

SOUTH CHESHIRE

**SOUTH CHESHIRE
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY**

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CHAMBER BUSINESS

News and views from the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry | **Q3 2023**



JOURNEY OVER FOR HS2?

PAGE 6



CHESHIRE & WARRINGTON LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Shaping skills for your existing & future workforce



The Cheshire & Warrington Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is one of 38 LSIPs that have been approved by the Department of Education Secretary of State. It has been developed to ensure that employers' most pressing skills needs are reflected within the local skills system.

The Cheshire & Warrington LSIP is led by South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Our LSIP aims to support employers in articulating their skills needs, whilst brokering links with Post-16 technical education to shape current and future provision; skills for your new and existing workforce.

In order to develop our LSIP, we have already engaged with many local employers and as a result been able to establish our Roadmap, focussing on key themes of Technical Skills (with priority areas of Manufacturing, Health & Social Care, Life Sciences, Digital and Low Carbon), Accessibility, Employability Competencies, Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance, and Educational Professionals.

Our aim is to ensure the current and future workforce have the necessary skills and access to local opportunities, as well being able to upskill or reskill to meet changes within industry. We also want to ensure that we can be responsive to the developing needs of employers.

If you would like to be part of making a difference to skills training within Cheshire & Warrington, or would just like to find out more, please get in touch – we're here to make things easier!

LSIP@sccci.co.uk or via our website:
www.cheshireandwarringtonlsip.co.uk

www.cheshireandwarringtonlsip.co.uk



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MASTERCLASSES

South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce will be running a series of Masterclasses throughout Q1 2024.

These will cover subjects such as A.I, Net Zero, Sales and Networking.

Subscribe to our eNewsletter and visit our website for more information www.SCCCI.co.uk

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Please look out for the **South Cheshire Chamber Annual Review in December 2023**

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

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WELCOME

to the Chamber's magazine 'South Cheshire Business'

The Prime Minister's recent decision to scrap HS2 comes as a devastating blow to South Cheshire and Crewe, a town that had long anticipated the economic benefits of this high-speed rail project. The cancellation not only halts the potential for enhanced connectivity but also undermines the town's prospects for economic growth and job creation.

Crewe, with its historical significance in the railway industry, had pinned hopes on becoming a key hub for HS2, advancing development, and attracting investment. The decision to abandon the project not only squanders these opportunities but also leaves the town at a disadvantage compared to areas that will benefit from improved infrastructure.

Beyond the immediate economic impact, there's a sense of betrayal among local stakeholders who had embraced the prospect of a revitalised economy. In a time when investment in infrastructure is crucial for regional development, the cancellation of HS2 in Crewe stands out as a shortsighted move. The Prime Minister's decision may have broader implications, not only for our town but for the government's commitment to fostering growth and connectivity across the nation.

However, while our area faces immediate challenges, our economy remains resilient. The setback does not negate the overall strength of our economy. As stakeholders, we must turn towards alternative strategies to bolster

regeneration and economic growth.

Our local leaders, in collaboration with businesses and communities, must seize this moment to diversify economic activities, invest in innovation, and attract alternative forms of infrastructure development. The resilience of our economy lies in adaptability and resourcefulness, and Crewe, with its rich history and skilled workforce, can explore new avenues for growth.

Examples of our resilience can be found within this magazine. Our finalists for the Business awards (p.9) have been announced, our patrons doing wonderful work to grow and support our local economy (p.16-18) and numerous stories of fantastic businesses large and small, all contributing to a successful South Cheshire economy.

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


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

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


 Paul Colman **Chief Executive**  @SCCCI_CEO

MEET THE CHAMBER TEAM


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Meet the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry

NEW MEMBERS



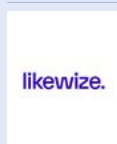
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WHY JOIN THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE?

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



BECOME PART OF A BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Network with other local businesses to create connections and opportunities.



ENHANCE YOUR BUSINESS PROFILE

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



ACCESS TO BUSINESS SUPPORT & RESOURCES

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

WE WELCOME ALL OUR NEW MEMBERS

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



"The Business Awards was such an amazing experience, a must for any Cheshire business on the up!

Take the time to take a step back from the day-to-day and reflect on your journey, your achievements and celebrate. Even if you don't win, the rewards are worth the effort of applying.





Thanks to South Cheshire Chamber for giving us the opportunity to celebrate with fellow like-minded local businesses.

Ivan Anketell-Clifford, Managing Director

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

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Paul is interviewed by the BBC following the controversial scrapping of HS2

Photography: Peter Robinson



Chamber Chief Executive Paul Colman at Crewe Station

SOUTH CHESHIRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HAILS HS2 DECISION 'AN UTTER DISGRACE'

South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce has blasted the Government's decision to scrap the HS2 northern leg from Birmingham to Manchester calling it an 'utter disgrace' for Crewe and the North.

Paul Colman, Chief Executive, said it was a 'devastating blow' in particular for Crewe and Nantwich where so much was hinging on the economic boost high speed rail would deliver during the project construction and in future years when up and running.

"Businesses have been keen to relocate to South Cheshire on the back of HS2. Despite the project delays, business confidence was at an all-time high. Now that is shattered.

"We know our business community will dig deep and show its resilience as it did in the pandemic years but now it's reeling from being let down once again. HS2 was hailed the saviour of Crewe, a town built on a Victorian railway infrastructure and still the centre of the railway network.

"With the prospect of high speed rail came the promise of a state-of-the-art HS2 station at Crewe, creating a new era of modern rail travel. Now that hope has been dashed too.

"We feel extremely let down and disappointed for all of South Cheshire. For the businesses that can no longer plan and for the local people of Crewe and Nantwich who had been looking forward to regeneration and prosperity. They have been robbed of job opportunities and improved life chances."

Mr Colman has met with counterparts throughout the country and our national body British Chambers of Commerce to voice their anger.

South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce is also taking part in a wider protest as a leading member of the British Chamber of Commerce.

He added: "HS2 has always been more than super-fast travel to London. It

was about freeing up capacity on the West Coast Main line which is notorious for over-crowding while creating a greener, more sustainable travel alternative.

"After being debated for more than a decade, and delayed several times, we can only hope the Government has a concrete plan lined up to improve the current railway infrastructure making rail travel across our country cheaper and more reliable.

"Meanwhile South Cheshire will look at ways of picking itself up. There has been considerable inward investment on the back of HS2 and we are desperate for that not to dry up."

The Chamber of Commerce is meeting with the area's largest employers to formulate a plan to ensure South Cheshire remains an attractive place to invest.

They hope to build on the area's excellent motorway links, leafy quality of life and workforce including many who have honed skills in railway and motor vehicle manufacturing industries as well as an emerging flow of creatives ready to take on new technologies.

A talent pool, the Chamber says, is worth every penny spent on staying on track with plans to relocate or establish commercial interests in South Cheshire.



New Crewe Rail Forum will push for opportunities

Crewe Rail Forum has formed to help maximise the potential of Crewe as the country's central hub of all things rail.

South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce has helped to establish a Rail Forum for Crewe that includes local businesses, rail operators, infrastructure management and suppliers.

The Forum, powered by the Chamber, aims to facilitate communication, cooperation, and coordination among various organisations, authorities, and individuals involved in the rail sector in Crewe.

Chamber CEO Paul Colman said: "The Forum has formed to promote and provide a voice for the rail sector in Crewe. It will help rail businesses collaborate and share information plus innovate and contribute to the sustainable development and growth of our local rail industry.

"The decision to stop High Speed Rail coming to Crewe is a huge issue for the local area, but there's real enthusiasm from everyone involved in the forum to lobby the decision and get the best for Crewe."

The Forum aims to:

- Provide a unified voice for the Crewe rail industry when engaging with governmental bodies and regulatory authorities.
- Identify challenges and opportunities within the rail sector and develop actionable solutions.
- Engage with the local community and address their concerns reing rail-related matters.

Clive Jackson, Director Business development, operations & customer at CCL Universal Rail in Crewe, has been appointed Forum Chair. He says: "No one should undermine the importance of Crewe as a rail town. It's something to be celebrated. We will push for opportunity and hopefully our 'joined up' thinking will encourage positivity, increased rail travel and ease of use. It's an exciting challenge and one we are all committed to."

The Forum is meeting regularly. Findings will be shared among Chamber members. Speak to the Chamber about getting involved.



COUNCIL SEEKS 'FAIR AND EQUITABLE DEAL' FOLLOWING HS2 PHASE 2 SCRAPPING

Cheshire East Council is pursuing a compensation and investment package from Government following the decision to scrap HS2 north of Birmingham – a deal the authority says would fairly compensate for the loss of an 'unprecedented economic opportunity'.

Cheshire East Council has written to Minister of State for Rail and HS2, Huw Merriman MP, and Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove MP, restating the authority's deep shock and disappointment that high-speed rail will no longer make it to Crewe and asking for Government's commitment to a 'fair and equitable deal' that would restore the long-term economic outcomes that HS2 would have unlocked for Crewe and the wider borough.

The letter follows the publication of the Government's 'Network North' plan which refers to £19.8bn of reinvestment for the North and identifies projects and regions that would directly benefit.

However, the plan includes no mention of investment in Cheshire East or Crewe, despite the direct and devastating impacts the decision has had on the town's future.

Cheshire East Council leader Sam Corcoran said: "The full consequences facing Crewe and the borough following the decision to scrap Phases 2a and 2b of HS2 are unknown, and they may not be understood for several years, but the economic opportunity cost alone is unprecedented.

"Cheshire East would have been a major beneficiary from HS2. But for Crewe itself – sitting at the centre of the HS2 Phase 2 network – HS2 was the catalyst to reverse its fortunes and deliver on the levelling up agenda and it is arguably the biggest loser from the HS2 cancellation and Network North Plans.

