

biz4Biz

Insight

JUNE 2025 | ISSUE FORTY FIVE

**BID TO PROMOTE
BUY BRITISH**

**OAKLANDS
ENGINEERING
APPRENTICE
BOOST**

**SPOTLIGHT
ON CAREERS
PROMOTION**

*New Station Gateway
announced for Stevenage*





biz4Biz IS A VOICE FOR BUSINESS

biz4Biz was created in 2009 followed by our ConneXions business networking group. We launched our first Insight magazine back in August 2014 and our phenomenally successful biz4Biz Awards programme in 2017.

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, Essex, and Cambs. We are now able to offer our clients the

ability to market their businesses via our Let's Work Together integrated digital marketing package which includes:

- **Advertising and editorial in our magazines:**
 - **Insight – East of England**
 - **Sustainable Biz - National**
 - **Manufacturing Biz – National & International**
- **Regular biz4Biz ConneXions networking meetings**
- **Regular WebeXions webinars**
- **Regular Newsletters**

- **Blog posts**
- **Email blasts**
- **Video content in the magazine and on the website**
- **Social Media posts**

In addition, we can offer specialised website promotion via our focused expert pages. These would be suitable for a wide range of professional services companies in accountancy, legal, HR, financial services, property services, corporate finance, IT, marketing, and insurance amongst others.



FOLLOW THE AWARDS
@biz4Biz_Awards



JOIN THE CONVERSATION
@BIZ4BIZ



biz4Biz @biz4biz
Join us on LinkedIn

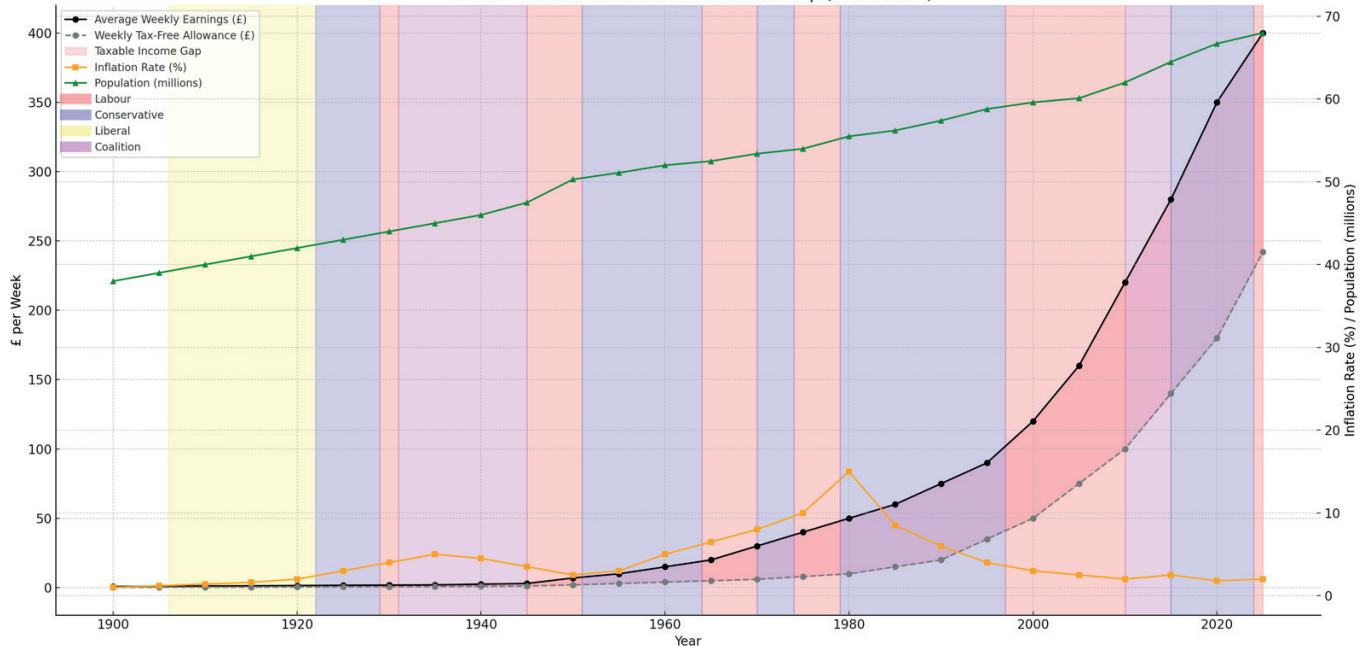
MISSED AN EDITION?



> CLICK HERE
TO ACCESS OUR
MAGAZINE ARCHIVE

Inspire to Aspire

UK Economic Trends and Political Leadership (1900-2025)



Today there is a genuine concern that our benefits claimant's volume is increasing considerably, and we believe that there is a range of reasons why this situation exists.

There is always a need for taxation to deliver a range of public services and today there are many services delivered by government. The population that works pays taxes to cover the cost of the services delivered.

With over 9 million people now claiming benefits this leaves a smaller population earning and paying taxes and this against a declining population due to falling birth rates and higher levels of immigration numbers the overall population continues to rise.

Therefore, those that are working and paying personal taxes are taking responsibility for the social value they create. Sadly, however there is today a greater demand for tax income by government to support society and the graph demonstrates this,

- The relevant government political party applying the rate of taxable income is shown
- The continued rise in population
- The level of inflation
- The growth in taxation because of the tax-free levels not following average wage levels.

This is yet a further example of the lack of inspiration preventing aspiration.

If the government increases the tax-free limit more in keeping with reality, then there would be a much greater level of encouragement for people to work and a vast reduction in benefit payment issues.

I remember interviewing people recommended by DWP for a particular role and they would often say that they wanted a job to avoid queuing at the Benefits office every Thursday which they do not do today.

By creating an environment with a more realisable return on the effort invested, there would likely be an increased tax income and reduction in benefit claimants, and we will inspire to aspire.

ADRIAN HAWKINS OBE

Chairman - biz4Biz

Chairman - Hertfordshire Futures Board

Chairman - Stevenage Development Board

Chairman - Hertfordshire Skills & Employment Board



A Letter from our Editor

Welcome to the very centre of the year, and into a June which feels like the red hot part of activity for 2025.

The bank holidays are over, summer is still a good six weeks away and that means it is head down and time to deliver.

And what great delivery we have seen across Hertfordshire and the eastern region.

Our look at careers provision in Herts spotlights the remarkable Generation Stevenage event which took place in May. Part of a series throughout the county, this incredible invitation to schools and their pupils offers a look ahead and is urgently needed as we shape the workforce of tomorrow.

"Our look at careers provision in Herts spotlights the remarkable Generation Stevenage event which took place in May"



You can follow us @biz4biz for news, articles and updates on our current stories.

Our articles get posted regularly to 2400 followers!

In a similar vein Oaklands College have announced a new engineering apprenticeship provision - well done to them!

In this edition we also look back at the recent UKREiF event and the announcements made by Herts there, and it is also with pride that we take a dip into the success of filming in the county and the revenue it brings.

A round of applause goes to Willmott Dixon for their employer study success while award plaudits have also been achieved by Redwood Bank.

And of course on the subject of awards in this breathless month, the biz4Biz Hertfordshire Business Awards are now open, and voting is taking place. Get involved, nominate a business which deserves to be considered and see if there is a category for yourselves as well. It's another thing to put on the to do list, but this is 'just get down to it' June, so let's power on!

DARREN ISTD
Insight Editor



biz4Biz

PUBLISHER

Adrian Hawkins OBE

EDITORIAL AND PRODUCTION

Darren Istd
editor@biz4biz.org

ADVERTISING

<https://biz4biz.org/magazine-advertising>

CONTACT biz4BIZ SECRETARIAT

0330 9002 777

@biz4biz

@biz4biz_Awards





Inside



3 Welcome
By Adrian Hawkins OBE

4 Editor
Down to business

6 Generation Stevenage
Career event success

10 Charity Founder Awarded
Heart Hero award



11 Engineering Apprenticeships
Oaklands new programme

12 Meet The Politicians
Spotlight on new Herts CC groupings

14 Legal Matters
By Michael Budd, Longmores

15 Buy British Bid
Call for clear labelling

16 Helping Herts Week
Your chance to be a local hero!

18 Output Falls
Manufacturing woes

19 Station Gateway
Partnership announced

20 Meeting Room Expansion
Development from Co-Space

22 Focus On Film
Herts a centre of filming

25 FB Chain
Birthday celebrations

26 Retail Survey
Sentiment falls

28 Hospice Appeal
Could you be a trustee?

29 blz4Biz App
Get your app now!

30 BizCRUNCH
The business data you need

32 UKREiif
Flying the flag for Herts

34 Transplant Success
Stanley power a first

35 Inco Contracts
Foray into education

36 Oaklands Achievement
Plus from new tables

37 No To Return To Work
Survey on workforce thoughts

38 New Project
Ground broken in Cheshunt

40 Redwood Bank
Seventh consecutive award win

41 Universal Destinations
Announcement made

42 blz4Biz Awards
Nominations are open

44 Co-Space Cup
Sign up for tournament

45 Willmott Dixon
Employer plaudits

GENERATION STEVENAGE 2025



In the largest Generation Stevenage event held to date, over 1,300 young people from 19 schools flocked to Knebworth Barns on 15th May to learn about the plethora of exciting career and training opportunities available locally.

With 70 exhibitors, the event showcased Hertfordshire's global sector strengths in film & TV, construction, life sciences and more, while enabling employers to connect with their next generation of talent.

Every secondary school in Stevenage and North Herts, including the SEN schools and

North Herts FE College, brought targeted group of students, allowing them to build relationships with employers directly; gain confidence and understand the job roles and career pathways on offer.

A 'twilight' session in the evening allowed students from all schools and year groups to attend with their parents and carers.

Martyn Patching, Careers Leader at Barnwell School in Stevenage, praised the event's impact: "Thank you to the Careers Hub for organising such a brilliant event, giving Barnwell students insight and access to so many amazing industry professionals."



Hertfordshire
CAREERS HUB

THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE

HERTFORDSHIRE
FUTURES





"This event allowed us to target some of our students most in need of careers inspiration and really consolidates our progress against several Gatsby Benchmarks. It has also enabled me to make several new employer contacts whom I'll be following up with and inviting to be part of our careers planning in the future."

Generation Stevenage is a partnership between Hertfordshire Careers Hub, Stevenage Borough Council, Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal (HOP) - powered by Hertfordshire Futures, biz4Biz and Stevenage Development Board.

It is the penultimate of 8 events held by Hertfordshire Careers Hub this academic

"This event allowed us to target some of our students most in need of careers inspiration"

year, which have collectively attracted more than 7,000 young people and their families.

The event was opened by Hertfordshire Futures Chairman Adrian Hawkins OBE,

Barnwell School students, the outgoing Mayor of Stevenage Jim Brown and the Leader of Stevenage Borough Council Richard Henry.

Councillor Henry reflected on the event's success, saying: "This was a lovely event and I was so delighted to be part of a such a vibrant atmosphere. It was wonderful to see so many Stevenage businesses attending and speaking with our local students who we hope will be their future workforce.

"I am grateful to the Careers Hub for their drive and partnership with the Development Board. This sort of event is exactly what we should be embracing as it truly brings together our dynamic industry

along with the very bright talent of the future.”
Representatives from leading construction firms, including **Willmott Dixon, Morgan Sindall, and BAM Construct**, attended the event.

Natalie Sidey, Social Value Manager at Willmott Dixon, highlighted its value: “Attending Generation Stevenage allowed us to meet some wonderful students who were really engaged. It was great to come together once again with fellow construction employers with activities and discussions that promote the industry.”





"Attending Generation Stevenage allowed us to meet some wonderful students who were really engaged"

Adrian Hawkins OBE Chair of Hertfordshire Futures main board and their Skills and Employment board said:

"Since the creation of Generation events across the County in 2020 our first being in Stevenage, we have now mastered something like 30 such events and I have had the pleasure of attending and opening everyone of these to date. These events are designed to enable Students to see

the potential employment landscape but inspire them to aspire to a long term career and place their education in context given the value and level of achievement as likely outcomes. It also greatly assists local employers the opportunity to connect with Schools and their Students to assist them to develop their future workforce.

