

SHROPSHIRE BUSINESS

July/August 2026
FREE

Award-winning news, views and analysis



RESILIENCE IN MOTION:

Keeping goods moving through global conflict

PLUS:

**SHROPSHIRE CHAMBER
BUSINESS AWARDS:**
12-page picture special



Crime is on the increase.

How safe are your valuables?



Keep your precious items secure in your own private safe deposit box.

- Cash
- Coins
- Data
- Deeds
- Documents
- Gold
- Gifts
- Heirlooms
- Jewellery
- Keys
- Musical Instruments
- Passports
- Photo Albums
- Precious Stones
- Stamps
- Watch Collections

At Shropshire Holdings we have a proven track record of keeping premium and high value items safe.



Shropshire Holdings Ltd
Safe Deposit Boxes



Various box sizes available, located in Shrewsbury, inside a former bank vault.

Priority Reservations



Or call us to discuss your requirements:
☎ 01743 295749



#AlarmsSaveLives

More UK Homes Trust Aico To Protect Them

Keeping you and your family safe from Fire and Carbon Monoxide since 1990, Aico has home life safety products that your household can rely on.

Safety first. Aico first.



The European Market Leader in **Home Life Safety**



SCAN TO LEARN MORE



www.aico.co.uk

an  Company



ISSUE 58:
JULY/AUGUST 2026

Magazine editor:
Carl Jones
editor@shropshirebiz.com

Operations director:
Henry Carpenter
henry@shropshirebiz.com

News editor:
Rachel Jones

Editorial design and layout:
Paul Naylor

Advertising:
sales@shropshirebiz.com

General enquiries:
info@shropshirebiz.com



MIDLANDS MEDIA AWARDS
Magazine of the Year – winner

Shropshire Business is published by Wiggly Worm Media Ltd. The publishers have taken all reasonable care to ensure that the information in this magazine is accurate at time of going to press.

Wiggly Worm Media accepts no responsibility for the consequences of error or for any loss or damage suffered by users of any of the information and material contained in this publication.

The views expressed are not necessarily those held by the publisher, or editor.

Our publications are printed in the UK by Welshpool Printing Group Ltd: wpg-group.com

All papers are sourced from well-managed, sustainable forests and their vast supply-chain hold many environmental accreditations. In addition to this, they hold a Climate Change Agreement along with ISO14001, ISO9001, FSC, PEFC and offer Carbon Balancing via The World Land Trust.



Printed in the UK by Welshpool Printing Group Ltd:
www.wpg-group.com



INSIDE

BUSINESS ‘OSCARS’:

12-page special from the Chamber Awards. P13

COVER STORY:

Cover Story – Freight company is in it for the long haul. P31

BACKGROUND STRESS:

Is it killing your company’s productivity? P10

TRANSATLANTIC DEAL:

Manufacturer signs landmark US contract. P25

BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT:

King’s Award success for local trio. P38



ADVERTISE WITH US

Did you know you can promote your company with Shropshire Business magazine and website for as little as £750 for a whole year? With a readership of more than 10,000, it’s a powerful and cost-effective way of reaching out to new customers and partners on your doorstep. Email editor@shropshirebiz.com for a copy of our media pack.



By Carl Jones
Shropshire Business Editor

Have you tuned into our brand-new business podcast? We’ve teamed up with Shropshire Live to bring you news, views and in-depth interviews with some of the county’s most fascinating business leaders.

Sponsored by two-time company of the year winner McPhillips, there’s a new episode every fortnight... find us on the Podbean platform, or listen on shropshirebiz.com



Visit: www.shropshirebiz.com X @shropsbiz

f facebook.com/shropsbiz

in Shropshire Business Magazine



SHROPSHIRE BUSINESS

Welcome

There’s something particularly powerful about celebrating success and longevity in a year like this.

When the economic and political landscape feels so unpredictable, when costs continue to be squeezed, and when so many Shropshire business leaders are being asked to do more with less, the achievements we’re showcasing here seem to carry even greater weight.

They remind us that resilience isn’t just a buzzword in this county – it’s a lived reality, a daily discipline, and a shared mindset across almost every sector.

That’s why it feels particularly fitting to shine a spotlight on the brilliant businesses who refuse to let challenging conditions define their trajectory. Our 12 page special on the Shropshire Chamber Business Awards captures that spirit perfectly.

From first time entrants to long established names, from micro businesses to major employers, the breadth of innovation, ambition and sheer determination on display this year has been extraordinary.

Congratulations to first time Company of the Year winner Fowler & Gilbert – star of the hit TV series Clarkson’s Farm, among many other things – which becomes the 20th different name to lift the top prize.

These awards have always been a barometer of the county’s business health, and this year they told a story of a community that is not just surviving, but pushing forward with purpose.

Freight forwarding companies know a thing or two about navigating choppy waters – and it’s fair to say Global Freight Services has weathered more than its fair share of macro economic challenges over the past three decades. As the company marks its 30th anniversary this summer, we sit down with managing director Anton Gunter to reflect on a changing world...and the importance of retaining a personal touch in business.

There’s a strong royal flavour running through our pages this time too. Not only are we celebrating three Shropshire firms recognised in the prestigious King’s Awards, but we also pay tribute to our columnist Hollie Whittles, who has received an MBE for her contribution to business leadership, female entrepreneurship and skills development in the UK. Read her latest thoughts on page 27.

It’s inspiring to see Shropshire’s business community meeting modern day pressures with such creativity and courage. Manufacturers are investing in new technologies. Professional services firms are expanding their teams. Hospitality and tourism businesses are reinventing their offer. Start ups are scaling faster than ever.

We report on a range of exciting developments, including a transatlantic deal for Bridgnorth’s leading employer, a merger between two Shropshire marketing agencies, and a £3.9 million equity investment which is creating jobs in Telford.

And across the county, leaders are finding new ways to collaborate, share insight and support one another.

Our talking point feature this time spotlights a new campaign to tackle the fact that the proportion of people not in education, employment or training is continuing to rise, and we explore why ‘background stress’ could be denting your company’s productivity.

Proud Welshman Garry Horrigan steps into the ‘Five Minutes With...’ hotseat in this edition, discussing his journey from international rugby player to business development manager at a Telford chemicals company.

And our round-up of new appointments includes a fresh face at the helm of Shropshire Council, and a who’s who of experts assembled to drive forward tourism in our region.

It’s this sense of collective strength that sits at the heart of what we love most about a business community that continues to inspire.



Shrewsbury MP Julia Buckley with delegates at the roundtable event



Sarah Davies

Shropshire is not immune to the national surge in young people who are not in education, employment or training. In fact, the county's mix of rural isolation and patchy public transport presents some serious challenges.

And the latest findings from Alan Milburn's Government commissioned review make one thing painfully clear: this is not a blip. It is a structural failure, and unless something changes, the UK could see 1.25 million NEET young people by 2031, up from just over one million today.

Milburn describes a "whole system failure" in which education, health, welfare and employment structures no longer support young people into adulthood. The evidence, he argues, does not point to a single cause but to a system "stuck in the past", one that leaves too many young people detached from work and learning at the very moment they should be taking their first steps into independence.

For Shropshire employers, this raises a difficult but unavoidable question: if the system is failing, what role can local businesses play in

The Search for a NEET Solution

The proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training is climbing. ADAM PRINGLE looks at some of the efforts across Shropshire to turn the tide

fixing it? The answer, increasingly, is that they must play a central one – not out of charity, but out of necessity.

A shrinking labour pool threatens productivity, growth and the long term health of the local economy. And while national reform is essential, the most promising solutions emerging right now are local, collaborative and rooted in the realities of Shropshire's communities.

For example, Telford College has led a successful bid to create one of the UK's new Youth Employment Hubs. Over the next 12 months, more than 300 young people aged 16 to 24 will be supported into work, training or education through a partnership between the college, Telford & Wrekin Council and supported employment charity Landau.

The timing could not be better. Milburn's review warns that Britain risks a 25% rise in the number of young people not in work or education, potentially reaching 1.25 million by the early 2030s without decisive action. He calls the current situation a "catastrophic systems failure" and urges an overhaul of education, health, welfare and the jobs market to prevent a "lost generation".

Sarah Davies, Telford College's executive

director of partnerships and employer engagement, says the hub is exactly the kind of targeted, practical intervention the review demands. She describes it as a place designed to break down barriers, rebuild confidence and give young people a clear route into sustained employment or further learning. Participants will receive intensive one to one support, access to accredited training in English, maths and digital skills, employer led events, work experience and mock interviews. "When you give young people the right support at the right time, it changes lives," she says – a sentiment echoed across the county.

The hub builds on the college's 'Into Employment' programmes which have supported 821 learners in 2024/25, with 309 progressing into jobs across logistics, construction, health and social care, and digital. The new hub will extend that reach further, with a town centre base and targeted outreach in rural areas such as TF1 and TF7, using a mobile teaching unit to ensure young people across the borough have equal access to support.

Six employer engagement events will run across the year, including job fairs, sector insight sessions and apprenticeship events delivered in collaboration with the DWP.

Local leaders are clear about the stakes. Councillor Shirley Reynolds, cabinet member for children, young people, education, employment and skills at Telford & Wrekin Council, says the hub strengthens an already "strong offer" for young people, complementing initiatives such as the Telford Job Box, the borough's Skills Strategy and the Stay Near, Go Far campaign.

But while the hub is seen as a major step forward, it sits within a much wider landscape of challenges. Nationally, more than one million 16–24 year olds are now NEET – the highest level in over a decade. The economic cost is estimated at £125 billion a year which, to put things in context, is more than the UK currently spends on education.

Milburn's report highlights several drivers: the collapse of entry level jobs, a dramatic fall in apprenticeship starts for young people, rising ill health and anxiety, the emergence of a "bedroom generation" shaped by social media and post Covid isolation, and a fragmented system in which schools, colleges, the NHS, welfare agencies and employers operate in silos.

Perhaps most strikingly, six in ten NEET young people have never had a job, up from four in ten two decades ago. Yet 84% say they want a job or training. The issue is not willingness – it is access, confidence and support.

Shropshire's geography compounds these pressures. For an 18 year old living in a village with one bus a day, struggling with anxiety and unsure how to navigate job applications, the leap into work can feel impossibly wide. Employers across the county report difficulty filling vacancies in hospitality, manufacturing, logistics and care, even as thousands of young people remain disconnected from the labour market. The mismatch is stark, and it is growing.

This is why youth services are becoming an increasingly important part of the conversation. All About Youth, the first and only youth organisation in the Midlands to achieve the National Youth Agency Quality Mark, says youth work can play a vital role in preparing young people for employment. The charity, which supports young people across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, argues that youth clubs are often misunderstood as purely social spaces.

In reality, they are places where young people develop confidence, communication skills, teamwork, resilience and independence – qualities employers consistently say they struggle to find.

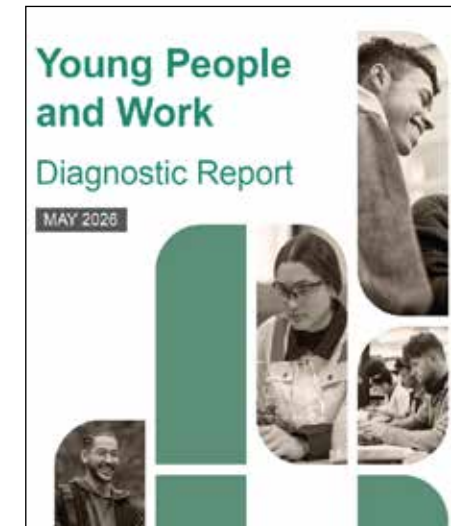
Chief executive Richard Parkes describes youth work as a bridge between enjoyment and employment. Through sports, creative activities, volunteering, group projects and leadership roles, young people discover what they enjoy, what they are good at and what they might want to do in the future.

Initiatives such as the Youth Forum and Youth Parliament give them experience in leadership, communication and decision making, while trusted youth workers help build aspirations and self belief, particularly for those who feel disconnected from education or unsure about their future.

Richard says the journey into employment often begins with something simple: feeling safe, feeling valued and feeling part of something. He argues that if the UK is serious about tackling youth unemployment,



Richard Parkes of All About Youth



Alan Milburn's Young People And Work report

investment in youth services must be part of the solution.

Another area where Shropshire is taking a proactive stance is neurodiversity. Employers across the county have been urged to rethink traditional recruitment practices to unlock a wealth of untapped neurodivergent talent.

At a roundtable organised by Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and hosted by supported employment service Enable, delegates heard that fewer than a third of autistic adults are currently in employment.

They discussed the need for earlier intervention, clearer pathways and better informed support systems, as well as the persistent misconceptions that individuals with learning difficulties are "hard work". Plans are now under way to develop a centralised directory of support organisations across Shropshire, helping businesses understand what help is available and how to access it.

Shropshire Chamber chief executive Ruth Ross says the Chamber is playing a pivotal role as a bridge between employers, support services and jobseekers. She describes the session as "frank, honest and productive", highlighting that the issue is not a lack of

willingness among employers but a lack of awareness, confidence and connection.

With better alignment between support systems and employers, she argues, there is a significant opportunity to unlock talent while delivering both social and economic value.

Shrewsbury MP Julia Buckley echoes this, saying that small adjustments can open up pathways into employment and she urged local businesses to sign the Chamber's Mental Health Charter to help build more supportive and inclusive workplaces.

Taken together, these efforts – the Youth Employment Hub, the work of All About Youth, the push for neurodiversity friendly recruitment – represent a growing movement across Shropshire to confront the NEET crisis head on.

They are not silver bullets, but they are practical, grounded and rooted in local knowledge. They recognise that young people need more than qualifications; they need confidence, connection, opportunity and a system that does not leave them to navigate the transition into adulthood alone.

The NEET crisis is deep, structural and urgent. But across Shropshire, the beginnings of a solution are taking shape – in youth clubs, in college classrooms, in employer roundtables...

Milburn has called for a national movement to galvanise communities around this issue. Shropshire, in many ways, is already building one. The challenge now is scale. Employers must rebuild the first rung of the career ladder by creating genuine entry level roles with built in training and fewer unnecessary barriers.

They must work with colleges on outcomes, not just placements, helping shape curriculum content and offering real world projects that lead to real world jobs. Recruitment processes must become more human, with informal conversations replacing automated filters that shut out inexperienced applicants before they have a chance to be seen.

And workplaces must become more supportive, with mentors, gradual onboarding and mental health aware practices that help young people thrive rather than withdraw.

The NEET crisis is deep, structural and urgent. But across Shropshire, the beginnings of a solution are taking shape – in youth clubs, in college classrooms, in employer roundtables and in the quiet, determined work of people who refuse to accept that a generation should be written off.

The question now is whether enough employers, educators and policymakers will join them.

Engineering and manufacturing leaders have revealed the toughest ‘skills’ picture yet in the latest annual Training Barometer released by a Telford training company.

Nearly three quarters of businesses surveyed in the research by In-Comm Training said they felt there was a lack of Government support to address skills shortages following the Budget last year, whilst only a third believe the Industrial Strategy is going to support their workforce development plans.

These concerns are reflected in an uncertain landscape, with less than half (46%) boosting training budgets and, worryingly, just 45% planning to take on an apprentice over the next twelve months.

This is the first time in the history of these findings that this number has fallen under half and is a massive 24% drop on recruitment intentions seen in 2025.

Staff retention has also been an issue for the 103 companies who responded – 58% of bosses say they are struggling to keep employees, and this could be due to a difficult cocktail of circumstances, including an ageing workforce, wage inflation and changes to employment law.

Gareth Jones, managing director of In-Comm Training, said: “Skills continue to be one of the pressing challenges for manufacturers and it appears the majority have lost faith in the Government playing their part in helping them bridge the gap.

“Changes to skills provision and the pace it is being delivered is damaging engagement due to a lack of industry understanding and a belief that they will not deliver the skill levels required.

“It’s not difficult to see where the lack of confidence stems from. The removal of certain qualifications, defunding of some standards and reducing the level of competency involved in apprenticeships has left firms feeling the system is unwieldy and not fit for purpose.

“There has also been no increase in funding for engineering apprenticeships since 2020, whilst costs have risen astronomically in the same period. It begs the question, how are providers going to be able to maintain the same level of quality provision, while being squeezed from all angles?