"Without swift agreement on the alternative measures, investment, and targeted support from Government – the opportunities will be lost forever."

The council fears the decision will impact on the confidence of investors and result in the loss of 4,500 new homes and 5,000 new jobs for the town. The expected £750m boost HS2 would have had on the local economy will not be realised.

The package of compensation and mitigations the council is seeking includes:

- Compensation for direct and abortive council costs in relation to HS2, totalling £11.2m.
- Funding and commitment to enable critical investments in Crewe Station.
- Local highway, public transport and active travel network improvements – including enhanced funding for the Middlewich Eastern Bypass and A500 dualling schemes, and funding to deliver Cheshire East's Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- Funding to support a programme to tackle deprivation challenges in Crewe.
- Funding to support the continued regeneration of Crewe town centre.

Crewe Town Board stays on track with planned improvements



Doug Kinsman, Operations Director at Chamber Patrons SG World, has stepped down as Chair of Crewe Town Board after three successful years in post. Here he reflects on the achievements of the Board and plans ahead.

The Towns Fund presented a much-needed opportunity to secure vital funds for Crewe. Through applying the theory of change model, interventions were identified that could help to address the measurable challenges and opportunities that exist within the town and would lead to long term beneficial impacts for the community

In this respect it was different, a place-based partnership Board working with the local community and other stakeholders to secure tangible funding that could be invested to make a real difference. Working through the challenges of the pandemic and the inflationary pressures on global supply chains, as a Town Board, we were still able to successfully secure £22.9m across a programme of projects to be delivered for Crewe.

- The young people of Crewe will have an amazing OnSide Youth Zone, a dedicated, state-of-the-art facility to allow them to reach their full potential in a safe and secure environment supported and encouraged through the care of professional youth workers. Our aspiring boxers, and those just wanting to gain fitness, self-respect and self-control will have opportunity to do so in a facility that will be the envy of much of the UK boxing community.
- The town's athletics track will have upgraded changing and viewing facilities that will build on the asset this facility presents. Families can all enjoy the outdoors with major improvements to eight parks across the town. Some of our remaining heritage assets will receive much needed investments, as the 1930's Flag Lane Baths building is brought back into community use and the heritage railway cottages, alongside Chester Street, will be supported by a grant scheme to ensure they are maintained for future generations to enjoy.
- Coming from the station, there will be a massively improved walking and cycling wayfinding route that will lead people along a more attractive pathway into the town centre. Along this route, at the foot of Mill Street, will be an opportunity to follow a revitalised route that will lead all the way to the impressive Queens Park, running alongside the Valley Brook which will have significant improvements to make an attractive waterway and ecological environment. Around the new History Centre, at the site of the old library, will be improved public realm with an open and attractive space for people to dwell.
- Through a targeted grant scheme, with wrap around business support, we are aiming to help business owners address some of the barriers to taking on vacant leases and help to revitalise the high street and bring back some vibrancy.

"All of these Towns Fund projects will be fully delivered over the next few years and will provide much-needed positive outcomes and impacts for Crewe. Although it is disappointing and short-sighted that HS2 is not coming to Crewe, none of the work of the Board and the Towns Fund has been predicated on its arrival. Crewe has always had great connectivity and location and it is important that we maximise that opportunity regardless.

"With a lot of hard work and dedication, from multiple stakeholders, these schemes are now all at the delivery stage and having chaired the board for the last three years, steering the Towns Fund programme to its current position, I feel that it is time for me to hand over the reins to a new chair and I am excited by the appointment of Tony Davison, the new Chair of the Board, as he shares the same passion to put Crewe back on the map. I intend to remain on the Town Board to add some continuity and wish Tony every success in his new role, and will do everything in my endeavour to support him."

Although I am proud of the work that has been done to get the Towns Fund programme to this stage, there is so much more that needs to be done to revitalise our town. We need to create an environment and a structure that allows community-based decision making and control where statutory bodies act as facilitators and enable sustainable change to be delivered through the empowerment of local communities. I am confident through the ongoing work of the Town Board and partners, that Crewe has a successful, thriving future and one that its communities deserve.



Board welcomes Crewe Alex FC director as new chair

Tony Davison, a director at Crewe Alexandra Football Club, has taken over the reins as Chair of Crewe Town Board.

While paying tribute to the work of outgoing Chair Doug Kinsman, he pledged to keep building on the board's good work and move forward with projects already well advanced.

Mr Davison (pictured) said:

"It's a great privilege to be joining Crewe Town Board as its new chair. I'm very appreciative of the work that has already been done by the outgoing chair Doug Kinsman and the board as a whole. My promise to Crewe residents is that I will bring time, effort, and enthusiasm to everything I do."

He adds his voice to the chorus of local organisations and businesses deeply unhappy about the decision to halt HS2.

"The news was catastrophic. As a result of this decision, Crewe has missed out on £750 million gross value added over the next 10 years.

"There has been a massive lost opportunity as businesses would have been looking to come to Crewe. Cheshire East have already spent millions – which they should get back – and there is still work that needs to be done refurbishing Crewe station. The Government should fund this refurbishment."

Meanwhile Crewe Town Board is pressing on with projects such as Crewe Youth Zone, Pocket Parks in Crewe, creating eight attractive outdoor spaces and Mill Street corridor to link the town centre with the railway station.

For more on its work go to weareallcrewe.co.uk/our-vision/proposed-projects



Finalists announced in Chamber Business Awards 2023

Finalists have been named in the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce Business Awards 2023 as excitement mounts ahead of the big night at Reaseheath College.

The prestigious ceremony, in its 26th year, always creates a buzz across South Cheshire as businesses of all sizes wait to hear who will be crowned this year's champions.

Now judging is underway as the Chamber prepares to unveil its business stars on Friday, November 24.

This year has seen the welcome return of the International Trader of the Year category showcasing the many goods and services exported from South Cheshire.

There was an encouraging increase in entries from Start Up businesses as well as an excellent response to the Ambassador of the Year category inviting the public to nominate and vote for businesses and organisations that champion South Cheshire on a regional and national level.

The finalists are:

Ambassador of the Year: Aqueduct Marina, Crewe and Nantwich Pledge, Jo Jo's Day Nursery, Right at Home South Cheshire, Crewe Market Hall and The Cat Community Radio CIC. Voting is open online to November 7. Go to sccci.co.uk/business-awards/ambassador-of-the-year

Apprentice of the Year: James Sambrook (Cheshire College South & West), Josh Tunnicliffe and Ellie Brammall (Everybody Health & Leisure), Leanne Read (Neon Freight), Leilani Evans (SG World) and

Harriet Whiston (Visyon Ltd).

Business of the Year (25+ employees): Platinum Construction (North) Limited and Rookery Hall Hotel & Spa.

Business of the Year (under 25 employees): Amplo Group, Jo Jo's Day Nursery Ltd, Safe Opportunities and The Nantwich Clinic.

Contribution to the Community: Alpha Omega Women Peace and Security (WPS) Foundation, Boughey Distribution Ltd, Stroke Survivors Speech and Language Support Group and The Cat Community Radio CIC.

Excellence in Customer Service: Aqueduct Marina, Crewe Hall Hotel and Spa, Daniel Matthias Architecture, Everybody Health & Leisure, Jo Jo's Day Nursery Ltd and Kindertons Accident Management.

Excellence in Collaboration: Right at Home South Cheshire and Safe Opportunities.

Employer of the Year: Boughey Distribution Ltd, Everybody Health & Leisure, Health Shield Friendly Society, Kindertons Accident Management and Rookery Hall Hotel & Spa.

Start Up Business of the Year: Bombay Junction Limited, KR Fleet Solutions Ltd and Take on Goliath.

International Trade: Viz Reflectives Ltd and SG World.

Chamber Chief Executive Paul Colman said: "South Cheshire missed out on HS2 but we move forward with pride and confidence in our local businesses.

The Awards will be a night to celebrate entrepreneurial talent but also the positive can-do attitude that makes our business community so special.

“Every year the calibre of entries is extremely high and this year is no exception. We have a fantastic range of finalists all hoping to be called to the winner's podium. Win or lose, they can all be proud of the contribution they make. We are looking forward to another memorable night at Reaseheath College.”

The flagship event has attracted generous sponsorship from well-known local companies and organisations.

Award sponsors include Assurant, Bentley Motors, Cheshire College South & West, Construction Linx, Hibberts, KPI Recruiting, Reaseheath College and Rhino Safety. Support has also come from Cheshire Connect, the Department for Business and Trade and Hydraulics Online. Main drinks reception is sponsored by Rookery Hall Hotel & Spa.

For more on the ceremony go to sccci.co.uk/business-awards



Flashback – the winners of 2022, who will join them this year

A message from our President



Although it has been extensively covered elsewhere, it would be remiss of me not to mention the devastating news of the decision to cancel HS2 which is a severe blow to the future economic growth of South Cheshire and the wider sub-region.

A lot of time, effort and resource has been put into trying to secure the project over many years, and there is obviously

great disappointment and concern about what this means for the future of our area.

We must not forget however, that, in spite of this decision, Crewe remains and always will be, a major hub and

interchange on the national rail network and a key gateway to the North West, and, with its geographic location, infrastructure and skilled workforce it remains an attractive proposition for inward investment.

We must now change the focus of our lobbying efforts to ensure that Crewe gets its fair share of the major investment that is to be made available for the improvement and development of the rail network in the North of England and the Business Council will be concentrating its efforts on this over the coming months.

Back on domestic matters, I am looking forward to carrying out my duties as President at a number of important events that are coming up shortly including the Annual Remembrance Day Service, the Business Awards, and the Chamber's Annual General Meeting, so I will be polishing-up my gong in readiness.

Finally I would like to congratulate Doug Kinsman on the fantastic job that he has done as Chairman of the Crewe Town Board over the past three years.

