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Insight

Summer 2021 | ISSUE TWENTY FIVE
THE VOICE OF BUSINESS IN HERTS. BEDS & BUCKS

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biz4Biz Connexions is a new, exciting networking club for senior managers, directors and CEOs of Herts-based businesses. There are no annual fees to be a member of Connexions nor complex rules.

Would you like to speak at one of our events?

If you are interested in speaking at one of our events call **Tim Baugh** on **01707 392552**

If you would like to be invited to our ConneXions meetings visit biz4biz.org/connexions and complete the form to be added to our mailing list.

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You can follow us @biz4biz for news, articles and updates on our current stories. Our articles get tweeted regularly to 2000 followers!

biz4Biz expands Assoicates programme



Many of our readers will know that biz4Biz stands as the voice for Hertfordshire businesses willing to promote, persuade and develop the concept of great business and compassionate companies at the centre of powering the economy of Hertfordshire.

Our future activities will broaden, to encompass the counties of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire and to assist biz4Biz with this move we are appointing more Associates, creating more meetings, extending our news coverage and distribution currently standing at 54,000 readers of our Insight magazine, to a wider audience.

We are already delighted with our call for support, but would encourage anyone connected with the business sector to get in touch to help our crusade to ensure that the voice of business is heard.

You can find further details about becoming a biz4Biz Associate at our website here <https://biz4biz.org/associates/>

Our website has been completely renewed and it now includes the opportunity to feature expert and partner pages and banner advertising.

As we exit the Covid pandemic, it's time to post your articles, present your brands and drive forward your business and we want you to know that biz4Biz and their Associates are ready to walk this road together with you.

Adrian Hawkins, OBE

Chairman biz4Biz, Publisher Insight Magazine



PROFIT FROM THE POWER OF PEERS

Leadership is a fellowship, and we all face first-time challenges that others have experienced before us. Leading is a journey of lifelong learning, and true Leaders help build new Leaders - because they know how to develop others.

In Peer Networks and CEO's Roundtable Groups, we soon learn that none of us is smarter than ALL of us combined.

As a CEO, you are inundated with advice. Your management team, paid advisors, consultants, shareholders and even your spouse, all have ideas about what you should do next. But how much of that advice comes from people who completely understand your situation and have no ulterior motives? Who can you turn to when making decisions that will have a direct impact on your leadership team or the future of your company?

When relentlessly confronted with significant decisions, it can feel incredibly lonely. Indeed, many CEOs suffer from 'Executive Isolation' as a result of shouldering the burdens of responsibility. According to a recent Stanford University study, over two-thirds of CEOs do not get leadership advice from outside sources.

When you consider the impact isolation can have on your business decisions and the success of your company, this is a serious risk. CEOs who do not have access to outside perspectives from the right people may make uninformed decisions that jeopardise their companies' success.

The ramifications can be severe. According to pivotal research, management's poor business decisions cause 50% of company failures. Even the best-in-class CEOs have blind spots and can significantly enhance their performance by obtaining a fresh perspective on the issues they confront. That outside perspective can assist you as a CEO in averting disaster and significantly growing your business. Understanding how to use a Peer Network or Roundtable Group in decision-making is one of the best ways to gain perspective.

A Peer Network group is a platform for other executives to connect and leverage one another's ideas and experiences in order to overcome obstacles, learn, and develop. Such groups can vary significantly in terms of how frequently they meet and who moderates them, as well as who participates and how confidential they are.

Think of the advantage you gain when you engage your peers in a more selective, strategic, and structured manner, as opposed to ad-hoc or arms-length. That's the benefit that top CEOs and business owners gain when they strategically engage a diverse group of their peers on an ongoing basis. CEOs in these groups assist one another in dealing with their most difficult challenges and identifying and pursuing their most promising opportunities. There are certain characteristics to look for in such groups if you want to gain a competitive advantage in decision-making. Being a part of the right Peer Network can help you improve your decision-making, often resulting in stronger company growth than your competitors.

There is no doubt that the pandemic period of 2020/21 have placed enormous challenges on business and their Leaders. As we emerge from C19 restrictions and start to 'Build Back Better' - seizing opportunities for growth and capitalising on aggregate pent-up demand - overcoming the inherent obstacles in, for example, supply-chain, HR, finance, health-and-safety, compliance and communications will best enable Leaders to scale their companies. This window for rapid-scaling is new territory for most Leaders, as we enter a new paradigm, and the landscape of stakeholder expectations has somewhat shifted in the interim, towards sustainability and good governance. Now is the time that many CEOs will be searching for allies with expeditious solutions, and this will only make Peer Networks and CEO Roundtable Groups more valuable.

In our next edition, we'll explore the qualities of a good Peer Network group, to help you select one that will best serve you, your business and your continued professional development.

For free advice on joining a regional Peer Network or CEO Roundtable Group, you can email coaching@biz4biz.org.uk, learn more at e-i.london, or call 0207 112 8386 to speak to an advisor.

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NEWS

New bridal shop opens in Hitchin

Bridal House is a new pre loved bridal that has opened in Hitchin. It is the latest shop to have been opened by Letchworth-based Garden House Hospice Care.

Located above Vintage House in Churchgate, Hitchin, the bridal boutique offers a personal experience to browse a vast collection of second-hand occasion wear with garments to suit all shapes and styles for brides, bridesmaids, mother of the bride.

Jenni Defalco is the Manager at Bridal House:

"I have a passion for vintage clothes and it's always been a dream of mine to open a bridal boutique as part of our Hospice charity shop. The dresses we have in-store are stunning, they are all individual and we're so pleased to be giving them a second lease of life at amazing value for money. We value the importance of sustainable shopping and cannot wait to welcome new brides into our shops to find 'the one'."

The opening of Bridal House is a sign of brighter days on the horizon for both charities and the wedding industry.

To book a private appointment at Bridal House, please call 01462 558082.



Jenni Defalco is the Manager at Bridal House:

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Steve Saunders Business & Performance Coach

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- How technology can help and hinder us.

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The timeless principles of Leadership do not change, only the application. Before the start of the Coronavirus pandemic, over 80% of managers were leading a team with at least 1 person working remotely. Going forward into the "new normal" this is only going to increase. So join this online webinar to build your awareness and brush up on your remote leadership skills

Thursday August 5, 2021 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM BST
Register on Eventbrite

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GIVE A FUTURE



At North Hertfordshire College we are focussed on providing our students with industry expertise and knowledge to allow them to progress to their chosen career. This isn't possible without the support of our local employers who know the industry and have specialised knowledge they can share.

We are asking employers to spare whatever time and resources they can to support our students. It may be providing advice or support, offering work experience, or delivering a virtual presentation.

Making a difference to someone's future doesn't have to take hours of your time,

you could make a difference through providing a short video or having a young person work with you for a week, right through to offering an apprenticeship.

If you feel this is something you could offer to our students please contact Caroline Hetherington, Tel: 01462 443036 Ext: 3036, Mob: 07553 364468, email Chetherington@nhc.ac.uk

Find out more at *Give a Future*





Are you a freelancer or small business owner based in Herts, Beds or Bucks?
Would you like an additional source of income?
Do you want to be part of a fast-growing business?
Why not become a biz4Biz Associate?



Could you sell digital marketing solutions?

biz4Biz has become a well-established and highly respected brand that provides a voice for the local business community. We launched our first Insight magazine back in August 2014 followed by our ConneXions business networking group and our highly successful biz4Biz Awards programme.

Our magazine has a regular readership of 100,000 made up of CEOs, managers, finance, accounts, marketing and sales personnel, and specialists across a wide variety of sectors. As an Associate you would be able to promote biz4Biz and sell a wide range of digital marketing products to local SMEs and earn a competitive commission. Let's Work Together is a fully integrated digital marketing package that includes magazine advertising, social media marketing, webinars, email blasts and much more.

