

YOUR CHAMBER YOUR VOICE



Spring 2023



DAINS

ACCOUNTANTS

Our Services:

Audit

Accountancy & Business Advisory

Corporate Finance

Corporate Tax

DAINSevolve

Employment Tax

Forensic Accounting

Private Client

VAT & Customs Duty

Outsourced Interim FDs

Outsourced HR

Your Future. Figured.



T: 01952 811745

www.dains.com



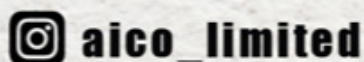
FAMILY FUNDRAISING FESTIVAL

SATURDAY
JULY 15TH 2023
12:00 - 7:00

Brynkinalt Estate
Wrexham, LL14 5NS



www.aico.co.uk



Contents . . .

Page 4	Introduction
Page 5	Membership
Pages 6 - 16	Chamber News
Page 17 - 19	Charity
Pages 20 - 21	New Faces
Pages 61 - 69	Patrons
Supplement	Quarterly Economic Survey



The deadline for receiving editorial content for the all new-look Your Chamber, Your Voice magazine is Thursday, 1st June, with a publishing date of Friday, 30th June.



Published by Shropshire Chamber of Commerce
Trevithick House, Stafford Park 4,
Telford, Shropshire, TF3 3BA



Design and layout by Paul Naylor,
Media & You
paul@mediaandyou.co.uk



Printed by Welshpool Printing Group Ltd,
Printing House, Severn Farm Industrial Est,
Welshpool, SY21 7DF

For all editorial requests contact Hollie Jones on:
magazine@shropshire-chamber.co.uk

For all advertising requests contact Hollie Jones on:
magazine@shropshire-chamber.co.uk



All change at your Chamber

As the curtain comes down on my time leading this magnificent Chamber and the truly wonderful group of people who have supported me over the past 15.5 years, I can look back with pride that I have been privileged to serve the business community of Shropshire.

It's clear that change is the new norm . . . or is it? With relentless challenges throughout the years, from credit crunch, recession, Brexit, pandemic, cost of living and energy crisis, the Chamber has always been there supporting our members when they need us most.

Never before has the sense of community and connectivity been more important than it is today; the agility and speed of response that your Chamber demonstrates is an example to all and converted by many.

I know that the Chamber will be in good hands as Ruth Ross steps up into the CEO role, and I close by saying that it has been an honour to have worked with so many of you. I am truly grateful for your wisdom and friendship.

Richard Sheehan, Outgoing Chief Executive Officer,

Now over to your new CEO, Ruth Ross..

I know that I speak for a huge number of you when I say a heartfelt thank you to Richard for his dedication and tireless work on behalf of the Shropshire business community during his time at the helm.

I am excited about the opportunity I have now been given, and fully recognise the importance of the Chamber's place within the business community.

The foundations of the organisation are solid and its commitment to supporting economic and employment opportunities remains unwavering.

Working with you over the last 18 months, as we redesign the services we deliver in response to the changing needs of business, has been enlightening.

We have an ambitious strategy in place to double the size of the Chamber's membership base, which will not only provide new and dynamic business networking contacts for our members and stakeholders, but also give us a much more powerful lobbying voice in the corridors of power.

And with the fantastic team we have here at the Chamber, I am confident it's something we can deliver.

Whilst we all recognise the future comes with challenges, I firmly believe in one thing: Working together makes us stronger, and as 'team Shropshire' we can achieve great things.

**Ruth Ross, Chief Executive Officer,
Shropshire Chamber of Commerce**



New members to engage with



Coverage Care Services Ltd
01743 283200
Allison House
Oxon Business Park
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY3 5HJ

David Lovatt Design Studio
07584257050
PO Box 51
Westbury
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY5 9WH

24x7 Ltd (Shropshire)
01952214091
Stratum House
Stafford Park 10
TELFORD
Shropshire
TF3 3AB

Airband Community Internet Limited
01905 676121
105 Pointon Way
Stonebridge Business Park
Hampton Lovett
DROITWICH
WR9 0LW

Blackcat Recruitment Ltd
01952 445590
St James House
Hollinswood Road
TELFORD
Shropshire
TF2 9TW

CD Financial Ltd
01952 455775
4 Church Street
SHIFNAL
Shropshire
TF11 9AA

Delta Telford Op Co Limited
01952429977
Great Hay Drive
Sutton Way
TELFORD
Shropshire
TF7 4DT

Dragon Display & Fabrications Limited
01952 290055
Unit 20
Queensway Link
Stafford Park 17
TELFORD
Shropshire
TF3 3DN

Enterprise Rent a Car
01952 200353
Unit 6 Taurus Park
WARRINGTON
Cheshire
WA5 7ZT

EPOS Commerce Solutions Limited
07817604873
Lawley Village
Lawley
Telford
Shropshire
TF4 2FG

Escudero Auto Ltd
07577 019555
Unit 2C Ni.Park
NEWPORT
Shropshire
TF10 9LH

Fourtress Group
01952 455545
53-55 Ketley Park Road
Ketley
TELFORD
Shropshire
TF1 5BF

Greenfield IT Recruitment
01743 234029
4 Sweetlake
Mercian Court
Sweetlake Business Park
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY3 9GE

Kadai Ltd
01694 771800
Wilstone House
Wilstone
CHURCH STRETTON
Shropshire
SY6 7HW

LBS Commercial
07964250406
No 1 Butcher Row
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY1 1UW

McQueen Education & Training Consultancy
07523 519309
Pool Leasowes
Longden Common
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY5 8AQ

Not Just Travel Marieta & Tom Poole
23 Green Crescent
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY2 6GR

Pathfinder FX Ltd
01743290955
1 Knight's Court
Archer's Way
Battlefield Enterprise Park
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY1 3GA

Quenelles
01280706640
1 Bagley House Barn
Bagley
Ellesmere
ELLESMERE
Shropshire
SY12 9BY

SafeWise Health & Safety
01922 279129
Upper Left Stables
Hilton Lane
Essington
WOLVERHAMPTON
WV11 2BQ

Severn Gorge Horticulture Ltd
01952587130
18 Riverside Avenue
COALPORT
Shropshire
TF8 7HY

Shropshire Class Travel Ltd
01743 292628
Unit A
SilkmoorShrewsbury
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY3 8LN

Virtual Reality Experiences Studio (Telford) Ltd
01952 455477
The Ridings,
4 Mannerly Lane
Overdale
Ketley
TELFORD
Shropshire

TF3 5AT WonderDays
02071018839
Jesson House
Stafford Court
TELFORD
Shropshire
TF3 3BD





Guest speaker announced for 2023 Business Awards



Richard Sheehan, chief executive officer at Shropshire Chamber of Commerce (third from the left) pictured promoting the launch of the awards at Salop Leisure earlier this year with many representatives from the county's business community

With the closing date for entries now just over a month away, Shropshire Chamber of Commerce's has revealed the guest speaker for its 2023 business awards.

Furniture up-cycler Jay Blades MBE, who hosts BBC's prime-time show *The Repair Shop*, will be taking to the stage at Telford's International Centre on June 23.

In addition to his presenting work, Jay spends a large amount of time working on furniture projects for commercial and individual clients, running workshops and motivating disadvantaged people in the community.

Jay, who has a workshop in the Ironbridge Gorge, inspires individuals, companies and charities to transform old furniture into works of contemporary design.

"We're delighted to have Jay as our speaker this year," said Chamber chief executive Richard Sheehan. "I know that the inspirational story of his own business journey will really resonate with our audience."

There is just over a month left to submit entries for the 2023 Shropshire Chamber Business Awards, which look set to be one of the biggest in the event's 23-year history with around 500 seats already reserved.

The event, which is now in its 23rd year, celebrates the stars of the Shropshire business community across 12 different categories.

The competition is free to enter, and open to all businesses with an operational base in the county of Shropshire or Telford & Wrekin – whether or not they are a Chamber member.

It includes the return of long-running categories including Company of the Year, Best New Business, and Best Small Business.

There are also new-look categories this year for Global Business recognising international trade, Commitment To People, and a return of the Business In The Community award.

The full list of categories for 2023, and the criteria which will be used by the shortlisting panel to judge the entries, is seen on the opposite page.



Jay Blades MBE will be guest speaker at the awards



Categories and criteria



COMPANY OF THE YEAR:

The showpiece award for an all-round star performer, flying the flag for Shropshire business excellence. Judged on a combination of:

- Financial track record, and pursuit of excellence
- Creativity, innovation and ambition
- Leadership and customer service skills
- Training, people development and wellbeing strategies
- Commitment to the community, and environment
- Effective response to economic challenges
- Awards, testimonials and accolades

BEST NEW BUSINESS:

For businesses in any sector, formed since January 1st 2021. Entries will be assessed on:

- Strength and originality of business vision
- Strong and sustainable business plan
- Evidence of progress and clear financial objectives
- Creative and ambitious marketing and growth plans
- Originality – what makes you different and better than the rest?

BEST SMALL BUSINESS:

For businesses in any sector employing up to 10 full-time equivalent staff, demonstrating a high level of success. Judged on:

- Innovation, and forward-thinking strategies for growth
- Gaining and sustaining a competitive advantage
- Commitment to staff development, and wellbeing
- Clear and creative marketing and growth plans
- Accolades, testimonials, and evidence of financial success

COMMITMENT TO PEOPLE:

For companies which go the extra mile in looking after the needs of their customers. Judged on:

- Ways of consistently exceeding customer expectations
- Measuring customer satisfaction, and acting on feedback
- Training and development in customer handling and service skills
- Awards, accolades and customer testimonials
- Adapting to the current economic challenges

GLOBAL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR:

For companies which are 'flying the flag' for Shropshire in overseas markets, through strong international trading links. Judged on:

- Evidence of cross-border growth and commercial success
- Strategy for building overseas awareness of a brand
- A forward-thinking and structured approach
- Understanding of different cultures and foreign practices
- Innovative approach to reaching out to new markets

COMMUNITY CHAMPION – BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY:

For businesses which believe in the philosophy of 'putting something back' into the Shropshire community. Judged on:

- Top-to-bottom 'buy-in' from staff at all levels, over and above statutory requirements
- Examples of projects which have made a real difference to local people's lives
- Promoting the value of community work through company vision and values
- Supporting Shropshire suppliers by 'buying local'
- Fostering links with schools, colleges and other community groups

EXCELLENCE IN MANUFACTURING AND ENGINEERING:

For companies which 'make things' and are continuing our proud industrial heritage. Judged on:

- Commitment to continuous improvement
- Innovation and customer satisfaction
- Investment in new technologies to achieve efficiencies and comply with latest environmental standards
- Growth plans and evidence of financial success
- Customer service standards, and client testimonials

WELLBEING IN THE WORKPLACE:

For companies which recognise the importance of supporting both the physical and mental wellbeing of staff. Judged on:

- Evidence that health and wellbeing of employees is embedded in business culture
- Training to recognise and address 'hidden' issues such as mental health and stress
- Examples of robust wellbeing policies and their impact on the workforce, and wider business
- Commitment to flexible working and healthy work-life balance
- Response to challenges of changing economy such as home working

THE TRAILBLAZER – INNOVATION AWARD:

For companies who have spotted a gap in the market, and thought outside the box to fill it. Judged on:

- Your USP: What makes you stand out from the competition?
- Use of technology to improve engagement
- Impact of forward-thinking policies on sales and profits
- Imaginative techniques used to identify and attract customers
- Testimonials, sustainability and potential for future growth

THE ECO AWARD:

For environmentally aware businesses which promote innovative practices, processes or technology. Judged on:

- Embracing green technology to lower the carbon footprint
- Promoting or producing eco-friendly products and services
- Evidence of successful 'green' initiatives and programmes
- Cross-company commitment to 'make a difference'
- Substantial and quantifiable improvements in environmental and commercial performance

YOUNG BUSINESS PERSON:

Open to anyone aged 30 or below in January 2023, who demonstrates flair, commitment and an entrepreneurial spirit. Judged on:

- Evidence of a significant influence on the business
- A commitment to training and personal development
- Entrepreneurial attitude, reliability and work ethic
- Strong people skills and maturity beyond their years
- Testimonials from managers, work colleagues, and/or customers.

The John Clayton Award, named after a previous Shropshire Chamber president, will also be presented to someone who is judged to have made an outstanding contribution to the local business community.

Aico of Oswestry won the coveted Company of the Year award last summer – retaining its title.

Previous Company of the Year winners include McConnell of Ludlow, Grainger & Worrall from Bridgnorth, Grocontinental of Whitchurch, Salop Leisure and Caterpillar from Shrewsbury, Pave Aways from Knockin, CJ Wildbird Foods of Upton Magna, and Telford-based businesses McPhillips, Dodd Group, Smartwater, Lyreco and Reconomy.



Hear from keynote speakers, share ideas and best practice, identify new opportunities, share knowledge and generate leads for your business

Relaunch of 18-35 group is a networking success



Potential business leaders of the future gather to network

The relaunch of Shropshire Chamber of Commerce's networking and socialising platform for like-minded young businesspeople has been declared a huge success.

The 18-35 group, which is specifically for young local businesspeople between those ages, was fully booked for its get-together at University Centre Shrewsbury.

Kelly Riedel, Shropshire Chamber's events manager, said: "We are absolutely delighted at the response which the relaunch of this group has received, and are now excitedly making plans for more meetings over the course of the year.

"If you want to meet new people, have your say on what matters to you, and broaden your knowledge base and skills, this is the perfect group is for you.

"You don't have to be a Chamber member to get involved. Whether you've recently launched a start-up business, or are currently seeking your next job opportunity, everyone is welcome. "It's all about creating a supportive network giving people the chance to share ideas and knowledge."

She added: "We want to make it a successful and integral part of the Shropshire business community, and have received so much positive feedback. We will be announcing details of the next meeting very soon."

The group will hold a minimum of four events a year, and include talks and presentations from a broad range of experts and business professionals – as well as a series of social activities.

For more details, email events@shropshire-chamber.co.uk or check out the website, www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk/campaigns/1835-group

Get involved with a range of fab events

Connections and building relationships are crucial to the success of any business.

We provide a wide range of opportunities to network, available in different formats, and at times to suit your busy schedule.

We offer the opportunity to participate in a dynamic and lively business community, where you can hear from keynote speakers, share ideas and best practice, identify new opportunities, share knowledge and generate leads for your business as well as having opportunity to raise your business profile.

The team works to create events that provide valuable networking opportunities to members of the Chamber and showcase the breadth and depth of the county's many areas, businesses, strengths, stories and opportunities. We offer a variety of events representing all sectors ensuring we are dynamic with our delivery.

Please do take a look at our 18-month Calendar on the website for full details of our events, the next three months are highlighted below. <https://www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk/events>

Upcoming Events

April

Member Networking – Getting Started – 19th April
Meet the Neighbours – 26th April
Quizzically Challenged Trivia Quiz Night – 27th April
Networking – 28th April

May

Maximise Your Membership – 9th May
HR in Focus – 16th May
Professionals Partnership 19th May
Network of Women – 24th May
Member Networking – Getting Started – 25th May

June

Bridgnorth Networking Breakfast – 14th June
Manufacturing Partnership – 21st June
Shropshire Chamber Business Awards – 23rd June
HR in Focus – 27th June
Property Partnership – 29th June



Are you making the most of your Shropshire Chamber Membership?

Are you struggling to remember why you joined Shropshire Chamber of Commerce in the first place?

Or perhaps you can't quite recall exactly what services and discounts you can access with your membership?

Are you looking for staff retention tools and Up-skilling Opportunities?

It's possible that you feel you are not making the best use of the huge array of business networking opportunities on offer?

If the answer to any of the above is yes, maybe it's time for a **FREE** refresher and a chance to learn something new.

Member Networking

Getting Started Interactive Workshop
19th April 12.30pm to 2pm
Shropshire Chamber, Telford

Maximise Your Membership - Webinar
30th March 11am to 12.30pm
Virtual World, Online

25th May 5.30pm to 7pm
Shropshire Chamber, Shrewsbury

9th May 11am to 12.30pm
Virtual World, Online

14th June 10.30am to 12.30pm
The Woodberry Inn, Bridgnorth

4th July 11am to 12.30pm
Virtual World, Online



SEVERN CANOE CREW

28TH APRIL 2023

Get your colleagues together for a team building day on the water!

Montford Bridge to Shrewsbury (Frankwell)
£80 per person

Lunch Provided

Team building activity

12 miles of canoeing

Axe throwing activity



For more information, visit our website www.lingendavies.co.uk/severncanoecrew





The point of the Local Skills Improvement Plan is to put the voice of the employer at the forefront of the drive to ensure training matches the skills needed

The skills triangle – the journey so far!

What is the Marches LSIPs and how might it be good for your business in the future?

Shropshire Chamber was awarded the Department for Education (DfE) contract to deliver the Marches (Shropshire, Herefordshire, Telford & Wrekin) part of the national LSIP (Local Skills Improvement Plan) project in Autumn 2022.

The point of the project is to put the voice of the employer at the forefront of the drive to ensure training matches the skills needed over the next 3-5 years, locally, regionally, and nationally. Even though there has been much work over the years to highlight skills gaps, these studies were based more on public sector statistics and did not involve the employers having a direct say, just representation by third parties. The Department for Education says it is now time to gain the direct employer voice as it is a vital element if the future direction is going to match the need. Of

course, tempered with reality; what funds are there available from Government to fund courses, who and how will these be delivered and is it cost effective or practical to do so, and are employers willing to pay for some forms of training themselves.

Starting in the Autumn we gathered a Governance Board together for the project, which represented many of the large training providers, the local authorities and business boards, the Local Enterprise Partnership, LEP Skills Advisory Panel, FSB, NFU and chaired by a local business. Stakeholders, who in the main the Government had articulated their need for them to support the project, assist in our reaching businesses and understanding of how they could look at innovative ways to help match training to need.

November was spent recruiting a small research team, engaging with our neighbouring Chamber in Herefordshire for support, and scoping out views from larger employers in the four large sectors we are focusing on. Scoping to give us the knowledge to create a relevant and probing question set for employers.

December was time for base research with private providers of training to understand the part they play, creating a full marketing package, training the team and preparing for the big push with employers. January saw the start of heavy promotion of the project, and the employer interviews starting, this has built up steadily and by February was in full swing. Tight time frames mean that interviews will draw to a close in March, giving us time to work with the trainers to support their understanding of the findings to date. Much research and analysis lies ahead, as the first stage of this project comes to a head with our full report being submitted to the DfE by the end of May.

July will herald part two and that will be to dig deeper into the training and skills needs of employers and how that changes as the economic landscape changes. Again, this will be based on direct contact with employers.

A big thank you goes to all those we approached who undertook interviews, evidence carries weight, and the more we can provide the better any outcome may be.

Cyber essentials launch will help our members navigate increasing threat

The British Chambers of Commerce, Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and IASME are delighted to announce that they will be working together to help Chamber members achieve the Cyber Essentials certification by delivering a new Chamber Cyber Essentials partnership. From 22nd February, Chamber members will be eligible for a discount on a Cyber Essentials assessment alongside a package of training, free cyber security guidance and the Cyber Essentials Readiness Tool.

Cyber Essentials is the minimum baseline cyber security standard for organisations in the UK.

Government backed, the structured process of preparing for the assessment is an affordable and accessible way for organisations of all sizes to put in place the technical controls needed to protect themselves against the most common cyber threats.

A Cyber Essentials certificate will:

- Attract new business with the assurance that you have cyber security measures in place.
- Reassure your customers that cyber security and data protection is an important priority for your organisation.
- Demonstrate to the ICO that you have taken steps to safeguard sensitive data which is important for GDPR compliance
- Allow you to bid for the increasing number of tenders and contracts that require Cyber Essentials certification.

Shevaun Haviland, Director General of the BCC, said: "The BCC is delighted to be launching a new partnership with IASME in Chamber Cyber Essentials."

"The pandemic has led to a huge shift in working practices over the past two years, which has had inevitable consequences for our use of IT and its cyber-security.

"Our research indicates these changes are here to stay, and with increasing concern over both organised crime and state-sponsored cyber-attacks it is more vital than ever that firms have the right protection in place."

Dr. Emma Philpott MBE, CEO of IASME said. "IASME are excited to be working with the British Chambers of Commerce to help Chamber members achieve Cyber Essentials. We know that four in ten businesses in the UK report having a cyber breach or attack in the last 12 months and the recent move to home and hybrid working means the risk level is higher than ever. Helping Chamber members access and understand the Cyber Essentials scheme will significantly increase their business resilience."

The free to use Cyber Essentials Readiness Tool which will provide a gap analysis can be found here <https://getreadyforcyberessentials.iasme.co.uk/>

To find out more about Chamber Cyber Essentials visit <https://iasme.co.uk/cyber-essentials/about-chamber-cyber-essentials/>



Training opportunities

What is the Importance of Training for your Business?

Training has an impact on your organisation's productivity and performance, training gives employees a better understanding of their responsibilities and the knowledge and skills they need to do their job. This will improve their confidence which can positively impact their performance.

Benefits of Employee Training & Development

- Improved employee retention
- Increased employee engagement
- More productivity
- Boosted employee morale
- Consistent work processes
- Increased ability to promote from within

The Shropshire Chamber team works to create a training calendar that benefits your knowledge and improve your staff wellbeing. Please do take a look at our 18-month calendar on the website for full details of our courses the next three months are highlighted below.

<https://www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk/business-training>

Upcoming Training

April

- Google Ads – Advanced – 4th April
- Optimising Your Social Media Profiles to Attract Clients – 13th April
- Emergency First Aid at Work - 3 Day Course – 18th - 20th April
- Prevention of Burnout in the Workplace - 19th April
- Easy and Effective Sales Techniques – 20th April
- Import Procedures and an Introduction to Special Procedures – 20th April
- Manual Handling – 25th April
- LinkedIn for Business – 26th April
- Risk Assessments Level 2 – What you need to know – 26th April

May

- WordPress in a Day – 9th May
- Basic Understanding of Health and Safety Duties – 10th May
- COSHH - 10th May
- Trust Based Sales – 16th May
- Incoterms – 16th May
- Managing Challenging or Difficult Employees – 17th May
- Time Management, Decision Making and Prioritisation – 18th May
- Digital PR and Social Media – How to do it – 18th May
- Google Analytics 4 – Beginners – 23rd May
- Preference Rules of Origin – 24th May

June

- Excel Getting Started – Level 1 – 7th June
- Digital Marketing, SEO, Website and Google Fundamentals to increase your online visibility – 8th June
- Presentation Skills and Confident Communication – 8th June
- Emotional Intelligence – 13th June
- Customer Service Excellence – 14th June
- Understanding Commodity Codes – 14th June
- Do you know how or why you should be Blogging for Business – 15th June
- Search Engine Optimisation – 20th June
- Google Analytics 4 – Beginners – 21st June
- Fire Marshal and Fire Awareness – 28th June

Budget review – Jury is out over energy support



Ruth Ross, deputy chief executive officer for Shropshire Chamber of Commerce

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce has welcomed moves in the Budget designed to tackle the skills shortage which it says is 'blighting the economy'. Ruth Ross, Shropshire Chamber's deputy chief executive But the Chamber believes that concerns remain about whether enough has been done on energy bills to help the many smaller businesses across the county who are 'fighting to survive'. Ruth Ross, Shropshire Chamber's deputy chief executive, said: "The Chancellor has clearly felt the need to act to address the unfilled jobs blighting our economy, which was so badly needed. "Help on childcare costs, and extra incentives designed to entice more over 50s back into the workplace are also to be welcomed. "And for companies which were concerned at the rise in corporation tax, it was also reassuring to hear that some of this can be offset against research and development costs." She added: "The jury is out, though, on whether enough has been done to ease the pressure which Shropshire businesses are facing with their energy bills. "Our quarterly survey results show that many will struggle to pay their bills in April, and say they cannot invest for the future when they are simply fighting a cashflow battle to survive. "There appears to be little in this Budget statement that will provide much comfort to these businesses – apart from the predicted sharp fall in inflation later this year." The British Chambers of Commerce has repeatedly called for reforms to business rates, but Ruth said the Government had failed to deliver. "We agree with the BCC when it says that the Government must shift the dial further on investment, both within the UK and from overseas, if innovative growth industries are to remain competitive on a global stage."