Doug's unwavering commitment and enthusiasm in driving forward the Crewe Town project has resulted in multi millions pounds worth of investment being secured to provide a number of exciting projects for Crewe which will be of great benefit to the community over the coming years and beyond.

I am delighted that Tony Davison has been appointed as Doug's successor. Tony brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the role and will be equally committed and enthusiastic to ensure that those projects are delivered and to achieve even more success in the future

I would like to congratulate Tony on his appointment and can assure him that he will have the full on-going support of the Chamber and am looking forward to hearing from him at future Business Council meetings.

John Dunning
President



A message from our Chair

I am writing this the day after the Prime Minister announced his intention to cancel work on the Birmingham to Manchester leg of HS2. Having eagerly awaited the time when 'spades would be in the ground' at Crewe, this was clearly a major disappointment not just in terms of Crewe's economy but also the benefit this would have had on the wider region and the nation's economy. There was no mention of Crewe in the PM's speech, and we can only hope that we will still see a share of the £36bn that is to fund "hundreds of new transport projects in the North and the Midlands and across the country".

Whilst it is understandable that we are disappointed with this outcome, we would be mistaken if we believed that HS2 was the only thing going for Crewe. We are in danger of forgetting that there are many ongoing projects funded by the High Street Fund and the Town fund, led by the Crewe Town Board. This is the time for us as a community work together and broadcast further afield the benefits that Crewe and Nantwich have to offer.

I recently read an article published by the Chartered Association of Business Schools based on research conducted by the Institute of Place Management at Manchester Metropolitan University. Their work revealed that "a lack of collaborative working is the primary barrier to many towns' transformation. Too often, stretched local authorities work in silos, and mistrust can develop amongst wider members of the community that starts to lose faith that things can change" they go on to say that the response to this is to ensure that "local people are tasked with helping to drive forward the change that is required." As a community we need to get behind a shared vision that all can buy into in an effort to drive change and remind ourselves that instead of having things 'done to us' we can make things happen on our own terms.

This reminded me of the great work that was commissioned by Crewe Town Council a few years ago but which is still relevant today (if not more so given yesterday's announcement). They asked Hemingway Design to come up with a rebrand of Crewe. The designers quite rightly said that "A place brand isn't a logo or a font, it's a set of shared values and common goals that give focus to a place and its people". They undertook extensive

research amongst the people of Crewe and identified the following shared values and goals.

We are people-powered: recognising that it is the industrial and creative heritage of our people that has made Crewe the community that it is now.

We get things done together: recognising that we are an active and engaged community, willing to take up a challenge and embrace change.

We build connections: Crewe is a place of potential, building pathways for skills, careers and living through partnerships, connections, and communities.

Shared values can create partnerships of collaborative working across councils, businesses, and the wider community as they drive forward a clearer vision of the area's future as well as creating a perception of the area in the minds of others – regionally, nationally, and internationally.

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



In the
Spotlight
with...



WR
Partners

wrpartners.co.uk

For more than 120 years, the firm has worked to protect the wealth and profitability of local businesses as accountants, auditors and tax experts. Its roots are in Shropshire and North Wales, but 2020 was marked with a milestone move into Cheshire with the acquisition of Howard Worth. Here we meet Helen Spencer, a former HR Partner who has risen to Managing Partner with a keen focus on employee wellbeing and fostering a positive workplace culture.



Q. Helen, your background is in human resources, and you have held many leading roles, including HR Partner for Whittingham Riddell LLP, as the firm was known before its rebrand. In 2019, you were appointed Managing Partner, what are the challenges you have overcome?

A. As I transitioned from a background in human resources to becoming the Managing Partner at WR Partners, I encountered several challenges. One of the key challenges was adapting to a leadership role which encompassed all areas of the business, broadening my expertise beyond HR and delving into the intricacies of managing a multifaceted organisation. This journey required me to embrace strategic thinking and decision-making on a larger scale. Additionally, there was the significant responsibility of overseeing the transformation of Whittingham Riddell into WR Partners during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring a smooth transition and aligning our team's vision with our growth ambitions. This transformation was a testament to our adaptability and resilience as a business.

Q. WR Partners is now firmly established in Cheshire, with offices in Nantwich and Northwich following the acquisition of Howard Worth. How is that working out for you in relation to your growth strategy and high levels of service to clients?

A. The acquisition of Howard Worth has been a pivotal step in our growth strategy and commitment to providing high service levels to our clients. By expanding our presence in Cheshire, we've increased our reach to cater to a broader client base and offer a more comprehensive range of services. The integration of Howard Worth's team, who share our values and ethos, has strengthened our ability to nurture client relationships. This strategic move aligns with our vision for sustainable growth and enhancing our capabilities to support our clients' ever-evolving needs.

Q. The firm enjoys being part of a vibrant business community and has made excellent links across South Cheshire. How does being part of the Chamber benefit your business activities?

A. Being part of the vibrant business community in South Cheshire has been incredibly beneficial for WR Partners. Our association with the Chamber has allowed us to create valuable connections, access resources, and stay well-informed about local developments. It has enabled us to understand the unique needs of local businesses better. It has been instrumental in fostering a sense of community.



Q. The Chamber offers a wealth of opportunities to connect with local businesses. What are you looking forward to with the Chamber next year, now as a Premium Member?

A. As a Premium Member of the Chamber, I look forward to even more excellent opportunities to connect with local businesses and engage in collaborative initiatives. It offers a platform for us to contribute to the growth and prosperity of the local economy, which aligns with our commitment to being a responsible company. The upcoming South Cheshire Chamber Business Awards in November will be a fantastic opportunity for us to celebrate local businesses. Our team are looking forward to the awards especially.

Q. South Cheshire has just lost out to HS2, but you remain committed to future growth in the area with plans to establish a bigger office base in Nantwich. Tell us more.

A. South Cheshire remains a significant focus for us. You're right we are committed to establishing a larger office base in Nantwich to serve our clients in the region and create more jobs in the area. We see great potential in South Cheshire and are dedicated to contributing to its economic development and offering our services to the local community.

Q. You have held leading roles in HR since 1993, including working for big names internationally, such as the Hager Group and CeDo, where you shaped HR policies. How important is it to create a happy workforce?

A. Creating a happy workforce is of critical importance. An engaged and motivated team is the backbone of any successful organisation. It's about ensuring our employees feel valued, supported, and empowered. We work hard to establish a positive and inclusive workplace culture at WR Partners that encourages personal and

professional growth, work-life balance, and a sense of belonging. Happy employees are more engaged, productive, and committed to delivering outstanding service to our clients.

Q. Helen, you are also a busy mum of two girls, aged 19 and 23. How do you strike your own positive work-life balance?

A. My husband and girls are incredibly supportive, making it easier to manage my responsibilities at work and home. It's not always easy, but I try my best to manage my time, set boundaries, and prioritise activities.

Q. What's the role model you hope your daughters will follow and the life lessons you will pass on to them?

A. I hope to give them the values of hard work, perseverance, and the importance of pursuing one's passions. I hope they understand that resilience and self-confidence are powerful tools that can help them overcome obstacles and achieve their dreams. I will succeed as a parent if I can encourage them to embrace their individuality, recognise their inner strength, and believe they can accomplish anything they set their minds on. I simply hope to give them the unwavering belief that their potential is limitless and that the world is full of opportunities waiting for them.

Q. WR Partners now has five offices with more than 230 employees across Shropshire, Hereford, Cheshire, Mid and North Wales. You aim to create an outstanding employee experience. What's your strategy for attracting and retaining high-calibre people?

A. Our strategy for attracting and retaining high-calibre people is centred on creating an outstanding employee experience. We are open and encourage involvement from our team on the roadmap we have developed for the future offering a

supportive and inclusive work environment that fosters growth, values individual contributions, and promotes a sense of belonging. We provide opportunities for professional development and recognise and reward excellence, as high performers typically thrive in an environment with other high performers.

Q. What's different about WR Partners, and what do you love most about your job?

A. I have always been a people person, so what I love most about my job is the opportunity to make a meaningful impact on our clients, employees, and communities. The involved nature of my role, the chance to lead a dedicated team, and the ability to shape the firm's future bring lots of fulfilment as I enjoy building a sustainable company for the future. Knowing that our work contributes to the growth and success of businesses and individuals is truly rewarding.

Q. Away from work, you enjoy reading, travelling and good food. What's the best book you have read lately, and why did you love it?

A. Recently, the best book I've read is Memphis by Tara M. Stringfellow. Having recently holidayed in Memphis I could recognise some of the locations described in the book and the strength of women and family in overcoming adversity.

Q. If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, who would it be and why?




A. If I could invite anyone to a dinner party, it would be Michelle Obama. She is an inspiring figure and an advocate for education, equality, and empowering young people. Her experiences as the First Lady and her commitment to positively impacting society make her a fascinating guest, and I would love to engage in a meaningful conversation with her.



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The Women's International Networking (WIN) programme aims to change the landscape for women in business, offering a structured and supportive environment for women to grow their businesses and achieve their potential.

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www.events.great.gov.uk/WIN-23-24



“The insight, inspiration, learning and peer to peer support has significantly benefited my strategy and confidence to export.”

