

Somerset Voice

The Official Magazine of
Somerset Chamber of Commerce

April / May
2026



Somerset Business Awards 2026

6 | PHOTOS AND
RESULTS FROM
THE FINAL

12 | CHAMBER NEWS

Lord Lieutenant of Somerset becomes Chamber Patron

18 | FEATURE

All things digital - from websites to AI

31 | UPCOMING EVENTS

Exciting investment conference and launch of Chamber vision

Affiliate Town Chambers & Business Associations

Axbridge Chamber of Commerce

T: 01934 733078 | E: mike.sartain@hale-events.ltd.uk
axbridgechamber.co.uk

Bruton Chamber of Commerce

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

Burnham-on-Sea Chamber of Trade & Commerce

T: 01278 238959 | E: deryk@kds-interiors.co.uk
burnhamonseachamber.org

Business Exmoor

T: 01643 851895 | E: admin@businessexmoor.co.uk
businessexmoor.co.uk

Cheddar Chamber of Commerce & Industry

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

Frome Chamber of Commerce

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

Ilminster Chamber of Commerce

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

Sedgemoor Chamber of Commerce

T: 01278 228004 | E: admin@sedgemoorchamber.org.uk
sedgemoorchamber.co.uk

Shepton Mallet & District Chamber

T: 01749 681413 | E: sheptonchamber@gmail.com
shepton.biz

Street and Glastonbury Chamber of Commerce

T: 07989 300641 | E: hello@sgchamber.co.uk
sgchamber.co.uk

Taunton Chamber of Commerce

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

Watchet Chamber of Trade

T: 07836 239 932
visit-watchet.co.uk

Wells Chamber of Commerce

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

Weston-super-Mare Chamber

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

Wincanton Chamber of Commerce

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

Wiveliscombe & 10 Parish Business Group

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

Yeovil & District Chamber CIC

T: 01935 385912 | E: president@yeovilchamber.org
yeovilchamber.org

Fast. Compliant. Local.



WASTE SOLUTIONS YOU CAN RELY ON

Hazardous waste collection & fast
tipping at Southwood Recycling Centre.

- Trade Waste Tipping
- Hazardous Waste Services

Southwood
Disposal Rates



Address:

Southwood Recycling Centre
Evercreech, Shepton Mallet
Somerset, BA4 6LX

Head Office: 01202 579579 | Visit: ams-group.co.uk

CONTENTS

First word	4
Somerset Business Awards 2026	6-11
Chamber news	12-14
Business partner news	15-16
Feature - all things digital	18-25
Sector focus - recruitment	25
Events gallery	26-30
New members	31
Membership	31
Upcoming events	32-33
Member news	34-38
Business news	39

Front page: Somerset Business Awards 2026.
Photo: Tessa Chapman Photography

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Chamber. This publication (or any part thereof) may not be reproduced, transmitted or stored in print or electronic format (including, but not limited to, any online service, any database or any part of the internet), or in any other format in any media whatsoever, without the prior written permission of the publisher. Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information contained in the magazine, Somerset Chamber do not accept any responsibility for any omissions or inaccuracies it contains.

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

Editorial and advertising:

E: marketing@somerset-chamber.co.uk
T: 01823 444924
Printers: Carly Press, Somerset
Design by: Thoroughbred Marketing, Somerset



We are social



@chambersomerset



Find us on LinkedIn

FIRST WORD



By the time you read this we will have welcomed 500 business people to the biggest ever final of the Somerset Business Awards! Congratulations to all the winners and finalists and thank you to both our sponsors and everyone who came along to the Bath & West Showground and made it a night to remember! There are six pages of celebrations in this edition, starting on page 6.

Somerset Chamber really is going from strength to strength. Our sell out AI summit proved to be a big hit and I'm delighted to welcome the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, Mohammed Saddiq, as the Chamber's new honorary patron. You can find out more on page 12.

And our members will also be aware we are changing the very structure of membership. We've listened to feedback from our members and are moving to a benefits-based system rather than the current tiers which are based on the number of employees each business has.

A full breakdown of the new membership tiers and all the benefits and value they bring can be found on pages 12 and 13.

You can find out even more about our plans for the future at our Vision 2029: Somerset Chamber Member Summit on April 28 at Taunton Racecourse - more details on page 32.

We are also working with Somerset Council and the Somerset Growth Board to host a new major flagship business and investment event, sponsored by NatWest, to accelerate economic growth and showcase the county's most significant commercial opportunities. The conference is expected to attract up to 250 delegates, including SME leaders, major corporates, investors, developers, and regional stakeholders. More details on page 33.

These are really exciting times to be part of Somerset Chamber's membership community and I look forward to going on this journey with you in the coming weeks, months and years.

David Crew

MANAGING DIRECTOR
SOMERSET CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Get in touch

David Crew

Managing Director

T: 01823 444924

E: david.crew@somerset-chamber.co.uk

Membership

Ian Colio

Membership Account Manager

T: 01823 444924 | M: 07872 063039

E: ian.colio@somerset-chamber.co.uk

Natalie Hodgson

Membership and Operations Administrator

T: 01823 444924 | M: 07749 493145

E: natalie.hodgson@somerset-chamber.co.uk

Robert Dakin

Membership Consultant

T: 01823 444924 | M: 07512 317391

E: robert.dakin@somerset-chamber.co.uk

Events

Chloe Sully

Events and Commercial Partnerships Manager

T: 01823 444924 | M: 07706 360398

E: chloe.sully@somerset-chamber.co.uk

Communications

Annelise Cowie

Communications Manager

T: 01823 444924 | M: 07702 537630

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

Hinkley Supply Chain

Oliver Morgan

Data Analyst

T: 01823 443425 | M: 07525 809274

E: oliver.morgan@hinkleysupplychain.co.uk

OUR BUSINESS PARTNERS

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

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







Health insurance for families and businesses

We've got you covered



Health Insurance



-  Freedom to choose specialists and hospitals
-  Fast access to tests and treatment
-  Comprehensive, tailored cover to suit your needs and budget
-  Most trusted health insurer 2025*



* Fairer Finance Trust in PMI Index (Spring 2025)

To find out more talk to me – **Alastair Warren**

Director of Somerset Healthcare Ltd, an Appointed Representative of WPA Healthcare Practice Plc

07966 392437 | alastair.warren@wpa-hcp.org.uk | www.wpa.org.uk/alastairwarren



WPA is registered in England and Wales number 00475557, authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority. Registration number 202608. The Healthcare Practice is registered in England and Wales number 07320330 and is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Registration number 757721.

CELEBRATIONS FOR SOMERSET BUSINESS AWARDS 2026 WINNERS

The winners of the 2026 Somerset Business Awards were announced at the biggest final in the awards' history at The Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, on Thursday (March 26).

Nearly 500 business people from across Somerset attended the gala evening, which was organised by Somerset Chamber of Commerce and hosted by BBC Points West and BBC Somerset Business Correspondent, Dave Harvey.

This year was the 21st anniversary of the awards and the 16th year the awards had been supported by headline sponsor Albert Goodman.

