

**SOUTH CHESHIRE**

**SOUTH CHESHIRE  
CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY**

**British  
Chambers of  
Commerce  
Accredited**

# CHAMBER BUSINESS

News and views from the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry | **Q2 2023**



**CHAMBER SUPPORT  
AT THE HEART OF OUR  
TOWN CENTRES**

PAGE 6



# LARGE OFFICES SMALL OFFICES



**81 BOWEN COURT**  
St. Asaph  
5,129 sq ft



**ONE LAKESIDE**  
Chester  
135,000 - 159,000 sq ft



**3 OLYMPIC PARK**  
Warrington  
2,560 - 5,120 sq ft



**16 HURRICANE COURT**  
Speke  
2,511 - 5,200 sq ft



**PULFORD HOUSE**  
Chester  
2,521 sq ft



**27 NEWGATE STREET**  
Chester  
1,410 - 3,654 sq ft



**OFFICE 2 THE DAIRY CREWE HALL FARM**  
Crewe  
1,120 sq ft



**TECHNOLOGY HOUSE 1 JOHN BRADSHAW COURT**  
Congleton  
9,988 sq ft



**PRINCES COURT, A51, BEAM HEATH WAY**  
Nantwich  
80 - 1,500 sq ft



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## UPCOMING EVENTS &amp; NETWORKING

**Speed Networking**

October 3rd  
Nantwich Town Football Club

**Business Awards**

November 24th  
Reaseheath College

**Christmas Networking Lunch**

December 8th  
Rookery Hall

## SOUTH CHESHIRE CHAMBER PATRONS



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## CHOOSE THE RIGHT PACKAGE FOR YOUR BUSINESS

ESSENTIAL  
MEMBERSHIP**Vital solutions for  
your business****Essential features:**

- + Connect with the largest business community in South Cheshire
- + Raise your online profile through increased SEO
- + Promote your business through the Chamber channels
- + Access to Chamber online events
- + Trusted, local business information

**£15** / MonthSIGNATURE  
MEMBERSHIP**Tailor-made for  
developing businesses****All Essential features plus:**

- + Access to 40+ networking events
- + Access to 35+ informative events
- + Train your young team through our Chamber Young Member Network
- + Talk to like-minded businesses in our Chamber Peer group
- + Key local and national updates
- + Information on business support programs
- + International Trade Information and guidance
- + Discounted export docs
- + Access to the BCC Global Business Network

**£35** / MonthEXECUTIVE  
MEMBERSHIP**Optimised for  
established businesses****All Signature features plus:**

- + One to One annual meeting with Chamber Manager
- + Access to Chamber Leadership Insights program
- + Shape your future workforce with free places to our Chamber Young Member Network
- + Government updates and key legislation
- + Local regeneration updates (Business Council)

**£80** / Month

All prices inclusive of VAT, minimum sign up term 12 months and information subject to change.  
Check [www.sccci.co.uk](http://www.sccci.co.uk) for updates.

**Next issue due out on October 20th 2023. Editorial and advertising deadline October 1st 2023.**

For advertising Sales and Articles, please contact Jon Barnes: 01270 445409 or [jon.barnes@sccci.co.uk](mailto:jon.barnes@sccci.co.uk)

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# WELCOME

to the Chamber's magazine 'South Cheshire Business'.

The role of the Chamber is to help and support our local business community and nothing gives me and our staff more pleasure than seeing local businesses small or large prosper. For our businesses to prosper the town needs to be developed in a way that promotes economic growth and the Chamber will lobby on behalf of members for improvements to the area. This is an indirect way of supporting local businesses and is often not as visible to members, but very important. I will liaise and work with local stakeholders including Cheshire East Council, Crewe Town Council, Colleges, Members of Parliament and local councillors representing the views of business.

In a more direct way, the Chamber is always available to assist its members who need help to address an issue that is affecting their business. On page 6 you can read about how our business adviser, Richard Weilding, helped town centre businesses with their business rates. Without Richard's intervention there would not have been a reduction in their rates, and we know in the current climate any savings a business can make is vital. There are many examples of the support we can provide, so if you would like to find out more about joining the Chamber, please visit [www.sccci.co.uk](http://www.sccci.co.uk).

Since the last magazine, it's been great to see the opening of Ly2 recently. The area

on Lyceum square is a tremendous addition to the town centre and complements the Lyceum theatre and the market hall very nicely. A Town's Fund project, we must see the public and private sector working closely together to make the most of the performance space and encourage more people into the town. It is the first Town's fund project to come to fruition, but there will be many more over the next few years.

I would encourage local businesses to enter our Chamber's business awards (p.9) this year. The prestigious event is in its 26th year and not only is there a chance of winning a coveted award, but it's also an opportunity to celebrate all that is great about our business community. Entering the awards are free and it's an excellent way of raising your profile in and around South Cheshire.

The Chamber will always evolve to meet the needs of the business community and our activities have never been more aligned to support employers. Please visit our new website at [www.sccci.co.uk](http://www.sccci.co.uk) and have a look at the support, networking and guidance the Chamber has to offer.

I hope you find this magazine informative and if your company has news to share or you would like to take advantage of the advertising opportunities, please do not hesitate to contact Jon at the Chamber.

May I take this opportunity to wish your business every success in the forthcoming months.

 Paul Colman **Chief Executive**  @SCCCI\_CEO

## MEET THE CHAMBER TEAM

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**Tricia Francis**  
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# WHY JOIN THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE?

A chamber of commerce is a collection of local businesses who have come together to further their own interests and those of their community.



## BECOME PART OF A BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Network with other local businesses to create connections and opportunities.



## ENHANCE YOUR BUSINESS PROFILE

Promote your business on our website, social media, Members Portal and magazine.



## ACCESS TO BUSINESS SUPPORT & RESOURCES

Access to an online library of 700+ documents and templates as well as advice lines.

# WE WELCOME ALL OUR NEW MEMBERS

The South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce is an amazing place to connect to your local business community, but don't just take our word for it:






"The South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce is probably the best Chamber: excellent local reputation; full engagement with local businesses, corporates, third sector and stakeholders. They are friendly, fabulous people with an eager, efficient 'can do' attitude."

Dianne Parrish, Business Connector

If you would like to share a testimonial, please send it through to [jon.barnes@sccci.co.uk](mailto:jon.barnes@sccci.co.uk)

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# Vernon's Fish Bar



Chamber Chief Executive Paul Colman and Business Adviser Richard Weilding meet up with Victoria Street fish and chip shop owner Michael Vernon

## CHAMBER INCREASES ITS LOBBYING AND BUSINESS SUPPORT WITH TOWN CENTRE VISITS

**South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce has been praised after throwing a life-line to town centre traders facing a huge hike in their business rates.**

The Chamber stepped in to help a number of Crewe and Nantwich shops and food outlets challenge rate increases of up to 150% putting the future of their businesses in jeopardy.

Richard Weilding, who works with the Chamber as Business Adviser, said: "Business rates are based on a property's 'rateable value' and following a Government reassessment, there were some nasty surprises in store for several landmark local businesses.

"Assistance was offered in the form of transitional relief over five years to allow

time to absorb the extra cost however a number of properties principally located on Victoria Street in Crewe were faced with hefty increases of up to 150%.

"This along with rising utility costs and the significant drop in town centre footfall threw into question their future plans. Cheshire East's website advised appeal but past experience has shown this can take a considerable length of time, sometimes up to two years.

"The Chamber intervened on behalf of these individual cases. After an approach to our local MP and the Valuation Office Agency, the businesses received confirmation of a significant rate reduction within four weeks.

"Indeed all received reductions from their previous bills before the reassessment. We were delighted to help

achieve this positive result on their behalf."

Mr Weilding, a former bank manager, is getting out to talk to Crewe and Nantwich businesses every week. He added: "Both our local towns are going through difficult times and the Chamber remains committed to providing hands on support where needed particularly in our troubled town centres.

"We see this work 'in the field' as a key part of our responsibilities as a member organisation supporting local businesses. We're also looking at leases. Overall we want to see a significant reduction reflecting Crewe town centre's current rental values."

Vernon's fish bar on Victoria Street was one of the businesses affected. Owner Michael Vernon said:



## Café owner pays tribute to long-standing Chamber support

The Chamber has helped Riminis Café on Victoria Street in Crewe secure alcohol and alfresco licences. Owner Tez Sabri has worked with Richard Weilding from the Chamber over the past seven years as his business continues to thrive.

Tez says: "The Chamber first supported me when I acquired the business in 2016. I was faced with closure when my cafe within the Royal Exchange site was demolished in readiness for redevelopment. Richard helped me relocate at a reduced rent. He assisted me in bringing the empty unit up to the high quality cafe and restaurant I now have. He later helped me secure an alcohol licence and most recently an alfresco licence. I continue to work with Richard and the Chamber in growing my business."

Chamber Chief Executive Paul Colman and Business Adviser Richard Weilding are seen with owner Tez Sabri Rimini's Cafe has been a long established business in Crewe town centre.



Business Adviser Richard Weilding and Michael Vernon



Victoria Street, Crewe



The Chamber has also been visiting businesses in Nantwich town centre. Here, Paul and Richard catch up with Nantwich Bookshop owner Steve Lawson. Paul says:

**"Nantwich is a bustling market town where the problems experienced by traders maybe different to Crewe but the message is the same. We are here to help if we can."**

**"Crewe town centre footfall has dropped significantly making times hard for everyone. Yet my rateable value was set to rocket from £22,500 to £55,000. "Thanks to the Chamber's intervention, it's now £13,600. This support has proved a life-saver to my business and I can't thank Richard and the Chamber enough for their expertise and understanding."**

South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce has supported local business for more than 30 years. Members benefit from access to HR, Legal, Health & Safety and Tax advice as well as a wide-range of networking and promotional opportunities.

Chief Executive Paul Colman said:

**"Our goal is to promote the economic growth of our members and in turn, the local community. Lobbying local and national government in the interests of South Cheshire is a large part of what we do but equally important is meeting businesses face-to-face. We're taking time to visit them regularly to see how we can help on a practical basis."**

Another recent case has involved helping a Crewe town centre café obtain an alfresco licence to allow outdoor dining.

For more on the Chamber and how it can support your business go to the website [sccci.co.uk](http://sccci.co.uk) or call any of the Chamber team on 01270 504700.



# Join South Cheshire's No1 Business Community

**At South Cheshire Chamber, we understand the importance of feeling part of a community. Whether that means knowing where to seek advice when growing your business or sharing best practice with a peer group, we have the membership package to facilitate your needs.**

From talking to our membership, we have designed our packages to best suit your needs, giving you the choice how you want to engage with the local business community. In this article we are going to take a closer look at Signature Membership.

If you are looking to raise your profile locally, Signature Membership gives you multiple opportunities to network with access to over 60 events each year. We have taken great care to ensure our calendar features events of interest to all businesses regardless of size or sector; ranging from our flagship monthly Final Friday event, to our newly launched referral group – The Fresh Network.

For businesses looking to promote themselves digitally and in print, we offer our online portal which gives you a platform to share your latest news, events and offers; our weekly eNewsletter distributed to a mailing list of around 2,000, and our quarterly magazine which has a readership of approximately 7,500.

Each Member will automatically be added to our online business directory, guaranteed to improve your SEO. These platforms provide useful business and local information from our membership, South Cheshire Chamber, and the British Chamber of Commerce.

For businesses with young professionals, Signature Membership grants you one free place to our exclusive Young Members Network (usually £100+VAT). The Young Members Network enables young professionals to network and learn within a peer group in a series of workshops covering topics such as How to Network, Public Speaking, Personal Branding and Selling.

