

Somerset Voice

The Official
Magazine of
Somerset
Chamber of
Commerce

April / May 2022

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Advice from the British Chambers of Commerce

 Somerset
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T: 01934 733078 | E: mike.sartain@hale-events.ltd.uk
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T: 01278 228004 | E: info@bridgwaterchamber.org.uk
www.bridgwaterchamber.org.uk

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T: 01749 813291 | E: brutonchamber@gmail.com
www.brutonchamber.org

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T: 01278 238959 | E: deryk@kds-interiors.co.uk
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T: 01643 851895 | E: admin@businessexmoor.co.uk
www.businessexmoor.co.uk

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T: 01934 741792 | E: beccycheddarchamber@gmail.com

Frome Chamber of Commerce

T: 01749 342255 | E: president@fromechamber.com
www.fromechamber.com

Glastonbury Chamber of Commerce

T: 01458 835678 | E: office@glastonburychamber.co.uk
www.glastonburychamber.co.uk

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T: 01460 52506 | E: enquiries@ilminsterhomehardware.co.uk
www.ilminsterchamber.org.uk

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www.shepton.biz

Somer Valley Chamber of Commerce

T: 07530 042627 | E: plenty.jon@gmail.com
www.somervalleychamber.com

Street Chamber of Commerce

T: 07552 170725 | E: secretary@streetchamber.co.uk

Taunton Chamber of Commerce

T: 01823 230898 | E: office@taunton-chamber.co.uk
www.taunton-chamber.co.uk

Watchet Chamber of Trade

T: 07836 239 932 | www.wacet.co.uk

Wellington Business Association

T: 07761 485657 | E: info@wellingtonbusinessassociation.co.uk
www.wellingtonchamber.co.uk

Wells Chamber of Commerce

T: 01749 685236 | E: info@wellschamberofcommerce.co.uk
www.wellschamberofcommerce.co.uk

Weston-super-Mare Chamber

T: 07850 363249 | E: President@westonchamber.org.uk
www.westonchamber.org.uk

Wincanton Chamber of Commerce

T: 01963 34327 | E: chair@wincantonchamber.co.uk
www.wincantonchamber.co.uk

Wiveliscombe & 10 Parish Business Group

T: 01984 684777 | E: secinfo@10pbg.co.uk | www.10pbg.co.uk

Yeovil Chamber of Commerce

T: 01935 804999 | E: secretary@yeovilchamber.org
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Front page: The grand final of the Somerset Business Awards 2022 at the Winter Gardens Pavilion, Weston-super-Mare.
Photo: Tessa Chapman Photography

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Somerset Chamber of Commerce
Equity House
Blackbrook Park Avenue
Blackbrook Business Park
Taunton, Somerset TA1 2PX

Editorial and advertising:

E: marketing@somerset-chamber.co.uk

T: 01823 444924

Printers: Carly Press, Somerset

Design by: Thoroughbred Design & Print, Somerset



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FIRST WORD

I achieved a major milestone last month – my first Somerset Business Awards with the Chamber team! We had an incredible night at Weston-super-Mare's Winter Gardens Pavilion and it was fantastic to meet so many of our great local business men and women.

We know times are still challenging for business, with soaring energy and supply chain costs, coupled with recruitment difficulties and rising inflation, but we were able to put that aside for one night and celebrate the very many achievements of Somerset's amazing business community.

Congratulations to all the winners and finalists in the Somerset Business Awards 2022 and a big thank you to everyone who took part - and our judges and sponsors for making the awards a real highlight in the business calendar.

You can find a round-up of all the winners and finalists, plus a photo gallery from the grand final in our special awards round-up on pages 11-15.

Elsewhere in this edition, we asked Chamber Business Partner, Somerset County Council, to explain what Somerset's new unitary authority will mean for both businesses and residents – you can find out more on pages 28-29.

We have more photo galleries from recent events on pages 24-26 and all the latest news from our members on pages 31 to 37.

I was also delighted to have been able to attend the official opening of Somerset's dedicated new aerospace centre, iAero, in Yeovil. We have photos and more details about that in our Business Partner news section on pages 8-10.

It's certainly been a busy time for the Chamber team and our members and we have a packed calendar of events to look forward to in the coming months – you can read more about what's coming up on page 27!

But I can't sign-off without mentioning the terrible situation in Ukraine. Our thoughts are with everyone caught in the conflict and for businesses unsure of what to do, we've got a special Q&A from the British Chambers of Commerce on page 38.

Emma Rawlings

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

OUR BUSINESS PARTNERS

Contact us to find out what benefits Somerset Chamber Business Partners receive.

T: 01823 444924 **E:** membership@somerset-chamber.co.uk



Get in touch

Marketing and PR

Annelise Cowie

PR & Communications Executive

T: 01823 444924 | **M:** 07702 537630

E: annelise.cowie@somerset-chamber.co.uk

Membership

Jenn Chidley-Sanders

Member Engagement and Policy Manager

M: 07872 063039

E: jenn.c.sanders@somerset-chamber.co.uk

Alistair Tudor

Operations Manager

T: 01823 444924 | **M:** 07912 054195

E: alistair.tudor@somerset-chamber.co.uk

Events

Sallie Barnes

Marketing and Events Co-ordinator

T: 01823 444924 | **M:** 07706 360398

E: sallie.barnes@somerset-chamber.co.uk

Emma Rudkin

Operations Administrator

T: 01823 444924 | **M:** 07821 950379

E: emma.rudkin@somerset-chamber.co.uk

Hinkley Supply Chain

Emma Rawlings

Executive Director

T: 01823 443425 | **M:** 07706 329974

E: emma.rawlings@somerset-chamber.co.uk

Oliver Morgan

Data Analyst

T: 01823 443425 | **M:** 07525 809274

E: oliver.morgan@hinkleysupplychain.co.uk

General Enquiries

Alistair Tudor

Operations Manager

T: 01823 444924 | **M:** 07912 054195

E: alistair.tudor@somerset-chamber.co.uk

Emma Rudkin

Operations Administrator

T: 01823 444924 | **M:** 07821 950379

E: emma.rudkin@somerset-chamber.co.uk

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FEATURE Transport

Somerset Chamber's members work in a wide range of industries, with many helping to keep the wheels turning for supply chains, the tourism industry and haulage firms. Here we find out more about those who are working in the transport sector and find out what they are doing to support other companies and the wider economy.

Air-Seal Products Ltd

Air-Seal Products Ltd is helping to keep drivers on the road by launching an online shop, allowing customers to buy puncture preventative solutions online for the first time.

Air-Seal Products is a family-run business that has been supplying a range of premier tyre sealants worldwide for over 20 years. These sealants are a major solution to tyre management and have been proven to reduce operating and tyre replacement costs.

They can prevent 95% of punctures up to 30mm in the tread area of

a tyre, giving a permanent repair for the life of the tyre. Air-Seal tyre sealants will help maintain optimum tyre pressure in a cost effective and safe way by stopping all rim, bead, and other slow air leaks.

This means better fuel efficiency up to 3% and the life of the tyre up to a staggering 20%. This reduces downtime and the cost of a user's operation and mitigates their carbon emissions.

Profitability of businesses in the transport sector is being threatened as fuel prices soar and could rise by a further 50% as the cost of crude oil increases due to sanctions imposed on Russia by Western nations.

Air-Seal Products' sealants 3%



efficiency saving could mean a company with a fleet of ten trucks and trailers would save between £17,334 and £30,701 a year when using their tyre sealants.

Air-Seal Products are used worldwide by major companies for their vehicle fleets e.g. The Royal Mail and have seen the reductions in cost and downtime for themselves. To find out more about how our products can help you, call us on 01823 674411 or email info@air-sealproducts.com.

Bristol Airport

A major redevelopment project to improve the airside departure lounge at Bristol Airport is well underway. The three-month project, which includes an overall investment of £2.6 million and will create dozens of new jobs, is expected to be completed in time for the Easter holiday getaway.

The significant investment will enhance the shopping and dining experience for customers before boarding their flights. As well as enhanced facilities to the retail and eateries in the departure lounge, improvements will also be made to the design of the retail units

to provide a smoother and easier shopping experience.

Tom Hack, Head of Commercial at Bristol Airport, said: "This is an exciting project and opportunity for Bristol Airport and its customer facilities. The £2.6million investment in the enhancements of the commercial amenities shows a very clear sign of the confidence our commercial partners have in Bristol Airport and vice versa. The redevelopments will create dozens of new jobs to the local area as the airport sees a continued passenger growth since the COVID pandemic.

"Our customers' holidays start in our departure lounge, and it is very



important for us to provide them with the best possible experience. We understand that our leisure and business customers have high expectations when travelling through Bristol Airport and we will continue to strive to meet their requirements. We are very confident that the investment and redevelopment in our departure lounge will provide a greater passenger experience as we offer new places to shop, eat, drink and relax before you fly."

West Somerset Railway

Train travellers can now enjoy a trip to Minehead as a result of a massive effort by staff and volunteers of the West Somerset Railway, which is celebrating being able to run passenger services back to the resort for the first time in around 18 months.

The need to improve and update the level crossing in Seaward Way meant that last season, trains from Bishops Lydeard had to stop at Dunster station and passengers were then treated to a vintage bus ride to complete their trip.



This came after months of COVID restrictions which hit the railway hard, but a record-breaking December with traditional Santa Express services and new and highly-popular Winterlight Specials gave new hope for the future.

Company chairman Jon Jones-Pratt said: "We're obviously very excited that after a difficult time, steam trains can once again run right back to Minehead. It's a very important step for the railway and the local tourism industry.

"We're extremely grateful to all our staff and volunteers who've worked so hard over the months to make this possible. Our locomotives, carriages and stations are looking fantastic, and a huge amount has been done to improve the tracks."

Full steam and diesel passenger services are running until the end of October, and an exciting programme of galas and special events has been organised, including marking the Queen's Jubilee.

Fish and Chips and Cider and Cheese Specials are running most weeks, while the line's Quantock Belle first-class dining coaches providing a slap-up three-course meal are back in action.



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BUSINESS PARTNER NEWS

iAero aerospace centre officially opened in Yeovil

A new £10m aerospace centre in Somerset dedicated to innovation, collaboration and sustainable aviation has officially opened. The iAero project, led by Somerset County Council, demonstrates the continuing commitment to the aerospace industry and underlines its importance to the economy of Somerset and the South West.

iAero is a hub for collaboration and innovation on new products. It stands next door to world-leading aerospace company Leonardo UK Ltd, a key partner in the project.

The centre – one of just a handful of aerospace innovation centres nationwide – will be the gateway for the aerospace industry to access small and medium enterprises who are looking to collaborate and innovate on new products at this dynamic and creative hub.

