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THE irony of the new-style Warrington Walking Day which will take place this year on Saturday, July 4th at Bank Park, is that it will result in changes many people have been seeking for years.

It will not be on a week day and it will be held in a park and avoid town centre road closures on a working day.

The changes are, of course, a direct result of the borough council's current financial difficulties. But organisers say they represent an opportunity to breath new life into a celebration that has been declining in popularity for some years.

Whether or not they accord with the original purpose of Walking Day when it was founded in 1834 is debatable.

The Rev Horace Powys, the then Rector of Warrington, founded the event as a celebration of Christian Witness and a counter-attraction to

Newton Races , which he said were causing drunkenness and gambling.

Newton Races died out many years ago but Walking Day continued, interrupted only by World Wars and Covid. It has remained a highlight of Warrington's calendar for thousands of people.

Whether it ever achieved the ambitions of the Rev Powys is another matter. I remember reporting on Walking Days in the 1980s on the number of little children in their white dresses waiting outside town centre pubs while their parents celebrated their own act of Christian Witness inside, propped up against the bar.

The organisers of Walking Day Reborn are right to suggest this year

offers an opportunity to breath new life into an event which has declined in popularity in recent years. But great care has to be taken if Walking Day is to return in anything like its traditional form when current financial pressures ease.

There is already talk of a lively, carnival atmosphere and food and drink.

We don't want the Rev Powys turning in his grave.

Deadline for the August issue is July 7

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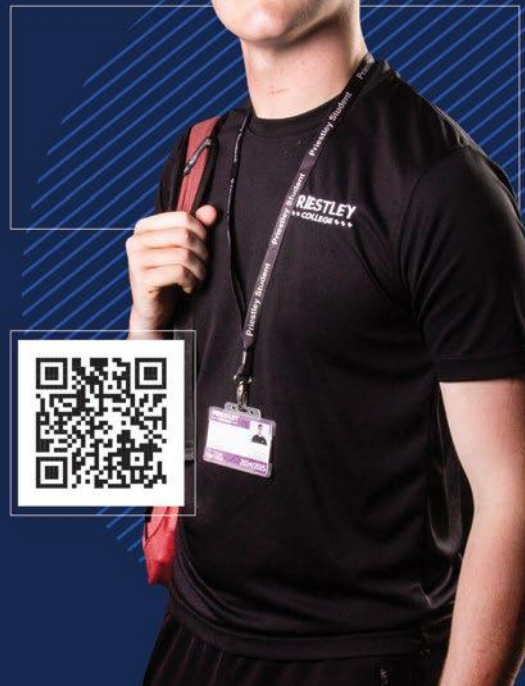
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Community champion appointed to lead £20m Pride in Place investment

A transformative, 10-year, £20m investment into Hulme, north Orford, has taken a big step forward, with the appointment of community champion Gail Stubbings to spearhead the Pride in Place project.

Following a successful recruitment campaign, Gail has been confirmed as the Independent Chair of the soon-to-be-established Hulme Pride in Place Board.

Hulme was designated in 2025 as a Pride in Place neighbourhood – a national programme designed to regenerate communities across the UK. Over the next decade, Hulme will receive £20 million in funding, with local people shaping how it is invested.

Gail, who is well known in the town for her Blooming Art classes, brings nearly 25 years' experience working with communities across Warrington, alongside a strong track record of supporting residents to develop skills, build confidence and strengthen local networks. She is the owner and founder of Blooming Art Academy, which provides a safe space for individuals to grow and express their creativity.

Gail's first priority will be working alongside the MP for Warrington North, Charlotte Nichols, to establish the Pride in Place Board, which will bring together residents, businesses, faith leaders, and community groups to shape the area's future.

She said: "I'm so delighted to

be appointed Chair of the Board. Having lived here since I was a small child and raising my family here too, I'm passionate about helping make a difference to our community. I'm excited to hear about what our communities hopes and dreams are. £20 million is a lot of money, and it's so important that we get it right.

"I'm hoping our whole community will get involved, as so much good can come from this amount of investment. I'm really looking forward to working with all involved – it's a very exciting time!"

Charlotte Nichols MP said: "I'm very pleased to be able to confirm Gail's appointment to this vital role. Gail is an excellent choice to chair the board, and she will undoubtedly play a leading role in bringing people together across Hulme.

"This project will be all about putting the community at the heart of decision-making, ensuring that the £20 million investment delivers what local people actually want and need. We can't wait to get started, and I'm looking forward to working closely with Gail to set up the board and unlock the incredible potential of this project."

Warrington Borough Council's cabinet member for economy,

growth and quality work, Cllr Hitesh Patel, added: "We welcome Gail's appointment as Independent Chair. Her strong local roots, passion for the community, and extensive experience working with residents make her an excellent fit to lead this important initiative.