Signature Membership also includes business support offers provided by our Members and the British Chambers of Commerce. These include Quest, which gives you access to five advice lines and 700+ downloadable documents covering HR, legal, health & safety, tax and VAT. This service, valued at £1,400 has proved a massive help to our Members, acting as an extension of their team. For businesses who export or are looking to break into further markets, Signature Members receive a massive 50% discount on their export documentation.

If you would like to know more about Signature Membership, or our other membership packages – Executive and Premium, please contact Angela Wilkinson on [angela.wilkinson@sccci.co.uk](mailto:angela.wilkinson@sccci.co.uk) or visit [www.sccci.co.uk](http://www.sccci.co.uk)



"I've really enjoyed networking and attending the events with the chamber. Sharing knowledge and ideas. Great people and always welcoming."

**Karen Mills, Director**



"We at Daniel Matthias Architecture Ltd chose to sign up to the Signature Package, with South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as it is a credible and local organisation, joining an array of businesses and services together. Being a relatively new member of the Chamber, we have found the initial stages very useful and welcoming. The communication and updates from the team are clear and helpful. We have found the 'Meet the Chamber' meeting a great start, to guide us in the right direction. Our team have enjoyed utilising the Final Friday Networking meetings and connecting with many local businesses."

**Daniel Matthias, Director**



"I have been a member of The Chamber of Commerce for over 10 years and feel that the benefits and support offered help to promote your business profile in the local area. The signature package offers the business many benefits such as the monthly Final Fridays, the option to run other events through the Chamber and most recently the Young Members Network, giving the younger members of the team opportunity to improve their skills and see what the Chamber members have to offer."

**Lauren Tudor, Financial Planner**



# Chamber Business Awards 2023 – it's time to get in the running

## The South Cheshire Chamber Business Awards are back - and looking better than ever.

This year sees the welcome return of the International Trader of the Year category showcasing the many goods and services exported from South Cheshire as a hotbed of manufacturing and creative talent.

Again we are looking for excellence in a wide range of sectors including categories for up and coming entrepreneurs and those that give back to our community.

Ambassador of the Year will give the public a chance to nominate any business trading in Crewe and Nantwich that demonstrates far-reaching leadership in its field.

Winners will step into the spotlight at our glitzy awards ceremony at Reaseheath College on Friday, November 24.

Chamber Events & Marketing Coordinator Dominic Hibbert said: "Entries are now open for our 26th annual awards and as ever we are delighted to see early interest from individuals and businesses keen to be part this very special night.

"With the support of our generous sponsors, we have created an annual

tradition that never loses its appeal or sparkle. We look forward to welcoming another sell-out audience to Reaseheath College and creating lasting memories for numerous individuals across the South Cheshire business community."

### This year there are 10 categories in total:

- Ambassador of the Year (public nominations)
- Apprentice of the Year (sponsored by Reaseheath College)
- Business of the Year 25+ Employees (sponsored by Cheshire College South & West)
- Business of the Year, Under 25 Employees (sponsored by Hibberts)
- Contribution to the Community (sponsored by Bentley and Supported by Cheshire Connect)
- Employer of the Year (sponsored by Assurant)
- Excellence in Customer Service (sponsored by KPI Recruiting)
- International Trader of the Year (supported by Department for Business and Trade)

- Start Up Business of the Year (sponsored by Rhino Safety)

Entering the awards is free and straight-forward. Winning or even being a finalist is an excellent way of raising profile with logos provided to use on marketing material.

Closing date is October 6 with finalists confirmed later that month. Tickets will go on sale on October 16.

For more information on how to enter go to [sccci.co.uk/business-awards](http://sccci.co.uk/business-awards)



It was a memorable night for the winners of 2022, now you could be among those who take to the stage on November 24 – entries now open for the Chamber Business Awards

## Walk this way to better health and productivity with South Cheshire Chamber



Queen's Park was a picturesque setting for netwalking, a new attraction on the South Cheshire Chamber events calendar

### South Cheshire Chamber members are stepping out as part of a new programme of 'netwalking' events.

Business owners and employees have enjoyed lunchtime walks round scenic Queen's Park in Crewe while making new business contacts along the way.

Dominic Hibbert, Chamber Events & Marketing Coordinator, said:

**"It's well documented that taking a break from the workplace or desk is beneficial to mental and physical health and can help boost productivity."**

**"So we have introduced netwalking which combines the opportunity to network while taking in some fresh air and exercise. The first trial events have been successful and we will be looking at further events to come."**

The Chamber is planning to team up with East Cheshire Chamber to stage netwalking in Congleton park. Other destinations could include Rookery Hall, Crewe Hall and Joey the Swan in Wistaston.

This summer it has also introduced a special Young Members Network offering workshops for young professionals and apprentices. Topics include interpersonal skills and public speaking.

**Plans are also well in place for this year's Chamber Business Awards taking place at Reaseheath College in November.**

For Chamber Events Weekly Updates and more on membership benefits to businesses go to [sccci.co.uk](http://sccci.co.uk)



# A message from our President



**Because my role as President is largely ambassadorial and does not involve me in day to day operational activity, people often ask me “what did you used to do?” and “what do you do now?” So I thought it might be interesting for many new Chamber members and indeed some existing ones to hear more about my background, how the Chamber evolved, and how I came to be President.**

It's a long story so please bear with me.

My career began way back in the late 1960's working for the New Town Development Corporations in my home town of Telford and then in Northampton where I was a Project Co-ordinator on large scale housing and industrial development schemes.

I moved to Cheshire to work in a similar capacity for Crewe Borough Council in 1971, as, at that time, Crewe was designated to be an Expansion Town for the Liverpool overspill. This never materialised and the expansion actually took place on a smaller scale in Winsford.

Having spent the next several years on industrial development projects such as Weston Road Industrial Estate, Crewe Gates Farm and Marshfield Bank I was appointed as the Council's Head of Economic Development with responsibility for developing and implementing the Council's future economic strategy which was aimed at diversifying the industrial base to end the reliance on the Railways and Rolls Royce which were in danger of going into decline and causing major local unemployment problems.

The emphasis was therefore on building more speculative industrial and

office buildings, helping to support business creation and growth and promoting inward investment and Tourism.

In particular, I was responsible for leading the development of Crewe Business Park which broke with Crewe's tradition of heavy industrial factories and warehouses and provided new, modern pristine office space in a green environment attracting a new type of employer into the area.

My career then took a dramatic turn in the late 1980's when the railway industry in Crewe, as feared, suffered many redundancies, and British Rail gave the Council £1.2m, on the condition that it did not go to the Council but was used to set up a private sector-led company to help support redundant railway workers to set up their own businesses.

I was charged with the task of doing this and set about creating the Crewe Development Agency comprising a Board of Directors made up of prominent local business leaders, DTI representatives, The Bank of England, British Rail and senior Councillors. It was chaired by Peter Ward the Chief Executive of Rolls Royce and Bentley Motors, with myself as it's Chief Executive alongside my role as the Council's Head of Economic Development.

The CDA's first action was to purchase the freehold of the now vacant British Rail Paper and Printing works located at Wistaston Road in Crewe with the object of converting it into a Business Centre for start-up companies together with a Business Loan Fund. Ownership of the site was later transferred to the South Cheshire Chamber Property Company along with the Loan Fund and the site is still operating today.

During this time, I also got my first taste of helping new start-ups with advice and financial support when I was appointed

to represent the Development Agency on the Board of the towns Enterprise Agency, SCOPE (South Cheshire Opportunities for Private Enterprise) SCOPE was later to be merged with Crewe & Nantwich Business Link but it is good to see that the building on Weston Road is still in use and providing space for small businesses.

At this time, the Government also increased its own commitment to providing business support through the creation of a national network of Business Links and Training and Enterprise Councils (TEC's) and I was appointed to sit on the Board of the Local Crewe and Nantwich Business Link, which eventually led to me being seconded from the Council to take over as its Chief Executive in addition to my roles as Head of Economic Development and Chief Executive of the Crewe Development Agency – busy times!

It was a key objective of Business Link that it would eventually establish a Chamber of Commerce in the area because although both Crewe and Nantwich had their own small Chambers of Trade for retailers, there was no Chamber to represent larger businesses many of which got their services from North Staffs Chamber.

The Crewe and Nantwich Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise and Business Link was therefore established in 1996 as part of a group of Chambers in the South and East Cheshire TEC area, comprising Macclesfield Chamber and Congleton Chamber.

This arrangement worked well enough but it became obvious that particularly in the Crewe and Nantwich area, there were too many organisations trying to do the same thing.



So, in 2001 when I had the opportunity to take early retirement from the Council, I engineered the establishment of the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry as a new single entity, involving, in effect, the merger of the Crewe and Nantwich Chamber of Commerce, Business Link, the Crewe Development Agency and both the Crewe and Nantwich Chambers of Trade.

Being an independent company gave much more clarity and enabled the Chamber to grow its services and develop into an organisation with a thriving membership that was of value to all sectors of the local business community.

For me personally, it also provided more focus – one job, one job title, less running around between offices - and no politics!

When the time came for me eventually to retire as Chief Executive of the Chamber in 2012 and just as I was ready to get out

my pipe and slippers, I was asked if I would continue in the voluntary role of Chamber Chairman which I did for three years before being invited to be President – No escape!

At the same time, I was also invited to become a Director of Nantwich Town Football Club which for me was an exciting opportunity to get involved in something different, in a sport that I love.

After spending several years as the club's Finance Director I am now Vice – Chairman and although the football club takes up an inordinate amount of my time, it is nevertheless enjoyable and rewarding. It also gives me the opportunity to meet with other Chamber members many of whom are sponsors and supporters.

As a Chamber member, the club hosts some Chamber events at its Swansway Stadium and also gives me a legitimate and necessary link with my role as President.

As mentioned before, although the role of President is largely ambassadorial, it does carry a number of duties such as chairing the Chamber Business Council, and the AGM, representing the Chamber at the British Chambers of Commerce Regional Assembly, attending local events such as the Nantwich Show, and the Food Festival, being available for the visits of Government Ministers, MP's or other dignitaries plus the odd radio interview - and of course, writing an article for the magazine.

In summary, having spent the greater part of my working life on economic development and supporting businesses through the Chamber and other organisations I do feel very privileged to be your President and am always proud to wear the "gong" when on official duty.

**John Dunning**  
President



**Your Chamber membership provides you with so much more than the excellent networking events that we hold, and we are keen for you to realise the wider value that we can bring to your organisation. The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) identifies that whilst chambers have roots that are local, we also have a national voice, where the feedback we provide from our members can influence decision making at governmental level, which impacts directly on our own business performance.**

A good example of this is the 'Business Barometer' which is an annual Open University report, in collaboration for the first time with BCC. This is based on a survey of more than 1,300 organisations of all sizes from the public, private and third sectors. Unsurprisingly the overwhelming message emerging from the report focuses on skills shortages, stating that:

- **Almost three-quarters (72%)** of organisations say the impact of skills shortages is causing increased workload on other staff, while 78% are seeing reduced output, profitability, or growth

## A message from our Chair

- **More than two-thirds (68%)** of SMEs are currently facing skills shortages, rising to 86% in large organisations
- **28% of businesses** say they have had to turn down work or are not able to bid for work due to their staff shortage
- To address the problem, **more than half (52%)** of large organisations will increase investment in staff training over the next year, compared to 47% of SMEs
- SMEs struggle to implement plans to address the skills shortage while **9 in 10 of large organisations** have implemented some form of written plan

I am sure many of you recognise your own organisation's difficulties reflected in these results. In summarising the report, Martha Lane-Fox (President of BCC and Chancellor of the Open University) in a recent Radio 4 interview explained that the tightening of the labour market, changes in the immigration system and the changing nature of work are already having a negative impact on the stretched labour market. So too are high inflation, an ageing population, low productivity, and stretched public finances. And whilst 70% of businesses are experiencing these problems, only half are planning on how to train and develop their staff and only 27% are actually putting money into training and development.

