

# YOUR CHAMBER YOUR VOICE



Summer 2023



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The deadline for receiving editorial content for the all new-look Your Chamber, Your Voice magazine is Friday, 8th September, with a publishing date of Friday, 29th September.



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



Design and layout by Paul Naylor,  
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Printed by Welshpool Printing Group Ltd,  
Printing House, Severn Farm Industrial Est,  
Welshpool, SY21 7DF

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*Ruth Ross, chief executive officer, Shropshire Chamber of Commerce*

## Working with you to bridge skills gap

**It's been another busy few months for the Shropshire Chamber team as we balance our training, networking and events programme with some significant research projects designed to upskill the local business community.**

We know that the inability to recruit and retain the right calibre of skilled staff is continuing to hold back companies in the majority of sectors.

One of the solutions is to ensure that post-16 education and training is as closely aligned as possible to the needs of local employers.

The Chamber was chosen last year to lead development and delivery of a Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for the Marches area, working closely with major players in further education.

We targeted specific sectors including engineering, manufacturing, professional services, construction, environmental technologies, and health & social care, asking them what support they felt needed to be delivered.

Our report has now been submitted to the Department For Education for approval, to decide on the next step forward.

Alongside this, we have also been working in partnership with Invest In Shropshire on a 'Rapid Upskilling Feasibility Study' to establish training and development needs in our market towns.

Recommendations include running a series of short courses, and we have now submitted a bid for additional UK Shared Prosperity Fund support to help deliver them.

Several members of our team also attended the British Chambers of Commerce conference in London last month. We made some valuable contacts, and came away with lots of other new ideas to help members. Watch this space!

We know that businesses continue to face significant challenges, so it's more important than ever to recognise and reward the amazing success stories we have on our doorstep.

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



# New members to engage with



CKLD Ltd  
07379 818512  
The Mount  
Castle Hill  
CLEOBURY MORTIMER  
Shropshire  
DY14 8DA

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7935936735  
Unit 2, Malinslee House  
Park Road  
Dawley Bank  
TELFORD  
Shropshire  
TF4 2BG

Activ Projects  
01952 459970  
Unit C1 and C2  
Horton Park  
Hortonwood 7  
TELFORD TF1 7GX

Advanced Architectural  
Services Ltd  
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2 Griffiths Avenue  
Doseley  
TELFORD TF4 3FE

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Progress House  
Churchill Court  
Faraday Drive  
BRIDGNORTH  
WV15 5BA

Castle Country Club  
Limited  
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Rowton  
SHREWSBURY  
SY5 9EP

Chrysalis Fitness  
Training  
07824880311  
182 Willowfield  
Woodside  
TELFORD  
TF7 5NY

Cyclone Sign and Print  
01952 541010  
Unit 5E  
Rodenhurst Business  
Park  
Rodington  
SY4 4QU

Davenport House  
01746 716021  
Worfield  
BRIDGNORTH  
Shropshire  
WV15 5LE

Doddington Lodge  
Care Home  
01584 707084  
Doddington  
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DY14 0HJ

Dwello Mortgages  
Ltd  
0333 533 0051  
St James' House  
Hollinswood Road  
TELFORD  
TF2 9TW

Eastridge Glamping  
Limited  
07535 382221  
Haberley  
SY5 0TP

H.L. Smith  
(Transmissions)  
Ltd  
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Enterprise Business  
Park  
Cross Road  
ALBRIGHTON  
Shropshire  
WV7 3BJ

Homemaster  
Relocations Ltd  
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Unit 7&8 Malehurst  
Industrial Estate  
Minsterley  
SHREWSBURY  
Shropshire  
SY50EQ

Hough Financial  
07738704375  
Unit 5E  
19 Moorhouse Close  
Wellington  
TELFORD  
Shropshire  
TF1 2BF

Insert Productions  
Ltd  
07749141625  
Unit 39 & 40  
Atcham Business  
Park  
Atcham  
SHREWSBURY  
Shropshire  
SY4 4UG

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1 Great Tower Street  
LONDON  
EC3R 5AA

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Suite 2-4  
Hazledine House  
Central Square  
TELFORD  
Shropshire  
TF3 4JL

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J12,  
Halesfield 19  
TELFORD  
Shropshire  
TF7 4QT

Quin Plant Hire Ltd  
01952 541623  
35 Waters Upton  
TELFORD  
Shropshire  
TF6 6NZ

Richard George &  
Jenkins Ltd  
01686 626210  
New Windsor House  
Oxon Business Park  
Bicton Heath  
SHREWSBURY  
Shropshire  
SY3 5HJ

Riverside Cabins Ltd  
01939 260495  
Stanwardine Lane  
Wykey  
SHREWSBURY  
Shropshire  
SY4 1HY

Security Wise Ltd  
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Marches House  
March Way  
Battlefield Enterprise  
Park  
SHREWSBURY  
SY1 3JE

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8 Manor Crest  
Ford  
SHREWSBURY  
SY5 9NZ

Sliding Systems  
01691 770303  
Unit 9 Gledrid  
Industrial Park  
Weston Rhyn  
Wrexham  
LL14 5DG

SWH Construction  
Services  
07772 569568  
64 Coronation Drive  
Donnington  
Telford  
Shropshire  
TF2 8HY

SY Contracts Ltd  
01952 979778  
15 Chatford Drive  
SHREWSBURY  
Shropshire  
SY3 9PG

SYA  
07766460428  
The New Lodge  
Upton Lane  
SHREWSBURY  
Shropshire  
SY2 5RR

Tanki Ltd  
01743 213912  
Unit 55  
Atcham  
Business Park  
SHREWSBURY  
Shropshire  
SY4 4UG



# University Centre Shrewsbury is new Chamber patron

**U**niversity Centre Shrewsbury has signed up to become a patron member of Shropshire Chamber of Commerce as part of a campaign to expand its links with the local business community.

The centre, which is part of the University of Chester, has joined a select group of businesses which support the Chamber through its pro-active and dynamic patronage scheme.

Kirstie Simpson, Deputy Dean and Associate Professor of the University of Chester Business School, said: "We want to be a patron of Shropshire Chamber as the opportunity relates directly to our aspiration of being the most connected business school in the UK.

"We would also like to ensure that all of our students can benefit from the insight of local business people and that local businesses can benefit from engaging with our students.

"We hope that a mutually beneficial relationship will flourish over the coming months."

She added: "We are keen to work with enterprising individuals and businesses in Shropshire, creating connections and new opportunities with them and our students.

"We believe that the key strength of the patronage programme is the ability of the Chamber to bring different businesses and stakeholders together to add value to our local economy.

"Our vision is to be the UK's enterprising business school; positively transforming our communities through education, research and knowledge exchange."

University Centre Shrewsbury hosted the relaunch of Shropshire Chamber's 18-35 group in February. The group is designed to provide a networking and socialising platform for like-minded young businesspeople.

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce's patron programme gives businesses the opportunity to raise awareness of



*University Centre Shrewsbury has become a patron member of Shropshire Chamber of Commerce*

their organisations, and express their commitment to the success of the local business community.

Rachel Owen, Shropshire Chamber's director of membership, said: "Being a patron is a mark of excellence and integrity, and demonstrates a firm commitment to the Chamber, and the success of Shropshire's economy as a whole.

"Patrons understand and engage with one another and aim to identify opportunities, and trade with and obtain introductions for each other wherever possible.

"The objective is to generate ideas, enthusiasm and dynamic business opportunities and to feed this back through Shropshire Chamber and

onwards to the county's businesses as a whole. Through their attendance as patrons at appropriate events, networking forums and business expos, they demonstrate their belief in the programme and through on-going membership they commit to maintaining the highest standards.

"We're delighted to welcome University Centre Shrewsbury to the programme and would like to thank them for their ongoing support for the Chamber and for the wider Shropshire business community."

More information about Shropshire Chamber's patron programme can be found at [www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk/about-us/shropshire-chamber-patron-programme](http://www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk/about-us/shropshire-chamber-patron-programme).

***"We are keen to work with enterprising individuals and businesses in Shropshire, creating connections and new opportunities with them and our students."***



## CHAMBER POLICY



### Businesses – what will you have to solve next?

Not so long-ago Royal Mail was victim to a crippling cyber-attack that caused widespread disruption stopping mail from being delivered overseas. As many SMEs relied on this service to fulfil their export requirements, it caused a major headache for businesses, **yet another problem to solve!**

**Cybercrime** has always been a concern for businesses who rely on digital technology to deliver products and services to customers, hold business-critical information digitally or use third parties who are also digitally dependant. Now more than ever it is imperative to keep this data safe and ensure that cyber security is at the forefront of your business practices.

### FREE TOOL FOR BUSINESS

The National Cyber Security Centre provides **free guidance** for small businesses on cyber security: at

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/small-business-guide>



Want to have your say or understand how others are facing business challenges?

Then the **Quarterly Economic Survey (QES)** is the tool for you!

The QES is the British Chambers of Commerce flagship business survey. From the reports you can learn how other local businesses are faring and understand the pressures affecting them. Joining in and having your say makes the data stronger, of more use to businesses and gives the Chamber the tools to lobby. Results from the survey are used to monitor business conditions and consulted on by HM treasury, the Bank of England and other Government bodies to shape their policy decisions.

Never miss an invite to take part in the QES again – **simply email [policy@shropshire-chamber.co.uk](mailto:policy@shropshire-chamber.co.uk) TODAY**, quoting QES Sign Up and ensure your voice plays a part in the largest private sector economic survey in the UK. It is anonymous, so you have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

## Continue learning and improving via training sessions

It has never been a more important time to train staff as this can lead to increased productivity, performance and staff retention.

Training improves employee confidence, gives them the skills to do their job and help to better understand their responsibilities.

Continuous improvement of employees through training can also have a positive impact on the overall running and performance of the business. Here at Shropshire Chamber, our training offer is tailored to cover a range of business needs, from sales to first aid and communication, there is a course to cover every topic.

Some of our training courses over the coming months are:

Mental Health for Managers FAA Level 2 - 05.07.23 – Telford

LinkedIn for Business – 05.07.23 - Shrewsbury

COSHH Awareness – 06.07.23 Morning - Telford

Basic Understanding of Health and Safety 06.07.23 Afternoon - Telford

Emergency First Aid at Work – 11.07.2023 - Shrewsbury

Excel Level 3 - 12.09.23 - Telford

How to Get Results at Networking 11.07.2023 - Telford

Instagram for Business 12.07.2023 - Shrewsbury

Methods of Payment and Letters of Credit (Export) - 12.07.2023 - Telford

Emergency First Aid at Work - 19.09.23 - Telford

Supervising First Aid for Mental Health (2day course) - 26-27.09.23 - Telford

Become a Powerful and Persuasive Speaker – 28.09.23 Telford

Google Ads Beginner Course 14.09.23 - Telford

Optimising Social Media to Generate Leads – 21.09.23 - Virtual

Understanding Export – 07.09.23 – Telford

Prevention of Burnout – 21.09.2023 – Telford

For the full details of our training offer please visit the training section of our website:

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

These training courses could be attended free of charge depending on your membership level.

For further information please call the team on 01952 208200.



*"It looks highly likely that the Bank of England is going to have to raise interest rates further over the coming months" says Shropshire Chamber chief executive Ruth Ross*

## GDP has improved a touch, but economy is 'merely stagnating'

**The Government today revealed that the UK's GDP grew by 0.1% in the three months to April.**

Responding to the news, Ruth Ross, chief executive of Shropshire Chamber of Commerce, said: "Clearly it's good news that our GDP is heading in the right direction again, albeit very slowly.

"But the growth is by no means across-the-board, and when it's put into context with rising inflation and interest rates, overall it seems that our economy is merely stagnating at best.

"We are currently in the process of analysing the results of our latest quarterly economic survey of Shropshire businesses, and it shows that there

are still significant concerns around recruitment, and the impact of our stubbornly high rate of inflation on overheads.

"It looks highly likely that the Bank of England is going to have to raise interest rates further over the coming months to try to reverse this trend, and that is going to impact on the purchasing and spending power of many businesses."

Ruth said it was clear that the construction and production sectors were lagging some way behind other industries, while many small and medium sized businesses in Shropshire are holding back on investment plans.

"The British Chambers of Commerce is also forecasting a 4.7% decline in exports this year, so there is clearly still a great deal of work to be done," she added.





# Olivia Adams: a new addition to the Elite Skin Studio team

**We are pleased to announce that Elite Skin Studio in Newport has welcomed a new team member. Olivia Adams joins Elite as a Skin & Laser Specialist, after having recently graduated from Birmingham City College University with a first-class degree as an Aesthetics Practitioner.**

We are steadfast to our commitment to providing exceptional education to our team, and service to our clients. Olivia's appointment demonstrates a dedication to staying at the forefront of the industry and achieving outstanding outcomes for clients. Olivia has honed her skills through comprehensive training, including facial

rejuvenation, chemical peels, and laser treatments, during her three-year degree program—an unprecedented achievement in our field. This experience has been further enhanced as she joins Elite, where she can utilise cutting-edge treatment technology and industry-leading homecare products available at our Studio.

Beyond her technical proficiency, Olivia has demonstrated a warm and caring demeanour that instantly puts clients at ease. She wholeheartedly embodies the Elite philosophy of cultivating robust connections through attentively comprehending clients' concerns and aspirations, thereby fostering a sense of trust and confidence in the exceptional care they receive at Elite Skin Studio.

As the demand for skin and aesthetic treatments grows within the market, it becomes increasingly vital to approach these procedures with professionalism



Olivia Adams

and rely on qualified practitioners. This is why we welcome the introduction of comprehensive University degrees, such as Olivia's. A commitment to client safety and well-being at Elite means that all procedures are performed by highly trained practitioners. For instance, injectable treatments at Elite are exclusively carried out by Melanie Brown, a Level 7

Qualified Advanced Nurse Prescriber. In contrast, it is alarming that it is still possible for individuals with no industry experience to attend a 'half-day course' and begin administering injections. Despite the ongoing lack of industry regulation, we strive to maintain our dedication to best practice at Elite, ensuring that clients can have peace of mind knowing that their treatments receive meticulous care and attention to detail.

We extend a warm welcome to Olivia and invite you to meet her at your next visit to Elite Skin Studio. [www.eliteskinstudio.co.uk](http://www.eliteskinstudio.co.uk)



**ELITE SKIN STUDIO**  
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## Feel amazing, inside and out.

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We work with industry-leading technology, including:

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-  SkinPen Microneedling
-  CACI Non Surgical Facelift
-  Cynosure Laser Hair Removal

Start your skin confidence journey today with a complimentary Skin Analysis consultation, exclusively for Chamber members! Book now.





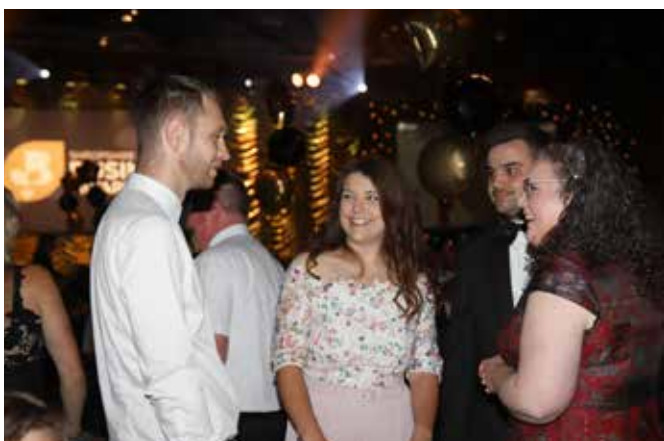
With the vast room at Telford's International Centre appropriately decorated and the stage set and ready to go, it was time – once again – to greet hundreds of guests to what is lovingly referred to as the 'Oscars' of Shropshire's business community. And what a night it was, culminating in Oswestry-based Aico taking 'Business of the Year' for a third time. There were plenty of achievements on the night, but the biggest winner was the county itself and its array of business stars.

# An amazing night! Images from 2023 Shropshire Chamber Business Awards



















Richard Parkes, SYA chief executive officer, appeals for help to store equipment

## Storage space plea from youth charity as new HQ is built

**A** Shropshire charity is appealing for help in finding storage space for furniture and other equipment ahead of the construction of its new headquarters in Shrewsbury.

SYA is replacing its current HQ with a new building - thanks to a £1.5m grant from the Youth Investment Fund but needs to find a new home for various equipment for the duration of the build.

Planning permission has been granted and it is hoped the new HQ will be ready by Easter next year. Any storage facilities would need to be easily accessible, allowing youth clubs to take out and return equipment needed to fulfil their commitments in support of young people across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.

Richard Parkes, SYA Chief Executive Officer, said: "We just can't wait for our new headquarters to be built but the building process takes time and we must ensure that the programmes we are involved with can continue running smoothly during this period.

"A lot of equipment is stored at our current base which we need to have regular access to during the demolition of our existing building and the construction of the new one.

"We need somewhere to keep things like sporting, arts and other equipment essential to keep the 120+ youth clubs across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin supplied with exciting activities.

"We would love to hear from anyone willing to come forward with an offer to provide storage space for us during this period.

"It needs to be easily accessible for those running our programmes and about 25 square metres - the size of a big double garage. Such an offer would solve a significant issue for us and it would be really appreciated.

"It is hoped that work will be completed by Easter next year and the construction will include a large social space and creative zone. The new headquarters will be quite an upgrade on our present demountable timber building which is both costly and dated.

"The new facilities will allow for the continuation of a valuable community resource within the area and will also include a quiet breakout room, training room and much improved office areas. It will be a low carbon building with great eco-credentials.

"In every way it will be a sounder base to help us deliver our exciting expansion plans in the future as the largest supplier and supporter of youth work across the county."

Anyone able to offer storage facilities to SYA can call the charity on 01743 730005 or email [info@sya.org.uk](mailto:info@sya.org.uk)

## Volunteers are sought

Volunteers are being sought to support a new youth project that has begun in Telford thanks to a partnership between SYA and Bournville Village Trust.

The new youth project opened at the Oak Tree Community Centre in Lightmoor Village after youngsters in the area were invited to have their say about what they would like to see in the village.

The youth activities are managed and run by SYA, while Bournville Village Trust has funded a part-time professional youth worker who is responsible for the weekly youth club sessions, the development of other activities, which includes a youth forum.

Some residents have already become volunteers but due to the popularity of the youth club, more volunteers from within the community are needed.

SYA is committed to running youth clubs, groups and projects for young people and support voluntary groups across Shropshire

and Telford & Wrekin while Bournville Village Trust, which has offices in Lightmoor Village, is one of the leading and longest serving independent community-focussed organisations in the Midlands.

The opening of Lightmoor Village Youth Project is the latest in a string of new youth clubs being opened by SYA in 2023 and follows on from the recent relaunch of Bomere Heath Youth Club and the opening of a new youth club at the Watergate Centre in Whitchurch.



A new youth project, opened at the Oak Tree Community Centre in Lightmoor Village, requires volunteers

Richard Parkes, SYA Chief Executive Officer, said: "I would like to thank Bournville Village Trust for helping us get Lightmoor Village Youth Club off the ground - it is already proving to be a valuable asset for Lightmoor Village.

"There was a real need for the provision of a youth club in Lightmoor Village and the move follows an increasing desire to support and engage local children and young people positively which will help to drive down incidents of youth related anti-social behaviour within the area.

"Youngsters were invited to have their say about what they would like to see in the village and members of our team and Bournville Village Trust have spent time out in the community collating those ideas before designing a project around them.

"The new youth club is led by a professional youth worker funded by Bournville Village Trust. We are also looking for more volunteers to help with supporting the youth worker in running the club.

"Youth clubs play an important role within our local communities and offer structured events which are properly run and give young people somewhere safe to attend on a regular basis to enjoy all kinds of interesting activities.

"We are trying to make sure as many communities within Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin have a youth club available to them and are constantly striving to achieve this."

The funding has come from the Lightmoor Village Delivery Group - a partnership between BVT and T&W Council - with additional funding from Cllr Raj Mehta and Cllr Jayne Greenaway from their Pride Funds.