**Claire O'Connor, Founder
babyballet**

Assurant Unveils Carbon IQ™: Informing Circularity Strategy

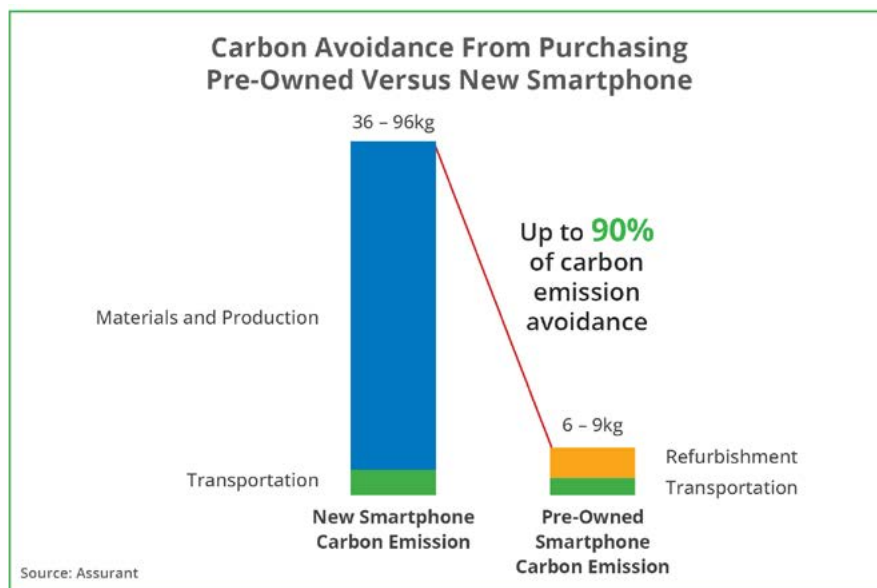


ASSURANT®

Assurant has introduced Carbon IQ™, the first solution that provides detailed measurement and insights on the carbon impact of individual connected devices, including refurbished devices, throughout the device lifecycle. Based on Carbon IQ insights, a new smartphone has an estimated carbon footprint that ranges from 36 kg to 96 kg of CO₂ while a refurbished device has up to 90 percent fewer emissions.

The end-to-end insights and circularity planning support Assurant can deliver through patent-pending Carbon IQ includes:

- **Device lifecycle CO₂ footprint:** Enables clients to see the carbon impact of each device, including new and refurbished devices;
- **CO₂ avoidance and optimization scenario analysis:** Provides clients with CO₂ emissions throughout the supply chain and lifecycle to identify opportunities for reduction or avoidance; and
- **Forecasting, tracking, and modeling:** Allows clients to see how the carbon footprint of mobile device programs can and is changing based on the mix of new and refurbished devices that are sold.



Carbon IQ is the first solution that aggregates the global carbon footprint of an individual device throughout its entire device lifecycle – from new to re-processing and reused - enabling companies to quickly and easily see insights and impacts based on device CO₂ emissions, which can guide decision-making.

Assurant's Carbon IQ initiative is a testament to the company's commitment to environmental responsibility and its

proactive approach to growing the circular economy.

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

Bentley launches new personalised customer tour experiences at celebrated Crewe factory



BENTLEY



Bentley Motors has made further investments in its customer experiences by creating new fully immersive, innovative and digitally engaging experiences at its historic Crewe headquarters.

This new adaption of the manufacturing base will allow customers to create their own Bentley design legacy as well as enjoying a transformational, digitally immersive, 3D lineage experience that will bring the story of Bentley's long and rich history to life. This significant development is a further extension of its landmark £2.5 billion investment in future product development and the Bentley 'dream factory' headquarters which employs over 4,000 people.

Bentley customers will be welcomed to Crewe by a dedicated host who will create a personalised factory tour to inspire and stimulate ideas for their final specification.

A new customer experience area in the Excellence Centre for Vehicle Finish will offer every opportunity to create a piece of custom art. Clients will be invited to choose from a range of the latest paint finishes, sustainable hides, stitching designs, finest wood veneers, hoods, carpets and seatbelt varieties with design consultants on hand to provide advice on combinations and final aesthetic that will make their dream car a reality.

The dedicated wood shop with more than nine sustainable wood finishes from around the world will enable customers to select their own veneers and learn how their car will be precision book and mirror matched. Bespoke finishes such as stone, carbon fibre and machine turned aluminium are also offered.

Caren Jochner, Global Head of Brand Experience at Bentley, said: "Our customer experience centre, CW1 House, is a place where we can entertain our customers in an exclusive environment and they can enjoy being immersed in the Bentley brand. The skill and passion of our craftspeople

who work with the finest materials is now supported by immersive digital innovations such as the 180-degree show in Lineage and our new Phyigital Table creates opportunities for clients to customise their preferred factory tour using touch screen technology."

Beyond100 will see the Bentley factory (already carbon neutral) becoming carbon positive by 2030. It has resulted in a complete transformation of the product portfolio, Crewe campus and greenfield facility, targeting benchmark production operations and sustainable luxury mobility leadership. The first ever Battery-Powered Electric Vehicle (BEV) Bentley will also be developed and built at the UK factory.

The new Factory Tour celebrates its sustainability success at every part of the journey, showcasing not only dedication to ensuring materials are sourced ethically but also how solar power is harnessed, the environment is protected through planting on site and how Bentley is nourishing the future with its own family of Bentley Bees.

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

Cheshire College is nominated for Excellence in Sustainability Award

Cheshire College – South & West has been selected as a finalist for the Excellence in Sustainability Award, as part of the West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce Annual Recognition Awards 2023.

The acclaimed awards ceremony is celebrated annually to highlight members' hard work and their commitment to excellence. The award for Excellence in Sustainability recognizes businesses that are leading the way to a low carbon, low waste and sustainable future.

Cheshire College has been nominated due to the construction of a fully functioning sustainable house, constructed on its Ellesmere Port Campus. The building was designed to cater for an ever-increasing demand for sustainable and environmentally friendly properties.

Through the sustainable house, the College hopes to train the next generation of construction workers, offering a tangible example of ways in which they will need to meet new sustainability standards in the modern age, where commitment to an eco-friendly way of life is increasingly important.

Cheshire College joins Less Common Metals, Llandudno Bay Hotel and the University of Chester as finalists in the awards category. West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce's Head of Membership, Jennifer Kennedy said: "The quality of the nominations this year has been outstanding, so it is a real testament to



[what Cheshire College] has done that they have been selected for this award."

West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce Chair and Cheshire College's Deputy Principal and Deputy CEO, Helen Nellist, expressed the College's delight over the nomination: "It is an honour to be nominated for this award, especially in the company of so many strong candidates.

"Sustainability is a key priority, on both a national and global level. At Cheshire College we are committed to environmentalism, helping our students to become conscientious global citizens, whilst also providing them with cutting edge facilities like the Sustainable House that can

help ensure our students possess the key skills needed to secure a sustainable career in the future."

The award winner will be announced at the Chamber Annual Ball and Recognition Awards Ceremony in November at Chester Racecourse.

Visit www.ccs.ac.uk to learn more about Cheshire College.



Business support and innovation recognised in latest Knowledge Exchange Framework



Manchester Met continues to drive innovation and engagement with businesses and the public sector as shown in the latest review of universities' knowledge exchange programmes.

This includes the University's work in sustainable hydrogen fuel cells where it is helping companies to develop carbon-cutting technologies, and initiatives to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to innovate in AI, cyber security and industrial digitalisation.

While work with partners such as the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the NHS is transferring the research and expertise from the University directly to SMEs and health trusts across the region.

The recognition comes from the Knowledge Excellence Framework (KEF), which reviews the activity of universities to support business, the public sector and the voluntary sector with its expertise – collaborating with partners to benefit society and the wider economy.

Covering a three-year period, the KEF ranked Manchester Met highly for its support for graduate start-up companies, its work with business, supporting local growth and regeneration, its work with the public and third sector, and its contribution to collaborative public research funding.

Professor Nick Brook, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research at Manchester Met, said: "As a University, we're committed to ensuring our research and our students are making the world a better place by supporting new innovations to drive sustainable economic growth and helping society.

"Our knowledge exchange activities at Manchester Met are a key element to our Road to 2030 strategy of excellent research with impact. We'll continue to transfer vital skills and research from the University to partners in the public, private and third sectors.

"The increasing impact we're having on the world can be seen in our recent KEF results with our engagement with SMEs, strong Knowledge Transfer Partnership Innovate UK funding, and our graduate start-ups ranking highly.

"Our place in the global city of Manchester allows our innovative approaches to deliver more: developing the partnerships already in place, working with new partners, and conducting new research to develop the skills and knowledge needed to tackle the big challenges of today's world."

Read the full article: bit.ly/MMU-KEF





Mornflake backs female adventurers in Atlantic rowing challenge



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

Three oar-some friends are preparing for an epic rowing challenge across the Atlantic backed by Mornflake.

Grace Gilbert, 31, a chartered surveyor in Oxford, Maddie Difazio-Wright, 35, a brand manager in Bath and Grace Pybus, 32, a teacher based in Newport, Wales will take on the gruelling 3,000-mile Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge in December.

The trio have won support from Mornflake as they press on with their final weeks of training with an ambitious goal in mind – to be the first all-female team past the finish line in one of the world’s toughest rowing challenges.

They say: “It’s difficult getting corporate backing right now but Mornflake have been very generous providing cash support and their Mighty Oats breakfasts for the whole time we are at sea.

“We are thrilled to have them on board. Not only is their heritage wonderfully British and steeped in history, the family behind the brand have long championed healthy lifestyles and are true champions of sustainability.

“Their mill is powered by a wind turbine and they believe there is no excuse for waste. They recycle and reuse everything they can and any by-product of their oats is used as feed for local livestock. We love that their values match ours and are excited to have them on our team.”

The friends, who formed their team ‘Vibe the Wave’ after meeting on social media, will row three hours on, three hours off for between 40 and 50 days covering 3000nm of open ocean in what is classed as one of the world’s toughest rowing challenges.

Their route from La Gomera to Antigua, the equivalent of 115 marathons, will be a test of their physical and mental resilience. The crew mates are preparing for sea sickness, sleep deprivation, hand blisters, hallucinations and 40ft waves.

They will set themselves up each

morning with energy-boosting Mornflake Superfast oats and have created vacuum packs of porridge mixed with nuts, dried fruit and Nutella. They will need them as the row will burn more than 5000 calories a day.

