

# Somerset Voice

The Official Magazine of  
Somerset Chamber of Commerce

**December 2025  
/ January 2026**



## Chamber news

**11 | UPDATES FROM  
THE AGRATAS PROJECT  
AT OUR SELL-OUT  
BUSINESS BREAKFAST**

## **6 | QUARTERLY ECONOMIC SURVEY - Q3 2025**

Labour costs and taxation worries as businesses feel the pinch

## **32 | HINKLEY UPDATE**

First Station Director appointed at Hinkley Point C

## **33 | MEMBER NEWS**

Fundraisers, awards, partnerships and appointments



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an excellent speaker and I was  
thrilled to represent Church House  
Investment Management as  
sponsors."

Andrea Steel  
Head of Private Clients (South West),  
Church House Investment Management



# CONTENTS

First word	4
Quarterly Economic Survey	6-7
Business partner news	8-10
Chamber news	11-14
Feature – media, marketing and PR	15-17
Events gallery	18 – 21
Upcoming events	22-23
New members	24-25
Membership	25
Sector focus – business consultancy	26-31
Hinkley update	32
Member news	33-37
Business news	38-39

*Front page: More than 160 people attended Somerset Chamber's business breakfast with Agratas event in Bridgwater to hear updates on the exciting project. More details and photos on pages 12-13. Photo: Darren Honeywill Video Production & Photography*

## Disclaimer

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**Design by:** Thoroughbred Marketing, Somerset



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## FIRST WORD



I can't believe this is the final magazine of 2025 and what an exciting year it has been for the Chamber – our 30th anniversary year!

By the time the magazine is published we will have held our AGM and said a sad farewell to outgoing Board Chair Emma Warren of Elite Staffing Solutions and fellow Board Directors Lizzie Tottle, Evelyn Adfield, Jerome Timbrell and Matt Ruddle. We will have a full report in the next edition.

We will also have welcomed members to join us for a celebratory 30th anniversary dinner at RNAS Yeovilton – we quite literally couldn't do any of the things we do without you!

In 2025 we have:

- Achieved a 15% growth in membership – the highest since 2017
- Formed even more wide-ranging stakeholder relationships
- Welcomed a record number of Business Partners
- Had even more proactive engagement through our events diary
- Represented a network of more than 45,000 people through our members and their workforces
- Averaged 40,000 monthly digital interactions on our social channels
- We are proud to be one of 51 UK Chambers accredited to the British Chambers of Commerce
- Now secured a total of £400 million in contracts through the Hinkley Supply Chain
- And launched the 21st annual Somerset Business Awards

Plans are already well advanced for 2026 and I am looking forward to meeting more of our members and stakeholders in the coming 12 months.

May I be one of the first to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year and thank you again for all your support in 2025.

A special thank you must also go to our departing Board Directors who have voluntarily given up their time to take Somerset Chamber on a journey of change and achievements.

Here's to a prosperous 2026!

David Crew

MANAGING DIRECTOR  
SOMERSET CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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## OUR BUSINESS PARTNERS

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# WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

## OUR ADVICE LINES ARE HERE TO HELP YOU...

At Quest Cover, our Advice Line Team boasts an impressive collective expertise; fortified by decades of experience and diverse qualifications in various aspects of Law, Human Resources, and Health and Safety.



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Our team members have practiced in both the private and public sectors, gaining invaluable insights and practical knowledge that enhance their advisory capabilities.

Having transitioned from traditional legal roles to specialising in HR, H&S and Employment Law Advice, our advisors demonstrate adaptability and dedication to client-focused services. They have provided legal guidance to a diversified range of clients, from HR managers, CEOs, and professional bodies, to small and medium-sized enterprises. This experience ensures our team is adept at handling the unique challenges faced by different organisations.

## WHY TRUST OUR ADVISORS



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### Deep Industry Experience

Between them, our advice team boast vast experience in areas including civil litigation, property law, landlord and tenant, criminal law, and employment law.



### Consulting Expertise

Our adept advisors are well-versed in delivering quality phone advice, having performed this function for local councils, manufacturing companies, and more.

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BRITISH CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

## QUARTERLY ECONOMIC SURVEY Q3 2025

**Business sentiment remains flat ahead of the Budget..** The BCC's Quarterly Economic Survey (QES) for Q3 2025 - the UK's largest independent survey of business sentiment, made up of 4,669 respondents - shows that most indicators remain unchanged from the previous quarter and are at 2022 levels, with taxation and inflation the top concerns.

**Taxation remains the top concern, cited by 59% of respondents**

**Almost half (44%) of firms expect to rise prices over the next three months**

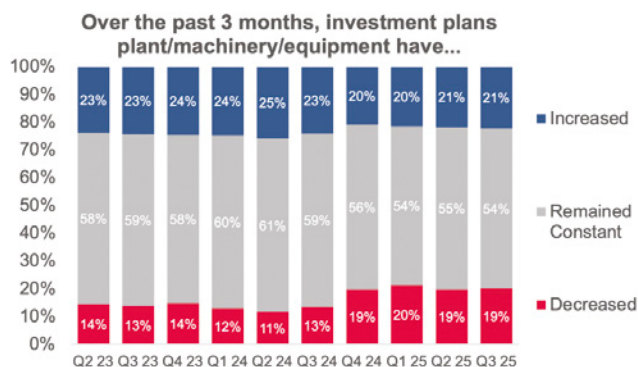
**Confidence and investment levels remain at 2022 levels**

### AT A GLANCE

#### Investment

**Overall, 25% of businesses say they have seen decreased investment in machinery and equipment. 54% report no change, while only 21% have increased their plans.**

The issue is more marked in certain sectors, with over a third (35%) of hospitality firms scaling back of investment plans. The figure for those in the retail sector is 30%.

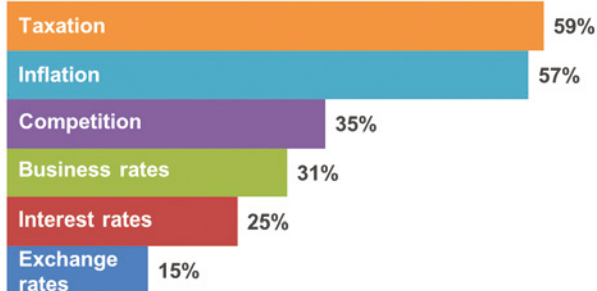


#### External factors

**Overall, tax continues to be the biggest concern for businesses, cited by 59%, slightly up from 56% in Q2. Before the 2024 Budget, taxation was cited by 36% of firms.**

Concern about inflation has also increased, cited by 57% compared with 52% in the previous quarter. Firms in hospitality sector are the most likely to be concerned about taxation and inflation, at 62% and 63%, respectively.

External factors of greater concern than three months ago







SOMERSET CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## QUARTERLY ECONOMIC SURVEY Q3 2025

Somerset businesses continued to follow the national trend and again cited taxation as the biggest cause for concern in Q3 of the QES, although the percentage was significantly lower than the previous quarter. Some 83% of respondents said tax was more of a concern than it was three months ago, up from 81% in Q2, while concerns about inflation dropped slightly from 59% in Q2 to 56% in Q3. Business confidence remained low, with 46% of firms expecting a drop in profits, down from 49% in the previous quarter. However, the percentage of companies expecting to increase prices in the next three months jumped to 58% from 39% who were planning to levy price rises in Q2. Labour costs were again the overriding financial pressure for most respondents, with 84% saying the cost of employing staff was the main factor in deciding whether to increase prices, with the price of utilities and raw materials coming in around 52% and 40% respectively. Only 39% of businesses said they were currently operating at capacity, while 50% of respondents reported having difficulty recruiting suitable staff, down from 58% in the previous quarter.



## Brown & Brown sponsors college Greenpower Motorsport team

Brown & Brown insurance services has become the official sponsor of Queen's College's Greenpower Motorsport team, a pupil-led engineering project that brings motorsport and innovation to life in the classroom.

The Greenpower project challenges young people to design, build and race electric cars, inspiring future careers in science, technology and engineering.

The Queen's College team, competing in the Under 16 category, has built its own car entirely from scratch, managing every aspect from budgeting and ordering parts to supplier negotiations and performance analysis.



Thanks to Brown & Brown's generous sponsorship, which runs until January 2028, the team will be able to fund new team kit, racing suits, car parts, race entries and travel.

The pupils also fit real-time data points to their vehicle, allowing them to collect and analyse performance data in the pits on race days, gaining valuable insight into how to improve their performance.

The first race in the team's smart new kit will be this Sunday, at Goodwood Motor Circuit, where pupils will put their car and engineering skills to the test against teams from across the country.

Alan Clarke, Regional Managing Director at Brown & Brown, said: "We are passionate about supporting local communities and creating opportunities for young people to discover their interests and ambitions.

"Partnering with Queen's College is a fantastic way for us to invest in the next generation, helping pupils develop practical skills, confidence and



a love of innovation that will stay with them for life."

As part of the partnership, Brown & Brown will also work closely with the Queen's College Futures department, providing guest speakers and work experience placements to help pupils explore career pathways and build valuable professional connections.

Ben Higgs, Head of Design Technology at Queen's College, said: "This sponsorship means so much to our pupils. The Greenpower project gives them hands-on experience of engineering, teamwork and problem solving that goes far beyond the classroom.

"Brown & Brown's support allows us to take the project to the next level, with improved equipment, new racing opportunities and even more ways to inspire the next generation of engineers."

Brown & Brown, formerly Higos Insurance Services, is part of Brown & Brown, Inc, one of the world's largest insurance brokerages and has offices across the South West.

## Yeovil College launches groundbreaking Hydrogen Lab

Yeovil College has officially opened its pioneering Hydrogen Lab (YC H<sub>2</sub> Lab), marking a major milestone in technical education and green energy innovation for the South West.



The launch event welcomed industry leaders, educators, and partners to celebrate this first-of-its-kind facility in England.

The Hydrogen Lab is designed to deliver specialist training across sectors including advanced engineering, construction and automotive.

The aim is to upskill existing professionals and prepare new entrants for careers in the rapidly evolving hydrogen economy. Initial programmes will focus on hydrogen safety, generation, storage and distribution, facility operations and fuel cell applications for transport and aerospace.

The investment forms part of Yeovil College's ambitious strategy to support the UK's transition to net zero and strengthen regional skills.

Equipped with cutting-edge hydrogen fuel cell training systems and integrated within the Advanced Engineering Centre, the lab offers hands-on experience alongside theoretical learning.

It also complements the college's new battery evaluation testing equipment, ensuring learners gain insight into future propulsion technologies for eVTOL and UAV applications.

Principal Mark Bolton said: "The Hydrogen Lab represents a bold leap into the future of technical education. We're proud to lead the way in hydrogen and aerospace training, preparing learners for sectors vital to the UK's green economy."





## Clarke Willmott helps housing developer to win landmark Supreme Court appeal

Lawyers at Clarke Willmott LLP have represented a housing developer in a successful Supreme Court appeal that could give the green light to the construction of thousands of new homes.

