



Insight

magazine

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The Journal of the

WARRINGTON CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

in association with
VALE ROYAL
The heart of Cheshire



MP visits Wiltshire Farm Foods to discuss government's proposed packaging legislations

However, Wiltshire Farm Foods, along with the food industry at large, is saying that the Government has not thought through the proposed regulations properly and it has significant concerns about some unjustifiable omissions. Not least, that there is no recognition of responsible businesses that have invested large amounts in future-looking systems that improve rates of re-use and recycling. These businesses will in effect, be paying

Lee Sheppard, Director of Policy for Wiltshire Farm Foods, who hosted the visit from Ms Nichols, says it is little more than another tax and the company is being penalised for doing the right thing and investing in

Ms Nichols agreed that the proposals needed clarification saying: "Anything which increases costs to the consumer is of concern right now and it's clear that the proposed regulations would benefit from a further review."

Sheppard concluded: "We implore the government to reconsider its EPR legislative proposals before it's too late and customers who can ill afford to pay more are penalised".

From the Chief Executive



There are several important

Government has made it clear that they see combined authorities with an elected mayor as the future for economic development so Cheshire stakeholders are in dialogue with Ministers on how this might work. Many observers feel that there will be a change in administration at the next election, however the Labour Party have indicated a similar approach.

Finally, well done to Dave Thompson and the team at Warrington Disability Partnership

Take care,
Stephen

Costa Coffee welcomes customers with new drive thru store in Warrington

The store team are also already busy playing their part in the local community by participating in the Chatty Cafe scheme, which designates a 'Chatter and Natter' table in-store on a weekly-basis, so customers can meet new faces and enjoy conversations with one another.

The store is open from 6am-8pm Monday to Saturday, and 7am-7pm on Sunday, and is available for orders via Click and Collect.



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Stephen Fitzsimons, Chief Executive

BiSN collaborates with Sasol Mozambique for future rigless plug and abandonment operations

WARRINGTON-based BiSN, a leading provider of permanent downhole sealing solutions, has partnered with major operator Sasol in Mozambique to successfully qualify the effectiveness of Wel-lok™ technology for future rigless plug and abandonment and intervention operations.

The collaboration aimed to establish the viability of using BiSN alloy via perforations to achieve rock-to-rock sealing and improve abandonment integrity.

“Sasol believed that BiSN alloy is a material which is far less prone to contamination vs traditional cement and can affect a far higher sealing capability within a shorter column height do its expansion characteristics upon cooling,” said Sandy Ferrari, Well Engineering Consultant at Sasol. “Upon setting, it far exceeded our expectations and we will continue to use BiSN technology in Sasol campaigns.”

Sasol Mozambique faced the challenge of establishing a 62-meter rock-to-rock seal in thin cap rocks, making it challenging to ensure complete sealing using traditional cement. To overcome this challenge, Sasol elected to work with BiSN and a major service provider to deploy BiSN alloy via perforations in 9-5/8 casing. The objective was to isolate formation activity from a gas-bearing silt layer and create a suitable regional seal within a 10-meter thick shale interval.

The operation began with the displacement of the 9-5/8 casing to solids-free brine, followed by casing scraping and perforating gun run on wireline. A cast iron bridge plug was set to provide a mechanical base for the molten alloy, and a 33ft Wel-lok plug was deployed and activated via a timer and hydrostatic switch. The alloy expanded, forming an effective 360-degree circumferential bismuth barrier within the annulus.

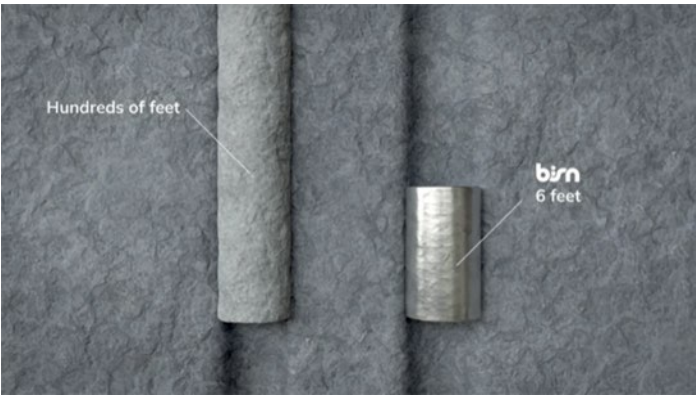
“It’s always exciting for BiSN to work with an operator in a new country and see the ever-growing adoption of Wel-lok technology across the industry,” said Paul Carragher, CEO and Founder of BiSN. “The forward-thinking team at Sasol, together with our other partners, made this a smooth and successful operation and we are proud to be working with them on this important initiative in Mozambique.”

The qualification in Mozambique of bismuth alloy for deployment via perforations offers numerous benefits for abandonment integrity and operational efficiency. These benefits include improved long-term abandonment integrity, reduced carbon footprint, reduced operational exposure, and cost savings. The use of BiSN alloy eliminates the need for section milling, reduces rig time, and enables rigless abandonment in the future. It also allows for the abandonment of wells with integrity issues and provides a solution for re-entering wells

with gas trapped under shallow barriers.

“A key to success was the excellent collaboration between BiSN and Sasol, from ordering the tools to the successful bismuth alloy

installation,” added Klisthenis Dimitriadis, Well Engineering Manager, Sasol. “The openness in communication and transparency on both sides was vital to the deployment’s success.”



■ The difference between the BiSN plug set versus traditional plug and abandonment approaches.

Bents’ gold approach to colleague wellbeing

IT is proving to be a successful year for Bents Garden & Home with awards from the Garden Centre Association and the Family Business Community.

Now they are celebrating another important recognition, a Gold Award from Warrington Borough Council achieved in supporting the health and wellbeing of its colleagues.

Bents’ colleagues are considered central to the success of the family owned and run business which is why so much importance is placed on their wellbeing; something which has been acknowledged by this latest award from Warrington Borough Council.