The friends are each raising money for a cause close to their hearts while raising awareness of the need to protect the ocean from plastic pollution, collecting debris along the way.

Mornflake Managing Director James Lea said:

“We are delighted our oat products are helping Vibe the Wave train for their mission and will be their staple food source on the row. It’s an incredibly brave and commendable effort to raise awareness of ocean protection and encourage people to live more sustainably. It’s important to us to work side by side with Mother Nature and keep the world the way it should be.”

Vibe the Wave set sail from the Canary Island, La Gomera, on December 12.

For more on the firm’s heritage and new products go to mornflake.com

Reaseheath College celebrates successful students



One of the country’s most successful independent specialist land-based colleges, Reaseheath College in Nantwich continues to notch up impressive student enrolments and achievements.

The college’s annual awards ceremonies, held over two days, celebrated the success of over 1100 Further Education students who have achieved focused technical qualifications and skills during the past academic year.

Impressively, 90% find a rewarding career in their chosen industry or progress into Higher Education, with many opting to take an industry focused degree at University Centre Reaseheath.

Addressing packed audiences, Principal and CEO Marcus Clinton emphasised that Reaseheath remains one of the top UK providers of technical land based training and offers programmes which are supported by many key employers.

He pointed out that the Government recognised the value of technical education and that Reaseheath enjoyed outstanding success in developing crucial employability skills among its students. In particular, the college had shown itself to be excellent at developing and embracing new technologies, and had continued to



Chair of Reaseheath College Board David Pearson MBE; President of the Student Association Megan O’Hara; Cross College Award Winner Keeley Waters; guest speaker and alumnus Greg Clifton; Principal Marcus Clinton

develop and invest in many new resources and facilities. Of particular note this year was a £3million investment into specialist equipment to support T Levels in a range of departments and at the college farm.

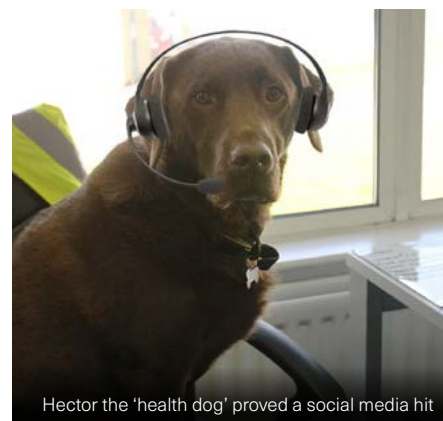
Marcus also applauded the efforts of members of the Student Association, who organised activities which raised over £17,000 for their chosen charity, The Children’s Adventure Farm Trust.

For more information visit: www.reaseheath.ac.uk



Cross College Award Winner Emilie Dean is congratulated by guest speaker and alumnus Rosie Lee

SG World brings 'International Week of Happiness at Work' to Crewe HQ



Hector the 'health dog' proved a social media hit

There were smiles all round as colleagues at SG World in Crewe enjoyed a range of activities to mark International Week of Happiness at Work.

The event was co-ordinated by Abigail Thorley, Vicki Kitchen and outgoing HR Manager Emma Stevens. Fun activities included a 'Happy Cake' competition, staff egg and spoon race, games and doughnuts.

Emma said: "The week focuses on employee wellbeing and specifically happiness at work. It's been proven time and again happy employees are more productive, more loyal, more cooperative,

more creative, and more innovative.

"For SG World, it isn't just an isolated week of exciting activities though, it also represents the induction of some permanent changes to promote employee well-being for the long-term."

Employee perks now include: Birthday early finishes, bespoke designed work areas, a gratitude wall, 'The Happy Hub' online staff forum and much more.

Commenting on the week's successes CEO Mark Haase said: "The week sums up a step change in how people can interact with each other at SG World, and a lot of that

is down to the environment that Emma has created. We have to ensure we build and grow going forward."

The week also proved a hit on social media, with posts on TikTok, LinkedIn & Facebook, achieving some of the highest engagement figures the company has ever recorded. It was a close run thing between the staff egg and spoon race, and a spoof pooch employee post about 'Hector the Health Dog', the former beating the latter by just 125 impressions (views).

To find out more visit www.sgworld.com

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To refresh or rebrand?

TRCREATIVE'S EXPERT INSIGHTS



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

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

BRAND REFRESH: Elevate Your Identity

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

REBRAND: Unleash Your Brand's Potential

For a complete transformation, go for a rebrand. Start with a new brand strategy, identifying a new direction and positioning for the business, aligning it with a fresh visual and verbal identity and stand-out creative campaign.

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

10 REASONS TO INVEST IN YOUR BRAND

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

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

We partner with ambitious changemakers to transform businesses into brands



Francis Fire Protection Services Limited, the Cheshire Fire Extinguisher Company

Director and Owner Wayne Francis is a retired fire and rescue crew manager with over 25 years combined experience. His career with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service covered every responsibility from 999 responses and fire emergency rescue to managing and training employees and command and control.

Francis Fire Protection Services Limited was formed by Wayne in September 2019 and has grown organically and safely, providing excellent fire extinguisher service standards and equipment throughout Cheshire and its surrounding counties.

Building Safety Act 2022 – Section 156

Changes to fire safety legislation through the Building Safety Act 2022 – Section 156 are coming into effect. Wayne looks at the key changes and what this means for all business premise owners regardless of staff numbers or premise size.

The new fire safety legislation will impose new duties on businesses and building owners going forward.

The existing Fire Safety Order 2005 is the core fire safety legislation here in England and Wales, this applies to all non-domestic premises as well as the communal parts of residential buildings. Changes to this legislation have been introduced through the Building Safety Act 2022 and represent the next phase of the Government's fire safety reform programme.

The main changes are as follows:

Written Fire Risk Assessments & Fire Safety Arrangements The previous requirement to put in place a written fire risk assessment only applied in certain circumstances (e.g., where the responsible person employs five or more persons). This is no longer the case, and if you are a responsible person, then you will need to

record both your fire risk assessment and fire safety arrangement in full, regardless of the size or purpose of the business or premises.

Enhanced Requirements for Cooperation and Coordination In premises where there is more than one responsible person (e.g., in multi-occupied premises or buildings where the occupier and building owner are different entities for example), there are increased requirements for cooperation and coordination between responsible persons.

Provision of Information to Residents In residential buildings, with two or more domestic premises (e.g., blocks of flats), then the responsible owner must provide residents with core information on the risks from fire within their building and the fire safety measures provided to keep them safe. This requirement expands upon legislation introduced earlier this year that required responsible persons to provide residents with information on emergency procedures and the importance of fire doors.

Recording your Fire Risk Assessment and Other Information You are now required to record the fire risk assessment in full, including all the findings, and the fire safety arrangements for your overall premises in all circumstances. You should make available as much information as possible about fire safety in your premise(s).

This new requirement replaces the previous requirement to record only the significant findings of the risk assessment. It also removes the previous limitations on the circumstances within which you are required to record both the risk assessment and the fire safety arrangements at your premises, such as only being required to record this information if there were five or more employees or where subject to licensing or an alterations notice.

If you employ a professional fire risk assessor to assist you in completing your

fire risk assessment(s), you must record their name, and their organisation name, and formal qualifications and certification etc. In doing so, this will ensure there is a clear record for enforcing authorities as to who completed the assessment and will enable you to share this information with both residents (where applicable) and any incoming responsible person after you.

You are responsible for ensuring that your fire risk assessment is suitable and sufficient and if you employ someone to do this for you, we recommend that you ensure they are competent to do so - you can do this by visiting the following accredited registers and industry associations:

- **BAFE** (British Approvals of Fire Equipment): <https://www.bafe.org.uk>
- **IFSM** (Institute of Fire Safety Managers) <https://www.ifsm.org.uk>
- **FIA** (Fire Industry Association): <https://www.fia.uk.com>
- **FPA** (Fire Protection Association): <https://www.thefpa.co.uk/>
- **IFEDA** (Independent Fire Engineering & Distributors Association): <https://ifeda.org/>

Within the said changes, your portable handheld fire extinguishers must be annually serviced and certified - by a competent and insured company, Francis Fire Protection Services are local and available to assist you and your business in Cheshire - get in touch by calling 01270 361209, 01625 365199, or by emailing: info@francisfps.co.uk Don't forget to mention SCCCI10 to get your 10% SCCCI member discount!

Further local information can be found by visiting the Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service business fire safety website: <https://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk/fire-protection/>



Note: Information and references within this summary article have been authenticated and sourced from the following government organisations, to always ensure accuracy: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/check-your-fire-safety-responsibilities-under-section-156-of-the-building-safety> <https://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk/fire-protection/legislation-and-consultations/>

Date set for Crewe International Women's Day 2024



the programme, a stand and banner on the day, a chance to put something in 200 goody bags and social media and associated PR in the run up to the event.

Publicity is handled by Jan Roberts of Pure PR in Nantwich who says: "Getting behind International Women's Day in Crewe is a great way for businesses to connect with the local community and receive valuable PR exposure.

"More than that, it's a way of celebrating the amazing things women do on a daily basis and their contribution to the local economy. The feel-good vibe is priceless and already there's a buzz spreading across social media."

This year's theme is 'Women of Words' capturing how powerful words can be. Jan added: "Words are expressive, powerful and in the best sense, uplifting. They have been my 'business' for more than 30 years as a former journalist. The aim is to hear what all women, no matter their background, have to say."

Businesses are invited to become part of the hugely-popular International Women's Day celebration in Crewe.

A date has been set for the crowd-pulling event which takes place next year at Cheshire College South & West on March 9 offering a wealth of opportunities for local firms and charities to raise awareness.

Hundreds of families flocked to last year's event which included a fashion show of traditional costume from round the world as well as dance displays, choirs, fitness sessions and more than 50 stalls selling arts and crafts.