The opening, which was also attended by Somerset Chamber of Commerce's Executive Director Emma Rawlings, marked the start of a new phase in the development, securing the right tenants, cementing its place in the aerospace industry and maximising its economic benefits. The ribbon was cut for the official opening by Yeovil MP Marcus Fysh.

Councillor David Hall, Somerset County Council's Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Community Infrastructure, said: "iAero plays a key part in our innovation portfolio to support key Somerset industries and sectors. It will support aerospace; the Energy Innovation Centre at Bridgwater supports the nuclear and low carbon industries while the Digital Innovation Centre under construction in Taunton, will support the county's fast-growing digital economy.

"iAero represents a significant investment in the future of Somerset's aerospace industry, delivered with funding from the County Council, the European Union and UK Government."

Karl Tucker, chair of the Heart of the South West LEP, said: "The launch of iAero is extremely exciting and of huge



Photo: from left, Yeovil MP Marcus Fysh, Councillor David Hall, Somerset County Council Cabinet member for Economic Development, Planning and Community Infrastructure, and Nick Whitney, Managing Director of Leonardo Helicopters UK.

significance to the region. The centre will contribute to local economic growth and the creation of high-value jobs as well as our clean growth ambitions.

"iAero will provide an important facility to support the South West's well-established aerospace cluster, and its national and global competitiveness. The facilities at iAero will enable the development of innovative and sustainable solutions, putting the South West at the centre of cutting-edge emission reducing technologies.

"We are delighted to have been able to support the iAero Centre with funding from our Growth Deal and Getting Building Fund allocations and look forward to seeing the fantastic work which will surely take place here in the coming years."

Nick Whitney, Managing Director of Leonardo Helicopters UK, said: "Yeovil has a long history in aerospace. The iAero centre marks the next frontier for the aerospace community in Somerset. The freedom to explore, experiment, and engineer at the centre will ensure the region remains at the cutting-edge of innovative flight technologies."

The iAero Centre has been funded by Somerset County Council, Government's Local Growth Fund as part of the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership's Growth Deal and the England European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme. Fit out of the Centre is being funded by Government's Getting Building Fund with these monies secured by Somerset County Council via the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership.

For more information about the iAero Centre or to register your interest, please email iAeroCentreYeovil@somerset.gov.uk.

WPA announced as official partner of Western Storm cricket team

Western Storm will be working closely with health insurer, WPA on a number of initiatives in 2022.

The partnership will see WPA branding appear on the Western Storm match shirt and sponsorship of the live stream coverage of Western Storm's 2022 fixtures at the Cooper Associates County Ground. The two organisations will also be collaborating on a wellbeing content series throughout the year.

WPA is already well-known within the domestic game for its principal partnership with Somerset County Cricket Clin.

Regional Director of Women's Cricket, Lisa Pagett, said: "We are really excited about this partnership with WPA.

Their desire to support Western Storm, and indeed women's cricket as a whole, at what is a really exciting time for the game is great to see.

"Their backing of the live stream will help us to bring the game to a much wider audience, and the wellbeing series will be a powerful and enlightening tool which will genuinely be of benefit to women from all walks of life."

Mark Southern, WPA's Sales and Marketing Director, added: "We're delighted to be supporting Western Storm, not only in bringing more attention to the women's game but also learning from professional sports women for the benefit of our customers."

Albert Goodman welcomes Iain McVicar as next managing partner

Regional chartered accountancy firm Albert Goodman has announced that its managing partner, Richard Bugler, will be stepping down after serving six successful years at the helm. A new successor and current partner at the firm, Iain McVicar, will take on the role for the same term starting on May 1.

Richard trained at Albert Goodman before working his way up to partner status and eventually taking on the six-year term as managing partner in 2016.

Under his leadership he has exponentially grown the firm year on year, promoted the board of partners to include a 50% female partnership and invested heavily in new premises in Weymouth, Weston-super-Mare and the firm's headquarters in Taunton.

Richard will continue to stay on at Albert Goodman as a partner with a particular focus on the firm's corporate finance offering.

As part of the succession planning, the partnership board has elected Iain McVicar, a partner in the farming estates team, to replace Richard. Iain will honour the firm's five-year commitment to grow the business and continue to meet Albert Goodman's sustainability goal of becoming net zero by 2030.



This will complement their work with large corporates across the region, especially next generation business leaders, who are looking to drive their own businesses forward in a sustainable way.

Richard said: "I've enjoyed 28 wonderful years at Albert Goodman, from my time as a trainee, to growing the business as one of the largest chartered accountancy practices in the South West.

"Hopefully my career path is an inspiration to our young apprentices that are at the start of their career. Anything is possible if you're dedicated, passionate about helping customers to reach their full potential and possess good leadership qualities.

"Working with Iain over the years has been tremendous and highly rewarding, seeing him grow personally and professionally. I'm confident he will do very well and I'm excited to see where he takes Albert Goodman over the next six years."

Iain added: "I know I've got big shoes

to fill as Richard is well respected in the region for so many reasons and he's done a sterling job of putting Albert Goodman on the map. The business is in great shape to take over the reins and it feels like the right time for me personally to move into the managing partner position and utilise all my experience.

"Helping South West businesses is my number one priority, and I am grateful that I have an amazing team behind me to support all of their accountancy needs. From apprenticeship level to partners within the firm, I'm fortunate to work with a team that have so much experience and a real passion to continue Richard's legacy."



Weston College plants a tree for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Weston College has joined the national campaign to support the Queen's Green Canopy - a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which invites people from across the United Kingdom to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee".

College Principal and Chief Executive, Dr Paul Phillips CBE, was joined by staff and students to plant their first tree at the college's South West Skills Campus on Locking Road, Weston-super-Mare.

It is just one of many of the college's green initiatives that ties in with its wider sustainability and social action framework. Also in attendance were Emily Burnell, Woods Project Coordinator at the Woodland Trust,



Pete Lane, horticulture lecturer and ex-students now working within Butcombe Farm's philanthropic venture, Uncle Paul's Chilli Charity, in partnership with the college.

Dr Phillips said: "The Queen's Green Canopy is a really interesting project and it's one that everyone can get involved in. I would encourage all schools, businesses, community

groups and members of the public out there now to really get behind this as we move towards the jubilee - it's also a great chance to connect with each other and inspire young people as the future custodians of the UK's green spaces, forests and woodlands.

"As a college, our wider sustainability work is leading the region whether this is working with businesses to create green apprenticeships, or supporting people to retain for green careers, we are supporting many organisations achieve the change required to collectively work towards 'Net Zero' - and this very much includes innovative social action projects such as this one to build stronger, greener communities."



Bridgwater & Taunton College trainer named as apprenticeship champion

Bridgwater & Taunton College (BTC) trainer Darren Waine has been named as a NOCN (National Open College Network) Apprenticeship Champion.

The title recognises people who consistently drive for excellence within the apprenticeship field, demonstrate a commitment to ensuring apprentices receive the very best in pastoral support and technical excellence.

They must also provide curriculums and apprenticeship programmes that embody the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the apprenticeship standard. The accolade is bestowed by NOCN, an educational charity which aims to help learners reach their potential and organisations to thrive.

Darren is a Senior Specialist Trainer at BTC's Construction Skills and Innovation Centre (CSIC) in Cannington. He is responsible for delivering the steel fixing and formwork apprenticeship, which is run nationally with some of the UK's leading construction and civil engineering contractors.

Darren said: "It's fantastic to have the work we do at the Construction Skills and Innovation Centre recognised by NOCN. It's very much a team effort and we're all focused on supporting apprentices to develop their skills and help to develop standards in construction.

"Raising the profile of steel fixing training is a huge passion of mine and to receive this award in recognition of that is great!"

Assistant Principal, Jason Kilduff, said: "Here at BTC, we pride



ourselves on excellent practices which benefit our students. This apprenticeship programme has been developed in direct response to local and national skills needs, and I am delighted Darren and his team have been recognised. It is a fantastic recognition and reflection of the hard work and commitment of the team."

BTC offers over 150 apprenticeship courses in a range of subjects and from Level 2 up to degree apprenticeships. More information is available at www.btc.ac.uk.

Darren is pictured on site with his NOCN Apprenticeship Champion certificate.

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▲ The winners and finalists in the Somerset Business Awards 2022.

CELEBRATIONS FOR SOMERSET BUSINESS AWARDS 2022 WINNERS

The winners of the Somerset Business Awards 2022 have been announced at a glittering event at the Winter Gardens Pavilion, in Weston-super-Mare.

Nearly 400 business people from across Somerset attended the gala evening, which was organised by Somerset Chamber of Commerce and hosted by BBC broadcaster Claire Carter.

The 2022 finalists come from all corners of the county, including Taunton, Wellington, Bridgwater, Yeovil, Norton St Philip, Mark, Wiveliscombe, Weston-super-Mare, Shepton Mallet, Bradford-on-Tone, Westonzoyland, Langport, Glastonbury, Roadwater, Midsomer Norton, Ilminster, Highbridge and Cheddar.

This year was the 17th anniversary of the awards and Somerset Chamber Executive Director, Emma Rawlings, thanked everyone who had entered: "I am extremely proud of our county's businesses; we were all blown away by the

quality of the entries and what Somerset's businesses are achieving and producing.

"It was fantastic to be able to honour winners and finalists from all corners of the county and from a wide range of sectors and industries. Thank you to everyone who entered the awards and thank you to our judges and sponsors who continue to make these the biggest and best business awards in Somerset."

It was the 12th year main sponsor Albert Goodman had supported the awards and Partner and awards judge Michael Cahill said: "After a trying two years and an ever-changing business landscape, it felt like an in-person celebration of Somerset's finest businesses was well and truly overdue.

"There is nothing quite like getting the leaders of some of Somerset's most innovative, unique and worthwhile businesses coming together to celebrate one another's achievements.



▲ From left, Emma Rawlings, Executive Director of Somerset Chamber of Commerce, Richard Bugler, Managing Partner of main awards' sponsor Albert Goodman and awards' host, BBC broadcaster Claire Carter.



▲ Guests from main awards' sponsor Albert Goodman.



“Congratulations to all of the finalists and the winners – they should be proud of all they have achieved under incredibly trying circumstances.”



▲ Awards' host Claire Carter.

▲ Celebrations during the evening.

THE SOMERSET BUSINESS AWARD 2022 WINNERS ARE:



Albert Goodman Family Business of the Year (sponsored by Albert Goodman)

Winner – Protek Products, Shepton Mallet

The runners-up were: J&K Aquatics, Bridgwater and Musgrove Willows, Westonzoyland

◀ Rebecca Rackstraw and Harriet Farquhar, of Protek Products, with judge Michael Cahill, of Albert Goodman.



