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ISSUE 322 OCTOBER 2026 FREE EVERY MONTH

Aaren's Voice journey continues

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Editor's Opinion

There is something deeply disturbing about the sudden collapse of a charity whose very purpose was to stop young people taking their own lives.

PAPYRUS was not some obscure organisation operating on the fringes of public life.

From its Warrington headquarters, it spent almost 30 years campaigning to prevent young suicide, training professionals, educating communities and providing the national HOPELINE247 service for young people experiencing suicidal thoughts.

And then, almost overnight, it was gone.

On September 7, PAPYRUS entered administration and its services ceased operating. Joint administrators were appointed after what the charity described as an "extended and extremely difficult period".

The official explanation points to rising demand, increasing costs and a reduction in reliable funding across the charity sector.

But I believe we should be asking much bigger questions. Because this isn't simply about the failure of another charity.

It is about what happens when society decides that something as fundamental as preventing children and young people from taking their own lives can be left dependent on charitable fundraising.

The Three Dads Walking, who have raised more than £1.5m for

PAPYRUS after losing their own daughters to suicide, have asked precisely that question.

And who could blame them?

They have walked thousands of miles to raise money for a service they believed was helping save other families from experiencing the unimaginable pain they themselves have endured.

There is another deeply troubling aspect to this story.

Warrington Worldwide has spoken to a former employee who claims staff were given virtually no warning of the impending collapse.

More than 120 jobs are understood to have disappeared. These were people who had dedicated their working lives to suicide prevention.

Whatever the circumstances behind the financial failure, surely those people deserved better.

There must now be a full and independent examination of what happened.

Not a witch-hunt. Not political point-scoring. But proper answers.

How did an organisation with reported income of more than £5.3m in the year to March 2025 end up in administration? Why did expenditure rise to almost £6.9m? What warnings were given to trustees? What did senior management know and when?



And why were staff apparently so shocked by what happened?

Those questions are now for the administrators – and potentially the Charity Commission – to answer.

But there is an even bigger question for Government.

Who is responsible for ensuring that specialist suicide prevention services remain available when charitable funding collapses?

Because young people don't stop experiencing suicidal thoughts because a charity has run out of money.

The need doesn't disappear.

It simply moves somewhere else – to families, schools, NHS services and other charities already under enormous pressure.

That is why the PAPYRUS collapse should be a wake-up call.

Warrington should be proud that a national organisation dedicated to saving young lives grew from this town. But we should also be upset and even angry that it has ended this way.

Saving young lives cannot be treated as an optional extra.

If PAPYRUS's legacy means anything, it must be that we learn from its collapse – and make sure the vital work it pioneered does not disappear with it.

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Local singer Aaren James leaves The Voice UK viewers in tears

Warrington singer Aaren James has secured his place in the next stage of ITV's The Voice UK following an emotional performance in front of the show's coaches.

The 24-year-old former ambulance care assistant was the final contestant to take to the stage hoping to impress coaches Kelly Rowland, will.i.am, Sir Tom Jones, Tom Fletcher and Danny Jones.

Before his performance, Aaren opened up about his close relationship with his nan Kim, who had recently been diagnosed with breast cancer.

He explained that he had moved in with her to look after and support her, telling viewers: "She means the world to me."

Aaren chose to perform How Do I Say Goodbye by Dean Lewis, a song which had both Kelly Rowland and Sir Tom Jones turning their chairs.

Following the performance, Aaren invited his nan onto the stage, telling the coaches: "My mum and nan are both crying."

He explained: "Nan is currently in remission and there was a period where we nearly lost her as a family, and she's been my rock."

When Aaren asked his nan for

advice on which coach he should choose, she pointed towards Kelly and said: "She's beautiful."

Turning to Sir Tom, she added: "And he's handsome."

But ultimately, she left the decision to her grandson, telling him: "It's down to you."

Aaren chose to join Kelly's team. The former Destiny's Child star said: "It's such a pleasure to meet you, and a blessing to meet a miracle."

Aaren replied: "She's my miracle, she really is," leaving Kelly visibly emotional.

Following on from his success Aaren met up with Warrington Worldwide's young reporter Elliot Taylor to visit The Hive in Warrington town centre, where he helped promote a new line of Gonks at Gonk World UK.

He also took the hot seat with Editor Gary Skentelbery to appear on his Rock Show on Radio Warrington, to receive an education in classic rock!



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*Children from the Foundations Summer Rugby Holiday Camp pictured posing for photos with Warrington Wolves 1st Team star Lachlan Webster.



Email BenStiff@WarringtonWolvesFoundation.com
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Warrington walks together for hope in powerful suicide prevention event

WARRINGTON came together in powerful numbers for the annual Hope 100 Walk, with the Mayor of Warrington and Charlotte Nichols MP among those showing their support for suicide prevention and better mental health.

The event brought together walkers, volunteers, community organisations and supporters at the Asics Stadium on Victoria Park, with a sea of yellow high-visibility vests creating a striking sight as participants gathered beneath the distinctive blue and yellow balloon arch.

The Mayor Councillor Sagheer Zaman, was pictured meeting walkers and volunteers and taking part in the community event, underlining the importance of tackling the stigma surrounding mental health and suicide.

The Hope 100 has become an important annual event in Warrington's calendar, encouraging people to start conversations, listen to one another and offer support to those who may be struggling.

The event is held in connection with World Suicide Prevention Day, which takes place on September 10.

The latest walk featured a strong turnout from across Warrington, with participants ranging from experienced walkers to people simply wanting to show their support.

For some, the event provides an opportunity to remember loved

ones lost to suicide. For others, it is about supporting friends, relatives or colleagues who may be experiencing difficult times.

The message behind Hope 100 is that conversation, connection and simply being there for somebody can make a difference.

Warrington has a long-running partnership approach to the event, involving organisations including Warrington Speak Up, Warrington Wolves Foundation, LiveWire and other community groups.

Mayor Sagheer said: "I was proud to attend HOPE 100 event raising vital awareness for suicide prevention here in Warrington.

"HOPE 100 is a partnership of local organisations and the community, working together to support better mental health and suicide prevention across our borough.

"This walk was a key to Suicide Prevention Strategy. It helped build confidence to have those life-saving conversations and highlighted the brilliant support groups we have here.

"By talking, listening, breaking stigma and signposting help, we move closer to our goal: zero suicides in Warrington.

