



Insight

magazine

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The Journal of the

WARRINGTON CHAMBER of
COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

in association with
VR VALE ROYAL
The heart of Cheshire

Welcome to new Chamber members Maskell + Josephson

WARRINGTON & Vale Royal Chamber are delighted to welcome new members **Maskell + Josephson** who have expanded their business with new premises at the brand new Warrington Market.

Maskell + Josephson, began life under the Ross Maskell Optometrists name on Oxford Road in Manchester 50 years ago. It moved to its new home in Altrincham in 1983 and is still based in the same location today. In May 2017 Anthony Josephson took over the business and subsequently rebranded it as Maskell + Josephson.

During the COVID lockdown an opportunity arose to open a second site in the new Warrington Market. Anthony went to check out the site and was massively impressed with what the council had put and was very keen to open up in this exciting new environment. The practice in Altrincham relies on high-quality eye care and eyewear and has the unique feature of offering monthly care plans (for as little as £5 per month) rather than any upfront appointment fees. This has been transferred over to the new Warrington site.

However, before opening the new practice Anthony knew that the success of this site depended not just on the great services or products but also on having the

right team members to support the business. The search started and Anthony was really impressed with the quality of candidates that applied for the job, some of whom had been working in the area for many years, others who sadly found themselves out of work because of changes due to COVID and others just looking for a new challenge.

The team is comprised of three brilliant members; Graham Weir (optometrist) who'll look after all clinical ongoings, Mai-Yee Cheng and Rachelle Garcia-Russo who are both responsible for everything to do with your new glasses - finding the perfect look and measuring up for the best lenses possible.

The practice is equipped with state-of-the-art technology, providing more accurate health assessment and glasses measurements with the set up facilitating great distancing measures to keep everyone safe in these challenging times. Whilst the business is new to Warrington it enters the town with over 50 years of experience offering quality eyecare and eyewear to a level not seen before in central Warrington.

The unique location, affordable prices and quality service should make Maskell + Josephson Warrington the optician for everyone local to the town.



Veterans urged to register in GP study

WARRINGTON veterans who have served in the British Armed Forces are being urged to inform their local primary healthcare practice as part of a new study.

The University of Chester's Westminster Centre for Veterans' Research is carrying out a research initiative to determine the number of military veterans registered at local GP medical centres in the Warrington area.

The findings from the research will help the NHS provide the optimum health resources for the veteran population.

Veterans who are registered at Penketh Health Centre; Holes Lane Surgery; Fearnhead Medical Centre; Stockton Heath Medical Centre; Culcheth Medical Centre and Birchwood Medical Centre have been asked to let their practice know at any time between now and February 28, 2021 that they have served in the British Armed Forces.

Dr Alan Finnegan, the University of Chester's Professor of Nursing and Military Mental Health and Chairman of the Cheshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Committee said: "A military veteran is anyone who has served at least one day in our Armed Forces as either a Regular or Reserve. Veterans are estimated as

being 5% of the population, and we know that significant numbers still need to be correctly coded within Primary Healthcare.

"Veterans can have a greater likelihood of some illnesses than their civilian counterparts, such as hearing loss and limb and joint problems. Ex-Forces personnel can also experience specific

mental health problems as a result of their military service, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, anxiety and alcohol misuse. In order to provide the correct health resources to meet the needs of these people, it is important to have accurate data on the number of veterans. This, importantly, includes the more elderly members of our armed

forces community who may be socially isolated or living in a care home or assisted living and many of whom may have completed National Service."

The funding to support this programme has been awarded by Forces in Mind Trust, and will identify numbers only, and personal data will remain confidential.



The team at the Westminster Centre for Veterans' Research (photograph taken prior to lockdown).

From the President

Nigel Schofield

READING the letters of condolence and tributes that have poured into the Chamber offices, it is a great tribute to Colin Daniels to see that he was widely held in such high esteem by members of the business community and others across the North West.

So many of us clearly counted Colin among our special friends,

and it is evident that he earned that accolade to a great extent through his persistent efforts to assist and support all those who sought his aid.

He will be greatly missed by many in the business community, and while he was a great ambassador for Warrington over many years, it is truly remarkable to see the tributes also received from elsewhere across

the North West and wider.

Colin was proud of his Warrington connections, as he was of his military and Scottish connections. He was also proud of his family and our thoughts are with them at this difficult time.

See more on page 7 of Colin's contribution to the business community.



New founder patron for Youth Zone



Paul Griffiths from Warrington Youth Zone, Paul Fleetham, managing director at Tarmac and Nick Hopkinson, Warrington Youth Zone board member and High Sheriff of Cheshire.

BUILDING materials group Tarmac is the latest Founder Patron of Warrington Youth Zone, the brand-new young people's charity set to open in the town next year.

The £6.9 million facility is being delivered by OnSide Youth Zones, a national charity which has created a network of Youth Zones across the country, providing local young people with somewhere to go, something to do and someone to talk to.

Set to be built in the stadium quarter next to the University Technical College (UTC), the state-of-the-art Youth Zone will offer thousands of young people from Warrington access to an indoor climbing wall, 3G kick pitch, four court sports hall, dance and drama studio, training kitchen, arts and crafts space, fully equipped gym, music room with recording studio, enterprise suite and much more.

Tarmac will join the Youth Zone's family of Founder Patrons, a group of local businesses and philanthropists who are united in support of young people and their ambition to see Warrington flourish.

Paul Fleetham, managing director of Tarmac Contracting, said: "After visiting the Hive Youth Zone in Birkenhead and seeing the tremendous difference to young people and the community, we were inspired to support the new Warrington Youth Zone."

The Youth Zone will open seven days a week for young people aged between 7 and 19, and up to 25 for those with additional needs. Young people will pay £5 per year to be a member and then just 50p every time they visit.

Dave McNicholl, chief executive of Warrington Youth Zone said: "I'd like to say a huge thank you to Tarmac for joining our family of Founder Patrons. Once open, Warrington Youth Zone will provide young people with somewhere safe to spend their leisure time, discover their talents and develop their skills but we can't do it without the support from businesses such as Tarmac."

For more information about the charity, visit www.warringtonyouthclub.co.uk

Better prepared than before!

by Interim Chief Executive Stephen Fitzsimons



Whilst it is concerning to see the economy take two steps forward and one step backwards because of a second wave of Covid-19, it is important to appreciate that our members are better prepared than they were in March.

Back then, we did not know what lockdown would look like and the subsequent challenges that it would create. Businesses quickly learnt to adapt and we are now all too familiar with enabling technologies such as MS Teams and Zoom.

There was a tremendous amount of innovation, with new and exciting ways of engaging with customers. Food and drink retailers made it much easier to communicate their products and offer additional options to collect.

A good example of this was Warrington Market where some of our members benefitted from residents buying locally. An on-line shop was quickly launched with a click & collect to complete the transaction.

