



# Insight

magazine

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The Journal of the

WARRINGTON CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

*in association with*  
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The heart of Cheshire

# £21.5m funding to secure zero emission all-electric bus fleet!

**AS well as a new bus depot Warrington is now set to benefit from an all-electric bus fleet thanks to more than £20m in Government funding to transform travel in the borough.**

The Department for Transport has announced Warrington Borough Council has been successful in its application for £21.5m in Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) funding, first announced by the Prime Minister in 2020, to support the introduction of up to 4,000 zero-emission buses across the country.

It paves the way to the replacement of Warrington's Own Buses' entire fleet of diesel buses with 120 new electric buses and has been welcomed by politicians across the town, including council leader Russ Bowden and Warrington South MP Andy Carter.

Warrington's Own Buses – a municipal bus operator, wholly owned by the Council – covers 85% of the bus mileage in the borough, so the conversion of its fleet to all-electric will bring a huge boost to the council's ambitions to introduce greener and cleaner transport options throughout the borough.

Independently of ZEBRA, the council is committed, as part of the Warrington Town Deal to delivering a new bus depot – relocating the Warrington's Own Buses depot from its current site to a purpose-built new depot on Dallam Lane. Work on the site will begin in December, and the successful ZEBRA bid means the council can forge ahead with plans to equip the new depot with electric vehicle charging infrastructure, ready to house the new fleet of zero-emission buses.

The council's commitment to green energy will also see the new buses charged by green electricity, including from the council's solar farm in Cirencester. Solar canopy/panels will be installed at the new depot, funded by the council, to further enhance the green credentials of the scheme.

The ZEBRA scheme supports a wide range of council policies aimed at transforming travel, reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality, including the Climate Emergency declaration, the Local Transport Plan (LTP4), the draft Electric Vehicle Strategy, the Air Quality Action Plan, and the Central 6 Regeneration Masterplan.

Tom Jennings, Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Innovation, said: "Securing this funding is absolutely fantastic news for Warrington. It will enable us to make huge strides in decarbonising our transport system as we work towards a zero-carbon future.

"The introduction of an all-electric bus fleet, charged by renewable energy, will bring massive benefits to our town. It will improve air quality, supporting our work to tackle the climate emergency. It will also provide more environmentally friendly, modern and attractive bus services, encouraging more local people to choose this mode of transport.

"At the same time, this project will put our town at the forefront of delivering sustainable, zero emissions public transport, further enhancing our reputation as forward-thinking location to live, work, and do business."

Along with the significant reduction in pollution, the all-electric bus fleet will bring further modernisation benefits to make them a more attractive proposition for passengers – including audible and visible route and next stop announcements and a second priority space for wheelchairs, giving better access for all. This supports the council's plans – through LTP4, the Bus Service Improvement Plan, the Town Deal sustainable travel programme, and the Bus Priority / Mass Transit study – to drive up the number of people choosing to use buses in Warrington.

Chair of Warrington's Own Buses, Cllr Cathy Mitchell, said:

"We welcome this funding, which will bring transformational improvements to bus services in Warrington.

"The investment in an all-electric bus fleet has the potential to be a real game-changer, improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions while providing a modern bus service we can all be proud of. It will help transform perceptions of public transport in our town, supporting our work to drive growth in bus usage.

"Warrington's Own Buses and the council have a close and established partnership, and this funding will enable us to further strength our working relationships, to deliver the all-electric fleet and to collaborate on a range of further improvements for the long term benefit of passengers and the wider community.

"I would like to sincerely thank our incredible team of council officers and the leadership team at Warrington's Own Buses for the hard work and time they have invested in making this bid successful. This is an amazing opportunity for us to come together and make a real impact on bus services in the town."

Warrington South MP Andy Carter, said: "Local people have consistently told me that they want to see frequent, reliable bus services across Warrington South. This is a fantastic announcement for the town. On the back of today's commitment we'll see a big investment into modern, clean

and efficient public transport in our town – which will allow the money saved from operating an older diesel fleet can go into providing better services where they are most needed."

This investment follows £5million secured from HM Government to create a new electric bus depot for the town last year, freeing up brownfield land for affordable homes to be built.

Mr Carter added: "I've worked closely with Department of Transport Ministers, Warrington's Own Buses & Council Officers who submitted a plan which I was happy to endorse to secure around £25million investment for our town. The Chancellor is listening and delivering on his commitment to invest right across the North of England. As well as connecting areas across the town we also need to ensure we have good links to neighbouring areas and this investment allows Warrington's Own Buses to do just that.

"This investment follows £22m Town Deal secured for Warrington almost exactly 12 months ago and the news last week that the Government will be supporting the HyNet hydrogen cluster, securing well paid and green jobs in Warrington and across the region, while helping to decarbonise industry across the town. I'm committed to speaking up for Warrington South in Westminster and so that we can secure the investment we need to move our town forward."



## Local solicitors raising money for Will Aid

DSM Legal Solicitors have taken part in the annual Will Aid fundraising campaign which runs every November.

The campaign is run by nine UK charities including NSPCC, Age UK, Save the Children and British Red Cross. Donations will be used by the various charities to fund worthwhile causes from giving children a healthy start in life to supporting older people with the challenges of later life.

Each November participating solicitors volunteer their time to write a basic will or a pair of mirror wills and instead of charging a fee invite clients to make a donation to Will Aid.

Diane Massey, Solicitor and Director at DSM Legal says:

"Will Aid is invaluable, not only for raising much needed funds for charities, but also for heightening awareness of the importance of making a will.

Without a will the Intestacy Rules will determine who will inherit your estate, but more than 2/5th of homeowners do not have a will and neither do a considerable number of young people – who are more likely to have young children and to co-habit – some of the most compelling reasons for making a will."

