



# DEFINING FUTURES

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 19 /// NOVEMBER 2024

## Liam Payne

We were sorry to hear the news about the death of Liam Payne, a former music technology student at the college.

As the news broke, we were contacted by numerous local, national and international media organisations and issued a statement from Louise Fall, principal and chief executive, expressing sympathies to his family at this sad time.



## What's in this issue?

Although we're only a few weeks into the new year, there's already been lots going on!

This edition features the activities students got involved in during Welcome Week, the official opening of the new Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre at the Wellington Road campus and the burial of a time capsule in the foundations of the new campus at the City Learning Quarter in the centre of Wolverhampton.

There's also reports of a workshop for performing arts students run by the star of a hit musical, vehicle checks on tutors' cars carried out by automotive students, a graduation ceremony for students completing higher education qualifications and the college's sponsorship of a local football club.


And, as always, there's a round-up of activities that have been going on in different curriculum areas to enhance students' learning experience.



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## WELCOME WEEK

As the new academic year got underway, we were pleased to welcome more than 1500 new students, as well as over 1200 familiar faces who returned to continue their studies, and it was great to see both campuses busy and buzzing after the quietness of the summer break.

During the first week of term we hosted the annual Welcome Week with a range of activities and freebies to give students the opportunity to have fun between lessons and get to know their new classmates in a relaxed environment.

Activities included a penalty shootout, virtual reality headsets and a visit from some furry, scaly and prickly animals, as well as free popcorn, candyfloss and ice cream to tuck in to throughout the week.



## NEW £8.1M TRAINING CENTRE STARTS WELCOMING STUDENTS

The start of the new academic year saw the new Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre at the Wellington Road campus welcoming its first students.

The £8.1 million centre purpose-built centre was completed in July and provides state-of-the-art teaching and learning facilities for students and apprentices studying for automotive and engineering qualifications.

The centre was officially opened in September by Councillor Stephen Simkins, leader of City of Wolverhampton Council and Richard Parker, mayor of the West Midlands and chair of West Midlands Combined Authority, who both unveiled commemorative plaques which will be displayed in the automotive and engineering departments.

The opening of the centre - which was phase one of City of Wolverhampton Council's transformational City Learning Quarter plan - has enabled the transfer of all automotive and engineering courses from the Paget Road campus in Compton to the Wellington Road site.



Read more [here](#).



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## TIME CAPSULE BURIED IN FOUNDATIONS OF NEW CAMPUS

The start of the new academic year also saw a time capsule containing college memorabilia buried in the foundations of the new city centre campus.

The capsule - containing prospectuses, photographs, newsletters, articles and other documents showcasing the college's long history as a further education provider in the city was placed in the footings of the new site at the City Learning Quarter in the heart of Wolverhampton.

The capsule was buried by Louise Fall, principal and chief executive of the college, and two business students, accompanied by Councillor Chris Burden, City of Wolverhampton Council cabinet member for city development, jobs and skills.

The new campus - which is phase two of City of Wolverhampton Council's City Learning Quarter plan - is due to open in the 2025/26 academic year.



Read more **here**.

## MUSICAL STAR RETURNS TO HER ROOTS TO INSPIRE PERFORMERS OF THE FUTURE

A former performing arts student who went on to star in a hit musical returned to her roots to give current students a behind-the-scenes look at life as a leading lady.

Nicole Lewis, who studied performing arts at the college from 2012 to 2015, recently starred as Catherine of Aragon in the UK and international tour of the smash hit musical SIX, based on the lives of the wives of King Henry VIII.

She led a workshop inspired by the musical - featuring choreography, acting through song and the power of lyrics - followed by a Q&A session to give current performing arts students a taste of what a professional rehearsal entails and insights into life as a performer.



Read more **here**.

Watch an interview with Nicole **here**.

## STUDENTS KICK-START AUTOMOTIVE CAREERS WITH CHECKS ON TUTORS' CARS

Students and apprentices doing automotive qualifications got experience of working in the industry by carrying out winter checks on tutors' and students' cars in return for donations to charity.



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Those studying for diplomas in light vehicle service and repair at the new Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre checked tyres, oil levels, coolant and screen wash to ensure vehicles are ready for the winter, with customers given a report detailing the checks carried out and recommendations for any further action required.

Vehicle owners were asked to make a donation of £5 - which included a complimentary continental breakfast - to raise money for Ben, a charity which supports people who work, or have worked, in the UK automotive industry.

Read more **here** and take a look at the checks being carried out **here**.

## STUDENTS DON CAPS AND GOWNS FOR GRADUATION CEREMONY

Students who completed higher education qualifications during the last academic year celebrated their achievements in front of family and friends at a formal graduation ceremony.

