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Editor's Comment



IT is clear the council cut backs which have been taking place over the past few years are starting to have an impact across the town.

Elsewhere in this issue we report on the "great North v South grass cutting divide" where people in Lymm and other areas south of the ship canal, believe they are being discriminated against by the borough council.

With the cut backs starting to impact in local parks in the south at the same time as the council announces the intention to close down the Sandy Lane recycling centre at Stockton Heath, it is easy to see why such fears exist.

Neglected

I am aware there are areas in the north of the town which are also being neglected as part of cost cutting measures - but there are others which are being well maintained.

One of these is St Elphins Park, but this is not down to the borough council - but a group called "The Friends of St Elphins Park" which includes local councillor Tony Higgins.

May be in these days of austerity more projects like this are needed, with community groups helping maintain their green spaces.

Surely it can't do any harm, local

people taking pride in their local community.

I know the council has previously done a "Love where you live" campaign - perhaps more should be done to promote this.

But it does seem strange that at a time the council is promoting huge investment on Omega at Burtonwood and the re-development of the town centre on Bridge Street, that as a town, we can't afford to cut the grass or empty park bins.

If we are a boom town, let's make sure we have the right image

to go with the title rather than become a tumbleweed town!

Finally I would like to congratulate Warrington Wolves on reaching another Challenge Cup semi-final and securing the services of Head of Coaching and Rugby Tony Smith on an extended contract until the end of 2016.

Smith has helped revolutionise the club's fortunes and there is no better tonic for the town than a trip to Wembley! Come on the Wire!

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Campaign to move war memorial

A CAMPAIGN to move Warrington's war memorial at the Cenotaph on Bridgefoot to a more accessible location is gaining momentum, with a young former soldier who nearly lost his life in Afghanistan, adding his voice to the campaign.

Tom Coleridge, aged 22, who almost died after being shot through the stomach and spine when his patrol was ambushed in July 2010, has teamed up with campaigners who are calling on Warrington Borough Council to re-locate the memorial to all those who have lost their lives in the two world wars and other conflicts.

Wheelchair user Tom, who was injured serving with the 1st Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, has great difficulty accessing the memorial and believes it should be situated in a more accessible location.

He now works for Warrington Disability Partnership who are also backing the campaign which was started by Julie Francis and Jeff Butler.

Campaigner Julie's son Luke joined the army when he was 17 nearly six years ago and serves with the Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers, while his grandad is also a 78-year-old veteran.

"They would like to have a picture taken together on the Cenotaph but it is so difficult to access they would



have to play chicken to get across the roads."

She said it was also totally unsuitable for wheelchair users like Tom to access it.

Julie added: "The Cenotaph is in a poor state of repair and the names on the walls are not kept up to date as they should be. The roads around the Cenotaph are a death trap - an accident waiting to happen. There is no parking, no seating, no proper access - it is a disgrace."

She said various other locations had been suggested, including the front of the town hall or Victoria Park.

A Council spokesperson said: "We have asked veterans groups to come forward with their views about this with a view to further discussions and so we await their response then we can look at the next steps."

To join the campaign contact Julie via email at warringtoncr@outlook.com or by calling 07821 026 786.

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Hello and welcome to my monthly column . . .

Hypnotes

by Michael Mahoney

When do you give up?

How often have you given up on a task only to regret it later on?

How often do you doubt yourself and your abilities? How often do you decide that the task or the relationship or the job is just too difficult? When do you start listening to the internal or external voices which breed doubt within you, leading you to simply decide they are right and so you give up?

Many people give up when they are just a few steps away from success. Some people don't see the success waiting for them, so they see no point in continuing. Others are frightened of success, because success brings change, and change is often seen as threatening, so abandoning the journey avoids change, but sabotages what could have been, simply through fear of imaginings. Others simply enjoy the journey they are taking, believing the journey is the goal itself.

Completing something, anything can often give us a buzz, a high, a feeling of self-congratulation, but it can also be the end of a familiar journey, and that means we have to find something new to learn, or

achieve or focus on, and that can bring new challenges as well as new excitement.

Conversely we sometimes have difficult journeys and when completed, we reflect on them with mixed emotions and then learn from it and move on.

I find it strange that people seem to have the strength of completing difficult journeys but not always beneficial ones. Is there a mind-set which we plug into which makes us believe we have to be seen to complete difficult journeys in life that it is expected of us, and so we do?

Why, when we come through difficult situations in life, do we not give the same drive and motivation to our positive journeys? Is it perhaps that we have more choices, more opportunities to decide for ourselves what we will and will not do, and that makes us think more, rather than follow our intuition as we often do in difficult times?

Each of us I suspect have our own answers and thoughts about this, I do know however that we have responsibility for what we do and what we don't do and, for what we think and feel and how we

Michael Mahoney is a Clinical Hypnotherapist. He has research, and patient trials experience. He is a member of the Hypnotherapy Association, an associate of the Primary Care Society for Gastroenterology, based at Woolston Surgery, Neighbourhood Hub, Warrington WA1 4PN.



