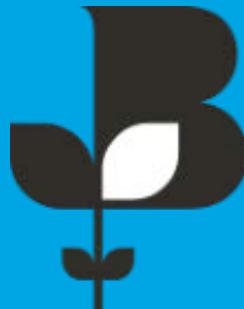


Shropshire Chamber of Commerce Patrons share their stories



# YEAR REVIEW 2019



Shropshire  
Chamber of  
Commerce



[www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk](http://www.shropshire-chamber.co.uk) 01952 208200



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## Adding so much to our community

**During 2019 we have been privileged to welcome Hencote to our Patron Programme. This is an exciting addition to the group as it demonstrates outstanding confidence to make a significant inward investment in our county showing the strength of Shropshire and what it has to offer.**

When consulting the Oxford Dictionary, the word Patron has several meanings. Supporter, benefactor and sponsor are just a few, and Shropshire Chamber Patrons are far more than that. They are an active group of high-profile companies that meet regularly to share best practice and professional advice, seek out opportunities to work together for the common good, and act as true ambassadors for Shropshire.

It should not be underestimated how much of a difference the support of these inspiring businesses continues to make to the work of the Shropshire Chamber, to the wider business community and to the local economy. Not to mention the valuable support they provide to the county's fantastic charities and worthy causes, many of which our Patrons have supported either through the Chamber or directly.

Throughout 2019 the programme has delivered a wide range of activities including forums, social and policy events, all focused on providing profile-raising and connectivity platforms at the highest level. During many of this year's events, members have shared their ongoing business growth stories and successes, with employee numbers increasing, premises expanding, and commercial objectives being achieved. It would be remiss of us not to remind ourselves of all that has been on offer throughout 2019, some of which is listed further in this annual review. During the year we have also seen significant value added to our members with the addition of better-tailored solutions available via the new Chamber Membership Model, this will soon be further strengthened with our Patrons enjoying access to our Corporate Membership offer designed to develop senior team members and future leaders, this will once again be a free of charge offer to our Patrons providing even greater return on investment than ever before.

Moving into 2020, we look forward to welcoming Thomas Consulting to the programme and we will continue to look for ways we can expand the group and enhance the opportunities available to raise profiles and connections. Growth in our cross-border Patron events is also a commitment that will bring groups from the Chambers of the West Midlands together on a regular basis.

While 2020 will present a number of significant challenges to business, our collective strength will play a major and vital role in supporting Shropshire and its economic growth and wellbeing, your Chamber is committed to using your support to reach out across Shropshire presenting opportunity to all.

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



# 0844 576 3446

[www.7video.co.uk](http://www.7video.co.uk)



## Never a dull moment

**It's been all go at 7video during an exciting year which has seen the firm produce engaging video and animation content for an ever-increasing client-base - including everything from animating safety videos for social housing landlords to filming independent traders in Wyle Cop.**

Pete Sims, founder and director, said: "We provide a wide range of film services, with particular specialities being timelapse, drone and animation - all hugely effective ways of producing the key message they wish to convey to a target audience.

"As more companies and groups come to realise the powerful impact of video and animation, we have this year worked with clients across a wide variety of sectors. We provided a series of videos for Aico in Oswestry to accompany a residents safety campaign aimed at social housing landlords, filmed the Shropshire BizFest and produced a series of promotional videos for the independent traders in Shrewsbury's Wyle Cop.

"We filmed the Shropshire Business Awards, and worked with Network Telecom to launch their multimedia phone, amongst many others.

"There is never a dull moment and we would like to say a big thank you to all our clients, old and new, for helping us to retain our position as a market leader among video production companies."



## Magnificent seven

7video has followed a record-breaking 2018 with another successful year which has seen a move to new offices and further client-base growth prompting an increase in staff.

The company, based at Shrewsbury Business Park, is now in its 11th year and while business rose steadily initially, the last two years have seen a more significant increase - resulting in a doubling of turnover.

Pete Sims, director and founder, said: "I would say our main business success of 2019 has been the expansion of our team and the move to bigger premises, which is the result of a steady growth in clients.

"These are exciting times at 7video and the company continues to go from strength to strength.

"Our team has grown from two to seven over the years and this, together with the continued growth in business, made it necessary to move to much larger premises more suited to meet the needs of the company.

"Our new base is three times the size of the old one which has allowed us to expand our production suites, helping us to produce the most engaging content possible.

"Each team member brings an impressive skill-set for the benefit of our clients and this inhouse talent means we can offer the full range of services clients are looking for in promoting the message they need to deliver in the best possible way."

For more information about 7video, visit [www.7video.co.uk](http://www.7video.co.uk)

# Exciting times follow another fantastic year



**This past year has been another significant one for all of us at Aaron & Partners, full of growth, opportunity and lots of work behind the scenes on some exciting plans for the future of the firm.**

Earlier this year we announced that annual fee income across all of our offices had surpassed £10.5 million – a new record for the firm and our third consecutive year of growth. What's perhaps most pleasing is that we're continuing to take more new instructions as well as repeat instructions from existing clients across all the areas of law we offer. It really reflects the reputation we've always strived to achieve for the firm, as well as our ongoing commitment to offering clients a bespoke service focused on delivering the outcomes they really want.

We have once again grown our Shrewsbury

team throughout 2019, having appointed a number of key experts with a clear brief to continue growing and developing our offering in the region. This commitment to developing the talented and driven people we have, was highlighted in the impressive rankings our Shrewsbury office received in both the Legal 500 and The Chambers and Partners guides earlier this year – both of which are prestigious rankings in our profession.

As an organisation with a strong presence in Shrewsbury, we believe it's important to support the local community and we have continued to offer our support to great local initiatives in 2019, having been involved in a number of community events. We partnered with Shropshire Festivals to sponsor their suite of events held across the region, including the hugely successful Shropshire Food Festival. A team of lawyers also took part in the annual World Coracle Championships held on the River Severn. It's fair to say we may need some extra training before we take on the race again next year!



## Success for firm named in top 200

Our Corporate and Commercial team have had a particularly successful year, having played a significant role in finalising one of the biggest international deals in the Mid Wales region's history. This saw a Japanese-listed global manufacturer acquire a Welshpool-based firm in a deal worth £100m, which was completed in November.

To round off what has been a fantastic year, our Shrewsbury Office strengthened its position as one of the region's top practices having been named as one of the Top 200 law firms in England and Wales. As the only Shropshire firm to have been listed in The Times exclusive Best Law Firms 2020, this remarkable achievement speaks volumes about our ongoing growth and capabilities.

It truly is very rewarding to look back over the past 12 months and to be able to celebrate such fantastic achievements and recognise the talented teams we have built.

I'm incredibly proud of everything we have achieved in 2019 and I can't wait to see what 2020 has in store.

Stuart Haynes,  
Partner

# Welcome to new home



**Aico has experienced significant business growth and expansion in the last five years.**

In 2018 it became apparent that our premises, which we have occupied since the mid-nineties, and despite multiple investments into its expansion, were no longer fit for purpose, for our current operation or indeed for our future.

In October 2019 our new home opened to the public and in November we moved in. We are proud to have invested in and delivered a new home that will secure our future here in Oswestry for decades to come.

Education is a core part of what we do, not only have we made a significant investment in education by training over 20,000 electrical contractors, we are very proud that over ten percent of our workforce is made up of Apprentices. With a rolling recruitment, we plan to expand as new roles become identified, investing in our people to help deliver our vision for the future.

Our community is at the heart of what we do and to make a further commitment to this, in 2018 we devised our CSR initiative, Aico in the Community. The focus is on four core areas; charity, volunteering, education and business enterprise.

