



# Newsletter

August 2020  
Issue 2

## Welcome from YMCA Wirral CEO Nigel Hughes

**SINCE** our last newsletter, we have come through one of the most challenging times in our lives, and I am proud of the amazing dedication shown by our staff during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Our teams continue to go above and beyond what we have a reasonable right to expect of them to support residents – and each other – in what has been a hugely testing time for everyone.

Everyone has responded brilliantly. They have my utmost respect and gratitude. It has been a tough time for everyone involved, but we have been in this together.

The YMCA Board of Trustees is truly inspired by everyone's personal commitment to make a difference in these unprecedented and difficult times.



*The approach from staff embodies the best values and working practices of YMCA Wirral in finding ways to address issues and break down barriers to do things differently, and continuously improve in all we do.*

*I am sincerely grateful that we have come through this stronger and better prepared for whatever our work may present in the future.*

*As well as looking after our residents, it is vital that we look after ourselves and each other. Stay safe and healthy.*

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## Praise for Wirral RSI's lifesaving efforts

**OUR** dedicated staff often go even further than the extra mile, as this story highlights.

This piece showcases the exceptional human qualities and calibre of our incredible team, despite a very sad outcome.

In early January, the Rough Sleepers Initiative Team (RSI) were called downstairs, where a client, John, was unwell in the communal lounge area.

John had been discharged from hospital earlier that day. He came to YMCA Wirral and the RSI Team were trying to find him accommodation.

A member of the RSI Team, Heather Hawthorn, found John unresponsive. She placed John in the recovery position and raised the alarm with RSI colleagues.

Jason Stansfield began CPR while Heather called an ambulance, taking advice from the emergency services call handlers.



**Jacqui Miles, Deputy Director of YMCA Wirral, with Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) Team members Heather, Jason and Alya**

Colleagues Jordan Cox and Dave Pegg, YMCA Wirral Key Workers, supported residents during the incident.

Paramedics resuscitated John for almost 40 minutes before a heartbeat was detected. He was then taken to Arrowe Park Hospital.

John sadly passed away the next morning.

The RSI Team later received a letter praising their work from Ann Taylor, a substance misuse specialist nurse manager at Arrowe Park Hospital.

Ann commented: "It was a great effort of the staff who performed CPR and managed to restart John's heart and keep it going for so long before the ambulance arrived."

# YMCA WIRRAL

Ann continued: “The consultants in the A&E department say it is a credit to your team that John survived long enough to make it to hospital, and that you should take comfort in knowing that you gave him a chance.”

The group were later nominated for a prestigious Liverpool Shipwreck & Humane Society (LSHS) Certificate, which recognises those who voluntarily save or attempt to save other people who are in danger.



## LIVERPOOL

Shipwreck & Humane Society

The LSHS Committee chose to recognise Jason for his outstanding and relentless efforts.

Jason was due to receive his certificate at an awards ceremony organised by Liverpool Shipwreck & Humane Society, but unfortunately it was cancelled due to Coronavirus.

Heather, Jordan and Dave will receive YMCA Commendation Awards for their roles in helping John.

*A huge well done to the YMCA Wirral RSI Team for their continued hard work and commitment. We are extremely proud of your efforts. Thank you.*

## Find out more about the Rough Sleepers Initiative

**THE work of YMCA Wirral’s RSI Team is invaluable to the borough.**

Learn more about the tireless work undertaken by the team, putting vulnerable members of the Wirral community at the forefront of everything they do.

Watch the video here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=njuwEuNWpt4>



## BBC North West mention for RSI project

**OUR fantastic RSI team was recently featured on BBC North West Tonight.**

The expansion of the project across Wirral was highlighted on the regional news programme.

Watch the video here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXOnhQTxLHk>

## YMCA Wirral responds to Covid-19 pandemic

A NUMBER of agencies and organisations, including YMCA Wirral, have joined forces with Wirral Council to find new and appropriate accommodation for hostel residents during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The collaborative effort also includes Wirral Ark and Rose Brae, who provide night shelters.

The move came after the Government's directives to close all night shelters to help local communities to practise social distancing.

Wirral Council commissioned outreach workers who were able to help a significant number of people sleeping rough with finding suitable accommodation.

