

Warrington Worldwide

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ISSUE 321 SEPTEMBER 2026 FREE EVERY MONTH

A giant salute to Littler

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Editor's Opinion

There is an old saying that if you don't have your say, you can't complain later. But when it comes to Warrington's Local Plan, the real question is whether enough people even realised what was at stake.

Based on the consultation figures, only around 1.5 per cent of Warrington's adult population took part in the process that will shape where thousands of new homes, employment sites and major infrastructure projects will be built over the coming decades. That statistic should concern everyone.

This isn't a criticism of those who took the time to respond. Far from it. Many residents, community groups and parish councils invested hundreds of hours studying complex planning documents running into thousands of pages. They deserve credit for engaging in what is an incredibly complicated process.

But 1.5 per cent is hardly a ringing endorsement of widespread public participation.

Whether that low figure reflects consultation fatigue, lack of awareness or simply the complexity of the planning system is open to debate. The reality is that many people only become interested when a planning application appears at the end of their road.

Following the Government's decision to increase mandatory housing targets for local authorities, Warrington Borough Council is consulting again on what those revised figures could mean for the borough's future. The new targets

have the potential to place even greater pressure on land availability, infrastructure and public services, raising fresh questions about how and where future development should take place.

Whether people supported the adopted Local Plan or opposed it, this latest consultation is an opportunity that should not be ignored. If residents believe the borough is growing too quickly, or alternatively that more homes are needed, now is the time to say so—not after decisions have been made.

The Local Plan has already generated fierce debate over Green Belt development, transport infrastructure, healthcare provision

and whether Warrington's growth ambitions are sustainable. Consultation should never become a box-ticking exercise. It should be about ensuring residents understand the choices facing the borough and have a genuine opportunity to influence them. At **Warrington Worldwide**, we've always believed in giving people the information they need to make informed decisions. But democracy only works when people take part. The previous consultation saw only around 1.5 per cent of Warrington's adult population respond. This latest consultation offers a chance to improve on that figure. The future of the borough is too important to be decided with so few voices taking part.



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Giant 38ft Luke Littler mural created to celebrate World Champion's remarkable rise

A giant 38ft mural of reigning world champion Luke Littler was unveiled at Golden Square Shopping Centre in his hometown of Warrington, to celebrate one of darts' most extraordinary success stories.

Recognising the lasting impact Littler continues to have in inspiring the next generation of players, the striking artwork pays tribute to the teenager's remarkable rise from local talent to global sporting superstar and recognises the achievements that have cemented his place at the top of the game.

To mark Luke's historic back-to-back World Championship and World Matchplay triumphs, Target Darts also announced the launch of "Born To Win", a new signature range of Luke Littler darts products. Emblazoned across the mural, "Born To Win" reflects the mindset and determination that have defined Littler's meteoric rise, while celebrating a journey that has inspired millions of fans around the world.

Elsewhere, Target Darts, who manage and represent Luke, also announced that together with Luke, they will donate darts equipment to 63 schools across the local Warrington area, designed to introduce more young people to the sport at grassroots level, helping to inspire and develop the next generation of players. Target Darts also announced at a press conference in London, it's aim to inspire one hundred million people to play darts by the end of the

decade, triple the number of people playing today.

The day's celebrations began as crowds gathered at Golden Square Shopping Centre for the official unveiling. Luke Littler was joined by his family and friends, the Mayor of Warrington, local schoolchildren, members of the public and representatives from Target Darts, as the hometown hero came face-to-face with the artwork for the first time.

The mural, commissioned by Target Darts, Luke's sponsors, manufacturers and management team, in partnership with MurWalls, has been created as a permanent new landmark for the town, and celebrates the remarkable journey of a Warrington teenager who has become one of the biggest names in world sport.

The unveiling follows Littler's latest major title victory at the World Matchplay in Blackpool recently, where he produced one of the sport's most dominant performances, posting the highest tournament average in World Matchplay Darts history to successfully defend his title. It comes during a period in which his achievements have helped drive unprecedented interest and growth in darts across the UK as he continues his quest to win all eight PDC ranking

titles in the same calendar year, something that has never previously been achieved.

Speaking at the unveiling, Luke Littler said: "Growing up in Warrington, I never imagined something like this would happen. It's a huge honour to have a mural in my hometown and I'm incredibly grateful to everyone at Target Darts for making it happen. Hopefully it inspires young people here to believe they can achieve something special too. If it encourages even a few kids to pick up a set of darts and enjoy the sport, then that's something I'm really proud of."

After posing for photos in front of the mural, Littler joined darts commentator Dan Dawson for a Q&A session, where he reflected on his career and recent success. He then took to the stage alongside three local competition winners from a drawing competition organised by Golden Square Shopping Centre, which saw children submit hand-drawn pictures of Luke. The three lucky winners, personally selected by Luke, were invited on stage to meet him and throw some darts together in front of the Warrington crowd using Target Arcade, Target Darts' new connected entertainment platform, which was showcased to the public for the first time ahead of its official launch in October.

The Mayor of Warrington, who was also in attendance, paid tribute

to Littler's achievements, highlighting the positive impact he has had on young people across the region, through his success, dedication and connection to his hometown.

"Warrington is absolutely proud of Luke Littler. This magnificent mural right here in our community stands as a lasting tribute to Luke's extraordinary achievements on the world stage. It is more than just art, it is a powerful message to every young person across Warrington: dream big, work hard, and believe that you, too, can reach incredible heights."



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Great Warrington Duck Race brings colour and community spirit to River Mersey

HUNDREDS of people gathered at Warrington Rowing Club for the annual Great Warrington Duck Race, with hundreds of brightly coloured plastic ducks taking to the water in a fun-filled event supporting the local community.

The popular event attracted families, supporters and duck-race enthusiasts to the riverside, with the atmosphere boosted by the presence of Warrington Mayor Councillor Sagheer Zaman, who attended as the special guest.

The race saw the ducks released onto the water before making their way towards the finish line, with spectators cheering on their chosen competitors.

The event once again highlighted the strong community spirit surrounding Warrington Rowing Club, while also showcasing the important role played by local businesses in supporting community events across the town.

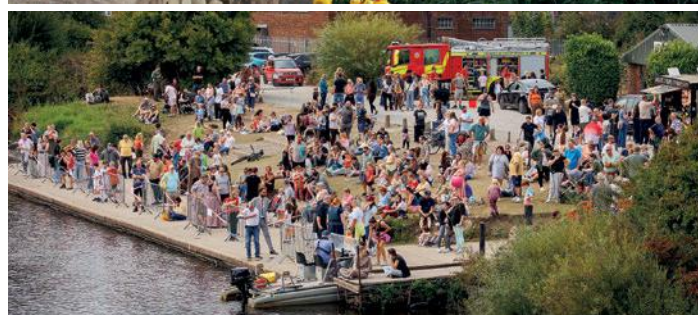
A number of local businesses

backed this year's Duck Race, helping organisers stage the event and bringing together the business and community sectors in support of a popular Warrington tradition.