Somerset Chamber Managing Director, David Crew, said every finalist should feel immensely proud of their achievements: "Each year, these awards shine a spotlight on the remarkable success stories in Somerset's vibrant business community.

"Despite the ongoing economic challenges, businesses across the county have once again demonstrated



▲ Awards host Dave Harvey of BBC Points West and BBC Somerset.

outstanding resilience, innovation and excellence in every sector.

"As the organisers, Somerset Chamber of Commerce is honoured to deliver the county's largest and most prestigious business awards. My thanks go to everyone who makes them possible each year – from our entrants to our judges and our valued sponsors."

The 2026 winners came from Weston-super-Mare, Langport, Glastonbury, Taunton, Roadwater, Highbridge, Shepton Mallet, Yeovil and Wincanton.

Michael Cahill, a Partner at Albert Goodman, said: "Across every sector, organisations are pushing

boundaries, investing in new ideas and showing what's possible when vision meets hard work.

"Businesses across Somerset are adapting, evolving and embracing change at remarkable pace whether through digital transformation, investment in skills, sustainable practices, or by expanding into new markets."



▲ Albert Goodman's Robin Clempson welcomes guests to the 2026 final.



▲ Somerset Chamber of Commerce Managing Director, David Crew (left) and Michael Cahill from headline sponsor Albert Goodman.



▲ The team from sponsor Agratas.



▲ Celebrations on the Imagine the Possibilities table.

THE 2026 WINNERS AND RUNNERS-UP ARE:



Albert Goodman Family Business of the Year Award

Winner: Datel Services Ltd, Weston-super-Mare

Runners-up: A J Wakely & Sons, Yeovil and Polyvine Ltd, Cheddar

◀ Michael Cahill presents the Albert Goodman Family Business of the Year Award to Daniel Fry and Chris Fry of Datel Services Ltd.



▲ Najeeb Sughayer of Gather Technology presents the Small Business of the Year Award to Jennifer Green and Lucy James of The Kiln Café.

Small Business of the Year (turnover up to £0.5 million) sponsored by Gather Technology Ltd

Winner: The Kiln Café, Langport

Runners-up: Dowlas Property Group, Cheddar and The FutureStrong Partnership CIC, Weston-super-Mare



▲ Alan Clarke of Brown & Brown presents the Medium Business of the Year Award to Laura Summers of The Sleek Easy Clean.

Medium Business of the Year (turnover up to £5 million) sponsored by Brown & Brown

Winner: The Sleek Easy Clean, Glastonbury

Runners-up: Chrysalis Courses, Bridgwater and First Class Comms Ltd, Weston-super-Mare



▲ Andy Berry CBE of UCS College Group presents the Large Business of the Year Award to Nicki Stewart and Ailis Holgate of Diverse Fine Food.

Large Business of the Year (turnover over £5 million) sponsored by UCS College Group

Winner: Diverse Fine Food, Taunton

Runners-up: Berry & Escott Engineering, Bridgwater and Stantec, Taunton



▲ Heather Davis of Westcotts presents the Best Use of Digital Technology Award to Chris Coumis of FHOSS.

Best Use of Digital Technology Award sponsored by Westcotts

Winner: FHOSS, Weston-super-Mare

Runners-up: Lanier South West, Cheddar and Snugs Custom-Fit Ltd, Watchet



▲ Kirill Bingham (left) of Clarke Willmott presents the Charity of the Year Award to Rosie Hather and Paul Richards of Arc.

Charity of the Year Award sponsored by Clarke Willmott

Winner: Arc, Taunton

Runners-up: Weston Hospicecare and Youth Adventure Trust



▲ Marina Serdar and Katy Lampard of Singer Instruments receive the Employer of the Year Award from Matt Huggett of Stephens Scown.

Employer of the Year sponsored by Stephens Scown

Winner: Singer Instruments, Roadwater

Runners-up: Calleva Limited, Bridgwater and Optimus Education Limited, Taunton

SOMERSET BUSINESS AWARDS



▲ Andrew Cockcroft (left) of Hinkley Point C presents the Investing in Somerset Award to Julie Young and Julie Walker of Imagine the Possibilities.

Investing in Somerset Award sponsored by Hinkley Point C

Winner: Imagine the Possibilities, Taunton

Runners-up: Reminiscence Learning, Wellington and School in a Bag, Chilthorne Dormer



▲ From left, David Crew of Somerset Chamber of Commerce, Carol Paris of the Royal Bath & West Society, Somerset Chamber Board of Directors Karen Morledge, Vice-Chair Rosie Wicks and Alex Clancy, with Colin Tyler, George Wilson and Sarah Green from Marston Foods.



▲ Ceri Stephens of Battens Solicitors presents the Start-up of the Year Award to John-Paul Hayes and Lee Baker of The FutureStrong Partnership.

Start-up of the Year Award sponsored by Battens Solicitors

Winner: The FutureStrong Partnership CIC, Weston-super-Mare

Runners-up: Be Laser & Skin Clinic, Taunton and West Country Cabs Ltd, Ilminster



▲ Tracie Leahy (left) of University Centre Weston presents the Apprentice of the Year Award to Sydney Winter of Boon Brown.

Apprentice of the Year Award sponsored by University Centre Weston

Winner: Boon Brown, Yeovil – Sydney Winter

Runners-up: Garador, Yeovil – Ben Parkin and Talking Stick Digital, Bridgwater – Chloe Pavey



▲ Tom Sherifi of Agratas presents the Environmental and Sustainability Award to Sarah Gibson and Suzi Logan-Thomas of SG Eyecare.

**Environmental and Sustainability Award
sponsored by Agratas**

Winner: SG Eyecare, Wincanton

Runners-up: Channel Events, Minehead and Mill on the Brue Outdoor Education Centre, Bruton



▲ Ed Jackson and Ryan Kuzmiak of Nest GI receive the Service Excellence of the Year Award from Evelyn Adfield of Porter Dodson.

**Service Excellence Award
sponsored by Porter Dodson**

Winner: Nest GI

Runners-up: Haskins Furniture, Shepton Mallet and Lendology, Bradford-on-Tone



**Manufacturing and Engineering Award
sponsored by CNC Recruitment**

Winner: Bates Product Design, Highbridge

Runners-up: Needles and Pins Aerospace, Somerton and Polyvine Ltd, Cheddar

◀ Myles Bates of Bates Product Design receives the Manufacturing the Engineering Award from Sarah Allen of CNC Recruitment.



**Business Resilience and Growth Award
sponsored by Barclays**

Winner: Haskins Furniture, Shepton Mallet

Runners-up: CL Drylining Ltd, Bridgwater and Wrencon, Taunton

◀ Nick Porter of Barclays presents the Business Resilience and Growth Award to Jade Farthing and Tiffany Wiltshire of Haskins Furniture.



▲ Staff and guests from Amicus Law Solicitors.



▲ The team from headline sponsor Albert Goodman.



