

SOUTH CHESHIRE



CHAMBER BUSINESS

News and views from the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry | **Q1 2024**



**CONNECTING THROUGH
CREWE**

PAGE 6

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**The Founder
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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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SOUTH CHESHIRE CHAMBER PATRONS



CHOOSE THE RIGHT PACKAGE FOR YOUR BUSINESS

ESSENTIAL	SIGNATURE	EXECUTIVE
<p>Online membership</p> <p>Essential features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Connect with the largest business community in South Cheshire + Get support for your business at our monthly Business Surgery + Promote your business through the Chamber channels + Access to a business support package valued at £1,400+ a year + Trusted, local business information + Raise your online profile through increased SEO <p>£17/ Month</p> <p>JOIN</p> <p>Find out more</p>	<p>Our most popular package</p> <p>All Essential features plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Access to 40+ networking events + Access to 35+ informative events + Train your young team through our Chamber Young Member Network + Key local and national updates + Information on business support programs + International trade information and guidance + Discounted export documentation + Access to the BCC Global Business Network <p>£37/ Month</p> <p>JOIN</p> <p>Find out more</p>	<p>Maximising your membership</p> <p>All Signature features plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + One to one annual review with Chamber Manager + Access to our monthly Leadership Insights peer-to-peer groups + Shape your future workforce with free places to our Chamber Young Member Network + Government updates and key legislation + Local regeneration updates (Business Council) <p>£80/ Month</p> <p>JOIN</p> <p>Find out more</p>

All prices inclusive of VAT, minimum sign up term 12 months and information subject to change. Check www.sccci.co.uk for updates.

The Next Issue of South Cheshire Chamber Business Magazine is due out on 18/07/24. Deadline for copy is 26/06/2024.

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'

South Cheshire Chamber is putting its weight behind a call for new investment into Crewe's rail connectivity following the terrible decision to axe HS2. I am still in shock from the decision made by the prime minister and speaking to members of the Chamber and in particular the Crewe Rail Forum which we established, I am not the only one.

More than ever the private and public sector need to come together to understand what the decision means for Crewe and the surrounding area and begin the process of developing a vision for the town. It was good to see that Sam Corcoran, Leader, Cheshire East Council had organised an event titled 'Connecting through Crewe' in which Andy Burnham and Steve Rotherham, Metro Mayors of Greater Manchester and Liverpool respectively, delivered speeches highlighting the importance of developing a rail infrastructure to connect the north and south. They challenged the attendees which included the public and private sector to make sure that Crewe raises its profile and makes sure the town is connected on any new rail infrastructure developed.

They also warned the audience that due to funding constraints, a north-south connection might bypass Crewe, so it's vital

that we articulate and promote the fantastic benefits connecting through Crewe would bring. The Chamber is more than playing its part on behalf of members by lobbying politicians, local leaders and engaging with neighbouring Chambers of Commerce to make sure this area does not miss out.

The Chamber exists to help members realise ambitions and help create an environment that provides the private sector with the opportunity to grow and succeed. Rail infrastructure is one aspect of that, but there is also the skills agenda, movement of people in and around the town plus the development of a successful town centre.

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 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

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WHY SHOULD YOU JOIN A 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.



PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS

You gain access to a wealth of [promotional opportunities](#). List your business on our online [members directory](#). Share your successes with our social media audience. Why not showcase your expertise with an article in our magazine or newsletter? If you're hosting an event, promote it on our online members area or even sponsor one of our [Chamber events](#).



NETWORKING IN CHESHIRE

We host a variety of events – both online and offline – throughout the year. Ranging from Final Fridays for an informal networking breakfast to our [Annual Awards](#) dinner where we celebrate the hard work and achievements of our community.



BUSINESS SUPPORT

No matter the size or age of your business, everyone needs support at times. Chamber membership offers you [support](#) which, for smaller businesses, may not be available in house. You can access 24/7 advice lines covering HR, Legal, Health & Safety and Tax. As well as an online library of 700 documents and templates such as employee handbooks and interview forms.



INTERNATIONAL TRADE

If you're looking to [trade internationally](#), we help local businesses go global. Our experts can guide you through the documentation and latest regulations. Members can receive up to 50% off export documents!



"It is wonderful to be part of South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry. We pay £35 per month with no joining fee. The event planning is fantastic and such good business. The Chamber Staff are always willing to chat through stuff."

Lynda Bradbury, Operations Director
 Tafco Ltd

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

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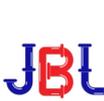
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CHAMBER: 'LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO DELIVER BENEFITS DESPITE HS2'

South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce has joined the chorus of national figures pushing for major new investment in Crewe's railway connectivity following the controversial axing of HS2.

The Chamber, alongside high profile business members, say Crewe needs to be at the centre of all future decision-making on infrastructure planning and improvement.

Chamber Chief Executive Paul Colman (pictured) was among those attending the 'Connecting Through Crewe' event at Crewe Market Hall where Northern leaders came to discuss opportunities for the town and ongoing regeneration remain despite the cancellation of HS2 in the north.

Mr Colman said:

"The decision to cancel the HS2 scheme north of Birmingham ending all the hopes and dreams we had for Crewe remains a bitter blow."

"However we must move on and see how we can revisit and plan for a new infrastructure that can improve the connectivity north and south while increasing the rail network capacity to accommodate more freight and encourage more investment into Crewe and South Cheshire.

"The private and public sector must now work more closely than ever to

prepare a vision for Crewe including the need to enhance the station into a transport hub.

"We know we have our business community behind this and 2024 is already appearing to be the year when we pick ourselves up from the HS2 decision and move forward together.

"The prosperity of Crewe depends on this 'joined up' approach and through our long-standing membership of the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) we will be raising this at the highest level."

The Chamber has long campaigned for changes that maximise Crewe's 360-degree connectivity and strategic position at the heart of the road and rail network.

It played an instrumental role in gaining the go-ahead for widening the M6 Junction 16 approach, easing a notorious bottleneck, and the development of Jack Mills Way and David Whitby Way routes into Crewe.

As a leading member of BCC, the Chamber remains in a strong position to ensure the business community's voice is heard.

—
To grow through South Cheshire's biggest business community and have your voice heard as part of the campaign for prosperity go to sccci.co.uk

Connecting through Crewe focused on how partners can work together to maximise opportunities that may come forward in place of HS2.

Cheshire East Council's leader and deputy leader, councillors Sam Corcoran and Michael Gorman, Andy Burnham and Steve Rotheram – the 'Metro Mayors' of Greater Manchester and the Liverpool City Region as well as local councillors and business leaders joined the focus on delivering regional transport and levelling up ambitions.

They discussed how Crewe's growth can continue to be driven forward – recognising the need for further investment in its regeneration and the town's importance to the North-West economy.

Cllr Sam Corcoran said: "Crewe remains at the heart of the UK's rail network and was at the heart of plans for HS2 in the north. It therefore needs to be at the heart of whatever follows in place of HS2. We are pleased that the Mayors of Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester have reiterated the need for improved north-south connectivity and that this needs to be via Crewe.

"The decision to cancel HS2 Phase 2 also cancelled the key levelling up catalyst for Crewe and the wider area – its arrival would have boosted the local economy by £750m per year.

"Connecting Through Crewe was an opportunity to strengthen collaboration between partners in the north and to look at what comes next and how we maximise any opportunities that may come forward in HS2's place.

"It was also an opportunity to demonstrate why investment in Crewe



Northern leaders come together for Connecting Through Crewe event

and at Crewe Station – regardless of HS2 – is not only essential for the town and Cheshire East, but for the wider region.

“With more than three million people within a 45-minute commute of Crewe by road and rail, it is hugely important that we continue to highlight Crewe’s strategic location and demonstrate why as the transport connector for the North, West Midlands, Wales, London, and beyond, Crewe Station is one of the most important interchanges on the UK rail network.”

Cllr Michael Gorman, who is also chair of Cheshire East Council’s economy and growth committee, said 2024 would be a major year for Crewe with work on a number of projects helping to ‘set the foundations of the future for Crewe and bring forward opportunities for business, people to meet and work and to create a vibrant local community’.

He added:

“But HS2 was the driver and confidence that enabled these projects to be developed and promoted. Without HS2 there is now a need to ensure that the momentum and investor confidence is maintained, and we need

certainty on transport links – links that will be fast and reliable.”

Greater Manchester Mayor, Andy Burnham, is part of a consortium looking at alternative plans for the scrapped northern section of HS2 alongside Mayor Andy Street and private sector partners. He said the plans, which aim to keep enhanced north-south connectivity alive, would be published and shared with Cheshire East Council shortly.

“The North West of England, the place that gave railways to the world, should be the place that expects a modern railway that connects people north-south, and east-west – and that’s what we need to hold firm to and that’s why we are here today,” he said.

“It is very important that we do this together and that we put forward a vision for the right railway for this part of the world as we go into the rest of the 21st century.”

Mayor Burnham said Greater Manchester had ‘always supported the Crewe hub vision’. He added: “We need to add your ambitions to what we are developing because we cannot accept the situation that we have got, which is that the West Coast Main Line ‘is it’ and that there will be no additional rail capacity north-south to support connectivity and growth.

“If we did accept that, it would mean that we have worse train services in future than we currently have now – with fewer seats and travelling at slower speeds.”

Mayor of the Liverpool City Region, Steve Rotherham, talked about how £86bn more funding would have been available to spend on transport projects over the

last decade ‘if the funding received in the north was equivalent to that received in the south’.

“We need to revisit plans for both north-south and east-west connectivity and have a strategic vision of connected places. It isn’t just about connecting towns, and it’s not just about connecting people, or allowing people to go and see wonderful places – it’s about connecting people to opportunities. We should not accept a second-class transport system.”



Chamber CEO Paul Colman

Leadership Insights with South Cheshire Chamber



Matt Liggins of Healthshield
–Health & Wellbeing hosts,
Amy Garratt of Likewize
– HR hosts, and Jon Barnes.

South Cheshire Chamber’s Members have always been at the forefront when it comes to sharing best practice – whether that be at our Final Friday networking events, or more recently our monthly Business Surgery.

This tradition of showing off our collective knowledge has continued with the introduction of Leadership Insights.

Introduced in 2023 for Chamber Members from our Executive, Premium and Packages, the Leadership Insights offer a safe space for businesses to discuss topics of a sensitive nature while getting feedback from their peers.

