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ISSUE 295 JULY 2024 FREE EVERY MONTH

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## Record-breaking Pride

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# Editor's Comment

**IT was an extremely proud moment for our family when my father David was made Honorary Freeman of Warrington.**

When I entered the family business as a 15-year-old learning the trade in my school holidays, before joining full-time at 16, he set high standards for me to follow - with a work ethic like no other - and is still working part-time approaching his 87th birthday!

As well as hard working he is also the most modest man I have ever met and will be wondering why he has been honoured for doing his job. I had to conceal the honour from him until the last minute and told him he was coming to the Parr Hall to see me collect an award.

He was completely shellshocked by the honour - but one in my opinion richly deserved, after dedicating a huge part of his life to providing free community news for all in a balanced and independent way.

He has almost 70 years of local news reporting experience across Warrington. He started his career with the Knutsford Guardian, Warrington Guardian and Lancashire Evening Post, before setting up his own local media organisation, Orbit News, more than 50 years ago, which is now a third-generation family business.

Since launching our Warrington-based titles, he has covered hundreds - if not thousands - of community features and stories.

His journalism has supported many community and voluntary organisations to receive profile across Warrington.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Warrington Worldwide also established its Legacy Project, investing grants into local groups and charities.

What many people don't know is that both of us were nearly not here to tell the tale, when almost 30 years ago he suffered a cricketing injury that almost cost him his life,



while I almost died after a hospital operation went wrong - both within six months of each other.

So if you ever wonder why I believe in fate - you now know why.

Congratulations Dad - we lived to tell the tale and none of it would have been possible without the support of my mum!



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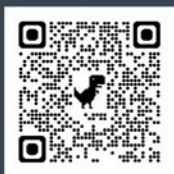


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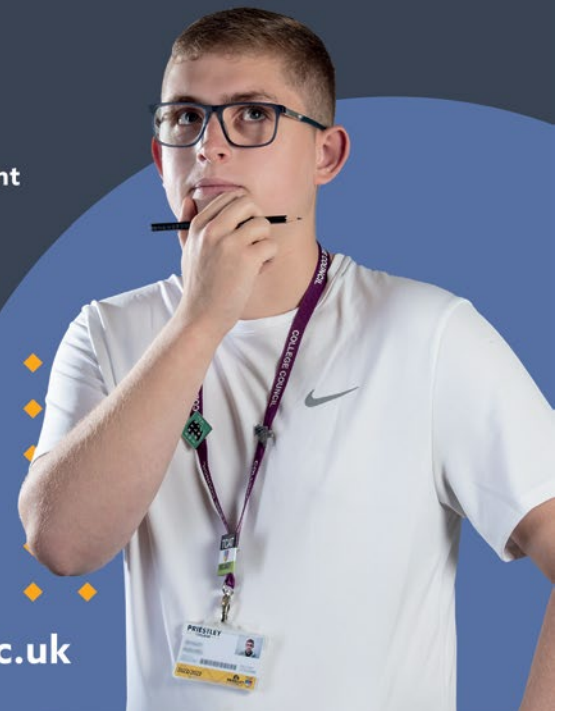
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'I was staggered at how well the students gelled with our team. They were friendly, professional and their attitude to work was outstanding'

Ben Sefton - Alcimi



[priestley.ac.uk](http://priestley.ac.uk)



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# Record-breaking Pride event celebrates diversity and community spirit

**WARRINGTON** was awash with colour and celebration as thousands gathered in the town centre to take part in Warrington Pride 2024.

This year's event, held as part of UK Pride Month, exceeded expectations with a record-breaking turnout and an array of diverse activities.

Warrington BID Project Manager Andrea Morley said: "We're absolutely delighted with how Warrington Pride turned out this year. The variety of events we had, from the parade to the live performances and family activities, really showcased the incredible diversity within our community. It's amazing to see how this celebration attracted more people than ever, not just from Warrington, but from surrounding areas as well. The mix of backgrounds and stories shared made it a truly special day.

"This event shows that Warrington is a place where everyone can feel welcome and proud of who they are. I can't wait to see how we continue to grow and celebrate together in the future."

Warrington Pride was supported by key local organisations including Golden Square, Warrington Borough Council, Warrington BID, Warrington Market, Culture Warrington, Warrington Youth Zone, University of Chester, LiveWire, HC Promotions, and United Utilities.

In its second year, the festivities

featured a vibrant parade through the town streets, live music, performances, workshops and a variety of vendors and community organisations providing resources and support for LGBTQIA+ individuals and their allies.

This year's Warrington Pride not only celebrated the local LGBTQIA+ community but also commemorated the broader significance of UK Pride Month, marking the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots – a pivotal moment in LGBTQIA+ history. It honoured this legacy while promoting inclusivity, celebrating diversity and acknowledging the community's achievements.

Ian Cox, Director of Golden Square, said: "The entire event was such a success and being able to host the Glitter event at Golden Square again was an absolute highlight of Warrington Pride for us this year. Seeing so many people come together and celebrate in such a joyful atmosphere was truly heartwarming. We're proud to support this fantastic event and contribute to making it bigger and better each year. It's wonderful to see our community shine and embrace diversity in all its forms."

The town's Time Square served as the vibrant central hub for Warrington Pride, hosting a

diverse array of events including the starting point for the parade, live performances and keynote speeches.

