

YOUR CHAMBER YOUR VOICE

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2022

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Remaining consistent in a time of great change

Much has changed since the publication of our last edition – in fact, let's be honest, it's pretty hard to work out what hasn't!

A new Monarch, new Prime Minister, new top-level Government team, and a whole new set of economic policies.

But through it all, one thing has remained constant: your Chamber's determination to connect, support and inform businesses to help them navigate the best path forward.

In these times of undoubted challenge, we must not be guilty of talking the Shropshire economy down, because we are still hearing about many, many success stories across the county.

Our programme of events and training programmes remains as busy and popular as ever. It was fantastic to see so many at our recent Professionals Partnership and Network of Women events, as well as testing their trivia skills at our Quiz Night.

It has been excellent, too, to see more companies discovering the benefits of our new all-inclusive membership package, which offers fantastic value at a time when everyone is wrestling with rising costs.

We are delighted to have been chosen to lead the development and delivery of the Local Skills Improvement Plan for the Marches, which aims to put the voice of employers at the heart of the learning and skills system.

It is an exciting opportunity to bring together employers, training providers and other key stakeholders at a time of great need.

We know that the inability to recruit the right calibre of skilled staff is holding companies back, so we must ensure that post-16 technical education and training is as closely aligned as possible to the needs of employers.

Finally, thank you to everyone who took part in our quarterly economic survey – it's a vital tool in feeding the views of the Shropshire business community directly through to those on the corridors of power.

And they really do listen...

Richard Sheehan
Chief Executive Officer,
Shropshire Chamber of Commerce



New members to engage with

Mbrace Menopause
Support
01743 403155
Courtyard House
Cound Park
COUND
Shropshire
SY5 6AH

Shropshire Petals
01952 691553
Lynn South Farm
Lynn Road
NEWPORT
Shropshire
TF10 9BB

Win Financial
07969 358424
Unit B, Howle Manor
Business Park
NEWPORT
Shropshire
TF10 8AY

ALC Christmas
Decorators Limited
07594649180
71-75 Shelton Street
Covent Garden
LONDON
WC2H 9JQ

EFG Harris Allday
01743 247746
Beech House
Anchorage Avenue
Shrewsbury
Business Park
SHEWSBURY
SY2 6FG

MedUK Group Ltd
07940284218
The Grove
Pitchford Road
Condover
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY5 7DF

Stallion AI Services
01948 666295
Chapel Field Stud
Ash lane
WHITCHURCH
Shropshire
SY13 4BP

Zero Carbon
Shropshire
07976 800730
Suite 9
Old Bank Buildings
Bellstone
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY1 1HU

Abbey Kitchens
01743 588656
Unit 393
Whitchurch Road
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY1 4EQ

GT Access
01952 898791
Unit 5 Lancaster Road
Harlescott
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY1 3LG

Morris & Company Ltd
01743 234224
Morris & Company
Welsh Bridge
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY3 8LH

The Movement Centre
01691 404248
Building 106
Robert Jones and
Agnes Hunt Hospital
Gobowen
OSWESTRY
SY10 7AG

eStat Solutions
01952 313141
Unit 20 Horton Court
Hortonwood 50
TELFORD
Shropshire
TF1 7CY

Age UK - Shropshire,
Telford & Wrekin
01743 233123
3 Mardol Gardens
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY1 1PR

Hartley Events Ltd
07736107770
Chaingate Cottage
Stanford Bridge
NEWPORT
Shropshire
TF10 8BD

NDU Bookkeeping
Services
07854 883388
Mynd View
Ratlinghope
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY5 0SS

The Shropshire
01952 677800
Granville Park
Muxton
TELFORD
Shropshire
TF2 8PQ

insight6 Black
Country & Shropshire
07808064134
28 Princes Gardens
Codsall
WOLVERHAMPTON
WV8 2DH

Ben Smith Graphic
Designer
07817 337259
5 Kiln Bank Road
MARKET DRAYTON
Shropshire
TF9 1LB

Life Transformation
Specialist Ltd
07939 049 218
Hilton
Haughton Drive
SHIFNAL
Shropshire
TF11 8HF

PODS (parents
opening doors)
07816643747
1 Manor Drive
St. George's
TELFORD
TF2 9DJ

Thirst Media
07465 221264
21 Miller Meadow
Leegomery
TELFORD
Shropshire
TF1 6NR

Sales Geek Shropshire
07525 080 601
59 Copthorne Road
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY3 8NW

Budgen Motors Limited
01743 463222
Featherbed Lane
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY1 4NN

Ludlow Race Club
01584 856221
Ludlow Racecourse
Bromfield
LUDLOW
Shropshire
SY8 2BT

Severn Hospice
01743 354 450
Bicton Heath
SHREWSBURY
Shropshire
SY3 8HS





Business Growth Roadshow sharing top tips for success

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce is joining forces with the county's two-time company of the year to share best practice on a 'Business Growth Roadshow'.

The free event, which commenced on October 3 and runs to November 29, will be stopping off in Oswestry, Ludlow, Whitchurch, Telford, Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury.

Oswestry-based home safety company Aico, the reigning Shropshire company of the year, will be outlining how its core cultures and values are at the heart of continued multi-million pound growth.

The Chamber will also be bringing together other experts on topics such as finance, international trade, recruitment and skills for presentations and panel debates, hosted by Shropshire Business editor and SBLTV presenter Carl Jones.

Neal Hooper, managing director of Aico, said: "The idea of this roadshow is to provide businesses with a range of short, sharp, thought-provoking presentations designed to help them to be the best that they can be.

"We have put systems and policies in place here at Aico which are hugely successful, helping us to grow rapidly and win a number of awards – and we want to share this intelligence to show other Shropshire businesses they can do the same."



Members of the Aico team will be explaining how they have adopted the 'Lencioni model' created by consultant Patrick Lencioni.

"His philosophies, based around his best-selling book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, explore the benefits of teamwork, and the importance of getting your organisational politics right," Neal explained.

"We are also keen to share our experiences around how corporate social responsibility

has helped to foster a fantastic community spirit among our workforce, for the benefit of Shropshire."

It is anticipated that each event – which includes free refreshments - will run for around 90 minutes, with time set aside for networking.

Shropshire Chamber director Rachel Owen said: "We are looking forward to taking this different kind of business event to all corners of the county.

"To accommodate for people's differing working patterns, two of the roadshows will be in the morning, two at lunchtime, and two in the evening."

The programme started at Aico's Oswestry headquarters in Maesbury Road at 6pm on October 3, before moving to Ludlow for a morning session at the town's brewery on October 14.

Stallion AI near Whitchurch will host the third event at noon on October 26, followed by an evening gathering at Hadley Park House Hotel in Telford on November 2.

The final two dates will be in Bridgnorth at lunchtime on November 14, and finally Shrewsbury Town Football Club on the morning of November 29.

Rachel added: "This event will provide opportunity to discuss current business topics, share best practice and establish new strong business connections."

For booking details, and more information, visit www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk or call the team on 01952 208200.



A wide-ranging new role at the Chamber for experienced John

An experienced salesman who has worked at the highest level of business has been given a wide-ranging new role with Shropshire Chamber of Commerce.

John Crook has been appointed strategic growth manager at the Chamber, as well as taking on the task of managing the sales team for the next 12 months.

Ruth Ross, the Chamber's deputy chief executive, said: "This is a wide-ranging and important role which involves John supporting our Patrons programme, as well as playing a key role in our sales and telemarketing activities."

The 65-year-old Manchester-born businessman has worked in sales for his entire career, starting with the makers of Ovaltine and relocating to Telford in 1992 to work for Wrapfilm Systems.

He eventually became a director and shareholder of the Hortonwood business – at one point even selling clingfilm dispensers on online shopping channel QVC - before stepping down from the role after it was sold in 2015 to Cofresco.

"Over the past few years I have been involved in a range of consulting work, but the chance to come on board to help with Shropshire Chamber of Commerce's ambitious growth plans really appealed to me," he said.

"I'm relishing the chance to get involved in various areas of the Chamber's operations where my management and sales experience can be put to good use."



John Crook, strategic growth manager at Shropshire Chamber

Leading Local Skills Improvement Plan for the Marches

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce has been chosen to lead the development and delivery of a Local Skills Improvement Plan for the Marches area.

It comes just days after the Chamber revealed that skills shortages have become a 'ticking timebomb' for the local economy.

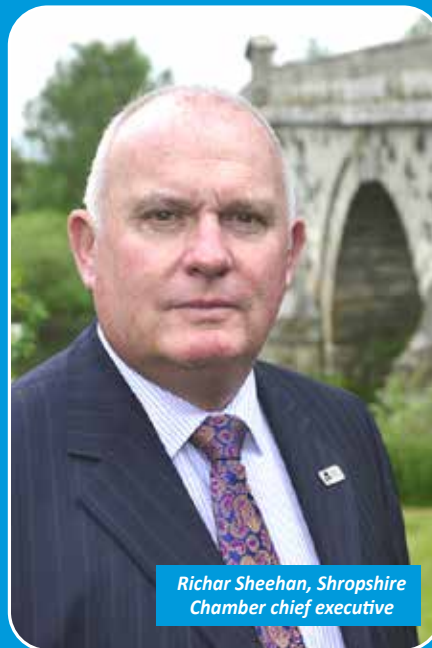
The Local Skills Improvement Plan, funded by the Department for Education, aims to put the voice of employers at the heart of the learning and skills system to build stronger partnership with further education providers.

Richard Sheehan, Shropshire Chamber chief executive, said: "This is an exciting opportunity to bring together employers, training providers and other key stakeholders at a time of great need.

"We know that the inability to recruit the right calibre of skilled staff is holding companies back, so we must ensure that post-16 technical education and training is as closely aligned as possible to the needs of local employers.

"There is lots of good work being done across the Marches region, but the idea of this project is to bring it all together into a more structured and collaborative approach.

"Our aim is to create an environment for the sharing of best practice to



Richard Sheehan, Shropshire Chamber chief executive

create the best possible outcomes for businesses and workers across all corners of Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire."

Shropshire Chamber is one of 32 accredited chambers of commerce

which will lead LSIPs across the country, supported by the British Chambers of Commerce.

Jane Gratton, head of people policy at the BCC, said: "The chamber network will use its convening power and deep knowledge of their local economies and communities to develop clear plans to address skills challenges faced by businesses.

"Chambers will bring together local businesses, training providers and a broad range of stakeholders to identify the skills needed to increase opportunities and enable economic growth for the benefit of everyone in the community.

"This is an opportunity for employers to shape how their current and future workforce can access the right training to thrive in the modern, more digital and greener workplace."

This Local Skills Improvement Plan project is funded by The Department for Education and is a part of the Government's Skills Accelerator programme.

Shropshire Chamber is currently in the process of gathering latest intelligence about the local economy through its quarterly economic survey. All businesses in the county are invited to contribute by following this link: <https://bit.ly/3Ps3XXk>

Export documentation? Start your export journey with certification service: It really is easy as 1, 2, 3...

As a fully accredited issuing body, we can certify UK/Arab Certificate of Origin and preferential EUR1 movement certificate. The team will also authenticate other Commercial Documents as well as facilitating the process of ATA Carnets and Letters of Credit.

Get started on your export journey and set up your free electronic account, enabling you to submit your applications choosing the following options: eCERT Premium Express, eCERT Express and eCERT Standard.



1. Get started

While online, simply click the eCERT logo above to set you to successful exporting!

2. Let's activate your account

Email us your completed Formal Undertaking & Arab Indemnity forms at export@shropshire-chamber.co.uk

3. Ready for action

Simply go through the Standard Rules and your registration is all set.

A handy tutorial is available on SGS webinar recording to help you navigate your eCERT account.

Call us on 01952 208 200 for further guidance on how to use your account, the team will be happy to help.

Did you know?

The service is available to all, but Shropshire chamber members specially benefit from a 50% discount on most of our documentation services.

View our current fees [HERE](#) or call the team on 01952 208 200 for more details.

Export documentation Forms

United Kingdom Certificate of Origin

Non-preferential document used for custom clearance.

It can also be requested for re-export, for commercial or financial purpose or an import regulation.

Stationery available to order via the Export Documentation team.

Arab-British Certificate of Origin

Issued for goods that are being sold and permanently exported to Arab League countries.

It is certified by the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce and legalised by the Embassy of the importing Arab country.

Our agent chamber will ensure liaison with the Arab-British chamber of commerce and embassies.

Please allow a minimum processing time of 2 weeks.

EUR1 Movement Certificate

This document is used to support claim for preferential rates of duty in the country of import and is certified on behalf of HMRC.

To qualify, the goods must be UK originating (manufacture). The preferential system only applied to countries where a signed preferential trade agreement exists with the UK.

Note due to the UK-EU trade agreement, you do not need to apply for a EUR1 for shipments to Europe.

Stationery available to order via the Export Documentation team.

Other Commercial Documents

Varying from commercial invoice, packing list, sale contract, company registration...

Your customer might request for these to be authenticated by your local chamber of commerce.

