

YOUR CHAMBER YOUR VOICE

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022



Shropshire Chamber
60
Years
Celebration

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Cover picture: Celebrating 60 years of Shropshire Chamber of Commerce, at Hencote vineyard

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Businesses need support right now

As the Westminster rollercoaster continues on its merry way and the revolving door of ministerial appointments impacts progress, the Chamber network continues to engage at every opportunity to deliver a powerful message that **businesses need support, and they need it now.**

A new PM in September and the construction of a cabinet after that must not be allowed to delay responses to reduce energy costs, change business rates to stimulate growth, and improve the labour market by targeted recruitment of the skills we need through open borders.

The Local Skills Improvement planning instigated by the government will play a significant role in making sure the skills need of businesses are heard, whilst curriculums will reflect future requirements. Your Chamber has submitted an expression on behalf of partner representative bodies to lead this planning across the Marches, at the time of writing we are awaiting the outcome.

With 90% of our Shropshire business community employing 10 people or less, it is vital that businesses are equipped for the challenges ahead, being a member of the Chamber provides the opportunity to get your voice heard whilst being part of something much bigger, part of the Chamber community.

Our All-Inclusive membership offering is now well-established allowing businesses to invest in their people and develop connections and profile raise without spiraling costs, make sure you take a serious look at how this amazing offer can support your business.

Your Chamber has been a voice at the table for both Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire council areas as they shape their bids into the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. We have been pleased to be included and given the opportunity to speak on behalf of business, we will share more information on this as it becomes available.

Richard Sheehan
Chief Executive Officer,
Shropshire Chamber of Commerce



County's firms celebrate diamond jubilee in style

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce celebrated its 60th birthday in style by throwing a party at a spectacular county location.

The relaxed evening of fun, food and friendship, including a barbecue and the cutting of an official celebratory cake, was held at Hencote vineyard on the outskirts of Shrewsbury.

President Piran Littleton spoke of his 'pride' at the work done by the Chamber's team – what it does now, what it's looking to do for the next 60 years, and the effect that it has already had on businesses across Shropshire.

"The Chamber has helped businesses to become happier, healthier, wealthier, and wiser," he said.

Shropshire Chamber was originally founded in 1962 in Dawley, to help connect businesses on the back of exciting plans to create a 'new town' called Telford.

In 1969 it was rebranded as Telford Chamber of Commerce, before being changed to Shropshire Chamber to reflect its growing countywide membership.

Current chief executive Richard Sheehan, who has been part of the team for the past 15 years, said the team was incredibly proud to have been providing support for the Shropshire business community across six decades of growth and evolution.

"Shropshire is such a fantastic place to do business; full of ambition, drive, enthusiasm and innovation.

"We all know that the economy is going to be in for a bumpy ride over the coming months, and it is at times like these that businesses can truly realise the strength and security of being part of a collective.

"Throughout the past 60 years, the Chamber's mission has not changed – we want to be seen as the voice of Shropshire business and the premier sounding-board for engagement with companies of all sizes, across all sectors.

"We represent the interests of Shropshire businesses, enabling them to collaborate, create valuable connections and deliver a comprehensive range of business services to help our members to prosper."



Chamber members and patrons help to mark the 60 year milestone



Freya Rickman, Sophie Coombs, and Kirsty Smallman



President Piran Littleton cuts the 60th anniversary cake



Piran Littleton welcomes guests



Guests tuck into the barbecue



Guests enjoy the summer sunshine at Hencote





J&PR with the Covid Response award



Guest speaker Frank Bruno joking with master of ceremonies Carl Jones during the after dinner Q&A

Award winners are crowned

Oswestry home safety company Aico has been crowned Shropshire Company of the Year for a second time, on a night of huge celebration at the county's annual business awards.

The company won three trophies at the Oscars-style event, which was organised by Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and held in front of nearly 600 business people at Telford's International Centre.

Aico is the first company in the event's 22-year history to retain the top award, and only the third business to be crowned Shropshire Company of the Year more than once. It also won the sustainability and young business person trophies.

Other winners on the night included Shrewsbury-based manufacturing firm Beaver Bridges which took the manufacturing award, and Bridgnorth car restoration specialist SNG Barratt which won for international trade.

Shifnal-based Bright Star Boxing academy was crowned best small business, and county travel agency Peakes Travel Elite was honoured for outstanding customer service.

There were also awards for the county's business broadcast channel Shropshire Business Live TV which was named best new business, Wellington-based PR company J&PR which won the Covid response prize, Shrewsbury Colleges Group for wellbeing in the workplace, and Oaklands Farm Eggs of Ellerdine for innovation.

The John Clayton Award, named after a former Chamber president and recognising someone who has made an outstanding contribution to the local business community, was given this year to Shropshire Homes founder Howard Thorne.

And there was also a special surprise 'This Is Your Life' presentation for Shropshire Chamber of Commerce's chief executive Richard Sheehan, to mark his 15 years of service with the team.

This year's finalists came from all corners



Richard Sheehan receives his 'This is Your Life' award from the Chamber team



Howard Thorne with the John Clayton Award



Bright Star Boxing, Best Small Business

of the county, including Telford, Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Ludlow, Bridgnorth, Whitchurch, Shifnal, Bishop's Castle, Ellesmere, Ellerdine, Knockin and Albrighton.

Former world heavyweight boxing champion Frank Bruno was guest of honour, and spoke about his legendary tussles with Mike Tyson, and the foundation he has created to fight back against the stigma of mental illness.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak recorded a special video message for the event, expressing his gratitude to the Shropshire business community for the way it has dealt with the challenges in the economy over the past few years.

He said: "I want to give a huge congratulations to all of you in the Shropshire business community for the way that you have dealt with all the challenges that have been thrown your way over the past couple of years.

"You have done absolutely brilliantly, and I am enormously grateful.

"A huge thank you to the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce for making these awards – the Oscars of the business community – such a success over the past couple of decades.

"It's so important that we celebrate business success, and I'm absolutely delighted that that's what you are doing tonight."





Winners – 2022

COMPANY OF THE YEAR:
WINNER: Aico - Oswestry

FINALISTS: Autocraft Telford, DMOS Group, Reconomy

BEST NEW BUSINESS:
WINNER: Shropshire Business Live TV

FINALISTS: Housebuilder Pro, Quality Medical Group, Techtimetype

BEST SMALL BUSINESS:
WINNER: Bright Star Boxing - Shifnal

FINALISTS: J&PR, Shropshire Festivals, The Shropshire Distillery

OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE:
WINNER: Peakes Travel Elite - Shrewsbury

FINALISTS: Aico, G.N. Badley & Sons, Q Financial Services

INTERNATIONAL TRADE:
WINNER: SNG Barratt - Bridgnorth

FINALISTS: Aviramp, Jesmonite, Scanning Pens

COVID RESPONSE AWARD:
WINNER: J&PR - Wellington

FINALISTS: Calluna Upcycling, Derwen College, Shropshire Business Live TV

MANUFACTURING AND ENGINEERING:
WINNER: Beaver Bridges - Shrewsbury

FINALISTS: Craven Dunnill, Portable Conveyors, The Needham Group

WELLBEING IN THE WORKPLACE:
WINNER: Shrewsbury Colleges Group

FINALISTS: Aico, Lavender Blue Services, Pave Aways

INNOVATION:
WINNER: Oaklands Farm Eggs - Ellerdine

FINALISTS: Aico, Six Ticks, Yarrington

SUSTAINABILITY:
WINNER: Aico - Oswestry

FINALISTS: Calluna Graphix, Lowfield Timber Frames, Reconomy

YOUNG BUSINESS PERSON:
WINNER: Samuel Marston – Aico

FINALISTS: Alex Riley - WR Partners, Lizzy Coleman – Lingen Davies, Steph Henson – Six Ticks

JOHH CLAYTON AWARD:
WINNER: Howard Thorne

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD:
WINNER: Richard Sheehan



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Chamber of
Commerce



Sarah has joined insurance specialist

A Shropshire insurance broker has welcomed a new commercial account handler to the team who has wide-ranging industry experience.

Sarah Trott has joined the Henshalls Group and she'll be based at the company's head office in Newport.

She was previously employed by another local insurance broker for 16 years as an account handler and then as an account manager.

At Henshalls, Sarah will join the Business Insurance team and work with commercial clients across a whole range of industry sectors.

"After working in insurance for so long, I have supported clients who run all kinds of businesses and I'm really looking forward to starting a new challenge in my role with Henshalls and learning more about their ever-growing client base," said Sarah.

"The best part of the job is getting to know the clients so I can meet their individual business needs and also building relationships with insurers to source the very best cover available.

"Everyone at Henshalls has been so welcoming, and it feels great to be part of such a friendly and professional team."

Henshalls Managing Director Mark Freeman said Sarah was the latest addition to the Group which was constantly growing to keep up with the increase in demand for its services.

"We're delighted to welcome Sarah to Henshalls and she's already made an enthusiastic start on learning more about the clients she'll be working with and getting to know her new colleagues.

Sarah Trott will be based at Henshalls in Newport



"As a Group, we're always looking to recruit ambitious and dedicated people who want to take their first steps in the insurance industry, or people who are looking to build on the skills they already have in order to take their career to the next level.

"We're renowned for our extremely high levels of customer service and it's a pleasure to see our team going even further to exceed customer expectations at all times."

Placement leads to promotion

A Shropshire accountant who initially joined a local company on a university placement has now been promoted to an Associate Director role.

Hayley Price spent a year at Dyke Yaxley Chartered Accountants in Shrewsbury as part of her studies at the University of Wolverhampton, before returning as an Accounts Clerk following the completion of her degree.

She currently works as a Client Manager in the firm's agricultural department alongside Director Mark Griffiths and she has been with Dyke Yaxley for over ten years. During this time, Hayley has trained and qualified as a Chartered Accountant and then as a Chartered Tax Adviser.

"I'm absolutely delighted to have been named as an Associate Director and I couldn't be prouder of the recognition I've received," said Hayley.

"Dyke Yaxley is a great company to work for and I thoroughly enjoy my work meeting up with clients – I particularly enjoy the sense of accomplishment I feel knowing I've been able to help them with their accounts and tax compliance.

"I manage a portfolio of sole traders, partnerships and limited companies, and I'm committed to delivering the very highest level of support to every client.

Hayley Price, Marie Bramwell and Mark Griffiths



"To have been promoted to my new senior position is a great honour, and I'm pleased that my work has led to such a great opportunity."

Dyke Yaxley Managing Director Marie Bramwell said: "Our company ethos has always been to encourage our team members to continuously develop their

skills and Hayley is an excellent example of someone who has worked hard and shown great dedication.

"Thanks to her experience and wide-ranging knowledge, she plays a key role in our team, and we're looking forward to the contribution she will make to our future plans and strategies moving forward."



Shropshire law firm appoints two new associate solicitors

Two lawyers at a Shropshire law firm have been promoted to associate solicitors in recognition of their knowledge, experience and service to their clients.

Clinical negligence specialist Adam Hodson is based in Lanyon Bowdler's Shrewsbury office and deals with claims involving delayed or missed diagnosis, surgical errors, cancer cases, deaths and inquests, as well as acting as an assistant coroner for the Birmingham and Solihull jurisdiction.

He said: "I joined Lanyon Bowdler in May 2021 in the depths of the pandemic, and I recall a sense of trepidation joining such a nationally-recognised team during what was a stressful time nationally.

"However, I was instantly made to feel at home by everyone, and it was clear that the move was the right one for me.

"As well as getting to grips with a challenging case load since joining, I have now taken a leading role in supervising and mentoring trainee solicitors during their seats in clinical negligence, and it is a fantastic privilege to watch them grow and develop as fledgling lawyers.

"I am thrilled to have had my efforts recognised by the partners, to whom I wish to sincerely thank for my promotion to associate.

"I am extremely grateful for the support

that has been given to me by everyone at Lanyon Bowdler, and I look forward to continuing to support and advise clients and their families – both locally and nationally."

Joining Adam as a new associate solicitor is Staci Robinson, a specialist in family law who is based in Lanyon Bowdler's Hereford and Bromyard offices. She said being made an associate solicitor was a landmark moment in her career.

Staci said: "I am delighted to have been appointed as an associate by the partners, which is a title that recognises my expertise and my loyalty and dedication to Lanyon Bowdler.

"I am proud to be an associate at Lanyon Bowdler, and always ensure I work to the values of the firm delivering high-quality advice with excellent client care."

Staci has been with Lanyon Bowdler since 2016 and specialises in matters that concern the arrangements for children, together with any applications made under the Children Act 1989, and financial cases arising from divorce or the breakdown of a relationship.

As a member of 'Resolution', she follows their code of practice which promotes a constructive approach to family issues, taking the needs of the whole family into account. Staci is recognised in the national lawyers' guide, The Legal 500, and regularly represents clients in court, conducting her own advocacy.

For more information, contact Lanyon Bowdler on 0800 652 3371 or visit the website www.lblaw.co.uk



Staci Robinson



Adam Hodson

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New classes aimed at wellness

Renowned Wellness Coach **Laura Butler** has teamed up with **Love2Stay** in Shropshire to launch a brand new set of classes designed to tackle mental health and wellbeing issues in the workplace.

Butler, an accredited health and wellbeing coach, has already built up a loyal following and client-base via her business, wellBe – which focuses on programmes for both individuals and companies alike. Now though, she's on a mission to transform the way businesses view employee wellbeing both in the office and beyond.

Partnering with Love2Stay, a major touring and glamping site in Shropshire, the new set of bespoke employee wellness days have been designed to boost team and individual wellbeing through a range of activities. With bookings available for half-days and full-days, they can be tailored entirely to meet the needs of any organisation – whether it's a local, small business looking to reconnect with its employees, or a national company looking to put employee mental health first on a regular basis.

Laura says these types of classes and



Laura Butler

packages are proving to be “more important than ever” at this time, following the turbulent periods both business-owners and workers have experienced throughout the pandemic.

“I've been working with clients since before the pandemic, carrying out retreats and activity sessions – but I can say with absolute certainty that never before have I experienced a time like this, when employee wellness needs to be at the very forefront of business thinking,” Laura says.

