



Insight

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WARRINGTON CHAMBER of
COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

in association with
VR VALE ROYAL
The heart of Cheshire

Priestley exhibition finds its place on line

AN exhibition of fine art work by Priestley College students that was due to take place in Warrington town centre will still inspire others after it was moved online.

Priestley College's Fine Art students were scheduled to exhibit their canvases in a retail unit in Golden Square, but their plans were disrupted by the coronavirus crisis.

However, tutors were determined the A-Level pieces should still reach a wider audience so created an online gallery to give the artists the recognition they deserved.

"We were as disappointed as the students that their work wasn't going to be put on display so we felt the online gallery was a way to celebrate their achievements," said tutor Steve Lane.

"It arguably opens up their paintings to a wider audience and we hope it offers some people a welcome distraction during these difficult times."

The students' work was developed between last September and February of this year. The committed artists – many of whom hope to go on to careers in the arts – would often arrive early for lessons and spend their free time in the studios at Priestley perfecting their skills.

Among them was former Irlam and Cadishead Academy pupil Alex Reid who will study Computer Games Technology after Priestley College.

His work focussed on what he saw as a correlation between quality of life and innovation in technology and his style was influenced by one of the greats.

"My primary inspiration most

definitely came from Da Vinci. His work concerning anatomy bore great influence on society at the time, which I find to be very useful today," he said.

Another of the young artists is Bethany O'Raw whose work explores the effects of mental illnesses and aims to portray these emotions as a physical piece of art.

The former Wade Deacon High School pupil, who hopes to study architecture after completing an Art Foundation course, took inspiration from the medium used by artist Eric Lacombe as well as his techniques.

"I think the online gallery is a good way of reflecting not only on your own work, but that of our peers as well. It allows us to take a step back and just appreciate it," said Bethany.



To see the gallery visit www.priestleylevelartshow.com



From the President

— Nigel Schofield —



"I recently took part in an online meeting between Cheshire and Warrington Business Leaders and the Bank of England. Their most recent forecast of economic activity is the biggest fall since 1709 this year followed by a balancing bounce back next year. Time for deep breaths and brave hearts! But assuming the Bank is correct, and they have a pretty good track record, how will the local business scene fare?"

Recoveries from down-turns are usually led by high earning

Professional and Financial Services in London and the South East, with the North following quite some time later. As Vauxhall and others have said, they have huge numbers of unsold stock and showrooms are closed, so it will be a gradual recovery of production levels at best.

Airlines and airports, freighters, ferries and ports lie idle. Export documentation provided by local Chambers has fallen dramatically, and we need a rapid recovery in air and sea transport of exports if local

GDP is really going to "bounce back" in 2021. Yet bounce back it must.

But we are British, and we have shown before as evidenced recently by the Spirit of VE Day, Churchill, Her Majesty the Queen and Colonel Tom Moore, that in the face of major difficulties there is No time for Faint Hearts.

Don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it."

MP welcomes boost for businesses with extension of furlough scheme

WARRINGTON South MP Andy Carter has welcomed a boost for businesses with the extension of the furlough scheme during the COVID-19 crisis.

Workers and businesses across Warrington were given a boost by Chancellor Rishi Sunak yesterday, when he announced the current furlough scheme would be extended by a further four months with workers continuing to receive 80% of their current salary.

From the start of August, furloughed workers will be able to return to work part-time with employers being asked to pay a percentage towards the salaries of their furloughed staff.

The employer payments will substitute the contribution the government is currently making, ensuring that staff continue to receive 80% of their salary, up to £2,500 a month.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak said: "Our Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has protected millions of jobs and businesses across the UK during the outbreak – and I've been clear that I want to avoid a cliff edge and get people back to work in a measured way.

"This extension and the changes we are making to the scheme will give flexibility to businesses while protecting the livelihoods of

the British people and our future economic prospects."

New statistics published today revealed the job retention scheme has protected 7.5 million workers and almost 1 million businesses.

Welcoming the news Mr Carter said: "The extension of the Job Retention Scheme will be welcomed by businesses across Warrington and beyond.

"The scheme is a lifeline which has been hugely beneficial in helping small employers keep their staff in work and shows that the Chancellor is listening to them."

The scheme will continue in its current form until the end of July and the changes to allow more flexibility will come in from the start of August.

The Chancellor's decision to extend the scheme, which will continue to apply across all regions and sectors in the UK economy, comes after the government outlined its plan for the next phase of its response to the coronavirus outbreak.



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Colin Daniels, Chief Executive

Warrington BID seeks 'Back in Town' plans from businesses

As part of a 'Back in Town' recovery strategy for Warrington Town Centre, Warrington Business Improvement District (BID) is calling out to businesses to share their plans for reopening when lockdown restrictions are eased.

Companies who submit their details into the secure online portal on the Warrington BID site will get social media promotion across Warrington and receive further support from the Warrington BID team to help boost communications about how and when the town centre and its businesses are opening up.

Companies can also receive government guidelines and ask for advice, information and support through registering.

This information will help inform a stakeholder-wide mapping exercise and a co-ordinated movement strategy and social distancing measures. The aim is to create a consistent system of safety interventions across public and privately managed spaces in the town centre.

