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Editor
Gary Skentelbery

Production
James Bryan

Digital
Hannah Skentelbery

Advertising
James Balme
01925 631592 opt 1

Editorial
01925 631592 opt 2

Email
info@warrington-worldwide.co.uk

Websites
www.culchethlife.com
www.frodshamlife.co.uk
www.lymmlife.co.uk
www.warrington-worldwide.co.uk

Address
New Media Centre
Old Road Warrington
WA4 1AT

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Printed by TwentyFourSeven

Editor's Opinion



CONGRATULATIONS to Cllr. Mo Hussain on his year in office as Mayor, as he set a benchmark for civic leadership by rising above toxic political divisions and hateful rhetoric, during his exceptional mayoral year.

When Cllr. Hussain took the chains of office, he promised to champion unity and inclusivity. Over the last twelve months, he has done exactly that. He proved that true public service belongs to the people, not partisan bickering.

True leadership is defined by how a person responds to adversity. Cllr. Hussain faced disgraceful, coordinated racist comments and online bigotry targeted at his office.

Rather than being dragged into the gutter of identity politics, he responded with quiet dignity and unshakeable resolve. He drew a firm line against discrimination. He reminded us all that hate has no home in Warrington.

His resilience has been a masterclass in staying focused on what truly matters: serving the community.

The true heart of Cllr. Hussain's tenure can be found in his tireless charitable efforts. His Mayoral Year culminated in highly successful community events.

These included the Mayor's Charity Ball raising thousands of pounds for four indispensable local causes:

- Warrington Disability Partnership: Supporting independence and mobility for disabled residents.
- St Rocco's Hospice: Providing

vital palliative and end-of-life care.

- Room at the Inn: Offering shelter and hope to the town's homeless population.
- Warrington Youth Zone: Creating positive spaces and bright futures for young people.

These funds directly translate into life-changing support for Warrington's most vulnerable people.

From opening inclusive

playgrounds to celebrating a resident's 102nd birthday, Cllr. Hussain showed up for everyone.

He stepped past the political noise to unite a multicultural, modern town.

We congratulate Cllr. Hussain on a deeply impactful year in office. He has shown that when leaders choose dignity over division, the entire community wins.



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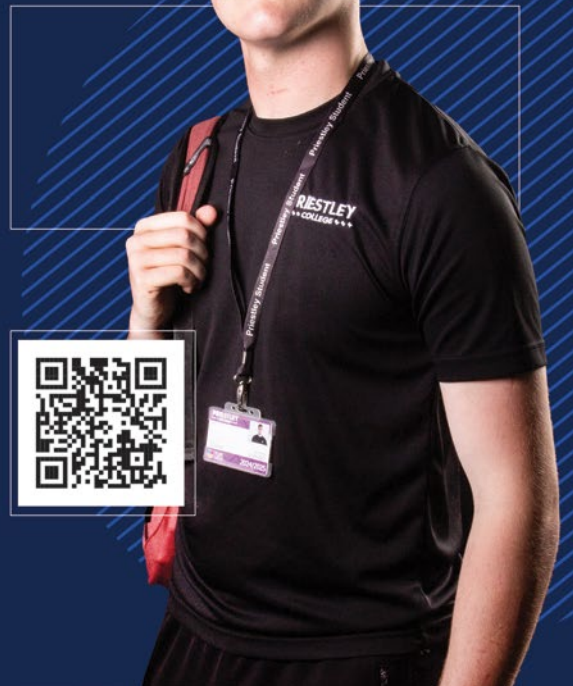
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Warrington bursts into colour for St. Rocco's Hospice!

WARRINGTON'S Walton Hall and Gardens was transformed into a kaleidoscope of vibrant powdered paint as supporters gathered for the 2026 St. Rocco's Hospice Colour Run.

The popular fundraising event, a staple of the local calendar, saw participants of all ages navigate a 3km course while being showered with bright colours to raise an incredible £20,000 for the hospice.

The afternoon kicked off with a high-energy group warm-up and the signature "colour throw," which sent a massive cloud of powdered paint into the air before the run officially began.

Runners, many sporting plain white t-shirts and charity-provided sunglasses, completed two laps of a 1.5km route, passing through three dedicated colour stations a total of six times.

The Mayor of Warrington, Cllr. Mo Hussain, attended the event to support the participants and personally hand out medals at the finish line.



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Warrington Bishop attends Royal Garden Party



A Bishop based in Warrington, Bishop Yousaf Nadeem Bhinder, was honoured to attend the recent Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, hosted by His Majesty King Charles III.

The event brought together guests from across the United Kingdom in recognition of service, community contribution, and public life.

During the event, Bishop Nadeem also briefly spoke with His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh.

Bishop Nadeem is the Founder and President of His Grace Churches International. He is also involved in humanitarian and community projects across Commonwealth countries, supporting people regardless of faith, background, or nationality.

His work focuses on service, unity, and helping those in need within both local and international communities.

Speaking after the occasion, he expressed gratitude for the invitation and described it as a meaningful opportunity to represent his community at a national level.