The event is organised by the award-winning charity Motherwell Cheshire as part of a movement to recognise the social, cultural and political achievements of women worldwide.

There's a range of sponsorship opportunities starting from as little as £50 which includes a banner to display on social media.

The £1000 headline sponsor package offers great exposure including name, logo and website in

To find out more about supporting the day email events@motherwellcheshirecio.com Pure PR specialises in creative content including news releases, social media and photography. For more on ways to raise your business profile call Pure PR in Nantwich on 0770 9977629

Enriching both professional and personal development



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 the economic crisis, 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.

Typical examples of current 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.

Contact:
Dianne Parrish
Cheshire Connect Business Connector for the Crewe and South East Cheshire area
• 07946 639394
• dianneparrish@cheshireconnect.org
• www.cheshireconnect.org



South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry Awards 2023

It is time to celebrate success and gain recognition for your hard work. The South Cheshire Chamber 2023 Awards is just around the corner, providing the perfect opportunity to shine.

At Cheshire Connect we are proud of our local charities and skill donors, all working together to make a positive impact in the community year-round.

We support and co-judge the 'Contribution to the Community' award with the sponsors Bentley Motors.

Crewe Makers Market goes from strength to strength

The Makers Market was established in Crewe in March 2023 following a successful trial market in September 2022. Crewe Town Council teamed up with The Makers Market, the leading artisan market company in the North of England, to bring the monthly market to Crewe Town Centre. The Makers Market returns every third Sunday of the month on an ongoing basis. The next is on December 17.

Crewe's pop up artisan market is located in Market Square, along Victoria Street and Market Street. It features a range of fantastic stalls showcasing award-winning local food, drink, art and crafts, as well as live music and free family activities. Upwards of 50 traders regularly attend the Market, with the record an impressive 70 stalls.

Two stands are also available at each monthly market for community groups. To express an interest in being considered for one of these stalls contact events@crewetowncouncil.gov.uk.

Victoria Crane, Event Manager of the Makers Market, said:

“We pride ourselves at the Makers Market in delivering delightful specialist events with many award winning local producers of unique goods set to inspire.



Makers Market is a superb opportunity to find out the origins of your food, meet the maker, feast your eyes upon some goodies and fill those shopping bags whilst indulging in some good conversations with our team and traders.”

Crewe Makers Market are always on the look-out for more small businesses to join the monthly market, which is a great platform to build customer bases within the Crewe community. Interested potential traders should contact info@themarkersmarket.co.uk



Photo credit: Crewe Makers Market.



The Makers Market in Crewe. Credit: Crewe Makers Market.

Town Council launches Defibrillator Directory for Crewe



Photo credit: Crewe Town Council

A Defibrillator Directory listing every 24/7 access defibrillator (defib) in Crewe has gone live. The Directory is hosted on the Crewe Town Council website and contains details of locations for each defib (including the What3words reference) and availability of bleed kits.

Crewe Town Council has purchased eight of the 18 defibs, which have been sited in key locations across Crewe, in order to help save lives in the event of a cardiac arrest.

The equipment has been funded through Crewe Town Council's Wellbeing Fund - Community Plan Committee. All units have been registered on the national defibrillator database to enable 999 callers to be directed to the nearest location. If a medical emergency is experienced near a defibrillator location, a call should be made to 999 for further guidance and to obtain the access code (if appropriate).

A defibrillator is a device that gives an electric shock to the heart through the chest wall to someone in cardiac arrest. Without defibrillation a person in cardiac arrest will die. The North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust state that

using a defibrillator within five minutes can result in survival rates as high as 70% and that otherwise, less than 1 in 10 people will survive a cardiac arrest.

All of the Crewe Town Council-owned defib boxes also contain bleed kits, which have been funded by Cheshire East Council and are also registered with the emergency services. These can be used in the event of a traumatic injury and each kit contains gloves, medical shears, haemostatic gauze to pack a wound, a chest seal, trauma dressing and tourniquet (to stop blood flow and loss).

The Defibrillator Directory can be accessed on the Crewe Town Council website, or through this link: www.crewetowncouncil.gov.uk/council-services-2/crewe-community-engagement/defibrillator-directory/

Unlocking Growth: What can your business gain through hiring Digital Apprentices?



In today's fast-paced and technology-driven world, it's no secret that businesses must continually adapt and innovate to stay competitive. From TikTok and Threads to AI and automation, navigating the digital landscape is more challenging, yet more rewarding, than ever before. One effective way to ensure that you're keeping up is by hiring digital apprentices.

Here escalla apprenticeships - specialists in Digital Marketing and IT apprenticeships in Crewe, the North West and London - tell us more.

Digital apprenticeships, particularly in areas like digital marketing and IT, can provide a fresh perspective and a valuable skill set that helps businesses thrive and grow.

Whether you choose to upskill your current team or hire a new apprentice, digital apprentices will likely already have a strong understanding of the latest trends and technologies, meaning your business can stay up-to-date with industry changes. This knowledge can be applied to enhance marketing strategies, streamline IT processes, and make more informed business decisions.

According to data from GOV.UK, 86% of employers say that apprenticeship

programmes enabled them to develop skills relevant to their organisation. Using a blended approach of learning on-the-job as well as with formal academy training, escalla works with you to tailor a programme that is going to develop skills specific to your business needs. In terms of digital marketing, businesses gain employees who are well-versed in SEO, social media marketing, content creation, and online advertising, whereas IT apprentices can specialise in areas such as network management, cybersecurity, software development, and IT support.

In terms of soft skills - digital apprentices possess a strong ability to adapt to new technologies and solve complex problems. Their fresh perspectives and willingness to learn can infuse innovation into your business.

Diversity is an asset for any business, and digital apprenticeships can bring a variety of perspectives and backgrounds to your team, enhancing creativity and innovation. Through digital apprenticeships, many Cheshire and North West-based businesses have created a talent pipeline for the future.

For more information email apprenticeships@escalla.co.uk or call the escalla Training Academy on Crewe Business Park on 01270 500102

Poole Alcock ranked among the top 10 UK legal firms for employment law and all company and commercial legal matters



A national law firm with headquarters in Cheshire is among the most trusted in the UK for employment law.

Poole Alcock ranked first nationally out of almost 3,300 employment law providers and third out of 4,695 for all law firms providing company and commercial law, according to a review by trusted law site Review Solicitors.

The firm, which has over 50 offices nationwide, 8 of which are in the Cheshire area (Alsager, Congleton, Crewe, Nantwich - High Street, Nantwich - The Dowery, Northwich, Sandbach, Wilmslow), says that success is a result of providing tailored services and actively listening to feedback from clients.

Jamie Riseley (pictured), Employment Law Partner at Poole Alcock, said: "Every client is different and we reflect this in how we work with them. I believe success comes down to ensuring each client gets tailored advice that meets a specific need and when we have worked with companies, we actively encourage feedback. Listening to customers is vital to growing a successful service.

Poole Alcock has a head office at Gadbrook Park, Northwich, but Jamie is based at the Dowery, Barker Street, Nantwich, alongside solicitor Emily Muncey. He added: "The rankings are predominantly dependent on customer reviews and are therefore something I am extremely proud

of. We set out to form a partnership with our clients - we are the opposite of a conveyor belt service churning out one size fits all advice."

Jamie's team handle all aspects of employment law, such as settlement agreements, restrictive covenants, employment tribunals, disciplinary hearings, unfair dismissal cases, discrimination, redundancy and bullying and harassment allegations.

Poole Alcock also offers a package called HR Assist which offers unlimited support from the employment law team for a monthly retainer. This provides support with a range of matters including training, contracts of employment, key documents and policies and procedures.

Review Solicitors ranking results are based predominantly on the reviews collected from clients in the last 12 months on the Review Solicitors' website, but consider a law firm's accreditations, experience, size, notable cases, Legal Ombudsman and disciplinary records.

For media enquiries contact Nigel Howle. Telephone 0776 2043436, email nigel.howle@howlecom.co.uk

Special guests help KPi Recruiting officially open new offices in Crewe



KPi Recruiting celebrated the opening of their new offices in Crewe with a launch event attended by staff, clients, friends and special guests Lee Bell, Manager of Crewe Alexandra and Paul Colman, Chief Executive of the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce.

Paul and Lee cut the ribbon and raised a glass to officially open the new offices based in Capital House on Fourth Avenue in Crewe.

"KPi was founded in our old offices on Nantwich Road, but the success of the business over the last 15 years has meant we required much larger offices to continue our growth," said Managing Director Ryan Jardine. "This a great way to kick off a new chapter in KPi's development as we look to expand our portfolio of recruitment services across the region."

South Cheshire Chamber Chief Executive Paul Colman said: "It's fantastic to see local businesses thriving and growing. As an active member of the Chamber, KPi continues to develop in the town where it was founded, which demonstrates the strength of South Cheshire's economy." KPi Recruiting will this year once again be sponsors of the Chamber's Business Awards, judging and presenting the Award for Excellence in Customer Service.



Staff and guests celebrated with a spectacular KPi cake, courtesy of Tracey's Enchanted Cakes, which beautifully portrayed all the industries KPi now serve.

Since its foundation in Crewe in 2008, KPi Recruiting has gone from strength to strength, opening offices across the midlands, north west, Glasgow and London. After initially focusing on industrial, commercial and driver recruitment, KPi now serves businesses in ten sectors which now include Care, Hospitality, Technical & Engineering, Rail & Infrastructure, Finance, Executive and Education.

KPi recently strengthened its partnership with Crewe Alexandra, raising its profile by sponsoring the Gresty Road stand and have many shared initiatives planned for the season.

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Visit www.kpir.co.uk for more information.

Historic accountancy firm marks anniversary milestone in Nantwich



Photography: Pure PR, Nantwich

Afford Bond directors and employees at their anniversary celebration afternoon

An accountancy firm, founded in Nantwich in the 1920s, has celebrated a golden anniversary at its landmark base in the town.