The event was opened and hosted by Amanda Hilton, Chair of Liverpool Pride, representing the LCR Pride Foundation. Dan Price, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, delivered an inspiring speech about the importance of community safety and inclusion, which was followed by a heartfelt address from Esther Ghey, representing the Peace and

Mind Foundation, established in memory of her daughter Brianna Ghey. Their contributions highlighted the ongoing efforts to promote mental health awareness and support within the community.

A crowdfunding campaign remains active to support the Peace and Mind Foundation, inviting contributions to continue this vital work and honour Brianna's legacy. Find out more by visiting [www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/peace-mind-at-warrington-pride](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/peace-mind-at-warrington-pride)



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# Engineering students secure prestigious degree apprenticeships with Sellafield

**TWO engineering students from Warrington & Vale Royal College have secured highly prestigious degree apprenticeships with Sellafield, following their Level 3 Engineering courses.**

Selected from a pool of hundreds of applicants, Luke Gosling and Bethany Leigh have demonstrated exceptional talent and dedication, earning them the opportunity to work as engineers at the birthplace of the UK's nuclear industry while pursuing a fully funded BEng degree.

Degree apprenticeships are a unique pathway in higher education and allow students to learn through a combination of working and studying, all while earning a wage, making them a highly sought-after option for those leaving college and beyond.

Luke, a former Birchwood Community High School pupil, attributes his success to the invaluable support and guidance received from his tutors, particularly Adeel and Adrian, who played a pivotal role in inspiring him to apply for the degree apprenticeship. Expressing his gratitude, Luke remarked, "Their support has really made the difference to me at college and seeing how passionate they are has definitely had a huge impact on me and my future as an engineer. I can't wait for my next

step at Sellafield."

Similarly, Bethany's journey to success was fuelled by her passion for engineering, nurtured by the encouragement of her tutor Jade Wilkinson. Despite engineering being a traditionally male-dominated field, Bethany was determined to become an engineer from as early as Year 10, when she visited the college's Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering Academy with Cardinal Newman Catholic High School. Her hard work since then and throughout her engineering course have led her to excel in mechanical design, securing multiple university offers alongside her degree apprenticeship with Sellafield. Reflecting on her college experience, Bethany stated, "Everything about my time at college has been great, from the facilities to my industry placement at the Ministry of Defence! It has all led me to my future at Sellafield."

The accomplishments of Luke and Bethany underscore the exceptional opportunities available to students following their time at Warrington & Vale Royal College. With level

3 and T Level students progressing to a diverse range of destinations including Higher Education, Degree Apprenticeships, and skilled work in industry, the college empowers students to pursue their dream careers and realise their full

potential.

For those seeking to explore exciting opportunities in engineering and beyond, visit [wvr.ac.uk/engineering](http://wvr.ac.uk/engineering) and discover the college's comprehensive range of courses and programmes.



Bethany Leigh

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# Work starts on new Digital Hub



## WORK has commenced on the £5m refurbishment of St James Business Centre with a new Warrington Digital Hub.

The investment will see the creation of a new entrance on Wilderspool Causeway and a raft of improvements, including new co-working space, a coffee shop,

meeting rooms and enhanced facilities for tenants. A refurbished atrium and a new glazed lift are also included, alongside improved outdoor space for access to the

coffee shop. Work is expected to be concluded in twelve months' time.

The thriving business centre, currently home to more than 40 companies, will be re-branded as Warrington Digital Hub as part of Wire Regeneration's remit to ensure that the town's economy remains competitive and forward-looking in the joint venture between Warrington Borough Council and Langtree,

"St James Business Centre has always been a home for ambitious SMEs and our investment aims to reinforce that, whilst attracting the latest generation of tech-led start-ups to Warrington," said Steve Park, Director of Growth at Warrington Borough Council.

Jayne Furnival, group property director at Langtree, said: "Our vision is to create an environment where new technologies and ideas can be tested and refined. We'll be delivering contemporary and creative facilities that will support networking and collaboration, key ingredients in driving innovation."

Wire Regeneration is working

closely with the parish authorities at neighbouring St James's Church to ensure that the new building and surrounding landscaping sit well alongside one another.

"The development is part of wider ambitions for Warrington's Southern Gateway, of which St James's Church is a prominent landmark, and we're pleased with the dialogue that we have established with the parish," said Jayne. "We have also informed our wider neighbours about the work, including providing them with a weekly update on forthcoming works via the project web site. These can be viewed at <https://refurb.warringtondigitalhub.co.uk/next-week/>

The first phase of the new facility was opened in November last year with the launch of a new Digital Suite for the University of Chester. The suite operates technology from the renowned Hydra Foundation to train blue light personnel in the management of critical incidents.

The new development has been designed by Seven architects.

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# On the right track as Warrington Means Business takes to the road

by John Laverick - Warrington & Co

So, for the last couple of months I have spoken at length about the new Warrington Means Business document and the opportunities set out in it that we are starting to see from the potential investment in Northern Powerhouse Rail.

Well, this month we took our proposals out on the road and with our colleagues in Cheshire East and Cheshire West attended a property conference called UKREiIF. That stands for UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum and is probably the foremost property event

in the UK. OK, OK, calm down, I know that in itself is tremendously exciting, but it was in Leeds so maybe not so much, but it gets better. The event was attended by over 13,000 people from Local Authorities, Government departments, Investors,

Developers and Consultants and is a perfect opportunity to spend time discussing how we can get a wide range of people to understand future needs, constraints, opportunities and generate new ideas about how we can deliver better investment in property within the UK and in our case Warrington.

