

Insight magazine

August / September 2026



Birchwood Park unveils new timeline celebrating 80 years of nuclear history

Former UTC Warrington student launches solar business

Warrington woman breaks the mould in male-dominated motorcycle world



Bents celebrates double success

Bents Garden & Home is celebrating success with two prestigious and widely respected awards; both providing the perfect start to a landmark year as the family owned and run business prepares to celebrate its 90th anniversary in 2027.

Having recently been crowned Best Destination Garden Centre in the North West at the GCA regional awards, it has also been officially recognised by the 2026 UK's Best Workplaces for Women™ and is listed within the top 100 large company category, alongside organisations including Tropic Skincare and Lindt.

Founded in 1937, Bents has grown from Alfred and Margaret Bent selling roses from their front garden, just yards from the Centre's current location in Glazebury, into one of the UK's leading destination garden centres. Both awards recognise Bents continued commitment to its colleagues, who remain at the heart of the family business.

The latest GCA accolade also recognises the continued commitment to quality, innovation and customer experience that have also been fundamental to Bents' success for almost nine decades.

The regional title follows the GCA's rigorous annual inspection programme, during which member garden centres are independently assessed across every aspect of their business. From plant quality and visual merchandising to customer service, catering and innovation, every department is judged against the highest industry standards.

Following an unannounced inspection, Bents achieved one of the highest scores in the country, securing the title of Best Destination Garden Centre in the

North West, along with regional awards for Best Customer Service, Food Hall and Catering.

Matthew Bent, Managing Director of Bents Garden & Home, said: "To receive this recognition from the Garden Centre Association is a fantastic achievement and one we're incredibly proud of, particularly as we prepare to celebrate our 90th anniversary next year."

The 2026 UK's Best Workplaces for Women list is made up of employers whose people have told Great Place To Work® UK they work for a place that is inclusive and equitable for all. The 350 companies on the list

are committed to ensuring a reasonable balance of women and men across the organisation; removing barriers to women's career advancement; and creating workplaces where all employees, regardless of gender, can flourish.

Benedict Gautrey, Managing Director of Great Place To Work UK says: "This year's UK's Best Workplaces for Women list celebrates businesses making a genuine difference day to day, not just in what they say, but in how people experience work. What matters most is that this recognition comes directly from women working in these organisations, who tell us they

feel supported, valued, and able to grow.

"Our research demonstrates that these organisations creating high-trust environments are delivering stronger results, whether in financial outcomes, impact, or service delivery, alongside greater agility and resilience in the face of change. Congratulations to Bents for creating an environment where inclusion is clearly felt in practice."

Adds Matthew: "Both of these awards reflect the passion, commitment and expertise of every one of our colleagues and I'd like to thank every member of the team for the part they've played in these fantastic successes."

Raising a toast to colleagues with 10 plus years experience

Bents Garden & Home has celebrated its 10+ Club - a club which welcomes colleagues with 10 or more years' experience at the Warrington based garden centre - with an event recognising a combined length of service totaling 1097 years.

Since it was launched in 2003 with initial numbers totaling 14, the 10+ Club has continued to grow and membership now stands at 97 with 59 still working within the Centre and a further 38 retired colleagues.

41 current members recently joined the Bents' family and senior management for a special thank you meal held in the Centre's Caffè nel Verde. This year's event paid special recognition to two long serving members who both retired this year; Aileen Rigby from finance and John Hayes from Bents' warehouse team.

Says Matthew Bent, Managing Director at Bents Garden & Home: "We have an excellent team of colleagues throughout the

Centre, many of whom have been with us for a number of years, as demonstrated by the incredible combined length of service figure. We were blown away when we worked it out to be 1097 years!

"And we continue to welcome new members all the time. It is a great way to recognise long-term commitment and we look forward to welcoming even more new members in the years to come."

Other highlights from this year's event recognised Bents' oldest member of the Club, still working at the Centre at 70 and its youngest member at 30 years old.

Annabel Brennan, Bents' People & Culture Advisor and member of the 10+club, adds: "So much has happened at Bents in the time I have been here. The business has grown and developed so much but the care and attention they give to colleagues has always remained the same. The dinner is a great opportunity to get together and talk about things that have taken

place and generally have a catch up with good friends."

In addition to Bents' usual colleague benefits such as birthday vouchers, birthday day off and pension scheme, members of the 10+ Club also receive an additional 5 days holiday.

The club also includes retired colleagues who were original members many of whom continue to attend the annual dinner which provides the ideal opportunity to meet up with old friends and colleagues.



From the Head of Membership

Aimee Ruddy

I am delighted to be standing in for Stephen Fitzsimons in this month's Insight magazine. I have been Head of Membership at Warrington Chamber Plus for over 18 months, and many of you will have met me at networking events during that time. It has been a real pleasure getting to know businesses of all sizes across Warrington, and I have particularly enjoyed supporting those who are just starting out on their business journey.

Warrington has always been a town built on enterprise: practical, ambitious and proud of the people who make things happen. As Warrington Chamber Plus celebrates 150 years of supporting and representing local business, this is a moment not only to look back with pride, but to look ahead with confidence.

That spirit of progress is at the heart of our Enterprise Accelerator programme. The programme comes to end in September. We have supported over 30 Warrington start up enterprises. The type of businesses have been varied. From coaching to care and recruitment to consultancy. Those talking part have benefitted from business and marketing support and a year's Warrington Chamber Plus membership. This will have given the extra support they have needed at the beginning of their business journey.

The upcoming Warrington Business Conference will continue that conversation on a bigger stage. It is the 7th year of the Warrington Business Conference once again held at Cineworld in the town centre. The conference takes place on 18th September this year and the theme is

Sustainable Warrington. It is one of the town's key opportunities for business leaders, entrepreneurs and community partners to come together, share insight and explore what comes next for our local economy.

Alongside the conference, excitement is building for Warrington Business Awards Plus. Taking place on Thursday 15 October at the Halliwell Jones Stadium, the relaunched awards will recognise the businesses, charities and individuals whose achievements strengthen Warrington's economy and community. The awards also mark a landmark year, celebrating 150 years of both Warrington Chamber and Warrington Wolves.

With categories including Business of the Year, Small Business of the Year, Entrepreneur of the Year,



Business Man and Business Woman of the Year, Young Person/Student of the Year, Outstanding Achievement, Charity of the Year or Community Impact Award, Employer of the Year and Lifetime Achievement, Warrington Business Awards Plus will shine a light on success in all its forms. Applications are open, sponsorship opportunities are available, and there has never been a better time to get involved.

Aimee

Businesswoman turns redundancy into award-winning business success

A businesswoman who experienced redundancy six times has turned her own career challenges into a thriving business helping organisations and individuals navigate workplace change.

Warrington Chamber Plus member Deanne "Dee" Walsh founded Dewa Training and Coaching in 2018 after deciding to take control of her future following her sixth redundancy, using nearly two decades of HR experience to launch a consultancy specialising in corporate wellbeing, executive coaching and redundancy support.

A lifelong North West resident, Dee spent 15 years working in HR roles across media and technology SMEs in Manchester, Cheshire and Liverpool before starting her own business.

Since launching Dewa, she has delivered mental health and wellbeing training to more than 2,000 people across the UK, while supporting businesses and individuals through periods of change.

Her specialist redundancy coaching

is built on both professional expertise and personal experience, having been through two site closures, a relocation, a company closure and two restructures herself, as well as leading multiple redundancy programmes during her HR career.

Dee's work has earned national recognition, with her being named in the BIMA100 2026 and receiving a British Interactive Media Association (BIMA) Award for People & Talent. She has also volunteered with BIMA since 2022, serving as HR Peer Community Lead and Chair of its Wellbeing Steering Group.

Alongside her consultancy work, Dee has delivered training for organisations including The Burnt Chef Project, Chasing the Stigma, Drinkaware and Mind.

She is now launching a dedicated redundancy coaching programme combining one-to-one coaching, group sessions and peer support, designed to help people rebuild confidence and find their next career direction following redundancy or restructuring.

Dee said: "When someone's world has just been upended by redundancy or restructure, they need more than a CV refresh. They need the confidence, self-awareness and space to figure

out what comes next on their own terms."

For more information, visit www.dewaconsulting.co.uk or call Dee on 07832 615751.



