



● The swimming pool at the Northgate Arena with the much-loved whale

Residents call on centre to save whale

BY JOSH PENNINGTON

CHESTER residents are demanding that the city's leisure centre keeps its iconic swimming pool whale.

The Northgate Arena sparked a wave of nostalgia among residents after hinting at the possible removal of the pool whale - a cherished fixture in the pool since the opening of

the centre in 1977.

Brio Leisure, which operates Northgate Arena and seven other leisure centres across the Cheshire West borough, recently shared a light-hearted post on social media, suggesting the 5ft whale could be 'swimming off into retirement' during the centre's ongoing refurbishment.

The post called for followers to share

memories and anecdotes under the hashtag #SaveTheWhale.

The community response was nothing short of incredible, with more than 400 comments on Brio's platforms, all celebrating the whale's status as a beloved local landmark.

One user commented: "SAVE THE WHALE! My kid and I absolutely love him, and I feel like he's been part of the family

since I was small."

Another user added: "The whale is iconic for generations of local people and visitors to Northgate Arena."

"Much loved and great fun for all who enjoyed their first swim or toddle around our whale."

While the leisure centre is embracing the playful spirit of the campaign, the final fate of the whale is yet to be confirmed.

Shining the spotlight on local historic landmarks

CHESHIRE'S inspiring landmarks and intriguing history come under the spotlight in an exciting new collection of poems and images by local writer Lynn Pegler.

Around Cheshire in 100 Poems and Pictures
by Lynn Pegler
with additional photos by Claudia Wild



● Lynn's book will be launched on May 4

Around Cheshire in 100 Poems and Pictures takes readers on a visual and literary journey of discovery, exploring familiar features and hidden corners from a fresh perspective.

Anderton Boat Lift, Jodrell Bank, Hack Green Cold War Bunker, Northwich's salt mine subsidence, Oulton Park race-track, Norton Priory and beavers in Delamere Forest are just a few of the fascinating places explored in the poetic behind-the-scenes tour.

With a journalistic eye, Lynn's collection of poetic reportage combines lively monologues from real and imaginary people with more reflective verse to present a delightful portrait of a 'special' county.

Lynn, who lives in

Crowton near Northwich, serves as one of Cheshire's Deputy Lieutenants, is an award-winning playwright, poet, journalist and runs PR consultancy Pegler Communications.

She said: "Cheshire is an amazing and special county."

"After living here for several decades, I thought I was well-acquainted with its history and geography, but research for this collection has taken me on a wonderful journey of discovery."

"I've jumped inside the heads of Quarry Bank mill workers, Roman soldier tour guides and Nantwich Civil War generals as well as grumpy teenage walkers and an exasperated Cheshire Oaks shopper."

"When I was writing the

poems, I always envisaged them sitting side by side with illustrations.

"I hope the new images of the county, alongside the evocative old black and white photos, help to embellish the words with enhanced emotion."

The book features a wide range of new illustrations by the author, supplemented with extra photos by Claudia Wild, Patricia Rugg and a map of modern Cheshire by Runcorn artist Ali Draws.

The book will be launched with a multimedia performance of selected poems at the Weaver Words Literature Festival in Frodsham on Sunday, May 4.

The Gala Celebration Evening, which starts at 8pm, also features musi-

cal entertainment from festival patron and playwright/musician Tim Firth.

Around Cheshire in 100 Poems and Pictures is published by Blurb and is available online and at selected book and gift shops.

Tickets for the Gala Evening, comedian Jenny Éclair, poet Lemn Sissay, BBC presenter Louise Minchin and other Weaver Words events (May 3-11) are available online at www.weaverwords.org.uk or the box office at 0333 666 3366.

Lynn will also be at Norton Priory's Summer of Stories in a special event devoted to readings from Around Cheshire in 100 Poems and Pictures on Thursday, July 31.



● Lynn Pegler is an award-winning playwright, poet and journalist

Gap in available NHS dentists still needs filling

IT'S still just as difficult to register at an NHS dentist in Cheshire as it was six months ago - despite Labour's promise to 'rebuild' NHS dentistry.

