

**biz4Biz**

# Insight

APRIL 2023 | ISSUE THIRTY FOUR

A portrait of Adrian Hawkins OBE, a middle-aged man with a beard, wearing a dark suit, a light blue checkered shirt, and a red tie with white polka dots. He is standing outdoors in front of a red brick building with white window frames. The background is slightly blurred.

**Exclusive first interview with  
Adrian Hawkins OBE, new  
chairman of Hertfordshire LEP**



## An entrepreneurial hub for life sciences

Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst is a leading location for companies to develop and commercialise cutting edge therapeutics.

Join 40+ companies in a vibrant ecosystem with state-of-the-art laboratory and office space and access to business and scientific support.

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MAGAZINE ARCHIVE**



## CREATING REAL TERMS VALUE

**T**he Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 in the UK requires public authorities to consider how the services they procure can improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of their local area. This means that public authorities are required to consider the social value of contracts, not just their financial value.

The Act has created real terms value in several ways:

**Improved social outcomes:** The Act has helped to deliver improved social outcomes for communities by encouraging public authorities to consider the social impact of their procurement decisions. This has resulted in the delivery of services that better meet the needs of local communities.

**Increased local procurement:** The Act has encouraged public authorities to procure goods and services locally, which has helped to support local businesses and economies. This has created jobs and

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**"The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 has created real terms value by encouraging public authorities to consider the social impact of their procurement decisions."**

economic growth in local areas.

**Reduced costs:** By considering the long-term social and environmental impact of contracts, public authorities have been able to reduce costs associated with negative social and environmental impacts. For example, contracts that promote sustainable practices can help to reduce the costs associated with climate change.

Overall, the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 has created real terms value by encouraging public authorities to consider the social impact of their procurement decisions. This has helped to deliver improved social outcomes, increased local procurement, and reduced costs associated with negative social and environmental impacts.

At our next ConneXions lunch on the 18th of May 2023 at Knebworth House, we are delighted to host senior representatives from the widely recognised Social Value Portal, home to the TOMS measurement of Social Value now widely used and accepted as the national baseline for Social Value.

Join us then to learn more!

### **ADRIAN HAWKINS OBE**

**biz4Biz Chairman, Chairman of the Stevenage Development Board, Herts LEP Chairman.**



We are delighted to introduce our Rosettes, our awards for the stars of the business world that feature in our magazine, organisations which have products and services ready and waiting for your connection. These companies are waiting to support your business now and, in the future, and have special arrangements with biz4Biz to support our readers with special pricing or free services.

**Simply click the Winning Rosette to leave your contact details and we will do the rest in arranging for the company chosen to contact you.**



# A Letter from our Editor

There is always a certain rhythm to the business year and we are now in the thick of the action.

Following the festive break, it's then the turn of Easter to allow us to recharge our batteries - but with the lighter nights and the vague promise of better weather the full year really does now come into view. And we certainly have a lot to achieve and to look forward to.

Our recent biz4Biz ConneXions event highlighted our Hertfordshire Business Awards event due to take place on July 7 this year and those present enjoyed a surprise exclusive that presenter and former Strictly winner Chris Hollins will be our host for the evening.

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You can follow us @biz4biz for news, articles and updates on our current stories. Our articles get tweeted regularly to 2400 followers!

The judging process for this is now in full swing, and it is a great chance for those who have entered to gauge their progress against their peers, and to take on board valuable lessons for future progress.

Elsewhere in this edition we are delighted to run an exclusive first interview with new Herts LEP chairman Adrian Hawkins OBE. We have also spent time with Grant Shapps MP, getting his take on business in the region, while it is always a pleasure to feature current biz4Biz partners and new members, offering vital promotion via our ever increasing readership.

In general news we also take a look at the recent spring budget, a project to transform the future of freight and an attempt to improve connectivity in the UK. As promised, it's a busy time, and a packed edition, and as always we hope to hear from you about your successes and to help promote you in the future.

**DARREN ISTED**  
Insight Editor



## biz4Biz

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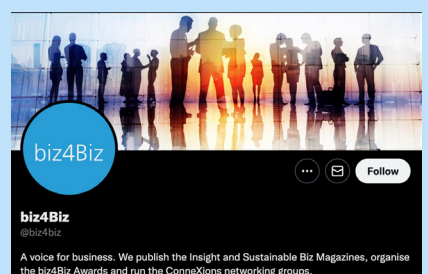
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# biz4Biz Hertfordshire Business Awards announces Chris Hollins as our host

**C**elebrating Hertfordshire's business success stories, the biz4Biz Hertfordshire Business Awards is now open for their fifth year. These awards are impartial, independent and open to Hertfordshire-based businesses.

The biz4Biz Awards is recognised as the best business awards programme in Hertfordshire as it brings together the highest number of nominees from across the county and provides physical judging. Winning a biz4Biz award is coveted and award winners continue to expand their businesses and extend their economic contribution to the greater success of Hertfordshire.

There are many excellent award schemes but none have such a high level of support and engagement, or attract the volume of nominations from across the county and all business sectors. Our 2022 Awards programme was a great success and set a record for the number of nominations, votes and engagement in the press and on social media.

## Awards process

Voting has now closed for the biz4Biz Hertfordshire Business Awards 2023 and the judging process has begun. At this stage we thank everyone for their participation and we wish you all the very best of luck.

Further details will be issued on our website with regards to ticket sales but we are delighted to announce that our host for this year will be Chris Hollins!

Chris is a journalist by trade who was well known as a presenter on BBC Breakfast while also winning the 2009 edition of Strictly Come Dancing. A former first class cricketer, his father is the former Chelsea star John Hollins.

Along with Chris, the awards will also see another of a famous son of a famous father to entertain us.



Paul Boardman, who is the son of comedian Stan Boardman, will provide both presentation and some laughs. Paul is a stand-up comedian and speaker, writing and performing his material

and with a sharp line in observational comedy. He is a regular on the 'Jongleurs' comedy circuit, and the corporate scene working for top brand clients and is equally at home on the Sporting Dinner circuit building a fine reputation by working with all the big names.

## SPONSORSHIP PACK

### Sponsorship opportunities:

Sponsoring the biz4Biz Awards offers an opportunity to position your brand alongside a prestigious, well-established, high-profile and comprehensively marketed event. Many of the companies that sponsored our awards in 2022 have been with us since we started in 2017. They clearly see the marketing value in supporting our awards programme. As a sponsor, you will benefit from our awards marketing campaign with coverage in our highly successful Insight magazine, which is distributed to over 250,000 people, as well as in the press, on social media and at our gala evening, at which the headline sponsor and category sponsors will have an opportunity to present an award.

**We hope you will join us and support the biz4Biz Awards in 2023.**

# CONNECTING EMPLOYERS TO LOCAL TALENT IN STEVENAGE

Wednesday 24 May 2023 | 9:30am – Late  
Knebworth Barns, Knebworth SG3 6PY

**Employers:** Book a FREE stand and promote your business to local students.

**Students:** Meet local businesses and find out about the routes into work.



Looking to strengthen your talent pipeline, connect with local schools and colleges, and highlight your opportunities to the next generation?

Join us at Generation Stevenage – a careers fair for young people in and around Stevenage to meet with local employers and discover the amazing opportunities available to them right here in Hertfordshire.

Employers from all industry sectors are invited to showcase their apprenticeships, work placements and jobs for graduates and school leavers to over 500 students aged 15–16.

Generation Stevenage is hosted by Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal (HOP), powered by Hertfordshire LEP, in partnership with the Stevenage Development Board.

Local students and their parents/carers are invited to attend our Twilight session for the chance to:

- Discover and speak to local employers.
- Learn more about Hertfordshire's major employment sectors.
- Learn more about the various routes into work.



Praise for HOP's past Generation events  
“The Generation careers fairs play a vital role in raising young people's aspirations and ensuring they are best placed to seize the opportunities on their doorstep.”

**Adrian Hawkins OBE, Chair, Hertfordshire LEP and Stevenage Development Board**

“Our school has a real mix of students from different backgrounds but attending today enables us to provide those students most in need of support and inspiration about their future career with the opportunity to meet with local employers and open their eyes to the range of options available to them.”

**Gita Patel, Careers Leader from Longdean School, commenting on Generation Dacorum 2022**

“It's been absolutely fantastic, we've had some really engaged students and I think we've broadened their minds to the wonderful careers at Tesco, from HR to marketing, to technical and finance.”

**Samantha Sullivan, Pre-employability & Work Placement Manager at Tesco, commenting on Generation Broxbourne 2022**

“This is a real opportunity for youngsters from all backgrounds to actually meet and ask questions of some inspiring employers, the very people who are doing the jobs and in the professions they might one day like to fill.”

**Councillor Caroline Clapper, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, commenting on Generation Hertsmere 2022**

“A brilliant example of a town that has its act together, connecting young people to key sector industries”

**Gillian Keegan MP**

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[biz4Biz.org](https://biz4biz.org)





# biz4Biz ConneXions 2023

There was a fantastic reception as we held our latest biz4Biz ConneXions event at Knebworth House Barns providing an update on the Hertfordshire Business Awards.

