



BUSINESS

DIRECTION

International Trade

We're expanding into Birmingham.

As one the leading audit, accountancy, tax and advisory businesses in the South West and West Midlands, we have the capability and capacity to meet your needs.

To build on this we've recently expanded into Birmingham, as we seek ambitious plans to further grow our business, our people and our client base across The Midlands.

From owner-managed businesses, SMEs and large businesses to public sector organisations, charities and schools; and entrepreneurs to private individuals, we combine our expertise with regional knowledge, deep industry insights, and an international reach through our membership of Kreston Global.

To find out how we can help you or your business, or the exciting new recruitment opportunities that our new Birmingham office offers, visit bishopfleming.co.uk or careers.bishopfleming.co.uk.

It's what we bring together that sets us apart.

International Trade

Businesses in Herefordshire and Worcestershire import and export all over the world. International trade is crucial for business performance and development and the overall economic growth of the two counties.

With numerous businesses across the two counties importing and exporting every month, we continue to stay dedicated to supporting businesses during uncertain times. The Chamber's recent Quarterly Economic Survey revealed that 12% of businesses reported a decrease in overseas sales. To help counteract this, we remain steadfast in providing support to businesses of any size and experience. At the Chamber, we know that trading internationally comes with its challenges, but also incredible opportunities. That's why we work closely with the British Chambers of Commerce to push for better trade conditions and open new markets for businesses like yours. Whether you're dealing with complex customs procedures, managing risk, or looking to expand overseas, we're here to help make the process smoother and more accessible.



From our translation services and ATA Carnets to Letters of Credit, we play a key role in keeping goods moving across borders. We also keep businesses up to date with the latest international trade news, events, and webinars, ensuring you have the knowledge and support you need to succeed. And for those looking to build their expertise, we offer a range of training courses—whether you're new to importing and exporting or need guidance on specific areas like commodity codes and customs procedures.

This edition is packed with insights from industry leaders and valuable updates on global trade. I'm delighted to introduce the latest Business Direction, focusing on International Trade.

Best Regards,
Sharon Smith

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Recruitment challenges and changing benefits: Key findings from the 2025 Salary & Benefits Report

Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce's Salary & Benefits Report 2025, in partnership with Hewett Recruitment, is now available to download for FREE.

In October 2024, businesses across Herefordshire and Worcestershire confidentially shared details of their salaries and benefits in the Salary & Benefits Survey. With recruitment and retention remaining key challenges in today's labour market, this report offers vital insights to help businesses benchmark pay and benefits, supporting workforce strategies.

Key findings include:

- 83% of respondents attempted to recruit in the past year, but 66% faced significant challenges.
- A notable shift away from hybrid working, with 73% of businesses reintroducing full-time office working, though flexible working remains steady or on the rise.
- A growing focus on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I), with 77% of businesses prioritising it as an organisational objective and 52% actively addressing unconscious bias.

The report also highlights popular benefits such as private healthcare, life insurance, and wellness initiatives, reflecting a commitment to employee well-being and holistic health.



Laura Hewett, Director of Hewett Recruitment, stated: "We are proud to partner with the Chamber on this essential resource, now supported by data from nearly 350 organisations. It's invaluable for navigating today's employment challenges."

Rising costs, including April's National Insurance and National Living Wage increases, have added pressure on businesses, particularly SMEs. This

report aims to help organisations overcome these obstacles, attract talent, and drive growth.

Download your free copy of the report today: hwchamber.co.uk/salary-benefits-report-2025.

Physical copies are also available upon request.

For queries, contact the Chamber's Policy department at policy@hwchamber.co.uk.

Glued taking action towards net zero goals

Being a micro business means our direct impact on the environment is low. But we support many businesses across the West Midlands with marketing, brand and web development, which represents a far wider scope of influence. So as an obvious starting point we want to support our clients with being more responsible about how to market to current and new clients.

Support from Aston University

Our first step towards this is to get our own house in order, and understand our own impact and how we can support our clients to make positive changes. During 2024 we attended the Aston University Green Advantage programme and became members of Sustainability West Midlands.

As a result, we've been able to start recording what's going well and where improvements can be made. We've been monitoring any changes we've made and attempting to record how much carbon we produce.

As a result of working with Aston University we've starting using a platform called Zellar that records and prompts our actions: we've also set out a sustainability road map.

Setting goals

On our journey we hope we can work with likeminded organisations helping to communicate, through their brand and marketing, important issues such as the climate challenge.



Glued is based in Warwickshire and Worcestershire and helps organisations with clear and honest marketing to connect them with the customers they deserve.

You can find out more about our sustainability journey at: gluedlimited.co.uk/zellar-score

For more information about Glued contact David Wilson: **0777 900 3818** or davidwilson@gluedlimited.co.uk



The Role of ISO Certification in International Trade

If you're looking for international trade opportunities, implementing one of the internationally recognised ISO standards could significantly enhance your credibility across borders.

Stacey Humm, Sales and Marketing Manager at ISO Quality Services, highlights the importance of ISO standards when working internationally: "ISO standards provide a globally recognised benchmark for excellence in areas such as Quality Management, Environmental Management, and Information Security. When a business is ISO certificated, it demonstrates its commitment to delivering consistent, high-quality results, while adhering to global best practices. This can be particularly valuable when building trust with overseas stakeholders with limited experience working with your company."

ISO certification supports compliance with international regulatory requirements, ensuring smoother trade processes and reducing potential barriers. It can also provide a significant competitive advantage when tendering for new business, particularly against competitors who aren't ISO certified. Whether you're looking to attract new customers, access new markets, or strengthen existing relationships, ISO certification can help your business stand out.

To learn more about how ISO certification can boost your business internationally, call ISO QSL today on **0330 058 5551** or visit their website at www.isoqsltd.com. With their flexible, hand-held approach to ISO certification, embarking on your ISO journey couldn't be easier.

International trade – make sure you tick the right boxes

International trade represents important opportunities for businesses across the two counties. However, when selling into export markets there are many factors which must be taken into account.

These factors include considerations around governing law and jurisdiction clauses, language, payment methods, and currency exchange. Vitally, legislation around shipping is key as there is not only a need for the correct export documentation, but also being able to demonstrate the origin and title of the goods being transported.

This is just a snapshot of some aspects to take into account if you are looking to export abroad. As always, seeking experienced professional advice can set you on the right route.



If you would like to arrange further discussions on this, Chamber members can email Julian Milan at mfg.solicitors through julian.milan@mfgsolicitors.com.

Save money on membership, become a Chamber Champion!

Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce are thrilled to announce the launch of 'Chamber Champions.' Chamber Champions is a brand-new incentive that could see Members save up to 100% off their Membership renewal fee, in other words FREE Membership!

Becoming a Chamber Champion and receiving discounts on Membership is easy. Simply refer a Non-member business to the Chamber. If that Non-member signs up to Chamber Membership, you'll receive 10% off your Membership renewal fee. This is uncapped, meaning 10 referrals can get you 100% off your Membership renewal. You will also receive a 'Chamber Champion' logo to proudly display.

The Non-member business must know you are referring them; to send your

referral, simply contact membership@hwchamber.co.uk or complete the [online form](#).

However, that's not all. Existing Members who refer 3 or more businesses will receive a shout-out across all social media platforms (that's a combined following of over 14,000). Yet, there's more: the highest referrer of the year will receive a ticket to the prestigious Chamber Business Awards and receive the title of 'Official Chamber Champion of the Year.'

So, if you know a business that could benefit from Chamber Membership, why not send their details over to membership@hwchamber.co.uk. The Chamber will get in contact, and if they sign up, you will be notified of your discount.



Terms & Conditions apply.

For all the T&Cs, contact membership@hwchamber.co.uk.

F.B & Sons, design show garden dedicated to the Primrose Hospice & Family Support Centre in Bromsgrove

We were encouraged to enter a design for this year's RHS Malvern Spring Festival after attending in 2024. We were not only struck by the beauty of the show gardens but also the opportunities they created to raise awareness of their chosen organisations. We knew that we wanted to design a garden space for a hospice as we are all too aware of the incredible work hospices do across the country.

With our initial concept sketches, we arranged a meeting with Primrose Hospice & Family Support Centre. This is the closest Hospice to our business base on the North East Worcestershire border; we also raised a few hundred pounds selling lavender plants for the Hospice at last year's Hanbury Show. Many of the people we met at the Hanbury Show had direct experience of the incredible work Primrose does; they are an integral part of the local community and we are privileged to work on this project with them.

From our first visit to Primrose, we could see how vital their work is to support patients and families. The Day Hospice site in Bromsgrove has beautiful grounds that are used extensively by the children and families of those in Primrose's care. A corner of the grounds was identified as being a suitable location to receive the show garden once the Malvern show had ended.

One of the key features of the garden will be a 'wind telephone'. Whilst not physically connected, the wind telephone can be used to share news or feelings with our loved ones who have died. The telephone will be housed in a hand-built gazebo to give shelter and sanctuary for anybody to use.

Whilst we are aiming for a highly-coveted Gold Medal at RHS Malvern, our sheer inclusion in the show will hopefully raise awareness of the work that Primrose does. That is enough of a reward for us!



Brockencote Hall lands green tourism accolade amid net zero ambitions

A boutique Kidderminster hotel has landed a world-leading certification for its green credentials after a bumper year of sustainability successes – as it strives to become net zero by 2040.



The four red star Brockencote Hall Hotel has been recognised by Green Tourism – a certification that has been assessing travel, tourism and hospitality businesses' approaches to sustainability for more than 27 years.

Expert assessors provide certification via bronze, silver and gold gradings, with Brockencote Hall achieving silver after initially landing bronze in 2023.

Appointing a "green champion" at the hotel to strive for a consistent approach to sustainability was key to landing the accreditation.

This has enabled Brockencote Hall Hotel to engage in and evidence practices across

wide-ranging areas such as community engagement, employee health and wellbeing, and customer experiences, through to energy usage, carbon reduction and waste management.

It comes as the hotel recently partnered with the North East Worcestershire Beekeepers' Association to house four new honey bee hives, develop bee keeping masterclasses for the public and provide a space for the association to hold meetings.

Brockencote Hall Hotel is part of Eden Hotel Collection – which has five hotels across the Midlands and South West – all of which now operate on 100% renewable energy, while their collective waste last year saw 35.5% per cent directly recycled; with 55% converted into renewable energy and 9.5% anaerobically digested.

Jack Hartshorne, General Manager at Brockencote Hall Hotel, said: "The work we have been doing with our local beekeepers' association has gone down well with our guests, and underlines the fact that sustainability is becoming a key consideration for customers when booking a hotel."

Jayne O'Malley, Group Operations Director at Eden Hotel Collection, has worked closely with each hotel and Green Tourism's assessors to develop the organisation's green credentials.

Jayne said: "Sustainability is much more than simply adopting environmentally friendly practices. It's about creating a sustainable business in every sense – from our people and our local community, through to the growth of our own organisation and our supply chain.

"Some of the properties we own and operate date back as far as the 16th century, but through our commitment to invest in sustainability, they are at the forefront of modern approaches of green hospitality, whether that is through the use of renewable energy, utilising local suppliers, or utilising on-site kitchen gardens for produce or guest experiences.

"Each of our hotels were initially graded by Green Tourism in 2023 with silver or bronze gradings – so to see each hotel making that step up one year on is testament to the commitment that our people have shown to take on board advice from the assessors to make us one of the leading hotel groups in the UK not just for a luxurious stay, but for sustainability too."

The Green Tourism accolades follow hot on the heels of the Eden Hotel Collection being named by the AA as Small Hotel Group of the Year.

For more information about Brockencote Hall Hotel, visit brockencotehall.com

International trade through a commercial litigation lens

International trade is the backbone of the global economy and enables the exchange of goods, services, and capital across borders and continents. However, the complexities of cross-border transactions often cause disputes, making commercial litigation an essential tool for resolving conflicts.

Understanding the legal landscape of international trade is crucial for businesses seeking to protect their interests and maintain competitive advantage, so in this latest edition of Business Direction, I want to cover the background, the challenges and how problems can be overcome.

There are typically four key areas of dispute around international trade:

- **Contractual disputes** - The foundation of any international trade relationship is the contract. Ambiguities in terms, performance issues, or breaches can lead to conflicts. These disputes often revolve around governing law, jurisdiction, or the interpretation of key clauses.
- **Customs and tariff issues** - Regulatory compliance is also a critical aspect. Disputes can arise over the classification of goods, valuation, or the imposition of tariffs and duties. These cases often involve navigating complex regulatory frameworks and challenging government agency decisions.
- **Intellectual Property (IP) infringement** - In a global market, IP rights are frequently at risk. Disputes over counterfeit goods, trademark violations, or unauthorised use of patented technology, can escalate into litigation.

- **Trade sanctions and export controls** - Businesses must comply with international sanctions and export control regulations. Violations can lead to severe penalties, including litigation over frozen assets, contract terminations, or reputational damage.

Challenges in international trade litigation

Whilst these areas of dispute are most typical, there are a variety of challenges which can be brought to the forefront in international litigation. The main challenges are:

- **Jurisdictional complexities** - Determining the appropriate forum for resolving disputes is often contentious. Parties must navigate differences in legal systems, procedural rules, and enforcement mechanisms.
- **Cultural and Language Barriers** - Misunderstandings stemming from cultural differences or language barriers can complicate negotiations and dispute resolution.
- **Enforcement of Judgements** - Enforcing judgments across borders can be challenging, particularly in jurisdictions with differing legal standards or limited reciprocity agreements.

