

SOUTH CHESHIRE

**SOUTH CHESHIRE
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY**

**British
Chambers of
Commerce
Accredited**

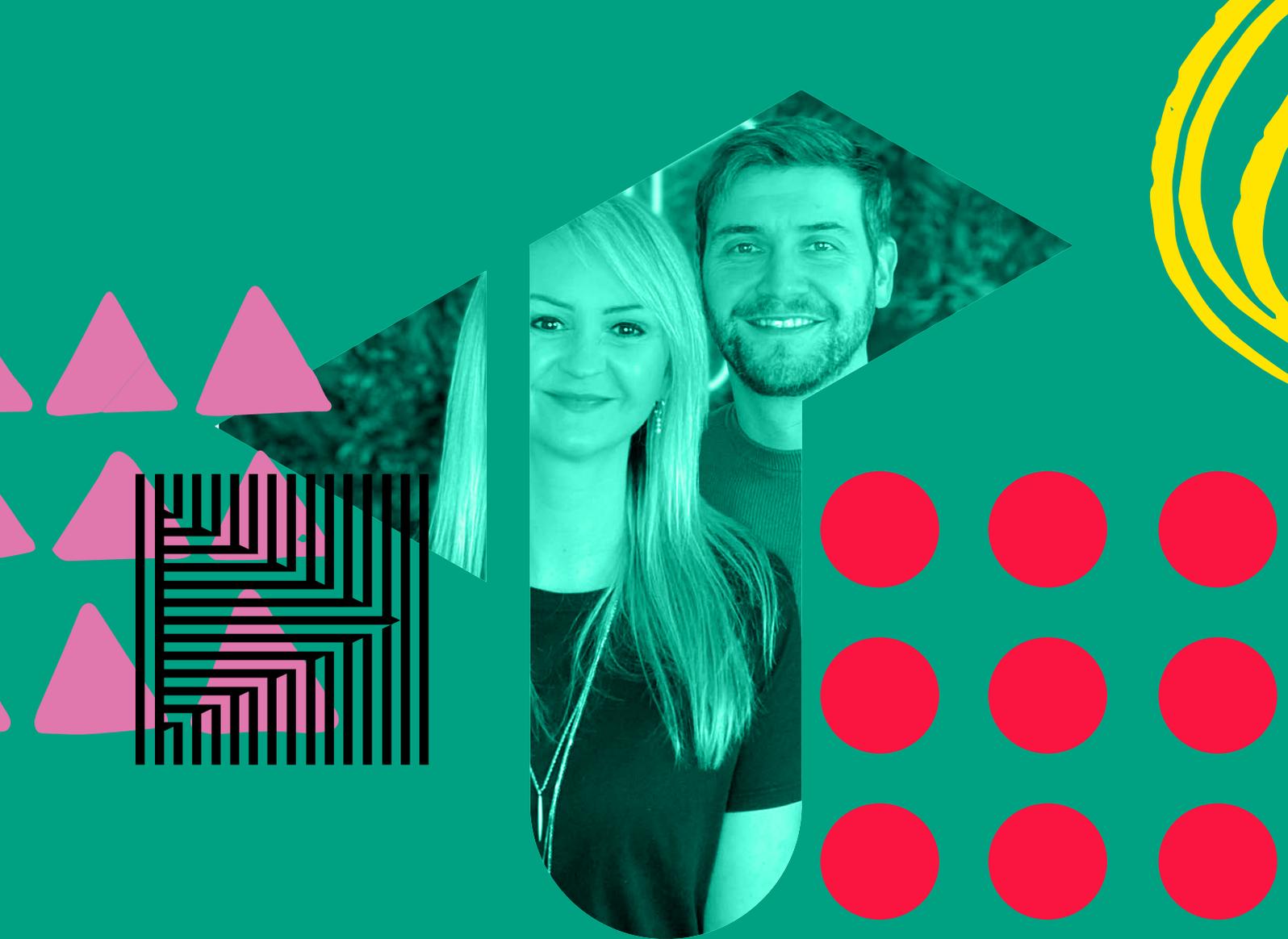
CHAMBER BUSINESS

News and views from the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry | **Q4 2022**



TIME TO CELEBRATE!

PAGE 6



Q&A

Introducing Mike and Lynsey, Co-Founders of TRCREATIVE.

We transform your brand's ambitious ideas into successes.

We do that through our expertise in Branding, Web and Digital Marketing.

In the magazine's next edition, Mike and Lynsey will answer a frequently asked question about Branding, Web or Digital Marketing to help local businesses succeed.

If you have a specific question, email: faqs@trcreative.co.uk

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2023

South Cheshire Chamber wishes its members, and the local business community a happy and healthy 2023.

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SOUTH CHESHIRE CHAMBER PATRONS



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
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- + Trusted, local business information

£15 / Month

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- + Key local and national updates
- + Information on business support programs
- + International Trade Information and guidance
- + Discounted export docs
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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 for updates.

Next issue due out on March 24th 2023. Editorial and advertising deadline February 17th 2023.

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

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WELCOME

to our latest edition of South Cheshire Chamber's Business magazine.

The Christmas period allows us to reflect on the year gone by and plan for the year ahead.

Once again, it's been extremely difficult trading conditions for our business community during the last year, primarily caused by the effects of the COVID pandemic and Russia's invasion of the Ukraine, which has created a cost of living crisis in our country. The situation has not been helped by the constant changes in government and a lack of stability in national policy.

Despite the difficult conditions, we have an extremely strong and resilient business community that helps create a robust economy. I see businesses that take the challenges head on, that adapt and embrace innovation to meet the needs of their customers and community.

The strength and resilience within our business community could not be more evident to see at this year's Chamber business awards

(P.6) held at Reaseheath College. During such a difficult time, the opportunity to celebrate success is a welcome relief and this year was no different. Congratulations to every business or individual who entered and in particular those who won an award. The Awards celebrate community, collaboration, social impact, innovation, inclusivity, diversity, ethical working, staff wellbeing and developing the workforce of the future.

In terms of developing your workforce, the Chamber has been designated to deliver the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for Cheshire and Warrington in conjunction with our fellow Chambers in the area. We will be engaging with the business community to identify the skills and people they require to help take their business forward. We want to know how the educational sector can support your skills needs and how we can work more closely together with our local educational institutions. The Chamber will be in touch.

This year the Chamber will continue to grow and develop its support for businesses in South Cheshire. Despite the year gone by, it is with great optimism and enthusiasm that the Chamber enters 2023 and we will be doing our utmost to ensure the views of business are continued to be heard. On behalf of the Chamber I would like to wish you a happy and prosperous year. Remember that the Chamber Team is here to assist you and your business, so if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

MEET THE CHAMBER TEAM

Paul Colman
Chief Executive

Jon Barnes
Chamber Manager

Jake Kennerley
Digital Marketing Manager

Madeleine Abbey
PA to Chief Executive

Angela Wilkinson
Membership Co-ordinator

Dominic Hibbert
Events & Marketing Co-ordinator

Jane Booth
Export Document Administrator

Richard Weilding
Business Advisor

Anne Xiourouppa
Accounts

Dianne Parrish
Business Connector Cheshire Connect

Sara Pomfret
DIT International Trade Adviser

Paul Colman **Chief Executive** @SCCCI_CEO

Meet the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry

NEW MEMBERS



Biz Group Ltd

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biz-group.co.uk
07831218409



Crown Rail and Environmental Services Ltd

CW1 4JJ
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HW Independent Financial Management

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01606338914



CCL Universal Limited

CW1 6DD
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07467950670



ElectroFix Group Ltd

WA4 2HP
info@electrofixgrouppltd.com
electrofixgrouppltd.com
0333 577 0079



InSafeHands Ltd

CW5 6PF
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01270 626 020



Charlie and Co Ltd

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hello@charlieandco.uk
charlieandco.uk
07980373322



Fleet Packs Ltd

CW10 0GW
hello@fleetpacks.co.uk
fleetpacks.co.uk
0330 133 3016



Lyon & Co LLP

ST7 2ES
chris@lyonco.co.uk
01270 882086

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 AND 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:

SQUEAKY PEDAL

"Being a member of the Chamber has benefitted our business in a number of ways. From helping refer us to a local law firm to help with GDPR compliance to being able to promote our membership with new businesses. As a new business who are proud to be based in Crewe, becoming a member of the South Cheshire Chamber was an obvious choice."

Squeaky Pedal

If you would like to share a testimonial, please send it through to jon.barnes@sccci.co.uk

| | |
|---|--|
|  | <p>Malbank School and Sixth Form College CW5 5HD admin@malbank.cheshire.sch.uk malbank.com 01270 611009</p> |
|  | <p>Neon-Peach Digital Services CW4 8AQ jp@neonpeachdigital.com neonpeachdigital.com 07766469734</p> |
|  | <p>Pink Ladies Cleaning Services CW10 0EG alison@pinkladiescleaningservices.co.uk pinkladiescleaningservices.co.uk 07388297428</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Platinum Construction (North) Ltd CW55RP platconstruction@yahoo.com platinum-construction.co.uk 01270 421348</p> |
|  | <p>Prestige Body & Paint Ltd CW2 7RR prestigebodyandpaint@gmail.com 07913329814</p> |
|  | <p>QD3 Ltd ST7 2LX gemma@qd3ltd.co.uk qd3ltd.co.uk 01270 875855</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>ServiceMaster Clean ST7 2LX gemma@smcontract.co.uk smcleaningcontractors.co.uk</p> |
|  | <p>Wardell Armstrong LLP ST1 5BD rmarvell@wardell-armstrong.com wardell-armstrong.com 01782276700</p> |



The Chamber team marked a special anniversary for the awards



Dr Diane Wright, Chamber Chair.



SOUTH CHESHIRE CHAMBER SALUTES ITS BUSINESS STARS OF 2022

Triumph in the face of adversity was the star of the show as South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce celebrated outstanding business talent at its 25th Anniversary Business Awards.

The ceremony at Reaseheath College was another uplifting occasion where ability to overcome challenge and succeed through creativity and goodwill to the community was honoured before a sell-out audience of local companies and charities.

They heard how finalists, many still reeling over the difficulties of the Covid pandemic, had ploughed resources into customer service and staff welfare. All were ready to take on the economic downturn.

Chamber Chair Dr Diane Wright said:

“So much has changed since we began the awards and indeed in the last few years. We have left the European Union, had a global pandemic from which we haven’t fully recovered as well as four prime ministers and two monarchs and a Russian invasion of Ukraine.

“Yet the grit, resilience and determination of our business community in the face of these social, political, global and economic events remains quite staggering.

“The Chamber is delighted to offer a platform where we can recognise factors other than turnover or profit. The Awards celebrate community, collaboration, social impact, innovation, inclusivity, diversity, ethical working, staff wellbeing and developing the workforce of the future.”