More than 30 single occupancy apartments and 40 hotel rooms for single people and family groups were sourced.

Food parcels were also provided for those needing support.



People experiencing homelessness are disproportionately affected by poor health, and accessing healthcare and support can be a real challenge.

As a result, outreach workers have been patrolling the community to ensure anyone in difficulty gets the help they need especially at this time.

A spokesperson for Wirral Council said: "Recognising the urgent need to help protect some of our most vulnerable people, Wirral's hostel and support providers responded magnificently, which

enabled us to place people in appropriate accommodation and close all our night shelters ahead of the Government's target.

"While we are clear that nobody needs to sleep rough, we know that very significant challenges lie ahead as demand continues to increase.

"That is why we are asking local hotel operators to get in touch if they are able to provide short-term accommodation."

The Rough Sleepers Initiative Team (RSI) can be contacted by emailing [rsiteam@birkenheadymca.co.uk](mailto:rsiteam@birkenheadymca.co.uk) or call 07821 125119.

## Chester University recognises YMCA Wirral as top placement provider

**CHESTER University has awarded YMCA Wirral with the Premier Placement Provider Award.**

The certificate recognises the charity for providing its students with excellent work placement opportunities.

Linda Rayner, Head Of Work Based Learning at Chester University, presented the award to YMCA Wirral CEO Nigel Hughes at the university's Churchill Building.

The university's work-based learning module enables second year undergraduates experience life in the workplace, and students must complete a five-week work placement relevant to their degree and career goals.

Many students, who have previously taken the module and secured placements through the university's network, have later gained full-time employment with those partners.



**Linda Rayner from Chester University with YMCA Wirral CEO Nigel Hughes**

With YMCA Wirral proud to be a placement provider, CEO Nigel Hughes is eager to reaffirm the charity's commitment to support the programme going forward.

Nigel explained: "We are delighted to receive this award from Chester University. It is always a pleasure to provide work placements to its students.

"We look forward to welcoming future undergraduates as soon as the pandemic is over and it becomes safe to do so."

Placement students at YMCA Wirral have the opportunity to develop practical, work-related skills for project management, as well as learning about the services provided by YMCA Wirral.

## Experience tranquility of the open waterways on a YMCA boat

FOR the perfect getaway or a memorable corporate event, immerse yourself in some of the UK's largest and finest wetland areas with YMCA's very own boating facilities.

Boasting two pristine vessels that are free to hire, experience an affordable boating adventure to escape the stresses of work and everyday life and return to the tranquility of nature.

The narrowboat is based in Church Minshull, while the cruiser is based in the Norfolk Broads.



Partner organisation, Project CIC, a creative arts and wellbeing recovering project based on the Wirral, hired the narrowboat for a canal boating course.

A spokesperson for Project CIC commented: "A huge thank you to Wirral YMCA for giving our members the opportunity to spend the day on their canal boat. It is a trip that all ages can truly enjoy.

"The experience of steering, how to navigate locks, and the chance to enjoy life in the slow lane was great."

The YMCA boats are available for teambuilding or developing leadership skills.

To find out more about hiring a YMCA boat, please contact YMCA Wirral CEO Nigel Hughes on 0151 650 1015.



## JourneyMEN: Making men's mental health support more accessible

**A UNIQUE early intervention service providing mental health support has been launched in Birkenhead.**

JourneyMEN will help clients access support and services across Wirral.

The initiative is the brainchild of Phil Roberts, a former community support officer at Merseyside Police. Phil worked as part of the Early Help Team on Wirral and he witnessed the devastating effects of depression.

Phil explained: "When I was dealing with people with mental health issues, I had to deal with males and females totally differently.

"There is a wonderful place in Birkenhead called Tomorrow's Women. But I could find nothing specifically for men."

After further investigation, Phil discovered there was plenty of care available but it was almost "like a secret".

He said: "After 17 years in the police, I thought I knew my area and all my contacts. But how would a man in distress find help when he really needs it?"



**Phil Roberts at JourneyMEN in Chester Street, Birkenhead**

After organising a mental health sector open day with Wirral contacts and agencies, Neo Community Cafe offered Phil premises in Chester Street.