Mitigating risks

To minimise the risk of disputes, we advise businesses engaged in international trade should:

- **Draft clear contracts** - Ensure contracts are comprehensive, unambiguous, and include provisions for dispute resolution, governing law, and jurisdiction.
- **Conduct due diligence** - Investigate the legal and regulatory requirements in all jurisdictions involved.

- **Leverage Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)** - Methods such as mediation or arbitration can offer faster, more cost-effective solutions than traditional litigation.
- **Engage experienced counsel** - Retaining legal experts with a deep understanding of international trade laws and litigation strategies is critical.

Summing up

International trade offers opportunities, but also exposes businesses to significant risks. By understanding the common causes of disputes, and implementing risk management strategies, companies can navigate the complexities of cross-border commerce. However, when disputes arise, skilled commercial litigators play a key role in safeguarding their clients' interests and ensuring fair outcomes.

For a further discussion, members can email Sam Pedley, a partner at mfg Solicitors, through samuel.pedley@mfgsolicitors.com



For all your litigation needs

Contact us now

01562 820181 mfgsolicitors.com





The Salary & Benefits Report 2025

The Salary & Benefits Report 2025, in partnership with Hewett Recruitment, is now available to download. Every year, businesses across Herefordshire and Worcestershire confidentially share salary and benefits data, creating a valuable resource to help employers stay competitive in a changing job market. Recruiting and retaining the right people remains a challenge but having clear insights into pay and benefits can make all the difference.

Key Findings:

- 83% of businesses tried to recruit in the past year, but 66% struggled to find the right candidates.
- Hybrid working has declined, with 73% of businesses bringing employees back to the office. However, flexible working remains a priority for many.
- 77% of businesses now see Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) as a key focus, and 52% are taking steps to reduce unconscious bias in recruitment.
- Employee well-being is a growing priority, with businesses offering private healthcare, life insurance, and work-life balance perks.

Laura Hewett, Owner/Director of Hewett Recruitment, commented on the Salary & Benefits Report 2025 and said, "We are proud to once again partner with the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce to produce this year's Salary & Benefits Report. Now in its latest edition, the report continues to grow in relevance, with

almost 350 organisations contributing data. It remains an essential resource for businesses navigating today's labour market challenges and making informed strategic workforce decisions."

The past year has seen a complex and evolving employment landscape. Hiring activity has steadied, but employers continue to face significant pressures. April's increases in National Insurance and the National Living Wage have added to rising costs, forcing businesses to balance budgets while remaining competitive in attracting and retaining talent. These pressures are particularly challenging for SMEs, which must carefully navigate costs without compromising on their people strategies. Despite these challenges, the UK's employment rate remains high.

Download your free copy today - hwchamber.co.uk/salary-benefits-report-2025.

If you have any questions, contact the Chamber's Policy department at policy@hwchamber.co.uk.

More information about support and our policies can be found on the Chamber website
hwchamber.co.uk/support/policy

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The Great Waddle of Worcester 2024 has officially come to a close

The Great Waddle of Worcester 2024 has officially come to a close. This unique art trail, organised by St. Richard's Hospice, turned Worcester into an open-air gallery for eight weeks.

We were delighted to have been chosen as the logistics partner to transport the penguin sculptures. Together, we contributed to an event that raised an incredible £330,000 for hospice care!

What Was the Great Waddle of Worcester?

The art trail featured hand-crafted penguin sculptures, each designed by talented artists from Worcestershire and beyond. Accompanying these were smaller penguins designed by local schools and community groups.

Running from July 22 to September 15, 2024, the trail invited families, residents, and visitors to explore Worcester in a new way. The event aimed to unite the community while raising funds for St. Richard's Hospice, which provides compassionate care to patients and their families across Worcestershire.

Our Involvement

As the official logistics partner, we were tasked with the transportation and placement of these unique sculptures across the city. This was no small feat – each sculpture was a work of art, requiring meticulous care and planning.

Behind-the-Scenes

Transporting penguin sculptures isn't your everyday logistics job. From ensuring the sculptures were securely packed to carefully mapping out their placement, every step required precision. We worked closely with the event organisers to ensure that each penguin was delivered on time and in perfect condition.

The Penguins Take Worcester by Storm

Families spent their weekends hunting for penguins,

while businesses enjoyed increased foot traffic as visitors explored the city. Social media was abuzz with photos and stories shared under the hashtag #WaddleofWorcester.

One of the most memorable aspects of the event was seeing the joy it brought to people of all ages. From children excitedly spotting their favourite penguins to art enthusiasts appreciating the designs, the trail created lasting memories for everyone involved.

The Farewell Event and Auction Success

As the trail came to an end, a special farewell event allowed residents to bid goodbye to the penguins.

Auction Outcomes

The highlight of the closing chapter was the charity auction. All 40 large penguin sculptures were auctioned off, raising an astounding £330,000 for St. Richard's Hospice. These funds will directly support the hospice's mission to provide free care to patients, their loved ones, and those navigating bereavement.

Our Reflection

Being part of the Great Waddle of Worcester was an honour for the team at BDL.

We're immensely proud to have played a role in this incredible event and to have helped raise funds that will make a real difference in people's lives!

We are unified with one united goal: one hundred percent customer satisfaction.

Email: info@bdl-groupservices.com

Call: **+44(0)1905 677401**

Innovating Together: Talisman Plastics and Merriott Group merge for enhanced collaboration and growth

Developments within the plastics injection moulding industry sees two big players come together and evolve into a singular group. Talisman Plastics and Merriott Group agreed a merger in 2024 that sees all three of their UK factories brought together as one business.

Both organisations have long-standing legacies within the injection moulding industry. Utilising 25 – 1,100 tonnage machines with capability thermoplastic and composite moulding capability focussing on key sectors including automotive, electrical & electronics, fluid transfer & rail.

This new chapter for the companies brings a range of exciting possibilities for the future. Not only do resources from three factories increase capacity and improve lead times. They also connect a wider range of experts, each learning from the other to produce an extended knowledge base for future development.

The group is especially excited to explore the increased opportunities for innovation. Bringing together a collective input of resources from the group allowing greater product offerings alongside technological innovations. Working side by side will promote more capacity for research and



development, faster implementation of future solutions focused on quality, standards, and sustainability.

Newly appointed group CEO Shaun Champion says, "We've always held customer service

at the forefront of our business objectives, and I'm really excited to lead this new chapter allowing us to continue on our growth path by servicing the industry with cost-effective, high-quality solutions."

Independent Worcestershire Hotel celebrates 10 years of welcoming guests to Worcestershire

Hogarth's Stone Manor Hotel, a family-run independent hotel located in the heart of Worcestershire, is proud to celebrate its 10th anniversary. Over the past decade, the hotel has become a respected destination for travellers seeking comfort, quality, and personalised service in the picturesque Worcestershire countryside.

Hogarth's Stone Manor Hotel is under the ownership of Helena and Andy Hogarth who also run Hogarth's Hotel & Restaurant in Solihull.

Since opening its doors in 2015, Hogarth's Stone Manor has hosted countless guests from near and far, offering an inviting atmosphere that blends modern amenities with characterful architecture and all the charm of an independent owned establishment. Its prime location near the M5 makes it an ideal choice for visitors exploring Worcestershire and Birmingham or stopping en route to other parts of the UK.

The team at Hogarth's Stone Manor pride themselves on delivering exceptional service with a personal touch. "We're more than just a place to stay; we're a home away from home," says Adam Bessant, General Manager "Celebrating 10 years is a testament to our dedicated team and our wonderful guests who have made this journey so rewarding. Our motto is to make guests smile through genuine hospitality."



With 56 luxury bedrooms, treatment rooms, vast conference and banqueting suites including outdoor options ideal for summer BBQs or networking events. The restaurant favours locally sourced and seasonal flavours, with the aim to bring guests delicious food from the neighbouring three local counties of Worcestershire, Warwickshire, and Herefordshire.

Why the switched-on CEO is adding GEO to SEO

If you have seen AI inserting answers to your Google searches, you've been touched by Generative Engine Optimisation.

It doesn't matter what your business does, or who your customers and clients are. If the internet is important to you, searches relating to your business will be subject to influence from GEO.

Your business mastered Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) some time ago, but now it needs to work hand-in-hand with AI-generated content too. GEO doesn't mean throwing out your investment in SEO, but adding another layer on top.

By employing GEO techniques, you exploit AI which uses advanced algorithms to analyse customer behaviour, predict

preferences and deliver content that resonates with your targeted audience.

If someone searches for "the best shampoo for dry hair", GEO-enabled FMCG brands will position themselves in answers by optimising their product descriptions and leveraging authentic customer reviews. Amazon already prioritise user reviews and GEO ensures these are integrated into AI-generated snippets.

If a business owner enquires: "What's the best CRM for small businesses?", GEO ensures that your content, backed by case studies and expert opinions, is featured as a reliable source. In short, it provides a full answer, not a list of suggestions from where you'll find your own answers, like traditional SEO.

GEO will change how businesses connect with their audiences. Appearing in AI-search replies requires authority, leadership and credibility in your field and shares your expertise in a conversational tone proven to work for the reader.



CEO, Christian Collison
by Michelle Morris

If your in-house marketing department is innovative and time-rich, they should be able to crack the GEO code. If you are the kind of company who likes to slot experts into specialist tasks like this, Nifty Comms should be on your radar.

GEO will change how businesses connect with their audiences.

- Christian Collison, CEO



JUST WHEN YOU'VE CRACKED SEO, ALONG COMES GEO...

It's like SEO but turned up to 11. Generative Engine Optimisation is reshaping the way your customers search.

It's no longer keyword-focused - it's about context, intent and AI-driven results – and businesses that understand how GEO

works are already pulling ahead. Don't get left behind.

What is it, how does it work and how can you use it to your advantage? Scan the Nifty QR to find out more about GEO and how it affects your business.

Get in touch with us today: hello@niftycomms.com / www.niftycomms.com / 01905 27126

Murcott Energy: Powering the Green Revolution with Portable Wind Turbines

Murcott Energy LTD is a small but mighty company, and we want to tell you why. Ben Murcott is the owner and founder, a highly knowledgeable and skilled Chartered engineer, specialising in Mechanical Engineering.

Ben had the idea to create a portable wind turbine whilst driving on the motorway, noting the opportunity to harness wind energy in difficult and untapped locations – after being blasted by a passing vehicle. He thought that if he could make a difference and an impact by following his passion for engineering, he should. That's how the wind turbine was born.

With the support of Innovate UK, the University of Birmingham, and Worcestershire County Council, this went from a flashby idea into a fully developed portable wind turbine called The Murb.

Today, we are producing a variant of The Murb for Network Rail. It will provide a viable alternative to diesel generators, for powering track side maintenance activities.

The Murb has successfully transferred to the telecoms industry whereby it can power remote cell towers, broadening connectivity for communities around the world.

Our purpose is to continue expanding the



unique service Wind Turbines can provide, reaching far out rural areas that would otherwise have no power or telecoms connection. The Murb is an ideal solution for natural disaster relief. It can be deployed in just 1 hour, bringing reliable power where it's needed immediately.

We aren't just another engineering company, we are a company supporting the global green energy revolution in a whole new way.

For more information, please visit the website at www.murcottenergy.com



NMITE continues to strengthen its position as a leader in industry-aligned engineering education

After reaching a landmark funding agreement towards the end of last year and recently appointing Jesse Norman as Chair of NMITE's Board, Hereford's New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering (NMITE) prepares itself for a pivotal year in innovation and partnerships.

Since its inception NMITE has worked closely with employers to integrate industry expertise throughout their curriculum through applied real-world challenges and have seen evidential success in their approach with almost 100% of their first graduating cohort securing impressive positions within the workplace.

To ensure the continued success of the model and consistent alignment with industry, NMITE have formalised their Terms of Reference with

their strategic Partnerships Advisory Group (PAG) who help guide the institutions aims within higher education, as well as contributing to NMITE's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) offerings from both its developing Centre for Innovation and Future Skills (CIFS) and Centre for Advanced Timber Technology (CATT).

NMITE's centres currently offer a range of UKSPF-funded short courses ranging from timber design to leadership. Places are free for those living or working within Herefordshire. The CIFS Innovation support programme also offers valuable support and guidance to businesses.

NMITE will be hosting their Future of Work conference on 5th June and their Military to Business Careers event on 19th June.



Businesses interested in partnerships or attending these events are encouraged to get in touch. nmite.ac.uk/contact-us

Cloud voice solutions and Connectivity



LOQEX is a leading provider of unified communications solutions. Our extensive expertise in the telecommunications industry

enables us to streamline the operations and enhance the customer service experience of businesses across the UK.

We integrate our unified communications and contact centre technologies seamlessly into business processes, to enable smarter, faster, and more effective communication – businesses of all sizes see the benefits immediately.

LOQEX is also a provider of all your connectivity needs including high speed broadband and ethernet, mobile SIMs, line and number rental and call recording software.

Joining the Chamber of Commerce enables us to connect with other businesses, share our knowledge, and collaborate to drive innovation and growth in the region.

At LOQEX Ltd, we believe that strong communication is the cornerstone of success, and that's why we are committed to helping local enterprises thrive in today's ever changing digital landscape.

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Hazelton Mountford buys White Knight Group's Insurance Book

Hazelton Mountford, Worcester's privately-owned Chartered Insurance Brokers, has announced the acquisition of White Knight Group's customer book of business.

The deal marks the second acquisition in the last 5 years for the firm, whose sights are set on steady growth across the region.

The new Lydney-based business is the third location for the brokerage, with their Headquarters in Bank Street, Worcester and a well-established office in Evesham, serving The Vale and The Cotswolds.