Awards were handed out in nine categories with Start Up Business of the Year creating a flurry of fresh faces. Winner Platinum Construction in Nantwich has



proved a success story despite beginning its journey in the health crisis when materials like cement were in short supply.

Everybody Health and Leisure won Contribution to the Community after implementing a programme of support for long Covid patients and the Wishing Well charity in Crewe took the Excellence in Collaboration award for teaming up with major employers to help the community Start, Live and Age Well.

There was recognition also for businesses helping to put South Cheshire on the map as a place to visit. Crewe Market Hall earned the Ambassador of the Year award after a crowd-pulling revamp. Business of the Year (25 or more employees) was Church Minshull's Aqueduct Marina which runs popular narrowboat facilities.

Another hotly-contested category was Business of the Year (25 or less employees). Winners were Crewe-based family firm Qualkem Ltd which manufactures chemical solutions for a variety of sectors including dental and veterinary with a deep-rooted commitment to sustainability.

The Excellence in Customer Service award went to Middlewich-based Everything Dinosaur which exports its dinosaur and prehistoric animal toys, models and clothing to more than 100 countries. With a background in paleontology, they spread love for the 'wonderful world of extinct animals.'

Employer of the Year winner was Nantwich-based care provider Right at Home which is changing perceptions of working in the health and social care industry with guaranteed hours contracts, pay above industry rates and a culture where employees are celebrated and nurtured.

Apprentice of the Year winner was Joshua Hallam, a young man working for the Amplo Group in Crewe where he has excelled on an Administration Apprenticeship.

All entries were of a high standard. This year saw a Special Recognition award go to the Mid Cheshire Hospitals Charity which fundraises for improvements and additional comforts such as a hypnotherapy service for people being treated for cancer.

The night attracted generous support from big names locally - Assurant, Bentley Motors, Cheshire College South & West, Cheshire Connect, Cheshire East Council, Construction Linx, Hibberts, KPI Recruiting Ltd, Reaseheath College, Rhino Safety and South Cheshire Development Agency Ltd.

Optimum Pay Group sponsored the VIP Drinks Reception and Trinity Create, the Main Drinks Reception. Comperes were Gary Johnson and Neil Davies of Cat 107.9FM and publicity by Jan Roberts of Pure PR. Images by Paul Harrison of Studio One, Nantwich.

Looking to 2023, Chamber CEO Paul Colman said South Cheshire was well placed to survive the economic downturn with HS2 attracting inward investment and more projects coming on stream from the £23m Towns Fund led by Crewe Town Board and £14m on improvements via the Future High Streets Fund.

He said:

“In the long history of the Chamber we have seen how local businesses rise to a challenge, no more so than in the pandemic. Innovation and resilience is all around us.

“As leading members of the British Chambers of Commerce we will continue to lobby at national level

for South Cheshire and welcome feedback from local businesses who need support and would like to join us.”

For a full round up and pictures from the Chamber Business Awards 2022 go to sccci.co.uk/business-awards/2022-awards To join the Chamber visit sccci.co.uk/become-a-member



Ambassador of the Year
Crewe Market Hall



Apprentice of the Year
Joshua Hallam, Amplo Group



Business of the Year 25+ Employees
Aqueduct Marina



Business of the Year Under 25 Employees
Qualkem



Contribution to the Community
Everybody Health and Leisure



Employer of the Year
Right at Home South Cheshire



Excellence in Collaboration
The Wishing Well



Excellence in Customer Service
Everything Dinosaur



Start-Up Business of the Year
Platinum Construction

New vision for Cheshire's archives takes major leap forward thanks to National Lottery support



Artist's impression of the Crewe history centre

Plans to transform the way in which Cheshire's archives are accessed and ensure they are preserved for future generations have taken a major leap forward following the go ahead from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Cheshire Archives and Local Studies – a shared service of Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils – looks after the county's unique and irreplaceable written and pictorial history and is driving forward plans to rehouse the archives in two new state-of-the-art history centres.

Today, it can be announced that The National Lottery Heritage Fund has agreed to provide funding to contribute towards the delivery of the new facilities in Chester and Crewe, which will replace the Cheshire Record Office, in Chester, and allow the service to better protect and share the historic records.

Planning applications for the two centres were recently submitted and decisions on the plans are expected to be made before spring.

If they are approved, the grant from the Heritage Fund of £4.45m, which has been made possible through money raised by National Lottery players, would allow for construction of the centres to go ahead.

The project, called 'Cheshire's archives: a story shared', would transform the way the archives service works and give local people greater access to the collections and opportunities to interact with them more easily – helping them to celebrate their personal and communities' histories.

There would also be an improved outreach and digital programme to extend access to the archives across Cheshire and further afield, better spaces for staff and volunteers to work with the collections, more spaces for research, performances and exhibitions, and opportunities to develop and exchange skills.



Councillor Jill Rhodes, lead for archives at Cheshire East Council, said: "Cheshire's archive collections date back more than 900 years

and represent a unique and irreplaceable part of the county's heritage, coming from all walks of life including businesses, schools, hospitals and local clubs and organisations.

"This funding decision from The National Lottery Heritage Fund is a significant step towards being able to deliver two fantastic new facilities that will ensure the archives' long-term preservation, open them up to a whole new audience and allow them to be used in a way that has not been possible previously."

Locations for the centres have been identified at the site of the former Enterprise Centre, Hoole Road, Chester, and the site of Crewe's former library, next to Memorial Square.

Subject to planning permission, work to build the centres is currently expected to begin in autumn 2023 and finish in winter 2025.

Councillor Louise Gittins, Leader of Cheshire West and Chester Council said: "This is fantastic news. Chester has proudly hosted the archive services for 70 years, but our current location is no longer able to meet the expectation and requirements of the many people who access this service.

"The new site will help us to revolutionise access to a wider audience and protect the collection for future generations."

Anne Jenkins, executive director, business delivery at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: "We are delighted that our funding means that the 'Cheshire archives: a story shared' is a step closer to becoming reality.

"This important project will open up the fascinating collections that are held in the archives to a host of new audiences and ensure that local communities can explore the heritage that matters the most to them.

"The two new history centres will be exciting new additions to the heritage landscape of Cheshire, and we're excited to see the project progress."

The funding from the Heritage Fund not only contributes towards the new facilities but will help the service to fund a programme of new activities across the county until March 2027.

During the project's development to date, Cheshire Archives have used new and creative approaches to engaging people with the collections.

One example was the team's work with theatre chef Leo Burtin, who previously worked on events and food-based programmes with Manchester Jewish Museum.

The team drew on historic recipes from Cheshire's archives, which dated back to the 18th century and included a hearty mushroom ragu and a berry syrup, and Leo hosted a live, digital 'cookalong' where he shared the histories of these recipes and people discussed the health benefits of different types of foods.

Of those who took part, 83 per cent had not engaged with the archives before and it gave the team important experience of running and promoting live-streamed events for its future events programme.



Proposed site layout plan for the public space around the history centre

Exciting exhibition planned for 180th anniversary celebration of Crewe Works



Photograph: The old Crewe Works (Number 9 erecting shop).
Photo credit: Crewe & District Local History Association.

2023 will mark the 180th anniversary of the Grand Junction Railway Engineering Works moving from Edge Hill to Crewe. Crewe Town Council is planning an exhibition at Crewe Heritage Centre which will help to

create a sensory experience of what the Works would have looked, smelt and sounded like and will feature stories, objects and interactive exhibits.

The decision to move the Works

shaped Crewe, building it from a community of a few hundred people to a town of 40,000 in just thirty years. The town became a hub of innovation in engineering, design and the organisation of large-scale industry. In 1846, the Grand Junction Railway Company was succeeded by the London and North Western Railway Company who wanted the town to be self-sufficient.

By the late 1800s, all elements of creating and maintaining a locomotive could be undertaken at Crewe, alongside ancillary works such as the creation of signals, soap making, leather working, uniform manufacture and artificial limb manufacture. The Works had an iron foundry, brick works, steel works and gas works, to support the large-scale production.

It was this large-scale production which enable Crewe to play a significant role in both of the World Wars. By the 1930s Crewe Works was said to be the biggest in the world. At its peak it employed between 7,000 and 8,000 people. In 2025, Crewe Works will support part of the assembly and maintenance of the HS2 rolling stock.

The proposed exhibition will focus on the Works' illustrious history and will reflect the impact it had on the social and economic development of the town.

For further information, please contact the Crewe Town Council Heritage Officer: heritage@crewetowncouncil.gov.uk

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service hosts Road Safety Event at Cheshire College



Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) hosted an event at Cheshire College – South & West's Crewe Campus to increase awareness during Road Safety Week.

Taking place between the 14th and 20th November 2022, Road Safety Week is the biggest road safety campaign from the road safety charity, Brake. An annual event, Road Safety Week sees thousands of schools, organisations and communities across the UK come together to share important road safety messages, remember people affected by road death and injury and campaign for safe roads for everyone.

The theme of Road Safety Week 2022 is 'Safe Roads for All', with the aim to educate and inform communities of everyone's right to make safe and healthy journeys on safe roads.

Providing interactive ways for students to learn more, the event at Cheshire College was led by eleven of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service very own Apprentices and provided examples of poor driving decisions, and its impact, through a Virtual Reality experience with state-of-the-art headsets and live demonstrations of the new highway code with bespoke fire service vehicles.

Head of the Road Safety Team at Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS),

Ryan Swindell, said: "Students utilise a variety of methods to get to and from Campus including bikes and cars every day. These two particular forms of transportation sadly accounted for 53% of all killed and seriously injured in 2020 on Cheshire's roads.

"We hope by running this event today we can educate students, cyclist and car users of how to be respectful of other road users and how to be safe whilst on the road across Cheshire."

Assistant Principal of Learner Services at Cheshire College, Nimisha Mistry-Miah, added: "Today was a brilliant opportunity for our students to gain further knowledge about the highway code and remain prepared when travelling alone or with family and friends.

"We're grateful to have a strong relationship with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service who not only save lives every day but work hard to educate us all in how we can be that bit safer."

For more information about the campaign and how you can get involved, please visit <https://www.brake.org.uk/road-safety-week>.

Everybody Health & Leisure delivers to the Crewe community by opening its doors to brand new £500K gym



(The expansive 100-station gym at Crewe Lifestyle Centre)

Everybody Health and Leisure unveil brand new fitness suite at Crewe Lifestyle Centre, despite the recent cost of living economy. Everybody commits to the local communities will be key to supporting efforts tackling health inequalities in Crewe.

Everybody are delivering opportunities for Crewe residents to access industry leading health and fitness equipment, where there is known health inequalities. Targeting those communities most in need of improved services to help and support residents in their efforts to become more active in their everyday lives and achieve healthier lifestyles.