Once all the donations have been collected on behalf of Will Aid DSM Legal hope to have reached their

target of £1,000.00.

DSM Legal will be running a similar scheme in February next year to support TASC (the Ambulance Staff Charity). TASC helps ambulance staff who are struggling with their mental, physical or financial wellbeing.

Diane says "Statistics show that male paramedics are 75% more likely to commit suicide than other healthcare workers – a truly shocking statistic. We are all grateful for the daily contribution and sacrifices made by front-line ambulance staff, more particularly during the last eighteen months and so instead of charging a fee for a basic will we will be asking our clients to make a donation to TASC instead."





# From the Chief Executive

Stephen Fitzsimons



**THANK you to everyone who attended the Warrington Business Conference in November. It gave us an opportunity to experience the £142m Town Square development up close, and more importantly to continue our "Road to Recovery".**

2021 has hardly been a vintage year, however we have received plenty of indications that things are getting back to normal, at least in a business sense. Economic growth was slightly stronger than predicted at 0.6%, whilst there are 400,000 more job vacancies than there were before the pandemic. Order books are increasing and we are receiving plenty of exciting enquiries from firms expanding in Warrington or looking to locate here. However,

there remain serious challenges, not least from inflation which has risen to 4.2%. Chamber members, especially in manufacturing, are seeing their growth restricted or delayed as they face the perfect storm of high energy costs, rising raw material prices, extortionate container charges and post-Brexit bureaucracy. This is resulting in unfulfilled and outstanding orders, as anyone ordering a new car will be able to testify.

Locally though, there are still plenty of positives. Whilst the recent rail investment announcements for the north of England were understandably criticised by our friends on the other (wrong!) side of the Pennines, Warrington will actually do quite well, with faster journeys to Liverpool and Manchester, plus

a major investment at Bank Quay station. This may not materialise in the next 10 years, however it is already encouraging discussions with investors keen to secure an early advantage. In the town centre, football has returned to 90% of 2019 levels and some of the empty Golden Square retail units have found new occupiers. Some businesses remain hesitant as they continue to manage their personal Covid safety, however the Business Conference showed that most are keen to return to face to face networking. Business development is not always possible virtually and meeting a potential customer usually helps establish trust and seal the deal.

If the UK manages to avoid the Covid spike that the rest of Europe is experiencing, 2022 will offer

us a fresh start. The economy is not the same as it was in 2019, with COP26 encouraging us to explore opportunities in electric vehicles, renewable energy and heat pumps. The scars will remain with us for a long time, however Warrington is a strong and resilient town with a determination to get back on track.

Take care, Stephen

## J&K Ross appoint new business development manager

**J & K Ross are delighted to announce the new appointment of Paul Jones who takes up the roll of Business Development manager.**

Paul will report directly to Neil Wilcock (Managing Director), his appointment underscores the growth plans that are in place at J & K Ross Ltd.

Following an education at Bridgewater High School Paul joined J & K Ross in 1993 to begin his career in the PPE industry, keen to spread his wings he moved to Arco, one of the national distributors, in 1997 after 6 years of "learning the ropes".

Paul was extremely successful during his time at Arco securing many major accounts however nothing stays the same for ever and he returns to his roots with much experience to bring to the roll.

Fully committed to providing excellence in customer service and delivering his promises Paul will be responsible for securing major new accounts on behalf of the company.

Paul says: "I am a team player, a great listener and happy to engage with customers to ensure they have the best solution / offer, so they can make the right decisions. I love to bring new ideas and innovation to the table and always seek to get employees engagement to ensure happier wearers who have been part of the selection process".

He goes on to share that his hobbies are golf and running: "having run over 25 half marathons, during lockdown 2020 I decided to challenge myself, I was going to run for 50 consecutive days which I did and then continued and continued completing 365 days of consecutive running, which equated to 1621 miles. I did this for my mental health and also to prove that if you put your mind to something you can do it.

He's a fanatical Warrington Wolves supporter, something that will go down well with the team here and also a Spurs fan, which perhaps won't go down as well!

Chris Ross (Chairman, with 40 years at J & K Ross) is delighted to welcome Paul back "to the

fold" and is sure everyone in the business will be excited at this development.

If you would like to know more

about how J & K Ross can keep your employees safe, then please call 01925 645645 or email [safety@jkross.co.uk](mailto:safety@jkross.co.uk)



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Stephen Fitzsimons, Chief Executive

# Gymnast wins silver medal at British championships



**A WARRINGTON gymnast from priestley College picked up a silver medal at the weekend after a finely-balanced performance at the Acrobatic IDP British Finals.**

Charlotte Kerboas finished second in the Women's Group competition with her teammates Hannah Guerin and Emma Green.

They were representing the North West and were only beaten by the North's number one team.

"We weren't disappointed about finishing second because the other team could definitely have been performing at a higher level

of competition," said Charlotte.

The trio have only been practising together since August, but despite that came through with an impressive two-minute routine at the Fenton Manor Sports Complex.

They had to produce a series of three tariffed moves linked by some dynamic choreography.

Charlotte faced her toughest moment of the performance during the first balance section.

"I was about to fall over and had to fight to keep hold of it," she

said. "I got cramp in my toes, but I told myself 'I am not falling today'."

Charlotte started gymnastics when she was seven after giving it a go with a friend and discovering she had a talent for it.

The former Lowton High School student is studying PE, Architecture and Applied Science at Priestley College. She hopes to go into coaching after finishing her studies.

Her next step in gymnastics, however, is to qualify for the British finals again next year.

"We've got the prelims in March and maybe it will be a gold medal next time," she said.

Head of Sport Priestley Nigel Howells, who also teaches Charlotte, said everyone in the cohort was proud of her achievement.