Tel: 01925-658322 email
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www.michaelmahoneyhypnotherapist.com

behave. The world is full of people who have achieved either in a quiet gentle way, without fuss or limelight, and those who make the biggest noise possible to attract attention. There are plenty of people in the process of working to make more of themselves, ignoring the voices of distraction and negativity, and there are people who have simply yet to learn that they can be more if they decide to take the journey of change, and don't give up.

In my opinion it is always better to have tried and failed, than never to have tried and face a future of what-ifs. We learn from failure, in fact everything we can do today is a result of failing in the past, and yet our lives show us, when we persevere, when we learn from our mistakes we can make a difference to our own lives and the lives of those we love.

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Caitlin bids to be Teen Face of the World!

WARRINGTON teenager Caitlin Holmes has won through to the finals of "Teen Face of the World" taking place in Disneyland Paris in October.

The Boteler High School student won a place in the final after winning the title of Teen Face of North West England, representing her home town.

The competition was held in Ellesmere Port and girls competed from across the region for the title. Before the competition Caitlin raised funds for the Dean Pulpit Appeal and the charity Headway.

On the evening the girls were judged on Evening wear, fashion/prom wear and each had an interview with the judges.

Caitlin, aged 15 from Woolston, won a variety of awards on the evening - best in evening wear, best in fashion/prom wear, most elegant, most photogenic, best on stage and Miss Congeniality (voted by the rest of the girls in the competition). She was then awarded the title of Teen Face of North West England!

Caitlin won a crown and sash and now goes on to compete for the title of Teen Face of the World in October at Disneyland Paris. she will compete with girls from across the world including Canada, USA, Japan, France and Brazil. Leading up to the world competition Caitlin will again be raising money for the Headway charity. She will also be supporting local charities and events including the Youth Challenge event with Warrington Careers for Young People and Gulliver's world food bank collection.

Caitlin would like to make as many appearances as possible while she has her title so if any charities or local events would like her support please get in touch.

Also if any business would like to support her with hair, make up, nails, lashes, dresses etc with promotion of their business in return please get in contact via teennorthwestengland@hotmail.co.uk.



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Exciting times for Warrington

THE Warrington economy is in an enviably robust position as we lift out of recession. Consistently Warrington appears in the top ten for economic growth.

Only last month yet another report proclaimed that Warrington was in the top ten 'Dynamic Cities index' and the top ten 'Economic Growth index'.

Warrington & Co. exists to grow, protect and to improve upon that situation. Last month we hosted three business events connected with the International

Festival of Business; Logistics 2020 and Manufacturing Growth at PlaceExpo and an international

event Nuclear UK which I'm proud to say was hosted here in

Warrington. These prestigious events were great national and international platforms on which to promote some of our key sectors; logistics, manufacturing and nuclear.

This is an exciting moment for Warrington. Ground works have started on the Stadium Quarter to construct Warrington's Business Incubator, which will soon

be followed by work on the new University Technical College Warrington. Both of these schemes are designed to support and grow our nuclear and engineering strengths and combined comprise a £20 million start on Stadium Quarter.

A formal consultation has also just ended on the £52 million Bridge Street regeneration scheme which has now moved significantly closer.

In August the formal planning application will be submitted and subject to approval work will begin on site just after Christmas.

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Steve Park
MD of Warrington & Co.

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Aldi continues recruitment drive

A NEW Aldi store will open the doors to its store on Chiltern Avenue, Warrington on Thursday June 26 at 8am – Aldi's fourth store in the town.

Aldi has undertaken a significant recruitment drive in the Warrington area, with 55 staff already recruited during the past few weeks, providing a range of opportunities for the local community. In addition, Aldi is still seeking a further 25 staff for its stores in Warrington, and more information including details of how to apply can be found online

at www.aldirecruitment.co.uk.

To celebrate the opening of the new store, a golden envelope containing a special ticket to win prizes including a 32" Full HD LED TV, a HDMI DVD Player, a Digital Camera and much more will be handed out to the first one hundred people in the queue on opening day.

Aldi prides itself on supporting local community groups, and the Warrington store is working with the Warrington Wolves Foundation, St Rocco's Hospice and Warrington Disability Partnership

The store will be served by over 145 car parking spaces and will provide around 1,400 product lines, where customers can expect a wide range of good quality and locally sourced produce.

With Aldi's 'Specialbuys' days occurring every Thursday and Sunday offering customers fantastic savings on a range of electrical and household products, Aldi's opening week 'Specialbuys' include; Piccolino BBQs (£24.99), Dual Burners (£24.99), and GPS Unisex Watches (£64.99).

Aldi Store Manager, James

Harrison commented: "We are delighted to announce the opening of our new store in Warrington; we hope the local community enjoy the grand opening celebrations and our high quality products at everyday low prices."

"We are very excited about our involvement within the community and look forward to working with more groups in the future."