The event offered the chance to network with our sponsors and awards nominees, make new contacts, enjoy a delicious buffet lunch and find out how you can promote your business via our awards programme. Starting at 11:30 with tea, coffee and networking, the day then saw a presentation from Adrian Hawkins OBE on the awards process in which he discussed the judging and also announced that the host for 2023 will be TV presenter and Strictly star Chris Hollins. There were further contributions from Insight editor Darren Isted on the suite of digital interactive magazines produced by biz4Biz. Ian Taylor also spoke to the audience on the benefits of the Let's Work Together marketing package before further networking was held over a buffet lunch.

The biz4Biz Awards will be returning for their fifth year with a gala evening on 7 July 2023. These awards are impartial,

independent and open to Hertfordshire-based businesses. We are pleased to announce that Barclays will return for a fifth time as our headline sponsor. There are many excellent award schemes but none that have such a high level of support and engagement, or that attract the volume of nominations from across the county and all business sectors. Our 2022 Awards programme was a success and set a record for the number of nominations, votes and engagement in the press and on social media.

The biz4Biz Awards recognises the success of businesses at all levels and provides some superb marketing to help your business grow. There is no cost to enter the biz4Biz Awards programme and winning a biz4Biz Award is coveted and award-winners continue to expand their businesses and extend their economic contribution to the greater success of Hertfordshire.

biz4Biz ConneXions is a business network for senior managers, directors and CEOs of Hertfordshire-based businesses. At each meeting you will be able to: network and make new business contacts discuss issues of interest with like-

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**"There are many excellent award schemes but none that have such a high level of support and engagement, or that attract the volume of nominations from across the county and all business sectors."**

minded business people listen to informative speakers on topics of interest to Hertfordshire-based business leaders get advice from a variety of experts to help you grow your business.

For future events Knebworth House Barns are accessed directly from the Junction 7 roundabout of the A1(M) motorway at Stevenage South. Drive along the access road past the Novotel until you reach the entrance to the Knebworth Estate.

If you use a sat nav please use the following postcode SG1 2AX.



"The benefits of entering an awards are that it really forces you to put your business in the public domain and by that you have to look objectively at it. You are going to come across people with more experience than you and they will dig deep into your business and find strengths and weaknesses and give you ways in which you can move your business along as it is far better to be planning in advance and heading off any problems and help with progress in the future."

**Andrew Watkin, Assynt Corporate Finance**



"Being part of these awards this year and next year is vital for us as we recognise how important it is to be able to promote businesses for what they do in Hertfordshire. It really is the county of opportunity and these businesses do a massive amount for the local economy. It is great that our company and others can be a mentor and champion to others - especially in our category with ESG and sustainability and if we can recognise companies on their journey that is so important."

**Sally Bedwell, Morgan Sindall**



"We sponsored an award last year and are doing so again this year. We enjoyed the 2022 event last year and thought it was fantastic. biz4Biz is great at putting local businesses in touch with others. Having a platform to have access to those people in sponsoring an award, and it is such a fantastic awards event, means we can't say no to it."

**Rebecca List, Head of Employment, Tollers**



"We have entered the awards this year as we believe that we are doing something which is different. We focus on delivering sustainable homes and it is time we changed the way that construction gets delivered and we want to shine through in the awards this year as we are a Herts based business and it is the showcase for us in Hertfordshire."

**James Fisher - Surreal Estate**

"Being part of these awards this year and next year is vital for us as we recognise how important it is to be able to promote businesses for what they do in Hertfordshire. It really is the county of opportunity and these businesses do a massive amount for the local economy."



"Awards like these are vital because they provide crucial exposure to so many people locally, and for us as a supplier in the area that is important. Of course this exposure is magnified if you are nominated and if you win as well then that's even better, but if not, the awards are such a fantastic evening to be associated with."

**Simon Power, Reswirl**





# How to Deliver True Social Value & Increase your Visibility

Biz4Biz is delighted to announce that the next ConneXions networking meeting will be held at Knebworth House on May 18.

Held from 11-30am to 2-30pm  
lunch will be provided

[Book your place](#)



**LOYD DAVIES**

Service Development Director, ElectrAssure

**'Encouraging Sustainable & Active Travel'**

Loyd is ElectrAssure's Service Development Director. Loyd started his career as a control electrical engineer in the Royal Navy where he served for twelve years, the last seven of those as a submariner.

On leaving the Royal Navy, Loyd joined Fujitsu, initially in a hardware engineering role. He then moved on to various roles in marketing and sales management before moving on to similar roles in IBM and Tibco Software.

Loyd decided to go back to his roots and founded ElectrAssure in 2004 specialising in energy management and renewables including solar PV. In 2013, an increasing interest and conviction in the role that could be played by electric vehicles in tackling climate change led to Loyd to establish ElectrAssure as one of the very early entrants in electric vehicle charging in the UK.

Loyd now heads sales and marketing at ElectrAssure and has led some landmark contract wins including those with Volkswagen and National Grid.



**SIMON LITTLEWOOD**

CEO ESTU

**'Be Proactive and Include your Team'**

Simon Littlewood is the CEO of Estu, a Leadership & Development business with programmes proven to deliver business results & personal growth for learners. His work as a Partner at Grant Thornton included the creation of the Business Growth Services Dept which he led for 10 years. Professional Services industry peers voted for his projects to win the Managing Partner Forum's Most Innovative Client Service award in 2018 & 2019 & Industry Game Changer runner up at the Growth Investor Awards. He is strategic adviser to Gov Depts BEIS & DIT and accepted his invitation to the Programme Advisory Board for the Cranfield Executive MBA.



**NATHAN GOODE**

CSO Social Value Portal

**'Delivering Real Social Value'**

Nathan is a director of Social Value Portal and as such he leads on the Portal's methodological approach and embedding social value in procurement, as well as managing a number of key client relationships. He brings over 20 years' experience working on the procurement of major public sector projects and with large and small companies in the energy, clean-tech and sustainability. Previously a partner at Grant Thornton, Nathan set up and managed Grant Thornton's Energy, Cleantech & Sustainability sector for over a decade and has worked across social, environmental and economic infrastructure projects in education, health, housing, economic development, digital and IT.

For further information on TOMS to measure the value see our links below:  
<https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/scape-website/commonUploads/SCAPE-Social-Value-Preview-Report.pdf>

**What is TOMS, and how do I use this system of measurement**  
<https://socialvalueportal.com/solutions/national-toms/>



# What are the benefits of an adviser for Corporate Finance Services?

**H**ere are the benefits of knowing someone in Corporate Finance. They can be extremely beneficial for an owner-managed business for several reasons. Let me explain some of the benefits that come with having a connection in this field.

**So, what are these services for the small and medium sized businesses?**

1. They include assistance in the areas of buying businesses, mitigating tax liabilities on transactions, business valuation, raising finance and succession planning. Their knowledge and experience will provide you with tailored advice that is specific to your business needs.
2. The good news about recessions is that they are followed by recovery. Research shows those businesses that are open to acquiring other businesses tend to grow at higher rates than those that do not. An adviser can help you identify opportunities for growth and expansion of your business. For example, they will be able to identify and advise you on the suitability of potential targets. Further value can be gained from the structure of the transaction and how to secure funding, where required. The service will give you the ability to bounce off ideas, saving you time, cost, and mistakes.
3. An adviser can work with you on succession planning. Unfortunately, it is a fact of corporate life that you can choose when and how to leave

**“In the small and medium sized business environment, an adviser is in a privileged position. They must be honest with you only acting for you where they believe they can add value.”**

your business, but you cannot choose whether. It is going to happen. It is a fact along with death and taxes. In the small and medium sized business environment, an adviser is in a privileged position. They must be honest with you only acting for you where they believe they can add value. It is important to them to protect your integrity and avoid, as far as possible, antagonism in the sales process. They will guide you through where to start, what to do to create a business that is sellable and talk you through the options available when you come to move onto the next stage of your life; thus, ensuring you do not leave it too late and find there is no real succession plan for you. The decision to sell your business in whatever form, is as much a psychological and emotional decision. Different skill sets are required in the market and an adviser for small and medium sized businesses have those skills compared to those advisers of

much larger transactions which are far more commercially driven.

4. It is now the case the Credit Score of your company is being reviewed regularly by both suppliers and funders. The gap is widening: your credit score may have been reduced while the expectation of the funder has risen to a higher score. If you are seeking funding, an adviser can find out your credit score and where necessary improve it to make it easier to obtain funding and negotiate with funders and suppliers thus saving you costs.
5. An adviser will help you to build new relationships with other business professionals. These will include wealth managers, commercial lawyers, bankers, and investors. Such relationships can be valuable for networking, learning about industry trends, and identifying potential business opportunities.
6. So, there are many benefits to knowing someone providing Corporate Finance Services. The advantages can be particularly significant for owner-managed businesses. Access to Corporate Finance expertise, will provide growth opportunities and professional networks. You can position your business for success and longevity. If you do not already have a contact in this field, it may be worth considering building relationships with individuals or firms who can provide the support and advice you need to achieve your business goals.



