



Insight

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COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

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VR VALE ROYAL
The heart of Cheshire

Business boost for Warrington

Research conducted by Birchwood Park reveals both business confidence and growth has sky rocketed amongst North West businesses.

According to new survey created as part of its Business Support Series, data from Birchwood Park, has revealed that the future is bright for the region, with almost 50% of its occupiers experiencing growth in the last quarter (Q1 Jan to March 2021), and 60% stating they are optimistic about growth for the rest of the year.

The research, conducted with over 100 local Warrington-based businesses at the North's largest out of town business park reveals an encouraging trend, with more than a quarter (28%) of local businesses sustaining output, despite experiencing a significant impact on their business due to

the COVID-19 pandemic.

The news comes as 84% of businesses are predicting a return to some form of 'normality' within the next 12 months, with the vast majority expected to return to the workplace in a flexible capacity within six months' time.

The research has also revealed other positive workplace trends, including an increase in employee focused wellbeing initiatives, with 60% of employees taking learnings from the past 18 months. Popular incentives include; flexible working, access to healthy refreshments, weekly team meets and access to complimentary exercise and treatments.

Martin O'Rourke, Commercial Director at Birchwood Park, said: "There's no denying that the pandemic has impacted businesses

– over the past 18 months being flexible and adaptable has been vital. However, what some may find surprising is that as we acclimatise and move forward through the recovery period, the business outlook is very positive, especially here in Warrington and indeed at Birchwood Park.

"A greater focus on the environment and wellbeing seems to be having a positive impact on businesses, this combined with the benefits of flexible working and of course access to business support. Incentives and initiatives such as those provided at Birchwood Park, our occupiers seem to be offering a robust blueprint for future business success across Warrington."

Twinfix is a family run business that has been designing and manufacturing Roof Glazing and Canopies from their premises on

Birchwood Park for the past 30 years.

Vicky Evans, Director at Twinfix, commented: "Despite the many challenges this pandemic has brought for our business, it has definitely helped us move forward, allowing us to automate and digitalise, getting rid of manual processes where possible. It's also helped with time efficiency, utilising Microsoft Teams to keep connected and supporting homeworking while also highlighting the benefits of actually being in the offices. We will utilise all of this knowledge going forward as we work to reach ambitious growth targets for the year ahead."

For more information, visit www.birchwoodpark.co.uk/business-support/



Rossie and the Legend that is Mr Simon Mayo

WIRE FM has evolved into Greatest Hits Radio and here's what you can expect from the classic hits station. At Breakfast 6 – 10am, start your day with the warm Irish tones of Rossie and the biggest songs of the 70s, 80s and 90s.

You have your chance to win big cash on the Morning Mystery Oldie, your playlist choices on the 8 Thirty Three and five non-stop Anthems at 9 o'clock. Oh, and he may mention food once or twice, did we tell you he was once a chef?

Catch The Simon Mayo Drivetime Show every weekday afternoon, 4-7pm, and end the day right with Simon, Matt and the biggest songs of the 70s, 80s and 90s. Nigel has the food, Friday is all about request and expect a confession or two along the way, maybe!

Plus join Simon for a celebration of the biggest albums of the 70s, 80s and 90s on The Album Show every Sunday at 1pm. Dedicated to the albums that shaped a generation and their iconic tracks, you'll rediscover the musical gems that provided the backdrop to three decades.



From the Chief Executive

Stephen Fitzsimons



The recent panic buying over fuel reminded me of one of businesses' most important currencies - confidence. History is littered with examples of when consumers have lost all faith in the economy, such as the bank runs of the Great Depression or hyperinflation from the Weimar Republic.

More recently, Gerald Ratner's inexplicable demonising of his own products led to the rapid collapse of a once mighty high street jewellery chain. Consumers need to feel confident in their buying decisions and the government's role is to ensure that the business environment enjoys as much stability and certainty as possible.

Frustratingly, this is currently not the case. When I meet members

in and around Warrington the same issues are being highlighted, especially in manufacturing. We know about the shortage of HGV drivers, estimated at 100,000 by the Road Hauliers Association. International container prices remain ridiculously high with one medical devices company reporting extra charges of £600,000 already this year. Add in rising fuel prices, semiconductor shortages and increases in anything from wooden pallets to inks and we have the most challenging business environment that most of us have ever known.

Of course, Covid is the most critical factor because the economic inactivity of 2020 has created multiple supply side challenges as global demand recovers. However, because of the political sensitivities, Brexit is not receiving

the scrutiny that it should. HMRC have estimated that during the first half of 2021, exporters required over 200 million more documents at a cost of £1.7 billion. Businesses have adapted as they always do, however there is no doubt that it is now more expensive and time consuming than it was before the UK left the European Union. No doubt the long term opportunities will appear, but it's currently really difficult to see beyond the immediate obstacles.

We therefore need to create our own confidence and optimism for the local economy. On the 12th November we will be hosting the Warrington Business Conference in the new £142m Time Square development.

The theme is the "Road to Recovery" and there will be

a number of organisations participating that can support this growth.

The event will bring together the Chamber, Business Exchange, Birchwood Forum and Warrington & Co. You can book at www.wbex.co.uk and naturally, it's free for members.

We look forward to seeing you at this "proper" face to face event and with lunch at the Botanist, it would be rude to miss it!

Exhibition brings alive history of the Wire industry!

AN interactive exhibition outlining the history of Warrington's wire industry is set to take place in the town through a blend of sculpture, film, dance, poetry and real-life accounts of what it was like to work in the wire industry.

The Wire Works, which runs from October 16 to November 20 is a Warrington Borough Council project funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The council has worked in partnership with Culture Warrington, artists Laurence Payot and Christine Wilcox-Baker and local media company, Ludovico.

This project aims to highlight and celebrate one of the borough's most significant stories from Warrington's rich heritage – wire manufacturing.

Lynn Radcliffe, the borough council's Cultural Partnerships Development Manager said: "As arguably Warrington's most important industry, putting the town at the forefront of the Industrial Revolution, wire production dominated the town's

employment structure for over 100 years, employing an estimated 9% of all wire drawers in England and Wales and almost twice as many as its nearest North-Western rival Manchester.

"The local rugby team became known as "The Wire" (shortened from "The Wire-Pullers"), indicating how important wire making was in the town.

"Many Warrington residents are unaware of the significance of this industry to Warrington. Think St Helens and glass or Sheffield and steel. Warrington wire has had and continues to have a variety of uses throughout the world, from barbed wire used in the trenches of World War 1 to telegraph cables for communication and even one of Lady Gaga's spectacular dresses.

"The Wire Works exhibition will be an interactive blend of heritage and art, representing the story of Warrington's wire industry through sculpture, film, dance, poetry and real-life accounts of what it was like to work in a wire factory in Warrington."