This is likely to consider one way systems of movement, signage, car parking and queue management in smaller retail and larger retail environments, understanding capacity in pedestrianised areas, street furniture and seating, offices and car parks.

Warrington BID is collecting data from businesses about their plans to reopen to monitor what is happening on the ground. This is for all types and sizes of businesses and organisations in the town centre, whether BID members or not.

Warrington BID Manager Harriet

Roberts said: "By registering your plans and asking for support if you need it, you will be part of planning and promoting a robust recovery plan and a consistent safety message and communication with visitors. This information will also help to shape how we support businesses with sustainability and innovation.

"We are keen to do what we can to get the town back on its feet and to work with all our partners to create and promote Warrington as a safe and healthy place to shop, visit and do business."



The registration portal for businesses can be accessed here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WarringtonBusinessRegistrationForm>. For all other enquiries, please email Warringtonbid@groundwork.org.uk.

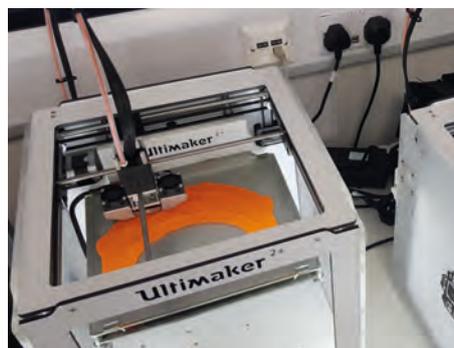
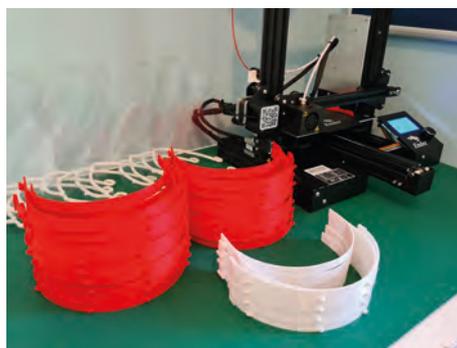
University delivers first class results in production of face visors for frontline healthcare workers

Staff at Chester University's Thornton Science Park have been involved in several projects to produce protective face shields for NHS and social care workers across Cheshire, Merseyside and North Wales.

The Department of Art and Design, the Commercial Operations Directorate and the Faculty of Science and Engineering have brought together their 3D printers to the Design Suite at Thornton Science Park.

The printers are now being run by a specialist team from the Faculty of Science and Engineering on rota to produce the much needed durable and reusable face visors for staff on the frontline.

To date over 500 face visors have been produced and collected for the Countess of Chester Hospital, the Clatterbridge Cancer Centre and Aintree University Hospital.



Warrington's Debenhams store saved from closure thanks to council rescue deal

WARRINGTON'S town centre's flagship Debenhams store in Golden Square has been saved from closure thanks to Warrington Borough Council.

The council has been working with Debenhams to complete a deal that sees the Golden Square store remain open, following the announcement of its immediate closure on Friday 17 April.

Earlier in April, Debenhams announced that it would not be reopening its Warrington store after the coronavirus restrictions are lifted. Debenhams confirmed

the closure of seven stores across the country, including Warrington, after going into administration.

However, following this announcement, the council has worked to reverse the decision, to ensure that the store can reopen once again.

Leader of the Council, Cllr Russ Bowden, commented: "Debenhams is a widely-recognised and highly respected national brand, and we all know how much the flagship store means to our local shoppers. It's one of the most popular stores in

Golden Square – it's played a big part in our high street and town centre for more than a decade, and we're pleased this is set to continue.

"Acknowledging the important role Debenhams plays for its staff, shoppers and other retailers in Warrington, I was concerned to hear the store would be closed indefinitely. The council reacted immediately to this announcement and we have been determined to find a way to reverse the decision.

"I am therefore delighted with the news that the store is set to remain

open following our intervention. This sends a strong signal that the council is determined to ensure that the town centre continues to be a vibrant and successful place for the people of Warrington and beyond.

"I'd also like to express my sincere thanks to officers who have provided support to get this deal over the line – particularly whilst in the midst of responding to the coronavirus pandemic. It's been a brilliant team effort."



Market launches new click and collect drive-thru service

WARRINGTON Market has launched a new contactless, click and collect drive-thru service, offering customers a new way of shopping safely during the coronavirus pandemic.

Traders and staff at Warrington Market have worked together to create an online shopping experience with a completely contactless drive-thru market, providing customers with a new way to take advantage of the fresh, local produce on offer.

Market Manager Andy Ward believes it to be the first contactless "click and collect" style drive-thru

market in the country.

The new online shop, which can be found at <https://www.warrington.gov.uk/contactless-market>, gives customers the opportunity to purchase essential items, such as meat, fruit and veg, dairy, bakery items and pet products from the comfort of their home.

Orders will then be ready to collect the following day, from the new contactless drive-thru at the rear of the current market building, while customers remain safely in their vehicle and market staff load their boot with their goods.

easyJet flights to return from Liverpool John Lennon Airport

easyJet have announced a return to flying from 15 June, with a small number of mainly domestic flights including departures from Liverpool to Belfast and the Isle of Man.