Bishop Nadeem said, "The greatest legacy we leave is the difference we make in the lives of others."

"God bless the United Kingdom and the Royal Family."



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Stand Out Socks receives The King's Award for Enterprise

WARRINGTON-based Stand Out Socks, a social enterprise co-founded by Stockton Heath brothers Christian and Ross Laing, has been honored with the King's Award for Enterprise in the Promoting Opportunity category.

The accolade marks a historic milestone for the business as the awards celebrate their 60th anniversary.

Founded in 2021, the business was inspired by Ross, who has Down syndrome and previously faced significant barriers to finding steady work.

Stand Out Socks aims to provide meaningful, paid employment for individuals with learning disabilities, placing them at the heart of operations including product development and fulfillment.

To date, the company has:

- Provided over 2,000 paid working hours for its team.
- Raised more than £35,000 for local and national charities.
- Sold over 100,000 pairs of socks worldwide.

The company gained widespread national attention after appearing on Dragons' Den in 2024, where they secured investment from Steven Bartlett and Peter Jones. Since

then, the brand has expanded significantly, collaborating with major names such as Manchester United and launching its products in over 200 Tesco stores across the UK.

"This award belongs especially to the incredible individuals with learning disabilities who are at the very heart of everything we do," the brothers said in a statement. "They are the reason we exist, and they are the reason we keep pushing forward".



The King's Award for Enterprise is considered the UK's most prestigious business honor, with

only 22 businesses nationwide recognised in the Promoting Opportunity category this year.

Digital marketing agency backs local charities

Following the long-awaited return of the Warrington Business Expo to the Village Hotel, Fireheart Digital is celebrating the town's unique community spirit by donating to two local causes.

In a move that highlights the power of local collaboration, Fireheart Digital's co-founders,

Stacey Whitney and Steph Houghton-Johns, have made a generous £650 donation to the event organisers, Kirsty James and Tony Longmore. Their request was simple: that these funds be shared between the two guest speakers who represented their charities at the Expo.

The Fireheart Digital team knows that in a town like ours, there are so many worthy causes where every penny counts. Having worked closely with the Expo team to support the event, Stacey and Steph wanted to ensure this extra gesture went directly to the two charities involved, Warrington Disability Partnership, led by CEO Dave Thompson MBE and Making Space, led by CEO Rachel Peacock.

This collaboration shows exactly what makes Warrington such an amazing place to live and work. When local partners like Kirsty, Tony, and the Fireheart Digital team work together, the whole community benefits.

"Warrington has so much heart, and the Expo really showcased that energy," says Stacey. "A huge thanks to Kirsty James and Tony

Longmore for a fantastic event. We were inspired to provide further support to the charities involved, and championing the life-changing work David and Rachel do was the perfect choice. It's a great example of why we always choose to collaborate with local partners."

Fireheart Digital is a local digital marketing agency based in Warrington, led by co-founders Stacey and Steph. Celebrating their six years in business this year, they're passionate about helping businesses grow and believe that the best results come from building strong, honest, and local relationships.



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Spotlight on Local Business



Proud and memorable moments

By Laurence Barrow

Over the past month, we've had the privilege of experiencing some truly memorable moments – both professionally and personally.

One of the standout occasions was attending the King's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, in recognition of the support we continue to give within the local community. It was an incredible experience and a proud moment for everyone connected to Barrow Electrical. To see King Charles, Queen Camilla, Princess Sophie, Prince Edward and Princess Anne in such an iconic setting was something we will never forget.

While in London, we were also fortunate enough to have a private tour around Parliament and Westminster Hall. Walking through such historic surroundings and seeing both the House of Lords and the Chamber first-hand was a real eye-opener. It gave a genuine appreciation of the history, tradition and decision-making that takes



place there every day.

Back on the business front, it has been another hugely positive month for the company. We are delighted to have secured a national UK rollout for one of our biggest clients involving data installation works across multiple sites. Winning projects of this scale is a massive achievement for the team and reflects the hard work, standards and reputation we continue to build as a business.

Football-wise, although Warrington Rylands unfortunately fell short in the playoff final, there is still plenty of positivity around the club. Reaching that stage was a fantastic achievement in itself, and preparations are already well underway to ensure the club comes back fighting and ready for next season. The ambition and determination behind the scenes remain as strong as ever.

We were also delighted to be nominated for an award at the NHS Thank You Awards which took place at The Titanic Hotel in Liverpool. Simply being nominated and invited to be part of such a special evening is something we are extremely proud of, particularly given the incredible work carried out across

the NHS every single day. We'll keep everyone updated on how we get on.

As always, it continues to be a busy but rewarding period, and we're grateful for the opportunities, support and relationships that continue to come our way. With plenty still in the pipeline, we're excited to see what the next few months bring.



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Veteran journalist publishes first novel to “redress the balance”

A NEW book by award-winning Warrington journalist David Skentelbery has just been released and is available from Amazon.

“The Heroism of Youth” is his first novel – his previous books have been autobiographical or for children – and it is set partly in Cheshire and partly in South Africa.

