

SOUTH CHESHIRE CHAMBER BUSINESS

 **SOUTH CHESHIRE**
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Chambers of
Commerce
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News and views from the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry | **Q2 2026**

**South Cheshire
Chamber welcomes
Baywater Healthcare
as new Patron**

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**HRH The Princess Royal officially opens
Bentley Motors' new state-of-the-art Paint Shop**

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Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you



RUN CREWE 10K FOR YMCA CHESHIRE

Every mile you run helps provide a safe home and a fresh start for young people in our community.

By running for YMCA

Cheshire, you are directly funding supported housing, wraparound care and mentoring, as well as essential life-skills training.

We will support you every step of the way with an official YMCA running vest and a dedicated fundraising pack.

Lace up, get inspired, and make your miles count for YMCA Cheshire.



SCAN TO REGISTER

YMCA CHESHIRE

CREWE 10K

SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER 2026

Every Stride Changes lives

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Unique Themed Medal

Free Race Photos

Chip-timed results

Post Race Goodies

YMCA Running vest



UPCOMING EVENTS



SOUTH CHESHIRE CHAMBER 2026 BUSINESS AWARDS

13/11/2026
CREWE HALL

FINAL FRIDAY

27/11/2026
YMCA CHESHIRE LIMITED

CHRISTMAS NETWORKING LUNCH

11/12/2026
ROOKERY HALL HOTEL & SPA

The next issue of South Cheshire Chamber Business Magazine is due out November 20th.

Deadline for copy is November 13th 2026.

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

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WHICH SOUTH CHESHIRE CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

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Our most popular package

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- + Place an ad in our weekly newsletter and priority position to promote your news
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£216.67 / Month (exc. VAT)

JOIN

Minimum sign up term 12 months and information subject to change.

Check www.sccci.co.uk for updates.



WELCOME

Welcome to the latest edition of *South Cheshire Business*

Confidence is being tested by a difficult national picture, yet across South Cheshire businesses continue to invest, recruit and commit to this area for the long term.

Our front cover captures that perfectly. Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal visited Bentley Motors to officially open the company's new Paint Shop, the first automotive paint shop in the world to use automated guided vehicles to move vehicle bodies through the process. It is central to the company's Dream Factory strategy. A visit of this kind matters for more than the photographs. It is national recognition of what is being built here, and a clear signal that Crewe remains a place where world class manufacturers choose to invest.

I am also delighted to welcome Baywater Healthcare as our newest Patron. One of the UK's leading home healthcare providers, Baywater has its headquarters and national distribution warehouse in Crewe, with more than 180 people on Electra Way and over twenty years of roots in the region. It is a business that combines commercial success with a real commitment to the community it serves, and I look forward to working closely with Adam Sullivan and his team.

That investment story continues elsewhere. Planning approval has been granted for the new Leighton Hospital and Integrated Health Projects named as contractor, a 1.4 billion pound programme and the biggest mid Cheshire will see for decades. The Chamber is working to ensure local firms understand the supply chain opportunities it creates.

Representation sits behind all of this. In recent months I have met a great many members and the same themes recur: connectivity, skills, town centre confidence and the need for a credible plan. The Words from Westminster piece on a Station Investment Zone around Crewe Station is the kind of thinking we need, and with Mayoral Combined Authority elections due in May 2027 the case for a coordinated vision and master plan for Crewe and South Cheshire has never been stronger. Our role is not simply to comment on the future of this area, but to help shape it.

There is much more to enjoy in these pages. On skills, Cheshire College South and West and Macclesfield College have merged to create one of the largest colleges in England, while our Local Skills Improvement Plan sets out how employer need and training provision can be better aligned. Crewe UTC enters its tenth year with record applicants, Qualkem marks 55 years of manufacturing in the town, and Her Place is turning an empty town centre unit into a new women's centre. One Crewe, powered by the Chamber, has also marked its first birthday.

Our own programme continues at pace, with our 29th annual Business Awards at Crewe Hall on 13th November. My thanks to the members, patrons and partners who make the Chamber what it is. If there is an issue affecting your business, please get in touch. We are here to listen and to act.

I hope you enjoy this edition, and I wish you and your business every success in the months ahead.

Paul Colman **Chief Executive** @SCCCI_CEO

MEET THE CHAMBER TEAM

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SOUTH CHESHIRE CHAMBER PATRONS



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.

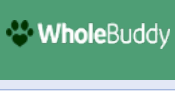


INTERNATIONAL TRADE

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!

Meet the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry

NEW MEMBERS

	Active Cheshire finance@activecheshire.org activecheshire.org 07951 916 665		Resin Driveways Showrooms sarah@resindrivewayshowrooms.com resindrivewayshowrooms.com 01270 449 409
	Apollo Buckingham Health Science Campus abbeygail_beck@apollohospitals.com abhsc.co.uk 01270 323 545		Richmond Villages info@richmond-villages.com richmond-villages.com 01926 679 502
	Canine Creations Cheshire info@caninecreationscheshire.co.uk caninecreationscheshire.co.uk 07376 274 221		Ryland Land Rover Stoke jonathan.newall@ryland.co.uk Ryland.co.uk 01782 219 500
	Macon Financial Planning Limited planningteam@maconfp.com maconfp.com 01270 250 900		White Ocean Ltd hello@white-ocean.co.uk white-ocean.co.uk 01270 295 230
	Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre lyndsey@rasasc.co.uk rasasc.co.uk 07391 429 480		Whole Buddy Limited information@wholebuddy.co.uk wholebuddy.co.uk 01270 296 366

MEMBER FEEDBACK



I have been attending South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce's HR Forum events for several years. I find it a great way to connect with fellow HR professionals, exchange views and experiences and share knowledge. I work for a family ran company which does not have a large HR department, so having a platform to meet other professionals from my field has been invaluable for me.

Dot Gidge
Compliance & HR Manager
HJ Lea Oakes



If you would like to share a testimonial, please send it through to jon.barnes@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 further details and dates of forthcoming Chamber events visit my.sccci.co.uk/events.html

» 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

For more information on how the Chamber can help your business please contact Manager Jon Barnes on jon.barnes@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

Summer proves a sizzling success for Chamber networking



Chamber Chief Executive Paul Colman is pictured with Active Cheshire who took home the Bentley Motors Trophy from the Annual Golf Tournament



SouthCheshireChamberofCommerce is celebrating a memorable season of bringing members together for a packed programme of networking, sport and outdoor activities during one of the hottest summers on record.

From business breakfasts and networking events to a newly-launched padel tournament at Crewe Vagrants Club, the Chamber has taken its members out of the office and into some very different settings over the summer months.

There was friendly rivalry, and some very impressive play, at the Chamber annual golf day at Crewe Golf Club. Members went on to swap their work wear for walking boots for netwalking at Queen's Park, Crewe and Reaseheath College, enjoying the gentle exercise and beautiful scenery.

The busy programme has provided plenty of opportunities for businesses from across South Cheshire to make new connections, catch up with existing contacts and enjoy some informal time together.

Chamber Events Co-Ordinator Dominic Hibbert said:

"It has been a fantastic summer for the Chamber and our members. We wanted to offer a programme that was varied, enjoyable and gave people plenty of opportunities to connect – and it has certainly delivered."



"Networking is at the heart of what we do, but it doesn't always have to mean sitting around a table. Some of the best conversations happen when people are walking together, playing sport or simply enjoying a bit of sunshine. The weather this summer has been perfect for that."

Now its full steam ahead for the autumn. Netwalking returns in September and October alongside Final Friday networking at DJH Accountancy and Business Advisers and YMCA Cheshire.

The Chamber's flagship Business Awards returns for a 29th year on November 13. The stage is set for another spectacular night at Crewe Hall Hotel & Spa celebrating all that is great and good about our South Cheshire business community.

Dominic added:

"We are incredibly proud of the business community we represent and the enthusiasm our members have shown throughout the summer."

"It has been a brilliant few months and a reminder that bringing people together is so important. Whether someone has been a member for many years or has only recently joined, these events are a great way to make connections and feel part of the wider South Cheshire business community."

» For more on what's coming up next go to sccci.co.uk/events/



South Cheshire Chamber welcomes Baywater Healthcare as new Patron



Baywater Healthcare Chief Executive Officer Adam Sullivan (left) with Paul Colman of South Cheshire Chamber



Baywater Healthcare is a large employer on Electra Way, Crewe Business Park



South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce is delighted to announce that Baywater Healthcare has joined the Chamber as its latest Patron, strengthening an influential network of organisations committed to supporting economic growth, skills development and community prosperity across the region.

With headquarters and a national distribution warehouse located in Crewe, Baywater Healthcare is one of the UK's leading home healthcare providers, supporting tens of thousands of patients nationwide through specialist clinical, sleep and home oxygen services.

With a long-established presence in the region spanning over 20 years, Baywater Healthcare has grown from its Cheshire roots into a nationally-recognised healthcare business while maintaining its commitment to the local community and regional economy.

As one of the region's largest healthcare employers, Baywater Healthcare says investment in the Chamber Patron programme reflects a shared belief in the importance of collaboration between business, education, healthcare and the voluntary sector.

Adam Sullivan, Chief Executive Officer of Baywater Healthcare, said:

“Whilst Baywater Healthcare supports patients across the UK, Crewe remains our home and an important part of our identity. We are proud of the role we play as a local employer and are passionate about creating positive impact beyond healthcare.”

“Through our partnership with the Chamber, we look forward to building stronger relationships across the business community and supporting initiatives that help Crewe and the surrounding area thrive.”

Baywater Healthcare has a workforce of 560 people countrywide, with more than 180 based on Electra Way in Crewe. Its warehouse facility is also based in the town.

The company has earned a reputation not only for delivering high quality patient care but also for its commitment to creating opportunities for employees and supporting initiatives that improve the wellbeing of local communities.

Chamber Chief Executive Paul Colman, said:

“We are delighted to welcome Baywater Healthcare as a Chamber Patron. Baywater is a fantastic example of a business that combines commercial success with a genuine commitment to making a difference.

Having grown from its roots here in Crewe, the organisation has become a national leader in home healthcare while continuing to invest in local people, local partnerships and community causes.”

“The Chamber looks forward to working alongside Baywater Healthcare and supporting its continued contribution to the economic and social success of South Cheshire.”

Baywater Healthcare is also actively involved in supporting local charities and community organisations, including its relationship with Cheshire Community Foundation and Cheshire Connect, helping to direct resources and support towards projects that make a meaningful difference to local people.

This commitment to social value, alongside its healthcare expertise and strong Cheshire heritage, makes Baywater Healthcare a welcome addition to the Chamber's growing Patron community.

The company joins several high-profile organisations as a Chamber Patron including Bentley Motors, Cheshire College South & West, Mornflake, Radius, Reaseheath College and SG World.