Read the full article via Shropshire Live at: <https://www.shropshirelive.com/business/2023/03/15/shropshire-chamber-welcomes-budget-but-jury-is-out-on-energy-support/>



Beth and Sid Heath, from Shropshire Festivals, receiving the award in London from Shevaun Haviland (right) and Jasmine King of award sponsor Meta

'Outstanding' national award win for our Beth

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce has expressed its pride and delight after seeing the boss of a county events business pick up a national accolade.

Chief executive Richard Sheehan and deputy Ruth Ross travelled to the London Stock Exchange to see Beth Heath of Shropshire Festivals collect the 'Game Changer' trophy at the British Chambers of Commerce's annual awards.

Beth outshone hundreds of nominees to win one of just eight national awards which were handed out this year.

Shevaun Haviland, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, told her: "You have transformed your idea into a successful, sustainable business by understanding your market's key challenges, customers and competitive landscape."

Shropshire Festivals runs a string of top Shropshire events, including Shrewsbury Food Festival, Shropshire Oktoberfest, Shropshire Tasty Trail, and Shropshire Kids Festival. Collectively, they attract around 90,000 visitors to the region each year.

Mr Sheehan said: "Ruth and I were delighted to be able to attend the London event to see Beth receive the award for her outstanding success.

"We have some fantastic businesses in Shropshire which, in spite of the current economic challenges, are doing incredible things."

The British Chambers of Commerce's annual awards highlight the role of firms in delivering growth and prosperity for the UK and local communities.

Judges said it was the 'entrepreneurial drive and community spirit' of Beth and her Shropshire Festivals team that helped to win the award.

The Game Changer category is reserved for an individual who has transformed an idea into a successful, sustainable business by understanding their market's key challenges, customers and the competitive landscape.

The BCC praised the way Beth had turned her love of food and festivals into a hugely successful events business, providing community-based days out at price points accessible to all ages and backgrounds.

"Beth's business has a hugely positive impact on Shropshire tourism," the BCC said.

The business faced a significant challenge when the pandemic hit, but Beth overcame many hurdles and pivoted the business to ensure its survival.

She launched a series of drive-in events, as well as a new hamper business, an online marketplace for local businesses and a national campaign to unite isolated communities.

Sarah Howard, chair of the British Chambers of Commerce, added: "Beth's company highlights the positive ripple effects successful businesses can have on their local economies.

"By going above and beyond to ensure her customers enjoy unforgettable experiences, people flock from far and wide to attend Beth's events. Not only is Beth passionate about her local area, she is also raising its profile."

Robotic process automation

With staff recruitment and retention pressures affecting most organisations, business managers are wise to ask the question - 'how can tasks be done differently to boost productivity'? Successful businesses identify that the removal of manual and repetitive tasks can eliminate many HR issues and drive-up productivity.

Most people who have heard of artificial intelligence dismiss it as some weird technology that will never apply to their business. AI is the ability of machines to perform cognitive functions as humans do, such as perceiving, learning, reasoning, and solving problems.

AI is not far that far away

However, many business owners do not realise that the fore-runner to AI is something called robotic process automation. RPA can be implemented in almost every business sector that has staff completing manual, often paper driven, repetitive tasks. In simple terms, RPA uses intelligent software, called cloudbots or 'Bots' for short, that make decisions based on pre-determined rules. The programming of Bots removes the need for any human input when on-going decisions need to be taken. The Bots follow a defined set of rules with complete accuracy that delivers the correct outcome.

What is an example of RPA?

A very simple example would be invoice processing. This is where inbound invoices, paper, and PDF, are diverted to a receiving centre. Using clever software the required data on the invoices (purchase order number, dates, values and so on) is extracted into a data

file. This data is compared with the client's purchase ledger. If the captured data meets pre-agreed criteria then payment authorisation is given. The approval decision is based entirely on the agreed criteria. There is no human involvement.

Can the benefits be measured?

The benefits are massive and can easily be quantified. From the example above, if an accounts payable function receives fifty invoices a day with an average manual processing time of over three minutes, the introduction of RPA would save over fifteen hours a week. This equates to over £11,700 a year!

The Potential is unlimited

The great thing is the amount of work the Bots do is highly scalable and they beaver away with zero intervention. The Bots can apply themselves to all business functions in most industry sectors – from legal and accounting through to manufacturing and logistics. The Bots are totally reliable, they never get sick, and they work 24/7 without holidays! Furthermore, they work remotely on a cloud and do not take up any office space!

Taking the innovative approach to boost productivity

Imagine if someone explained to you how a lot of the routine and repetitive tasks your staff undertake could be automated. Not only would many staff recruitment and retention challenges evaporate but you would save time, lower costs, enhance information security as well as drive up accuracy and productivity.

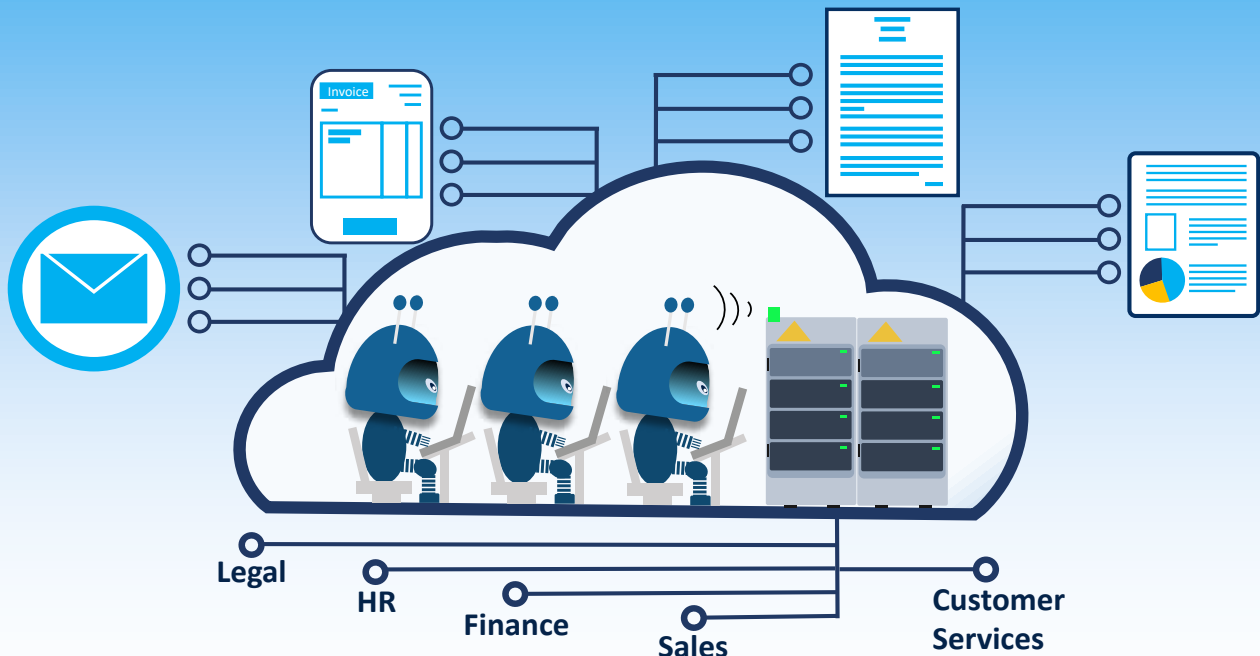
The great news is that you do not need to stretch your imagination as robotic process automation is a reality.

*Tom Gilruth
Director of Topwood Ltd*

To set your business free...



We can automate the receipt, data capture, indexing and storage of documents.



To boost your productivity call Tom on **01978 464432** or email **tom@topwoodltd.co.uk**





**I SAVE MONEY
ON ALL MY
INTERNATIONAL
PAYMENTS**

**AS A CHAMBER
MEMBER I'M WELL
CONNECTED**

Take advantage of exclusive offers, bank-beating exchange rates and expert currency guidance with Chamber Foreign Exchange.

Add a free foreign exchange health check and a dedicated personal trader to help you manage foreign exchange risk, protect against currency fluctuations and make savings on every transaction.

Find out more overleaf or call **0808 163 5138** to access your exclusive Chamber offers.

moneycorp 
exchange experts

 Shropshire
Chamber of
Commerce



Claim your free Foreign Exchange Health Check - exclusive to Chamber members!

In addition to free currency accounts, low transfer fees and competitive exchange rates, as a Chamber member you're eligible for a free foreign exchange health check for your business.

Take us up on the offer to assess your foreign exchange requirements, and let us help you to pin-point where you can improve your margins.

If you're trading across the world or making regular international payments, you'll know that currency fluctuations can have a big impact on your bottom line.

Chamber Foreign Exchange, in partnership with Moneycorp the exchange experts, protects your business against adverse rate fluctuations and makes the most of any positive movements to protect and grow your profit - and your business.

Why choose Chamber Foreign Exchange?

- **Bank-beating exchange rates** - typically as much as 4% better than the banks
- **Free currency accounts** - Chamber members can trade multiple currencies for no extra charge
- **Low transfer fees** - Chamber Foreign Exchange transfer fees fixed at £5, just for Chamber members, compared with £20 to £40 typically charged by the bank
- **Expert market guidance** - with Chamber Foreign Exchange you'll have access to a dedicated Moneycorp professional currency dealer to guide you through the foreign exchange market
- **Fast online money transfers 24/7** - trade at convenient times with online accounts and live rate information
- **Free foreign exchange health check** - free assessment of your business's foreign exchange requirements, to help you pin-point where you could improve your margins

Discover more about the range of benefits available to you as a Chamber member call **0808 163 5138** or visit **www.moneycorp.com/chamberfx**

#WELLCONNECTED

Moneycorp, the exchange experts, have been saving individuals and businesses money on international payments and travel money since 1979. Moneycorp offer bank-beating exchange rates on international money transfers with expert guidance over the phone and 24/7 online transfers. Moneycorp are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority for the provision of payment services.



Five ways looking at your foreign exchange provision can help you cut costs in 2023. Sophia Awan, Strategic Partnerships Manager at Moneycorp, tells us how.

How foreign exchange can save you money

The outlook for 2023 is bleak. Soundbites from experts worldwide are touting global recession, downturns in growth, increasing inflation, and housing market crashes. The UK, particularly, is set to suffer this year with the war in Ukraine still impacting the cost of living and rising interest rates reducing demand for property while forcing up rental rates and creating a perfect storm to undermine the UK housing market.

Needless to say, times will be tough for UK businesses as the purse strings of the average household tighten, and the effects of slow growth and continued inflation begin to have more of an effect on the day-to-day. 2023 should be about saving, but making savings in the right places, being shrewd about utilising the services that are available to you, and leveraging them to offset increasing costs.

Something often overlooked is saving money through your foreign exchange provision. This can be a smart way to save money quickly without cutting back on other areas of your business.

Here are our top five ways to save money by optimising your foreign exchange provision:

1) Make sure you're getting the most competitive rates

When you're exchanging large amounts of money, a small difference in rate can make a big impact. We source our rates

through our panel of 18 liquidity providers and but many banks are bound by a single rate.

Make sure you've managed your execution risk because depending on how much you're exchanging, the difference could be in the thousands – multiply that over the year, and your savings become significant.

2) Avoid unnecessary fees

Watch out for hidden costs – some foreign exchange providers charge you to open a corporate account and to hold various currencies, while others charge fixed fees on transfers. Compare the fee structure against your foreign exchange needs, as different providers will work better for your business.

3) Open a multiple-currency account

If you receive multiple currencies, make sure you have an account that supports that. It's easy to incur charges and fees inadvertently when you receive different currencies into your UK bank account – and once it's done, it's difficult to do anything about it.

With an account that holds multiple currencies, you avoid these fees. It's an easy move to cut costs and we've seen clients save over \$10,000 simply by opening a multi-currency account.

4) Protect yourself against risk

In 2022 the GBP/EUR rate fluctuated between 1.21 and 1.07 during the year; this represents a difference of more than 12%. The impact of these fluctuations are present all the time in business, for example when you raise invoices in foreign currencies.

In an ideal world, they would all be paid within thirty days but sometimes it can stretch over months. If there's been a big swing in the exchange rates during that

time it's bound to have meaningful effect on the trade - whether it eats into your profit margin, or swallows it up completely.

To mitigate this kind of risk, your organisation can explore Forward Contracts. This allows you to hedge the rates on invoices for future payments, protecting you against volatility.

5) Get some expert guidance

FX experts work with you to understand your exposure and suggest the most appropriate currency tools that will enable you to save money on your exchange transactions. An experienced currency management professional can execute your risk management strategy in line with your risk appetite and investment objectives.

We know it's not always easy to see the true cost of foreign exchange, so at Moneycorp, we start every client relationship with a free audit.

By looking at up to 12 months of data, including the times and dates of your transactions, the exchange rates, and the type of products your business uses, and what currencies you trade, we help paint a clear picture. This allows us to understand your foreign exchange history and the needs of your business to show you accurately how and where we can save you money.

Moneycorp can then help you protect your business from unwanted exchange rate movements with various strategies to suit your risk appetite and business plans.

Speak to one of our experts about a free FX Audit.

Sophia Awan

Strategic Partnerships Manager

**E: sophia.awan@moneycorp.com
M: 07874 811 534**

Please note forward contracts may require a deposit. None of the information contained in this article constitutes, nor should be construed as financial advice. Moneycorp Financial Risk Management Limited (company number 5774742) is registered in England. Its registered office is at Floor 5, Zig Zag Building, 70 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6SQ. Moneycorp FRM is a trading name of Moneycorp Financial Risk Management Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority for the provision of designated investment business (firm reference number 452443). Moneycorp is a trading name of TTT Moneycorp Limited and is authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority under the Payment Service Regulations 2017 (reference number 308919) for the provision of payment services.





Marina Desir, Jason Fullwood, Ramon Rantsus, David Powell, Manny Athwal, Clare Norton and Selina Bougan

Sponsors needed for charity films



Can you help Climbing Out raise funds?

Local charity, Climbing Out, is looking for sponsors to help fund filming equipment so it can produce new promotional videos. The charity, which helps people rebuild their mindset following trauma, wants to create videos on each of their programmes this year, which includes an expedition in Sweden.

Charity founder, Kelda Wood MBE, said, "We're calling out to the brilliant businesses of Shropshire to see if anyone would be kind enough to sponsor the purchase of new filming equipment for Climbing Out. We're hoping to fund some equipment and editing help so we can film content on every programme this year, and also make a new promotional film to share with people wanting to find out more about what we do.

"It'll also enable us to capture some of the life-changing work that happens on our 5 day programmes. Any major sponsor would feature at the end of our 2023 videos, which we intend on sharing far and wide!

"We find that sharing video content from our outdoor programmes is really impactful, helping people to understand what we do. We would be so grateful for any support helping us to spread the word about Climbing Out."

The charity's programmes are held across the UK. The 5 day residential trips combine outdoor activities and mental resilience coaching. They work with adults who have had their lives derailed by an injury or illness, or PTSD or anxiety linked to a traumatic event, to take control of their mindset, actions and behaviours.

This year alone they will be running seven core programmes, a mountaineering expedition in Scotland, a wilderness canoeing expedition in Sweden, several walk and talk days and their annual fundraising hike.

If you are interested in finding out more about sponsorship, contact Kelda on keldawood@climbingout.org.uk

Future of youth work is in safest of hands

The final conference for CAIR4YOUTH took place at School of Coding's premises in Wolverhampton and all partners Robotika, Shropshire Youth Support Trust (SYST), Cij Sud Coopérative Jeunes, Elderberry AB, and School of Coding attended to participate in providing insight into the CAIR4YOUTH programme and the importance of e-learning for Youth Workers and Young People.

In today's digital age, coding is an important skill for youth workers to learn as they can create educational or interactive activities that can support to engage and inspire youth on their future career path. Additionally, understanding coding can help youth workers to better understand and navigate the digital landscape and technology that plays an increasingly vital role in young people's lives.

It is important for young people to understand coding because it is a valuable skill in today's digital world. Understanding how to code can help young people to become more proficient in using technology and to develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills. Additionally, coding can be a steppingstone to careers in technology, which can be well-paying and in-demand.

Speaking on behalf of the charity, Youth Engagement Lead and CAIR4YOUTH Project Lead for SYST Jason Fullwood

expresses his gratitude for the programme "This programme has been instrumental in opening new channels of education for our beneficiaries as young people with little to no experience in this sector would be able to learn the basics of Coding, A.I (Artificial Intelligence) and Robotics from the e-learning platform, which will enable them to gain basic experience and skills that would be of great benefit when putting together a CV, who is just starting out in the industry."

Using the online learning platform called QUEST that was created by this project Jason continued "We trialed the QUEST system in a piloting launch which was a success. We had numerous beneficiaries and interest from young people who sat down in our office to test some of the modules and provide honest feedback such as "I had extremely limited bits of coding experience prior to this. I am glad to say I am walking away with more knowledge than I had" and "It gave great insight on coding which I did not have prior" with feedback like this it is a testament to the need and necessity for Coding, A.I and Robotics for both Youth Workers and Young people"

SYST Chief Executive expresses his gratitude "A massive thank you to all those that attended. We thoroughly enjoyed being part of this programme and look forward to what is next. We will be using the e-learning platform to help educate our volunteer youth workers and young beneficiaries as there is a need for learning within this sector in this now digital age. A massive thank you for allowing us to be part of something unique and special"

You can learn more about the project by visiting the CAIR4YOUTH website at <https://cair4youth.com/>



Putting your people first

Volunteers from a search and rescue charity who often find vulnerable missing people after they have sadly taken their own life today launched a "Putting Your People First" workplace initiative.

West Mercia Search And Rescue (WMSAR), which is reliant on specially trained volunteers who use specialist equipment to search for people in woodland, rivers and rural areas and can often be out for days at a time, will be co-hosting the "Putting Your People First" in Telford next month and are urging county businesses to join them.

Andy Neal, volunteer Search Planner & Fundraising Officer at WMSAR, said the charity had teamed up with Marcus Matthews, Award Winning Clinical Hypnotherapist and Life Transformation Coach, who will be the guest speaker at the event.

Mr Neal said they wanted to encourage people from all workplaces to attend including CEOs and managers, along with their staff members from all areas of the business, as he said mental health does not discriminate based on a job title.

Mr Neal said: "Our volunteers at WMSAR are so aware of the various ways mental health can present itself - every case is different. Families, employers, friends and even those closest to the people we sadly find, who often have taken their own life, often do not know the depth of the mental health crisis the person was facing.

"If we can make more people aware of what mental health in the workplace can look like, identify signs and triggers for them to look out for and most importantly offer techniques to help identify people who are struggling then it might just help prevent another sad statistic."

The event will be held on Friday April 28th from 9am to 12noon at Hadley Park House Hotel in Telford. The event includes refreshments and a light lunch and tickets cost £20 per person.

Organisers are also looking for businesses to sponsor the event and any raffle prizes to boost funds for WMSAR charity.

Marcus Matthews, from Make Your Life Count, a former soldier and West Mercia and British Transport Police police officer, will be the guest speaker at the event.

Whilst serving Marcus found himself on the verge of suicide and no one knew. When he finally broke, he said the support he needed wasn't there.

Having worked with TV personalities, CEOs, police officers, doctors and nurses and many business professionals, Marcus is making a difference by empowering people



Andy Neal, Marcus Matthews and Stuart Ellen are ready for the initiative

to change their lives and understand why they feel the way they do.

"The workplace is such a powerful place for people - it can make the difference between living your best life to living your worst. Managers, colleagues and everyone in the workplace - regardless of how much contact you have with someone or how well you know them - can have such a powerful positive influence on someone's life but only if they know the signs to look out for and the techniques to help identify people who need extra support," Mr Matthews said.

According to the Mental Health Foundation, mental health issues in the workplace impact employee engagement, productivity and reputation.

Mental health is estimated to cost £1652 per employee per year and improved mental health support in the workplace could save

UK businesses up to £8million annually, foundation research showed.

The "Putting Your People First" event will offer delegates a different perspective on mental health and introduce them to some of the latest thinking and techniques, and reveal some tools and new ideas.

The environment will be fun and informative, whilst helping visitors to understand more about how their mind impacts their daily life and how they can support others to make real change quickly.

Visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/putting-people-first-a-different-perspective-on-mental-health-tickets-533781253097> for tickets and more information.

If you would like to donate a raffle prize then get in touch by completing the online form <https://bit.ly/3YMCIZR>



The charity Little Stars was formed at a time when families were facing unprecedented challenges during the pandemic

Demand for support doubles

A Shropshire charity has reached a milestone, having supported over 400 children since it launched in 2020. Little Stars is a Shropshire charity supporting vulnerable families with the essential items that need to ensure that children are clean, clothed and safe.

The charity was formed when Founder and CEO, Leanne Simcoe, discovered that there was nowhere that she could donate her children's good quality pre-loved baby items, when finishing her maternity leave.

Little Stars provides a baby bank service to families in Shropshire, who are referred by professionals, including midwives, housing associations and domestic abuse charities. As well as pre-loved items and clothing, kindly donated by the local community, the charity also provides nappies, toiletries and equipment, such as stair gates and car seats.

The charity was formed at a time when families were facing unprecedented challenges during the pandemic. "I was sure that there must be so many families out there who needed this support. Following discussions with potential referral partners and after carrying out research, including on Government data on deprivation within Shropshire, it became clear that there was a need for a baby bank



Little Stars is a Shropshire charity supporting vulnerable families with the essential items that need to ensure that children are clean, clothed and safe

within the county" says Leanne Simcoe, Founder and CEO of Little Stars. "Immediately we formed links with professionals in the county, who refer to us. As awareness of our work grows, and due to the cost-of-living crisis, demand for our services has doubled in the last twelve months."

It is an incredibly challenging time for so many families. Research by End Child Poverty shows that 31% of children in North Shropshire, 26% of children in Shrewsbury, 30% of children in Ludlow and 31.5% in Telford and Wrekin are currently living in poverty. "Little Stars is sadly seeing the reality of these statistics," says Leanne. "We are incredibly grateful for the support we receive from the local community, charitable trusts and foundations and local businesses, but there

is still so much to be done. As a small charity it is vital we are able to grow and develop so that we can continue to support families in the county, especially as the need for our work continues to grow."