Afford Bond, now one of the region's largest independent practices, has marked 50 years on Wellington Road as it grows its client base across the North West.

The anniversary milestone was celebrated with a barbecue for staff and retired partners in the picturesque grounds of 31 Wellington Road where the firm employs more than 50 people.

Paul Edwards, one of ten directors at the helm, said: "We are very proud of our Nantwich roots and the town remains very much the central hub of our operations.

Afford Bond has prospered significantly in the last decade by abiding by our core values of strong technical ability delivered with sound commercial understanding.

The culture remains very much about people and combining traditional values with forward-thinking."

Afford Bond can be traced back to the 1920's when Norman Afford set up his practice at District Bank House in the town centre. In the 1960s it merged with V C Bond & Co of Edleston Road in Crewe and then relocated to 31 Wellington Road in 1973 as Afford Bond & Co.

Down the decades the former mansion house has been extended to create north and south wings accommodating the growing workforce. Today the firm also has a branch in Wilmslow and has just opened offices in the heart of Manchester city centre on Kings Street.

It nurtures fresh talent as a certified training office for the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and recruits Crewe and Nantwich school leaver apprentices every year.

Mr Edwards, who began as a trainee with the firm in 1996, added: "Our portfolio includes clients of several decades and we have taken pride in their business growth.

"The new Manchester office now presents an opportunity to extend our reach across the North West while creating roles for young professionals who want to stay in the region. There's already a huge appetite for what we do and we will continue

providing proactive services to ambitious businesses across the region from our Nantwich, Wilmslow and Manchester offices."

Afford Bond, a member of South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce for almost 30 years, is an active supporter of many local charities and causes. The firm provides accounts, audit, taxation, payroll and corporate finance services to a wide variety of sectors across the region.

Contact Afford Bond on 01270 623731 or email enquiries@affordbond.com



Afford Bond has been a landmark on Wellington Road, Nantwich for 50 years

The power of health benefits and positive workplace culture



In the ever-evolving business landscape, the wellbeing of employees has emerged as a linchpin of successful organisations. Providing comprehensive health benefits not only enhances your company's reputation but also positions you as an employer of choice in this competitive market.

Here Health Shield looks at the crucial role that employee health benefits play in fostering a productive, happy workforce and shares its tried-and-tested methods for raising morale.

Promote work/life balance: A healthy work/life balance is hugely important when it comes to boosting morale and retaining staff. Working long hours, skipping lunch breaks and working on weekends can quickly lead to burnout, sickness absence, and staff turnover. You can help staff lead full and happy lives by:

- Prompting them to take full lunch breaks
- Encouraging them to take regular periods of leave throughout the year
- Making sure employees work sensible hours and avoid working on weekends where possible
- Offering flexible working, whether by location or time, to allow staff to juggle things like childcare commitments, caring responsibilities or medical appointments

Two-way dialogues: Everyone wants their voice to be heard. Having mechanisms in place that create open, two-way dialogues can help staff feel valued, whilst giving employers unique ideas and perspectives. You could ask staff for feedback on new initiatives, or insights into their ideas for raising morale at work.

Create a positive workplace culture: A positive, healthy, and happy workplace culture is the ultimate morale booster. Work towards this by:

- Arranging social events and team-building activities
- Providing opportunities for collaboration to forge positive working relationships
- Supporting your employees to live healthy lives, with subsidised gym memberships or a health cash plan

Introduce recognition and reward initiatives: Recognising and rewarding the individual contribution of employees can go a long way toward creating a positive work environment. Employees that feel valued, confident, and supported are more productive than those who aren't. Online review platform and job search company, Glassdoor, reported that 81% of employees say they feel motivated to work harder when their boss shows appreciation for their work. A quick thank you email or a team lunch will recognise an employee's efforts and the ways they've gone above and beyond.

Prioritise learning and development: One way to truly engage and motivate employees, is to invest in their personal

development and enable them to reach their full potential. This also makes great business sense. By setting goals and giving staff the resources and support to achieve them, employees will feel empowered to gain knowledge, be productive, and accelerate their careers.

Foster a sense of belonging for remote workers: Boosting morale for employees who are working remotely, especially those who work alone, can be a bit challenging but it's certainly not impossible. One of the best ways to do this is by fostering a sense of belonging and inclusivity. Even if they're not physically present in the office, it's essential to make them feel like they're part of the team. Regularly check in with them, not only about their tasks but also about how they're doing in general. Make use of technology to keep them connected - organise virtual coffee breaks or interactive video calls where everyone can relax and chat informally. Offering mental health support, like increased management support as well as access to counselling services, can also be hugely beneficial.

Discover more at healthshield.co.uk


health shield
The best of health

Charity football match proves a winner for 'Ambulances for Ukraine' appeal



Jubilant winners of the charity football match

A charity football match played by employees from two high-profile businesses in Crewe has netted more than £500 for an appeal to send ambulances to the Ukraine frontline.

The match saw footy fans from The County Group on Crewe Business Park and Kinderton Accident Management on Marshfield Bank play a fast-paced game at Willaston Football Ground cheered on by work pals on a Friday evening after work.

Organiser, Sam Turvey, a personal lines manager at The County Group, said: "County won 3-2 with 'Man of the Match' going to Tom Hulme, who works at our Crewe branch. A whopping £520 was raised between the players, spectators and the raffle which is an amazing achievement.

"It was a close game with both sides having chances. Paul Poland opened up the scoring after he found his headed effort hit the bar but then fall back to him to then scuff it into the back of the net. Ashley Prior then thankfully scored in the second half to make it 2-0 after chances by Sam Turvey, Paul Poland and Loic Deugan were missed. Kindertons then came back into the game making it 2-1 and with the nerves starting to kick in and the heat getting to the players, Ashley hit a long range effort into the top corner of the net making it 3-1 to the visitors."

The County Group, which includes over 35 community-focused insurance brokers countrywide, employs more than 70 people at its Crewe head office. Employees across

the group have been raising money to buy two ambulance to send to Ukraine.

CEO Alastair Christopherson, based in Crewe, said:

"Our branches pride themselves on being part of the community, doing their bit to support local causes."

"We are also part of a global community shocked by the atrocities in Ukraine. The medical infrastructure has suffered badly and on the front line, 4x4s are being used to rescue casualties. This is where the ambulances will come into their own, transporting the wounded back to main hospitals."

"So we want to say a big thank you to everyone who came down and supported both sides and to the players for giving up their Friday evening. To raise over £500 is an amazing effort and thanks also to everyone who purchased raffle tickets."

The firm, a Crewe Alex FC sponsor, is planning to support Sam, 35, in staging further charity football matches.

For more information visit: www.countyins.com/

Rotary Crewe crocus planting highlights worldwide campaign to end polio



Rotary Crewe volunteers have completed the back-breaking task of planting 80,000 crocus bulbs around Crewe - here they are seen taking a breather during planting at the Apollo Buckingham Health Sciences Campus

Rotary volunteers have been hard at work helping to add a splash of colour to areas of Crewe as part of a worldwide effort to combat polio in children.

Thousands of purple crocus bulbs have been planted by Rotary Crewe at the entrance to Apollo Buckingham Health Sciences Campus highlighting the Worldwide International Rotary and UNICEF purple campaign colour.

More than 3000 have been planted at the campus site adding to the 15,000 in Queen's Park, 3000 at Valley Park and 3000 at Joey the Swan in Wistaston.

Christchurch, opposite the Lifestyle Centre entrance, has some 5000 bulbs already planted and virtually every school in Crewe, Shavington and Haslington has around 2000 bulbs ready to burst into colour in March.

Rotary Crewe End Polio campaign organiser Tom Protheroe said: "Worldwide International Rotary with UNICEF and governments has reduced the number of children suffering from POLIO from 1000 children a day 30 years ago to only seven in the world so far this year.

"This has been done by immunising billions of children. To raise public awareness Rotary in the UK has planted

millions of crocus corms that flower purple, the campaign colour, in March each year.

"Locally, Rotary Crewe has just finished planting its 80,000th purple crocus corm at the entrance to ABHSC.

"For 10 years our group has been part of the End Polio campaign by planting purple crocus. It has sent donations to the fund for 30 years and served the Crewe community for over 90 years and we enjoy it all."

The planting in Crewe is funded and operated by Rotary Crewe and often a school will allow a short talk on End Polio with a 'purple day' and collect towards the campaign fund. For every £1 donated by schools via Rotary Crewe, the Gates Foundation gives the fund £2.

Meanwhile Rotary Crewe is planning to add another splash of colour - this time red. Its popular Santa Float will be in action for 23 nights in the run up to Christmas bringing joy to young and old alike.

Anyone who can help as drivers or collectors is asked to make contact via Rotary Crewe's Facebook page.

To support the End Polio campaign contact Tom Protheroe on 01270 623525 or t.protheroe@talk21.com for further details.

How can you help your community and your business at the same time?

Shaping Governance is committed to improving schools and children's education through the 'Step on Board' programme. It works with local employers who understand the value of encouraging their employees to volunteer as school governors, benefiting the school as well as the business and its employees.

School Governors are volunteers who play a vital role in improving schools. Encouraging employees to become school governors is an excellent way for you to support local communities, building links between schools and pupils' future employers.

What does a school governor do? Governors have the power to improve education for children. The governing board helps schools run efficiently and effectively, supporting and challenging the headteacher and making sure public money is spent responsibly.

How would this benefit your employees? Becoming a school governor allows them to experience board level leadership, developing many transferable skills. Supporting your employees to volunteer as governors will help them learn about areas outside of their usual role that they can bring back to benefit your business.