The authentication process consists of confirming the signature of the applicant is genuine by adding stamps to the document.

Force Majeure Certificate

Document attesting the existence of force majeure circumstances that are beyond the control of the applicant such as fire, flood, industrial disputes, pandemic etc.

The team will only certify factual details that can be evidenced.

ATA Carnet

This document is requested when taking goods temporarily out the UK and will be valid for 1 year from the date it is issued.

ATA Carnet can only be used in certain countries and each have their own rules about what goods you can bring in with an ATA Carnet.

Our agent chamber will ensure your document is ready in timely fashion.

Letter of Credit

This is one of the most secure methods of payment used in international trade.

Working in partnership with Exporter Services, your letter of credit is in capable hands. From paperwork check to fully managed option, our service is tailored to your requirements.

Start your export journey with us!

Call the team on 01952 208 200 (option 4) or contact the team by email via export@shropshire-chamber.co.uk
Visit our website.





ChamberCustoms

Since launching in 2021, there have been some common myths around ChamberCustoms and what we do.

Customs is too hard, my Freight Forwarder handles everything

Our experts offer advice, training, and a professional service to help make customs clear. By taking more control and appointing your own agent, you avoid costly penalties for errors made by a business you don't know. Remember, an Import declaration is a Tax return!

ChamberCustoms don't operate out of hours

If a business has an out of hours requirement, we're more than happy to discuss a solution tailored to your needs. Usually If you're goods are leaving early in the morning or late in the day, you can submit customs entries beforehand!

ChamberCustoms is expensive.

From the beginning we based our fees on the average costs across the UK for professional customs services. And even more as a Chamber member you can benefit from a reduced price as well. View our current fees online.

Since launching ChamberCustoms

we have introduced Transit (T1) support, customs consultancy, customs training and our new online EXabler portal for customs submissions. We've also been early adopters for CDS, getting local businesses ahead of the game for the big change to Imports in September.

We're always improving on our services too. Our EXabler portal will be introducing full real-time updates for those late-night import clearances and can also be tailored to work with your CMR systems for better integration and full compliance control.

With CDS and EXabler we are also fully compatible with tailoring partnerships for our local Freight Companies. Increasing the Chambers' support for local businesses even further.

Business support is at the heart of the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and International Trade forms the bedrock of what we have supported for more than 60 years.

After the uncertainties faced over the past two years, this has been more relevant now more than ever.

Visit our exciting new website or contact a member of the team to find out more about our services on 01952 208200.

Email the team for details via customs@shropshire-chamber.co.uk

Office space to let

We currently have the following office accommodation opportunity available from October 31:

SHREWSBURY - CHAMBER HOUSE
The office is located within the Shropshire Chamber building, Chamber House, Shrewsbury, SY1 3TJ.

The accommodation includes a Residential Membership which includes a standard membership with Shropshire Chamber and will have a reasonable level of access to both the Chamber Boardroom and Clayton training rooms*.

Office 1
Space available: Suitable for 6 people
Size: 3109sqm
PCM: £650 plus VAT
Commitment: Minimum 12 months
Notice: 2 months
Our Residential Members enjoy a prestigious address with a fixed cost to include:

- Heat, light and power
- Open Wi-Fi
- Kitchen facilities
- Parking
- Access to our meeting rooms on a fair use policy
- Buildings insurance

For more details please contact Ruth Ross, Deputy CEO, Shropshire Chamber of Commerce. Contact by email via r.ross@shropshire-chamber.co.uk for more details.

*Subject to availability



Recognition for Ruth at graduation ceremony

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce's deputy chief executive Ruth Ross has been presented with a diploma in human resources management at a higher education graduation ceremony.

She was among the students recognised for their achievements and progress at Telford College's higher education graduation ceremony, held at All Saints Church in Wellington.

Ruth said: "When I first became deputy chief executive, part of my role was to manage the human resources for the organisation and up until then I had been self-taught.

"I had wide-ranging experience of managing people in my former career, but I wanted to be the best I could be for our team.

"So when I discovered about the Telford College course while they were assessing some of our apprentices, I decided to find out more and give it a go."

She added: "I am not an academic – I'm far more of a practical kind of person, so this was certainly a challenge.

"Since the age of 24, I have been writing business reports, but writing academic assignments is a whole different world. When my role at Shropshire Chamber changed, not only did my responsibilities increase, but due to Covid, the course suddenly turned virtual, which meant new business practices too.

"I was also juggling the course with the need to complete house renovations before my grandchild arrived, so it was an extremely busy time for my whole family."

As part of her training, Ruth was required to create a project that focused on the practical side of the business at Shropshire Chamber.

"This gave me a chance to look at things in a different light, and helped me to implement some effective changes, and the course has definitely given me much greater confidence."

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce chief executive Richard Sheehan congratulated Ruth on her achievements.

He said: "We are constantly striving here at the Chamber to highlight the importance of upskilling staff, and Ruth has practised what we preach.

"Her training and diploma success is a clear indication that there is a wealth of local provision here in our county that can help anyone reach and exceed their career dreams."



Ruth Ross receives her diploma scroll from Telford College principal Graham Guest

Flooring the competition

Resin Floors Telford Ltd have gone from strength to strength.

They have just secured a prestigious contract with a leading pharmaceutical company installing a high specification epoxy screed which meets the hygiene standards required.

The project will take several months to complete due to the size of the area. Resin Floors Telford Ltd have taken on extra staff due to the increased work load.

For further details on our products and services, visit our new website www.resinfloorstelford.co.uk

Our services include:

- Heavy duty Epoxy coatings
- Food grade polyurethane screed flooring
- Anti-slip and Anti-skid
- Decorative resin systems
- Anti-static systems
- Fast cure MMA
- Cementitious flow screeds

We have installed Resin Flooring systems in many local companies, including Denso UK Manufacturing, JT Hughes, Ricoh Products Ltd, Stadco and more. Nationally, we have worked with companies such as Dana UK Axle Ltd, Kier Construction, Seddon Contractors and Honda.



We also have a specialist team who work in the food industry. Customers include Quorn, Charlie Bigham's, McCains, Bakkavor Meals and Tulip.

We are proud members of FeRFA the

Resin Flooring Association, CHAS and are Safe contractor approved.

For a free no obligation quote, please call 01952 878615 or contact by email info@resinfloorstelford.co.uk



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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



"I couldn't have got here without you Paul! Thank you for making this possible."
Katie-Lou Mackenzie, author

Email: paul@mediaandyou.co.uk

Call: 07914 304 504

Visit: www.mediaandyou.co.uk

Pension warning from experts

New figures which show growing numbers of people are cutting their workplace pension contributions to make ends meet during the cost-of-living crisis are deeply worrying, a leading financial expert says.

Lee Fellows, director at Shropshire-based Q Financial Services, says the figures show the impact the crisis is having on families across the region – but also point to a possible pensions timebomb in the future.

Digital pensions platform Penfold says its research shows that the number of people opting out of company pension schemes soared by close to a third between March and July this year.

Lee said the figures were an indication of the financial pain the current crisis was inflicting on households.

“People are having to make a choice between having essential money available in the short term or saving for their retirement in the long term. That is putting them in a hugely difficult position.

“People are being forced to cut their cloth



Lee Fellows

accordingly to survive this present crisis, but at what cost in the future?”

Lee urged anyone thinking of cutting their contributions to seek expert financial help – and said other, more cost-effective, options could then be explored to help out.

“Pension contributions are effectively free money from your employer, so you need to think very carefully before taking the decision to pass them up.

“Employers are required, in most instances, to contribute at least 3% of your salary into a suitable scheme and some of the bigger firms will actually match what you contribute, up to their limits.

“All pension contributions are tax free, so

stopping contributions and having the cash back incurs additional tax liabilities which very quickly start eating into the extra cash.

“For example, on an average salary of £31,772 per annum in the UK, a worker can expect to receive around £85 per month additional income in their take home pay by ceasing contributions. This is based on their employer scheme being set up to take into account basic pay as opposed to qualifying earnings, which quite a few firms are not.

“But the value of the pension contribution is actually £211.81 per month when you factor in employer and employee savings – which compounded over the coming years will amount to a significant reduction in your retirement pot.

“There are no easy answers to the situation at the moment, but getting the right advice and support is absolutely essential if families are to make the best financial decisions both in the short and longer terms.”

Q Financial Services group, which has offices in Wellington and Shrewsbury, is one of the leading and fastest-growing companies in the sector across the Midlands.

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

Double celebration for commercial cleaning firm

A Shropshire commercial cleaning company has double reason to celebrate - 25 years in business and a successful kidney transplant from one director to another!

Marie McCreadie launched her business Cleveland Cleaning with her husband Rab in 1997 and has since expanded the workforce to over 100 team members.

Their son Robert set up his own oven and window cleaning business with his dad Rab after Robert left the army. The family has since amalgamated the two businesses into Cleveland Cleaning, based on Bridgnorth Road in Madeley, run by co-directors Marie, Rab and Robert.

In 2005 Marie feared she was diabetic but instead was diagnosed with kidney disease which saw her health deteriorate to the point she faced dialysis or a kidney transplant.

Three of Marie's children Karen Bate, Rob and David McCreadie all underwent tests and all came back as a match to be able to donate a kidney. It was then agreed Rob would go ahead with the donation of a kidney to his mum.

The pair underwent the kidney transplant in October and are now both back to full health.

The business is a true family-run business with the couple's two daughter's Nikki and Karen both working in the business as Contracts Manager and Operations Manager respectively.

Marie said: “To mark 25 years in business is very special but to also mark a clean bill of health thanks to Robert



Rob and Marie McCreadie

successfully donating his kidney to me is definitely a reason to have a double celebration. I never wanted to go on dialysis but I was very close to it as my kidney function was so low.

“Robert always said he would give me his kidney when he left the Army and he did and it was a great success.

“We both feel fantastic and we were extremely well looked after by both Birmingham Hospital and at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital.

“To have all three children come back as a match was very fortunate and I will be forever grateful to Robert for going through with the transplant but I know any of them would have done. I am most certainly looking forward to the future and seeing the children continue the business for the next 25 years.”

The success story started in August 1997 when Marie got in her Fiat Panda with a box of cleaning supplies and went to her first client. They now have hundreds of office, commercial and specialist cleaning contracts across Shropshire and the West

Midlands covering sectors including medical and healthcare, education, leisure, construction and manufacturing.

They also launched MR Cleaning Supplies in 2018 to offer a one-stop shop for other cleaning companies to source cleaning products and now sell thousands of products every year on-line and through their in-store trade counter at their premises in Madeley.

Marie added: “If someone had told me in August 1997 as I got into my Fiat Panda that I would have all of my family working around me, with an amazing team of over 100 members, servicing so many amazing clients across Shrewsbury and Telford and selling products across the UK, I would have laughed! We pride ourselves on first class service each and every time and it is this reputation which has got us to where we are today.

“Cleaning companies can be notorious for a high level of staff turnover but we retain our staff members for years. They start with us and see the opportunity for promotion and our working culture is one which they love. Even if our staff members aren't our family members - they are definitely made to feel like family here at Cleveland Cleaning.

“We would like to thank all of our clients, and of course our staff, for their support over the last 25 years and special thanks to Robert for donating an organ - you can't really beat that can you?”

For more information about Cleveland Cleaning visit <https://clevelandcleaning.co.uk/> or call the team on 01952 585 588.

8FP's first ever event – to welcome their newest clients – was held at Hencote Vineyard



Firm's event sets a new precedent

Local financial planning company, 8 Financial Planning, has set a new precedent for their business by making client's wellbeing their top priority.

8 Financial Planning was founded by established financial planner, Rikesh Bhatt, and his wife, Isha Bhatt, last year. Rikesh has over 15 years experience of being a financial planner and wanted to provide something different for clients with his own business.

8 Financial Planning supports their clients on their journey to financial freedom but not just through creating bespoke financial plans. Instead, they encourage clients to reflect on the life they want, so they can tailor their plans to support them before, during and after retirement.

8FP's first ever event last month was to welcome their newest clients. Held at Hencote Vineyard in Shrewsbury, it was a

huge success and has led to an exciting announcement that supports their new approach to financial planning.

8FP will now be hosting quarterly lifestyle events for their clients and their client's invitees. This decision feeds into the main aim of 8FP - Making client wellbeing a top priority.

The reason for the focus being on client wellbeing as opposed to being purely financial, is so they can create the most beneficial financial plans.

The initial meeting 8FP has with any potential client is up to 90 minutes long and done at 8FP's expense. The aim of the meeting is to find out about their clients as people - Their family, their history, their interests and personal goals. Only then, can they create a financial plan that supports the life they want, not just an ideal figure they want to

get to.

Founder of 8FP, Rikesh Bhatt, said, "Financial freedom looks different to everyone. For some it's retiring earlier, working less days, being able to travel,

having wealth to pass onto their children, etc. A financial plan shouldn't just give you a route to financial freedom though, it should give you a better quality of life overall.

We actively encourage, and work with, our clients to invest in their health, wellbeing and personal development as much as they do their assets. We believe that in order to provide them with the highest level of financial planning, we need to look at the bigger picture.