“All of this is translating into less of an appetite to invest in apprentices. A 24% drop in the number of companies planning to take on a new apprentice is more than worrying and should send shockwaves through the corridors of Whitehall.

“It feels that management teams are being battered at every possible turn with legislation, employment changes and then issues coming out of the conflict in Iran. There’s very little financial wriggle room to invest in the future.”

The In-Comm Training Barometer is one of the UK’s leading reports on the current skills and training landscape, providing critical data on provision, apprenticeships and company sentiment.

Releasing staff from core activities (55%) continues to be the biggest factor holding firms back from upskilling and this is exacerbated with just under two fifths not considering modular training, once felt to be a preferred upskilling option for employers.



Changes to skills provision and the pace it is being delivered is damaging engagement

Skills shortage is real concern



A 24% drop in the number of companies planning to take on a new apprentice is more than worrying

This could be down to the apprenticeship units in the Skills & Growth Levy being up to 16 weeks, which many firms feel is too long to lose valuable employees for.

Nearly a third of all companies questioned are looking to boost leadership and management training, yet the Government’s recent decision to defund Level 3 and above apprenticeship pathways in this area may reduce this demand over time.

Gareth said: “Interestingly, 60% of respondents felt recent changes to the Skills & Growth Levy – particularly around modular, apprenticeship-aligned training – will add value to their organisations.

“In my opinion, I believe the Government has chosen this route to try and deliver some quick impact, rather than attempting the hard yards of changing legislation to better enable non-apprenticeship aligned training.”

OTHER KEY FINDINGS

- More than a quarter (27%) of firms feel the new funding for under-25 apprenticeships will make them more likely to recruit an apprentice
- 53% of respondents use apprenticeships to upskill their workforce
- 68% of businesses have invested in new technologies to improve productivity
- Just 17% of management teams are using AI to support workforce development, training or skills planning

Advertisement

Bronte’s Shropshire inspiration



Meet Shropshire author Bronte Bennett, who has just celebrated the publication of her first novel, The Squire – a fabulous, somewhat amorous romp through country life, hitting the spot where Rivals whetted our appetite.



Whilst Bronte’s other job takes her around the world to train leaders and teams in the luxury hospitality and corporate sectors, her first love is writing. And finding the right environment for the process is a vital component in success, as she explained:

“I first visited Marrington Escapes in Chirbury nestled here in south Shropshire back in 2022.

“I was so inspired by the beauty of the grounds and, of course, the Hall itself that it sowed the seeds for my book. Three years later ... it was published. So Marrington has a special place in my heart.”

“As a writer, one of the most precious commodities we chase is time. During my first four-day stay here, I managed to write 60,000 words towards my manuscript. It was the peace and tranquillity that gave me the opportunity to ‘just be’ in my writer’s head.”



Marrington Hall

“This wonderful, restored Tudor Hall has a unique magic all of its own – the grand drawing rooms, the smell of wood polish, and dreamy scenes from the windows allowed me to channel my inner Jane Austen. I like to think my book is a bit like Pride and Prejudice, but set in contemporary times.”



“It was such a thrill returning to the Hall and seeing my book among a curated collection – especially as it was next to a copy of Jane Austen’s Emma.”

Marrington Escapes, run by Morris & Company, offers a range of properties for luxury breaks on the 600-acre rural estate in south Shropshire – a perfect author’s retreat.

Scan the QR code and listen to the podcast.



marringtonescapes.com

In my View:

Alex Morris, Senior Quantity Surveyor at



The beautiful scenery at our sister company Marrington Escapes, brings to mind the recent 100th birthday celebrations for Sir David Attenborough – a man whose passion and dedication to the natural world continues to inspire generations.

While discussing this milestone with my children, I reflected on the recent Carbon Literacy Training undertaken by our senior team here at Morris Property, where a video featuring Sir David opened the session.

I found the course both fascinating and eye-opening, particularly the statistics surrounding the carbon impact of the way we work. One area that especially surprised me was the hidden carbon cost of emails. I assumed emails simply ‘lived in the cloud’ but actually highly engineered facilities housing vast amounts of network and computing equipment are responsible for storing and processing this data. These generate significant heat and require extensive cooling systems, all of which contributes to carbon emissions.

Of course, email is essential. It has become one of the most important tools for communication in modern working life. However, we all recognise the volume of unnecessary messages we receive and send each week – cc-ing people or hitting the ‘reply all’ button unnecessarily. Individually, these actions seem insignificant, but collectively when multiplied across thousands of emails, the environmental impact becomes considerable.

We all share a responsibility to our planet, our children and future generations to make better choices wherever we can. At Morris’ we have a collective commitment through our Carbon Reduction Plan to make a meaningful difference: reducing superfluous emails is just one small but important tick in the box.

The Hidden Drain

Why 'Background Stress' is the silent killer of productivity

Heather Noble



If there's one phrase that echoes through the offices and boardrooms of our region more than any other, it's this: "I didn't realise how stressed I was until something small tipped me over."

As a leadership and communication specialist, I hear this constantly. That "something small" – a missed deadline, a blunt email, a broken printer – is rarely the actual problem. It is simply the final straw landing on a mountain of background stress: the low-level, persistent pressure bubbling beneath the surface of our professional lives.

In the fast-paced world of local business, where we pride ourselves on resilience and "getting on with it," background stress is deceptively easy to ignore. But it is the silent pressure cooker of the modern workplace, and it's costing our organisations more than we realise.

Unlike a heart-pounding crisis, background stress is subtle. It's the constant juggling of competing priorities, the inbox that never hits zero, the emotional labour of appearing "fine" for the sake of the team, and the mental load of home life that follows us into the office. Add into this the general instability in the world as a whole and the pot starts to boil over!

Individually, these factors feel manageable. Collectively, they create a cognitive fog. When we are stuck in this state of "quiet" overload, we lose access to the higher-level thinking required for strategic decision-making and creativity. We stop being proactive and start being reactive. We don't just lose our focus; we lose our edge.

From a leadership perspective, background stress is a significant barrier to growth and can have direct effects on your bottom line. It manifests in three critical ways:

- 1. Communication breakdown:** Stress shortens our fuse. It makes us less patient and less curious. When a team is under background pressure, misunderstandings increase and tensions rise. Transactions replace collaborations.
- 2. Eroded confidence:** When every task feels harder than it should, "imposter syndrome" creeps in. Employees begin to question their competence, and trust within the team starts to fray.
- 3. Delayed crisis:** Because it doesn't shout, we don't address it early. We wait until a key player burns out or a team dynamic implodes. By then, the damage to your culture – and your delivery – is already done.

Spotting the signs in your team

In my work across various sectors, the patterns are consistent. You'll know your team is suffering from background stress when meetings



become purely transactional, people become unusually defensive, and productivity drops despite everyone working longer hours. Perhaps most tellingly, the team loses its sense of humour and connection.

This isn't a sign of a bad team; it's a sign of an overloaded one

There is a dangerous myth that leaders must be endlessly resilient. The reality is that the most effective leaders aren't superheroes; they are observers.

The first step is noticing. Noticing isn't a "soft" skill; it's a strategic one. It allows you to intervene before a dip in morale becomes a resignation.

Most people don't need a dramatic overhaul; they need space, practical tools, and leaders who recognise that stress isn't a personal failing, it's a human response to a demanding world.

The second step is modelling. If you never pause or set boundaries, your team won't either. By creating "psychological safety", where an employee feels safe to say "I'm struggling", you can address the pressure before the cooker explodes.

Background stress is one of the biggest obstacles to a thriving business, but it is also one of the most addressable. Most people don't need a dramatic overhaul; they need space, practical tools, and leaders who recognise that stress isn't a personal failing, it's a human response to a demanding world.

When we name the pressure and address it with empathy, we don't just improve wellbeing. We improve the very health and future of our organisations.

Heather Noble runs Salt Solutions – a business training, mentoring and coaching business in Shropshire



The partnership highlights the college's expanding reputation as a specialist provider for the Food and Drink sector

Shrewsbury College secures major apprenticeship partnership with Müller

Shrewsbury College is pleased to announce a new partnership with Müller to deliver engineering apprenticeship programmes across the dairy group's operations in Shropshire.

The agreement represents a significant step in enhancing the region's technical training capacity and highlights the college's expanding reputation as a specialist provider for the Food and Drink sector.

Shrewsbury College was selected for its expertise, curriculum quality, and strong alignment with industry needs.

The college has introduced this new apprenticeship programme specifically to assist employers across the wider Marches region. Focusing on a specialised Food and Drink Engineering apprenticeship route, making it a strategically valuable development for local workforce planning.

The new programmes directly align with the priorities outlined in the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), helping to address skills shortages and supporting the sector's long-term competitiveness.

Further strengthening its position, Shrewsbury College has also been formally approved by the National Skills Academy for Food and Drink as a specialist provider for this pathway.

This endorsement places the college among only seven nationally approved training centres for this apprenticeship standard, providing external validation of the programme design, quality, and relevance.

To support delivery, the college is investing in new specialised equipment and training resources to ensure apprentices benefit from modern, industry-standard facilities that reflect current Food and Drink Engineering environments.

This investment will enhance practical learning and ensure apprentices acquire the high-level technical skills employers demand.

James Staniforth, Principal of Shrewsbury College, said: "We are very proud to collaborate with Müller on this vital skills initiative. As one of the region's leading employers, Müller plays a key role in supporting local economic growth, and this partnership allows us to enhance the flow of engineering and technical talent essential to the food manufacturing sector. This represents a significant step forward for both the college and the Marches region."

A Müller spokesperson added: "We're pleased to collaborate with Shrewsbury College to support colleagues' development across our organisation.

"Apprenticeships are vital in shaping our future workforce, enhancing skills, and providing clear routes for progression. This



A new apprenticeship programme specifically to assist employers such as Müller has been introduced by the college



An aerial view of the Müller site in Market Drayton

partnership will help us continue to build the capabilities needed for the future."

Louise Cairns, from the food trade body, National Skills Academy for Food & Drink, added: "We are delighted to welcome Shrewsbury College into the Industry Approved Network and look forward to supporting them on their journey with this critical programme for our sector."

Equity investment drives firm forward

A highways drainage contractor has doubled revenue and created 20 new jobs in a ‘transformative year’ with the help of a £3.9 million equity investment.

Telford-based Crown Plus secured funding from the Midlands Engine Investment Fund II, through fund manager Mercia Ventures, in April 2025.

Since then, the Halesfield-based company has won a host of new contracts, expanded its team and invested over £2 million in plant and equipment to enable it to take on larger projects.

It has also appointed a new managing director, Jenny Moten, who has held senior roles at National Highways, Amey, Cadent and Core Highways. Jenny joined the company in September 2025 as executive director and was promoted to her current position in recognition of her success in driving its growth.

Crown Plus has developed a range of lower-carbon maintenance techniques and its own specialist equipment. It is known in particular for its filter drain recycling. Instead of replacing stone in highway filter drains, the weeds are removed and the gravel is cleaned and recycled on site, reducing waste sent to landfill, traffic disruption and project costs.

The company, which works with National Highways and major contractors, has recently completed a major project on the M50 in the Midlands where it made extensive use of filter drain recycling and no-dig solutions such as patching and lining. It is currently working on a major scheme on the A46.

Founded in 2015 by Paul Conner and Gary Price, Crown Plus now employs 72 staff. It expects to increase turnover by a further 25% and create 25 new jobs by 2030.

Jenny Moten said: “The investment by MEIF II and Mercia Ventures was a major milestone for Crown Plus, creating a platform for further growth. With increasing industry focus on carbon reduction and sustainable maintenance, Crown Plus is now



Night repairs by the Crown Plus team

well positioned to help lead the future of sustainable highway drainage remediation in the UK.”

Rafael Joseph of Mercia Ventures said: “The past 12 months have been transformative for Crown Plus. The company had already tripled turnover in the three years before our investment but was being held back by limited resources. The funding helped to unlock its potential and has enabled it to go from strength to strength.”

David Tindall, senior investment manager at the British Business Bank, said: “It is encouraging to see the Midlands Engine Investment Fund II being put to such effective use in driving growth and creating jobs. We’re delighted to have supported Crown Plus on its journey and look forward to seeing the team build on this progress and achieve its ambitious future plans.”

The £400 million Midlands Engine Investment Fund II covers the entire Midlands region and provides equity investment up to £5 million and debt finance from £25,000 to £2 million to help a range of small and medium-sized businesses to start up, scale up or stay ahead.



New managing director Jenny Moten



Fowler & Gilbert is crowned 2026 Shropshire Company of the Year

All four corners of county celebrate

It’s been established as the biggest event on the local business calendar for more than a quarter of a century – and the 2026 edition of the Shropshire Chamber Business Awards was another sparkling celebration

It’s been a whirlwind few months for Market Drayton manufacturing business Fowler & Gilbert. Just weeks after picking up a King’s Award, it has now been crowned Shropshire’s 2026 Company of the Year.

The company, which designs and supplies custom steel framed buildings for the agricultural and industrial sectors, celebrated in front of more than 650 people at the 26th Shropshire Chamber Business Awards.

It is the first company from the town to win the competition’s highest honour, and becomes the 20th different name to feature on the trophy’s roll of honour since the awards were launched in 2001.

Fowler & Gilbert employs around 50 staff at its Western Way base and is celebrating its 15th anniversary. It will be known by many for



Lee Gilbert with Jeremy Clarkson at Diddly Squat Farm

its work with Jeremy Clarkson at Diddly Squat Farm, featuring on the second season of TV series, Clarkson’s Farm.

Managing director Lee Gilbert said: “We are absolutely over the moon to have won, particularly given the fierce opposition in this category.

“It’s been a really good year for us. Moving to our own purpose-built base in Market Drayton has pushed things further for us, but it’s the team that makes us what we are. I have got a fantastic group of staff, and I can’t thank them enough.

“To receive a King’s Award in our 15th year is an incredible honour and being Shropshire Chamber Company of the Year means a great deal to us as a local business.”

There were seven companies shortlisted for the company of the year award this year. Alongside Fowler & Gilbert were former champion Pave Aways, plus Telford-based pair Aviramp and Kraft Heinz, Riverside Cabins from Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth Aluminium, and Shropshire Festivals.

A total of 14 awards were handed out on the night at another glittering celebration at Telford’s International Centre, with other winners coming from Telford, Shrewsbury, Ludlow, Whitchurch, Newport, Norton, Buildwas and Rodington.



MARTIN & JONES
MARKETING

Marketing that matters...

- **Strategy & planning**
- **PR & social media management**
- **Blogs, features and content creation**
- **Social Value workshops and campaigns**
- **Event promotion**

Get in touch today - 07917 787804

13 Arthur Street, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 1JN
hello@martinandjonesmarketing.co.uk
www.martinandjonesmarketing.co.uk



“It feels like we get a personalised service rather than a set plan off the shelf that would be generic or formulaic.”





Fran Ash, Sarah Carter and Kim Goode arrive for the awards

◀ The John Clayton Award, given to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the Shropshire business community over a number of years, went to long-time tourism and charity campaigner Katie Foster – just days after she was also presented with a British Empire Medal.

She first came to Shropshire in 1981 to join the marketing team at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust – and during a subsequent period of nearly 20 years with the organisation, she played a major role in putting it on the tourist map.

She went on to chair the English Tourist Board's Commercial Member Group, play a key role with Business Link Shropshire, and become a board member of Telford's Princess Royal Hospital.

Katie has advised state governments in Japan on industrial heritage... worked for the UK Trade & Investment Board, and chaired the Heritage Lottery Fund for the West Midlands for nearly a decade, overseeing the allocation of more than £12 million each year to deserving causes.

More recently, she has founded and led Alzheimer's Research UK's Shropshire Fundraising Group, helping it to raise well over £150,000.

The awards, hosted for the first time this year by Shropshire Live radio presenter Ryan Kennedy, showcased the achievements of more than 50 brilliant businesses.

Telford-based winners this year included manufacturing and engineering winner Kraft Heinz, tourism and leisure champion Exotic Zoo, and McPhillips which won the community champion award for firms which support their local communities.

From Shrewsbury, Planet Doughnut won the trailblazer award for innovation, Shuker Building and Development was recognised for outstanding growth, Lingen Davies Cancer Support was voted best place to work, and Jack Ryan from Sygneus won the young business person of the year award.



