

MyBlacon

Winter 2019



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Welcome to the Winter edition of *MyBlacon*



We're well and truly in the countdown to Christmas now and I hope that everyone is looking forward to getting into the festive spirit.

This year's lights switch-on will be taking place on Thursday 5 December and we hope you'll be able to join us to share in the celebrations and enjoy a mince pie or two.

As we approach the end of 2019, we can look back on another busy and exciting year for Avenue Services and one that has seen several significant developments for our local community.

The most recent of these has seen the opening of a new community gym, open to residents of all ages and abilities, at Blacon Adventure Playground.

We're delighted to have supported Rage Fitness Company in bringing this state-of-the-art facility to Blacon and, if you haven't already, I would encourage you to pop down to meet the friendly team and see the facilities for yourselves.

We've also worked with Cheshire West and Chester Council and WREN to complete a

major refurbishment of the Canterbury Road play area and it has been great to see so many families enjoying the improved facilities and new-look green space.

We can also reflect on another successful summer programme, which included extending the opening hours at Blacon Adventure Playground and Youth Club, providing at least two meals per day for children over the school holidays and staging dozens of free activities and popular events such as Glastonvenny and our National Playday celebration.

And no look back at the year would be complete without mentioning the Blacon Festival. Once again it was a real pleasure to have so many local families join us in celebrating the very best of Blacon and everything that makes our community such a great place to live. We can't wait to do it all again in 2020!

The year ahead is also a very special one for Blacon Adventure Playground, which will be celebrating its 50th anniversary.

We're extremely fortunate to have a facility like the Venny

on our doorsteps in Blacon and we'll be organising some special events to celebrate the positive impact it has had for many generations of Blacon residents. If you have any stories, photographs or special memories about the Venny that you'd like to share then we'd love to hear from you!

As we say farewell to 2019, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you, your families and friends a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Paul Knight

Paul Knight – Head of Avenue Services

What is Avenue Services?

Avenue Services is a joint venture between Sanctuary Group, a not-for-profit housing and care provider, and Cheshire West and Chester Council. Set up in 2012 and based at the Parade Enterprise Centre, it provides services such as grass cutting, caretaking and cleaning, housing management, youth services, neighbourhood planning and management of Blacon Adventure Playground.

Awards for grounds maintenance teams

Congratulations to the Avenue Services grounds maintenance team, whose efforts have been recognised with a staff award.

Members of the team were named joint winners in the Housing in England awards scheme run by Sanctuary Group.

The quarterly award scheme recognises exceptional performance, where staff have made an outstanding contribution, demonstrated a 'can do' attitude or gone above and beyond the normal expectations of their role.

The team's success recognises the high number of compliments received for its work in Blacon, including one from a resident who said the estate had not looked so good in 50 years.

Paul Knight, Head of Avenue Services, said: "Our grounds maintenance staff work extremely hard to keep Blacon looking its best all year-round.

"We're very proud of their efforts and delighted they have been recognised with this award."

Pictured below: The Avenue Services grounds maintenance team being presented with their award by Daren Nowlan, Sanctuary Housing Operations Director and Christa Ripley, Head of Housing.



Chernobyl children visit Blacon Adventure Playground

Children who have grown up in areas still affected by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster enjoyed a fun-filled day out at Blacon Adventure Playground.

The young people, from Belarus, visited the playground as part of a therapeutic holiday to the UK organised by the Chernobyl Children's Lifeline charity.

Staff from Avenue Services spent time with the children as they tried the outdoor play equipment, met the animals at the site's city farm and had fun making their own candyfloss.

The children stay with local host families during their holiday and enjoy a full programme of activities, including trips to local attractions as well as visits to the dentist and optician.

Garth Goddard, of Chernobyl Children's Lifeline Wirral Link, said: "The children were made to feel very welcome and had

a great time exploring everything on offer at Blacon Adventure Playground.

"These holidays really are a once in a lifetime experience for the children. They make such a positive impact on their health and ensure they return home with happy memories that will last for a lifetime."

Gary Miller, playleader at Blacon Adventure Playground, said: "We were delighted to welcome the group from Chernobyl Children's Lifeline to the playground and it was very humbling to see the children enjoying themselves so much and the big smiles on their faces."

Anyone interested in becoming a host family for Chernobyl Children's Lifeline or supporting the charity's work can visit www.ccll.org.uk.

Pictured below, right: The Chernobyl children spending time at Blacon Adventure Playground.



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Chester wellbeing group bringing people together

A newly-formed health and wellbeing group is inviting new members to join its regular meetings and events in Blacon.

