

# YOUR CHAMBER YOUR VOICE

JULY/AUGUST 2022



# Contents . . .

Page 2	Introduction
Pages 3 & 4	Chamber News
Page 5	Membership
Pages 26 - 27	New Faces
Pages 28 - 30	Charity
Page 31	Take a Break
Pages 34 - 38	Patrons



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Virgin Balloon Flights, based in Telford

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# Positive spin on turbulent times

**A**s we reach the mid-point of a turbulent 2022, it is clear that the rollercoaster of challenges facing our business community is set to continue for many months to come.

The Shropshire Chamber team is working hard to gain up-to-date intelligence from you, our members, so that we can paint an accurate picture of the current state of our economy – and use the information in a positive and practical way.

Information you provide to us is a key element of the many reports we compile, which are used to inform stakeholders and policy makers on the needs of business.

It helps us to ensure that the voice of Shropshire is heard in the corridors of power.

The challenges created by rising inflation, cost-of-living increases and spiralling fuel costs are complex, and it's difficult to predict when – or how high – the peak may be.

But it's important not to talk ourselves into recession. Even against this perfect storm of pressure, there are still some incredible success stories across Shropshire.



This was highlighted in celebratory style at the Chamber's 2022 Business Awards, where up to 600 people gathered at Telford's International Centre.

We heard many stories of innovation and job creation from trailblazing businesses which are at the forefront of their sectors, in many cases putting Shropshire on the international map.

Here at Shropshire Chamber, we are innovating too. Our all-inclusive membership offer – the first of its kind in the UK Chamber network – has been developed in direct response to what you told us you needed, to help overcome the challenges you face.

I am delighted to report that, despite the fact that we have only just launched, the uptake is really strong and is already exceeding our expectations.

It demonstrates once again that when you speak, we listen, and we respond.

Never has it been more important to invest in our staff. Recruitment is still a major challenge, making staff retention more critical than ever. Investing in your people not only upskills them, but shows they are valued - something we all need to feel right now.

With spiralling costs and supply chain challenges, cash is king. The message from our professional services members is clear: If you think you may have an issue, get advice and support at the earliest opportunity. The sooner you engage a professional, the more options you usually have.

At the end of June we say goodbye to our Department Of International Trade-funded Export Advisory team. For more than 10 years we have successfully provided support to exporters across Shropshire as they send hundreds of millions of pounds of goods and services across the globe. The team will now be directly employed by DIT and will continue to provide support to your business.

However, your Chamber will still provide export and customs documentation services - and will always be there to signpost you to whatever kind of support you need.

**Richard Sheehan**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Shropshire Chamber of Commerce

**PATRONS**





# A new range of membership packages has been launched



Instead of a “one size fits all” approach, members now have the power to choose the solutions and services that make sense for them.

## Membership Levels

May 2022

CORE SOLUTIONS - Included for ALL Members		
RAISE YOUR BUSINESS PROFILE:	MANAGE YOUR BUSINESS:	MEMBERS ONLY DISCOUNTS:
Chamber membership helps raise your business profile locally, regionally, and nationally.	A range of services that assist our members with their day-to-day operations.	We have negotiated special discount levels for our members for important business services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of Chamber logo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chamber Finance Finder</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AXA Healthcare</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership Certificate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ChamberHR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Westfield Health Primary Healthcare Plan</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Editorial opportunities in Chamber magazine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ChamberLegal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roadside Assistance with AA</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Member welcome in Chamber magazine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ChamberTax</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilities Auditing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media welcome post</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ChamberHealth and Safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shropshire Chamber Telecoms</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PR opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal Expenses Insurance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discounted meeting room hire**</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicly visible website profile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal Advice Line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising and Sponsorship Opportunities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Zone - Manage your account</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health at Hand 24/7 Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost savings on training and events</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Zone - Add news item</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Trade Advice and Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ChamberCustoms</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Zone - Add Member2Member offers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly Economic Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Export documentation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking opportunities*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government lobbying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chamber Foreign Exchange</li> </ul>

\*Subject to availability and membership level | \*\*Subject to availability

- Telford: Trevithick House, Stafford Park 4, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 3BA. 01952 208200
- Shrewsbury: Chamber House, 5 Henry Close, Battlefield Enterprise Park, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY1 3TJ. 01743 460486

## Shropshire Chamber of Commerce has launched a new-look range of membership packages after listening to the views of the local business community.

It includes a brand new all-inclusive option – the first of its kind in the UK chambers of commerce network - which gives companies access to the full programme of training and standard events during the year.

The new structure means that instead of a ‘one size fits all’ approach, members now have the power to choose the solutions and services that make the most sense for their particular businesses.

Chief executive Richard Sheehan said: “This will be a year of challenge and opportunity, and with the costs of doing business at record levels, being part of a business community has never been more important.

“We have been reviewing the way we

support our members, and intelligence from the ground makes it clear that recruitment, skills, supply chain, new customers, costs and of course finance is keeping business leaders awake at night.

“We have listened, and created this new, innovative, cost-effective all-inclusive membership that will do exactly what it says on the tin.

“It is the first of its kind across the UK, and we believe it will support our county’s economic and employment growth when businesses need it most.”

The all-inclusive membership package is being launched at a discounted introductory rate of £895. The Chamber’s essentials and standard membership packages are also still available, at £295 and £495 respectively.

Mr Sheehan said: “We remain one of the most cost-effective accredited Chambers in the UK. Shropshire Chamber is committed to being a market leader, supporting the county’s businesses when they need it most and working under a clear not-for-profit remit.

“We are ambitious and hungry for growth because we know a joined-up connected business community is a prosperous community.”

He added: “Throughout the past two years, we have been providing unprecedented levels of support, investing in people, free membership periods and signposting when businesses have needed it, funded by using some of our reserves.

“With feedback from our members that recruitment remains a significant challenge and many businesses seeking to upskill their existing workforce to enhance productivity and improve sustainability, the Chamber is stepping up when companies need it most.

“Add to this the ongoing search for new suppliers, cost savings and the importance of profile-raising in the eyes of other businesses and consumers, and our new and unique all-inclusive membership offer presents a cost-effective solution to many day-to-day challenges.”

More details are available from the Chamber team on 01952 208200.



# New deputy chief executive is appointed



Ruth Ross, new deputy chief executive of Shropshire Chamber

**S**hropshire Chamber of Commerce director Ruth Ross has been promoted to the newly-created position of deputy chief executive.

She said she was 'very honoured' to have been given the position, and to be playing a pivotal role in the Chamber's exciting expansion plans over the coming months.

"We've got some ambitious growth plans for the Chamber, and I'm looking forward to helping deliver a range of services which I know will make a real difference to local businesses," she said.

Ruth has been with Shropshire Chamber for seven years, most recently in the role of director of business. "I'm grateful to chief executive Richard Sheehan, and the Chamber board, for having faith in me to take on this new role," she said.

She has many years of experience in the local business community. Prior to joining the Chamber, Ruth was managing director of Shrewsbury-based Building Trust & Safety Limited, providing health and safety, HR consultancy training.

She has also held senior positions with ABC Health and Safety Consultancy and Alphabet Zoo.

She said: "Chambers of commerce play such an important role in helping to drive change and growth in our business community.

"We help Shropshire companies come

together to support each other by building local working relationships, upskilling staff, and spreading the good news they are creating.

"But on top of that, we're also able to share funding and partnership working opportunities, and have direct links into Government through our accrediting body, the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC).

"I experienced first-hand the benefits which chambers can provide when I was at my previous business.

"Things changed for me when I became an active member of Shropshire Chamber, becoming part of the business community, comparing notes with other business owners at networking events, meeting local suppliers, and seeing friendships blossom.

"It suddenly created a whole new playing field for me and my business."

Ruth has a degree in business and finance, and has also completed a series of other business development courses including the Golden Sachs Growth Programme, and CIPD level five course in Human Resources Management.

Richard Sheehan, Shropshire Chamber chief executive, said: "Ruth has been an integral part of our management team for many years, and a driving force in the exciting changes we are looking to introduce.

"We are delighted to be able to recognise her commitment and valued contribution by appointing her to this newly-created position."

## Rachel joins the Chamber's team of directors

One of the longest serving staff members at Shropshire Chamber of Commerce has been promoted to the senior management team.

Rachel Owen joined the organisation 12 years ago and has held a series of different positions including trade administrator, training co-ordinator, relationship manager, and most recently membership manager.

She has now been promoted to a new role as Director of Member Engagement, effective from May 1.

Telford born and bred Rachel said: "I'm honoured and very excited to have been given this opportunity to play such an integral role in increasing our member engagement and supporting the wider business community.

"On a personal level, it has also shown me how much I have grown over my years with the Chamber, and I feel privileged to be in this position."

She added: "Prior to joining the Chamber, I was working in

leisure and hospitality. I always wanted to support young people, and 12 years ago there was an opportunity to work on the Future Jobs Fund programme.

"It was a six-month contract at the Chamber which led to a full-time position as an administrator, and I've part of the team ever since.

"The thing I love most about Shropshire Chamber is the fact that no two days are the same. The team, here are great; we all support each other... and all enjoy a good quiz too!"

Shropshire Chamber chief executive Richard Sheehan said: "This is a well-earned appointment for Rachel, who has built up a rounded knowledge of what we are, and why we exist through her involvement in so many aspects of Chamber activities.

"We have embarked on a journey to deliver unprecedented growth in membership that will support the operational sustainability of the Chamber in the coming years, and Rachel will be playing a pivotal role."



Rachel Owen joined Shropshire Chamber of Commerce 12 years ago

# New members to engage with

ANTA Education Ltd  
01952 303043  
Molineux House  
6a Victoria House  
Market Place  
SHIFNAL  
TF11 9AZ

Probity Mortgage  
Services  
01952 263684  
48 Newcomen Way  
TELFORD  
Shropshire  
TF7 5UB

Albright Hussey Manor  
01939 290523  
Broad Oak,  
Ellesmere Road  
SHREWSBURY  
Shropshire  
SY4 3AF

Clenviro Ltd  
01952 676666  
Unit 1C Queensway  
Business Park  
TELFORD  
Shropshire  
TF1 7UL

Famous Wolf Digital  
Marketing Agency  
7808024458  
28 Hermitage Way  
Madeley  
TELFORD  
TF7 5SZ

High Grosvenor  
Leisure Ltd  
01746 572055  
High Grosvenor  
BRIDGNORTH  
Shropshire  
WV15 5PG

Moka Pot Coffee Shop  
7720603710  
88a Dawley Bank  
Dawley Bank  
TELFORD  
TF4 2LQ

Purple Butterfly  
Bookeeping  
07791 729659  
60 Whitemere  
Road  
SHREWSBURY  
SY1 3DD

Anderson's Windows  
07983 570637  
79 Birchmore  
Brookside  
TELFORD  
TF3 1TJ

Composite Doors 2 You  
Nationwide Ltd  
0800 014 2270  
Unit 15 Heath Hill  
Industrial Estate  
Dawley  
TF4 2RH

Ferro Midlands Ltd  
01952 981098  
Unit 15 Ollerton  
Business Park  
Childs Ercall  
MARKET DRAYTON  
TF9 2EJ

JAM Care  
01902 932950  
Stafford Court  
Stafford Park  
TELFORD Shropshire  
TF3 3BD

My Sports &  
More Limited  
7805387782  
22 St Johns Walk  
Lawley Village  
TELFORD  
TF4 2FT

Saracen Solutions  
(UK) Ltd  
07801 441 249  
24 Mayfield  
Drive  
SHREWSBURY  
SY2 6PB

Assured ISO Ltd  
7852148446  
4 Poplar Road  
KIDDERMINSTER  
Staffordshire  
DY11 6ND

Croft and Oakes  
Chartered Financial  
Planners Ltd  
01952 897377  
Suite 7 Business Dev  
Centre, Stafford Pk 4  
TF3 3BA

Framework Innovation  
Ltd  
07875 724096  
23, Dorchester Drive  
Muxton  
TELFORD  
TF2 8SR

Kaye Heseltine  
Design  
07445 480072  
38 Queensway Drive  
BRIDGNORTH  
Shropshire  
WV16 4JF

Nienhuis Ltd  
7545632909  
13 A Castle Forgate  
SHREWSBURY  
Shropshire  
ST1 2DJ

Spring Networking  
Ltd  
7972029614  
40 Corse Farm Road  
NUNEATON  
Warwickshire  
CV11 6TH

BASE Architecture &  
Design  
01743 236400  
Unit 1, Nexus  
Roushill  
SHREWSBURY  
SY1 1PT

Dukeshill Ham  
Company Limited  
01952 607770  
Unit C Lodge Park  
Hortonwood 30  
TELFORD  
TF1 7ET

Grand Fitness Limited  
01952 247490  
Watling Street  
Wellington  
TELFORD  
TF1 2TU

L V Recycling Ltd  
01603 821200  
Cavell House  
Stannard Place  
NORWICH  
NR3 1YE

Peplow Hall Estate  
780883264  
Peplow  
MARKET DRAYTON  
Shropshire  
TF9 3JP

TIA Tyres  
01952 587301  
Unit C&D  
Halesfield 14  
TELFORD  
TF7 4QR

Bauer Media  
0121 566 5200  
Nine Brindley Place  
4 Oozells Square  
BIRMINGHAM  
West Midlands  
B1 2DJ

ETS  
01952 771170  
Unit 2 Rodenhurst  
Business Park  
Rodington  
SHREWSBURY  
SY4 4QU

Hands on Care  
01952 743490  
United House  
Tern Hill  
MARKET DRAYTON  
Shropshire  
TF9 3PX

Madeleys First Aid  
Plus  
07508 834906  
64 High Street  
MUCH WENLOCK  
Shropshire  
TF13 6AE

Phillips Chartered  
Accountants  
01952 522000  
4 Pearson Road  
Central Park  
TELFORD  
TF2 9TX

Think Beyond Data  
Programme  
0121 2043399  
Aston University  
Aston Triangle  
BIRMINGHAM  
B4 7ET

Bespoke Construction  
Services Ltd  
01952 588816  
Merlin House  
Halesfield 19  
TELFORD  
TF7 4QT

EVC Solutions Limited  
03300 100463  
Lymedale Business  
Centre  
Lymedale Bus Park  
NEWCASTLE UNDER  
LYME ST5 9QF

Herefordshire and  
Ludlow, NS College  
01743 355159  
The Gateway Arts &  
Education Centre  
SHREWSBURY  
SY1 1NB

Midland Technology  
Solutions Ltd  
01746 767676  
Unit A3 Faraday  
Business Park  
BRIDGNORTH  
WV15 5BA

Plastic Machining  
Services Limited  
01952 680369  
Halesfield 23  
TELFORD  
TF7 4NY

Xtrahand Consulting  
01743 231135  
56 Morant View  
Bowbrook  
SHREWSBURY  
Shropshire  
SY5 8QQ





A presentation on Net Zero at the offices of Aico

# Pivotal to the restoration and re-opening of “The Iron Giant”

**C**rown Plus Ltd, a Shropshire based Civil Engineering and Specialist Drainage Survey company, has been pivotal in the restoration and re-opening of Bennerley Viaduct.