“The pandemic was difficult for everyone, with so much uncertainty going on for business-owners and employees. And now that we're coming out of it, people are really starting to realise just how much has changed. Some people have adapted to working-from-home, others haven't, and there are some who are finding the transition back to the workplaces more difficult than they ever thought they would.

“Bringing teams together on wellness days is proving very powerful.”

“We've built our employee away days with this in mind, which is why they are going to become a super important and dynamic part of any workplace programme.”

Packages can be tailored to suit the needs of any organisation and match individual company values. With options to choose from half-days and full-day packages, Laura's activities can include any of the following evidence-based restoration sessions, including yoga, cold water swimming, assault courses, healthy cookery demos, breathing work, coaching sessions, mindfulness meditation, and more.

If you're a business or organisation looking to book a wellness day or find out more you can contact Laura directly Laura@laurabutlercoaching.co.uk

Research findings highlight lack of forward planning

Did you know that only 40% of people have a will, and even fewer - just 12% - have a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) in place?

Writing a will is important for all of us, but if you are a business owner and don't have an LPA, you could be lining up your business for some major problems in the future.

Edward Rees, partner and head of the private client team at Lanyon Bowdler Solicitors, says getting the necessary arrangements in place should be a priority for everyone who owns a business.

“The research done by Canada Life during the pandemic suggested that something like 31 million people have not written a will, with even more without the peace of mind of a Lasting Power of Attorney,” he said.

“Most people understand the need for a will, but people are less clear about what a Lasting Power of Attorney - known as an LPA - actually is. In simple terms, an LPA legally assigns someone to act on your behalf if you lack the mental capacity to do so.

“It's a sad fact that something could happen at any time, and without warning, to affect your mental capacity, and it's vital to have considered who will look after your affairs should the need arise. This is even more important if you run



Edward Rees, partner at Lanyon Bowdler

a business. An LPA can specifically cover your business or personal affairs - or both - and enables someone of your choosing to step in if you are unable to do so, whether through illness or due to an accident.”

There is a common misconception that someone's spouse or business partner will automatically be able to make decisions

on their behalf, which can lead to major disruption.

As Edward explains: “Unless you have appointed an attorney through an LPA, whoever is trying to access joint bank accounts or make business decisions will face a long and stressful legal battle.

“The day-to-day running of your business could be severely affected. For instance, it may not be possible to access bank accounts to pay wages or authorise insurance renewals.

“You can choose whoever you wish to be your attorney, provided they are over 18 and not bankrupt, but it's important to think carefully about who you appoint. It needs to be someone you trust to make these important decisions for you and is capable of carrying them out.

“If you are in business it also makes sense to take specialist advice to ensure that the powers granted by your LPA to your attorney(s) are consistent with any business partnership agreement, articles of association or shareholder agreement.

“Taking out an LPA is something many people don't think about until it may be too late, but by planning your affairs while still able, you will have the peace of mind of knowing that everything is in good hands whatever may happen in the future.”

For more advice, call the team at Lanyon Bowdler on 0800 652 3371 or visit www.lblaw.co.uk

Our People Your Team

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Helping a high profile client

Members of the Tax, Business Advisory and Commercial teams at WR Partners provided financial and tax due diligence advice to Foresight Group on their acquisition of a majority stake in UPVC window manufacturer, Rooms & Views, headquartered in Flintshire.

The work on the deal was led by Neil Holtschke, Transaction Services Senior Manager and Andrew Hague, Partner in the Business Advisory team. Tax due diligence was undertaken by members of the firm's specialist tax consultancy team (Charlie Thompson, Emma Williams and Dan Hayley) led by Tax Partner, Paul Brown.

The work undertaken focussed both on the historical financial and tax information in respect of the target group and on forecasts of future profitability and cash generation. A key area of focus was ensuring the business' ongoing working capital needs could be met post completion. The WR Partners team worked in conjunction with the team from Foresight, management of the target company and other due diligence providers across various fields.

Neil Holtschke said "It was a great experience for the whole team to work with such a high profile and well-respected organisation like Foresight. The assignment was not without its challenges (they never are!) but we were able to work with all parties to give the investor the comfort they needed to make the investment. We are very proud to have been able to play our part in getting the deal over the line and it's clear that the investment by Foresight will enable management to take what is already a great business to the next level."

Charles O'Riordan, Investment Manager at Foresight Group said "It was a pleasure to work with Neil, Andrew, Paul and the team at WR Partners on Foresight's investment into Rooms and Views. The whole team at WR Partners worked closely with R&V and Foresight to produce a high-quality report to support our investment and we hope to do more together in the future."

Gold accreditation

SBM is celebrating 28 years of business and is delighted to have been awarded a Gold Accreditation with Ricoh UK for another. SBM have achieved this continuously since it was introduced 10 years ago. The Accreditation is there to give customers the assurance that they will receive a quality service on Ricoh equipment that is maintained to manufacturers standards. The review is undertaken annually and the following criteria must be met:

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- All Engineers Ongoing Training Must Be Fully Up To Date
- Service Systems Are Checked For Response Times, First Time Fixes and Total Uptime

The SBM Digital Systems Team work hard every year to maintain very high standards and it's great to get confirmation from our main partner that we continue to meet and exceed their requirements to be an Accredited Gold Partner. The Team pride themselves on the highest levels of customer service and are committed to ensure customers have print, copy and scan working consistently and correctly. SBM have invested heavily during COVID to renew systems enhancing Service Reporting, Toner Fulfilment and Invoicing to continually improve our customer's experience and ensure the business is in a strong position to serve our customers as they return to their offices.

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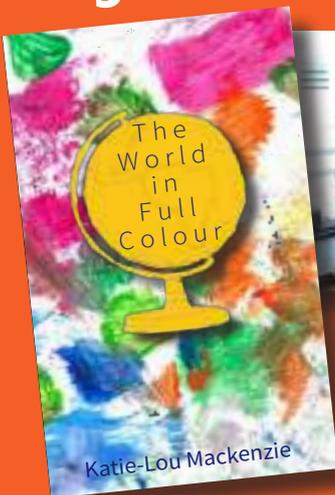


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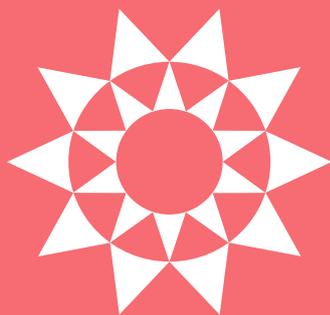


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Investing in working from home

With more people now working from home or a hybrid of working at home and the office, is it worth investing in your workplace? Harry Reece, managing director of one of the chamber's latest member, Shrewsbury's Base Architecture, examines the argument:

Since Covid turned our working environment on its head, whether it's worth investing in improving your office space is something we get asked about a lot.

Working from home or splitting your time between there and the office is now part of everyday life and often an expectation for potential employees. Business owners and leaders are understandably nervous about investing into their physical workplace, as they're worried that staff might have little interest or desire to actually use it.

Your workplace, though, shouldn't be a place where you're chained to your desk. It's where you socialise with colleagues, learn from your peers and develop in your field of expertise. The workplace is simply an environment that you can't recreate at home or in a virtual world.

It's also a space to showcase your businesses, your values and your brand. In a very visual world packed full of likes and shares, dull dreary places do not light people's fires and they may choose to avoid these places or even resent being based there.

Given the choice, clients want to visit and engage with businesses that are exciting and inspiring. You can showcase your business through your social media and marketing campaigns but also through your physical offices.

You've probably guessed by now that I'm a believer when it comes to businesses investing in their office or workspace. Here at Base, for example, we have extensively upgraded one office and are now considering repeating the process at a second. We experienced a 100 per cent return to work as a result, with the benefit of flexible working if the team so wish. In 19 years, we haven't had such a united and proactive team.

You don't necessarily need to spend a lot of money to make a difference either, but you do need to carefully consider how your business functions (or how you want it to function).

When looking at schemes like this for clients, we do a full, detailed business appraisal first to find out how teams communicate and link together, what the business specialises in and how their systems work.

As sustainability becomes ever more important for businesses, we can also look at how improved heating and cooling can make for a better work environment as well as improving your carbon footprint. Some of the cost of the investment might also be offset by cheaper bills long-term!

Once we've established the constraints and opportunities in each project, we can tailor some innovative and exciting design solutions.

A project we did for our friends and clients at Iconsys is the perfect example of this. We designed a fully bespoke and automated smart HQ to support their continued growth, incorporating a fully automated building for both office and factory staff.

If you're not sure whether investing in your office is the right thing to do, it's always worth an initial conversation - it could be an investment that reaps rewards in the long run.

Architect with growing portfolio

A record year of enquiries and appointments is driving the continuing growth of a Shropshire architecture practice.

Base Architects, which has offices in Shrewsbury, Chester and Conwy, has recruited several new staff to support its growing portfolio in the residential and commercial sectors across the UK.

Base received its highest ever level of enquiries in its near 20-year history in the first month of 2022, closely followed by a record number of appointments to projects in February. This followed a 15 per cent growth in turnover during 2021 to 2022.

The company has added another architectural technologist, Kieran Thomas, to its team, with recruitment for an additional architect in its Chester office underway.

Lucy Grubb has become Base's second business and planning executive to support the increasing demand for its services in that field with graphic designer Sophie Booth taking up a new role as creative consultant.

Managing Director Harry Reece said the fact that Base was experiencing its best ever year to date indicated the confidence of its clients in its 'concept to completion' service.



Sophie Booth, Lucy Grubb, Kieran Thomas with Base managing director Harry Reece

"We expanded our team last year, strengthening our planning and design expertise, and these new appointments are another positive move as we enjoy unprecedented growth," he explained.

"We pride ourselves on being a one stop shop, dealing with everything from design and planning to on site administration, which takes a lot of strain from our clients, especially commercial property investors who want a proactive team that can offer a comprehensive range of feasibility, planning and design services.

"Our new appointments are a very

welcome addition to the Base team and we look forward to building on the success of the past year."

At the beginning of 2022, Base introduced a new feasibility service for commercial property developers, an area where it is experiencing substantial growth. It is also facing continuing high demand for its residential services for extensions, new builds and grand designs properties.

Alongside its expansion, Base is investing in bespoke project management software from specialists Shoothill to support its day-to-day business operations.



Jackie's green treat

A fast-food kiosk has been serving up a green treat for its customers – after ditching a diesel generator for a pioneering new environmentally-friendly system which helps save money and the planet.

The MunchBox on Telford's Stafford Park has been trialling AceOn's portable energy storage system - which can power all their lights, refrigerators and toaster for a whole week on one charge.

The AceOnPES comes with an inbuilt 2kW inverter and custom-made battery pack which can be charged using solar power or mains electricity and costs just £2 a week to run compared to the £25 cost of a diesel generator.

It is being developed by AceOn – itself based on Stafford Park and one of the country's leading battery and energy storage specialists - to offer clean off-grid power across a range of low-cost applications.

MunchBox owner Jackie Griffiths said the AceOn system had more than proved its worth during the month-long trial.

"The portable generator has been absolutely brilliant," said Jackie. "It is clean, green and totally silent. It doesn't run on dirty diesel or make a constant noise like the old generator and has saved me more than £25 a week into the bargain.

"What's more, it's great to be able to tell all my customers that we are doing our bit for the environment by cutting out the fossil fuels and using the portable generator instead."

AceOn managing director Mark Thompson said he had offered Jackie the generator on trial to test it out in a real-world environment and was thrilled with its success.

"We are developing the AceOnPES as a clean, environmentally-friendly alternative to the millions of diesel generators currently in use all over the world but which are facing being phased out because of the pollution they cause.

"Our portable generator is being developed to use second life EV car batteries, which can be charged for nothing through solar panels or for £2 a week using the mains. It runs without any noise at all and is the ideal solution for anyone wanting off-grid, portable power whilst using a circular economy by reusing second-life EV batteries that will be coming back to the market in their thousands as the UK goes



electric. There's been a lot of talk about how diesel generators running things such as ice cream vans are contributing to climate change and should be banned, and our AceOnPES offers a fantastic, green alternative.

"We are working in Nigeria on developing a new version which uses sodium ion batteries which are based on salt and put much less of a strain on the earth's resources and believe they could add a whole new dimension to portable power for people all over the world.

"If the recent heatwave showed us anything it is that we cannot keep going on the way we are and must start embracing renewable, green technology which cuts our carbon emissions, helps us achieve Net Zero and gives our children and grandchildren a world which has a future."

AceOn Group offers everything from an AAA battery to multi-megawatt battery energy storage products and focuses on bespoke battery pack design and manufacture, battery distribution, residential energy storage and ancillary renewables products, large scale commercial and industrial battery storage, and portable energy storage and generators.

Mark has more than 30 years' experience in the industry and co-founded AceOn in 2010. He is a member of the UK Government's national Faraday Battery Challenge Advisory Board and in 2012 was a winner of the UKTi Growth for Export competition when he designed and brought to market the world's first four-pin AC solar generator with iPod sound system. Visit <https://www.aceongroup.com/>



Football club sponsorship deal

DMOS People have announced they will sponsor the Shrewsbury Town North Stand at Montgomery Waters Meadow for the next four seasons, through to the end of the 2025/26 season.

The sponsorship continues the company's support since 2018. Presently the stand is named after their temporary recruitment arm – DM Recruitment. The stand is due to be renamed to the DMOS People stand – the name which covers their three recruitment brands, which also includes Opus Vitae for permanent positions and Simply Interview – a technical recruitment business. The new branding is due to go up in the coming weeks.

Stuart Danks, Director of DMOS People, said: "We are thrilled to continue the support of our local side. It was fantastic to see supporters back in the stadium on a regular basis after the strange couple of years we've all experienced, and we're already looking forward to the new season getting underway.

"Here at DMOS People we believe in



Stuart Danks and Andy Tretton

giving back to the community where we're based, and we know football is hugely important to a lot of people – so what could be better than supporting our town's club! We hope the next four seasons prove fruitful for the team."

Town's Commercial Manager, Andrew Tretton, added, "Stuart and the DMOS People team have supported us for a number of years now, and that support is appreciated by everyone at the football

club. I'm delighted that they've continued their sponsorship, four years is a significant commitment, and I'm looking forward to working with Stuart and his team once again".

Visit www.dmosgroup.com for more information about the recruitment business, with their head office based in Shrewsbury, and temporary and permanent recruitment solutions across the West Midlands and mid-Wales.