The title is taken from a speech by Nelson Mandela on his release after 27 years in prison.

Although a work of fiction, many of the events described really happened and others could well

have done so. The story tells of the lives and loves of two groups of young people, separated by thousands of miles but caught up in the lengthy worldwide campaign to end the racist apartheid system in South Africa, which is estimated to have led to some 7,000 political deaths between 1948 and 1989, as well as more than 19,000 cases of gross human rights violation.

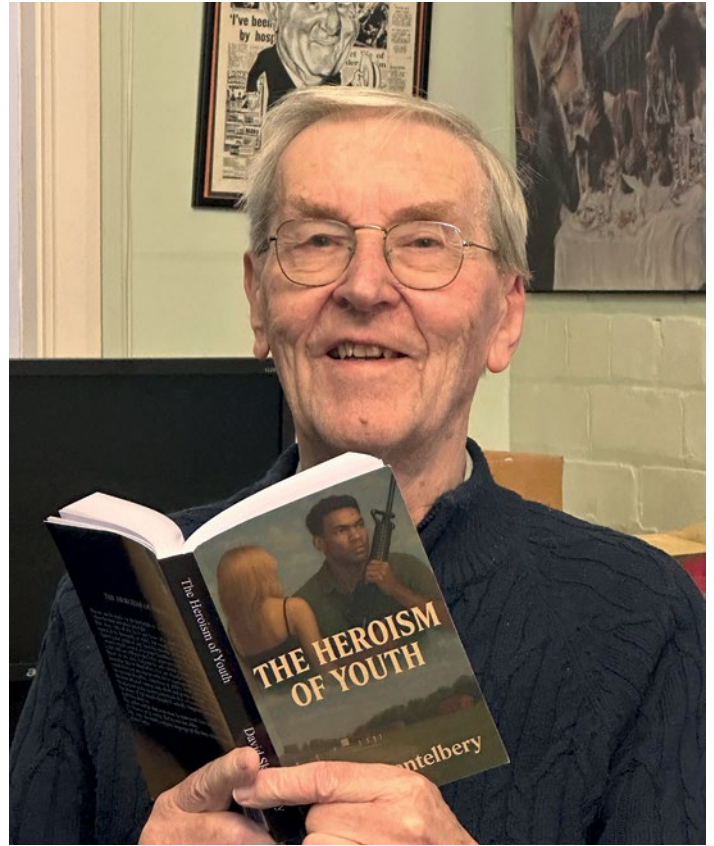
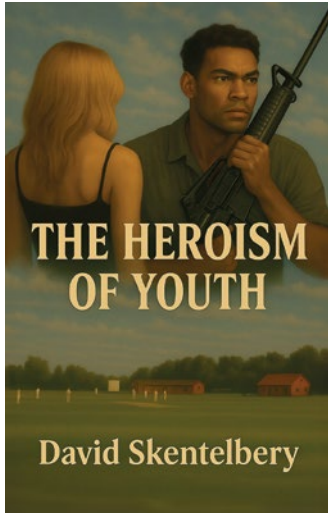
Although it was probably worldwide economic pressures that eventually toppled the undemocratic South African government, sport, led by cricket, played a huge role by isolating South Africa from the rest of the world.

In 1968, David, now aged 88, was writing on current affairs and admits that he expressed views in print which he later realised were wrong.

He hopes his new book, as well as being an entertaining account of what it was like to be young in Britain and South Africa at that time, will redress the balance.

Away from fiction, in 2024 he was awarded the Honorary Freedom of the Borough of Warrington for his services to the borough through journalism.

The Heroism of Youth is available from Amazon.



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Warrington hits national clean air targets



Warrington has reached a significant milestone in improving its environment and residents' health, with new evidence confirming that national air quality targets are being consistently met across the borough.

Long-term monitoring shows that levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) – a pollutant largely associated with road traffic – have continued to fall steadily over the past decade. For the last three to four years, recorded levels across Warrington have remained within national health-based limits at all monitored locations.

The council previously designated two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) covering the motorway network and Warrington town centre and main roads surrounding the town centre. In both of those areas, air quality has improved steadily and nitrogen dioxide levels now meet national limits in both areas.

The improvements reflect sustained local action by the council, working with partners and residents to tackle pollution and improve air quality for communities across Warrington.

Key contributing factors include

the growing use of low-emission and electric vehicles, cleaner engine standards, and improved traffic flow, alongside other work by the council as part of its wider Air Quality Action Plan. Many of these actions have now been completed, helping embed long-term improvements rather than short-term gains.

While this milestone confirms that targets linked to nitrogen dioxide are being met consistently, the council will continue to monitor air quality carefully and report on progress each year.

Building on this progress, the council will develop a new Air Quality Strategy during 2026. The strategy will set out how Warrington will continue to improve both outdoor and indoor air quality, linking with wider work on public health, sustainable transport, climate action and active travel.

