

ANNEX No. 5

Additional Information on INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO TRAINING EMPLOYERS TURNED TRAINERS

Though the report highlighted the general existence of these private sector businesses who have come up with mutually beneficial training schemes, we wanted to give the reader far more detail of how these employers have embraced or supported training. Schemes which benefit staff, contractors, apprentices, trainees, other employers, and support both their own and others business growth, productivity, and longevity. These ways of training come in many forms, here we cover a few examples of types that have and are working well, enhancing the availability of skills and general increasing productivity.

List of contents

Aico (Oswestry)

Iconsys (Telford)

Pipekit (Shrewsbury)

Rowlands Roofing and CoRE (Hereford)

Cleftbridge Limited (Ledbury)

Useful Links

<https://www.aico.co.uk/our-services/centre-of-excellence/>

<https://www.iconsys.co.uk>

<https://www.pipekit.co.uk/>

<https://www.rowlandsroofing.co.uk/> & <https://www.corehereford.co.uk/>

Cleftbridge - Tel 01531 633771

ANNEX No. 5

AICO



Details provided by the company.



AICO'S SKILLS HUB



The Skills Hub was a new event that brought together industry figures from different fields, and took place at the Aico office in Oswestry, Shropshire. With a lineup of presenters from organisations including the Fire Industry Association (FIA), Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA), Zemper, Ratio EV, Aico and CEF, the event provided invaluable insights into critical topics within the industry.

The event covered a diverse range of topics, including compliance in fire safety, battery storage systems, solar panels (PV), emergency lighting, domestic fire and carbon monoxide (CO) detection, and electric vehicle (EV) charging. Attendees had the opportunity to engage with experts and gain essential knowledge in these select areas.

Zemper and Ratio EV showcased their latest products, utilising mobile units that allowed attendees to explore their product offerings up close. The whole event was also Continued Professional Development (CPD) certified by the Fire Industry Association.

The Skills Hub drew a good turnout, with 62 delegates in attendance, representing a wide range of backgrounds, including social housing, electrical services, waste management, education, along with various other industries. The event also attracted participants from all corners of the country,

highlighting the widespread relevance and importance of the topics discussed.

Feedback from attendees has been overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing their appreciation for the wealth of knowledge and insights gained through the event. Some feedback received went as far as to state that they wished the event had run on for longer. The Skills Hub not only facilitated networking opportunities but also provided a platform for encouraging collaboration and advancing industry expertise.

The events success underscores the importance of education within the industry, providing a forum for sharing vital information and promoting best practice in various fields. Investigating the potential to offer further follow up versions of the event is already underway, anticipating even greater participation and impact.



aico.co.uk



01691 664100



enquiries@aico.co.uk



ANNEX No. 5

ICONSYS

iconsys

Details provided by the company.



iconsys Academy Development – bolstering the UK engineering talent pool.



Milissa Chesters, Head of People and Culture at iconsys, explains why one of the UK's fastest growing technology businesses has decided to seize the day when it comes to finding and attracting new talent, by creating its own Academy.

“A lot has been written in the media about the current labour shortage and, for someone who has worked in HR for more than 20 years, I can – hand on heart – say the current situation is as severe as it has ever been for manufacturers.

We're dealing with a complex cocktail of issues that have been exacerbated by the pandemic and a brain drain caused by Brexit, with many migrant workers choosing to return home. Frustratingly, this scenario comes at a time when UK manufacturers are experiencing strong growth and a raft of new opportunities from reshoring, the lure of the 'Made in Britain' brand and our influence in driving emerging sectors.

iconsys is a perfect example. Our automation solutions are helping to create the factories of the future and we have seen a demand in our services increase by 54%. Whilst we've invested heavily to meet this demand with a £3m spend on creating our 17,500sq ft smart HQ in Telford, bricks and mortar development is the easy bit.