UKREiIF has also become a bit of a natural forum for major investment announcements by Government and is well attended at Mayoral and Ministerial level and this year was no exception. Both Liverpool and Manchester Mayors and the leader of Warrington Council, Hans Mundry, took to the stage to announce the formation of a Liverpool-Manchester Railway Board. The group is charged with crafting a strategy for the £17bn rail link between the two cities that maximises potential benefits to the region, while also linking the Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester investment zones. Through Bank Quay.

We chose to launch Warrington Means Business there and this was well exceptionally well received and chimed well with the announcement made at the conference. If you are interested in the document and some of the promotional material we used,



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John Laverick  
01925 442 243

[www.warringtonandco.com](http://www.warringtonandco.com)

and I know you are, it is now available on the Warrington & Co website, so if you recovered sufficiently go and have a look, just find somewhere to lie down just in case it is too much for you. Follow up to the conference has demonstrated that our message has really hit home, and we have received a number of enquiries in relation to our regeneration plans, which is the point of going.

But if you prefer your events a little closer to home, we also have some events upcoming in July. Diaries in the ready, we have the ever-popular Makers Market on 14th July and on Saturday July 27th, No Dragon, No Lion – TS Crew presented by the Warrington Arts Festival. "Now I am no judge but if this won the Asian Arts Award for Best Show at Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2022 I suspect it will be rather good.



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## Divorce Column

By Peter Wilkinson  
Divorce Lawyer at Chambers Fletcher Solicitors

### Cohabitation Breakdown

Times have changed. People and families evolve and an increasing number of couples move in together and start a family without getting married, and whilst some might give some thought to what would happen with respect to their home and other assets in the event the relationship breaks down, I know from experience and from some of the common questions we are asked in cohabitation breakdown scenarios that many people do not, or perhaps they have given it some thought but they have mistakenly thought the legal position is different from how it really is.

The key thing to understand is that the law in relation to cohabitation breakdown is not the same as for marriage or civil partnership breakdown. There is a common misconception that unmarried couples who live together are 'common law' partners and have the same rights as married couples or civil partnership partners, but the fact is that they don't. It's not true; it is a myth! There is no such thing as 'common law' marriage and so it follows there is no such thing as common law husband and wife or common law partners.

Unmarried couples who live together are quite simply an unmarried couple living together and it comes as a surprise to some to discover on the breakdown of the relationship that they have no automatic right or entitlement to make financial claims against the other and that this is the case irrespective of how long they have lived together. That is, no right to any form of financial support for themselves (child support being a separate issue) and no right to a share of the other's pension. As regards the family home this on the face of it depends on how the property is owned but it can get complicated and in some cases the dispute can involve complex contractual, trust and land law principles. Each case turns on its own facts and sometimes the smallest of details can have a significant bearing on the eventual outcome.

If you are in need of advice and assistance regarding the issue of cohabitation breakdown then feel free to get in touch - we have a lot of experience advising, guiding and supporting clients in this area of law.

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# Media students gain insight into the industry

**MEDIA students from Warrington's Priestley College gained an insight into the industry that is their passion on a visit to New York.**

The college took 40 media students on a tour of TV and film sets in the "Big Apple" to enhance and enrich their classroom learning.

For Chris Bellard one of the highlights was visiting the Museum of Moving Image in the Astoria neighborhood of Queens.

"The museum had work from Jim Henson who created the Muppets so that was really good to see in real life," he said.

Dean Duffy said: "The tour allowed us to see where huge TV shows and films were filmed such as Ghostbusters and Friends, which was really interesting."

Sophie Wright said the tour was her highlight as there were TV shows she watches being filmed at the time.

"The show 'YOU' started filming their new season and it was really cool to say we were there when that happened," she said.

During the trip, students immersed themselves in the city sights including Times Square and the Rockefeller Center.

One of the most memorable moments was a visit to the iconic Radio City Music Hall where they met one of the Rockettes dancers.

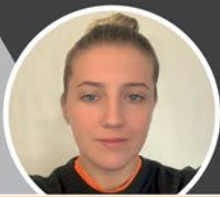




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# Gulliver's World thanks customers for generous toy donations

**GULLIVER'S World is thanking all its visitors who donated hundreds of brand new toys in aid of a national charity that supports children affected by domestic abuse.**

The Warrington theme park held a special Toy Bank weekend where guests could access a reduced ticket price on entry for all the family in return for a donation of a brand new toy. And in total over 2,200 donations were collected across all four of Gulliver's UK resorts.

The toys are now going to be part of Toy Boxes that KidsOut, a national charity that supports mothers and children who have

escaped domestic abuse, put together for children in Refuge up and down the UK.

Craig Clews, resort director at Gulliver's World in Warrington, said: "KidsOut does so much wonderful work with disadvantaged children, and we were so pleased to be able to support the charity. Our customers supported us in droves and we are so grateful for their donations so a massive thank

you to all who contributed."

Each year over 20,000 children flee domestic abuse to seek sanctuary in refuge or a safehouse. Typically leaving home with only the clothes on their back, these children have either witnessed or experienced physical, emotional, and even sexual abuse and arrive at refuge with nothing.

Each Toy Box contains 10 brand new toys that are both age and gender appropriate, filled with a family game, jigsaw puzzle, craft activity, educational game, action

figure/doll, books, outdoor play and a cuddly toy. Receiving the Toy Box can help children regain a sense of normality, make the world seem a little kinder, and give them a reason to invite other children over to play.