» For more on Baywater Healthcare go to baywater.co.uk

Picturesque Queens Park retains Green Flag award



Queen's Park, often described as Crewe's 'jewel in the crown', is one of 12 Cheshire East parks and green spaces to be awarded the prestigious Green Flag Award, recognising their exceptional quality, condition and cleanliness.

The Green Flag Award is the international quality mark for parks and green spaces and reflects the ongoing work of parks staff, volunteers and community partners, who help care for these valued public spaces throughout the year.

The awards also recognise the continued success of a number of other parks and countryside sites across Cheshire East, highlighting the council's commitment to providing high-quality green spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Green Flag Award status is reviewed annually and recognises excellence across

a range of areas, including environmental management, biodiversity, cleanliness, safety and community involvement.

Cllr David Jefferay, cabinet member for environment, sustainability and waste management, said: "These awards are a reflection of the dedication and hard work of our environmental services teams, volunteers and community partners who help care for these important community spaces throughout the year. Parks and green spaces play a vital role in supporting health and wellbeing, encouraging people to be active and helping communities connect with nature. We are proud that so many of our sites continue to receive this prestigious recognition."

Opened in 1888, Queens Park was gifted to the town of Crewe by the London & North Western Railway (LNWR) to mark Queen Victoria's Jubilee and the 50th anniversary of the Grand Junction Railway.

Today the original Victorian layout remains largely unchanged. The park's impressive 500m main axis runs east to west through her distinctive oval shape. Features include the Grade II listed Jubilee Clock Tower, bandstand and South African Boer War Memorial of 1904. Today visitors can enjoy a wide range of events in the park and refreshments in the Taste for Life café.

The park has notched up many accolades over the years, including Green Flag awards, all testament to the hard work of local volunteers.

The full list of Cheshire East's Green Flag award-winning sites in 2026 is: Bollington Recreation Ground, Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve, Congleton Park, Fountain Fields, Middlewich, Macclesfield Riverside Park, Milton Park, Alsager, Sandbach Park, Tatton Park, Tegg's Nose Country Park, Macclesfield, The Carrs, Wilmslow and The Moor, Knutsford

» **The council welcomes new volunteers at its parks and open spaces. Visit parks@cheshireeast.gov.uk**



Cheshire Afrofest hailed a success after drawing crowds to first event in Queen's Park

Afrofest burst onto South Cheshire's summer social scene in style in June bringing a riot of colour and crowds of fun-lovers to Queens Park. The event, the first of its kind in the region, exceeded expectations as families, residents and visitors from across South Cheshire flocked to experience a vibrant showcase of African culture.

Attractions included live music performances, energetic dance displays, cultural exhibitions, fairground rides, community stalls and handicrafts as well as Afro art, fashion and delicious Afro-fusion food.

Organiser Amaka Lawton, founder of the award-winning Alpha Omega Women Peace & Security (WPS) Foundation in Crewe, was delighted at the response. This was exactly what Afrofest was created for," she said. "People from every background came together to celebrate culture, friendship and community. Seeing families dancing together, meeting new people and embracing the atmosphere was joyful."

The event was sponsored by Alpha Omega Securities in Crewe and Crewe Town Council and supported by a wide-range



of local businesses donating raffle prizes. CreweCreates staged craft sessions to make costumes and flowers for the festival Queen and her throne.

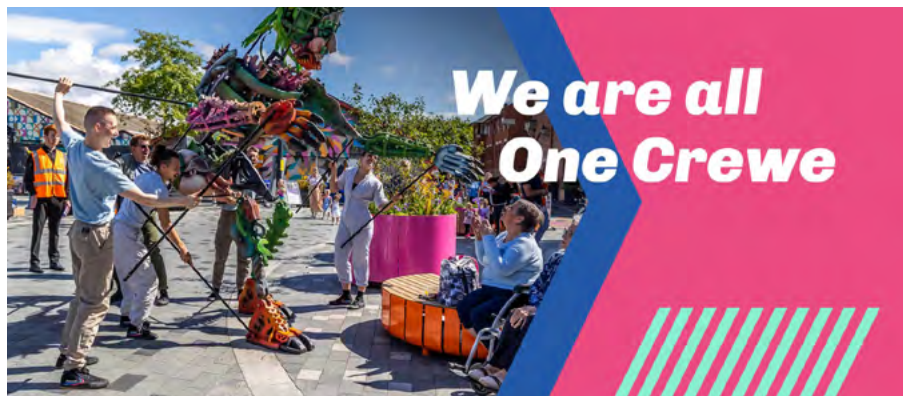
The Queen's arrival, and parade round the park, proved a spectacle to behold as families joined in and danced to the beat.

» **For a full gallery of pictures see Cheshire Afrofest on social media or the website cheshireafrofest.co.uk**

Amaka Lawton and Afrofest volunteers



One year – and one great success story: One Crewe



One Crewe, the good news and information platform 'Powered by South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce', is going from strength to strength after marking its first birthday.

Since publishing its very first story on July 15, 2025, One Crewe has been shining a spotlight on the people, businesses, organisations and community groups helping to make Crewe a great place to live, work and visit.

The aim has always been simple – to celebrate the positive things happening across the town, share useful information and give the people of Crewe a platform to tell their stories.

And over the past 12 months, there has been plenty to celebrate. From inspiring individuals and successful local businesses to charities, community groups and major events, the One Crewe editorial team has been busy

filling 'happy pots' bringing readers a daily dose of good news.

A spokesman said: "Crewe has every reason to be proud. A rich industrial heritage, businesses of global repute, and hardworking communities doing good every day. But for many, the prevailing story has been one of setbacks - a town centre awaiting regeneration and railway infrastructure overdue investment.

"One Crewe was launched to change that narrative. Our purpose is to promote positive news from across our residents, businesses, public sector, education and charities — and in doing so, restore civic pride and rebuild belief in the town."

The platform has also captured the colour and character of Crewe through some fantastic picture coverage, including Cheshire AfroFest, Crewe Pride and Crewe Day – events which have brought people together and showcased the vibrant

community spirit running through the town.

It's delivered on major breaking news stories and developments key to the growth of the town and wellbeing of its people. One Crewe has become a place to discover what is happening locally, meet some of the people making a difference and celebrate the achievements that might otherwise go unnoticed.

And the first birthday is far from the end of the story. With plenty more events, initiatives, community projects and local success stories on the horizon, One Crewe is looking forward to the next chapter.

» **To find out more head over to the onecrewe.co.uk and follow on Facebook. To send a good news story email news@onecrewe.co.uk**

Nantwich Show celebrates record-breaking year



Nantwich Show returned to Reaseheath Old Hall Farm in July for another fantastic celebration of agriculture, food and rural life, welcoming around 13,500 visitors to the showground.

The 2026 Show was the biggest since moving to Reaseheath and marked the successful completion of the Agricultural Society's five-year plan to rebuild and strengthen the event. This achievement would not have been possible without the tremendous support of sponsors, volunteers, exhibitors, traders and local business community.

Highlights included the Shetland Pony Grand National, Tilstock skydivers landing in the Main Ring and ever-popular livestock competitions. Visitors also enjoyed falconry, the Dog and Duck Show, Countryside Arena and new Horticulture Section, officially opened by gardening expert Adam Kirtland.

The Farming Discovery Zone proved particularly popular with families. Its Great British Cheese Sandwich theme helped children discover the farming story behind the food on their plates through seed sowing, grain identification, butter making, cheese tasting and potato digging.

Show manager Liz Parkin said: "We were delighted to have South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce as sponsor of the official showground map. With so much to explore across the site, the map was an essential part of helping visitors make the most of their day. Our sincere thanks also go to our long-standing patrons, Reaseheath College and University Centre and HJ Lea, whose continued backing plays an important role in the Show's success."

Organisers are now looking ahead to 2027 when Nantwich Agricultural Society will celebrate its 130th anniversary.



PLANNING APPLICATION APPROVED AND CONTRACTOR NAMED FOR NEW CREWE HOSPITAL

Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has been given the green light to build a state-of-the-art hospital in Crewe.

On Tuesday 9 June 2026, Cheshire East Council approved the Trust's hybrid planning application for the six-storey hospital to be built on land to the north of the existing site. The approved planning application also included an ambulatory cancer care centre, and a 1,000-space multi-storey car park.

Among the key features of the new hospital will be single en-suite rooms for all inpatients. Evidence shows single rooms help hospitals manage infection control better, reduce recovery times for patients and provide far greater privacy and dignity for patients and their loved ones.

The new hospital will also be one of the most digitally enabled in the country with advanced technology supporting improved patient safety. Meanwhile, smart technologies will help control things like heating, lighting, and air conditioning. These smart systems can also help people find appointments, and manage waiting areas, and improve access to car parking spaces.

The main hospital construction work is scheduled to begin in summer 2028, with the new hospital opening during the 2032/33 financial year.

Russ Favager, the Trust's Board Senior Responsible Officer for Leighton New Hospital Programme, said:

"We have a bold, long-term ambition to develop a health and care neighbourhood in Crewe, with this new hospital at its heart. The approval of our planning application is a major milestone in this journey."

"While the new hospital is much needed, our plans go beyond a physical building, this development supports our long-term strategy to transform how care is delivered by reducing unnecessary time in hospital and strengthening prevention and neighbourhood-based care closer to home, in partnership with community and primary care services.



“There’s still a lot of work to do before the new hospital opens, so we will continue to keep our local communities and partners fully informed and engaged every step of the way.”

Meanwhile the contractor for the new hospital has been named as Integrated Health Projects (IHP), which is a joint venture between VINCI Building and Sir Robert McAlpine.

IHP has over 20 years of experience in the development and delivery of a wide range of award-winning healthcare projects.

These include the Countess of Chester Women & Children’s Hospital, a four storey 180-bed facility, which was the first completed NHS facility in England to be verified as compliant with the NHS Net Zero Building Standard. IHP also built North View, an adult mental health inpatient unit, which has 150 single bedrooms, for Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust.

Ian Moston, the Trust’s Chief Executive Officer, said:

“I’m proud to welcome IHP to our team. Together we will deliver what will be the single biggest infrastructure programme in mid Cheshire for decades. Our bold plan will mean better outcomes by creating environments that improve patient care, support staff, strengthen resilience and provide long-term value for communities.”

“But this programme will be more than a like-for-like hospital replacement. The development, along with the wider ambition for a health and care neighbourhood, is a £1.4bn investment in mid Cheshire. This makes it a once in a generation opportunity to transform health and care services at a scale never seen before in this region.”