The Great Warrington Duck Race has become a colourful fixture in the town's summer events calendar, providing an entertaining day out for families while raising the profile of Warrington Rowing Club and its work within the local community.

With the river providing the perfect backdrop, the event combined fun, fundraising and community spirit – with the Mayor's attendance adding an extra civic touch to one of Warrington's most unusual and much-loved races.

Pictures: John Hopkins



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United Utilities recognised as one of the UK's top 100 apprenticeship employers

WARRINGTON-based United Utilities has again been recognised as one of the UK's best employers for apprentices.

The North West water and wastewater company ranked 64th in the annual list which is published by the government and career platform HIGHERIN to recognise organisations that provide outstanding apprenticeship opportunities and experience.

With more than 160,000 apprenticeship employers in England, being recognised in the Top 100 – it places United Utilities among the elite of apprenticeship providers in the country.

The rankings are based on performance across three key

criteria: achievement, recognising employers whose apprentices successfully complete their programmes; commitment, highlighting those that offer a diverse range of apprenticeship opportunities, particularly for young people; and apprentice experience, recognising employers that receive outstanding reviews from their apprentices.

United Utilities welcomed 84 new apprentices in its most recent intake across a wide range of roles and disciplines ranging from scientist, project controller and digital specialists through to mechanical and electrical engineer, customer service advisor and for the first time trainee woodland officers.

More than two thirds were aged between 16 and 18 highlighting the important role apprenticeships play in helping young people take their first steps into the world of work. 21% are female, 11% come from ethnic minority backgrounds and 10% identify as having a disability.

Welcoming the ranking Jacqui Kawczak, Head of Early Careers and Education, said: "We are delighted to be recognised as one of the Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers. This achievement reflects the dedication of our teams, mentors and apprentices,

and highlights our commitment to creating meaningful career opportunities through high-quality apprenticeship programmes.

"We remain passionate about developing future talent, supporting apprentices to achieve their goals, and providing an inclusive environment where everyone can succeed.

"This recognition is another important milestone in our commitment to developing future talent, supporting social mobility, and creating career opportunities that benefit both individuals and our business."

Apprentices at United Utilities earn while they learn, studying Apprenticeship Standards which are endorsed by Skills England while also gaining hands-on experience.

Schemes range from 18 months to six years for degree apprenticeships in subjects including engineering, quantity surveying, town planning, science and labs and run in conjunction with universities, colleges, training providers and United Utilities in-house dedicated Technical Training Centre. Western Europeans

The company will be welcoming 86 apprentices and 54 graduates in September.

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Spotlight on Local Business

Another busy summer of growth, community and family

By Laurence Barrow

It's been another incredibly busy few weeks, with Barrow Electrical continuing to grow, Warrington's community keeping us busy and plenty happening at Warrington Rylands 1906 FC. I'm also writing this from Spain, where we've finally managed to enjoy some much-needed family time.

At Barrow Electrical, the business continues to go from strength to strength. We've welcomed new clients, been invited to tender for some of our biggest projects to date and continue to deliver nationwide and international compliance rollouts across the retail and hospitality sectors. LED upgrade programmes are continuing across the North West, while the team are also delivering a major school upgrade in the Midlands.

Closer to home, a large storage facility is nearing completion, with several full shop fit-outs also underway. Summer is always a particularly busy period for school work, and we're currently working in a number of schools across Warrington, helping make sure they're safe and ready for pupils returning in September.

It's fantastic to see the business growing, but I'm equally proud of who we work with, what we do and, most importantly, how we do it. The team continue to work incredibly hard, and there's plenty more in the pipeline.

Community has also been a

huge part of the past few weeks. Warrington Youth Zone's BBQ on the Roof was a brilliant evening, including the opportunity to take penalties with the Mayor — and thankfully I managed to score! It was great to share the evening with so many fantastic Warrington businesses.

We were also incredibly proud to sponsor Disability Awareness Day at Walton Hall and Gardens. Claire, the girls and I had a brilliant day, and seeing the work that goes into making the event such a success was genuinely inspiring.

The biggest personal highlight, however, was the North West Cancer Research Golf & Gala at Fairmont Cheshire, The Mere. Quite simply, it was out of this world. We raised more than £80,000, which still hasn't really sunk in. There are far too many people to thank individually, but every sponsor, guest, business and person who supported the event played a part. We're already planning the 2027 event — and it's going to be even bigger!

At Warrington Rylands, the new

season is now underway and I'm incredibly excited to see what it brings. It was also fantastic to see the club supporting Warrington Youth Zone's annual VPX event, with our coaches getting involved and so many young people taking part.

Finally, we've enjoyed an amazing family cruise followed by some quiet time in Spain. After everything we missed out on last

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year while Claire was undergoing treatment, having this time together has been exactly what our family needed.

Another busy chapter, and plenty more to come.



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Young boy sells prized Pokémon cards to help the homeless

A 7-year-old boy from Grappenhall has sold his prized Pokémon cards to help raise funds for the homeless charity, Room at the Inn, based in Warrington.

Enterprising Leo from St Wilfred's Primary School in Grappenhall set up a stall and raised an impressive £34, which will help fund a safe night indoors and provide essential supplies for a homeless person in Warrington.

Leo explained: "I learned about charities in RE at school and then started to think how I could raise money for people who aren't as lucky as me. I wanted the money to help homeless people because it makes me feel sad when I see people in Warrington that don't have a home."

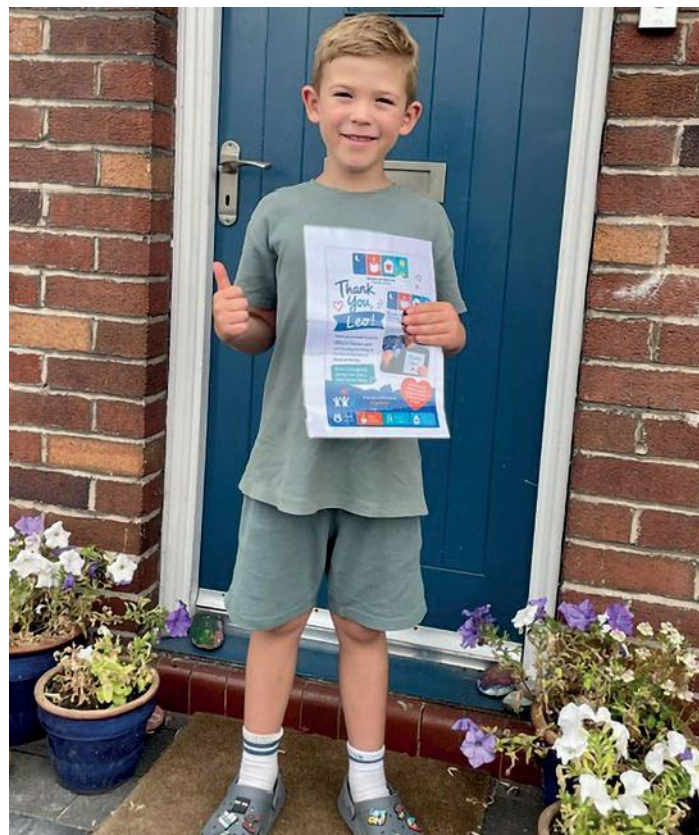
As Volunteer and Fundraising Co-ordinator Morven Turner says: "Sometimes the biggest acts of kindness come from the youngest members of our community."