▲ Ryan Werner, of AIP Welding Supplies Ltd, with judge Ges Green, of Enterprise South West.

Small Business of the Year (sponsored by Enterprise South West)

Winner – AIP Welding Supplies Ltd, Bridgwater

Runners-up were: Introtweet Ltd, Taunton and Reflex Medical Limited, Shepton Mallet



▲ Martina Dytor-Butler (right), of Haven Timber Holdings Ltd, with judge Alison Smith, of Brook Financial Services.

Medium Business of the Year (sponsored by Brook Financial Management)

Winner – Haven Timber Holdings Ltd, Norton St Philip

Runners-up were: Hippyck Ltd, Bridgwater and Lendology CIC, Bradford-on-Tone

SOMERSET BUSINESS AWARDS



- ▲ Lara Battersby and Bill Sivewright, of Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance, with judge Tim Walker (left), of Clarke Willmott.

Charity of the Year
(sponsored by Clarke Willmott)

Winner – Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance, Wellington

Runners-up were: bibic, Langport and St Margaret's Hospice Care, Taunton



- ▲ Ben Hoskin and Sharon D'arcy, of Regency Purchasing Group, with judge Ben Lee (left), of PKF Francis Clark.

Large Business of the Year
(sponsored by PKF Francis Clark)

Winner – Regency Purchasing Group, Weston-super-Mare

Runners-up were: Bradfords Building Supplies, Yeovil and Ten Three Cleaning Ltd, Yeovil



Best Use of Technology
(sponsored by Porter Dodson)

Winner – Berry & Escott, Bridgwater

Runners-up were: Rotec Hydraulics Ltd, Taunton and Talick Group, Glastonbury

- ◀ Aaron Wood and Stuart Spinney, of Berry & Escott, with judge Evelyn Adfield, of Porter Dodson.



Employer of the Year
(sponsored by Elite Staffing Solutions)

Winner – Singer Instruments, Roadwater

Runners-up were: Alpha Housing Services Ltd, Taunton and WPA, Taunton

- ◀ Oliver Severn (left) and Josh Ogilvie, of Singer Instruments, with judge Emma Warren, of Elite Staffing Solutions.



Investing in Somerset (sponsored by Hinkley Point C)

**Winner – Bridges Electrical Engineers Ltd,
Midsomer Norton**

Runners-up were: Cake Box Bakery, Yeovil
and MMES 2012 Ltd, Bridgwater

- ◀ Elaine Workman and Steve Spencer, of Bridges Electrical, with judge Andrew Cockcroft (centre), of Hinkley Point C.



Start-up of the Year (sponsored by Teapot Creative)

**Winner – The Birch Dementia Centre Ltd,
Weston-super-Mare**

Runners-up were: Emily Thompson Social Media Coach,
Ilchester and Otterhead House, Taunton

- ◀ Charlie Coetzee (left) Gina Baird, (centre) and Vicky Turner of The Birch Dementia Centre Ltd, with judges Lizzie Ginbey (left) and Barry Tottle, of Teapot Creative.



Employee of the Year (sponsored by Weston College)

**Rebekah Blake, of The Willow Set Pre-School,
Stoke St Gregory**

Runner-up was: Ryan Werner,
of AIP Welding Supplies Ltd, Bridgwater

- ◀ Rebekah Blake (centre) and Rebecca Lihou, of Willow Set Pre-School, with judge Dave Crew, of Weston College.



Environmental Achievement (sponsored by Gravity)

Winner – Talick Group Ltd, Glastonbury

Runners-up were: New Leaf Life Design, Bridgwater
and Somerlap Forest Products Ltd, Mark

- ◀ Charlotte Page and Celine Collette (centre), of Talick Group Ltd, with judge Paul Lowndes, of Gravity.



Service Excellence (sponsored by CETSAT)

Winner - House Fox Estate Agents, Weston-super-Mare

Runners-up were: Alpha Housing Services Limited, Taunton and Container Team Ltd, Weston-super-Mare

▶ Neil Urch (right) and Jack McCabe (left), of House Fox Estate Agents, with judge Durgan Cooper, of CETSAT.



Somerset Manufacturer and Producer (sponsored by Garador)

Winner - E-FS Ltd, Highbridge

Runners-up were: EPS Services & Tooling Ltd, Wiveliscombe and Rotec Hydraulics Ltd, Taunton

▶ Calvin Christopher (right) and Dean Adams (centre), of E-FS Ltd, with judge Neil Discombe, of Garador.



Congratulations to all of the Award Winners

From the team at Global.



radio & entertainment



outdoor



dax

To find out more contact:
David.Collins@global.com



▶ Ben Hoskin (left) and Sharon D'arcy, of Regency Purchasing Group, with judge Jon Wheale, of Barclays UK.

Rebuild and Thrive (sponsored by Barclays UK)

Winner - Regency Purchasing Group, Weston-super-Mare

Runners-up were: Introtweet Ltd, Taunton and Sansum Solutions Group Limited, Cheddar



FOCUS

Charity and not-for-profit

St Margaret's Hospice Care

St Margaret's Hospice Care has been at the heart of the Somerset community for more than 40 years, providing expert and compassionate care for patients and families facing life-limiting illnesses.

Last year, St Margaret's cared for more than 5,000 people all over Somerset, thanks largely to the support of the local community – and that includes businesses like yours. There are lots of ways you can make a difference:



from sharing your expertise and advice, to volunteering time, or making a financial gift.

We put on a varied calendar of events every year – and we would love your company to get involved! Whether you prefer adrenaline, endurance, fun, family or corporate events, there are lots of options for companies to choose from. Or you might think about a cause-related marketing partnership. However you choose to work with St Margaret's, we celebrate the support you are able to give – promoting our partnerships across our website and social media.

By getting to know each of our patients and those around them, we are able to tailor our care and help them live as well as they can for as long as they can. Our 24-hour advice line means help and support is just a phone call away.

We also support their families during their loved one's illness and continue after their loss. We help their children to prepare for and cope with losing a parent, and support families to help them deal with their grief.

If you would like to get involved and support St Margaret's Hospice, please contact Viv Cioma on 01823 345910 or by email vivien.cioma@st-margarets-hospice.org.uk



Nuffield Health

Driven by our purpose to build a healthier nation, our experts have been working together for more than 60 years to make the nation fitter, healthier, happier and stronger.

We achieve this through our industry-leading network of 37 hospitals, 114 fitness and wellbeing centres, medical centres and workplace wellbeing facilities. We believe that the best healthcare should help prevent illness by looking after mind and body.

Our holistic wellbeing offering spans physical and mental health – from personal training, health assessments, GP services, and physiotherapy to providing mental health support or hospital treatments for serious conditions. We also use our expertise to support the NHS, working in

collaboration with all parts of the health service.

What makes us truly different is our commitment to our unique flagship programmes, where we respond to developing national unmet health and wellbeing needs in local communities and widen access to our services, experts and resources to give more people the tools to live a healthy life.

As a trading charity, we do not fundraise and we invest all our income back into our purpose to build a healthier nation. With our purpose at the heart of everything we do, we always focus on the wider impact of our actions on our people, on those who benefit from our flagship programmes, on local communities and on the environment.



Spark Somerset

Spark Somerset supports and champions Somerset's voluntary and community organisations to help change lives and build healthy, resilient communities. We do this through the provision of information, advice, training, and support to charities and community groups, sharing our expertise, building partnerships, promoting volunteering, and advocating on the sector's behalf.

We represent the sector on strategic bodies, both at a district and county level and also run the volunteer service, Spark a Change, inspiring people to get involved and make a difference in their communities.



The Spark a Change team has extensive experience of supporting organisations of all sizes to get involved with corporate volunteering so that they can help their local communities and create a positive workplace culture.

Siobhan Kelly, Harmony Fires' Events Coordinator explains why they chose corporate volunteering as a team building activity: "The team always get a huge sense of pride and satisfaction when helping others out through volunteering days. Being involved in a day like this is fantastic for team morale. Seeing what organisations do for people who need it the most spurs the team on and gives everyone a positive outlook."

As a part of a corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy, a volunteer program enables employees to make a difference and give back to their communities. This can help with their development, thus improving staff retention and an organisations reputation and ability to recruit.

To find out how corporate volunteering could benefit your business or organisation, please visit our website <https://www.sparkachange.org.uk/for-employers> or get in touch info@sparkachange.org.uk



WPA

WPA is an award-winning not-for-profit medical insurer with a heritage of more than 120 years helping individuals, families, small and large companies fund their healthcare. In the corporate world, we help companies increase the productivity of their team by giving them more choice and control of how they recover from illness.

Helping customers live more healthily is integral to our purpose brought to life by our Health and Wellbeing hub which has a treasure trove of information helping everyone, whether a member or not, live healthier lives. It includes articles and thought-provoking videos on every day health challenges.

The latest addition includes series of inspiring video interviews with Somerset County and England cricketers outlining their coping mechanisms underlining how, professional sportsperson or not, we all experience every day pressures and need help dealing with them.

Health begins at home and it's important that we have a working environment that promotes healthy choices



and living. We made our Taunton headquarters healthier by creating a wildflower meadow, a walking track with picnic tables and outside meeting spaces so that the team access more natural daylight as well as having the opportunity to increase their steps. We also introduced more healthy menu in our onsite staff restaurant, including vegan options.

Not-for-profit means that we're not hampered by the demands of shareholders motivated to make a profit, meaning we're free to act differently from the rest.

Our purpose is healthcare our focus is on the service that we provide to our members.

Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP)

Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP) is dedicated to increase the health and happiness of residents in Somerset through physical activity and sport. SASP has just announced it is among the first group of over 40 organisations working in partnership with Sport England to receive funding from its new funding model.

Over the last 18 months, the team has grown in size with new funding streams and projects, and we are currently going through our next phase of growth.

We have a foundational role in the sport and physical activity sector and are therefore well-placed to help level up access and aid in reducing inequalities in Somerset. We focus on what matters most to people who move least, therefore embedding a system wide culture through health, employability, schools, the voluntary

and charitable sector and through insight led learning, collaboration, and co-production.

To name a few projects we are presently working on across the county: in partnership with Somerset County Council, SASP is coordinating the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme, Happy Healthy Holidays Somerset for those families on benefits related free school meals to receive free school holiday activities; SASP is working with several Primary Care Networks (PCNs) in social prescribing and have employed health and wellbeing coaches in the West Somerset and Sedgemoor areas to offer one-two-one support to residents; and, finallym Somerset Moves our system-wide, multi-agency strategy for the development of physical activity and sport across Somerset will launch soon. For more details, visit www.sasp.co.uk.