Matthew Bent, Managing Director at Bents said: “We have worked really hard to develop our wellbeing strategy so it is great to get this recognition. In the aftermath of the pandemic there have been growing external pressures so we know it is critical to support our colleagues’ in terms of their physical, mental and financial well-being”

Since appointing a new Head of Culture last year Bents has worked

closely with its team of ‘Culture Champions’ to identify ways it can help. Initiatives include Wellbeing Walks with a trained practitioner, providing colleagues with the opportunity to talk and reconnect, and weekly yoga sessions have proved very popular. Reduced gym membership and mental health awareness training have also helped towards the Gold Award from Warrington Borough Council.

In addition Bents has worked closely with the council and their NHS Wellbeing Bus, offering colleagues the opportunity for confidential onsite health checks and personal MOTs, which are easily accessible during work hours.

Additional opportunities for health checks recently arose following a £1000 voucher win at this year’s Health & Wellbeing at Work event to spend on wellbeing. Following discussions with colleagues, the request for further health checks was fulfilled.

Matthew continued: “Our colleagues are hugely important to us and the initiatives we have put in place come from them directly, something we believe is vital to

their success. We have a team of 16 Culture Champions who seek out ideas and requests, all of which is fed back to management who then work hard to put initiatives in place which can help support our colleagues’ mental, physical and financial wellbeing.”

Bents also promotes the use of the Perennial App, a free platform

dedicated to helping people in the horticulture industry and provides a wide range of health and wellbeing content including recipe ideas, podcasts and educational videos. Through the app, Bents colleagues have also have free access to trained counsellors who can offer further support in all wellbeing areas.



Bumper year for corporate finance advisers Cleveland Scott

THE team at corporate finance boutique Cleveland Scott are boasting a record 12-month period after advising on deals with a total value of over £60m.

Among the highlights of the year to June was the management buyout of language services provider The Translation People, backed by Mobeus Equity Partners. Cleveland Scott co-founder and joint managing director Tim Scott introduced Mobeus to the company and advised the vendors.

North west-based Cleveland Scott also acted for the shareholders of May Figures, a chartered accountancy and tax advisory firm, on its sale to private-equity backed accountancy firm AAB.

Other notable deals included advising the shareholders of Vanguard Cleaning Management Solutions, which is based in Oswestry, Shropshire, on its acquisition by Churchill Support Services, which has its headquarters in Chorley.

The team also advised sales and lettings agency Matthews of Chester on its sale to Lomond Group through its Thornley Groves brand, and acted for north west sports and fitness brand Built for Athletes on a seven-figure equity investment by River Capital.

Tim Scott and Richard Higham founded Cleveland Scott in 2017 to focus on advising business owners on their exit and succession strategies by helping prepare their companies for sale and identifying buyers.

They were joined in 2021 by Ryan Niblock as corporate finance director. Cleveland Scott has its offices in Warrington.

The trio said the firm has a

robust pipeline, with sectors such as renewable energy and professional services in particular seeing strong activity.

Cleveland Scott’s most recent deal saw the firm advise Hafod Renewable Energy, based in North Wales, on its sale to Warrington-headquartered Certas Energy.

Tim said: “Our business has grown year-on-year, but the last 12 months have been particularly buoyant.

“The market has been very positive despite the obvious economic headwinds. There is still plenty of capital available from banks, private equity and debt funds, and strong appetite from buyers and sellers.”

Richard said: “Business owners have had to deal with two seismic and hopefully once-in-a-lifetime situations in Brexit and Covid, which has led to many looking to de-risk, either through a partial or full exit.

“As our reputation and profile have grown, so too has the geographical spread of our work. Business owners and acquirers like our approach, and the fact that it is ourselves who are the deal team, having over 50 years’ combined experience of leading on merger and acquisition transactions.

“We invest a lot of time and energy with our clients to provide the right advice, and often over an extended period, to get their businesses into a position to enable them to maximise value, by providing advice on putting together senior teams, diversifying their client base, entering new markets and creating appropriate corporate structures, to make them more attractive to potential buyers.

“We’ve completed a range of deals, including trade sales to PLCs, private equity-backed buyouts and fundraisings, on behalf of companies across the country. It’s been hugely satisfying to see the fruits of our labour realised with these transactions.

“Our pipeline remains very strong and we are expecting to bring a number of new opportunities to market later this year and into 2024.”

Ryan said: “Certain sectors are particularly active, such as renewable energy and

professional services.

“Interest in renewable energy businesses has grown as the country transitions to net zero and as domestic and commercial users turn away from fossil fuels towards green energy sources. The recent spike in energy prices has supercharged this sector even further.

“The professional services market is highly fragmented with a lot of opportunities for consolidation, and deal activity is largely being driven by private equity.”



■ Ryan Niblock, Tim Scott and Richard Higham.

ITI Group to install safety monitoring systems at Hinkley Point C

AS the construction of Hinkley Point C progresses, ITI Group has been selected to provide a critical monitoring system that will be an important enabler for the beginning of site installation and commissioning works.

ITI Group’s SCADA system and Network Engineering works for the Temporary Control Room will monitor the internal working environment of the electrical buildings and turbine halls, thus ensuring personnel safety as they construct the largest nuclear power station in the UK fleet.

ITI Group will provide a turnkey solution, managing the design and manufacture through to installation and commissioning, including responsibility for cyber security of the Codra Panorama SCADA system, network cabinets, and Operator Workstations within the Temporary Control Room.

This will be ITI Group’s second project at Hinkley Point C, the UK’s first new Nuclear Power Station in 30 years, having already been engaged to design, build and deliver the safety, control and instrumentation systems for the heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC) systems for the Electrical Buildings, the turbine halls and their associated buildings. With a strong history of proven experience in the nuclear sector, ITI Group is well suited to undertake this latest project for Hinkley Point C.

Bryn Thomas, Sales Director for ITI commented: “This is a fantastic opportunity for ITI Group to demonstrate our immense expertise in this field and to deliver a robust technical solution for what is one of the most critical enabling systems on the Hinkley Point C site. We are extremely pleased to have been selected for this project and are looking forward to

working in close collaboration with the project team.”

