LOVE WREXHAM MAGAZINE

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Welcome

7 YEARS

Hello and welcome to the November edition of Love Wrexham.

What an exciting time for our city! We're celebrating the brilliant news that Wrexham has made the final four for UK City of Culture 2029. It's a huge moment and a chance to show what makes Wrexham so special. Inside, we've got everything you need to know about the journey ahead.



There's more good news for the city centre, too, with a £5 million grant set to transform Henblas Street and the former Hippodrome site into a brand-new cultural quarter, complete with green spaces, tiered seating and a big outdoor screen.

We meet Fern from The Hive in our Talk of the Town feature this month, and find out what you can expect when you visit... including the return of a traditional butcher's counter.

Music lovers are in for a treat. We meet 13-year-old Holly Baker, who went from busking in Chester to playing on stage with glam rock legends Sweet at Portmeirion. Not bad for someone who hasn't finished secondary school yet! We also join Baby Brave at their triumphant album launch and meet folk-pop duo Igloo Hearts.

Football fans, don't fear. Wayne Jones is back sharing his thoughts on the season so far, and Ben Foster swaps his gloves for a frying pan at Brickfield Rangers FC, serving up pancakes before facing the youngsters in a penalty shootout!

With Christmas around the corner, pop the Victorian Christmas Market in your diary, from Thursday 26th to Sunday 29th November, for four days of festive stalls, seasonal treats and handmade gifts.

We hope you enjoy the issue!

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WeMindTheGap, Llangollen Pavilion and Nightingale House

Award-winning learners, hospice care, summer gigs and young people finding their way feature this month.

From a Llay learner who once dreaded answering the phone to Bananarama heading for Llangollen, this month's round-up is packed with good news from across our community.

Coleg Cambria: Confidence, Careers and Wellbeing

Yaser Iranshahi, originally from Iran and now living in Llay, was once so nervous about speaking English that he would avoid answering the phone altogether. After studying English, IT and communication skills at Coleg Cambria, he was named **Yale Learn English Learner of the Year 2026**. His tutors praised his kindness and resilience, and the welcoming atmosphere he helped create for fellow students.



Yaser Iranshahi

Building on that success, Yaser has now enrolled on the **Level 2 Diploma in Engineering** at the college's Bersham Road site. He says receiving his award in front of his wife and children was one of the best nights of his life.

Meanwhile, Cambria for Business is helping employers put staff wellbeing first, with training in mental health first aid, stress management and menopause awareness. Wrexham firms Fibrax and Woodlands Ltd are among the many organisations to have benefited so far. Eligible Wrexham employers can get **up to 100% subsidised training** through the Supporting Employability and Skills in Wrexham project.

WeMindTheGap: 200 Young People Moving Forward

WeMindTheGap's 2025/26 Impact Report shows that **200 young people** were supported into, or to stay in, education, employment or training. That's 39% of the 514 young people actively engaged in its programmes, at a time when almost a million young people nationally are not. In total, the charity reached 1,115 young people through its programmes, partnerships and community activities across North East Wales and Cheshire.

Around 70% of young people on its flagship WeGrow programme went on to employment. Other highlights include 36 young people gaining work experience and 129 supported in education through Welnspire.

The charity also celebrates smaller steps, such as an isolated young person finding the courage to turn up and try something new. As its guiding phrase puts it, **it takes a village to raise a child**.

WeShare: Giving Young People a Voice

WeMindTheGap has also launched WeShare, **a new monthly insight series** exploring the issues shaping young people's lives. Each edition will look beyond national headlines and statistics to ask what they mean for young people locally. Topics will include education, employment, skills, mental health, wellbeing and access to opportunity.



The charity believes young people's lived experiences are **too often missing** from conversations about their future. Ali Wheeler says young people's futures should not

continued on page 8

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depend on where they are born or live. WeShare aims to amplify their voices and highlight the positive action already happening.

Head of Impact and Insight Edward Greening says **data alone does not create change**, but combined with lived experience it can help. The series is aimed at employers, educators, policymakers, parents and young people themselves. The first edition is available to read now on the WeMindTheGap website.

Llangollen Pavilion: A Summer of 80s Legends

Live at Llangollen Pavilion has announced **two huge headline shows for summer 2027**. Former Frankie Goes To Hollywood frontman Holly Johnson plays on Sunday 27 June, with special guests Haircut 100 and Toyah. Fans can expect "Relax", "Two Tribes" and "The Power Of Love" alongside Haircut 100's "Fantastic Day" and Toyah's "It's A Mystery".



Bananarama

A week later, on Sunday 4 July, Bananarama bring their **Too Hot To Handle Greatest Hits Summer Tour** to the Pavilion. They will be joined by Spandau Ballet's Tony Hadley and Altered Images. With more than 30 million records sold, Sara Dallin and Keren Woodward are promising a night of real 80s nostalgia.

Tickets for both shows are **on sale now** from llangollen.net and ticketmaster.co.uk.

Nightingale House: Living Well With Hospice Care

Nightingale House Hospice is backing this year's Hospice Care Week theme, **Don't Leave Hospice Care to Chance**. Helen, who has lived with multiple sclerosis for 25 years, attends the hospice's MS Group for hydrotherapy, physiotherapy and peer support. She says the hospice has given her support, friendship and encouragement, and helped her focus on what she can do.



Gwyneth Roberts and Helen

Neurological Link Nurse Gwyneth Roberts works with health teams to encourage earlier referrals. She says **hospice care is about living well**, and people often leave their first appointment feeling reassured and more in control. For Helen, the support has inspired her to live her life to the full.

Interim Chief Executive Samantha Scott says this care should not depend on donations or short-term funding. It costs more than £5.6 million a year to run the hospice, and its services are free to patients and their families. The hospice is calling for **fair, stable funding** so it can continue to be there for everyone who needs it, whenever they need it.

Ysgol Rhiwabon: Champions in the Gym and the Classroom

Year 10 pupil Katie McGlynn has been crowned **Welsh Floor Champion** at the Welsh Classic Challenge gymnastics competition in Cardiff. She also finished fifth on bars and fourth in the all-around competition. Headteacher Patrick Bingham said her success was a testament to her commitment, dedication and hard work.

The school also has plenty to celebrate in the classroom, after its English, Maths, Science and History departments received **The PTI Subject Mark**. The award recognises school departments that develop genuinely inspirational teaching and enthuse pupils beyond the curriculum. To earn it, departments must increase the challenge in their subject, deepen staff knowledge and build links outside school.

Mr Bingham said the school is delighted and will **proudly carry** the Mark on its stationery and website. Ysgol Rhiwabon is an open-entry secondary school on the Wrexham and Shropshire border, with just over 550 students. **Huge congratulations** to Katie, the staff and every pupil who helped make it happen!

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Local Kid Rocks Portmeirion

How a 13-year-old Wrexham guitarist ended up on stage with glam rock legends Sweet

n A tip-off from a Sweet fan in Berlin led us to Holly Baker, a 13-year-old from Wrexham who has just played Fox on the Run alongside the band that made it famous.

From Busking to the Big Stage

Michael, a long-time Sweet fan we sent a copy of our earlier feature on the band a few years ago, emailed Stefan from Berlin to tell us all about her. Holly regularly **busks in Chester**, and that's where members of Sweet spotted her playing their 1975 hit "Fox on the Run". Impressed, they invited her to join them on stage at Portmeirion.



Holly on stage with Andy Scott

The two concerts on 11 and 12 September were no ordinary gigs. They were staged to celebrate **100 years** of the famous Italianate village on the Gwynedd coast. With its sweeping estuary views, it was quite a setting for a teenager's first appearance with a world-famous band.

Before the show, Holly admitted that the pressure of playing alongside the real band might get to her a little. She knew the song by heart, however, and insisted, **"I'm not afraid of stages or crowds".** That confidence was about to be put to the test in front of a packed audience.

A Dream Come True

On 12 September, Holly walked out in front of the Portmeirion crowd and played "Fox on the Run" with Sweet. The band's fan site reported that she impressed the audience, and Holly described the moment as **a dream come true**. Michael sent us a video of the performance, and it's well worth a watch on YouTube.

There's a lovely Wrexham connection here too. Sweet's guitarist and driving force, Andy Scott, was **born in Wrexham in 1949** and played his first gig at St Peter's Hall in the town in 1963. More than six decades later, he was sharing a stage with a 13-year-old from the same city.

It's the kind of moment many musicians spend a lifetime hoping for. Holly managed it **before she had even finished secondary school**. Not bad for someone who earned her place by playing her heart out on a street corner.

A Rock Fan Through and Through

Holly collects vinyl, goes to concerts whenever she can and shares videos of her playing on Instagram. Her covers of classic rock guitar solos have even caught the eye of **Kathy Rhoads**, sister of the late guitar hero Randy Rhoads.