Our bigger challenge comes from attracting engineers with the right skills and whilst we could wait in hope of the Government taking more comprehensive action, we have learnt that the power lies within if we want to make meaningful change in our industry. About 9 months ago we said that enough was enough and decided to take a different approach.”



‘Best in Class’

“We have involved several experts in the field of training and talent development, including Bill Drury, visiting professor of Engineering at both Bristol and Newcastle Universities.

The aim was to understand different ways of attracting, developing, and retaining the ‘best in class’ talent for both the now and in the future.

All of this intelligence was brought back and presented to the senior management team, who swiftly took the decision to develop the iconsys Academy to enhance learning and development across the business through state-of-the-art online learning blended with classroom and on-the-job training.

This is not a short-term solution, but a long-term commitment and we have immediately ringfenced more than £250,000 to not only bring it to life but to fund evolution as it expands.”

Making a difference

“It has only been a few months since the announcement of our Academy, but we are already seeing positive results from this proactive approach.

Seven new engineers have already been recruited over the last 9 months, with at the very least five more needed over the next twelve months, as we continue to provide bespoke automation solutions to high profile clients in the many industries in which we operate.

Ultimately, if UK manufacturing is going to take advantage of a changing industrial world order, then we need more companies to take a proactive stance and look at ways where they can grow their own engineers or attract new talent to our sector.

We look forward to developing this exciting platform and being part of ensuring the future pipeline of engineering talent.”

iconsys

<https://www.iconsys.co.uk/>

ANNEX No. 5

Pipekit



Details provided by the company.



Investing In People

Investing in people, upskilling and training has always been integral to the Pipekit business model. From the start of Pipekit's venture 12 years ago, the role of apprenticeships, product training and industry partnerships has been key to staff development, extending good working practices and improving industry standards for the mutual benefit of all.



An independent distributor of specialist pipework systems and drainage solutions, Pipekit prides itself on offering high levels of customer service and technical support to its customers and the industry. Central to this proposition is ensuring that training is at the heart of the skills system, and that it extends throughout the business, both internally and externally.

Firstly, Pipekit sees continual professional development for its staff as integral. As an ambassador of apprenticeships, Pipekit has always offered apprenticeships with full time contracts, to ensure job security and advancement, and ensures that young team members can contribute immediately to the day-to-day business whilst upskilling organically. This is further supported by ongoing product development and training, for all staff, to ensure the sales and customer support services are at its optimum level for customers and industry alike.

Enhancing Pipekit's own staffing, via training and upskilling, can be evidenced most recently by the launch of a new prefabrication service. Following market demand, Pipekit saw a gap in the market to manufacture prefabricated building drainage stacks offsite, in a factory environment, to offer the market better quality, lower waste and more efficiency. The investment in its fabrication service, through upskilling staff and infrastructure, has opened up significant opportunity in both the UK offsite and tall building markets, which is valuable at a time where both sectors are rapidly expanding. Recent estimates suggest that the UK offsite construction sector is worth over £1.5 billion to the economy (UK Commission for Employment & Skills) and according to Barbour ABI, in the last 12 months there have been 204 10 storeys plus projects undertaken in the UK, with a total value of £12.3bn.

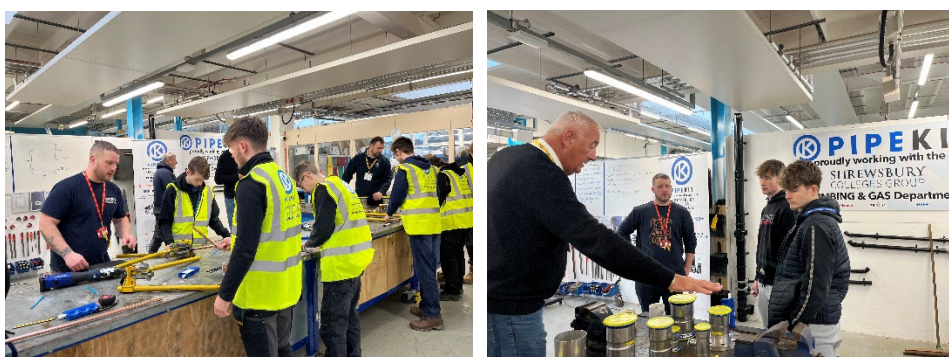


Pipekit's Prefabricated Drainage Factory

Pipekit's inhouse training service also extends externally, offering regular product training programmes, in conjunction with leading brands, for contractors to learn about the latest, innovative pipework and drainage systems. This free service in turn ensures; the best products are specified, are fit for purpose and installed correctly to help minimise waste and risk and optimise industry standards.