South Cheshire Chamber runs quarterly Leadership Insights on Cyber Security, HR, and Health & Wellbeing, with Net Zero planned before the year is out.

Chamber Manager Jon Barnes said: “The Leadership Insights have grown into a valuable date in the diary of our Members. Not only do they get an insightful presentation from the host organisation, but the peer to peer sharing of information has ensured the bonds between the delegates is strong.”

For more information on the Leadership Insight suite please contact jon.barnes@sccci.co.uk

Upcoming Leadership Insights for 2024:

- HR with Likewize
22/05/24
- Health & Wellbeing with Healthshield
27/06/24
- Cyber Security
18/07/24
- HR with Likewize
28/08/24
- Health & Wellbeing with Healthshield
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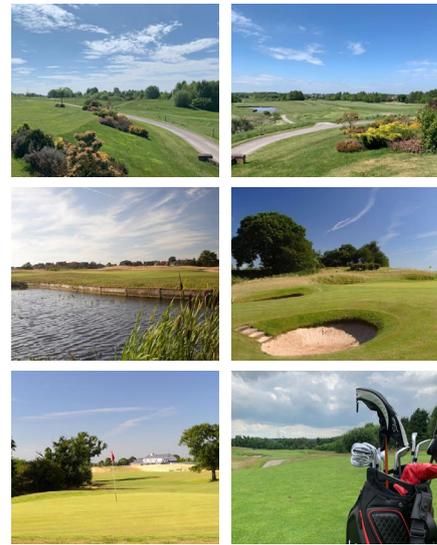
Dave provided me with invaluable guidance throughout the course and beyond.

Paul Topping
Director of Finance
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Chamber back on course with popular golf event



Businesses are invited to form teams to take part in a golf tournament hosted by South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce.

The event, taking place at the prestigious Wychwood Park Hotel on May 7, will see teams of four drawn from across Cheshire compete for the Bentley Cup in an 18-hole round followed by dinner and networking.

Chamber Events & Marketing Coordinator Dominic Hibbert said: "The annual golf tournament is returning to our events calendar after an absence of a number of years including the pandemic period. It's back by popular demand and we expect a day of friendly rivalry and great banter against the scenic Wychwood backdrop.

"We aim to make this a memorable day of networking when business meets pleasure on the lush greens. It will be an opportunity for team-building in a fun setting followed by a post-game feast. Already we have several businesses signed up."

Relaxed and informal networking is high on the Chamber agenda. Events now also combine an opportunity to take time away from the office and enjoy the great outdoors.

A new and popular addition is 'net-walking' when businesses swap work shoes for trainers to take a brisk morning walk in local parks and places of interest. The most recent was at Aqueduct Marina.

Dominic added: "The Chamber is keen to support health and wellbeing. One way we can do this is by organising events which help businesses get out in green space. The benefits are well documented and we are planning more opportunities over the spring and summer months."

For more information on the golf tournament and future events go to sccci.co.uk/events or email dominic.hibbert@sccci.co.uk

Date set for Chamber Business Awards 2024



A date has been set for the Chamber Business Awards 2024 which is returning to the magnificent Crewe Hall.

The Events Centre will be the venue for the Awards on Friday, November 8 when businesses, organisations and individuals drawn from our local community will step into the spotlight in an exciting Oscars-style ceremony.

Chamber Events & Marketing Coordinator Dominic Hibbert said: "We are delighted to return to Crewe Hall with our flagship event after a gap of several years including the pandemic period. It's a

beautiful venue adding grandeur to what is always a memorable evening.

"Once again we will celebrate the hard work and achievements of those in our South Cheshire Business Community. More information will be available in coming weeks on categories and sponsorship opportunities."

The Awards are recognised as one of the region's most prestigious business events held every November. This year marks the 27th annual event and already there is interest from potential sponsors and would-be winners.

Entries are set to launch on May 13 with a closing date on August 28. Finalists will be announced in September.

For more information see the Chamber website and social platforms or look out for headlines in local press. Save the date for the Chamber Business Awards 2024.

A message from our President



As we head towards the next General Election, businesses all over the country will be turning their minds towards what they want to see from the next Government.

It is useful to reiterate that the Chamber is an apolitical organisation and has a duty to promote and represent the interests of its members to whichever political party is in control of either Central or Local Government.

To this end, the Chamber always works closely with the local MPs and Borough and Town Councillors.

As the various political parties begin to shape their manifestos, there is no doubt that the Economy will form a central part of their plans and there will be plenty of opportunity for our members to make their views known and to seek to influence what goes into them.

Over the coming months all Chambers in the national network will be consulting with their members to give them the opportunity to voice their thoughts and ideas on what they consider the new Government should do to create the best possible economic conditions within which business can thrive and grow.

All of this information will be collated by the British Chambers of Commerce who will produce a Business Manifesto on which they will consult directly with all political parties at the highest level.

Indeed, as is usually the case, the BCC along with the CBI and other business organisations will no doubt be courted by all of the parties in order to get the ear of business, but equally will be quizzed, probed and challenged to make commitments on their intentions.

I would therefore encourage all of our members to make their views known to us through the various platforms that will be available over the coming months and can assure you that these will be fed into the system in the strongest possible terms.

I was privileged to be invited to attend the recent High Sheriff of Cheshire's Business Awards which was held at the University of Chester Business School and turned out to be a successful night for South Cheshire with two of our members picking up winning awards in the following categories;

Outstanding Community, Education and Business Engagement – for the charity or business that has made a significant difference to the community it serves. Winner – **The Cat Radio**.

Young Business Person of the Year (sponsored by Mornflake) – to recognise a young person under 30 who has shown entrepreneurial spirit and endeavour within their role. Winner – **Kate Fox - The Nantwich Clinic**.

These highly prestigious awards are both thoroughly deserved and although I took the opportunity on the night I would again like to congratulate the Cat Radio and Kate from the Nantwich Clinic.

Finally it's good to see that the Chambers Annual Golf Tournament is back in action at Wychwood Park after a couple of years enforced interruption.

I hope that all of the entrants will have a great days golf and be able to enjoy some much better weather.

John Dunning
President



A message from our Chair

Recently I was privileged to sit on a panel at an event held by Radius in celebration of International Women's Day. It was a pleasure to be able to share with others the achievements of women around the world – young and old, past and present, celebrated and unknown. However, it made me consider other groups that have been marginalised, and that go unrecognised and unrewarded, and the impact on businesses and the wider society.

At a time when businesses are struggling to fill job vacancies, and with increasing numbers of economically inactive working age people, should we be considering what more we can do to remove some of the barriers that are preventing marginalised groups of people from gaining access to jobs and progressing their career?

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) have recently put in place the 'Workplace Equity Commission' where they explore how to help SMEs create a more equitable workplace¹. They found that:

- a quarter of surveyed employees (25%) believe that not everyone in their workplace has the same access to opportunities.
- Over a quarter (28%) of employees surveyed aren't aware of the term 'workplace equity' or have no understanding of what it means.

- 28% of respondents say they believe they've unfairly missed out on a workplace opportunity in the past two years

The Commission defines workplace equity as 'creating a level playing field for all individuals, recognising that we do not all start from the same place and that adjustments may be required to provide fair access to opportunity'. The first part of the commission was a call for evidence amongst SMEs, and the BCC surveyed more than 2000 employed workers across Great Britain between the ages of 18 and 64.

Emerging themes identified that:

- Firms who have taken steps to improve fairness in the workplace have seen tangible benefits and there is a lot of good practice in local business communities across the country.
- Fair recruitment practices are critical to making equitable workplaces.
- The main barriers for firms were knowing where to go for information and a lack of time and resource.
- Fear of saying or doing the wrong thing can lead to paralysis which does not benefit the employer or the workforce.
- Businesses are aware that skilled people are being forced to leave the

workforce because of the cost and availability of care/childcare.

- SMEs value opportunities for peer-to-peer learning with organisations of similar size or within their sector.

The commission also identified that people who feel valued as individuals, are included, and given fair access to opportunity are likely to be more engaged, productive, supportive and loyal to their employer. Employers said they had experienced reduced absenteeism and staff turnover as a result of equitable practices. Additionally, benefitting from diverse perspectives and skills, and providing increased opportunities for the workforce to develop their full potential can boost an organisation's productivity and growth.

The final report will be available in September 2024, but in the meantime, this could be the opportunity for Chamber members to share best practice and reap the benefits of the diverse workforce that we enjoy in South Cheshire.

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

¹ <https://www.britishchambers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Workplace-Equity-Commission-Interim-update-March-2024.pdf>



In the Spotlight with...



Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

Mark Hills, CEO
ymcacrewe.org.uk

YMCA Crewe CEO Mark Hills in the GLO Café



YMCA Crewe is a Christian charity that invests in the lives of young people and the community through projects including housing, learning, family support and working with children. Here we catch up with CEO Mark Hills and take a look behind the scenes of the landmark facility on Gresty Road.



Crewe was part of a recent visit to Parliament with youth ambassadors from across England and Wales

Q. Mark, you follow in your father's footsteps working for the YMCA. Tell us about how being part of the organisation is in your blood.

A. I was born in 1971 and lived within a YMCA when I was less than a day old as my parents were staff who lived on site. I lived there from the age of 0 to 5 years old. As I grew up my family was fully involved in the YMCA and all my relatives have either worked for or volunteered for various YMCAs my Dad worked at. Therefore, I guess I was destined to work for the YMCA. I started my full time YMCA career June 1997 as Assistant Manager and life coach for YMCA Newbury. I have since then worked for six other YMCAs and worked my way to CEO of YMCA Crewe starting in June 2017

Q. What do you love most about your role?

A. I love the way the YMCA values the whole person. Its emblem/logo (red triangle) represents the three parts of a person (Body, Mind and Spirit) and therefore the YMCA enables people to have the opportunity to focus on all three. We work with them to belong, contribute and thrive. As CEO my aim is to ensure we have great buildings, great activities, great opportunities which are long-term sustainable and best assist staff. The YMCA isn't just a journey for those we work with it is also a life-changing journey for staff and volunteers. If I can be part of changing one person's life then that's mission accomplished.

Q. The YMCA is the world's oldest and largest youth sector organisation, founded in 1844. However there remains the perception of being a 'hostel' when you do so much more, tell us about how things have changed and the services you provide.