The Exhibition will run at Unit 31,

Old Market Place, Golden Square, Warrington, WA1 1QB (The old Co-Op Bank, near Vintage Viola) from Saturday 16th October –

Saturday 20th November.

Opening times: Wednesday – Saturday – 10am – 5pm Sunday – 11am – 4pm.



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Stephen Fitzsimons, Chief Executive

Apprenticeships take-off once again at LJLA

As the aviation industry continues to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and Liverpool John Lennon Airport (LJLA) sees more passengers and flights once again, the Airport Company is delighted to be able to announce the latest additions to its Apprenticeship Programme by recruiting a further three apprentices.

The Apprenticeship Programme is a key part of the Airport's wider Community Programme that helps to make a difference to the lives of communities across the City Region and gives young local people the skills to develop a career at the Airport. By combining work at the airport alongside their college studies over the next four years, apprentices bring fresh ideas and new young talent into the business.

The three successful individuals were selected from a number of applicants keen to seek a career at the Airport. BSM Engineering Apprentice Luke Whitehead, aged 19, from Bootle and Airfield Ground Lighting Engineering Apprentice Jack Boyce, aged 16, from Aintree, will both be undertaking a Mechatronics Maintenance Technician Course at nearby Riverside College in Halton. In addition, Finance Apprentice Sean Hughes, aged 18, from Widnes, will be undertaking an Association of Accounting Technicians Course Level 2 with online specialist Kaplan.

The Airport has been a long-time advocate of apprenticeships, recognising the benefit to young people looking for their first step into the world of work and for the business in being able to nurture and develop high calibre employees. Many former apprentices have subsequently

gone on to full time permanent positions and have developed successful careers at the Airport.

Riverside College in Halton were chosen because they are Ofsted Outstanding for Apprenticeships, have an excellent reputation for providing high quality courses and are an ideal fit for apprentices working at the airport.

The college was instrumental in helping to choose the two local engineering apprentices and will be providing ongoing support over the next four years of their studies.

Carol Dutton, Liverpool John Lennon Airport's HR and Community Director commented, "After the challenges of the past 18 months, we are really excited about being able to restart our Apprenticeship programme and welcome our three new apprentices to the Airport.

This important scheme is a fantastic opportunity and gives young people the skills to develop a career here at the Airport, whilst they in turn will no doubt bring fresh ideas and make an important contribution to Airport operations."

Jayne Smith, Head of Skills and Enterprise at Riverside College said, "We are delighted to be working with such a prestigious employer in the Liverpool City Region to help them develop their future workforce, and to support the sector as it emerges from the pandemic stronger than ever.

"The Apprenticeship Programme is an ideal way to train employees by combining on and off the job training, and we are pleased to be supporting these new apprentices as they start their career journey at the Airport."



■ (L to R) LJLA's three new apprentices; Jack Boyce, Luke Whitehead and Sean Hughes.

Business continues to grow for local optician

Business at Warrington Market's Maskell + Josephson's The Optometrists continues to grow.

If you see somebody around Warrington wearing a particularly spectacular pair of glasses, chances are they're been to Maskell + Josephson!

They continue to offer corporate care packages (for £5 per month per person) and a range of corporate glasses starting from just £49 including lenses. They are experts in myopia management - helping short-sighted children to be less short-sighted. Their optometrist, Graham, teaches contact lenses at The University of Manchester. His expertise means they are now also offering night lenses, meaning patients can be free of glasses and contact lenses all day every day.

Have you ever had a question about eyes, glasses, or contact lenses? If so, go in and ask Graham! You may be surprised what can be done with the right knowledge and the right equipment these days.



Updated Local Plan approved for consultation after "open and honest" discussion says leader

WARRINGTON'S updated Local Plan has been approved for consultation following "open and honest discussion with local people" says council leader Cllr. Russ Bowden.

The revised plan was approved for consultation at a meeting of the full council and got the backing of the Lib Dem group, who were applauded by Labour councillors, while opposition Tories opposed it, saying it had been produced with too much haste.

The updated plan to deliver the homes, jobs, transport infrastructure and community facilities Warrington needs has now been approved for consultation.

Warrington's updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan was given the go-ahead paving the way to a six-week period of public consultation, which will begin on Monday, October 4.

The consultation period will give everyone in Warrington the opportunity to have their say on the updated plan, by completing an online response form, or by attending the public consultation events – details of which will be released in the near future.

Warrington Borough Council Leader, Cllr Russ Bowden, said: "The development of our Local Plan has always been based upon open and honest discussion with local people. We have committed from the start to taking on board people's views and, where necessary, refining the plan in partnership with our communities. We have listened to, and acted upon, many of the key issues raised.

"This, along with the significant changes we have seen since our Proposed Version Submission Local Plan was published in 2019 – not least the Covid pandemic and new Government housing methodology – mean it has been right to pause, take stock, re-evaluate and revise our plan to make sure it is the best fit for Warrington now.

"Our updated Local Plan – in a changing world – continues to be fully focused on driving forward Warrington's ambition and need for development, while protecting the Green Belt wherever possible.

"It's vital that the plan continues to be shaped by the people of our borough. Now Full Council has given the go-ahead to consult, we will once again be talking and listening to local people, and we will be holding a number of consultation events from October to give everyone the chance to share their views on the updated plans."

The council received more than 3,000 responses to its initial, 20-year Proposed Submission Version

Local Plan in 2019, and has taken on board many of the views of local people, much of which focused on how brownfield sites should continue to be prioritised ahead of Green Belt.

This, along with the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and changing Government housing methodology, has meant that, in preparing the updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan, the council is proposing some big changes. These include:

- A reduction in new housing from 945 a year over 20 years, to 816 a year over a reduced plan period of 18 years (2021-2038 inclusive).
- Under the updated plan, the amount of land proposed to be removed from the Green Belt is 580 hectares, equating to 5% of the total amount of Green Belt land in the borough. This is significantly lower than the 1,210 hectares proposed in the previous Proposed Submission Version Local Plan which equated to 11% of the total amount of Green Belt.
- The removal of the South West Urban Extension from the Plan (1,600 homes), the housing allocation for Phipps Lane in Burtonwood Village (160 homes), and the Massey Brook Lane site in Lymm (66 homes).
- Moving away from the Garden Suburb concept in South Warrington (4,200 new homes), and instead including new proposals for a South East Warrington Urban Extension, with a reduced allocation of 2,400 new homes during the plan period.
- The removal of Port Warrington (75ha employment land) and the Business Hub (25ha employment land) from the plan.
- In addition, recent changes have enabled the council to include proposals which further maximise the opportunity to repurpose land, through the inclusion of the Fiddlers Ferry site for development. The closure of the power station in March 2020 has given the council the opportunity to bring the site into the allocation this time. This site was the subject of a high number of responses to our previous consultation.

