



Insight

magazine

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The Journal of the
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VR VALE ROYAL
The heart of Cheshire



'Contractor's consultancy' eyes up major expansion – with workforce set to double this year

A FAST-GROWING consultancy business aims to almost double its workforce this year amid ambitious growth plans.

Dubbed "the contractor's consultancy", Novo Consultants provides expertise across the built environment sector.

The Warrington-based business has supported several major multi-million-pound projects, ranging from the refurbishment of Manchester Airport to the construction of the Co-Op Live Arena.

Now the ambitious consultancy plans on creating 20 new roles – split evenly between staff and consultants – over the next 12 months, with a keen eye on expansion.

"Novo Consultants only launched last August, but in a short period we've made big progress and by the end of the decade, our current goal is to turnover £1m-a-month," said Managing Director, Jason Palmer.

"Integral to our growth is our workforce, and we are thrilled to be well positioned to grow our team in order for the business to reach that level."

Boasting a unique model, Novo Consultants provides a range of high-calibre and experienced commercial, planning and project control services to leading engineering and contracting organisations.

And while much of the company's contracts have been concentrated

in the North West, the company is already making moves to expand across the UK.

"Our initial target is to expand further into the Midlands, and we've already made a key strategic hire by appointing high-skilled commercial manager Ian Rushton to help break into the area, while the goal next year is to expand into London," added Jason.

"Additionally, we have identified three key new markets for the business – defence, rail and nuclear – where we will be placing more resources, and we are really interested to use our expertise to help businesses within these sectors."

And the recruitment drive is already well underway.

Besides Ian's appointment, Novo's leadership team has been bolstered by the appointments of a new Business Development lead Ellie Hyde and a senior accountant Debbi Matthews to help bring services in-house, providing stability.

"While many businesses seek the cheapest option when it comes to consultants, I strongly believe that you get what you pay for, and the skillset, experience and professionalism of our team is second-to-none," added Jason.

"The feedback we've had from clients has been superb, and we have incredibly high hopes for the next 12 months and beyond."

For more information, visit www.novoconsultants.co.uk

Leading the Conversation: DV8 Designs on Stage at NEWH Paris

DV8 Designs recently had the honour of joining hospitality leaders at the NEWH Leadership Conference in Paris, where Managing Director, Lee Birchall, was invited to speak on a panel exploring The Future of Food & Beverage.

Stepping onto the stage, Lee shared insights on how design, sustainability, innovation, and shifting guest expectations are redefining the hospitality

experience.

Joining a dynamic panel of industry experts, including Tim Mutton, Founder of Blacksheep, Antoine Menard, Chief Creative Officer at Paris Society, and Heleri Rande, Partner at Think Hospitality (Moderator), the discussion offered fresh perspectives on where the industry is headed, and the role thoughtful design plays in shaping its future.



From the Chief Executive

Stephen Fitzsimons

The recent retirement of Warrington Borough Council Chief Executive Prof Steven Broomhead got me thinking about how the town has changed in the last few decades.

Although not quite as shiny and new as it once was, the Halliwell Jones Stadium is a fantastic asset for the borough, both as a sports stadium and conference venue. Younger residents are probably unaware of the crucial role Steven, the late Doug Hoyle MP and others had in making this happen.

Similarly, the town centre has been transformed, initially with the Golden Square extension and new bus station, then more recently with the £142m Time Square development. We've welcomed

the English Half Marathon, Rugby League World Cup, Neighbourhood Weekender, Mela and Pride in a burst of new culture. The "New Town" perception couldn't be further from the truth!

I wish the national economic outlook made me feel as positive as Warrington's cultural mix does. Every key indicator seems to be heading in the wrong direction - growth, trade and business confidence down, with inflation and unemployment both up. We also have a new Employment Rights Bill coming in that will have a big impact on our members.

Whilst no-one wants to see the exploitation of any section of the workforce, government is being incredibly naive in thinking that

everyone is a model employee. The last thing an SME needs is not being able to easily part company with a new recruit who is clearly not going to work out.

Devolution is once again in focus as the inevitable journey towards an elected Mayor begins. Frustratingly, the elections have been put back until May 2027, however there will still be a shadow Combined Authority in place before then. This means that Cheshire & Warrington can still receive a significant financial settlement from central government. However, it's only with a Mayor that the county will have a seat at the top table. This means being invited into Downing Street with the other Metro Mayors and participating in trade missions



overseas. Local Councillors are voting on devolution this autumn and if any of the three Cheshire Councils are against, we face another long period in the economic wilderness, so a "yes" vote is the only option for growth.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and I look forward to seeing you at the Warrington Business Conference on the 19 September.

Global mat brand partners with Warrington agencies for major UK expansion push

GLOBAL mat and rug manufacturer Kleen-Tex has joined forces with search-driven content agency No Brainer and branding agency The Modern World to spearhead a major UK growth drive - with bold plans to shake up the market through its flagship wash+dry brand.

The partnership will see the Warrington-based, award-winning agencies work with Kleen-Tex, which already sells its popular Turtle Mat product in the UK, on branding, content, PR and campaigns.

Well established in the US, South America, Asia and across Europe, Kleen-Tex is now focused on further growing its UK footprint. And with its European headquarters also based in Warrington, the business sees the launch of wash+dry - and its collaboration with No Brainer - as a key step in that expansion.

The deal is the latest in a string of new client announcements and award wins for No Brainer over the past year.

Gary Jenkins, Managing Director of No Brainer Agency, said: "We're incredibly proud to be partnering with The Modern World to support Kleen-Tex, which is a global powerhouse in manufacturing. The team has an ambition to shake up the market and that's an exciting challenge for our team and a perfect match for their creativity and strategic thinking. This is a brand with serious potential, and we're excited to be part of the journey."

Matt Lewis, Creative Director of The Modern World said: "We're thrilled to be partnering with the No Brainer team to deliver a refreshed brand identity for wash+dry. The vision for the brand is to firstly re-engage the UK market with further, ambitious plans to then rollout across Europe and beyond, which from a branding point of view, can bring it's own unique challenges. However, our collective experience and skillset is perfectly placed to deliver it."

Family-owned Kleen-Tex was originally founded in the US in

1967 and has grown to become one of the leading designers and manufacturers of rugs and mats across the world. It boasts a rapidly growing presence in Germany and other European markets.

Nick Coward, European Sales Director at Kleen-Tex Home, said: "Sales of wash+dry have been phenomenal across Europe, and we've always known there was huge potential to replicate that success in the UK.

"We've worked hard to create

something bold, design-led and built to stand out in a market that's often quite safe - and now, with No Brainer and The Modern World on board, we've got a team of industry experts who share our passion, ambition and energy to really make a mark in this industry.

"They understand our brand and our goals inside out, and with their support, we're confident wash+dry will become a go-to brand for stylish, high-quality mats, runners and rugs across the UK."



■ Gary Jenkins and Matt Lewis.