Hazelton Mountford's reputation for expertise

in General Commercial, Property, Haulage & Transport and Not for Profit insurance has led to the expansion of the company through ambitious plans over the last few years, allowing the business to be agile in its approach to insurance solutions.

Group Managing Director, Gordon Hazelton, confirmed: "The team are proud to announce the most recent acquisition, allowing us to move forward into 2025 with strength and an enviable ability to provide solutions across multiple regions. Our new Lydney base, led by existing team member Michelle Howells, will serve the Forest of Dean and beyond."



Michelle continues to manage accounts from the Lydney office and explains: "It will be business as usual for our clients, with no need to worry. We're looking to consolidate and then grow our presence in the area over the coming years, and I'm here to support that plan."

For more about Hazelton Mountford please call the team on **01905 611 951** or visit: hazeltonmountford.co.uk

Bishop Fleming expands into the Midlands with a new Birmingham office

Worcester-based Audit, Accountancy, Tax and Advisory Business Bishop Fleming has pushed further into The Midlands with the recent opening of a new Birmingham office. Mark Taylor, Bishop Fleming's new office lead, outlines their ambitious growth plans.

Why have Bishop Fleming chosen to open a Birmingham office?

As such a key city in terms of the national economy and with strong connectivity to the rest of The Midlands and beyond, Birmingham is the next logical step in the further expansion of the business from its South West heartland. Bishop Fleming already has a well-established and successful office in Worcester and our new Birmingham presence will build on that foundation.

What are Bishop Fleming's key priorities?

Having secured and opened our office in Colmore Row, the next few months will be focussed on two core priorities. Firstly, building awareness of what Bishop Fleming is all about amongst the business community, sharing the compelling – and different – story about this business and where it is heading. Secondly, and crucially, we'll be accelerating our recruitment drive. This will include searching to fill several senior positions, as we being to add the local capabilities we need to drive our growth, but also more junior roles, as we bring in people earlier in their careers who want to be part of this exciting journey too.

What key opportunities does Bishop Fleming see in the West Midlands region?

The region is rich with a diverse and extensive range of owner-managed and family-run middle market businesses – a part of the economy that is a big focus for Bishop Fleming. The firm is also keen to be part of the extensive and thriving

“The region is rich with a diverse and extensive range of owner-managed and family-run middle market businesses – a part of the economy that is a big focus for Bishop Fleming.”



Mark Taylor, Birmingham Office Lead and Andrew Sandiford, Managing Partner, Bishop Fleming

professional services community that operates from the region, serving clients locally, nationally and globally.

Which markets are Bishop Fleming focussing on?

Our client base is hugely diverse, and we're immersed across a wide range of industry sectors. But our plans are fundamentally sector agnostic; we serve clients across four core markets – large corporate businesses, mid-market businesses, public sector and education and private individuals.

What will distinguish the new Birmingham office from competitors in the Midlands?

Our aspiration is to build a local team with a firm focus on the mid-market, and especially owner-managed businesses. It will be key to hire leaders who have deep experience and connectivity in The Midlands to drive this approach.

How does the firm's Midlands expansion fit into its broader vision for the next decade?

The expansion into Birmingham is a key strand in the firm's Better Growth strategy

which is on track to double in size – to revenues of £75m – between 2023 and 2028.

As such, we are aiming to make substantial progress in Birmingham by 2028, but the growth journey in The Midlands will still have a long way to run. We are aiming for strong, sustainable, high-quality growth over the next decade – with investments in fantastic talent at all levels of the business being the key driver.

What opportunities are there to work with, or for, Bishop Fleming?

We have the capability and capacity to service any potential client's needs and together with our existing Worcester office, our new Birmingham office will only serve to increase that capability. So, I urge anyone who is interested to discuss their business or individual needs to contact us at bishopfleming.co.uk.

Similarly, our ambitious plans to grow our headcount quickly are generating many recruitment opportunities so I invite talented candidates to find out more by visiting careers.bishopfleming.co.uk.



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World-Class Engineering from Blade Tooling

An exciting new chapter has just begun for a specialist Worcestershire engineering company Blade Tooling Co. Ltd, as it welcomes its recent new ownership in 2024, and looks forward to growing its business worldwide.

The Legacy of Expertise

Blade Tooling Company has been a well established part of precision engineering in Worcestershire for over forty years. Based in Pershore, the company specialises in the manufacture of tooling to support the manufacture of aircraft engine components. As part of a strong legacy of aero-engineering in this region of the UK, toolmaking has always been an important part of aircraft manufacturing. The region between Bristol and Birmingham has a long history of aircraft engineering extending back to the very active period after the second world war when there were many active local aircraft engineering companies. It is no surprise that those engineering skills evolved to support the advancing technology needed for new aircraft engines and the original owners of Blade Tooling identified the need to supply tooling to make cast turbine blades for aero engine makers such as Rolls-Royce in Derby and Bristol.

Innovation and Skills

From the outset in the early 1980's the company decided to specialise in making metal dies and mould tooling for casting foundries in the UK, building up its reputation for innovative and high-quality precision tooling. The challenges of producing tooling for turbine blades requires a special combination of innovative engineering design of complex 3-Dimensional shapes and the dedication of highly skilled toolmakers to produce the working die. Today the whole manufacturing process is a unique blend of advanced computer aided design (CAD) and manufacturing with skilled operation of complex computer numerically controlled (CNC) multi-axis machine tools and the magic of traditional hand toolmaking. The company has invested in multiple CAD platforms to support the needs of different customers. With the extensive experience of all types of die manufacture, Blade Tooling has developed its own expertise in advanced Electro-Discharge Machining (EDM) and Wire Erosion machining and advanced 'blue light' optical inspection methods. Die making is a highly specialised area of toolmaking with its own challenges and the expertise required takes many years to develop. Blade tooling understands the vital importance of maintaining the level of experience and expertise and has an



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Blade Tooling Company
Units 1-6 Aintree Road, Keytec Business Park, Pershore, Worcestershire, WR10 2JN
e: info@bladetooling.co.uk
t: 01386 575710



apprentice development programme to train talent for the future.

Customers around the World

As Blade Tooling developed and grew its expertise and experience, the markets for its tooling developed beyond the UK to such an extent that in the past decades the majority of sales have been exports to the USA, Europe, and the far East. Managing the complexities of export and import legislation compliance as well as the requirements for Technical Export licences and Brexit, the help and training resources of the Herefordshire

and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce has been invaluable.

The Future looks bright

Under the new UK ownership this year the company is well positioned to develop its customer base and markets even further. Meeting the unique requirements of its customers for high quality, on-time delivery and multi-project capability is of utmost importance to Blade Tooling for its continued success into the future.

For more information, please visit the website at www.bladetooling.co.uk.

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Worcester based recruitment firm sees 60% growth in roles

Worcester-based Four Squared Recruitment has achieved a 60% growth in retained recruitment work throughout 2024, providing a much-needed boost to the slowing recruitment market.

By prioritising a retained search model and committing to partnerships that go beyond transactional hiring, Four Squared Recruitment's focus on delivering talent with integrity resonates strongly with companies seeking recruiters who act as an extension of their brand.

Retained recruitment offers a distinct advantage by securing upfront funding, it ensures the dedicated attention of a specialist recruitment partner. This commitment enables Four Squared Recruitment to prioritise quality over quantity, building relationships with top-tier candidates and matching them to organisations where they can thrive.

This commitment to understanding and authentically representing clients has proven particularly valuable for sourcing senior and specialist roles—positions that demand both technical expertise and cultural alignment.



"Opting for a retained search model enables businesses to access specialist expertise and a more diverse talent pool compared to working with multiple recruiters," explains Kat Paterson-Browne, Senior Executive Consultant at Four Squared Recruitment. "This approach allows us to invest significant time and resources into understanding a business's unique needs and culture. That means we're not just filling vacancies; we're finding the right talent to support long-term success for businesses."

Driven by their recent successes, Four Squared Recruitment is now expanding their team, seeking expert and driven recruitment consultants to join their growing operation.

For businesses and professionals keen to learn more about partnering with a recruiter who prioritises results, or for consultants interested in joining a growing and supportive team, **visit their website** for further information.

Introducing our 'Upskill Your People' campaign

As part of the Worcestershire Local Skills Improvement Plan, we have committed to raising awareness of the importance of developing and nurturing staff.

We held extensive conversations with hundreds of businesses from around the county, and something which really stood out for us was the number of businesses that attribute the training of their staff to financial gain. Whilst this is the ambition of most businesses, we want to ensure that business owners and employers see the tremendous benefits to cultivating and developing their staff – not only for financial growth, but for improved productivity and efficiency, for improved staff morale and retention, for better succession planning and business planning and for making the workplace a place where people want to be.

We are thrilled to be launching our 'Upskill Your People' campaign. The purpose of this campaign is to help boost the importance of great business culture, with a call to action for employers to commit to open discussion and honesty with their employees, to get the same in return. We are working alongside Worcestershire Growth Hub in their endeavours to promote Workforce Planning via their hugely supportive and education Workforce Planning Platform. **Click here** to view and explore the Workforce Planning Platform.



Take a look at our webpage, and start your journey to becoming an even more amazing employer!

Upskill Your People | Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce

ADVERTISE IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Contact:
Angie Smith,
Business Development Manager

Email
a.smith@distinctivegroup.co.uk

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What decision-makers need to know about ESG



Increasingly, business owners, board members and those who are responsible for legal decisions in organisations are required to be aware of the impact these decisions have on ESG (Environment, Social and Governance). The expectations placed on those in a position of authority – both from governing bodies like the FCA, and employees – can be difficult to navigate. However, it is essential that ESG is considered fully and implemented where possible.

What is ESG?

ESG is a framework used to measure impact on society and the environment, whilst also evaluating how transparent and accountable a business is in relation to these matters.

This framework assesses the sustainability and ethical impact of a company or investment and is often taken into account during the financing process.

Research shows that good ESG practices will also help to attract and retain staff, particularly younger employees who belong to a generation that is reported to consider and care more about the environment and sustainability. These initiatives also appeal to customers and suppliers.

Why is ESG relevant to decision-makers?

The people who are responsible for decisions around ESG are likely to have clear oversight of what's happening across the business as a whole. Such individuals will recognise that ESG is an important component for growth and that they, and their decisions, can have a direct impact on successes and the bottom line. Real value can be added by understanding what ESG is and how it can benefit your workplace.

What should you consider in relation to ESG?

When looking at the long-term goals and values of your organisation, it is vital for those with responsibility for these initiatives to consider how to assess and implement their ESG objectives. We suggest that the following steps will be useful.

- **Collaboration and communication** – work with colleagues to understand your priorities and objectives on ESG. Those with responsibility for these objectives are likely in the unique position of having access to many areas of the business; they should use this to communicate any ESG strategy
- **Compliance** – ensure that you are complying with all mandatory laws and regulations – for example employment law, data use and security, and energy regulatory law

- **Education and empowerment** – senior leadership teams should be educated on why ESG is so important. A cost-benefit analysis may be useful here. Education will empower stakeholders to create a strategy which moves your company forward in a positive way
- **Management and mediation** – stakeholders will no doubt have different views on the importance of ESG. Expectations will need to be managed around what is both necessary and achievable
- **Prioritising and protecting** – an ESG strategy will not be achieved overnight – therefore, it is important to prioritise ESG issues. Whilst working through the priorities, it is important to ensure that your organisation is protected against claims for non-compliance of mandatory law and regulation
- **Leading and thinking positively** – as someone with a bird's eye view of operations, leaders and decision-makers can take a direct strategy and can assist in addressing the issues in a positive way. It's important to communicate that the business will not only be compliant with the law but will also benefit in other ways – for example financially, in staff recruitment and retention.

External support can help to fully implement a suitable plan, ensure the law is complied with, and that goals are achieved within a complex landscape. This support can provide a sounding board for ideas, as well as up-to-date information on ESG practices and processes.

For more information, please contact



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Small meeting room that seats up to 8. Ground floor.

- Full day – £115+VAT Members / £170+VAT Non-members

Half day – £60+VAT Members / £90+VAT Non-members

Small meeting room that seats up to 8. First floor.

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To check availability or book please email **training@hwchamber.co.uk** or telephone **01905 673600**

More information about each training course and upcoming dates can be found on the Chamber website
hwchamber.co.uk/events-and-training-calendar

Meet the Chamber Training Team



Olivia Williams,
Head of Events
& Training



Amanda Swingewood,
Training Co-ordinator



Saskia Murphy,
Events & Training
Assistant

We would like to hear from you!

Whilst continuously expanding our training offering, we are always keen to hear from businesses about what training needs they have or skills shortages they are facing. Our dedicated training team are on hand to support and help find a solution for you.