The brand new fitness suite includes 100 stations, with areas such as cardio, resistance, free-weights, functional area and a new stretching area, all working towards



Peter Hoare

an improved health and fitness experience for the Crewe community.

Having visited a total of 312 times this year, Peter Hoare, a Shavington resident is Crewe Lifestyle Centre's most regular gym member.

After beating cancer, Peter frequently uses the gym to keep fit and socialise, sharing:

"Since I had throat cancer 25 years ago I have tried to stay as healthy and active as possible. I'm 73 now and I had to stop playing cricket and badminton 6 years ago, but I didn't want to become a couch potato, so I joined Everybody and began using the gym at Crewe Lifestyle Centre to keep fit. It's also a great way to socialise and I find the atmosphere here is very friendly. I love the new gym. It's like having new toys to play with."

Dominic Crisp, Head of Operations at Everybody Health & Leisure, commented:

"As highlighted in the recent census data, published by the Office for

National Statistics (ONS), we are aware of the scale of deprivation and health inequalities in the Crewe area.

This makes this investment timely and will provide opportunities for the community to access state of the art equipment in an inclusive environment. We are so excited that the time has come to unveil the brand new gym facility and we welcome all people from the local communities."

Visit here to find out more about Everybody Health and Leisure's investment into the Crewe Lifestyle Centre – www.everybody.org.uk/locations/crewe/gym-crewe/

Everybody Health and Leisure provide a range of targeted health and wellbeing programmes at Crewe Lifestyle Centre, including Everybody Exercise Referral and a Multi Rehabilitation programme, both programmes access the gym environment and provide support for those in greatest need. You can find out more here: www.everybody.org.uk/locations/crewe/health-programmes/



A message from our President



This is always a busy time of the year for the Chamber and in particular for me as your President when I have to attend a number of events in a formal capacity.

It is always a pleasure to do so and gives me the opportunity to don the Presidents "Gong" which is always a great privilege.

The annual Remembrance Day Services held at both Crewe and Nantwich have been something that it is felt important for the Chamber to attend in respect for the local businesses and workforce who gave so much.

The services used to be held at different times so that I was able to attend both but over recent years they have been held at the same time so Richard Welding attended the Crewe Ceremony while I did the Nantwich one. As usual the ceremonies were of an impeccable standard and attended by huge crowds.

The Chamber Business Awards which this year reached an amazing milestone of 25 years was again a great success. I can remember the first one which was held in the Mayors Parlour at Crewe and was attended by about three businesses over a cup of tea and a biscuit! Who would have envisaged that it would have grown to be the spectacular event it is today?

The Awards are well covered elsewhere in this edition so I won't go into any detail except to congratulate all of the Businesses that were nominated on the night, especially the winners and to thank the sponsors, judges and presenters for their invaluable support and input. And, of course, Reaseheath College for transforming what is normally a sports hall into a magnificent venue fitting of the occasion and providing some excellent food.

The Chamber's AGM can't claim to have the same high profile but is nonetheless an important event in the Chambers Calendar when members can hear about all of the activities that the Chamber has undertaken during the year and its plans for the future.

As usual the AGM was held at Rookery Hall, followed by the Christmas networking lunch which was, as always, a great event.

In between all this, the Autumn meeting of the Chamber Business Council took place to discuss matters of local, regional and national importance which will have an impact on the local economy, and consider where it can use its lobbying influence for the benefit of our business community as it prepares to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

It just remains for me to thank all of our members for their continuing support and to wish everyone a very happy and prosperous New Year.

John Dunning
President





A message from our Chair

It's always so cheering to celebrate the Business Awards during November as they carry us along to the start of the New Year with such hope as well as pride, in our local businesses. They were especially celebratory this year as this was our 25th Awards event, which caused us to reflect on how much our members contribute to not just the local economy but also the community in which we live. Their achievements have been especially notable this year with many still recovering from the pandemic, but now at the same time having to deal with astronomical energy bills and lack of skilled staff.

The results of the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) Quarterly Economic Survey (which you are always invited to contribute to) identify a huge drop in confidence, with 25% of businesses surveyed reporting a drop in sales. The BCC is lobbying the government on our behalf to address several key issues some of which are particularly relevant to our members.

Firstly, in a climate where four in ten businesses think their profits will decline in the next 12 months, there needs to be action

from the government that will boost confidence and drive business growth. Key to this is the investment in infrastructure. This is pertinent to our region, and it was good to hear the Chancellor pledge his commitment to HS2. So too business rates need to be adjusted to encourage growth and businesses also need to be reassured that there will be an energy support package after April.

A further area where the BCC is lobbying for government support is with respect to a skilled labour force. The BCC has stated that 76% of firms are facing difficulties recruiting the right staff and are calling for investment in human capital. This has been a serious issue amongst our own members, and so we are really excited to announce that the Chamber has been chosen to lead the government funded Local Skills Improvement Plan for Cheshire and Warrington, with a view to addressing the skills need in the region. The plan will be to firstly articulate employer skills needs exploring amongst our own members and

the wider business community what skills employers need locally but struggle to find. We will be looking for your feedback and contribution so that we get this right. Secondly, we will then aim to translate that need into provision, exploring with our local education providers how the skills needs can be met in more responsive ways. This is a huge boost for all of us, as it directly addresses problems that have been raised time after time – and two of our patrons Cheshire College South and West and Reaseheath College are there to support us in our endeavours and respond to changing needs.

So whilst I don't think any of us are naïve enough to imagine that next year is going to be a breeze, we can at least identify areas that give us some optimism for the year to come. As ever your feedback is welcome, and we do urge you to continue to complete the BCC's Quarterly Economic Survey – it really does feed directly into information provided to the government.

And finally – on behalf of the Chamber may I wish you and your families a happy and prosperous New Year.

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



In the
Spotlight
with...

Crewe University Technical College (UTC)

What is Crewe UTC?

Have you ever driven past that colourful looking, modern building opposite Asda on West Street in Crewe and wondered 'what is it'?

Well, we're a University Technical College (UTC) delivering a highly specialised curriculum with an unrivalled real-world engineering and design experience to students aged 14 to 19. We're a T Level provider and boast industry standard engineering facilities. We have employer partnerships with world-leading engineering businesses and are proud of the education and opportunities available to students at Crewe UTC.

ENGINEERING FUTURES SINCE 2016



Crewe Engineering
& Design UTC



But why not hear about us from our students themselves?



Natasha Hibbert: Civil Engineer Degree Apprentice at Mott MacDonald

Crewe UTC student 2017 – 2019 (joined in Sixth Form)

"I currently work in the Rail Sector at Mott MacDonald, in a Stations Team. Crewe UTC helped me secure this apprenticeship role firstly, thanks to the employability skills I gained from the industry placements integrated into the curriculum, which allowed me to work alongside Bentley Motors, Siemens and AO. This also gave me an understanding of which sector I enjoyed working in the most. Then further down the line, UTC helped me with my apprenticeship applications, which companies to apply to, and how to strengthen my skill set.

I love the diversity across the Mott MacDonald businesses and the teamworking. I also really like the fact that I'm now working on real-life engineering challenges and then seeing those projects come to life is a great feeling."



Jack Cartledge: Test Engineering Degree Apprentice at Siemens

Crewe UTC student 2017 – 2021 (joined in Year 10)

"Crewe UTC and the employer partners were super supportive, especially during Lockdown. We were supported in Mechatronics and supplied with home kits that were set up with PLC Programming, all connected to Siemens. We also had weekly Employer Talks with lots of different businesses. Then when it came to applying for the apprenticeship and I got an interview, it had to happen virtually, so UTC set me up with a PC in college to make sure I didn't miss out. When I got the role with Siemens it was overwhelming!"



Thomas Longden: Applications Engineering Degree Apprentice at James Walker

Crewe UTC student 2017 – 2019 (joined in Sixth Form)

"I'm specialising in the nuclear industry at James Walker. Crewe UTC helped me secure my role by already having ties to employers, so you're aware of the partners throughout your time at the college. A lot of it is to do with the connection to employers, so for example part of my coursework was related to a project proposed to the college by Bentley Motors. The depth of work we do in CAD is also an advantage, and much more than you'd cover in a normal school. My ambitions for the coming year are to build on my nuclear knowledge base, meet more customers and to build my portfolio for chartership."



**Malaika
Crewe UTC student 2018 – 2022
(joined in Year 10)**

"It's great that at UTC I could develop civil engineering skills and see what it's like to be a civil engineer while still at college. And I was able to do work experience with Mott MacDonald because they work closely with UTC."



**Maciej: current Sixth Form student
Joined Crewe UTC 2019 in Year 10**

"What I love is the atmosphere and the people at Crewe UTC and the facilities here are amazing for engineering. I've picked up many, many skills which I would not have been able to do in a normal school. I feel confident that I'm ready to be in a working environment with machines, different technologies and software. The main skill I really enjoy using is 3D modelling. It helps me a lot, especially when I'm doing prototyping, or trying to create my own projects. And that's all thanks to the Engineering Design lessons in Years 10 and 11."



James: Electrical Engineering Degree Apprentice at Siemens

Crewe UTC student 2020 – 2022 (joined in Sixth Form)

"You get really good work experience through the employer partners, which you might not get at other places. I've already got an apprenticeship lined up at Siemens, doing Electrical Engineering."



**Kai
Crewe UTC student 2018 – 2022 (joined in Year 10)**

"In Year 10 I was able to do a work placement at Bentley Motors, where I worked on a production line and helped put the engines together. I had a look at everything from just putting the cylinders in, to actually seeing the engineers then make the Mulsanne engines by hand and calibrate them, which was brilliant."

If you would like to see our facilities for yourself or are interested in supporting our industry placement programme for students, I'd be delighted to show you around our West Street campus.

— Will Chitty, Principal.
www.utccrewe.co.uk
01270 218150
w.chitty@utccrewe.org.uk
West Street, Crewe, CW1 2PZ



Your Guide to UK Trade Agreements

Any company wishing to do business with, or in, another country must always be aware of the law and regulations in that country and follow them accordingly. If you are already selling your products or services overseas you may have come across differences in customs procedures, duties and taxes charged, regulations around standards and professional qualifications as well as laws on duration and scope of work for business travel...and perhaps more!

The UK Government wants you, as a UK business, to be ambitious in doing business overseas. Easing the process of trade in goods and services between countries will help your business to save time, boost profits and grow. Securing trade agreements between single countries or trading blocs is a method of achieving this.

What are Trade Agreements?

Trade Agreements are made between two or more countries and, simply put, set out the preferential rules for buying or selling goods or services between them.