The court case, brought by fellow Chamber member CG Fry & Son Ltd, questioned whether so-called “nutrient neutrality” rules apply in cases where a development received planning permission before the introduction of Natural England’s guidance on the issue.

Nutrient neutrality is a concept that aims to prevent land use or development from increasing the level of harmful nutrients, such as phosphates and nitrates, in vulnerable watercourses and catchments. This has led to significant delays and stalled planning applications affecting housing developments across the country.

CG Fry & Son was given outline planning permission for a development of 650 homes at Jurston Farm in Wellington, Somerset in 2015.

But it has been unable to build the third phase of the scheme after Somerset Council said it did not meet nutrient neutrality rules which were introduced by Natural England in August 2020.

CG Fry appealed to the Planning Inspectorate and following an

 **clarke  
willmott**

 **CG FRY & SON**  
BUILDERS  
DEVELOPMENT & CONTRACTING

inquiry in August 2022 the Inspector dismissed the appeal. The High Court and Court of Appeal subsequently upheld the Inspector’s decision.

The case hinged on the proper interpretation of the Habitats Regulations 2017, the legal effect of the grant of an outline planning permission and the impact of a subsequent change in the application of policy.

Earlier this year CG Fry & Son obtained an order for permission to appeal to the Supreme Court and today the court, presided over by Lord Reed, delivered its judgment in *CG Fry v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government* - ruling unanimously in its favour.

The company was represented by Lord Banner KC and Dr Ashley Bowes plus Kary Withers, partner in Clarke Willmott’s property litigation team, associate Tara Moseley and Caroline Waller, partner in the planning and

environmental team.

Caroline Waller said: “This important decision will result in housing developments being able to proceed where the relevant planning consent has been obtained but is currently stalled due to nutrient neutrality.

“The case will also have wider legal implications around the scope of matters to be considered in the discharge of planning conditions more generally.”

Philip Fry, managing director of CG Fry, said: “This marks the end of a time-consuming and costly process for us as an SME developer. It is deeply frustrating that it has taken over three years to reach this conclusion - a delay that could have driven many other small developers out of business.

“The prolonged legal proceedings have caused significant delays and unnecessary expenses in delivering both private and affordable homes, which are urgently needed in Wellington. Additional costs arising from such legal challenges further exacerbate viability issues across the industry, making it even harder for SME developers to deliver much-needed housing.

“With this matter now resolved, we can focus on what the Government has tasked us with: delivering high-quality homes for our communities.”

## Weston College welcomes more than 900 visitors to careers event

Weston College welcomed over 900 local people to the Winter Gardens for the ‘What Next’ careers showcase for Year 10s and 11s.



Attendees had the opportunity to find out more about their potential career pathway; from meeting Weston College staff from all faculties, to speaking with a wide range of employers.

Over 40 employers attended including, Airbus, Muller, the Royal Navy, Thatchers Cider, Bristol City Robins Foundation and Noah’s Ark Zoo Farm. They spoke directly with students and parents, highlighting career prospects and opportunities within their industries.

Alongside employers, Weston College also showcased its careers excellence hubs, giving students insight into the courses and pathways available across areas such as Early Years, Creative Arts, Construction, and Engineering. Lecturers were on hand at each stand to answer questions and provide advice.



## New partnership set to strengthen skills development in battery sector

Andy Berry CBE, CEO UCS College Group, and Steve Smith, Managing Director of SIAS, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), marking a significant step towards shaping and delivering the skills and qualifications needed in the rapidly emerging battery manufacturing sector in Somerset.

SIAS is leading, Ofqual approved, awarding organisation for science, manufacturing, engineering and low carbon industries.

Speaking about the partnership, Andy Berry CBE, CEO of UCS College Group, said: "This partnership with SIAS demonstrates our commitment to shaping a future-focused curriculum that meets the evolving needs of Somerset's industries.

"Together, we're building qualifications that will support the next generation of skilled workers and position Somerset at the forefront of advanced manufacturing."

Steve Smith, Managing Director of SIAS, added: "We're delighted to formalise this partnership with UCS College Group. SIAS is committed to developing a suite of qualifications specifically designed to address current skills gaps.

"These qualifications will be rigorous, industry-driven and nationally scalable. This is a prime example of how collaboration between education and industry can deliver real impact - supporting employers, communities, learners, and long-term economic growth at both regional and national levels."

Matt Tudor, Chief Strategy Officer, UCS College Group, commented: "This partnership is another step towards aligning education with regional economic and skills needs.



▲ From Left to Right: Simon Brewer, Group Director, Partnerships and Major Projects, UCS College Group, Deborah Hoggett, SIAS, Matt Tudor, Chief Strategy Officer, UCS College Group and Jenny Ashworth, Strategic Projects Associate, UCS College Group.

"Together, we will ensure that opportunities are unlocked, transforming the lives of our students and communities, while delivering on the national skills agenda.

"This partnership further positions Somerset as a national hub for workforce innovation and battery sector skills development."

The MoU outlines a framework for collaborative projects, around curriculum development, regulated qualifications and accreditations, aligning UCS College Group's expertise in further and higher education with SIAS's awarding and accreditation capabilities.

## Former apprentice promoted to site management role at Summerfield

South West house builder Summerfield Homes has promoted a young employee to assistant site manager just weeks after completing his apprenticeship.

Miles Broughton studied engineering after leaving school but discovered a passion for construction after helping his father with carpentry. This led him to approach the Taunton

based developer Summerfield who agreed to support him through an apprenticeship.

While attending Bridgwater and Taunton College one day a week, Miles spent the remaining four days gaining hands-on experience on various housing sites. His strong work ethic impressed his Summerfield supervisors, who gave him increasing amounts of responsibility throughout his training.

Now having completed his apprenticeship, Miles is looking forward to this next step in his career and says he would highly recommend others to consider this route into a construction career.

"This has been a great way to learn, gaining experience while working towards a qualification," said Miles. "I enjoy the fact that every day is



different and am grateful for the support I have received from my work colleagues."

Throughout his apprenticeship Miles worked on several Summerfield developments including Carrots Farm in North Petherton, Liddymore Park in Watchet and Killams Park in Taunton. He now aims to advance his career through further management roles and opportunities.

Summerfield Group Managing Director, James Holyday, said: "Miles has shown real commitment throughout his apprenticeship. His promotion to assistant site manager is well deserved and we have confidence in his future with us."



## Somerset businesses sign-up to smokefree pilot project

A trio of Somerset companies have signed up to take part in a pioneering project to help their workforce lead healthier lives by quitting smoking.

Somerset Chamber of Commerce is working with Somerset Council to deliver the pilot project as part of the Smokefree Somerset initiative.

Cleaning equipment manufacturer Numatic, in Chard, family-owned skip, tipper, plant hire and aggregate supplier S Roberts Group of Bridgwater and hand-made dessert manufacturer Marston Foods, of Frome are all taking part in a year-long scheme to help their staff stop smoking.

Smokers at the three businesses will have access to free stop smoking therapies and medication plus tailored support, in group or one-to-one session through Smokefree Somerset. The scheme is a free, local stop-smoking service funded and delivered by Somerset Council's Public Health team, offering practical support and advice to smokers who want to kick the habit.

The project will also develop guidance to help other businesses who would like to support their staff to stop smoking.

Alison Bell, Director of Public Health for Somerset Council, said: "We're delighted to see Somerset businesses

leading the way in supporting their staff to quit smoking.

"This pilot is about more than just improving health, it's about creating workplaces where people feel supported to make positive changes to their lifestyle.

"Being surrounded by people at work who are making healthy choices, make those easier choices. By working together, we can help more people in Somerset live healthier lives and reduce the impact of smoking on families, businesses, and our wider community."

Research by health charity Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) earlier this year estimated smoking cost the UK economy £27.6 billion in lost economic productivity.

David Crew, Managing Director of Somerset Chamber of Commerce, said: "Past research has shown smokers take up to three more days of sick leave each year than non-smokers due to ill health.

"Anything we can do to support our members and the Somerset business community to be more productive is to be welcomed and we hope this initiative will enable more workers to stop smoking."

As part of the initiative, the three businesses will develop a smokefree

vision and implement a plan to ensure the vision is funded then delivered while working closely with the Smokefree Somerset team.

Becky Bevins, Human Resources Director at Numatic, said: "Our mission at Numatic is to make better products in better ways, therefore having an engaged, happy, and healthy workforce is paramount to our success.

"We were delighted to be selected for the smokefree initiative, working alongside the Somerset chamber and Somerset Council and we are confident that together we can encourage many of our workforce to rethink their smoking habits."

Sarah Green, Managing Director, of Marston Foods said: "Marston Foods Ltd are very proud to be one of three businesses selected to be part of the Somerset Smokefree Project.

"The health and wellbeing of our staff is hugely important, and to be able to provide support to some of our employees to give up smoking will be well received and a significant benefit to the business."

Natasha Butcher, Office Manager, at S Roberts Group, said: "The Roberts Group are proud to be part of the Smokefree Project in collaboration with Somerset Council and Somerset Chambers.

"Supporting our team's health and wellbeing is a top priority and this initiative gives us a meaningful way to help those who want to quit smoking. To find out more about the support available for smokers in local businesses, business visit [www.smokefreesomerset.org.uk](http://www.smokefreesomerset.org.uk).



◀ From left, David Crew of Somerset Chamber, Carol Bryan and Natasha Butcher of S Roberts Group, Andrew Hanson, Healthier Lifestyles Service Manager at Somerset Council, Becky Bevins and Luke Owen of Numatic, Caroline Brooks, Go Smokefree Team Manager at Smokefree Somerset, Georgina Wilson and Sarah Green of Marston Foods.

## Global shipping firm becomes Chamber's latest Business Partner

Somerset Chamber is delighted to welcome leading global shipping experts Cory Brothers Ltd as a new Business Partner.

The company has been supporting the global supply chain for more than 180 years through a range of global shipping – freight forwarding, project logistics, customs clearance, liner and warehousing divisions.

From humble beginnings as shipbrokers and coal exporters in Cardiff, in 1842, Cory Brothers' operation has grown to provide supply chain assistance throughout the UK and around the globe.

Businesses rely on them for local expertise, wherever in the world they are needed, helping firms to keep compliant, cost-effective and running on time.



With bases across the UK, plus the Netherlands and USA, Cory Brothers has a well-earned reputation as a leader in the sector.

## Updates and opportunities at sell-out Agratas business breakfast

More than 160 people heard about the latest progress and opportunities at the Agratas development near Bridgwater on Tuesday when they attended a business breakfast organised by Somerset Chamber of Commerce.

Guest speakers from Agratas, contractors Sir Robert McAlpine, NG Bailey and TClarke gave updates about the multi-billion-pound project which will create the UK's biggest state-of-the-art battery manufacturing facility in Puriton.

There was an update on the skills support being provided by UCS College Group to ensure future school and college leavers have the right skills to work at the factory once it is complete.

Nick Cooper, Community Engagement Manager, at Agratas said: "It was wonderful to see so many people interested in Agratas and the possibilities our new battery manufacturing facility will bring to Somerset."



