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# Insight

magazine

June / July 2024



The Journal of the

**WARRINGTON** CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

*in association with*  
**VR** VALE ROYAL  
The heart of Cheshire





■ Steven Broomhead – Warrington Council CEO, Hans Mundry – Leader of Warrington Council, Ian Hilliker – Managing Director Persimmon North West, Joe Philbin – Warrington Wolves, Karl Wiseman – Deputy Regional Chair of Persimmon Homes and Arron Lindop – Warrington Wolves.

# Housebuilders Persimmon are first occupiers of iconic Chadwick House

**HOUSEBUILDERS** Persimmon have become the first occupiers of the iconic Chadwick House – the historic centrepiece building on Warrington's Birchwood Park.

Warrington Wolves players joined borough council chiefs to cut the ribbon on Persimmon's new north-west headquarters.

Rugby League aces Joe Philbin and Arron Lindop were alongside council leader Hans Mundry and chief executive Steven Broomhead to formally open the new offices.

Persimmon is the first occupier of the historic Chadwick House building following its refurbishment and transformation works.

Chadwick House was built in 1976 after the wartime Royal Ordnance factory at Risley was closed.

It became the headquarters of the newly formed United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA).

At the time it was regarded as the last word in modern office development.

But over the years it became dated and was described as being typical of 1970s office building – a six-storey flat-roofed, framed block with a courtyard arrangement.

The modernised office boasts collaborative workspaces, breakout areas, and access to on-site facilities in EngineRooms and the Alive & Well gym.

Councillor Hans Mundry, leader of Warrington Borough Council said: "It was great to meet some of the team at Persimmon and officially open their new office at Birchwood Park.

"I am delighted to see one of the

UK's largest housebuilders choose Warrington as their new home and I'm confident they will enjoy their time here."

Steven Broomhead, the council's chief executive said: "It is really pleasing that a blue-chip housebuilder is joining our successful business park.

"Persimmon is now part of a park which has 6,000 high-value jobs and is making a significant

contribution to local and regional economic growth."

Ian Hilliker, managing director at Persimmon North West, added: "We're delighted to have moved into our new, modern offices here at Birchwood Park.

"We'd like to say a big thank you to Cllr Mundry, Mr Broomhead and Joe and Arron for helping us celebrate the formal opening of our new home."

Martin O'Rourke, commercial director at Birchwood Park said: "This move marks a significant moment for Chadwick House, perhaps our most recognisable building over the decades, as it completes the first stage of major refurbishment work.

"This is further evidence that Birchwood Park is a hotspot for developers across the region and nationwide."



■ Linda Welsby – Leading Manager at Birchwood Park, Martin O'Rourke – Commercial Director at Birchwood Park, Ian Hilliker – Managing Director Persimmon North West, Joe Philbin – Warrington Wolves, Karl Wiseman – Deputy Regional Chair of Persimmon Homes and Arron Lindop – Warrington Wolves.

# From the Chief Executive

Stephen Fitzsimons



**We finally have a General Election in July with an opportunity for Chamber members to provide their verdict on the current and future governments.**

It would be inappropriate for my personal politics to be too visible, however it's my job to challenge on behalf of business, regardless of what colour is behind number 10 (gold if going off a previous occupant's wallpaper...). It does frustrate me though, when I hear that "all politicians are the same" because they really aren't. I've worked with many MPs over the last 20 years and the northern ones in particular have a very demanding week, being away from their families and attending events over the weekends. The most effective MPs are those who have had a "proper job" because they better understand what it takes to work in the real economy.

Frustratingly, we have too many career politicians who entered straight from university and they have introduced legislation such as the Apprentice Levy with little appreciation for its affect on business.

You may not always see their efforts, however we have two excellent MPs from this outgoing parliament in Charlotte Nichols and Andy Carter. They have been very supportive of the Warrington Business Conference, participating in person and securing senior colleagues who help elevate the gravitas of the annual event. Andy is stepping down this time so we thank him for his great support and wish him all the very best for the future. If as predicted, we may be welcoming Sarah Hall into the Warrington South seat and if so, she has already provided several years of service to the town as

a local Councillor and I recently worked with her on the Warrington Skills Commission. We'll also have a third MP for Warrington after the election because Lymm has been moved into the Tatton constituency following a recent Boundary Commission - Esther McVey currently holds this seat. Rest assured that the Chamber will be engaging with all our MPs to ensure that they continue speaking up for Warrington businesses, regardless of their political affiliation.

Whoever is successful on the 4th July will inherit a sluggish economy with fundamental infrastructure failures in transport, water and energy. It was disappointing to see both major parties water down their green technology proposals because the market is potentially worth \$10.3 trillion. We need a brave and

forward thinking plan for growth that makes it easier to trade with our neighbours. We need a future workforce that is trained in the skills of tomorrow, not just today, with advanced engineering the crucial one for Warrington. And we want to see transport finally fixed so that northerners can move on from the same tracks and services that the Victorians used. Slogans don't matter - Levelling Up, get Brexit Done - just give us a plan for growth that we can all buy into!

Good luck to all,  
Stephen

## Birchwood Park donates £10k to local charity

**BIRCHWOOD Park has announced its successful fundraising efforts over the last 12 months, with a total donation of £10,000 made to the Walton Lea Partnership for the second consecutive year, completing the two-year fundraising partnership with just over £20,000 raised in total.**

The Walton Lea Partnership specialises in empowering young people and vulnerable adults with learning disabilities through various activities and opportunities. In 2023, Birchwood Park supported the charity's fundraising efforts through a series of engaging events and challenges, including the annual DuckFest and five-a-side football tournament.

As the new year unfolds, Birchwood Park has voted Esther Ghey's recently established community interest company, Peace & Mind UK, to be the Park's official donation partner for 2024.

Martin O'Rourke, Commercial Director of Birchwood Park, commented: "We're dedicated to making a meaningful impact in the local community which is why the Park team gets together to choose

a local cause to support. Over the past two years, our partnership with the Walton Lea Partnership has allowed us to witness firsthand the positive changes our contributions have facilitated, and we wish them well with the hope of working together closely in the near-future."

Peace & Mind UK is a Birchwood based community interest company founded by Esther Ghey in memory of her daughter, Brianna. Peace & Mind UK aims to support schoolchildren with their mental health, carrying forward Brianna's legacy through impactful initiatives.

