

WORKING ON THE WATERFRONT

United Utilities has plans in the pipeline to give Widnes Waterfront's water network a modern makeover.

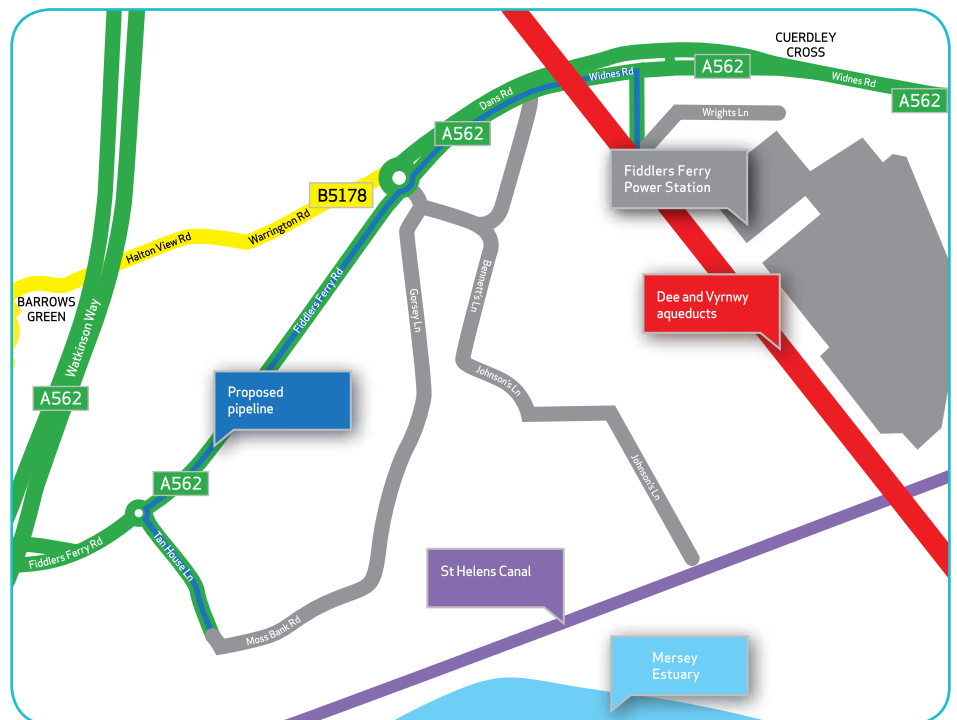
The Cheshire-based water company will be installing 2.5km of new water main from Dans Road through to the Tan House Industrial Estate, which will serve and directly benefit the area.

The work, which is due to start in summer 2010 and will be finished in time for the commencement of work on the proposed Mersey Gateway Bridge, is designed to improve the overall reliability of the local water network, reduce the risk of leakage and to ensure standards of service to new and existing customers are safeguarded.

Daniel Smith, United Utilities' Project Manager, said: "By installing this new connection into the water network we will be able to meet the increasing commercial demand for water at the Widnes Waterfront development long into the future."

The scheme also includes additional works which will improve the resilience of existing supplies for other properties in the Widnes and Warrington area.

This work is part of United Utilities' £2.9b water quality and environmental improvement programme for 2005-2010.



A word from

COUNCILLOR
**TONY
MCDERMOTT**
MBE

One of the key outcomes embedded within the original vision for Widnes Waterfront was the delivery of a lasting improvement to the physical environment to make the area more attractive to both local people and visitors.

While perhaps not as obvious as the new office, light industrial and retail developments which have sprung up around the Waterfront a gradual uplift of the visual amenity of the area has nevertheless had a profound impact upon the overall 'feel' of the Waterfront as an attractive place to visit and enjoy.

To date the programme has completed numerous small landscaping schemes along key access routes in and around the Waterfront, opened Moss Bank Park, improved access to Widnes Warth and landscaped the new Watkinson Way Interchange but there's still more to do.