Many of these enhancements are still in place and ready to ramp up if required.

Nevertheless, it is going to be tough again for many of our members in the next few months. Whilst the Chancellor's Job support scheme will be welcomed by some members, others will be left wondering how they can maintain their staff. Another measure that has been recently launched is Kickstart, a 6 month work experience placement for young people, who we know are disproportionately affected by rising unemployment. The Chamber is working with local partners, including the Council and the DWP, to agree how best to manage this in Warrington. Recruiting companies need to be in cohorts of 30 new starters and the Chamber will be helping to put these groups together. Members can benefit from 25 hours paid work each week and up to £1,500 in training support.

We all acknowledge that exporting is one of the best ways to help the UK economy recover. It was encouraging to hear that a trade deal has been reached with Japan, the first example of the UK operating outside the European Union's own arrangements. However, the slow progress on an agreement with our continental neighbours is alarming. The UK exports £300 billion in goods & services into Europe which is 43% of the total global value. Companies require certainty in order to make the right business decisions on staff, resources and business development. They are urgently looking to government for the rules and regulations that they will be working under from the 1st January 2021. Once this is clear, they will do what British companies do best - selling successfully across the world.

WARRINGTON
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Colin Daniels, Chief Executive

Park Royal Hotel makes Safe to Trade Scheme Approved list

WARRINGTON'S Park Royal Hotel is one of just six Cheshire hotels to make the Safe to Trade Scheme Approved list, to take their place among the safest 175 hotels in the UK.

With the number of August bank holiday overnight stays at UK hotels reported to be down from 8.6m last year to 4.8m this year, a list of 175 fully Covid-compliant UK hotels has been released by the hospitality industry's Safe to Trade Scheme.

The newly-launched Safe to Trade Scheme helps holidaymakers to identify which hotels, bars, restaurants and cinemas are going the extra mile to ensure the safety of both their staff and guests.

The Scheme, has been launched by top-ranking hospitality safety experts, including the former CEO of the Health and Safety Executive and Food Standards Agency and the ex-Head of Local Delivery at Food Standards Agency, and is an independently verified safety standard for hospitality businesses that are not only compliant with, but also implementing measures that go above and beyond the government's guidelines for trading during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The six Cheshire hotels that feature in the Top 175 Approved Safe to Trade Hotels in the UK, which includes the Park Royal Hotel in Warrington, have been independently audited by the

Safe to Trade Scheme's team of expert Environmental Health Practitioners and have had to pass a strict approval process, as well as adhere to stringent health and safety guidance.

The hotels will now work with the experts at the Scheme on an ongoing basis, who will audit their safety practices against its Safety Charter to ensure that they are running a Covid compliant operation, with this information made available to the public, so that they can make informed choices about where they patronise.

Each of the 175 establishments now feature on a national register, that holidaymakers can consult to find a safe to trade venue, which is regularly updated following honest feedback – both good and bad – from staff and customers. The register is also made available to local and national safety regulators, to assist with their requirement to risk rate businesses and a full list of current approved venues can be found at: <https://safetotrade.org.uk/safe-to-trade/search/>

Mark Flanagan who chairs the Safe to Trade Scheme governance board comments: "We are delighted to announce the first 175 UK hotels to meet our stringent standards and be deemed as Safe to Trade. For those customers looking to make the most of what's left of the summer with a UK staycation but who want to do

so as safely as possible, the Safe to Trade Scheme provides peace of mind. Customers who consult our register of approved venues at safetotrade.org.uk can search for a hotel by name or location and be confident that every approved hotel that features on the list complies fully with the law."

The Safe to Trade Scheme is spearheaded by Shield Safety Group, alongside a Governance Board of top-ranking industry experts, including John Barnes, the ex-Head of Local Delivery at Food Standards Agency; Geoffrey Podger, the former CEO of the Health and Safety Executive and Food Standards Agency; Dr John Holah, the ex-Head of Food Hygiene Department at Camden BRI; Sterling Crew, the ex-Technical Director at manufacturers Peter Black and Kolak Snack Foods, Selvarani Elahi, the UK Deputy Government Chemist and Executive Director

of the Food Authenticity Network and Mark Flanagan, CEO of Shield Safety Group (SSG).

Flanagan added: "If a customer sees something concerning at a venue or wants to share a positive experience, then they can simply scan the QR code on the venue's Safe to Trade window sticker, or visit the Safe to Trade Scheme website, search for the business to feedback anonymously as well as rate the business. This is then fed back to the hotel, and outlet managers and owners are encouraged to adjust and adapt their practices to ensure that their business stays COVID compliant and safe."

The Scheme's register of approved venues is continuously evolving as hundreds of hotels have already signed up to be audited, and many more continue to do so on a daily basis. To find out more about the Safe to Trade Scheme visit: www.safetotrade.org.uk



MP welcomes new Principal at Priestley College

WARRINGTON South MP Andy Carter has welcomed the new Principal of Priestley College James Gresty to his position.

Mr Carter met with Mr Gresty in his first few weeks in the position and got the opportunity to talk to staff and pupils about reopening during coronavirus.

Speaking about the visit, Mr Carter said: "It was brilliant to be back at Priestley College to see the great work going on there by the teachers, support staff and pupils.

"It's clear that Mr Gresty has a vision for the future which will hopefully see the college going from strength to strength. More immediately, ensuring students have a full timetable, whether that's within the college itself or studying from home.

"We need all students to continue to receive high-quality education and training, no matter where they grow up or what college they go to. Now more than ever, it is vital that colleges such as Priestley can support their students to gain the skills they need to progress and help us level up the economy."

Mr Gresty commented: "I was delighted to have met Andy last week and to have had the

opportunity to discuss our shared vision for education in the area. I am proud to be leading such an outstanding college community with so many inspiring students and dedicated staff.

"As Priestley College enters its 41st year, I'm excited about the future and look forward to continuing the strong working relationship we have with Andy and his team in supporting the local community and improving

the opportunities and life chances for young people across the region."

Mr Carter concluded that providers of 16-19 education such as further education and sixth form colleges had last year received £400 million additional funding to train and teach young people the skills they need for well-paid jobs in the modern economy. The boost was the single biggest annual increase for the sector since 2010 with

colleges across Warrington and in the North West benefitting.

With extra funding and improved standards over the years, Priestley College had been able to expand its curriculum and offer a new range of skills to pupils. The Government had put more of an emphasis now on crucial subjects such as engineering which lead to higher wages and, ultimately, a more productive economy which was vital to levelling up.





University's 500th police apprentice prepares to go out on the beat

THE University of Chester is celebrating a landmark in its Degree Apprenticeship programme - with its 500th student from its Warrington campus.