Ensuring our clients are in a strong financial position is what we should be doing as standard. Using their finances to give them a better quality of life from the get go is how we're setting a new precedent"

8FP is fixed-fee which means they don't charge a percentage based on a client's assets. They do this for transparency - Their rate is consistent and their clients interests are put first with no hidden agenda.

8FP has also partnered with Headspace to offer ongoing clients free access to their full range of meditation and mindfulness tools. 8FP also offers lifestyle coaching to clients and financial education for their children.

You can find out more about 8 Financial Planning by visiting their website at www.8fp.co.uk or following them on Facebook or LinkedIn @8FinancialPlanning

We actively encourage, and work with, our clients to invest in their health, wellbeing and personal development as much as they do their assets

The group from Climbing Out on Y Garn, a mountain in Snowdonia, North Wales



Tackling the Welsh 3000s and growing in resilience

Climbing Out helps adults rebuild mental resilience to move their lives forward following a physical or mental trauma. They run eight outdoor programmes a year, taking groups on residential trips across the UK. The charity combines outdoor activities, such as kayaking and abseiling, with mental resilience coaching, to change the mindset of their participants.

In September they took 13 people on a programme in North Wales. The participants were all embarking on their level 2 – a follow up programme which aims to continue their development. The trip was funded by Team Forces and The Sackler Trust. Members of the group were all from different backgrounds, including veterans and emergency service workers.

Charity founder, Kelda Wood MBE, said, "Our level 2 programmes are all about people

continuing on their journey of development, growth, friendship, and support. In North Wales we saw all of those things – the group pushed themselves, encouraged each other, and most importantly they had an amazing experience."

One of the group members, Gary, said, "My level 1 Climbing Out programme showed me the person I can become, and on my level 2 they've shown me that I am worthy to become that person."

Kelda adds, "Our level 2 trips involve an increase in the challenge and the responsibility we ask for in return from our participants. They did an amazing job at taking ownership of their journey. We took on six of the Welsh 3000m peaks, including a sunrise summit of Tryfan which involved a 4am start to get to the top in time. It was a truly magical moment."

Another participant, Martin, said, "Climbing Out has helped me find myself once again. To see a beacon of light upon the horizon to guide me home. It has given me hope and enabled me to see what it is I am fighting for. It's been little steps each

day, using the tools shown by Kelda and her team. These small steps have made a big path. Recently my father said to me 'I finally have my son back.' This is all down to the Climbing Out team."

Sarah from the group adds, "Climbing Out has been the most helpful, and most awakening thing to ever happen to me. It has helped me more in those few days, than professional services have been able to do in 17 years. I'm so grateful to be given this life-changing opportunity to grow, to push through previous fears and anxieties, to change my mindset, and to gain self-confidence, a sense of purpose, and to meet wonderful like-minded people along the way. Climbing Out has completely changed my life, my mindset, and thankfully, my future - which I now see and look forward to after so long. I feel like a huge weight has been lifted, the darkness has cleared, I'm no longer stuck, and I can't wait for other people to experience this new life that Climbing Out enables us to have."

To find out more about the charity visit climbingout.org



Graduation ceremony celebrates achievements of Shropshire learners

A special ceremony has been held by Shropshire Chamber member Landau to celebrate the success of young learners who have overcome a mix of challenges to gain the skills and qualifications required ready for the world of work or further training.

Landau, which runs its study programme for 16-19 year olds, held its graduation event on August 31 at Casey's in Donnington with 37 learners receiving certificates for their achievements.

Nearly all the students receiving support through Landau's new dedicated Training and Enterprise Centre in Wellington throughout the 2021/22 academic year have secured a place in further education or have jobs to transition into.

Sonia Roberts, CEO of Landau, said the event was a wonderful way to end the year and to mark the achievements of individual learners.

She said: "I'm incredibly proud of all the hard work and dedication that our learners have demonstrated throughout the programme.

"Many of our learners have previously experienced challenges or barriers to learning in a mainstream school or college environment but with us and our tailored support they have been able to reach their full potential and gain the relevant qualifications, skills and practical work experience for the next stage of their lives, which is just tremendous.

"Our programme is designed to be a stepping stone to upskill and promote life skills in young people and following the Covid pandemic it has been more challenging than ever to engage young people so these achievements are a very positive outcome.

"We wish every single one of our learners the very best of luck as they progress either into further training and education or into employment."

More than 70 per cent of learners undertaking the study programme have gained one or more qualifications in functional skills English and maths, employability skills or personal social development skills.

Awards were also presented to individual learners for attendance, improvement and progression.

Landau, which won the Queen's Award for Enterprise for



Promoting Social Mobility, operates the study programme from its skills, training and enterprise centre in Wellington which opened earlier this year to support learners across the county.

Alongside supporting learners to achieve qualifications in functional skills and employability, the new, bigger base has enabled the charity to provide a centre for young people to study a range of other vocational courses such as hairdressing, health and beauty and construction.

On site students have access to a professional-standard hair salon, construction skills suite, modern classrooms and there are also plans in the pipeline for an on-site café.

For more information on the courses and training available, visit <https://www.landau.co.uk/>

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Networking online – meeting in person

Business Network International (BNI) Shropshire has two flgroups that meet online every week. The Darwin group brings primarily Shrewsbury-based companies together, whereas Thomas Telford has businesses working in and around the new town. But you don't have to live geographically in those areas to qualify.

Paul Naylor, chapter President for Thomas Telford, said: "We have members based near Oswestry, Kidderminster and Stoke-on-Trent.

"What brings us all together on a Thursday morning is a shared commitment to helping each other to grow our respective businesses.

"Our Chapter proves quality of members comes above quantity when you are looking for business success. You could have 200 people in a room but if they aren't the right people for you and your business then you might as well be on your own in that room.

"Our members are dedicated and have supported each other throughout the pandemic and as those relationships have grown the business figures have increased too which just shows how much business is based on relationships.

"I think the key fact is that BNI as a global organisation moved to online meetings immediately without hesitation and we had consistency and confidence in each other.

"We have enjoyed such fantastic success our members have voted to remain as an online meeting as it has worked better for all."

BNI Thomas Telford recently passed the milestone of £5million of business and a successful post-Covid bounce back.

The group boasts a number of Shropshire Chamber members who have worked together for many years.

"While the regular weekly meeting is conducted online, the importance of meeting face-to-face should not be underestimated," said PAul.

"This still happens with monthly power team meetings and one-to-one meetings throughout the week which suits the members so much better.

"Reaching the £5million milestone of business passed in the group is great but the recent weekly figures really show the success of the group right now."

Mr Naylor said they had welcomed visitors throughout the pandemic and continued to do so without any obligation to join.

"Visitors bring so much to the (virtual) room and they can access so many different services in one place at one time.

"We understand the time of day or the day of the week might not be right for them on a permanent basis each week but we welcome them to visit us to make those first introductions and connections which might just be the connection they need for their business.

"We look forward to working with Chamber members and the Chamber organisation for collaboration opportunities as we both have the same aims."

The group is proud to be a community focused group where members volunteer in the community and a member has recently secured £10,000 for the charity member SYA.

Anyone who would like to visit can register their place on their chosen date here [http://bnishropshire.co.uk/shropshire-thomas-telford-\(telford\)/en-GB/index](http://bnishropshire.co.uk/shropshire-thomas-telford-(telford)/en-GB/index)

Second anniversary and award win too

A successful recruitment agency launched during the pandemic is celebrating its second birthday by winning a prestigious award.

Blue Orchid Recruitment, based in Shrewsbury but with a national client base, was started by Rob Griffiths after being made redundant from another recruitment company which closed because of pandemic-related pressures.

Two years on and Blue Orchid Recruitment has gone from strength to strength and is celebrating winning the Best Emerging Recruitment Agency category at the Midlands Enterprise Awards 2022, hosted by the SME News Magazine and aimed at showcasing the very best of business in the Midlands.

Mr Griffiths said: "We are delighted to have won and must admit to being pleasantly surprised because we are a small fish in a huge pond - but it just goes to show how far we have come in a short space of time.

"Blue Orchid Recruitment is a professional family run business providing a personal touch.

"We knew it was going to be a challenge launching the business during Covid but with lots of hard-work and dedication we are proud of how the business has grown. It's allowed us to demonstrate that when you push through difficult times you can build a successful business. Being a recruiter you have to be resilient so this mindset has come in very useful.

"We specialise in office and commercial opportunities but also provide career coaching and have a particular interest in helping disadvantaged people who can often get overlooked by other recruiters or struggle generally and need that extra support and confidence building.

"Our focus is on assisting the employer and candidate in the best way we can - helping all parties come together in a working environment in which everyone has the opportunity to thrive. We work with a wide range of businesses from SMEs and charities through to big corporations, covering every industry, so we have clients who are one-person bands up to multinational companies, including one who makes parts for the aerospace industry."

Blue Orchid Recruitment predominantly works across Shropshire, Mid Wales and the West Midlands but also boasts a number of national clients. Mr Griffiths says the plan is to grow the company organically rather than forcing it, ensuring it adapts effectively to market changes and customer needs.

"We are dedicated to providing a great service for the employers and candidates we represent," he added. "Excellent customer service is the key to the success of Blue Orchid Recruitment, something proved by the number of customers who keep coming back and the fact that 95% of our business is referral based.

"There are plenty of job opportunities at present but there are also challenges in certain areas, such as hospitality which is still undoubtedly feeling the effects of Brexit. The pandemic has also seen a rise in the number of people who want to continue working from home or take on the flexibility of hybrid working.

"There are a lot of candidates out there for jobs across many sectors and it's all about businesses making themselves attractive, so we are working hard to put them in the best position possible to attract those candidates.

"We are committed to supplying the right candidate for the right employer and the beauty of being a small recruitment company is that we provide a personal service from start to finish, meeting the needs of all parties, whatever those needs happen to be."

For more about Blue Orchid Recruitment, call 01743 612013, email mail@blueorchidrecruitment.co.uk or go online and visit the website at <https://www.blueorchidrecruitment.co.uk/>



Rob Griffiths

Paul Fielding from
Commercial Assistance



So much more than assistance from Paul

A Shropshire businessman has left an operational management career in manufacturing to start up his own company.

Paul Fielding has launched Commercial Assistance to help other businesses with tasks and projects which they do not want a full-time employee to do.

Mr Fielding has held positions of business development, commercial and operations manager to director level during his career and wants to now share the skills he has acquired with the business community of Shropshire.

Commercial Assistance will be offering a wide variety of services including project and event support, logistical, research, recruitment and management support.

"My skills have been developed through the manufacturing industry but can be applied to all sectors.

"I see myself as a facilitator, someone who initiates or implements, a stimulus or catalyst. It is proving difficult to quantify when people are trying to pigeonhole my offering," Mr Fielding said.

"It might be a project which the business has been trying to get off the

ground but time and restricted staff numbers or skill sets have prevented them doing so. For example, the business might be looking for new suppliers or products and need help with their procurement; they may be looking at making their business more efficient and productive, or looking at expos and networking, but haven't got the time or team to be able to get out and do those important things.

"I can't create any more hours within their working week, but I can supply my time and expertise from half a day to as many days as that project or task needs.

"I work by gaining an understanding of the current situation and then explore the avenues needed to hit the target or establish and deliver the solution for them."

Mr Fielding has already completed projects with fellow Shropshire businesses including Chrisbeon, Autocraft (Telford) and ChipsAway which have included Trustpilot review research, working with a CRM system to be more efficient including staff training and interim management.

He has also worked with a vehicle supply business whereby they needed a fleet of vans delivering to Scotland and the staff bringing back during the rail strikes.

"I love getting stuck into a project and making it work, or a problem where an existing process is not working and answers are required but the company just can't find the time, or the skill set within the existing workforce.

"Many companies are very cautious of employing full time staff at this time. I am an additional resource on an ad hoc basis," he said.

"My service does not represent a profit margin reduction, the successful conclusion will add to the business profitability because I am not a permanent cost.

"I am very much looking forward to working with more of the amazing businesses we have here in Shropshire and there really isn't a job too small," Mr Fielding added.

For more information visit <https://commercialassistance.co.uk/> or email Mr Fielding on paul@comass.co.uk

I see myself as a facilitator, someone who initiates or implements, a stimulus or catalyst. It is proving difficult to quantify when people are trying to pigeonhole my offering.



Theo Grainger, Max Hopson, Rachel Davies, Jay-Jay Perks, Emily Roberts, Conal Smith, Laura Steele and Dan Scharenguivel

New trainees join the family

A Shropshire company has welcomed eight new trainees who are starting their careers in the accountancy industry.

The new faces have joined Dyke Yaxley Chartered Accountants at their head office in Old Potts Way, in Shrewsbury, and they have now begun a two-year scheme of technical and practical training.

The training will be co-ordinated by Human Resources Manager Keith Higgins, who said the trainees were the latest intake to benefit from the support and advice of experienced and knowledgeable colleagues.