The Department for International Trade is responsible for negotiating and securing these UK trade agreements, yet, like new roads, trade agreements can deliver huge benefits if they get used but are pointless if no-one can drive. The UK government is working hard to make sure businesses have the information and support they need to harness these trade agreements the moment they enter into force (*see Further Information*).

The Journey of a Trade Agreement

Initial Assessment: During this stage the Government explores whether a new Trade Agreement with a partner country would be useful for UK businesses.

Launch: After a favourable assessment the Government announces it will be starting negotiations with the country.

Negotiations: The Governments work together to come to an agreement on key areas. This is done in several negotiating 'rounds'.

Signature: At signing, both countries have concluded their talks and the main benefits of the deal are made public.

Scrutiny and Ratification: At this point, the Trade Agreement is inspected by Parliamentarians to ensure it represents the best opportunity for UK businesses.

Entry into Force and Implementation: Once the Trade Agreement has Parliamentary approval, it can be used by businesses trading with the country, or countries, involved.

What are the KEY Benefits of Trade Agreements for UK businesses?

The specific benefits of each trade agreement will depend on what was agreed during the negotiating process. Common benefits include reduced tariffs, easier business travel, recognition of professional qualifications and simplified customs procedures.

Some of the provisions in a trade agreement will apply automatically while others may require you to take some actions before you can benefit. The actions you need to take will depend on the type of goods or service you sell, and the country that you are doing business with.

The best way to explain the key benefits of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) is to look at the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

This was the first major trade deal the UK struck as a newly independent trading nation, bringing together two of the world's most technologically advanced nations. In force since 1st January 2021 CEPA is tailored to both economies, going beyond what was possible under the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement and seeing big benefits for digital and data, financial services, food and drink, and creative industries.

It makes trading easier by:

- Reduction or removal of tariffs on qualifying goods
- Simplified procedures for showing evidence of product compliance
- Enhanced protection of intellectual property
- Mutual recognition of professional qualifications
- Preferential, guaranteed market access and fair treatment of UK service suppliers seeking to sell to, and operate in, Japan
- Easier business travel
- Streamlining licences to operate and improved provisions for UK financial services companies
- Easing restrictions on amount of UK shareholding and investment permitted in Japan
- Recognition of each country's advanced, trusted technology landscape creating new opportunities for UK tech and digitally-savvy firms to export to Japan.

Benefits also continue into a wide range of additional themes such as:

- Addressing anti-competitive practices within each countries' goods and services competition law
- Ensuring UK SMEs are informed of the agreement provisions to seize the opportunities of exporting to Japan
- Seeking to support the conditions for women to participate equally thus increasing women's access to and ability to benefit from the opportunities created by the Agreement
- Facilitating trade in goods and services relevant to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development

What UK trade agreements are in force right now?

The UK has signed trade agreements with over 70 countries plus the EU, most of which can be used right now. At the date of publication these Trade Agreements are either in force or have been applied provisionally (*) whilst awaiting full Parliamentary approval.

28 bilateral agreements:

Albania, Canada, Cameroon, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Ghana*, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Moldova*, Morocco*, North Macedonia*, Palestinian Authority, Serbia, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey*, Ukraine, Vietnam*.

7 trading bloc agreements:

- UK-European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community Trade Cooperation Agreement (UK/EU and EAEC TCA): 27 countries of the EU
- UK-Andean Countries: Colombia, Ecuador, Peru
- CARIFORUM-UK Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)*: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, The Commonwealth of the Bahamas, The Commonwealth of Dominica, The Dominican Republic, Grenada, The Republic of Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, The Republic of Suriname, The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
- UK-Central America Association Agreement: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama



- Eastern and South Africa Countries-UK EPA (ESA-UK EPA): Mauritius, Seychelles, Zimbabwe
- UK-Iceland and the Kingdom of Norway*: Iceland, Norway
- UK-Pacific States EPA*: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands
- UK-Southern African Customs Union member states & Mozambique (UK-SACUM EPA): Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique

3 Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs):

Each country recognises the results of one another's product conformity assessments and are in force for specific product groups.

- UK-Australia
- UK-New Zealand
- UK-USA

1 Digital Economy Agreement:

UK-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement: In force since June 2022. This is the world's most comprehensive digital trade agreement, and the first digitally-focused trade deal completed by a European nation, strengthening ties between Asia and the UK on tech and digital trade.

What UK trade agreements are coming soon?

Scrutiny and Ratification:

- UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement. Signed December 2021. This is the first Trade Agreement the UK has developed since leaving the EU where there was no prior agreement in place. The agreement has been laid before Parliament.
- UK-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement. Signed February 2022.

Both agreements are expected to come into force in the first part of 2023.

Negotiations:

- UK-Canada: to strengthen existing bilateral agreement
- UK Accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP): Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam
- UK-India
- UK-Gulf-Cooperation Council (GCC): Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE.
- UK-Mexico: to strengthen existing bilateral agreement
- UK-Israel: to strengthen existing bilateral agreement
- UK-Greenland

Initial Assessment:

- UK-African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)
- UK-South Korea: to strengthen existing bilateral agreement
- UK-Switzerland: to strengthen existing bilateral agreement

Further Information:

To find out more about trade agreements and how you can use them to grow your business:

- sign up to DIT'S online Export Academy Masterclass "Introduction to Free Trade Agreements", repeated on:
 - Thursday, 12 January 2023, 14:00-15:00
 - Thursday, 26 January 2023, 14:00-15:00
 - Thursday, 9 February 2023, 14:00-15:00
 - Thursday, 23 February 2023, 14:00-15:00

Register here:

- <https://www.events.great.gov.uk/website/6264/>
- visit www.great.gov.uk/freetradeagreements

The Department for International Trade can support you on your export journey. We work closely with South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce so please don't hesitate to get in touch.



For more information contact Tricia Francis, Export Manager, Cheshire & Warrington, Department for International Trade
Email: tricia.francis@trade.gov.uk

Article data accurate at time of going to print



Department for
International Trade



ASSURANT®

Another Big Tick for Assurant's DEI Commitment



At Assurant, we remain committed to strengthening Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) across our business. Our DEI strategy is guiding our efforts to accelerate the way we foster diverse thoughts and experiences, defining and directing our path toward reflecting the communities we live in, deepening our understanding of each other and furthering collaboration as we work

together to solve problems, serve our customers and clients and strengthen Assurant as a best place to work.

Through our heightened focus on DEI, we continue to reinforce our values of Common Decency, Common Sense, Uncommon Thinking and Uncommon Results.

In October we were delighted to be crowned winners of The Sova Moving the Dial in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Award

at the TIARA Talent Acquisition Awards!

Being recognized at the TIARA awards is a testament to the hard work and creativity that goes into delivering in-house talent acquisition partnerships to meet the skills required by organizations to thrive in the current market. The TIARA awards are unique in that every shortlisted entry is provided with expert, confidential feedback from their panel of judges. And we were highly praised for the commercial and cultural impact of our policies and initiatives to promote greater diversity, equity and inclusion. The Assurant Talent Acquisition team have deployed a blend of initiatives which have led to tangible changes in the talent acquisition process.

The TIARA awards exclusively recognize employers who put excellence in talent acquisition and resourcing at the heart of their people strategies. This award recognizes the commercial and cultural impact of our policies and initiatives to promote greater Diversity, Equity and Inclusion driven by our talent acquisition function.

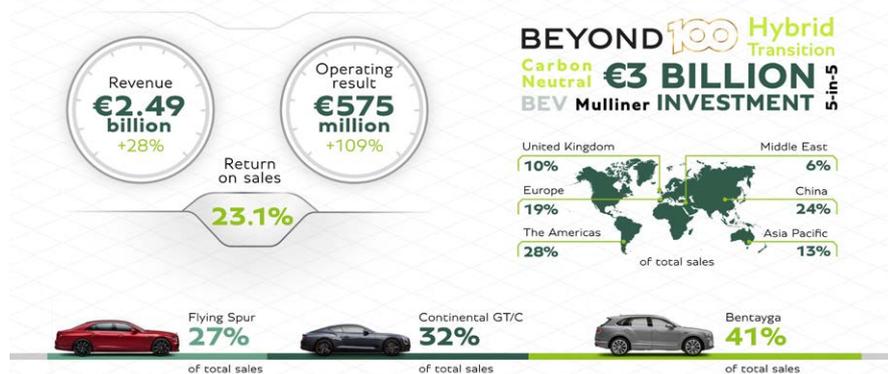
For more on Assurant go to www.assurant.co.uk

Bentley reports record third quarter results



BENTLEY

RECORD GROWTH IN Q3 2022
Becoming a leader in sustainable luxury mobility



Bentley Motors has announced record operating profits for the first nine months of 2022, despite continuing challenges and uncertainty in the global economy.

The British luxury car manufacturer saw profits more than double to €575 million, an increase of 109 per cent compared to the same nine-month period last year. The previous best full year total for the Crewe-based luxury marque was €389 million. An encouraging 23.1 per cent return on sales was the highest in Bentley's 103-year history.

Year-to-date sales were up 3 per cent to 11,316 luxury cars, while revenue increased from €1.949 billion in 2021, to €2.490 billion this year, a 28 per cent growth rate.

This was largely due to the popularity of new model derivatives and the personalisation options available through Bentley Mulliner, the oldest coachbuilder in the world.

This includes the most powerful, fastest, most dynamic and most luxurious Continental GT yet created, the GT Mulliner, which launched earlier this year. Extending driver appeal further, Bentley unveiled a new S range, focused on driving performance and visual presence, for the GT family and Flying Spur. A third customer offering was also announced with the range of Azure models focused on well-being and comfort.

Reinforcing Bentley's balanced model line success, the best-selling Bentayga SUV claimed a 41 per cent share of sales, while the Flying Spur luxury sedan recorded 27

per cent, thanks in part to the introduction of the new Hybrid model, the most advanced and environmentally-friendly Flying Spur ever. The Continental GT and GTC ultimate grand tourers together accounted for 32 per cent of sales, with the new, performance-orientated GT Speed the most dynamic road car Bentley has ever built.

Bentley sales were up 18 per cent in Europe in the first nine months of 2022, to 2,133 cars. The Asia Pacific region also saw double digit growth of 17 per cent. The UK home market rose by 25 per cent to 1,126 vehicles while the Americas is still the strongest sales region overall, with a 7 per cent increase to 3,154 cars.

Bentley is expecting a strong end to the year thanks to the introduction of the Bentayga Extended Wheelbase (EWB) model, the new luxury flagship SUV offering the best rear cabin experience since the Mulsanne. The EWB has so far accounted for approximately 40 per cent of Bentayga orders since launch.

The latest figures continue to support Bentley's industry-leading Beyond100 strategy, as the company looks to reinvent its entire product range to support an electrified future, achieving carbon neutral status by 2030. This includes a €3 billion, ten-year investment programme in future products at the Pym's Lane factory in Crewe, where all Bentley models are built.