Following its launch, the store at Chiltern Avenue, Sandy Lane West, Warrington, WA2 9SX will be open: Monday – Saturday 9am – 10pm and Sunday 10am – 4pm

How Bridge Street will be brought back to life

MORE details have been revealed of the £52 million plan to revitalise Warrington's Bridge Street.

A new square – pictured as a computer generated image – is to be created as the core of the ambitious regeneration project.

The image shows a proposed

multiplex cinema to the right, with family friendly restaurants below.

To the left is a contemporary-style new council office block and also the new market hall, which will front on to Bridge Street, using the former Boots building – a Grade 2 listed building – as its frontage.



Bank Street, Time Square, Warrington while the Saturday event will be at Warrington Retail Market.

The key elements of the scheme remain the same as those announced in October last year.

Comments may be submitted online at www.warrington.gov.uk/bridgestreet or at www.howplanning.com/consultations

A consultation period will run until Friday June 27.

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Rob Lowe tests his skills on Ryan Giggs

Rooftop soccer with United legends

A SITE team from the Warrington-based northern arm of housebuilding and construction company Galliford Fry got the chance to down tools and play against Manchester United legends Gary and Phil Neville, Paul Scholes, Nicky Butt and Ryan Giggs.

The match took place on the roof of Hotel Football, next to Old Trafford during a site visit from United's Class of '92, who are backing the project.

Hard hats and high-vis yellow jackets were used as goalposts during the game on the unfinished five-a-side pitch on the roof of the building.

Rob Lowe, from Woolston, Warrington was one of the workers who got the chance to play against the United stars in the kick-about.

Rob, a design co-ordinator with Galliford Fry, said: "It certainly wasn't your typical day at work.

"We've all watched and admired these players over the years, so it was great to have a match against them. We may not have the skills of players they're used to facing, but I still think we delivered a premier performance.

"Filming the match was great fun and it's fantastic to see how popular the video has been."

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Whites Sports officially oldest sports shop in the world

AS one of Warrington's oldest family businesses prepares to take its final curtain call Whites Sports has been officially recognised by the Guinness World Records as the "Oldest Sports Shop" after trading through six generations for 113 years.

The Official Guinness World Record Certificate was presented to the White family at half time during the Warrington Wolves v Leeds Rhinos match which was live on Sky Sports!

Once a chain of shops in Stockton Heath, Knutsford and Warrington, current owner Susan White has decided it is now time to retire and will be closing down later this month.

The business was established by Mr J.E.White in April 1901 and eventually handed the business onto his eldest son, Norman White in 1940, who then past it onto his two sons John and Paul White in 1969.

Since losing John and Paul in 2009 and 2007, Paul's wife

Susan (68) has successfully run the business in Warrington Market.

Susan said: "It is an amazing achievement and behalf of all the White family past and present I would like to say a huge thank you to all customers and staff that have been loyal and good friends over the years. Winning the Guinness World Record is the perfect bookend to 113 years of trading in our beloved town centre. Please do pop in and say hello and goodbye before we go!"

After some 40 years Susan is now retiring and is delighted to welcome her son Adam White (41) to now help keep the heritage of Whites Sports Shop alive and online with the www.whitesports.com. You can now visit the website and see the Guinness World Record submission and you still have chance to pop into the shop in Warrington Market to say goodbye and pick up a limited edition Whites1901 heritage t-shirt.

Meanwhile the Whites1901 Heritage Wall was unveiled in Warrington Market Hall in March 2014 by the Mayor of Warrington,



Roger, Susan and Adam White.

CLlr Peter Carey and Warrington Wolves Rugby League star Ryan Atkins.

Adam White, Susan's youngest son added: "We may be leaving the town centre but will still be trading and sharing our 113 year heritage online at www.whitesports.com. The website will allow customers to

continue to purchase their favourite flags, darts, bowls and snooker accessories from Whites Sports."

From the late 1960's to the mid 1980's they also had shops in Stockton Heath, opened by Liverpool and England '66 world cup winner Roger Hunt and Knutsford, opened by rugby league legend Alex Murphy.

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Business is booming at FDR Law

BUSINESS is booming at Warrington based law firm FDR Law which has just recruited seven new staff to join the law practice in a variety of roles.

Thanks to a reinvigorated property market and greater confidence in the local economy, FDR Law has experienced a growing demand for its legal services, particularly in conveyancing.

Emma Allchurch, a conveyancing solicitor, and Alison Herdson, a conveyancing executive, have boosted the residential property service in the firm's Stockton Heath office and solicitor Chris Illingworth

will head up professional conveyancing services in their Frodsham office.

The busy family law specialists in Stockton Heath have been bolstered by the arrival of Rachel Kendrick as a chartered legal executive and in Warrington, Ian Murray joins the accounts office and IT support gets extra help from Andrew Glover and FDR Law's first apprentice, Jack Peters.

Oliver Burton, FDR Law chief executive, is delighted the firm is in a position to expand. He said: "All law firms have experienced some challenging times recently but the fact we are able to take on seven

new staff within the space of four months is a sure sign that the local economy is now in a much better place.