"With incredible thoughtfulness and compassion, Leo set up a little stall outside his house and sold his

own Pokémon cards to members of the public. He proudly displayed that all money raised would go towards helping homeless people. Leo has shown that no matter what age, every act of kindness can make a real difference to someone's life."

Leo's dad James added: "It has been a lovely, heartwarming experience for us as a family. I'd like to thank Morven for supporting Leo and giving him a certificate and the confidence that he is on the right track. This has certainly planted a seed in Leo that will stay with him forever."

If Leo's story has inspired you, and you would like to support their work helping people experiencing homelessness across Warrington, please get in touch at donations@roomattheinn.org.uk



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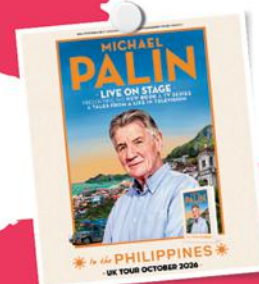
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- Thu 24 Sep - Tim Peake - Astronauts: The Quest to Explore Space**
- Thu 1 Oct - Susan Calman - Tall Tales**
- Fri 2 Oct - Fastlove**
- Sat 3 Oct - The Night Sky Show**
- Tue 13 Oct - Michael Palin - In the Philippines**
- Thu 15 Oct - The Rocket Man
A Celebration of Sir Elton John**
- Fri 16 Oct - T-Rextasy**
- Sat 17 Oct - The Clone Roses, Oas-is & The James Experience (Sold Out)**
- Tue 20 Oct - Tits Up!**
- Fri 23 Oct - The ELO Show**
- Sat 24 Oct - The Illegal Eagles**
- Sun 25 Oct - Northern Live**
- Fri 30 Oct - Too Much Too Young**
- Sat 31 Oct - Lost in Music**
- Sun 1 Nov - Guy Martin - Unplanned (Sold Out)**
- Fri 6 Nov - The Stylistics**
- Sat 7 Nov - Magic of the Beatles**
- Wed 11 Nov - The Nutcracker**
- Thu 12 Nov - Sky Full of Stars
A Tribute to Coldplay**
- Fri 13 Nov - Boyzlife**
- Mon 30 Nov - James B Partridge
The Big Christmas Assembly**
- Fri 4 Dec - Livewire - The AC/DC Show**
- Sat 5 Dec - The ABBA Reunion Tribute Show**
- Fri 11 Dec - Massaoke - Christmas!**
- Sat 19 Dec - Warrington Male Voice Choir
Christmas Voices Christmas Brass**
- Wed 30 Dec - Aladdin Panto 2026/27**
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Priestley College celebrates another year of outstanding results

PRIESTLEY College Warrington is celebrating another year of outstanding results, with students achieving exceptional success across A-Levels, vocational qualifications and T-Levels.

As the largest provider of A-Levels in the local area, an incredible 100% pass rate was achieved in 30 A-Level subjects, with 61.5% of grades awarded at A*, A or B.

Among those celebrating was Evie Steele, who is heading to the University of Oxford to study Japanese and is already looking forward to spending time in Japan as part of her degree next year.

"The support of my teachers at Priestley has been amazing and I have just enjoyed every aspect of college life," said Evie, who achieved three A*s and an A. "Studying at Oxford is going to be amazing and I can't wait to get there."

Vocational and technical learners were similarly successful, with a 100% pass rate across 27 vocational subjects and three T-Levels.

Chloe Booth is heading to Manchester Metropolitan University to study Physiotherapy after securing D*D*D in Sport & Exercise Science.

Former St Nicholas High School pupil Lacey-Marie Kirk secured D*D in Protective Services and a Merit in Human Biology. She is now heading to the University of Worcester to study Paramedic Science.

"I'm most excited about the course, but also university life, the independence that will bring and how that helps you to become an adult," she said.

Priestley students are also

heading to some of the UK's most prestigious universities, including Cambridge, Durham, King's College London and Edinburgh.

Their chosen degrees reflect the breadth of subjects and interests across the college, including Ecological Environmental Science, Acting, Physiotherapy, Geography and History.

Josh Taylor is taking a different route, with a gap year ahead that will see him travel to Nepal to teach. The former Bridgewater High School pupil secured two A*s and two As and hopes to build valuable experience before pursuing his ambition of working in wildlife conservation.

"I'm hoping to get some real-life experience from my gap year before going to study at the University of Edinburgh," he said.

Priestley School of Performance Arts continues to produce exceptionally talented performers, with students progressing to prestigious conservatoires including Guildford School of Acting, Bird College and the Royal Northern College of Music.

For many students, the next step will be into the world of work, with a number progressing to higher-level apprenticeships with employers including Sellafield, Pacific Nuclear Transport, the NHS and Cheshire Fire Service.

Principal Paul Willerton said: "Today is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the achievements of every Priestley student. There is

no single definition of success, and what makes these results particularly special is the sheer variety of achievements and destinations we are celebrating.

"From students securing places at some of the UK's most prestigious universities and conservatoires, to those progressing into higher-level apprenticeships, employment and exciting opportunities around the world, our students have demonstrated ambition, determination and resilience.

"We are incredibly proud of everything they have achieved and, most importantly, of the futures they are now able to build for themselves."



Evie Steele



Best friends Caitlin McEvoy and Olivia Menarry enjoyed outstanding achievements



Family-owned nursery group celebrates successful Ofsted report

A FAMILY-owned award-winning nursery group is celebrating a successful Ofsted report for its newest nursery in Warrington.

Dunky's Day Nursery & Forest School at Gulliver's World in Old Hall, Warrington, was awarded a "Strong Standard" rating in every area in its first OFSTED inspection.

The nursery opened in October 2024 and is an authentic Forest School environment. It occupies a large amount of woodland in the grounds of the theme park, serviced by multiple bell tents, canopies and unique structures.

OFSTED praises the nursery's leaders for "working above the standard expected of them".

Inspectors note how 'freely and confidently' children explore in 'this purposeful, enchanting and

natural forest school environment', that they 'settle quickly into chosen activities', 'play happily and make many friends' and 'have a real sense of belonging'.

Children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, are supported to 'consistently take part in daily experiences'.

The nursery is also praised for its "excellent punctuality and attendance" and inspectors say children are well prepared for their next stage of learning and develop the confidence, independence and social skills needed for school'.