Cementing plans for an extension

Bradford Estates is paving the way to meeting its environmental commitment with a £1million farm road and grain store extension constructed from low carbon concrete.

It is one of two innovative products being used during a rolling programme of works across the estates – the second being ecological paint, and they are complementing the ongoing installation of air source heat pumps during property refurbishments.

The low carbon concrete absorbs carbon dioxide throughout its life, is 100% recyclable and reduces carbon emissions associated with concrete by up to 35%, while the ecological lime paint is helping to create healthier and more sustainable homes through its graphene technology.

Alastair Hollands, Construction Director at Bradford Estates on the Shropshire/Staffordshire border, said: "We are putting in a new farm road at our main farming enterprise, Woodlands Farm. The road is using 295 cubic metres of concrete and we are just about to do the grain store extension which will take about 4,000 square metres of concrete. We are talking about an overall development at Woodlands costing more than £1m.

"Shifting to Hanson Eco Plus concrete will cost us more but the fact that it absorbs CO2 over the course of



Alastair Hollands,
Construction Director at
Bradford Estates

its life means it is the right thing to do and goes hand-in-hand with our ongoing commitment to the environment. It is more difficult to get hold of than normal concrete but we will keep using it as we embark on future projects

"The Graphenstone paint is again more expensive than what we would otherwise use but its ability to absorb CO2 over its

lifetime has actively encouraged us to make the shift as part of our planned maintenance and general refurbishment of properties – fitting in with the estates' wider remit in terms of reducing our carbon footprint and becoming generally more sustainable.

"We are currently using the paint on a first property, a Grade II Listed building, Church Farm House and cottage. We will then be moving on and using it on another farmhouse as we make the shift to this product over time. It will be used on any future refurbishments and we have plans for two more, possibly three, this year.

"This is all alongside the installation of air source heat pumps during refurbishments and increasing levels of insulation. We have now installed seven air source heat pumps at our properties, we are about to start on another one and have a further two or three properties lined up beyond that.

"It all means that as well as reducing the carbon footprint, we should see a reduction in utility bills over the course of a year – something which is even more important as energy costs continue to rise. In basic terms the pump is about three times as efficient as using fossil-burning fuel."

To find out more about what Bradford Estates does visit <https://www.bradford-estates.co.uk/who-we-are/>

Be more inclusive

A specialist Shropshire college is urging businesses to help train and employ talented young people with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Derwen College wants local enterprises to back their life-changing supported internship programme, which is an introduction into employment for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

It's the ideal opportunity for businesses who would like to become more inclusive to see how employing a person with SEND could work in their company. An employer would need to offer regular weekly voluntary work during term time, with a view to offering the intern employment at the end of the year if the intern is capable and independent. The College is confident that they will be!

Derwen College has a range of brilliant young people who need the opportunity to hone their skills with just a bit of extra support from a college-supplied job coach.

Capable potential employees looking for vital work opportunities include JT, from Telford, who is interested in a career in retail or business.

JT is a student at Derwen College Telford; he is 18 years old and is autistic. JT likes to work in customer-facing environments and understands the importance of customer care and how good customer service can benefit a company. He also has good money handling skills.

He has completed work experience placements at Derwen College print shop, charity shop, garden centre and on a Derwen stall at Much Wenlock Market. He also enjoys a weekly external placement at Jolly Good Eggs Farm shop, in Telford.

JT completes tasks such as visual merchandising, stock checks, pricing, stock rotation, serving customers on the till. He is able to complete admin-based tasks with confidence such as printing, trimming and laminating.

Or there's Maisy, a polite and hard-working Hospitality & Food student, who is looking for work at a cafe or restaurant. Maisy has worked in the College's Orangery Restaurant, Garden Café, Hotel 751 and Food Centre. She has won medals in Restaurant Service skills competitions, and has enjoyed external work placements at McDonalds and Gobowen's Station Café.

The College is particularly keen to find supported internship placements in the Telford and Shrewsbury areas in a business admin, retail or hospitality environment.

Many employers in the county are keen to diversify their workforce, and create a more inclusive environment. A lack of understanding can sometimes hold them back, says Derwen College Work Experience and Supported Internship Coordinator Abi Baker

Abi and her team are doing everything they can to support businesses to work with employees with learning difficulties. Creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce can be an incredibly fulfilling experience, with employers reporting an increase in motivation in the workplace.

Just a day a week in a work environment provides vital experience for interns which helps them towards employment and a more independent future. Interns are supported at all times during their placements by a Derwen College job coach, with this support tapering off as the intern becomes more independent. The College also supports employers on how to make their environment more inclusive, this is usually far simpler and less expensive than employers might believe.

Work experience and Supported Internship co-ordinator Abi Baker said:

'Presently, fewer than 6% of young people with learning difficulties go into work. Supported internships create opportunities for young people who may have special educational needs, but have proved they are able and willing to work. This enables them to enjoy job satisfaction and also to live more independent lives.

"An intern can be a real asset to a business. Businesses that we work



say they have found it a rewarding thing to do. Offering internships and employment to a person with a learning difficulty promotes diversity and boosts a company's reputation for being community-minded and inclusive."

Agri-cation CIC, in Wrexham, offer supported intern Keeley a weekly placement.

They said: "Keeley is such a wonderful engaging individual that fits into any role given to her at Agri-cation CIC. Her approach to challenges is very constructive, and she is keen to ask questions to make sure she understands the task at hand so that she can apply her knowledge and skills to get a desirable outcome. I am impressed with Keeley's creative abilities and each week she uses this talent to create beautiful recycled items to help develop our sensory garden. She is a joy to work with and I would recommend that people engage in this programme to create opportunity not only for the student but the employer themselves.

Weston Park, near Shifnal, work with supported inter Oliver, on a Horticulture placement.

They said: "Oliver has been incredibly helpful during his time with us so far. He and his PA Miriam have tidied up an area that we haven't had time to look after for some years. It now looks fantastic and it is all down to them!"

This year, Derwen College has been awarded a prestigious Queen's Award for Business for Promoting Inclusion. Last week, the college won an award for 'Pathways into Employment' from Natspec – the leading membership association for specialist education providers.

To find out more about offering work opportunities to a young person with SEND, please contact Abi Baker on abi.baker@derwen.ac.uk

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



Are you getting ready for Christmas?

The Shropshire-based Hencote Estate has unveiled its plans for the 2022 festive season – and promises a Christmas to remember.

The award-winning vineyard is planning a special Christmas menu to run throughout December and a series of party nights for companies to say thank you to their staff.

Dishes will be served comprising homegrown and locally sourced produce, alongside some of the estate's award-winning wine.

The corporate party nights will include food, drink and music to keep partygoers dancing into the early hours – with places still available for companies on December 17 and 23.

Managing director Mark Stevens said Hencote was committed to putting on high quality events at accessible prices.

"We are really looking forward to celebrating another year with the Shropshire community and businesses



from across the county. We had exceptional demand for our corporate nights last year and are really looking forward to welcoming partygoers back this year and helping them celebrate the year in an exclusive and fun environment. It's important to us that everyone has the opportunity for

an exceptional Christmas by providing memorable experiences at appropriate prices."

The View's Festive Menu will be available throughout December for both lunch and dinner reservations, with two courses priced at £36 per person and three courses priced at £42 per person.

For those looking to continue the festivities there are complete festive packages available, including overnight accommodation in either the renovated Georgian farmhouse The Grange, or Hencote's luxury glamping lodges.

The Grange sleeps up to 14 guests and is fully equipped with amenities such as a cedarwood hot tub, steam room and view of the Estate's 60-acre gardens, with the glamping pods including use of the wood-fired hot tub and log burner for a cosy winter's evening.

For more information or to make a booking, visit www.hencote.com or call 01743 298444

Opening another Dulson centre

Driver training expert Dulson Training has opened a new centre to help the company meet the demand of new contracts from Wolverhampton and Birmingham.

Driver training expert Dulson Training has opened a new centre to help the company meet the demand of new contracts from Wolverhampton and Birmingham.

The new training and testing site is situated near the A5 and M54 between Telford and Gailey and will also act as an additional resource to complement an existing centre in Telford.

Dulson Training also has bases in Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Wrexham and the latest expansion has seen a £150,000 investment in vehicles - all of which will be based at the new site.

Steve Dulson, of Dulson Training, said: "The new centre is better situated for our Wolverhampton and Birmingham learners, helping us to deliver training and testing on a lot of new contracts as well as supplementing the services we are providing at our Telford site.

"We are providing PSV and HGV Category C1, C and C+E training courses there, so lorries and buses, and we are also offering B+E car and trailer training courses. It's a major move for us which will make things easier to service a growing base of West Midlands clients.

"In order to help meet this rise in demand we have purchased four Euro 6



Renault T range tractor units and tri-axle box trailers at a cost in the region of £150,000. This new investment is taking us up to being one of the largest training fleets in the UK."

Mr Dulson said the B+E accredited training, which applies to car and trailer towing, is something still deemed as extremely important despite the Government axing the test requirement last year.

"The pressure is still on individuals and companies to make sure anyone towing a trailer is safe and responsible to do so - even though there is no longer a need to take a test," he added.

"It's still advisable to have formal accredited training and we are providing these courses at all our centres. We have contracts with local and national companies to deliver this training on everything you need to know about towing a trailer - including loading, reversing, hitching and checking to ensure a trailer is safe to go on the road. We have private and corporate clients and during the last three weeks we have delivered training for companies in Cumbria, Hull, Devon, Norfolk, the West Midlands and Cheshire.

"Companies are certainly seeing the

value in both insurance and corporate responsibility in making sure their staff are safe to tow on the road.

"A course can be undertaken with us with the driver using their own car and trailer or, alternatively, we can supply the equipment.

"That can involve car and caravan, towing a horse box or for construction or utility use, such as low loaders, mini-diggers or tipper trailers - anything that applies to towing within the B+E category."

The opening of the new centre comes as Dulson Training celebrates being accepted on the Register of Apprentice Training Providers (RoATP), having successfully complied with the high standards to obtain Government approval.

"We have invested a lot of time into this - it's very difficult to obtain this status," Mr Dulson added. "But being an approved apprenticeship training provider is another thing which has helped us with contracts throughout the West Midlands and North Wales."

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

Flooring the competition

Resin 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.

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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.

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Resin Flooring Association, CHAS and are Safe contractor approved.

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

Thanks from volunteers

Volunteers who take care of a Telford park have thanked a local insurance broker for its ongoing support covering the cost of a vital policy.

For the past four years, the Henshalls Group, which has offices in Newport and Shrewsbury, has paid for the annual public liability insurance cover for the Friends of Telford Town Park.

And managing director Mark Freeman said the broker was very pleased to be able to support the organisation for another year, particularly in such challenging economic times.

"We are always keen to help community-based groups and given the difficult two years we've all been through, it's great to be able to help the volunteers who would otherwise have had to raise the funds themselves.

"They play a key role in ensuring the valuable green area at the heart of the town is at its very best, and thanks to their hard work, so many people benefited from a precious open space throughout the pandemic.

"And now, with the cost-of-living crisis hitting hard, we wanted to give them peace of mind that their insurance fees would be covered without them having to worry about raising more funds."

The Friends of Telford Town Park began in 2003 as a group of three people who all felt that the park needed some extra care and attention. The group was formally constituted in 2004, and currently consists of over 20 members from all walks of life.

The volunteers are involved in many different activities throughout the park's 400 acres including gardening, hedge laying, scrub clearing, promotional events, installing bat and bird boxes, and other general environmental maintenance work.

FOTTP chairman Chris Pettman said the ongoing support from Henshalls and other local companies was crucial to their operation, and it was very much appreciated.

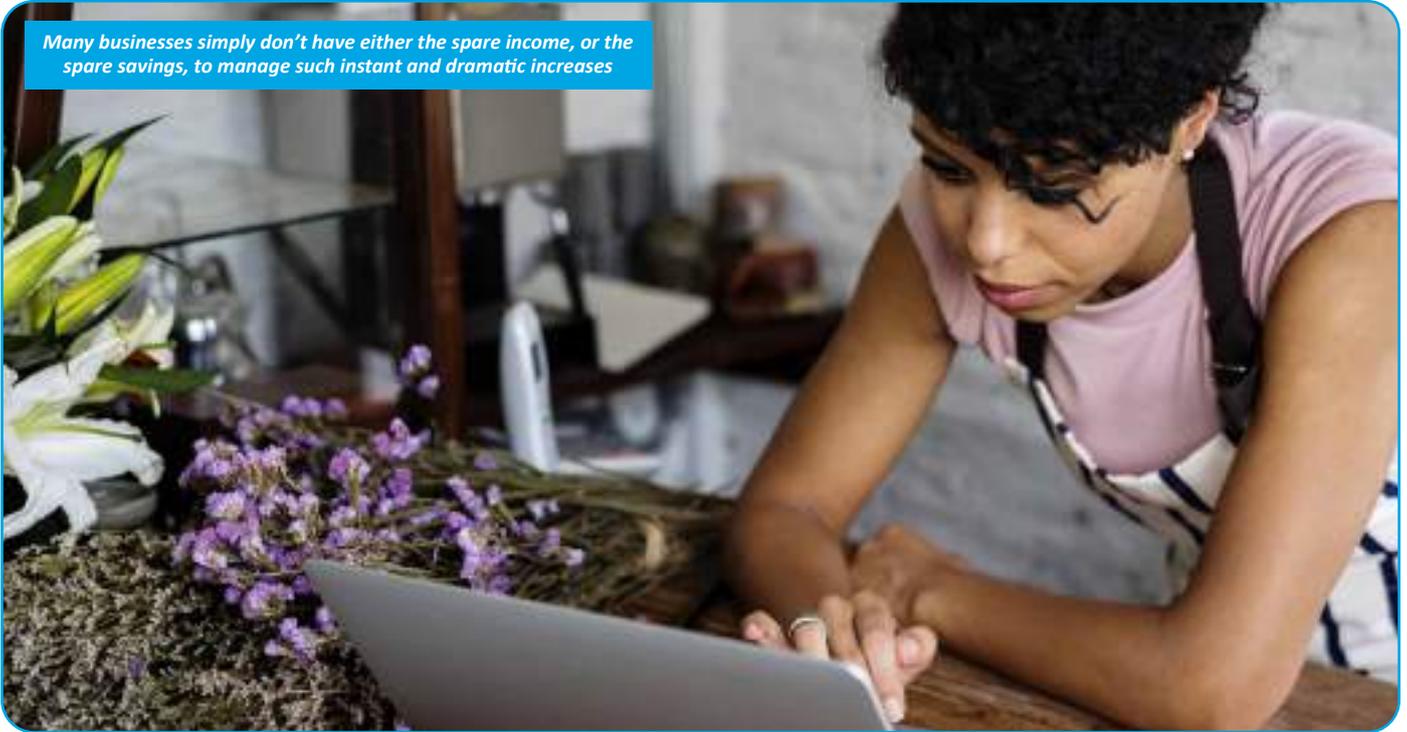
"Without the help of businesses in the area, we would not be able to continue to care for the park which is such an important open space. Around 700,000 people visit every year and we believe it's one of the largest urban town parks in Europe."