Holly with members of Sweet

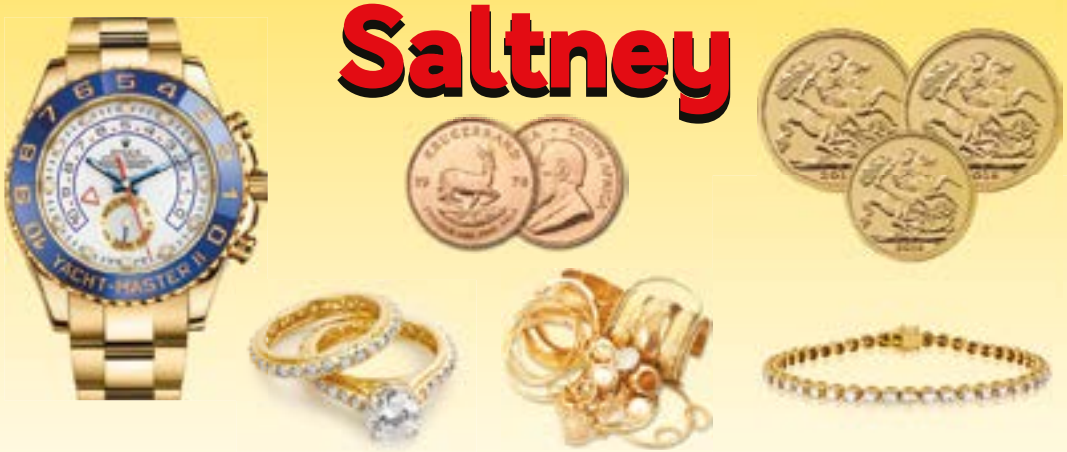
For a band of the stature of Sweet, inviting a young local guitarist on stage says a lot. It also says a lot about Holly's talent, her determination and **the hours of practice** behind that performance. We suspect this won't be the last time we write about her.

A big thank you to Michael in Berlin for the tip-off, proof that Love Wrexham travels further than we ever imagined. If you spot Holly busking in Chester, stop and listen. You might just be watching **the start of something special**.

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A New Buzz in the Heart of Wrexham

Fern Evans' independent shop gives local traders a stall and lets them keep every penny

Fresh local produce, independent businesses, handmade gifts and a real sense of community. The Hive Wrecsam is bringing something special to the town centre, and it's all about supporting local.

There's a new buzz around Wrexham, and it's coming from an **exciting independent business** putting **local traders, fresh produce and community spirit** at the heart of everything it does. **The Hive Wrecsam** is the brainchild of local entrepreneur **Fern Evans**, whose passion for supporting small businesses has created a welcoming new destination for shoppers looking for something a little different.



From **freshly baked bread, locally produced cheeses and homemade sweet treats** to **handmade gifts** and a **traditional butcher's counter**, The Hive offers a fantastic selection of products with one thing in common – they're all about **supporting local**.

From Street Markets to The Hive

Fern's journey began long before The Hive opened its doors. **Self-employed since 2014**, she initially worked in hospitality, running bars and bistro businesses before moving into **mobile catering** following the Covid pandemic.

In **February 2023**, Fern took over **Wrexham Monthly Street Market**, creating a regular platform for independent traders. Over the next three years, she organised monthly markets alongside special events celebrating occasions such as **Halloween** and **Pride Wrecsam**.

Her dedication didn't go unnoticed, earning a **High Commendation** from the **National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA)** and a **Make a Difference Award for Community Spirit** from the **F. Jones Initiative**.

Fern wanted to go one step further, however. She recognised that many small businesses needed somewhere to **sell their products more regularly**, without the expense and commitment of running their own shop, and so, **The Hive Wrecsam was born**.

A Home for Local Businesses

What makes The Hive special is its **refreshingly simple approach**. For just **£40 per month**, local businesses can set up their own stall within the shop, and The Hive **manages the stalls and handles sales** on their behalf, so traders don't need to be present to make a sale.

And here's the really impressive part – traders **keep 100% of their takings**. The Hive doesn't charge commission, giving small businesses the chance to **maximise their earnings** while keeping overheads to a minimum.

It's a concept designed to give **independent producers, makers and entrepreneurs** the best possible chance of building successful businesses, while customers enjoy an **ever-changing selection of locally sourced products** under one roof.

Fresh, Local and Full of Flavour

Step inside and you'll discover **freshly baked bread, farm-fresh eggs, delicious pies and pastries**, cheeses and dairy products, homegrown vegetables and an irresistible assortment of **homemade cakes and sweet treats**.

Alongside the food, shoppers can explore **locally made crafts and unique gifts**, providing plenty of inspiration for birthdays, special occasions or simply treating yourself.

Feeling hungry? Visitors can also enjoy **freshly prepared food and hot drinks**, including **sourdough toasties** and **freshly made baps** made with the same quality ingredients sold in the shop – a great way to **sample the products for yourself**.



Bringing the Butcher Back to Town

One of The Hive's biggest attractions is something that has been missing from Wrexham town centre – a **traditional butcher's counter**. In fact, The Hive currently offers the **only butcher's counter in the town centre**, supplied by respected family business **Jamie Ward's of Chirk**.

Customers can choose from **quality fresh and cooked meats** alongside a tempting range of **delicatessen products**, and if something isn't on the counter, The Hive can **arrange for additional items to be ordered** and collected the following day.

Fern is keen to expand the counter, but with **food waste** a major consideration, stock is carefully managed to avoid leftovers. The message is simple: **the more customers support the counter, the greater the range of products** The Hive can offer.

Keeping the Community Spirit Alive

Although The Hive has established a **permanent indoor home** for independent traders, Fern hasn't turned her back on the outdoor events that helped inspire the venture, and continues to organise regular markets and community activities at **Eagles Meadow**, including events with **WrexFest** and other community organisations.

There's also an exciting **three-day indoor Christmas market** on the way, giving local businesses another opportunity to reach new customers during the festive season.

Support Local, Help Wrexham Thrive

At its heart, The Hive Wrecsam is about **much more than selling products**. It's about creating opportunities, supporting entrepreneurship and **encouraging people to spend their money within the local economy**.

By offering **affordable trading space without taking commission**, The Hive allows independent businesses to keep more of their profits, while customers benefit from fresh, quality products at competitive prices. It's a model built on **collaboration rather than competition**.

So next time you're heading into Wrexham, why not **discover what's creating all the buzz**? You might just find your new favourite local producer, and **every purchase helps another small Wrexham business grow**.

The Hive Wrecsam

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A Boost for Nature in Johnstown

Postcode Lottery players help Wild Ground care for two wildlife havens on residents' doorsteps

Two much-loved nature reserves in Johnstown are set for a year of care and improvements, thanks to a Green Community Grant funded by players of the Postcode Lottery.

Wildlife on the Doorstep

Stryt Las and Aberderfyn nature reserves sit right in the heart of Johnstown's residential streets. Despite their urban setting, they are home to **a wealth of wildlife**, including amphibians, birds, butterflies and dragonflies. Both feature a mosaic of ponds, woodland and grassland, and both are open for the public to visit and enjoy.

The reserves are looked after by Wild Ground, a nature conservation charity working across North East Wales. Its main focus is protecting amphibians and reptiles, especially the **great crested newt**, which is protected by law. The charity also manages its sites for wider biodiversity and other species of conservation concern.

Having reserves like these so close to people's homes is a real advantage for both wildlife and the community. They create ideal opportunities for local people, young and old, to **connect with nature** in a hands-on way. This autumn, Wild Ground is launching a new project to make the most of that.

Volunteers Wanted

Over the coming year, Wild Ground will run **weekly volunteering sessions** in Johnstown. Tasks will include woodland management, pond maintenance, wildlife surveys and keeping the sites accessible for visitors. No previous experience is needed, as the sessions are designed to be friendly, relaxed and supportive for everyone.



Volunteers fencing

Volunteering is a great way to **learn new practical skills**, get some fresh air and exercise, and make new friends along the way. It also gives local people a real say in the future of the green spaces on their doorstep. Every hour spent on the reserves helps the wildlife that depends on them.

Anyone interested in getting involved can visit the Wild Ground pages on the Groundwork North Wales website. You can also email the team at **info@wild-ground.org.uk** or call them on 01978 757524. The team would love to hear from residents of all ages and abilities.

Practical Help for Wildlife

The grant will also pay for practical improvements to both reserves. These include **tree planting** and the restoration of ponds on Stryt Las that have been badly affected by invasive non-native species. On Aberderfyn, new fencing will stop unauthorised vehicles from getting onto the site and damaging its sensitive habitats.

The Green Community Grants are awarded by the **Postcode Green Trust**, using money raised by Postcode Lottery players. It is a great example of how lots of small contributions from players can add up to make a real difference to a local community. Next time you're passing Stryt Las or Aberderfyn, why not stop and see what's living there?

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Localcars4sale.co.uk Expands Into North Wales

Wrexham dealers are among the first in North Wales to join the Motors Search Engine for Wales

Localcars4sale.co.uk, the Motors Search Engine for Wales, has now expanded into North Wales and has seen some of the dealerships in Wrexham already joining the website, along with others in Mid Wales.

The First North Wales Dealers Come on Board

“I would like to give a special shout out to **I&S Car Centre** and **Ben Wild Motors**, who were the first dealerships in North Wales to join us. We’ve also had **Castle View Car Sales** and **Broughton Motor Company** go live with us too and **M&N Davies Car Sales** have also signed up to come on board. We expect many more dealers to come on board and join us shortly too", said Chris Deacon, the owner of Localcars4sale.co.uk.

“I also want to give a big thank you to all our other motor dealerships on the website, many of them have supported us for up to 8 years, we wouldn’t be here without you so a huge thank you.”

Localcars4sale.co.uk now has **nearly 200 dealerships across Wales** advertising all their stock on the website and it is fast becoming the first choice website for the people of Wales who want to see and buy local vehicles from local dealerships within Wales.

The website has **over 6,000 vehicles**, all from dealerships in Wales, giving users plenty of choice and, with stock updated daily, it lets users get a real view of what is available in Wales.

Why It’s Different From the National Sites

"Many people think Autotrader is the number one website to find their next used car as they do have the biggest national stock selection, however, what many people don’t realise is that most motor dealerships don’t advertise all their stock on there due to the cost of advertising so you don’t always get a true reflection of what vehicles are available in certain areas.

On our website, **all our dealers advertise all their stock** so it gives you a much better perspective of what is available locally from those dealers, meaning you may not need to travel so far to find the motor you want and also it means you can buy locally and support local motor dealers which is a message we feel passionately about", says Chris.