## The awards kept coming in 2019



2019 has been a significantly busy year for Aico, not only have we moved into our new home in Maesbury Road, Oswestry, we also reached £140m turnover in 2019, which is remarkable to have achieved in an industry which remains relatively flat.

Our new home was a landmark moment in Aico's history and a very proud moment for all involved in this project, including local companies such as Halls Estate Agents, DGA Architects and Morris Property. They worked hard to complete this project within the time frame set, which was a staggering ten months from first day on site to moving in. Whilst the build was taking place, Aico was busy winning awards and this year have taken home an impressive eight awards locally and nationally.

We were very proud to have won the prestigious "Business in the Community" award at the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce Business Awards. Aico in the Community will continue to work with and support charitable organisations, young people and education into 2020 and beyond with our aim being to create safer communities.

# Helping businesses flourish with support



**It's been another busy year for Barringtons across all our offices, including Market Drayton and Newport.**

Newly-launched, is a service to support companies claim for Research & Development Tax Credits and a secure online Portal for securing client data.

Meanwhile our client portfolio has expanded across all sectors and we remain the go-to accountants for professional services not only to businesses and individuals but to medical professionals as long-standing members of the Association of Independent Specialist Medical Accountants (AISMA).

We share best practice and offer up-to-date advice and information as members of the 2020 Consultancy Group and as Platinum partners with Xero and QuickBooks Online.

Armed with this specialist knowledge, we

have helped many local businesses switch to Cloud-accounting allowing them to update their records in real time and prepare for HMRC's 'Making Tax Digital'.

Always ahead of the game, we're using advanced technology to help businesses plan for growth and gain insights into how they will fair in the future. Our digital accounting gurus analyse trends, forecast cash flow and support businesses in making data-driven decisions.

Meanwhile our Payroll department goes from strength to strength. With the ever increasing complexity of taxation and employment legislation, more employers have turned to us to release them from the burden.

At Barringtons we take the time to get to know our clients and their businesses, allowing us to make suggestions on how they can become more efficient and profitable. Despite uncertain times, we have taken pride in seeing them flourish and create new prosperity for Shropshire.

## Approach resulting in growth

Our progressive approach led to consistent growth - in the number of clients we serve, in the breadth of services that we offer and in the high levels of satisfaction that our clients enjoy.

With experience in an increasingly wide range of manufacturing and commercial activities, from sole traders and professional partnerships to large limited companies, we provide a strong team to fulfil all business requirements.

Always our aim is to help businesses maximise profits, minimise tax, plan for future success and succession and even deal with business failure.

We're specialists but are often praised for our jargon-free advice. A friendly team, just a phone call away. We also like to get out into the business community as often as we can and 2019 has been no exception with attendance at business expo's and networking events, including those staged by the Shropshire Chamber.

Meanwhile we continue to nurture fresh talent, injecting new blood into the business with young recruits drawn from the local area.

We continue to give back to the community by supporting charitable causes such as Severn Hospice, Shrewsbury. We sponsor Market Drayton Rugby Football Club and as part of our commitment to the farming community, we back the Newport Show every summer.

We actively engage with the business community on social media. Follow Barringtons on Facebook and Twitter for topical news and blogs @TeamBarringtons



01952 641821

[www.buckatreehallhotel.com](http://www.buckatreehallhotel.com)

# Venue has much to offer



**Wow! 2019 almost over and done with. For some businesses it is a time when things start to slow down, for us it is the calm before the storm as we prepare for the hotels busiest trading period - Christmas!**

This Christmas is all set to be the busiest we have ever had which, for a challenging year, has to be the best way to welcome 2020.

Buckatree Hall has always been very much a 'venue' and we are of course happy with this. It gives us immense joy to be part of other people's celebrations, be it a wedding, birthday or festive celebration.

As a 'venue' it is crucial that we get it right and exceed expectations. Weddings have always been pivotal to our success but, with an influx of venues, such as farms and those with tipis, it has become a crowded market.

Unfortunately, we have seen a steady decline in weddings, however, for the first time in over 5 years we have seen this start to reverse. I apportion this to the fantastic work of our events team who have made such a big effort to showcase how wonderful weddings are here at Buckatree Hall.

## Teamwork and fun are essential



In general, 2019 has had a recurring theme. Work smarter! We have had our challenges, but, overall we continue to stand our ground as an independent hotel.

There have been many achievements throughout the year but the one thing that stands out for me is teamwork. By working together we have overcome some significant challenges. Not only have the team all pulled in the same direction they have chosen to do so. We are a family owned hotel which has family values at the heart of what we do.

I cannot lie, business has been tough. When I consider the amount of well-known businesses that have folded this year I hold my head up high and proudly declare that we are not amongst them. We have had a very pro-active 2019 and are looking forward to 2020.

I am confident that we will enjoy the journey and have much fun along the way.

## Plenty of plans in store for 2020

It's been a landmark year for Chrisbeon and the firm has unveiled exciting plans to drive the success of 2019 forward in the new year.

The office furniture and stationery supplier has seen continued growth with partner Craig Hughes saying: "The main challenge has been to show customers our office furniture service is not the same as internet-only suppliers and we do this in several ways.

"Our 3D planning service has been a

revelation, allowing customers to see exactly what a room will look like with proposed changes, while our try before you buy at our showrooms, stocking preloved used furniture and our part-exchange system have all been extremely successful over the year.

"Having our own warehouse and stock is a distinct advantage, as is our own vans and delivery drivers who install the furniture.

"Our ISO9001 accreditation means we are a firm you can trust with very

experienced and knowledgeable staff, who can also go out on customer visits.

"Looking ahead, we are planning to revamp our showrooms, share a new range of innovative acoustic products designed to improve wellbeing and room aesthetics, a new back care chair range and new environmentally-friendly stationery products.

"Our 2020 plans also include taking on another apprentice to help meet the growing demands from customers for our services."

# Office supplier with 45 years experience

**Office furniture and stationery supplier Chrisbeon is marking 45 years in business and is still going strong - very strong, in fact, reporting another good year with improved sales figures for 2019.**

While many others in the industry have experienced difficult times, a number being forced to close outlets, partner Richard Hughes, who is celebrating 30 years with the firm, says Chrisbeon is still very much on the up.

"We have overseen improvements at both our Telford and Shrewsbury showrooms, been involved in new projects and helped many existing, long-standing customers achieve their move, expansion or refurbishment with a renowned high quality service they know they can rely on.

"Much of our work is with repeat customers which emphasises the trust they have in us and our client-first ethos. Sales have increased this year despite very uncertain times, helped by winning contracts for more new furniture projects.

"We are also heavily involved in community events like the Wacky Races, Oktoberfest, the Bizfest and being able to donate furniture for the new office of Kelda Wood's Climbing Out charity and other not-for-profit organisations..

"These are exciting times at Chrisbeon and we already have a number of things we are working on to make 2020 even better than 2019."



## Century of success stories

**2019 saw another milestone in the history of Dyke Yaxley as the firm celebrated 100 years of business success!**

Dyke Yaxley began life in 1919 when David Dyke opened up for business in Claremont Street, taking on Bertie Ruscoe, who on qualifying became a partner and so Dyke and Ruscoe was born.

The connection between Dyke and Ruscoe and Yaxley Davies & Co started in 1926 when Reginald Yaxley served articles with Dyke and Ruscoe. Upon qualifying he left to set-up his own business, employing his first articled pupil, Frank Davies, who became a partner, and the firm took its name Yaxley Davies & Co.