Latest Member-to-Member Offers

As a member of Somerset Chamber why not take advantage of our great range of member-to-member offers?



If you have an offer you would like to add to our list, visit www.somersetchamber.co.uk/membership



New Members

Welcome to our newest members of the Somerset Chamber.

Amarin Rubber & Plastics Ltd

Manufacturing

Based in Weston-super-Mare, Amarin Rubber & Plastics manufacture items including machine guarding, gaskets, conveyor belts and much more from rubber and plastic sheet to service a wide range of industries, from food and pharmaceuticals, to engineering and packaging.

Alex Howells, 01934 622420
enquiries@amarinrubber.co.uk
www.amarinrubber.co.uk

Nexus Open Systems Ltd

Business IT

Nexus Open Systems provides managed IT support and IT consultancy to government, charity and private sector organisations in the South West and South Wales. Founded in 1998, we are ISO27001 certified and are a highly-accredited Microsoft Gold Partner.

Glenn Weeks, 01392 205095
sales@nexusos.co.uk
https://www.nexusos.co.uk

AV Path Limited

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We are the South West Region's newest audio visual systems company. We create presentation and video collaboration systems fit for the new ways of working that we are all adapting to. In-office solutions, remote working solutions, we can help!

Ashley Tisshaw, 07900 221826
ashley@av-path.co.uk
www.av-path.co.uk

The Path Financial Limited

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Ethical financial advice and wealth management. Path are leading ethical financial advisers and wealth managers, providing sensible financial advice aligned to your personal values and are experts in sustainable and impact investing. This is your opportunity to make a difference.

Luke Sword, 0333 050 7610
luke.sword@thepath.co.uk
thepath.co.uk

BLOCK Workspace

Serviced Offices & Co-Working

BLOCK Workspace offers members a flexible way of working that encourages community and a healthy work/life culture. With spacious glass-fronted offices, open-plan co-working areas plus spaces to relax and collaborate, BLOCK lets you think differently for your business and your team.

Lisa Brammer, 01752477888
info@blocktaunton.co.uk
www.blocktaunton.co.uk

The Somerset Removal Company Ltd

Removals and Storage

We are a family operated removals and storage company established 2012, covering all of the TA postcode area delivering nationally, accredited by Move Assured and offering a very high level of service and flexibility you should expect from your removal partner.

Paul Osborn, 01823 324315
info@thesomersetremovalcompany.co.uk
www.thesomersetremovalcompany.co.uk

Mash Group

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Mash Group don't just offer you recruitment and headhunting services but also advertising packages on various websites so you can advertise your vacancies at a fraction of the cost.

We also offer business coaching, HR services and mental health training.

James Tuckett, 07973 380016
james@mashgroup.co.uk
http://www.mashgroup.co.uk

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Enabling autonomy with leading-edge LiDAR, sensors and drive-by-wire solutions. From R&D to series production, we are your partner at every stage of the development journey, providing superior products from global suppliers to bring you a curated selection of cutting-edge technology.

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jon@levelfivesupplies.com
www.levelfivesupplies.com

Naval Solutions Ltd

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NSL delivers practical engineering or management solutions to challenging or complex problems across maritime and energy generation sectors. We have specialist knowledge in the design and operation of marine systems (ashore and afloat), nuclear power plant, and safety management systems.

Nick Dunsby, 07923 349424
enquiries@navalsolutions.co.uk
www.navalsolutions.co.uk

Wilson Lee Ltd t/a Go2 and Somerset Couriers

Transportation and Courier service

We are a local based courier and transport company, specialising in B2B deliveries of all goods from legal documents to pallets. We work 24/7 and specialise in out of hour deliveries and meeting installation teams on sites of projects

Andy, 01823 740009
enquiries@somersetcouriers.co.uk
www.somersetcouriers.co.uk

The logo consists of the letters 'CA' in a white serif font. A blue decorative flourish is positioned to the left of the 'A'.

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Our approach is very simple. We treat every client as if they are our only client. Irrespective of whether we are acting for a large corporate business, or helping an individual with their tax return, our service will always be bespoke, diligent and personal.

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David Johnson



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Calvin Bull



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CHAMBER NEWS



Somerset Chamber renews agreements with four Business Partners

Somerset Chamber is delighted to announce it has renewed partnerships with four existing Business Partners – Albert Goodman, WPA, Newsquest and Yeovil College.

Regional accountancy firm Albert Goodman has 300 staff across offices in Taunton, Bristol, Chard, Yeovil, Weston-super-Mare and Weymouth, with a turnover of more than £14million.

Founding partner Albert Goodman established the firm in Taunton in 1866 and built his practice on the principle of providing high quality, technically excellent advice to individuals and businesses – still the main principle by which the firm operates today.

With a heritage dating back to 1901, the WPA team looks after over 320,000 corporate and individual customers, helping them fund their

healthcare from their offices on Taunton's Blackbrook Business Park.

WPA offers the full spectrum of health insurance products, ranging from cash plans to cover essential needs such as dental and optical costs through to bespoke fully comprehensive cover.

Newsquest is one of the largest regional news publishers in the UK and has a portfolio of more than 120 news brands and 29 magazines online and in print. With an online audience of almost 39 million users a month and 5.1 million readers a week in print, the content is read by a substantial proportion of the UK population.

Locally, Newsquest owns the Somerset County Gazette Series, which includes a number of regional publications including the Somerset County Gazette, the Chard and Ilminster News,

the Bridgwater Mercury, Burnham and Highbridge Weekly News, Yeovil Express and the Mid Devon Star.

Yeovil College has been serving the community for more than 130 years. The College was first formed in 1887 when Somerset County Council began formally organising Science and Art classes in Yeovil.

Today, Yeovil College remains passionate about its role as a key provider of education and training in South Somerset and North and West Dorset. It remains committed to its role as a tertiary college for the whole community and currently supports around 5,000 full and part-time students.

Alistair Tudor, Somerset Chamber Operations Manager, said he was looking forward to further building on existing relationships with the Business Partners.

KEEPING YOUR BUSINESS IN THE PINK WHILST GOING GREEN

Don't be neutral when it comes to sustainability. Be carbon neutral.

Albert Goodman has pledged to be net zero by the year 2030.

Simply thinking about environmental and social governance is no longer an option; individuals, businesses and consumers are making big changes to ensure that their actions are fair and their impact on the environment is nothing less than neutral.

Albert Goodman can keep your business in the pink, whilst going green.

We are with you wherever you are, on your sustainability journey.



albertgoodman.co.uk

Somerset businesses given top tips on reducing carbon emissions to save money and win contracts

Hybrid or fully electric pool cars, cycling to work initiatives and moving computer servers to Cloud-based systems are just some of the ways businesses can make a start on cutting their carbon emissions.

Taunton-based health insurance company WPA (Western Provident Association) have already adopted all three measures, as well as ensuring computers are not left on standby, installing low energy lighting and even planting a wildflower meadow to both reduce and offset the company's carbon footprint.

Brian Goodman, MD of WPA's Major Corporate Division, outlined a raft of measures the company had already taken and was planning to take in the future as part of its ongoing net zero strategy at an event hosted by Somerset Chamber of Commerce and chartered accountants Albert Goodman to outline the business benefits of carbon neutrality.

Mr Goodman said businesses could no longer rely on writing 'a couple



of paragraphs' outlining ideas to be greener as detailed strategies were becoming crucial to winning contracts, retaining staff and reducing costs.

Sophie Parkhouse, a Partner at Albert Goodman, explained: "Your people, customers, lenders, supply chain - all these people are thinking about sustainability, so it's important you think about sustainability, too, in order to remain relevant."

She gave examples of businesses such as Tesco, which wanted proof from suppliers about sustainability strategies and said businesses needed to be taking action now -

From left, are Emma Rawlings, Executive Director of Somerset Chamber of Commerce, Sophie Parkhouse, Partner at Albert Goodman, Brian Goodman, MD of WPA's Major Corporate Division and Alistair Tudor, Operations Manager at Somerset Chamber of Commerce.

from switching to renewable energy supplies, to changing their boiler systems ahead of gas boilers being phased out and creating less waste.

"Banks are already discussing with their business clients what they are doing to hit decarbonisation targets. I wouldn't be surprised if they offer lower lending rates for businesses with better carbon neutrality. It's not happened yet, but I think it will happen," she said.

The UK has committed to making all its greenhouse gas emissions net zero by 2050, meaning emissions must be balanced by schemes to offset the equivalent amount of greenhouse gases. A survey carried out by Somerset Chamber found that only half of respondents had started working towards net zero.

The Somerset Education Business Partnership Awards are back!



With skills shortages a very real factor in business today it's great to see Somerset's business and education communities addressing this challenge head on.

From offering individual placements to inspiring whole school groups our partners are actively building Somerset's talent pipeline.

So, we are delighted that the Somerset Education Business Partnership Awards 2022 are now open for entries and nominations.

To recognise your business, a team member or supplier simply look through the categories below and submit your entry or nomination at www.somerset-ebp.co.uk/awards before May 20.

If you have any questions about eligibility or which category is best for you, contact support@somerset-ebp.co.uk for guidance.

The categories are:

Careers Inspiration in Business (1 to 249 employees)

For an individual or a company that has effectively inspired young people about future career opportunities.

Careers Inspiration in Business (250+ employees)

For an individual or a company that has effectively inspired young people about future career opportunities.

Careers Inspiration in Education

For the education institution that has most effectively inspired students about future careers.

Proactive Young Person

For a young person who has independently taken proactive steps to prepare for their future career.

Removing Barriers

For an organisation or individual that has helped remove barriers to progression for disadvantaged young people.

Overcoming Barriers

For an individual who has overcome barriers to progression towards employment.

Best Placement Employer

For the employer that provided the highest quality work experience.

Best Placement Participant

For a person who has excelled during a work placement.

Continuing Through COVID

For an individual or organisation that demonstrated innovation and tenacity to continue inspiring young people during COVID-19 restrictions.

Outstanding Personal Contribution

Partners are invited to nominate individuals who have contributed to raising aspirations in Somerset over a significant period.



#WELLCONNECTED

Breakfast with
Somerset
County Council
at Taunton
Racecourse



▲ Nick Porter, of Barclays and Ges Green, of Enterprise South West



▲ Nick Porter, of Barclays (left), Emma Rawlings, of Somerset Chamber of Commerce and Cllr David Hall, of Somerset County Council.



▲ Ruth Bethel, of Advantaged Commercial Finance, deep in conversation.



▲ Somerset Chamber of Commerce's Executive Director Emma Rawlings (left) with Kelly Burge, of Barclays and Ian Porter, of West College.