"We decided against the idea of an '**as the crow flies**' system that most of the national search engines use as we find it doesn’t give a true answer of what is available within that distance as we don’t drive in a straight line to get there so it will often show results that are actually much further away".

"Instead, we opted for a system where our users can search by county/counties (along with all the other normal filters), so they can find local vehicles in the actual area they want to search".

From West Wales to the Whole Country

Localcars4sale.co.uk **was launched back in February 2018** with approximately 12 dealerships in West Wales but by working closely with the local dealerships, the website has evolved over the years, spreading all across South Wales with as many dealerships and as much stock as most of the national search engines in that area.



After seeing how successful the website has become in South Wales, they decided to expand into Mid and North Wales, especially after receiving lots of requests from website users to bring this service to other areas of Wales. From October 2026, **they have started expanding up through Mid Wales and into North Wales** and have already seen many dealers sign up to the website.

"By using our website, you can search through all the stock for these motor dealers and approximately 200 dealerships across Wales, in one go".

Live Chat, Comparisons and More Than Cars

"We also have a **live chat system using WhatsApp** which over half our dealers actively use, meaning you can chat directly with them in real time with any questions you might have on a particular vehicle or alternatively you can send them a message through our easy to use contact forms. You can also compare multiple vehicles side by side, making it easier to work out which is the best one for you".

It’s not just cars on there though, there is also a **huge selection of vans and motorhomes too**, as well as quick search sections.

A Family Business With a Local Focus

As a **small local family business based in West Wales**, Chris and his fiancée Sarah have worked hard to evolve the website over the years, expanding across Wales. They also help the “support local” message by sponsoring many local sports clubs, fundraising events, charity nights, local rally drivers and other local businesses.

"Our aim is to be the **biggest motors search engine in Wales**, to give our dealerships a cost effective platform upon which to advertise and a user-friendly platform for the people of Wales to find their next motor – locally".

"We have actually turned away over a dozen dealerships from England this year alone who have asked to advertise on the platform but we are focused on just covering Wales and supporting Welsh businesses. **Run in Wales for the people of Wales**".

If you believe in supporting local businesses in Wales, or to find out more, google Localcars4sale or visit **localcars4sale.co.uk**.



"One Huge, Mad Celebration!"

Wrexham bands unite for a triumphant Baby Brave album launch show

One of Wrexham's most popular bands has celebrated the launch of its first full-length album with a jubilant night of live music at The Rockin' Chair.

Soaring Pop Melodies

Baby Brave combine soaring pop melodies and disco rhythms with gut-wrenching guitars, new wave, post-punk and psychedelia. Their debut album, *Sugar To The Tongue*, was released earlier this month and has already earned rave reviews and regular plays on **BBC Radio Wales and BBC 6 Music**.



Baby Brave

The band marked the launch with a hometown gig at the much-loved independent venue. Joining them on the line-up were **three genre-spanning local acts**: alternative rockers Roadside Assistance, fuzz/folk band Fleece and Welsh folklore-inspired wizard-grunge outfit Groom the Giant.

"My Cheeks Hurt From Smiling So Much!"

Lead singer Emmi Manteau said: "The gig felt like **one huge, mad family celebration**, with everyone letting their hair down, from headbanging and hand jiving to a whole lot of pogoing! I even ended up in the crowd getting everyone doing the Macarena before we played.



Emmi Manteau

"What makes Wrexham so special is **the genuine love between bands**. My cheeks hurt from smiling so much! It was one of those nights that reminds you exactly why we do this".

"Wrexham at Its Best!"

Fleece guitarist Gareth Thomas said: "It really exceeded all expectations. Wrexham has had a **phenomenal grassroots music scene**, and tonight we saw it at its very best. It's not just the bands, it's **all the people behind the scenes**, and, of course, the venues. When you see it working so well, it's no wonder we're one of the favourites to win City of Culture".

"I Never Felt a Stranger in the Community"

Roadside Assistance lead singer Igor Konieczny said: "Every time I looked at the audience, they were filled with **the same energy and eagerness** they had at the start of the night. Musically, Wrexham is very diverse, but I never felt a stranger in the community. We're all just like a big family here".



Roadside Assistance

"Glorious"

Groom the Giant opted for grander wordage. From behind a nest-like beard, one of the band's grunge wizards uttered: "The crowd writhed and gyrated like **a cursed, sweaty sponge** encrusted with human hair. Glorious".

Where to Buy

Sugar To The Tongue is available from **babybrave.co.uk** or from Revibed Records at Tŷ Pawb in Wrexham.



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Ysgol Rhostyllen Gets Active Outdoors

A £1,500 Tesco Fruit & Veg Grant helps a Wrexham school boost pupils' health and well-being

Pupils at Ysgol Rhostyllen are enjoying new outdoor and sports equipment, thanks to £1,500 from the Tesco Fruit & Veg Grants programme.

The school used the funding to upgrade its outdoor and sports resources, giving pupils more ways to get moving during the school day. The aim is to promote **active lifestyles**, support pupils' physical and mental well-being and encourage greater community engagement. It is a great example of how a relatively small grant can make a big difference to children and families.



Wrexham school project pupils

The programme, formerly known as Stronger Starts, funds projects that improve children's access to **free fruit and vegetables**. These can include healthy meal and snack schemes, holiday hunger projects, food banks and community growing schemes. Sports clubs, community groups and other projects can apply too, as long as healthy food is part of their activities.

Applications are now open for **projects taking place in 2027** across North and Mid Wales. Community charity Groundwork North Wales, which supports the programme locally, has dedicated enablers who can help organisations understand the programme and put together their applications. To find out more, visit tescoplc.com/fruit-and-veg-grants or contact Groundwork North Wales on 01978 757 524.

£5 Million to Transform Henblas Street

Welsh Government funding paves the way for a new cultural quarter on the former Hippodrome site

Wrexham's plans for a new cultural quarter have taken a big step forward with a £5 million Transforming Towns grant for Henblas Street, the former Hippodrome site and Chester Street.

Cabinet Minister Siân Gwenllian announced the funding during a visit to Tŷ Pawb on 8 October. The streets will get new paving, street furniture, trees and green spaces, while the Hippodrome site will gain **tiered seating, water features and a large outdoor screen**. The council hopes to start work before the end of the year.



Hippodrome site visual

The Hippodrome cinema closed in the 1990s and burnt down in 2008, and the council bought the site in 2022. Rob McElhenney later proposed it as the **Ryan Rodney Reynolds Memorial Park**, and his company More Better is reported to be helping with running costs. Wrexham.com has reported that the scheme is fully grant funded, with nothing from the council's own budget.

Councillor Nigel Williams called the package **an absolute game-changer** for the city centre. Planning Geek has cautioned that a grant is not planning permission and that building work can disrupt nearby businesses. Even so, a long-neglected corner of Wrexham finally has money, a design and a date in the diary.

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Wrexham Makes the Final Four for UK City of Culture 2029

Wrecsam2029 is one step closer to becoming the first Welsh UK City of Culture

Wrexham has made the shortlist of four places bidding to become UK City of Culture 2029. The Wrecsam2029 team says it is ready to deliver a programme that would transform lives across the region. It would also leave a lasting legacy for the whole of Wales.

A Programme to Transform the Region

As well as £10 million in funding, the title could bring an economic impact of **more than £200 million**. That would mean new jobs, more visitors and wider social and cultural benefits. Wrexham would also become the first Welsh UK City of Culture.

Inspired by the ambition to make Wrexham **the world's most playful place**, thousands of local people have shaped the bid. They range from schoolchildren to businesses. The bid builds on work already under way to develop Wrexham as a creative industries hub.

Cllr Hugh Jones, Lead Member for the bid, said, "We're delighted to have made the final shortlist. Since our previous bid, we've continued to put **culture at the heart of our long-term ambitions** for Wrexham". Winning would also bring more creative careers for young people.

The Right Place at the Right Time

Joanna Knight OBE, Chair of the Wrecsam2029 bid, said, "What an incredible moment for Wrexham! To be shortlisted for UK City of Culture 2029 is fantastic news and something **our whole community** should be immensely proud of". She believes Wrexham is the right place at the right time.



Heledd Fychan MS, Cabinet Minister for Culture and Sport, said, "We're so proud that Wrexham has made the UK City of Culture shortlist". She added that the title would provide **a major platform for the Welsh language**. More than 150 ambassadors, including Matthew Rhys and Colin Jackson, are also backing the bid.

Actor Rhys Ifans said, "I'm supporting the Wrecsam2029 bid, because it's Wrexham's time and it's Wales's time". Neck Deep, who came out of Wrexham's music scene, say the title would bring **new attention and investment**. The band believes it could make a real difference to local venues and studios.

A Year of Playfulness

Jo Marsh, Creative Director at Tŷ Pawb, says a key driver for the bid is **Wrexham's world-renowned culture of radical playwork**. She believes playfulness can drive creativity, wellbeing and social cohesion. Winning would mean a year of county-wide playfulness to fuel generational change.

Community organisations have been central to the bid. They include Wrexham's Youth Parliament and Adventure Playgrounds. Omonigho "Omo" Idegun, founder of the Wrexham Africa Community, said: "Together, we can showcase a Wrexham that is **inclusive, diverse, welcoming, and full of talent**".

The Wrecsam2029 team will now prepare for **a visit by the UK City of Culture Advisory Panel**. The winner is expected to be announced in December 2026 or January 2027. Wrexham is ready.



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Igloo Hearts Find Their Voice in Welsh

Wrexham folk-pop duo embrace Cymraeg after loss, TV success and a new creative project

Husband-and-wife duo Igloo Hearts are learning Welsh at Coleg Cambria's Yale site, and the language has become central to both their music and their lives.