For more information, email hopinto@hertfordshirefutures.co.uk or visit the [Generation careers fair hub on HOP](#).



biz4Biz.org

Founder of Hemel Hempstead Charity Honoured with Community Award at Hertfordshire Hero Awards 2025

Kerry-Anne Cooper, 62, founder of Liberty Tea Rooms & Community Hub in Hemel Hempstead, has been honoured with the Community Award at the Heart Hertfordshire Hero Awards 2025, recognising over a decade of dedication to supporting vulnerable individuals.



Owen and Kerry-Anne Cooper

Kerry-Anne, who co-founded the charity with her husband Owen, received the award at a glittering ceremony at Tewinbury Farm. Now in its seventh year, the Hertfordshire Hero Awards celebrate ordinary people making an extraordinary difference, with this year seeing a record number of nominations from across the county.

OVER A DECADE OF COMMUNITY IMPACT

Since establishing Liberty Tea Rooms in 2013, Kerry-Anne has worked tirelessly to create a welcoming and inclusive space where those in need can access support for mental, social, and financial well-being. In 2016, she spearheaded a fundraising campaign to relocate the charity to Bank Court, in Hemel Hempstead's town centre, securing its place as a vital hub for the local community.

Today, Liberty Tea Rooms is run by volunteers, ranging in age from 18 to 91, offering fresh food and drink at a minimum suggested donation, so that even those on a low income can feel included. The Community Hub side of the charity provides free services, including

money management courses, life skills support, and a food bank distribution point.

A HEARTFELT NOMINATION

During the awards ceremony, videos featuring those who nominated the winners were played, including a tribute from local resident and long-time Liberty Tea Rooms supporter, Dan Stobbs, who said:

"Kerry-Anne has been the heart of our community for years. She saw a need and took action, establishing a remarkable charity that has helped countless vulnerable individuals access financial advice, develop life skills, and feel a real sense of belonging. This award is a testament to her incredible impact."



Debbie Chadwick Heart Station Director, The Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Robert Voss CBE CStJ, Kerry Anne-Cooper and broadcaster John Darin

RECOGNITION AND A NEW CHAPTER

Kerry-Anne was presented with the award by The Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Robert Voss CBE CStJ, and broadcaster John Darin. Reflecting on the honour, she said:

"I was shocked to be nominated, let alone win! This award belongs to the entire Liberty Tea Rooms family: our incredible volunteers, supporters, and partner organisations who make our community stronger every day."

During her speech on stage, Kerry-Anne highlighted her passion for inclusion and advocacy, celebrating the diverse community of volunteers who make Liberty Tea Rooms special:

"We've got young people with learning difficulties, Asperger's, and all different kinds of challenges, and I'm a real advocate. We've all got something to bring to the table. I'm dyslexic. I have dyspraxia. I have ADHD. I have autism. But do you know what? Because of all that, I did this. Everyone else would run a mile. So I believe in taking risks and in building community."

Having recently stepped back to enjoy her retirement, Kerry-Anne is confident in the charity's future under its new CEO, Richard Evans. She added:

"Richard is leading the charity into its next chapter, and I have no doubt that Liberty Tea Rooms & Community Hub will continue to grow and support the community for years to come."

To find out more about the charity's services and volunteering opportunities, please visit the [Liberty Tea Rooms website](#).



Exciting New Engineering Apprenticeships at Oaklands

Oaklands College are excited to share some great - they're launching a brand-new suite of Engineering Apprenticeship programmes starting from this month (June 2025), and they'd love for you to be part of it.

These programmes are designed to support both new recruits and training existing staff, helping them build the skills needed to succeed in today's fast-moving engineering world.

HERE'S WHAT'S ON OFFER:

- Level 2 Engineering Operative
- Level 3 Engineering Design Technician
- Level 3 Engineering Fitter
- Level 3 Machining Technician
- Level 3 Mechatronics Maintenance Technician
- Level 4 Engineering Manufacturing Technician

Whether you're looking to develop your current team or bring in fresh talent, they're here to help you make the most of these opportunities. Their team will



support you through the whole process – from choosing the right programme to recruiting the perfect apprentice. Spaces are limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, so do get in touch soon if you're interested. If you already have someone in mind or would like support finding the right fit, just

let them know – they're happy to help: **CLICK HERE to learn more and register your interest.**



**OAKLANDS
TRAINING
& DEVELOPMENT**



biz4Biz.org 11

Meet the *Politicians*

The **Conservative Party**, **Labour** and **Reform** were invited to participate in this feature, we hope to feature them in our next edition



STEVE JARVIS
County Councillor for
Weston and Sandon
northhertsandstevenagelibdems.org.uk

Liberal Democrats

INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO THE READERS OF INSIGHT HIGHLIGHTING YOUR BACKGROUND IN LOCAL POLITICS

I have been the Liberal Democrat County Councillor for Royston West & Rural (which extends from Royston to the edge of Stevenage) for the last eight years. During those years I was an opposition councillor challenging the council on highways, growth and infrastructure and services for children.

Since May I have been the leader of the County Council leading a team who now have responsibility for all these areas and many others.

I have also been a district councillor for many years, including five years as a cabinet member responsible for the environment.

Outside politics I ran a small business software company in North Herts for nearly 20 years.

WHAT DO THE RECENT ELECTION RESULTS TELL US ABOUT THE CURRENT THOUGHTS AND CONCERNS OF THE ELECTORATE?

The results of the May local election made it clear that people want change. Many thought that was what they had voted for at last year's General Election but have been disappointed in the result. Locally it is clear that people wanted to see Hertfordshire run differently. They were repeatedly told that the council was doing a great job, but that did not match their experience. They saw roads with too many potholes, with one being fixed whilst those around it were ignored. Those who had

experienced the help provided for children with special educational needs agreed with Ofsted's assessment that were too many failures. Those who were concerned about Hertfordshire's environment saw that little progress was being made to make our county more sustainable.

WHAT DIFFERENTIATES YOUR PARTY AND ITS APPROACH AND AIMS FROM THE OTHERS ON THE COUNCIL?

Liberal Democrats believe that it is important to listen to local people and the views that they express. It is vital to understand both people's concerns as individuals and as members of a community whilst being honest with them about what can be achieved. We must do the best job we can for people in Hertfordshire within the constraints that are placed on the council. To do that we must be prepared to look at new ways of doing things and ensure that we focus on the issues that matter.

WHICH ISSUES DOES YOUR PARTY VIEW AS A PRIORITY FOR THE PEOPLE OF HERTFORDSHIRE?

Our priorities are to do a better job for Hertfordshire's children, fix the broken roads and improve the environment. We believe that this will provide benefits for all the people who live or work in the county. To make a start on these we have agreed at a 10-point plan of priority actions to fix our roads, make journeys safer, improve our environment, support people who most need our help and generate

funding to invest in frontline services. We have already announced our first two priority actions. To support those who most need our help we will bring young people, parents, schools and teachers together for a SEND Summit to inform our plans to make the further improvements needed. To fix our roads we will trial a new approach to mend more potholes in a single visit rather than coming back another day.

WHAT ARE YOUR MAIN POLICIES FOR BUSINESSES IN HERTFORDSHIRE?

Many of the things that businesses need are not enormously different from those that residents require. Both need to be able to get about easily and reliably. Both need a well educated and skilled population and both need services which are effective and easy to access. There is currently much talk of growth and we want to see growth plans for Hertfordshire focused on making things better for those who live, work and do business here. Promoting Hertfordshire as a great place to do business is something that the council can help with, whilst recognising that it needs to work with business to achieve this.

WHAT DO YOU THINK HERTFORDSHIRE WILL LOOK LIKE SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY IN 2030?

By 2030 I hope that Hertfordshire will be more productive, generating more wealth for those who live and work here. That will enable them to be better off, socially and culturally as well as economically. There will undoubtedly be more people living in the county and it is vital that the places for them to live and work are developed in a way which supports this. There are already many great communities across the county but by 2030 I hope that there will be even more, working together to improve lives.



KIRSTY TAYLOR-MORAN
County Councillor for Ware North
eastherts.greenparty.org.uk



INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO THE READERS OF INSIGHT HIGHLIGHTING YOUR BACKGROUND IN LOCAL POLITICS

I live in Ware with my husband and two young sons, having moved to the area from London as a teenager. Ware is a wonderful place to raise children with all of our green spaces and countryside all around.

I am the founder of Sugar & Scoop, the Zero Waste and Refill Shop on Ware High Street. This is what set me on a path of involvement in local politics; Thomas Day, a fellow high street business owner and Green town councillor, encouraged me to consider joining the local party. Until then I had not considered that local politics was for people like me. Now I am keen to encourage other local Millennials to get involved and I want to make it more accessible for young mums and other groups who face barriers in engaging with politics.

WHAT DO THE RECENT ELECTION RESULTS TELL US ABOUT THE CURRENT THOUGHTS AND CONCERNS OF THE ELECTORATE?

Importantly, the results in Hertfordshire showed a swing away from the Conservatives, meaning their 26 years of dominance at Hertfordshire County Council is over. Voters are also fed up with the Labour Government's dismal first year in office. Clearly, the strong local voice that Green councillors provide is proving to voters that there is an opportunity to choose positive change.

While the political landscape has undoubtedly fragmented, there was no swing to the right in Hertfordshire, despite what the media might claim. The Conservative and Labour vote was split by the emergence of Reform UK, whose campaign made promises to residents that their new councillors will struggle to keep. Overall, though, there was a swing here to the left-wing parties, with Liberal Democrat and Greens increasing their share of seats on the council. Green Party councillors have continued to

show their commitment and dedication to making our local communities better places to live and work. And we'll continue to work hard for our residents - at town, district and county councils, to build fairer, greener communities.

WHAT DIFFERENTIATES YOUR PARTY AND ITS APPROACH AND AIMS FROM THE OTHERS ON THE COUNCIL?

The Green Party councillors are truly local councillors, with endless energy and enthusiasm, rather than some of the other parties who are shipped in by Westminster. We all live and work right in the heart of the communities we represent and have deep roots locally. We understand and care about the issues we all face. We work tirelessly to tackle multiple issues for our residents, from blocked drains, flooding, and overgrown hedges to litter and help with planning queries. Green councillors also have a track record of being community champions, offering hope and practical solutions on the housing crisis, cost of living, climate breakdown and protecting public services.

WHICH ISSUES DOES YOUR PARTY VIEW AS A PRIORITY FOR THE PEOPLE OF HERTFORDSHIRE?

After decades in charge of the County Council, the Conservatives had stopped listening to residents. The Conservatives failed to tackle neglected roads. They failed Families. They underfunded Public Transport. They ignored a Public Health Crisis. And, they wasted millions on delays, consultants and TV ads. The Greens priorities are to:

- Fix our Roads: Invest in sustainable repairs, not wasteful compensation
- Support Families: Keep schools and youth centres open, transform Special Educational Needs services
- Tackle Pollution: Prioritise public health, improve road safety and speed up electric bus rollouts
- Spend Wisely: End wasteful spending and invest in our community

WHAT ARE YOUR MAIN POLICIES FOR BUSINESSES IN HERTFORDSHIRE?

Our main policies prioritise environmental sustainability, social justice, and a fair economy. We advocate for decarbonisation, fair taxation, and worker rights. We also support community ownership of businesses and sustainable energy infrastructure.

We advocate for stopping new fossil fuel extraction projects and ending subsidies to the oil and gas industries. We need a carbon tax on all fossil fuels, increasing over time to reflect the environmental cost.

Crucial in this aim, is the need to provide grants to businesses to help them transition to a zero-carbon economy. We champion worker's rights, and my career is in employment law. We want a maximum 10:1 pay gap ratio for public and private companies.

WHAT DO YOU THINK HERTFORDSHIRE WILL LOOK LIKE SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY IN 2030?