Louise Sherwood, community engagement manager, at KidsOut said: "Working with an amazing, well known attraction like Gulliver's across the country is very exciting for a small, national charity like us. Over 930 children are supported in the Warrington area by KidsOut, who are residing in local refuges, through our Toy Box project so it's fantastic Gulliver's World and its customers has supported us with these wonderful donations which mean so much.

"To now have over 2,200 new toys that we wouldn't otherwise have had is incredible for our Toy Boxes that go to children up and down the country."

For more information please visit: [www.gulliversworldresort.co.uk](http://www.gulliversworldresort.co.uk)

"KidsOut are the only charity in the UK to reach children in refuges with a toybox of brand-new toys. Plus, by working with our charity partners we also help disadvantaged children and young carers experience carefree fun days out." added Louise.

For more information about the work of KidsOut, visit: [www.kidsout.org.uk](http://www.kidsout.org.uk)





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# WHAT'S ON

JUNE - OCTOBER 2024



- Thu 27 Jun - Paul Smith - Pablo (SOLD OUT)
- Thu 4 Jul - Russell Crowe's Indoor Garden Party
- 6 & 7 Jul - John Bishop - Back at It
- Fri 19 Jul - An Evening with the Cast of Quadrophenia
- Fri 30 Aug - Toyah and Robert
- Sat 31 Aug - The Bohemians
- Fri 6 Sep - Sounds Familiar Music Quiz
- Sat 7 Sep - Ben Elton - Authentic Stupidity
- Fri 13 Sep - Whitney - Queen of the Night
- Thu 19 Sep - The Signs in Love with Carolyne Faulkner
- Fri 20 Sep - 80s Live
- Sat 21 Sep - Choriza May
- Sun 22 Sep - Alexander O'Neal (NEW DATE)
- Thu 26 Sep - Katherine Ryan - Battleaxe
- Fri 27 Sep - A Night at the Movies
- Sat 5 Oct - The Clone Roses
- Thu 10 Oct - Country Roads
- Fri 11 Oct - Billy Joel - The Piano Man
- Fri 11 Oct - Tom Stace - Risky Business
- Sat 12 Oct - Luther
- Sun 13 Oct - Luke Combs UK Tribute
- Wed 16 Oct - Scouting for Girls (SOLD OUT)
- Thu 17 Oct - Peter Hook and The Light
- Fri 18 Oct - Al Murray - Guv Island
- Sat 19 Oct - Magic of Motown
- Sun 20 Oct - Don't Stop Believin'







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# All set for Stockton Heath Festival

**THERE are over 50 events to enjoy throughout the long Stockton Heath Festival weekend from Thursday 4th to the Sunday 7th July 2024, many of which are free and will be hosted by community venues such as St Thomas' Church, Scout Centre, the library and on the Festival Field.**

Tickets for paid events are on sale online and will be available from the physical Box Office from Friday 14th June, 10am.

## Why visit the festival?

As the premier art, culture and heritage festival in the area it provides something for everyone, of all ages and interests. By day visitors can experience walks and talks about the history of the area, crafts, dance sessions for babies, Circus Skills and science events for children, Animals Take Over and the ever-popular dog show where visitors can parade their pooch they believe may have the "waggiest tail".

By night, live music lovers can sing and dance to favourites at The Killers Collective tribute band, Fleegles and Bemonts, and The Deltatones (plus classical and choral performances). And for

those who like to look on the bright side of life, visit The Comedy Club and An evening of Comic Verse while theatre-goers can experience My Friend Miss Flint and an open-air theatre performance of Twelfth Night. Appreciate talented artists at the Art Exhibition and gifts, food and drink will be available from the artisan market on the Festival Field throughout the event.

## How to get tickets?

Visit the What's On section of the website at: [www.stocktonheathfestival.co.uk](http://www.stocktonheathfestival.co.uk)

Search for Stockton Heath Festival 2024 in Eventbrite.

Visit the physical Box Office in the Forge Shopping Centre open every Friday and Saturday from Friday 14th until Saturday 29th June (inclusive) from 10am to 1pm.

Buy tickets throughout the Festival weekend on the Festival Field on

Friday 5th July from 12 noon and at the Information Tent on Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th July.

Some tickets are available at the actual venue on the day. Check the

website for details.

Note ticket purchases are subject to availability.

Follow Stockton Heath Festival on social media for the latest updates.



## Young Onset Dementia support group launched

A YOUNG Onset Dementia support group has been launched in Warrington by registered charity the Alzheimer's Society, meeting at the Pavilion in Bank Bark, near the town hall.

The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 6.30 pm to 8 pm at the premises off Crosfield Street, Warrington WA1 1UP and is reaching out to those within the Warrington community who the disease has

impacted.

While still relatively rare, there have been increasing numbers of Young Onset Dementia, which can come on at any age, most commonly in the 40s and 50s.

If you or a loved one has been struck down by Young Onset Dementia please contact the new support group to register your interest and receive updates!

Call 0151 420 8010 or email [cheshire@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:cheshire@alzheimers.org.uk)



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# New chief executive announced for Hospital Trust

**FOLLOWING a rigorous and competitive recruitment process, Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals (WHH) has announced the appointment of Nikhil Khashu as its new chief executive.**

Nikhil will replace Dr Simon Constable, who leaves WHH at the end of August after nearly ten years in the Trust.