Katie MacGregor, an accountant by profession, began evening classes with her mum after an **858-day streak on Duolingo**. Soon afterwards, the duo auditioned for S4C's Y Llais, where Yws Gwynedd turned his chair for them. Tragically, Katie's mum died of pancreatic cancer in March, but Katie says Welsh gave them both a focus throughout her treatment.



Igloo Hearts – photo Nick Brown

James, who works in aerospace, has since joined Katie at the college's revamped Camu Welsh Centre of Excellence. Their tutor, David Fagan, won the **Gwobr Dechrau Arni** award at this year's National Eisteddfod. He encourages learners to build the basics, grow in confidence and let the language come to them.

The couple are now running **a Welsh-language creative project** with NEW Sinfonia, The Gentle Good and Menter Iaith until the end of 2026. Its workshops, for Welsh speakers and learners alike, aim to help people overcome fears about not being fluent enough. A follow-up to their debut album is due next April, and they hope it will include an original Welsh song.

Wrexham Foresters Welcome Netball

The former Wrexham Phoenix Netball Club joins the city's growing multi-sports family

Wrexham Foresters has added netball to its football and futsal line-up, with the 200-member Wrexham Phoenix Netball Club becoming Wrexham Foresters Netball Club this season.



The club began in 2022 as a back-to-netball social session, and **more than 60 women** turned up to the very first practice. Founder and player-coach Caitlin Jones, supported by coaches Zoe and Julie, has since built it into a thriving club. Today it has social, competitive, mixed and junior teams for all ages and abilities playing in a variety of local leagues.

Adam Alfi, Chief Officer of Wrexham Foresters, said, "The netball club's **values align closely** with the Foresters' own. After a phenomenal first season of football and futsal, the Foresters can now offer netball for anyone who wants to play for fun or competitively. Its vision is to be an inclusive, community-first sports club with clear pathways for every player".

Caitlin said, "The club will stay the same at heart, with the same coaches, values and community spirit. The only obvious change is the kit, which has gone **from pink to green**, while the club gains the support and long-term vision of a bigger organisation". To find out more or get involved, visit wrexhamforestersnetball.co.uk.

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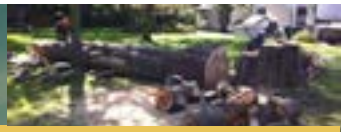
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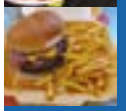
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Step Back in Time for a Magical Wrexham Christmas

Four days of festive shopping, seasonal treats and Victorian charm return to the city centre

Wrexham's much-loved Victorian Christmas Market is back from 26th to 29th November 2026, bringing four days of festive shopping, seasonal treats and Christmas cheer to the heart of the city.

Christmas Comes to the City Centre

Christmas is just around the corner, and what better way to get into the festive spirit than a visit to Wrexham's **Victorian Christmas Market**? Returning to the city centre from **Thursday 26th to Sunday 29th November**, the popular event is set to welcome visitors for four days of Christmas shopping, delicious food and plenty of festive atmosphere.



Stalls, Treats, and Handmade Gifts

With a wide range of stalls to explore, visitors can browse **handmade gifts**, **Christmas decorations**, **local crafts** and **seasonal treats**. Whether you're looking for something special or simply fancy a wander with a warm drink in hand, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

A Traditional Setting for All Ages

Set against the backdrop of **St Giles' Church**, the market brings a traditional feel to the Christmas season. With its traditional Victorian atmosphere, **lively street entertainment** and **festive music**, the market offers something for visitors of all ages. Families can soak up the atmosphere and make memories together.



Shop Local and Spread Some Cheer

The event is also a great way to **support local businesses**, with **independent traders and makers** offering a variety of unique products. Shopping at the market means discovering something a little different while supporting the people and businesses that make our local area special.

As the evenings draw in and the Christmas lights begin to shine, Wrexham's Victorian Christmas Market is a wonderful place to enjoy everything we love about this time of year.



So, whether it's an annual tradition or your first visit, make sure to **add the dates to your diary** and enjoy a little festive cheer in the heart of Wrexham.



Wrexham Victorian Christmas Market

Dates: Thursday 26th-Sunday 29th November
Location: Wrexham City Centre

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WHAT'S ON IN NOVEMBER

Sunday 1st | 2pm
Wrexham AFC Women
Come along and see the high-flying women's team in action against Wrexham Briton Ferry Llansawel Women.
Racecourse, Mold Road
Get your tickets at eticketing.co.uk/wrexhamafc/events

Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays
Erddig Nordic Walkers
Three walks per week: Mondays am, Wednesdays pm and Saturdays am. Please see details of walks at erddignordicwalkers.co.uk.
Erddig Hall, Wrexham LL13 0YT
They hold a training session for new members at Erddig on the 1st Saturday of every month throughout the year.

Regular Miners Rescue Events
Mini Art buds – Thu and Fri, 3:30-5:15pm: art club for children 4yrs+.
Teen Art – Tues, 3.30-5.15pm: for all teens.
Art4All – Mon and Wed, 11am-12:30pm: adult art club for all abilities.
TAG Tues, 10am-1pm: art classes for established artists.
Miners Rescue Project, 3 Maesgwyn Road, LL11 2AP
Contact Sharon on 07703 360 081

Mondays | 9am–4pm
Monday Market
The market sells a range of goods, including clothes, fruit and veg, meat, household goods, plants, arts and crafts, as well as food and drink.
Queens Square, City Centre, LL11 1AT
Search "Wrexham Monday Market" on Facebook for further information.

Mondays | 11.30am–1pm
Men's Group – Chirk Library
Come and join in every Monday at Chirk Library as part of an informal group just for men. Activities and guest speakers plus refreshments – all free of charge! The group is open to all men of any age and will be a safe and non-judgmental space for men to chat. No need to book – just turn up.
Chirk Library, Chapel Lane, LL20 5NF
01691 772344 | chirk.library@wrexham.gov.uk

Tues/Thurs | 9.30am–3pm
Income Advice Sessions
Support on how to manage your finances and to apply for any grants and benefits you may be entitled to.
Caia Estate Office, 7 Churchill Drive, LL13 9HN
Go to wrexham.gov.uk/service/information-council-housing-residents/your-local-housing-estate-office to find your local estate office.



Wednesdays | 1pm
Free Lunchtime Concerts
Tŷ Pawb's autumn season of free lunchtime concerts features outstanding musicians from the local area and beyond – a blissful hour away from the busy world. Arrive in good time for the 1pm start to find a good seat.
Tŷ Pawb, Market St, Wrexham LL13 8BB
Free; donations gratefully received. Full line-up at typawb.wales

Every Weds 6.30pm/Sat 9am
Erddig Muddy Trainers
This beginners' running group welcomes those with zero running experience to hardy veterans! No contract or commitment, just a voluntary donation of £1 per session.
Erddig, LL13 0YT
Search "erddigmuddytrainers" on Facebook for more info or email erddigmuddytrainersbrg@gmail.com

Thursday 5th | 5–6.30pm
Wrexham Talks Presents: Jack Sargeant
More Engineers at the Table: the voice of STEM professionals in politics and policy making. Wrexham University alumnus Jack Sargeant shares his journey from engineering apprentice and manufacturing engineer to Member of the Senedd and Welsh Government Minister.
Wrexham University, Mold Road, Wrexham
Book via eventbrite.co.uk – search "Wrexham Talks Presents Jack Sargeant"

Thursdays | 6–7pm
Ladies' Walking Netball
Fun, friendship and fitness! Come along for "a wiggle and a giggle"! New members always welcome! Price: £5
Rhosnesni Leisure Centre LL13 9ET
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Fri 6th | 7.30–10.30pm
Tŷ Pawb Comedy Night
An evening of side-splitting stand-up comedy from some of the UK's best touring comedians at Wrexham's favourite monthly comedy night. Hosted and MC'd by Wrexham-born comic, writer for VIZ, and circuit veteran Kevin Caswell-Jones (AKA Funny Bones Jones)
Tŷ Pawb, Market St, Wrexham LL13 8BB
Food court open before the show; bar open all night. Tickets: £12 at eventbrite.co.uk. Doors: 7.30pm – first act: 8pm. 16+

Fri and various other days
Free Swimming Sessions
Welsh residents only. Available 52 weeks of the year.
Chirk Leisure & Activity Centre, Chapel Lane: 16s & under: Sun, 1–2pm; 60s & over: Fri, noon–1pm
Waterworld: 16s & under: Sat, 3–4pm; 60s & over: Tues, 11am–noon
Gwyn Evans Leisure & Activity Centre, Heol Cefn, Gwersyllt: 16s & under: Sun, 1pm–2pm; 60s & over: Thurs, 3–4pm.

Saturdays (term time) | 10am–noon
Family Art Club
Hands-on making, painting and drawing for children of all ages, with a treasure trove of art materials, loose parts and recycling themed around Tŷ Pawb's exhibitions. Parents, grandparents and carers are encouraged to get stuck in too!
Tŷ Pawb, Market St, Wrexham LL13 8BB
Pay what you can. Book via typawb.wales

Saturday 7th
Saturday on the Square Market
A monthly Saturday market in the heart of the city centre.
Queens Square, City Centre, LL11 1AT

Saturday 7th–Sunday 8th
Remembrance Weekend
Wrexham comes together to remember those who served and sacrificed.
Venue and times to be confirmed – check wrexham.gov.uk for details.