Esther Ghey, founder of Peace & Mind UK, shared her thoughts: "I'm absolutely delighted that Peace & Mind UK is named Birchwood Park's donation partner for the year.

"I have been overwhelmed with the support, kindness and community that our family has received from staff across the park since Brianna was taken from us. I'm proud to be part of the park and can't wait to get involved in the amazing challenges and competitions."

Martin O'Rourke added: "The team felt strongly about voting Peace & Mind as Birchwood Park's donation partner, as we all felt compelled to support Esther who has already raised tens of thousands for students most in need of wellbeing support. We're looking forward to driving fundraising efforts this year in

Brianna's memory, via a lineup of fundraising activities already in the pipeline, to give occupants and visitors alike the opportunity to support such a good cause."

To stay updated on Birchwood Park's fundraising activity and upcoming events, visit [parklife.birchwoodpark.co.uk](http://parklife.birchwoodpark.co.uk)



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Stephen Fitzsimons, Chief Executive



# Strong growth showcased at Warrington Annual Property Review

**CONTINUING strong growth, evolution, economic resilience, and confidence for the future was showcased to more than 200 business leaders at the annual Warrington Property Review.**

The launch of Warrington & Co's Annual Property Review 2024, took place at the Park Royal Hotel, today, looking back on 12 months of achievement within the town's commercial property market.

Now celebrating its 26th year of publication, the report looks at the economic activity of Warrington's property and development sector over the previous year and prospects for future growth.

Attended by more than 200 people, and hosted by political journalist Jim Hancock, the event provided an in-depth analysis of the local property development and investment market, with statistics and reports

independently compiled by Warrington-based commercial property agents, BE Group, who have authored the report since its inception. Additional contributions were made by Cushman & Wakefield on national trends, with Warrington & Co highlighting future regeneration opportunities.

This year's Review once again demonstrates – in the face of significant economic challenges nationally – that Warrington is continuing to perform strongly, with a robust investment landscape, which is helping attract new businesses and strengthen the town's office, industrial and retail sectors.

It has resulted in the Centre for Cities once more identifying Warrington as a leading UK location for economic performance, with recognition given to the town's businesses for leading from the front in new technologies and innovation.

Successes of the past year include:

- Over 21,500 sq m of office floorspace transacted in 2023, comprising 36 deals – the highest in Warrington for five years.
- Major office and industrial deals completed at Birchwood Park, in Woolston, and at Gemini Business Park.
- The ongoing redevelopment of Cockhedge Shopping Centre, which will provide new leisure, food and retail space, along with new housing in the heart of the town.
- The success of boutique retail centre, The Hive, WA1, and the expansion of JunctionNINE Retail Park on Winwick Road.
- The opening of Warrington's new, Living Well Hub – funded by the government's Town Deal – in the town centre, which is one of the first of its kind in the country, providing a health and wellbeing 'one-stop shop' for local people.

Warrington Borough Council Chief Executive and Chair of Warrington & Co, Prof Steven Broomhead MBE, said: "It was really positive to welcome businesses for another successful Annual Property Review launch, once again providing everyone with a valuable insight

into our strong, sustainable, economic performance.

"We were able to showcase a local economy which – despite the more downbeat investment picture, nationally – continues to perform well, with a business sector which is robust, innovative, and resilient.

"Warrington remains a very attractive place to do business, thanks to the creative and entrepreneurial spirit and strong partnerships that define our town – with businesses, residents, the council, and a range of other partners all playing a role in driving our positive momentum.

"I'm confident that this momentum will continue into the future, as we work together to deliver on our ambitions to create an environment where all our businesses can thrive."

The Council's Director of Growth, Steve Park, who kicked off proceedings with a reflection on the life of former Warrington MP Lord Doug, said: "This year's Warrington's Annual Property Review yet again highlights a range of successes which show that our town remains a leader in business, investment, and innovation.

"Our ongoing economic success is something to be proud of, especially in the current national economic climate. Our strong resilience and collaborative approach continue to attract new investment and fuel opportunity.

"This means we continue to outperform many other towns and cities across the country, which can give us great confidence as we work together to meet the challenges of the future and drive forward Warrington's growth."

The Warrington Annual Property Review is hosted each year by Warrington & Co – the town's urban regeneration and inward investment partnership.

This year's event was sponsored by:

- PATRIZIA
- B-Engineering Group
- KK Thompson Solicitors
- Baker Mallett
- Pin Property
- Together Financial Services Ltd
- BetFred (Birchwood-Offices)
- Omega Warrington Ltd
- Orbit Developments



■ Jim Hancock.

## Wiltshire Farm Foods receives fourth Royal honour



WARRINGTON-based ready meal provider, Wiltshire Farm Foods, has been awarded a King's Awards for Enterprise in Sustainable Development 2024.

Regarded as the UK's highest business accolade, it is the fourth time the company has received the Royal honour, having previously won three Queen's Awards for Enterprise.

The company's ambitious closed-loop recycling scheme – which involves customers returning food trays back to drivers where 100% of them are subsequently recycled into new trays – is a world-first initiative on an industrial scale.

This groundbreaking project has seen 25 million trays be recycled to date; an achievement which gained considerable recognition from the award body and helped to secure this prestigious win.

Warrington branch manager,

Steve Bishop, says: "On behalf of the whole team, we are so proud to be recognised with a King's Awards for our closed-loop recycling tray scheme.

"This is all down to the tireless work from our drivers and their relationships with our customers – getting them involved in doing their bit for the environment has been a real motivator and something they really enjoy being a part of.

"It's a brilliant example of teamwork at its best!"

The award also recognises parent company apetito's commitment to doing business in a way that positively impacts on the environment. Its ambition to reach Net Zero by 2040 and its dedication to meet challenging short-term targets for carbon reduction, demonstrates how the company is committed to supporting climate change.



# Promoting healthy eating in the workplace

By David Herne - Director of Public Health Warrington

**RESEARCH shows that workers spend an average of a third of their time at work.**

So, your place of work is a key setting that can support healthy eating. Our diet impacts on our levels of health and wellbeing and studies suggest that a diet high in fibre, fruit and vegetables, healthy fats, and proteins, reduces the risk of poor mental health. This has benefits for businesses as employee happiness and wellbeing increases productivity by 13%. Encouraging healthy

choices is therefore a win-win for businesses and staff.