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Stephen Fitzsimons, Chief Executive

Award-winning nursery group opens forest school

AN award-winning nursery group has opened a new forest school at Warrington.

Dunky's Day Nurseries, which provides high quality childcare across the North West, has opened a Forest School in the Activity Centre at the Gulliver's World theme park.

It's the seventh nursery in the family-run nursery group.

Dunky's was founded by Siobhan McCarroll who started her career as a nursery nurse before working up to become a manager and opening her first nursery in 2005.

Over the years, she has grown Dunky's to a group of nurseries in Culcheth, Farnworth, Great Sankey, Hapsford, Runcorn, Warrington and now at Gulliver's World.

All the nurseries have gained either "Outstanding" or "Good" in Ofsted inspections.

Dunky's Forest School at Gulliver's World is in the grounds of the theme park and occupies an area of woodland. There are multiple bell tents, canopies and unique structures as well as a nature trail for children to explore.

A dedicated Dunky's team engage children in a wide range of activities using nature as a learning tool.

Forest School is a method of working outdoors with children using the natural environment to promote social and emotional development.

Siobhan said: "I'm delighted to have opened our seventh nursery and for it to be a Forest School in the fantastic setting of Gulliver's World.

"At Dunky's, we believe in the holistic power of nature-led learning which is why we have a growing number of Forest Schools at our nurseries.

"It's an inspirational process that offers our children regular opportunities to develop their confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland and natural environment.

"These learning experiences also help to develop communication and practical skills, as well as a greater understanding of nature. Forest Schools can also appeal to children who are less engaged in the classroom and can improve behaviour, motivation, concentration and confidence.

"We're getting lots of interest in our new Forest School from parents and our children absolutely love it. The range of activities they can do is huge and include sensory walks, foraging, hunting for mini beasts, building dens, playing in puddles, climbing trees, tying knots and building and lighting fires and cooking on them.

"We give our children the space to explore, but always with a high ratio of adults to children.

"When I opened my first nursery nearly 20 years ago it was never my plan to have seven nurseries, but I always wanted to have a successful business and to provide

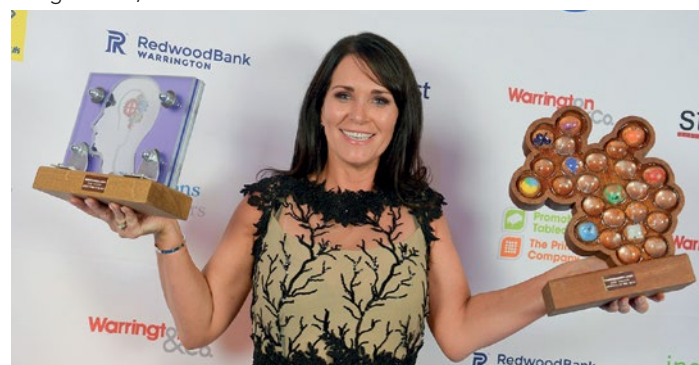
exceptional places for children to learn and grow, ahead of them starting at primary school.

"I'm proud of the brilliant team we have at all of our nurseries, some of whom have been with me since the start, and others who are just beginning their childcare career with us."

Craig Clews, resort director at

Gulliver's World, said; "Just like Dunky's Day Nurseries & Forest School, we're a family business and it's great to be working with a local company that delivers such a good service.

"We have a fabulous setting here and it's great to open our grounds and to welcome children into a natural learning environment with woodland and trails."



■ Dunky's founder Siobhan McCarroll.



■ Lauren Bailey, manager of Dunky's Gulliver's World and Craig Clews, Resort Director.



Birchwood Park welcomes new arrivals as summer momentum continues

BIRCHWOOD Park is building on its strong momentum this summer with the arrival of two new occupiers – Omnicell and Blue Ribbon Healthcare – further cementing its reputation as the North West's premier out-of-town business destination.

Omnicell, a global leading player in healthcare automation (medication and medical supply management), has relocated from Irlam to a new warehouse facility at 714 Eddington Way, taking advantage of Birchwood Park's high-quality industrial space and strategic location. The move supports Omnicell's plans and commitment to serving the national healthcare market and beyond.

Bethan Dixon, Facilities Manager at Omnicell, commented: "We are excited to make Birchwood Park our new home. The Park's excellent facilities and accessibility provide the ideal environment for us to run our operations and continue delivering innovative solutions to healthcare providers across the region."

Blue Ribbon Healthcare, a growing healthcare supplier, is also new to

Birchwood Park, relocating from Blackburn to Suite D in Chadwick House, a modern office space of 2,438 sq. ft. Their move marks an important expansion for the company, which is undertaking fit-out works currently, ahead of full occupation.

Jade Avison, Executive Assistant at Blue Ribbon Healthcare, has also commented: "Birchwood Park offers the perfect combination of professional workspace and community spirit. We look forward to establishing ourselves here and becoming part of the thriving business environment on the Park."

The arrival of Omnicell and Blue Ribbon Healthcare comes following the recent expansion of Veolia Nuclear Solutions (VNS), a leading nuclear technology provider at Birchwood Park. While VNS strengthened the Park's reputation as a centre for the UK's expanding nuclear industry, Omnicell and Blue Ribbon Healthcare underline its appeal to a wide range of growing businesses, across various sectors.

Martin O'Rourke, Commercial Director at Birchwood Park,

commented: "We're delighted to welcome Omnicell and Blue Ribbon Healthcare to Birchwood Park. Their decisions to relocate and expand here reflect the strength of our unique offering – combining a wide range of warehouse spaces with flexible offices, alongside a vibrant business community committed to growth and sustainability. Birchwood Park continues to attract a diverse range of occupiers, reinforcing its position

as the North West's leading business destination."

Knight Frank acted on behalf of Omnicell in securing the new premises. B8 Real Estate was the acting agent for the Park for the warehouse letting, JLL and OBI were the acting agents for the Park for the offices.

For more information on the range of occupiers at Birchwood Park, please visit: <https://www.birchwoodpark.co.uk/destination/>



Birchwood Park's annual fundraising event raises £4k for Peace & Mind UK

HUNDREDS of visitors from across Warrington and the wider region attended Birchwood Park's annual summer fundraiser, Duckfest – raising £4,000 for Peace & Mind UK, the Park-based organisation founded by Esther Grey to support young people with their mental health.

Taking place around the lake, the event once again brought together the local community for a day full of fun, food and fundraising, all in support of the organisation.

From creative competitions to lively races, locals were reminded why the day has become a staple in the social calendar.

The Engineered Duck Race made a return in full force, with occupier Tenet taking the winning title after designing and building the best, modified duck. The headline event – the ever-popular Duck Dash – was won by 11-year-old Leighton, beating dozens of other hopeful entries in front of spectators.