"It was lovely to connect, share,

support one another or simply walk together, knowing we're not alone.

"Thank you to everyone who took part."

Warrington North MP Charlotte Nichols has also been a long-standing supporter of the event.

She said: "Suicide prevention isn't just the work of professionals, it is something we can all be a part of. I've had my own experiences with suicidal ideation and feel passionately about the fact that every suicide is preventable with the right support – one conversation can save a life and be the first step towards someone getting the help

they need, and it can start with something as simple as "how are you doing?". The more of those conversations we all have, the more we can ensure that we have a culture locally where no-one feels forced to suffer in silence through shame or stigma.

"If you're worried about someone or if you need help yourself, support is available."

Warrington Speak Up says that through open conversations, active listening, asking questions, helping people access support and challenging stigma, communities can make a difference.



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Warrington – a town brimming with opportunity!

In January this year, Warrington was ranked 5th in the UK for rising living standards. One month earlier, in December 2025, Rightmove named Warrington the 16th happiest place to live in the Northwest of England.

Then, in February the year before that, we received the prestigious title of "One of the best places to live in the UK". This included property finder Garrington placing us an outstanding 342nd out of 1,400 regions nationwide.

The statistics don't lie: Warrington is a town which consistently strives

to do more, continuously adapting in order to turn challenge into opportunity.

In 2026, this feels more significant than ever, particularly for local young people, who are also performing well above national averages. Recently, this has been demonstrated in abundance, one

By Elliot Taylor

prime example being the return of a 12-week training initiative organised by 'The King's Trust'. Starting on the 14th of September, the programme will work hard to equip young people with new skills, ultimately launching participants into high-quality apprenticeships and job roles once completed.

This is just one very small example however, as the recent Cities Outlook Report showed how Warrington once again ranks in the top 10% nationwide for its employment opportunities. This incredible success has been largely attributed to a booming "new economy" and knowledge-intensive sectors, the most powerful being, the nuclear and clean energy industry. Here, Warrington is paving the way for the entire UK, creating yet more ways for local people to thrive.

The recognition doesn't stop there though, as Stephen Fitzsimons, Chief Executive of Warrington Chamber Plus, was featured in the national Guardian newspaper at the start of this year with this fantastic headline: 'A southern economy in the north': how Warrington has adapted to change.

Despite all of this however, our town remains focused on challenges ahead, a drive shared by two of our local entrepreneurs I spoke with earlier this week. One of these was Laurence Barrow, who didn't even need a question in order to start expressing his passion to support young people.

Almost immediately, Laurence openly expressed a strong sense of 'responsibility' to 'light up' career opportunities as a business owner. This was inspiring to hear and shows in abundance through Laurence's work with Barrow Electrical and efforts as a board member supporting youth initiatives Warrington Rylands Football Club.

I got a similar feeling interviewing another local businessman, Carl Oates, a director of Dante Group. Carl was just as eager to talk about the future, jumping straight into the direct career opportunities coming

from his new project, 'Platform'. This will bring massive new data centres to the old Unilever Crofields site, and will once again employ bucketloads of local people for high-level roles.

For both Laurence and Carl, it's an extremely busy time, as on top of all these business projects, they're also getting behind two brand-new careers initiatives.

The first of these kicks off on the 9th of October and is going to be known as "The Vibe Café". Organised by both Warrington Life and the Department for Work and Pensions, this monthly event will take place at the Living Well Hub, lasting from 1:30pm till 4:00pm. The mini careers event, as Participation and Training Manager Sharon Jenkins described it, will build on an existing Friday afternoon drop-in session which already exists at the hub. Specifically designed to help young people who are currently Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET), the event will provide a welcoming team of advisers and local employers to connect with, in a laid-back and relaxed setting.

The second Careers event is 'Warrington Youth – LINK', another extremely exciting project. This is designed for all young people to get involved with, specifically targeting the ages of 14-18 year olds. This will be the first of its kind and as the initiative plans to give young people the chance to build a professional network as early as 14.

Similar to The Vibe Café, these events will bring together a range of employers and local businesspeople, delivering out-of-the-classroom skill sessions to help participants get ahead in the competitive 2026 job market. Different to the average careers fair, WY-LINK will also prioritise reliability, with young people who have gone down different career pathways attending the events, ready to speak and offer advice face-to-face with others.

How many towns offer opportunities like this?



Elliot pictured with Laurence Barrow.

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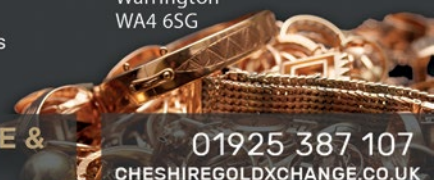
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Back home, back to business and plenty to look forward to

By Laurence Barrow

After four weeks away with Claire and the girls, we're now firmly back home and, as you'd expect, straight back into another incredibly busy few weeks.

I'm not really a believer in the usual "refresh and reset" phrases people use after a holiday, but having that time together was genuinely important for our family. After missing out on so much time away last year, we've really appreciated being able to enjoy our cruise and time in Spain together.

The summer has also brought some special family milestones. Claire and I celebrated our 14th

wedding anniversary, while our youngest, Poppy, is now officially a teenager and has started Year 9. Our eldest, Ruby, has also had an incredible summer. After everything she's dealt with, she absolutely smashed her GCSEs and secured her place at the college she wanted, studying the subjects she's passionate about. I couldn't be prouder of both girls.

At Barrow Electrical, it's been another incredibly busy period. Although the schools are quieter over summer, our teams have been working across Warrington and further afield, alongside projects right across the country and in Ireland. We've got some fantastic projects coming up, while we're also tendering for some really exciting opportunities. It's brilliant to see the business continuing to grow and the team

delivering such a high standard of work.

We've also recently completed the new illuminated signage at Hotel Football, next to Old Trafford. So if you're driving past on an evening and see Hotel Football lit up, that's another Barrow Electrical job!

At Warrington Rylands 1906 FC, the new season is now well underway. It's been a mixed start, but we've now put together three wins on the bounce and progressed through to the next round of the FA Cup. Hopefully that's the start of a good cup run, while we'll be looking to push up the league as the season progresses.

Community continues to be a huge part of what I'm involved in. Over the summer, Barrow Electrical and Rylands have supported organisations including Andy's Man Club, Warrington Youth Zone, Warrington & Halton Hospitals, North West Cancer Research, Cash for Kids and Warrington Disability Partnership. We're incredibly proud to play our part in a town with so many amazing people and organisations, particularly when it comes to supporting the next

generation.