Ladies' afternoon tea at Taunton School

ASSOCIATE PARTNER OF



ST. JAMES'S PLACE
WEALTH MANAGEMENT



▲ From left, Connie O'Donnell, of Clarke Willmott, Morgan Llewellyn, of Sheppy's Cider Ltd and Siobhan Flanary, of Wessex Reserve Forces and Cadets Association.



▲ From left, sponsor Laura Joyce, of Laura Joyce Wealth Management, speaker Kenda Macdonald, of Automation Ninjas and Somerset Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, Emma Rawlings.



▲ Dannielle Seddon (left), of SRD Technology UK and Emma Rathbone, of ibis Bridgwater.



▲ From left, Laura Joyce, of Laura Joyce Wealth Management, Caroline Mortimer, of Clarke Willmott, Linda Carrington, of Wessex Commercial Solutions Ltd, Lisa Brammer, of BLOCK Workspace Taunton and Ruth Bethel, of Advantedge Commercial Finance.



▲ From left, Lauren Preedy and Fiona Griffin, of Ian Walker Family Law and Meditation Solicitors, Julie Callun, of Cooper Associates Group and Jade Townsend, of Poolbridge Accountancy.

Construction Connections at ibis Bridgwater



UPCOMING EVENTS

Construction Connections

Thursday
14
April

Aimed at businesses in the construction and property industry this monthly meet brings together like-minded individuals for some relaxed networking. Come along, meet new contacts and share best practice. There will be a buffet lunch with tea and coffee.

Time: 12 noon – 2pm at the ibis Bridgwater
Cost: £17.95 plus VAT

Using Canva effectively for your business

Thursday
5
May

Presented by Kirsten Rae, of Somerset Design Studio, discover how to use Canva Pro in-house. Perfect for businesses that don't have an in-house design team or graphic designer. Canva is a cost-effective online publishing tool to ensure brand consistency throughout your business.

Sponsored by

Time: 9.30am – 1.30pm
Equity House, TA1 2PX
Cost: £49.50 plus VAT



The future of remote working with Teams

Tuesday
26
April

The future of remote working with Teams will give you an understanding of communications in a remote/hybrid environment and show you how you can make the most of the new solutions on the market to connect your team and provide a first-class service.

Time: 9.30am – 1.30pm
at Equity House, TA1 2PX
Cost: £49.50 plus VAT

Sponsored by



Making the most of membership: Westfield Health

Tuesday
10
May

Whether you are new to Somerset Chamber or new to your company find out how to make the most of your Westfield Health benefit, which comes as standard as part of your Chamber membership package. It's all part of our commitment to ensuring our members receive a range of benefits that offer real value to their business and staff.

Sponsored by

Time: 10am – 11am - online
Cost: free for members only



Meet the neighbours Dorset Chamber

Thursday
28
April

Join us for our first 'meet the neighbours' event of the year for some cross-border networking over a two-course lunch. The event will also see the return of our popular table swap between courses to maximise the opportunity to showcase your business and make new connections.

Time: 12 noon – 3.30pm
at Summer Lodge Country House Hotel and Restaurant, Evershot, Dorset
Cost: £36.50 plus VAT

Sponsored by



Let's network over lunch

Tuesday
24
May

Our popular B2B lunches give guests multiple opportunities to network with different people while enjoying a delicious two-course lunch. Guests are welcomed with a drink and informal networking, before being seated for lunch, with a table swap to maximise introductions between courses.

Time: 12.30pm – 2.30pm
at the Hornsbury Mill, Chard
Cost: £27.50 plus VAT

*Prices are plus VAT unless otherwise stated

Please note due to high demand, some of these events may be fully booked by the time of printing.

Please note that all non-members are entitled to attend a maximum of two Chamber events. Should you wish to attend further events, you will be required to become a Somerset Chamber member.

SPOTLIGHT ON SOMERSET'S NEW UNITARY AUTHORITY

Together we are delivering your
New Somerset Council

Somerset County Council and the county's five district councils will cease to exist in just over 12 months' time. We asked Somerset Chamber Business Partner, Somerset County Council, what the new single, unitary authority would mean for businesses and residents alike.

In just a year's time, the new, unitary Somerset Council, comes into being.

It's the biggest change in local government in almost 50 years, bringing the five existing councils - Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset County Council, Somerset West and Taunton Council, and South Somerset District Council - into a single authority.

A single Somerset council will cut duplication and waste, freeing up at least £18.5m a year that can be reinvested in services. These are the things that people care about most, such as infrastructure, jobs, skills and training, apprenticeships, climate change, transport, and housing.

It means we can grow Somerset's voice nationally and regionally, helping to deliver the investment in business and infrastructure that our county deserves, and drives action to tackle climate change.

Somerset needs change. Our picture postcard image, high quality of life and leading centres of industry can mask serious problems, such as the need to improve productivity, create more high-skill high-wage jobs and address social mobility. Too many of our young people leave the county and this amplifies the challenges associated with an aging population.

How do we address these issues? As a unitary council we will be able to build on the strong foundations already laid - growing the network of enterprise centres with ambitions for 25-30, alongside the countywide Recovery and Growth Plan and the three innovation centres supporting aerospace, nuclear and digital. Their watchwords of collaboration and innovation echo our vision for the future.

We will adopt a joined-up approach to delivering services by bringing, for example, planning, economic development, and infrastructure

delivery together across the whole county.

A unitary council will reduce bureaucracy and confusion with less red tape enabling faster and more reliable decision-making, one point of contact for our residents and businesses, an end to expensive duplication and artificial boundaries.

Somerset Council will bring four travel-to-work areas, and five economic market areas into a single unit. This scale is a strength for an area that does not have an anchor city or multi-centre city region to drive growth and development.

The Taunton-Wellington area, with a combined a population over 80,000, has the potential to be the South West's largest, and an exemplar, 21st century Garden Town. Yeovil is a crucial player in the Bristol-South Coast aerospace corridor. Just last month the iAero aerospace innovation centre opened in Yeovil.

Bridgwater's 45,000-strong settlement, with its large enterprise zone at the Gravity site positions it well as a centre for the nuclear and low carbon supply chain service for Hinkley Point C.

Agriculture has been the mainstay of the Somerset economy for many years and the development of a cluster of

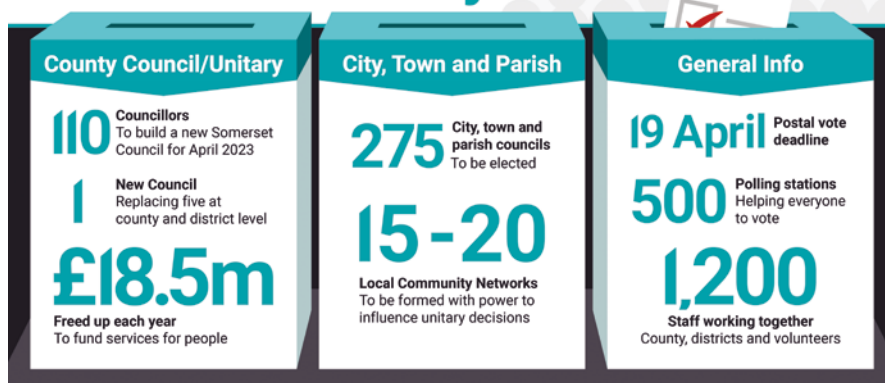


Agritech businesses in the Mendip area provides inward investment opportunities for Somerset.

Tourism is - and will continue to be - a key part of our economy. The vogue for staycations during the pandemic brought a boost for the industry hard-hit by COVID-19. But there is more to do and as a single council we can focus our combined expertise on supporting tourism-related businesses.

How does it work on the ground? Buckinghamshire adopted a unitary model in April 2020. The council is now working closely with public and private sector partners to build vibrant and connected places, thriving culture and heritage - and focusing on high tech sectors and skills. Housing is very much in the mix with proposals to create a Housing Investment Fund and Board to prioritise affordable, sustainable, and carbon-neutral housing.

Elections - 5 May 2022





In Somerset, we are working along similar lines to integrate services, bringing together housing, planning and highways, for example, so that the right homes can be built in the right places, with transport links for jobs, schools, and leisure.

We want to make sure there are more procurement offers open to small and medium size businesses.

The new council will create a single economic development service with capacity to deploy a range of specialist skills,

compared to generic approaches inherent when spread over five teams. Importantly that will help attract the brightest and best to join our workforce and create a critical mass of expertise for delivering major programmes and projects.

At a local level, businesses will be invited to participate in new Local Community Networks (LCNs), that will bring together councillors with local representatives of all sectors to focus on the issues that matter to them. It's expected there will be 15-20 LCNs covering every part of the county and they will be built into the structure of the council as formal committees, empowered to influence decision-making.

Elections on May 5, 2022 will return 110 councillors at county level, who will have responsibility for the transition to the new council on April 1, 2023, when they will assume responsibility for all council services in Somerset.

But it won't stop there. Once the new council opens its doors, there will begin an intensive period of optimising resources to deliver what we have promised.

It's crucial that the business community remains central to the ongoing discussion – please visit our website, www.newsomersetcouncil.org.uk, and contact us with thoughts or questions at any time.

HINKLEY UPDATE

HOST achieves one million room nights milestone

HOST, the accommodation and facilities provider to the workers at EDFs Hinkley Point C (HPC) project, has reached a major milestone, selling one million room nights across both the Hinkley and Sedgemoor Campuses.

Since opening in June 2018, the campuses have welcomed over 19,000 guests, which offer a combined bedroom capacity of 1,496 and provide a number of high-quality amenities including restaurants, bars, gyms, sports pitches, meeting rooms and event spaces.

Over the years the HOST team has worked hard to ensure that their core values and behaviours of ambition, inclusivity, collaboration, a caring nature and outstanding service are embedded in all that they do. This dedication is reflected in the fact that they've been able to achieve this major milestone.

A spokesman said the achievements were a testament to HOST and how they work to ensure the health and safety of their guests and team is a priority and how they collaborate with the local community and extensive local supply chain to bring the best of Somerset to the HPC Project.



Mark Flinton, Campus Operations Director, said: "Achieving this milestone is a source of immense pride for our team. Thank you to all our guests who have made this possible and a huge well-done to our hardworking team who continue to offer an outstanding level of service. We look forward to continuing to grow the brand and welcoming new and existing guests through our doors."



CASE STUDY

Helping HPC suppliers stay on brand and digitally responsive



A multitude of local and regional companies are supporting those who are helping with the physical build and service elements of the Hinkley Point C project.

Highbridge-based The Design Hive (South West Ltd) is just one of them, supporting contractors and making sure they are able to deliver the best possible service by working on their branding and designing websites to ensure they are both customer-focused and user-friendly.

The Design Hive was founded in 2009 by Creative Director Melanie Downing and offers clients a complete creative package, from graphic design and branding to signage and Wordpress websites.