▲ Sponsors and guests, from left, James Cox and Tracy Crommer of Bristol International Airport, Peter Quintana of Somerset Chamber's Board of Directors, Oliver Hebbard and Laura Edwards of CETSAT, Ryan Skone and Harry Mockridge of the Somerset County Gazette, Joe Routledge, Chair of Somerset Chamber's Board of Directors and awards host Dave Harvey of BBC Points West.



▲ The team from sponsor Brown & Brown.



▲ The Somerset Business Awards 2026 winners and finalists with Somerset Chamber's David Crew and awards host Dave Harvey.

The Somerset Business Awards 2026 media sponsors were Newsquest and the Somerset County Gazette Series and Global.

Somerset Chamber of Commerce welcomes Lord Lieutenant of Somerset as Patron

Somerset Chamber of Commerce has announced His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, Mohammed Saddiq, as the Patron of Somerset Chamber.

Accepting the new ambassadorial role at a dinner for business leaders held at The Castle at Taunton, Mr Saddiq said it was a privilege to be asked and he looked forward to working with the Chamber to celebrate enterprise and innovation.

He said: "Somerset has a proud and diverse business community. Our businesses are the backbone of Somerset's economy — creating jobs, supporting families, and playing a vital role in sustaining and strengthening our local communities.

"As Lord Lieutenant, I have the great honour of representing His Majesty the King in Somerset, and through the work of the Somerset Lieutenancy, we seek to promote everything that is best about our county — championing enterprise, encouraging civic pride, and recognising excellence through honours, awards and visits.

"We also share the Chamber's mission to support Somerset businesses to connect, influence and grow, and a key part of our role is bringing people together across business, the voluntary sector and public life, and supporting those who are making a positive difference in Somerset."

David Crew, Somerset Chamber's Managing Director, said: "We are honoured to have His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Somerset's support and leadership in this exciting new role.

"It's a really exciting time for Somerset Chamber of



▲ Somerset Chamber of Commerce's new Patron, the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset Mohammed Saddiq (left) with Chamber Managing Director, David Crew.

Commerce - in the coming months we'll be announcing a new three-year strategy which will be centred on our vision for the Chamber to be a catalyst for creating a thriving Somerset economy powered by connected and supported businesses.

"Collaboration is at the heart of the Chamber's future and I'm delighted to welcome the Lord Lieutenant as a Patron of Somerset Chamber of Commerce.

"This key ambassadorial role reflects our shared commitment and shared goals to champion Somerset businesses, to celebrate their achievements and to strengthen the economic and civic fabric of our county."

Somerset Chamber to launch new added value membership tiers

Over the past year, we've spent a great deal of time listening to your feedback about what you need from us—more tailored support, clearer benefits and greater value from your membership. Your views have been central to shaping the future of Somerset Chamber of Commerce.

Members are at the heart of everything we do and as Somerset's best-connected and most influential business membership organisation we want to offer you even more value, connections and benefits.

From the beginning of May, all new members and those renewing their membership will be able to choose which membership level they join. Membership will no longer be based on the number of employees a business has – instead, it will be all about what our members want and packed with value.

It's about giving members the right to choose. Each tier has its own price and associated benefits – from tickets to networking events to guaranteed seats at the most influential tables in the county.

It's what our members would expect from their county Chamber. We have also added to our existing range of great money-saving membership benefits, too!

A full breakdown of the different benefits of each tier can be found in the advertisement on the opposite page – you can also find out more at our special event, Vision 2029: The Somerset Chamber Member Summit.

This unique networking event will bring members together to celebrate the strength of our business community and unveil the Chamber's new three-year strategic plan.

Our new added value membership tiers are central to that plan, so we invite you to join us on Tuesday, April 28, from 8.30am – 10:30am at Taunton Racecourse to discover more about the value of Chamber membership and outline how our 2026–2029 Strategy will support, champion, and empower Somerset businesses in the years ahead.

Bookings can be made via the event listings on the Chamber website.



Your membership, your way

We are excited to unveil a new, simplified membership structure to bring our members even more benefits and value. We've listened to feedback and we're excited to offer four new membership tiers with enhanced benefits across the board to help our business community connect, influence and grow.



01823 444924 | somerset-chamber.co.uk | membership@somerset-chamber.co.uk

Core benefits for all Somerset Chamber of Commerce members

- ✓ Legal Expenses Insurance - Comprehensive Cover for Employment Law, HSE Prosecution and HMRC investigation (up to £1m)
- ✓ HR, health and safety, legal, tax and VAT business help line (Quest)
- ✓ HR, health and safety, legal and business documentation library (Quest)
- ✓ 50% discount on certification fees for international trade documentation (Certificates of Origin, ATRs, EUR1s, and blank certificates of origin stationery)
- ✓ Discounted membership fee when taking out health insurance for employees (AXA)
- ✓ Discounted roadside assistance cover for employees (AA roadside cover)
- ✓ Chamber finance and grant finder (Swoop)
- ✓ Chamber PirkX (Workforce well-being platform and staff discounts)
- ✓ Chamber AI Academy ***NEW*** (Tailored AI training programme)
- ✓ Free business energy saving audit (Troo Energy)
- ✓ Discounted training workshops
- ✓ Social media welcome and new member announcement in magazine
- ✓ Use of the Somerset Chamber logo on business website and certificate to display
- ✓ Member news and events published on Chamber website
- ✓ News considered for inclusion in Somerset Voice magazine
- ✓ Discounted advertising in Somerset Voice magazine
- ✓ Directory listing on Chamber website
- ✓ Discounted member rates for events
- ✓ Contribute to the Quarterly Economic Survey reviewed by The Treasury and Bank of England
- ✓ Offer and access to member-to-member benefits
- ✓ Exclusive invitation to member-only events and tours
- ✓ Guest use of co-working spaces across Somerset for hot-desking ***NEW***
- ✓ Printed copy of bi-monthly Somerset Voice magazine (digital option available)

Connect

Core membership for sole traders, start-ups and freelancers

All of the core benefits plus...

- + Free entry to the Somerset Entrepreneurs Group (quarterly)
- + One free ticket to a County Connections breakfast networking event
- + One use of the Somerset Chamber boardroom (full day)
- + Quarterly meetings with team (optional)

£240 + VAT per year or £25 + VAT per month (direct debit)

**Terms and conditions apply*

Grow

Enhanced membership for ambitious entrepreneurs, SMEs and growing businesses

All of the core benefits plus...

- + Free tickets to the Somerset Entrepreneurs Group (quarterly)
- + Invitation to the Somerset Directors Forum
- + Invitation to Bank of England roundtables
- + Two free tickets to County Connections breakfast networking events
- + Two uses of the Somerset Chamber boardroom (full day)

£395 + VAT per year

Elevate

Tailored membership for larger businesses looking to make strategic connections, raise their profile and influence policy

All of the core benefits plus...