As Little Stars enters its third year, the charity is planning on expanding its services, supporting families with school uniforms and other essential items, as well as growing its baby bank provision.

They most recently joined up with fellow chamber member Shropshire Festivals and attended KidsFest to help them raise the charity's profile, whilst decorating Little Stars with families who attended the festival.

To find out more about Little Stars visit their website or contact Leanne Simcoe (leanne@littlestarscharity.org)

A new director



Marie Bramwell and Audrey Williams

Staff at a Shropshire accountancy firm have welcomed a new director to the team at their head office in Shrewsbury.

Audrey Williams has joined Dyke Yaxley Chartered Accountants and brings with her many years of industry experience.

She relocated to Shropshire from Glasgow after finishing university and began her accountancy career in Telford, where she gained her Association of Chartered Certified Accountants qualifications.

Audrey worked for a number of small accountancy firms in Shropshire before becoming a partner in a firm based in Bridgnorth where she worked with agriculture clients and commercial businesses.

At Dyke Yaxley, she will be advising a wide range of clients, incorporating limited companies, partnerships and individuals, to deliver business and taxation advice.

"I am so excited to join a company like Dyke Yaxley that is renowned for its high levels of customer service and which has such a well-deserved reputation for its effective and knowledgeable advice," said Audrey.

"I'm looking forward to helping our clients to achieve their goals and to working with colleagues who have already made me feel part of their close-knit team."

Part of Audrey's new role will also include mentoring members of her team and helping them to develop their skills.

Dyke Yaxley managing director Marie Bramwell said Audrey's experience and industry knowledge made her a genuine asset to the company's growing workforce.

"We're delighted to have Audrey on board, and we're sure her skills will prove invaluable when it comes to working closely with our varied portfolio of clients, and with small and medium enterprises in particular.

"At Dyke Yaxley, we're always keen to welcome colleagues who know the local area well and who understand the way the Shropshire business community operates.

"Audrey's time with other firms in the county means she is well-versed in what makes Shropshire tick, and we're very pleased to see her make such a positive and impressive start to her new role."



Mike Barton and Kieran Jones are familiar faces in the Shropshire business community

Mike and Kieran have joined Chamber team

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce has appointed two new membership growth executives who say they are looking forward to building new and strong links with local businesses.

Mike Barton and Kieran Jones are both well known in the county through their previous roles.

Mike, who lives in Pontesbury, is a keen tennis player who runs his own coaching business called High Five Tennis, and has also worked as a commercial finance broker for Q Commercial Finance.

"I learnt a huge amount during my time at Q and worked with some amazing businesses to reach their goals," he said.

"My job at the Chamber is a very rewarding one. I get to go out and meet businesses, learn about what they do, listen to the problems and challenges they are facing, and try to find a solution.

"All businesses can utilise the Chamber

offering in different ways, and my job is to understand where businesses fit within the membership levels and make sure they maximise the potential and see a return on investment."

He added: "For me, the best part of the job is seeing a business fully utilising their membership and seeing great value in us. We are a member-led organisation and everything we do is for our members.

"We want to see businesses collaborating and supporting one another for the betterment of the whole business community."

Kieran, from Minsterley, is a former retained firefighter in Shropshire – a task he carried out alongside his long-standing job at the Three Tuns Brewery in Bishop's Castle, where he worked his way up from delivery driver to operations director.

"My role is to make as many businesses as possible aware of the fantastic membership the Shropshire Chamber offers at all different levels," he said.

"I am keen to get out shout about it at every opportunity as I feel that everyone should know who we are and what we have to offer.



Strengthening commercial and agricultural property team

A Shropshire law firm has strengthened its commercial and agricultural property team in Telford with the appointment of a new solicitor.

Chloe Williams has joined Lanyon Bowdler as a newly-qualified solicitor having already built up a great deal of experience within her specialist field.

Another benefit she brings to her new role is familiarity with the area having spent much of her life in and around Shropshire.

Praveen Chaudhari, head of Lanyon Bowdler's commercial and agricultural team, said: "We are delighted to welcome Chloe to the firm - she has already made an impressive impact in her new role.

"We are living through a challenging economic climate but while there are some worries within the commercial and agricultural sector, we are still seeing strong demand for commercial property within the Telford area, and are encouraged to see calls for our services remaining extremely high.

"We wish Chloe well with her future with us and know she will be a valuable addition to Lanyon Bowdler."

Chloe began her law career as a secretary in the commercial and residential property team at another local law firm in 2017 and studied for her LLB Law Degree

and the Legal Practice Course with Masters of Law at the University of Wolverhampton.

"I am delighted to have joined Lanyon Bowdler and am very excited about working in the busy commercial and agricultural property team based in Telford," Chloe said.

"A lot of my experience during training was dealing with commercial leases for individual and business landlords and tenants, but I have also acquired valuable experience in other areas within his particular field and look forward to working with, helping and supporting our clients.

"Also on a personal level, I grew up in Shropshire so I understand and appreciate local needs and the importance of helping local people and businesses so they can thrive."

Chloe's experience has already seen her deal with a range of issues including acting for landlords and tenants in respect of new commercial property leases and renewals, lease assignments and underlettings, business sales and purchases, and residential conveyancing matters

She has also been involved in the sales and purchases of agricultural land and commercial property, first registrations and adverse possession of land, residential new-build plot sales and purchases on development sites and re-mortgages.

For more information, contact Lanyon Bowdler's Telford office on 01952 291222 or visit the website at www.lblaw.co.uk



Chloe Williams

Do you need a newsletter producing? How about a magazine? Or maybe even a book? Then you need MEDIA & YOU . . .



Shropshire-born, Paul Naylor specialises in the creation of newsletters, magazines and books, Paul is equally at home putting together all manner of business essentials, including:

- Product Catalogues
- Media Packs
- Posters
- Advertisements
- Brand Design/Redesign
- Roller Banners
- Rate Cards
- Business Cards
- Information Cards
- Promotional Materials

NEW for 2023

- Illustrations and Info Graphics
- Professional Podcast Service

MEDIA & YOU

Email: paul@mediaandyou.co.uk

Call: 07914 304 504

Visit: www.mediaandyou.co.uk



Upskilled staff at growing driver training business

Dulson Training has increased the size of its driver training facilities in Shrewsbury creating greater capacity and flexibility.

The leading driver training specialist has carried out the extension at its Battlefield training and testing site and is part of an ongoing programme to ensure the company is able to maintain training delivery to the highest standards.

Steve Dulson, of Dulson Training, said: "We always prioritise customer service, looking to develop our instructors and facilities to meet the changing needs of our learners - adapting training methods to achieve constantly excellent pass rates.

"We have restructured our in-house instructor training programme for our new recruits and existing staff to ensure quality and consistency throughout. Hayley Norgrove, Dave Rowlands, and Mark Williams, all on the National Register of Instructors (NRI), are headed by training manager Allan Jones, ensuring the highest standards are always being achieved by all staff members and every learner leaves feeling not only content but impressed by the service they have received.

"More staff have upskilled by gaining new qualifications and the company has retained its Grade 1 ranking as an ADR training centre in an annual audit. ADR training covers any dangerous goods which are transported by road.

"The week-long course offers drivers the opportunity to enhance their skill set and employability. The training centre, facilities and course delivery are all scrutinised to gain the top level Grade 1 ranking by the SQA."

Dulson Training delivers a range of training courses at its centres in Shrewsbury, Telford, Ludlow, Wrexham and throughout the West Midlands.

"We have taken several steps across the business to provide a more flexible service while safeguarding the high standards customers have come to expect from us," said Mr Dulson. "We have doubled the size of the off-road practice area at our Shrewsbury centre, allowing us to carry out more training and testing on a daily basis.

"Being approved by the DVSA, we can now deliver double the training and testing capacity. This is not all about doubling the amount we deliver but more about being able to deliver at more suitable times during the course and have less people waiting to use it at the same time.

"It's a big step which means there is less space sharing and we are not having



Dulson Training delivers a range of training courses at its centres in Shrewsbury, Telford, Ludlow, Wrexham and throughout the West Midlands

to work around each other anywhere near so much. It was an important move in customer service and means we are making sure everyone is receiving the exact training they need with minimum downtime.

"In the annual audit from the SQA in relation to our ADR courses, one of our instructor's, Dave Rowland, received the highest Grade 1 qualification for course delivery and ADR knowledge, and our facilities and course content have also been given a Grade 1 as an exam centre."

Hayley Norgrove, Operations Manager, has also expanded her skill set by passing her exams to enter onto the National Register of LGV Instructors known as NRI as an LGV Instructor - adding this to her DVSA Assessor status.

Hayley said: "Holding these qualifications and being able to deliver and assess training is a vital part of my role, having the full understanding of all parts of the business is essential. The National Register of LGV Instructors is made up of very few females, only 1%, so it's a great achievement and excellent for Dulson Training to have a female LGV instructor option for customers.

"In addition, we have upskilled LGV instructor Mark Williams who has completed an ADR dangerous goods course on his route to training to be able to deliver ADR courses - which again is offering more flexibility and greater capacity. Mark also completed his National Register of LGV Instructors NRI qualification, which will enable him to teach new instructors and bring them up to NRI standard to enter onto the instructor register.

"Two staff members, Josh and Jed who are not instructors at this stage, have completed their HGV Class 1 C+E training courses which allows them to move vehicles around within the business - a

situation which has previously needed to be done by instructors.

"This means we can move equipment around without instructors taking time out from their training schedule. Training coordination manager Josh, who has completed his C+E and recently his Cat D bus licence, and yard person Jed, who has passed his Cat C+E, are now able to move equipment from site to site or for repairs and service. These qualifications are the first steps of offering the possibility to become vocational driver trainers in the future.

"Chris Purcell, the team leader at our Telford site, has successfully completed the Module 4 Driver CPC Assessor course, meaning more flexibility and capacity for testing in Telford and the West Midlands, while Wrexham team leader Austen Jones has successfully completed his DVSA Mod 3a assessor qualification allowing him to deliver the off-road reversing and coupling tests in Shrewsbury, Telford and now Wrexham areas.

"Dave Cross has completed his Driver CPC periodic training induction and been approved by the DVSA and will now be delivering Driver CPC remotely and in the classroom throughout Shropshire and the West Midlands for both the public at our training centres and closed for specific companies' training courses at their premises.

"All these changes ensure we have enough equipment, training capacity, instructors and support staff across the board to be in a position to deliver the service we continually strive for and have the means in place to cover any eventuality."

For more information about the courses provided by Dulson Training, call Telford 01952 770659, Shrewsbury 01743 709611, Wrexham 01978 805868, or visit the website at <https://www.dulsontraining.co.uk/>

New appointments build on great start to 2023

Thermal insulation specialist Seymour Manufacturing International (SMI) has announced a series of new appointments on the back of a record-breaking start to the year.

To build on the success, SMI has restructured its senior team as it prepares to launch a series of new products into the market during 2023.

Kirsty Murrell is now Operations Manager and Health & Safety Officer, Ross Clarke has been appointed Business Development Manager, and Chris Davies is now Sales Manager – with particular responsibility for leading on SMI business in Ireland.

Gemma Elsmore-Roberts' accounts role has been expanded to include Quality Officer, due to the immense amount of work involved with ISO compliance, and Matt Weaver has been recognised as Warehouse Engineer.

SMI managing director Jill Seymour said: "This is going to be an important year for the company as we expand our range with innovative new products. My husband Brian, our chairman and founder, is

constantly working on many R&D projects and is hopeful some will be launched before the end of the year.

"We have an incredibly loyal and hard-working team here who create the family atmosphere which we are proud to have always retained. I'm incredibly grateful to all of them for their support."

She added: "The success that has been achieved in the past two years has enabled us to modernise and adapt our manufacturing facilities.



Operations manager Kirsty Murrell

"We hope to be launching a new product for the agricultural sector which we believe has huge potential and cost savings, and are currently trialling a new Tempro® thermal cover for supermarket freezers which has so far been very well received."

SMI has been saving energy and money for some of the world's biggest and best well known businesses since the 1980s. The company's client list is a who's who of big-name brands, including Waitrose, Morrisons, ASDA, Sainsbury's, Co-Op and Lidl.

SMI have long relationships with the NHS, the Ministry of Defence, and has become a leading thermal insulation supplier for the protection of food, chemicals, agricultural and home delivery products.

It's all thanks to Tempro®, SMI's remarkable lightweight thermal insulation material which has been scientifically proven to cut energy loss by up to 60%, depending on the product and its working environment.

SMI's Tempro® thermal insulation product, and best-selling Cold-Stop® curtains & Back-Stop® range for the logistics are in the running for the 'Technological Breakthrough – Innovation of the Year' prize for cold storage at the 2023 Cold Chain Sustainability Awards. The awards recognise

businesses and individuals who are 'leading the way towards a more sustainable UK cold storage and temperature-controlled transport sector'. The winners will be announced later this month.

Last year SMI's founder and chairman Brian Seymour was given a 'lifetime achievement award' in recognition of his contribution to the UK temperature control storage and distribution industry.

For more details about SMI and its product range, see the website www.seymour-mi.com

SHROPSHIRE BUSINESS AWARDS Finalist

FEATURE

- COPY
- PRINT
- SCAN

Web : www.sbmdigital.co.uk
 Phone : 01952 730307
 Email : Sales@sbmdigital.co.uk

PRINT COPY SCAN MANAGE

Ricoh Gold Accredited Partner Specialising in Photocopiers & Printers

Outstanding printer & copier services





Helen Culshaw, centre, with the team at Ascendancy, based in Newport

Shropshire digital agency moves to four-day working week permanently

Staff at Shropshire digital agency Ascendancy are not generally considered to be 'clock watchers' but they have been counting the days recently . . . quite literally, as part of a UK trial into the benefits of a shorter working week.

The company has completed a six-month pilot project to trial the four-day working week and it has proved so successful that the Newport-based company has decided to make it a permanent arrangement - with Ascendancy now an officially accredited Gold Standard 4 Day Week business.

The trial was initiated by 4 Day Week Global with companies from the USA, Ireland and the UK taking part - but has seen hundreds of other companies internationally experimenting with the idea. It has proved to be a major success with reports of increased productivity and reduced levels of fatigue, stress, insomnia and burnout.

Helen Culshaw, Director of Ascendancy based in Newport, Shropshire, which took part in the UK trial from June to December said: "We put a huge amount of thought and planning into how this was going to work. Deciding that we were going to work four days a week was one thing but we still needed to provide a five-day-a-week service while still maintaining our high standards.

"Each permanent, full-time member of staff is included in the scheme once they have passed their probation period and get either a Monday or Friday as their 'rest day'. The remaining four days are slightly longer than before, but overall we have reduced the working week from 37.5 hours to 32 hours, with no reduction in pay.

"We have introduced a 'buddy' system where each team member pairs with someone with a similar skillset and on the opposite rest day. They each check the other's emails and ensure that anything urgent can be dealt with.

"The trial period was carried out in partnership with Boston College and meant us having access to a community of other businesses to compare notes with, all doing the same thing as us at the same time. We have also provided productivity and wellbeing data to academic researchers. Their findings will be published shortly.

"There were concerns going into the trial, the main one being could we get all the work done? But this hasn't been a problem and we are doing just as much work now, if not more, as we were before.

"Most of the issues have been administrative: holiday allocation, employment contracts, coming up with an HR system to meet demand, how to treat our part-timers and apprentices, and the scheduling of team meetings - but we have managed those challenges well and the key thing to running this kind of system is to be super-organised."

Ms Culshaw said she believed the four-day week was an attractive proposition in the recruiting and retaining of the most talented staff in a competitive marketplace.

"One thing that works particularly well for us is 'focus time,'" she added. "Three hours spread out over each day when the office goes quiet and we don't interrupt each other with questions. We also have a daily stand-up meeting where we name a chunky task that we are going to get done that day, say whether yesterday's task was achieved and highlight anything we need help with.

"This means any potential interruptions can be aired at the start of the day and scheduled on our calendar. We also have a quiet room where staff make video calls to clients, so as not to disturb anyone in the main office.

"The trial period worked really well for us, we are happy to make it part of our permanent working routine and are proud to be an officially accredited Gold Standard 4 Day Week business. If any business is thinking of trialling the four-day week, I would be happy to share my thoughts on how to go about it."

To contact Helen and her team visit <https://ascendancy.agency/> and to find out more about the 4 Day Week trial visit the website <https://www.4dayweek.co.uk/>

Bold investment



Mark Waugh and Amy Bould, founders of Be Bold Media

Midlands communications consultancy **Be Bold Media** is launching a range of new content and social media services after investing more than **£100,000** in a growth plan for 2023.

The investment is backed by the creation of a new content team delivering an agile newsroom-like response for clients, including broadcast-quality video and audio for media use.

Managing director Amy Bould said: "Last year was a year of change for Be Bold. We moved into fantastic new offices, brought video work in-house while securing great new talent to shape our content and social media offer to clients.

"We're building the business with the help of two new senior appointments – respected Midlands journalist Jon Simcock is now Be Bold's head of strategic communications and our PR manager Mel Boulter is promoted into a new head of operations & digital role.

"We also won significant contracts

with Midlands organisations, including Solmar Villas, Birmingham City Council and Get A-Head Charitable Trust, which like the way we go about our business – applying a strategic approach to journalist-led story-telling which secures profile and builds reputations.

"The groundwork was laid with a £100,000 investment to launch new content marketing and social media services in 2023 which will help support businesses navigating the economic downturn."

The services include newsroom quality editorial, video, podcast and online content, helping businesses reach wider audiences online cost-effectively, through their own channels.

"We already deliver this excellence to long-standing clients who we love working with and we're looking forward to more companies 'being bold' in their communications in 2023!" added Bould.

The company, which was set up in 2010 and works with a number of high profile national, regional and local clients from its new headquarters in Shropshire, is known for the significant support it provides to third sector, charitable and environmental organisations in the region. In 2023, it will again provide pro bono support to the national Dyslexia Awards after supporting founder Eli Wilkinson MBE to take the scheme nationwide in 2022.

European retreat is charity hotspot

Not many people are aware of the facilities that are offered at the Centre Algarve Holiday Centre.

24x7 Ltd (Shropshire) is raising awareness and money for this wonderful charity that can provide a family with a holiday they will never forget.

The Centre has been equipped and set up for families with members that have Special Needs, be it physical or hidden.

We would love to assist in helping families within Shropshire to be able to go abroad as a family and be able to relax!

Many of the hotels on mainland Europe can assist with some of the needs for these families, but the families we speak to are constantly finding it a struggle, Centre Algarve is the only hotel on mainland Europe that has the equipment, including hoists into the Pool and hot tub, specially equipped rooms fitted with hoists, the area is fully secured for those that like to wander and explore, they can accommodate dietary needs and more!

24x7 Ltd (Shropshire) are hosting a charity event on Friday 9th June 2023, tickets available on Eventbrite and to see more about the hotel visit:

<https://centrealgarve.org/>

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/centre-algarve-charity-dinnerdance-tickets-557779652957>



Simplifying business connectivity with the power of technology

Leading the way in digital transformation

CQS Solutions has linked up with a leading software company to embrace the latest digital innovation within the industry.

CQS company owner, Tim Lloyd, explained that the UK construction industry was currently at the receiving end of rapid and unpredictable changes.

As a result the Construction Industry Training Board has been calling on the industry to focus on digital transformation to bring the latest technology to the sector.

"Companies of all shapes and sizes face escalating costs in raw materials coupled with shipping delays and staff shortages. As the challenges mount we at CQS Solutions are convinced that making full use of digital technology is vital for the future of the industry.

"So we have teamed up with Masterbill Micro Systems to ensure that we are doing our very best to make sure we are at the forefront of our industry and

CQS is fit for the future," he said.

The Masterbill software will better allow the CQS Solutions team to meet ever stricter deadlines without compromising on the quality of its work whilst maintaining a full audit trail for its clients.

Its integrated CAD and BIM measurement software can be used anywhere where there is an internet connection – at a client's office, on site or at home.

QS CAD / MB Elite will enhance its support to clients by allowing several team members to collaborate on the same project at one time and whilst maintaining consistent quality, results and output.

The Masterbill package also gives CQS the option to work with Masterbill Measurement Services to increase resources when needed to hit tight deadlines or tackle increased workloads.

"As quantity surveyors our role is to manage our clients' supply chain and reduce costs to bring improved cost certainty, margins and productivity. We are confident that our increased integration of the Masterbill software will not only ensure our clients receive the most efficient service possible, but will also put us at the forefront of the digital revolution," said Tim Lloyd.



CQS company owner, Tim Lloyd

From disruptive start-up in 2014 to one of Europe's fastest growing tech companies, plan.com have grown into a 100+ strong team, revolutionising business communications with our technology-led approach and we're not slowing down.

After the recent acquisition of the experienced Telford based, Telserve Group, plan.com now offer a comprehensive range of services that help businesses work securely and smarter – at home, at the office or on the move.

EXPERIENCE THE BEST

We put our cutting-edge technology and the best coverage and capability of the UK's leading telecoms providers, in the hands of our customers, having set the industry standard for business communications.

my.plan is designed to operate seamlessly across devices, services and networks and is a unique platform for businesses to connect, configure and control all aspects of their business communications in one place.

Our network level controls, robust analytics and valuable real-time insights are transforming the way many of the UK's leading businesses manage, control, and optimise their workforce's connectivity and productivity.

plan.com customers enjoy the choice of both the O2 & EE, all on one account and billed on one invoice so you can have the best network whenever your people are based, paired with a level of insight beyond anything that any other network can deliver.

my.plan - Connected, configured, and controlled by the customer.

CONNECT

Single platform simplicity – Streamline mobile connectivity through one platform, with features, insights, and support on a level that you choose.

CONFIGURE

Customise the experience – Set up connectivity with simple device controls and easy to use account management tools, that deliver powerful results.

CONTROL

Unlock the power of data – Empower teams and optimise connectivity with live reporting, for faster insights and immediate action.

GETTING STARTED

Our award-winning team combined with our efficient onboarding process ensures we're with you every step of the way.

To learn more about the benefits of working with plan.com, or to book a my.plan demo, visit our website or email the team, timhubbard@plan.com.

Visit www.plan.com

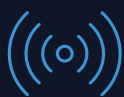


plan.com

my.plan



THE ULTIMATE CONNECTIVITY PLATFORM.



UNRIVALLED CONNECTIVITY

With two of the best mobile networks on our award-winning platform and even more exciting things to come in 2023, my.plan provides you with unrivalled choice and benefits for your business.



DETAILED INSIGHTS

Know how much you're spending, where and when, with live activity and usage views from worker to workforce. Then take control with live spend controls giving you the power and flexibility to manage access and minimise overspend.



SUPERFAST SPEEDS

Combine superfast data with custom controls through my.plan to give you real-time data insights and robust analytics, so they can make 'in-life' changes to each service and react quickly.