- **Finance** – budget planning, management and approval; prioritising and making tough decisions to balance the books.
- **HR** – governing boards are responsible for recruiting headteachers and their performance management.
- **Strategy** – governors make decisions that directly affect the school and children. They oversee curriculum changes, set the school's ethos and vision, and discuss and monitor how the school performs.
- **Data analysis** – making informed

decisions based on data and ensuring the school is on track to success.

- **Analytical thinking** – Governors need to solve problems quickly and effectively to make sure the school runs as efficiently as possible.

Sadly, many local schools have governor vacancies – join the Step on Board programme and support your employees to make a difference.

Contact emma@shapinggovernance.co.uk



High-profile employers get behind 'Women in the Workplace Pledge'

Health and wellbeing charity Motherwell Cheshire is inviting employers to show their support for female members of staff by signing a special workplace pledge.

The 'Women in the Workplace Pledge' is a new initiative by the charity, based in Crewe, to break down stigmas around women's health including the menopause and menstruation.

Several high-profile employers and organisations have already thrown their weight behind the campaign by signing the Pledge including Brio Leisure, Safe Opportunities Crewe, Space4Autism Macclesfield and Warrington Disability Services.

New onboard this month are Radius which has its headquarters in Crewe and accountancy firm Afford Bond which has offices in Nantwich, Wilmslow and Manchester.

Motherwell Cheshire founder Kate Blakemore said: "The Women's Health Strategy for England published this summer highlighted how women's health is now in the forefront of issues that need to be addressed in the workplace.

"Women's health, wellbeing and disabilities, are still a barrier to a positive experience in the workplace. This will only become more focused as the Government has collated a 10-year strategy to help promote better support and awareness in the workplace.

"From this strategy, we have devised our 'Women in the Workplace Pledge' for organisations to sign and commit their support for women's health and wellbeing in their workplace.

"I experienced lack of commitment to

women's health in my old role in retail. It wasn't a priority but thankfully things are changing and there are good employers out there keen to make a difference like those who have signed our Pledge.

"We are delighted at the positive feedback and take up so far. These employers are committed to supporting their female members of staff and we hope to see more follow their lead."

Employers who sign the Pledge can access a range of resources from Motherwell Cheshire including awareness days and training focusing on menopause, stress, post-natal depression, infant loss, fertility, pre-menstrual tension, mental health and depression.

The charity includes trained counsellors and mental health first aiders who are hand to support Wellbeing Champions appointed by employers.

Its workshops can be staged in-house or at the Motherwell Cheshire Community Share Hub on Beech Drive to help employers learn more about supporting women through their life journey.

Kate added: "Menopause is still one of the biggest issues affecting women over 50 at work. They are the fastest growing demographic in the workplace yet stigma around the menopause and the problems encountered still forces too many to give up work which is a huge loss to employers.

"Good employers now recognise the need to make adjustments for women on their period days or as they journey through the menopause and experience symptoms such as hot flushes and brain fog. We hope to break down the taboos and create a better understanding about women's health across our local business community."



The charity runs a Community Share Hub on Beech Drive, Wistaston

Employers who would like to show their support to female members of staff by signing Motherwell Cheshire's 'Women in the Workplace Pledge' are asked to call 01606 557666 or email kate@motherwellcheshirecio.com. The initiative builds on the Government's health strategy for women. For more go to www.gov.uk/government/publications/womens-health-strategy-for-england/womens-health-strategy-for-england



Motherwell Cheshire founder Kate Blakemore and Wellbeing Co-ordinator Debbie Sharred are encouraging businesses to sign the Women in the Workplace Pledge

Mornflake expands historic support of the Railwaymen



Pics courtesy of Peter Robinson,
The Mornflake Stadium

Alex mascot 'Gresty the Lion' visits the Mornflake stand at Nantwich Food Festival

Mornflake has secured its place in history books after striking an expanded sponsorship deal with its famous footballing neighbours on Gresty Road.

The partnership between Crewe Alexandra FC and the world-renowned cereal company is already one of the longest and most admired in football. Now Mornflake has increased its support of the club meaning its name will remain above the landmark stadium and players will continue to wear 'Mornflake' on their shirts with pride.

The brand has been a familiar sight to Railwaymen fans since Mornflake became shirt sponsor back in the 2005/06 season. It's now the longest continual front of shirt sponsorship in the English Football League (EFL).

Club chairman Charles Grant paid tribute saying:

“Our long-standing relationship with Mornflake is a source of great pride for everybody at Crewe Alexandra. So, to be able to announce the

extension and expansion of our partnership with the country's oldest and most trusted producer of breakfast cereal is truly something to celebrate.

“Mornflake are a major local employer and they share our commitment to playing a positive and active role in the local community. And they have played a huge part in our success over almost two decades - an incredible and almost unrivalled demonstration of unwavering support.

“It will continue to be an honour and a privilege for our stadium and players' shirts to bear the Mornflake name.”

Mornflake remains one of Crewe's largest employers where 300 people work and has operated its mill on Gresty Road since 1943. The family firm, with a history in South Cheshire dating back to 1675, remains an ambassador for Crewe of

international renown and global reach.

As a top exporter to more than 70 different countries, including China, Saudi Arabia, America, Australia and South Africa, every morning millions of people start the day with a little bowl of breakfast joy supplied by this iconic Cheshire company.

And that includes Alex players themselves. Mornflake provides cereals to the breakfast club they attend before training. Meanwhile the company is a keen supporter of healthy and active lifestyles through its sponsorship of sporting organisations and individuals in the community.

Managing director James Lea said: “Many Mornflake employees are loyal fans of Crewe Alexandra FC and show their support at matches home and away Like Mornflake, the club is part of Crewe's heritage and we are proud to see our name on the shirts and on the stadium only a stone's throw away from our mill.

“We are delighted to announce this expansion of our sponsorship and wish Crewe Alexandra FC a very successful season.”

– For more on the Mornflake heritage go to mornflake.com

Weston Centre Business Hub Welcomes Cheshire College T Level Student



T Level qualifications are two-year courses designed in collaboration with employers and businesses so that students are equipped with the practical and technical skills that meet the needs of industry and prepare them for work or further study. Each T Level qualification is equivalent to 3 A Levels and includes an in-depth industry placement that lasts at least 45 days.

When the new qualifications were introduced, Cheshire College was proud to be one of a limited selection of colleges chosen by the government to offer T Levels in a range of subjects including Business, Construction, Digital, Childcare, Education, Engineering, Health, and Science.

Claire Garner said "We are extremely grateful to Katie and the Weston Centre for the fantastic opportunity they are providing for Matty's T Level placement. Not only is the 45-day placement a key ingredient of the course, it's also a great way for our students to gain extremely valuable work-place experience and develop employability skills which can help immensely with the transition into full-time work or a higher-level apprenticeship.

"It's also a chance for employers to work alongside these young people and spot their promise early. I know Matty is thriving in his placement and bringing his own skills and perspectives to the Weston Centre, which is a great training ground for not only seeing how this organisation operates but also exposing him to the other businesses which the Weston Centre supports."

Matty said:

"My placement at the Weston Centre has really helped boost all the learning I am doing at college. Katie and Harry are really helpful and have been very encouraging so I feel like I am gaining a lot of confidence in a professional environment.

"Each week, I am going in with new things I have learned in my T-Level and getting the chance to put some of it into practice and see for myself how the Weston Centre works. I am experiencing lots of different areas in a busy and successful business which is useful for my next steps, career-wise, at the end of my T-Level course."

If you are looking for extra space for your business or a new base for your operations, please check out westoncentre.co.uk or call 01270 250022 to speak with Matty, Harry or Katie!

For further information about T Levels and how your business could benefit from being a T Level placement provider for a student, get in touch with Cheshire College at employers@ccsw.ac.uk.

Weston Centre Business Hub has been pleased to welcome Cheshire College – South & West student Matty Cross, who is currently studying for a T Level in Business Administration, onto a work placement.

Located off Weston Road, Crewe, the Weston Centre provides flexible easy to rent self-storage units, office suites, workshops and warehousing space.

The work placement follows on from Harry Oliver completing his Apprenticeship earlier this year in the same field. Harry is now a full-time member of the team in an Assistant Manager role.

Katie Vost, Managing Director, met Claire Garner, Business Development Executive for Cheshire College at a South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce (SCCI) networking event where Claire explained the importance of T Level students gaining real-life insight into operating businesses.

Katie said

"Having studied Business at Cheshire College myself, (a few years ago now!) I can see the importance of students having work experience to enrich their studies and bring their curriculum to life! Matty will get to learn and be involved in all aspects of operating the company and the placement will also be a great opportunity for Harry to pass on the skills he learnt during his Apprenticeship."

South Cheshire Chamber Events Programme



Meet the Chamber

Held Monthly

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



Speed Networking

Held quarterly

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



International Trade Forums

Planned for return in 2023!

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



Final Friday

Held on the last Friday of the month

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



Local and Economic updates

Held quarterly January, April, July, October

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



Business Surgery

Held Monthly

The South Cheshire Chamber Business Surgery, in partnership with Take on Goliath, is an exclusive set of events designed to empower our members with essential knowledge and provide an interactive platform for insightful discussions.

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 Vision

Inspiring and supporting our vibrant business community.

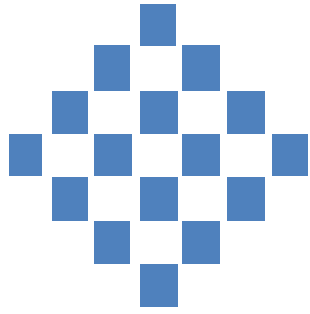
Our Mission Statement

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

For more information on how the Chamber can help your business please contact **Angela Wilkinson** on angela.wilkinson@sccci.co.uk



We will always strive to help our businesses shape the economy for the better, and you can feedback to us on the issues affecting your business. We report both directly to local government and regional bodies and to central government through the British Chambers of Commerce network, so please get in touch with the team or email us at info@sccci.co.uk



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