"We're looking forward to working with Gail, the MP and the Board to ensure we make the most of this significant investment and deliver lasting, positive change for Hulme over the next ten years."



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Local author publishes third novel 'An Everyday Housewife'



WARRINGTON author Cilla Shiels has published her third novel 'An Everyday Housewife,' which tells of her early life with her tempestuous first husband!

Cilla runs 'All Seasons' writing group based at Warrington Disability Partnership on Wednesday 1.30 – 3.30pm. Originally, a six-week project, is now an established group with excellent attendance.

She compiles collections of members short stories and poems which is published annually on Amazon, Royalties of which are donated to the Partnership for their hospitality.

Cilla publishes books on Amazon including children's stories; memoirs; a self-help book on Management and is now on her third novel.

Her latest book, published by Austin Macauley, 'An Everyday

Housewife, will be on sale on Amazon and in all good bookshops from 19th June.

'An Everyday Housewife' tells of her early life and with her tempestuous first husband. It took just six words from her husband to make her leave her marriage behind. She went into higher education and secured a post as Head of Department in further education.

Cilla writes, "People may feel trapped but fear they wouldn't cope if they made changes to their current life, when in fact, they are probably the ones doing all the coping anyway!"



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Council to exit bus depot site deal as part of debt reduction

WARRINGTON Borough Council's Cabinet has rubber-stamped plans to terminate its existing option agreement with Wire Regeneration Ltd for the former bus depot site near Brian Bevan Island.

Under the original agreement, Wire Regeneration Ltd – a joint venture between the council and developer Langtree – held an option to acquire the land. This option was never triggered, and the Cabinet's decision will officially remove it.

The move is part of a wider, ongoing effort by the council to reduce the complexity of its commercial activities. By scaling back these investments, the local authority aims to focus its resources more effectively on delivering essential, day-to-day services to residents.

This decision aligns with the council's budget, set in March 2026, which prioritises exiting commercial investments and reducing overall debt. The strategy follows recommendations and guidelines outlined in recent Best Value Inspection reports, Ministerial Directions, and the Ministerial Envoys' Report.

By terminating the contract and dissolving the joint venture, the

council will maintain direct control over the site, which can be openly marketed for a trade park or alternative uses.

Warrington Borough Council Leader, Cllr Hans Mundry, said: "We continue to make decisions that ensure we can focus our resources on providing important day-to-day services, while equally making sure that we exit some of our more complex commercial arrangements."

As part of the transition, Wire Regeneration Ltd will be permitted to complete its current active projects. Once these outstanding projects are finished, the joint venture company will be formally dissolved.

*Wire Regeneration Ltd (Wire) is a joint venture (JV) company limited by shares which is 50% owned by the Council and 50% by Langtree Property Partners Limited (Langtree). It was set up in 2014.



Warrington goes Gonk Crazy!



Warrington went "Gonk crazy" as Warrington Worldwide Editor Gary Skentelbery officially cut the ribbon to open Gonk World UK inside The Hive WA1 shopping centre.

Dedicated shoppers queued outside from the early hours, with enthusiastic collectors travelling from as far as Scotland, London, Hull, and North Wales to be the first through the doors.

The permanent new store on Sankey Street brings a whimsical collection of more than 100 gnome-like figures, home décor items, and Gonks for all occasions to the heart of the town centre.

The grand opening marked a nostalgic milestone for honorary guest Gary, who performed the official ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Speaking at the launch he shared that his very first job in the town centre was as a Saturday boy at his mother's gift shop on Horsemarket Street.

Returning decades later to launch a unique independent retailer on the high street brought his career full circle, highlighting the enduring value of local trade.

Owned by mother-and-son duo Datsa Gaile and Kristoff Gailis, Gonk World UK originally started in 2021 as a small business operating out of Christmas markets and events.

After running a successful pop-up shop and market stall in Mansfield,

the family decided to permanently relocate their retail venture to Cheshire.

Reflecting on the massive crowd waiting outside for the shutters to go up, co-owner Datsa Gaile said: "The response to our Warrington opening has honestly been overwhelming. When I looked at that queue, I didn't just see customers. I saw five years of hard work, sacrifices, risks, challenges, determination, and a dream that started with a single Gonk."

The launch day proved to be an instant success, helped along by the first 25 customers receiving a free gift. The store caters to all budgets, featuring items ranging from £1.99 croc charms up to large seasonal gonks for £29.99, and a high-end 24-day advent calendar. To add to the opening day fun, atmospheric "Gonkologists" and "Gonkcholitis Virus Doctors" made playful appearances around the boutique shopping centre to interact with families and pose for photographs.

The owners praised The Hive WA1 community and neighboring businesses for helping them settle into their new home—which even included erecting a giant, five-metre-tall Santa Gonk outside the building to greet shoppers.

A video of the opening on Warrington Worldwide social media channels went viral attracting nearly 200,000 views!