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Stephen Fitzsimons, Chief Executive

The Jobs in the Middle

What a church bell tower taught me about AI – and why Warrington's future depends on the work machines can't do



By **Richard Morris MRICS**,
Chartered Building
Surveyor and Director,
Property Surv, Warrington



Everyone is quietly asking the same question: which jobs will survive AI?

I think about it from an unusual vantage point. Not a lecture theatre or a strategy paper, but places like the top of a listed church bell tower, working out why the sandstone was slowly cracking apart. The culprit turned out to be invisible: iron cramps set into the masonry by Victorian builders had corroded and expanded over a century, quietly forcing the stone apart from within. No sensor flagged it. No database predicted it. It took investigation, experience and judgement – up a tower, in the weather. And from up there, the answer to the AI question looks clearer than the headlines suggest.

The pattern

Work sits on a spectrum. At one end is what I call knowledge in, knowledge out – reading, analysing, drafting, advising from a desk. Information goes in, information comes out. That is exactly what AI does, at scale, for pennies. At the other end is static, repeatable production – manufacturing, standardised processes, anything done the same way twice. That is what robotics is steadily absorbing.

The durable ground is in the middle: applied knowledge in the physical world. Thinking on your feet, in real buildings, with real people. Geoffrey Hinton – often called the godfather of AI – was asked what career he'd recommend now. His answer: be a plumber. He wasn't joking. Dexterity, judgement and improvisation in messy, unpredictable environments are the things machines find hardest.

Knowledge is becoming like water – cheap, everywhere, on tap. The value is moving to the people who can plumb it.

Why buildings are the strongest ground of all

Here's the part most commentary misses. Yes, AI and robotics will help us build new buildings faster, cheaper and better – new build is repeatable, and repetition is what machines do.

But the vast majority of the property we will ever use already exists. Around 80% of the buildings we'll occupy in 2050 are standing today. And no two of them are the same. Every old building carries generations of alterations, hidden defects, obsolete systems and improvised repairs – like that ironwork buried in the bell tower. You cannot train a robot on a building that refuses to repeat itself.

Think of it like vintage cars. As production lines perfected the modern car, the old ones didn't lose value – the skills to understand and restore them became rarer and more prized. Existing buildings are the vintage cars of the built environment, and the people who can diagnose, adapt and care for them – surveyors, engineers, and skilled trades alike – are the restorers.

On one recent instruction, proving why a previous rebuild was failing meant taking the entire roof off a London property and looking down into every room – investigation, evidence, judgement, then designing and delivering the fix. No algorithm does that. That work isn't going to a machine. If anything, some now predict skilled construction workers will out-earn barristers within a decade. I wouldn't bet against it.

There's a human dimension too. When I'm just investigating a defect, I'm rarely just assessing an asset – I'm standing in someone's home, their church, their business, often their biggest investment and their biggest worry. Judgement has to be delivered with reassurance, in person. People will not hand that moment to an app.

The teacher who has never stood in a building

One more risk, closer to home. For me, AI is an assistant – because I already carry thirty years of buildings in my head. I've smelled the damp before the meter confirms it; I've stood in the flooded and the fire-damaged and read what the building was saying. AI doesn't add to that judgement; it clears the ground around it – the reporting, the research, the routine – so experience can be spent where it matters most: in the building, with the client. Used well – and used ethically, with client confidentiality and data protection



■ An unusual vantage point – drone survey of a listed church during a bell tower investigation.

non-negotiable – it's a genuine gift for a small practice.

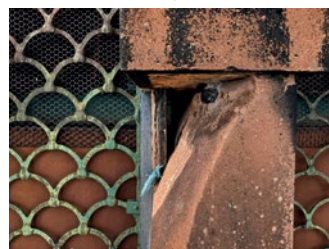
But for a young person entering the industry, AI isn't the assistant. It's the teacher – and it's a teacher that has never stood in a building. Knowledge without the grounding. If we're not careful, we'll produce

a generation fluent in information and short on judgement. The answer isn't less technology; it's making sure the next generation still learns in lofts, on scaffolds and on site – with experienced hands beside them. That is an apprenticeship question, a training question, and ultimately a local economy question.

What this means for Warrington

Put it together and the opportunity for our town is obvious. The growth story is already being told – with Northern Powerhouse Rail and Bank Quay on the horizon, Warrington is positioned for one of the most significant regeneration opportunities in the North. The question this article asks is the next one along: which jobs will actually be there to deliver it, and to sustain it afterwards?

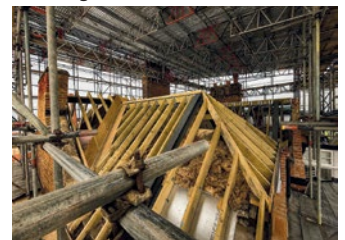
The future-proof economy isn't only glass offices full of knowledge workers – it's skills: construction, retrofit, building care, applied



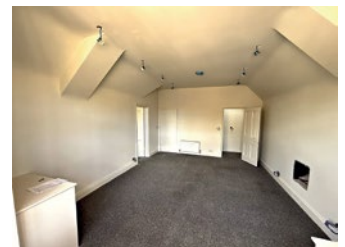
■ The damage was visible. The cause – corroded Victorian ironwork buried in the stone – was not.

technology, and the trades and professions that keep our existing towns standing and improving. Ten thousand construction jobs don't materialise from a masterplan; they come from a pipeline of local people trained in the applied middle – and every one of those roles is on the durable side of the AI divide.

The places that win the next decade won't just build new – they'll grow the people who can do the work machines can't. The jobs in the middle are the safest jobs in the room. We should be training for them, here.



■ Getting to the truth meant a temporary roof over the whole property – then stripping back the original structure to expose why it was failing.



■ From investigation to completion – the room fully reinstated.

Richard Morris is a Chartered Building Surveyor, Director of Property Surv in Warrington, and a member of the RICS North West Regional Advisory Board. He writes here in a personal capacity.

Warrington Business Expo confirms 2027 date following successful relaunch

Following its successful relaunch in March 2026, plans are already underway for the next Warrington Business Expo, which will take place on Friday 19 March 2027.

Warrington Business Expo celebrated a powerful comeback in March 2026, bringing together local entrepreneurs, founders, leaders and professionals for a full day of networking, learning and collaboration. The relaunched Expo delivered an energetic programme that showcased the very best of Warrington's business community.

The 2026 event featured 30 exhibitors, a dynamic speaker agenda of 14 speakers including contributions from charity leaders and business innovators, interviews offering practical insights and inspiration, a live podcast studio by Prism Studios, and the debut of the Expo's 'Tomorrow's Tech' panel.

Adding to the day's significance, the Expo partnered with Google, who delivered free 'Grow With Google' digital and AI workshops, alongside LinkedIn training from the Social Media Executive to provide hands on learning throughout the day.

The relaunch marked the return of Warrington Business Expo for the

first time since 2013 and generated overwhelmingly positive feedback from attendees, exhibitors and partners. Organisers Kirsty James and Tony Longmore, both passionate supporters of Warrington's business community, said they were delighted with both the turnout and the engagement.

Kirsty James commented: "The Expo has always been about bringing people together with purpose. There were fantastic conversations taking place throughout the event and Prism Studios recorded more than 20 interviews and podcast discussions. We were also incredibly grateful that our local MP, Sarah Hall, was able to clear diary space to deliver the opening address and support the relaunch."

A new addition for 2026 was Expo Bingo, an interactive competition that proved extremely popular, helping to drive stand visits and conversations between attendees and exhibitors throughout the day. Prize draw winners have been contacted.

Tony Longmore added: "We've been blown away by the response. The exhibitor hall was buzzing from start to finish, which is exactly what every organiser hopes to see. It was clear there was real appetite

for the return of the Expo. The goodwill shown by our sponsors, exhibitors, speakers, volunteers and attendees made the event what it was - and showed what collaboration really looks like. We're already excited for what comes next."

Beyond business impact, the Expo also delivered a positive community contribution, thanks to the generosity of the Expo's social media partner, Fireheart Digital, who gifted back their fee to the Expo's nominated charities - Warrington Disability Partnership, led by Dave Thompson MBE, and Making Space, led by Rachel Peacock. Organisers, Kirsty and Tony, have personally topped

up this donation, reinforcing the Expo's "stronger together" ethos.

The organisers would like to pass on special thanks to the Expo's headline sponsors, Warrington Chamber Plus and Connectus, as well as the wider network of exhibitors, speakers, attendees and prize donors who contributed to the success of the relaunch.

