells out quickly every year.

The WDP Santa's Grotto is based at Walton Gardens Heritage Yard. It's £12 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 although they are selling out fast.

All proceeds go to Warrington Disability Partnership.

Dates and times

Saturday 29 November – 10am to 4pm

Sunday 30 November – 10.30am to 4pm

Saturday 6 December – 10am to 4pm

Sunday 7 December – 11am to 4pm
Saturday 13 December – 10am to 4pm

Sunday 14 December – 10.30am to 4pm

Saturday 20 December – 10am to 4pm

Sunday 21 December – 10.30am to 4pm

Monday 22 December – 10am to 4pm

Tuesday 23 December – 10am to 4pm

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Two stars set to shine at Parr Hall Panto

It will be twice the spectacle when panto season returns to Warrington's Parr Hall in the New Year.

The Warrington venue has revealed there will be two stars for January's family-friendly production of *Beauty and the Beast* in partnership with Tony Peers Ltd.

Heading up the bill will be singer, actor and TV personality Jake Quickenden as the ruthless hunter Gaston while *The Chase*'s Anne Hegerty is returning by popular demand as Fairy Rose.

Jake first rose to prominence as a contestant on ITV's *The X Factor*. Following his departure in 2014, he was immediately whisked off to the jungle for *I'm A Celebrity*... Get Me Out of Here! where he finished as runner-up.

Since then, Jake has become a regular fixture on our screens. Most recently, Jake was a contestant on BBC1's *Celebrity Masterchef* and among his many highlights was winning *Dancing On Ice* in 2018 with skating partner Vanessa Bauer.

He said: "I can't wait to thrill you all with the antics of Gaston in this production of *Beauty and the Beast* at the Parr Hall in Warrington in January. Do come along, it's a great way to have fun, let your hair down and enjoy the festive season with your loved ones."

Meanwhile, families couldn't get enough of Anne's fairy godmother vibes in *Cinderella* at the beginning of this year, and Anne equally loved the warm reception she received in Warrington – so she will be sprinkling just a little more magic in 2026.

The professional quizzier, TV personality and fellow *I'm A Celebrity* contestant added: "I can't wait to be back with the cast and crew in *Beauty and the Beast*. The audience are so appreciative, and the Parr Hall team make us feel really welcome!"

Also returning in a starring role is Charlotte Buxton as Belle after previously playing *Cinderella* at Parr Hall while former *Ugly Sister* Matt McInnes will be swapping his glad rags for the dual role of Beast/Prince.

Parr Hall favourite, magician and entertainer Daniel Dean as well as Mervyn Francis and Katie Buttner complete the main cast.

Full of chaos, calamity, traditional slapstick humour and sing-along songs, Tony Peers pantos have been entertaining audiences of all ages for decades.

It will be the first panto since Tony's death was announced on 23 July this year.

A spokesperson for Parr Hall said: "Our upcoming production of *Beauty and the Beast* is in tribute to Tony Peers, a big-hearted showbiz veteran and the man behind the magic of our much-loved annual pantos."

"We've had a partnership with Tony for more than 15 years. It won't be the same without him, but in words Tony must have said hundreds of times in his career: 'The show must go on'."

"We're sure Tony will be smiling

down at us with his signature beaming grin when panto season returns to Warrington in January, and we'll definitely be raising a toast to his memory."

Beauty and the Beast comes to Parr Hall from 3 to 11 January. Tickets are on sale – giving early birds the chance to secure the best seats in the house. Call Box Office on 01925 442345 or visit parrhall.culturewarrington.org/whats-on/beauty-and-the-beast



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Sat 3 Jan			
Sun 4 Jan	11:00am	3:30pm	
Fri 9 Jan	7:00pm		
Sat 10 Jan	9:45am	1:30pm	5:30pm
Sun 11 Jan	11:00am	3:30pm	

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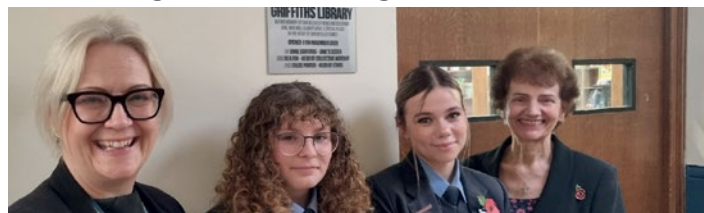
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School library opens in memory of Safeguarding Governor



SIR Thomas Boteler Church of England High School has celebrated the official opening of the school library under its new name: The Griffiths Library.

It has been named after the school's much loved Safeguarding Governor, Jane Griffiths, who sadly passed away earlier this year.

The school describes Jane as not only their Safeguarding Governor but, above all, a friend.

Headteacher Mrs Scott-Herron said: "I wanted to recognise all the time Jane spent with us here at school so she would always be with us. I thought: I've got to do something for her in the building. She always commented on how much she loved the library — how much she loved the feel of it and it was the first place she ever came to us as a Governor. I thought, what could be better than naming our library The Griffiths Library? Jane's legacy will live on here forevermore."

The Griffiths Library was officially opened by Jane's sister, Anne

Griffiths, who was joined by their Year 11 students: Bea Fox, Head of Collective Worship, and Chloe Porter, Head of Ethos.

Before cutting the ribbon to mark the official naming of the library, Anne said, "It is such a privilege for me to be invited here today, to your special school — one that Jane truly loved. This is such a beautiful and fitting way to celebrate Jane's incredible legacy, for which I deeply thank you all. It is with great pride and honour that I dedicate your library to my amazing and beautiful sister, Jane Griffiths."

The opening of The Griffiths Library stands as a lasting tribute to Jane's unwavering commitment, kindness, and love for the school — a legacy that will continue to inspire generations of students to come.