"It's always a great moment when one of our own is successful on the national stage," he said.

"We wish Charlotte well for her future in the sport and with her belief I am certain the team can win gold next year."

## More Success with Apprentices at Blue Whale Media

WARRINGTON based Blue Whale Media is celebrating an incredible achievement from one of their Website Development Apprentices.

Naomi Clarke (right), from Warrington, achieved a "Distinction" in her Level 3 Digital Marketing Apprenticeship while working at Blue Whale Media.

Naomi first began working at Blue Whale Media two years ago, joining as part of the website design and development team. She has since become a valuable member of the team and after the pandemic in 2020 was able to return to the office to complete her apprenticeship earlier this year.

Operations Director Stephanie Sweeney said: "Achieving a Distinction which is the highest level, is a testament to Naomi. I am very proud to have been able to have supported her through the

Apprenticeship but also to now helping her further her knowledge into her desired career as a full-time staff member at Blue Whale Media Ltd."

Earlier this year, Blue Whale Media also saw success when another one of their apprentices achieved a Distinction. The Birchwood-based agency also currently has three other members of staff working on completing apprenticeships to further themselves in the creative media industry.

Blue Whale Media has had a lot of success when employing apprentices, including Naomi, the digital agency has had six apprentices achieve a high level when undertaking the Digital Marketing Apprenticeship. Apprentices are a major part of the Blue Whale Media team, with many current members completing apprenticeships and progressing into full-time roles.





# Business conference is a big screen success!

**THE Warrington Business Conference 2021 has been hailed a huge success as business leaders from across the borough converged on Time Square.**

The conference, which welcomed around 200 delegates to a combination of Time Square venues – Cookhouse at Warrington Market, Cineworld and The Botanist – brought companies together to discuss 'The Road to Recovery'.

As well as finding out more about Warrington's continuing regeneration plans and support for business growth, businesses also had the opportunity to enjoy the stunning, multi-million pound development for themselves, including walking tours of the venues.

Keynote speaker for the event was Paul Scully MP, Under Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, who set out the government's plans for economic recovery, post-COVID.

Delegates also heard from Andy Carter MP, Warrington South ('Supporting SME Growth'), John Laverick, Managing Director of Warrington and Co ('Evolution Warrington'), Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost, University of Chester, Prof. Helen O'Sullivan ('An Academic Catalyst'), and Cllr Tom Jennings, Warrington Borough Council cabinet member for economic development and innovation.

Panel sessions explored support for business growth and the green revolution – why sustainable and environmentally friendly practices will help support economic recovery.

Cllr Jennings said: "This year's Warrington Business Conference has been such a big success. It gave us a fantastic opportunity to network, share ideas and to reaffirm our commitment to work together to strengthen our economy."

"Warrington has a resilient and

successful business community and it's vital we do all we can to support them on the road to recovery. This event formed part of that work, placing local companies at the heart of the discussions, as we continue the work to make Warrington a place where businesses of all sizes can thrive, grow and succeed."

The Warrington Business Conference 2021 was sponsored by British Business Bank, DriveWorks, and FDR Law. The event was funded by the European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-20.



## New businesses transform town centre



WARRINGTON town centre has been boosted by an influx of new business over the past year, helping transform the face of the high street despite the challenges presented by the pandemic and lockdown restrictions.

With around a dozen new businesses now operating in the town centre Warrington has again been bucking the national trend as the town centre re-invents itself alongside a thriving new market.

Warrington BID Project Manager Amy Dawber said of the new businesses: "it is truly inspiring to see so many great businesses thrive during a difficult time for the high street. We are proud to see such a strong assortment of independently owned businesses prosper and this is all down to the support of the local community."

"Warrington has a proud heritage of supporting independent business and is fast becoming one of the most desirable locations to set up shop in the North-West. With all of the challenges facing the high street we are inspired to not only see ours surviving but coming out of the other side stronger than ever."

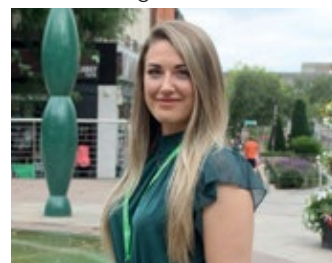
Among the new businesses that have opened in Warrington are The Coffee House, Mamars Bread & Cheese, Gourmand!, Trilogy Bar, The Grand, New Cod On

The Block, Liquor Library, Terry's Traditional Fish & Chips, Wok's Cooking, Mojos and Cocktail Limited as well as a new PCR testing centre.

The influx of new independent businesses is helping to buck the trend of high street closures, with more than 3,600 shops reported to have closed on the high street in the first half of 2021.

With many chain stores facing the threat of closure due to the pandemic and the shift towards online shopping, many local residents are welcoming a new era of independently owned businesses breathing new life into the high street.

To discover what new businesses are opening in Warrington, you can follow We Are Warrington on their Facebook and Instagram pages or sign up to their newsletter at [www.WeAreWarringtonBID.co.uk](http://www.WeAreWarringtonBID.co.uk)



■ Amy Dawber.

## SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION



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## Maskell+Josephson THE OPTOMETRISTS

### Top Quality eye care at Maskell + Josephson

By Anthony Josephson



Maskell + Josephson Optometrists opened in Warrington Market in September 2020, having had a site in Altrincham since 1983 and prior to that being based in central Manchester.

The objective of the business is to offer top quality eye care and corrective options (glasses and contact lenses).

Long gone are the days where a person's glasses are simply functional pieces of kit. Whatever your need for glasses (driving, reading, computer work) we believe that glasses should look good and suit the individual's personality and requirements, as well as their prescription. We also know that sometimes there's no one perfect option for glasses and that a person's best results can be achieved with different pairs for different purposes. That's why after you've bought one pair we offer half-price on all of our additional sets of lenses.