In late 1970 both firms were looking to expand, but recognised they needed to provide a wider range of professional services. Both restricted by lack of space, they decided to search for a suitable property, which led to them moving into Abbey House in Abbey Foregate, merging in 1987 to create Dyke Yaxley.

After further acquisitions and increasing staff the firm moved to its current location



in Brassey Road just over 17 years ago. Managing Director, Marie Bramwell, said: "We're delighted to be celebrating 100 years in business. We've seen the Company evolve

over the years into the success it is today, who knows where we will be in 2119 - we're all very excited to see what the future holds for us all."

## Marie achieves ambition of her life



May 1, 2019 was an important date in Dyke Yaxley's calendar, as Marie Bramwell became Managing Director of the Company, taking over from Laurie Riley who had held the role for the past seven years.

Achieving her lifetime ambition Marie said: "I am absolutely delighted to have been appointed as Managing Director of such a progressive and well-respected firm.

"I have always said that it was my lifetime ambition to achieve this position, so it doesn't get any better than this - it's a real honour and a privilege and I'm looking forward to what the future holds for us all at Dyke Yaxley."

Marie joined the Board as Operations Director in 2006, and has played a key role in helping to shape the business and its direction since then.

"In my new position, I want to ensure that we continue to meet and exceed the expectations our clients have of us, and that we constantly develop our services to keep us at the forefront of accountancy services in the local area. It's a challenge I can't wait to get started on."



HENCOTE

## Essence of English hospitality



We set the bar high at Hencote and like our wines we want to mature and grow as a business. To do this we have built a team of people with expertise in all areas. Our staff has grown from six to 30 employees all of whom play a huge role in the success of the business. We firmly believe that investing in people is key to the continued growth of the estate.

The goal for the first 12 months was to capture the essence of true English hospitality and the addition of luxury accommodation in the form of our glamping village helped to further enhance our reputation of becoming a destination spot. A place for people to come and sample all the delights that Shropshire has to offer.

When it comes to the food the culinary ethos is to deliver cuisine which offers seasonal flavours that complement our wines. The kitchen brigade has worked hard to create menus that are influenced by British classics and deliver them with a modern twist.

In addition, we have also been able to accommodate large scale events in the form of corporate days and weddings – where we have the knowledge and experience to organise and plan everything in house.

**01743 298444**

[www.hencote.com](http://www.hencote.com)



# Vineyard is toast of the county

**2019 has been a great year for Hencote Estate and there have been many highlights including the release of four estate wines and the first anniversary of The View Restaurant, Bar and Balcony.**

Our vineyard has produced an abundance of high-quality grapes which have exceeded expectations. These went into making our estate wines of which we released four this year; the Evolution sparkling, Solaris, Rose and most recently our first estate red wine, The Mark I. All

have been very well received with some wonderful feedback from guests and wine club members.

As well as the wine The View Restaurant, Bar and Balcony has been hugely popular. Shropshire is a region that is synonymous with great food, a town that prides itself on using and promoting the finest local produce and we must adhere to this ethos. We endeavour to make sure that the food we serve uses local produce and that it pairs well with our wines.

The year also saw the opening of our luxury glamping village. The ten lodges complete with private veranda and hot tub have spectacular views over the South Shropshire hills and provided our guests with the ideal atmosphere to relax in and escape.

*Longmynd Travel*

**01743 861999**

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



# Growing the fleet

**2019 has been a really good year for Shropshire's Longmynd Travel, based near Shrewsbury, resulting in several new contracts and major investment in two new prestigious vehicles.**

The family firm, which has large premises at Lea Cross, now has a varied fleet of 23 vehicles ranging from 16-seater mini buses to large 70-seater luxury coaches, covering all aspects of travels from school runs, private hire and holiday tours.



# Support for football fans



Shrewsbury Town Football Club started the season in fine style in August with a brand new bespoke Volvo executive coach and is currently flying high in League Division One, much to the delight of Longmynd Travel's operations director Val Sheppard-Evans, who is a life-long Shrews fan!

Val, commented: "Town are doing really well and we are absolutely delighted to be providing continued support for their away travels with this splendid new executive coach and we have also further added to the fleet with one of the very latest Mercedes Tourismo luxury coaches, an important commitment to our clients, costing over £200k, for our on-going UK and European holiday tours."

"We have also taken on a significant new contract with Wrekin College in Telford and will provide two school runs across the county, both morning and evening.



# Care with innovation

**The last 12 months have seen several key changes at The Uplands which are set to hold the award-winning care home in the best stead for the future.**

The Shrewsbury care home, which is run by the family-owned Marches Care Ltd, has ensured its ongoing success with a refreshed management team and has introduced several key innovations to ensure it continues to deliver the best standard of care for its residents.

Main share holder, Mandy Thorn, stepped away from her operational role as managing director and is now chair of the board of directors. Mandy has since been named as chair of Marches LEP to add to the presidency of Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and holds other senior roles in local charities and the wider care industry.

The registered home manager Carey Bloomer has become managing director of the business and now oversees the day-to-day running of the Uplands. Carey is also gaining national recognition for her ground-breaking work as one of the only Social Care Caldecott Guardians and

clinical governance specialists.

"While 2019 has been a year of change at the Uplands, much of it has been behind the scenes and might not have been immediately obvious to our residents and their families," said Carey.

"One area we have looked at is cultivating an ethos of promoting our own staff rather than looking externally.

"We are concentrating on developing their strengths, and helping them to develop as people, and it has proved a huge success.

"This is perhaps best illustrated by the introduction of our specially commissioned Leadership Academy. This is a specially designed programme which provides staff with the knowledge and confidence to become leaders. I think quite a few of the staff have even surprised themselves at the heights they can reach, and that has been brilliant to see. The management style is also becoming more inclusive – much less matronly and top-down."

"The use of technology had enabled us to do that. Everything we do now is much more transparent through the introduction of new systems, and the staff have really embraced that."

## Developing staff gives very best in support

One external appointment has been Dan Kendrick who is the new operations manager.

Mandy said that Dan, who headed a division at one of the country's largest distribution firms, has introduced systems which allow the Uplands to operate to maximum efficiency. Supporting Carey and Dan is Mark Thorn who, following a long career in international engineering consultancy, is now working within the business providing support to the finance team and supporting the change management process and embedding IT, cyber and information security in to the day to day operations of the Home.

"There has been a real sea change this last year which has all been about further supporting our fabulous staff team."

"Under Carey's outstanding stewardship, the culture of continuing development of our staff is bearing fruit."

"Our aim has always been to offer unrivalled levels of care to those we support and their families. I believe our staff, through this continued emphasis on their development, are achieving that and they should all be very proud."



# Power to be a world beater

**As the world's leading supplier of hedge cutting, verge mowing and remote-control technology, McConnel has been setting new standards for quality and innovation for nearly 80 years.**

The company was the first in the world to design and build a tractor-mounted hedgecutter; the first to develop a universal Power Arm; and the first to create a hands-free verge flotation system for reach arm mowers.

This spirit of innovation has established McConnel as the world's number one manufacturer of Power Arms with export sales to more than 40 countries, including: China, Japan, Germany, the United States and Australia.

A market-leading British manufacturing company, McConnel designs, builds and tests its comprehensive range of green maintenance machines at its production facility in Ludlow, Shropshire – precision-engineering the vast majority of components on-site to meet the



UK's ISO9001:2008 hallmark of quality management.

Winner of more than 30 national and international awards, McConnel has blazed a trail for quality and innovation within its market sector the World over.