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Many businesses simply don't have either the spare income, or the spare savings, to manage such instant and dramatic increases



How firms can tackle the rising cost of doing business

We're all now familiar with the cost of living crisis - how households are struggling to keep up with bills and afford the rapidly rising cost of food, fuel and other essentials.

But there's another crisis, similar to the struggle households are going through, which is dramatically hitting businesses, and that's the 'cost of doing business' crisis. Firms across the country are being confronted by rapidly rising costs of vital raw materials, fuel, wages and, of course, energy.

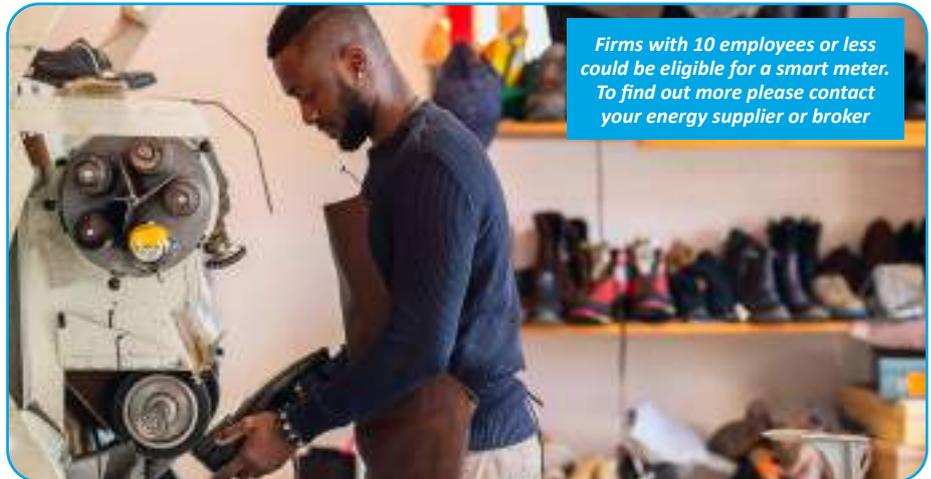
Many businesses simply don't have either the spare income, or the spare savings, to manage such instant and dramatic increases.

What's caused this?

The current price inflation is one of many impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, which interrupted supply chains, clogged manufacturing, and created the global delays that are being seen years later.

This has been worsened by worldwide issues such as the conflict in Ukraine, and the continuing Covid-19 lockdowns in China, which have also increased prices.

Battered businesses now face a stark



Firms with 10 employees or less could be eligible for a smart meter. To find out more please contact your energy supplier or broker

choice – whether to pass on the increases to their customers, or to try and absorb these new expenses to keep prices down.

A positive step for businesses

In order to cope with these dramatic cost increases, firms need to get a grip on their expenditure. Unexpected bills are the last thing they need in this current climate – and in particular energy bills are a significant worry for a lot of bosses.

There's some good news though - installing a smart meter is a positive step in taking control of business outgoings.

Once installed, energy readings will be sent directly to the supplier, bringing an end to estimated bills.

That means that businesses will only pay for what they use – and some energy suppliers may also offer an in-home display screen, to show exactly how much energy is being used. A handy way to bring an end to shocks at the end of the month!

Firms with 10 employees or less could be eligible for a smart meter. To find out more please contact your energy supplier or broker.

Author's dream is realised by four Chamber members

A Shropshire mum and her two boys are celebrating the launch of their first book to raise awareness of Down Syndrome thanks to four Chamber members.

Katie-Lou Mackenzie, from Lawley, Telford, has written and published her book "The World in Full Colour" in a bid to support others who might be earlier on in their journey.

Katie-Lou, whose three-year-old son Alfie was diagnosed with Down Syndrome hours after he was born, chose to write the book through the eyes of a sibling of a child with Down Syndrome as she felt siblings could often be overlooked but yet they are "the ones who ground you and show you how amazing all children are". She was inspired by her older son, Jack, 7.

The book, which has already reached number 4 in the Amazon charts, was published thanks to the help of Shropshire Chamber of Commerce members J&PR; Media & You; WPG and BNI Shropshire.

Kirsty Smallman, director of J&PR met Katie-Lou through a friend and introduced her to graphic designer Paul Naylor from Media & You - who she knew through another fellow Chamber member BNI Shropshire - to get the project off the ground.

Mr Naylor knew the team at WPG (Welshpool Printing Group), which is a Patron of the Shropshire Chamber, would be the perfect collaboration and once he had designed the book using Alfie and Jack's artwork and the first book came off the printer at WPG, it was over to J&PR to share the amazing story!

Mrs Mackenzie said: "The team and support I had to get the book published were brilliant and made the process so much easier than I thought it would be.

"The children were involved every step of the way from designing with Paul to seeing the printing happen at WPG to appearing in radio interviews thanks to J&PR - they have become quite the stars!

"Within a few days of the press release going out the book was in the top four of the Amazon charts. It has been quite overwhelming and I'd like to thank all who helped me get this far."

Mrs Smallman, director of J&PR said: "It has been a joy to see the book become a top seller within days of sharing Katie-Lou's story. It is always a privilege to interview and write someone's story - even more so when someone opens their heart so openly. This was a very special story to share and we look forward to working with Katie-Lou and the boys on their next book."

Kelly Griffiths, Sales Account Manager at WPG, said: "We love to build a personal relationship with all of our clients at WPG Ltd, so it's always nice to meet people face to face.

"We were also very happy to hear Katie-Lou would love to visit us on-site to see her job being printed on the press, whilst having a tour around our premises.

"They all arrived with huge smiles, understandably, unable to hide their excitement at seeing her first published work coming to fruition. Alfie was the superstar of the day, and it was lovely to have everyone over to visit."

Mr Naylor, from Media & You added: "My two design 'apprentices', Alfie and Jack, did a brilliant job - it was obvious to me that their artwork should be the inspiration behind the cover and something Katie-Lou had not thought of but something she loved.

"The short journey has been such a success and proof of how successful a Chamber collaboration can be. We all look forward to working together again soon."

Katie-Lou also runs a Facebook page called "Nothing Down Here But Love" which shows Alfie's journey and the blonde



Publisher Paul Naylor joined Katie-Lou and Alfie Mackenzie on a visit to see the book cover printed by Neil Boag at WPG



Some of the team from BNI Shropshire, including Kirsty Smallman from J&PR and Paul Naylor from Media & You

haired, blue eyed toddler has just won a modelling contract too! Katie-Lou is already helping to spread the message to employers through the Down's Syndrome Association Work Fit employment programme and the family have also had pin badges designed and made with "What's Your Super Power? Trisomy 21" on to raise awareness of Trisomy 21 and raise funds for Down Syndrome charities.

"The World of Full Colour" is a light hearted, positive story, that takes the reader on a journey, demonstrating that 'perfection' can be what we want it to be if we open our eyes.

The story is full of achievements, love, inclusion and different perspectives of the world, where a cheeky, stubborn little boy called George and his brother James achieve their big dreams with the help of a little bit of magic from their eccentric Great-grandad.

● To arrange a book signing, if you would like to stock the book or order a copy of the book which is on sale now, visit https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/1800688946/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_2F9C53M8MKT7TNNVQ384 Alternatively, email Katie-Lou at k8_lou88@hotmail.co.uk or send a message through the Facebook page @nothingdownherebutlove



Law firm raises £2,800 for charity

A Shropshire law firm has raised £2,800 for a local charity over the last 12 months.

mfg Solicitors, which has offices across Ludlow and Telford both chose to support Shropshire Mental Health Support as its chosen charity and has announced they will continue raising money until 2023.

So far, the big-hearted team have raised the money through a popular Wine and Pimms event, a Christmas hamper raffle, and a sponsored walk from Titterstone Clee in Ludlow for eight miles down the Shropshire Way.

Kirsten Bridgewater, partner and chair of the CSR committee at mfg Solicitors said: "It is fantastic to see so many people getting involved in fundraising events over the past year and there always seems to be something positive going on in our offices.

"Whether it be pushing themselves physically, or dressing up, our staff always want to get involved.

"The partnerships we build with our various charities are very important to us as a business and on a personal level and I am looking forward to seeing what fundraising events will be on the calendar next.

"We are delighted to have raised so much this year and know it will be put to good use by the charity."

Mfg also have offices across Worcestershire and in Birmingham who have raised over £5,000 for their own nominated charities over the past 12 months.



Roy Munton from Shropshire Mental Health Support, Kirsten Bridgewater, Sally Smith and Stewart Harris

Helping develop international markets

Paul Kalinauckas



Companies across the Marches are being urged to take advantage of a fund to help them develop their international markets.

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has launched its new Internationalisation Fund for eligible businesses in England.

Match-funded grants of between £1,000 and £9,000 will be available to help support companies which want to develop and expand their international operations.

To secure a grant, companies will need to fund a proportion of the costs themselves. This will be either 40 or 50 per cent of the total cost.

The funding can be used to help meet the cost of:

- Market research
- Intellectual property advice
- Translation services
- International social media/SEO
- Trade fairs (where no TAP funding is available)
- Independent market visits
- Consultancy and other international commercial services

Marches LEP Access to Finance champion Paul Kalinauckas urged businesses across the region to make use of the fund.

"This funding can offer real help to businesses across Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin to develop their global footprint.

"If any company is thinking of developing or expanding their international operations, this fund can be a huge help."

To qualify for funding, the business must be based in England, be a small or medium sized enterprise (SME) with up to 250 employees, have an annual turnover of less than €50 million or annual balance sheet of no more than €43 million and no more than 25% of the business should be owned by an enterprise which is not a SME.

The fund is supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

For more information and to start an application visit <https://www.great.gov.uk/campaigns/internationalisation-fund-for-english-businesses/>

Manufacturing journey

Bosses at a Welshpool factory, who plan to invest £3million over the next five years, opened its doors to encourage more youngsters to start their manufacturing careers on National Manufacturing Day.

Morland UK, which manufactures and distributes on a global level, welcomed visitors from colleges, government and national industry bodies as part of the Make UK National Manufacturing Day to their sites on Buttington Cross Enterprise Park.

The visitors enjoyed a tour of the three factory sites where they learned of the success of the family owned business since it was founded in 1972 and the recruitment and career opportunities across the business.

Morland UK - which manufactures timber based products including panels and profiles for the leisure and caravan industry, luxury yachts and anyone converting vans into campers also provide fire doors and other products into the construction sector - turned over £26million last year.

The business is part of the Interior Products Group which also includes Newmor - a wall coverings manufacturer - which is also based in Welshpool.

The business, which currently employs 125 people, has recruited a number of staff members over the last eight weeks and are looking to recruit at least another 10 across all areas of the business including the factory, sales, accounts, IT and others from apprenticeships to graduate opportunities and those looking for a change in their career as well as entry and mid level production roles.

James Morris, Managing Director of Morland and of The IP Group - whose grandfather launched the IP Group in 1967 - said: "Our five year plan includes an investment of £3million across our three factories which will include solar panels and more automation equipment.

"Investment such as this means that the composition of the job offering changes and means we are offering more highly skilled jobs. Everyone has the opportunity here to scale up what they do. The investment means the factory workforce can move from manual skilled to higher level skilled value added jobs.

"It's certainly an exciting time here. Like any business we are experiencing changes in the supply chain and with recruitment but the question is 'what are we going to do about it?'

"The answer is to engage with the community, look after our staff and keep investing."



Morland UK welcomed visitors from colleges, government and national industry bodies as part of the Make UK National Manufacturing Day

Russell George MS, member of the Welsh of the Welsh Parliament for Montgomeryshire who attended the event, said: "It's a brilliant opportunity for young people to see for themselves the opportunity right here in Mid Wales.

"I would like to thank Morland for opening their doors on National Manufacturing Day to celebrate the fantastic manufacturing we have here in Wales."

Richard Allen, sales and marketing director at Morland said it was the first time they had held the event in partnership with Make UK.

"It is a great opportunity to champion manufacturing here in Wales. We are genuinely influencing the future of people who start their careers here and we are very proud of our technical excellence.

"There is so much scope for people here and the family feel is in everything we do which means our staff stay with us for many years.

"We have staff who travel from across the border from Shropshire and as far as Wrexham as well to work for us. However many people still seem to consider us as a hidden secret - we have so many exciting opportunities here and we want people to be able to work and enjoy the exciting opportunity we have here on their own doorstep."

Steve Cass, from Newtown College which is part of the NPTC Group of Colleges, said: "This is an excellent opportunity for

apprentices to see the huge opportunities for engineering right here in Welshpool. Many young people are struggling for placements at the moment so opportunities like Morland are offering are exceptional. If I was going into manufacturing then this is most certainly the place I would want to come to."

Cllr Carol Robinson, representing Powys County Council and Welshpool Town Council, added: "This is absolutely amazing. We want to keep our wonderful young people here and for them to take opportunities like this."

Andy Ellis, from Mid Wales Manufacturing Group, said: "Employers and employees may not have the contacts they need to find the right people or the right job so we take the right job opportunities like here at Morland and take them to the right colleges and universities."

Make UK is working with the Government and companies including Morland and will be circulating the job opportunities to every jobcentre across the UK and into schools.

The Manufacturer's Organisation is proud to demonstrate the value of a manufacturing apprenticeship as an alternative route post school/college, and also promote these opportunities to women and other minority groups, helping to attract new talent for businesses looking to develop their future skills pipeline.