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Former Unilever factory site set to be reborn as major Data Centre

THE 130-year-old former Unilever factory site at Bank Quay, once the heart of Warrington's historic soap-making industry, is set to be transformed into a cutting-edge, next-generation data centre.

Warrington-Worldwide was given a first look, behind the scenes into the work which is now getting underway on the privately owned site.

The ambitious regeneration project is a joint effort by local development company Platform and The Dante Group, aiming to power the UK's growing artificial intelligence (AI) economy and bring high-tech jobs to the town.

The site, which closed its production lines in October 2020 after 130 years of operation, has long been a familiar landmark near Bank Quay train station. Initial plans for the location focused on demolition, but the new vision represents a significant pivot towards the digital future, repurposing the industrial land for essential modern infrastructure.

Warrington South MP Sarah Hall recently mentioned the project in Parliament, calling on government ministers to support local innovation and homegrown firms driving the UK's technological progress. She highlighted the development as

a prime example of how local ambition can foster national renewal and create a stronger local economy.

Carl Oates, a director at The Dante Group involved in the Platform project, emphasised the site's historical significance and the community's connection to its manufacturing past. "The old Unilever site means a lot to our town. Generations of families remember working there and the pride that came with it. What we're doing now is about bringing that place back to life, turning a vacant industrial land into something that powers the new economy".

The project has been praised for its collaborative approach, with Oates noting that it took "real teamwork" from businesses and local leaders to ensure future opportunities were created in Warrington by local people. The development is expected to support the town's role in the national digital infrastructure and boost the local job market with new skills and roles.

Fellow Dante Director Neil

Rustage added: "Platform @Bank Quay is more than just a data centre. Our approach allows for bespoke infrastructure to support hyperscalers and research institutions as the UK accelerates its adoption of next-generation AI and high-performance computing technologies."

The team also includes John Laverick, who helped deliver various projects in Warrington, during his time at Warrington & Co.

Welcoming the development, Warrington Borough Council's Chief Executive Steve Park said: "It is fitting to see that a site that was once at the forefront of chemical engineering, is now once again being used in leading innovation

in the modern economy. Research, development and investment is underway across Warrington and the common denominator is always the hunger for data analytics which this site will be able to provide and therefore is a key part of the growth of the local economy. It is especially pleasing to see the intention to utilise local supply chain networks where at all possible, to help strengthen this investment."

The data centre will be a "next-generation modular" facility, a design increasingly favoured in the industry for its efficiency and scalability, capable of meeting the intensive demands of AI and cloud computing providers.





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Spotlight on Local Business

Barrow Electrical: From local beginnings to international future

FROM local beginnings to an international future, Warrington-based Barrow Electrical Ltd. is proudly celebrating 20 years in business next year.

Founded by Managing Director Laurence Barrow, Barrow Electrical Ltd is a commercial electrical contractor based in Warrington.

Looking ahead Laurence said: "As we look ahead to 2026, when we'll proudly celebrate 20 years in business, it feels like the right moment to reflect on how far we've come and where we're heading next."

"When I started Barrow Electrical in 2006, it was a small local company with a big ambition: to deliver quality, reliability, and genuine care in everything we do. Nearly two decades later, we've grown into a trusted partner for clients across the retail, hospitality, education, healthcare and FM sectors. Our reputation has been built on lasting relationships and consistent delivery, and 2025 is already rounding up to be another record-breaking year."

"A major highlight has been securing a three-year international contract with BoyleSports in the Republic of Ireland, which also covers the entire UK estate. For a Warrington-based SME, this marks a huge milestone. All retail sites

in Dublin are now complete, and we'll be returning in the new year to continue delivery. Plans are also underway to open a second office near Dublin and recruit locally, which is an exciting step forward for our team."

"In addition to this, we have also signed a contract with a multinational FTSE small cap company to deliver a nationwide estate upgrade programme throughout the UK."

"Innovation, sustainability, and ESG sit at the heart of what we do. Our engineers are leading BMS and IoT upgrades in schools and major hospitality sites, helping clients save hundreds of thousands of pounds through improved energy efficiency and smart-system integration. As part of this drive towards sustainability, we're also proud to provide specialist LED lighting design, offering bespoke solutions that improve performance, reduce running costs and support carbon reduction. For us, efficiency and sustainability go hand in hand — and lighting plays a major role in helping clients future-proof their buildings with smarter, greener, more

cost-effective systems.

"Outside the business, I'm proud to serve as a Director of Warrington Rylands 1906 FC, who are enjoying a fantastic season at the top of the league in the NPL. The teamwork, passion and drive I see on the pitch reflect the same values that guide us at Barrow Electrical every day."

"Community has always been at the centre of what we do. We're proud ambassadors of local causes including The Brianna Ghey Project, Warrington & Halton Hospitals Charity, North West Cancer Research, HoneyRose Foundation, Hospice of the Good Shepard and

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Warrington Youth Zone, both directly and through the football club.

"As we approach our 20th anniversary, I couldn't be prouder of our journey, our people and our strong Warrington roots. With exciting opportunities ahead, the future for Barrow Electrical looks bright at home and beyond."