Nikhil will join the organisation this autumn on a two-year interim basis as the Trust looks to achieve closer integration with its community partner Bridgewater Community Healthcare. He will be seconded from NHS England's North West regional team, where he has been Director of Finance since April 2022.

More recently, Nikhil has been working nationally as NHS England's Deputy Chief Finance Officer. His previous experience includes executive director roles at provider organisations Calderstones and St Helen's and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals.

Steve McGuirk, chair of WHH, said: "I'm pleased that from a very strong field of candidates, we have appointed Nikhil to be our chief executive. His unwavering focus on quality, patient care and staff experience shone through. I'm confident that his background

and leadership style will be a huge asset, not just to us at WHH but across the wider health and care system.

"I would like to thank all those involved in the recruitment process, including external partners, governors, non-executive and executive directors. It was certainly robust and has resulted in the appointment of an exceptional candidate."

Speaking of his appointment, Nikhil said: "I am absolutely thrilled to be appointed to lead Warrington and Halton Hospitals, in what is sure to be a highlight of my career. Having lived in Warrington for 20 years, I have a very personal connection to the area and to the hospitals' services.

"I am committed to enabling the best possible care to be provided for the people of Warrington, Halton, and beyond. I have witnessed for myself so many times the commitment and dedication of the talented people who work at the Trust, and I look forward to joining them later this year."





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# Volunteers stage spectacular 80th anniversary D-Day event

**VOLUNTEERS** from Helping Hands Changing Lives helped stage a spectacular D-Day 80th anniversary event at St Benedict's Club in Orford.

From Home Guard to nurses, everyone dressed to impress as guests were treated to war-time songs and music.

A beacon was also lit to mark the special occasion, while Warrington Rotary Club also lit a beacon up at Hillcliffe.

Pictures John Hopkins



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# Success for Culture Warrington's second music festival of the year

**FOLLOWING the Winter Music Festival at Parr Hall in January, 'Culture Warrington' have done it again with their Summer version held in the town centre on May 25, only this time it was bigger and better than last year!**

Let's be honest, we were extremely lucky with the weather and the Saturday dawned with a very promising high of 21 degrees which is ideal for music festival goers, music lovers and families alike and many turned out for a superb day of well organised entertainment. With the main stage in Golden Square and a second located in Time Square there was plenty of music on offer, ranging from Ukulele bands, Blues, Acoustic acts, Keyboard acts, Rock and Indie and something to suit everybody. Sadly and unlike the Marvel Character 'Mister Fantastic' I couldn't stretch to being in two places at once so like a 'Glastonbury stage trotter' I noted who I hadn't seen before (or reported on in Warrington Worldwide previously) and flitted between the two stages as best as I could.

It proved to be the best strategy and I witnessed some excellent performances from the early 12pm slot on the Golden Square music festival stage, namely 'Barstaff' from Wigan who I hadn't seen before and the Summery, funky sound of 'Isla Rico' who proved very popular in the sunshine. Some of the bands like young up and comers 'Freight' had agreed to do an early 1.30pm slot at Golden Square and a later 6.45pm slot at Time Square with their teenage fan club and merchandise table in tow throughout. What a great idea, and this enhanced two exciting performances from the lads who have an average age of just 17!

The Time Square music festival stage opened at 1pm and when it was time to move down there mid-afternoon it meant I had to miss some main stage acts although my fellow writers and photographers informed me that 'The Odeens' in particular played a strong set and have come on enormously since I first saw them live as a Youth Zone start up back in August 2023, and with their own band of EMO Rock teenage followers I was delighted to hear it. On arrival at Time Square I found it basked in sunlight and plenty of people were clearly enjoying themselves. Surrounded

by so many bars and food outlets there were lots of families being entertained by the quieter electro-acoustic sets and I was reliably informed by a fellow musician that The Ukulele Uff Trio with a guest appearance by renowned and local Blues musician Pete Price gave a well received performance.

Unfortunately, it wasn't long before I was feeling the effects of the sun and without a hat I headed for cover into the welcome shade of The Hop Emporium and a quick Pacifico before taking stock and catching up with a few other revellers. I also noticed that The Pink Leaf Cocktail bar had set up their mobile trailer with a fenced enclosure and deck chairs, a bit of well planned optimism which looked brilliant!. However, back to the music and in this game one ear is always open to the stage and the sound of electro-acoustic guitar performer Matty Hignet drifted in on a very pleasant breeze. Matty's set was mixed and very good indeed, his playing and vocals were solid but as always on this stage with many families present, covers were going to be more popular and it wasn't long before people were joining in with his excellent renditions of 'Teenage Dirtbag' by Wheatus and 'Smells like Teen Spirit' by Nirvana, cannily captured on video by editor Gary in our earlier Warrington Worldwide report. So, hat's off to all the solo performers of the day, it's certainly not easy following a band and can be quite unnerving as the audience goes quiet for a time as you tune up and start.

Indeed, up next at the music festival and following a very short changeover (kudos to the sound team), keyboard player Joseph O'Brien took to the stage. Now I'm going, to be honest here readers and say it's not usually 'my thing', but that's the beauty of music, someone will always change your mind and in this instance it was Joseph. As a guitarist at least you can move and jump about, but as a keyboard player you are sat in the same position and if you are singing as well there is nowhere

by Glen Screeton

to hide! This was another good performance and well done to the organisers for getting Joseph on for something different. Apologies to the next act - Oopsacat as I was invited to head back up to Golden Square to take a quick peek inside the future & temporary Pyramid venue (ex Viola Beach shop) where a lot of hard and exciting work is taking place. Many thanks to Chris for showing me around.