The British Nutrition Foundation's (BNF) Healthy Eating Week will be running from Monday 10 June to Friday 14 June 2024.

We are encouraging everyone to 'Give it a go' this Healthy Eating Week. Whether that means having one extra portion of fruit or vegetables a day, moving more, trying out a new recipe or using up leftovers. Healthy Eating Week 2024 is all about giving it a go! The

BNF will be providing information and resources for workplaces around the following themes:

- Eat at least 5 fruit and vegetables A DAY.
- Stay hydrated – drink enough water.
- Move more.
- Focus on fibre.
- Reduce food waste.

To receive the latest updates and information to help you plan or get involved in Healthy Eating Week 2024 visit [nutrition.org.uk/healthy-eating-week/](https://nutrition.org.uk/healthy-eating-week/) and register.



For further information and support visit:

- [nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/](https://nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/)
- [lovefoodhatewaste.com/](https://lovefoodhatewaste.com/)
- [nhs.uk/better-health/get-active/](https://nhs.uk/better-health/get-active/)

## Measles is on the rise – make sure you are protected

Measles is a highly infectious disease that can easily spread within the workplace through coughing and sneezing. It can lead to serious problems such as pneumonia, bronchitis, ear infections and on rare occasions, long-term disability or death. It isn't just a childhood disease – it can make adults seriously unwell too.

The MMR vaccine is safe and effective against measles, mumps and rubella. If you have missed one or both doses of the MMR vaccine, we encourage you to make an appointment with your GP to get vaccinated. This not

only provides protection for yourself, but also your colleagues and minimises staff sickness levels ensuring services can continue.

With summer just around the corner, if you plan to go on holiday, it is especially important to make sure you and your loved ones are vaccinated as measles is still common in many countries worldwide. To avoid bringing measles back to the workplace on your return, and to ensure you and your family are protected against this disease, make sure to book an appointment with your GP to get the MMR vaccine before you set off this summer.



## Cheshire High Sheriff's Award for Business Health & Wellbeing

The Business Health & Wellbeing (BHW) award seeks to acknowledge and champion the incredible steps taken by businesses or charities who demonstrate their commitment to the health and wellbeing of their workforce, through creating an environment for their employees to succeed.

The BHW award was developed in 2023 by Warrington Borough Council's (WBC) Public Health team and promoted widely to Cheshire businesses as part of the Cheshire High Sheriff's Awards for enterprise. Applicants were asked to summarise and provide examples of how current workplace culture and practices support employee health and wellbeing and have led to employee satisfaction, retention, and increased productivity, creating a healthier and happier workforce.

A panel of judges (from WBC Public Health & Chamber of Commerce) reviewed and scored applications in January, with the awards ceremony taking place at The University of Chester's Business School on Thursday 4th April. Both the winner and runner-up were invited to attend.

The judges were impressed with No Brainer Agency's values and

philosophy for investing in the health and wellbeing of their employees, which are ingrained within the organisation from top to bottom. Their dedication to looking after the health of their team shone through. They demonstrate that a small organisation can deliver big aspirations to positively impact on workplace health and wellbeing.

For a horticultural organisation, whose core business isn't health, the breadth of wellbeing initiatives Bents delivers to nurture their employee health and wellbeing is impressive. Their strong commitment to proactively engaging their staff in shaping company health policy, programmes and events is admirable and demonstrates the value of true co-production in cultivating employee health and wellbeing.

For further information about the award, visit [www.chester.ac.uk/about/high-sheriffs-awards-for-enterprise/](https://www.chester.ac.uk/about/high-sheriffs-awards-for-enterprise/).

If you would like the opportunity to showcase your business commitment to health & wellbeing, Warrington Borough Council are planning to return the award for 2024/25. Further communications will follow later this year.



■ Winner: No Brainer Agency



■ Shortlisted: Bents Garden & Home



# Cheshire law firm takes part in 'unique' French exchange programme

A "unique" international exchange programme involving Cheshire lawyers and counterparts from a French legal firm has been described as a "brilliant success".

Aaron & Partners have taken part in their latest two-week exchange scheme as part of their membership of the IAG Global group, with Lyon-based Ydès Avocats.

Taking place this month, it saw Real Estate Senior Associate Solicitor Hannah Fynn travel to France's second largest city, where she spent two weeks learning about French legal practice - and the similarities and differences to the UK, as well as immersing herself in the city's culture.

As part of the exchange, Fabien Fernandez, an Associate at the law firm Ydès Avocats, spent two

weeks in Cheshire, observing work in various departments and spending time with different experts at Legal 500-ranked Aaron & Partners within and beyond office life.

He also got involved in social, networking and community activities laid on by the firm including a day at Chester Races. Those also included a 'practice' hike up Mount Snowdon - a build-up to fundraising efforts that will see some members of the team attempt the Three Peaks Challenge this summer, all in aid of local specialist palliative care provider, The Hospice of the Good Shepherd.

Helen Watson, Partner and Head of Employment Law at Aaron & Partners, who sits on the board of IAG, said: "We're proud to be a part of the IAG network and the exchange programme

as just one component of that relationship. Through IAG we are able to work collaboratively with exceptional lawyers all over the world on behalf of our clients, and the exchange programme, one of very few schemes of its type, allows us to solidify those working relationships.

"It's a fantastic opportunity for lawyers to go and experience the law in a foreign country, which will go on to benefit our clients, bringing a host of learnings, helping us understand the similarities and differences between legal systems here and abroad, which in turn allows us to better service our clients with international needs. That's in addition to building an excellent relationship with our partner firms far beyond just the individual who's taken part in the exchange."

This year's exchange run by IAG Global, an international association of law firms and accountants, follows 2023's programme - the first of its type, which saw Aaron & Partners partner with leading US law firm, Philadelphia-based Miller Shah.

Helen Watson added: "The learnings for both firms have been very interesting and safe to say, this year has been another brilliant success - not to mention a great developmental tool for our next generation of up-and-coming lawyers.

"We'll continue to make visits to our IAG colleagues across the world and ensure we are well set to meet the increasing number of our clients who require international legal services."



■ Hannah Fynn and Fabien Fernandez.

## Local training and consultancy provider empowering businesses through new procurement and sustainability projects



### S. L. Procurement Solutions

*Creating Value in Supply Chains*

S.L. Procurement Solutions Limited, provide a range of Procurement and Supply Chain services, but have been enjoying working with local businesses, to guide them through recent economic challenges and helping them reach their growth goals and support them navigate this turbulent times.