A. YMCAs are charities but in today's world we are Not-for-Profit organisations where we invest every penny into our work. YMCAs are known for the song and housing but in the UK there are YMCAs running hotels, wedding venues, leisure centres, mental health services, drug rehabilitation, alcohol support, Gymnastic clubs, Scouts, Kendo, Judo, outward bound centres and cafes. The aim is to serve the local community and that's why every YMCA around the world is different.

Q. YMCA Crewe is an Executive Member of the Chamber of Commerce. How does being part of the Chamber benefit you as an organisation.

A. We have linked into networking events such as Final Friday which has been a great way to share the amazing



YMCA Crewe

Conference room and meeting facilities at YMCA Crewe

work of YMCA Crewe and encourage members to come and find out more about what we do. I also believe it's about giving back so by being a member we are helping the Chamber which helps other members and thus the wider community of South Cheshire.

Q. What are you looking forward to this year as part of your Chamber membership?

A. I'm looking forward to meeting new people and enticing them to have coffee and cake at our public GLO (Growth Life and Opportunities) Café at the YMCA but also learn about their businesses and how we all connect. Hopefully while meeting them, I will be able to expand their knowledge of the YMCA past, present and future. For example, did you know the YMCA created Basketball, Volleyball, the Red Poppy and Father's Day? On 6th June 2024 the worldwide movement of the YMCA is 180 years old.

Q. YMCA Crewe is soon become YMCA Cheshire Group, what will this mean for your outreach services?

A. I'm very excited by this new opportunity to look at new opportunities around Cheshire and to develop impactful services for local communities we serve. We have already opened YMCA Macclesfield providing new accommodation services for young people. Hopefully in the next few years we may have new services in Cheshire West and Cheshire. But it's important to add we only want to do services which work for the benefit of the community and not in competition. It's much better to work in collaboration than competition and therefore some of our ideas may never come to fruition as people, organisations may already be doing them. However, we have been in Crewe since 1909 so we are a sustainable, long-serving charity which demonstrates we are not going anywhere and plan to be around for another hundred years or so.

Q. The YMCA strapline is to 'build better lives and better futures for young people and communities' and continues to deliver in a tough economic climate. How do you overcome fundraising challenges?

A. The climate for charities has always been challenging but in these current times, I would encourage charities to look at different ways of sharing, working together and collaborating to ensure the people we serve are getting the maximum "bang for their buck". We are very blessed with the limited grants and funds we receive but ensure we are good custodians of any amounts which come into YMCA Crewe and always very grateful.

Q. Tell us about the facilities at Crewe and the services businesses can tap into such as your meeting rooms.

A. YMCA Crewe's main building on Gresty Road in the 1800s was accommodation for railway workers. Today it is a thriving hub where all three of our social enterprises are based. Our GLO Café public café where we train people in the specialism of hospitality and catering and you can also get great cake as well as a great cooked breakfast, lunches and all sorts of 'niceties.' We also have various high class meeting rooms which can be hired for conferences, AGMs, training, children's parties and we have all the tech for online meetings such as our own super-fast broadband. Our final social enterprise is our property maintenance service where we now have a team of eight and four vans who can provide handy person services such as renovating, replacing and restoring kitchens, bathrooms, roofing, electrical and plumbing work at an affordable price. Proceeds go into our work in Crewe and beyond. We also have several satellite buildings in parts of Crewe enabling local communities to belong, contribute and thrive with Chill and Chat, after school clubs, holiday activities, parent groups, Stem training sessions for young people, cooking classes, counselling, mediation to name just a few.

Q. You also run a café and property maintenance service from Crewe YMCA. How does that support your fundraising?

A. The income from both goes straight back into our work which we fund directly. Though we are a very blessed organisation we do need the support of the local business community to ensure we can make a difference to the local community.

Q. You are a family man, with one grown up daughter. What do you do to relax away from work?

A. I love spending time with my wife (Sarah) who has been super supportive - we have moved several times around the country to enable me to work for various YMCAs. I also love being with my daughter Beth who is almost 26 and a blossoming Clinical Psychologist in a high security hospital. They keep me grounded. I also like Skiing (snow, water and jet) as well as playing squash and enjoy building Lego vehicles.

Q. Finally, how can readers support the work of the YMCA locally?

A. By coming and having tea/coffee/milkshake/smoothie and cake with me to start with and learning about the rich history of the YMCA and how it was started by a 22 year-old apprentice on 6th June 1844 in London. I can then show you what YMCA Crewe has been doing since 1909 and what it will be doing for the next 5-10 years.

To learn more about YMCA Crewe go to the website or email Mark to catch up for a coffee mark.hills@ymcacrewe.org.uk



A young person honing their hospitality skills in the GLO Café



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Assurant Connects Purpose and Partnership at Mobile World Congress 2024



ASSURANT®

In the bustling environment of Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2024 in Barcelona, Assurant, a leading global business services company that supports, protects, and connects major consumer purchases, strategically positioned itself to drive meaningful discussions on purpose and collaboration within the mobile industry. With a deliberate emphasis on engagement, Assurant's presence at MWC sought to foster partnerships, connect with clients, and explore opportunities, all anchored in the company's distinctive purpose.

MWC, the world's premier mobile industry event, annually brings together thought leaders, innovators, and stakeholders to explore the latest trends and technologies. Against this backdrop, Assurant utilised its participation to underscore its commitment to purpose-driven actions aligned with the broader industry's goals.

Chris Woolnough, Assurant's UK Managing Director, (pictured) highlighted the significance of MWC as a platform for collaborative progress. "At MWC 2024, our aim was to engage with partners, connect with clients, and explore collaborations with a shared commitment to purpose-driven initiatives," Woolnough stated. "Our

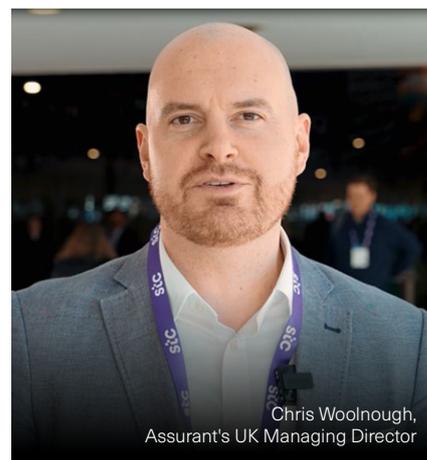
discussions revolved around the integral role we all have in promoting a meaningful mobile future."

Embedded within Assurant's mission is a purpose statement that guides its actions and aspirations. Woolnough emphasized, "We strive to help people thrive in a connected world – it's about creating a positive impact, enhancing lives, and contributing to a resilient and connected world."

Assurant's global representatives actively sought opportunities to align partnerships with the company's purpose during their meetings with industry partners. Conversations delved into how collective efforts could contribute to a more secure, connected and sustainable mobile ecosystem.

For clients, MWC provided a platform to reaffirm Assurant's commitment to providing comprehensive, competitive mobile protection solutions. Discussions centred around enhancing the impact of services, improving the overall experience, and fostering a sense of security.

As part of Assurant's commitment to knowledge-sharing, the company featured notable speakers at MWC 2024. Biju Nair, President, Global Connected Living at Assurant offered his perspective on the opportunities and challenges at hand for emerging GenZ leaders and Deborah Battaglia SVP, Customer Experience at



Chris Woolnough,
Assurant's UK Managing Director

Assurant shared how AI is revolutionizing CX.

As the event concluded, Woolnough expressed optimism about the outcomes saying, "Our engagements at MWC have set the stage for meaningful collaborations that align with our vision to be the leading global business services company supporting the advancement of the connected world."

Assurant's strategic participation at Mobile World Congress 2024 served as a platform to connect purpose with partnerships, underlining the company's commitment to fostering meaningful relationships and driving positive change within the dynamic and ever-evolving mobile industry.

Bentley awarded 'Net Zero Plastic to Nature' accreditation for second year



BENTLEY



Bentley Motors has been awarded 'Net Zero Plastic to Nature' status for a second consecutive year. The internationally-recognised accreditation, from the climate company, South Pole, followed a rigorous waste stewardship appraisal of the company's campus and local operations.

Bentley was the first car manufacturer to receive the ground-breaking certification in 2022 but South Pole's latest endorsement reflects the firm's ongoing efforts to support ambitious environmental commitments, across its manufacturing operations to the end-consumer.

South Pole's first in-depth appraisal in 2021 resulted in a widespread re-

assessment of Bentley's plastics footprint on the environment. The assessment covered operational macro-plastic parts packaging used in logistics and manufacturing, and the disposal of plastic protection downstream at global dealerships. It also assessed micro-plastic emissions from tyre abrasion as part of the logistics and product lifecycle.

To secure Net Zero Plastic to Nature status in 2022, Bentley significantly increased the level of waste management and traceability for its plastic waste, with a successful achievement: 97 per cent of plastic waste was processed in 2022, lowering the non-processed plastic waste to be mitigated. All inbound logistics packaging is processed, including zero waste-to-landfill and export minimisation. Bentley subsequently invested in certified units supporting 'Second Life Thailand', a plastic waste collection project focussing on ocean-bound and land plastic recovery, recycling and reuse. The amount of funding towards mitigation matched the full volume of non-processed plastic waste found in 2022.

Andreas Lehe, Board Member for Manufacturing at Bentley Motors, said: "Bentley's aim is to be the world's most sustainable, luxury automotive brand. Our Beyond100 strategy is reinventing every aspect of the business and the Net Zero

Plastic to Nature award is further proof of our efforts to address our environmental impact.

"For example, at our production headquarters in Crewe, we are working closely with our waste management suppliers to ensure that all waste is treated, while implementing plastic reduction and optimisation initiatives to cut plastic usage. This includes a reduction in the overall size of our textile car covers, and a new collaboration with our UK waste manager, Veolia on the proper management of the waste it generates at our Crewe facility.

"Nevertheless, we are aware plastic usage extends beyond the manufacturing process. Plastics are used in the delivery of vehicles to dealerships and customers. These are all waste management concerns that we continue to address in our Beyond100 strategy."

South Pole advises leading companies on their climate journeys to achieve net zero emissions. It is aligned with the aims of the Paris Agreement and UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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

Cheshire College invests £150K in new training hospital ward at Crewe campus

A new state-of-the-art training hospital ward, designed and built for learners to gain experience in a real life medical setting, has opened at Cheshire College – South & West's Crewe Campus.

The College was one of the few educational providers in the North West that was awarded funding under the Government's Strategic Development Fund (SDF), resulting in an investment of £150,000 into the new training ward.