Could you run a business networking group?

biz4Biz ConneXions is a successful business networking group which was set up at the end of 2014. We are now planning to open new groups in Herts, Beds and Bucks and are looking for people interested in setting them up and running them.

You will be fully supported by the biz4Biz team and directors and will have the ability to earn additional income.

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READER INTERESTS:





POST-PANDEMIC ETIQUETTE

arrived at my home. Yet, last year when I was finally comfortable enough to invite my support bubble over, I found myself fretting over guests having touched the downstairs door (I live in a block of flats) along with anything else on their journey. It quickly became apparent that I was not the only one and it became a normal thing to do when entering someone else's home.

Personal space

The poor reaction that "please don't touch me" often receives is remarkable, considering it merely extends your autonomy over your own body. Although shop goers and key workers alike still report invasions of personal space and even "friendly" touching from colleagues, customers, and members of the general public, it's safe to say there has been a slight decrease in this behaviour. While it's apparent that the masses in England don't really quite understand what 2 metres means, the bizarre social convention that seemingly enforces handshakes, literal pats on the back and other forms of often unwanted touching – including several retail workers who have mentioned they have frequently had customers put their arm around their waists – does seem to be on the decline. As we move into a world where enforced social distancing is abolished, we must remember that not everybody likes to be touched or be in too close proximity to others and this must continue to be respected in the way it finally has been during this pandemic.

Staying home when you are sick

Many workplaces have had to become more flexible over various lockdowns, meaning both revised sickness policies and better facilities for working from home. Hopefully, combined, these two new standards will mean a decrease in the number of staff members physically present with coughs and colds – and therefore less spread of disease in general. Though usually frowned upon by your co-workers, we have all been guilty of going into the office with the sniffles because we just have too much work to do or can't afford to take a day off. With the flexibility to now work from home when you are well enough to and revised sick leave policies to cover you when you're not, catching the office cold will hopefully be a thing of the past!

Insight's Rachael offers some thoughts on covid social norms that could be carried forward into the post-pandemic world

I don't think any of us were really ready for the drastic change in social etiquette we experienced a little over a year ago when the coronavirus pandemic first hit. It seems like advice we have been offered by health experts for years suddenly became the normal social expectation. It was the norm to see someone in the office with a nasty cough, or being forced to shake hands with strangers, not knowing when they last washed their hands – unthinkable now! Only the most germ conscious of us ever thought about how many people had touched door handles, shopping trolleys and keyboards before us. Advice from health experts on things like how to properly wash your hands and to cough into a tissue and dispose has been circulating for years, but I can't be the only person to have regularly seen those around me sneeze into their hands, wipe them on their jeans and then go back to touching everything – gross! Therefore, below are a few trends we're hoping to see stick around long after the "all clear" date:

Some people will still continue to wear masks – let them!

Long after masks are no longer mandatory, those more health conscious, anxiety ridden or just plain sensible will be donning a

mask in small or busy spaces just for peace of mind! I've even found myself putting one on outside – sometimes it's just a bit crowded and not everyone remembers to keep their distance. Just as the Chinese have been doing in cities for years to escape germs and pollution, it'll be perfectly normal for some people to choose to continue to wear a mask when out and about and we need to remember that it is their right to do so.

Sneezing and coughing into a tissue

Something experts have urging us to do for years! How many times have we heard "catch it, bin it, kill it" during flu season? And how many times have we seen people cough or sneeze all over their hands and then continue to handle goods, open doors, and generally touch everything else? This pandemic saw a welcome rise in people catching their coughs in tissues and immediately sanitising their hands afterwards and if there's one "new normal" we'd like to see, it's this one!

Washing your hands when you arrive at someone's home

In the pre-pandemic world, I never would have dreamt to have the audacity to ask a guest to wash their hands when they

REMEMBERING THE GOOD TIMES



It's hard to believe that it's really been 2 years since we were congratulating our winners on their fantastic achievements over a glass of champagne at the last biz4Biz Awards in 2019. While the Coronavirus pandemic might have kept us apart for a little while, we are hoping that we will all be able to get together again one day soon! In the meantime, we've just been reliving the buzz of the previous years over and over and over...

Regular Insight readers will know, but for any newbies out there: The biz4Biz Awards are (ahem) annually hosted business awards celebrating businesses across our local area, no matter how

big or small! Nominees are voted for by the public to secure a spot in our independent, face-to-face judging round overseen by local business experts, who then declare the finalists.

That's when the real fun begins! Finalists, friends, and business fanatics dust off their sparkly shoes and practise their smoothest networking skills for a fabulous night, waiting with bated breath for the winners to be announced. Previous years have been hosted by celebrity guests Fiona Bruce, Eamonn Holmes and Michael Portillo and held at The Meadow Barn at Tewin Bury Farm, a truly beautiful setting that still feels intimate despite having a seated dinner capacity for 350 guests.





STOP THIS NONSENSE



Sir Ebenezer Howard OBE (29 January 1850-1 May 1928) was an English urban planner and founder of the garden city movement, known for his publication *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (1898), the description of a utopian city in which people live harmoniously together with nature. The publication resulted in the founding of the garden city movement, and the building of the first garden city, Letchworth Garden City, commenced in 1903. The second true Garden City was Welwyn Garden City (1920).

Following the effects of the Covid pandemic, people are becoming vexed by the potential for Local Plans to remove areas of Green Belt. The concept of “Green Belts” was first proposed by Sir Ebenezer Howard whom way back in 1912 saw the necessity to create spaces between towns to prevent them losing their identity and coalescing.

In British town planning, the green belt is a policy for controlling urban growth. The idea is for a ring of countryside where urbanisation will be resisted for the foreseeable future, maintaining an area where agriculture, forestry and outdoor

leisure can be expected to prevail. The fundamental aim of green belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, and consequently the most important attribute of green belts is their openness.

The Metropolitan Green Belt around London was first proposed by the Greater London Regional Planning Committee in

1935. The Town and Country Planning Act 1947 then allowed local authorities to include green belt proposals in their development plans. In 1955, Minister of Housing Duncan Sandys encouraged local authorities around the country to consider protecting land around their towns and cities by the formal designation of clearly defined green belts. Green belt policy has been criticised for

reducing the amount of land available for building and therefore pushing up house prices, as 70% of the cost of building new houses is the purchase of the land (up from 25% in the late 1950s).

As part of our recognition of local campaigns we are carrying the opinion of Save Our Green Belt in North Herts below.

SAVE OUR GREEN BELT!

The North Herts District Council (NHDC) is consulting once more with the public regarding the main modifications applied to their Local Plan, in the faint hope that it will be acceptable to HM Planning Inspector.

It is a very sad moment for this authority to try to obtain acceptance for a Local Plan, that has at many stages during its existence been through thousands of objections, many hundreds of modifications, an attempted deletion by the brave Lib Dem Councillors and has resulted now in two prominent council leaders losing their seats.

This plan started life as a collection of opportunist landlords and developers seeking profit from the rising land prices and the golden opportunity to sell/develop their protected Green Belt areas. In fact, the Local Plan intends to build a huge 85% of the housing developments proposed within the Green Belt.

At the same time the plan retains the option of another 5,500 homes to be built in the west of Stevenage also on the Green Belt, but one would argue closer to the urbanised area of a majority town. In fact, the HM Planning Inspector has already been requested to permit a further review of this plan in just three years' time to permit these 5,500 homes to be built.

The current 13,000 homes desired by the NHDC would

be in the villages and areas abutting and including scarce green spaces in and around our towns. A total of 18,500 homes would be permitted by the NHDC, despite the Office of National Statistics confirming that the authority only needs to build 3,500 to 6,000 homes in total! The very concept that this is a "plan" at all is an oxymoron, just like a "smart" motorway has been proven to kill motorists.

This authority is seeking your apathy to enable their poorly conceived and opportunist plan to succeed. So please show them your thoughts by taking time to register your opinions here by email: local.plans@north-herts.gov.uk.