To find out more or to request a demo, please contact
timhubbard@plan.com

Minimising energy consumption



EFA- TK 100 ideal for cold, chilled, and deep freeze applications

The challenges facing today's food and beverage industry are more complex and diverse than ever; temperature control, hygiene, speed of logistics, safety, while minimising the risk of incidents and ensuring timely deliveries. These are just some factors that companies juggle ... daily. Thankfully with nearly 50 years' experience, EFAFLEX have designed an array of high-speed interior and exterior industrial doors that provide a solution for every element along the supply chain journey.

How can EFAFLEX help

Downtimes are unwanted and costly. Reliability, versatility, and durability are some of the objectives cited by leading food producers; upgrading and replacing old roller shutters or sectional doors for energy saving, insulated, high speed alternatives, that also offer a multitude of activation choice such as remote control, or laser scanners. Thankfully, the combination of safeguarding users, speeding up logistics, and reducing energy costs are the key design factors built into every EFAFLEX product.

EFAFLEX UK Managing Director, Darren Turrell explains, 'Facts such as our doors open at speeds of up to 4 metres per second are easy to say, but there's nothing quite like seeing an EFAFLEX door in motion. The speed, the quality, and the durability can't be



Fabric roll up door – delivering exceptional price performance ratio

translated into a picture or even a video. Returning to Foodex gives us the opportunity to demonstrate the product and discuss how our bespoke door options can help each and every customer.'

A one door solution for deep freeze areas

On their stand (B69) visitors will see three of the most popular models used in the food and beverage industry. The TK-100 thermal door is a unique one-door solution for deep-freeze areas as it delivers exceptional insulation properties and perfect for environments $\pm 30^{\circ}\text{C}$. A practically hermetic seal that provides constant temperatures to prevent condensation or buildup of frost. The TK-100 is perfect for deep freeze and blast freeze zones.

Alternatively, the fabric, roll-up easy clean curtain (CRC) with its integrated design, encapsulating all but the curtain and control panel. Perfect for applications calling for the highest levels of hygiene for example within food processing.

The original and still the best

Move along to the production loading area or warehouse facility, and this is where the turbo spiral door comes into its own. Opening at speeds of up to 3 metres per second and capable of up to 200,000 operating cycles per year, it features 70% crystal clear acrylic glass laths for increased visibility, user safety and transfer of natural light. It also helps with noise insulation too!

Many of the high street supermarkets and their supply chain have come to rely on EFAFLEX with clients including drink producers, food manufacturers, and the latest trend - meal kit suppliers.

From field to fork, EFAFLEX have an industrial door solution for every step of this journey.

Find out for yourself why EFAFLEX is quickly becoming the door of choice for food and beverage industry by visiting stand B69 at Foodex 24 – 26th April, NEC.



The spiral turbo door has insulation laths and opening speeds up to 3 m/second

**FOODEX
MANUFACTURING
SOLUTIONS**



24 - 26 April | NEC, Birmingham

**Where the processing, packaging
& logistics sectors meet**

See us on Stand B69

EFAFLEX – see us on stand B69

clickingmad

DAINS
ACCOUNTANTS

DY
dykeyaxley
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

enreach



Why do dyslexia training services matter so much?

The world of business is changing. More neurodivergent minds are joining the workforce than ever before, and the power of neurodiverse teams is becoming a topic of conversation in every sector. It's a huge shift in the right direction for accessibility and inclusion... but it does require a shift in our thinking, too.

Many neurodivergent professionals find they need support in traditional ways of working. This requires both their teammates and their management structures to think communication, goals, and how best to support a diversifying workforce.

That's where dyslexia and neurodiversity training services come in.

A professional, guided education through the idea of dyslexia and other neurodivergent minds in the workplace is key in creating neurodiversity strategies that work for everybody: supported teams are stronger teams, and stronger teams have the satisfaction and sticking power to make things work even in times where many may be keeping a closer eye on our finances.

New ways of working are a daunting prospect for some. Established patterns, systems and softwares may need to be thought out again; or they might just need a tweak. What's important to remember is that you're not expected to know it all first time—but you are expected to meet your workforce's needs under the Equality Act.

Help is out there, ready to get you up to speed and able to take on the challenge. Global dyslexia positivity movement Succeed With Dyslexia are proud to announce a series of new training courses are now available via their Training and Assessment department.

Drawing on the knowledge of dedicated dyslexia experts, SWD offers training for businesses and individuals who want to understand their changing teams and support them to do the best work they possibly can. From managing neurodiverse teams to supporting mental wellbeing and cultivating inclusion, these learning opportunities can be tailored to unique workplace needs or simply provide an overview of best practice, policy and legislation. They join SWD's original group of introductory courses that explore dyslexia at work, and are all available online via www.succeedwithdyslexia.org/training.

Expanding training support in this way is part of SWD's drive to take neurodiversity positivity to where it's needed, by way of raising awareness, fostering support opportunities, and navigating that message out into the heart of the community in 2023.

To find out more about SWD's training opportunities, visit www.succeedwithdyslexia.org/training or contact training@succeedwithdyslexia.org to start a conversation with one of the experts.



Drawing on the knowledge of dedicated dyslexia experts, SWD offers training for businesses and individuals who want to understand their changing teams and support them to do the best work they possibly can



Supporting cast for theatre group



Moonstruck Astronaut artistic director Hannah de Quincey and Jenny Osborne from Henshalls

Youngsters in Newport will get to take part in a local youth theatre project next year thanks to the support of a local company.

Henshalls Insurance Brokers has donated £250 to the Moonstruck Astronaut Theatre Company – a not-for-profit community theatre group that is based in Newport.

The cash will help subsidise a number of children to join the project whose families would otherwise be unable to afford to pay for them to attend.

The aim of Moonstruck Astronaut is to bring together the local community of Newport and the surrounding areas through theatre projects firstly with children and then extending to all ages.

Artistic director Hannah de Quincey said: "Based on years of experience teaching drama and directing theatre, we are passionate about the extensive benefits to a community's well-being of taking part in communal creativity."

"We're extremely grateful to Henshalls for their support and we're looking forward to devising next year's Newport Youth Theatre sessions that will begin in January, on the theme of Folktales of the Shire."

Jenny Osborne, for Henshalls, said: "Our head office is based at the heart of the Newport community, and it's always fantastic to be able to support organisations and groups in the town that make a real difference."

"Moonstruck Astronaut theatre company is an inspirational and welcoming group that helps children to explore their creative and artistic ideas, and we're delighted to be part of their growing support network."

The theatre company is always looking for volunteers to support its sessions and would like to hear from anyone over 16 who may have spare time on Saturdays from January onwards who could help, or over the Easter and Summer holidays for the Drama in the Forest workshops to be held at the Wrekin Forest School.

They are specifically looking for locally-based drama workshop assistants, stage management, technical, backstage and operational, administration and social media support.

Visit www.moonstruckastronaut.com to find out more.



Mark Freeman, managing director of Henshalls in Newport

Shropshire insurance broker signs new deal

Henshalls Insurance Brokers has announced the company has been acquired by the UK operation of the fifth largest insurance broker in the world.

The Shropshire firm, which has its head office in Newport and branches in Shrewsbury and Stafford, has signed a deal with Global Risk Partners (GRP) which is a major force in the UK and Irish retail insurance markets and part of US broker Brown & Brown Inc.

Henshalls managing director Mark Freeman said: "We have operated as a proud independent broker since 1967 and decided that now was the right time to join GRP. This will enable us to continue our ambitious growth plans and expand our footprint in this area of the UK."

"In our discussions with GRP, it became clear that joining them was the best future option for our business, our excellent team and for our customers. The deal builds on our strong foundation of loyalty and commitment to the local community, and

we're looking forward to the next exciting chapter for our business."

Henshalls was founded in 1967 and specialises in insurance cover for various industries including food and drink, manufacturing, construction, charities, sports, and hospitality. It also operates two other brands: Bayliss and Cooke in Stafford, and Coachline providing cover for buses, coaches and minibuses.

Following the deal, Mark and his fellow directors Martin Pitchford, Dave Williams, Anthony Hughes and Neil Atkinson, and their 42-strong team of staff will remain with the business.

Stephen Ross, head of M&A at GRP, said: "Henshalls is a really good fit for our business and gives us a valuable presence in Shropshire and Staffordshire."

"The Shropshire region is not widely served by brokerages so we are pleased that a company with the well-deserved reputation that Henshalls has achieved over so many years has chosen to join us."

The Henshalls deal is the fifth acquisition completed by GRP so far this year, including four in the retail division and a deal with Nucleus Underwriting. GRP has its head office in London and has ongoing plans to acquire brokerages right across the UK.

Fuel Cost Uncertainty Continues...

“
**STAFF
SHORTAGES**
*...holding
business back*

“
**INFLATION
WORRIES**
*...still looms
large*

“
**DOMESTIC
ORDERS**
*...expected to
pick up*

“
**BREXIT
WOES**
*...still creating
export barriers*

INFLATION & FUEL

Inflation driven by high fuel costs is damaging.

The large increases in fuel costs weighs heavy on every sector, keeping inflation firmly in focus.

The inflationary fall out has crept into every corner of business. Wage rise demands continue, as staff struggle with rising prices of food and fuel.

Business mortgages have become more expensive along with borrowing. Loans are having to be repaid when cash flow is weakened by cost rises. Raw materials, transport and services have all had to increase prices to meet their commitments and this passes on to businesses further up the chain.

“When will the inflationary pressures ease?”

This is a common question, and though prices will remain high, inflation will start to fall quickly this year according to the **Bank of England February 2023 Monetary Policy Report**, which will come as good news to businesses large and small.



We want to hear your views...

Each quarter Shropshire Chamber takes part in the British Chambers of Commerce national economic survey. In this report, you will see the results for Shropshire, trending from as far back as 2009. If you and your company would like to take part in these surveys, please contact policy@shropshire-chamber.co.uk giving your name, company name and the email to which invitations should be sent.

Please note this is only open to businesses in **Shropshire** and **Telford & Wrekin**, and Chamber Membership is not required to take part. Those in neighbouring counties should approach the British Chambers of Commerce to locate their nearest BCC Accredited Chamber.

This survey is open to businesses from all sectors including public sector and the third sector. The survey is open to any size of business from micro's, who employ no staff, to the very largest businesses. The data is used both locally and nationally to lobby those in power on the main topics of concern. The national survey is highly respected and is used by Central Government and the Bank of England to understand the economic situation and pressures facing businesses in the UK.

The greater our business voice, the more valuable the information becomes, so we want to encourage every business, Chamber member or not, to add their voice to this vital survey.

DOMESTIC (UK) SALES INCREASES

UK Sales Past:

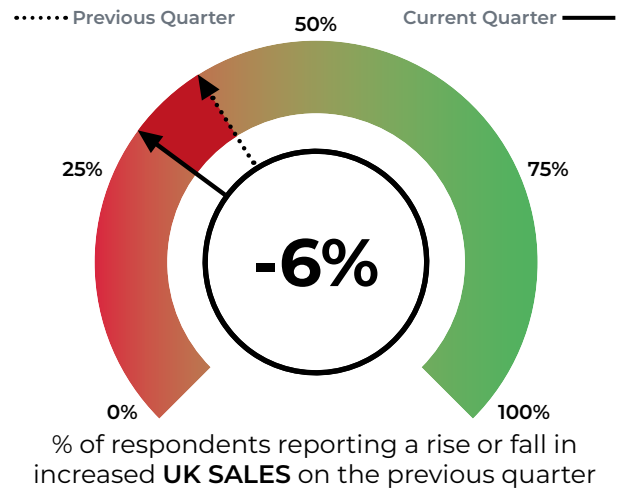
"The increase in sales is due to playing catch up after Covid and is not as much as we need."

Agri/Energy Sector

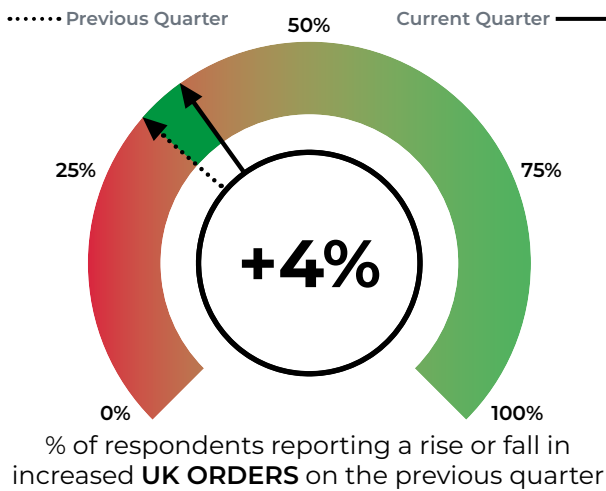
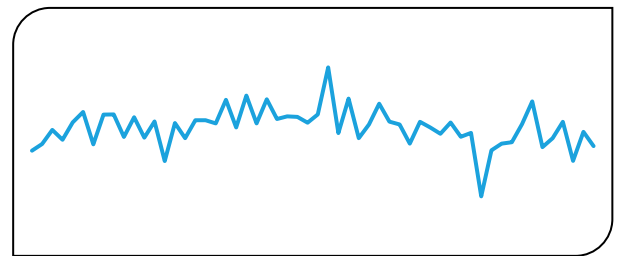
"Strong forward order book despite the pessimistic economic outlook. Suspect this partially as a result of pent-up Covid demand."

Construction/Engineering Sector

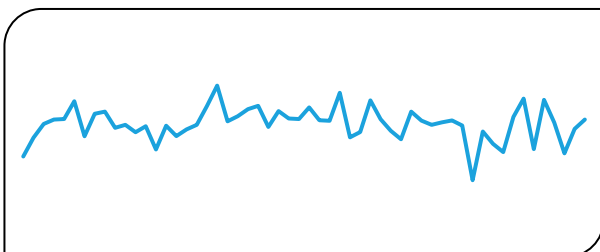
Sales increases are still subdued. Those seeing increased UK sales was 30%, down from Q1 2022 which was 33%.



2009 UK Sales Past 2023



2009 UK Sales Future 2023



UK Sales Future:

"Demand for our services & products remain steady."

Consumer Services Sector

Despite inflation and other pressures businesses expect sales increases to rise in the next 3 months.

The 35% who expect a rise in UK orders is the highest figure in the last 4 quarters.

EXPORT SALES

INCREASES

Export Sales Past:

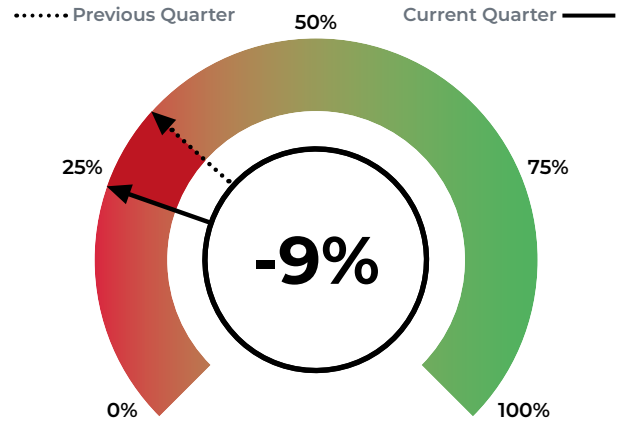
"I do not export at all now due to post Brexit red tape."

Marketing/Media Sector

"Because of the paperwork, delays and import taxes many of our European customers are not buying from us anymore, enquiries are right down."

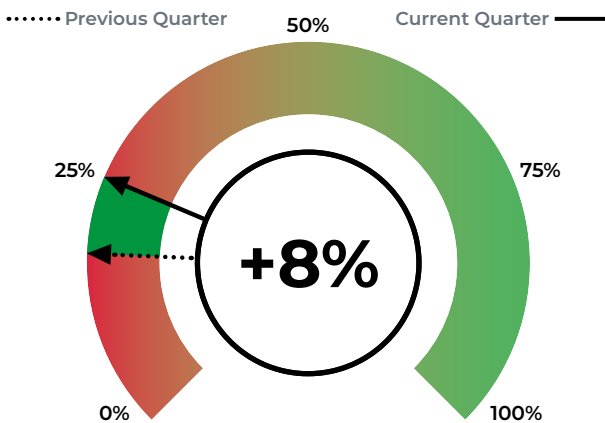
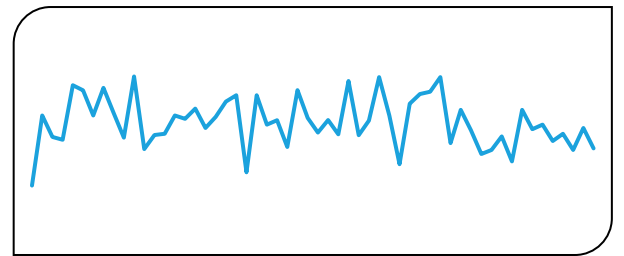
Manufacturing Sector

Those expecting increased export sales fell away by 9% from the previous quarter.



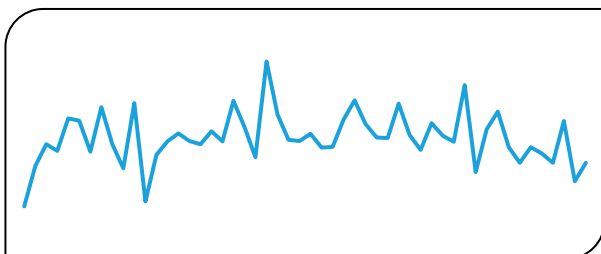
% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **EXPORT SALES** on the previous quarter

2009 Export Sales Past 2023



% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **EXPORT ORDERS** on the previous quarter

2009 Export Sales Future 2023



Export Sales Future:

Though the expected sale increases are low there is a marked pick up this quarter.

"Our exports, while never large, have dropped following Brexit, we now have one customer in the States who is 95% of exports by volume."

Retail/Wholesale Sector

"It's much more difficult to deal with the EU now."

Retail/Wholesale Sector

WORKFORCE PAST & FUTURE

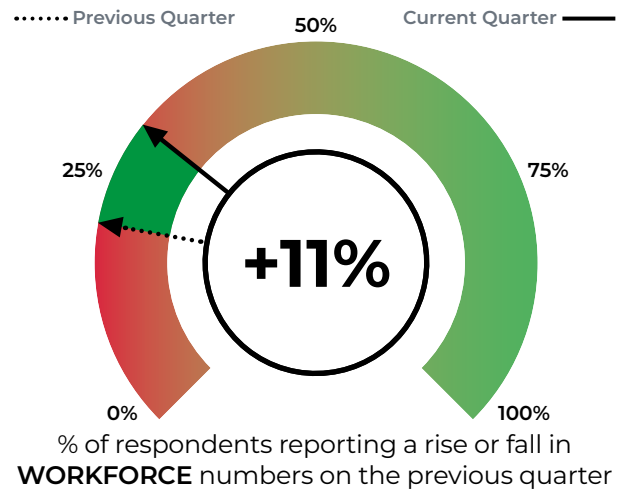
INCREASES

Workforce Past:

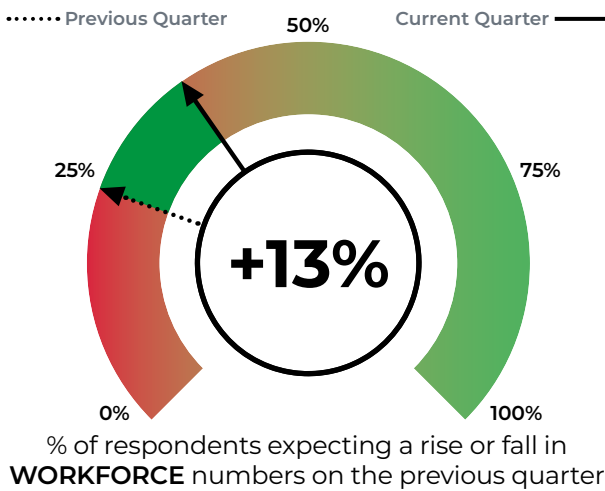
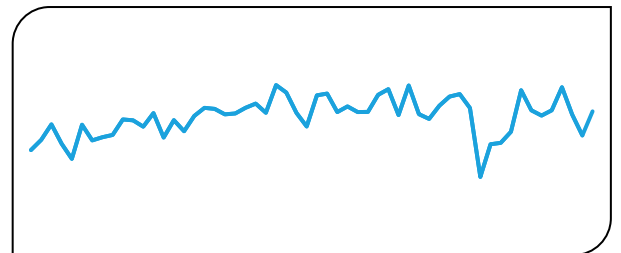
"Difficult to employ anyone although we pay well and look after our staff."
Manufacturing Sector

"Our workforce has remained constant. We would like to take on another employee but the cost of our energy has increased too much to be able to afford to."
Manufacturing Sector

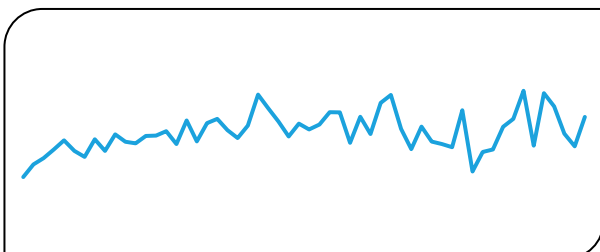
Recruitment issues still dominate workforce woes.



2009 **Workforce Past** 2023



2009 **Workforce Future** 2023



Workforce Future:

"Cost of living crisis making it harder to retain staff at current wage. Impact of Brexit, inflation, etc."
Other Services Sector

"Some of our staff are now on reduced time!"
Professional Services Sector

The workforce continues to be very transient, which is not supportive of business.

SKILLS & RECRUITMENT

Companies Recruiting:



“Experienced construction managers are still in very short supply. Regular site personnel becoming a little more readily available due to a slow down in the new housing market.”

Construction/Engineering Sector

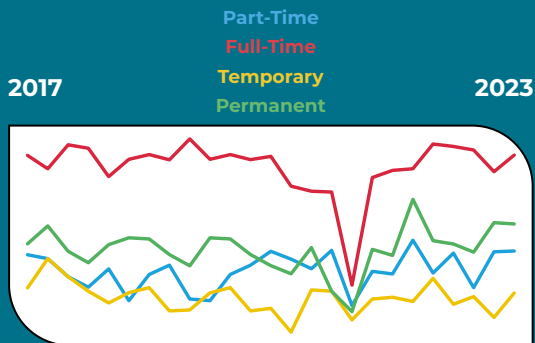
“Hard to find reliable housekeeping and event staff willing to work, even above the minimum wage.”

Hospitality/Tourism Sector

Recruitment often brings staff who are qualified but still do not have the skills expected from their qualifications.



Staff Types:

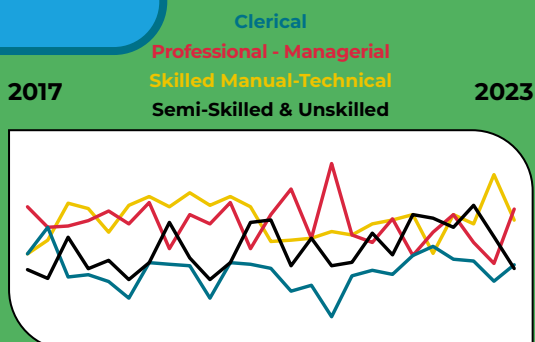


Despite the drive to flexi working and part-time, the figures show that most vacancies are full-time.