Updated analysis of the 144 practices in Cheshire on the NHS's 'Find a dentist' website has revealed 116 - or 81 per cent - are still not currently accepting adults aged 18 or over.

In one constituency - Chester South and Eddisbury - not a single NHS dentist is accepting new adult patients.

The situation remains exactly the same as in November, when the last numbers were disclosed.

And it's not just adults who are affected - 64 per cent of NHS dentists in

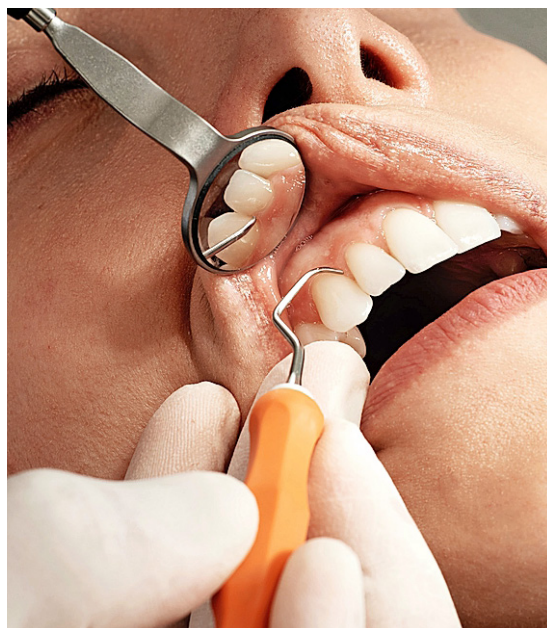
Cheshire are not accepting children aged 17 or under.

In reality, many of those that say they are accepting patients 'when availability allows' may not be or may have years-long waiting lists.

Those who cannot get NHS appointments are largely reliant on expensive private care with rural and coastal areas some of the worst affected.

The ongoing lack of NHS dentists is an issue nationally.

Across England, nearly 4,800 of the more than 6,500 dentists on the site, or 73 per cent, are still not currently accepting adults aged 18 or over - the same as in



● It is difficult to find an NHS dentist taking on new patients
Caroline LM / Unsplash

November.

When contacted by the Mirror as part of a joint investigation with the British Dental Association, 84 out of 100 practices that were listed as accepting new

adult patients 'when availability allows' in November were actually not accepting new NHS patients.

One stated its waiting list was 'at least 10 years.'

Chippy nominated for top award

A CHESTER chippy has been nominated for a Deliveroo Restaurant Award, vying to be named one of the best takeaways in the country.

Nick's Wok and Fish Bar on Sealand Road has been shortlisted for the accolade of Best Fish and Chips in the North of England and the Midlands.

Up until May 9, local food lovers can cast their votes to back their best-loved restaurants. Those who participate are automatically entered into a draw to win £150 in-app credit.

Deliveroo has shortlisted the Chester chippy, stating that it is 'serving up some of the best Chinese street food and fish and chips in Chester, offering a delightful blend of Malaysian flavours with a comforting British twist.'

There are 65 award categories in total, including 50 regional cuisine-led awards and the coveted Independent Restaurant of the Year award. This year sees the introduction of several new categories - Lifetime Achievement, Changing the Game, Role Model and Rising Star.

To mark the return of the 2025 Restaurant Awards, the delivery app has recruited a guest judge with arguably one of the most discerning palates on the planet - Celebrity Masterchef finalist, TV personality, culinary school graduate, and the daughter of multi-Michelin star restaurant royalty, Tilly Ramsay - who has been enlisted to judge the coveted Independent Restaurant of the Year Award and the Rising Star Award.

Tilly said: "I can't wait to take my taste buds on a tour as I rate some of the most loved local eats from around the UK and Ireland as part of the Deliveroo Restaurant Awards. The shortlist of restaurants looks epic and I'm excited to get stuck into deliberating the dishes for the top title, Independent Restaurant of the Year, with my co-judges."

"It's also a huge honour to be supporting the next generation of restaurateur talent as part of the Rising Star award - as a recent culinary school graduate and someone still early in my career, it feels very special to celebrate new and exceptional talent in the food industry!"

The winners of the Deliveroo 2025 Restaurant Awards will be announced on May 28.