Known for bespoke CIPS training for Professionals, the training company have seen an increase in first quarter enquires from regional businesses reaching out for specific Procurement based guidance to revive confidence in trading through Brexit, Covid and the economic challenges forecast for 2024.

Director Stephen Lovatt said, "businesses more than ever are realising the impetus on Procurement and supply chain, and the affect this has on an entire business. We have been working closely with many businesses in Central Warrington and its surrounding areas to drill down on many important areas

of their business".

The training and consultancy company have witnessed an increase in businesses getting in touch for bespoke help on risk management, contract management support, advice on new sustainability projects, in addition to the usual guidance on all aspects of business procurement activities with the cost of living crisis very much of the forefront of their planning.

"We continue to embrace the opportunity to get to know so many brilliant local businesses that we can help. We have such a broad spectrum of guidance that we can give, we have enjoyed seeing our services making such positive changes to businesses," added Stephen.

The company want to continue to offer these consultancy services in the local community and urge anyone who thinks they might need guidance to get in touch with S. L. Procurement Solutions Limited to see how they might help.



# Foster Care Matters, not-for-profit fostering agency launches in Chester

**FOSTER Care Matters, a new fostering agency, is officially launched with the help of CHESTER'S Town Crier, David Mitchell, who announced the opening.**

The team also hosted an information stand at Chester's multi-award-winning venue, Storyhouse.

Foster Care Matters, who achieved their Ofsted registration this month, will offer stable and loving homes for children and young people aged 0 to 18 years and will be recruiting foster parents across the North West.

As a children's charity with children's needs at their heart, Foster Care Matters is committed to re-investing back into their services to offer high quality support and ongoing training to their foster families, enabling them to help children matter.

The agency, whose head office is in Chester, offers a therapeutic approach and dedicated support to foster parents including access to their Centre for Fostering and Adoption Support, an established and recognised centre in the North West, offering innovative, bespoke, ongoing support from a multi-disciplinary team including occupational therapists and trained therapeutic social workers.

Karen Palfreyman, Foster Care Matters Registered Manager commented: "We are delighted to launch our new agency just ahead of Foster Care Fortnight 2024,

which is such an important event for raising awareness of the many aspects of fostering.

Nearly 70,000 children live with almost 55,000 foster families across the UK each day. This is nearly three-quarters of the over 98,000 children in care away from home on any one day in the UK. Every year thousands of new foster families are needed.

In the North West, there is a huge need for foster parents who can care for children of all ages, cultures and backgrounds.

Foster Care Matters therapeutic approach runs through everything we do and we cannot wait to start building our fostering family by recruiting foster parents across the North West".

Foster Care Matters is part of

the Adoption Matters family, a children's charity and well-established voluntary adoption agency with over 76 years of experience in the children's sector and the ONLY adoption agency in the North rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted five times in a row.

To find out more and download a fostering information pack, visit: [www.fostercarematters.org.uk](http://www.fostercarematters.org.uk)



## DSM Legal raises £1,770 for charity will-writing campaign

A Warrington law firm has raised £1,770 by participating in an annual charity will-writing campaign – which will help to fund vital work in the UK and abroad.

DSM Legal Limited has taken part in the Will Aid campaign since 2018 and has raised a grand total of £2,980, by volunteering their time and expertise to write wills and, instead of charging their usual fees for writing basic Wills, inviting clients to make a donation to Will Aid.

The money raised is shared between the campaign's partner charities, which work across many different causes in the UK and across the world.

Diane Massey, from the firm, said: "We love taking part in Will Aid, and to raise so much for charity was a real team effort.

"The entire team is very proud to take part, and we're delighted to have given so many people the reassurance of knowing they have a professionally written will.

"It's a brilliant feeling to know that such well-deserving charities will benefit, helping people both here in the UK and abroad who are

facing challenging times."

The generosity of solicitors who have taken part in Will Aid since it launched in 1988 has helped raise more than £24 million for charity in donations alone, with many millions more in pledged charitable legacies.

Jonathan Chase, chair of Will Aid, said: "Huge congratulations to all the firms for raising such a staggering amount this year. It's amazing that so many solicitors give their time to volunteer so generously, using their expertise to help people gain peace of mind by getting a professionally written will while fundraising for our incredible charities who do such crucial and life-changing work in the UK and around the world.

"On behalf of all the partner charities, a massive thank you and well done!"

Peter de Vena Franks, Will Aid's campaign director, added: "What a great team effort from everyone who has taken part in this year's Will Aid campaign. Thank you to everyone who has harnessed their expertise and generosity to give their time, helping to protect people's wishes and

also supporting such worthwhile partner charities who are changing lives for the better."

Will Aid takes place every November and involves solicitors waiving the fee for writing a basic will and instead inviting clients to make an upfront donation to Will Aid.

The suggested donation for a basic single Will is £100, and £180 for a pair of mirror Wills.

Donations are shared between Will Aid's partner charities: ActionAid, Age UK, British Red Cross, Christian Aid, NSPCC, Save the Children, Sightsavers, SCIAF and Trócaire.

To meet the continued demand each year, Will Aid needs more solicitors to take part. For more information, please visit: [www.willaid.org.uk](http://www.willaid.org.uk)







## Six in a row for Redwood Bank at industry awards

**A specialist business bank is boasting a sixth successive victory with a key industry award.**

Redwood Bank, based in Warrington, has won the Business Moneyfacts trophy for Best Business Variable Rate Deposit Account Provider for the sixth time at a London ceremony.

The bank, which was founded in 2017, has won this accolade every year since 2019.

Stuart Davidson, the Bank's

Director of Products and Strategy, said: "Six years in a row demonstrates longevity and consistency which, is arguably as important as the specific accolade.

"Backing British businesses is what we're all about, and our team works so hard to support them. So many of our customers are the small and medium-sized businesses upon which the UK economy is built. Providing products that help them achieve their business goals is what we're all about.

"Winning this award for six straight years is a remarkable achievement, and it means so much for our colleagues to be recognised like this at such a special occasion. We are beyond proud and we very much hope we can do it again next year."

Redwood was also shortlisted for two other awards – Best Business Fixed Account Provider, which it won in 2020, and Best Service from a Commercial Mortgage Provider.