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Spotlight on Local Business

A busy month for Barrow Electrical and Warrington Rylands 1906 FC

By Laurence Barrow

It's been another incredibly busy and rewarding month, both personally and professionally, with plenty happening across Barrow Electrical, our community commitments, and at Warrington Rylands 1906 FC.

At Barrow Electrical, we're on the verge of launching our brand-new website alongside a bespoke app we've invested heavily in. This is a really exciting step forward for us and will help streamline our operations even further, improving the service and communication we provide to our clients.

We were also proud to be recognised as a Charity Champion at the recent awards held by North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust. While we didn't take home the overall prize, to be

recognised for the work we do in supporting our local hospitals was a fantastic honour and something we're extremely proud of. It's a partnership we'll continue to build on.

Work-wise, it's full steam ahead. We're currently completing a large storage facility in Rossendale and have recently finished works on the Masonic Hall in Morecambe. Our national power and data rollout continues to progress really well, and we're also preparing for upcoming compliance checks in

the Republic of Ireland alongside installation works and further compliance visits to Jersey and the Isle of Man.

Closer to home, the renovation works at the iconic Warrington Bank Quay site are progressing well, while school projects are coming in thick and fast. We're also pricing up an exciting new office, padel and leisure facility next to the Hill Dickinson Stadium on Liverpool docks, and attending an education sector event at the Halliwell Jones Stadium.

We're also incredibly honoured to continue supporting our local community by sponsoring and backing Disability Awareness Day at Walton Hall and Gardens on Sunday 12th July, organised by Warrington Disability Partnership. It's a fantastic event that shines a light on inclusion, accessibility and the amazing work being done to support disabled people and their families across our community. See you there.

On a personal note, I'm heavily involved in a major charity golf day at the new Fairmont Cheshire The Mere on July 10th, raising funds for North West Cancer Research.



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Having had a private tour of the venue, I can honestly say it's going to be something special. With guests including Manchester City F.C., Jacob & Co. and William Hill, it promises to be an incredible occasion—and we're proud to be part of its launch.

Please contact me directly for more information on this incredible event.

At Warrington Rylands 1906 FC, the summer tournaments have been a huge success, with over 1,000 children taking part across recent weekends. It's also been fantastic to support charity tournaments for PYPYRUS, St. Rocco's Hospice and Warrington Youth Zone, helping raise around £15,000. The biggest news, however, is that a land deal has now been agreed—securing an exciting future for the football club.

Plenty more to come next month.



Charlotte Nichols MP Warrington North



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New report highlights men's mental health challenges

Healthwatch Warrington has published a new report exploring men's experiences of mental health support across the borough, revealing high awareness of mental health issues but significant challenges in accessing timely and effective care.

The report, *Men's Mental Health: Experiences of Support in Warrington* (May 2026), is based on a local survey capturing the views and experiences of men from a range of backgrounds. It provides valuable insight into how men engage with mental health services and the barriers that may prevent them from seeking or receiving support.

Lydia Hughes, CEO for Healthwatch Warrington, said: "We are aware that a lot of work is already underway with partners and commissioners, and we are very pleased to see the excellent work that peer led voluntary groups add to the support for men in Warrington".

High awareness, limited support: While 97% of respondents reported being aware of mental health issues, many said they did not feel adequately supported even after receiving a diagnosis.

Access challenges within NHS services: GP services and NHS mental health pathways were often described as difficult to access, with long waiting times and complex processes.

Value of community support: Peer-led and community organisations were consistently rated highly,

described as welcoming, accessible, and effective.

Barriers to seeking help: Stigma, fear of judgement, and anxiety around appointments—alongside structural issues such as waiting lists—continue to prevent men from accessing support.

Wider impact on health: Mental health challenges were found to affect access to other services such as GPs, dentists, and pharmacies.

The report highlights that men's mental health support in Warrington remains fragmented, with inconsistent access and limited coordination between services. While community-based support fills important gaps, statutory services are often seen as slow, rigid, and difficult to navigate—particularly at times of crisis.

Healthwatch Warrington is calling for action across the system to improve outcomes for men, including:

- Increasing flexible and accessible support options
- Strengthening and sustaining community and peer-led services
- Improving signposting and navigation across services
- Addressing stigma and promoting safe access to care

- Expanding early intervention and preventative support
- Improving integration between NHS and voluntary sector services
- Sector Response

Local partners have welcomed the report, recognising its alignment with wider system insights. There is strong support for improving access, strengthening partnerships, and expanding community-based provision to better meet the needs of men in Warrington.

Healthwatch Warrington will continue to work with partners, commissioners, and community organisations to ensure the findings inform the future development of services and translate into meaningful improvements for local people.

Healthwatch Warrington is the independent voice for people using health and social care services. It works to ensure that people's experiences shape and improve local services.