- + Free tickets to the quarterly Elevate Somerset leadership network events
- + Invitation to the Somerset Directors Forum
- + Invitation to Bank of England roundtables
- + Priority invitations to MP roundtables and policy meetings/events in Somerset and Westminster
- + Priority booking for the annual Somerset Business Leaders' Dinner
- + Three free tickets to County Connections breakfast networking events
- + Four uses of the Somerset Chamber boardroom (full day)
- + Dedicated account manager
- + Priority notification of events sponsorship opportunities
- + News prioritised for inclusion in Somerset Voice Magazine
- + Company visit and PR opportunity with Somerset Chamber Managing Director

£695 + VAT per year

Charities

Available for individuals who have left the Armed Forces in last two years

All of the benefits of the Grow membership plus...

- + invitation to the Elevate Somerset leadership network events

£240 + VAT per year

Somerset Chamber welcomes construction experts Costain as new Business Partner



Somerset Chamber is delighted to welcome engineering, construction, consulting and digital experts Costain as our new Business Partner.

The company has won the contract to build Junction 22A, a new M5 motorway junction between Burnham-On-Sea and Bridgwater. It will provide access to the Gravity Smart Campus and £4bn gigafactory being developed

by Agratas, which will be Britain's biggest electric vehicle battery manufacturing facility.

Costain Group has been delivering major infrastructure projects for more than 160 years and becomes the county Chamber's 26th Business Partner.

Our Business Partners share the ambitions of Somerset Chamber,

supporting and developing a vibrant local economy and promoting the region of Somerset as a great place to live and work. They are recognised as supporters of the local economy and all share a common passion for growth and prosperity, people and skills, ESG and social impact.

Find out more about Costain here: <https://www.costain.com/>

Business leaders gather for annual Chamber dinner

Somerset's business leaders joined the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, Mohammed Saddiq, guest speaker Sir Peter Wanless, representatives from sponsors Barclays and

Stephens Scown and Somerset Chamber MD David Crew at the annual business leaders' dinner held at The Castle at Taunton.



▲ From sponsor Stephens Scown, Alistair Tudor (left) and Stephen Wray (right) with Chamber MD David Crew.



▲ Jon Lombird (left) and Natasha Colliss from sponsor Barclays with Chamber MD David Crew.



▲ Guests were welcomed by Chamber MD David Crew before enjoying a three-course dinner and speeches from former NSPCC CEO and current President of Somerset County Cricket Club, Sir Peter Wanless and the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, Mohammed Saddiq.

Somerset Chamber to host major business and investment conference: Ignite Somerset 2026

Somerset Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with Somerset Council and the Somerset Growth Board, has announced the launch of the Ignite Somerset Conference 2026 sponsored by NatWest.

This new major new flagship business and investment event is designed to accelerate economic growth and showcase the county's most significant commercial opportunities.

Taking place on Tuesday, June 30, at Haynes Motor Museum in Sparkford, the conference is expected to attract up to 250 delegates, including SME leaders, major corporates, investors, developers, and regional stakeholders.

The Ignite Somerset Conference will

shine a spotlight on the county's highest-value growth sectors — those identified in the Somerset Growth Board's Economic Prosperity Strategy — and highlight the "golden opportunities" for businesses arising from:

- Advanced manufacturing and battery technology
- Nuclear legacy and energy transition
- Aerospace and defence
- Digital, data and AI
- Clean growth and tidal energy

From major investments such as Agratas' gigafactory programme to the emerging Hinkley Point C legacy supply chain and defence sector innovation, Ignite Somerset will give businesses direct access to the projects shaping

Somerset's economic future.

High-impact keynote speakers from leading corporates will outline their long-term roadmaps and opportunities for regional businesses. A "State of the Region" address will set out Somerset's economic prosperity strategy and future growth trajectory.

There will be curated networking sessions to connect SMEs directly with major corporates, stakeholders and exhibitors, while delegates will be able to hear from expert panellists on:

- Supply chain entry
- Innovation and funding
- Skills and talent

Bookings can be made via the event listings on the Chamber website.

Leonardo secures £1 billion MoD helicopter contract

Leonardo has been awarded a £1 billion UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) contract to build and deliver 23 latest generation AW149s from Yeovil, the Home of British Helicopters. The news was announced during a visit to the site by Defence Minister Luke Pollard.

The deal for new medium helicopters (NMH) cements the site's role of serving the national and export market with advanced military rotorcraft, with significant potential for the international market in the future. It also secures thousands of skilled British jobs across the supply chain as well as sovereign defence skills and expertise for decades to come.

Roberto Cingolani, CEO and General Manager of Leonardo, said: "We welcome the UK Government's decision to award the NMH contract to supply advanced medium lift helicopters to the UK Armed Forces, as well as the continued investments in



our autonomous technology."

Managing Director of Leonardo Helicopters, said: "The NMH Contract Award opens a new chapter for our Yeovil site and its historical contribution to the UK Armed Forces.

"The AW149s modern design, advanced technology and high performance will deliver outstanding capabilities allowing the operator to enter a new era in terms of mission effectiveness, interoperability, supportability and growth potential to face the challenges of modern and evolving scenarios."

The AW149 is capable of operating in all environments in support of defence operations around the globe, from warfighting to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts. The NMH



▲ Defence Minister Luke Pollard at Leonardo.

programme will deliver multiple rotary wing requirements using a single aircraft-type.

This means that the platform will be able to undertake defence tasks that were previously delivered by different aircraft types, streamlining the Armed Forces' capabilities – improving efficiency and operational flexibility now and in the future.

WPA named Private Healthcare Provider of the Year - and extends partnership with cricket club

Somerset-based health insurer WPA has been named Private Healthcare Provider of the Year at the prestigious 2026 Moneyfacts Compare Awards.

The national award recognises excellence across the UK health insurance sector and reinforces WPA's reputation for outstanding customer service and value. The win builds on WPA's strong performance on Trustpilot, one of the UK's leading independent review platforms, where the organisation consistently outperforms competitors and holds a 5-star 'Excellent' rating.

Charlie MacEwan, WPA's Corporate Communications Director, who attended the ceremony to collect the award, said: "This is our obsessive focus on customers in action. It's fantastic recognition of the hard work and commitment of every single person at WPA, and of the momentum the business built throughout 2025."

WPA was shortlisted alongside other major providers including Bupa, AXA Health, Aviva and Vitality, with AXA Health commended and Benenden highly commended on the night.



Meanwhile, WPA has signed a new three-year agreement as a Principal Partner of Somerset County Cricket Club, supporting both the men's and women's teams until at least the end of the 2028 season.

Under the renewed agreement, WPA branding will continue to feature prominently on both teams' playing kits, while the company will also remain one of the Club's Official Live Stream Partners, supporting Somerset's industry-leading digital broadcast offering.

WPA's involvement with Somerset Cricket extends well beyond the professional game. In 2026, the two organisations will once again collaborate on Somerset Dreams,



an initiative designed to provide support and encouragement to members of the wider Somerset Cricket family.

Last year's programme saw Somerset CCC and WPA work together to support a young cricketer affected by online abuse, highlighting the partnership's shared commitment to wellbeing and community care.

Somerset County Cricket Club Commercial Director, Caroline Herbert, said: "Our collaboration is built on shared values – community, wellbeing and long-term regional impact. Together, we have demonstrated how professional sport can be used to build meaningful connections, support communities and engage audiences in an authentic way."