Unfortunately, after 26 years of Conservative control of Hertfordshire and a dismal first year of the new Labour Government, local councils are struggling for survival.

It's not yet clear what devolution of council services in Hertfordshire will look like. There's a danger that decisions could be made even further from where the impact is felt and could end up being more expensive.

We would want to see increased power devolved to Hertfordshire's town and parish councils, alongside more resources, to ensure that residents can actively, directly impact decisions that affect them. We need solutions to address the health and social care crisis in Hertfordshire. We will advocate for investment in integrated public transport and active travel across our county. And, we will work hard to ensure accelerated biodiversity and green spaces protection, ensuring that less power is in the hands of developers who have little interest in striking the right balance between building homes and protecting the environment.

We are hopeful that increased Green representation at all levels of government will affect positive change on the social and economical landscape of Hertfordshire, especially given the changes we are told to expect to our population.

Protecting your family business with bespoke company arrangements

By Michael Budd

HOW CAN WE PROTECT A FAMILY BUSINESS?

There is a misconception that family businesses don't need to prepare or update their legal documents because family ties can overcome any business disagreements. In reality, family businesses are not legally distinct from other businesses.

Company documents can't prevent every dispute, but they can significantly reduce the impact of any potential business issue. They offer two advantages: the process of agreeing terms in advance helps identify and address potential issues early; and, if a dispute arises, there's already a clear, agreed process in place to resolve it and protect the business. For a limited company, bespoke articles of association and shareholders' agreements can be tailored in line with the family's objectives to promote business continuity and family harmony.

WHAT ARE THE ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION?

A limited company must have articles of association, setting out its internal governance rules. A common issue is that many companies rely either on outdated or default "model" articles of association. Depending on the dynamics of your family business today, these documents may not sufficiently cover your family's objectives. The default articles of association include specified rules on how the directors manage the company, share rights, rights to income and capital and share ownership (and what is or isn't a permitted transfer to another). Family businesses should consider whether these standard rules are appropriate.

WHAT BESPOKE ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE INCLUDED IN THE ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION?

In line with your objectives, the following bespoke arrangements may add value to your family business:

- Create different share classes to reflect



different roles. For example, by giving voting rights to family members involved in management, while providing income rights to family members who aren't involved in day-to-day operations.

- Control over ownership by restricting who can receive or inherit shares. This helps prevent transfers to non-family members or ex-partners without prior approval.
- Include succession planning provisions to reduce uncertainty when a shareholder dies, retires or exits.
- Define how major decisions are made – such as requiring unanimous consent or granting a casting vote to senior family members.
- Include dispute resolution mechanisms to manage disagreements internally or through private mediation, reducing the risk of court action.

HOW CAN A SHAREHOLDERS' AGREEMENT HELP MY FAMILY BUSINESS?

A shareholders' agreement can be prepared between the family shareholders and potentially the company. It complements the bespoke provisions in the articles of association and regulates decision-making, share transfers, exits and clearly outlines each family shareholder's rights and obligations.

For example, shareholders may agree not to amend the articles, issue shares, or appoint directors without board approval.

Alternatively, if the family shareholders want more direct control, it can limit the board's powers by requiring shareholder consent for key business decisions – like issuing shares, obtaining investments, or selling key assets.

Though not mandatory, it is highly recommended for enhanced protection of the business. Unlike the articles, it is a private document and can cover sensitive family matters like succession or voting rights.



Michael Budd

Partner and Head of
Company Commercial

www.longmores.law
enquiries@longmores.law
01992 300333

 **LONGMORES**
SOLICITORS



Buying British

50% RECOGNISE MADE IN BRITAIN TRADEMARK AND 44% WOULD BUY MORE BRITISH GOODS WITH CLEAR MADE IN BRITAIN LABELLING

Following calls for a 'Buy British' campaign, YouGov polling reveals that 50% of UK adults recognise the official Made in Britain trademark, and 44% would be encouraged to buy products with the label.

Made in Britain is a trade organisation representing more than 2,160 UK manufacturers. Members, who must demonstrate their commitment to UK manufacturing and a series of sustainability and ethical standards, display the Made in Britain trademark on their products and wider branding as a mark of distinction. Last month, the organisation reported a surge in businesses applying to be members of Made in Britain since America's 'Liberation Day' tariff announcements, with applications increasing by 20% in April.

Now, polling has revealed the extent to which the official Made in Britain campaign has gained traction with British consumers, with 50% of UK adults recognising its trademark.

The survey also found that 44% of Britons would be encouraged to buy British if domestically-manufactured goods carried clear Made in Britain branding. This is only slightly fewer than those who said price relative to non-UK

products (46%) and availability (45%) were the main factors.

Last month, the Liberal Democrats were among those calling for a national 'buy British' campaign, including the use of clear 'Made in Britain' labelling. Made in Britain has backed this suggestion and has written to Sir Kier Starmer, Kemi Badenoch and Sir Ed Davey to underline its established, industry-led, not-for-profit, independent and widely recognised efforts to support UK manufacturing in the UK and around the world.

The broad recognition of the Made in Britain trademark is a major milestone for the not-for-profit trade organisation, which was established in 2015 to champion British manufacturing and help businesses to sell more of their UK-made goods. Its trademark appears on tens of thousands of UK-made goods, from construction materials to luxury clothing, as a mark of provenance and distinction. Made in Britain CEO, John Pearce said: "The Made in Britain trademark only appears on products that are verified as being manufactured in the UK and member organisations must also demonstrate their commitment to our social and ethical standards. As a result, shoppers, consumers and businesses

throughout supply chains know that products carrying the trademark really live up to what it means to be Made in Britain.

"Businesses and government are reorienting supply chains and shoring up new trade deals to support British manufacturing, meanwhile consumers are looking for more British-made goods as a result of the recent turbulence. We're growing every day as businesses realise the value of celebrating their Britishness, and we've seen a huge surge in interest, with membership enquiries doubling in the month since the introduction of tariffs on goods exported to America.

"The recent tariffs and economic turbulence have rightly drawn attention to the value of British-made goods, so we're pleased to be helping businesses to proudly fly the flag and stand apart from their global competitors.

"Today, we have over 2,160 manufacturers in our membership, with tens of thousands of products bearing our trademark. 50% of all UK adults recognise our logo which they'll have seen on products ranging from vans and wheelie bins to medical gowns and coffee makers."

For more information on the Made in Britain campaign, visit the website: www.madeinbritain.org



HELPING HERTS WEEK: YOUR CHANCE TO BE A LOCAL HERO!



From 4 to 11 of July 2025, people across Hertfordshire will be coming together to raise money for children and young people — and thanks to match funding, every pound raised will be doubled.

Whether you're a business, school, pub, club or individual, Helping Herts Week is your chance to make a difference — and have a bit of fun while you're at it!

WHY TAKE PART?

Helping Herts supports 12 brilliant local charities working with children and young people — from mental health services and youth mentoring, to inclusive theatre and family support. Every penny raised goes directly to support young lives across the county and with match funding in place, your impact can go twice as far.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- **Host a fundraiser** – Bake sale, quiz night, sponsored walk — whatever works for you! Download a free fundraising pack from our website to get started.
- **Schools** – Organise a non-uniform day, fun run or classroom challenge. Sign up online for ideas and support.
- **Pubs and clubs** – Why not host a charity pub quiz or fundraising night during Helping Herts Week? It's a great way to bring people together and do something good.

- **Nominate a Herts Hero** – Know someone who's going the extra mile for children or young people in your community? Nominate them as a Herts Hero. The winner will receive a special award at the end of Helping Herts Week, and we'll be sharing their story as part of the campaign.
- **Just want to donate?** Amazing! Every donation — big or small — will be eligible for match funding, so your generosity can be doubled.

Jim Tatchell, Co-Founder of Helping Herts said: "Helping Herts Week is



about showing what we can achieve when our community pulls together. Every fundraiser, every fiver, makes a difference — and this year, every pound counts double."

Gordon Morrison, Co-Founder of Helping Herts said: "This is your chance to be a hero in your own community. Every event, every donation helps to give young people in Hertfordshire the support and opportunities they deserve."

Follow us on social media at [@helpingherts](https://twitter.com/helpingherts) and use [#HelpingHertsWeek](https://twitter.com/helpingherts) to show your support. Nomination forms, fundraising packs, graphics, posters and social media templates are available to download and share.

GET INVOLVED:

www.helpingherts.com/helping-herts-week-2025
info@helpingherts.com

ABOUT HELPING HERTS

Helping Herts is Hertfordshire's only countywide collaborative charity campaign. We support 12 local charities helping children and young people from birth to adulthood. Every pound raised stays local, supporting the next generation across our county.



HELPING HERTS

Improving Children's Lives

**Together,
we can build
a future
where every
child in Herts
thrives.**

**Helping Herts Week
4th - 11th July**

www.helpingherts.com/helping-herts-week-2025

MANUFACTURING OUTPUT FALLS AT JOINT-STEEPEST PACE IN FOUR YEARS - CBI INDUSTRIAL TRENDS SURVEY - MAY 2025

Manufacturing output volumes fell in the three months to May, at the joint-steepest pace since August 2020, according to the CBI's latest monthly Industrial Trends Survey (ITS). Looking ahead, output is expected to fall further over the three months to August. Total order books weakened marginally in May, relative to April, while export order books improved from a sharply negative reading last month. But both total and export order books remain well below their long-run averages. Manufacturing firms reported that stock adequacy for finished goods was largely unchanged from last month, with the balance standing close to the long-run average. Expectations for selling price inflation over the coming quarter were broadly similar to last month, remaining above the long-run average.

The survey, based on the responses of 281 manufacturers, found:

- Output volumes fell in the three months to May at the joint-steepest pace since August 2020 (weighted balance of -25%, the same as in December 2024, and down from -2% in the quarter to April). Manufacturing firms expect output volumes to decline again in the three months to August (-14%).
- Output decreased in 13 out of 17 sub-sectors in the three months to May, with the fall in output being driven by the metal products, food, drink & tobacco and mechanical engineering sub-sectors.
- Total order books were reported as below "normal" in May (-30% from -26% in April). The level of order books remained far below the long-run average (-14%).
- Export order books were also below "normal" but improved relative to last month (-29% from -41%). The balance still stands below the long-run average (-18%).
- Expectations for average selling price inflation in May were broadly similar to last month (+26% from +23%). Expectations remain above the long-run average (+7%).
- Stocks of finished goods were reported as more than "adequate" in May (+10%



"Many respondents to the survey reported a reluctance to spend among their customers"

from +13% in April), with stock adequacy standing close to the long-run average (+12%).

Ben Jones, CBI Lead Economist, said: "Sentiment among UK manufacturers seems poor, reflecting a combination of rising domestic business costs and US tariff uncertainty. Many respondents to the survey reported a reluctance to spend among their customers. "Although there are some bright spots, notably aerospace and renewable energy,

the sector as a whole is reporting that their order books remain weak, and this is expected to weigh on output volumes through the summer.

"While the government has taken steps to boost UK competitiveness on the global stage by striking trade deals with India, the US and a UK-EU reset, more action is needed to shift the dial.

"Businesses are facing pressure from high energy costs, rising labour costs and the threat of extra regulation with the Employment Rights Bill coming down the track. Government must avoid further burdening business while simultaneously building confidence through the launch of an innovative Industrial Strategy.

"At a time of heightened global economic uncertainty this could really help to promote the UK as an attractive and stable environment for investment, which is critical for driving long-term, sustainable growth."

Partnership to develop masterplan and vision for Stevenage Station Gateway

Stevenage Borough Council and ECF – a joint venture between L&G, Homes England, and Muse – are working in partnership to develop a masterplan and vision to deliver a new residential and commercial quarter in Stevenage town centre.

Station Gateway will regenerate a significant area around Stevenage rail station, and in addition to important infrastructure upgrades could deliver around 1,000 new homes, workspace, education and innovation space, retail, hospitality, and public spaces.