▲ From left, Nick Cooper of Agratas, Matt Beaven of sponsor Jays Transport, Matt Tudor of UCS College Group, Phil Peregreen of TClarke, Glenn Hiscocks of Agratas, David Crew of Somerset Chamber of Commerce, Richard Young of NG Bailey and Ben Walker of Jays Transport.



▲ Matt Tudor of UCS College Group gave an update about skills and training in readiness for the project.



▲ Kerry Cruden of main contractor Sir Robert McAlpine answers questions.

"It truly is an important development and investment in the area, and it's been a great opportunity to update the community on our progress and what's still yet to come, alongside our local business community."

Construction is well underway, supporting more than 2,200 direct jobs and an around 7,500 jobs throughout the supply chain, for the duration of the build.



▲ From left, Helen Hutt of Porter Dodson, Amanda Sheppard of the FSE Group and Charlotte Ford of SWIG Finance.





▲ Somerset Chamber MD David Crew welcomed more than 160 people to the business breakfast with Agratas.

At full capacity, the site will support around 4,000 direct jobs, and once fully operational, Agratas estimated it will generate more than £700 million in economic value annually for the South West.

David Crew, Managing Director, Somerset Chamber of Commerce, said: "Somerset has many skilled and talented businesses who are ready to help deliver this exciting project.

"Our business breakfast was a sell-out and gave attendees a fantastic opportunity to hear directly from the main contractors and to find more about progress and opportunities on site.

"Somerset Chamber is looking forward to continuing to support local businesses, Agratas and its partners to mobilise and deliver this transformative project."

It was the second sell-out business breakfast with Agratas organised by Somerset Chamber this year.



▲ Nick Cooper, Community Engagement Manager, Agratas.



▲ Andrew Morris (left) of contractor NG Bailey with event sponsors Matt Beaven (centre) and Ben Walker of Jays Transport.





## Somerset Chamber hosts British Chambers of Commerce Director General

Somerset Chamber was delighted to invite Somerset Chamber members to an exclusive members-only networking breakfast with the Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, Shevaun Haviland.

It was part of a two-day visit to Somerset, hosted by Somerset Chamber and led by Managing Director, David Crew.

As well as touring some of the county's leading businesses and exciting new projects, Shevaun was the guest speaker at a business breakfast held at The Shrubbery Hotel Somerset, Ilminster and sponsored by Albert Goodman.

It was an opportunity to hear directly from Shevaun about the work of the British Chambers of Commerce and how they support Somerset Chamber's own members.

During her time in Somerset, Shevaun also visited the Agratas site near Puriton, Hinkley Point C and the Muller factory in Bridgwater. She also hosted a dinner for Chamber Business Partners at The Castle in Taunton.



▲ Shevaun Haviland, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, hosted Somerset Chamber Business Partners at an evening reception held at The Castle in Taunton.



◀ Somerset Chamber MD David Crew (centre) was able to show Ben Martin and Shevaun Haviland of the British Chambers of Commerce progress on the Agratas site near Puriton.

▲ From left, Michael Cahill of breakfast sponsor Albert Goodman, Shevaun Haviland the Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, Lyndsay Blackshaw of Albert Goodman, David Crew the Managing Director of Somerset Chamber and Ben Martin the Policy Manager of the British Chambers of Commerce.



## Survey launched to give employers a say on workforce future skills, training and development

Somerset Chamber and neighbouring chamber Business West have launched a survey to find out what employers need to develop their existing workforce and the skills they will be looking for in the future.

The two chambers are working together to deliver the Somerset Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and the findings from the survey will form the basis for a new skills plan which is due to be published next spring.



Please add: The survey - which can be found using the QR code - takes just five minutes to complete and will ensure employers' voices shape Somerset's future skills and training programmes with support from the Department of Education.

David Crew, Managing Director of Somerset Chamber of Commerce, said: "Our daily conversations with businesses indicate that skills and accessing talent to grow remains a key issue for the majority of Somerset firms and this exciting new partnership with our Chamber colleagues at Business

West will ensure we can continue to put employers at the heart of the skills agenda.

"The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is central to delivering a skills agenda which is fit for both education providers and employers, as well as learners, and will help to ensure learners have the skills needed by our local businesses to enable firms to operate efficiently and effectively."

As well as the survey, Somerset Chamber and Business West are hosting a range of online focus groups as part of the Somerset LSIP to gather additional feedback about the skills, training and workforce development needed to support both the future workforce and employers.

The groups are specifically for employers and skills providers to share insights about their experiences of current and emerging skills needs and the barriers to recruitment, retention and upskilling.

There is no charge to take part in a focus group and insights will help shape the future skills agenda in the region. Additional sessions will be organised in the new year.







## Media, marketing and PR

### Amarin Rubber & Plastics

In the last 18 months Amarin Rubber & Plastics Ltd have adopted a new marketing strategy of sponsoring professional sports teams' players. Starting last season with Tommy Nappier of the Bristol Pitbulls ice hockey team and Ross Vintcent of Exeter Chiefs rugby club it has proved a successful endeavor.

The player sponsorships offer a cost-effect method of raising the company's profile. Through social media



interaction, including competitions and game day interaction, our respective followings have increased as a result.

This season Amarin have followed up with new sponsorship partnerships with Bath Rugby, Gloucester Rugby, Somerset County Cricket Club and Yeovil Town Football Club.

The company has seen a number of new business opportunities from these sponsorships. An increase in company profile in key areas and markets can be, at least partially, attributed to this change in strategy.

As well as a business improvement, Amarin has also used these partnerships to do work in their local community. They have hosted our sponsored players at two local rugby clubs where they have held youth team training sessions. In addition, Amarin has arranged a visit, assembly and activity session at a local secondary school.

This increased awareness and reputation for the company have proved successful and is something they plan to continue with in the coming years.



### M&J Bowers

For over 50 years, M&J Bowers has been a trusted name in confidential waste management and recycling across Somerset and the South West — but in 2024, the company took a bold new approach to how it tells its story.

Traditionally seen as a behind-the-scenes service, M&J Bowers has been re-energising its marketing by putting community, transparency and sustainability at the forefront of every campaign.

This year's "Shredding for a Cause" initiative, launched in memory of long-serving colleague Jason Crabb, saw all confidential waste shredding fees in November donated to The Rowan Ward via the Dorset HealthCare Charitable Trust.



In the same spirit, M&J Bowers also supported Ferne Animal Sanctuary throughout November 2024, providing shredding services and recycling assistance to help the charity continue its vital animal welfare work.

These initiatives, combined with the company's ongoing sponsorship of Sherborne Town Football Club, underline its deep commitment to giving back locally and helping community organisations thrive.

Alongside its community outreach, M&J Bowers is modernising its B2B marketing via a number different channels — becoming a business partner of the Devon & Somerset Law Society to strengthen ties within the legal sector across the South West.

The company has introduced more social activity with an educational tone to help businesses understand where their waste goes and why sustainability and compliance matter.

This is in addition to general news and information within the business for people to engage with and to be seen as the "go to" for confidential waste disposal in The South West. [www.documentshreddingcompany.co.uk](http://www.documentshreddingcompany.co.uk)

## IMPRINTS

Marketing is all about visibility and message — raising the profile of your brand and ensuring it stays in the minds of potential customers. Every business invests in marketing to promote and sell its products or services, but one of the simplest and most cost-effective ways to do this is often overlooked: branded workwear.

Your team is your most valuable marketing asset. Every time they meet clients, attend events, or simply go about their day, they represent your brand. Wearing your logo and message transforms everyday interactions into powerful moments of brand exposure. It reinforces professionalism, builds recognition, and communicates consistency — the cornerstones of strong marketing.

“Professional starts with how you show up.” The way your

team presents itself reflects your company’s values and culture. Branded corporate clothing, workwear, and team kit can help underpin those values — showing pride, unity, and attention to detail. It sends a clear message that your business cares about quality and identity.

For example, appropriately certified PPE need not be solely for compliance, but an opportunity to reinforce team pride and brand identity.

In an increasingly competitive marketplace, it’s the little details that make a lasting impression. Branded workwear ensures your business looks the part while keeping your name front and centre.

Marketing isn’t just about what you say — it’s about how you show up. Make an impact by making a good impression.



## Teapot Creative

Teapot’s Top Tips on Growing Your Brand:

At Teapot, we believe great brands don’t shout the loudest, they connect the best. Here’s our top tips for six essentials of modern marketing:

1. Social media - Stop chasing trends. Start telling your story. Consistency beats ‘virality’ every time.
2. PPC - Don’t just bid high, bid smart! Invest where your most valuable customers already are.
3. Strategy - The best strategy? One that actually gets used.

Make it clear, measurable and visible to your whole team.

4. Website visibility - Google likes humans. Write for people first... the rankings will follow.

5. Brand visibility - Your brand isn’t just what you say. It’s how people feel after interacting with you. Make every touchpoint count.

6. Overall brand growth - Growth doesn’t happen in silos. Bring your design, development and marketing together, that’s where the magic happens.

Ready to create change and grow?

Visit [teapot.agency](http://teapot.agency) to see what’s brewing.



## CETSAT

Marketing has never been the easiest thing for us at CETSAT. Like many businesses, we’ve tried working with a number of outsourced specialists over the years, but somehow it never quite felt right.

No matter how talented they were, it was difficult for them to capture our culture, values, and the essence of what makes us, us.

So, as a senior leadership team, we decided to take a different path and bring our marketing efforts in-house. We started with a dedicated day away from the office, no distractions, just time to focus on what we truly needed.

The website was our first priority, giving us the foundation to build everything else: from social media, email

campaigns, and newsletters, to rethinking our internal communications, office branding, and even our workwear.

To keep the momentum going, we’ve also welcomed a marketing graduate into the team, bringing fresh ideas and energy to the mix.

It’s still early days, and only time will tell if our approach delivers the results we hope for. But already, the process feels more authentic, we’re telling our own story, in our own way.

For any business wrestling with the same challenge, our advice is simple: take the time to understand who you are and what you want to say. The rest starts to fall into place.





## Springboard & Thoroughbred Marketing

When Springboard, a Somerset-based software development company, decided to strengthen its marketing direction, they turned to long term customer Thoroughbred Marketing for strategic guidance.

Springboard specialises in developing business productivity software, integrating platforms such as Microsoft Power Apps, SharePoint and Power BI to streamline clients' operations.

While their technical expertise has long been a strength, the team recognised the need for a clearer marketing strategy to reflect their evolving business ambitions and growing client base.

Working together, Thoroughbred Marketing helped the team refine their brand positioning, clarify their service offer and establish objectives. Structured business development meetings provide a regular forum for reviewing activity and identifying new opportunities, to ensure marketing and growth plans align with business goals.

The regular focus has supported measurable results with a clear direction for the future. The team now communicate with confidence about what they do and how they help clients work smarter through software. The business continues to expand its team and has relocated to accommodate its growth.

"Partnering with Thoroughbred Marketing has really helped us understand how to tell our story. The regular support has brought structure and focus to our marketing, giving the whole team clarity and confidence.

"As we start on our Making Tax Digital for Income Tax project our previous groundwork is highlighting to our team the strengthened way we present our capabilities to clients" says Steve Bloomer Springboard's MD.