The salt marshes, which make up Widnes Warth, are one of the environmental jewels in the crown of a Borough blessed with numerous Green Flag designated open spaces. For decades, however, the Warth and its abundant wildlife was hidden behind the heavy industry which characterised southern Widnes.

Over the last few years walking routes to the Warth have been improved, in part to provided access to the Trans Pennine Trail, but the dilapidated state of Carter House Bridge over the canal has long been a cause for concern.

I am delighted, therefore, that the old bridge is currently being replaced. However, in keeping with the long term vision for the area, it will not be simply a case of replacing like for like but rather the old bridge will be replaced with a new swing bridge to further a long-held ambition to make the canal navigable.

The creation of a new bridge is very timely because in the spring of 2010 work will be completed on the Future Flower, the Borough's first landmark public art piece.

The Flower will be a striking 12-metre structure which will act like a magnet drawing people down to the Warth to appreciate, perhaps for the first time, a small part of what the Borough has to offer.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Mc Dermott".



Kaltek Relocates

Kaltek Automation, a control panel producer, has doubled its size after relocation to new premises at Heron Business Park. Despite the tough economic climate, the firm has moved from Pickering Road to the new site where it aims to increase staffing and sales.

Kaltek, which was founded in 2004, serves a variety of industries such as chemical, automotive and pharmaceutical and has a number of well known clients including Ford, Jaguar, Rolls-Royce and United Utilities.

George Brady, Managing Director for Kaltek, said:

"Fortunately for us, several of the sectors we supply are weathering the economic storm and are continuing to place orders, and as a result we have exceeded all our expectations."

"Demand for our products has been fantastic and we needed much bigger office and manufacturing space to provide a platform for us to increase capacity and productivity, which we hope will also help us reach £1m turnover by next year."

Kaltek's move was facilitated by £40,000 of grant funding from regeneration body the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA).

Enterprise Game comes to Widnes Waterfront

Enterprising Halton is once again making headlines with The Enterprise Game. Originally launched as a resource for secondary schools and colleges at the end of 2006, a brand new version has just been unveiled for primary schools, which features Widnes Waterfront.

Players of the Game own a factory which makes, sells and delivers to customers. They learn about profit, loss, assets and balance sheets and how to be enterprising. The Enterprise Game has been customised to feature Halton businesses and provide players with labour market information to make them more aware of how businesses are run.

The launch of the new game is the culmination of collaboration involving Halton Education Business Partnership, the Economic Development team of Halton Borough Council, teachers, pupils, business parks and start-up businesses across Runcorn and Widnes.

There are four business parks, including Widnes Waterfront and 27 local businesses featured on the new Halton Primary Enterprise Game board and all of them have agreed to support primary schools across the borough in a variety of enterprising ways. The businesses have provided their logo to appear on the board and have also completed a questionnaire, the information from which will provide the primary schools with a

database for the pupils to use before and after playing the Game. Some of the businesses have taken part in a question and answer session about their business, with pupils posing the questions, filmed by Runcorn City Learning Centre who are also producing the database. Other businesses have taken part in a Careers Fair for 8 to 10 year olds at a Widnes primary school.

The launch which took place in November at the Stobart Stadium, saw the teachers and pupils from 36 Halton primary schools coming together with the businesses featured on the game board.

A group of 11 schools have been working on resources to complement the Game and these will be freely available to primary schools through the Game's website www.theenterprisegame.com.

This new edition of the Enterprise Game forms part of Halton's 'Next Generation Entrepreneurs' programme coordinated by Gerry Fitzpatrick of Halton Borough Council and would not have come about without the support of the Working Neighbourhood Fund.



Constructor appointed for Future Flower

Funding has now been approved from the Northwest Regional Development Agency for the construction of the Future Flower. The 12-metre high wind-powered art piece will be three metres in diameter with perforate steel petals that light up in the wind.

Cheetham Hill Construction has been appointed as the main contractor for the flower and fabrication has been subcontracted to specialist London based firm Mike Smith Studios. Cheetham Hill will construct the foundation and oversee the installation.