Better Together Chester offers support and group activities aimed at people looking to improve their health and wellbeing in a relaxed and friendly environment. The group meets at the United Reformed Church, in Saughall Road, Blacon, between 10am and noon every Thursday, offering a wide variety of inclusive activities including crafts, games, walks, talks, picnics and days out.

Avenue Services is supporting Better Together Chester by offering advice and expertise to help it grow its membership and expand its offering to the community.

Simon Hughes, chairman of Better Together Chester, said: "We're really pleased with the way the group is growing and that it is benefiting more and more people in and around Chester.

"Our members constantly tell us how they enjoy being in a kind-hearted, approachable atmosphere where they feel welcome, safe and totally at ease."



Picture Caption: Members of the Better Together Chester wellbeing group.

Chris Leicester, neighbourhood partnerships manager at Avenue Services, added: "We work with a wide range of local organisations and are delighted to be supporting Better Together Chester to expand its valuable service and benefit more people in the local community."

Better Together Chester is open to everyone aged 18 and older. If you're interested in finding out more or becoming a member, please call **07594 244752** or email **bettertogetherchester@gmail.com**.

NEW COMMUNITY GYM AT BLACON ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND



A new community gym has opened its doors at Blacon Adventure Playground.

A number of guests attended the launch party of the gym, which is being run by Rage Fitness Company. The ribbon cutting ceremony was led by 12-year-old Luca Apollonio, who has been helped by Rage to improve his self-confidence.

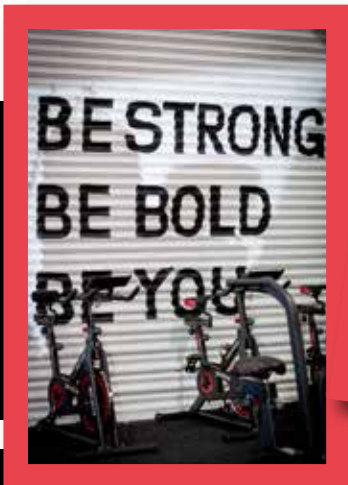
The gym, boasting a host of state-of-the-art equipment, is open to people of all ages and abilities.

Avenue Services, which owns the adventure playground in Kipling Road, has been working with Rage over the past year to help bring its services to more people in the community.

Chris Leicester, neighbourhood partnerships manager at Avenue Services, added: "The new gym is a fantastic addition to the facilities on offer at Blacon Adventure Playground and something that will offer considerable benefits to the whole community."

For more information about the new gym and the full range of services Rage offers in Blacon, visit www.ragefitnesscompany.com.

Pictured above and below: Luca Apollonio age 12 cut the ribbon at the new community gym.



Christmas

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Thursday 5 December

Christmas Lights Switch On

4.45pm – Western Avenue with the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress

5pm – Christmas tree lit outside Parade Enterprise Centre – join us to share in the celebrations and enjoy a mince pie or two

5.15pm – Performance TBC

Warming refreshments served

Wednesday 11 December

Coffee Morning in aid of Hospice of the Good Shepherd

10am – 12pm, Parade Enterprise Centre

Mince pies, refreshments, raffle and stalls with sing-along music from entertainer Matt Baker

Dates may be subject to change. Please call us on 0300 123 1741 if you're unsure

What's on at Blacon Library?

Monday 23 December – Friday 3 January during opening hours

Children's Christmas crafts available throughout the holidays every afternoon 2-4pm

Library Christmas opening hours

Tuesday 24 December – close at 1pm

Wednesday 25 and Thursday 26 December – CLOSED

Tuesday 30 December - close at 1pm

Wednesday 1 January - CLOSED

Age-friendly Blacon



Working together with Cheshire West and Chester Council, Age-

friendly Cheshire West has been formed to bring people of all ages together to create 'friendlier' communities, where everyone is valued and has the opportunity to live a happy, healthy, active and enjoyable later life.

Get involved now:

- email inclusivecommunities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
- phone **0300 123 8123**
- or visit www.agefriendlycheshirewest.org

Take part in 'Social Butterflies' a spectacular art project, designed to celebrate an 'age-



friendly borough' and encourage people to stay connected. Get together and have some fun!

Community groups, schools, clubs, local businesses and individuals are invited to get involved and create a butterfly...it's that simple. It can be made from anything you choose, so knit, sew, paint or sculpt, it's up to you!

Find out more www.agefriendlycheshirewest.org/socialbutterflies

Keep in touch

Keep up to date with everything that's going on in Blacon by joining the Avenue Services mailing list.

All you have to do is visit avenueservices.org/contact and fill in the form.

Website: www.avenueservices.org

www.facebook.com/MyBlacon

[@Avenue_Services](https://twitter.com/Avenue_Services)