In future editions of Insight Magazine, we will carry our “Ask Andrew column.” It will provide you with an appreciation of Corporate Finance Services. Such a contact can be extremely beneficial for an owner-managed business. In the meantime, Andrew can be contacted at [awatkin@assyntcf.co.uk](mailto:awatkin@assyntcf.co.uk) or 07860 898452 if you have something you would like to chat through with him.



# WHY IS CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STILL RELEVANT AND SIGNIFICANT?

Emily True, one of Hart Learning and Development's Management Apprenticeship Tutors, understands the importance of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for a successful career. Below, Emily discusses how CPD can unlock potential growth opportunities for your staff.

Research shows that workplace performance can be improved by increasing our knowledge through learning and gaining new skills, which in turn benefits the organisation and may lead to competitive advantage. There are two factors of knowledge involved: knowledge at an individual level, which includes explicit knowledge that can easily be documented and shared with others and tacit knowledge, which is at a deeper level and is learned through experience and reflection. The second factor is the transference of explicit and tacit knowledge across the organisation, therefore becoming a learning organisation.

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**"CPD is important for yourself, to maintain professional competency in your job role and for potential future career progression; and for your organisation to gain sustainable competitive advantage in the dynamic business that we face."**

Personal Development Planning (PDP) should take place prior to Continuous Professional Development. PDP helps you to become aware of your current skills and to identify and further develop skills that you may need. PDP focuses on your own personal development and encourages reflection on your own learning and achievement, using a personal development plan. A SWOT analysis is a helpful tool to assist your PDP, that can be applied to determine your strengths and weaknesses and

to identify any potential opportunities and threats. Short and long-term goals should be considered when planning your PDP.



PDP helps you to plan and prioritise your CPD journey, to demonstrate how you maintain and enhance the knowledge and skills required in your current and future planned career. Whereas, CPD focuses on the learning and development that you undertake to develop and enhance your career.

CPD comprises of the different activities available to improve your skills and capabilities and may include structured learning, such as: job shadowing, training, e-learning, workshops, learning conferences, sharing best practice; and passive or unstructured learning, such



as: reading relevant literature, watching relevant podcasts and TED Talks.

There are many benefits of CPD for both the individual and the organisation, which include but are not limited to:

#### Benefits of CPD for self:

- Empowers you to take a proactive approach to your own learning and development
- Encourages you to take responsibility and accountability of your learning and development
- Provides a bespoke record of all developmental activities undertaken
- Leads to potential career progression
- Encourages learning at an explicit and tacit level.

#### Benefits of CPD for organisation:

- Improves staff retention by developing the key skills and knowledge required to maintain sustainable competitive advantage
- Improved job satisfaction helps to increase staff morale
- Provides a bespoke record of all developmental activities undertaken



- Promotes Equality, Diversity and Inclusion by upskilling existing staff leading to future opportunities
- Develops a culture of continuous improvement.

In conclusion, CPD is important for yourself, to maintain professional competency in your job role and for potential future career progression; and

for your organisation to gain sustainable competitive advantage in the dynamic business that we face. CPD provides a bespoke record of all developmental activities undertaken to manage your professional development (CPD, 2020). If you would like to discuss opportunities for CPD within your organisation please get in touch with the Hart Learning and Development team on [hello@hartld.co.uk](mailto:hello@hartld.co.uk)



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### Are you paying the Apprenticeship Levy?

Contact us to find out how we can make the levy work for you.

The levy can be used to cover the direct costs associated with apprenticeship training including:

- training that supports learners in fulfilling the requirements of their apprenticeship
- formal assessment associated with learners' apprenticeship.

For further information about how a Hart L+D apprenticeship can help you achieve your business goals, call us on **01462 424242** or email [hello@hartld.co.uk](mailto:hello@hartld.co.uk)

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





# Helping businesses to grow in Hertfordshire and beyond



In today's rapidly changing business climate, good legal advice is invaluable. Whether you are taking a new lease, updating your employment contracts, selling or purchasing a business, or issuing new shares, it's worth speaking to a solicitor at an early stage in the process for guidance. However, finding that trusted law firm is not always easy. Tollers have been in business for over 145 years. While the firm's original roots are in Northamptonshire, the firm opened its first office in Stevenage in 2014. Since opening its doors the firm has been making moves to strengthen its commercial offering in Hertfordshire and beyond. Tollers' commercial legal teams have a wealth of experience, delivered with professionalism and a personal touch. In addition to Stevenage the firm has office locations across the South and East Midlands and continues its growth having made some key hires in its commercial business disciplines.

Tollers has commercial clients that range from national and international enterprises to more typically regional small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), medium sized public sector organisations and owner-managed businesses. The firm has extensive experience in a wide range of sectors and its clients share one thing in common: a desire to grow their business and improve profitability.

Tollers commercial business teams specialise in a number of key areas:

## **Corporate and Commercial Law**

The Corporate and Commercial team in Stevenage is headed by Nicholas Johnson who has over 25 years' experience. The team at Tollers also includes another Partner, two solicitors, junior fee earners and a strong team of support staff.

In recent months the team have dealt with a wide variety of transactions to include the sales of a number of large regional garden centres, a complex corporate restructuring and insolvency scheme with property aspects, along with disposals of manufacturing and software companies. As well as transactional work the team also has extensive experience that includes; drafting of facility and security documentation, joint ventures and shareholder agreements and advising on matters related to business succession.

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**"Tollers have been in business for over 145 years. Since opening its doors the firm has been making moves to strengthen its commercial offering in Hertfordshire and beyond."**

## **Commercial Property Law**

Tollers has a strong Commercial Property team of expert lawyers who act for commercial developers, housebuilders, investors, businesses and their owners, lenders, construction firms and charities. The Stevenage office is represented by Alan Goodwin (Director), Daniel Addison (Partner), Danielle Sher (Partner) and Jenny Dudzinski (Senior Associate Solicitor). The Tollers team is completed by Head of Department and Partner Simon Chambers along with another 3 solicitors, paralegals and support staff. Some of their recent transactions include; a £15 million development land sale and an intragroup transfer of a £10 million property portfolio. The team's expertise extends to



acquisitions and disposals, property development, commercial leases, funding and commercial property disputes. Employment Law and HR  
Rebecca List is the Head of Tollers

Employment Team, assisted by Partner Amy Edwards and solicitor Gabriella Croxford.

The team advises on both contentious and non-contentious issues and can assist with all HR issues, as well as employment tribunals.

## **Dispute Resolution Law**

Headed by Partner Tristan Benson, Tollers Dispute Resolution team is made up of 6 further solicitors who along with a team of paralegals are able to deal with disputes that might arise in the course of business. In addition to its Commercial Teams, Tollers also has a highly regarded Private Client Team.

Headed by Partner Sharon Brown, Tollers' private client team provides expert legal advice regarding wills, trusts and estates for individuals, families, and businesses. These teams are also supported by highly experienced colleagues in residential conveyancing, family law and personal injury.

No matter what your business or personal legal needs are, for more information on Tollers and our services:

## **CLICK HERE**

or Talk to Tollers on 01438 901095 and our teams will be happy to assist.



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## Two in five councils fail to engage with fleets over EV infrastructure



**D**espite the Government's ambition to see at least half of new cars to be ultra-low emission by 2030, it appears that local authorities are off the pace. According to research from the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing association (BVRLA), two out of five local authorities in the UK have not yet engaged with the fleet sector when considering electric vehicle charging needs.

These results form part of the association's new Fleet Friendly Charging Index, which also indicates that nearly two thirds (63%) of authorities are yet to publish an electric vehicle (EV) strategy.

The BVRLA Fleet Friendly Charging Index addresses the size of the challenge for fleets, who it says regularly battle with an unreliable, inaccessible or absent public charging infrastructure. Alongside this, they launched the updated Fleet Charging Guide at a House of Commons Reception on 15th March.

Both documents reveal the extent and range of charging challenges that fleets are facing and identifies some ways in which local and national government, airports and electricity network operators (DNOs) can make improvements.

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**"The fleet sector is pulling the nation forward on its drive to decarbonise, but charging infrastructure is failing to keep up. Local authorities have the power to make a real difference and we want to help them help fleets."**



Gerry Keaney, BVRLA chief executive, said: “The fleet sector is pulling the nation forward on its drive to decarbonise, but charging infrastructure is failing to keep up. Local authorities have the power to make a real difference and we want to help them help fleets.

“Armed with our Fleet Charging Guide, we are supercharging our engagement on this topic. Conversations are taking place with decision makers the length and breadth of the country.

“The index shows where the most collaboration is needed, and we are fully equipped to share the insights that will shape a fleet friendly network from Land’s End to John o’ Groats.”

At the House of Commons launch event, MPs across all parties met with the association and senior industry stakeholders. They heard about the barriers created by the present charging infrastructure and the essential role that



fleets play in bringing electric vehicles to UK roads.

The MPs were then shown where their constituency ranks nationally and saw them commit to back the rollout of an effective EV infrastructure. The association recognises that the solution will only be driven by the participation of all its members in conjunction with fleet professionals.