The materials have now been ordered and the work is expected to be complete by Spring 2010.

David Ives, Project Manager for Cheetham Hill Construction Ltd, said: "The Widnes Future Flower is a unique and exciting project for Cheetham Hill Construction Ltd

to be involved as principal contractor. We are currently in the early stages of the project, which is due for completion in March 2010.

"The site team, led by Site Agent Steve Thornley, is faced with another logistically challenging project on the Waterfront, which only adds to their enthusiasm. Consideration has to be given to members of the public using the Trans Pennine Trail during construction, who will be able see the Widnes Future Flower grow as they walk or cycle past the site."

Jelly Beans bounces to Waterfront

A brand new Jelly Beans Play Centre is soon to open at the Waterfront close to the new B&Q Store. The new facility will feature a climbing wall, kid's bowling lane and ride on cars and will occupy a prominent 14,000 ft² unit at Alliance Property Group's Widnes Trade Park.

Darren Shaw, director of Jellybean Play Centre, said:

"Alliance's unit suited our requirements perfectly, with the large car park and location next to B&Q, but also within easy access to the motorway and nearby major towns and cities, which will help attract lots of new visitors for us."

"We look forward to opening in the New Year and taking advantage of the opportunities the new retail and regeneration areas will offer us."

Jelly Beans opened its first centre in Warrington in 2007 and now attracts over 8,000 visitors each year.

CBRE and Atlas Property Consultants are joint letting agents on the scheme.





Final remediation works for Widnes regeneration site

The first phase of demolition of the former Bayer CropScience site is now almost complete with the second phase due to commence shortly.



The site, which was bought by Halton Borough Council earlier this year, is one of the largest pieces of commercial land to go on sale in the borough for over 10 years.

A two part closure and clearance began in April 2008 and was planned by engineering consultancy RVA Group so that Bayer could continue operating on the second half of the site.

Ian Wharton, RVA operations director, said:

"Clearance of sites like Widnes are without doubt complex and potentially hazardous undertakings that demand strong and continual communication between our team, the dismantling contractor and the client company."



SmartWater

Over 100 SmartWater kits have now been distributed to businesses in the Widnes Waterfront area.

The kits contain an invisible liquid containing a unique code registered to one specific owner which can mark high value items and can be tracked should the item be stolen. The liquid can only be seen under ultra violet light and is virtually impossible to remove.

More kits are still available and Halton Borough Council would like all business in the Widnes Waterfront, particularly new businesses, to receive one.

SmartWater warning signs have also been distributed to businesses which should be erected on a business' perimeter fence to reinforce the security message.

If you have not received your free SmartWater kit or signage, or would like to know more about the security initiative contact Steve Clark on 01928 516124 or email steve.clark@halton.gov.uk



Short back & sides for Johnsons Lane!

The Probation Service, through 'The Community Payback' initiative were on site in the Widnes Waterfront area recently, to tidy up a couple of areas around the metal bollards in Johnsons Lane.



The works involved litter picking and cutting and strimming the overgrown grassed areas to keep the footpaths clear and accessible.

The area now looks much cleaner and tidier as a result of the works being completed.

The area has now also been added to the existing schedule of works, which means it will be litter picked and maintained on a regular basis when the growing season commences again in the Spring.

For further information about The Probation Service 'Community Payback' scheme contact Elaine Hamlett on 01925 650613.

Quality, build and flexibility makes Turnstone a popular choice

Turnstone Business Park is a conspicuous and significant piece of the comprehensive regeneration being progressed at the Waterfront. The prestigious office scheme is being brought forward by regeneration specialist Priority Sites who has sold or let more than 28,000 sq ft of space this year alone.



The latest occupier is Aerelink, a wireless ICT company who are relocating to Halton from Knowsley. The business has taken an 8,000 sq ft office building at Turnstone from where it will concentrate its entire operation, realise its expansion plans and subsequently create 10 new jobs.