The Business Moneyfacts Awards

attract entries from across the banking sector, with Redwood Bank joined as winners on the night by high street names including Santander, Lloyds and NatWest. Representatives from the bank were among more than 700 people at Evolution London for the ceremony.

Redwood's parent company, Redwood Financial Partners, is this year hoping to complete the reverse takeover of R8 Capital Investments plc, a company listed on the London Stock Exchange.

## Warrington-based laboratory wins contract with borough council

LOCALLY-based laboratory AlphaBiolabs, has once again been awarded the contract to provide drug, alcohol and DNA testing services for Warrington Borough Council.

Under the three-year contract, AlphaBiolabs will provide sample collection and back-to-lab analysis services for the Children's Social Care team, in support of family cases.

The company was re-awarded the contract following a rigorous tender process.

Rachel Davenport, director at AlphaBiolabs, said: "As a Warrington-based business, our contract with Warrington Borough Council means a great deal, as it allows us to assist the Children's Social Care team in their work with vulnerable children and families

across our own borough.

"With over 20 years' experience working with family law professionals, social services and local authorities, we fully understand the role that drug, alcohol and DNA testing plays in helping the council make important and often time-critical safeguarding decisions.

"We are delighted to be providing this service again over the next three years."

Established in 2004, and headquartered at Carina Park, Westbrook, AlphaBiolabs is one of the UK's leading providers of drug, alcohol and DNA testing services for members of the public, family law professionals, social workers, local authorities and the workplace sector.

It also operates 19 walk-in centres

across the UK and Ireland – including a location at its head office in Westbrook – providing

on-site sample collection appointments for drug, alcohol and DNA testing.







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
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### **For more information:**

**E:** [nphdigital@businessandtrade.gov.uk](mailto:nphdigital@businessandtrade.gov.uk)

**T:** +44 (0)20 4566 5206





# DV8 Designs unveils its latest 'three-tier' airport lounge

**DV8 were appointed once again by Aspire Airport Lounges to revamp Newcastle International Airport.**

The newly unveiled "three-tier" lounge marks a significant milestone in providing unparalleled luxury and comfort to travellers, offering an exclusive experience catering for all passengers under one roof.

David Collyer, Global Vice

President of Executive Lounges, expressed his enthusiasm for this ground-breaking endeavour, stating, "Our new approach is the result of extensive research into understanding what our customers truly want from their lounge experience."

This sentiment resonates deeply with our commitment to delivering excellence in every aspect of our design philosophy.

The design intent was to create a truly premium lounge service in line with the Aspire vision, whilst also integrating the unique geographical characteristics of Newcastle and the surrounding region.

MD Lee Birchall of DV8 Designs said "We are immensely proud to have contributed to such a transformative project that sets a new standard for airport lounges

and travel amenities."

Spanning across 1,100 square meters, the lounge introduces three distinct offerings: the classic Aspire lounge, Luxe by Aspire, and The Suite by Aspire. Each section is meticulously crafted to meet the diverse needs and preferences of airport guests, ensuring an unforgettable pre-flight experience.



## Warrington businesswoman and CEO honoured at inspirational women's event

A Warrington businesswoman has been celebrated as one of the North West's most inspirational women at a prestigious awards ceremony honouring the region's pioneering female figures.

Karen Turton, 52, received the Seed Bomb Award at the Girls Out Loud Shining Stars Ball last month in recognition of her work disrupting the status quo within corporate leadership teams.

With three decades of commercial and leadership experience in the hospitality sector, Karen Turton established performance consultancy, Purple Story, with a vision of fostering better leadership and to make the working lives of every individual at each organisation better.

The Seed Bomb Award, sponsored by Stanmore Insurance, is given to an individual who spreads the message about Girls Out Loud and the need to invest in the next generation, acting as an ambassador for the non-profit organisation.

Girls Out Loud was founded by entrepreneur, campaigner and female champion, Jane Kenyon, in 2009, with a pledge to empower and inspire the next generation of teenage girls. The multi-award-winning social enterprise is the leading provider of programmes supporting teen girls in the North West, working with more than 80 schools and impacting the lives of over 30,000 girls.

Despite the challenges posed by

the global pandemic, Purple Story has had year-on-year growth since starting. With a dedicated team of 16, the company has successfully implemented new leadership development programmes for renowned UK hospitality brands including Bella Italia, Prezzo and Flight Club.

Karen Turton said: "I had no idea whatsoever that I was going to win the Seed Bomb Award but it is a massive honour, especially to be recognised amongst so many incredible women and young girls.

"I started Purple Story with a mission to drive operational excellence. I was well-known in the hospitality sector, having worked as Operational Director at Nandos, but I abandoned this stable path and followed my dream of redefining leadership.

"In a nutshell, we blow up past perfect leadership and instead drive future fit leaders through our programmes. As someone who has always been fairly non-conventional and challenged the corporate mould, it's a privilege to support other businesses on their path to achieving this too.

"Jane and I have a lot of shared ambitions, so I'm incredibly proud to be an ambassador for Girls Out Loud and show my support in every way imaginable. At every opportunity, I'm finding people to connect with the non-profit, enabling the girls that I work with to become Big Sisters, and shouting about Girls Out Loud on my social media platforms.

"This year, I'll be working with Jane more directly as a thinking partner for how she scales Girls Out Loud up and continues her mission – there's a lot of exciting plans in the pipeline."

Jane Kenyon, founder of Girls Out Loud, said: "Karen has taken Girls Out Loud to her heart and shares our message at every opportunity with her clients, her suppliers, her social media connections, even people she sits next to on the train!

"Her enthusiasm has generated some awesome attraction for our brand – she truly sprinkles purple fairy dust wherever she goes and we're incredibly grateful for her support."

The Shining Stars Ball was hosted by Manchester-based social enterprise Girls Out Loud to celebrate the North West's top inspirational women and female pioneers.

The event, held at Hilton Manchester Deansgate, honoured nine women and girls who have gone above and beyond to champion women and equality in their personal lives and careers.

It forms part of Girls Out Loud's 14-year commitment to inspiring and empowering young girls, having impacted more than 30,000 young girls in the region.

The non-profit was founded by entrepreneur, campaigner and female champion, Jane Kenyon, in 2009, with a pledge to empower and inspire the next generation of teenage girls. The multi-award-winning social enterprise is the leading provider of programmes targeting teen girls in the North West.