Charlotte Nichols MP Warrington North

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Meeting Lane, WA5 2BB
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5.30pm & 7pm
Tel: Becky 07989 453707

Orford

Orford Community Hub
Hughes Avenue, WA2 9EW
5.30pm
Tel: Debbie 07850 428777

TUESDAY

Orford

Orford Community Hub
Hughes Avenue, WA2 9EW
9am
Tel: Nicky 07765 915148

Penketh

St Joseph's Club
Meeting Lane, WA5 2BB
9am & 5.30pm
Tel: Becky 07989 453707

Grappenhall

Grappenhall Ex-Servicemens Club
Chester Road, WA4 2QG
5pm & 6.30pm
Tel: Angela 07446 907029

Woolston

Woolston Social Club
Manchester Road, WA1 4AD
5.30pm & 7pm
Tel: Pip 07554 422451

WEDNESDAY

Grappenhall

Grappenhall Ex-Servicemens Club
Chester Road, WA4 2QG
9.30am
Tel: Serena 07801 540735

WEDNESDAY

Great Sankey

St James's Church Hall
Canons Road, WA5 2EO
7.30am & 9am
Tel: Jojee 07470 457334

Woolston

Woolston Social Club
Manchester Road, WA1 4AD
9.30am
Tel: Pip 07554 422451

Birchwood

Birchwood Community Centre
Delenty Drive, WA3 6AN
5pm
Tel: Kerry Millington 07740 179645

Orford

Beaumont Primary School
(Entrance at rear of school)
Wilkinson Street, WA2 7RF
5.30pm & 7pm
Tel: Debbie 07850 428777

Westbrook

St Philip's Church
Westbrook Centre, WA5 8UF
5.30pm & 7pm
Tel: Anne-Marie 07590 370988

THURSDAY

Grappenhall

Grappenhall Ex-Servicemens Club
Chester Road, WA4 2QG
9am
Tel: Nicky 07765 915148

Culcheth

The Scout Hut
Jackson Avenue, WA3 4EJ
9am & 10.30am
Tel: Emma 07880 223795

THURSDAY

Orford

St Ann's Church
Central Avenue, WA2 8AJ
9.15am & 10.45am
Tel: Debbie 07850 428777

Latchford

Latchford Grange Sports Club
52 Grange Avenue, WA4 1QH
5.30pm & 7pm
Tel: Serena 07801 540735

Padgate

Padgate Methodist Church
Padgate Lane, WA1 3DU
5pm & 6.30pm
Tel: Kerry Millington 07740 179645

Westbrook

St Philip's Church
Westbrook Centre, WA5 8UF
5.30pm & 7pm
Tel: Anne-Marie 07590 370988

FRIDAY

Latchford

Latchford Grange Sports Club
52 Grange Avenue, WA4 1QH
7.30am & 9am
Tel: Kerrie 07960 961518

Padgate

Padgate Methodist Church
Padgate Lane, WA1 3DU
7.30am & 9am
Tel: Kerry Millington 07740 179645

SATURDAY

Orford

Beaumont Primary School
Wilkinson Street, WA2 7RF
7.15am & 8.45am
Tel: Pip 07554 422451

SATURDAY

Latchford

Latchford Grange Sports Club
52 Grange Avenue, WA4 1QH
7.30am, 9am & 10.30am
Tel: Kerrie 07960 961518

Birchwood

Birchwood College
Brock Road, WA3 7PT
8am & 9.30am
Tel: Nicky 07765 915148

Penketh

Meeting Lane Community Centre
Meeting Lane, WA5 2QX
8am and 9.30am
Tel: Lisa 07432 051489

Fearnhead

Fearnhead Community Centre
Insall Road, WA2 0HD
8.30am & 10am
Tel: Anne-Marie 07590 370988

Stockton Heath

Stockton Heath Primary School
West Avenue, WA4 6HX
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Mental Health Matters launches out-of-hours support hub



Mental Health Matters welcomed the Warrington and Halton community to their new out-of-hours mental health crisis service, Warrington and Halton Support Hub.

A community event at the service in Warrington brought together people from across NHS, emergency services, and community organisations to raise awareness of the Support Hub and the support on offer.

The service, based in Warrington and providing sessions one night a week from community locations in Widnes and Runcorn, opened at the end of October offering out-of-hours mental health support when other services are often closed. Anyone aged 18 and over can drop-in for help with no need for a referral or appointment.

The charity, who run similar services across England, supported over 16,000 people in crisis last year.

Tracey Bell, Director of Quality & Operations at Mental Health Matters, said: "The Support Hub offers a safe space for anyone feeling distressed, anxious, or overwhelmed, at a time when they may be unable to access other services."

"Our team is here to listen, offer reassurance, and help people find the right support for their mental wellbeing."

The service has been funded by Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust.

Mental Health Matters is a third sector organisation providing a wide range of support to people with mental health needs. Learn more: www.mhm.org.uk

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Jodie's 10st weight loss wins her a place at Slimming World finals



A 39-year-old slimmer from Warrington says she feels great on the inside and out after losing 10st to reach the semi-finals of a competition to find the Slimming World's most inspiring female members.

And she celebrated her incredible achievement with former England rugby international James Haskell, who described her as a 'role model'.

Jodie Folkes was one of just 42 women to secure a place at the semi-finals of Slimming World's Woman of the Year 2025 competition, held at Slimming World's head office in Derbyshire, after losing an incredible 10st 11lbs.

Jodie, who slimmed from 23st 2.5lbs to 12st 5.5lbs, earned her place at the semi-finals after the members of her group in Grappenhall voted for her to represent them nationally. She says: "Before I joined Slimming World, I felt stuck. My weight was affecting me on the inside and out – it impacted my health and the way I felt about myself. My confidence was low and I was self-conscious about my size, but I didn't know how to change things."

"It was when my daughter's parent's evening at school moved to being in person after covid that jolted me into doing something about it. I was so scared that she'd be bullied about my weight at school. Finding Slimming World was a turning point. I didn't realise then that it would be the best decision I'd ever make."

"I discovered a way of eating that worked for me and my life – it wasn't like a diet at all and I couldn't believe

it when I lost 7lbs in my first week. I didn't have to give up the meals I loved, old favourites like pizza, chicken burgers and Chinese food were still on the menu, just cooked in a healthier way. I started trimming the fat off meat and using low-calorie cooking spray instead of oil, for instance. It wasn't long before people started noticing, and that gave me the motivation to keep going."