Consequently, Chambers have been lobbying the Government to address these issues, and investing in people and training must be the top priority. This is about rethinking education, assessing what skills are relevant, linking in with education providers and importantly listening to the needs of businesses.

**The Government's Local Skills Improvement Plan that South Cheshire Chamber is currently driving forward in Cheshire and Warrington is going a long way to address these issues. We have just submitted the draft report and this has been a true collaboration between businesses of all sizes, local education providers and the Chambers in the region. Local education providers will respond to business needs, supporting training and upskilling in those areas of need.**

The wider impact of bringing these groups together is a business community that has more jobs, better paid staff, driving forward opportunities thus making for a healthy economy that serves the region. Clearly, this doesn't end with a report, and work will continue into 2025 to ensure that your voice continues to be heard in shaping the future skills agenda.

**Dr Diane Wright PhD MA BA (Hons)**  
Chair of the Chamber

# Ada exhibition draws crowds to opening at Crewe Market Hall

**Crowds turned out in force to pay tribute to a suffragist who played a vital role in campaigning for equal pay for women but is little known in her hometown Crewe.**

An exhibition celebrating the life and times of factory girl Ada Nield Chew drew many visitors to Crewe Market Hall including one surprise VIP - her great nephew Henry Winby, 88, who remembered her as the 'kindly lady' who brought him presents as a little boy.

Ada, born in 1870 as one of 13 children, was in her 20s when she worked as a tailor and wrote a series of letters to the Crewe Chronicle, under the pseudonym 'A Crewe Factory Girl' criticising working conditions for women and girls.

She called for a "living wage, not a dying wage" for women paid less than male counterparts and criticised unfair practices such as charging workers for tea breaks.

Henry, from Remer Street in Crewe, said:

**"Ada lost her job as result and became a union rep going up and down the country in caravan. I was only a little lad but I remember her bringing me books in her later life.**

"Ada was my grandad's sister so we always knew about her in the family and how she was trying to improve things for women so I'm really happy this exhibition has finally been created." The retired Radway Green Royal Ordnance factory worker added:

**"Ada isn't really well known in Crewe. Recognition has been a long time coming so my thanks go to the organisers."**

Cheshire Women's Collaboration (CWC) has spent months piecing together the display which includes pictures, posters,

letters and newspaper cuttings as well as aprons, hats and dresses which would have been worn by Ada. It tells how she became a prominent suffragist and campaigned for the right for women's vote. Ahead of her time, she was a vegetarian and one of the first women of her era to go with a double barrel name once married.

**CWC, which champions health and wellbeing for local women, also welcomed civic dignitaries, union representatives and supporters of its 'A Statue for Ada' campaign. The organisation has mounted a fundraising drive to place a statue in Crewe town centre as a lasting memorial to Ada and is talks with Cheshire East over pinpointing the right spot.**

Ada went on to run a mail order drapery business. She died, aged 75, in 1945 and is named, along with other suffrage supporters, on the plinth of the statue of Millicent Fawcett in London's Parliament Square.

The exhibition is set to tour different venues such as Crewe UTC, Cheshire College Crewe campus, Crewe Library and Nantwich Museum. For further dates go to 'A Statue for Ada' on Facebook.



Henry Winby visiting the exhibition telling the story of his great aunt, Crewe factory girl Ada Nield Chew



Cheshire Women's Collaboration chair Kate Blakemore with fellow trustees and supporters of the 'Statue for Ada' campaign



The dressing up corner is proving popular with young visitors

## Ly<sup>2</sup> Dates

DATE	EVENT	TIMES	DESCRIPTION
Saturday 12th August	Compact Disco	3 x 45 min sets 11.30am, 1.30pm, 3.30pm	Large disco ball on Ly <sup>2</sup> , dancers will do some of performance on and off stage
	Angie Mack Hula Hoop	11am, 1pm & 3pm	
Saturday 19th August	Pantasy Samba band	11am - 4pm	3 band members plus local dancer
	Autin Dance - Out of the deep Blue	12pm, 2:00pm & 4:00pm	Walk about before each performance. 25 mins Promenade, 25 min dance duet in Ly <sup>2</sup> .
	Opening event Speech/thanks	2.50pm - 3pm	
	Puppet Workshop TBC	TBC	
Saturday 26th August	Wild Rumpus Adventure Play	11am - 2pm	
	RiRis	1pm and 3pm TBC	Bollywood and Bangra performance and workshop Walkabout



# Lyceum Square to reopen with stunning launch event

## LYCEUM THEATRE CREWE

**Crewe's Lyceum Square has been transformed into an exciting events and performance space and the site is ready to host a brilliant range of activities in the summer season.**

The scheme – called Ly<sup>2</sup> – sees the centre of Lyceum Square becoming a mixed-use space to host events, festivals, performances, and activities throughout the year.

Ly<sup>2</sup> launches on Saturday 24 June with exciting performances from national dance circus company, Motionhouse, fresh from featuring at the National Lottery's Big Eurovision Welcome event in Liverpool.

You can catch performances of Motionhouse's daring outdoor show, 'Wild' at 2pm and 4.45pm on the day. Both performances are free to attend and are not ticketed. The shows are suitable for all audiences.

As well as a new raised events stage with an integrated digital screen, the new Ly<sup>2</sup> scheme includes colourful and multi-functional street furniture and improvements to key gateways into the square.

The improvements have included the installation of an eagle mural which has been applied to the southern market shed known as 'Crewe Central' operated by the Crewe Market Hall team. The eagle sits next to floor art on the Northern market shed designs, which has also recently been completed.

Councillor Nick Mannion, vice chair of Cheshire East Council's economy and growth committee, said:

"It is really exciting to see this project come to fruition. This space lends itself so well to a really broad range and diversity of arts events."

**"Being able to open now is another big boost to Crewe, as it keeps up the positive momentum built by the revamped Market Hall and also dovetails nicely with a fantastic programme of events that is already being provided by the Lyceum Theatre."**

"It's also important to add that this isn't just about the here and now though. As we're approaching high summer, we are of course focusing our attention on an events and activity programme that takes us right through to September, but our commitment to Ly<sup>2</sup> will extend well beyond that."

Doug Kinsman, chair of Crewe Town Board, said: "Ly<sup>2</sup> is here to stay, and I'm thrilled to see how this space will really connect our communities and provide opportunities to step up our arts scene in Crewe another notch. I've said this



1) The new stage and screen on Lyceum Square  
2) Motionhouse performance of Wild  
3) Performers of 'Wild' on raised platforms  
(credit to Dan Tucker)



before, but it bears repeating – this is a transformative project for Crewe's town centre."

The vision for Ly<sup>2</sup> was developed by the Crewe Cultural Forum – a collaboration of more than 100 residents, organisations and businesses in Crewe – and it aims to enhance the setting of the Lyceum Theatre and Crewe Market Hall and create a cultural heart for the town centre.

Highways works are continuing as part of the programmed multi-phased approach, which includes Hill Street and part of Heath Street. This will involve installation of final materials and imprinting of the junction and

will be completed later this summer.

Later this summer there will also be a more formal launch of the scheme.

Crewe Town Board was allocated £750,000 from the government's Accelerated Towns Fund for an improvement scheme for the Lyceum Square and adjacent areas. The project is also supported by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Crewe Town Council.

The Ly<sup>2</sup> project was delivered by Cheshire East Council and overseen by Crewe Town Board with Crewe Town Council and Lyceum Theatre also key partners.



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## In the Spotlight with...



ASSURANT®

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Chris Woolnough, and his son Thomas



Assurant's European head office is on Crewe Business Park. It's home to over 900 employees from frontline call centre staff to those in support functions like Finance, Supply Chain, Marketing and Compliance.

Here we meet the man at the helm of UK operations, Chris Woolnough.

**Chris, you joined Assurant in 2019, after several high-ranking roles with famous names such as Bank of America, Lloyds Banking Group and Phones 4u. Previously, you were Digital and Commercial Director at Shop Direct (now The Very Group), where you led the commercial and digital transformation teams. Tell us about your role.**

I'm responsible for our UK business, the clients we partner with (we are predominantly a B2B2C business), the products we sell and how we sell them all the way through to the UK P&L and ensuring we have a growing, sustainable UK business for the long term.





Assurant UK headquarters on Crewe Business Park

**Assurant protects and insures millions of mobile phones, cars, household valuables, mortgages and travellers. Green credentials are key. Tell us about these measures, for example your hybrid working scheme.**

We're committed to addressing the physical and transitional risks of climate change, as well as reducing our carbon emissions. This includes a reduction in our total energy consumption recognized through our ongoing real estate optimization strategy given our increasingly hybrid workforce. While finding efficiencies in the facilities we operate, for example our U.K. device care center is certified to the ISO14001 Environmental Management System Standard.

**Assurant is a long-standing Patron of the South Cheshire Chamber. How does this benefit your business?**

Being part of the Chamber is an excellent way of tapping into what's going on locally such as HS2 and the town regeneration. We are part of a close-knit business community united in pushing forward change to support the local economy and our workforce, the majority of whom live in the local area.

**The company has been a well-known employer in South Cheshire, with a large base on Crewe Business Park, for many years. How does being based in Crewe support business?**

Excellent transport links and access to a talent pool from top-rated local colleges and universities. Assurant is keen to work with the Chamber and these educational establishments to keep these talented individuals in the local area. As a graduate of Keele, I found I have had a successful career path close to my family and friends.

**You are keen to attract enthusiastic people to your talent pool, with a culture focusing on kindness and supporting the community. It's called The Assurant Way, how does that work?**

The four dimensions of The Assurant Way describe the things that make our company culture unique: Our purpose. Our values. Our commitments. And our vision. Our purpose inspires us. It's the reason we exist as a company, and why the work we do each day matters to us and to the people we serve. Our values ground us. They are fundamental to who we are and how we relate to others. Our commitments propel us. These behaviours provide a clear understanding of what we can do to be successful at Assurant. Our vision unites us. By living our purpose, values, and commitments, we're working together toward a common goal; creating the future of Assurant.

**The Chamber offers a wealth of opportunity to connect with businesses of all sizes and the community at large. Tell us what you enjoy about being part of the Chamber and this vibrant local business community.**

It's a very positive experience, connecting people who share common goals and want the best for the area. It's good to be able to talk to like-minded business leaders to share problems and solutions and hear how other major employers are tackling issues such as skills shortages.

**Away from Assurant, you are a keen runner and dad of three including Thomas aged seven who is autistic. You are a strong supporter of Cheshire Autism Practical Support (CHAPS), a charity helping local people with autism and their parents. Tell us about your fundraising.**

In December I'm running another marathon, this time in Antarctica. CHAPS offer brilliant support to children and parents, including training courses, yoga and swimming. Assurant will also support with match funding. I'm hoping to raise £10,000. Link - <https://gofund.me/283b4a19>

**With a young family, and a very responsible role, how do you strike a good work-life balance?**

Tough one! I get up 5am to run before the children are up and about. Hybrid working allows me to take them to school at least twice a week and be there for tea time.