Founder and managing director of Aerelink, Steve Swift comments, "The move to Halton marks an exciting phase of development for us. The support infrastructure in the region coupled with the need for significant additional space were important factors in our decision to relocate. We believe we are now in an ideal environment to grow further."

In addition to Aerelink, Edmundson Electrical, Connaught Partnerships, Headstart Academy (hairdressing training) and LTS Envirosafe have all recently chosen Turnstone Business Park to relocate their operations. They join Boulting Group, IDT, OMG Plumbing, ABS Engineering and the Council's Gateway and Community Safety Teams. The diversity of the companies who have made the business park their home is testament to the flexibility and quality of the accommodation on offer here.

For the Chief Executive of Priority Sites, Bill Skilki, the realisation of Turnstone Business Park is particularly significant as he was born in Widnes, and through his role at Priority Sites can claim a small stake in its ongoing transformation from an industrial heartland to a rejuvenated dynamic environment, home to prospering modern businesses.

He puts Turnstone's appeal down to several factors. He comments, "The park is without doubt providing a new kind of space, not previously available in Widnes – that is, flexible modern premises, designed and built to a high standard that are ideal for a very large cross section of the business population. This flexibility extends to our financial terms, with occupiers able to buy or rent, or indeed, rent for a period of time with an option to purchase at a later date.

"When you counter in the park's location, adjacent to the A557 Watkinson Way, just a few minutes drive from junction 7 of the M62, and part of such a busy, thriving hub, it's easy to see the attraction.

"Halton Council are also a major factor in stimulating investment such as ours and attracting new businesses to the area. We develop large regeneration schemes throughout the country and the political leadership and pro-active attitude of the executive and officers in Halton is second to none.

"Widnes Waterfront has the potential to develop as a high quality mixed use area taking advantage of the canal and riverfront with leisure and housing development, as well as office and commercial development."

Turnstone is typical of the type of scheme Priority Sites develops that has contributed to its growing reputation as a leading regeneration specialist. Bill Skilki explains:

"We have never been afraid of developing in areas where other developers may have been reluctant or even resistant, because we can see the potential. We work very closely with the appropriate local people and authorities to help realise a vision, one that we are confident will draw in businesses and boost employment for the area.

"We use top architects to produce developments of the highest design and sustainability standards that will help to 'change the place'. Our approach at Turnstone Business Park has been typical of that applied around England, with us having successfully developed over four million square feet of business accommodation in the past decade."



Bill Skilki at The Turnstone Business Park



Carter House Bridge



£160,000 has been secured from the Northwest Regional Development Agency together with a further £140,000 from Halton Borough Council to replace Carter House Bridge.

The existing bridge, which spans the disused Sankey Canal at the end of Tan House Lane, is to be dismantled and a new bridge constructed which will support both pedestrians and vehicles.

Cheetham Hill Construction Ltd has been awarded the contract to build the new swing bridge across the canal. David Ives, Project Manager for Cheetham Hill Construction Ltd, said: "We are proud to have been awarded the Carter House Swing Bridge Project. Work will commence on site in November while the design development progresses in the background with Halton Borough Council.

"The existing fixed bridge will be replaced with a swing bridge, which will move manually to allow boats to pass along the canal in the future. Although the contract is challenging due to the logistical constraints, members of the public using the existing bridge will experience minor disruption and will be able to cross the canal by means of a diversion while construction works are in progress.

"When completed in February 2010, it will play a key part of the reinstatement of the Sankey Canal and its link to the Widnes Waterfront and Trans Pennine Trail."

Tan House Lane Gate

A planning application is being prepared by Halton Borough Council for the construction of a temporary gate across the southern section of Tan House Lane, just south of Moss Bank Road.

If approved, the gate will restrict vehicle access to the road allowing just landowners, utility companies and emergency services to gain access. The footpaths will remain open allowing continued use by pedestrians and cyclists down to Widnes Warth.

Simon Walker, Lead Monitoring and Compliance Officer at Halton Borough Council, said "We are currently taking measures throughout the Widnes Waterfront to reduce

fly tipping. By restricting access to the southern section of Tan House Lane we hope to keep the area free from debris illegally offloaded by vehicles."