“We get a lot with not enough experience for the role applied for.”

Construction/Engineering Sector

Post Types:



“A lack of work ethic and range of skills, is an issue.”

Professional Services Sector

“Very few applications, but those who have contacted us want ultimate flexibility without being prepared to make any commitment.”

Marketing/Media Sector

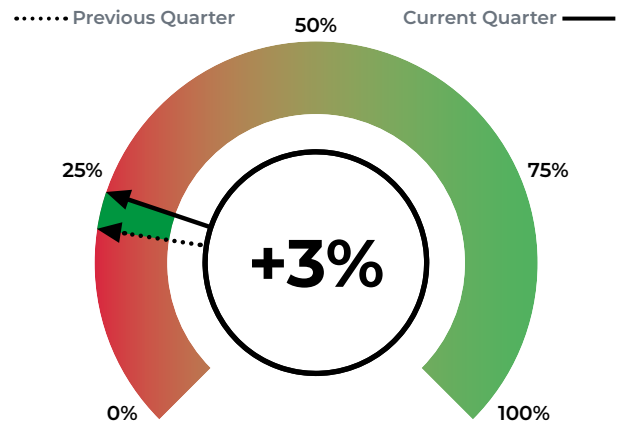
CASH FLOW INCREASES

Cash Flow:

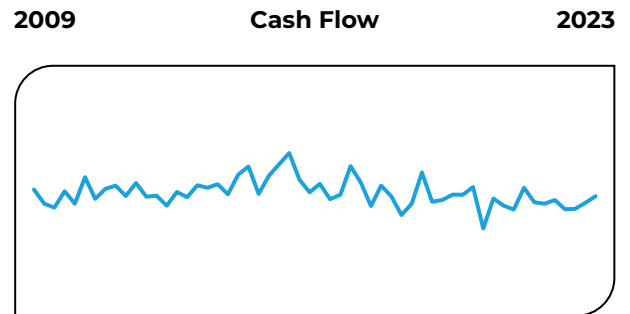
"We are investing in automation equipment in order to reduce reliance on production staff but this has not helped with cash flow."
Manufacturing Sector

"Because 80% of our costs are wage related cutting staff can help cashflow."
Service Sector

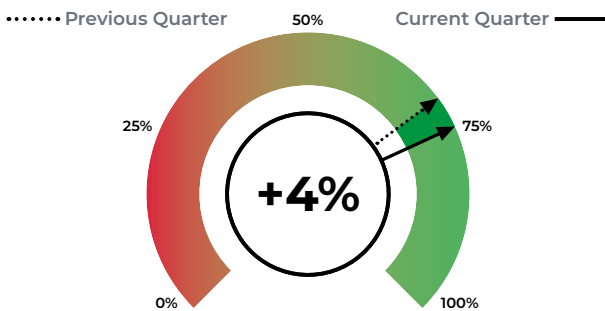
"Payment timings have slowed but we are aware of this and are changing our credit policy to protect cash flow."
Professional Services Sector



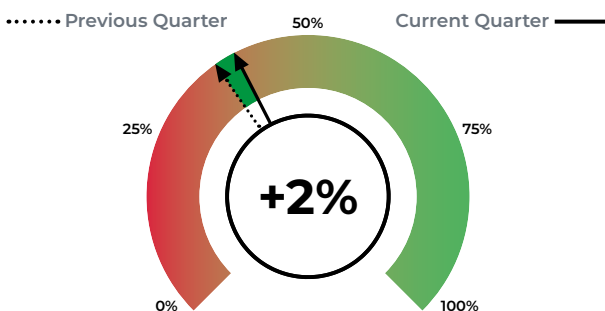
% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **CASH FLOW** on the previous quarter



FEAR FACTORS



% of respondents seeing **INFLATION** as a fear factor compared to last quarter



% of respondents seeing **INTEREST RATES** as a fear factor compared to last quarter

Fear Factors:

Hot on the heels of interest rate worries is taxation, with 32% saying they fear taxation will affect their business.

The old front runner, pre pandemic, was always competition, whereas now it resides in 2nd to bottom place as a fear.

70% see labour costs as a worry for their business.

INVESTMENT INCREASES

Plant & Machinery

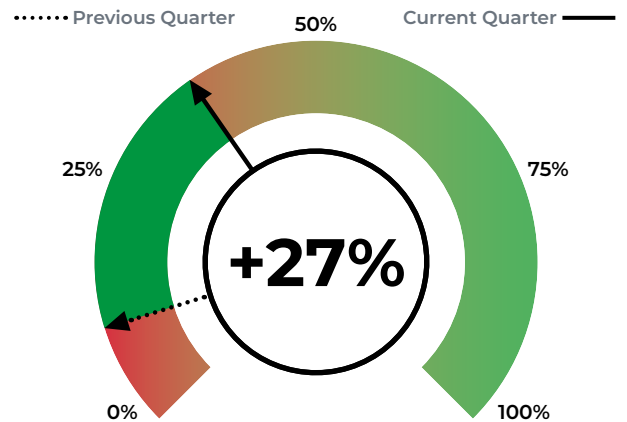
"Due to the lack of availability and reliability (and expense) of staff, the Company has been investing disproportionately in automation equipment in order to reduce reliance on production staff."

Manufacturing Sector

"At the moment we are not looking at buying any new equipment due to concerns about business rates which are due and rising energy costs."

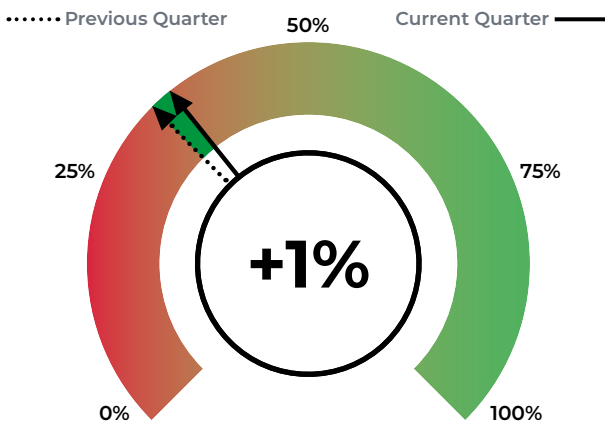
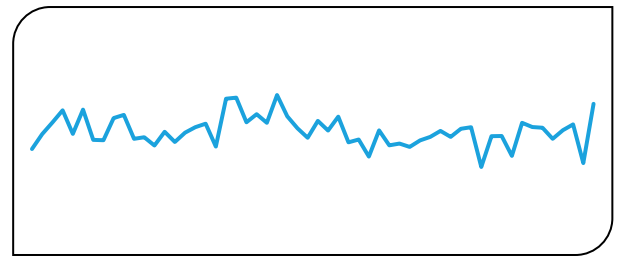
Consumer Service Sector

This quarter sees a marked rise in those saying that they intend to invest more, the best quarter since pre-pandemic.



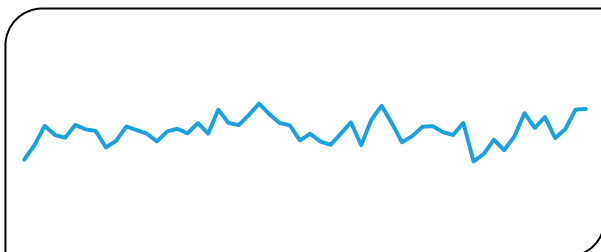
% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **P&M INVESTMENT** on the previous quarter

2009 **Plant & Machinery** 2023



% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **TRAINING INVESTMENT** on the previous quarter

2009 **Training** 2023



Training

"Cash flow has remained constant only due to cut back measures which includes training."

Consumer Service Sector

"We have increased our training as we see this as a long-term money saving solution."

Professional Services Sector

Training spend increases inched up but only by 1% on last quarter. Employers are having to upskill current staff to manage staff shortages.

**CONFIDENCE
INCREASES**

Turnover:

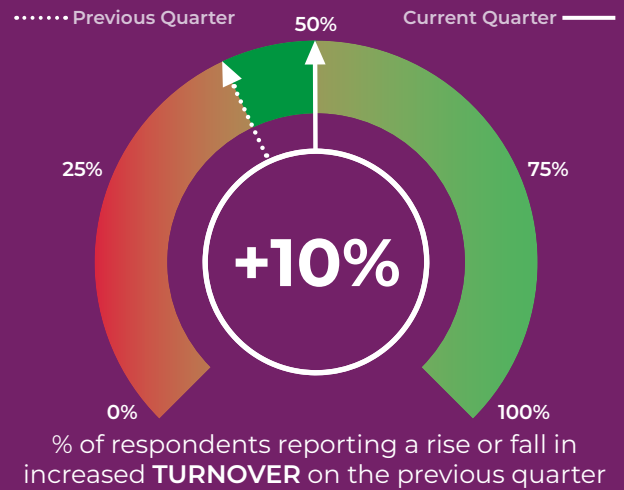
“Business Confidence - More cautious clients makes it difficult to predict future revenues.”

Hospitality/Tourism Sector

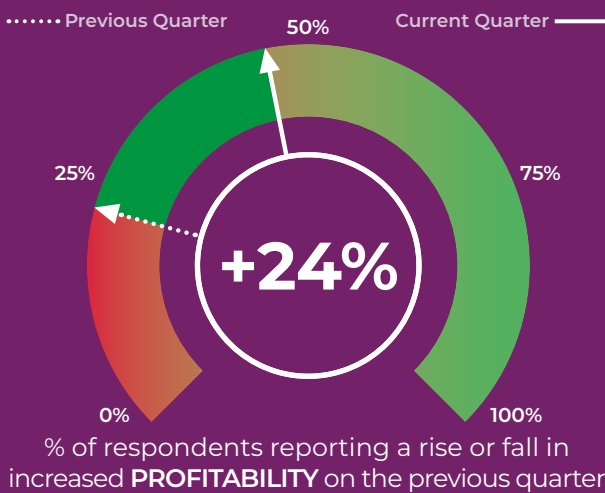
“Our B2C and B2B customers are all being cautious about spending.”

Manufacturing Sector

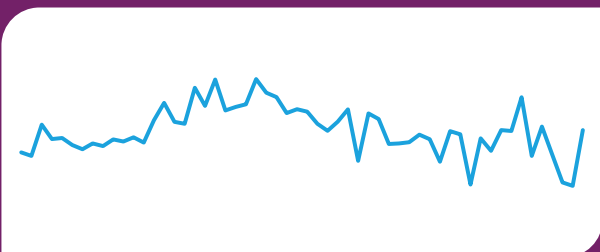
Turnover confidence got a boost this quarter after the fears of last winter quarters eased.



2009 Turnover 2023



2009 Profitability 2023



Profitability:

“Our turnover will remain the same, I am not expecting higher numbers of clients, however due to increased costs, our profitability can only go downwards.”

Professional Services Sector

“Due to the fact we are funding through Government and Council Tax our budgets remain pretty constant in terms of what is coming in. However, with rising costs across the board (cost of living, non-pay costs, pay costs) we are already reviewing our capital and revenue expenditure.”

Public Sector

CAPACITY | PRICE vs COST

Capacity:

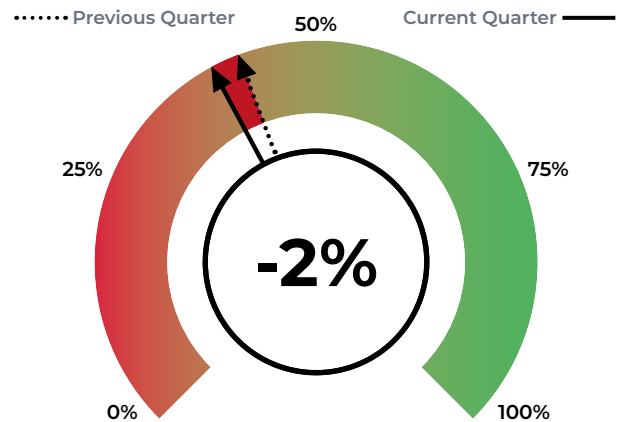
"Currently struggling to get orders out due to lack of staff."

Manufacturing Sector

"We are currently expanding capacity."

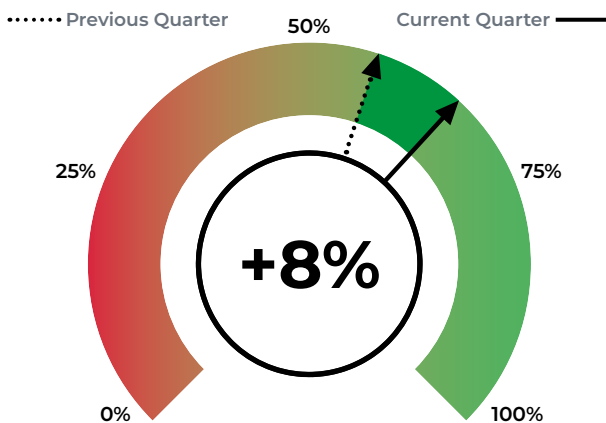
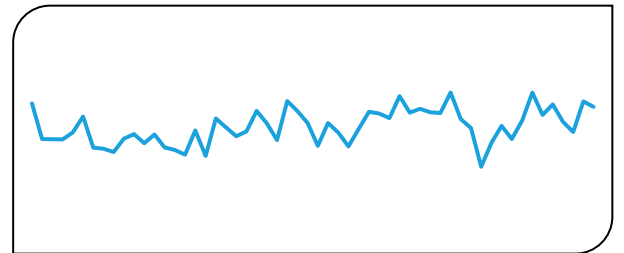
Consumer Services Sector

Those working at full capacity dipped very slightly but is still very much in the norm for capacity.



% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in **FULL CAPACITY WORKING** on the previous quarter

2009 Full Capacity 2023



% of respondents expecting to **INCREASE PRICES** compared to the previous quarter

Price vs Cost:

81% said that they are having to offer higher wages to attract staff!

"There was never going to be a good Brexit - a good Brexit was always unachievable. We rely on the hospitality industry for a lot of our trade customers - they are closing or reducing days open due to lack of staff (all gone home because of Brexit) and unreliable supplier issues (no longer in the Single Market and Customs Union). Our EU customers have vanished due to high or unexpected import duties."

Manufacturing Sector



ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Business Pressures

1

Are you having to offer higher wages to attract new staff?

2

As a result of higher cost do you anticipate having to lay off any staff?

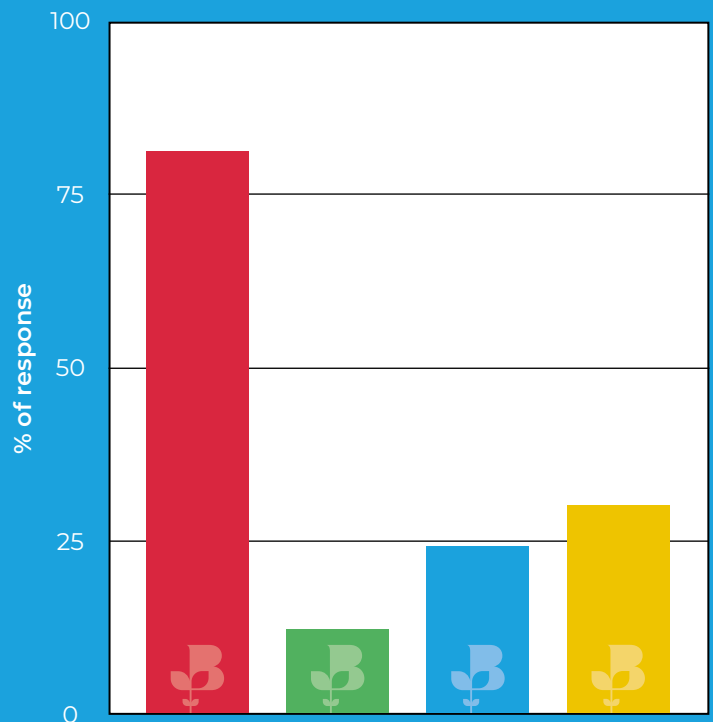
3

Are your credit terms getting worse?

4

Are bad debts increasing?

Graph shows the % of those who said YES to each question



Comments:

"With the rising cost of living we have found more returning to work which is creating a continuous flow of applicants."

Transport/Logistics Sector

"Whilst increased, we struggle to recruit staff of the calibre we are requiring. Countless fail to turn up for interview. Recruitment platforms are expensive for little benefit."

Services Sector

"Time management, communication skills and motivation are what many candidates lack!"

Services Sector

your voice MATTERS!

The greater the voice, the greater the influence we can have to support you

- ✓ Confidential
- ✓ Highly respected
- ✓ Informs Government

Contact us
TODAY!

Contact policy@shropshire-chamber.co.uk today to have your name added to the Chamber survey invite list

About the QES

The **Quarterly Economic Survey (QES)** is the flagship economic survey from the **British Chambers of Commerce**. **Shropshire Chamber** is responsible for the collection of data, for the survey, in both Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. The data gives Shropshire Chamber vital economic indicators, facts which are used to lobby, inform Chamber strategy, as well as to support the local business community.

The national collated data, the largest and most highly respected survey of its type, is used to inform and lobby Government departments, assist the Bank of England, and inform a wide variety of other relevant bodies and economists. The survey happens four times per year.

Every Single Business Voice Matters!

The greater the voice, the greater the influence we can have to support you and your business. **All businesses from Shropshire / Telford & Wrekin are welcome**, Chamber member or not, sole trader to multinational. It is anonymous to ensure you can speak freely.

If you would like to discuss partnering with us for the next **Quarterly Economic Survey**, please contact **Ruth Ross** on:
r.ross@shropshire-chamber.co.uk





Alasdair Hobbs of Human Results, based in Telford

HR and employment specialists celebrates its 20th anniversary

A team of HR and employment law specialists in Shropshire are celebrating their 20th anniversary this year - after doubling in size in the space of a few years.

Human Results, which is based in Telford, assists companies all over the UK on a range of employment issues, including recruitment, absence management and disciplinary advice.

Managing director of the firm, employment solicitor Alasdair Hobbs, said the team swiftly expanded from being a "man with a laptop" to the busy office it is today.

He said: "I acquired the company nine years ago, and began as a sole advisor following many years of being a practising solicitor, specialising in employment law.

"I quickly realised there was huge demand for a personalised and flexible approach to providing HR services, so we grew quite rapidly.

"We work with a lot of SME businesses who don't necessarily have their own in-

house HR expertise, providing everything from full outsourcing of HR functions to ad hoc advice on specific issues.

"The core of our retained service to companies includes making sure their paperwork is correct, drafting contracts of employment, helping with difficult decisions around dismissals, redundancy, restructuring, service provision changes, chairing difficult meetings and dispute resolution, including tribunal litigation.

"A lot of our recent work has been related to recruitment challenges and retaining staff - quiet resignations are a big issue since the Covid pandemic, and everyone is finding it difficult to attract enough skilled staff."

Mr Hobbs said there were a number of ideas being considered for how the firm was going to celebrate the 20th anniversary.

"It's a significant milestone and demonstrates our commitment to our clients over the past 20 years, which is certainly worth celebrating," he said.

"We are discussing a number of options, and are looking forward to sharing more details in due course. Whatever we do, we will hope to involve a local charity so we can raise some money for a worthwhile cause."

For more information about Human Results, visit www.humanresults.co.uk

Helping staff with mental health is more than a 'tick box'

Mental health training for staff should be backed up with action and not just done to "tick a box", a Shropshire-based employment law expert has warned.

Alasdair Hobbs, of Human Results in Telford, said investing in the wellbeing of their staff was an important responsibility for every business, but was not always done effectively.

He said: "From an employer's perspective, mental health often gets overlooked until someone goes off sick, and if they are off for more than a couple of weeks with work-related stress, all of the statistics show they are unlikely to return.

"You are then left with the complexities of long-term absence and ultimately dismissal, or indeed fighting a constructive dismissal claim.

"It's absolutely right that mental health has become more of a priority for businesses, and indeed in general society, and improving staff wellbeing is always in the best interests of everyone.

"However, there has been a tendency in recent years for employers to see mental health first aid training as something of a tick box exercise.

"It's tempting for businesses to sign up for mental health charters and other initiatives, all of which are laudable, but then fail to install the necessary culture and HR policies to provide a healthy working environment."

Alasdair said ensuring that absence rates remained low was vital for the success of any business, particularly SMEs, and looking after their staff was integral to that.

He added: "The problem for SMEs is knowing where to invest what the business can afford, and mental health first aid training has been very popular in recent years, but there are other ways of looking at it.

"There are innovative ways of monitoring staff and collecting data to help an employer understand if there are any issues, but not every SME can afford to do that.

"I think most small employers are actually very good because ultimately they value their staff.

"Enabling things like flexible working practices and being sensible when it comes to booking holidays can go a long way to making employees feel valued and improving their mental health - possibly even more effective than placing all of your staff on a training course."

For more advice about employment law and HR issues, visit the website at www.humanresults.co.uk or call 01952 288361.





Time to celebrate – The Hundred House at Norton won the Best Wedding Barn Venue in the West Midlands category at The Wedding Industry Awards 2023

Wedding venue is a four-time winner

A Shropshire wedding venue is celebrating after picking up a prestigious award - for the fourth time!

The Hundred House at Norton, near Bridgnorth, won the Best Wedding Barn Venue in the West Midlands category at The Wedding Industry Awards 2023 (TWIA) and now goes on to challenge for the national title at an event to be held in London in January.

It is the fourth TWIA regional award success for the family-run Hundred House, following on from three wins pre-covid and is particularly pleasing as a large part of the judging criteria was made up of feedback and votes from couples who married at the venue.

Weddings at the Hundred House, located between Telford and Bridgnorth, are held in the 17th century tithe barn at the rear of the successful country pub, restaurant and hotel and is fully licensed for all civil marriage ceremonies. The client-voted TWIA were launched in 2011 to recognise and reward excellence within the UK weddings industry.

Stuart Phillips, of the Hundred House, said: "This is amazing news for us and we are absolutely delighted. The Wedding Industry Awards are the highlight of the year and everyone connected with the wedding industry wants to win one - they are the 'Oscars' of the industry!

"It's the first time we have entered for three years and despite some mega tough competition from other stunning wedding venues across the West Midlands, we have won through-- again! It's fantastic!

"After winning three times previously, we took the decision not to enter after 2019 out of respect for the more than 120 couples who were forced to postpone their weddings due to Covid - It just didn't seem right, but we felt the 2023 awards presented the ideal opportunity to get involved again.

"We were up against extremely stiff competition of the highest quality which included big budget venues, some with a much higher price tag than us, but our idyllic wedding venue once again came up trumps - showing we can hold our own with anyone nationally.

"The judging process is primarily down to feedback and votes from couples who have experienced their wedding with us, which makes the win extra special for our team. Other factors in the decision making focus on the critique on our website, social media platforms and literature.

"We are very proud of our ongoing success, which is due to our excellent wedding & kitchen team as well as our beautiful oak tithe barn & gardens.

"Our team never relax the quality of service they provide, the care and attention they put into every moment and detail is what makes it special. We have so many people in the team that are family, quite literally, brothers and sisters, couples, mums and daughters, cousins and so on. It's a close knit team with a lot of experience and this is what makes the difference.