It's time for the voices of North Herts residents to be heard. It is a fact that there are more than one million empty homes in the country and that local authorities have already agreed planning applications for a further one million homes that developers have not even started building. Clearly, there is no housing shortage and no reason to take away your countryside. We are going through the worst pandemic in our lifetimes and our green spaces matter more than ever. Stop this nonsense now and show the NHDC that you do not agree with their bloated "plans". Please hurry, the opportunity to do so closes very soon!

Save Our Green Belt North Herts
@save_greenbelt



A GUIDE TO YOUR LOCAL DAYS OUT

As the world around us slowly comes back to life couples, families, friends and even lone-wolfers are looking to get out and about and make up for all that time spent couped up in the house. We are extremely lucky to live in a beautiful part of England with a whole host of places to visit and fun activities to enjoy.

While we are all business here at biz4Biz, we also like to promote well-being and a healthy work/life balance. As business starts to pick up with the easing of lockdown 3.0, the temptation to dedicate every waking minute to pushing forward has never been greater. Yes, we whole-heartedly support our businesspeople out there who are absolutely crushing it (go you!), but we've also included a little list below of local places you can relax or let off a little steam!



The Natural History Museum at Tring

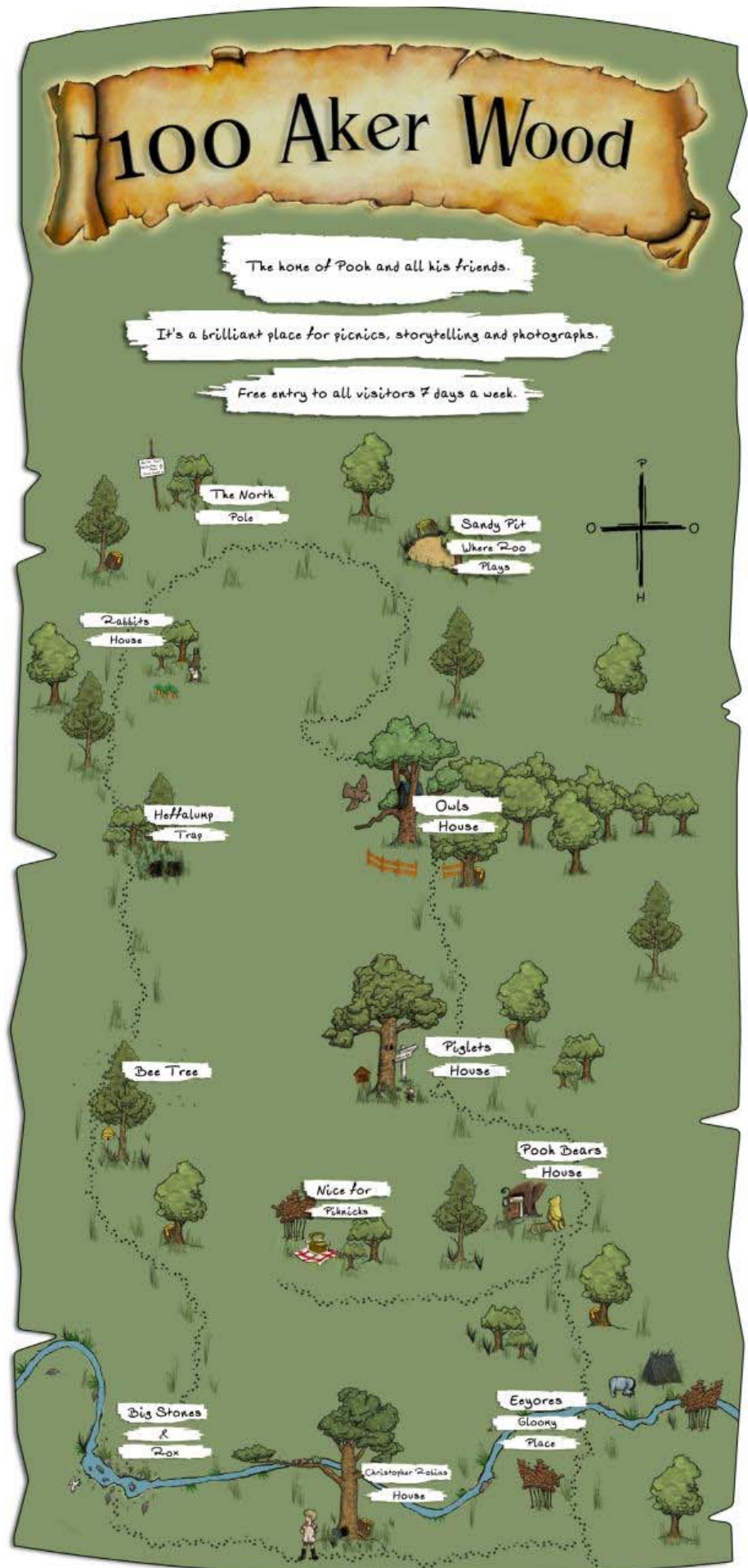
Hertfordshire's best kept secret, conveniently located round the corner from Tring Brewery, The Natural History Museum at Tring started life as the private collection of Lionel Walter, 2nd Baron Rothschild, but now is under the control of National History Museum, London and boasts the largest collection of taxidermised animals in the UK. This museum makes a fantastic free day out for kids, or anyone interested in the natural world with an experience rival to the bigger museums in London.

100 Aker Wood at Aldenham Country Park

The entire park at Aldenham is worth a visit if you like to get out and enjoy green spaces, but in particular, I wanted to tell you about the 100 Aker Wood situated within the park itself. If you have a child, or are still a child at heart, you will thoroughly love this charming nod back to those Halcion days for a very low entrance fee. Following the map on the right, you can seek out all the homes of the Winnie the Pooh characters along a wonderful woodland trail walk. It's also rumoured that Pooh sometimes makes an appearance himself on weekends and holidays to greet children and read stories. The Park as a whole is geared towards education, enhancing the countryside, caring for wildlife, and farming ecologically and as a not-for-profit organisation have struggled over our various lockdowns.

Stotfold Watermill

Situated within an 8 acre nature reserve home to a plethora of native tree, plant and wild flower species, Stotfold Watermill is an idyllic slice of British countryside wedged between Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire and just 5 minutes from the A1. The nature reserve makes for a wonderful place to have a picnic, take a stroll, or even introduce your children to the natural world and is free to enter. The Watermill itself is open on various days throughout the year for members of the public to explore, learn and discover its 1000-year history, which includes the recording of the Watermill in the Domesday book in 1098 and the renovation after a devastating fire in 1992.





Ivinghoe Beacon

Ivinghoe Beacon of Ashridge Estate is a fantastic spot to enjoy views of the surrounding countryside. The area has

a full, rich history dating back to the Bronze Age with burial mounds visible throughout the area and you might even

be able to spot the outline of a former Iron Age hill fort at the top of the Beacon. Just a little further south from Ivinghoe Beacon is Incombe Hole where you can see evidence of prehistoric earthwork Grim's Ditch (or Grim's Dyke) that marks the border between Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. The area also has a long history of being farmed with deeply rutted 'cattle drovers' paths and cross-ridge dykes still visible. The area has long been used for sheep and cattle grazing, a tradition that is continued to this day and helps to create the ideal conditions for wildflowers such as rare orchids and the delicate pasque flower and even rarer butterflies such as the rapidly declining Duke of Burgundy. Upon reaching the top of the beacon you will be able to see across several counties on a clear day, a fantastic reward for a not too difficult walk!

Wyboston Lakes

If you're looking for something a bit more thrilling than to stroll and observe, conveniently located off the A1 at St Neots, Ride Leisure offers a range of adventure and adrenaline options including the inflatable aqua park, jet skiing, off roading and more. It makes for a fantastic experience providing you don't mind very very cold water! Thankfully, most of the activities will lend or hire out wetsuits, which I would highly recommend taking them up on if you don't have your own. Next door to Ride Leisure there

is also a beautiful golf course with tranquil views across the lake.