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First meeting of Prostate Cancer support group a great success

THE first ever meeting of a prostate cancer support group for the Warrington area, Warrington Area Prostate Cancer Alliance, has been described as a great success by organisers.

The meeting took place on Monday, 1st June at Alford Sports & Social Club, Manchester Road, Warrington, from 6:30-8:30 pm.

Paul Whittaker and Tony Collier, who started the group and are both living with advanced prostate cancer, were thrilled that 10 men in total attended the inaugural meeting.

After introducing themselves

and outlining where they were on their own personal journeys, the conversation widened to talk about all aspects of living with prostate cancer and became a very open and supportive peer-to-peer conversation in a very safe and friendly space.

The group will meet on the first Monday of every month from 6:30-8:30 pm at the same venue.



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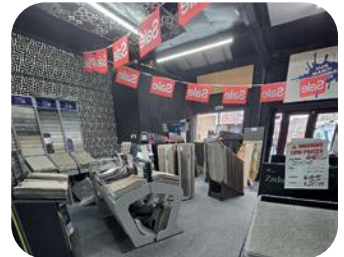
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Colourful Birchwood Carnival described as one of the "highlights of the year"

Pictures: John Hopkins

The 43rd annual Birchwood Carnival drew thousands of local residents to Birchwood Forest Park for a day of community celebration.

The highly anticipated event featured a colourful 'Flower Power' procession, live entertainment, and a wide array of free family-friendly activities.

Mayor of Warrington Cllr. Sagheer Zaman described Birchwood Carnival as "a truly brilliant community event and a fantastic day out for all ages. Definitely one of the highlights of the year!"

The festivities kicked off with the vibrant 'Flower Power' procession winding its way through the park.

The procession was led by the high-energy Batida Rio Samba Band. The band's enthusiasm had attendees smiling and dancing along.

A fancy dress competition followed, showcasing brilliant creativity from residents.

The main arena buzzed all afternoon with a variety of exciting performances and demonstrations. The Little Nippers Terrier Display

Team provided fast-paced racing. Ridgeside Falconry offered spectacular birds of prey displays. Northern Starr Dance delivered engaging community dance routines. Magic shows and The Creepy Crawley Show captivated younger audiences.

Attendees of all ages enjoyed a wide range of interactive attractions and local displays. A fun dog show and traditional donkey rides took place.

Thrill-seekers enjoyed a funfair, climbing wall, wipeout challenge, and rodeo surfboard.

Around 25 charity, craft, and commercial stalls were on-site to explore. Free interactive workshops offered drumming, crafts, and circus skills.

Birchwood Carnival proved once again to be a highlight of the local calendar. It successfully brought the Birchwood community together for an unforgettable day of fun and celebration.



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Chambers Fletcher Solicitors

Divorce Column

By Peter Wilkinson
Divorce Lawyer at Chambers Fletcher Solicitors

Child Arrangements How does the court decide?

One of the most common concerns for separating parents is what will happen regarding the children.

Questions such as "Where will they live?", "How often will I see them?" and "What happens if we can't agree?" are often at the forefront of people's minds.

The good news is that many parents are able to reach their own agreement regarding child arrangements, but where agreement cannot be reached the court has the power to make decisions by way of a Child Arrangements Order. In this regard, a question I am often asked is: "How does the court decide?"

The answer is that the court's paramount consideration must always be the welfare of the child. The court is not concerned with rewarding or punishing either parent but rather its focus is on the child's welfare, and in practical terms, what is in the child's best interests.

In deciding what arrangements are in a child's best interests the court will have regard to anything it considers to be relevant, but in particular to the child's wishes, their age, their needs (in a broad sense), the likely effect of any change in their circumstances, any harm suffered or at risk of suffering and the capability of each parent to meet the child's needs.

Importantly, there is no rule that children should live with one parent rather than the other. Every family is different and every case turns upon its own facts, but as a general rule the court will consider it better for the child for both parents to be involved, unless the contrary is shown.

Whilst court proceedings are sometimes unavoidable they should generally be seen as a last resort. Whilst there will be cases where communication between parents is difficult or inappropriate, parents should try, wherever possible, to focus on finding practical solutions that place the needs of their children first.

If you require advice regarding child arrangements or any other aspect of family law, please feel free to get in touch. We have a great deal of experience advising and supporting clients in family law matters.

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Spotlight on Local History with James Balme

For Whom the Bells Fall – The Disaster of St. Mary's Church Rostherne



Just twelve miles to the south east of Warrington lies the picturesque village of Rostherne well known by many for its magnificent mere and nature reserve.

Mentioned in the Domesday book of 1086 Rostherne was held by Gilbert De Venables who came to England at the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066. Gilbert was given large tracts of land by William the Conqueror mostly in Cheshire which he held under the Earldom of Cheshire. One interesting story tells that on the side of the Tatton estate facing Rostherne once stood a Tudor Village in the fields known as 'Camp Green'. The story goes that the Egerton family who resided at the hall had the village completely demolished and relocated to new buildings in Rostherne as the village was spoiling their view.