At HPC, they worked with Hinkley PSG (Professional Services Group) to design and develop a fully responsive website. Hinkley PSG is a collection of businesses which provide support and advice to other firms already involved in the HPC project.

They required a clean and modern image to reflect their services, and to provide a database of group members as well as a collection of news blogs, videos, and information sheets.

Graham Potts, Chairman, Hinkley Professional Services Group, said: "The Design Hive won a competitive tender to build a new website for the Hinkley Professional Services Group. Formed in 2017, the Hinkley PSG is a collection of businesses with experience of advising businesses or consortia wishing to win and deliver contracts relating to the building of Hinkley Point C.

"From the original tender document to the completed website, the process was clear and smooth with the website being launched on time and in budget.

"The group was delighted with result and thank Melanie and her team for their creativity, attention to detail, collaborative approach, and support throughout. They certainly embodied our values of partnership and would endorse their work for future clients."

As well as Hinkley PSG, the team also refreshed and redeveloped Somerset Passenger Solutions (SPS) website. SPS provides a bespoke transport solution for the HPC Project, carrying almost all passengers who go to the construction site either for work or to visit. SPS transport thousands of clients to and from the construction site every day, working 24/7 to ensure that construction remains on schedule.

They required the site to better reflect their staff-focused ethos, with their missions and values aimed more at respecting their people, customers, and community.



The website now contains more information on their core services, careers, how they positively impact the local community and environment, a 'meet the team' section plus links to bus timetables and passenger information – all combined with a more vibrant and friendly design.

Emma Warr, Communications Coordinator, Somerset Passenger Solutions, said: "The team at Design Hive delivered everything we asked for and more and we are thrilled with our new site.

"Mel, Jason and Tash are a joy to work with, nothing is too much trouble, and they made the whole process so easy and enjoyable. They understood from the beginning what we were trying to achieve and delivered over and above our expectations. We can't thank them enough and very much look forward to continuing to work together on more exciting projects this year."

Melanie added: "Our team has a passion for creating perfection no matter how small or large the project. Our aim is to help our customers create a great first impression and ensure they have a cohesive message across their marketing literature.

"We support our customers by creating a clear roadmap to help them achieve their goals. We believe in bringing consistency to a company's brand to help increase the lifetime value to their customers. This ensures their business is instantly recognisable and trusted.

"Receiving regular Hinkley Supply Chain newsletters and emails and being part of the Hinkley Supply Chain has helped us win contracts and allowed us to work on some incredible projects.

"We would recommend businesses sign-up to the Hinkley Supply Chain portal as this has helped to promote and grow our company."



MEMBER NEWS

Falcon Kickstart success

The Kickstart Scheme continues to have a positive impact for businesses across the region, including Somerset Chamber member Falcon Vehicle Solutions.

The company initially took on three Kickstarters, with two working in the firm's rental team and another in the HR and accounts department.

While one relocated with family, a second secured a full-time job with a large employer in North Somerset and the third - Jordan Friend - has been taken on permanently by Falcon.

Tristan Savage, Managing Director, of Falcon Vehicle Solutions, said: "All three of our Kickstarters made a quick impression on us and became part of the team, with no reason to think of them as anything other than valued members of staff.

"The fact one of our Kickstarters gained full-time employment is, in itself, a success as Kickstart had given them the experience and confidence to enter the world of full-time employment."

But Jordan certainly made an impression on the Falcon team and was offered a job with the company while he was only halfway through his Kickstart placement: "He certainly has a big future with us," said Tristan.

"From day one, Jordan made a massive impression. A hunger to learn new skills and develop his knowledge of a completely alien industry.

"After only three months of Kickstart, we offered Jordan a full-time role within the business beyond his six months Kickstart placement finishing.

"Since then, Jordan has gone from strength-to-strength, independently running both our rental counters on occasions, handling challenging situations with customers and logistics that comes with commercial vehicle rental."

Falcon Vehicle Solutions has been in business over 30 years and is continuing to grow, earning an enviable reputation as a comprehensive fleet provider. From humble beginnings, today the company operates a fleet in excess of 700 vehicles ranging from self-drive cars and vans through to a full range of HGVs and trailers.

The fleet is the most diverse rental fleet in the South West of England and can provide anything from a one-day 7.5t tipper or a 17-seat minibus hire, to a seven-year contract hire on a bespoke 26t refrigerated HGV.

Jordan, who is a rental co-ordinator in the company's Bridgwater office, said



he was grateful for the opportunities offered by both Falcon and the Government's Kickstart Scheme.

He said: "Having suffered first-hand the effects of redundancy due to lockdown, I was given the opportunity through the Government Kickstart Scheme to get my vehicle rental career started.

"Initially, as with any new job, it was daunting but within the first few months, my confidence had grown and I was fortunate enough to turn my six months Kickstart placement into a full-time permanent position at Falcon Vehicle Solutions.

"I couldn't be more grateful to the Kickstarter Scheme and Falcon."

Somerset Chamber has been acting as an official gateway for the Government's Kickstart Scheme and more than 300 young people have been given placements.

The scheme helps companies cover the cost of employing a 16 to 24-year-old for six months, for 25 hours a week, with no cost to the business. Government pays 100% of the National Minimum Wage for those 25 hours, plus National Insurance contributions.

Experienced Senior Tax Manager joins Milsted Langdon

Award-winning accountancy practice, Milsted Langdon, has recruited experienced Senior Tax Manager Ben Branson as it looks to further grow its personal tax services.

Ben joins the firm's tax team in Taunton and brings with him over a decade of experience spent within practices across the South West, including time spent at one of the UK's largest accountancy firms.

With an incredible depth of knowledge and a real tenacity to help clients minimise their tax bills, he will bolster Milsted Langdon's existing expertise.

Ben has a particular interest in international taxation and UK residency and domicile issues, but also regularly assists with matters relating to Income Tax, Capital Gains Tax and Inheritance Tax.

Speaking about his appointment, Ben said: "I am delighted to be joining such a respected firm, with a reputation for providing excellent tax compliance and advice services.



"I hope that my expertise can help to further bolster Milsted Langdon's considerable existing personal tax offering."

In the last few years, Milsted Langdon has recruited many new professionals and promoted several existing staff members as it looks to expand its operations.

Simon Denton, Tax Partner at Milsted Langdon, said: "Ben is a really dedicated and highly

qualified Chartered Tax Adviser who is committed to providing an exceptional service and guidance to our clients. He is the perfect addition to our growing tax team."

To find out more about Milsted Langdon's personal tax services, please visit www.milstedlangdon.co.uk.

Businesses tune in to Glastonbury Town Deal opportunity

More than 50 business people attended an event in Glastonbury on March 3 to hear about the opportunities that the Glastonbury Town Deal projects could bring for local suppliers.

Glastonbury is set to receive £23.6 million of investment through the Government's Towns Fund scheme, representing the highest award in the South West and one of the highest per capita in England. The Glastonbury Town Deal board members and support team are keen to ensure that local businesses benefit from the developments wherever possible.

The event was hosted by Glastonbury Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Mendip District Council, the lead authority for the Glastonbury Town Deal.

Dr Lynne Sedgmore, Temporary Chair of the Glastonbury Town Deal Board and Julie Reader-Sullivan, Head of Service for Planning and Growth at Mendip District Council, gave a presentation outlining the Town Deal vision, objectives, projects, timescales and procurement process.

The Town Deal investment has been allocated to fund the 12 different projects outlined in the Glastonbury Town Investment Plan. Although the investment is for capital projects only, the funding is expected to attract further investment into the town, bringing opportunities over the coming years for local businesses across a range of industries.



The comprehensive business cases required by the Government for each of the projects are currently being developed by the Glastonbury Town Deal board, individual project teams and Mendip District Council. These must be submitted to the Government by the end of June 2022, with funds being released as and when the individual Business Cases have been approved.

The Glastonbury Town Investment Plan was developed by the Town Deal Board through engagement with key partners, businesses, community groups and Mendip District Council as the lead authority.

It aims to deliver a necessary 'levelling up' opportunity for the town, bringing existing assets back into community use and working with local communities to develop the spaces and resources that they want and need. The overall aim is for Glastonbury to be a sustainable, prosperous, modern town and global tourist centre, drawing on its rural landscape, history and unique legacy.

www.mendip.gov.uk/glastotowndeal

Air-Seal Products team raise money for charity - and prepare for next big challenge

Air-Seal Products has completed its first charity fundraiser challenge of 2022! Each member of the Air-Seal team walked 28 miles or more throughout the month of February, to raise money for Alzheimer's Research UK. This was 28 dedicated miles outside of their usual activity to help support the charity.

Through hard-work and determination, the Air-Seal team has raised £966 for the charity and managed to walk over 370 miles. Air-Seal Products Ltd has also generously agreed to match £500 in donations, bringing the total funds raised up to £1,466.

The term 'dementia' describes diseases that stop a person's brain from working properly, when someone has one of these diseases, they may have problems remembering, thinking, and speaking. Almost 600 people in the UK develop dementia every day.

One member of the Air-Seal team, Michelle, has particularly enjoyed the extra activity: "I never really walked before, except for occasionally at



weekends, so it feels great that I have set this goal and achieved it.

"Doing this as a team has kept me accountable and there is a real sense of community on the app we used to track our miles. I've even decided to join another group challenge and walk 50k in 30 days throughout March!"

The challenge proved that even while working full-time, it was possible to fit 20 minutes of walking into a busy schedule. Staying active and exercising regularly can prevent long-term conditions such as dementia and reduces stress and improves mental well-being.

Donations remain open so if anyone would like to donate to the charity and support the Air-Seal team they can do so online at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/air-seal-products>

The challenge was also a great start to training for the next Air-Seal charity event of the year . . . climbing Mount Snowdon! The team had planned to take on this behemoth challenge back in 2020 in aid of St Margaret's Hospice but unfortunately had to postpone their plans due to COVID. This will now take place in October 2022 - follow @airsealproducts on socials to keep up with the latest updates.



Important partnership with cricket club set to continue

Rotec Hydraulics Ltd has announced that its long-standing partnership Somerset County Cricket Club (SCCC) will continue for at least another 12 months.

The two organisations have extended their sponsorship agreement, which will see Rotec continue as the club's Principal Royal London Cup Partner.

The deal will once again see Rotec branding appear on the front of Somerset's Royal London Cup matchday shirt, while their company logo will continue to feature prominently on the pitch covers at the Cooper Associates County Ground.

Following the extension of the partnership, Somerset CCC's Commercial Director, Caroline Herbert said: "We are delighted to be working with Rotec again in 2022. Their name is synonymous with our 2019 Royal London Cup triumph at Lord's in 2019 and we are hopeful that further success is on the horizon.