To be kept informed about the 2027 event, and the opportunities available for exhibitors, sponsors and speakers, follow the Expo social accounts or contact the team directly. The full event gallery can also be viewed via the website.

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



Organisers Kirsty James and Tony Longmore with Sarah Hall MP.

Entrepreneur launches life-coaching business to help people rebuild self-trust

Warrington-based entrepreneur Jack Longton has launched Jack Longton Life Coaching, a practical coaching and personal development business helping capable people build confidence, make clearer decisions and follow through on the changes they want to make.

After more than a decade working across sales, customer service, leadership, workplace wellbeing and strategic partnerships, Jack began to notice a recurring pattern. Many people were ambitious, intelligent and fully aware of what they needed to do, yet still found themselves overthinking, delaying decisions or repeatedly starting again.

Jack realised that the missing ingredient was often not knowledge or motivation, but self-trust.

"I kept meeting people who were clearly capable, but who had stopped trusting themselves to take action," Jack said. "They did not necessarily need another plan or another motivational speech. They needed practical support to rebuild confidence in their own judgement and prove to themselves that they could follow through."

This inspired Jack to complete his professional life coaching training and become an ACCPH accredited life coach. He

subsequently launched his own coaching practice, combining his professional leadership experience with structured coaching methods, accountability and practical behavioural tools.

Jack now works with individuals experiencing challenges such as low confidence, overthinking, inconsistency, career uncertainty, communication difficulties and a lack of personal direction. His central belief is that confidence is not something people must wait to feel. It is something they can train through small actions, kept promises and evidence of progress.

Through one-to-one coaching, structured programmes, assessments and practical resources, clients are supported to understand the patterns holding them back, identify what matters to them and take realistic steps forward. The business is positioned around "self-trust training", providing a more direct and action-focused alternative to vague personal development advice.

Alongside individual coaching, Jack is also developing workforce training for businesses, particularly those with sales, service and customer-facing teams. These programmes focus on communication, resilience, accountability, burnout prevention and leadership under pressure, helping organisations

support employee wellbeing while strengthening workplace performance.

Jack's ambition is to grow a recognised coaching and training business that supports individuals locally in Warrington as well as clients and organisations across the UK. Future plans include expanding the range of workshops, digital programmes, practical assessments and employer partnerships available through the business.

"I want to build something that is genuinely useful," Jack

added. "My aim is for people to leave coaching with more than a temporary boost. I want them to understand themselves better, trust their own decisions and have practical tools they can continue using independently."

Jack Longton Life Coaching is currently welcoming individual coaching clients and enquiries from organisations.

Visit the Website: www.jacklongtonlifecoach.co.uk

Follow the Instagram: @jack.selftrustcoach



Former UTC Warrington student launches solar business

A former UTC Warrington student has launched a new business combining his experience with drone technology and the commercial solar industry.

Joshua Doyle has established Warrington-based Sunbase, which works with businesses considering solar installations for commercial, industrial and agricultural premises.

Since leaving UTC Warrington, Joshua has worked with drones under Civil Aviation Authority approval, producing aerial visuals for property advertising, commercial buildings and development sites.

That experience introduced him to the practical uses of drone technology around buildings, including surveying roofs and reaching areas that are difficult to inspect using traditional methods.

Joshua said: "After leaving UTC Warrington, I began working with drones to produce visuals for properties and commercial sites.

"UTC has a strong focus on engineering and technology, so there is a natural connection between my time there, the work I have done with drones and the direction I am now taking with Sunbase."

Drone technology will be used as part of the early surveying and planning stages of some Sunbase

projects, including external roof surveys and internal inspections where access is difficult.

The company has been set up to bring together the different stages involved in a commercial solar project, including surveys, finance, design and installation.

Depending on the business and the site, funding routes can include a Power Purchase Agreement, known as a PPA, or asset finance.

A PPA can allow a business to use electricity generated by solar panels without paying the full installation cost at the start, while asset finance offers another route for companies looking to purchase

a system over time.

Following an installation, Sunbase can also introduce eligible businesses to a specialist partner that assesses whether the carbon savings produced by the solar system could generate carbon credit revenue.

Joshua said: "Working with drones has given me experience around commercial properties and shown me how technology can make surveys safer and more practical.

"Commercial solar involves much more than fitting panels. There are surveys, finance options, technical assessments and installation work to coordinate, which is where the

idea for Sunbase came from."

The business will initially focus on Warrington and the wider North West, where there are large numbers of manufacturing, logistics, agricultural and commercial premises.

Joshua added: "Warrington has always had strong links with engineering and industry, and UTC Warrington reflects that.

"It is good to be launching the business in the town where I studied and using technology that has been part of my work since leaving."

Further information is available at sunbase.co.uk



Personal experience inspires launch of Warrington home support business

A new Warrington home support service, Ann's Gentle Hands, has officially launched to transform how elderly and vulnerable adults experience care in their own homes.

Founded on the deeply personal experiences of its Director, Darren Earl, the company targets a vital but frequently overlooked aspect of independent living: companionship and emotional wellbeing.

The inspiration for the business came when Mr Earl was navigating the complexities of home care for his own mother, Ann. While observing her health decline, he realised that many people do not initially require rigorous medical or personal care. Instead, they require a helping hand with daily routines and, most importantly, someone to talk to.

Many older adults face quiet isolation, a challenge that can significantly impact their physical and mental health. Ann's Gentle Hands aims to bridge this gap by delivering services tailored to comfort, safety, and community integration. The provider's offerings include: Assisting with grocery shopping, meal preparation, and light domestic chores. Also, accompanying individuals to

medical appointments and local social outings.

They also offer dedicated sitting and respite services to give family members a crucial break from their care duties.

The company's foundational ethos is directly inspired by the warmth and respect Ann showed to others throughout her life. Before she passed away, Mr Earl spoke with his mother about establishing a business in her name to perpetuate those exact qualities.

Reflecting on the mission, Director Darren Earl shared: "Now that my lovely mum has passed, Ann's Gentle Hands is my way of honouring her memory and carrying forward the values she lived by. "This company is dedicated to ensuring that people receive the dignity, compassion and genuine care that meant so much to our family. We understand how important it is for people to feel safe, respected, and not alone. Our aim is to help people remain independent and continue enjoying life in the comfort of their own homes for as long as possible. That is why we are passionate about providing not only practical support, but true companionship, because sometimes a kind presence can mean just as much

as practical help. At Ann's Gentle Hands, we care for every client as if they were one of our own family."

By prioritising the human element of home care, the local service intends to ensure that clients

do not just manage their daily routines, but truly continue to thrive independently.

For more information, call 0333 050 6362 or visit www.annsgentlehands.co.uk



Funeral directors achieve national accreditation following independent inspection

Independent funeral business Hankinson & Molyneux Funeral Directors has secured membership of the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD), with inspectors recognising standards that exceeded those typically expected nationally.

The accreditation follows a detailed assessment of the Warrington-based firm's business practices, facilities, procedures and professional standards. The NAFD is the UK's leading professional body for funeral directors, with membership requiring businesses to demonstrate high levels of professionalism, transparency and care.

The milestone comes as Hankinson & Molyneux and its sister brand, Warrington Direct Cremation, also join Warrington Chamber Plus, strengthening the firm's links with the local business community.

The independent, family-run business is led by Greg Hankinson and Anthony Molyneux, who between them have almost 80 years of experience in the funeral profession. Both are fully qualified funeral directors and embalmers, while Hankinson is also an

experienced funeral celebrant, having conducted thousands of services across Warrington and the surrounding area.

Alongside traditional funeral services, the business operates Warrington Direct Cremation, offering a simple and affordable alternative for families seeking a more straightforward farewell while maintaining the same professional standards.

Commenting on the accreditation, Greg and Anthony said: "Achieving NAFD membership is a significant milestone for our business because it independently recognises the standards we work to every day. We have always believed that every family deserves the highest levels of care, professionalism and transparency, and this accreditation reinforces that commitment."

"Joining Warrington Chamber Plus is another exciting step for us. As a proudly independent business, we are looking forward to building stronger relationships with fellow members, supporting local initiatives and continuing to invest in the community we have proudly served for many years."



Two Warrington businesses invested in each other

Warrington-based B Corp-certified digital marketing agency Beech and award-winning L&D consultancy Oomph Learning & Development have spent the past few months investing in each other's work, with Beech building a new website for Oomph, and Kerry Lockyer working directly with the Beech team on development and sales skills.

