

**biz4Biz**

# Insight

| DECEMBER 2014 | ISSUE TWO |

THE VOICE OF BUSINESS IN HERTFORDSHIRE

**DAVID CROFT  
ON THE F1 DRIVE  
OF HIS LIFE**



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# Insight

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## THE EDITOR

### Editor's notes

I am delighted to welcome you to the second edition of Insight, the voice of business in Hertfordshire and the official publication of biz4Biz. Much has happened since our last edition both in the world of business and with biz4Biz.

A glance at the diary shows how many events we have that prove both interesting and insightful and also provide the chance to network with like-minded people. Of course along with learning something new there should always be time for fun and we too offer you more than that with a fascinating read in this edition. I am pleased that Sky F1 commentator David Croft has written us an exclusive column and given us an insight into an experience that very few have, the chance to open up and really let rip driving a Formula One car.

We also have a fascinating piece on former top driver Simon Harrison who has made the transition from track to the world of business by setting up his own video and website production company. As you will read in Simon's story there are many parallels in the two worlds.

As always it has been fascinating to both meet and learn from all those in the world of business and as this is the final edition of 2014 I would like to wish you all the best and trust that you have a happy and prosperous end to the year and a similar start to 2015.

**Darren Isted**  
 Editor



# MEDTECH MEETS LIFESTYLE: A NEW CONVERGENCE

**U**p to 90 businesses, ranging from corporates to micro SMEs in the digital healthcare field attended the second in a series of LEP conferences on Convergent Medical Technologies, on Wednesday 22 October.

Organised by Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and sponsored by The University of Hertfordshire, the event at the Fielder Centre, provided a great opportunity for businesses to debate the important links between digital health products designed for use by both professional medical providers and consumers.

The conference heard from experts in the field of sensing technologies, mHealth and the patient experience, 'Big Data', product design and funding for digital health businesses. The

speakers included senior executives from Google, The Technology Partnership, and Toumaz Group including academics from UCL. The conference saw a fascinating demonstration of Google Glass showcasing changing trends in wearable technology.

Crowd Mission outlined the opportunities of raising capital through crowd funding and Grant Tree highlighted the benefit of R&D tax credits; enterprise investment scheme and grants to support business development. Rowan Gardner from RowAnalytics, who presented on Big Data, said: "The conference provided a great opportunity to consider a world where health care technology has an impact on professional companies and consumers, and is making an impact on better health and healthier living."



## DATES FOR THE DIARY

For more information and to register online visit [www.biz4biz.org/events.html](http://www.biz4biz.org/events.html)

### 12th December 2014

Executive Lunch Club. Guest speaker Grant Shapps. Brocket Hall.

### 12th February 2015

Executive Lunch Club. Guest speaker Peter Lilley. Hitchin Priory.

### 20th February 2015

CEO Forum. Guest speaker Peter O'Gorman. Stevenage Novotel.

### 20th March 2015

Executive Lunch Club. Guest speaker Fergus McMullen. Brocket Hall.



# TAX EXPERT INSIGHT AS POACHER AND GAMEKEEPER

Our biz4Biz forum welcomed David Whiscombe to the Forum Conference Suite of the Ibis Hotel in Stevenage for a recent lunch meeting.

This was our first meeting at this central Stevenage location and Ruslana and her team made us most welcome and looked after us very well.

The forums are free to attend for biz4Biz members so do look out for the next one!

David is a tax expert and gave a real insight into the world of tax both as poacher and gamekeeper; you can decide which is which between the Revenue and private practice. The raising and collection of taxes has three differing purposes and these can in fact conflict:

The raising of money for the government of the day to spend on the protection of the realm and the infrastructure of the nation. Taxes are used to influence behaviours in whatever way is deemed beneficial at the time.

Taxes are used in order to provide some redistribution of wealth. Indeed, David made the point that with most consumed goods and services that the more you “buy” the cheaper it becomes; think about buying gas or electricity, sending parcels or bulk buying at a cash and carry. However, with tax, the more you pay, the more you pay.

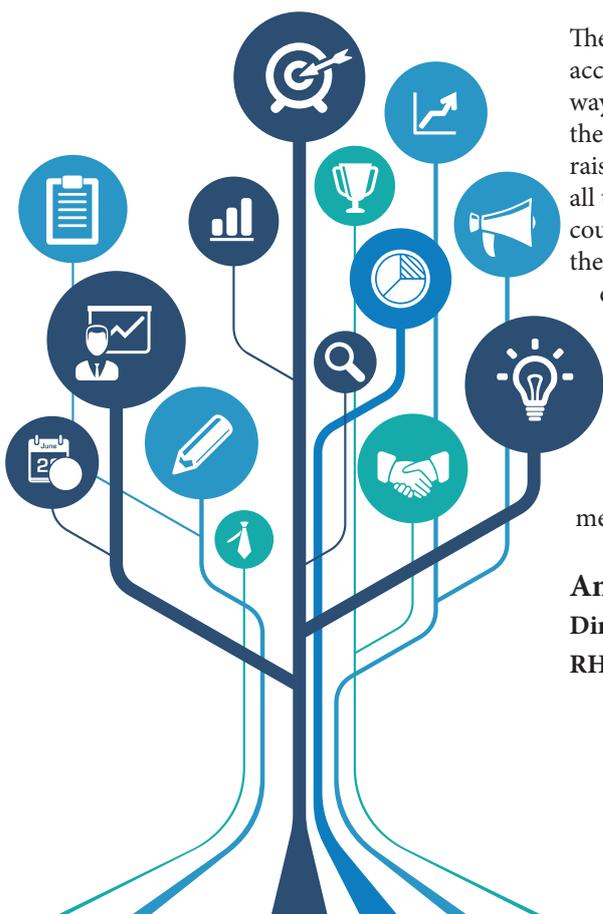
The statistics showed that the top 10% of earners pay 55% into the tax coffers but the lower 50% of the population’s earners only contribute 10%.

He also made the point that when the top rate of tax is brought down; it was 98% at one time, the actual amount raised shot up.

There is a limit at which people find tax acceptable and do not seek to avoid it by way of schemes or moving assets away and there is a balance to be drawn between raising as much as possible to accomplish all the wonderful things we want our country to do and squeezing so hard that the ones who can, decide to seek a refuge elsewhere.