Now, time marches on as they say and after more photographs

and catching up I heard that the last performance on the Time Square stage had finished and revellers started to appear at the Golden Square stage where they would have been in time to catch the remaining acts. In the interest of brevity and column space I'm afraid I'm not able to deliver comments about all 29 bands /performers, so apologies if you are not mentioned but I'm sure I will catch up with you over the many Summer festivals happening in the town.





# Distinguished Gentlemen ride again raising funds for charity

**THE Warrington Distinguished Gentleman's Ride took to the road again raising over £4,500 for prostate cancer and men's mental health initiatives.**

This year saw the ride increase the number of registered riders from 26 to 53 and it raised £3,857 through sponsorship, donations and a raffle held on the day.

Organisers Phil and Andria are already planning next year's ride and thinking of ways to make it even bigger and better for 2025!

The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride unites classic and vintage styled motorcycle riders from all over the world to raise funds and awareness for prostate cancer

research and men's mental health. It was founded in Sydney, Australia, by Mark Hawwa in 2012. He was inspired by a photo of TV Show Mad Men's Don Draper astride a classic motorcycle and wearing his finest suit. Mark decided a themed ride would be a great way of connecting niche motorcycle enthusiasts and communities, while raising funds to support the men in our lives.

DGR is now a global phenomenon that to date has

raised 50 million US dollars for prostate cancer and men's mental health initiatives all over the world.

The co-ordinated event took place on Sunday 19th May in 105 countries and in over 900 cities around the world.

In the UK there are 61 DGR rides and 2024 saw the Warrington Distinguished Gentleman's Ride return for its second year. The ride was once again organised by keen Cheshire motorcyclist Phil Hesmondhalgh and Andria Jones from local Warrington motorcycle dealership, In2moto.

Phil said, "The event was great fun, helped by fantastic weather. We had some amazing bikes turn up and everyone looked very smart in their tweed suits and waistcoats. The ride itself was about 20 miles long taking in Warrington town centre, with a quick stop for a group photo outside the Town Hall's Golden Gates. We then went onto Walton, Hatton, Comberbach and Anderton before finishing at The Coachman pub in Hartford".

For more details visit [www.gentlemansride.com/rides/england/warrington](http://www.gentlemansride.com/rides/england/warrington)



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Advertiser's announcement

# Freedom Fibre brings the future of broadband technology to Stockton Heath

**For the past three years, Freedom Fibre has been building a full-fibre broadband network in Stockton Heath and its surrounding areas, bringing lightning-fast broadband technology to homes and businesses. Now, approximately 10,000 homes and businesses can access speeds of up to 100Mbps, with a network that is 10 times faster and 5 times more reliable than any previous network.\***

In addition to building the infrastructure, Freedom Fibre has partnered with over 10 internet service providers (ISPs), including TalkTalk, Fusion Fibre Group, Squirrel Internet, and Yayzi Broadband. These partners offer competitive packages on Freedom Fibre's network, catering to various budgets and bandwidth needs. These partnerships are a crucial step in providing Stockton Heath residents with more broadband choices.

In providing this network in Stockton Heath, Freedom Fibre has been working tirelessly to replace the existing copper network with full-fibre, actively working towards the UK government's target of having gigabit-capable broadband available nationwide by 2030.

The retirement of the old copper network has been long overdue. Copper signals deteriorate over distance and are affected by environmental factors, resulting in reduced speeds and an unreliable connection. In contrast, full-fibre networks (FTTP) eliminate copper,

using fibre optic technology delivered directly to homes and businesses. This ensures unmatched reliability and speed. With many UK areas still relying on copper, even through standard fibre (FTTC) networks, it is crucial to replace these with full-fibre technology to futureproof homes and businesses as copper is phased out.

Beyond futureproofing, a 2018 report by Regeneris\*\* highlighted several benefits of a full-fibre broadband network:

- Increased productivity through improved connectivity.
- A competitive advantage for businesses.
- New employment opportunities, both directly through the network build and indirectly through improved business outputs.
- Enhanced digital inclusion by providing access to essential resources like banking, healthcare, and education.

In addition to providing the above benefits, Freedom Fibre is dedicated to working with local communities to offer world-class

broadband technology while supporting the social, economic, and environmental goals of the towns. One example is the Freedom Fund, Freedom Fibre's community fund that has granted thousands of pounds to Stockton Heath non-profit and community groups for their good and green initiatives.

Residents not yet on the network can view our partners' full range of packages and enhance their

connectivity by registering on Freedom Fibre's website [www.freedomfibre.com/connect](http://www.freedomfibre.com/connect).

\*Based on data from Ofcom reports 'UK home broadband performance, measurement period November 2020' and 'Building a full-fibre future 2018'.

\*\*Regeneris, The Economic Impact of Full Fibre Infrastructure in 100 UK Towns and Cities, 2018

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# Financially yours

## Missing NI years update

Last year HMRC stated taxpayers will now have an extra two years to make additional payments to their National Insurance (NI) contributions to increase state pension entitlements.

The cut-off point for voluntary NI contributions from April 2006 to April 2017 has been extended to 5 April 2025 to help people to plug gaps in their NI record - an extension of nearly two years.