The viaduct is a grade 2\* listed railway viaduct built in 1877 in Nottingham by the Great Northern Railway Company. At over quarter of a mile long, it is the longest wrought iron viaduct in the country, straddling the River Erewash connecting Ilkeston in Derbyshire with Awsworth in Nottinghamshire. Historic England consider the viaduct is a “stunning example of the genius of British Engineering”.

The Viaduct was closed in 1968, after which it fell into disrepair, eventually it was sold to conservation group Railway Paths Ltd in 2001. Small stages of restoration were carried out in mid-2014 with planning requested for the provision of wooden decking along the extent of Bennerley Viaduct to allow for safe public access across the bridge, joining a network of existing public cycling and walking paths. In 2020, Bennerley Viaduct, fondly known as the “Iron Giant” was 1 of 25 sites listed within the 2020 World Monuments Watch, selected for their cultural significance.

Railway Paths awarded the contract to Crown Plus in early 2021 to install a new bridge deck as well as to construct access steps and resurfacing works to eastern approach ramp, which would allow its reopening to the public. Works commenced in September 2021, concluding in January when the bridge was finally opened to the public on 13 January 2022.

Local Telford business Crown Plus was established in 2015, and has quickly grown in both size and reputation, recently located to



Railway Paths awarded a contract to Crown Plus in early 2021 to install a new bridge deck as well as to construct access steps and resurfacing works

larger offices in Telford. In 2020 Crown Plus was selected as a finalist for the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce Environmental awards for its revolutionary and innovative in-situ filter drain recycling operation, which provides a more sustainable and cost-efficient approach to highway filter drain recycling.

Gary Price, Co-founder and Construction Director said of the scheme, “It has been an absolute honour to be involved in this latest programme of restoration and conservation works seeing the “Iron Giant” brought back to its former glory and being enjoyed again by the public, some 54 years after its closure.

“Being a Telford lad, bridges and structures have always had a special place in my heart, having grown up overlooking the Ironbridge, and inspiring my career in Civil Engineering”.

Paul Thomas of Railway Paths said ““It was a pleasure to work with the Crown Plus team

on one of our most high-profile projects to date, the re-opening of the historic Bennerley Viaduct.

This was a one-off project, to a unique structure and as usual there were tight budget and time constraints. Crown Plus fully understood the nature of the project and the constraints and worked closely with us, the client team, to find the best set of solutions. I felt we worked as a truly collaborative unit and as a result we achieved all we needed despite external setbacks outside our control. On top of this I personally observed that the site was well managed, safe working procedures were always followed and communication from site was always both prompt and clear. In addition, the site team maintained a professional and friendly approach with the vast number of interested parties that was an understandable a constant feature of this job”.

Visit [www.crown-plus.co.uk](http://www.crown-plus.co.uk) for details.



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## Mental health and wellbeing charity ambassador

Leading mental health and wellbeing charity, The Kaleidoscope Plus Group, has announced the appointment of actor and presenter Adil Ray OBE as its latest charity ambassador.

Adil is best known as the star and creator of the hit BBC1 sitcom *Citizen Khan*. As well as acting and writing, television and radio presenting has remained a staple throughout his career and Adil can currently be seen presenting *Good Morning Britain* and popular quiz show *Lingo* for ITV.

Monica Shafaq, CEO of The Kaleidoscope Plus Group said: "I am delighted to welcome Adil to the Kaleidoscope family as our latest ambassador.

"Adil's engagement and support will be a huge help in raising awareness and

support for people living with mental ill health.

"Adil is recognised and respected across our region not just for his acting and broadcasting work, but also as an advocate for inclusion and diversity, which is especially important for us at KPG as we are committed to making sure that we not only provide effective services of the highest quality, but that they are diverse and accessible to everybody who needs them.

"Team KPG and I are all looking forward to working with Adil so that we can help support people who might be struggling with their health and wellbeing well into the future."

The appointment comes after the charity launched its new celebrity ambassador programme in May 2020, in

a bid to utilise the support of a variety of influential people to get Britain talking about mental health.

Adil Ray said: "I am delighted to announce that I am an ambassador for leading mental health charity, The Kaleidoscope Plus Group.

"Experiencing poor mental health is extremely difficult but when combined with fear of judgement, shame and isolation, it makes it much harder. That's why I want to work with Kaleidoscope to help end mental health stigma across all communities and discrimination.

"I hope to work with the team to not only raise awareness but encourage noticeable action too."

For more information about the charity and the support it offers visit the website at [www.kaleidoscopeplus.org.uk](http://www.kaleidoscopeplus.org.uk)

## An Olympic gold medallist collaborates with distillery

**T**he world number one event rider, Oliver Townend, has joined forces with The Shropshire Distillery to produce a dry gin named after one his most notable horses, *Carousel Quest*.

Twenty per cent of profits from the new release will be donated to Midlands Air Ambulance and the Dogs Trust.

Oliver Townend has won multiple medals from international championships, most recently a team gold from the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

In 2008 a horse named *Carousel Quest* joined the operations of a young, still relatively unknown rider who had recently bought himself a farm in Shropshire. The pair quickly rose to success, winning their first international competition together and the following year winning one of the most prestigious Three-Day Events in the world; The Burghley Horse Trials.

In the winner's interview, Oliver said he hoped this win with 'Quest' would allow him to forge a future for himself. *Quest* enjoyed years of success with Oliver and when the time came for his retirement, he lived out his days in the field bridging Oliver's farm and The Shropshire Distillery.

Husband-and-wife team, Emma and Gareth Glynn from The Shropshire Distillery formed a friendship with Oliver, and began crafting the gin together.

Oliver Townend said, "This is a true artisan gin, handcrafted to celebrate one of the most extraordinary horses I have ever met. *Carousel Quest* won the



Emma Glynn, Oliver Townend and Gareth Glynn with the gin

Burghley Horse Trials whilst in training with me just down the road from the distillery.

"I've picked two charities close to my heart to support, and hope we raise lots of money for them both. With this gin I toast *Carousel Quest* - and invite you to toast your hero too."

Emma Glynn adds, "We're really excited to be collaborating with such a sporting legend, neighbour and friend.

We've created a juniper-led premium dry gin which incorporates citrus notes from lemon balm and lemon peel atop a liquorice and cassia warmth with a light fresh sweet orange undertone.

"The *Carousel Quest* Gin is best served with lemon wheel, premium tonic, and good company. We hope you enjoy this hero worthy gin!"

To purchase the *Carousel Quest* Gin visit [www.theshropshiredistillery.co.uk](http://www.theshropshiredistillery.co.uk)



# Derwen College has received Queen's Award for Enterprise

**A leading specialist college, in Shropshire, has been honoured with a top business award endorsed by Her Majesty the Queen.**

Derwen College, in Gobowen, near Oswestry, has been honoured with a Queen's Award for Enterprise for Promoting Opportunity.

The further education college was established in 1927, and provides education and vocational training for young people aged 16 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

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

Additionally, the College embraces technology, such as developing a CV Builder app which allows students to showcase their work skills to potential employers in an accessible way.

The College currently supports 143 students and interns with SEND to achieve their aspirations. Derwen College is proud to achieve outcomes that exceed the national average for people with SEND –

including progression into paid employment, voluntary work, further training, increased independence and supported living.

Derwen College is one of 226 organisations nationally to be recognised with a prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise, of which four are from Shropshire.

Announced on Thursday 21 April, Derwen has been recognised for its excellence in Promoting Opportunity.

Now in its 56th year, the Queen's Awards for Enterprise are the most prestigious business awards in the country, with winning businesses able to use the esteemed Queen's Awards Emblem for the next five years.

In a formal letter, a spokesman for the Queen's Awards said:

"I am delighted to inform you that Her Majesty the Queen has approved the Prime Minister's recommendation that your company should receive a Queen's Award for Enterprise in the Promoting Opportunity category this year.

"It has been an exceptionally hard few years for businesses and this achievement is testament to the resilience you and your staff have shown through these unprecedented times.

The award will be presented to the College by Queen's representative Lord Lieutenant Anna Turner.

She said: "I am absolutely delighted to be celebrating the wonderful success of Derwen College in winning the Queen's Award for

Enterprise for Promoting Opportunities.

"Judges for these awards look into every detail of your nomination as they want to absolutely certain they make a good selection. It makes me so pleased that we have four businesses in this county that have reached the required standards, and particularly one this is so inspirational in providing such a happy learning environment to so many young people."

Principal Meryl Green from Derwen College is invited to attend a Reception at Buckingham Palace hosted by HRH the Prince of Wales on 12 July.

The College has won and been shortlisted for many awards for 2021 and 2022. In the last year, the College has won Specialist College of the Year in the TES FE Awards and a NASEN (National Association for Special Educational Needs) Award. It is also shortlisted in the Aico Awards and the Shropshire Chamber Business Awards.

Meryl Green said: "Derwen College is having an exceptional year for awards; for our educational and care provision, and for our business 'Marketplace'. To receive this very special award, endorsed by the Queen, during her Platinum Jubilee' really is the icing on the cake.

"We are very proud to receive this distinguished award, and would like to thank all our staff, students, families, and the community who support our College, our Charity and our Marketplace."

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# Could you train to be an HGV driver?



Fancy a change of career? HGV training courses from Dulson are Government funded

**T**raining specialist Dulson Training is providing additional fully Government funded courses to get more HGV drivers qualified and on the road - but applicants must be approved and enrolled by the end of June.

It's part of the Government's HGV Skills Bootcamp Pathway scheme and means successful applicants can undergo their training for free provided they meet certain criteria. They must be aged 19 or over, can be employed or unemployed, must live in England and can only complete one of the pathway courses.

The programme was created to address the UK driver shortage and the additional funding approved for Dulson Training follows the firm's successful participation in the first phase of the scheme. Dulson Training has centres in Shrewsbury, Telford, Ludlow, Shifnal and Wrexham.

Steve Dulson, of Dulson Training, said: "After successfully delivering Pathways A, B, E and F earlier this year and seeing hundreds of learners achieve success and gain

qualifications, we are delighted to have been backed for additional funding.

"Although Pathway A, Category C licence acquisition, and Pathway B, car to category C+E licence acquisition, are now fully allocated, the new additional funding is allowing us to increase the number of opportunities for Pathways E, F, H and I.

"Pathway E focuses on HGV driver ADR without tanks, including optional 21-hour Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) training.

This covers lorries carrying dangerous goods - things like fertilisers and bottled gases. Pathway F covers HGV driver ADR with tanks and includes optional 28-hour Driver CPC, allowing the applicant to work towards a qualification to drive things like petrol tankers.

"Every driver must complete 35 hours Driver CPC every five years, so a big chunk of that can be taken up on these courses. A qualification in both these pathways lasts for five years.

"Pathway H is for those drivers who have a Category C or C+E licence and require refresher training. It may be that they have

been out of the industry for a while or are newly qualified and want to improve their skill level. It focuses on general driving, things like reversing, uncoupling and so on.

"Pathway I provides training and testing necessary to upgrade your licence to Category C+E. Holding a Category C licence is a minimal requirement when applying for Pathways E, F, H or I."

Mr Dulson said all funding was subject to application and anyone interested should in the first instance email [info@dulsontraining.co.uk](mailto:info@dulsontraining.co.uk) for a form, which will be returned via email.

"The applicant submits the form and a decision is then made whether or not they meet the criteria," said Mr Dulson. It's quite a quick process and we are looking at completing these courses quite quickly.

"The courses are fully funded and these opportunities don't come around very often - but it is time sensitive.

"Courses must be started by June 30th so there is little time to delay. The driver must get their application in, it has to be approved, the applicant enrolled and course instigated by then."

For more information about Dulson Training, call Telford 01952 770659, Shrewsbury 01743 709611, Wrexham 01978 805868.

Alternatively visit the website at <https://www.dulsontraining.co.uk/>

Every driver must complete 35 hours Driver CPC every five years, so a big chunk of that can be taken up on these courses. A qualification in both these pathways lasts for five years.



# Our People Your Team

## Here to Help

We continue to offer meetings via telephone and video and where necessary we are able to offer face to face appointments, please use our letterbox when dropping off documents.

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# Rose joins nationwide leadership initiative

A Shropshire insurance expert has been selected to join a prestigious nationwide leadership initiative that offers invaluable training and development opportunities.

Rose Stephen is the operations manager at Henshalls Insurance Group in Newport, and she has been accepted on this year's RSA Broker Leadership Programme.

Run by insurance giant RSA UK & International, the scheme has been operating for the last seven years, and only 12 people annually are offered a place.

Henshalls managing director Mark Freeman said: "Rose is a shining star in our team and she plays a key role in the way our firm operates.

"It's no surprise to us that her excellent knowledge and skills have been recognised with a coveted place on the leadership programme, and it will give her the opportunity to build on the foundation skills she has already acquired.

"Joining the initiative is a fantastic opportunity for Rose and we couldn't be prouder of her as she begins the next step of her journey. The skills she learns during the training will be invaluable in her Henshalls career, and we can't wait to see what the course has in store for her."

Last year the training ran as a fully-virtual programme, and this year some sessions will take place online, but in combination with interactive face-to-face learning too.

Rose said: "The training will run from May through to November this year, and I'll be partnered with an industry expert who will act as my mentor throughout.

"RSA have launched an online Broker Leadership content hub which details all the sessions I'll be following, and I'm also looking forward to the Scene Setting Day in May when we will be introduced to fellow delegates and our trainers.

"My day-to-day work at Henshalls has given me the chance



Rose Stephen

to work closely with RSA when advising clients on the types of policy that best suits their needs.

"To be one of the small number of client managers chosen for this wonderful training project is just an amazing way to take the next step in my insurance career."

RSA Insurance Group is a British multi-national general insurance company with its headquarters in London. It has major operations across the UK, Ireland, Scandinavia and Canada. It provides insurance products and services in more than 100 countries through a network of local partners.

# HR team is on the right tracks

**L**eading Shropshire employment specialist - The HR Dept Shropshire - celebrated 4 years of business success by taking invited guests on a Heritage Railway to a local Brewery.