Impressive new training facilities include an 8-bed replica hospital ward on Campus, cutting-edge dental simulation equipment, digital reality programmes, tactile models and life-like mannequins, virtual dissection tables and specialist teaching staff.

The hospital ward will not only equip students with the skills to better meet the needs of their future employers, but also support local innovation, jobs, and economic growth as well as develop a more efficient overall delivery infrastructure within the College itself.

Facilities are now open within the health and social care department of Cheshire College's Crewe Campus, and use of them will be offered to students working towards careers in nursing, life science, dentistry, healthcare and education, to name a few.

Learners will be able to engage with responsive mannequins to measure blood pressure, heart rate and even simulate engaging with a patient in a ward setting.



They will also be taught to check pulses and can monitor virtual procedures thanks to cutting edge digital equipment provided by the College. Dentistry students can experiment with onsite simulation equipment to begin to understand and attain the skills they will need for their future working life.

Karen Roberts, Assistant Principal has overseen the project. She said: "From our close relationship with employers, we know that the best talents come from when students can experience what it's really like to be in a work setting. There's no better place to do this for those pursuing a career in the medical or healthcare field, than in a ward itself. This new high quality learning experience will give our pupils the perfect start to their career journey; and that they will venture into further education, or into work, with transferrable, 'hands on' skills attained at Cheshire College. It's amazing

what we've been able to achieve here with the investment, it really brings the curriculum alive."

Local organisations that work with the College have already expressed interest in using the facilities to train their own members of staff; and have highlighted the value of the ward when it comes to the employability of college leavers in this sector.

Many of the students that will be using the new medical facilities on Cheshire College's Crewe Campus will be studying the new qualifications that are T Levels. T Levels equip students with the real-life technical skills that are valued and required by employers in various industries. To learn more about the training ward, watch Cheshire College's video or visit the website.

Go to www.ccs.ac.uk

Students 'pull apart the myth of Fast Fashion' at Cheshire College

Fashion students at Cheshire College – South & West's Chester Campus have participated in a huge collaborative project to promote sustainability in the fashion industry.

Students got involved at every level of creation, organisation and promotion for the event; deciding on the name, logo and tagline for the project ('Unravelling: Pulling apart the myth of fast fashion') and creating a themed Instagram account to spread the word.

Fashion students also undertook an upcycling workshop which was held across three classes. The finished products were then exhibited in the Campus's main foyer where they could be seen and admired by all students, staff and visitors. Chester Campus's Photography students collaborated with the event organisers, taking high-quality photos of the finished garments and models.

Level 3 Fashion Business & Retail student Scarlett said: "Putting the outfits together was my favourite part of the whole event! Working behind the scenes, deciding who needs to wear what, and helping to bring it all together was amazing. I'm thinking about a career as a fashion buyer

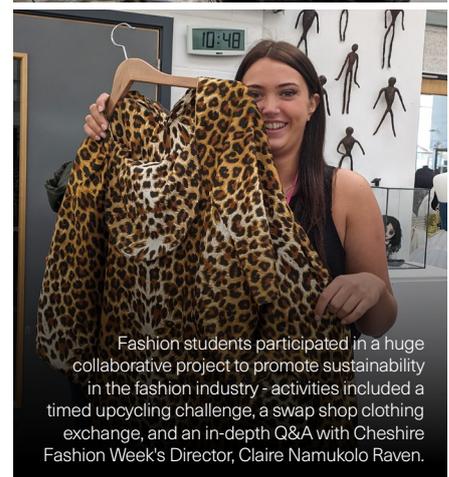
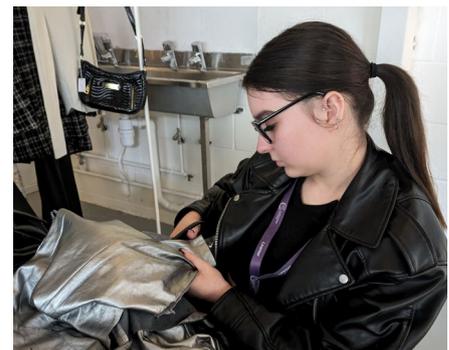
and sustainability is a main part of the job, so the 'Unravelling' event will be really beneficial for my future."

Chester Campus also played host to sustainability talks by prominent figures in the fashion industry, including a Q&A with the Director of Cheshire Fashion Week (CFW), Claire Namukolo Raven, who shared the various ways that CFW champions sustainability. Also in attendance was a former Cheshire College Art & Design Lecturer Rachel Davies, who is now working as a freelance artist and makes frequent use of textiles for her work. Rachel demonstrated how to elevate and innovate items without creating the damaging textile waste of the fast fashion cycle.

The Campus also hosted a Swap Shop Clothing Exchange which encouraged students to bring in their unwanted clothing which they could then exchange for a different item of preloved clothing. All unclaimed clothing at the end of the day was donated to local charity providers, in line with ethical practices.

Cheshire College is now accepting applications for September 2024.

Go to www.ccs.ac.uk



Fashion students participated in a huge collaborative project to promote sustainability in the fashion industry - activities included a timed upcycling challenge, a swap shop clothing exchange, and an in-depth Q&A with Cheshire Fashion Week's Director, Claire Namukolo Raven.

Success on a plate for community cooking school backed by Mornflake



Wild Salt Community Interest Company founder Esther Southern meets Charlotte Gribbin and Iain Lavelle of Mornflake in the firm's innovation kitchen

A community cooking school helping Sandbach families to eat well on a tight budget is set to expand after receiving backing from Cheshire breakfast company Mornflake.

Wild Salt Community Interest Company (CIC) has received cash help from the Crewe company towards equipment as it plans to move into Macclesfield.

Founder Esther Southern, a mental health charity worker from Sandbach, said: "The community cooking school provides free classes to families who access the local

food bank pantry. The aim is to increase social inclusion, diversity in meals and empower every person who attends to be able to build a nutrient-dense plate of food.

"The results have been reduced sugar intake, decrease in loneliness and increase in families cooking together at home. The classes have enhanced understanding of flavour and what you can do with left over veg in the fridge. And the demand has been overwhelming, so much so we are looking to expand into Macclesfield."

The free classes, staged monthly at

the Wesley Centre on Chapel Street, are funded by paid-for supper clubs and cookery events involving local chefs who support the project. Events in the pipeline include Japanese, Greek and plant-based cookery in Sandbach, Hale and Altrincham.

Mornflake has topped up the funding pot with £250 to buy more utensils and provided oats and recipe ideas.

Managing director James Lea said:

"Mornflake promotes an active lifestyle through sponsorship of many local sporting organisations. Sponsoring the free cookery classes is another way for us to support health and mental wellbeing. We were delighted to hear how they have improved local diets while helping to combat isolation."

Mornflake shares a wide range of oat-based recipes on its website and social platforms. For more go to mornflake.com/recipes

The Princess Royal opens Riding for the Disabled Centre at Reaseheath College



HRH The Princess Royal officially opened a new centre for Nantwich & District Riding for the Disabled (RDA) Group at Reaseheath College in Nantwich.

The Princess Royal is a long serving President of the RDA and during her visit met some of the Nantwich group's coaches and volunteers, supporters and trustees. Her Royal Highness also watched a demonstration by seven riders and ponies, talking to each individually and presenting them with a rosette, and later mingling with other riders and their families.

An accomplished horsewoman herself, The Princess Royal ran an experienced eye over the group's new Platinum Jubilee Stables and toured the fully accessible centre which includes a welfare space, training area and sophisticated riding simulator.

Nantwich & District RDA Group Chair Sheila Saner said: "It has been a great honour to welcome The Princess Royal here to officially open our wonderful new centre and meet some of our incredible riders and hard working volunteers.

"So many local people, organisations and businesses have supported us in different ways since we set up as a registered charity. It has been an honour



HRH The Princess Royal visiting Nantwich & District Riding for the Disabled Group at Reaseheath College

to invite them to such a special event as thanks for their commitment. Reaseheath College has welcomed us and we now have a permanent, secure home in which to grow and thrive to help people with disabilities in our local area".

The RDA provides therapy, fitness, skills development and often life changing opportunities for children and adults with disabilities through the use of horses. The

Nantwich & District Group was launched in 2017 and now has 50 active riders and a substantial waiting list. Everyone involved is a volunteer and the total annual running costs of £28,500 are met through fund raising, donations and legacies.

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

SG World completes The Printing House Ltd's rebrand



SG World, a leader in the production of safety and compliance products, has officially completed a company restructure involving its commercial print arm The Printing House Limited (TPH). Effective from 1st April 2024, TPH will operate as SG World Commercial Print, aligning with its parent company's esteemed values.

Mark Haase, Group CEO of SG World, reflects on the journey:

“For over half a century, SG World has been at the forefront of manufacturing essential safety products, such as Visitor & Contractor Passes, Visual Inspections and Permits-to-Work, from our headquarters in Crewe.

The acquisition of TPH in 2017 was a strategic move that broadened our horizons, allowing us to offer a diverse range of



commercial print products including banners, posters, brochures, and large-format signage.”

Since the acquisition, SG World has experienced a growing demand amongst its customer base for TPH's specialised commercial print products, which complemented SG World's existing offerings. "Operating the two separate brands, under two distinct businesses no longer made sense, therefore we've decided

to merge TPH under the SG World brand," Mark explains. "This integration is more than a name change; it's about unifying our strengths to deliver a seamless, customer-centric experience. Our combined expertise will ensure a more streamlined operation, enhancing efficiency and focusing on what matters most – our customers."

As SG World Commercial Print takes shape, both legacy TPH clients and SG World's loyal customers can look forward to the same dedication to personal service and high-quality products that have become synonymous with SG World's name.

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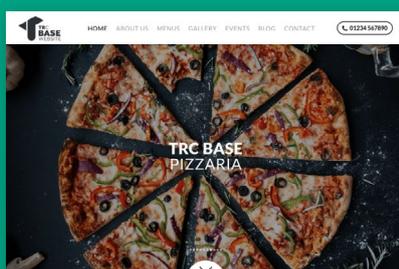


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Local accounting firm WR Partners enhances client experience, broadens service offerings, and relocates within Nantwich



WR Partners, a leading firm of Accountants, Auditors, Business and Tax Specialists, is thrilled to announce the relocation of its Nantwich office.