Katie Foster receives The John Clayton Award



Master of ceremonies Ryan Kennedy



Kraft Heinz with the manufacturing and engineering award



Exotic Zoo with the tourism and leisure award



Carl Jones interviews company of the year winner Lee Gilbert



A colourful red carpet greeting for guests



McPhillips won the community champion trophy



Planet Doughnut won the Trailblazer innovation award



Lingen Davies – best place to work



Shuker Building and Development won the outstanding business growth award



Jack Ryan receives the Young Person award from Victoria Lawson of Pave Aways

FOWLER & GILBERT

Agricultural & Industrial Buildings

Building our future. Celebrating 15 years of excellence.

For 15 years, Fowler & Gilbert has been designing, manufacturing and constructing high quality agricultural, equestrian and industrial buildings across the UK.

EXPERT DESIGN
Bespoke buildings designed around your needs.

QUALITY BUILD
Precision manufactured to the highest standards.

TRUSTED PARTNER
A dedicated team delivering outstanding service from start to finish.

BUILT TO LAST
Durable, reliable buildings that stand the test of time.

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS
OF BUILDING STRONGER FUTURES
2011 – 2026

Proud recipients of The King's Award for Enterprise in Promoting Opportunity 2026
and winners of Company of the Year at the Shropshire Chamber Business Awards 2026.

01630 655555

sales@flgb.co.uk

www.flgb.co.uk

Western Way, Market Drayton, Shropshire, TF9 3UY

14

15



Claire Brown and Ed Glover

Shropshire Festivals was crowned best small business, The Salwey Lodge from Ludlow won the best new business title, Dulson Training won for outstanding customer service, Wild Shropshire took the sustainability prize, and The Hundred House lifted the retail leisure and hospitality achievement trophy.

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce president Piran Littleton said: "These awards stand as a beacon of excellence, recognising the resilience, innovation, and outstanding achievements of businesses and individuals across our county."

"Year after year, we see organisations grow, adapt, and push boundaries – and we are incredibly proud to continue celebrating that success."

"Businesses across Shropshire, and beyond, are navigating difficult trading conditions, shaped by economic uncertainty, rising costs, and ongoing global pressures."

"Yet, in the face of this, our local business community has shown remarkable strength. The resilience, ingenuity, and determination on display across the county is truly inspiring."

He added: "More than ever, this is a time that highlights the importance of working together. Collaboration, support, and shared ambition are what enable our businesses not just to endure, but to thrive."

Shropshire Chamber chief executive Ruth Ross said: "The night wasn't just about trophies – beautiful as they are. It was about celebrating the resilience, the creativity and the sheer determination that defines our business community."

"Over the past 12 months – in a challenging business climate – it's a spirit that has been on full display."

"We had a record number of entries this year, and the standard was exceptional. That's great news for the competition – but not so easy for the people who had to pick a winner!"

She told the audience that much of the work done by the Chamber over the past year had one recurring theme... bringing people together. ►



Shropshire Festivals is crowned best small business



James Sherwin of Wild Shropshire receiving the sustainability award



Best new business – The Salwey Lodge in Ludlow



Dulson Training won for outstanding customer service



Chamber president Piran Littleton



Chamber CEO Ruth Ross



The Hundred House wins the retail, leisure and hospitality award



Graham Corfield CEO

LOCAL AMBITION, WORLDWIDE OBJECTIVES...



Continued expertise and innovation in product development is the driving force behind Telford based Aviramp® an independently owned UK-based manufacturing company specialising in aviation access and loading systems.



Our step free boarding ramps and bridges offer improved safety, drive turnaround efficiencies, solve capacity issues, deliver an all-inclusive passenger experience and provide greater dignity to passengers with reduced mobility (PRMs).

With a worldwide network of clients, we are proud recipients of the Queen's Award for Enterprise in International Trade. Aviramp® was also named in the most recent **Sunday Times 100** – the prestigious ranking of Britain's fastest-growing private companies.



AIRCRAFT BOARDING RAMPS AND BRIDGES



15 Stafford Park | Telford | Shropshire
United Kingdom | TF3 3BB

T: +44 (0) 1952 291220 | E: sales@aviramp.com
www.aviramp.com



Jacob Moore who designed the trophies

◀ “Collaborations spark the sort of ideas, partnerships and possibilities that simply don’t happen in isolation. That’s the power of community – and it’s the heartbeat of Shropshire Chamber.”

Talking of the beautiful trophies – they were designed and made this year by students at Shrewsbury College, who were invited to pitch their designs for the local business community’s big celebration.

The winning concepts were created by Jacob Moore, a 17-year-old from Ellesmere, who said he was incredibly proud to have been able to design an award that recognises ‘significant achievements within businesses’.

This year’s guests raised several thousand pounds for Lingen Davies Cancer Fund, towards its Sunflower Appeal

He explained: “I created the award by analysing past examples and existing trophies as benchmark references, before brainstorming initial ideas. I then refined these into two final concepts, producing both sketches and virtual models.”

Unfortunately he was unable to attend the awards ceremony to see his trophies being presented, because he secured a three-week industrial internship in Switzerland through the college, working on a project to design and manufacture a mobile phone charging station, while also gaining valuable insight into Swiss engineering practices.

The awards team choose a different local charity to support from its fundraising charity game each year. This year’s guests raised several thousand pounds for Lingen Davies Cancer Fund, towards its Sunflower Appeal. 



Naomi Atkin of Lingen Davies



Blue sunflower or yellow sunflower – that was the question



The charity fundraising game



Carl Jones and Stuart Woodings



Gwynneth Slavin, Richard Sheehan, Natasha Fox, Keith Winter, and Ruth Ross



Get Free Essential Business Support with Quest

Available to Shropshire Chamber Members

Find Out More About Membership



Want to know more? Contact us:
membership@shropshire-chamber.co.uk
01952 208200



Chamber HR

Chamber Health and Safety

Chamber Legal

Chamber Tax



The awards get under way



The Lingen Davies Team



The pre-dinner drinks reception



The Midlands Air Ambulance team



Aaron and Partners



Pippa Tait, Shelly Barratt, Simon Adcock and Sylvie Cowell



New York, New York – guests get involved in the musical entertainment



Fun at the after show party



Grace Bywater, Chloe Symms, and Nicola Clinton



Guests on the Shropshire Business table



Andrew Turner, Robert Lees, and Tom James



The McPhillips team



Halls Holdings and guests

Wow your clients and treat your team - hold a VIP event at...

SHROPSHIRE PETAL FIELDS

Looking for a unique venue for your next corporate event?

Limited packages are available at our **spectacular flower field**, complete with tips, seating and a fully stocked bar.

6th-16th AUGUST 2026

OPEN FOR A LIMITED TIME

NR NEWPORT, SHROPSHIRE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

SHROPSHIRE Festivals

Stroll through the **layers of colours** in **stunning fields of delphiniums and sunflowers**, and capture special memories amongst the magic.

shropshirepetalfields.co.uk

Find out more by emailing **fun@shropshirefestivals.co.uk**

Introducing... Pop in the Petals

Friday 31st July

One of the most sought-after tribute bands in the world, **ABBA Sensation** will transport you back to the golden days of **ABBA**.

Proms in the Petals

Saturday 1st August

Experience the magic of a 50-piece orchestra performing iconic songs from film, stage and screen.

Scan for tickets

An event from **Shropshire's Best Small Business**

BUSINESS AWARDS 2026 WINNER



More than 650 people were at Telford International Centre



Paul Naylor, Henry Carpenter, and Mark Waugh



The team from Lanyon Bowdler

OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE – IT’S OFFICIAL!
WE’RE PROUD WINNERS OF THE 2026 SHROPSHIRE CHAMBER BUSINESS AWARD

LORRY LICENCES

BUS LICENCES

CAR & TRAILER TOWING

FORKLIFT TRAINING

ADR TRAINING

DRIVER CPC TRAINING

TRANSPORT MANAGER

FIRST AID TRAINING

www.dulsontraining.co.uk

info@dulsontraining.co.uk

01743 709611



Entertainers got the audience on their feet with a mid-show musical performance



A fun casino was part of the after-show entertainment



The after-show party under way



Staff and guests from Chrisbeon



Staff from Telford College



Jack Ryan of Sygneus with his award



THE 2026 AWARD WINNERS

- COMPANY OF THE YEAR
Fowler & Gilbert, Market Drayton
- BEST NEW BUSINESS
The Salwey Lodge, Ludlow
- BEST SMALL BUSINESS
Shropshire Festivals, Buildwas
- YOUNG BUSINESS PERSON
Jack Ryan from Sygneus, Shrewsbury
- MANUFACTURING AND ENGINEERING
Kraft Heinz, Telford
- COMMUNITY CHAMPION
McPhillips, Telford
- TOURISM AND LEISURE
Exotic Zoo, Telford
- OUTSTANDING BUSINESS GROWTH
Shuker Building & Development, Shrewsbury
- OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE
Dulson Training, Rodington
- SUSTAINABILITY ACHIEVEMENT
Wild Shropshire, Whitchurch
- RETAIL, LEISURE & HOSPITALITY
The Hundred House, Norton
- THE TRAILBLAZER – INNOVATION AWARD
Planet Doughnut, Shrewsbury
- BEST PLACE TO WORK
Lingen Davies Cancer Support, Shrewsbury
- THE JOHN CLAYTON AWARD
Katie Foster

A generational opportunity

Bridgnorth Aluminium has signed a landmark transatlantic deal with Lotte Aluminium Materials USA to accelerate the company's growth in the battery materials sector.

The company, which employs 368 people at its production facility in Shropshire, will deliver battery grade aluminium to one of the world's leading suppliers of advanced materials for the battery industry.

Signed at the customer's site in Elizabethtown in Kentucky, the five-year agreement marks the culmination of a technical and commercial journey that has seen both firms work closely together to bring new material to a rapidly emerging market.

Adrian Musgrave, head of sales at Bridgnorth Aluminium, said: "This landmark agreement marks an important milestone in our diversification strategy.

"The transition to electrified transportation and energy storage presents one of the most significant industrial opportunities of our generation, and our technical expertise, agility and 'green' production methods are at the forefront of this transition.

"Material manufactured here in Bridgnorth will be used by Lotte Aluminium Materials for the next five years. It will go into production of next generation batteries that will end up in electric vehicles and energy storage systems.

"Battery foil plays a critical role in battery performance, making secure, high quality supply partnerships like this one increasingly important to manufacturers serving both the 'EV' and 'ESS' sectors."

This latest deal represents a successful 18 months for one of Shropshire's largest manufacturing employers as it returned to 24/7 production.

Backed by the Viohalco Group, Bridgnorth Aluminium has recovered from a difficult trading environment to deliver a buoyant order book that covers customers in printing, packaging, construction, energy and, more recently, electrification.

New jobs have been created to take the workforce to 368 and more than £2m has been invested in the latest cast house technology and a dedicated slitting line to increase efficiency and capability.



Michelle Elliott and Eunseong Chang from Lotte Aluminium Materials USA with Gerhard Trilling and Adrian Musgrave of Bridgnorth Aluminium at the signing ceremony in Kentucky

Adrian said: "This is giving us a strong foundation to target new sectors both at home and overseas. We're leveraging collaborative agreements where we get involved in the early stages of a project. This means we can influence specification and ensure the high grade material we supply delivers the most effective performance possible."



Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Apprenticeship Awards

2026 Awards Evening October 8th



Tickets On Sale From July 6th

stwaa.co.uk

Trusted Legal Support for the Agricultural Community

HATCHERS
Solicitors LLP

The Minsterley Show is Shropshire's oldest and most prestigious one-day agricultural show, celebrating the very best of rural life with livestock competitions, equestrian displays, a food hall, trade stands, and family entertainment.

We're delighted to be attending on **Saturday 15th August** and would love for you to come along and meet our team.

At Hatchers, we provide a comprehensive legal service to farming clients across a wide range of agricultural matters. Our reputation is built on a genuine understanding of the farming community, combined with extensive expertise in agricultural law.

Our team regularly attend livestock markets and are actively involved in the local farming community. We are proud members of the Shropshire Chamber of Agriculture and the County Land Owners Association, advising farming businesses and landed estates across the region.

We advise on a wide range of agricultural matters, including farming partnerships and business structures, the sale and purchase of farms and estates, agricultural tenancies, employment disputes and contracts, tax planning, wills and succession planning, planning law and diversification, as well as equestrian law and litigation matters.

The day promises to be fun for all ages - and we'll also be running a Jellycat giveaway, so be sure to visit our stand!

To get an enquiry started either call us on 01743 248545 or email mail@hatchers.co.uk or come visit us as our stand on the 15th August.



Jennifer Woods
Legal Director and Chair of Rural Services Group.
Head of Dispute Resolution Team.



Sarah Jane Smith
Legal Director and Member of Rural Services Group.
Head of Family Law Team.



Georgia Davies
Legal Director and Member of Rural Services Group.
Head of Wills, Trust and Probate Team.

We've moved

We're creating the right space for growth - for our clients, our people, and the region

One Anchorage Avenue, Shrewsbury Business Park,
Shrewsbury, SY2 6FG

Find out more at
www.hcrlaw.com

hcrlaw

HCR Legal LLP is authorised and regulated by the SRA



SQLBits is one of the largest data conferences in Europe

Why our best businesses will be built on people, not platforms



Hollie Whittles

Earlier this year, I stood on a stage at SQLBits – one of Europe's largest data conferences – and told a room full of technology professionals something they weren't quite expecting to hear: the reason data projects fail is almost never technical. It's almost always human.

Wrong team dynamics. Poor communication under pressure. Leaders who understand platforms better than they understand people. I've been building and running a Microsoft Data and AI consultancy in Shropshire for twenty years, and I can tell you, the pattern holds. The tech is rarely the problem. The people and culture around it usually are.

Right now, there's enormous pressure on businesses to adopt AI, and that pressure is only going to intensify. Every week brings new tools, new platforms, new promises. And there's a very real risk that companies, including Shropshire businesses, get swept up in the procurement of technology without

asking the more important question: is our team ready to use it well?

At Purple Frog Data, we've had a team around us who've stayed for the journey. People who've grown with the business, shaped its culture, and become genuinely expert in what they do. That loyalty isn't accidental. It comes from investing in people first – their development, their wellbeing, their sense of belonging and purpose. No tool does that for you.

The gap isn't in the technology. It's in the human infrastructure around it

This year, Purple Frog celebrates its twentieth anniversary. I was also honoured to receive an MBE in the King's Honours for services to business, female entrepreneurship, and skills. Both of those things mean far more to me because they happened alongside the people who built this with us, not despite them.

I'm also working at a national level right now on AI skills policy feeding into Skills England's emerging frameworks for what AI literacy should look like in the workforce. One thing is clear from those conversations: the gap isn't in the technology. It's in the human infrastructure around it. Critical thinking. Collaboration. The confidence to question what an AI tells you. These are the skills that will define successful businesses over the next decade, and they can't be downloaded.

So my ask of Shropshire's business community is this: by all means, explore



Hollie celebrates her MBE

AI. Invest in AI tools like Claude, ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, in automation, in data. But invest equally in the people who will use it.

Create the kind of culture where your team feels safe to learn, to experiment, and to stay. Because the competitive edge in the years ahead won't belong to whoever buys the most advanced platform. It'll belong to the businesses that knew their people were always the point.

Hollie Whittles MBE is co-founder & director of Purple Frog Data, in Telford



Duncan Richards of Autosshine and Tinting

A passion for cars that has developed into a business

A growing Telford vehicle customisation and protection business trusted with some of the region's most prestigious cars is expanding into Shrewsbury following increasing demand for its specialist services.

Autosshine and Tinting, based on Halesfield and founded by Duncan Richards, is investing £20,000 into a second county branch which is expected to create four new jobs. The new branch is on Vanguard Way, Battlefield.

The company, which began with vehicle valeting and window tinting in 2002, has evolved into one of the UK's leading specialists in Paint Protection Film vehicle wrapping and luxury car enhancement, working with high-end vehicles straight from dealerships as well as private owners.

Duncan said: "What started as a passion has developed into a thriving business which is trusted with some incredible vehicles."

"The new Shrewsbury branch gives us the space and capacity to continue growth while creating new opportunities for our existing team members and the talented people we recruit in the future."