Both teams continue to collaborate on developing content, case studies and outreach activity designed to share Springboard's expertise and build meaningful engagement within the business community.



THOROUGHbred est 2004  
MARKETING

## Orbital

Orbital is helping organisations connect with their audiences through believable, interactive AI storytelling – and the results are remarkable.

We all know a good story sticks. It's how humans have learned, taught and persuaded for thousands of years. But what's often overlooked in modern marketing is why storytelling works so well. As we become more conscious consumers, the backstory has become just as important as the product or service.

Now consider that the average literacy age in the UK is nine, and around 70% of us are visual learners. No wonder

visual storytelling has become one of the most powerful tools in any marketer's kit.

Traditionally, though, creating professional video content has been expensive – scripts, actors, film crews, editing. But the rise of AI-generated video is changing that fast.

Here in Somerset, Orbital has developed Scoop, an interactive, web-based platform that creates realistic, branching video stories at around a quarter of the cost of traditional filming.

There are no cameras or studios involved – just smart AI generating believable people, voices and scenarios that viewers can explore and interact with.

The technology is already being used across healthcare and professional training, but it's now reshaping how organisations approach marketing and PR.

Imagine a charity using Scoop to take donors on an emotional journey – following the story of someone they've helped, showing what happens when support arrives in time, or what's at stake when it doesn't.

"We're not replacing creativity – we're giving it new tools," says Orbital's Co-Founder Hayden Allen-Vercoc.

[www.orbitalmedia.com](http://www.orbitalmedia.com) | [haydenav@orbitalmedia.com](mailto:haydenav@orbitalmedia.com)

ORBITAL  
MEDIA







### Somerset skills summit at The Canalside, Bridgwater



▲ A cross-industry panel discussed the skills opportunities and challenges in Somerset.

Photos: River Axe Media



▲ Nelma Vieira of Pitman Training.



▲ Tracie Leahy (centre) and Lynsey McKinstry of Weston College.



▲ Somerset Chamber MD, David Crew (centre) with event sponsors Peter Woodhouse and Ciara Campfield of Stone King.



▲ The skills summit was attended by more than 120 people.



## Let's network over breakfast with Frome Chamber at the Cheese and Grain, Frome



▲ From left, David crew from Somerset Chamber, Laura Ablett from event sponsor Thatcher + Hallam Solicitors and Peter Quintana of Frome Chamber.



▲ Rosie Wicks of Blossom HR Consultancy and David Baum of Begbies Traynor.



▲ Josh Nicolson of Jatech Limited and Candy Bowman of Dovetail Confident Communication Skills and Training.

## Somerset speed networking at the Grand Pier, Weston-super-Mare



▲ Somerset Chamber MD, David Crew (left) with Harry McCarthy and Natalie Tonkin of event sponsor John Hodge Solicitors.



▲ Ed from the Storage Company and Colin Pitt.



▲ Attendees worked the room in timed one-to-one sessions.





## Let's network over breakfast at Oake Manor Golf Club



▲ Breakfast sponsor Jon Goss of WPA Healthcare Practice.



▲ Chloe Sully, Somerset Chamber Events and Commercial Partnerships Manager.



## Wells Cathedral networking brunch and tour



▲ From left, Alastair Warren and Maria Tavlo of Somerset Healthcare, Alexia James and Georgina Landau of Wells Cathedral and Chloe Sully of Somerset Chamber.



▲ John Harris of Aspire Commercial Finance and Karen Williams of Milsted Langdon.



## Somerset entrepreneurs' group at Ferne Animal Sanctuary



▲ Kevin Parker (right) of event sponsor WB Design & Construction and Rob Dakin of Somerset Chamber.



▲ Stuart Martin of Ethical Sales Pro and Adele Williams of SuperFunkyPenguin Photo + Video.



▲ Shaun Bartle of Blue Wolf Group and Iz Bladek.

## Somerset directors' forum at Brown & Brown, Somerton



## Somerset HR professionals' forum at WPA, Taunton



▲ Attendees with the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, Mohammed Saddiq (fourth from left), Nigel Beacom (fifth from left), a Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, chair Lizzie Tottle (front, centre) of Teapot Creative and host and sponsor Alan Clarke (fifth from right) of Brown & Brown.



▲ Sarah Young (centre) of event sponsor Porter Dodson with attendees, including chair Emma Warren of Elite Staffing Solutions (fourth from right) and Charlie MacEwan of WPA (right).

## Workshop: Make 2026 count – plan with purpose, grow with confidence

For ambitious business owners ready to stop winging it and start winning. Step out of the day-to-day and into a powerful workshop designed to give you clarity, focus and a plan you can actually deliver. Delivered by Katherine Dyer of The Pocket Strategist.

**Time:** 9.30am – 11.30am at Somerset Chamber of Commerce, Blackbrook Business Park, Taunton, TA1 2PX  
**Cost:** £10 plus VAT for members  
 £15 plus VAT non-members

Wednesday  
**14 Jan**

Delivered by:

THE Pocket Strategist.

## Somerset marketing professionals' forum

In an ever-changing business and consumer landscape, finding effective ways to reach our target audience to maintain our competitive advantage is key to engaging with customers and to growing our organisations. Chaired by Albert Goodman's Director of Marketing, Robin Clempson, it's an opportunity to discuss key challenges and opportunities.

**Time:** 9.30am – 11.30am at Battens Solicitors, Petters Way, Yeovil, BA20 1SH  
**Cost:** £25 plus VAT members  
 £35 plus VAT non-members

Thursday  
**22 Jan**

Sponsored by:

Teapot.

## Yeovil Breakfast Circle

The Breakfast Circle is where business creativity meets diversity in a welcoming and supportive setting. This isn't your typical gathering dominated by a single profession—our attendees come from a vast array of industries, each adding their unique flavour to the mix.

**Time:** 8.30am – 10am at Yeovil Town Football Club, Lufton Way, Yeovil, BA22 8YF  
**Cost:** £10 plus VAT members  
 £15 plus VAT non-members

Thursday  
**15 Jan**

## Breakfast with Troo

Find out more about our exciting new partnership with business energy specialists Troo while enjoying networking and a cooked breakfast! The company has a dedicated team ready to review our members' energy contracts, explore market-wide deals and give clear, actionable advice, all free-of-charge and with no obligation.

**Time:** 8.30am – 10.30am at Sheppy's Cider Farm, Wellington Road, near Taunton, TA4 1ER  
**Cost:** £15 plus VAT members  
 £20 plus VAT non-members

Tuesday  
**27 Jan**

Sponsored by:



## Breakfast with Somerset Council

Find out more about Somerset Council's plans for 2026 with their senior leadership team, including both officers and councillors. It's a chance to listen and to ask questions, as well as taking the opportunity for some networking while enjoying a cooked breakfast, all sponsored by Amicus Law.

**Time:** 9am – 11am at Haynes Motor Museum, Sparkford, BA22 7LH  
**Cost:** £25.99 plus VAT members  
 £35.99 plus VAT non-members

Tuesday  
**20 Jan**

Sponsored by:

Amicus Law

## Somerset speed networking

Somerset speed networking is returning to Yeovil! Join us for a relaxed networking event with a difference! Our speed networking evening will give you an opportunity to speak one-on-one with scores of local business professionals. There's also the chance for more general networking before sitting down for the main event!

**Time:** 6pm – 8pm at Yeovil Town Football Club, Lufton Way, Yeovil, BA22 8YF  
**Cost:** £24.99 plus VAT members  
 £34.99 plus VAT non-members

Tuesday  
**27 Jan**





## Business and VCSE leaders' forum

Thursday  
**29 Jan**

We are gathering leaders from the business community and voluntary sector to make connections to create collaborative partnerships for Somerset. Attendees will also hear an update regarding Skill Share, a partnership project coordinated by Spark Somerset supported by Somerset Chamber of Commerce.

**Time:** 9.30am – 11.30am at The Shrubbery Hotel, Station Road, Ilminster, TA19 9AR

**Cost:** £24.99 plus VAT

## Yeovil Breakfast Circle

Thursday  
**19 Feb**

The Breakfast Circle is where business creativity meets diversity in a welcoming and supportive setting. This isn't your typical gathering dominated by a single profession—our attendees come from a vast array of industries, each adding their unique flavour to the mix.

**Time:** 8.30am – 10am at Yeovil Town Football Club, Lufton Way, Yeovil, BA22 8YF

**Cost:** £10 plus VAT members  
£15 plus VAT non-members

## Future of hospitality business brunch

Wednesday  
**4 Feb**

This inspiring event will explore how the hospitality sector is adapting in changing times with Ethan Davids, owner and founder of the Chickpea Group. In just a short period, Ethan and his team have successfully opened several pubs, proving that the next generation's passion for hospitality is alive and well.

Hosted by:

**CHICKPEA.**  
A handful of country houses with tonnes of a prime sheep

**Time:** 9am – 11am at the Manor House Inn, Wraxall Road, Shepton Mallet, BA4 6RB

**Cost:** £24.99 plus VAT members  
£34.99 plus VAT non-members

## Business breakfast with Agratas

Thursday  
**26 Feb**

Find out more about the procurement portal and work packages for the construction phase, plans for recruitment and information about skills partnerships! Somerset will soon be home to the biggest electric vehicle battery manufacturing facility in the UK and we are inviting invite local business to find out more directly from the company behind the scheme, Agratas.

**Agratas**  
A TATA Enterprise

**Time:** 9.30am – 11.30am at Yeovil Town Football Club, Lufton Way, Yeovil, BA22 8YF

**Cost:** £24.99 plus VAT members  
£30 plus VAT non-members

## Somerset international trade roundtable with HSBC

Tuesday  
**17 Feb**

Our new international trade roundtable forum is designed to support Somerset businesses that are already trading overseas or looking to expand into international markets. We will be joined by William Bain, Head of Trade Policy at the British Chambers of Commerce, who is a respected authority on international trade, frequently chairing panels with senior politicians and contributing to national TV and radio discussions.

Sponsored by:

**HSBC**   
Commercial Banking

**Time:** 9am – 11.30am at Clarke Willmott, Blackbrook Park Avenue, Taunton, TA1 2PG

**Cost:** £24.99 plus VAT members  
£34.99 plus VAT non-members

## Somerset Business Awards 2026 – grand final

Thursday  
**26 Mar**

The Somerset Business Awards are organised annually by Somerset Chamber of Commerce – celebrating excellence, uniting teams and honouring individual achievements. The final is the county's largest annual black-tie awards ceremony, recognising companies across Somerset for exceptional accomplishments. It's a unique opportunity to network with a variety of businesses and celebrate local talent.

**SOMERSET BUSINESS AWARDS**  
2026

**Time:** 5.45pm – 12 am at The Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, BA4 6QN

**Cost:** £115 plus VAT per ticket or  
£995 plus VAT for a table of 10

Welcome to our newest members of Somerset Chamber.

#### Arbuthnot Latham & Co

Banking and wealth management

Founded in 1833, we have a long proud history of helping clients at all stages of their life. We offer private banking, commercial banking and wealth management designed to meet client's needs both for today and the future.