Mark Southern, WPA's Sales and Marketing Director, added: "WPA is immensely proud to support a club with such passion, ambition and community spirit, and we look forward to celebrating continued success – both on and off the pitch."





Yeovil College opens new facilities and secures £2 million to boost advanced engineering and defence skills

Yeovil College is entering a major new phase as two flagship facilities — the Yeovil Institute of Sport and the Construction Innovation Centre — have been completed within the college's £70+ million Big Build redevelopment programme. These cutting-edge centres represent a significant investment in skills, education, and employer led training across Somerset, Dorset, and the wider South West.

Opening in October 2025, the Yeovil Institute of Sport will elevate the college's sports education and performance offer to inspire the next generation of athletes, coaches, and sports scientists. The new building will feature advanced training zones, multi-



use performance spaces, and industry standard equipment, all created to deliver a modern, inclusive, and high performance environment.

In February half term 2026, the college also opened its new Construction Innovation Centre, a state-of-the-art technical training hub is designed to meet the needs of the evolving

construction and built environment sectors. The centre includes specialist workshops, digital construction classrooms, and equipment that reflects modern construction methods and technologies

The college has also secured £2,075,800 from the Office for Students (OfS), making it one of only two colleges in England to receive investment at this scale. This major funding award will transform the ground floor of the College's Engineering Centre into a cutting-edge hub for advanced manufacturing, clean energy, and defence engineering—supporting sectors vital to the UK economy.

SS&L invites employers to support young people into work



SS&L is inviting employers across Somerset to help young people take their first steps into the workplace by offering Supported Internship placements and work experience opportunities.

The company currently delivers a number of supported internship programmes across Somerset and Bath & North East Somerset, supporting young people aged 16-24 with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) to gain real workplace experience.

Interns spend most of their week in a work placement, developing practical skills, confidence and independence while working towards their next step into employment.

This year SS&L is expanding the programme further with a new supported internship launching in Exmoor, delivered in partnership with Young Somerset and Somerset Council's

Imagine the Possibilities initiative.

Local employers play a vital role by offering structured placements where young people can develop skills and experience in a supportive environment. SS&L and partner job coaches, including Young Somerset, Discovery and The Shaw Trust, work closely with both the employer and the intern throughout the placement.

Alongside supported internships, their Future Ready programme offers shorter work experience placements for young people exploring their career options and building employability skills.

Employers interested in offering placements and helping develop Somerset's future workforce are encouraged to get in touch with SS&L to find out more. sslcourses.co.uk 0330 332 7997

Clarke Willmott renews Somerset CCC partnership

Law firm Clarke Willmott has renewed its long-standing partnership with Somerset County Cricket Club.

Clarke Willmott will remain one of the club's preferred legal partners for 2026, continuing over 30 years of providing legal advice and support to the club, which is based at the Cooper Associates County Ground in Taunton.

Clarke Willmott will also act as match sponsors for both the Men's and Women's teams and continue as valued members of the 1875 Club. Clarke Willmott's branding will also be displayed on the big screens for every boundary in this season's Metro Bank One Day Cup competitions.

Kirill Bingham, head of Clarke Willmott's Taunton office, said



that with over 30 years of involvement in Somerset cricket, the firm remained closely connected to the club and its community initiatives: "I am sure we share the same ethos of hard work, dedication and a winning mentality and can't wait to support all the playing staff during the season."





Proud to have partnered with
the Somerset Business Awards 2026

**Congratulations to all the winners
and finalists from everyone at Global**



We're proud to connect brands with audiences
across Somerset and the West Country.

To find out how your business could benefit,
contact carolyn.iles@global.com.

Radio | Outdoor | Digital Audio (DAX)



All things digital

Yeovil College

Techosaurus and Yeovil College have announced a major step forward for digital skills in the region with the launch of the new Level 4 Artificial Intelligence and Automation Practitioner Apprenticeship. Approved for delivery in December 2025, it is the first programme of its kind nationally, and will soon be available to learners and employers across the South West.

The apprenticeship builds on the success of the partners' AI & Automation Skills Bootcamps, which for the past two years have consistently sold out and helped organisations across Somerset unlock new efficiencies through practical, real world use of emerging technologies.

This new qualification takes that proven model and transforms it into an 18 month apprenticeship designed to develop confident, industry ready practitioners.

Open to new entrants and existing employees alike, the programme is suitable for learners at any stage of their career – from those taking their first steps into the tech sector to professionals seeking to upskill and support digital transformation within their organisation. There is no upper age limit and no requirement to change employer; businesses can enrol their own staff through the apprenticeship levy or co investment.

Combining award winning training with hands on project work, the apprenticeship is designed to equip the region's workforce with the skills needed to adopt, implement, and manage AI driven solutions.

Individuals and employers interested in joining the first cohort are encouraged to get in touch or register their interest. Full programme details will be released soon.



Arc

As part of Arc's 50th year celebrations, the Somerset charity has launched a dedicated anniversary website to mark this important milestone.

While Arc's main website is currently being redeveloped, it was essential to have a dedicated digital platform in place to promote the 50th year. The new microsite acts as a central hub for anniversary news, events, stories from Arc's history, and opportunities for supporters to get involved. It ensures this landmark year can be celebrated with a clear, engaging, and accessible online presence.

What makes this project particularly special is the generosity behind it. The anniversary website was designed and delivered completely free of charge by fellow Somerset Chamber member Ritchie Cridge and his team at the Gecho Agency in Taunton. Their generosity demonstrates the power of collaboration within the Somerset Chamber network and has played a vital role in bringing Arc's 50th year celebrations to life online.

They donated their time, expertise, and creativity fully in support of Arc's work. This in-kind contribution has enabled Arc to launch a high-quality digital platform without impacting its budget, allowing resources to be focused directly on supporting people experiencing homelessness locally.

The site has been developed to be visually strong, easy to navigate, and fully responsive across all devices, creating a seamless experience for visitors. It also supports Arc's wider digital marketing plan, providing a clear destination for traffic generated through social media, email campaigns, and partner communications.

You can view the website and find out more about Arc's 50th Year plans here: www.arc50.co.uk.



Gather Technology

For many growing firms across Somerset, digital transformation has been rapid. Cloud platforms, remote working, AI tools and client portals have all been adopted at speed to stay competitive.

But governance hasn't always kept pace.

In 2026, business leaders are increasingly accountable not just for performance, but for resilience. Data protection, cyber security, third-party risk and operational continuity are no longer "IT issues"; they are leadership responsibilities.

This is where Governance, Risk, and Compliance becomes critical.

GRC isn't about paperwork or box-ticking. Done properly, it provides clarity. It answers practical board-level questions:

- Where are we exposed?
- Could we evidence our controls if challenged?

- Would we recover quickly from a cyber incident?
- Are we proportionate, or over-engineered?

The most resilient organisations we see aren't necessarily the biggest. They're the ones who treat digital risk as a business conversation, not a technical one, particularly as AI and automation accelerate change.

Regulators, insurers and clients are asking tougher questions than ever. Firms that can demonstrate structured, sensible governance stand out and sleep better because of it.