The UK's first New Town, Stevenage hosts some of the country's most important innovation-led companies in nationally significant industries including life sciences, defence, and aerospace. The masterplan allows already established businesses the infrastructure to grow, building upon Stevenage's global reputation and driving the next phase of the evolution of the town, securing talent and investment for generations to come. Station Gateway is an opportunity to deliver a new 'front door' for Stevenage, better connecting the town centre to the station. The masterplan will focus on addressing the needs of the local community, working closely with local people to co-create an approach to create skills and development opportunities whilst underpinning the long-term economic growth of the town.

Cllr Richard Henry, Leader of Stevenage Borough Council, said:

Station Gateway is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to further invest in our town centre to shape our economy and communities for decades to come."

"Successful places regenerate themselves and it's right that we continue to invest in Stevenage to enhance and maintain our reputation as a world-class commercial hub and a great place to live."

"Significant investment in the train station, new homes, offices and innovation space, retail, leisure and public spaces will deliver a dynamic new mixed-use community. This partnership with ECF will allow us to bring forward a vision and masterplan,



"The Station Gateway will be an exciting new area ensuring full connection with the Leisure Park and the Town's central spaces"

keeping our businesses and local communities at the centre of proposals as we continue to make Stevenage Even Better."

Sir Michael Lyons, Chair at ECF, said:

Stevenage Borough Council is a bold and ambitious local authority. Station Gateway is at the heart of the council's vision for the town centre."

"It is a unique opportunity for infrastructure-led regeneration which will not only deliver new homes – including affordable homes – for all the whole community but continue to promote Stevenage as a fantastic location for businesses to invest and grow."

"Stevenage is undergoing a £1bn

transformation of its town centre, delivering a mixed-use space reflecting the needs and aspirations of its people, businesses and recognising its new town heritage and spirit. With the support of the Stevenage Development Board, Station Gateway is the next stage on this journey and marks the latest milestone in the evolution of the town."

Adrian Hawkins OBE – Chair of the Stevenage Development Board said:

The Stevenage Development Board is delighted that this projects funding request has progressed to a point where we will be able to deliver such an important project for England's first new Town."

"The development board has invested considerable time and effort in bringing the parties together such that Network Rail are keen to see a new railway station and the ECF is ready to support the plans developed and managed by Muse."

"An initial investment of £6 million has already been made by the Stevenage Development Board, the Station Gateway will be an exciting new area ensuring full connection with the Leisure Park and the Town's central spaces, delivering maximum benefit to the people and the businesses in Stevenage and the locality."



Co-Space Expands Stevenage Site by 7,000 sq. /ft in Response to Growing Demand

Co-Space is proud to announce the expansion of its Stevenage site, adding a further 7,000 square feet of premium workspace to meet the growing demand for flexible office solutions.

This exciting development has been made possible through a strategic partnership with a prominent financial institution, underscoring Co-Space's reputation as a trusted provider of dynamic working environments.

The new space will be fully self-contained, catering to the businesses needs of a private and professional setting while still enjoying the benefits of Co-Space's collaborative ecosystem. This expansion aligns with the company's innovative hub-and-spoke model, which combines centralised hubs for networking and collaboration with

localised offices for flexibility and convenience.

Stevenage has emerged as a key destination for businesses across various industries, thanks to its strategic location and thriving economic environment. By expanding its footprint in the area, Co-Space is not only strengthening its presence but also contributing to the local business community's growth and success.

The additional 7,000 square feet will be tailored to modern business needs, featuring state-of-the-art facilities, ergonomic designs, and a focus on sustainability. Whether for startups, SMEs, or larger enterprises, Co-Space's enhanced offering in Stevenage will provide the tools and environment needed to innovate, grow, and succeed.

This expansion marks another milestone in Co-Space's mission to redefine the future of work by providing flexible, inspiring, and accessible workspaces that empower businesses to thrive in a changing world.

SPECIAL OFFER for Insight Readers

Co-Space is offering Insight readers an exclusive **15% discount** on all meeting room bookings. Take advantage of this offer and enjoy beautifully designed meeting rooms with optional catering.

Call or email today to book: visit www.co-space.co.uk or email hello@co-space.co.uk.



co —
space

New Office, New Mindset.

Looking for a private office space for rent that meets all your professional needs? Co-Space brings top-notch private offices to Milton Keynes, Stevenage, and Reading, offering premium office solutions designed to boost creativity, focus, and productivity. Our spaces are more than just offices; they're hubs where businesses thrive.

[CLICK FOR A QUOTE](#)



Superb Meeting Rooms — 4 to 12 People

Whether its team building or pitching and impressing those important clients, our stylish meeting rooms have got you covered. Choose between small or large meeting rooms at any of our convenient locations in Milton Keynes, Stevenage and Reading.

[BOOK A METTING ROOM](#)

www.co-space.co.uk



Hertfordshire Futures springboards growth of county's impressive screen sector

Hertfordshire Futures' commitment to growing the county's screen sector has been evidenced in new figures demonstrating the increasing interest and expenditure from production companies. More than £11m is estimated to have been spent in Hertfordshire's local economy through film/TV companies on locational shoots in 2024/25. Around £4m of this was generated in the first three months of 2025 alone. This was a marked increase from £5.76m for all of 2023/24, reflecting both the strength of the sector and improvements to data collection, including the use of Filming in England's estimated economic spend toolkit and wider data gathering from within the county by Hertfordshire Film Office (HFO).

HFO was set up by Hertfordshire Futures to maximise the potential of the county's thriving film/TV sector which includes independent production companies and major global players such as Elstree Studios - celebrating its centenary this year - Warner Bros. Studios Leavesden, Sky Studios Elstree and BBC Studioworks. HFO raises the county's profile on a national and international stage and supports productions looking to film locally, connecting them with the right locations, suppliers and film studios. Hertfordshire Futures Board member Celia Taylor, Head of Media Trust and Co-Founder, Distant Voices, said: "These figures are great news for the industry, a real lift for the film and TV workforce – but they are more than just statistics. They are tangible evidence that the Hertfordshire

screen sector is experiencing renewed growth due to increased production spend – and this is in great measure down to the work of Hertfordshire Film Office in supporting production companies to realise their creative vision." Adam Morley, Creative Sector Lead at Hertfordshire Futures, said: "We work closely with studios and industry partners around the world, including the US. Hertfordshire is a global centre of film and TV production, with world-class facilities, locations and crew. Thanks to the UK's new film tax credits and our continued investment in skills, supply chains and infrastructure, we've built a thriving ecosystem that supports both independent UK productions and international co-productions. "In the wake of recent challenges,



Adam Morley



Celia Taylor



Pippa Cawdron

including the actors' and writers' strikes, we've worked with government, education, and the sector to establish a more sustainable approach to industry growth. Despite a decade of global shocks, Hertfordshire has remained resilient, innovative, and at the forefront of the screen industries."

Productions filmed in the county vary in size and include *The Crown* and *Bridgerton* which both made use of Hatfield House while Ricky Gervais' *After Life* was set in Hemel Hempstead Old Town.

In a further boost for Hertfordshire Film Office, Manager Pippa Cawdron has been appointed as the new **Chair of Film Offices: UK (FO:UK)**, a forum sharing best practice and knowledge to boost the national film and TV sector.

Pippa will use her extensive industry knowledge and experience gained at Hertfordshire Film Office, and previously at Dacorum Borough Council, to support the organisation and build connections. Hertfordshire Film Office is currently the lead office for FO:UK and alongside Pippa's

"Hertfordshire has remained resilient, innovative, and at the forefront of the screen industries"

appointment, expands the county's USP as a proponent of both independent UK film and global international brands.

Pippa said: "I am delighted to take up this position and look forward to what will be an exciting and insightful journey both for me personally, and for how Hertfordshire, already a global screen hub, can connect with other regions to grow the domestic film and TV industry across the UK and on our own doorstep."

In recognition that a sector cannot continue to thrive into the future without a talent pipeline, Hertfordshire Futures is collaborating with the University of

Hertfordshire on a ground-breaking project - **The Propeller Stages**.

This will create a cutting-edge film studio to deliver top-tier training in creative and technical skills for the film and TV industry, and was launched in response to the need to fill 20,000 to 50,000 job roles in the screen sector - a skills gap identified from British Film Institute and Screen Skills research.

Dr Stephen Partridge, Dean of the School of Creative Arts, University of Hertfordshire, said: "A plan to nurture a diverse workforce, concurrently addressing long-established barriers to entry for those from less privileged backgrounds, is long overdue.

"The biggest challenge is to develop a diverse high calibre workforce at the scale required by the sector. If we can develop four functioning stages over the next two-three years, each producing six-eight features per annum alongside other smaller production projects, then we'll be achieving meaningful impact to support the workforce needs of the sector.

CASE STUDY: SELVEDGE

Sci-fi film, *Selvedge*, was made in Hertfordshire after the HFO connected producers with locations including Woodoaks Farm, Berry Farm, Space Film Studios and the disused Bovingdon airfield strip, which were adapted by the film's production designer to create a futuristic sci-fi look. Hertfordshire Film Office also attended on shoot day to provide support.

The film follows a mixed-species families of AI and humans fleeing their homes due to prejudice, and will soon be streaming on *Dust*, the short film sector's

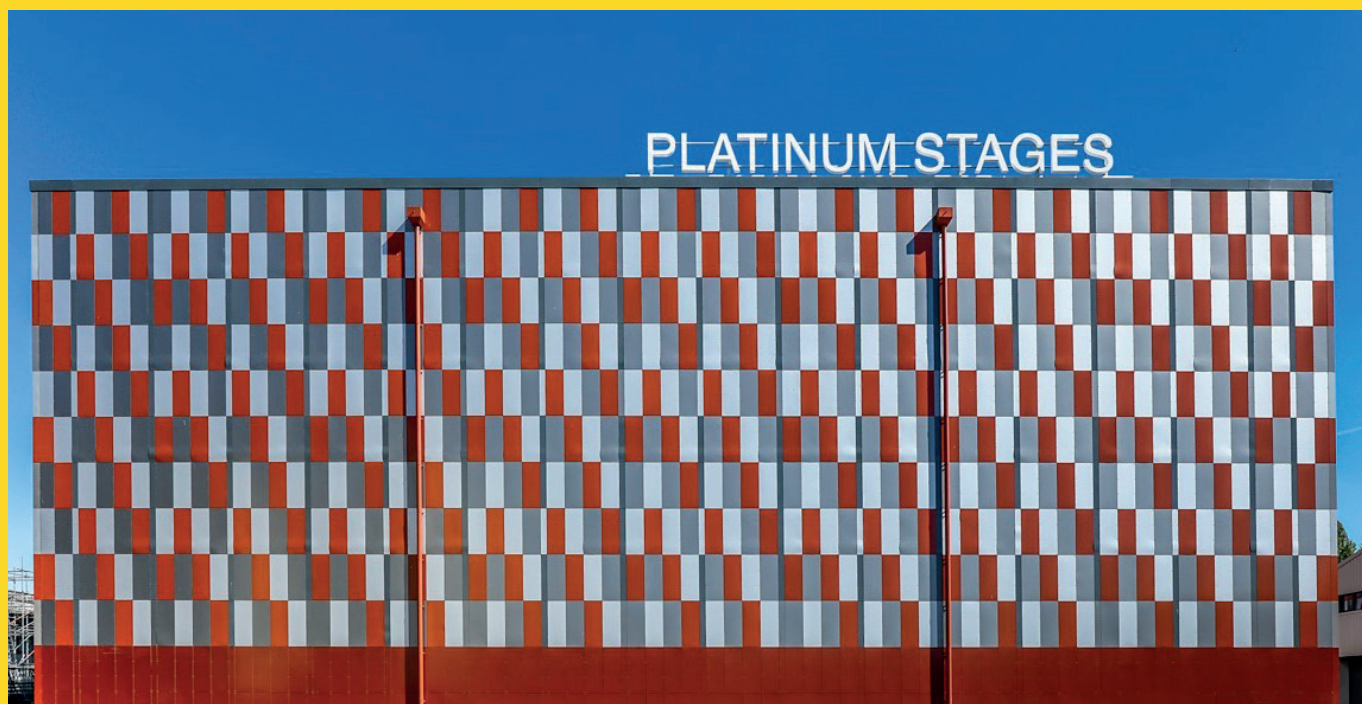
equivalent of Netflix.