Anybody interested in applying for any positions at Morland UK should email rachel.jones@ipgroup.one or visit <https://www.morlanduk.com/careers>





Jack Fallows from Herald Wealth Management



David Pugh of Lanyon Bowdler

Raising awareness of NHS pension benefits

A financial adviser and legal expert are joining forces to raise awareness amongst health workers about the value and benefits of the NHS pension.

Jack Fallows, a financial adviser from Herald Wealth Management, and David Pugh of Lanyon Bowdler, an expert in wills, trusts and the administration of estates, have started an awareness campaign for health workers in Shropshire.

After an inaugural presentation at Lanyon Bowdler's Shrewsbury offices, to an audience of current and retired NHS employees, the pair are planning to take the campaign into hospitals and other care settings.

Jack said: "Understandably, knowledge of the NHS pension can be really low because it is such a complex area, and with thousands of people working, or having worked, in the NHS, it affects a significant number of people.

"Misunderstanding about the pension is a common reason that people leave the NHS, so we want to raise awareness and increase understanding about its value.

"The NHS pension is actually an extremely good pension, with hugely valuable benefits, but it is complicated - so we are doing our best to simplify it.

"Most people assume their home is their biggest asset, but if you have worked in the NHS for a long time your pension can, in essence, actually be worth more than your property."

David added: "We thought it made sense to join forces for this campaign, because an understanding of your pension is vital when planning for retirement and getting your affairs in order.

"Whenever I advise someone on their will, and they have an NHS pension, it's often the case that they do not understand the amount of benefits they are entitled to.

"Each NHS pension Member's Guide is long and convoluted, so it's not entirely surprising, but we are really keen to get the message out that if you are working in the NHS, or recently retired, it's a good idea to do some research to ensure you don't miss out."

For more information about the campaign, contact David Pugh at david.pugh@lblaw.co.uk



David Pugh and Jack Fallows at Lanyon Bowdler

New head of brand at event venue

Telford International Centre (TIC), has announced the appointment of Mathew James to the role of Head of Brand at the leading Midlands-based event venue.

Mathew has previously worked for TIC in the same role prior to Covid-19 and knows the venue proposition and destination intimately. He was responsible for a series of stand-out campaigns that have helped position the venue as an innovator in the market. These include turning the TIC into the UK's largest escape room for event agencies to experience and master-minding the award-nominated brand film: The Heist.

Reporting to TIC Managing Director, Alison Griffin, Mathew will again be responsible for developing and delivering the venue's marketing communications strategy, as well as spearheading work on redefining TIC's brand across all business areas - especially important as the venue grows back stronger after the pandemic.

Commenting on his appointment, Mathew says: "It's a privilege to be back working with the brilliant TIC team. There is a huge amount of experience, passion and know-how in the venue which

translates into delivery of some of the best events in the UK.

"I can't wait to be part of the next step of the TIC brand and experience journey."

Alison Griffin, Managing Director at TIC, comments: "Post-pandemic, live events have returned with a bang as businesses, event organisers and consumers realise the value of meeting in person for sales, learning, networking and leisure. With high market demand, the venue was looking for the consummate marketing professional to ensure Telford retains its premier position and so I am delighted Mathew chose to return to TIC - he brings proven expertise and a potent combination of marketing creativity, strategy, planning and delivery."

Mathew has held senior event and corporate PR and marketing roles, most recently as VP of Global Marketing and Communications at event technology company Konduko and working for brands such as Nissan, Diageo and BAFTA. He also brings a wealth of other experience-related disciplines including equality and diversity and emergency planning.



Staycation boom continues for county

A Shropshire businesswoman who launched her business to host accommodation said the staycation boom is continuing across the county as people enjoy the UK, despite the easing of travel restrictions.

Vicky Brown ended her 22 year career in car sales to launch Pass the Keys Shropshire which manages short-term and holiday rental properties such as those listed on Airbnb and other such sites including her own site www.passthekeys.co.uk/midlands/shropshire Vicky said the business has become so successful she is already looking to expand her team to host more short term rental properties and holidays lets.

"My business has been going just 10 months and I couldn't be happier with the results so far. I have always been interested in property so this is like a dream job.

"I manage Airbnb properties for people who might have their own unrelated businesses, have a family or live abroad and have a portfolio of properties which they are unable to manage to the high standard expected as they live abroad or elsewhere in the country. It is a full management service so the owner doesn't have to do anything - only enjoy the income from their property.

"I organise the welcome, the changeover, the bookings and deal with any problems guests may have 24/7," she said.

Vicky, who lives in Hadnall, said the properties she currently manages were across Shrewsbury and North and South Shropshire but had availability for more.

"It is such an enjoyable business as you get to know the property owners, and then the guests who come and stay and why they come to Shropshire."

Pass the Keys Shropshire also boasts its own online bookings facility which the properties go on to as well as other website listings such as Airbnb.



Pass the Keys Shropshire

"I'm a one stop shop for property owners who want full management and first class customer service is at the heart of everything I do - just as it has been throughout my career.

"Shropshire is a beautiful place to stay, live, socialise and holiday and the right accommodation in the right place is key," she added.

Anybody who would like to find out more about property, listing or guest management can visit the website <https://www.passthekeys.co.uk/midlands/shropshire/> or email vicky.brown@passthekeys.co.uk

Continuity needs an IT aspect

Every business should have a continuity plan – and that plan should have an IT aspect that protects systems and ensures the survival of a business.

A business continuity plan is a document held by businesses that explains what managers and employees would do in the case of a serious cyber breach or if the business is the victim of fire, flood or other threats.

In this case a business may not be able to continue with its day to day operations - without a business continuity plan there may not be the possibility to get operations up and running quickly enough to avoid severe impact on the business itself.

A business continuity plan needs to cover far more than just the tech - and it is also important to think about where it is stored.

Daniel Ellis, of PC Net partner's EPX Technical Services said: "Our advice would be to not store your continuity plan on your server, as generally, that's the thing that's not working in the disaster.

"With a business continuity plan, sure, keep it on the server, but print it and keep it in safe in someone's desk.

"It is the document that will tell everyone what they need to do and where they need to be so it is important to have someone in charge of accessing the document and giving instruction on what should be done."

A number of different threats face a business including cyber

A number of different threats face a business including cyber attacks, which many businesses are now aware of and prepared against, but there are many threats that employers do not think about

attacks, which many businesses are now aware of and prepared against, but there are many threats that employers do not think about.

"Utility failure is also quite common and even just the power goes out for an afternoon - it doesn't happen a lot, but it does happen," adds Daniel.

"You may also have natural disasters. You may be thinking of floods and tsunamis, but don't also underestimate the power of a tree falling on a telephone wire in high winds."

There are many different ways to put together a continuity plan and certain steps that the plan needs to cover.

- Assess the risk: how likely are they to happen, and how impactful will they be?
 - Make a plan that says: in the event of [disaster], we will do [solution/reaction]. For example, in the event of a tree falling onto a telephone wire, what are you going to do about it? Are you going to switch over to a failover line, or send everybody home? Either is absolutely fine, because your company has a plan for it.
 - Who is going to be responsible for that plan?
 - How often are you going to cast that plan?
 - Don't forget about your customer impact. If your phone line has gone down, can you change your voicemail or send an email out informing them that they won't be able to reach you.
 - How long do these recoveries take, and is that time ok?
- Chamber members that have further questions about Business Continuity Plans should speak to their IT provider or contact PC Net Solutions on info@pcnetsolutions.co.uk

Aico retain Company of the Year award in a triple win

Aico, the European Market Leader in Home Life Safety, are delighted to have retained their Company of the Year title at this year's Shropshire Chamber of Commerce Business Awards as well as taking home the awards for Sustainability and Young Business Person of the year.

The Shropshire Chamber of Commerce Business Awards recognise successful businesses in the county. This year, Aico were shortlisted for a record-breaking six awards and won three, becoming the first company in the awards twenty-two-year history to retain the Company of the Year award and only the third company to win the top award more than once. The previous awards ceremony was carried out virtually due to the pandemic, so in this year's ceremony Aico were invited on stage to collect their previous title and were then delighted to take home the accolade again for 2022 at the end of the night.

Aico's wins began with Samuel Marston, Aico's Product Development Executive taking the Young Business Person of the Year award in a particularly strong category. Samuel, who joined Aico at 18 years old as a level three Infrastructure Technician Apprentice has since flourished, earning an EDA Gold Circle before being promoted to his full time Product Development Executive role. Seeking continuous improvement, Samuel is now working on his level four Manufacturing Engineering Apprenticeship. Samuel also enjoys supporting Aico's CSR programme, Aico in the Community through supporting local education in his role as a STEM ambassador.

Aico also took home the award for Sustainability which celebrates companies that have gone the extra mile to lower their carbon footprint. Aico have pledged to reach their Net Zero goal by 2030 and are continuously looking for innovative ways to cut their carbon footprint. The market leader has not only made huge progress in cutting their product waste over previous years, but they have also massively extended their photovoltaic system, added ten new EV charging points to their headquarters and are near completion of changing their entire company fleet of vehicles to hybrid/electric vehicles.

Managing Director Neal Hooper commented "What an honour it is to become Company of the Year for the second time in a row. We are a strong company of good



Aico Colleagues on the night with the awards for Company of the Year, Sustainability and Young Business Person

people living our values on a day-to-day basis, I am delighted for all my Colleagues for this recognition. Thank you to the Shropshire Chamber for an amazing evening of celebration, well done to Samuel and all our fellow winners".

Product Development Executive Samuel Marston who won the Young Business Person award added "I was honoured to have been awarded the Young Business Person Award. Many thanks to all those involved, especially

all my Aico Colleagues for supporting me, who have been a real credit. Well done to everyone else shortlisted in my category which had some really tough competition this year."

To find out more about Aico's journey to Net Zero, please follow: www.aico.co.uk/sustainability

To find out more about Aico in the Community, please visit: www.aico.co.uk/in-the-community

Further prizes achieved

Wednesday 6th July saw Aico, the European Market Leader in Home Life Safety, win two trophies for their HomeLINK Internet of Things (IoT) connected home platform at the EG Tech Awards and the Computing Digital Technology Leaders Awards.

At the EG Tech Awards, Aico won the ESG category, which recognises the best use of tech to improve the sustainability of a building and resident wellbeing. Aico's entry successfully demonstrated how the HomeLINK IoT platform assists landlords in identifying properties for retrofit to increase thermal efficiency, while improving indoor environmental conditions by predicting the risk of damp and mould.

Jordan Toulson, Product Manager at HomeLINK, attended the EG Tech Awards and comments, "We had a great time at the EG Tech Awards and being recognised for "The best use of tech to improve the sustainability of a building" as well as for "The best wellbeing innovations in property" in such a strong group of shortlisted nominees for the ESG Award is a real honour."

The innovative HomeLINK IoT platform achieved the accolade for the Big Data / IoT Project of the Year, in recognition of Aico's project with Barnet Homes, involving the roll-out of the IoT platform to over 3,000 properties. Aico's connected home offering met the category criteria by illustrating how Barnet Homes have utilised the system to provide safer homes for residents and deliver social value, while generating a return on investment. This award-winning IoT project has already had a life-saving impact on residents by identifying dangerous levels of carbon monoxide within several properties. The remote data insight enabled Barnet Homes to react quickly, keep residents safe and perform the necessary maintenance duties.

Stuart Bishop, Director of Property Services of Barnet Homes, who played an integral role in the Barnet Homes IoT roll-out adds, "Barnet Homes is delighted to have been instrumental in AICO



Chamber welcomes another new patron

Law firm PCB Solicitors is the latest professional services company to become a patron of Shropshire Chamber of Commerce.

The company provides wide access to legal services across Shropshire and the border towns with offices in Telford, Shrewsbury, Church Stretton, Ludlow, Knighton, Welshpool and Bishop's Castle.

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce's patron programme exists to give a select group of dynamic businesses in the county various opportunities to raise awareness of their organisations, and express their commitment to the success of the Shropshire business community.

PCB partner Danny Smith said: "We decided to become patrons to cement our growing relationship with the chamber and to really set our brand

within Shropshire Commerce and beyond.

"The training and resources provided by the chamber is great value for money and provides an excellent opportunity for staff to network and develop.

"The patron scheme helps us to reach out to more business and individuals across our network and beyond."

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

"Patrons understand and engage with one another and aim to identify opportunities, trade with and obtain

introductions for and each other wherever possible.

"The objective is to generate ideas, enthusiasm and dynamic business opportunities and to feed this back through Shropshire Chamber and onwards to the county's businesses as a whole.

"Through their attendance as patrons at appropriate events, networking forums and business expos, they demonstrate their belief in the programme and through on-going membership they commit to maintaining the highest standards."

More information about Shropshire Chamber's patron programme can be found at www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk/about-us/shropshire-chamber-patron-programme.

Flaxmill furniture delivery

Known as the Grandparent of skyscrapers Shrewsbury's historic Flaxmill has been repurposed and adapted many times.

And as the site evolves into a new workspace and community hub in 2022 Chamber Patron's Chrisbeon Office Supplies has been delivering furniture to the site for the first time!

Richard Hughes, Partner at Telford-based Chrisbeon, said: "The Flaxmill is an iconic building and we are really proud to be working with Historic England to transform it into the new workspace and a place for people to celebrate and explore the past.

"We work with so many Shropshire businesses and working in such a fantastic building that has such wonderful local history has been a real experience for the whole team.

"We hope that as the Flaxmill get more tenants in the offices we can help those companies and organisations plan their space - our 3D planning allows us to design around the iconic but sometimes awkward layout and the building's pillars to create fantastic office space.

"Hopefully our visit will be the first of many deliveries we will make into the building over the next few years."

The Main Mill opened in 1797 as a purpose-built flax mill and since then the site has grown and changed. It was a maltings from 1897 to 1987, but also served as a temporary army barracks during the Second World War.

The freehold for the Flaxmill was bought by Historic England in 2005 who partnered with Shropshire Council and the Friends of the Flaxmill to save the buildings and give them new life.

The focus of the current restoration is the Main Mill and Kiln and they are set to open this year to welcome people to eat, learn, visit, work and enjoy the listed buildings dating back to more than 200 years ago.