SAVING YOUR LOCAL

It's no secret that this last year has been difficult for our hospitality sector, with pubs particularly struggling when the 10pm curfew and rule about ordering food with alcohol came into effect. Our British pubs are not only a pillar of our economic landscape – creating 900,000 jobs and contributing £24bn to the UK economy annually, they are often also pillars of our communities. Studies have shown that those who consider themselves to have a “local” pub are reportedly happier, more fulfilled socially and feel more part of their immediate community.

To add insult to injury, the further 4-week delay in the complete relaxing of the rules is predicted to cost the sector another £400m. This has led some to demand Government support also be extended to lessen the blow. Industry leaders have suggested this support come in the form of pushing back the reintroduction of business rates payments, which could cost the sector £93m just over the July period.

Whether you're a regular or not, you can't deny that pubs are so inherently British and deeply embedded in our culture that we as a nation would feel their closing keenly.

Already, so many of our British pubs have been forced to diversify over the last decade to cater to a wider demographic as they have struggled to stay afloat. While the majority now also serve food, host quizzes and employ various other gimmicks to get people through the door, at the heart of it all is still what us British love the most, a pint with your mate at the end of a long day!

Pubs have also long gone hand in hand with another demographic hit rather hard by the pandemic – local musicians. That's why this summer Insight is urging their readers to get out and support their local music scene at open mic nights and pub gigs. It's been wonderful to see the support these two groups have offered each other this last year, a special relationship that can be perfectly demonstrated by the “local musicians” trust set up by one pub in Baldock. Many pubs have even set up online open mic nights or “radio” shows broadcast on Facebook or YouTube live with artists creating performances from their own homes (see below!) and donations to the host welcome. Now pubs are open and musicians are getting back out there, it's time for us to show our support in person!



Buried on Sunday - Del Mar Acoustic (lockdown performance)
 Catch Buried on Sunday at The Horn in St Albans on 11th August.
 Tickets available at: [ticketweb.uk](https://www.ticketweb.uk)

WHERE THERE IS HOP, THERE IS HOPE

HOP competition provides hope for the future

A new report commissioned by HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire gives a snapshot into the hearts and minds of young people during the pandemic and provides hope for the future.

A series of focus groups was set up by the Lieutenancy earlier this year to hear directly from young people about the impact of COVID-19 on their studies, mental health and future aspirations.

Their responses are captured in a report by Deputy Lieutenants Jo Connell and Marion Brown which demonstrates the impact COVID-19 has had on all aspects of their lives.

It highlights that now more than ever young people need to know where to access information to help make decisions about their future career paths, training and skills development options.

Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal (HOP), powered by Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), is the county's premier gateway connecting young people to future employment, apprenticeship and training opportunities.

To help spread the word about this free resource, Hertfordshire LEP set up a competition offering £3,000 to the school or youth group that registered the most young people, their parents and carers on HOP by 9th July 2021. The prize will be presented in person by HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Robert Voss CBE CStJ.

Adrian Hawkins OBE, Chair, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's Skills and Employment Board and Chair, Stevenage Development Board, said: "This report gives us a snapshot into the very real hopes and fears of this generation and presents

a fantastic opportunity to signpost young people to available sources of advice and support. That is why we are running this competition to raise awareness of this skills portal. I would like to thank the Lord-Lieutenant for his ongoing support. Where there is HOP, there is HOPE!"

Robert Voss CBE CStJ, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, said: "By

listening to the voice of youth and working together we can find out how best to support and empower them to go on to lead fulfilling, productive lives in the future."

To download the report and find out more about the competition visit: <https://www.hopinto.co.uk/win-3-000-for-your-school-or-youth-group/>

The impact of COVID-19 on young people in Hertfordshire

Key findings:

- **Personal:** loss of face-to-face interaction with friends and peers;
- **Studies:** uncertainties around exams and assessments causing stress;
- **University:** lot of nervousness about going to university. Would they be behind in their learning; would they be 'locked' in their room if there was another lockdown; what restrictions would be in force?
- **Employment:** very few had been able to find part-time work and had been unable to save for their further education. Generally, students were pretty pessimistic about opportunities in the immediate and near future;
- **Mental health:** students with previous mental health issues spoke of how this had deteriorated. Peers, who had not had mental health issues previously, were also affected;
- **Voice of young people:** They felt they had been blamed unfairly for the spread of the pandemic and felt very strongly their voice had not been sought or heard.

APPRENTICESHIPS: BACK TO BASICS



We know businesses have been hit hard by the pandemic. Investing in skills now can help grow your business and ensure it is future-ready. There has never been a better time to hire an apprentice in Hertfordshire, developing the skills your business needs and promoting the talent pool of our local residents. That is why Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has launched the Hertfordshire Supports Apprenticeships campaign to help:

- Deliver a resident workforce fit for the future;
- Raise the skills and productivity levels of

those already in work;

- Showcase the resilience of apprentices and employers during COVID-19

Over the next 12 months, Hertfordshire LEP is proud to partner with Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce to deliver a series of events to help employers at every stage of their apprenticeship journey, by providing practical advice and digital toolkits via its skills and employment portal, HOP (www.hopinto.co.uk). The year-long campaign will culminate in a large scale networking event in March 2022 to shine a light on the amazing work being done

by employers and apprentices across the county, marking the finale of the Hertfordshire Supports Apprenticeships campaign.

By promoting apprenticeships and other recruitment opportunities, we are working together to support economic recovery and stability #KeepTheHeartinHerts.

At this first event, we are delighted to be working with West Herts College, one of four Further Education colleges in the county, and will hear from:

- **Professor Sir Tim Wilson DL**, Emeritus Professor and Deputy Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, on the importance of apprenticeships
- **Gill Worgan**, Principal and CEO at West Herts College, and **John McMahon**, Managing Director of Together Training, on how they are tailoring their apprenticeship programmes to meet local skills and business needs
- **Camelot UK Lotteries**, to hear an employer perspective
- Apprentices on their incredible career progression and the return on investment for their employer
- **Caroline Cartwright**, Skills, Employment & Apprenticeship Lead, Hertfordshire LEP, on the Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal (HOP)

Who should attend?

SMEs and employers who are new to apprenticeships or who are seeking to improve the success of their apprenticeship programmes. This practical workshop will provide a step-by-step guide intended to help employers at the various stages of the apprenticeship journey, directing to key information and local support services.

For more information and to register, visit: the Events pages on hertschamber.com

Keep up to date with our progress #HertfordshireSupportsApprenticeships and visit our Apprenticeship Pages: <https://www.hopinto.co.uk/employers/apprenticeships/>

Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce
Webinars

**Apprenticeships:
Back to Basics**

THU 15th July
11:00 - 12:00

**HERTFORDSHIRE SUPPORTS
APPRENTICESHIPS**

Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership | European Union European Social Fund | West Herts College



HOW TO DOCUMENT AN INVESTMENT IN A COMPANY

Attracting the right investors is often critical to the success of a company, both when starting up and during growth and development. Any investment you bring in will need to be carefully considered and the terms properly documented.

The best way to document a company investment will depend on the situation, but the following are some of the key documents that will typically be needed when an investment is being made.

Outline terms of investment (heads of terms)

The basic terms of an investment will need to be negotiated and recorded in a document usually referred to as a 'heads sheet', 'terms sheet' or more generally as 'heads of terms'.

This document is not legally binding but will act as a record of the key points that have been negotiated, including the value of the investment and what the investor will receive in return.

Shareholders' agreements

Also sometimes referred to as an 'investment agreement', this will set out the

terms agreed in a more detailed and legally binding way. It will be based on what has been agreed in the heads of terms.

A shareholders' agreement will cover issues such as the number of shares in the company the investor will receive, the price paid and their voting rights. It will also normally set out what will happen if the investor wishes to sell their shares and the process for bringing on board other shareholders in the future.