Additional measures will be in place to help ensure the safety and wellbeing of all passengers and employees both at the airport and onboard the airline's aircraft.



Students collaborate virtually to create a dancefloor track for lockdown

WHILE Dancefloors across the globe may currently lie empty it hasn't stopped a group of music production students from the University of Chester from releasing their new single.

Fall for You by Miora was recently released and can be heard on YouTube above.

It has been produced by Nora Ring, 22, from Oslo, Norway and Michael Rooney, 23, from Ireland as part of their studies.

The basis of the track had been initially created before the country entered lockdown with the students collaborating virtually from different countries using limited equipment to bring it to fruition.

Nora said: "One of the most enjoyable parts of the project for me was working with Mike in the studio sharing ideas for the track. We both have different approaches and techniques on how we do this kind of project but for Miora we could combine our

strengths and make something different.

"Thankfully we had done most of the groundwork before the lockdown, but when it started it became challenging as we couldn't work on it together collectively in the studio, we had to send the project back and forth."

As Michael is based in rural

Ireland, internet speeds were another challenge for the duo. He added: "We got there eventually and are both really happy with how it has turned out.

"The song is about when you can't stop falling for someone, but it doesn't seem as though they like you back and you just can't stop thinking about them all day and every night."

Jim Mason, Programme Leader for BA Music Production, said: "I'm really proud that Nora and Michael have completed this track ready for release while being miles apart and working on the project virtually, with very limited technology. Although challenging, this experience will stand them in good stead to be able to work flexibly in the industry once they graduate as artists and producers often collaborate at a distance."



College launch first ever school leaver's Virtual Open Week!

WARRINGTON & Vale Royal College are excited to announce their very first Virtual Open Week. Open Week!

Taking place from Monday 1st June – Friday 5th June, the unmissable event is an opportunity to have a sneak preview into college life and discover more about the college's impressive facilities and courses.

Throughout the week, their expert tutors will be hosting interactive subject talks on Zoom, Instagram

and Facebook, allowing a valuable insight into their wide variety of fantastic courses. Their tutors are there to help provide guidance and answer questions for future students.

The open week will also feature exclusive videos from the college's careers advisors, apprenticeship

recruitment team and dedicated support staff, explaining how they can support students during their time at college and beyond.

Joining couldn't be easier; simply register online to access the college's Virtual Open Week Portal, where you can view the interactive timetables, watch

a range of fascinating videos, and apply for courses starting in September.

Whether you already have a place at Warrington & Vale Royal College or are considering applying, this exciting event is not to be missed.

Register online now via www.wvr.ac.uk/openweek.

VIRTUAL OPEN WEEK
Monday 1st - Friday 5th June

Charity pays tribute to true community champion Colin "Wolfe" Whitfield

TRIBUTES are being paid to "true community champion" Colin "Wolfe" Whitfield, another member of the Warrington Disability Partnership team who has sadly died from COVID-19 related illness.

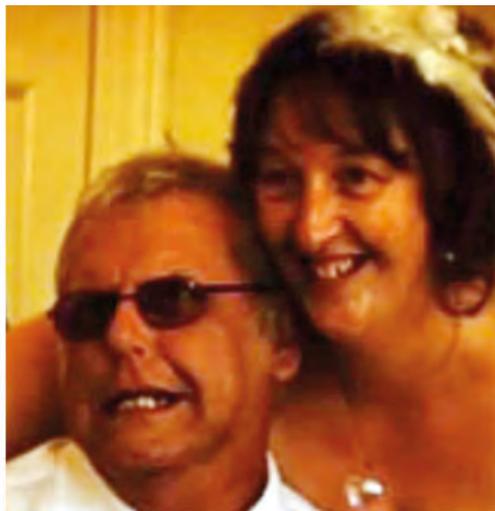
A key member of the WDP team Colin, from Burtonwood, Warrington, will be sadly missed by many as one of the charity's larger than life characters.

"He was a wonderful man who helped anybody he could. Nothing was too much trouble," said his wife Ann, who he actually met while helping her fill out forms at the Warrington Disability Partnership offices – they became the charity's first couple to tie the knot. "Whatever people needed doing he would do it," added Ann, "Nothing was too much trouble. He was a wonderful guy."

The couple who met nearly 10 years ago at WDP would have been celebrating their 7th wedding anniversary in July.

Colin joined WDP back in 1991, originally as a volunteer Disability Advisor on the telephones, later at the Market Disability Information Desk, Shopmobility and at community events. He was trained to be a Welfare Benefits Advisor, and helped hundreds of disabled people to secure much needed benefits.

Paying tribute to Colin, WDP Chief Executive Dave Thompson said: "Colin had a skill to be able to work with anyone and everyone, he played a large part in our work around advising and influencing better building designs around access and facilities. One of his biggest projects was the Warrington Bus Interchange, where Colin convinced the designers to include a Changing Places style toilet. In recognition of his efforts Network Warrington named one of their buses in his



honour. His work stretched well beyond Warrington, across the northwest. Millions of disabled people have benefited because of Colin's efforts.

"Colin also delivered Disability Awareness Training to businesses, colleges and schools. He brought his wicked sense of humour to his training, making audiences laugh and cry within minutes. Always getting the WDP message across that it's what we can do that matters.