**You gained your undergraduate degree at Keele University, with a Bachelor of Business Administration. A member of the Assurant Europe Leadership Committee, you remain based in the UK. Would you live anywhere else?**

I've lived in Sandbach most of my life, and my family and friends live in the area. I have travelled extensively with my job but South Cheshire really is home sweet home. It gives my children a wonderful quality of life and provides all the necessary links for travelling. Why live anywhere else!

**What is the motto you try to live by?**

Life is short, seize every opportunity and make the most of everyday





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# Assurant Foundation supports My CWA, a Cheshire domestic abuse charity, with \$10,000 contribution



ASSURANT®



**Assurant, a leading global business services company that supports, protects and connects major consumer purchases, announced the Assurant Foundation's donation of \$10,000 to the domestic abuse charity My CWA, formerly known as My Cheshire Without Abuse. My CWA was nominated by the Assurant European Women's Network, an employee resource group whose purpose is to support women in the workplace and beyond. In addition to the donation, Assurant has also supported the charity with skill-sharing initiatives, employer-supported volunteering and a recent corporate fundraising event.**

As co-chairs of the Assurant European Women's Network, Kerry Crompton, European legal director and Natalie Paddock, EU group company secretary, presented the contribution to Saskia Lightburn-Ritchie, My CWA CEO, during a fundraising day in support of the charity. Assurant held the fundraising day at its European head office in Crewe with a host of activities organised by the Assurant European Women's Network for employees; including an ice cream van, a silent auction and raffle, and a networking event with representation from My CWA and Cheshire Constabulary, who brought on site the service's new night-safety buses. During the event an additional £1,477 was raised to support My CWA.

"It is such a privilege to partner with My CWA and help support their amazing

work and their desire to make life changing impacts in the community," said Kerry Crompton. "We kickstarted our partnership with employees volunteering hours to help My CWA make and distribute holiday gifts to the families they support who have been impacted by domestic abuse. To grow our support with today's generous donations from the Assurant Foundation and Assurant employees is a wonderful testament to our corporate culture of giving back in communities where we work."

"Community partnerships have such a significant impact on the work we do and the people we help. They help raise awareness of our services, build long-lasting connections for us, and help employees give back to their local communities," said Lightburn-Ritchie. "This partnership also brings much-needed financial support to My CWA and we cannot stress enough how crucial that is for us right now. With demand higher than ever and budgets having to stretch further and further, we have genuinely never needed our corporate partners more. I'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone at Assurant for their generosity and efforts. Every penny Assurant has raised for us will go towards helping adults and children in Cheshire affected by domestic abuse."

For more on Assurant go to [www.assurant.co.uk](http://www.assurant.co.uk)

## Bentley Excellence Centre for Honey Production reaches one million bees



**Bentley is pleased to announce the expansion of the Excellence Centre for Honey Production in Crewe, increasing the colony size of the famous 'Bentley Bees' from 600,000 to over one million through the installation of seven new bee hives.**

As part of the company's Beyond100 strategy, Bentley is focusing on making its historic Crewe campus even more environmentally friendly as the company aims towards becoming the leaders in sustainable luxury mobility. In a further move, Bentley is encouraging its colleagues to enhance local biodiversity by handing out wildflower seeds for them to plant in their communities.

Welcoming the new bees into the Bentley team, Andrew Robertson, Head of Site and Facilities Planning, commented: "Our Bentley Bees have been at our site for almost five years, producing over 2,000 jars of honey for our extraordinary colleagues and customers. We hope that by installing seven new hives, in addition to ten hives already in place at our Excellence Centre for Honey Production, we can further enhance our positive impact on the local environment as part of a wider sustainability programme. This is to ensure Bentley remains a significant contributor to local biodiversity and adds to our ambition to be the leaders in sustainable luxury mobility."

In partnership with 'Buckley Bees', Bentley installed a colony of 120,000 indigenous honey bees as part of British marque's #GOTOZERO sustainable strategy. This year, the colony will now grow to over one million bees across 17 active bee hives at the company's headquarters. The Crewe-based manufacturer, hopes that in 2023 Bentley can surpass last year's record honey harvest, where the bees produced over 1,000 jars of honey whilst helping to pollinate the on-site flora and bring wider benefits to the surrounding Cheshire countryside.

The Excellence Centre for Honey Production is just one of many initiatives in place to improve site sustainability at the Crewe campus. Other activities include handmade bird and bat boxes dotted around the campus by Bentley colleagues, hedgehog highways, our expanding colleague allotments and much more. These initiatives help Bentley to support local wildlife and enhance natural beauty in local areas, whilst also boosting colleague mental wellness through the provision of sufficient green spaces.

For more on the company go to [www.bentleymotors.com](http://www.bentleymotors.com)



# How apprenticeships could help to upskill your workforce



**It's no secret that the UK economy is struggling with a skills and talent gap and for many businesses recruiting and retaining talent is number one priority, and therefore many are looking to invest more in upskilling the existing workforce. Karen Roberts, (pictured) Assistant Principal Apprenticeships & Employer Engagement, outlines how apprenticeships could be the answer to many businesses' recruitment and retention issues, and how they could be the ideal solution to the need to upskill existing teams and therefore and investment in the businesses and team's future.**

Different types of apprenticeships: There is a misconception that apprenticeships are for post-GCSE school leavers only, when in fact, there are a variety of apprenticeship routes to suit various levels and ages, explains Karen. We find when speaking to business leaders that many don't realise how apprenticeships can be a complete game-changer for their business! In fact, those businesses looking to upskill their teams, for example, pushing employees up to management level, could take advantage of an apprenticeship, which would come as little or no cost at all to the business.

Anyone over 16 and not in full-time education can apply for an apprenticeship. Programme lengths vary and can take between one and four years, depending on the level of study, the sector and the apprentice's initial ability.

The cost of putting an employee through an apprenticeship: One barrier to businesses training their employees is the worry of cost. Many have had to tighten their purse strings in the past few years, so the additional cost of training courses isn't always possible for SMEs.

There are ways in which businesses can put their teams through apprenticeship courses for little or no cost. If a business does not pay into the Apprenticeship Levy, which we will touch on later in the article, the government will fund 95% of the cost of training an apprentice. With just a 5% contribution required from the employer, this usually equates to a few hundred pounds. If a business employs fewer than 50 people, that contribution increases to 100% for apprentices aged 16-18 or aged 19-24 with an education and healthcare need.

However, in England, an employer that has an annual bill of more than £3m will pay monthly into the Apprenticeship Levy. This levy is an amount paid at a rate of 0.5% of an employer's annual pay bill and this includes related companies and charities. This therefore means that if the

employer wishes to put team members through an apprenticeship scheme, it will cost them nothing at all as the business would be eligible for an Apprenticeship Levy allowance, plus a 10% top up from the government.

For more information about Cheshire College apprenticeship courses contact [apprenticeships@ccsw.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@ccsw.ac.uk)



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# Five top tips to develop a Business Strategy



**Rob McKay is a Senior Lecturer in Business Growth and Programme Manager for Help to Grow: Management.**

**Here, Rob (pictured) shares his five top tips to develop a business strategy.**

“Setting out to create a strategy can be a daunting prospect. A quick internet search for “business strategy” quickly turns up a myriad of models and diagrams, mostly aimed at larger corporate organisations. So, how can a small business owner/manager come up with a good strategy to take their enterprise forwards?”

**1. Put it in context:** Your strategy doesn't sit in isolation. Think of it as a journey you intend to make. What is the destination? How will you get there? How will you know you've arrived? The answers to these questions will depend a lot on your values (what is important to you, what behaviours you accept/reject from staff, customers and suppliers), your vision and

mission (how your existence contributes to making that vision come about). Your strategy then becomes what you will do to make your mission real.

Take time to make sure you've a clear idea of what these elements are; your strategy won't succeed if it clashes with your values, and isn't an effective way of achieving your mission and getting you closer to your vision.

**2. Don't fly solo:** You aren't alone on your journey; you'll have staff, customers and suppliers to take with you. Get wide perspectives on your ideas, and gather ideas from others. Do your staff have untapped skills they want to deploy? Do your customers want something from you that you don't currently offer, but could? Are there potential partners available to move things forward?

**3. Don't fret about originality:** Commerce has been underway since ancient times, and there are millions of businesses around the globe active right now.

You don't have to be unique in your strategy – some theorists argue there are only four basic strategies. It's far, far better to focus on something that works for you.

Something that builds on your strengths, diminishes your weaknesses, opens up your opportunities, and overcomes any threats.

**4. Can you get there from here?** Start with a solid understanding of where you are now – think back to that journey metaphor. If I'm planning a luxury cruise as my journey, I must travel from home to the port to meet the ship; planning for the journey starts from home, not Southampton docks. A realistic, but optimistic appraisal of where you are now, where your current momentum is taking you, and what resources you have to hand are critical to building a solid, achievable strategy.

**5. Nothing is forever:** A strategy is a plan, just a wide-ranging and high-level one. Plans can flex and ultimately be binned and replaced. It's the same for your strategy; don't assume it's engraved in stone. Give it time, and allow your operations and strategic activities to flex and adapt as they encounter the complications of real life. If you genuinely feel like your strategy isn't working, don't be afraid to revisit it and consider changing.”

– Find out more about tools to build a growth strategy: [bit.ly/H-T-G](https://bit.ly/H-T-G)

## Mornflake launches breakfast products in 100% recyclable packaging



**Charlotte Gribbin at Mornflake headquarters in Crewe and the new-look packs**

**Chamber Patron Mornflake has unveiled a new look for its famous Mighty Oats as part of the Crewe firm's mission to champion sustainability and the health benefits of oats.**

The historic family business, with roots in South Cheshire since 1675, is rolling out new packaging which is 100% recyclable and carries the strapline ‘Positive energy for you and your planet’.

Best-sellers in the Mornflake range including Stoneground Oatmeal, Creamy Superfast Oats, Jumbo Scottish Oats and Organic Porridge Oats are now sporting the bold, modern design.

Managing director James Lea said: “The refreshed design of our premium range

of porridge oats, represents the ethos of our business, providing the best quality cereals whilst holding sustainability, health and provenance to heart.

**“We know consumers have high expectations when it comes to our responsibility as a brand to contribute to a greener future and this range is a testament to our ongoing commitment to sustainability. Now shoppers can reach for Mornflake oats knowing they are buying a quality breakfast that's been milled carbon neutrally.”**

Mornflake, the UK's oldest cereal company, has long operated a zero-waste policy, with any by-product being repurposed into animal feed for local livestock and biofuel.

Headquartered in Crewe, the company also has a mill in Banffshire, Scotland which is powered by a wind turbine. Harnessing the power of nature is reflected in the new packaging which it hopes will help shoppers make environmentally responsible choices.

Mr Lea added:

**“We have been family owned for 15 generations and stewardship of our planet and resources has always been central to the way we work. We want to ensure our business continues for at least another 15 generations.”**

The new-look products have hit the shelves at supermarkets across the country including Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda and Morrisons. They are also available in the mill shop at Mornflake in Crewe.

– For more on the firm's heritage and new products go to [mornflake.com](https://mornflake.com)



Mornflake Mighty oats are a favourite in flapjack recipes





Assistant Principal Iain Clarke and Councillor Sam Corcoran (centre) with speakers Sarah Mukherjee, Dave Green (Sharenergy Co-op), Catherine Barton (Chester Zoo), Jeremy Herbert and Ben Waite (Ringway Jacobs)

**Action which local businesses, organisations and individuals can take for a more sustainable future were highlighted at a conference jointly by Reaseheath College and Cheshire East Council.**

The 'Achieving Net Zero' conference, held at Reaseheath's Nantwich campus, illustrated how the borough can achieve its net zero target – currently set for 2045 - through a collaborative commitment to lowering carbon emissions and driving sustainability while still maintaining growth.