If you want to see how your local authority is progressing – check out the Fleet Friendly Charging Index. It features an interactive map and contact details for your local decision-makers.

**If you’re considering taking your fleet electric, ElectrAssure can help. Visit our website [www.electrassure.co.uk](http://www.electrassure.co.uk) or give us a call on 01438 525264 to find out more.**



# Punching Above Our Weight

**ElectrAssure**  
Intelligent EV charging solutions

## ElectrAssure can deliver, support & manage your EV charging system, ensuring maximum availability at all times.

When you rely on your electric vehicles for your business, downtime simply isn't an option. Our clients value us because we refuse to let them down.

Contact us today for an initial, no-obligation audit by our team of specialist electrical engineers. We'll keep you moving.

**Find out why you should trust us with your business fleet.**

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

# MEET THE NEW biz4BIZ MEMBER

## James Gentle

**H**ello all. It's my pleasure to join the go-getting business community at biz4Biz.

As a coach, I get immense satisfaction from helping fellow entrepreneurs grow their businesses and live fulfilled lives.

Based in Tring Hertfordshire with my family, coaching principles have come alive - no more rush hour traffic but rather a morning walk listening (and learning!), before heading off down our ActionCOACH West Herts office on high street office. My idea of winding down? An active session outdoors such as paddle boarding!

### Why do I do what I do?

I have a deep-seated passion for inspiring change and making businesses succeed. With 30 years of professional experience in marketing, sales, business development, leadership, and innovation - from conceiving concepts to launching products/revenue streams - my skill set allows me to coach people across a variety of industries on strategic growth challenges.

I love the variety that working with different personalities across a plethora of industries and challenges brings!

### Some of the ways you might like to engage:

#### To reach new heights

With the right mind-set, business strategy and plan of action.

#### To build your business for sale

Even if selling is not on your agenda yet, it pays dividends to start early and build value into your business model.

#### To develop your Team

Effective communication serves as one of the essential building blocks for successful teams. Strengthen your team by honing their vital soft skills! I am a DISC certified practitioner and advocate its central principle 'treat others as they'd like to be treated'.

#### To empower leaders through Exec coaching

Unlocking your organisation's potential, allowing teams to thrive and grow while giving you peace of

mind that your business is securely managed.

### I bet you've more untapped potential in you!

One easy way to find out is with an open, non-judgemental conversation about what you could change in-order to achieve what you want.

"With 30 years of professional experience in marketing, sales, business development, leadership, and innovation"



# MEET THE NEW biz4BIZ MEMBER

## Reswirl



**R**eswirl is a small local start up run by four friends and based in Stevenage making eco-friendly toothbrushes out of plant-based plastic. Rare in making toothbrushes entirely in the UK, Reswirl also has a unique selling point as customers once finished with their toothbrush are encouraged to return them to Reswirl whereupon they clean, separate out the materials and remanufacture into new toothbrushes for closed loop recycling.

Reswirl toothbrushes were launched onto the online market in November 2021 with a manual brush available via subscription. Customers can order from an annual subscription, quarterly and one offs. More recently Reswirl brushes can be seen in local environmental stores as well as dental practices across the UK. Reswirl are hopeful that this year following discussions with national supermarkets and high street retailers, customers will be able to buy their toothbrushes from local supermarket shelves.

Reswirl's mission is to significantly impact the number of toothbrushes that end up in landfill or the world's oceans, and



take hundreds of years to biodegrade, by moving towards a circular economy where manufacturers take responsibility for their waste and re-use materials reducing the amount of virgin raw materials being used.

Currently there is a choice of medium and soft bio based bristled toothbrushes in a range of 4 colours but there are plans this year to introduce eco-friendly electric toothbrush replacement heads

to meet customer demand and to compliment the manual range.

The team at Reswirl are currently looking to raise additional capital to develop their offer further through crowdfunding with a share value of £25 per share. If you aspire to own shares in your own eco-friendly local enterprise then please register your interest to [smile@reswirl](mailto:smile@reswirl). eco and the team will be in touch.

<https://reswirl.eco>





## Charity Champion

# STEVENAGE COMMUNITY TRUST

**T**his issue, having become Stevenage Community Trust's first Ambassador, I'm excited to highlight the wonderful work of this much-loved small local charity supporting people in and around Stevenage. Established by the first female Mayor of Stevenage, I appropriately accepted my new role on International Women's Day and believe that the Trust demonstrates all that is good about Stevenage.

Providing vital funding and support to local charities, community groups and families in crisis, the Trust was established in 1990 and is entirely funded by business members and donors from local businesses, private donors, and individual members from within the community.

The Trust has zero office costs and prides itself on reacting quickly and efficiently to requests for help for urgent cases of hardship throughout the year, giving grants for heating, food, furniture, community projects, schools, sports and special needs, benefiting over 20,000 local people each year.

In 35 years, the Trust has given almost £2 million in grants and is actively looking for more corporate support.

If, like me, you are passionate about Stevenage and the community, and would welcome an opportunity to demonstrate your corporate social responsibility, please visit [www.stevenagecommunitytrust.org](http://www.stevenagecommunitytrust.org) or contact

[enquiries@stevenagecommunitytrust.org](mailto:enquiries@stevenagecommunitytrust.org). With rising levels of hardship and soaring costs, by becoming a corporate member from £100 per annum, attending a fundraising event or nominating the Trust as your chosen company charity, you will be making a real difference to the everyday lives of those who are hardest hit in our community.



**BY SARAH FREE**  
Herts Charity Champion



# Stevenage Community Trust

Supporting local people since 1990

## We're here for the people of Stevenage

We're a much-loved, independent local charity that provides vital funding and support to local charities, community groups and families in crisis.

**£2million** has been given in grants since 1990

**100%** of grants are given to people in and around Stevenage

**20,000+** local people benefit each year

We are ultra-lean and efficient with a zero office cost model

We give grants for heating, food, furniture, community projects, schools, sports and special needs

We totally depend on donations from generous businesses and people

With rising levels of hardship and soaring costs, we need to do more to help those who are hardest hit in our community - but we need your help.

**See how you can get involved** 



# Spring Budget 2023 - Round-Up

**T**he Chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt delivered his Budget last month in the House of Commons.

During his opening statement, he stated that "Today we deliver the next part of the plan, a budget for growth". The Chancellor said his budget will achieve growth by "removing obstacles that stop businesses investing; by tackling labour shortages that stop them recruiting; by breaking down barriers that stop people working; and by harnessing British ingenuity to make us a science and technology superpower."

The Chancellor says the Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts that because of changing economic factors and the measures he takes; the UK will not now enter a technical recession this year.

With thanks to Hertfordshire Growth Hub we have rounded up the key points for businesses below:

## Economic Growth

The rate of inflation is forecast to fall to 2.9% by the end of 2023, according to the Office for Budget Responsibility.

The Government is on track, with underlying debt to be 92.4% of GDP by next year, falling every year after until 2027-28.

In the Autumn Statement, the Chancellor said public sector net borrowing must be below 3% over the same period. Today, he says the OBR confirmed we are meeting that rule with a buffer of £39.2bn and our deficit falls in every year of the forecast, borrowing falling from 5.1% in 2023-24 to 1.7% 2027-28.

After this year the UK economy will grow in every single year of the forecast period: by 1.8% in 2024; 2.5% in 2025; 2.1% in 2026; and 1.9% in 2027.

The Chancellor announced an additional £320m funding for the Scottish

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**"The Chancellor says the Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts that because of changing economic factors and the measures he takes; the UK will not now enter a technical recession this year. "**

government, £180m for the Welsh government and £130m for the Northern Ireland executive.

## Enterprise

Corporation tax for businesses is to increase from 19% to 25%. Firms which make a profit of more than £250,000 will pay 25% tax on their profits from April.

For smaller businesses, the Annual Investment Allowance has been increased



to £1m, meaning 99% of all businesses can deduct the full value of all their investment from that year's taxable profits.

The Chancellor is also introducing "full expensing", with an intention to make it permanent as soon as we can responsibly do so. He says it means that every single pound a company invests in IT equipment, plant or machinery can be deducted in full and immediately from taxable profits.

A £500 million per year package of support for 20,000 research and development (R&D) intensive businesses, will take place through changes to R&D tax credits.

Reforms to tax reliefs for the creative sectors will ensure theatres, orchestras, museums and galleries are protected against ongoing economic pressures and even more world-class productions are made in the UK.

£900 million of funding for an AI Research Resource and an exascale computer – making the UK one of only a handful of countries to have one – and a commitment to a £2.5 billion ten-year quantum research and innovation programme through the government's new Quantum Strategy.

#### Levelling Up

Greater responsibility for local leaders to grow their local economy. Over £200 million for high-quality local regeneration projects in areas of need, from the transformation of Ashington Town Centre to a skills and education campus in Blackburn.

Over £400 million for new Levelling Up Partnerships for twenty areas in England most in need of levelling up, such as Rochdale and Mansfield.

Business rates retention expanded to more areas in the next Parliament.