"Last year's Royal London Cup saw a fresh new wave of talent make a name for themselves and this exciting and dynamic side reflects the nature of our relationship with Rotec.



"We have developed an outstanding working relationship with Paul Prouse and his team over the last few years, and we thank them for their continued support of the Club."

Established in 1979 as a supplier of hydraulic hoses and couplings, Rotec Hydraulics has gone from strength to strength. The company is now one of the leading specialist providers of hydraulic, pneumatic and electrical mechanical products and engineering services to all industry sectors throughout the UK and internationally.

Paul Prouse, Rotec Managing Director, said: "We are thrilled to be continuing our strong relationship with SCCC. Our head office is based within walking distance of the Cooper Associates County Ground and as loyal followers, we relish supporting the Club.

"Our business has seen real benefits over the years from our close working partnership, including the use of the Club's fantastic facilities throughout the year and coverage we gain from the Royal London Cup.

"On the pitch we have an exciting and enthusiastic team whom we believe will do a brilliant job for the County this season and hopefully reward those on and off the pitch with the trophies they justly deserve."

New Managing Partner at Porter Dodson

Law firm Porter Dodson, based across Somerset and Dorset, has appointed a new managing partner. Kate James takes on the role from Rob Fox, who retires this month (April) after more than 35 years with the firm.

Kate James joined Porter Dodson in 2005, training with the firm and qualifying in 2007. She was appointed to the partnership in 2013 and took on the roles of Head of the Wellington office and Head of the Private Client Team.

Kate's in-depth knowledge and passion for marketing led to her hosting seminars advising on inheritance tax and succession planning and the success of these formed the basis of a strong reputation, for which she is well known across the region.

Kate said: "I am so proud, as are my family. Rob will be a really tough act to follow but he has been fully supportive of me, as has the board. I plan to continue working with many of my clients, offering the same excellent advice that they have always received.

"I will be based in Wellington, working with the board and partners to implement the firm's plans for continued growth. Hiring good people is essential. Working with the right people is key, and I want to take everyone with us on the journey ahead."

Kate's advice to those wanting to follow in her footsteps?

"There will always be obstacles in your way. You have to stick your head above the parapet and get noticed.



Be commercial, put yourself out there, do the business development, work hard and have confidence in yourself. With the support of those around you, you can achieve your goals."

Porter Dodson employs nearly 200 people at its eight offices across the South West and has a number of vacancies for skilled and motivated lawyers and support staff. To learn more about joining this award winning law firm, visit <https://www.porterdodson.co.uk/vacancies>.



Funded training to help local hospitality businesses grow

Skills Support for the Workforce (SSW) supports small and medium businesses in Devon and Somerset to upskill their employees with training courses and qualifications to help their business grow and boost the local economy.

The team can work with you to develop a bespoke training programme relevant to your business needs and as the SSW programme is co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), a wide range of training can be accessed at no cost (subject to eligibility) to business.



SSW has a network of expert training providers who can deliver hundreds of fully-funded and accredited hospitality training courses covering a range of subjects such as: food safety, senior culinary chef, team leading, lean manufacturing training and many more.

What's on offer?

- A training needs analysis for a business, identifying the skills the team needs to support the business goals
- On-the-job vocational training to meet individual and business needs including taught learning, workplace assessment, distance learning and online learning
- Recognised accredited qualifications and training courses to support employees to upskill or even learn new skills
- Progression pathways for employees enabling them to take on more responsibilities and move up in the organisation, or progress onto higher level qualifications and apprenticeships



What are the benefits?

- A more efficient business with improved profitability
- A highly-skilled and engaged workforce with up-to-date skills
- Improved staff morale and motivation, therefore reducing staff turnover
- Becoming an 'Employer of Choice' to improve a business' image and attract new talent
- Competitive advantage in the marketplace and improved chances of winning new business

SSW also offers support to business owners facing the prospect of making hard decisions about redundancy, and to individuals who have recently been made redundant through the Skills Support for Redundancy programme. Contact the team for more information or visit the website www.serco-ese.com/skills-support-for-the-workforce.

Promotion at A C Mole Chartered Accountants

Award-winning accountancy practice, A C Mole, recently announced the promotion of Rebecca Oatley to Associate Partner.

Rebecca has been with the firm for over 22 years having joined as a trainee in 1999. She qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 2005 and as a Chartered Tax Advisor in 2008. Rebecca also qualified as a Trust and Estate Practitioner in 2017, having won the STEP Worldwide Excellence Award for the Taxation of Trusts & Estates.

Rebecca heads-up the award-winning tax team alongside Tax Partner Amanda Gunter.

Rebecca acts for a wide range of personal and corporate tax clients and has particular interests in inheritance tax planning and trusts. Alongside her specialist subjects she also advises

on income tax, capital gains tax and corporate research and development claims.

Rebecca said: "Having been supported by the firm throughout my career in accountancy I am excited to step into my new role and to have the opportunity to support and inspire others whilst continuing my commitment to providing a high level of service and guidance to our clients."

Lexi Shore, Managing Partner, at AC Mole said: "I am delighted to announce Rebecca's promotion to Associate Partner. As a key member of our tax team, she has made a significant contribution. Her appointment reflects the firm's dedication to growing, nurturing and developing talent."

To find out more about A C Mole please visit www.acmole.co.uk.



Everything's coming up roses for Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance

Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance has announced the launch of a 'Blossoming and Blooming' open gardens initiative.

'Blossoming and Blooming' is the charity's latest fundraising initiative, which asks people to show their support by opening their gardens to members of the public between June and September this year.

The aim of the campaign is to bring local communities across Dorset and Somerset together, to celebrate the wonderful gardens spread across both counties, while raising awareness and funds for Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance.

No matter the size of the garden or whether they are pristine or wild, the charity is inviting everyone to get involved.

Whether people decide to simply open their gardens to members of the public, or have a cream tea or barbecue alongside, the initiative provides a fantastic opportunity for people to hold a special event within their local community in aid of Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance.

The life-saving charity receives no direct funding from the Government or the National Lottery and relies on the generosity of the public to help raise their operational costs of over £5 million per year. Community fundraising initiatives like 'Blossoming and Blooming' play a vital role in helping to do this.

Emma Jones, Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance Fundraising Manager, said: "We believe that spending time outdoors with nature is essential for our health and wellbeing. That is why we are asking people to open their gates, share the love of their garden, whilst raising funds for us.

"People could host a picnic, serve tea on the lawn or just keep it simple and let people sit or potter at their leisure. Whatever they decide to do, 'Blossoming and Blooming' will



raise essential funds and awareness of our life-saving work within the local community.

"We have always had wonderful supporters who have opened their gardens in the past and we hope that others will do the same. With our new 'Blossoming and Blooming' initiative, we will be able to fully support these generous people, by providing all that they need for the day, so it can be a positively 'Blossoming and Blooming' success!"

To register an interest in taking part, or sign-up to join in, visit: www.dsairambulance.org.uk/open-gardens. If you require further information, please contact Emma Jones, Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance Fundraising Manager by emailing: fundraising@dsairambulance.org.uk or by calling: 01823 669604.

The 'Blossoming and Blooming' initiative will run until September 30, 2022.

New premises for Amarin Rubber and Plastics Ltd



After 10 years at the heart of Weston super Mare's industrial area, on the Weston Industrial Estate, Amarin Rubber and Plastics Ltd has moved to its first ever purpose-built premises in Rolstone Business Park, just off the A370 only a few seconds off the M5's Junction 21.

The move has enabled the company to double its floorspace, giving the firm a more practical layout, complete with dedicated break areas, both inside and out, for staff.

Managing Director, Ian Howells, said: "Going from a busy industrial estate to the peace and quiet of our new home in the countryside, the move

has been a great thing for Amarin and has allowed us to hold a more diverse range of materials at a time when supply chains are stretched for everyone.

"In the future there is potential for the premises to grow in its current location and this provides Amarin with a level of future proofing that we have never had before. For the first time in our history, we can be truly proud of our premises when customers and suppliers visit us."

Amarin felt it was important to use local contractors to help with the move and used local builders, electricians and plumbers, in addition to a local design team.



Summerfield secures two national trade counter operators in latest phase at Westpark 26



Summerfield Commercial has announced Toolstation and Screwfix have both leased new units on the latest phase of development at the established business park, situated just off junction 26 of the M5.

Blocks C and D comprise of two terraces of industrial units that suit trade counter or light manufacturing occupiers. Screwfix and Toolstation have leased units in Block C of 4,100 sq ft and 2,800 sq ft respectively and will be in occupation during February 2022.

The remaining two units in Block C, comprising a total of approx. 5,437 sq ft are also under offer with completion anticipated in March of this year.

A further four units in the adjacent Block D are available for lease offering 2,572 sq ft each, or up to a combined total of approx. 10,288 sq. ft, subject to the requirements of any occupier's needs, with dedicated and communal parking on site.

Ben Trickey, Commercial Director at Summerfield, said: "Having two such well-regarded national trade counter operators both taking leases at Westpark 26 is indicative of the

business park's success. It's a very welcome move from Screwfix and Toolstation who both have their heritage here in Somerset, and we're looking forward to welcoming all of our new occupiers this spring."

Westpark 26 has established itself as a prime modern business park, with a range of amenities, serving both the Wellington/Taunton area and the wider M5 corridor. The 200,000 sq ft (18,500 sq m) site features industrial warehouses, distribution depots, workshops, trade counters, offices and small employment units with planning consent in place for further uses including logistics, manufacturing and health, as well as frontage and roadside options.

The business park boasts a range of existing amenities including a 60-bed Travelodge hotel, the Skylark pub, Shell service station with a Budgens convenience store and Subway, in



addition to Costa and McDonald's restaurants, both with drive-thru facilities.

Tim Western of JLL and Andrew Maynard of Alder King, joint marketing agents, said Summerfield's strategy to speculatively construct modern business space has again paid dividends with these latest signings by well-known trade counter operators. Wellington is growing significantly as a town with large housing developments and Westpark 26 provides valuable employment opportunities.

Further information can be found at www.summerfield.co.uk.

ActionCoach Ilminster signs sponsorship deal with football team

Avon & Somerset Police Mens Football Team is delighted to welcome ActionCoach Ilminster as its main shirt sponsor. Run by Duncan McKechnie, the business has signed a sponsorship deal that will see its branding on the front of player shirts and other kit.

Avon & Somerset Football Club plays in the PSUK Championships and has been national runners up twice (2016 & 2019) in the last six years. The team comprises a mixture of Police Officers, Police Staff and Specials. They also play in the Emergency Services Football League (ESFL) where they face NHS, Fire, HMP and Military Teams in a regional and then national cup competition. After a successful start to the season, the team currently sits top of the South West ESFL.