The sell-out event attracted over 100 attendees including leaders of significant multi-international companies, small and medium (SME) businesses and community groups and included a 'field to fork' networking lunch.

Messages for positive change were put forward by an inspirational panel including Sarah Mukherjee MBE, former BBC environmental correspondent and now CEO of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. Other speakers included Councillor Sam Corcoran, Leader of Cheshire East Council; Iain Clarke, Reaseheath's Assistant Principal (Land based and Sustainability) and Jeremy Herbert, Community Co-ordinator for Sustainable Nantwich.

Councillor Corcoran outlined local projects which have already made a significant difference to the borough's carbon emissions including the conversion of large fleet vehicles to green hydrogen, energy efficient street lighting, and a long term modernisation project to deliver green

energy to council owned properties through solar panels and low carbon heat pumps.

Iain Clarke explained that Reaseheath College's sustainability strategy to achieve carbon net zero by 2035 had resulted in many positive projects which were well supported by students. These included a 'Field to Fork' programme linking local school children with the production of locally produced healthy food, the reduction of single use plastic in college food outlets and investment into precision farming, robotics and data collection on the campus farm.

Reaseheath was already using energy from green sources and was advancing plans to install solar panels on buildings and to decarbonise its transport fleet.

Jeremy Herbert, Community Co-ordinator for Sustainable Nantwich, described local community schemes including a very successful bid to reduce plastic waste. He also spoke of the launch of a community garden on the Brookfield allotments and the progress of the Nantwich Mill Community Energy Company, which is working with CEC colleagues to generate hydro energy from the weir on Mill Island in the town centre and at Beambridge sluice which would benefit Reaseheath College.

For more information visit: [www.reaseheath.ac.uk](http://www.reaseheath.ac.uk)

## SG World backs HS2 attending Crewe Hall conference



**SG World's CEO, Mark Haase, was invited to participate in a panel discussion by the High Speed Rail Group at the Annual Conference held at Crewe Hall. The event was attended by rail insiders and political figures and featured keynote speeches by Mark Thurston, CEO of HS2 Ltd and Alan Over, Director General Department for Transport. The event was hosted by ITV's Sameena Ali-Khan and included a variety of panel sessions. Despite the varied and wide-ranging nature of the speakers, who between them offered a number of different perspectives**

**on the HS2 project, they were united in putting forward a hopeful vision for rail and infrastructure. They emphasized the importance of high-speed rail to the future of the UK economy and the central role it must play in our transport network for decades to come.**

Commenting on the HS2 project, Mark Haase said: "Having participated in the High Speed Rail Group Annual Conference, I felt privileged to be able to put across the benefits of HS2 and what it will bring to the town and the business community and its importance in the levelling up agenda going forward."

He also added: "Crewe has a rich history in the world of rail, and with HS2 providing an important link between London and the northwest, it's imperative that the town doesn't get left behind. It should play a part in what will be the future of rail travel."

The High Speed Rail Group represents companies with relevant experience and an interest in high speed rail. They support the successful delivery of a world-class high speed rail network in Britain and focus on net zero, sustainability, jobs and skills.

HS2 is the largest infrastructure project in Europe and is being built from London to the Northwest, which will form the backbone of Britain's transport network. It is an important project for our economy and social regeneration. The project is intended to create high-speed rail links between London and major cities in the Midlands and North of England. It will cost tens of billions of pounds and is aimed at cutting journey times and increasing capacity. It's also planned that HS2 will create jobs and grow the UK economy outside London as part of the levelling up agenda.

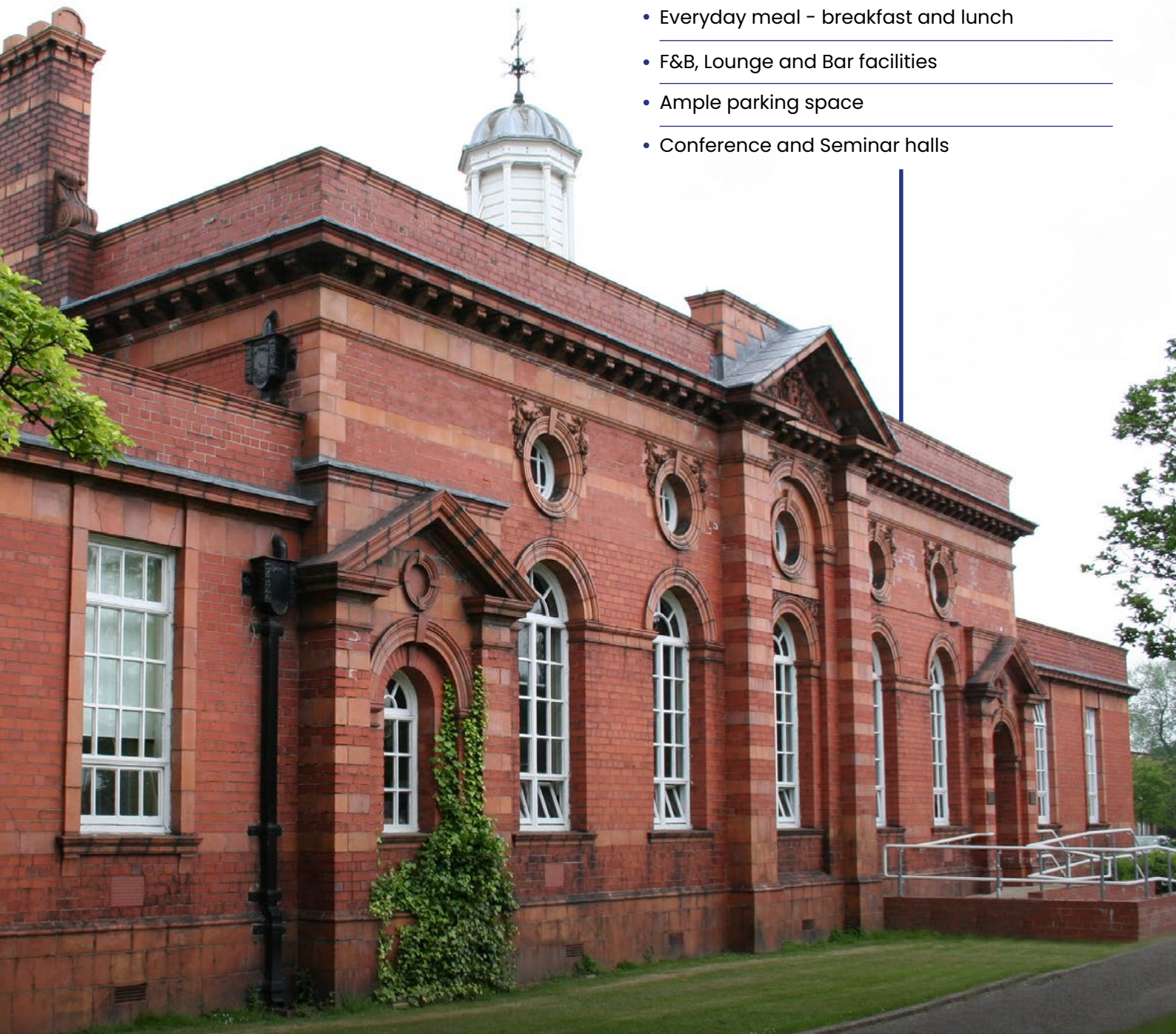
To find out more visit [www.sgworld.com](http://www.sgworld.com)



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# Reaching new heights with Construction Linx



**Chamber Premium Member Construction Linx is a keen supporter of volunteering in the community. Here employee Steve Poole shares his passion for saving lives in the Welsh mountains.**

"I have always had a strong connection with mountains, so when I made the move

from Stoke to Wales, I knew that I wanted to get involved with Mountain Rescue. After several months of training, and, by the end of May 2022, I was ecstatic to find out that I had been accepted as an aspirant team member. Together with six other people, I completed an intensive training course with NEWSAR near Mold, where we covered basic life support,

communications, hazardous terrain, navigation and so much more. As of October 2022, I became an official call team member of the organisation. Search and Rescue (Mountain Rescue) are volunteer-run and available to help 24/7, 365 days a year, no matter if it's a mountainous or suburban area. Thankfully, Construction Linx allows me to take call-outs during work hours, which has been an invaluable experience. During my volunteering, I have gained certification in water and flood rescue, and medical training and been appointed as the assistant equipment officer. This training has been especially beneficial to my job role as a Site Supervisor at Construction Linx since it has improved my safety awareness, management of staff, and overall first aid skills. It costs roughly £30,000 annually to keep the team running, covering fuel and repairs for our vehicles, protective gear for the members, training courses and necessary equipment, such as ropes and stretchers. Therefore, apart from being on call-outs, you may see us around fundraising to cover our expenses.

Construction Linx MD Gareth Williams added: "We have been keen to support Steve's vital work and are very proud of what he does."

For more on the firm go to [constructionlinx.co.uk](http://constructionlinx.co.uk)



## Making a difference ...



**Cheshire Connect matches the skills and expertise of local businesses and professionals, kindly offered for free, with the requirements of the voluntary and community sector... not merely a box ticking exercise, but to have a direct impact on real people within the local community.**

Skill donor volunteers have an opportunity to expand their range of skills while they use their business expertise to support a local grass roots charity, which in turn helps your business to attract talent, encourage staff retention, engagement and productivity.

It's a win win – the charity gain expertise, your organisation makes a meaningful contribution to the community,

you and your employees gain values-driven experience generating that special 'feel good factor' for all!

Plus providing your skill donor support experiences could attract more customers. People are more likely to buy from a business with shared values and can demonstrate that they are living by those values and making a tangible difference to their local community.

Get in touch with the local Crewe and South Cheshire East Business Connector - Dianne Parrish on 07946 639394 or email: [dianneparrish@cheshireconnect.org](mailto:dianneparrish@cheshireconnect.org)

Or to find out more about Cheshire Connect, please visit our website [www.cheshireconnect.org](http://www.cheshireconnect.org)

**... a small amount of skill donor time can make a huge difference to charitable organisations, helping to support people in our local community.**

**"Cheshire Connect have given me the tools and introductions to skill donors to realise the potential of what the Stroke Survivors Group could become. Our Business Connector is very personable and totally gets what we are about. It's wonderful to know that I have this support, especially as we progress from a new start-up to now developing and expanding our services in neighbouring areas. I can't wait to see where this journey takes our Group with Cheshire Connect."**

Liz Bedson, Founder and Leader: Stroke Survivors Speech and Language Support Group

## Legat Owen announces new appointments



**Legat Owen has announced the appointment of Harriet Shakeshaft as a general practise surveyor. The company has also brought on two "Sandwich Year" students, Scarlet Smith and Harry Mason, to work across the agency and management teams for the next 12 months.**

Harriet has been working in commercial property for over seven years, most recently at Halls Commercial in Shropshire in the agency and professional department and before that in Chester as a Chartered Surveyor. Working across the Chester and Nantwich offices, Harriet will be undertaking mostly agency work across all sectors, as well as working with Legat Owen's management, professional and valuation teams.

Harriet was elected as a professional member of the RICS in 2019 after successfully completing her APC. Harriet completed her undergraduate

degree at Birmingham city University in Real Estate.