Delivering trailblazer devolution deals for the West Midlands and Greater Manchester Combined Authorities that include single

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**"The Chancellor is also introducing "full expensing", with an intention to make it permanent as soon as we can responsibly do so. He says it means that every single pound a company invests in IT equipment, plant or machinery can be deducted in full and immediately from taxable profits."**

multi-year settlements for the next Spending Review, alongside a commitment to negotiate further devolution deals in England.

12 Investment Zones across the UK including the West Midlands, Greater Manchester, the north-east, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, East Midlands,

Teesside, and Liverpool. £8.8 billion over the next five-year funding period for a second round of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements.

#### Employment

The Lifetime Allowance charge will be removed before being abolished altogether, removing barriers to remaining in work and simplifying the tax system by taking thousands out of the complexity of pension tax.

The Annual Allowance will be increased from £40,000 to £60,000, incentivising highly-skilled workers to remain in the labour market.

A new 'Returnerships' apprenticeship targeted at the over 50s will refine existing skills programmes, to make them more accessible to older workers, giving them the skills and support they need to find a recognisable path back into work.

A new voluntary employment scheme for disabled people and those with health conditions called Universal Support will be funded in England and Wales.

A £406 million plan to tackle the leading health causes keeping people out of work.

Strengthening work search and work preparation requirements for around 700,000 lead carers of children aged 1-12 claiming Universal Credit in Great Britain.





# Local Businesses Continue to be the Lifeblood of Welwyn Hatfield

Insight spoke exclusively to Welwyn Hatfield MP Grant Shapps about the role local business plays in our economy

One of the most interesting and rewarding things about being an MP is being able to see the many varied and impressive businesses in my Hertfordshire constituency of Welwyn Hatfield. As a Conservative, I believe that small businesses are vital to the success of our local economy and are the backbone of our community; providing vital services and employment opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds and skills.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, small businesses faced unprecedented challenges. Some have been forced to

close their doors, while others have had to adapt quickly to new and changing circumstances. Having started my own small business three decades ago, I know much work goes into setting up and running a small business. So, with this knowledge, I endeavoured to make one of my key roles as an MP to help and support local businesses during the pandemic - a role that I continue to undertake as we continue to recover from it.

With this in mind, I have decided to take to the road and tour many of the businesses that are dotted around my constituency

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**"As a Conservative, I believe that small businesses are vital to the success of our local economy and are the backbone of our community; providing vital services and employment opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds and skills."**





Similarly, my second business tour highlighted the great work of local businesses in Welwyn Garden City. Accompanied by Councillor Fiona Thomson, my trip took me from Regal Fish and Chips, where I had enjoyed a lovely lunch, all the way to the fantastic Stonehills Hairdressing which was full of life and activity.

As I walked around Old Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City, it was clear to me that these areas were brimming with life and that the local community was enjoying the variety of services and goods provided by the businesses in the areas. Local business is the lifeblood of any community and the time I spent with local shops, restaurants and barbers in Old Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City reinforced this reality and my commitment to supporting them in any way that I can.

Over the coming weeks and months, I will continue to tour around across my constituency, highlighting the great work being done by businesses of all kinds and sizes. Thanks to the hard work of business owners and the warm reception of the

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**"Over the coming weeks and months, I will continue to tour around across my constituency, highlighting the great work being done by businesses of all kinds and sizes. Thanks to the hard work of business owners and the warm reception of the community, Welwyn Hatfield is continuing to be a hotbed for entrepreneurship, innovation and high-quality services."**

community, Welwyn Hatfield is continuing to be a hotbed for entrepreneurship, innovation and high-quality services.

while promoting them on my Facebook page. These business tours are a way for me to say a big thank you to the small business owners and employees for all their hard work and perseverance over the last few years, while also highlighting some of the hidden gems and new businesses that have popped up across Welwyn Hatfield.

My first business tour took me to Old Hatfield where I, along with Councillor Peter Hebden, met business owners providing all kinds of services for the local community. From Mick's Barbers, where Peter himself gets his haircut, to Falcon's Delhi which hosts a wide array of Italian foods such as pasta, cakes, and a delicatessen with cheese and meat. These businesses along with the others I visited were full to the brim with happy customers and smiling employees.







## Leadership in Profile

# Interview with Adrian Hawkins OBE, Chair, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

**A**drian Hawkins OBE has officially taken over the helm of Hertfordshire LEP taking on full responsibility for its ambitious growth agenda. In this exclusive interview with biz4Biz, Adrian sets out what he sees as the big opportunities for Hertfordshire and what he hopes to achieve during his first term in office.

### **Why did you want to take on the role of Chair, Hertfordshire LEP?**

I have seen at first hand the work of Hertfordshire LEP and how it knits together all aspects of the local economy. I was a LEP Board Member from 2014 becoming Deputy Chair from 2017-2020, serving a full six-year term. As Chairman of the LEP's Skills and Employment Board, I am passionate about increasing opportunities and widening access to all and I want to ensure that people remain at the heart of what the LEP does.

In my role as Chair, Stevenage Development Board, we secured £37.5m to help lead its £1bn transformation

programme. I am enormously proud of what we have achieved there, not least as I grew up in a council house and built up my

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**"As Chairman of the LEP's Skills and Employment Board, I am passionate about increasing opportunities and widening access to all and I want to ensure that people remain at the heart of what the LEP does."**

welding business in the New Town. As someone who has been in business for over 40 years, I am 100% committed to the LEP's business-first agenda. So, when the opportunity arose to apply to take on the Chairmanship, I felt I had really strong track record to lead the LEP to achieve

more. When I applied for this role I set out my mission to inspire, ignite and innovate – and I have plenty more in the tank to deliver on that!

**Your predecessor Mark Bretton left a legacy of success with legions of examples of growth across the county, from setting up Herts IQ Enterprise Zone to encouraging more young people into STEM and investing in our key sectors. What do you see as being the big ticket items for Hertfordshire?**

I want to see an acceleration of that progress by co-partnering with Government and local partners across digital technology, life sciences, clean energy, creative industries, and innovation. This is at the heart of the Government's growth plan and we are uniquely placed to deliver that.

We have already seen the impact that the clustering of life sciences has had on the transformation of Stevenage and the UK economy. I see a real opportunity for further clustering of our world-class

**"I want to see a more business- first approach – enterprise is the engine of growth and thanks to the strength of our private sector partnerships we can ensure that the business voice continues to be heard in Whitehall and informs future decision-making."**



sectors of excellence, such as space-related R&D and communications, which, in turn, can act as catalyst convertors for growth and future innovation. That model of collaboration is in the LEP's DNA by convening stakeholders to make things happen.

At the same time we need to ensure that even those living in the most deprived wards are able to find out about local opportunities available in these high-value industries. With employers committed to CSR, we can help connect them to their local talent pool in a sustainable model that truly gives back to communities while reducing the overall carbon footprint. That is why our biggest priority is to develop a new economic strategy for Hertfordshire over the next 10 years that takes a more holistic approach to growth so that no person or place is left behind.

#### **What do you think are the biggest challenges facing the county over the next few years?**

The cost of living continues to bite and business confidence remains low. Wage inflation and a tight labour market is impacting staff retention and recruitment – the availability of non-management skills impacting sectors such as hospitality, healthcare and construction continues to be the most widespread growing challenge. Staff turnover has eased but remains an elevated problem. Salaries are rising at a near-record rate, with a further increase planned for the year

ahead. However while these are short to medium term pains, the long view must be on addressing climate change and carbon emissions.

Environmental sustainability and the low carbon challenge are no longer optional – they are integral to the future of the Hertfordshire economy and the welfare of our residents and businesses and we have a real duty to respond.

Like the majority of business people, I am a glass half full person – so for every challenge I see an opportunity! Retrofit is one of the areas I believe Hertfordshire could become a real trail blazer. In addition to the environmental and health benefits of decarbonizing our homes there is a real opportunity to create thousands of jobs both in terms of upskilling in new retrofit technologies and processes and encouraging more young people and adults to train or retrain in green retrofit technologies. I would like us to be at the vanguard of a green revolution in Herts!

#### **The Chancellor announced in his recent Budget that it 'intends for the functions of Local Enterprise Partnerships to be delivered by local government in the future and that the government is minded to withdraw central government support for LEPs from April 2024'. What does this mean for Hertfordshire?**

We are well placed to transition to these new arrangements set out in the Budget and see ourselves as front-runners for

future integration. Over the past year, we have planned ahead and evolved our business model and service offer to focus on key sectors and inward investment; skills and employment and business support – while continuing to lead on the economic strategy for Hertfordshire that has sustainable and inclusive growth at its core. This work will continue and I am really excited to take this forward.

#### **What are your priorities for your first year in office?**

Inspire, ignite, innovate! By that I mean that we need to ensure that we continue to create opportunities for everyone and the right conditions for business growth, both in terms of our high value sectors and encouraging enterprise. It's about innovation and being a catalytic convertor, translating ideas and R&D into real tangible outcomes for the future of our people, places and planet. The mechanism for this is our economic strategy which will be developed in tandem with health and place leaders, academia, charities and business.

I want to see a more business- first approach – enterprise is the engine of growth and thanks to the strength of our private sector partnerships we can ensure that the business voice continues to be heard in Whitehall and informs future decision-making.