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It was great to have my dad, Kev, pop into the new-look Love Carpets showroom recently. Kev's now retired from the business, but as the man who helped build it from the ground up, he'll always be a big part of what Love Carpets stands for.

On the other side, I'm proud to introduce the next generation — my son, Tom — who's now officially joined the team. Tom's a fully qualified, time-served fitter with experience in carpets, vinyl, laminate, and LVT. He's worked with many different fitters over the years, learning every part of the trade from the ground up. Tom actually started fitting carpets at just 14 and knew straight away it was the career for him. By learning his trade independently before joining me, he's shown that everything he's achieved has been earned through hard work and dedication. As a dad, that makes me incredibly proud.

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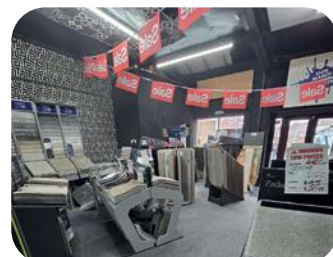
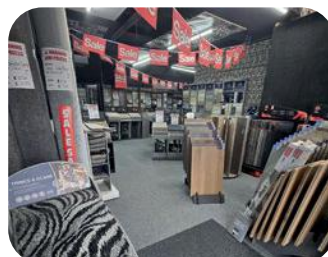
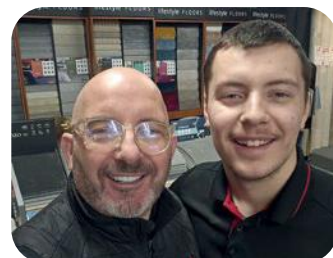
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Maternity mural brings joy to new families at hospital

A new mural has been opened on the maternity unit at Warrington Hospital thanks to students from Carmel College.

The project, co-ordinated by maternity support worker Emma Bright, welcomed sixth form fine art students from the St Helens college to bring some colour to the corridors of the maternity unit to welcome parents, families and visitors as they approach or leave the ward.

Under the guidance of Carmel College's head of fine art, Melissa Wright, students Anna Leigh, Amelia Baker, Becah Nogueira, Charlotte Johnson, Ionela Turcan, Isla Stabbins, Kiara Dorkel-Law and Laila Turner spent two days creating the hand drawn mural, inspired by artwork chosen by women and families on the unit.

The large-scale mural, painted on a 40-foot wall, includes intricately hand-painted flowers with flowing lines to illustrate the journey from pregnancy to birth and through to early years of life. It also features 5 intertwined butterflies to represent the 1 in 5 families who sadly experience pregnancy loss.

With a delicate design surrounding the words 'welcome to the world little one' the new mural makes the perfect spot for that famous 'going home' hospital photograph.

Emma said: "Lots of families take photographs on the corridor when they are leaving hospital

with their precious newborn and as a team, we had noticed that the main corridor was a bit plain, with quite a clinical feel. We came up with the idea of reaching out to local colleges and it was a great opportunity to work alongside Melissa and the students to discuss design ideas. We were also able to share the designs with families receiving care on the unit, so it was extra special and represented their journeys.

"The students were absolutely fantastic on the day and so many families have commented on the difference it has made to the unit!"

Melissa Wright, head of fine art at Carmel College, said: "Painting this mural on the maternity ward at Warrington Hospital has been such a wholesome and rewarding experience. I am so proud of what my A-Level fine art students and I achieved in such a short amount of time. We've already received lots of photos of families holding their beautiful newborns next to it!"

Nikki Webb, maternity ward manager, said: "We couldn't be happier with our new mural and would like to say a massive thank to you the students for giving up their time to complete this project for us."



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Divorce Column

By Peter Wilkinson
Divorce Lawyer at Chambers Fletcher Solicitors

After the Summer Holidays - Thinking About Divorce?

September often marks a return to routine. The summer holiday is over, the children are back to school and life begins to return to normal. For some couples, this can be a time of reflection. Difficulties that have perhaps been pushed into the background during the summer period may come back into sharper focus, leading them to question whether their marriage has reached the end of the road.

If you find yourself in that position and are considering separation, it is important to remember that the choices made in the early stages of a relationship breakdown can have long-lasting legal and financial consequences. Taking advice before taking action is often the best first step, allowing you to understand your options before deciding how best to move forward.

Although the legal process for obtaining a divorce is now more straightforward under the no-fault system, the divorce itself is only one part of the picture. Financial matters will need to be resolved and, where children are involved, careful consideration will need to be given to making arrangements that best meet their needs. Reaching sensible agreements is sometimes easier said than done. It often requires time, information and compromise.

It is also important not to make assumptions about your legal position. Decisions such as leaving the family home, dividing assets informally or relying on what friends or family have experienced may not be in your best interests. Every case is different and the advice that applies in one situation may not be appropriate in another, even where the circumstances appear similar.

Seeking legal advice equips you with the knowledge you need to make informed choices. If, after the summer, you are reflecting on your situation and wondering whether separation is the right step, obtaining advice sooner rather than later can reduce uncertainty, provide clarity and offer reassurance at what is typically a difficult and emotional time.

For expert advice and assistance regarding divorce, financial matters or child arrangements, please get in touch. Whatever your family law situation, we can help.

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Vet's 100km challenge honours friend



A Grappenhall vet has completed a gruelling 100km challenge in just two days, raising more than £7,000 for a charity supporting the mental health and wellbeing of the veterinary profession.

Alexa Montgomery, from Rutland House Vets branch in Grappenhall, Warrington, took on the Peak District Ultra Challenge in memory of her close friend and fellow vet, John Ellis, who tragically died by suicide.

She was joined by John's partner, Ashley Andrews, from Northumberland, and Hampshire-based vet Stephanie Ellis, who is no relation to John. Together, the trio tackled the demanding route to raise funds for Vetlife, the charity that provides vital emotional, financial and mental health support to everyone in the veterinary community. Vets in the UK face an alarmingly high risk of suicide, with rates estimated to be three to four times higher than the general public.

Alexa raised £2,000 through her JustGiving page, while the team raised a combined total of £5,288. VetPartners, which owns veterinary practices and animal healthcare businesses throughout the UK and Europe including Rutland House, doubled Alexa's fundraising efforts for a grand total of £7,000.

John, who was godfather to Alexa's daughter, Lois, died in 2022 at the age of 35. He is remembered by those who knew him as a kind, compassionate and dedicated vet who cared deeply for both his patients and their owners.

The challenge saw the trio walk 50km on each of two consecutive days, spending around 14 hours

on their feet each day as they navigated the tough Peak District terrain.

Alexa said: "It was one of the toughest things I've ever done, both physically and emotionally. There were times when we were in tears because we were so exhausted, but we kept reminding ourselves why we were doing it and that gave us the strength to carry on."

"Reaching the finish line was incredibly emotional. Every blister, every aching muscle and every difficult moment was worth it because we have raised such an amazing amount of money for a charity that means so much to us."

