



Insight

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COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

in association with
VALE ROYAL
The heart of Cheshire

Engineering consultancy partners with Maggie's for 20th Anniversary Year

TENET Consultants – a nuclear engineering consultancy based in Birchwood Park, has announced its official charity partnership with Maggie's, a leading cancer support charity.

As part of their 20th-anniversary celebrations in 2025, Tenet will dedicate fundraising and awareness efforts to supporting Maggie's vital work, alongside a second chosen charity, Awyr Las, supporting the children's cancer ward at Bangor Hospital in North Wales.

Maggie's offers free practical, emotional, and social support to individuals and families affected by cancer. The charity was specifically chosen by the Tenet team, inspired by its incredible

impact and close connection to their own team. Clara Hartigan, the wife of Senior Mechanical Engineer Simon Hartigan, was diagnosed with breast cancer earlier this year. Since then, Maggie's has been a lifeline for Clara, Simon, and their family, providing a space of comfort, community, and understanding during a challenging time.

Simon Hartigan said: "Maggie's has been an essential support for Clara, myself, and our children throughout her cancer journey. Their care has been truly life-changing, providing not only guidance but a sense of belonging during such an emotional time. As we celebrate 20 years of Tenet, we're honoured to give back to

a charity that has given us and so many others so much."

This partnership reflects Tenet's commitment to supporting causes that resonate deeply with the team and align with its values of care, compassion, and community. Fundraising activities will take place throughout the year, including events in Warrington and Anglesey, where Tenet has a strong local presence.

Robin Muir, The Centre Head and Clinical psychologist at Maggie's Manchester said: "We are so incredibly grateful for the support of Tenet Consultants in their 20th year in business. At Maggie's we rely on the kindness and generosity of local businesses to be able to open our doors every

day and support people with cancer, and their families when they need it most'

In addition to Maggie's, Tenet is also proud to support Awyr Las, the official NHS charity for North Wales, which works tirelessly to improve services and care for young cancer patients at Bangor Hospital. As one company, Tenet will champion both charities throughout 2025, highlighting their extraordinary work and inspiring others to contribute.

To support Tenet's fundraising efforts for Maggie's and Awyr Las, visit the JustGiving page: www.justgiving.com/team/tenet-maggies-manchester



£9m government funding boost for Skills Bootcamps

AN extra 2,600 people across Cheshire and Warrington will be able to sign up to Skills Bootcamps this year – thanks to £9m government funding.

This almost quadrupling of the previous year's allocation will help fast track them into jobs and boost existing careers.

Covering diverse areas ranging from digital skills and health and beauty to logistics and 3D printing, the flexible courses of up to 16 weeks are designed to help employers fill vacancies and develop the skills of their workforces and to help individuals develop the skills they need to move into a job or progress in

work.

In the last three years, 1136 people aged 19 or over have enrolled on a Skills Bootcamp with the region's delivery of the programme ranked by the government as one of the most successful in the UK.

Now it has been confirmed Cheshire and Warrington has secured a further £9m Department for Education funding allocation for 2025/26 – meaning from April onwards the money can help support at least 2,630 learners and create at least 80 new Skills Bootcamps.

Based on an ever-changing jobs market and employer demand,

those enrolling will be able to sign up to Skills Bootcamps in a wide range of areas and sectors such as covert surveillance, rail track maintenance, data analysis fibre engineering, health and social care, retrofit coordinator, scaffolding, accountancy and HGV driving.

Amid the continued success, the region's funding allocation has grown year-on-year – starting with £1m in 2022, rising to £2.4m in 2024 and almost quadrupling this year to £9m, with Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington, who run the programme in the region, today urging potential trainees, companies and training providers to come forward to help deliver

the bootcamps.

Cllr Karen Shore, the member of the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee responsible for Skills and Careers, said: "Securing £9m in Department for Education is testament to the continued hard work and successful delivery of the programme in the region. These Skills Bootcamps will not just help thousands of people across Cheshire and Warrington looking to get into work or climb the ladder, they will help employers recruit people with the right skills amid a shared vision for the region to have the healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and growing economy in the UK."

From the Chief Executive

Stephen Fitzsimons



The Chancellor has delivered her Spring Statement, the second fiscal plan from the new government, following its first Budget last October.

I do sympathise to a certain extent. I don't think anyone could argue that public services are in a better state than they were 15 years ago and there is hardly a surplus of cash to spend. Add in the economic vandalism of the Trump administration's tariffs and the overall picture is bleak.

However, a basic principle of business seems lost on Number 11 - you cannot ask UK PLC to pay more on National Insurance and the Living Wage whilst expecting them to take on more staff and invest in capital. The Office for Budget Responsibility has halved its growth forecast to just 1% and

it's really no surprise.

On a positive note, the spirit of enterprise is alive and well at the micro level and we've just completed 12 months of our Start & Scale Up Club. Some modest grants, events and masterclasses have assisted 100 SMEs with their growth ambitions, helping to create 70 new jobs. Headed up by Aimee Ruddy, we've spoken with a variety of local entrepreneurs, from dog walking to artificial intelligence. Dragon's Den winners Stand Out Socks also received our support. We're confident that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will enable us to continue for another year.

There are two important consultations running this Spring. Many will remember Business Link, which was frustratingly

closed in 2011. It was not perfect, however at least companies knew where the front door was for business support. Government has asked for input on a new Business Growth Service, joining up the current network of Growth Hubs whilst potentially reinstating elements of a national service. We look forward to seeing the results and a future proposal.

Elsewhere, Cheshire has been asked to feed in its thoughts on devolution and a county mayor. Even for those who are sceptical of (perceived) extra bureaucracy, there is no alternative if Cheshire & Warrington is to receive the highest available level of government funding from Westminster. Either way, we will have a mayor in place by May 2026.

We have delivered some interesting events so far this year, including a visit to the police museum, a tour of Greenall's distillery and a trip to Parliament. You can book your attendance at www.wbex.co.uk and view other events in and around Warrington. If there is anything that you'd like to see on there or have something yourself to publicise, do get in touch.