Speaking after the meeting, Liberal Democrat Planning Spokesperson, Cllr Ryan Bate (right) said, "Warrington must have a sustainable Local Plan and not one that is damaging to the Borough. Delaying it makes no sense at all. Two years ago, thanks to significant efforts by councillors, campaigners and the South Warrington Parishes' Group, many changes were made as a

result of the consultation process. We are confident that changes for the better can be made again. People have a democratic right to have their say and we will be working hard to help them. The Labour Administration must listen to their views.

"If the Plan is delayed for too long, there is a risk that the Government will take control away from the Council and developers would have a free for all. This would be a disaster. However, I want to make it absolutely clear that if acceptable changes are not made to the Plan, we will vote against it when it comes back to Council for approval."

Group Leader, Cllr Bob Barr, said "Delivering the right Plan can be summarised as having the right homes in the right places with the right jobs and the right infrastructure. We need sustainable development where most residents can walk or cycle to shop, be schooled, receive care, take exercise and socialise in twenty minutes or less. The beauty of Warrington's best green spaces must be respected, biodiversity enhanced and buildings designed to minimise energy use. What is unacceptable is large car-dependent housing estates that serve only as dormitories but are quick and profitable for developers to deliver.

"We acknowledge many of the changes, but we need a greater emphasis on regenerating the town centre, more genuinely affordable housing, the maximum use of brownfield sites and the timely delivery of physical and social infrastructure.

The South East Extension makes no sense socially, economically or environmentally. The proposed road-based logistics facility in the south east is not sustainable. We need high quality jobs that promote Warrington as an area of scientific expertise."

After the meeting he added: "The Liberal Democrat Group voted for the new draft of the Local Plan to be put out for public consultation. It did NOT vote for the plan as the Conservatives are alleging.

"Currently Warrington does not have a 5 year supply of housing land so is forced, by Conservative Government regulations to approve planning applications which would otherwise be refused if the decision was local.

"Delaying the Local Plan extends that process giving developers, many of whom make substantial contributions to the Conservative Party, a free ride.

The Conservative opposition opposed the revised Local Plan saying it had been done with too much haste.

Cllr Kath Buckley, leader of the



Tory group, said: "Warrington really needs a new, agreed, Local Plan as soon as possible. It's been two years since the most recent proposed submission so I do understand the temptation to push this through council as fast as possible.

"But we believe a real opportunity has been missed to protect the important green spaces of Warrington."

Cllr Buckley said while the Conservatives welcomed reduction in the amount of Green Belt land required, they were unable to support the plan because of continued unnecessary inclusion of Green Belt land in the proposals.

"This Labour administration has not listened to its residents, especially south of the Ship Canal."

She said councillors had been given just 10 days to review the new proposed Local Plan for 2021 – 2038. Time was needed to study the plan or the lack of scrutiny would lead to problems for the future.

"Therefore Conservative councillors believed that to vote in favour of this was unsafe and it was not in the best interests of Warrington residents to have this pushed forward in such haste."



Intrepid students progress ventures with unforgettable adventure

Young people with enterprising ideas focusing on everything from the arts to recycling have been given a boost in their endeavours with an exciting adventure combining business workshops and intrepid outdoor activities.

Ten entrepreneurial University of Chester students won a place on the 2021 Santander Universities UK five-day Venture Adventure after a highly-competitive application process.

They enjoyed both business sessions and adrenaline sports at the famous mountaineering venue of Plas y Brenin National Outdoor Centre, in the heart of Snowdonia National Park, during August.

The Venture Adventure develops entrepreneurial thought and action, through a memorable mix of interactive talks and activities including kayaking, open boating, stand-up paddle boarding, raft building, indoor and outdoor climbing and abseiling.

The students and their businesses - some of which are already up-and-running - are:



■ Student Anthony Isiwele.

- Liam Boyle - Vincovits - a vitamin supplement manufacturing company.
- Asotah Wisdom - SS Glass and Tiles - converting glass waste into tiles used for walls and flooring purposes.
- Anthony Isiwele - Dew Drops African Mart - an African food shop in Warrington.
- Klaudiusz Trzebuniak - KT Enterprise - high-quality hand-crafted wooden furniture.
- Vijay Manchikanti - VKM Granules PVT LTD - a plastic recycling business, making granules from waste plastic that can be recycled into, for example, kitchen and cosmetics items - reducing single use of plastic.
- Okodi Donatus - Don Fish Farm - fish farming packaging to enable the fish to remain fresh, visible and healthy.
- Niccole Sumler - Amerland's (a word play on America and England as Niccole is from America) - an Art Centre that incorporates creative writing, music, drawing, and cooking in one place. The mission is to help children and teenagers create their voice and boost their confidence through art.
- Jacob Trainer - My Uni Life UK - a mobile application produced by students for students, to share experiences and support them with student life.
- Jak Jones - Jak Jones Productions - a freelance videography and photography studio.

Student Patrycjusz Szubryt,

who is developing Shubrit and Shubrit, a professional consulting business providing a framework for the introduction of successful AI (Artificial Intelligence) during digital process transformations, also won a place and while unable to attend has participated fully in other aspects of the initiative.

An added highlight for each finalist was receiving a signed copy of the first book by acclaimed entrepreneur Steven Bartlett, founder of Social Chain and the youngest Dragon from Dragons' Den. Business lecturer Francesca Shollo attended a book signing by the Dragon after bumping into him at a train station, and thanked him with an Instagram film clip of all the students receiving his book. She was delighted when Steven shared the clip to his extensive audience of followers.

Anthony Isiwele, a Master of Business Administration student from Nigeria, said: "The Venture Adventure was a one-in-a-million opportunity.

He added: "Plas y Brenin was amazing and jaw dropping; it was fun from day one and exciting to pitch my business idea for Dew Drops African Mart, offering all fresh African foods and condiments in Warrington.

"I feel very privileged to have been chosen to take part and learned so much. Thank you to the University of Chester, Santander and everyone who made it an unforgettable experience."

Dr Connie Hancock, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Management at the University of Chester Business School said: "The combined resources of the Business School

team of entrepreneurial support specialists and Santander Universities, have provided these student entrepreneurs with a superb opportunity to develop their capacity to innovate and transfer a business idea into a sustainable proposition.

"Our time at Plas y Brenin was filled with learning, challenge and development. This type of student experiential opportunity equips our students with lifelong skills and knowledge. The results were outstanding with impressive business plans and skilled pitch decks being delivered towards the end of the five days.

"We're extremely grateful to everyone at Santander Universities UK; everyone at Plas y Brenin; our colleagues at the Business School, in particular Dr Henry Sidsaph, Francesca Shollo, Sue Benson and Dr Ying Zhao; Laura James-Mowbray from Angels Invest Wales; Gary Hewins for the Belbin Team Roles session; Kirsty Badrock from the fantastic Venture Programme run at the University; Steven Bartlett for signing 10 of his books and AM Clothing for our branded hoodies."