Fleur Hemming, Lightmoor Village Estates and Stewardship Manager at Bournville Village Trust said: "There was a real need for youth provision in Lightmoor Village and we have worked hard, in collaboration with others including the young people and residents, to deliver that which now includes the youth groups, forum, healthy living project and outreach work."

The youth clubs will run in the Oak Tree Community Centre in Lightmoor Village every Wednesday. Junior youth club runs from 5.15pm - 6.45pm for school Years 6 - 8, and senior youth club runs from 7pm - 8.30pm for school Years 9 up to the age of 18.

Anyone interested in volunteering should call SYA on 01743 730005 or email [emma.b@sya.org.uk](mailto:emma.b@sya.org.uk)

# Historic rally returns for Weston Park spectacle



*The golden age of rally cars returns to Weston Park with the Historic Rally Festival*

**The fast-paced thrills of the golden age of rally cars are returning to historic Weston Park this autumn – with a new stage to delight fans.**

Legendary drivers, night racing and a second historic venue will all be in the spotlight when the Historic Rally Festival drives back into Weston for a third year.

For the first time this year, drivers will take on a stage at Hatton Grange in Shifnal, the historic home of the Kenyon Slaney family.

Meanwhile Weston Park, on the Shropshire/Staffordshire border, will host both day and night stages, the rally service area and an explosive fireworks spectacular.

The festival takes place on September 30 and October 1 and promises to be a real celebration of racing, the cars and their drivers.

Spectators can stay in the heart of the action and enjoy a one-night stay at Weston Park. Bed and breakfast is £300 per double room and includes one night in a luxury room, a full English breakfast the

following morning and weekend tickets to all stages of the rally.

Jennifer Astbury, head of estate operations at Weston Park, said: "We are very much looking forward to building on the success of last year's event, and having the service area at Weston this year is going to be a very welcome addition to the show.

"It is very apt that this year sees the festival link with Hatton Grange, as it has very strong connections with Weston Park and our donor family, the Earls of Bradford.

"Lady Mabel Bridgeman, the eldest child of the third earl, married William Kenyon Slaney of Hatton Grange and became a real "footballer's wife". As well as being MP for Newport, William has the distinction of scoring the first ever international goal for England when he scored against Scotland on March 8, 1873!"

The ceremonial start of the rally will take place at Hatton Grange on the Saturday, when drivers will complete four runs through the rolling parkland and past the impressive Georgian house.

The cars will then return to Weston Park for the night stages on Saturday evening and a spectacular firework finale. The service area will also be based at the park.

Sunday will see a full day of action at Weston Park. One of the longest rally stages ever held in the park will feature the Tower Loop, one of the highest spots of the estate, with drivers then descending into the heart of the park and into the watersplash.

The popular driver meet and greet will return, as well as a food and craft village, delicious street food, local ales and ciders, a fun fair and club area.

Star driver Louise Aitken Walker will be back in the commentary box alongside Howard Davis and Mike Broad.

Warner Lewis, from Rallying History, said: "We can't wait for year three and are very excited about the Hatton Grange stages and bringing the service area to Weston Park. Not only will spectators see top rallying action from more than 70 cars, but they will have plenty of opportunities to meet the drivers and see the cars up close."

Advanced tickets for the UK's only Motorsport UK-permitted multi-venue demonstration rally are on sale now. Early Bird prices, which start from £20 per person, are on sale.

For more information and to book tickets, visit [www.weston-park.com](http://www.weston-park.com) or [www.historicallyfestival.com](http://www.historicallyfestival.com)





Anna Redding with Annette Badland



Rocking Horse Partnership team

# College wins innovation award

**A specialist Shropshire college is delighted to have won a national award for an innovative partnership forged with a local film company who share the College's ambition for people with special educational needs and disabilities.**

Derwen College, near Oswestry, recently won the Natspec award for Innovative Partnership Working. The award was for the mutually beneficial partnership with film-making company Rocking Horse Media. Oswestry-based Rocking Horse use areas of Derwen College as the location for their pilot television comedy/drama with an inclusive theme. They also provide meaningful work experience and industry information to students and supported interns.

With a shared vision for promoting inclusivity in the workplace and on screen and stage, Derwen College students have been able to access unique experiences from this partnership. Well-known actors work directly alongside the students, including former Blue Peter presenter Peter Purves, Doctor Who and Skins actress Annette Badland and Doc Martin's Ian McNeice.

Rocking Horse Media have also delivered workshops on continuity, acting and directing as part of Careers Week.

Rocking Horse founder Gareth Thomas is an Industry Champion for the college's Performing Arts Pathway. He freely gives his time to judge talent shows, provide students with professional acting headshots, and videoed and photographed College events, such as the annual Christmas and Summer Shows.



Rocking Horse founder Gareth and actress Orla teach Performing Arts student Izzy about camera work

Derwen College Supported Intern Anna Redding started a regular work placement with Rocking Horse as a runner and has progressed to acting, writing and even producing. Director/ scriptwriter Gareth has supported Anna to write and produce her own short film, based on her personal experience of short-term memory loss.

Anna says: "I really enjoy my internship with Rocking Horse Media. I got to be a clapper at one point which was really exciting because I've never got to use the clapper before. I have also acted as a background actor."

She's also learnt transferable work skills. She says: "I've learnt that you have to be professional even if you are stressed. You have to be patient with different people."

Rocking Horse Media supported Anna to create her own short film on short term memory loss condition (which she has), and introduced her to many industry professionals. They supported her to feature on a radio interview as well as securing her future work experience when she leaves us this summer.

Natspec, which represents specialist colleges across England and Wales, announced the winners of the Innovation Awards during a virtual ceremony, with the trophy presentation taking place at Natspec's National Conference on 13 June.

Gareth Thomas said: "Being autistic myself, Rocking Horse Media has always championed itself on being a neurodiverse supporting organisation, working with people from all kinds of diverse backgrounds.

"Getting to produce our care home drama series TV project, which champions the SEND community, right here at a renowned specialist College, with students with SEND involved on our set, both on and off camera, was the perfect marriage between both organisations. We will continue to support Derwen College in any other aspect that we can out of recognition for that."

Derwen Performing Arts lead Jessie Vaughan explains the College partnership with Rocking Horse Media.

"Rocking Horse Media have had a massive impact on the Performing Arts pathway over the past year or so. With their consistent support and ideas they have provided our learners with a range of experiences which include question and answer sessions, headshot workshops, careers talks, filming and editing our departmental shows to name just a few.

"Rocking Horse Media have not only provided our current cohort of learners with memorable opportunities, they have also offered work experience opportunities to recent and older graduates."

If you would like any more information around our Performing Arts Pathway, or other pathways at the college, please visit [www.derwen.ac.uk](http://www.derwen.ac.uk)



## Rachel's role



**Rachel Tomley trained at Lanyon Bowdler**

A Shropshire law firm has congratulated a former trainee who has qualified as a solicitor and joined the family law department.

Rachel Tomley started her career at Lanyon Bowdler following the completion of her Legal Practice Course and LLM in Professional Legal Practice in 2020 and is now a new member of the family team in Oswestry.

Sue Hodgson, head of Lanyon Bowdler's family team, said Rachel would be a valuable addition to the team.

She said: "As a firm, we are proud to provide opportunities for lawyers starting out in their legal careers and it's always a wonderful moment when a trainee qualifies as a solicitor.

"Rachel has proved herself to be a very capable lawyer and I am delighted she has joined the family team in Oswestry where she will be a great asset to the firm and our clients."

Rachel said she was looking forward to assisting with the growing demand for advice in family law matters.

She said: "I have experienced a wide range of legal cases and issues during my training contract at Lanyon Bowdler, completing seats within the court of protection, clinical negligence, family, and personal injury departments.

"Everyone at the firm has always provided me with a great level of support and supervision, and helped me develop my skills that will last my entire career.

After spending six months with the family department, I am very pleased to be returning on a permanent basis as a newly-qualified solicitor.

"The training contract has given me a fantastic basis for my legal career and I am proud to have now qualified as a solicitor in the family department.

"After growing up in Oswestry, and knowing there is an increasing demand for family work in the area, I am delighted to join Caroline Yorke, who is an associate solicitor, at the Oswestry office.

"Here, I will develop my experience within divorce, finances and child arrangements under the supervision of Caroline."



**Kelly Reynolds, Sophie Speirs and Jemma Parocki**

## New trainees starting contracts at law firm

**A** Shropshire law firm has welcomed a new intake of trainees as it continues its commitment to helping aspiring lawyers take the first step in their professional career.

Lanyon Bowdler runs an award-winning training programme, which has seen dozens of trainees and apprentices qualifying as solicitors in recent years.

Brian Evans, managing partner at Lanyon Bowdler, said the latest additions had settled into their training contracts very well - having already worked in different roles for the firm.

He said: "We have recently welcomed Kelly Reynolds, Sophie Speirs and Jemma Parocki to our training programme, joining Claudia Booth, who started her training contract in January.

"All four of them are already familiar with the firm, having worked in various administrative roles before being accepted as trainees this year.

"It's always great to see the ambition and drive of our trainees to succeed, and we hope all four will go on to enjoy long careers in the legal profession."

Kelly Reynolds joined Lanyon Bowdler

in 2021 as a paralegal, assisting solicitors at court hearings and client meetings, before beginning her training contract.

She said: "I aspire to qualify as a solicitor and be recognised for my expertise in my chosen field. I would hope I can progress within my role to an associate and then potentially a partner one day, but that is a long way off yet!"

Sophie Speirs worked as a litigation assistant before joining Lanyon Bowdler and said the training contract had been a great experience so far.

She added: "I have also enjoyed going back to my roots at the University of Wolverhampton's careers events, representing the firm to the current students and advising them on their career paths.

"Like Kelly, my aspiration is to be an extremely successful solicitor and partner at Lanyon Bowdler - I am not set on which department specifically but that's the beauty of a training contract."

Jemma Parocki has been with the firm since 2020, following experience in the teaching profession and a stint studying law in Australia as part of her university course.

She said: "Lanyon Bowdler is highly-regarded as a great training firm and I am delighted to have started as a trainee.

"My ambition post-qualification is to remain at the firm and become a partner within five years."

# Nick takes on marketing position for Telford College

**Telford College has appointed a new community engagement marketing officer to raise the profile of its growing range of higher education and adult courses.**

Nick Brandum, who lives in Shrewsbury, is no stranger to working in the world of education – or marketing.

He graduated from Bournemouth University with a degree in advertising and marketing, and then spent three years as sales and marketing manager for the university's student union.

During this time he organised one of the country's largest freshers' fairs and led on promotion for The Old Fire Station; a famous south coast music venue that helped break the careers of artists like Example and Ed Sheeran.

The newly-created role at Telford College is aimed at expanding its community outreach programme, and raising the profile of the college's higher education and adult learning curriculum.

It involves working with staff, students, schools, parents, employers and other college partners to deliver unbiased information, advice and guidance through pop up shops, community events, workshops, jobs fairs and other recruitment events.

Nick, who has also previously worked for a creative agency in Birmingham dealing with global entertainment brands like PlayStation, Warner Bros and Netflix, said: "I'm super happy to be back in an education setting.

"I love putting my experience to use in a place made to help people. Having made Shropshire my new home, it's a privilege to work for the largest further education college in the region."



Nick Brandum is community engagement and marketing officer at Telford College

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## Agency signs new additions



Alfie Lloyd (left) and Russell Goody

Hunter Bevan, a leading Shropshire-based marketing, web development and graphic design agency is excited to announce the addition of Russell Goody and Alfie Lloyd to their team. With the company's growth and demand for services increasing, Hunter Bevan has expanded its team to meet the current and future needs of its client base.

Russell joins the team as a highly talented and experienced digital artist, web, and app developer. Starting his career in 3D animation and illustration, he followed his interest in coding, becoming proficient in full-stack development. With his years of experience and a keen eye for creative design, Russell will be responsible for developing and implementing custom web solutions to meet the unique needs of Hunter Bevan's clients. Russell's expertise will be invaluable in creating responsive, mobile-friendly websites and web applications.

Alfie, a digital marketing specialist, will be responsible for developing and executing innovative digital marketing strategies that drive traffic and increase conversions for Hunter Bevan clients. Alfie brings a wealth of experience in social media marketing and event management, with his role also encompassing traditional marketing techniques and client liaison.

"We're thrilled to welcome Russell and Alfie to the Hunter Bevan team," said Neil Bevan, Director of Hunter Bevan. "As our company continues to grow, it's important that we have the right talent in place to meet the needs of our clients."

Hunter Bevan, located on Oswestry's Artillery Business Park, will be celebrating 25 years in business next year. The company offers a comprehensive range of services covering logo design and branding, design and supply of printed stationery and promotional marketing materials, marketing strategy and support, digital marketing and website development to a wide range of clients locally, nationally, and internationally.



Clickingmad's new junior web developers, left to right, Seamus Harvey, Alex Guest and Daniel Sweeney - hi res

## Web developers join Bridgnorth company

**Three new team members have joined Shropshire-based web design specialist Clickingmad to help handle its growing business.**

Seamus Howard, 24, Alex Guest, 23, and Daniel Sweeney, 23, have been recruited to the Bridgnorth-based company as junior web developers.

Clickingmad managing director Shaun Carvill said the company's business had grown significantly over the past two years. "We were looking for new developers to join us but we particularly wanted to recruit young people at the start of their digital careers. It gives them a chance to develop their skills and brings a new perspective to the company," he said.

The three have been recruited to roles which include building, updating and maintaining websites, helping and supporting clients with updating their websites and improving search engine optimisation.

Seamus, from Halesowen, has been programming in one form or another since he was a child. He started creating websites and basic games from the age of 12 and moved into web development from the age of 17.

"I have been thoroughly enjoying my time here. Clickingmad is a company with

a value on people and high quality results. I have been, and still am being, pushed to be my best," he said.

Alex, from Bridgnorth, studied computer science at Staffordshire University after developing a passion for web development at an early age. He worked on freelance projects for businesses and individuals while at university.

He said his experience in his new role at Clickingmad had been overwhelmingly positive and he was enjoying new challenges with lots of support from his new team.

"The environment at Clickingmad is incredibly supportive. Everyone is friendly and welcoming as well as knowledgeable which has made me feel very much at ease," he said.

Daniel moved to Bridgnorth from the Isle of Wight to take up his new post with Clickingmad after completing a computer science degree at Aberystwyth University. He said that his experience in his new role had been excellent.

"The team are great and I have learnt a lot whilst working here," he said.

Shaun Carvill added that Seamus, Alex and Daniel had quickly become part of the Clickingmad team.

"It's quite inspiring to see the enthusiasm and commitment that the three of them have. They have all settled in really well and we are looking forward to working with them into the future," he said.

**"We were looking for new developers to join us but we particularly wanted to recruit young people at the start of their digital careers. It gives them a chance to develop their skills and brings a new perspective to the company"**

# Care services manager role for Paulette

**A** new manager has taken over the reins of a care home run by Shropshire’s largest not-for-profit care provider Coverage Care Services.

Paulette Morgan is the new manager at The Cottage Christian home in Newport.

She has stepped up to the new role following the retirement of long-standing manager Julie Stevenson.

Paulette joined the home in February 2022 as the deputy manager following a long career in nursing.

She said: “My background is in nursing but moving into the care sector was certainly a good decision. I love being able to provide continued care to residents, build relationships with them and provide support on an ongoing basis.

“The environment here is so friendly and we have a brilliant working culture. The residents know that this is their home, and all the staff work tirelessly to make sure they are happy, comfortable and that their individual needs are catered for. Our residents are at the heart of everything we do.”

Paulette manages a team of 65 carers, nurses and domiciliary staff and together they care for 40 residents at the home on Granville Road.

Last year Coverage Care Services secured the long-term future of the home after completing on the purchase of the site.

It had previously operated as a tenant of the home.

Debbie Price, Chief Executive, said she was delighted to appoint Paulette to the management team.

“Paulette brings a wealth of professional experience to the role and we have no doubt that she will continue to build on the fantastic care that The Cottage Christian provides to residents in the local community.



Paulette Morgan at The Cottage Christian, in Newport

“We’d like to thank Julie for the many years of service that she dedicated to the home. She was a committed, hardworking professional and we wish her the very best for her well-earned retirement.”

Coverage Care Services operates 12 homes across Shropshire and employs in the region of 1,000 people.

For more information about its services visit <https://www.coveragecareservices.co.uk/>

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Peter Sims, 7video director, pictured with Tom Rees and Lauren Birch

# Ambitious plans of growing team

**R**apidly expanding film and animation company 7video is celebrating further growth, welcoming new members to the team.

The award-winning company has more than doubled in size over the last two years, and has recently moved into a brand new two-storey building, based on the Shrewsbury Business Park.

And now, Tom Rees, 25, and Lauren Birch, 24, have joined the team to support the company's offering to their customers.

Tom has been appointed as video editor, with an impressive track record of producing compelling and engaging content, with more than five years of video production experience.

"The 7video team have been so great and helpful at such an exciting time. They're so ambitious about their future plans and I'm so excited to be a part of that," he said.

To further expand the company's animation and motion graphics service, Lauren brings a wealth of experience as a graphic designer, having previously collaborated in diverse industries to deliver exceptional results.

She said: "Joining the team was such an incredible opportunity, I've already seen some of the exciting projects that we're working on and I'm looking forward to even more opportunities in the future."

Alongside the growth of the team, 7video has enjoyed a strong increase in the number of clients they are working with right across the UK.

The media production company enjoys ongoing partnerships with local companies like Aico, Dechra Pharmaceuticals and Shrewsbury Colleges Group.

7video director, Peter Sims, described how proud he is of the team's achievements with the new recruits joining during the company's 15th birthday year.

"Seeing the team continue to grow continuously demonstrates the dedication we have to innovate and deliver for our clients. The addition of both Tom and Lauren to the team marks another significant milestone in our company's journey, especially during our 15th year milestone," he said.

"We're incredibly ambitious about our future plans, delivering outstanding media production services to our clients across the UK and sometimes overseas.

"And I would like to say a special thank you to all our customers too. We love what we do with them and very much look forward to bringing more of their stories to life with film and animation."

For more information about the media production company's work visit [www.7video.co.uk](http://www.7video.co.uk)





# Battery packs are ground-breaking

**T**hriving UK battery specialist AceOn says its ongoing investment in innovation and renewable energy technology is driving strong growth as it unveils another positive start to a year.

The Telford-based pioneer has produced its first-ever ground-breaking sodium-ion battery packs, unveiled a world-leading mobile 80kWh energy system, started work on a multi-million pound project to replace fossil fuels with battery technology in the maritime industry and opened a new office in Solihull in just the first quarter of the year.

Managing director Mark Thompson says sales of its commercial energy storage products – which help customers store renewable and low-tariff power for the most cost-effective use – are also buoyant as a result of businesses and organisations wanting to become more green and the rising cost of energy.

Mark said the company's belief that 2023 would be the 'year of the battery' was already bearing fruit – with the prospect of further expansion to come later in the year.

"We have enjoyed a hugely exciting start to 2023, with our reputation for innovation, developing new renewable and battery technologies and belief in working with the best in UK industry really paying off.

"Our new office in Solihull, which has created four new jobs, is part of an exciting expansion strategy that we are developing which could include us setting up a new manufacturing and warehouse facility later in the year to further grow the battery storage side of our business.

"Just last week we showcased our new sodium-ion battery packs – thought to be the first manufactured in this country – powering an inverter system at the University of Wolverhampton's Renewable Energy Workshop and Mobile Solar Power Energy Storage System Demonstration (REWED) event at its Telford Innovation Campus, where they were greeted with huge interest.

"Sodium-ion batteries will be a key battery technology in the not too distant future and AceOn is at the forefront of development work on this."

Mark said the company had also



*The new Lion-ESS 80kWh mobile energy storage system and smaller Lion-ESS Cub portable storage system*

***The AceOn team has more than 30 years' experience in the design and manufacture of custom-built battery packs, supporting the development of new battery technologies and products, and the distribution of industrial and consumer batteries to the worldwide market.***

launched its new Lion-ESS 80kWh mobile energy storage system and was also working on a smaller 3kWh portable storage system which gives a second life to electric vehicle batteries.