"All eight trainees will be working with our audit accounts team and we're delighted with their impressive progress

so far," said Keith. The new faces are: Emily Roberts, Daniel Scharenguivel, Conal Smith, Jay-Jay Perks, Laura Steele, Max Hopson, Theo Grainger and Rachel Davies.

"Five of the new colleagues are from Shrewsbury, two are from Telford and one from Wolverhampton, so we're very pleased to have recruited team members from within the area where the vast majority of our clients are based.

"They have all come to us from college and university, except Rachel who already has a year's industry experience as a trainee with another firm.

"Now that they've completed their induction training, they are working as part of the audit accounts team to develop the skills they will need for a successful career in the industry, and once their initial training is over, the aim is for them to move

forward to study for formal accountancy qualifications."

Keith said the firm's staff training and apprenticeship programmes had helped many employees as they took their first steps on the career ladder.

"In fact, training and apprenticeships have been key to the success of the Dyke Yaxley management team as four of our current directors – Managing Director Marie Bramwell, Helen Bruce, Mark Griffiths and Andrew Young – and newly-appointed Associate Director Hayley Price, all began their careers through our training scheme.

"It's always exciting to see new trainees as they excitedly set off on their accountancy journey, and we're looking forward to working with them to share our knowledge and help them to prepare for the future."

Apprentice joins the team at recruitment business

Shropshire based recruitment agency, DMOS People has continued to expand the team following the completion of Mollie Davies' apprenticeship.

DMOS People's recruitment solutions are spread across three brands, DM Recruitment, Simply Interview and Opus Vitae. Together, the three brands provide temporary and permanent workers in the industrial, hospitality, transport, and commercial industries.

Mollie started as an apprentice 18

months ago, and during her time, has worked in payroll, compliance and most recently in resourcing. Mollie's new role is the DMOS People Office Administrator, where she will be working alongside head office and focussing on customer service.

"I've really enjoyed completing my apprenticeship with DMOS," Mollie said.

They've given me so many fantastic opportunities in each area of the business, and I'm excited to start work as the Office Administrator."

Managing Director, Stuart Danks,

added "Mollie has been an excellent member of the team, and we're delighted that she's completed her apprenticeship with us.

"As our new Office Administrator, Mollie will be focussing on implementing new processes for both our temp family and our clients and ensuring our customer service is up to an incredibly high standard.

"We're excited about what the future holds for Mollie with DMOS."

For more information about DMOS People's services, visit dmospeople.com



On-call firefighter joins the fight against climate change

Leading battery and energy storage specialist the AceOn Group has strengthened its team with a new appointment.

James Hall has joined the Telford-based company's residential, commercial, and industrial energy storage team as a sales executive – with AceOn targeting substantial growth in the sector in the coming years.

James, from Wombourne in Staffordshire, has spent almost ten years working in the motor industry and also works as an on-call firefighter with Staffordshire Fire Service.

"I know from my experience that the future of the motor industry is clean, sustainable electric power and it's so exciting to see all the work AceOn is doing in battery storage and technology to help develop the technologies the world will need in the fight against climate change.

"I've learned so much already since I joined them, and I cannot wait to keep on learning into the future and developing what is clearly going to be a key growth area for the company."

AceOn group managing director Mark Thompson said he was delighted with James's appointment.

"We are developing a suite of innovative energy storage products which will help power the drive to a carbon zero economy and James's passion and enthusiasm will be a vital part of bringing those to market. This is a key area for AceOn and one in which we are expecting significant growth so we are delighted to have him on board."

James, a season ticket holder at Wolverhampton Wanderers, has spent 13 years as an on-call firefighter based at his home town station in Wombourne and enjoys golf, badminton and going to the gym as well as football.

AceOn has more than 30 years' experience in the design and manufacture of custom-built battery packs and the distribution of industrial and consumer batteries to the worldwide market. The energy



James Hall

division provides a training, service and distribution centre to offer a full turnkey solution for residential and commercial battery energy storage systems.

The group has built a reputation as being specialists in solar and battery technology, particularly the development of bespoke, custom-built battery packs. For more information visit www.aceongroup.com

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UK Address finding App marks official partnership with Ordnance Survey

FinTec Business Solutions, the company behind a new UK-wide address-finding App developed in Shropshire, has launched an official partnership with Ordnance Survey.

DALUS App (Driver Address Look Up System) was developed by Spencer Taylor, from Higher Heath, near Whitchurch, Shropshire.

It already has the exact location of 34 million addresses, drawing from seven databases, including Ordnance Survey's Address Base Premium and Royal Mail Postal Address Files (PAF).

This means it has the most comprehensive data set of any similar app on the market – and is supported by Ordnance Survey (OS) data through the licencing of its full data packages for the App.

Ordnance Survey provides national mapping services for Great Britain and is a world-leading geospatial organisation. Its location data and expertise has helped governments make smarter decisions, businesses gain valuable data insight, and everyone experience the world outside for over 225 years.

OS's Address Base Premium not only holds GPS coordinates to delivery addresses (taking it one step further than Royal Mail which confirms what addresses can receive post), but also location data to places such as beach car parks, public toilets, playing fields and sites of scientific interest, for example.

DALUS also draws on data from local authorities and holiday let data sets to create its address list and cross-checks between all the data sources to ensure it is the most comprehensive app on the market to get drivers to where there need to go.

DALUS CEO and founder, Spencer Taylor, is still currently working part-time as a delivery driver, which allows him to constantly test and improve the app. He says that data checking is extremely time-consuming, but essential to support not just delivery drivers, but any users of our platform.

"We are constantly improving the app and wanted to enhance the data sources we were using. We met with Ordnance Survey and presented the App, and were delighted that they not only liked it, but accepted us as a licensed partner meaning we will have licensed access to all the OS

DALUS Founder and Director, Spencer Taylor, 60, from Shropshire celebrates securing a partnership with Ordnance Survey



data sets. This new partnership with OS will ensure we stay at the forefront of meeting the challenge of providing both accurate and up-to-date details," he said.

"As well as every UK address, this also includes data on new builds and homes under construction, so as soon as someone moves in and wants a delivery, we will know where they are.

"It also includes location information on amenities and many other locations like castle ruins, picnic spots, places you wouldn't necessarily deliver to but which you still want to find easily. It has so many benefits and in the future, the mapping data will allow us to introduce artificial intelligence technology for smart route planning.

"We believe that the partnership with OS will make DALUS the most up-to-date address location & navigation platform in the UK," he added.

Tom Williams, Channel Sales Executive at OS, said: "I was really impressed by DALUS and its capabilities, both now but also in the future. To enable the company to grow, we could see the benefit in accepting it as a premium partner, giving them unlimited access to all our latest data."

Spencer has nearly four decades

in the tech industry and along with a development team and partners including Chief Technical Officer, Ruben Riano, from Bristol and Data Manager, Garry Martin, from Croydon, they developed the App over five years.

Spencer created the app after taking a break from IT and starting a job as a Tesco.com delivery driver. He found that other navigation solutions couldn't get him to all the addresses on his routes and set about creating his own app, including the key element of accurate address location.

"The app officially launched in April after a long and intensive development process to create a superior address-finding app. We have more downloads every day and the feedback we are getting is just incredible. We want to help people reduce stress, save time, and help the environment by reducing CO2 and cutting down on fuel usage," added Spencer.

Currently, DALUS is completely free to download and use for one month. After that, users will be contacted and asked if they want to continue using it and only then will payment details be taken. After the first free month, it costs £2.99 per month (incl.VAT), or the cost of a cup of coffee.

For more information about DALUS, visit www.dalustechologies.com

To view or download the app, search DALUS on the Apple app store at apps.apple.com or on Android at play.google.com

As well as every UK address, this also includes data on new builds and homes under construction, so as soon as someone moves in and wants a delivery, we will know where they are

Lisa passes HGV test after winning free driver training competition

A Shropshire woman who won a competition for free HGV driver training has passed her lorry test first time - saying the opportunity has set the wheels in motion for a range of possibilities in the future.

Lisa Ford, a mother-of-two from Wem, went along to the Shrewsbury Live event last year after seeing that driver training specialist Dulson Training was offering the chance for people to drive a lorry around the showground, with one lucky person winning the special prize at the end of the day.

The competition was aimed at raising awareness of the HGV industry and how it is an excellent career choice. Lisa was entered along with all the other people who took a test drive on the day and was shocked when her name was drawn out as the winner.

She took up her place on the driving course and, after spending time with her as she went through the process, Dulson Training offered her a job and Lisa now works in the company's accounts department.

She said: "I come from an HGV background and my dad always said it would be a good idea to get my licence as I didn't know when I might need it. I saw the competition advertised, thought that's for me, went along and won the draw.

"It's been incredible! Going through the course was fantastic, my trainer Trevor Roberts was superb and to top it all I passed my Category C HGV test first time. It's a life skill that I will never be without and it opens up a lot of possibilities.

"We have two young children at the moment but in the future I could become a trainer or drive for a living if I want to. The course was a massive saving as everything connected with this training costs in the region of £1,600 to £2,000. So I was very fortunate to win the competition and have the opportunity to do it.

"The job in accounts with Dulson Training came up during my training course. It means I am also able to drive lorries around the yard and take them to and from mechanics and signwriters and so on as required - which is great."

Steve Dulson, of Dulson Training, said: "Shrewsbury Live allowed us to open up the opportunity for anyone to have a go at driving a lorry. We had instructors on hand to take people for a drive around the showground in a controlled environment, get a feel for it and see if it was something that interested them.

"Whether they just wanted a go or had the intention of becoming a licence holder, it was a good experience. The competition was an idea we bounced around for a while and it was the first time we had linked a competition with an appearance at an event.

"The winner was drawn live in the arena and from there we made arrangements for Lisa to do her medical, provisional and theory tests and then the driving course and test - she passed everything and now has her HGV Category C licence.

"We are seeing more women coming into the industry and have received a lot of comments from local businesses on how fantastic it is that such a large volume of HGV learners now seem to be women. Every day we are seeing multiple women on site taking courses and tests.

"Lisa takes lorries out for us as required and will continue to do more of that. The competition was such a success last year that we held it again at this summer's Shrewsbury Live event and we are just waiting on the winner, Ian Burgess from Stoke, to get in touch to fix up his training course."

Dulson Training provides all types of training, including HGV, PCV, towing, driver CPC, forklift, First Aid, and ADR courses.

For more information call Shrewsbury 01743 709611, Telford 01952 770659, Wrexham 01978 805868, or visit www.dulsontraining.co.uk/



Lisa Ford has passed her HGV drivers test



iconsys has expanded its apprenticeship programme by welcoming Jack Evans and Zack Guillemin

Investing in future engineers

One of the UK's leading independent system integrators has created 16 new at its new smart building in Telford.

iconsys, which provides industrial automation, enterprise integration and sustainable services, has relocated to a 17,500 sq ft site on Stafford Park that will deliver an increase in available manufacturing floorspace, a new technology demonstration/training area, and an office of the future for agile working.

As part of the move, additional engineers have been recruited to help the company continue to provide end to end solutions to their customers.

Investment in the workforce of the future, the firm has expanded its apprenticeship programme even further by welcoming Jack Evans and Zack Guillemin.

Nick Darrall, Managing Director of iconsys, commented: "UK Manufacturers are seeing the necessity of implementing automation and digital solutions into their

operations with the need to compete in the global market.

"This has seen a major surge of interest in what we offer, and we have been proactive in investing in our new 'smart' HQ that will increase our workforce by 30% to 65."

He continued: "We always have one eye on developing the future talent for iconsys and have been working with Telford College of Art & Technology for some time now on shaping an apprenticeship programme that really delivers for the young person and our business.

"This involves creating a three-year course that at the end of it will see our apprentices gain a recognised Level 3 NVQ diploma in Advanced Manufacturing Engineering and, importantly, offering ongoing professional development so they can develop and progress through the company."

In addition to spending two days per week at TCAT, Jack and Zack will both complete in-house workshops and spend time working on a diverse range of

manufacturing and engineering related business across several industrial sectors.

They will work alongside experienced staff and benefit from a 'buddy-type' system that helps the apprentice ease into their new role by sharing in their knowledge and experience and tapping into guidance on work and development issues. The duo will gain hands-on experience building, testing and installing iconsys' electrical control systems, in collaboration with the internal engineering and design team, and learn how to resolve technical issues.

"It's all about creating an apprentice that has a solid all-round understanding of our sector and our business," added Nick.

"This has worked really well in the past and we really want to encourage them to look at how they can develop, with Jack and Zack both having the opportunity to complete a further year of studying for a HNC in Electrical Electronic Engineering.

For further information on the new positions, please visit the website at www.iconsys.co.uk/careers/current-opportunities/

Honorary doctorate awarded to a local solicitor advocate

A Shropshire-based solicitor has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Staffordshire University for his commitment to both the institution and wider industry.

Danny Smith, a Solicitor-Advocate and Partner at PCB Solicitors, attained his Law Degree from the University back in 2004 and has continued to support the establishment and its students through roles on its Development Board, Alumni Advisory Board, and Students' Union Board – roles which he currently holds.