Digital risk can't be eliminated. It can only be managed, proportionately and prudently.

As a business leader, the real question is this:

If something happened tomorrow, could you confidently say you'd taken appropriate steps to protect your business and your clients' data?

If that answer isn't an easy yes, it may be time for a second opinion.



10 Years Ahead

The electronic display wall was not cooperating. Having travelled half-way across the county to Somerset Chamber's AI Summit in Taunton, it had decided to put itself into landscape mode and stubbornly refused to change back. With the conference the next day, this was a problem. We decided to deploy our AI to help.



The AI tools we have developed for our business are primarily used to surface information, highlight trends and use agents to track narrative online. Our human experts then create communications campaigns which are significantly more effective, focused and detailed than anything humans could produce alone.

We are the first UK communications agency built on the partnership between people and AI for exactly this reason; to offer our clients a better service for a lower fee.

Recently, we have been experimenting with a new tool. We have re-engineered the code of an 'OpenClaw', the open-source AI agent, to include a much richer personality, interactive memory and 44 character traits, including resilience, agency, discipline and even humour (and better security!).

Summoning the AI via WhatsApp, it accessed the electronic wall in less than 10 seconds.

"I see the problem" it chirped merrily. The wall went black and restarted back in portrait mode. "I've locked the settings and optimised the display so this doesn't happen again".

AI will always be a partner not a replacement, but it will only get better and better. Your competitors will almost certainly be looking to use AI in their communications. You should too.

10 years ahead

Morledge & Co.

In business, reputation has always mattered.

It is built through relationships, service, reliability and word of mouth. A recommendation in a café, a trusted supplier referral, a long-standing client who speaks highly of you. These remain powerful drivers of growth.

But today, reputation no longer lives only in conversation. It lives online.



Before making contact, most customers will search. They will read reviews. They will scan your website. They may look at your LinkedIn presence. Increasingly, they will also rely on AI powered search tools to compare options quickly.

What appears in those moments, shapes perception long before

a meeting takes place.

Digital platforms, including search engines and AI tools, place greater weight on credible third-party sources than on self-promotion. Media coverage, expert commentary and award nominations and wins all contribute to how your business is understood and presented.

In other words, what others say about you often reinforces or undermines what you say about yourself.

This is why strategic PR and reputation management matter more than ever for SMEs. Not for vanity or visibility alone, but because authority builds over time. When your business is referred to in respected publications, recognised through awards, quoted as 'expert' or consistently represented online, it strengthens trust.

And trust influences decisions.

Reputation today is both human and digital. It is shaped by the quality of your relationships and by the signals you leave online. Businesses that take a proactive approach by building credibility, securing third party endorsement and maintaining clarity of message are more likely to be discovered, shortlisted and chosen.

Morledge & Co.

Marketing • PR • Communications

CulturaLinks Community CIC

At CulturaLinks Community CIC, based in Somerset, we support refugees, migrants and local people who are trying to find their feet in a new system – from housing and benefits to work and wellbeing. What we see every day is simple: people are not failing, systems are. They're too complex, too digital, and too confusing.

That's why over the last year I've started to develop



AI tools linked to our work at CulturaLinks – practical, human-centred tools that turn information into clear next steps.

Our CulturaLinks Newcomers Navigator concept is designed to help people understand their rights and options around housing, benefits and employment in plain English (and other languages), and then turn that into simple action plans they can follow. Instead of scrolling through dozens of websites, they get a structured, accessible "roadmap" they can take to an appointment, share with a support worker, or work through at home.

On the "back end", I'm also building AI-powered note-taking and follow-up tools for our employability and community support sessions, so that advisers spend less time on admin and more time with people. The aim is not to replace humans, but to use digital tools to give them more time to be human.

I'd love to connect with other Somerset organisations who are curious about using AI ethically in community, HR or employability projects – especially those who want digital innovation without losing the human heartbeat.



White Knight Marketing

Many businesses assume digital marketing is about doing more. More posts, more pages, more information.

In reality, we are seeing something entirely different; customer behaviour has shifted.

Modern audiences are busier, more distracted and make faster decisions than ever before. They don't read websites from start to finish. They scan. They look for reassurance. They want answers within seconds.

This means website design and digital marketing are no longer just about visibility. They are about usability and ease of understanding.

If a visitor cannot quickly see what you do, who you help and why they should trust you, they will leave, even if your service is excellent.

For some time now we have been seeing changes in

how people find businesses. Search engines, AI summaries and zero-click results mean your messaging must be clear, structured, and easy to interpret, not just keyword-focused.

For Somerset businesses, this creates a real opportunity. Clear navigation, concise messaging and well-structured content consistently outperform complex websites filled with too much information.

In simple terms, the businesses that make it easiest for customers to understand and take action will achieve better results.

Digital success is no longer about being the loudest online. It is about being the clearest.

Pam Knight, Director, White Knight Marketing

<https://www.whiteknightmarketing.co.uk/blog/marketing-behaviour-changed/>

WHITE KNIGHT
MARKETING

CETSAT

At CETSAT we realised something slightly uncomfortable.

We spend our days helping organisations improve systems, build websites and modernise how they use technology. Yet when it came to our own online presence, we had not applied the same thinking.

In simple terms, we had become a bit like the

woodworker sitting on a broken chair.

For years we relied on third party marketing companies who promised a steady stream of leads each month.

If our digital presence was going to

reflect what we actually do, we needed to take ownership of it. Since November we have done exactly that.

We improved the website and made it clearer what CETSAT does. We started publishing more practical content and became more consistent across social media. Nothing complicated. Just explaining technology topics in plain English and sharing the problems we solve for businesses.

We also introduced Dave at CETSAT. Dave helps us explain technology in a way that makes sense to non-technical audiences and brings personality to our content. He now appears across our posts and also helps visitors through a chatbot on the website.

The results are starting to show. A recent enquiry came after someone searched for MSP IT providers in Somerset. CETSAT appeared near the top of the search results and was also highlighted in an AI generated summary, which prompted the business to get in touch.

What this reinforced for us is simple. Digital visibility does not come from promises of leads. It comes from explaining clearly what you do and being consistently visible where people search.

CETSAT



Hatched Agency

The digital landscape is like airspace: extremely crowded with little room for error. Rising acquisition costs mean businesses can't afford friction once someone lands on their site, app or social channel.

Seamless journeys, fast performance, mobile optimisation, accessibility and joined-up messaging across channels should be your radar focus. Those who view digital not as a marketing layer but as an integrated customer experience ecosystem - one that connects brand, data, technology and service into one coherent journey - will thrive.



So, what's the journey for ensuring a smooth customer experience?

- Check-in - understand your brand, audience, and ambitions

- Passport control - define identity, messaging, and visual style
- Departure lounge - bring your brand to life in the digital space through with UX, design, content, and integrated campaigns
- Take-off - launch with confidence
- In-flight - ongoing monitoring to ensure momentum

At Hatched Agency, digital expertise is at the heart of everything we do. From web design and UX to SEO, social media, and integrated campaigns, we build platforms that perform beautifully and strategically.