There was a lively question and answer session and a lovely lunch so in all a very well spent couple of hours; very informative and a good chance to catch up with colleagues and meet new contacts.

**Andrew Sykes**  
 Director biz4Biz, Chairman  
 RHG Insurance Brokers



# CORPORATE DEMOCRACY

**W**ith the last party political conference season now over before the general election gets in full swing, I am still awaiting a clear policy manifesto for business. A limited company is a 'person' in law, yet this 'individual' has no stake in the political process. A limited company does not have a vote so why publish a manifesto?

The principle of no taxation without representation may be 260 years old but it does not apply to companies. Successive governments have increased the tax and regulatory burdens on business. Now in addition, we act as an unpaid government department. It is not enough that we pay corporation tax, business rates, capital gains tax, environmental levies, Vat and national insurance. We also have to collect employees' income tax and NI, Vat, student loans and are responsible for certain benefits such as maternity pay and auto enrolment pension schemes. We also act as an immigration dept having to check passports and verify eligibility for residency.

In all, we "individuals" contribute a huge amount to society in terms of jobs, prosperity and social cohesion. Yet all we hear from unelected (by business) politicians is about the aggressive tax avoidance of a very few. At a local



level, councils continue to ignore local business. 50% of our business rates go to Stevenage Borough Council. We also provide the income from which they collect council tax. Yet they spend just 12% of their procurement budget with Stevenage businesses. Our democracy is going through a period of turmoil. The Scottish referendum has thrown English devolution into the spotlight. At the same time, the raising of the income tax threshold to £10,000 leaves increasing numbers with representation without taxation. Meanwhile businesses face increasing tax and regulatory burdens with zero representation. I am not sure we will see a corporate Emmeline

Pankhurst emerge in the 21st century. However, government attitudes to business needs to change. We deserve more respect than currently afforded. I call on each party to publish a separate business manifesto that only businesses can vote on. Such votes would not count towards the general election, but it would allow us to have our say and be more accurately represented than by the current lobbying system accessed only by the big corporates.

**Paul Beasley ACII**  
Director and co-founder  
Managing Director Richmond House  
Group

# HMRC TASKFORCE: A NECESSARY EVIL?

**A**s part of HMRC's broader work to tackle tax evasion and avoidance, they have established taskforce teams to undertake highly focused compliance into higher risk sectors across the UK. Since May 2011 it would appear that most industries are higher risk as taskforces have been set up to investigate the following:

- Restaurant sectors across the country
- The fishing industry in Scotland
- The legal profession in London
- Security guards, bouncers and their employers in London and the South East
- The holiday industry across many of the country's main holiday resorts

It would appear no sector of business is immune from the grasp of a taskforce.

Businesses that fall within a taskforce sector can expect unannounced visits by the HMRC inspectors to ensure that evidence of potential non-compliance is not destroyed.

In addition to payment of tax arrears, interest and penalties for the most serious cases, HMRC will undertake a criminal investigation into the affairs of the individual and businesses.

HMRC can point to some notable success cases, one of a barrister being sentenced to three and a half years in prison. In the year 2013/14 prosecutions surged 29% to 795 cases, but this is still considerably

short of the revenue target of 1165 by 2014/15.

Opinions regarding taskforces are generally mixed:

- Are they really necessary?
- Are they too heavy handed?
- It is easy to pick on the B&B in Blackpool rather than the multi nationals
- Should they have been deployed years ago?
- Were the inspectors working in local offices which have now been disbanded more efficient?

The whole scenario does highlight the fact that it is very important to keep your taxation affairs in order and it is a

complete their tax returns correctly and pay the correct amount of taxation. We are concerned by the increased use in Parliament of the new word "avoision", a made up word to suit political soundbites.

The facts are straightforward, tax avoidance is legal, tax evasion is not. As a firm of chartered accountants we will only advise on avoidance. If Parliament find a particular form of avoidance unacceptable, they should change the law.

**Keith Middleton**

Partner, George Hay Chartered Accountants



duty of all individuals and businesses to

# 24 HOUR PARKING PEOPLE

**H**ow strange it seems that we can spend upwards of £2.50 on a cup of coffee which can be dispensed and drunk within a matter of minutes and yet bemoan a similar amount on parking the car for a couple of hours; it's a discretionary spend versus an imposed charge I suppose!

Once again the issue of car parking in town centres has reared up with the decision by North Herts District Council to impose evening and weekend charges in Hitchin's short-term car parks and raise charges across all car parks to make up for the fact that there have been no increases for 4 years – not unreasonable on the face of it one might think.

However, there's more to think about than just an across-the-board rise in charges. How do we now reconcile the boom in town centre living where so many have bought flats thinking that at least they can park overnight without penalty – will that impact on house prices? What about those who come in to town for their community event – the Bridge Club, the Camera Club, the Historical Society, the Floral Art Club etc to whom a regular evening charge is an unwelcome

imposition; what about the Churches on Sunday, bell-ringing practice and choir practices. It would seem to me that more thought is required when car parks are half empty anyway. Should we be charging the same rate on a wet Wednesday afternoon as on a very busy Saturday morning? Is it not better to charge on exit or pay on foot rather than pay and display which can lead to overstays and curtailed visits as drivers worry about expiring tickets?

On 30 August, Local Government Secretary Eric Pickles announced that there would be a new right to allow local residents or local firms to raise-up a petition that will require a council review of the use of yellow lines and unfair parking charges; he states "This government is standing up for hard working people and tackling over-zealous parking enforcement practices and unfair parking charges that force people away from the high street and into out-of-town shopping centres or online". Really? ..I seem to remember similar talk about something called localism.

Around the county, there is a positive profusion of parking policies! A quick look at neighbouring authorities in

Hertfordshire shows that there are Sunday and overnight charges in Stevenage much to the disgruntlement of their local MP; St Albans District charge a flat rate of £1 on Sundays both in the city and in Harpenden although significantly, the Town Council in Harpenden run 2 car parks themselves which are free on weekends; Welwyn seems to charge a flat rate on Sundays but Hatfield appears to be free; East Herts District Council provides free parking on Sundays in Bishops Stortford, Hertford and Ware as well as free after 6.30pm – the council have also introduced a reduced tariff of £1 after 4pm each day.