The order is seen as a temporary measure and if approved, the gate will be removed once adjacent sites start to see some development activity.

A decision on the gate is expected within the next three months.

The cows come home at new nature reserve

A new nature reserve is set to be created in the heart of Halton as part of the Mersey Gateway project.

A saltmarsh nature reserve of over 28 hectares (70 acres) is proposed for the upper Mersey estuary which will run 200 metres either side of the proposed new bridge and also incorporate Wigg Island.

Existing visitor facilities will be used as viewing points to the new reserve.

The long-term aim is to create a new nature reserve that will protect the local environment over the next 30 years. Plans for the new reserve include restoring high quality saltmarsh throughout the areas as well as creating new saltmarsh scrapes and pools close to the new bridge.

It is hoped that rare breeds of 'conservation cattle' can be introduced to graze alongside the river to the new site and also increase

the local breeding bird population, such as skylark and meadow pipit.

There are also plans to build fencing on the saltmarsh area to protect it from disturbance by people and dogs.

Paul Oldfield, Nature Conservation Officer with the Mersey Gateway Project Team, said: "This will create a fantastic nature reserve in the heart of Halton.

It will be a unique haven for birds and other wildlife and will help ensure that the new bridge brings major environmental benefits to the area.

"We will also ensure that the new nature reserve will link in with wider, long-term nature conservation activities across the Mersey Estuary."



New Retail Brings Jobs to Widnes



Widnes' multi-million pound shopping centre is nearing completion, with the flagship Marks and Spencer store expected to open at Easter. The development is expected to provide over 750 jobs for local people.

Retailers now confirmed are Next, New Look, Boots, Peacocks and Birthdays. Wallis, Miss Selfridge, Principles, Dorothy Perkins, Topman, Warehouse and Burton will all offer fashion, footwear, lingerie and accessories in Outfit.

Council leader, Cllr Tony McDermott, commented:

"This really is something for the borough to be proud of. How many towns have a new multi million pound retail development going on during the recession?"

"When other areas are struggling and shops shutting, we are delighted to welcome big names to Widnes. I am confident more things will happen once this opens."

Widnes RUFC Remains Top 'Priority' For Regeneration Specialist



The RUFC team, Priority Sites Chief Executive Bill Skilki and Phil Haslam

Leading regeneration specialist, Priority Sites, has confirmed its continued financial support to Widnes RUFC for the 2009/2010 season.

The developer, who recently completed 60,000 sq ft of quality business accommodation at Turnstone Business Park on Widnes Waterfront, presented a brand new kit to the first team to cement their continued commitment to the club.

Bill Skilki and Phil Haslam from Priority Sites joined club president Graham Riley at a recent South Lancs Cheshire 1 fixture against Warrington.

Chief Executive Bill Skilki commented: "We have long since recognised the important role the sport plays here. The club really does sit at the heart of the community and we are delighted to lend our continued support to Widnes RUFC

for the coming season. They are a great club and we are behind them all the way."

Graham Riley, Club President said,

"We are thrilled to have the support of such a prestigious company. The help offered to us by Priority Sites is invaluable and has undoubtedly contributed to our success to date, and for that we are extremely grateful."

For further information about Priority Sites contact Phil Haslam on 0151 495 4680 or visit www.prioritiesites.co.uk

Farewell to Gareth

This month the Widnes Waterfront waves farewell to Gareth Bennett, the Business Park Officer. Gareth has been working with businesses at the Waterfront for six years and in that time has set up a number of initiatives including the Business Steering Group.



Gareth (pictured far right) is taking up a new post at Envirolink.

Tim Leather, Team Leader Business Support, said: "Gareth has been an invaluable member of the team and we are all very sad to see him go. We wish him the best of luck and every success for the future."

Steve Clark will be taking over Gareth's responsibilities until a new Business Parks Manager is appointed. Steve can be contacted on 01928 516124 or steve.clark@halton.gov.uk

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