We work with ambitious businesses, organisations and schools that want their digital presence to work harder for them. Whether it's creating a new website, implementing AI tools, or developing a clear digital strategy, our focus is on delivering platforms that not only look great but actively support growth.

We believe the sky isn't the limit in digital marketing, it's just the beginning. So, get in touch and come fly with us: <https://hatched.agency>.

Hatched
Creative • Digital • Marketing

Children's Hospice South West

Since joining Children's Hospice South West (CHSW) in May 2023, I've seen first-hand how digital fundraising is transforming the way supporters connect with our charity, writes Jadeen Lowe, Digital Fundraiser. It's a fast-paced, creative and ever-changing area of fundraising and one that continues to grow.

Digital fundraising gives us the opportunity to try new ideas, tap into emerging platforms and reach audiences



in ways traditional fundraising can't always achieve. Over the past year, our Facebook challenges have grown consistently, raising vital funds to help CHSW continue providing care and support to babies, children and young people with life limiting conditions and their families.

From month-long running and walking challenges to our popular dog walking challenge, these digital campaigns bring together online communities who encourage one another, share their journeys and raise incredible amounts along the way. Keep an eye out for details of our next challenge to run 100km in June!

We're also expanding into new spaces, including streaming and gaming, by working with content creators and industry experts. This means experimenting with platforms CHSW hasn't used before and forging connections with younger, digitally native audiences.

Excitingly, our digital work now includes a brand-new partnership with Judi Spiers and the beloved Gus Honeybun, where supporters can buy a personalised digital birthday message from Gus for friends and family. It's a brilliant example of how nostalgia and digital innovation can come together for a meaningful cause.

To find out more visit www.chsw.org.uk.

children's hospice
SOUTH WEST
Registered Charity No. 1003314

Techosaurus

We're building something new - and we want Somerset's input. Since 2023, Techosaurus has trained over 150 businesses across the Southwest through government-funded Skills Bootcamps.

Practical AI, automation, and digital skills training that achieved 99.5% positive learner outcomes and earned us Somerset Chamber's Best Use of Tech 2025 and Tech South West's EdTech Provider of the Year 2025.



But those programmes came with eligibility rules, waiting lists, and geographic restrictions. Not everyone could access them.

That's changing.

With Government Skills Bootcamp

funding significantly reduced across the South West, we decided to stop waiting for permission and build something ourselves. We're launching Open Learning - the same award-winning training, now open to anyone who wants to learn. No funding criteria. No jargon. Just practical skills that make a genuine difference to how you work.

Before we go live, we want to hear from Somerset. What skills do you need? AI tools? Automation? Microsoft 365? Cyber security? Something else entirely? Your answers will directly shape what we build first.

It takes just a few minutes, and the courses we release will reflect what this region asks for.

Visit tsrs.uk/openlearning to have your say. You can chat with our AI bot or complete a short survey - either works. If you leave your details, we'll let you know as soon as relevant courses are available.

We've always believed that practical skills should be accessible to everyone. This is us putting that into action.

Help us build what Somerset actually needs. Scott Quilter, Co-Founder, Techosaurus.



Springboard IT

For many, Excel spreadsheets are the backbone of day-to-day financial record keeping. Spreadsheets are familiar, flexible and widely used by sole traders, landlords and those with property interests.

As HMRC Making Tax Digital for Income Tax Self Assessment (MTD-ITSA) requirements loom, many are concerned they need to abandon Excel spreadsheet systems they already use and understand.

MTD-ITSA aims to modernise the UK tax system by requiring digital record keeping and regular HMRC electronic submissions. Whilst its goal is improved accuracy and efficiency, the prospect of switching to complex accounting software can feel daunting for

those who have successfully managed their accounts using spreadsheets.

Somerset-based software developers Springboard recognise the challenge. Their team specialise in improving business productivity by integrating and enhancing the software organisations already use, helping streamline processes and reduce repetitive administration.

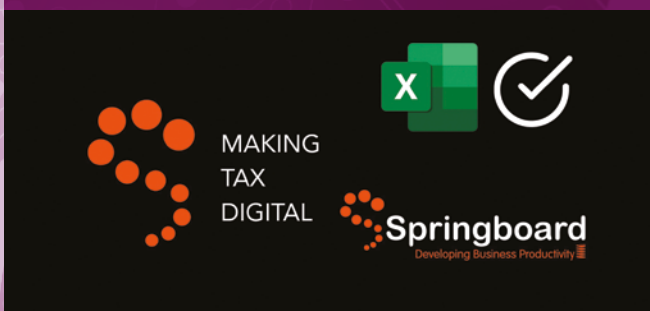
Building on experience gained from their widely adopted MTD-VAT solution, Springboard has developed a new MTD-Tax tool designed specifically for those who keep their records in Excel.

Rather than forcing users to migrate to a new accounting platform, the software connects existing spreadsheets directly to HMRC systems for compliant quarterly submissions whilst keeping data secure.

Businesses can continue using their familiar spreadsheet structure while the software manages the required digital links and calculations ready for submission.

For sole traders, landlords and the accountants or bookkeepers who support them, the result is a practical and cost-effective route into the Making Tax Digital era.

To learn more visit: www.MakingTaxDigitalSolution.co.uk



Impact Design & Marketing

It's time, to level up your digital marketing game.

Simply having a website or posting occasionally on social media isn't enough. Digital marketing moves fast. What worked a year ago, may already be outdated. Algorithms evolve, customer expectations shift, and new technologies continuously reshape how businesses connect with their audiences.

If your marketing strategy feels stagnant or your results aren't where you want them to be, it might be time to level up your digital marketing game.

Modern digital marketing means aligning every

touchpoint including your website, search presence, social media, email campaigns, and advertising so that a cohesive experience guides potential customers from discovery to decision.

Businesses must adopt a more strategic, integrated approach that combines creativity, data, and technology.

With over four decades of experience at Impact Design & Marketing we work closely with our clients, both regionally and internationally, helping them to achieve their marketing goals and long-term objectives.

To find out how to level up your digital marketing, get in touch with our MD Rich: richard@impactdm.co.uk



SuperFunkyPenguin Photo + Video

Many businesses treat their brand photography and video as a one-off job. Tick it off the list, move on. But the businesses that show up consistently online, that feel familiar and trustworthy before you've even spoken to them, are the ones quietly building something far more valuable: a bank of digital assets that works for them every single day.

Stock photos might feel like a quick fix, but they're eroding your brand credibility faster than you think. Your ideal clients are switched-on. They can spot a generic handshake image or a suspiciously perfect "team meeting" from miles away. When your visuals don't reflect the real you, trust quietly evaporates before the conversation even starts.

On-brand photography and video, built up over time, does the opposite. It creates familiarity. People start to recognise your face, your style, your values. They feel like they already know you. And when someone feels like they know you, they're far more likely to reach out, refer you, or invest in what you do.

The other gift of a strong asset bank? Time. No more scrambling for something halfway decent to post. No more "I'll just use that old headshot." The right image or video clip is right there, ready to go, consistent and on-brand every single time.