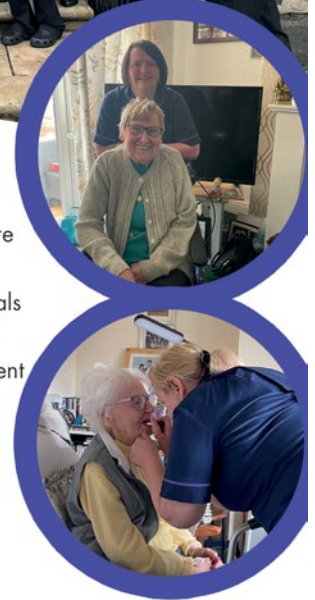


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On the other side, I'm proud to introduce the next generation – my son, Tom – who's now officially joined the team. Tom's a fully qualified, time-served fitter with experience in carpets, vinyl, laminate, and LVT. He's worked with many different fitters over the years, learning every part of the trade from the ground up. Tom actually started fitting carpets at just 14 and knew straight away it was the career for him. By learning his trade independently before joining me, he's shown that everything he's achieved has been earned through hard work and dedication. As a dad, that makes me incredibly proud.

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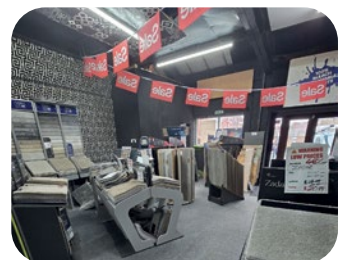
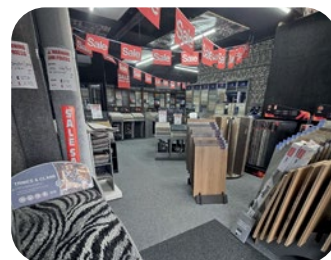
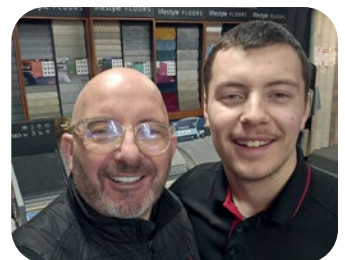
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Porters Resurrection: How one business owner is reviving a historic institution

CLOSE to the heart of Warrington, a beloved live music venue and community hub, Porters Resurrection, is undergoing a remarkable transformation.

Once facing financial collapse and severe structural neglect, Porters Ale House is being brought back to life under the leadership of its new owner, Mark Moran, whose ambitious restoration project has been fittingly named Porters Resurrection.

For Mark, this is more than a business venture. It is a deeply personal mission to restore not only a historic pub, but also the unique sense of community that made Porters a cornerstone of Warrington's alternative cultural scene for decades.

Mark's connection to the pub industry stretches back to the mid-1990s. Over the years, he built extensive experience in hospitality, including two previous stints as an area manager for Porters itself, but what Mark inherited here was a business in severe decline.

Financially, Porters had become unstable, suffering from repeated management turnover and a lack of consistent direction. But the most alarming discoveries lay beneath the surface.

Years of neglected maintenance had left the Victorian building in a dangerous condition. Upon taking over, Mark discovered that the bar itself was collapsing into the cellar. Rotten timber beams had given

way, leaving a 16-square-foot hole in the floor.

For many owners, such revelations might have been enough to walk away. For Mark, they became the starting point of an ambitious restoration.

Rather than applying quick fixes, Mark and his team developed a clear phased business strategy to rebuild the venue while keeping it operational.

Phase One: Survival and Stabilisation: The immediate priority was ensuring the business could survive through its first critical months and remain open through the New Year period.

Phase Two: Structural Renewal: This involved relocating and installing a new bar at a cost of £11,000, alongside £6,000 in flooring repairs. The redesign also increased usable revenue-generating floor space by 25 percent.

Phase Three: Accessibility and Outdoor Renovation: The gardens are being refurbished, while the manager's office is being relocated from an inappropriate position inside the disabled toilets—restoring essential accessibility for customers.

Phase Four: Interior Refurbishment: Major internal

by Glen Scretion



renovation work is scheduled for winter, a deliberate decision to avoid disrupting summer trade and protect cash flow.

Phase Five: Expansion into Live Events: The first floor will be transformed into a new live music and events venue called The Office, designed to accommodate around 150 guests and further cement Porters reputation as Warrington's longest-running live music venue.

The name Porters Resurrection, coined by marketing manager Becci, captures the spirit of the project. I think it's perfect and in the wider music circles that I frequent punters are starting to take notice.

It represents an effort to bring "the old back into the new"—preserving the venue's identity while modernising its facilities for future

generations. Everyone knows that Porters has had its ups and downs over the years, but this venue has long been known as a welcoming home for diverse subcultures, including rockers, punks, mods, and alternative music fans. Under Mark's leadership that inclusivity remains central to its appeal and his goal is to ensure Porters remains a genuine safe space where people from all backgrounds can gather, connect, and feel part of something larger.

Mark's leadership demonstrates a careful balance of emotional investment and commercial realism. His phased roadmap reflects strategic discipline, while his willingness to tackle major structural setbacks shows notable resilience.