"Vetlife does incredible work supporting people across the veterinary profession who are struggling, and we experienced that support ourselves around the time of John's death. Knowing that help is there for vets, nurses and practice teams when they need it most is invaluable."

"We never want another family, friend or colleague to go through that. If raising money and talking openly about mental health helps even one person reach out for support, then every step of those 100 kilometres was worthwhile. I hope this challenge also helps raise awareness of the pressures people in our profession can face and encourages anyone who is struggling to know they are not alone."

Warrington Mela returns to Queens Gardens

Following the success of last year's event, Warrington Mela will return to Queens Gardens on Sunday 6 September, bringing together communities from across the borough for a vibrant celebration of culture, diversity and inclusion.

The popular event is funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), with further funding and in-kind contributions coming from sponsors and community partners including Culture Warrington, Warrington BID, Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Safer Communities Fund, the Hoover Foundation, Cheshire Language Academy and Warrington Chamber Plus. The council does not provide funding for the event.

Warrington Mela is a multicultural community celebration that welcomes people of all ethnicities and backgrounds, showcasing traditions, music, dance, food and performances from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. Its purpose is to create opportunities for people from all communities to come together, learn about different cultures and celebrate the diversity that makes Warrington a welcoming and vibrant place to live.

Throughout the day, visitors will enjoy performances reflecting the rich range of talent within Warrington's communities, alongside family-friendly activities, arts and cultural experiences.

One of the festival's highlights is its colourful international market, featuring cuisine from around the world, including Indian, Korean, Turkish, Greek and Chinese dishes.

Through music, food, arts and shared experiences, the programme is designed to encourage conversation, build understanding and strengthen connections between communities.

Warrington Borough Council Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture

and Leisure, Cllr Jean Flaherty, said: "Warrington Mela continues to demonstrate how cultural events can bring people together, foster community resilience and celebrate the rich diversity of the borough, thanks to the support of external funding, sponsors and partners."

"Everyone is welcome to attend. The programme has been designed to encourage conversation, shared experiences and

greater understanding between communities through music, food, arts, performances and family-friendly activities.

"Warrington Mela is one of the highlights of our cultural calendar and an event we are really proud of. It's not only a huge celebration of culture, it also strengthens our community, fosters togetherness and showcases the very best of who we are."



Breathing Easy: Warrington's Revolutionary One-Stop Lung Health Clinic

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If you've been battling a persistent cough, feeling short of breath during everyday activities, or simply worried about your lung health, you're not alone. Thousands of people across Warrington are affected by breathing issues that impact their work, exercise, sleep, and quality of life. The frustration? Waiting months for specialist appointments, juggling multiple visits, and leaving without clear answers. That's about to change.

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What You Can Expect

- During your appointment, advanced diagnostic testing provides clarity:
- Spirometry or other breathing tests – assesses your lung function and breathing capacity
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 - Comprehensive analysis and plan by an experienced respiratory consultant

The results? You leave the clinic with a clear understanding of your condition, personalised advice tailored to your goals, and a concrete plan for managing your health moving forward.

What makes the clinic different is its coordinated, same-day approach. Test results are reviewed and interpreted by the respiratory team, allowing you

to leave with a clearer understanding of your condition, personalised advice and recommendations for ongoing management.

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Why Warrington Residents Are Choosing This Clinic

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- Same-day results interpretation – leave with clear answers, not confusion
- Welcoming, convenient setting right here in Burtonwood

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If breathing better and regaining confidence in your health sounds appealing, the Respiratory Wellness Clinic at Axis Core Health in Burtonwood is ready to help.

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Responses to Local Plan amount to around 1.5 per cent of adult population

RESPONSES to the last Local Plan consultations in Warrington amounted to around 1.5 per cent of the adult population in the borough.

This compares to around just 0.56% of local populations nationally following new analysis from the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), with the Institute warning that low public participation could undermine trust in planning reform.

The finding suggests that most people are not taking part in formal conversations about the future of their local area, despite local plans shaping the location of homes, high streets, schools, parks, roads and railway stations.

The analysis was published alongside a new white paper, Communications in planning: How better engagement can build trust with communities from the RTPI and its member magazine The Planner. The report argues that planning authorities need to communicate clearly, engage early and reach beyond the people who already participate in planning consultations.

A previous RTPI survey with YouGov found that 33% of the British public did not know how to get involved in the planning process, while 39% felt their participation would not make a difference. The same polling found that only 7% of the public had engaged with the planning system.

However, earlier research supported by the RTPI and delivered by Demos, The MIMBY Majority, found that 63% of the UK population would accept development under certain conditions.

The white paper warns that the challenge is becoming more urgent. Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework could mean every English local authority will be required to have a local plan in place within 30 months.

Without better engagement, the RTPI said, decisions risk feeling more remote, more opaque and more vulnerable to mistrust, misinformation and public opposition later in the process.

Simon Creer, Director of Communications and Engagement at the RTPI, said: "Planning, no matter where it is done, relies on proper communications and consultation. The public expect their voices to be heard. But there is an emerging feeling that planning is something that is done to people, not with them.

"There is a real risk that changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, as well as the additional layer of spatial development strategies, will add to this. The communities being consulted will be larger, the decisions more opaque and further away. Many people may not even be aware of which combined authority they are in, let alone be motivated enough to engage with planning at that level.

"Taken all together, we can see a system that will require more engagement, more communication and clearer explanation of what the system does and does not do. If we are to bring the more positively inclined communities along with us

and make this system work, then there is a large job of work to be done."

Robin Hutchinson, Director of The Community Brain CIC, said: "I'm not sure we should be overly surprised by the low figures of engagement currently experienced through formal and traditional routes. The language used and approaches taken can be a turn off even when if it does come to people's attention. Conversations need to be brokered earlier and in different ways so they are not directly linked to the need for specific responses.

"Create events and moments that allow people to talk openly about their area, their thoughts, concerns and hopes. Make space for them to tell their stories. You will find more insight and information from someone in this atmosphere than ever through a 'consultation'. We are always delighted by how open and ambitious people can be about where they live."

In response to the findings, a Warrington Borough Council spokesperson said: "We recognise the importance of engaging residents and stakeholders in the planning process and have undertaken extensive consultation throughout the preparation of the adopted Local Plan.

"Across the various stages of consultation, thousands of people and organisations took part and shared their views. This included:

1. 78 responses to the Regulation 18 Part 1 (Scope and Contents) consultation
2. 4,500 responses to the Regulation 18 Part 2 (Preferred Development Option) consultation
3. 185 responses to the Regulation 19 Proposed

Submission Version Local Plan consultation in 2019

4. 2,597 responses to the Regulation 19 Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan consultation in 2021

"The 2021 consultation received responses from 2,597 individuals and organisations, resulting in 6,922 individual representations, as many respondents commented on more than one aspect of the plan.

"Public consultation is a key part of the planning process and all representations submitted during Local Plan consultations are carefully considered as plans are prepared and progress through to examination and adoption.