Hertfordshire Film Office Manager, Pippa Cawdron, said: "We're thrilled to celebrate *Selvedge*, a powerful short film supported by Hertfordshire Film Office. Despite a tight budget, we connected the team with iconic locations, collaborating with Dacorum Borough Council to make their vision a reality. A shining example of female directorial excellence, *Selvedge* highlights what's possible with collaboration and creativity."

Director Aleksandra Czenczek led a multicultural cast and crew from diverse

backgrounds including writer Mehzeb Chowdhury, actors Amelie Leroy, Olufemi Ajibade Houghton, and Ella-Rose Minott, and producers Adriana Kulig and Amina Hassam.

Amina said: "Hertfordshire Film Office very kindly put me in touch with various people and locations who were happy to step in and agreed to support our project. The team is hugely grateful for allowing us to film in these sought after locations. We will certainly continue our relationship with Hertfordshire Film Office and use them again for future projects."



"Through close collaboration between educators, industry partners and the local council, I believe we are on course to achieve this in Hertfordshire, thus establishing a replicable model that can stimulate further growth and diversification across the country." A further key benefit of the project is the wealth of opportunity that goes beyond the film/TV sector itself, and into the wider supply chain. Adam Morley explained: "We're building a very healthy slate of content that will mean a steady supply of good jobs and good networks. I always use the same analogy, I can take a chippy learning the world of carpentry and one week, can get them onto a TV show, another week onto a feature film at Leavesden. Then, we get them into the panto at Watford Palace, then a UK tour with a pop-star and after

that they can come home and do a loft extension in Hemel Hempstead. "This is a sustainable new career portfolio for a young person and similarly, with older people who want to come back into the industry or want to retrain, we can offer the same pathway. You don't have to be related to the executive producer to get a job. We are breaking down the barriers." To continue attracting investment into Hertfordshire and the UK as a whole, Hertfordshire Futures is headline partner in the **UK Screen Investment Programme**. The programme's flagship moment – the UK Screen Investment Summit – will take place in September 2025 and discuss key themes for the sector's growth, from skills and sustainability to tax incentives and comprehensive infrastructure. It will also spotlight the interconnected development

of hospitality, supply chain, residential, energy and innovation essential to a thriving, sustainable screen ecosystem.

For the latest news and updates on Hertfordshire's film/TV sector growth, visit:

**HERTFORDSHIRE
FUTURES**

More details on the UK Screen Investment Programme are available at:

**UK SCREEN
INVESTMENT
PROGRAMME**

For more information on locational shooting in Hertfordshire, visit:

HFO **HERTFORDSHIRE
FILM OFFICE**



LETCHWORTH'S FB CHAIN TURNS 40 – AND IT'S JUST GETTING STARTED

FB Chain is celebrating 40 years of innovation, resilience, and community commitment in Letchworth – marking a journey from a local forklift chain supplier to an industry leader with a global reach, all while investing in sustainability, local talent, and the future of engineering.

For 40 years, a Letchworth team has been making a global impact – one chain at a time. From forklifts to conveyors, FB Chain's expertise has helped keep industries moving worldwide, all while staying true to its local roots. Now, as it marks four decades of innovation, the company is celebrating not just its success but the people and community that made it possible.

FROM LOCAL BEGINNINGS TO GLOBAL REACH

Founded in 1985 on Jubilee Road, FB Chain began as a key supplier to the flourishing British forklift manufacturing sector. As the industry evolved, so did the company – expanding its offerings to factories, warehouses, and logistics centres worldwide. One of the first major milestones came in 1995 with the invention of the Professional Chain Wear Gauge by founder Jim Cameron, a breakthrough that improved safety standards across the industry. Today, FB Chain remains at the forefront of chain solutions, continually innovating while staying deeply rooted in the Letchworth community.

One such success story is Rob Finch from Letchworth, who joined FB Chain as a Business Administrator aged 20 in 2010 and has since risen to Business Improvement Co-ordinator. "FB Chain has grown a lot since I started, expanding in all aspects," he said. "The team was much smaller back then but has grown alongside our sales, as well as through the acquisition of BKC and RotaLube. Over the years, we have greatly enhanced our systems' capabilities, with even more opportunities for improvement ahead. We have a very good team at FB Chain, who have been open to change and



improvements, which has contributed to the success at FB Chain."

Beyond employment, FB Chain actively supports local education and business. It collaborates with North Hertfordshire College as well as Oaklands College to inspire students about careers in engineering and manufacturing. The company also prioritises working with local suppliers such as nearby Aztec Logistics and contributes to numerous charities and community projects such as the Northhill CE Academy Reading Scheme.

A modern, sustainable future

In 2017, FB Chain moved from Jubilee Road to a purpose-built facility on Works Road, designed in collaboration with the Letchworth Heritage Foundation. Efficiency and sustainability are built into the design, with features such as skylights to reduce lighting needs, automatic roll-up doors to prioritise health and safety, and EV charging points.

"Our purpose-built facility was designed with efficiency and wellbeing in mind. Even the building's orientation on the plot was carefully planned to maximise natural sunlight throughout the day. We wanted to build not just a greener facility, but a well-functioning and comfortable environment

where people enjoy working and spending time," explained Managing Director Peter Church.

A celebration of legacy and evolution
To mark this significant milestone, FB Chain reflects on the achievements of its 40 years in business and the valuable contributions of its long-serving team members, such as our Chief Financial and Operating Officer (CFOO) Karen Barton, who has completed 30 years of service.

"Our 40th anniversary is a celebration of the people who have driven our success – our employees, customers, and local partners. We're proud of our roots in Letchworth and remain committed to driving innovation and supporting our community," Church said.

Former Director Jim Cameron added:

"Seeing how FB Chain has evolved over the years is incredible. Our ability to stay ahead of industry needs while maintaining a strong local presence has been the key to our success."

As FB Chain looks to the future, it continues to invest in cutting-edge technology and sustainability initiatives, ensuring it remains a leader in the industry while contributing to the prosperity of Letchworth and beyond.

Find out more at fbchain.com



Retail sentiment falls at the sharpest rate in five years

CBI QUARTERLY DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES SURVEY

Sentiment amongst retailers fell at the sharpest rate in five years in May, with the net balance of firms expecting their business situation to deteriorate over the coming quarter, according to the CBI's latest quarterly Distributive Trades Survey.

Year-on-year retail sales volumes fell in May, a decline expected to accelerate next month. However, online sales fared better, with volumes rising in the year to May, following six consecutive months of falling or flat sales.

Against a backdrop of subdued demand, retailers plan to reduce investment and headcount. Retailers are expecting to significantly scale back capital expenditure in the next 12 months compared to the last 12. This cautious outlook shows only modest improvement on February's reading, which marked its weakest point since the onset of COVID-19 in 2020. Total employment fell in May compared to a year ago, with the pace of decline expected to accelerate in June.

Key findings included:

- Year-on-year retail sales fell in May (weighted balance of -27% from -8% in April). Sales are expected to decline at a faster rate next month (-37%).
- Retail sales for the time of year were judged to be "poor" in May, but to a lesser extent than in April (19% from -31% in April). June sales are set to remain below seasonal norms (-21%).
- Sentiment amongst retailers plummeted in May at the sharpest rate in five years, with a net balance of firms expecting their business situation to worsen over the coming quarter (-29% from -19% in February).
- Retailers expect to scale back investment plans in the next 12 months (compared to the previous 12) to a significant extent (-47% from -56% in February).
- Employment in retail declined at a broadly steady rate in the year to May, compared to the previous quarter (-15%



from -13% in February). Headcount is expected to fall at a quicker pace next month (-20%).

- Retail selling price inflation picked up in the year to May but remained below the long-run average for the fifth consecutive quarterly survey (+35% from +25% in February; long-run average +41%). Retailers anticipate selling prices to increase at an accelerated rate next month (+57%).
 - Total distribution sales volumes (including retail, wholesale, and motor trades) declined in the year to May at the joint-fastest rate since January 2021 (-43% from -26% in April). Businesses anticipate another strong decline in sales for June, albeit at a slower pace (-38%).
- Ben Jones, Lead Economist, CBI, said: "This was a fairly downbeat survey and highlights some of the challenges facing the retail and wider distribution sector. In contrast to other recent retail data, this survey suggests parts of the sector are still

struggling with fragile consumer demand, though online sales seem to be holding up better.

"Firms are also feeling the impact of higher NICs and the National Living Wage increase. Our quarterly survey suggests that retailers are cutting back on hiring, scaling back investment and expect to increase selling prices at the fastest pace for over a year.

"With the Spending Review on the horizon, the government has an opportunity to kickstart growth and incentivise investment, whether by reforming business rates, simplifying skills investment through the Apprenticeship Levy reform or expanding the Made Smarter Programme, further enabling digital adoption."

In addition, data from the survey showed:

- Retail orders placed upon suppliers declined at an accelerated rate in the year to May (-41% from -24% in April). Retailers expect to cut back on orders at a steady pace in June (-42%).
- Retailers reported that stock volumes in relation to expected demand dipped below the long-run average in May (+12% from +21% in April; long-run average +17%). Stock positions are expected to ease further next month (+9%).
- Online retail sales volumes grew at a strong rate in the year to May, following six consecutive months of falling or flat sales (+37% from -1% in April). Retailers expect online sales to grow again next month, but at a moderate rate (+17%).
- Wholesale annual sales volumes fell in May at the fastest rate since June 2020 (-48% from -33% in April). Wholesalers expect the sales decline to slow next month (-30%).
- Motor trades annual sales volumes contracted in May at the joint-quickest rate since October 2022 (-65% from -50% in April). Motor traders expect sales to decline at the same pace in June (-65%).

biz4Biz

**BOOK
TWO
FULL
PAGE
ADVERTS
GET
ONE
FREE**



CLICK HERE
FOR MORE INFO

Insight

Sustainable Biz

ManufacturingBiz



Garden House Hospice Care Trustee

Are you passionate about making a difference? Do you have a strong background in Human Resources and a commitment to supporting charitable causes? If the answer is yes, then we want you to help guide our organisation as a Trustee!

Garden House Hospice Care provides specialist palliative care and free wellbeing services for patients, families and carers facing life-limiting illnesses. We are seeking a HR professional to join our Board and contribute to the charity's development and success. As a Trustee, you will play a key role in shaping our People and Culture strategy and governance, ensuring that we are best positioned to attract, retain, and develop talented staff and volunteers. You will provide strategic HR guidance and support, helping to build an organisational culture that reflects our values and mission.

We strive to be an inclusive and diverse Board and welcome applications from members of underrepresented groups.

SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

- A background in Human Resources, ideally at a strategic level (Senior HR Manager, Director, or equivalent)

"We are seeking a HR professional to join our Board and contribute to the charity's development and success"

- Strong knowledge of HR best practices, employment law, and compliance
- Experience in strategic HR leadership and the ability to work with non-profit organisations
- A passion for the charity sector and commitment to the mission of Garden House Hospice Care
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Ability to work collaboratively with both a diverse team and stakeholders

WHAT YOU WILL GAIN FROM THIS ROLE

- The opportunity to contribute to a cause you believe in
- Make a lasting impact in the local community

- Work with a dynamic and supportive team of Trustees, staff and volunteers
- Ongoing professional development
- The opportunity to expand your professional network

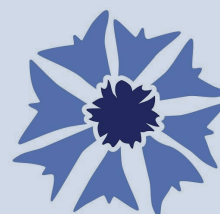
TRAINING AND SUPPORT...

- This role is subject to a DBS check and mandatory training
- You will receive ongoing training/development and support in-role
- You will be entitled to receive free access to our Volunteer Assistance Programme, which offers confidential support and advice

Register your interest on our website:

[Become a Trustee | Volunteer at the Hospice | Garden House Hospice Care](#)

Alternatively, contact us directly to discuss further at volunteers@ghhospicecare.org.uk.