For more on the company go to www.bentleymotors.com

Cheshire College student aces Academic Programme by University Of Oxford



Cheshire College – South & West is delighted to see one of its A Level students, Bethany Wallace, successfully complete the 12-month Oxnet Intensive Academic programme in Philosophy and World Religions.

Led by Pembroke College, Oxford, Oxnet is an established initiative run collaboratively between participating colleges at the University of Oxford, Durham University, the University of Manchester, and Hub secondary schools and colleges in

London, the North West and North East of England.

Speaking of her experience, Bethany said: 'It was intense, but it was great to prove that I could do it. I really liked the seminar series, as it was good to talk to experts in their field. We also had a small tutor group so that we could get personal feedback and that really made me think differently about tutorials at Oxford.'

Following her studies at Cheshire College, Bethany hopes to go to university to study Archaeology and Ancient History.

Bethany's academic aspirations have been supported by The Futures Programme at Cheshire College; a unique selection of pathways designed to support progression onto employment and university.

Commenting on the programme, Bethany said: 'The Futures Programme supported me in making the application to Oxnet and some of the team came to the summer residential, so it was nice to see some familiar faces. The Scholars group are really friendly, and my teachers are all very supportive too.'

Dhesi OBE, Principal and CEO of Cheshire College, commented: "We are very proud of Bethany's achievements with the Oxnet Programme. Not only has her hard work and determination paid dividends, but her success will also inspire the new cohort of Scholars at Cheshire College."

For more on college courses go to www.ccs.w.ac.uk



Guinness welcomes start of works at Crewe housing development



The Guinness Partnership is pleased to announce that construction work has started on 73 homes at Goddard Street in Crewe.

The mixed tenure development is on the site of the former LMR football club and pitch. Senior members of The Guinness Partnership and Vistry Partnership were joined by Homes England, the Mayor of Crewe and other partners, to mark the important milestone.

Vistry Partnerships, with whom Guinness is working on a number of developments across the country, is the

main contractor for the development on Guinness's two-acre site. The scheme will see 31 two and three bedroom houses for shared ownership, and 42 one and two bedroom flats for affordable rent (for over 55s).

The site is well located for local public transport and is close to Crewe town centre which is currently undergoing significant regeneration.

Jon Milburn, Group Development Director at The Guinness Partnership, said: "We have been working for many years on our plans to build new affordable homes at Goddard Street, so we are very excited to

have started work with Vistry Partnerships here in Crewe. This development will provide much needed housing in Crewe and contribute to Guinness's delivery of affordable homes under our Homes England Strategic Partnership."

Christine Hill, Senior Growth Manager at Homes England, said: "Homes England is committed to supporting partners that have ambitions to build new homes and our investment through affordable housing grant allows us to do that. The development of the Goddard Street site is clear evidence of the impact our Strategic Partnership with Guinness is having in providing much needed new homes in Crewe."

Ian Hilliker, Regional Managing Director for Vistry Partnerships (North West) said, 'We're thrilled to be a part of this fantastic project for our friends at Guinness. We're looking forward to delivering high quality homes and creating a place where people aspire to live.'

The development is set to complete by mid-2024.

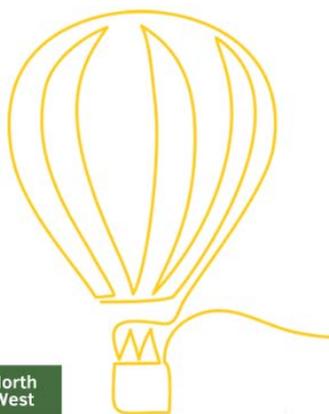
To find out more about Guinness homes across the country, go to www.guinnesspartnership.com/building-homes/our-homes

How to design for the planet... even if you're not a designer



How to design for the planet... even if you're not a designer

#McrMetCfE #SmallBizInsight



design community, he's looked for new ways to apply lessons from design into his own work. And in turn, he knows the design community can benefit from his expertise too.

Moving beyond empathy: One example of a design approach that Graeme finds valuable is empathy. It's a key concept in design. You need to think about your end users and other stakeholders – what they need, how they'll use the product, how it will benefit them. But Graeme argues that this approach doesn't go far enough.

What if we could extend empathy to encompass the whole planet and the wider communities who might be impacted by business activity?

"This sort of aspirational, long-term thinking is essential in the business journey to sustainability" says Graeme.

– Read the full article: bit.ly/ECOINW

Dr Graeme Heyes, Enterprise Fellow in Sustainable Design Innovation, wants more people to think about sustainable design – whether they're designers or not. This, he believes, is the only way to drive the radical change we need to stop the climate emergency.

Unless design is part of your job title, you probably don't think of yourself as a designer. But if there's even the smallest bit of creativity in your role – whether that's

building spreadsheets or making policies more effective – then design is involved.

Designing sustainable business: Graeme isn't a designer in the traditional sense. But ever since he realised that he approaches problems in his work in a very similar way to the

Mornflake backs Christmas fundraiser for St Luke's Hospice



Thousands of Cheshire schoolchildren have been taking part in a fun-filled hospice fundraising event supported by Mornflake.

Youngsters from local schools, nurseries and pre-schools are putting their best foot forward in St Luke's annual 'Elf Run' to raise vital funds for patient care.

The festive fundraiser managed to raise an incredible £66,000 for patient care last year, with a total of 65 schools and 11,431 children taking part. This year the St Luke's Community Fundraising Team are hoping to do even better.

Angela Slack, St Luke's Community Partnerships Manager, said: "We would like to say a huge thank you to Mornflake for their continued backing of our Elf Run. Their kind support helps us to run this kind of event year after year which proves vital in enabling our nurses to continue to provide care to the community."

Schools and nurseries are tasked with setting a day aside for 'Elf' activities which could be anything from a one mile run, an assault course or a themed PE lesson.

St Luke's provides all the materials for a fun-filled day including Elf hats, stickers and each participating school receives a Santa suit and Elfie Selfie frames.

Berkeley Academy, Crewe took part for the first time last year and classmates are looking forward to donning their Elf headgear once again. Headteacher Carolyn

Brown said: "The children all wore their Christmas jumpers and Elf hats and they had so much fun. It was fantastic to see so many happy, smiling faces."

Once again, the 'Elf Run' is supported by long-standing Chamber Patron Mornflake, which not only sponsors the event but also provides a tasty porridge pot to each child as part of its mission to promote healthy lifestyles from a young age.

Mornflake Managing Director James Lea said: "We are delighted to offer our

support to this wonderful campaign which promotes health, fitness and community spirit, whilst raising money for such an important cause. St Luke's Hospice relies so heavily on the generosity of our community and as a long-standing Cheshire company, we continue to be touched by the support it offers local people and endeavour to help as much as we can."

– For more on Mornflake products and heritage go to www.mornflake.com



Royal visit concludes Reaseheath College's centenary year



HRH The Duke of Gloucester unveils the Heritage Trail and Centenary Bridge watched by Principal Marcus Clinton, Forestry and Arboriculture Course Manager Alan Mottram and students Max Robertson and Laura Steer

His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester officially opened two sustainability projects in ceremonies marking the end of Reaseheath College's centenary year.

The Duke, who is the cousin of the late Queen Elizabeth II, opened a Heritage Trail and Centenary Bridge and a state-of-the-art Vertical Farm at the Nantwich college and university centre.

His Royal Highness, who has a keen interest in conservation and education, toured part of the campus which has been restored by students and staff from the countryside department with the aim of

increasing biodiversity.

The signed Heritage Trail can be enjoyed by students, staff, official visitors and the public and takes in historic buildings and sites of horticultural interest. The Centenary Bridge was originally installed in 1952 and has been renovated as part of the project.

His Royal Highness inspected some of the 100 trees planted on campus this year as part of the Queens Green Canopy, and concluded his visit to the Heritage Trail by planting a tree as a lasting reminder of the occasion. A keen horticulturist, he took time to chat to students and staff involved in the project.

He then officially opened Reaseheath's Vertical Farm – the UK's largest training and research centre for vertical farming - which was completed in 2021. This facility grows a range of crops using LED lighting and tiered systems of plants growing in temperature and light controlled environments.

The Vertical Farm has been built to showcase technical innovation within this specialised sector and is part of the institute of Sustainability and Food Innovation, a joint venture between Reaseheath and its academic partner, the University of Chester.

Supported by Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership through its Local Growth Fund and built to specification by iGrowing Ltd., the facility offers undergraduates and businesses the opportunity for applied research and technical training and is also being used to teach school children about sustainable food production and healthy eating.



HRH The Duke of Gloucester joins Crop Innovation Manager Dr Peter Gould in the Vertical Farm

What every business needs to know about Fire Safety Signage



Long-standing Chamber Patron SG World in Crewe, has recently expanded its safety signage range to include fire safety. Did you know all business premises will need at least 2 or 3 fire safety signs, depending on the layout of their premises, the nature of their use and any supporting fire-fighting equipment.

There are 4 main types of signage:

- Fire Action Notices explaining what to do in case of fire
- Fire Exit and Door signs marking fire exit routes, doors and assembly points
- Fire Equipment and Alarm signs

showing the location of fire-fighting equipment such as extinguishers and alarm points

- Warning and Prohibition safety signs alerting people to danger and warning them of unsafe actions such as 'Danger Flammable Gas' or 'No Smoking'

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service has an excellent online resource helping small to medium businesses conduct a risk assessment and comply with fire safety regulations, including a section on the provision, positioning and maintenance of signage:

- Are escape routes and exits indicated by appropriate signs?
- Are you maintaining all signs and notices so that they continue to be correct, legible and understood?
- Are you maintaining signs that have been provided for the information of the fire and rescue service, eg: the location of water suppression stop valves and the storage of hazardous substances?
- Have you provided notices such as those giving information on how to operate security devices on

exit doors, those indicating doors enclosing fire hazards that must be kept shut and fire action notices for staff and other people?

In summary, if you are responsible for the fire safety of commercial premises, these are the signs you will need to put in place:

- Fire Action Notice – mandatory for all premises
- Fire Exit Signs – needed for all but the smallest & simplest of properties
- Fire Extinguisher ID Sign – as extinguishers are mandatory, all premises must have at least one extinguisher ID sign
- Fire Alarm Call Point Signs – if you have a fire alarm, then call point signs are mandatory
- Other fire equipment signs – if you have a hose reel or a dry riser, you will need to signpost them
- Warning & Prohibition Signs – if you have an extra risk of fire on your premises

You can find further useful information on safety signage as well as a wide range of signs online at www.sgworld.com

Modern day recruitment – more about tech and less about people!



Author - Dan Marshall, CEO, The Absolute Solutions Group. Recruitment specialists.