Business clients from across the county together with staff and associates of the company enjoyed an afternoon on the very first 'Business Express' run by Cambrian Heritage Railways which headed from Oswestry to Weston Wharf and the corporate event at Stonehouse Brewery.

Speaking about her business milestone, Níamh Kelly, Director of HR Dept Shropshire said: "The business is entering its fifth year, with it's fifth member of staff; and I wanted to thank all our hard working staff and our loyal Shropshire client base by inviting them to share in our success.

"What could be more enjoyable than to charter a train on a heritage railway and spend a sunny afternoon at a brewery. I am delighted to say everyone enjoyed this novel way marking our business milestone!"

The HR Dept Shropshire started business in May 2018 and has rapidly grown it's client base across Shropshire, Wrexham and Mid Wales.



Níamh Kelly, Director of HR Dept Shropshire with the team, pictured at Cambrian Railways



# Broaden your audience

**I**ndustry leaders are being encouraged to utilise the latest feature on social media networking site LinkedIn, to share their expertise and broaden their audience.

The newsletter feature on LinkedIn became available to all users at the end of 2021 and allows them to share regular articles and thought-pieces to subscribers, who will be notified whenever a new article is published.

Shropshire-based communications agency J&PR is suggesting industry leaders should be using the feature to their advantage, to benefit their business.

Sophie Coombs, Digital Manager at J&PR based in Wellington, said: "Anyone who has expert information to share from within their industry, that is useful to others, should be using LinkedIn newsletters. Articles showcase their knowledge and expertise, which will naturally bring in more business.

"As newsletters gain more subscribers, more people will be reached due to readers sharing and engaging with articles, which can appear on other connections' LinkedIn feeds.

"This should only result in an improved reputation, a wider network and, therefore, more business enquiries."

Sophie believes the newest feature from LinkedIn will also allow industry leaders and experts to combat the current 'pay-to-play'



Sophie Coombs, digital manager at J&PR

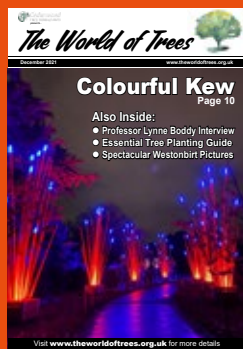
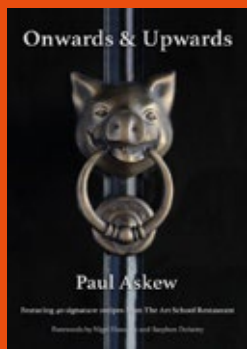
model of many social media platforms, where users must invest in advertising to be seen by their target audience.

She said: "We created a newsletter for a client and within a week, after one article, they had 270 subscribers who would be notified through email and LinkedIn whenever a new article is published. I can't think of another platform or feature that

would notify 270 people every time you post, without charging you first. That figure has now risen to over 400 subscribers."

J&PR offers retained LinkedIn services, such as creating newsletter articles, or training for users to gain the skills and knowledge to create articles themselves. Email [info@jandpr.com](mailto:info@jandpr.com) or phone 01952 951 263 to enquire.

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



## MEDIA & YOU

Shropshire-born, Paul Naylor launched MEDIA & YOU in February, 2017. Specialising in the creation of newsletters, magazines and books, Paul is equally at home putting together all manner of business essentials, including:

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Accommodation at Love2Stay



Love2Stay has been carefully developed to help visitors unwind and reconnect with the world around them

# Event to help employers focus on wellbeing in the workplace

**A**n award-winning Shrewsbury glamping and touring resort, which focuses on leisure, wellness and adventure, is to host Shropshire Wellbeing Day this summer.

Love2Stay resort is collaborating with Laura Butler Coaching to organise an event for Shropshire businesses on June 29, promoting wellbeing in the workplace and support for the physical and mental health of their employees.

Coinciding with World Wellbeing Week, the event aims to build on the success of the first Shropshire Wellbeing Day in 2021, which was held remotely. Businesses can sign up for free at <https://www.shropshirewellbeingday.co.uk/>

One hundred Shropshire businesses were involved last year, signing up to access online toolkits and other resources.

A Shrewsbury-based health and wellness coach, Laura Butler trained in the United States and has an international client base.

“If the pandemic has taught us anything, it’s that our health is everything,” said Laura. “Now, more than ever, we are encouraging businesses to support the physical and mental health of their employees.

“On June 29, we are asking employers to take a first step towards wellbeing in the workplace, no matter what size the organisation is.

“Mental health and wellness are now at the forefront of businesses who can see the benefit of investing in their staff.

“Employees now also expect it of their employers.

“We know that many businesses are passionate about doing what they can for their employees, but starting is the always the hardest part, so we are here to help.

“We have teamed up with wellness



Laura Wilde (left) and Laura Butler at Love2Stay resort which will host Shropshire Wellbeing Day

providers all over the county to deliver activities and competitions on the day as well as ongoing inspiration for creating a long term wellbeing culture in the workplace.

“This year, we are holding the day in person and it’s going to be bigger and better. We are going to livestream some of the talks but most of the programme will be on site at Love2Stay.”

Laura plans to continue working closely with Love2Stay on business packages, including corporate away days. “Love2Stay’s facilities are fantastic and there is so much we can do in terms of mental health, wellness and self-development,” she added.

Love2Stay has been carefully developed to help visitors unwind and reconnect with the

world around them, whether they book a stay or just visit for the day. Visitors are able to take a dip in a natural cold water swimming pool, which aids both mental and physical health, unwind with a yoga or Pilates class in a gym studio or splash around on a paddleboard on a recreational lake.

Activities planned for June 29 include cold water swimming, an assault course challenge, a demo and dine, yoga classes and workshops that focus on wellness in the workplace, mental health at work and domestic abuse.

“We offer a range of activities and classes to help people take some time away and enjoy a digital detox from the fast-paced life we all lead these days,” said Laura Wilde, Love2Stay’s marketing assistant.



Protect, care and invest to create a better borough





# £10 million of funding for innovation projects

**N**early £10m of funding has been awarded to organisations in the Marches to develop innovative projects tackling issues as diverse as sustainability, an ageing population and Covid challenges.

Innovate UK approved nearly 30 projects for the funding in 2020/21, with the majority awarded for business-led innovation in response to the global disruption caused by the pandemic.

One of the largest awards made nationally was for a collaborative project led by Veolia, which will result in the development of the UK's first dedicated recycling line for trays and non food bottles, unlocking the UK tray recycling capability. The project was awarded £34.7m and will take place over 3 years.

The figures were revealed today by the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership's business support service, the Marches Growth Hub (MGH). The MGH works with Innovate UK to promote funding for research and development projects in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.

LEP Access to Finance champion Paul Kalinauckas said Innovate UK funding was vital to developing and delivering projects which make a real difference to regional economies and communities.

"Nearly 30 different projects secured funding in our region tackling issues such as an ageing society, health and nutrition, waste in manufacturing, home learning



Richard Howells, MD, Bronze Labs

and working during the pandemic and innovation in medtech and healthcare in direct response to the Covid crisis.

"It is fantastic to see not just the innovation being explored in these projects, but also the wider economic, social and environmental challenges which are being addressed.

"This is just one of a huge number of finance programmes and opportunities the Marches LEP and Marches Growth Hub help support which can provide companies with much-needed funding to drive growth."

Telford software development company Bronze Labs is behind the Tribe Project – which won nearly £50,000 for a collaborative bid to develop technology to support the co-ordination of volunteers and communities during the Covid lockdown.

Richard Howells, Managing Director of Bronze Labs, said: "Our proposal centred on a digital approach to facilitate the scaling of 'trusted' community groups which responded to COVID-19 community demand. The focus was on providing a solution

to facilitate coordination, planning and action of broad spectrum community need between voluntary organisations and local government."

The company developed app technology to categorise and ultimately predict the movement of community 'need' across society through use of machine learning. The Tribe Project has used the technology to support and co-ordinate volunteer efforts including reaching vulnerable members of society during the Covid lockdowns.

Other successful funded projects include:

- Leominster-based Grove Design secured £74,000 to develop a design and prototyping of a clear face mask which allows lip reading for those who are deaf or have hearing loss.

- Earth Rover, based at the Agri-Epi Centre near Newport, led a consortium bid for £175,000 to build prototype equipment which will contribute to solving the problem of a shortage of seasonal agricultural labour required to pick crops due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and Brexit.

- Shrewsbury-based Interactive Opportunities Ltd secured £49,000 to scale-up its online platform designed to support learning from home during the pandemic. The project provides a community, support and advice for parents, carers and teachers while making the most of the creative talents of teachers, celebrities and entertainers who are keen to help others.

Businesses interested in applying for Innovation UK funding can find out more at <https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/support/innovate-uk/>

**PRESTFELDE**

**Telford College**



# An outdoor learning area for youngsters

**Y**oungsters at a school on the Shropshire/Staffordshire border have a new outdoor learning area - thanks to the generosity of Bradford Estates.

St John's First School in Bishops Wood was drawing a blank in applying for funding for the project when one of the parents suggested asking Viscount Alexander Newport for help.

Lord Newport donated £7,000 on behalf of Bradford Estates and he and his fiancée Eliza Liepina visited the school last week to meet the children and view the new outdoor learning area - the couple's first joint public engagement.

Emma Challiner, Head at St John's First School, said: "We were looking into getting new equipment, some heavy-duty structures, and enquired about funding from various sources but everyone came back saying sorry, there was no funding available. One of our parents suggested writing to Lord Newport asking if there was any chance of helping us.

"He very kindly said yes and gave us a cheque for £7,000, which has allowed us to get some amazing things for the children - and they are thoroughly enjoying it!

"We have a playhouse which the children sometimes use as a garage and pretend to fill their bikes up with petrol, and sometimes they use it as a cafe and ride around it pretending it's a drive through. We have a huge wooden frame structure which involves putting pipes together for water or a ball to run through it - which is marvellous for problem solving.

"There are sand and water features and another piece of equipment which has a number of posts with holes in where the children thread string through it, make dens and climb through. It's up to them what they do with it and how they use it.

"It's absolutely fantastic for the school and we were delighted to welcome Lord Newport and his fiancée to have a look at what we have. The children were so thrilled to see them and they were so lovely with the children. The outdoor learning area means so much to the school and we are so touched by his generosity."

Miss Liepina said: "It was a delight to meet the children and staff at the school and look around their new outdoor learning area. The children really seemed to love it and it's so important for them to have access to this kind of equipment, something which will aid their learning experience."

Lord Newport, who is Managing Director of Bradford Estates, said: "Outdoor learning is so important, particularly as children have missed out on so many opportunities and school activities such as trips and residential due to the pandemic.

"Bradford Estates is committed to supporting the local community and one of the cornerstones of a community is its school. We were delighted to be able to help St John's First School in bringing a vision to life. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to the school to see first-hand this impressive new outdoor learning area."



Viscount Alexander Newport and fiancée Eliza Liepina chat with some of the pupils



Pupils at St John's First School, Bishops Wood, welcomed Viscount Newport and Eliza Liepina



# Talented joiner downs tools ready for retirement

A talented Shropshire joiner who 'has never been short of work' is finally downing tools ready for retirement.

John Watkins, 66, from Telford, has been a joiner all his working life, spending the last 12 years running his own business from a workshop at Bradford Estates on the Shropshire/Staffordshire border.

Mr Watkins said he was looking forward to having a rest and spending more time with his wife Dorothy. The couple, who have two sons, a daughter and four grandchildren, are both avid Shrewsbury Town FC fans and are regular visitors to Montgomery Waters Meadow.

"I've done carpentry all my life, I've never done anything else, and before setting up my own workshop at Bradford Estates I worked at a place in Newport," said Mr Watkins.

"The chap who employed me died very suddenly and his partner really didn't want to carry on, so that was that. I had known about Bradford Estates for a while and thought why not have a go on my own. I moved in about 12 years ago and have never regretted it.

"I didn't do anything for Bradford Estates initially, it was all my own work, but over time they saw what I could do and I started doing

work for them - something which grew over the years. I must say I've never been short of work and have been working seven days a week regularly right up to retirement.

"I've always believed in doing the job properly and taking pride in my work. It has to be right when it goes out. I've done all sorts over the years, windows, doors, furniture and staircases, including some fancy ones in oak. People must have been pleased with my work because they kept coming back!"

Bradford Estates arranged some drinks to mark Mr Watkins' retirement on his final day at work on Thursday (MAR 31).

"My wife and I have no plans and just intend to take things as they come. I'll be glad to have a bit of a rest, I've worked on my own for a long time and as you get older you don't work quite so quickly and some things become more difficult.

"We are looking forward to spending more time together and will continue watching Shrewsbury Town - which can be a difficult thing to do, I'll tell you! I've been to Wembley to watch them half a dozen times and never seen them win!"

Alastair Hollands, Building and Contracts Manager, said: "John is a master craftsman



John Watkins receives a retirement gift from Viscount Alexander Newport

who has carried out a lot of work for us - much of it bespoke, such as the windows in some of our historic properties.

"He has been extremely reliable and his work has always been of the highest standard, to the point where he effectively became an additional arm and valued member of the business. I would like to thank John for all his effort and wish him and Dorothy all the best for the future as he enters retirement."

For more about Bradford Estates, visit <https://www.bradford-estates.co.uk/>

# Official office opening

**S**hropshire digital agency Ascendancy officially opened its newly-refurbished offices - with the new Newport Mayor cutting the ribbon on his first official outing!

Mayor Ian Perry joined Ascendancy founder Helen Culshaw along with her team and clients, suppliers and local guests to see inside the company base at Chetwynd End - a historic home that dates back to medieval times.

Director Helen said: "It has been such an interesting and fantastic journey and we have been wanting to welcome clients, suppliers and work friends to the new office since the completion of the project in 2020 - however, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns and restrictions made an official launch a little difficult.

"It was fantastic to finally open our doors and welcome people in to see what we have created and meet the team - and the weather was kind enough for us to even enjoy some games in the garden.

"Our special guest Mayor Perry cut the official ribbon and everyone enjoyed coffee, tea and lots of cake, and of course the chance to visit the King's Head pub - the unusual staff room we created in a converted outhouse."

A huge renovation and conversion project was undertaken to prepare the building for the Ascendancy team and the history of the building - and many treasures - were revealed.

Research by Helen and the Newport History Society led to the belief that the home was part of a burgrave plot, a property owned by a burgess in a medieval town.

The History Society also dug some test pits in the garden and found some pieces of medieval pot among many more modern finds - and guests were lucky enough to get to see them at the open event.