Garden House Hospice Care



Will

protect my loved ones.

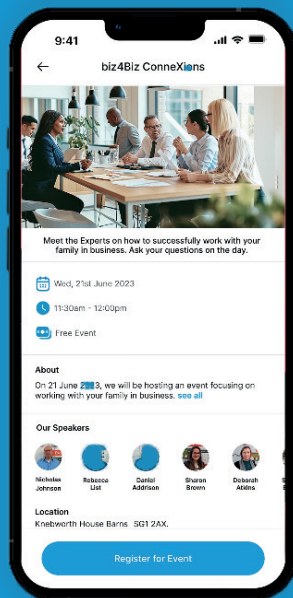
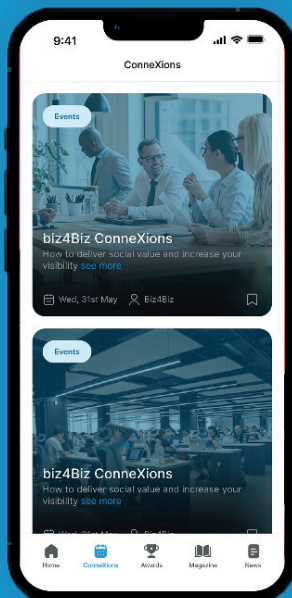
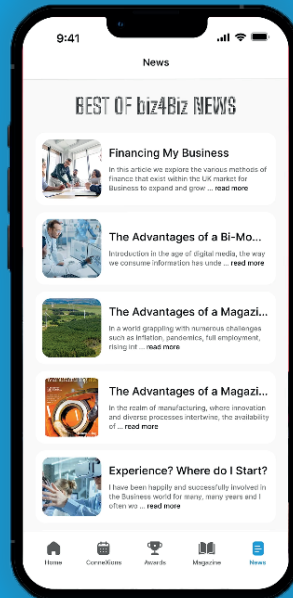
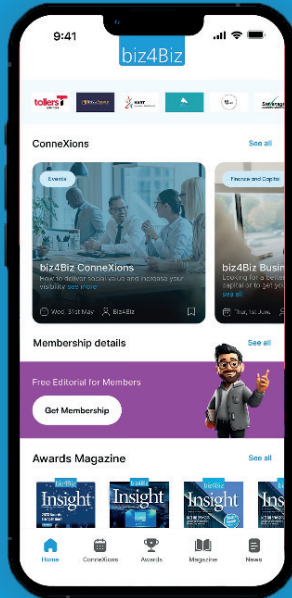
Make a will with a solicitor in exchange for a donation to Garden House Hospice Care.



biz4Biz

OUR BIZ4BIZ APP IS AVAILABLE FOR YOU TO DOWNLOAD!

The app offers a number of exciting features with networking at its heart, allowing you to build meaningful connections with like-minded individuals and businesses within our vibrant community. We are also renowned for our variety of curated magazines which each offer a unique perspective on topics ranging from business to lifestyle. You can use the app to explore Insight, Sustainable Biz and Manufacturing Biz and see these stories and this rich multi-media experience come to life. The app also moves you closer to a wide range of biz4biz events and not only offers seamless registration but allows you to manage your attendance and access full event details from one centralised platform. While making sure you never miss any of our must-attend events, the app also ensures that you completely maximise all of our exclusive membership packages and fully benefit from all of our enhanced features. Finally, as you would expect from a cutting edge organisation, we also keep you informed instantly, allowing you to access the latest news and breaking stories in the region and around the world.




 **CLICK HERE** to download from the **Apple App Store**





biz4Biz



bizcrunch

BizCrunch

Looking to Buy or Sell a business?
BizCrunch has the data, you need to make that purchase or sale.

In an era characterised by seismic shifts in the global economic landscape, a remarkable phenomenon is unfolding, one that heralds the largest generational wealth transfer in history. As the sun sets on the careers of the baby-boomer generation, a new dawn beckons for the young, ambitious and visionary. At the heart of this transition lies the vibrant domain of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), where opportunity knocks louder than ever before.

A HISTORIC TRANSFER AWAITS

Picture this: over 75,000 companies in the UK alone, each a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit, boasting revenues north of £1,000,000. Their architects? A generation of business

"This burgeoning wave of entrepreneurs sees not just companies, but legacies ready for a new chapter"

owners now on the cusp of retirement. But this isn't a narrative confined to the British Isles. From the fjords of the Nordics to the vibrant markets of the USA, and the bustling economic landscapes of Germany and Australia, this trend paints a global

canvas. The baton is poised for passing, but the question looms – who will take the helm?

AN UNPREPARED LEGACY

A startling revelation by Wilmington Trust sheds light on a critical gap – almost 60% of these privately-owned bastions of industry lack a clear succession plan. The foundation of their life's work, their companies, remain without a formal valuation, an oversight that could lead to untold losses in potential and opportunity.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH ACQUISITION: A NEW PARADIGM

Enter the bold and the brave, fuelled by the pioneering ethos of "Entrepreneurship Through Acquisition," a movement birthed in the hallowed halls of Harvard

Business School. This burgeoning wave of entrepreneurs sees not just companies, but legacies ready for a new chapter. They recognize the inherent value in established enterprises, where profitability, not just potential, shapes valuation. It's a shift from the ground-up approach, moving away from the venture capital frenzy to a more measured, value-driven investment in proven entities.

THE MISMATCHED MARKETPLACE


Yet, the journey is fraught with hurdles. According to insights from BizBuySell, a staggering 80% of businesses listed for sale find no buyer, a testament to the chasm between seller expectations and market realities. Often, inflated valuations, spurred by overzealous brokers, derail potential deals, leaving businesses in limbo.


BIZCRUNCH: THE BEACON FOR ASPIRING ACQUIRERS

In this landscape of untapped potential and navigational challenges, BizCrunch emerges as a lighthouse for the intrepid acquirer. With its vast repository of data on millions of companies, BizCrunch.

[CLICK HERE](#) to find out more
[CLICK HERE](#) to try BizCrunch



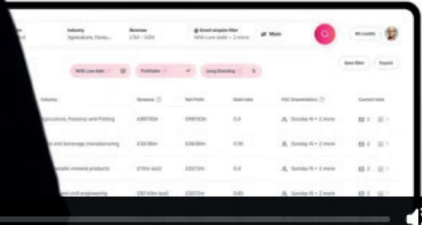














The Smart Way to Discover Next M&A Deal

Access vital metrics and key contact data with our advanced on-market deal discovery platform.

Start for free →



01:45







INVEST HERTFORDSHIRE FLIES THE COUNTY FLAG TO ATTRACT INVESTORS AND DEVELOPER PARTNERS AT UKREIIF

Hertfordshire's growth and development experts – coming together under the Invest Hertfordshire banner - showcased the county's outstanding offer and opportunities at the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiIF) in Leeds. They presented the many strengths and assets – including 'shovel-ready' sites - for the sustainable and digitally led development that will help fast-track the UK Government's growth plans, to an audience of investors, developers, architects and Government officials. Hertfordshire already contributes £49.7 billion GVA to the UK economy – a growth of over £10bn in a decade and a larger economy than many major cities. Key sectors include seven of the eight high

value industries identified in the Industrial Strategy such as life sciences, creative and clean growth. Digital infrastructure is another asset with gigabit broadband exceeding 90% coverage (above the national average) and Google building its first UK data centre in the county. Around 100,000 new homes and jobs will be created over the next 15-20 years to support a growing 1.2m population, through a range of new developments including two new Garden Towns – Hemel Garden Communities and Harlow & Gilston. Neil Hayes, CEO, Hertfordshire Futures and Interim Director, Hertfordshire Growth Board, said: "UKREiIF provides an ideal platform to showcase how Hertfordshire's public and private sectors are working hand-in-hand to deliver high-quality,

sustainable growth — not just through new homes and infrastructure, but by generating jobs, creating economic opportunities and delivering meaningful social impact.

"From Harlow and Gilston Garden Town to the pioneering DC01UK data centre in Hertsmere, we're looking forward to highlighting Herts' shared ambition and joined-up approach to delivering sustainable growth."

The county has 24 development sites with a total GDV of £12.9 billion – 17 investor-ready now and seven on the horizon – which were promoted at UKREiIF. Hertfordshire Futures Chair, Adrian Hawkins OBE, said: "Whether it's a major town centre regeneration project such as Stevenage's Station Gateway or Watford High Street, a global life sciences hub or





innovation and technology campus, every project we're showcasing at UKREiIF is backed by clarity and real substance.

"And we have ambition to do more – operating at scale to have a transformational impact on our local communities and the wider region. We welcome an open dialogue with investors and developers to co-design a better future for our residents and businesses."

Adrian attended the Annual Regional Leaders Brunch Roundtable, convened by globally leading investor Federated Hermes MEPC and UKREiIF. Guests included leaders and mayors of local authorities from all four UK nations and Minister for Investment Baroness Poppy Gustafsson.

Invest Hertfordshire's presence at the event (May 20 to 22) was sponsored by The Crown Estate and Gascoyne Estates. The Crown Estate is developing a new 1.8 million sq. ft. business park, just off M1 junction 8, which will also deliver 4,000 new homes, four new schools and a country park.

Gascoyne Estates is seeking partners to deliver the Hatfield Innovation Campus, a landmark development featuring 400,000 sq. ft. of commercial space and key worker accommodation, alongside promoting a new village at Symondshyde Farm, which has opportunities for solar energy and biodiversity net gain.

The 'Meet Hertfordshire's Place Pioneers'

"We welcome an open dialogue with investors and developers to co-design a better future for our residents and businesses"

panel took place on May 21 at the SCAPE Public Sector Stage in the Royal Armouries - the UKREiIF venue.

Angie Ridgwell, CEO, Hertfordshire County Council; Rob Chesworth, Head of Strategic Land, The Crown Estate; Rachael Elwin, Senior Development Manager, Strategic Land, Gascoyne Estates; Linda Chandler, Chief Digital Officer, BRE Trustee; and Dan Wilson, Senior Planning Manager, Cala Homes, joined the discussion facilitated by Mayor Peter Taylor, Leader of Watford Borough Council and Vice Chair, Hertfordshire Growth Board.

Hertfordshire County Council's new leader,

Councillor Steve Jarvis, gave an address ahead of the discussion, less than 24 hours after he was appointed.

Melanie Miller, Inward Investment Manager at Hertfordshire Futures, said:

"I am really excited that we have brought together such a diverse range of views to give a 360-degree perspective on what good and responsible growth means.

"This debate will look beyond bricks and mortar to give concrete examples of how we are working together to drive positive social impact for our local communities and ensure Hertfordshire fully leverages its place pioneering past for future generations."

The Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Development Board (HIDB)—a membership organisation which brings together over 100 private and public sector members from across Hertfordshire—sponsored a post-event drinks and networking session. Established in 2021 by the Hertfordshire Growth Board, HIDB brings the county's political, civic, health and business leadership together to deliver sustainable economic growth and high quality placemaking.

[CLICK HERE to read more.](#)

INVEST
HERTFORDSHIRE



Exoskeleton technology used in double lung transplant in world first trial at Harefield Hospital

The world's first double lung transplant using AI enabled exoskeleton technology has taken place at Harefield Hospital, part of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust (GSTT). The technology, which was supplied by wearable tech and safety experts, St Albans based Stanley, was trialled as part of a seven hour overnight operation on a 62 year old female with end stage lung disease and was performed by Mr Espeed Khoshbin Cardiothoracic surgeon.