Growth plans at consultancy

A Telford IT consultancy has celebrated its 23rd birthday by unveiling ambitious growth plans.

Bespoke Computing Ltd, based at Stafford Park, has been helping businesses across the country work smarter and more securely since 2003.

The company provides fully-managed IT support, strategic advice, data back-up and recovery planning and cyber security protection – ensuring customers can access systems safely from anywhere.

Some clients have been with the business from the very beginning, including Runtime UK in Wellington. Director Andy Smith said: "I've admired how founder Chris Pallett has grown Bespoke Computing over the years."

"We've bought everything from antivirus software to servers from him and recommended each other to numerous businesses along the way. We still use Bespoke Computing to this day... I can't believe it's been 23 years!"

The company is on track to increase sales by around 25% this year, with new services in the pipeline to help businesses leverage automation and use AI safely. A new 'AI Readiness Assessment' for employers has already come on stream.

Founder Chris Pallett said: "Reaching 23 years – and still growing and evolving – is something we're all incredibly proud of."

"Technology has changed dramatically since 2003, but our mission has stayed the same: to give businesses the confidence, tools and support they need to operate securely and effectively. We're excited by the opportunities ahead."

Bespoke Computing Ltd delivers trusted IT support, cyber security expertise and digital transformation services to organisations across Shropshire, the West Midlands and beyond.

It supports customers with everything from day to day IT operations to strategic projects that strengthen resilience, efficiency and growth.

Tailored
advice
from
legal experts



Aaron & Partners
Solicitors

aaronandpartners.com

Chester | Shrewsbury | Greater Manchester | Wirral

SHROPSHIRE BUSINESS SUITE

Shropshire's new meeting space and podcast facility

SHREWSBURY



20 High Street
Shrewsbury
SY1 1SJ
01743 623263

www.shropshirebusinesssuite.co.uk



Thriving visitor economy that strengthens wider investment

Matt Potts



Ask most people to name Shropshire's key economic sectors and tourism may not top the list. Yet it makes a substantial and far-reaching contribution, supporting businesses, jobs and communities across the county.

As we move into the summer months, attention turns to holidays and day trips. Whether visitors travel from overseas or choose to stay closer to home, their spending directly fuels our local economy. In Shropshire, the visitor economy is now worth more than £1 billion and supports over 9,400 jobs. That is a strong foundation, but it also highlights a clear opportunity to do more.

We often underestimate tourism as a sector. In practice, it reaches far beyond hotels, attractions and cafés. Visitor spending ripples through an extensive supply chain. Local tradespeople maintain and upgrade accommodation. Food producers supply kitchens and venues. Logistics businesses keep goods moving. Retailers, petrol stations and high streets all benefit from increased footfall.

This wider impact helps sustain rural enterprises, town centres and essential services that communities rely on all year round. The visitor economy is not an add-on. It plays a central role in the health and resilience of Shropshire's economy.

It also creates vital routes into employment. For many young people, particularly as technology reshapes entry-level roles, jobs in hospitality and leisure provide a first step into the workplace. These roles build transferable skills such as communication, teamwork and problem-solving. The sector does not just create jobs, it helps develop the future workforce.

Our focus now must shift from volume to value. It is not simply about attracting more visitors, but about increasing the value of every visit. Our recently published Shropshire Destination Management Plan sets out a clear direction. We want to encourage longer stays, promote higher quality experiences and strengthen links with local businesses.

Growth must also be sustainable. We need to protect the landscapes, heritage and character that make Shropshire distinctive while ensuring that tourism continues to deliver economic benefit. This is where regenerative tourism comes into its own.

Regenerative tourism goes beyond reducing impact. It actively improves the places people visit. This might mean supporting local suppliers, investing in natural assets or encouraging visitors to leave a positive mark during their stay.

We are already seeing this approach take shape locally. Paddle Bros in Ellesmere, for example, which opened its new centre last Easter, combines outdoor activities with litter-picking on local waterways. It enhances the visitor experience while improving the environment. It is a simple idea, but a powerful one.

Accessibility presents another major opportunity. The Accessible Tourism market is worth billions nationally and continues to grow. By



Ludlow Castle – a tourism gem which dominates the south Shropshire skyline



Full steam ahead on the heritage railway at Oswestry

improving accessibility across accommodation, attractions and public spaces, we can welcome a broader range of visitors. This is not only the right thing to do, it makes clear economic sense for local businesses.

A thriving visitor economy also strengthens our wider investment ambitions. Successful destinations attract attention. Many investors and business owners first encounter Shropshire as visitors. They come for the landscape, heritage and quality of life, then recognise its potential as a place to live, work and invest.

The visitor economy works best when delivered in partnership, and we are working with Telford & Wrekin Council, Visit Telford, Visit Shropshire, and sector partners through the Visit England-accredited Telford and Shropshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership that brings councils, businesses and sector leaders together, with one ambition: to unlock the full potential of the region.

Tourism, therefore, should not sit in isolation. It shapes perception, strengthens place appeal and supports long-term economic growth.

Shropshire already has a strong story to tell. The opportunity now is to build on that success and position the visitor economy as an even more powerful driver of growth in the years ahead

Matt Potts is service manager for economy, funding and skills, overseeing Invest in Shropshire



In it for the long haul...

As Global Freight Services celebrates 30 years in business, CARL JONES talks to managing director Anton Gunter about the importance of maintaining the human touch in an increasingly automated world

Freight forwarding companies know a thing or two about navigating choppy waters – and it's fair to say Global Freight Services has weathered more than its fair share over the past three decades.

The Telford-based business marks its 30th anniversary in July and has been reflecting on a globe trotting journey that has encompassed everything from Brexit and the pandemic to blocked shipping canals and shifting global trade routes.

"There's always something, somewhere in the world presenting us with a challenge to overcome," says Anton Gunter, who became managing director in 2018, four years after joining the business which was founded by his wife, Nicole.

She was named one of the top three female directors in the UK logistics industry and featured in the Who's Who of Britain's Business Elite.

Shortly before handing over the reins, we put Nicole Gunter under our 'Five Minutes With...' spotlight to gain an insight into her role, as the economy was wrestling with the impact of the Brexit vote.

"The one thing about being a freight forwarder is that there is no such thing as a typical week," she told us.

"We really do move the world's products globally. One week I am compiling tenders for large contracts and the next week I am dealing with agents in South Africa to sort out issues.



Anton Gunter of Global Freight Services

"I do have the dull days where I have to look after the administration and running of the business, but thankfully with a great team behind me, we all work hard to achieve our goals."

She added: "A highlight was most definitely winning Best Small Business Award in the Shropshire Business Awards of 2010. To me, the recognition that what we as a business were, and are, doing is the right thing.

"Likewise, when we won the Apprentice of the Year award, it showed that we were investing the time and effort into the next generation of freight forwarders."

Anton says: "You can't overstate the

achievement of Nicole starting this business in a man's world, where local freight forwarders were telling her, 'You won't be in business in a year or two' and 'You've no place being here because you're a woman'.

"She used to turn up with a seven and a half tonne truck to do collections. They'd look at her strangely because she'd be in business attire with work boots. And she wouldn't think twice about jumping on the forklift."

That work ethic has become the company's DNA. Today, the Halesfield-based business operates with a lean team of five, most of whom have been with the company as long as – or longer – than Anton himself.

Sales are now running around 30% higher than a decade ago, and forward order books remain healthy. Around a third of the company's customers are from the Shropshire area – but the remainder cover a huge geographical area.

The company has built a reputation for opening doors for firms launching international trade programmes across Europe and beyond, supported by a strong network of overseas agents in more than 160 countries.

It's also been keen to give back over the years, supporting and sponsoring events such as the Dyslexia Awards, and the international business of the year at the Federation of Small Businesses regional awards.

It also sponsored more than 200 Year 8 students at Shifnal's Idsall School to enter the Ryman National Enterprise Challenge, the biggest schools' enterprise education competition in the UK.



Keeping it in the family – husband and wife duo Anton and Nicole Gunter

When Anton arrived at Global Freight from an international personal effects background – shipping belongings for individuals relocating overseas – he found an industry in transition.

“I came from a background where if a customer said they wanted to move something, I’d immediately say, ‘Yes, we can do that’... then sit down and work out how it could be done.”

He admits to wearing down the staff with his persistence, and this “say yes first, figure it out later” approach has become part of his leadership legacy.

The freight forwarding industry sits at the intersection of global politics, economics and logistics – a position that has become increasingly precarious in recent years.

From the Ever Given blocking the Suez Canal to Houthi attacks in the Red Sea, from the pandemic shutting Chinese ports to flight paths closing over Ukraine, Global Freight has had to navigate an unprecedented series of disruptions.

“We always say at the beginning of every year that it would be nice to have a boring year,” Anton says. “And every year, it never fails to disappoint.”

“Thirty years ago, most of our conversations were about sea freight and air freight. Now, even from China, you’ve got sea, air, road and rail freight to deal with.”

Customer awareness of global events has increased dramatically – though not always helpfully.

“You’d be amazed how many times someone says, ‘Why is it taking so long?’ despite you having explained the situation.”

“When the Ever Given got stuck in 2021, we told customers there would be delays. ‘Is our consignment on the Ever Given?’ they’d ask. When I said no, but it was on a ship stuck behind it, they couldn’t understand why we couldn’t just tell it to turn around.”

The company has had to develop a deeper understanding of world events out of necessity.

“It makes our job easier when explaining to customers why something is delayed or why we have to use alternative routings,” Anton says.

“We’re more aware of the world situation and discuss it more – not in terms of whose side we’re on, but what difficulties it will bring and how we can overcome them.”

Perhaps the company’s greatest competitive advantage in 2026 is something that was standard practice in 1996: actually talking to customers on the telephone. While larger competitors have embraced automation and remote email only communication, Global Freight has doubled down on human contact.



Playing it cool – Global Freight branding at Telford Ice Rink



“That’s the one thing that has stayed the same at Global Freight over the whole 30 years – communication,” Anton says. “And on my watch, it always will. I’m talking about using the telephone. It should always be the first choice – not impersonal emails or automated messages.”

It’s a philosophy that proved invaluable during the pandemic.

“We picked up a customer just after lockdown ended who didn’t want a Zoom call. He said, ‘No, I want you to drive up to Blackpool and see me in person.’ He told me I was the first and only person who had answered the phone and actually spoken to him – and when he challenged me to come for a socially distanced meeting, I didn’t hesitate. We’ve worked with them ever since. That personal touch matters.”

Which brings us to the elephant in the room: artificial intelligence. Anton is, characteristically, not sitting on the fence.

“It drives me insane when you hear a customer say they’ve had prices quoted using ChatGPT.”

“I remember saying to one potential customer, ‘Okay, why don’t you try ChatGPT to do the shipment and let me know how that goes.’ He asked what I meant, and I said, ‘Well, you’ve got the price from them, so now you’re comparing my company’s service with someone who isn’t actually there.’ Needless to say, we didn’t work together.”

He is deeply concerned about AI’s broader implications, in a world increasingly dominated by technology-driven automatons.



Helping craftsman Andy Bennett to tune into overseas markets with his oak guitar stands



Anton Gunter joined wife Nicole in the business in 2014



Anton speaking at a Future of International Trade event in Telford



Anton with Dave Partridge from AA Trikes

“I’ve got 30 plus years of experience in the shipping industry. ChatGPT can take information from all over the internet and condense it in seconds, and that’s great. But when it comes to actually explaining to a customer why something is delayed, how is ChatGPT going to do that?”

His concerns extend to employment. “My staff are just as important as I am. Without them, we wouldn’t have had a Global Freight for 30 years. We wouldn’t be the business we are today without their experience and loyalty.”

Over three decades, Global Freight has moved an eclectic array of goods across the globe.

“We haven’t shipped to Swaziland yet, and we haven’t shipped to Vatican City or San Marino – so there are still some pins to drop on the map.



Celebrating the company's 20th birthday in 2016

Nicole will never forgive me if I don’t mention the crane we famously shipped to Ulaanbaator in Mongolia.

“But we’ve had many other memorable jobs: an urn of human ashes to Romania, car parts to the Caribbean, wines from South Africa, and parts you can see at places like Alton Towers.

“Right now, we’re importing food to Australia for rowers travelling to Kenya – and that means navigating the country’s very strict quarantine regulations.”

Then there was the two-metre high bronze sculpture weighing 750kg that needed moving from the Shropshire studio of acclaimed artist Mark Richards to Flinders University in Adelaide... moving a life-sized horse and base to Vittoria Racing Club, in Melbourne... and a

sculpture from Oswestry that had to be taken to the door of a private collector in Texas.

But this thrill of the challenge is one of Anton’s favourite aspects of the job.

“Someone might ring up and say they’ve spoken to several people who told them their request isn’t possible. Can we do it?”

“Does the financial reward always match the work involved? Probably not. But that’s our industry. I get more satisfaction from what I’ve shipped than how much I’ve charged.”

As well as shipping goods across the globe, the company – a previous winner of the Shropshire Small Business of the Year award – offers extensive advice and consultancy and has been credited with assisting scores of companies to grow their operations by being a guiding hand when they launch international trade programmes.

Looking ahead, Anton sees the future for Global Freight Services as one of evolution rather than revolution.

There are still some pins to drop on the map. Nicole will never forgive me if I don’t mention the crane we famously shipped to Ulaanbaator in Mongolia

“I don’t want to sound unambitious, because I certainly am, but I’m really content with the success of this business and the team we’ve built,” he says.

“That work ethic Nicole had when she launched the business is something we’ve carried on. It’s not unknown for me to jump on the forklift like she used to.”

Today, Global Freight has shifted from being primarily an export company to handling more imports – a reflection of the pound’s strength and the challenges facing British manufacturing.

“In my opinion, the Government needs to get off their backsides and properly sort out manufacturing in this country. British manufacturing is being stifled by Chinese imports. If there’s one thing I’d like to see to help our industry – and others – it’s manufacturing being given a proper helping hand.”

As the company enters its fourth decade, Anton’s vision focuses on deepening rather than widening relationships – strengthening links within their global network and continuing to demonstrate that personal service still has value in an increasingly automated world.

“The goal is to continue on the path we’re on. Sometimes I feel like we’re a hippie freight forwarding company. We just want to be barefoot and doing the job we do, and have always done,” he reflects. “Sometimes we don’t shout about our achievements enough. But other times, you know what? For me, it’s just great to know we’ve done a good job.

“We’re not too big, we’re not too small. If you deal with me today, you’ll deal with me tomorrow because I’ll still be here. Everyone here is just as important as the next person. That bond is what has kept Global Freight going for 30 years... and hopefully will do for many more.”

Business is blooming for two county florists

Two Shropshire flower farmers have become part of a revolution in sustainable growing, with their businesses helping to put the county on the floral map of Britain.

Lisa Holt and Beth Evans are at the centre of a rapidly expanding artisan flower movement created by increasing demand for seasonal, locally grown flowers with lower environmental impact. Beth's business – Pheasant Field Flowers – provides bespoke floral designs for weddings and events, as well as growing artisan cut flowers for use in her own work, and for wholesale to fellow florists. Her floristry is based near Much Wenlock.

Lisa's business, Gate House Florals, is based at Ryton near Shifnal, and creates bouquets and funeral flowers using flowers that hold special memories of people and places.

Both have benefited from completing a start-up programme with Bridgnorth-based Good2Great after seeking new challenges during lockdown, and are celebrating their fifth anniversaries this year.

British-grown flowers are at the centre of their work. Lisa said: "There is something incredibly special about in-season flowers that are grown locally. They have movement, scent, texture and character that really capture the English countryside at that moment in time."

Their work has not gone un-noticed. Both Beth and Lisa's displays were on show during the visit of Sophie, Duchess of Edinburgh, to Shropshire earlier this year. Beth's flowers were used by Ironbridge Flower School for a commission presented to the Duchess.

Meanwhile, Lisa was invited by Albrighton Trust Flowers to make a posy to be presented to the Duchess. Her special funeral flowers featured on leaflets and displays at the RHS Chelsea gold medal winning Farewell Flowers display.

Beth said: "In 2020, following redundancy during the pandemic, Pheasant Field Flowers launched as a flower farm, offering flowers for sale to florists and DIY brides.