"We know these units have huge UK and export potential and for AceOn to team up with the automotive market is not just magnificent for us but also really good news for the planet in terms of moving to a Net Zero future. It's this sort of innovation which will drive the change we need to meet the climate crisis.

"I am also delighted to see AceOn leading a consortium of some of the country's leading commercial and academic experts as we start work on our RESTORE project to help power a green future for the maritime industry.

"This is a £4.6million project which will develop ground-breaking ways of converting vessels from diesel to battery

and hydrogen power and establish the UK as a world leader in marine renewable technologies."

The AceOn team has more than 30 years' experience in the design and manufacture of custom-built battery packs, supporting the development of new battery technologies and products, and the distribution of industrial and consumer batteries to the worldwide market.

The energy 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 renewable and battery technology, particularly the development of bespoke, custom-built battery packs. Mark and AceOn have been selected by the UK Government as one of its Export Champions.

# Base reaches new heights with its caring approach

## An exciting time for firm in its 20th year

A thriving firm of Shropshire architects has announced a number of promotions to accommodate the business's continued growth during its 20th anniversary year in 2023.

The changes, announced by Managing Director Harry Reece, include the creation of a Board of Directors and the promotion of a number of existing members of staff as well as the addition of two new employees to the team.

Bryn Jones and Ben Embrey have been made Directors as part of the changes and will join the newly formed Board alongside MD Harry and Chairman Carl Huntley. Alongside this Jack Harris



*Harry Reece, Managing Director of Base Architecture*

and Kieran Trow have also stepped up to become Associates to further strengthen the company's internal team and market position, with Joe Weigh becoming Senior Architectural Technologist. The company has also recently recruited two new starters to their Chester office and are currently seeking a third.

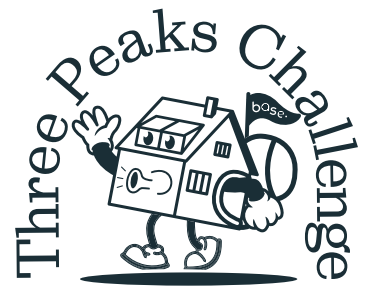
This success all comes as a result of the company's ongoing growth plans, with significant interest being seen in their high-end residential design portfolio and commercial operations from across the UK. With an innovative and passionate team delivering architectural design and planning services to their clients, this interest shows that despite challenging economic times there is still considerable focus in the marketplace on built development, with Base helping steer their clients through current complexities.

Asked about the changes, Harry said "This is an exceptionally exciting time for the company. It is great to see the time and investment we have put into developing our staff pay dividends, and everyone should be very proud of themselves. With more in store for 2023 this is another brilliant way to celebrate our 20th anniversary!"

Bryn and Ben have been with the company for more than a decade and alongside Harry and Senior Associate Joe Salt have overseen a period of business expansion in the face of the challenges created by the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.

Jack, Kieran and Joe Weigh have been with the company for a number of years and during this time have gained valuable experience in their respective fields, to the point that they are now ready to take the next step in developing their careers.

Business and home or land owners who want to find out more about how Base's growing team can help them with their plans can get in touch via: [hello@basearchitecture.co.uk](mailto:hello@basearchitecture.co.uk)



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

At the time of writing, this epic challenge has raised a huge £3,650 in aid of 12 worthy charities: Severn Hospice, Lingen Davies Cancer Fund, Hope House & Ty Gobaith, Grinshill Animal Rescue, Midlands Air Ambulance, Asthma + Lung UK, Samaritans, Sands, Bowel Cancer UK, Andy's Man Club, Sight Savers and Cancer UK.

On Friday 9th June 2023, after a day-long drive, a bright-eyed and bushytailed band of base brothers and sisters set off up Ben Nevis in the late afternoon. Job done, a slightly less bouncy bunch arrived back at the bus at 10pm to begin the drive to Scafell Pike. By the early hours of the next morning, having arrived in the Lake District, the ascent of the next peak was underway and several hours later (with sprints perhaps not so high after 24 hours without sleep and an awful lot of driving) the final ascent up Yr Wyddfa (the mountain formerly known as Snowdon) was underway.

Happily, the whole challenge was completed by the evening of Saturday 10th June, with the intrepid team having walked a total of c.23 miles covering a combined total ascent of 3,408m.

Base's Managing Director, Harry Reece said "Base turns 20 this year and the Three Peaks Challenge has been just one of several events we've planned to celebrate this milestone. Having now recovered from their blisters, aches and pains, the team have had a chance to reflect on their tremendous effort, having bonded over this terrific experience, and they feel deservedly proud of their achievement. I'm personally incredibly proud of each and every one of them, and of the charitable funds they have raised, which really demonstrate the 'Base Cares' ethos of the business.

Anyone who'd still like to donate to any or all of the twelve charities being supported by the team can do so by visiting [www.basearchitecture.co.uk/three-peaks-challenge](http://www.basearchitecture.co.uk/three-peaks-challenge)





BCRS Andrew Hustwit, Head of Business Development at BCRS Business Loans, left, with Mark Wilcockson, Senior Investment Manager, British Business Bank

# £15 million delivered to SMEs through MEIF

**B**CRS Business Loans has passed another lending landmark by delivering £15 million to businesses in the West Midlands through the Midlands Engine Investment Fund's Small Business Loans Fund.

The regional alternative lender, which is a delivery partner for the Midlands Engine Investment Fund (MEIF), has to date provided finance to over 1400 businesses via the fund, which is forecast to create 5505 jobs and has safeguarded 1451 more.

The Midlands Engine Investment Fund is a collaboration between the British Business Bank and ten Local Enterprise Partnerships in the West, East and South Midlands. Combining funding from LEPs, the European Regional Development Fund and the European Investment Bank, it provides more than £300m of investment to boost small business growth in the Midlands.

One of the latest businesses to secure MEIF investment from BCRS is Charisma Design & Print Ltd, based in Tyseley, Birmingham. The investment assisted the family commercial printing company with working capital and cashflow, safeguarding 13 jobs in the process.

BCRS Business Loans Chief Executive Stephen Deakin said: "We are delighted to have now lent £15 million from the MEIF Small

Business Loans Fund to businesses across the West Midlands.

"Our investment levels have been strong across all corners of the region, helping SMEs with funding for a wide range of purposes, including growth capital, expansion projects, the leasing of commercial premises and asset acquisitions.

"Small businesses are the backbone of our economy and a force for social good. Improving access to finance not only supports business growth but also strengthens the local community. We believe that no viable business should go unsupported."

Mark Wilcockson, Senior Investment Manager, at the British Business Bank, said: "The MEIF Small Business Loan Fund was set up specifically for start-ups, and more established small businesses looking to grow. Preparing for growth is a key moment for a business, with many finding it difficult to obtain the finance they need.

"By hitting the £15m milestone, BCRS enables the Fund to meet its commitment to improving access to finance across the Midlands LEP areas by helping small businesses to shape future growth."

The Midlands Engine Investment Fund project is supported financially by the European Union using funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2022 and the European Investment Bank. The FSE Group manages a section of MEIF that provides investments between £100,000 and £1.5 million to support growing SMEs across the region.





*Busch UK has been working with 25 Sixth Form Business studies students to support them*

# Opening doors to school students

**B**usch Vacuum Solutions welcomed students from Thomas Telford School to its Telford site in April to provide them with an insight into how a local business operates.

Busch has been working with the twenty-five Sixth Form Business studies students to support them with an 'employability passport', a personal skills certificate from the Thomas Telford School Business Academy, for when they enter the field of work.

All areas were open for the students to experience the world of business so that the students could learn how the business operates, the different careers that make up the business, and how to progress into the roles. Busch UK provides tailor-made vacuum solutions and services to customers in a comprehensive range of market segments, including food, chemical, pharmaceutical, plastics and metallurgy. Part of the global Busch Vacuum Solutions group, one of the world's largest producers of vacuum pumps, systems, blowers and compressors, the Telford site comprises the UK head office, service workshop, and vacuum systems engineering centre.

Starting with a business introduction with the General Manager

Tim Hulbert, the students embarked on a tour around the site to meet Busch colleagues from a wide range of business areas, such as finance, purchasing, customer service, service planning, product management, service workshop and systems engineering. The final stop at the tour was a vacuum experiment with a Busch vacuum application specialist to provide an insight into the world of vacuum technology.

The students were fully engaged and asked many questions throughout the visit, which concluded with a Q&A session with all the Busch hosts and presenters to answer any additional questions.

"The staff at Busch Vacuum solutions were extremely welcoming, working with the students and showing them, in detail, the various aspects of the business", commented Mrs Amy Jones, Assistant Head - Director of Business at Thomas Telford School.

"Students got a lot out of the day and were lucky enough to be able to gain some 1:1 career advice and guidance about their next steps. We would like to thank all of the staff that supported the visit, but also to those that support the Thomas Telford School Business Academy on a regular basis, in our drive to provide students with a well-rounded experience offering wide ranging opportunities to enhance their employability skills."



# Winning by boat and truck



Dulson trainees pictured at Dulson Training

## Driver training specialist swaps the road for the river to raise funds for Severn Hospice.

Leading driver training specialist Dulson Training is swapping the road for the river for one day only to raise funds for Severn Hospice.

The firm has signed up to take part in the Dragon Boat Festival in Shrewsbury in July - but the fundraising doesn't end there as the team at Dulson Training has committed themselves to raising as much money as possible for the charity for the rest of the year.

Dulson Training is currently running a raffle with some amazing prizes up for grabs, which will be drawn at the Dragon Boat Festival on July 23, and will then run another raffle with a whole new list of prizes which will be drawn at the bonfire night spectacular at the West Mid Showground in Shrewsbury in November.

Prizes for the Summer Prize Draw include a number of cash prizes, a signed Shrewsbury Town football shirt, a spa and treats experience at Lion Quays and a family pass to Wonderland in Telford.

A just giving page has also been set up for donations and the Dulson Training team will be out and about at a number of shows and other events throughout the year where the fundraising efforts will continue.

Steve Dulson, of Dulson Training, said: "It is the first time we have entered the Dragon Boat Festival, although we have committed to fundraising for various charities every year. Everyone locally seems to connect to Severn Hospice and most of our staff have either experienced first-hand or knows someone who has experience of the amazing work the charity does. It's a charity that touches so many people.

"We will have a stand at the festival and most of our staff will be there on the day - we are treating it as a summer party and we will all be going off for food afterwards. Severn Hospice is a great cause and we are hoping to raise big money for them this year.

"We are already selling raffle tickets for our Summer Prize Draw



Some of the training vehicles at the Shropshire facility

and have received tremendous support for this from a number of people and businesses who have donated some really great prizes. Our thanks to all those who have supported us in this way.

The Summer Prize Draw prizes also include PT sessions with Sophie at Wellness Warrior in Shrewsbury; a voucher from Sweetcheeks Salon; a £20 Co-op voucher; a hair product hamper from Live & Let Dye; family day ticket for four from Park Hall Farm a basket of Tanners Claret and Gascont White Wine and a two-course Sunday roast at Cromwells in Shrewsbury.

Cash prizes have also been donated: £20 from Battlefield 1403, £50 from Rodenhurst Garden Centre and £50 from John Bishop Mobile HGV Commercials. There is a £50 Marks & Spencers voucher donated by Shropshire Mobility Solutions; £50 Amazon voucher from WBconstruction, £90 voucher for Breakout Chester, £50 voucher from Riverbank and a £50 voucher donated by Clive Medical Practice

Raffle tickets are £2 for one and £5 for three and will be allocated when donations are received on the just giving page at <https://www.justgiving.com/page/dulsontrainingdragonboatrace>

Alternatively, pledges can be made by calling Dulson Training on Shrewsbury 01743 709611. For more about Dulson Training, visit <https://www.dulsontraining.co.uk/>



## Support beyond that exam hall



*A Scanning Pen in action*

The way we do education is changing in the UK. Every year more and more tech enters the classroom, with more learners using it to bridge learning gaps and support reading. It's an important part of ensuring that education stays accessible for all, and making sure that neurodivergent students and English Language Learners don't get left behind as teachers move through the curriculum.

But what happens to this dedicated support network when these learners finally reach exam season in May and June?

A large amount of EdTech— especially reading support technologies and softwares— don't have the power to follow learners into the exam hall. This means that whilst they may have developed reading methodologies that work for them during the school year, exam season sees those reading support networks removed. Learners who have relied on text-to-speech screen readers or computer learning programmes may enter the exam hall to find that they're without support, or faced with a human reader who they have no previous working relationship with.

These changes can be jarring, especially if learners are neurodivergent or have become comfortable relying on other methodologies to help them read. And adding extra stress to the time that they have with the exam paper can have disastrous consequences in terms of grades: nobody works best when they're subject to new things to adjust to.

That's why exam support that follows learners into the exam hall is such an important part of the exam process in 2023— and why Scanning Pens are so proud of the Exam Reader 2.

Discreet, intuitive and approved for use in UK exams by JCQ, its dedicated text-to-speech functionality enables learners who have spent the school year supporting themselves using text-to-speech devices like the C-Pen Reader 2 to transition seamlessly into the exam hall using a device that they're comfortable and capable with. It's almost the same device they've been supported with all year, but with a special zero-storage design to make it appropriate for use under exam conditions: students simply plug in headphones, scan the text on the page, and can access the exam paper in an instant.

Although the pandemic may be over, we're only just seeing its effects on our learners. It means that reading support has to go the extra mile— from the classroom to the exam hall, so that exam-takers can focus on the answers that will unlock their futures.

To find out more about the Exam Reader 2 and how to support learners as they move from the classroom and into the exam hall, check out the C-Pen Exam Reader 2 at Scanning Pens.



*Nathan Blissett (centre) has launched Dwello Mortgages as he plans to transition from the football pitch as a professional footballer to the corporate world*

## New mortgage firm kicks off as people face further hikes

**A new mortgage advisory firm has been launched in Telford as people across the country face further price hikes and struggle to get on the property ladder.**

Nathan Blissett has launched Dwello Mortgages as part of his plans to transition from the football pitch as a professional footballer but he still plans to keep his foot on the ball for a few more seasons yet!

He is supported by a team of experienced non-executives including Mike Rose, Simon Lloydbottom, Manuel Heinke and Oliver Wadlow, who all bring a wealth of business knowledge and expertise to the table.

Nathan, Founder and Principal Mortgage Adviser at Dwello Mortgages, played for several clubs from childhood after following in his uncle's footsteps - former England player, Luther Blissett.

Dwello Mortgages has ambitious plans to expand across the country but firstly have chosen Telford as their headquarters based in St James' House on Central Park.

Nathan said: "The mortgage market is confusing and ever-changing for people who are busy and often then bury their heads. They are often scaremongered and then make the wrong decisions or no decisions!

"Dwello is here to be that trusted guide in personal finance - we will ensure the process is easy to understand and smooth for our clients and most importantly we will get the best mortgage deal for them.

"As a team we aren't afraid of long hours, hard work and challenging the market - every day literally is a new day in the mortgage world.

"We all live in Shropshire and surrounding areas, with many of the team working on national and international projects in the finance industry, so Telford was the obvious choice to launch and base our HQ here on our home turf."

Nathan, who has joined Shropshire Chamber of Commerce to support, collaborate and learn from fellow business owners, said it was an exciting time for the borough due to the commercial and residential developments across Telford.

"Telford has a fantastic and dynamic business community and an ever-growing population.

"Our offering means we can really help and guide people locally with mortgages; right at a time when some will need it most.

"Telford is very close to my heart as I've lived in the region a long time and I know how passionate and welcoming the community are through my connection with football in the county," he added.

Dwello offers mortgage and protection advice for residential, buy to let and remortgage purposes and focuses on creating 'Yes' from mortgage and protection providers as they explore the market fearlessly on behalf of customers.

To find out how Nathan can help you email [Info@dwellomortgages.com](mailto:Info@dwellomortgages.com), visit [www.dwellomortgages.com](http://www.dwellomortgages.com) or follow them on Facebook and LinkedIn @dwellomortgages

# Inflation Remains Stubbornly High...

“  
**WAGE RATES**  
*...Continue to rise*”

“  
**FUEL COSTS**  
*...still remain high*”

“  
**STAFF VACANCIES**  
*...hard to fill*”

“  
**UK ORDERS**  
*...at pre-Covid levels*”

# Staff & Inflation

## Getting the right staff is still proving difficult.

**Qualifications not meeting employer expectations and recruitment shortages are causing issues for businesses in all sectors.**

Salary demands remain high which is putting pressure on profitability. Interview no-shows or younger recruits not even completing their first week is hampering the manufacturing industries, with some employers no longer recruiting anyone under 21 years of age.

**“When will pressures on the business community ease?”**

Inflation is expected to fall quickly this year as consumer consumption demand weakens, goods shortages start to ease and the wholesale energy prices remain lower. Inflation is already falling from the highs of last winter, currently sitting at around 8.7%.



## We want to hear your views...

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

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

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

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



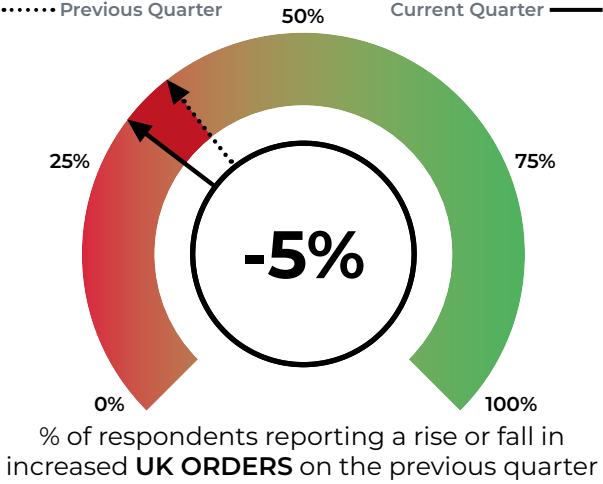
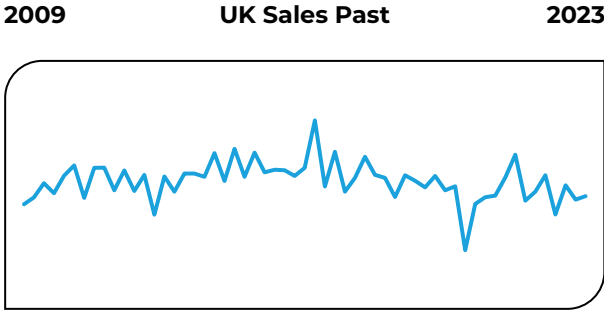
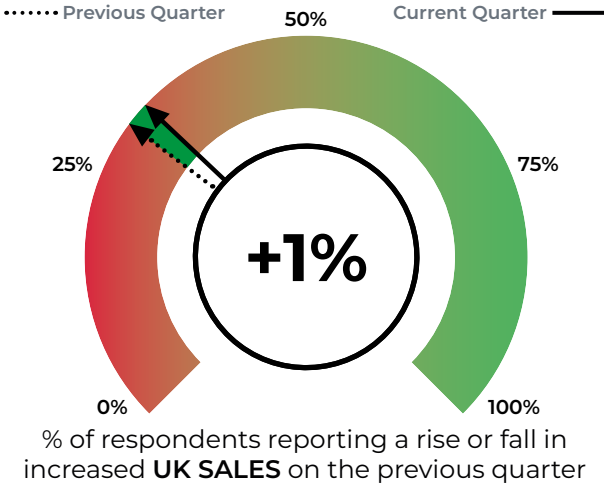
**DOMESTIC (UK) SALES INCREASES**

**UK Sales Past:**

*"March and April have been slow in the independent retail sector."*  
Retail/Wholesale Sector

*"Clients are leaving things far more last-minute before committing to orders."*  
Marketing/Media Sector