**James Newcombe 01392 674718**  
[jamesnewcombe@arbuthnot.co.uk](mailto:jamesnewcombe@arbuthnot.co.uk)  
[www.arbuthnotlatham.co.uk](http://www.arbuthnotlatham.co.uk)

#### Greaves Brewster

Legal - intellectual property

Greaves Brewster is an internationally recognised intellectual property firm, based in Cheddar. We develop patent, trade mark and design strategies with you to help your business thrive. We are keen to support more Somerset businesses to help them achieve success.

**Paul Casbon 01934 745880**  
[info@greavesbrewster.co.uk](mailto:info@greavesbrewster.co.uk)  
[www.greavesbrewster.co.uk](http://www.greavesbrewster.co.uk)

#### BAPPCO

IT, automation, AI

BAPPCO helps Somerset's tradespeople solve business problems using the right technology, digital tools, software and smart systems to make work life easier, more profitable, and less stressful, so they can focus on their trade.

**Pierre Ponsin 07344 143932**  
[pierre.ponsin@bappco.com](mailto:pierre.ponsin@bappco.com)  
[www.bappco.com](http://www.bappco.com)

#### Jon Goss - WPA Healthcare Partner

Private medical insurance

I'm your local WPA Health Insurance Advisor, helping individuals, families and companies access quality private healthcare. With over 28 years' experience, I provide personal support and advice. WPA is a not-for-profit organisation putting customers first.

**Jon Goss 07899 986546**  
[jon.goss@wpa-hcp.org.uk](mailto:jon.goss@wpa-hcp.org.uk)  
[www.wpa.org.uk/jongoss](http://www.wpa.org.uk/jongoss)

#### BOP training

Skills and training

Former RSC and National Theatre actor Peter Stephens uses theatre's transferrable skills to help clients be at their most authentic and impactful best each and every time they have to communicate a message, controlling nerves and increasing charisma.

**Peter Stephens 07973 316955**  
[boptraining@outlook.com](mailto:boptraining@outlook.com)

#### Reassure Safety & Risk Management Limited

Health and safety consultancy and training

Reassure exists to make safety less complicated, less stressful and clearer. We deliver solutions bespoke to your business needs. Whether you need one-off support or a long-term safety partner, we are passionate in making your journey a little bit easier.

**Martin Webb 07577 621177**  
[enquiries@reassure-safety.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@reassure-safety.co.uk)  
[www.reassure-safety.co.uk](http://www.reassure-safety.co.uk)

#### First Class Comms Ltd

Business telecoms and ICT

FCC is your in-house expert business telecoms helpdesk providing you with your company mobile contracts, phone system and broadband connections. Proud to be the first B Corp telecoms provider, supporting our local community and environment.

**Mark Burland 01934 756400**  
[mark.burland@firstclasscomms.co.uk](mailto:mark.burland@firstclasscomms.co.uk)  
[www.firstclasscomms.co.uk](http://www.firstclasscomms.co.uk)

#### SCC Toyota

Automotive retail, fleet and business

SCC Toyota represents Toyota in Taunton, Yeovil and Roundswell. We offer new and Approved Used Toyota vehicles, servicing, and business fleet solutions, all backed by Toyota's industry-leading 10 warranty and commitment to quality, reliability and customer care.

**Thomas Girdley 01823 250059**  
[tom.girdley@scc.toyota.co.uk](mailto:tom.girdley@scc.toyota.co.uk)  
[www.toyota.co.uk/group/scc](http://www.toyota.co.uk/group/scc)





#### SHAL Housing Limited

##### Housing

SHAL is a not-for-profit community benefit society that provides over 780 safe, warm and affordable homes in Somerset. We are committed to creating strong communities, building strong relationships, and providing high quality homes and services.

**Kim Marjeram 01278 444344**

**kim@shal.org**

**www.shal.org**

#### UK Storage Company (SW) Ltd.

##### Self-Storage

UK Storage Company offers self-storage units across the country with 30 sites in the portfolio, and our head office being located in Bridgwater, Somerset.

**Ed Nixon 0330 2020602**

**ednixon@ukstoragecompany.co.uk**

**www.ukstoragecompany.co.uk**

#### Taunton Deane Horticultural and Floricultural Society

##### Charity

Taunton Deane Horticultural and Floricultural Society is a charitable organization that promotes horticulture in Taunton and the South West. It organizes the historic Taunton Flower Show, attracting over 17,000 visitors annually with competitions, exhibits, and community engagement.

**Beccy Fox 07794 407758**

**beccy@tauntonfs.co.uk**

**tauntonfs.co.uk**

#### Wrencon

##### Construction

Wrencon Ltd delivers high-quality new builds, refurbishments, and fit-outs across the South West. With over 35 years' experience in the healthcare and commercial sectors, our hands-on team brings projects in Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, and Dorset from concept to completion.

**Jake Elsmore 01823 462010**

**construction@wrencon.com**

**www.wrencon.co.uk**

## MEMBERSHIP

### Latest member-to-member offers

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

#### Heart of the South West Growth Hub

Free one-to-one digital business review

**FREE**  
ONE-TO-ONE

**FREE**  
ASSESSMENT

#### GB NRG

Free energy assessment

#### Onto Digital

Free access to sales, marketing, training and resource guide templates

**FREE**  
AUDIT

#### IMPRINTS

Free embroidery set up, free delivery and one free branded gift with first order

**FIRST**  
ORDER OFFER

**1hr**  
BUSINESS  
HEALTH CHECK

#### Imex Consultancy Ltd

One-hour free business health check

#### Bright Fox

50% off one-day workshop: Foundations of wellbeing. Worth £1,200

**50%**  
DISCOUNT

**10%**  
DISCOUNT

#### Pro Cloud Solutions

10% discount on first year's fees when joining Pro Cloud solutions

**If you have an offer you would like to add to our list,  
visit [someretchamber.co.uk/membership](https://someretchamber.co.uk/membership)**



## Business consultancy

### hgkc

Somerset-based consultancy, hgkc has been helping business owners plan and prepare for a successful exit since 2013. In our experience, the better the preparation upfront, the better the outcome and adjustment for all.

For owners, the decision to exit often comes with mixed feelings. That's why we usually start with the owner themselves, helping them to understand why they want to exit and what they want to do instead.

Loss of purpose is a real challenge for owners that have lived and breathed their business for many years, so mental preparation about the next chapter is critical.

As a part of this, we help them to work out what is important for them - legacy of their brand and values? cash in the bank? etc - and what that means for their exit.

Preparation of the business is key to a successful exit transaction.

Much more than boosting revenue or profitability, this is about building a resilient, scalable operation that can thrive without the constant involvement of the founder.

Achieving this requires a mindset rooted in proactivity, ambition, and a willingness to take calculated risks.

Finally, timing is key. Our advice is always to start as early as possible - building a stronger, more resilient business is good for growth, not just for exit.

Indeed, one of our former clients challenged a group of peers on this, asking: "If you had to sell tomorrow, would you be confident of getting what your business is worth?"



### Ethical Sales Pro

Businesses that engage Ethical Sales Pro become more confident and more successful with customer acquisition and retention leading to business growth.

Our mission is to implement ethical sales principles, enabling our clients to create behaviours and actions that are positive for themselves, their stakeholders and society.

The output is customer focused sales practices that build trust, enhance reputations and deliver long term business success, through teams who act with confidence, clarity and conscience.

Through tailored consultancy and training, we support clients to:

- Identify and reach their ideal audience with precision
- Communicate products and services in ways that genuinely appeal
- Convert more enquiries into valued, repeat customers

The result is a consistent, principled approach to business development that enhances credibility and fuels growth—without compromising your values or the experience of your customers.

If you'd like to explore how Ethical Sales Pro can support your business' growth, you can arrange a complimentary discovery meeting with Stuart Martin (Founder) at [stuart@ethicalsalespro.com](mailto:stuart@ethicalsalespro.com) or 07739 939347.

Stuart Martin is pictured (right) with client and fellow Chamber member Auxilium HR Solutions.





## Sandler South West

Real success isn't achieved through quick fixes or motivational bursts, but through building consistent habits, growth mindsets, and a culture of accountability that drives lasting performance across your team.

At Sandler South West, clients come to us with a sense of what's holding them back — but not necessarily the full picture. Sales leaders may struggle with unpredictable pipelines or “busy” activity that doesn't convert.

**SANDLER®**

Managers may have been promoted for their technical ability, yet lack the confidence and process to coach, delegate, and hold their teams accountable. Leadership may find themselves firefighting symptoms instead of solving root causes.

With over 50 years of global expertise in performance development, we help organisations create sustainable growth through proven Sandler methodologies that change behaviour and results. Our flexible programmes combine interactive coaching, diagnostic tools, and data-driven reinforcement to ensure new skills stick.

As a result, our clients' salespeople move from chasing prospects to confidently qualifying and closing, and leaders grow from reactive managers to strategic, empowered coaches.

By uncovering blind spots, aligning culture and leadership, and embedding repeatable success behaviours, Sandler helps organisations accelerate revenue, build high-performing teams, and achieve ambitious goals with clarity and control.

To find out more about our sales, leadership, and management development programmes, call 01395 203050, email [tom.nation@sandler.com](mailto:tom.nation@sandler.com), or book a free 30-minute consultation with Tom at <https://meetings.hubspot.com/thomas-nation>. Website: <https://go.sandler.com/southwest/>



## Time for Inclusion

Highbridge-based Time for Inclusion is helping Somerset businesses unlock their full potential by creating truly inclusive workplaces where everyone can thrive.

Founded by Jane Finch, a diversity and inclusion consultant with extensive experience in multinational pharmaceutical companies, Time for Inclusion takes a refreshingly practical approach to workplace culture transformation.

“I want work to be a place where everyone can feel they belong, they are safe and they have value,” said Jane. “Too many workplaces are not like this for some, or even all of their employees.”

Jane's journey into inclusion work began when she became European Ally Lead for her employer's LGBTQ+ network in 2016. This experience, and her background in team management, training, auditing and process improvement, shaped her understanding that true fairness means treating people as individuals and

ensuring equal access – which often requires different approaches for different people.

Time for Inclusion works with charities, start-ups and established businesses of all sizes, conducting comprehensive business reviews through an inclusion lens.

They help organisations identify non-inclusive practices, develop actionable strategies, and incorporate inclusion into their core business approach – all without placing the burden on those already disadvantaged by existing systems.

Whether businesses are struggling to attract and retain talent, questioning their company culture after difficult feedback, or wanting to broaden their client base, Time for Inclusion starts where organisations are, ready to guide them through meaningful change – creating success that benefits everyone.

For a confidential chat about the inclusion challenges in your business email [jane@time4inclusion.co.uk](mailto:jane@time4inclusion.co.uk).



**Time  
For  
Inclusion**

Making work a place where everyone belongs.



## Nigel Browne Business Mentoring

So, what is a business mentor and how one might add value to you and your business?

Simply put, I work hand-in hand with business owners on the journey to get them to where they want to be. And that is often the starting point – where exactly do you want to be?