But the Jewel in the crown and most recognised landmark in Rostherne has to be the church of St Mary standing proudly on high ground overlooking the mere. In the Domesday book of 1086 there is no church recorded, but in a deed dated to 1188 AD it mentioned that 'a church had stood here for quite some time'. In the early 18th century disaster was to strike St Mary's despite many warnings made in previous years. The tower

of St Mary's was built in the year 1533 but was allowed to fall in to a desperate state of disrepair by the early 1700s, however the fall of the tower was not unexpected and on the 12th October 1703 a church warden stated 'an agreement has been reached to allow only one bell to be rung in regard to the looseness and sorry state of the bell frame'.

In 1734 it was decided to try and repair the cracks using mortar but by 1738 it became apparent that severe damage had been caused. But still the situation dragged on and on and a year later its condition had become critical.

Quickly messengers were dispatched to nearby Macclesfield to find one John Rowson who was to attend the church to carry out immediate repairs. With his Masons in tow John tried in vain to sure up the steeple but to no avail and shortly afterwards the tower came crashing down with devastating effect. By 1744 the tower that we see today was fully repaired and the four bells dating to 1630, 1656, 1717 and 1732 were rehung. Two further bells were added to the tower, one in 1771 and the other in 1785 and in 1890 all six bells were once again rehung.

If the events of the collapse were not bad enough St Mary's was to see further tragedy when on the 10th November 1845 Charlotte Lucy Beatrix Egerton aged just twenty-one was to drown in Rostherne Mere on the eve of her wedding. Charlotte born on 13th September 1824 was the only daughter of Wilbraham and Elizabeth Egerton of nearby Tatton Hall. Today a beautiful carved marble memorial stands inside the church dedicated to Charlotte.

My film, For Whom the Bells Fall, shot at Rostherne, can be viewed for free with many other local history films by visiting my channel, [youtube.com/Tvpresenter4history](https://www.youtube.com/Tvpresenter4history).



Kidney Disease: The silent condition thousands in Warrington may not know they have

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

Most people know they should keep an eye on their blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar. Far fewer think about their kidneys – until something has already gone wrong.

That is a problem, because chronic kidney disease, often shortened to CKD, is one of the most important long-term conditions we do not talk about enough. Recent research published in The Lancet has highlighted a stark issue: a significant proportion of kidney disease remains undiagnosed, even in countries such as the UK.

Kidney Research UK estimates that around 7.2 million people in the UK are living with chronic kidney disease. Put simply, that is roughly one in seven adults. Warrington's resident population is around 215,000, so if the national pattern is reflected locally, more than 20,000 people in Warrington may be living with some degree of kidney disease – many without knowing it. The reason is simple but dangerous. In its early stages, kidney disease usually causes no symptoms.

Patients often imagine kidney disease would cause pain in the back, urinary symptoms, or a clear sense that something is wrong. Sometimes it does. More often, it does not. A person can lose a significant amount of kidney function before feeling unwell. By the time symptoms such as tiredness, swollen ankles, breathlessness, nausea or

changes in passing urine develop, the disease may already be advanced. This matters to ordinary families across Warrington and Cheshire because kidney disease is closely linked with other common conditions: high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and increasing age. The risk rises as we get older, and nearly one in five Warrington residents is aged 65 or over. CKD is also more common in people of Black or South Asian background.

What is often missed is that kidney disease is not just a kidney problem. Poor kidney function increases the risk of heart disease, hospital admission, complications during illness, and medication-related harm. The kidneys are central to how the body manages fluid balance, blood pressure, waste products, and many medicines. When kidney function declines, the whole person is affected.

The frustrating point is that CKD can often be detected with simple tests. A blood test can estimate kidney function, usually reported as eGFR. A urine test can look for protein leakage, often measured as an albumin-to-creatinine ratio. That urine test is particularly important because protein in the urine can be an early

warning sign, sometimes before kidney function has significantly declined.

Good GP care should start with a proper history. Does the patient have diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, recurrent urine infections, kidney stones, autoimmune disease, or a family history of kidney disease? What medicines are they taking? Are they regularly using anti-inflammatory painkillers such as ibuprofen or naproxen? Are there changes in blood pressure, weight, swelling, tiredness or urine?

Examination also matters. Blood pressure should be measured properly. Weight, cardiovascular risk and signs of fluid retention should be considered. Investigations should include kidney blood tests and, where appropriate, urine testing for protein. At myGP Clinic, this is exactly why we believe prevention and early detection must sit alongside traditional family medicine. Modern diagnostics are useful, but only when combined with clinical judgement, continuity, and responsibility for follow-up.