Marking a significant milestone in the revitalisation of our nuclear power industry, Hinkley Point C will make a major contribution to the UK’s move to reduce

carbon emissions. The electricity generated by its two EPR reactors will offset 9 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions a year, or 600 million tonnes over its 60-year lifespan, whilst providing low-carbon electricity for around 6 million homes.



United Utilities scoops top health and safety award

UNITED Utilities has scooped a prestigious award for consistently demonstrating its commitment to health and safety excellence for more than a decade.

The water company has been given the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) President's Award in recognition of 11 consecutive years of achieving gold status.

United Utilities has a company-wide 'Home safe and well' approach, which encompasses workplace health and safety policy, procedures and training, as well as mental and physical wellbeing support schemes for colleagues at work and at home.

The company's approach is that nothing it does is worth getting hurt for, and it embeds a culture where colleagues look out for each other, and take action if anything is not right. United Utilities' health, safety and wellbeing strategy undergoes regular reviewing, improving and benchmarking as the company strives to eliminate work-related injuries and ill-health, reduce risk, and improve wellbeing.

Paula Steer, health, safety, wellbeing and estates services director at the company, said: "We're delighted to have achieved an incredible 11 years of gold status and gain the President's Award. It's testament not only to our effective system and strategy, but also demonstrates that our people are informed, competent and empowered when it comes to health, safety and wellbeing.

"We want everyone who works for and on behalf of United Utilities to go home safe and well at the end of their working day. That's not just about working safely, but about supporting our colleagues in their personal mental and physical wellbeing too. We're really proud

of the ways in which we do all this, from our Mental Health First Aiders to our comprehensive training, and how our colleagues are actively involved in keeping themselves and others safe."

Julia Small, RoSPA's achievements director, said: "Accidents at

work and work-related ill health don't just have huge financial implications or cause major disruption – they significantly impact an individual's quality of life. That's why good safety performance deserves to be recognised and rewarded.

"We are thrilled that United Utilities has won a RoSPA Award and would like to congratulate them on showing an unwavering commitment to keeping their employees, clients and customers safe from accidental harm and injury."



■ **Erroll Taylor, RoSPA chief executive officer, and Sian Corr, lead health and safety business partner at United Utilities.**

Cheshire and Warrington Pledge Careers and Education Fair

THE Cheshire and Warrington Pledge Careers and Education Fair comes to Warrington on 11th October.

Organisers are looking for exhibitors to represent the wide range of sectors and opportunities available within Cheshire and Warrington:

- Employers - across all sectors, showcasing small and big businesses and uniformed services
- Charities and youth groups – also great to recruit volunteers for your charity
- Independent Training Providers
- Colleges
- Sixth Form colleges
- Universities

The Pledge puts employers at the heart of inspiring the next generation. It is engaged with all mainstream, SEND, Alternative Provision schools and colleges and

many youth and community groups as part of our Careers Hub.

They are seeing strong collaboration across schools, resulting in the fact that multiple schools have joined together to attend the Pledge Careers and Education Fair in their locality. Therefore, as an exhibitor instead of going to several schools, you can now attend the event to maximize the number of students, teachers and other businesses you engage with, completely free.

The events are targeted at Year 9-13 students to help them understand what opportunities are available locally in terms of careers and educational pathways but also in terms of securing volunteering and work experience placements for the future.

You will get the chance to meet hundreds of young people from different schools and colleges.

Many schools will be bringing whole year groups at one time and doors are open to the general public.

There is also an opportunity for organisations to be key sponsors for the fair. If you would be interested in the possibility of partnering with the organisers, and reaching out

to thousands of young people, parents, carers, employers, educators and other partners, then please contact georgina.mills@cheshireandwarrington.com

To book on to the event please visit <https://tinyurl.com/2w2yd4cy>



EO to install charging infrastructure for Warrington's new electric buses

EO Charging, one of Europe's leading EV charging solutions providers, has been awarded a major contract by Warrington Borough Council to provide the infrastructure that will power its new eBus fleet.

EO will install the chargers at Warrington's new bus depot being constructed to host 105 Volvo BZL Electric vehicles scheduled for delivery in 2024. This is one of the biggest electric bus orders by any town or city in the UK to date.

The state-of-the-art vehicles will replace the current Warrington's Own Buses diesel fleet, which covers 85 per cent of the mileage served in the borough. The investment, being made with support from the ZEBRA scheme, is part of wider work to transform Warrington services under the borough's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

Keith Watson, Head of eBus at EO Charging, said: "EO Charging is delighted to be working with Warrington Borough Council and Warrington's Own Buses to install electric bus charging technology for their new fleet. This is one of the most ambitious eBus projects in the UK public sector, so it will be a great case study for how electrification can help councils and bus operators deliver on their plans to build sustainable transport into everyday life."

EO Charging will be starting works on-site later this year, with the project fully delivered in Q2 2024. The charging solutions provider is working in collaboration with ABB E-mobility. They have provided 53 of their Terra 124 dual outlet units, which are high capacity 120kW chargers. Each unit supports overnight charging of two vehicles.

Navin Smart, Sales Manager UK at ABB E-mobility, commented: "This has been an exciting project that we have worked on together with EO Charging for a long period of time, and I hope for further similar projects in the future to promote EV and E-mobility in local transportation. This collaboration is a beautiful example of how a turnkey solution company like EO and a hardware solution like ABB E-mobility can contribute to building an emission-free future of transportation."

The new connection of 6MVA will be managed through an EO Hub load management device, and the chargers will be connected to the EO Cloud software platform to ensure the limits of the new timed connection are not exceeded. EO Charging has previously collaborated with ABB E-mobility, but never on such a large-scale project.

Councillor Hans Mundry, Warrington Borough Council's Cabinet Member for transport, said: "It's fantastic news that our ZEBRA project is moving forward and we're working with best-in-class partners like EO Charging on the implementation. The introduction of our all-electric fleet will bring massive benefits, helping to decarbonise our transport system as we work towards a net-zero future.