Blank canvas – furniture arrives at the historic Flaxmill



Office specialist Chrisbeon on site



Protect, care and invest to create a better borough



Supersonic link-up with RAF Cosford for aviation students

Telford College is working with RAF Cosford to ensure its aviation students can experience all the latest innovations in aerospace technology.

The college's level two and three aviation courses are the only ones of their kind in the area, and attract students from across the West Midlands, as well as into Wales.

Enrolment is now under way for the new intake in September – with the added bonus of being able to go behind the scenes at RAF Cosford as an integral part of the study programme.

Robert Lees, the college's director of engineering and aviation, said: "We've all seen the headlines in recent weeks about staff shortages in the aviation industry – and that means big opportunities for our students.

"Thanks to the relationship which Telford College has developed with the team at RAF Cosford, our aviation students get incredible access to their facilities, to see first-hand what it's like to work on real aircraft.

"They also get to spend time in Cosford's supersonic wind turbine, and learn their trade on the GenFly training rig which replicates the hydraulic systems and landing gear of front-line aircraft."

It is estimated that, across Europe alone, more than 130,000 new technicians will be needed between now and the year 2037 to work on the maintenance of aircraft.

Graduates from Telford College's aviation courses have already gone on to a wide range of different roles, from engineering apprenticeships to careers with well-known airlines such as Ryanair.

Robert said: "People sometimes think aviation is a niche sector to be in, and that you have to live near an airport, but for every aircraft that is flying, there are hundreds of support companies that need to be properly staffed, to keep them in the air.

"So although this kind of qualification will certainly allow you to work in an airport, that's just a small part of it – it will also give you a road into a much wider aviation industry support network."

He added: "It is the perfect course for people who like working with their hands and working outdoors, because especially in the early years they will be flightline mechanics.

"We have the benefit of fantastic virtual and augmented reality facilities here at Telford College which can simulate many engineering scenarios – but there is no real substitute for getting your hands dirty, and working on real aircraft.

"The close bond and the links we are developing with the RAF is something that nobody else can offer. It's the thing which really sets us apart."

For details about Telford College's aviation courses, and other engineering-related programmes, see www.telfordcollege.ac.uk/join-us/our-courses/full-time/



Behind the scenes – Telford College aviation students get the chance to learn at RAF Cosford

Breathing new life into balloons

Virgin Balloon Flights has launched a campaign to give its retired balloons a second lease of life

The UK's craft makers, businesses, entrepreneurs and community groups are invited to pitch ideas as to how they would re-use the fabric from decommissioned hot air balloon envelopes.

Based in Telford, Shropshire, Virgin Balloon Flights flies from more than 100 locations across the UK.

Each Virgin balloon hosts 10,000 passengers with 600 hours of flying before being retired. One balloon consists of 34,000 square feet of nylon material, which is enough to cover 16 football pitches.

In the past, Virgin Balloon Flights has been finding other ways to use its retired balloons – the durable, lightweight, and tear-resistant fabric makes for great covers for the balloon baskets and extra insulation for the walls of its large barn workshops

But the company currently has too much balloon fabric to re-purpose itself, meaning several balloon envelopes that can no longer be flown have started to languish at the back of the workshop.

Maria Wilkinson, head of marketing at Virgin Balloon Flights, said some of those who had already requested the fabric had made some really fabulous new items with it.

"We've seen some stunning handbags and purses made by some of the entrepreneurs who have already had some of our fabric, which has been fantastic.

"Since we launched our campaign, we seen requests and ideas to use the



Virgin Balloon Flights is based in Telford



Inside the balloon fabric

fabric for Scout and nursery activities, sanitary bags for school girls in Africa and sewing projects for women battling cancer, among of host of other inspiring suggestions.

"We would love to see the fabric used by as many Shropshire business, community groups or even just members of the public as possible, as we've been based in the county since the beginning of Virgin Balloon Flights.

"Anyone at all can apply for some of our fabric, so please let us know if you'd like any."

People, business and community groups across Shropshire can pitch ideas how to use the material via Virgin Balloon Flight's website at <https://www.virginballoonflights.co.uk/up-upcycled-and-away>.



New manufacturing area is officially opened

Temperature control specialist SMI has officially opened a new two-storey manufacturing area at its Telford-based headquarters.

The expansion is the result of a ten-fold increase of in-house manufacturing capabilities at the fast-growing company, which sells thermal insulation products across the world.

SMI has spent the past two months creating the purpose-built new machining, cutting and manufacturing area at its Stafford Park site.

The walls have been insulated with the company's industry-leading thermal protection material, Tempro – which proved its credentials by keeping the building cool on the hottest day in UK history.

SMI founder and chairman Brian Seymour performed the official ribbon cutting. He said: "This is a giant area of floorspace which we so desperately need to keep pace with the company's growth.



SMI founder and chairman Brian Seymour cuts the ribbon, with director Jill Seymour

"I want to genuinely say an enormous thank you to the crew here at SMI for all the effort and hard work they have put into making this happen. It is an absolutely brilliant job."

The ground floor area, covering more than 180 square metres, houses SMI's team of expert machinists, and a new mezzanine floor will soon be in operation directly

above them for extra cutting and assembly capacity.

Director Jill Seymour said: "We now have ten times as many sewing machinists compared with four years ago – and we expect this number to continue to grow.

"Thanks to this project, they now have a state-of-the-art, fully air conditioned facility, which also doubles up as a demonstration area for our clients."

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

Its client list includes big name brands such as Waitrose, Morrisons, Asda, Sainsbury's, Marks & Spencer, Co-op and Lidl.

The company also works with the NHS and the Ministry of Defence, and has become a leading thermal insulation supplier for the protection of food, chemicals, agricultural and home delivery products.

Double award success

Shrewsbury's multi award winning travel agency, Peakes Travel Elite, has two more successes to add to its already long list of accolades.

Peakes Travel Elite has been shortlisted in the National and Regional Categories of the 2022 Travel Weekly Agent Achievement Awards, which are the UK and Ireland's biggest celebration of travel agents.

In June the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce held their annual business awards, and Peakes was crowned winners for the 'Outstanding Customer Service' category.

The award singles out a company that goes the extra mile in looking after the needs of their clients, finding ways to exceed customer expectations, measuring customer satisfaction and acting on feedback, developing customer handling skills, adapting to the challenges of Covid, and based on awards, accolades and customer testimonials. At the start of 2022 Peakes was also shortlisted as a finalist for Luxury Travel Agency of the Year in the TTG Luxury Travel Awards 2022.

Claire Moore, managing director at Peakes Travel Elite, said, "Since early 2020 we have seen the town centre flooded more than once, dealt with the travel fall out from Brexit, contended with the never-ending chaos and disruption caused by the pandemic, and the travel unrest following the Russian invasion. It has been far from easy for the travel sector, so to have been



Peakes Travel Elite team

rewarded for our hard work means more to us than I think most will realise – it is the silver lining, and we are over the moon!

"Outstanding customer service is core to our mission, and to have it recognised in this way is a very proud moment for Peakes, especially in our 30th year of trading.

"Thank you to our wonderful, loyal customers for helping Peakes to become

the business it is today. We hope to continue offering our top-level service to holidaymakers for many years to come."

Peakes Travel Elite offers an appointment service Monday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm, and outside those hours via phone and email.

For more details, visit the website at www.peakestravelelite.co.uk



Recognised for its apprenticeships

A Shropshire training organisation is celebrating after being recognised by City and Guilds for the 'Excellence of its delivery'.

SBC Training was presented with a plaque to acknowledge the high quality and standard of apprenticeship provision. In presenting the plaque Morice Hole, City and Guilds Partnership Manager, said "We have analysed our data and due to the high pass rate and number of distinctions at your centre, we are pleased to provide an "Excellence in EPA delivery" plaque. We hope that you will feature this proudly on your premises to showcase the quality of your training and delivery."

She particularly highlighted engineering which has a 100% pass rate with cross the board success rates for SBC Training apprentices currently at an amazing 99% with 52% at distinction.

EPA (End Point Assessment) is the final stage of assessment which marks the successful completion of an apprenticeship.

The presentation was made to Rhian Chadwick, SBC Training's Quality Manager who commented "This is well deserved



SBC Training was presented with a plaque to acknowledge the high quality and standard of apprenticeship provision

recognition for the hard work, quality of teaching and individual support given by the trainers to our learners. Our aim is to inspire our learners to achieve their full potential and the quality of our teaching and coaching is fundamental to that aim."

SBC Training provides apprenticeships in Administrative, Digital, Health and Social Care, Engineering, Construction, and Warehousing sectors. Congratulations to all the successful apprentices and to the trainers who have supported them!

WR Partners advice assists Foresight Group acquisition

Members of the Tax, Business Advisory and Commercial teams at WR Partners provided financial and tax due diligence advice to Foresight Group on their acquisition of a majority stake in UPVC window manufacturer, Rooms & Views, headquartered in Flintshire.

The work on the deal was led by Neil Holtschke, Transaction Services Senior Manager and Andrew Hague, Partner in the Business Advisory team. Tax due diligence was undertaken by members of the firm's specialist tax consultancy team (Charlie Thompson, Emma Williams and Dan Hayley) led by Tax Partner, Paul Brown.

The work undertaken focussed both on the historical financial and tax

information in respect of the target group and on forecasts of future profitability and cash generation. A key area of focus was ensuring the business' ongoing working capital needs could be met post completion. The WR Partners team worked in conjunction with the team from Foresight, management of the target company and other due diligence providers across various fields.

Neil Holtschke said "It was a great experience for the whole team to work with such a high profile and well-respected organisation like Foresight. The assignment was not without its challenges (they never are!) but we were able to work with all parties to give the investor the comfort they needed

to make the investment. We are very proud to have been able to play our part in getting the deal over the line and it's clear that the investment by Foresight will enable management to take what is already a great business to the next level."

Charles O'Riordan, Investment Manager at Foresight Group said "It was a pleasure to work with Neil, Andrew, Paul and the team at WR Partners on Foresight's investment into Rooms and Views.

"The whole team at WR Partners worked closely with R&V and Foresight to produce a high-quality report to support our investment and we hope to do more together in the future."

A new role for Pamela

Take a break with Pamela Bonsall, Membership Engagement Manager at Shropshire Chamber of Commerce.

I am delighted to introduce myself having recently joined the Chamber as Membership Engagement Manager. After spending my first few weeks speaking directly to members, hoping to gain an understanding of the value we bring to businesses, I am keen to get engaging with you all! We have a fantastic and extremely hard-working team here at the Chamber, who are committed to providing exceptional service to our members. It's important that we stand beside you and in support of you during these testing and uncertain economic times.

1. Who is someone you admire, and why?

Baroness Brady, CBE is a one-woman powerhouse, and a tremendous ambassador for women in business. Her expressions of disbelief in *The Apprentice* are also priceless!

2. Tell us three pet hates?

Careless and obstructive customer service, mouldy cups and plates festering in teenagers' rooms and unnecessary plastic food packaging.

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

I am an avid gardener. Actually, does anyone want any courgettes? I currently have a glut and a mutinous family!

4. Who would be your 3 dream dinner guests?

Elizabeth I of England, Will Ferrell and Oscar Wilde – I think it would be a riot!

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

Margarita - lots

6. What is your favourite holiday destination?

have such fond memories of holidaying in Italy whilst the children were small, so I'd have to say Tuscany. Wonderful food, friendly people, incredible architecture, and utterly breath-taking countryside.

7. Name three words that best describe you?

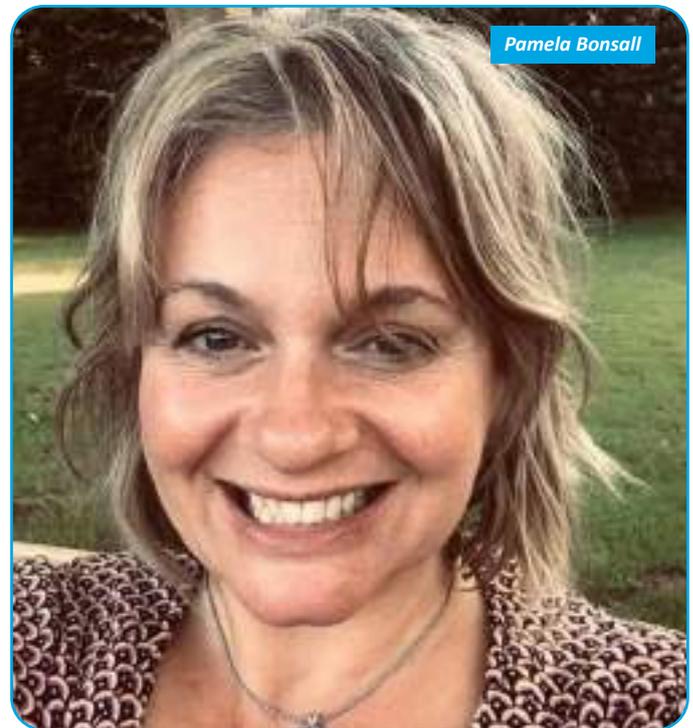
Resilient, curious, and genuine.

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

Ideally, 3 friends as I'd be awful on my own. But I realise it's a stretch to call 'friends' items, so being more practical, how about sustenance, shelter, and a means to make a fire? And not for too long hopefully – 2-3 weeks before a dramatic rescue would be amazing.

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?

I have been meaning to become a PADI certified scuba diver for the longest time. Perhaps this is the year!



Pamela Bonsall

10. What was the last book you read?

A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles, it's a window into Russian life during the Bolshevik Revolution and their subsequent tyrannous rule, from the perspective of an aristocratic gentleman under house arrest at one of Moscow's best hotels. It's a phenomenal read.

11. What is your favourite aspect about your career?

It has been so wide and varied. I have gained valuable insights through my experiences and learning never stops.

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

I imagine I thought I would work with horses but can't recall exactly. I still don't really know what I want to be when I grow up, but I definitely aim to make the most of all opportunities which come my way!

13. What are some causes you care about?

I am interested in ways we can all create habitat in our urban spaces and gardens to conserve our diverse insects and critters, as they play such an important part in maintaining the biodiversity of the planet. 80% of our food crops are pollinated by insects and they are a vital link in the food chain. Rewilding is where it's at, we should all give it a go.