"The property market is one area where activity is now at a very healthy level again which is good news for all the professionals who are involved in this sector.

"I am also very proud to recruit

the firm's first young apprentice who will be learning new work skills under the expert tuition of our seasoned professionals in the IT department."

The new recruits join more than 100 staff at FDR Law's offices in Palmyra Square, Warrington, Walton Road, Stockton Heath and High Street, Frodsham.

Advertiser's announcement

Reproductive Health Group offer free fertility consultation

BASED at their state of the art clinic at Daresbury Park, Reproductive Health Group are committed to using the latest technologies available to give their patients the best possible chance of a successful pregnancy.

The most well known assisted conception technique is in vitro fertilisation (IVF), where the sperm and eggs are mixed in the laboratory, and if fertilisation is successful, the created embryo is transferred back into the female partner's womb. However, there are many more technologies available now to complement IVF and enhance the chances of a successful pregnancy, for example techniques such as ICSI (intracytoplasmic sperm injection) where a single good quality sperm is injected directly into the egg, and IMSI (intracytoplasmic morphologically selected sperm), which uses a more powerful microscope to help ensure

the best available sperm are used for the fertilisation process. Once embryos are created, they can now be cultured in an incubator to a later more mature stage of development (known as a 'blastocyst') before being transferred back into the womb. Reproductive Health Group's embryology team also use a preparation called EmbryoGlue which is enriched with nutrients to resemble the environment in the womb during a natural conception. Studies have shown that this can increase the chances of a successful implantation.

For more information on any of the above or to book your free fertility consultation please contact us on 0845 600 9997, email info@reproductivehealthgroup.co.uk or see www.reproductivehealthgroup.co.uk

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Veterans return to Burtonwood

FORTY British and American World War 2 veterans attended a reunion at Warrington – and got a chance to see the efforts being made to ensure the town's wartime heritage is not lost as new development is carried out.

It was the first reunion since re-development of the former Burtonwood air base started and Omega Warrington Ltd (OWL) was keen to show how the development will respect the area's heritage.

The 575-acre former base is now the Omega development site – but the first road to be opened was named "Lockheed Road" after the major US aircraft manufacturer.

Burtonwood was Europe's largest military airfield and around 18,000 Americans were stationed there.

Welcoming the veterans, Cllr Terry O'Neill, leader of Warrington Borough Council, said the base had served as a key logistics base for the British and US military for more than 50 years.

It played a pivotal role during

World War 2 and during the Berlin Airlift.

"In its new life as Omega it makes an interesting comparison to see part of the site once again returning to its logistics roots albeit during, thankfully, more peaceful times."

During the 1940s and 1950s there were 7,500 marriages between locals and US citizens stationed at the base, highlighting the importance of the site's history to the local area.

OWL believes it is important to respect and remember the site's unique heritage.

Planning approval for Zone 7 of the Omega development will ensure new heritage-related features will come into place.

Chris Gardner, development manager at Miller Developments – part of the OWL team – said: "The site is so rich with heritage and meeting the veterans has reminded us that there once stood a bustling community on this land. It seems only fitting we pay tribute to the veterans and those who served here and we will continue to look for opportunities to



Above and below left: The veterans enjoying their trip to Warrington.

incorporate references to the site's heritage through names, landscape design and public art. We look forward to working with the RAF Burtonwood Association further."

The day included a tour of the Omega site in the morning. Veterans were accompanied by a local historian and a development consultant to provide an insight on the past and future of the site's development.

This was followed by a quintessential British afternoon tea and 1940s themed entertainment.

Jim Bentley, president of the US Air Force Burtonwood Association, said: "The number of veterans has significantly diminished in recent years; we therefore welcome

Omega's incorporation of the site's heritage in the future and its interest in the RAF Burtonwood Heritage centre. It is through these actions that the memories of the past can stay alive."

Roy Thorpe, president of the RAF Burtonwood Association, said: "The number of veterans who were still able to attend, particularly those who travelled from the US is fantastic! They all have strong memories of the site and the tributes made to the site's heritage encourages a great relationship between developers and ourselves; we look forward to many more visits."



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Swimming with sharks

TWO Warrington divers, Peter Coulthard and Peter Holbrook, together with Glyn Hawes from Runcorn, have returned from a diving expedition, which involved studying sharks and other large marine life in the Southern Egyptian Red Sea.

The divers, who all did their qualification dive training with Warrington Sub Aqua Club, flew to Marsa Alam, and then transferred to Port Ghalib to join the diving vessel, Hurricane, which was their home for the next seven nights.

A long overnight sail took them to Daedalus reef, or Abu Kizan, as it is known locally, some 52 miles from Marsa Alam and about half way to Saudi Arabia.

The reef is almost completely submerged, measures only 450 x 100 metres, and is marked by a lighthouse. Currents can be very strong and the reef walls drop initially 30-40 metres and then plummet to depths of over 500 metres.