A second way Pipekit can influence the skills system is to look outside its Shropshire headquarters and support the industry as a whole, and significantly the next generation of plumbers, heating contractors and installers. Last year, Pipekit commenced a partnership with the Shrewsbury Colleges Group, sponsoring the plumbing and gas department at Shrewsbury College to provide tools, materials and technical presentations. Pipekit works with leading manufacturers including Albion, Flamco, Geberit, George Fischer, McAlpine and various others to essentially offer 'real life' experience to the course and supports the development of practical skills and industry knowledge. The partnership between the college and Pipekit is an effective way to combine the skills and knowledge of staff at the college, with up-to-date industry products and processes provided by Pipekit to support the plumbing and heating engineers of the future. See Video.

https://youtu.be/BJ_AcrVWlLg?si=wYDwu6ERwrxHsvC6



Commenting on the value of training, Martyn Rowlands, MD of Pipekit said: "As a business leader and owner, I see it is vital to ensure training, in its many guises, is central to our business. Playing a significant role in upskilling our staff, our customers and all future contractors and installers is key to ensuring we drive industry knowledge, improve standards, reduce risk and minimise waste. It's all our responsibility to play our part in the skills system and we should all work together to foster this going forward".

ANNEX No. 5

Rowlands Roofing & CoRE



CoRE

Hereford

Training Centre of Roofing Excellence



Business shares their skill and passion for their sector to ensure the next generation of roofers have the best start, understanding and widest range of skills.



CoRE

Hereford

Training Centre of Roofing Excellence

Teaching The CoRE Skills of Roofing'

CoRE, The Centre Of Roofing Excellence is a training provider for the roofing industry. Our Training centre based in Hereford has been designed and equipped to offer expert development to anyone who requires access to specialist training across the many roofing disciplines.

"We are dedicated to helping raise standards across the industry and providing roofers throughout the region with the necessary skills to deliver consistently excellent outcomes for their customers and so build their careers and businesses."

Andrew Rowlands director



ANNEX No. 5

Cleftbridge



Details provided by the company.

CASE STUDY

WHERE LOCAL INDUSTRY REACHES INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

A WONDERFUL WORKING RELATIONSHIP

A SMALL SUCCESS STORY

We are delighted to be able to showcase our ideas, endeavours and modest achievements; and to demonstrate how small business can have far-reaching influences on the future of industry.

Cleftbridge Limited in Ledbury, Herefordshire and NMITE (New Model Institute for Technology & Engineering) in the City of Hereford, were brought together by a local creative consultancy – The M Partnership Limited. Between us, we have played a part in guiding and inspiring higher education students to become work-ready engineers.

-----oOo-----

THE PARTICIPANTS



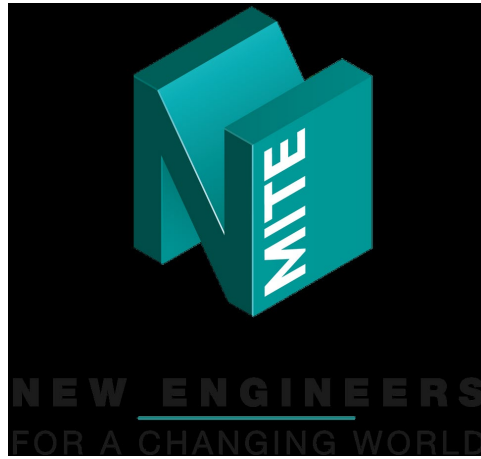
At Cleftbridge, we enhance our clients' products with the very highest standards of finish in both powder coating and wet paint applications. Cleftbridge Limited has been in business since 1979 and nurtured an enviable reputation for high service standards, intelligent solutions, attention to detail and reliability.