Joseph Tilston is one of 58 Cheshire Constabulary Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship students studying with the Institute of Policing on the University's Warrington Campus. Having started in the last academic term, he is already preparing to go out 'on the beat' for the first time this month.

Joseph explains what drew him towards the course. He said: "One of the main reasons was that I wanted to help. I knew that I was either interested in the emergency services or in the Civil Service – so public service, basically. If I can do my bit, and help, that's all that matters. Also, having grown up in rural Cheshire, I saw evidence of the different levels of crime that ran through the county. I think the PCDA (Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship) is an excellent kickstart to an officer's career. To be able to study for a degree in professional policing, whilst also putting that learning into practice out on the streets, is an exceptional opportunity."

Joseph's cohort has quickly adapted to a new way of learning, because of the pandemic. So far, they have been mainly learning 'virtually', as well as having some role-playing sessions at Police Headquarters in Winsford, when social distancing conditions allow. "In some ways though, this has prepared us," said Joseph. "We are going to have to deal with COVID-19 as part of our job and our training, so training within these parameters should help us to better prepare for scenarios that we may be facing in this climate."

Joseph added: "Although I didn't know what to expect from the teaching, we have covered so much already. Things like disclosure, how you investigate a crime scene, arresting people – the role of a PC was so much more than I had expected."

Geoff Elvey, Head of the Institute of Policing, said: "This is a very exciting time for policing. It is with great pleasure that we have welcomed the second cohort of Cheshire Constabulary Police Constable Degree Apprentices to the University of Chester Warrington Campus, along with their lecturers who support the Institute of Policing teaching team

in the delivery of the curriculum and assessment. The experience due to Covid 19 restrictions has been via a more blended approach, with much more emphasis on the use of technology using a virtual classroom, but we have still managed to conduct some limited face to face teaching and been able to immerse the students in some role play activity. The implementation of the College of Policing, Police Educational Qualifications Framework (PEQF) sees policing working with Higher Education Institutions, forging a partnership that sees police education taking a more academic focus. However, more importantly, it recognises the valuable contribution made by police officers and staff, for the complex roles they deliver in keeping communities safe and supporting those most vulnerable within our society, by providing them, quite rightly, with higher academic qualifications."

Sergeant Eddy Waring who is the Cheshire Constabulary PCDA supervisor said: "Cheshire Constabulary is delighted to be working in partnership with the University of Chester to welcome our second intake of Police Constable

Degree Apprenticeships. The Constabulary takes great pride in our new recruits and we care about the standard and quality of training they receive. This partnership approach ensures that both academically and practically our Police Constable Degree Apprentices are equipped to succeed as Police Constables and serve the community of Cheshire."

Joseph being the 500th Degree Apprentice to join the University of Chester marks a real milestone for the institution, as Paul Grayson, Academic Lead for Apprenticeships, explains: "Our apprenticeship provision has grown from strength to strength. Since the inception of the Higher and Degree Apprenticeships in the UK, the University of Chester has been at the forefront of their development. In 2016, we launched one of the first Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA) programmes in England, with 12 Chartered Manager Degree Apprentices on programme out of just 50 enrolments across England. These numbers have grown year on year, with our first cohort graduating this November."

College to receive more than £700,000 funding for refurb

WARRINGTON and Vale Royal College is to get £712,000 worth of funding to help with refurbishments as part of government plans to boost further education.

The college is one of more than 180 who will receive a share of £200 million to begin immediate work from this September to repair and refurbish buildings and campuses so they continue to be great places to learn for the local communities they serve, the Education Secretary Gavin Williamson announced.

The funding marks the latest

step in the government's drive to overhaul further education and deliver the skilled workforce employers and the economy need, and that will help level up skills and opportunities for more people across the country.

The cash boost forms part of a major £1.5bn investment that will transform colleges over the next 5 years. This initial investment is being fast-tracked so colleges can kick-start work this year and so students and staff will benefit at least a year earlier than originally planned.

Welcoming the news, Andy

Carter, the Conservative MP for Warrington South, said: "This funding will help Warrington & Vale Royal college carry on delivering for students living all across Warrington, carrying on with the government's promise to level up across the country, ensuring every young person, no matter where they come from has the same opportunities in life."

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said: "We want to build a world class further education system which delivers for the whole nation, and a key part of this is ensuring colleges are fit for the future – with better

facilities and brand-new buildings.

"It is brilliant news that more than 180 colleges will receive a share of £200 million so they can start immediate work to renovate buildings and facilities, with further funding being invested over the next 5 years."

"We want all students to continue to receive high-quality education and training, no matter where they grow up or what college they go to. Now more than ever, it is vital that colleges can support their students to gain the skills they need to progress and help the economy to recover and grow."

Student nurse overcomes her own challenges to bag first class degree

AN inspirational student has overcome her own challenges to achieve outstanding academic grades at the Warrington Campus of the University of Chester.

Shezz Jordan, 35, initially suspended studying for a degree in Nursing after struggling with undiagnosed ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).

But following a six-month break, during which she received a formal diagnosis, she returned to study Mental Health Nursing at the Warrington Campus and impressed her lecturers with consistently high grades and a passion for her studies, resulting in the award of a First Class degree.

Shezz said that receiving the diagnosis "made an absolutely amazing difference to my entire experience at university".

She added: "I can now concentrate

and engage with lectures and I've discovered an enjoyment for academic writing which I had hated before because I couldn't sit and concentrate.

"It has made such a massive difference to my time on placement too and I have learned so much since I have come back. I'm able to engage better with staff and patients and it makes the whole experience so much more enjoyable for me as well as the fact that I can provide better patient care.

"Being diagnosed made so many things in my life make sense. I don't see having ADHD as a hindrance to becoming a nurse – I'm empathetic, quick-thinking, gentle and able to build up therapeutic relationships well with patients. If anyone is worried that having ADHD would hold them back from being able to do this – it won't – you just have a different skill-set which is just as

important."

Shezz said that the support she felt all the way through her student journey played a major part in helping her to achieve her dreams, especially the university's disability services team and her lecturers, who enabled her return to her studies.

Laura Duncan, senior lecturer in Mental Health Nursing, said: "I believe Shezz is an advocate and role model for those experiencing any form of neurodiversity or learning difference. Shezz's academic work in her third year of study has been of exceptional quality, frequently achieving grades in the 80s for her work.

"Having known Shezz in her first year before interrupting her studies and seeing how far she has developed and grown as an individual is remarkable. Shezz is a delight to teach, is engaged

and asks insightful and interesting questions that help the whole group to develop more in-depth and interesting discussions. Shezz has demonstrated a passion for mental health and is an inspiration to other students."

Shezz now plans to further her studies with a Master's in Mental Health Sciences.



Cheshire Fire & Rescue response to Covid-19 restrictions

Business Safety Manager Tracey Carter and her team of Business Safety Advocates have responded to the restrictions under COVID-19 by delivering advice and guidance through social media, webinars and desk top visits via the telephone. The team were quick to think of a solution that would allow them to continue to work alongside businesses and ensure changes made due to the virus didn't impact their fire safety responsibilities.