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

If I want to be sociable, I love a good chat over wine and food with friends. If I want solitary 'me time' then I can be found in my garden or riding my horse. I love to visit new places, and we're trying to do more of it.

15. What would be your personal motto?

In the inimitable words of John Lennon, "...everything will be alright in the end. If it's not alright, it's not the end".



SHREWSBURY
COLLEGES GROUP





The charity golf day raised over £5000 for Macmillan

Tee-rific result

A housing provider's charity golf day has raised a tee-rific £5,241 in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. The event, organised by The Wrekin Housing Group, took place at Shifnal Golf Club.

The golf day saw 22 teams compete in the event and raised thousands of pounds to go towards Macmillan's vital work supporting patients and families across Shropshire.

As well as a fun day on the course, more money was raised with the raffle at the end of the day's play.

A number of companies supported the event including Phoenix Heating, CLC, Dodds Electrical, BEW, SJ Cleaning Services, Ideal Boilers, Leavers Building Services, SGS Environmental, Axiom.

Jason Scott, Category Manager at The Wrekin Housing Group, was one of the organisers behind the event.

He said: "Wrekin's charity golf days have always proved popular, but we were truly humbled by the interest and support shown by businesses from across Shropshire for this year's event.

"Macmillan is a charity that has great significance for many of us at The Wrekin Housing Group, and we have proudly supported them for a number of years now. They provide such vital services and support for families and individuals when it is needed most, and we are proud to support the amazing work they do across our communities. Everybody who took part in the Golf Day really are helping to make a huge difference."

The funds generated from the charity golf day means The Wrekin Housing Group has now raised over £80,000 for Macmillan. Wrekin's fundraising efforts have grown in popularity over the years, with employees taking advantage of a match-funding scheme introduced in 2014. Wrekin employees have got involved with a variety of activities including golf days and coffee mornings.

Kate Thomas, Relationship Fundraising Manager for Macmillan Cancer Support Shropshire, said:

"We are extremely grateful to The Wrekin Housing Group and the teams taking part for their fantastic fundraising from the golf day. Donations such as this are vitally important in supporting Macmillan in helping to raise the awareness and help us continue to do whatever it takes to support people living with cancer. This donation could help fund the Macmillan Welfare Rights Service in Shropshire which offers free, confidential, welfare benefits advice for people affected by cancer. The service aims to help people living with cancer cope with the financial cost of cancer, especially bearing in mind the current rising costs of living."

For comprehensive cancer information and support visit www.macmillan.org.uk. The Macmillan Support Line is open 7 days a week 8am to 8pm 0808 808 0000.

Cheers! – it's the return of Shropshire Oktoberfest



Shropshire Festivals' popular sell out drinks festival is set to return to its huge marquees in the Quarry this autumn. Shropshire Oktoberfest will be held on Friday, September 30 and Saturday, October 1.

Last year the festival sold out ahead of the event, and the organisers have reported that ticket sales have been going well since the start of the year, especially for the Chrisbeon VIP area.

The festival site will be filled with independent brewers, distillers and local drinks producers, serving up the best locally made ale, lager, cider, perry, wine, gin, rum, fizz and cocktails.

Fibre Heroes are sponsoring the reusable beer cups and the live music stage. On both days the line-up features lederhosen wearing, Oktoberfest favourite - Vorsprung Durch Oompah.

Friday's acts also include The Follicles, The Vertigo Band and Lost The Plot. The Saturday music line-up will deliver sets from Microbaby, Groove Dynamite, Something 4 The Weekend, Dirty Rockin Scoundrels, Five O'clock Hero, and Ego Friendly. The stage will be hosted by BBC Radio Shropshire's Paul Shuttleworth.

On Saturday there will be barrels of laughs to go with the beers in the Comedy Club or chill out in the DMOS People seating area.

Festival goers can pick their own music in the silent disco tent, sponsored by Throgmorton Associates Wealth Management, and have 5 minutes of fame in Volvo Shrewsbury's Carpool Karaoke tipi.

Shropshire Festivals' Director of Fun, Beth Heath, said, "We can't wait to host Shropshire Oktoberfest

once again! From beer buffs to gin aficionados, local event lovers to party people – you will find the best night out at our annual event.

"There will be loads of lederhosen, Oompah, real ales and our big beer hall, plus there will be all the ingredients for a brilliant day and evening out, with bands performing singalong favourites, our popular silent disco tent, carpool karaoke, delicious street food, and anyone who's anyone will be there!

"We are big advocates of independent, local businesses, so there won't be any mainstream beer at Shropshire Oktoberfest, just the region's best independent drinks producers."

Oktoberfest in Germany traditionally is held mid-late September, ending on the first Sunday of October. Oktoberfest is an important part of Bavarian culture, having been held since 1810.

Beth adds, "Many of our new festivalgoers often remark that they are surprised at how big the event is – there isn't just one bar, and a couple of beer options – we have huge marquees, stretching across the bottom of the Quarry, filled with local brewers serving hundreds of real ales, ciders, and lagers straight to our festival goers, plus our gin, wine and cocktail bars.

"Our Hoppportunity Bar from CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) is always a big hit, selling their top picks and unusual choices, including vegan and gluten free options, which you just don't get on tap normally. CAMRA will also be judging beers from each brewer, and will crown the winning beer 'Shropshire's Choice'.

"Don't miss Shropshire's best party – we'll see you there!"

Discounted advance tickets can be purchased online by visiting www.shropshireoktoberfest.co.uk

The Queen's Baton Relay departs Bridgnorth Station over the footbridge – photo by Dan Shorthouse



Triumph at the Severn Valley Railway for the Queen's Baton Relay

The Severn Valley Railway welcomed the Birmingham 2022 Queen's Baton Relay to its Kidderminster station on Saturday morning, 23rd July. Batonbearer Jess Benyon from Stourport carried the Baton inside the station building and through a guard of honour, made up of many of the SVR's volunteers.

Jess is the West Midlands regional coordinator for the Dwarf Sports Association UK, and organises sports activities for people with dwarfism, including swimming, multi-sports and outdoor adventure activities. She said:

"It was amazing to carry the Baton on the special Severn Valley Railway train, and I'm so proud to have been chosen for this role."

The Baton contains The Queen's Message to the Commonwealth, which was placed inside it in October last year. It's travelled around the world, visiting all 72 nations and territories of the Commonwealth, before it arrived in

Birmingham for the Opening Ceremony of the Games on 28th July.

As the special Baton Relay train, hauled by the SVR's purple-liveried locomotive, No.70 'Elizabeth II', made its way along the 16-mile line to Bridgnorth, it slowed to walking pace as it passed each intermediate station. The platforms were crowded with spectators, who'd come to witness this historic occasion.

"The atmosphere across the whole railway has been joyous," said the SVR's managing director Helen Smith. "It has been a pleasure to welcome hundreds and hundreds of people here today, and to have played our part in this wonderful community event. And what a fantastic opportunity it's been for our stunning purple locomotive to shine once again, alongside the Batonbearers who carried out their duties so well."

The event heralded the start of the railway's summer holiday season, which is appropriately taking its theme from the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, as it hosts a Summer of Sport. As well as a trip on a heritage train, visitors can take part in a host of fun sports and team activities at The Engine House, Highley alongside the SVR's summer crew.

Book tickets at www.svr.co.uk

50 years of support

Shropshire Association for Supported Housing (SASH) is celebrating its fiftieth year of supporting people with enduring mental health issues.

SASH was founded in 1972 following a presentation made by psychiatrist Jimmy Flowerdew to the Rotary Club of Shrewsbury on the operations of Shelton Hospital, the old mental health hospital in Shrewsbury serving the county of Shropshire. Jimmy explained to the club that many of the 800 Shelton residents had no home to return to, and there were very limited options for accommodation for those in recovery still needing support.

Ten Rotary Club members each placed £100 into a fund and SASH was formed. It was a registered charity and Friendly Society that was also registered with the Housing Corporation as a Social Landlord and was supported by Senior Social Managers, Consultant Psychiatrists and Senior Officers in Mental Health, all of whom recognized there was a very strong need for the provision of sheltered housing for patients moving on.

A number of properties were purchased in Shrewsbury and the surrounding areas to provide furnished accommodation and in-house support. Today, SASH has accommodation for just over 20 people. In line with changes introduced by the Supporting People legislation, support is no longer provided by an in-house person, but rather each resident has their own individual care package provided by social services and the community mental health teams. Recent times have seen a steady increase in demand and SASH is once again building its property portfolio to meet that demand.

Residents are referred by the local authority, who continue to provide the social care and support so residents may complete their rehabilitation and become as independent as possible, eventually moving into their own accommodation.

SASH prides itself on providing good quality, non-invasive accommodation and aims to promote independence and respect personal choice, giving residents the freedom to develop and recover at their own pace.

Each resident has their own fully furnished, comfortable bedroom with private shower room. Living in a SASH property, means sharing communal areas, such as garden, living room and kitchen, with other people, who also need support. Its residents find these communal arrangements and socialisation with the other residents tend to aid their recovery.

SASH is managed by a Board of Directors, each of whom offers their time voluntarily. They bring a range of skills, expert knowledge and experience to ensure the quality of the business and the service being offered is efficient, appropriate and consistent.

If you are aged 18 or over, are recovering from or have an enduring mental health issue and feel SASH accommodation may suit you, or someone you know, SASH can be contacted via its website: <https://sash-housing.co.uk/>



Stately home history revealed

The inspiring history of a stately home on the Shropshire/Staffordshire border has been detailed in a richly illustrated and fascinating new book.

Weston Park: the House, the Families and the Influence has been written by Gareth Williams, Curator and Head of Learning at Weston Park.

The estate, at Weston-under-Lizard, was the ancestral home of the Earls of Bradford and dates back to the medieval period.

In 1986, in the face of crippling death duties, the house and the 1,000-acre park were gifted to the nation by the current Earl of Bradford. The estate is now owned and run by the Weston Park Foundation, an independent charitable trust, in perpetuity for the nation.

Gareth said: "Weston Park and its collections is relatively little-known beyond Staffordshire and Shropshire but its influence reaches much further than these two counties.

"The families who have lived at Weston have been involved in national affairs, in politics, the legal profession, and the military, with significant links to

the development of the urban centres of Walsall, Bolton and Wigan as well as the rural areas around the House.

"Weston Park has been a prestigious home, visited by royalty and politicians and is home to a fascinating collection including a significant collection of paintings assembled in the late 17th and early 18th centuries which are now enjoyed by visitors to the House and form a backdrop to the events that regularly take place at Weston.

"It's a fascinating story, which has not previously been brought together to explain how this very rural English stately home is, in fact, associated with the development of so many other places throughout Britain."

The book takes a chronological view of Weston Park's historical associations and those of the people linked to the estate, beginning in the medieval period and continuing to the present day. Chapters bring together the different families who have owned the property, with sections also dealing with the complex evolution of the House's architecture, and the creation of the globally acclaimed art collections



Author Gareth Williams with the new book

amassed by the Newport family. Before joining Weston Park in 2006, Gareth was previously a regional director of Sotheby's and curator for the National Trust at Nostell Priory.

Andrea Webster, Weston Park's marketing manager, said: "Gareth has worked painstakingly to research and document the history of this unique property, and the finished book is stunning.

"It's a fitting record of the house, its setting, extraordinary collections, the people involved and the influence that it has had on wider communities."

For more information visit <https://boydellandbrewer.com/9781783276127/weston-park/>

£5million milestone at networking group

A new member has joined Shropshire Chamber of Commerce to enhance the networking and collaboration opportunities available for all.

BNI Shropshire has joined as one chapter within the organisation celebrates passing the milestone of £5million of business and a successful post-Covid bounce back.

The BNI (Business Network International) Thomas Telford business networking group was meeting face-to-face on a weekly basis in Ironbridge prior to the pandemic but swiftly moved their meeting on-line as they knew how important it was to continue to support each other.

The members, who have since voted to remain as an on-line networking group for the foreseeable, have this month marked passing £5million of business between members since the chapter was launched in May 2010 and £66,491 during the first six months of this year.

The members have also seen the amount of business passed in the group grow each month as businesses have navigated through and out the other side of the pandemic.

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

Paul Naylor, chapter President, said: "Our Chapter proves quality of members comes above quantity when you are looking for business success. You could have 200 people



Jack Fallows, Paul Naylor and Rob Griffiths – leadership team at Thomas Telford chapter of BNI, Shropshire

in a room but if they aren't the right people for you and your business then you might as well be on your own in that room.

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

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

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

"However the importance of meeting face to face should not be underestimated and this still happens with monthly power

team meetings and one to one face to face meetings throughout the week which suits the members so much better.

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

"In June alone we passed nearly £27,000 of business in the room between us which is fantastic. Our members support each other in so many different ways but our chapter has definitely become a one stop shop for people to come to, knowing they will receive great service from any of our members."

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

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

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

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

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



Fundraising with Hadrian's Wall Challenge



The fundraising hike, seen here in 2021

Climbing Out are calling for applicants for their annual fundraising hike. This year they will be taking on the Hadrian's Wall Challenge on October 1st.

Climbing Out offers fully funded places on 5 day outdoor activity programmes, aimed at rebuilding confidence, self-esteem and motivation in people who have been through a life changing injury, illness or trauma. They run several programmes a year across the UK.

The Hadrian's Wall Challenge will have four different routes to choose from, suitable for all abilities. The most challenging route will take on 30km of iconic Northumbrian scenery.

To take part, participants need to complete a registration form, raise a minimum of £150 for Climbing Out and get walking.

Traditionally the annual hike has been a sociable group trip, with a meal the night before, accommodation at a nearby bunkhouse, and a celebratory meal at a local pub after the hike.

Charity founder, Kelda Wood MBE, said, "Please join us for another epic hike challenge! We'll take in some awesome scenery, all whilst getting out, active and raising money for our 2023 programmes.

"The annual hike is a vital fundraiser for the charity, it's also a really fun challenge with a great group of people, which includes previous participants, friends and family of participants and our lovely supporters.

"Your support means the world to us - so what are you waiting for!"

To find out more and to download a registration form, visit the news section on the website at climbingout.org.uk or email Admin@climbingout.org.uk

The Hadrian's Wall route



Village show with a purpose

Bethphage were delighted to host their family fun biennial Village Show at Oak Farm, Ditton Priors, in Bridgnorth. Bethphage is a local charity that supports adults with learning disabilities, and or autism and mental health needs. Our day opportunity, Oak Farm in Bridgnorth provides a working farm environment for the people we support.