Commenting on behalf of IHP, Neil Martin, Chief Executive Officer, Sir Robert McAlpine, added: “The new Leighton Hospital will transform healthcare for communities across Mid Cheshire, creating a modern, sustainable facility that will serve generations to come. Working alongside our IHP joint venture partner, VINCI Building, we are proud to help deliver a world-class hospital that will improve patient outcomes, support the wellbeing of healthcare professionals, and leave a lasting legacy for local people. We look forward to collaborating with the Hospital 2.0 Alliance, Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and regional partners to bring this important vision to life.”

The current Leighton Hospital was built in the 1970s using a material called reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC). This material does not last forever, and the existing building has now reached the end of its structural life. For this reason, the hospital is part of the Government’s New Hospital Programme scheme and included in the first group of hospitals to be rebuilt, known as Wave 1.

Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal officially opens Bentley Motors' new state-of-the-art Paint Shop



HRH The Princess Royal visited Bentley Motors' headquarters in Crewe to officially open the company's new state-of-the-art Paint Shop, marking a significant milestone in the ongoing transformation of Bentley's Dream Factory.

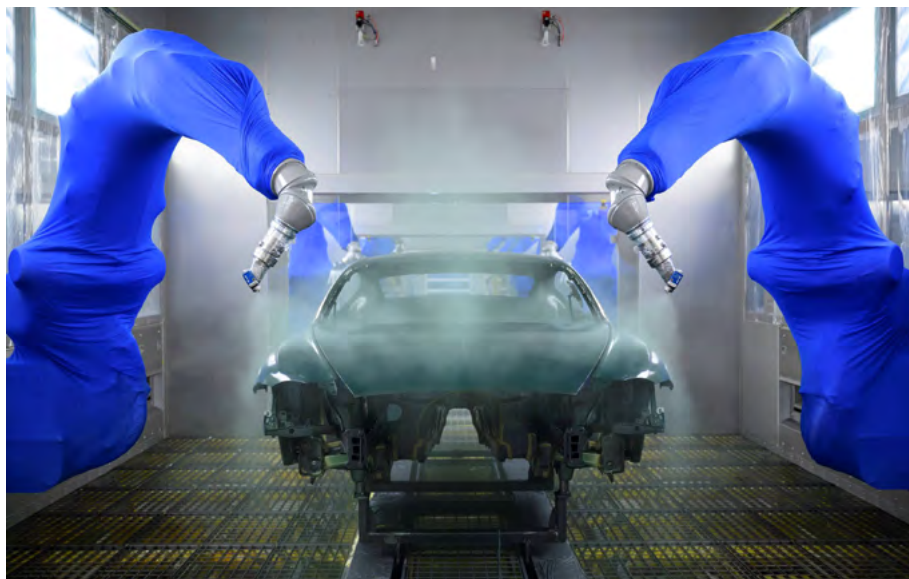
During the visit, Her Royal Highness toured Bentley's Design Studio, the new Paint Shop and wider manufacturing operations, meeting colleagues from across the business whose skills, innovation and craftsmanship underpin the creation of Bentley's extraordinary vehicles. The visit highlighted Bentley's continued investment in advanced manufacturing technologies, sustainable production practices and the future of luxury automotive manufacturing in the UK.

Dr Frank-Steffen Walliser, Chairman and Chief Executive of Bentley Motors, said:

"We are honoured to welcome Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal to Crewe and to mark the official opening of our new Paint Shop – a proud moment for all of us and the culmination of a great deal of innovation and ambition to see the facility come to life. Her visit provides an opportunity to celebrate the extraordinary colleagues whose expertise, passion and dedication continue to drive Bentley forward."

Andreas Lehe, Bentley's Member of the Board for Manufacturing, added:

"This facility represents a major milestone in the transformation of our Dream Factory and a significant investment in the future of British manufacturing. Combining advanced technologies with exceptional craftsmanship, it strengthens our production capabilities and supports the next generation of Bentley vehicles, including the forthcoming Bentley Torcal."



development of its Crewe headquarters and reaffirming the company's commitment to British manufacturing excellence.

The new Paint Shop represents a major investment in Bentley's future and is a central component of the company's Dream Factory strategy. Covering 12,500 square metres across multiple levels, the facility is the tallest building on Bentley's Crewe campus and the first automotive Paint Shop in the world to use Automated Guided Vehicles (AGVs) to transport vehicle bodies through the paint production process.

Designed to deliver greater efficiency, flexibility and environmental performance, the facility also reflects Bentley's commitment to creating manufacturing environments where people can do their best work. Advanced thermal management systems provide cooler, more comfortable conditions for colleagues carrying out highly skilled manual craftsmanship, while intelligent automation and AGVs improve ergonomics, reduce physical demands and enable more flexible production processes. Together with significant reductions in energy consumption, waste and emissions, the new Paint Shop demonstrates how investment in the latest technology can simultaneously advance sustainability and create a workplace built around the needs of Bentley's colleagues.

The Paint Shop will play a key role in Bentley's future product portfolio. The Bentley Torcal, the brand's fourth model line, will be painted in the facility from the start of production,



alongside the Continental GT, Continental GTC and Flying Spur.

The new building underscores Bentley Motors' continued commitment to innovation, sustainability, its people and manufacturing excellence as the company advances its vision for a modern, flexible and future-ready luxury automotive production site in Crewe.

» For more information visit bentleymotors.com

Just as importantly, every aspect of the Paint Shop has been designed around our colleagues. From improved thermal comfort to intelligent automation that enhances ergonomics and flexibility, we are creating a modern working environment that enables our people to perform at their very best while setting new standards for luxury automotive production."

The official opening was marked by the unveiling of a commemorative plaque by Her Royal Highness, celebrating an important moment in Bentley's ongoing

AstraZeneca equipment donation brings industry standard equipment to Cheshire College students



Cheshire College staff alongside Mark Mottram (left) and Boughey driver Jamie (fourth from the left).

A significant equipment donation from global biopharmaceutical company AstraZeneca has been delivered to Cheshire College – South & West with the support of Boughey Logistics, enhancing the College's ability to deliver high-quality technical and vocational training for students across the region.

The donation includes five tonnes of specialist equipment, such as packaging conveyor belt systems, vacuum testers, pouch sealers, instrumentation, mobile platforms and mechanical lifting equipment. In addition, office furniture, lockers and work benches were also donated. The resources will be used to support practical, industry-focused training, helping students develop skills aligned with modern workplace practices.

The equipment was transported and delivered to Cheshire College's campuses

by logistics partner Boughey Logistics, as a goodwill contribution, supporting the safe and efficient movement of the donation. The collaboration reflects Boughey Logistics continued commitment to supporting skills development and education across the region.

AstraZeneca's donation reflects its commitment to sustainable practices through the reuse of specialist equipment, extending its lifecycle and helping to reduce waste. The equipment will provide students with access to industry-standard machinery, strengthening links between education and real-world industrial environments.

Jasbir Dhesi, Principal and CEO, Cheshire College commented: "We are extremely grateful to AstraZeneca for this generous donation, and to Boughey Logistics, both valued employer partners of the College, for their support in delivering the equipment. Partnerships like this are vital in ensuring our students have access to industry-standard

resources that prepare them for the world of work. We look forward to continuing to work closely with employers like AstraZeneca and Boughey Logistics to support skills development across the region."

Mark Mottram from AstraZeneca said: "We're delighted to be able to support our local community and to help young people develop the skills they need for the future. We are pleased to donate this surplus equipment to Cheshire College, where it can support practical learning and career development."

Tim Moran, Managing Director at Boughey Logistics, commented: "At Boughey Logistics, we believe we have a vital role to play in supporting the communities where we operate. Our in-house Palletline team facilitated the transfer of this high-quality engineering equipment from AstraZeneca to Cheshire College. By ensuring these resources reached the Ellesmere Port and Crewe campuses safely, we are helping to provide the next generation of engineers with the tools they need to succeed."

"I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all our colleagues for their flawless coordination of this move; it is a proud moment for us to support the vocational development of local students in such a tangible way."

» To partner with Cheshire College, visit www.ccs.ac.uk.

New chapter for education as Cheshire College – South and West and Macclesfield College officially merge



Cheshire College - South & West and Macclesfield College have become one organisation following the successful completion of their legal merger.

The newly merged College now serves more than 15,000 learners each year, including over 6,000 young people, around 1,500 apprentices and thousands of adult learners. Supported by approximately 900 staff, with an annual income of almost £80 million and covering a geographical area of 750sq miles, making it one of the largest further education colleges in England. The strengthened organisation will play a leading role in developing the skilled workforce needed to support economic growth across the region and beyond.

The merger follows a successful public consultation and an extensive period of planning and due diligence. It reflects

a shared commitment to expanding opportunities for learners, responding to the evolving needs of employers and creating a financially strong, resilient and sustainable college for the future.

Operating under the banner of Stronger Together, the new organisation brings together the expertise and heritage of both colleges. By combining specialist curriculum expertise, established employer partnerships and strong industry links, the College is well placed to deliver the skills, training and innovation needed to support learners, businesses and local communities. Working in partnership with more than 1,500 employers across local, regional and national networks, the College will play an even greater role in developing the talent pipeline, addressing skills gaps and supporting economic growth.

Learners will benefit from broader curriculum choice, enhanced progression pathways, continued investment in industry-standard facilities and technology, and even stronger links with employers and industry partners. Together, these developments will ensure learners gain the skills, knowledge and experience needed to succeed while helping meet the current and future workforce.

Lesley Davies, Chair of Corporation, said: "This marks the beginning of an exciting new

chapter for our colleges and the communities we serve. The merger is the result of many months of careful planning, rigorous due diligence and meaningful consultation, all with one clear objective: creating the best possible future for our learners, staff and employers.

"By bringing together the expertise, resources and ambitions of Cheshire College – South & West and Macclesfield College, we have created an organisation that is better equipped to respond to evolving skills needs while continuing to deliver exceptional education and training across Cheshire."

Jasbir Dhesi OBE, Principal and Chief Executive, said: "Both colleges have proud histories, strong reputations and a deep commitment to serving their communities. By bringing our organisations together, we are building on those strengths to create even greater opportunities for learners, apprentices, employers and our wider communities."

"This merger enables us to broaden our curriculum, strengthen our partnerships with employers and continue investing in the facilities, expertise and opportunities that help people to succeed. Together, we will play an even greater role in supporting economic growth and meeting the future skills needs of Cheshire and beyond."

Crewe's 'Jewel in the Crown' shines with Mornflake support



Richard Palin of Friends of Queen's Park and Abi Kennish of Mornflake at the fishing peg where a plaque is now installed

Volunteers have received a welcome boost as they carry out vital restoration work in Crewe's much-loved Queen's Park.

Mornflake, the town's oldest employer, has funded a lakeside fishing peg which provides a safe platform for anglers and helps prevent further ground erosion.

It's one of three built and installed by Friends of Queen's Park volunteers and fishing bailiffs - a group of 15 local people dedicated to caring for the historic park, which has won many Green Flag awards for its beauty and is often dubbed Crewe's 'Jewel in the Crown'.