We're not just a styling opticians. We offer some of the latest technology when it comes to looking after your eyes meaning when you're seen by us you're guaranteed to have one of the most thorough eye examinations around. There really is no other opticians like us in Warrington.

**We're proud to be one of the only private-only opticians in the country and the only one in Warrington.** Private eye care really isn't that expensive when compared to other costs of life and what's more important than one's ability to be able to read things, recognise people's faces, drive safely and many other things we all take for granted for as long as we can do them. We're also proud to be one of the only practices in the country to **offer huge benefits to those members on our monthly care plan.** The plan costs just over £6 per month and covers all of your appointments and eye care (with an upgrade fee for contact lens wearers). **All of our glasses can be paid off in monthly, interest-free, installments too.**

We're also one of the only certified myopia control practices in the area offering different options to children who are becoming short-sighted to slow down their rate of progression and protect the health of their eyes in the long-term.

Whether you're struggling with glare when driving at night, at risk of develop hereditary eye problems like glaucoma, fancy trying our over-night corrective contact lenses, or have very specific visual demands there's always a best option and we'll not settle until we get there.

For anyone who values their eyes and their eyesight we're here to look after you, help you see as well as you possibly can and make you look and feel good whilst doing so.

For more information please get in touch.



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# Cabinet approval for £3.66m funding for College construction centre



**A BUSINESS case to support the delivery of an Advanced Construction & Civil Engineering (ACCE) Centre as part of the Warrington Town Deal has been approved by Warrington Borough Council's Cabinet.**

The business case, which will now be submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), will unlock £3.66m funding for the development.

The ACCE centre, which will be developed by Warrington & Vale Royal (WVR) College, will help to drive collaboration between the college, employers and the council to develop, commercialise and promote digital technologies for the construction and civil engineering sectors. The ACCE centre will also support construction and engineering partners to build high-quality, smart, efficient homes and building infrastructure more quickly, cost-effectively and sustainably than ever before.

The ACCE centre will help to raise awareness of, and access into, careers in the construction and civil engineering sectors, supporting unemployed residents to progress into employment in local construction and civil engineering businesses.

Nichola Newton, Principal and CEO at WVR college, said: "We are delighted that Cabinet

approval has been secured for the ACCE centre, a ground-breaking project that will establish a centre of excellence for the construction and civil engineering sectors at our Warrington campus.

"The onward development of the ACCE Centre provides a fantastic opportunity for the college to work with employers and key stakeholders to co-create an education and skills training offer that will enhance the sectors' use of digital technologies for improved productivity and sustainability."

Cllr Tom Jennings, cabinet member for economic development and innovation, said: "Cabinet approval for the ACCE centre is the next vital step to bringing this game-changing scheme to Warrington."

"It will support the next generation of construction and civil engineering professionals and will play a key role in the region as a facility that will support future infrastructure delivery in Warrington and beyond. The council has worked very closely with partners, not least WVR college, in helping to draw together proposals for the ACCE centre and I am pleased to see that our close working continues to pay off."

To find out more about the Warrington Town Deal, visit [warrington.gov.uk/my-town](http://warrington.gov.uk/my-town)

# Festive train returns for Christmas adventure at Gulliver's World

**GULLIVER'S World will be transformed into a magical winter wonderland in the lead up to Christmas with festive rides, snowy surprises and appearances from Santa.**

To celebrate the most wonderful time of the year, families are invited to enjoy some Christmassy adventure at the Warrington theme park and resort.

As well as Elfie mischief and fairy fun, there will be selected festive rides and attractions for big and little thrill seekers to enjoy including the return of the North Pole Express train ride.

Premium Festive Breakfast and Cracker packages are available, which include selected Christmas rides and attractions, the North Pole Express Experience and children choosing their own gift from the Elf Workshop or interactive Christmas shop.

Christmas packages at Gulliver's World Warrington, which also includes a festive breakfast option, start from only £10.

For an enchanting train ride, the North Pole Express features twinkling lights and Christmas delights. There are special stops on the magical journey and every child will have the chance to give

Santa their Christmas wish list and choose their own gift from the Christmas shop.

Families can extend their magical stay with Christmas Sleepovers at Gulliver's World Resort. There are several seasonal adventures available in themed accommodation, from Santa's Sunday Sleepover to the North Pole Express Sleepover which includes a journey on the festive train.

The festivities at Gulliver's World start from late November and continue through December.

Mel Burrows-Carr, resort manager at Gulliver's World, said: "We're really excited to be launching our Christmas programme of festive fun which has something for the whole family to enjoy. Our North Pole Express is particularly popular so it is great to see it return once again to delight our young visitors.

"Helping our guests to make magical memories that last a lifetime is really important to what we do here at Gulliver's and we are so looking forward to welcoming families to Gulliver's World to celebrate Christmas in style."

For more information, please visit [www.gulliversworldresort.co.uk/christmas-at-gullivers](http://www.gulliversworldresort.co.uk/christmas-at-gullivers)



## Key appointments at Chancerygate office in Warrington

INDUSTRIAL property developer and asset manager Chancerygate has announced a trio of key appointments at its Warrington office as it continues to grow its team in the North West.

Stuart McGill joins Chancerygate as asset manager, Andy Farrer as development manager and Joe Johnson as project manager.

Mr McGill (top right) joins from Cowiesburn Asset Management, where he headed up the Manchester office. A chartered surveyor, he is responsible for the asset management of the Northern properties in Chancerygate's industrial portfolio, both balance sheet and third-party asset management mandates.

Mr Farrer (middle right) arrives from Peel L&P, where he was most recently development director on business parks. He has also worked for CBRE and Lambert Smith Hampton and will deal with some of the existing portfolio of industrial developments in the North as well as source new development opportunities as the business continues to achieve its growth ambitions.