Subscription agreements

This is the legal agreement that a company will sell a certain number of its shares to an investor at a certain price and that the investor agrees to these terms. Once this is signed by both parties, the sale will become legally binding.

Vesting provisions

A common concern when starting a new business is what would happen if one of the founders or a major shareholder were to leave. This can often lead to the failure of a new business where the knowledge, skills and activities of individuals, founders and shareholders can be particularly critical.

Vesting provisions offer a form of

protection against such a possibility by setting out that the shares assigned to a particular shareholder or investor will only pass to them (or 'vest') after certain milestones have been met. These milestones could be related to how long the shareholder or investor has been with the company, when key revenue targets are hit or any other goals the company wishes to set.

Vesting provisions are often included within shareholders' agreements and are sometimes referred to as 'vesting clauses'.

Articles of association

Every company needs articles of association – they are a legal requirement. They are essentially the rules by which a company will be run and cover matters such as how company directors will be appointed, how new shares will be issued and procedures for board meetings and shareholder decision-making.

A company's articles of association need to reflect the interests and obligations of any shareholders and investors. When new investors come on board, the articles of association may need to be amended to reflect changing priorities or circumstances. They will also need to be carefully drafted to work with any shareholders' agreements in place.



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Please note the contents of this blog are given for information only and must not be relied upon. Legal advice should always be sought in relation to specific circumstances.

What Would Success Look Like For Your Business?

For you:

only focused on the things that really mattered?

charged what you're really worth?

had a predictable cashflow?

only worked with the right people?



NO PROBLEM, WHAT'S VIDEO CONFERENCING?

"Thanks, Steve that was great, I really enjoyed the seminar. I'd love to get my Team involved in the next one". "Sure, I said, I'd be happy to help, where are they based, I asked?" "All over the country, we'd have to do it over a video conference". "No problem", I said as you do, but in my mind, I was thinking what's Video Conferencing?!

This conversation was at the end of 2019. Little did we know how much the world was going to change within the next few months. When the Pandemic first hit our shores, it really helped to be part of a global business coaching Franchise. ActionCOACH Head Office were super supportive & delivered webinar material ready to present. Our aim was to ensure we offered maximum support to the local business community.

To date we have delivered 42 free one-hour webinars to mainly local businesses, but by promoting events using Eventbrite has had a much greater reach. We have had attendees from Europe, Australia, USA,

the Philippines & even someone who was from Stevenage but now lived in Japan! To start the business topics covered were very much with the pandemic front & centre e.g. "11 Steps Your Business needs to prepare for the COVID 19 Economic Pandemic" but have moved with the times to include "Virtual Leadership" & "Mental Resilience". It's hard to believe that these topics have become so key in today's business climate.

When you work with Steve, he will help and guide you to:

- 1. Grow your Profits** – we know we can help you improve the profitability, cash flow & revenue of your business, using tried & tested strategies
- 2. Take control of Your Time** – we help business owners spend more doing the things they really enjoy; with the people they care about most.
- 3. Build stronger Teams** – we help to ensure that the right Team members are in the right positions, in the right structure & heading in the right direction!

biz4Biz
ASSOCIATE

The reasons business coaching has become so successful are through education, motivation, awareness, accountability & above all through focus. Our proven "6 Steps" structured approach, brings tangibility and Results to your coaching, guaranteed. As your coach, we will guide you to bridge the gap between where you are right now, and where you want to be, both in your personal life and your business. You will develop long-term and short-term goals and strategies, as well as improve your business in areas that you might have overlooked. You may be able to survive in business without the help of a Coach, but we guarantee that with our guidance, you can achieve your personal and business goals faster!

Testimonials: "Over the last couple of years Steve has helped us grow considerably and provided helpful advice, tools and insights for every stage. My business is a constantly evolving work in progress, but our systems and processes have improved considerably, and we've grown roughly 40-50% in staff and revenue." - *Mark Smith*

"My business has changed in many ways, but the most important change has been that Steve has taught me to SEPARATE my business from me. The separation has made a major difference to my family life." - *William Rowe*

ActionCOACH®
business coaching

For more information about our current webinar schedule, please visit our website <https://actioncoach.co.uk/coaches/steve-saunders/events/stevesaunders@actioncoach.com>

WHAT DOES YOUR FUTURE HOLD?

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We've been carefully reviewing our training centre and courses to ensure that we can continue to deliver our first class training experiences safely during the Coronavirus pandemic. We are pleased to announce that we have been certified as COVID-19 Compliant and are looking forward to welcoming you all back soon!

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- L1 introduction to welding (any process)
- CP7 gas safety courses
- Welding Coordinator courses
- Bespoke courses, can't see what you want? just ask!

George Hay provide audit, accountancy, taxation, VAT and business advisory services to a wide range of clients

George Hay have been leading the accountancy field for over **80 years**. We offer a personalised, friendly service backed up by a wealth of professional expertise and we work with a range of industry sectors. Our services include:

- taxation
- VAT advice
- audit
- bookkeeping
- online accounting
- payroll
- new business start-up advice
- management accounts
- financial planning
- year end accounts
- probate
- business advice

Letchworth office: ☎ 01462 708810

We also have offices in Biggleswade and Huntingdon

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George Hay
Chartered Accountants



FREE
CONSULTATION



LIMITED COMPANY ANNUAL ACCOUNTS ARE NOT JUST A COMPLIANCE EXERCISE

If you operate as a Private Limited Company (Limited) in the UK, you are required to file a set of annual accounts, and usually a company tax return, following the end of your financial year.

Particularly when you are new to running a business, the associated statutory obligations can be overwhelming. Here, we'll briefly cover what is required in respect of annual accounts and when, and how we can help you to utilise them effectively within your business.

Annual accounts; the what, when and the how...

Annual, or 'statutory', accounts are prepared using a company's financial records, at the end of the financial year (also referred to as the accounting period) and must be done so in accordance with either UK GAAP accounting standards or in some cases International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

A full set of accounts typically includes a balance sheet, a profit and loss account, notes on the accounts and a directors report and, in some instances, may need to be audited. There are exemptions available for small companies and those that qualify as micro-entities, meaning

they need not include all the elements detailed above.

Company accounts will need to be filed electronically, with both Companies House and HMRC exactly 21 months after the date your company was incorporated, if in your first year of business. After this time, annual accounts must then be filed nine months after each financial year end.

It is worth noting that, for small companies and micro-entities, a filleted version of the accounts can be filed at Companies House. Consequently, the information available on Public Record is minimised.

A valuable business tool

Clearly, the accurate preparation and timely submission of statutory annual accounts is paramount, to ensure you comply with regulation and the requirements of Companies House and HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). However, your company accounts should not only be viewed as a compliance exercise, but as a valuable tool that you can really put to work within your business.

Your accounts should offer insight into your financial performance over the past year, should enable you to benchmark

against your competitors and should be a reliable source of data when it comes to business planning and making calculated decisions about the future of your company.

Year-round support

Especially if your company is only recently established, it's important not to spend time worrying about where to start. As chartered accountants and business advisers, we have the skills to ensure you are fully compliant, and the IT infrastructure in place to get this task done efficiently.

Our advisory approach also means that whilst we prepare accurate financial information, from the records you provide, we pair this with ongoing strategic input to help you interpret the figures and we facilitate discussion about what this means for your company going forward.

To find out more about the services we offer, and how we can support you, contact us today on 01462 708810, or visit www.georgehay.co.uk



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A LEAP OF A LIFETIME

Derek Blaney and Ian Glenister are taking the leap of a lifetime this Summer for the Children's Respite Trust, by jumping from 12,000 feet over the English countryside.

The jump involves freefalling for around 30 – 40 seconds before the canopy opens. We will then spend around five minutes enjoying the ride and the views before landing back at Headcorn Airfield.