Not having sufficient clarity on what you want for your business – and more importantly, yourself – is very common with small businesses. We may have had a clear vision at the outset, but that can easily get lost in the day-to-day demands of running your business.

We end up with the business controlling us, rather than us controlling the business. Sound familiar? It is the business that should be serving us, not the other way around! But once we have sufficient clarity about where we are going, we can start to make a plan to get there.

And when we have a plan, that will determine our actions. And when we have actions, we must measure our progress. Here it is important to measure not only the actual result but to also measure those things that create the result. The SPAM approach – See, Plan, Action, Measure.

Whether it is people (usually our biggest challenge!), leadership, sales and marketing, financial understanding, strategy and planning, or exit options, a business mentor covers all these areas.

If you're interested in how mentoring could add value to you and your business, I offer a free 90-minute mentoring session to all members of Somerset Chamber.

NIGEL BROWNE BUSINESS MENTORING  
**NBBM**  
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## Edge Coaching

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is renowned for the excellent humanitarian support it provides in high-emotional-impact global contexts. It was, therefore, a privilege for Sam Farmer, of Edge Coaching, to facilitate the “Self-reflection, Self-care and Ethical Practice” workshop at the Netherlands Section’s annual Staff Health Unit Conference in Tunis.

Participants were psychologists from Afghanistan, Jordan, Lebanon, Netherlands, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sudan, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Yemen.

Further to working directly with beneficiaries in humanitarian emergencies, MSF psychologists also: train other psychologists; design and lead mental health programmes; provide psychosocial support and education to diverse staff; inform and support leaders to provide psychologically safe workplaces.

“Really proud of being an MSF consultant for over 15 years”, Sam said and added that he “was fortunate to have access to so many different perspectives and wisdom ... and to contribute to that knowledge base”.

A Chartered Coaching Psychologist, Sam’s experience is informed by over two decades of coaching, educating, supervising and training leaders, psychologists and other professionals across a range of sectors.

Supplementing earlier conference content with additional intervention models and frameworks, his workshop led participants through exercises to build greater self-awareness before exploring ways to: maintain

authenticity;  
balance  
neutrality and  
natural bias;  
sustain self-care;  
and practise  
ethically.

Sam is currently offering sessions with 25%+ discount during December for fellow Somerset Chamber members.





## The Pocket Strategist

For many small business owners, growth can feel like a moving target. You want your business to be successful, but you also want it to be manageable. You want to earn more, but not at the expense of the freedom you started it for.



THE Pocket Strategist.

Sustainable growth means finding that balance between ambition and stability. It's about building a business that works for you, not one that relies on you for everything.

The most successful small businesses I work with are not necessarily the ones that grow the fastest, but the ones that grow with intention. They know what they want their business to do for them, and they make decisions with that in mind. They focus their time and energy on what really matters, and they create simple, repeatable habits that move them forward.

Sustainable growth isn't about constant expansion or adding more to your plate. It's about creating clarity, direction, and consistency. When you know where you're going and what to prioritise, everything else becomes easier to manage.

At The Pocket Strategist, we help small, service-based business owners plan strategically, grow their teams, and simplify operations so they can build a good business for a good life.

If you'd like to start planning for sustainable growth, you can download our free 90-day planning tool at [thepocketstrategist.com](https://thepocketstrategist.com) or contact Katherine, Strategy Consultant, at [katherine@thepocketstrategist.com](mailto:katherine@thepocketstrategist.com).

## Elevate Business Performance

Elevate Business Performance Ltd, based in Cotford St Luke, is helping Somerset businesses thrive through strategic coaching, leadership development, and CPD-accredited online training.

Founded by Tim Gardner, a seasoned business owner and executive coach, Elevate offers practical, people-first solutions tailored to the needs of SMEs.

With over 30 years of experience spanning transport, retail, financial services, manufacturing, and executive coaching, Tim understands the challenges that business leaders face. Elevate's services are designed to simplify complexity, build capability, and unlock sustainable growth.

A key offering is Elevate's suite of accredited, self-paced tutor-led online training courses covering health and safety, fire awareness, food hygiene, and leadership. These courses are CPD-certified, accessible 24/7, and

ideal for teams requiring flexible, compliance-focused development.

Following a recent meeting with Robert Dakin of the Somerset Chamber, Elevate is proud to offer members an exclusive 25% discount on all online training. Simply visit <https://www.elevatebusinessperformance.com/business-skills/> and use code SCC25 at checkout.

Whether you're onboarding staff, meeting regulatory requirements, or developing leadership, Elevate provides the tools and support to help you move forward with clarity and confidence.

Use the following link for a no-obligation discovery call: [Meetings-eu1.hubspot.com/meetings/tim-gardner](https://meetings-eu1.hubspot.com/meetings/tim-gardner).

Empower your people. Strengthen your business. Elevate your performance.

Email: [info@elevatebusinessperformance.com](mailto:info@elevatebusinessperformance.com)  
Tel: 07724 134499

ELEVATE  
BUSINESS PERFORMANCE



## Bartlett Bid Management

BBM is a business consultancy offering bid writing, bid management and tender support. We help your organisation stand out by delivering technically accurate, compelling tender responses that meet the criteria and move you toward the next stage, to ultimately win the bid.

Our clients are professional people who could write and submit a bid themselves. They are experts in their fields and are probably already working more hours than there are available, so why add more stress by trying to get a tender over the line, making errors while doing so, and not winning the bid?

Our value lies in professional bid writing and tender support services tailored to help you achieve your business outcomes across all sectors.

We analyse the bid documents, understand the buyer's pain points, carry out research into the buyer's business and their regulatory obligations and identify alignment

that can be amplified within the written responses.

We look for the key points within a question and then answer those specifically, demonstrating the various features, advantages and benefits that our client's solution will bring to the buyer.

Why we win:

- Our proven four-component framework: compliance, case studies and evidence, cultural fit, and continuous improvement and innovation
- Direct bid leadership from Curtis Bartlett, with 11+ years shaping winning proposals for engineering, construction, IT, healthcare, education and government programmes, among other sectors
- Demonstrated success in securing multi-million-pound framework contracts across the South West, South East, Greater London, North East, Scotland and Wales.

Contact Curtis Bartlett, 0788 9038296, [curtis@bbmnow.co.uk](mailto:curtis@bbmnow.co.uk), website [www.bbmnow.co.uk](http://www.bbmnow.co.uk)



## International Trade Matters

International trade offers huge potential for businesses of all sizes but navigating foreign regulations, logistics and compliance can seem daunting or complicated, particularly for SMEs.

The fast-track Global Trade Blueprint programme has been designed to break down those barriers, providing directors and senior leaders with practical support and proven frameworks for success in overseas markets.

Delivered across four half-day online workshops, the programme provides insight and tools that work in the real world, enabling delegates to leave with a tailored, ready-to-go export strategy.

As one recent participant reflected: "This framework and toolkit helps avoid costly reactive actions to issues that could have been avoided and planned for." Another said the programme "provided our company with the tools to analyse and reflect on our current international journey and helped us explore further potential", adding that it empowered them to "develop a clear visual map which gave structure to the unknown."

The programme includes advice on the integration of ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) strategy and the growing impact of AI, with guidance on demonstrating social responsibility, navigating global safety regulations, and using metrics to evidence impact, all of which are increasingly crucial for credibility and growth in today's competitive international markets.

With expert guidance and a confidential one-to-one review, delegates leave with a validated growth plan and toolkit to help them navigate risk and seize opportunities worldwide.

The next Global Trade Blueprint programme launches in January 2026, with limited spaces available. For more information, call 0333 7722 565 or email [info@internationaltradematters.com](mailto:info@internationaltradematters.com)





## SuperFunkyPenguin Photo + Video

Many business owners tell me they struggle with marketing because they “don’t know what to say”, or they feel pressure to show up everywhere, all the time. But in most cases, the issue isn’t lack of ideas. It’s that the core message has become blurred.

When I work with clients on story-telling brand photography and videography, we don’t start with a camera. We start with clarity.



Why does your business exist?

What is the impact you genuinely care about making?

And where do you personally find joy in your work?

When those answers are clear, marketing becomes simpler and more genuine. Your visuals, your tone of voice, and the stories you share all align. And your ideal clients feel it.

This doesn’t require a rebrand, a new strategy document, or being louder online. It requires reconnecting to the heart of your business and letting that lead your marketing decisions.

It’s something I’m seeing more SMEs prioritise: thoughtful, values-led communication that resonates, rather than noise for the sake of visibility.

If you’re finding marketing heavy right now, pause the tactics. Come back to the reason your business matters. Start there. The rest has a way of flowing.

Adèle Williams is a business and brand photographer and videographer and the founder of SuperFunkyPenguin Photo + Video based in North Somerset, helping SMEs communicate who they are with clarity and confidence.

## Imex Consultancy Ltd

Imex Consultancy Ltd delivers results-driven business and management consulting with over 30 years’ experience, helping organisations across the South West thrive sustainably.

As a micro-business itself, Imex understands the pressures SMEs face – an uncertain economy, tight margins, ever-increasing ‘red tape’, and the need to do more with less. Owned and operated by Chartered Quality Professional Ian Stanbury CQP FCQI, Imex offers authentic, context-aware solutions tailored to your specific challenges.

Whether you’re dealing with disengaged customers, outdated processes, clunky IT systems, stalled growth, or the demands of ISO certification, Ian cuts through complexity to deliver practical, lasting results.

Core services include:

- Business strategy and planning
- Process and service improvement

- Insight-driven innovation
- Digital transformation
- Quality management and ISO readiness

Imex’s unique ‘Tube map’ growth journey is a visual framework that helps you pinpoint where your business stands, where it’s heading, and how to get there, using only the approaches that matter. It’s flexible, cost-effective, and avoids generic ‘sticking plaster’ fixes.

Ian works collaboratively, listening first and diagnosing root causes before co-creating solutions that empower you and your team. Every engagement is designed to deliver measurable impact and real value for money.

Whether you need a one-off consultation or support for a strategic programme, Imex tailors its approach to your size, sector, and goals.

Ready to move beyond surface-level fixes? Call Ian on 07917 097989, email [info@imex-consultancy.co.uk](mailto:info@imex-consultancy.co.uk), or visit [www.imex-consultancy.co.uk](http://www.imex-consultancy.co.uk) to arrange your free one-hour consultation.





## New Station Director announced for Hinkley Point C

Hinkley Point C has named Nicola Fauvel as its first station director. The experienced nuclear engineer will lead the new nuclear power station through commissioning and into operation.

Nicola will return to the Somerset new build project early next year after three years as first plant manager and then station director at neighbouring Hinkley Point B. She led the team that defueled the station in preparation for handover to the Government organisation responsible for decommissioning.

Nicola, who describes herself as “almost genetically programmed to be an engineer”, has worked in the civil nuclear industry for 26 years. She has held a number of technical,

leadership and project manager roles, as well as 13 years as part of the Hinkley Point C project.

Her nuclear career began at Torness power station in Scotland and she has also worked for EDF in Paris on reactor design and at Flamanville in Normandy, where a



sister EPR power station is now generating electricity.