Watford has pay on departure multi-storeys managed by Intu which charge £1 per hour up to 6 hours plus a couple of surface pay and displays. These are run by the council while Dacorum seems to be the most generous, but again a real mixture of charges depending on the car park, but no charges after 6pm and lucky old Tring get the first hour free. So hardly a level playing field county-wide; I suppose it depends on different areas' priorities.

**Keith Hoskins**



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AWARDS  
★ 2014

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## biz4Biz would like to congratulate the 2014 finalists by inviting them to join the biz4Biz network at a special rate.

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### **New Business of the Year**

Ten2Two (North Herts & Beds)  
Menspire Male Image & Grooming  
Businessagent.com  
Primary Care People  
ASK Physio

### **Small Business of the Year**

PubAffairs Ltd  
TEMAG Pharma Ltd  
Synergi Search & Select Limited  
Cariad Marketing Limited  
Foxholes Farm Shop  
Alliance Intelligent Scaffolding Ltd

### **Medium Business of the Year**

PG Mutual  
Osborne Appointments  
Understanding Recruitment  
Lintbells Ltd  
Conamar

### **Social Enterprise of the Year**

Carers in Hertfordshire  
The Gifted Organisation Ltd  
Stevenage Football Club Foundation  
Howard Cottage Housing Association  
Hertfordshire Community Meals

### **Commercial Business in Community**

The Talent Keeper Specialists  
The Crown Aston End  
Red Potato  
Central Housing Group Ltd  
ITVET Ltd

### **Business Person of the Year**

James Lanwarne, Lanwarne Landscapes Ltd  
Warren Bacci, Top Hat Stage & Screen  
School /Top Talent Agency  
Abi Purser, Longcroft Luxury Cat Hotel Ltd  
Leigh Muschette, The Cakes and Sugarcraft  
Shop and The Hertfordshire School of Cake  
Decorating & Sugar Art  
Justine Perry, Cariad Marketing Limited

### **Customer Service Award**

Understanding Recruitment  
TATE  
Putterills of Hertfordshire Ltd  
LCN.com Ltd  
Foxholes Farm Shop  
Lawrence Dean Recruitment Ltd

### **Supporting Young People Award**

Attwaters Jameson Hill  
Total Group International Ltd  
The ConstructionSkillsAcademy  
Lanwarne Landscapes Ltd  
Sporting Futures Training cic  
John O Conner Ground Maintenance

### **Online Business of the Year**

PubAffairs Ltd  
Off The Barrow  
HTC Group  
Hertfordshire County Show  
Holiday Tots

### **Young Entrepreneur of the Year**

Lee Hodgkins, Just Spray  
Hannah Chapman, IBIS Hotel  
Paul Monks, Purple Menswear  
Lindsey Fish, Little Fish Event Management  
Mark Hammond, Abacus Party Cover

### **Innovation Award**

Understanding Recruitment  
Academy21 Limited  
Glovista Ltd  
Townhouse Creative Limited  
uComply Limited

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# BUSINESS IS BOOMING AT STEVENAGE BIOSCIENCE CATALYST

Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst (SBC), the UK's first open innovation bioscience campus, is pleased to report that 2014 is bringing both exciting news for a range of new tenants, and continued progress in the development of the site. Recently launched gene editing company CRISPR Therapeutics raised \$25m in a Series A round in April, while incoming tenant MRC Technology has announced an extension to an open innovation collaboration with AstraZeneca. On the infrastructure side, SBC has been allocated £3m for its expansion as part of recent Government funding to Hertfordshire. CRISPR Therapeutics, whose Series A funding is from Versant Ventures, is focused on the development of CRISPR-Cas9 genome editing technology for the development of new approaches to genetic diseases.

Headquartered in Switzerland, CRISPR Therapeutics was assisted by UK Trade and Industry (UKTI) and the UKTI Life Sciences Investment Organisation in the selection of a UK base. "It is exciting that Companies such as CRISPR, Ossianix and Tokyo Electron, are choosing to locate at Stevenage" said Martino Picardo, CEO SBC. "This is further endorsement of the unique business model we are employing to bring the best to Stevenage - either early stage University projects, looking for investment, or early stage start-ups and SMEs seeking to grow in a vibrant and unique environment. The early momentum from our opening in February 2012 has been steadily maintained and

we are delighted with the progress being made. We have begun to create the buzz that we were hoping for amongst our growing community and open Innovation through partnership and collaboration with each other, is a key part of our vision" said Martino.

This is an exciting time for Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst, we are delivering against the objectives set for us, in terms of creating a unique and meaningful Life Science cluster. We hope very shortly to be making announcements regarding our plans for the next stage of build and development on the Campus. In the meantime, we look forward to working with our current tenant mix and helping them to become sustainable and with potential for future growth" said Martino.

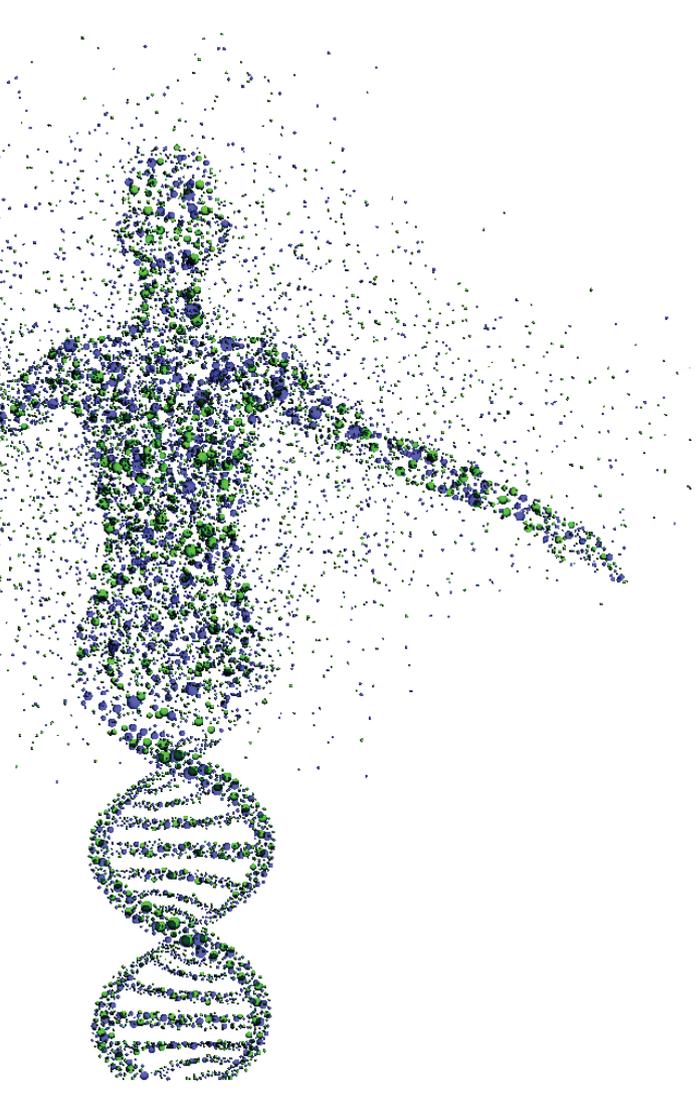
The £3m award to Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst for Phase 2 of its development forms part of the Government's Growth Deal with the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), announced at the beginning of July. Overall, the county has secured over £200m by 2020/21 for investment in infrastructure, business and skills.