Among the honours picked up by the company include: the Queen's Award for Innovation which the company received for its pioneering Easy Drive System, the prestigious Burke Trophy, and the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce Champion of Champions Award.

## Get productive with robotic tech



Although internationally renowned for Power Arms, more recently McConnel has also been making waves in the world of robotic technology with a range of all-terrain remote-control machines known as ROBOCUT.

McConnel's all-terrain remote control ROBOCUT boosts safety by removing operators from steep-sided, dangerous and restricted-access zones. Capable of tackling slopes of 55 degrees, ROBOCUT has a working range of 150m and is up to 25 times more productive than manual cutting.

Christian Davies, McConnel's General Manager, says: "The ROBOCUT range has now become the fastest growing sector of the McConnel business and we see major growth opportunities in what has become an exciting new marketplace for us."

"We continue to invest heavily in research and development as well as our production facility at Ludlow to ensure our robotic range remains at the forefront of the Worldwide market."

"We have launched three new remote-control models in the past year and achieved sales success around the world".

"We've made rapid progress in becoming a leading international supplier of remote-control machinery. What is really exciting for us, is that we believe this is just the start."

## Firm's turn-over tops £60 million



McPhillips has had a record year during 2019 with turn-over topping £60m for the first time in the construction contractor's 55 year history.

With major building and civil engineering projects completed during 2019 for Birmingham City Council, Shropshire Council and Taylor Wimpey and further schemes for these organisations along with other public and private sector clients currently in-construction the future is looking rosy.

The number of projects undertaken in 2019 has enabled McPhillips to increase its directly employed workforce by 15% so that the company now employs 320 locally based personnel.

Significant projects that have contributed to this success include the Ashted Circus Junction Improvements on Birmingham's City Centre Ring Road, a new veterinary school for Harper Adams University, paving and highway improvements at Town Walls and Pride Hill Shrewsbury, residential infrastructure and groundworks at Reaseheath, Cheshire and a new Emergency Services Hub & Fire Station at Kidderminster.

# Construction of an award-winning kind

**As a result of its diverse customer base across both civil engineering and building sectors McPhillips has weathered a challenging year in the wider construction industry.**

The company has remained successful in delivering infrastructure and groundworks in a largely buoyant house building market.

In March Warwickshire County Council renewed McPhillips' membership of their engineering and construction works framework contract so that the company is able to carry out work on Warwickshire highways for the next four years.

Private industrial and commercial developers have seen consistent demand for warehousing and manufacturing space and this has led to a demand for new industrial units which McPhillips has been delivering through the process of design and build.

Elsewhere the company has added to its successful history of delivering Dogs Trust Rehoming Centres with current projects in Cardiff and Darlington totalling £25m.

In Birmingham work is ongoing to prepare the city for the arrival of HS2 and the 2022 Commonwealth Games alongside the annual



capital works budgets and McPhillips has been involved with highway and public realm improvements linked to these longer term strategic projects.

The company takes pride in employing local people and developing its personnel so was delighted to win the Apprenticeship

Award at Shropshire Chamber's Business Awards in June. Other achievements include certification of the company's health & safety management system to ISO45001 in July and in the same month RoSPA's Order of Distinction for 22 year's consecutive gold awards.

# Communication champs

**2019 was a pivotal year for Network Telecom, with increased sales, further product development and new accolades.**

Notable highlights were winning the Technology, Enterprise and Innovation Award at the 2019 Shropshire Chamber Business Awards and being named the Regional Winners in the Best Use of Technology category at the British Chamber Business Awards.

The award entry centred around the inception of NT Multimedia, our pioneering desk phone which has changed the way businesses communicate and brings the functionality of your smartphone to your desk. This award is both an achievement and a reflection of the dedication and hard work that went into creating this innovative device.

Thanks to NT Multimedia and our full suite of communication services, we have had another record-breaking year of sales, and a significant increase in staff levels. This has led to the expansion of our product and service offering and the successful launch of our own hosted platform, NT Cloud.

The successes of 2019 have paved the way for even more prosperity in 2020.



# Acquisition is an exciting opportunity

Exciting changes and ground-breaking technological developments have taken place at Network Telecom over the last 12 months.

Most notably was our acquisition by European technology and telecoms group Enreach. This exciting opportunity will not only help us to explore new products and work with new businesses, but it will provide access to increased resources and a wider pool of expertise across Europe.

Building on our existing successes of 2018, we further improved the features of our award-winning desk phone, NT Multimedia, and launched our very own hosted platform. A growth in sales also saw an increase in employment, with the creation of new roles and new staff being welcomed into the business.

We also successfully launched the Shropshire Chamber Telecoms Solution in partnership with the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce. This is an initiative we are proud to offer exclusively to Chamber members, offering a credit of £450 towards your



business' Chamber membership fees (plus other exclusive benefits) when you upgrade your phone system with us.

Furthermore, thanks to our own charitable committee NT Together, we have had a

greater focus on social responsibility in 2019. We raised a fantastic amount of money for our charity of the year, Severn Hospice, as well as several other local charities. We are looking to build on this even further in 2020.



RYBROOK  
SHREWSBURY

01743 467467

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



# Committed to continuous development



**In the last 12 months, Rybrook BMW have celebrated the arrival of a selection of new models across the BMW range.**

The BMW 1 series was re-launched with an entirely new design language and the introduction of the BMW X7, into the luxury GKL range, has been a fantastic step forwards for BMW. For MINI, the announcement of the MINI Electric, that arrives March 2020 has been an exciting prospect for Rybrook. Despite the growth they remain committed to continuous development of their relationships with local businesses, the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and Rybrook's BMW Business Partnership scheme.

**The Customer Experience**  
Regardless of the internet and competitiveness of the premium market we recognise that our customers are loyal to the BMW and MINI brand's but want to do business locally.

Rybrook provide a local and personal service that can be tailored to the needs of our customers.

This could involve business partnership consultations at your office, collection and delivery for your servicing needs, or even test driving one of the many BMW models on display at our showroom.

The team aim to meet and then exceed the expectations of our customers on a daily basis.



## Start your business partnership

Rybrook actively promote the BMW Business Partnership Programme. If you manage a fleet of fewer than 50 company cars, the BMW/MINI Business Partnership has been designed specifically for you.

As a member, your business can benefit from attractive discount terms, competitive contract hire rates, a range of exclusive product offerings and a dedicated Business Manager with the backup of a National Corporate Team to advise you. This is all provided from the comfort of your office, premises or by visiting the showroom.

### Rybrook Business Partnership benefits

- Compelling discounts & contract hire rates
- Complimentary specification upgrades
- Dedicated local business manager
- Opportunity to attend exclusive events and previews
- Membership is free

### A Personalised Experience

The team at Rybrook have a great relationship with many businesses across the county including many of the patrons of The Shropshire Chamber of Commerce. Our service is personalised, whether you want to buy one car for you, or a fleet for the business, we can cater for any eventuality. If you would like to experience Rybrook for yourself with a 48-hour test drive or just learn more about our competitive offers then please contact Martyn Gough on 01743 467 467.

the  
**shrewsbury  
club**

01743 467755

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



# Feedback is encouraged

**The Shrewsbury Club is proud to have developed an excellent reputation as an award-winning family-friendly health club.**

We passionately believe in the importance of children being active and there's really no better way for that to happen than by exercising regularly with their families.

We now offer a busy programme of over 35 classes for children, of all ages, each week.

Our mission to be a fun and friendly Health Club and to make a difference to people's lives is reflected in our membership and activity programmes which are free for children of adult members. This has allowed more family time together in one place and it has proved extremely popular.