We also welcome suggestions for new courses or workshops that will be most beneficial to our local businesses. To express your interest in delivering training on behalf of the Chamber or to put forward your suggestions for new course topics, please email **training@hwchamber.co.uk**

Training & Development

Managing Performance in the Team
Tuesday 4 March | 9.00am-4.00pm
£175+VAT Members / £220+VAT Non-members
Location: Worcester

HR for the Non-HR Manager
Wednesday 5 March | 9.00am-4.00pm
£175+VAT Members / £220+VAT Non-members
Location: Worcester

IOSH Working Safely®
Wednesday 12 March | 9.00am-4.00pm
£175+VAT Members / £220+VAT Non-members
Location: Worcester

Advanced Microsoft Excel
Thursday 13 March | 9.00am-4.00pm
£169+VAT Members / £210+VAT Non-members
Location: Worcester

Intermediate Microsoft Excel
Tuesday 18 March | 9.00am-4.00pm
£175+VAT Members / £220+VAT Non-members
Location: Worcester

Communicating for Success – Hereford Funded by UKSPF
Tuesday 18 March | 9.00am-4.00pm
FREE for Herefordshire residents only
Location: Hereford

Introduction to Project Management
Wednesday 19 March | 9.00am-4.00pm
£169+VAT Members / £210+VAT Non-members
Location: Virtual

How to use Microsoft Teams Effectively
Thursday 20 March | 9.00am-12.30pm
£95+VAT Members / £115+VAT Non-members
Location: Worcester

Intermediate Microsoft Excel – Hereford Funded by UKSPF
Monday 24 March | 9.00am-4.00pm
FREE for Herefordshire residents only
Location: Hereford

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Training
Tuesday 25 March | 9.00am-4.00pm
£175+VAT Members / £220+VAT Non-members
Location: Virtual

Basic IT Skills
Wednesday 26 March | 9.00am-4.00pm
£169+VAT Members / £210+VAT Non-members
Location: Worcester

Managing People in the Team
Thursday 27 March | 9.00am-4.00pm
£169+VAT Members / £210+VAT Non-members
Location: Worcester

April Courses Date

Delivering Exceptional Customer Service
Tuesday 1 April | 9.00am-4.00pm
£175+VAT Members / £220+VAT Non-members
Location: Virtual

Emergency First Aid at Work
Wednesday 9 April | 9.00am-4.30pm
£95+VAT Members / £115+VAT Non-members
Location: Worcester

Internal Auditor Training
Thursday 10 April | 9.00am-4.00pm
£175+VAT Members / £220+VAT Non-members
Location: Worcester

An Introduction to Digital Marketing and PR
Tuesday 8 April | 9.00am-11.00am
FREE for Members / £115+VAT Non-members
Location: Zoom

Canva - Simple and effective designs for digital marketing
Tuesday 22 April | 9.00am-12.30pm
£95+VAT Members / £115+VAT Non-members
Location: Virtual

Using AI for Businesses
Tuesday 29 April | 9.00am-4.00pm
£175+VAT Members / £220+VAT Non-members
Location: Worcester



We would like to hear from you!

Whilst continuously expanding the training offering, the Training department are always looking for new ideas for courses. It's great to understand what topics will be most beneficial to local businesses.

For any suggestions, please email **training@hwchamber.co.uk**. More information about each training course and upcoming dates can be found on the Chamber website - **hwchamber.co.uk/events-and-training-calendar**



Britannia Dynamic Logistics celebrates global success

Launching a business at the height of Brexit/Covid could have ended in a swift ‘crash and burn’. But for Phil Schiaffino, founder of Britannia Dynamic Logistics, it’s the best decision he’s ever made.

It’s been an amazing four-year journey for BDL’s managing director Phil and his small tight-knit team.

From a modest £10,000 outlay and a desk at the kitchen table to an international freight forwarder with an annual £7 million turnover, there’s just one trajectory in mind – and that’s up!

Setting up in business is tough at any time, but recent economic headwinds are some of the toughest ever faced by Phil and business partner Tony Seifas.

They needed all their decades of experience in road, air and sea freight to navigate the uncharted waters of Brexit and then Covid, when – for example – container costs from China spiralled from \$2,000 per 40ft to over \$20,000.

Then there is the ongoing global supply chain turmoil caused by war, pirate attacks, driver shortages and volatile fuel costs.

The journey to date

“It was a bit of a challenge at first,” Phil says with classic understatement. “Back in August 2020, I’d just been made redundant. I had job offers, but decided to do my own thing, drawing on 25 years’ experience in road freight.



Phil Schiaffino
Managing Director / Founder



Tony Seifas
Operations Director

“I also had a lot of connections – particularly in the automotive industry – who offered positive feedback to my plans.

“So, I thought okay, I’ll put them to the test. And lo and behold, they came up trumps.”

Fast forward to today – and from a handful of initial clients, BDL is a well-established, highly successful international freight forwarder, handling thousands of imports and exports across the world for a wide range of industries.

Turnover has doubled year on year, and the focus is on continued organic growth.

Local heroes

Despite their huge success, the company remains extremely proud of its strong links with the local community. As a long-standing member of the Chamber of Commerce, BDL won Small Business of the Year 2023 and High Growth Business of the Year 2024.

“These awards really made our achievements seem real”, says Phil, who adds they hope to clinch the treble with International Trade Business of the Year in the next Awards.

BDL also have close charity ties: they sponsor an emergency rapid response vehicle; support Worcestershire County Cricket golf day; and perhaps closest to their hearts, were logistics partner of choice for the Great Waddle of Worcester, organised by St Richard’s Hospice, which raised £330,000 in a charity auction of quirky penguin sculptures.

Secrets of success

But back to business. What is the secret to BDL’s success?

Phil says: “It’s a combination of our very small but great team and our hugely supportive client base. We have delivered exactly what we promised them from the start, so a lot of our work now comes through recommendation”.

Tony adds: “Competition in the freight industry is huge, and you have to stand out. It’s easy to say, ‘Our customer service is fantastic, and we offer the best rates. But being in the industry as long as we have, we know these promises have to be backed up with meaningful results.

“If a client wants the cheapest rate all the time, then we’re probably not the people for them. But there are plenty of customers who rely on quality service as much as price. That’s what we aim for.

“Honesty is a key part of our business. Sometimes you have to relay information that the customer doesn’t want to hear but needs to know.”

A perfect blend

Tony’s 37 years in international sea and air freight are the perfect balance to Phil’s expertise in road freight and automotive.

He says: “There’s lots of variables in the third-party supply chain.

“Our drivers and services are tracked 24 hours a day to make sure a. they turn up and b. we can handle any events out of our control. We keep our customers fully informed at every stage, even if it’s bad news.”

Tony continues: “My client base comes from a wide variety of backgrounds. I’ve got customers that import bed frames and camping equipment, and others that export machinery parts.

“And obviously most of our shipments are time-critical, mainly on the automotive side, which Phil handles.

“But we also work with other very interesting clients, including an award-winning chef who sells premium foods to superyachts. We often pick up last-minute orders from his suppliers and deliver them within a very narrow timeframe when the boats are in dock.”



International sea freight is also very time-consuming – a shipment from the Far East can take eight weeks door to door, whereas UK and Europe freight generally takes around three days.

While market conditions have generally calmed down, volatility remains throughout the freight industry, Tony says.

“It’s difficult to quote for a job as far in advance as we used to, but we have to be realistic about sudden price rises and prolonged delivery times, and deal with challenges as we come to them.

“The key is maintaining proper communication with customers. They know we are reliant on the big decisions made by shipping lines on everything from fuel prices and port congestion, to transport around war zones.”

Good times ahead

BDL has not only survived but thrived in these exceptional times, and Phil and Tony are hugely optimistic about the future.

Tony says: “It sounds corny, but we get huge satisfaction from knowing our clients are well looked after, and their feedback tells us so.”

Phil and Tony are currently handling sales and winning some really nice accounts through word of mouth. Tony says: “It really makes up for all the knockbacks.”

Phil adds: “We’ve got some exciting activities in the pipeline. For instance, a very well-known automotive company has approached us to apply for their special transport list.

“There’s plenty of business opportunities out there, which could take us up to a whole new level. I never dreamt we’d get to this point in just under five years.”

And finally, a message for new clients. Tony says, “Come and have a chat with us. We’re here to share our knowledge and advice and talk through any pain points.

“Potential customers should see us as an extension of their own business. Our existing ones certainly do.”

Full information at
bdl-groupservices.com



Supporters rally round after the Severn Valley Railway suffers devastating landslip

As investigations continue into a devastating landslip on its line, the Severn Valley Railway has released dramatic new images of the damage caused and has paid tribute to the hundreds of people who’ve already made donations to help it pay for remedial work. The heritage line is also reassuring passengers that it will be open to the public on 15 February for half-term, on the 12-mile section of its line that is unaffected.

On Wednesday 29 January SVR staff discovered that a large landslip had occurred, leaving the line impassable. It has affected a 30-metre section of embankment in Shropshire, between the SVR’s northernmost station Bridgnorth and the smaller station at Hampton Loade.

Investigations began immediately and are ongoing, as head of infrastructure Chris Bond explained:

‘We’ve made a number of visits with specialist engineers, and Network Rail are sending a team of geotechnical and infrastructure experts later this week, as part of the partnership agreement we have with them.

‘We’re carefully building a picture of what’s happened, but it’s still early days. We need

to begin ground investigations by drilling boreholes to gather geotechnical data of what lies beneath the surface. This is important information that will assist with the engineering design of the repairs.

‘It’s essential that we don’t rush this investigation. We need to gather extensive information, so that we can be sure that we take the most robust and effective measures to repair the embankment for the long term.’

Meanwhile, the SVR has received almost £36,000 in donations from many hundreds of supporters, as well as practical offers of help from a number of sources. Managing director Jonathan ‘Gus’ Dunster said:

‘It’s a huge boost to us to know how much people care about the Severn Valley Railway, and how they’re prepared to dig deep to help us repair the damage, and get our line fully up and running again. We are incredibly grateful to every single person who’s rallied round.

‘We’ve also received offers of practical help – from both specialist companies who want to donate their services and from individuals who say they’ll come and join a volunteer working party, when the time is right. All of this support will make a tangible difference to us.’



With half-term services due to commence on 15 February, including character meetings with Paddington™ at The Engine House, Highley, the SVR is reassuring passengers that they will be able to travel on the unaffected section of its line between Kidderminster and Hampton Loade. It is contacting people who pre-booked Bridgnorth departures to offer them an alternative departure from Kidderminster. The railway has also confirmed that its brand-new Boogie Lights Express experience will go ahead as planned, starting on 28 February.

You can donate to the SVR Resilience Fund to help the railway repair the line at svr.co.uk.

Hereford River Carnival – how to get involved



Hereford River Carnival is holding an open meeting to encourage people to get involved in the 2025 event.

The drop-in open meeting will be held upstairs at De Koffie Pot between 1pm-5pm on Saturday 8th February. This will be a chance to meet the team, find out more about what we do and how you, your group, organisation or business can get involved.

Get yourself, your mates, or your business on the River Wye for the Hereford River Carnival Flotilla on Saturday 17th May 2025.

Bring your own paddle board, canoe, inflatable, coracle or rowing boat or use a raft base from us and dress it up to advertise your business or just show off!

Register your interest here: rivercarnival.org Just scroll down and hit the FLOATS button

Dress up and join the Street Carnival

Our Street Carnival sets off from Maylords at 10.30 am processes through High Town, down Broad street, King street, Bridge street and when we arrive at the Bishops Meadow it marks the opening of the day’s activities. There will be open workshops, around the city, to make costumes and structures over the Easter holidays all FREE to attend!

So let’s get the City Buzzing.

For more information keep your eyes on our website rivercarnival.org

We are currently looking for sponsors

In the current climate, public funding is particularly difficult to attain and many festivals and community events have folded ‘due to lack of funding’ as was the case with our 2024 event. We are therefore asking local businesses to step in to help secure the future of the biggest and best free community event in Herefordshire! We have a ‘raft’ of sponsorship packages available which can be shaped to suit your needs, or if you can offer goods, services or volunteer staff to offset the monetary fees we incur, we would love to hear from you too.

You can find these here: rivercarnival.org

Crowd funder

We need money upfront to pay for the licence, insurance and deposits for our contractors, & have set a £5,000 target. You can fundraise

in any way you see fit, be it a pub quiz, jumble sale or sponsored walk, make it a community event, or just donate what you can afford to help HRC 2025 be bigger and better.

crowdfunder.co.uk/p/hereford-river-carnival-2025

Volunteers

Register your interest in assisting at the Hereford River Carnival 2025. We need helping hands and smiling faces for HRC 25 happening on Saturday 17th May. Come and be part of the crew and the magic. If you have skills we can use in our event planning process please get in touch too!

Register here: rivercarnival.org Just scroll down and hit the VOLUTEERS button

Advertising in the Souvenir Programme

We are publishing a Souvenir programme to with all the info on what’s happening at this year’s Carnival, this will be distributed in the Easter Holidays and handed out at the event.

The programme is colourful and much prized by the attendees. If you want to advertise prices start as little as £25 to get you noticed and it shows your support for this fabulous community event.

Check out the deals on our website rivercarnival.org scroll down to the ‘Advertise with us’ button.

Annual Dinner

Join us for the Chamber Annual Dinner on 30th April. This dinner will bring together local businesses from Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The evening will include networking, an update from the Chamber Team, and the chance to hear from our inspirational guest speakers.

Guests will enjoy a welcome drink, a delicious two-course meal, and the chance to connect with fellow professionals.

Guest speakers:

Olympic gold medallist and world champion swimmer Matt Richards M.B.E. will share his journey from Droitwich to the world stage. At just 22, Matt has already achieved remarkable success.

“As a professional swimmer, I have had the opportunity to travel the world and compete at the highest levels of my sport. The lessons

that I have learnt from this journey have proved invaluable to my sporting career so far, but also to my business interests outside of the pool. I’m really excited to be speaking at the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce Members Dinner.”

We are also delighted to announce that we will be joined by Sarah Howard, Chair of the British Chambers of Commerce.

Sarah has a long history in the Chamber movement and is a great advocate for the power of business for good. Sarah became

Chair of the British Chambers of Commerce in 2019, is a Past President of Suffolk Chamber, and sits on the board of the London Chamber. In challenging times for business, she has supported the BCC and international network’s growth and is working with her teams to ensure they support the growth and prosperity of our Members.