## **Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst the history**

*Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst is the UK's first open innovation bioscience campus, pioneering a unique culture to drive early stage bioscience technology and company development, and building a thriving community. It is backed by £38m of funding from its founding partners*

*- GlaxoSmithKline, the Wellcome Trust, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the Technology Strategy Board and the former East of England Development Agency. Consisting of an Incubator, an Accelerator and a Hub, covering 60,000 sq ft of laboratory, office and networking space, the independent facility houses a range of companies, from virtual and start-up firms to those which are more established, as well as other organisations. Located on the GlaxoSmithKline Stevenage site, Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst is in the unique position of operating in proximity to the expertise and resources of a major pharmaceutical company, close to both London and Cambridge. For more information, please go to [www.stevenagecatalyst.com](http://www.stevenagecatalyst.com).*

*Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst's stakeholders are GlaxoSmithKline ([www.gsk.com](http://www.gsk.com)), the Wellcome Trust ([www.wellcome.ac.uk](http://www.wellcome.ac.uk)), the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills ([www.bis.gov.uk](http://www.bis.gov.uk)), the Technology Strategy Board ([www.innovateuk.org](http://www.innovateuk.org)) and the former East of England Development Agency ([www.eeda.org.uk](http://www.eeda.org.uk))*



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**R**ead the following and guess who said it. “It is a fallacy really that to gain votes the politicians keep telling the people, ‘Tax the rich, do this to the rich, do this to the rich.’ It sounds nice for the voters but it isn’t good for the economy. .... The only way to raise the standard of living in society is by encouraging more people to be rich.”

Wow! What a statement, particularly because it was made by one of Labour’s very biggest donors, Dr Assem Allam. He wants to improve people’s lives by pulling them upwards and not by lowering the ceiling. When talking about it not being societies of rich and societies of poor he said, ‘It is one society, where one person is more capable of generating wealth.’

Have we not seen in France just what happens if the only policy is to squeeze the creators of wealth? The economy over there is flagging, money, assets and talent are coming over here to get away from it. The point is that this is a natural reaction. All of us at different levels of wealth or poverty naturally choose different ways of getting round the economic position we are in if it is hurting; not just the wealthy who can up sticks and emigrate until it is a good time to go back home. Look at the shopping habits. Tesco and Sainsbury’s, Morrisons and ASDA are seeing falls in turnover and popularity

as people move in great numbers to ‘cheaper’ brands of Aldi and Lidl, once thought to be too cheap for the majority but now giving the customer what is needed; the lowest prices in no frills ways.

What about alcohol? Are people drinking less? No, but changing habits instead and buying from supermarkets and drinking at home. Record numbers of pubs are closing. Pubs! Quintessentially British institutions, closing. People still want alcohol so they change their habits to make sure they can still get it.

And even more, what about another heavily taxed commodity, tobacco? Are people giving up because that is sensible for the good of your health and your wallet or purse? Apparently, the amount of rolled tobacco has shot up and more and more people are going on fag cruises to buy quantities of cigarettes from towns in Belgium on organised tours, daily, to feed the demand.

The government has to set tax at a level people will accept or people will find ways to avoid it. Bigger organisations and richer people do the same; it’s only natural to want to hold on to what is yours and to make your own spending decisions. Remember that and don’t criticise others when we are all making

those decisions all the time by prioritising what we will accept as affordable and what we will try to mitigate.

It will be no different with the “mansion tax” where most of these mansions are in the South East and London. I know what a mansion looks like and there are lots around the country that cost far less than £2m and yet around here you can find starter homes edging towards £500k so naturally larger properties readily reach £2m without being extravagant or palatial. Those who can will vote with their passports, damaging the whole property market, one of the mainstays of the economic recovery, and the rest of us will be left to pay a bill we can’t escape because we can’t afford to.

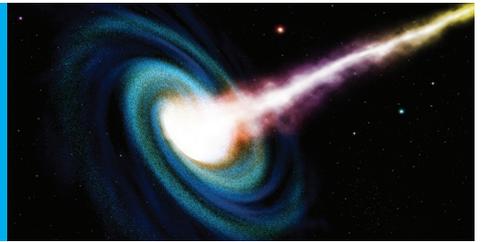
Tax has to be acceptable and that way most will be raised for supporting those who really need support and helping others to aspire to success and greater benefit for all.

## Andrew Sykes

Director biz4Biz, Chairman  
RHG Insurance Brokers



# TIME TO PLUG THE BLACK HOLES IN GOVERNMENT SPENDING



**S**imon Stevens, the chief executive of NHS England, claims that the NHS will need an extra £8bn by 2020 to plug a looming black hole in funding. This is nothing new – a trawl through the BBC website found a story from 1998 about a looming black hole in funding that could have been written yesterday. The solution from politicians is predictable. The three main parties claim they will provide more money for the NHS – but they would say that, as there is a general election looming.