Have a great Easter, Stephen

Lighting manufacturer announces major warehouse distribution expansion

NORTH West-based leading lighting designer and manufacturer Ansell Lighting has opened an additional distribution warehouse in Warrington, following a period of continued growth.

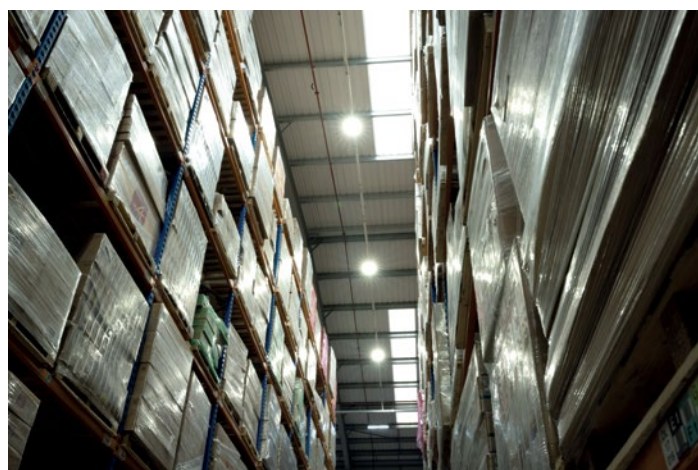
The new 72,000 sq ft facility, on Stonecross Industrial Park, where Ansell has its existing warehouse and HQ, increases the company's North West warehousing capacity by 78%, and will enable it to accommodate further growth and increase stock holding.

Ansell is also introducing a new warehouse management system to support its multi-site operations, enhancing coordination across locations, optimising stock handling, and further improving the efficiency of its processes, ultimately enhancing customer service.

Managing Director of Ansell Lighting, Mark Abbott, said: "By expanding our capacity and enhancing operations, we are laying the groundwork for sustained business growth and ensuring we continue to meet the needs of our valued customers effectively.

"We are excited about the opportunities it will bring and look forward to seeing the positive impact on our service delivery and operational efficiency."

Alongside Ansell's Warrington headquarters, where it has a state-of-the-art showroom, the business operates in 20 countries across the globe, with a warehouse distribution centre and showroom in Belfast plus showrooms in Dublin and Madrid.



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Stephen Fitzsimons, Chief Executive

Olympic sized water savings for North West schools and businesses

UNITED Utilities has worked in partnership with Groundwork, Cenergist and business water retailers to deliver water efficiency visits to organisations including schools, care homes, leisure centres, public sector and small businesses across the North West.

By identifying and repairing leaky taps, toilets and showers, and installing water efficiency measures, 3.8 million litres of water – enough to fill one and a half Olympic-sized swimming pools – are being saved every day.

As well as helping to protect water resources in the region, the organisations that have taken part are now benefitting from lower water bills.

Alice Denholm, Water efficiency delivery manager at United Utilities, explained: “The North West is one of the rainiest areas in the UK and we know that saving water isn’t always something people think about in the same way they do about saving energy. But water is a precious resource, and we can all play our part in saving it one drop at a time.

“Our ambition was to help as

many organisations as possible to reduce water use and save money. To help us achieve this, we worked with several water retailers across the region. They did a great job engaging with their customers to encourage take-up.

The water efficiency visits were carried out by Groundwork and

Cenergist. Alice added: “They did a brilliant job of tracking down water leaks and installing water-saving devices such as tap inserts and save-a-flush bags.”

One of the business water retailers United Utilities worked with was Water Plus.

Scott MacIndeor, Head of technical water efficiency at Water Plus, said: “It’s been brilliant to be involved in this, drawing on our experience in this area with customers, engaging more than 3,600 businesses and public sector locations, so they become more water efficient and make financial savings.”



New homes at Culcheth will deliver £1.5m in community benefits

PLANNING permission has been granted to deliver 194 new homes and associated infrastructure on land at Warrington Road/Holcroft Lane in Culcheth.

It marks an exciting milestone for housebuilder Story Homes’ first development in the Warrington area.

Warrington Borough Council resolved to grant planning consent for the scheme at its Planning Committee meeting last night (March 20) subject to completion of a Section 106 Agreement*.

The development will include a mix of one to six-bedroom high-quality new homes, with 30% of the properties designated as affordable housing for eligible local residents. From first-time buyers to downsizers or those looking for a ‘forever’ family home, the scheme will offer a variety of house types to suit the needs of buyers at all life stages, including bungalows, apartments, semi-detached and detached homes.

The properties at this development have been designed with sustainability and energy efficiency in mind, with internal layouts that offer modern, open-plan living spaces and exterior design details that will create the unique street scenes for which Story Homes is renowned.

In addition, Story Homes will make a number of significant community payments in line with the Section 106 Agreement, totalling over £1.5m. This includes contributions towards education, sports facilities and healthcare. The

plans also incorporate a large area of open space running through the development, and a Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) for use by both new and existing residents in the area. As part of the scheme, improvements will be made to surrounding footpaths and bus stops, enhancing accessibility for the community. Additionally, the development is designed to deliver a biodiversity net gain of over 10%, ensuring a positive environmental impact.

Siobhan Sweeney, Land Manager

for Story Homes North West said: “We’re thrilled to have received planning consent from Warrington Borough Council for our new residential development in Culcheth, which will deliver 194 high-quality homes.

“This development will bring a range of benefits to the local community, including much-needed new homes, affordable housing, and attractive open spaces. It will also generate economic benefits for the area, such as the creation of direct and indirect employment

opportunities throughout the construction phase.”

It is anticipated that on-site works for this new development will commence in autumn 2025.

For more information, please visit www.storyhomes.co.uk.

* A Section 106 Agreement is a legal agreement between an applicant seeking planning permission and the local planning authority, which is used to mitigate the impact of any new homes on the local community and infrastructure.





Kellen Homes doubles office space following expansion at Birchwood Park

BIRCHWOOD Park, the North West's largest out-of-town business destination, has welcomed the expansion of Kellen Homes into a new office space the park.