The firm boasts a team of experts, delivering tailored services to businesses and individuals across Nantwich and the wider Cheshire area through collaboration and insight. This dedicated team works closely with clients to navigate their unique challenges, ensuring they achieve both personal and financial objectives.

Expanding its presence within the area, the team has bolstered its expertise and services to include an extended range of comprehensive Audit services, which will build on the teams existing rural and commercial expertise. Beyond traditional accounting and tax services, WR Partners provides bespoke solutions designed to drive profitability and safeguard wealth. With a passion for client success, WR Partners aims to foster long-term partnerships and serve as an extension of its clients' businesses.

The new office, located at 6 George House, Beam Heath Way, Nantwich, CW5 6GD, reflects WR Partners' dedication to elevating the client experience. Designed to facilitate smoother interactions, the modern facility offers enhanced accessibility and ample parking, ensuring clients'

convenience and comfort during their financial consultations.

Helen Spencer, Managing Partner at WR Partners, expressed her enthusiasm about the move, stating,

"At WR Partners, we prioritise our clients' needs and strive to offer them the best possible experience. We've made several changes to the offering across the area; bringing in additional experts to broaden the services offered. We look forward to welcoming clients to a new modern and accessible premises, where they can continue to receive the exceptional service and personalised support that the firm is renowned for."

For more information about WR Partners and its services, please visit: www.wrpartners.co.uk



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 2024

It's time to celebrate success and gain recognition for your hard work. The launch of the South Cheshire Chamber 2024 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.

Diversity and inclusion celebrated with new food venture

A local mum has turned her love of cooking into a new venture celebrating diversity and inclusion through her culinary creations.

Amaka's Fine Food Fusion is the first step into business for Amaka Lawton, founder of the Crewe-based Alpha Omega Women Peace Security (WPS) Foundation which champions diversity and community wellbeing.

Now, with a passion for bringing people together through food, Amaka has designed an exciting menu showcasing the flavours of different cultures including Nigerian, Asian and Turkish dishes.

"I believe food has the power to unite us regardless of our backgrounds or differences. It's an ice breaker which bridges cultural and racial divides. So when it came to my menu, I knew it had to be delicious and healthy but also a celebration of diversity and the rich tapestry of culture in our community. I hope local people will join in the celebration and enjoy a fusion of fine foods" – Amaka Lawton

Amaka's Fine Food Fusion launched on April 30 – a date with special significance for the mum-of-one. On that date, her dad's birthday, the website went live for freshly-cooked food orders such as Asian Veggie Noodles, Turkish Lahmacun minced meat



flatbreads and Nigerian Jollof Rice and spicy chicken.

Orders can be collected from Amaka's kitchen at 10 Coppicemere Drive on Crewe Business Park or delivered in a five-mile radius.

She added: "As the youngest of seven children growing up in Nigeria, food was always a big part of life. I cooked for friends in university, trying out recipes handed down by my mum and mums before her. It still gives me utmost pleasure to cook for my family and friends and see the pleased satisfaction on their faces as they explore new flavours and cuisines.

"Amaka's Fine Food Fusion spreads this joy and allows our community to celebrate its colourful diversity. I'm excited

to see how the menu will evolve and provide local people with food tourism in the comfort of their home, office or event."

The business is currently employing five and will be seeking more talented hands in the kitchen soon.

– To discover a global fusion of flavours go to www.amakas.co.uk or follow on social media.



Crewe Heritage Centre reopens to visitors after winter closure



Crewe Heritage Centre open for the season with new trustees

Crewe Heritage Centre, located on Vernon Way has reopened to visitors offering an engaging programme of

events and activities which keep the incredible story of Crewe's Heritage alive.

The centre opens on weekends and Bank Holidays between 10am and 4.30pm (with last admission at 3.30pm). It will also be open with free admission on Wednesdays during Cheshire East school holidays as part of Crewe Town Council's Operation School Holidays programme.

It's overseen by Crewe Heritage Trust and a number of changes have been made to its management structure in recent months, including the recruitment of a new site manager and the appointment of four new trustees to the Board - Stuart Mackay (Visitor Operations Trustee), Tara Sundaram (Marketing and Communications), Katey Goodwin (Curatorial) and Mandy Pritchard (Health and Safety). The future is bright for the centre, as 6a architects has recently completed a Feasibility Study which will be used to secure external funding for significant capital redevelopment. The study was funded by a UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant (UKSPF), which was awarded to Crewe Town Council, and explores the feasibility of shared ambitions and vision for the Heritage Centre as an engineering and heritage attraction in Crewe.

– Crewe Heritage Trust is recruiting volunteers for a range of opportunities across the site, from Catering to Model Railways. Visit the website for more www.crewehc.co.uk/volunteer



Crewe businesses launch £1.6million Business Improvement District



Board members of the New Crewe BID Company Ltd. From left: Thomas Jones (Hibberts LLP), Juliet Davies (United Carpets), Graham Saunders (South Cheshire Glass & Chair of Crewe BID) and Mark Hill (YMCA Retail)

The creation of Crewe's Business Improvement District (BID) received the support of local businesses in November 2023 and local business leaders have now formed a company to lead on delivery of the five-year programme of improvements planned for Crewe.

The BID has been set up as a limited company with a board of voluntary directors, made up of local business leaders, starting from April. The establishment of the new BID Company follows a vote in which businesses approved a proposal to support a five-year £1.6million private sector led investment for Crewe town centre, Grand Junction Retail Park and Nantwich Road.

This will be Crewe's first BID, and it is expected to lead and support a wide range of activities, events & festivals, additional

projects and services that will help to make Crewe more economically vibrant, increase footfall and support the creation of a safer, cleaner and greener town.

Crewe's business community joins over 350 city and town centres across the UK which have chosen to implement successful BIDs since 2004 including Chester City Centre, Wilmslow, Northwich and Warrington. The current Board comprises representatives from Nantwich Road, Crewe Town Centre and Grand Junction Retail Park, however new board members are invited to get in touch.

The newly elected Chair of the BID is Graham Saunders from South Cheshire Glass.

“The creation of a Business Improvement District in Crewe enhances the overall economic health of our town. The business community in Crewe has achieved so much under difficult circumstances over the past few years, and the creation of the BID demonstrates the aspiration of businesses to support the regeneration of Crewe and

unlock further opportunities to enhance the town's offer as a place to work, live, shop and entertain” - Graham Saunders, BID Chair

The development of BID was funded by Crewe Town Council in 2023 and 2024. A spokesperson commented: “Crewe Town Council is delighted to see the establishment of a BID for Crewe. The BID will empower businesses and create a more vibrant and diverse visitor experience for all. Working together to improve marketing, events, transport, cleansing and security will make a massive difference to Crewe and the business community.”

The BID will be funded through a small additional levy paid by companies within the BID area which will raise £1.6million to invest in new additional improvements for Crewe. To ensure that the Business Improvement District does not duplicate or fund statutory services provided by Cheshire East Council and Crewe Town Council a number of baseline commitments are being provided by the town council and Cheshire East Council to enable the new Crewe BID board to ensure the BID's funding is invested in added value projects and services.

Eligible business interested in joining the new private sector led BID board of the new Crewe BID company can find further details at www.connectingcrewe.com

Go-ahead given for walking and cycling route linking Crewe town centre with railway station



Plans for a safer and greener route for pedestrians and cyclists which will link Crewe town centre with the railway station have been approved.

The Mill Street Corridor scheme is part of a package of nine projects being supported by the government's Towns Fund and Crewe's allocation of up to £22.9m of funding.

Having now received planning permission, physical works are expected to start on site in late 2024 and will deliver a better connection and environment for people walking or cycling between the southern part of the town centre and towards the railway station.

Public space improvements including new planting, lighting and landscaping will be delivered along the route, which will run

along Nantwich Road, Pedley Street and Railway Street, and cut through Waverley Court and Wesley Place. From there it will run north along Mill Street, towards the town centre.

Cllr Michael Gorman, deputy leader of Cheshire East Council and chair of its economy and growth committee, said: “The Mill Street Corridor will provide a new clear connection, separate to motorised traffic, which links two key areas of Crewe and makes it easier for people to choose more sustainable and healthier forms of travel – which is of course much better for both them and our environment.

“While providing this new cycling and walking route, the project also focuses on making the spaces along it high-quality, accessible, and safe, while supporting

biodiversity and encouraging community use of the area.”

Tony Davison, chair of Crewe Town Board, which oversees the Crewe Towns Fund programme, said: “2024 is a big year for Crewe and local communities will be able to see regeneration projects, like the Mill Street Corridor, taking huge strides forward and major improvements being delivered in the town centre and surrounding area.

“Over the coming weeks, I look forward to being able to share updates on other projects within the Towns Fund programme, as well as celebrate the completion of the first four ‘pocket parks’ in Crewe – Queen Street, Derby Docks, McLaren Street and School Crescent – where work is being carried out to make them become more attractive and better equipped spaces for people to spend time and get fit outdoors.”

The Mill Street Corridor route is planned to link up with projects including the Valley Brook green corridor – also supported by the Towns Fund – which will connect Queens Park with Mill Street / Edleston Road via a cycling and walking route primarily through parks and open spaces.

Multiply your workforce's skills with free numeracy training



Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is among a number of local employers supporting Reaseheath College's delivery of the Multiply initiative which helps people boost their math skills and progress in their careers.

Are you keen to elevate the skill set of your workforce? Imagine being able to offer them free training opportunities that not only enhance their abilities but also contribute to the growth of your business.

Reaseheath College is supporting businesses across Cheshire East through the Multiply programme – an initiative funded by the Government and designed to equip individuals with essential numeracy skills.

This is a fantastic opportunity for businesses across the area to invest in their employees' development. The Multiply

programme caters to adults aged 19 and above, aiming to strengthen crucial maths skills necessary for both professional and personal life.

Whether it's basic budgeting, understanding tax and payslips, or managing competing priorities, Multiply courses cover a wide range of topics to ensure comprehensive skill enhancement. Each course is tailored to your business needs through face-to-face or blended delivery.

Scarlett McHattie, Multiply Project Manager at Reaseheath College, explains: "The Multiply scheme is not just about improving numerical abilities, it is about

instilling confidence in your employees and encouraging them to apply their newfound skills in the workplace.

"By supporting your staff in enrolling for a Multiply course, you are not just investing in their individual growth, you are developing a culture of continuous learning within your organisation. This can lead to a whole host of benefits such as increased profits, reduced numerical errors, higher employee retention rates, and amplified productivity."