A wedding is one of the most important days in a couple's life and everything must go exactly as it should, making it a really special experience.

For more about The Hundred House, call 01952 580240, email weddings@hundredhouse.co.uk or visit the website at <https://www.hundredhouse.co.uk/>



Marathon challenge in memory of mum

A Welshpool woman is in training to run this year's London Marathon in memory of her mum who passed away just before Christmas.

Lisa Andrew, 32, Internal Sales Manager at Welshpool-based Morland, will be heading to the capital with a support team of family and friends for the event on Sunday, April 23rd and is hoping to raise at least £5,000 for Brain Research UK.

It will be her first attempt at running a full marathon, although she did complete a half-marathon about five years ago, and is keen to raise as much money as possible for a cause very close to her heart.

"My mum was diagnosed with a primary Grade 4 brain tumour, also called a glioblastoma, in March last year. It was not operable so my mum was offered a course of radiotherapy, in conjunction with chemotherapy medication," said Lisa.

"She responded well to the treatment and remained well until she finished the course of radiotherapy; unfortunately, the chemotherapy medication began to make her very unwell, leading to further scans, which revealed the treatment had not worked, and the tumour had grown.

"Due to how difficult the treatments had been, on receiving the updated prognosis, my mum made the brave decision to cease further treatments and focus on enjoying as much time with her family as possible. She passed away just before Christmas.

"A Glioblastoma is the most common high grade primary brain tumour in adults. It is fast growing and diffuses into other parts of the brain. Even if the tumour is treated it may come back. The average survival rate is 12-18 months and only 25% of patients survive more than a year.

"One of Brain Research UK's current research priorities is brain tumours so I very much hope that raising money for Brain Research UK will help fund more research into glioblastomas and improve the prognosis for people diagnosed with this horrible cancer. If I can help other families in a similar situation, then a little bit of sweat from running in the marathon is the least I can do!"

To help her on her way, Lisa arranged an internal raffle for the team at Morland to get involved and she thanked everyone who has donated prizes, bought raffle tickets and donated money towards her £5,000 target.

"Over Christmas Morland suppliers sent us loads of gifts for the raffle and we will be drawing that next week with all money raised also going to Brain Research UK," Lisa added. "Everyone at work has got involved, which is great, and I can't thank them enough. My overall target is £5,000 but I will be happy to raise as much as I can.

"Training for the marathon has gone pretty well and my longest run so far is 17 miles. I have a couple of longer runs to do yet to help prepare but I will be ready and raring to go when the time comes.

"Watching the London Marathon, I always thought it would be amazing to take part. Every year I have entered the ballot to compete but have never been successful in getting a place. Now it is a case of, well, I have got to do it now! But it's for charity, so it is less about me and more about raising money."

Richard Allen, Sales & Marketing Director at Morland, said: "Lisa is an inspiration and we are all very much behind her as she takes on the marathon and the fundraising.

"Supporting staff through difficult times including through grief is important and then through their efforts like this too. Go Lisa - you can do it!"

To make a donation in support of Lisa's London Marathon fundraiser run, visit <https://lnkd.in/eBcw4ESn> and for more about Brain Research UK, visit <https://www.brainresearchuk.org.uk/>



Lisa Andrew will be raising funds for Brain Research UK



Deputy Lieutenants Mandy Thorn MBE, Gill Hamer and Fiona Rogers-Coltman, were present at the ceremony, along with Shropshire Chamber of Commerce CEO Richard Sheehan and deputy CEO Ruth Ross and a number of Jesmonite suppliers



Mr Littleton presented a clock made out of Jesmonite to HM Lord-Lieutenant, destined for her kitchen



Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire Anna Turner presented Jesmonite director and co-owner Emma Pearson with the award

HM Lord-lieutenant visits to present Queen's Award

Staff at a Shropshire business were presented with the prestigious Queen's Award for International Trade at a celebration ceremony at the county headquarters.

Jesmonite, based in Bishop's Castle, won this year's Queen's Award for Enterprise for their growth and success in International Trade.

Since announcing the award win earlier this year, the company has expanded the reach of the global brand further to Africa and America, as well as setting up distribution hubs in Europe and Canada.

At the time of applying for the accolade for Outstanding Short Term Growth in overseas sales over the last three years, Jesmonite's overseas sales had grown by 108% and made up 45.7% of all sales and the company's top five markets were South Korea, Bahrain, Netherlands, Spain and Japan with around 54 distributors.

The firm now boasts 72 distributors across more than 40 different countries and employs 20 staff members at the south Shropshire base where many members of staff live in the town.

Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire Anna Turner presented Jesmonite director and co-owner Emma Pearson with the award and grant of appointment at the Jesmonite headquarters in Challenge Court where the Queen's Award flag was flying on Monday. (December 12th)

Piran Littleton, director and co-owner, thanked the team of staff present telling them they "are the most important part of the business".

He said they entered the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise to "shout about the fantastic growth which was

happening at Jesmonite and within Bishop's Castle" and show others where the brand was going in the world.

"We have doubled in size and since winning the Queen's Award we have increased our worldwide sales by 25 per cent.

"Jesmonite is being used in some truly remarkable projects across the world including film sets, theme parks and also one of the finalists for the Turner Prize.

"This is about celebrating and marking who we are now and we should all be very proud."

His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant said Jesmonite had been "recognised as exceptional whilst demonstrating outstanding standards in International Trade which out of them all is the most exclusive award".

After meeting with the board members of the company, along with all of the staff from across the business, HM Lord-Lieutenant praised the staff for "putting their backs" into their roles - many of whom are just starting out in their careers. She said the award marked their huge dedication to their roles and they should all be very proud.

Following the presentation of the award, Mr Littleton said the company was bucking the current manufacturing industry statistics and praised the staff for the company's growth and success.

"We've employed more, we've produced more and we've exported more.

"If you want to be brilliant, surround yourself with brilliant people and that is you," he said.

Mr Littleton presented a clock made out of Jesmonite to HM Lord-Lieutenant which she said would hang proudly in her kitchen.

Deputy Lieutenants Mandy Thorn MBE, Gill Hamer and Fiona Rogers-Coltman, were present at the ceremony, along with Shropshire Chamber of Commerce CEO Richard Sheehan and deputy CEO Ruth Ross and a number of Jesmonite suppliers.

One-coat paint is a real winner



UK-based specialist, KEIM Mineral Paints have recently been awarded 'Product Winner' by a panel of industry experts for its one-coat interior paint.

KEIM Innostar is their latest paint system to be introduced into the UK market, however the concept of natural, mineral, eco-friendly, sustainable paint is far from new to them. The company have been hand crafting earthy, durable, breathable paints since 1878. In fact KEIM has, perhaps, been the best kept secret in the 'paint world,' ...until now.

The ASBP (Alliance for Sustainable Building Products) was formed in 2011 to foster innovation, promote and share knowledge via events, awards, and research projects. The recent awards hosted by EDGE in London brought together finalists from categories competing for best Project, Product, and Initiative as judged by the panel of experts and a people's vote.

Anton Boekhoudt, who represented KEIM throughout the months of judging process commented, 'This award is an acknowledgment of the product's unique qualities and characteristics. Our exterior paints, washes, and renders have been used on a diverse range of projects, but KEIM Innostar is our latest interior product that is ideal for homeowners, decorators, architects, or specifiers.'

He went on to explain, 'Our products have recently been independently assessed and 65 of them are Cradle to Cradle Certified®. That makes KEIM the most certified paint in the world. Quite an accolade. Winning this ASBP award is the icing on the cake. It's testament to the product's eco-credentials that align perfectly with the ASBP Awards Six Pillars of Sustainable Construction.'

KEIM Innostar is a non-toxic, one coat, easy to apply, high-yield paint; ideal for speedy re-occupancy projects, creating healthy spaces. It is labour saving and economical due to its one coat system. It's free from additives and preservatives meaning it is kind to use and kind to the environment. Application brushes or rollers are simply cleaned with cold water ready to re-use, and any leftover paint disposed of via natural household waste rather than to landfill.

Boekhoudt concluded, 'This is a very exciting time for KEIM UK. We've recently opened a showroom within the Business Design Centre in London to inspire people and projects to show what is possible using KEIM. We even have metallic paints for elegant projects, and washes for more industrial concrete effects. Thank you to the judges and panel at the ASBP for this award, and congratulations to our fellow winners.'



KEIM Innostar is a non-toxic, one coat, easy to apply, high-yield paint



The paint is free from additives and preservatives meaning it is kind to use and kind to the environment



Solicitor is named as Clinical Negligence Lawyer of the Year

A solicitor from a Shropshire law firm is officially the best in her field after winning a major national award.

Beth Heath, of Lanyon Bowdler, has been named as the Clinical Negligence Lawyer of the Year at the Personal Injury Awards, which recognise the excellence of law firms and individuals in the personal injury and medical negligence sectors all over the UK.

Judges said: "The winner of this award is a department head and rising talent in clinical negligence practice, achieving big things in a short space of time. They manage a large team across multiple offices that continues to rank highly.

"They are renowned for a thorough and organised approach, and for their caring and compassionate attitude."

Brian Evans, managing partner at Lanyon Bowdler, said Beth's award was richly deserved and a testament to the strength and commitment of the whole clinical negligence team.

He said: "Our congratulations go to Beth on a great win against some stiff competition, including the Chief Assessor of the Law Society's Clinical Negligence Panel, and the head of medical negligence from Slater & Gordon's London office.

"This is a brilliant achievement and is well deserved.

"I know Beth would say that she could not have won this award without the support of her team, so without wishing to detract from Beth's stellar personal achievement, everyone in the team is a winner for the support they give which enables Beth and our other clinical negligence partners and senior lawyers to do what they do."

Beth has been a leading voice in recent years dealing with cases involving the maternity services scandal at Shrewsbury and Telford hospitals.

She said: "Being named as Clinical Negligence Lawyer of the Year is a major honour, which I hope will give our clients even more reassurance that Lanyon Bowdler can be trusted with such sensitive cases.

"Clinical negligence cases, particularly ones involving maternity services, are understandably distressing and we always take care to support our clients during the process.

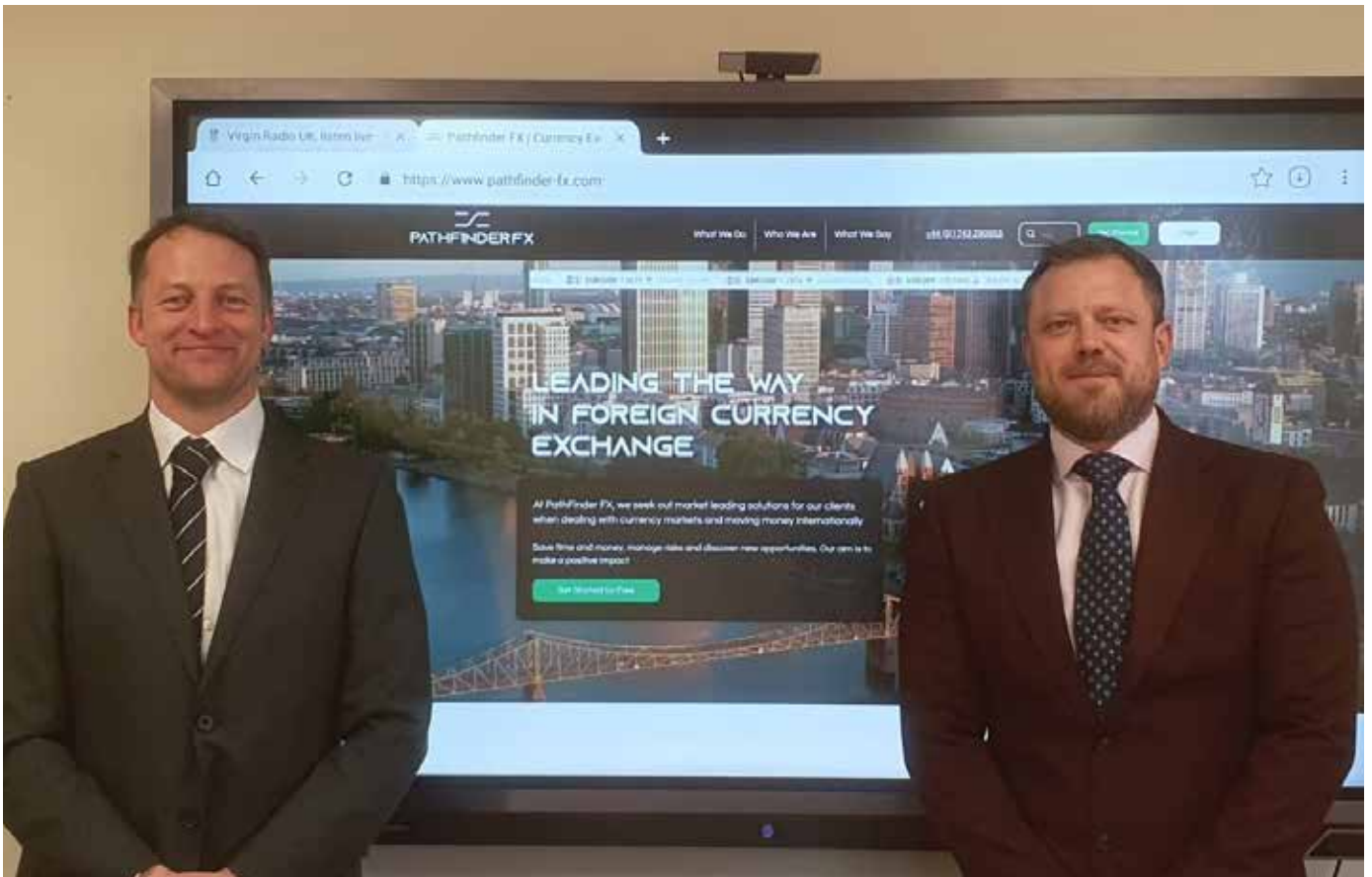
"The motivation behind all cases is a desire to get answers to what went wrong and to help bring about improvements so the same mistakes are not made again.

"That will always remain our priority as we continue to work on behalf of our clients."



Beth Heath, of Lanyon Bowdler





Gareth Bowles and Tom Davis – Pathfinder FX, a leading foreign exchange dealer, has announced its relocation from London to Shrewsbury

Currency dealer is a first for the county

Pathfinder FX, a leading foreign exchange dealer, has announced its relocation from London to the picturesque town of Shrewsbury, making it the first business of its kind to be based in the county.

The move is expected to create up to 10 new jobs in the local area in the next 12 months and reflects a growing trend of businesses moving out of London in search of more affordable office space and a better quality of life. The move offers the chance to form closer links with established industries in the Midlands that deal in global markets and are looking for an alternative to using banks for this specialized area of their operations.

Founded in 2016, Pathfinder FX has

quickly established itself as a service led provider of foreign exchange services to businesses and individuals around the world. Its decision to relocate to Shrewsbury is based on a desire to tap into the talent pool of skilled workers in the region, and to take advantage of the area's strong transport links and strategic location.

According to the Managing director of Pathfinder FX, Gareth Bowles, the move to Shrewsbury is an exciting opportunity for the company to grow and expand its business. "We are thrilled to have relocated to Shrewsbury and becoming part of the local community. Our decision to move here was based on the quality of life, the talented workforce whom until now would have had to relocate South to work in this type of business. We look forward to building strong relationships with our new neighbours and contributing to the local economy."

The move has been welcomed by the local business community, Mark Evans MD from Shropshire based manufacturer

Aluroll has used the service recently and commented "We recently set up a new business in Dubai and needed to make a fast-track payment in the local currency AED, we tried the Pathfinder platform it was straightforward and saved circa £700 versus our usual high street bank supplier, very pleased".

The relocation of Pathfinder FX is likely to have a significant impact on the local economy, as it will bring new jobs and investment to the area. It is also expected to attract other similar businesses to the region, as Shrewsbury continues to establish itself as a hub for innovative and forward-thinking companies.

Overall, the move represents a significant milestone for Pathfinder FX, as it expands its reach beyond the traditional boundaries of the Southeast of England and establishes itself as a truly global business in the future.

Web: www.pathfinder-fx.com Email: desk@pathfinder-fx.com Tel: 01743 290955





Pave Aways is celebrating after gaining the prestigious Investors in People standard for the first time

Golden year for construction firm kicks off with an award

One of the leading building contractors in Shropshire and Mid Wales has marked the start of its 50th anniversary year by gaining the prestigious Investors in People accreditation.

Knockin-based Pave Aways has been awarded the accolade for the first time. It recognises organisations that are committed to the support and development of their people as well as striving for continuous improvement and high levels of customer service.

Pave Aways began in 1973 as a groundworks contractor and has grown into one of the region's most successful privately-owned construction firms. It works on a variety of developments including new build and refurbishment projects in sectors including healthcare, education, manufacturing, commercial and residential.

Managing director Steven Owen said the Investors in People title demonstrated its commitment to building a sustainable future for the business.

"We have always been clear that our best asset is our people and it has been a priority to provide the framework for their development," he said. "That has enabled us



Managing Director of Pave Aways, Steven Owen

to build on our reputation established over the past 50 years and create a solid business with a positive future.

"We have developed a strong leadership team with that homegrown talent that will lead us into the next chapter of the Pave Aways story."

Steven added: "Our team has been one of the foundations on which we have built our business. Other keystones include our commitment to the communities where

we live and work – 80 per cent of our sub-contractors and suppliers come from within a 50-mile radius of our projects – and our support for grass roots organisations.

"But we're not afraid to evolve and we adapt as we need to do. We've developed a specialism in zero and net carbon and Passivhaus construction in recent years, as well as focusing on our own carbon reduction plans so we can build a greener future for everyone."

clickingmad

DAINS
ACCOUNTANTS

DY
dykeyaxley
Chartered Accountants

enreach



Safer driving in winter months

Did you know road accidents are more likely to happen in summer?¹ The reason for this is simple: there are more people on the roads, particularly during peak summer months when we pack up our cars for UK-based holidays.

However, the winter months are the ones with the most hazardous driving conditions. Ice, snow, fog, rain and darkness all play a part in making every journey more difficult. There may be fewer of us on the roads, but we need to adapt our driving accordingly to ensure that we all stay safe.

Always adjust your driving according to the conditions

It is illegal to drive with any ice or snow on your windscreen that obstructs your windscreen as it breaks the Highway Code Rule 229. Drivers could be fined up to £2,500 for driving with an obstructed windscreen, be banned from driving, and get three penalty points for driving a vehicle in a dangerous condition.²

Slow down

Allow more time for your journeys, slow your speed and keep your distance. Stopping times are reduced in winter, so you need to ensure you don't skid into the back of someone's car. The easiest way to do this is to simply back off. When driving in icy or snowy weather drive with care, even if the roads have been treated, they may look fine even when they are not.

Up your gears

Drive at slow speed and in as highest gear as possible allows you to keep more control of your vehicle. If it's icy and you're struggling to get started, try pulling away in second gear. This should make it easier to get you going – pulling away in first gear on ice won't give you much grip.

Dealing with skids

Icy conditions can lead to skids, even if you are driving carefully. If you lose control of the car, keep both hands on the wheel and avoid the instinct to hit the brakes. You should also try to steer into the skid – this should help get you straight and back on track. Keep calm, which can be easier said than done.

Breaking distance

Leaving enough distance between you and the car in front will give you a better view of the road ahead. Let you react and stop in time if cars ahead suddenly brake. When driving in conditions of ice

and snow the Highway Code rule 230 advises keep well back from the road user in front as stopping distances can be 10 times higher than on a dry road.³

Coping with the hills

If you are driving uphill, leave plenty of room between other cars or wait until it's clear so you don't have to stop part way up. Keep a constant speed and try to avoid having to change gear on the gradient. Going downhill requires a low gear, again leaving as much room as possible so that you don't have to keep applying pressure on the brakes.

Be aware of noises

In winter, your battery is under extra pressure, so listen out as you start the vehicle and use the starter in short bursts to avoid more stress. Continuous squealing noises when you start up could mean that the water pump is frozen and the fan belt is slipping on the pulley. Stop the engine straight away and let it thaw out. If your car overheats a few miles from home, it's likely that the radiator has frozen. Stop straight away, so you don't cause more severe damage. A full service and keeping your car covered or in garage if possible is recommended.

Don't drive whilst tired

Dark roads, the distracting effect of car and street lights and harsher weather will all make driving a bit more challenging at this time of year. Don't add to the risk by driving if you are tired. Only take long car journeys when necessary and ensure you are up to date with your insurance, your vehicle services checks - and listen to all route traffic reports so that you are prepared.

As the nights draw in and the temperature drops, you need to make sure you are ready.

Simple changes to driving habits – mainly slowing down – will mean our roads can stay safer over the winter months.

For more information about keeping your commercial vehicles safe please visit marshcommercial.co.uk

Sources:

- <https://www.petrolprices.com/news/serious-driving-accidents-summer-not-winter/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/check-vehicle-safe>
- <https://www.highwaycodeuk.co.uk/icy-and-snowy-weather.html>

Class 56 is set to appear at SVR's Spring Diesel Festival

The Severn Valley Railway has confirmed that one of Colas Rail's Class 56 locomotives will be joining the line-up at its Spring Diesel Festival.

The popular machine will appear courtesy of Colas Rail, which is one of a number of main line operators that have come forward to support the four-day event, taking place between 18th and 21st May.

The Festival will celebrate 50 years of diesels in preservation, and will bring together an unrivalled collection of heritage guest and home fleet locomotives, as well as many examples of modern traction from the main line.

Other guests include Class 47 47712 'Lady Diana Spencer', accompanied by a push-pull set of coaches incorporating a DBSO, and Class 58 58023, which makes a long-awaited return to UK traffic, since all members of the class were withdrawn 21 years ago.

Tickets, including money-saving multi-day rovers, are available at svr.co.uk



Colas Class 59 56090 – Picture: Brad Joyce

3D Printing DFM analysis for a faster turnaround

Protolabs has launched Design for Manufacturability analysis for 3D printed parts, offering peace of mind to manufacturers across Europe.

The Midlands manufacturer says it is a significant advancement to the company's 3D printing offering as it provides added assurance that a part is suitable for manufacturing before committing to production, all entirely online in a matter of seconds.

Protolabs, based in Telford, has been supporting customers using the process for CNC and Injection Moulding offerings, and the development brings those benefits of speed and reassurance to the 3D Printing service.

Andrea Landoni, Protolabs EMEA's 3D Printing Product Manager, commented: "Additive manufacturing is a brilliant technology, allowing engineers to produce complex parts that were previously too difficult to achieve. Whilst the technology offers great flexibility, there are a few limitations that engineers must be aware of and the Design for Manufacturability (DFM) analysis provides that guidance in seconds.

"The system will instantly highlight all the issues to the user,

whether they are critical, such as parts that are too large to be produced, or non-critical, like dimensions that are close to certain thresholds like wall thickness and may not form completely.

"We understand the importance of speed, but ensuring that parts are correct, high quality, and delivered rapidly is critical. Instant analysis means you can have all the advantages of additive manufacturing with even more certainty without sacrificing speed."

Design for Manufacturability processes eliminate lost time incidents for most common issues, preventing engineers from proceeding with their order only to discover there has been an issue hours later. Whilst the vast majority of problems are solved, there are circumstances where the user may still require further support.