Kellen Homes has expanded into a new 9,000 sq. ft office, now located at 105 Dalton Avenue, doubling the size of its previous workspace.

One of the leading North West housebuilders, Kellen Homes specialises in building modern and energy-efficient homes across the North West. The move underlines Kellen's growth and future strategy for the addition of new talent for the business as it continues to go from strength to strength.

The refurbishment of the new office was completed in

December and achieved an EPC A rating, reflecting Birchwood Park's commitment to improving energy efficiency. This milestone is part of the Park's broader commitments to achieve net zero in all landlord-controlled areas by 2030.

Having been a part of the Birchwood Park community for four years, Kellen Homes cites the longstanding positive relationship with the Park, which has made the expansion a seamless process.

Kellen Homes' Chief Executive, Ian Kelley, said: "I am incredibly proud of Kellen Homes, the team we have built and how far we have come in our first five years. We have forged partnerships, built houses and communities and seen hundreds of people move into our new homes.

"We are committed to growth and have new sites and projects on the horizon and a talented and growing team to help us deliver that vision. Our new offices will allow for that continued expansion and I look forward to a bright and busy future."

Martin O'Rourke, Commercial Director at Birchwood Park, commented: "We're delighted to support Kellen Homes as they expand within the Park. Our priority is always to ensure a seamless transition for both new occupiers and those growing their operations, enabling them to focus fully on their business ambitions.

"Seeing Kellen Homes thrive here is a testament to the strength of the Birchwood Park community,

and we look forward to continuing our successful partnership as their business progresses."

The continued presence of Kellen Homes and its expansion is significant for the Park, demonstrating its ability to cater to the changing needs of the businesses it hosts on site.

BE Group and JLL serving as the acting agents.

As well as its thriving business community, Birchwood Park is home to a cluster of well-known house builders

To find out about the diverse range of office spaces available at Birchwood Park, please head to <https://www.birchwoodpark.co.uk/space-to-let/> or call the team on 01925 851536.

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Groundbreaking wellbeing project "Digi Care Health UK" to launch in Warrington

DIGI Care aligns with the government's mission to build a future-ready health and social care system. The initiative focuses on reducing health inequalities, driving economic growth, and improving the financial sustainability of healthcare delivery.

The project supports national and Integrated Care Board (ICB) ambitions to shift healthcare from hospitals to community-based prevention and care models. Key areas of focus include addressing multi-morbidity and leveraging advanced digital infrastructure such as high-speed broadband and telecare/telemedicine technologies. The initiative will also lay the foundation for a new Neighbourhood Health Service, enabling innovative approaches to healthcare delivery.

Central to Digi Care Health UK is the rollout of high-speed broadband

fibre across local communities, facilitating the transition from analogue to digital systems. This infrastructure will also underpin broader community wellbeing objectives, encompassing mental health support, community safety, and enhanced reassurance for residents.

The project, which will be piloted in the Central 6 wards of Warrington, is being delivered by a diverse partnership board that includes:

- Future Connected Fibre
- Warrington Borough Council
- Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Trust
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside
- NHS England
- Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service
- Cheshire Constabulary
- LiveWire

- Warrington Chamber of Commerce
- Cheshire Digital
- Warrington Primary Care Networks
- Warrington & Vale Royal College
- Torus Housing

Professor Steven Broomhead MBE, Chief Executive of Warrington Borough Council, said: "This project represents a major leap forward for communities in Warrington. By combining cutting-edge technology with a focus on prevention, Digi Care Health UK will improve health outcomes and quality of life for thousands of residents. The innovations will see Warrington lead the way in supporting the government's aspirations."

Sarah Hall, MP for Warrington South, said: "Digi Care

demonstrates how collaboration between government, healthcare providers, and local stakeholders can create meaningful change. This initiative will help us build a healthier, more connected future."

Shaun Ennis, Managing Director of Digi Care Health UK is delighted to get started. He said: "This project will be revolutionary in the UK and give great support to the health care system and support the government's aspiration to digitise elements of the NHS to free up capacity in its hospitals. Warrington is the start and we look forward to improving tens of thousands of lives with this project."

With the support of its multi-sector partners, Digi Care Health UK is poised to become a national model for health and wellbeing innovation, creating lasting impacts for individuals, families, and the wider community.



■ Nichola Newton – Principal Warrington Vale Royal College, Steven Broomhead – Chief Executive Warrington Borough Council, Charlotte Nichols MP, Elaine Burns – Future Connected Fibre, Dave Thompson - Chief Executive Warrington Disability Partnership

Inco Contracts goes back to school to target £3m education boost

ONE of the UK's leading principal contractors is continuing to branch out into education after making a high-profile hire.

Warrington-based Inco Contracts, which also has offices in Cannock, Cardiff and Stevenage, has appointed Billy Sneddon as its dedicated Contracts Manager for this specialist area with the brief of generating more than £3m in revenue over the next twelve months.

The company's ability to manage complex projects and deliver on time and to budget has made it a natural choice for schools and colleges, with £1m of contracts already completed for organisations in the West Midlands and the North West.

These have included a special education needs centre at Birchwood Community High School and multiple jobs for the Invictus Education Trust, which looks after eight schools across Dudley and South Staffs.

"Education has always been an area we wanted to explore as we have all the core refurbishment skills required to deliver high quality projects quickly and at the right cost – as we all know the taxpayer has to see value for money," explained David Cotterill, Managing Director of Inco Contracts.

"Labour has announced a big cash injection to upgrade existing schools and, with the supply chain already creaking under pressure, we feel now is the right time to accelerate our expansion and provide services so desperately required to ensure our children learn in the best possible

buildings."

He went on to add: "The appointment of Billy Sneddon is an important moment for us. He brings over 10 years' experience in this sector, a massive book of contacts and supply chain specialists who have a proven track record in education."

Inco Contracts can work alongside architects, designers, and directly with schools to bring buildings back to life or to the required modern-day standards.