*41% stated they had seen no change either way in domestic sales in Q2.*

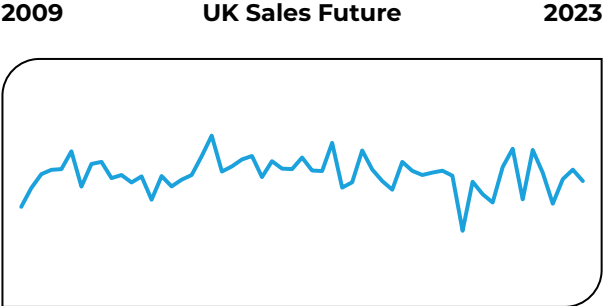


**UK Sales Future:**

*Anticipated orders for domestic sales faltered slightly with a greater number saying they expect no change. No expected change up 7% this quarter.*

*"Web design orders have increased."*  
Marketing/Media Sector

*"Orders seem to be largely holding up against a more pessimistic background two quarters ago."*  
Manufacturing Sector



## EXPORT SALES

### INCREASES

#### Export Sales Past:

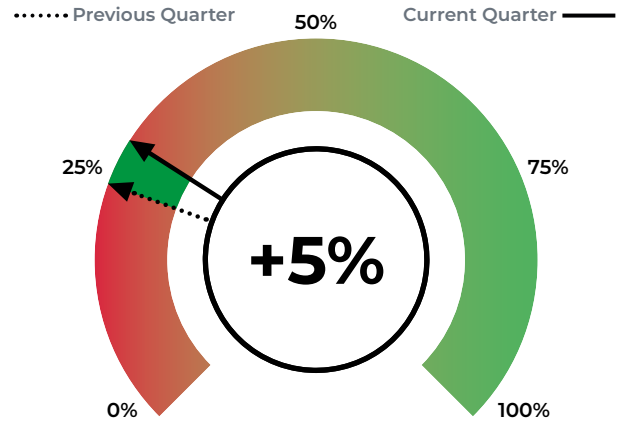
*"The market we source from has become much more chaotic. It is unclear when cars will arrive in the UK, where, and when they will become available. UK appears a real afterthought when it comes to the large non-UK manufacturers."*

Automotive Sector

*Those seeing a decrease in export sales this quarter doubled, from 19% Q1 to 38% this quarter.*

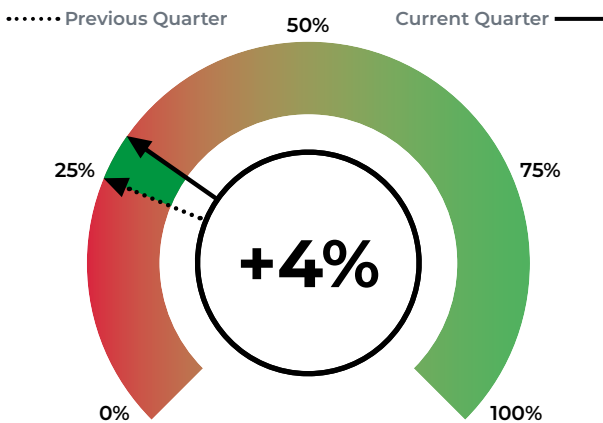
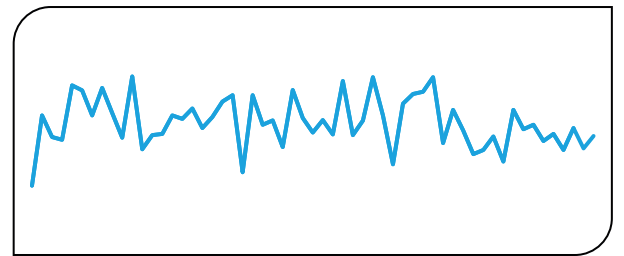
*"Sales impacted by sea freight supply interruptions from the United States."*

Retail/Wholesale Sector



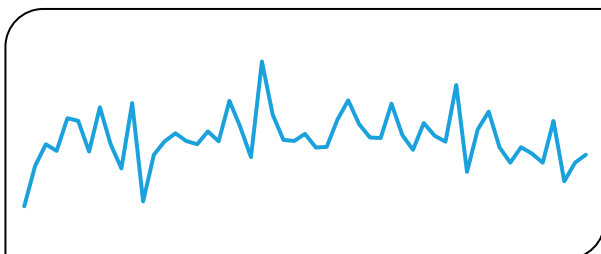
% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **EXPORT SALES** on the previous quarter

2009      Export Sales Past      2023



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

2009      Export Sales Future      2023



#### Export Sales Future:

*"New orders from export activities are up."*

Retail/Wholesale Sector

*"While we are seeing an increase in sales and orders across the board, there are indications that in some sectors that we will start to see a slow down in the second half of the year."*

Manufacturing Sector

*Q2 saw a 4% increase in predicted export orders, from 25% in Q1 to 29% in Q2.*

# WORKFORCE PAST & FUTURE

## INCREASES

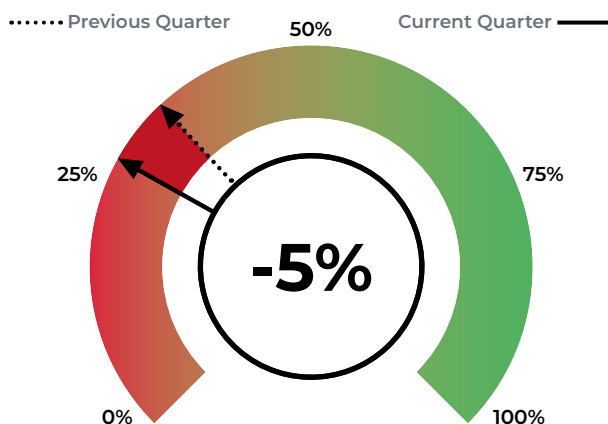
### Workforce Past:

Workforce numbers stabilised, despite unfilled vacancies, with 64% saying they had not increased or decreased their workforce in the last 3 months.

Machine operators, fabrication welders, project managers, warehouse staff, trades and engineers are high on the list of needs from across the sectors again this quarter.

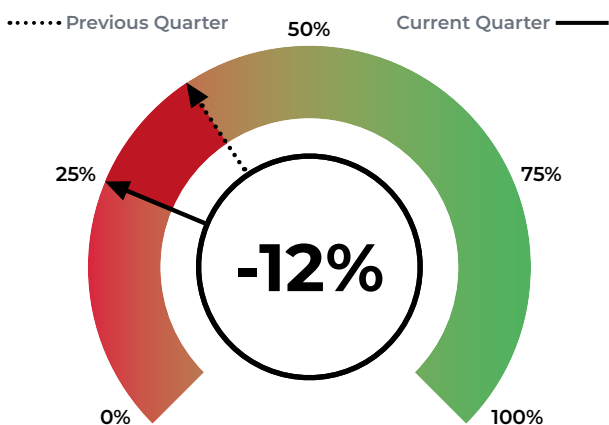
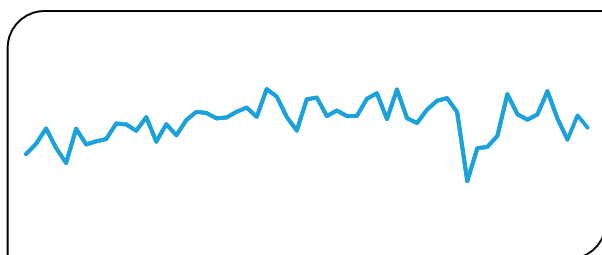
*“Hardware & mechanical engineers, they are all preferring to work freelance which is not ideal.”*

Manufacturing Sector



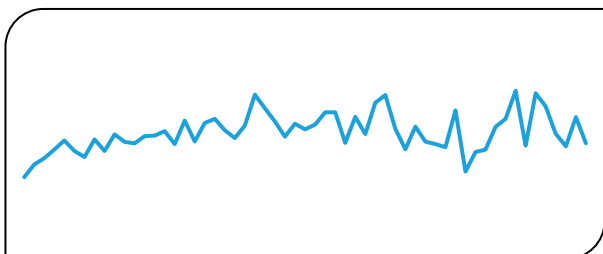
% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in **WORKFORCE** numbers on the previous quarter

2009      **Workforce Past**      2023



% of respondents expecting a rise or fall in **WORKFORCE** numbers on the previous quarter

2009      **Workforce Future**      2023



### Workforce Future:

*“To meet the anticipated increase in capacity we will need to increase our workforce.”*

Manufacturing Sector

*The construction sector is still in need of all trades and the manufacturing sector needs skilled engineers.*

*“We have had a number of staff go back to Romania so haven’t had to cut staff, we may have had to if they hadn’t left.”*

Manufacturing Sector

## SKILLS & RECRUITMENT

“The number of exits is matched by the number of new starters.”

Construction Sector

### Companies Recruiting:

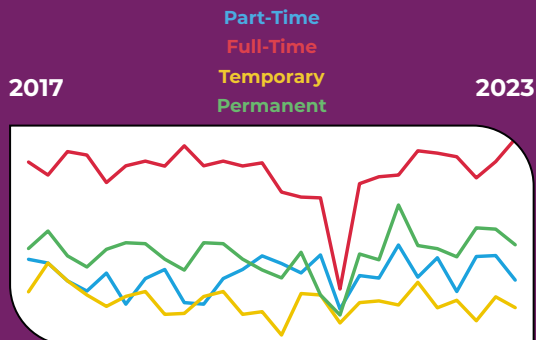


“We have started an apprentice program but it is not encouraging. If the number of candidates who apply and then get through the interview remain at this level, then we will drop the program as not worthwhile. We work hard with apprentices but we are not a parenting organisation.”

Service Sector



### Staff Types:



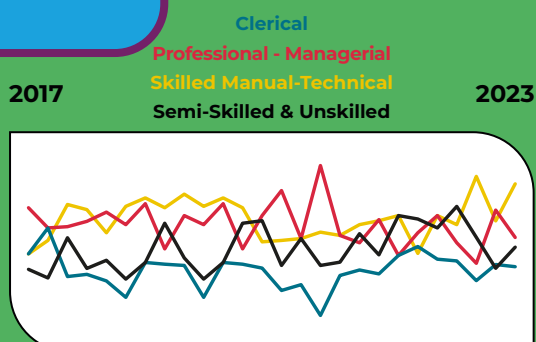
“Software developers are in high demand. Skills / experience do not match expectations.”

Professional Services Sector

“We offer flexibility of working at home or in the office. New staff need to start in the office and some positions are office bound in general, but we are always flexible.”

Service Sector

### Post Types:



“Recruiting trained admin staff is very difficult.”

Customer Services Sector

“Competition for staff keeps the wage expectation very high, we are a living wage employer but some rates expected are unrealistic and not sustainable.”

Manufacturing Sector

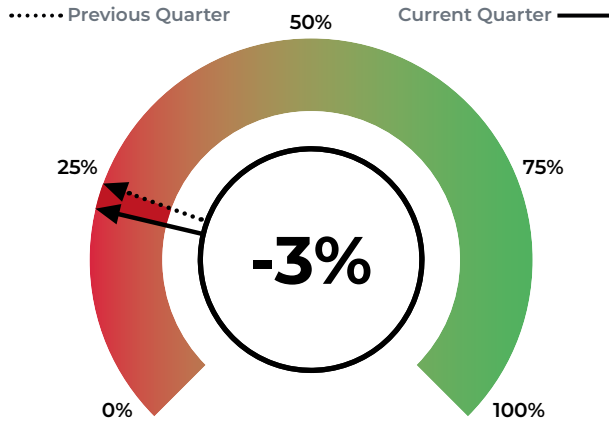
**CASH FLOW**  
INCREASES

**Cash Flow:**

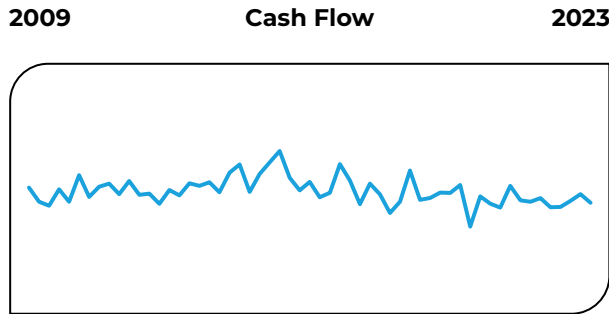
*"Cash flow suffering due to slow payments."*  
Retail/Wholesale Sector

*"We have seen customers taking longer to pay and some suppliers wanting payment sooner."*  
Professional Services Sector

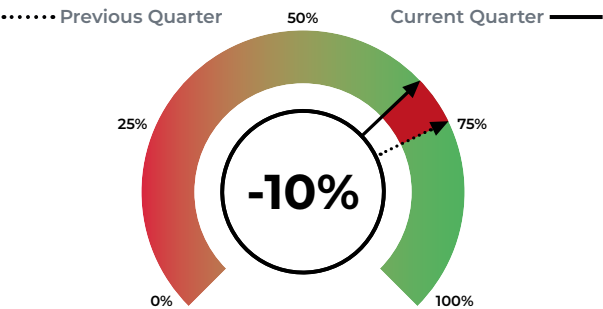
*52% reported no change to their cash flow in Q2, however only 20% saw increased cash flow.*



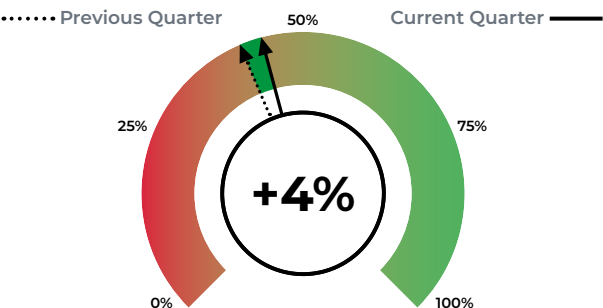
% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **CASH FLOW** on the previous quarter



**FEAR FACTORS**



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



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

**Fear Factors:**

*"Our market is very price sensitive so any increase in business costs is most unwelcome as it wholly or partially undoes the benefits that should accrue from previous productivity / efficiency measures taken."*  
Manufacturing Sector

*70% saw both utilities and pay settlements as a fear this quarter.*

*"Interest rates keep rising, yet they are not helping the situation. They are making the situation worse because there is less money in a persons pocket to spend, that affects every business in the country."* Professional Services Sector

## INVESTMENT INCREASES

### Plant & Machinery:

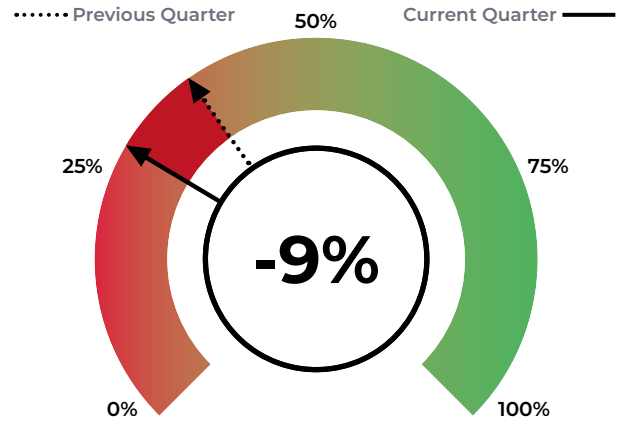
*“Recruiting is difficult locally. As a result, we are turning more to better machinery.”*

Manufacturing Sector

*“We are in the middle of an investment programme designed to reduce our dependence on skilled labour and still allow us to take on additional business competitively.”*

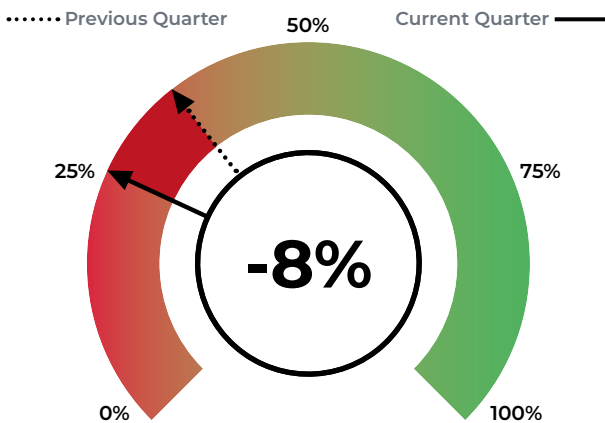
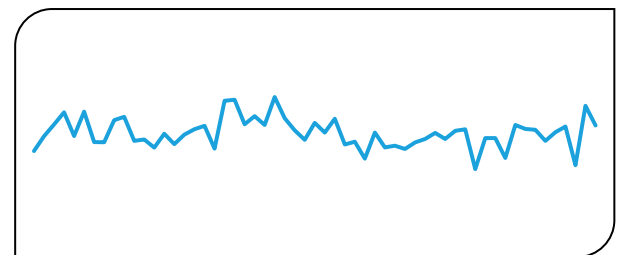
Manufacturing Sector

*56% of survey respondents stated that they had not changed their plans with regards to investment in plant or machinery.*



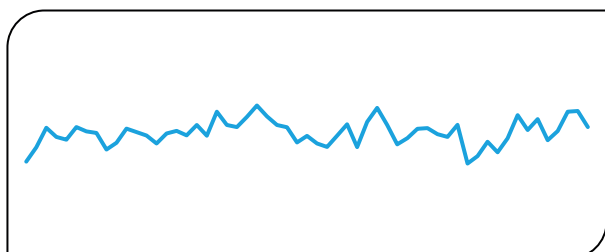
% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **P&M INVESTMENT** on the previous quarter

2009      **Plant & Machinery**      2023



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

2009      **Training**      2023



### Training:

*“Our debtors have increased slowing cashflow therefore no training can take place due to cashflow issues.”*

Marketing/Media Sector

*A drop in the % of interviewees who plan to increase investment in training. Dropping from 34% in Q1 to 26% in Q2.*

*“Our professional body requires hours of annual CPD training, which is getting more difficult to achieve, due to cost hikes by accredited trainers.”*

Service Sector

## CONFIDENCE INCREASES

### Turnover Confidence:

*"We are seeing strong opportunities coming through."*

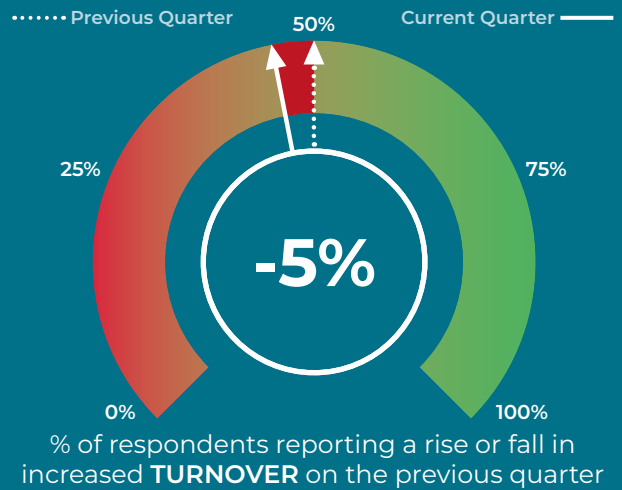
Manufacturing Sector

*"Customers won't accept the price hikes required, to simply cover energy costs!"*

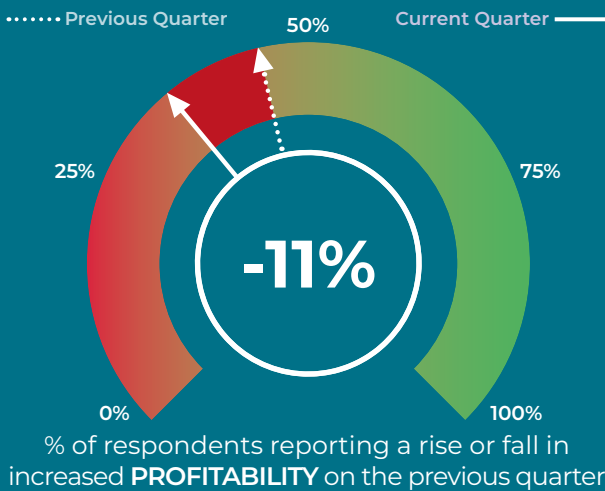
Service Sector

*"We've had to reduce numbers of children we take because of staff shortages, which has impacted on turnover."*