He was also instrumental in setting up the University's Horizon Fund which helps support talented individuals through higher education by providing opportunity awards, bursaries, and scholarships. And, he's supported individuals as they continue their journey through offering many law graduates employment opportunities upon completion of their studies.

Danny said: "To have been recognised in this way by the team at Staffordshire University is a complete shock, but an honour that I am hugely grateful for. I am proud to be a graduate of such a fantastic institution and to have the opportunity to continue to support current and past students.

"I want to accept this award not only in recognition of my own achievements, but of those individuals who have come from ordinary backgrounds and who have demonstrated their passion and commitment to pursuing their dreams."

Since himself graduating from Staffordshire University, Danny has enjoyed a hugely successful legal career – one which saw him become the youngest Crown Court Advocate in Shropshire at the age of just 26 and most recently an equity partner of PCB Solicitors in 2019.

Over the past couple of years alone, Danny has helped PCB Solicitors navigate the pandemic – investing in a brand new IT system to support its team continue to deliver their services remotely on behalf of clients. He led the opening of a new office in Welshpool in April this year which now sees the firm operate from nine locations across Shropshire and Mid-Wales. He continues to invest in young talent – with four current trainees due to qualify and a new apprentice joined the firm in September.

Danny concluded: "I am hugely passionate about inspiring individuals from all backgrounds to reach for the stars and fulfil their potential, and in supporting them every step of the way to achieve their ambitions. Which is why I am very much looking forward to continuing to work alongside Staffordshire University students to share my experiences, to deliver mentorship, and to provide them with all the encouragement they need to succeed."

Danny is one of ten individuals to have been awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Staffordshire University in 2022, a list which also includes Lord Justice Sir David Bean, Paralympic athlete Ian Marsden, and CEO of Alice Charity, Steph Talbot.

Danny was officially awarded his honorary degree at a special ceremony at King's Hall in Stoke-on-Trent on the 21st July.



Danny Smith, a Solicitor-Advocate and Partner at PCB Solicitors



Ruth Pemberton (Shropshire MHS) with Richard Pettener, Sharon Wood and Lauren Newell from Dyke Yaxley

Charity cash adds up thanks to accountants

Two Shropshire charities will share a donation of almost **£3,000** thanks to the efforts of staff from a local accountancy firm.

The team from Dyke Yaxley Chartered Accountants, in Shrewsbury and Telford, have been taking part in all kinds of events and challenges to raise funds for their current chosen causes – Shropshire Mental Health Support and the Lingen Davies Cancer Fund.

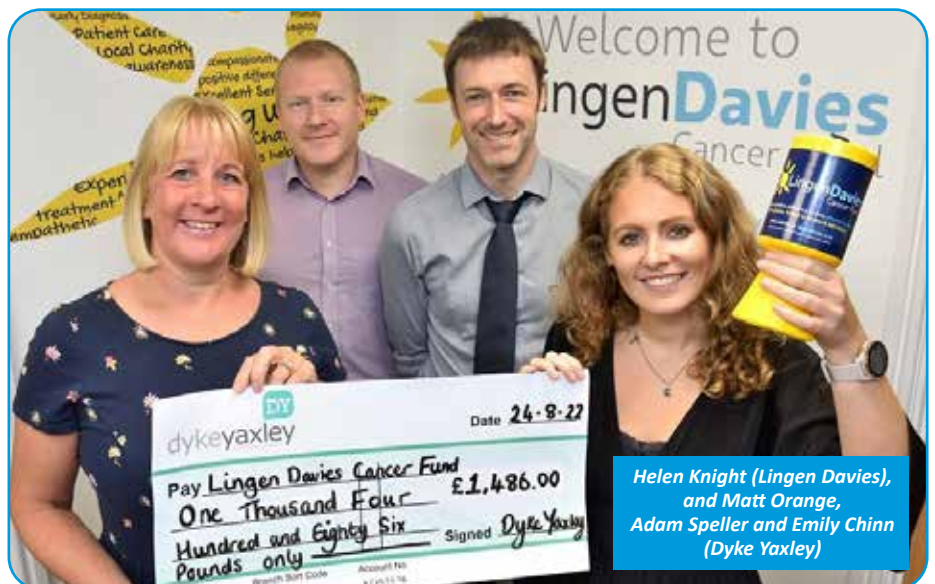
Marketing co-ordinator Jackie Young said they had raised £2972 during their campaign which ran from 2020 to 2022.

“Usually we nominate two chosen charities every 12 months and pledge to support them by raising as much money as possible. But this time, because of the Covid 19 pandemic and the difficulties of organising events during lockdown, we extended that to two years instead.

“We’re just so grateful to everyone who contributed to our incredible total, and to all our colleagues who were prepared to put themselves through some tough challenges to maximise the amount we raised.”

The Dyke Yaxley team were even more creative than in previous years when it came to ideas for a mixture of virtual and in-person events which included:

- A virtual dog race, a Beaujolais Nouveau raffle, a virtual Christmas jumper day and virtual Christmas message board, steps



Helen Knight (Lingen Davies), and Matt Orange, Adam Speller and Emily Chinn (Dyke Yaxley)

challenges, bake-off events, a sunflower race, fantasy football league, a Christmas wrapping service, and a Valentine’s Day bake sale.

“Everyone who supported our efforts this year has helped us to raise almost £3,000 that will be split equally between our two chosen charities, and we’re looking forward to starting all over again with two new causes in the coming months,” said Jackie.

The next two charities that the firm will support during 2022/2023 are:

- The Buddy Bag Foundation – providing a bag of essential items to children who enter emergency care, often after fleeing violent situations at home. The bags include toiletries, pyjamas, underwear, and comfort items such as a book and a teddy bear.
- Shrewsbury Food Hub – a volunteer-powered charity that stops food waste by collecting surplus food from shops, manufacturers and farms, and shares it with community groups to save them money.



Patients to benefit from critical care car

(Back) L-R: Roger Pemberton, chair of the Board, and Dr Mark Nash, medical director, both for Midlands Air Ambulance Charity. (Front) L-R: Robert Bertram, chief executive of The HELP Appeal, Hanna Sebright, chief executive, and Sarah Folley, critical care paramedic, both for Midlands Air Ambulance Charity.



A new lifesaving service has been launched by Midlands Air Ambulance Charity in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

Following extensive research into patient need across the area, the charity has introduced a new critical care car service in the region which has already been dispatched to more than 80 incidents since May 2022, helping to save many lives.

The new northern critical care car was funded by a £60,000 donation from the HELP Appeal – the only charity in the country that funds NHS hospital and air ambulance base helipads. It operates from 10am until 10pm daily, is run by a critical care paramedic. They rapidly bring advanced skills, medicines and hospital-level equipment to the incident scene, giving patients the best chance of survival and good recovery.

The car is adding to the lifesaving service already provided by Midlands Air Ambulance Charity in built up areas such as Stoke-on-Trent and the surrounding areas. The service, which also has an air ambulance helicopter based at Tatenhill near Burton-on-Trent, is

available to help patients in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire on a daily basis.

Ian Jones, clinical operations director for Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, states: "We will always remain a helicopter-led pre-hospital emergency care service, but our critical care cars enhance our ability to save lives. The northern car enables our highly-trained critical care paramedics to offer early advanced medical intervention to patients in Stoke and Staffordshire with serious medical emergencies and those who have suffered trauma."

The northern critical care car has been funded by HELP Appeal and is the third of its kind to enter Midlands Air Ambulance Charity's fleet of critical care cars. These are in addition to three helicopters covering six counties across the Midlands.

Ian adds: "The critical care paramedic on-board the car will support the vitally important work of the staff within the NHS ambulance service."

"We have invested in the advanced training of our critical care paramedics at masters degree level to increase their effectiveness.

"In addition, the cars are equipped with the same advanced medical equipment and drugs as our helicopters, so we can bring parts of the emergency department to the patient. This is to improve survival rates and restore quality of life."

Robert Bertram, chief executive for the HELP Appeal, which provided a grant to fund the new car and its two sister critical care cars across the region, said: "We are a charity that is dedicated to saving lives, whether that's funding hospital helipads, lifesaving equipment or in this case, critical care cars."

"This new vitally-important service has the potential to save many lives across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire each year."

"I am sure people across this region will be reassured that Midlands Air Ambulance Charity's helicopters will be bolstered with the new car service."

To find out more about Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, and how you can support the organisation with future lifesaving missions, visit www.midlandsairambulance.com and follow the charity on social media.

For further details about the HELP Appeal's work, visit www.helpappeal.org.uk

Cameras follow Mo on his return

One of Telford College's most famous former students praised the 'great vibe' on campus when he paid a visit to film scenes for a new documentary.

Mo Chaudry, the multi-millionaire entrepreneur who owns Waterworld in Stoke and several other leisure and fitness businesses, is working on a new film about his inspirational life story.

He wanted to meet some of the college's current students who are facing the same challenges as he did - adjusting to life in the UK when English isn't their first language.

Mo spoke with accountancy students Zahid Laiba and Areeba Zahid who have come to the UK from Pakistan, as well as business student Sylvia Ogbemudia from Ghana, and Ukrainian media student Yan Sorochynsky.

Mo also toured the campus to meet other staff, and chatted with chief executive Graham Guest about the work being done by Telford College to support and encourage students from a diverse range of nationalities and backgrounds.

Thanking the college team for hosting the visit, he said: "The campus has a great vibe and an ideal environment for learning.

"It was lovely to meet some amazing young people, full of purpose and positive energy. Best of luck with the future - and remember, with the right attitude nothing is impossible."

Mo believes he would not have enjoyed such success without his 'transformational experience' at Telford College.

He moved to the UK from Pakistan at the age of eight, unable to speak a word of English, yet has become one of the most successful businessmen in the country, owning a string of leisure-related businesses, and appearing on the Secret Millionaire hit TV show.

Speaking of his time at Telford College's former King Street campus, he said: "Quite simply, I don't believe I could have had the success that I've been fortunate to enjoy if it was not for this transformational experience."



Mo Chaudry meeting some of 'amazing young people' at Telford College



Mo Chaudry is working on a new film about his inspirational life story



Shelley George, from the college's IT department, takes delivery of some of the new PCs

Seat of learning has new chairs

Telford College has taken delivery of 155 new chairs in the latest stage of its campus upgrade. They have been supplied by local company Chrisbeon, based at Stafford Park, which has been providing furniture to the college for around 30 years. Around £1.5 million is being spent on improving facilities around the Telford College campus this year, using local suppliers wherever possible. Dave Candlin, the college's director of estates, said: "We're very proud of our university-standard facilities, but are always striving to improve. This summer alone, we have invested around £250,000 on upgrades and renovations.

"We have a long and happy partnership with the team at Chrisbeon, who always provide a terrific service and know exactly what sort of products to recommend to meet our needs."



Richard Hughes and Dave Candlin with some of the new chairs delivered to Telford College

Chrisbeon has previously provided furniture for the college's Haybridge restaurant, Rendezvous, Orange Tree, Willow Tree Centre, plus the construction and discovery centres.

Richard Hughes, from the company, said: "We're grateful to Telford College for the business it has given to us over the years – hopefully it's a relationship which will continue for many more years to come.

"We are also both patron members of Shropshire Chamber of Commerce, which means we are keen to encourage local businesses to 'buy local' and support each other – and this is a perfect example.

"We have also employed apprentices over the years who have been trained by Telford College, so our company has worked closely with the college on many different levels."

Chrisbeon supplies furniture which is suitable for heavy use in classroom or common room settings to a large number of schools, colleges and universities across the region.

The 155 chairs Titan four-leg chairs delivered to Telford College come with a 10-year warranty.

Richard said: "We recommend these as they are built to last - less expensive chairs have to be replaced more often as they are not such good quality."

Telford College was given a 'Good' rating by education watchdog Ofsted earlier this year, just weeks after its financial health was officially upgraded to 'Outstanding'.

Ofsted praised the college for adapting the curriculum to meet changing skills needs, and for helping students to boost confidence and self-belief in a safe and stimulating learning environment.

£1.5 million upgrade for Telford college

Telford College has invested around £1.5 million on upgrading its equipment and facilities over the past year – with many more improvements still to come.

The college has bought new classroom furniture, using local suppliers wherever possible, in readiness for the new academic year, as well as upgrading around 800 computers.

It has also replaced many whiteboards across the Wellington campus with new touch-screen technology, as part of a campaign to make learning a more interactive experience.

Dave Candlin, the college's director of estates, said: "We're very proud of our university-standard facilities, but are always striving to improve.

"This summer alone, we have invested around £250,000 on upgrades and renovations, including a revamp of our catering outlets which will significantly improve service and widen choice."

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Ofsted praised the college for adapting the curriculum to meet changing skills needs, and for helping students to boost confidence and self-belief in a safe and stimulating learning environment.

Mr Candlin said: "Over the past year, we have used local suppliers to help us upgrade classroom furniture and equipment across many curriculum areas including our 7th Form A level centre, engineering, construction, foundation learning and apprenticeships.

"We are also constantly striving to become more sustainable, by replacing inefficient heating systems, upgrading light fittings, and improving our IT infrastructure."