Services provided range from roof repairs, classroom/toilet refurbishments, mechanical and electrical upgrades, extensions and PV installation.

In just the last six months, Inco has transformed an existing library into a dedicated special educational needs unit, equipped with six classrooms, meeting rooms, toilets, reception area and state-of-the-art playground.

Invictus Education Trust has also called on the company for resurfacing work, emergency repairs and a refurb of its headquarters at Kinver High School.

Billy Sneddon picked up the story: "This is a really exciting opportunity to shape our education offer, so that we bring something a little bit different to an established marketplace.

"The beauty of Inco Contracts is that we are agile. This means we can pick up smaller jobs quickly yet are big enough to handle £multi-million projects across the UK. Our people all have experience of working in this environment

and understand the need to prioritise the safety of the children and teachers, whilst completing projects alongside their studies.

"My approach is to build partnerships with schools, colleges and education providers so we are their 'go to firm' in an emergency

or for planned works."

He concluded: "Our target is £3m in revenues over the next twelve months and increasing my team so that we have two or three dedicated people working with me on projects."

Pioneering printer expands innovative portfolio

POPLAR Services Printers Ltd is a pioneering force in the UK print industry, proudly being the first in the country to offer digital printing with seven special colours—Neon Yellow, Neon Pink, Gold, Silver, Clear, White, and Security Red.

This cutting-edge capability allows them to create truly unique and high-impact print materials that stand out from the competition.

Managing Director Martin Winders said: "We specialise in high-quality digital printing with a super-fast turnaround, ensuring your projects are completed with speed and precision. Using our own fleet of vehicles, we provide daily deliveries throughout Warrington, guaranteeing a reliable and efficient service."

"Beyond our advanced colour

printing, we also house a Vision 3 CAD cutting line, enabling precision cutting for bespoke packaging, point-of-sale displays, and intricate designs, ensuring a seamless, high-quality finish."

"Expanding our innovative portfolio, we now offer Video Brochures, featuring an impressive 10-inch HD screen—a dynamic and engaging way to showcase products, presentations, and brand stories with impact."

"At Poplar Services Printers Ltd, we combine technology, creativity, and expertise to deliver exceptional print solutions tailored to your needs. Whether it's vibrant digital prints, precision-cut designs, or high-tech video brochures, we bring your ideas to life with quality and innovation at the forefront."



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So.....what's the big IDEA

A NEW Dawn for UK Charities: Warrington's "Idea for Charities" Leads the Way.

In the heart of Warrington, a ground-breaking venture has emerged, poised to transform the landscape for UK charities. Launched in early 2025, "Idea for Charities" is a dynamic new business dedicated to empowering charitable organisations by enhancing their sustainability through innovative infrastructure and income development support. With a mission rooted in resilience and growth, this Warrington-based initiative is already making waves in the voluntary sector, offering a lifeline to charities navigating an increasingly challenging financial and operational environment.

The Vision Behind Idea for Charities

The brainchild of Gillian Mckinnon, a seasoned charity sector expert, "Idea for Charities" was born from a simple yet urgent realisation: many UK charities, particularly smaller ones, struggle to maintain stability amid rising costs, shrinking donations, and evolving demands. While their passion for their causes remains unwavering, the infrastructure and income strategies needed to sustain their work often lag behind.

"We saw an opportunity to bridge that gap," says founder

Gillian McKinnon, a Warrington native with over a two decades of experience in non-profit management. "Charities do incredible work, but too many are one funding cut away from collapse. We wanted to create a business that not only supports their day-to-day operations but also helps them build a future-proof foundation."

A Dual Focus: Infrastructure and Income

What sets "Idea for Charities" apart is its holistic approach, tackling two critical pillars of sustainability: infrastructure and income development. On the infrastructure side, the business offers tailored solutions to streamline operations—think policy development, business strategy, a compelling fundraising strategy. For charities stretched thin on resources, these services promise to reduce overheads and boost efficiency without compromising impact. The IDEA is to free up key staff to focus on what's important – the service user, whilst "Idea for Charities" gets on with minutiae of the back-office functions.

Income development, however, is where "Idea for Charities" truly shines. Recognising that charities are finding themselves competing instead of collaborating and funding is becoming far more competitive, standing out from

the crowd is essential. "It's about thinking creatively," Gillian explains. "A charity shouldn't just survive; it should thrive. We're here to unlock that potential." We work on a 'no win/no fee' basis for grant writing – so carry all the risk of time versus success.

Early Impact and Local Roots

Though only months old, "Idea for Charities" has already begun to leave its mark. One early success story is a collaboration with a women's mental health charity struggling to cover operational costs after a key grant expired. Within weeks, the "Idea for Charities" team put together a key fundraising strategy which included applying for some smaller grants to get them secure enough in the short term, enabling Idea for charities to focus on bigger grants to ensure their sustainability in the longer term.

The business's local roots give it a unique edge. Warrington, a town known for its community spirit and growing economic ambition, provides the perfect backdrop. "I am proud to be from Warrington," says Gillian. "This is a place that values collaboration, and we're building partnerships with local businesses and authorities to amplify our impact."

A Broader Mission for UK Charities

While Warrington is home base, "Idea for Charities" has its sights set on a national scale. The UK's voluntary sector—comprising over 166,000 organizations, many with incomes under £1 million—faces unprecedented pressure. Rising energy costs, post-pandemic recovery, and a competitive funding landscape have left countless charities vulnerable. "Idea for Charities" aims to be a beacon of hope, starting with

the North West and expanding outward.

Their approach draws inspiration from broader trends in the sector. Experts note that modern charities increasingly rely on hybrid revenue models, blending donations with earned income and contracts. "Idea for Charities" takes this a step further, offering bespoke strategies that reflect each organization's unique mission and community. "No two charities are the same," Gillian says. "We don't do one-size-fits-all. We listen, we analyse, and we build something sustainable together."