JourneyMEN has already supported men, who have attempted suicide or experiencing suicidal thoughts.

JourneyMEN offers support through its comprehensive Journey Plan programme, tailored for individual needs. This includes initial assessment, counselling, training, social support, and enabling clients to become job or volunteer ready.

Phil added: "During lockdown we've had to be innovative to reach men in our community. We began a Zoom-based virtual JourneyMEN Mental Health Hour for peer-to-peer support. But some counselling requires face-to-face support so we developed JourneyMEN Walk & Talk Therapies -

taking a stroll with a counsellor while keeping two metres apart."

Future plans include opening a Man Cave to provide a safe space for clients to enjoy fun activities. Phil is hoping to attract funding for the project.

Project partners include Tranmere Rovers Football Club and YMCA Wirral.

Nigel Hughes, CEO of YMCA Wirral, said: "Our partnership with JourneyMEN is a special and very meaningful one. Our work brings us into contact with so many men with mental health issues, so these services are vital."

## Volunteers lend a hand with Woodside clean-up

**VOLUNTEERS** from YMCA Wirral recently helped out at a clean-up operation in Woodside.

The team headed to Birkenhead to collect rubbish ahead of the arrival of HMS Prince Of Wales, which was visiting Liverpool for a week to celebrate the Royal Navy's close ties with the city.

Woodside is an ideal location for spectators to get a great view across the River Mersey of the largest warship in British navel history. So it was vital to ensure the area was looking at its best.



**Jimmy and Nick from Birkenhead BID with YMCA volunteers during the clean-up at Woodside**

The volunteers worked alongside Birkenhead BID, Merseyside Community Pay Back Team, and staff from the Birkenhead Constituency Office.

An area of most concern was a sunken decking area and gardens near Woodside Ferry Terminal, which was cleared of litter and weeds.

The two-day clean-up resulted in 60 bags of green waste being collected.

Ian Davies, Commercial Safety Co-ordinator from Wirral Chamber Of Commerce, was on hand to help. He said: "A huge collective thank you to the YMCA volunteers who helped over the two days.

"Their help, along with the Community Pay Back Team and Constituency Office has transformed the area around Woodside for the better - and all in time for the arrival of HMS Prince Of Wales."



**Up to 60 bags of waste was collected by volunteers**

## Planting spree to make Borough Road bloom

**PREPARING** for Summer, YMCA Wirral volunteers have been busy planting more than 500 bulbs to ensure a blooming marvellous sight in Birkenhead.

The YMCA Wirral In Bloom planting project focuses on flower baskets in Borough Road in Birkenhead. Local authority cuts mean that no flowers are provided for the local areas so the charity has stepped in.

Bulbs were provided by Jacqueline Miles, Deputy Chief Executive of YMCA Wirral.

The flowers are a welcome boost to the community, adding plenty of colour and lifting spirits in times of lockdown.



To ensure the flowers thrive and are well maintained throughout the Summer, volunteers from YMCA Wirral will regularly top them up with water from the charity's head office on Whetstone Lane.

Susan Nicholas, Chair of YMCA Wirral, said: "We've selected a range of plants that will give us an all year round display. We bring in more than 500 plants, and grow them for the project.

"Gardening is therapeutic. It's particularly good for our clients in the controlled drinking programme, they work in the garden and look after the planters. A big thank you to our support worker Rita, who oversees the growing, planting and maintenance."

We always receive such a positive response from local residents, so for us, the effort in maintaining the flowers is most certainly worth it.



Watch a video about YMCA Wirral In Bloom by visiting [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8\\_MpNEK8m0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8_MpNEK8m0)

# Remembering the fallen on 80th Dunkirk Anniversary

**OUR** volunteers took part in a project to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the evacuation of Dunkirk.

The anniversary marks the historic moment during the Second World War when 300,000 Allied soldiers were stranded on the beaches in France.

Volunteers made models of Dunkirk and the “Dunkirk little ships”, which were made up of privately owned fishing boats and pleasure cruises that courageously made the dangerous journey across The Channel to help with the evacuation.



After extensive research, the group learned more about the struggle facing the soldiers and the rescue effort in what was a critical turning point in WW2. Their research also led them to letters from young soldiers sent home to loved ones.