Nicola said: “I have loved leading the team at Hinkley Point B as custodians of the site as there is such a proud heritage and real sense of community.

“I am now excited and humbled to be taking on the challenge of preparing Hinkley Point C for generation. Building the right operational organisation is just as crucial as the fantastic engineering feats being achieved daily by the construction team.”

Nicola is a staunch believer in the nuclear industry and the wider possibilities it opens up for people of all backgrounds and she is looking forward to being an advocate for those opportunities in her new role.

Stuart Crooks, Hinkley Point C’s CEO, said: “Nicola’s leadership and experience on operating stations, as well as her previous experience of new nuclear projects, will be invaluable as we accelerate our commissioning phase.

“Taking up the role now enables Nicola to build knowledge and evolve from pre-operations to an operational organisation that will be capable of generating into the next century.

“Hinkley Point C’s twin nuclear reactors will provide reliable zero-carbon electricity for more than six million homes, boosting Britain’s energy security for decades to come.”

## Latest ‘insider tour’ video released of HPC

A new video update has been released taking a look behind the scenes at Hinkley Point C.

With the civil construction work nearing completion and the second dome in place, attention is now firmly on the power station’s fit out with pipes, cables and equipment.

Thanks to innovation and the experience gained from Unit 1, teams are building the second unit 20-30% faster, with prefabrication now approaching 60%. Everything learned here will benefit Sizewell C from the start.

The video can be found in the dedicated Hinkley Point C section of EDF Energy’s YouTube channel.



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## C & D South West Ltd recognises Kev's 15 years of commitment and excellence



C & D South West Ltd has celebrated the remarkable 15-year service milestone of Kevin Fillary, who serves as both a Class 1 Driver and driver trainer with the company.

Kevin joined C & D in 2010 as a Class 1/2 HGV driver, quickly establishing himself as a highly dependable and skilled member of the driving team.

Over the years, through dedication to his work and a passion for professional development, Kevin progressed into the role of driver trainer, where he now plays an instrumental part in supporting, mentoring and developing both new and existing drivers.

His contribution ensures that the company continues to uphold its rigorous standards of safety, efficiency, and quality on the road.

To mark this significant achievement, Kevin was formally presented with crystal award and certificate of recognition during a presentation by Cayla Hammond, HR and Finance Director at C & D South West.

Kevin said: "I feel very proud to be marking my 15 years of service with the business. Over the years I've had the privilege of working alongside an incredible team who are committed to delivering excellent outcomes for our customers and each other.

"Having the support to progress in my role to become a Driver Trainer has made this journey all the more rewarding. Here's to many more years contributing to the success of the company."

Managing Director, Lorna Hammond, said: "It's always a proud moment when we get to celebrate such a significant milestone. Kevin has shown outstanding dedication, professionalism, and loyalty over the years, and we're



incredibly grateful for his contribution to the business.

"He embodies the values that C & D stands for, and it's people like him who help drive our continued success. We're thrilled to celebrate this achievement with him."

C & D South West continues to take great pride in recognising the achievements and long service of its team members, acknowledging that its success is built on the commitment, expertise, and integrity of its people.

The company's culture of professional development and internal progression ensures that individuals like Kevin have the opportunity to grow and thrive within the organisation.

Based in Chard, Somerset, C & D South West has been providing high-quality palletised distribution and logistics solutions for more than three decades.

Lorna added: "The company would like to once again congratulate Kevin on reaching this outstanding milestone and thank him for his continued dedication and contribution to the company's ongoing success."

## PROMISEworks Launches First-Ever Crowdfunding campaign to support Somerset's young people



PROMISEworks, an innovative children's charity based in Somerset, has launched its first-ever crowdfunding campaign to expand its vital mentoring programme.

The charity currently supports over 150 mentoring relationships across the county, carefully matching each child or young person with a trained, compassionate volunteer mentor for a minimum of two years.

These long-term relationships help young people build resilience, confidence, and a stronger sense of self-worth within a safe and supportive environment.

In keeping with PROMISEworks' inclusive approach, donations start from just £1 — enough to fund the charity's operations across Somerset for one minute. This unique model ensures that everyone can play a part, no matter their means, in helping to change young lives for the better.

Supporters can also receive exclusive rewards, including a copy of PROMISEworks' latest Impact Report or an inspiring case study highlighting the difference the charity's work makes.

"We want everyone to feel involved," said a PROMISEworks spokesperson. "To know that even £1 can support every relationship, every referral, every training session, and every safe space we create."

PROMISEworks is inviting local Somerset businesses to take part: "By giving a donation we can give a shout out on our social media page.

"We are also offering the opportunity for their website banner and logo to go on our supporters page - this is a perfect opportunity to work collaboratively across the community, networking and making connections."



## Richard Huish College and Stephens Scown LLP launch legal skills programme to empower future lawyers

Richard Huish College and the Huish Law School have announced the launch of a pioneering legal skills programme, developed in partnership with leading South West law firm Stephens Scown.

The initiative offers students a unique opportunity to gain the practical skills most valued by legal employers.

The programme includes six expert-led sessions delivered across the academic year with a focus on client care, professional communication and effective networking.

Course Manager, Rowena Mudge, said: "Stephens Scown's generous donation in both time, expertise and experience, along with £500 towards our enrichment programme allows students to gain invaluable experience and earn a certificate that will really stand out on future applications."

Stephens Scown, which is both B



Corp Certified and employee-owned, is known for its commitment to exceptional client service and the programme reflects their dedication to nurturing the next generation of legal professionals.

Stephen Wray, who heads up Stephens Scown's Somerset office, said: "Playing a supportive and impactful role in our community is an important and rewarding part of working at Stephens Scown, where we strive to balance people, planet, and profit."



"We jumped at the chance to support Richard Huish College students through the Legal Skills Programme, which is an exciting opportunity to share our experience and expertise and to inspire future legal talent."

Alistair Tudor, Head of the Transformation and Client Delivery team at the firm, added: "In the fast-developing legal marketplace, it is vital for future legal advisors to develop more than just their academic and theoretical knowledge of the law."

"The legal skills programme aims to support and develop an understanding of the mechanics of how a lawyer works but also to support students with the softer skills required around networking, people management, conflict resolution, problem solving and, above all, being able to deliver outstanding client service."



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## New Head of Employment joins Amicus Law and launches free employment law seminar series

Amicus Law has announced the appointment of a new Head of Employment in a newly created role, strengthening the firm's commercial law expertise and enabling the expansion of services to businesses across the South West.

In one of his first major initiatives, Slade De Lacey will lead a series of in-person and free employment law seminars designed to help local employers navigate the latest workplace regulations and best practice.

De Lacey joined Amicus Law, a progressive, client-focused legal firm with offices across Devon, Somerset and Dorset, in September 2025 as part of its ambitious expansion plans.

Qualifying in Employment Law in 2004, De Lacey has over 20 years of specialist experience and is member of the Employment Lawyers Association (ELA). He is both a mediator and an HR specialist, providing a range of services to support clients of all sizes with employment challenges including employment tribunal representation, dispute resolution, settlement negotiation, HR advice, contract and policy review, recruitment guidance and training for HR and legal personnel.

Slade has been leading a series of lunchtime "Amicus Law Employment Bites" events across all nine Amicus



Law offices, which started last month (November).

Each event is open to all local business leaders and those with HR responsibilities and will be hosted at a different Amicus Law office each week.

Slade said: "I'm delighted to join the team at Amicus Law and to be leading such an important initiative so early in my role.

"The upcoming changes to employment law will have a significant impact on both employers and employees, and these "Amicus Law Employment Bites" lunch sessions are designed to provide a safe, open space for discussion and collaboration.



"I'm really looking forward to meeting HR leaders from across the region to share the updates and explore how they can manage these shifts to ensure their businesses and employees are well-prepared for the new landscape of workers' contractual rights."

Dates include:

- January 14 in Yeovil
- January 21 in Martock
- January 28 in Ilminster

Claire Lovett, Managing Partner at Amicus Law, added: "Slade is an incredible addition to the Amicus Law team. His two decades of experience in employment law bring invaluable expertise to our growing firm.

"I'm particularly impressed by his enthusiasm and drive to get out into the community so early in his appointment. It reflects the proactive, client-focused approach we stand for.

"I'm confident that both our existing clients and those who haven't yet worked with us will gain real value from these events. It's absolutely the right initiative at the right time and Slade is the right person to lead it."

Guests can expect to be at the offices for an hour with free lunch and refreshments included. Places can be booked via Eventbrite.

For more information visit: [www.amicuslaw.co.uk](http://www.amicuslaw.co.uk).

## Cancer charity offers businesses festival loo sponsorship opportunities!

Testicular cancer support charity It's in the Bag is looking for 20 sponsors for their event toilets at next year's Test Fest Music Festival, which takes



place on Saturday, June 20, at Taunton Rugby Football Club.

Test Fest is a family friendly music festival showcasing grassroots music in the South West. This popular music festival has been taking place in Somerset since 2018 and this will be the fifth festival at Taunton RFC.

For £100 individuals and businesses are being invited to name a loo and have their company advertised on the inside, telling festivalgoers all about the business.

It's in the Bag will also post sponsors' information on their social media, announce sponsorship support on the day and give all sponsors a free festival ticket.

Sponsors also get to name their loo - suggestions so far have been Taloola, Courtney Short, Walter Closet and The John.

For more information about the quirky offer, contact [sue.brand@itsinthebag.org.uk](mailto:sue.brand@itsinthebag.org.uk).





**Battens**  
SOLICITORS

## Battens Solicitors conquer West Dorset Three Peaks Walk, raising over £2,000 for charity

A team of 12 employees from Battens Solicitors laced up their walking boots on to take on the West Dorset Three Peaks Challenge, raising over £2,000 for the Battens Charitable Trust.

The scenic but demanding route saw the group climb three of West Dorset's iconic peaks — Thorncombe Beacon (157m), Golden Cap (191m), and Colmer's Hill (127m) —covering 9.3 miles of coastal paths, countryside, and steep hills.



Despite the physical challenge, spirits remained strong throughout the five hour route, with the team united by a shared goal: to support local causes through the firm's charitable trust and to beat the impending rain forecast for that day.

Battens Solicitors' Director and Trustee of the Battens Charitable Trust, Katherine Gilmour, said: "We're incredibly proud of our colleagues for completing the West Dorset Three Peaks challenge. Their commitment and energy reflect the values we hold as a firm—not just in our legal work, but in giving back to the communities we serve."

The Battens Charitable Trust, established in 1985, and in its 40th year, was set up to support local initiatives and groups, and will use the funds raised to continue supporting communities across Somerset and Dorset.

The Trust has supported a wide range of causes, from youth organisations and mental health charities to community arts and education projects. To learn more about the Battens Charitable Trust visit [www.battens.co.uk/battens-charitable-trust](http://www.battens.co.uk/battens-charitable-trust)

## Former Taunton School student signed to Somerset County Cricket Club

Kian Roberts, a Taunton School 2025 leaver, has signed his first professional contract with Somerset County Cricket Club.