"At Disability Awareness Day Colin was a key member of the team up at Walton Gardens, and as a Steward on the big day, after the set up Colin would change clothes and take to the stage in the Arts Marquee singing with Wired for Sound community choir, then he would be off to the Sports Zone helping run the Curling Lane. Like me, Colin was proud to be able to share his volunteering at DAD with his family, initially his son Paul and later, Craig.

"As much of the clean up at DAD

involved physical work, Colin and I competed to see how many cable ties we could collect after the marquees were dismantled..... Colin's competitive streak was ever evident, counting each and every one.

Dave added: "Sports was a passion we both shared, with Warrington Wolves Disability Sports Club at the Dallam Day Centre, but Colin went on to much bigger things, representing Wales, competing in the World Curling Championships in Prague. Colin played a huge part in the local Disability Sports Club DISC that was based a Great Sankey Forum. It was befitting that his efforts were recognised by the judging panel of the Warrington Sports Awards.

"Colin was a man for the big stage, stewarding at the Manchester Commonwealth Games, singing at the 2015 Super League Final, nothing phased him. I do remember embarrassing myself at a WDP Karaoke doing a duet with Colin, but it was a total mismatch,

Colin's deep and in tune voice and my no pitch out of tune voice.....

"It was nice to watch Colin grow in confidence when he met the love of his life Ann at the a centre for Independent Living. Little did we know that it was to become the first WDP marriage. I remember Colin telling a group of us that he was so proud when Ann agree to be his wife. She was his rock, and brought love, warmth and happiness to Colin's life.

"Colin was a true friend, always smiling, loved his hugs, always up for a laugh, hard working, a pleasure to be around. He leaves a legacy of change that has improved the lives of thousands of disabled peoples lives, he also leaves a hole in the hearts of our team, but we have so many happy memories of our times together."

It is proposed to dedicate the next Disability Awareness Day in Colin's memory, alongside that of Peter Ives, another member of the WDP family, who was sadly lost a few weeks ago to COVID-19.



Online bingo raises a “jaw-dropping” £23K for St Rocco’s Hospice

A online bingo game which “started out as a bit of fun” has raised a staggering £23,432.82 for St Rocco’s Hospice.

Run by Chris Forster from Woolston, the son of former Warrington Wolves’ legend Mark, he started the event as “a bit of fun” to help out the charity which is close to his family’s heart after caring for his Aunty and Grandad.

He started the fundraiser because St Rocco’s was set to lose so much money due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The first game raised 3k and then with the second game it doubled to £6k.

It became a global success, attracting players from all over the world and has now raised over £23,000!

A spokesperson from St Rocco’s said: “We’d like to say a huge THANK YOU to Chris Forster who’s regular bingo night has been a massive success, raising £6,417.50 last Friday alone!

“This means that Chris’ running total that has been raised through this fundraising total stands at a whopping £ 23,439.82! This is an absolutely jaw-dropping amount to have raised during this time and we cannot stress how far this

will go in helping St. Rocco’s to continue to provide care and support to those who need us most.

“Thank you also to everybody who has taken part in the bingo nights, it’s so lovely to see so many people in Warrington showing how much they care.

“As you can see from these pictures the bingo has been a success for all age groups and is even an excuse to dress up for some.”

The next bingo night will be taking place in early June.

Meanwhile St Rocco’s Hospice have been overwhelmed by the outpouring of support from the Warrington community and are grateful that so many supporters are continuing with their fundraising efforts to raise money for patient care.

As a lot of corporate supporters



For more details on the next online bingo check out the facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/818298032015429/>

have been working from home, the hospice has been amazed to follow the fundraising journeys of a variety of different activities such as ‘Stair Climbs to Everest’, ‘Donate Your Commute’ and ‘Indoor Rowing Challenges’.

All funds raised have been donated to their Emergency Appeal in the attempt to recuperate the £1million loss that St Rocco’s will face through this pandemic.

It was devastating for those at the hospice having to change our visiting rules due to COVID-19 restrictions. Patients and their families are at the heart of everything they do and these decisions did not come easily.

But – out of bad situations come

wonderful acts of generosity. The Hospice sent a plea to local businesses asking for donations of iPads so that patients could easily stay connected with their loved ones during these difficult times – and they were bowled over by the response they had.

The Hospice needed 14 iPads for each of our 14 in-patient beds, and in just a few hours they had hit our target!

Special thanks to Sandstone Supplies Ltd, 3 Pugs Gin, Real 5 Networking, Winwick Road Skip Hire, Birchwood Shopping Centre, Barkinmouse Ltd, MD Tool Hire Ltd, Piero Belmonte Photography, BMECH Ltd, David Paul of Warrington, Libertas Wealth Management, Warrington

Worldwide, Warrington’s Own Buses and Legal for Landlords for their kind donations.

As the hospice are experiencing a national shortage of PPE for their front line staff, the Warrington community and local businesses have come together to provide donations of all necessary equipment to enable nurses and staff to provide care in the safest way possible, for this they are truly thankful!

Not forgetting, the gifts of hampers, chocolates, flowers and treats that patients and staff have received, acts of generosity such as these help show that the Warrington community, and businesses alike, really are ‘Hospice Heros’.