Landoni continued: "Protolabs understand that specific projects require technical consultancy to solve complex issues. In these circumstances, our Application Engineers are still on hand to overcome these challenges and accelerate the process. The Design for Manufacturability analysis supports our Application Engineers by reducing the number of projects they need to get involved in, allowing them to interact with more customers who require their support even faster.

For further information, please visit www.protolabs.co.uk or follow @protolabs_emea on Twitter.

Royal praise for SMI's 'positive change for the environment'



Part of the SMI thermal insulation range

A Telford manufacturing company has been praised by the Prince of Wales for 'creating a positive change for the environment'.

Seymour Manufacturing International, which sells its range of temperature control and thermal insulation products around the world, received a letter from Prince William's team at Kensington Palace.

The Prince was made aware of the company's work, and the letter from his correspondence secretary said: "It was most interesting to learn how your products make significant energy and carbon savings.

The letter said: "The Prince was encouraged by your commitment to creating a positive change for the environment. I do hope that Seymour

Manufacturing keeps up the good work."

SMI has been saving energy and money for some of the world's biggest and best-known businesses since the 1980s.

The company's acclaimed Tempro, the world's thinnest and most thermally-efficient material of its kind, has been scientifically proven to cut energy loss by at least 25% in chillers, and 33% in freezers.



Arthur Scarf was the recipient of the only Victoria Cross awarded to the Royal Air Force for services in the Far East during the Second World War



The Museum is a registered charity and has just a few months to raise £660,000 to match the auction bid placed by an overseas buyer

Museum needs your help to save a Victoria Cross Medal

The Royal Air Force Museum, who joined the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce in December, are calling on Chamber members support to help keep Squadron Leader Arthur Scarf's Victoria Cross medal in the UK. Help them stop a unique part of our shared heritage from leaving the UK forever.

Arthur Scarf was the recipient of the only Victoria Cross awarded to the Royal Air Force for services in the Far East during the Second World War. This incredibly rare medal, and Arthur's Story, is a national treasure which represents an extraordinary and highly poignant story of great personal courage, and the RAF Museum is determined for it to remain within the UK.

The Museum is a registered charity and has just a few months to raise £660,000 to match the auction bid placed by an overseas buyer. If successful in the mission to acquire this one-of-a-kind medal, the VC will be preserved in the RAF Museum's national collection and will initially be on public display at RAF Museum London, with the longer-term ambition to rotate the collection seeing the Victoria Cross at the RAF Museum Midlands alongside the Bristol Blenheim, an example of the type of aircraft Scarf flew.

The Museum is hoping to raise £250,000 of the required funds through public donations. Money raised will be added to a contribution being made from the Museum's own funds, and a potential grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund. Donate to #SaveTheScarfVC on the Museum's dedicated Save the Scarf VC GoFundMe page.

RAF Museum Historian and Head of Collections, Dr Harry Raffal said:



Arthur Scarf

'Not only does Sqn Ldr Scarf's Victoria Cross represent his outstanding devotion to duty and supreme act of bravery, it is also a powerful reminder of the sacrifices made by all the British and Commonwealth service personnel fighting in the Far East, and the role of the RAF within this context. This unique medal is part of our nation's heritage, and a significant element to a decisive moment in British history. There is an imminent risk of it leaving the UK, but we're hopeful that with public support we can prevent this from happening, and for the medal to remain on our shores. If we're successful, the medal will be displayed at the Museum, in the heart of our collection, helping us to share the stories of all those RAF personnel who fought, lived and died in the conflict.'

The Victoria Cross (VC) is the highest decoration for valour in the British armed forces, awarded for an act of extreme bravery in the face of the enemy. Such is the medals legendary status, recipients are often revered as heroes. Only 22 Victoria Crosses were awarded to RAF personnel during the

Second World War, and just one, for their service in the Far East - the VC that was awarded to Arthur Scarf.

Scarf joined the RAF in 1936 aged 23, and three years later was sent to Singapore with No. 62 Squadron to join the forces in the Far East. On the 9 December 1941, he led a formation of Bristol Blenheim aircraft in a daylight attack on Japanese forces occupying airfields in Burma, what is today Thailand. As Scarf became airborne, a formation of Japanese bombers swept over the airfield destroying every British aircraft on the ground.

Realising that none of his squadron's aircraft had survived the Japanese bombing, Scarf was determined to complete his squadron's allotted task. Flying low for some 30 miles into enemy occupied territory, Scarf skilfully evaded several attacks by Japanese fighters, and released the bombs whilst his crew manned the machine guns. With the task complete and now heading home, more Japanese fighters arrived attacking at close range. Greatly outnumbered, hopelessly outgunned and in aircraft slower than the enemies, Scarf flew at tree top height, desperately seeking whatever protection he could find. Despite evading the worst of the Japanese attacks, machine gun fire riddled the Blenheim. Scarf was mortally wounded but continued to fly the aircraft while being held upright by his crew mates and managed to make a controlled crash landing at a nearby British controlled airfield without injury to his crew, but Scarf died from his wounds shortly afterwards.

The Victoria Cross was awarded posthumously in 1946 and was presented to his widow, Elizabeth, by King George VI at Buckingham Palace.

Arthur's heroic story can inspire future generations for many years to come. To support the RAF Museum's mission to raise the money needed to save Scarf's VC medal from leaving the UK, visit the Save the Scarf VC GoFundMe page or contact fundraising@rafmuseum.org





The team at Best Friends Day Nursery has benefitted from the help given by Q Financial Services

Q steps in to save day for outstanding nursery

An award-winning children's nursery has been saved from the brink of closure thanks to expert help from a leading Shropshire financial company.

Best Friends Day Nursery, in Chester, faced closure when their landlord gave them notice to quit but the pandemic stopped them from finding a new home.

After a traumatic few years, the nursery is now back up to 14 staff and 52 children and has been shortlisted for the Cheshire High Sheriff's Family Business Award. Owners Julie and Cliff Davies credit the timely intervention of Q Financial Services with helping to keep the business going.

David Wells, partner of commercial finance at Q, used his expertise to find Julie and Cliff a loan to keep the business afloat during the turmoil.

David said: "It is heartbreaking when good businesses stop trading for the want

of a little short-term support. I'm delighted that we were able to help Julie and Cliff find the loan they needed to keep going while the axe was hanging over them, and it's great that they are now going from strength to strength again.

"There are a lot of options for businesses who might be going through a difficult patch, but they can be difficult to access without help. Good financial advice is essential – and it could save your business."

Owner Julie Davies said Best Friends was plunged into problems when the owners of the previous building, the church, gave notice that the lease would not be renewed because a more financially beneficial deal had been agreed with another company.

She said: "We had 18 months to find somewhere but then Covid came. Although we stayed open for critical workers, we couldn't go out to look for new premises. We were let down so many times at the last minute.

"We had 24 staff and 100 families, but as the months went on and we could not offer certainty to parents or staff, we lost numbers

and income. David from Q came to our rescue and secured a loan, giving us one year's breathing space.

"We were eventually down to eight children and eight staff. It was heartbreaking as we tried so hard to keep going. We gave the eight staff notice and two weeks later the building we are in came up."

Julie said it had not all been plain sailing since the move, as investment had to be made to upgrade the new building just as the cost-of-living crisis hit, forcing many parents to cut the number of days their children attended and considerably increasing utility bills.

Despite a very tough year though, the nursery – which is rated outstanding by Ofsted – is now back up to 52 children and 14 staff. "We couldn't have got this far without the help of David Wells and his team," said Julie.

Q Financial Services has offices in Telford and Shrewsbury. For more information about how the team could help your business, visit www.qfinancialservices.co.uk/ or email info@qfinancialservices.co.uk



All-new plastering partnership builds on firm foundations



Colin Thaw, of SBC Training, pictured with Paul Nightingale and Calvin Challis, both of V&D Interiors

SBC Training is really excited to have partnered with V&D Interiors to offer apprenticeships in plastering.

V&D Interiors is a specialist drylining and exteriors contractor that delivers large complex projects across the Midlands, North West and Yorkshire and has become one of the UK's leading drylining contractors with over 150 operatives across three regional sites.

Paul Nightingale of V&D Interiors said "We are aware that there is a serious skills shortage in the industry so we decided to develop our own training centre. Based in Dawley Bank, Telford the facility has been delivering short courses and is now ready to progress to offer full apprenticeships. The apprentices will be employed by

V&D Interiors and attend for skills training guided by SBC Training"

Colin Thaw MD of SBC Training said "This is a very important step for the construction sector in this area, as previously Dudley was the nearest training centre for plastering. We have been working with the CITB and V&D Interiors to support its development and are looking forward to welcoming the first cohorts of apprentices this year, with intakes planned for May and September."

This adds to the Construction training portfolio offered at SBC Training which also includes Carpentry and Joinery, Bricklaying and Trowel Trades, Electrical Installation, Inspection and Testing. Pre-apprenticeships, Apprenticeships, Return to Work, reskilling and upskilling courses are regularly available.

To find out more contact Amanda Carpenter Amanda.carpenter@sbc-training.co.uk 07939664033



The venue plays host to tens of thousands of visitors each year and is home to a variety of events



The new sponsor will have its branding featured across the site and be incorporated into the title of the showground

Naming rights up for grabs at West Mid Showground

The naming rights for the West Mid Showground in Shrewsbury are up for grabs and the society which runs the venue is keen to hear from any business, group or organisation keen to be considered.

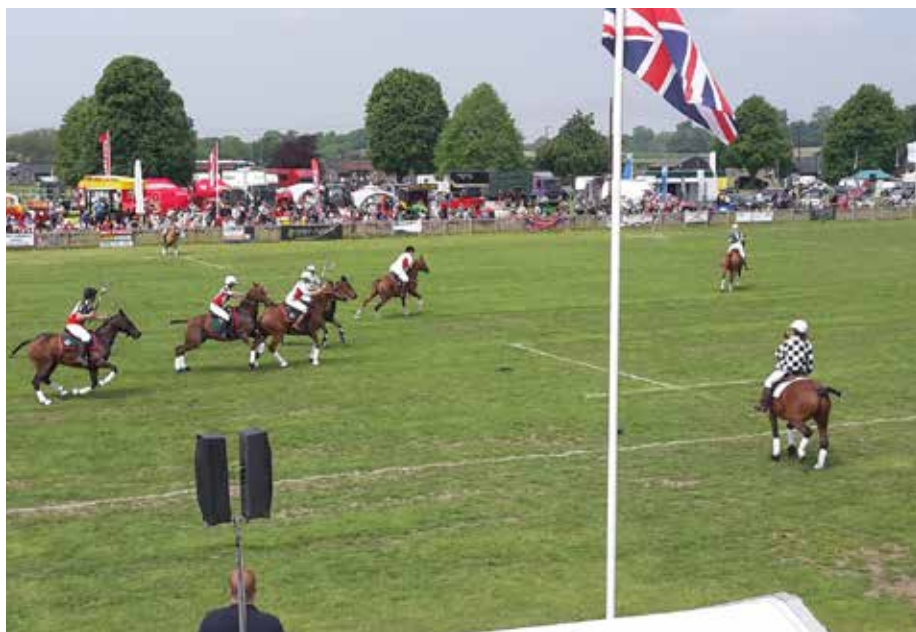
Chamber member the Shropshire and West Midlands Agricultural Society has launched the search which comes as the long-term sponsorship by local car dealership Greenhous comes to an end.

The new sponsor will have its branding featured across the site and be incorporated into the title of the showground. The venue plays host to tens of thousands of visitors each year and is home to a variety of events including Shropshire County Show, Shrewsbury Live, the November bonfire night spectacular, Shrewsbury Folk Festival and regular car boot sales.

Huge numbers of campers and touring caravans also use the 100-acre site and the showground and pavilions are hired out for a range of events to a variety of groups and individuals annually.

Ian Bebbington, the society's chief executive, said: "Securing the naming rights at the showground is a massive opportunity and we look forward to hearing from anyone interested in partnering the showground in this way."

"It is the chance for a business or other organisation to have their name seen by tens of thousands of people over the course of the year and incorporated in our name in all of the PR and marketing we are involved in.



Ian Bebbington, the society's chief executive, said: "Securing the naming rights at the showground is a massive opportunity and we look forward to hearing from anyone interested"

"The opportunity has arisen as the long-term sponsorship of Greenhous comes to an end. The naming rights also includes company branding on our main arena grandstand and a presence at all the events we host over the course of the year.

"We are very flexible with any sponsorship deal and would welcome the chance to talk things through and create a bespoke arrangement which would benefit both parties. As a first point of contact we would ask anyone interested to email admin@westmidshowground.com

"Greenhous, based in Old Potts Way,

was the first official sponsor of what became known as the Greenhous West Mid Showground eight years ago - signing up for five years but extending its support for a further three years at the end of that time. The sponsorship proved invaluable and we are extremely grateful to Greenhous for that support."

Mr Bebbington said the showground was gearing up for the Shropshire County Show on Saturday, May 27th and that tickets were now available through the website at <https://westmidshowground.digitickets.co.uk/tickets>



It's 'access all areas' at the SVR's Open House Weekend

Visitors to the Severn Valley Railway on 1st and 2nd April will be in for a real treat, when the heritage line grants 'access all areas' during its annual Open House Weekend.

As well as the chance to experience the golden age of rail travel along the scenic line from Kidderminster to Bridgnorth, visitors will be able to get a rare peek behind the scenes to discover how the SVR's volunteers and staff make the magic happen.

Find out how carriages are prepared for service, how skilled engineers build and repair steam locomotives, as well as venturing deep inside the normally off-limits areas of the carriage works at Kidderminster and the locomotive shed and machine shop at Bridgnorth.

In The Engine House Visitor Centre at Highley, there's a fleet of 'resting' engines on display waiting to be discovered, along with the Royal Saloon and the travelling post office. Volunteer guides will be on hand to share their passion and unlock the hidden history of the SVR, and there's the chance to win a footplate ride by entering a raffle!

And if that's not enough, how about visiting the cab of a diesel loco, peeking inside one of the railway's signal boxes or taking a thrilling ride in a brake van? Who knows, you might even catch a glimpse at Bridgnorth of the railway's famous former 'purple loco' that's just been repainted into a stunning wartime black livery?

"Open House Weekend is an absolute must for those who want to discover more about what makes the SVR tick," said Michael Dunn, head of commercial and visitor services. "It's packed with fascinating opportunities to see what really goes into making a heritage railway run. Everything is included in your ticket price, although donations for guided tours and the brake van rides will be very welcome!"

Open House Weekend on 1st and 2nd April also sees SVR services running the full length of the line between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth for the first time this season. During March, services were restricted between Kidderminster and Highley because of engineering works.

Booking in advance offers the chance to save up to 22% off on-the-day prices, and each ticket booked online will come with a voucher for a free return visit. For more information and to book tickets, please visit svr.co.uk



Will Marsh machining the new coupling rod bushes for 75069. Lesley Carr



View inside the Carriage works at Kidderminster c Dave Waldren



Bewdley signal box. SVR



Financial experts are on track for year of growth

A leading financial services company says it is on track for new growth this year – after enjoying a highly successful 12 months in 2022.

Q Financial Services – which has offices in Wellington and Shrewsbury – is planning to open new offices in Wolverhampton in the first half of this year as it continues to expand across the region.

Q directors Steve Parry and Stuart Mackintosh said the expansion came off the back of an excellent 12 months last year in spite of the challenging economic background.

“Wolverhampton and the Black Country is an area we have had in our sights for some time and we already have a number of clients who are based in the region. The city is undergoing considerable regeneration and has a dynamism about it which fits our business profile perfectly.

“We are looking to open a new office in the city early in the year so that we can offer the full range of financial services to new and existing clients across the area.”

The pair said Q had grown year-on-year throughout its five-year life and 2022 had been no exception.

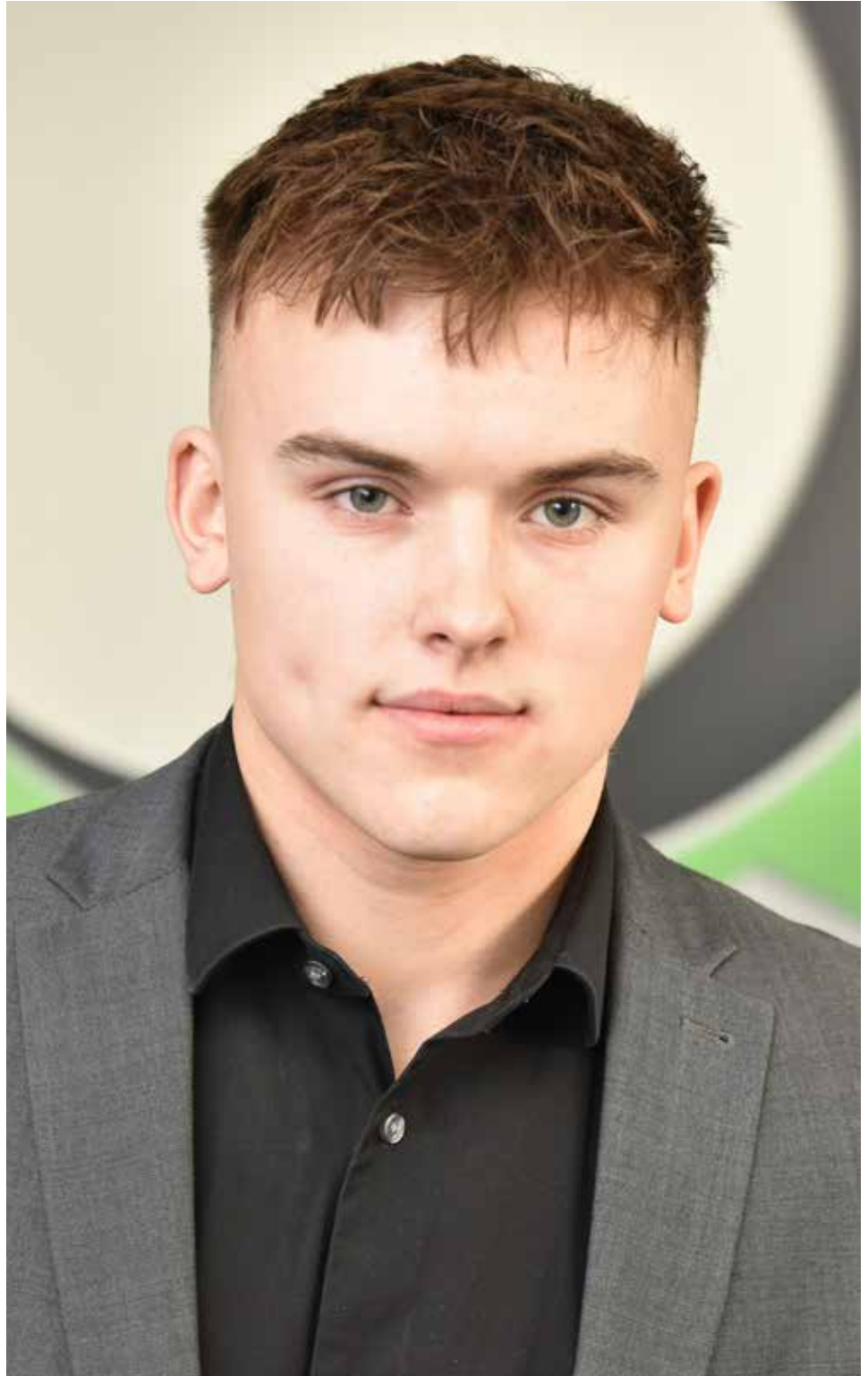
“We’ve really consolidated our position over the last 12 months as one of the region’s fastest growing financial services companies and strengthened the business with a number of new appointments and some excellent promotions from within.

“We were delighted to be shortlisted for our customer service in the Shropshire Chamber awards and also to see our partner Josh Timbrell make the nominees for a national Rising Star of the Year award.

“A central part of our philosophy is that we recognise young talent early, develop it through ongoing training and build a team which is committed to producing the very best results for our customers.

“That philosophy has served us extremely well since we launched and we are sure it will be the recipe for success in Wolverhampton too.”

For more information about Q visit <https://www.qfinancialservices.co.uk/>



Q partner Josh Timbrell was nominated for a national Rising Star award



Keeping Telford's shoppers hydrated

In partnership with Telford Shopping Centre, Wenlock Water have recently installed one of their BOB (Best of British) Bottle Filling Stations at the centre. If you've recently been shopping in Telford you can't have missed it! Did you refill your drinking bottle? Free of charge, of course.

BOB quite simply filters mains water. You may ask why mains water would need to be filtered? Filtering simply removes the chlorine and micro particles that are present in mains water. The water is then chilled before being dispensed into the customers' bottles.

Bottle Filling Stations are one of the most popular options for companies looking to install modern drinking water facilities in large workplace areas – or in public spaces, such as shopping centres, railway stations and similar environments. Designed to refill customers' reusable water bottles with ease, Bottle Filling Stations are modern, innovative and extremely functional.

Bottle Filling Stations are helping organisations and businesses to take easy, yet important steps toward their goals in sustainability and hydration.

By providing a means for people to reuse their bottles, Wenlock Water are helping them to save money, stay hydrated, and protect the environment – all at the same time.

The design and creation of BOB comes from years of experience of supplying water dispensing equipment – and a desire to produce something better and more reliable. What's more, BOB is also made in the UK – in Shropshire.

BOB is situated by the main entrance to Telford Shopping Centre – so feel free to fill your water bottle next time you are there.

Visit their website www.wenlockwater.com to find out more or get in touch.



If you've recently been shopping in Telford you can't have missed the free of charge water refill station



Promise of 'practical solutions' for clients

Cutting through the jargon and finding practical solutions for employers - that's the priority for a new legal specialist at a Shropshire law firm.

Employment lawyer Gemma Workman has joined the Shrewsbury office of Lanyon Bowdler Solicitors, and John Merry, head of employment at the firm, welcomed her to the team.

"Gemma is an experienced solicitor, having initially worked in the south east of England and more recently in Shropshire for the past six years, before joining Lanyon Bowdler in January," he said.

"We continue to see a strong demand for legal advice from businesses on employment issues.

"Gemma advises both employers and employees on all aspects of employment law, including in relation to settlement agreements, contracts of employment, disciplinary and grievance procedures, redundancies and employment tribunal proceedings.

"She is an excellent solicitor, and a great addition to our highly-regarded team."

Gemma said she was delighted to join Lanyon Bowdler, and had a clear message for her new clients.

"Employment law can be incredibly detailed and confusing, especially when you are very busy running your business," she said. "My main aim is to provide efficient and practical solutions for my clients.

"Lanyon Bowdler has a reputation for taking the same approach, so I am really pleased to be working for a firm which shares my ideals."

For any employment law advice, contact Gemma on 01743 291055 or visit the website at www.lblaw.co.uk



Employment lawyer Gemma Workman has joined the Shrewsbury office of Lanyon Bowdler Solicitors



Aico invited customers from all areas of their supply chain to ground-breaking events, including electrical contractors, distributors and registered social landlords

Building safer futures

Aico has recently hosted four events to explore how their supply chain can work collaboratively to build safer futures for residents of the UK, welcoming 400 industry professionals to their headquarters in Oswestry.