Through the use of social media, the website and Q & A webinars the team recorded videos answering questions received from the public about how they could meet legislation and be Covid-19 secure.

These were released through face

book, LinkedIn and Twitter and have increased our followers significantly. In response to the feedback received following the video releases the team have ran weekly campaigns on some of the main topics discussed, these included :

- Our response to Covid-19
- Making Changes - Amend your fire risk assessment
- Schools reopening,
- Open for business,
- Farm safety,
- Business re-opening

During the period of lockdown the team have worked with Business chambers, networking groups and

local authorities to ensure they provide as much support as possible to ensure businesses can get back on their feet and still meet fire safety legislation. Regular updates have been posted onto the CFRS website responding to government changes and the possible implications to businesses. <https://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk/business-safety/covid-19>

These have included advice on the following

- Increased shift patterns – Have you increased your Fire Marshalls to be available for each shift?
- Increase in hours worked – If these include shifts throughout the night do you have emergency lighting in place?

- Businesses propping Fire Doors open to stop the virus increasing – Clear guidance on fire safety regulations and the use of self-closing doors
- Amendments to Fire Risk Assessments that include new processes in place – New shift patterns, vulnerable staff, working from home etc.
- Changes to floor layouts – Is there still a clear route out in the event of fire

Tracey and the team are on hand to support businesses throughout the pandemic and you can get in touch by emailing tracey.carter@cheshirefire.gov.uk or by viewing the website <https://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk/business-safety>

Charity bidding to buy AC Invacar as part of plans for National Disability Museum

WARRINGTON Disability Partnership is bidding to raise £4,000 to help purchase a pre-1970s AC Invacar 70 as part of their plans to deliver a National Disability Museum to the town.

The team at Warrington Disability

Partnership is committed to raising awareness about a wide range of matters relating to disability across the community in schools, colleges and businesses and are also committed to retaining the heritage of disabled people, with

plans for a Disability Museum.

Founder and Chief Executive Dave Thompson said: "Last year, with our partners at BAS (NW), we restored a vintage wheelchair which we took to Classic Car Shows, where it raised lots of interesting discussions which enabled us to get our message across to a new audience." "We have now been informed about a pre-1970s AC Invacar 70. During its day, it was the main form of motorised disabled people for many severely disabled people.

"Many of us will remember seeing them parked at pitchside at Wilderspool and other rugby and football stadiums.

"We would like to purchase it to help us continue with our work in raising awareness about how far

we have come in terms of mobility and transport for disabled people. It will no doubt create added interest when we take it to outside events and on show at the Centre at open days.

"We are appealing for help to raise the £4,000 needed to buy it. Can you help with a donation, no matter how small or large. We have already received £225 offline.

Anyone who would like to be involved in the discussion about the possible development of a National Disability Museum, please contact Dave Thompson, Chief Executive at Warrington Disability Partnership Email davethompson@disabilitypartnership.org.uk or call 01925 240064.



Death of business community stalwart Colin Daniels

BUSINESS community stalwart Colin Daniels, long-standing Chief Executive of Warrington & Vale Royal Chamber of Commerce has sadly died after a short illness.

As well as the Chamber of Commerce, he was leader of Warrington Borough Council in the early 1980s and a long-standing Chair of Governors at Warrington & Vale Royal College.

Chamber President Nigel Schofield said: "It is with great sadness that I have to report that Colin Daniels, Chief Executive of Warrington Chamber of Commerce and Industry passed away this morning. He has been a stalwart of the business community for many years both within Warrington and the North West, and will be fondly remembered by many for his enthusiasm to support business. He also served as a Cheshire County and Warrington Borough Councillor and Chairman of the Board of Governors at Warrington College for many years. Our thoughts are with his family, who have been a source of great support to Colin in recent times as his health deteriorated."

In 2016 he was honoured with the degree of Doctor of Business Administration, *honoris causa* by the University of Chester.

He was Chairman of the Corporation of Warrington Collegiate since 1989, where he took a very proactive and strategic role, including the complete rebuilding of the college. He played a significant role in the successful transfer of the Collegiate's Higher Education provision to the University of Chester in 2002.

Mr Daniels served continuously on the board of the Colleges National Association, now the AOC, and was chairman of the National Employment Committee and the National Joint Forum for Further Education until 2002. He was one of the joint architects of the introduction of the flexible employment contract for the Further Education Sector. He

was a former member of both the Further Education Governors National Council and the National Self-Regulation Group for Further Education.

He was also a Senior Council Member of the University of Chester and a former member of the Court of the University of Salford. From 1978 until 2012 he was chairman of Governors of his Thelwall Primary School, which featured in the top 8 percent of schools in the UK. He served on Cheshire County Council's education committee from 1994 to 1999.

A past President and Treasurer of the Warrington and District Association of the National Builders Federation, and a former member of the North West Regional Council of the National Federation of Building Trade Employers, he was a Life Member of the National Builders Federation.

He was also a former chairman of Warrington 2000+ Ltd, which owns and operates two office developments which act as start-up and incubator units. He was also deputy chairman of Warrington & Co (Regeneration) Ltd, which actively promotes the economic expansion and inward investment of Warrington.

Mr Daniels was also chairman of Cheshire Chambers Enterprise Ltd, which serves the sub-region of Cheshire and Warrington. A former director of Chambers of Commerce North West Ltd, he coordinated the work of the 16 Chambers of Commerce in the North West Region. He was also very involved in the establishment of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Council and was directly involved in a number of important sub-groups including enterprise, international trade and skills development.

Mr Daniels was both a borough councillor and parish councillor from 1977 to 1986, leader of the Conservative Group and chairman of the parish council.

In 1992 he was a Parliamentary Candidate at the General Election and, for five years, chairman of the Warrington South Conservative Association.

He served with the Royal Artillery in BAOR (British Army of the Rhine). His charitable work has included Cancer Macmillan Nurses, Ryfields Retirement Village and as a trustee of the Warrington Charities Trust.



Bus company staff help raise over £2,000 for St Rocco's Hospice

A team from Warrington's Own Buses took on the massive challenge of walking from Blackpool to Warrington in aid of St Rocco's Hospice - a distance of 45 miles to be walked in just 19 hours!

The entire team made it back in one piece and were greeted at the Golden Gates after walking through the night!

They managed to raise over £2000 which will go so far in helping St. Rocco's Hospice to continue its care and support to the people of Warrington

"St. Rocco's is such a great cause

and I'm so proud of the entire team for taking part in such a great fundraiser," said Ben Wakerley, Managing Director of Warrington's Own Buses.