Angela Stirrup who runs the group that Jodie attends says she is so proud of what she's achieved she says: "Jodie is a star and watching her journey has been a privilege. She's not just lost weight, she's grown in confidence and self-belief. She's a huge support to others in group and a brilliant example of what can be achieved. Losing weight isn't easy, we know that, and support plays a huge role in people's motivation and success."

Whether you are just starting your journey, need some extra support to develop healthy eating alongside weight-loss medication or you've been a member before, we've made some exciting new changes at our groups and I'd love to welcome anyone to pop along to our group at Ex-Servicemen's Club on Chester Road on Tuesdays at 5pm and 6:30pm. Or you can call me on 07446907029 to find out more."

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Mobile phones to be locked away at all state schools across Warrington

MOBILE phones are set to be locked away at every state school in Warrington and across Cheshire as part of a new initiative led by Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Dan Price.

Mr Price wants Cheshire to be the first county in the UK where ALL state high schools have lockable phone pouches – and he's backing it with a funding plan of up to £150k. The initiative is being backed by Esther Ghey, the mother of murdered Warrington school girl Brianna Ghey.

Only nine of the county's mainstream high schools have introduced lockable phone pouches. While many schools have 'out of sight' mobile bans, these are often ineffective or problematic to enforce.

Schools with lockable pouches are seeing immediate, widespread, positive results in wellbeing and a dramatic reduction in online safeguarding incidents; one quoting an 80% reduction in these.

Behaviour is better, concentration is up and one school has seen a fivefold increase in library usage since introducing pouches, as well as a surge in interest in enrichment activities.

In October 2025, Esther, whose daughter Brianna was murdered in 2023, launched a national Phone Free Education campaign in parliament. Mr Price believes Cheshire can lead in this space by being the first county in the UK to

make it happen.

PCC Dan Price said: "From a crime prevention perspective, this is an absolute no-brainer. Less online bullying, less access to potentially harmful or violent content, less distractions, less exclusions. In Cheshire of all places, we know the impact this can have. That's why we must make this happen here."

Cheshire PCC Dan Price launched plans to set aside up to £150k over two years to support schools in Cheshire to adopt phone pouches. This will target funding to those in receipt of free school meals, if their schools can find a way to fund the remaining amount.

This will not cover all of the funding they need. Matched funding from other public and philanthropic funds could further accelerate this plan to make sure all state high schools operate an effective phone-free solution by 2026.

With a conservative cost of £8.75 per pupil (and likely to reduce further by pooling procurement), the PCC hopes that a county-wide approach may offer significant savings.

Esther Ghey said: "I urge every school in Cheshire to take advantage of this amazing



initiative. Dan Price is absolutely leading the way, showing real commitment to improving young people's wellbeing and safety. Lockable phone pouches are a simple step towards creating safer and more focused classrooms. I truly hope other Police and Crime Commissioners across the country follow his lead."

Birchwood High School has already implemented its on ban on mobile phones and seen positive results.

As well as funding, schools who participate will receive support from this initiative in the form of information materials for parents and pupils, implementation plans and expertise from those schools that have already rolled out

pouches.

Responding to the new scheme Sarah Hannafin, head of policy at school leaders' union NAHT, said: "NAHT supports a ban on the use of mobile phones during the school day by pupils and we therefore welcome this initiative."

"While phones and the online world clearly offer benefits, there is a time and place for their use. As well as the safety issues which can arise, they can be an unhelpful distraction during the school day."

"Many schools already have restrictions on phones, but it is really positive that this scheme recognises that financial support is often needed to help ensure these are truly effective."



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Stone Roses bassist to share his life story at Parr Hall

Stone Roses bassist Mani will be heading to Parr Hall next year to share behind-the-scenes stories of his time with one of the most iconic bands of the past 35 years.

Gary 'Mani' Mounfield will talk about his fascinating life and career in 'The Stone Roses, Primal Scream, and Me' when he comes to Warrington on Wednesday, 14 October, 2026.

In this intimate tell-all, Mani will reflect on the group who redefined the British music scene – paving the way for Oasis, The Verve and 'Madchester', the cultural phenomenon which originated in Manchester in the late 80s.

But the show also represents the first time Mani has graced Parr Hall's stage since the Stone Roses' legendary reunion gig at the venue in 2012.

After a 15-year hiatus, Stone Roses announced they were reforming in late 2011 and were set to host a series of comeback shows across Europe in the summer of 2012, including three homecoming dates at Heaton Park.

But on May 23, 2012, they sent fans into a frenzy when it was announced on the band's Facebook page that they would be playing their first show since 1996 at Parr Hall that same evening.

Oasis's Liam Gallagher was among the crowd, and the night was later immortalised in British director Shane Meadows' documentary, Made of Stone.

Mani will also reflect on recording Stone Roses' hugely influential and widely acclaimed self-titled debut album, which was released in 1989, and look back on the band's much celebrated Spike Island gig of 1990 which was watched by 27,000 and described as 'Madchester's Woodstock'.

Mani was there for every show and also played with Primal Scream from 1997 to 2012, before rejoining The Roses for their stadium-sized comeback.

He'll remember Fools Gold, Wembley Stadium, Ally Pally, court cases, bucket hats, Adidas, Screamedelica, and the Second Coming among much more.

Mani said: "This is the perfect time in my life to look back and reflect on the highs and lows, and the mad times of my career. I can't wait to see you all and share the best of times."

Mani: The Stone Roses, Primal Scream, and Me' tickets are from £30 with meet-and-greet and premium packages also available.