Beech has designed and developed a new website for Oomph Learning & Development, the Warrington-based learning and development consultancy founded by Kerry Lockyer. The site launched in April 2026 and was built to reflect Kerry and her work accurately, including her approach, her personality, and the real-world impact her sessions deliver for clients across the UK, which Beech were lucky enough to experience firsthand.

Kerry wanted a website that felt like her and showed the Oomph in what she does, with case studies and real examples of how her programmes have changed the way people work. Beech worked with Kerry to achieve exactly that.

Kerry said: "When investing in a new website, it can be a daunting process and I was keen to partner with someone who really wanted to understand me and what I do, plus could make the whole process easy. That's exactly what I got from the whole team at Beech, and I'm delighted with the result!"

The relationship between Beech and Oomph went beyond the

website project itself, with Kerry working directly with the Beech team to deliver team development sessions, Clarity4D profiling, and sales skills training for Roz Healey (Director), Sophy Bostock (Development Manager), and Beca Purvis (Content Manager). All of which was massively beneficial to Beech going forward.

Kerry's work with the team has directly changed how they approach client conversations, collaborate internally, and how they find new ways to create high-quality work for their clients. The Clarity4D profiling gave the team a shared language for their working styles, recognising what their colours mean about who they are and how they work, which strengthens both internal communication and external client relationships.

Roz Healey said: "Working with Kerry on the Oomph website was one of those projects where everything clicked, and we're thrilled with the end result. Getting to know Kerry and her work through our team learning and development sessions meant we understood what Oomph really needed to look and feel like before we started. Seeing it land so well with her network is exactly the outcome we work towards on every project."

The partnership grew from a local business network connection in and around Warrington. Kerry was also drawn to Beech's B Corp certification, a signal that Beech

cares about how it does business, not just the work it produces. For Beech, getting to know Kerry through the L&D sessions gave the team a great feel for her work before a single page of the website was created. That comes through in the finished site.

The Oomph project is a good example of how Beech works best, with clients who see their website as a long-term investment, share in the process and are open about what they need. That openness, combined with the team's understanding of Kerry's work, is

what made the end result possible.

Kerry added: "Right from the start, the Beech team made me feel they truly cared about understanding me and my work, that's exactly how I work too. That alignment, alongside their B Corp values, made this a perfect partnership. For them to experience the work I do first hand has meant the final website is a genuine reflection of who I am and what Oomph stands for.....and I absolutely LOVE it!"

The Oomph Learning & Development website is live at www.oomphlearning.co.uk



■ Kerry Lockyer of Oomph Learning and Development (left), then from left to right, the Beech team of Beca Purvis, Content Manager, Sophy Bostock, Development Manager and Roz Healey, Director

Member's blog

AI in the workplace when grievances and tribunal claims write themselves

With widely accessible tools such as ChatGPT and Copilot, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to draft grievances, complaints and even Employment Tribunal claims is an emerging trend HR teams and employers are increasingly encountering.

While AI can make it easier for employees to raise concerns, it is also creating new challenges around accuracy and credibility, particularly where submissions feel more articulated or legally sophisticated than expected. This blog from Chamber members Employee Management Ltd (EML) explores how AI is shaping the way workplace grievances, complaints and tribunal claims are drafted, the risks this creates for employers and importance of staying focused on the underlying facts.

How AI Is Changing Workplace Complaints

AI-generated submissions can significantly alter the tone and structure of complaints by:

- Exaggerating legal arguments, sometimes turning minor disputes into serious allegations
- Including case law or legal references without fully understanding their relevance
- Appearing overly formal, highly structured and repetitive, compared with an employee's usual communication style
- Creating a polished document that may not accurately reflect the underlying facts

This may create unrealistic expectations for the employee regarding the likely outcome,

potentially making early resolutions or settlements more difficult.

There is a risk in dismissing complaints simply because they appear poorly drafted, over legalistic or factually inconsistent, particularly if there is genuine concern behind them. The focus must remain on ensuring that all complaints are taken seriously and investigated fairly and consistently and in line with the ACAS Code of Practice, regardless of how they are presented.

Data Protection and Confidentiality Risks

AI-generated complaints can also raise the risk of data breaches or unintended disclosure of protected information where employees use AI tools to input:

- Confidential company information
- Sensitive personal data relating to colleagues
- Commercially sensitive material

Where disputes escalate to the Employment Tribunal, there is a potential for disclosure to include AI prompts or input data which could reveal how documents were created and what information was shared.

Practical Steps for HR Teams and Investigators

The priority for HR teams and investigators should always be to establish the underlying facts rather than becoming distracted by legal language, terminology, structure or tone. Employers should consider the following:

- Don't be panicked by AI generated grievances littered with legal language. Break them down into separate, succinct allegations, confirm these at the grievance hearing and assess each allegation separately against available evidence
- Ensure investigations remain evidence-led, with decisions based on documents, witness statements and factual records, rather than the style or tone of the complaint
- Use follow-up questioning to test inconsistencies, exaggerations or embellishments that do not align with earlier accounts of events
- Review and update policies and guidance to address the use of AI, including expectations around honesty and accuracy, guidance on appropriate use of AI tools and safeguards for confidential and personal data
- Ask employees at the hearing whether AI has been used in preparing a complaint or statement, and where it has, ask them to put their complaint into their own words at the hearing.
- Avoid penalising employees who use AI to overcome language barriers or help structure their concerns.

Expert Support

EML have already seen a rise in highly structured, legally framed submissions from client employees. However, the requirement to investigate them fairly and consistently and with a clear understanding of the underlying issues remains the same. If you're finding it difficult to navigate this area and would like support, seeking external advice can be valuable. Get in touch on 01942 727200 to find out how they can help your organisation or visit www.employee-management.co.uk



Skyline Sizzle BBQ brings business community together in support of local young people

Warrington Youth Zone welcomed more than 50 representatives from businesses across Warrington and the wider region to its annual Skyline Sizzle Business BBQ recently.

The event provided an opportunity for local businesses to network, build new connections and learn more about the life-changing work of Warrington Youth Zone, all while enjoying a fantastic summer BBQ in the heart of the Youth Zone.

Guests were inspired by the moving story of Dom, a local young person whose journey has been transformed through the support of Warrington Youth Zone. His personal experiences highlighted the lasting impact that the charity has on the lives of young people and reinforced the importance of continued support from the local business community.

Adding to the fun was a lively Beat the Goalie challenge,

with participants putting their shooting skills to the test. A special thank you goes to Rylands FC for providing the goalkeeper, who kept everyone on their toes throughout the afternoon. Mayor of Warrington, Cllr Sagheer Zaman joined in the challenge alongside guests from across the business community.

Warrington Youth Zone thanked Birchwood Shopping Centre, whose generous support as the event's Silver Sponsor covered the cost of the delicious BBQ, helping to make the event such a fantastic success.

Jamie Patterson, Head of Fundraising at Warrington Youth Zone, said: "I am so pleased with the huge turnout for our Skyline Sizzle. To see the whole business community coming together in Warrington is fantastic and we really hope to welcome back our supporters very soon!"

The Skyline Sizzle Business BBQ

once again demonstrated the strength of Warrington's business community and its shared commitment to supporting local young people. Events like these not only help raise awareness of

Warrington Youth Zone's work but also create valuable opportunities for businesses to connect while making a positive difference to the lives of thousands of young people.



Bathgate Business Finance supports purchase of former Blind Veterans centre with £1.5 million deal



■ Clive Wolfendale, Vice Chair of Trustees Adferiad, Sharon Jones, Deputy Chief Executive Adferiad, Alun Thomas, Chief Executive Adferiad, Gary Beggs (Bathgate), Sandy Ackers, Director of Finance, Adferiad and Simon Green, Treasurer of Adferiad.

Adferiad, one of the largest charities in Wales supporting people affected by mental ill health and substance use, has completed the purchase of the former Blind Veterans centre in Llandudno, thanks to a £1.5 million deal brokered by Chamber members, Bathgate Business Finance.

The purchase marks a new chapter for Adferiad, which earlier this month celebrated its 50th anniversary at the new site. The building will be transformed into Parkland Place, a 40-bed detoxification facility, providing safe, structured detox for adults with substance use disorders, including individuals with additional complexities.

Bathgate BDM and Head of Property Finance, Gary Beggs, held a number of in-person meetings with the client and its advisors to fully understand both the organisation's aims and requirements regarding terms and a challenging timescale. This allowed him to advise on the levels of funding that could be achieved prior to potential locations being identified.