Fri 13th/27th | 11am–2pm
Llangollen Country Market
A variety of home-baked goods, seasonal fruit, vegetables and plants, handmade crafts, jewellery, and more! Free entry.
Llangollen Memorial Hall, Market Street, LL20 8PS
Held on the 2nd and last Friday of the month from March to Christmas. Go to llangollen.org.uk/index.php/shopping/food-health

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Sun 8th – **WSO: Rite of Spring**.
Fri 20th – Ben Portsmouth: **This is Elvis**, a tribute to the King of Rock 'n' Roll.
Sat 21st – **The Magic of Motown**: a celebration of the hits that defined the Motown sound.
William Aston Hall, Mold Road, Wrexham.
Tickets: williamastonwrexham.com or call 01352 344 101

Friday 13th | Evening
Emerald Storm, starring Adam Garcia
Billed as the moment 'Riverdance and Stomp collide', this spectacular production blends Irish dance with urban tap, live music and high-impact choreography. Coyote Ugly star Adam Garcia performs in the show for the very first time, joined by Britain's Got Talent finalist Tom Ball on vocals.
William Aston Hall, Mold Road
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Saturday 14th | 10.30am–12.30pm
Festive Coffee Morning
Enjoy a cuppa and a mince pie, browse the stalls and maybe pick up a Christmas present or two! There's also a Christmas Prize Draw.
Our Lady & the Welsh Martyrs Catholic Church Hall, Wrexham Road, Overton
Entrance £2, including tea/coffee and a mince pie. Contact Vonnie on 01978 812 057

Saturday 14th
Christmas Light Switch On
The festive season officially begins as Wrexham switches on its Christmas lights.
Queens Square, City Centre, LL11 1AT

Tuesday 17th | 7.30pm
Holt Flower Club
A floral demonstration by NAFAS demonstrator Dawn Weaver, on the theme 'Christmas at the Castle'. New members welcome.
Wrexham Golf Club
Visitors £10, pay on the door.

Tuesday 17th | 7pm
The Friends of Wrexham Museum Monthly Lecture
The speaker this month is Daniel Newton, who will give a talk on 'The Past and Present of Rhosllanerchrugog'. Why not join their membership so you can enjoy all the talks?
Memorial Hall, Bodhyfryd LL12 7AG
Visitors £5, refundable on joining the membership. Car parking is outside the hall or next door in the Waterworld car park. Any enquiries, please contact asandra66@hotmail.co.uk.

Saturday 21st
Wrexham Makers Market
The sixth Wrexham Makers Market brings together a diverse range of makers – from apparel, ceramics and textiles to woodwork, homewares, jewellery, glass, printmaking and affordable art. Perfect for Christmas shopping!
Tŷ Pawb Art and Market Space, Market St, Wrexham LL13 8BB
See typawb.wales for details.

Thursday 26th–Sunday 29th
Wrexham Victorian Christmas Market
Wrexham's much-loved Victorian Christmas Market returns to the city centre.
Wrexham city centre



Sunday 29th | 2pm
Wrexham AFC Women
Come along and enjoy this crunch match against national rivals Swansea.
Racecourse, Mold Road
Get your tickets at eticketing.co.uk/wrexhamafc/events

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Eco-Friendly Pet Products for Wrexham Owners

Karen Boyce explains how you can play your part by using environmentally-friendly pet products.

Choosing greener products for your dog, cat or other pet is one of the simplest ways to shrink your household's environmental footprint. Small swaps add up, from walking at Alyn Waters or Erddig instead of driving, to cutting the packaging that ends up in the bin. Better still, eco-conscious options are easy to find locally in Wrexham and online.

Cutting Down on Waste

Standard plastic poo bags can take centuries to break down. Look for compostable bags certified to EN 13432, or recycled-material bags that stay strong. Pets at Home on **Plas Coch Road** stocks its own Zero Plastic plant-based bags alongside Beco's recycled bowls, toys and leak-proof bags, while Jollyes at Border Retail Park carries natural feeding products.

Food From Local Raw Specialists

Heavily processed diets often mean longer supply chains and more packaging. **Cave Dog Ltd on Rhosnesni Lane** specialises in natural raw and complementary foods, delivering across Wrexham, Chester, Mold and Buckley, and its experienced staff will advise on switching diets. WrexRaw in Llay offers affordable bulk raw food and treats with local delivery several days a week. Many owners notice better digestion, cleaner teeth and less waste once dogs settle on natural food.



Natural Grooming

Plant-based shampoos avoid harsh chemicals and often come in refillable packaging. Pets at Home stocks Faith In Nature's pH-balanced dog shampoos. Closer to home, **Mountain Garden Botanics**, a family business in New Brighton near Minera, handmakes palm-oil-free, cruelty-free pet shampoos, soaps and balms, sold online, at local markets and through PetPlace at Gledrid, Chirk, which has also invested in solar panels.

Beds, Toys and Bowls

Natural rubber toys last longer and avoid microplastics. Bamboo or recycled bowls and UK-made beds using British wool or natural latex offer comfort with **a lighter footprint**. Beco, Ethical Superstore, Peace With The Wild and 4 Paws & Planet all deliver plastic-free options reliably across the UK.

Check the Labels

Look for recycled content, **compostability certification**, local production and minimal packaging. Small, consistent choices keep pets happy and healthy while supporting a greener Wrexham.

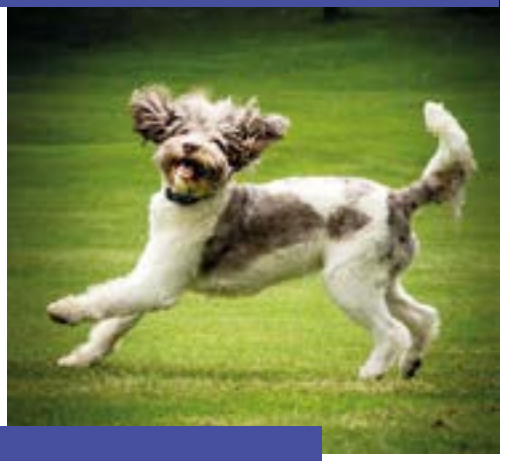
Karen Boyce is the founder of Beastly Thoughts Professional Dog Services (BTPDS), established in 2007. As the largest independent dog training facility in Wales, BTPDS specialises in puppy training and managing reactive dogs, while also offering a wide range of obedience classes, lectures, webinars, and online training hubs and communities. In 2019, Karen was honoured as the Animal Star Awards Dog Trainer/ Behaviourist of the Year. In 2025, BTPDS surpassed the milestone of training 2,000 puppies and was named the Overall Winner in the Best of North Wales Business Awards, in addition to being recognised as the Best Pet Services Business in North Wales.

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BOOKS
with John Morris



Quirky Wirral by Ken Pye

by John Morris, BA(Hons), MEd, MPhil, DipPsych, CertEd

Pirates, witches and Victorian day trippers in a lively history of our neighbours across the Dee



An Area of Contrasts

Many people from Wrexham and the surrounding area travel to the Wirral for work, holidays and day trips. It is **an area of contrasts**, from the industrial towns of Birkenhead, Ellesmere Port and Wallasey to the coast at Hoylake, West Kirby and New Brighton. There is also William Lever's Port Sunlight garden village, and with close ties to Liverpool.

In *Quirky Wirral*, Ken Pye draws on **a wealth of personal knowledge** and research to uncover the peninsula's stranger side. His collection of tales brings its rich history to life for readers of all ages. The result is an insightful, thought-provoking and easy-to-read book.

Bibliographic Information

Title: Quirky Wirral
Author: Ken Pye
Publisher: Amberley Publishing
ISBN: 978-1398126176
Available at waterstones.com

The text is supported by **authentic illustrations**, mainly from the Discover Liverpool Library and the Liverpool Athenaeum Library. These pictures add real depth to the stories and help readers imagine the places described. For this reviewer, the book sparked an enthusiasm to revisit Bidston, New Brighton and Wallasey with fresh eyes.

Witches, Pirates and Smugglers

Regular travellers on the train from Wrexham to Liverpool via Bidston will enjoy the section on **Bidston Hall**. It is full of stories and myths of witchcraft and devil worship. The illustrations show strange carvings on rocks around the summit of Bidston Hill, including the Sun Goddess and the Cheshire Cat.

Equally gripping are the legends of pirates and smugglers' tunnels running from New Brighton to Egremont. These freebooters collected their booty from shipwrecks and then used the labyrinth of caves to hide it.

In contrast, the **Beside the Seaside** section celebrates the attractions of Hoylake, West Kirby, Parkgate and the unique Riviera of New Brighton.

Ken Pye deserves credit for raising the historical profile of the Wirral's contrasting communities. This is **a must-read** for anyone keen to discover the peninsula's past, and the illustrations make a great companion for day trips or holidays. Visit our website for a longer, more comprehensive review.

About the Reviewer

John taught physical education in Ladbroke Grove and was a fitness coach at the Middle Row Boxing Club. Following further study at Aberystwyth, he became head of three specialist centres for young people in North Wales, a fitness and weight training coach in Wrexham, and a fitness coach at Wrexham RFC and with the WRU. In addition, John was a tutor on the OU courses MA(Education) and PGCE and an Ofsted inspector. His research at Lancaster University was on developing growth mindsets. He is currently a freelance consultant promoting motivation for people to re-engage with employment.

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Alyn Waters Country Park Circular: River Alyn and an Iron Age Hill Fort

Explore this varied and picturesque park while also covering the area around Alyn Waters.

This month, we explore the beautiful Alyn Waters Country Park and its surrounding area. There's plenty to see, and you'll walk through impressive parkland, across green meadows and along deserted country lanes. You'll pass close to the River Alyn, reindeer, an Iron Age hilltop fort and Christmas Farm in Llay.