Labour is looking for a big idea, which is political speak for tax rises. Ed Balls favours a mansion tax while Andy Burnham favours a 1 per cent rise in NI contributions, which could be ring-fenced and used for the NHS. The Conservatives plan to make efficiency savings and then provide more money from increased tax revenues as the economy continues to improve. Meanwhile the government of Hungary has decided to tax the internet – the population will pay around £0.40p per gigabyte of data. According to the BBC, the EU Commission has condemned it as a bad idea that could threaten political freedom – oh the irony. They are probably kicking themselves that they did not think of it first. However, I bet UK politicians have taken note.

And the Ministry of Defence has been congratulating itself. The Royal Air Force has begun taking delivery of upgraded Typhoon jets that will finally allow the aircraft to undertake bombing missions with some of the latest precision-guided bombs. BAE Systems is undertaking the work on 35 of the existing fleet at a cost to the taxpayer of £950m.

However, after the upgrade the Typhoon fleet will not be able to handle certain types of ordnance, like the highly effective British-made Brimstone missile, nor are there plans to send the planes to Iraq to join the international effort against ISIL. So why were they upgraded?

The story of the Typhoon is one of gross incompetence on the part of the government and the MoD, and has so far cost taxpayers more than £20bn.

The Typhoon was a product of cold war thinking. It was designed for air-to-air combat against Russian Mig and Sukhoi fighters. With the end of the cold war, the UK had no need for such an expensive fighter. The fact that a ground attack capability was not built into the design of the plane from day one was short-sighted. It has resulted in the MoD deciding to scrap 50 of the aircraft a third of the way through their operational life as they are too expensive to upgrade.

The French took a different route and with the Dassault Rafale have a single combat plane that can act as a fighter and bomber, and fly off an aircraft carrier. Meanwhile the MoD is building two aircraft carriers that currently have no aircraft – the planned purchase of US F-35 stealth planes has been dogged by delays and rising costs.

It seems that we cannot trust our politicians to run the government efficiently and cost-effectively. So what is the alternative? We could reduce the size of the government and let the NHS be run by the experts rather than via a minister and a bureaucratic Department of Health. Ask a politician and they will look you straight in the eye and say there is no precedent for this and the public

would not stand for it.

Actually there is, and it is called the BBC. The BBC is far from perfect, but it entertains and educates us in equal measure and delivers a diverse range of TV and radio programmes. We pay a licence fee, a tax in all but name, and the BBC provides us with a service. The corporation has also been successful at generating income through other sources and does not give in to political pressure – it still makes Top Gear, after all. It is run along sound business principles by industry experts.

Could the NHS be run like the BBC? Why not? We could fund it in a similar way with an NHS tax. Free from political interference it could innovate, integrate disparate services and become more efficient and educate the population on the need to stay healthy. It could also develop new income streams – for example, charging people for non-essential cosmetic surgery – and make better use of its skills and resources. More importantly, it could remain a viable public service free from political interference. Ordinary people could also have a say in how it is run and how services are delivered and paid for. Now I am not an expert and there are probably a host of issues that would need to be addressed, but the time is right for some radical thinking on how we run and fund our key public services. Maybe it is time to shrink the size and reach of the government to stop politicians devising yet more inventive ways of taxing us only to throw the money they raise into a black hole.

**Tim Baugh**, Partner Howardsgate LLP  
Director biz4Biz

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PARTY MENUS



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[sales@redcoats.co.uk](mailto:sales@redcoats.co.uk)

[www.redcoats.co.uk](http://www.redcoats.co.uk)

### Party Menu £30

Includes crackers & coffee with fudge  
• £25 at lunchtime

#### First Course

Platter of melon, lychee & mandarin,  
pink Champagne syrup (v)  
Smooth chicken liver pâté, spiced  
cranberry chutney,  
toasted olive & rosemary bread  
Crab & prawn cocktail with Marie rose sauce,  
crisp lettuce & apple salad

#### Main Course

Aubergine, pine nut, spinach & cheese bake,  
tomato & red pepper sauce (v)  
Free range turkey with all the  
traditional trimmings  
Slow cooked lamb rump, rosemary,  
mint, redcurrant  
jelly sauce, purple sprouting broccoli,  
fondant potato

#### Pudding

Chocolate brownie trifle with black cherries  
Redcoats' recipe Christmas pudding  
with brandy butter & rum sauce (or custard)  
Ice cream selection - Strawberry meringue,  
Vanilla bean & Toblerone chocolate

### Celebration Menu £40

Includes crackers, amuse bouche, coffee, fudge,  
nuts & mince pies

#### First Course

Platter of melon, lychee & mandarin,  
pink Champagne syrup (v)  
Pan seared Scottish king scallops, pea purée,  
black pudding, bacon  
Exotic mushroom, goats' cheese & leek tartlet,  
red pepper & rosemary dressing  
Crab & prawn cocktail with Marie rose sauce,  
crisp lettuce & apple salad

#### Main Course

Aubergine, pine nut, spinach & cheese bake,  
tomato & red pepper sauce (v)  
Baked halibut, fennel, new potato, butter bean &  
seafood ragout  
Local estate pheasant breast, rosti potatoes,  
pumpkin purée, crouton, game gravy, game chips  
Slow cooked lamb rump, rosemary,  
mint, redcurrant  
jelly sauce, purple sprouting broccoli,  
fondant potato

Free range turkey with all the  
traditional trimmings

#### Pudding

Mincemeat jalousie, frangipane,  
homemade puff pastry,  
vanilla bean ice cream  
Chocolate brownie trifle with black cherries  
Redcoats' recipe Christmas pudding  
with brandy butter & rum sauce (or custard)  
Espresso, orange & vanilla bean panna cotta  
with steeped figs & dates, brandy snap tuille  
Chef's cheese selection  
Ice cream selection - Strawberry meringue,  
Vanilla bean & Toblerone chocolate

### Other Menus Available

**Lunch (Monday to Saturday) From £26.50**  
For 3 courses & coffee

Only available to smaller parties (up to 8 guests)

**Sunday lunch £29.50**

For 3 courses & coffee

**À la carte From £32**

For 3 courses including amuse bouche

Only available to smaller parties (up to 8 guests)

For larger parties we can build you

a bespoke menu,

please call for more information & pricing

### Additional Festive Touches

For an additional £3 per guest  
we will provide luxury crackers, party poppers,  
streamers, noisemakers & if you are in a private  
room, rocket balloons

For an additional £8 per guest you can choose  
to have the Chef's English cheese selection as an  
additional course

### Private Dining Rooms

We can accommodate up to:

16 in the Oak Room

24 in the Victorian Room

50 people in the Conservatory

Minimum spend policy applies

- please enquire for details

# DAVID CROFT ON THE F1 DRIVE

“So we’ll push you out into the pit lane and hold you there for a few seconds. When we’re all ready to go, I’ll tell you to let the clutch out, the car will start moving and as it does, press down on the throttle and make your way onto the track. All clear Crofty?”