Gary supported the team in reviewing and advising on a selection of premises before the former Blind Veterans centre was identified as the ideal property. Working with Adferiad's CEO, Dr Alun Thomas and its finance team, Gary then prepared all financial information and submitted to a targeted selection of lenders, which included high street banks and specialist funders.

Following introductions to a panel of lenders, Adferiad selected charity finance lender, specialist, Charity Bank, who was not only able to provide a more compelling offer than the high street options available, but also an alignment in values.

Dr Alun Thomas, Chief Executive

of Adferiad, said: "Securing the right funding for a project of this scale was a significant milestone for Adferiad. As a charity, every investment we make has to deliver long-term value for our beneficiaries, so finding a funding partner that understood both our ambitions and our values was incredibly important.

"Gary and the team at Bathgate Business Finance took the time to understand what we were trying to achieve. Their expertise, guidance and determination throughout what was a complex process helped us secure the funding needed to bring this project to life.

"Parkland Place Llandudno represents a major investment in specialist detoxification services in North Wales. The new facility will provide a safe, therapeutic environment where more people can access clinically supported detoxification, helping them take the first step towards recovery.

"The purchase also preserves the legacy of a building that has served people for well over a century, and where some of the Adferiad's origins began, some 50 years ago. As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, it feels particularly fitting that we are giving this historic site a new purpose, ensuring it continues to provide care, hope and support for generations to come. We are incredibly grateful to Bathgate Business Finance and Charity Bank for helping make this vision a reality."

Gary said: "After visiting the property with the Adferiad team, it was clear to me just how special the location was and how it would enable the charity to realise its vision for the facility, and I was determined to get the deal across the line.

"It certainly wasn't without its challenges, particularly at the legal stage, but I was pleased to be able

to step in and use my expertise to support those negotiations on both sides to ensure the purchase was completed.

"This has been an extremely rewarding deal to lead and deliver, not just in terms of the technical delivery of the funding, ensuring the best financial solution for the client, but the fact that the funding will facilitate the creation of a place of healing and safety that will save and change lives.

"Attending the charity's 50th anniversary event at the site last week was a real pleasure, and it certainly changed my perspective on what facilities for those with substance use disorders and ill

mental health look and feel like. We wish the whole team the very best for the launch of Parkland Place and fifty more years of providing safety and recovery to those who need it."

Development of Parkland Place is now in its final stages, with its official opening planned for 1st July 2026. The building, which was originally erected as a convalescent home by Lady Forester in 1904, has a long history of providing care and support in the local community. Adferiad will continue its legacy as a place of care and rehabilitation as part of its expanded services in North Wales.

City & Guilds success highlights value of apprenticeship levy funding

Congratulations to our very own Carolyne Kasangwa who has just completed her City & Guilds Level 3 in Multi Channel Marketing.

Two years of pain, frustration and patience. But enough about the team's suffering - Carolyne made it through!

Thanks to Nicola-Jayne W. and Warrington & Vale Royal College for their support throughout.

Carolyne commented: "I've learnt a great deal over the last 2 years at college and can't wait to put some fresh ideas into the Chamber's digital strategy"

Stephen Fitzsimons added: "Carolyne has worked really hard to achieve this important qualification and we're all very proud of her success".

The Chamber utilised Warrington

Borough Council's Apprentice Levy Transfer to fund the course at Warrington & Vale Royal College, saving £6k in tuition fees.

The Apprentice Levy Transfer allows eligible local businesses and organisations to apply for a transfer of its unspent apprenticeship levy to fund training and assessment costs.



Birchwood Park unveils new timeline celebrating 80 years of nuclear history

Birchwood Park, Warrington, the North West's largest out-of-town business destination, has unveiled a new historical timeline installation celebrating 80 years since the former Risley site helped shape the UK's atomic energy programme.

Part of the Park's wider 80 Years of Nuclear campaign, the installation charts the site's evolution from a disused Second World War ordnance factory into the thriving business destination it is today.

Now home to more than 165 organisations, including over 30 businesses operating across the nuclear sector, Birchwood Park sits at the heart of one of the UK's most significant nuclear clusters. More than 6,000 people work across Warrington's nuclear community, the UK's only region which spans the full nuclear lifecycle.

With the sector forecast to contribute more than £15 billion to the North West economy by 2030 and nuclear employment expected to grow by almost 49%, the timeline also highlights the opportunities the industry continues to create for the region and future generations.

The timeline showcases key moments from the past eight

decades, celebrating the people, organisations and innovations that have shaped the site, while helping today's workforce and future generations better understand the role Birchwood Park has played in the UK's nuclear story.

As part of the celebrations, the Park is also inviting current and former employees, visitors, and members of the local community to share their memories, photographs, and stories of life at the site, helping to preserve the personal history behind one of the region's most significant employment and innovation hubs.

Stories and photographs can be submitted via Birchwood Park's dedicated 80 Years of Nuclear webpage www.birchwoodpark.co.uk/80-years-of-nuclear, where contributors are invited to help celebrate the people and moments that have shaped the Park over the past eight decades.

Linda Welsby, Leasing Manager at Birchwood Park, said: "For 80 years, Birchwood Park has been part of the UK's nuclear story, but it's also been a part of thousands of people's own stories. The timeline is a way of celebrating both.

As the site continues to evolve, it's

important that we recognise the heritage that has shaped the Park we know today. We're incredibly proud of the role it has played in supporting the UK's nuclear industry and the contribution it continues to make to the North West economy through the businesses and people based here.

We're also hoping the timeline encourages people to share their own memories and helps a new generation discover the opportunities and careers that continue to be created here. We'd like to thank Norman Bird from UKNNL and the UK ARC Programme Alpha Heritage team for their support in helping bring this important piece of the Park's history to life."

Rachel O'Donnell, Chair of the Northern Nuclear Alliance (NNA), said: "The Northern Nuclear Alliance exists to champion the organisations and capabilities that make the North West the number one region for nuclear services in the UK. Birchwood Park has been central to that story for 80 years, bringing together businesses that have helped shape the industry and continue to drive it forward today.

Supporting initiatives like this is about recognising that heritage while also demonstrating the strength of the nuclear community we have here today. It's a story worth celebrating because it's also the foundation for the sector's future growth."



Member's blog

Building success across projects, partnerships and community

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

At Barrow Electrical, the team continue to be extremely busy delivering projects across the UK. Closer to home, we're proud to be working on another iconic Warrington building, Parr's Bank Hotel. It's a stunning property with so much history, and it's a privilege to be involved.

Our work continues across a wide range of sectors, with LED upgrade programmes being delivered across numerous retail properties around the UK, helping clients reduce running costs, improve efficiency and increase profitability. Alongside this, our national power and data installations continue to progress, while our compliance teams remain committed to ensuring our clients' properties are safe, efficient and fully compliant.

The team have recently returned from the Isle of Man following further compliance works, and we've also been proud to support a fantastic charity in St Helens by providing our services free of charge. We hope the work completed will bring real benefit and help support the incredible work they do.

Outside of projects, it's been great to continue building relationships

with clients and the wider business community. We enjoyed a fantastic evening sponsoring a Warrington Wolves fixture, welcoming clients and guests for some excellent hospitality. It was a brilliant opportunity to spend time together away from the day-to-day running of business.

We were also delighted to attend the grand opening of the newly renovated Daresbury Park Hotel. I was genuinely impressed by the transformation and look forward to visiting again soon.

Community remains a huge part of what we do, and it was a pleasure to attend the Cheshire Community Foundation summer gathering at Cholmondeley Castle. Meeting so many inspirational people and hearing their stories was a fantastic reminder of the incredible work happening across our communities.

We also enjoyed the latest Warrington Chamber Plus meeting with Andy Carter, discussing the future of NHS services and the improvements planned for Warrington's facilities.

On a personal note, it's been a month full of special moments. I celebrated my birthday, while my eldest daughter Ruby turned 16 and enjoyed her prom. It really does make you realise how quickly time flies. We also had a brilliant family evening watching Take That at the Etihad Stadium, thanks to

Cheshire's Mix 56 – an incredible show and a memory we'll all treasure.

I was also fortunate enough to spend time with Ged Mason from the Morson Group, someone I hugely admire both professionally and personally. Conversations with people who inspire you are always valuable, and I came away feeling incredibly motivated.