Duration and Ascent

The walk is **just over 4 miles** with a total ascent of 186 feet (57 metres) and a high point of 273 feet (83 metres). With the wet weather we've had recently, the route is designed **to keep out of the mud** as much as possible and runs along concrete or gravel paths for the most part.

Directions

From Wrexham, head north along the A483. Take the exit at junction 6 and turn left along Blue Bell Lane. Turn right after about three-quarters of a mile onto **Llay New Road**. The entrance to Alyn Waters is on the left after about a mile and a quarter.

It costs £1 to park there.

You'll be walking along the park paths for a lot of the walk, so you'll have to keep your dog on a lead just in case, because there are lots of other dogs out for walks as well. Please refer to **love-wrexham.com/walk-disclaimer** before you set off.

Starting Point

Face the pay and display machine, turn right and walk back up the road you drove into the car park along. At the gateway with the "Have you paid and displayed?" sign, turn left and go through **the thick metal tubular barriers**, then turn right onto the gravel path (1).



1. Take the path on the other side of the fence

Follow the gravel path, which runs parallel to Llay New Road, for about five minutes. Turn left at **the red dog waste bin**, where there is another set of tubular metal barriers. Carry on along the gravel path through some light woodland.

Forks



2. Take the diagonal path on the right here

After about a minute, take a right diagonal off the gravel path onto a grass track (2), well trodden by walkers. You'll be walking immediately to the left of **a thick hedgerow** covered in red rose hip berries. After a few yards you'll reach another fork; take the right-hand fork, just to the right of an oak sapling, into undergrowth that forms a canopy over your head.



3. Take the right fork

This stretch follows some garden fences on your right, so if you're ever in doubt, keep those fences on your right. Go through **the green metal kissing gate** into a large field. Take the right-hand fork in the grass so you continue following the garden fences on your right (3).



4. Go through the green gate ahead

After a minute or so, ignore the metal kissing gate on your right and carry on along the grass track. When the garden fences run out, keep following the fence and hedge line on your right for seven to eight minutes until you reach the end of the field. Walk straight over **the grassy track** running across you and through the open gateway – there's a green metal kissing gate to its left (4).

Christmas Farm

Walk straight on across the wide grassy track, with the farmhouse on your right, and go through the green metal kissing gate ahead of you. In the next field, carry on in the same direction, roughly following **the left-hand hedge and tree line**. You're heading for a group of prefabricated buildings with a flag.

The hedge and tree line gradually angles in towards you, so for the last part of the field you'll be walking close to the hedge on your left. Walk to the very end of the field, go through the green metal kissing gate and turn left. Go through another green metal kissing gate just to the right of the entrance to **Christmas Farm** (5).



5. Go through the gate and turn left

Once through, walk to the left of the wooden fence with the sign asking you to keep to the footpath and keep dogs on leads – you'll be on this path for the next eight-or-so minutes. Whatever you do, **don't miss the reindeer** on your right! Cross one of the two wooden boards over the stream and follow the log fence uphill with the maize maze on your right.

Keep following the log and metal netting fence on your right until you reach a green metal kissing gate with a lane beyond. **The gate has a padlock on it**, but don't worry: it's holding the catch up, so you can just push the gate open. Go through and turn left onto the lane.

Back to Alyn Waters

Walk along the lane past Treetops Barn on your right for three or four minutes. Just after the "**Danger Cyclists**" sign on your left, turn left back into Alyn Waters through those now familiar thick tubular metal barriers and onto the concrete path.

Pass **the sculpture** on your left (6) and stay on the concrete path as it winds through the woodland for about 10 minutes until you come out into an open space, close to where you started. Just after the commemorative bench with **the pink flowers** on the ground, you'll come to a black waste bin and beyond it a black pole that once held a sign. Turn right there onto another concrete path.



6. Pass this sculpture on your left

Ignore the concrete path off to your left and carry straight on back into **the woodland**. After about 10 minutes, leave the park through the thick tubular metal barriers and turn left onto the lane.

A Dilapidated Caravan



7. Turn right here

Along the lane you'll pass some tubs of plants on your right, then two houses. Just after the two

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houses, turn right at the signpost for "**Llay New Road/Ffordd Newydd Llai, ¼ mile**", and follow that path (7). When you reach a fork, don't go straight on up the short, steep bank; take the right-hand fork instead.

You're now walking past the backs of the two houses you passed on the lane. After the breeze block back wall of the second house, you enter a narrow path with **green plastic-coated metal fencing** on your left. Follow it downhill until it brings you out onto the pavement of the main road.

Look across the main road to your left, and you'll see another green metal footpath sign, with a path leading up into a wooded area. Cross the road and follow the sign for "**Pont-y-Capel Lane**, ¼ mile (footpath 623/14)". Make your way up the path and go through the silver metal kissing gate.

Head straight across the field, with the horses (and what looks like **a little Shetland pony**) and a dilapidated caravan on your left. Look for the telegraph pole with yellow bands on its supporting cables: the metal gate out of the field, hung on a tall wooden gatepost, is just to its right.

I believe **Bryn Alyn (Caer Alyn) Iron Age hilltop fort** is along the lane to the right, but we're crossing straight over and climbing over the wooden stile. Walk straight across the field towards the electricity pole ahead of you. Leave this field by the metal gate in the left-hand corner. You'll need to lift the gate slightly to slide the bar out of its bracket.

Follow the barbed-wire-topped fence line on your left to a stile. Once over it, follow the track in the grass as it bends right, passing to the left of **a rather majestic yew tree**. Just ahead of you is another wooden stile.

Pont-y-Capel Lane and Park Road



8. Walk down the slope after the stile

Walk to the stile (you can go round it rather than over) and follow the path down **the grassy slope** and the wooden steps cut into the bank (8).



9. Go through the gate and turn right

Go through the metal gate at the bottom onto the lane and turn left. You'll now be on **Lôn Pont-y-Capel** (Pont-y-Capel Lane) country lane for the next 10 minutes or so. Follow it up to the main road and cross straight over onto Park Road. Walk up Park Road, and after a few minutes, you'll be able to re-enter Alyn Waters Country Park through a large metal gate and the ubiquitous tubular barrier (9).

You'll find yourself on **a large concrete square** with two paths in front of you; take the right-hand one. Ignore the path going off to the left and carry straight on to another tubular metal barrier. Cross the lane on the other side straight over, go back into the country park and turn right.



10. Turn right here and head back to the car park

Follow the winding path as it descends. As you come out into the open park, you'll see a pair of bins just ahead of you to the right (10); turn right just before them and head across **the flat ground** towards the parked vehicles. If there's higher ground on your right, you're going the right way.

Follow the wide, well-trodden grassy path across the open grass, and you'll see **the car park** ahead of you, where you started a couple of hours ago.

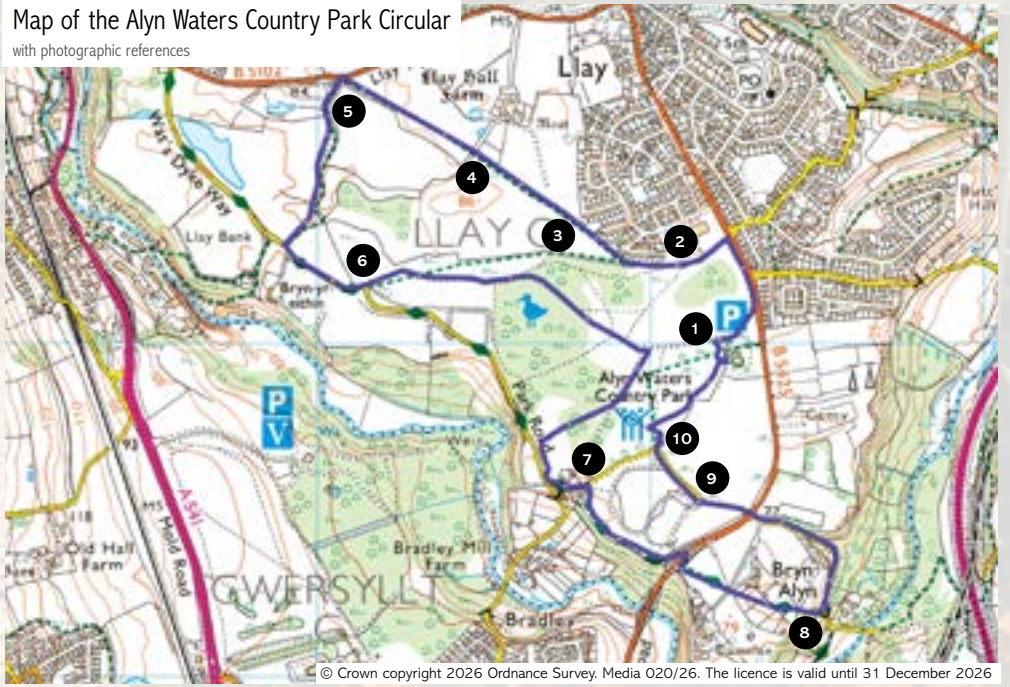
Congratulations: you've finished the walk!





Map of the Alyn Waters Country Park Circular

with photographic references



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The Budget 2026: Wrexham Business Briefing

Wednesday 4 November, 9–11am, Hotel Wrexham, Holt. Hosted by The Uncommon Practice and supported by Wrexham Young Professionals, this session unpacks the Autumn Budget with expert analysis, **breakfast butties** and roundtable discussions. Free; book via Eventbrite.

Elevate Your Business in Wrexham Conference

Friday 6 November, 9am–5pm, Bangor-on-Dee Racecourse. The third annual flagship conference features keynotes from Jamie Murray Wells OBE, founder of Glasses Direct, and Jo Fairley, co-founder of Green & Black's, alongside local leaders. **Free, but booking is essential** via wrexham.gov.uk.