Security sector hit hard with high mortality rate during COVID-19 pandemic

It appears from the latest scientific studies that the security sector has the highest mortality rate with male security guards accounting for 46 deaths per 100,000 of population.

Thankfully whilst Uniqwin UK Ltd have experienced a high degree of sickness they haven’t to date

had any Covid 19 related deaths.

Director Gary Higgins said: “Despite closure of many of the locations we normally service, accounting for close to 18% of turnover we have managed to recoup that loss due to requests to provide additional services including additional manned

guarding, building patrols, and facility checks.

“We have continued to support our clients and achieve 100% service records. This would not have been possible without the support and response from our teams in the field who have responded magnificently.

“With almost 21% of staff off due to self isolation, shielding or ill generally the last couple of months have been really challenging to achieve the above.

“We have been very fortunate that the business has continued operating in these uncertain times unlike many local business’s.”

PPE health and safety products to get you back to work

LOCALLY based J&K Ross are open for business supplying a wide range of health and safety products, especially for businesses looking to open up again during the coronavirus pandemic.

The J & K Ross Team are health and safety specialists whose prime concern is the safety and wellbeing of all their customers. They offer a complete range of health and safety clothing and equipment to all sizes of business and members of the public via their trade counter.

Best in class social distancing measures including:

- *Barriered queuing system outside of the store
- *Hand sanitising stations at the entrance
- *One way system with barriers and floor markings
- *Wheeled baskets for customers, sanitised after every use

*Staff located behind state of the art screening around the pay counter

*Staff wearing masks at all times
*Card payment only (unless you have an account)

They also stock a full range of head to toe PPE to help get you "back to work" also:

- *Hand sanitisers – in stock now
 - *Washable "healthcare" masks, pack of 5 £ 15.95 (only £ 3.19 each) no vat – in stock now
 - *Hard surface anti-viral cleaner, 750 ml trigger spray, Vira-Wipes (tub of 225 anti-viral surface wipes) £ 24.95
 - *A full range of social distancing products including desk screens, barriers, floor markings.
- New opening hours are Monday to Friday 0830 to 1230 and 1300 to 1700



www.jkross.co.uk Customer Support : 01925 645645 E: safety@jkross.co.uk



Lilycross facility opens in record time

Halton Borough Council, with the support of local care organisation Catalyst Choices, has opened the doors to Lilycross, its step-down care facility in Widnes, just four weeks after starting work on the derelict care home.

Priestley exhibition finds its place on line

The 60-bed facility is intended as a regional hub for people recovering from Covid-19 and other major illness. It forms an important part of a wider 'Out of Hospital' project happening across Cheshire and Merseyside to provide additional capacity in the community, freeing up much needed bed space in local hospitals.

The Council commissioned the project at the beginning of April, working in partnership with Catalyst Choices, Eric Wright Health & Care and Capacity, as part of its commitment to supporting the Halton population during the outbreak of Covid-19 coronavirus.

Cllr Tom McInerney the Council's Executive Board Member for Social Care, said: "Lilycross is an extraordinary example of what can be achieved when the public, private and third sectors pull together in a common cause. This facility will free up much needed NHS beds and support the community in Halton and

more widely. Just a few weeks ago this building was an empty shell and now it is a superb, fully functioning care facility which will be an invaluable resource for our local community."

Christine Winstanley from Eric Wright Health & Care, working with Eric Wright Special Project construction division which delivered the building works, added: "To transform an empty building into a fully functioning care facility in just over a month is a huge achievement and one that was only possible when everyone pulled together in the same direction. We are so proud to have

been involved with this project and look forward to seeing its first occupants arrive this week."

To support the new facility Catalyst Choices has recruited 60 people from both the local community and the healthcare sector. Managing Director, David Osborne, added: "This is a real opportunity for the local people to play a part in the delivery of Lilycross. We have recruited a strong staff team with a mix of experienced support workers, alongside local people from outside the sector who wanted to make a difference during the coronavirus outbreak. It is great to

see the whole community pulling together to make this happen so quickly at a time of national crisis."

Other members of the project team include: Catalyst Choices; Bridgewater Community Healthcare Foundation Trust; Warrington & Halton Hospitals Foundation Trust; St Helens and Knowsley Hospitals Foundation Trust; Warrington Council; Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG); Halton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG); St Helens Council St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).



Working from home to help local charities

KEY workers from a Warrington call centre are raising coronavirus cash to help beat the lockdown blues.

Charity challenges, which happened weekly at United Utilities' call centres before the lockdown, have now been resurrected by colleagues working on their own from home using apps like WhatsApp and Paypal.

And as an added extra, managers have agreed to boost whatever they raise by £500 a week

In Warrington, the first charity to benefit was Warrington Foodbank, which received a £500 cheque from United Utilities plus extra food donated by staff themselves. With the vast majority of its 500 staff working from home, and the skeleton crew of people in the office keeping a wide distance from each other, the call centre building at Lingley Mere Business Park was eerily quiet.

Customer service adviser Katie Holbrook who nominated the foodbank said: "With what's happening in lockdown, a lot of people are really struggling and what some of them really need is food on the table. The foodbank is round the corner from where I used to work and I know people who have been in difficult situations and are glad it's there. This is something we can do which could make a difference.