Spokesman Richard Palin said: "We were concerned about erosion in some areas around the lake and the council gave us permission to build the pegs, which provide a stable spot to

fish and help prevent further damage. We've used railway sleepers for the build in keeping with Crewe's rail heritage and were delighted with the support from Mornflake, also part of the town's history for so many generations."

The park was officially opened in 1888 as a gift to the town from the London & North Western Railway Company.

Designed by railway engineer Francis Webb and landscape architect Edward Kemp, the 45-acre Victorian park features a man-made lake, clock tower and Boer War memorial.

It remains a busy local attraction and venue for crowd-pulling festivals - just in recent weeks these have included Cheshire Afrofest, Picnic in the Park and the Armed Forces weekend, all drawing thousands.

Breakfast manufacturer Mornflake, an employer of more than 350 people at Crewe, traces its roots back to 1675 when the Lea family first began milling oats in Cheshire. The Gresty Road site, established in 1941, had previously been a flour mill run by Walter Brown before being taken over by the Lea family to feed the war effort.

The firm, still family-owned, marked its 350th anniversary last summer with a visit from HRH The Princess Royal, who performed the official opening of its new 'Oat Milling Centre of Excellence' supporting a commitment to sustainability.

Activities to mark the milestone are continuing with trees being planted up and down the country. Managing director James Lea said:

"It is a privilege for Mornflake to support the Friends of Queen's Park and the fantastic work they do to preserve this treasured landmark.

"Both the park and our family business have been part of the fabric of this community for generations, so there is a real sense of shared heritage and pride in helping to protect and enhance this special place.

"We're also delighted that the park remains such a busy local attraction. Supporting health and wellbeing in the communities we serve has always been important to Mornflake, and the park remains a valuable green space where local people can get active and connect with nature."

Mornflake enjoys bumper day as thousands flock to The Nantwich Show

Long-standing Nantwich Show sponsor Mornflake enjoyed a brisk day of trading as thousands of visitors packed into one of the region's biggest celebrations of farming and rural life.

The breakfast cereal manufacturer welcomed a steady stream of visitors to its popular stand throughout the day, with many taking the opportunity to stock up on favourite products, discover new lines and chat to the Mornflake team. Top-sellers were large 3kg bags of Jumbo Oats and Creamy Superfast Oats.

The family-owned business was once again a headline sponsor of the show's Food Market, helping to showcase the region's finest independent food and drink producers.

Managing director James Lea said:

"Nantwich Show is always one of the highlights of our year and it was fantastic to see so many people enjoying everything the event had to offer."

"Our stand was busy throughout the day, and it was wonderful to meet customers, many of whom have supported Mornflake for generations. The show has such a special atmosphere and reflects everything we value as a business - supporting British farming, celebrating local food producers and bringing communities together."

"We're proud to have been part of Nantwich Show for more than 50 years and look forward to continuing that relationship for years to come."

The annual event once again attracted thousands of visitors to the Reaseheath College showground, where they enjoyed top-class livestock competitions, equestrian displays, countryside attractions, trade stands, family entertainment and an extensive range of local food and drink.

Mornflake's association with the show stretches back to the 1970s, long before digital records began. Last year Nantwich Agricultural Society honoured the Lea family's support with the presentation of a Long Service award plaque.



» For more on Mornflake heritage and products, go to mornflake.com

Radius accelerates EV charging expansion



Over the past 12 months, Radius, the global fleet, mobility and connectivity solutions provider, added more than 220,000 charging points to its European roaming network.

Growth focused on core markets, including the UK (20,000), Belgium (90,000), Germany (30,000), and the Netherlands (40,000). In Portugal, the network expanded from zero to 18,000 locations. This targeted approach continues to reduce range anxiety and support efficient cross-border fleet operations.

Expansion was driven by the addition of 16 new roaming partners. Key contributors include GreenFlux (+70,000 charge points), Allego (+32,000), and Monta (+34,500) across Europe. The network also incorporates over 3,000 InstaVolt and more than 2,000 Gridserve charge points throughout the UK. A further partnership with Milence added 274 specialist truck-charging stations, supporting the electrification of heavy goods vehicles across Europe.

Radius has also recently partnered with Source, which plans to open 300 ultra-rapid charging hubs across the UK and Ireland by

2030. All Source hubs will feature chargers of at least 150kW, enabling drivers to “charge and go” in around 15 minutes and further strengthening the accessibility and reliability of the Radius charging network.

Jonathan Haseler (pictured) Divisional Chief Executive Officer - Fuel & EV, commented:

“Fleet electrification is accelerating across Europe and businesses need partners that can scale with them. Through strategic partnerships, continued investment in our charging network, and the recent launch of Radius One across Europe — bringing fuel and EV charging together into a single integrated solution — Radius is focused on making fleet mobility more connected, accessible, and commercially efficient for customers operating across multiple markets.”

Radius brings music, community and inclusion to life at Crewe Pride

Radius colleagues came together at Crewe Pride to celebrate Pride Month, support the local LGBTQ+ community and reinforce the company's commitment to inclusion, diversity and belonging. The day saw widespread participation from across the business, with employees volunteering, performing and supporting activities that showcased Radius' strong connection to our local communities.

Crewe Pride continues to be a key moment in the local community calendar, and Radius has proudly championed the event since 2021, led by Nat Hand and a dedicated team of volunteers. Colleagues from across the business took part in the parade, helped at the Radius stand and contributed to a wide range of activities that helped bring the day to life, demonstrating strong engagement and a shared sense of purpose across teams.

A highlight of the day was our very own house band, featuring Alice Webb (vocals and keyboards), Michel Monsellato (vocals and guitar) Gareth Maguire (bass) and Alex Ewing (guitar), with our Founder and Executive Chairman, Bill Holmes, keeping the beat on drums, adding a unique moment to the day.

Alongside the celebration, the Radius UK Challenge team was out in force. They raised vital funds for their chosen charity, The OppO Foundation, continuing our ongoing commitment to making a positive social impact.

Simeon Irvine, Chief Business Officer at Radius and Executive Trustee of the company's DEI employee groups, shared his pride in the event:

“Crewe Pride is a great example of colleagues coming together to support our communities and celebrate inclusion in a very real and

visible way. It perfectly reflects the culture we are continuing to build at Radius — one where people feel able to show up, contribute, and be part of something bigger.”

Crewe Pride was just one part of a global wave of Pride Month activities across Radius. Colleagues worldwide marked the occasion through local initiatives, internal engagement, and community events, reflecting our ongoing commitment to inclusion, belonging, and diversity throughout the month.

» For more information visit radius.com



Reaseheath plays key role in showcasing UK beef standards to Japanese trade delegation



An international delegation from Japan visited Reaseheath College and University Centre as part of a UK-wide programme focused on strengthening trade links and assessing the quality and consistency of British red meat production.

The visit, organised by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), forms part of a wider industry fact-finding mission across UK farms, processors and retail sites, designed to give overseas buyers first-hand insight into the systems underpinning UK beef, and the standards that support its global reputation.

With premium export markets like Japan placing increasing emphasis on traceability,

quality and technical assurance, the ability to demonstrate those standards in practice is a key part of maintaining and growing trade relationships.

Delegates were welcomed into Reaseheath Food Centre's food processing halls for a specialist butchery demonstration led by industry experts.

The session provided a detailed demonstration of UK carcass breakdown, product utilisation and technical butchery skill, highlighting the precision and consistency required to meet both domestic expectations and international export standards.

Gary Evans, Master Butcher at Reaseheath, said: "When international delegates see the

level of skill, consistency and care involved in British butchery, it reinforces exactly why UK beef continues to be held in such high regard globally. This isn't just about technique, it's about trust in the whole supply chain, from farm to fork. Being able to demonstrate that standard in real time is hugely important for export confidence, and it's a real credit to the industry and to the skills being developed here."

The visit underlines the role of specialist institutions such as Reaseheath play in supporting the wider UK food and farming sector, not only through training the next generation of skilled professionals, but by actively contributing to the visibility and credibility of UK agricultural expertise on the global stage.

Celebrating the next generation of the land-based workforce



The next generation of the land-based and technical workforce has been celebrated as Reaseheath College and University Centre recognised the achievements of hundreds of students at its annual Presentation of Awards events.

Bringing together students, families, staff and industry partners, the ceremonies celebrated learners completing qualifications designed to prepare them for successful careers across a wide range of sectors.

The week began with a special celebration of students who entered and were published in the national Young Writers Stranger Sagas competition. Principal and CEO Marcus

Clinton praised their creativity before certificates were presented, with Freya Love receiving a special trophy from industry sponsor Anna Bates of Room 11 Coaching, alongside Julia Yeardeley from the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce.

The main award ceremonies followed on Tuesday, June 23rd and Wednesday, June 24th, celebrating achievements across land-based, technical and vocational areas. Although extreme weather conditions meant the final ceremony could not go ahead as planned, Reaseheath is working to ensure all students affected receive the recognition they deserve.

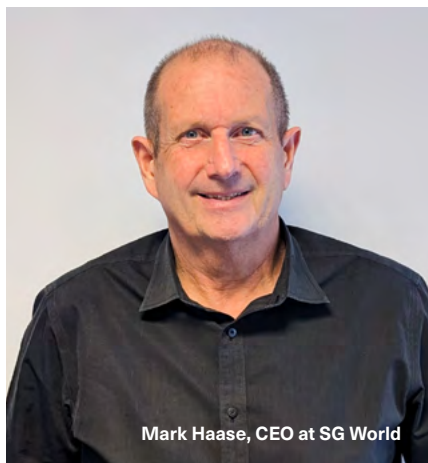
Guest speakers included former Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire and

author John Dwyer, and Animal Management alumna Kayla Bebbington, now a Dog Wellbeing Technician at Guide Dogs, who shared their experiences and highlighted the opportunities available to Reaseheath graduates.

Principal Marcus Clinton said: "A huge well done to every student who completed their qualification this year. We are incredibly proud of your achievements and wish you every success in your future careers. You will always be part of the Reaseheath community."

» **For more information visit:**
reaseheath.ac.uk

Why better rail links matter for South Cheshire (and us)



Mark Haase, CEO at SG World

As active members of the local business community, we all want to see our economy thrive. But one of the biggest conversations right now is how we bring the best people into our businesses and keep them here.

Mark Haase, CEO at SG World, recently featured in a Bloomberg article looking at Andy Burnham's push to revive high-speed rail connections across the North. The piece highlighted the ongoing challenge of drawing talent to Crewe and the surrounding areas.

This is a challenge we know many of you face, but it is important to focus on the reality. Mark said,

"We are incredibly proud of the team we have here at SG World. Our people are the engine of what we do, and the talent in this building is second to none."