As well as balloon animals, street food, and a DJ, attendees enjoyed seeing the delightfully decorated ducks in the Best Dressed Duck competition. This year's creative winners included:

- 'Elsa Duck' (Under 8s) – Jenna, daughter of WHP's team member
- 'DJ Duck' (8–16s) – Corey Hardy
- 'Strawberry Duckery' (Over 16s) – Maria from the EngineRooms

The Park's occupiers got involved

in the celebrations, selling out the Corporate Ducks ahead of the Corporate Duck race. Avoira, CBRE, Kelsey Networks, labdesk, NUVIA, Prodware, TÜV SÜD, and Werfen submitted fantastic designs – but Goodlife Recruitment took home the win.

Martin O'Rourke, Commercial Director at Birchwood Park, said: "Duckfest is one of the highlights of our year for many reasons –

but none more so than raising awareness and vital funds for such an important cause.

To raise £4,000 for Peace & Mind UK – a cause close to home for so many – is a testament to the generosity and spirit of everyone who took part. We're incredibly proud to support Esther and her team's critical work, and we'd like to thank our Birchwood Park team for arranging the day and making

it such a success."

Birchwood Park will continue to support Peace & Mind UK – which is soon to be renamed as the Brianna Ghey Legacy Project – throughout the year, with fundraising events and initiatives planned in the months ahead. To stay updated on upcoming activity, visit www.birchwoodpark.co.uk/parklife



Chance for local businesses to shine as entries open for Visit Cheshire Tourism Awards 2026

LOCAL tourism champions are being encouraged to shine, as Cheshire & Warrington's top visitor awards return with a new name.

Entries are officially open for the Visit Cheshire Tourism Awards 2026, with this year's celebration of the region's visitor economy.

Run by Marketing Cheshire (and until last year called the Marketing Cheshire Tourism Awards), the awards honour excellence across the entire visitor economy – from standout attractions and stylish stays to unforgettable events and first-class hospitality.

The prestigious event will take place on Thursday, March 5, 2026 with the host venue to be unveiled in the coming months.

Tourism is a powerhouse for Cheshire and Warrington, generating £3.9 billion a year for the local economy, supporting 38,000 jobs, and welcoming over 56 million visitors. The Visit Cheshire Tourism Awards are designed to spotlight the inspiring people and businesses behind that success.

This year's awards will feature 17 hotly contested categories, including the return of the Best Event or Festival Award, introduced last year, and won by Deva Fest at Cholmondeley Castle.

Highlights from the 2025 awards included a standout win for the Harry Styles-inspired Harry's Home Village Tour, in the New Tourism

Business Award, The Ice Cream Farm in Tattenhall scooping Visitor Attraction of the Year, and Jodrell Bank being named Business Events Venue of the Year.

Encouraging tourism professionals ranging from those running a boutique hotel or family-run café that's going the extra mile to a quirky new tour to step forward, Jamie Christon, Chair of Marketing Cheshire and CEO of Chester Zoo, said: "The Visit Cheshire Tourism Awards are a cornerstone of our region's calendar – a celebration of the incredible people and experiences that make Cheshire and Warrington a must-visit destination.

"Beyond the thrill of winning, participants often report a real boost to business, team morale,

and recruitment.

"With the awards continuing to grow in prestige, now is the perfect time to get involved. Submit your entry by 4pm on Friday August 22, 2025 – and don't miss your moment to shine."

And for winners, the recognition doesn't stop here – qualifying entrants will go on to represent Cheshire at the national VisitEngland Awards for Excellence.

At the 2024/25 awards this included Jodrell Bank Centre For Engagement which flew the flag for Cheshire after it was crowned Business Events Venue of the Year.

Urging others to enter this year's awards, Teresa Anderson,

Director, Jodrell Bank Centre for Engagement said: "Jodrell Bank is honoured to be recognised alongside so many outstanding regional businesses and attractions. These awards shine an important spotlight on the incredible talent and destinations that set Cheshire apart, and we're proud to come together with Marketing Cheshire to celebrate everything that makes this part of the country such a fantastic place to visit.

"We're especially delighted to have had the opportunity to go on to the national awards and win silver for our venue hire provisions, reflecting our ongoing mission to promote science for all."

To enter visit www.visitcheshire.com/tourism-awards



Cheshire Language Academy launches new workforce upskilling programs

RECOGNISING the evolving demands of the modern workplace, Cheshire Language Academy is set to launch a series of new English and work skills courses this September.

These specialised programs aim to equip both current and future employees with not only essential English language proficiency but also crucial industry-specific knowledge, addressing the growing national focus on workforce integration and efficiency.

Janet Wilson, Director of Cheshire Language Academy, highlighted the academy's understanding that language skills alone are often insufficient for effective workplace integration. "As the focus intensifies on getting more people into the workplace, we understand that English language skills alone may not be enough," Wilson stated. "That's why we're excited to offer a range of new courses designed to upskill your current and future employees."

The academy has developed three

new specialised courses, each combining English language study with vital industry insights:

- English and Logistics: Designed for individuals in the logistics sector, running on Tuesdays from 12:30PM to 2:30PM.
- English and Care: Geared towards the care industry, with sessions on Tuesdays from 6:00 PM to 8:00PM.
- English and Health & Safety: Focusing on essential health and safety knowledge, held on Wednesdays from 10:00 AM to 12:00PM.

Each course spans 15 weeks, with two hours of instruction per week, totalling 30 hours of comprehensive learning. The cost per learner is £295, which includes a course book. The first courses are scheduled to commence on Monday, September 15, 2025.

Classes will primarily be held at the Warrington Business Centre, 67 Bewsey Street, Warrington WA2 7JQ. However, for businesses with a cohort of 10 or more learners,

Cheshire Language Academy offers the flexibility of delivering bespoke courses directly on-site. This allows for content to be precisely tailored to the specific requirements of a company, ensuring employees gain immediately applicable practical knowledge.

"Our goal is to ensure your employees not only understand their roles but truly comprehend what's expected of them," Wilson added, emphasizing the academy's commitment to practical, impactful education.

While individual enrolments are welcome, the academy strongly encourages businesses to consider these programs as a strategic investment in their workforce. Empowering employees with enhanced skills is expected to lead to greater efficiency, improved communication, and increased confidence within teams.

To ensure every learner is placed at the appropriate level and can maximise their success, Cheshire Language Academy provides

a free English assessment. These assessments are typically conducted at the Academy but can also be arranged at the workplace for convenience.

Businesses interested in learning more about how these new courses can benefit their organisation are encouraged to contact Janet Wilson via email at janetw@cheshirelanguageacademy.com, by phone at 01925 575557, or on mobile at 07766 188185.



New leisure centre and Slide Park at Cockhedge will create 40 new jobs

A NEW leisure centre and unique Slide Park creating 40 new jobs is set to be created at the Cockhedge development in Warrington, attracting an estimated 150,000 new visitors annually.

Leading North West Asset Manager, Altered Space, has announced the landmark deal with Rocafella Leisure Group, securing a 25,000 sq. ft space at

its Cockhedge development.

The agreement is a significant step in the evolution of the mixed-use scheme, solidifying Cockhedge as a major leisure and retail destination in Warrington.