"We are so grateful to the Newport History Society for coming along, bringing some finds and chatting to the guests," added Helen. "Thanks also goes to the Ascendancy team who worked hard to put together videos and photobooks of the different steps of the refurbishment for visitors to see, and also took guests on a tour of the office throughout the open day."

Mayor Ian Perry said: "It was fantastic to spend my first engagement as Mayor visiting a local business, chatting with members of the



Mayor Ian Perry prepares to cut the ribbon at Ascendancy, watched by founder Helen Culshaw



Guests were invited to tour the premises and gardens at the business based in Newport

Newport History Society and enjoying cake with some of Newport's residents and businessmen and women.

"The history behind Chetwynd End has always been of great interest to me and it was wonderful to view the maps, deeds, correspondence and even hidden treasures that Helen and the team put together for us."

# Retiring lawyer passes on the baton

A widely respected Shropshire lawyer has passed on the baton to a trusted successor after over three decades in the legal profession.

Residential and commercial property specialist Richard Connolly retires as a partner from law firm mfg Solicitors after a successful legal career spanning 32 years.

Mr Connolly, who joined mfg in 1990, moved through the ranks from a trainee and became a partner in 1999.

Starting in the firm's Worcester office where he was based for 20 years, he moved across to boost mfg's Shropshire property offering, working in recent years at its Telford and Ludlow offices. He was also previously a board member with the roles of Human Resources and Managing Director of the firm between 2001 and 2013.

He is being succeeded by property expert and partner Liz Hulland, who will continue to lead on a variety of property sales and purchases – including for developments and rural properties.

Mr Connolly said: "After just over 30 years with the firm it is a big change for me to be leaving at the end of April. I've



Liz Hulland, Richard Connolly and Javed Ahmed

enjoyed a wonderful time in the industry and met so many amazing people. I count myself lucky to have been involved with so many property deals across the region – but it is now time to hang up my hat and enjoy retirement.

"More than anything, I know am leaving my clients in very safe and vastly experienced hands in the shape of Liz.

"The department will continue to go from strength to strength and has a very exciting future ahead. Liz is a hugely talented, dedicated and knowledgeable solicitor in whom I have the utmost confidence and trust to deliver the

best possible advice on all property matters. She is well known in Shropshire and trusted by so many people to complete and advise on their property transactions."

Prior to starting his successful legal career, Mr Connolly, who has two sons, worked in the hospitality industry in Australia for multi-national groups including, Grand Metropolitan and Intercontinental Hotels.

During his retirement he will be setting off on a road trip around Australia with his wife and also indulging in his passion for cycling and windsurfing.

# Links between wellbeing and sport

**The link between sport and personal wellbeing is becoming ever more apparent – and if there's one person who truly recognises that connection, it's Paycare's Sally Bromley.**

Sally is the Health Cash Plan provider's Partnerships Engagement Officer and is passionate about helping to raise awareness of the impact of sport on health and happiness.

We caught up with her to find out a little more...

**Q: Firstly, what's your background and what does your role at Paycare involve?**

A: Before joining Paycare, I worked in management - both in the graphic print and property lettings sectors. I've always been a self-confessed sportaholic, starting my own netball club 12 years ago and spending much of my free time coaching and encouraging participation in sports.

That's what attracted me to the role at Paycare, because of the wonderful work they do with so many sports clubs locally, nationally, and internationally.

As Partnerships Engagement Officer, I'm responsible for sourcing potential new groups, clubs and partners to work alongside, as well as building and developing existing partnerships.

**Q: Most of us know taking part in sport or exercise is beneficial, but could you share with us some of the key ways in which it can help your wellbeing?**

A: There are so many benefits to sports participation and regular exercise, in addition to the physical health improvements you'll see. Sport can reduce stress, anxiety and depression; increase self-esteem and confidence; improve sleep; and increase energy levels.

It really is a case of 'the earlier, the better' as we see children who start playing sports early on in life learning emotional control, communication skills, how to cope with failure, and lots of essential social skills which can all boost their wellbeing.

**Q: How do you find being active personally supports your wellbeing?**

A: When I was younger, being active was important simply because I enjoyed it, but as I've got older, I've realised the impact on

my physical and mental wellbeing. As a working mum, playing sport became my release from the stress of a busy schedule – it was a form of escapism and often gave me the motivation to get through the week.

Now my children are older and no longer live at home, it's even more important for me to stay active as it provides important social connections, helps combat many issues associated with ageing, and helps keep my mind clear and focused.

**Q: All exercise is beneficial, but are there any extra benefits to taking part in team sports rather than individual ones?**

A: A sense of belonging and being part of a community are both integral aspects of team sport – and we really saw the importance of that during the Coronavirus lockdowns. Collaborating and working together towards a common goal are also key, and doing so can really boost your self-confidence. Individuals are also less likely to give up exercising if it's part of a team commitment, meaning they reap the benefits of long-term physical activity.

Paycare has almost 150 years of experience boosting the UK's health and happiness, providing a range of solutions to ease the cost of everyday healthcare. This includes the low-cost high-value Bundle, which enables employers to support the physical, emotional and financial health of their teams – for just £2 per employee per month.

Bundle comprises three valuable aspects: a 24/7 GP appointment service, access to a telephone line for confidential chats and counselling, and Paycare Perks – discounts on everything from utilities and household items to fashion and holidays.

Visit [www.paycare.org/wellbeing-bundle](http://www.paycare.org/wellbeing-bundle) to find out more



Sally Bromley



# Flooring the competition

**R**esin Floors Telford Ltd has achieved a prestigious industry award within 5 years of its inception.

After one of these systems was specified to be installed in the Metropolitan Police Services new Babcock Rainham facility; Resin Floors Telford were chosen as winners by the leading independent figures within the flooring industry for the best use of flooring in industrial areas.

Resin Floors Telford Ltd offers a range of functional Resin Flooring systems that are specifically designed to perform in the industrial sector, including Manufacturing, Aviation and Warehousing.

Our services include:

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



*Resin Floors Telford Ltd, formed five years ago, has achieved a prestigious industry award*

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

We are proud members of FeRFA the

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## In harmony with your family

At CBSL Accountants the team work closely with their clients – including helping family owned businesses deal with the challenges that arise from working closely with their nearest and dearest. In fact, according to the Institute for Family Business, two thirds of UK businesses are family owned - that's around 4.8 million in total - employing approximately 12.2 million people in the UK, and generating over a quarter of UK GDP. Louise Osselton is a Director of CBSL Accountants and here are 5 Top Tips to working in harmony alongside your family in business:

**1.Communication** – Make sure that you plan regular meetings to discuss business matters – this gives family members an opportunity to make decisions together & to prevent work discussions infringing on family time. It's important to have some kind of separation between family time and work time – even more so if the business is a husband and wife team who have children..

**2.Set your roles** – Identifying your family members' strengths and weaknesses is key to allocating suitable roles – and also highlighting where external support and advice is required.

**3.Get it in writing** – As with any business it is important to set boundaries and terms whilst everyone is in agreement. This is useful should disputes arise further down the line. There will then be a clear way to resolve any matters that occur.

**4. Strong values** – The longest lasting family businesses have a clear set of strong values – for the business and the family – that everyone takes pride in upholding and passing on to future generations.

**5.Work with the younger generations** – Whilst the business values bind the generations together, the most successful businesses also embrace changes in their business environment, often propelled by the passions and ideas of the younger generations to move the business forward.

If you want to discuss challenges facing your family business, are considering starting a new business venture or want to look at how best to hand down the business to next generations, please do give Louise Osselton a call on 01743 249 992 or email her at Louise.Osselton@cbslgroup.com and she will be happy to offer advice.

**cbsl.**  
accountants

Our clients trust us to look after their family interests and their businesses.

Let's discuss you and your business and how we can work with you.

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Shropshire Festivals are offering bursary places to fledgling food and drink businesses in need of a leg up in to the lime light



# Feast for the eyes at town's food festival

**S**hropshire's thriving food scene is celebrated annually in the 29 acres of parkland of Shrewsbury Quarry. In the festival's 10-year history, it has been voted Best Food Festival in the Midlands multiple times.

The Shropshire Festivals team will once again be providing a weekend of foodie, family entertainment, celebrating lots of amazing independent businesses from the region and beyond.

Organisers are lining up 200 food, drink, home and garden stalls, tasty street food, plus beer, wine, gin, and fizz bars.

Talented chefs from the region such as Stuart Collins, James Sherwin, Chris Burt, Rob Gibson, Jimmy Worrel and Gareth Howard, will be leading talks, demonstrations and cookalongs, and they will be joined for the weekend by multi-Michelin star and 5 out of 5 AA Rosette winning chef, Jean-Christophe Novelli.



In the festival's 10-year history, it has been voted Best Food Festival in the Midlands multiple times





Organisers are lining up 200 food, drink, home and garden stalls, tasty street food, plus beer, wine, gin, and fizz bars

For the first time, the food festival will be dropping all mainstream alcohol brands so only our local, independent breweries, vineyards and distilleries are enjoyed and championed.

The Shropshire Distillery will be running a gin and cocktail bar at the festival,

“We’re looking forward to being a big part of the Shrewsbury Food Festival again this year and serving up our locally produced handcrafted spirits,” says Emma Glynn from the distillery. “It has become the premier event for celebrating independent food and drink businesses from the region. We’re proud to be sponsoring the Chef Talks and Demonstrations Stage for the second year running, where the biggest chef names will be all weekend.”

Shropshire Festivals are offering bursary places to fledgling food and drink businesses in need of a leg up in to the lime light. They are also in search of more home and garden stalls for the Monk’s home and garden zone.

This event is more of a mammoth day out for all, than a run-of-the-mill food festival, with a live music stage hosting top local bands all weekend (including Dirty Rockin Scoundrels, Chasing August and Lost The Plot), a huge free kids’ zone featuring a circus big top, and an educational Field and Fork area with piglets, alpacas and ducklings. They promise the biggest STEM offering to date. There will also be a family entertainment stage, with performances from ‘Get Your Wigle On’ delighting audiences again.

Beth Heath, Director of Fun for the event, said, “Join us again for a beautiful, sunny weekend of amazing food, drink and entertainment. You will get so much more out of the festival than you will ever expect - try a glider simulation, visit the Marmite stand, enter a prison van, try axe throwing or challenge yourself to try every single food product in the festival! This is a must visit event this summer – there is something for everyone!”

For more information and to buy tickets visit [shrewsburyfoodfestival.co.uk](http://shrewsburyfoodfestival.co.uk)



Talented chefs from the region will be leading talks, demonstrations and cookalongs



# Winner of three prizes at West Midlands construction awards

**SY Homes were singled out to win three awards at the Constructing Excellence West Midlands Awards 2022 held in Birmingham in early May.**

The awards that the company was shortlisted for are:

- Best Residential Project for Albury Place in SY1
- Integration and Collaborative Working Award
- Winner of Winners Award

Shortlisted alongside far larger organisations, we are incredibly proud that our work and ethos shone through. Each award is judged by a panel of industry experts with a series of interviews and written entries. The grand Winner of Winners award is recognition of consistently high standards.

SY Homes and Albury Place will now be entered into the National Constructing Excellence Awards to represent the West Midlands alongside eight other regions. Results ceremony in November 2022.

The Residential Project of the Year award recognises developments 'that provide a desirable and sustainable place to live' and 'demonstrate creative approaches from concept to delivery'. With Albury Place, SY Homes have successfully transformed a brownfield site in Shrewsbury, SY1 into an exclusive enclave of luxury townhouses and apartments. All properties at Albury Place are now sold SSTC.

The Integration & Collaborative Working award criteria looks for 'evidence of improved results achieved through the collaborative

approach'. SY Homes has a carefully honed network of contractors, choosing to work with the best tradespeople in the industry and with businesses who share our obsession with quality. We identified our local partners whose input we feel adds immense value to our homes: BKNC Kitchens, Qu-Est, Porcelanosa, Build-Lite and Monks.

SY Homes pride ourselves on building positive relationships in Shrewsbury where we focus our projects. This includes working with Shropshire Council, Network Rail, Environmental Agency, and The Shrewsbury Ark. We approach each development with the intention of adding value to this beautiful market town.

The Constructing Excellence awards are recognised across the West Midlands as the biggest and brightest celebration of best practice. Receiving the grand Winner of Winners award was our proudest moment. SY Homes was also shortlisted for SME of the Year.

Importantly the team enjoyed a great evening at the ceremony held at Edgbaston Cricket Ground. Our end-of-year plans were cancelled due to concerns around Covid-19, so this was a much-needed celebration of hard work and team work.

SY Homes are now focusing on Lord Hill Gardens, creating a luxury development of town houses and apartments on the site of the former Lord Hill Hotel. With award-winning confidence, we will draw once again on our creative approach, our strength in collaboration, and our desire to bring an exciting new standard of living to Shrewsbury.

Find out more about Lord Hill Gardens and SY Homes at the website [www.syhomes.co.uk](http://www.syhomes.co.uk)

Visit <https://www.cemidlands.org/about-the-awards-west/>

*The Constructing Excellence awards are recognised across the West Midlands as the biggest and brightest celebration of best practice. Receiving the grand Winner of Winners award was our proudest moment.*

## High achievement award from Volvo UK



Chris Carr and Matt Fielding collecting their awards at the Volvo UK awards dinner

Autocraft Telford, Shropshire's leading accident repair centre and Volvo Cars Shrewsbury, the authorised Volvo dealership for Shropshire, are celebrating their recent high achievement award from Volvo UK.

This award is a result of the successful partnership which has been formed between the two Shropshire businesses over the recent years, where they have been delivering outstanding vehicle repairs for Volvo customers.

Chris Carr, the owner of Volvo Cars Shrewsbury "We are delighted to have received this award from Volvo UK. We can talk to our customers with confidence knowing that our relationship with Autocraft, our Volvo approved bodyshop is excellent. We know that when our customers require a vehicle repair they are being looked after by Autocraft with outstanding customer service. This is why our relationship is so successful."

Autocraft Telford and Volvo Shrewsbury recently attended an awards dinner hosted by Volvo UK to celebrate with the high achievers across the UK.

Darren and Matt Fielding, Directors of Autocraft "This is a fantastic reward for both of our businesses and we are proud to have formed such a successful relationship with Volvo Shrewsbury. We are customer focused and work closely with Chris and his team to ensure that we are delivering a great service for our customers."