One final piece of news has left me incredibly humbled. ABB have invited me to be a guest speaker at their annual leadership conference in October. I'm nervous, but incredibly excited to tell my story — the reality of building a business in Warrington, the challenges life throws at us and the importance of finding a way forward, with the support of great people around you.

And finally, I'm delighted to confirm that the North West Cancer Research Golf Day returns on Friday 21 May 2027 at Fairmont Cheshire, The Mere. After raising more than £80,000 this year, we're determined to make it even bigger and better.

If you'd like to be involved, drop me a message and let's get you locked in!





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Mum's heartfelt plea for brave Jayce

A Warrington mother has launched an emotional fundraising appeal to give her five-year-old son the specialist equipment he desperately needs as he prepares for major spinal surgery.

Emma Carlton from Woolston, says her son Jayce is a "smiley, happy and determined little boy" who refuses to let his disabilities stand in the way of living life to the full.

But with Jayce facing spinal SDR surgery and potentially two years of recovery, his family are facing a race against time to make sure he has the equipment and support he needs to maintain his independence and enjoy life both before and after the operation.

Jayce was born prematurely at 36 weeks on December 19, 2020, following a difficult pregnancy which included the premature rupture of his mother's waters at just 29 weeks.

After a gruelling 30-hour labour and a severe postpartum haemorrhage, Emma's little boy was born weighing 6lb 1oz.

He subsequently developed jaundice and spent almost a week in hospital receiving light therapy.

As Jayce grew, however, Emma and his family began to realise that something was not quite right.

He was extremely stiff and rigid and struggled to settle, while important developmental milestones such as sitting, crawling and walking failed to happen.

He did not begin speaking simple words until he was around three-and-a-half years old.

Concerned for their son, Emma and her family arranged a private consultation with a paediatrician at

Spire Hospital.

The specialist believed Jayce could have cerebral palsy and referred the family back to Alder Hey Children's Hospital, where he underwent a series of tests and investigations.

In 2022, the family received the devastating news that scans had identified white matter changes in Jayce's brain.

He was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy Diplegia, with doctors believing the condition was linked to a lack of oxygen during pregnancy or birth.

Jayce has since also been diagnosed with autism.

Yet despite everything he has faced, his mum says he continues to amaze those around him.

Now aged five, Jayce attends a mainstream school with one-to-one support.

He uses a wheelchair as his main form of transport but has also worked incredibly hard to learn to use a K-walker for short distances with the support of an adult.

For Emma, the biggest challenge now is ensuring Jayce has the equipment he needs to face the next stage of his journey.

The family have been waiting for an adapted home for more than four years, but their current accommodation is not suitable for Jayce's growing needs.

With spinal surgery approaching and a lengthy recovery ahead, Emma says the situation has become



increasingly urgent.

The family are hoping to raise enough money to purchase several pieces of specialist equipment which could make a huge difference to Jayce's everyday life.

These include:

- An adapted electric wheelchair – £4,000
- A junior adapted electric wheelchair with a headrest and harness would allow Jayce to travel safely in a wheelchair-accessible vehicle without his parents having to physically lift him – something which is becoming increasingly difficult as he grows.
- A specialist floor-level safe bed – £2,000
- An adapted floor-level bed would allow Jayce to get into and out of bed more independently while still keeping him safe during the night with padded and secure sides. Emma says the NHS bed currently supplied requires Jayce to be lifted into it – something which is already

becoming difficult and would be virtually impossible following his surgery.

- An adaptive bike – £2,500
- A specially adapted, hand-controlled bike with additional supports and a harness would give Jayce another way of experiencing the freedom and enjoyment of cycling.
- A Huckleberry Hiker – £2,000

Perhaps most importantly for Jayce, the specialist all-terrain equipment would allow him to experience places his wheelchair simply cannot reach – from hills and mountains to off-road adventures.

The equipment can grow with him and could ultimately allow Jayce to take part in adventures alongside his family which might otherwise be beyond his reach.

Donate to Jayce's GoFundMe appeal www.gofundme.com/f/jayces-journey-to-raise-funds-for-lifechanging-equipment



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Get ready for Oktoberfest 2026!

AFTER missing a year, Warrington's much-loved Oktoberfest is back, and it's set to be a celebration you won't want to miss!

Join Warrington Rotary Club on October 9-10, 2026, at the iconic Parr Hall for a fantastic weekend filled with great brews, delicious bites, and a whole lot of fun, all thanks to the hard work of the Rotary Club and their amazing local volunteers.

What to Expect:

- **Over 50 Beers & Ciders:** Sample a diverse selection, including local favourites and authentic German imports, that will tickle your taste buds.
- **Mouthwatering German Snacks:** Savor tasty German-style treats from Café @ the End of the Universe while you sip and socialise with friends.
- **Live Music:** Get ready to groove with fantastic live performances! Enjoy the high-energy sounds of "The Pink Pumps" on Friday night and the lively tunes of "The Fleegles" on Saturday evening, plus surprise acts Saturday afternoon, all to keep the energy buzzing!

This festival isn't just about enjoying great food and drink; it's also a fantastic opportunity for local businesses to get involved! They have a few barrels left to sponsor, giving businesses a chance to showcase their support for the community while gaining visibility at the event. Every penny raised

will go towards supporting local charities and causes that make Warrington a better place to live.

Event Details:

- **When:** October 9-10, 2026
- **Where:** Parr Hall, Warrington
- **Times:** Friday 5 PM – 11:30 PM, Saturday 12 PM – 11 PM

Don't wait—grab your tickets now and be part of a weekend filled with laughter, community spirit, and unforgettable memories. Let's make this Oktoberfest the best one yet!

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Surprise race day for self-confessed petrolhead



A day at the motorbike races proved to be the surprise of a lifetime for Warringtonian Phil Warburton, as the self-confessed petrolhead met his racing idols on a special day at Oulton Park, arranged by his carers at his home, Belong Care Village.

After cheering from the stands, the former carpenter enjoyed a personal meet-and-greet with superbike riders Glenn Irwin, Blaze Baker, and reigning British Superbike Championship (BSB) champion Kyle Ryde.