Call Box Office on 01925 442345 or visit parrhall.culturewarrington.org





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Work set to start on new Warrington motorway services at Junction 11 M62

WORK is set to start in the new year on the motorway services at Junction 11 of the M62 at Warrington following the appointment of a principal contractor.

Extra MSA Group, a leading developer and operator of motorway service areas, has appointed Glencar as the principal contractor on its Warrington MSA site at Junction 11 of the M62.

This major new development is set to bring significant investment, employment, and community benefits to the local area through the creation of high-quality food, beverage and retail facilities, alongside landscaped leisure, amenity and community spaces.

The appointment marks a key milestone for the scheme, with on-site works scheduled to begin in January 2026.

Glencar's appointment also coincides with the appointment of Bethell Construction Ltd to deliver a package of highway improvement works at Junction 11, carried out exclusively at night, including the introduction of traffic signals and pedestrianisation of the junction for the first time. These upgrades will enhance connectivity between the new service area, the wider local community and the region.

The new MSA will also feature extensive electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure from day one, with Extra also planning to introduce specialised E-HGV charge points to further support

the region's industrial and manufacturing sectors, and to further decarbonise the road network.

Extra MSA and Glencar plan to collaborate with local education and skills providers to offer employment support such as site visits and blended work experience placements. The two will also work with social value specialist, Ahead Partnership, on a bespoke programme of schools engagement.

Through these collaborations, they aim to build a lasting and meaningful partnership with the community during the construction phase and beyond.

Supporting the project's delivery are several consultants including architects Corstorphine & Wright; ecological and landscape consultants, Smeeden Foreman; quantity surveyors, CSA; project managers, Mascot Management; environmental consultants, SLR; structural engineering firm, Hexa; highways and sustainability consultants, Ramboll, and stakeholder engagement and communications specialists, Social. Ingleton Wood will also be supporting on the delivery of the hybrid filling station.

Tom Dobson, CEO at Extra MSA,

said: "We're delighted to be moving towards a start on site for this fantastic development. Warrington MSA represents a major investment in local infrastructure and will bring significant economic, safety and community benefits to the area. We're proud to be working with Glencar and all our wider project partners to bring this scheme to life."

Tom Kearsley, North Regional Director at Glencar, said: "It's fantastic to be appointed on this transformational project, building

on our existing track record of delivering major infrastructure projects across the North West and beyond. We look forward to working closely with Extra MSA and the wider team to deliver a high-quality facility that provides lasting value for Warrington and the surrounding communities."

For more information on Extra MSA, visit: www.extraservices.co.uk.

For more information on Glencar, visit: www.glencar.com



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Tony shares the excitement, "It's fantastic to work with Craig again. Love Carpets offers better prices, quicker turnaround—fitting within two days—and exceptional service. I'm amazed at what an independent business can offer."

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Divorce Column

By Peter Wilkinson
Divorce Lawyer at Chambers Fletcher Solicitors

Surviving Christmas after Divorce

For many separated parents Christmas brings mixed emotions. What is traditionally regarded as a family-centred celebration can instead become a source of stress, uncertainty, conflict and possibly resentment. However, with a little planning and a focus on what is best for the children Christmas can still run smoothly.

The starting point is preparation. Clear arrangements agreed well in advance help avoid misunderstandings. If there is a child arrangements order in place then it is worth revisiting the wording to ensure that the terms are clearly understood, including where the children should be on specific days and how any handovers will work. Where no formal order exists, written confirmation by text or email of what has been agreed can help prevent misunderstandings and disputes.

Communication between parties should be kept brief, polite and respectful. Christmas is not the time to revisit historic grievances or raise new issues. Keeping discussions brief, polite and limited to essential information reduces the scope for conflict. Christmas naturally requires compromise and children cope best when both parents remain calm, flexible and work together. They should not feel caught between warring households or worried about upsetting either parent.

Financial pressure can also be a concern, particularly when budgets are stretched across two homes. There is no requirement to match spending or compete over presents and any temptation to do so should be resisted. Whilst children will naturally be excited to receive presents they will also value time, attention, stability and routine.

Despite best efforts conflict may unfortunately arise. If you are concerned that arrangements may not be followed then early legal advice can be helpful. Whilst urgent legal remedies are available if necessary court proceedings should remain a last resort and where possible mediation or solicitor-assisted negotiation may offer a faster and more cost-effective solution.

Christmas after a separation is bound to feel different but that does not mean it cannot be positive. With clear arrangements, a calm approach and a focus on the children's wellbeing families can create new traditions and new happy memories.

For expert advice and assistance on any aspect of family law please get in touch.

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Litter Networks volunteers celebrate King's Award



WARRINGTON Litter Networks volunteers are today celebrating after being awarded the King's Award for Voluntary Service for 2025 – the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and equivalent to an MBE.

Warrington Litter Networks volunteers are a local movement of litter-picking teams, which have developed a system of working together since 2019. There are a dozen teams of different sizes working as a coalition, and they have collected over 40,000 bags of litter in Warrington so far.

Warrington Litter Volunteers is one of 232 local charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award this year. Their work, along with others from across the UK, reminds us of all the ways fantastic volunteers are contributing to their local communities and working to make life better for those around them.

The King's Award for Voluntary Service aims to recognise outstanding work by local volunteer groups to support their communities. It was

created in 2002 to celebrate Her Late Majesty The Queen's Golden Jubilee and was continued following the accession of His Majesty The King. 2025 marks the third year of the King's Award for voluntary Service.

Representing the Warrington Litter Volunteers, KBT Litterheroes Ambassador Tony Dixon said, "We are very honoured and delighted that the work of Warrington's Litter Volunteers has been recognised by the King's Award for Voluntary Service. We have approximately 300-400 active volunteers and it is the strength of their commitment to tidying our town which has shone through. We are driven by pride and teamwork and want to continue improving the quality of our local environment. This award has provided us with extra motivation."