"We will also be working more closely with our catering provider, Aramark, to foster greater links with the college curriculum over coming months, creating work opportunities for students from across the college.

"It is all part of our determination to ensure that tutors and students have access to modern technological resources, to support high-quality teaching and learning, and develop skills ready for the workplace."

The college is now enrolling for its new range of academic, vocational and technical qualifications, starting in September. Details can be found at www.telfordcollege.ac.uk





Sam and Darren from Shropshire Council talking about the upcoming Leadership Conference



On location at Aico with Neal Hooper



Nick Jones returned for another 'Ask The Expert' slot

SBLTV launches new season

Shropshire Business Live TV, the award-winning monthly broadcast for the county's business community, has returned for a third series.

It is a collaboration between three local media organisations – Shropshire Business magazine, Shropshire Live, and Yarrington Limited.

The first episode of series three included a panel debate on the challenges facing the economy, featuring Shropshire Chamber's very own policy and projects officer Alex Brown.

He discussed the importance of the Chamber's quarterly economic survey, taking his seat alongside the chief executive of the Marches LEP, Rachel Laver, and the managing director of Bridgnorth automotive company SNG Barratt, Matthew Say.

The show also went out and about to take a look inside the newly opened Flaxmill site, and visited Aico in Oswestry where managing director Neal Hooper revealed some of the problems the company was experiencing with its products being sold on the black market.

Back in the studio, the boss of multiple award-winning coffee company Iron & Fire dropped in to reveal his recipe for success at the recent Taste Awards, and Darren Griffin and Sam Collins-Lafferty from Shropshire Council previewed the upcoming Leadership Conference at Theatre Severn where Sir Clive Woodward is the headline speaker.

The show's popular 'Ask The Expert' features also returned, with episode one offerings coming from wealth manager Nick Jones, and Alex Hyde from WR Partners.



The panel debate included Alex Brown from Shropshire Chamber of Commerce

If you missed the show, or any other episodes from the last two series, don't worry – you can watch on the catch-up player any time at <https://sbltv.co.uk/episodes/> The next show premieres on October 27, and the November edition will be broadcast live in front of a studio audience in the theatre at Prestfelde School in Shrewsbury, on November 24. If you'd like to be in the audience for that one, drop the school a line for details.

And finally... the SBLTV team is also on the lookout for people who would like to try their hands at being a presenter, or going out and about to record interviews with local companies. If you fancy giving it a try, go to <https://sbltv.co.uk/contact-us/>

Taking on the Snowdon Sunrise Trek

Aico, the Market Leader in Home Life Safety, are no strangers to fundraising challenges, already looking to 2023 when they will take on the Snowdon Sunrise Trek Challenge in support of local charity, The Movement Centre.

On Wednesday June 28th 2023, over 50 Aico colleagues from Aico and HomeLINK will set off from their headquarters in Oswestry, travelling through the night and beginning their mountain ascent at 2am. The team will reach the summit of the largest mountain in Wales in time for the sun to rise, all to raise vital funds for one of their long-term local charity partners. The journey will be carried out in the complete darkness of night and will see the team travel nine miles and ascend 3,199 feet.

The Movement Centre, a UK charity and specialist treatment centre, helps children who have Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome or other diagnosis to achieve new skills through increased strength and control of their movement. They do this through the use of Targeted Training, a specialist therapy that is currently only provided by The Movement Centre, within the UK. Aico have a longstanding relationship with The Movement Centre, showing continued support through fundraising activities and donations, organised as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programme, Aico in the Community.

The Movement Centre's Fundraising and Marketing Officer, Curtis Langley is excited for the challenge, adding "At The Movement Centre, we are always trying to create new fundraising initiatives, and our latest is the Snowdon Sunrise Trek Challenge. Having met with the team at Sky Blue Adventures, I knew this was going to be our next new event, and it is all set to launch

in 2023. After reaching out to a few corporate partners and individual fundraisers, I was amazed with the positive response, and really pleased to have the support of Aico, with over 50 signing up.

The response has been that great, not only from Aico, but other local businesses too, we may have to put two events on in 2023 to keep up with demand, which will raise vital funds for The Movement Centre, and the families who attend. Snowdon can be a difficult walk to complete at the best of times but to complete it at night brings new challenges. A huge thank you to all Aico and HomeLINK colleagues for stepping up to the Snowdon Sunrise Trek. Bring on June 2023!"

Jane Pritchard, Aico's Community Liaison commented "The Movement Centre is an amazing local charity, very close to our hearts and we are always excited to look at new ways in which we can fundraise and support them. We were delighted when Curtis approached us to see if we would be interested in a Snowdon Sunrise Trek next summer. Having almost 60 Aico and HomeLINK colleagues signing up for the challenge is fantastic! We just need to all start training hard now and focus on reaching our fundraising target."

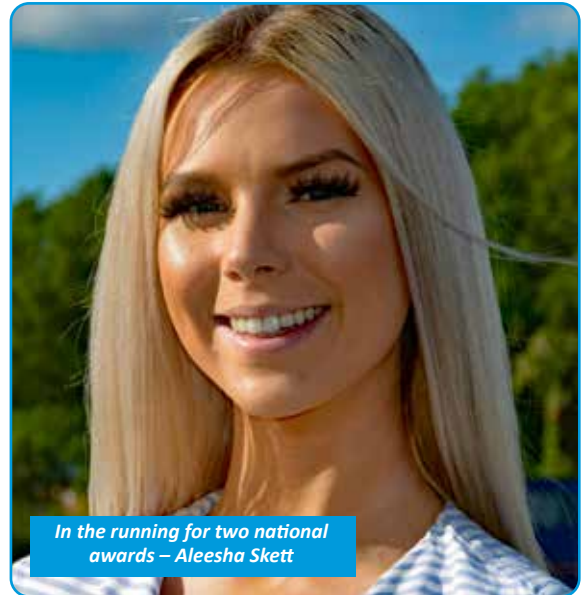
For more information please contact Alex Garmston – Marketing Manager on alex.garmston@aico.co.uk or 01691 664100. For all the latest news please visit www.aico.co.uk

To find out more about The Movement Centre and the work they carry out, please visit: www.the-movement-centre.co.uk

To find out more and to donate, please visit the website: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/tmcaicohomelinksnowdontrekk



Aleesha Skett with colleagues, pictured in May



In the running for two national awards – Aleesha Skett

Former HR apprentice is up for two national awards

A Shropshire woman has been shortlisted for two prestigious national awards following the successful competition of her apprenticeship.

Aleesha Skett is a finalist in the “Young Business Woman of the Year” category at the National Business Women’s Awards and in the “Young Business Person of the Year” category in the SME National Business Awards. The winners will be announced at special ceremonies in London in December.

Aleesha joined The HR Dept Shropshire (a company which provides employment law and human resources support to small and medium sized businesses) in September 2020 as Apprentice HR Consultant. She successfully completed her course in July 2022 and has been appointed HR Consultant to the firm.

“To be shortlisted for these national awards is a great honour and I am delighted to have been recognised in this way.

“It’s been quite a journey since I started my apprenticeship two years ago and have been really pleased to have been appointed as HR Consultant” she said.

“The Covid-19 pandemic has been a really difficult time for businesses dealing with the challenges of lockdown and the uncertainties of what lay ahead.

“Sadly, I am also now working with



Niamh Kelly, Aleesha Skett and Laura Bray from The HR Dept

clients who are faced with the difficult prospect of having to make staff redundant as they look towards the impact of the cost of living crisis on their organisations.

“As a Trustee of the Shropshire Youth Association (SYA), I can see first hand how this will affect young people in the County.

“There are difficult challenges ahead and it’s important businesses plan for

the future. Despite all the uncertainty, however, I remain optimistic and extremely proud of the business community and how Shropshire businesses are helping each other through extremely difficult circumstances.”

For more information about how Aleesha and The HR Dept Shropshire can help meet your HR needs, email shropshire@hrdept.co.uk



Recent research has found that 80% of UK properties are underinsured

Rising building costs bring underinsurance risk for many

For property owners and investors – buildings insurance should provide a crucial safety net, protecting property assets against unforeseen events.

It should step in to cover the cost of repairs or rebuilding work after an insured event like fire or flood, but for all too many property owners, across domestic and commercial property that vital protection may not be all it seems.

In fact, recent research has found that 80% of UK properties are underinsured.¹

Disastrous outcomes

This insurance gap is not something that any property owner or investor can afford to ignore, because it can have a significant financial impact if the time comes to make a claim. Research shows that on average, underinsured buildings are covered for just 68% of the amount they should be.¹

So what is behind this alarming trend? It boils down to a number of issues.

Inaccurate property valuations

There is a common misconception that a property's market value and its insurance value are interchangeable. In reality, an insurance valuation refers to the cost of rebuilding a property, which would include



a range of costs not covered by a market valuation.

They include materials and labour, but also the cost of site access and the rebuild value of areas surrounding the property, such as car parks, outbuildings, or trees. The bottom line is that a property value for insurance purposes must mirror the definition of buildings set out in the policy.²

Rising construction costs

To make matters worse, even buildings that were accurately valued when a policy was taken out may be tipping over into underinsurance now, because of steep rises in the cost of building materials and labour. Clearly, that means the situation is worsening for any property that is already underinsured due to an inaccurate valuation.

Indexing and day one uplifts lagging behind?

It would be easy to assume that property owners are insulated against

these rising costs by inflation indexing for residential property and day one uplift clauses in commercial buildings insurance, both of which are designed to defend against the impact of inflation on rebuild costs.³

However, with building material cost increases far outstripping baseline inflation and the retail price index, this may be a false sense of security.⁴

For those in doubt, help is at hand

Property owners should act now to review buildings insurance policies, paying particular attention to the accuracy of rebuild costs and sums insured.

To find out the reinstatement value of your property, speak to Marsh Commercial's experts in Shrewsbury on 0174 336 0545.

Marsh Commercial work with RebuildCostASSESSMENT to offer their clients the peace of mind that comes with accurate insurance valuations based on multiple data sources. Visit their property underinsurance hub for more information.

Sources

1. RebuildCostASSESSMENT - Infographic 2021
2. Why Rebuild Cost Assessments
3. flat-living.co.uk/advice/90-what-is-the-difference-between-index-linking-and-day-one
4. Construction costs 2021

Supplier of the year

Shropshire's finest, Mutneys Professional Pet Care Ltd. are delighted to have won Supplier of the Year in the 2022 PetQuip Awards.

The awards, now in their tenth year, are reputable in the pet equipment sector and reward manufacturers and suppliers who have made an invaluable contribution to the pet care goods and services industry.

Following a record number of entries, Mutneys were announced as winners at the prestigious awards ceremony for their commitment to supporting customers and providing added value services.

Stephanie Roberts, Co-Founder of Mutneys said: "As a manufacturer and supplier of pet grooming equipment, we pride ourselves on our products being developed by professionals, as every product available is tried and tested in working salons before being added to our range.

"We are passionate about providing first-class customer service to our customers and offering products to suit every breed or coat type.

"To win the Supplier of the Year award and to be recognised for our hard work and commitment is a privilege."

Mutneys is a market-leading company that has been manufacturing and supplying high quality, professional pet grooming equipment for 27 years, supplying to both professional groomers and pet owners across the UK and worldwide.

To find out more about the full range of grooming products that Mutneys offers, visit www.mutneys.com, call their team of industry experts on 01948 841470 or visit the Mutneys showroom in Market Drayton, Shropshire (opening times: Monday - Thursday, 10am - 4pm).



The award was much appreciated



The Mutneys team with the award

Recruitment business opens new logistics division

Shropshire based recruiter, DMOS People has extended its recruitment offering with the appointment of a new team member, Alex Edwards, for the newly formed extension to Simply Interview, Simply Logistics.

Across the existing three brands, DM Recruitment, Opus Vitae and Simply Interview, DMOS People provides recruitment solutions for a wide range of industries, including industrial, hospitality, and commercial businesses, and now, they are branching out into the transport sector.

Simply Logistics, the newest part of the Simply Interview brand, cuts out the hassle of hiring in the transport industry,

and provides businesses with candidates who have been vetted by recruitment professionals.

Alex, Transport Manager at Simply Logistics, has worked in recruitment for over 7 years, and with his appointment, he brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the DMOS People brand.

"I am very excited to be part of the DMOS team and have the opportunity to assist logistics companies across the county fill their void, as well as helping excellent drivers find a position that is right for them." Alex said. "Everyone at DMOS has welcomed me with open arms since I started, and I'm so excited to expand the Simply Logistics brand."

Managing Director, Stuart Danks said "The appointment of Alex as our new Transport Manager heading up Simply Logistics allows us to expand and develop our recruitment solutions to even more business sectors and build on the service we can provide to our current clients."

"Alex has already had great success in his first 6 weeks winning new clients, and growing our temp worker database, it's great to have him on board.

"We're excited for what the future holds with Simply Logistics and Alex at the helm!"

For more information about DMOS People's transport services, visit their website dmospeople.com





New Pave Aways' apprentices - Max Williams, Lloyd Hart, Charlie Lowe and Zoe Booth

Apprentice intake carves a slice into the skills gap

A construction firm that works across Shropshire and Wales has unveiled its latest apprentice intake as it aims to encourage more people of all ages to consider a future in the industry'.