Mr Johnson (bottom right) is also a chartered surveyor and joins from Lambert Smith Hampton's Manchester office, having previously worked for Deloitte Real Estate and Dot Residential. He will work with both the development and asset management teams to advise

on technical and construction activities on Chancerygate projects in the region.

Mike Walker, development director at Chancerygate and head of the Warrington office, said: "These are three great additions to the business as we continue to grow across both asset management and development.

"We are delighted to welcome Stuart, Andy and Joe to Chancerygate. They bring a wealth of experience and proven success with large firms, as well as a strong understanding of the industrial property market in the North.

"We have grown our asset management portfolio and development pipeline significantly in the North West in the past 12 months. Their appointments will be key in ensuring that we achieve our ambitions to continue with our rate of growth and maintain our position as a leading developer and asset manager in the region."

Chancerygate currently has up to three million sq ft of industrial space under construction or ready for development. The company also manages in excess of £255m of assets across more than five million sq ft of commercial space in more than 390 units.

In addition to Warrington, Chancerygate has offices in London, Birmingham, Bristol and Milton Keynes. For more information visit [www.chancerygate.com](http://www.chancerygate.com)







■ Students gather items for the Warrington Foodbank.

## Students share food donations with Warrington's Foodbank

**KIND-HEARTED** Social Work students gathered items for Warrington's foodbank as part of a national week of action.

The students at University Centre Warrington got involved in Amnesty International UK's Week of Action, which promoted human rights. The group created artwork to raise awareness and explore the themes of human rights as well as collecting donations of food.

Dr Valerie Gant, Associate Professor in the Department of Social Work and Interprofessional Education said: "This group of Social Work students are in their final year and getting ready for placement and ultimately social work practice and I felt it was important for them to be offered an opportunity to become involved in Amnesty International's week of action.

"We discussed it as a group and students decided to make posters to be displayed around the Warrington site to highlight the importance of the Human Rights Act and the fact that elements of it are currently under review. Students also decided to take the opportunity to donate to the Warrington foodbank."

Student Sarah Faulkner said: "Amnesty International's Week

of Action is important as it raises awareness for human rights and humanity."

Fellow student Kelly Lopez-Reeve added: "Designing and producing the posters was a great way to spend time with fellow students, doing something so close to our hearts. Human rights are fundamental to our profession."

## Optician on mission to be more eco-friendly

**MASKELL + Josephson** The Optometrists are on a mission to be more eco-friendly. They are working with multi-award lens company Shamir to be one of the regions only suppliers of Metaform lens technology. This cutting edge science has led to lenses that are not only thinner, stronger, and safer than ever before, but also can be produced using less water, less energy, and fewer chemicals.

They're also introducing a new eco-friendly range of frames from iGreen. The frames use eco-conscious acetates. Manufactured from cotton, with a revolutionary process so that every frame is

made using 50% less water and 50% less electricity. Not only that, but they are fully customizable. Check out social media for more on this exciting new range soon.

And it's not just good news for the planet, but for your wallet too. They're running a special offer meaning you can upgrade your glasses lenses to Transitions or Blue Zero (ideal for computer use) at no extra charge. Or if you're buying sunglasses, a free upgrade to polarized lenses.

They'd love to see you and tell you all about these exciting developments. Pop into the market and say hello.





# No Brainer growth bolstered by two new senior hires

**WARRINGTON-based PR, SEO and content marketing agency No Brainer makes two new senior hires – Digital PR specialist, Victoria Attwood and former North West Business Editor at Business Live, Tom Houghton.**

Ella Howatson also joins as the agency's first digital apprentice.

Award-winning PR, SEO and content marketing agency, No Brainer has made two new senior hires to support its continued growth.

Digital PR and content specialist, Victoria Attwood, joins the No Brainer from digital marketing agency Cedarwood Digital as Account Director. Victoria brings over eight years' experience to the role and will help drive the agency's Digital PR offering.

Tom Houghton, former North West Business Editor at Business Live – which encompasses the Manchester Evening News and Liverpool Echo – joins the agency as Senior News and Content Manager.

The agency has also welcomed its first apprentice, with 18-year-old Ella Howatson joining the team whilst working towards a QA Digital Marketing qualification.

The appointments come just a couple of weeks after the agency was awarded the North West's 'PR Consultancy of the Year' by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR). It has also been named in Prolific North's Top 50 PR agencies and took home the Media Relations Award at the Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) 2021 Awards.

No Brainer co-founder and managing director, Gary Jenkins said of the new appointments: "Victoria's extensive knowledge of digital PR, SEO, and content marketing paired with Tom's keen eye for a story make for the perfect additions to our growing team. We're so proud to have

Victoria and Tom join us, and to be attracting this calibre of professionals who want to work alongside us and grow with us. I'm confident they'll both bring something special to the agency.

"Being in a position to invest in young talent like Ella is really

rewarding too, and she is relishing the opportunity to forge a new career with us, rolling up her sleeves and doing an amazing job so far. We're really proud to be championing apprenticeships as more and more young people consider on-the-job learning as an alternative to university."



## Local logistics company on lookout for more owner-drivers

WARRINGTON-based logistics company Today Team has announced record revenue in the wake of the pandemic, and is now on the lookout for more owner-drivers in the area.

The company based at Taylor Business Park has now 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 and Logistics Co-ordinator. They are now looking to recruit more owner-drivers to add to their growing team.

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

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 and Leah Wegener has been appointed as the new Logistics Co-ordinator.