“Of course! Easy right? Except the next five minutes of my life would be anything other than easy. I can drive a car, that’s true, and from time to time I’ve had the pleasure of driving some very fast cars, on some very fast tracks. With, it has to be said, varying degrees of success. It’s just that on this magnificent summer’s day in Southern France I wasn’t driving any old car, I was behind the wheel of the Lotus E20. The car that Kimi Raikkonen not only drove in the 2012 Formula 1 season, but raced to victory that year in Abu Dhabi. Powered by a 3 litre V8 Renault engine, it’s easily capable of a speed of 200mph and will take you from 0 to 100mph in a little over 2 seconds. As fast cars go, this is the Daddy and here was my moment of truth. After 9 years spent commentating on Formula 1, could I drive it and

complete a timed lap of the Paul Ricard Circuit without any problems? I can talk the talk, but now, sat in the cockpit, could I walk the walk? It was certainly a moment that I never really expected to happen. Unlike playing darts with Phil Taylor, another personal sporting highlight, it doesn’t happen overnight. Luckily for me the Lotus team run the iRace programme which means that you, and on this occasion, me, can experience this whole stomach churning, g-force inducing, brilliance, for ourselves. Give them a call and for about €6000 you too could be behind the wheel. A steering wheel by the way, which is worth around £20,000, so be careful with it and don’t press anything you shouldn’t.

The morning schedule consists of a few track familiarisation laps in a Renault van as our instructor informed us where the racing lines were. Shortly after we were strapped into a Formula Renault 2.0, top speed 140mph and the perfect vehicle to prepare yourself for what was to come in the afternoon. Initially we drove in groups of three behind a pace car which gradually built up the speed. Lap by lap going that little bit quicker, although I confess I did have to make an early entry back into the pits when I realised that I hadn’t fastened my crash helmet properly and it was in danger of flying off halfway along the back straight.

From laps behind the pace car to laps on our own, via more driving instruction, a safety briefing and the best sports massage I’ve had in a long time. Well, you have to be fully prepared, right? I’d like to say that the preparation made for brilliant driving but it’s confession time once more and sadly out on the track I tried to go too fast, too soon, and promptly spun the car, not once, but twice. Rookie



# OF HIS LIFE

errors and very annoying they were too. Then it was lunch, although looking around the faces of the journalists and iRace customers at Paul Ricard that day, they wore the look of the condemned man eating his last meal. Gone were the jokes and bravado of the early morning, replaced by worried expressions, nerves building as we all realised that the time had come. No going back now, the dream was upon us but to say the prospect of what we were all about to do was mildly terrifying, was a huge understatement. And so at just after 3pm on a wonderfully sunny May afternoon I emerged from the pit lane and onto the track, behind the wheel of a Formula 1 car. I put my foot on the throttle and off I sped. What followed were three laps and five minutes that not only will I never forget, but will probably dine out on as well. Three laps where any sensations I'd ever experienced regarding speed and adrenaline, were blown out of the water. Using the out lap to build up my confidence for the one lap against the clock I made my exit from the final turn and accelerated along the main straight.

Williams driver Suzie Wolff had told me that whatever else I did I had to make sure I was flat on the straights and not waste the chance to go faster than I'd ever driven before. So with her advice ringing in my ears I flicked up through the gears

hitting 160mph before I applied the brakes, some 100 metres or so before the second gear right hander that followed. But we (by now the Lotus E20 and I were a team) made it easily. The claustrophobia experienced in the garage replaced by a feeling of exhilaration as we headed through the next series of corners to the chicane where the track turns right, rises over a crest and sweeps left toward the next left and the start of the back straight.

I was asked by my Sky F1 producer to try and commentate over the lap, impossible. All that came from my mouth were



the odd sentence, soon replaced by cries of joy and screams of delight as I built up to my top speed on the day of 173 mph and took the long right hander that followed with my foot still on the throttle, car in 7th gear and with enough

downforce to make it appear that we were travelling on rails. And it was in the final part of the lap that the full experience hits you.

Formula 1 cars are fast, you expect that, but it's the way that the aerodynamics allow it to corner at such excessive speeds and to brake so impossibly late that make them stand out. The final few corners of Paul Ricard provide the perfect demonstration of why these machines are such a delight. Line crossed in a time of 1 minute 31 seconds. Respectable enough to record the third fastest time of the day I was told but somewhat off the pace of the professionals. Bruno Senna on exactly the same circuit a few years earlier and in an earlier incarnation had lapped some 26 seconds faster. Still he has had a bit more practice than me and will continue to do so.

Three laps was my lot, three sensational laps, round about 11 miles where I discovered just why Formula 1 drivers love the job they do, the evidence written all over my face, in a smile that whenever I look back at that day will never fade. Easy it certainly wasn't, unforgettable it most certainly was.

## David Croft

Sky Sports Commentator

# THREE FACTS ABOUT THE 2014 HERTFORDSHIRE BUSINESS AWARDS

biz4Biz

sponsored by biz4Biz

**T**he most prestigious event in the county's business calendar is organised by local media company Archant Herts & Cambs. Commercial Editor **BARRY HUNT** looks ahead to the event sponsored by biz4Biz.



**1** **THE HOST**  
Stewart White has spent the last 30 years presenting the nightly news programme Look East for the BBC. For the past two years he has been judged the best regional presenter in Britain by the Royal Television Society and in 2012, Stewart won the Nick Clarke Award for the best broadcast interview in Britain for an interview with Lord Hanningfield following the peer's release from prison after his conviction on expenses fraud. He has also won a lifetime achievement award from the BBC for his services to broadcasting. A keen sports fan, Stewart has three grown up children and lives in South Norfolk with his wife Jane.