Pave Aways' most recent recruits include two employees in their 30s, who have taken up carpentry apprenticeships as a change in career. Lloyd Hart from Wrexham, who had been working in engineering, and Zoe Booth, from Ellesmere, who studied for a level one site carpentry qualification at Coleg Cambria, have joined 16-year-old Charlie Lowe from Welshpool and Max Williams, 18, from Llanfyllin, who previously studied carpentry at Newtown College, on the team. They will be working on Pave Aways' sites alongside their mentors as well as attending Shrewsbury College to undertake a level two site carpentry course.

The construction company has also appointed its first ever apprentice site manager, Oliver Roberts, 18, from Llanfair Caereinion, who has recently completed his A-Levels at Ysgol Uwchradd Caereinion. He will combine study for formal qualifications at the Shrewsbury Colleges Group with work, initially at the orthopaedic centre it is building for armed forces veterans at the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Hospital in Gobowen, under the guidance

of experienced site manager and mentor Andrew Owen.

Training manager Michelle Benjamin said: "Apprenticeships have long been thought of as an option only for school and college leavers but they are a great way to earn while you learn.

"The apprentices will be supported by our experienced team and get a chance to learn practical skills on our live building sites alongside study at college. There's a recognised skills gap nationally in construction and being able to draw older people into the sector would be one way to bridge that gap."

She added: "An apprenticeship can offer the potential for a long-term career for the right person. One of our former apprentice carpenters, Paul Brooke, has been with us for 25 years and mentored many trainees during his career. And one of our contracts managers, Aaron Evans, started with us as an apprentice carpenter before working his way up to his current position."

Pave Aways' takes on an annual cohort of apprentices including site and office based staff with a long term future in the business for the committed candidates.

It won the Shropshire Business award for its commitment to training and education in 2020 and is a member of The 5% Club, a national movement committed to investing in new talent with fifteen per cent of its workforce currently being apprentices or trainees.



Oliver Roberts, Pave Aways' first apprentice site manager



Shropshire funeral directors join Armed Forces Covenant

Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Shropshire, Anna Turner; Lieutenant Colonel Charles Field, Commanding Officer, Royal Yeomanry; Ian McDougall, Director, WRR Pugh & Son Funeral Directors; High Sheriff of Shropshire, Selina Graham



A Shropshire funeral director has signed up to a programme committed to helping and supporting serving and retired Armed Forces personnel and their families.

WRR Pugh & Son in Shrewsbury is currently the only funeral directors in the county to join the Armed Forces Covenant in the Shropshire area and the move will see the firm providing support through employment opportunities and discounts.

The Armed Forces Covenant was set up to ensure all those who serve or have served their country and their families should be treated with fairness and respect within the local community, economy and society in general.

It covers areas such as education and wellbeing, access to a home, career,

healthcare, financial assistance and discounted services.

Ian McDougall, director of WRR Pugh & Son, said: "Signing the Armed Forces Covenant is a major move for us and recognises our commitment, respect and thanks to all the people who serve or have served our country.

"We are very proud and honoured to have been invited to sign the covenant - we fully support the thinking behind it and its ongoing goals in giving practical help to those people who keep us safe by protecting us through their dedication and courage.

"It seems only right and proper that we repay this kind of commitment by making one of our own, which is why we are offering a guarantee that we are there to help them when they need it most.

"The covenant acts like a database where those who need help can find what they need by looking up the signatories and

finding the appropriate group committed to their cause.

"As part of our pledge, WRR Pugh & Son will be offering discounted services to serving Armed Forces personnel and their families and will be providing support with employment opportunities.

"Being part of the covenant will also help us better understand the unique situation of our service men and women and the problems they face on a day-to-day basis.

"Businesses and organisations like WRR Pugh & Son are determined to ensure they receive the appropriate support they need - something which can only be helped by signing up to this covenant."

WRR Pugh & Son has been serving the people of Shropshire for more than 130 years.

For more information about their services, call 01743 344646 (available 24hrs) or visit www.pughsfuneraldirectors.com/

Lord Lieutenant celebrates with college

Students and staff at a leading specialist college, in Shropshire, celebrated winning a top business award endorsed by Her Majesty the Queen, at a presentation attended by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire.

Derwen College won the Queen's Award for Enterprise for Promoting Opportunity 2022. To mark this fantastic achievement, the college held a celebration event where they were presented with a trophy and official scroll by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire, Anna Turner.

She also delivered a personal letter of congratulations from Derwen College patron HRH The Duchess of Kent.

The presentation, held in the college's The Orangery Restaurant, was hosted by Derwen College Chair of Governors Kathleen Kimber and Principal & CEO Meryl Green, and attended by Mayor of Oswestry, Jay Moore, the Chair of Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council, Councillor Craig Emery and Deputy Lieutenants of Shropshire Mandy Thorn and Veronica Lillis.

Afternoon tea was served by students working on the college's Hospitality & Food pathway. Guests were able to meet some of the students, volunteers and staff who learn and work in the College's Marketplace businesses.

The college was delighted to be flying the flag for promoting opportunity, and literally raised two Queen's Awards for Enterprise flags for the occasion. The event was particularly poignant following the sad death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

Further education college, Derwen College, was established in 1927 by Dame Agnes Hunt, and provides education and vocational training for young people aged 16 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The College operates several businesses at its on-site 'Marketplace'. Students learn work skills in a garden centre, café, restaurant, charity shop and a small hotel developed in conjunction with Premier Inn. They are then supported to progress to external work placements where appropriate.

The College supports students and interns with SEND to achieve their aspirations. Derwen College is proud to achieve outcomes that far exceed the national average for people with SEND – including progression into paid employment, voluntary work, further training, increased independence and supported living.



Meryl Green, Principal and CEO of Derwen College, with Lord-Lieutenant Anna Turner

The King's Representative Lord-Lieutenant Anna Turner said: "It's such a pleasure to be part of this celebration today. When I heard that Derwen College had won the Queen's Award for Enterprise, my pride soared.

"This is a very high award for amazing businesses; a much sought-after award for high achievers. Derwen has been recognised for being exceptional at promoting opportunity. Derwen College is one of only a very small number of organisations recognised in this category nationally. The Queen's Award for Enterprise is a globally recognised business excellence award and probably the best-known accolade for businesses world wide."

Derwen College Principal & CEO Meryl Green attended a Reception at Buckingham Palace hosted by HRH the Prince of Wales (now His Majesty, King Charles III) in July, to mark the win.

Meryl Green said: "Derwen College is having an exceptional year for awards; for our educational and care provision, and for our business 'Marketplace'. We are very proud to receive this distinguished award, and would like to thank all our staff, students, families, and the community who support our College, our Charity and our Marketplace. None of this happens without an amazing team, and we certainly have that at Derwen!"

Photography by Stonehouse Photographic

Plan your 2023 trip with travel firm this November



Peakes Travel Elite team

On Sunday, November 6, Shrewsbury's multi award winning travel agency, Peakes Travel Elite is holding a live event at St Marys Church in Shrewsbury. As well as offering travel inspiration for 2023 and beyond, they will also be raising a glass to 30 years of Peakes Travel Elite.

Claire Moore, Managing Director, said, "We would love customers past and present to join us in celebrating 30 years of Peakes Travel Elite! As Shrewsbury's only fully independent travel agency we are so proud to have been providing incredible holidays along with award winning customer service for over 3 decades. We hope to continue offering our top-level service to holidaymakers for many years to come."

For the November event, Peakes has carefully enlisted trusted travel partners from the world of cruise, touring and adventure to offer their expert advice on the day. Claire adds, "Whether it's visiting the mountains of South America, or sampling Italian cuisine in the heart of Rome, whatever your travel aspirations are, we will have experts on hand to talk through options!

"We would love all those dreaming of a holiday to join us at our event to gather inspiration or plan a unique trip. We hope you can join us!"

Their informal event will run from 10am until 2pm on November 6. Places at the event are limited and must be booked in advance.

To book a place call Peakes Travel Elite on 01743 233234 or email sales@peakestravlelite.co.uk

R&D adviser choice is essential given HMRC investigations rise

We're just months away from changes to the Government's research and development tax claims scheme – a response to the wave of unscrupulous 'advisers' submitting incorrect claims on behalf of companies.

Once HMRC wised up to the abuse of the scheme, estimating at least £311m of fraudulent claims had been made in a single year – they decided to overhaul the system and require additional details to be completed which are designed to root out those misusing the system.

But while we wait until April 2023 when the changes come into force, a Shropshire R&D expert is encouraging companies not to be put off from claiming if they undertake legitimate research and development activities.

Mark Evans set up R&D Tax Claims ten years ago – the firm has since helped hundreds of companies to submit tax claims, specialising in SMEs within the manufacturing and engineering sectors.

He's committed to supporting the drive to get rid of the dodgy advisers out there, who often over-promise and fail to mention that HMRC can decide to re-investigate at any time during the year after processing a claim.

And if HMRC decide at that point the money wasn't legitimately claimed, they can and will ask for it back. If this happens months after the payment, it's likely the business will already have re-invested the money.

Mark has recently published a free guide on his website to help anyone seeking an adviser, and he's also launched a new support service for accountants.

He explains: "We work closely with many accountants who refer their clients to us because of our specialisms within manufacturing and engineering R&D claims. So many times, I've heard that a client has been told (often by a cold-calling adviser) that they should make a claim; they may then mention this to their accountant – who may disagree.

"It can be difficult for the accountant to dissuade their client, who will simply see the opportunity to claim back a significant sum of money. That's why I decided to launch our free advisory service, so we can independently assess whether there is a claim opportunity or not.

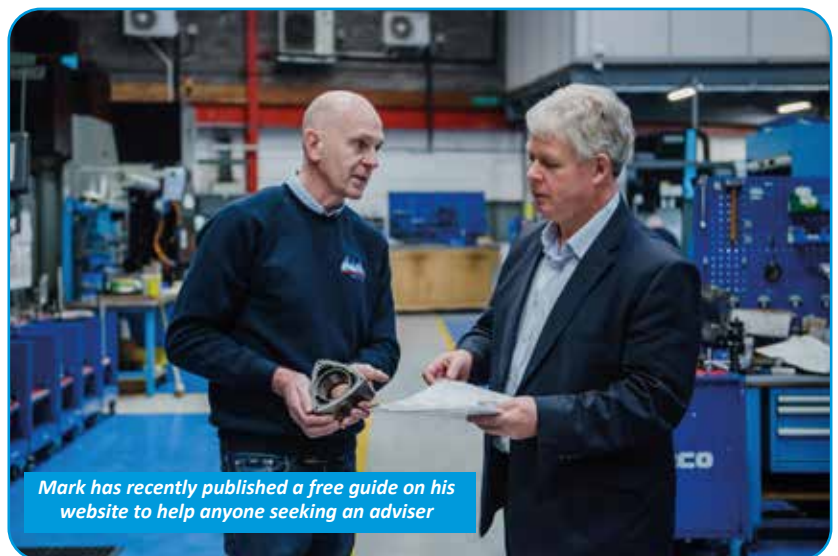
"We hope to see a reduction – and preferably a complete eradication – of unscrupulous advisers submitting bad claims as a result of the new rules coming into place next spring.

"But in the meantime, we can hopefully stop companies falling foul.

"It's easy to think it's a no-risk endeavour, but given the increase in HMRC investigations after they've paid out on claims, it's essential that businesses protect themselves against this – and that starts with choosing a reliable expert to support them with their claims."

To access Mark's free guide to choosing an adviser, simply visit www.rdtaxclaims.co.uk and click the 'read guidance' button.

Mark Evans from
R&D Tax Claims



Mark has recently published a free guide on his website to help anyone seeking an adviser



Fresh website, fresh branding, fresh approach – celebrating one year in our new office

The team at Saracen Solutions are thrilled to celebrate the first year in their new office. Situated in the centre of Shrewsbury, the one-year anniversary of the move to their new premises also coincides with the arrival of a brand-new website, new logo and branding, new staff members and new in-house training courses delivered by Director Tori Davies.

The new office in Swan Hill, Shrewsbury has already provided more space for the growing team, a central location as well as a new training room which is used to deliver in-house courses on a wide range of subjects including Health and Safety, Food Safety, Mental Health Awareness and First Aid.

Courses now carried out in-house are:

- NUCO Emergency First Aid (One Day Course)
- NUCO 3 Day First Aid at Work
- NUCO Lvl2 Mental Health Awareness Course
- Lvl 2/3/4 in Food Safety
- IOSH Managing Safety Course
- BIIAB Award in Personal License Holders

The new office in Swan Hill, Shrewsbury has already provided more space for the growing team, a central location as well as a new training room

Saracen Solutions Owner and Director, Tori Davies says: "Due to personal and health reasons, the last 18 months have been extremely testing for both me and my family. This in turn meant I was unable to fully focus on the business and allow it to reach its full potential.

"However, good news earlier this year meant I was able to 100% concentrate on Saracen again and take it to the next level.