Vic the Dog, our club mascot, makes frequent appearances and is always a big hit with youngsters, while under-eights love to have fun in our soft play area.

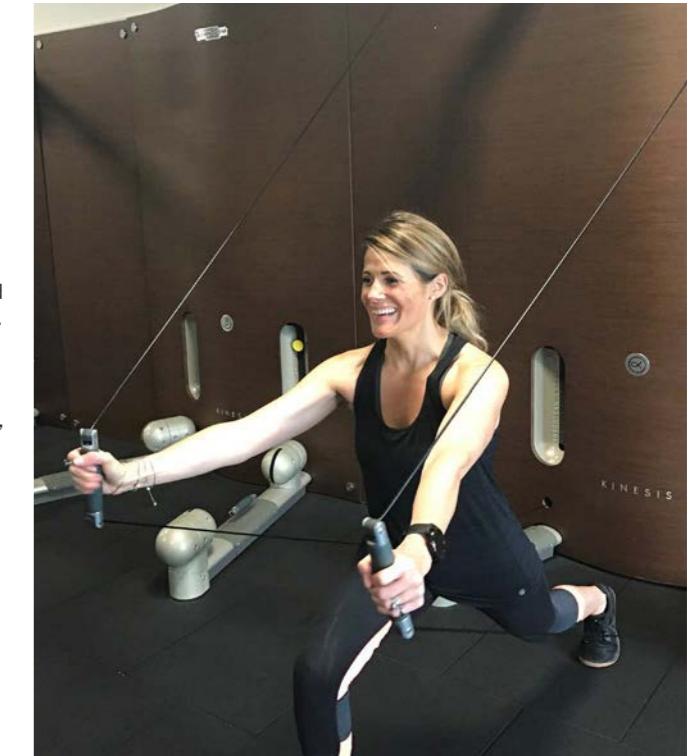
As a club, we always appreciate and value feedback from our members, so we have been delighted with their response since embarking on an exciting £1.4 million refurbishment programme.

Improving our facilities has only served to enhance the experience of our members, who enjoy working out in our state-of-the-art gym, or having a swim in our luxurious pool, complete with sauna, steam room and new vitality pool.

We now deliver more than 100 group fitness classes a week, so there really is something for everyone.

Our first class day spa offers a wide selection of packages while The Hub, our restaurant, is the ideal place to meet, eat and drink.

It's our social centre, at the heart of the club, and we hold quiz nights, food nights and film nights throughout the year. With free wifi, it is also the perfect venue to work in a relaxing setting.



# Ace tennis courts at county town club



We love tennis at The Shrewsbury Club and welcome players of all ages and abilities to have a game or to receive top tips from our expert coaches.

In 2019 we were also extremely proud to have hosted the largest Women's Tennis tournament outside of the grass court season in the UK, the W60 Shrewsbury, which brought a lot of attention to Shropshire from wide and far. This event was such a success that in 2020 we are hosting the event again and the BBC will be broadcasting from the club live via the red button service!

But what really makes The Shrewsbury Club stand out is the quality of our staff, led by manager Alvin Ward.

The hard work, integrity, passion and friendliness of our team guarantees a warm welcome and means our members want to keep returning time and again to spend time at their club.

Employees of businesses that are members of the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce can receive discounted membership rates at The Shrewsbury Club, so we look forward to welcoming you.

## Success stories in examination results

The excellence of the College is highlighted in a number of successes over the last year including:

A Level:  
51% of our A Level/BTEC students achieved A\*-B or \*Distinction/Distinction with a:

98% pass rate

Vocational:

98% pass rate

44 full-time courses had a 100% pass rate

99% pass rate for Level 3 students on BTEC courses – with 88% achieving high grades.

Around 90% of all students (academic and vocational) are successful in gaining university places each year. More than a third of students progress to Russell Group universities.

87% of our former students who graduated from university in 2018 gained a first class or upper second class honours degree. This is higher than both other sixth form colleges and the independent sector nationally.

We have been in the top 10 best colleges



in the country for the last three years for success in GCSE results.

Students on vocational courses progress to university courses all over the country to study everything from Aircraft Engineering to Fashion Merchandising, from Midwifery to E-sports.

They also secure highly sought-after Apprenticeships at companies like Caterpillar

or BMW, as well as working in accountancy, in outdoor adventure centres, as bricklayers, carpenters, event organisers and plumbers.

The College supports the business community through the extensive range of business training opportunities for companies of all sizes from SMEs to multi-national corporations and public sector services. Employer services offered by the College include:

- Apprenticeships in a diverse range of sectors
- The help of qualified staff with industry experience
- Flexible workplace delivery of training
- 'Job Shop' to advertise positions and recruit talent Jobs at Shrewsbury Colleges Group - Current job vacancies at the College can be found at [www.scg.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.scg.ac.uk/jobs)

Join our Alumni - If you are a former student or staff member of the College, please help us inspire the next generation of students and keep in touch with former students and the College via Shrewsbury Colleges Group Alumni at [www.scg.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.scg.ac.uk/alumni)

## Education goliath

**Shrewsbury Colleges Group was formed in August 2016 through the merger of Shrewsbury Sixth Form College and Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology.**

The College is Shropshire's largest provider of post-16 education, teaching around two-thirds of all 16-18 students in the county. The College operates from three campuses in the county town, providing academic and vocational excellence, as well as high quality on-the-job training through its Apprenticeship provision.

The College is the sixth form for seven schools in Shropshire, as well as being the preferred college of students in school sixth forms and schools in Telford and Wrekin and Powys. The college offers the widest choice of courses across this area. It is also a leading provider of Higher Education courses, offering degree, foundation degree, HNC/D and higher level professional courses. In total, Shrewsbury Colleges Group works with around 9,000 students each year.

The College vision is to ensure all students make outstanding progress, regardless of their age, course or educational background.

Its mission is to provide outstanding academic and vocational education, provide local, high quality higher education and to be the College of choice.



## Going live with media team

### It's been another busy year for the Shropshire Business crew.

In addition to expanding the distribution of our print magazine, we've launched a new SB Podcast, which can be found at [www.shropshirebiz.com](http://www.shropshirebiz.com)

Episodes include a spotlight on young entrepreneurs, the man who first coined the 'Brexit' phrase, the school head who started life as an investment banker on the other side of the world ... and much more.

We were also at Bizfest to meet exhibitors and guests, and also caught up with the big winners of the Shropshire Chamber Business Awards as they stepped off stage at the amazing summer showcase.

Another new venture for the team this year has been to join forces with Nick Jones Wealth Planning to host 'Shropshire Business LIVE' events.

The first, at Hencote vineyard, was a sell-out success, featuring presentations from a wide range of businesses.

And the second, at Netley Hall, included two question time-style panels, bringing together a range of experts in the fields of finance, professional services, international trade, IT, and education.

We were also proud to once again be a sponsor of the Shropshire Chamber Business Awards – always a highlight of the county's business calendar.



## A voice for the county's economy

Shropshire Business is the county's award-winning independent magazine, website and podcast – bringing you news, views and analysis from the local economy.

It is run by journalists Carl Jones and Henry Carpenter, who have decades of experience in the Shropshire media, backed up by a top team of media professionals.

Having been crowned Midlands Magazine of the Year in 2018, Shropshire Business once again hit the headlines in 2019 as Carl – who edits the magazine – took the top print writer's prize in the Midlands Business Journalist of the Year category.

Our glossy magazine is delivered free to businesses in all corners of the county, and read by thousands.