Our finishes can accommodate a wide variety of very specific needs, such as low abrasion or anti-microbial properties, corrosion resistance or tarnish resistance, long-life durability and weather resistance, a stand-out shine or a subtle, textured appearance.

At Cleftbridge, we know that our finishes can complement the engineers hard work, enhance (and even lead) product design and innovate what is achievable through product development. They can also account for the practical, environmental and aesthetic demands on a product.

Businesses in a wide range of industries have come to us as market leaders for sound advice and solutions. When we become a part of our clients' production process - and pre-production - we can advise on enhancing performance; often working with designers, engineers and R&D teams.





NMITE (New Model Institute for Technology & Engineering) is a new Higher Education Institute based in Hereford. Backed by industry, government and educators from across the world, NMITE is innovating and breaking new ground in academia. Learning through practical means and putting industry partners at the centre of the teaching, NMITE is putting a real focus on creating the work-ready graduates needed to resolve important world issues and to fuel global development. The projected shortfall in graduated engineers is at least 22,000 individuals and NMITE has been founded to help combat this issue by providing a condensed Masters in integrated engineering.

How are we different?

At the heart of NMITE is the desire to make radical changes across the board when it comes to engineering education. Firstly, we are developing new pathways into an engineering career. At NMITE we believe to be a great engineer, you need to be a critical thinker, with talent, grit, curiosity and passion. Therefore, we are opening our doors to a much wider pool of potential students by eliminating the need for a maths and physics A-level and instead appreciating the strengths a creative mind can have in engineering. Whilst studying at NMITE, the differences to a traditional University are vast and apparent. Removing lectures and instead moving teaching to a practical studio environment, NMITE students are encouraged to work together to solve real-world engineering challenges provided by our industry partners. The students will focus on each module for a month at a time, giving them the necessary exposure of each of the engineering disciplines for the integrated course.

Our goals:

We have distinct, overarching goals to achieve positive impact, these are:

- ❖ **To attract** learners with diverse backgrounds and experience to enter higher education, study engineering and graduate employable and work ready.
- ❖ **To enable** employers to recruit work ready, talented and diverse engineers.
- ❖ To provide Herefordshire with a more diverse and highly skilled population who contribute to its health and wealth.
- ❖ **To change** engineering higher education by disruptive and innovative delivery, value for money and competition to provide work ready engineers.
- ❖ In order to regenerate the region, we plan on developing a knowledge economy within the heart of the City of Hereford, which in turn provides the foundations for the economic, social and cultural advancement needed.

Currently, we believe there is a regional skills shortage that can be solved by the introduction of bright, vibrant people to the area and connecting them to local businesses.

In-house, we offer strategic and tactical marketing support, manage PR and social media, and offer design, writing and event support. However, we are able to scale it up quickly to accommodate bigger and broader projects with help from our 40+ Approved Creative Partners. This creates a fully resourced Creative Consultancy 'on demand', without a large number of employees on permanent staff; which means our clients only pay for the specialist services they need, when they need them.

-----o0o-----

INTRODUCTION

In September 2022, The M Partnership was introduced to NMITE by an existing client that was becoming an 'Industry Partner' to the Institute at that time. This led to discussions with the NMITE Funding Manager and, in turn, the Academic Partnerships Associate. The M Partnership then crafted a proposal for our client – Cleftbridge, which would bring together local industry and international students.



THE NMITE GOALS

To achieve the transformation of engineering education and prove that NMITE graduates are more work-ready than through the traditional route, whilst taking less time to complete the course. The 'new model' focuses on the liberal skills necessary to be a high-quality employee, along with the technical skills needed to be an engineer.