Speaking of the occasion, Phil, 78, said, "I thoroughly enjoyed it! It was a lovely surprise and I'm really grateful to the Belong team and everyone involved for making it happen for me."

Belong Warrington administrator Margo Partington and support worker Hazel Henshaw devised the trip, making all the necessary arrangements to accompany Phil on the 30-mile round trip from the Loushers Lane care village to mid-Cheshire.

Providing more detail, Margo said: "Phil and I have a shared love of motorbike racing – we're always catching up over upcoming events and who is top of the leaderboard. He's been a bit unwell recently and we wanted to do something to give him a boost, so I reached out to the venue to see if they could help and the result was an unforgettable day."

A motorbike fanatic from a young age, at just 16, Phil procured his pride and joy, his very own gold Ducati 200 – now considered to be a vintage classic. His fondness of the sport stems from the excitement of its fast-paced nature, the dazzling daredevil moves of its racers, and the camaraderie culture that comes from watching alongside fellow enthusiasts.

Two cherries on the top of the day came in the form of a special jacket gifted to Phil by the racers, and a Kyle Ryde-signed picture, purchased for him by a fellow fan.

Hazel added: "We're pleased to be able to organise experiences like this for our wonderful customers. For Phil to be able to enjoy something he loves, meet his idols, and even make new friends, these are moments that mean so much to him, and he's not stopped wearing his new jacket! A huge thank you to everyone who made Phil's day one he'll cherish."

More information about Belong Warrington can be found at www.belong.org.uk or by emailing enquiries@belong.org.uk



Local Healthwatch recognised nationally

INDEPENDENT public voice Healthwatch Warrington has been recognised by Healthwatch England for its work improving health and social care services and ensuring local people's voices help shape the support they receive.

The recognition comes in Healthwatch England's latest Local Healthwatch Impact 2025/26 report, which highlights examples of outstanding impact from local Healthwatch organisations across the country.

The national report praises Healthwatch organisations for their role in reducing health inequalities, helping people access services, supporting improvements in care, and ensuring decision-makers listen to community experiences. It notes that more than 370,000 people shared their experiences with local Healthwatch organisations during the year.

Healthwatch Warrington was specifically highlighted for its work in identifying and escalating safeguarding concerns. According to the report, what began as support for an individual resident ultimately led to wider action being taken to improve services and prevent future people from experiencing similar difficulties. Healthwatch England cited this as an example of how local Healthwatch organisations provide an invaluable early warning system for health and care services.

Lydia Hughes, Chief Executive of Healthwatch Warrington,

said: "We are proud to have our work recognised by Healthwatch England. Every piece of feedback we receive helps us build a clearer picture of what is working well and where improvements are needed. This recognition reflects the commitment of our staff, volunteers and local residents who continue to share their experiences with us. Together, we are helping to make sure health and social care services in Warrington work better for everyone."

The national recognition highlights the important role Healthwatch Warrington continues to play in championing residents' views and ensuring local services are shaped by the people who use them.



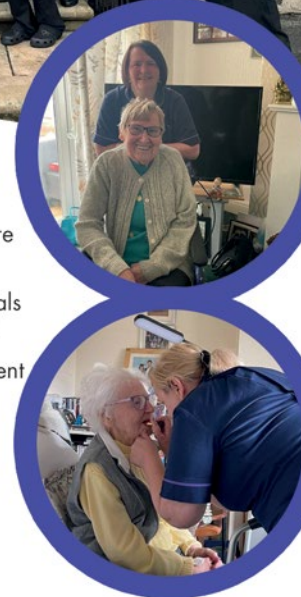
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On the other side, I'm proud to introduce the next generation — my son, Tom — who's now officially joined the team. Tom's a fully qualified, time-served fitter with experience in carpets, vinyl, laminate, and LVT. He's worked with many different fitters 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.

Love Carpets remains a true local, family-run business that you can trust. Whatever your budget, we've got something for you — and if you need help clearing a room or removing your old flooring, we can arrange that too.

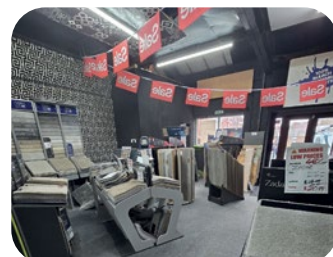
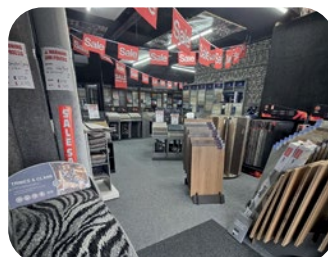
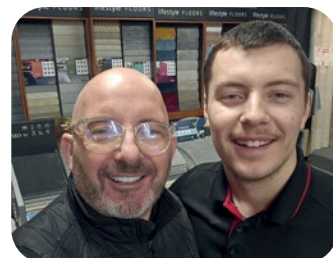
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The Voice star Aaren James brings a touch of magic to Gonk World UK

WARRINGTON singer Aaren James swapped the bright lights of *The Voice UK* for a very different kind of stage when he paid a special visit to Gonk World UK at The Hive in Warrington town centre.

The rising local singing star from Hood Manor delighted shoppers with a surprise live performance as he helped launch a brand-new British Classic Gonk collection at the popular Sankey Street store.

Aaren, who recently captured the hearts of television viewers with his emotional performance on ITV's *The Voice UK*, treated shoppers to an impromptu rendition of the classic *Stand By Me*.

With just his powerful voice filling the arcade and surrounding shopping area, Aaren quickly attracted the attention of shoppers, staff and Gonk fans.

The performance came just days after the Warrington singer secured his place in the next stage of *The Voice UK*, turning two coaches' chairs during an emotional performance of Dean Lewis's "How

Do I Say Goodbye".

Aaren ultimately joined Kelly Rowland's team, following an emotional appearance alongside his nan Kim, who he described as his "miracle".

But at Gonk World UK, the atmosphere was very different – with Aaren surrounded by colourful Christmas Gonks, British-themed characters and plenty of smiling shoppers.

The visit marked the launch of the store's latest collection, celebrating British life and traditions, adding a distinctly home-grown twist to the ever-growing Gonk phenomenon.

The new range joins the extensive collection already available at Gonk World UK, which opened permanently at The Hive earlier this year following its success as a travelling Christmas market and pop-up business.