"We will be delivering a fleet of buses fit for the future with zero tailpipe emissions which will improve air quality across Warrington, supporting our work to tackle the climate emergency. It will also support a key aim of our Local Transport Plan, to reduce emissions and congestion and build sustainable transport into

everyday life in Warrington."

EO Charging has developed charge points, advanced software and charging services that maximise vehicle uptime and lower operating costs for bus fleet operators. It already supports a range of fleet

customers in the business within the public sectors, including providing a full turnkey solution for the electrification of Go-Ahead's Bextleyheath and Northumberland Park Bus Garages supporting zero-emission e-buses that form part of the Transport for London (TfL) fleet.

Jacobs seeks people looking for STEM jobs after career break

JACOBS – with key offices and laboratories in Warrington – is searching for people looking for STEM jobs after a career break.

It is stepping up its collaboration with STEM Returners, a company which supports people restarting their careers after a break.

STEM Returners, which focuses on careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, will source experienced engineering and project management professionals for fully paid, 12-week placements. These "returnships" allow candidates to refresh their skills and gain valuable experience that can help them transition back into the workforce full time.

Jacobs has pledged to fill 50 such roles across the U.K., including hybrid working options and office based positions in Warrington, Manchester and Knutsford.

Karen McCormack completed the programme in 2021 and is now a project manager at Jacobs. She took a career break to look after her baby and spent

12 years away from the industry. Despite years of engineering experience in Scotland, Norway and Asia, she found it challenging to get back into the workforce.

"I would hear absolutely nothing back, not even a rejection, just nothing at all," Karen explained. "To say it was disheartening is an understatement. But I saw in STEM Returners the possibility of a lifeline and the team were hugely supportive. I have had the opportunity to take part in several training courses designed to reskill or upskill."

The U.K. has an estimated shortfall of over 173,000 workers in STEM-related jobs, with an average of 10 unfilled roles per business costing the economy £1.5 billion each year.

STEM Returners director Natalie Desty said: "Only by partnering with industry leaders like Jacobs will we make vital changes in STEM recruitment practices, to help those who are finding it challenging to return to the sector, reduce the skills gap and improve inclusion and diversity."

New health care and technology ‘super centre’ for full mouth rehabilitation opens in Warrington

LEADING dental implant specialist, 21D, has opened its doors to a new, state-of-the-art, ‘super centre’ to accommodate high levels of customer demand.

21D is a leading provider of full jaw dental implant solutions in the UK, having treated over 400 patients in the last 12 months. At present, 21D is treating over 50 patients a month.

The new clinic, located in Warrington, Cheshire, will see 21D’s capacity increase three-fold to meet nationwide demand.



Exclusively providing full mouth rehabilitation for £16,995 for both jaws, the 21D solution is the most affordable available in the UK.

Prior to the opening of its state-of-the-art ‘super centre’ clinic, 21D operated predominantly from its Harrogate clinic, working with partners across the country to assess patients. 21D has plans to expand further with another clinic in the South of England early next year.

The Warrington centre is expected to serve upwards of 35 surgical

patients per month. This clinical unit houses two full-time surgical chairs and treatment rooms, with an additional chair to accommodate free clinical assessments. The clinic’s state-of-the-art facilities comprise the latest digital and surgical equipment. This includes a 3D CBCT scanner, 3D intra oral scanners and a fully functioning decontamination room with high-spec autoclaves and specialist air-flow technology.

21D was founded by David Veige, CEO and Rajesh Vijayanarayanan (Vijay) in April 2022. Veige is a leader in digitally guided implants. Vijay is the founder of Evo Dental which was the first business in the UK to focus exclusively on full jaw dental implants, and creator of the Evo Solution.

Veige said: “We have a unique approach that is improving the lives of people who need it most. Our exclusive focus on full-mouth rehabilitation has allowed us to perfect our solution in a way that no one else has to date. We developed the 21D solution to be as affordable as possible, to provide people with the chance to regain their ability to speak, eat properly and smile with confidence.”

21D’s innovative solution uses 3D printed digital guides to place titanium implants within 100 microns of digital plan. This allows

the design and fabrication of the prosthetic teeth to be carried out in advance of the surgery. The guides, the implant plan and the prosthetics are unique to each patient. The surgery itself takes under 60 minutes per jaw, delivered to the highest standard of safety due to its exceptional accuracy. Hence it is faster, safer, simpler and better including better value in comparison to any other solution in the UK.

Vijay said: “This is the logical successor to the Evo solution that I created. It enables us to reach a better clinical outcome for a lower cost to the patient.”

21D has employed two new specialist surgeons and four other clinicians to work at the new ‘super centre’. The business is also planning to eventually extend its operations to seven days a week, to meet patient needs and availability.

Veige and Vijay launched 21D in April 2022. Using their collective 30 years of experience in full jaw dental implants the pair were able to innovate 21D’s fully guided solution, which uses 3D printed digital guides and implant plans and prosthetics designed on specialist CAD software to safely deliver life-changing results.

To find out more about 21D, visit: www.21d.co.uk



Local HR expert launches free service to help local residents with their future careers

33 year old Jessica Dunne who currently heads up HR for Element in Warrington has been exploring ways to help others navigate the tricky world of employment.

Aware of the technological advances over the past 30 years, Jessica takes an unconventional approach to the typical consultancy model by offering her services online via social media platforms. Her aim is educate, inform and empower residents through the use of these social media platforms.

“There were times in my career that I really wish someone would have offered me the

benefit of their wisdom. This is my opportunity to offer some pointers to others, utilising the skills that I have learnt through supporting a number of large organisations”.

“There are some really exciting careers on offer in Warrington, including those within the science corridor. I want to ensure that local people are equipped with knowledge and skills to excel within their chosen careers”.

Scan the QR code to connect with Jessica.



@ITSJESSFROMHR

Made Smarter whitepaper to accelerate Warrington manufacturers to net zero

A WHITEPAPER has been launched by Made Smarter to help Warrington manufacturers accelerate their net zero plans.