'Partnerships Working'

The NMITE Industry Partners are integral to the learning experience. They can provide;

- ❖ a variety of the challenges for the curriculum,
- ❖ learning objectives,
- ❖ hosting of students on their industry-based projects,
- ❖ site visits.

Often, an Industry Partner will highlight and investigate a job, project or problem they face, which is then carefully crafted into a challenge for the students that fits the learning objectives of the module. This can have a number of benefits;

- ❖ Adding context to the academic content brings the best out of students.
- ❖ Hosting site visits allows students to understand further working in the module's environment.
- ❖ This breaks up the student's time and allows them to explore the possibilities of each field ...
- ❖ ... whilst also getting to know potential, future employers.

During the final 4 months of a final year, students complete a Masters Project. This project has the scope to either be completed within NMITE or on an Industry Partners premises.



THE CLEFTBRIDGE CHALLENGE

To create a brief and an 'industry challenge' for 1st Year students in October 2022.

... The challenge started with a factory tour and business credentials presentation in Ledbury, by Cleftbridge Business Development Manager - Dawn Staes. This provided information, inspiration and context for the challenge to follow.

“ Good Morning. Welcome to the Cleftbridge Challenge. In the coatings industry, we are met with challenges daily; each unique and fundamental to the success of our customers' projects.

Businesses from a wide range of industries come to us for sound advice and solutions.

We are known for our service standards, intelligent solutions, attention to detail and reliability.

A finish not only creates a first impression, it also gives the product life, highlights its purpose and enhances its character.

Cleftbridge is well aware that the finish says something about the quality of every product, its longevity, suitability for its given purpose and even the position of a brand in the market.

So, with those thoughts I give you your Challenge -

A Cleftbridge client is developing and manufacturing a bicycle frame made of wood - European Ash - grown in the UK. It incorporates high-end, top quality components including carbon fiber forks.

The frame coating needs to withstand the uses of an everyday high-performance cycle, used on and off road. It must offer protection from the elements and withstand hard knocks for years.

You will need to consider;-

- ❖ The purpose of a coating;- what will it offer?
- ❖ Application, adhesion and finish.
- ❖ It will also need to look great, have style and appeal to the target market.
- ❖ As it's made of wood, consider how eco-friendly the cycle is or could be.



Please discuss, research, prepare and present a coating option that fits the customers' requirements.

In small groups, the students were then tasked to present their solutions to Mr. Peter Rieck at NMITE in Hereford a few weeks later, including a rationalization of their findings and an explanation as to why other alternatives were dismissed.

Peter Rieck has an impressive CV and is a respected authority within the coatings industry;

- ❖ In 1899, the Rieck family and Gus Sonneborn established Sonneborn & Rieck Limited as a producer of French polishes for pianos. They evolved into a leading manufacturer and wholesaler of specialist paint coatings for automotive, wood and cosmetics packaging.
- ❖ In 2010, Sonneborn & Rieck became a part of the Fujikura Kasei Group and the company name changed to Fujichem Sonneborn Limited (FCS) the following year.
- ❖ Peter himself started in that family business in 1969 and has remained in the coatings industry ever since.
- ❖ He is also a long-standing Member and Adviser to the British Coatings Federation, having previously been its President. ...
- ❖ ... and a main Board Director at the European Coatings Industry Federation; a federation that covers paints, printing inks and artists colours in Europe.
- ❖ Peter is business owner and CEO at Cleftbridge Limited.



THE SOLUTIONS

The NMITE students offered suggestions that included the use of lacquers that were hard-wearing, flexible, weather resistant and unlikely to fade in strong sun (UVA & UVB rays). In addition, the coating should have an aesthetically pleasing gloss or satin finish, through which it was possible to see the grain of the wooden frame; either by being clear or translucent.



These solutions demonstrated a good understanding of the engineering, construction, physical demands and environmental considerations, together with an appreciation of the brand values and marketing / sales approach for this new-to-the-market product.