If you have damaged your vehicle and need it repaired, call Autocraft on 01952 617468 or email [office@autocraft-telford.co.uk](mailto:office@autocraft-telford.co.uk)

For new and used Volvo vehicle enquiries, Volvo Cars Shrewsbury will be happy to assist you on 01743 454060 or contact via email [sales@volvoshrewsbury.co.uk](mailto:sales@volvoshrewsbury.co.uk)

A video about the successful partnership between Autocraft Telford and Volvo Shrewsbury can be viewed here - <https://vimeo.com/683917491>



# It's another level of working remotely



Steph Henson of Six Ticks, in Croatia

## have something to share... I'm not in the country, and I haven't been for a while. At the end of 2021 I headed to Croatia, and I'm yet to return to the UK.

Clients, colleagues, business pals, I want you to know I'm not taking 'shirking from home' to a whole new level, nor am I 'finding myself' in the Croatian mountains. What I'm actually doing is the same thing most of us have been doing for nearly two years, and something I've done since I started at Six Ticks - I'm working remotely.

And do you know what? Everything is fine. Six Ticks is fine. techtimeout is fine. Both teams are fine (and amazing!). The world hasn't imploded. After all, there really isn't much difference between me working from my flat in Shropshire and working from my terrace in Croatia... except maybe the weather. Either way, I'm still working! And I'm working hard.

*Heading to Croatia wasn't an easy decision to make and I don't want anyone reading this to think I've just booked a flight and moved with no consideration or hard work beforehand. It's been years and years of grafting, tears, stress...*

That hard work will always continue no matter where I am, or where my teams are. We've had plenty of brilliant meetings with clients, potential and current techtimeout ambassadors, and new connections, as well as great internal meetings, so far in 2022 and I don't intend for these to slow down. If you know me, you know I have one speed - 100mph.

On that note, it's probably worth mentioning why I decided to take the plunge. I'm always on 'full tilt' - techtimeout to Six Ticks, I love my work and I put my heart and soul into both organisations. There comes a point, though, that I have to practise what I preach. If I'm telling people they need to improve their relationships with tech, set boundaries and focus on their own wellbeing - and that they can do it from anywhere - then I should probably be following suit!

So, I've been taking techtimeouts to the next level with yoga on the beach, weekend trips to see beautiful waterfalls, walks every

morning with fellow digital nomads to start our days, and plenty of dips in the sea...

As much as it sounds like it, I'm not off galavanting... remember what I just said about working hard? That's still taking up most of my time! The difference is what I'm doing with my time outside of the workplace.

Heading to Croatia wasn't an easy decision to make and I don't want anyone reading this to think I've just booked a flight and moved with no consideration or hard work beforehand. It's been years and years of grafting, tears, stress, more tears and more stress... we have transformed working cultures at Six Ticks and techtimeout, both internally and externally, and that hasn't happened overnight.

I'm also not leaving our teams to wallow while I'm enjoying the sights. I am completely available, as I always have been, and team members know they can hop on a plane and work from anywhere, too!

All of this is possible - and I am thrilled I did it. I have more clarity on where these businesses are going than ever before but importantly, I'm recharged and have the energy to make it all happen... if your workplace offers remote working, you can do that same!



Dan Bebbington is nominated for Inspirational Colleague of the Year



Rachel Morgan is nominated for Inspirational Colleague of the Year

# Four Housing Heroes nominations secured

**The Wrekin Housing Group have been shortlisted in four categories at the coveted Housing Heroes Awards 2022.**

Both Dan Bebbington and Rachel Morgan are in the running for the 'Inspirational Colleague of the year'. Dan is Wrekin's Debt & Energy Manager and is nominated for his work helping tenants who find themselves in financial difficulties. During the past year, Dan successfully secured £369k in extra income for Wrekin tenants.

Training Development Officer Rachel was recognised for her tireless campaigning around LGBTQ+ issues. Rachel has been a fierce advocate for transgender awareness, working closely with colleagues to develop the organisation's first 'Transitioning at Work' policy. Rachel has also played an integral role in the creation of 'Proud to Be Me' – Wrekin's first LGBTQ+ staff forum. She has recruited over 80 members of staff as LGBTQ+ allies.

Wrekin's Plumbing Apprentice Simone Hitchin is hoping to take home the award for 'Outstanding Achievement by Apprentices'. Simone has used her platform to inspire other women to consider a career in trade-based roles.

Wrekin's Money Matters team are vying to be crowned 'Team of the Year' for their work in helping people who are struggling with their finances. The need for this service has been highlighted during the pandemic – with the service helping to secure millions in extra income for tenants.

Wayne Gethings, Group Chief Executive at The Wrekin Housing Group said: "It's fantastic to see Wrekin shortlisted in four categories at the Housing Heroes awards. Dan, Rachel, Simone and our Money Matters Team have shown they are committed to making a difference to people's lives.

"Dan will always go out of his way to



Plumbing apprentice Simone Hitchin is also nominated

achieve positive outcomes for our tenants. He realises there isn't a one-size fits all approach when it comes to debt management, and he will always tailor his support to a person's specific need. Dan supports people that are facing considerable challenges - including poor mental health; language barriers and domestic violence. Dan's ability to adapt his approach to a person's individual needs has meant he has been able to help so many people

"Rachel leads by example strives to upskill the whole organisation on issues relating to diversity – sharing her ever-growing knowledge and arranging training around the latest legislation. Rachel has used her own her experience to help others. Rachel is always on hand to offer advice and support over a cuppa,

"Simone has made a huge impact during

her time with us here at Wrekin, combining on-the-job learning with her studies. She has used her own initiative to take younger staff and apprentices under her wing, helping to develop their skills, whilst also honing her own craft. Her leadership qualities are there for all to see. "

"Our Money Matters do great work, often in difficult circumstances. They've kept that support going during the pandemic, checking-in with vulnerable customers and providing help and advice. They're here to make a positive difference and I'm very proud that a team making such a huge difference to people and communities, has received such well-deserved recognition."

The Housing Heroes awards celebrate the unsung heroes of the social housing sector. This year's winners will be announced at a ceremony in Manchester in June.



# Advice is not to be sneezed at

**The hay fever season is upon us and workers across Shropshire are being reassured that they don't need to suffer in silence as help is available to combat this miserable condition.**

Shropshire Chamber member Summerfield Healthcare is sharing the message that while over-the-counter medicines are available, another treatment option is often more effective and generally keeps symptoms at bay for the whole season.

The advice comes after Allergy Awareness Week, which highlights all allergies while also focusing on the difficulties people with allergies experience.

Summerfield Healthcare has a private healthcare clinic in Shrewsbury and hay fever injections are available at each one through an online booking system.

Mike Knill, of Summerfield Healthcare, said: "The arrival of late spring and summer fill many workers with dread with the onset of hay fever. It is estimated that one in four people - around 16 million in the UK - will be affected, it's not pleasant and can also have an effect on our home life, social activity and interfere with our working efficiency.

"Hay fever is usually at its worst when the pollen count is at

its highest, normally between the end of March and September. Symptoms can come and go but for some the misery remains for the whole season.

"Many people will take over-the-counter medicines, such as antihistamine tablets, nasal sprays or eye drops to help ease the symptoms but this simply doesn't work for about 10% of hay fever sufferers and so they require another form of treatment.

"An effective alternative is the use of steroids, a powerful anti-inflammatory medication which is available in the form of an injection. It's a quick and simple remedy that has the additional benefit of doing away with the need to constantly be taking sprays, drops or tablets.

"One injection is normally sufficient to last the whole season. It's readily available at all our clinics - all people have to do is visit our website and book an appointment at a time convenient to them. Appointments are quick to arrange and there are no lengthy waiting times.

"Hay fever symptoms vary from mild to severe but an injection to combat the suffering is becoming increasingly popular as the treatment of choice by more and more people - providing lasting protection for the whole summer."

For more information visit [www.summerfieldhealthcare.co.uk/private-hayfever-injection/](http://www.summerfieldhealthcare.co.uk/private-hayfever-injection/)

*Hay fever is usually at its worst when the pollen count is at its highest, normally between the end of March and September. Symptoms can come and go but for some the misery remains for the whole season.*

## Award winning water, now in cans

Their still and sparkling water, which is drawn from a spring beneath Shropshire's Wenlock Edge, are both available in the new canned format.

The launch continues Wenlock Spring's commitment to sustainable practices that help protect the environment and reduce their carbon footprint.

Matthew Orme, Director of Wenlock Spring, reported seeing a rise in customer demand for cans, as an increasing number of venues and events want to remove plastic from their shelves. "The benefit of choosing cans over plastic, is the power of recycling them," he said. "They can be recycled and remade into new cans in just 60 days - it's a true closed loop. Recycling aluminium to make new cans uses 95% less energy than using raw materials, making it a great choice."

Wenlock's move should prove useful to venues, with consumers increasingly turning to cans. In 2020, shoppers took home 561.7 million more single-use cans than they did in 2019.

The family run-business have built a reputation around sustainability. In the last 6 years, over half of the glass used to make their glass bottles was recycled. In 2018, Wenlock Spring launched a new plastic PET bottle made from over 50% recycled plastic, which uses 79% less energy to produce than new plastic. Their bottles, cans, caps, labels and case wrap are all 100% recyclable.

Mr Orme adds, "It is fantastic to be able to offer our water in a new format that aligns with our mission to reduce our impact on the environment. Aluminium cans can be recycled again and again, proving to be an excellent choice for environmentally conscious venues. We not only have a corporate responsibility to be sustainable but a responsibility to future generations to make better choices."



*Still or sparkling? - Wenlock Spring is now available in cans.*

"Our canned format is perfect for outdoor events and festivals - they are light, convenient to store, and can be easily recycled.

"Enjoy the same refreshing water that has taken a natural filtration journey through layers of limestone rock. There is no compromise on quality packing our premium water in to our new cans."

Wenlock Spring's still and sparkling 330ml aluminium cans are available in cases of 24 and pallets of 120.

For more information visit [www.wenlockspring.co.uk](http://www.wenlockspring.co.uk)

# Barry the record-breaker joins Telford College team



Barry Mason in the construction department

**H**e's had his name in the Guinness Book of Records, helped out on seven of TV's DIY SOS projects plus various 60 Minute Makeover shows – and now Barry Mason has joined the team of expert tutors at Telford College.

The 52-year-old, from Trench, is the newest construction lecturer at the college – and says he is excited at the prospect of helping students to build their dream careers.

"Nothing gives me more satisfaction than seeing students blossom and go on to have fantastic careers," says Barry, who has been teaching for nearly 20 years.

He wrote his name into the Guinness Book of Records in 2009 when, with one of his colleagues, he became the world's fastest wallpaper hanger.

He has also worked on seven DIY SOS projects with presenter Nick Knowles and the team, including the scheme in Manchester when princes William and Harry helped to turn a derelict street in Manchester into homes for ex-service personnel.

"It's really good to be back here at Telford College – I came here as part of my teacher training, and my son Ellis was also a student here too. So, I know the kind of fantastic facilities available here.

"I'm passionate about all things to do with painting and decorating and the construction industry, and I am now able to fulfil my life's ambition of sharing my skills, knowledge and experience to inspire others into this great profession."

Barry, who has also worked at Buckingham Palace during his career, says: "I want to see the people of Telford go on and succeed.

"If I can meet previous students in a few years' time who have gone on to become successful following studying here at Telford College, who say 'thanks for helping me to achieve this Barry', that's the most special feeling. It's about giving people the inspiration to get out there and follow their dreams."

Barry has also created a YouTube channel called 'Brush Up With Barry' where he demonstrates how to carry out all aspects of painting and decorating, to help enthusiastic DIYers, as well as students and apprentices.

"These are particularly helpful with dyslexic learners who experience sequencing problems," he says.

One of his light-hearted videos called 'Paint Like A Pro – Tartan Print' has gone viral on Facebook with over five million views.

Barry knows a thing or two about overcoming obstacles – he's just returned from a trek to the base camp of Mount Everest to raise cash for mental health charity Heads Up.

"I attended the John Hunt School in Trench, Telford – named after the person who organised the first ascent of Everest in 1953. Sir John Hunt came and gave a special talk to the school and ever since then it became a life-long ambition to do this trek."

*If I can meet previous students in a few years' time who have gone on to become successful following studying here at Telford College, who say 'thanks for helping me to achieve this Barry', that's the most special feeling*



# Changes afoot at county law firm

**A** Shropshire law firm has welcomed a new partner to its commercial and agricultural property team as it bids a fond farewell to two long-serving partners who are retiring.

Highly-experienced commercial property lawyer, Matthew Bowering, has joined Lanyon Bowdler Solicitors, Andrew Evans retired at the end of April.

Neil Lorimer, who stepped down as head of personal injury last year but continued with the firm as a partner, also retired in April.

Dawn Humphries is now head of the personal injury department, and John Merry, head of employment has replaced Andrew Evans as the firm's senior partner.

Brian Evans, Lanyon Bowdler's managing partner, said Andrew and Neil had together clocked up nearly 70 years of service with the firm.