Rocafella Leisure Group, known for its innovative and immersive family-friendly entertainment experiences, was the creator of the UK's first and largest ninja

park, Total Ninja. Building on this success, Rocafella Leisure Group will introduce a new Slide Park to Cockhedge. The venue, which has been named 'Slide Sliderson', will deliver a high-energy entertainment experience for all ages, further cementing Cockhedge's position as a leading family-focused destination.

This strategic partnership will introduce the Slide Park concept to Cockhedge, expected to draw an additional 150,000 visitors annually. The new venue, a first of its kind in the UK, will strengthen the scheme's leisure offering and create synergies with the surrounding retail mix, boosting the development's commercial viability and solidifying its status as a major leisure destination.

Chris Hayes, founder and managing director of Rocafella Leisure Group, commented: "What drew us to Cockhedge was the clear vision for revitalisation and the opportunity to be part of a transformative development. The regeneration aligns with our mission to create unique, innovative, family-friendly destinations. The location is ideal for Slide Sliderson, which brings a fresh, innovative attraction to the North West of England with never-before-seen attractions. We are keen to add to the local community and we will be creating 35 to 40 new jobs as well as looking to support local junior sports clubs by striking up

strategic partnerships."

The transformation of Cockhedge is a key part of a broader initiative to revitalise Warrington's town centre. With leisure spending on the rise, the new venue will benefit from exceptional visibility and accessibility, thanks to the Cockhedge Masterplan. This plan includes a 900-unit, car-free residential development, positioning Cockhedge as a modern, vibrant destination for local residents and regional visitors alike.

Michael Brown, director and co-founder at Altered Space, commented: "This letting to Rocafella Leisure Group is a fundamental piece of the long-term vision for Cockhedge and the regeneration of Warrington town centre. It perfectly underscores our commitment to delivering a commercially sustainable scheme that enhances Warrington's town centre offering."

Altered Space's ambitious plans for Cockhedge continue to unfold, with further tenant announcements expected in the coming months. The focus will be on securing a diverse mix of operators that will meet the scheme's dynamic, mixed-use aspirations.

This project builds on Altered Space's successful track record of regeneration, including their work on Stanley Square, which continues to breathe new life into Sale Town Centre.

There's a cool breeze at B-engineering with the return of air conditioning manager

WARRINGTON-based mechanical and electrical specialists, B-engineering Group, has announced the return of a familiar face, Craig McLachlan, to its leadership team.

With over 25 years of experience in the refrigeration and air conditioning industry, Craig rejoins the company to lead the continued growth of its Air Conditioning division across the North West.

Craig started his career through the Government Youth Training Scheme, where he built his career in the commercial refrigeration sector. His journey saw him work across all aspects of the department, from installation and inspections, to service and maintenance. His time as a Facilities Manager himself provided him with a full and comprehensive perspective of the industry, allowing him to

truly be understand our clients' perspective.

Craig originally joined B-engineering Group (then Bmech) back in 2017, where he established and built the air conditioning department from the ground up. Craig plans to work closely with both existing and new clients to provide the best-in-class service this department is known for.

Craig stated: "I'm excited to be back at B-engineering. "It's great to work alongside a team of engineers excited to grow in their careers. I'm particularly looking forward to reconnecting with familiar clients and creating new partnerships as we take the division to the next level."

Need an upgrade or to reconnect? Contact him today craig.mclachlan@b-enggroup.co.uk

Website: www.b-enggroup.co.uk



Time, trust and care: Interim findings shed light on home care in Warrington

HEALTHWATCH Warrington, in collaboration with Warrington Borough Council's Adult Social Care Commissioning team, has released its interim report into the state of domiciliary (home) care services across the borough, unveiling both promising strengths and areas needing urgent improvement.

Home Care was chosen by Warrington residents as a top priority for Healthwatch Warrington this year. The ongoing initiative captures the lived experiences of people receiving home care and their families, combining data from over 1,100 service users and feedback from consultations, surveys, and real-life case studies.

Among the most pressing concerns raised:

- Inconsistent visit durations and late arrival times by carers.
- Language and communication challenges that hinder effective care.
- High turnover of staff disrupting continuity, especially for people with dementia.
- Mixed levels of training and professionalism across providers.

Yet, many survey responses also praised carers who offered compassionate, timely, and

person-centred support.

Healthwatch Warrington CEO Lydia Hughes commented:

"This interim report gives voice to residents whose stories might otherwise go unheard. It's clear that while some providers deliver high-quality, empathetic care, systemic improvements are necessary to ensure dignity, safety, and continuity for all."

As of May 2025, 79 responses had been analysed, with many more expected before the survey closes later this year. These findings have already been shared with Warrington Borough Council and care providers, with early recommendations focusing on improving punctuality, training, communication, and consistency among carers.

The full comprehensive report, including detailed recommendations and an expanded data set, will be published in December 2025.

Healthwatch Warrington encourages individuals with experience of home care services—either personally or through a family member—to continue sharing their insights by participating in the ongoing survey available at <https://engagingcommunities.welcomesyourfeedback.net/s/m6yixy>



Exciting new chapter for Belvoir Warrington under new leadership

AFTER 17 years of dedicated service by founders Gary and Amanda Pemberton, Belvoir Warrington has entered an exciting new chapter under the leadership of local property professional Lauren Hughes.

With five years' experience in sales and lettings at a neighbouring branch, Lauren brings both industry expertise and deep local knowledge to the role. As a Warrington native, she is well-acquainted with the community and surrounding areas—insight that she says will be invaluable in continuing to build strong relationships with landlords and tenants alike.

"This is a fantastic opportunity to grow a respected franchise that's already built on solid foundations," she shared. "The property industry is ever-changing, and now more than ever, it's important we support landlords in navigating evolving legislation, such as the upcoming Renter's Reform Bill."

In just her first month at Belvoir, Lauren has hit the ground running, describing it as the busiest she has ever been. Her focus is on equipping her team to meet future challenges head-on, maintaining Belvoir's reputation for trusted

guidance and service.

"My team's commitment, knowledge and passion are key to helping landlords adapt and thrive. We're not just here to let properties—we're here to educate, protect and grow together."

Lauren's ambition is to challenge established market leaders in the sales sector and position herself as Warrington's leading estate agent of choice.

After nearly two decades at the helm of Belvoir Warrington, longstanding owners Amanda and

Gary have officially transferred ownership of the business to Lauren Hughes.

In a strategic share sale, all existing contracts, banking arrangements, and operational structures remain unchanged. The transition marks a new chapter for the agency, with Lauren stepping into the leadership role—bringing a vibrant mix of energy, experience, and a growth-driven mindset.

Gary said: "'Amanda and I have had the privilege of building and growing Belvoir Warrington for the past 17 years. It's been an

incredible journey.

"We're excited to see Lauren continue our legacy and take the business to new heights, supported by our exceptional team."