For more information and to help change the lives of teenage girls across the North West, please visit: <https://girlsoutloud.org.uk/>





# Together for Good launches platform to drive social impact in West Cumbria and Warrington

A SIGNIFICANT milestone has been reached in the pursuit of social change as "Together for Good" officially launches its innovative platform aimed at fostering collaboration and driving positive impact in West Cumberland and Warrington.

With its mission to empower businesses, organisations, and volunteers to work together for the greater good, "Together for Good" is poised to transform the landscape of community engagement and social value.

As businesses and organisations increasingly recognise the importance of delivering social value, "Together for Good" offers a unique opportunity to turn commitment into action. The platform provides a central hub where businesses looking to deliver social value can connect with organisations in need of support and skills, as well as individuals eager to volunteer their time and expertise.

"At "Together for Good", we believe in the power of collaboration to drive meaningful change," said Tracey West, Senior Social Impact Manager of Sellafeld Ltd. "Our platform supports the vision in our social impact multiplied strategy (SiX), serving as a catalyst for bringing together businesses, organisations, and volunteers to address pressing social and environmental challenges in West Cumberland and Warrington. By uniting our efforts, we can create lasting impact and build a stronger, more resilient community for all."

Eirini Etoimou, head of corporate sustainability and supply chain development & sourcing, shared: "I am immensely proud of the launching of the "Together for

Good" platform, a way to build bridges, create impact, and inspire a brighter tomorrow through collaboration. "Together for Good" provides accessibility and real time visibility to the social and environmental challenges, making caring and support, easier than ever. I am hopeful that this new platform will be embraced and welcomed by our colleagues and our partners and will shed more light to the areas that require our attention and support".

Key features of the "Together for Good" platform include:

- **Business Partnerships:** Businesses looking to connect with the local community and deliver social value can explore opportunities and engage their employees in impactful projects aligned with their Social Value goals.
- **Support for Organisations:** Non-profits, charities, and community organisations can access a wide range of support, skills, and resources to amplify their impact and drive positive change in the community.
- **Volunteer Opportunities:** Individuals passionate about making a difference can discover volunteer opportunities across various causes and projects, enabling them to contribute their time and expertise towards building a better future.

In addition to the web platform, "Together for Good" have launched a mobile app, providing users with convenient access to opportunities and notifications on the go.

"The launch of the "Together for Good" app represents our commitment to making community engagement accessible and

convenient for everyone," added Tracey West. "Users will receive timely notifications about volunteer opportunities, project updates, and more, empowering them to stay informed and engaged wherever they are."

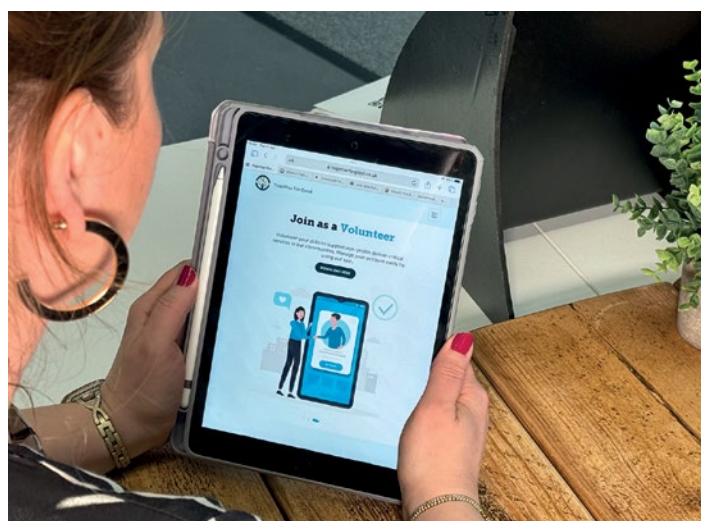
The launch of "Together for Good" comes at a time when collaboration and community engagement are more critical than ever. By leveraging the power of collective action, the platform aims to create a ripple effect of positive change that extends far beyond individual efforts.

"We are excited to embark on this journey of collective impact with businesses, organisations, and volunteers across West Cumberland and Warrington," concluded Gemma Leadbetter, Director of Finance and Support Services, BEC. "Together, we have the potential to make a significant difference in the lives of individuals and communities,

creating a brighter and more inclusive future for all."

The platform has been funded through the Sellafeld SiX and is free to use making it accessible to all.

For more information about "Together for Good" and how to sign up, please visit [www.togetherforgood.co.uk](http://www.togetherforgood.co.uk)



## ITI Group welcomes new Chief Executive

WITH offices at Birchwood Park, ITI Group have announced the appointment of Dominic Murphy, who joins the business as CEO.

Dominic's career includes roles at Deloitte, Centrica and Schlumberger and he brings a wealth of experience and leadership to the role. Most recently he was with Element Materials Technology where he led the Connected Technologies business across multiple regions. Dominic will drive the strategic direction of the business, building upon the already impressive achievements of the current leadership team.

Dominic comments, "I am delighted to be joining ITI Group. I feel privileged to join the team and be a part of the ITI journey. ITI Group play a critical role in

supporting clients with their digital evolution and their proven track record of using technical expertise to drive operational excellence is truly impressive. I am looking forward to engaging and working with colleagues across all locations to explore opportunities and address challenges, whilst building on the group's remarkable success story."

Mark Hardy, Chairman, ITI Group added "I'd like to congratulate the entire business on the success achieved in the last few years, booking record order levels, executing complex technology solutions and integrating two valuable acquisitions. I'm delighted that Dominic is joining to lead the Group on the next phase of its development and am genuinely excited for the future of the Company".







## New £24m fire resistance testing laboratory nearing completion

**A NEW £24m fire resistance testing laboratory is nearing completion at Warrington's Birchwood Technology Park.**

Four out of a planned seven state-of-the-art fire resistance testing furnaces are already installed.

In August last year, Warringtonfire, the UK's leading testing and certification provider, announced it was building a brand new 101,000sqft facility.

This significant investment enables Warringtonfire, part of the global

Element Materials Technology (Element) group, to expand capacity and meet increasing demand for fire resistance testing of critical fire safety products and systems, such as fire doorsets, intumescent coatings for steel protection, and other passive fire protection solutions.

Ten months into Warringtonfire's projected 17-month build programme, four furnaces have been fitted and are ready to enter the commissioning phase shortly. The furnaces will be supported by a raft of technology to carefully manage air quality both during and after the testing process.