"In March 2026, the Government introduced its new plan making system which emphasises the importance of early and meaningful engagement in the plan making process. In April to June 2026, we carried out the first stage of consultation on our new local plan: Scoping Consultation and Call for Sites. A key element of this consultation was to seek feedback on how we engage with local residents and stakeholders, to understand what has worked well previously and what we can improve upon as we prepare the new plan. We are currently processing all feedback received to this stage of consultation."

Warrington Council's Independent Group leader, Cllr. Stuart Mann, who has already questioned the Local Plan process said: "It's encouraging to see attention being given to how few people take part in the Local Plan process, because these decisions shape our communities for decades. I'd urge every resident to get involved as early as possible. Once a plan reaches the later stages, many of the key strategic decisions have already been made, so early

participation really does matter.

"At the same time, we have to ask an uncomfortable question: have many Warrington residents simply lost faith in the Local Plan process? If people look at an adopted Local Plan and then see proposals for well over 1,000 additional homes on Green Belt land in North Warrington that wasn't allocated in that plan, it's understandable that some will ask, 'What's the point?'

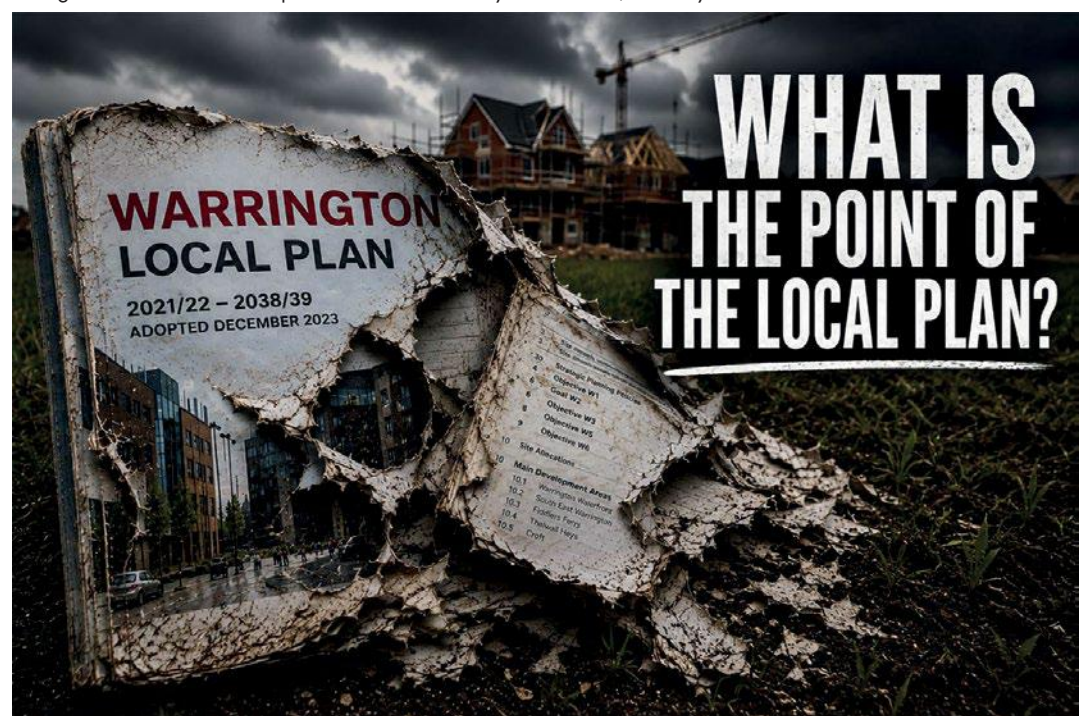
"For many communities, there was an expectation that by accepting the Green Belt releases identified in the adopted Local Plan, the remaining Green Belt would continue to be protected unless there were exceptional reasons to do otherwise. Rebuilding confidence means showing residents that local plans have real meaning, that infrastructure comes first, and that engaging with the process genuinely makes a difference.

Methodology: The key figure is that the 2021 consultation received responses from 2,597 individuals and organisations. The 6,922 representations were individual comments made by those respondents on different parts of the plan—they do not represent separate people.

Using the estimated adult population of 168,112:

- 2021 respondents: 2,597
- Adult population: 168,112
- Participation rate: $\frac{2,597}{168,112} \times 100 = 1.54\%$

So, around 1.5% of Warrington's adult population responded to the 2021 Local Plan consultation, and the true figure would be slightly lower because the 2,597 total includes organisations as well as individuals.



Private Scanning with Proper Clinical Assessment

By Dr Stephen Coogan MBChB MRCGP, Founder and CEO, myGP Clinic

In general practice, a scan is rarely the whole answer. It is one part of a careful process: listening to the patient, understanding the symptoms, considering risk and choosing the right investigation.

At our Antrobus clinic, we now have a private MRI scanner and ultrasound facilities. These are available to existing myGP Clinic members, but they are also open to people who do not use our GP service.

What we are offering is a

scan combined with a one-off "faster" appointment. This gives someone the opportunity to meet a clinician, discuss why they are considering imaging and ensure that the requested investigation is appropriate. There is no requirement to become a member

of the clinic.

MRI, or magnetic resonance imaging, uses a strong magnetic field and radio waves to produce detailed pictures of the body. It is useful for examining soft tissues, including the brain and spine, muscles, ligaments, joints and internal organs. It does not use X-rays.

Ultrasound uses high-frequency sound waves and is commonly used to investigate abdominal or pelvic symptoms, lumps and swellings, thyroid problems, muscles and tendons, and blood flow. It does not involve ionising radiation and is quick and well tolerated.

One area where earlier assessment can be particularly valuable is prostate health. Prostate cancer may develop without obvious symptoms, which is why men should understand their individual risk rather than waiting until something feels wrong.

At Antrobus, a prostate cancer assessment can combine a clinical appointment, a PSA blood test and a prostate MRI scan where appropriate. PSA measures a protein produced by the prostate. It is not a perfect cancer test: a raised result can have non-cancerous causes, while some significant cancers do not produce a markedly raised PSA.

MRI can provide detailed images of the prostate and may identify areas that require further specialist assessment. However, neither PSA



nor MRI can diagnose or exclude every prostate cancer on its own. The value lies in interpreting the results together, alongside age, symptoms, family history, examination where appropriate and clinical judgement.

This is particularly relevant for men with urinary symptoms, a family history of prostate cancer, Black men, who have a higher underlying risk, or anyone who wants an informed discussion about testing. Screening is not automatically right for every man, and the benefits and limitations should be understood beforehand.

Whatever part of the body is being investigated, the best scan is the one that answers a clear clinical question. Results must then be explained and followed up properly.

Anyone interested in private MRI, ultrasound or prostate assessment at our Antrobus clinic can call the onboarding team on 01925 972 673. The service is open to members and non-members, with no obligation to join.