The dinner is open to Members and Non-members. If you would like to book your place, please visit hwchamber.co.uk/product/chamber-annual-dinner-2025-04-30.



CHAMBER ANNUAL DINNER

WEDNESDAY 30 APRIL, 6.00-9.00PM

HOGARTHS STONE MANOR HOTEL, BROMSGROVE ROAD, KIDDERMINSTER, DY10 4PJ

THIS EVENING EVENT WILL INCLUDE A WELCOME DRINK ON ARRIVAL, A TWO COURSE MEAL, AN ABUNDANCE OF NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES, AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAMBER TEAM AND THE CHANCE TO HEAR FROM OUR INSPIRATIONAL GUEST SPEAKER; OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALLIST AND WORLD CHAMPION SWIMMER, MATT RICHARDS M.B.E.

THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS.

Leadership Development Series 2025/26

The Leadership Development Series is back for 2025/26. This comprehensive series is designed to inspire leaders, promote best practices, and provide actionable solutions to leadership challenges. In partnership with 3WH, this series includes six engaging workshops and a half-day conference.

Series Overview:

- **Workshop Schedule:** Each session runs from 8:30 am to 11:00 am at the Bank House Hotel, Bransford, Worcestershire, WR6 5JD. Virtual attendance via Zoom is also available.
- **Half-Day Conference:** Scheduled from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm, this in-person event features networking opportunities and guest speakers discussing emerging leadership trends, well-being, and leading through change.

Workshop Topics:

- Boost confidence in yourself and your leadership (7 May 2025)
- Leading with creativity and hosting creative meetings (9 July 2025)
- How AI is influencing leadership and how can leaders adapt (10 September 2025)
- Creating a culture of innovation in the workplace (12 November 2025)

- Managing and embracing change (14 January 2026)
- How to give feedback, it’s a gift! (4 March 2026)
- Half-Day Conference on Leadership Trends, Coaching & Effective Communication (25 March 2026)

Booking Information:

- **In-Person Attendance:** £70.00 + VAT per workshop; £370.00 + VAT for the full series.
- **Virtual Attendance:** £70.00 + VAT per workshop; £370.00 + VAT for the full series.
- **Full Series and Conference Package:** £400.00 + VAT (in-person only).

■ **Conference Only:** £60.00 + VAT.

Non-member rates are also available. In-person sessions include refreshments and printed materials, while virtual attendees will receive live-streamed content with interactive group work. Please note, full series bookings require a consistent attendance mode (either all in-person or all virtual).

Spaces are limited and in high demand. To secure your place, please email events@hwchamber.co.uk or call **01905 673612**.

For more details and to view all training course dates, visit hwchamber.co.uk/training/leadership-development-series

2025/26 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SERIES

A 6-part development programme, in partnership with 3WH.

01905 673600



Nicklin Accountancy Service joins H&W Chamber of Commerce

Having ready access to the best possible financial advice, when you need it, is vital for your business and family, as well as your future and your legacy.

That is why the team at Nicklin prides itself on offering sensible, all-round support, built on individual attention and a complete range of services that you would normally only expect to receive from top national firms.

More than just accountants, Nicklin provides specialist services that help clients to generate and retain their wealth. This is delivered via a range of services through its various companies:

Nicklin Accountancy Services Ltd

Offering accounting and taxation services to a wide variety of small and medium sized business entities including Limited companies Limited Liability partnerships, Business Partnerships and sole traders.

Nicklin Audit Ltd

Offering specialist audit services to owner managed businesses, UK subsidiaries and branches of overseas companies, charities, pension schemes and academies. We also offer audit services to property professionals,



David Wright, Director
David.wright@nicklins.co.uk



Mark Howell, Managing Director
Mark.howell@nicklins.co.uk



Paul Clayton, Director
Paul.clayton@nicklins.co.uk

solicitors, clubs and housing associations.

Nicklin Financial Services Ltd

Advice on pension planning, investments and protection planning.

HSP Nicklin Limited

Specialist accountancy and taxation advice for medical professionals. Our clients include medical practices ranging from sole practitioners to large partnerships.

As current members of both the Black Country and Birmingham Chambers of Commerce, joining the H&W chamber allows us to connect with other businesses to foster innovation and growth in the region. We are excited to work closely with the chamber and look forward to building relationships and sharing success.

For more information and advice, please visit: nicklins.co.uk

Hoople's services have evolved to meet the requirements of its shareholders and customers

Hoople Group supports the local economy by delivering a range of services to its council and NHS shareholders, schools and academies, private sector businesses and charities.

At a time when the public sector is facing pressure to deliver increased services with reduced budgets, Hoople is a valued strategic partner. Using its public sector expertise, Hoople provide innovative and forward-looking solutions which help maximise resources and reduce costs. Teams across the group work to integrate provision and achieve efficiencies in areas including IT infrastructure, property management, compliance and human resources.

Hoople's services have evolved to meet the requirements of its shareholders and customers. In 2022, the group took over the operation of three care settings from Herefordshire Council, in addition to the reablement service. Hoople Care has grown to become one of the leading care providers in Herefordshire.

The group provides a range of services to schools and academies including payroll, finance, HR and data management. This has recently been expanded to include a health and safety advisory service and information security provision.



Hoople provide a growing number of commercial services. The group is one of the largest training providers in the area, focusing on health and social care, first aid and wellbeing, health and safety, leadership and personal development. Hoople also has a professional and experienced resourcing team accredited by the Recruitment & Employment Federation.

The people-focused ethos at Hoople Group prioritises the wellbeing and personal development of its employees, and it continues to work towards reducing its environmental impact.



Greensafe are excited to announce their new strategic partnership



Greensafe IT specialise in offering secure, sustainable and environmentally responsible IT Asset Disposition (ITAD) and lifecycle services.

Their goal; to help businesses efficiently manage their IT estates from cradle to grave; ensuring full data security and compliance whilst embracing a circular economy. Greensafe provide a comprehensive range of IT services; including, secure asset sanitisation, recycling and refurbishment. As a certified provider, they adhere to the highest industry standards, with credentials including List X, ISO14001, G-Cloud and

ADISA certifications, ensuring compliance, data security and both environmental and operational best practices.

Greensafe are excited to announce their new strategic partnership with Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce. Holding sites in both Kidderminster and Droitwich, their membership represents a significant milestone; enabling them to extend their services and support to more businesses across the two counties. By joining forces with the Chamber, they aim to build stronger connections within the local business community and offer tailored solutions that cater to the unique needs of companies in our region.

Jon Sansom, MD iterates "We look forward to forging lasting partnerships with local organisations, driving united ESG efforts with the two counties and supporting a tech-driven future, where businesses thrive sustainably."

Greensafe have made it their mission to empower local businesses to responsibly and sustainably manage their end-of-life technology, reduce their carbon footprint and safeguard sensitive data. As a trusted, highly accredited ITAD and lifecycle services provider, Greensafe understand the growing need for businesses to adopt more sustainable practices and will guide and support them do just that.



Driving Innovation: SJL joins Chamber as Key Member

SJL Insurance is one of the UK's largest owner-operated insurance brokers, and is excited to become a Strategic Member of the Chamber in 2025. Currently supporting companies nationwide with over 100,000 commercial policies, SJL is looking forward to servicing local companies, whilst helping to influence regional business growth and innovation.

Founded in 2001 by Simon Lancaster, SJL has grown from its Worcester headquarters into a national industry leader with a strong presence across the UK. As a Lloyd's of London broker, SJL offer tailored insurance solutions for all range of businesses and risks, no matter the size or sector. Providing a fully advised service to all our clients, SJL can ensure your business has the protection it needs, should the worst happen.

Through this partnership, SJL aims to grow its role in supporting the business community, with The Chamber's endorsement underscoring SJL's vital role in helping to shape and support the local economy. Simon Lancaster said, "SJL Insurance has always been about empowering businesses to thrive. Partnering with the Chamber aligns with our mission to support businesses and communities in achieving their goals."

Beyond its commercial success, SJL is committed to community impact through the SJL Foundation, supporting initiatives like Acorns Children's Hospice and entrepreneurial grants.

As a Strategic Member of the Chamber, SJL Insurance is set to drive economic development, championing the success of businesses across the region. Together with the Chamber, SJL aims to continue to set a benchmark for client support and excellence.

Kraft Heinz Worcester is looking forward to meeting other Members

Kraft Heinz Worcester is the home of Lea & Perrins, the official creator and supplier of Worcestershire Sauce. This factory has been operational since 1897, surviving being commandeered by the British Army during the Second World War and the factory fire of 1964.

Today this site exports the famous sauce, along with other recipes, to over 130 countries across the globe. It remains as popular today as it has ever been and is still lovingly made in Worcester in much the same way as it was when first sold in 1837.

The Lea & Perrins factory employs just under 50 full time employees, some of which have been key members of the team for over 30 years. With their new Site Manager, Faye Webber and fresh leadership team they are all excited to work closely with the Chamber



team to build relationships in the community.

Looking forward to meeting other members during upcoming events and sharing training opportunities with our fantastic team members.

Residential development expert Paul Harris joins mfg Solicitors

Law firm mfg Solicitors has bolstered its residential development team with the appointment of a new senior associate.



Residential development specialist Paul Harris has joined the firm, working closely with partner and head of residential development, Rhiannon Clark.

Representing a variety of clients over the last decade, including PLC housebuilders and promoters, widely experienced Paul is well respected for his specialism in a variety of residential development matters, including strategic and immediate land promotion, as well as developer acquisition and disposal.

Rhiannon Clark, head of the residential development team at mfg Solicitors said: "Paul brings common sense and confidence to his transactions and I know that our clients will enjoy working with him. I am looking forward to seeing our residential development team thrive in what we expect to be a busy market place in 2025."

mfgsolicitors.com

Hoople Group announce new role at the company

Hoople Group are pleased to announce that Daley Jones is taking on a new role at the company, as Head of Learning & Business Development.

Daley has many years' experience in the training and education sector, and will continue to lead Hoople's Training Team and Foundation Learning Programme. As an effective communicator with a passion for all things Hoople, he has been a valued advocate for the company since its inception in 2011, so the addition of the business development function is a natural and richly deserved progression.

Daley will help achieve the company's strategy of sustainable growth. He will be working with teams across the business, together with customers, to develop the service offering, identify opportunities and deliver solutions.



Daley Jones

New roles for two team members at Hazelton Mountford

The Senior Management Team at the privately-owned local firm are excited to announce role changes for two of its existing team members.



Ethan Bozward has transitioned to the Let Property division as an Account Handler, while Allen Goodwin is now an Account Handler in the Claims Department. These strategic moves highlight the company's commitment to their long-term business goals of growth across the region.

Ethan Bozward's move to the Let Property division reflects Hazelton Mountford's focus on providing tailored insurance solutions for landlords, letting

agents and property professionals. Speaking about his new role, Ethan shared: "I'm excited to join the Let Property team and support our clients with comprehensive insurance services. I look forward to contributing to a department that plays such a vital role in the company's offerings." The Let Property division has been instrumental in Hazelton Mountford's success.

Meanwhile, Allen Goodwin's transition to the Claims Department demonstrates Hazelton Mountford's commitments to enhancing its claims-handling expertise. Allen commented: "Moving to the Claims Department is an opportunity for me to make a direct impact on client satisfaction. Helping clients navigate challenging situations aligns with my passion for excellent customer service." The Claims Department is a cornerstone of Hazelton Mountford's operations.

Discover more about Hazelton Mountford's team on their **Staff page**.

EBC Group proudly signs the Armed Forces Covenant: Supporting those who serve

At EBC Group, we are proud to announce that our Chief Operating Officer, Mike Cook, has officially signed the Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of the company.

This milestone reflects our commitment to supporting the UK Armed Forces community, including serving personnel, veterans, reservists, and their families.

By signing this important pledge, EBC Group joins a growing network of organisations dedicated to ensuring that those who serve—or have served—are treated with fairness and respect in their civilian lives.

What is the Armed Forces Covenant?

The Armed Forces Covenant is a pledge made by organisations to honour and support the Armed Forces community. It commits businesses and public sector organisations to remove barriers and ensure that members of the Armed

Forces community are treated fairly. This includes offering support in areas such as:

- Employment opportunities for veterans, reservists, and military spouses.
- Flexibility in work arrangements for reservists and cadet force adult volunteers.
- Providing assistance to employees with family members in active service.
- Supporting service charities through fundraising, volunteering, or donations.

Why This Commitment Matters

For EBC Group, this is more than a signature—it's a reflection of our values. Our company is built on the foundation of trust, resilience, and innovation, qualities that align closely with the skills and experiences of Armed Forces personnel.



A Message from Our COO, Mike Cook

"Signing the Armed Forces Covenant is a proud moment for EBC Group. We deeply value the dedication and sacrifices made by our Armed Forces community, and this pledge reinforces our commitment to supporting them in every way we can. We're excited to welcome more veterans, reservists, and military families into our organisation and to give back to those who have given so much."

Worcester Six Business Park: A prime hub for business expansion and innovation

Worcester Six Business Park is quickly becoming the go to location for businesses looking to expand. Situated near the M5, it offers excellent national transport links and a range of modern facilities, making it an ideal base for companies of all sizes. The park provides flexible units from 10,000 to 300,000 sq ft, combining cutting-edge amenities with a peaceful rural setting, creating an attractive environment for both businesses and employees.