"However, I discovered a love and a talent for designing with the flowers I grew, and now the business focuses on delivering unforgettable wedding and event flowers across Shropshire, North Wales and the West Midlands.

"I feel unbelievably lucky to receive wonderful commissions from clients who put their faith in me, often on the biggest day of their lives.

"Good2Great really helped me to focus and define the business and my customers, and what my offer was. The business model has changed significantly, so the skills I gained helped me to recognise the need to evolve and focus the marketing efficiently to meet the requirements of a different group of customers."

Lisa's business was originally born out of frustration. She explained: "When I couldn't buy locally grown, seasonal flowers and had a poor experience with funeral flowers, I decided I would learn to grow and arrange them to sell myself; being able to offer truly bespoke funeral flowers was a key motivator for me setting up my business.

"Once I started growing, I had so many flowers I started gifting them to friends and bunching them to sell in my local community shop on 'Flower Friday'. My first three bunches sold – I was so thrilled!"

Lisa has also set up The Daisy Chain – a WhatsApp group linking flower farmers around Bridgnorth.

"We all collaborate and co-operate to support each other. Sometimes we will even meet in a supermarket car park and it may look quite suspicious at first as we all arrive and raise our car boots and swap buckets – but they are buckets of fresh flowers!"

On her experience with Good2Great, Lisa said: "I had an idea and passion for growing but turning that into a business required a complete set of new knowledge and skills.

"I really didn't know anything about business. Self-doubt was a big barrier to me starting my business, but I know education changes lives, and I knew I could learn."



Lisa Holt of Gate House Florals



Beth Evans of Pheasant Field Flowers

Sally Themans, from Good2Great, said: "These two entrepreneurs show exactly why Shropshire's start up scene is so vibrant. With determination, creativity and a commitment to sustainable floristry, they've built businesses that continue to inspire others across the county.

"It's been a privilege to walk alongside Beth and Lisa on their business journeys. Their courage to start, learn and grow through such challenging times is nothing short of remarkable."

New apprenticeship for future engineers

Three of Shropshire's biggest food and drink manufacturers are partnering with Telford College to design a brand new engineering apprenticeship.

Kraft Heinz, Avara Foods and Pickstock are joining forces with the college to develop the new qualification aimed at delivering the skills the sector needs for growth.

The Level 3 Food and Drink Maintenance Engineering apprenticeship, available to Telford College students from September, will train apprentices in specific skills needed in food and drink businesses which contribute £2.4 billion in Gross Value Added to the West Midlands economy.

Anton Hickey, site director for Telford-based Kraft Heinz, one of the world's biggest producers of sauces, said the partnership with Telford College and the new apprenticeship would help solve an industry-wide skills issue.

He said: "We can recruit engineers but getting engineers with the right skills within the food and drink sector which is a fast-changing environment is difficult so this is a real opportunity for us with the help of Telford college to be able to mold our own apprentices with the skills we need specifically for this site.

"The employer teams at Telford College have really listened to us and the needs of our sector. This new apprenticeship will be a fantastic opportunity for young people. The career opportunities across the food and drink industry are endless and I'm looking forward to being a real ambassador for this new scheme."

The decision to develop the new apprenticeships came from conversations with employers at Telford College's regular Employer Skills Hubs – dedicated events where educators, manufacturers and industry stakeholders work together to shape the region's future workforce.

David Moreton, head of apprenticeships at Telford College, said: "We get a lot of businesses within the food and drink sector attending these hubs and we were hearing that recent changes to engineering apprenticeship standards had created a real skills gap for their industry.

"Traditional engineering apprenticeships have moved towards a mechatronics focus, and as a result many of the core practical skills that food and drink manufacturers depend on have been stripped out - skills such as machining, welding and electrical maintenance.

"This new apprenticeship restores those skills. Crucially, it does so in a food and drink manufacturing context - training apprentices to work with stainless steel production lines, food-safe lubricants and the specialist materials used in the sector every day.

"Employers have told us these are the skills the sector needs to thrive and we're proud to be working in partnership to secure the future of



From left, engineering manager at Kraft Heinz Ben Groom, with Lawrence Wood (principal and chief executive of Telford College), Kraft Heinz site director Anton Hickey and Telford College executive director for partnerships and employer engagement Sarah Davies.

the sector by training students to be industry-ready."

Chris Field, employer relationship manager at Telford College, said the partnership model was central to what made this apprenticeship different.

We wanted employers to put their stamp on this apprenticeship. Food and drink manufacturers are under real pressure to recruit and retain skilled engineers.

"We wanted employers to put their stamp on this apprenticeship. Food and drink manufacturers are under real pressure to recruit and retain skilled engineers. Competition from larger employers, an ageing workforce and persistent gaps in multi-skilled mechanical and electrical knowledge alongside industry-specific knowledge mean businesses increasingly need to grow their own talent.

"By working in partnership, understanding their operations and going out to visit their sites, we've been able to make sure that training

through this apprenticeship will match the skills needed on production lines and factory floors. Employers tell us what they need and we listen and that's what makes our programmes different."

Michael McCoole, engineering operations manager at Avara Foods - one of the UK's largest poultry processors with around 6,000 employees - said: "We are proud to be working alongside Telford College and industry partners to help develop this new apprenticeship.

"At Avara Foods, investing in the next generation of engineers is vital for our continued growth and for the success of food manufacturing in the region. Apprenticeships like this ensure our sector has access to the specialist skills and knowledge needed to maintain high standards and support innovation in a fast-moving industry.

"We are committed to creating opportunities for young people to build successful careers and are excited to welcome future Telford College apprentices to our organisation."

The first cohort of apprentices will begin the course this September.

Alongside the core programme, Telford College's Apprenticeship Plus initiative launched earlier this year, offers employers optional bolt-on training to help upskill existing members of their workforces.

Last year, Telford College trained 31 mechatronic maintenance apprentices with a 100% overall pass rate.

Food and drink businesses that wish to discuss partnering with Telford College to offer the apprenticeship should contact chris.field@telfordcollege.ac.uk or david.moreton@telfordcollege.ac.uk

In brief

● Independent local news and entertainment platform Shropshire Live is to begin broadcasting on digital radio across central Shropshire. Starting this summer, Shropshire Live will be available on DAB through a small-scale transmitter on The Wrekin. Editor Chris Pritchard said: “We’ve been planning this expansion for months, and there is no better home for the new transmitter than the highest, most recognisable point in the county.”

● Cameron Homes has secured £942,058 of gap funding from the West Midlands Combined Authority to bring about the redevelopment of Audley Court in Newport, Shropshire. Construction work will commence this summer to deliver the £13m residential scheme, with 35% of the 43 new homes being designated for affordable housing.

● Telford & Wrekin Council has submitted plans to improve shop frontages at The Parade in Donnington. It will include new shopfront glazing and frontages, external shutters and updated signage. The facade grant can range from £500 to £3,000 and can be used to paint shop frontages and replace signage, repaint roller shutters and replace with retractable trellis.

● A Shropshire-based leadership consultant who works with organisations worldwide on cultural diversity and inclusive leadership has been shortlisted in two categories at the Speaker Awards 2026. Marina Ibrahim, founder of Globility Insights and an internationally recognised Cultural Agility Expert, has been named as a finalist for both Best Storyteller and Best Thought Leadership Speaker.

● A new kind of estate agency service is arriving in Oswestry, offering homeowners a more personal, streamlined way to sell their properties. Morgan Nunns, a local entrepreneur with a background in coaching, marketing, and property investment, is launching The Property Experts in the area, bringing a “property concierge” approach that challenges the traditional estate agency model.



Marina Ibrahim delivering her keynote speech – From Culture Clash to Culture Cash – at SpeakFest 2026



The Dyke Yaxley team



WR Partners on the attack at the Croud Meadow

WR Partners wins accountancy cup

WR Partners won the footballing battle of the big Shropshire accountancy firms to retain ‘The Accountancy Cup’.

A deciding goal just two minutes from time gave them a 3-2 victory at Shrewsbury Town FC’s Croud Meadow after rivals Dyke Yaxley had come back from a 2-0 half-time deficit.

But the real winner on the night was Lingen Davies Cancer Support, with hundreds of pounds raised to boost the funds of their Sunflower Appeal.

Organised by Dyke Yaxley’s business advisory specialist Cian Iddison, the rematch featured team members from the firms’ bases in both Shrewsbury and Telford.

Cian said: “We were really looking forward to the rematch as WR Partners beat us last year, so we were determined to reverse the result in this year’s game.

“Sadly though that didn’t happen, but it was an extremely competitive match – and we’re already planning our team tactics for next year!”

Cian said the total funds raised for Lingen Davies Cancer Support had already reached around £1,500.

“We’re extremely grateful to everyone who supported the match – there were over 200 supporters in the ground on the night.”

After the match, Steph Smith from Lingen Davies presented the trophy to the winning WR Partners team.



The WR Partners team



Action from the second Accountancy Cup



The hotly-contested match was decided by an 88th minute winner



See **Wrekin Prep**, **Wrekin Senior** and **Wrekin Sixth** at the

WREKIN COLLEGE OPEN MORNING

Saturday 3rd October

Discover **The Wrekin Way**. Enjoy a tour of our school, hear from staff and pupils, and ask any questions you may have about the admissions process.

Book your place:

admissions@wrekincollege.com • 01952 265603



WWW.WREKINCOLLEGE.COM

Independent school 4-18

Wellington, Shropshire | Registered Charity No. 528417



If you want to go far, go together.

We get it. Running a business right now is hard work. But you don’t have to tackle every challenge alone.

Join a trusted and confidential peer group of business leaders to take your business to the next level.

Find out more or register your interest at:
wrpartners.co.uk/blg

WR Partners offer accounting, auditing and business services including; tax advisory and consultancy & payroll.
08000 664 664





The Pave Aways team

A royal flush

Three Shropshire companies have been given a royal seal of approval with recognition in this year's prestigious King's Awards.

Fowler & Gilbert of Market Drayton and Pave Aways from Knockin are both celebrated for 'promoting opportunity', while Thermserve of Telford is cited in the category for international trade.

They are among 186 winners across the UK this year.

Fowler & Gilbert, which designs and manufactures agricultural and industrial steel framed buildings, is marking its 15th anniversary this year.

It says the King's Award recognises the firm's commitment to widening access to engineering careers through apprenticeships, inclusive recruitment, community engagement and clear progression routes.

Managing director Lee Gilbert said: "To receive a King's Award in our 15th year is an incredible honour. It reflects the hard work of our team and our belief that strong businesses can have a positive impact on their communities."

With a team of over 50 skilled professionals, Fowler and Gilbert says it is committed to continuous growth, driven by both experience, technological expertise, and an investment in the next generation of talent.

Lee said: "This wouldn't be possible without the dedication of our team members, who take pride in sharing their knowledge and building a reputation for Fowler and Gilbert as a supportive and forward-thinking employer."

Pave Aways said the award acknowledged the company's outstanding achievement in creating opportunity and improving social mobility through meaningful careers in construction.

Managing director Steven Owen said: "We're proud to have been awarded a King's Award for Enterprise for Promoting Opportunity. It recognises what we have always set out to do and that is invest in people, back local talent, and give individuals a fair chance to build a career in construction."



A memorable milestone for Fowler and Gilbert's 15th anniversary

"It is particularly meaningful in rural areas like ours, where opportunity can be harder to access. This award belongs to our team, our clients and supply chain, and most importantly, the people who have taken those opportunities and made the most of them. We are delighted to receive this recognition."

Winners demonstrated that Shropshire is home to so many innovative businesses and we celebrate with them their success

For Thermserve, which is 25 years old this year, this is the fourth time the company has been recognised through the King's Awards.

The Halesfield-based business, which provides specialist thermal solutions to the



Thermserve is 25 years old this year

metals industry, has seen sustained growth across global markets.

The award recognises strong export growth and expansion in key markets, particularly the Middle East and North America, where demand for the company's specialist thermal solutions continues to rise.

Managing director Steven Hodgkiss said the achievement reflects the company's global strategy and team effort, with Thermserve building long-term partnerships across international markets.

Congratulating the local winners, Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire, Anna Turner, said: "The winners demonstrated that Shropshire is home to so many innovative businesses and organisations and we celebrate with them their success in achieving this most prestigious business award."

Blair McDougall, minister for small businesses and economic transformation, said the winners illustrated 'the best of British innovation and talent'.

"These awards show that right across the UK, there are small businesses that are thriving, growing and succeeding and it's only right that we champion these successes."

Market town still draws interest

Halls commercial says Ludlow continues to retain its appeal to retailers while many UK high streets face structural changes. The company has completed eight sales and lettings of commercial properties in Ludlow in the last 12 months, and also has five more currently on the market. Retail accounts for nearly 36% of commercial units in the town – higher than anywhere else in Shropshire. Among the iconic properties currently available for £650,000 is 5-6 Broad Street which has traded as Wildwoods restaurant and De Greys of Ludlow tearoom and bakery in the past. With three floors and a basement, the property has a commercial kitchen and has a total gross internal floor area of approximately 6,802 sq ft.



5-6 Broad Street, Ludlow, has three floors and a basement. The property has a price-tag of £650,000.

Property auctions don't have to be a last resort



A recent series of successful commercial property disposals in Shropshire is showing the long-held perception that auctions are only suitable for distressed assets or last-resort disposals to be incorrect.

Halls Commercial is of the opinion that property auctions are increasingly being recognised as a highly effective method of sale for owners seeking speed, certainty and competitive market exposure for property investment.

Recent auction successes include four multi-let investment properties on Market Street in Craven Arms – 11, 12 and 14 Market Street, along with Bristol Chambers – as well as a vacant shop

unit known as 26 Bull Ring in Ludlow. All of these disposals attracted strong levels of interest and achieved successful sales through the auction process.

There remains a misconception that auctions are only used when a property has struggled to sell through traditional channels. In reality, auctions can be an excellent option for a wide range of commercial and mixed-use properties, particularly where vendors are looking for a tenant and a secure transaction.

Well-located town centre properties, in particular, continue to generate strong interest when marketed through auction

Once the hammer falls, contracts are exchanged immediately, providing a level of certainty that many sellers find extremely attractive. For buyers, auctions offer transparency and a clear timetable, creating confidence for all parties involved and not experiencing the increasing delays and uncertainty of private treaty sales.

The recent sales demonstrate the continued appetite among investors, developers and owner-occupiers for commercial property

opportunities across Shropshire and the wider region. Well-located town centre properties, in particular, continue to generate strong interest when marketed through auction.

The auction process also enables sellers to reach a broad audience of potential purchasers, often resulting in competitive bidding and market-led pricing.

With ongoing economic uncertainty, many property owners are prioritising certainty in their disposal strategy and speed of sale. An auction sale can often achieve both, while ensuring the property receives maximum exposure to active buyers.

Halls Commercial continues to advise property owners across the Midlands and Wales on the most appropriate route to market, with auctions increasingly forming an important part of the sales strategy for commercial, investment and mixed-use properties.

Property owners considering a sale and wishing to explore whether auction is the right option for their asset are encouraged to contact Halls Commercial for advice.

What many parties do not appreciate in the auction process is that all the legal due diligence is done at the start of the process with an auction pack prepared for properties prior to marketing containing all the intellectual information like EPCs, asbestos surveys, and draft contracts.

The parties buy as seen and the vendor's professional fees are paid by the buyer, so in this world of economic uncertainty, this has to be a route for vendors to consider in their disposal strategy. Halls Commercial offers regular professional auctions at their head office.

James Evans is head of commercial property at Halls Commercial

Could your business benefit from engaging an experienced mentor?

Over my 45-year business career I benefitted hugely from the objective and strategic advice I received from non-executives and business mentors, all of whom had **'been there and done it'**.

They ensured we stayed on track through advising, probing, questioning and making us accountable at board meetings every month.

Over that time, I've built and sold six businesses, been through 4 acquisitions and, for the past 10 years, I've worked in M&A, advising entrepreneurs on the sale of their businesses.

My experience covers all aspects of establishing, managing, growing and selling small businesses, including:

- Strategic planning
- Intellectual Property
- Sales & marketing
- Contracts
- M&A, finance & funding
- Building management teams

I took my branded goods business from zero to £3m in 3 years

It's this experience I could bring to bear for business owners who are ambitious, looking to grow or perhaps planning an exit.