Looking Ahead

As "Idea for Charities" gains traction, its founder is optimistic about the future. Plans are underway to launch a mentorship program, pairing charity leaders with business experts, and to develop income generation training for beginners. "This is just the beginning," Gillian says with a smile. "We want to create a movement where sustainability isn't a buzzword—it's a reality for every charity."

For UK charities facing uncertain times, "Idea for Charities" offers more than just support—it offers a vision. From its Warrington headquarters, this fledgling business is proving that with the right tools and a bit of ingenuity, the voluntary sector can not only endure but flourish. With a forward looking approach, their message resonates even more: sustainability starts with community, and together, we can unlock a brighter future.

Get in touch today: 01925 354477

gillian@ideaforcharities.co.uk
www.ideaforcharities.co.uk



Who We Are

We are dedicated to helping organisations strengthen their operations, diversify their funding sources, and build the foundations for growth and lasting impact. Through strategic guidance, tailored solutions, and a focus on capacity-building, we enable charities to thrive and create positive change in their communities.

Our Values

- Integrity**
We uphold the highest standards of honesty and transparency in all our actions.
- Collaboration**
We believe in working closely with charities, stakeholders, and communities to co-create tailored solutions.
- Sustainability**
We are committed to fostering long-term financial health and operational resilience.
- Innovation**
We are committed to providing innovative solutions that will help create a better tomorrow for everyone.
- Impact**
We are driven by a passion for helping charities make a real difference in their communities, delivering results that matter.

Our Services

- INCOME**
Writing funding bids for your charity, helping you to secure financial support to help you achieve your mission
- DEVELOPMENT**
Guiding you through the necessary infrastructure development, including strengthening organisational systems, processes, and structures to ensure you are aligned with the expectations of potential funders
- ENGAGEMENT**
We understand that strong engagement is key to a charity's growth and sustainability and provide tailored support to help charities effectively engage with their stakeholders
- ADVICE**
Our consultancy services provide expert advice on issues such as governance, compliance, strategic planning, and operational efficiency

Contact Us @01925 354477 @ideaforcharities.co.uk @gillian@ideaforcharities.co.uk

College unveils Spring Adult Course Guide

WARRINGTON & Vale Royal College has unveiled its new Spring Adult Course Guide, packed with exciting opportunities for adults aged 19+ looking to enhance their skills, boost their careers, or improve their wellbeing.

With accredited qualifications from industry-recognised bodies like AAT, CIPD, and ILM to inspiring community learning courses like ceramics, digital skills, and floristry, there is something for everyone. Whether you're looking for a part-time, full-time, or flexible learning option, the college offers a wide range of courses to suit different needs and lifestyles.

Many of these courses can be studied for free if you receive an income-based benefit or earn less than £25,000 per year. If you live in a Liverpool City Region Combined Authority postcode, you can study at Warrington &

Vale Royal College and may be eligible for funding. Your course may be free if you earn less than £33,958.60 per year or receive an income-based benefit.

Warrington & Vale Royal College is enrolling now on these courses – enquire online today to secure your place! Alternatively, you can contact its friendly Learner Services Team on 01925 494 400 or learner.services@wvr.ac.uk.



Local lawyers give helping hand to 'wonderful' hospice – as firm launches new volunteering scheme

A GROUP of lawyers have given their time to help paint a local children's hospice – after the firm launched a new charity initiative.

Legal 500-listed Aaron & Partners says the new scheme is encouraging all staff to take a day away from the office to volunteer for a charity of their choice - in line with the firm's values and ongoing commitment to give back to the local community.

While the initiative has officially launched this month, several employees have already lent their time to charities across the region.

Those included Chief Operations Officer Mark Bergin, Head of HR Caroline King and her Colleague Jane Dearsley, who helped paint fences and furniture at Claire House Children's Hospice in Bebington, Wirral.

That was in addition to another group of Aaron & Partners employees taking on the gruelling 13.2 mile 'Welsh Peaks Challenge', which took them across Moel Eilio, Foel Goch, Cynghorion and Mount Snowdon –raising more

than £700 in the process.

Mark Bergin said: "This new scheme is a way of enabling our people to do something meaningful for a cause close to their or their loved ones' hearts.

"Our experience at Claire House was truly special. It was a privilege to meet the wonderful people who run the charity, as well as the inspiring children it supports. It's very rewarding to know that even a small contribution of our time can help make a positive difference."

The scheme launch follows on from the firm's decision in December to join with other local businesses to help raise thousands of pounds to ensure the city's Christmas lights could be switched on.

A subsequent Carols in the City event arranged by Aaron's raised vital funds and bags full of food for the West Cheshire Foodbank – the annual event's biggest ever donation.

Nick Clarke, Senior Partner, added: "I'm proud to work for a business that genuinely values its

role within the local community and takes tangible steps to make a difference. Giving back isn't just a box-ticking exercise for us – it's a core part of who we are as an organisation.

"Supporting local causes and enabling our team to contribute to initiatives they care about shows our commitment to creating both meaningful connections and a positive impact beyond the workplace."



Significant step toward carbon-neutral production takes place at Latchford

NOVELIS Inc., a sustainable aluminium solutions provider has successfully tested using hydrogen fuel to power a recycling furnace at its UK plant in Latchford.

The tests were carried out as part of a UK government decarbonization programme and in collaboration with Progressive Energy, an independent UK energy company, and required the installation of new burners, regenerators, and furnace lining material. Using hydrogen instead of the same amount of natural gas when operating a melting furnace can reduce CO₂e emissions by up to 90%.

“Exploring renewable energy sources, such as hydrogen, making first mover investments, and reducing energy intensity are part of our 3x30 vision to advance aluminium as the material of choice with circular solutions”, says Emilio Braghi, Executive Vice President, Novelis Inc., and President, Novelis Europe. “With the significant expansion of our local recycling capacity, we are transforming the Latchford site into a prototype for high-recycled content and decarbonized aluminium production.”