"United Utilities call centres

deal with thousands of customer queries and staff there are key workers, not least because they support customers through difficult times, offering payment breaks on their bills, or signposting them to one of the company's many assistance schemes. Customer services and people director Lou Beardmore said United Utilities

was giving £500 of charity cash a week for each of the company's two call centres in Whitehaven and Warrington.

Staff in both locations will choose a different local charity every week

"Every week, we are keen to support local charities and causes important to our communities.

Our call centre staff always do some great work to raise money and we wanted to keep that going. Now more than ever having some fun, supporting each other and supporting our charities and communities is critical and together we can make a massive difference," she said.



Warrington property company launches £3m national community fund

WARRINGTON based primary care property specialist Assura plc is to launch a community fund to support local health projects across the UK – distributing more than £3m over the next five years.

The Assura Community Fund has been created to support health-improving work by charities and local groups in the communities around Assura's GP surgery, primary care and treatment centre buildings around the country.

The fund, which was already planned for launch in May before the COVID19 pandemic, has been boosted by a £2.5m donation by the company in April. It will build on the work of Assura's existing Healthy Communities grant scheme, which has funded projects nominated by the GP practices in its buildings ranging from social prescribing walking groups, gardening schemes and coffee and chat sessions to support for a new Men's Shed and a community bakery run by young people with learning disabilities and autism.

Assura's CEO, Jonathan Murphy, said: "The Assura Community Fund has been a long time in the planning for launch this year but with the impact of coronavirus, we know there's now an even more important role for it to play. The roots of the fund's work are very firmly in the relationship between local charity projects, primary care and social prescribing, and those areas will be vital in helping

our communities recover in the months and years to come."

The fund will be managed for Assura by Cheshire Community Foundation, and will begin inviting applications for a share of £750,000 in initial grants from June this year. Funding will be targeted at projects serving people living within a 15-mile radius of each of Assura's buildings around the country, with a specific tranche of funding earmarked for strategic grant giving in Assura's home town of Warrington. With further fundraising by the company over the next five years, Assura plans for the fund to have reached £5m by March 2026.

Warrington South MP, Andy Carter, said: "The Assura Community Fund will add real value to people's lives by supporting health-improving projects linked with primary care in Warrington and beyond. This funding, combined with the record investment we are making in our NHS, will go some way to combatting the long-term health challenges our communities face."

Cheshire Community Foundation CEO Zoe Sheppard said: "We are delighted to be working with Assura to manage the Assura Community Fund. This is an incredibly generous commitment from Assura, at a time when it has never been more important to invest in our local communities."



Research into accountant adaptability wins prestigious award

A Doctoral candidate at the University of Chester has won a prestigious bursary award for her study into how accountants stretch the boundaries of their careers, adapting and flexing into new roles and circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Carol Mclachlan, a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Business and Management, applied for the highly competitive bursary from the Chartered Accountants' Company, a charitable arm of the professional body, of which she has been a member for over 20 years. Her studies focus on career boundaries and how they must be adaptable in the new world of work.

As one of the largest professional

bodies with over 150,000 members, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), through its livery company, provides a small number of highly selective academic bursaries to those deemed to be undertaking cutting-edge doctoral research in accounting-related topics.

In successfully satisfying the robust peer review and panel interrogation to achieve the award, Carol says the bursary will be used to "support the unique inter-disciplinary focus of my research, drawing on perspectives from the academic and practice literature across the business and management spectrum, in other words, truly stretching the

boundaries!"

Carol describes her research as follows: "In identifying the professional context as one of uncertainty and chaos, I was foreshadowing an event such as the current pandemic, so my research is proving timely. The profession, and indeed business in general, was already poised to deep dive into the Fourth Industrial Revolution, driven by the smart digitalisation. My study focuses on career boundaries, and how they, can, and often must, be more elastic in the new world of work."

Carol's principal PhD supervisor, Professor Tony Wall, Head of the International Centre for Thriving at the University of Chester, said:

"Carol's research digs deep to explore what exactly enables accountants to adapt, and adapt quickly, to new circumstances – which is particularly important to us all right now."

However, Carol's research is not just following a long-standing personal and professional curiosity, but is now being used to support her fellow accountants dealing with the COVID-19 crisis.

Carol is currently hosting a series of international ICAEW webinars to support members as they grapple with a new reality, culminating in a valuable opportunity to share her research via a panel discussion on 'Stretching your boundaries and develop a portfolio that will deliver results'.

Completion on £12m warehouse brings much need industrial space to Warrington

PATRIZIA-managed Birchwood Park, the North West's largest out-of-town business destination, has completed its latest phase of new industrial development with an investment of £12m, bringing 170,000 square feet of prime industrial warehouse space to the region.

The development, which began construction in April 2019, features five new units (717 to 721) comprising of two 18,000sq.ft warehouses, a 24,000sq.ft warehouse and larger 50,000 and 58,000sq.ft warehouses, and benefits from some of the best transport links in the North West - following the recent completion of a £5million investment into the road network surrounding the park.