Service Sector



2009      Turnover      2023



2009      Profitability      2023



### Profitability Confidence:

*"Material costs are continuing to spiral."*

Marketing/Media Sector

*"Profitability - Vehicle prices are increasing on a regular basis and the majority of consumers buy using credit. It is likely that as supply improves our business will need to use margin to compete"*

Automotive Sector

*"We are charging more for our services but not in line with increased staff costs. We also have increased food, wine and tax costs so not ideal for a restaurant."*

Hospitality Sector

## CAPACITY | PRICE vs COST

### Capacity:

*"Held back by post Brexit increase in admin and costs."*

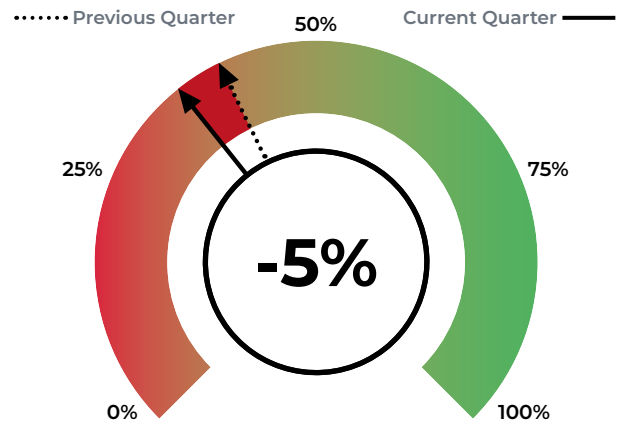
Retail/Wholesale Sector

*"Could increase capacity but can't recruit the skilled technicians we need which means taking on apprentices and growing our own."*

Retail/Wholesale Sector

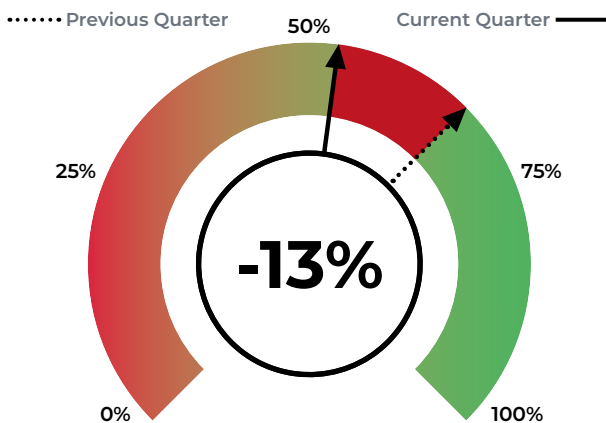
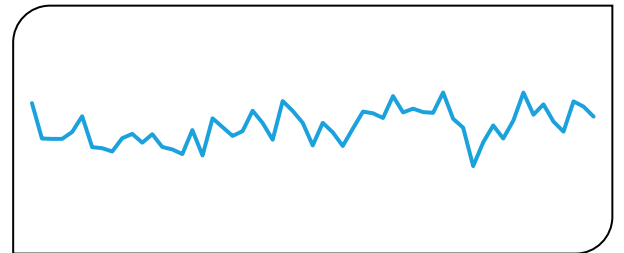
*"We are just below full capacity and obviously if more customers were to come on then we would need to re-evaluate and consider employing more staff."*

Professional Services Sector



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

**2009**      **Full Capacity**      **2023**



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

### Price vs Cost:

*"Interest rates on business loans have significantly increased. Inflation is driving costs of essential commodities higher, yet customers won't pay higher prices. Income is now zero. Not sustainable!"*

Service Sector

*"Taxation will heavily impact on our ability to expand and inflation will be a further depreciation in our purchasing power."*

Manufacturing Sector

*"As raw material costs are falling slightly this counteracts increase in labour and energy."*

Manufacturing Sector





## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

### Business Pressures:

1

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

2

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

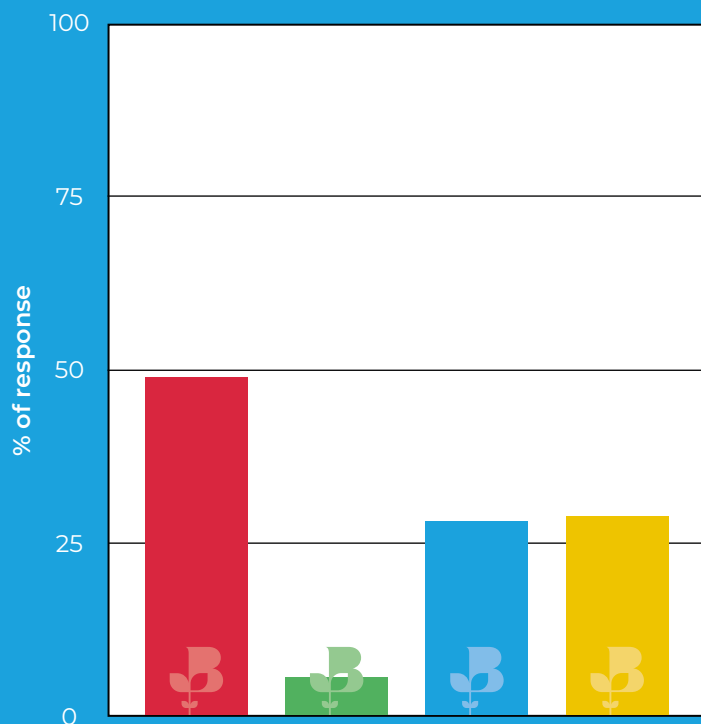
3

Are your credit terms getting worse?

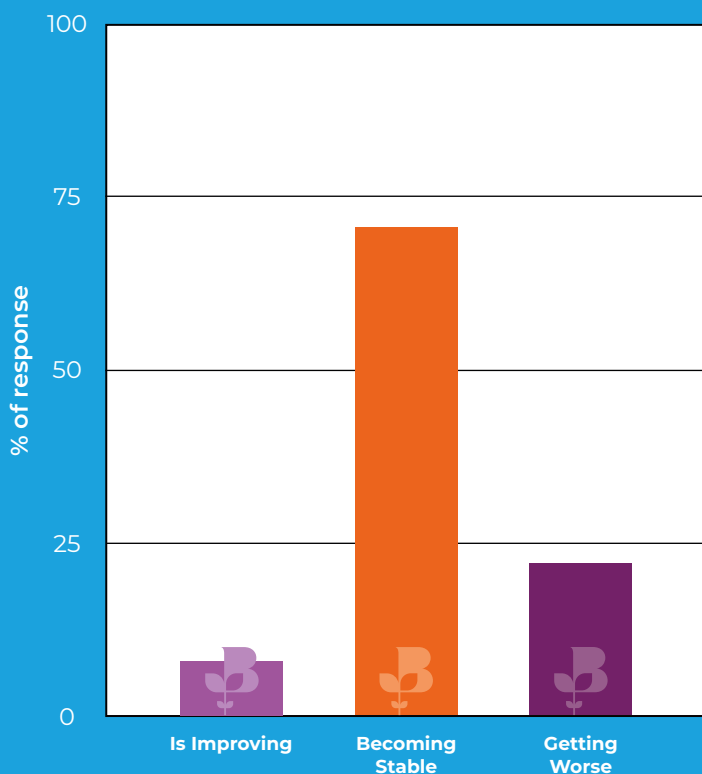
4

Are bad debts increasing?

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



Graph shows the % of responses regarding the current Supply Chain situation



### Supply Chain:

*“Still seeing long delays in some supply chains.”*

Public Sector

*“In terms of supply chain it is between stable and getting worse, you will have a period with some suppliers being stable then it drops off.”*

Retail/Wholesale Sector

*“Importing from EU is slower and more expensive.”*

Retail/Wholesale Sector

# your voice MATTERS!

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

- ✓ Confidential
- ✓ Highly respected
- ✓ Informs Government

Contact us  
TODAY!

Contact [policy@shropshire-chamber.co.uk](mailto:policy@shropshire-chamber.co.uk) today to have your name added to the Chamber survey invite list

## About the QES

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

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

## Every Single Business Voice Matters!

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

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



# Local book launch changes people's mindset on money

**L**ocal financial adviser, Jack Fallows, has launched his book titled, *Money: The Assembly Guide*, which aims to revolutionise the way people think about their finances.

The book offers a comprehensive, step-by-step guide on how to build strong financial foundations, regardless of where people are starting from. It is written in a relatable, jargon-free way to help people not only understand their finances but feel good about them too.

The book is intended for business owners, people who want to retire before their state pension age, and anyone who wants a solid plan for their finances, so they can go about their lives confident that their money is in good shape.

Jack's goal with the book is to help readers gain a healthier relationship with their money, explaining, 'Other than the basics, we're not taught about

money at school or in the workplace. We're expected to learn as we go. However, of all the things you would feel comfortable muddling through by trial and error, is your hard-earned money one of them?'

The book launch event was held on Thursday 25th May at the Riverbank Bar & Kitchen in Shrewsbury.

The event brought together over 70 local people to celebrate feeling more confident about their finances. The event was a huge success, with attendees expressing their excitement at having found a guide to help them navigate the often-daunting world of personal finance.

Attendee, and local business owner, Richard Charles, enjoyed the event, saying, 'The book is the missing resource we all needed. If you want to understand, improve and feel better about your financial situation then this book is for you. I found it very helpful and will be recommending it to all my clients'.



*Jack Fallows signs a copy of his new book – Money: The Assembly Guide*

Jack Fallows expressed his pride and gratitude for the support he received at the event, saying, "I am so proud of the book launch and how well it was received. It was great to see so many people come together, all with the intention of gaining that 'tidy house, tidy mind' feeling... about their finances! I am grateful for the support and excited to continue helping people improve their relationship with their money."

*Money: The Assembly Guide* is now available to buy, and Jack Fallows hopes that it will be the first step for many people in taking control of their finances and achieving their financial goals.

The book is a must-read for anyone looking to build a solid financial foundation and feel better about their finances.

You can find out more about the book, and purchase your own copy, here - <https://linktr.ee/jackfallows>



*The Furniture for Life AR app in use*

## The release of an augmented reality interactive shopping tool

Leading distributor of massage chairs and wellness products Furniture for Life, based in Oswestry, Shropshire, have announced the launch of their new augmented reality (AR) web tool.

The AR tool is designed to enhance the shopping experience by allowing potential customers to see what a massage chair would look like in their own home before making an informed purchase, without the need to visit a showroom or trust their imagination.

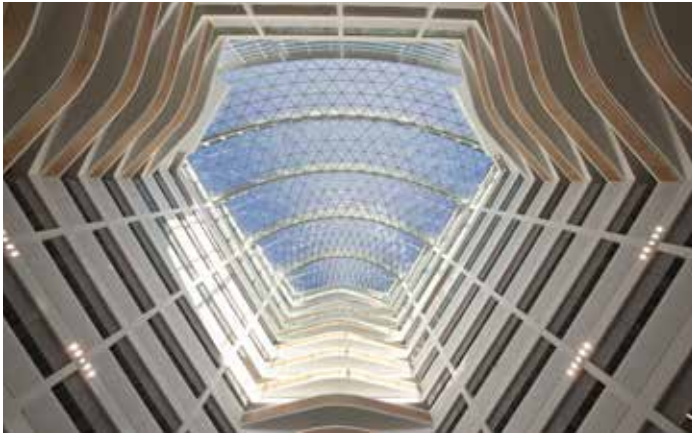
The innovative tool utilises advanced 3D technology to create a realistic rendering of the massage chairs in the customer's own home environment using the camera on a mobile phone or tablet. By simply accessing the AR 'View in Your Own Home' button on the Furniture for Life product pages, customers can rotate and scale the chairs to get a full 360 degree view, or to visualise how the different chairs would fit and look in their home or office.

"We're excited to offer our customers an immersive and interactive shopping experience that's fun to use," said Furniture for Life's Diane Hughes.

In addition to the convenience and ease of use of the AR tool, the website also provides valuable information on features for customers to access product details, compare features, and view videos and customer reviews, all from one page.

"At Furniture for Life, we're committed to providing the best possible experience for our customers," said Diane. "The augmented reality web tool is a great way to help our customers see how the chair will fit and look at home, and we're excited to bring this technology to our customers."

The augmented reality web feature is now available at [www.furnitureforlife.co.uk](http://www.furnitureforlife.co.uk) and can be accessed with any device that supports web browsing.



One Angel Square, Manchester painted in KEIM Ecosil-ME



Madame Tussauds decorated using KEIM Soldalit-ME

# Breath of fresh air

## KEIM mineral paints aren't just breathable, they also cleanse and purify the air!

The quality of air we breathe is more important than ever before as we spend up to 90% of our lives indoors, taking over 25,000 breaths, and inhaling a staggering 11,000 litres of air per day.

It's vital that we consider the quality of products we use to paint and coat surfaces, both within our homes and also in the buildings we occupy for work and leisure.

Petrochemical based conventional paints often contain cheap, easy to source ingredients such as plasticisers, and acrylics which can emit harmful toxins during their initial use and over their lifetime.

In this article we delve into the benefits of improved air quality which KEIM mineral paints help to deliver. When purchasing or specifying paints we urge you to read product labels and data sheets in order to make a well-informed, balanced, environmentally conscious decision.

Many clients are surprised to find that mineral paints such as KEIM are as cost effective as conventional paints, with added benefits of breathability, low VOC (volatile organic compounds) and the ability to clean the air and remove pollutants.

### Why is this important?

We use huge quantities of paint both in construction and home renovation projects and these play a significant role in air quality, and conversely air pollution.

Poor indoor air quality is a well-publicised problem, as a mixture of pollutants are generated both from inside the building and from external pollution migrating indoors.

Poor outdoor air quality, as result of air pollution, has negative impacts on both human health and the natural environment. Whilst levels in some

areas have been declining, there are more measures which need to be taken, specifically with regard to Nitrogen Oxides.

### Which Keim mineral paints help to clean the air?

We have developed two key products that help cleanse the air, whilst offering long lasting protection and colour stability; KEIM Soldalit ME for exterior surfaces, and KEIM Ecosil ME for interiors.

These paints are ideal for a wide variety of applications including for people with respiratory conditions, asthma sufferers, schools, hospitals, and care homes. Some buildings that have used KEIM for improved air quality include Battersea Power Station, John Lewis, Madame Tussauds, as well as prisons, museums and castles.

### How do these air purifying paints work?

KEIM air purifying paints are photocatalytic mineral paints which use light energy to neutralise pollution via a reaction with a pigment in the paint itself. A full explanation of this can be found here. The pigment is unchanged by the reaction, which continues for the lifetime of the paint, and the paint, being mineral based, is not degraded by the reaction, unlike petrochemical based photocatalytic paints.

### What type of pollutants can be reduced?

Pollution by industry and road traffic for example: – Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) and Ammonia gas (NH<sub>3</sub>)

The pollutants which KEIM Ecosil-ME helps to reduce include formaldehyde and acetaldehyde, as well as other VOCs such as benzene and toluene. Nitrogen oxides and ammonia can also be reduced by the photocatalytic reaction.

Even bacteria and fungal spores can be significantly reduced by photocatalysis.

### What other air quality benefits do these paints offer?

Mineral paints are low VOC, do not contain any additional solvents and

are both environmentally friendly and sustainable. Mineral paints are odourless and since they do not off-gas any chemicals, rooms can be occupied very quickly, as soon as the paint is dry without being a danger to health.

The photocatalytic reaction also inhibits and kills bacteria. Independently tested it is proven to reduce living bacteria by 99% and dead cells completely. With regards to sanitation and health care the reduction and removal of dead and living biomass is very important to prevent infections. Dead cells can still have a toxic and allergic potential and KEIM Ecosil-ME is proven to improve interior hygiene more effectively than a conventional film forming paint.

Mineral paints are breathable and moisture regulating and, due to their mineral alkaline formulation, do not provide a nutrient base for new mould growth, acting as a mould inhibitor in a natural way.

### The KEIM Difference

Not only do mineral paints help to clean the air, they also have many other benefits.

Mineral paints give a long life, colourfast finish, they are natural, fire resistant (A2,s1-d0), breathable, and highly light reflective, making them ideal for all types of building, from heritage to high-rise and commercial to private.

With Cradle to Cradle Certification, Keim Mineral Paints are the proven, safe, environmentally friendly choice for healthy buildings.

### What next?

Not all mineral paints are equal in their environmental credentials. If you want to find out more our paint systems, renders, washes and mortars, please visit the website [www.keim.co.uk](http://www.keim.co.uk) buy online at [www.keimpaintshop.co.uk](http://www.keimpaintshop.co.uk)

Order your colour card, samples or arrange a site survey. Any questions, please contact the team by emailing [sales@keimpaints.co.uk](mailto:sales@keimpaints.co.uk) or call 01952 231 250.



# National accreditation

**Two solicitors at a Shropshire law firm have been officially recognised as being among the best in the country for helping people with clinical negligence cases.**

Natasha Gibbons and Adam Hodson, of Lanyon Bowdler, have been accredited by APIL (Association of Personal Injury Lawyers) for outstanding specialist knowledge and excellent support of their clients.

APIL is a not for profit organisation which helps people with their legal journey towards obtaining compensation for injuries that have been suffered due to personal injury and clinical negligence, which can be life-changing.

It works to promote and develop expertise in personal injury law, for the benefit of injured people, and being an accredited lawyer is a highly-respected accolade.

Natasha Gibbons, who has been a clinical negligence specialist at Lanyon Bowdler since 2015, said she was honoured to receive the APIL accreditation.

She said: "I'm thrilled to have been recognised for my specialist expertise in dealing with clinical negligence cases.

"I'm passionate about working to secure positive outcomes for my clients and to



Natasha Gibbons

contribute to improvements in clinical standards across England and Wales. It is an honour to have this dedication and my competency in doing so recognised.

"At Lanyon Bowdler, we pride ourselves on our specialist expertise and are committed to providing an excellent service to our clients.

"The firm's support to further my professional development and to attain this accreditation is reflective of this."

Adam Hodson, who as well as being a clinical negligence solicitor is also an assistant coroner, said APIL was a well-respected organisation.

He said: "APIL does a lot of really important work to help victims of clinical



Adam Hodson

negligence find justice, and I am delighted to be an accredited solicitor.

"A clinical negligence case is not just about securing vital financial compensation which can greatly improve someone's quality of life, it's about finding answers and making sure the same mistakes are not repeated.

"Clients often feel like a weight has been lifted from their shoulders on the successful conclusion of a case, and it's a privilege to help them bring some kind of closure on what is often an extremely traumatic part of their life."

For advice about clinical negligence claims, visit [www.lblaw.co.uk](http://www.lblaw.co.uk) or call 01743 280280.

## Menopause and menstruation workplace standards

Acknowledging the urgent and important reasons that menopause at work should be taken seriously, the British Standards Institution (BSI) has published the Menstruation, menstrual health and menopause in the workplace standard (BS30416). The introduction of a British Standard is a huge step forward in providing opportunities for women to have open conversations or to ask for support wherever they're working. The BSI said "only a minority of UK workplaces" had already introduced policies on menstrual and menopausal health and wellbeing, stressing that some women, transgender men and non-binary people needed adjustments to effectively carry out their work.

The standard is intended to help workers in a variety of roles - including jobs that involve being on your feet a lot, like police officers, and highly physical roles like construction workers, the BSI said.

### Why do we need to talk about menopause in the workplace?

Women entering the peri-menopause stage of their lives are the fastest growing demographic in our workforce today, 8 out of 10 women who are on their menopause



Mbrace deliver workshops locally

journey are working, 1 in 4 of those women consider leaving their jobs due to symptoms and 1 in 10 will hand in their notice. Women in this age group are likely to be eligible for senior management roles, and so their exit can lessen diversity at executive levels. It can also contribute to the gender pay-gap and feed into a disparity in pensions.