If you'd like to explore whether I might be able to add value to your business, please email me in confidence:

john@strategic-business-exits.com



John Knight,
Managing Director,
Strategic Business Exits Ltd



Midlands Air Ambulance Charity Golf Day was a success

£56,000 is raised at hugely successful golfing event

Local businesses have raised over £56,000 for the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity at its annual golf day event. The event brought together businesses from across the region to raise vital funds for the charity's pre-hospital emergency service during its 35th anniversary year. Sophia Baker, corporate partnership lead, said: "We're incredibly grateful for the continued support shown by the businesses that took part in this year's golf day. "Events like this play a vital role in helping us to continue providing lifesaving care to those who need us most across the Midlands."

Westminster key to local growth

Leaders from the Marches Forward Partnership are heading to Westminster to press ministers to back a practical, locally-led approach to economic growth and resilience across the Marches.

The partnership, which brings together councils in Shropshire, Herefordshire, Powys and Monmouthshire, has written to Number 10 and senior ministers setting out how closer cross border working can help deliver national priorities such as economic growth, housing, skills, food security and climate resilience. As part of its Westminster discussions to be held in person on September 1, the MFP is asking for funding to help scale up delivery, along with closer working with Government to test new ways of getting things done. It is also calling for clear sponsorship at national level to reflect the programme's contribution to growth, energy and long term resilience.

The MFP wants to demonstrate how effective cross border collaboration can accelerate delivery by linking growth, the environment and community wellbeing so people and businesses can thrive in the long term. Across the region, work is already under way on green growth, business resilience, good food and farming, digital innovation and major water management schemes. Alex Wagner, Shropshire Council deputy leader with responsibility for economic growth, said: "A key part of our message to Government is the role of local councils. "Through the MFP we are uniquely placed to bring partners together and deliver at scale – particularly in our rural and cross border areas where we know challenges don't follow administrative lines. "If Government is serious about growth and resilience, it needs to back places that are ready to go further and faster. With the right support and a bit of flexibility, the Marches can show what joined up, real world delivery really looks like."



Scott Clarke in the new studio

Celebrating in new studio

Telford-based marketing agency Kensa Creative has unveiled a new in-house film studio to coincide with its 15th anniversary.

It is part of a six-figure investment for the Hortonwood company, which has created a dedicated high spec video production and animation space to support growing demand for video and animation content. The facility, which has a six-metre panoramic green screen, flexible lighting rigs and acoustic panelling, can produce a range of content from interviews and explainer videos to product showcases and creatively driven campaigns. Bosses say the investment also paves the way for continued growth. Kensa welcomed three new animators to the team last year, alongside wider recruitment across its marketing and design teams. The expansion brings the agency's total team to 28, with further roles planned for development throughout 2026. Managing director Scott Clarke said: "By bringing more production capabilities in-house, we can give brands the full experience – from imaginative concept development to dynamic final cut – all while meeting their overall objectives. "Many clients struggle to find a suitable space to film in at their premises. By offering a centralised, convenient location to film from we're making it easier for our clients to produce high quality video content." The studio launch follows an exciting last 12 months for Kensa, which saw the rollout of a refreshed brand identity, new website and the agency's best recorded year in business.



The facility is part of a six-figure investment

TG BUILDERS MERCHANTS



- Bridgnorth
- Chester
- Ellesmere
- Kidderminster
- Nantwich
- Northwich
- Oswestry
- Welshpool

TG CONCRETE



- Aberystwyth
- Bala
- Bangor
- Bridgnorth
- Chester
- Ellesmere
- Machynlleth
- Newtown
- Oswestry
- Porthmadog
- Pwllheli
- Welshpool
- Wrexham

TG SKIP HIRE



Mini Skips to 40yd Maxi roll-on, roll-off Skips

TG AGGREGATES



Choose from our extensive range of building and decorative aggregates

TG ELECTRICAL SERVICES



Domestic, Commercial & Agricultural Contractors

TG Group
Established 1874

Tel: 01691 626262 | www.tggroup.co.uk

Roadshow with focus on employment law

Business leaders and HR professionals from across Shropshire turned out for Aaron & Partners' latest employment law roadshow, as organisations look to get to grips with major changes to workplace legislation.

The firm hosted five events across the region this spring, with a Shrewsbury event attracting more than 80 professionals to Shrewsbury Town FC's Croud Meadow Stadium for a session sponsored by Unitemps Harper Adams.

Hosted by Aaron & Partners' specialist Employment Law team, the roadshows bring together senior leaders responsible for people and culture, offering practical guidance on the most pressing challenges facing employers.

This year's programme is centred around the Employment Rights Act 2025, widely regarded as one of the most significant overhauls of employment legislation in recent years.

The reforms include major changes such as day-one rights for unfair dismissal, expanded statutory sick pay, strengthened protections against harassment, and extended time limits for employment tribunal claims.

During the Shrewsbury session, attendees received expert insight into how these changes will impact their organisations, alongside updates on discrimination law, immigration, recent case law and forthcoming legislative developments.

Helen Watson, senior partner and head of employment at Aaron & Partners, said: "The Employment Rights Act represents a new era for employers, with wide-ranging reforms that will dramatically impact how businesses in Shropshire and across the UK operate.

"It's clear from the level of engagement across all our events that organisations are keen to understand what these changes mean in practice and, importantly, how they can prepare.

"Our roadshow has always been about giving businesses clear, practical advice they can take away and apply within their organisations. This year, that guidance is critical as employers grapple with one of the most significant shifts in the employment law landscape we've ever seen."



Ben Mason, Jennifer Gibson and Jenice Forde



More than 80 people attended the event



Neale Sadler and Shropshire County Show chair Philip Thornycroft present The Richard Breeze Memorial Trophy to Mike Gould for Best In Show



Graham Cole of Willey Estates receives a long service award from Neale Sadler



West Midlands Agricultural Society members enjoy the ringside bar on show day. More than 6,000 people attended the event.

County show is a success

The Shropshire and West Midlands Agricultural Society has paid tribute to the businesses, sponsors, stewards, volunteers and visitors that helped make this year's Shropshire County Show such a great success.

More than 6,000 people poured through the gates of the DMOS People West Mid Showground.

Show secretary Arthur Hill said: "We were especially pleased to welcome Robyn Munt, NFU vice president, who addressed farmers and growers in the NFU and NFU Mutual marquee at what is an extremely challenging time for the industry.

"Robyn spoke about county food production, the pressures on fuels and fertilisers as a result of the ongoing Iran conflict and discussed NFU efforts to secure fuel duty changes.

"She also highlighted the work going on over trade deals and core standards and spoke about the campaign to secure more resources to tackle rural crime – and spent time touring our livestock lines, engaging with county politicians and industry stakeholders and meeting members of Shropshire Young Farmers during her visit."

During the President's Afternoon Tea, Neale Sadler presented The Royal Agricultural Society of England long service award to Graham Cole of Willey Estates for 50 years' service.

Mr Sadler said: "This is an amazing achievement that deserves recognition and we were very pleased to be able to present this to Graham in the presence of so many members of the agricultural society and community."



From left: Robyn Munt (NFU national vice president), Rob Newberry (regional NFU director), show president His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire Anna Turner, West Midlands Agricultural Society chair Neale Sadler, Richard Yates (a former chair of the Shropshire branch of the NFU) and Andrew Williamson (NFU regional chair)



Shropshire County Show secretary Arthur Hill and West Midlands Agricultural Society chair Neale Sadler with Mike Shuker and Robert Parry of Premier Show Partners, Shuker Group.



Guests watch the annual SFYFC Float Parade from the President's Suite balcony

Unforgettable Moments

Made with Salop Leisure

- ✓ Service & Repairs
- ✓ Accessories & Awnings
- ✓ Support & Advice
- ✓ Plus much more!

Open 7 Days a Week

Over 200 Touring Caravans, Motorhomes & Holiday Homes for sale

www.salopleisure.co.uk

Emstrey | Shrewsbury | Shropshire | SY5 6QS | 01743 282400

SALOP LEISURE
For the journey

From raw data to confident decisions.

Microsoft Fabric connects your data. Power BI makes it actionable.

- Make faster decisions with a single, trusted view of your data
- Reduce cost and complexity by replacing fragmented data tools
- Enable AI-ready analytics with strong governance and security
- Scale integrated reporting and insight as your business grows
- Give teams confidence in the numbers they rely on every day

www.PurpleFrogSystems.com @PurpleFrogSys

New site in county town for Top 50 law firm



Matt Hayes and Lynda Richards at HCR Law's new Shrewsbury office

HCR Law has relocated to larger premises in Shrewsbury, just months after launching a new office in the town. The Top 50 law firm is now settling into One Anchorage Avenue, Shrewsbury Business Park, alongside another 100 companies which collectively employ more than 2,000 people on the site.

Lynda Richards, HCR partner and head of the Shrewsbury office, said: "We opened an office in Shrewsbury in response to growing client demand and have been delighted with the warm response we've received from the town's business community."

Alan Hay, owner and managing director at Shrewsbury Business Park, said: "HCR Law has taken space in probably the best office building in Shrewsbury Business Park, at the Wenlock Road entrance. It was a pleasure to deal with them – tough but fair in all our negotiations."

Since it opened in January, HCR Law's Shrewsbury office has already expanded employee numbers, most recently appointing new partner Helen Barrett to the residential property team.

She joins private client partners Lynda Richards and Amy Morris, corporate partners Arpinder Dhillon and Jenny Staples, family law partners Victoria Fellows and Hannah Nicholls and Charlotte Nutting, a partner in the agriculture and estates team.

The office is also home to colleagues from commercial, restructuring and insolvency, employment and immigration teams.

In 2025, HCR Law was recognised as one of the UK's fastest-growing law firms over the past decade

Building connections

THINK LOCAL

with a Global Presence


Newport-Shropshire

Local Business, People, News, Events & More...

Do you run a business?

Our social media followers may want to hear about your products/services.

 4,700+

 3,100+

 1,000+

 1,000+

 1,000+

We are also on 

Get your message across through social media and website promotion.

Call: 07973 385929

Email: Karen@allaboutnewport.co.uk



Find us at...

www.allaboutnewport.co.uk

from
£60
for
12 Months

A new monthly networking event for the construction industry has been hailed a huge success – with plans to grow it even further over the coming months.

The Shropshire Constructing Excellence social, held at The Loopy Shrew in Shrewsbury, has grown in attendance every month since its launch in February.

Hosted by leading quantity surveyors CQS Solutions – which has bases in Telford, Mid Wales and Birmingham – the event aims to create an informal get-together for anyone working in the industry.

CQS Solutions owner Tim Lloyd said: "We have been delighted with the success of the new networking event, which has seen some fantastic attendances in its first few months."

We wanted to create an event where people could meet up after work, grab a drink and make some great connections

"We wanted to create an event where people could meet up after work, grab a drink and make some great connections over relaxed conversations."

"The response has been really fantastic. People appreciate that there are no sixty-second pitches, awkward intros or forced engagement – just top industry people getting together and sharing valuable conversations."

The group meets at 5pm on the third Thursday of every month. There is no cost to attend and no formal booking process, although guests are encouraged to comment or message organisers to help with headcount.



Selina Graham speaks to guests



Nick Jones of Throgmorton Associates

Investors get together

Business leaders, charity representatives, volunteers and community champions gathered in the grounds of Willey Park for the annual Shropshire Investors in Community Dinner, hosted by Shropshire Community Foundation.

It provided an opportunity to thank and celebrate the organisations committed to creating positive change across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and to

recognise the impact of local giving. Drinks and canapés were followed by a meal supported by Oak Apple Catering, with wines donated by Tanners.

The event also celebrated the continued growth of the SIIC network, which has helped support 148 projects and reach more than 22,000 people across the county through funding for local charities and community organisations.

Shropshire Community Foundation is a registered charity connecting Shropshire people, businesses and funders with the local causes that matter most.

Pictures: Peter Lowbridge Photography



Garrison Sergeant Major 'Vern' Stokes, High Sheriff Katy Tanner, CEO Joanna Morris, chair of trustees Selina Graham, Deputy Lord Lieutenant Jenny Wynn, and Graham Wynn



High Sheriff Katy Tanner in conversation



Julian Lowe of Perspective Financial Group and Trustee Ruth Martin

Team is committed to raising funds

A team from Shropshire law firm Lanyon Bowdler swapped their office wear for running gear, tackling this summer's Shrewsbury 5k for charity.

Each of the four runners – Dawn Humphries, Amanda Clarke, Amy Burgoyne and Sophie Morris – set up JustGiving pages to raise money for county-based charity Little Stars.

Little Stars is close to the hearts of those working at the law firm, and is a chosen charity for the year with a number of fundraising activities organised to support it.

Two more members of the firm's team,

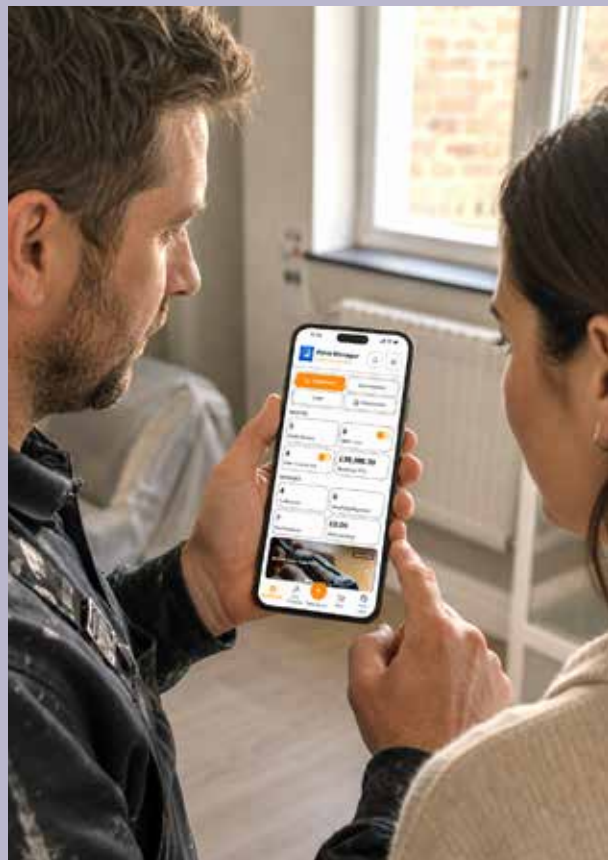
Isabella Drummond and Helen Siegieda, will also be taking on the Shrewsbury Half Marathon in September.

Dawn Humphries, a partner at Lanyon Bowdler and head of the personal injury team, said: "The whole team is committed to our charity fundraising efforts each year and really enjoy getting involved to ensure those efforts are successful."

"It allows us to spend time together away from our normal formal working surroundings while providing the opportunity to raise much-needed funds for charity. We jumped at the chance to run for Little Stars at this year's Shrewsbury 5k."



Lanyon Bowdler staff are raising charity funds



The new Paint Manager system

Brushing up on a method to save time

A Shropshire company has launched a new tool designed to help painters and decorators save time, stay organised and improve profits.

Nigel Stephens, who has worked in the construction industry for more than 20 years, formed Paint Manager Ltd after spotting a common problem among painters and decorators.

The software makes it easy to create quotes, invoices and manage job costs in one place, while also supporting businesses preparing for Making Tax Digital requirements.

Nigel said the Paint Manager system had been created specifically for self-employed decorators and small decorating businesses who were tired of juggling paperwork, spreadsheets and manual quoting systems while trying to run jobs day-to-day.

He said: "I kept seeing the same issue – good decorators doing great work but struggling with the business side of things because they simply don't have the time. A lot of people are still using handwritten notes, spreadsheets or bits of paper to quote and invoice jobs. Paint Manager was created to make things simpler and help decorators understand exactly what jobs are costing them and what they're actually making."

"It's completely free to give it a try – people can create up to five quotes under the free plan, and there is a demo on the website which explains how it works."

Collaboration across industries is required

More than three quarters of business leaders believe sustainability is driven more by brand image than genuine action, according to new research by a Shropshire firm.

The survey of 100 senior decision-makers, commissioned by personalised workwear provider MyWorkwear, highlights a clear disconnect between intent and execution.

While an overwhelming 91% of respondents agree that sustainability should be a priority for their company, only 69% say it is currently treated as such. Just over half have measurable targets in place.