The move reflects a seamless handover, ensuring stability for clients and staff while ushering in a fresh era of innovation and development for the Warrington-based property business.

For more details on Belvoir Warrington visit www.belvoir.co.uk/warrington-estate-agents/



New partnership sees rooftop solar installation at Birchwood Shopping Centre



WARRINGTON-based Greenvolt Next UK, part of the Greenvolt Group has signed a contract with commercial real estate owner MDSR Investments to install PV solar rooftop panels at Birchwood Shopping Centre.

The new solar installation will host 452 panels across 1,564m² with an installed capacity of 200kWp. The installation began in May and is projected to generate approximately 154 kWh per year, approximately 29% of the centre's overall power.

The project is financed under Power Purchase Agreement (PPAs), allowing MDSR to access clean, less expensive energy with no upfront investment. Together the system will save 47 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year, contributing to MDSR's overall mission to reduce the emissions of its real estate portfolio.

Owen Power, CEO, Greenvolt Next UK and Ireland says: "We are thrilled to support MDSR on bringing on-site green energy to their UK retail premises. The large unused area of adaptable roof space that shopping centres have makes them perfectly suited to integrate solar installations. This type of partnerships provides the perfect opportunity to boost renewable energy generation with minimal disruption to building users, making optimal use of existing spaces that might otherwise remain underutilised."

This partnership builds on a successful project at MDSR's Nova Arcada shopping centre in the city of Braga, northern Portugal, where Greenvolt Group developed a 1.2 MWp installed capacity rooftop system with 2,164 solar panels. This project can generate 1,531 MWh of clean electricity per year, enough to help Nova Arcada avoid 303 tonnes of CO₂ and cutting grid consumption by 34%.

Sandor Biro, Managing Director –

UK, Portugal, MDSR Investments says: "Greenvolt Next has already helped us realise the benefits of on-site renewable energy at our Nova Arcada site in Portugal, and we want to continue the roll out of clean energy to our UK sites. With the help of Greenvolt Next UK, we are thrilled to be enabling renewable energy generation at Weston Favell and Birchwood, helping us achieve our broader decarbonisation goals and reduce energy costs."

Supported by the pan-European platform of Greenvolt Group, Greenvolt Next provides decentralised renewable energy solutions, including photovoltaic systems for both individual and collective self-consumption, energy efficiency measures, solar storage, and electric mobility. All of these are underpinned by flexible financing options such as Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), ensuring businesses gain access to cheaper, predictable renewable energy without the need for upfront investment. Operating across 12 European countries, Greenvolt Next leverages its scale and expertise to deliver integrated solutions tailored to companies operating in multiple regions, as exemplified by its agreement with MDSR Investments.

In the UK, Greenvolt Group is among the five largest producers of biomass-based electricity, with a total capacity of 68.7 MW, following the acquisition of Kent Renewable Energy in 2024, alongside Tilbury Green Power, which has been part of the Group since 2021. In the Utility-Scale segment, Greenvolt has also been expanding its presence in the UK, with a 210 MW solar pipeline and 57 MW of battery storage.

Greenvolt Next UK was launched in early 2024 and aims to achieve a project portfolio of 100 MW by end of 2025. The company is also currently managing a range of projects.

Member Focus

Mitchell Charlesworth reconnects with Warrington business community

MITCHELL Charlesworth, one of the North West's leading independent firms of accountants and business advisors, has re-joined the Warrington Chamber of Commerce. This move signals a renewed commitment to the local business landscape in Warrington, strengthening the firm's deep-rooted presence in the region.

With a heritage stretching back to 1885, Mitchell Charlesworth has grown significantly, now boasting 28 partners and nearly 300 staff across its offices, including one in nearby Widnes. Despite its considerable scale, the firm emphasizes its enduring commitment to core values of trust, collaboration, integrity, responsiveness, and quality, which have guided its operations for over a century.

"We are thrilled to re-engage with the Warrington Chamber of Commerce," said John Davies, Partner at Mitchell Charlesworth. "This partnership reinforces our dedication to supporting local businesses and individuals in Warrington. We believe in building long-term relationships and standing alongside our clients as they navigate the ever-changing commercial landscape."

Mitchell Charlesworth is well-regarded for providing a comprehensive suite of financial services that rival those of national and international

firms, all while maintaining the personal care and continuity of a local practice. The firm conducts over 400 audits annually and serves a diverse client portfolio, from small family-owned enterprises to large group structures with turnovers exceeding £650 million.

The firm's re-entry into the Chamber highlights its proactive approach to community engagement and its desire to further integrate with the vibrant Warrington business network. Mitchell Charlesworth's services extend beyond traditional accounting, encompassing audit and assurance, tax compliance and planning, corporate finance, wealth management, and cloud accounting solutions.

With a strong focus on direct access to partners, prompt response times, and consistent high-quality standards, Mitchell Charlesworth aims to be a trusted advisor and ally for businesses in Warrington. Their sector expertise, particularly in manufacturing, property and construction, retail, technology, hospitality, and leisure, positions them to offer invaluable insights to a wide array of local enterprises.

To learn more about how Mitchell Charlesworth can support your business, visit www.mitchellcharlesworth.co.uk



■ John Davies.

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Landmark judgment as Supreme Court unanimously rejects Uber's bid to render unlawful the businesses of its competitors

A LANDMARK judgment by the Supreme Court has ruled that private hire taxi firms should not be forced to change their business models, a move which would have resulted in passengers being forced to pay VAT – in a decision hailed as a major victory for consumers and the private hire industry.

Ride-hailing giant Uber had sought a legal declaration that would have added VAT to all private hire fares outside of London. Uber was seeking to render unlawful a model they had previously used up to 2022 until they lost a London-focused legal challenge. But the move was successfully challenged by Liverpool-based DELTA Taxis, represented by the legal firm Aaron and Partners.

DELTA argued that legislation dating back to 1976 allows for multiple business models under the private hire licensing regime, meaning not all operators are required to charge VAT. While Uber's model does trigger VAT liability, the Supreme Court agreed that competitors can lawfully operate using alternative structures that do not.

The Supreme Court dismissed Uber's appeal and confirmed that private hire firms are not legally required to adopt the same model – or contract directly with passengers. As a result, VAT will not be automatically added to fares, avoiding a potential 20%+

price hike across England and Wales.

The decision is being celebrated as a huge win for passengers, particularly the most vulnerable in society, and is a welcome reprieve for thousands of small private hire firms who would have faced huge cost and complexity if forced to apply VAT, many of whom wouldn't have survived.

Layla Barke Jones, Dispute Resolution Partner at Aaron & Partners, represented DELTA and believes the decision has saved the private hire taxi industry – saving thousands of businesses and securing many more livelihoods.

"This is a monumental decision, not just for DELTA, but for all private hire taxi drivers and operators across England and Wales. Had this gone the other way, the cost and complexity of implementing VAT systems would have pushed many firms to the brink.