### What support is available?

Angela, a trained Menopause Holistic Coach says "As more and more businesses invest in the wellbeing of their employees

there is a realisation that the support needed during this time in a woman's life is quite specialised. One solution does not fit all and that's why we offer a bespoke service which can be general awareness sessions, e-learning packages right through to group and individual coaching. These simple interventions are often only needed for a short time but can ensure that businesses retain those key, experienced members of the team, here at Mbrace we welcome the introduction of the BSI standard as an important step in supporting women in work".

The past year has seen Mbrace deliver workshops locally to many different groups of women from teachers to accountants, we've held collaborative sessions introducing ladies to trail running and cold-water swimming and enjoyed networking with the Chambers' Network of Women. As we look forward to the rest of 2023, we are planning further collaborations to bring menopause awareness to different groups, combining information sessions with activities which will encourage a happy, healthy menopause and beyond.

Website: <https://mbrace.me.uk>



# On your bike for cancer charity

**T**he Pedal the Borders cycling sportive is returning for a third consecutive year this summer with entrants being sought to help smash the £70,000 raised to date.

The popular event is making its return on Sunday, 10th September, with three brand new routes to choose from; 25km, 60km and 100km, making it a perfect challenge for both novice cyclists and those who are more experienced on two wheels. It is being run by Lingen Davies Cancer Fund whose mission is to enhance cancer services in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, and Mid Wales, raise awareness of cancer in wider community, and improve the lives of those impacted by cancer as they adjust to life beyond treatment.

Created by local businessman and keen cyclist Mark Harris, also the Chair of Trustees for Lingen Davies Cancer Fund, Pedal the Borders was borne from Mark's love of sport and it helped him regain fitness after his own cancer treatment.

All three routes start and end from the event's headline sponsors, Aico, in their state-of-the-art headquarters on Maesbury Road, Oswestry. Each route crosses the Shropshire-Powys border, with cyclists able to enjoy stunning scenery, either as an individual, corporate team or group of family and friends.

Lizzy Coleman, Fundraising Events Lead for Lingen Davies, said: "We are delighted to bring back Pedal the Borders for a third year. Over the last two years our supporters helped raise more than £70,000 to benefit cancer patients throughout the region which is just incredible. We are very grateful to have the support of Aico once again as our headline sponsors and Adrenaline Sporting Events organising the challenge. It is also great to have the support of local businesses, Rix Petroleum, Henshalls Insurance Brokers, and McPhillips as event sponsors, and shows how valued Lingen Davies is by the wider business community.

"Funds raised from the previous events have helped us create three new clinic



**10th September 2023**

Set yourself a new challenge and cycle the borders of Shropshire and Powys, enjoying some breathtaking scenery.

**THREE BRAND NEW ROUTES TO CHOOSE FROM:**

25km 60km 100km

**Aico Ltd, Maesbury Road, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 8NR**



**ADRENALINE SPORTING EVENTS**

Sign up:

[www.pedaltheborders.co.uk](http://www.pedaltheborders.co.uk)



**All routes start and end from the event's headline sponsors, Aico, in their HQ on Maesbury Road, Oswestry**

rooms at the Lingen Davies Cancer Centre at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and contributed towards funding a new CT scanner. However, there is always more we can do to enhance local cancer services, helping to improve the lives of those impacted by cancer."

The new 25km route allows anyone of

the age of 12 to participate, accompanied by an adult. Entry fees includes a training plan, medical cover, bike maintenance cover, on-the-road assistance, British Cycling insurance, a finishing medal, as well as two food and rest stops.

To sign up to the event visit [www.pedaltheborders.co.uk](http://www.pedaltheborders.co.uk)



# Construction firm commits to building a greener future

One of the leading construction companies in Shropshire and Mid Wales has introduced new sustainability training as part of its ongoing strategy to build a greener future.

Staff at **Pave Aways**, which has offices in Knockin, Newtown and Wrexham, will undergo the training as part of the company's commitment to enhancing its green credentials.

The course aims to educate about the environmental need for change as well as inform employees about the practical steps they can take to reduce waste, be more energy efficient and improve environmental awareness. Staff will also be undertaking audits to ensure the firm's environmental policies are being adhered to on sites.

Managing Director Steven Owen said the sustainability training course was just one positive action it was taking towards a greener future.

He explained: "It is widely acknowledged that, as an industry, construction is a major contributor to landfill waste and pollution, contributing 38 per cent of total global energy-related CO2 emissions. We are determined to do what we can at **Pave Aways** to reduce our effect on the environment, not just in the way we build and on our sites, but in our day-to-day operation as well.



**Pave Aways has introduced new sustainability training as just one action in its plan to building a greener future**

"Sustainability is one of the five key values of **Pave Aways** and our new training course has been devised so our team understands the importance of sustainable behavior and how we are implementing that across our processes company-wide."

Steven added: "As a business, we're making practical changes such as bringing electric vehicles into fleet, reducing overall vehicle movements and using a waste compacting baler but collectively, we all have a responsibility to change our behaviour so

we can build a greener future for our planet."

**Pave Aways**, which celebrates its 50th year in business in October, works on a wide variety of developments from residential schemes to multi-million pound new build and refurbishment projects across a wide range of sectors including manufacturing, healthcare, education and more.

It has developed a growing specialism in net carbon construction for the public and private sector including building to Passivhaus standards.

# How booking a holiday can help save our planet

**Not Just Travel Marieta and Tom Poole have started a great initiative when you book your holidays with them.**

The online Shrewsbury based Travel agents who also recently announced a partnership with Shrewsbury Town FC Foundation. For all the football fans booking their holidays with the popular travel agents sees a % of the commission going straight to the Shrewsbury Town Foundation. When discussing this with Tom he said "The work they do in the community is amazing, offering support and activities to engage people in living a healthy lifestyle, we are very proud to support this".

It is great to see them support a local charity, but this is only the start of their mission as the Travel Agent duo aim to help the planet as well. For every holiday which is booked with them they will plant a tree for you, in your name on your behalf and they will even send you a link so you can watch it grow. We asked Marieta the reason they decided to do this? "We all know that Travel by plane is one of the worst things for the planet, flights produce greenhouse gases - mainly carbon dioxide (CO2) - from burning fuel. These contribute to global warming when released into the atmosphere. We went out with our children and local school and planted 40 trees a few weeks ago and decided we needed to do more to help combat global warming. So we decided to give back and help our earth recover as much as it can by planting a tree for every holiday booked with us".



**Marieta Poole from Not Just Travel**



**Tom Poole takes a look at the trees planted**



# Seeking to defend title in Dragon Boat Race challenge



*Back row (l-r): Adam Parrish, Managing Director Pertemps Network Medical, Richard Bourne, Regional Manager, Neil Mancey, Director, Liam Walter, Contracts and Compliance Managers, Simon Juiler, Director of Corporate Solutions, Andy Long, Head of Learning and Development, James Wilde, PR and Communications Manager, Craig Elwell, Regional Manager, Kent Thompson, Managing Director, Mike Matthewman, Senior Solutions Manager.*

**A team of intrepid colleagues will compete in their second Dragon Boat Race challenge seeking to defend their title from last year while raising funds for Birmingham Children's Hospital charity.**

The crew from Pertemps Network Group, including members from the Wolverhampton office and elsewhere across the Black Country, will try to retain the fastest boat titles it won at last year's event.

Birmingham Children's Hospital is the country's leading, specialist paediatric centre, delivering some of the most

advanced treatments, complex surgical procedures and cutting-edge research to over 90,000 children and young people from across the UK and beyond.

One in five families in the Midlands and one in eight families across the country have been touched by the hospital in some way.

Pertemps Network Group recently became on one of the inaugural Changemakers partners at Birmingham Children's Hospital, working with a small group of local business to raise at least £1 million a year for the hospital to allow it to better plan investment for transformational projects that will benefit thousands of sick children for decades to come.

Lisa Miller, Director at Pertemps Network Group, said: "As partners of the new Changemakers programme, it is our pleasure to be taking part again in this year's

Dragon Boat Race to raise vital funds for the Birmingham Children's Hospital charity.

"The Birmingham Children's Hospital are continually going above and beyond to support their patients and families, which is why events like this are so important to raise the vital funds needed to make a real difference to all those who use the hospital.

"For 62 years Pertemps has always supported the communities in which we work and this one of many that we are proud to support."

Last year the team of Pertemps Paddlers set the fastest time to take first place. The team raised more than £2,500 for the cause and hope to achieve the same in June.

If you can support our Pertemps Paddlers, please visit <https://birminghamchildrenshospitalcharities.enthouse.com/pf/pertemps-paddlers>







Overwhelmed – Black Country Women's Aid



Staff from Brierley Hill Babybank with the donated toys

# Teddies find fur-ever homes following generous donation

**A bear-y generous donation has been distributed to vulnerable children thanks to two community-focused companies.**

Golden Bear Toys, a leading UK toy manufacturer based in Telford, entrusted a bumper haul of goodies to their Health Cash Plan provider Paycare.

Paycare then used their community connections to find five charities who would be able to distribute the teddies to children most in need across the region.

For over 40 years, Golden Bear have been transforming some of the nation's much-loved children's TV characters into high-quality toys including Bing, Hey Duggee and In the Night Garden as well as producing many exciting properties of its own including Curlimals, which was one of the top selling soft toy ranges in the UK in 2022.

Partnerships Manager Sally Bromley explained the toys had been 'squatting' at Paycare House in Wolverhampton before finding their fur-ever homes thanks to four charities: The Haven Wolverhampton, Brierley Hill Baby Bank, Wolverhampton Baby Bank, Black Country Women's Aid, and the Black Country Santa Toy Appeal.

"We've had a large volume of toys and cuddly bears very kindly donated by Golden Bear. The good news is that we've managed to find permanent homes for the toys.

"I think we can rest assured the toys will be going to some very grateful and very deserving young children and babies in our local area.

"I am absolutely delighted that we have been able to link with these amazing charities to ensure these toys go to local families where they will certainly put a smile on some children's faces.

"A massive thank you goes to Corporate Account Manager Simon Cater and Compliance Manager Saranjit Nagra for arranging the donation.

"And of course thank you to the team at Golden Bear Toys. In a very difficult and challenging year for most people, this has truly warmed my heart."

Golden Bear's HR Manager Emma Graham added: "We're proud of our family values at Golden Bear and always strive in our quest to enhance the lives of children and families in the local community.

"We are delighted to help our partners at Paycare and hope the toys brings a lot of enjoyment to children of all ages."

Katie Newell, Fundraising Officer at Black Country Women's Aid, said their children's team were 'overwhelmed' with the donations, adding: "I have sent some to accommodation for our younger clients who have recently arrived.

"The Children's Independent Sexual Violence Advocates have already used some of them to support with distraction and pre-court support boxes.

"Some are particularly good for supporting our children who have started the therapy process.

"Thank you for choosing to support us."



The Paycare team pick up toys from Golden Bear



Simon and Sally from Paycare, pictured with the toys





An artist's impression of the new dining hall extension at Burton Borough School in Newport

# Building contractor wins £6.6m of new projects

**A** Shropshire building contractor has landed three new contracts in the education and care sector.

Pave Aways will design and build a single storey extension at Lawley Village Academy in Telford that will allow the school to offer an additional 210 places along with a new nursery and associated internal and external works.

The Knockin based contractor will also build a dining hall extension and refurbish the kitchen at Burton Borough School in Newport, where it carried out an extension and refurbishment to the main hall in 2019. Both projects are on behalf of Telford & Wrekin Council.

Additionally, Pave Aways has been commissioned to carry out a refurbishment and small extension at a children's home near Shrewsbury for Shropshire Council's Property Services Group.

Managing director Steven Owen said: "These new contracts are the latest in a long line of new build, extensions and refurbishments in the education and care sector and play to our strength of being able to deliver high quality new facilities whilst organisations carry on their day-to-day operation.

"It's also good news for our supply chain of suppliers and sub-contractors as we're committed to using businesses within a 20-mile radius of the jobs, ensuring a boost to the economy by keeping our spend local."

Pave Aways, which celebrates its 50th year in business this October, is currently working on a number of other education projects including the new £5.1m girls' house at Shrewsbury School and science laboratories at Packwood Haugh as well contracts in the healthcare, charity and manufacturing sectors.

## Drive for sustainability shifts up a gear

A building contractor has completed another stage on its journey for greater sustainability with the addition of new electric vehicles to its fleet.

Pave Aways has introduced two Maxus electric vans and an electric Tesla as a pool car to support its drive for changes in its day-to-day operations so it can build a better future for the environment. The vans will be used by Pave Aways' on-site teams with the pool car available for its head office-based staff.

Sustainability is one of Pave Aways' five key values and the introduction of the electric vehicles is just one way the company is working to reduce its carbon footprint.

Managing director Steven Owen explained: "We already encourage vehicle sharing and to avoid unnecessary journeys but the nature of our work means we have to be on the road.

"We chose these vehicles as they have an excellent range which will allow staff to travel around our sites on a full charge. We'll be testing the benefits of these new vehicles and, as the technology and infrastructure of the



Pave Aways director Charlie Davies, Jamie Evans, Victoria Lawson and Steven Owen with one of the new electric vans

charging network improves, we aim to bring even more electric cars and vans to our fleet as vehicles need replacing."

Pave Aways, which celebrates its 50th year in business this October, has already developed a growing specialism in net carbon construction for the public and private sector including building to Passivhaus standards.

The Knockin-based company has also committed to a series of practical changes within its day-to-day operations including environmental site audits, sustainability training and the use of waste compacting baler to enhance its green credentials.



# Full-Service Garden Experts of the Year, 2023

Priestgate Garden Specialists, a leading garden design and landscaping company in Shropshire, is celebrating this week after being honoured with an award in BUILD Magazine's Facilities Management Awards.

The Awards celebrate the achievements of some of the most outstanding and innovative businesses within the FM sector. Priestgate has been named Full Service Garden Experts of the Year 2023 for Shropshire, in recognition of the company's performance expertise in all aspects of garden design and landscaping, from initial consultations to final installations.

It's the latest in a string of awards in recent years for the Wrockwardine Wood-based firm that has been serving the region for more than 40 years.

"We are thrilled to be receiving this award," said Phil Birtwhistle, Managing Director of Priestgate Garden Specialists Ltd. "The award is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team, who are committed to providing our clients with the highest quality service possible."

Priestgate Garden Specialists Ltd offers a wide range of garden design and landscaping services, including lawn care, landscaping and estate management for private and business customers alike.

The company has a team of qualified and experienced qualified professionals who are passionate about creating and maintaining beautiful, functional gardens. Priestgate Garden Specialists Ltd is committed to using sustainable materials and practices, and they are always looking for new ways to improve their services.

"We never like to stand still and are always seeking to stay ahead of the latest trends in garden design and landscaping, as well as embracing technology where we can" said Birtwhistle, who has seen a number of his entertaining TikTok videos for Priestgate go viral in recent months, "We are committed to providing our clients with the best possible experience, and we are confident that we can help our clients create the outdoor space of their dreams."



Priestgate is based Wrockwardine Wood

# Understanding R&D changes is key for Shropshire's SMEs

**Shropshire SMEs claiming R&D tax relief must deepen their understanding of the HMRC schemes.**

That's the call from R&D Tax Claims Ltd founder Mark Evans, who's written to all of his firm's clients to help them get to grips with the changes being made to the process of claiming for R&D activities.

HMRC has made various announcements to the way R&D claims are dealt with – from pre-notification of a claim, to the contact details of a named person at the company being disclosed as additional information. Some of the changes came into force in April this year, but others will be enforced at later dates.

"What's clear is that – as well as the expert advisers like ourselves putting a lot of time into being fully conversant with every detail of the changes – HMRC is also expecting at least one director from the claimant company to have a reasonable knowledge and understanding of what activities constitute legitimate R&D in their company," Mark explains.

**HMRC has made various announcements to the way R&D claims are dealt with – from pre-notification of a claim, to the contact details of a named person at the company being disclosed as additional information.**

"That's why we've devised a guide to send to all of our existing clients, together with a copy of the recently-released Government guidelines, to ensure that they have this knowledge. It'll help them introduce or refine systems to calculate the cost of their R&D activities, and collate the extra information that we'll now need in order to submit a robust claim on their behalf.

"We strongly believe SMEs who are undertaking R&D should be able to continue receiving tax relief for this, and we don't want anyone to decide not to submit a claim due to any confusion around the announcements which have been made over the last six months.

"But the reality is, the process has become more complicated – that's why it's imperative that directors take the time to learn what they need to, and rely on

expert advisers to know everything else! HMRC are hoping to reduce the amount of fraudulent and incorrect claims and believe these new measures will go a long way to achieve this. In addition to these measures, HMRC have hugely increased the number of enquiries into historic claims.

"Enquiries are now being launched for many different reasons, including a particular business sector (SIC code) or company location, so it's more important than ever that companies and their R&D advisers work closely together to ensure they have all of the information needed to respond effectively to an enquiry"

Visit [www.rdtaxclaims.co.uk](http://www.rdtaxclaims.co.uk) for more information about R&D Tax Claims, which specialises in supporting manufacturing and engineering companies with their research and development tax relief.





*Rachel Corner, sales director, third from left, back row, welcomes the recruits at SWS Broadband's new office on Shrewsbury Business Park*

# 16 new appointments for a broadband team

**S**hropshire based SWS Broadband, which specialises in providing high-speed full-fibre broadband services to rural communities, has taken on 16 members of staff and moved to a new office location in Shrewsbury.

Fulfilling the requirement for positions across all areas of the business, the appointees have been selected from a variety of previous roles, including experienced telecoms industry professionals to people with a desire to learn something new. A chef with a keen interest in IT and a military dog handler are just two examples of the team who will be trained by SWS in their new careers.

The changes follow a £75M investment in the company last autumn and are the beginning of a planned period of sustained activity according to SWS sales director, Rachel Corner. She said: "While we are eager to advance new projects, adopting a measured approach to delivering our strategic goals is key to sustained business growth. In addition, we don't want to lose sight of SWS's emphasis on a happy, dedicated workforce and the provision of excellent customer service the latter of which, for example, is reflected in our 100 percent 5/5 Trust Pilot review status. Apart from one person, the new members of staff have all been recruited from within Shropshire, some of whom have made a complete career change. We will support them with tailored on-the-job training and look forward to their contributions at what is an exciting and important stage in SWS Broadband's development."

More information about SWS Broadband is available at: [www.swsbroadband.net](http://www.swsbroadband.net)

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# Would your business welcome a Fractional solution?

**G**reenfield IT Recruitment is offering a new Fractional IT Leadership solution. Based in sunny Shropshire 14 years and counting, Greenfield IT offer Technology / Digital Marketing recruitment services to companies locally and nationally.

Vicky Heard our MD has launched a Fractional IT Director / CTO recruitment service – this is essentially like having senior level technology expertise on a part time basis for as long as needed.

If you're an SME business looking to re-evaluate your IT landscape, planning to move to new business systems like CRM, ERP, Cloud or implementation of a new tech strategy this this could be a good way to accomplish business goals without the need of hiring an IT Director / CTO.

Fractional IT Leaders are typically experienced IT execs who have worked for larger organisations or have similar Industry knowledge who can help SMEs navigate the complex IT landscape



by providing strategic IT advice, Manage IT projects, oversee vendors and technology investments. This is a cost-effective solution that can help SME's save money whilst gaining the expertise needed. Our IT Leaders are typically paid on a day rate or project basis, so companies only pay for the time / services used.

Vicky Heard said – “We are really excited about launching the Fractional Leadership solution to existing and new clients, we've been operating in the Tech space for a long time now and have a great network of IT Leaders we can engage with.”

[www.greenfield-it.co.uk](http://www.greenfield-it.co.uk) Telephone: 01743 234029.

## HERE'S MY CARD – BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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We are looking to introduce an entry-level advertising opportunity in the next issue of Your Chamber, Your Voice. The concept is to replicate the information from your business card in print – as part of a handy directory. Each slot is priced just £50\* and will be collated with other businesses taking up this great deal. \*Subject to VAT. Telephone: 01952 208200 Email: [magazine@shropshire-chamber.co.uk](mailto:magazine@shropshire-chamber.co.uk)



# Food festival is backed by business community

**S**hropshire Festivals has shared its delight in being supported by a number of businesses from the region through sponsorship of the Shrewsbury Food Festival.