With safety as the top priority of

the hydrogen pilot project, several series of tests were conducted by blending different percentages of hydrogen with natural gas (30%-100%) to evaluate the impact on existing infrastructure, and equipment compatibility. During the trial campaign, several hundred tonnes of 3000 series scrap aluminium alloy were remelted and cast into sheet ingots. In addition, all relevant parameters were measured to assess any impact on the product, process, operating environment, and environmental emissions.

Further downstream processing, including rolling and finishing, will be now completed at other Novelis plants in Europe to establish the real ‘end-to-end’ parameters of a hydrogen-based, recycled alloy production process. Following the full post-trial evaluation and assessments, a report will be released as part of the UK government’s Industrial Fuel Switching programme later this year.

“The use of hydrogen is not common in the aluminium industry today and we are very proud to be one of the pioneers to have tested this new fuel at an industrial scale and in a real-world environment,” says Allan Sweeney, Plant Manager, Novelis Latchford. “The

results from Latchford will drive further research into the potential deployment of hydrogen in our recycling operations worldwide.”

The demonstration project at Novelis Latchford is part of the UK government’s Industrial Fuel Switching Competition programme. Supported with a grant of £4.6 million, as part of the £1 billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio and the wider regional HyNet project, the programme is designed to support industry to decarbonise their operations through a switch from natural gas to low carbon hydrogen. As the UK’s leading industrial decarbonisation cluster, HyNet will decarbonise industry across the North West and North Wales through the production, transportation and storage of low-carbon hydrogen, and through capturing industry’s carbon dioxide emissions through Carbon Capture Solutions. Novelis has been a partner in the HyNet project since 2017 and is supporting the development of the regional infrastructure project.

Novelis is also conducting its own technical feasibility studies into the use of hydrogen as a direct replacement for natural gas, and more generally, Novelis research and development teams worldwide continue to investigate

the possibility of using plasma and electricity to supply energy to its production plants.

As announced in July 2024, Novelis is investing approximately \$90 million to double the recycling capacity for used beverage cans (UBCs) at its plant in Latchford. The project will increase the facility’s UBC recycling capacity by 85 kilotonnes per year and decrease Novelis Europe’s CO₂e by more than 350,000 tonnes annually. The project is expected to begin commissioning in December 2026.

Furthermore, as part of its new Novelis 3x30 vision, the company has set new ambitious sustainability targets to achieve by the end of 2030, including increasing recycled content to 75% from today’s 63%, reducing carbon emissions to less than 3 tonnes CO₂e per tonne aluminium shipped, and continuing to lead the industry to circularity through first-mover investments. These are in addition to the company’s goal to be carbon neutral by 2050 or sooner. Along with using higher amounts of recycled content, decarbonization of the company’s melting processes and energy sources are important levers to delivering lower-carbon, highly sustainable aluminium solutions.



Residents rate Warrington care groups in top 20

NEW Care and Lovett Care have been included in the Top 20 UK Care Home Groups report, as voted for by residents at Grappenhall Manor and Statham Manor.

Lovett Care acquired New Care almost six months ago, however the two care home operators received the prestigious Top 20 rating individually.

The award is based on care home reviews compiled by leading review website carehome.co.uk from residents, as well as their friends and relatives, with various factors considered including overall experience, facilities, care/support, cleanliness, treated with dignity, food and drink, staff, activities, management, safety/security, bedrooms and communal

spaces, as well as value for money.

There are 2,117 care home groups in the UK, so being rated within the Top 20 is a huge achievement.

With nearly 17,000 care homes in the UK caring for around half a million people, it is a testament to the teams at both New Care and Lovett Care to receive an award from the leading reviews guide to care homes.

Nearly a fifth of the UK population are aged 65 years or older, which equates to 12.7 million people. In 50 years, this is predicted to increase to 22 million, making up 27% of the population. With demand for care homes set to grow, carehome.co.uk helps care seekers choose the right care home by ranking care homes using their reviews.

Amanda Hopkins, reviews manager, said: "It is a huge achievement to be named as a Top 20 care home group by the residents and their families, who have experienced for themselves the quality of care and support given at the care home.

"We would like to congratulate New Care and Lovett Care on being a top care home group! Our awards, celebrate the excellent care given by care home groups and show both New Care and Lovett Care give first-rate care throughout its homes.

"These top performing care home groups are making a profound difference to residents' lives, by putting compassion, respect and dignity at the centre of their care."

Keith Crockett, CEO of Lovett

Care and New Care, concludes: "The reviews received by our residents and their loved ones are what truly matter, as they are speaking first-hand about the care they receive, and to be named a Top 20 UK care home group out of 2,117 is incredible.

"While both Lovett Care and New Care have won this prestigious award several times in the past, it continues to be a superb achievement for the teams within all our care facilities. Now that the two operators are joined, it's wonderful to see the same level of excellent care and exceptional standards across all homes."

For further information, please visit www.newcarehomes.com or www.lovettcare.co.uk



New solar panel funding awarded to Bridgewater Community Healthcare

THOUSANDS of pounds are expected to be saved and put back into frontline care thanks to a major award win to install new solar panels at the main headquarters of Bridgewater Community Healthcare.

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero has today (Friday 21 March) announced a package of £100 million from Great British Energy for the NHS to install solar power and battery storage solutions to help drive down energy bills, offering better value for the taxpayer.

As part of this groundbreaking new funding, Bridgewater Community Healthcare has been awarded £160,000 to install solar panels at the organisation's corporate headquarters in Birchwood.

At current electricity price costs, it could save the organisation almost £25,000 each year.

In total, 227 panels will be installed on the roof of Spencer House by late summer. Spanning an area of 453 square metres, it is estimated the annual electricity generated will be almost 90,000kWh (enough energy to power an average UK household for about 25 years*).

Nikhil Khashu is Chief Executive of Bridgewater Community Healthcare. He said: "With energy bills soaring, the funding to install solar panels on the roof of our main headquarters in Birchwood has arrived at a perfect time.

"Like NHS trusts up and down the country, we are doing all we can to cut costs to ensure we can focus our spending on delivering the best patient care.

"Not only will this installation save us around £25,000 on energy bills each year, it will also support our ambition of creating a greener and more sustainable NHS."