Business Wales Workshops

The **Green Growth Calculator Workshop** helps businesses measure and improve their environmental sustainability (Tuesday 17 November, 8.30–11am, Atrium Suite, Redwither Tower, LL13 9XT). A UA3 Benchmarking and UA4 CPD Workshop follows on Thursday 26 November, 10am–noon, at Hotel Wrexham. Details at wales.business-events.org.uk.



Wrexham University Professional Training

Full-day courses this month include Cyber Security Awareness (£600), Leadership and Management (£300) and Artificial Intelligence in the Workplace (£600). **Local Growth Funding** is available; email enterprise@wrexham.ac.uk or visit wrexham.ac.uk/business/professional-workshops.

360 Networking

Attendance is free. Meetings are the second Tuesday every month, 5–6.45pm, in the Atrium Suite (3rd floor) at Redwither Tower, Wrexham Industrial Estate, LL13 9XT. **Free parking** is available. Visit wrexham.gov.uk/service/business-and-investment-support/360-networking.

Connect Wrexham

Held at Hotel Wrexham, Wrexham Road, Holt LL13 9SW, for £5. No membership and no sales presentations, just **open to all industries**, employees and owners. The next meeting is Thursday 12 November, 5–7.30pm. Visit connectwrexham.co.uk.

North Wales Social Events and Zoom Hour

A Zoom Hour plus **in-person networking**. Email dave@northwalessocial.co.uk or visit northwalessocial.co.uk/events.

networx4business

Meetings across Wirral, Cheshire and North Wales, including **two Wrexham groups**: one at Maesgwyn Hall and one at Caffi Cwtch, Nightingale House Hospice. Contact daryl@networx4business.co.uk.

Wrexham Business Professionals

The group is holding a **Christmas Dinner event** on Thurs, 19th Nov at the Ramada Plaza Hotel. Arrival: 6.30pm for drinks. £60 per seat or £600 for a table of 10. Request more information at wbp@allingtonhughes.co.uk; attention: Luke Owen.

BNI Deadpool

Meets every Tuesday, 9–11am, at Hotel Wrexham. Part of Business Network International, the world's largest referral-based business organisation, it allows **one representative per profession**, with weekly meetings built around structured referral-giving.

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Wow!

In Front of the Camera With North Wales Social

Nerves, cameras and a chat ahead of the Autumn Expo 2026, by Stefan Paudler, Love Wrexham Magazine

Ahead of North Wales Social's Autumn Expo 2026, I swapped my usual desk at Love Wrexham for a seat in front of a professional camera. It was my first video interview, and it turned out to be a memorable behind-the-scenes experience, as the photos on these pages show.

A Professional Setup

North Wales Social arranged the interview with **Picturehouse Films**, based just outside Chester near Saltney Ferry. Filming was handled by **Mal Oldfield**, who used to work for **BBC News**, and his expertise showed. The **professional camera equipment** and polished setup were a world away from a quick recording on a phone.



Dave Ledward and Stefan Paudler

Questions From Dave Ledward

Putting the questions to me was **Dave Ledward** of North Wales Social. I will be honest: it was **quite nerve-wracking**, as I had never been interviewed in front of a camera before. We talked about **Love Wrexham Magazine**, what it is all about and how it has developed since we began in **2019**. From the start, our message has been simple: put Wrexham at the heart of everything we do. Dave also asked how long we have been going, which gave me the chance to explain that we are a **monthly online and A5 printed publication**, packed with interesting local stories and giving local businesses a platform to promote what they do.



Mal Oldfield, Picturehouse Films

Looking Back at Two Expos

We also looked back at our **two previous North Wales Social expos**. Both were **really well visited** and kept us busy at our stand, and compared with similar events we have attended, they are **definitely among the better ones**. Dave asked about the Autumn Expo at **Deeside Leisure Centre** on 22 October, and we shared our thoughts on the day ahead.

Tips for Exhibitors and Visitors

If you are exhibiting, **always bring a tablecloth**, as you can never be sure one will be provided. It is also worth having an **incentive**, such as chocolates or other giveaways, to draw people to your stand and get a conversation going.

If you are visiting, take a **quick walk around** first to see where everyone is, then **plan who you would most like to talk to**. **Comfortable shoes** and plenty of **business cards** will help too, and these tips are useful for any expo.



Dave and Stefan

Thank you to **North Wales Social**, **Picturehouse Films**, Mal and Dave for a great experience, and for helping spread the word about Love Wrexham.





DO YOU KNOW?

Strange but True: Facts to Surprise You



1. **The word 'robot' originated in a play. Czech writer Karel Čapek introduced it in his 1920 play R.U.R., derived from a word for forced labour.**
2. Norway has several villages called Å, pronounced roughly like 'awe'.
3. The world's shortest commercial flight links the Scottish islands of Westray and Papa Westray. It takes about two minutes!
4. The Anglo-Zanzibar War of 1896, history's shortest, lasted around 38–45 minutes.
5. The world's oldest customer complaint was written on a clay tablet 4,000 years ago. A man named Nanni complained about poor-quality copper.
6. The Museum of Bad Art in Massachusetts celebrates wonderfully unsuccessful, entertaining artwork.
7. Saudi Arabia has no rivers, only seasonal watercourses called wadis.
8. **Australia's Christmas Island is famous for its annual red crab migration from forest to sea to breed.**



9. The first speeding ticket in Britain was issued in 1896 to Walter Arnold, doing 8 mph in a 2 mph zone.
10. The Belgian-Dutch border runs through the village of Baarle, sometimes dividing buildings.
11. A mechanical clock inside a Texas mountain is designed to keep time for ten millennia.
12. Male bowerbirds arrange colourful flowers and shells to impress mates.
13. Antarctic icefish lack haemoglobin, giving their blood an almost colourless and transparent appearance.
14. Frigate birds can sleep in flight, resting one half of their brain at a time.
15. Skunk cabbage can melt surrounding snow, letting it flower in freezing conditions.



16. **Scientists have recorded ultrasonic vocalisations resembling laughing from rats during playful tickling, too high-pitched for human ears.**
17. The pistol shrimp snaps its claw so fast that the collapsing bubble creates a loud shockwave.
18. Certain species of sea slugs keep chloroplasts from the algae they eat, using sunlight as extra energy.
19. Ancient Romans had takeaway restaurants known as thermopolia. They served ready-to-eat food from counters fitted with storage jars.
20. The first photograph of a person was accidental. An 1838 Paris street scene captured a man having his shoes polished; everyone else moved too fast.



21. **The first recorded vending machine dispensed holy water! Invented by Hero of Alexandria in the first century AD, it released water when a coin was inserted.**
22. Mount Erebus is Earth's southernmost active volcano. It features a continuous molten lava lake since 1972 and releases about 80 grams of crystalline gold (about £7,925) daily into the air.
23. T Rex lived closer in time to humans than to Stegosaurus, which disappeared tens of millions of years earlier.

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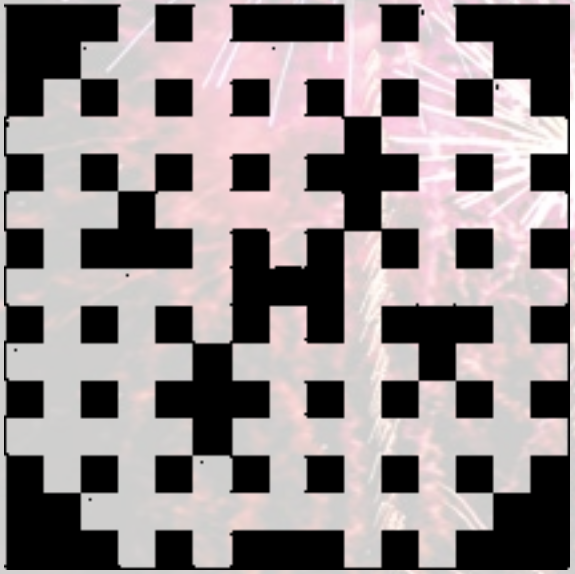




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PUZZLE CORNER

Crossword, Sudoku and Word Ladder



Across Clues

5. Drawing ever nearer to a destination (11)
9. Under the influence of an evil spirit (9)
10. Lines where fabric panels are joined (5)
11. Twenty-third letter of the Greek alphabet (3)
12. Office paperwork & organisation, informally (5)
13. Work dough with your hands (5)
15. One who reduces or diminishes something (6)
17. Where a farmer's milk comes from (6)
19. Flat surface or airborne vehicle (5)
20. Bubbling with heat, as a pot might be (5)
21. Put something to practical purpose (3)
23. Long-legged bird said to deliver babies (5)
24. Different types or assorted kinds (9)
26. Creative power of the mind (11)

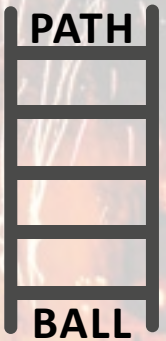
Down Clues

1. Sudden involuntary muscle contraction (5)
2. Medieval warriors on a holy mission (9)
3. Question asking about a person's identity (3)
4. Confined as a prisoner of war (8)
6. Earhart, pioneering female aviator (6)
7. Something that might just happen (11)
8. Red-faced and wishing the ground would open up (11)
14. Mortify someone publicly (9)
16. Toddler's furious outbursts of temper (8)
18. Manage to get hold of something (6)
22. Backless seat for perching on (5)
25. Freudian concept linked to self-importance (3)

Sudoku

	9	1		8	3		4	2
6	5	2		4		1		
	3	8				6	9	
			8	6	4		5	3
			3					
3	6	7			9			
2		4	7			3		
			1				2	
	8				2		7	1

Word Ladder



Make your way from **PATH** to **BALL** by changing one letter on each step to make a new word!