This includes new air handling and high-performance ventilation systems, as well as cold smoke and hot smoke extraction systems, ensuring a better working environment for employees and compliance with strict environmental regulations. To support this, specialists from Element undertook an extensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) involving acoustics and noise modelling, air quality dispersion modelling, and emissions monitoring.

By the laboratory's open date, scheduled for January, two vertical furnaces, two horizontal furnaces, and one indicative furnace will be ready to accept test specimens. Another two furnaces, one horizontal and one vertical, will be installed by the end of 2026. In total, this will represent an 80 per cent increase in testing capacity over Warringtonfire's current site at Holmesfield Road, Warrington. Following the opening of the Birchwood Park laboratory, the existing facility will become a centre of excellence for reaction to fire testing, which are smaller scale

tests including spread of flame and heat release.

Dafydd Llewelyn-Jones, project manager for Element Materials Technology, has been coordinating the laboratory's construction.

He said: "We are on track with our progress and are actually seven weeks ahead of schedule in terms of the furnaces themselves. We are now moving swiftly along to fitting out all the office areas and control rooms, commissioning the building services, and completing the test bay preparation areas.

"It is brilliant to see this project coming together. We have put a significant amount of money into making this new laboratory truly one of the best in Europe, if not the world."

Besides the investment into furnaces, Warringtonfire is committed to reducing the laboratory's carbon footprint and making the new site as sustainable as possible. Measures include energy-efficient fans, upgraded power supply transformers that consume minimal electricity when idle, and electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure including a fleet of EV forklifts and charging points.

The site will also be well lit, through a combination of natural light from skylights and LED lighting that delivers a high lux level. In addition, the laboratory is set up to accept a blend of clean hydrogen and natural gas once local infrastructure offers this service.

For more information about Warringtonfire's new site, the latest updates or to book for 2025, please visit [www.warringtonfire.com/about-warringtonfire/warrington-site-relocation-and-expansion](http://www.warringtonfire.com/about-warringtonfire/warrington-site-relocation-and-expansion)

## Costly paperwork burden lifted for UK steel product exporters

Thousands of UK businesses are breathing a huge sigh of relief after the European Union decided to lift a huge paperwork burden.

Since last autumn, companies exporting products containing iron and steel to the EU, have been required to provide 'mill certificates' to prove the elements did not originate from Russia. This proved either expensive or impossible for many UK businesses resulting in the loss of crucial export markets.

Following months of talks by the British Chambers of Commerce, with UK and European officials, the EU has now scrapped the paperwork requirement. Officials in Brussels have now designated the UK as a partner country on steel sanctions against Russia, meaning the certification paperwork is no longer needed.

Commenting on the announcement from the European Union, the BCC's Head of Trade Policy William Bain

said: "Businesses up and down the country will be delighted at this outcome. A lot of hard work has got us to this position, which is strongly welcomed by the whole Chamber Network.

"We had many meetings and communications with both the UK government and the EU to highlight the negative impact the mill certificate requirements were having. In roundtables with senior officials, firms bravely described their experiences of ongoing lost orders and cash flow issues.

"Without those accounts from real businesses about the nature of the problem, and the need for a pragmatic fix, we could not have got this far. We'd like to thank to UK and EU officials for listening to the concerns of businesses and agreeing a solution.

"This is a big win for the collective power of our Chamber network. It's a welcome boost for thousands of British exporters ahead of the Easter weekend."



# Warrington man appointed head of sales at UK's fastest growing premium ice-cream brand

**THE UK'S fastest growing premium ice-cream brand has strengthened its sales team in a bid to meet demand for its products across the UK and abroad.**

The family business, which has seen more than 1,000 additional UK stores stock new flavours in this calendar year alone, has brought in three new members to its sales team, aiming to draw on their experience and continue the company's growth journey.

One of the three new starts is Will Dixon, 35, who will lead Mackie's of Scotland's sales team as the company's Head of Sales.

Dixon joins Mackie's with a wealth of food and drink sales experience – most notably from stints at global spirits brand, Pernod Ricard, and craft beer brand Northern Monk. During his time at Northern Monk, Dixon played a role in helping increase its UK retail distribution by almost 50%, growing it from the fifth-largest craft beer brand in the UK to the fourth.

Based in Warrington, Dixon becomes one of the Scottish farm-based business' only England-based employees, emphasising the company's drive and ambition to expand sales south of the border.

Will said: "I've been following

Mackie's progress over the past few years and when I learned of the role, I leapt at the opportunity to be a part of their next chapter of growth and success. It also helps that I have been a huge fan of Mackie's products since learning about them from my father-in-law, who won't eat any other kind of ice cream.

"I plan to blend what I have learned from my experience of sales strategy at both a global brand and a challenger brand in order to further improve Mackie's strength in its Scottish heartland, while winning new listings and consumers south of the border.

"Fundamentally, my focus is to help replicate Scotland's love for Mackie's ice cream across the rest of the UK, helping the business achieve its ambitious growth plans – and helping consumers get their hands on better ice cream!"

Mackie's has also appointed two new National Account Managers, Kirsten Blockley and Iain Thomas who bring a combined 20 years' experience in the food and drink sector to the farm.

Thomas spent years at Froneri, Europe's biggest ice cream manufacturer, which will stand him in fantastic stead in the sales team's pursuit of growth.

Stuart Common, Mackie's of

Scotland's Managing Director, said: "We've seen some incredible growth over the last 18 months, and we're excited to see our delicious products reach more consumers than ever.

"Appointing Will to the Head of Sales role comes at a really important time for Mackie's, as we reach more consumers south of the border than we ever have, while we strive to reach more.

"I'm confident that Will's clear focus on our company goals, and the support he will find from Kirsten and Iain in our achieving

them heralds the beginning of a very exciting period at Mackie's."

As the UK's largest independently owned ice cream manufacturers and one of the country's top ice cream brands, Mackie's ice cream is made using fresh milk and cream from their fifth-generation family dairy farm, Westertown, near Inverurie in Aberdeenshire.

Mackie's places great emphasis on its employee engagement with several employees working at the farm for more than 40 years.

To find out more about Mackie's, please visit: [www.mackies.co.uk](http://www.mackies.co.uk)



■ Mackie's sales team Kirsten Blockley, Will Dixon, Iain Thomas and Bill Thain.