Matt Hutnell, Director, Santander Universities UK, added: "Santander is committed to supporting higher education as well as local communities across the UK. We're delighted to support students at the University of Chester and enable them to develop their business ideas further."

For further information about the Venture Adventure please visit: <https://www.instagram.com/ventureadventure2021/>



Funding award success to provide more targeted mental health support for students

A project to provide targeted mental health support for students has been successful in receiving Government funding.

The Office for Students (OfS) has awarded £148,281 to the University of Chester and its partners to focus on preventative strategies to support the mental wellbeing of students with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC).

Young people and adults with ASC are at increased risk of experiencing poor mental health and wellbeing and data suggests that the intersection of these conditions has a significant impact on students' retention and attainment, with one in three students with ASC not continuing beyond their first year of study. Individuals with ASC may hide or mask their autism leaving them totally exhausted and at risk of mental health difficulties.

Improving mental health and wellbeing for its students is embedded across all areas of University of Chester activity. Analysis has identified there are two key points where ASC students are particularly at risk of experiencing poor mental health, which the project will support - the transition to University and the transition to the workplace. A further challenge has been identified as sustaining engagement with ASC students to make sure that they are aware where and how they can access support, especially during the first few weeks of the first year.

As part of this project the University will develop an online toolkit for individuals; provide carers/parents with information and practical help to make the transition to higher education; provide holistic wellbeing support with specialist staff tailoring activities for ASC students; and job coaching support to prepare students for the work-based learning module they undertake during their second

year of study. Partners, including The Bren Project, a charity offering people with learning disabilities and autism the opportunity to experience supported, bespoke work placements and the West Cheshire Autism Hub, will also be involved in delivering the project.

Continuous student engagement is planned throughout the project (where appropriate and if the students are comfortable to participate) through a number of routes including focus groups; peer-to-peer support and capturing lived experiences through discussions with the project team to inform future plans.

The University currently offers an Early Arrival Scheme for ASC students, which means they can arrive at university a day earlier than other students to allow them to familiarise themselves with the environment while it is quiet. Following this, 100% of survey respondents said that this helped to reduce their anxiety about starting university. This has informed the project, which will start engagement much earlier in the year to build on this success.

The University community already has a Neurodiversity Support Group, to celebrate diversity across the institution and an Active Wellbeing Programme, to support positive mental health for all, all of which complement the delivery of this project.

The University of Chester project – A Strategic Approach to Mental Health Support for Students with Autism Spectrum Condition – is part of the mental health funding competition programme: Using innovation and intersectional approaches to target mental health support for students, funded by the Office for Students. The Office for Students is the independent regulator for higher education in England. Its aim is to ensure that every student, whatever

their background, has a fulfilling experience of higher education that enriches their lives and careers.

Dr Helen Galbraith, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Student Experience, at the University of Chester, said: "The news of this funding is incredibly welcome and will enable us to further support our students to maximise the opportunities available here at the University. I would like to thank everyone involved in the application for funding, including the institution's Disability and Inclusion team for their hard work in developing this project.

"The University of Chester has a firm focus on developing Citizen Students and this is where we encourage all students to contribute to society and achieve their full potential."

Chris Millward, Director for Fair Access and Participation at the Office for Students, said: "Having a mental health condition should not be a barrier to success in higher education, but for many students this is still the case. Data shows that students reporting a mental health condition are more likely to drop out, less likely to graduate with a first or 2:1, and progress

into skilled work or further study – compared to students without a declared condition. We also know that students come to university or college from a range of backgrounds and that their individual journey, and the kind of support they require, is likely to be influenced by their specific circumstances.

"That's why this funding of targeted interventions for student mental health is so important. By paying attention to the diverse needs of students; universities and colleges can fine-tune the support they offer and ensure that all students, regardless of where they are from, have the best chance possible to succeed.

"Working with the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Education, we are pleased to be able to fund projects across a range of universities and colleges targeting a number of priority groups. We look forward to working with these projects to develop and evaluate innovative and collaborative approaches to targeted support for student mental health, and to support the take-up of this learning for the benefit of students in all parts of the sector."



■ The project team at the University of Chester: Ryan Miller, Disability and Inclusion Manager; Lisa Whiteley – Disability Support Officer (ASC Specialist) and Emily Jones, Disability Team Leader.

A Winwick office scheme bucking the trend

THE refurbished Quay Business Centre in Winwick is bucking the trend following a turbulent 18 months for the commercial property market.

The 46,000sqft centre was acquired by Bauer Group in 2018 as part of the Amazon portfolio of assets, and comprises 15, two-storey units.

New occupiers include Empire Aesthetics and Beacon Financial Training, with Tela Communications taking a 2,609 sqft unit on a five-year term.

Katie-Ruth Staniec, Centre Manager at Quay Business Centre, said "We have seen a good level of activity across the board at Bauer, with our flexible office offerings in several locations across England

welcoming new tenancies.

"We put this down to our 'can do' attitude to providing a turnkey solution for our tenants, making a relocation a much simpler process for businesses."

Despite a year characterised by the Covid-19 pandemic causing relative uncertainty for occupiers, the choice of refurbished options at Quay Business Centre provided a number of new tenants with the space required for those whom 'the office' remains an integral part of working life.

Greg O'Hara, joint letting agent from BE Group, added "Office enquiries are now at pre-pandemic levels, which is a promising characteristic of the market as we count down to the easing of

Covid-19 restrictions. Occupiers are reviewing their space requirements, and rightfully so, to create a better and more flexible working environment for staff."

BE Group and Roberts Vein Wilshaw are the joint letting agents at Quay Business Centre acting on behalf of Bauer Group.



Days of the New Town exhibition opens at Padgate Library

A fascinating insight into the area's 1970's heritage is being offered at a new photographic exhibition "Days of the New Town" which has opened at Padgate Library.

The new photography exhibition tells the story of Warrington's New Town expansion in the Padgate area in the 1970s.

The exhibition uses photographs from the Warrington New Town Development Corporation archive and residents' own photos.

The photographs recall the years Padgate and surroundings changed forever as they became New Town expansion areas in the early to mid-1970s

These show how the architects and planners imagined Padgate's expansion, and how residents from both 'old' and 'new' Padgate experienced this significant and lasting change to the area.

The photos are accompanied by an exhibition guide that features a foreword and specially commissioned poem from acclaimed poet Ian McMillan, whose first poet-in residence gig was at Padgate Library when it first opened in 1982.

It is the first time the public has seen images from the Warrington New Town Development Corporation archive and builds on material from the Days of the New Town: Birchwood at 50 exhibition of 2018/19 hosted by Warrington Museum and Art Gallery.

The exhibition is curated by university lecturer Su Fitzpatrick, who grew up in Birchwood, one of Warrington's New Town Development areas. Su became interested in telling Warrington's New Town story after designing a module for her students looking at the New Town building programme in the UK.