Speaking about her appointment at Legat Owen, Harriet said:

**"I am delighted to be joining one of the best regional specialists in commercial and residential property and am looking forward to working within the various teams and offices. I am very much looking forward to further developing my career at Legat Owen."**

Andy Butler, director and head of the Nantwich office at Legat Owen, continued: "As a business, we have always sought to bring in and promote new talent whenever we can. Harriet is no stranger to working in our area and will be a fantastic asset to the team, as will Scarlett and Harry.

To find out more visit: [legatowen.co.uk](http://legatowen.co.uk)

## The hell of half measures...



**That is how the boss of one large organisation recently described hybrid working - coming into the office intermittently – and they have also banned this**

**style of working, writes Andy Butler, director at Legat Owen Chartered Surveyors.**

Certainly in South Cheshire, Legat Owen have never experienced a busier few years of office transactions, both sales and lettings. There continues to be an under supply of good quality office space with no significant speculative development for over 15 years now.

There seemed to be a belief after Covid that we could now do everything from home; work, shop, eat. But I think since then we have begun to realise that as humans we are generally more productive and happier when we interact face to face. For instance, we have certainly noticed a shift back of the small businesses from the home environment to multi-let office buildings (of which there is currently little space available). In addition, larger companies are putting much more emphasis on the

working environment they provide for their staff within the offices; to include provision of gyms, cafes, rest areas and generally a good quality internal office design. We also need that variety of use to be reflected in Business Park settings. The planning Use Classes amendment in September 2020 has created a great opportunity for this change both in Business Parks and town centres. Essentially, the new Class E is an amalgamation of several previous use classes and now includes amongst other uses; retail, cafes, offices, day nurseries, indoor sports, fitness, medical and health services. As letting agents we have certainly started to see these types of uses coming into play on the traditional business park environment.

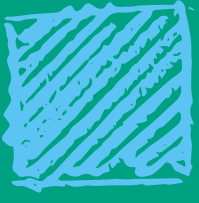
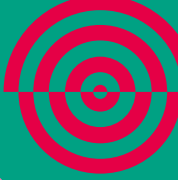
**"I think we still need a greater variety of uses around our working environment, as well as smaller HQ offices and more regional hubs for companies, to help cut travel to work time for employees and assist with hybrid working practices."**

On a local level, in Crewe and Nantwich, we still have the problem of the lack of supply of good quality offices for businesses including smaller working hub space. Our planning system doesn't seem to help with bringing new sites to the fore even when there is obvious need. For Nantwich businesses wanting to expand locally that is a big problem. In Crewe, there are currently few opportunities as there is no development land available on the Business Park anymore. Whilst I am hopeful that opportunities will arise around the train station, prior to the arrival of HS2, that does not help in the immediate term.

The Crewe Town fund is helping bring forward lots of exciting regeneration projects in Crewe Town Centre but we must not forget the needs of businesses. One of these projects is the Mill Street corridor which will provide an active travel route and link between the train station and town centre. We need to encourage office users back into the town centre, alongside retail, health, leisure and housing to create a vibrant mixed use area. But we need good quality office space to be able to do that. There is still a lot of work to be done.

To find out more visit: [legatowen.co.uk](http://legatowen.co.uk) or call Andy Butler on 07768 880944 / 01270 621001





# To refresh or rebrand?

## TRCREATIVE'S EXPERT INSIGHTS



**In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, maintaining brand relevance and resonance is crucial for driving growth and fostering brand loyalty.**

TRCREATIVE's Co-founder & Creative Director, Lynsey Edwards, breaks down the difference between a brand refresh and a rebrand, to explore the key reasons businesses should invest in their brands.

**BRAND REFRESH: Elevate Your Identity**  
A brand refresh is perfect when your brand strategy remains unchanged, but your visual identity needs a modern update. Update your colours, style, fonts, and logo to stay appealing and relevant to your audience.

**REBRAND: Unleash Your Brand's Potential**  
For a complete transformation, go for a rebrand. Start with a new brand strategy, identifying a new direction and positioning for the business, aligning it with a fresh visual and verbal identity and stand-out creative campaign.

A rebrand brings alignment internally by simplifying an idea in a unified way. Externally it helps you stand out and be memorable to your audience.

## 10 REASONS TO INVEST IN YOUR BRAND

- 1 Dated look
- 2 Inconsistent visuals
- 3 Team not aligned
- 4 Ineffective messaging
- 5 Common logo
- 6 Target audience shift
- 7 Products or services have changed
- 8 Leadership transition
- 9 Visual & verbal identity is over 5 years old
- 10 Staff retention is low

When done well, a refresh or rebrand are effective ways to revitalise your brand. Reach out for a free consultation.

### Let's take your brand to the next level



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# Bridging the gaps



## The Cheshire and Warrington Pledge Partnership and Careers Enterprise Company host Annual Conference with employers and school providers and lead the conversation on 'Bridging the Gaps'

The conference at Alderley Park explored how employers, educators and other key local stakeholders can work further together to address local priorities based on three key themes: Skills, Inclusivity and Opportunity.

Currently linking up 85 schools and colleges with 550 businesses, the trailblazing network addresses skills and employment gaps, supports careers planning and gives students from all backgrounds meaningful access and experiences with employers so they are ready for the world of work.

Underpinned by the Gatsby Benchmarks – a framework that promotes careers education excellence – the Cheshire and Warrington Careers Hub runs innovative tailor-made projects.

These include students being interviewed by genuine recruiters at Mock Assessment Centres, multiple careers fairs attended in 2023 alone by 263 exhibitors and almost 6,000 people, and even Teacher Encounters which allow school staff to engage directly with employers to explore student career pathways relevant to their subjects.

The Cheshire and Warrington Careers Hub is part of a national network of 45 Careers Hubs funded through the national body for Careers Education, The Careers and Enterprise Company.

And its Chief Executive, Oli de Botton, a guest speaker at the conference said the work of The Cheshire and Warrington Pledge Partnership and Cheshire and Warrington Careers Hub was “magnifying the impact on young people”.

Mr de Botton informed those that attended the conference that working “collectively” was crucial and “teachers and parents need to be part of the conversation” and that he believes that the work that The Cheshire and Warrington Pledge and Careers Enterprise Company is undertaking is “inspiring and I want every Careers Hub in the country to be exactly like this.”

Other speakers included Clare Hayward

MBE, chair of Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership - which part funds The Cheshire and Warrington Pledge Partnership. She said the growth of The Cheshire and Warrington Pledge Partnership was “phenomenal” considering it started from a small pilot project in Crewe in 2016 and now covers the whole of Cheshire and Warrington.

The Cheshire and Warrington Pledge Partnership also welcomed keynote speaker and Chief Executive of the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Paul Colman who spoke at the conference about the Local Skills Improvement Plan which is designed to give employers a clear and strengthened role in shaping local skills provision in post-16 education.

His wide-ranging presentation included the extensive engagement with the region's employers to establish the skills they need locally but can struggle to find, how changes in provision can help resolve this and the benefits of wider collaboration.

**“I am proud that The South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry was among the founders of The Crewe Pledge and to see the way it has blossomed and grown across the region is fantastic. Collaboration is so important. I often describe The Cheshire and Warrington Pledge Partnership as the glue that connects education, business, and young people”**

– Chamber CEO Paul Colman



On the day, more than 30 headteachers dialled into the event, which was attended by businesses, educational providers, young people, and voluntary organisations who participated in separate workshops and heard presentations including sessions from South Cheshire Chamber and Warrington Borough Council, Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Grace Sheldon, Strategic Hub Lead said: “There has been exceptional progress, and this is down to the commitment of everyone from careers leaders in schools developing their provision to local employers providing meaningful experiences of the world of work.”

The Cheshire and Warrington Pledge Partnership creates a sustainable bond helping bridge the gap between local employers and educators. Ranging from Employment Readiness Programmes to Careers fairs last year it delivered programmes to over 24,000 young people and held over 500 events with employers in schools and colleges across Cheshire and Warrington.

– You can get in touch with our friendly team to find out how you can get involved by emailing [Pledge@cheshireandwarrington.com](mailto:Pledge@cheshireandwarrington.com)





# Alextra announce Associate Director appointments



**Alextra Group is delighted to announce the promotion of Joanne Hamilton to Associate Tax Director and the appointment of Wayne Riley as Associate Audit Director.**

## **Joanne Hamilton's Story:**

With her extensive expertise in accountancy practice and tax management, Jo will be instrumental in expanding the tax practice in the upcoming years, increasing both headcount and the range of services the Group is able to provide to clients. She will also collaborate closely with her fellow directors to pinpoint tax planning opportunities for the Group's current clientele, thereby augmenting the overall value that the Group provides.

Jo joined Alextra as Tax Manager in January 2022. With over 20 years of experience in handling tax issues large and small, Jo has strengthened the relationship between Alextra's Business and Wealth Management teams and helped provide a more holistic approach to business and personal tax planning for clients.

Jo's promotion to Associate Director of Tax comes at a key time in Alextra's growth. She is looking forward to new challenges and adding value to the group's tax offering.

"Naturally, people often ask me: "why tax?" For me, it's the work and the variety of clients I work with that I enjoy the most. Many people imagine that I spend a lot of time pouring over case law and legislation



but it's also a very people-focused role. From assisting businesses with the complexities of corporation tax to helping clients navigate inheritance tax legislation, no two clients are ever the same. Clients see real value when you tell them something that makes life easier, saves them money, or that they hadn't thought of. I'm really looking forward to growing our team so that Alextra becomes the first port of call for people looking for support with their taxes"

## **Wayne Riley's Story:**

With a wealth of auditing and accounting experience and a deep understanding of the industry, Wayne offers a wealth of expertise in his Associate Audit Director role.

Wayne's proficiency in auditing and financial analysis extends beyond risk assessment and compliance. Throughout his career, he has developed a unique talent for uncovering growth and improvement

opportunities during the audit process. This skill has proven invaluable in helping corporate clients to identify untapped potential and chart new paths to success.

"I am incredibly excited to join Alextra Group and begin the next chapter in my career. Working alongside the talented team of accountants, fellow auditors, and tax professionals, I look forward to growing the team and helping our clients to discover new opportunities wherever possible."

In his role as Associate Director, Wayne will continue to leverage his expertise to benefit the Group's existing and new clients. From analysing financial statements to assessing internal controls and operational processes, he will help Alextra to realise the collective goal of delivering strategic financial solutions to clients.

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

# South Cheshire Mortgage Broker Amplo awarded top titles



Team photo of Amplo Group at their Quiz Night fundraising for Nantwich Town FC

## **South Cheshire based Amplo Mortgages & Financial Solutions have scooped two top titles.**

The firm won Best Mortgage Broker in Crewe in Quality Business Awards and Most Client Focused Mortgage Broker – England at the Worldwide Finance Awards.

The best in Crewe award is based on feedback and needed to achieve an overall quality score exceeding 95%.

And the Most Client Focused Mortgage Broker – England was judged by an

independent panel of judges who assess entries across the whole England.

Amplo Mortgages & Financial Solution advises on residential, buy to let and commercial mortgages alongside personal and business protection insurance.

Last year they won Mortgage Brokerage of the Year 2022 – England at the Worldwide Finance Awards.

They also won Apprentice of the Year for Joshua Hallam at the South Cheshire Chamber Awards and Business Administration Apprentice of the Year at

the South and West Cheshire College Apprentice Awards.

Amplo Mortgages & Financial Solutions are part of Amplo Group.

As a group, they arrange commercial finance such as business loans, asset finance, franchise finance and cashflow finance to support local businesses with their growth plans.

For more information, visit [amplomortgages.co.uk](http://amplomortgages.co.uk) or get in touch with the team directly on 01270 443510.



## A successful year as Reaseheath grows T Level offering



### Reaseheath College has expanded its T Level course offering for 2023 and is inviting South Cheshire businesses to get involved.