‘Decarbonisation through Digitalisation: manufacturing made smarter and greener with technology’ is a practical guide to industry’s biggest challenge and opportunity.

The free-to-download document from the government-backed and industry-led technology adoption programme, aims to simplify a complex and fast-evolving topic by demystifying some of the terminology and analysing the latest research.

Crucially, the whitepaper offers insights about how a variety of technologies enable manufacturing and engineering businesses to make things smarter and greener, while powering growth and creating new highly skilled jobs.

The whitepaper showcases makers who have started their decarbonisation journeys with Made Smarter and signposts manufacturers to other initiatives including, Race to Zero, a campaign led by the United Nations, and the SME Climate Hub, a non-profit global initiative that empowers companies with tips and tools, including its Business Carbon

Calculator.

Donna Edwards, Director of Made Smarter’s North West Adoption Programme, said: “Manufacturing is vital to the UK economy and our daily lives. But it also has a colossal impact on our environment.

“The pressure and scrutiny on the sector to be more sustainable is ramping up, and coming from all directions. It is our biggest challenge, but it is also a significant opportunity.

“Decarbonisation is not a distraction. It is an imperative. Talk needs to stop and make way for action and a concerted commitment to change. UK manufacturing must get behind the mantra that the future is decarbonised and digital.

“Made Smarter is committed to help small and medium sized makers get there with vision, technology, leadership and collaboration. Our hope is that our ‘Decarbonisation through Digitalisation’ whitepaper will become a valuable part of any manufacturer’s toolkit to support their net zero journey.”

Over the last four years, Made Smarter has provided impartial, tailored and expert advice to thousands of manufacturers of every size and shape, and from every sector.



Digital transformation workshops offer practical steps towards digitisation and a clear digital roadmap to follow. There is also funding to help SMEs invest in technology and a variety of support to enable businesses to adapt to the green skills and digital leadership a net zero future demands.

Donna Edwards added: “In recent years we’ve seen technology play an incredibly important part in tackling disruptive and emerging challenges. It has helped businesses navigate the Covid-19 pandemic and recover, negotiate supply chain disruption and labour shortages, as well as focus on solutions to mitigate the energy crisis.

“For the climate emergency, digitalisation offers manufacturers a huge opportunity to deliver

operational efficiencies, decarbonise heat and power, optimise design and materials, and improve logistics and transport, benefitting their business, their bottom line and the environment. Then there is the reputational gain which helps secure customer loyalty, as well as attract new talent and investment.

“While decarbonisation might feel overwhelming, and it is by no means a simple task, it is vital manufacturers recognise they are not alone. Combating climate change demands collaboration, and that is exactly what Made Smarter is here for.”

To download the whitepaper visit: www.madesmarter.uk/resources/decarbonisation-through-digitalisation

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HMS launches latest apprenticeships, opening the door to career in construction for community

EXPERIENCED contractor and leading local employer, HMS, has announced that it will take on 30 apprentices in September.

A variety of apprenticeships are available which focus on both business and trade roles and offer applicants the chance to apply to become a valued member of the HMS team. There are opportunities for Electricians and Heating Engineers, Plumbers, Plasterers or Joiners in addition to back-office roles such as Scheduling and Surveying.

Committed to creating and supporting a variety of business

and trade apprenticeships, HMS has taken on over 100 Apprentices since its amalgamation with the Torus Group in January 2019 with a number of them becoming fully qualified this year.

Discussing HMS' latest apprenticeship recruitment campaign, Managing Director, Paul Worthington, said: "There is a clear skills gap in the construction industry, and I believe apprenticeships are the best way to proactively address the shortfall of qualified tradespeople we have across the sector.

"Apprenticeships not only offer

a sustainable, long-term training and employment opportunity for individuals, they positively contribute to the local economy by upskilling its communities and keeping sought-after trades in the local area and as a largescale employer, this is what we want to encourage.

"For HMS, Apprenticeships are a long-term investment, and a number of our current Managers and Leaders, including myself, began their career as an Apprentice, so I know that this can be an important and career-defining first step for many and I am looking forward to welcoming our

next cohort of Apprentices to the team seeing where this opportunity can take them."

As part of the Torus Group, HMS apprentices' benefit from support and guidance from the Torus Foundation, which includes support with interviews and writing CVs, applying for a CSCS Card and driving lessons. This ensures apprentices are given the best chance to succeed and can flourish in their career at HMS.

For more information on HMS' latest Apprenticeship opportunities, visit www.hmsworks.co.uk/working-for and find out how to apply now.

Major battery storage facility approved at Fiddler's Ferry

PLANS for a major battery storage facility within the site of the decommissioned Fiddler's Ferry Power Station have been approved by Warrington planning chiefs.

The purpose of the development by SSE Energy Solutions is to store excess electricity at times of low demand and re-distribute it back into the National Grid at times of higher demand or network instability.

The fast-acting response service will help ensure that National Grid can maintain electricity transmission network stability set by Government under its Electricity Transmission Licence and the Security and Quality of Supply Standard.

Fiddlers Ferry is considered

suitable for the development given the proposed re-development of the power station site following demolition of the existing infrastructure.

It is also within close proximity of a National Grid substation where a connection can be made easily.

The power station site has been purchased by natural resources and energy company Peel NRE which plan to produce a 10-15 year mixed-use master plan for the 820-acre site – one of the largest brownfield sites in the country.

New developments for industrial use and new homes in a sustainable community are planned to provide jobs, skills and address housing shortages in the borough.

The plans will also create extensive

new parkland and wildlife areas to enhance the environment.

SSE Energy Solutions' proposals involve an area of the power station site scheduled for employment.



Approving the proposals, Warrington Borough Council planners said the proposal did not raise any issues of concern. The principle of development is considered acceptable having regard to the existing land use and Draft Local Plan site allocation.

Warrington features in list of best UK locations to launch a new business in 2023

NEW high street restaurants, stores and bars are being encouraged to consider Warrington for a prime location as the town is named as one of the most attractive locations in the UK to launch a new business in 2023.