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Spotlight on Local History with James Balme

The life and times of Latchford born Richard Comberbach 1644

The beauty of the Cheshire village of Lower Peover cannot be under estimated with its chocolate box cottages, it's wonderful old pub and stunning ancient church dating back to early medieval times.

The beautiful church of St Oswald with it's stunning tower dating to around 1500 AD stands side by side with the Warren de Tabley arms hotel, known to most visitors as the 'Bells of Peover', however the name of the pub has nothing to do with the church or its famous bells but derives its name from the 'Bell' family who owned the establishment in the 20th century.

Lower Peover stands approximately four miles south of Knutsford and is easily accessed from Warrington today. A popular destination for locals and visitors, Lower Peover is like taking a walk back through time.

But as well as the church and the nearby 'Bells of Peover' pub the village itself has a wonderful history of its own including an old schoolhouse with a great story to tell.

The schoolhouse was founded by one Richard Comberbach in the early 18th century and his life is a great story in itself. Richard was born in Latchford near Lymm in the year of 1644 and he was the son of a gentleman. In the year of 1665 Richard was to attend Cambridge university where he studied hard

to attain the highest qualifications possible. In 1687 Richard was to become the curate of St Oswald's church in Lower Peover. Richard was a staunch supporter of the Royalist Stewart monarchy and following the revolution of 1688 he resigned his position as curate with immediate effect. Richard was to remain in the area and he became a local farmer, however his lifetime ambition was to found his own school within the village.

It was in 1709 along with financial help from his wife Margaret that Richard purchased a plot of land in the South West corner of the churchyard where he went on to build his dream of a detached schoolhouse. In 1710 the doors opened for the first-time seeing Richard's lifetime ambition finally fulfilled. Richard and Margaret were to become the teachers of the school. They went on to appoint a Mr John Mear as the first master of the school who became well known for his manner and discipline. John remained at the school for many years to come and upon his death in the year of 1734 John was buried in the churchyard of St Oswald's close

to a large yew tree. The grave is still visible to this day and a marker has been placed next to the grave by the children who today attend the local village school nearby. The old schoolhouse is today used as a private children's nursery carrying on the tradition of education within its walls.

St Oswald's church is delightful place and the timber framed building and churchyard remains a great attraction to the many visitors as well as the local people who live close by. The church is still used regularly for worship and is at the heart of the community. The church is one of a very few such buildings to be supported purely by oak pillars and beams.

My film, On the trail of Richard Comberbach, shot at Lower Peover, can be viewed for free with many other local history films by visiting my channel, youtube.com/Tvpresenter4history



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Top Stuff: WAF - A 'Culture Warrington' masterclass

By Elliot Taylor

Wow. July really was out of this world, and not just because of the "Under Mars" exhibit at the Parr Hall. No, Warrington Arts Festival 2026 genuinely couldn't have acted as a better advert for our extremely vibrant and talented town.

Above everything, the festival's success created the perfect opportunity for a much-deserved light to be shone onto the local charity: Culture Warrington. Their devoted and hardworking volunteers were absolutely pivotal to the festival taking place, and crucial in creating a platform on which local and external talent could be showcased.

From the 18th to the 25th of the month, the charity treated us to a staggering array of top-quality acts and events right across the town centre—all for either free or very low entry fees. The entertainment spanned music, film, drama, acrobatics, comedy, and much more, all proving the fact that Warrington really is full of artistic talent!

The festival hosted massive names from across the North West, including award-winning bands like The Winachi Tribe and HENGE. This created some fantastic experiences for some of our own exceptional performers. For instance, events like Garden Sounds provided emerging Priestley College bands with the invaluable chance to chat and network with seasoned music industry performance pros.

In contrast, Culture Warrington even captured talent from much further afield, as performers from

the French acrobatics company CirkVost stunned two high-capacity Bank Park audiences with their thrilling outdoor trapeze show.

Similarly, the Made by Me film festival at Cineworld was another huge success. Here, emerging filmmakers didn't just showcase brilliant work to add to their portfolios, but received the amazing chance to connect with more experienced creators, including students studying film at places like Salford University.

More than anything, it was people coming together that made the festival so successful. This included maintenance volunteers, producers, performers, and a range of different audiences, all gravitating to celebrate artistic talent in one place.

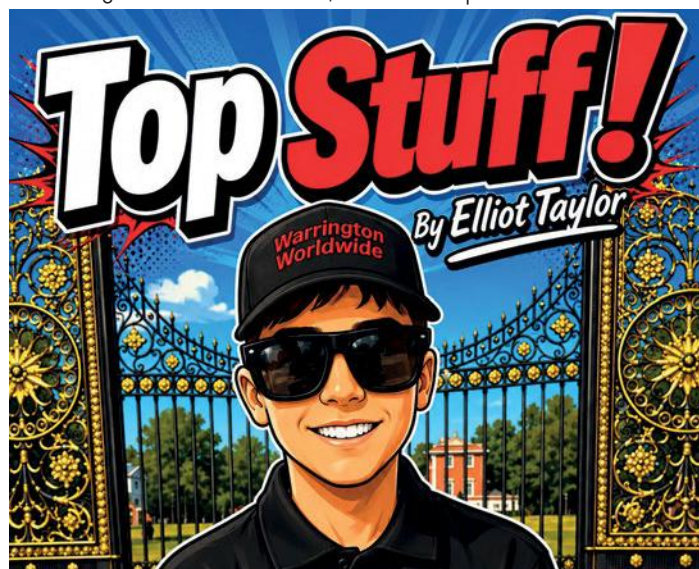
I really wish I could mention every event, as one defining element of this year's success had to be the festival's outstanding range of entertainment. Culture Warrington did phenomenally well to achieve this, ensuring the event had something for everyone to enjoy.

There really was a buzz all around the town centre, especially with comic-con and a Warrington Wolves game coinciding with the festival. This drew in crowds who weren't even planning on attending—and from my own experience, even

managed to draw in a few Hull KR supporters, who were equally staggered by the entertainment, comparing it to their own city of culture celebrations from 2017! This vibrant atmosphere was perfectly summed up by the interactive family shows and music performances across Queens Gardens and Time Square throughout the week itself. These events had a fantastic feel of light-heartedness and togetherness, things that can often seem very hard to achieve in 2026.

Overall, it certainly was an outstanding WAF from start to finish,

and I'm already looking forward to next year's. Culture Warrington is putting our town firmly on the map, and most importantly, making Warrington a truly special place with these kinds of displays. How many towns offer opportunities like this? Or more appropriately, how many should? I am therefore hugely excited to see the festival continue to grow, open up even more opportunities, and above all, spread some joy over the summer months. So as a great man once said: Keep calm and WAF on!



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Lymm High School celebrate another excellent set of post-16 results

STUDENTS and staff at Lymm High School celebrated another excellent set of post-16 results.

After months of preparation – and the inevitable nervous wait over the summer – there have been plenty of smiles and celebrations as students opened their results.