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Hi there!

We have seen some great music events this month in Warrington. The first one was a **SOLD OUT** show we promoted at Peggy McCools featuring local artists Gondolas, Freight and Containers.

The venue was packed out and everyone loved the bands we provided. We do see big things ahead for all three bands, so I'll track their progress in this column.

On the same night we were treated to a show by American country stars **Lost Hollow**. Lost Hollow came over to celebrate the releases on a song called 'Buttermarket'. The song was written by Sarge Pete Frampton formally of **Poacher**. The song is about Buttermarket Street in Warrington.

The event '*Hands across the Sea*' at the Masonic Hall was organised by local promoter Dave Warwick. Lost Hollow performed in front of the mayor. They treated us to their biggest hits and the cover of 'Buttermarket' (with Pete joining them on stage). I am a big fan of folk music, so this was really cool. The local interest of this song, Poacher and Lost Hollow made this a very memorable night.

On the management side, we are now in the full swing of rehearsals for **The Lower Angel Band** at the Irish Club, on Orford Lane. The show is on January 17th 2026 and as I write only a handful of tickets are left. You can get yours on Skiddle.

On a separate point, we are working on our wellness imprint '**Mellotron Records**'.

On this roster we have many very talented artists, from Leeds' Luke Faulkner (left) to Christopher Dicker (right) from Australia! Our artist roster is spread very far and wide, we regularly cut deals with musicians from all over the world.



Gondolas performing at Peggy McCools

The music business is a truly global industry now, with our royalties being sent in American Dollars, Euros and even Japanese Yen! But you can't beat local music!

That bring us to the end of 2025. Its been a great year for music in Warrington, with lots of exciting things happening ahead of 2026. From all of us here at Ameritz, have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! See you on January 17th at the Irish club!

All the best!
Dave Green

**Are you an artist or in a band? Want to get in touch?
We'd love to hear from you!
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MERRY
Christmas

From everyone at Ameritz.
See you in 2026!



More than a club

Lymm RFC earns the King's recognition!

The King's Award for Voluntary Service awarded to Lymm Rugby Club in 2025



**The King's Award
for Voluntary Service**

The MBE for volunteer groups



The King's Award for Voluntary Service is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE.

The King's Award for Voluntary Service aims to recognise outstanding work by local volunteer groups to support their communities.

'Receiving the King's Award for Voluntary Service in 2025 is a tremendous honour for Lymm Rugby Club,' commented David Simpson, Chairman. 'We are immensely proud of this achievement, which will further inspire our members and volunteers to contribute to the ongoing success of our remarkable club.'

www.lymmrugby.co.uk



**For more information on Lymm Rugby Club
or for sponsorship opportunities please contact
commercial@lymmrugby.co.uk**

Prostate Cancer – Why men need to start talking and testing

By Dr Stephen Coogan MBChB MRCGP, Founder and CEO, myGP Clinic

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in the UK. Around one in eight men will develop it during their lifetime, but for those with a family history or higher-risk background—such as Black African or Caribbean heritage—the risk rises to one in four.

Despite this, too many men still delay getting checked. Early detection remains the key to survival, yet many only present once symptoms appear, when treatment options are more limited. Any man over 40, or with a family history, should feel confident in asking their GP for assessment and screening.

Initial assessment involves a thorough medical history and a simple blood test called PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen). While

PSA testing isn't perfect—it can be raised for benign reasons, and occasionally normal in men with cancer—it's still a vital first step. Examination of the prostate is no longer routinely required, as modern testing methods provide far more insight.

The real diagnostic challenge lies in men with PSA levels between 2.5 and 10—the so-called "grey zone". This is where newer tests such as Stockholm3 are proving invaluable. Stockholm3 combines PSA with

additional biomarkers and genetic data to better identify which men need further investigation, helping avoid unnecessary MRI scans or biopsies.

At myGP Clinic, we believe in proactive medicine. In 2024, through our screening programmes, we detected prostate cancer in 14 men—all of whom were able to receive treatment with curative intent. These are lives that could

have been lost without early testing.

As a GP—and as someone who lost my father to prostate cancer—I know first-hand how important it is to break the silence around men's health. Talk to your GP, get tested, and encourage others to do the same.

For further information, advice, and to support the campaign for national prostate cancer screening, visit Prostate Cancer UK



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Advanced walking football £5

Age: 18+ Time: Thursday 7:30–9pm

Box & brew £4

Age: 50+ Time: Friday 11:30–12:30pm

Family netball £2

Age: 8+ Time: Friday 6–7:30pm



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Baroness Newlove dies after short illness



TRIBUTES are being paid to Baroness Helen Newlove, who has sadly died after a short illness.

Baroness Newlove, the victims' commissioner for England and Wales, has died aged 63, following a short illness, her office has said.

The Conservative peer was appointed to the role twice after becoming a campaigner and activist following the death of her husband Garry Newlove who was killed when he confronted a group of youths outside the couple's home in Warrington.

In a statement her office said: "Helen was a committed and passionate advocate for victims," adding that she was a "dear friend and a respected colleague" who "transformed" the role of commissioner.

Tributes were paid in the House of Lords, while Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy praised her "unparalleled experience and dedication" to her role.

She was most recently appointed to the role in 2023, and was due to serve until the end of this year. She previously served as commissioner from 2012 to 2019 after first being appointed by former Prime Minister David Cameron.

Calling her an "extraordinary public servant", Lammy said: "Her leadership shaped the Victims' Code, strengthened victims' voices in the criminal justice system, and ensured that the Victims and Prisoners Act progressed with victims' interests at its heart.