To support their mission statement of promoting best practice and delivering safer homes, Aico invited customers from all areas of their supply chain to these ground-breaking events, including electrical contractors, distributors and registered social landlords.

Held throughout February and March, the events combined insights and evidence into how connected homes can create safer and healthier properties for all, from improving fire safety to reducing the risk of poor indoor environmental conditions, such as damp and mould and poor indoor air quality.

Aaron Hamilton from Southway Housing Trust who attended the event added "All of the presentations were really good and informative. The thing that impressed me most was how the business is run and is constantly evolving and trying to improve all aspects".

Jason Parker, Electrical Supervisor from Chesterfield Borough Council who also attended commented "The whole event was slick and well presented, especially with technical topics. I gained a lot from the event, while it was very enjoyable".



Attendees took a tour of Aico's modern headquarters and participated in a workshop

Members of Aico's expert team delivered a range of engaging and impactful workshops to drive a synergistic approach to building safer futures.

Beginning with an insight into Aico's past, present and future, National Sales Managers, Daniel Little and Tony Boyle, set the scene for the event, examining the organisation's products, technology and training initiatives.

National Account Manager, Alex Parker, examined new research, conducted by Cebr on behalf of the Housing Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce, into the economic impacts of fire safety standards regulations.

Product Manager (HomeLINK), Jordan Toulson, examined the plethora of data and insights available through Aico's HomeLINK Connected Home Solution; focusing on the recently released structural versus environmental insight, which enables landlords to pinpoint the root cause of damp and mould.

Product Development Manager, Michael Wright, continued the theme of technology and innovations, exploring how Aico's range

of ever-evolving hardware and software can ensure residents have access to safe and healthy living spaces.

The attendees also took a tour of Aico's modern headquarters and participated in a workshop led by Operations and Learning & Development Manager, Lee Duffy, to learn how to achieve high-performance teamwork.

To close each event, the groups merged for an ask the panel Q&A, giving guests the opportunity to share feedback or ask questions. Aico's National Sales Manager, Daniel Little was delighted with the events, adding "Over the last two weeks, we have welcomed 400 people to our Centre of Excellence in Oswestry. Promoting best practice, engaging with our communities and delivering safer homes, forming part of our company's mission statement, and these events are a way in which we achieve this. The Build a Safer Future Together events were designed to bring together professionals from all over the country and from every part of our supply chain. There has been a real buzz around the building."





"I feel so proud of what we've achieved but I've not taken one moment for granted," said 7video director, Pete Sims

15th birthday milestone for media production company

Media production company 7video is celebrating 15 successful years working in the film and animation industry.

Since launching in Shropshire, the award-winning company is now based on the Shrewsbury Business Park.

And because of year-on-year growth, its 16-strong team is about to move into a new purpose-built, two-storey office nearby.

"I feel so proud of what we've achieved but I've not taken one moment for granted," said director Pete Sims.

"It's such exciting times moving into a new building and I look forward to the future with a huge amount of optimism with everything focused on loving what we do.

"The world and technology is changing at such a pace and we look forward to

embracing this and bringing ideas to life with film and animation."

Pete started 7video working from the Innovation Centre in Telford before moving into his garage working on his own and then into offices in Shrewsbury.

The media production company has produced thousands of films and animations for a wide range of businesses right across the UK and overseas and has a strong reputation in a wide variety of sectors including UK housing, construction, education, tourism and hospitality.

In recent years, there has been a huge increase in the number of clients they are working with including companies like pub chain Chef & Brewer, Transport for West Midlands and Hammerson.

And it also enjoys ongoing partnerships with local companies like Aico, Dechra Pharmaceuticals, Hope House and Shrewsbury Colleges Group.

Among many highlights over the years

was winning the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce, Best Small Business Award in 2020.

"We're constantly pushing ourselves to improve and innovate to continuously take our work to new heights," said Pete. "We've also learnt a lot, I'm surrounded by hugely talented people and we know that customer service is everything.

"With this in mind, I would like to say a huge thank you to all our customers. We have had the pleasure of working with so many great people with many staying with us since the beginning and we really cannot thank them enough.

"It's amazing to think millions of people have watched videos we've made and there are so many more things to accomplish and celebrate in the years to come."

For more information about the media production company's work with film, animation, drone, timelapse and photography visit www.7video.co.uk



Charity dinner in support of OsNosh Community Kitchen



OsNosh, a Community Interest Company based in Oswestry, will host their first charity dinner at The Townhouse restaurant on Monday 27th March, supported by Aico and the Marches School

OsNosh, a Community Interest Company based in Oswestry, will host their first charity dinner at The Townhouse restaurant on Monday 27th March, supported by Aico and the Marches School.

More than just a community kitchen, OsNosh works to turn surplus food into nutritious meals and provide grocery boxes for local people, as well as running a community garden and a range of educational projects.

Following their participation in one of OsNosh's cookery programmes, with the support of OsNosh and the Townhouse staff, a selection of students from the Marches School will be preparing, cooking and serving the charity dinner within the setting of an award-winning restaurant.

Funded by Aico, the programme was designed to teach students basic kitchen skills, alongside building self-esteem, developing employability skills and creating

an inclusive learning experience different to the traditional classroom setting.

Jane Pritchard, Community Liaison at Aico comments "Supporting programmes such as this is very important to us. Aico work with multiple schools across Shropshire, providing educational workshops to students of all ages and realise the importance of inspiring young people and giving them opportunities to flourish.

I am sure the charity dinner will be a great success and will raise the important funds needed for OsNosh to continue supporting young people in our community."

Ben Wilson, one of the Directors at OsNosh added "Working with the dedicated staff at The Marches, and the essential ongoing support of Aico, we have been working with disengaged students to turn their energy and creativity into delicious, restaurant standard food.

Students who struggle with a regular classroom setting have been focused, engaged and a genuine joy to work with. They're forever thinking up what to cook next, which has led to them setting an incredible menu which we had to utilise.

We thought we'd take the student's

cooking to the next level, at the same time raising the funds essential to continue the project. This will also give the student real-world experience of the catering and service industry. Who knows, they might be cooking up a storm at a restaurant near you in a few years' time.

Come and support OsNosh, local businesses and education, by enjoying a spectacular 3 course meal using local produce."

Diners can expect to taste a range of fresh and seasonal ingredients, with recipes taking inspiration from across the globe. The three courses will commence with a Middle Eastern smorgasbord, followed by a traditional Italian dish made from local produce, and finish with a trio of puddings.

Tickets are available for £45, which includes a three-course meal, table wine and a glass of welcome fizz. All proceeds will go towards OsNosh continuing their educational programmes and supporting the local community.

View the full menu and book your tickets here: <https://bit.ly/3Zw0zDN>

Find out more about OsNosh: <https://osnosh.co.uk/>





Local people enjoying the warm space at St Peters Church in Monkmoor, Shrewsbury. Including Bernice Firmin (far left) and Maddison Fielding from Autocraft (Far right)

Autocraft sponsor warm space in Shrewsbury to support local folk in need

We are proud to be sponsoring a new warm space has opened in Monkmoor, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, to provide welcome and warmth for local people who want to save on their energy bills at home..

The centre is being manned by volunteers from Shrewsbury Abbey and St Peters congregation and it is hoped that the centre

will remain open for all the cold winter months this year. Initially the space is open between 10am - 5pm on Tuesdays and 2:30pm - 5pm on Wednesdays in the parish hall next to St Peters Church. Refreshments are served and on Tuesdays free produce from shrewsbury food hub is available. There is no need to book, just come along and enjoy yourself.

Creating this warm space is a fantastic idea to provide some help for local people, and as a local business it's something that we wanted to support. The volunteers should be very proud of what they have created.



Avoid creating refuse when aiming to reuse

A Shropshire office supplies firm is championing a national organisation which supports businesses to donate unwanted items to charity and prevents them from ending up in landfill.

Chrisbeon, based in Stafford Park, Telford, teamed up with not-for-profit organisation A Good Thing to donate Chrisbeon's unwanted items to Shrewsbury Ark. This charity provides ongoing support and day centre facilities for homeless and vulnerable people.

Richard Hughes of Chrisbeon said: "A Good Thing is such a great service: simple for people to use and such a great way to connect charities with local businesses.



Cathy Benwell and Richard Benwell, both of A Good Thing

"We really wanted to spread the word about what A Good Thing does, as we feel strongly about avoiding items going to landfill and feel it is extremely important to support local charities at the same time."

So when Chrisbeon was carrying out a refit at Shropshire-based Nidec Control Techniques, who were marking their 50th birthday with a revamp of their office space, the team recommended A Good Thing to see if they could be matched with a charity that could use their old furniture.

Nidec's Elaine Aykroyd-Bell used the organisation's app to list the items - and a match was quickly found with the Shropshire-based charity, The Crossbar Foundation, which is opening a new education centre at Battlefield in Shrewsbury. The charity received desks, carpet tiles, filing cabinets and more for the new space via A Good Thing.

The Crossbar Foundation centre will provide training and education programmes to young people who are

currently classed as NEET or are not able to access mainstream education. The courses enable young people to gain qualifications suitable for future employment.

Sophia Smart of Nidec said: "It is really important to the team here at Nidec that we prevent items from going to landfill. It is perfect that our furniture can be donated to a charity and reused.

"I personally know the amazing work that The Crossbar Foundation does, and to be able to support their growth and help them reach more children and young people in the local area is just fantastic."

Lynette Whiting of The Crossbar Foundation said: "It all happened so quickly! We saw the offer for the desks and thought they would be perfect for the new space. But we quickly learned that the business had even more items on offer, and that they were keen to donate them to us rather than sending them to landfill - Nidec has kitted out the whole space!"

By sharing news of the matchmaking

platform with its clients, Chrisbeon is doing a lot to support charities that are working hard in the face of adversity. Anna Rose Bowler, of A Good Thing, explains:

"Richard has become a fantastic champion of A Good Thing, and we are delighted to be working with him and the team at Chrisbeon.

"Working on the frontline of office refurbishment, Chrisbeon sees first-hand the items that are likely to be sent off to landfill or for recycling. By sharing news of our charity with its clients, not only is Chrisbeon preventing waste, but it's supporting amazing local charities too.

"Now more than ever, charities need our support: demand for their services is increasing and costs are spiralling. When a business donates furniture, stationery, laptops - literally any item that is no longer needed - it makes a huge difference to the local community."

For more information about A Good Thing, visit www.agoodthing.org.uk



Members of the British Armed Forces visited Telford College for a series of talks and demonstrations, explain the levels of dedication needed to succeed

Students learn about varied careers in the British Armed Forces

Members of the British Armed Forces visited Telford College for a series of talks and demonstrations showcasing careers in the public uniformed services.

The Army outreach team delivered talks and held question-and-answer sessions with the college's public uniformed services students – the latest in a series of regular visits to the campus.

The talks and demonstrations were designed to highlight the different routes into the army for individual skillsets, and explain the levels of dedication needed to succeed.

Public uniformed services tutor Craig Stockman said: "The Army outreach team were specifically highlighting career options within the Royal Logistic Corps on this visit.

"The Royal Logistic Corps is the largest in the British army. Students got the chance to look at various careers, such as the role of an ammunition technician, working in bomb disposal situations.

"The team also highlighted Royal Armoured Corps careers including tank driver and gunner, and students got chance to hear about training and recruitment for The Parachute Regiment as well."

Telford College receives regular visits from members of the Armed Forces and other uniformed services, to give students



The Army outreach team delivered talks and held question-and-answer sessions with the college's public uniformed services students – the latest in a series of regular visits to the campus

chance to hear first-hand about career opportunities.

It also goes off-campus to give students chance to experience public support scenarios, including riot training with the RAF, and major disaster planning involving several different emergency services.

Craig added: "We have a long-standing record of students progressing on to successful careers including the Royal

Marines, Royal Navy and police force.

"Our courses includes drill and physical training followed by a mixture of theory and practical sessions, all tailored towards developing communication, self-confidence and leadership skills."

For more details about Telford College's public uniformed services courses, see www.telfordcollege.ac.uk/join-us/our-courses/full-time/

A taste of Heaven comes to College



Above, Deborah Mitchell with the Telford College delegation, from left, Daisy Poole, Houraye Sawadogo Rabo, Hollie Hilton, Charlotte Anson, Katie Duddell, Scarlett Lamb, Megan Sault, Suzanne Weston and Demi Willdigg; Right, Checking out the facilities – Telford College level three beauty students Hollie Hilton, Scarlett Lamb, and Katie Duddell

Beauty students from Telford College were given a behind-the-scenes tour of a multi-million pound beauty brand – founded and built by one of the college’s former students.

Deborah Mitchell launched Heaven from her kitchen table in 1995 and has grown it into one of the UK’s leading skincare businesses, with string of celebrities and members of the royal family among her customers.

She invited a group of level three beauty students from Telford College to visit her new premises at Access 442 in Hadley Park for a tour, talk and question-and-answer session about the running of a global business.

Charlotte Anson, learner manager for hairdressing, beauty therapy, hospitality and catering at Telford College, said: “We are really grateful to Deborah and her team

for taking the time to host our students. This was a fantastic opportunity for them to learn about the world of skincare, and what it takes to run a global beauty business, and it was wonderful to be able to hear from Deborah about her incredible career journey.”

Deborah said: “It is particularly rewarding to meet budding business men and women who may just be starting their careers, because it gives me a chance to revisit my roots.

“While they will tell me how much I inspire them to follow their dreams I am also inspired by their energy, passion and enthusiasm.

“I suffered from severe acne as a teenager and struggled to find products that were suitable for my skin. When I left school I did a beauty course at Telford College and became a mobile therapist by the time I was 17.

“I used what I learned on the job to start mixing and blending essential oils into various creams for me and then my clients,

and Heaven Skincare was born from there.”

Heaven uses totally natural, organic ingredients that are not tested on animals, and has built up an award-winning product range.

Deborah said: “I have always loved looking after people and there is no better feeling than helping someone who may have suffered with a skin issue for years and I can ease that for them.

“I’m probably not your average industry boss, I’m very hands-on and I still work on counter and carry out treatments so I have the privilege of meeting my customers day to day.”

She added: “I enjoy seeing how successful Heaven has become around the world – seeing my products appear in Vogue or Elle in places like the USA, Slovenia and Taiwan.

“I’m not naturally a proud person when it comes to me but I am mighty proud that my daughter Ella now works with me helping to run the business day to day and making decisions alongside me.”



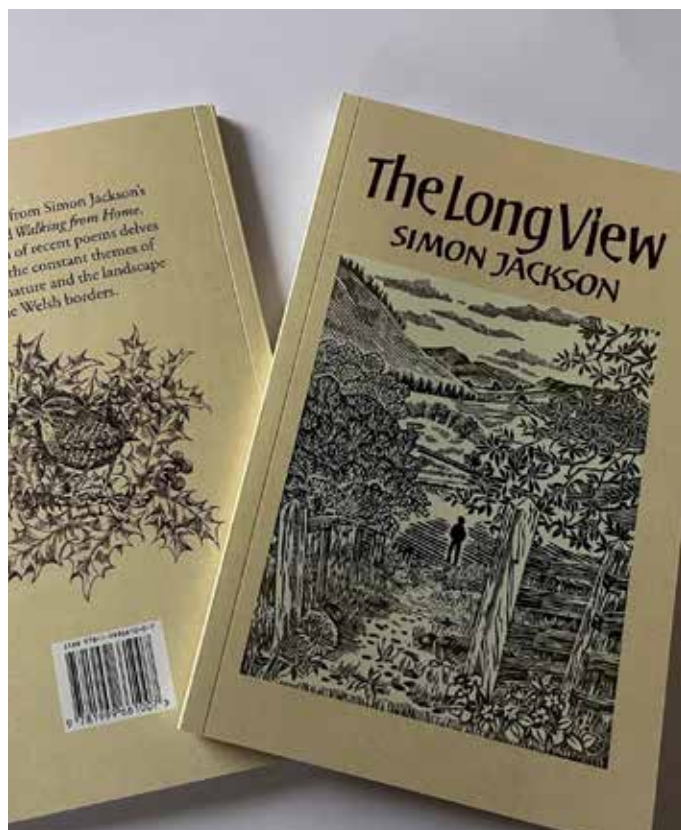
Deborah Mitchell gave a talk about her business journey and students got a behind-the-scenes tour of the Heaven headquarters



Telford & Wrekin Co-operative Council



Parkinson's charity to benefit from sales of Simon's latest book



The Long View, printed by WPG



Simon Jackson and Poppy the Collie promoting the book.

Chamber patrons, Welshpool Printing Group, were recently asked to print a wonderful book of Poetry to raise funds for a Shropshire based charity supporting people living with Parkinson's.

The author, Simon Jackson was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease 7 year's ago and quickly realised that sustaining his physical and mental health through walking was one way of controlling progress of the condition.

The Long View comprises 20 poems that reflect on nature and the local landscape

taken from Simon's walks with his faithful Collie, Poppy.

The book also includes a series of pen and ink drawings by local artist Sally Lewis and was designed and typeset by John Neilson, who recommended WPG's printing services.

WPG's Kelly Griffiths says, "After being recommended to Simon by one of our long-standing clients, we were thrilled to be chosen to provide our book publishing services to another local author. Together with the designer John, we were able to discuss ideas, paper weight, stock and finishes to ensure we delivered a top-quality service and finished publication that Simon's poetry deserved. I hope the book raises awareness, whilst raising vital funds for an amazing charity. It was a pleasure working together."

All proceeds from the sale of this book as well as his earlier book, Walking From Home, are going directly to Parkinson's in the Marches, a local charity set up to support people with Parkinson's in the local area.

Parkinson's in the Marches are having a seminar day on 2 April. This will be free of charge due to funds already raised for people with Parkinson's and their carers to come along to hear from guest speakers and to share experiences with others affected by Parkinson's.

If you would like to know more about Parkinson's in the Marches or to purchase a book – contact details are on their website: www.parkinsonsinthemarches.com

Or contact WPG who can put you in touch.

WPG Ltd. | wpg-group.com | 01938 552260





Clickingmad has completely redesigned the Shropshire Chamber website – www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk – giving visitors a much-improved experience

Web designers spin their magic

A Shropshire-based web design specialist has created a fresh new online look for the county's business chamber – and boosted visitor numbers to the new website at the same time.

Bridgnorth-based Clickingmad has completely redesigned the Shropshire Chamber website – www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk – giving visitors a much-improved experience and leading to a big rise in traffic to the site.

Chamber bosses say the new site is fresh and exciting, better reflects the Chamber and its values, has improved the user experience and explains the benefits of its new membership levels to a much wider audience.

Alongside the modern new design, the website allows users to see the Chamber's membership database, boosting its value to members. The speed of the website has also been improved and visitor numbers have significantly increased since the website went live.

Clickingmad managing director Shaun Carvill said: "The whole team is very proud to be working with such an important client for Shropshire. Every day we work closely with their various teams to ensure that the website is the best it can be.



The newly-designed website has brought with it greater traffic to Shropshire Chamber of Commerce

"The results of our work speak for themselves, but our most important focus is the on-going support we provide."

Chamber deputy chief executive Ruth Ross said they were delighted with the results.

"Shaun and the team at Clickingmad are absolutely brilliant.

"They respond quickly to all our requests, and there are many as we progress along the journey, and the website results are much improved. Their support is frankly remarkable. We are very pleased with the new website as it shows the Chamber's ability to help businesses thrive and prosper in Shropshire."

Ruth said the website now gave visitors

the best opportunity to see the whole range of business services the Chamber provides.

"The website is connected to the Chamber's CRM system to ensure swift and accurate communications and our news is now presented in a much better way.

"Working with Clickingmad has been a breath of fresh air. Working with a new supplier can create issues but we shouldn't have worried. They really are very good in all aspects of technical ability, speedy responses and high-quality work and proactive advice.

"We have access to a support system that is used on a daily basis, and we are very pleased with the support they provide."

For more information about Clickingmad visit www.clickingmad.com



Marathon man Manish, set to take on 12th marathon to raise funds

The countdown is on for keen runner 33-year-old Manish Patel from West Bromwich after he signed up to take part in this year's London Marathon.

The countdown is on for keen runner 33-year-old Manish Patel from West Bromwich after he signed up to take part in this year's London Marathon.

Manish is currently hard at work training for the annual 26.2 mile race around the capital to raise money for local mental health charity, the Kaleidoscope Plus Group after the team supported him back in 2020 when he was struggling with his own mental health.

The West Bromwich-based charity helps thousands of people across the UK each year and offers a range of services for people in need, struggling with their emotional health and wellbeing.

After reaching out for support late one evening, Manish then followed a programme of counselling, that enabled him to move out of a dark place. On that support Manish said: "Counselling provided me with an open platform to speak about my feelings, in an environment where I didn't feel judged at all.

"The support from the Kaleidoscope Plus Group was a real lifesaver as I was in a very dark place, and I was keeping everything bottled up within myself".

The London marathon in April will be Manish's twelfth marathon after taking up running back in 2015. Having previously

completed the London event Manish feels there is unfinished business this time around as he is more determined than ever to hit his target of 3 hours and 45 minutes.

When asked why he is putting himself through a 12th gruelling marathon Manish added: "Running really makes me happy. But most importantly I want to encourage others not to give up if they are struggling.

"There is still a stigma that surround mental health and seeking support. It was those stereotypes that held me back and stopped me reaching out in the past. But since I received the support from the team at Kaleidoscope Plus Group I haven't looked back, I can't thank them enough."

On the incredible support from Manish, Monica Shafaq, CEO at the Kaleidoscope Plus Group said: "We are delighted to work together with Manish and can't thank him enough for his support and I'm thrilled that the support he received has enabled him to be in a good place.

"All the money raised will go to services that provide crucial mental health support for those in need, like our counselling service.

"I can only thank Manish for advocating having those conversations around mental health, it is so important for us to help remove the stigma that surround mental health."

Manish is certainly putting in the hard work to ensure he completes the course in his desired time and reach his £1,000 target often running in the early hours before heading off to work at Staffordshire Police.

If you'd like to support Manish and help him reach his £1,000 target, then visit his just giving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/mpkpg23>



Manish Patel from West Bromwich

HERE'S MY CARD – BUSINESS DIRECTORY

BUSINESS
CARD
HERE
(ACTUAL SIZE)

BUSINESS
CARD
HERE
(ACTUAL SIZE)

We are looking to introduce an entry-level advertising opportunity in the next issue of Your Chamber, Your Voice. The concept is to replicate the information from your business card in print – as part of a handy directory. Each slot is priced just £50* and will be collated with other businesses taking up this great deal. *Subject to VAT.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE YOUR ADVERT IN OUR NEXT MAGAZINE?

(Prices vary)



Full page



Half page



**Half
page -
portrait**



**Quarter
page**

**Prices start from
£120**

***Subject to VAT**

**Please enquire for
more info:**

Contact: Hollie Jones

Tel: 01952 208200

Email: magazine@shropshire-chamber.co.uk

♥ clickingmad

The best website agency in Shropshire - probably.



We provide all the high quality services
you would expect from an expert digital agency.

Born in 2000
Call 01746 769612