**2** **THE VENUE**  
The awards ceremony takes place at Knebworth Barns on the beautiful grounds of Knebworth House on November 27 when more than 430 of the county's business leaders come together under one roof. Knebworth is a spectacular historic house, home of the Lytton family since 1490. Set in 250 acres of attractive parkland just 28 miles north of London, this Gothic fantasy was transformed from its red brick Tudor origins by Edward Bulwer Lytton in 1843.

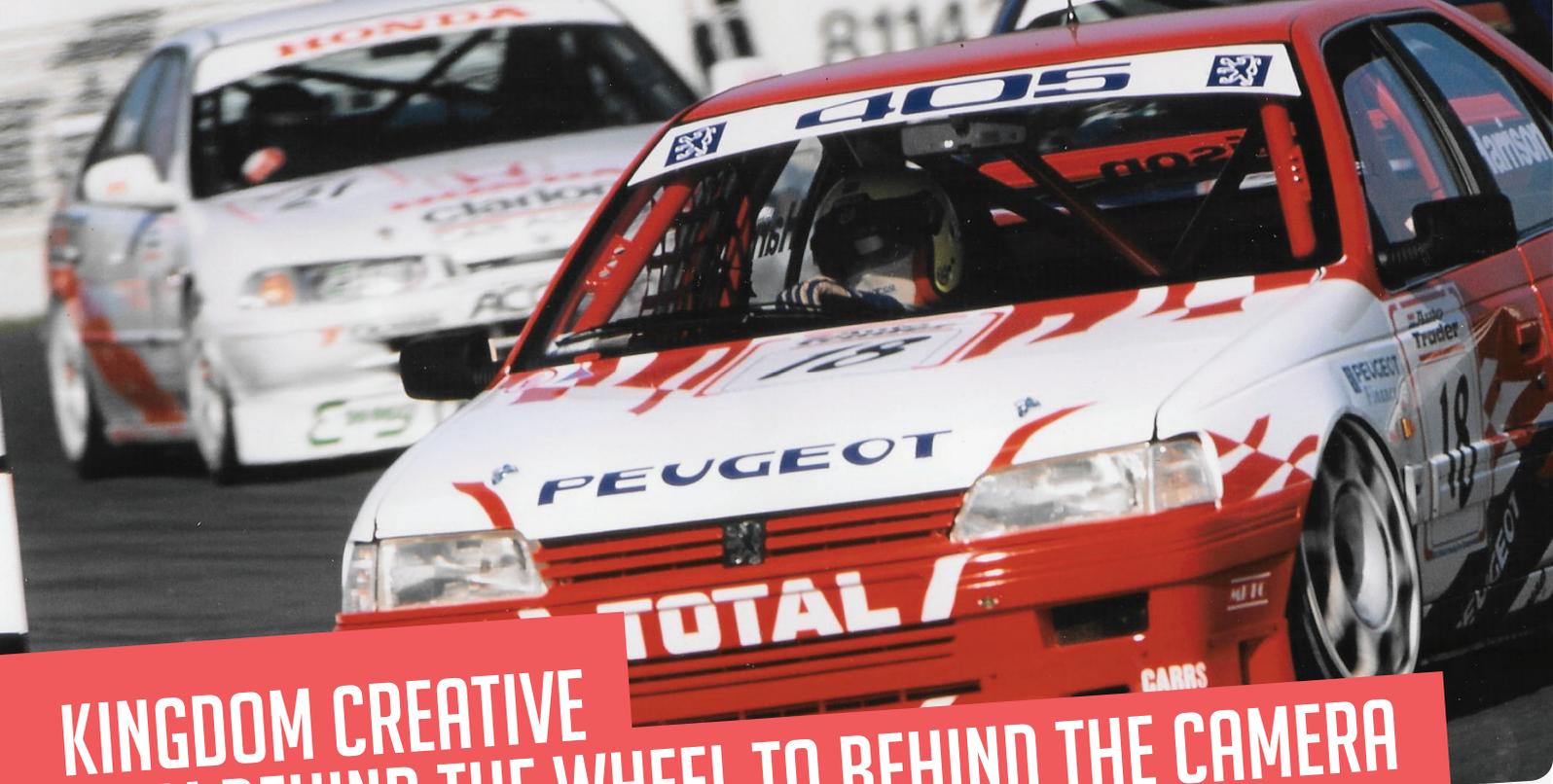
**3** **JUDGES' AWARD**  
There are 15 categories up for grabs this year, including the Judges' Award. The lucky winner will receive £10,000 worth of advertising which can be used to market their business through Archant's local newspapers and websites. This award is open for all short-listed finalists who have done exceptionally well, showing great vision and potential for the future.



Short-listed finalists have been announced in Archant's newspapers and online, so it's a great way to promote your brand in the local business community and share your achievements.

Winning or being shortlisted will make sure your business stands out against its competitors. It will also create a lasting impression to your customers and potential customers, ultimately opening the door to new business opportunities.





## KINGDOM CREATIVE FROM BEHIND THE WHEEL TO BEHIND THE CAMERA

**F**rom behind the wheel to behind the camera, former racing driver Simon Harrison is celebrating more than 12 years of success with his video and website production company, Kingdom Creative.

Simon, 45, from Baldock, enjoyed a motor racing career that spanned over twenty years. In that time he won three British Saloon Car titles, competed as a factory driver for Peugeot in the British Touring Car Championship and went on to compete at the very highest level driving in the World Touring Car Championship.

“In 2005 I felt that I had got as far as I was going to get within the sport. To win a championship, especially one as competitive as the World Touring Car Championship, you have to be in the right car, it’s no different to F1 in that respect. I could not see how I was going to get a drive with a team capable of winning the 2006 championship, so I walked away happy with what I

had achieved. I was ready for a fresh challenge and I always had a passion for making videos and websites, so I formed Kingdom Creative,” said Simon.

Kingdom Creative initially specialised in producing films and websites for motorsport teams and car manufacturers, but word spread and very quickly the company was working within a wide range of industries, both nationally and locally, creating promotional films, designing websites, producing training films and videos to help brands gain a social media following.

“Silverstone was our very first client, then Porsche, who have an experience centre at Silverstone, started using us and the business really took off. We have diversified and we now work for a complete range of companies, both large and small,” he explains.