The money raised will go directly towards the Children's Respite Trust's important work of providing respite for disabled children and support for their families.

www.crtcharity.org

Derek and Ian have chosen to support the Children's Respite Trust, as caring for a child with a disability is something that never ends, and the Charity supports the children and their families.

Many families of children with a complex medical need or a profound learning or physical disability really just need a break – a chance to do something that the rest of us often take for granted like going shopping or having some quiet time to read or shower alone.



Our fund-raising goal is £1,100 and we hope that you can help us to reach our target by kindly donating, however big or small the donation. This will make a profound difference to the charity and the amazing work they do.

If you would like to donate, please visit the donation page @ uk.virginmoneygiving.com/DerekandIan



**Children's
Respite Trust**

www.crtcharity.org

A WINNING CHARITY CHAMPION

In October 2020, mid-Pandemic, the Archant-backed Hertfordshire Community Awards 2020, in association with London Luton Airport, crowned Sarah Free their Charity Champion. We caught up with Sarah this Spring to find out more about her and the Hertfordshire causes which she promotes.

Sarah holds various Ambassador and Patron roles at several Hertfordshire charities including the Anne Robson Trust, Garden House Hospice Care, the Hertfordshire Community Foundation and Tilehouse Counselling, and channels her energy and enthusiasm to their benefit, chiefly through networking and fundraising, working collaboratively with local businesses and individuals. A highlight of her long-standing partnership with Garden House Hospice Care was fundraising over £12,000 on the Charlie Chicks project at Easter 2020 and, more recently, fully equipping the Anne Robson Trust's newly expanded office with donated furniture and equipment.

"The extent to which Covid-19 has affected the charitable sector remains unknown. The financial impact has increased demand on many charities, against a significant drop in income through charity shop closures, staff and volunteers stood down, and fundraising events postponed or cancelled. As with businesses, some have been forced to find alternative ways of working (telephone counselling and helplines, e.g.), whilst for others (health-related charities,



e.g.) demand has increased but with no alternative mode of operation.

"The Government's additional support for charities, the Hertfordshire community's response and the re-opening of income streams have been hugely welcomed, but there is still much to do.

We look forward to hearing more from our Charity Champion in future editions.

To connect with Sarah and make a name for your business as being socially conscious, contact her on 07790 656510 sarah@deardsfarm.net

THE SUNSHINE APPEAL



Stevenage Development Board has called on businesses and individuals to back the East and North Hertfordshire Hospitals' Charity Sunshine Appeal.

The board, which was established in March 2020 to deploy government funding through the town investment fund, is supporting the campaign to raise £380,000 to develop an outside terrace at Stevenage's Lister Hospital to benefit patients, visitors and staff.

Commenting on the appeal, Stevenage Development Board chairman Adrian Hawkins said: "We have been in awe of the NHS in the past year and come to understand the many ways in which their care for us has changed.

"This appeal to develop outside spaces

has arisen because staff have seen first-hand the benefits to patients on critical care of fresh air and the chance to get outside in good weather.

"There can be absolutely no doubt that we owe our NHS so much and that their role at the very heart of our community and impact on our health is second to none. We say that it is now time for individuals and also businesses to say thank you and give their support, and if they are considering charitable fundraising in the next few months, to back the Sunshine Appeal."

The Sunshine Appeal has been launched by East and North Hertfordshire Hospitals' Charity and aims to raise the £380,000 to provide the terrace so patients on the critical care unit can be pushed outside in their beds, as well





as a deck and garden area outside the restaurant for staff, patients and visitors to enjoy a break outside in the fresh air.

Dr Kate Flavin, critical care consultant, said: "During the peak of the pandemic, we saw how patients in intensive care responded well to feeling fresh air on their face and seeing the moving sky, instead of ceiling panels.

"Currently we can push beds out onto a rooftop area but it isn't very easy and requires an experienced doctor and nurse, lots of equipment and fine weather! Although the area is safe, it was not designed for patient use and it doesn't look very attractive.

"A new rooftop garden balcony will allow us to move patients in their beds, with all the necessary equipment, out into the open air. We want to create a beautiful space in which patients can feel fresh air, see the sky and have some time away from the machines and

bright lights of the wards. The sad fact is, in some cases, it may be the last time they get to see the sky."

Bob Niven – chair of the charity which funds projects above and beyond the remit of the NHS and supports Hertford County Hospital, Lister, Mount Vernon Cancer Centre in Northwood and the New QEII Hospital in Welwyn Garden City – said: "We all know the value of spending time outside so we hope you will help us transform these areas into spaces that will benefit us all. Thank you."

To donate and help bring sunshine into the lives of patients, staff and visitors at Lister Hospital, visit: enhcharity.org.uk/sunshine.

If you are a business which would like to find out more about the appeal and ways in which you can provide support please contact head of charity Eloise Huddleston on 01438 286369.



East & North
Hertfordshire
Hospitals'
Charity



NHS
East and North Hertfordshire
NHS Trust

biz4Biz BOTTOM LINE



>3% The Bank of England predicts a rise in inflation of above 3% as Britain's recovery continues at pace. The rise is likely to be temporary, however, and interest rates are not expected to follow suit.

€1.8bn Visa buys Swedish fintech Tink for €1.8bn as they look to expand upon their current card network. Tink is used by banks across Europe to access consumer financial data. Founded in 2012, the start up now connects over 3,000 banks and 250 million bank customers.

£850k Former money laundering expert, James Edward Thorncroft of Orpington, Kent, has been found guilty of laundering the proceeds of a £ 850,000 scam by a jury at Southwark Crown Court. While it is likely that he did not commit fraud himself, he allowed the Money Service Bureau business to be used by fraudsters to transfer criminal proceeds of an investment fraud to Hong Kong and China.

8 months Is the length of period over which the VAT deferred payment scheme will allow you to make payments. HMRC has said that it will 'take it easy' on businesses struggling due to the coronavirus pandemic with the introduction of a new scheme to "take a cautious approach to the execution of government debt".

£50 Notes in the new polymer style have been issued with a shadow over them. £50 notes have often been refused by smaller shops who often didn't have the facilities to confirm they were genuine. The new notes, which are now in circulation, are now also under scrutiny after a report estimated that cash use is down 35% following the rise of contactless payment during the pandemic.





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LANDLORDS AND TENANTS

storage to facilitate safer commutes. To protect the value of a landlord's reversionary interest, leases usually limit alterations. Commonly, external and structural alterations are prohibited but internal non-structural alterations are permitted with the landlord's consent. In multi-occupied buildings, alterations to common areas are likely to be carried out by the landlord but with the costs potentially recovered through a service charge, although landlords should carefully consider the provisions of each lease to check whether they can actually recover such costs.

What is a covid clause and should a lease contain one?

Covid clauses are still evolving. There is no market standard yet and the extent to which landlords will agree them is unknown. If, agreed, they apply if the Government imposes measures that restrict or prohibit the tenants' use of the property to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and range from a rent suspension to a tenant's right to terminate the lease.

Can a landlord terminate for non-payment for rent yet?

Commercial landlords are barred from forfeiting commercial leases and evicting tenants for non-payment of rent until 30 June 2021. Predictions are that some

form of restriction will remain after this date, possibly by treating arrears which arose during the pandemic differently to arrears that arose before or after it, or possibly by treating certain sectors differently, but we eagerly await a Government announcement. If a tenant cannot pay rent, the Government has issued a voluntary Code of Practice and encourages landlords to adopt it as good practice, although it is not a legal requirement.

Can a tenant terminate the lease or withhold payment of rent?

Leases normally require rent to be paid on specified dates without deduction or set-off, meaning it is unlikely a tenant can withhold payment without the landlord's agreement. Break clauses, rent suspension and force majeure clauses should be reviewed. If the lease cannot be terminated, tenants may be able to agree a surrender or assign or sublet with the landlord's consent. Landlords will review the financial standing of the incoming tenant and additional security might be needed. A lease can also be frustrated (which means it comes to an end immediately) if it is impossible or unlawful to use the property at all, and not just for a specific business purpose. The Courts have set a very high bar for successful claims and we are not aware of a successful claim for COVID reasons.