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Divorce Column

By Peter Wilkinson
Divorce Lawyer at Chambers Fletcher Solicitors

Divorce and Social Media – Think Before You Post

For many people, social media has become part of everyday life. We share photographs, post comments and communicate instantly – sometimes perhaps without giving it much thought.

The difficulty is that during family law disputes our social media activity can end up being used as evidence in the dispute.

It is increasingly common for material obtained from Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp or other online platforms, even dating apps, to feature in family law cases.

Beware, your online activity may reveal more about yourself than you realise. And it may be used against you. Your online activity may provide a useful insight into matters such as lifestyle, expenditure, relationships, parenting or behaviour which may be relevant to the case.

In financial disputes, photographs of holidays, luxury purchases, frequent social activities, may sit uneasily alongside declared finances or assertions of financial struggles. In children matters, photographs and messages may become relevant where they touch upon parenting, parental conflict, new relationships or child welfare concerns.

People often post emotionally and impulsively. Sometimes posts can look very different at a later date when presented in evidence. Anything shared online should be treated as a public record and deleting posts can give a false sense of security because posts can be easily copied, screenshot and saved.

There is also a misconception that 'private' messages are always private. Sometimes they're not. Whilst there are important legal limits regarding access to another person's online account or devices, parties are often surprised by how much 'private' material can find its way into proceedings.

Always the safest approach is to pause, take a step back and consider how a post might be interpreted when scrutinised within court proceedings. Ask yourself, would I be comfortable explaining this in court if I had to – and assume that you might have to.

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Mayor's Ball raises over £4,000 for local charities



MAYOR of Warrington, Cllr. Mo Hussain hosted a highly successful Mayor's Charity Ball at the village hotel, which raised more than £4,000 in support of his chosen mayoral charities.

Held in a fantastic atmosphere of the village hotel with almost 150 guests in attendance, the evening brought together community leaders, businesses, charities, councillors, volunteers, and residents from across the region to celebrate community spirit while raising vital funds for worthy causes.

The Mayor's nominated charities for the year are:

- Warrington Youth Zone
- Warrington Disability Partnership
- St. Rocco's Hospice
- Room at the Inn

Representatives from each charity addressed guests during the evening, speaking passionately about the important work they undertake within the community and the difference the fundraising support will make.

Among the distinguished guests attending the event were the Mayor of Tameside, Councillor Shibly Alam, the Mayor of St Helens, Seve Gomez, Warrington North MP Charlotte Nichols, Warrington South MP Sarah Hall, local councillors, community champions, volunteers, and representatives from organisations including BT Skip Hire and the Rotary Club of Warrington.

Mayor Councillor Mo Hussain said: "It was a wonderful evening that showcased the generosity, compassion, and community spirit that makes Warrington such a special place. I want to sincerely thank everyone who attended, donated, sponsored, volunteered, and supported the event. Every

pound raised will help our charities continue their incredible work supporting vulnerable people across our borough."

The Mayor also expressed his gratitude to the event sponsors whose generosity helped make the evening possible:

- Give Consulting
- Alcedo Care
- Arpleymere Care
- Today Team

Special thanks were also given to Warrington Disability Partnership, Caroline Thompson, Rebecca Health, and the mayoral team for their hard work in organising the successful event.

Guests enjoyed an evening of entertainment featuring performances from Creative Adventures, Warrington Youth Zone, Rhythm of Warrington Drummers, and talented young dancer Samiksha.

Throughout the evening, Mayor Hussain reflected on the inspiring individuals and organisations that have supported the community during his mayoral year and praised the dedication of volunteers and local groups who continue to make a positive difference across Warrington.

The event concluded with fundraising activities including raffles and auctions, helping to raise significant funds for the Mayor's chosen charities while providing guests with a memorable evening of celebration and community togetherness.



Summer skincare: protecting your skin during the warmer months

By Dr Paul Ivey, Dermatology Specialist at myGP Clinic

As the weather improves and we spend more time outdoors, summer is a good opportunity to enjoy the benefits of sunshine, exercise and fresh air. However, it is also one of the times of year when our skin is placed under the greatest stress.

Every summer, GPs and dermatology clinics see a rise in problems linked to sun exposure, dehydration, heat, insect bites and worsening of chronic skin conditions. The good news is that many of these issues are preventable with relatively simple skincare habits.

One of the biggest misconceptions I still encounter is that sun protection is mainly about preventing ageing or maintaining appearance. In reality, protecting your skin from ultraviolet (UV) damage is primarily about long-term health.

Even in the UK, UV levels during spring and summer can be surprisingly high. Repeated exposure contributes to premature skin ageing, pigmentation changes and, more importantly, increases the risk of skin cancer.

Melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, continues to rise in the UK. While fairer skin types are generally at higher risk, skin cancer can affect anyone.

A few simple measures can significantly reduce risk:

- Use SPF 30 or higher sunscreen daily during sunny weather

- Reapply sunscreen every two hours if outdoors for prolonged periods
- Reapply after swimming or sweating
- Wear hats and sunglasses where possible
- Avoid prolonged direct sun exposure during the middle of the day

Importantly, sunscreen should not only be reserved for holidays abroad. Many people underestimate how much cumulative sun exposure they receive simply through walking, driving, gardening or sitting outside in the UK.