"Despite not being able to spend the first six months in our new office, I am extremely pleased with what we have achieved over the second half of the year, and I am looking forward to seeing what the future holds."

Established in 2004 by Director Tori Davies, Saracen Solutions has over 16 years' experience in all areas of Health and Safety, Food Safety, Mental Health Awareness and First Aid and, are proud to provide cost effective, nonsense safety solutions and advice to organisations across Shropshire, Staffordshire, Mid-Wales and the Midlands.

As a Chartered Member of the Institute of Occupational Safety & Health (IOSH), Tori can deliver recognised training courses to a wide variety of industry sectors including Construction, Hospitality, Retail, Care Homes, Manufacturing and many more.

To find out more about Saracen Solutions, their services and retainers or upcoming courses, call 03300 250506. Alternatively email hello@saracensolutions.co.uk or visit their website: www.saracensolutions.co.uk



It's a lifetime achievement award for SMI founder Brian



Chris Davies, and his partner Jowi, collect the award on Brian's behalf



Brian recorded a video message of thanks for the event

The founder and chairman of a Shropshire manufacturing business has been honoured for his achievements with a lifetime achievement award.

Brian Seymour of Seymour Manufacturing International (SMI) was given the accolade at the annual Temperature Controlled Storage & Distribution Awards, held in Manchester.

More than 400 senior officials from the UK's temperature control and distribution industry were at The Midland Hotel for the event.

They were told: "This year's Lifetime Achievement award goes to a man who has been inventing and innovating for more than 60 years.

"Since developing a fascination with the possibilities of plastic and rubber products during his early years at tyre company Goodyear, he has built a reputation as an award-winning pioneer in the field of temperature control products.

"His industry-leading material, Tempro, protects food in transit for

most of the big supermarkets and retailers. It also helps the armed forces . . . blood banks . . . pharmaceutical giants . . . and many more – not just in the UK, but across the world.

"His invention even protected intrepid adventurer Sir Ranulph Fiennes against life-threatening temperatures during an expedition to the Antarctic."

The judges said: "Even after all these years he is still investing his time into our industry. He has seen it all and more, and received a true level of respect from the panel."

Brian was sadly unable to attend on the evening, but sent a video message of thanks. The award was collected on his behalf by SMI's regional sales manager Chris Davies, who attended the event with his partner Jowi.

SMI has its headquarters and UK manufacturing base at Stafford Park in Telford.

The fast-growing company has just opened a new two-storey manufacturing area at its site, following a ten-fold increase of in-house manufacturing capabilities.

Make a Beeline for new-look recruiter

Formally known as Team4You UK, a local recruitment firm is pleased to announce they have rebranded and are now trading as Beeline Personnel Limited.

With exciting plans for the future, Nick Lewis is heading up the operation based on Battlefield Enterprise Park and said:

"Following a lot of hard work and planning the team and I are pleased to announce this next chapter as we continue to support Shropshire Businesses during this difficult economic time. We are aware that the candidate market in particular is extremely tough currently, coupled with a workforce shortage in many industries across the County.

We are proud to offer Shropshire businesses a bespoke, professional service,

tailored to the needs of our much valued clients. With a full rebrand and a fresh look to our website, I am confident we will continue our growth plan as an independent SME in the heart of the Shropshire business community. I would like to personally thank both our clients for their support and loyalty and also my team for their hard work and commitment during this busy and important time for the business"

Although the rebrand offers a fresh new look to the firm, at Beeline Personnel you can always expect the same high level of service coupled with a commitment to achieving the best outcome for clients and candidates alike.

At Beeline Personnel values and ethics are, as before, the heart of their business.

With the clear mission being to be educators and leaders in ethical recruitment. To create amazing opportunities for driven people, alongside providing the highest standards of service and care. Simply put, to become the partner you wouldn't be without.

Their foundations are based around honesty, innovation and listening to the needs of both their clients and candidates. Coupled with attractive payment terms, making their services both effective and affordable, Beeline Personnel are committed to solving recruitment headaches for both hiring manager and business owners across Shropshire.

To find out more, please visit beelinepersonnel.com or call one of the team on 01743 627404.



The best investment a business can make right now is in its Customer Experience (CX)

We asked our local Customer Experience specialist, Ian Phillips, for his views on the outlook for businesses over the next 12 months

Businesses have had a tough time over the past couple of years, but unfortunately this trend looks set to get worse not better as we see the impact of the cost of living hitting the economy and our customers hard. To survive, and thrive in an increasingly competitive market, businesses need to be investing in their customer experience (CX), as the value of service and the importance of making a human connection with customers has rarely been starker.

What is CX?

CX is the overall perception – the thoughts and feeling – a customer gets from interacting with your business. We can all think of positive and negative experiences we have had as customers. Good or bad, these interactions shape our opinions of brands, products, and services we interact with.

Why is it so important for a business to get it right?

Delivering a positive customer experience will make your customer(s) happy but also increases the likelihood they will return, remain loyal or recommend you to others. Crucially for businesses, great customer experience will positively impact the bottom-line.

You don't know what you don't measure

We know that 94% of customers will look at a businesses reviews before they purchase so I always start by asking a client; are you passive, proactive or reactive in asking customers for feedback? Most will look at me rather blank!

Proactively asking for customer feedback and then actively managing the responses – communicating back to customers and making positive changes – is a great place to start on your CX journey.

Without quality insight and data, you can't truly understand how your customers view your business and if you are delivering on the promises you make.

Your Local CX Specialist

Having lived, studied and worked across Wolverhampton and Telford my whole life, I know the business and customer landscape very well and I'm looking forward to working with faces new and old.

About the author

Ian left a long career as a regional manager within the financial service sector to help businesses across the Black Country improve their customer experience and convert more leads.



I'm a leader and motivator by trade and love to help people meet and exceed their business goals. I'm looking forward to helping businesses develop and grow through improving their customer experience.

CX is one of the best and simplest ways

to improve any business. By taking people out of the day-to-day and helping them to see their business through the customers eyes, we can pinpoint any blind spots and implement new mechanics.

Want to find out more?

If you would like to find out what your customers think about your business or improve your CX strategy, speak to me about **insight6** and its world-class review platform, **instantinsight** or leading CX Reviews.

Contact Ian on 07808 064134, email ian.phillips@insight6.com or visit www.insight6.com for more details.



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Customers or clients are the people who decide whether a business will succeed or not. Businesses looking to grow must understand the experience they provide through the eyes of their customers or clients by regularly asking for feedback.

With our instant insight solution, we can help you analyse the feedback from your customers (or team members) at a much deeper level than self-service alternatives, enabling you to benchmark different criteria over time and against competitors in your sector.

“

We use instant insight to identify how we can improve the experience for our customers. The customers love it, and so does the team. What is more, the system has developed numerous TripAdvisor Reviews; it is a fantastic feedback tool!

— Heather Parry, Managing Director, Great Yorkshire Showground.



Please speak to us today to arrange your **FREE** demo!

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Shropshire business supports local food and drink producers

Shropshire Hamper Company started in 2020 to champion local food and drink businesses, and is now seeing a large increase in sales, despite the challenges facing the sector.

The Shropshire Hamper Company is the brainchild of Beth Heath – owner of Shropshire Festivals who's large scale, award winning events include Shropshire Oktoberfest, Shropshire Kids Fest and, of course, Shrewsbury Food Festival attracting over 90,000 visitors to the region per year.

Beth Heath said, "We're on a mission to help the county's food and drink businesses flourish - given issues within the sector and the current cost of living crisis, it's vital we give even more support to our fantastic food and drink producers.

All produce in the hampers is sourced from within the Shropshire and the Marches region. The hampers bring together a range of products including locally produced gin from The Shropshire Distillery, based in Ellesmere to Cheese Nibbles, a popular savoury snack produced in South Shropshire.

Beth adds "The response from local businesses has been particularly encouraging. With social responsibility being at the forefront of companies ethos and values, we have seen a significant increase in businesses choosing to reward staff and treat clients with our hampers.

"As well as being a lovely treat, this kind of support is vital for the survival of local food and drink producers. In a tough economic climate where consumer confidence is knocked by increasing monthly bills, we need local businesses to collaborate and communicate with one another and to work together to build a strong local economy."

The Shropshire Hamper Company has worked with many corporate clients, across a variety of sectors to create bespoke hampers and gifts to suit all requirements and budgets.

To order hampers for your clients and staff, please visit shropshirehamper.co.uk



Beth Heath, founder of the Shropshire Hamper Company

Tow the line with leading SUV

A Shrewsbury car retailer is proud to announce that one of its most popular models has been crowned the Best Car for Towing, in the highly respected Auto Trader New Car Awards.

Volvo Cars Shrewsbury on Old Potts Way is delighted to announce the Volvo XC40 remains "the hallmark of Volvo", thanks to its smooth driving performance, extensive safety features and intuitive electric technology. The compact SUV is currently available for Shrewsbury drivers to test drive now.

Auto Trader is the UK's largest automotive marketplace for buying and selling new and used cars. Unlike other car awards which rely solely on editorial judging panels, the 19 winners of this year's Auto Trader New Car Awards were voted for by real car owners – with more than 150,000 motorists having their say.

The XC40, which remains the UK's most popular premium SUV, which topped the annual sales charts for a second year running in 2021, was also praised for its performance. For the petrol-powered versions, the capacity for towing a braked trailer extends up to 2,100kg for the 197hp all-wheel-drive B4 model, while the new generation of pure electric Recharge XC40s are capable of pulling caravans or braked trailers up to 1,800kg.

Applauded for practicality as well as performance – the model's towing capability is combined with generous luggage capacity, with 452 litres in the load compartment, or up to 1,328 litres with the rear seats folded down. This can be further maximised with an extensive range of load-carrying accessories, including roof boxes (which provide up to 500 litres of additional storage space) and bike and ski carriers.

Auto Trader Editorial Director, Erin Baker, said: "Safety, comfort and quality were the top attributes for consumers searching for the best car for towing, and it was the Volvo XC40 that ticked all three boxes this year, offering a premium interior, great technology, a small footprint and that all-important ability to tow."

Chris Carr, Managing Director at Volvo Cars Shrewsbury, said: "We're delighted to have one of our cars recognised by Auto Trader as the best car for towing – especially as this award is voted for by UK motorists.

"The spacious load compartment plus capacity for towing a braked trailer makes this car perfect for road trips and breaks away.

"The SUV market is fiercely competitive, so it's fantastic to see the XC40 winning more awards and being commended for its state-of-the-art technology, connectivity, safety and, of course, that all-important driving experience.



Order your XC40 from Volvo Cars Shrewsbury on Old Potts Way



The XC40 remains the UK's most popular premium SUV

"No matter which XC40 you choose – petrol, plug-in hybrid or pure electric – it is a super tow car

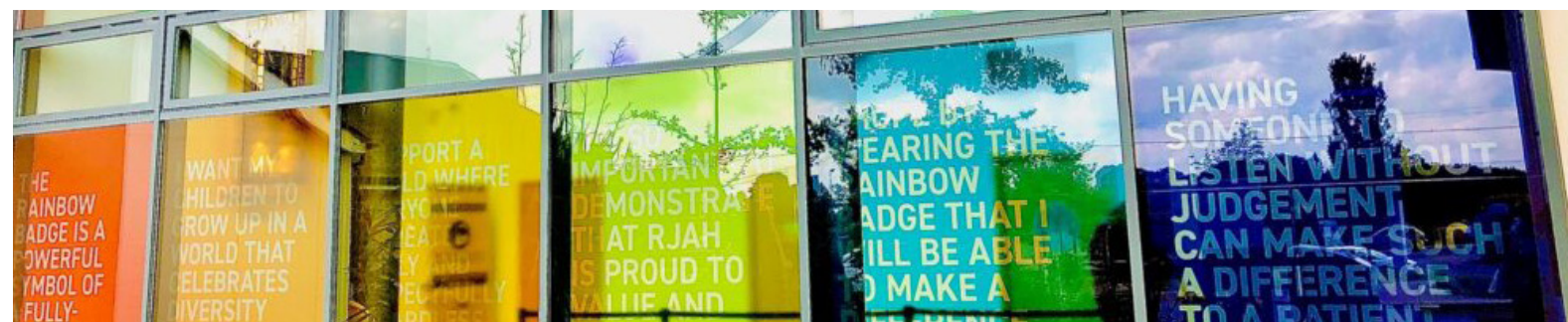
"We invite car buyers to our retailer to explore this award-winning model.

"The XC40 has all the space, comfort and quality that customers value and expect from Volvo's history, while looking ahead to a more sustainable future."

Volvo has one of the most ambitious electrification plans in the automotive

industry. Not only was it the first manufacturer to offer a plug-in hybrid version of every car it sells, by 2025 it aims for 50 per cent of its global sales to consist of fully electric cars, with the rest hybrids. By 2030, Volvo plans for every car it sells to be fully electric.

For more information on the Volvo XC40 or to book a test drive, please visit your local retailer, Volvo Cars Shrewsbury on Old Potts Way, Shrewsbury.



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