Global manufacturing leader MiTek has chosen Worcester Six for its new UK headquarters, marking a major milestone for the business park. The state-of-the-art facility will be the largest on-site and is set to bring approximately 250 new jobs to the region. This investment not only strengthens the local



economy but also reinforces Worcestershire's position as a hub for global manufacturing innovation. MiTek joins a prestigious lineup of industry giants already thriving at Worcester Six, including Siemens, Kohler Mira, and

Spire Healthcare. With its prime location, cutting-edge infrastructure, and seamless connectivity, Worcester Six continues to attract world-class businesses seeking the ideal base for growth and success.

With over 1.2 million sq ft of commercial space already developed and more to come, Worcester Six continues to attract major investment, supporting local growth while drawing international attention. To date, the park has created over 800 jobs, proving its importance to the local community and economy.

To find out how you can join the growing number of businesses at Worcester Six Business Park, please visit: worcester6.co.uk.

The UK labour market is undergoing significant transformation



The UK labour market is undergoing significant transformation due to AI advancements and upcoming legislative changes, including a rise in the National Living Wage and Employer National Insurance contributions. AI

integration into various sectors is enhancing efficiency by automating routine tasks and demanding new skills from the workforce, fostering a need for continuous learning and development. Yet, AI also raises concerns about job displacement as it alters the nature of work, making some roles obsolete while creating others that require advanced skills.

The recruitment sector must help businesses navigate these changes through strategic workforce planning and reskilling efforts. Additionally, the increased labour costs starting in April pose a financial challenge, particularly for SMEs, as they face tighter margins. This could impact job creation and

force companies to adjust their recruitment strategies and workforce management. Businesses may opt for agency workers to handle demand surges or further embrace AI to cut costs, indicating a cycle of ongoing influence on labour market dynamics.

Moving forward, UK businesses need to remain agile, using technology to boost productivity and developing a resilient workforce ready for a rapidly changing environment. Recruitment professionals will play a crucial role, not only in hiring but also as strategic advisors on talent management and technological integration, ensuring businesses can thrive in this new landscape

Movers
& Shakers

Read about the
latest movers
& shakers for
this issue.





International Trade

Export services

International trade export documentation services:

The world of export documentation can appear to be difficult and complicated to those who are new to international trade, even the seasoned exporters can experience problems when completing the necessary paperwork for their shipments.

We have many years of experience assisting exporters and issuing a wide range of documents used in international business. We are authorised by HM Government and nationally accredited to certify Certificates of Origin (United Kingdom and Arab) and UK EUR1 certificates, invoices and other documents

as required in international trade and also ATA Carnets for temporary movement of goods.

***Members receive up to 50% discount on most export documents*.**

For more information on any export documents contact us on **01905 673614** or email **internationaltrade@hwchamber.co.uk**

Don't forget we also offer a customs declaration service and can act as your UK Customs agent for both imports and exports. Look out for our **next e-shot** for more information on this service!

Meet Our International Trade Team



Kayla Ball



Emma Harris



Natalie Foxall



Sabrina Brown



Amy Timmins

Our International Trade Advisors are on hand to support you with any questions you may have. For further details, please don't hesitate to contact the team on **01905 673614** or email **internationaltrade@hwchamber.co.uk**.

Changes to NI Shipment

Are you ready for changes in shipping parcels to Northern Ireland?
Processes are changing from 31 March 2025 for businesses shipping parcels from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

- **Business-to-business (B2B)** parcels will require information submission through the Customs Declaration Service (CDS). While parcel carriers may handle this as part of their service, businesses need to provide additional information to their carriers, and in some cases may need to pay duty that can be reclaimed if goods remain in Northern Ireland.
- **The UK Internal Market Scheme (UKIMS)** offers a streamlined solution for eligible goods moving from GB to NI businesses. Under this scheme, goods intended for sale to or final use by UK end consumers can move without requiring a full international customs declaration or incurring duty, simplifying the process significantly.

- **For business-to-consumer (B2C)** shipments, the process remains relatively straightforward - no individual customs declarations are required, and no duty is payable. Carriers will only collect standard consumer data such as recipient details and goods descriptions.
Businesses need to clearly identify whether their customers are businesses or consumers, as different processes apply. This can be determined through various means such as business account status, VAT registration, or transaction characteristics. It's crucial to communicate this information to your parcel carrier.

What is an ATA Carnet and how to use them

What is an ATA Carnet?*

An ATA Carnet is an international Customs document that operates like a passport for your goods. It allows the temporary importation of goods in to countries that are part of the ATA Carnet system and avoids you having to pay unnecessary taxes or duties. ATA Carnets cover all goods that leave the UK and returning within a 12 month period. They do not cover disposable goods that will be used while out of the country or items that will not be returning to the UK.

When and why do I need it?

If your goods are going outside of the UK and into one of the 40+ countries that accepts ATA Carnets and you are going for one of the following reasons:

- Exhibiting at an International Trade Fair/ Exhibition.
- Advertising Commercial Samples.

- And for Professional Equipment purposes to perform their function or to undergo testing.
If this applies to you, you should use an ATA Carnet. The ATA Carnet simplifies the customs procedure into a single document and makes the importation process much quicker and easier to handle.

How can I apply for an ATA Carnet?

Online application

All carnets are applied for via our electronic service, E-cert and processed here at the Chamber.

New Account Setup - Exporter | eCert UK

For more information on ATA Carnets or any other export documents contact us on **01905 673614** or email **internationaltrade@hwchamber.co.uk**

Members receive a £100 discount on ATA Carnets



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humanresources@arcc.uk.com
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07712 649091 /
www.femalesintheirfield.com

IT Works 2012

0121 270 0808 /
www.it-works.co.uk

Jelleyman's Heritage Arts Charity (JHAC)

07444 746445
info@jhac.co.uk
www.jhac.co.uk

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01684 561179 /
finance@mwprimary.co.uk
www.malvern-wells.worcs.sch.uk

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Prime plc

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www.primeplc.com

Remsons Automotive Ltd

01299 828578 /
www.remsons.com

Roger & Douglas Turner Charitable Trust

01299 861368 /
enquiries@arleyestate.co.uk
www.arleyarboretum.co.uk

Rushbrook Business Solutions Ltd

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www.rushbrooksolutions.co.uk

Silvflame Ltd

07368 209323 /
silvflameltd@gmail.com
www.silvflameltd.com

Southover Wealth

07772 094417

Stephen Alexander

07514 247537
www.stephen-alexander.com

The Crown Inn

hello@thecrownmartley.com
www.crownmartley.com

The Vale Golf and Country Club

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www.thevaleworcestershireshire.co.uk

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www.toxiqua.com

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01544 350241 /
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01905 23003 /
www.worcestercityfc.org



Left to right: Christina Darling – Managing Director, Kezia Allen – Marketing Apprentice, Jo Morgan – Marketing Director, Julia Handley – PA & Content Creator

Prime Mix launches new content creation package ‘Pounce’

Worcester based marketing agency, Prime Mix Marketing Ltd, launches Pounce, a new cutting-edge creative content hub designed to elevate marketing strategies with dynamic video content, high-impact photography, and strategic written content – all integrated into one seamless service that reflects a business’s unique brand identity.

As demand for engaging, high-quality content continues to grow, especially video content, Pounce meets the need for an all-in-one solution. It simplifies the professional content creation process while ensuring consistency across multiple platforms, helping businesses effectively reach and engage with their target audiences.

Christina Darling, Managing Director of Prime Mix Marketing Ltd, shared her excitement about the launch, “We’re thrilled to bring Pounce to the market. As video content continues to drive engagement and conversions, businesses need a reliable partner to help them navigate the world of dynamic content. Pounce brings together strategic marketing and the best of video, photography, and motion graphics, in a way that aligns perfectly with business objectives. It’s a unique storytelling service that will help businesses grow, increase engagement, and ultimately drive sales.”

The strategic importance of video content cannot be overstated. Research shows that incorporating video on landing pages can increase conversion rates by up to 80%, while videos on social media platforms receive higher engagement and shareability than other content types. Pounce leverages these insights, offering businesses the opportunity

to create content that not only resonates with their audience but also boosts brand visibility, engagement, and search engine optimisation.

Pounce has been designed to serve a wide range of businesses, from startups and small businesses to large enterprises, to help businesses grow and remain competitive in a crowded marketplace. Whether a business needs long-form videos for product launches, short-form content for social media, or a comprehensive content strategy that speaks directly to a target audience, Pounce has the tools and expertise to make it happen.

Prime Mix’s continued success has been marked by several recent accolades, including the Marketing Consultancy of the Year Award, in the Corporate LiveWire Global Awards 2024/25, and the Marketing Agency of the Year in the Central England Prestige Awards 2024. The launch of Pounce is the next step in Prime Mix’s mission to provide businesses with comprehensive, high-quality creative solutions to support business success.

For more information about Prime Mix Marketing and their new service Pounce, visit primemixmarketing.co.uk/pounce-creative-content-worcester or alternatively email talktous@primemixmarketing.co.uk

GTAcess shortlisted for Access Rental Company of the year!

We’re thrilled to announce that GTAcess has been shortlisted for Access Rental Company of the Year at the International Awards for Powered Access (IAPAs). This recognition highlights the hard work, dedication, and excellence of our entire team.

The IAPAs are among the most prestigious awards in the powered access industry, celebrating innovation, outstanding performance, and companies making a significant impact. Organised by IPAF (International Powered Access Federation) and Access International, the Access Rental Company of the Year category honours businesses delivering exceptional service, innovation, and reliability—values we proudly uphold.

This milestone reflects our entire journey, from humble beginnings to becoming one of the UK’s largest independent powered access companies. It celebrates:

- The dedication of our team, who consistently go above and beyond.
- Our commitment to safety and innovation, ensuring excellence in a competitive industry.
- The trust and loyalty of our customers, who inspire us to continually raise the bar.

The winners will be announced at the IPAF Summit in Dublin on 13th March 2025. This event gathers industry leaders and innovators for a day of celebration and collaboration.

Thank you to our customers, partners, and team members—this nomination is a shared achievement. We’re excited to see what the future holds and will continue to set new benchmarks for success.





The Ultimate Venue for Events, Conferences & Meetings in Worcester

Looking for the perfect space to host your next event? Nestled in the heart of Worcester, the University of Worcester offers stunning venues on both sides of the picturesque River Severn. With its central location, excellent transport links, and flexible indoor & outdoor spaces, our campuses are the ideal choice for events of all sizes across the Midlands.

From historic Georgian architecture at City Campus to modern, versatile facilities at Severn Campus, we provide an inspiring mix of settings for conferences, meetings, training days, corporate events, community gatherings and celebrations. Whether you're planning a business meeting, a party, a product launch, or a networking event, our expert team will help bring your vision to life.



Why Choose UoW for Your Next Event?

- **Versatile Venues** – From intimate meeting rooms to large-scale event spaces
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- **State-of-the-Art Facilities** – High-speed Wi-Fi, AV equipment, on-site parking
- **Indoor & Outdoor Spaces** – Ideal for exhibitions, launches, and networking events
- **Catering to Impress** – A mouth-watering selection of locally sourced cuisine
- **Expert Event Planners** – Hospitality professionals ensuring every detail is perfect

Let's make your event truly unforgettable! Whether you need a conference suite, breakout rooms, a party venue, or a scenic outdoor space, we have the perfect setting for you.

Ready to book? Call on 01905 542121 or email conferencing@worc.ac.uk quoting BD2025 to receive 10% off your first room booking...



Experience Wild Team Building and Corporate Fun Days at West Midlands Safari Park

West Midlands Safari Park is excited to offer businesses a unique and engaging way to bring their teams together with exceptional Team Building and Fun Day packages.



Whether you're looking to boost morale, strengthen team bonds, or reward employees and their families with an unforgettable day out, the Park has the perfect experience.

Our expansive indoor and outdoor event spaces provide an ideal setting for team activities, whilst the four-mile Safari Drive offers spectacular animal encounters. Thrill-seekers can also enjoy the Adventure Theme Park, adding an extra layer of excitement to the day.

For a truly wild team-building experience, the Park has partnered with BITE, offering



innovative activities that benefit both your team and the animals. Participants will have the unique opportunity to craft enrichment items or furniture, directly enhancing animal habitats. Seeing the animals interact with these creations provides a real sense of achievement and a lasting impact.

Alternatively bring employees and their families together with a carefully curated Corporate Family Fun Days. The packages include a variety of engaging activities, delicious food, and entertainment suitable for all ages, ensuring a day of fun and team bonding.



Fun Day Packages includes complimentary car parking, admission to the Park and ride wristbands for the Adventure Theme Park in the summer season, exclusive hire of Treetops Pavilion or Spring Grove House, unlimited tea, coffee, and cordials, a delicious BBQ lunch and free admission for children under 3.

For more details and to book your event, contact the Safari Venues team by emailing: enquiries@safarivenues.co.uk.

You can also find more information by visiting our website at www.wmsp.co.uk.



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Trial of free bus travel to support veterans launched

Worcestershire veterans can now benefit from free travel in Worcestershire on Demand bus services thanks to Worcestershire County Council.

Home to over 22,000 veterans, Worcestershire is honouring the sacrifices and dedication of its veteran community by recognising their service to the nation with this new initiative which started trialling from 2 January 2025.

Currently operating in Bromsgrove and surrounding areas and Malvern Hills, with plans to expand further in the coming year, these services aim to make travel more accessible and convenient.

Councillor Marc Bayliss, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, at Worcestershire County Council said: "Offering free bus travel for our veterans shows our commitment, and our gratitude, for those who have served for our county."