This year's event took place on June 24 and 25 and sponsorship included the Shire Collection Chef School, The Shropshire Distillery Chef Demo Stage, the Monks Home and Garden Area, Reconomy's Field to Fork area, and the Adcote School Kids Area.

"They say it takes a village to raise a baby, well it takes a local business community to host an event of this scale!" said Beth Heath, Creative Director at Shropshire Festivals. "Our infrastructure costs have gone through the roof, as have electricity, suppliers, and labour – in fact, just about every cost has increased.

"Our customers are surviving a cost of living crisis, so we can't pass on all our rising costs to them. In fact, our ticket prices are the same as in 2022 to help our visitors as much as we can.

"We have been overwhelmed with support from local businesses, who not only wanted to be part of the event, they see the opportunity to tap into our audience here – growing sales, brand exposure, and reputation."

New to sponsor this year's event are Shrewsbury-based IT providers Start Tech and DS Automobiles – a Parisian brand with their nearest branch in Stafford.

Cathryn Hancock from DS Automobiles said: "DS Salon Stafford is excited to have supported the Shrewsbury Food Festival.

"We enjoyed welcoming visitors to the DS Automobiles stand where they experienced a warm welcome and discover Parisian savoir-faire for themselves."

The baby changing facilities were supported by Waterbabies and Full Fibre provided reusable cups to reduce single-use plastic.

Beth adds: "I think it's really positive to see these brands invest in marketing, after the tough time businesses have had in recent years.

"It shows the strength in some of these sectors, and I'm really pleased they can see the value in partnering with Shropshire Festivals.

"I'm grateful to the local businesses that have supported us through sponsorship for several years now, such as Aaron & Partners, Volvo, Monks, Cartwrights, TCA, and the Tudor Griffiths Group, to name but a few."

"A huge success story has been working with Reclaim Tax. They sponsored our VIP area last year, and that support has seen us expand and upgrade the whole area. This year, the VIP area sold out – showing that with investment, we can grow ticket sales. Thank you to Reclaim Tax for sponsoring the VIP area again this year."



Beth Heath from Shropshire Festivals





The flower field will be open for a limited time while flowers are in bloom, giving visitors exclusive access to a field usually reserved for petal confetti production.

# Visit Petal Fields

**T**ickets have been released for a new flower field experience in Newport, Shropshire. The ticket launch announcement coincides with the annual flower fever caused by The RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

Two Shropshire businesses are joining forces to deliver the experience. Biodegradable petal confetti business, Shropshire Petals, is providing acres of stunning flowers to walk amongst, and the award-winning team at Shropshire Festivals are turning it into a must-visit experience.

The flower field will only be open for a limited time while the flowers are in bloom, giving visitors exclusive access to a field usually reserved for petal confetti production. The organisers have confirmed the field will be open from Friday 4th August until Sunday 13th August daily.

Sadly, the debut event last year was cancelled following extreme weather disrupting the crop, but the organisers are full steam ahead for this summer's event with delphiniums, sunflowers, cornflowers, and wildflowers being grown to provide the perfect photo backdrop.

"We're excited to give Shropshire the best flower experience it has ever seen!" Beth Heath from Shropshire Festivals said. "Shropshire Petals are renowned for their exquisitely colourful petal confetti. Once I saw the flowers in person, I knew we had to share the unbelievably beautiful visual with our community, whilst adding in our usual dose of festival fun. As well as being immersed in the gorgeous blooms, families can follow the wildflower pathway to the forest of fun where they'll find some characters hiding amongst the trees. We'll also have a café, so bring a picnic blanket and make a day of it."

Ashley Evers-Swindell, marketing manager at Shropshire Petals said: "To get completely immersed in our stunning fields will be an unforgettable experience for flower lovers and families, and a great location to capture special memories with loved ones.

"There will be a myriad of bright pink, blue, purple, yellow, and white flowers, that will enchant visitors of all ages. You'll also have the opportunity to buy your own freshly cut flowers. The field will make the most stunning location for any photo, so you can take the beauty home with you."

To find out more and purchase tickets visit [shropshireflowerfield.co.uk](http://shropshireflowerfield.co.uk)



The field makes for a stunning photo opportunity



# Staff build on charitable support with fundraisers



The team of 14 from SWG Group is taking on an array of physical activities to achieve the equivalent of 10,000 steps, about five miles, per day for an entire month

## Staff at a leading construction firm are laying the foundations for another successful fundraising year for charity by taking part in a number of events for Severn Hospice.

SWG Group, with bases in Welshpool and Shrewsbury, is heavily committed to supporting charitable organisations and events across the area as a firm, and staff are building on that involvement by signing up to fundraising activities over the coming months.

They will be out and about on land and water, walking and rowing to raise much-needed funds for Severn Hospice. They will also be volunteering to carry out work at the charity's headquarters.

Jacqui Gough, SWG director, said: "Severn Hospice does such a wonderful job in caring for people with incurable illness and their families. They provide an invaluable service to the community and it seems like most people have been touched in some way by the work they do.

"We are delighted to support the charity and are grateful to our staff who are getting involved in various fundraising activities this year. We want to raise as much money as possible for this deserving cause.

"Team members are taking part in the

charity's Walk In Our Shoes fundraiser - which recognises the average 10,000 steps a day taken by Severn Hospice nurses and care teams.

"Our team of 14 is taking on an array of physical activities to achieve the equivalent of 10,000 steps, about five miles, per day for an entire month.

"We have a team booked in to compete at the Dragon Boat Festival in Shrewsbury on Sunday, July 23.

"It's a massive fundraiser for Severn Hospice and we are really looking forward to taking part. We will have a big presence there and look forward to chatting with visitors at the event on the day.

"Plans are being discussed at the moment for a couple of days of volunteering at Severn Hospice's premises in August, and in September we are self-organising a coastal walking challenge - Ynyslas to Llangrannog, a total of 45.6 miles over two days."

Jess Druce, Severn Hospice's Corporate Fundraiser said: "We are delighted the team at SWG Construction are going all out in support of Severn Hospice this summer.

"They'll be stepping up for us in some fantastic challenges including Walk in our Shoes, the 10,000 steps a day challenge, and a gruelling two-day coastal walk stomp. Then they'll be swapping the land for water at our annual Dragon Boat Festival.

"I'm sure they'll have a fantastic time taking on these challenges as a group with such camaraderie, encouraging each other

every step and stroke of the way.

"We're thrilled the team will also be volunteering with us at the hospice donating the precious gift of their time, expertise and care.

"Their support means so much to us and we are really grateful to everyone at SWG Construction. Every penny they raise will make a real difference and will enable us to be there for thousands of local people living with incurable illness."

In addition to fundraising efforts for Severn Hospice and as part of its continued Corporate Social Responsibility, SWG has already donated and is supporting a variety of other charitable organisations and events.

These include: Welshpool FC home kit sponsorship; the Circus Starr Spring Tour 2023; the Dudley Mayor's Business Club; Armed Forces Day in Dudley on July 25; The Shine Balloon Race on June 23; a Macmillan coffee morning on September 29; Welshpool 1940's weekend sponsorship; and a cash donation to Llandysilio Church in Wales School.

The school's Headteacher Mrs Williams said: "We are so grateful to SWG for their kind donation, which contributed to a fantastic Love Our School Day.

"To see so many people coming together to make our school sparkle was fantastic. Our school is at the heart of the community, and this was reflected in all the generous donations of time and support we received."





# Building a great reputation

Established in 2012 SafeWise provides cost-effective and bespoke Health, Safety and HR provide advice and services to small and medium-sized Construction, Industrial and Manufacturing companies throughout the West Midlands, London and in between.

We proudly represent some of the finest companies in the West Midlands, not only within construction companies, but we have progressed seamlessly into other sectors, through fabrication and installation then various industrial, workshops and office environments.

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Health & Safety	HR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HLS COMPETENT PERSON</li> <li>POLICIES &amp; ADVICE</li> <li>RISK &amp; METHOD STATEMENTS</li> <li>FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS</li> <li>ACCIDENT INVESTIGATIONS</li> <li>HKS TRAINING</li> <li>SAFETY INSPECTIONS</li> <li>SAFETY ACCREDITATIONS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR ADVICE FOR EMPLOYERS</li> <li>EMPLOYMENT DOCUMENTS</li> <li>EMPLOYEE CONTRACTS</li> <li>EMPLOYEE HANDBOOKS</li> <li>HR POLICIES</li> <li>EMPLOYER PROTECTION INSURANCE</li> <li>HR TRAINING</li> </ul>

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If you require further information about our services – Please call 01922 279 129 visit our website [www.safewiseuk.com](http://www.safewiseuk.com) or scan our QR code.

Furthermore, feel free to follow us on LinkedIn or Facebook.

# Amalgamation leads to growth of a team

**R**oger Parry & Partners are delighted to announce the expansion of its planning and architectural services team following the recent amalgamation with Les Stephan Planning Ltd, one of the leading planning consultancy firms in the Midlands and Wales.

The Les Stephan Planning team will become an integral part of the on-going service provided by Roger Parry and Partners throughout the Midlands and Wales.

Les Stephan Planning's senior Planning Consultants are members of the Royal Town Planning Institute and include three former Local Authority Planner Officers, with a wide knowledge and expertise in a variety of planning aspects.

Roger Parry, Partner at Roger Parry & Partners said, "We are delighted to announce the inclusion of Les Stephan Planning within Roger Parry and Partners.

The company shares our values and our long-standing commitment to excellent and successful planning advice in the region. We are delighted that they have joined us and will allow our MRTI planning department to take on more substantial projects.

Roger Parry & Partners are pleased that Les Stephan, with his long-standing expertise, chose to become part of Roger Parry and Partners to continue to provide the same high standard of service to his clients. Les said, "I am looking forward to remaining with the new amalgamated business in a consultancy capacity with the support of Rob Mills, Stuart Taylor and Daniella Owen, who will remain in position to ensure continuity to all clients' current and future projects."

Richard Corbett, Partner at Roger Parry & Partners added, "Expanding the company is very exciting for us with offices

in Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Welshpool. This amalgamation will enhance our planning and architectural services business for the benefit of all our current and new clients. Going forward we are now able to expand more into sectors involving Land Promotion and Option Agreements and have the resources to take on larger scale projects and a wider spectrum of work."

Roger Parry & Partners have assisted clients with all aspects of property advice and services for over 40 years. The company has a strong presence in the residential, agricultural, and commercial sectors and have a highly successful planning and development team offering a complete service backed by a wealth of knowledge and experience. For further information please visit the website: [www.rogerparry.net](http://www.rogerparry.net) or contact Shrewsbury on 01743 791336

***"Expanding the company is very exciting for us with offices in Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Welshpool. This amalgamation will enhance our planning and architectural services business for the benefit of all our current and new clients."***



SWG Construction is building 14 homes at Callaughton's Ash, Much Wenlock, on behalf of Connexus

# More affordable homes coming to Much Wenlock

**W**ork has started on a development of affordable homes in Much Wenlock, giving people a “much-needed” opportunity to find a property in their hometown.

SWG Construction is building 14 homes at Callaughton's Ash, Much Wenlock, on behalf of Connexus, which says there is great demand for residential properties in the area.

Head of development at Connexus, Amanda Knowles, said: “Connexus is delighted to be providing more much-needed good quality affordable homes to the Much Wenlock community.

“With local people often priced out of

the area they call home, we continue to focus on providing the right mix of rental and shared ownership homes for rural communities.”

Josh Coleman, commercial director at SWG Construction, which is based in Shrewsbury and Welshpool, said the project started in early April, with an expected completion date in the first half of 2024.

He said: “We are very pleased to be working with Connexus on this project, which includes a really good blend of properties suitable for a variety of residents, from families to single occupants.

“We are building two one-bedroom apartments, eight two-bedroom homes and four three-bedroom houses.

“Everyone knows the current state of the housing market, and the economy in general, makes it very difficult for people to get on the property ladder so it's great to

see these affordable homes getting under way.”

The project marks phase two of the Callaughton's Ash development, and workers for SWG Construction are making a concerted effort to avoid disruption for nearby residents.

Josh added: “When we first started on site, we held an open event with residents to discuss the plans and reassure them that we will do everything we can to minimise any inconvenience during the works.

“That includes things like planning deliveries and any particularly noisy elements of work at times which don't cause too many issues with people living nearby.

“We appreciate it's difficult living next to a construction site, but we will continue to work with residents to make the project go as smoothly as possible.”



# Chamber members urged to vote for the 2023 dyslexia stars



*Dyslexia Awards finalists 2022 – photo by Ian Reynold Photography*

**The Dyslexia Awards are back for the eighth year – and it's time for Chamber members to think about which Shropshire people they want to nominate.**

The awards shine a spotlight on the work of dyslexics as well as those educators and employers who go the extra mile to support and empower them

Nominations for the nine categories are now open, and awards founder and Shropshire Chamber of Commerce member, Elizabeth Wilkinson, urged everyone who knows, is related to or who works with dyslexics to get involved.

She said: "I know from experience how amazing dyslexics are, and yet every year I am blown away by the content of the nominations received.

"I'm sure this year will be no different, and I look forward to lots of brilliant entries. We have a new category this year – the young entrepreneur award. Quite often young dyslexics show entrepreneurial skills at a young age, but it is not recognised or encouraged, so we wanted to offer the opportunity to help celebrate and shine a light on these young people, after all it's no coincidence that so many brilliant entrepreneurs are dyslexic.

"I hope our new award will inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs to go on to even bigger and better things just like Shropshire-based Clive Knowles from the British Ironworks Centre and Deborah Mitchell from Heaven Skin Care who are both previous award winners."

The adult categories include amazing artist, entrepreneur, learning support, community shining star, excellent educator, supportive employer and innovation.

Two of the awards will also recognise dyslexic youngsters – the teenage community shining star award and the young entrepreneur award for 16 to 21-year-olds.

The awards recognise that people with dyslexia can achieve amazing things with support and understanding from people around them.

Elizabeth said: "It saddens me that when people hear the term dyslexia, they assume it means we cannot read, write or spell.

"What we need right from an early age is to be taught the way we learn. That would then level the playing field and we would likely excel and be able to follow our positive pathways a lot earlier in life.

"Being surrounded by people who get that we think differently and having the right support in place from family, friends and educators, can make a big difference.

"If you know someone who has gone above and beyond to help a student or employee and empower them to reach their potential then, we want to hear about them."

It is estimated that about one person in 10 is dyslexic. It is a specific learning difficulty (SpLD) which usually manifests mainly as a difficulty with handling language, such as phonics, short term memory and automaticity. It is caused by a difference in how the brain processes information but is unrelated to intelligence or other skills.

Elizabeth, from Wellington in Telford,

Shropshire, was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Jubilee honours for services to dyslexia.

She was diagnosed with dyslexia in her early 30s. Realising that an earlier diagnosis and more support for educators in school would have made a huge difference, Elizabeth set about doing what she could to raise positive awareness of dyslexia locally and to empower her fellow dyslexics.

After training to become a specialist teacher she went on to set up her company The Dyslexic Dyslexia Consultant and has since trained thousands of business leaders and professionals on dyslexia in the workplace. She also founded the not-for-profit Dyslexia Information Day – an annual event designed to help people access trustworthy, free advice about dyslexia and local services.

In 2015 she launched the first ever Dyslexia Awards for dyslexics, businesses and educators, in the Shropshire region only. The awards, which are also run on a not-for-profit basis, expanded to include the West Midlands region in 2020, before going national last year.

Other high profile dyslexic people include Shropshire-based furniture restorer Jay Blades, chefs James Martin, Jamie Oliver, EastEnders actress Kara Tointon, The Saturdays pop star and presenter Mollie King and Scottish rugby union international Kenny Logan.

Nominations for the 2023 Dyslexia Awards will close on June 30. To nominate someone for an award use the form here <https://forms.office.com/e/1Yg4Bia4y2> or visit the website here <https://theddc.org.uk/dyslexiaawards/> for more information and entry details.

# Distillery expands range with its latest releases



Emma Glynn

**The award-winning spirit producers at The Shropshire Distillery, have released their first vodka, along with a new grapefruit and hop gin.**

The family-run distillery has been handcrafting spirits in Ellesmere since 2018 and has picked up multiple awards for their Shropshire Dry Gin, Aromatic Spiced Gin, Navy Strength Dry Gin, and Cherry & Pink Peppercorn Gin.

Their new Spring Vodka takes its name from the local water it's blended with - Wenlock Spring - which is drawn from beneath Shropshire's Wenlock Edge. Wenlock Spring's water takes a natural filtration journey through layers of limestone rock, providing its refreshing taste.

Emma Glynn, one of the UK's few female distillers, said, "It's exciting to be launching our first vodka - and by utilising the premium water from Wenlock Spring, we've created a clean, crisp vodka that I'm really proud of."

"We're passionate about developing new recipes to keep evolving our offering - I love exploring new botanical combinations. We've also just released a Grapefruit & Hop Gin in time for summer cocktails, although it's delicious simply with tonic and a citrus slice! It has an undercurrent of juniper which delivers a smooth refreshingly hoppy character."

The new Grapefruit & Hop Gin is distilled using American Cascade hops and dried grapefruit for a zesty citrus pine flavour balanced with light floral notes.

"We're looking forward to seeing what our customers think of the new releases. We'll be serving them up during our distillery experiences, which have expanded to include cocktail masterclasses as well as the gin school and distillery tours. Plus, we'll be at lots of events over the summer, including the Shrewsbury Food Festival at the end of June, which we're proudly sponsoring. We look forward to seeing our new releases enjoyed across Shropshire and beyond!"

The new products can be purchased from [www.theshropshiredistillery.co.uk](http://www.theshropshiredistillery.co.uk)



Ellesmere's small batch distillery has had a change of spirit launching their first ever vodka, plus a new grapefruit and hop gin





*Mark Jenkins, of One Stop Windows, said: "I am pleased to confirm that Mathew - the owner of Windows and Doors 2 You – has accepted the opportunity to become the joint owner of my company"*

# Rebrand and expansion for Telford window and door manufacturer

**A Shropshire window and door specialist has announced a rebrand - involving a change of name and a major expansion of the business.**

Windows and Doors 2 You, formerly known as Composite Doors 2 You, has also moved to new premises on Hortonwood in Telford to form an exciting new partnership with its manufacturing supplier One Stop Windows.

The two companies are now working together under one roof at Unit 27 with Windows and Doors 2 You boss Mathew O'Loughlin taking a 50% ownership in One Stop Windows as a new company director.

Mr O'Loughlin said: "It's been an amazing journey in a relatively short space of time. I launched my own company a little over four years ago and we have been extremely successful.

"The rebrand and change of name came about because we had been selling a lot more than composite doors for a while and we felt we were missing out in some product areas. The change of name better reflects

who we are. It's fair to say that people didn't fully realise that we supplied both windows and doors and the standards we adhere to are matched by those at One Stop Windows so it was the perfect partnership in the making.

"We have worked closely with One Stop Windows throughout and talks began with Mark Jenkins of One Stop Windows and we are now 50/50 shareholders of One Stop Windows.

"This expansion is the next stepping stone in the progression of the business. The plan was always to set up a fabrication arm but I thought that was maybe a year or two away. It has actually happened within a couple of months through the new partnership - an opportunity that was just too good to turn down."

Mr O'Loughlin said the partnership has seen Windows and Doors 2 You move into Unit 27 at Hortonwood 33 - premises already occupied by One Stop Windows - so both businesses are now operating under one roof.

"It means customers can see products being fabricated as well as visiting our showroom," he said.

"Business is really good and we find that

being a small family-run company focussing on personal service and quality stands us in good stead with our customers across Shropshire, the West Midlands, Staffordshire and even further afield."

Mark Jenkins, of One Stop Windows, said: "I am pleased to confirm that Mathew - the owner of Windows and Doors 2 You - has accepted the opportunity to become the joint owner of my company.