Hot weather can also lead to dehydration, which often shows itself in the skin first. Dryness, irritation and sensitivity tend to worsen during warmer months, particularly in people who already suffer from eczema or sensitive skin.

Drinking adequate water is important, but so is maintaining the skin barrier itself. Lightweight moisturisers can still be beneficial during summer, even for those with oily skin.

Air conditioning, swimming pools and increased showering can all strip natural oils from the skin, leading to

irritation if skincare routines become too harsh.

Summer often brings a surge in social media skincare trends, but more products do not necessarily mean healthier skin.

Over-exfoliation is particularly common during warmer months. Excessive use of scrubs, acids or retinol products alongside increased sun exposure can damage the skin barrier and increase sensitivity.

A simple, consistent routine is often best:

- Gentle cleanser
- Moisturiser suited to your skin type
- Daily sunscreen

For many people, this is more effective than using multiple aggressive products simultaneously.

Sweating, heat and sunscreen use can contribute to acne flare-ups, particularly in teenagers and young adults.

However, it is important not to avoid sunscreen altogether due to acne concerns. Modern non-comedogenic sunscreens are designed not to block pores and are usually far safer for the skin than repeated UV damage.

If acne becomes persistent or severe, medical treatments are available and can make a substantial difference both physically and psychologically.

Summer is also a good time to



become more familiar with your skin.

Any mole or lesion that changes in size, shape, colour or appearance should be assessed by a healthcare professional. Warning signs include:

- Irregular borders
- Multiple colours
- Bleeding or crusting
- Persistent itching
- Rapid growth

Most skin lesions are harmless, but early assessment is always worthwhile.

Good skincare is rarely about expensive products or complicated routines. In most cases, the biggest long-term benefits come from consistency — protecting skin from excessive sun exposure, maintaining hydration, and recognising when something does not look right.

As we move into the summer months, taking a few simple precautions now can help avoid both short-term skin problems and more significant issues later in life.

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Spotlight on Local History with James Balme

Celebrating over 30 Years of bringing history to life

It was way back in the late 1970s when I first became interested in the history that surrounds us and what evidence may lay just inches below our feet.

Aged just fifteen years old I decided to join a local amateur archaeological group allowing me to take an active part in excavations and research in the area. This was to prove to be a valuable experience and I learned a great deal about archaeology and history. I started to do my own research looking for evidence of our ancestors in the landscape across Warrington and Cheshire.

After many more years of research I began to find evidence of previously unknown activity from the Bronze Age and Roman periods. In 1996 I was to discover the remains of what had once been a small Roman settlement on the outskirts of Warrington where I went on to recover both Roman silver coinage and a rare Roman silver snake bracelet. It was at this time that my discoveries caught the attention of the local press and television. I started to make regular appearances on both BBC and Granada news programmes. My work continued and more

discoveries came to light through my research. In 2000 I was to co-present a history documentary with former Granada presenter Fred Talbot entitled 'The King's Grave' covering a full excavation of the Roman settlement that I had found. Following this I was contacted by BBC1 who had decided to make a documentary about my work. We filmed a half hour episode for the 'Inside out' series.

I carried on with further research for several more years walking the fields in search of further evidence. By this time I had started to write and present my own short history films teaching myself camera and editing skills to allow me to share my work with a larger local audience. As social media advanced it became possible to share my films much wider on the internet. But it was in 2006 that I received a phone call from Channel 4's Iconic Time Team asking if they could join me at my Roman settlement to film an excavation for the 2007 series. The filming took place and the episode

was first broadcast on channel 4 in March 2007.

It was at that time that I set up my own dedicated history channel on youtube under the name of Tvpresenter4history allowing my films to be viewed by a worldwide audience. Youtube was in its infancy with only a few channels existing at that time. Now some nineteen years later my channel has become a legacy channel with over seven hundred films, four thousand subscribers, two million views and recently announced as being in

the top twenty UK history channels on youtube. As well as presenting and producing history films I began writing as a history columnist for local publications in 2020 covering historical sites in the area.

Today I'm pleased and proud to be the history columnist for Warrington Worldwide allowing me to highlight to our readers our history and heritage across Warrington and surrounding areas.

To view my history films and features simply visit my youtube channel Tvpresenter4history.



Death of former Warrington South MP

FORMER Warrington South MP Christopher Butler, passed away on 3 May 2026 at the age of 75 following a short illness.

A dedicated public servant, Westminster consultant, and passionate cultural advocate, Butler represented the people of Warrington from 1987 to 1992.

He is remembered by his family as a "special guy" and an "armchair anarchist" who always knew exactly what he wanted.

Born in Cardiff on 12 August 1950, Butler grew up in the Welsh capital before moving to England to study at the University of Cambridge.