"This ruling ensures that operators can continue to operate under established, regulated models that have been in existence since regulation was introduced almost half a century ago – such as the agency model without being forced into a 'one size fits all' model."

The ruling concludes a long-running case that's been ongoing



since March 2022, following an initial judgment in the High Court where the judge found that a private hire operator is required to contract directly with the passenger for providing the journey.

However, that decision was overturned by the Court of Appeal in July 2024 which held that the licensing regime already provided for contractual liability for the operator without requiring operators to change their business models, in a case jointly brought by Delta Taxis and fellow operator Veezu. The Supreme Court ruling now cements the Court of Appeal outcome as the final say in law.

DELTA had warned that any shift in the legal regime could have led to "seismic consequences" for passengers and firms alike – especially in communities where private hire services act as a lifeline.

Layla Barke-Jones added: "Private hire firms are vital in the communities, and are used frequently by those with disabilities, low-income households and older people who rely on taxis for essential journeys and to maintain their

independence.

"If VAT suddenly had to be paid by all those people, the additional cost would have meant many simply choose not to travel at all, leaving some of the most vulnerable people in our society isolated.

"A crisis has been averted. This ruling protects the freedom to operate and the right of communities to access affordable, reliable transport."

Delta was represented by a team from Aaron and Partners which consisted of Layla Barke-Jones, Dispute Resolution Partner; Simon Edwards, Dispute Resolution Consultant & Notary Public; Claire Brook, Employment Law Partner; Lucy Harrison, Trainee Solicitor and Mercedes Sharp, Trainee Solicitor. Philip Kolvin KC of 11KBW and Jen Coyne of Monckton Chambers were instructed on behalf of DELTA. Uber was represented by Hogan Lovells LLP with Tim Ward KC of Monckton Chambers leading Ranjit Bhoose KC of Cornerstone Chambers. The judges presiding over the case were Lord Reed, Lord Briggs, Lord Leggatt, Lord Stephens and Lady Simler.

X-Press Legal Services offers support to charity Circus Starr

WARRINGTON-based X-Press Legal Services has presented its annual donation to local charity, Circus Starr.

The firm has been a long-time supporter of Circus Starr – a North West-based not-for-profit social enterprise – donating £1,000 this year in celebration of its recent 25th anniversary and helping spread joy to children.

Nearly 1.5 million families in the UK are unable to afford even a single day out together, and half of all families with disabled children say they feel isolated due to stigma and discrimination. Circus Starr is working to change that creating a truly inclusive environment where every child, regardless of ability or circumstance, can experience the joy of the circus.

Known as "the circus with a purpose," Circus Starr stages vibrant live performances filled with clowns, acrobats, jugglers, and more. These carefully designed shows ensure that children of all abilities can take part in the fun and enjoy a magical,

stress-free day they'll never forget.

X-Press' sponsorship of the circus' Warrington performance enabled children with additional needs, illnesses or disabilities, as well as those from vulnerable or low-income backgrounds, to attend the show for free at Penketh High School.

Lynne Lister, managing director of X-Press Legal Services, said: "Circus Starr is a remarkable organisation that brings joy and unforgettable memories to children. We're proud to support their incredible work, which makes a meaningful difference to the lives of so many children and families nationwide."

X-Press Legal Services is a leading independent provider of conveyancing data in England and Wales. It offers regulated property searches and reports, quotation management tools, compliance and insurance products, plus other essential services that streamline the conveyancing process from start to finish.



Redwood announces a near doubling of growth in new lending in 2024

A WARRINGTON specialist business bank which has supported SMEs and landlords with more than £760 million of mortgage lending since it launched has announced new lending growth of nearly double and continued profitability in 2024.

Award-winning Redwood Bank made the announcement in its newly published 2024 Annual Report and Accounts which reported new lending of £136 million, almost doubling the 2023 performance of £75 million. The value of Redwood's loan book rose by 18.1 per cent from £414 million in 2023 to £492 million last year.

Redwood Chairman Mark Winlow said: "We've demonstrated a depth of experience in property lending, and have enhanced further our savings franchise, with a focus on SMEs, clubs, charities and associations.

"Looking ahead Redwood remains committed to serving the needs of all its customers, building relationships with its

borrowers, both business owners and property investors, principally through a broker network, manually underwriting all lending, investing in technology to improve our processes, and delivering an excellent customer experience."

Mr Winlow said Redwood was well positioned to take advantage of new capital-raising initiatives that will enable it to develop and grow scale at a faster pace.

Redwood's Annual Report also revealed the Bank made a profit before tax of £2.7 million and saw its total assets increase by £36 million to £635 million and its deposit base increased by £53 million to £553 million.

Redwood CEO and Co-Founder Gary Wilkinson added: "We provide a bespoke service for lending customers, alongside quick, easy and efficient account opening and servicing for savings customers, making it straightforward and easy to do business with us. Every customer can talk to one of our team based exclusively in the UK.

"As well as delivering new lending of £136 million which was mainly attributable to the growth of our fixed rate residential mortgages, we also made numerous product enhancements including, most notably, the embedding of our Green Reward mortgage proposition and alternative fee products."

Redwood's lending focuses on secured commercial and residential buy to let mortgages for experienced SMEs and landlords. Redwood also offers business savings accounts focussed on SMEs, charities, clubs and associations.

For further information, visit www.redwoodbank.co.uk



■ Gary Wilkinson, CEO, Redwood Bank

Over 400 organisations flock to the North West for HyNet Supply Chain Summit

THE HyNet Supply Chain Summit, organised by NOF, welcomed over 430 attendees, making it one of the most significant low carbon supply chain events in the UK this year.

The energy was electric at the HyNet Supply Chain Summit, held recently in the North West, as over 430 delegates – ranging from local authorities and regional SMEs to international contractors – gathered to explore the opportunities HyNet is unlocking across the region.

HyNet partners will build the infrastructure to position industry and power generators in the North West and North Wales to strengthen ready for a globally competitive, low carbon future. Working across the industrial heartland, HyNet is a catalyst for economic growth—unlocking investment, creating skilled jobs and safeguarding existing roles.

Across three buzzing exhibition suites, the Summit showcased the strength and diversity of the HyNet supply chain from

innovators, contractors, clients and supporters. Alongside this, a packed main theatre programme featured powerful contributions from members of the HyNet Alliance, as well as regional, national and international delivery partners.

David Parkin, Chair of the HyNet Alliance, said: "The Summit brought together the full strength of the HyNet community. It was a powerful reminder of the region's collective commitment to making HyNet a reality – and a proud

moment for us all.

"The event underscored the scale of opportunity available through HyNet and reinforced the North West's position at the forefront of the UK's low carbon transition.

"This event really helped showcase that, while many of us have been working on HyNet for years, for the outside world and the supply chain, it's only just begun."

For more information visit hynet.co.uk



Inco Contracts pledges £150,000 a year to fight skills gap in construction sector

FAST-growing principal contractor Inco Contracts – with offices in Hatton, Warrington – has pledged to spend £150,000-a-year to help fight the worrying skills gap facing the construction sector.