"However, transport infrastructure changes the geography of recruitment.

Right now, Crewe is not automatically seen as a major commercial hub in the way Manchester or Birmingham might be. Better rail links solve that by blowing the catchment area wide open, making it far simpler for top talent to reach us."

This affects every single business trying to grow in South Cheshire. When you improve transport links, you open doors for the whole region. It is not just about bringing new people in, it is also about keeping the brilliant minds we already have by making the area more connected.

Of course, we are not just sitting back and waiting for the trains. Mark added, "We have taken things into our own hands by building our own talent pipelines locally, including apprenticeship schemes in sales, finance and IT with great success."

Infrastructure upgrades are ultimately about the next generation. Better connections make South Cheshire more accessible, more dynamic, and better equipped for long-term growth. We already have incredible businesses and exceptional talent right on our doorstep. By pushing for the transport infrastructure to match, we can ensure our region remains a brilliant place to build a career. It is a vital step for our shared economy, and SG World is proud to be part of driving South Cheshire forward.

» For more information go to sgworld.com

Building a Culture of Safety: SG World awards £500 prize to West Yorkshire chemicals leader



Leading up to this summer's tournament, Health and Safety solutions provider SG World decided to give away free World Cup-related wall planners and sweepstake kits to its customers. As part of this giveaway, anyone who requested the kit was entered into a free draw to win £500 worth of SG World products.

The campaign saw a fantastic level of engagement across the business community. Recently, SG World CEO Mark Haase visited the winning site in person to

present the prize.

The winner was Verdant Specialist Solutions, a key chemicals provider in the supply chain. They supply the essential concentrates used in many well-known household personal care and home care products that consumers would instantly recognise on supermarket shelves. Mark met with Stewart Morris, Verdant's Health and Safety Manager, who is responsible for a large and highly sensitive site in Elland, West Yorkshire.

During the visit, Stewart explained how the £500 credit will support upcoming major

mechanical works on-site. "We'll be looking to refresh and update our permits to work, particularly for confined space and Class 1 permits," Stewart explained.

The conversation highlighted how Verdant uses SG World products not just for compliance, but to build a genuine safety culture where everyone is invested. "We're getting feedback from the shop floor where they're using [the permits] now... the culture is changing and becoming more accepting," Stewart noted. "Once you've got the culture whereby everybody accepts responsibility for their own and everybody else's actions, safety runs itself".

Mark Haase complimented Stewart and his team on this collaborative approach, adding, "If you build a safety culture, the team owns it. It's about helping them own it by seeing for themselves the positives".

Brilliantly, the winning World Cup sweepstake kit wasn't just enjoyed by Verdant's staff. Stewart, who is chairman of his local RAF Association, used the kit to run a sweepstake at a charity event, raising money for their charity fund in the process!

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For facilities managers, estates teams and business owners, it is often the smaller maintenance issues that create the greatest day-to-day frustration.

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Cheshire and Warrington is the most productive economy in the North of England. We're home to world-class strengths in advanced manufacturing, life sciences, clean energy and business and professional services. But growth only works if our skills system and businesses operate in sync, and if everyone can share in the opportunities our economy creates. So the skills we build in our region are important for our future shared prosperity and sustained growth.



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one activity plan.

1. Strengthening employer voice
2. Simplifying navigation for SMEs
3. Scaling technical pathways
4. Embedding digital and sustainability skills
5. Connecting people to employment
6. Improving provider quality and teaching capacity



CHESHIRE & WARRINGTON LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Our Local Skills Improvement Plan for Cheshire and Warrington

That's what the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is for. Built on direct engagement with employers and businesses, it sets out key sectors in Cheshire and Warrington and what employers need from training and skills provision. It outlines the practical changes and collaboration which will make a difference over the next three years.

Figure 01:
Cheshire & Warrington
Local Skills Improvement Plan



Living, ongoing interface

This plan isn't the outcome – it's the blueprint for the next **three years** of how we work together to shape our workforce for today and tomorrow, and will evolve through a shared focus on partnership and delivery, as set out in Annex B. This is a live interface which will be kept regularly updated and used to track progress.



Read the report:
www.cheshireandwarringtonlsip.co.uk/



Email: LSIP@sccci.co.uk



LinkedIn: Cheshire & Warrington Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

Families can now book a fully accessible Wingate Holidays break



Guests can choose from two en-suite holiday lets sleeping up to six (if booked together) – now available in Wingate Holidays' first phase. Features include ceiling hoists, wet room bathrooms, wide doorways and plenty of space to move freely. Situated on the ground floor with level access throughout, all guests share a fully accessible self-catering kitchen and a lounge, and there's free on-site parking.



Families who struggle to find fully accessible accommodation can now book a comfortable, relaxing stay with Wingate Holidays in the peaceful South Cheshire countryside.

Cheshire disability charity The Wingate Centre has opened its new self-catering holiday accommodation to give children and adults with additional needs the chance to enjoy a break with their family. Sitting within the centre's grounds in Wrenbury, near Nantwich, guests have access to beautiful outdoor spaces and an on-site café.

The Wingate has already been providing accessible residential accommodation for schools and other organisations for many years. And now it's revamped and opened up its accommodation for families who might otherwise struggle to go on holiday. It's also ideal for solo travellers, and carers and their clients looking for an independent stay.

Ian Linton, General Manager at The Wingate Centre, says: "We've tapped into what we've learned over decades supporting people with special educational needs and disabilities, so they get the chance to be fully included in their family getaway."

» **Every holiday booking supports the charity's work to brighten the lives of children and adults with SEND. To book a stay or learn more, visit: thewingatecentre.co.uk/wingate-holidays or call 01270 780456.**

Enrich your social impact - while contributing to your 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 future. In the face of external economic pressures, cost of living crisis 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, professionals and corporations 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 and 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 professional and personal development.

Typical examples of current skill requests:

Strategic planning; coaching; 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.

» **For further information, please contact the local Crewe, South and East Cheshire Business Connector, Dianne Parrish, via email: dianneparrish@cheshireconnect.org or visit the website: www.cheshireconnect.org**



South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry Awards 2026

It is time to celebrate and gain recognition for your hard work. The South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce 2026 Awards are now open for entries.

Cheshire Connect is proud of the 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 category sponsors Bentley Motors.

Qualkem celebrates 55 years of British chemical manufacturing



Proudly manufacturing in Crewe, Cheshire for 55 years, making Qualkem one of the town's longest-established manufacturing companies.

Qualkem Ltd, the family-owned chemical product innovator and manufacturer, celebrated 55 years in business this July. Founded on 20 July 1971 as Repclif Chemical Services Ltd by chemical engineer Robert Frazer and industrial chemist Doug Holt, the company has grown from a small sales office on Sandbach High Street with bottles labelled in a back bedroom, into a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility on Macon Way, Crewe. Supplying customers ranging from blue-chip brands to individual caravanners across the UK and Europe.

Today Qualkem is a proud second-generation family business. Ivan Anketell-Clifford joined

the company in 2005 and together with his wife Rachael, became its owner in 2020, carrying the founders' values into a new era. In 2022 the company formally adopted the Qualkem name and was awarded Business of the Year by the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce.

Every Qualkem product is developed and manufactured in Britain. As a member of Made in Britain and certified to ISO 9001, the company blends and fills all of its products at its Crewe plant, sourcing raw materials locally wherever possible. Supporting British jobs, British suppliers and British manufacturing at a time when much of the industry has moved offshore.

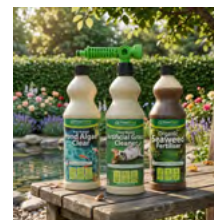
The anniversary comes as Qualkem accelerates its eco-friendly product drive under the banner "Green Chemistry in Green Packaging". The company has moved its market-leading toilet additive ranges away from formaldehyde, introduced biocide, enzyme & probiotic-free formulations such as 40shot Eco Green Cassette into the Motorhome & Caravan market. In 2026 the company launched a range of garden products under its HouseProud brand, all formulated from natural probiotics and packaged in 100% recycled bottles and cartons.

Ivan Anketell-Clifford, Owner and Managing Director of Qualkem, said: "Reaching 55

years is a milestone very few manufacturing businesses achieve, and it's a tribute to everyone who has been part of the Qualkem family since Bob and Doug started out in 1971. As a second-generation family business we take the long view, that's why we make everything here in Crewe, buy British wherever we can, and put sustainability at the heart of every product we develop. Green chemistry in green packaging isn't a slogan for us; it's how we intend to spend the next 55 years."

From its Cheshire headquarters, Qualkem develops and manufactures its own consumer brands: 40shot, LeisureTime, HouseProud, Destrol and b#, alongside contract blending and filling, white-label products and demineralised water supplied to the healthcare sector. Its portfolio of past and present partners includes Mercedes-Benz, Bentley, the NHS, EDF Energy and Lakeland. Consumers can now buy the full range direct at shop.qualkem.co.uk, with free next-day delivery on qualifying UK orders.

» Visit our new web shop: shop.qualkem.co.uk



True Physio nurtures fresh talent as demand for services grows



True Physio has increased its numbers after a busy summer of treating everything from sports injuries to everyday aches and pains.

The physiotherapy group with clinics in Crewe, Nantwich, Sale, Lancaster, Blackburn, Skipton, Stafford, Stoke-on-Trent, Darwen and Congleton, has welcomed two new physios to its South Cheshire team as demand for treatment continues to grow.

The Crewe and Nantwich clinics have been busy helping patients get back on their feet over the summer months, with injuries ranging from sporting strains and sprains to joint, muscle and mobility issues affecting people of all ages.

General Manager Richard Whitworth said: "We always see an increase in people getting active when the weather is good, whether that's taking up running, playing more sport, heading out on the bike or simply spending more time in the garden. Inevitably that means we see more injuries.

"It's fantastic to be busy, but for us it's also about making sure we have the right team in place to give every patient the time, care and expertise they need. Bringing fresh talent into the business is a big part of that. We're proud to nurture people who are at the beginning of their careers and give them the opportunity to develop their skills alongside an experienced team."

Joining the South Cheshire team are Aidan Hicks and Rob High – both dedicated to high standards of patient care and supporting speedy recovery.

Aidan has worked as a physio in Zanzibar, to working in professional sport, to delivering Musculoskeletal physio in the NHS community and hospitals. With additional qualifications in sports massage, acupuncture as well as strength and conditioning, Aidan has a versatile arsenal of treatment options to support the journey to recovery.

Rob graduated with a Master of Science in Physiotherapy in 2025 and holds a BSc in Sport Science. He is also a qualified

Personal Trainer. There's a strong interest in strength training and the management of chronic conditions, including tendinopathy. He is passionate about helping people reduce pain and improve function through tailored exercise prescription and hands-on treatment.