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 frontline workforce with opportunities for owner-drivers. Are you an owner-driver who goes the extra mile? Would you like to work flexible hours/days? If this sounds like you, get in touch today at [info@todayteam.co.uk](mailto:info@todayteam.co.uk) For more information on Today Team, visit [www.todayteam.co.uk](http://www.todayteam.co.uk)





# New Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation appointed

THE University of Chester is delighted to announce the appointment of Professor Paul Bissell as the University's new Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation. Paul will join Chester on 10th January 2022.

Professor Bissell is currently Professor of Public Health and Dean of the School of Human and Health Sciences at the University of Huddersfield. As Dean, he leads the largest School at the University and ensures financial sustainability and delivery of the University strategy. Over the last five years, he has led the School through a process of transformation across its academic and research portfolios, resulting in major improvements in research capacity and quality in the health sciences, social sciences, sports sciences and psychology. He has been heavily involved in the School's external engagement strategy, working closely with senior leaders in the other anchor organisations in West Yorkshire in order to drive innovation around research and knowledge exchange.

In terms of his own academic background, Professor Bissell is very much an interdisciplinary researcher, working at the

intersection between public health, health services research and medical sociology. He has an interest in medicines usage, health inequalities, obesity science and functional neurological conditions. He has published over 100 journal articles and book chapters and led a series of high-profile health research projects over the last 30 years.

Professor Bissell is also an educationalist, having been Director of Teaching in the School of Health and Related Research at the University of Sheffield, and has designed and led a number of Public Health Programmes. He believes strongly in the power of higher education institutions to transform the lives of students and learners and to deliver on opportunity and social mobility. An appreciation of scientific principles, research and new knowledge creation are central to the student experience and he is looking forward to ensuring they are fully integrated into the Citizen Student Strategy at the University of Chester.

Paul completed his BA (Hons), MA and PhD at the University of Manchester.



## *Business park welcomes nine new companies*

WARRINGTON'S Birchwood Park – one of the largest out-of-town business destinations in the North West, has welcomed nine businesses across a mixture of office suites and warehouse facilities – making it the most successful quarter of the year to date.

The most recent addition is award-winning equity release experts Equity Release Supermarket, the UK's No.1 independent equity release advisory service. After an incredible 12 months of growth, the business has taken up 4,607

sq. ft. of office space at Birchwood Park's Bridgewater Place.

Equity Release Supermarket was also joined by a host of businesses in quarter three taking up occupancy in Birchwood Park's small suite facilities. These facilities come with more flexible leasing terms, which allows for changing business needs.

In total, eight new companies have taken small suites facilities at Birchwood Park, totalling 6,460 sq. ft. of office space this quarter. In the year to date, the park has

welcomed 21 new companies to its small suite facilities, on track to surpass the number of small suite deals both last year and 2019.

Commercial director Martin O'Rourke said: "We are delighted to welcome Equity Release Supermarket and eight small suite businesses to Birchwood Park and we hope that being situated right in the heart of the North-West, with access to several key towns and cities across the region, will provide each of the businesses joining us with the tools to aid both recruitment and boost

connectivity.

"Being able to support businesses, regardless of size or sector, by combining a great central base with the flexibility to adapt our offer to suit business needs is always a huge plus for the team on the Park. We look forward to seeing each of the new businesses thrive!"

To find out about the diverse range of businesses located at Birchwood Park, head to [www.birchwoodpark.co.uk/](http://www.birchwoodpark.co.uk/) or call the team on 01925 851536.





# Top customer service award for United Utilities call centre staff



**UNITED Utilities call centre staff in Warrington have been awarded The Institute of Customer Service, ServiceMark with Distinction.**

The 675 staff share the award with the rest of the customer team at the North West water firm which achieved 94.7 per cent for customer satisfaction and 93.98 per cent for employee satisfaction according to the Institute of Customer Service. United Utilities is one of only 15 companies to be awarded the ServiceMark with Distinction.

Julie Wright, a customer section manager based in Warrington, said: "I'm proud to live and work in the North West and the team at Warrington takes great pride in providing the best service to our customers.

"We're an essential service that people depend on so we're here to help no matter how you might contact us. We're always on the look-out for ways we can keep improving and to get this recognition from the Institute of Customer Service is just great for everyone," she added.

To achieve this exemplary standard in customer service, hundreds of interviews with employees and customers were carried out by the Institute. The

final part of the accreditation was a week of interviews with employees to understand the water and wastewater company's performance, policies, processes, commitment and engagement with its seven million customers.

According to the Institute's Report: "The customer services team at United Utilities put customers in the centre. This was evident right from the start and throughout the assessment. Far from resting on their laurels, they seem to have stepped up the focus on service delivery even more. The team drive the culture of service excellence and live and breathe the values that they expect their teams to demonstrate."

Louise Beardmore, United Utilities' Customer Services and People Director, said: "We are delighted that having gone through such a rigorous assessment we have achieved distinction status.

"We are one of only 15 companies to have achieved ServiceMark with Distinction across a wide range of sectors and that's testimony to everyone's hard work and commitment right across United Utilities."

For further information please contact United Utilities' Press Office on 0345 072 0822 or [externalaffairs@uu plc.co.uk](mailto:externalaffairs@uu plc.co.uk)

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# University powers ahead as academic lead in national Net Zero mission

**THE HyNet Consortium (based at the University of Chester's Thornton Science Park) has been selected by the UK Government to pioneer the new skills required to meet the country's Net Zero targets, safeguard and create thousands of local jobs.**

As part of its own Net Zero by 2030 goal, the University plans to develop a HyNet Academy, with curriculum informed by the latest research and together with public and private providers of further education. This will equip current and future generations with the knowledge and experience needed to address the opportunities in the clean growth agenda.

HyNet North West, with the University as academic lead, has been announced today (Tuesday, October 19) as the collaboration which will begin decarbonising the North West and North Wales from 2025. The initiative will make positive and demonstrable change by reducing annual CO2 emissions by 10 million tonnes by 2030 – the equivalent of taking four million cars off the road.