The market assessment from asset finance brokerage, Approved Business Finance analysed the average rental cost for commercial spaces, footfall recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic as well as the number of closed banks and vacant commercial units to reveal the locations that are most promising for new businesses in 2023.

Warrington appeared seventh in the rankings with a Business Potential Score of 331 out of 500. Plymouth (381) topped the list with Dundee (348) and Sunderland (346) completing the top three.

With nearly two-thirds of businesses revealing their energy costs have increased compared to last year, many business owners are looking for affordable

locations with a thriving high street and these new statistics are encouraging for locations such as Warrington.

The list of top twenty locations to launch a new business in 2023 are:

- 1 Plymouth
- 2 Dundee
- 3 Sunderland
- 4 Telford
- 5 Stoke-on-Trent
- 6 Middlesbrough
- 7 Warrington
- 8 Hull
- 9 Edinburgh
- 10 Bournemouth
- 11 Newcastle upon Tyne
- 12 Aberdeen
- 13 Liverpool
- 14 Portsmouth
- 15 Sheffield
- 16 Cardiff
- 17 Peterborough
- 18 Huddersfield
- 19 Ipswich
- 20 Leicester

Mark Kozo, Marketing Director at Approved Business Finance said: "It's no surprise that the slightly smaller cities are looking

more promising with cheaper rent and higher footfall. With the current financial climate, many people have relocated to more inexpensive cities to start a new business which can be pricey and using asset finance can help with increasing costs in rent and stock.

"There is a significant amount of pressure on retailers and as the data reveals the cities that tend to have the higher rental prices will most likely see the biggest increase in vacant retail spaces.

"With the impact of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis, a significant number of businesses across the country are facing financial challenges and data like this reveals the cities that are bouncing back and the ones that aren't."

For further information and the full research, please visit: www.approvedbusinessfinance.co.uk/post/best-cities-for-uk-businesses-in-2023



Local businesses support prestigious Miss International UK Pageant

MORE than 50 delegates and their families from all over the UK were hosted at the Village Hotel in Warrington for the return of the prestigious Miss International UK pageant organised by local business woman Holly Pirrie and her team.

Alisha Cowie, a model and photographer from Newcastle, beat the competition to take the prestigious title at Warrington's Parr Hall, securing her place to compete for her country in the Miss International contest in Japan this October.

The event brought together lots of local businesses from Warrington, who all contributed to making it a huge success!

Local business White Lace Bakery, located in Golden Square, sponsored the competition by gifting the winner a celebration cake as part of her prize package.

The 56 delegates were also provided lunch from Culcheth based business Brunch Café, with the team visiting local tapas restaurant, Las Ramblas.

The Miss International UK competition is organised from the Pageant Girl office, which is situated in Warrington at The Dress Studio – Prom & Pageant Superstore.

Miss International is one of the top four pageants in the world but that won't faze Alisha. The Miss International UK crown sits

comfortably on her head and it's no surprise ... she is no stranger to the pageant stage. Alisha won Miss England in 2018 and went on to compete in Miss World, another of the top 4 pageants. She is now the only British beauty queen in recent times to have achieved such an accolade.

Alisha's winning photoshoot the following day used the beautiful Golden Gates as a backdrop, and the photos from Brian Hayes Photography will be used to promote the pageant both nationally and internationally.

Culcheth based Holly Pirrie, director of Miss International UK, said: "I am thrilled for Alisha, and she truly deserved to win. Alisha will be an incredible representative for the United Kingdom at Miss International and I know that she will have the trip of a lifetime in Tokyo!

It was an honour to host the event in my hometown of Warrington, and heart-warming to receive such an amazing response from lots of local businesses. I am excited for future events that we plan to hold in Warrington.

If you are reading this and want to be a part of it, either as a contestant or sponsor, our next events in Warrington are planned for March & May 2024. You can contact the team directly via email at info@pageantgirl.co.uk



Time Square commended by Royal Town Planning Institute for “Planning Excellence”

WARRINGTON’S Time Square, which has helped revitalise the town centre, has received a commendation by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) for Planning Excellence.

Time Square received the commendation in the ‘Successful Economy’ category of the 2023 RTPI North West Awards which are the most established and respected in the UK planning industry. Running for over 40 years, they celebrate exceptional examples of planning and the contribution planners make to society.

In awarding a commendation, the judging panel were full of praise for Time Square, saying that since opening, it has had a transformative impact on Warrington, increasing both investments in the town centre and supporting wider economic viability.

The judges said the success of the challenging scheme has been driven by an ambitious vision, shaped by extensive and meaningful public consultation, and implemented through a combination of a clear planning policy framework, phasing strategy, strong leadership and partnership working.

Judges were impressed by the careful thought given to design, and in particular how the

existing cultural heritage assets of the existing facades on Bridge Street were incorporated into the development. It was felt that this has been key in allowing the scheme to become well integrated with the southern part of the existing town centre, whilst creating its own unique identity and sense of place.

Also praised was the vision to reuse a highly complex site to bring a renewed vibrancy to the town centre, and the introduction of several different but complementary uses, which are increasing footfall and supporting both the day and night-time economies.

The judges also noted the sustainability and green energy credentials embedded within the development and agreed that the Market is a standout asset, providing a contemporary destination for shoppers and visitors while attracting and supporting new business start-ups.

Cllr Janet Henshaw, cabinet member for housing, planning policy and development, said: “Time Square has been a huge success story for Warrington. Delivered through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is now firmly established as a premier, family-friendly destination for our town centre, with high-quality

restaurants, shopping and leisure venues, a cinema experience, and a modern, contemporary home for our famous market.

“This praise from RTPI for the development is well deserved. It shows real recognition from national planning leaders of the fantastic work done by the council and its partners, to deliver a truly transformative project which is bringing in new investment, injecting economic vitality and driving the regeneration of our town centre.”

Cabinet member for economic development and innovation, Cllr Tom Jennings, added: “The Time Square development has transformed the face of Warrington town centre, bringing a major boost to our economy and attracting visitors from across the borough and wider region.

It’s a destination that Warrington deserves, and one that we can all be proud of.