Dan Marshall is joint CEO of the Absolute Solutions Group, a leading group of North West Recruitment companies with the HQ based in Crewe and serving Cheshire, Staffordshire, and Shropshire.

There is no doubt that technology has hugely impacted the recruitment process for many hiring managers in the last decade, with the pandemic only supercharging this growing trend.

Reliance on Artificial Intelligence is now common in modern hiring, with the AI machine saying “yes” or “no” throughout the recruitment process, from application, interview(s) and any tests required for the role. But with the rise of AI, is skilled recruitment becoming a waning skill and could this be damaging your business?

Believe it or not, with some recruitment apps, applicants can submit their CV directly to the Client without an actual flesh and blood Recruiter ever seeing them! Seriously, where’s the skill in that?! In our opinion, you might as well slap the vacancy on a job board yourself, add a few keywords and hope for the best.

It’s the human aspect that really makes a difference. A good Recruiter will take the time to understand both their Clients’ and Candidates’ needs and will be alert to the subtle human nuances - from both their Client and their Candidates - that give a feel of the “right fit” or not.

In our view, you cannot beat the face-to-face video interview – looking somebody directly in the eye can sometimes speak a thousand words and gives us the insight that we need as good Recruiters to really get the measure of our applicants.

Technology can no doubt streamline recruitment processes and make them more efficient, and indeed expand the reach of certain roles, but a good Recruiter’s intelligence is innate, not artificial.

After all, recruitment - like our strapline says – is all about people.

We wish all Chamber members a safe and prosperous 2023.

–
If you’d like to focus on your business and use the Absolute Solutions Group to find you the best people to help you on your journey, call us on 01270 445566 or email info@absol-group.com

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Crewe UTC: The Perfect Place to Study Engineering



Crewe has built a reputation as the centre of the UK's railway industry and today is home to a number of world class engineering

firms. Crewe UTC works with many of these industry giants, to help students develop their skills in engineering and design so they are ready to move into careers in the sector.

We are proud to partner with organisations such as Air Products, Bentley Motors, James Walker, Mott MacDonald, AO, Network Rail, RAF and Siemens.

We Are Different: Industry Standard Learning

We deliver a highly specialised engineering curriculum which has been designed in consultation with our industry partners, ensuring students receive the most appropriate education and experiences for a future career in engineering or design.

Students start with us in Year 10 and study a core curriculum in English, Maths & Science alongside a highly specialised engineering curriculum. Our sixth form students study engineering as either a BTEC or T-Level.

We Are Different: Industry Standard Facilities

UTC students learn how to solve real-world challenges using hardware and software such as Solidworks, virtual reality, 3D printers, CAD, CNC and computer-based simulation software, all in state-of-the-art workshops and laboratories.

Our Pastoral Support is Superb

We know it's a big decision to move schools at the end of Year 9. That's why we prioritise pastoral and SEND support to students and families to help the transition into the Crewe UTC family. We're a small college, and quickly develop close relationships with all students, meaning we can also tailor their education to individual skills and aspirations.

If you would like to see our facilities for yourself or are interested in supporting our industry placement programme for students, I'd be delighted to show you around our West Street campus.

Will Chitty, Principal.

For more information go to www.utccrewe.co.uk or call 01270 218150



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Are you inspection ready for 2023?

Just as many people use the new year as a time to reset their personal goals and plans for the year, lots of businesses find themselves earmarking January as a time to get various jobs they've been putting off done.

The team at Rhino Safety know that H&S can be a daunting task, but January can actually be a great time to get it in order. Combining health and safety considerations alongside the other business plans you are making for the year ahead means you are more likely to make safety a priority on an ongoing basis, and less likely to miss issues or concerns that arise as your business changes or grows throughout the year.

Some of the things businesses need to consider as a minimum include:

- When was the H&S documentation (policies, procedures, risk assessments) last reviewed? It should be at least annually, and signed and dated by a Director.
- Have the contents of the First Aid kit been checked? Are the contents in date and does anything need to be replaced or replenished?
- Does the business have sufficient First Aiders, and do any of them need to refresh their training or qualifications?
- Is the Fire Risk Assessment up to date, and has all fire safety equipment been tested and serviced?
- When was the last fire drill (evacuation) carried out? Have all staff experienced at least one in the last 12 months? Consider whether people have been on leave or working from home when the last one was conducted.



Rhino Safety have created a free, easy-to-use checklist for business owners and leaders to assess whether their health and safety is up to scratch.

Taking just 5 minutes to complete, it gives immediate insight into the areas of health and safety compliance that a business may need support with. To get yours, email info@rhinosafety.co.uk with the subject line 'send me my checklist'



YOUR OUTSOURCED H&S DEPARTMENT

Health & Safety giving you a headache?
Safe Systems of work giving you sleepless nights?
Risk assessments getting you riled?

Join hundreds of small, medium and large businesses around the UK who have their health and safety handled by Rhino Safety

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OUR SOLUTIONS:

- ✓ We audit your premises and working practises
- ✓ We write your health and safety documentation, policies, procedures, risk assessments etc
- ✓ We manage your risk assessments
- ✓ We train your employees
- ✓ We offer online training
- ✓ We get you through accreditation processes (SSIP, SMAS, CHAS, SAFEcontractor, ConstructionLine etc.)

Get in touch to see how we can help...



e. info@rhinosafety.co.uk
w. rhinosafety.co.uk

Head Office Cheshire 01270 440341 | London Office 02036 332107



Crewe and Nantwich schools, colleges and employers collaborate to inspire the next generation



In collaboration with Cheshire College South and West; the Cheshire and Warrington Pledge Partnership hosted the biggest ever town wide careers and education fair to take place in Crewe; with 1461 young people attending the event from 10 different schools and colleges across the town. And 55 inspirational exhibitors including; further education providers, higher education providers, employers, youth organisations and charities all supporting the event.

The event took place at Cheshire College South and West, and the Pledge were overwhelmed with support from both small and large local employers across all sectors including: NHS, Bakkavor, Bentley, Balfour Beatty, Boughey, Rookery Hall, Radius Payment Solutions, ROI Ltd, Atherton Associates, Poole Alcock LLP, Hibberts LLP, Hall Smith Whittingham LLP, Right at Home, Cheshire East, Cheshire Police, Cheshire Fire and Rescue, Flat Cap Hotels, KBA Financial Management, Swansway Motor Group, British Army, Crown Rail, In Safe Hands, Lane End Construction, Sporting House, WR Partners, The Red Cow and many more!

Trevor Langston, Cheshire and Warrington Pledge Lead, comments: "It was incredible to see so many of the high schools and colleges in Crewe and Nantwich working collaboratively on this event. The support from employers has been overwhelming, because they were able to engage with students from a multitude of schools and colleges. We need to work proactively and collaboratively in this area to be able to truly inspire young people and to give them the opportunities they deserve. Even more impressive was the number of employers who received part time job applications, work experience and volunteering enquiries of the back of the event, which just proves how effective this is!"

If you would like to find out more about The Pledge and how you can make a difference by collaborating with like-minded employers and educators, please contact the Crewe and Nantwich Pledge Facilitator Katie Heirene (katie.heirene@youthfed.org).

Time is the most precious gift



Moving into 2023 you may have New Year's resolutions, ambitions, and aspirations for the future of your business. If your Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Good Business Citizenship plans are on the agenda, please consider opportunities to help share skills for local grass roots charities.

At Cheshire Connect, we work closely with many not for profit and community groups to help identify skill requests, which could help them to maintain and develop a

robust and sustainable foundation. In the face of austerity and commission funding cuts, the role of the charitable organisations is vital to help support those most vulnerable in our community.

There are many ways business owners can help with practical support, fund raising, philanthropy and skill sharing.

At Cheshire Connect we focus on facilitating skill donor matches. The skill requests we receive from the local charitable organisations are wide and

varied. Many skill donors reap the benefit of flexing their skills in a different environment to their usual workplace and in the process, identifying many transferrable skills they hadn't previously realised they possessed. Skill donors often find the experience of sharing skills gives them a better understanding of the local community issues and broadens not just their work experience but enriches their personal development.

– Examples of current local charity skill requests:

Strategic planning; mentorship; marketing; PR and social media; commercial and sustainability mentorship; effective people management (HR); financial planning/financial forecasting; IT/data management/accounting; programme and project management; bid writing; procurement (asset/building expertise/planning applications); legal – contracts; technical illustration; health & safety; trustee roles.

– Want to know more: Contact Cheshire Connect Business Connector for the Crewe and South Cheshire area: Dianne Parrish 07946 639394 email: dianneparrish@cheshireconnect.org www.cheshireconnect.org

Congratulations to the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, Contribution to the Community Award Winner 2022 - sponsored by Bentley Motors and supported by Cheshire Connect:
Winners: Everybody Health and Leisure



For most of us, there will come a time when our loved one or family member requires care. It is often a difficult time, when the warning signs are spotted earlier, early prevention measures can be put in place to support your loved one to remain living in their own home for as long as possible. Here are some of the common signs when it may be time to consider care.

- Physical and mental changes
 - Physical changes can include bruises or bumps from falls, weight changes, changes in personal hygiene or all of the above. Whilst mental changes can include mood swings, withdrawal from social situations, or displaying new behaviours that seem out of character. Mental health problems can be experienced by people of all ages, so it is important to check in with your loved ones regularly to understand how they are feeling.
- No longer able to perform daily tasks
 - Another key sign that your loved one may need care is that they are unable to carry out daily tasks. You might notice that their house is becoming very untidy. If they struggle with things such as making a cup of tea, showering, getting dressed or preparing meals, they could benefit from the support of a homecare plan.

- Memory loss
 - Memory loss is typically associated with dementia. Although it can be a symptom of dementia, that is not always the case. If you are worried your loved one has dementia, it is best to seek advice from your GP.

Who is most likely to need care?

As adults age, it is more likely that they may need some additional support. Older adults may require help with day-to-day tasks, or they may need some companionship and a friendly face to share a cuppa.

Having the care conversation

Having a conversation with your loved one about care can be daunting, but it is important that you speak openly so you can discuss the options available together.

How can I check the quality of care services?

- Search for local care providers on Homecare.co.uk & read their client's feedback - Home Care UK | Live in Care, Nursing Care & Homecare Reviews
- Read the most recent Care Quality Commission inspection report available on the CQC website - <https://www.cqc.org.uk>

What type of care services are there?

There are lots of different types of care services. The level of care that is required will depend on the individual needs of your loved one. View Right at Home service on Homecare Services for Care at Home in South Cheshire | Right at Home

What help should I expect?

You should receive support for you and your loved one to develop a unique and personalised care plan that meets their needs and supports them to live a fulfilled life from the comfort of their own home. Whether they love spending time with their grandchildren or completing their favourite crossword puzzle, the care plan will ensure they are supported to keep doing the things they love.