HMRC has now also released an

online tool to enable taxpayers to pay the missing years online which follows a number of reported problems over the past 18 months as people struggled getting through to either the DWP or HMRC on the telephone helplines.

HMRC's original plan had set the deadline to 5 April 2023, however in March 2023 this was extended to 31 July, following capacity problems on government helplines.

Extending the deadline until 2025 means that taxpayers will have more time to properly consider whether paying voluntary contributions, which could boost their state pension entitlement, is right for them.

All relevant National Insurance contributions payments will be accepted at the rates applicable from 2022 to 2023 until 5 April 2025.

The Department for Work and



Thomas Coyne and Stuart Barr

Pensions (DWP) hopes the extension will grant staff more time to cope with the high level of interest - as thousands of people are expected to take advantage.

## Capital gains tax when selling your home

Most people selling their homes rely on Private Residence Relief (PRR) to avoid capital gains tax (CGT) but with increases to this on the horizon some may end up with higher tax bills when they move.

For the vast majority of individuals capital gain arising on the sale of their main home will be exempt from CGT due to PRR, also commonly referred to as Principal Private Residence Relief (PPR).

Whilst large numbers of individuals rely on this relief when selling their home, it is far from well understood. This is despite it being one of the most valuable tax reliefs in the UK, with the latest statistics estimating that it cost the Treasury around £31.5bn in the 2023/24 tax year. The lack of understanding is largely due to the rules being difficult to follow, but in broad terms the relief will typically apply in full when:

- the property sold has been your only or main residence during the whole period of your ownership;
- you have not been absent from the property, other than for the last nine months of ownership and certain other specifically allowed absences;
- no part of the home has been used exclusively for business purposes; and
- the garden or grounds do not exceed half a hectare or are required for the reasonable enjoyment of the property as a home.

There are various instances in which an individual can potentially end up with a taxable chargeable gain arising on the sale of their main home. For example, this might happen when two individuals each own

a property and then move into one of them, to live together, or if lengthy renovation works were undertaken before an individual moved into a new home.

When a CGT liability arises on the sale of a residential property, it's usually necessary to separately report this on a CGT return and pay any associated tax within 60 days of completion. In data released to RSM UK following a freedom of information request, HMRC has confirmed that 51,800 CGT returns in the 2021/22 tax year included claims for PPR relief.

In the past, even those taxpayers who could not benefit from PPR in respect of a full gain could have potentially relied on the CGT annual exemption to cover an unexpected taxable chargeable gain. However, the CGT annual exemption was cut from £12,300 in the 2022/23 tax year to £6,000 in the 2023/24 tax

year, and now stands at £3,000.

There is now limited room for error and the safety net of the CGT annual exemption has been largely pulled away. We could therefore see the number of disposals of homes on which CGT is due increase substantially. At the moment, such tax is due at a rate of either 18% or 24% depending on whether the seller is a basic or higher rate taxpayer respectively.

With reports of lobbying for CGT rates to be increased, and such proposals now being included in the manifesto pledges of some political parties, some homeowners could find themselves with a surprisingly high tax bill when they come to move home. For others it could be even worse if they don't realise they have a bill to pay, and end up incurring HMRC penalties and interest as well.

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# Wembley heartbreak for Warrington Wolves



**WARRINGTON Wolves suffered Wembley heartbreak again to Wigan Warriors as they lost out 18-8.**

In the first meeting between the two clubs at Wembley since the 1990 final, the Wolves went down fighting with a spirited second-half fightback.

But the Warriors proved too strong after dominating the first-half. Bevan French led from the front as Wigan recovered from a riotous opening period to wrap up a record-extending 21st Challenge Cup title.

The reigning Super League Man of Steel set up Zach Eckersley for Wigan's opening try and stretched over for the second himself to ensure his side also became the first team since 2007 to hold all four of the game's major honours at once.

Warrington rallied and Matt Duffy's late try gave them a glimmer of hope but in truth they were second best throughout and seldom looked likely to deliver the prestigious silverware to head coach Sam Burgess in his first season in charge.

Tributes to Leeds great Rob Burrow completed the build-up to the final with the 64,845 crowd at Wembley – the biggest since 2017 – rising for an impeccably-observed minute's silence prior to kick-off, and again seven minutes into the match in honour of the shirt he wore with such aplomb.

But the two sides were guilty of taking Burrow's famous fighting spirit a little too literally in a wild start that saw both Wigan's Mike Cooper and Warrington full-back Duffy sent to the sin bin for separate incidents.

Cooper, preferred for only his third start of the season in the Wigan front row, was penalised by referee Chris Kendall for a swinging arm that left Warrington winger Josh Thewlis prostrate on the turf.

But two minutes later Warrington's numerical advantage was wiped out when Duffy also exited for a high tackle on Liam Marshall that sparked a mass confrontation on the touchline.

Warrington showed early signs of emerging best equipped after the early chaos, with captain George Williams stopped yards from the line before a Wigan offside gave Thewlis the chance to kick his side in front.

But the high-octane start was clearly having an impact, with Burgess' side guilty of being over-

eager as they gradually gifted their opponents the initiative, culminating in Wigan's opening try in the 19th minute.

After nudging deep into their opponents' territory, French delivered a perfectly-timed grubber into the path of Eckersley, who seized his moment on only his fourth appearance for the club, shrugging off Matty Ashton to touch down.

Ashton's knock-on three minutes later from Harry Smith's high ball kept Warrington pinned back and led to Wigan's second try, Abbas Miski and Jai Field stretching the Wire defence before French touched down following a scrum.