However, this combination of remoteness, depth and currents

attracts an extremely varied fish life including hammerhead sharks and manta rays.

The divers had to wait for some time and air supplies were dwindling when a large hammerhead shark appeared.

Peter Holbrook said: "It came swimming along the reef wall at the same level as ourselves, straight towards us. It kept coming, seeming to grow larger and larger, until it turned aside when only a couple of metres away and was gone as quickly as it had arrived."

Back aboard the Hurricane, the divers agreed that it appeared Hammerhead sharks were generally found in large schools, with "sentries" cruising in advance to spot potential threats.

It was likely that the single shark encountered had been "checking out" the divers.

A further five dives were carried out and on each occasion large schools were encountered at short range. And more than 20 large sharks were seen at once.

There were also many sightings of Manta Rays.

The vessel sailed on further south to Rocky Island and Zabaraagad where more Hammerhead and grey reef sharks were encountered, as well as dolphins.

The divers also investigated the site of a mysterious ship wreck.

Originally thought to be a cargo ship, the suspicion is that it was a surveillance vessel, and the mystery intensified when it is noted that the hull appeared to have been damaged by an internal explosion and not by contact with the reef.

It was clear from all of the evidence that this vessel was used as an "intelligence gatherer", but what was she doing tucked away in a bay in a quiet corner of Egypt near the Sudanese border?

The final leg of the expedition was back north, to Elphinestone, a long, finger shaped reef, extending 300 metres long and one of the most beautiful dive sites in the south of Egypt.

Mr Holbrook said the walls of the reef were spectacular, plunging to more than 100 metres.

"Usually it is an excellent location for sightings of Oceanic whitetip sharks. However, whereas on normal days, the current will be raging, on this visit there was no current whatsoever. This unfortunately meant that the sharks were elsewhere, but it presented the opportunity of two dives to the very ends of both the north and south plateaus, to 50 metres and 37 metres respectively, which is very rarely possible."



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All set for Disability Awareness Day 2014

THE world's largest voluntary led disability awareness event is set to take place at Walton Hall and Gardens on Sunday July 13 - and with it comes a week-long calendar of special events to mark the occasion.

Warrington Disability Partnership's Disability Awareness Day (DAD) is now in its 23rd year with the main aim of showcasing the wide range of support services available locally, regionally and nationally that enable disabled people, carers and families to stay independent.

Principally sponsored by Your Housing Group a huge tented village will play host to an expected 250 exhibitors and it is estimated that more than 25,000 visitors will make the journey to Warrington from across the UK and beyond to experience DAD 2014.

With a free, accessible park and ride service; a free bus from Warrington Bus Interchange; British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters; trained assistants and a scooter / wheelchair loans service, DAD 2014 promises to be 100 per cent all-inclusive.

Staff from Your Housing Group will be on hand to talk to visitors who may have questions about housing and recent Welfare Reform changes - including the options available and where they can receive the right advice and support.

Also on-site will be the fully accessible - and outdoor - Dave Connor Sports Zone, which will boast an impressive assortment

of activities including a climbing wall with full harness; archery; small boar rifle shooting; striker academy; wheelchair basketball; an inflatable rugby pitch and a football / tennis area (provided by Warrington Wolves); golf - courtesy of Cheshire County; Cheshire Scuba Academy; Kuk Sool Won Martial Arts, Widnes; and fencing with WDP Trustee Adrian Derbyshire.

Inclusive Arts is just one of the highlights of the event - with disabled performers including Carly and Martin from the BBC's 'Autistic Superstars' plus 'Britain's Got Talent' semi-finalists The Urban Gypsies. There will also be an exhibition of artwork - produced by disabled artists - for visitors to enjoy.

For a full running order, please visit the DAD website at www.disabilityawarenessday.org.uk

The big day - which will take place from 10am to 5pm - will be a fitting finale to a week comprising a variety of complementary events to savour, which are guaranteed to attract thousands more visitors.

Event founder and Co-ordinator Dave Thompson MBE DL said: "The DAD Team were really pleased - and somewhat relieved - when we heard the news that Your Housing Group had agreed to extend their



financial support for another year as our principal sponsor."

"It is very humbling to hear the interest from across the world about our event - which initially started out as a one-off celebration, but has since become the main event on the disability calendar nationally and now internationally. This is all thanks to a great team of staff, volunteers and supporters aptly named 'DAD's Army'. Overall DAD focuses on what disabled people can do - not what we can't do - and it proves to be a great day out for everyone," added Dave.

Brian Cronin, Chief Executive of Your Housing Group, said: "Your Housing Group is enormously proud to once again be the principal sponsor of the Disability Awareness Day. As well as being

a fantastic community event, DAD provides a wonderful opportunity to showcase the achievements and talents of people living with various disabilities. It also offers Your Housing Group the chance to show the work we are doing across the Group on Welfare Reform to ensure that our residents are fully informed and supported."