... A perfect exercise to develop and inspire work-ready engineers.



BENEFITS AND RESPONSES

The student presentations were followed immediately by a comprehensive assessment by Peter Rieck. Peter also went on to share knowledge and expertise acquired over many years that included reference to all coating considerations for this product, as well as procedures, applications and timelines.

In addition, students were given an insight into how Cleftbridge seek to engage with designers, product developers and engineers at the earliest opportunity. This positions them uniquely as a 'coatings consultancy service' to pre-production; not just with the Buyers requisitioning Cleftbridge's specialist services.

In so-doing, practical, real-world activities, relationships with clients and commercial considerations were all highlighted to enhance the students' understanding of being an engineer within business.



HIGHLIGHTING THE COLLABORATION AND THE SUCCESS

Shortly after the Challenge was completed, a press release was issued to local press and select, specialist publications.



PRESS RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

Date: 2nd November 2022

for immediate release

CLEFTBRIDGE CHALLENGE KEEPS EMERGING TALENT AT NMITE ON TRACK

One of the UK's leading companies for specialist finishing and coating applications Cleftbridge Limited, has tasked engineering students at NMITE in the City of Hereford to provide finishing solutions to the new 'Cleftbridge Challenge' as a part of their course curriculum.

The Ledbury-based company has recently agreed a collaborative association with NMITE (New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering) and this challenge asked students to recommend finishes for a new-to-the-market gravel bike, built around a unique and innovative wooden frame.

NMITE is a brand-new Higher Education Institute backed by industry, government and educators from across the world that is innovative and breaking new ground in academia. The institute focuses on producing work-ready graduates to fuel global development. This collaboration seeks to solve a regional skills shortage by the introduction of bright, vibrant young people and connecting them to local businesses.

CEO at Cleftbridge Peter Rieck, explains:-

“ For more than 40 years, businesses in a wide range of industries have come to us for advice and intelligent solutions about applying the right and best powder coating or wet paint applications to their products. However, we also want to become better known locally for being supportive of emerging talent in the arena of engineering, technology and design. As a leading industry partner, this is helping students with real world engineering challenges and, in turn, we are playing a part in maintaining the stability and appreciation of our own, coatings industry ”.

Twmpa Cycles, based locally in Hay-on-Wye have already commissioned Cleftbridge to provide a coating solution that show cases its beautiful bike frame, made from European Ash that is grown here in the UK. In turn, the Cleftbridge Challenge has taken this product to NMITE for the engineering students to apply their developing skills in devising possible coating solutions for this high-tech bicycle.

Peter Rieck continues;-

“ The students needed to consider the relationship between the coatings and the materials - both man-made and natural, the purpose of the product and the environmental conditions it will operate under. In addition, they had to look at factors such as application, adhesion and properties of the finish from durability to aesthetic appeal; mirroring the process that we would go through for our clients ”.

Ben Ricketts, Academic Partnerships Associate at NMITE, said;-

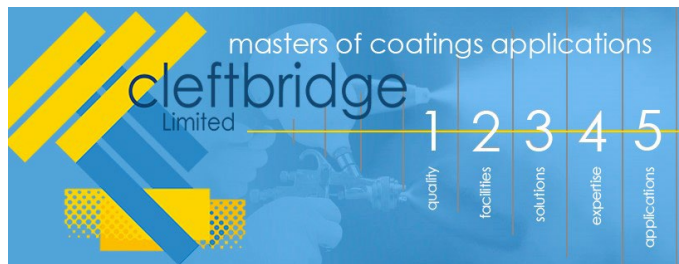
“ NMITE are thrilled to be working with Cleftbridge. Our industry-led, challenge-based approach to learning necessitates working alongside local businesses and Cleftbridge’s expertise in materials and processes has been essential to the development of this challenge and ultimately, the learning of the students. Cleftbridge’s desire to help NMITE nurture the next generation of engineers is just the beginning of a fruitful relationship in Partnership. ‘Thank You’ Cleftbridge, for being part of this challenge and part of NMITE. We hope to be working closely together in the future ”.