The University has been working as part of HyNet on initial workforce planning and skills requirements to meet industry demands now and into the future, and a socio-economic impact assessment, which quantifies the financial, environmental and health benefits of the project.

In Ellesmere Port, close to the University's Thornton Science Park and the area of focus for HyNet, skills levels are below the national average. So the University is working with commercial companies and Cheshire College South & West to provide upskilling programmes, which will support the town's ambition to be recognised as one of the country's transformational 'SuperPlaces,' identified in the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution.

Professor Eunice Simmons, the University's Vice-Chancellor, said: "The University is a proud partner in HyNet's success, as a proactive, high impact consortium, which will start to deliver national objectives on levelling up, decarbonisation and clean growth with immediate effect.

"The strength of this industrial and educational consortium gives it real traction to ensure global leadership in skills for industrial decarbonisation, clean hydrogen and carbon capture and storage. Since its inception, this project has enabled us to attract innovators, investors and problem solvers to design a low-carbon exemplar that other in the UK and internationally can learn from and replicate.

"Our early analysis of supply-chain development has helped facilitate implementation, ensuring the project was already at an advanced stage of readiness."

Prof Simmons explained that enhancing the local economy and the student experience are at the forefront of the University's involvement.

She added: "Across the University, students are determined we act to address the climate and ecological emergencies of our day. The University has a great track record in placing students with business and industry and our new Citizen Student strategy now aims to involve them at every level in our business, cultural and political communities.

"Through the Consortium, we are seeking every opportunity for HyNet to bring shared and sustainable prosperity to this region."

Thornton Science Park is at the heart of one of the most important industrial clusters in the UK, from North Wales, through Cheshire, Merseyside, Manchester and Lancashire, which made it a compelling case for the Government's decision makers.

Professor Joe Howe, Executive Director of the University's Energy Research Institute and Chair of the North West Hydrogen Alliance,

said: "It's incredible news for HyNet North West. The region not only has one of the lowest cost and deliverable Carbon Capture Solutions, but has made significant progress in developing plans for a full hydrogen system to generate, store and distribute hydrogen to our job-creating companies in our industrial heartland.

"The Government's decision will drive essential investment to deliver carbon capture facilities in the region – a key component of unleashing the hydrogen economy in the region and the UK. Crucially, this will keep up the pace to bring the first stages of the HyNet project to fruition by the mid-2020s.

"With COP26 on the horizon and the spotlight on practical steps to reach Net Zero carbon emissions, this is excellent progress. It will provide long-term confidence to big employers in the region and investors that, as well as the North West being a leading force in the Green Industrial Revolution, hydrogen as a clean source of power and fuel can, and will, be delivered at a mass scale sooner rather than later."



■ Professor Joe Howe.

## Two senior appointments at preventative healthcare company

A WARRINGTON-based preventative healthcare company is strengthening its management team with two senior recruits.

Brandon Collins and Stefan Jagielski will join PAM Group early next year from employee assistance programme services rival business Health Assured.

Mr Collins, a founder and sales director at Health Assured, has 30 years' experience of employee assistance programmes. Before Health Assured, he founded and ran two businesses, PCP and Corporate Support.

He will join PAM as sales director of its ToHealth business.

Mr Jagielski has more than 10 years' experience of managing large, national employee assistance programme (EAP) services.

He will join PAM as the head of account management in ToHealth with a remit to drive service levels and innovation to add further value to the services the group delivers to existing and new clients.

ToHealth provides corporate health and neurodiversity services including employee health and wellness screening, assessments, assistive technology, diagnostics and

staff coaching and awareness training.

PAM Group chief executive James Murphy (pictured) said: "Brandon and Stefan will be influential in the strategic development of our services and sales to existing and new clients.

"I am delighted that we have managed to secure them to join the PAM team in 2022.

I have known Brandon for 15 years and he is a true expert in the EAP market. He will help shape the strategic direction of PAM and the delivery of our psychological health services.

"At a time when mental health is so important to employees and people throughout the UK, the appointment of Brandon and Stefan demonstrates our commitment to invest in the services we provide to our clients

and the service users who rely on PAM Group."

ToHealth managing director Kerry-Dene Ihlenfeldt said: "I am so excited that we will be joined by two such high-calibre people as Brandon and Stefan. I am looking forward to working with them to develop our sales and the services we offer in ToHealth."

PAM Group, one of the largest occupational health, EAP and wellbeing providers in the UK with 650 staff, offers a range of integrated programmes to public and private sector clients, supporting more than 600,000 employees at over 1,000 businesses and organisations.

The group is looking to double turnover to £80m over the next three years through continued organic growth and acquisitions.





# College finance students make it count

**STUDENTS from Priestley College have been offered scholarships by one of the most established banking institutes in the country.**

The London Institute of Banking & Finance offered the scholarships to 17 current and former students after they achieved outstanding results in their Level 3 qualifications.

Speaking via zoom for a virtual presentation of their certificates, the LIBF's financial education relationship manager, Stephanie Payne, said it was a significant achievement.

"It has been such a difficult year so to achieve these scholarships marks a great effort by all of you as well as your tutors," she said.

"To put it into perspective I have only spoken at several other schools and colleges across the country this year so you should be extremely proud of yourselves."

Students who achieved A\* and A grades in the 2020/21 academic year were eligible for the scholarships.

Those with the highest grade in either their CefS or DipFS qualifications received an offer of £750 and anyone who achieved an A will receive £500 if they choose to study at the institute.

Among the Priestley cohort who received their certificates from Principal James Gresty was former Sir Thomas Boteler pupil Faye Bannon who also studies Business.