What happens next?

If you think your loved one may need support or for more information on homecare services, please contact a member of our friendly office team who will be happy to help & guide you through the next steps - 01270 257347

Right at Home are an award-winning care company with 3 offices across Cheshire, Nantwich, Sandbach & Northwich.

Our mission is to make a genuine difference to the quality of life of those we serve, we focus on improving the lives of those we care for, not just maintaining quality of life.

Inspected and rated

Outstanding

Watts Commercial Finance announce sponsorship deal with Crewe Alexandra Football Club




Want your business to reach its goal? ...Watts the answer

Watts Commercial Finance are delighted to announce a new partnership with Crewe Alexandra Football Club. The deal will see the multi-award-winning commercial brokerage feature on the sleeve of the Crewe Alexandra Women's side and have branding at the Mornflake Stadium.

Watts now join Crewe Alexandra's growing list of partners at the Football Club with a special focus given to the Women's team.

Speaking on the partnership, Phil Gray, Managing Director of Watts Commercial Finance said: "We're delighted to partner with Crewe Alexandra. With a long history of supporting grass-roots sports, this new partnership allows us to give something back to our local community which is something we are proud to be able to do."

"With the success of the Lionesses in the summer, there is a real buzz about women's football at the minute and we are proud to support Crewe Alexandra Women's side as they continue to grow, improve and excel in their league."

Chris Turner, Business Development Manager at Crewe Alexandra, added: "This deal represents another partnership with a major local organisation, and we're delighted to get it over the line."

"We're hopeful that this relationship can continue to blossom over the next few years and that will be of great benefit to Women's football in the local community."



Do You Have A Winning Business Strategy?

In uncertain times, it is essential you have an active business strategy in place.

We offer high levels reviews of business strategies, along with outstanding advice to help Business Leaders stay on track and achieve their ambitions.



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In pain and not sure what to do? There is a solution



Rick Carter (left) and Andy Byrne

When one of your employees tells you they're in pain what should you do? Most of us reach for the painkillers and hope it passes soon. It often does. But what if it doesn't go away? Then what? What should we recommend next?

There are so many options. Should they rest? Should they keep moving? Should they use ice or heat? Should they wear a support? Should they keep working? Should they see a Doctor, or a Physio, a Chiropractor, or an Osteopath, or any number of other options? Should they keep taking painkillers or will that mask the problem?

It's no wonder that sickness absence rates because of pain are on the rise. Because what most people do is end up putting up with the pain for far longer than they need to because they don't know what to do. They do nothing and hope for the best. But if the pain doesn't go away quickly,

often it actually becomes more of a problem, and that's when staff are forced to miss work.

That's exactly why Pain Map (www.painmap.com) was created. Designed by Physiotherapists, the free site aims to help people avoid this confusion and stop people just doing nothing about their pain because they don't know where to start.

If you or one of your employees is in pain, you can simply go to Pain Map. You'll work through a series of questions (designed by Physios) about your pain, and at the end, it will give you a likely diagnosis of the issue, as well as advice and exercises that should help to settle the pain. It will give you recommendations on products that might help and even recommend a local Therapist who could help.

Andy Byrne, Physiotherapist and Founder of Pain Map said

"In my 18 years as a Physio, I've seen thousands of people who suffered in pain for far longer than they needed to, simply because they didn't know what to do to relieve it. That's why I created Pain Map. It's a free tool that anyone can use to find out what to do about their pain so they can get rid of it as quickly as possible"

CTC Healthcare have been instrumental in bringing Pain Map to our area and want to help spread the word. Rick Carter, CTC founder said "We have been here for nearly 30 years supporting the community with their pain and injuries. We love how simple Pain Map is to use, and can see that it can help so many people access the help they need quickly."

CTC Healthcare have sites in Crewe, Nantwich, Stoke and Stafford and are experts in what is known as Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy. That basically means if you have aches, pains, or an injury, they have nearly 30 years of helping people with exactly that!

Rick added

"We have always invested in the best technology to help our patients get rapid relief from their pain when they visit us in clinic. Pain Map extends this far beyond the clinic. It's the best use of technology: breaking down barriers that stop people getting the help they need, when they need it. We are delighted to be one of the Recommended Therapists on Pain Map and to spread the word to our community"

Pain Map has already helped thousands of users and more than 40 companies across the UK are now using the site to support their staff.

When it comes to working with businesses, Andy believes Pain Map has huge value. "The companies we're working with have advertised Pain Map to all their staff, and now know that their staff have instant access to high quality, specific advice about any pains that come up, when they come up. They tick the box for looking after their staff, but they are also starting to see reductions in time off because of pain, because problems are nipped in the bud"

If you're in pain and want to find out what the problem is and how to relieve it, visit www.painmap.com.

If you're a business or organisation and think Pain Map could help your staff, then you can reach Andy Byrne on andy@truephysio.co.uk



New HMRC filing regimes designed to hit persistent offenders



VAT Consultant Alix Hyde

hit their penalty threshold (2 points for annual returns, 4 points for quarterly returns and 5 points for monthly returns), they will receive a fine of £200. Every subsequent late return will incur another £200 fine.

Points will expire after two years and reset to zero. But, if at the penalty threshold, taxpayers must demonstrate a period of compliance to reset their points.

To do this they must:

- Submit all returns on time for a set time period (24 months for annual returns, 12 months for quarterly returns and 6 months for monthly returns), and
- Submit all returns for the preceding twenty-four months (even if late).

Both conditions must be met for the points to be reset.

HMRC say this will be kinder to people who make a one-off mistake, whilst penalising persistent offenders.

Late Payment Penalties

Basically, the sooner you pay the lower the penalty rate will be.

First Penalty

No penalty if payment is made within 15 days of the due date.

Day 15 – penalty is 2% of the amount outstanding.

Day 30 – penalty becomes 2% of the amount outstanding at day 15 PLUS 2% of the amount outstanding at day 30.

Additional or Second Penalty

Day 31 – daily penalty of 4% per annum of the outstanding amount. This will only stop when the outstanding balance is paid.

Soft Landing Period

No penalty will be charged between 01 January 2023 and 31 December 2023, IF the amount due is paid in full within 30 days of the payment due date.

Time to Pay Arrangements

If a time to pay arrangement is agreed with HMRC, the penalty will stop accruing, but only if the terms of the TTP agreement are honoured.

If you have any VAT related questions or queries, please contact Alix Hyde – ahyde@wrpartners.co.uk

From 01 January 2023 HMRC are introducing two new penalty regimes for VAT customers. The penalties will affect ITSA customers from 2024.

Late Submission Penalties

Every time a business fails to submit a VAT return, they will get a point. Once they

Roaring success for dinosaur specialists



Sue and I are delighted to have won the Excellence in Customer Service Award.

We looked at all the finalists and any of the other nominees could have won, they all put customers at the very heart of their business. The category sponsor KPI Recruiting Ltd commented how difficult selecting a winner had been and we at Everything Dinosaur are honoured and humbled to receive this accolade.

Businesses are facing numerous difficulties at the moment; trading conditions are challenging, and it has never been more important to retain existing customers as well as to develop new ones. We are grateful for the support and assistance the Chamber has provided. As a mail order company that specialises in the sale of dinosaur models and figures, we are a niche business and being able to generate and maintain export sales is crucial to us. With the Chamber's support we have been able to continue selling in Europe, even though trading conditions have changed, and we are looking forward to increasing revenues by growing our customer base in North America.

Mike Walley and Sue Judd of Everything Dinosaur winners of the Excellence in Customer Service Award



South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry chosen to lead the local skills improvement plan for Cheshire & Warrington

South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry is delighted to be designated by the Department of Education to lead the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for Cheshire & Warrington.

As one of the 38 LSIPs across England, each plan will provide a mechanism for businesses to have a stronger voice in shaping local skills provision.

Paul Colman, South Cheshire Chamber CEO, said:

“The LSIP process provides a fantastic opportunity for businesses in Cheshire and Warrington to be at the heart of shaping how their current and future workforce can access the right training locally whilst keeping pace with the move towards greener and more digital workplaces.

In developing the plan, we will be bringing together local businesses, training providers and a broad range of stakeholders to ensure that the planning for local skills in Cheshire and Warrington aligns with existing and emerging job opportunities and skills required for growth.

We are looking forward to starting the work on this exciting project as we move forward to develop a successful LSIP for Cheshire and Warrington”.

The Chamber is one of 33 Accredited Chambers of Commerce which will lead LSIPs across the country, supported by the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC).

For more information or to express interest in getting involved in the Cheshire & Warrington LSIP, please email LSIP@sccci.co.uk

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Curated at Dorfold Hall, Cheshire. British Art Then and Now

29th January – 11 February 2023
Press Preview: 28th January, 1 – 3 pm

Curated at Dorfold: British Art Then and Now is a celebration of British Art, taking place at Dorfold Hall in the New Year. Come and enjoy an exhibition in this quintessential British stately home, a Jacobean mansion set in the heart of the English countryside. The elegance and timeless style of Dorfold Hall and its exquisite new event spaces - L'Écurie and the Tack - will provide the most wonderful backdrop for this exhibition. Dating to 1616, Dorfold Hall is known for its intriguing combination of the historic and the contemporary and this will be mirrored by the exhibition. Work by British artists past and present will be placed in this extraordinary setting, integrated with the collection of the current owners and alongside the many historic objects and generations of antiques. Among the highlights are museum-worthy works by John Craxton, John Piper, Sir Matthew Smith, Nigel Hall RA, Tom Hammick, Sir Howard Hodgkin and Sophie Ryder as well as an installation by Valeria Nascimento. Work by exciting emerging contemporary artists such as Paul Benney, Nancy Cadogan, Alan Rankle and Arabella Ross will also be shown. The paintings, prints, sculpture and ceramics will be placed in response to the beautiful spaces. Spaces that will be used include the dramatic setting of the Drawing

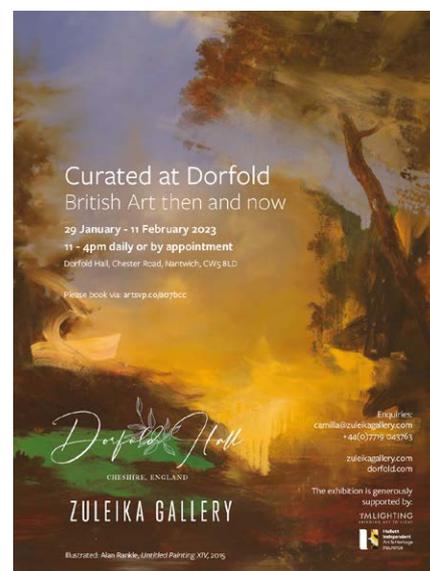
room, with its ceiling designed by Italian plasterers in 1621, and the King James Suite, a room that got its name having been designed specifically for King James I in the 1620s. You will also see the Drawing Room, Dining Room and the Coach House, now used also for weddings. Whether you are an art lover or not, this exhibition will be a wonderful opportunity to discover the beauty of Dorfold Hall, and some of its hidden spaces. The exhibition is presented with the kind support of TM Lighting www.tmlighting.com and Hallet Independent – www.hallent independent.com