Scan the QR code for this month's puzzle answers or visit love-wrexham.com/puzzle-solutions/

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Ben Foster Serves up a Surprise

The former Wrexham goalkeeper swaps gloves for a frying pan at Brickfield Rangers FC

Wrexham favourite Ben Foster returned to the city to surprise young players at Brickfield Rangers FC, cooking post-training pancakes before facing them in a penalty shootout.

Pancakes and Penalties

Ben, who spent the 2022/23 season with Wrexham, visited the club as part of M&S Food's **Eat Well, Play Well: Grassroots Edition** campaign. He was joined by M&S Senior Nutritionist Sophia Thistlethwaite. Together they cooked up healthy spinach and banana pancakes for the hungry young players.

Then it was down to business on the pitch, as Ben put his goalkeeping skills to the test in a special **penalty shootout**. For the youngsters, trying to beat a former England and Premier League keeper from the penalty spot was an experience they won't forget in a hurry.

Cooking is nothing new for Ben. As a teenager trying to kick-start his football career, he **trained as a chef** and worked in kitchens until signing his first professional contract with Stoke City in 2001. That mix of football and food made him the perfect fit for the campaign.

Volunteers at the Heart of the Club

Founded in 1976, Brickfield Rangers is **run entirely by volunteers**. The club supports more than 400 young players across 37 teams, from Under 4s to Under 18s. Its teams play in the Wrexham Youth League at the Court Road playing fields, known affectionately to generations of local players as the Brickie.



Ben Foster by kind permission of wrexhamafc.co.uk

Volunteer coach Dave Murray gives around **50 hours a week** to the club. He says that commitment is shared by the whole volunteer team, many of whom have given their time for as long as they can remember. Asked why, he said simply, "We do it because we love being here".

Ben described clubs like Brickfield Rangers as **the epitome of grassroots football**. He said it is the volunteers who give up their time that help the next generation of players come through. It's a fitting tribute to everyone who keeps the club running week after week.

Healthier Eating for Grassroots Football

The visit comes as M&S Food research reveals a gap in nutrition support at grassroots level. A survey of more than 200 grassroots coaches found that **only around one in seven** feel confident advising players or parents on nutrition. Almost a third said they would welcome nutrition training.

To help, M&S Food is developing **practical, affordable recipes** that clubs and families can download from its website. Ben said the recipes are easy to follow and ideal for busy families who don't have time for complicated meals.

Ben joins fellow ambassadors **Laura Woods, Ian Wright, Jill Scott and Peter Crouch** in championing healthier eating at grassroots level. The campaign will continue with clubs across the UK over the coming months, with episodes shared on M&S social channels.

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Wins, Grit and a New Kop: Wayne's November Round-Up

Wayne Jones on the 4-1 win over Preston, a busy November fixture list and what to call the new stand

What a month! Let's start with that fantastic 4-1 victory over Preston North End at the Cae Ras. Four goals, three points and a performance that gave everyone a real lift.

It wasn't just the scoreline that impressed me. It was the way we responded to setbacks and the contributions coming from right across the pitch.

Joe Worrall got us going with a cracking header, his first goal in more than two years. He brings experience and leadership to the back line, and it's always a bonus when your defenders chip in at the other end.

Preston pulled level, but there was no panic. We got ourselves back in front before half-time and really took control.

And how fitting was it that Ben Whiteman should score his first Wrexham goal against his former club?



Ben Whiteman celebrating

Whiteman's contribution goes well beyond the scoresheet. He's comfortable receiving the ball in tight areas, reads the game well and has that ability to dictate the tempo from midfield. At this level, knowing when to slow things down and when to move the ball forward is absolutely vital.

His long-range strike against Preston was a lovely moment, but it's his overall influence that could become increasingly important. The Championship is demanding, and experienced players who keep their composure under pressure are worth their weight in gold.

Sam Smith showed what he can offer in attacking areas, too. His header for our third goal demonstrated the importance of having players prepared to attack deliveries into the box.

And Kieffer Moore rounded things off with our fourth. He's a real handful for defenders, particularly when we're getting good service into dangerous areas. His physical presence gives us another dimension, especially with players making intelligent runs around him.

Four different goalscorers in one afternoon is encouraging. You don't want to rely on one player every week.

Of course, it hasn't all been plain sailing.

The draw away at Derby showed the character in this squad, with Ollie Rathbone grabbing that late equaliser. Those moments can make a real difference over a long season. You might not always be at your best, but finding a way to take something from a difficult away fixture is important.

The defeat against West Brom was frustrating, but that's the Championship for you. There are no easy games, and there's always another challenge around the corner.

What matters is how we respond, and Preston was exactly the answer supporters wanted to see.

I believe there's plenty more to come from this group. As the newer players develop an understanding of one another, I'm hopeful we'll see greater consistency.

Looking ahead to November, there are some cracking fixtures on the calendar.

Middlesbrough visit the Cae Ras on Wednesday 4 November, followed by Wolves on Saturday 7 November. Two big occasions that remind you how far this club has come.

Wolves coming to Wrexham for a league fixture would have seemed almost unimaginable not so long ago. Now it's part of our regular football calendar.

We've then got trips to Lincoln City and Bristol City before Portsmouth visit on Saturday 28 November.

It's a busy month, with plenty of points to play for. Home form could be particularly important, because when the Cae Ras gets going, it really can make a difference.

And speaking of the Cae Ras, how exciting is it to see the new Kop taking shape?



Approval has been granted to increase the stand's capacity to 7,750 supporters. That's another 2,250 places compared with the original plans. Just imagine the noise coming from that end when it's full!

For those of us who've watched Wrexham through the good times and the bad, seeing the stadium develop like this is something special. The new roof structure is taking shape, and every time you walk past, you can see the scale of what's being built.

There's also been plenty of discussion about what the new stand should be called. The Kop name means a lot to supporters. It's part of our history and the memories of generations of fans.

But there's another name that deserves a mention: Joey Jones. Mr Wrexham himself. There's a mural of Joey on the side of our pub, The Turf, and I know there's been talk among supporters about a Joey Jones Stand. I can certainly see why. Few people represent the heart and soul of this club quite like Joey.

Whether it's called the Kop, the Joey Jones Stand or something else entirely, I hope the name reflects the people and history that have made this club what it is.

Because that's what makes Wrexham different. We might have Hollywood owners, international attention and supporters from every corner of the world, but underneath it all, we're still the same football club that's been part of this community for generations.

And that's something worth protecting.

As we head into November, I'm looking forward to seeing how this team develops. There'll be more twists and turns, but that's football, isn't it?

Keep backing the lads, keep making yourselves heard and, as always, enjoy the ride.

Up the Town!

Photos courtesy of Wrexham AFC

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Horoscope

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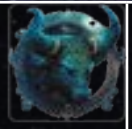
With love and light, Warren Starling, Psychic Medium.

Aries Mar 21-Apr 20



November encourages you to reconsider shared finances and emotional commitments. The New Moon brings fresh perspective, while the Full Moon highlights communication. Speak honestly and trust your inner strength. Lucky Number: 9

Taurus Apr 21-May 21



Relationships take centre stage this November. The New Moon encourages fresh agreements, while the Full Moon highlights personal values. Listen carefully, express your needs, and welcome greater understanding. Lucky Number: 6

Gemini May 22-June 21



November invites you to refresh daily routines and protect your wellbeing. The New Moon inspires positive changes, while the Full Moon in your sign brings personal clarity and renewed confidence. Lucky Number: 5

Cancer June 22-July 23



Creativity and romance bring happiness this November. The New Moon encourages heartfelt beginnings, while the Full Moon highlights hidden feelings. Trust your intuition and allow yourself to enjoy life's blessings. Lucky Number: 2

Leo July 24-Aug 23



Home and family matters deserve attention this month. The New Moon encourages a fresh start, while the Full Moon brings clarity to friendships and future ambitions. Follow your heart. Lucky Number: 1

Virgo Aug 24-Sept 23



November brings important conversations and fresh ideas. The New Moon encourages learning, while the Full Moon highlights career ambitions. Believe in your abilities; an opportunity may arrive through unexpected news. Lucky Number: 8

Libra Sept 24-Oct 23



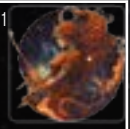
Financial confidence grows throughout November. The New Moon encourages wiser decisions, while the Full Moon highlights travel, learning and spiritual growth. Recognise your worth and trust your developing talents. Lucky Number: 7

Scorpio Oct 24-Nov 22



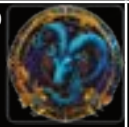
Happy birthday, Scorpio! November offers opportunities for personal renewal. The New Moon in your sign supports fresh intentions, while the Full Moon illuminates deeper emotions. Trust your intuition and embrace change. Lucky Number: 4

Sagittarius Nov 23-Dec 21



November invites reflection before a fresh personal chapter begins. The New Moon encourages rest and spiritual renewal, while the Full Moon highlights relationships. Listen to your inner wisdom and prepare for new possibilities. Lucky Number: 3

Capricorn Dec 22-Jan 20



Friendships and future plans receive a welcome boost this month. The New Moon inspires fresh connections, while the Full Moon encourages healthier routines. Stay focused on the dreams that matter most. Lucky Number: 10

Aquarius Jan 21-Feb 18



Career ambitions gather momentum throughout November. The New Moon supports professional beginnings, while the Full Moon brings creativity and romance into focus. Trust your originality and let your talents shine. Lucky Number: 11

Pisces Feb 19-Mar 20



November opens doors to learning, travel and spiritual discovery. The New Moon encourages fresh perspectives, while the Full Moon highlights family and emotional security. Trust the journey and follow your inspiration. Lucky Number: 12

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