The LEP has expanded its business outreach service with a dedicated team of skills experts, sector leads and a new

inward investment service. A Hertfordshire film office is also being set up which will provide a co-ordinated countywide film location service and capitalise on the growth of the creative sector. I am really excited to see this unfold.

Our skills portal, [www.hopinto.co.uk](http://www.hopinto.co.uk) connects residents to job, training and apprenticeship opportunities on their doorstep and employers to local talent. Thousands of students have benefited from its free programme of online and in-person events, resources and information. Over the next year we are expanding its successful Generation brand of careers fair into more areas and sectors.

#### **How will the LEP help to create a more inclusive and resilient economy for everyone?**

We are creating a circular economy and increasing financial resilience to support our local communities. By this I mean that by striving to diversify the workforce we can improve labour flows and skills supply, thereby improving local living standards and earnings. This, in turn, drives up the quality of health and well-being for residents. Similarly, in pursuing a low carbon economic strategy, this has positive impacts on health, increasing greater labour market participation. Larger corporates have a big role to play here by taking the lead on low carbon transition. Innovation too creates low carbon solutions and economic growth. This, in turn, generates revenue for green public infrastructure.

Our bold and ambitious inclusive growth strategy therefore supports high quality, healthy places that are properly connected and digitally enabled, providing everyone with the opportunity to prosper. An example of this is the creative sector. Hertfordshire has a great heritage of film and TV production so we know that there are people with the skills to do this work today, and the ability to train the next generation of camera operators, special effects designers, costume makers and make-up artists. A lot of these are transferable skills so it is making sure that we have a delivery pipeline of skills in order that the local population can benefit from the considerable investment in this sector.

Another example is in life sciences. We are working to make sure that local people have access to these high-value jobs, with facilities such as the Stevenage Innovation and Technology Centre (SITEC) being funded and supported by LEP investment. The first phase of this is now open at North Hertfordshire College, providing courses in science, digital skills, and healthcare. By implementing a 3D Virtual reality learning environment, more students than ever can explore future careers at the very cutting edge of technologies and science. Now that's what I call progress!

#### **How do you relax?**

I have been able to enjoy a life of international travel in building my business and have found that there is great pleasure to be derived by remaining and relaxing locally, supporting many other businesses

with knowledge acquired the hard way in developing a very successful business and just helping others to succeed in the way that I have over the years. My wife and I have both received RYA training to support our love of the sea and sailing and boating and more recently we have been very fortunate to have received the gift of three grandchildren who make our very existence even more worthwhile.

## **Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership**



#### **About Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership**

Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership is a business-led, multi-sector partnership focused on accelerating economic growth, job creation and raising workforce skills within the local area. Working in partnership with businesses, government, investors and not-for-profit, the LEP puts people at the heart of growth.

With a dedicated team focused on delivering inward investment, key sector, clean and inclusive growth activity, business growth, skills leadership functions and providing detailed economic intelligence, we provide a comprehensive package of support to businesses, employers, and local partners.

Our reach goes beyond county borders by promoting Hertfordshire as a great place to live, work and do business. With an economy delivering £41.57bn for UK plc annually, abutting a global city and home to several excellent significant sectors including creative media, film and TV, life sciences and advanced manufacturing, the LEP delivers a range of initiatives to continue powering its growth.

**Find out more –**  
[www.hertfordshirelep.com](http://www.hertfordshirelep.com)







# Exciting new plans for Watford Business Park now underway

**T**he £20million major redevelopment project of 'Inspire' at Watford Business Park is now underway, with works taking place by the council over the next year to create workspaces fit for the future...

Located on Greenhill Crescent, Caxton Way and Faraday Close – the business park has over 100 businesses employing more than 1,000 people from Watford and beyond. Whilst the 30 hectare site is a major employment area, a significant proportion of the pre-existing buildings were old and not geared to the current needs of businesses.

Led by the appointed project managers, Stace LLP, and construction company, Faircloth, the project is expected to be finished by autumn 2023. The work is thanks to investment by the council and Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), who supported the redevelopment with £5 million of funding via the Local Growth Fund. It will help regenerate this

key employment hub in the town and 'set the tone' for companies looking to move into the area.

Elected Mayor of Watford, Peter Taylor said: "A key part of our success is providing the right spaces and conditions for all kinds of businesses to thrive and grow. To do this we have to offer high-quality accommodation and places that people want to work in.

"That's why we are extremely excited to start redevelopment of Watford Business Park. Supporting our local businesses and creating the right environment for them to flourish is absolutely vital and a top priority for me. Our local businesses are the lifeblood of our town, creating jobs and prosperity and keeping the town vibrant and successful."

**"Located on Greenhill Crescent, Caxton Way and Faraday Close – the business park has over 100 businesses employing more than 1,000 people from Watford and beyond"**



# New investment aimed at boosting UK's digital connectivity



New plans and investment to boost digital connectivity and put the UK at the forefront of future telecoms technologies have been unveiled by Technology Secretary Michelle Donelan. As part of the new Wireless Infrastructure Strategy, the government has set out its ambitions to blanket the country with the fastest, most reliable wireless coverage available – with an ambition for all populated areas to be covered by ‘standalone’ 5G (what some companies call 5G-plus) by 2030. 77% of the population already has access to basic 5G from one provider. This next iteration of 5G coverage across the country will unlock new technologies that will change our lives and the way businesses operate, at a time when the connectivity we depend on is significantly evolving and is woven further into the lives of us all. From driverless vehicles, robots and drones on the factory floor to making our cities smarter, cleaner, and less congested; innovation is set to be supercharged. The announcement also commits £8 million to delivering high-speed broadband for up to 35,000 of the UK’s most remote properties. Under the new scheme, homes and businesses in the most remote areas that are unable to be

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**"A £40 million 5G innovation fund will promote investment and adoption of 5G by businesses and public services, helping them unlock opportunities to use advanced wireless connectivity, generating value, innovation and growth at a local level."**

connected to gigabit-capable broadband will be given funding to link them up to satellites orbiting the globe, giving them a broadband connection that will be up to ten times faster than what is currently available to them. Additionally, a £40 million 5G innovation fund will promote investment and adoption of 5G by businesses and public services, helping them unlock opportunities to use advanced wireless connectivity, generating value, innovation and growth at a local level. To help the mass adoption of 5G across the country, the strategy sets out a clear pro-investment framework for mobile network operators by driving down deployment costs and improving demand. The government has also reconfirmed

that there is no ‘magic number’ of mobile operators, whilst noting all decisions on consolidation are for the Competition and Markets Authority. The UK is due to hit 75% gigabit broadband coverage this month, up from just 6% in 2019, and is on track to deliver 99% by 2030.

**Future telecoms mission**  
The government has also announced a new long-term national mission to ensure that the UK is at the forefront of both adopting and developing 6G, the future of digital connectivity. As part of a fully-fledged 6G strategy, the government will ensure that the next generation of mobile connectivity meets the needs of people and businesses across the UK. The government has committed up to £100 million of funding initially to shape and drive early-stage research into 6G and influence global standards-setting. The UK will work closely with allies to deliver this mission - ensuring we are influential in shaping the global landscape, embedding our values into future telecoms technology, and protecting our security interests. This will support the UK’s drive to become a science superpower, as set out in the Science and Technology framework.



# What Employers Need to Know about Redundancy



Richard Gvero, Joint Senior Partner,  
Head of Employment and Commercial  
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01992 300333

**"As an employer you should decide on some fair and objective selection criteria to assist you to choose between these employees, for example, these criteria could be based on performance, skills or disciplinary record."**

**R**ichard Gvero, Joint Senior Partner and Head of Employment and Miranda Mulligan, Associate Solicitor, explain the key considerations for employers when conducting redundancy processes.

## **What is a redundancy?**

The statutory definition of redundancy is set out within section 139 (1) of the Employment Rights Act 1996 which identifies three situations in which redundancy may arise, namely business closure, workplace closure or if the requirement of the business for employees to do work of a particular kind has ceased or diminished.

## **Will all employees be entitled to statutory redundancy pay?**

No, only the employees who have been employed for two years or more will be entitled to a statutory redundancy payment.

## **What types of claims can arise in a redundancy situation?**

If your employees have more than two years' service, they could potentially claim unfair dismissal if you do not identify a genuine redundancy rationale for the dismissals or carry out a fair consultation

process prior to taking the decision to dismiss.

An employee with any length of service could also potentially claim that the decision to dismiss them was not a genuine redundancy and instead was for discriminatory reasons (for example, because of age, sex or race). As such, we would always advise employers to properly consider the rationale for the redundancy (including any indirect implications) before commencing any process.

## **What do I do if I have more than one employee carrying out the same role but the workload has reduced?**

If you have more than one employee carrying out the same type of job (or similar jobs where skills are interchangeable) those employees should be placed in a pool together and an employer should select between them for the available positions. As an employer you should decide on some fair and objective selection criteria to assist you to choose between these employees, for example, these criteria could be based on performance, skills or disciplinary record. Following the scoring process, the lowest scoring employees would usually

be selected for redundancy following a consultation process.