Chief Sustainability Officer at NHS England, Chris Gormley added: "Thanks to the dedication of teams nationwide, the NHS has already implemented hundreds of projects that enhance energy efficiency and drive significant cost savings.

"This groundbreaking new investment, across 78 NHS Trusts

on around 200 sites, will expand solar power generation within the NHS by over 300%, slashing energy costs by hundreds of millions of pounds.

"These vital savings can be reinvested directly into frontline care, ensuring the NHS continues to deliver for our patients and communities."



Workwear companies primed to go up in size

TWO north west workwear companies are primed for growth under new ownership after a double management buyout.

Warrington-based distributor J & K Ross and manufacturing business Dale Techniche, which is based in Nelson, Lancashire, have nearly 50 staff in total and a combined turnover of £10m.

They have been acquired from the Ross family for an undisclosed sum by a management team led by Neil Wilcock.

A team at north west law firm Bermans, comprising corporate partners Charlotte Mills and Laura McMorland and solicitor Nathan Hughes, advised the management team on the double buyout.

J & K Ross, which was founded by Jean and Ken Ross in 1976, supplies safety workwear, protective and hi-vis clothing, uniforms and PPE to companies in sectors including utilities, logistics, manufacturing, construction, oil and gas, chemicals and petrochemicals.

At its Warrington facility, the business has a retail shop alongside its offices, warehousing, embroidery and printing operations.

The Ross family acquired Dale Techniche, which makes health and safety workwear, flame-retardant clothing, racewear and flight wear such as pilots' uniforms, in 2003.

Following the deal, J & K Ross and Dale Techniche continue to trade as standalone businesses.

The buyout team alongside Neil comprises J & K Ross accounts and logistics director Sharon Sykes, the company's purchasing manager Phil Taylor, customer experience manager Lisa Robinson and communications and IT manager Phill Moir-Riches, and Donna Emmott, the operations director at Dale Techniche.

Neil, who joined J & K Ross as a sales representative more than 30 years ago and has been managing director since 2020, said: "Both companies are really important names in their respective industries. It's very much business as usual, and we look forward to

servicing the needs of our existing customers and new ones, and working with our trusted suppliers, for many more years while maintaining our high standards of service thanks to our dedicated and knowledgeable team."

He added: "We have a great management team who understand the businesses well and we have exciting plans to expand, as there are strong growth opportunities for both companies.

"At J & K Ross, we will be looking to add to our product portfolio and expand into new sectors, bringing in additional staff to assist with our strategy.

"Dale Techniche is a sleeping giant and there is great scope to expand its customer base.

"The Ross family was keen that the businesses should be able to build on the extensive knowledge base of the senior staff and the wider team so, despite interest from other parties, they were keen to hand over ownership to the management and ensure there would be continuity. Our fantastic and loyal staff are all very happy

with the outcome."

Charlotte Mills said: "J & K Ross and Dale Techniche are terrific north west businesses with strong foundations and excellent reputations for their commitment to quality and customer service.

"The six-strong MBO team has around 140 years' experience of working in the companies between them, and it was a genuine pleasure to guide them to completion.

"They were great to work with and I am confident that the management team will make a huge success of the acquisitions, powered by their enthusiasm and experience. They have an excellent platform for growth and I wish them every success."

Close Brothers funded the deal. Kirsti Pinnell and Helen Mather at law firm Kuits, and Matt Beckley and Lewis Pearson at DJH Corporate Finance, advised the Ross family. Cole Associates provided corporate finance advice to the buyers.

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The image shows the LocaliQ Video logo at the top, with the tagline "Your local video production agency." Below the logo is a collage of four small video thumbnails: a man in a cap, a woman pouring a drink, a man in a white shirt, and a man in a dark shirt.



World leader in renewable energy Greenvolt moves into town

GREENVOLT Group, a global leader in renewable energy, is to expand into the UK's distributed generation market with the launch of Greenvolt Next UK – based in Warrington.

Targeting a portfolio of commercial and industrial projects with a total capacity of 100 MW this year, the company will enable UK businesses to produce, consume and manage their own green electricity, such as through rooftop solar panels on warehouses and industrial buildings, helping lower electricity expenditure, reduce dependency on the grid and meet decarbonisation goals.

Greenvolt Next is part of Greenvolt Group, which operates in 12 European countries, now including the UK, and provides decentralised renewable energy solutions including photovoltaic systems for individual and collective self-consumption, energy efficiency, and battery solar storage, all backed by flexible financing options allowing businesses to access low-cost, predictable renewable energy without upfront investment.

The expansion of Greenvolt Next into the UK is part of Greenvolt's broader strategy to expand its investment in distributed generation across Europe, where it already has over 450 MWp of signed capacity, more than 180 MWp installed, and a portfolio of over 2,500 projects.

Based in Warrington, Greenvolt Next's UK team is expected to grow to 50 members over the next 12 months, with support from its Irish counterparts, who bring 20 years of experience.

The company is currently managing a range of projects, including those for a leading European beverage company, a logistics and real estate developer in Thurrock, a ground-mounted system in Standingfauld, and a major retail store in Wellington.

"The expansion of Greenvolt Next into the UK is a significant milestone in the group's strategy, reinforcing our strong commitment to this market, where we are already present through utility-scale and sustainable biomass projects. Establishing Greenvolt Next UK forms part of our plan to grow our pan-European self-consumption platform, bringing proven expertise and a solid track record across multiple European markets to support businesses in their decarbonisation efforts," said João Manso Neto, CEO of the Greenvolt Group.

Owen Power, CEO, Greenvolt Next

UK, is seeing growing demand for decentralised (or onsite) clean energy solutions.

He said: "Businesses across the board have had to grapple with rising energy costs and for energy intensive sectors like airports, retail centres, manufacturing and pharma, the imperative to bring down costs is even higher.