Our website is updated daily with the latest news and comment.

And our podcast – newly launched for 2019 – is giving wide-ranging businesses a voice, exploring their success stories in even more depth.

For 2020, Shropshire Business is offering



discount commercial packages for local businesses, who can feature in every one of our print publications, plus 12 months of profile online, from as little as £750.

If you'd like to find out more, get in touch with us. We are here to celebrate the success of the county's incredible businesses – [editor@shropshirebiz.com](mailto:editor@shropshirebiz.com)

# Investing in Shropshire



**Shropshire Council is ambitious. It continues to encourage its communities and businesses to grow by optimising exciting development and investment opportunities.**

A second visit to MIPIM in March 2019 proved highly successful in raising the profile of Shropshire on an international stage highlighting key assets and major development opportunities across the county.

Our collaborative approach to working with key partners and stakeholders ensures the forward thinking 'Shrewsbury Big Town Plan' continues to gain momentum, moving towards an investable prospectus of sites for development that

will transform key areas of the town centre and change the way we move around Shrewsbury.

Economic growth continues to flourish in the county. This year saw 3.2% GVA growth to £6.23 bn and 1,600 new jobs. Recorded investment across the county topped £120m: £35m from foreign-owned businesses. New companies, including Valley Motorsports and Hickory's Smokehouse (who will shortly move into Shropshire) and indigenous businesses continue to grow and expand: Aico opened their flagship new site in Oswestry and Müller has invested over £30m in the last 12 months. 94% of homes & businesses now have access to superfast broadband and the council continues to smash government targets for the provision of new homes year on year.



## Marching on with funding for business

The Marches Growth Hub Shropshire's Summer Funding Summit, highlighting ways in which businesses can access vital funding, was hailed a huge success. 127 businesses and 36 exhibitors attended the event in Shrewsbury. The event brought together representatives from banks, peer-to-peer lenders, alternative finance and European and Government supported programmes to showcase the range of funding schemes available to businesses. It also included the launch of the Marches Growth Hub's £10million Growth Challenge – designed to simplify access to finance – and a Brexit and national business update. The event certainly established 'The Growth Hub' as a destination for Shropshire businesses.

The Marches Growth Hub Shropshire, the gateway for business support provision, has experienced exponential growth over the last 12 months. Supporting 3065 unique businesses, 400 per cent increase from the previous year, delivered 120 events and helped 336 business start up which was 34% of the overall businesses supported. In October it celebrated the official launch of the newly expanded space at the Food Enterprise Centre on the Battlefield Enterprise Park. To help support rural businesses it launched its outreach programme 'Let do Business In' offering advice and support to businesses and entrepreneurs looking to establish a new venture or grow an existing company. The team has already visited 6 market towns in Shropshire with a full timetable for 2020.



# Publisher brings you news from the county and beyond



**The Shropshire Star is the leading local news brand for the county, delivering the latest news and sport for people across the region.**

Based at its HQ in Ketley, Telford, the Star has continued to serve readers and advertisers to a high standard, across print and digital.

The seventh biggest selling local

newspaper in the country, it is a county success story, celebrating the best of local life and the business scene for Shropshire and the surrounding area.

Its website continues to grow, with pageviews reaching 3.5m per month during 2019.

The Star's portfolio of weekly titles provide local news for a host of local areas including Telford, Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, Whitchurch and Ludlow.

At the Star HQ, parent company the

Midland News Association publishes hundreds of thousands of papers every week, not just for its Shropshire portfolio but also England's biggest daily title the Express & Star and 190,000 copies of the free Chronicle Week newspaper.

Led by editor-in-chief Martin Wright, who was raised in the county, the team of journalists keep readers up to date with all the events in the county.

When news breaks in Shropshire, people know to turn to the Shropshire Star.

## Engaging with the community

Throughout the year, the Shropshire Star has continued its tradition of serving readers and advertisers just as it has since its launch in 1964.

During 12 months which have seen change nationally, the Star has moved with the times to continue its own evolution.

The daily newspaper has been redesigned to give it a modern feel, while maintaining the high count of stories in each edition.

The seventh biggest selling local newspaper in the country has kept readers up to date with changes to the local health service, the fortunes of the county's sports stars and the local implications of the turbulent political scene around Brexit.

Its website continues to grow, with pageviews reaching 3.5m per month during 2019 while thousands more people follow its brands on social media.

The county's community heroes were

celebrated in the annual Great Big Thank You Awards, while the Star launched popular campaigns to find the Baby of the Year and the best looking animals in Pet Pawtraits.

One lucky couple will get to tie the knot in style thanks to the Win A Wedding competition.

There has never been more reasons to read the Star, giving advertisers an engaged audience who know their favourite title will tell them about life locally.

# Enterprising route to winning business



**Telford & Wrekin Council prides itself on being business supporting and business winning. Our local service, Enterprise Telford, assists businesses looking to grow and promotes Telford to attract new investors into the borough.**

Highlights this year include breaking ground on the multi-million pound agri-tech research and innovation hub Ni.PARK, with first units and land available from late 2020. In partnership with the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership and Harper Adams University we will support the creation of up to 950 jobs. Ni.PARK will put Telford and the UK at the forefront of high efficiency agriculture, bringing together agricultural and technical companies to enable industry experts to collaborate on and commercialise new technologies.

We also welcomed the £25m site expansion of leading plastics manufacturer Creamer that has already created 30 new jobs with more on the way. Filtermist, one of the UK's leading

industrial air filtration and extraction specialists opened its brand new £4m distribution centre as they celebrated the firm's 50th birthday. AO also counted its one millionth recycled fridge at its facility in Telford and announced a new four-acre site that will clean and refine the plastic it collects to a higher standard, meaning it can be processed for further reuse.

Managed and delivered by Telford & Wrekin Council the Marches Growth Hub Telford & Wrekin is the local gateway to business support. With a programme of business engagement, events and partner collaboration we aim to support as many of our local businesses as possible; whatever stage of the business journey they are in.



Enterprise  
Telford

## A hub of gurus is on hand



Over the last 12 months we have dealt with over 670 enquiries, held over 100 events and engaged with over 1800 businesses in the physical hub at the University of Wolverhampton Innovation Campus in Priorslee. Many of our events use our extended team of experts 'The Growth Hub Gurus' and we're pleased to say that customer satisfaction levels remain high from successful selling to getting to grips with financials the events programme has covered it all. We regularly receive comments like 'Brilliant trainer today, relevant and very knowledgeable and supportive. Thank you.'

Our fast, integrated and responsive approach continues to make Telford a focus for enterprise and innovation and cements the town as the number one choice for new foreign investment. We look forward to continued success in 2020 and wish all of our business community a prosperous and happy New Year.

# Opportunities galore

**Telford College is a one-stop shop for academic, vocational and apprenticeship studies, with a wide-ranging curriculum which is constantly evolving to meet the needs of Shropshire businesses.**

The college works in close partnership with the area's biggest companies, including a growing network of industry mentors – and the benefits are clear to see.

Huge investment in university-standard facilities means the college offers courses which pave the way for careers in more than 70 different industries.

Engineering and construction programmes are helping to tackle a skills shortage, and Telford College has this year launched the first aviation engineering courses of their kind in the Midlands.

A new virtual and augmented reality suite also makes Telford College one of the leading colleges in the country for developing skills in this exciting and dynamic hi-tech sector.