The Warrington store has quickly become a popular destination for Gonk enthusiasts, offering everything from small collectable characters to seasonal decorations and larger statement Gonks. And having one of Warrington's newest singing stars helping launch the latest range proved a fitting way to add some entertainment to the occasion.

The young singer has already been attracting considerable attention following his *Voice UK* appearance, with his emotional audition prompting an outpouring of support from viewers.

Now, as his musical journey continues on national television, Aaren is also proving that he

has not forgotten his Warrington roots. And while there may have been no red chairs, superstar coaches or television cameras at The Hive, there was certainly a receptive audience as Aaren James demonstrated why he is fast becoming one of Warrington's most talked-about young musical talents.



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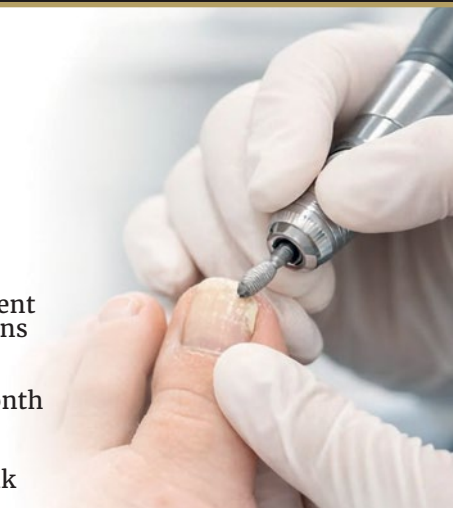
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Divorce Column

By Peter Wilkinson
Divorce Lawyer at Chambers Fletcher Solicitors

Divorce – Navigating the Legal Divide

If you are thinking about divorce, it can be difficult to know where to start. There is usually a great deal to consider, so taking legal advice from the outset can help make the process easier to navigate.

One common misconception is that "the divorce" deals with everything. It does not. There are often three separate issues to consider: dissolving the marriage (the divorce), resolving financial claims (financial remedy) and, where children are involved, making arrangements for their care (child arrangements).

Since the introduction of no-fault divorce, it is no longer necessary to "point the finger" by alleging blame against your husband or wife for the breakdown of the marriage, so the divorce process itself is now relatively straightforward. Where difficulties arise, they are not usually with the divorce itself, but rather with resolving financial matters or child arrangements.

It's important to understand that obtaining a divorce does not, of itself, resolve financial claims between you. Property, savings, investments, pensions, businesses and income may all need to be considered. Where agreement is reached, it will usually need to be incorporated into a financial order approved by the court. Where agreement cannot be reached, it may ultimately be necessary for the court to determine how the finances should be divided.

Child arrangements are a separate issue. In many cases, parents are able to agree between themselves where their children will live and how their time will be divided. Where agreement cannot be reached, an application to the court may become necessary. In determining any application, the welfare of the children will be the court's paramount consideration.

Taking legal advice at an early stage should help you understand your options and make informed decisions about the issues which apply in your case. Understanding your legal position before making important decisions can help you approach separation with your eyes wide open and see a clearer way forward.

For expert advice and assistance regarding divorce, financial matters or child arrangements, please get in touch. Whatever your family law situation, we can help.

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Sandy Lane tip closure given green light despite no replacement



WARRINGTON Borough Council has decided to press ahead with the closure of Sandy Lane Community Recycling Centre in Stockton Heath – despite there being no confirmed alternative facility for residents in south Warrington.

The decision was taken by the council's Cabinet recently as part of a package of cost-cutting measures aimed at tackling the authority's huge financial problems.

The move means the popular Sandy Lane tip is still scheduled to close on January 31, 2027.

But the decision is likely to fuel further anger in south Warrington, where residents and local councillors have repeatedly argued that the facility should remain open until a replacement has actually been identified, funded and delivered.

The council currently has three Community Recycling Centres – Sandy Lane, Gatewarth and Woolston – but after the closure, residents in the south of the borough will face longer journeys to dispose of many types of household waste.

The council's own consultation document acknowledges that it only has a legal requirement to provide a minimum of one recycling centre across the borough. It argues that Sandy Lane is an unsuitable site because of its condition, its location within a residential area and the limitations on the types of waste it can accept.

But campaigners say that misses the fundamental issue. Where is the replacement?

Local Lib Dem councillors Judith Wheeler and Sharon Harris have been among those calling for Sandy Lane to remain open until an alternative is operational.

They have argued that closing the existing facility first simply transfers the problem elsewhere – potentially increasing traffic, emissions and pressure on Gatewarth and Woolston, while raising fears of increased fly-tipping. The issue is particularly sensitive given the scale of planned housing development across south Warrington.

Councillors have argued that recycling and waste infrastructure should be regarded as essential infrastructure for the area, rather than something to be considered after thousands of additional homes have been built.

Sandy Lane's future has been the subject of controversy for more than a decade.

Previous attempts to close the centre have generated strong

local opposition, including a petition attracting more than 3,000 signatures when closure was threatened in 2018. The council subsequently backed away from the proposal.

Now, despite another campaign by local residents and councillors, the closure has been confirmed against the backdrop of an unprecedented financial crisis.

The council says it faces an identified £179m budget gap and that difficult decisions about future services are unavoidable.

But opponents of the Sandy Lane decision are likely to question whether saving money by removing a facility used by thousands of residents is simply creating additional costs elsewhere.

Once Sandy Lane closes, residents in Stockton Heath, Grappenhall, Appleton, Walton, Lymm and surrounding communities will have to use alternative facilities.

That is likely to mean more journeys by car – precisely at a time when the council is promoting environmental objectives and preparing for major development across south Warrington.

There are also concerns that additional traffic will be placed on roads serving the remaining centres.

And critics argue that the decision sends out a particularly strange message when the council is simultaneously planning thousands of new homes in the south of the borough.

The simple question being asked by campaigners is: why close the existing facility before a replacement is ready?

Sandy Lane's location, access arrangements and proximity to homes have been criticised for years.

But for many residents, the argument is not that Sandy Lane should remain forever – it is that it should not close until there is somewhere else for people to go.

The council has now chosen a different route. And with the January 31 closure date approaching, the political row over the future of Sandy Lane looks certain to continue.

Bruche Academy welcomes first secondary pupils

The first 36 Year 7 pupils at Bruche Academy are settling in nicely as the new school year gets underway.

Warrington's first all-through school will take pupils on one seamless journey from Early Years right through to Year 11 and will accommodate 300 secondary pupils by 2031.