Crewe and Nantwich Clinic Manager Ben Ratcliffe added: "It's great to see new members of the team bringing fresh ideas, enthusiasm and expertise while continuing the high standards our patients expect from True Physio."

The Blackburn clinic has also bolstered its team by two bringing the total number of accredited physiotherapists and physical therapy specialists to 27 working across the group.

Meanwhile True Physio continues to foster links with local training centres of excellence including Keele University and regularly welcomes physiotherapy students on work placements. Many have gone on to successful careers.

Across all clinics, True Physio remains true to its core values of helping people get their pain under control and back to doing everything they love - pain-free.

» For appointments call 01270 361363 or book via the website true.physio

New Crewe women's centre breathes new life into empty shop unit



The well-stocked library

A new women's centre is set to breathe life into Crewe town centre as a massive operation to transform an empty shop draws to completion.

Her-Place Charitable Trust is opening a new base in the former TUI unit at the Victoria Centre, creating a welcoming space where women, girls and families can access support, advice and activities under one roof.

The charity launched a fundraising appeal earlier this summer to help transform the vacant town centre unit into a vibrant community hub. Since then tradespeople, businesses and supporters have donated their time, skills and resources to help prepare for opening.

They have ripped out old wiring, painted, laid new flooring, put up shelves and generally pulled out all the stops working day and night. Now with the make-over almost complete, charity officials are preparing to host a wide range of services at the centre including wellbeing sessions, counselling, women's health events, police surgeries, legal advice drop-ins and community activities.

There will also be a community laundrette allowing families to wash and dry clothes

free of charge. A similar scheme is popular at the Her-Place base in Winsford. It will also host newly-announced #HerSocial events such as quiz nights, relaxation evenings, 'Sassy Ladies' chats and 'Meet the Author' in the well-stocked reading area. All will help drive footfall into the town centre.

Kate Blakemore, charity founder and CEO, said:

"When we first announced our plans for a women's centre in Crewe, we knew it would take a big community effort to make it happen. The response has been heart-warming. Local businesses have donated materials and expertise, volunteers have rolled up their sleeves and supporters have backed us every step of the way."

"This centre belongs to the community. It has been built by people who believe every woman and girl deserves somewhere safe, welcoming and accessible where they can find support, friendship and hope. It marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter, not just for Her-Place, but for Crewe helping to breathe new life into the heart of town."

The new centre builds on the charity's work at its other base on Beech Drive, Wistaston where it has spent more than a decade supporting women experiencing trauma, disadvantage, domestic abuse, poor mental health and social isolation.

Support for the new centre has come from a variety of organisations and businesses including AO.com, Cheshire Lettings, Crewe Town Council, Mornflake, Radius and SP Energy, YMCA GLO Maintenance and the National Lottery Reaching Community fund. Kate added: "Through the Community Foundation, Bentley has covered staffing the centre for a year which is a huge help. We're so grateful to everyone who has made the centre possible. Now we can't wait to open the doors in September."

» To support the new centre email events@her-place.co.uk or call 01606 557666.



Kate being recorded for one of her regular podcasts outside the new centre

Crewe Business Exhibition Returns to the Mornflake Stadium

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Crewe Business Expo

Discover New Business Opportunities

Wed 9th Sept, 10am to 4pm

The Mornflake Stadium, Gresty Rd



01270 350 094



**FREE
VISITOR
TICKETS**

www.CheshireBusinessExpos.co.uk

The Crewe Business Exhibition returns to the Mornflake Stadium on Wednesday 9th September, from 10am until 3pm, bringing together businesses, entrepreneurs and decision-makers from across South Cheshire and beyond.

Whether you are looking to raise your profile, grow your network, find new suppliers or discover fresh opportunities, this is an event you will not want to miss. The exhibition provides the perfect setting to step away from emails and online meetings and have valuable face-to-face conversations with the people who can help move your business forward.

Visitors will have the opportunity to meet a range of exhibitors representing businesses of all sizes and sectors. South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce will also be exhibiting on the day, giving attendees the chance to learn more about its support, services and the many benefits of becoming part of the Chamber community.

Alongside the exhibition, there will be a packed schedule of guest speakers sharing practical insights on topics including artificial intelligence, HR, marketing and podcasting. With so much knowledge and experience in one venue, there will be something useful for every business owner and professional, whatever stage of their journey they are at.

Our exhibitions are designed to be welcoming, accessible and full of genuine opportunities. You never know which

conversation could lead to your next customer, collaboration, referral or idea. The important thing is making sure you are in the room when it happens.

Visitor tickets are free, making this one of the easiest and most valuable business decisions you can make this September. Come along, meet the South Cheshire business community and discover what opportunities are waiting for you.

» **Secure your free visitor ticket at www.cheshirebusinessexpos.co.uk and join us at the Mornflake Stadium on Wednesday 9th September. We look forward to welcoming you.**

The Aqueduct Marina team enjoy Snowdon at sunrise for charity



A hardy team from Aqueduct Marina recently took on the challenge to climb Snowdon (Yr Wyddfa) in aid of their chosen charity, My CWA. The challenge, Snowden at Sunrise, meant the team of 9 had to set out from the marina in Church Minshull near Nantwich at 04.00am. A challenge in itself!

Phil, Robert, Andrea, Joseph, Faith, Matt, Phill, Nick and Lee set off before sunrise to climb the 1085m of Wales and England's highest peak, to raise money to support the marina's Charity of the Year, My CWA.

This isn't just the walk; it was the early start, the tough climb and the cold, damp conditions they had to contend with. But compared to the challenges faced by those supported by My CWA, it was nothing. My CWA (Cheshire Without Abuse) is a charity doing amazing work supporting individuals and families affected by domestic abuse right across Cheshire, and the reason it is Aqueduct's chosen charity for 2026.

As a result of the team's efforts, they have raised £560 so far for My CWA.

Robert Parton, Aqueduct Marina's MD, praised the efforts of all those involved in the challenge and thanked everyone who sponsored the team.

He added, "It was a bit disappointing that the weather wasn't kind to us, and unfortunately, we didn't see any sunrise. The peak was very cold, cloudy and windy, and due to our early start, we got to the top before the café had opened! But we are glad we were able to not only raise some money but also awareness of the great work done by My CWA".

» For more information visit:
aqueductmarina.co.uk

Boyd's earns Bronze Medal from EcoVadis for sustainability performance



Global drug development consultancy, Boyd's has achieved a Bronze Medal from EcoVadis, a global leader in business sustainability assessments.

In the company's latest rating, which was completed in April 2026, Boyd's scored 65 out of 100, which places Boyd's in the top 35% of companies globally.

Commenting on the achievement, Boyd's CEO, Professor Alan Boyd MBE (pictured) said:

"Achieving an EcoVadis Bronze Medal is an important milestone for Boyd's and reflects the commitment we have made to operating responsibly, ethically and sustainably. As a specialist medicines development consultancy supporting companies across the globe, we recognize that our impact extends beyond the work we deliver for clients; it includes how we support our people, manage our business, engage with suppliers, and contribute to the wider communities in which we operate. This rating provides valuable independent validation of the progress we are making, while also giving

us a clear framework to keep improving. It motivates us to build on our sustainability commitments and continue embedding responsible business practices across every part of Boyd's."

The EcoVadis assessment evaluates 21 sustainability criteria across four core themes: Environment, Labor & Human Rights, Ethics, and Sustainable Procurement.

More than 130,000 companies globally have been rated by EcoVadis, and the ratings are based on international sustainability standards including the Ten Principles of the UN Global Impact, the International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions, and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards. The ratings provide an evidence-based analysis on performance and an actionable roadmap for continuous improvement.

» For more information, visit
boydconsultants.com/boyds-esg-commitments

Making Tax Digital for Income Tax: What you need to know



Are you ready for MTD? WR Partners updates

From 6 April 2026, sole traders and landlords with gross income over £50,000 must submit quarterly updates to HMRC under Making Tax Digital for Income Tax (MTD for IT).

What it actually involves: This does not mean doing a tax return four times a year, but it does mean four quarterly submissions, a meaningful change to how you currently manage your tax obligations.

Currently, most sole traders and landlords file one Self-Assessment return annually. Under MTD, that is replaced by quarterly reporting throughout the year, followed by a Final Declaration in January. For most people, this means more frequent contact with their records, more regular deadlines, and the right software in place.

The quarterly submissions are summaries of income and expenditure for each three-month period, sent through HMRC-compatible software. Your final tax position

is still confirmed once a year via the Final Declaration by 31 January, but the work feeding into it now happens in stages throughout the year.

MTD requires digital record-keeping and timely quarterly submissions. Getting set up correctly, with the right software, processes, and HMRC connection, takes time and care.

WR Partners can manage the whole process - handling quarterly submissions, guiding you on what records to keep, and ensuring your obligations are met accurately and on time. To get started, you will need a personal Government Gateway account with MTD for IT enabled.

If you are unsure whether MTD applies to you, get in touch and we can check your position based on your 2024/25 figures.

No penalties in year one: HMRC has confirmed there will be no penalty points for late quarterly updates in 2026/27. Late payment and late final declarations are still subject to penalties, but there is some tolerance while people adjust.

» For more information contact
wrpartners.co.uk

Why Exit Planning Matters: Preparing your business for the right outcome



Neil Holtschke
is a Director at
WR Partners

Planning early can maximise value

A well-prepared business is more attractive to potential buyers, funders, management teams or family successors. Early planning gives owners time to address factors that can influence value, including sustainable earnings, management strength, customer concentration, operational processes, working capital and the quality of financial information.

Taking action early can strengthen the business before it is brought to market or transferred to new ownership. This could include improving reporting, documenting key processes, developing the management team, resolving legacy issues or demonstrating a clear growth strategy.

Choosing the right exit route

Every business and owner is different. A trade sale, management buyout, family succession, employee ownership or gradual retirement will each require a different approach.

The right strategy depends on the owner's priorities, whether that is maximising value, protecting the company's legacy, ensuring continuity, passing the business to the next generation or reducing day-to-day involvement.

How WR Partners can help

At WR Partners, we work with business owners to understand their personal and commercial objectives, assess business readiness and identify the route most likely to achieve the desired outcome.

Our support can include valuation advice, exit readiness reviews, succession planning, management buyout support, sale preparation, financial due diligence preparation and wider tax and advisory services.

The earlier the conversation starts, the more options an owner is likely to have. Whether an exit is planned in two years, five years or further ahead, structured planning can help build a stronger business and provide greater confidence for the future.

» Neil Holtschke is a Director at WR Partners, specialising in transactions, M&A and due diligence. With over two decades of experience as a qualified accountant, Neil helps business owners navigate the complexities of buying, selling and valuing businesses, drawing on his ACCA qualification in business valuation and his work across SMEs, larger corporates and charities.