So why wait? Empower your employees and unlock the hidden potential within your business through free, flexible numeracy training. By championing the Multiply programme, you are not only investing in your workforce's future but also in the future success of your business.

Ready to take the next step? For more information email multiply.enquiries@reaseheath.ac.uk or visit reaseheath.ac.uk/multiply.



Access FREE Multiply training and develop your numeracy skills for the workplace

Innovative numeracy courses tailored to specific numeracy skills required in the workplace.

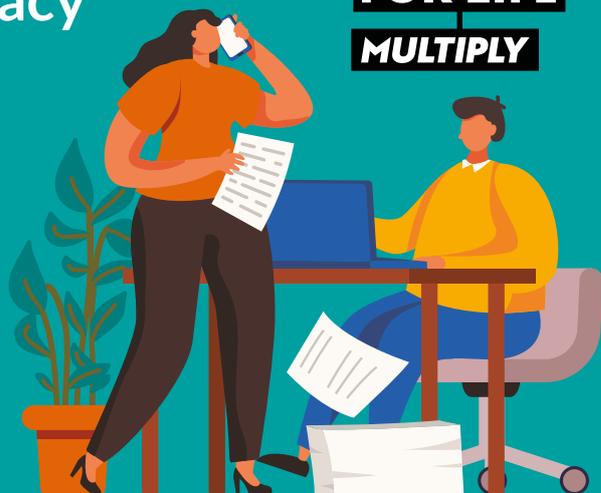
Multiply can help boost employee confidence and wellbeing, develop new skills which can lead to a Functional Skills Qualification.



Email: multiply.enquiries@reaseheath.ac.uk

*Eligibility: Business located in Cheshire East, aged 19 and over.

**SKILLS
FOR LIFE
MULTIPLY**





Jess Pembroke, Head of Data Protection
Naomi Korn Associates

DATA PROTECTION: TOP TIPS FOR BUSINESSES

Jess Pembroke, Head of Data Protection from Chamber member Naomi Korn Associates, delivered a free masterclass to Cheshire businesses at Wychwood Park in February. In this article, Jess offers an overview of some insights shared during the session.

1. Make sure you are registered with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). This is a legal requirement for some businesses, in most cases it is quick to do for the majority of business' costs between £35-60 per year. The ICO actively monitors Companies House to identify businesses that haven't registered, so it's advisable to verify your registration status. There is a free tool to help you understand if you need to register on the ICO website.

2. Your website Privacy Policy gives an insight into your data protection maturity. As a practitioner, the first thing I check when assessing the level of knowledge a company has about data protection is their Privacy Statement. This should be clear, concise and kept up to date – make sure your business isn't referring to out of date legislation such as the Data Protection Act 1998 and your privacy policy includes all the required information.

3. Cookies. If you use cookies on your website that collect personal data, you will need to use a compliant cookie banner. The ICO has been cracking down on this recently and named and shamed some big businesses. Phrases like this "continued use of this website confirms your acceptance of our use of cookies" are not compliant.

4. Beyond the UK GDPR, there is additional legislation that pertains to marketing. The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR) is different legislation to the Data Protection Act and the UK GDPR. PECR has specific rules on marketing calls, emails, texts and faxes, cookies (and similar technologies) and more. If you engage in electronic marketing directed at individuals, it's crucial to have a solid understanding of this legislation.

5. Third parties are one of your biggest risks. Whether these are employees, consultants, contractors or partner organisations, if you share personal data, you are responsible for taking steps to ensure that this data is kept securely. For employees this includes steps such as a contract of employment which references data protection, staff training and clear policies for staff. For partners and other organisations steps would include due diligence checks, contracts and checking for accreditation such as cyber essentials.

6. And finally ... Make the most of free resources available from the ICO <https://ico.org.uk/> and the National Cyber Security Centre www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/small-business-guide including training videos and e-learning. Naomi Korn Associates also publishes free resources on its website <https://naomikorn.com/resources/data-protection-resources/>

If you missed the Masterclass but would benefit from some data protection training why not attend one of Jess's upcoming CPD accredited courses the details for which are available here: <https://naomikorn.com/training/public-training-and-events/>

For more information, please contact info@naomikorn.com





Empowering communities: The impact of The Wingate Centre an independent charity



At The Wingate Centre in Wrenbury, stories of personal development are evident daily, showing the impact on individuals like Jay and Eddie. Their experiences highlight the importance of places like The Wingate Centre for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in the community.

Jay visits The Wingate Centre once a week and finds meaning and purpose in the activities she participates in, from arts and crafts to adapted fitness sessions. Her visits not only bring happiness but also boost her confidence, making daily routines easier, while enhancing her overall well-being. Similarly, Eddie's journey is characterised by remarkable achievements and personal

development. Previously hindered by a lack of confidence, through tailored fitness sessions and rebound therapy, he has now mastered new skills once thought unattainable.

Nestled in the Cheshire countryside, The Wingate Centre offers vital support for individuals like Jay and Eddie. With adaptable facilities including a 7000 sq. ft gym, sensory room, and three acres of grounds, plus a holiday Centre with twenty-two rooms, it caters to diverse needs. Welcoming day guests and school groups, the Centre champions inclusivity, treasured by organisations like Birmingham PHAB and Forest Way School.

Birmingham PHAB, for over two decades, has found a second home at The Wingate Centre, hosting summer camps for disabled and disadvantaged children and young adults. Their glowing endorsement speaks volumes about the Centre's commitment to accessibility and inclusivity. Similarly, Forest Way School's visits attest to the Centre's impact, returning year after year to enjoy residential visits filled with memorable and enriching experiences.

Continuing the work at The Wingate Centre hinges on ongoing support from donors and the local community. With an annual funding target of £450,000, contributions play a pivotal role in sustaining the Centre's initiatives, to brighten the lives of individuals with SEND.



Mayor of Crewe's visit to the Looking After the Homeless (LATH) Drop-In Centre



The Mayor of Crewe, Cllr Dennis Straine-Francis, recently visited the LATH drop-in at St Mary's Caritas centre. The Mayor was there to view the impact of a council grant to LATH to support the homeless and vulnerable of Crewe. LATH is a charity entirely staffed by volunteers, and funded by donations. At the drop-in centre, the Mayor talked to clients and volunteers about LATH and, in particular, how it benefits the homeless and vulnerable and the changes it makes to individuals' lives.

The short-term aim of LATH is to provide immediate support to the homeless and vulnerable, with a hot meal and the provision of sleeping bags and clothing where required. Many of the clients are isolated and have mental health, alcohol or drug issues. The initial work of the charity is to ensure they have sufficient resources to support themselves, that they are in the 'system' with the council and to provide a morale boost. Many of the short-term homeless come to us feeling hopeless and isolated - the drop-in centre provides practical support and hope.

Longer term, the charity works to return individuals back to work or to be integrated into the community and prepared for the challenges of society.

During his visit to the drop-in, the Mayor saw the volunteers working with clients in a number of stages in their return to society. The Mayor expressed his appreciation for LATH and its work, pledging to do whatever he could to support the centre in the future.

If you wish to donate cash, warm clothes or sleeping bags to LATH please contact lathsecretary@gmail.com for details.



Volunteer Josta Hopps and President Bernard Potter

Inspire Cheshire wins funding as new activities supporting young women get underway



A project to support the mental health and wellbeing of young women has won cash support as it launches new activity sessions in Crewe, Winsford and surrounding areas.

Inspire Cheshire, which comes under the umbrella of Chamber members Motherwell Cheshire in Wistaston, has received a grant from the Pilgrim Trust to support its work with local young women over the next three years.

The charitable trust, founded in 1930 by American philanthropist Edward Stephen Harkness, has awarded £90,820 towards Inspire's counselling, befriending and peer support activity sessions for 16-25 year-olds struggling with their mental health.

Motherwell Cheshire founder Kate Blakemore, a trained counsellor, said: "Today, young women are three times more likely than men to experience common mental health problems. Anxiety and depression is rife and it's a crisis we recognised several years ago at Motherwell Cheshire.

"We began Inspire Cheshire to help girls feel more positive about themselves and develop coping mechanisms to deal with day-to-day challenges. It's run by young women for young women and they are over the moon to be recognised with this funding."

Inspire Cheshire's young women have co-designed a programme which includes counselling, peer support and therapeutic groups meeting at the charity hub on Beech Drive. Projects have expanded to include counselling in local schools and training for young wellbeing ambassadors to identify and care for pupils suffering with their mental health.

New for the spring and summer is #BeActive – a girls-only scheme offering fitness and fun for all abilities in safe spaces. Self-defence, clubbercise and rockbox taster sessions are underway in the local area with support from Sport England and Cheshire Police Crime Commissioner.

Inspire Cheshire coordinator Georgie Kay-Phillips said: "We understand the

barriers that can prevent young women and girls from engaging in sport and experiencing the physical and mental health benefits that come with being active. So we are providing a safe, relaxed and non-judgmental environment to try out new sports activities and have some fun being active. Exercising is a great way to foster your physical and mental wellbeing, and this will also be an opportunity to make new friends."

Inspire Cheshire has also launched empowerment groups for young women and has teamed up with the Wishing Well Project to run Craft for Wellbeing sessions at the centre on Chester Bridge, Crewe.

Meanwhile Georgie and volunteers are currently working on their quarterly magazine. For information on all activities see Facebook or go to [inspire-motherwell](https://www.inspire-motherwell.com). Girls aged 13-18, or up to 25 with a vulnerability, looking to take part in #BeActive sessions are asked to email georgie.kay-phillips@motherwellcheshire.co.uk



AA reaches out to employees needing support



Alcoholics Anonymous Potteries and District Intergroup is a proud member of South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

Chris Hunt, Employment Liaison Officer for Potteries Intergroup of AA, says:

"Many members come to AA as a result of contact with a well-informed non-alcoholic. We seek to cooperate with employers and others in our attempts to reach those with our problem."

"Many of us have witnessed the difficulties that problem drinkers cause for their employers – declining standards of work, lower output, absenteeism and high levels of sick leave, strained relationships, and, of course, the health and safety risks they pose for themselves and others.

"The problem often lies in trying to identify the person with a drink problem, especially as the alcoholic is usually the last person to admit that alcohol is causing them problems. The alcoholic's resistance to help can be frustrating. Alcoholics tend to be evasive when questioned about their drinking. They may resist any suggestion that alcoholism is involved and be equally resistant to the suggestion of AA."