ENDS

WORD COUNT: 475



Attached image shows: Peter Rieck, CEO of Cleftbridge, talking to NMITE students.



Additional Information

- ❖ **Based in Ledbury Herefordshire**, Cleftbridge Limited is a market leader when it comes to the provision of powder coatings and wet spray applications.
- ❖ **Since being formed in 1979**, the company has developed and nurtured an enviable reputation for high service standards, intelligent solutions, attention to detail and reliability.
- ❖ When applied, coatings can provide a wide range of properties such as low abrasion, surface friction control and texture, long-life durability, resistance to weather, corrosion, tarnishing or chemicals, anti-microbial properties *and even product character*.
- ❖ ... **“good to know”** ...
 - 1 ... Powder coating is used on a variety of substrates to give decorative and hard-wearing protective finishes. The process applies powder onto a prepared surface that is then passed through a temperature-sensitive oven. This causes the powder to melt, producing a uniform, smooth coating as it dries and hardens.
 - 2 ... Wet paint finishes can be applied to softwood, hardwood, MDF, plastics including PVC, styrene and ABS, as well as resin and metal surfaces.
 - 3 ... A finish can be anything between 40 and 80 microns thick. (A human hair is typically between 60 and 80 microns; no more than 0.20 of a millimetre).
- ❖ More information can be viewed at www.cleftbridge.co.uk

NOTES to Press & Media (only)

For further information, jpeg images or interviews, please contact The M Partnership

Mandi Doyle - mandi@tmpartners.co.uk or Guy Boardman - guy@tmpartners.co.uk or

(01584) 881 651

FOLLOWING ON

A few weeks later, Cleftbridge Limited made a donation to bursaries to support further engineering courses in 2023 & 2024. To highlight the support and continue the awareness of Cleftbridge as a local company integrating with local educational provision, a further press release was issued.

Here follows an extract from copy sold-in and issued to both local press and the Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce ... *of which, all three participants are members.*

**FROM LEDBURY TO HEREFORD ON THE
BIG GIVE CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE**

Ledbury-based specialist coatings firm Cleftbridge Limited is set to follow up on their recent educational challenge for students at NMITE in Hereford, with a donation to bursaries for additional engineering courses in 2023/24.

NMITE (New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering) has been selected to take part in The Big Give Christmas Challenge - the UK's largest match-funding campaign - to sponsor students from disadvantaged backgrounds in the local area. During one week at the beginning of December, the aim is to raise £ 15,000 knowing that up to this amount is guaranteed to be match-funded.

Dawn Stares, Business Development Manager at Cleftbridge said;-

“ We have recently made a commitment to work with NMITE and donating £ 500.00 knowing it will be matched for students in this area was an easy decision to make. These life-changing bursaries will open up NMITE's engineering degree programmes to local young talent from different backgrounds, giving them the opportunity to become work-ready, world-conscious engineers ”.

The aim is to provide bursaries for three new students to join NMITE in September 2023 and started with a campaign launch event on Tuesday 29th November at The Bookshop Restaurant in Hereford. The relaxed evening provided cocktails, food, a tombola and a chance to meet a few current students. Final funding figures are yet to be confirmed.

THANK YOU

Cleftbridge seek continued success in business. Of course. However, we also wish to maintain appreciation of the coatings industry as well as improving awareness of the role it plays in so many finished products - from aeronautical to agricultural, from motor vehicles to medical instruments and from new, innovative cycles with wooden frames, to kitchen units in every home.

Our support for and collaboration with NMITE sits outside any targets for turnover and profits, and yet, must surely have a positive impact on such commercial goals and realities in the long term.

We hope that this modest case study reinforces a belief in small business, partnership working, innovation now, education for the next generation of skilled workers and ambition for the future.

Thank you, for showing an interest in our modest impact on the UK economy.