"We will continue to expand our product range and in streamlining our work processes have increased our productivity and efficiency, which will be of benefit to all. Our combined trade experience is seen as a real plus in further developing One Stop Window's business and public profile.

"Mathew is going to be a key player in driving the company forward. It's also a bonus that he brings the dogs into work, Milo and his brother Brandy have become a great addition to the office team!"

For more about Windows and Doors 2 You, call 01952 474898, email [info@windowsanddoors2you.co.uk](mailto:info@windowsanddoors2you.co.uk) or visit <https://www.windowsanddoors2you.co.uk/> and for more about One Stop Windows, call 01952 474090, email [info@onestopwindows.co.uk](mailto:info@onestopwindows.co.uk) or visit <https://www.onestopwindows.co.uk/>



# Providing such a valuable resource for its customers

**W**enlock Water – Shropshire's main provider of Water Coolers, Water Filling Stations and Hot Water Boilers – have long prided themselves on their customer service.

The team have recently introduced something new to assist their customers – a set of 'self help' troubleshooting videos.

These cover simple, easy to solve issues. For example, the customer may be having an issue where there appears to be something floating inside the water bottle.

Bruce Orme, director, says: "This issue is really simple, it usually occurs when the customer hasn't removed the seal from the bottle when placing it on the cooler. It's not a problem, simply just remember to remove it the next time!"

The videos can be found on their website – just visit the link at the bottom of this article.

Bruce explains: "The idea behind the videos is simple.

"We often get customers calling us with small, solvable issues, and historically someone in the office – usually Simon – has needed to try and explain the solution over the phone or in an email.

"Now we can simply direct the customer to the link on our website or YouTube channel and the issue can be resolved in no time at all..."

"One of the most popular problems we receive calls about is that no water is running from a cooler.

"This is usually because there is water in the air filter, which is simple to sort" says Bruce.

"Other enquiries include issues regarding water not running quickly, ice is coming out of the tap and the hot water safety tap is not working.

"These are all issues which are usually easy to solve and don't require an engineer to visit."

So, if you have a Cooler from Wenlock Water – or from anyone else – the answer to your question could well just be a click away!

It's easy to order a Cooler from Wenlock Water – simply call the office and speak to a member of the team! Or search Wenlock Water online and send an enquiry via their website.



*"One of the most popular problems we receive calls about is that no water is running from a Cooler. This is usually because there is water in the air filter, which is simple to sort," says Bruce Orme*



*Shropshire Business magazine has continued to see growth in readership in the last six months*

# It's the business for county readers

**It's been a record-breaking year so far for Shropshire Business, the county's award-winning independent magazine and website.**

The bi-monthly magazine, bringing you independent and impartial news, views and analysis from the local economy, has seen a sharp rise in readership numbers since the start of the year.

The increase is driven by a near 20% rise in the number of businesses now downloading the e-copy of the publication from the website, [www.shropshirebiz.com](http://www.shropshirebiz.com).

Shropshire Business is run by award-winning journalists Carl Jones and Henry Carpenter, backed up by a top team of media professionals.

It is proud to have won the coveted Midlands Magazine of the Year trophy, and been recognised at the Shropshire Chamber Business Awards.

If you are an expert in your field with top tips to share, a company which is innovating, evolving, expanding or relocating, or has top tips to help us all navigate the post-pandemic landscape, the Shropshire Business team wants to hear from you!

Editor Carl Jones says: "Everything we do in print, online, or through our live streaming TV venture is about championing Shropshire-based companies, and success stories.

"There is a real appetite for keeping the 'Shropshire pound' in our county right now, and for companies to source their suppliers as locally as possible.

"Now, more than ever, we need to be celebrating the many success stories



*Connectivity was one of the topics of the series three studio debates*

which continue to make Shropshire such a dynamic place in which to do business."

From SMEs and one-man bands, to manufacturers and engineers employing thousands; legal and financial powerhouses to media organisations large, small and varied; polymer, agriculture, food and pharmaceutical trailblazers to tech and telecom entrepreneurs, Shropshire Business magazine champions them all.

It celebrates the work being done across all corners of the county, spotlighting innovation and achievement, and showing people just what's right here on their doorstep.

There are commercial packages on offer for local businesses, who can feature in both a print publication, and online, from as little

as £125. For more details, email [editor@shropshirebiz.com](mailto:editor@shropshirebiz.com)

Shropshire Business is also proud to have teamed up with partners from Yarrington and Shropshire Live to form Shropshire Business Live TV (SBLTV) which is nearing the end of its third series and is continuing to attract new viewers. It broadcasts on the final Thursday of each month.

The final episode of the current run will be streamed live with a studio audience at the Aico theatre in Oswestry on the afternoon of Thursday July 27.

Places in the audience are free: if you'd like to reserve your spot for what promises to be a networking event with a difference - or even book a slot on the show - email [info@sbltv.co.uk](mailto:info@sbltv.co.uk)



# The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is now available

**T**elford College has begun running The Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) Award to offer invaluable skills and life-changing experiences to young people.

The college has worked closely with The Duke of Edinburgh's Award to create an opportunity for students which is designed to boost the employability and 'workplace readiness' of everyone who takes part.

Janet Stephens, Telford College's deputy chief executive, said: "The DofE is a fantastic opportunity which encourages young people to find new interests, gain self-confidence and develop a real sense of purpose.

"Not only does it give them the chance to take part in some fantastic adventures, it equips them with the skills they need to present themselves more confidently to prospective employers."

Around 15 Telford College students will be taking part in the first intake, working initially towards their Silver Award, but the intention is to expand the DofE Award offering significantly over the coming years.

DofE operations officer, Ramela Mills, attended a Telford College open event to explain the benefits of signing up.

She said: "We're delighted to welcome Telford College on board with us and have developed a DofE offer for students which will provide opportunities for all young people – not just those in mainstream education.

"This is a bespoke programme which has been tailored to specifically deliver experiences for students in the 16-plus age bracket. It's about removing barriers which may previously have prevented people from taking part."

The DofE is working to reach one million young people by 2026 and has launched ambitious projects to fund schools and community organisations in the UK's most deprived areas to start running the DofE, support more young people with additional needs and disabilities to achieve their Awards, and expand in prisons and young offender institutions.

To do their DofE, young people aged 14-24 choose activities in four sections: improving a Physical and Skills activity, Volunteering for a cause of their choice, and completing a demanding Expedition.

Along the way they have fun, grow in resilience and self-belief, discover new talents and passions, and learn practical skills to help them in future – while working towards a highly respected Award.



*Janet Stephens, Telford College's deputy chief executive, with Ramela Mills, Duke of Edinburgh Award operations officer*





# Events encourage firms to seek royal approval

**H**igher profile, global recognition and increased sales are just three reasons why Shropshire's "wonderful" companies should enter the UK's most prestigious business awards.

That was the message at events in Shrewsbury and Telford encouraging innovative, sustainable and dynamic firms to enter the inaugural King's Award for Enterprise 2024.

Hosted by HM King Charles III's representative in the county, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire, Mrs Anna Turner, visitors heard from current winners of the Queen's Award for Enterprise about the experience of entering and winning one of the 'Oscars' of the business world.

Tullis Matson, managing director of Stallion AI which won the Queen's Award for Innovation in 2023, told visitors to the event at Telford College about the impact of winning the award.

"I totally underestimated what it could do for a business. There's a lot of work involved, you need to really examine your business, go into detail on finance, green goals and strategy but the impact of winning has been incredible.

"The award means we can fly the flag outside our Whitchurch offices - when I and my staff walk into work, we see that and feel proud. For our team, when we're working overseas, that emblem is the first thing we put out there and it sets the bar high and leads to bigger things."

Tullis' work to preserve equine semen has led to the development of a charity which focuses on the preservation of species at risk globally and is now nominated for The Earthshot Prize, spearheaded by HRH Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge.

Lord-Lieutenant Anna Turner encouraged businesses to take advantage of the experience and knowledge of Shropshire deputy lieutenants Gill Hamer and Mandy Thorn, also High Sheriff of Shropshire, when considering the nomination form.

"We have wonderful businesses here doing incredible things and this award will bring recognition for companies far and wide. There is a tremendous amount of support available for companies looking to enter and I'd urge businesses to gain as much insight as possible from previous winners as well as Mandy and Gill, who



*Graham Guest, Cllr Eileen Callear, Lord-Lieutenant Anna Turner, Cllr Shaun Davies and Tullis Matson at the event at Telford College*

themselves have significant experience of running and supporting businesses."

Mrs Turner thanked Shrewsbury Colleges Group, Telford College, Shropshire Council, Telford & Wrekin Council, Be Bold Media and Reech Media for their support of the awards and the launch events.

Councillor Shaun Davies, Telford & Wrekin Council leader, added: "The King's Award for Enterprise is one of the highest accolades a business can get and gives them the ability to recognise their staff and work here in the borough.

"Having the King's mark of approval against your name is a fantastic kitemark and so many of our local Telford businesses have been recipients of an award in the past which is a testament to the strength of our business community.

"Developing a thriving economy that everyone benefits from is one of the council's priorities and we are proud to have supported our local business community for many years.

"We recently launched Invest Telford, our investment and business support service which highlights Telford's unique strengths to businesses and investors across the UK.

"Through Invest Telford, we are supporting more businesses than ever before and we know there are many companies who demonstrate every day the values which would help them secure this prestigious prize."

Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council, Councillor Ian Nellins, told the Shrewsbury College event: "This county is an amazing place to live and work which is why we attract so many brilliant businesses. We're

encouraging our businesses to enter the King's Award, it's a great chance to celebrate the work they and their teams do."

The King's Award has four categories: innovation, export, sustainable development and promoting opportunity through social mobility.

The latter can now be entered by a collaborative partnership which includes a training provider.

Gill Hamer DL took businesses through the timescales for entering the awards, which close at 1pm on September 12, and said a third virtual workshop for companies looking to enter would be held in the summer.

Previous Shropshire winners include aviation ramp manufacturers Aviramps, Telford digital manufacturer Protolabs and I2R Packaging and south Shropshire's Jesmonite.

Telford College chief executive, Graham Guest, said: "We were delighted to welcome the Lord-Lieutenant, her deputies and businesses to our Orange Tree venue for the Telford launch event. We have close links with the business community here and this is a great opportunity to celebrate the dynamic companies we have here in Telford."

Shrewsbury Colleges Group vice-principal Donna Lucas said: "We are always very keen to welcome businesses to our campus. Winning a King's Award helps businesses attract and retain staff and they could be the future employers of our students here."

Advice and support on the entry process is available through the Shropshire Lieutenancy.

For more information about entering the awards visit [www.kaeshropshire.co.uk/](http://www.kaeshropshire.co.uk/)





Darren Price and Alex Guest of Clickingmad with the ISO27001 certificate

# Web designers secure updated certification

**S**hropshire web designer Clickingmad has been re-awarded approval under the international standard for information security.

The Bridgnorth based company has been re-certified by an independent accreditation body to the ISO 27001 standard for its information security management system.

It means the company and the work that it does for clients across the Midlands comply with international standards for confidentiality, integrity and the availability of data.

Clickingmad managing director Shaun Carvill said the company had held ISO 27001 certification since 2020.

He explained that the international standard outlines a set of requirements for

***“Our continued commitment to our security procedures in line with the ISO 27001 standard not only protects our own data but also protects that of our clients,” says Clickingmad managing director Shaun Carvill.***

establishing, implementing, maintaining, and continually improving an organisation's information security management system.

“The re-certification process is rigorous and complex but it means that we are absolutely confident that we are complying with the best practice in our information security for our own company and for our clients,” he said.

“Our continued commitment to our security procedures in line with the ISO 27001 standard not only protects our own

data but also protects that of our clients. Accreditation to ISO 27001 can play a critical role in protecting our clients' cyber security by demonstrating our commitment to information security, providing a framework for information security management, enhancing client confidence, improving risk management, and providing a basis for compliance with data protection regulations,” he said.

For more information about Clickingmad visit [www.clickingmad.com](http://www.clickingmad.com)



# Table tennis star gets helping hand

**A** Shropshire accountancy firm is helping a rising star on the UK's table tennis scene to follow her sporting ambitions.

Dyke Yaxley Chartered Accountants, in Shrewsbury, has sponsored Megan Jones for the past five years, and they have once again agreed to sponsor her bat for the current season.

Megan is the daughter of Philippa Jones, who works in the accounts department at Dyke Yaxley's head office in Old Potts Way.

Managing director, Marie Bramwell, said: "It's been a real pleasure watching Megan develop her talents over the last five years, and we're very proud to be supporting her ambitions for another year of competition.

"She's achieved incredible things throughout her sporting career so far, and we're looking forward to seeing what heights she can reach in the coming season."

Megan is currently England's number seven at under 19 level and also qualified for the Senior National Championships for the third year running earlier this year.

She won a silver medal in the English Schools Championships, and as a result, Megan will now represent England in the Senior Schools Internationals in Galway at the end of June.

And thanks to her success so far this year, Megan has been invited to the Junior National Cup, also in June, where the top ten players in the country play off against each other, and she's hoping to improve on the bronze medal she won in last year's competition.

Megan took up the sport at the age of ten, and trains at Draycott Table Tennis Club in Derbyshire and Albrighton Table Tennis Club in Wolverhampton, where she is coached by the legendary Desmond Douglas, and Helen Lower.



Marie Bramwell from Dyke Yaxley with rising table tennis star, Megan Jones



Megan Jones pictured during a competition in 2020. Picture courtesy of Shropshire Newspapers Ltd

**Marie Bramwell, said:**  
*"It's been a real pleasure watching Megan develop her talents over the last five years, and we're very proud to be supporting her ambitions for another year of competition."*

# Aico joins forces with an independent negotiation body to power academy



*AWEBB is an independent negotiation body with over 200 branches across the UK and Ireland with many original members being part of the group for over 40 years.*

**E**ducation, training, and development are at the heart of what Aico offers to its supply chain and colleagues. This is why Aico are pleased to announce that they will be supporting AWEBB's training academy with a rebrand. The AWEBB LEAD training academy will be rebranded as 'The LEAD Academy powered by Aico'.

AWEBB's training academy provides a pathway into management for their members. Through the training, they can increase their awareness of effective sales skills and negotiation, develop their techniques for conducting successful interviews, and gain insights into effective business development.

Mark Lambert, Chief Executive Officer for AWEBB for over 15 years commented "We are thrilled to be partnering with Aico to enhance our LEAD Academy. We share the same values around training and investing in our people so the partnership itself is a natural fit."

Aico, the European market leader

in home life safety share in a passion for training and have recognised the great work AWEBB are doing together as a result, the new partnership will ensure the best of both organisations and enable AWEBB to continue to provide their members with industry leading training.

Taking pride in delivering award-winning training, Neal Hooper, Managing Director added "Aico HomeLINK's foundations are built upon Quality, Service, Innovation, and Education. Our award-winning CPD accredited training and the unique City & Guilds assured training offer the supply chain unrivalled learning. Every colleague within Aico HomeLINK has four days every year devoted to personal development. We are delighted to partner with AWEBB with their LEAD academy. It is a superb initiative ensuring education embraces its whole

membership, at all levels. We look forward to delivering education together for the future generations to come."

Barry Hall, Learning and Development joined AWEBB and is responsible for delivering training to members stated "The AWEBB LEAD Academy powered by Aico, is really to get people to think much deeper about how to sell profitably. The workshops are designed to reflect our members' particular challenges and cater to an individual's needs and wants for their career. The partnership with Aico allows us to build on that shared belief of the importance of people development, to ensure staff retention and progression."

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in association with



*Aico has collaborated with Shropshire Youth Association to produce a programme of fun activities for children during the school summer holidays*

# Partnership brings fun activities to children during school break

**A**ico in association with Shropshire Youth Association (SYA), is thrilled to announce the launch of its Summer Club this August, based at their headquarters in Oswestry.

SYA are a registered charity that helps youth clubs in Shropshire to get set up and keep going. They also run youth clubs themselves and deliver youth projects for others.

Aico in the Community was developed to give back to communities and to help make a difference. Aico's Summer Club aims to provide a fun and educational experience for year 6 students and will run from Monday 21st to Friday 25th of August, from 10:00 to 14:00 every day, with lunch provided upon request.

Richard Parkes, CEO of SYA commented

"SYA is a Shropshire charity that supports the delivery of over 100 youth clubs and young people's projects supporting positive mental health, youth voice and leadership. So, when the opportunity to partner with Aico came up, to deliver this really exciting Yr6's summer club, we leapt at the chance. With our qualified youth workers and equipment coupled with Aico's volunteers, site and skills it will offer a great, safe, exciting, fun-packed week for local children."

The programme will cover a wide range of activities to keep children entertained and educated.

Participants can look forward to hands-on cooking sessions, interactive games, arts and crafts sessions, and outdoor sports activities.

It will also include a trip to the local leisure centre for either an Inflatable Aqua Challenge or Roller Disco. These activities have been designed to encourage creativity, teamwork, and personal development, Aico's Summer Club will be led by

experienced and qualified club leaders from SYA and supported by friendly volunteers and Aico colleagues whom are all safeguard trained and DBS checked.

"We are delighted to introduce the Aico Summer Club in association with SYA and provide an opportunity for children in our community to have a memorable summer filled with learning and fun," said Jane Pritchard, Community Liaison at Aico. "Our goal is to create a safe and engaging environment for children to develop new skills, forge new friendships, and enjoy themselves."

The Summer Club is open to all families in the local community with children of year six age. Interested parents can register their children by visiting the Aico website at [www.aico.co.uk/in-the-community/summer-club/](http://www.aico.co.uk/in-the-community/summer-club/). Spaces are limited, so early registration is encouraged.

For more information about Aico and its community initiatives, please visit [www.aico.co.uk/in-the-community/](http://www.aico.co.uk/in-the-community/)



# LOCAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING SPECIALIST ENERGISED TO BE LOCATED IN SHROPSHIRE

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce Member, EVC Solutions Limited, has located its new Technical Centre at the Newport Innovation Park, in Shropshire.

EVC Solutions, a well-established nationally focused Electric Vehicle Charging specialist, is setting its sights on ensuring all Shropshire Chamber members and other businesses make great decisions about moving their business vehicle needs to Battery Electric Vehicles from ICE's (Internal Combustion Engines).

Adrian Cooper, Director of Client Partnering at the Company, has seen some common questions asked.

'Businesses are increasingly keen to make an investment in their own EV Charging Infrastructure, whether that is driven by a desire to prepare well ahead of the 2030 deadline for new ICE vehicle purchases; Carbon Footprint management; or reducing fuel costs and achieving other benefits from Battery Electric Vehicles'.

## Common questions include:

- How much power is required for EV Chargers
- How do I make the best use of available power at my site to maximise the number of chargers I can have available
- Where should I put them
- How many do I need
- What's the cost of an installation
- What is the charging 'speed'
- How do I manage the Charging System once it is installed
- How do I measure utilisation; energy cost allocation and access
- Can I get CO2 saving data from the system

Increasingly, in the Business world, Companies are focussing on how to reduce the Carbon Footprint of their activities and transportation is one of the top three contributors to that Footprint.

So, there is a huge opportunity to reduce that Carbon Footprint by moving to Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV's), but that transition needs to be managed carefully to ensure maximum benefit and minimum disruption to both the Business and its staff.



Part of that should involve careful consideration to the Electric Vehicle charging needs, particularly infrastructure owned or managed directly by the Business, or for example at the home of employees who may work remotely.

One of the key considerations, not necessarily top of the agenda for decision-makers and project managers, relates to the management and operation of this vital new asset, once it becomes operational.

This change represents an opportunity to manage transport more 'digitally' than ever before, but that requires an effective Charge-Point Operating System (CPOS), for example EVC Connect, to be deployed as part of the integrated EV Charging system.

This tool allows those who manage the assets, to drill down in detail on information; data; security; access and costs enabling good management decisions to be made relating to transport.

Many Companies are therefore finding exciting opportunities to improve their business performance whilst changing to Electric Vehicles, for further information visit

[www.evcsolutions.co.uk](http://www.evcsolutions.co.uk)





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