For patients, the practical advice is straightforward. If you have high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, obesity, a family history of kidney disease, or are over 60, ask whether your kidney function and urine protein have been checked. Do



not rely on symptoms. Keep blood pressure well controlled. Manage blood sugar carefully if diabetic. Avoid regular anti-inflammatory medication unless advised by a clinician. Stay active, maintain a healthy weight, stop smoking, and review long-term medicines periodically.

You should seek medical advice if you develop persistent ankle swelling, unexplained breathlessness, blood in the urine, frothy urine, worsening tiredness, nausea, poor appetite, or a change in how often you pass urine. But ideally, kidney disease should be found before symptoms appear. The lesson is not to panic. It is to be sensible. Kidney disease is common, often silent, and too often missed. A simple urine test, a blood test, and proper clinical follow-up can make a real difference. Prevention is not glamorous medicine, but it is often the medicine that protects healthspan, independence and quality of life for years to come.

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Warrington Music Festival review

THE annual Warrington Music Festival once again proved why it remains one of the town's most important cultural events, delivering a day packed with live music, community spirit and an impressive standard of local talent.

With typically unpredictable summer weather threatening throughout the day, organisers were rewarded with largely favourable conditions, while the festival's two main performance areas at Market Square and Times Square maintained a professional atmosphere from start to finish. More importantly, the event successfully balanced its grassroots identity with a noticeable rise in the quality of performances across the board.

Proceedings on the Main Stage opened with a lively set from Runcorn band The Brindley Rats, whose energetic performance immediately engaged the growing audience. Kim Jennett followed with a solo appearance showcasing her rock powerhouse vocals and electro-acoustic guitar work, which provided an early reminder of the festival's commitment to diverse musical styles.

Dashing between stages I can't vouch for all of the younger bands that followed but Red Light Racers demonstrated considerable improvement despite understandable signs of 'in between song' nerves – these are big stages after all and many non-musicians wouldn't dare speak on them let alone perform, however the crowd warmed to them and went to see the lads again at the Time Square Stage later in the day so 'hats off' to them. Around 4 pm, The Beamonts brought a useful Indie

Rock break with their Americana style, which was well received and young Billy Howard also continued his impressive development as a performer, leading his band through a confident set that highlighted his growing songwriting and stagecraft.

As the day progressed, several performances elevated the festival to another level.

Olivia Booth is no stranger to the Music Fest and delivered another strong performance, combining power and control with a stage presence that commanded attention.

Perhaps the most remarkable transformation, however, came from Indie-Pop band Freight. Having appeared at previous festivals, the young Warrington band displayed a dramatic leap forward in both confidence and professionalism since I last saw them nearly 2 years ago, in fact I interviewed the lads in 2023 when they hadn't long picked up their instruments! Their stage presence was polished, their performance assured and their growing fanbase impossible to ignore. Equally impressive was the band's commitment away from the stage, spending considerable time at their mum – led merchandise stand engaging with supporters and reinforcing the commitment that is needed from a band in today's digital world.

Sadly, The Ambersons faced adversity before they even played

by Glen Scretion

a note, performing without their keyboard player, who was taken ill in the morning. The keyboards are a large part of the new sound, yet the setback barely registered with the crowd during an enforced shorter set built around strong musicianship and excellent vocal harmonies. Their loyal following responded accordingly, creating one of the most appreciative atmospheres of the day.

Closing the Main Stage was Winachi, whose high-energy funk-infused set provided a fitting finale, which had the crowd dancing in unison, and I must make a quick reference to the chap doing the 'robot' in the middle of the crowd with a pint balanced on his head, Peter Crouch has nothing on him! Despite the absence of percussionist Inder Goldfinger, through illness, the band delivered a performance that was both visually engaging

and musically exceptional. It was a superb way to conclude a very well-organised day.

While the Main Stage provided the festival's louder moments, the Times Square Stage offered a more relaxed experience, helped by its proximity to the popular market food stalls and large social areas. Minor sound issues during the early part of the day did little to dampen spirits, and the stage soon found its rhythm – this is live music after all and even the best festivals have technical problems! Unfortunately, I didn't manage to catch the opening act but saw Folk Rock outfit The Lower Angel Band just as they were opening up with a very strong performance from Vicky, Warrington Music Festival has always been about showcasing local talent, but it now feels as though the event is entering a new phase.



WHAT'S ON JUL - OCT 2026

- Sat 4 Jul - The Comedy Store
- Sat 11 Jul - Nik Kershaw
- Sun 12 Jul - The Makings of a Murderer
- Thu 23 Jul - HENGE
- Fri 24 Jul - Dave Haslam, Stephen Morris and Gillian Gilbert
- Wed 29 Jul - Tommy Emmanuel CGP
- Fri 4 Sep - The Beast UK
- Sun 20 Sep - Cloudbusting - The Music of Kate Bush
- 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
- 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
- Tue 20 Oct - Tits Up!
- Fri 23 Oct - The ELO Show
- Sat 24 Oct - The Illegal Eagles - Hotel California Tour
- Sun 25 Oct - Northern Live

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Celebrating 35 years of a “can do” culture at Disability Awareness Day 2026

THE 35th annual Disability Awareness Day (DAD) will officially be held in Warrington on Sunday, 12 July 2026, opening its gates at 10:00 am to welcome thousands of visitors to the beautiful grounds of Walton Hall and Gardens.