With two units already under offer, this latest warehouse development comes after the successful previous phase of development in 2016, Cavendish Avenue, which saw three new units let within one year. The new multi-million investment responds to the increasing demand for high-grade warehouse space of this size and quality in the surrounding Warrington area.

Martin O'Rourke, Commercial Director at Birchwood Park, comments: "We're delighted to see the next phase of our Cavendish Warehouse development reach completion, meaning we can plug the gap for much-sought-after industrial space in the area.

"During this project, we've ensured we take key learnings from previous experience gained on industrial developments at the Park, and taken on board occupier experience and comments to help us deliver exactly what businesses are looking for. Knowing that previous businesses have extended their offices to provide additional office, showroom or laboratory space, we have anticipated future occupier's needs by obtaining planning consent in advance should occupiers wish to provide additional office space in the units if required.

"We have also provided the quality of office space that is something you would expect to find in an office development rather than an industrial unit. Occupiers expressed their wishes for better quality office space to help attract and retain the qualified staff they need for their businesses, which is exactly what we did. Occupiers shouldn't have to put up with poor quality office space just because they work in an industrial unit."

The units feature a unique combination of high-quality warehouse and office space, and occupiers benefit from being situated within the expertly landscaped surroundings of Birchwood Park. Being located on Birchwood Park also gives companies the benefit of excellent transport links, with easy access to Junction 11 of the M62 and access to the excellent range of amenities on offer such as a gym and all day eat and meet facilities at the EnterpriseRooms.



Martin added: "We're extremely proud of the benefits we can offer businesses here on the park, from the excellent connectivity to the landscaped surroundings and range of amenities - something completely different from your usual industrial park and of great benefit to businesses looking to improve staff retention and impress clients.

"We look forward to seeing continued growth within the park in this next chapter in our industrial development, and hope to follow similar success to our previous phase of the warehouse project."

New occupiers from warehouses 717 to 721 can expect to benefit from Enterprise Zone status as Birchwood Park forms an integral part of the Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone. This is due to the large nuclear engineering and science sector having continued to thrive at the park over the last 20 years, and

part of Birchwood Park's long-term ambitions.

Designed by architects AEW, Caddick Construction were appointed as main contractors with Warrington Martin appointed as project managers and quantity surveyors. BDP Structural were appointed as structural engineers and the planning process was overseen by Turley's, with Crookes Walker providing advice on M&E and Vectos providing highways advice. B8 Real Estate and JLL are joint agents acting on behalf of Birchwood Park.

For more information on the Cavendish Warehouse development or to find out about socially-distanced property viewings, head to birchwoodpark.co.uk or call the team on 01925 851536.

Blue Whale Media - Get to know our team!

Blue Whale Media is a professional digital marketing agency made up of a creative team of experts.

As a team, we create stunning and innovative website designs and development, social media marketing, SEO campaigns and drone filming and videography. At Blue Whale Media, we have quite a mixed bunch of talented individuals with a broad range of skills and expertise to make sure that work well across the spectrum of digital marketing.

Through the services we offer at Blue Whale Media and our customer connection, we aim to produce a lasting impression on our customers. Our values mean we don't adopt a one-size-fits-all approach and we are open to helping any business no matter how small. Over the past year, our team worked on a huge variety of different websites from a diverse range of industries and trades. From website design projects like ABAC and YKK to stunningly professional videos for companies such as Mayne Coaches, The Body Project and Xrail.

Each day is different as each team member has various tasks to do, or there could be a meeting or photoshoot taking place in the office. In the Blue Whale Media office, our work family consists of 15 staff members and we sit in desk pods of four across the office. Describing our team as a work-family may sound cliché, but that is precisely what we are. The mixture of different personalities within the group means we all work well together and more importantly; we all get on with each other!

The Blue Whale Media office is light, airy and open plan. We have our brand colours featured throughout the office, as well as our logo on the blue feature wall that looks out onto Birchwood Boulevard Business Park. The advantage of our open-plan office is that our team can share ideas along with being more approachable and accessible. Our clients are always welcomed by a member of our team and a nicely brewed hot drink.

Within the office, we have several departments that make up our overall team. The main departments include web design/development, marketing, graphic design and videography but we do have a lot of teams



that work behind the scenes to ensure the business is running smoothly.

If you're looking for a fresh website update, new logo, or even a promotional video, contact the Blue Whale Media team for more information on 01925522050.

Warrington's Own Heroes

The town's bus company is showing its thanks to all fellow key workers with a specially designed bus that goes into service this week.

The bus has a special design, which recognises the efforts of the town's council employees, delivery

drivers, the NHS, the care sector, shop workers, teachers and the many volunteers who are pitching in. It also has the rainbow motif, which has become synonymous the lockdown period.

Warrington's Own Buses have

operated throughout the lockdown, having taken many additional safety measures, including facilities for contactless payments, and extra cleaning has been implemented.

Ben Wakerley, Managing Director

said: "I am extremely grateful to our employees who are keeping key workers connected and we also wanted to do our bit to thank the many people who are working hard to keep the town running. I am really proud of our team and commitment they have shown throughout."



Validation of your Covid-19 Risk Assessment

As many of our businesses continue working, or are preparing to return to work, restrictions imposed to manage COVID-19 are an increasing challenge.