Nicola Henshaw, Senior Relationships Fundraiser at St. Rocco's, who was there to make sure the team were welcomed back with applause and cheers, said "It's so great to be able to work alongside Warrington's Own Buses and this challenge really shows how dedicated they are to supporting us. Huge congratulations to them all and thank you to everyone who made a donation."

If you'd like to fundraise for St. Rocco's Hospice visit their website for more information on how you

can set yourself a challenge www.stroccos.org.uk/Get-Involved/Fundraise





Mayor attends first community event since lockdown as Shopmobility opens at Birchwood

WARRINGTON'S Mayor Cllr Wendy Johnson attended her first community event since lockdown when she was on hand to help Warrington Disability Partnership launch an extension to their Town Centre Shopmobility service.

The new scheme will be operated by staff at the charity's Mobility and Independent Living Store located in Birchwood Shopping Centre.

Dave Thompson, Chief Executive and Co-founder of WDP expressed his thanks to the management and staff at Birchwood Shopping Centre for their continuing help and support.

He said: "Sadly, dozens of Shopmobility schemes across the country have closed during the recent years, mainly because of reduced funding. But with the continued support of Warrington Borough Council, businesses and individuals, we have continued to

extend our services."

Dave said members of their Town Centre scheme, which costs £20pa, can use the new service without the need to sign up to a separate scheme.

"We operate a standard charge of £1.50 per visit which goes towards the general running costs of the scooters. Day membership is also available."

John Magee, Centre Manager

at Birchwood Shopping Centre said; "We are delighted to be extending our working partnership with WDP, utilising their Shopmobility expertise's enabling those customers who require extra assistance to go about their shopping easily and freely at Birchwood Shopping Centre. It's great to have the scheme up and running once again."

Virtual DAD receives £40,000 National Lottery boost

THIS year's Virtual Disability Awareness Day has received a major boost with a £40,000 grant from the National Lottery Community Fund.

Organised by local charity Warrington Disability Partnership the funding comes from the National Lottery's Coronavirus Community Support fund, to help organise and run the event which takes place on Sunday, October 25.

Like numerous events around the country, this year's annual event at Walton Hall & Gardens had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

But now thanks to the latest technology the event can be staged online with a virtual event including "walk through" marquees, providing various organisations to promote their services.

Bookings are still being taken for businesses or community groups who wish to participate – and thanks to the funding stands are free.

WDP co-founder and Chief Executive Dave Thompson said: "The lottery funding has provided us with a major boost and we have also managed to secure a virtual display by the famous Red Arrows,

including a Pilot's eye experience.

"While it has been a difficult year for many we hope our virtual DAD event will help local businesses

and community groups gain much-needed exposure."

Bookings can be made online at www.dadvirtual.org.uk



Former MP launches new business



Westminster Finance Limited was launched in Warrington by former MP Faisal Rashid on 27/02/2020 just before our country went into lockdown.

Faisal, former member parliament for Warrington South and Mayor of Warrington with his passion to support businesses and create jobs started his business.

Despite the Covid-19 situation the business is making its way to employ its first staff this Autumn.

The Company deals in commercial

finance brokerage and provide bridging loans, commercial mortgages and all types of business finance.

The vision for the company to expand and employ local staff is looking more achievable in the coming months and years.

Access to finance is the lifeblood of any business, and Westminster Finance offers bespoke finance solutions to businesses in need of credit and financial consultancy.

**BREAKING NEWS
RED ARROWS DISPLAY
CONFIRMED**



Virtual Disability Awareness Day

Sunday 25th October 2020

Visit online

www.dadvirtual.org.uk



Organised by



Principal Sponsor



@disabilitypartnership



@WDPcomms

Supporting Independence Throughout Life and Work

"Be an apprentice like me" says Megan

A 22-year old Warrington woman is encouraging other young people from the town to consider an apprenticeship, after starting her own career through one..

Megan Mason, from Woolston, began working with water and wastewater firm United Utilities, five years ago as a customer service apprentice and has worked her way up to become a digital optimisation officer.

United Utilities is currently looking for 62 new apprentices, including three customer service apprentices at its headquarters in Lingley Mere, Great Sankey.

Megan said: "I started my apprenticeship when I was 17 leaving college after a year as I really didn't enjoy it. At the time, my family would have definitely preferred for me to go to university, but the hands-on approach of an apprenticeship really appealed to me.

"I saw the opportunity to be a customer service apprentice and I really liked the look of it as you got to work in different departments to get a wider feel for the business. I was initially interested in becoming an accountant, but I was open to finding out about other roles.

"The first year of my apprenticeship involved being on the telephone in the customer service department dealing with queries and I also went out on the road with the water and wastewater team to see how we tackle problems like unblocking drains and detecting water leaks.

"I then moved to the digital and communications team where I helped with the maintenance and development of the United Utilities website and app.

"It was a great experience and I was given lots of training so I quickly improved my skills. I then went on to secure a permanent position here as a digital

optimisation officer.

"Without this apprenticeship and having the opportunity to try out different roles, I never would have considered a career in digital. It's been the best decision I have ever made and I love how varied my job is.

"I would definitely recommend an apprenticeship to other people looking for their next steps. I knew further education wasn't

for me and taking this route has given me the opportunity to gain qualifications and have hands-on experience without getting into the debt by going to university."

"My next step is to do a degree around my role and start United Utilities' aspiring management course, a programme that will give me the skills and confidence to progress to the next level and become a digital optimisation manager."



Wizz Air and Ryanair add to their networks from LJLA

WIZZ Air, the leading low-cost carrier in Central and Eastern Europe have recently announced more services to be added to their growing network from Liverpool with two more destinations to feature for the Winter.

Twice weekly flights are due to start at the end of October to Chisinau, the capital of Moldova with Liverpool becoming the only UK airport to serve Chisinau outside of London. In addition, Wizz Air will also reintroduce twice weekly flights to the Romanian city of Cluj, whilst flights to Iasi, also in Romania will now continue to operate through to the Winter period too. Wizz Air already operate to nine destinations from Liverpool.

This news follows Ryanair's recent announcement of the launch of their new service from Liverpool to Kosice in Slovakia which also commences at the end of October.

Paul Winfield, Director of Aviation Development for Liverpool John Lennon Airport commented, "We are delighted to see Wizz Air and Ryanair continue to develop their business from Liverpool, creating opportunities for passengers from across the North West and North Wales to travel to a growing number of central and eastern European destinations.

To book and for more information on Wizz Air's and Ryanair's Liverpool networks, visit www.wizzair.com and www.ryanair.com



Warrington & Vale Royal College celebrate best results ever!

STUDENTS and staff at Warrington & Vale Royal College are celebrating the best results in the college's history.

The college is immensely proud of the hard work their students have put in to achieve such high grades.