## labdesk's 10GB internet revolutionising hyper fast connectivity for local businesses

LABDESK, a Warrington based cloud and technology partner, has launched a lightning-fast 10GB internet connectivity across Birchwood Park, a hub for innovation and industry in Warrington, made possible through the support and partnership with GigaBritain.

This groundbreaking initiative promises to propel businesses, tenants, and the nuclear sector into a new era of digital efficiency and productivity.

As the demand for high-speed internet continues to rise, Birchwood Park recognises the crucial role connectivity plays in fostering growth and competitiveness.

With labdesk's infrastructure, services and support, the business park will be equipped with cutting-edge infrastructure to meet the evolving needs of its vibrant community and the energy sector.

The upgrade marks a significant milestone in the evolution of connectivity within the region. By investing in cutting-edge technology, labdesk reaffirms its commitment to driving economic growth, fostering innovation, and

supporting the needs of the local business community.

Mike Douglass, labdesk commercial director comments: "Access to hyper fast, reliable and secure connectivity gives businesses a competitive edge, attracting top talent and positioning Birchwood Park as a premier destination for forward-thinking companies.

Birchwood Park serves as a vital hub for the nuclear sector, and the introduction of 10GB internet connectivity reinforces its position as a leading hotspot for industry innovation.

The sector relies heavily on data-intensive operations and stringent security protocols. The high-speed internet provided by labdesk ensures that critical data can be transmitted securely and efficiently."

Linda Welsby, Leasing Manager at Birchwood Park, commented: "We're pleased to see the introduction of this new 10GB internet service from labdesk on Birchwood Park. It adds to the diverse range of services and amenities available to our occupiers, via our Park and its

strong business networks that thrive here, further enhancing the appeal of being located right in the heart of the Northwest. As one of the largest hubs for the nuclear sector in the UK, this initiative will undoubtedly benefit companies with high security and data needs. We wish the labdesk team every success with the launch of this new service."

Stephen Fitzsimons, Chief Executive of Warrington Chamber of Commerce commented: "This is excellent news for Warrington and especially the world class nuclear sector at Birchwood Park. There are around 6,000 people based there and they are sharing

digital material on a daily basis. It is therefore essential that they are able to do so as quickly and securely as possible so this infrastructure boost is most welcome."

Will Goodall, Head of Wholesale at GigaBritain Commented: "Our mission is to create a connected world for businesses across the UK, and this is only possible working with our trusted partners like labdesk".

For more information about the internet and IT services across Birchwood Park – [www.labdesk.co.uk/birchwoodpark](http://www.labdesk.co.uk/birchwoodpark)





# Honours for Sport Priestley's class of 2024

**A YOUNG rugby player who made headlines after his debut for Warrington Wolves has been crowned Priestley College's Sports Person of the Year.**

Arron Lindop – who impressed the rugby world with his performance for Wolves against Catalans Dragons – won the honour at Sport Priestley's annual awards.

Unfortunately, the 18-year-old, who is studying BTEC Sport Coaching & Development, was unable to collect his trophy in person as he was busy – competing for Wolves again, this time against Hull FC.

"I was extremely grateful to receive the award, especially because it was voted for by other students and there are so many talented

athletes at this college," said the former Bridgewater County High School pupil.

"This time last year I had a big injury so it has been a crazy time. My biggest achievement has to be making my debut in France as it was a proud day for myself and my family. Even now I cannot put into words how much it means to me."

Other nominees for the Sports Person of the Year Award were netballer Taylor Ratcliffe and martial artist Jess Ryan, both internationals in their chosen sports.

This year's Sport Priestley Awards were sponsored by Toby and Lisa Macormac of Warrington Town FC, which hosted the event.

Fitting then, that Priestley College's Football Academy was named 'Team of the Year' after a season that saw the firsts and seconds win their respective leagues. They reached the finals of the national college competition and the John Sleigh Cheshire Cup.

At the awards dinner, national and international honours were awarded to athletes in sports as diverse as tennis, windsurfing and netball.

Carys Backhouse Worrall, a former pupil at Cardinal Newman Catholic High School, received

the Special Recognition Award for her voluntary coaching work at Warrington Youth Zone, RugBees and other community work encouraging girls into rugby league.

Sport Tutor Sam Nightingale, who organised the event, paid tribute to the entire cohort.

"We attract the most talented young athletes to Priestley every year and this year's cohort has impressed not only with their sporting talent, but also their commitment to their studies," she said.



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# J&K Ross supports local motorbike talent

**CHAMBER** members **J&K Ross**, one of the UK's leading providers of personal protective equipment (PPE) has announced its continued sponsorship of local sports person Adam Perks, who races motorbikes as a hobby.

Adam, an electrical engineer by trade, began his racing journey in 2022 and has been making waves in UK racing ever since. Competing in various races across the UK, Adam recently clinched victory at Oulton Park and has consistently finished on the winner's podium securing second place finishes in other races. He currently holds a top four position in the championship, where he races for the Wirral100 and NG Road Racing Clubs.

J&K Ross provides a comprehensive range of personal protective equipment, safety wear and branded corporate wear to ensure the protection and wellbeing of workers across many different industries. From high visibility jackets, vests and safety footwear to goggles, gloves, branded tabards, polo shirts and workwear. At their retail store in Kerfoot Street they stock leading brands including DeWalt, Leo Workwear and Rockfall.

By sponsoring a talented motorbike racer like Adam Perks, J&K Ross are reinforcing their commitment to safety, showing the importance of

protective equipment in high-risk environments.

Chris Ross, Chairman of J&K Ross, also a passionate motorbike enthusiast expressed his delight in supporting a talented local athlete in a sport he deeply admires. Chris, who during lockdown, built a bike based on a Honda CX500 from many individual parts including refurbishing the engine, is thrilled to back Adam and ensure his safety on the circuits through sponsorship. The hand-built bike is a showpiece displayed

in the J&K Ross boardroom in Warrington.

Adam, who is from Warrington, began his passion for motorbikes at the young age of 6 through watching Superbikes and MotoGP. He particularly enjoys racing at circuits like Cadwell Park, Anglesey and Cheshire's Oulton Park. Grateful for the continued support from J&K Ross, Adam expressed his appreciation for the backing from both the company and his family and friends. He highlighted the significance of the

sponsorship in enabling him to pursue his racing dreams and stay competitive in the sport he loves.



■ The Honda bike Chris built.



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