Candice Roundell, custodian of Dorfold Hall, explains her vision for the exhibition:

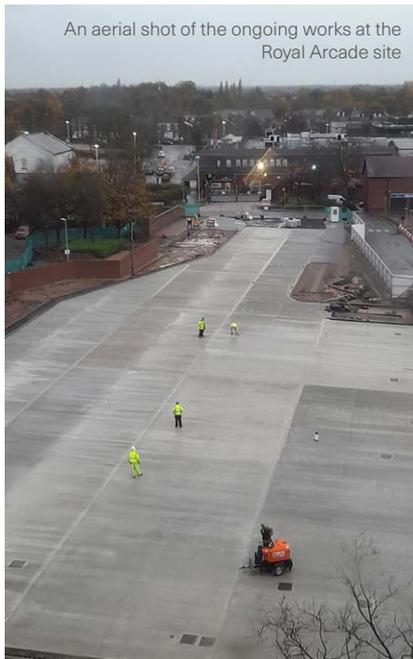
"Art is an intrinsic part of the Hall's History, and juxtaposing the historical and the contemporary encompasses perfectly what Charles and I believe reflects our vision for propel the estate into the future whilst enhancing its roots... not only art, but also in architecture and sustainability. Zuleika's artists and their art represent the perfect opportunity for us to illustrate those beliefs. Zuleika Gallery founder, Lizzie Collins, comments: I cannot think of a more elegant or stunning location in which to hold an exhibition. As a gallery we focus on Modern British and Contemporary art, looking back at historical artists who have shaped British art as well as forward to those shaping the future. It is wonderful to be working with

an historic property that also embraces the future and merges the historic with the contemporary. There are so many exciting spaces to curate at the Hall."

Dorfold Hall, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 8LD www.dorfold.com
Opening Hours 11 – 4pm daily or by appointment – please contact camilla@zuleikagallery.com +44(0) 7719 043763 – to make another arrangement



Council gives update on first phase of town centre regeneration scheme



Cheshire East Council has given an update on the first phase of its Royal Arcade scheme.

The first phase, which includes a new bus station and multi-storey car park, is due to reach its first major milestone on January

4, when a temporary bus station is expected to be brought into use.

Over the next few weeks, works to complete this stage of the project will include creating temporary bus lanes, landscaping, and installing passenger shelters, waiting areas, cycle stands and facilities for bus drivers.

Once finished, work can then begin to demolish the existing bus station and build the new permanent bus station and multi-storey car park, which are expected to open at the end of 2023.

Councillor Nick Mannion, chair of Cheshire East Council's economy and growth committee, said: "It is fantastic news that we have reached this stage of the scheme, and that we are moving ever closer to providing Crewe and its communities with new modern and attractive transport facilities.

"By continuing to work on the scheme in the run up to the festive period, we will ensure that we stay on track and can open the temporary bus station first thing in the new year.

"We will of course make sure that there will be as little disruption as possible to those accessing the town centre during this time."

Over the next few weeks, works will focus on junctions at Delamere Street and Lawrence Street, and various restrictions will be in place.

However, the restrictions will not affect the nearby car parks and there will be no road closures in place.

Arrangements have also been made to ensure that that this weekend's Crewe Christmas light switch-on event is not impacted.

Once the temporary bus station opens, a one-way system will be in place for buses – with buses entering the site from Victoria Street and exiting onto Delamere Street.

Pedestrians will be able to access the temporary bus station from both Victoria Street and Delamere Street.

Further information about the first phase of the Royal Arcade scheme can be found by visiting: [RoyalArcade redevelopment \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](http://RoyalArcade redevelopment (cheshireeast.gov.uk))

Innovation brings more resources for home care

InSafeHands a local home care company in Nantwich have been innovative, as the first in the area, to obtain a sponsorship licence to recruit new care staff from Zambia.

The clients and team have welcomed the new initiative, and the opportunity to work with staff who are qualified nurses and drs in Zambia, coming to work for InSafeHands, in the local community as carers, extending the services InSafeHands can offer.

Managing Director and Business Owner Rachel Wright, who is a qualified nurse said,

"Everyone is aware of the current challenges in the recruitment of health and social care staff up and down the country, we needed to do something to address the shortage of staff."

Rachel was frustrated that people were stuck in NHS hospital beds when there wasn't enough staff in social care to make sure people could get home from hospital.



The new staff mean that more people can receive the care they need to remain in their own home and InSafeHands can increase the services they offer to include overnight care and live in care as well as the usual daily visits.

If you know of anyone needing care in their own home, contact our friendly professional team on 01270 626020



Expert Eye with...



How to prepare for a mortgage application?

The last 12 months have seen significant changes in the mortgage market.

It's quite hard to comment on the current market as changes are happening so quickly – we've experienced rates being pulled overnight and lenders rates fluctuating week by week. Navigating through the mortgage market can be quite challenging if you're not very experienced.

Additionally, you may find it disheartening that you've been declined by a lender or are unable to borrow as much as you thought. However, with many lenders specialising in different areas, knowing which lenders to approach who will match your requirements and needs can make all the difference. As well as submitting supporting paperwork that meets the lender's lending criteria.

How can business owners prepare for a residential mortgage application?

Those who are self employed will be assessed on net profits, not turnover and if you chose to legally minimise declared profits to pay less tax, you could find it harder to get a mortgage. Company Directors' affordability will generally be assessed based upon their declared salary and dividends, however certain lenders may be able to use the company's profit and directors salary as proof of affordability along with supporting evidence in the form of 12 months of company accounts.

You may need to provide Company Accounts and/or Tax Returns as evidence of income for your mortgage application.

For Company accounts, it would be preferable to show two to three years of accounts, usually signed off by a chartered or certified accountant. For Tax Returns, you might be asked to provide two years of tax calculations and tax year overview forms.

You can also use different forms of income as well such as pension income, investment dividends and Government benefits.

What about remortgaging – can it save you money?

If you're experiencing increasing monthly mortgage payments, that may be because you're on a tracker mortgage, discount mortgage or a standard variable product. As the base rates changes, your monthly repayments will reflect the change. Therefore, to avoid any further increases, you can look at securing a fixed rate which will stay the same regardless of what happens with the Base Rate. You should be aware that if you're on a tracker or discount mortgage, you may be faced with early repayment charges. In some cases if you have a high early repayment charge, you may end up being worse off switching to a fixed rate product.

Individuals who have 12 to 18 months left on their current fixed mortgage should check their paperwork to see what their current rate is and what their early repayment charge may be. Again, if you have high early repayment charges, it is most likely not worth moving before your current deal is due to end as you'll probably be paying more than you're actually saving.

However, you can look to secure a new fixed mortgage product, potentially up to 6 months before your current ends. This means that you can lock in at today's rate, an opportunity to avoid any future rate increases, whilst if rates fall you can secure a lower rate than you have already.

As a mortgage is secured against your home or property it could be repossessed if you do not keep up the mortgage repayments. The purpose of this article is to provide technical and generic guidance and should not be interpreted as a personal recommendation or advice.

— Amplo Mortgages & Financial Solutions is an award winning mortgage broker based in Cheshire, advising on residential, buy to let and commercial mortgages & protection insurance; renowned for providing solutions that other brokers often cannot see. Call 01270 443510 or make an enquiry online: ampломortgages.co.uk
Amplo Group is the parent company to Amplo Mortgages & Financial Solutions.

South Cheshire Chamber Events Programme



How to Maximise your Membership

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/

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

Our Mission Statement

“To be an asset that is integral to the success of the local business community and influential in promoting the future prosperity of the area”.

Networking / Representation / Crewe Signposting / Events / Nantwich / Knowledge Hub / Export Training / Sales / International Trade Awards / Facilitation / Support Mentoring / Voice of Business / South Cheshire Seminars / Start-Up Advice / Local Economy / Interactive Portal / Promotion / Information

For more information on how the Chamber can help your business please contact **Angela Wilkinson** on 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 and we would encourage you to complete this to assist us with event planning.



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We're here to help you feel in control of your money.
Not the other way around.

Let's start a conversation.

Lauren Tudor
Financial Planner

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www.athertonandassociates.co.uk



Senior Partner Practice

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SJPI3569a B1 (09/22)



"We had a great evening. It's an amazing achievement for Josh and also milestone for ourselves, to be recognised as a business that can attract talent such as Josh. We're all very proud of Josh and are excited to continue to support him in his role here."

Scott Williams,
Director
 Amplo Mortgages & Financial Solutions



"Right at Home have had a very busy year, so it was a joy for the team to get together for the awards evening. We all had a great time and enjoyed coming together with fellow businesses and representatives from the local community to celebrate our achievements. I am absolutely over the moon to receive this award. The care sector is incredibly demanding and challenging, but Right at Home recognise the challenges faced by frontline Care Staff and our office team, and we go above and beyond to make sure all our staff receive excellent training, support and recognition as standard practice. It's been my mission to make the working environment in the care sector something that can be thoroughly enjoyed as a career, and I feel this award demonstrates we are definitely on the right track!"

Ben Selby,
Owner & Managing Director
 Right at Home South & Mid Cheshire



"Naturally, we are delighted to have won the Business of The Year (+25 Employees) award. It was yet again, a fantastic evening at Reaseheath College surrounded by numerous local businesses celebrating success. Thank you to the Chamber for organising the award and another special thank you to Cheshire College – South and West for interviewing us at the judging stage and presenting us with the award on the evening. Winning this award means a lot to us and it shows just how far we have come over the last 13 years as a business. Our whole team have gone above and beyond this year and to be recognised as South Cheshire Business of The Year proves that hard work pays off. A company is only as good as the employees that work for you and we truly believe that our achievements are down to our great people. We look forward to see what the next 12 months bring for us in the ever-changing world."

Robert Parton,
Owner and Managing Director
 Aqueduct Marina



"We are delighted to have won the Excellence in Collaboration Award. As a local charity we rely on our ability to work with other local organisations. We are constantly looking for opportunities to partner with others as we strive to achieve our core aims of assisting the local population to start well, live well and age well. Without our ability to work with local business partners we would not be able to maintain the many varied activities across families, children and the older generation. The award is fantastic recognition for our staff and volunteers."

Richard Weilding
Chair
 Wishing Well

See you next year?
sccci.co.uk/business-awards