## **Will my employees be entitled to notice even where there is no work?**

Yes, your employees will be entitled to receive their contractual, or if greater, statutory notice period. Your contracts of employment may allow you to pay staff instead of requiring them to work their notice periods.

## **What alternatives are there to redundancy?**

Redundancy is usually the last resort. Alternatives should be considered where possible. You could rely on contractual lay off provisions for temporary reduction in workloads or alternatively, staff may agree to reduce their hours or holiday can be used where there are periods of no work. Also, you could try to reduce the head count of non-employed staff such as temp workers or consultants. Another approach is to ask for volunteers or consider alternative roles for staff at risk elsewhere within the business.





# Retail sector shows signs of resilience

A recent distributive Trends Survey shows retail sales volumes are expected to return to growth next month for the first time since September 2022, following broadly unchanged sales in the year to March.

The survey, based on the responses of 135 companies (including 48 retailers) found: Retail sales volumes were broadly unchanged in the year to March (weighted balance of +1% from +2% in February). Sales are expected to increase at a moderate pace next month (+9%), marking the first positive growth expectations since September 2022. Retail sales in March were judged to be good for the time of year (+12% from +6% in February). Retailers expect sales to exceed seasonal norms to a broadly similar extent next month (+13%). Orders placed upon suppliers were

broadly unchanged in the year to March (-2% from -25% in February) and are expected to remain unchanged next month (+0%).

Retailers considered stock volumes in March to be elevated relative to expected sales, and to a broadly similar extent as last month (+10% from +8% in February). Stock positions are expected to ease slightly next month but remain “too high” (+6%).

In addition, the latest survey data reported:

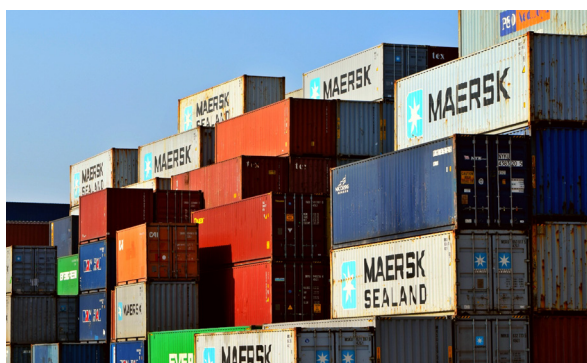
Internet sales continued to fall at a firm pace in the year to March (-26% from -30% in February). Retailers expect a modest



expansion in internet sales next month (+5%).

Elsewhere in the distribution sector, wholesale volumes grew at a firm pace in the year to March (+18% from -28% in February). Wholesalers expect sales to remain broadly unchanged next month (+2%).

Meanwhile, motor traders' sales were unchanged in the year to March (0% from -15% in February), but are expected to decline again next month (-25%).



## British Businesses set to benefit from £10 billion boost to UK Export Finance support

UK Export Finance has been granted an extra £10 billion of capacity to drive more UK exports, raising its maximum exposure limit from £50 billion to £60 billion. The additional capacity will ensure the export credit agency's continued ability to support UK exporters and to deliver on its mission: to advance prosperity

by ensuring no viable UK export fails for lack of finance or insurance, doing that sustainably and at no net cost to the taxpayer.

In 2021-22, UKEF provided £7.4 billion in financing to exporters of all sizes, which supported up to 72,000 UK jobs. The increased capacity will help UKEF continue to deliver on the government's

priorities, supporting economic growth and jobs in communities across the UK. UK Export Finance is committed to increasing its support in clean growth and climate adaptation. This new capacity will help build on the £7 billion of support UKEF has provided for sustainable projects since 2019, as it focuses on long-term, sustainable economic growth.



# UK SMEs secure funding to transform future of freight

**D**rones will be used to deliver packages on remote Scottish islands as part of nine new innovative freight projects which have been awarded £1.2 million in government funding.

The first winners of the Freight Innovation Fund (FIF), backed by £7 million overall, have been announced and could help create cleaner, more innovative ways of delivering freight around the country. This could lead to reduced emissions, increased numbers of high-skilled jobs and better delivery services in hard-to-reach parts of the UK.

The winners include Skyports Deliveries, which will use drones to improve island-to-island connectivity in the Orkney Islands, and Electric Assisted Vehicles, which is developing a 4-wheel, electrically assisted lightweight delivery vehicle to

help reduce road emissions.

The fund is one part of the government's Future of Freight plan launched last year, setting a strategy to work closely with industry to deliver a world-class freight system, which supports economic growth and builds on the measures already taken to tackle the global HGV driver shortage. The winning projects are led by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that have designed innovative technology and are partnered with existing industry companies to explore the viability of these solutions in real-world conditions. The nine projects that have been awarded funding are:

£150,000 for Skyports Deliveries Ltd (project based in Orkney, Scotland and partnered with Royal Mail and Loganair): improving logistics in ports and hard-to-reach areas through the Orkney I-Port

project. It will create an intermodal transport hub to improve island-to-island connectivity using drones to make deliveries, conduct surveys and monitoring.

£120,000 for CurbCargo (based in London and partnered with Savills): using data to track the environmental impact of freight deliveries, which will prompt companies to change how they order products to reduce vehicle movements.

£119,000 for Lightricity Ltd (based in Oxford and partnered with Bradford Swissport Ltd): using a unique, patented technology that harnesses the energy from indoor and low-level light sources to power battery-free tracking devices. This will help companies realise the benefits of tracking devices without the cost challenges of battery change and sustainability impacts.



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"Located The Freight Innovation Fund aims to accelerate the adoption of existing freight technologies within the freight sector and develop a future pipeline in line with the freight industry's real-world needs. It is a 3-year £7 million programme designed to make delivering freight across the UK more efficient and cleaner.

£150,000 for Electric Assisted Vehicles Ltd (based in Bicester, Oxfordshire and partnered with FedEx Express): developing a 4-wheel, electrically assisted lightweight delivery vehicle as an alternative to petrol and diesel vans.

£145,000 for Otaski Energy Solutions Ltd and Syselek Ltd (based in Gateshead and partnered with Costain): trialling their cost and energy-efficient smart charge and bi-directional converter, which allows electric vehicles to charge from any power grid source and discharge energy back to the grid or storage. This could help create an intelligent vehicle fleet charging system that increases grid reliability, resilience and stability and high adaptations to variable loads.

£129,000 for CocoonFMS Ltd (based in Lichfield, Staffordshire and partnered with Simarco Worldwide Logistics): creating a digital calculator to provide automated management of port costs and shipping expenses, providing more accurate invoice information to users, reducing port delays and improving planning of deliveries.

£145,000 for Entopy (based in Suffolk and partnered with Fujitsu Services UK and Atamai Freight): creating a digital twin of shipments to track them during their delivery, providing vital information and supporting greater use of digital products in the freight sector.

£133,000 for RoboK Ltd (based in Cambridge and partnered with Port of Tyne): trialling the use of their AI system to generate insights from existing video data, such as CCTV, to provide analysis on things like capacity and asset movement in real time to reduce costly delays and inefficiencies.

£100,000 for Estudio Cactus (based in London and in cooperation with Portsmouth International Port):

trialling the use of their health, safety, security and environment software to provide operators real-time information about their port to increase efficiency through improved resource management.

The winning SMEs will benefit from a freight innovation fund accelerator, which will provide bespoke business support to help them access private investment. They will also be invited to join a "freight innovation cluster", a community of innovators that will hold events, encourage collaboration and generate new opportunities, and stimulate growth within the wider freight sector.

The Freight Innovation Fund aims to accelerate the adoption of existing freight technologies within the freight sector and develop a future pipeline in line with the freight industry's real-world needs. It is a 3-year £7 million programme designed to make delivering freight across the UK more efficient and cleaner.

The winning projects will support ideas

and technology addressing 3 longstanding issues in the freight sector including: a lack of large-scale cross-industry data collection and sharing between different modes of freight transport, such as road, rail and maritime, could improve efficiencies and coordination difficulties in intermodal transport, such as between rail and road, and ways to improve how large consignments are broken up into smaller ones could reduce emissions and traffic improvements in freight distribution in ports across different transport modes could create knock-on benefits with timings, efficiencies and predictability of the journey

In 2022, the government published the Future of Freight plan, the first-ever cross-modal and cross-government plan for the UK freight transport sector. Government launched the Freight Innovation Fund competition, which is delivered by Connected Places Catapult (CPC), earlier this year in January.





# £27 billion business tax cut takes effect as tax year begins



**T**he package announced at Spring Budget, comprises 100% full expensing and a 50% first-year allowance. It will mean the UK has the most generous capital allowance regime in the OECD worth £27 billion over the next three years, amounting to an effective £9 billion a year tax cut for companies.

The OBR expects this regime to boost investment by 3% over three years.

With the new 25% corporation tax rate coming in for the top 10% most profitable companies, and the super-deduction ending, the Chancellor used his Spring Budget to ensure that the UK's tax system fosters the right conditions for enterprise, investment and growth.