At Warrington Rylands 1906 FC, pre-season is now underway, bringing plenty of excitement around the club. It's been fantastic seeing the new signings in action, welcoming supporters back and seeing everyone reconnect after the summer break. Improvements around the ground continue, alongside further progress as we build towards an exciting future for the club.

Finally, the countdown is on for the North West Cancer Research Golf

and Gala event at the incredible Fairmont Cheshire, The Mere. Having seen the venue and the transformation that has taken place, I genuinely believe it's going to be a very special occasion. With the launch of the newly renovated venue, the opening of Gordon Ramsay's restaurant and so many exciting things happening around the site, it feels like a real privilege to be part of such an important moment.

I honestly cannot put into words how humbled I am by the support we've received. The businesses and individuals getting involved have been incredible, from football clubs and rugby clubs to watchmakers, Dames and Sirs. I'm nervously excited to see the day arrive and will share more in next month's column.

Plenty more to come, Laurence Barrow.



New recruitment business launches with mission to create career pathways and local jobs

A new Warrington-based recruitment business is aiming to do more than fill vacancies by helping local people build long-term careers in education and healthcare.

Bluevale Recruitment, headquartered in Warrington, has launched with a clear purpose: to connect schools, healthcare providers and employers with high-quality professionals while creating genuine career opportunities for people across Warrington and Cheshire with particular expertise in supporting Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Alongside the business, Bluevale has introduced Bluevale Futures, a long-term community initiative designed to reduce barriers into employment by supporting school leavers, graduates, career changers and people returning to work with clear pathways into meaningful career pathways for:

- School leavers
- University graduates

- Career changers
- People returning to work

The launch comes at a time when schools and healthcare organisations continue to face workforce shortages and increasing recruitment challenges. Bluevale believes that by investing in local talent and creating stronger links between employers and jobseekers, more people can access rewarding careers while helping address skills shortages across the region.

Bluevale Recruitment is also expanding beyond the North West after securing a place on a major public sector recruitment framework, enabling the business to support organisations in other parts of the country while continuing to invest in its Warrington roots.

Raymond Burey, Head of Partnerships at Bluevale Recruitment, said: "Bluevale was founded with a simple vision: to create opportunities for people while helping employers overcome

recruitment challenges. We wanted to build a business that genuinely supports communities, not just through recruitment but by creating clear career pathways into education and healthcare."

"Bluevale Futures is our commitment to the future. We want to inspire school leavers, support graduates, help career changers and give people returning to work the confidence and opportunities to build meaningful careers. If we can create jobs, strengthen our local workforce and make a positive difference to people's lives, then we've achieved what we set out to do."

Since launching, Bluevale has become an active member of the Warrington business community, working alongside Warrington Chamber Plus and developing relationships with local organisations to support employment, skills and economic growth.

The company plans to work closely with schools, healthcare providers,

community organisations and employment partners to help create sustainable employment opportunities and strengthen career pathways across Warrington and Cheshire.

For more information about Bluevale Recruitment and Bluevale Futures, visit www.bluevalerecruitment.co.uk or contact operations@bluevalerecruitment.co.uk



■ Larna Wilford, Marketing and Communications lead at Bluevale Recruitment.

No Brainer launches new digital growth platform

Independent PR and search agency No Brainer has launched Seer – a proprietary online platform designed to help brands identify where their biggest growth opportunities are across search, AI and social media.

Seer is the first product released from a suite of new tools being developed by No Brainer and sits at the heart of its new 'Search + Discovery' proposition – a strategic approach built around how consumers are now discovering both B2C and B2B brands online.

Built to give marketing, search and performance leaders greater commercial clarity, Seer combines SEO, Answer Engine Optimisation (AEO), social discovery insights and digital PR intelligence within a single strategic dashboard.

Gary Jenkins, Managing Director at Search + Discovery agency No Brainer, said: "Seer is a powerful intelligence engine built around a simple idea: that marketing leaders need far better visibility of where commercial growth is actually coming from in a world where search behaviour is changing rapidly.

"People aren't just Googling anymore. They're discovering brands through AI summaries, Reddit threads, TikTok searches, comparison content and a whole range of other touchpoints. We wanted to create a platform that reflects this reality and helps brands make smarter, more informed decisions around content, channels and investments.

"One of the biggest frustrations in modern marketing is trying to

make sense of disconnected data sources, sometimes from multiple agency partners. Seer brings all this data together to identify the clearest routes to revenue growth across SEO, AI visibility, content strategy, and digital PR."

The platform helps brands uncover revenue opportunities, prioritise channels and shape campaigns around the modern customer discovery journey – from SEO keywords, AI-generated answers and TikTok searches, to Reddit discussions and comparison content.

It has been developed in-house by the North West-based agency's team, working in partnership with AI skills and capability consultancy NoCodeLab.ai.

Gary Jenkins added: "We think Seer is a great example of what can happen when agencies properly invest in AI capability, and I'm so proud of our team for building this powerful new product. The tool was developed collaboratively, in partnership with our clients and industry leaders, and it's the first of several new generation products we'll be bringing to market."

Features within Seer include competitor landscape analysis, AI visibility tracking, audience and persona insights, content planning tools, campaign opportunity mapping and revenue forecasting based on achievable traffic and performance data.

The platform will begin rolling out across No Brainer's client base over the coming weeks, with additional AI-powered products currently in development.



Warrington woman breaks the mould in male-dominated motorcycle world

Warrington family-run "On Your Bike" is quietly changing the face of motorcycle rider training in the North West – one student at a time!

For many people, the idea of learning to ride a motorcycle can feel daunting. For women, especially, walking into a male-dominated training environment can be enough to put them off entirely. Angela Davies wants to change that.

Angela is the DVSA-approved instructor and driving force behind On Your Bike, with her partner Graham by her side, she built the school from the ground up with a single principle at its core: the student comes first.

"The whole idea was to create a school that puts the student first – no rushing people through to tick a box, no production-line feel," says Angela. "Just patient, honest training, where people progress when they're genuinely ready."

A lifelong motorcycling enthusiast who holds her IAM Advanced Rider certification, Angela made the leap into instruction after realising she wanted to share her passion in a more meaningful way. She trained as a DVSA-approved instructor and set about building something different – a school that feels less like a conveyor belt and more like a conversation.

The results speak for themselves. On Your Bike offers one-to-one Compulsory Basic Training (CBT) sessions. We provided the bikes, helmets with intercoms, and jackets. There's no pressure, no clock-watching, and no upselling. Angela's philosophy is simple: "I give honest advice because I want people to ride safely and confidently, not just to get their money and move them on."

As a female-led business in a field that has historically been dominated by men, On Your Bike has found itself attracting a remarkably wide range of students – including many men who say they find a female instructor less intimidating.

"It's not just women either," Angela explains. "We get a lot of men booking with us as well, because they feel a female instructor will be less intimidating. That wasn't something I set out to make a headline of, but it clearly matters to people and I'm proud of it. Saying that, we are a team – the guys who work with us are calm and friendly too, so you don't have to worry, you are always in safe hands."

The rewards, she says, are immeasurable. "Watching someone go from nervous and uncertain to riding away with a big grin on their face – that never gets old. If I had

to pick a moment that sums it up, it would be the students who came to us saying they'd been told they'd never manage it. Seeing those people pass their CBT is something really special."

With fuel costs rising and more people turning to motorcycles as a practical, affordable way to get around, Angela is urging anyone who has hesitated to take the plunge.

"If you're a woman who's been put off by the idea of a male-dominated training environment, please come and talk to us," she says. "You'll be very welcome."

01925 551 555 (Call or WhatsApp) ride@onyour.bike www.onyour.bike



Simpler Recycling legislation: An opportunity for businesses

As one of Warrington's leading commercial waste management providers, ASH Waste Services is helping local businesses prepare for the biggest changes to workplace recycling in years.

With Simpler Recycling legislation encouraging organisations to rethink how they separate and manage their waste, ASH Waste Services believes the new requirements are not just about compliance – they are an opportunity to improve efficiency, reduce costs and strengthen environmental performance.

As businesses across Warrington continue to grow and invest, effective resource management will play an increasingly important role in supporting both commercial success and the area's wider sustainability ambitions. Those businesses that take a proactive approach today will be well placed to meet future regulations while improving their environmental credentials.

ASH Waste Services have been working with businesses throughout Warrington and the surrounding region to help them understand what the changes mean in practice. One thing is clear: successful recycling isn't about adding complexity. It's about creating simple, practical systems that work for each individual business.