Rising costs appear to be a significant barrier, with 64% of firms reporting that their focus on sustainability has declined in the past year.

Other key challenges include the cost of sustainable alternatives (63%), time constraints (41%), lack of knowledge (31%), and limited availability of sustainable options (29%).

James Worthington, co-owner at

MyWorkwear, said: "While it's encouraging to see most business leaders recognise the importance of sustainability, this research clearly shows there is still a significant gap between ambition and action."

"For many organisations, the topic is still viewed as a 'nice to have' rather than a core business priority – particularly in the face of rising costs and operational pressures."

Ultimately, bridging the gap between intention and action will require collaboration across industries

Despite the challenges, the commercial benefits of sustainability are evident in the report.

Nearly six in ten reported seeing cost savings as a result of adopting more

sustainable practices, suggesting a gap between perception and reality when it comes to return on investment.

When it comes to implementation, waste reduction and energy usage are the most commonly addressed areas, followed by packaging, supply chain improvements, workwear, and travel emissions.

James said: "Our data shows that investing in more sustainable practices can deliver tangible benefits, not just environmentally but commercially too."

"As a provider in the workwear industry, we recognise that our sector isn't without its challenges when it comes to this arena."

"That said, it's our responsibility to help drive positive change, whether that's by educating customers on more sustainable product options, improving transparency across our supply chain, or expanding the range of eco-conscious garments available."

"Ultimately, bridging the gap between intention and action will require collaboration across industries, better education, and a shift in mindset from viewing sustainability as a cost, to recognising it as a long-term investment."

Joining forces broadens range

Shrewsbury-based e-commerce growth and digital agency Clear has acquired the marketing and creative agency Buy-From.

It brings together two established Shropshire businesses with complementary expertise, creating a joint workforce of 33 digital, creative, and strategic professionals.

Bosses say it will be business as usual for clients, although the Buy-From team has relocated from its previous base in Bridgnorth to Clear's Shrewsbury offices.

The relationship between the two agencies has come full circle – when Buy-From founders Louise and Graeme Christie launched the business over 12 years ago, Clear was chosen to create the original logo.

Graeme is moving towards retirement and Louise is pursuing new opportunities following a successful period of growth for the business.

For our clients, it's very much business as usual. The same people are still here, the same support is still here...

Clear will retain the Buy-From brand, integrating its existing team into Clear's Shrewsbury headquarters to ensure continuity of service and the preservation of long-standing client relationships.

Sherridan Grady, commercial director at Clear, said: "We've admired Buy-From's work and reputation for a long time. The team has built something incredibly valuable, with strong client relationships and a very distinctive approach."

"Bringing Buy-From into the Clear group felt like a natural fit from the outset because there is a huge synergy in how we think and work. Together, we can offer clients an even broader range of creative, strategic, and digital expertise while protecting everything that makes Buy-From special."

Jessica Ralph, director at Buy-From, said: "When we started



Jessica Ralph, Sherridan Grady, Gavin Mills, Jamie Detton, Tegan Bristow and Jo Lawrence of Clear

conversations with Clear earlier this year, it quickly became obvious that there was a real alignment in both values and vision. What they bring complements what we do incredibly well, and vice versa.

"For our clients, it's very much business as usual. The same people are still here, the same support is still here, and the same passion for helping businesses grow remains at the heart of everything we do."

"What this gives us is additional strength behind the scenes – broader expertise, greater resource, and exciting new opportunities that will allow us to offer even more to our clients in the future."



Commercial Property Experts

Sales | Lettings
Acquisitions | Valuations
Management

Featured Commercial Opportunities



Ludlow Business Park, Units 1,2,3,4 and 5
Orelton Road, Ludlow | SY8 1XF
For Sale: £3,500,000 (OFFERS IN EXCESS OF)

- INVESTMENT FOR SALE: COMMERCIAL UNITS
- Freehold investment opportunity, comprising of 5 units providing a Total Gross Internal Area of approximately 45,827 sq ft (4,257 m sq)
 - Significant Asset Management Potential
 - Secure Annual Rental Income of £263,085 Per Annum (Exclusive)



GWR Site, Sleaf, Shrewsbury | SY4 3HE
For Sale: £2,000,000 (EXCLUSIVE)

- FOR SALE: HIGH QUALITY COMMERCIAL UNIT
- Large external yard area
 - Total Gross Internal Floor Area of approximately 16,568 ft (1,539.07 m sq)
 - An established commercial site of approximately 3.5 acres (1.42 hectares) located adjacent to Sleaf airfield



Springbank Farm, Meadow View & Caravan Site
Church Stretton | SY6 6HB
For Sale: OIRO £1,500,000 (EXCLUSIVE)

- FOR SALE: LIFESTYLE PROPERTY OPPORTUNITY
- 4 bed house, 2 bed bungalow, equestrian facilities & caravan site
 - Collection of outbuildings, land and turnkey business
 - Idyllic setting and offering 9.587 acres



Feeling the impact of a foreign conflict

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce is calling on the Government to deliver urgent support to employers as new data reveals that four in five businesses are impacted by the Iran conflict.

Latest research from the British Chambers of Commerce highlights rising energy bills, shipping disruption and escalating raw material costs as the most widespread pressures facing firms.

Shropshire Chamber is supporting the BCC's call for the Government to fund renewable levies on business bills, roll out a national business energy advice scheme, strengthen protections against unfair pricing practices, and improve energy storage capacity.

Chief executive Ruth Ross said Shropshire businesses were not asking for handouts – simply for a stable environment in which they can plan, invest and grow.

“Shropshire firms are incredibly resilient, but the cumulative pressure of energy volatility, shipping disruption and rising input costs is becoming a real pressure cooker.

“Many of our manufacturers are already operating on tight margins, and these global shocks are now hitting at exactly the wrong time.

“We have just completed research for our latest quarterly economic survey, and are hearing from members who are delaying



Ruth Ross, chief executive of Shropshire Chamber of Commerce

investment decisions, reworking supply chains, or absorbing costs they simply cannot continue to carry.

“The uncertainty around the Strait of Hormuz is particularly concerning for energy intensive industries. Businesses need clarity, stability and targeted support to navigate the months ahead.”

More than 800 businesses – the majority SMEs – took part in the BCC survey. Over half said they were already directly affected by the unrest in the Middle East, while a further quarter expected to be hit.

Manufacturing emerged as the sector experiencing the most severe strain, with more

than two thirds already affected by the crisis, and another 23% braced for further impact.

Shropshire Chamber said this reflected what the team was hearing locally from engineering, food production, automotive supply chain and advanced manufacturing firms.

Energy costs remain a major concern. Three quarters of firms expect their energy bills to rise over the next 12 months, and 43% anticipate increases of more than 20%. Nationally, more than a third say they expect difficulties paying their energy bills in the year ahead.

Local businesses have also reported volatile fuel prices, unpredictable shipping routes and supplier price rises ranging from 3% to 30% with very little notice.

William Bain, head of trade policy at the British Chambers of Commerce, said the impact of the conflict is being felt “the length and breadth of the UK”, warning that higher energy bills, shipping disruption and rising raw material costs are now daily concerns for firms.

“Even if the current ceasefire soon signals the end of the conflict, the economic reverberations will be felt for many months to come. The geopolitical kaleidoscope has been shaken and there’s no quick fix.

“Consumers will be given clarity over their energy costs in the coming days, but for businesses there’s no price cap. While Government has provided some relief for high energy users, most UK firms remain vulnerable to the volatile global market.”

Growing with a Dash

A young entrepreneur has doubled the turnover of his marketing business and opened a new co-working space.

Sam Deakin founded Ironbridge-based marketing agency Dash in 2023, after leaving a previous business he had created with a former business partner.

Less than three years on, it has grown from a one-person business into a group of three companies, a team of four and is working with national clients across the UK.

Dash moved into larger premises in the John Rose Building and earlier this year launched Dash Spaces, a co-working and meeting space to support freelancers, remote workers, and small business owners in Shropshire.

Alongside its agency services, the company has also begun developing its own software platforms, including project management and social media scheduling tools designed to reduce costs for both the agency and its clients.

Sam, 24, said: “The fact



Young entrepreneur Sam Deakin

that we’ve been able to grow so quickly by word of mouth and clients recommending us to other companies is something I’m incredibly proud of.

“We’re still at the beginning of our journey, and opening a co-working space is an important part of that, as we’re helping support the business community we are proud to be part of.

“What excites me most is that every step of our growth has come from delivering results, building relationships, and helping other businesses succeed. I am looking forward to continuing our growth here in Shropshire.”

Chronic pain – do you have to live with it?

A Bridgnorth therapist is bringing an emerging evidence-based chronic pain approach to Shropshire following specialist training linked to internationally-recognised research in the field.

Katie Rothwell, founder of Katie Rothwell Therapies, attended a masterclass in Manchester led by Howard Schubiner, whose work around pain reprocessing therapy, nervous system sensitisation and emotional awareness is attracting increasing global attention.

According to the latest Health Survey for England published by NHS Digital, more than one in four adults now report living with chronic pain.

Katie, a former RAF physical education officer who now works with people suffering persistent symptoms including fibromyalgia, chronic back pain, fatigue and long Covid, said awareness was growing around the role the nervous system can play in ongoing pain conditions.

Katie now incorporates elements of pain education, nervous system regulation, emotional awareness, nutrition, sleep and movement into her own BEAT Pain approach – Brain, Energy, Activity and Therapy – which she delivers through one-to-one sessions, group support and workshops.

“The science and understanding around chronic pain is evolving massively,” Katie said.

“More and more research is looking at how the nervous system, stress, emotions and past experiences can contribute to persistent symptoms, even when structural injuries have healed.

“People are often told they simply have to live with chronic pain, but many are now beginning to understand there may be more going on beneath the surface.”



Turas Accountants

Need help with Making Tax Digital?

Making Tax Digital went live on April 6th 2026. Whether you need help choosing software, learning how to use it, or want us to handle the digital side for you entirely, we'll make sure you're supported every step of the way.

Follow us on Socials for the latest news on HMRC, budgets and making tax digital.



Annual Accounts | Self-Assessments
VAT Returns | Payroll
Bookkeeping | Credit Control

01952 882434

info@turasaccountants.co.uk



Visit our website
for more info



The Lord Lieutenant gave the closing address

Eleventh shop for air ambulance charity

It is the charity's eleventh shop opening and comes during its 35 anniversary year.



Midlands Air Ambulance Charity has a new store on Frogmore Road in Market Drayton

Achieving in spite of such adversity

Founder Elizabeth Wilkinson – a long-time champion for dyslexics – said: "Each ceremony brings new stories of extraordinary talent and perseverance that truly inspire. Every Dyslexia Awards celebration evening is packed with

Previous winners have gone on to make significant impacts in various fields, demonstrating how dyslexic thinking can lead to innovation and success.

Notable figures from various sectors, including arts, sports, and business, continue to share their stories, fostering a more inclusive society.

The charity described it as ‘a great opportunity to connect with the amazing work happening across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin’.



Trustee Mark Thorn talking on the panel



Hanna Clarke, head of fundraising and communications at Community Resource



Kim Thompson-Lawrence delivering her pitch



The pre-event drinks reception at Aico



The panel debate hosted by Shropshire Business editor Carl Jones

Detailing Studio

- Paint correction & ceramic coatings
- Maintenance valets & aftercare
- Courtesy car or collection available

Secure Indoor Storage

- Alarmed, CCTV-protected unit
- Staff on site most days
- Trained delivery/collection available for your convenience

Automotive Concierge Service

- Servicing & MOT coordination
- Event & seasonal management
- White-glove "Custodian by Carscierge" packages

Your Personal Automotive Concierge

A boutique service for discerning owners who expect more.

CARSCIERGE

DRIVEN BY SERVICE

From precision detailing to discreet storage and transport, Carscierge delivers excellence in every detail — quietly, competently, and personally.

Covered & Open Transport

- Covered or open trailer options
- Live location tracking
- £1m insurance cover

Consignment Sales

- Valuation & preparation
- Professional listing & marketing
- Sale handled from start to finish

Vehicle Buying Service

Looking for something specific?

We source and inspect premium vehicles — to exacting standards, saving you time and risk.

- Expert sourcing & inspection
- Honest advice, personal service

Minsterley, Shropshire • 01743 291511 • 07478 332224

hello@carscierge.co.uk • www.carscierge.co.uk



Why addiction is everyone's business

Scott Morgan



Think about a Shropshire employee, and it is unlikely that dependency on alcohol or drugs comes to mind as a typical attribute. Yet there are many people for whom addiction and employment co-exist, which is why it is so crucial for employers to think about gaining knowledge and taking action.

With the right attitude and information to hand, businesses may be able to spot that a staff member needs support, signpost them towards treatment and resources, and also provide the right environment for those re-entering the workplace after treatment. Because it is not only about having the necessary knowledge, but also ensuring that this translates into policies and practices which are beneficial to both the individual and the employer.

The Mental Health Foundation estimates 1.2% of UK adults are alcohol dependent and 3.1% drug dependent. Perhaps less well known is that a large proportion are either able to continue working, or re-enter employment,

following treatment – Government analysis suggests this figure is around half for those with an alcohol dependency and a third for drug dependency.

In the county of Shropshire which has 250,000 adults, this means there are at least 10,000 impacted by addiction, of which a minimum of 3,500 are employed.

Put simply, every one of the 15,700 businesses in Shropshire should have dependency on their employee wellbeing agenda – because the likelihood of them employing someone who has been (or is currently) affected by addiction is high.

Spotting the signs of dependency is admittedly a difficult task – a Bupa study found 45% of employees would rather hide an addiction than discuss it at work – and many of the potential effects such as a dip in performance, attendance issues or a change in behaviour could be attributed to a range of other factors like stress, for example.

Put simply, every one of the 15,700 businesses in Shropshire should have dependency on their employee wellbeing agenda

This exemplifies why it is so important to purposefully create a workplace where managers feel able to approach employees if they have concerns, and confidence is instilled in staff that they will be supported

not reprimanded if they choose to disclose an issue such as dependency. Having multiple ways in which staff can share a concern such as addiction and having avenues of support which can be discretely accessed are also key.

This approach not only benefits the individual themselves, but it also makes sense on a purely commercial level: the sooner someone seeks support, the better the outcomes – minimising the potential impact on the business.

There are different considerations for those who have undergone treatment (whether they have continued working throughout or have re-entered the workforce since): employers may wish to consider reasonable adjustments, especially for those just beginning their recovery treatment. And they may wish to put thought into aspects such as social gatherings among colleagues, particularly if these usually centre around alcohol.

Each individual's scenario will be nuanced, and there will be new learnings that employers discover along the way – even if they have previously supported a staff member with a dependency. But having the right policies and practices in place, ensuring adequate knowledge has been shared across all those with management responsibilities, and having a directory of support services to signpost towards are a good place to start.

What is perhaps most essential is our collective attitude towards addiction: the fact is that individuals with drug and alcohol dependencies are working within Shropshire businesses right now, and many others who have the skills and will to do a brilliant job are looking to re-enter the workforce.

By turning a blind eye to the issue, employers are doing a disservice to both of these groups of people – but by making addiction everyone's business, we can do so much good: for the people affected, for employers, and for the wider community too.

Scott Morgan is the chief executive of A Better Tomorrow

Another milestone for development

Construction work at Telford town centre's Station Quarter is continuing apace, with hotel, education and residential facilities starting to take shape.

A new Hampton by Hilton hotel has reached its highest construction point, reinforcing Telford's ability to attract investment from leading national and international brands.

The topping out ceremony marks progress on the 142 room hotel, which will create 38 full-time jobs and increase Telford's capacity to welcome more visitors for leisure, culture and major business events.

The development supports continued regeneration and long term confidence in the destination. The visitor economy is worth a total of £440 million to Telford, and the tourism sector is Telford and Wrekin's fifth largest employer.

Representatives from key project partners including Telford & Wrekin Council, Hilton, Legacy Hotels & Resorts, contractor Bowmer & Kirkland and Gen8 Developments gathered for the topping out ceremony on site.

Partners celebrated this milestone by recreating the iconic image of 'Lunch atop a Skyscraper' taken during construction of the Rockefeller building in 1932.