Warrington looked ragged and unfocused, the normally outstanding Williams off the pace, and they were fortunate to reach half-time within touching distance after French stretched an arm over only to be penalised for a marginal double movement.

Ten points adrift, Burgess' side desperately needed to start the second half on the front foot and they came close five minutes after the restart when Ashton grasped a looping pass wide from Williams only to be bundled into touch within sight of the line.

At the other end, Rodrick Tai's superb intervention denied Marshall a certain try, and there were signs, particularly through the increasingly influential Williams, that Warrington were stirring.

Enter Warriors veteran Liam Farrell, who marked his fifth final by streaking onto a short pass from Field, stepping inside Josh Drinkwater then rolling through a last-ditch challenge from Matty Nicholson to put further clear air between the two sides.

Smith's third conversion gave Matt Peet's men an 18-2 advantage but Warrington responded well and gave themselves a glimmer of hope with 15 minutes remaining when Duffy arrowed in from the left, Thewlis' conversion reducing the arrears to 10.

But Wigan saw out the final moments with the minimum of fuss to take the trophy for the second time in three years and add it to the Grand Final, League Leaders' Shield and World Club Challenge trophies they already own.

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**disability trading company**

**Warrington Disability Partnership**

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**CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING** T: 01925 240064  
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[www.disabilitytradingcompany.co.uk](http://www.disabilitytradingcompany.co.uk)



# THE DRESS STUDIO

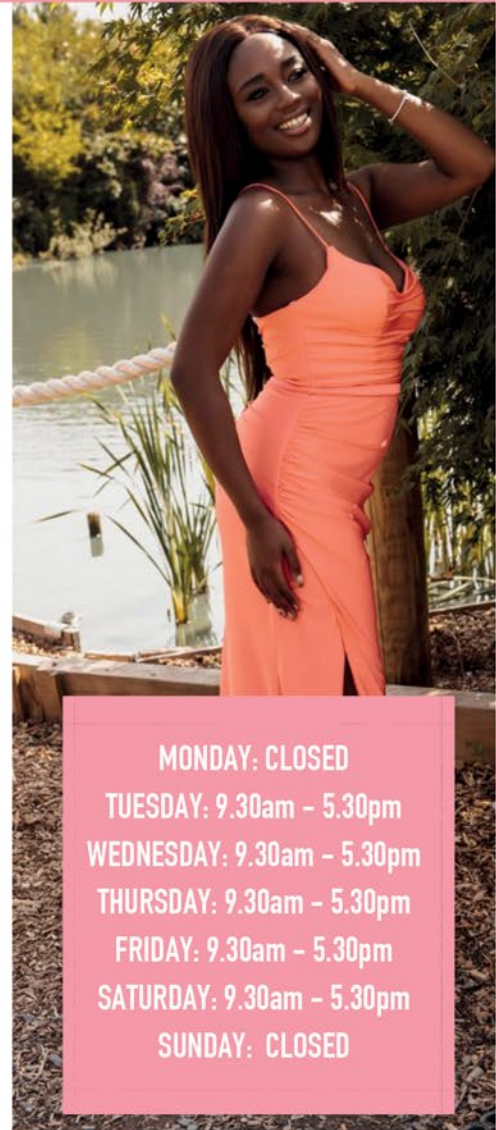
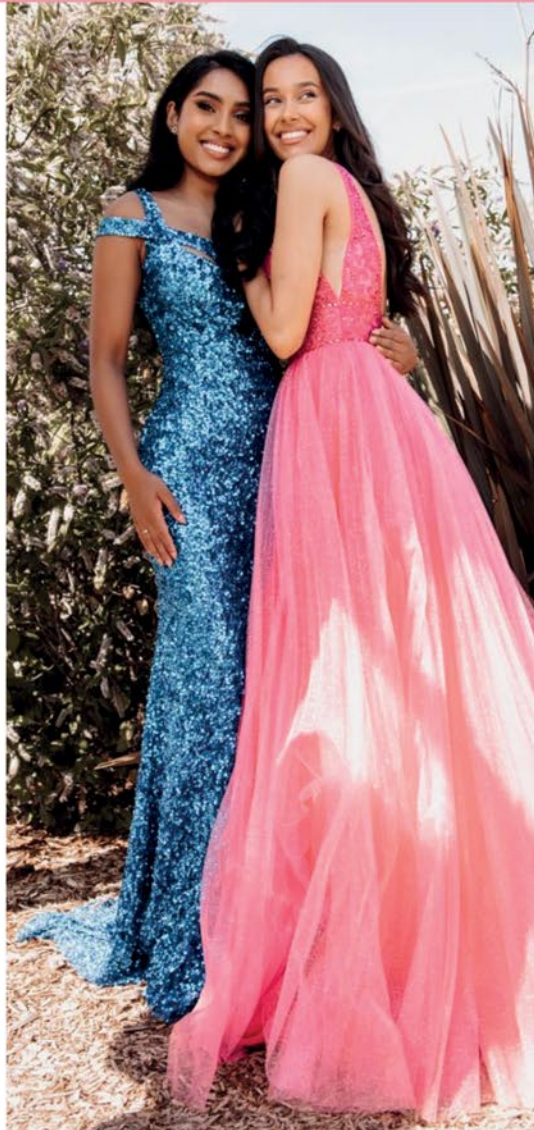
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MONDAY: CLOSED

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