For more details on DAD and all the events taking place in the build up, please contact Warrington Disability Partnership on 01925 240064 or visit www.disabilityawarenessday.org.uk

Tickets can be purchased online by visiting www.disabilityawarenessday.org.uk/pay/index.shtml

Warrington's great north v south grass cutting divide!

RESIDENTS living in south Warrington fear a great north v south divide is being created by Warrington Borough Council when it comes to grass cutting and emptying litter bins in local parks and play areas.

People living in Lymm have been complaining about the complete neglect of public spaces by WBC - Ridgway Grundy Park particularly, but also all grass areas.

Local resident Kieran Walshe said: "They seem to have completely ceased grass cutting and bin emptying."

"The park has rubbish strewn everywhere because bins are not being emptied, a lot of it is unusable because the grass and weeds including nettles are a foot to two feet high, and there is a real health problem with dog mess - dog owners can't clear up after their dogs in long grass."

"A neighbour of mine was so exercised about this that he went around taking pictures of various parks in Warrington."

"They clearly illustrate what looks like the old problem of WBC ignoring/neglecting Lymm."

Mr Walshe added: "The grass has not been cut for months, and is so long and full of nettles and weeds that most of the park is unusable by children, dog walkers and so on."

"The bins are rarely emptied and are always overflowing with rubbish strewn around the play area. It's a disgrace."

"They say it's because of budget

cuts, but Victoria Park in Warrington is still being maintained, and they can still afford to cut the lawns outside the Town Hall."

Local Cllr Sheila Woodyatt added: "I am working very hard, as I have done for the last 35 years to try and get a good deal for Lymm - but I cannot perform miracle!"

"There have been cutbacks and we now only have four men working in Lymm instead of eight. Ridgway Grundy park is a jewel in the crown of Lymm and I will do all I can to try and ensure it is looked after as it deserves."

"Funnily enough people think the Council spends more in Warrington South than the North. It was ever thus. When I was Mayor it didn't matter where I went they always believed that everywhere else did better than they did."

Former leader of the council and fellow Lymm councillor Ian Marks added: "We know that all councils are having to make savings but this is no excuse for the neglect we are starting to see in our open spaces."

"I am quite sure there is plenty of scope for the Council to work in a more joined up way and more creatively so that more can be done with the resources available. Closer collaboration with the Parish Council, local volunteers and Friends' Groups is a fruitful way forward too."

"What disturbs me is that there is some evidence that open spaces across the town are not being treated equally. Looking at some of the parks in the inner areas it



Ridgway Grundy Park



Orford Park.

appears they are not suffering in the same way that open spaces in the outer areas are.

"It would be quite unacceptable if the Labour Administration was favouring the wards they represent."

"It seems rather strange that at a time when so much investment is being put into parks in the town to improve them, the Administration is cutting back on their maintenance. It doesn't make sense."

A Council spokesperson said: "The council has faced severe reductions in the funding available to pay for our local services. Officers and Councillors have been forced to make savings and have tried to make these in areas which will have the least impact on residents."

"Grass cutting schedules have

been modified and some grassland areas will be cut less often than they were in the past to make savings. The grass will be cut less often in locations where short mown grass is not a necessity for recreational use such as highway verges, low use areas within parks and open spaces and rural verges. There will be no change in the way football pitches, bowling greens, play areas and high use amenity areas are managed."

"We have invested in new flail mowers which are more suited to cutting longer grass and mulch the cuttings back into the grass. This will mean that when the grass grows long the new machinery will cut it without difficulty allowing us to reduce the frequency of cuts and save money."

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Record Apprenticeship vacancies

A LOCAL college has seen a significant growth in Apprenticeship vacancies over the last few months with over 80 for June, setting an all-time record.

The vacancies at Warrington Collegiate range from the more traditional apprenticeships of Customer Service to exciting new opportunities in IT and Social Media which also feature in the top five apprenticeship vacancies alongside Accounting, Business Administration and Hospitality and Catering.

Myrtle Northage, director of Business Development at Warrington Collegiate says, "A recent report from the CBI (Confederation of British Industry) suggests that the growing demand for high level technical skills cannot be met by traditional university courses alone, and it seems that more and more businesses and young people are considering apprenticeships as a viable alternative."

"Taking on an Apprentice means giving a great career opportunity to a new member of staff, who gain practical experience and training whilst working towards industry-recognised qualifications. The business benefits from having motivated and well-trained staff with essential skills, enhanced staff morale, better employee retention rates and improved efficiency and productivity."

Nigel Higham, Owner and Manager, Prestige Auto Repairs, recognises the importance of apprenticeships in the modern workplace, saying, "We're committed to helping our young apprentices grow and develop as we see the value they can offer."

They enjoy hands-on experience learning alongside industrial specialists. Apprenticeships are a great way to grow raw talent, ensuring they develop the knowledge and skills we need to progress in the future."

Chris Moss, Managing Director of Geotek UK, acknowledges the value of apprenticeships in the local economy, commenting, "The benefits of apprenticeships are twofold. On the one hand I gain an employee who is dedicated and keen to learn who I can train to my own high standards. Secondly I feel that, as a company, we are putting something back into society by giving a young person the opportunity of employment and training."