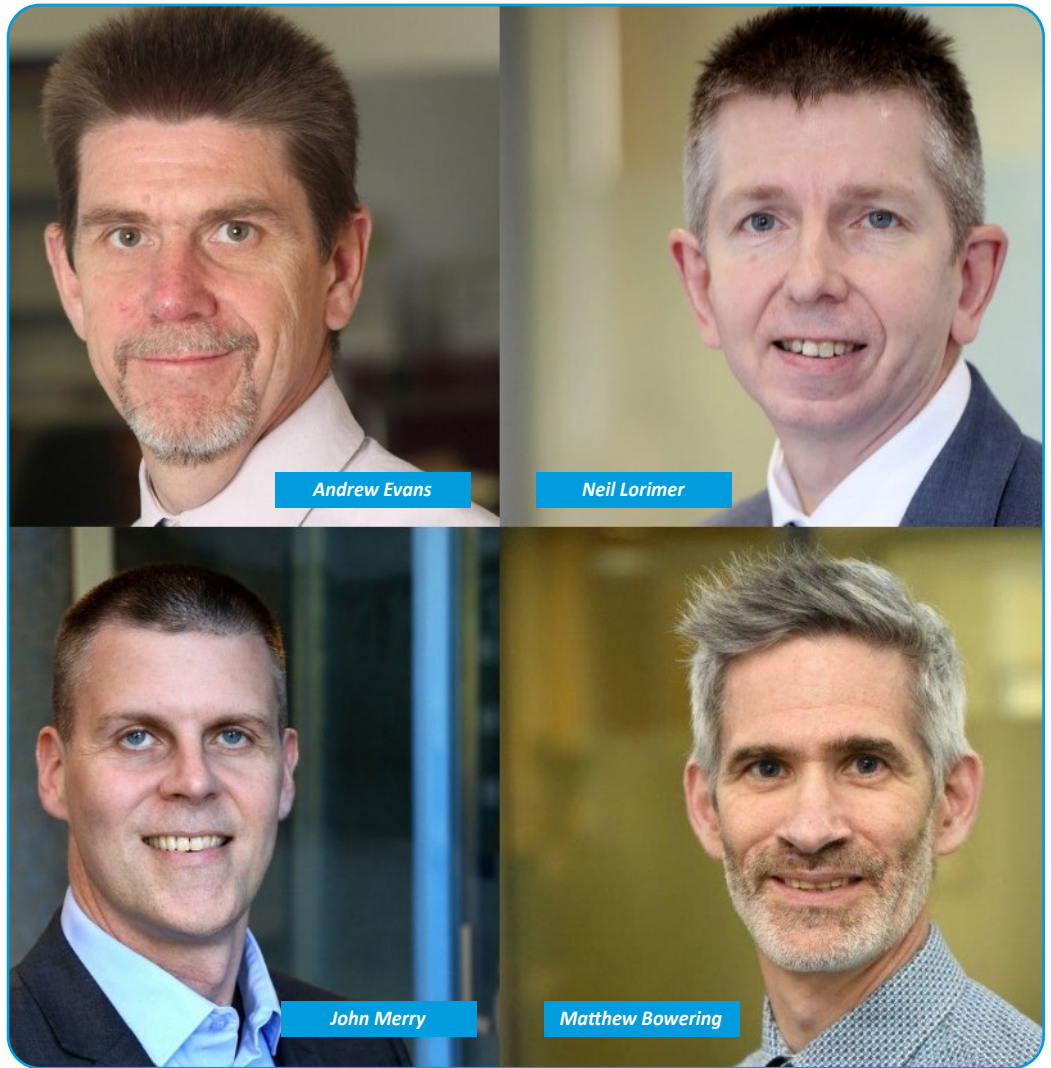
He said: "Andrew and Neil are among the very few partners who have been at the firm longer than I have. Neil joined the firm in 1987 as an 'articled clerk' as trainee solicitors were called back then, with Andrew joining shortly after in 1989.

"Andrew is very well-known as a commercial property specialist, and has been the firm's senior partner since May 2015.

"Neil is a nationally-renowned, award-winning, expert in personal injury cases, and led the firm's personal injury department for 17 years until stepping down in May 2021, when Dawn Humphries became head of the department.

"We will all miss Andrew and Neil and wish them every happiness in their well-earned retirement."

Of John Merry's appointment as senior



Andrew Evans

Neil Lorimer

John Merry

Matthew Bowering

partner, Brian added: "John is the head of our employment team and will be celebrating his 25th anniversary with the firm later this year.

"He is extremely knowledgeable and highly respected, so we are delighted he has been made senior partner."

Head of commercial and agricultural property at Lanyon Bowdler, Praveen Chaudhari, said Matthew Bowering would be a real asset to the firm.

"Matthew is a highly-experienced and well-respected commercial property lawyer, having been a partner at Hatchers for a number of years prior to joining us here at Lanyon Bowdler," Praveen said.

"He has extensive experience in providing practical and professional advice on commercial and agricultural property related issues, and I am delighted to welcome him to the team.

"The commercial property sector continues to be very busy in Shropshire, and demand is high for property of all types.

"Matthew's experience of dealing with a wide range of property transactions over many years will be of great benefit to our growing client base."

For assistance with any legal matters, contact Lanyon Bowdler on 0800 652 3371 or visit the website at [www.lblaw.co.uk](http://www.lblaw.co.uk)



# New training and enterprise centre opens in Shropshire

**A** new skills and enterprise training centre has officially opened in Shropshire with the ambition of supporting hundreds of young people into work or education over the next five years.

The new Landau Training and Enterprise Centre in Wellington will allow people who are currently not in work or education the opportunity to gain hands-on practical experience in several sectors including construction, hospitality and hair and beauty.

A fully-equipped hair salon, nail bar, café, construction skills suite and various teaching spaces feature in the new facility, which is located in the former Barclays Bank building on Church Street.

Award-winning charity Landau, which will operate the facility, has also moved its headquarter operations from the town's Tan Bank to the new, larger site.

The investment demonstrates the charity's ongoing commitment to skills and training in the county and forms part of its ambitious plans to get more than 500 young people upskilled and into work.

A ribbon cutting ceremony marked the opening of the centre on Friday, April 29, with the Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire, Anna Turner, doing the honours. She was accompanied at the event by Shropshire's High Sheriff Selina Graham.

A number of civic dignitaries were also in attendance including Telford & Wrekin Mayor Councillor Amrik Jhawar, Mayor of Oakengates Councillor Stephen Reynolds and former Mayor of Wellington Councillor Anthony Lowe.

Landau Chief Executive Sonia Roberts said the new training and enterprise centre would play a significant role in helping to raise educational attainment across the county by providing a range of opportunities for young people who are currently unemployed or not in education.

"Landau has a successful track record of supporting people through training and into sustainable employment regardless of any barriers that they may have encountered previously, and this new facility will enable us to expand that support to help even more people," she said.

"It marks a real milestone in our delivery and demonstrates our continued commitment to promoting opportunities and changing lives."

Elliot Shipley (21) has been receiving support from Landau for the last three years after the transition from school to college proved too challenging for him.

He is among the first group of learners to move into the new building and is



*Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire, Anna Turner, with Sonia Roberts, CEO of Landau, at the opening of the new Landau Training and Enterprise Centre in Wellington*

currently taking part in the Landau Study Programme.

He will sit his Level 2 exams in English and Maths next month before progressing onto the IN2 programme which supports young people into further education and employment.

He said: "I would not be where I am today without the support of Landau. I aspire to be a paramedic one day, but I did not suit a mainstream college, so Landau have helped me to fulfil my potential. I'm a really caring person and to be able to help someone in their hour of need is my dream so they're helping me to achieve that."

The new centre will offer training in a range of vocational qualifications including NOCN Entry Level

3 Introduction to Construction; Level 1 and 2 in Customer Services; NOCN Beauty and Hospitality accredited qualifications and VTCT awarded NVQs up to Level 3 in Hair and Beauty, as well apprenticeships and certificates in general functional and employability skills.

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

Landau works in partnership with a number of organisations across the Shropshire area to deliver its projects and support services and last year it was awarded the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise for its work in Promoting Opportunity (through social mobility).

*Landau has a successful track record of supporting people through training and into sustainable employment regardless of any barriers that they may have encountered previously, and this new facility will enable us to expand that support to help even more people*



Protect, care and invest to create a better borough





# £10k grant is awarded

**A** Shropshire charity committed to helping children with movement difficulties through a unique and life-changing therapy has received a £10,000 grant from a wealth management company.

The money has been awarded by the St. James's Place Charitable Foundation and will be used by The Movement Centre in Oswestry to provide five children with free Targeted Training therapy - a treatment which normally costs £2,000 and has to be met by their families.

To be considered for the grant, The Movement Centre enlisted the help of Nick Jones from Throgmorton Associates Wealth Management, a Senior Partner Practice of St James's Place with offices in Shrewsbury and Leicestershire.

The Movement Centre is giving children the chance to gain more control of their movement and reach their full potential through Targeted Training therapy, the only therapy of its kind in the world. The treatment has been helping to transform the range of movement of children with cerebral palsy and other disabilities affecting their mobility for more than 25 years.

Johnny Wilkes, The Movement Centre's Chief Executive Officer, said: "The £10,000 donation is marvellous news for us and the families who have children undergoing Targeted Training therapy in Oswestry.

"It will make a massive difference to those five families, meaning they will have access to this life-changing therapy free of charge, instead of having to pay the £2,000 contribution which they usually need to fundraise or fund themselves.

"We would like to thank the St. James's Place Charitable Foundation for providing the grant and Nick Jones of Throgmorton Associates Wealth Management for assisting us in our efforts to apply for it.

"It all came about when we applied to the St. James's Place Charitable Foundation for funding and were told we needed to do it through the St. James's Place community, which was Nick and his company. We received the money last month and it will be vital in off-setting the direct costs to families as stipulated in the grant agreement.

"Nick and Chimene joined us for our open day towards the end of the month and said they were delighted to have been able to support us in this way. We are extremely grateful for their efforts and the awarding of the grant."

Nick Jones, of Throgmorton Associates, said: "We supported this application because it was a local cause and having visited the centre and seen the difference it is making to families, it's amazing and will really change the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in society.

"The Movement Centre is a hidden gem and I'm so proud we can get involved and help people access what is a very personal and bespoke service. If it means more families can benefit then it's a win-win!"

St. James's Place Charitable Foundation has been supporting those in need for 30 years with the goal of making a positive and lasting difference to people's lives through grants to support the incredible work of grassroots charities.

It's the third largest corporate foundation in the UK and since 1992 has granted more than £110m to charities, provided funding and support to more than 800 charities each year and helped an estimated 2.5 million people.

For more information about The Movement Centre, call 01691 404248, visit [www.the-movement-centre.co.uk](http://www.the-movement-centre.co.uk) or email [curtis@themovementcentre.co.uk](mailto:curtis@themovementcentre.co.uk)

For more about the St. James's Place Charitable Foundation, visit <https://www.sjpfoundation.co.uk/about-the-foundation.aspx> and for more about Throgmorton Associates, visit <https://throgmortonassociates.co.uk/>



Nick Jones, Johnny Wilkes and Chimene Felton at The Movement Centre

## It's fundraising and fun on the fairway

Fun, fundraising, a bit of healthy competition, and maybe even a hole in one is all on offer for keen golfers next month.

Lingen Davies Cancer Fund is holding a charity golf day at Wrekin Golf Club, Wellington, on Thursday, 16th June. The event has already attracted several corporate sponsors including headline supporters Telford Electronics and Lab Visions.

Teams of four are invited to join in the day which will see a two-tee start from 12pm. The £200 entry includes the 18-hole competition, arrival refreshments and a two-course meal. All proceeds from the event will go towards supporting cancer patients throughout Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, and Mid Wales. The Lingen Davies Cancer Centre at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital sees more than 4,000 new cases a year, and the charity also runs a community-based cancer awareness raising service.

Helen Knight, Head of Fundraising for Lingen Davies, said a huge thank you to those businesses who have already signed up for the golf day, and urged others to lend their support.

"We are so grateful for the support of Telford Electronics and Lab Visions for agreeing to be our headline sponsors, and to hole sponsors J&PR, Throgmorton Associates, Moonshine and Fuggles, Chrisbeon, The Business Company, Base Architects, John Dawson Painting, Shingler Homes, and Rix Petroleum.



Lingen Davies Cancer Fund is holding a charity golf day at Wrekin Golf Club

"It's going to be a great day and we have a few more team places left, as well as hole sponsorship opportunities so we're looking forward to hearing from anyone who would like to get involved and help fund our vital work supporting those impacted by cancer throughout the community.

"Whether people are professional golfers or amateur enthusiasts we would love to hear from you," she added.

To register your team, visit the Lingen Davies website Charity Golf Day - Lingen Davies



# Climbing Out delighted to receive Team Forces support



Shropshire charity, Climbing Out, has been chosen by Team Forces to receive a grant to support 12 military participants attending their courses

**Local charity, Climbing Out, has been chosen by Team Forces to receive a grant to support 12 military participants attending their courses. Climbing Out offers outdoor activity programmes aimed at rebuilding confidence, self-esteem and motivation in people who have been through a life changing injury, illness or trauma.**

There are three layers to Climbing Out's programmes. They combine outdoor activities with mental resilience coaching whilst building long term friendships and support. This gives participants the tools to manage themselves, helping them to deal with not just what's happened in the past or what they are going through right now,

but also any challenges they may face in the future.

Kelda Wood MBE, Founder of Climbing Out said, "Thank you so much to Team Forces for choosing to support Climbing Out, it's fantastic for us to be taking our first steps with Team Forces. Every single penny will go to changing people's lives – providing them with the tools to manage their mental wellbeing, move their lives forward and be happy again. The grant from Team Forces will help us offer invaluable support to many members of the Armed Forces. We are really grateful for the support."

Team Forces a registered charity

which raises funds for sport, challenge and adventure in the armed forces community in order to improve health, wellbeing and recovery.

*Thank you so much to Team Forces for choosing to support Climbing Out, it's fantastic for us to be taking our first steps with Team Forces. Every single penny will go to changing people's lives, providing them with the tools to manage their mental wellbeing.*

Maj Gen Lamont Kirkland, CEO Team Forces commented, "We are very pleased to announce our support for Climbing Out as they deliver programmes which help our veterans to deal with mental or physical wellbeing issues. The activities run by Climbing Out will assist in rebuilding lives by providing the inspirational goals that help veterans move beyond their disability, regain confidence and recapture their zest for life." Find out more at [climbingout.org.uk](http://climbingout.org.uk)



# Adding confidence

**T**ake a break with Clare Spalding Cert Ed PhD from Foreveryoung Medical Aesthetics Shrewsbury Ltd, a CQC Registered Clinic. Member of Safe Face; ambassador for Supreme Dermal Filler and Thread company.

Advanced aesthetics nurse prescriber and trainer, Clare has been working in aesthetics for more than 15 years and has a large following in the aesthetics world. Clare provides training all over the UK and ensures perfection in everything she does and will always strive for the best outcome. She was voted aesthetic nurse of the year in December 2021 at the Diamond Safety in Beauty and Aesthetics awards.

**1. Who is someone you admire, and why?**

*The Queen, she is dedicated, hard working, passionate and an excellent role model.*

**2. Tell me three pet hates?**

*Laziness, untidiness, rudeness*

**3. Do you have any skills or talents that most people don't know about?**

*Spinning and weaving my own wool.*

**4. Who would be your 3 dream dinner guests?**

*Alan Sugar, Richard Branson and Dame Judi Dench*

**5. If we went to 'happy hour', what would you order?**

*Espresso Martini*

**6. What is your favourite holiday destination?**

*Caribbean*

**7. Name three words that best describe you?**



Clare Spalding

*Professional, Kind and Knowledgeable*

**8. If you were stranded on a desert island, what 3 items would you want with you?**

*Glasses, solar powered radio, Suncream*

**9. What's a goal you have for yourself that you want to accomplish in the next year either in your personal or work life?**

*Open another medic aesthetics clinic*

**10. What was the last book you read?**

*Alan Sugar – What you see is what you get*

**11. What is your favourite aspect about your career?**

*Making people feel more confident about themselves.*

**12. Are you doing the job you thought you would do when you were a child?**

*Yes*

**13. What are some causes you care about?**

*Domestic abuse*

**14. What do you do with friends and family in your spare time?**

*Spending time at the seaside*

**15. What would be your personal motto?**

*Be kind to all*



Protect, care and invest to create a better borough





Katy Jones, of PC Net

## Cybercrime is in the spotlight

The manufacturing industry is undergoing something of a digital revolution as more and more companies realise the benefits of embracing technology to help them remain competitive and develop a thriving business - but it also raises questions about security!