“In delivering such an ambitious project, it was crucial we had a strong vision, high quality planning and design, excellent partnership working and meaningful community engagement. I’m delighted that all of this has been recognised by RTPI.”

The RTPI champions the power of planning in creating prosperous places and vibrant communities. It is the only body in the UK that confers Chartered status to planners, the highest professional qualification sought after by employers. It supports its members – over 26,000 worldwide – throughout their careers.

For more information on the awards, visit rtpi.org.uk



DAF dealer North West Trucks opens new site in Warrington

NORTH West Trucks, part of the Greenhous Group – one of the UK’s largest DAF dealer groups – has opened a new state-of-the-art dealership in Warrington, strategically located close to the M62 and M6 motorways.

Featuring a 9-bay workshop, the newly built site will provide a full portfolio of repair and maintenance services to all makes of truck, trailer and van with a planned 24-hour 7-day a week operation. This is supported by a round-the-clock parts operation through TRP all-makes parts.

The new purpose-built facility is the result of £2m of investment and features vehicle inspection, servicing, tachograph calibration, MOT preparation, dedicated bays with DAVIE diagnostics, air conditioning re-gassing and brake testing facilities to meet new DVSA regulations.

The new site comes in addition to the existing North West Trucks sites located in Huyton, Northwich, Ellesmere Port and Wigan. Peter Brabin, Depot Manager at North West Trucks Warrington, explained: “This is an exciting opportunity for North West Trucks, enabling us to broaden our service offering to our existing customer

base and support more vehicle operators in the local area. In addition to the new site, having another DAFaid support point on the map will enable us to reach our customers quicker to keep their businesses moving.”

North West Trucks Warrington is located on Mill Lane, Winwick, Warrington WA2.

The new site is fully operational and will be hosting a customer open day on Wednesday 23rd August 2023.

Brabin continues: “When a customer visits our site, they can be sure their vehicle is in capable hands. Our highly trained DAF and tail lift technicians with IRTEC accreditation are available to ensure operators vehicles are back on the road, whilst North West Trucks can offer a courtesy car and collection and delivery service to ensure minimal disruption to their day.

Kevin Swinnerton, Managing Director Greenhous Group Truck Division, concluded: “The new service centre is ideally placed in Warrington, just a few miles from the M62 and M6, meaning many operators can reap the benefits of our new location. The Warrington site will provide a centre for

after-sales and maintenance offering a seamless one-stop-shop service.”

For vehicle enquiries or to book

a vehicle in for repair, servicing, routine maintenance, or MOT, call North West Trucks Warrington on 01925 728020.



Warrington plays host to leaders from across the North West

WARRINGTON played host to leaders from across the North West of England for this year’s Northern Power Towns conference.

The event included a thought-provoking session led by Sir Philip Redmond – television producer and screenwriter best known for creating the television series Grange Hill, Brookside and Hollyoaks – who shared his views on culture, business, place-making, politics, leadership, levelling up, and societal challenges across the region.

Sir Philip also answered questions from attendees around deprivation, economic growth and his reflections and learning from Liverpool’s time as European Capital of Culture in 2008.

The Northern Power Towns group, a partnership between public and private sector partners, including councils, businesses and community organisations, has worked together for the last five years to support inclusive economic growth across the region.

There was a focused discussion on devolution and “Northern leadership” and its potential benefits for the North of England. The session was led by The NP11, a business-led group for the North

established in 2018 which brings together the region’s 11 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

The conference also enabled attendees to consider how, by working together and sharing best practice, partners across the North West can support green growth, housing, planning, science and transport.

Warrington Borough Council’s chief executive, Professor Steven Broomhead who chaired the conference, said: “It was good to see so many engaged partners across the North West attend this year’s conference at Birchwood Park here in Warrington.

“I am a strong believer in how effective public and private partnership working can address local and regional challenges, and I’m pleased to have been part of stimulating discussion with a number of leaders across the region about how we can work together to make improvements for our communities.

“The Northern Power Towns group represents millions of residents, from Runcorn to Rossendale, from Crewe to Carlisle, and by learning from each other and sharing best practice we can continue to support our ‘power towns’ to thrive across the North West.”



■ Sir Philip Redmond and Professor Steven Broomhead.

15Travel.com and Warrington Disability Partnership collaborate to enhance travel experiences for disabled people

15Travel.com, a start-up travel platform, has joined forces with Warrington Disability Partnership (WDP), a user led charity based in Cheshire, who have over 30 years’ experience of developing and designing solutions to independent living.

15Travel.com, endeavours to address the challenges faced by disabled People in the world of travel. By working closely together, both organisations aim to foster a greater understanding of these challenges and create a more inclusive travel environment.

Disabled travellers often encounter difficulties due to a lack of insufficient online information, that is often complicated as most travel agencies have little or no information that is relative to questions raised, which is further compounded due to inadequate staff training. What should be an enjoyable experience all too frequently becomes a source of stress and frustration, leaving some disabled travellers unable to access the most basic of facilities. Booking travel arrangements often requires numerous phone calls, leaving disabled People

frustrated, and uncertain about the outcome upon arrival at their destination, resulting in limited options for spontaneity.

Recognising the need for change, the first step is to comprehend the diverse needs of disabled travellers and identify the most common issues they face. To achieve this, 15Travel.com has been conducting user group meetings and one to one sessions in collaboration with WDP and the individuals they support.

The ultimate goal of this partnership is to provide disabled

People with equal access to travel, bridging the gap between them and able-bodied travellers. It is crucial for travel providers to move beyond the fulfilment of basic needs and strive to consistently deliver exceptional experiences as the standard.

In an effort to include as many people as possible in this transformative journey, 15Travel.com encourages interested individuals to sign up on their website, 15Travel.com. By doing so, they can actively participate in and contribute to this ground-breaking initiative.



Trailblazing partnership links businesses with students of all backgrounds

THE man who leads England's school careers education said he was "truly inspired" by a trailblazing partnership that links Cheshire and Warrington businesses with students of all backgrounds to prepare them for the world of work.