Su explained: "When I realised how few references existed to Warrington's New Town story, I began looking at ways to bring about a more public acknowledgement of this key stage in the town's history. Working with Howard Cockcroft from the group Friends of Padgate Library and LiveWire, I hope the Padgate exhibition will allow people to explore the period when Warrington expanded into a New Town."

Su is currently looking to secure research funding to develop educational resources which will help Year 9 students around the country find out more about the later New Towns that were built in the UK, and the material shown in this exhibition will form an important part of those resources.

Days of the New Town is delivered by Friends of Padgate Library with funding from Poulton-with-Fearnhead Parish Council and York St John's University, and in partnership with LiveWire, which manages Padgate Library on behalf of Warrington Borough Council.

Emma Hutchinson, Managing Director of LiveWire, said: "I know how much hard work has gone into the staging of this exhibition by Su, the Friends of Padgate Library and LiveWire library staff. I very much hope the local community takes the opportunity to come along and learn more about a unique period in the area's history."

Howard Cockcroft from the Friends said: "The Friends of Padgate Library, who are all volunteers, give their time to constantly promote the library to the local community and attract people to the building. We are especially grateful to Poulton with Fearnhead Parish Council, and York St. John's University, without whose financial support this exhibition would not have been possible."

Warrington Borough Council's Cabinet Member for leisure and community, Cllr Tony Higgins, said: "The Days of the New Town exhibition will provide a fascinating insight into Padgate's past, giving a people a rare opportunity to see photos from Warrington New Town Development Corporation archive. It's a great example of the work we are doing to make our libraries rich, vibrant community resources which offer history, heritage, culture and much more."

Council Chief Executive, Prof Steven Broomhead MBE added: "This is a fantastic exhibition, which I'm sure will be of great interest to local people. It's the result of some really positive work between a range of partners – not least the Friends of Padgate Library, who are working really hard to develop the library's cultural offer and attract new audiences."

Days of the New Town is now open and will run until November.



No Brainer grows with more staff and more clients

WARRINGTON based PR, SEO and content marketing agency, No Brainer, has added two new account executives and an office manager to its team while securing four new clients.

Alexandra Hudson, 25, joins the team with a background in the property industry. Whilst working at the firm, Alexandra is also currently undertaking a master's in digital marketing and data analytics and joins the No Brainer team as an account executive.

Also joining No Brainer's team of account executives is Charlie Briegal, 22, after completing an internship at the agency while studying languages at Newcastle University.

Michaela Leech also joins the firm as office manager with over a decades' experience working in operations for businesses including ASDA and Byrne & Doherty Mortgage Specialists.

No Brainer has also welcomed four new clients to its roster, supporting the agency's growth plans, including Manchester-based clinical trials company, MAC Clinical Research, which undertakes pioneering new research into treatments for a range of conditions including depression, Alzheimer's, and eczema. No Brainer has been

appointed to support the team on all PR, paid media, and influencer marketing activities to drive leads for trial volunteers.

In addition, joining the agency's client list is one of the UK's leading credit card providers, MBNA. The team at No Brainer has been appointed to manage the brand's regional and national sponsorship strategy which includes Chester Zoo, Chester Football Club and Storyhouse. The firm will lead on sponsorship activation including events and special projects.

Online life management platform Once I've Gone has appointed No Brainer to manage its PR, social media, and content marketing activities. The brand, which helps provide people with the tools to ensure they create and manage their legacy, appointed No Brainer after a competitive pitch.

And Rochdale-based community and cultural charity, Your Trust, is also working with No Brainer on a new PR and social media strategy for its brand, leisure and cultural assets. The charity manages many of the borough's leisure and cultural facilities on behalf of Rochdale Borough Council, aiming to inspire residents to live more healthier, happier and creative lives.

Celebrating its sixth year in

business in 2021, the agency is also currently recruiting for a new PR Account Manager.

No Brainer co-founder and managing director, Gary Jenkins said: "This is a really exciting time for us all, as it's fantastic to be growing our clients and our team."

"We're proud to have so many talented people and delighted to welcome Alex, Charlie and Michaela to the team. It's great to see them already rolling their sleeves up and getting stuck into

life at No Brainer.

"We're also proud to have the opportunity to work with four amazing new clients, all of which are doing fantastic things in their respective industries."

No Brainer was founded by Gary Jenkins and Lee Cullen in 2015 and works across a range of consumer and professional service sectors with national clients including HomeServe, Appreciate Group, Eureka Science + Discovery, Cash Converters and MBNA.



Warrington Running Festival success

CHAMBER director Gary Skentelbery and International Trade Advisor Tricia Francis both took part in the inaugural Warrington Running Festival when an estimated 2,000 runners of all abilities took to the streets of Warrington, starting and finishing at the town's iconic golden gates.

Runners took part in 5, 10k and a half marathon events, many raising money for local charities and plans are in already in place for the event to return again next year.

Gary took part in only his second 10k, the last one three years ago as part of the former English Half Marathon, while Tricia did her first ever 5k.

Gary is currently more than half way through his charity challenge to run the equivalent of 30 half marathons in 2021 to mark the 30th anniversary of Warrington Disability Partnership.

Mayor of Warrington Cllr Maureen Creaghan was on hand to wave runners off from the town hall lawn and through the Golden Gates which was also the finishing line for the 10k and half marathon events.

For RunThrough Co-Founder Ben Green, the inaugural Warrington Running Festival was close to home and takes a special place among the hundreds of events he

has organised over the years.

Not only is he the event's race director, but the half-marathon route wound its way past the street in Grappenhall that he grew up on.

The event had been scheduled to take place last year but had to be postponed due to the pandemic.

First male across the line in the half marathon was CHRIS HAZLEDENE in a time of 01:15:35.

First female was CHLOE LAM – MOORES in a time of 01:26:18.

First male in the 10K was DANIEL CLIFFE in a time of 31:21. First female was ELINOR YATES in 00:39:38.

The 5k was won by SEAN TRUETT in a time of 16:30. First female was LUCIE GODDARD in a time of 18:38.

Next year's event has been scheduled for September 25th – to sign up visit www.warringtonrunningfestival.com/event/warrington-running-festival-2022/





Today Team celebrates 16 years in the driving seat with record growth

A CROFT-BASED logistics company has announced two new senior appointments following an unprecedented 35% growth in turnover during the pandemic.

Jamie Boyd, 40, Founder & Managing Director of Today Team, has also taken on a new full-time apprentice – increasing the same-day courier service's workforce by 20%.

The recruitment drive coincides with the firm turning 'Sweet 16'.

"It has been a long journey – both on and off the road – to get to where we are today, and I am grateful to all our colleagues, customers and supporters over

the last 16 years," said Jamie, who is a former Warrington Wolves rugby league player.