"In the UK, there is also a strong drive to reduce emissions in line with government targets, and decentralised energy solutions can play a significant part of an organisation's carbon reduction plan. Finding the right solution varies from business to business, whether it has large industrial units with plenty of roof space for solar panels or is based in a location where wind or heat pumps are most suitable. A tailored approach is essential, and that is precisely what we bring to the market, backed by Greenvolt

Group's international expertise and solid experience, particularly in onsite energy generation."

Mr Power is also CEO of Greenvolt Next Ireland, which has a portfolio of over 700 projects, and a signed capacity of 300 MW and 160 MW already installed. The Irish business serves a client base that includes industry leaders such as PepsiCo, Lidl, Pfizer and Virgin Media.

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 209 MW solar pipeline and preparations underway for the development of two storage projects with 58 MW.



Specialist bank recognised among industry's best at prestigious awards

REDWOOD Bank has been shortlisted for the Specialist Bank of the Year at the B&C Awards, run by industry publication Bridging and Commercial.

Last month, Redwood was given the award for Best Innovation in the Mortgage Space for its Green Reward, which benefits landlords who have energy-efficient properties, at the MoneyAge Mortgage Awards.

Stuart Davidson, Director of Product and Strategy, said: "We're incredibly proud to be named a finalist in the Specialist Bank of the Year category at the B&C Awards. This recognition is a testament to the hard work, innovation and commitment of our entire team, who consistently go above and beyond to support our customers.

"To be shortlisted alongside such strong and respected institutions highlights our position in the market, and we remain focused on continuing to deliver exceptional service and specialist lending solutions across the UK."

With voting for the awards closing

last week, the shortlist has pitched Redwood against its peers in this hugely competitive category.

The B&C Awards celebrate excellence across the specialist finance industry, recognising lenders, brokers and service providers who are making a real impact across 24 categories.

The winners will be announced during an awards ceremony at Ditton Manor, Berkshire, on June 5.

The announcement of being shortlisted comes just a week before Redwood attends the Business Moneyfacts Awards at Evolution London, where the Bank has been named a finalist in three categories – Best Business Variable Rate Deposit Account Provider, Best Business Fixed Account Provider and Best Service from a Commercial Mortgage Provider.

The Bank has won the Best Business Variable Rate Deposit Account Provider for six successive years.



Warrington firm sponsors Wire woman for second year

WARRINGTON-BASED X-Press Legal Services is keeping it local with the continued sponsorship of a Wire woman.

The largest independent search firm in England and Wales is fully behind Warrington Wolves women's team for the second consecutive season, as it cheers on outside back player, Nicole Barnett.

Lynne Lister, managing director of X-Press Legal Services, comments: "We are thrilled to continue our sponsorship of Nicole for another season. Women's rugby showcases incredible mental and physical agility, along

with essential life skills such as discipline, determination, and teamwork.

"As a business, we understand the importance of commercial success in enabling Warrington Wolves to provide sporting opportunities for players of all ages and abilities. We are proud to support our local club and wish all the teams great success this season."

This is the second season 19-year-old Nicole from Haydock has played for Warrington Wolves. Her selection last year had an immediate impact with Nicole securing a crucial last-minute try and 34-28 victory over

Featherstone Rovers in the first Super League game of the season.

X-Press Legal Services is the leading independent provider of regulated property searches and reports, trusted by legal practices across England and Wales. Its 27 offices are run by local teams who are experts in reporting and

have an in-depth knowledge of their area. The firm provides a wraparound service including residential & commercial searches, pre & post-completion services, cyber security, and compliance products. For more information, visit www.xpresslegal.co.uk or contact the HQ team on 01925 393 333.




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Charity appoints new Director of Operations

WALTON Lea Partnership has welcomed Ashok Kalia as new Director of Operations.

His outstanding leadership abilities, experience and expertise will be critical in guiding the charity through the next stages of its strategic development and growth, as it transforms into a centre of service excellence.

Working collaboratively with a recently strengthened board, Ashok will re-align the organisation and organisational competencies to deliver the significant enhancements in person centred learning development services set out in their strategic manifesto.

With significant experience in business transformation and change management he will accelerate the pace at which they deliver strong improvement across the charity's internal

business processes and energise engagement with their key stakeholders.

Ashok brings a wealth of sector experience having worked alongside Trudi Beswick at Cauldwell Children, during its transformational journey to becoming a national and international centre of excellence.



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Bank kicks off brighter future for young rugby fans

MORE young people in Warrington are getting the chance to experience the thrill of live rugby thanks to a generous donation from a business bank.

All 76 primary schools in Warrington have received a Warrington Wolves children's membership as part of Redwood Bank's commitment to the community.

The Bank is keen to make more memberships available as part of the Join the Pack initiative and has pledged to donate one every time a business with a WA postcode opens its first business savings account with them, ensuring even more young people can attend games at the Halliwell Jones Stadium.

A longstanding kit sponsor for Wolves, the Warrington-based bank was keen to support the club's programme. John Eastgate, Chief Commercial Officer, said: "Redwood Bank has strong roots in Warrington and a local office in the town. We are a local employer and have been a kit sponsor for Wolves for many years now.

"When Warrington Wolves approached us about supporting their Join the Pack campaign, we didn't hesitate to get involved. We immediately donated 76

memberships so every primary school in Warrington had one.

"However, we knew we could do more, so we have created this new initiative to provide even more memberships for the kids and families of Warrington."

This partnership reflects Redwood Bank's long-term dedication to community involvement. The bank has been a strong supporter of local initiatives and is proud

to contribute to projects that make a difference to the lives of Warrington residents.

Karl Fitzpatrick, CEO of Warrington Wolves, said: "We're delighted to be partnering with Redwood Bank on this great campaign, helping more children to be part of the Warrington Wolves pack.

"Having the backing of local businesses is crucial in making initiatives like this possible. Their

support allows us to reach more children and provide them with opportunities they might not otherwise have. It's fantastic to see businesses stepping up to invest in the next generation of rugby fans and players, strengthening both the community and the sport."

For more information on opening a business savings account, visit <https://redwoodbank.co.uk/savings>



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