"Consistency is key when it

comes to implementing Simpler Recycling," said Andrew Hulme, Company Director at ASH Waste Services. "We want to help avoid contamination of waste and recycling streams where possible to ensure maximum amounts can be recycled or reused. While we're all adjusting to the changes, we are here to help our current and future customers and their staff to understand what is expected of them with the regulations and how they can seamlessly transition to a compliant service."

"We offer free waste audits for businesses for exactly this reason, working with them to establish how effective their waste management is today and identifying opportunities to enhance it for the future."

Every workplace generates different types of waste, from cardboard and plastics to food and general waste. Taking the time to review waste streams often reveals opportunities to recycle more effectively, reduce unnecessary collections and make better use of available resources.

Businesses that approach recycling strategically can also benefit from improved reporting and greater visibility of their environmental performance. As sustainability continues to influence procurement decisions, customer expectations and supply chain requirements, having a well-managed waste

strategy is becoming an important part of demonstrating responsible business practices.

The key is planning ahead rather than waiting until compliance becomes an issue. A professional waste review can identify where improvements can be made and ensure collection services match the needs of the business without disrupting day-to-day operations.

With more than 35 years of experience supporting businesses, ASH Waste Services believes the future of the industry lies in making recycling easier, more efficient and more accessible. The company's experienced team is already helping organisations prepare for the new Simpler Recycling legislation, with further requirements set to come into

effect for all non-domestic settings from 2027.

Waste should be viewed as a resource, not simply something to dispose of. By working in partnership with local businesses, ASH Waste Services is helping local organisations navigate changing legislation with confidence, improve recycling rates and contribute to a more sustainable future for the local business community.

To find out more about how ASH Waste Services can help your business prepare for Simpler Recycling, or to arrange a free waste audit, contact your local ASH Waste Services representative Paul Smethurst on 07464 544945 or email paulsmethurst@ashgroup.co.uk



Public health news

Help create a healthier Warrington: practical ideas for local food businesses

Whether you run a café, restaurant, takeaway, pub, workplace canteen or coffee shop, your business plays an important role in the daily lives of Warrington residents.

The food and drink choices available across our borough can help shape healthier habits and support the wellbeing of local communities.

To support local businesses, Warrington Borough Council has created a 'Healthier catering: A guide for Warrington food businesses' webpage, which includes simple, practical guidance and achievable ideas for businesses of all sizes.

The guide is not about restricting consumer choice or overhauling menus. Instead, it offers flexible suggestions that can be introduced gradually, depending on what works best for your customers and your business.

Ideas include promoting water as a default drink option, offering fruit or vegetable-based side dishes, and making healthier menu choices more visible and appealing.

Many businesses are already seeing growing interest from customers who want healthier

options alongside the food and drink they already enjoy. The guidance aims to help businesses respond to this demand while maintaining the quality, variety, and customer experience that customers value.

Some of the potential benefits for businesses include:

- Attracting new customers
- Enhancing their reputation within the local community
- Reducing food waste
- Responding to increasing demand for healthier options
- Supporting the health and wellbeing of their workforce

Creating a healthier food environment is something we can all contribute to, and small improvements made by many businesses across the borough can have a significant collective impact.

The choices people see every day often influence what they buy and consume. By making healthier options more visible and readily available, local businesses can help make healthier choices easier, while continuing to provide great food, excellent service and enjoyable customer experiences.

To view the full guidance and

explore practical ideas for your business, visit the council's website www.warrington.gov.uk/healthier-catering-guide-warrington-food-businesses

For further information, contact publichealth@warrington.gov.uk

As part of ongoing work to improve Warrington's food environment, local businesses are also being invited to complete a short survey that will help inform future initiatives across the borough.

Feedback from businesses will help identify opportunities to:

- Increase access to healthier food and drink options
- Expand free water refill provision
- Support children and families through discounted or free food offers during school holidays

By taking part, businesses can help shape future programmes and partnerships designed to support both local enterprises and healthier communities.

Take part in the survey today and help create a healthier Warrington for everyone!

www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/wbc-businesssurveyhealthy



Join Warrington's Breastfeeding & Baby Welcome Scheme

Show local families they are welcome to breastfeed in your business by signing up to Warrington's Breastfeeding & Baby Welcome Scheme. Taking part helps create a friendly and inclusive environment where parents feel comfortable feeding and caring for their babies.

Why join?

- Demonstrate your commitment to supporting families



- Create a welcoming and inclusive customer experience
- Encourage repeat visits and customer loyalty
- Enhance your reputation in the local community
- Help make Warrington a breastfeeding-friendly borough

Breastfeeding mothers have a legal right to breastfeed their baby in public places. By supporting the scheme, you can help parents feel more confident and comfortable when feeding their baby while out and about. It's simple and free to join.

Joining the scheme is quick and straightforward. We provide guidance and resources to support you every step of the way. To find out more, visit www.livingwellwarrington.org/activity/babywelcome where you'll find scheme information, the application form, a breastfeeding policy template and staff briefing materials.

Apply now by completing the briefing and application form and return it to publichealth@warrington.gov.uk and become a recognised Breastfeeding & Baby Welcome venue, making a positive difference for local families while showing your customers that your business is inclusive, supportive, and breastfeeding friendly.



WARRINGTON
Borough Council





Breastfeeding and Baby Welcome Spaces

Offering warm, respectful and practical settings for families



Businesses invited to sponsor star-studded Warrington charity concert

Businesses across Warrington are being invited to put their brand centre stage by sponsoring a major live music event that will raise vital funds for national health and social care charity Making Space.

Retro Party Live will take place at Parr Hall on Thursday, October 29, bringing together a star-studded line-up led by internationally acclaimed ABBA tribute sensation Björn Again, alongside Eurovision winner Katrina and legendary DJ and television presenter Pat Sharp. Organisers are expecting the 1,100-capacity venue to sell

out for what promises to be one of the town's biggest entertainment events of the year.

Making Space is now seeking a small number of corporate partners to support the event, offering businesses a unique opportunity to combine high-profile brand exposure with meaningful community impact. The charity says sponsoring the event will allow companies to reach audiences from across the region while demonstrating their commitment to corporate social responsibility.

Three sponsorship levels are available. A headline sponsorship package, priced at £5,000, includes VIP tickets, a meet and greet with Pat Sharp and Katrina, on-stage branding, a full-page programme advert, media exposure and social media promotion. Three corporate sponsorship packages are available at £2,500, while four programme sponsorship opportunities are available for £500, giving businesses of all sizes the chance to be involved.

Funds raised through sponsorship will support Making Space's life-changing services, which include mental health and wellbeing support, dementia and carers'

services, supported living, care homes and specialist health and social care provision. The charity has been helping people live independent, fulfilling lives since 1982 and holds the Bronze Social Value Quality Mark in recognition of its commitment to delivering positive community impact.

For tickets to Retro Party Live, visit: <https://parrhall.culturewarrington.org/whats-on/retro-party-live/>

Businesses interested in sponsorship opportunities or securing a package can contact Natalie Bargery by emailing Natalie.Bargery@makingspace.co.uk or calling 07843 268007.



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As you develop your international trade activity the Warrington Chamber of Commerce can assist you with all the documentation you need to export your goods and services easily. All our staff have passed the required training to become British Chambers approved documentation officers and are able to provide the following services:

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- Certification of agency agreements, invoices, other documents
- Certification of EUR1 movement certificates
- Certification of EUR-MED movement certificates
- Certification of GSP Form A preference certificates
- Advice on import and export procedures

(This service is also available electronically)

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making space

HEADLINERS
BJÖRN AGAIN

RETRO PARTY LIVE!

Thursday
29th Oct
2026
7.30pm - 11pm

Join us for an unforgettable night where every ticket helps make a world of difference to the people who draw on our support!

Venue
Parr Hall, Warrington

Ticket Info

COMPERE AND DJ
PAT SHARP

EUROVISION WINNER
KATRINA
(FORMERLY OF KATRINA AND THE WAVES)

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20% DISCOUNT

The copy deadline for the next edition of Insight magazine is

September 23rd

Please email your news stories and pictures to the Editor at our email address:

info@warrington-chamber.co.uk



Gulliver's World unveils exciting new Princess & Pirate themed hotel

Gulliver's World has expanded its offering with the opening of two brand new themed accommodations.