Security of systems and data is of paramount importance and chamber member PC Net Solutions understands the reluctance of some manufacturers to race headlong into major digital changes which could see undoubted major advantages to a business offset by costly breaches or loss of vital information.

Katy Jones, of PC Net, said: "The bottom line is that digital technology is with us and the pace of implementation has certainly been quickened by a greater reliance on remote working through the pandemic - a policy which is being continued in many instances but something which, again, can lead to headaches when it comes to cyber security.

"It is important for business owners to know that it can be implemented safely and securely and that IT support teams are here to help you do just that."

Make UK, which represents 20,000 manufacturers across the country, compiled a report after asking its members to take part in a cyber security survey. It found that one in eight manufacturers said the fear of cyber attacks was preventing them from adopting digital technologies.

Other interesting statistics thrown up by the survey included that 47% of manufacturers reported being the victim of cybercrime over the previous 12-month period and that of those companies, 22% said it had cost them between £5,000 and £25,000, while 63% said it had cost their business up to £5,000.

"There are many businesses that are on top of cyber security with 61% of companies now appointing a director responsible for cyber security and 50% reporting cyber security has become a higher priority since the start of the pandemic," adds Katy.

"But one worrying statistic is that 44% said they do not offer cyber security training to staff. Staff training is of paramount importance - creating an environment of awareness and consequences of not adhering to policies you have in place as a company to prevent a breach. They also need to understand what action to take if they recognise something is wrong.

"Cyber-attacks will evolve, become increasingly sophisticated and more difficult to spot or prevent, particularly as more devices and systems become interconnected but there are steps you can take to reduce the risks."

# New bar and restaurant is opened at The Astbury

**The Astbury Resort opened its doors to Montgomery's Bar & Restaurant on Friday 8th April. The restaurant and bar have been completely transformed since the site was acquired by its new owners in 2020. Extensive renovations have taken place, incorporating original features such as intricate ceiling roses and coving, with luxurious textures and bold teal colours, to create a warm and relaxing environment.**

With all day dining from Wednesday through to Saturday, and a delicious Sunday roast menu, Montgomery's offers classic British dishes complemented by dishes with inspiration from around the world. Choose from lunch time light bites through to refined evening meals including herb crusted loin of lamb and sumptuous seasonal desserts such as lime & cucumber posset, with a sharp gin sorbet or a classic raspberry crème brûlée. Montgomery's is also offering fabulous Afternoon Teas, with our Head Chef's pastry experience - all of our decadent afternoon tea sweet treats are made in house.

Not only is Montgomery's offering all day dining, but the Bar is also open for guests to enjoy everything from a mid-morning cappuccino through to

a carefully curated cocktail from our Head Bartender, Michael. Our bar is stocked with well known spirits, as well as tipplers from local spirit distilleries such as Wild Jac who are a short 14 miles away in Bewdley. Our extensive wine list has been designed to complement our menu, with pairing very much part of the experience of dining in Montgomery's.

Montgomery's aims to source its ingredients from as close as possible. With the meat coming from Beaman's & Sons, just 3 miles away and bread from Swifts Bakery in Cleobury Mortimer. Taking pride in supporting local, Montgomery's vows to continuously source new local suppliers, as their offering expands.

Jamie Hammond, General Manager of The Astbury Resort, says 'Montgomery's provides a beautiful setting with extraordinary views across the 18th

*Not only is Montgomery's offering all day dining, but the bar is also open for guests to enjoy everything from a mid-morning cappuccino through to a carefully curated cocktail*

hole, with first class service. No matter whether you're joining us for a coffee or a special occasion, the Montgomery's team has a wealth of experience, led by our Food & Beverage Manager Craig, who will take care of you from the moment you arrive. We look forward to

being part of the local community, your new 'local' and a place that everyone feels welcome'

Bookings for Montgomery's can be made via The Astbury website [www.theastbury.com/montgomerys](http://www.theastbury.com/montgomerys). You can see more of what's on offer at Montgomery's by visiting their social media channels, search @montgomerysbarandrestaurant on Facebook and Instagram and @Montgomerys2022 on Twitter.





Jayne Meakin and Jill Seymour of SMI hand over the confectionery to Mitch Morgan on behalf of the Shropshire Supports Refugees group

## Chocolate treats for Ukrainian refugees

**A** Telford manufacturing company has handed over a morale-boosting chocolate feast for children of Ukrainian refugees who are trying to rebuild their lives in the county.

Seymour Manufacturing International (SMI) ran an 'easter bunny' competition, inviting people to nominate deserving causes for a basket full of goodies.

Director Jill Seymour said: "We were looking for a person, or group of people, who deserved a special treat – it could have been a good deed, a customer delivering fantastic service, or simply someone having a tough time and in need of cheering up.

"Several people suggested we should help Ukrainian refugees who have had to escape the war zone – many of whom are now staying with families here in Shropshire.

"We thought this was a fantastic idea, so we made contact with the Shropshire

Supports Refugees group, which helps not only those from Ukraine, but also displaced families from Syria and Iraq too."

Mitch Morgan visited the SMI offices at Stafford Park to collect the chocolate treats on behalf of the group, which described the donation as 'wonderful news'.

Jill Seymour added: "This is the first in what we hope will be many donations we are able to make, to help families in need.

"Our range of thermal protection products are designed to help keep people warm – or cool – and we know that this could be invaluable for struggling families. We are committed to helping however and wherever we can."

SMI's celebrated Temprow® is a lightweight thermal insulation solution used by many industries, including food retail and processing, plus pharmaceuticals, agriculture, logistics, the Ministry of Defence and NHS.

It was even taken to Antarctica by explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes to insulate his crew's sub-zero living quarters on one of his polar expeditions.

## New innovation studio opening

The launch of Maxi House Innovation Studio at Halesfield is set to put Telford at the forefront of a new concept in entrepreneurial support.

Developed by local entrepreneur Tim Luft, The Innovation Studio has been established as a way of removing barriers to entrepreneurs who are looking to scale their businesses from the Midlands.

The venture uniquely combines an approved 'Start-up and Innovator' visa endorsement body for the UK Home Office, with a dedicated business support studio in one venue.

Its team is operating to support entrepreneurs seeking to rapidly grow their businesses, and can now also support overseas individuals who require a business visa to move to the UK, set up, and develop their business.

Using his experience as a mentor for the UK Government Global Entrepreneur Programme, personally supporting over 50 new international start-ups in the past 7 years, and as an entrepreneur establishing his own technology companies leading the way in the use of Virtual and Augmented reality, Tim views this as a precursor to a shift in the way we view and support entrepreneurship, particularly from abroad.

He said: "Attracting entrepreneurs with high-value, high-growth potential businesses, not only locally, but from overseas will be a real boost to Telford and the region.

"Too often overseas entrepreneurs assume their only route to growth in the UK is to set up in London. We can redress this misconception by promoting the unique opportunities available in the Midlands, and Telford in particular, via a dedicated package of support".

In addition to its visa endorsing capacity, The Innovation Studio, based at Halesfield 20, is an ideal location to visit the delivery team - with a series of training rooms, co-working space, innovation breakout rooms and technology demonstration suites fully available for all members.

It will help to remove barriers to growth and address a number of core business functions including; finance - ensuring businesses are investment-ready and introducing potential angel investors.

Innovation - helping to create disruptive strategies for businesses as well as clear routes to championing technology pilots and proof of concepts.

Commercialisation - developing innovative digital marketing techniques to help businesses scale rapidly.

Business Development Director, Nigel Birch, said: "We hope to establish the studio as a unique service in the region which will support the most entrepreneurial start-ups and help them scale their business rapidly and efficiently".



Master of Ceremonies, Carl Jones, and guest speaker, Ed Clancy OBE



The Aico | HomeLINK Community Awards 2022

# Aico host the Community Awards 2022

## **A**ico, the European Market Leader in Home Life Safety, has recently hosted a new award ceremony – the Community Awards – at the International Convention Centre, Birmingham.

The ceremony was designed to recognise excellence within social housing and the local community, with 11 curated categories to provide entrants with an opportunity to showcase their inspirational projects and innovations. Aico also utilised the event to raise funds for the Electrical Industries Charity (EIC), which offer a range of vital support services to individuals, and their families, who serve within the electrical sector.

With 300 guests in attendance from across the UK, the event was hosted by Carl Jones, BBC Radio Presenter and Master of Ceremonies. Carl Jones says of the awards ceremony, "It was a fantastic evening of celebration. The hall delivered a real 'wow' factor to get things off to a terrific start. Standing at the lectern as Master of Ceremonies is always a privileged position at events like these - because it means I get to see the magical expressions on the faces of winners when their names are announced. You can see how much it meant to them to be recognised in front of colleagues and peers on an evening when so many people made new friends. It was a joy to share the stage with such inspirational people."

Also in attendance were special guest speakers, George Clarke, architect and TV presenter, and Ed Clancy OBE, triple Olympic champion. Ed Clancy OBE spoke to the audience about the importance of teamwork in achieving success, drawing on his own experiences as a Team Pursuit cyclist for Great Britain. Ed comments, "It was a great evening and a privilege to be a part of the Community Awards 2022. It was fantastic to hear all about the positive work that Aico and their partners are doing for their communities. Everyone had a good time - I very much enjoyed George Clarke riding round on my bike in his tux!"

The finalists were chosen from over 200 entries and selected by five judges; Neal Hooper, Managing Director of Aico, Gavin Smart, CEO of the Chartered Institute of Housing, Dame Judith Hackitt, Chair of Enginuity, Fayann Simpson OBE, Group Board Member and Senior Independent Director of L&Q and Mandeep Bhogil, Director of Operations at Tower Hamlets Community Housing.

The first award of the evening was presented to a Shropshire-based educational facility, Derwen College, which won College Initiative of the Year. As a specialist college for young adults with special educational needs and disabilities, Derwen's entry focused on their Vintage Charity Shop that provides valuable work experience for students.

Pete Evans, Commercial Manager of Derwen College comments "We were delighted to be shortlisted for the College Initiative of the Year. To find out we were overall winners was wonderful; especially as the competition from across the UK was so strong. We were very proud to be recognised for creating and opening our Vintage Advantage charity shop. Launching during a pandemic was challenging, to say the least, but everyone's efforts

have made it all worthwhile – the shop is proving to be a huge success."

The 10 remaining awards were received by a diverse range of organisations that operate or offer services within the housing sector.

Fire protection company, Millwood Servicing, were the deserving winner of the Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative, which included two unique employability schemes to give fair and equal opportunities specifically for the disabled and disadvantaged.

The winning initiative for Resident Engagement was Scotland's leading housing, care and property-management provider, Wheatley Group; through engaging with vulnerable residents via events and home visits, the organisation has significantly improved fire safety.

Kerry Storrar of Berneslai Homes was announced as Woman in Fire Safety for the improvements she has brought to the organisation while working as a firefighter in her spare time.

The Neighbourhood Transformation category was awarded to Grand Union Housing Group for the improvements they have made to a local estate through working in partnership with the local authority, police and the community.

Sita Luka of Northampton Partnership Homes won the accolade of Inspirational Colleague of the Year for her work with the most vulnerable residents to implement an innovative solution that improves fire safety.

Lesley Baird of TPAS Scotland was the winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award; through her determination and targeted strategy work, Lesley and her team have positioned the organisation as the number one for tenant engagement expertise in Scotland.

The Community Awards recognised Adam Pearce of North Star Housing Group as its Rising Star for his passion and enthusiasm for his role as Property and Repairs Manager.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the strategic Housing Authority for Northern Ireland, won Sustainability Project of the Year for their evidence-based pilot project, which has helped reduce carbon emissions and fabric heat loss within their housing stock.

The Best Distributor Community Initiative was awarded to Quantum Electrical Distribution, whose 'green initiative' programme is making a meaningful difference within their business and the communities they serve.

The final award of the evening celebrated the Electrical Contractor of the Year. ADS were the winning nomination, recognised for their proactive approach to service delivery from inception to completion, going the extra mile to ensure good customer service.

The first Aico|HomeLINK Community Awards was a great success, celebrating the achievements of inspirational individuals and organisations; innovating, demonstrating excellence, and putting people first.

To keep up to date with Aico, please visit: [www.aico.co.uk/](http://www.aico.co.uk/)  
Visit [www.electricalcharity.org/](http://www.electricalcharity.org/) to find out more about the EIC



# Plastics warning for our businesses

## Shropshire businesses that import or manufacture large amounts of plastic packaging will now be hit by a new tax.

Matt Orange, from Dyke Yaxley Chartered Accountants in Shrewsbury and Telford, said the tax had been introduced as part of the Government's strategy to make the UK's economy more environmentally-friendly.

"The aim is to reduce plastic packaging waste and to encourage businesses to use recycled packaging wherever they can.

"Under the new regulations, businesses that import or manufacture more than ten tonnes of plastic packaging will need to register for the tax.

"It primarily targets single use plastics – such as carrier bags – and those for use in supply chains such as a manufacturer of yoghurt pots who then sells them to the company that produces the yoghurt."

Matt said the tax did not apply to items that had been designed to be re-used such as food storage boxes or items where the plastic packaging is an integral part of the goods – such as printer ink cartridges.

"The tax is payable at a rate of £200 per metric tonne of plastic packaging that contains less than 30 per cent recycled plastic.

"Businesses will not be taxed on plastic packaging containing at least 30% recycled plastic, but this will still count towards the overall amount they've accumulated.

"So if your business imports or manufactures more than ten tonnes a year – all of which contains at least 30% of recycled plastic – you will still need to register and keep clear records, even though no tax payments will be due."

Matt said once businesses had registered for the tax, they would need to submit a return to HM Revenue and Customs every three months, and any tax payable would be due at the same time as the quarterly return.

"Take care too if you are buying plastic packaging from suppliers overseas because the responsibility for knowing the weight and composition of the packaging is firmly on the business importing it into the UK."



Matt Orange

## Stepping out for charity cash

Staff at a Shropshire accountancy firm have been raising cash for two local charities by putting their best foot forward in their latest challenge.

The team from Dyke Yaxley Chartered Accountants in Shrewsbury and Telford organises an annual steps challenge and nominates charities they want to support.