The school's secondary phase, headed by Secondary Director Don Gillthorpe, offers a broad and engaging curriculum designed to inspire curiosity and a love of learning, combined with high academic expectations and exceptional pastoral care.

Beyond the classroom, pupils will benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities to help them develop confidence, resilience and leadership skills, underpinned by strong partnerships with families that support every pupil to thrive academically, socially and personally.

"It's been a pleasure and a privilege to welcome our first Year 7 pupils into the Bruche community," Don said. "Seeing them arrive in their smart new uniforms and full of excitement was a wonderful moment for everyone at the academy."

"Our school is built on ambition, respect and opportunity, and we combine high academic expectations with real warmth and exceptional pastoral care, so that every pupil feels known and

supported."

"I'm really looking forward to getting to know families over the coming months, including those of prospective pupils, to show them why Bruche is the right choice for their child." Book Walking Tours

Chris Jones, Executive Headteacher and WPAT Deputy CEO, said: "We are incredibly proud to welcome our very first Year 7 pupils to Bruche Academy. This is a significant moment for our school and one that our staff have been looking forward to with great excitement."

"Starting secondary school is an important milestone for every young person, and we want our pupils to feel welcomed, supported and excited about the opportunities ahead of them."

"As our first Year 7 cohort, these pupils will always hold a special place in the history of Bruche Academy. They have a unique opportunity to help us establish the character and identity of our secondary phase, and we are tremendously excited to see what they will achieve."

Open evenings for prospective secondary families are being held on Tuesday 29 September and Tuesday 13 October, with three separate time slots (16:30, 17:30, and 18:30) giving families the

chance to meet staff and pupils and see for themselves what makes Bruche different. Places can be booked using the link on the school website.

A £13 million project to construct new secondary and early years buildings alongside existing primary provision on the academy's

Seymour Drive, Padgate site is now underway.

The need for more secondary school places in the borough was identified in council plans published in 2024, and proposals for the new school were approved by local planners in December 2025.



Breathing Easy: Warrington's Revolutionary One-Stop Lung Health Clinic

Stop struggling. Get answers in just one visit

If you've been battling a persistent cough, feeling short of breath during everyday activities, or simply worried about your lung health, you're not alone. Thousands of people across Warrington are affected by breathing issues that impact their work, exercise, sleep, and quality of life. The frustration? Waiting months for specialist appointments, juggling multiple visits, and leaving without clear answers. That's about to change.

Expert Respiratory Care – All in One Visit

The Respiratory Wellness Clinic at Axis Core Health in Burtonwood has reimaged how lung health assessment works. Forget the traditional model of waiting weeks between appointments. Here, a dedicated team of respiratory specialists team works together to assess, investigate, and explain your results – all during a single visit.

Led by Consultant Respiratory Physician Dr Abdul Ashish, the clinic brings together:

- A specialist respiratory physiologist who measures lung function and offers a variety of other tests
- An experienced Respiratory physiotherapist who evaluates breathing patterns and physical performance to help you understand your breathing issues.

What You Can Expect

- During your appointment, advanced diagnostic testing provides clarity:
- Spirometry or other breathing tests – assesses your lung function and breathing capacity
 - Comprehensive breathing assessment by physiotherapist – identifies factors contributing to your symptoms or reduced fitness
 - Comprehensive analysis and plan by an experienced respiratory consultant

The results? You leave the clinic with a clear understanding of your condition, personalised advice tailored to your goals, and a concrete plan for managing your health moving forward.

What makes the clinic different is its coordinated, same-day approach. Test results are reviewed and interpreted by the respiratory team, allowing you

to leave with a clearer understanding of your condition, personalised advice and recommendations for ongoing management.

Whether you are seeking reassurance, investigating symptoms, improving fitness, or taking a proactive approach to your health, the Respiratory Wellness Clinic offers expert respiratory care in a welcoming and convenient setting.

Why Warrington Residents Are Choosing This Clinic

- No waiting weeks between appointments – everything happens in one comprehensive visit
- Expert team approach – benefit from coordinated specialist knowledge
- Same-day results interpretation – leave with clear answers, not confusion
- Welcoming, convenient setting right here in Burtonwood

Your Next Step

If breathing better and regaining confidence in your health sounds appealing, the Respiratory Wellness Clinic at Axis Core Health in Burtonwood is ready to help.

Contact the clinic today to book your one-stop respiratory assessment. Get the expert care you deserve – without the long wait.



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Spotlight on Local History with James Balme

St. Thomas' Church – The historical hidden gem of Stockton Heath

Stockton Heath today is a vibrant and historic village with origins stretching right back to Roman times.

For it was the Romans who built important routes such as Wilderspool causeway and the well-known Roman industrial area much of which lies beneath the old Greenall's site. I myself was involved in the excavations that took place at Stockton Heath Primary school in 2007 where we uncovered evidence of Roman buildings and found cremation urns and an ancient Roman well. The well is still visible today and is built into the school extension as a feature. There was also an Anglo-Saxon settlement here and during the 17th century English civil war encampments for the soldiers also existed.

Stockton Heath grew rapidly during the 19th century from a small rural village into a much busier industrialized village given its proximity to the Bridgewater canal.

In 1826 a local church was built, but it wasn't long before a newer church was to be constructed and dedicated to St. Thomas. The Church is a Grade II listed building completed in 1868. It is built of sandstone to the design of architects Paley and Austin and is of traditional Victorian Gothic

Revival style. Although it is a relatively large church, seating over 300 people, it has an intimacy and warmth which is felt as soon as you enter. The high roof and imposing chancel and east end inspire a sense of awe, while the fine detail of screens, woodwork, tiling and stained glass demonstrates the craftsmanship and care invested over generations. The church is significant as a landmark parish church in the Stockton Heath Conservation Area.