There was an impressive 100% pass rate for students studying a BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma (equivalent to A Levels), with over 80% achieving one or more Distinction grades. Furthermore, almost of third of BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma students achieved a Triple Distinction Star, the highest grade possible. This is equivalent to achieving 3 A* grades at A Level.

The college are also delighted to announce that this year they have a record number of Level 3 students progressing onto their first choice university to further their studies.

Warrington & Vale Royal College have places available for a wide range of courses, and are still enrolling now for September. The college's Warrington campus is open for enrolment 8.30am-5pm on Tuesday, 8.30am-7pm on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, and 8.30am-4.30pm on Friday.

There is an additional enrolment day taking place 10am-1pm on Saturday 5th September, allowing plenty of opportunity to call into college and enrol onto your

chosen course. Careers advisors will also be on hand to offer valuable advice and help you decide on your next steps. It's not too late to find your perfect

course!

For enquiries, please contact the college's friendly Admissions Team on 01925 494400 or learner.services@wvr.ac.uk



Plaque unveiled celebrating nearly 30 years of Disability Awareness Day

A plaque marking a very special friendship between Warrington Disability Partnership and Walton Hall and Gardens has been unveiled celebrating nearly 30 years of Disability Awareness Day.

The new plaque has been officially unveiled in the grounds of Walton Hall to mark nearly 30 years of Disability Awareness Day (DAD) being held at the venue.

The plaque serves as a tribute to the successful partnership and to everyone who has made DAD possible – from the volunteers, aptly named DAD's Army, through to members of the DAD Week Team, who contribute over 120 hours on the park each year during the 10 days build and breakdown.

It also recognises the huge contribution made to the annual event by the management and administration teams, sponsors, supporters, exhibitors and visitors.

Founded by Dave Thompson in 1992, DAD has gone from strength to strength and is now recognised as the world's largest voluntary-led, pan-disability event.

DAD highlights at Walton Hall and Gardens over the years include the royal visit in 2011 by Her Royal Highness the Countess of Wessex, and fly overs by the RAF Red Arrows and Battle of Britain display teams. DAD Warrington has also provided charities with the opportunity to raise over £1million. In addition, the event has served as an inspiration to others, with DAD events now held in a number of other towns and cities across the UK and 10 other countries worldwide.

Dave Thompson, Chief Executive of Warrington Disability Partnership (WDP), is grateful for the support given by Warrington's leading green venue over the years. He said: "We simply couldn't hold DAD without the ongoing help and support of the management and staff at Walton Hall and Gardens.

"Our collaboration is built on mutual respect – not only does WDP use the facilities each year, we are involved in other aspects, including providing advice and guidance on improvements to access and facilities and attending community events held at the park.

"Initially, we were told by various leading people that DAD wouldn't work, and the fact it has not only been successful but has grown in popularity over almost 30 years is the most pleasing. We're looking forward to celebrating our 30th anniversary next year."

This year's 29th DAD event was due to be held at Walton Hall and Gardens on Sunday 20 July, but had to be postponed due to Covid-19. Instead, the 2020 event is being held virtually. Anyone can join online at dadvirtual.org.uk, from Sunday 25 October.

The virtual event will feature over 100 businesses, charities and statutory services working side-

by-side with one common aim – to provide information, advice and guidance on what support is there to help people who are disabled or have a long term health condition.

This will be supported by an amazing line up in the Virtual Arts Marquee, including international award-winning dancers, celebrity TV comedians and singers who have appeared on stage in the UK and the USA.

In addition, visitors will be able to watch videos of past Centre Arena Acts and virtually visit various facilities available in the park, including the zoo, the hall, the orangery and greenhouses, the pond and raised flowerbeds – all from the comfort of their own home.

Warrington Borough Council's Cabinet member for leisure and community, Cllr Tony Higgins said: "Warrington Disability Awareness Day is one of the most important dates in our annual calendar, bringing our communities

together for a celebration of a 'can do' attitude, raising awareness and providing a range of invaluable information and support for people with a disability.

"We have been proud to host the event at Walton Hall and Gardens for nearly 30 years, and it's been wonderful to see the event thrive and grow.

"While the current restrictions mean this year's event has to be held virtually, I'm delighted that we have been able to unveil this plaque in the gardens, marking almost three decades of a very special friendship. Long may it continue!"

Join in this year's Virtual Disability Awareness Day on Sunday 25 October at dadvirtual.org.uk

Warrington Disability Partnership will celebrate the 30th anniversary of Disability Awareness Day at Walton Hall and Gardens on Sunday 18 July.



Cllr Tony Higgins, Sean Kelly from Walton Hall and Gardens, and Pamela and Dave Thompson officially unveil the new plaque.

New vision to help recover from COVID-19 pandemic with fairer, greener economy

A NEW vision of how Cheshire and Warrington can recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and develop a fairer, greener economy delivering lasting benefits for local people and businesses has been set out today.

The goal is a brighter future, with better outcomes for all, delivering jobs, improving health, protecting and enhancing the environment, and taking positive action to address inequalities and tackle poverty.

The three local authorities in the region and the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) have committed to a vision of building a better future after Covid, where businesses and local communities see improvements in four key areas – Economic Growth, Health, Sustainability and Inclusivity.

As a first step, Cheshire East, Warrington, and Cheshire West and Chester councils and the LEP have established a new Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission. It will act as a catalyst for and provide advice on the overall delivery of the new vision. The Commission will be chaired by Sam Corcoran, leader of Cheshire East, and Robert Davis, chief executive of EA Technology.

The Commission will look at a wide range of issues including decarbonising industry, ensuring all our communities are supported to access high quality training

and skills to improve their job prospects and income levels, addressing fuel and transport poverty, overcoming digital exclusion, improving physical and mental health, and better managing our land and natural resources.

Its steering group will bring together a diverse range of views from the public, private, and third sector. The full membership will be announced shortly and include members drawn from carbon-intensive industries and agriculture, along with health and social care, and experts from the third sector experienced in tackling disadvantage and promoting inequality. It will take evidence from residents, businesses, academics, interest groups and young people giving a voice to everyone who has an interest in a sustainable future for the sub-region.

Russ Bowden, leader Warrington Borough Council, said: "As we work towards the recovery from Covid-19, effective partnerships will be crucial. The new commission will play an important role in this, delivering real expertise – from a range of sectors – to help drive forward our ambitions for health, the economy and the environment. By working together, we can make real strides forward in building a brighter future for the people of Cheshire and Warrington."

Sam Corcoran, leader of Cheshire East Council, and co-chair of



the Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission, said: "I look forward to working with our partners to develop and deliver robust proposals to deliver both a sustainable and inclusive economy. This is particularly important as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to have a profound economic impact across Cheshire East. The new vision emboldens our focus on creating plentiful opportunities for all generations, tackling environmental challenges and to promote equality and wellbeing."