For many business owners, their company represents years of hard work, personal commitment and financial investment. When the time comes to consider an exit, the outcome will rarely be determined by the market alone. Preparation, clear objectives and the right exit strategy can all play a significant role.

Exit planning is not simply something to consider when a sale is imminent. Done well, it is a structured process that can help increase business value, reduce risk and give owners greater control over the timing and terms of their eventual exit.

GET IN TOUCH



We don't believe
in a one size fits
all approach.

That's why we take the time to get to know
your business and provide the perfect
solutions for you.

hello@wrpartners.co.uk
wrpartners.co.uk
08000 664 664



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From fundraising to future development: How The Crown Group is supporting Leighton Hospital



Supporting Leighton Hospital's Children's Ward

Supporting the local community is a core principle embedded within The Crown Group's culture. Following the announcement of its support for Leighton Hospital's Children's Ward, The Crown Group has committed to making a meaningful impact by helping the hospital enhance care and wellbeing, inspired by the fantastic care provided to the daughter of a Crown Group employee during her time in the ward.

Funding Innovative Patient Care

A key priority for the Children's Ward is funding access to Virtual Reality (VR) technology, including a specialist VR headset, designed to help reduce anxiety and discomfort for children during stressful or invasive medical procedures. This innovative technology provides distraction and reassurance for young patients, helping to improve their overall hospital experience. However, due to limited funding, access to specialist VR headset equipment is not currently available.

A £10,000 Fundraising Target

To help address this need, The Crown Group has set an ambitious target of raising £10,000 to fund a VR headset and support the ward in delivering innovative care to its young patients.

Fundraising Progress

Currently, The Crown Group has raised 64% of its £10,000 target through initiatives including an Annual Golf Day, a 37-mile walk from Alder Hey Hospital in Liverpool to Leighton Hospital, a Christmas tree collection and a Step Up for Good challenge, whereby employees walked 100,000 steps

each in one week. The team will also host another Annual Golf Day in September at Wychwood Park Golf Club as it continues its fundraising efforts.

A Personal Connection

This initiative is particularly meaningful to Managing Director Chris Steele, whose daughter previously spent an extended period on the ward. Reflecting on this time, Chris recalls the "incredible work carried out by the nurses and doctors, as well as the challenges they face due to limited external funding", which inspired his commitment to giving back to the hospital and supporting its continued efforts.

Looking Ahead

As The Crown Group continues its fundraising journey, the business remains committed to supporting Leighton Hospital and the wider community. With further initiatives planned throughout the year, the team is focused on reaching its £10,000 fundraising target and helping to fund innovative equipment that will enhance the experience of young patients on the Children's Ward.

The Crown Group would like to thank everyone who has supported its efforts so far, with every contribution helping to improve care and create a positive impact for future generations.

If you would like to support this important cause, please consider donating by scanning the QR code. Every donation, no matter the amount, will help bring the fundraising target closer and support the purchase of equipment that can make a real difference to children and their families during their time in hospital.

Contact The Crown Group

The Crown Group provides a comprehensive range of rail and infrastructure support services, including civil engineering works, vegetation management, isolation planning and delivery, security and boundary fencing, rail training and certification, and permanent way (P-Way) services.

» To discuss your project requirements or explore how our specialist team can support your organisation, call 01270 747303 or email info@thecrown-group.co.uk.



Industry Ready: Crewe UTC enters 10th year with record applicants



Crewe Engineering and Design UTC is proudly entering its tenth year since opening, marking a decade of technical excellence, industry partnership, and lifechanging opportunities for young people across the region. As the UTC approaches this milestone, it does so with a record number of applicants for September 2026 entry at both Year 10 and Year 12, reflecting its growing reputation as a leading destination for future engineers, designers, and digital innovators.

The UTC continues to deliver its best-ever academic and technical outcomes, with students achieving exceptional results across GCSEs and TLevels. These outcomes are not only strong on paper—they translate directly into highquality, aspirational destinations that set students up for long-term success. A standout achievement is that 25% of TLevel graduates progress into degree apprenticeships, a pathway that combines university-level study with paid employment at some of the region's most respected engineering and technology employers.

As it moves into its second decade, Crewe Engineering and Design UTC remains committed to providing cuttingedge technical education, expanding employer partnerships, and inspiring the next generation of engineers and innovators who will shape the future of the UK's STEM industries.

Powering Our Community: UTC Students Ready to Give Back: Crewe Engineering and Design UTC is deepening its commitment to the local area by seeking community organisations to host UTC students for volunteering opportunities from September 2026 onwards. As the UTC approaches its tenth year, giving back has become central to its vision, and students are eager to support projects that make a real difference. Partner organisations benefit from young people who bring enthusiasm, technical thinking and a willingness to learn, while helping them build confidence, responsibility and practical skills.

Current partnerships already show the impact UTC students can make. Through Community Recycle Cycles, students restore and maintain bicycles for local residents, supporting sustainable transport and hands-on engineering. With the YMCA STEM outreach programme, students deliver engaging STEM activities for KS2 pupils, inspiring younger learners across the community.

Students have also contributed to local heritage and civic pride. Working with Peacock Railway, they supported track development and maintenance, applying

engineering skills in a realworld heritage setting. Meanwhile, students created a thoughtful Ada Nield memorial installation, celebrating an important local figure and strengthening community identity through creative design and research.

Crewe UTC is ready to expand this work and partner with more organisations who share its commitment to community impact.

» **First open event is 26th November 2026, for more details visit: utccrewe.co.uk**



Nantwich Museum embarks on ambitious project to make its collection accessible to the public



Nantwich Museum is an integral part of the heritage and cultural offering of South Cheshire. Our displays and temporary exhibitions tell the story of the historic market town of Nantwich, and our growing educational programme inspires children from across the region. Our collection is central to these activities, but currently only a fraction of the approximately 6,000 objects we hold are on display. The rest remain invisible to the public. We are now starting a new project to release the potential of the collection, exploring sharing of our collection on-line and involving the community in telling new stories.

By combining funding we have received from Cheshire East's Cultural Framework with money from a recent legacy, we have been able to launch a two year project called "Unlocking Collections, Empowering Communities". We are starting by auditing our collection store, improving our database and rationalising parts of the collection. We will also test new ways to make our database available on-line. To drive these activities we are recruiting a part-time Collections Officer. Alongside this work we will be delivering community-focussed events to explore and enhance the relevance of the collection, culminating in a volunteer-led exhibition showcasing objects from storage.

Nantwich Museum manager Kate Dobson said:

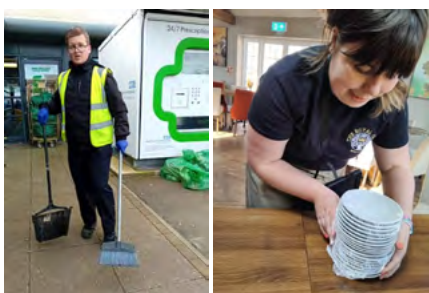
"We are really excited to be able to start this project and I'm looking forward to working with the community to explore our collection. We know there is a lot of interest in this. For our current summer exhibition – 'Hospital Street: a street through time' - there was a great response from the public. They contributed over half of the objects on display, complementing the objects from our own collection."

Museum Trustee Pete Broad commented: "I'm really pleased that we have secured this funding. The collection we hold is a resource for the community, so it's great that we can focus on improving the collection quality and lay the groundwork for making the collection more available. We will also be better positioned to collaborate with other museums and with organisations such as the new Cheshire Archives in Crewe."



» For more information visit: nantwichmuseum.org.uk

Petty Pool: Creating Pathways to Employment and Independence



Petty Pool provides a gateway to independence for young people with learning difficulties and special educational needs, offering a supportive environment where every individual is valued, encouraged, and inspired to explore their potential. Through tailored learning programmes and practical opportunities, Petty Pool helps young people build confidence, develop essential skills, and take positive steps towards meaningful employment and independent living.

A key part of this journey is the organisation's work placements and supported internships, which create life-changing opportunities for learners to gain valuable workplace

experience and develop the skills employers are looking for.

One recent success story is Evie, who has secured paid employment at The Royal Oak pub. An enthusiastic and dedicated team member, Evie embraces every opportunity to learn new skills and contribute to the business. Her positive attitude and commitment have made a lasting impression on both colleagues and customers, and she has quickly become a valued part of the Royal Oak family.

Another inspiring example is Patryk (pictured) who has gained paid employment with the Estates Team at Leighton Hospital, supporting grounds maintenance across the site. Employment has enabled Patryk to develop important life skills beyond the workplace, including independently cycling to and from work each day. His achievement highlights the wider impact that meaningful employment can have on confidence, independence, and personal growth.

The support of local businesses is vital in helping more young people achieve similar success. By offering work placements, employers provide invaluable opportunities for learners to gain experience, develop workplace skills, and build confidence in

a real-world setting. Businesses can also partner with Petty Pool through fundraising initiatives, sponsorship opportunities, or skills-based volunteering, creating a meaningful and lasting impact within the local community.

Fundraising events and donations play an important role in enabling Petty Pool to continue its work, helping young people develop confidence, build key life and employability skills, and progress towards sustainable employment and independent futures.

Together, with the support of local employers and community partners, Petty Pool is helping young people realise their potential and create brighter, more independent futures.

» If you're interested to know more about how your organisation could support neurodivergent young people into employment, either with a visit, short work experience placement, or a longer supported internship opportunity, or you'd simply like to find out more how you can support young people like Evie and Patryk on their journey to independence, visit Pettypool.org.uk.

Government policy overtakes inflation as biggest concern for SMEs, new business survey reveals

**wilson
partners.**



Business owners across England remain committed to growth despite a more uncertain economic backdrop, but Government policy and taxation have now overtaken inflation, recruitment and cashflow as the single biggest perceived barrier to achieving their growth ambitions.

That's according to the latest State of Business Report from Wilson Partners, the accounting, tax, advisory and corporate finance firm, which surveyed business owners and leaders across the region during July 2026.

The report, The Confidence Gap, found that while average business confidence has eased from 61 in January to 59, it remains

above the level recorded at the beginning of 2025, suggesting business leaders have become more cautious rather than less ambitious.

Almost half (49%) of respondents identified Government policy and taxation as their biggest external concern over the next 12 months, comfortably ahead of global economic uncertainty, geopolitical instability and inflation.

Despite this, businesses continue to demonstrate resilience. Almost a quarter expect to increase headcount over the next six months, turnover expectations remain positive, and existing clients continue to be viewed as the biggest opportunity for growth. Rather than pursuing aggressive expansion, respondents are increasingly focused on strengthening customer relationships, improving productivity and protecting profitability.

The report also highlights a significant shift in attitudes towards Artificial Intelligence. Businesses are moving beyond the hype, with AI increasingly being adopted as a practical tool to improve productivity rather than fundamentally reshape business models.