As well as currently running T Levels in Business and Construction, the new academic year will welcome students in Agriculture, Forestry, Food Sciences and Land Based Engineering.

T Levels are key to the Government's ambitious plans to provide technical expertise for the jobs of the future.

They are exciting new courses devised specifically with employers to ensure students learn relevant and up-to-date

practices from the industry sector that interests them the most. Equivalent to three A levels, they include a substantial industry placement of 315 hours (45 days) over the two years.

The industry placement within a T Level is not only great for students who have a real-life insight to what career they want to progress into but also creates an opportunity for industry providers to receive free support, solve entry level skill shortages and have early access to the brightest talent entering the market.

Businesses can get involved in a number of ways. They can support students

with mock interviews, offer masterclasses and on-site visits, provide real life projects for students to work on and offer a work placement of 45 days over a two year period.

If a business currently has an apprentice with them four days a week, then they could also take a T Level student to support them on the fifth day.

Lee Gilbert, Company Director at Fowler and Gilbert Ltd, said: "We are pleased to be able to support Reaseheath College T Levels. As one of the leading Agricultural and Industrial Steel framed building manufacturers within the UK, we can offer a wealth of experience within the industry from sales and marketing, bespoke technical drawing, fabrication of steel, groundworks, and the erection of the building."

As well as the current courses on offer Reaseheath will also be launching an Animal Management T Level in 2024. With the unique facility of the mini zoo and over 200 species of animals located there, it will be an ideal opportunity for students that wish to study a very rewarding career in animal management.

If you are interested in becoming an industry partner for T Levels in September then call 01270 613242 or email enquiries@reaseheath.ac.uk for more information.

## Crewe and Nantwich radio station goes digital



### The Cat, the local community radio station for Crewe and Nantwich is now broadcasting on DAB digital radio, alongside its current FM and online output.

The Ofcom licenced community radio station is now in its eighth year of operation and is making itself even more accessible to listeners by adding digital radio to its line-up of ways audiences can tune in to the station.

The Cat is run and supported by a team of over 50 volunteers and is based at Cheshire College South and West in Crewe, which also hosts the transmission

site for the South Cheshire small-scale DAB multiplex.

The station is now available on digital radio, as well as online, on smart speakers, and on its original launch frequency of 107.9 FM.

The station works closely with local community groups, charities, local businesses and town councils, and serves as a platform to give voices to people from all backgrounds and ages through its radio programmes, podcasts and online content.

The Cat also works with students at Cheshire College South and West to provide

in-depth hands-on work experience at a live, Ofcom licenced radio station, preparing them for careers in the broadcasting and creative industries.

Earlier this month The Cat also launched Cat Xtra on DAB digital radio, as a sister station targeting younger audiences.

Paul Simpson, Station Director said:

"Over 12 months of hard work has gone into getting The Cat onto DAB, and we're so glad it's finally going live this Saturday (17/06/2023).

**"Even more people in Crewe and Nantwich, and the surrounding villages and rural areas can now tune into their local radio station which provides unique content and coverage that can't be found on other stations in the region."**

"We're also grateful for the support of our partners and supporters at South Cheshire DAB and Cheshire College South and West that have allowed this project to come to fruition."

For more information visit: [thecat.radio](http://thecat.radio)





## Why connecting with people is key for happiness



**The simple act of talking about our problems can be incredibly healing. It's like taking off a mask and finally being able to breathe. It can also help us to gain perspective and find solutions.**

Of course, it's important to choose someone who we can trust to listen without judgment. We need to feel safe and comfortable sharing our thoughts and feelings.

If you're not sure who to open up to, you could try talking to a therapist, counsellor, or other mental health professional. You could

also try talking to a friend, family member, or trusted colleague. Just make sure that you choose someone who you feel comfortable with and who you know will be supportive.

**Breeze, Health Shield's own Health & Wellbeing app gives members access to a 24/7 Mental Health helpline, offering support for stress, anxiety, bereavement, financial and family matters.**

Opening up to others is not always easy, but it's one of the best things we can do for our mental health.

**Here are some tips for opening up to others:**

- Choose someone you trust and feel comfortable with.
- Start by sharing something small and then gradually build up to sharing more.
- Be honest about how you're feeling, even if it's scary.
- Don't expect the other person to have all the answers. Just listen to them and let them know that you're there for them.

**It takes courage to be vulnerable and to share our true selves with others. But it's also one of the most rewarding things we can do.**

**So don't be afraid to reach out for help. There are people who care about you and want to listen. And you might just be surprised at how much better you feel afterwards.**

— Read more about Employee Health & Wellbeing on the Health Shield blog - <https://blog.healthshield.co.uk/blog/>



## Architectural company recognised in prestigious national awards

**Cheshire-based architectural practice, Daniel Matthias Architecture Ltd (DMA) is celebrating receiving three prestigious awards in recognition of its outstanding work. The company, which was only formed in 2011, now operates from Sandbach having recently moved to expand the business.**

The national, Build: Architecture Awards, has named Daniel Matthias Architecture Ltd as the 'Most Trusted Residential Architectural Design Specialists - North West England' and 'Best Bungalow Renovation Design Project - North West England' in the Architecture Awards 2023.

In addition, the company was also recently named as 'The Best Architectural Firm, Crewe, Cheshire, 2023' in the Quality Business Awards. This award recognises that an overall quality rating of 95% or higher has been achieved, providing five stars in satisfaction, services, reputation and quality.



Over recent years, Daniel Matthias Architecture Ltd has undergone a successful rebrand, relocated and expanded its team, due to business growth – evolving from residential extensions and new builds, to also collaborating on commercial developments and a number of local primary school projects.

Director and Architectural Technologist, Daniel Matthias said:

**“As a close-knit team, we have a hands-on approach with every project from start to finish. Providing our clients dedicated support, with projects delivered to the highest standard and the security of knowing myself and the team are there every step of the way continues to be our priority. We are delighted that our service and commitment to clients has been recognised with such prestigious awards.”**

— For further information, contact 01270 346033 [www.architecture-dma.co.uk](http://www.architecture-dma.co.uk)

### Daniel Matthias Architecture

**Most Trusted Residential Architectural Design Specialists 2023 - North West**

**Best Bungalow Renovation Design Project 2023 (North West England): The Bungalow England**



# International freight company moves to new base



**attract new team members too,” said Ian Mallon, the managing director of Neon Freight.**

It has been a very busy few months for the team, now expanded to 11. Not only have they moved, they are also delighted to announce achieving ISO 9001 and 14001 certification.

**“We are now more than ever fully committed to continuously manage and monitor quality, customer satisfaction and strive for constant improvement.” added Ian. “Credit goes to the whole of the team who worked towards this and are constantly looking for ways to challenge and improve.”**

– Neon Freight transports goods all over the world by road, sea and air. For more information call 01477 668003 or go to [neonfreight.co.uk](http://neonfreight.co.uk)

**South Cheshire Chamber member Neon Freight has moved to a brand new location.**

Previously based in Holmes Chapel, the international freight company has moved to Hurstwood House, a 2-storey self-contained office block in Knutsford giving excellent motorway access to both the M6 and M56 and swift links to Manchester Airport.

**“These purpose built, modern and energy efficient offices are exactly what we are looking for to kick start the next stage of growth in the business. They give us the space to grow and**

# Everybody launch Junior Awards nominations for 2023



**Everybody Health and Leisure are delighted to announce that nominations for the 2023 Everybody Junior Awards are now open. These awards will recognise and celebrate children aged 5-15 years for their inspirational efforts and contributions to local sporting and activity success in Cheshire East, between 9th October 2022 - 1st October 2023.**

You can nominate in categories including:

**Active Family of the Year** - A family that has shown immense dedication to remaining healthy and active together within the past 12 months.

**Rising Swim Star** - A swimmer

participating in the Everybody Swim programme who always listens to instructions, is enthusiastic to achieve and gifted in the water. They also support other learners in the group and the swimming teacher too.

**Sports Personality of the Year, for ages 5-8 years, 9-11 years and 12-15 years** - Individuals who have competed and achieving at local, regional or national level in a sport or several sports, shown an ability to lead by example and support others.

**Everybody Junior Member of the Year** - An Everybody member who has shown great dedication to keeping healthy and active.

**Unsung Junior Hero Award** - Someone who has given their time to a local

sports club or community group, ensuring that they can provide their services to as many people as possible.

Previous winners include skilled Football Players, Karate stars, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu enthusiasts and many more!

Kerry Shea, Director of Health & Communities at Everybody Health and Leisure shared:

“We are very excited to welcome back the Everybody Junior Awards for 2023! They are one of our favourite awards of the year and we love hearing the fantastic stories of our young local athletes. We can’t wait to read all your nominations and we are sure there will be some difficult decisions when it comes to picking the winners, so please get your nominations in today!”

After the success of last year, presenting the Junior Awards within local clubs and school assemblies, Everybody are delighted to be doing the same this year and cannot wait to celebrate with the nominee’s family, friends, teachers and club representatives.

Nominations for the Everybody Junior Awards 2023 will close on Sunday 1st October, find out more information and how to nominate here – [www.everybody.org.uk/about/everybody-junior-awards-2023/](http://www.everybody.org.uk/about/everybody-junior-awards-2023/) or follow @EverybodyHealthLeisure on Facebook for regular updates.



# Crewe Town Council and local leisure charity announce new timetable for free Health and Wellbeing classes



**“This is a fantastic free initiative for Crewe residents, which will have a direct impact on physical wellbeing and help to address social isolation in our local community in a fun and active way. It is great to see Crewe Town Council leading on projects like these which use our local parks for everyone’s benefit.”**

Kerry Shea, Director of Health & Communities and Deputy CEO at Everybody Health and Leisure shares:

**“As a registered Health and Leisure Charity, improving the health and wellbeing in our local communities is our main aim, so we are delighted to be working in partnership with Crewe Town Council to deliver these accessible classes in local parks for Crewe residents.**

**We have a range of new classes on offer, which is the perfect way to get out in the open air and have fun whilst exercising with a like-minded community.”**

For more information about these classes in the community please visit: [www.everybody.org.uk/pop-up-in-the-parks/](http://www.everybody.org.uk/pop-up-in-the-parks/)

Sign up to Everybody Health & Leisure’s new newsletter to receive information about these free classes, including when new timetables are launched.

**Registered Charity, Everybody Health and Leisure are excited to announce the next round of their “Pop Up in the Parks” project, in partnership with Crewe Town Council, which has funded the project.**

Everybody’s experienced coaches will be delivering a range of health and wellbeing activities, free of charge, in parks around Crewe including Cumberland play park, Leighton Brook and Queen Street park.

Helping to tackle social isolation, improve physical and mental wellbeing, the new timetabled classes launching include:

#### **Wellbeing Walks**

Open to all adults of all ages, Everybody have specialist instructors leading these walks to help local residents get out safely, increase activity levels and socialise in a safe environment, whilst exploring the local area.

#### **Family Dance Fit**

Dance Fit is open to all families with children of all ages. The routines incorporate interval training, alternating fast and slow rhythms, to help improve cardiovascular fitness.

#### **Family Bootcamp**

Open to all! Families with children of all ages are welcome to this inclusive session where Everybody’s trained instructors will use a mix of bodyweight exercises and challenges to get everyone in the family active.

#### **Family Circuits**

A series of different bodyweight exercises designed to raise the heart rate and build strength, fun for all ages

#### **Family Games**

Prepare to be active, Everybody will provide a range of multi-sport activities, from kwik cricket, rounders, dodgeball and tennis! Open to all and great fun for all of the family.