Louise Gittins, leader Cheshire West and Chester Council, said: "Cheshire and Warrington has one of the strongest economies in the UK. However, we now face some unparalleled challenges as we recover from the impacts of Covid and grapple with the existential threat of Climate Change. A true measure of our success will be the extent to which economic growth improves the lives of all of our

residents, leaving no one behind and ensuring that we create truly sustainable prosperity for future generations. The establishment of the commission will enable us to draw on the expertise of our businesses and give a voice to our communities to share their real lived experience, challenge traditional thinking and bring new opportunities to the fore."

Clare Hayward, chair, Cheshire and Warrington LEP, commented: "This shared vision is an important building block in the future of our region. Covid-19 has been a huge challenge for everyone and imposed many uncertainties and hardships. We are committed to working together to not just deliver recovery, but to come back with something better for Cheshire and Warrington. The Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission is the first step along the road and will be an influential group that ensures we achieve real progress."

Pension fund reports on carbon footprint of its £6 billion investments

A PENSION fund with hundreds of members in Warrington has become one of the first in the country to report on the carbon footprint of its £6 billion investment portfolio.

Cheshire Pension Fund has published its Climate Risk Report, which reveals that the carbon footprint of its equity investments is 30 per cent below the general market, represented by the FTSE All World Index which covers more than 3,000 companies in 47 countries.

The fund is the pension scheme for more than 100,000 members across 300 employers, including Warrington and Cheshire West and Chester councils, Cheshire Police and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and a range of other employers in the county. The fund is administered by Cheshire

West and Chester Council.

Cllr Myles Hogg chairman of the fund, said: "The report confirms that the Cheshire Pension Fund has a good baseline from which to manage the risk presented to its investment portfolio from climate change.

"Our priority remains our financial duty to pay the pensions of our 100,000 members and to do this we need to ensure the assets of the fund are well diversified and resilient when faced with the impact of climate change.

"The fund has previously invested more than £500 million in a pioneering Climate Change Factor Fund and the report confirms that this decision has helped reduce the carbon emissions from our investment portfolio.

"We understand that climate

change is an important issue for our employers and members, so it is reassuring to see the difference this investment has already made to our carbon footprint.

"The fund will continue to explore what additional steps it can take to reduce investment risk through further reductions in its carbon footprint."

The new report published by the Cheshire Pension Fund follows recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), a blueprint for climate reporting which represents best practice in the investment industry.

Its publication follows an independent and in-depth review of the climate risks of the fund's investment portfolio.

The report shows that the fund

has less exposure to companies with fossil fuel reserves and those exploiting coal reserves than the general market and reveals that it has more investment with companies who use clean technology than the general market.

The fund invests in five different equity funds and all except one have a lower carbon footprint than the general market index. The one fund with a higher carbon footprint will now be reviewed to identify potential alternative investment funds.

The publication of the report will be followed by the publication of a climate strategy and climate stewardship plan.

For more information and to see the report visit: www.cheshirepensionfund.org/ and click on news.

New NHS COVID-19 app launched

RESIDENTS and businesses are being urged to play their part to protect their family and friends by downloading the new NHS COVID-19 app.

The app has launched nationwide on Thursday 24 September and can now be downloaded onto smartphones from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

For residents

It allows you to report symptoms, book or order a coronavirus test, and check in to venues by scanning a QR code, helping the NHS trace individuals who may have coronavirus.

The app will help the NHS understand where, and how quickly, the virus is spreading, so it can respond appropriately. It does this while protecting a user's anonymity. Nobody, including the government, will know who or where a particular user is.

It is designed to notify its users if they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, and it needs to be downloaded by as many people as possible in the borough to track the virus and stop its spread.

For businesses

The app is supported by new regulations, which also come into force today, which state that certain venues are legally required

to display NHS QR posters. This includes all venues from the following sectors:

- hospitality
- leisure and tourism
- close contact services
- places of worship
- local authority venues

The QR posters will allow app users to scan the QR code to 'check-in' as they enter a venue. This means that if people visit the venue and later test positive for coronavirus, other app users who were there at the same time can be alerted.

Cllr Maureen McLaughlin, cabinet member for public health and wellbeing, said: "The new app will help us to tackle the virus by providing important information about virus hotspots, how to avoid it, and what to do if you have come into contact with someone who has it.

"I have downloaded it, and I urge everyone to do the same. By doing this, it will be a constructive way for us all to play our part to protect our friends, family, and others in our community.

"This is one of a number of actions you can take to help stop the spread of infections in Warrington. We must all continue to do the basics – wash our hands often,



wear face coverings, keep our distance from others, and seek a test if we have symptoms.

Thara Raj, Warrington's Director of Public Health, said: "The roll-out of the app is an additional tool to support test and trace measures, helping to stop the spread of coronavirus and safeguard our communities.

"In order for the app to be effective, we need as many people as possible to download and use it, and we also need our local businesses to support us. The QR system is a free, easy and effective way to check-in customers, and I would ask that all businesses get involved and download and display the official NHS QR code posters."

The council has been assured that the app works by using an anonymous alert (using a random

identification number known as a 'random ID'). This means that interactions with other app users remain completely private, so users' privacy and identity are protected.

No personal information about users is revealed, and the app does not track users, or their location, and does not have access to phone contacts or any personal information held on a phone. Nobody, including the government, will know the identity or location of users.

The National Cyber Security Centre also checks that the app is safe and secure, and users can delete the app and all the data it stores, whenever they choose.

Find out more about the app on the council's website at warrington.gov.uk/TestandTrace

Wolves Foundation launch strategy for positive change

WARRINGTON Wolves Charitable Foundation are launching a strategy to support positive change in local communities.

The Foundation's newly appointed Chair Peter Astley MBE and Warrington Wolves Rugby Club Chair Stuart Middleton joined together to support the goal of building a healthier and more resilient Warrington community.

In front of the replicated iconic Wilderspool Scoreboard, where

Stuart, Club Chairman started his association with the club back at Wilderspool with his business Excelsior, he spoke passionately, "the club have always believed in the power of sport, our Foundation have been at the forefront of many inspiring initiatives that we are immensely proud. I want the Warrington Community to get behind this strategy and drive the change."

Peter, Chair of the Foundation and Chief of Staff for the Cheshire Police

and Crime Commissioner said, "The Foundation, which recently celebrated its 15 year birthday, has fully established itself as part of the Town's fabric making a real difference to the Community in many extremely positive ways. This strategy sets out clearly how the Foundation Team, Warrington Wolves, our Business patrons, myself and fellow Trustees, will provide a vehicle in these difficult times to continue to make a real difference in the areas of most need.



Lockdown charity giveaway nets £5.5k for good causes

A charity cash giveaway which started during lockdown by Warrington based United Utilities has raised £5,500 for good causes.

Workers at United Utilities' call centre in Warrington started the weekly fund-raiser during lockdown to help keep team spirits high and lend each other moral support while most of them were working from home.