Butler secured his place in Parliament in the 1987 general election, winning the seat for Warrington South. He served the constituency diligently for five years. During his time as an MP, a chance seating arrangement at a Conservative Club fundraising dinner introduced him to Jacqui, a Lymm resident training to be a nanny. The couple fell in love and

married on 25 March 1989 at Oughtrington Parish Church.

Though he left the Commons following the 1992 general election, his time in the town left a lasting legacy on both his political and personal life.

Butler lost the Warrington South seat by just 191 votes to former Warrington Borough Council leader Mike Hall.

The seat was a critical battleground and acted as a rare exception to the national trend of that election. Nationally, John Major led the Conservative Party to its fourth successive general election victory. However, the local result in Warrington South bucked this trend due to intense campaigning and local popularity for Hall, who had previously served as the leader of the Warrington Borough Council. Hall represented the constituency until 1997, when major boundary changes prompted him to successfully contest the newly created Weaver Vale seat.



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Teenage pageant ambassador opens Pink Turtle Collectables

Local community ambassador and Miss Teen Warrington finalist Isabelle "Issy" Grace Thompson took centre stage at The Hive WA1 shopping centre to help perform the official opening of its newest independent business, Pink Turtle Collectables.

The grand opening marks a major community milestone for the 15-year-old pageant star ahead of her highly anticipated national stage appearance at the town's historic Parr Hall this June.

Clad in her official Miss Teen Warrington sash, Issy officially declared Pink Turtle Collectables open to the public, welcoming visitors to explore a diverse range of Pokémon trading cards and rare collectibles.

The store's management expressed great enthusiasm about having the town's premier teen ambassador launch their business venture, celebrating the day

with exclusive prize giveaways, character appearances, and open-day festivities for the local community.

The official opening highlights a powerful local partnership, as The Hive WA1 is acting as the primary official sponsor for Issy's journey in the upcoming pageant.

The teenager has already earned widespread praise for her outstanding community service, recently receiving formal congratulations from Warrington Mayor Cllr. Mo Hussain. The Mayor commended her deep commitment to local volunteering, calling her an inspiring role model for youth across the borough.

The retail launch serves as the perfect warm-up for Issy's major hometown showcase.

On Saturday, 13 June 2026, she will step onto the iconic stage at Parr Hall to compete in the prestigious Pageant Girl UK national finals.

Issy plans to use her high-profile pageant platform and expanding social media presence to raise critical funds and awareness for causes close to her heart, ensuring her legacy extends far beyond the stage.



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Leaders pledge to put 'next generation at its heart'

A milestone first meeting of Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority (CWCA) was told the next generation will be at its heart at its launch at Warrington Youth Zone – as the region formally marked the transfer of powers from Westminster.

Leaders made the pledge to give young people a seat at the table and shape the CWCA's blueprint as they held the landmark first public meeting at Warrington Youth Zone, where they heard directly from young people about their hopes and aspirations for the future.

The momentous meeting came after the region was given the government green light in March to form the CWCA and take control over powers related to transport, skills and investment including a 30-year investment fund worth £20m a year.

The people of Cheshire and Warrington will next year elect a Mayor who, by having a voice on the national and international stage, will bang the drum for a region home to almost one million residents, national strengths in clean energy, life sciences and advanced manufacturing, 41,000 businesses, and a £4bn tourism economy.

Leaders said Warrington Youth Zone was a perfect location for the inaugural meeting and region's exciting new chapter – amid a collective pledge to work with young people and feed their priorities into the CWCA and inform the work of

the Mayor following their election next year.

The Combined Authority will bring forward plans in the coming months to invest in accelerating regional growth priorities, business support and celebrating communities and culture.

The CWCA will continue preparatory work ahead of the 2027 mayoral election and the transfer of powers in areas including transport and skills.

Cllr Hans Mundry, Leader of Warrington Borough Council, said: "We know from our experience in Warrington the positive impact that better public transport, connectivity and investment can have on an area's fortunes. This means the Combined Authority delivering the game-changing infrastructure that will help local people and businesses across the region, working with Government to deliver a new station Warrington Bank Quay so we can maximise the benefits from Northern Powerhouse Rail."

Ahead of the meeting the Combined Authority board and Interim Chief Executive Nick Walkley were given a tour of Warrington Youth Zone's purpose-

built state of the art facility for the town's young people by young representatives, alongside its Chief Executive Dave McNicholl.

Dave said: "As an organisation dedicated to helping young people thrive it was an honour to host the CWCA's milestone meeting and hear about a shared vision, which includes improving the life chances of the region's incredible young people."

Young people outlining their hopes for the region as it begins life as a combined authority included Indie Lomax, 18, from Warrington

who said: "Hopefully the politicians can make things more affordable. People struggle with jobs, buses need to be cheaper."

And Ryan Parker, 18, from Latchford said: "The big thing for me is that they care about the youth. That they see us as young people who can become adults. I see Cheshire and Warrington on the map in 30 years. If you tell someone you're from this region they will know what this place is like. If we thrive as much as we can, we can seriously get somewhere with its people and offering."