Marketing co-ordinator Jackie Young said the idea had really taken off with 12 teams of four colleagues joining forces to amass the greatest number of steps in a friendly and positive competition.

"This year we've had a great response from colleagues who were all keen to take part, and so far, we've raised £250 for the Lingen Davies Cancer Fund and Shropshire MHS (Mental Health Support).

"The winning team clocked up over 1,780,000 steps on their step counters during the four-week challenge which is a really impressive effort, and in the first week, one of our colleagues did over 187,000 steps alone!"

Jackie said the competition had proved increasingly popular during the years it had been held, and staff had been so motivated that the firm had now launched a Dyke



Dyke Yaxley colleagues who took part in this year's charity steps challenge

Yaxley lunchtime walking club.

"This takes place every Thursday and has been running since before Christmas, with staff meeting up for a brief walk and receiving a loyalty card stamp each time they attend with the chance to earn up to two free coffees on Dyke Yaxley.

"It's a great opportunity to get out into the fresh air and to clear our heads by breaking up the working day, and with the warmer weather now here, we're hoping to encourage even more colleagues to join us."

As part of their yearly steps challenge, the Dyke Yaxley team nominate local charities to benefit from their efforts. This year's beneficiaries are:

Lingen Davies Cancer Fund which aims to make a positive difference to lives affected by cancer in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, and Mid Wales; and Shropshire MHS in Holywell Street, in Shrewsbury, that offers mental health support including drop-in sessions, and a range of structured groups and activities.

# Personalising the workplace for health

**C**ompanies are becoming more aware of the need to personalise employee workspace in a bid to create better health and wellbeing for staff, Chamber Patron Chrisbeon has revealed.

It comes as more workers are making their way back to the office as Covid restrictions are lifted with employers seeing increased productivity thanks to addressing things like lighting, sound and individual furniture needs.

Richard Hughes, Partner at Chrisbeon Office Supplies in Telford, said the general image of the workplace had changed significantly over the years and many businesses were now reaping the benefits of a more modern approach to the office environment.

"Health and wellbeing are key in today's working world and if staff are happy and healthy then that must also be good news for employers and the productivity of their business," he said.

"We know it is good for staff to personalise their workstation areas with things like their own colourful accessories, displaying photos which evoke good personal memories, personalising screensavers and desktops, bringing plants into the office and even, in certain circumstances, having access to music.

"But companies too can play a major role when it comes to how they lay out offices. We have a tremendous aid for this in the form of Computer-Aided Design (CAD) - a modern wonder in planning, giving a detailed 3D insight into how your office environment will look before pressing ahead with any refurbishment or installation.

"Lighting is a major consideration and, depending on the location of an individual workstation, the employer needs to think about the employee having enough light to work by, with natural light, desk lamps and LED lighting all factored into the equation. There is also a potential problem with too much light becoming at best a distraction and at worst impossible conditions to work in.

"Office desks and chairs also need to be personalised to the requirements of the employee. This may include the use of standing desks which can be height adjusted for the individual and sitting desks which help aid good posture.



Personalised workstations can add to productivity



Chrisbeon has a wide range of colourful options

"Chairs are also an important consideration in terms of comfort, practicality and being functional. Office staff probably spend the vast majority of their working day sitting down so need to be able to do that without potentially putting their health at risk."

Richard says the effects of sound on the workplace were very important with some areas of the office possibly being too noisy for employees to work effectively while others may be extremely quiet.

"Excessive noise affects the ability to interact with colleagues, take phone calls or Zoom meetings. Concentration can be easily affected; noise causes unnecessary distraction and mistakes can be made as a result," he added.

"Choosing your furniture and where it is placed can help absorb sound and make life a little easier for staff. Upholstered chairs and sofas produce the best results while placing furniture against walls between offices reduces noise levels.

"Carpets, couches, plants and partitioning between individual staff members also have the desired effect of reducing sound levels. All these options are great motivators and are helping to ensure that healthy and happy employees are able to carry on working at the peak of efficiency."

## Training commercial pilots of the future

The UK's national balloon rides operator, Virgin Balloon Flights, is set to train a dozen new commercial pilots to future-proof the industry from a potential shortage in large passenger balloonists.

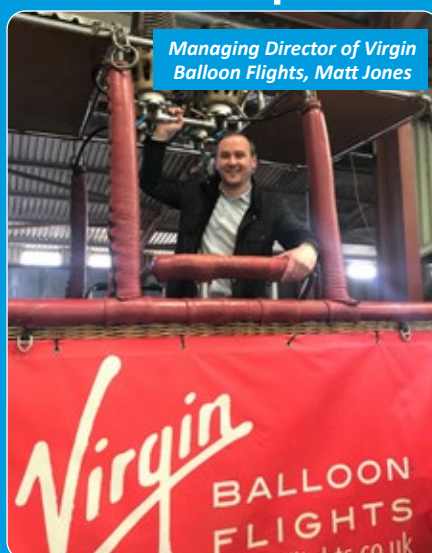
The Telford-based company has been flying its iconic, big red balloons across England, Scotland and Wales for almost 28 years.

This June, more than a dozen UK balloon pilots will head to northern Italy for a week-long intensive commercial balloon training course.

Many private balloonists wanting to fly as a career find it difficult to access larger, passenger-carrying balloons to build up the hours required 'on type' to gain their commercial licence.

"Those bigger balloons are operated by commercial companies, like ourselves, and when they're in use flying paying passengers, they have to be flown by fully qualified commercial pilots," explained Matt Jones, managing director of Virgin Balloon Flights.

"That means there is very little opportunity for a private balloonist to build up their hours in a passenger balloon to gain their commercial licence, as they are simply not available for them to use.



Managing Director of Virgin Balloon Flights, Matt Jones

"Three or four years ago, Virgin Balloon Flights recognised the potential consequences of not enough new passenger pilots flying the bigger balloons joining the industry might bring and we began to work directly with three young, talented private pilots to gain their commercial rating.

"A fourth pilot followed to join us in 2021 and we are now broadening that commitment to train passenger balloonists of the future by taking a dozen prospective new pilots to Italy for an intensive course and examination."

The course in Italy will be led by Virgin Balloon Flights CEO, Kenneth Karlstrom, who is a qualified commercial pilot instructor and examiner and has more than 40 years flying experience.

"There are some fantastic private balloon pilots in the UK who will make equally outstanding commercial passenger pilots if they can get their ours in and gain the correct rating," he said.

"Nurturing ballooning talent is something we have always done at Virgin Balloon Flights but with the number of passenger pilots qualified to fly 12 or 16 passengers starting to dwindle through retirement and then leaving the industry during Covid, we wanted to ensure there were plenty of new pilots to take on the mantle of commercial flying in the UK."

Virgin Balloon Flights is based in Stafford Park, Telford and flies from around 100 different locations around the UK.

For more information, visit the website [www.virginballoonflights.co.uk](http://www.virginballoonflights.co.uk)



# Workplace Telford opens doors to new flexible workspace

Telford & Wrekin Council has opened a 'Workplace Telford' business hub on New Street, Wellington.

The refurbished, modern office space has dedicated hot desk and collaboration spaces, as well as large and small meeting rooms which can be booked by the day or block booked in advance.

The initiative aims to support both businesses and individuals needing space away from their usual place of work or home surroundings.

It also helps the transition and demand for new ways of working as many organisations are still continuing to work remotely or using their office on a rota basis.

The hub opens up opportunities to individuals who work at home and would like to work in an office environment with a possibility of networking.

Free Wi-Fi is available at the hub along with welfare facilities and Wi-Fi and door codes are given to businesses on receipt of their bookings.

Councillor Lee Carter (Lab), Telford & Wrekin Council's Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services, Regeneration and the High Street, said: "We are responding to what businesses still need in terms of remote working and flexibility but are also

giving them the opportunity to connect with employees in person in a dynamic and creative environment.

"This is a really exciting new venture for businesses and employees in the area and we hope that many will make the most of this facility at the heart of the Wellington community."

For some employees, the hub could also help provide the first steps on the road to workplace normality if they have been working from home throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

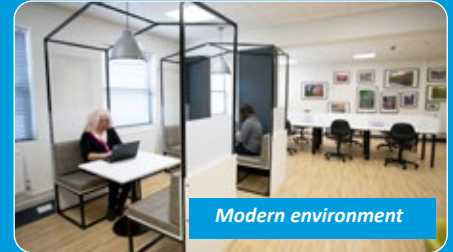
Councillor Eileen Callear (Lab), Telford & Wrekin Council's Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy, Employment and Skills, said: "Although many businesses are now using modern technology to work remotely and flexibly, particularly as a result of the pandemic, communicating regularly on a face-to-face basis with colleagues is still fundamental to business success.

"The opening of Workplace Telford in Wellington is a fantastic opportunity for employees who are still working from home to connect with their teammates and staff within their organisation."

Any businesses who are interested in booking spaces at Workplace Telford can do so online via the dedicated website page: <https://workplacetelford.co.uk/>



Perfect for networking



Modern environment



Working at home? Try the hub instead

# SBLTV is shortlisted for a major business award

**S**hropshire Business Live TV, a collaboration between three local media companies, has been shortlisted for a top award.

It has been named as a finalist in the Midlands round of the StartUp Awards National Series, which recognises the booming start-up scene across the UK since the pandemic began.

Shropshire Business Live TV (SBLTV) is one of five companies shortlisted in the Creative Start-Up category for the Midlands finals, to be held in Birmingham on June 16.

There was stiff competition, with over 2,500 applications received in response to the StartUp Awards National Series' first-ever call for entries.

SBLTV is a ground-breaking business broadcast venture, which is a collaboration between Shropshire Business magazine, Shropshire Live, and Yarrington.

The monthly business-to-business show is live streamed from studios in Shrewsbury every month, and has seen audiences grow steadily since its launch in September 2020. It is now mid-way through its second series.

Carl Jones, editor of Shropshire Business magazine and one of the SBLTV producers and presenters, said: "It's wonderful to receive recognition for this collaborative partnership, which has been so well received.

"We set up SBLTV during the depths of the pandemic to help keep Shropshire businesses connected and give them a communications shop window, and are now getting thousands of viewers – not just in the UK, but some from overseas too."

The StartUp Awards are supported nationally by BT, EY, Dell & Intel to 'celebrate the achievements of the amazing individuals across the



The March edition of Shropshire Business Live TV included the official launch of the Marches Growth Hub's new Business Boost initiative

UK who have turned an idea into an opportunity and taken the risk to launch a new product or service.

Professor Dylan Jones-Evans OBE, who created the event, said: "New firms are important for generating economic prosperity, employment opportunities and innovation.

"Given the sheer volume of phenomenal start-ups we've heard from since then, as well as the huge post-pandemic shift in people's desires to take their career in a new direction and set up a business against the odds, we felt it was the right time to take the programme nationwide.

"We've been blown away by the standard of entries in this first year and truly look forward to crowning the winners in June."



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## Generous donations will help families from Ukraine

Staff and students from Telford College have donated more than 1,000 items to help the people of war-torn Ukraine.

The health, social care, early years and education department led the college campaign after learning about an initiative on Facebook run by Karol and Zaneta Kil-Misztal from Telford.

They have donated a whole host of items including toiletries, nappies, children's toys, and other vital supplies.

Learner manager for the department, Sarah Cadenne de Lannoy, said: "It's been heart-breaking to learn about the difficult circumstances and dangers that people in Ukraine are facing, and we wanted to offer our support.

"It's been a real team effort to get this together, and we'd like to wish the best of luck to Karol, Zaneta and everyone else involved in the project."

Karol said nine lorries had already been driven over to the war zone from the local area, and that the donations from Telford



College were a welcome addition.

"We'd like to thank everyone at the college who has donated such important items that are really going to help communities in Ukraine.

"It was great to receive over 1,000 items from the staff and students, but we are still

looking for more donations as the situation is continuing."

Karol urged anyone who could contribute to get in touch on the campaign's Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/groups/3138124176515863](https://www.facebook.com/groups/3138124176515863) - Telford and Surrounding Areas Helping Ukraine.

# New chair appointed for Telford College's governing corporation

**T**elford College has appointed a new chair of its governing corporation as part of a series of changes.

Gail Bleasby succeeds Paul Hinkins to become corporation chair, with Louise Biffin stepping up to become the new vice-chair.

Other new appointments to the board, replacing retiring corporation members at the end of their terms, are Kevin Barton, Manny Jhawar-Gill, and Stew Watson.

Gail has been part of the corporation since December 2017, when Telford College was created from the merger of Telford College of Arts and Technology, and New College Telford.

She is a former New College and University of Wolverhampton student who works as an integration programme manager for Telford life and pensions company Phoenix.

Her background is project and programme management, and she has also worked for Telford and Wrekin Council.

Gail said: "I'm delighted to be taking on the role at such an exciting time for the college, supported by such a talented and experienced team.

"The role of the corporation is to oversee the strategic direction and pace of the college, ensuring it remains focused on delivering a high-quality and economically focused curriculum.

"The college has an ambitious strategy to be an ethical skills ecosystem for the Marches and West Midlands.

"Our governors have a passion for vocational and professional education and training, and a commitment to supporting the college ambition to build on the successes and use the strengths of collaborative working."

Louise Biffin has been on the board since October 2019, and is an experienced finance leader and non-executive director who has operated in the not-for-profit sector for over 20 years.

She is a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, holds a diploma in charity accounting, and is a member of both the Association of Corporate Governance Practitioners and the Institute of Directors.

Kevin Barton is an international education consultant who had a 20-year career as a teacher, and now works at policy and practice levels with schools and a wide range of organisations, including the Youth Sport Trust, YST International, Nike, and the British Council.

Gail Bleasby, second left, with Kevin Barton, Stew Watson and Manny Jhawar-Gill



Manny Jhawar-Gill is a procurement and commissioning professional with more than two decades of experience in local government and the voluntary sector, working predominantly in the area of disability and mental health. She is a member of the Chartered Institute of Purchase & Supply and holds a CIPS Level 4 Practitioner qualification.

And Stew Watson has worked within the construction and development industry for over 30 years. His career spans across Local Government, Emergency Services, Higher Education and the NHS.

Graham Guest, Telford College's principal and chief executive who also sits on the board, said: "The corporation plays a pivotal role in shaping the direction of the college.

"The progress made by Telford College since the merger of TCAT and New College Telford has been recognised by Ofsted with our recently achieved Good rating, which followed an Outstanding grading for our financial health.

"We are an ambitious college, strongly focused on delivering the best possible outcomes for learners, and meeting the current and future needs of our local businesses.

"This is an exciting time for further education, and it is vital we work closely with our corporation to help create a workforce with strong academic, vocational and employability skills."



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