AA in Great Britain has over 60 years' experience involving tens of thousands of alcoholics.

Chris added: "As the Employment Liaison Officer for Potteries Intergroup of AA I can give you details of facilities available in the area, for example, visiting speakers, availability of AA literature and details of the many local AA meetings (there are AA meetings every day and night of the week).

"I would welcome the opportunity to better describe the AA programme of recovery to anyone in your organisation who may be of need of our help to stop drinking and coordinate with anyone you may designate to work out ways AA can be of assistance."

Contact Chris Hunt
employment.pdistrict@aamail.com
Call 07788137132



Long-established Nantwich firm Afford Bond adds to its management team

Afford Bond
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS



Afford Bond director Paul Edwards (centre) with Associate Directors Chris McEnaney and Jen Johnson (left) and managers Lauren Griffin and Dan Nixon

One of the most established accountancy firms in the region has expanded its management team while creating new roles for fresh talent entering the industry.

Afford Bond, founded in Nantwich in 1929, has promoted four team members and recruited a trainee as part of its growth strategy and commitment to the town.

Senior managers Chris McEnaney and Jen Johnson, both Nantwich residents, have risen to Associate Directors taking on

additional management responsibilities and a growing share of the firm's high profile client portfolio. Chris, a dad of twins, is a specialist in cloud accounting while Jen, a mum of two, deals with many farming and GP clients. Each have notched up more 20 years in the industry.

Meanwhile accountants Lauren Griffin and Dan Nixon have stepped up to become managers and Sam Parkinson, 22, from Weston near Crewe, joins as a trainee accountant.

Afford Bond director Paul Edwards, who began as a trainee with the firm in 1996, said: "Afford Bond has prospered significantly in the last decade by abiding to 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. Chris and Jen have been at the heart of this growth strategy for many years and we are delighted to welcome them to the board room as Associate Directors."

Afford Bond provides accounts, audit, taxation, payroll and corporate finance services to a wide variety of sectors across the region with offices in Nantwich, Wilmslow and Manchester.

Its roots in Nantwich can be traced back 95 years 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. Growth over the past decade has led to many key appointments with more than 50 people now employed at the Nantwich office and a further 20 in Wilmslow and Manchester.

For business news follow on social media or go to affordbond.co.uk

Crewe tyre firm keeps wheels of Cheshire charity turning



Long-established Crewe Tyre & Exhaust Limited is marking another year of support to a well-known Cheshire charity.

The Derby Street business has provided tyres and free parking for the Central Cheshire Buddy Scheme (CCBS) minibus since 2015.

Owner Eric Harrison said: "We felt that we wanted to put something back into the community and therefore agreed to provide free, secure parking for the CCBS minibus, in addition to free tyres, exhausts, and batteries whenever necessary.

"It's an excellent charity, supporting over 150 children and young people with disabilities. The 24 volunteers and four staff members organise a range of activities and trips, providing new experiences and friendships for those involved.

"This agreement is now in its ninth year and we recently supplied and fitted a set of Michelin tyres to the bus, ensuring utmost safety for both the bus and its passengers."

Chamber members Crewe Tyre And Exhaust Limited, owned by Eric since 1985, has successfully served Crewe and surrounding areas as an independent, family-run business since its establishment in 1966.



The partnership with CCBS was established via Cheshire Connect which helps charities and not for profit organisations to connect with local businesses and gain support.

Using the latest fitting equipment, Crewe Tyre & Exhaust Limited supplies and fits all major brands of tyres and exhausts to all types of vehicles at competitive prices.

For more call 01270 255966 or go to crewetyres.co.uk
To support Cheshire Connect go to cheshireconnect.org



Hydraulics Online wins prestigious Customer Satisfaction Award



Hydraulics Online has been recognised for its outstanding customer commitment to businesses globally.

The UK Customer Satisfaction Awards are the UK's most prestigious customer service awards – run by the professional body for customer service – and Hydraulics Online was honoured in a room filled with household names as finalists.

Mark Tonks, co-founder, said:

“Hydraulic engineering is complicated. We recognise that our customers come with diverse levels of technical knowledge and understanding – from highly-qualified, time-served engineers to absolute beginners – and that each one has a unique enquiry. Every enquiry receives a bespoke response by our team to ensure we can give best advice and get things right first time – which can sometimes mean addressing poor/incorrect diagnosis received elsewhere.

“It means that our customers can harness our knowledge and expertise for

their own benefit – whether that's getting out of what they thought was an impossible 'tight-spot'; bringing ideas to life; extending the life of existing, time-served systems and equipment and/or creating more efficient, effective sustainable solutions.”

The Customer Commitment Award, Business-to-Business, was open to any UK organisation that had differentiated itself through a well-communicated customer commitment strategy operating in the business-to-business environment. Judges were impressed by Hydraulics Online's “commitment to the provision of a differentiated customer-led service in an otherwise complex and fragmented marketplace” that supported an extensive global customer base.

To date, Hydraulics Online has supported over 5000 customers in 130 countries worldwide – from business start-ups to global, household names. This achievement has seen Hydraulics Online recognised as Export Champions by the UK Government's Department for Business and Trade every year since 2019.

A commitment to service excellence is underpinned by an ISO 9001 Quality Management accreditation which drives a culture of continuous improvement in all aspects and areas of the business.

Co-founder, Helen Tonks explains: “We chose to work with the British Standards Institution as a recognised world authority on management systems. In securing our accreditation, we really wanted to be put through our paces – to have the best possible opportunity to learn and fine-tune our operations, to ensure that we remained well-positioned to always deliver a superior

customer experience as we continued to grow.”

Speaking of the win, Helen added: “Proud doesn't come anywhere close.”

– For more on the company go to hydraulicsonline.com



 **The Institute of Customer Service**
UK Customer Satisfaction Awards 2024 **WINNER**

Hydraulics Online
POWERING THE WORLD



Working from home – what are the consequences?



challenging situations.

Since 2015 many large companies have invested in employee health through corporate exercise challenges, the next wave of wellness has focused on underlying health. Post lockdowns, flexible working is a key consideration for employees. This has created a situation where many spend long hours in makeshift conditions for longer periods. The earlier issues are addressed the better.

Businesses can find support in three areas – raising awareness of issues with staff, advice on prevention, and support for staff returning to work.

Remote working arrangements have blurred the line between home and work life leading to a rise in work-related ill health. Jim Wyatt of Silver Bee PT works with businesses to support and empower their employees and to seek improved health and wellbeing. Here he looks at remote working and the consequences.

What does your Wellbeing Programme look like for 2024? Last year, common complaints like back pain, tension headaches, strains, and neck pain were a major cause of ill health. This contributed to a staggering loss of 35.2 million working days last year in the UK, with musculoskeletal disorders causing an average of 13.9 days off work per person affected.

Work-from-home arrangements have a huge hand in those worrying statistics, due to poor posture and an increasingly sedentary workforce. However these issues can be tackled through improved awareness, stronger habits, and in some cases targeted exercise.

Companies that invest in their staff improve workplace efficiency, build a stronger culture, and mitigate some risk of workplace sickness. Employees feel valued and are better equipped to deal with more



“While ultimate responsibility lies with the employees to take care of

their physical and mental health, companies must be proactive in their support.” - Jim Wyatt, Silver Bee PT

Contact jim@silverbeept.co.uk for information on the range of services fit for your business

Supporting local business growth in South Cheshire



In the bustling landscape of South Cheshire's business community, Tafco stands out as a steadfast supporter of local enterprises. Situated within the grounds of Sandbach Railway Station, Tafco plays a pivotal role in fueling the growth and prosperity of businesses across the region.

One shining example of Tafco's commitment to fostering business growth is their collaboration with Andy & Bernie Sargent from ADS Truck Parking in Longton, Stoke. Andy & Bernie's journey with ADS began with a modest cabin, evolving into a thriving truck park featuring a cafe with a hot carvery, a pool room, showers, a shop selling

essentials, and even a training center. Tafco has been instrumental in supporting ADS's expansion, funding essential infrastructure such as the cafe cabin, show blocks, and wash ramps for trucks.

Moreover, Tafco's dedication to empowering businesses extends beyond the realm of traditional assets. They also specialize in financing supercars, directors' company cars, and even classic cars, providing bespoke financial solutions to meet the diverse needs of their clients.

Working alongside such positive and determined individuals despite the prevailing negative news, Tafco finds inspiration in companies like ADS that are not only surviving but thriving in today's

economy. It's a testament to the resilience of local businesses and their unwavering commitment to growth and community development.

Tafco welcomes visitors to their Sandbach location at any time, inviting businesses to explore opportunities for collaboration and support. Alternatively, interested parties can learn more about Tafco's services by visiting their website at www.tafco.co.uk.

In partnership with the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, Tafco continues to champion the growth and prosperity of local businesses, striving to create a thriving ecosystem where entrepreneurship thrives and communities flourish.

Anniversary marked at marina as glamping plans are unveiled

Staff members and long-standing customers recently gathered to mark the 15th anniversary of one of Cheshire's most popular marinas. Robert and Andrea Parton, owners of Aqueduct Marina near Nantwich, hosted a celebratory dinner at Rookery Hall Hotel and Spa.

The event was organised for moorers and staff members who have been with Aqueduct Marina for 10 years or more. Some guests having been moored at Aqueduct Marina since it opened in 2009. A total of 45 guests were present at the dinner, including 27 boaters and their respective partners.

All attendees enjoyed a superb three-course dinner and helped along with a table-top quiz based on the history and events that took place at the marina over the years. The quiz was designed with questions including a number of pictures taken over the years of boats and boaters, giving everyone the opportunity to reminisce. Two of the attendees, and some of the earliest moorers at the marina, were Anthony and Sue Muncer with their boat Jumeirah Jane, who also presented Robert and Andrea Parton with a rose bush, which was subsequently planted at the marina by Woody, the marina gardener, who was also at the dinner.

Aqueduct's next major social event will be the marina's annual boating event on July

13. With a growing list of trade stalls and live band already booked, the event looks like it is becoming an important fixture on the boating calendar.

Meanwhile the marina has plans to introduce glamping breaks. Last year's trial of a pop-up motorhome and camping site proved to be a great success, so with that in mind, 20 new bell tents, fully equipped for glamping, will be available during the upcoming season.

For more information, visit www.aqueductmarina.co.uk



Glamping in style at the marina



Aqueduct Marina celebrated its anniversary milestone with a dinner at Rookery Hall Hotel and Spa.