#### **Morning rise Yoga**

A beautiful sequence of moves and breath, combining strength, flexibility and taking the body through a range of movements. Based on Ashtanga, Hatha and Iyengar formats.

Cllr Dennis Straine-Francis, Mayor of Crewe, commented:



# Social Return on Investment celebrated by women's health and wellbeing charity



Project lead Maggs, young people's counsellor Abbi and wellbeing coordinator Debbie highlight the monetary value Motherwell Cheshire adds to the community

**Motherwell Cheshire has announced its annual 'Social Return on Investment' figures highlighting how it gives back £millions to the community.**

The charity, based in Wistaston, delivered a fantastic £21,318,458 of support to local women and girls in the year up to April 2023, according to its independently compiled SROI report.

Founder Kate Blakemore said: "In other words, for every £1 donated, £72 is ploughed back into the community through our activities and services.

"We are dedicated to making a difference and this report demonstrates the value our services bring to the communities we serve in terms of fiscal savings, social value and local economic value.

"When businesses support us, they know every penny is not only well spent, but provides massively increased value to our community."

One service which greatly supports the community is Motherwell Cheshire's school uniform recycling scheme. Its Community Share Hub on Beech Drive hands out primary and secondary school uniforms free of charge to any mother who can't afford to kit out their child – no questions asked. There's also football boots, coats, baby/maternity packs, fancy dress and prom outfits.

The Social Return on Investment (SROI) report shows 1464 school uniforms were given to those in need as well as 58 pairs of trainers/football boots, 223 coats, 595 baby/maternity packs, 159 toiletry packs and 81 period comfort packs.

Kate, a Crewe mother-of-three, said:

**"At this time of year the cost of going back to school weighs heavily on families. The fact they can come to us and find uniforms for local schools is a big worry off their shoulders. The smiles on the faces of the women and girls we help are priceless."**

Motherwell Cheshire's mission is to help women and girls meet challenges in life and access support, education and

advocacy whenever they need it, in order to fulfil their potential. Encourage, Inspire and Empower is the mantra.

The charity has also delivered £1,491,663 of mental health support to 293 women. A total of 239 women were helped with perinatal depression, amounting to £1,903,635 economic value delivered.

It created opportunity for 2,432 volunteering hours and gave access to training. Meanwhile its crochet groups, book clubs and menopause cafes are creating long-lasting friendships helping to beat isolation.

Businesses can back Motherwell Cheshire through a range of sponsorship opportunities. The SROI report is available to any business interested and the charity is very active on social media where new support is warmly welcomed. Encourage employees to stage fundraisers or take part in planned events such as an upcoming sponsored walk in October.

Donations of clothing and items to the Community Share Hub are gratefully received. It's open every Tuesday and Thursday from noon to 2pm. There's also a new outlet for occasion clothes donated to Motherwell on Vinted.

For ways to support the charity, including becoming a sponsor, go to [motherwellcheshirecio.com](http://motherwellcheshirecio.com) or call 01606 557666.

## Rotarians at work in the community



The Mayor of Crewe Rotarian Dennis Straine-Francis with President Diane, High Sheriff Dennis Dunn and Rotarian John Cheshire at the Knife Angel Closing Ceremony

**The Rotary Club of Crewe and Nantwich Weaver became a Chamber member a number of years ago as part of a reappraisal of how the Rotary movement could modernise its relationship with the local community and the businesses within it. It is one of three Rotary Clubs in the geography covered by the South Cheshire Chamber, all of whom collaborate under the banner of Rotary in South Cheshire.**

For more than 100 years, Rotary International has united leaders who are committed to using their expertise to improve communities. Yet many people still don't fully understand who Rotarians are and what makes them unique, indeed perceptions continue that they are all white, middle-aged males.

The collective leadership and expertise of 1.2 million members helps tackle some of the world's biggest challenges, locally and globally. Community Service encourages every Rotarian to find ways to improve the quality of life for people in their communities and to serve the public interest.

A spokesman said:

**"As Rotarians, we are committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect, allowing everyone's voice to be heard, and providing equitable opportunities for fellowship, service, and leadership. Our members want and expect Rotary to be a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organisation. Although the Rotary experience may differ from country to country, issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion are globally relevant."**

In the last 12 months Crewe and Nantwich Weaver has made its contribution to the local and international work of Rotary through a comprehensive programme of fund raising and 30 service projects including the following:

Christmas hampers for vulnerable people in need in association with CHANCE Saving Lives, out of school summer activities organised by YMCA Crewe, maintaining a garden at Leighton Hospital, assisting community organisations in litter picking, weed clearing and alley clearing, supporting Ukrainian and Afghan families living in our community having escaped from conflict, collaborating with the Town Councils in Christmas and Knife Angel events and responding to international disasters.

Rotary Clubs are always looking for individuals who share the same values. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Simon Yates at [SYates3880@aol.com](mailto:SYates3880@aol.com)



Mayor of Nantwich Stephanie Wedgewood and President of the Rotary Club Diane Yates at the launch of the Weaver Wander Classic Car Rally





## Attracting and Retaining High-Performing Candidates in the Office Support Sector

**Marie Williams-Spalding is the Director of Synergy Recruitment, an award-winning recruitment consultancy. They specialise in the placement of Personal Assistants, Executive Assistants, Office Managers and Office Support professionals into businesses across Cheshire and Manchester. Here, Marie offers tips on attracting and retaining high-performing office support candidates.**

With numerous companies vying for top talent within the Office Support sector, its imperative to implement effective strategies to not only attract candidates but also ensure they stay and thrive within your organisation. Here's my top tips to help you do just that...

### **Develop a Strong Employer Brand**

In today's job market, a compelling employer brand can significantly influence a candidate's decision to apply for a position and remain committed to the company. Highlight your company's unique advantages, culture, opportunities for growth, and the organisation's commitment to employee well-being. Utilise social media platforms, company websites, and employee testimonials to showcase a positive and inclusive work environment.

### **Offer Competitive Compensation and Benefits**

To attract and retain talent in the Office Support sector, offering competitive compensation packages and benefits is non-negotiable. Conduct market research to determine industry standards and ensure you're competitive. Additionally, consider flexible working arrangements and wellness programs to demonstrate the organisation's commitment to employee satisfaction.

### **Emphasise Opportunities for Growth and Advancement**

Top-tier candidates are often ambitious and seek opportunities for professional development and career advancement. Outline clear career paths within the organisation and provide mentorship programs or training initiatives to empower employees to reach their full potential. By investing in their growth, you not only attract high performers but also foster a sense of loyalty and commitment.

### **Foster a Positive and Inclusive Work Environment**

A positive and inclusive work environment can significantly impact employee satisfaction and retention. Encourage open communication, respect diverse perspectives, and implement recognition programs to acknowledge outstanding contributions.

### **Streamline the Hiring Process**

Lengthy and convoluted processes can deter top talent from applying or accepting an offer, and you can lose out to companies who move quicker! A well-organised and transparent process sends a positive message about the company's professionalism and commitment to its employees.

### **Implement Effective Onboarding Programs**

High-performing candidates want to feel valued and part of the team from day one. Assign a mentor, introduce them to key team members, and provide all necessary resources to ensure a smooth transition into their role. A warm and welcoming onboarding experience significantly contributes to higher retention rates.

### **Recognise and Reward Performance**

High-performing candidates thrive in environments where their efforts are recognised and rewarded. Implement performance-based recognition programs. This can include monetary rewards, public acknowledgment, or career advancement opportunities. Celebrating success motivates employees to maintain their high performance.

### **Conclusion**

Attracting and retaining high-performing candidates in the Office Support sector is a continuous process that requires a proactive approach. By following my tips, companies can position themselves as top choices for top talent. Investing in the recruitment and retention of high-performing candidates ultimately leads to increased productivity, enhanced company culture, and sustained success.

For more information on how we can help you to recruit PA's, EA's, Office Managers and Office Support professionals head to our website [www.synergycr.com](http://www.synergycr.com) or give me a call on 01625 509182.



# South Cheshire Chamber Events Programme



## Meet the Chamber

### Held Monthly

Whether you are considering joining the Chamber, have been a member for some time, or have employees who may not be fully aware of all the benefits of Chamber membership, this event will enable you to fully utilise your membership. This event is open to members and non-members.



## Speed Networking

### Held quarterly

Speed Networking events are a regular and efficient fixture for meeting other Chamber members. This structured event enables you to meet all delegates attending in addition to offering guidance and tips on making the most of your networking. This event is open to members only. \*Ideal for new members who are new to networking.



## International Trade Forums

### Planned for return in 2023!

With a range of expert speakers, this event provides an excellent source of information, knowledge and contacts for any business that is currently, or plans to, trade internationally. This event is open to members and non-members



## Final Friday

### Held on the last Friday of the month

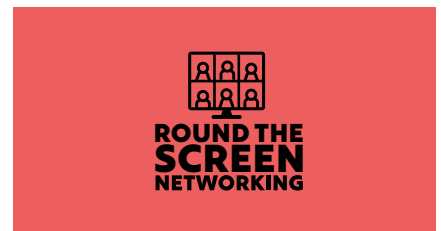
Hosted by a different Chamber member each month, this event offers great networking and regularly attracts over 40 different businesses. The Final Friday is designed to allow you to meet other Chamber members and make new contacts at the start of the working day. The host will provide a short presentation on their business and tours of their premises. This event is open to members.



## Local and Economic updates

### Held quarterly January, April, July, October

This event features an update and comparison of the local, regional and national responses to the latest British Chambers of Commerce Quarterly Economic Survey. In addition, the event will feature a second speaker who will provide an update on local project activity e.g. HS2, Crewe Town Centre. This event is free to members. Non-members may attend subject to capacity and will be charged an attendance fee.



## Round the Screen Networking

### Held Monthly

The aim of this event is to get members talking again in a road-the-screen fashion. Each participant will have 60 seconds each to introduce themselves, their organisation and how they may be able to assist other businesses. This is a very direct way to network with other Chamber members at the comfort of your home or office.

For further details and dates of forthcoming Chamber events visit [www.sccci.co.uk/portal/event/](http://www.sccci.co.uk/portal/event/)

For more information and event listings or if you wish to promote your own event please visit the Chamber Member Portal: [www.sccci.co.uk](http://www.sccci.co.uk)

## Our Vision

Inspiring and supporting our vibrant business community.

## Our Mission Statement

We support the ambition of our members and help create greater prosperity for South Cheshire.

For more information on how the Chamber can help your business please contact **Angela Wilkinson** on [angela.wilkinson@sccci.co.uk](mailto:angela.wilkinson@sccci.co.uk)



We welcome your feedback and ideas for Chamber events. A short feedback questionnaire is available on [www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/972R6KN](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/972R6KN) and we would encourage you to complete this to assist us with event planning.



The Crown Group are a Cheshire based company specialising in many areas. Since The Crown Group started 10 years ago, the company has grown into many sectors and now offer a large array of services and highly skilled operatives.

## Our Services

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IRATA Rope Access  
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### Fencing

Stock Fencing  
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Post & Rail  
Hoarding & Perimeter Fencing  
Pallisade Fencing

### Training

NSAR Approved Training Company  
Safety Critical  
OLE  
P-Way  
Small Tools & Plant



### OLE Planning & Services

Isolations Services  
Isolation Labour Supply  
Isolation Planning  
Possession Planning  
Safe System of Work Planning

### Pest Control Services

Integrated Pest Management  
Pest Control  
Bird Control



### Contingent Labour Supply

OLE  
Safety Critical  
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