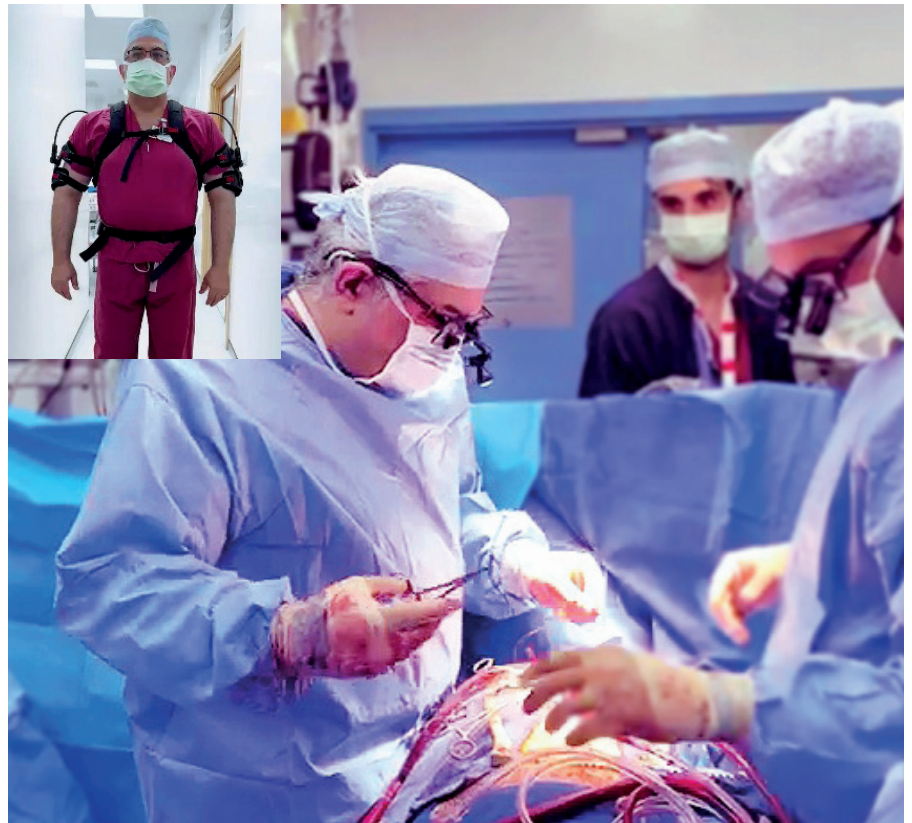
After the operation, Mr Khoshbin commented:

"Using the exoskeleton suit, including taking it on and off, was remarkably straightforward. The suit was comfortable throughout the procedure and I felt a significant reduction in my upper body strain. This is important because so many cardiothoracic and transplant surgeons suffer from neck and back-related musculoskeletal issues which can negatively impact their careers. Our patient is progressing very well and recovering swiftly from her surgery."

The trial has been spearheaded by Mr Aamir Amin, Cardiothoracic Surgical Resident and Honorary Research Fellow at the hospital, working in collaboration with Hertfordshire based Health and Safety consultants, Stanley, who advised on the best equipment to trial, supplied the HAPO exoskeleton suit and provided suitable training to the surgical team.

Graham Sharp, Managing Director of Stanley said:

We're thrilled with the success of the trial and how effectively the exoskeleton suit supported the demands of a long surgical procedure. We have seen a lot of success with this AI wearable technology in a range of health care



"AI wearable technology is proving to be game changing for the Health and Safety sector in the UK"

settings, including in care homes, where carers are moving and lifting patients on a regular basis. Our role in this trial has been to advise on the best technology for this type of procedure and subsequent training and supply of the HAPO exoskeleton.

"AI wearable technology is proving to be game changing for the Health and Safety sector in the UK, with equipment like lightweight exoskeleton suits and wearable SmartBelts, able to help cut accident and injury rates in UK workplaces."

Mr Aamir Amin, from Harefield Hospital who was behind the trial said:

"Surgeons are superheroes without capes, but now we get to wear cool suits! Our goal with this project is to provide a solution for ergonomic challenges that surgeons face on a daily basis so that they keep doing what they do best - for as long as possible." The team are now working with Stanley as they step into the next phase of the project evaluating the long-term benefits of its use.

STEVENAGE'S INCO CONTRACTS GOES BACK TO SCHOOL TO TARGET £3M EDUCATION BOOST

One of the UK's leading principal contractors is continuing to branch out into education after making a high-profile hire. Stevenage-based Inco Contracts, which also has offices in Cannock, Cardiff and Warrington, has appointed Billy Sneddon as its dedicated Contracts Manager for this specialist area with the brief of generating more than £3m in revenue over the next twelve months. The company's ability to manage complex projects and deliver on time and to budget has made it a natural choice for schools and colleges, with £1m of contracts already completed for organisations in the West Midlands and the North West. These have included a special education needs centre at Birchwood Community High School and multiple jobs for the Invictus Education Trust, which looks after eight schools across Dudley and South Staffs.

"Education has always been an area we wanted to explore as we have all the core refurbishment skills required to deliver high quality projects quickly and at the right cost - as we all know the taxpayer has to see value for money," explained David Cotterill, Managing Director of Inco Contracts.

"Labour has announced a big cash injection to upgrade existing schools and, with the supply chain already creaking under pressure, we feel now is the right time to accelerate our expansion and provide services so desperately required to ensure our children learn in the best possible buildings."

He went on to add: "The appointment of Billy Sneddon is an important moment for us. He brings over 10 years' experience in this sector, a massive book of contacts and supply chain specialists who have a proven track record in education."

Inco Contracts can work alongside architects, designers, and directly with schools to bring buildings back to life or to the required modern-day standards. Services provided range from roof

repairs, classroom/toilet refurbishments, mechanical and electrical upgrades, extensions and PV installation. In just the last six months, Inco has transformed an existing library into a dedicated special educational needs unit, equipped with six classrooms, meeting rooms, toilets, reception area and state-of-the-art playground. Invictus Education Trust has also called on the company for resurfacing work, emergency repairs and a refurb of its headquarters at Kinver High School. Billy Sneddon picked up the story: "This is a really exciting opportunity to shape our education offer, so that we bring something a little bit different to an established marketplace."

"The beauty of Inco Contracts is that we are agile. This means we can pick up smaller jobs quickly yet are big enough

to handle £multi-million projects across the UK. Our people all have experience of working in this environment and understand the need to prioritise the safety of the children and teachers, whilst completing projects alongside their studies.

"My approach is to build partnerships with schools, colleges and education providers so we are their 'go to firm' in an emergency or for planned works." He concluded: "Our target is £3m in revenues over the next twelve months and increasing my team so that we have two or three dedicated people working with me on projects."

For further information, please visit www.incocontracts.co.uk or follow the company across its social media channels.



Oaklands shines in new National Achievement Rate Tables

Oaklands College has made stunning progress according to the latest Department for Education National Achievement Rate Tables (NARTs) for 2023–24. This marks a significant achievement for the College, which has climbed an impressive 59 places nationally - moving from 107th to 48th in the overall standings. Even more notably, in the Under-19 Achievement category, Oaklands has risen from 77th to 17th, placing them firmly among the top providers in the country. Their performance in adult education continues to strengthen, offering more opportunities for those looking to retrain, upskill or take a new direction.

"Recent milestones include the opening of the £7.5 million High Performance Centre for sport"

Apprenticeship provision also remains strong, reflecting the commitment to work-based learning and employer engagement.

These outcomes are part of a wider transformation at Oaklands, underpinned by substantial investment in both the student experience and the learning environments. Recent milestones include the opening of the £7.5 million High Performance Centre for sport, and a new state-of-the-art Construction Centre - both of which support the mission to deliver a well-rounded, future-facing education.



**OAKLANDS
COLLEGE**

UK WORKERS INCREASINGLY REJECTING RETURN-TO-OFFICE MANDATES, STUDY FINDS

New research reveals that less than half of UK workers would comply with a full-time return-to-office mandate, with women and some parents showing the strongest resistance to employer demands for in-person attendance.

Despite high-profile CEO announcements and media reports suggesting a “great return” to workplaces, researchers found no evidence of a mass move back to offices, with working-from-home rates remaining stable since 2022.

The study, by researchers at the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at King's College London and King's Business School, analysed over 1 million observations from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and 50,000 responses from the Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes UK (SWAA), providing a comprehensive picture of remote working patterns across the UK workforce from early 2022 through to the end of 2024.

WORKERS INCREASINGLY WILLING TO QUIT OVER FLEXIBILITY

The research shows growing worker resistance to rigid office mandates:

- 42% of workers say they would comply with a five-day return-to-office requirement – down from 54% in early 2022.
- From early 2022 to the second quarter of 2024, the proportion of workers saying they would look for a new job with homeworking opportunities if their current employer tried to make them return to the office full-time rose from 40% to 50%.
- Similarly, over the same period, the share of workers saying they would quit straight away if forced to go in five days a week doubled from 5% to 10%.
- Overall, 58% of workers now say they would either quit immediately (9%) or start looking for a new job (49%) if required to return full-time.
- Women are more likely to resist, with 64% saying they would quit straight away or seek alternative employment, compared to 51% of men.

Some parents are increasingly resistant to office mandates

Parents have particularly shown



growing opposition to full-time office requirements:

- In early 2022, 38% of fathers with school-age children (aged six to 17) said they would quit or look for a new job in response to such a mandate – but by the end of 2024 this had risen to 53%.
- Just one in three (33%) mothers with young children say they would comply with full-time office mandates.
- Meanwhile, Black and minority ethnic workers show higher rates of compliance with full-time return-to-office mandates, possibly reflecting job insecurity and workplace discrimination

Hybrid working becoming the norm
Despite a widespread “return to office” narrative, the data shows hybrid working has become established in the UK labour market:

- Employer policies have not shifted significantly towards eliminating remote work: based on the LFS dataset analysed, a stable 26-27% of women said their home was their main place of work between the first quarter of 2022 and the fourth quarter of 2024. Similarly, for men, the rate has remained at around 27-30%, although a slight decrease of around 1-2 percentage points is observable in the most recent data.
- If anything, there has been a slow increase in average permitted work-from-home days – from less than one day per week in 2022 to about 1.3 days in 2024.
- However, there is also evidence to show that employers are less likely to allow fully remote working, with a slight increase in the number of homeworking policies that permit staff to only work from home one to two days per week.
- According to the SWAA dataset, one in four (25%) workers report working remotely at least three or more days

a week, while two in five (40%) work remotely at least once weekly.

Implications for businesses and diversity
The researchers warn that rigid return-to-office policies risk creating a two-tier workforce and undermining diversity:

- Women and parents who cannot comply with full-time office requirements due to caregiving and other household responsibilities may be forced out.
- Remote workers are likely to face a greater flexibility stigma and potential career penalties, especially when it is generally parents or mothers who work from home.
- Organisations implementing inflexible mandates risk significant recruitment, skills and retention challenges.

The study recommends that organisations frame flexibility as a long-term business strategy rather than a temporary perk, emphasising that hybrid and remote working have become baseline expectations in the modern labour market. Heejung Chung, Professor of Work and Employment and Director of the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at King's College London, and lead author of the report, said:

“An increasing amount of research shows that well-designed hybrid working models offer significant benefits for both employers and employees. Alongside this, there has been a marked shift in attitudes, with workers now seeing flexibility as the norm. Managers need to understand and adapt to this new reality. Rather than forcing a return to pre-pandemic working patterns, organisations should be looking to formalise hybrid models, invest in remote collaboration tools, and set up coordinated in-office days to maximise engagement.

“Where possible, workers should feel emboldened to hold their ground in the face of return-to-office mandates, as the weight of the evidence demonstrating remote working does not harm productivity is growing. In fact, many studies are finding flexible workers tend to work longer and harder compared to those who do not work flexibly – and importantly, those who are able to work remotely tend to be more loyal and committed to their jobs.”

Pigeon breaks ground at landmark Cheshunt project

Development has commenced at Pigeon's MAX50 scheme in Cheshunt, with a pre-let secured for the 50,000 sq ft industrial warehouse and office space situated close to the M25 at Waltham Cross.

A ground breaking ceremony saw Lewis Cocking MP, Council Leader Mark Mills-Bishop and other senior local leaders formally launch the construction phase. Cheshunt MAX50 is adjacent to Google's first UK data centre, on Theobalds Business Park, a new Council-owned business park in Cheshunt. It is being constructed to high sustainable standards, targeting BREEAM Very Good and EPC A – Net Zero Ready for the future occupier.