"I would especially like to thank The Prince's Trust, who gave me a helping hand when a knee injury ended my professional rugby career aged 24. I used a £3,000 loan from the Trust to rent a van and put some fuel in it. Since 2005, I have turned my one-man courier service into a seven-figure venture that serves all corners of the UK."

Today Team's latest appointments are Logistics Team Manager Mark Hurd and Marketing Manager Sian Page.

Adam Aspinall, 22, has been

employed as Apprentice Logistics Controller through logistics specialists Mantra Learning.

Having worked remotely to start with, the new recruits are now getting to know each other in person at Today Team's headquarters, which is located at Taylor Business Park, Risley.

"I am delighted to welcome our new team members and I look forward to working with them to shape the future of the business," smiled Jamie. "I would also like to thank our existing staff for their continued support and hard work, alongside helping their new colleagues to settle into their roles."

"Just like in every other business, the pandemic took its toll initially; however, we have been able to turn things around and go from strength to strength – smashing all our monthly targets."

"I am proud that, compared to 2019, we are now in a position to report a healthy increase in turnover – giving us a strong foundation to build upon as we head into our busiest time of the year."

Jamie is now looking to further strengthen his Senior Management Team with the appointment of a new Logistics Coordinator, as well as to build his frontline workforce with opportunities for owner-drivers.

Multi-million £ new BT contact centre opens at Warrington

BT has announced the completion of its new Warrington contact centre in the Birchwood area of the town, following a multi-million pound investment in the building.

More than 100 staff have been recruited in the area in the last year and another 15 people will be based at the new building before Christmas.

Staff are taking part in induction sessions as a phased return to the office begins over the next few weeks following the end of Covid-19 restrictions. The impressive future-fit workplace, across two floors, will now be occupied by the communications and technology company, creating a workspace for around 750 people.

The revamped office features full-height windows providing lots of natural light, new café and restaurant facilities, flexible workspaces, collaboration zones and plenty of greenery for plant

lovers. It also includes relax and refuel areas and a games space.

The state-of-the-art building is one of the first of BT's new look offices to open in the UK as part of its 'Better Workplace Programme' – a major workplace improvement and consolidation scheme.

The five-year programme, due to be complete in 2024, is part of BT's ambition to increase efficiency and productivity, improving its ability to do the best for its customers and workforce.

Nick Lane, managing director for consumer customer services at BT, said: "Our new contact centre in Warrington will offer our people an impressive and exciting state-of-the-art environment to work in with excellent transport links close by. It boasts some of the latest technology and facilities to help our colleagues thrive at work and to relax and unwind during break periods."

"Warrington is a key location

for BT and we're really pleased to have invested in this new office space and to show our commitment to the town through job opportunities and recruitment over the last year."

Some staff have been working from home during the pandemic, but many are expected to return to the office over the coming weeks and months following the lifting of Government restrictions.

Warrington Borough Council leader, Cllr Russ Bowden, said: "BT's new contact centre will bring

huge benefits to Warrington, creating new employment opportunities for local people and helping further boost our economic recovery, post-Covid."

"I'm delighted that the state-of-the-art facility has now officially opened, with 110 people already recruited into roles, and a further 15 jobs currently on offer. It's great news for Warrington and is a testament to our continuing, strong economic performance, which makes us an attractive place for big businesses to invest."



Job vacancies soar as people choose to work part time

SOME businesses in Warrington have as many workers as they did pre-Covid but they are working half the hours because they want a better work-life balance.

Berry Recruitment, which has 40 branches across the country, including Warrington, says staff got used to having more leisure time while on furlough and during lockdowns.

With the country opening up, these workers want to retain elements of their previous lifestyles, which means many are opting for part-time work.

Employers, who know there is a candidate shortage, are being forced to accept this and many are struggling to make up the lost hours because they can't find new staff.

Berry Recruitment says it has noticed the trend across numerous sectors.

Managing director Lee Gamble (pictured) said: "It is a real problem for businesses who have staff opting for part-time work.

"Many workers got a taste for it during the lockdowns and while on furlough and want to keep their

new-found leisure time.

"The pandemic gave people a chance to take stock as they had to slow down and it led to a reappraisal of their working lives.

"Without being forced to work fewer hours this trend would probably not have happened.

"Many of those now choosing to work less have not seen a huge dip in income because of the tax system and any loss is offset by what they have gained.

"We are seeing this particularly in the driving, office, catering and hospitality sectors, but it is across the board.

"In terms of demographic it is more pronounced in those aged in their late 40s and 50s, but the trend is observable in all age groups and nationalities

"People had been working the same way for 30 years and suddenly were forced to change habits, which they've now embraced.

"Businesses are left with a headache because there are not enough workers to make up the lost hours. It is making the labour shortage even worse, but is

leading to rising wages as the rule of supply and demand kicks in.

"It might be that tax increases or inflation compel people to return to former work habits, but there is no sign of that happening yet.

"We have clients that have the

same numbers of staff as they did before the pandemic but half the hours being worked."

Statistics have shown that there are now one million vacancies in the economy – the highest ever. There are around 1.5 million people unemployed.



Tennis club's memorial tournament raises £1,170 for St Rocco's

A TOURNAMENT held by Stockton Heath Tennis Club as a tribute to member Jon Clark, who died earlier this year, raised an amazing £1,170 for Warrington's St Rocco's Hospice.

Jon's wife, Rose, and children Will and Anna, who are also club members, attended the event along with many other members and guests.

They enjoyed an afternoon of tennis followed by a buffet made and donated by club members.

Jon and his family have been members of the club for several years and Rose wanted to donate a trophy in his memory to be played for every summer to remember him and other members the club has lost.

The standard of tennis was high and the overall winner was Alison Lewis – just beating Jon's son Will by one point!

Stockton Heath is a welcoming, family-orientated club and members were as usual extremely generous by donating raffle prizes and the total raised from entry fees and raffle was £1,170.

Nicola Henshaw, senior relationships fundraiser at St. Rocco's attended the event to collect the cheque and meet Rose, Alison and other club members.

She said: "I was very humbled and

grateful to visit Stockton Heath Lawn Tennis Club to receive the cheque for the funds raised from

the Jon Clark Trophy tournament. It means so much to all patients, their families and staff to help us to

continue to provide patient care to Warrington people. Thank you so much to all involved"



■ Alison Lewis, Nicola Henshaw, Rose Clark and Jane Argent.

Chance to explore Warrington's unique buildings as arts festival launches

FANCY exploring the old Marks & Spencer building in Warrington town centre to see what has become of it since it shut its doors? Or have you been intrigued by the transformation of The Parr's Bank in Winwick Street?

Warrington Contemporary Arts Festival is about to throw open the doors to both of these venues because one of the themes of this year's programme is shedding light on the town's unique and undiscovered spaces.