Organised by the Warrington Disability Partnership (WDP), this year’s landmark event marks three and a half decades of promoting a positive “can-do” culture.

It stands proudly as the world’s largest voluntary-led, pan-disability exhibition and independent living expo.

The mammoth undertaking is made possible through the vital support of its principal sponsors, regional water supplier United Utilities who are supported by various corporate sponsors and supporters.

Dave Thompsom MBE DL, Co-founder of Warrington Disability Partnership, said: “The continued backing from United Utilities and our other generous sponsors ensures that the event remains entirely free to enter, providing a vital, accessible platform for the community.

“The corporate social responsibility from partners is more critical than ever,” added Dave, who led the setting up the charity after breaking his neck playing American Football in 1989. “This support directly aids families navigating independent living, health, and mobility needs.”

While the main exhibition takes

place on Sunday, it serves as the grand finale to an entire week of complementary, fun-packed activities.

Starting days prior, the tented village at Walton Hall and Gardens will host a series of specialised events featuring events for carers, disabled children and young people, Dementia Awareness and two evening events showcasing inclusive talent.

“DAD Week” concludes on Friday evening with Queen tribute band “I Want It All” performing in the dedicated Arts Marquee.

When the main event starts on Sunday, visitors will find nearly 200 exhibitors spanning statutory services, local businesses, and voluntary organisations.

Together, they will offer expert advice on mobility equipment, vehicle adaptations, holidays, employment opportunities, support groups and services.

Beyond essential information, DAD 2026 promises a vibrant festival atmosphere featuring:

- The Main Aren for family entertainment and community performances.
- The Sports Zone provides opportunities to try scuba diving,

wheelchair sports, and adapted games.

- The Arts & Performing Marquees provide live music, inclusive dance troupes, arts and crafts, plus a dedicated silent disco.
- A classic car show will include WDP’s Invacar AC70 and their disability timeline.
- New for 2026 is the Viking reenactment and the Viking village.

The exhibition runs from 10:00 am until 4:30 pm. To ensure maximum accessibility, organisers provide a free wheelchair and mobility scooter loan service on-site and

British Sign Language interpreters.

A free accessible, complimentary park-and-ride bus service will be available from Wilderspool Park, and a free accessible bus service will run from the Warrington Bus Interchange provided courtesy of Warrington’s Own Buses (see website for times).

Come along to celebrate community togetherness, discover cutting-edge independent living aids, and support the incredible “DAD Army” of volunteers making it all happen.

For more detail visit www.disabilityawarenessday.org.uk



#DAD2026

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Your accounts are going public, unless you act

If you run a small limited company, you may have grown accustomed to a degree of financial privacy. For years, the rules have allowed smaller businesses to file what are known as 'filleted' accounts, essentially a stripped-back version of your annual figures, typically just a balance sheet, with no requirement to disclose how much your business earned or spent. For many owners, that privacy has felt like one of the few quiet perks of running a small company.

What's Actually Changing?

The Government has now confirmed that from 1 April 2028, all UK-registered companies, including small companies and micro-entities, will be required to file a full Profit and Loss (P&L) account with Companies House, in addition to the balance sheet they already submit each year. The reform forms part of the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 (ECCT Act), legislation designed to improve the accuracy and reliability of data on the companies register and to help tackle fraud and financial misconduct.

The change was originally due to come into force in April 2027 but following extensive lobbying from business groups and accountancy bodies, the Government pushed the implementation date back by a full year. That gives most companies approximately one complete accounting period plus nine months to prepare which sounds generous but will pass faster than you might expect.

WatkinsonBlack have considerable experience in all areas of taxation and business services. This includes providing a very cost-effective **payroll bureau service**, as well as assisting to ensure compliance with the latest **Making Tax Digital** legislation. If you are **employed or self-employed** either as a sole trader, partnership or limited company and want to arrange a **no-obligation initial meeting on any taxation or accounting matter** then please contact us by telephone on **01925 413210** or by e-mail to **info@watkinsonblack.com**. Please note that these ideas are intended to inform rather than advise and you should always obtain professional advice before taking any action.

Will My Turnover Be on Public Display?

This is where things get more nuanced and where there is, genuinely, some good news.

The initial proposals would have made all filed P&L accounts fully visible on the public Companies House register, meaning anyone, a competitor, a supplier, a nosy neighbour could look up your turnover, your gross profit, and your director's salary with a couple of clicks. Unsurprisingly, that prospect drew significant pushback from small business owners and advisors alike.