"She championed the rights of victims and witnesses and held

agencies to account."

Her office said Baroness Newlove "consistently led by example", and that she "reshaped the office into a trusted voice and genuine force for victims".

Her 47-year-old husband Garry, was killed when he confronted a gang of youths who had vandalised their car outside their home in August 2007.

At the time, the court heard that he was kicked "like a football" in front of his daughters during the attack.

Three teenagers were convicted of his murder in January 2008, and Lady Newlove was made a life peer for her work on youth crime in 2010.

Warrington North MP Charlotte Nicholls paid tribute saying: "Incredibly sad to learn of the death of Baroness Helen Newlove, who was a fearless and courageous advocate for victims and survivors in the fight for justice. I last met her just a few weeks ago to discuss her recommendations in her landmark report "Compensation without Re-traumatisation", and work around violence against women and girls. Her compassion and dedication was unparalleled and completely inspiring. She will be an enormous loss to politics, missed by all those she worked so hard to support and champion, and of course most acutely by her family and friends. May her memory forever be a blessing."



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Saturday 13th - Live Clubland Classics | Amnesia
From 8pm

Sunday 14th - Ska, Reggae & 2 Tone Band | Rude Boy
From 1pm

Friday 19th - Massive Party Band | Ultimate Party
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Saturday 20th - Party tunes for Xmas | Too Hot to Riot
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Sunday 21st - Northern Soul | 3 DJ's playing all the classics from 1pm

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Saturday 27th - Oasis Vs Stone Roses | All the tunes
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Spotlight on Local History with James Balme

The hidden slaughterhouse of the Earls of Warrington



Deep in the heart of Cheshire in the grounds of Dunham Massey park once home to the Earls of Warrington stands a stunning and mysterious archaic building hidden away amongst tall mighty oak trees that have stood for over five hundred years in what was once a Medieval deer park.

The deer provided the Earls of Warrington with the best venison available throughout the 18th and 19th centuries and adorned their dining tables during lavish banquets to entertain the landed gentry of the period. Local folklore referred to this building as 'The Slaughterhouse' but was this really the case? I decided that it was time that I paid a visit to seek out the truth for myself so I grabbed my coat and cameras and set off on my quest to uncover the truth about this mysterious building that lain hidden deep in the woods.

I arrived at the deer park and set off on foot to locate this mysterious building somewhere deep in the undergrowth. The ground was boggy underfoot and this was certainly not going to be as easy as I had hoped for. Undaunted I soldiered on until suddenly before my eyes the shadowy outline of the building began to emerge in front of me in between the mighty oak trees and boy was it worth all the effort to find it.

The building certainly had the wow factor but at the same time it sent shivers down my spine and looking like something out of a horror movie, I could already see why it had been labelled as 'The Slaughterhouse'.

As with all my investigations I take with me my trusty video cameras and record for posterity what I find once there and often I present my findings to camera before being made into a short documentary soon after.

But as mysterious and oppressive as this building may seem the truth is a little less daunting than folklore may have us believe. Erected circa 1740 the building was constructed

to hang deer carcasses culled by the gamekeepers of the Dunham estate in preparation for dressing and jointing before being taken to the hall kitchens for roasting. No doubt many grand banquets would have been held at the hall during the entertaining of guests and visitors alike and the table would have been graced with venison and other game coming directly from the Dunham estate. By the late 19th Century the slaughterhouse was deemed no longer necessary and it was converted into a summerhouse complete with fireplaces. During the summer months of the late 19th century it would often be used by adults and children as a retreat and somewhere to relax. To this day the building still remains standing in the woods hidden away amongst huge oak trees.

This stunning building is still accessible to anyone who cares to visit for themselves and it can be found in the grounds of Dunham Massey Hall and deer park.

My film 'The Myth of the Slaughterhouse' shot at Dunham Massey can be viewed for free by visiting my channel [Youtube.com/@Tvprenter4history](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvprenter4history)



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Holding Your Family Investment Company in a Trust

Family Investment Companies (FICs) are increasingly being used as part of long-term wealth and succession planning. While shares can be subscribed for personally, many families choose to have some or all of the shares owned by a trust. This approach can provide tax advantages, help with succession planning, and offer strong protection for family wealth across generations.

Holding shares through a trust also allows them to be kept for minor children or wider family groups in a controlled environment. One important point is the settlements legislation: if a founder gifts shares to their minor children, or into a trust established for their benefit, the income remains taxable on the founder. For this reason, families often use trusts for adult children, grandchildren or more remote family members, avoiding the settlements rules and preserving tax efficiency.

Tax Implications for a Trust

A gift into a discretionary trust is normally treated as a Chargeable Lifetime Transfer (CLT) for inheritance tax (IHT) purposes. In principle, this means a 20% IHT charge on the value of the gift over the available nil-rate band of £325,000. However, this is where the timing of an FIC structure becomes particularly beneficial. When the FIC is formed, the shares usually have negligible value. Transferring them into trust at that point typically results in no IHT charge at all, allowing all future growth to take place within the trust and outside the founder's

estate. If the shares are transferred later, after becoming valuable, the CLT rules could apply in full. For this reason, many families settle the trust when the FIC is first created.

Capital gains tax (CGT) also needs to be considered. A transfer to a trust is normally treated as a disposal at market value, giving rise to a charge on any gain. Again, if the shares are transferred when they have no real value, no gain arises. Even where they have gained value, the founder and trustees can often claim hold-over relief, deferring the CGT until the trust eventually disposes of the shares.

Once in the trust, the shares fall under the trust IHT regime rather than the 40% death-based charges that apply to personal estates. This difference is often substantial over multiple generations.