Eleven local good causes nominated by call centre staff shared the cash.

Charities to benefit from the funds raised during lockdown were: Warrington Food Bank, Halton Haven Hospice, Carla Lane Animal Rescue, Alder Hey Children's Charity, Willowbrook Hospice, Liverpool Women's Charity, The Lilac Centre (Whiston Hospital Charity), Cancer Research UK, Neuroblastoma UK, Richmond Fellowship North West Air Ambulance.

Heart & Soul footprint unveiled in honour of former Wolves Foundation Chairman



A new "Heart & Soul" footprint was unveiled at Warrington Wolves' Halliwell Jones Stadium as part of Heritage Open Days in honour of former Foundation Chairman Cllr Terry O'Neill, who died last year.

Heritage Open Days are England's largest festival of history and culture and Warrington is full of rich heritage and no more than the contribution the rugby club has played since 1876.

The Halliwell Jones Stadium is home to a unique timeline that brings together the town and clubs historical milestones.

Usually, the timeline would be viewed on special days but due to the Covid 19 pandemic and the social distance restrictions the Halliwell Jones Stadium has fallen silent, no matches, no community floor activities and the cancellation of the annual beer festival which has supported funding for heritage projects.

As part of a special heritage Open days event a new heart and soul footprint in the South Stand, supported by Club Chairman's Stuart Middleton a Heart & Soul Footprint was dedicated to former Foundation Chairman Terry O'Neill.

Foundation Director Neil Kelly said: "The footprints represent the true spirit and passion involved in the development of rugby league

in the town. At our annual Man of Steel event in 2019 the late Terry O'Neill was given the honour for his commitment and leadership."

Terry was instrumental in the set up of the Foundation and was a great believer in the power of sport.

He played Rugby League professionally and following his retirement he became a community servant with a political career spanning three decades, including seven years as leader of the council.

He first became a parish Cllr in 1983 and was a borough Cllr from 1991.

He was a dedicated and loyal servant to Warrington, particularly those in the Burtonwood & Winwick Ward.

As well as developing his community club Burtonwood Bulldogs, he was influential in the appointment of the town's first Rugby League Development Officer Kevin Tamati.

Terry supported the council in buying Wilderspool from the Wolves during a financial crisis, as well as supporting the club's application for a new stadium.

Following the formation of the Wolves Foundation, he helped steer to become one of the best sporting charities in the country.

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Neil Kelly with Terry's family, Cath, Michael and Gemma O'Neill with new Foundation Chair Peter Astley.

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info@warrington-chamber.co.uk

Wolves' Joe Philbin gets to "Gripz" with new business venture

WARRINGTON Wolves' Joe Philbin kept himself busy during lockdown by getting to "Gripz" with a new business venture launching a new clothing brand with his good friend Jack Hodgkiss.

Working alongside local online web developers Morgan Branding, the new business got off to a flying start as they sold out of 200 pairs of special compression socks in just 48 hours.

Philbin, aged 25 and with more than 100 first-team games under his belt for the Wolves, is already planning for his future after teaming up with Jack to launch Gripz, a fresh clothing brand. Having already enjoyed success in rugby league, representing Great Britain and Ireland, Philbin now wants to see Gripz thrive in the sporting world.

Commenting on the business venture Philbin said: "I've been thinking of this for years. I've always followed a few brands and I've always fancied giving something like this a go.

"Lockdown gave me the opportunity to act on it because previously I was always doing rugby. I got together with my good mate Jack Hodgkiss and we spent a good few months putting

things in place.

"We have been friends for a long time. We've both had similar ideas with what we wanted to do. He's already got a successful construction company and I was looking to start this so we got talking to each other, shared ideas and we decided to use his expertise in the business world and my expertise in the sporting world, so we've put them ideas together and hopefully it is a good recipe for success."

The first item of clothing launched is a compression sock, which has been specifically designed to give an extra boost to performance – and they are looking to launch an activewear range as well.

Philbin added: "Our first product, the Gripz sock, can be worn for playing any sport, or for walking or going to the gym.

"Boots are getting a lot lighter these days and your feet can move around your boot quite a bit so the compression sock will give that extra boost.

"They have got silicone grips on the bottom of the sock and it gives you that extra 1% in the change of your direction and extra power. The grips we have got go up the back of the sock so they help

prevent blisters.

Philbin and Hodgkiss are determined to turn Gripz into a huge success – and they also want to give back to their local community in the process.

Philbin continued: "We want to build a solid brand. We want to do it properly and we want to make this a brand that people want to wear.

"We want to let the business grow organically and we've set a target

that we want to be sponsoring the clubs that we both played for at amateur level within six to 12 months.

"Jack played for Culcheth Football Club and so did I. I played rugby for Culcheth Eagles and Latchford Giants so we want to be sponsoring those teams down the line and give back to the clubs that gave so much to us.

One of our main goals is to give back to the community so hopefully it all works out well."



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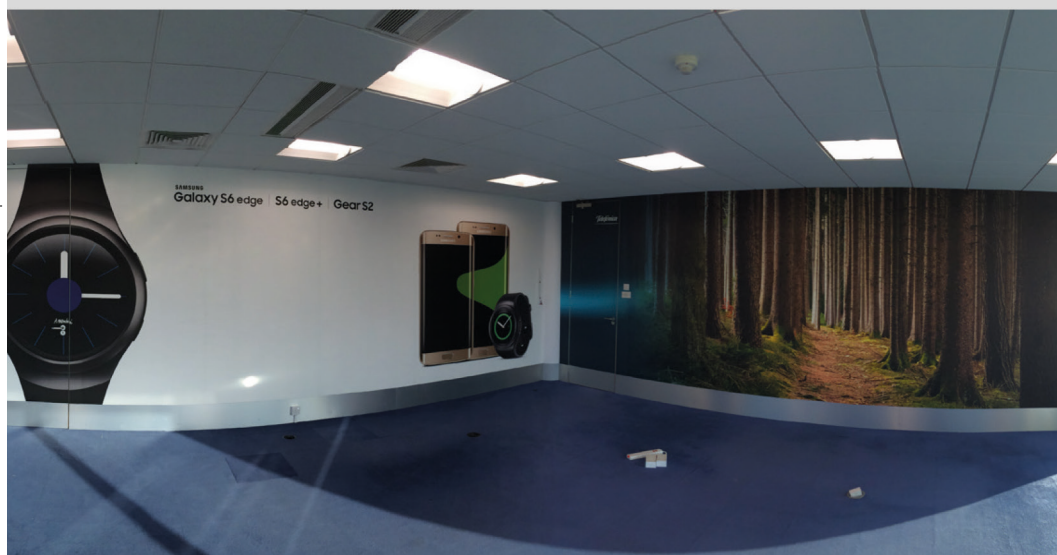


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