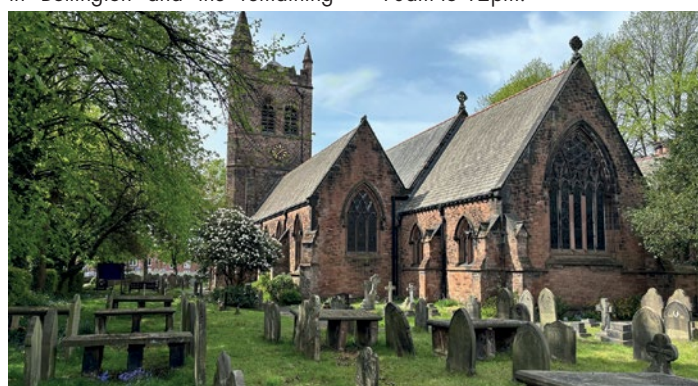
St Thomas' Church is included on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. This entry is significant because it confirms that, while St Thomas remains an active and valued place of worship and community building, its historic fabric is vulnerable and requires planned intervention. The church's Gothic Revival architecture and tower contribute strongly to this village character and to the legibility of London Road as a historic route through the settlement. The church sits within this sensitive townscape and contributes to the experience of Stockton Heath as a historic and socially active village centre. The churchyard provides a tranquil centre to a busy village

and an appropriate setting for the church. It is also a place of memory, family history and local identity. The Crosfield family graves are located in the churchyard, linking the memorial windows and benefactors inside the church to the memorial landscape outside. The Crosfield family established a soap and chemical manufacturing business in Warrington and in time this became known as Joseph Crosfield and Sons.

In 2016, a ring of ten bells was installed in the tower. Eight bells had been salvaged from the redundant church of St John's in Bollington and the remaining

two were donated by local bell enthusiast Dr Ashley Pugh and his daughters in memory of his wife H       Pugh.

The church today is a community focal point in the village, open daily for social interaction, refreshments, prayer and sanctuary. It hosts many school visits and assemblies, the annual Art Exhibition and Festival Praise during Stockton Heath Festival, and the Village Carol Service. If you are visiting Stockton Heath then a visit to see St. Thomas' church is a must. The church is open Monday to Friday 10am to 12pm.



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The silent killer: why your blood pressure deserves five minutes of your time

By Dr Naveed Ijaz, Chief Clinical Officer and Consultant in Family Medicine, MyGP Clinic

Most of the serious conditions I see in general practice announce themselves. There is pain, or a lump, or a cough that will not shift. High blood pressure does none of that. It sits quietly for years, damaging the arteries, heart, kidneys and brain, and the first sign that anything was wrong is often a stroke or a heart attack.

That is why it earned the nickname the silent killer. Around one in four adults in the UK has high blood pressure and a large chunk of them have no idea.

The good news is that it takes about a minute to measure and in most cases it responds very well to treatment. So here are the questions worth asking, whether you see me, your NHS GP, a nurse or a pharmacist.

What is my blood pressure and what do the numbers mean?

Ask for the actual reading. Not "fine" or "a bit up", but the two numbers.

The top number is the pressure when your heart pumps, the bottom when it relaxes between beats. A healthy clinic reading is usually around 120 over 80. We start calling it high blood pressure at 140 over 90 or above in clinic, or 135 over 85 at home.

One high reading does not make a diagnosis. It goes up if you have rushed to the appointment, had three coffees, or are simply

nervous in a consulting room, which even has a name, white coat hypertension. What matters is the pattern over time.

Do I need to monitor it at home?

For a lot of people, yes. Home readings are one of the most useful things you can bring to an appointment, and a far more honest picture than a single reading taken in a rush.

Buy a clinically validated monitor that goes around your upper arm, not your wrist. The British and Irish Hypertension Society keeps a list on its website. Sit quietly for five minutes first, back supported and arm at heart level, then take two readings a minute apart, morning and evening, for a week and write them down.

Should I be having cholesterol and diabetes checks too?

Almost certainly. Raised cholesterol and high blood sugar cluster with high blood pressure, and each one multiplies the effect of the others. Both show up on a simple blood

test, and type 2 diabetes can sit undetected for years.

Is my cardiovascular risk higher than I realise?

We can calculate your ten year risk of a heart attack or stroke using a tool called QRISK, which turns your blood pressure, cholesterol, age, weight, family history and ethnicity into a percentage. But it does not capture everything. You can have a normal cholesterol and still have a heart attack.

How often should I get checked?

NHS advice is that adults over 40 should have a blood pressure check at least every five years. I think that is far too relaxed. If you are over 40, carrying extra weight around the middle, have a family history of heart disease or stroke, or you are of South Asian or African Caribbean background, do not wait five years.

It is not just about weight and cholesterol

Sleep is badly underrated. Poor sleep and untreated sleep apnoea drive blood pressure up. So does stress. Alcohol has a bigger effect than most people expect, and so does sitting still all week. Regular movement, even a brisk half hour



walk most days, genuinely shifts the numbers.

None of that is glamorous advice. It is just the stuff that works.

Where we come in

At MyGP Clinic we run structured health checks that pull all of this into one appointment rather than five separate ones over eighteen months, reviewed properly and explained in plain English.

If you have not had your blood pressure checked in the last year, please do. It takes a minute, it costs nothing at your local pharmacy and it is one of the few things in medicine where a little attention now saves a great deal later.

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The M6 Bed Warehouse opens new showroom and earns further national recognition

FAMILY-run independent retailer The M6 Bed Warehouse has officially opened its third showroom in Macclesfield, marking another significant milestone in the business's continued growth.

Located opposite B&Q Macclesfield, the new showroom offers customers a wide selection of beds and mattresses from leading brands, including Sealy, Sleepzee, Harrison Spinks and Enchanted House. The showroom has been designed to provide a relaxed shopping experience, with customers able to try different products and receive expert advice from the M6 Beds team.

The opening follows the success of the company's existing showrooms in Alsager and Northwich and represents a significant investment in the future of the family-run business.

Louis Mitchell, Director of The M6 Bed Warehouse, said: "Opening our third showroom is a really exciting milestone for the business. We've learned a huge amount from opening Northwich and have used that experience to create what we believe is our best showroom yet."

"Macclesfield was a natural choice for us. It's a fantastic retail location with a strong local community, and we're excited to bring our approach to quality

products, expert advice and first-class service to the area."

Customers can also benefit from M6 Beds' established services, including free delivery and free recycling of old beds and mattresses.

The opening comes as M6 Beds

is also celebrating being shortlisted for the National Bed Federation Medium Retail Champion of the Year Award.

Following the company's success in winning the Small Retail Champion Award last year, the latest recognition highlights its continued growth and commitment to high standards in independent bed retail.

Louis added: "To progress

from winning the Small Retail Champion Award last year to being recognised again this year is fantastic recognition for our whole team."

With three showrooms now established, M6 Beds remains focused on quality products, outstanding value and first-class customer service.