Following that lobbying, the Government has confirmed that small companies and micro-entities will have the option to opt out of having their P&L published on the public register. Companies House has acknowledged concerns from the business community about the 'privacy and commercial risks' of requiring smaller companies to disclose this information publicly. Details of exactly how the opt-out process will work have not yet been confirmed, but guidance is expected to follow in due course.

It is important to note, however, that opting out of public disclosure does not mean opting out of the obligation to file. The P&L must still be submitted to Companies House, and when filed, it will remain accessible to HMRC, Companies House itself, and law enforcement agencies for the purposes of identifying fraud or financial crime. The opt-out simply determines whether the information appears on the public-facing register.

Other Changes Coming at the Same Time

The P&L requirement is only one part of a broader package of reforms taking effect in April 2028. Two other changes are worth flagging now.

First, the option to file abridged accounts, a format that required formal shareholder approval and compressed key figures into broad categories is being abolished entirely. In practice, this is unlikely to be a significant loss; abridged accounts were widely considered cumbersome, and relatively few companies used them.

Second, and perhaps more immediately practical, all UK companies will be required to file their annual accounts using commercial software that supports Inline eXtensible Business Reporting Language, better known as iXBRL. This is a digital tagging format that makes the data within accounts machine-readable. From April 2028, the existing options to file accounts via the Companies House web portal or submit paper copies will be closed for accounts filings. If you currently file your own accounts directly through the web, you will need to use software instead.

What Should You Do Now?

April 2028 may feel comfortably distant, but the reality is that for many businesses, this reform will affect accounts for periods that are already underway. The key steps to consider sooner rather than later are these.

Talk to your current accountant or reach out to us. If you have



Thomas Coyne and Stuart Barr

not already had a conversation about how these changes affect your specific situation, now is the time to raise it. The opt-out mechanism, in particular, will require decisions to be made once the process is confirmed, and it is better to understand your options in advance.

Review your software. If you use accounting software yourself, check whether it supports iXBRL filing via the Companies House API. Platforms such as Xero, QuickBooks, and Sage are expected to be compliant, but it is worth verifying.

Think about what your P&L will show. Even if you intend to opt out of public disclosure, the prospect of your figures being filed with Companies House is a good prompt to review the health of your accounts. Are there areas of the business you want to tighten up before the numbers become part of any regulatory record?

The Bigger Picture

The Companies House reforms reflect a broader Government effort to make the UK's corporate register more transparent and harder to abuse. For the vast majority of legitimate small businesses, the practical impact will be manageable. But the reforms do represent a meaningful shift in what is expected of smaller companies, and those who start preparing now will be in a far more comfortable position than those who leave it until 2028.

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When World Cup fever gripped Lymm

AS World Cup fever kicked off, 10 years ago 250 people packed into the Lymm Hotel for a night of celebration to mark the 50th anniversary of the time that the hotel was briefly home to the 1966 Brazil World Cup squad.

The squad included iconic players like Pelé, Garrincha and Gilmar, who all stayed at the former Lymm Hotel, creating a buzz around the quiet Cheshire village.

That night in 2016, the memories flowed as freely as the wine, with memories of kickabouts with the stars, autographs, photos and even the lending of kids' bikes to the players so that they could ride around the village. The reminiscences were fuelled too by an outstanding display of photographs and memorabilia. Much of it was provided by avid local collector Neil Perkins, with the whole event, attended by England World Cup winner Roger Hunt, being organised by the newly formed Lymm Heritage group.

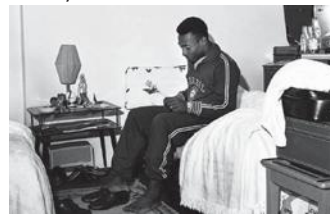
What was meant to be a one evening affair ended up running for almost a week as the BBC picked up on the story, featuring it on their home page and with regional news programmes also turning up to promote the story.

Much has changed in Lymm in the ten years since that night. The historic hotel was demolished in 2019 to make way for retirement apartments. Pelé and Roger Hunt sadly passed away. But on the plus side, the village does now have its own Heritage Centre, a charity that was launched

back on that night in 2016. And it is in the Heritage Centre that you can now see and hear again the whole story of that famous 1966 visit, 60 years ago this year, in the form of video and storyboards as well as a gallery of photographs, many of them newly restored using the latest technology.

The exhibition also includes a rediscovered hotel visitor book, never before seen in public, containing the signatures of the whole team and staff plus several of the other teams who visited around that time.

Whether you're a football fan, a local history enthusiast, or just a lover of nostalgia, organisers think you will enjoy Brazilymm66+60. The exhibition is due to run till late August. Lymm Heritage Centre is at 1 Legh St, Lymm, WA13 0DA. The Centre is open from 12 til 4 - Thursday to Sunday. More info at www.lymmhc.co.uk



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