Headteacher Gwyn Williams said: "It's been another lovely morning and very satisfying to see another set of really strong results for the school, but behind the celebrations are many months and years of hard work, commitment and perseverance from our students. Post-16 qualifications are demanding and achieving strong results requires real determination, so we are immensely proud of what students have achieved again this year.

"I'd also like to congratulate and thank our Sixth Form and teaching staff. Their expertise, encouragement and support have played such an important part in helping our students to achieve their potential. We are very fortunate to have such committed staff working alongside such talented and determined young people."

Mrs Neesam, Head of Sixth Form, added: "I'm extraordinarily proud of all our students. Results Day is always a mixture of excitement

and nerves, but it is wonderful to see so many students celebrating their achievements this morning. They have worked incredibly hard over the last couple of years and have shown real determination and commitment throughout. They thoroughly deserve the success they are enjoying."

There are so many individual successes to celebrate it is impossible to mention everyone. However, the school traditionally name the top performers and particular congratulations go to Owen Williams, Sofia Naylor and Jamie Bolton for each securing A* grades in three subjects – truly sensational performances.



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SIPPs explained: Taking greater control of your retirement savings

Pensions are often associated with workplace schemes where contributions are invested on your behalf with relatively limited involvement. A Self-Invested Personal Pension, or SIPP, takes a different approach, offering considerably more choice over how retirement savings are invested.

For people prepared to take a more active interest in their pension, a SIPP can provide valuable flexibility. However, that flexibility comes with rules around contributions, tax relief and eventually accessing the money.

What makes a SIPP different?

A SIPP is essentially a type of personal pension. Contributions are made into the pension, tax relief is available subject to the relevant rules, and the money is invested with the aim of building a fund for retirement.

The main difference is investment choice. Depending on the provider, a SIPP may provide access to shares, investment funds, investment trusts, exchange-traded funds, bonds and gilts.

Greater choice does not necessarily mean better returns, of course, and investments can fall as well as rise. Charges also vary between providers and investments, so platform fees, fund management charges and trading costs should all be considered.

Making contributions tax-efficiently

For most people, the standard pension Annual Allowance is currently £60,000. This measures the total pension input during the

tax year, including contributions made personally and by an employer. A lower allowance can apply to some higher earners and to people who have already flexibly accessed pension benefits.

There is also an important distinction between the Annual Allowance and the amount on which an individual can obtain tax relief. Personal contributions benefiting from tax relief are normally limited to 100% of relevant UK earnings, although someone with little or no earnings can usually contribute up to £3,600 gross each year.

Unused Annual Allowance from the previous three tax years can potentially be carried forward, provided the relevant conditions are satisfied. This can be particularly useful following an unusually profitable year, the sale of a business or when someone simply wants to catch up on pension funding.

Business owners should also consider employer contributions. A company can contribute directly to a director or employee's SIPP and, where the appropriate conditions are met, the company may obtain corporation tax relief. This can make pensions an important part of wider remuneration and tax planning.

Accessing your SIPP

A pension is, however, a long-term investment. Most people cannot currently access private pension benefits until age 55, with the normal minimum pension age increasing to 57 from 6 April 2028, subject to certain protected pension ages.

When benefits are taken, up to 25% can generally be received tax-free, although the amount is now normally restricted by the Lump Sum Allowance of £268,275 across an individual's pensions.

The remaining pension can potentially be left invested through pension drawdown, used to purchase an annuity, or withdrawn in lump sums.

Drawdown can be attractive because it provides flexibility over when and how much income is taken. It also allows funds to remain invested. However, this means investment risk continues into retirement and withdrawals need to be managed carefully to avoid exhausting the fund too quickly.

Taking taxable income flexibly can also trigger the Money Purchase Annual Allowance, reducing the amount that can subsequently be contributed to defined contribution pensions while retaining the usual tax advantages. The MPAA is currently £10,000 a year.

Combining pensions

Having a SIPP does not mean abandoning a workplace pension. It is perfectly possible to have both.

In particular, employees should think carefully before opting out of a workplace scheme where their employer contributes. Giving up employer contributions simply to move to a SIPP could leave them financially worse off.

Existing pensions can also often be consolidated into a SIPP, but transferring should never be automatic. Older schemes can contain valuable guarantees,



Thomas Coyne and Stuart Barr

preferential annuity rates or other benefits that could be lost on transfer.

What happens on death?

SIPPs can also provide flexibility when passing pension wealth to beneficiaries. Pension holders should complete and regularly review their expression of wishes or beneficiary nomination, particularly following major life events such as marriage or divorce.

The tax treatment on death depends on a number of factors, including the member's age and how benefits are ultimately taken.

There is also a significant change approaching. From 6 April 2027, most unused pension funds and pension death benefits are due to be brought within the estate for Inheritance Tax purposes, making pensions and estate planning increasingly interconnected.

SIPPs can therefore be a powerful retirement-planning tool, particularly for people wanting greater investment choice and flexibility. The trade-off is that there are more decisions to make, and contribution, withdrawal and tax rules need to be considered carefully.

As with all pension and investment decisions, individual circumstances differ and regulated financial advice should be considered where appropriate.

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Luke Littler lands another trophy at Fishing Championship

WORLD darts number one Luke Littler has landed another trophy, and there weren't any arrows or an oche in sight.

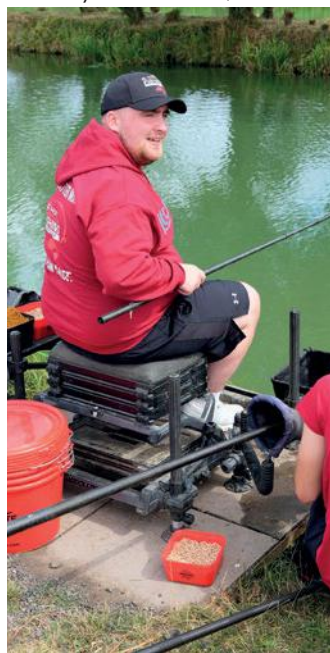
The darts king from Warrington likes to reel in the big fish when he hits a 170 checkout, and after swapping arrows for angling at the Target Sports Stars Fishing Championship – the UK's biggest and most prestigious annual charity fishing event – he tasted success as his team won the coveted team prize.

Fishing alongside fellow darts pros Adrian Lewis, Rob Cross and Target Darts Chairman Garry Plummer for Team Target, The Nuke and his fellow anglers saw off a host of sporting legends, including Barry Hearn, David Seaman, Steve Davis and many more.

It was double delight for Team Target as Adrian Lewis won the singles title by pulling in a WHOPPING 111lbs and 2oz of fish during the four-hour competition.

The UK's most prestigious fishing event took place at Tunnel Barn Fisheries in Warwickshire on Tuesday, 28th July. It aimed to raise £40,000 for various charities, including The Willow Foundation, St Francis Hospice, Haven House, the Ricky Hatton Foundation and Alex – The Leukodystrophy Charity,

but smashed that total by a further £10,000, bringing the total amount of money raised to £50,000.



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