The topping out comes at a time of strong momentum for Telford as a destination, driven by major investment in heritage, culture and business events.

This includes the £9 million transfer of the Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust sites to the National Trust, the development of a new cultural quarter anchored by the Telford Theatre in Oakengates, and the continued growth of the Telford International Centre as one of the UK's leading conference and exhibition venues.

The hotel sits next to the new Denmark House apartment building which is now complete and has been handed over to Nuplace, Telford & Wrekin Council's wholly-owned housing company.

Legal & General Affordable Homes are also delivering a series of low-rise townhouses and maisonettes, which are nearing completion next to Denmark House.

And construction work is nearing completion on the new Telford 6th building – a brand new A level centre for Telford College which will be welcoming its first students in September.

Councillor Lee Carter, Telford & Wrekin Council leader, said: "The Hampton by Hilton hotel will strengthen our town centre accommodation offer at a time when Telford and our wider borough are welcoming more visitors for business and leisure – for major events, culture, heritage and our growing outdoor and leisure offer.

"It reflects the confidence being shown in Telford and supports our wider ambition to create high quality, sustainable places where people want to visit, stay and invest."

Paul Blackmore, vice president for development in the UK & Ireland at Hilton, said: "This milestone marks an important moment for Hampton by Hilton Telford and for everyone involved in bringing the project forward.



Representatives from key project partners on the rooftop of the Hampton by Hilton hotel



Officials mark the progress of Denmark House

"Telford continues to show real momentum, driving demand for well-located, high quality accommodation. With its prominent position at Station Quarter, the hotel will be well placed to welcome visitors to the town, and we're pleased to be working alongside our partners as the development progresses towards completion."

Mandy Thorn, chair of the tourism board for the Telford and Shropshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership, said: "Reaching this milestone is an important step in building both the quality and capacity we need as a destination.

"As Telford and Shropshire continue to grow its vibrant tourism sector, developments like this ensure we offer visitors real choice – from large scale resort hotels to distinctive bed and breakfasts, small hotels and self catering accommodation.

"That breadth of offer is vital in supporting staycations, major events and year round visits, and in welcoming people confidently and sustainably to the destination."



Recognition means a lot to Katherine

Katherine White is head of corporate sales at Telford International Centre

Telford International Centre has promoted Katherine White to head of corporate sales. Having started at the venue in September 2019, Katherine quickly proved a very adept account manager, winning and securing many new events for the venue. She said: "After nearly seven years at TIC, the recognition really means a lot to me. The business events industry is exciting and fast paced with no two days ever

the same. During my time at TIC, I have really enjoyed getting to know our clients and seeing their events grow and develop in the venue." Alison Griffin, managing director of Telford International Centre, said: "We recognised the need for a specialist to look after this sector well. Katherine has always understood – and looked after – the specific needs and requirements of prestigious brands and their event agencies and I am delighted for her on her promotion."

Head of wills, trusts and tax



James Wallace

Shrewsbury-based law firm Aaron & Partners has a new head of wills, trusts and tax. James Wallace has already led the firm's contentious trusts and probate work, managing a team that has grown significantly and seen increasing demand in recent years. His move to head up the wider team places both the contentious and non-contentious arms of the team under his leadership. James joined Aaron & Partners in 2010 and is widely known for his expertise in complex, high value estate and trust matters, often involving cross-border elements. He is also consistently recommended in industry guides like The Legal 500 and Chambers & Partners, while being an active member of established industry bodies the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners and the Association of Contentious Trust and Probate Specialists. The move is part of a wider strategic restructure at Aaron & Partners, with Clive Pointon, who had led the department for three decades, taking on the newly-created role of head of private client services.



Christopher Greenough is the new managing director at Westley Engineering

New managing director for engineering business

Shropshire businessman Christopher Greenough is the new managing director at Birmingham manufacturer Westley Engineering.

The company employs 47 people and generates an annual turnover of approximately £5 million from its dual capabilities in presswork, tooling and CNC machining. Christopher succeeds the retiring John Harland, and has more than 30 years' experience in senior operational leadership roles across British manufacturing, including SDE in Shrewsbury and CEL Sheetmetal in Telford. He said the business possessed "all the ingredients" required for significant future growth. "Westley Engineering has an extraordinary heritage and reputation which has been built over generations," he said. "What immediately stood out to me was the depth of engineering capability within the

business and the commitment of the people here. There is a huge opportunity to build on those foundations and take the company into an exciting new phase of growth, building on the strong foundations laid by John Harland." The company traces its roots back to 1812, when William Westley Richards founded Westley Richards & Co., initially specialising in the development and manufacture of firearms for sporting and military use. "Manufacturing in the UK has enormous potential when businesses are prepared to invest in technology, people and culture," said Christopher. "I strongly believe in developing teams, creating opportunities for people and building an environment where individuals feel supported to grow professionally and personally. If you create the right culture, performance follows." "One of my priorities will be strengthening our apprenticeship programme and continuing to invest in workforce skills, because the future of manufacturing depends on developing the next generation of engineers."

Highest honour bestowed

A local soldier has been awarded Telford and Wrekin's highest civic honour for his role in safeguarding the borough's internationally significant heritage.

At a special meeting of Telford & Wrekin Council, members voted unanimously to confer the Freedom of the Borough on Garrison Sergeant Major Andrew 'Vern' Stokes. The title of Honorary Freeman is the most prestigious civic honour a council can award, recognising individuals or organisations that have made an exceptional contribution to the local community. GSM Stokes has served with distinction throughout a long and highly regarded military career, rising to one of the British Army's most senior non-commissioned ranks. As Garrison Sergeant Major, he oversees the delivery of some of the nation's most significant ceremonial events, including Trooping the Colour. Born in Madeley and educated in Wellington, he joined the Army at 16 and has served on operational tours around the world. He was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal in 2013 in recognition of his outstanding service. In 2021, he was appointed a Member of the Royal Victorian Order for his leadership in delivering the ceremonial funeral of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh during the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2023, he was awarded an OBE for his role in the planning and delivery of the State Funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II and the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla. Now based at Horse Guards in London, GSM Stokes continues to live locally and maintains strong ties to Telford and Wrekin. He also serves as



Vern Stokes is appointed Honorary Freeman of the Borough

a Deputy Lieutenant of Shropshire. The honour was formally presented by Deputy Lieutenant of Shropshire Mrs Mandy Thorn, alongside Councillor Eileen Callear, mayor of Telford and Wrekin and the council's armed forces champion Councillor Derek White. GSM Stokes described it as a 'tremendous honour', adding: "I am incredibly proud of my roots here. This area and its people have always meant a great deal to me and have shaped who I am." At the same meeting, the council also unanimously approved a special recognition award for Mark Pemberton, chair of trustees of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, for his role in overseeing the transfer of the museums to the National Trust – a move seen as securing the long-term future of one of the UK's most significant historic sites.

sales@global-freight.co.uk +44 (0)1952 270 699 www.global-freight.co.uk

GLOBAL FREIGHT

In 1956 Malcolm Maclean invented and patented the first standard shipping container. In 1966 Global Freight Services started using this method of shipping for the first time. Today, we ship to over 112 countries worldwide and with the help of Road, Air, Sea and Rail, we can not only help you take your product local, but we can also help you take it GLOBAL.

Logistics Upside Down
Call Us

Thrilled with new role

The new business development manager at a Shropshire advocacy charity says she is looking forward to helping the organisation build a sustainable future for its vulnerable and disabled clients.

Oswestry-based Shropshire PCAS (Person Centred Advocacy and Support) is now planning for a successful year ahead after winning funding from various organisations since the appointment of Tarrah Lewis. Shropshire PCAS supports clients, most of whom live alone and have no family support, through complex issues including housing problems, safeguarding concerns, social care access, energy bills, and health challenges.

Tarrah brings a wealth of experience to her role, having worked successfully with Brightstar Boxing and Lingen Davies – two organisations with strong Shropshire connections. She said: “It is an exciting challenge for me and I am looking forward to supporting the trustees, advocates and the internal team, including the manager Simon Arthur, in building a charity which is sustainable for the future.”

“My role will focus on building the income, ensuring the charity is secure for years to come.”

“Shropshire PCAS has been a lifeline to more than 11,000 disabled and vulnerable adults across Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin for more than 30 years, with advocates and volunteers working with clients who often have no one else to turn to.”



Tarrah Lewis with Shropshire PCAS manager Simon Arthur

Expansion of property team

Talbots Law has announced the expansion of its commercial property team in Telford with the appointment of Rachel Raybould-Dear and Charmaine Wilding.

They join the firm’s commercial hub in Telford – one of the firm’s seven commercial hubs – working alongside established team members Andy Ward and Tracy Pyatt. The expansion coincides with the firm’s relaunch of its business services team.

Asad Khand, head of commercial property, said: “Strengthening our



The expanding team at Talbots Law in Telford

commercial property team in Telford is a key priority, as we continue to grow our presence in Shropshire. Rachel and Charmaine bring valuable experience and insight, and their appointments ensure we are well-placed to meet increasing client demand across the region.”

Manager Sally's in the Spotlight

Shifnal-based Spotlight Accounting has appointed Sally Taylor as practice manager.

Sally is an ACA qualified accountant with over 20 years’ experience in practice.

She trained with a small local firm and, prior to joining Spotlight Accounting, was a director at a top ten accountancy firm.

Her background includes audit and assurance, accounts preparation and tax compliance, working with owner managed and family businesses, multi company groups, overseas owned entities and FCA registered clubs and societies.



Sally Taylor of Spotlight Accounting

Carrie Stokes, founder of Spotlight Accounting, said: “Sally’s experience and approach make her an excellent addition to the team.”

“Her appointment allows us to strengthen our operations while continuing to provide the personal, high quality service our clients value.”

Sustainable future

Shropshire Council’s newly-appointed chief executive has outlined her determination to put the authority on a ‘sustainable footing for the future’.

Tanya Miles had been serving as interim chief executive since September, having previously been the council’s director of adult social services and director of children’s services.

She has held numerous roles in adult and children’s services since joining the council in 1999 as a social worker, and described the appointment as ‘a real privilege’.

“Since September, I’ve seen first-hand the commitment of our staff and the strength of our partnerships across the county,” she said.

“My focus is on supporting our workforce, working closely with members, and delivering the plans we have in place to stabilise, improve and put the council on a sustainable footing for the future.”

Councillor Heather Kidd, leader of Shropshire Council, said: “There was strong competition through a rigorous recruitment process, but Tanya stood out as the right person to lead Shropshire into its next chapter.”

“She brings not only enormous professional experience, but a genuine love of this county and a lifetime of service to its



Chief executive of Shropshire Council Tanya Miles

people. Tanya has literally worked her way up from a front-line social worker, and that gives her a grounding and understanding of public service that is hard to replicate.

“She is tough but fair, ambitious for this organisation, and committed to making Shropshire Council a positive place to work where staff feel valued, challenged and supported to improve.”

“Tanya has also always put our residents at the heart of the council’s role.”

“We have moved from crisis management towards recovery and improvement. With our improvement plan and medium-term financial plan in place and our draft Corporate Plan soon to be approved, we now need to keep delivering – and Tanya is the right person to help lead that effort.”

Three-year deal helps with affordable housing

Travis Perkins Managed Services has been appointed to provide building materials to affordable housing provider Connexus on a three-year deal.

Connexus provides over 10,000 affordable rented homes and associated services across Shropshire and Herefordshire.

Travis Perkins Managed Services will also be opening new sales offices in Hereford and Ludlow, ensuring that products and expert advice are readily available while reducing customer mileage.

Anthony Keen, business development executive, said: “We’re really proud to have been partnering with Connexus as their building materials supplier, supported by the extensive range of products available through Travis Perkins branches.”

“Connexus will also use Travis Perkins Managed Services’ web-based platform TPgo Data for up-to-date data insights to inform business decision-making, and TPgo Order to manage orders for bespoke and special items. With such a large number of properties in their portfolio, using the TPgo suite will help to create greater efficiencies for Connexus.”

Fleur Whittingham, director of property at Connexus, said: “Our geography and the challenges of being a rural housing association with greater distances between jobs mean we needed to find a very bespoke approach for our materials supply contract.”

“We believe that our new supplier model will give us better rural coverage, more local merchants and increased access to dedicated specialised expertise. We are excited to be working with Travis Perkins in this new partnership arrangement.”

Binge the whole box set.

All five series of SBLTV are now available on YouTube.

Search @ShropshireBusinessLiveTV



shropshirelive

Your **local** news and entertainment website and radio station

Listen on our free app
On your smart speaker
Read and listen at shropshirelive.com



Five minutes with . . .

GARRY HORRIGAN is business development manager at Serchem in Telford – a family-run manufacturer supplying specialist hygiene and decontamination products and services to the healthcare, catering, and hospitality sectors

HOW IS YOUR JOB IMPACTED BY FLUCTUATIONS IN THE ECONOMY?
I think all industries are impacted by this, especially ours. We have all heard of the pressures that our NHS is under but at Serchem we try to become part of the solution with our offering of cost-efficient products that do not sacrifice on quality.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF AI ON YOUR BUSINESS?
I think it is amazing and it is going to bring so much innovation to health care and the boundaries are endless. Serchem will evolve with AI but stand true to our core beliefs that service comes first and people buy from people.

HOW DO YOU HOPE YOUR COLLEAGUES WOULD DESCRIBE YOU?
I would like to think that they believe I am driven, ambitious, dependable, loyal and think of me as a friend not just a colleague.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN YOUR JOB?
Encouraging our customer base to look at the bigger picture. We are far more than a chemical manufacturer, we operate as an ecosystem of technical support, expertise, and service that helps customers optimise their operations. However, many customers only fully recognise the value of the support when they trial alternative suppliers and experience the difference.

YOUR PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENTS?
My two sons; they are my number one... and representing my country at rugby.

PET HATES?
People who think it is acceptable to be late, and laziness. My grandfather always taught me: "Ten minutes early is on time, on time is late and late is disrespectful."

IF YOU COULD GO BACK AND GIVE YOUR YOUNGER SELF SOME WISE ADVICE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
Don't try to be something that you are not; just be yourself because that is always enough.

HOW DO YOU RELAX AWAY FROM WORK?
Trying to drive the company forward means lots of time away from home so weekends are sacred – and family time, spending time with Harriet and my boys Lenny and Vinny is the priority then.

FAVOURITE THING ABOUT SHROPSHIRE?
Being a proud Welshman, I obviously miss the Green Green Grass of Home but Shropshire is just as beautiful, and only just over the border.

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM OF CHOICE?
I'm quite a private person, so don't really do the social media thing, but would have to say LinkedIn.

FAVOURITE MOVIE AND/OR TV SHOW?
Braveheart

EARLY BIRD, OR NIGHT OWL?
Early bird – I'm a proud member of the 5am club.

DREAM DINNER PARTY GUESTS, DEAD OR ALIVE?
My grandparents . . . and Gordon Ramsay, just so he could cook.

TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT YOU THAT MOST PEOPLE PROBABLY WOULDN'T KNOW
I spent time working as a bodyguard all over the world protecting high profile stars.



Garry and Serchem colleagues showcase the product range



Garry in rugby action



Garry Horrigan



Family man... Garry says his two sons are his proudest achievement
AND FINALLY . . . WHAT DO YOU THINK THE NEXT 12 MONTHS HAS IN STORE FOR YOU, PROFESSIONALLY AND PERSONALLY?
Personally, I will continue to try to be the best father I can be. I truly believe that in life, everyone has a WHY: my why are my family and my kids, everything I do is for them. Professionally, Serchem is a sleeping giant and the future is exciting... watch this space.

Our People, Your Team.

Here to
help you.

We can hold meetings via telephone and video and, of course, we are also able to offer meetings in person. Please contact us and a member of our team will be happy to help.

Find Us:
Chapter House North, Abbey Lawn,
Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury SY2 5DE
Tel: 01743 280280

info@lblaw.co.uk
www.lblaw.co.uk



Shrewsbury • Bromyard • Conwy • Hereford • Ludlow • Oswestry • Telford

Forever begins with



Rudell.
The Jewellers

97 Darlington Street, Wolverhampton WV1 4HB. Telephone: 01902 423308 / 427199

1 The Burlington, 127 New Street, Birmingham B2 4JH. Telephone: 0121 289 7149

www.rudells.com