DS Richard O'Brien of Bristol CID said: "We are delighted to have ActionCoach Ilminster on board as



our shirt sponsor. The players really value having a local business involved in the club. The ongoing success of the team helps with the challenges of the day job following the recent unprecedented demands we have faced."

From South Africa originally, Duncan McKechnie moved to Somerset in 2008. After a career in the South African Air Force as a helicopter pilot and instructor followed by 15 years



in corporate roles, he launched his ActionCoach business in 2020. He helps business owners to take their businesses to new heights using tried and tested business coaching programmes.

ActionCoach is the largest business coaching franchise and has been running in the UK for 23 years. Duncan McKechnie works with business owners in and around Ilminster, including Yeovil, Sherborne, Street, Wincanton, Wells, Chard and Glastonbury, in Somerset and Dorset.

Find out more at <https://ilminster.actioncoach.co.uk/> or call 07792205850.

Ten Three Cleaning staff shine for good causes

Staff at Ten Three Cleaning have been stepping out and picking up in aid of good causes.

Having taken part in a 20-mile sponsored walk to raise money for St Margaret's Hospice last year – and exceeding their fundraising target of £500 – Charlie Mae James and Christina Truesdale have also just completed a sponsored litter-pick.

They enlisted the support of their co-workers to litter pick their way through Yeovil's country park and walking hotspots, to raise at least £300 for a large food parcel to be donated to the town's Lord's Larder food bank.

Charlie Mae said: "I wanted to support a local cause for this year's charity and with the increase in difficulty for people to provide basics for themselves and their families, the Lord's Larder seemed the perfect charity for Ten Three to support.

"We chose to litter pick because we feel we have a social and

environmental responsibility to look after our lovely town, so this fundraiser will have a wonderful result and benefit everyone in their area!

"I decided that this year I wanted to arrange a charity event that will make a difference which is why I chose litter picking. This is us giving back to the community and everyone in the area will benefit from it."



The team is pictured during a previous fundraising charity walk.

TEN³ CLEANING

The Lord's Larder is a volunteer-led food bank and has helped to support over 8,000 desperately hungry people annually in the local area, over 3,000 of which were children.

Charlie Mae added: "Food banks have become an ever-increasing need in the last few years. After seeing on the news about the increase in costs of gas and electricity and the worries that use in food banks would soar because of this, it was clear that we wanted to choose our local food bank as this year's fundraiser.

"We are incredibly grateful for those that have donated so far and anyone else that chooses to support us."

The team took part in the litter-pick on April 2 and it's still not too late to support them with a donation: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/tenthreelordslarder>.

SPS vehicle maintenance team scoops HPC Pride of Platform award

The vehicle maintenance team at Somerset Passenger Solutions (SPS) was proud to be named as a winner in the Hinkley Point C (HPC) Pride of Platform Awards.



The Pride of Platforms initiative recognises the best platforms on site and teams who go above and beyond to deliver their work to the highest safety standards and welfare practices. It rewards the fantastic work that goes into providing safe working environments on platforms across the project.

SPS was chosen as the winner in the operational support category based on their demonstration of good signage, clear access arrangements and welfare facilities, as well as a great focus on health, safety, and the environment.

A spokesman said the award well deserved recognition and highlighted the highest level of safety standards that had been achieved. SPS also scooped two awards in at the HPC Excellence Awards in November 2021.

SPS provides a bespoke transport solution for the HPC project, carrying almost all people who go to the construction site either for work or to visit. SPS transports thousands of clients to and from the construction site every day, working 24/7 to ensure that construction remains on schedule.

The state-of-the-art 10 bay vehicle maintenance facility is fully equipped with modern engineering equipment and staffed with its own in-house engineering team that work

24/7 offering support to the transport operations and roadside assistance for the fleet.

Martin Webb, Head of Business Services said: "We beat tough competition from many great teams. So much hard work and commitment has gone into ensuring the unit is safe, secure and a great place to work."

Simon Cursio, Managing Director, added: "I'm hugely proud of the team, who have worked tirelessly and been committed to adhering to the high standards of safety and welfare required. This award, and the HPC Excellence Award we won in November, is a testament to all of the people at SPS and their individual and collective efforts. Congratulations to all the winners and runners up!"



Nick Bridle, Assistant Engineering Manager, Max Coombes, Parts Apprentice, Richard Pole, Parts Administrator and Ben Scott-Davies, Workshop Manager.



BUSINESS NEWS



Trade with Ukraine, Russia and Belarus – Q&A

The invasion by Russia of Ukraine is an appalling act of aggression with terrible loss of life and displacement of potentially the largest number of people in Europe since World War 2.

With more dreadful news coming out of Ukraine every day, our thoughts are with all those affected in Ukraine and across the global Chamber network.

The situation will be deeply worrying for many businesses in the region as well as here in the UK. As Somerset Voice went to print at the end of March, the invasion showed no sign of coming to an end.

Sanctions have been imposed by the UK Government on Russia and Belarus. These are a combination of measures affecting payment systems (many Russian banks have been removed from the SWIFT payments service) and trade in financial services products with Russia plus measures to target the UK assets and travel rights of selected Russian nationals (including members of the Duma), plus export bans on selected dual-use products mainly in the technological sector. Furthermore, UK airspace is closed to Russian flights. All UK ports have also been informed by the UK Government not to allow Russian-linked ships to berth or enter a port.

In summary:

- UK sanctions prohibit sale of hi-tech products, including on aerospace, to Russia
- Dual-use products also banned from export to Russia
- Key Russian banks removed from SWIFT payment system. Sberbank cut out from UK financial system. Trade in Russian securities prohibited
- Sanctions also applied to trade underpinned by the Russian Central Bank
- Wide group of Russian politicians, officials and oligarchs prevented from travelling to the UK, and arrangements for freezing of assets in the UK put in place. Now being applied to senior figures in Belarus
- Ban on Russian flights within UK airspace
- Russian-linked ships cannot arrive or berth at UK ports
- UK nationals being advised not to journey to Russia and those in Russia to return to the UK now

Are companies still permitted to trade with customers in Russia and Belarus?

There is no legal bar on sending goods outside the terms of the sanctions to those states. In practical terms, however, it is becoming more difficult to export goods there by the day.

Major shipping companies including Maersk and MSC have said they will not carry non-essential goods to Russia. Russian flights for freight cannot land in the UK or fly in its airspace. Paying or receiving payment for goods is likely to be extremely difficult too. No UK Government guidance is in place on this issue – individual businesses must take decisions on both moral and commercial grounds regarding supplying prior customers in Russia and Belarus.

Should we be importing goods, including raw materials, from Russia and Belarus?

No ban on these Russian and Belarussian imports is in force in the UK. It is again a matter of moral and commercial judgment for UK businesses. Companies may have had a history of importing wood, timber, iron, steel, fuels and other goods from that region but the issues around freight, access to ports and payment for goods now act as practical barriers on imports from Russia and Belarus.

Will the UK Government compensate UK businesses which stop trading with Russian clients or customers?

No arrangements have been made for this.

How is business in Ukraine responding?

The British Chambers of Commerce is supporting the leadership of the British Ukrainian Chamber who are now in London and have asked them for guidance on appropriate aid routes that we may wish to support as a network.

If payment has been made under contract for goods or services not now being sent from Russia what are the implications?

Firstly, in terms of what the contract says about force majeure events or ways in which the contract may be brought to an end. Secondly, companies would be strongly advised to speak to their insurers for any available assistance under their agreement.

What advice is available from the UK Government?

Latest guidance on the sanctions adopted is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/russia-sanctions-guidance/russia-sanctions-guidance>.

The Export Support Service (ESS) is available to contact via telephone or online form for assistance with particular trading problems in the affected region. Call on 0300 303 8955 between 8am and 10pm daily.

Further information on export controls: contact the Export Control Joint Unit Helpline on 020 7215 4594 or email: exportcontrol.help@trade.gov.uk.



New £150m loan scheme

The Government has launched a series of loans worth £150 million to support innovative small and medium-sized businesses. The loans will broaden the financial support available to businesses, ensuring they can access funding at all stages of innovation. The loans will be provided to businesses that have the strongest potential to support future economic growth and tackle social challenges, across fields such as net zero, health and wellbeing, and next-generation digital technologies.

Read more about the loans at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-backs-innovative-businesses-with-new-150-million-loan-scheme>

Fund opens for green heating projects

A £288 million funding scheme has opened to encourage businesses and households to use greener heating to help reduce emissions. Schemes, such as heat networks, that provide clean heating to homes, offices and commercial buildings will be able to apply for grants from the Green Heat Network Fund over the next three years. Heat networks offer carbon emissions savings by supplying heat from a central source.

Read more about the funding at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/288-million-fund-opens-for-green-heating-projects>

Extension to plug-in van and truck grants

The Government has announced a two-year extension to the plug-in van and truck grant scheme. From 1 April 2022, the threshold to claim the small truck grant of up to £16,000 will be increased from 3.5 tonnes to 4.25 tonnes. Grants worth £5,000 will be available for vans up to 4.25 tonnes. Plug-in vehicle grant schemes have supported sales of over 450,000 ultra-low emission vehicles across the UK, including more than 300,000 zero emission vehicles.

Read more about the grants at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/businesses-to-benefit-from-extension-to-plug-in-van-and-truck-grants>

Plans announced for largest ever R&D budget

The largest ever research and development budget, worth £39.8 billion, has been allocated across the Department for Business's partner organisations. The allocations will allow the Government to deliver on the plans set out in the Innovation Strategy.

Read more about the allocation at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-plans-for-largest-ever-rd-budget>

SCA becomes mandatory

Online retailers who are not set up for strong customer authentication (SCA) risk losing £3.64 million every day. SCA, which became mandatory on March 14 2022, affects the way banks and other payment service providers check that the person requesting access to an account or trying to make a payment is permitted to do so.

Read more about SCA at:

<https://www.chargedetail.co.uk/2022/03/14/online-retailers-sca-mandatory/>

Initiatives to recruit Ukrainian refugees

A consortium of UK businesses has launched an initiative to make it easier to offer employment to Ukrainian refugees. A jobs board, JobsForUkraine.net, has also been launched which has more than 1,700 placements listed.

Read more about the initiatives at:

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/uk-businesses-join-consortium-to-recruit-ukrainian-refugees/>

Source: BAD News (Business Advisers News)



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A man with a beard and glasses is looking down at a smartphone held by a woman with glasses. They are both focused on the device. The background is slightly blurred, suggesting an office or meeting environment. A large magenta triangle is overlaid on the right side of the image.

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