The Golden Square M&S store closed four years ago but thanks to Manchester's Castlefield Gallery, it currently has a new lease of life as a temporary workshop and studio space under the name 'New Arts Spaces Warrington'.

It is part of a north west scheme to breathe new life into commercial properties that have been vacant for a long time and now the public are being invited to see what it is all about as part of the launch of the WCAF 2021.

All parts of the building have been used by the town's artists since early 2020 as a testing ground for new projects and visitors will have a unique opportunity to look around the former store, meet the artists and ask questions on 22 and 23 October.

There will also be a special one-off event in the basement of the building – a multimedia experience created by Julia Griffin on 27 November. The visual artist's work will combine projection mapping and immersive performance to take advantage of the unique venue.

A number of events in the programme are also taking place at The Parr's Bank, the recently renovated Grade II listed Natwest in Winwick Street which dates back to 1877.

There will be a performance there by the award-winning Not Too Tame – a theatre group which aims to break the down barriers to the arts by taking its shows out of conventional venues. Led by Burtonwood playwright Jimmy Fairhurst, most of Not Too Tame's work explores pub and social club culture and the people who inhabit them. Parr's Bank will also be the venue for a dance triple bill with new work by Joseph Reay Reid, Lauren Tucker and Sarah Bateman choreographed especially for the festival.

Another focus of the multi-venue festival, now in its 11th year, is creating opportunities for emerging talent in Warrington and celebrating the town's diverse community. Over nine weeks, WCAF will be giving the area's creatives the chance to showcase new work for the first time. It is part of a new vision in line with plans to redevelop Warrington's Pyramid Arts Centre led by Culture Warrington, the charity behind the event. Organisers particularly want to support artists who have previously had little support and opportunities due to the pandemic restrictions.



Leah Biddle, Cultural Manager at Culture Warrington, is leading the festival. She said: "Ninety per cent of the people creating or presenting work for this year's festival are either from Warrington, or live or work in the town. It's great to be able to support our talented artists by creating paid opportunities and platforms to showcase their work and provide a springboard for their future careers."

"Using new, undiscovered, and alternative venues will allow us to challenge audience's perception of the arts and create intrigue around some of the incredible locations – whether that be the beauty of The Parr's Bank or the incredibly atmospheric basement at New Art Spaces Warrington. We have created a diverse festival this year so there really is something for everyone and hopefully the community will support their artists and performers and try something new."

Below is the full line-up of WCAF 2021:

Company Carpi dance classes, Pyramid Arts Centre, various dates between 7 October and 1 November

Culture Warrington has teamed up with Lancaster Arts and the Dance Consortia North West to create opportunities for Warrington dancers, aged 18 and over. Dancers are invited to come for a free contemporary class at Pyramid while the company develop new work to be performed in spring 2022.

Neverland, Pyramid Arts Centre, 21 October

WCAF open exhibition 2020 winner Lauren Tucker and Tuckshop Dance Theatre welcome you to Neverland. The dance and storytelling experience, suitable for young people and families, explores the digital world we live in today.

Open day, New Art Spaces Warrington, 22 and 23 October

Since early 2020, Castlefield Gallery, based in Manchester, has re-purposed the old Golden Square M&S store, creating a unique testing ground for experimental and large-scale art projects. This is your chance to see how it is currently being used and meet some of the Warrington artists based there. You can drop in between 4pm and 7pm on Friday, 22 October, and 10am and 1pm on Saturday, 23 October.

Muado by Tina Ramos Ekongo,

Pyramid Arts Centre, 29 October to 17 December

Following on from her striking entry in the WCAF open exhibition in 2020, Tina Ramos Ekongo has taken up residency at Pyramid and will present her first solo exhibition as part of this year's festival. Taking inspiration from the pioneering British Black Art Movement in the 1980s and coinciding with Black History Month, Tina's thought-provoking new project presents a 'clash' of cultural identity, re-imagining British queens as her artistic heroines. Tina, who was born in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, and grew up in Spain before moving to the UK in 2011, mostly paints on cardboard with the aim of giving a new value to a disposable material.

The Social by Not Too Tame, Parr's Bank, 9 to 12 November

The Social is presented by the award-winning 'great night out specialists' Not Too Tame, the company that reinvented Cinderella as a 'punk pub panto'. This time they are back with an immersive show that celebrates social clubs and Northern Soul culture.

Parr de Trois, The Parr's Bank, 18 November

Joseph Reay Reid, Lauren Tucker and Sarah Bateman will present a triple bill of new work choreographed for the festival in the recently renovated Grade II building.

Ciné Hustle, Pyramid Arts Centre, 25 November

WCAF will present an evening of independent film hosted by actor

and director Darren Jeffries. The event will feature work by WCAF open exhibition 2020 winner Hope Strickland, an artist, filmmaker and visual anthropologist from Manchester. A panel of professionals will also talk about how they got into the film industry.

I Used To Be, New Art Spaces Warrington, 27 November

Julia Griffin will be teaming up with sound and visual artist Dave Forrest for an event which will immerse audiences in a multimedia experience in the basement of the former Warrington M&S store. The event will be supported by visual artwork from Warrington and Vale Royal College students.

Short Supply presents Slap-Bang, 4 to 22 December

Artist-led organisation Short Supply have experienced significant success in supporting northern artists who are just starting out in their careers. So this year they have joined forces with WCAF. The event aims to welcome artists back to live exhibitions and offer bespoke support following a drastic reduction in opportunities due to the pandemic. Their work will be presented at New Art Spaces Warrington and at the temporary pop-up Museum and Art Gallery at Golden Square.

Warrington Contemporary Arts Festival's main programmes takes place between 21 October and 22 December. For more information or tickets visit wcaf.culturewarrington.org



United Utilities takes on record number of apprentices

AFTER welcoming 56 new apprentices in January, Warrington based water company United Utilities has recruited a further 46 apprentices, 24 Graduates and in October will be recruiting a further 24 Customer Service apprentices.

The only FTSE100 company in the North West has a strong track record in delivering an award winning apprenticeship scheme and now has over 160 apprentices currently gaining valuable practical hands-on skills in a diverse range of roles, alongside achieving nationally recognised qualifications, including degree-level.

The new intake will be completing recognised programmes in a variety of roles from Payroll, Project Controls, Construction

Supervisors, Income, Engineering, Water Technicians and Trainee Buyers.

Jacqui Kawczak, Apprentice Delivery Manager, United Utilities, said: "We're delighted to be able to invest in future generations of our workforce as we recover from the economic impact of Covid-19.

"We're committed to creating opportunities for people in the communities we serve and the contribution apprentices and graduate make to our business is invaluable."

After being welcomed into the company the new recruits are currently completing a week long exciting Outward Bound Programme, in Eskdale Cumbria, where they will undertake a range of resilience and mind set challenges.