Warrington Collegiate offers a free Apprenticeship Recruitment Service which is popular with employers. Employer Services at Warrington Collegiate advertise the apprenticeship vacancy, receive applications and screen the candidates before sending the application onto the employer. They will also arrange interviews for the chosen candidates with the employer.

The college prides itself on the high calibre of its apprentices. Myrtle adds, "Young people considering an apprenticeship generally need to gain a C grade at GCSE in Maths and English. Employers are also looking for an employee who is hardworking, keen to learn and motivated with a strong interest in their chosen



Francis Roach It Professional Apprentice, United Utilities

profession."

Employers looking for an apprentice can call Jo Sweeney from Employer Services at Warrington Collegiate for more information on financial support, selection and training of apprentices on 01925 494703.

Individuals wishing to view and apply for our latest Apprenticeship vacancies should visit www.warrington.ac.uk/apprenticeships/apprenticeship_vacancies for further details

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Students can also request information and a prospectus by calling Learner Services 01925 494494 or emailing learner.services@warrington.ac.uk

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Students to follow in famous footsteps

PERFORMERS and backstage stars from Priestley College are set to tread the same boards as some of Britain's finest actors.

An incredible 17 offers have been made to the college's Performing Arts students from some of the UK's most prestigious theatre schools.

"The offers they have received are the equivalent to them of Oxford and Cambridge," said Priestley's head of performing arts Sarah Graham.

"For one year group to receive so many offers is an incredible achievement. They are a talented group, but have really blossomed at Priestley into impressive performers and production artists."

Offers have been made to Priestley students from the likes of Guildford School of Acting, the Brighton Institute of Modern Music and the Urdang Academy.

Guildford alone counts Hollywood stars Celia Imrie and Bill Nighy as former students as well as ex-EastEnders actor Rob Kazinsky



who last year appeared in the popular US drama True Blood.

Six offers have come from the Performance Preparation Academy while three have been received from the Bird College of Dance.

Most of Priestley's other Performing Arts students are holding offers from their first choice of university on a range of prestigious musical theatre degree courses including Blackpool, UCLan, Chichester and Cumbria.

Among those stepping into the limelight at these prestigious

colleges will be Evan Sutton who took one of the leading roles in Priestley's recent production of In The Heights.

Evan, a former Golborne High School pupil, is going to Guildford to study Musical Theatre.

"I have to thank the tutors at Priestley for giving me the belief to aim high and my parents for supporting me through my auditions and helping me to follow my dreams," he said.

During their time at Priestley the Performing and Production Arts

students have put on several shows including the first-ever production in the North West of In The Heights.

Many travelled to New York with the college to work with Broadway actor Adam Kaplan and have developed their talents as well as understanding of the art.

Former Sir Thomas Boteler Georgia Bass, who is heading to UCLAN to study Music Theatre, said: "Being surrounded by so many strong performers at Priestley has inspired me to challenge myself every day at college."

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Ted becomes Mayor of Warrington at second time of asking

WARRINGTON'S New Mayor is Cllr Ted Finnegan (pictured right) – at the second time of asking!

Cllr Finnegan, who has represented the Grappenhall and Thelwall area for more than 30 years, lost out at becoming the town's first citizen when he lost his borough council seat at Latchford West in 2010 when he was deputy mayor in waiting.

He successfully got back on the borough council representing Grappenhall and Thelwall, where he has been a parish councillor for 31 years, in 2012 and now having served a second term as deputy mayor, has at last become Mayor of Warrington – with his wife Mavis, his Mayoress.

Warrington born and bred Cllr Finnegan started work as an office boy at the age of 15, later becoming a metal worker and engineering buyer for four international companies.

He was proposed as the town's 131st Mayor by Lib Dem leader Cllr Ian Marks who described him as "very much a man of the people."

Fellow Lib Dem councillor and

former Mayor Cllr Mike Biggin seconded the proposal, saying Cllr Finnegan, was the 5th Mayor from the parish of Grappenhall and Thelwall, the first being Joseph Parr in 1901.

"When he gets hold of an issue he will not let go and will take it right to the top to get it resolved," added Cllr Biggin.

Cllr Finnegan was unanimously elected Mayor for 2014/15, with Labour councillor Geoff Settle elected as his deputy.



Employment Team support residents into work

GOLDEN Gates Housing Trust's (GGHT) Employment Team, successfully supported 31 of its residents into work during May – one job for every day of the month!

The 31 jobs are with a wide range of employers from across Warrington and the surrounding area, including HM Prison Service (Risley), Arriva Runcorn, American Golf, Travis Perkins, Sofaworks, Maplin, Tesco and Toby Carvery.

Additionally, three of the jobs residents successfully gained in May were with Cheshire Fencing, Livewire & Total Glass. These companies all recruited local people through GGHT and Warrington Borough Council's Employer Wage Incentive programme.