Fuelled with enthusiasm the team at Oak Farm put hours of preparation and dedication into making sure the show was a huge success! With a mixture of craft stalls, live entertainment, displays, food & drink, the event also welcomed a staggering

number of dogs and their owners to enter the infamous Dog Show. Waggiest tail, prettiest eyes, shiniest coat, best rescue and worker's choice, there was a class for every dog to enter. With the sun shining, the village show was everything we love about a Great British Summers outdoors!

Ceri Burgess - Oak Farm Manager said: "We would like to say a special thanks to all the volunteers, OFFA (Oak Farm Friends Association), the people we support and staff team who have worked hard behind the scenes to prepare for today. Thank you to our stall holders and

entertainment, to all the dogs/owners who took part in the show and a massive thank you to everyone who came along to support this wonderful event."

"We have raised an incredible £2,500 for Oak Farm, which after the last 2 years of not being able to fundraise at all, will be a great investment for Oak Farm! This money will go towards helping improve the service we offer to the people we support and extend the opportunities available to them."

"We run Oakfest on a biennial basis, so we look forward to seeing you all again for the next one in 2024!"



Much-needed £10,000 grant

The team behind a Shropshire charity is celebrating after winning a £10,000 grant thanks to the support of a county financial adviser.

Shrewsbury-based SYA (formerly Shropshire Youth Association) runs youth clubs, activities for young people and support groups across the county.

Jack Fallows, a financial adviser at Herald Wealth Management, an appointed representative of St. James's Place, applied to the St. James's Place Charitable Foundation on behalf of SYA and was overwhelmed when the application was accepted for the £10,000 grant.

The £10,000 grant will allow the charity's Heads Up Project to run in Brookside in Telford for a further 12 months.

Mr Fallows, who is also based in Shrewsbury and offers financial advice to clients across the UK, said: "When I first discovered what amazing work SYA delivers across Shropshire, I knew I wanted to support them.

"I first met Emma at BNI Thomas Telford and her enthusiasm for the charity led me to volunteer at their Annual Celebration where I was able to meet the young people and the youth leaders and also surprise them with my announcement of the grant!

"Youth clubs were at the heart of a community when I was growing up and I wanted to help ensure that continued.

"The work SYA does is much more than just funding a youth club - the work the charity does is having a direct, positive impact on young people's lives.



"These young people need and deserve our support more than ever following the disruption during the pandemic.

"I am so pleased that I could help them secure the £10,000 which will allow the Heads Up Project in Brookside to run for a further 12 months."

Emma Croall, fundraising officer for SYA said every penny made a difference to their charity with a donation of just £5 funding refreshments at a youth club and £50 funding sports equipment for a youth club. Mrs Croall said: "The support from Jack has been overwhelming for our team.

"We are considered as a hidden secret in Shropshire and people are often unaware of the work and the impact our charity does so to be supported by Jack in order to successfully secure the funds from the

St. James's Place Charitable Foundation is simply brilliant.

"On behalf of the children we support and those of so many more who will benefit from the Heads Up project in Brookside over the next 12 months - thank you Jack."

SYA is committed to helping young people develop and maintain their physical and mental wellbeing and engages with about 6,000 young people each week.

The charity helps to provide the opportunities and skills needed to meet future life challenges and enables them to realise their full potential.

For more about how to get involved in helping SYA or to nominate the charity as a corporate charity of the year contact Emma on fundraising@sya.org.uk and for more information visit <https://sya.org.uk/>

Search is on for celebration event sponsors

West Mercia Search & Rescue are completely a volunteer charity with highly trained team members, vehicles, boats and equipment ready to respond from our Bridgnorth base; to search for, locate and rescue vulnerable adults and children.

We are proud to announce that the Team has recently been honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. "The MBE for Voluntary Groups".

And in addition, 31 members of our team have been awarded the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal "in recognition of 5 years continuous service to the UK Search & Rescue provision".

To recognise these fantastic achievements, we are inviting businesses and individuals to join us at a Celebration Ball on the 17th September at the Punch

Bowl Inn, Ludlow Road, Bridgnorth. We are looking forward to a fun filled evening, with a three-course carvery meal, entertainment from Europe's Top Bon-Jovi tribute act, prize draw and a DJ to dance into the night.

The event runs from 7pm-12am. Dress - formal but we are also asking our supporters to wear something red to help acknowledge our achievements. Tickets are £35 each.

And if you can't make it don't worry you can still support us. We would like to announce new partnerships with local businesses and so we are inviting local companies to show their support by taking up one of our sponsorship opportunities.

We are looking for an overall Event Sponsor, Individual Table Sponsors, a Sponsor for the Event Programme,

provision of wine for the tables and interesting prizes for our draw.

If you'd like to help, please call or email steve.arnold@westmerciasar.org.uk - 07900 160819 - for more information.

A member of the Association of Lowland Search and Rescue, which governs the provision and training standards of Lowland Rescue teams across the UK, WMSAR is the only official Lowland Rescue team in West Mercia region, and part of the UK government's response to search and rescue.

All of our equipment, overheads and training are paid for by charitable donations and grants. All members are volunteers who fund their own travel, personal equipment and training and also commit to fund raising events throughout the year.



SHREWSBURY
COLLEGES GROUP



Projects galore and praise from the High Sheriff

Shropshire Youth Support Trust (SYST) has been riding a wave of success this year with the implementation of new projects.

SYST partnered up with Telford & Wrekin Council for the delivery of two new programmes: Safer and Stronger Communities, with the overall aim to give young people, aged 19-24, who are currently not in education, employment, or training (NEET) support throughout the community and a NEETs Re-Engagement project which grants young people, 16- to 18-year-olds, an option and an opportunity to work towards a sustainable future for themselves. Specifically, they have access to a range of activities, that can be anything from Coding, BMX, Mindset, Driving, Fitness, Music plus many more.

SYST partnered up with the DWP for the charities' creation of a programme that delivers employability, enterprise, wellbeing, and the building blocks of self-belief entitled Breakthru. The support programme consists of Level up (CV

writing, interview techniques, where to look for a job, personal branding) Launch U (A programme garnered towards self-employment), Empower (wellbeing and mindfulness) and Ignite (Exploring ideas, gain skills, valuable experience and self-belief). Speaking on volunteering for SYST and her involvement with the Breakthru Programme, Lisa Avery (Who runs Empower) said "Volunteering with SYST has been a hugely enriching experience for me. It has given me the opportunity to work with a vast array of amazing young people, and help them find a little clarity, courage and confidence to take a step out of their comfort zone and grow into their true potential. It's been a real pleasure to see how people begin to believe in themselves, articulate an exciting future vision, and then take their first tentative steps forward."

Most recently the team has been incredibly busy learning coding as part of the Erasmus project, CAIR4YOUTH which saw Marketing Executive Jason

Fullwood and 2 volunteer youth workers attend a training course in Sweden which was utilised for upskilling Youth Workers to be able to then pass on this newly acquired knowledge and expertise to disadvantaged youth, essentially providing them with skills that may otherwise have been not obtainable to them. Speaking on behalf of the charity's recent success Chief Executive Officer Richard Nuttall said the following "It is a really exciting time for us at SYST because we have so many opportunities within the charity at present that I believe can help more people within the county than we ever could foresee in the past 5 years". With all the excitement and buzz surrounding SYST Shropshire High Sheriff – Selina Graham recently made a visit to the charity. Upon reflection, Selina took to her Instagram to say: Invest in young entrepreneurs, invest in the local economy, invest in the future.

For more details call 01952 299214 or email hello@systbusiness.co.uk

National award scheme launched

A dyslexic Chamber member made MBE has taken her annual award scheme national to shine a light on the talents of dyslexic individuals UK-wide, as well as educators and employers who consistently inspire and empower people with dyslexia to reach their full potential

Elizabeth Wilkinson, who is a member of the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce, has successfully run The Dyslexia Awards in her home-county since 2015.

The awards evening on the 24th September will showcase the diverse skills and strengths of dyslexic people and those supporting dyslexics and the categories are: Amazing Artist Award, Entrepreneur Award, Learning Support Award, Community Shining Star Award (aged 20 plus), Exceptional Educator Award, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) Award, Community Shining Star Award (aged 13 to 19), Innovation Award and Supportive Employer Award.

Elizabeth, who was made an MBE in the Queen's recent Jubilee Birthday Honours List for her services to dyslexia, said the awards were about celebrating diversity in the workplace, showcasing the commitment of educators and marking the achievements of those who are dyslexic to bring about positive changes in society.

"I've dedicated almost my entire working career to raising awareness and greater understanding of dyslexia and have supported



Elizabeth Wilkinson MBE, founder of the Dyslexia Awards

thousands of individuals in that time," said the 50-year-old.

"These awards are about celebrating the amazing talents, skills and achievements of everyday dyslexics, as well as shining a light on supportive employers and excellent educators across the nation.

"So much has been achieved to promote diversity and inclusivity in business, education and society in general but, there is still a long way to go and a lot more work to be done.

"There are so many terrific employers and educators who 'get' that dyslexics offer a vast array of skills, talents and solutions and are working tirelessly to encourage, inspire and empower their dyslexic students and employees to achieve their full potential and it is this work which the awards will recognise."

Research suggests that one in ten people in the UK are dyslexic, however it is not usually identified in childhood and around 75 per cent of diagnoses happen in adulthood, either in the workplace or university.

Elizabeth was 33 when she received her dyslexia diagnosis and 39 when she discovered she was also autistic.

Understanding she was dyslexic only came about after she had been researching the specific learning difficulty (SpLD) to provide support to her dyslexic son and the teachers who were looking after his education.

She said: "It was like a penny had dropped. Everything I read sounded so familiar, but I just wasn't aware before then what the core deficits of dyslexia were and their impact. Once I received an official diagnosis, everything started to make a lot more sense.

In 2007, with a fresh determination, Eli went on to set up her business, The Dyslexic Dyslexia Consultant and since then, she has trained thousands of business leaders and professionals on dyslexia and other SpLDs in the workplace.

She is also the founder of the Dyslexia Information Day – an annual event designed to help people access trustworthy, free information about dyslexia and other cooccurring conditions.

Then in 2015 she launched the first ever Dyslexia Awards for businesses and educators in the Shropshire region only. In 2020, the awards were open to nominations from across the West Midlands and this year, the scheme will go national culminating in an award celebration at Ingenuity – an interactive engineering and design museum located in the heart of Ironbridge, the birthplace of the industrial revolution.

To see the full list of awards, information on how to enter and a timeline of key dates visit <https://theddc.org.uk/dyslexiaawards/>



Protect, care and invest to create a better borough



Cancer Charity Hits £1,000,000 goal

The region's primary cancer charity has revealed its income has smashed the million pound target this year – for the first time in its 43-year history.

Lingen Davies Cancer Fund held its annual awards evening on 12th July to recognise the success and achievements of the fundraising community.

Up to 200 guests, including the charity's Patron Lady Heber-Percy, and the High Sheriff of Shropshire Selina Graham, gathered at Shrewsbury College to celebrate achievements, remember loved ones, and thank the hard work of so many.

Enormous cheers greeted the announcement that for the financial year 2021 to 2022 the charity's income hit £1,075,000.

Naomi Atkin, CEO of Lingen Davies which supports patients impacted by

cancer in the community, delivered the news at the end of the celebratory evening as plans for the next five years were also revealed.

"The Lingen Davies awards event is a very special part of our calendar where we welcome our supporters, both old and new, to join us and mark the achievements of so many," Naomi said.

"We are tremendously grateful to have such a fabulous team of people behind us who all go above and beyond for the charity – as a way of thanking staff in the Lingen Davies Cancer Centre for their care, treatment and support given.

"I am very proud to be able to announce that for the first time in our history Lingen Davies has become a million pound charity.

"But we still have so much work to

do and so cannot take that for granted. We have big plans for growth and our LiveLife Cancer Awareness Service where we go out into the community throughout Shropshire, Telford and Mid Wales, is only just beginning.

"The next five years will be hugely important for the charity, we have a lot we want to do, a lot of projects and support initiatives we want to deliver, and an increasing number of people who need our help," she added.

Ongoing Chair of the Lingen Davies trustees, Mandy Thorn MBE DL, said it was a remarkable evening to celebrate so many people doing fabulous things for others.

For more information on the work of Lingen Davies and how to support the charity visit www.lingendavies.co.uk

Crowdfunding appeal is set to help community radio station

A new community radio station for Shropshire has launched an online crowdfunding campaign.

INTune Radio – which has already established a suite of programmes to support local businesses, charities and communities around Shropshire – wants to raise £5,000 to help it help even more good causes.

The station, which started as a podcast during the Covid pandemic, broadcasts throughout the day and generates 40,000-plus Facebook engagements a month.

INTune founder Wayne Flynn said the station was entirely manned by volunteers with a mission to reach into every corner of the county.

"Your support will help us sustain the number of broadcast hours we can produce, which means we can spotlight more great people and ideas to a growing Shropshire audience.

"Right now, we're looking to fund an ambitious 12-month project to broadcast live in each of 25 Shropshire towns beginning later this year. We want to connect the county and shine a spotlight on all the amazing things that happen here.

"This funding will help us buy the equipment we need to be able to get into each of these communities over the course of the next year or so and spend time listening to and then telling their stories.

"It's so important that every part of Shropshire feels it has a voice and that businesses, charities, community groups and good causes have a champion shouting about the great work they do. That is at the heart of this appeal and at the heart of just what INTune Radio is.

"Everything we do is done by volunteers, so every penny really does make a world of difference."

Later this month INTune is filming a special charity space odyssey – during which a special balloon will fly through the Earth's atmosphere – to help raise the profile of a host of county charities as part of its community focus.

Wayne added: "We want to share all the amazing work done by Shropshire charities to as wide an audience as possible – whether that is in the county itself, across the UK or even further afield.

"INTune Radio gives more businesses, social enterprises, and charities a zero-cost means to reach an engaged regional audience, helping them attract new business, secure donations and fill employment and volunteering vacancies.

"The more we can do to help them, the more the whole county will benefit for years to come."

Wayne Flynn, INTune Radio founder





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