Following significant interest through early marketing, the site is pre-let to Stephen James Group, a well-established and authorised BMW and MINI automotive retailer headquartered in nearby Enfield. MAX50 will deliver a brand new purpose-built facility for Stephen James to continue their commitment to contributing to local employment and skill development.

Cambridge-based contractor, Barnack Estates, has been appointed as main contractor for the works.

Hugh French, Development Director at Pigeon, commented: "It is a testament to the significance of the development that senior local leaders have joined us to break ground down at Cheshunt MAX50. "This is such an important site for local and regional economic growth and we are looking forward to delivering it with our team"

Social impact specialists Meeting Place worked with Pigeon to establish that the development will generate over £4.0m in social impact, predominantly through the provision of local jobs and environmental commitments.

Pigeon is the largest land promoter in the East of England, currently promoting over 21,000 homes and 8,500,000 sq ft of commercial space for development. Its in-house investment team also owns and manages over £100m of income-generating commercial assets including the 165-acre Twinwoods Business Park north of Bedford and Broadland Gate, a 48-acre business park on the outskirts of Norwich.

Pigeon acquired the Cheshunt MAX50 development site from STX in 2022. Hugh said: "Beyond Cheshunt and amongst other projects, we are also in the process of unlocking development at

Junction 56, a brand new pre-let 230,000 sq ft industrial and logistics park on the edge of Ipswich at the A14, within easy reach of Felixstowe Port."

Peter Williams, Chief Financial Officer at Hedin UK on behalf of Stephen James, said: "Breaking ground on our new aftersales facility marks the beginning of an exciting chapter for us. This state-of-the-art centre will elevate our service capabilities, ensuring we meet and exceed our customers' expectations. The future is bright, and we can't wait to see what we achieve together!"

Cllr Mark Mills-Bishop was pleased to commence the development and remarked: "I am delighted to welcome this development to the Borough. This, along with the Google data centre under construction and the Theobalds Enterprise Centre for start-up and small to medium enterprises, is another important element in cementing Theobalds Business Park as a key part of the economic growth corridor being created along the southern A10 in Broxbourne."

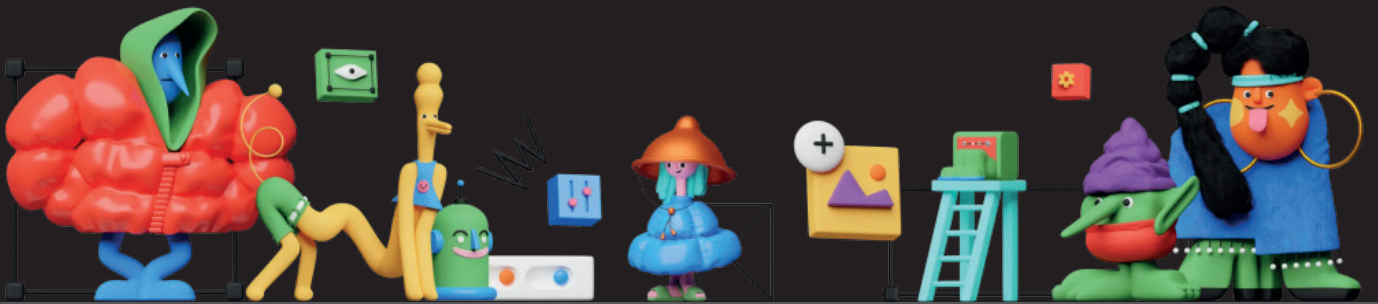
 **Pigeon**



Jabbercoms

We help brands evolve their products

At Jabbercoms Limited, we're dedicated to propelling your business towards greater success



What we offer

We are committed to delivering exceptional services tailored to meet your specific needs and demands.

Editorial

Crafting Compelling Content to Engage Your Audience

Videos

Bring Your Brand to Life with Captivating Video Content

Photography

Capture the Essence of Your Brand with Stunning Imagery

Website and software development

Create a Dynamic Online Presence with Professional Website and App Development

ConneXions

Unlocking Growth Through Strategic Connexions

Magazines

Insights and Inspiration for Business Excellence

Let's Collaborate

hello@jabbercoms.co.uk
www.jabbercoms.co.uk





Redwood Bank secures seventh consecutive win at national awards

Redwood Bank has once again proven its place at the top of UK business banking, winning Best Business Variable Rate Deposit Account Provider at the 2025 Business Moneyfacts Awards for the seventh consecutive year. The ceremony, held at Evolution London, brought together the UK's leading financial institutions to celebrate the best in the industry. Redwood Bank's continued success in this hotly contested category underlines its reputation for consistency, competitiveness and client-first service. In addition to this prestigious win, the Bank was shortlisted in two other categories: Best Business Fixed Account Provider and Best Service from a Commercial Mortgage Provider, recognising the strength and breadth of its full product range.

"To win it seven years in a row shows we're not just getting it right we're setting the standard"

Stuart Davidson, Director of Products and Strategy at Redwood Bank, commented: "To win this award once is an achievement. To win it seven years in a row shows we're not just getting it right we're setting the standard. This recognition reflects our long-term

commitment to supporting UK businesses with dependable, high-performing savings solutions. We're proud to be a bank that delivers consistency in a world that rarely stands still."

Jessica Darrah, Senior Savings Product Manager, added: "Securing this award for the seventh-year running is a testament to the dedication and expertise of the entire Redwood team. We continually strive to offer our customers exceptional service and competitive products, and this recognition reinforces our commitment to excellence."

Founded in 2017, Redwood Bank has built a reputation for rapid decision-making, customer-first service and competitive rates all backed by a UK-based team who truly understand the needs of modern British businesses.

UNIVERSAL DESTINATIONS & EXPERIENCES

In a landmark announcement for Bedford Borough, Elected Mayor Tom Wootton has shared the exciting news that Universal Destinations & Experiences will establish a world-class theme park and resort on the former brickworks site just south of Bedford. This significant investment, years in the making, positions Bedford as the proud home of Universal in the UK — the country's only park of its kind.

This transformative project will bring 28,000 new direct and indirect jobs, generate billions in economic benefits, and attract millions of visitors to the area annually, a figure expected to rise to 12 million over time.

Mayor Tom Wootton expressed his enthusiasm for the development, emphasising its significance for the local community: "This is a landmark moment for Bedford Borough. Universal's decision to proceed with its theme park and resort in the UK brings exciting opportunities to our doorstep – thousands of jobs, new

training and career paths, and a huge boost for local businesses.

"Bedford is the perfect place for this investment – well-connected, full of talent, and ready to grow. We're proud to be chosen as the home of Universal in the UK. I'm delighted that our residents and communities will benefit in the years and decades ahead. I will continue to work closely with Universal and local stakeholders to deliver for them."

The Universal entertainment resort complex will deliver sustainable, inclusive growth for the region, with high-quality employment, new education and training pathways, and long-term community benefits. It promises to make Bedford a leading destination for visitors and a key hub for business investment, securing its place as a thriving and ambitious community.

Laura Church, Chief Executive of Bedford Borough Council, added: "I am excited about the next phase and the borough's role in elevating the UK's profile as a

leader in the visitor economy and creative industries. With continued sustainable growth, Bedford Borough is poised to become a must-visit destination and a prime hub for business investment, driving growth for our community.

"At opening, Universal will be one of the largest employers in the region, and it is expected that approximately 80% of employees will come from Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton & Milton Keynes. We have been working closely with Universal Destinations & Experiences for over two years, in partnership with national Government and regional stakeholders, and it's great to see the progress made today."

The project has received agreement in principle from the Government to move forward, pending planning approval. The Universal theme park and resort is expected to open in 2031, providing immersive storytelling, innovative attractions, exciting entertainment and opportunities for residents and visitors alike.



biz4Biz AWARDS2025

Sponsored by



The Hertfordshire Business Awards programme organised by biz4Biz, returns for their seventh year. These Awards are impartial, independent and open to Hertfordshire-based businesses. The Hertfordshire Business Awards programme organised by biz4Biz, 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 2024 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. Entry and participation are completely free of charge.

Adrian Hawkins OBE
Chairman, biz4Biz



CLICK HERE
To see the current voting state of play

biz4Biz AWARDS 2025

Sponsored by



A NIGHT OF CELEBRATION!



CO-SPACE CUP

A charity football tournament will take place in Letchworth to raise funds for Stevenage Football Foundation.

The Co-Space Cup is aimed at local businesses and players and the five-a-side tournament will take place at Hertfordshire FA, The County Ground, Baldock Road on Friday, June 20.

- Teams can have a maximum of eight players, with five players minimum and three subs.
- All genders are welcome to participate and it is adults only.
- Participation costs £25 per person, with all money raised from entry costs and a raffle going to the Stevenage FC Foundation.

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."

Foundation CEO, Joe Goude said "We're so grateful to the team at Co-Space for organising the Co-Space Cup. William and the team have been really supportive of the work we are doing in the local community, and the money we will raise will help us to continue to do that work day in day out. A massive thank you to all the teams that take part".

For more information email

melissa.edwards@stevenagefcf.com



Willmott Dixon gives industry big representation at best employer guides

Willmott Dixon has appeared as one of the UK's best workplaces in two major studies published by national newspapers. The company came fourth in the FT's Best Employers list of the top 1,000 companies in Europe, helping to represent the UK as one of two companies from this country to feature in the top 10. The high ranking was based on feedback by employees.

This weekend, The Sunday Times published its Best Places to Work Guide recently, and Willmott Dixon appeared in the top 10 of the big company category, and also have the distinction of being named best big construction company to work for. Chief executive office Graham Dundas said: "This rounds off a fantastic week of recognition for our culture and people that

started with Jason Hunt being named the CIOB's overall Construction Manager of the Year for his work leading our team at Bristol Beacon. Our brilliant people really do help lift us to new heights. "These tremendous accolades help us stand out as a diverse, inclusive and supportive place to work, where our people can enjoy a career of a lifetime as we deliver outstanding projects for our customers."



Health clubs, holidays, electric cars: these firms are powering ahead

Big organisations 250-1,999 employees

CHAMPNEYS
In its centenary year, this Bedfordshire spa business believes its 1,068 employees make it special: many have been there more than 30 years. Colleagues are recognised in monthly and annual awards, and benefits include wellbeing initiatives, free meals and discounted stays.

CLARION
The 310 staff get fully involved at this Leeds law firm – joining netball and football teams and fundraising for charity while developing fulfilling careers. Recent initiatives include technical and management training, while chair massages and yoga classes are among the perks.

CULINERA
Prizes such as trips to Italy or France are among incentives for excelling as a chef or baker at this Amersham-based school caterer. The firm recently launched its own cookery school to maintain the skills of its 367 staff. It offers paid training, often done remotely to fit around work hours.

DAKOTA HOTELS
Members of the 520-strong team at Manchester-based Dakota can enjoy a 40 per cent discount on stays at its six hotels across England and Scotland, and there's 25 per cent off for family and friends. The Dakota Academy has offered bespoke training sessions to more than 400 employees in the past year.

DORCHESTER COLLECTION
At this London hotel group, guest and employee satisfaction go hand in hand. Learning programmes are provided for all 1,200 staff, who also enjoy complimentary hotel stays, family discounts, long service awards, celebration leave and study leave, plus flexible working.

TURNING POINT SCOTLAND
The Glasgow-based organisation supports vulnerable people across Scotland, and over two thirds of the 1,200 staff have a recognised disability or a close lived experience of it. A training and development programme and promotion from within enable them to grow professionally.

WILLMOTT DIXON
This Hertfordshire construction specialist rewards loyalty with £750 after five years' service for home improvements or to gain new skills. A third of the 1,943 employees are female, and the firm aims for a 50/50 gender balance by 2030, plus a rise in the number of women in key leadership roles from 60 to 100.



THE SUNDAY TIMES
Best Places to Work 2025
BIG ORGANISATION



Proud to support businesses in the East of England

Visit barclayscorporate.com

Big Picture Banking



BARCLAYS | Corporate
Banking