Wychwood Park Hotel & Golf Club recognised with Highly Commended at Marketing Cheshire Tourism Awards



Wychwood Park Hotel & Golf Club was shortlisted in three categories in the prestigious Marketing Cheshire Tourism Awards.

The hotel, located just outside Crewe, reached Business Events Venue of the Year, Team of the Year and Wedding Venue of the Year shortlists. Although they didn't win the top spots they were honoured to have been recognised with Highly Commended in the Business Events Venue of the Year category.

The awards, held at the glorious Chester Cathedral, recognise exceptional individuals and accommodation providers, eateries and much-loved attractions behind

the region's £3.41 bn tourism sector which attracts 50 million visitors a year. A record 87 nominations – up 29% on the previous year - had been received from across Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington. Around 300 tourism and hospitality sector guests were present as winners across 16 wide-ranging categories were unveiled. Some of the winners will go on to represent Cheshire at the VisitEngland Awards for Excellence.

Nicola Smith, from Wychwood marketing, said: "It was a wonderful night against backdrop of the cathedral and we were thrilled to get so far in three different categories.

"It's a busy period for the hotel and golf club. We are delighted to have hosted Chamber events and its forthcoming golf tournament."

Meanwhile the wedding season is gearing up for Wychwood with many set to tie the knot over the next few months. A few late dates are available with special discounted packages.

The Claret Jug golf bar, which is open to all, has reopened and with a new chef.

The hotel offers 113 bedrooms, along with 25 flexible meeting rooms, including 2 large function rooms. For more information go to www.wychwoodparkhotel.co.uk



Life-saving innovation scoops top honours for medical device specialists Medtrade Crewe



CELOX™ MEDICAL MADE TO SAVE LIVES

Medtrade, Crewe, goes from strength to strength gaining industry recognition as a leading global Med-Tech company making waves in international trade and contributing to advancements in the world of medical and life sciences.

At the business desk.com North West Business of the year awards 2023 Medtrade Products was awarded winner of the Innovation category of the year for life saving CELOX™ technology – world class life saving haemostat, saving lives in life-threatening, emergency, and military situations.

Following this, Medtrade was honoured with the prestigious Allicia Bank Great British Scale-Up Entrepreneur of the Year 2023 Award for CELOX™ PPH for the management of severe bleeding following childbirth (postpartum haemorrhage - PPH) which is the leading cause of maternal mortality globally, ultimately helping save the lives of many mothers worldwide.

Medtrade CEO Russ Mably said

“I’m so very proud of what we are doing to help address the biggest cause of maternal mortality globally. We redesigned and repurposed our CELOX™ technology for the management of severe bleeding following child- birth (postpartum haemorrhage - PPH) which is the leading cause of maternal mortality globally. Hearing how Celox™ PPH is helping save lives just inspires us even more to make CELOX™ PPH

available at every delivery across the world. We truly believe this is a game changer !!

The Innovation award holds profound significance as it celebrates our rapid response to supporting the Ukrainian conflict, showcasing our ability to swiftly scale up and meet critical needs”

To find out more about Medtrade Products and its life saving technologies and please visit www.celox.com, www.celoxpph.com, www.medtrade.co.uk



SUPPORTING YOUR EMPLOYEES THROUGH EVERYDAY PRESSURES

Every day, we are faced with challenges as we navigate through the pressures on the NHS and the cost-of-living, which also has a knock-on effect on our mental health and wellbeing. At Health Shield, we understand the crucial role that employee benefits play in supporting individuals to tackle these challenges, allowing them to be more productive, engaged, and lead a healthy, happy life.

NHS pressures:

Research highlights the significant strain the NHS is under, with long wait times and individuals unable to get an appointment. A recent survey conducted by Health Shield, found that 72% UK employees are finding it difficult to book a doctor's appointment¹, heightening concerns about the pressures currently on the healthcare system.

When individuals can't access the care that they need, they are ultimately in a difficult situation, leaving them with no other option but to suffer, or self-treat until they can be seen. The pressure the NHS is under is unlikely to ease anytime soon, and the rising cost-of-living only adds to the impact on individuals.

Escalating Cost-of-Living:

With energy and food prices increasing and mortgage rates at their highest in over a decade, everyday essentials are becoming increasingly unaffordable for many. Essential food items such as milk, bread, meat, and eggs have been greatly impacted, creating a noticeable difference in weekly expenses. It's no surprise more than 8 in 10 have had to try and reduce their spending on food with a concerning nearly 4 in 10 skipping meals due to increased costs¹.

These increases have affected lower-income households more, with full-time workers earning under £25,000 a year feeling particularly vulnerable to the impact of rising costs. Stagnant wages and the fear of job loss has led many full-time workers cancelling routine healthcare treatments. It is crucial for employers to recognise and address the financial pressures weighing on their employees.

Impact on Mental Health:

The impact of financial pressures extends beyond the usual concerns, Mental Health Foundation highlights with people opting to socialise less, 18% cutting back on activities such as seeing friends and family, and 11% exercising less², all in the

hope of saving money. With nearly 1 in 3 full-time workers have put plans on hold and 4 in 10 are concerned that they don't know when the cost-of-living pressures will end, those earning under £25,000 a year being the most impacted¹. Ultimately, with each missed social gathering, lost workout, skipped meal, and even cancelling routine appointments, the individual's wellbeing may gradually be affected, and this is important to acknowledge.

Noticing the signs:

When employees thrive, so does the business. It's important for employers to invest in the long-term health and happiness of their team.

Spotting the early signs of stress in your employees could be key. Keep an eye out for these subtle indicators:

- Change from the normal for that person is the key marker
- Change in health, perhaps shown through increased absences
- Change in mood and demeanour
- Change in work performance

These cues may signal that an employee is silently dealing with stress, presenting an opportunity for you to step in and offer support. Check in with colleagues regularly and look for patterns of behaviour.

Creating a supportive workplace culture:

Matt Liggins, Head of Wellbeing at Health Shield, says: A positive nurturing workplace cannot be created overnight; it relies on creating a solid foundation.

Provide a space to talk:

Discussing finances can often be a difficult topic to approach, so don't let your employees suffer in silence. Regular catchups will provide the opportunity to address any concerns they may have going on in their work or personal life and release any difficult emotions they might be facing.

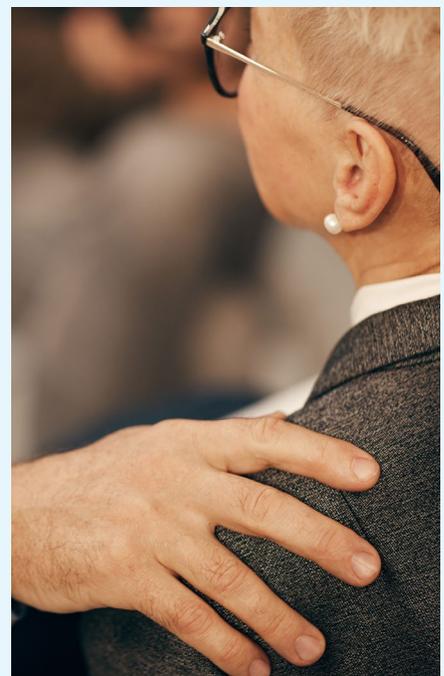
Listen with empathy:

Choose to engage with the employee, asking open questions shows your engagement with the conversation and your employee, hopefully making them feel heard and understood.

To underline the importance and commitment to wellbeing, it should be an integral part of the vision and values of a business, with employees recognised as the organisation's most important asset. Prioritising mental health not only supports employees but also contributes to the overall success of the business.

Discover more at www.healthshield.co.uk

1. Snapshot survey, carried out by Health Shield December 2023 amongst 564 people in full- or part-time work; and with a cross-section of regions, gender, and age.
2. [Mental Health Org November Survey, 2023.](#)



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 Cheshire Business Coaching, 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

DOG TRAINER

- residential training
- 1-2-1 training sessions
- dog sport trainings
- assistance dogs training

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Let's train together!

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WhatsApp / Mob 0747-037-4784

Would you like to advertise in the Chamber magazine?

Sizes from full and half page to business card.

Please contact Jon Barnes on 01270 445409 or jon.barnes@sccci.co.uk

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

In today's global trade landscape, exporting, importing and outward investment are key in driving growth, creating and safeguarding jobs, and enhancing a company's competitiveness

Who We Are

South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a leading provider of export documentation services. We have been supporting local businesses for 30+ years.



Accredited to British Chamber of Commerce and a certified Issuing Body for Export Documentation to the International Chamber of Commerce and World Chamber Federation.

Do You Need Documentation?

If you sell your products or services overseas, then you will need export documentation in some countries to clear customs.

It can also be required as proof of origin to claim preferential duty rates or for banking purposes when payment is by Letter of Credit.

Our Services

- International Trade Support
- Up to 50% discount on documents for Chamber Members
- eCert – Electronic Documentation Service
- EUR-1 and A.TR Movement Certificates
- Arab and Egyptian documents
- Authorised signatory services
- Assistance in accessing new markets

Global Business Network



We are a member of the Global Business Network – a powerful, reliable B2B network that includes Accredited Chambers of

Commerce and business groups from around the world.

Its aim is to drive two-way commerce and business between global destinations and the UK. The network acts as an agile and reliable ecosystem for businesses wishing to widen their international horizons.

Chambers Trade Academy



The Chambers Trade Academy is an initiative of selected Chambers of Commerce across the UK designed to help traders by providing free information sessions to both Members and Non-Members.

Topics covered include the basics of exporting and importing, how to grow overseas sales, diversifying your supply chain, establishing a presence overseas, and updates on the latest regulations.

The Chambers Trade Academy represents more than 15,000 businesses of all sectors and engage with more than 70,000 businesses through our services.

Contact Us

Expert International
Trade support



01270 445 406



info@sccci.co.uk



www.sccci.co.uk



The Cheshire East Business Support Initiative

Start, Sustain and Succeed.

Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems and businesses through the Cheshire East Chambers Network – all three Cheshire East Chambers of Commerce working together.

The listed workshops below are to be delivered by South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce:

Friday 21st June

Rookery Hall Hotel & Spa
- Covering the basics of International Trade

Wednesday 10th July

Nantwich Town Football Club
- Speed Networking



This project is funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.



For more information and bookings for the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce Workshops, please email dominic.hibbert@sccci.co.uk