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**"The OBR expects this regime to boost investment by 3% over three years. With the new 25% corporation tax rate coming in for the top 10% most profitable companies"**

Full expensing lets companies deduct 100% of the cost of certain plant and machinery investments from their profits before tax. It is available from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026. It provides the same generosity as the super-deduction, saving

firms up to 25p in every £1 of qualifying investment and is for main rate assets – such as construction, warehousing and office equipment.

The 50% First-Year Allowance lets companies deduct 50% of the cost of other plant and machinery, known as special rate assets, from their profits during the year of purchase. This includes long life assets such as solar panels and lighting systems.

For passengers flying in economy class, the new domestic band will be set at £6.50, a 50% cut to bolster UK-wide connectivity, while the new ultra long-haul band will be set at £91, meaning those who fly the furthest will pay the greatest level of duty.

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**"From 6 April 2023 personal tax changes taking effect include removing tax-barriers that the medical community have made clear stop doctors working, delivering on the Prime Minister's priority to cut NHS waiting lists so people can get the care they need more quickly"**

Further tax measures include:

- To help household budgets further, the planned 11 pence rise in fuel duty has been cancelled, maintaining last year's 5p cut for another twelve months, saving a typical driver another £100 on top of the £100 saved so far since last year's cut.
- More business rates relief, as part of the Chancellor's £13.6 billion package from 2022's Autumn Statement. This includes the freezing of the multiplier and the introduction of 75% relief for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses, helping the high street to thrive and compete with online firms.

- Extending creative sector reliefs: theatres, orchestra and museums and galleries will benefit from a further 2 years of tax relief rates of 45%/50%. The museums and galleries exhibitions tax relief sunset clause will be extended for a further 2 years to allow these organisations to fully benefit from the extension of the highest rates.
- The Annual Investment Allowance (AIA), an existing measure which also supports business investment, has been increased permanently to £1 million today. This covers the investment needs of 99% of UK businesses.
- Rebalancing the rates of Research and Development Expenditure Credit and the R&D SME scheme to ensure taxpayers' money is spent as effectively as possible. As a result, today the UK now offers the joint-highest uncapped headline rate of R&D tax relief support in the G7 for large companies.
- The government also committed to considering the case for further support for R&D intensive SMEs, and at Spring Budget announced that from today there will be an increased permanent rate of relief for the most R&D intensive loss-making SMEs. To support modern methods of innovation, for accounting periods beginning on or after today, businesses will also be able to claim

for the costs of datasets and cloud computing under the R&D tax reliefs.

- Expanding the Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS) to help more UK start-ups raise higher levels of finance. This package will help over 2,000 start-up companies access finance.
- Expanding the availability and generosity of the Company Share Option Plan (CSOP) scheme which will widen access to CSOP for growth companies and simplifying the process to grant options under the Enterprise Management Incentives (EMI) scheme.

From 6 April 2023 personal tax changes taking effect include removing tax-barriers that the medical community have made clear stop doctors working, delivering on the Prime Minister's priority to cut NHS waiting lists so people can get the care they need more quickly. The pensions annual tax-free allowance will increase by 50% from £40,000 to £60,000, the Money Purchase Annual Allowance will rise from £4,000 to £10,000, and the Lifetime Allowance charge will be removed. The Office for Budget Responsibility estimate around 15,000 individuals will remain in the labour market because of the changes to the annual and lifetime allowances, many of whom will be highly skilled individuals, including senior doctors in the NHS.





# The Co-Space Cup

**O**n February 24th, Co-Space teamed up with Stevenage FC Foundation who hosted the first ever Co-Space cup. Aimed at local businesses and adults, the tournament saw 9 teams battle it out to be crowned the Co-Space Cup 2023 champions, with two groups, semi-finals, and a tense final.

## The teams who took part were:

Unreal Madrid, Bayern Brew, Bracey's FC FFF (Football for Fathers) Diamond, Readie FC, 24 on the 24th, FFF (Football for Fathers) Gold, Rebound FC and Brazilliant

The day started with a group stage, which saw some great goals, saves and football on display, with 5 teams in group A and 4 teams in group B battling it out to finish within with the top two to qualify for the Semi-Finals.

Onto the semis, where Readie FC were narrowly beaten by FFF Gold and a few goals for 24 on the 24th saw them beat Bayern Brew shaping a very competitive final between the two.

The final could have gone either way, and only saw one goal in extra time for 24 on the 24th who owe a big thanks to their goalkeeper who ensured it was kept that way and became the first ever Co-Space Cup champions!

Alongside this, there was also a raffle to raise some additional funds for the foundation, increasing the total to just shy of £2,000. A big thank you to all the businesses and people that donated some amazing prizes, including match tickets to a West Ham home game & Stevenage FC match tickets.

William Stokes, Co-Space CEO & Co-Founder said "I am immensely proud of the fundraising efforts put in by Stevenage FC Foundation, local business teams and our Co-Space members. We believe strongly in community and it's events like this that show what can be achieved when we come together and have fun. This was the first Co-Space Cup and after it's success, we look forward to more to come!"

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**"We believe strongly in community and it's events like this that show what can be achieved when we come together and have fun. This was the first Co-Space Cup and after it's success, we look forward to more to come!"**

Foundation CEO, Joe Goude said "We're so grateful to the team at Co-Space for organising a fantastic first Co-Space Cup. William and Jess have been really supportive of the work we are doing in the local community, and the money they've raised will help us to continue to do that work day in day out. A massive thank you to all the teams that took part, and we can't wait till next year".



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## A Message from our Founder and Chairman, Adrian Hawkins OBE

**E**stablished in 2010 to provide “a voice for business”, biz4Biz ensures that the benefit of businesses to our society is both seen and heard.

Insight Magazine published bi-monthly holds a current circulation of 320,000 + named business professionals across the northern home counties with a 60% open rate on the first day of delivery. The Sustainable Biz magazine currently published quarterly holds a national circulation of 500,000 with a focus on technology to save money, carbon footprint assessment and the journey to Net Zero.

biz4Biz is also responsible for the very successful Hertfordshire Business Awards now in its 5th year, annual business conferences, our very popular ConneXions lunches, and breakfasts and the new biz4Biz Angel Investment group.

We are about to launch the biz4Biz business directory to support any business in placing themselves in the public domain, a free service for all basic entries, but with scope to

add video and photos at a small fee providing an ideal space to host these important assets.

We also offer a complete range of marketing awareness services and encourage our members to consider our “Let’s Work Together” (LWT) package providing the most complete marketing awareness service with reach available. Further details of the LWT package can be found overleaf. LWT is a unique package to promote a company, its skills, people, products, and services.

All our services carry a 30% discount for Members who also enjoy free editorial on joining biz4Biz. Don’t hesitate and join biz4Biz today online here <https://biz4biz.org/membership/>

We look forward to you joining biz4Biz and to assisting you in the future,

Best Wishes

*Adrian Hawkins*

**Adrian Hawkins OBE**



## A Voice for Business

**W**e launched our first Insight magazine back in August 2014 followed by our ConneXions business networking group and our phenomenally successful biz4Biz Awards programme. biz4Biz has become a well-established and highly respected brand that provides a voice for the local business community. As part of our continued growth, we have expanded our activities to cover Herts, Beds Bucks and Cambs. We are now able to offer SMEs in the eastern region the ability to market their businesses via our Let's Work Together integrated digital marketing package which includes:

- Advertising and editorial in our Insight magazine
- Newsletters
- Blog posts
- ConneXions webinars
- Email
- Twitter
- LinkedIn promotion
- Video content in the magazine and on the website
- YouTube
- Website advertising



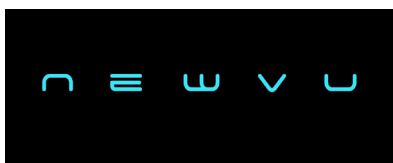
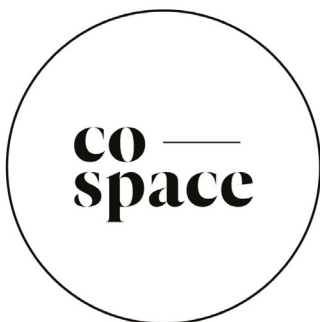
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# Recruitment

## Social Media Assistant – Part Time 10am to 2pm – Working from Home

We currently seek a self-employed assistant to support our Social Media team as our business expands.

The hours are flexible and to suit the arrangements at home. We seek individuals with a good knowledge of Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Google, TikTok and Twitter.

For further details contact [secretariat@biz4biz.co.uk](mailto:secretariat@biz4biz.co.uk)

**biz4Biz**

## Advertising Sales Representative – Part Time 10am to 2pm – Working from Home

We currently seek a self-employed assistant to support our Advertising Sales team as our business expands.

The hours are flexible and to suit the arrangements at home. We seek confident individuals with a good knowledge of Advertising Sales.

For further details contact [secretariat@biz4biz.co.uk](mailto:secretariat@biz4biz.co.uk)

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## Finance Committee Chair

Our governors play a vital role in the success of the Hart Learning Group (HLG), proving a wealth of experience from across different social and professional backgrounds to ensure the group is well-run and high-achieving. We're currently looking to build our Governance team – could you be part of the future of HLG?

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