For more information, visit www.m6beds.co.uk



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80s hits and neon lights make for a memorable St. Rocco's Neon Night Walk

MORE than 100 people turned Warrington neon as they took part in the Neon Night Walk, raising over £11,000 to support hospice care at St. Rocco's.

Starting and finishing at the Halliwell Jones Stadium, participants embraced the event's vibrant 80s theme, arriving in colourful fancy-dress, glow accessories, and neon outfits before setting off on a memorable 5k walk through the town centre. Sharon Bannister, PT, led the walkers through an energetic warm-up before they kicked off their walk.

Once walkers got to Bank Park, they were treated to a performance from The Rock Choir, who sang their hearts out and cheered on participants as they walked past.

The event brought together people of all ages, each walking for their own personal reasons. For many, the evening was an opportunity to

remember loved ones, celebrate lives, and support the hospice that has cared for so many loved ones across Warrington.

A beautiful lantern display welcomed walkers as they finished the walk, featuring heartfelt messages and dedications to loved ones. The display provided a moment of reflection before participants made every step count in support of hospice care.

After completing the walk, the evening continued with entertainment from a spectacular Whitney Houston tribute act, who sang a collection of her best 80s hits.

St Rocco's would like to say thank everyone who helped make

the event a success, especially those who took part in the walk. Thank you to Greenalls' for kindly sponsoring the event, the Halliwell Jones Stadium for hosting them, the team of 40 volunteers; photographer Brian Touhey, Moore Camera Club and Heather Davenport; Adrian Cunliffe (MC) and the team of first aiders from ARC; Sharon Bannister PT for the warm up; The Rock Choir

and Whitney Houston Tribute for their fantastic performances as well as our participants.

If you would like to hear more about their upcoming events or about the services offered by St Rocco's, you can visit our website www.stroccos.org.uk. You can also contact the Fundraising Team on T: 01925 575780, E: events@stroccos.org.uk



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Making Tax Digital: What to do if HMRC has signed you up automatically

A new phase for Making Tax Digital

Making Tax Digital for Income Tax has been on the horizon for years, but this month marks a genuine shift in how it's being rolled out. Rather than waiting for sole traders and landlords to register voluntarily, HMRC has begun automatically enrolling those who meet the criteria but haven't signed up themselves. If that applies to you, you'll receive a letter or a digital notification confirming you're being brought into the system, whether or not you were expecting it. For many business owners who assumed MTD was still something to think about "eventually," this is the point where it stops being a future consideration and becomes a present one.

Who's being caught by this

The threshold for this round of automatic enrolment is qualifying income over £50,000 in the 2024-25 tax year, covering self-employment and property income combined. If you've been above that figure and haven't already registered for MTD yourself, you should assume you're in scope. HMRC is working through the affected population in stages from September onwards, so not everyone will receive their letter on the same day,

but the direction of travel is the same for all of them: sign-up is happening regardless of whether you've opted in.

What being signed up actually means

Being auto-enrolled isn't a formality and it doesn't mean the requirement is optional. From the point HMRC signs you up, you're expected to keep digital records of your income and expenses and report to them quarterly, rather than just once a year through a traditional Self Assessment return. In practice, that starts with signing into HMRC's online services using your existing Self Assessment credentials, and checking that the income details HMRC holds for you are accurate. If a source of income has genuinely stopped, that needs to be reported rather than left as it stands.

Getting your records in order

The next step is choosing software that's compatible with MTD. There are both free and paid options available, and you can use a single all-in-one package or separate tools for record-keeping and submissions, so it's worth taking a little time to find something that suits how your business actually operates rather than picking the first

option that comes up. Digital records need to run from the start of the tax year, which means anyone only finding out about this now will likely need to catch up on the quarter that's already gone, rather than starting with a clean slate from today. That catch-up is more manageable than it sounds if you've kept reasonable paper or spreadsheet records up to now, since the software mainly needs the same information in a different format.

The deadlines to have in mind

For the 2026-27 tax year, the quarterly update deadlines fall on 7 August and 7 November 2026, then 7 February and 7 May 2027, with the familiar 31 January deadline still applying to the final tax payment. There is a degree of breathing room built into this first year, since HMRC isn't applying penalty points for missed quarterly updates while the system beds in. That's a genuine concession, but it isn't an invitation to let things slide. The quarterly updates still need to be filed eventually, and the habit of getting them right from the outset will save considerably more stress than trying to reconstruct several quarters of records in one go next spring.



Thomas Coyne and Stuart Barr

If you don't think you should be included

It's also worth pausing to check whether you should be in MTD at all. If your qualifying income has dropped below the threshold, if your self-employment or property income actually ceased before April, or if you have grounds to be treated as digitally excluded, that needs to be raised with HMRC directly rather than assumed to sort itself out. Once you're already in the system, correcting a mistake tends to take considerably longer than flagging the issue before enrolment goes through, so it's worth acting as soon as you receive any notification rather than putting it to one side.

Get in touch

If you've had a letter or notification about this, or you're simply not sure whether it applies to you, which software to use, or how to get your records in order before the next quarterly deadline, get in touch and we'll talk it through. Better to have that conversation now than to be untangling several quarters of catch-up work under pressure later in the year.

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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Latchford Giants U18s crowned 'best in the country'



LATCHFORD Giants U18s have been crowned BARLA National Cup champions after a dominant 44-6 victory over East Hull at Castleford Tigers' Wheldon Road.

The road to the final was far from easy. The Giants showed determination, resilience and character throughout the competition, overcoming some tough opposition along the way.

Their journey included:

- A dramatic Golden Point victory away at Skirlaugh
- A hard-fought win over Leigh Miners, progressing by just two points
- Victory against Waterhead Warriors
- A huge win over Halton Farnworth in the semi-final

And then came the perfect ending — a fantastic performance in the National Cup Final, defeating East Hull 44-6 to bring the trophy home

to Warrington!

A Latchford Giants spokesperson said: "A massive shout-out must go to Dave Manfredi, James Brabin, Lisa Singleton, and all the other coaches and volunteers who have given their time, effort and commitment to help this group of players reach this incredible point."

"A huge thank you must also go to all the parents and families for their continued support throughout the journey."

"But most importantly, congratulations to every single player. The hard work, commitment and belief shown throughout the season and this cup run has been outstanding."

"Warrington's best U18s team in the country!"

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