The signing follows Kian's debut with the 1st XI squad in a Metro Bank One Day Cup match against Lancashire on 10th August 2025 and a second against Sussex where he scored 29 runs and claimed his inaugural 1st XI wicket.

Beginning his journey with the club at U11 level having played for Cornwall since age eight, Kian has represented all Somerset cricket teams including with the EPP and academy, U16s, U18s, and the 2nd XI.

He played five 2nd XI County Championship matches this year, scoring 202 runs and claiming eight wickets, plus six 2nd XI T20 matches yielding 99 runs and seven wickets.

Kian said: "I'm over the moon to have signed a contract with Somerset and can't wait to get started in the new year. It's something I've wanted to do since I started playing cricket.

"Taunton School has supported me on my journey since I joined in 2017 and I loved my time there. The amount of coaching I've had alongside my academic studies has been amazing.

"Being able to work with Somerset legend and England batting coach Marcus Trescothick has definitely benefitted



me, as has the help from Mr Sanderson and the rest of the cricket coaches."

Kian developed his cricket skills throughout his eight years at Taunton School as a Sport Scholar and went on to become captain of the 1st XI in Year 12 and 13 while studying BTEC Sport & Exercise Science.

Pete Sanderson, Director of Cricket at Taunton School, said: "It has been a pleasure to be part of Kian's journey since 2017, seeing not only his cricket

blossom but his character and leadership skills too.

"The way he combined progressing his Somerset career with his academics showed high commitment levels and excellent time management. Overall, we are very proud of his achievements and look forward to seeing his progress."

Taunton School's sport provision is one of the most extensive in Somerset, including 120+ teams across more than 20 different sports, a performance pathway for everyone, and high-quality facilities.

Sport scholars receive further support to develop their skills, including dedicated weekly scholars' sessions and bespoke athletic development support.

Find out more about Taunton School's sport provision and its scholarship opportunities by visiting its website: [www.tauntonschool.co.uk](http://www.tauntonschool.co.uk)





## Chrysalis Wins Bronze Stevie Award for Organisation of the Year – Non-Profit

Chrysalis, a UK-based non-profit transforming lives through counselling and therapeutic training, has been honoured with a Bronze Stevie Award for Organisation of the Year – Non-Profit – Small business at the 2025 International Business Awards.

The prestigious accolade was presented during a gala ceremony held in Lisbon, Portugal, placing Chrysalis among the world's most impactful and innovative organisations.

The Stevie Awards are widely considered the world's premier business awards, celebrating achievements and positive contributions of organisations and professionals globally.

This year's competition attracted over 3,700 nominations from more than 60 nations. Chrysalis' win highlights the exceptional work they continue to do in advancing mental health support, personal development, and accredited education across the UK and beyond.



Founded on the belief that everyone deserves access to high-quality therapeutic services and training, Chrysalis has grown significantly in recent years. The organisation offers nationally recognised diplomas in counselling and hypnotherapy, providing thousands of students the tools to launch new careers while promoting emotional wellbeing within communities.

CEO, Ross Elliott, said: "To be recognised on the international stage for our impact as a non-profit is deeply meaningful. This award is a testament to the dedication of our staff, tutors, and students who share our mission to make mental health services more accessible and inclusive."

Chrysalis' submission highlighted their commitment to high-quality education, ethical practice, and measurable outcomes for their students and the wider public. Their blended learning model, combining in-person training with flexible online support, was praised by judges for its accessibility and innovation.

A spokesperson for the company said the award marked a new chapter for Chrysalis as they continued expanding their training centres and developing new resources to support students. They said the organisation remained committed to tackling the stigma around mental health and making therapeutic support a cornerstone of healthier, happier communities.



## Sandler South West smashes Royal Parks Half Marathon to raise over £1,000

Director Harriet Harrison represented business consultancy Sandler South West at the London Royal Parks Half Marathon, raising £1,091 for Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders).

The marathon has been the flagship event of The Royal Parks Charity since 2008. Just over 16,000 runners participated in this year's half-marathon including Harriet, covering 13.1 miles through Hyde Park, Green Park, St James' Park and Kensington Gardens.

Harriet is a keen runner in her local scene. In preparation for the half-marathon, she completed the 10k Trail Run hosted by the Budleigh Salterton Lions Club in Woodbury Common, a stone's throw away from her Sandler South West office. This time, she turned her efforts towards raising funds for one of her favourite charities, as MSF provides medical relief to complex crises and emergencies across the world.

"I chose to support Médecins Sans Frontières because their work represents compassion in action," Harriet said. "As phase one of the deal to end the war in Gaza is agreed, countless Palestinian families returning home are facing not just destruction, but immense medical and humanitarian needs. MSF continues to stand on the frontlines, offering vital

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care where it's needed most — and that's something I deeply believe in supporting."

The Sandler team supported Harriet among 44 other fundraisers, raising 272% of the initial £400 target for the charity. Harriet went on to place 321st in her category, running the full half-marathon length in 2:19. In total, MSF raised over £70,000 from supporters of the race.

"I'm very grateful for the support from friends, family, Sandler clients, and colleagues, which helped spur me on in the training and on the day!" Harriet added.

## Bank of England summary – economy remains flat in face of increased costs and Budget worries



Bank of England

By Malindi Myers – Bank of England Agent South West.



@BoESouthWest

Intelligence continues to paint a picture of a flat economy, with contacts uncertain about potential announcements in the upcoming Autumn Budget. Retailers continue to see little volume growth.

They consider that consumer confidence is weak, leading to low expectations for improvement into 2026. Investment plans are limited. US tariffs are constraining goods exports and, with weaker global demand, continue to dampen exporters' expectations for a recovery in 2026.

Manufacturing output is under further pressure, apart from defence and aviation. Contacts' order books and expectations remain subdued, though the extent varies by sector. Construction remains under pressure from weak demand, planning delays, increased costs, and regulatory constraints, although public and infrastructure projects are expected to yield some positive growth in 2026.

Business services volumes are virtually flat, and increased uncertainty about the upcoming Autumn Budget means contacts do not expect demand to pick up until at least part way through 2026.

Employment intentions remain cautious and lower than normal, although more firms are maintaining rather than reducing headcount than in previous rounds. Recruitment difficulties are now around normal for most roles having fallen over recent rounds.

Pay pressures are expected to ease in 2026. Contacts' actual pay settlements for 2025 look to be averaging 3.9%, a touch above the Agents' expected pay survey of 3.7% reported in January, while early indications for 2026 are averaging somewhere around 3½%.

The Agents' pay survey, launching in December, will provide a more comprehensive and timely view of contacts' pay expectations early in 2026. Spare capacity overall remains modest, mostly in physical capacity, though a few report they are hoarding skilled staff.

The inflation outlook is largely unchanged, with disinflation anticipated to resume in 2026 input cost pressures abate. Consumer goods inflation is modest except for persistent food price rises. Consumer services inflation remains

elevated due to high labour and food costs. Profit margins are squeezed across most sectors, especially consumer services, with contacts aiming to rebuild margins mainly through cost control and as demand recovers.

Contacts report subdued investment intentions, similar to the previous update.

Uncertainty, subdued demand, and financial constraints remain the main limiting factors on investment intentions. Fewer contacts than in the last round mentioned UK labour cost pressures from the changes to National Living Wage (NLW) and employer contributions to National Insurance (NICs), suggesting the impact is settling.

Public infrastructure spending is beginning to rise, but many projects face delays or remain in planning, so a material pickup may take over a year. Climate-related policy uncertainty is leading some firms to cut sustainability-related investment, despite its overall positive outlook.

While non-labour input cost pressure remains modest, labour cost pressures mean that manufacturing price inflation is around normal, and business services price inflation is elevated. Lacklustre demand means it may take some time to rebuild squeezed profit margins.

Materials cost inflation remains modest overall but with sharper movements for some individual commodities. Imported finished goods inflation is also low, helped a little by the strength of sterling and some spare capacity in the Far East, reflecting slower world demand.

Manufacturers' domestic price inflation remains around normal, consistent with modest material inflation and some companies able to pass on at least some of the increase in labour costs.

Business-to-business price inflation is elevated, with labour cost inflation being easier to pass through where demand remains stronger. Professional services price inflation has moderated somewhat from recent high rates but remains higher than for most discretionary services. Other services prices have tended to rise fastest where many staff are paid NLW or close to it.

Profit margins have been squeezed by cost inflation and subdued demand, with ongoing but limited mitigation from cost control.

The squeeze affects most sectors but is probably most acute for consumer services. Fuller margin rebuild may well take some time and depend mostly on cost control and recovery in demand.





## UK Finance relaunches mentoring service

UK Finance has relaunched its mentoring support service MentorsMe, which is a directory of verified business mentoring organisations across the UK. The directory also includes mentoring and business advice programmes run by banks, the Government and other organisations.

**Read more about joining the directory at:**

<https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/mentors-me/about-us/join-mentors-me>

## Guide to help unemployed people start businesses

A new guide to support and encourage unemployed people to set up a business has been launched by Start Up Loans, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and HMRC. The Fresh Start Guide will be distributed via over 600 jobcentres and 25,000 specialist work coaches. The guide will also be used by companies making large-scale redundancies and shared with around 200 external organisations working with the DWP.

**Read more about the guide at:**

<https://www.startuploans.co.uk/media-centre/start-loans-programme-provides-ps150m-help-unemployed-start-businesses>

## Rural community-owned businesses need support

Research from Plunkett UK reveals that there are over 800 rural community-owned businesses trading across the UK. This is an increase of 59% when compared to 2015. However, Plunkett UK has warned that the increase has been achieved in spite of, not because of, government support. A lack of direct funding, following the closure of the Community Ownership Fund, is preventing community groups from taking ownership and saving a local asset.

**Read more about the research at:**

<https://plunkett.co.uk/better-business-report-2025/>

## Tools to support AI adoption

Skills England has launched three new tools to support wider and more responsible AI adoption. The AI Skills Framework will help identify relevant skills needed for different job roles. The AI Skills Adoption Pathway Model will help organisations progress through the different stages of AI adoption. The Employer AI Adoption Checklist will help employers assess their AI skills readiness.

**Read more about the tools at:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/help-for-uk-businesses-to-fill-400bn-ai-skills-gap>

Source: BAD News (Business Advisers News)

## Changes to charity accounting framework

In January 2026, a new accounting framework for charities will be introduced. The framework will apply to all UK charities and will make charities' financial reporting more proportionate. Alongside the framework, the Government has also announced that the threshold for some charities to produce accrual accounts will double from £250,000 to £500,000.

**Read more about the changes at:**

<https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/three-tiers-of-accounting-rules-confirmed-as-new-charities-sorp-published.html>

## Young people lack professional business support

Research by Young Enterprise has revealed that over 80% of 18- to 24-year-olds have engaged in some form of entrepreneurial activity, such as a side hustle, alongside a full-time job. However, young people's confidence in the state of entrepreneurship is low, due to increasing financial pressures and barriers in accessing professional support. Nearly one in five reported having limited access to mentors and business networks, with some not being able to access any form of help.

**Read more about the research at:**

<https://www.cityam.com/gen-zs-entrepreneurial-dreams-threatened-by-lack-of-support/>



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