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New Tax Return rules put Directors under greater scrutiny

From April 2025 onwards, company directors completing a self-assessment tax return will notice some important new reporting requirements. While the changes may initially appear to be a minor administrative update, in reality they represent another step in HMRC's increasing focus on directors of owner-managed businesses and close companies.

The changes mainly affect directors who already complete a tax return and will apply from the 2025/26 tax year onwards. For many business owners, it is likely to mean additional information gathering and greater attention to detail when preparing returns.

What Is Changing?

Historically, directors could indicate on their tax return whether they were a company director during the tax year, however completion of these boxes was not mandatory.

Under the new rules, directors will now be required to confirm not only that they were a director, but also whether the company involved is classified as a "close company".

In simple terms, a close company is typically a company controlled by five or fewer shareholders, or by its directors. Most small family-run or owner-managed businesses fall within this definition.

Where the company is a close company, directors will also need to disclose additional information including, the company name, registration number, amount received, percentage of holding.

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Not Every Director Needs a Tax Return

One of the biggest misconceptions surrounding the announcement is the suggestion that all directors will now automatically need to complete a self-assessment tax return.

That is not currently the case.

HMRC removed the blanket requirement for all directors to file tax returns several years ago. Whether a director is required to file still depends on their overall circumstances, such as dividend income, other untaxed income or whether HMRC have specifically issued a return.

The new rules simply mean that where a tax return is already required, additional information must now be included.

Shareholding Calculations Could Cause Confusion

Perhaps the most practical difficulty created by the new rules is the requirement to report percentage shareholdings.

At first glance this sounds straightforward, however many limited companies do not have simple share structures.

Where a company only has one class of shares, calculating ownership percentages is relatively easy. If an individual owns half the shares, they own 50% of the company.

However, many businesses have multiple classes of shares with different nominal values and different rights attached. In these situations, the calculation becomes more complex because HMRC's

guidance refers to the nominal value of shares held rather than simply the number of shares owned.

This means someone holding fewer shares could actually have a larger percentage interest than another shareholder depending on the value and structure of those shares.

For companies with alphabet shares or more bespoke ownership structures, this is likely to create additional work for both directors and accountants.

Changes During the Year

Another interesting aspect of the new rules relates to shareholdings that change during the tax year.

HMRC's guidance suggests directors should report the highest percentage shareholding held at any point during the year, rather than the position at the year end.

For example, if a director owned 60% of a company for part of the year before reducing their holding to 50%, the figure reported on the tax return should still be 60%.

This approach simplifies the reporting process from HMRC's perspective, but it may not necessarily reflect the position at the end of the year.

Zero Still Means Something

One area that could easily catch people out is the requirement to enter zero values where appropriate.

If a director did not receive dividends from a close company, or does not personally own shares in the company, the relevant boxes must still be completed with a zero entry.



Thomas Coyne and Stuart Barr

Leaving the boxes blank is not the same thing.

HMRC may treat missing information as a failure to complete the return correctly, potentially leading to penalties.

There have already been reports of some tax software struggling to accept zero entries in certain fields, so it is important for taxpayers and advisers to review returns carefully before submission.

What Should Directors Do Now?

Although these changes are not overly complicated, they do reinforce the importance of maintaining accurate company records and understanding ownership structures properly.

For directors, particularly those involved in family businesses or companies with multiple shareholders, it would be sensible to start reviewing shareholdings and dividend records well in advance of the next tax return season.

As with many HMRC changes, the additional reporting may initially appear administrative in nature, but the wider aim is clearly to improve visibility over director income, company ownership and close company structures.

For many small business owners, it is another reminder that HMRC continues to move towards more detailed and data-driven compliance monitoring in the years ahead.

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Local bowler triumphs



Mike Wightman (organiser) Ross Wightman, John Brown (winner), Natalie Kirkby (sponsor from Sigma Solutions Limited.)

LOCAL bowler John Brown triumphed as top bowlers from across the North West competed in the annual Kevin & Ken Wightman Trophy played at Monks Sports and Social Club, Warrington.

The final of the Crown Green Bowls event in memory of Kevin & Ken Wightman was down to the final 16 from 64 competitors on the day.

The semi-finalists were John Brown (Warrington) v Danny Watson (Warrington) and Steven Glover (Merseyside) v Matty Gilmore (Wallasey).

John Brown (Warrington) triumphed over Matty Gilmore (Wallasey) in the final.

The sponsors of the competition were local companies Sigma Solutions Limited and Grange Valley Amusements. The raffle raised £405 and £135 to each of the following Cancer charities.

Prostate Cancer Research, Macmillan Support and Breast Cancer UK.

The event was organised by Mike Wightman in memory of his late brother Kevn and father Ken, helping raise funds for cancer charities.

Mike's brother Kev sadly died from pancreatic cancer, and since his death, his sister-in-law has been diagnosed with breast cancer, while Mike has had prostate cancer - thankfully, both are in remission. All monies raised from raffles over the weekend will be split equally between Macmillan Nurses, Breast Cancer and Prostate Cancer charities.

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