Allan Wilson (pictured) Managing Director of Wilson Partners, said:

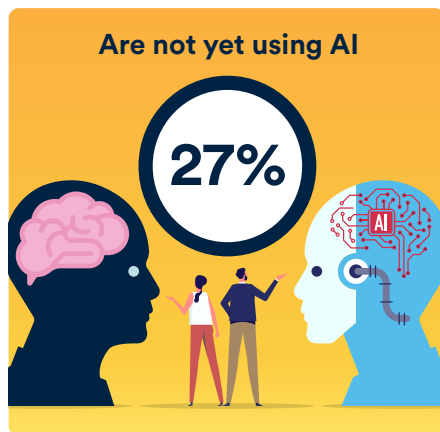
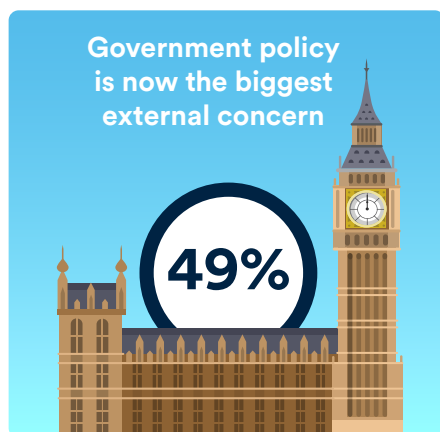
"What stands out most isn't a lack of ambition. It's how carefully business

owners are weighing every decision. Growth is still very much on the agenda, but today's leaders are balancing opportunity against an unprecedented level of uncertainty."

"Businesses can usually adapt to commercial challenges. What they're finding much harder is making long-term decisions when the rules they're operating under continue to change. The businesses that will outperform over the next few years won't necessarily be those that move fastest. They'll be those making the clearest, most informed decisions."

Other key findings from the report include:

- Business confidence eased from **61 in January to 59**, although it remains above the level recorded at the start of 2025.
- **49%** of respondents identified Government policy and taxation as their biggest external concern.
- **44%** believe the greatest opportunity for growth lies with existing clients rather than new markets.
- **27%** of businesses are not yet using AI, while many others report productivity as its biggest measurable benefit.
- **27%** of respondents have no formal exit plan.





CYBER SECURITY: DOING THE BASICS MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

By Matthew Kidd – Technical Director (CISSP)



When cyber security makes the headlines, the focus is often on sophisticated attacks by highly organised criminal groups. As a result, many small businesses assume that meaningful protection is beyond their reach without large budgets and dedicated security teams.

Others fall into the trap of thinking, "It won't happen to us, we're too small"

The truth is quite the opposite as **small businesses are regularly targeted because attackers see them as easier opportunities with weaker defences.**

Many successful cyber attacks exploit simple vulnerabilities that could have been prevented through basic security measures. For small businesses, focusing on the fundamentals can significantly strengthen resilience and reduce the risk of operational disruption, financial loss and reputational damage.

By doing the simple things well, small businesses can make a big difference to their security posture and become far less attractive for cyber criminals.

Simple Steps To Improve Your Cyber Security

Strong Passwords	Enable MFA	Keep Software Updated
Use complex, unique passwords for every account. Consider using a password manager to generate and store them securely.	Add an extra layer of protection by requiring a second form of verification, such as an authentication app or security key.	Turn on automatic updates and regularly check that operating systems, applications and devices are running the latest versions.
Check and Test Backups	Train Employees to Spot Threats	Principle of Least Privilege
Ensure backups are completed successfully and regularly test that critical data can be restored when needed.	Help staff recognise phishing emails, suspicious links and unusual requests. Encourage them to report concerns promptly.	Give employees access only to the systems, data and applications they need to perform their role. Avoid granting administrator rights unless absolutely necessary.

Build Good Security Habits

Cyber security is not a one-off project. Consistently reviewing and applying these simple measures creates layers of protection that significantly reduce risk.



ACCIDENTAL MANAGERS

By Melanie Saywell – Founder and Facilitator, Culture Care



Most of us have worked for an accidental manager at some point...

Some of us have been one too.

Someone who was brilliant at their job, promoted into leadership, and left to figure it out.

With no real training.

No clear expectations.

And little space to learn what good leadership actually looks like.

We call them accidental managers.

Alongside them are reluctant managers.

People who could step up, but don't want to, because they see the reality of the role and think,

"Why would I take that on?"

They're not wrong.

The role of a manager today is so much more than management.

It's leading people through complexity, navigating change, and making sure people know they matter.

- 5 generations working side by side
- Hybrid working changing how we connect
- Disengagement showing up more quietly
- Managers stepping into roles without preparation

Without support, the impact can be felt quickly.

Morale dips. Communication breaks down. People leave. And culture suffers.

But this isn't always about capability. It's about support.

Most managers aren't struggling because they can't lead.

They're struggling because no one has shown them how.

Because leadership is something you can learn.

And often, it starts with better conversations.

Simple, structured culture conversations create space for managers to listen, reflect and involve their teams. Not big initiatives. Just regular, honest dialogue about what's working, what's not, and what needs to change.

Three simple ways to support our managers:

- **Well led** – Be clear about what good leadership looks like here, day to day
- **Involved** – Let managers shape culture, not just carry it
- **Empowered** – Give them the tools, support and space to learn, then step back and let them do it

When managers feel confident and supported, they lead well.

When people feel well led, involved, valued and empowered, they show up physically, mentally and emotionally too.

» So here's the question:

Are your managers being given responsibility...or the support to succeed?

For more information, visit: culture-care.mystrikingly.com

Building a Station Investment Zone in Crewe

Station Investment Zones have been identified by the Railway Industry Association as a means of driving town centre regeneration. The idea is to create an 800-metre radius around railway stations to support integrated housing, commercial and transport improvements.

I believe Crewe would benefit greatly from public-private coordination to become a transport hub. Operating under a tripartite partnership between rail, local planning and transport authorities and the private sector, the Cheshire & Warrington Mayoral Combined Authority could provide leadership over improvements to the areas within a 10-minute walk of Crewe Station.

Crucially, Station Investment Zones are cost-neutral. The plans are based on existing revenue streams, including passenger revenues; commercial opportunities; land value capture and public sector grants.

Crewe Station recorded 3,389,590 passenger entries and exits for the 2024/2025 period, ranking it the 160th busiest station in Great Britain. That's a daily average of over 9,000 passengers starting or ending their journey here.

That level of footfall should translate to a bustling local economy, with a blend of commercial and residential properties and transport links. Establishing a Station Investment Zone would allow the new Combined Authority to coordinate funding and planning to unlock that potential.

The surrounding area is home to a number of sites that, with the necessary investment, could transform the town. Rail House on Gresty Road, with its 13 stories, has the capacity for 168 apartments according to the latest planning proposals granted by Cheshire East.

A number of existing businesses on Weston Road and Crewe Green Road could benefit from public and private sector investment in employment land. On Mill Street, a focus on residential properties would drive increased footfall to the existing commercial offering at the retail park and the train station. Even closer to Crewe Station, Nantwich Road has existing commercial and residential lots that could be renovated to bring about town centre regeneration.

With the Mayoral Combined Authority elections being held in May 2027, it is essential that a framework for Station Investment Zones is established, alongside identification eligible sites across the region.



The case for Crewe to be on that list is clear.

I'm also delighted to have been asked to serve as a Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Transport.

As the MP for Crewe and Nantwich, I have been a vocal champion on the importance of greater connectivity across our country whether that be by bus, car, train or otherwise.

I look forward to continuing that work now by supporting the Department for Transport to

deliver on the commitments we have made and the agenda of the new Prime Minister.

Thankfully, this won't change how I do my job as the Member of Parliament for Crewe and Nantwich - a job I love. I will still be doing everything I can to get things done for people across Crewe and Nantwich and seeking to use my position and influence to get the best deal from government.

Message from our Chair



When I last wrote a Chair's report, the conflict in the Gulf had just begun. Sadly, it continues, so the international situation remains uncertain. Here in the UK, we now have a new Prime Minister, and the national picture is still developing. In many ways, it could be said that not

much has changed — but, as ever, businesses across Cheshire continue to adapt, respond and get on with the job.

One thing that has certainly changed is the weather. Recurring heatwaves and the growing concern around drought have made it increasingly difficult for many businesses to keep staff and customers comfortable. It does feel as though hotter, drier conditions are becoming part of a new normal, and I am sure many of us are now looking more seriously at practical measures such as air conditioning. At the marina, for example, we have had to introduce café menus on hot days that do not require the ovens to be turned on. On the waterways, the impact is also clear: maintaining canal water levels becomes ever more challenging when the rain simply does not come.

Despite these wider pressures, business life across the area served by the North and South Cheshire Chambers has continued

with energy and resilience. It was a real pleasure to be part of the North Cheshire Chamber Awards evening in early July and to hear so many inspiring stories of success from across the region. More recently, I also attended the Nantwich Show, which has gone from strength to strength in recent years and once again featured many Chamber member businesses exhibiting, meeting customers and showcasing the best of what our local economy has to offer.

As we move into the autumn — although I am writing this in late July — please look out for upcoming Chamber events across both North and South Cheshire. I would encourage you to keep up the good work, continue sharing your good news stories with us so that we can celebrate them across our network, and get in touch with the Chamber team whenever issues arise. We are here to listen, support and help wherever we can.

Robert Parton
Chair

Message from our COO

From newcomer to Nantwich Show: My first three months

Three months. It's not long, but somehow it feels like I've been at South Cheshire Chamber forever — in the best possible way.

I've always thought the secret to slowing down time is to keep learning and experiencing new things. By that measure, these first three months have delivered in spades! From learning our CRM to my first trip to 'The Alex', my first Nantwich Show, a roundtable with the Bank of England and welcoming my first new Patron, Baywater Healthcare. It's been action packed. I've met brilliant businesses, attended all sorts of events, got to know the Chamber team,

and started to understand the problems, opportunities and what's already great across our area.

I knew when I took the role there was loads of potential here. Coming from outside gives me a slightly different perspective; we can all be critical of where we live, but spending time around South Cheshire I've found plenty to be excited about: ambitious businesses, great people, and genuinely interesting things happening.

So, what have I actually been doing? Meeting members and prospective members, reviewing our membership offer, getting under the skin of our events and how things work day to day, and working with

the team on our priorities, developing new opportunities and thinking hard about how we use our influence to bring businesses together around what matters most.

I won't pretend to have all the answers after three months. But I have a growing understanding of the area, a clear sense of where we can make a difference, and real enthusiasm for getting on with it.

On a personal note, my house move is progressing, so I'll soon be living in Crewe myself, not just working here. I can't wait to see what we achieve together -

Julia Yeardley
Chief Operating Officer (COO)



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