Inco, which specialises in industrial, commercial and education refurbishment schemes – will boost spending on its early years talent academy as part of its 15th anniversary celebrations.

This will encompass a comprehensive programme, offering apprenticeships, on-the-job learning, formal qualifications and one-to-one mentoring from its senior leadership team.

It has been specially designed to attract individuals into the sector and, importantly, retain existing talent who are being tempted into different opportunities. By offering acceleration of their personal development and career path they can clearly see their future at Inco Contracts.

The Early Years' Talent Academy has been a resounding success so far for the business, with six young people trained from the basics into highly skilled professionals and some already progressing into managerial positions.

Operations director Sam Norton said: "Skills are a growing issue for our sector and our ability to grow.

"Rather than stand still, we decided to take positive action and create our own training programme."

"This has been a fantastic initiative for attracting young talent to

join us as a fledgling contractor and we wanted to further renew our commitment to this. Our 15th anniversary felt like the perfect opportunity to extend it by increasing the funding to £150,000."

"We provide real project-based experience from day one, setting us apart from our competitors, with a progression pathway aligned with their personal goals. There is also company-funded education at college or university in place to deliver the best all-rounded team member.

"Annual growth is running at around 20 per cent and we can't completely rely on the existing labour pool if we want to maintain this level of expansion. Growing our own talent is the preferred option to address the skills shortage and I'm delighted that we have given our proven scheme an 'anniversary boost'."

Managing director David Cotterill said: "It's well documented that the construction industry has been experiencing skills shortage issues for some time, so it's crucial that we deliver talent from the ground up.

"By doing this we're helping address the 'gap' and create opportunities for people who might otherwise be overlooked by the sector. Our goal is to make construction more accessible, modern and rewarding. In a tight labour market, the companies that invest in its people will be the ones that continue to thrive."

William Quayle will become the

latest recruit for the Warrington team when he joins as an apprentice estimator/quantity surveyor later this month.

He will spend the first two years studying towards his HNC at Warrington Vale Royal College, before moving onto a three-year degree at a local university.

Matthew Penswick, Inco's regional director said: "Growing our own is extremely important for us as

we can take a young person and help them and become part of our culture.

"William is the latest apprentice to join. He'll get the very best mentoring, practical experience and funded further education that will hopefully see him become a highly qualified and valuable member of our team."

For further information, visit www.incocontracts.co.uk



■ Matthew Penswick.

Raynor Bid Consultancy shares "Ten Golden Rules of Bidding"

RAYNOR Bid Consultancy (RBC), a specialist firm in bid writing and management, has joined the Chamber and founder Mike Raynor, a seasoned expert in securing public and private sector contracts, has unveiled his "Ten Golden Rules of Bidding" to help businesses boost their tender success.

"Winning bids isn't just about a great product; it's about strategically presenting your capabilities and truly understanding the buyer's needs," says Raynor, who established RBC in 2012. "These rules are built on years of experience helping diverse clients secure significant contracts."

The Ten Golden Rules of Bidding:

- Create a Tender Library: Centralise all company accreditations, certifications, and performance data for readiness and improvement.
- Contact the Buyer Before a

Tender: Proactively engage target organisations to understand their tender pipeline, policies, and social value priorities.

- Ensure You Can Meet All Tender Requirements: Thoroughly review all Pass/Fail requirements. Don't waste resources on bids you can't win.
- Create a Bid Management Plan: Designate one person to oversee documents, assign tasks, and set deadlines, including time for reviews and external requirements.
- Create a Competitive Strategy: Analyse competitors to develop "Win Themes" that highlight your strengths, address weaknesses, and counter rivals.
- Get Senior Stakeholder Input: Involve senior decision-makers early and regularly to avoid major rewrites closer to the deadline.
- Create Storyboards: Plan your

entire response with "essay plans" before writing detailed content, identifying where "Win Themes" will be included.

- Vary the Presentation: Use a mix of informative headings, paragraphs, bullet points, and visuals to cater to different reading styles.
- Describe Benefits, Features, and Evidence: Articulate the benefits clients will gain, the features that deliver them, and provide evidence of past success.
- Schedule a Final Review Days Before Deadline: Perform a comprehensive review well in advance to rectify any unexpected issues.

RBC boasts a strong track record, having helped over forty clients win bids, including projects with National Grid, HS2 Euston Station, and Manchester United Football Club. Mike Raynor leads most projects from Grappenhall,

bringing his extensive expertise to businesses aiming to secure valuable contracts.

For more information on Raynor Bid Consultancy's services, you can contact Mike directly: mike@raynorbidconsultancy.co.uk Mobile: 07713275156 www.raynorbidconsultancy.co.uk



Made Smarter relaunches digital internship programme to support manufacturers

MADE Smarter has relaunched its highly successful Digital Technology Internship programme to help Cheshire manufacturers tackle the growing digital skills gap and accelerate innovation.

The government funded scheme connects digitally capable students and recent graduates with SME manufacturers to work on real-world technology adoption projects.

The reboot follows the overwhelming success of the first phase (2019–2022), where nearly half of interns secured permanent jobs.

UK manufacturers are facing unprecedented workforce pressures, with 92% expecting skills gaps and over 52,000 job vacancies in the sector. The cost of inaction is mounting with an estimated £7.7 billion a year in lost productivity. These challenges are compounded by reduced immigration, an ageing workforce, and underperforming training pipelines.

To explore these challenges in more depth and share insight on how the internship programme is addressing them, Made Smarter has published a new white paper: Digital Internships: How Made Smarter helps SME manufacturers tap into tech talent. The free guide offers a deep dive into the digital skills shortage in UK manufacturing, how the programme works, and the real-world impact it's having on both businesses and students.

Made Smarter's Digital Internship programme helps manufacturers address immediate resource needs and long-term skills development,

while offering students career-defining experience.

Interns – ranging from second-year undergraduates to postgraduates and recent graduates in fields like data science, robotics, digital design, and engineering – are matched with manufacturers undertaking live digital projects. These may include helping to develop digital roadmaps, or implementing software or hardware solutions.

Internships are flexible (part-time or full-time), paid, and come with support from Made Smarter's expert advisers.

For SME manufacturers, Made Smarter's digital internship programme offers immediate, practical support from digitally skilled interns who bring fresh thinking, cutting-edge tools, and the latest technologies into the business. It provides a low-risk way to trial digital solutions, while helping companies build future talent pipelines, strengthen sustainability and inclusion efforts, and forge valuable partnerships with universities and research institutions.

For students and graduates, internships offer hands-on experience and real-world application of academic skills, professional development, enhanced employability, networking opportunities, and a clearer path into a career.

Among the manufacturers to benefit from the internship programme is Harten Frameworks, a manufacturer of bespoke art presentations based in Bollington. It was paired with Robert Fairclough, studying Design at Lancaster University.