"The Worcestershire on Demand buses offer an easy and convenient public transport service and have really benefitted communities in the areas that we've launched them in so far. So, I'm very pleased that we're now able to offer this fantastic service, free of charge, for our veterans. I'd like to thank Councillor Martin Allen, a veteran himself, for his dedication on this opportunity."

The service will be available to holders of the HM Armed Forces Veteran ID Card. When booking a bus on the app, the card will show up as a new option under the concessions menu. Card holders will be required to produce the card on the vehicle before travelling.



Councillor Martin Allen, Veteran and Worcestershire County Councillor for Croome, said: "As a former Submariner in the Royal Navy, I am determined to ensure that Worcestershire veterans are not forgotten."

"Can I thank Councillor Marc Bayliss for talking to me and understanding the important need for Worcestershire to pay back the service and sacrifice given so willingly by our veterans."

"The residents of Worcestershire can be proud that the county leads the way in looking after our veterans."

More and more people are using this popular service, which offers a sustainable and

efficient way of travel. The buses run from 7am until 7pm Monday to Saturday.

On demand buses offer a great alternative service to the familiar local bus. They provide a flexible, affordable, and sustainable form of public transport. Local veterans will be able to request a journey through the app and will be directed to a nearby 'virtual bus stop' for pick-up and drop-off, allowing for quick and efficient shared trips.

For more information about the Worcestershire on Demand Bus Service, please visit worcestershire.gov.uk/WOD.

Pineapple Recruitment marks second anniversary with Worcester office move

A growing Worcester recruitment firm which provides talent for the catering and hospitality sectors has relocated to new headquarters in the city as it marks its second birthday.



Pineapple Recruitment has moved its eight-strong team to the Painting House on Severn Street in Diglis, with a promise to add more jobs over the next 12 months as it bolsters its team of permanent recruitment consultants.

Their new city centre headquarters boasts spacious open-plan offices, meeting rooms and conference facilities.

Kasia Krieger, business manager at Pineapple Recruitment said: "Moving into our new offices in the heart of Worcester represents the start of an exciting new chapter as we mark our second anniversary."

"We have grown rapidly since 2022 as more businesses in the catering and hospitality industries put their trust in us to source the right professionals for them. We therefore felt the time was right to make the move to larger offices which will help us accommodate more staff as we add more clients this year."

"The new offices are already proving to be popular with our team and our clients and we've had great feedback. We are on the doorstep of everything the city has to offer and have created a perfect modern working

environment as we look to our next phase of growth.

"As a business with its roots firmly in Worcester, being able to contribute to the local economy by adding new jobs is also important to us. We're excited to be bringing in more fresh faces before the summer."

Over the past year, Pineapple Recruitment has placed over 1,100 people into permanent roles within the UK's catering and hospitality industries. The company also works closely with colleges and universities to encourage future talent into both sectors.

Adding to its senior management team, in November the company appointed Robert Jones into the new role of business development manager.

For more information, readers can visit pineapple-recruitment.co.uk

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Situation

Located off the A456, north of Tenbury Wells and in the Village of Burford, this new build development of 23 units is located adjacent to the Kerry Foods Factory. This position is a short distance from Teme Street, Tenbury Wells and the area offers many facilities to include: a variety of supermarkets, shops, services, primary and secondary schools, library, cottage hospital and cinema.

Description

Ground works have commenced on site for the construction of the 23 new build commercial units, which shall be built in terraces comprising of 6 buildings. These Architect designed commercial units are set within landscaped grounds, providing parking and loading areas within this gated modern estate. The units are available individually or as multiples, with neighbouring units.



Each unit will have personnel access to front, inset to the vertical glazing features and also an insulated roller shutter door. Internally each unit will benefit from LED lighting, W.C and kitchenette facilities. The units will be finished to a high specification with a target EPC rating of A, each being fitted with a solar panel.

Viewing

Via the Sole Agent's Great Witley Office
Great Witley, Worcestershire WR6 6JB

Contact: **Nick Jethwa**

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Earth Hub recognised by Theo Paphitis' Small Business Sunday

If you're a small business owner, you might have heard of Small Business Sunday (#SBS) – an initiative set up by Theo Paphitis in 2010 to support small businesses across the UK. Every week, six businesses are hand-picked by Theo and given a huge social media boost through his half-a-million-strong network on X (Twitter), Instagram, and LinkedIn.

Winning businesses also gain a place on the official #SBS website, access to an exclusive network of entrepreneurs, and an invite to the #SBS Winners' Event – a must-attend occasion for small businesses looking to grow, learn, and connect.

Last week, we shared our company's story on Theo Paphitis' LinkedIn page as part of the #SBS competition. Out of countless small businesses, we were selected as one of the six weekly winners!

Theo tagged Earth Hub in his social media posts, instantly boosting our brand's visibility. The impact was immediate with increased website traffic to www.earth-hub.co.uk and

a rise in enquiries about our Net Zero and Carbon Compliance Services.

Theo, one of the UK's most successful entrepreneurs, has recognised our hard work and helped spread the word about us to his followers.

"We've been working hard to grow our business since 2022, and receiving support from Theo Paphitis is a fantastic boost. Theo's recognition highlights our dedication and helps spread the word about what we do to a wider audience." – Laura Fyles, Earth Hub

One of the most exciting perks of winning #SBS is that we are invited to the #SBS Winners' Event, taking place at the ICC



Birmingham on 21st February 2025. This event brings together winners from across the UK for a day filled with networking, learning, and inspiration. As well as looking forward to connecting with other small businesses we are also excited to meet Theo Paphitis in person and receive our official #SBS certificate.

Winning #SBS is a game-changer for small businesses like ours, and we are beyond excited about the opportunities ahead! To find out more about how you can enter the competition click here theopaphitissbs.com

Driving digital transformation

In a World of constantly evolving technologies and tools, the development of tech and digital skills within the workforce, driving digital transformation, is vital for organisations of all sizes and sectors.



Based in West Midlands, TDM are an Apprenticeships training provider, specialising within tech and digital, supporting employers across England, including West Midlands Police.

Through support and coaching from TDM's expert coaches, delivered through an individualised learning plan tailored specifically to them, Apprenticeship Manager at West Midlands Police, Glynis, shares how TDM's Apprenticeships have enabled them to develop a workforce skilled for the future, supporting the career development opportunities of their staff.

"West Midlands Police was recognised as one of the Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers last year, featuring alongside other major global employers such as Amazon, BT, BUPA, McDonald's and the armed forces.

We're leading the way when it comes to police apprenticeships, with people of all ages thriving in various departments across the force. But that's not all! We were also one of

the top-scoring organisations for the diversity of our apprentices and one of only a handful of police forces to even make the top 100 list.

We believe in investing in our people and providing them with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. Our apprenticeship programmes offer a fantastic opportunity to gain valuable on-the-job experience while earning a nationally recognised qualification and a great salary.

We're committed to creating an inclusive working environment for everyone and ensuring our values reflect the people and communities we serve. We're dedicated to improving the way we recruit, promote, retain and manage talent, developing a workforce skilled for the future where everyone can reach their full potential. Apprenticeships are the cornerstone of this vision.

Our apprenticeships strategy supports both our existing employees and brings new talent into the organisation, laying the foundations for the next generation of recruits.

One of our first departments to embrace apprenticeships was IT and Digital. We've seen these apprenticeships flourish, thanks to the support of our staff and our training provider, TDM.

We chose to partner with TDM for all our IT and Digital apprenticeships because their

approach is employer-focused, flexible, and tailored to our specific job roles and performance requirements. In the last 18 months, we've found them outstanding in delivery, professional, responsive, and incredibly supportive.

But don't just take our word for it! Hear from one of our apprentices about their experience being coached by TDM:

"I've really enjoyed my ICT Support apprenticeship with TDM," says Muhammed, who is in his first year studying for a Level 3 Information Communications Technician apprenticeship. "They helped me secure this job, and I'm really grateful for their ongoing support. The course has been excellent, and having two coaches focusing on different aspects of my learning has made a huge difference."

It's essential that West Midlands Police has a highly capable digital workforce to effectively combat criminals who are increasingly using sophisticated technology for illegal activities.

With the support of TDM, we're expanding our apprenticeship offer to include new roles like Intelligence Analyst and Cyber Security Technician."

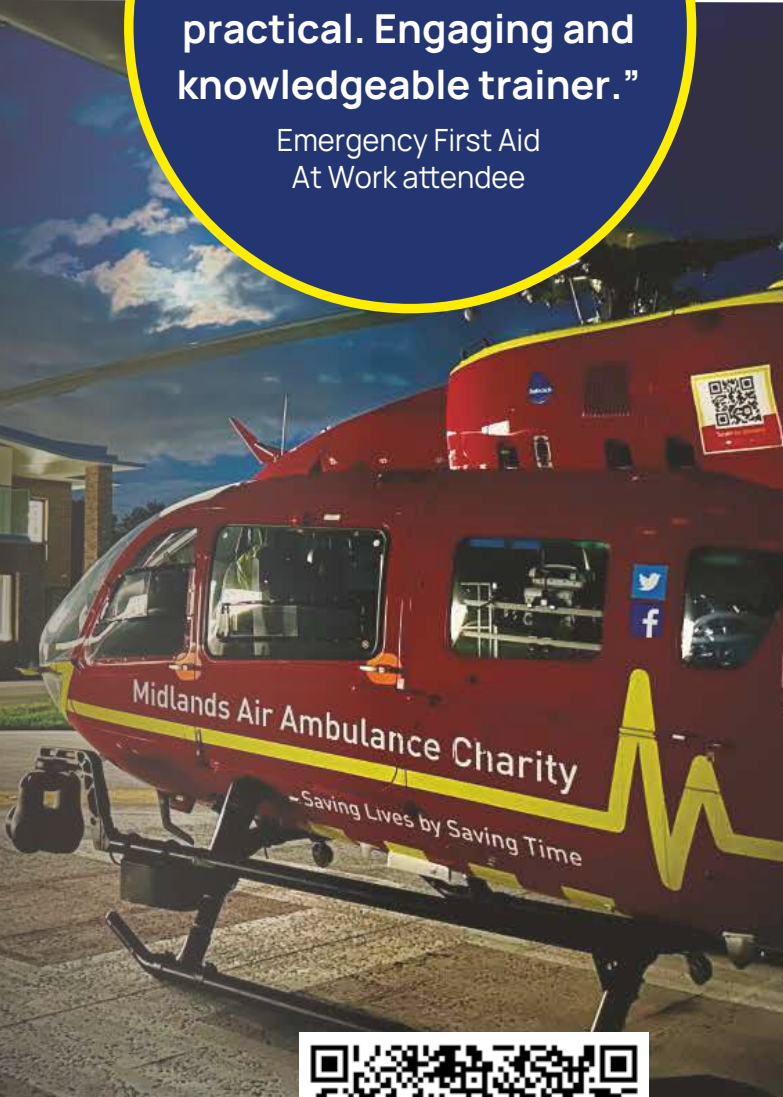
Get in touch via enquiries@tdm.co.uk or tdm.co.uk if you want to learn about how TDM can support the tech and digital workforce development of your organisation.

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Terminally ill residents in remote region of Tanzania, East Africa receiving expert care thanks to the Herefordshire-based charity Muheza Hospice Care



An ever-increasing number of people living with terminal illness in a remote area of east Africa are receiving expert care and support thanks to the generosity of a Herefordshire charity.

Muheza Hospice Care was set-up more than two decades ago by Doctors Karilyn and Richard Collins – a husband and wife from Herefordshire – to help residents in a number of rural communities in northern Tanzania.

The Hospice, which cares for patients at St Augustine’s Hospital in the small town of Muheza, as well as in their own homes, is the sister hospice of St Michael’s in Bartestree, Herefordshire and costs around £50,000 a year to run.

It is largely financed by individual contributions through the Hereford Muheza Link Society. It was originally funded by the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, which closed in 2012.

A five-strong group from St Michael’s has just returned from a two-week self-funded trip to Tanzania, spending time shadowing the clinical teams at Muheza Hospice and St Augustine’s, and developing a knowledge of palliative care provision in the third world.

“What we witnessed during our trip to Muheza was a group of talented, dedicated professionals working wonders in their community,” said Dr Jim Burtonwood, the Lead Specialist Doctor at St Michael’s.

“In that respect, it is very similar to life back home at St Michael’s. Where it differs though, is when it comes to things we take for granted.

“Things like a consistent supply of vital drugs; tarmacked roads, and basic training opportunities to enhance learning and understanding.”

The St Michael’s team saw first-hand the task facing the palliative care team based at St Augustine’s, but it was also witness to a number of projects providing hope.

One morning, dozens of women from Muheza and beyond attended the hospital to receive free screening for breast and cervical cancer – a vital procedure in early detection.

Then, as the weekend arrives, so do the children who gather on a Saturday morning for Kids’ Club. They are all living with HIV, born to mothers with the same disease, but at Kids’ Club, you wouldn’t know. Happiness, laughter and mischief abound, whether it’s from a game of volleyball, or a board game with friends.

There is a serious element, too. A nurse reminds them all of the importance of taking their antiretrovirals regularly, and of looking after one another.

The future for the children who attend is uncertain, but the positive effect Muheza Hospice Care is having on its community is evident.

Likewise, a Mothers’ Club which began almost 20 years ago as part of a Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV programme has proved so successful that in the last six years, all babies born at the hospital to mothers with HIV, are free of the virus.

Muheza Hospice Care is totally reliant on donations to maintain the growing care it provides.