After that they'll join United Utilities' army of around 5,000 dedicated staff keeping taps flowing and toilets flushing for seven million people in the North West.

As the pandemic's economic cost is laid bare, United Utilities ambition to create job opportunities

for people in Warrington and across the North West has not waned. The company is involved in the Government's Kick Start programme and is working with #10000BlackInterns – a Black internship programme offering paid work experience across various industries.



Cardiac diagnostic clinic opens at Birchwood Park

VENTURI Cardiology has opened its first clinical facility at Orbit's Birchwood business park in Warrington to champion cardiac diagnostic services across the North West.

The independent cardiology specialists have taken 2,475 sq ft at 4, The Square on one of the region's most popular business parks to make it easier for patients to get rapid access to clinical

consultations and advanced diagnostic investigations.

Set up by three consultant cardiologists, Dr Scott Murray, Dr Jonathan Hasleton and Dr Tom Heseltine, Venturi's services are open to NHS patients, self-funded patients and those with private medical insurance.

The company also offers a range of packages for companies that value the well-being of their staff.

The new clinic has had a specialist fit-out to provide a comfortable and relaxed environment for patients and access to state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment.

Consultant cardiologists can give patients a range of tests (from an ECG to CT scan) in the space of an hour and a half, getting the answers they need when it matters.

Venturi will have around 15 staff employed at the new clinic. Its proximity to the M62 and M6

road network and plentiful free parking means patients from Cheshire, Merseyside, Manchester and beyond can get to the facility quickly.

Managing director Lisa Gregory said: "Patients are understandably often anxious about coming for a heart check-up. However, arriving at the clinic really does put them at ease. It is a very welcoming space, modern, easy to access with great parking, quite unlike many hospital environments which patients can find difficult. The feedback has been amazing.

"Most company health care packages are reactive, so only really used when there is a problem. We offer a preventative service, giving staff an accurate assessment of their risk of heart disease over the next five to ten years."

For more information on Venturi Cardiology please go to www.venturicardiology.com



New business development manager appointed at The Base

FORMER Peel Land and property Director Alison Tennant has been appointed as new business development manager for The Base on Dallam Lane in Warrington.

Alison was previously chief marketing officer of Peel subsidiary Lifestyle Outlets, with responsibility for the developer's Gloucester Quays and Quayside Mediacity assets, following her role as marketing director for Peel Land & Property.

Alison's new role is part-time, something she says fits well with her wider interests as a yoga teacher.

"The Base has successfully

positioned itself as Warrington's foremost technology and engineering innovation hub and is now three-quarters let. My role is to help our existing tenants to continue on their growth journeys by providing support and signposting as well as helping manage what is a very dynamic eco-system within the building," said Alison.

"I've been a qualified yoga teacher since 2014 and the role's flexibility allows me to continue to develop my successful yoga classes."

The Base, managed by asset manager and developer Langtree on behalf of Warrington & Co, has 26 tenant businesses across a range of software, technology and

engineering services.

More than 240 staff now work in the 50,000 square foot Grade A

space, which provides flexible office options geared towards fast-growing SMEs.



FDR Law acquired by leading law firm Taylor Rose MW as part of expansion plans

WARRINGTON-based FDR Law has been acquired by leading consumer law firm Taylor Rose MW, as it targets significant expansion in the North-West of England.

The acquisition is the first stage in the top-75 firm's strategy to develop its presence beyond its South-East heartland and will also provide impetus for the growth of its consultant solicitor operation in

the region.

FDR Law – formerly known as Forshaws Davies Ridgway – can trace its roots back 250 years and offers a broad range of private client and business law services across the North-West. It has five partners among 24 qualified lawyers, and 55 people in total. FDR Law will retain its brand and management team.

Taylor Rose MW is now a £70m business with over 1,000 people following this acquisition and McMillan Williams last year, split between 31 offices around the country and its consultancy proposition. The latter gives lawyers the freedom and flexibility to work how, when and where they want but supported by Taylor Rose MW's infrastructure – including using the offices.

The aim is to grow the scale and scope of FDR's operations across the region, through further mergers and acquisitions, developing areas of practice – in particular conveyancing, where Taylor Rose MW is a top-three player – and investing heavily in business development.

Taylor Rose MW's offices are concentrated in Southern England, and particularly the South-East, although it does have offices in Manchester and Workington, Cumbria.

Adrian Jaggard, CEO of Taylor Rose MW, says: "FDR Law has a strong local and regional presence with a respected brand and experienced solicitors. It provides a perfect foundation for our ambitions to grow along the M62 corridor as we build a national network to support both our traditional law firm operation and our fast-growing consultancy business.

"After the successful integration of McMillan Williams, we are now looking to make Taylor Rose MW an even more significant player

in the consumer law market than it already is. The North-West has a heavy concentration of both lawyers and firms, and at a time when the market is changing, we offer something unique to those who want to find better ways to operate."

FDR partner Margaret Evans says: "We have made the decision to join the Taylor Rose MW group from a position of strength but also in recognition that the legal market is consolidating.

"We can see significant opportunities to grow our business with the support, know-how and muscle that Taylor Rose MW brings, and also provide a home to the growing band of lawyers who are looking to practice as consultants but without the hassle of having to set up their own firms."

Taylor Rose MW is unique in running such a large consultancy operation within a more traditional practice structure. Consultants source their own work but also receive referrals from Taylor Rose MW, and they play a significant role in helping the firm flex the resourcing it needs for different projects.

The consultancy arm, which opened in 2014, is on track to contribute 40% of the firm's revenue this year.

ALIC Holdings Ltd is a holding company that owns Taylor Rose MW and has acquired FDR Law.



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■ Margaret Evans.

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info@warrington-chamber.co.uk

Warrington Wolves crowned 2021 PDRL champions

WARRINGTON Wolves were crowned 2021 Physical Disability Rugby League champions with a victory over Wakefield.

Comedian Adam Hills featured for Warrington in the clash at York, with the Wolves claiming the title with a 12-0 victory at York St John's University.

Warrington also faced Leeds in the curtain raiser, with the Rhinos claiming their sixth victory on the bounce. PDRL returned in April 2021 following an enforced 18-months absence due to the pandemic. Six teams have taken part in the 2021 competition, which saw a new format introduced to ensure as much Covid-secure activity as possible.

It was Wakefield's second Grand Final in three years, while Warrington became the first PDRL Grand Final winners back in 2019. In 2018, Warrington were crowned the first club world champions after defeating South Sydney Rabbitohs 34-12 at the ANZ Stadium in Sydney. The club also featured in the UK's first physical disability rugby league match at Victoria Park back in February 2018.

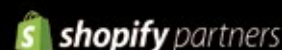
The first-ever Physical Disability Rugby League World Cup, an exhibition event, will be held during next year's showpiece tournament – The Rugby League World Cup 2021.



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