Around 30 students - who had completed HNCs, HNDs and Level 5 professional qualifications - donned academic caps and gowns and were presented with certificates by Louise Fall, principal and chief executive of the college, at the ceremony at the Paget Road campus.



## PROMOTING THE COLLEGE

College principal and chief executive Louise Fall recently welcomed two MPs to the new Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre at the Wellington Road campus.

The Rt Hon Pat McFadden, MP for Wolverhampton South East and Sureena Brackenridge, MP for Wolverhampton North East, both met with staff from the automotive and engineering departments and spoke to students about college life and their opinions of the new facilities.

And, Dipesh Patel, business development executive in the employer engagement team, represented the college at the UK Construction Week exhibition at the NEC in Birmingham and spoke to a range of employers about courses, apprenticeships and how they can support students by offering work experience placements.



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## PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT

Participants in a course designed to prepare them for work in retail and customer services benefited from a visit by Bruno Coppola, manager of the Wulfrun Shopping Centre and Rachel Daker, employer advisor at DWP Digital. They spoke to the group about the range of shops and businesses based in the centre, as well as upcoming job opportunities with a number of retailers.



## PROMOTING EQUALITY BLACK HISTORY MONTH

During Black History Month in October, the Study Hubs at the Paget Road and Wellington Road campuses hosted a Black History film club with a range of blockbusters showcasing Black culture and history, including Ali, Belle, Black Panther, The Butler, and 12 Years A Slave.



Students also heard from motivational speaker Janet Smith who talked about Black History and reclaiming narratives, with many questions asked by attendees at the end of the session.

## COMPANIES PRAISED FOR DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT

A local nursery that provides employment opportunities for students doing supported internships was nominated for a recognition award at a recent ceremony.

Low Hill Nursery was one of nine organisations praised for their efforts in creating career opportunities for young people with disabilities.

The inaugural West Midlands Supported Internships event brought together colleges and some of the region's biggest employers for a celebration of job creation for students with special education needs.



Read more [here](#).

## COLLEGE TAKES ON PATRONAGE OF THE MULTICULTURAL APPRENTICESHIP & SKILLS ALLIANCE

The college has demonstrated its on-going commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity by becoming patron of a national organisation which provides pathways to apprenticeships for people from under-represented groups across the region.

The college has partnered with the Multicultural Apprenticeship & Skills Alliance to promote apprenticeships and encourage people from all cultural backgrounds to embrace the learning, career opportunities and future earning potential that the training scheme provides.

Through the patronage, the college will promote apprenticeships through organisations which work



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with young people from under-represented groups and also forge links with businesses that can benefit from its free apprenticeship recruitment service.

Read more **here**.



## PROMOTING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

### COLLEGE TEAMS UP WITH BILSTON TOWN FC TO PROMOTE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES



Players at Bilston Town Football Club are proudly sporting City of Wolverhampton College’s logo on their home strip and training kit after the two organisations teamed up to promote the benefits of good education and healthy lifestyles to local people.

Peter Merry, deputy principal and chief executive at the college, said: “As prominent organisations in the local area, the college and football club aspire to improve the lives of local people of all ages through good education and the promotion of healthy lifestyles, and football can be used a vehicle to do this.

“By working together, the club will be able to use our excellent training facilities, and we will be able to provide information on fitness programmes available in the gym in our sports centre, as well as details of courses, apprenticeships, employment programmes and job vacancies to players, supporters and the local community.”

As part of the partnership, the college logo will feature on kits worn by the first team, under-18 and under-21 teams, as well as on hoardings outside the club’s stadium, around the football pitch and in match-day programmes.

Read more **here**.



## PROMOTING STUDENTS’ SAFETY

Safety was the theme of this term’s enrichment week – a week where students have the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular activities relating to their course and also attend talks and workshops to extend and enhance their learning.



Puppeteer Steve Wright from Routes Puppets, gave a thought-provoking talk on consent, crime and hate speech, while Gazebo Theatre performed a play entitled A Sense of Belonging which delved into issues such as county lines, peer pressure, gangs, and grooming.

And, West Midlands Police gave a presentation on the dangers of drink, drugs, knife crime, social media, and violence against women and girls.





## SUPPORTING EMPLOYERS

### Artificial Intelligence

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) to improve businesses' processes was the subject of talks delivered by Sage Lal, the college's innovate consultant, during Wolverhampton Business Week and at the monthly Black Country Chamber of Commerce's monthly business breakfast.

And Amit Patel, founder of Experience Haus, also delivered a masterclass on how AI can help businesses improve efficiency, as well as covering key points for businesses starting to use AI and some tools that they can implement straight away.



### Health and Safety

For employers wanting to know more about health and safety, trainers Ken Davies and Phil Suddaby have hosted an online podcast focusing on the Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

Watch the podcast [here](#).