For more information, just visit **muhezahospicecare.org**



Celebrating 10 Years of the Family Business Practice with St. Richard’s Hospice Partnership



Peter Roper, founder of the Family Business Practice, is proud to announce a special series of events to celebrate a decade of helping family businesses thrive across the UK.

In partnership with St. Richard’s Hospice, four exclusive events will be held throughout 2025, designed to offer valuable insights and opportunities for family businesses, while raising much-needed funds for the hospice’s vital services.

These unique events will combine engaging business presentations with both structured and informal networking sessions, providing participants the chance to connect, share experiences, and learn from industry experts. The events aim to support family businesses in navigating challenges and seizing opportunities, all while building meaningful relationships within the community.

With the generous support of event sponsors, Art Business Loans and FBC Manby Bowdler, plus support from Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce all profits from these events will be donated to St. Richard’s Hospice, which provides compassionate care to individuals and families affected by life-limiting illnesses.

“I’m thrilled to be celebrating this significant milestone by giving back to a cause that means so much to me,” said Peter Roper. “By bringing together family businesses in support of St. Richard’s Hospice, we can not only continue to empower and inspire business owners but also make a lasting impact on those in need.”

Join us in this exciting celebration of family business and charitable giving and help us make a difference in the lives of many.

For details: familybusinesspractice.com/events/all

Take on the Snowdon Sunrise Challenge and support your local hospitals charity!

Join us for an unforgettable adventure this summer! On Saturday, 28th June 2025, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity is hosting a Snowdon Sunrise Adventure—a magical moonlit hike to the summit of one of the UK’s tallest mountains.

Imagine this: Reaching the peak of Snowdon just in time to witness the sun rise over the breathtaking Welsh countryside. Not only will you conquer an incredible challenge, but a chance to make a real difference in your community.

Guided by expert leaders from Sky Blue Adventures, this fully supported 9-mile hike promises stunning views, an amazing sense of accomplishment, and an opportunity to raise vital funds for your local hospital.

Dust off your walking boots, gather your friends, or take on the challenge solo—it’s time to get fundraising and embark on this life-changing adventure!

We’re asking participants to raise a minimum of £200, which covers your entry fee and directly supports Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust. You can even choose which service area you’d like to support!

Return transport from Worcester is also available, departing on the evening of Friday, 27th June, will be available for £30 per person



on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please note that this is an additional cost to the minimum sponsorship amount.

Will you join us on Snowdon this June?

Visit: wahcharity.org/snowdon-sunrise-challenge or email Laura at info@wahcharity.org to sign up and make a difference today!

How to ensure your manufacturing supply chain is secure

The UK manufacturing industry is a crucial aspect of our economy accounting for a total of over £450bn in 2023.

Despite this, the government’s ‘Industrial Strategy’ green paper has highlighted that the Purchasing Managers’ Index (“PMI”) has been on a downward trend. This is likely due to the budget and the concerns that many businesses have had following this. In addition, over recent years, challenges such as global unrest, the rise in energy prices and an increase in inflation have affected the manufacturing industry significantly, specifically where their supply chain is concerned.

Risks within the supply chain range from contractual disputes and intellectual property issues to breaches of regulatory compliance. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the specific obligations and liabilities of both your business, and that of your supplier.

Proactive risk identification through regular assessments and audits can prevent costly legal issues down the line. Furthermore, ensuring transparent communication within the supply chain encourages early detection and resolution of potential legal problems.

Due diligence

It goes without saying that ensuring your company complies with laws and regulation is imperative. This is not only a legal requirement, but it also speaks volumes about your company’s integrity and standards.

The first step is to ensure that you are conducting robust due diligence on your supplier, therefore ensuring they are adhering to applicable laws and regulations. This will not only minimise your risk of legal problems, but also, protects the reputation of your business.

Technology

Many businesses are now implementing a heavy focus on technology and artificial intelligence within their supply chain processes as it enhances visibility and control, making it easier to identify and address risks proactively.

Contract management

Implementing effective contract review processes are central to mitigating legal risks in the supply chain. This ensures that all contracts with suppliers are clear, legally binding, and enforceable.

It is important for all contracts to explicitly include the responsibilities, obligations, and expectations of all parties, including compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Regular review is also important to reflect changes or recent operational requirements, this will hopefully prevent disputes and ensure smooth supply chain operations.



Termination clauses

When there are problems within the supply chain, especially whereby the supplier is in financial difficulty, it is likely that the contractor will want to terminate the contractual relationship. To be able to do so, a robust termination clause clearly outlining the position is required. You may also want to consider including financial distress and change of ownership triggers.

Contracts in the event of a breach

The liability of a party can also be limited within a contract; one way of doing so might be to exclude a party from claiming certain categories of loss such as consequential and indirect loss, loss of anticipated savings, revenue or data, or via liquidated damages provisions.

Thinking about these considerations from the outset allows parties to plan ahead. If you engage with sub-contractors, it is also important to carefully investigate their contracts and assess whether relevant terms flow down into their agreements too.

International trade regulations

If your business is involved in international trade, it is imperative that you understand and comply with any additional regulations that may be implied by local laws. Engaging with experienced legal experts can provide you with valuable insights and guidance to assist you in implementing robust contractual measures and protections that address the relevant international requirements to avoid penalties and delays in your supply chain operations.

Sustainability

Consumer demand and regulatory trends are driving manufacturers to invest in a more sustainable supply chain. There are legal risks which can arise from failing to meet sustainability targets or engaging in unethical practices.

Conducting regular ESG assessments can assist with identifying potential legal and reputational risks. The move to more sustainable practices has allowed the industry to become more creative with their processes once the materials are being produced into products, for example, de-carbonising the production of glass. That said, creative processes will also require careful contract creation to ensure compliance with regulations.

Conclusion

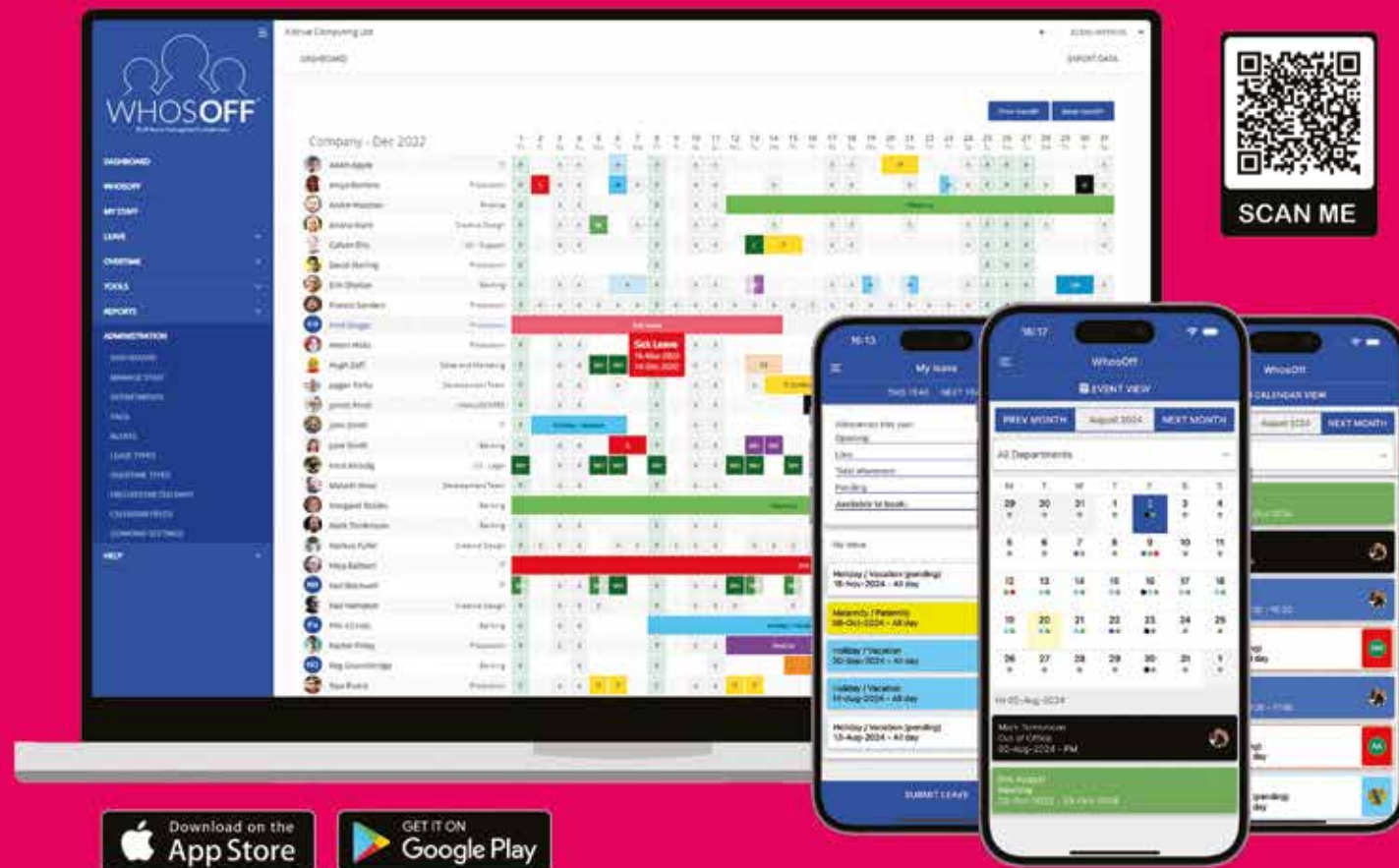
As the global market continues to evolve and change, so do the associated legal risks. Having a comprehensive understanding of the legal landscape and the on-going challenges within the industry will allow you to drive your business and supply chain forward.

It is an exciting time to be working within manufacturing, but alongside that, it is important not to lose sight of the key foundations required to protect you and your business in the supply chain.

In brief, always ensure your business is aware of the benefits and risks associated with due diligence, technology, contract management, international trade regulations and meeting your sustainability obligations.

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Behind the lens: who is Michelle Morris?

I am a unique mix of English and French, born in Darlington raised in Paris, schooled at the American School, and studied law in London. I specialised in international human rights law which led me to work for 10 years with the United Nations in Rwanda, Burundi, Bosnia and New York.



Michelle in Burundi with UN soldiers

One of the most important lessons I learned during my time with the UN is the power of an individual's story. I saw this firsthand when China K, a former child soldier who had never spoken in public, addressed a room full of senior UN officials. You could have heard a pin drop as she shared her experiences—her words carried more impact than all the reports we had submitted to the delegates. It was a powerful reminder of the power of authenticity and how one person's story can make a difference.

Who inspired you to become a photographer?

Photography has always been a passion of mine, thanks to my mother, who was one of the first female photographers on a French movie set.

Growing up, I loved going through her photographs. My mother had an extraordinary ability to make women feel confident in front of the camera (often with the help of champagne!), and the results were always spectacular.

In 2006, I took a break to have a family and explore photography professionally. What I didn't realise was that I had inherited my mother's ability to bring out confidence in others. I help women see themselves as they truly are—capable, powerful, and unique.

The result is magical, creating not just beautiful photographs but reinforcing a deep sense of confidence that extends far beyond the camera. French women are famous for being 'bien dans sa peau' (good in their skin), and that self-assurance is something I strive to capture in every shot.

You have your own unique brand of photography for women, what is this?

If I had to choose one word to define my photography, it would be CONFIDENCE. My goal is to ensure that every woman I photograph sees herself in the best possible light. In today's digital world, where first impressions are often made online, every visual touchpoint counts.



Michelle Morris
PHOTOGRAPHY

Why focus on confidence and women?

Because so many women shy away from the camera, and that hesitation can limit their reach and impact. In a world where we are often judged in seconds, a strong, confident image can make all the difference—whether for personal branding, career progression, or business success.

That said, I do photograph men too!

What's your secret for helping women feel confident in front of your camera?

It's hard to define, but I think it's a combination of my French heritage, boundless energy, and genuine passion for what I do. I have a keen eye for seeing the beauty and essence in everyone, and my approach naturally puts people at ease.

Most importantly, I understand the power of a first impression. Whether it's the expression in your eyes, the way you hold yourself, or the confidence that radiates from a well-composed image, every detail contributes to how you are perceived. My role is to make sure that when you step in front of my lens, the world sees you as you truly are—strong, confident, and ready to make an impact.

What message would you give your younger self?

I would like to encourage all women and girls to take pride in and share their stories. Everyone has a story and our stories are unique. Sharing your story is a powerful tool for building trust, influence and engagement. Why? Because

stories are compelling, stories connect us. In the words of Simon Sinek: "Start with Why. Because in business it doesn't matter what you do, it matters why you do it".

This is why I am creating a "C'est Moi" (This is Me) series. I started with Kate Mackintosh, Executive Director of the UCLA Law Promise Institute Europe. I first met Kate in 1995 when we both worked for the UN in Rwanda. I recently met up with Kate in Amsterdam where we shared our stories since then.

My goal is to create a portfolio of purpose-driven women which inspires other women and the next generation of change-makers.

What's next?

In addition to offering personal and team branding shoots, I am launching a new group photography experience exclusively for women. This will bring together colleagues or friends to support and uplift one another while capturing their individual essence. By encouraging each participant to share their personal narrative, we ensure that every image tells a story of confidence and connection—because first impressions truly do count.

If you'd like to connect, scan the QR code for direct access to my calendar, or feel free to email me at michelle@michellemorris.co.uk or call **07894 747 807**.



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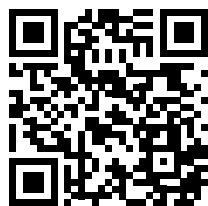
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