The implications of COVID-19 on commercial property continue to evolve. Helen Bunting from Longmores Solicitors answers some common questions still faced by both landlords and tenants.

Can the terms of a lease be varied to assist either party through difficult times?

It can be in all parties' interests to discuss any hardships being experienced and to work together to find a solution. However, there is no legal obligation to agree proposed variations and acceptance will generally depend on commercial viability.

As the workforce returns, will leases allow tenants to adapt workplaces to meet COVID safety requirements? Occupiers will need to consider social distancing, space between workstations and possible extra facilities such as cycle

Please note the contents of this blog are given for information only and must not be relied upon. Legal advice should always be sought in relation to specific circumstances.

JAGUAR LAND ROVER TO DEVELOP HYDROGEN-POWERED DEFENDER FUEL CELL PROTOTYPE



Jaguar Land Rover is developing a prototype hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicle (FCEV) based on the new Land Rover Defender, with testing scheduled to begin this year.

The FCEV concept is part of Jaguar Land Rover's aim to achieve zero-tailpipe emissions by 2036, and net zero carbon emissions across its supply chain, products, and operations by 2039, in line with the Reimagine strategy announced last month.

FCEVs, which generate electricity from hydrogen to power an electric motor, are complimentary to battery electric vehicles (BEVs) on the journey to net zero vehicle emissions. Hydrogen-powered FCEVs provide high energy density and rapid refuelling, and minimal loss of range in low temperatures, making the technology ideal for larger, longer-range vehicles, or those operated in hot or cold environments.

Since 2018, the global number of FCEVs on the road has nearly doubled while hydrogen refuelling stations have increased by more than 20%. By 2030, forecasts predict hydrogen-powered FCEV deployment could top 10 million with 10,000 refuelling stations worldwide.

Jaguar Land Rover's advanced engineering project, known as Project Zeus, is part funded by the government-backed Advanced Propulsion Centre, and will allow engineers to understand how a hydrogen powertrain can be optimised to deliver the performance and capability expected by its customers: from range to refuelling, and towing to off-road ability. The zero-tailpipe emission prototype New Defender FCEV will begin testing towards the end of 2021 in the UK to verify key attributes such as off-road capability and fuel consumption.

To deliver Project Zeus, Jaguar Land

Rover has teamed up with world class R&D partners, including Delta Motorsport, AVL, Marelli Automotive Systems and the UK Battery Industrialisation Centre (UKBIC) to research, develop and create the prototype FCEV.

"We know hydrogen has a role to play in the future powertrain mix across the whole transport industry, and alongside battery electric vehicles, it offers another zero-tailpipe emission solution for the specific capabilities and requirements of Jaguar Land Rover's world class line-up of vehicles. The work done alongside our partners in Project Zeus will help us on our journey to become a net zero carbon business by 2039, as we prepare for the next generation of zero tailpipe emissions vehicles."

Ralph Clague - Head of Hydrogen and Fuel Cells for Jaguar Land Rover
Visit: www.landrover.co.uk

THREE SCAMS TO WATCH OUT FOR IN 2021

As well as keeping your business needs at the front and foremost of our hearts, biz4Biz is also dedicated to protecting your identity, assets, and peace of mind! Read on to find out about 3 scams you currently need to watch out for!



Insurance fraud: 'crash for cash' hotspots

Crash for Cash is shorthand for a type of insurance fraud where con artists either claim for accidents that never happened or intentionally cause accidents in order to make a claim against innocent drivers. These scams are usually carried out by criminal gangs and can raise premiums in areas where they are carried out frequently. Of course, premiums aren't the only thing these gangs are putting at risk as crash for cash scams have a real potential to endanger innocent people's lives. You can reduce your risk of being involved in this scheme by staying alert for the signs. Often these fraudsters will cause an accident by braking suddenly at a busy junction or roundabout, seem unphased by the collision and even have their insurance details already handy. In these instances, CCTV footage, eyewitnesses, and dashcams are invaluable. If something feels wrong and you think you might be being targeted, you can report evidence confidentially to the IFB's Cheatline on 0800 422 0421. Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester, London, and Luton are all hotspots for this type of activity, you can find the full list of postcodes provided by Which? Here: [which.co.uk/news/2021/05/insurance-fraud-do-you-live-in-a-crash-for-cash-hotspot](https://www.which.co.uk/news/2021/05/insurance-fraud-do-you-live-in-a-crash-for-cash-hotspot)

Is that call really coming from your bank?

Number spoofing is a powerful tool in a scammer or fraudster's arsenal. By manipulating their caller ID to show a number that matches the contact info on the back of your card, the call can appear a lot more convincing. Ofcom has worked with the banking industry to add protection to these numbers so that spoofing cannot take place, but for some reason, not every bank has elected to take part. Inbound-only numbers can be submitted to the DNO (did not originate) database, which is then shared with phone networks to block these calls before they even reach you, however, numbers used for outbound calls cannot be protected. The responsibility to protect you from these scams falls largely with your bank and phone provider, however, it is important to familiarise yourself with your bank's protocols and security measures should they wish to contact you. For example, what questions will they ask you and what information might you be asked to provide.

Census scams

Despite the deadline for the 2021 census being long passed, scammers are still issuing texts to unsuspecting victims informing them that they face being fined up to £1,000 because their information is either wrong or incomplete. These text messages direct you towards a link where you can update your personal info – and of course send it directly to them. ONS, in charge of carrying out the census issued a statement saying that census branded envelopes are issued to households who have not yet completed the survey, fines are never issued over the phone, on the doorstep or via email, only once the party has been taken to court.



DEVELOPMENT BOARD PRAISES STEVENAGE SECOND BEST RANKING AS PLACE TO START A BUSINESS IN THE UK OUTSIDE LONDON

Stevenage Development Board has welcomed a study which ranks the hi-tech hub as the second best town to start a small business outside London.

The board was established in March 2020 to deploy government funding through the town investment fund, and Adrian Hawkins OBE, Board chairman and

Chairman of biz4Biz, an organisation that supports business development, said “We have clear plans for the future growth and development of Stevenage and this study highlights the opportunities available to people in our area.

“Following our successful £37.6m Towns Fund bid earlier this year, and the range of projects that



are being delivered in the ongoing regeneration programme, we now have real momentum going forward over the coming years.”

The research, conducted by Tide found that the town – more renowned for global businesses like Airbus, GsK and MBDA – ranks behind only Bournemouth in the best locations for entrepreneurs to set up shop.

The study combined data on a number of factors including the rise in the number of start-ups, the five-year start-up survival rate, and the number of registered businesses as a percentage of the town’s

Ed Jordan, CEO at Wenta said:

“We’ve been helping business owners of all shapes and sizes since 1983 and, during this time, have supported more than 110,000 people to start-up, maintain or grow their own business. Over the past year in Stevenage alone, we have supported over 169 businesses to help them survive the pandemic, helped 28 local residents to start-up their own business and given away more than £13,000 in start-up grants. It’s of no surprise that Stevenage is in the top 3 most attractive towns to launch a new business as we have the infrastructure here in place to both encourage and support enterprise.”

Stevenage resident, Lee Robbins started his own business (BI Data Intelligence Limited) in June 2019 with help from Wenta.

Lee said:

“By the summer of 2019, I realised I needed to find more appropriate office space to enable me to grow my own business and that’s when I came across Wenta. Alex is one of the business advisors at the btc, and she gave me invaluable advice on office space, training schemes and funding opportunities for businesses just like mine.

Working in the btc’s incubator with other people in a similar situation to me was also invaluable, the shared experiences.”

Wenta is an independent, not-for-profit, social enterprise that exists to make it easier and simpler to start and run a successful business.