Nigel Hughes, CEO of YMCA Wirral, said: “With us having to make sacrifices during these unprecedented and challenging times, it is only fitting we remember the sacrifices made during one of the bloodiest wars in our history. Our clients showed a genuine enthusiasm and commitment to learn and remember what happened at Dunkirk with the support of our amazing team.”

## Pizza and poetry during lockdown

**TO** help lift people's spirits during Covid-19 lockdown, our support workers have been busy coming up with ways to keep our residents safe and in a happy environment.

Working with Lagoon, we have able to host pizza night every Friday, while residents socially distance.

Residents have also been encouraged to get creative through our arts, crafts and poetry competitions.



# Come and volunteer with us at YMCA Wirral

*“Nothing gives me greater pleasure than seeing a volunteer either progress into paid work via ourselves, or into another organisation. To me, this is real progression”*

Lesley Lawson, YMCA Wirral Volunteer Co-ordinator

**ARE you finding it difficult to gain employment because you lack experience?**

**Do you have some free time that could be used to achieve some useful qualifications?**

**Are you keen to play a part in your local community, give something back and try something new?**

If you answered yes to any of the above questions above, then please consider joining the YMCA family.

At YMCA Wirral, we can provide you with a range of opportunities perfect for personal development, with courses that can lead to learning new skills and achieving great qualifications.

A positive first step to prepare you for the next stage of your preferred career.

Our dedicated volunteering programme offers a range of community and environmental-based voluntary projects - which aim to get people outdoors, become active, and valuable members of the community.

We have three award schemes depending on contact hours - Bronze (25 hours); Silver (30 hours); and Gold (50 hours).

Getting involved can lead to a valuable reference for employers, while also helping you get back into work and meet new people.

Research shows that being involved in voluntary work can improve your health and wellbeing by allowing you to make a positive contribution to the community.

We can tailor your experience depending on your chosen career path, helping you to gain relevant experience for your first or even dream job!



From gardening to administration, there are a host of things we can offer that can help you develop your communication and teamworking skills, and improve your ability to use your own initiative.

We employ volunteers to take part in our activities throughout the year, join us to help you stand out from the crowd through valuable work experience.

Listed below are just some of the training courses available at YMCA Wirral:

- Level 1 & 2 Food Hygiene Course - 1 day
- Manual Handling Course - 1½ days
- Level 1 Introduction Health & Safety - 1 day
- Customer Service & Customer Care - 1 day
- Basic Motor, Vehicle Mechanics & Vehicle Maintenance - 8 weeks (1 day per week)
- Foundation Course in Catering & Hospitality - 8 weeks (1 day per week)
- Boat Maintenance & Marine Training - 1 day
- Basic Horticulture & Plant Care - 4 half days
- Peer mentoring
- Substance Abuse
- Health & Social Care Level 2

**To find out more about volunteering please contact Lesley Lawson, Volunteer Co-ordinator at YMCA Wirral, by telephoning 0151 650 1015 or email [lesley@birkenheadymca.co.uk](mailto:lesley@birkenheadymca.co.uk)**

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To submit content or if you have any other newsletter enquires please email

[reception@birkenheadymca.co.uk](mailto:reception@birkenheadymca.co.uk)



# Contact and Further Information

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Like and follow our  
Facebook page  
[@YMCAWIRRAL](https://www.facebook.com/YMCAWIRRAL)

THE YMCA has served the community for 145 years and has responded to social, economic and political changes throughout that time.

Homelessness and drug and alcohol abuse has left many people damaged. We provide a place of a safety with facilities that cater for the needs of people from all walks of life.

We manage a hugely successful volunteer programme, and our in-house team deliver practical advice, training and support to our clients. We provide a night shelter for up to 15 street homeless people each night, 365 nights a year. We offer a Controlled Drinking Environment (CDE), which has been highly successful in reducing alcohol dependency. These are just a series of initiatives that help engage our clients, whilst serving the community as a whole.

Our services include training courses, accommodation, and volunteering. We also have facilities available to hire including conference rooms, an ICT suite, and boating facilities.

Find out more about our charitable organisation and our facilities by visiting [www.ymcawirral.org.uk](http://www.ymcawirral.org.uk)