"I am glad my hard work has been recognised by the LIBF despite the challenges of COVID-19 and I feel honoured that I have been offered this opportunity at such a young age," she said.

The scholarship winners have now been invited to visit the institute's City of London campus to gain an insight into studying banking and finance.

The London Institute of Banking & Finance's programmes are

developed to ensure students are highly employable after graduation. Within six months 100% of its students find work including within organisations such as Barclays, HSBC, Deloitte, Thomas Reuters and Goldman Sachs.

Priestley tutor Tracy Croft said: "Achieving these high grades has required a lot of hard work on behalf of the students, but also their teachers so everyone deserves huge congratulations for their efforts this year."



■ Successful Finance students Luke Taylor, Benjamin Blackburn, Luke Smith, Molly Girdlestone and Alex Barton.



■ Faye Bannon and Laura Harrison.

## Reaching out to Africa from Warrington

A WARRINGTON-based multi-discipline engineering solutions business, today launched an international operation to meet demand from major companies requiring bespoke services in Africa.

BGEN, whose headquarters are on Centre Park, Warrington, has appointed an experienced management team, based in Lagos, to oversee growth and use homegrown talent to deliver local and international client projects.

Chief executive Robin Whitehead said: "On the back of decades of successful project experience in the continent, the launch of an African operation was the next logical step for the business.

"We have strong demand from our existing client base for support in Africa, and I'm confident the diverse, experienced management team will achieve great things in terms of sustainably growing the business through the employment of local resource. As a company, it's important we support the people and communities within which we operate."

BGEN International will provide a range of mechanical and electrical services including design and management, HVAC and building services, instrumentation and control systems, LV assemblies and system integration, LV/MV power distribution, piping systems and steel fabrication. The company will initially support its existing and new Nigerian-based clients along with those based in countries including Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana and Kenya.

The operation will be headed up by a senior management team including Vinnie Edge (international & strategic business director at BGEN), Don Foy (managing director at BGEN International, Nigeria) and Bolaji Sofoluwe (chair of BGEN International, Nigeria). The team, with more than 60 years' combined experience operating in the continent, have specific market entry expertise, an exceptional understanding of the African marketplace, and a wealth of engineering knowledge.

Mr Edge said: "We already have

an enviable client list including multinationals such as Diageo, Mondelez and PZ Cussons, having successfully completed more than 200 projects in Africa.

"We're looking forward to supporting local and international businesses in the region with bespoke electrical and mechanical

engineering services to help optimise their operations. At a personal level, I'm looking forward to supporting the company as we look to create a positive legacy in the continent."

For further information on BGEN International, visit [www.bgeninternational.com](http://www.bgeninternational.com)



■ Vinnie Edge and Robin Whitehead.

# Athletes given a sporting chance

**WARRINGTON'S Priestley College is leading the way in supporting talented athletes in England after receiving a new accreditation.**

The honour was awarded by the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) recognising the way Priestley supports students in achieving both their sporting and academic goals.

"Dual career support is at the forefront of what TASS does and that's why the accreditation scheme is so important for us in recognizing those institutions who place precedence on their athletes' education too," said TASS national director Guy Taylor.

"We hope the academic flexibility policies put into place for the accreditation will begin to develop an effective and lasting dual career structure within each institution."

Priestley is now selecting those students who will most benefit from being on the scheme.

Among the 16 who have already been chosen are GB rowers, jujitsu athletes, swimmers, kickboxers, as well as regional Thai boxers and rugby players.

By highlighting their sporting commitments and successes, tutors will be able to offer extra support such as virtual catchup sessions to review work when a

student is competing away from home.

In exceptional circumstances they might also be allowed deadline extensions for assignments.

Priestley also plans to organise workshops focusing on time management, goal setting, nutrition, prioritising sleep, First Aid and careers.

"The idea is to make sure all tutors and staff realise how many hours a week these athletes are dedicating to training and competing, often travelling around the country and abroad," said sport tutor Kathy Butler.

"We want to make sure the students are fully supported academically and that their sporting challenges and successes are celebrated properly in college."

TASS is backed by Sport England

and said that Priestley would now be an important part of a network supporting more than 600 young athletes across the country.

In backing the scheme gold medal-winning Paralympian Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson said there was a duty to help young people achieve their potential, whilst prioritising their welfare, wellbeing and education.

"For the vast majority of athletes, skills and formal qualifications are needed to help them find alternative careers, either alongside their sporting activities or once their sporting days are over," she said.

"For me the TASS Dual Accreditation Scheme is a vitally important measure in ensuring all athletes have the chance to pursue an education and enjoy a more well-rounded approach to life."



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■ Quinlan Dunne and Kahlan Kan are on the TASS programme.

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[info@warrington-chamber.co.uk](mailto:info@warrington-chamber.co.uk)



# Warrington Town appoint new manager

**WARRINGTON Town have promoted Mark Beesley to manager to replace the departing Paul Carden.**

Beesley, 40, had been Carden's assistant since the duo arrived at the club in October 2016.

The former Chester, Cambridge and Forest Green striker has now taken the top job, signing an 18-month deal.

He told the club's official website: "I'm made up that the opportunity has been given to me to push on the work we've done.

"I didn't hesitate – I had a good conversation with Paul about it and Toby, and we're ready to carry it on.

"I do a lot of research and I have a lot of notes about what I would do if I became a manager again.

"I was really happy working with Paul but I thought at some point I wanted to challenge myself again.

"This opportunity came along and normally, when a new manager

comes in the club is on its knees a bit.

"This is the total opposite. There's a squad of players down there that's excellent and it's up to me to

make sure that continues."

Beesley's first game in charge was the FA Trophy tie at home to Morpeth Town on Saturday 27th November.

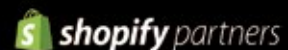


■ **Departing manager Paul Carden.**

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