But cutting-edge technology is no good unless students are equipped with the basics, and that's why it is also proud to see academic



results improving year-on-year. Graham Guest, principal and chief executive, said: "Having been a lecturer myself, I'm acutely aware of the importance of delivering consistently outstanding teaching and learning, and motivating students to be the best they can possibly be."

"And having run my own business too, I'm

equally aware of the value of delivering the sort of practical, relevant skills in step with the needs of the local economy.

"There have never been so many opportunities for students, and I am honoured at having the opportunity to lead Telford College's committed and experienced team during these dynamic and changing times."

## State-of-the-art facilities add a new dimension

We are delighted to have been named one of the top five colleges in the UK for delivering employability skills this year, based on information collated by the Department for Education.

We also reached the national finals of a competition to find the best apprenticeship provider in the UK for construction training.

Overall achievement rates for our apprentices were up by more than 12% during the last academic year, and continue to run comfortably ahead of the UK average.

And in our 7th Form, students recorded the college's best-ever set of A Level results, with 100% success rates across a host of subject areas.

Going forward, Telford College is keen to work with local businesses to offer industry placements – a new way to attract and develop talent.



A placement gives each student approximately 45 days of priceless experience in a relevant role with a host employer.

We have also opened up our state-of-the-art virtual and augmented reality suite to local businesses, allowing companies to

engage and work with technology in new and innovative ways. You can hold a board meeting in a computer aided virtual environment, immerse your team in a tailored team-building experience, or host a breakfast event which takes networking to a whole new dimension.

## Knowledge adds peace of mind

In 2019, the demand for retained support has grown, as we have found an increasing number of business owners and managers wanting the peace of mind in knowing they have specialist, professional advice on-hand, and we can provide tailored packages to suit each individual business.

Alongside this, we have assisted on a range of independent projects, including a complex and large-scale grievance investigation within the Public Sector, redundancy consultation for a Charitable organisation, and an Employee Satisfaction Survey with report, focusing on equality and diversity in the workplace.

We have also seen an increasing number of clients requiring clarification of the legal standpoint on self-employed arrangements and IR35, and have provided specialist and bespoke documents for this purpose. One of many happy clients commented;



*"I approached Triangle HR as I wanted to review and overhaul the contracts used within the business."*

*"This was not a quick fix and involved attention to detail, and a considerable degree of customisation in order to produce systems which work correctly for different types of consultant engagement. I believe the amount of work Vicky had to put in to help the*

*company achieve the final package, involved more time than was originally anticipated, but Triangle HR honoured their original quote and were unfailingly helpful and supportive. "With their expertise and input a handbook with updated and compliant policies was produced as were Consultant Agreements and Engagement Schedules. Thank you, Triangle HR" – Course Beetle*

# Human touch is key to expansion

**Triangle HR are specialists in Human Resources and Employment Law and work with a variety of business sectors both on a retained and project basis.**

Over the past twelve months, we have continued to grow in terms of the number of businesses we work with, the volume of employment matters that we support, and the scope of our service portfolio.

During this time, we have also successfully introduced a more sophisticated telephone system, further developed our website and Client Portal, and implemented new IT platforms; all of which enable us to continually enhance and grow our service provision and provide our clients with the valued help and excellent customer service they have come to expect.



That said, the 'Triangle team' is undoubtedly our biggest and most important asset, as without them we could no longer offer a warm and personal service that sets us apart from many of our competitors.

The greatest success for us over the past

year, has to have been the successful battle that our Senior Consultant, Jenna Tarry, took on against Hodgkin's Lymphoma, and the unwavering support, kind wishes and generosity shown by our clients and other associates. We thank you all.

## Collaboration with industry

**With several campuses in the West Midlands and an increasing international presence, the University of Wolverhampton has come a long way from its origins which trace back to 1827.**

Since it was established over 190 years ago, the University of Wolverhampton has earned a reputation for creativity and innovation and prides itself on being a place of opportunity for its students, staff and the communities and businesses it engages with.

The University's Our Vision, Your Opportunity programme aims to generate over £250 million by 2020, its biggest ever investment which will drive economic growth for the benefit of students and the wider region.

Collaboration with local industry aids the University in developing students who are entrepreneurial, eminently employable and well-connected. In response to the expected shortfall in qualified engineers in the UK, the University has invested over £10million in advanced engineering facilities and courses at Telford Innovation Campus, strengthening the region's engineering infrastructure.



## Upskilling the local workforce

The launch of the University's Apprenticeship Hub in 2016 highlighted its commitment to bringing higher level technical and professional skills into businesses through new Higher and Degree Apprenticeships. This new model is helping employers to upskill their existing workforce with 250 apprentices already studying on the University's programmes, including Engineering at Telford.

Additional recent highlights in the University of Wolverhampton's portfolio:

- A commendation, the highest possible accolade, in the most recent assessment by the Quality Assurance Agency.
- 96.3% of 2016 graduates were in employment or further study six months after graduating, according to the Destination of Leavers of Higher Education survey 2016.
- All University Research Centres submitted to the Research Excellence Framework 2014 had elements rated as world-leading.



Centre Telford in 2015. The Centre, situated in Southwater One, helps to widen access to higher education in the heart of Telford by providing opportunities for personal and professional development alongside support for local organisations.

Access tailored business advice and support by contacting Business Solutions today.

## Patronage has grown demand



Becoming a patron of the Shropshire Chamber has had a great impact in increasing our local business partnerships within the area over the past 12 months, following our membership in January 2019. We have met a lot of new people along the way, and gratefully a lot of them have become new customers. Over the last 12 months we have gained approximately 150 new clients, allowing us to increase our database greatly.

We're delighted to gain numerous substantial contracts, such as becoming the official printers for Shrewsbury Town Football Club weekly match day programme. Also, in 2019, WPG also became the official printing sponsor for the largest business networking event within Shropshire, The Shropshire Bizfest, which was endorsed from being an active member of the Shropshire Chamber. Additionally, WPG were so pleased to win the competitive tender to become the official printers for one of the West Midland's longest running business publication; Prosper Magazine.

Overall Welshpool Printing Group has had a very busy but very successful year, and we are looking forward to hopefully working with more businesses over the next 12 months!

# Celebrating six decades in print

**Welshpool Printing Group are absolutely delighted that we are celebrating our Diamond work anniversary on the 16th April 2020.**

60 years has past very quickly, with lots of changes, merges and updates to the business over the years. The support we have had from our client base to keep the company trading has been outstanding and we can not thank you all enough for your continued support and work.

We have had numerous updates to the company; however, the biggest change was when we took several other businesses under our wing to develop the company. Sign City UK, Powys Trophies & Awards, NRG Direct Mail and Shrewsbury Circular Redverse to name a few, have all merged with Welshpool Printing Group to work together and develop the



business. These mergers allowed us to target a much wider client base and have helped us to become one of the leading printing companies throughout Mid-Wales and surrounding areas.

We are thoroughly looking forward to hitting the big 60th Birthday in April, and we are certainly excited to see how the company will develop for another 60 years.

## Adding value to your firm

**For some reason, maybe it's the visual nature of the number 2020, but this new decade seems almost as eagerly awaited as 2000!**

The one thing for sure is that marketing trends will continue to change at a breakneck pace and keeping up with your existing and potential customers will become increasingly complex.

So what are the buzzwords for 2020? No surprises that top of the list is Consumer Privacy, with GDPR biting hard and high levels of consumer awareness about reducing their digital 'footprint', this hot potato is set to continue.

The wise brands and businesses will be working hard to establish added-value relationships with their clients and consumers over the coming year.