Oli de Botton, chief executive of The Careers and Enterprise Company told a major skills conference that the work of The Pledge Partnership which connects all 86 schools and colleges in the region with 550 businesses was "exceptional" and is "magnifying the impact on young people".

The glowing endorsement came at the "Bridging the Gaps" Cheshire and Warrington Pledge Partnership and Careers Hub Annual Conference at Alderley Park.

Attended by more than 200 delegates, the conference explored how employers, educators and other key local stakeholders can work further together to address local priorities based around three key themes, Skills, Inclusivity and Opportunity.

And those attending heard the great strides being made through support from The Pledge Partnership which includes Cheshire and Warrington Careers Hub.

The trailblazing network addresses skills and employment gaps, supports careers planning and gives students from all backgrounds meaningful access and experiences with employers so they are ready for the world of work.

Underpinned by the Gatsby Benchmarks, a framework that promotes careers education excellence, the Cheshire and

Warrington Careers Hub runs innovative tailor-made projects.

These include students being interviewed by genuine recruiters at Mock Assessment Centres, multiple careers fairs attended this year alone by 263 exhibitors and almost 6,000 people, and even Teacher Encounters which allow school staff to engage directly with employers to explore student career pathways relevant to their subjects.

Mr de Bolton told the conference: "What you are doing here is truly inspiring."

The work of The Pledge Partnership and Cheshire and Warrington Careers Hub, he said, was "magnifying the impact on young people" and added: "I have been blown away by the exceptional work that is going on in Cheshire and Warrington to help every young person find their next best step."

He also told the conference that working "collectively" was crucial and "teachers and parents need to be part of the conversation".

Statistics unveiled at the conference revealed more than 25,000 young people in Cheshire and Warrington a year were benefitting from the network which was not only seeing more students snapping up exciting jobs locally but raising careers education standards across the region.

The conference was told that on average Cheshire and Warrington schools have fully achieved 5.5 of the eight Gatsby benchmarks, which is above the national average. The 21 schools it had prioritised in disadvantaged areas had achieved even higher averages – 5.8 out of 8.

The benchmarks include enabling encounters with further and higher education and employers,

experience of workplaces and linking the curriculum to careers.

Evidence shows the better the quality of careers education the more likely a person will flourish after leaving school or college – particular those who face barriers.

Other speakers at the event included Clare Hayward chairman of Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership – which part funds The Pledge Partnership.

She said the growth of The Pledge Partnership from a small pilot project in Crewe in 2016 to covering the whole of Cheshire and Warrington today was "phenomenal."

The need to address the "attainment gap between our disadvantaged and advantaged students" was among priority areas but she stressed that people could be "rightly proud" of the work so far.

She added: "We are now seeing more and more young people successfully securing jobs with our local employers who are working with us to inspire the next generation. You now have the opportunity to consider what you can do to bridge the skills gaps, opportunity gaps and disadvantage gaps."

The event gave business, education, community and voluntary organisations opportunity to share practice through workshops and hear presentations including sessions from employers, education, South Cheshire Chamber and Warrington Borough Council, Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council.

The Pledge Partnership is calling for more local employers to help inspire the next generation.

Get in touch by emailing pledge@cheshireandwarrington.com



Warrington businesses urged to go for glory at Marketing Cheshire Tourism Awards

BUSINESSES who helped Warrington win a special award at the Marketing Cheshire Tourism Awards have been urged to bring more glory to the town by shouting about their own personal success stories and entering this year's event.

Nominations are now open for the Marketing Cheshire Tourism Awards 2023/4 which, split into 16 categories, recognise individual and collective excellence and outstanding achievement in the region's visitor economy and give accommodation providers, eateries and much-loved attractions the chance to show why they are a must-visit.

The awards show just why the region's tourism sector is among the nation's finest and visitor economy businesses entering also have the chance to enter the Visit England awards and showcase themselves on a national stage.

In March at a glittering ceremony attended by 250 guests at Warrington's Halliwell Jones Stadium, the whole town of Warrington was given a Special Recognition Award – something kept under wraps until the night itself.

The award was for its contribution and commitment to inclusion with examples cited by judges ranging from The Foodbank Weekends at Gulliver's World to Warrington Disability Partnership's annual Disability Awareness Day 'DAD' at Walton Hall Park.



Warrington Wolves' participation in the Physical Disability Rugby League, the diverse work of LiveWire which includes award-winning dementia-friendly buildings and services, a menopause awareness programme and walking football; and The Run Through Foundation's Warrington Running Festival were among other examples cited.

Judges said it was fitting the town received a special recognition award for "its unflinching commitment to promoting inclusivity in its innovative initiatives and events programmes."

And encouraging businesses to fly the flag for Warrington and enter the 2023/4 awards, Warrington Borough Council's cabinet member for leisure and community, Cllr Tony Higgins, said: "For Warrington to be recognised through this award for its commitment to inclusion was a fantastic honour."

"It demonstrated regional acknowledgement of the tireless work carried out by so many people – in particular our charity and voluntary partners – to champion inclusivity in everything we do."

He added: "Winning this award has brought us real benefits, showcasing Warrington as a diverse, welcoming and inclusive town and celebrating the work that goes on, day-in and day-out, to make Warrington a place where everyone matters."

"To be recognised in this way has certainly given us even more inspiration to continue working with our diverse communities to embed inclusivity across our leisure, tourism and cultural offer."

Nominations close on 1 September and finalists will be announced on October 2, 2023 before the ceremony is held at a Cheshire venue on March 21, 2024.

To enter the awards, go to the Marketing Cheshire Tourism Awards 2023/24 website <https://cheshireandwarrington.com/what-we-do/visitor-economy/marketing-cheshire-tourism-awards-2023-24/>.

Trevor Brocklebank, Chair of Marketing Cheshire and Deputy Chair of Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership said: "Every year the quality of entries is magnificent."

"We know the visitor economy contributes greatly to the region's prosperity and I can look forward to seeing nominations for individuals and organisations that continue to make Cheshire and Warrington a truly wonderful place to live and visit."



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