## CURRICULUM ROUND UP

### A LEVELS

A Level students got valuable insights into careers in the parole and criminal justice field from Jennie Sugden, a Parole Board member for England and Wales.

Jennie explained the processes behind sentencing and parole decisions, and students took part in a workshop where they reviewed case studies, assessed risk factors, and deliberated on offender release.



## ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Students studying for Access to Higher Education qualifications recently completed their first science practical activities.

The programme bridges the gap between current qualifications and what's needed to pursue a degree, with the students hoping to apply to university on completion of their course.



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## APPRENTICESHIPS

Two apprentices have recently completed their training through the college and are set for great careers in their chosen industries.

Dan Webb, an engineering apprentice at Heinrich Georg UK, completed his Level 3 standard and is now progressing to a Level 4 apprenticeship.

And hairdressing apprentice Freya Povey has completed her Level 2 standard at Cute hair salon.



## AUTOMOTIVE

This year's automotive students are the first to benefit from the teaching and learning facilities in the new Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre and are pictured having their first lesson in one of the brand new classrooms.

Students also got tips about the key skills and traits that employers in the industry look for when Nathan Taylor, owner of Walsall Wood Tyre & Service Ltd, paid a visit to the new centre.



## BAKERY, HOSPITALITY AND CATERING

Students doing hospitality and catering qualifications got a taste of working in the industry when they worked in front of house roles handing out canapes to guests at the launch of the Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre.

And bakery students showcased their creative skills by turning out a range of delicious treats, including spooky Halloween-themed biscuits.



## BUSINESS

Business students got practical tips on achieving their dream during an inspiring talk from Lowell Sheppard, author of the best-selling book Dare to Dream.

He also shared personal stories and captivating tales of his travels across Japan and his journey over the Pacific, and also met with Louise Fall, college principal and chief executive.



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## FUTURES FOUNDATION LEARNING

Students on the Pathways programme hosted a coffee morning as part of Macmillan Cancer Support's annual fundraising campaign, and also raised money for Breast Cancer Now by wearing pink, organising a raffle and selling cakes and sweets.



## HAIR AND BEAUTY

Staff in the hair and beauty department were praised by Deborah Mitchell, the founder of Heaven Skincare, who has partnered with the college to deliver beauty courses.

Deborah stated that "the staff at City of Wolverhampton College are among the best!"



Hear more from Deborah [here](#).

## MATHS

Annette, a tutor on the Multiply maths course, recorded a video about the programme and how it can help to boost not only maths skills, but self-confidence and employment opportunities too.



Watch the video [here](#).

## MUSIC

Students doing diplomas in music technology and sound production used the skills and knowledge they are learning on their course to support the launch of the new Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre.

They set up a sound desk to play background music as guests networked and operated microphones for the official speeches.



## SPORT

Former student Tom Eccleston - who completed his Level 3 extended diploma in sport in 2023 - spoke about the opportunities that studying at the college gave him, and how support from his tutor helped him to get a job with a coaching company.



See what he had to say [here](#).



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## UNIFORMED PUBLIC SERVICES

Students doing uniformed public services qualifications found out about providing first aid and medical cover at events from representatives from MW Medics.

They also found out about work experience placements and what these entail, as well as future employment opportunities with the company.

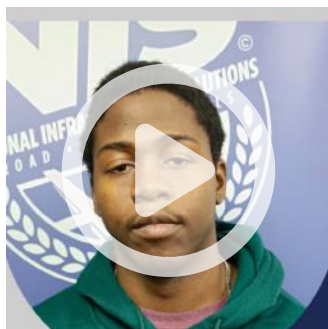


## STUDENT STORIES

Take a look at what students on a range of courses have to say about what they're learning.



Andrew Birch -  
Gateway to Rail



Johan Botouli -  
Gateway to Construction



Che Gayton -  
NIS Gateway to  
Construction



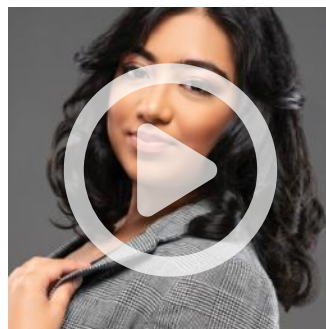
Michelle Gott -  
NIS Gateway to Rail



Amar Marwaha -  
Skill SWAP, Midland  
Metro



Aimee Peach -  
Nail Technology Level 3



Maisssha Rahman -  
Social Media Content  
Creator Level 4 Award



Farrah Robinson -  
Maths





*Benjamin Steatham -  
Social Media Content  
Creator Level 4 Award*



*Leah Storm -  
Social Media Content  
Creator Level 4 Award*



*Raymond Paul Tonks -  
NIS Gateway to Rail  
Construction*



*Peter Walker -  
NIS Gateway to Rail*



*Creator Level 4 Award*

Read more student stories **here**.



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