The job roles have been promoted by GGHT's Employment Initiatives Team through its weekly job clubs across the town and on social media. Since 2012 the team has helped over 260 of its tenants and their family members into employment, as well as providing additional access to training and volunteering opportunities. They remain on target to support up to 450 local residents into employment by the end of 2015.

The Wage Incentive Scheme was launched by GGHT and WBC in 2013 and offers local voluntary sector organisations and

small/medium sized employers an incentivised package of between £3,000 and £5,000 to provide apprenticeships and jobs with training. GGHT's Employment Team are also able to offer those taking part free recruitment services and in work support to ensure companies gain the right employee for their business needs.

GGHT offers a range of free training opportunities for its tenants and their family members. Many residents have also applied to and have been successful in gaining funds from the GGHT Employability Fund, enabling them to buy new clothes for interviews, a bicycle to get to work and printing of leaflets to promote their new self

employment services.

GGHT Employment Engagement Officer, Clare Sing said: "I am excited about being able to offer this incentive to local employers. To date it has enabled small businesses to recruit and increase their workforce and productivity and provide valuable job opportunities to Warrington residents."

GGHT resident and Positive Change member, Margaret Hitchman said: "I would advise anyone who is out of work, lacking in confidence and feeling down, to get in touch with The Positive Change team, they will help and support you in all of the processes of helping to find work."

Anyone who lives in one of the Trust's properties and would like additional support getting into employment, training or volunteering can register on Positive Change. If you're a small or medium size business and want to benefit from the wage incentive scheme then contact GGHT's Positive Change initiative by visiting www.gght.org.uk/positivechange, calling 0800 25 26 27 and asking to speak to the Employment Team or alternatively follow the team on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/gghtpositivechange>



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By David Watkinson

National minimum wage

It is 15 years since the National Minimum Wage was first introduced in 1999. It currently stands at £6.31 per hour for adult workers and this is set to increase in October to £6.50. This means that someone working 35 hours per week should be earning £221 per week, or £957 per month, before deductions. It is the responsibility of HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) to enforce the legislation, and they have just published the latest results of their investigations.

Over the past 12 months, HMRC have investigated 1,455 cases and found underpayments in 47% of these cases. This seems a high figure, even though many of the investigations would have been the result of a complaint lodged by an employee. Total reimbursements to employees amounted to over £4.5m, and penalties of over £800,000 have been issued.

In one case a Premier League football club was ordered to pay arrears of £27,500 to over 3,000

workers. Frances O'Grady at the TUC said "It is shocking that so many employers, including some who pay their star players millions of pounds a year, are cheating low paid workers out of the minimum wage".

Since last October new rules enabled HMRC to name and shame offenders, and the latest list of 25 employers, all small businesses, has been released. Between them they underpaid a total of £43,000 with the largest being a firm in the Wirral underpaying £7,310 to 3 workers. However, for reasons known only to themselves, HMRC have decided not to name the football club. This seems to be another example of HMRC dealing with some taxpayers more leniently than others.

In many cases the underpayments seem to be the result of misunderstandings of what should be included in the calculations. Many, for instance, resulted from the employer not paying for travelling time. One case that we recall from the early days was a result of the personal allowance being increased. The employer had agreed a net pay level with the employee. When the



personal allowance increased the gross pay fell, and as a result was below the minimum wage level.

The National Minimum Wage is only one set of regulations that employers need to comply with, another being Real Time Information which we have covered previously. As part of our payroll service we endeavour to ensure that clients do not fall foul of any of these regulations.

WatkinsonBlack are pleased to advise on these as well as other matters, including providing a very cost-effective payroll bureau service. If you want to arrange a no-obligation initial meeting on any taxation or accounting matter then please contact us.

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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Former skipper returns as Town announce five new signings

WARRINGTON Town have announced their first new signings for the forthcoming season, which sees the return of three former players, Tom Hardwick, Matt Doughty and Anthony Hickey.

Former club captain Hardwick, aged 26, returns after leaving Warrington just over two years ago to join Skelmersdale United, where he enjoyed success winning promotion to the Evo-Stik Premier Division.

Striker Hickey, aged 24, was another who left Town for Skelmersdale before moving to Runcorn Linnets last season.

Left back Doughty, aged 31, had a spell at his home town club in 2011 but left for a successful spell at Altrincham, helping the team win promotion to the Conference last season.

Also joining Town are Runcorn Town goal keeper Karl Wills and Nantwich Town defender Alex Frost.

Wills aged 26, is ex Crewe, making his debut against Notts Forest in the League Cup. Wills was at Warrington Town as a teenager and has spent the last four years at Runcorn Town, appearing over 300 times and winning many goalkeeper of the month awards.

Frost, aged 28, has bags of experience after playing more than 200 club games for Ashton United, prior to joining Nantwich as club captain last season.

Town manager Shaun Reid, said: "The signings we have made are a statement of our intentions to kick on from last season and challenge for promotion.

"These new signings will strengthen our squad and it shows just how far our club has come to be able to attract signings of this calibre."

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