Following a boom in short-break bookings over the last year, the Warrington theme park has unveiled The Enchanted Castle Hotel and the Pirate Ship Hotel which are now open for bookings.

The new accommodation, which add an extra 32 themed rooms to the resort, includes the Pirate themed hotel rooms which each sleep four people and have their own ensuite, as well as the Fairytale themed Enchanted Castle Hotel with ensuite rooms that sleep five people.

Craig Clews, resort director at Gulliver's World, said: "We are so excited to be launching our new accommodation as we know our guests will be wowed by what is on offer at the Enchanted Castle and Pirate Ship Hotels.

"The popularity of our short break stays continue to increase year-by-year so this investment in our park helps to meet that demand and also provide families with even more options for costs-effective, family breaks here in the UK.

"The Princess & Pirate Hotels are part of Gulliver's expansion of its accommodation offering across all four of our resorts, as we look

to reinforce our commitment to creating immersive short break experiences for families to enjoy."

There are more than 50 rides, attractions, shows and activities to savour, including The Pirate Ship, Desperado Drop, The Antelope Wooden Coaster, Togo Tower, and the amazing animatronic dinosaurs.

Last year saw two new rides prove to be incredibly popular – the Winged Monkeys Wicked-inspired adventure, and the Munchkin Motors, where families can drive through the Land of Oz whilst looking for its much-loved characters.

And not forgetting the Gulliver's

Gears car-themed area, home to the Grand Prix Racer rollercoaster and Overdrive – a 360-degree thrill and one of Gulliver's most daring rides.

Guests can save money by booking tickets in advance, with the park open 10.30am-5pm on weekends and during school holidays.

Gulliver's World is one of four theme park resorts in the Gulliver's family – alongside Gulliver's Kingdom in Matlock Bath, Gulliver's Land in Milton Keynes, and Gulliver's Valley in Rotherham.

For more information and to book your tickets, visit: www.gulliversworldresort.co.uk

Residential bookings soar as school visits increase by 67 per cent

Gulliver's World is celebrating a significant rise in demand for its residential experiences after welcoming around 2,500 pupils from 62 schools during the 2025/26 academic year.

The Warrington theme park resort has seen residential bookings increase by 67 per cent compared with the previous academic year, when around 1,500 pupils from 36 schools enjoyed overnight stays. The growing popularity of Gulliver's residential offer reflects increasing demand from schools seeking engaging trips that combine outdoor learning, team-building activities and memorable adventures in a safe and inclusive environment.

The latest group were sixty pupils from Locking Stumps Community Primary School in Warrington who recently enjoyed a fun packed residential stay.

Two groups of 30 children enjoyed overnight stays at the theme park and had great fun doing a host of activities, including bushcraft, den building, archery, safari golf, team building, orienteering on scooters – and, of course, toasting marshmallows!

Jamie Vermiglio is headteacher at Locking Stumps in Warrington. He said: "This was our first visit as a school to Gulliver's World, and everyone had a wonderful time. The activities were ideal for the children, and being able to use the theme park rides too was fantastic.

"Being together as a group was ideal and the focused timetable was superb, but we could also be flexible to meet the needs of individuals within the group. We stayed in Gully's House and the accommodation was excellent – inclusive, clean and organised."

Rebecca Worthington, group sales advisor for Gulliver's World, said: "We were thrilled to hear how much the children and teachers from Locking Stumps enjoyed themselves. Residential stays at Gulliver's World continue to increase in popularity, with more schools and groups visiting for the exciting activities and themed accommodation.

"It really is a growth area of our business with bookings increasing year on year and the feedback we get is amazing – it's fantastic to see young people from across the North West and beyond join us to have fun

and create lasting memories with their teachers and classmates. We look forward to welcoming all the groups that are lined up to visit us this season and into the future."

Gulliver's World opened in 1989, the second of four Gulliver's theme park resorts to open around the country.

The resort has more than 50 rides, attractions, shows and activities, including the Pirate Ship, Desperado Drop, Antelope Wooden Coaster, and Togo Tower, along with some incredible animatronic dinosaurs.

The Gulliver's Gears car-themed area has two fun rides – the Grand Prix Racer rollercoaster, and Overdrive, a 360-degree thrill and one of the park's most daring rides.

The themed accommodation offers a great choice, with the onsite hotel featuring Unicorn, Cowboy, Sweetie and Pirate-themed rooms, along with themed dens, lodges and tipis in Wilderness Wharf.

To learn more about residential stays at Gulliver's World, please visit: <https://groups.gulliversfun.co.uk/school-residentials/>



Go Earth launches new software division to help Warrington businesses solve real problems

Warrington-based Go Earth Ltd has launched a new division to help local businesses use modern software and artificial intelligence to solve practical business problems more quickly and affordably than ever before.

The new service, operating through www.bestsoftware.earth, is aimed at businesses of all sizes across Warrington and the surrounding area, from established companies with complex systems to smaller firms that know something in the business could work better, but are not sure where to start.

Go Earth believes that many local businesses are still held back by outdated processes, duplicated admin, manual spreadsheets, disconnected systems and software that does not quite fit the way the business actually works. Until recently, solving these problems with bespoke software could be expensive, slow and difficult to justify. A system that may once have cost £50,000 to specify, build and test can now, in suitable cases, be developed for a fraction of that cost.

The reason is the rapid development of artificial intelligence and modern software tools. AI does not remove the need for experience, judgement or proper business analysis, but it can dramatically reduce the time needed to design, code, test and improve useful systems. This makes bespoke software realistic for businesses and other organisations that would previously have assumed it was only for large organisations with very substantial budgets.

The new division is headed by Martin Berman, who brings extensive experience in software, business analysis, artificial intelligence and the practical use of technology to improve business performance. His approach is deliberately business-led rather than technology-led. The starting point is not "what software can we sell?" but "what problem are you trying to solve, what is it costing

you, and what would a better process look like?"

Typical projects might include replacing spreadsheets with a proper database, automating repetitive office tasks, improving customer enquiry handling, linking existing systems together, creating internal dashboards, building simple customer portals, using AI to process information more quickly, or developing bespoke tools that give staff the information they need without wasting time.

Martin Berman said: "A lot of business owners know that software could help them, but they are understandably cautious. They may have had poor experiences in the past, or they may fear that a software project will become complicated, expensive and difficult to control. Our message is that things have changed. With the right advice, modern AI-assisted development can make bespoke software far more affordable, and the process can be much more practical and down to earth."

"We are not interested in technology for its own sake. We want to sit down with local businesses, understand the real commercial issue, and then work out whether software or AI can provide a sensible, cost-effective answer. Sometimes the best answer may be a small system that saves a few hours every week. Sometimes it may be a larger project that changes how the whole business operates. Either way, the focus has to be on business value."

They provide a completely free, no obligation, 1 hour consultancy at <https://bestsoftware.earth/free-initial-consultancy/>

Go Earth's aim is to reduce the fear and uncertainty that many companies feel when considering a software project. The service is designed to be approachable, clear and commercially realistic. Businesses do not need to know technical language or have a detailed specification before making contact. In many cases, the first stage is simply a conversation about what is frustrating, slow, expensive or difficult in the business.

The company is particularly keen to speak to Warrington businesses that have grown around informal systems and now need something more robust. That could include manufacturers, professional firms, service businesses, distributors, property businesses, marine businesses, trades, consultants, training providers, charities or any organisation where better software could save time, reduce errors or improve customer service.

Martin added: "Local businesses should not be frightened of bespoke software. They should see it as a practical tool, just like taking on the right member of

staff, buying better equipment or improving their premises. The difference now is that AI means the cost and speed of development can be very different from what many people remember from a few years ago."

Businesses interested in exploring how bespoke software or AI could help them can visit www.bestsoftware.earth or contact Go Earth Ltd to arrange an initial conversation.



TAKING YOUR BUSINESS TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Innovative solutions to help your business thrive. Our expert team is ready to partner with you to achieve extraordinary results.

Artificial Intelligence, intelligently applied, enables us to, very cost-effectively, achieve incredible business results for your business.

- 01 Free 1 Hour Initial Consultancy**
Understand where there are opportunities to lower costs, increase revenue, resolve business issues
- 02 Business Analysis**
A full analysis of an individual challenge to resolve, and how technology, especially software, can resolve this
- 03 Business Use of Artificial Intelligence**
Most businesses can benefit very substantially from AI. Most businesses are not yet using AI effectively



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