Since 2009, Wenta have been working in partnership with Stevenage Borough Council providing free one-to-one business advice, skills training and affordable workspace (at The Business & Technology Centre on Bessemer Drive) to residents and business owners across the Stevenage area. Anyone in the Stevenage area can access Wenta’s free business support services which are independent and tailored to individual needs.



population, to reveal the best UK towns and cities to launch a business.

Stevenage was ranked second while other local towns including Watford finished third. Stevenage features in the top seven towns and cities for each ranking factor, the highest-ranking aspect being the number of registered businesses, which accounts for 0.59% of the population. On top of this, there is a 45.54% five-year survival rate for start-ups in the town, and there was a 26.7% rise in new businesses between 2018 and 2019.

Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE, Leader of Stevenage Borough Council said: “We were delighted to hear such amazing news and hope that this acts as a platform to drive even more businesses and creative, driven individuals to our town as well as more opportunities and jobs for our

local communities. Our regeneration programme is delivering more flexible working and conference space with every project we complete and by providing more of these facilities we can open up the opportunity for even more organisations to flourish in Stevenage.”

Lloyd Briscoe, Executive Member for Economy, Enterprise and Transport at Stevenage Borough Council said: “We know that there are numerous SMEs, freelancers and other small businesses based here and that number grows every year so it’s fantastic to see this entrepreneurial spirit outlined so clearly in this study. Stevenage has always provided a platform for growth and you can see from the numerous major businesses based here that there is clearly room for expansion and success within our town.”

CONTRA PROFERENTEM



ANDREW SYKES FCII

Chairman rhg,
Director biz4Biz

I became a Harry Potter fan one summer holiday when I had finished all my books and was searching around for something else to read. My youngest had got the first couple of HP books so I picked up the first one (Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone for the uninitiated) and started to read and I was captivated in a few sentences. Strange how these things happen.

Anyway, whenever I use the phrase Contra Proferentem, not too frequently, admittedly I think of Harry Potter and I am still trying to decide if it constitutes a charm or a hex.

Well what is it and how does it affect me and my business?

The world has been suffering from the growing effects of coronavirus since late 2019 but more widely in 2020 and now well in to 2021 as once fairly unscathed areas are getting hit with the virus. In the UK there was a great cry about the stance of the insurers and whether or not the insureds were covered for businesses losses following a pandemic. I guess everyone wanted to be covered because of their own circumstances but few thought

about the wider issues. Fundamentally, insurance is a collective with lots of people and businesses paying into a pot so that when some of the contributors suffer a loss this is paid for by the pot of the many. Business Interruption or Consequential Loss cover is in many forms but can come in two major forms; those that have losses following a peril covered under a Material Damage policy, generally a Commercial Combined policy these days, and those that do not require there to be physical loss of their property to be able to claim, often because of Denial of Access or an Outbreak of a notifiable disease.

The big problem is that the whole of the insurance industry generally considered a pandemic, a global disaster, as not being part of the scope of an insurer cover but allied more to Government responsibilities like War, Nuclear Attacks and such. So whether you're on the side of the insurer or the insured here you have to realise that premiums were not charged for such a risk other than in a very very few specific covers.

The market needed to be sure where it stood and so a test case was taken to the courts. The payout would be enormous if it was ruled in favour of the claimants (hurrah) and some estimated this could be twice the amount of the largest ever disaster previously paid and added to the

lack of premium ever charged for and set aside to settle. What a to do.

Luckily, the courts could wave the wand, conjure up contra Proferentem and sort it all. Hurrah again, probably. What does it mean and what does it do? The principle here is that in any contract where a meaning is unclear the benefit of the doubt is given to the party that did not draw up the contract. The insurers and the myriad versions of wordings, exclusions and exceptions were found wanting and whilst it was accepted that the insurers weren't wanting to cover the effects of such a pandemic and never intended to they were liable because their policy wordings were not sufficiently clear! They are now!

So many clients with these wishy washy wordings are being paid out of funds put aside for other losses and that will have consequences for all of us (boo).

I can spell this out in much greater detail as the insurance market is now hardening in a way not seen for many years and possibly not like this ever before because Covid 19 is only one of seven major factors that is going to mean businesses paying far more for cover, assuming they can get cover, over a wide range of insurances so whilst it might warm the cockles to think some have received piles of money we will all be paying for it; at least those who can still get cover.

WHERE IS THE LOYALTY?



ADRIAN HAWKINS, OBE

Chairman biz4Biz,
Publisher Insight Magazine

At the start of the Covid pandemic in March 2020, my wife and I, like so many, opted for a supermarket home delivery service. We have shopped with Sainsbury's since we were married 44 years ago, so we naturally tried to arrange for them to deliver to us, only to find that they were too busy to do so. I appreciate that they were suddenly in demand and many other people, including those with special needs were ahead of us able bodied people, but the thought of visiting a supermarket at that particular time was quite worrying for many. Sainsbury's were polite, very polite in turning us away. I remember thinking at the time that a quick look at our nectar loyalty card would show them that we were long serving customers, but it didn't help. Sainsbury's were happy to turn loyal customers away as they now had so many to choose from. Tesco's however stepped up and came to the rescue, regardless of any prior commitment and happily have looked after our shopping needs, ever since!

On Saturday the 5th June, Rishi Sunak our Chancellor of the Exchequer completed a historic deal with his G7 finance chiefs to tax global companies at the point of sale rather than where the goods are manufactured, otherwise known as the tax point. The new digital world has created massive cross border trading opportunities and companies such as Amazon and Google have avoided paying taxes in the

UK because previous tax law permitted them to utilise the rate of tax at the tax point which was not the UK. As a result of this new arrangement, firms with a profit margin of 10% or above - which is currently thought to apply to roughly 100 Companies, including Google and Amazon, will now have 20% of their profits assessed above that margin reassigned and taxed in the countries where they are doing business.

A little known fact is that virtually all taxes collected and spent by the Exchequer on the full range of services necessary for our Society to operate, is paid by business as detailed in our last edition of Insight and that almost 50% of that value is generated from the SME sector.

Insight and biz4Biz has congratulated the Chancellor for securing this new tax deal and has asked the Chancellor if this now

means he can reduce taxes to SME's. It would be good to know if the loyalty of SME's over many, many years is now equally rewarded by a reduction in the Corporation tax rate of 25% promised for 2023 at this years budget having increased from 19% to pay for the pandemic.

Whilst accepting that there is no more certain an outcome in life other than Death and Taxes, we live in hope our voice is heard!

Death and taxes is a common reference to the famous quotation:

Our new Constitution is now established, and has an appearance that promises permanency; but in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.

Benjamin Franklin, in a letter to Jean-Baptiste Le Roy, 1789



Adrian Hawkins OBE

Founder Weldability Sif, Chairman Stevenage Development Board, Managing Director Welding World, Herts LEP Skills and Employme...
1d • 🗨️

Well done Rishi, it's about time global companies paid their way! It's a real shame it has taken so long, but full credit to you for doing so now. Can we ease up on taxing UK SME's so heavily now? [Rishi Sunak biz4Biz](#)
[Welding World AWD](#)




Rishi Sunak • Following

Chancellor of the Exchequer at HM Treasury
1d • Edited • 🗨️

At the G7 in London today, my finance counterparts and I have come to a historic agreement on global tax reform requiring the largest multinational tech giants to pay their fair share of tax in th ...see more



A comic panel featuring a woman with blonde hair and blue eyes, looking surprised with her hand near her face. The background is blue with a white dot pattern.

I know
branding, marketing and
maintaining an online
presence are important..
but I just don't have the
time or skill my business
deserves!

A comic panel featuring a woman with dark hair and blue eyes, looking excited with her hands raised. The background is yellow with a black dot pattern.

Jabbercoms
can help your
business with anything
from a single advert to a
full blown marketing
campaign!



No one can afford to rest on their laurels and now is the time to ask yourself, **is my business keeping pace with my competitors?**

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