## So, what is the 2020 vision for your company?

Interactive rich content, both the B2B and Consumer markets are demanding more and more interactive rich content, static web pages will be replaced by more video content, animated graphic presentations, chat-bots and short online interactive experiences. In addition, the trend for live experiential marketing will continue to grow, enriching the brand experience.

Personalization, one huge trend will be the drive and desire for people to tailor their digital and print experiences. It is this trend that will fuel the growth of apps that unlike websites allow individuals the chance to manage their own levels of interaction and information.

So how can Yarrington help with these new trends? As a full-service marketing agency with key disciplines in design, digital, apps, video and live events, no other agency is so clearly ready for 2020. If you are looking to energise your business, get closer to your clients with meaningful messages, why not take advantage of our 2020 Ready Review programme?



# Revelation, revolution and re-education

**For Telford-based Zen Communications, one of the county's leading strategic PR and communications agencies, 2019 has been a year of revelation, revolution, and re-education. And, it's well and truly reaping the rewards.**

As Zen's Managing Director, Felicity Wingrove, explains:

"Ever since launching the agency 13 years ago, I've been on a personal mission to do things differently. In fact, it was the very reason I set up in the first place. I was back then, and still am now, hugely passionate about the need to move away from traditional PR, and to bring real, tangible, business-changing value to clients."

"As an agency, we've never been afraid of pushing boundaries. Of encouraging our clients to push boundaries. And in educating the wider industry that change needs to happen. Traditional PR (think the modest press release)

is no longer a viable option for businesses who are looking to create a real impact on those who matter most to them, who want to truly own their space, and who deserve to lead the way in their respective industry."

We absolutely owe it to our clients to do right by them, and continuing to churn out the same old drivel we were doing two decades ago is unjustifiable. Which is why we've spent the past 12 months continuing to re-educate businesses that traditional PR is dead and buried. And we mean obsolete... out-dated... dead as a dodo.

What is well and truly alive is content. And not just content for content's sake. But dynamic, semantically-packed, psychologically-resonant content. Content that tells a story in a way that resounds with its intended audience. Content that poses questions, answers questions, encourages a different way of thinking. Content that isn't simply one dimensional. Content that has many different faces and comes in all shapes and sizes – a talking head-style video, round-table discussion, or keynote speech. Content that impacts, influences, and inspires."

For further information please call 01952 200722, visit the website [www.zen-communications.co.uk](http://www.zen-communications.co.uk) or email [hello@zen-communications.co.uk](mailto:hello@zen-communications.co.uk)

## Flexibility works for the staff



Not only has the past year seen Zen transform its clients' businesses, but it's also seen its own business expand and evolve.

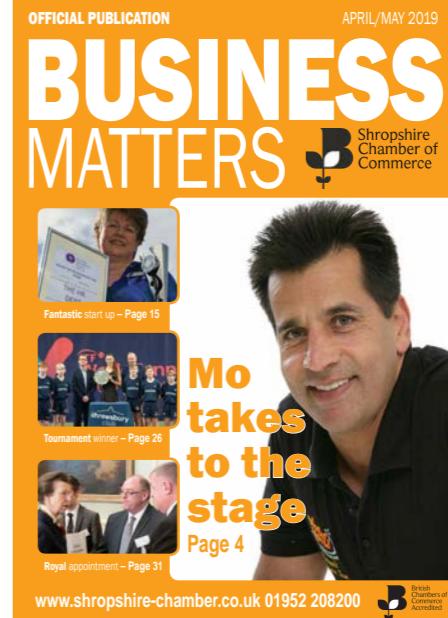
2019 has seen former Relationship Manager Chris Bentley step up into a Director role – a move which has seen him take on leadership of the agency's dedicated trade and technical divisions. Chris's expertise and exceptional industry relationships have been instrumental in pushing the agency further into international markets, with the team representing clients on a global scale across industries such as aviation, food testing, and biotechnology.

The past 12 months have also seen the agency's flexible working philosophy continue to evolve, with the introduction of 'The Fifth Day' – an initiative which gives individuals the option to fit their working week into four days and enjoy an extra day off.

"I'm passionate about ensuring that to us, flexible working isn't just a tick box exercise," explains Felicity.

"It's very much there to empower each individual member of the team and to encourage them to be the happiest, healthiest, and very best version of themselves – for their own benefit, as well as for the benefit of the agency, and our clients. And, we were delighted that our approach to flexible working was commended in a national Best Boss shortlisting earlier this year – so we're obviously doing something right!"

**It's been a year packed full of events and opportunities to do business in our wonderful county.**



# Cover stories provide a snapshot of the year

**It's been a year packed full of events and opportunities to do business in our wonderful county.**

The highlight for many is Shropshire Business Awards which will be celebrating its 20th year in 2020.

There is so much more to Shropshire Chamber of Commerce than a night of

celebration. Being great in the county is an all-year round effort.

Please turn the page to see just a selection of what your Chamber of Commerce offered you in 2019 – and look forward to 2020.

**CHAMBER HOUSE  
SHREWSBURY  
NOW OPEN  
100%  
POSITIVE FEEDBACK**

Our DIT funded International Trade Advisors have supported Shropshire Businesses through 2019 to the value of over £100m worth of business won across the globe, helping to grow the Shropshire Economy.



Our newly strengthened International Trade Documentation team have produced over 2900 sets of compliant documents helping to move over £50m worth of Shropshire goods and services around the world.

**781  
MEMBERS  
HAVE USED THEIR  
ALLOCATION TO ATTEND  
TRAINING OR EVENTS**

Our choice based membership model continues to be well received with over 39% of our training and events accessed free of charge via membership engagement with the Chamber and its membership has shown sustainable growth.



At a time when we hear of the ongoing challenges that businesses face with skill shortages our Chamber training has upskilled 549 participants this year.



We have delivered a project on behalf of BEIS focused on a No-Deal Brexit.

The team worked together and delivered an extraordinary programme of events and training all within a six-week timeline.

Feedback was exceptional and as a result we expect more opportunity via Growth Hubs.



As our business community strive to become better connected, our events have seen 1442 attendees in 2019 helping participants to find new contacts and new business opportunities.



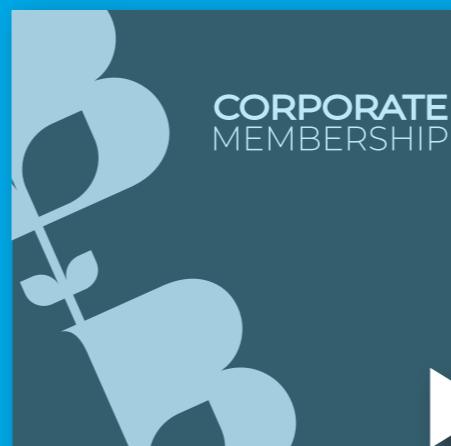
The 2019 Business Awards has been recognised as one of the best ever. Work on the 2020 Showcase, Conference and Awards on 12 June is well under way, celebrating the 20th anniversary of this prestigious event.



Our virtual Pathway2Careers advice platform is now fully functioning.

We are developing focus groups to aid further development.

We received a small amount of funding and through our relationships, have delivered something special to assist our young people to make informed career choices and promote sectors seen as less attractive.



Our Corporate Membership designed to provide senior team development across Leadership, Strategy, Sales, HR and Compliance is now in its pilot stage.

Early feedback suggests we have some fine tuning to do and it is clear that it fits the needs of Shropshire businesses.

This membership will nurture modern-day leaders to make their mark.



Shropshire  
Chamber of  
Commerce

# Patrons 2019



HENCOTE

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## New Patron for 2020 . . .



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