Future Ten-Year Charge

Although a trust avoids repeated 40% IHT charges on death, it is subject to periodic ten-year charges. These are based on the value of the trust's chargeable assets at each ten-year anniversary and are broadly capped at 6% of the value above the nil-rate band. The value will depend on the growth of the investments within the FIC and on the repayment of any loan account owed to the founder.

Even with these charges, the total IHT leakage over several generations is typically far lower than allowing the full value of the FIC to be exposed to the

standard 40% inheritance tax at each generational death.

Income Tax

Discretionary trustees pay income tax at the trust rates, currently 39.35% on dividends and 45% on most other types of income. Only the first £500 may be taxed at lower rates, and even this allowance is reduced if multiple trusts exist. However, because the founder usually retains control over dividend policy in an FIC, dividends need only be paid into the trust when intended for distribution.

When income is distributed to beneficiaries, the trustees' 45% tax credit attaches to that income. Beneficiaries may reclaim any excess tax if their own tax rate is lower, allowing distributions to adult children or grandchildren to make use of their personal allowances or basic-rate bands. Income retained within the trust is simply taxed at the dividend trust rate. Some families also use revocable life interests to simplify the income tax position.

Other Considerations

Beyond tax, the protective qualities of a trust are often its most valuable feature. Shares held personally are vulnerable in situations such as divorce or creditor claims. If shares are owned by a trust, no individual has a direct right to the underlying assets, meaning the wealth is far better insulated. While family lawyers often still recommend pre- and post-nuptial agreements, the trust itself provides a strong layer of protection.



Thomas Coyne and Stuart Barr

Trust ownership also helps with long-term family governance. Shares held personally could be sold or inherited outside the family; shares held in a trust remain under trustee control and can be retained for generations, maintaining a consistent investment strategy and preventing fragmentation of ownership.

A simple example helps illustrate this. Sally establishes a discretionary trust for her grandchildren, and the trustees subscribe for shares in a newly formed FIC. The shares have nominal value at the outset, so no IHT or CGT arises. As the investment portfolio grows, the increase in value sits within the trust, outside Sally's estate. Although the trust will face periodic ten-year charges, it avoids repeated 40% IHT charges across successive generations, preserving significantly more of the family wealth.

Merry Christmas from WatkinsonBlack!

As the festive season approaches, we'd like to thank our readers and clients for their continued support over the past year. We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a successful start to 2026. Here's to a year of growth, opportunity, and achievements, enjoy the holiday season and all the best for the year ahead!

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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Police Museum awarded King's Award for Voluntary Service



DESCRIBED as a "jewel in crown" the Police Museum based in Warrington, has received the King's Award for Voluntary Service.

The Museum of Policing based at the Arpley Street Police Station has been awarded the King's Award for Voluntary Service – which is equivalent to the MBE for voluntary organisations.

Based in the old Victorian cells in Arpley Street, Warrington, the museum focuses on police history and heritage going back to the days of Robert Peel in 1829.

It features police uniforms through the ages, police vehicles, knife crime displays and one of the biggest collections in the UK of police helmets and headgear from around the world.

Twenty years ago a group of retired police officers persuaded the then Chief Constable to allow them to create a small police museum in the disused female cell block at Warrington Police Station the only Victorian Police Station in Cheshire that still has operational police officers working there.

Little did any of them know, or even envisage at that time, how big and how successful it would become. The museum embraces every law enforcement agency and police force that has at any time had responsibility for policing in Cheshire.

Since those early days the museum has expanded into other areas of the police station which were not being used and has now become one of the foremost police museums in the country and without doubt one of the most visited ones.

In the past year they have shown thousands of visitors around and in August alone their open days attracted over 5,000 visitors with 2,600 of them being on one day. They also take the excitement of the museum to outside events.

Museum Manager Peter Hampson (pictured above) said: "I marvel every day at the work our volunteers put in. They are a great bunch of people and they make my job as manager very easy. They are always smiling and always enthusiastic and I am so proud of them all and of receiving this award which acknowledges all our efforts as volunteers."

He acknowledged that museums need people to run them, to organise visits, to care for the exhibits, to maintain the displays, to clean, to guide the visitors and explain the exhibits and to ensure that we operate within the Charity Commission's Guidelines.

"That is a lot of people and the museum has a magnificent and ever giving team of 21 volunteers and not a single paid member of staff," said Peter.

Terry Clarke has been a volunteer at the Museum since it started twenty years ago said "I remember being part of a small group of enthusiastic people with an idea and a dream not sure that the dream would ever come true, but it has and I am very proud that our joint efforts as volunteers have been recognised in such a tremendous way."

Chairman of the Trustees, Chris Upham MBE, BEM said: "Volunteers do not volunteer for accolades, they volunteer because they want to give something back to society and volunteers at the museum enjoy bringing the heritage of the police to the community, especially to younger visitors."

He said volunteers were "humbled and proud" to have been chosen to receive this award and will proudly display the emblem wherever possible.

Chris added: "The museum regularly receives accolades from visitors but this award is specifically for our volunteers without whom there would be no museum. They are appreciated more than they will ever know and they are a very happy and committed group of people who I think of as friends."

"I am so pleased that we have received this extremely prestigious award from The King and I think it is well deserved. We now look forward to the presentation and to displaying the logo on our promotional material."

Long-time volunteer Olive Brereton said: "It was a great thrill just to be nominated for this award let alone get one. It means the world to a great group of people who have become friends over the years and as well as working in the museum we have developed and active social life together. So we are very proud and honoured by this award from His Majesty the King."

For more information about volunteering at the museum or to arrange a visit go to our website <https://cheshirepolitemuseum.org.uk> or contact the Museum Manager, Peter Hampson on 01606 365803.

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