Is it a coincidence that a successful career as a racing driver has led to being successful in starting and growing a company, or has the world of motorsport

taught Simon a trick or two? He believes that the two go hand in hand saying: “On race day you win, or lose. You get to stand on the podium with everyone cheering, or you drive back to the pits alone. As such it’s very obvious to yourself and your team if the work that you have all done has been successful or not, you all learn very fast. A front-running team has to be hard working for sure, but keep back enough time and enough energy to enjoy what they do and therefore retain the passion for the job. At Kingdom Creative we work hard, but we ensure that we retain our love and our passion for what we do.”

“So many video production companies rely on freelance staff. I could not imagine being part of a team that came together for a single filming shoot, the team could not possibly work together as they should. If my race car was prepared by a team that had only just met I could not trust it, I would not have the confidence to drive to the absolute limit. There are twelve of us now in the



company, that's a large number of full time staff for a video and web company, but having an enthusiastic consistent team is our greatest strength," says Simon.

Kingdom has also invested in some interesting pieces of equipment that maintains their reputation for being ahead of the pack. They continually keep their eye out for the latest equipment

to give their films an edge. An example of this was the investment in aerial filming drones as soon as they became available, giving Kingdom the ability to film amazing aerial footage for clients at a fraction of the cost of hiring a helicopter.

And being able to embrace future technology is crucial in the long term for Kingdom Creative as Simon explains: "It is more important than ever for all companies to have an effective website. Additionally, video is playing a more and more important part of websites and how a company communicates both externally and internally. We are now designing online platforms to help our clients share videos, ensuring that they get full use of what we have created. These platforms can also be designed to send out files to the

media, our systems are currently being used by Porsche, Williams F1 and MINI. We are working in a great industry full of change and innovation."

**Call Kingdom Creative on 01462 730320  
email: [info@kingdom-creative.co.uk](mailto:info@kingdom-creative.co.uk)**



*Simon Harrison, Managing Director at Kingdom Creative*



**Kingdom**  
CREATIVE

# I LOVE MY JOB!



**I** love my job, it is high profile, pressured, responsible and gives me an opportunity to travel the world. Am I in a minority of those that relish the opportunity of going to work? What has happened to the work ethic that used to be so apparent amongst the workforce here in the UK?

I recently spent some time in Singapore trying to understand how this small island has managed to capture the World's shipbuilding industry and establish itself as a westernised centre of commerce in Asia. Once I had managed to get past the strong Scottish influence in society and shopkeepers asking me "do ya ken" I realised just how close to home Singapore was to the UK.

A stable economy, low taxation, safe streets and a propensity towards immigration let alone the use of the left hand side of the road for driving. Home, from home.

On a Sunday afternoon, I toured the purpose built Industrial landscape of Singapore's newly established shipbuilding industry some of which is based on land being reclaimed from the sea. I saw the accommodation modules constructed alongside the offices and fabrication workshops, built to house the many skilled workers arriving from India and China to carry out the work. As with the boom in industry in Singapore and the need for labour which cannot be supported locally, shipbuilders are employing and accommodating workers from all over Asia and the rest of the World. I thought to myself if you are willing to travel 1000's of miles for work and you are willing to live on an industrial site, what must life be like back at home and in particular, that the wages must be really good in Singapore. How could this small Asiatic territory take on such a cut-throat industry such as shipbuilding and alongside Korea, put the UK Shipyards out of business?

With what was some of the best shipbuilding yards in the world, how did the UK lose its grip on this all so important industry and more to the point, why did we let it go? This is just one example of manufacturing and international export sales opportunities that should return to our shores to support UK PLC rebuild its balance sheet.

One cannot ignore the immeasurable pride associated with major engineering projects like building the Titanic, even if it eventually sunk. Either way, being proud of what you deliver can provide a huge boost to your work ethic.



## **Adrian Hawkins**

Co-Founder & Chairman biz4Biz, Herts LEP Main Board Member, Chairman of the Weldability Sif Foundation and Director and Trustee of the North Herts Studio Schools & Academies Trust

# THE CHANGING DEMOGRAPHY OF ENTERPRISE IN HERTFORDSHIRE

**O**n October 29th, the Office for National Statistics published its 2014 snapshot, by activity, size and location, of the UK's business base. This has important implications for Hertfordshire, which continues to outgun many other parts of the UK in terms of new enterprise starts.

In total, the ONS data records 58,975 local enterprise units within Hertfordshire in March 2014. 57,665 of those units are private sector firms, accounting for 97% of the total number of organisations resident here. Since 2011, the number of private sector firms has increased by an average of 1,600 local enterprise units per year. This compares to a year-on-year reduction in the number of public sector organisations which fell from 1,785 in 2011 to 1,310 in 2014. This suggests that the rebalancing of the economy between private and public sectors is well underway.

In terms of the composition of the private sector, 86% are micro firms employing less than nine people. 6,090 (11%) are small firms employing 10 to 49 people and 1,140 (2%) are medium sized firms employing between 50 and 249 people. The 205 large private sector firms in Hertfordshire account for less than one half of one percent of the total business stock, yet have a disproportionate impact on the labour market given their scale and power near the top of local, national and international supply chains. Hidden within the impressive growth figure of a 12% rise in new businesses



in the last four years is evidence of a shift towards incorporation. The ONS data shows that sole-traders and partnerships are in decline as entrepreneurs opt to incorporate and take advantage of the benefits arising from that particular legal form. Since 2011, the number of sole traders and partnerships fell by 12%. This compares with an 18% increase between 2011 and 2014 in the number of private limited companies now registered in the county. The not-for-profit sector which accounts for 2,000 of the registered private sector business in Hertfordshire has grown by around 1% since 2011.

As a local enterprise partnership we have more work to do to continue to build our understanding of the changing dynamics of the private sector. We will publish more detailed analysis in the coming months focusing on the comparatively slow progress in moving new business starts up the value

chain. For now, our initial analysis of the figures confirms what we know already; Hertfordshire is an inherently entrepreneurial place and long may it remain so.



**Paul Witcombe**

Enterprise and  
Business  
Innovation Manager  
Hertfordshire LEP  
Paul.witcombe@  
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# 100



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