Insurers will expect businesses to be and continue to remain compliant with existing legal obligations, specifically the duty imposed on all employers by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees and others affected by their operations.

In order to demonstrate this duty of

care has been fulfilled, employers must be able to evidence that the actions taken to control the risks to health, safety and welfare are reasonably practicable, in other words the balance between the benefits of risk reduction on the one hand, outweigh the time, effort and cost of the control measures on the other.

The risk assessment should clearly show that, on the balance of all considerations, the controls implemented reduce the risk as low as reasonably practical. This evidence, in the form of a suitable

and sufficient risk assessment, is crucial in the defence of an insurance claim for personal injury or illness or intervention by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or other regulatory authority.

How can a business ensure that its risk assessment for working or returning to work during the COVID-19 pandemic is suitable and sufficient? For a one-off fee of £450 plus VAT, Gallagher Risk Management Solutions' health and safety consultants will arrange a conference or video call to ascertain an understanding of

your business and to establish context before undertaking an independent, professional review of your COVID-19 Risk Assessment against existing legislation, COVID-19 guidance and protocols. Where the document is considered suitable and sufficient it will be validated by the health and safety consultant.

For more details contact Gary Brabander E: gary_brabander@ajg.com TEL: 0151 708 8090 or M 07877 199 802



Former Warrington Wolves winger celebrating 15 years in business at Today Team

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A former Warrington Wolves player who had his career cut short by injury, is celebrating his 15th year in business running the Today Team logistics company based at Risley, Warrington.

“Starting a business in my 20’s was never part of the plan, my life was all about rugby league back then” says Today Team founder Jamie Boyd, who had his rugby league career taken from him with a serious knee injury aged 24.

The former Warrington Wolves winger, decided to use the skills he’d learnt in the professional sports world and transfer them to starting his own business “I’d not really worked in a business much after signing professional aged 17 but when I was forced to retire I wanted to look forward to the future, not ponder what could have been and had the idea of starting a logistics company”

With the sudden injury and lack of business experience getting the venture off the ground wasn’t straight forward and it was the Princes Trust who gave Boyd a lifeline with a £3000 loan to rent his first van and start out as an

owner driver with the early days were mainly furniture deliveries for local bed and sofa stores.

Fifteen years later and Today Team offer a full UK and European business to business logistics service and are trusted by clients such as Sony and Nestle to deliver their time critical and mission critical shipments from their head office in Warrington / Risley. The business employs 10 office staff and works with around 50 drivers a day across the country.

Having organically grown that original £3000 loan to what is now a seven figure turnover business, Boyd speaks confidently about the future of the business “From the beginning it’s always been about controlled, steady growth and I’m proud to have brought Today Team this far from those long days driving a van in the first year, I still feel like there is lots to press on for and I’m looking forward to the next 15 years to see what else we can achieve.”

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The copy deadline for the next edition of Insight magazine is

July 20th

Please email your news stories and pictures to the Editor at our NEW email address:

info@warrington-chamber.co.uk

Wire pull off huge signing with capture of Aussie star Greg Inglis

WARRINGTON Wolves have pulled off one of the biggest signings in Betfred Super League history by capturing the signature of Aussie star Greg Inglis for the 2021 season.

The former Queensland Captain, who has had a year out of the game, will join the Wire subject to him receiving a visa. He retired from the game in April 2019 at the start of the last NRL season, saying he had lost his hunger for the game.

He then went on to take a job at South Sydney Rabbitohs as the club's pathways manager, having spent the last eight years of his playing career with the club after rising to super stardom as part of the all-conquering Melbourne Storm team.

Inglis has been a standout player at fullback, centre and stand-off during an illustrious career to date, and has penned a one-year deal with Warrington for the 2021 season.

The 33-year-old is a Clive Churchill Medal winner, Golden Boot winner and is widely revered as

one of the greatest players of modern-day rugby league. As a former Melbourne Storm and South Sydney Rabbitohs star, he made 263 NRL appearances, played 32 State of Origin games and represented his country on 39 occasions.

Speaking about the news via zoom, Inglis said: "I can't wait to get over there and play for a club that has so much rich heritage. I've seen the success the team have had in the Challenge Cup and I want to help the team to deliver more glory.

"I've played over in England many times in representative footy and love how passionate and vocal the supporters are.

"To get the opportunity to live in the UK, to play for such a powerhouse club that I believe is on the rise is something I'm looking forward to and hopefully I can add value to the team." Warrington Wolves CEO, Karl Fitzpatrick commented: "This signing is a gift to every one of our fantastic members and partners who are currently experiencing difficult times.



"We wanted to give everyone something to look forward to and to say thank you for their extraordinary loyalty. With this in mind we were extra motivated to get this deal completed.

"Greg is considered to be one of the greatest Rugby League players of the modern era. To see him pull on the primrose and blue will be a historical moment in Warrington Wolves and Super League's timeline."

Wire's Head Coach, Steve Price added: "Greg is a world class athlete and has received the highest honours within our game.

"Having had 12 months out of the sport he has had time to refresh both mentally and physically, and he is focused on having a positive influence on Warrington Wolves.

"I'm looking forward to working with him on a professional and personal level, and I'm excited to welcome him into our group."

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