■ **Frances McDonnell, MD of Harten Frameworks.**

Frances McDonnell, MD, said: "We would thoroughly recommend to anyone thinking of taking on an intern to jump at the opportunity."

"Rob had a raft of valuable skills which would help us. He was calm and confident and from this start-point he was able to translate our requests through engineering and 3D software to provide beautiful solutions that added to our product offering. He was also able to teach one of our team how to use the 3D software to help us."

Donna Edwards, Programme Director for Made Smarter, said: "It's been incredibly rewarding to see the impact our Digital Internship Programme has had – bringing fresh energy, ideas, and digital know-how into manufacturing businesses across the North West."

"Phase one showed just how powerful this model can be, not only helping manufacturers embrace new technologies and improve productivity, but also giving students and graduates

that all-important first step into the industry.

"With national funding now in place, phase two is set to go even further – offering more opportunities for businesses to access fully funded support, and for young people to gain meaningful, paid experience that can kickstart their careers."

"This is about building confidence on both sides – giving manufacturers the skills to take digital forward, and developing the next generation of talent to drive the future of UK manufacturing."

Since its inception in 2019, Made Smarter has supported over 2,500 manufacturers in the North West, providing access to expert digital advice, technology adoption roadmaps, and workforce development opportunities.

To find out more about digital internship opportunities visit: madesmarter.uk/adoption/internship-programme/

Largest truckwash in Europe plans major expansion

LYMM Truckwash – the largest truckwash in Europe – has announced plans to enhance its industry-leading facilities, following the approval of a planning application submitted last year.

Now in its 58th year and proudly family-owned – the truckwash has been granted permission to expand its facility by 50 percent with the addition of two more wash bays. This will increase its capacity to six high-efficiency commercial vehicle washes.

Work on the expansion is scheduled to begin early next year, with the new bays expected to be fully operational by the autumn. The development will also create several new jobs in the local area.

The investment highlights the company's long-term commitment to the region and will support local suppliers and contractors

throughout the build, delivering a further boost to both the regional and national economies.

This milestone will cement the business's position as the market leader in truck washing—not just in the UK, but across Europe. It will enhance service and efficiency for its growing customer base, reducing queuing times and improving support for the UK and European haulage sectors.

With an average of 60,000 trucks washed annually – and over 22,000 vehicles already cleaned by the end of April 2025 – the additional bays will enable Lymm Truckwash to streamline operations while maintaining its dedication to safety, quality, and service.

Managing director Laura Cardwell said: "We're absolutely thrilled to move forward with this development."

"Demand during busy periods has been so high that we needed to improve our service by reducing costly downtime for our customers and enhancing road safety by removing queues from the road. The two new washes and additional queuing space will allow us to do just that."

"This investment is about supporting our customers and drivers, improving road safety and wait times, and creating more local jobs. We're proud to be a family-run business that continues to invest in the future of haulage, as well as in both the local and national economies."



Celebrating Six Years: Worksmart's 6th Anniversary

WORKSMART is set to celebrate its 6th anniversary! For the past six years, they've been redefining work-life balance for local professionals with their high-end, serviced offices in the heart of Cheshire.

Since Worksmart started the journey in 2018, its mission has been simple: to offer a workspace that you want to work in.

"Our journey has been nothing short of amazing," said Carla Wells, Founder at Worksmart. "We set out to build a community where work feels less like work, and we've seen that happen over the last six years. Worksmart firmly

believes that a great work-life balance leads to happier, more productive people."

The team is all about creating workspaces that are charming, stylish, and inviting to enhance productivity and well-being. As we celebrate this exciting milestone, we want to shout out a huge thank you to our incredible tenants and the local community for their support. We're looking forward to continuing our journey with them as they grow!

Worksmart has recently welcomed a new tenant. Carla said "a huge welcome to our new tenant, Geraldine Claire Therapy;

Geraldine is an accredited Psychotherapist now based in our Hale office! Geraldine offers the following therapies: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT); Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) Skills Training; Schema Therapy, Eye Movement Desensitisation Reprocessing (EMDR), and Trauma-Focused Therapy."

"With 20 years of experience in the NHS and private sector across Greater Manchester and Cheshire, Geraldine is dedicated

to supporting adults, adolescents, and children in overcoming various mental health challenges. We're thrilled to have her with us and wholeheartedly support her efforts as she helps many individuals make positive life changes."

Worksmart has four high-end serviced offices in prime locations across Cheshire, including Warrington, Hale, and Altrincham. The offices are convenient for local professionals and offer a community feel and the chance to work with like-minded people.



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■ Carla Wells.



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info@warrington-chamber.co.uk

Gulliver's World teams up with college to establish internship programme

GULLIVER'S World theme park is partnering with Bridge College in Manchester and DFN Project SEARCH to deliver an exciting internship programme from September 2025.

The initiative will help bridge the gap between education and paid work, supporting young people aged 16-24 from Manchester, Warrington and Cheshire with additional needs and who have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) in place.

The internships at Gulliver's World in Warrington offers opportunities to develop individual skills in various areas of the park including retail and stores, catering, rides, park care, hotel, upkeep and grounds.

Melanie Burrows-Carr, safety and training manager at Gulliver's World in Warrington, said: "We are pleased to be partnering with Bridge College and DFN Project Search to deliver this opportunity. The goal of the internship is to help young people with learning difficulties who have an EHCP already in place to develop the skills they need to find work. The course lasts for one academic year and will be an opportunity to experience an exciting work environment, with the aim of securing paid employment on

completion of the course which potentially could be at Gulliver's or elsewhere in the job market."

Bridge College, run by the charity Together Trust, offers specialist education for students aged 16 to 25 with learning difficulties, disabilities, complex health needs and autism, providing personalised support, tailored learning and hands-on life skills to give young people the confidence to exceed their aspirations.

DFN Project SEARCH is a national charity that enables young adults who have a learning disability or autism spectrum condition to secure meaningful permanent employment.

The Interns at Gulliver's World will have access to specialised therapeutic input including speech and language therapy and occupational therapy, as well as expert travel training professionals to support their independence when travelling to and from work.

Added Mel: "We have between six and ten internships available starting in September so we'd love to hear from anyone who think this opportunity might be for them. Please do get in touch if you want to find out more or apply as the closing date for applications is the end of June 2025."

Jemma Golden, internship lead at Bridge College, said: "Through our partnership with the amazing Gulliver's World, the Bridge College Supported Internship program offers our young people a unique opportunity to gain practical experience in a real work environment.

"This collaboration helps them develop vital skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, which are essential for their future success. By working alongside professionals and engaging in

meaningful tasks, our young people build confidence and independence, preparing them for a brighter future. We believe that this partnership not only benefits their personal growth but also opens doors to new opportunities, empowering them to reach their full potential and become active, valued members of their communities."

For more details about the internship programme, visit: togethertrust.org.uk/schools/supported-internships



■ Mel Burrows-Carr from Gulliver's World with representatives from Bridge College, DFN search as well as prospective interns.

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