Your digital asset bank grows over time, developing and evolving alongside your business - as your team changes and your services shift, your photos and videos keep pace.

Adèle Williams - superfunky Penguin.co.uk.



Sandler South West

At Sandler South West, we strive to keep up to date with current digital advancements that affect business across Devon, Cornwall and Somerset. And none are as current as artificial intelligence.

AI is being integrated into every sector, from consultancy firms with sizeable teams, to manufacturers with complex sales cycles. Whilst the learning and development space is no different, we're proud to say that, globally, Sandler is leading the way integrating AI into how we reinforce our group sales and leadership training as well as our 1:1 coaching.

Our various tech partners help to reduce the workload for our clients. We have embraced the use of AI roleplay coaching tools such as Yoodli, where we encourage clients to improve their selling and conversational skills through

simulated sales scenarios. This supports sales leaders by being able to provide highly targeted and effective follow up coaching sessions.

Notetaking software such as Fathom pulls the highlights from our internal and external meetings and presents a summary of key takeaways that can be reviewed any time and shared with clients, removing the distraction of notetaking during important conversations.

While Somerset's businesses will be assessing how to embrace AI, we aim to be on the cutting edge of technology and support clients through that journey.

To find out more about Sandler and how we can support your strategic goals and objectives, call 01395 203050, email tom.nation@sandler.com, or book a free 30-minute consultation. <https://go.sandler.com/southwest/>

SANDLER®

Chrysalis Courses

As digital technology continues to reshape the way we live and work, it is also transforming how people access mental health support. Online counselling is becoming an increasingly popular option, offering flexibility, privacy and convenience for those seeking help.

Chrysalis Talking Therapies, developed by Chrysalis Courses, are at the forefront of this digital shift, providing a secure platform that connects clients with qualified therapists online.

Digital therapy removes many of the traditional barriers to accessing support. Instead of travelling to appointments or navigating long waiting lists, individuals can attend sessions from the comfort of their own home using a smartphone, tablet or computer. This makes counselling easier to fit around busy schedules, work commitments and family life.

Another key advantage is choice. Through the Chrysalis Talking Therapies platform, clients can browse therapist profiles, learn about their areas of expertise and book an initial 15-minute introductory call to ensure the therapist is the right fit. Sessions can be arranged quickly, sometimes in as little as 24 hours, allowing people to begin their therapy journey without delay.

Importantly, while the format is digital, professional standards remain the same. Therapists on the platform are accredited members of the National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society, ensuring clients receive high-quality, ethical support.

As more aspects of healthcare move online, digital counselling is proving that meaningful human connection can still happen through a screen. By combining professional expertise with modern technology, Chrysalis Talking Therapies is helping make mental health support more accessible than ever before.



Recruitment

SECTOR FOCUS

HRGO Recruitment

Recruitment has always been influenced by supply and demand, but the current hiring landscape is shifting faster than employers expected.

Across multiple industries, skills shortages are increasing competition for experienced candidates. Research from CiphR shows UK HR leaders now rank recruiting skilled candidates as their biggest challenge.

As competition grows, salary expectations are rising. Around 25% of HR leaders in the same research say meeting employee pay demands is another major pressure point. When salaries offered by employers do not align with market expectations, recruitment processes can slow significantly.

Candidates are also approaching job searches differently. With access to online job boards, industry reports and salary comparison tools, people are better informed about their market value than ever before. Data from

Indeed shows that more than two-thirds of UK job adverts now include salary information.

This transparency means employers can no longer rely on guesswork when setting pay levels. Even small gaps between expectations and offers can result in candidates withdrawing or accepting competing opportunities.

For recruitment professionals, this makes accurate market insight increasingly important. Salary benchmarking tools help employers understand how their offers compare with current market conditions.

At HRGO Recruitment, we have developed a free salary benchmarking tool that provides real-time insight into pay levels, salary ranges by experience, and the level of competition for different roles.

With clearer market data, employers can set competitive salaries, attract stronger candidates, and keep recruitment moving forward.
<https://www.hrgo.co.uk/>



Business and VCSE leaders' forum at The Shrubbery Ilminster



▲ From left, Amy Fox of Bright Fox, Heidi Oliver of SS&L and Heather Rybaruk of Click 2 Connect.



▲ Penny Schofield (left) and Miranda Milan of Spark Somerset.



▲ Peter Woodhouse (left) of sponsor Stone King and Somerset Chamber MD David Crew.

Somerset international trade forum at Clarke Willmott, Taunton



▲ William Bain (right), Head of Trade Policy and the British Chambers of Commerce joined the discussions with Linda Middleton-Jones of International Trade Matters and Somerset Chamber MD David Crew.



▲ It was the first international trade roundtable organised by the Chamber to support Somerset businesses.



Business breakfast with Agratas at Yeovil Town Football Club

Pardoes
Solicitors



▲ Sarah-Jane Shillito (left) of UCS Group and Tracey Matthews of SS&L.



▲ From left, Rhu Harrison and Aron Charles and Amarin Rubber & Plastics with Justin Johnson of Clean Linen and Workwear.



▲ From left, Chamber MD David Crew, Tansy Hanson of sponsor Pardoes, Nick Cooper of Agratas and Peter Munn.



▲ From left, Sarah Young of Porter Dodson, Karen Wellman of Reframe HR and Kerry Cruden of Sir Robert McAlpine.

▼ Guests were able to network during breakfast before hearing updates about the Agratas development.



Future of hospitality business brunch at the Manor House Inn, Shepton Mallet



▲ Hospitality leaders heard from Ethan Davids, owner and founder of the Chickpea Group, at our specialist brunch.

Somerset speed networking at Yeovil Town Football Club



▲ Attendees were able to make scores of connections on a one-to-one basis.

County Connections at Sheppy's Cider Farm near Taunton



▲ Attendees enjoyed informal networking and breakfast rolls for the rescheduled County Connections event.



▲ Kennedy Lugg (right) of Stephens Scown with Chris Campkin of the CFO Centre and Rim Cameron of Quantock.



▲ From left, Will Hall-Tomkin and Georgie Bennett from Somerset County Cricket Club, Ruth Edwards of 10 Years Ahead and Ian Colio of Somerset Chamber.





Somerset Council breakfast at Haynes Motor Museum, Sparkford

Amicus Law
SOLICITORS



▲ Charlotte Duff of BoonBrown Architects (left) and Sarah Emmerson of Gather Technology.

▲ Attendees enjoyed a cooked breakfast before hearing updates from Somerset Council leader Cllr Bill Revans and Lead Member for Economic Development Planning and Assets, Cllr Mike Rigby.



▲ From left, Louise Shewry and Emma Lower of Lendology CIC, Robin de Wreede and Mark Moore of Ashfords.



▲ From left, Cllr Mike Rigby of Somerset Council, Slade de Lacey, Shona Young and Rob Thomson of sponsor Amicus Law, Cllr Bill Revans of Somerset Council and Somerset Chamber's MD David Crew.



▲ Colin Pitt (left) of Training Services South West with Ryan Walters of Milsted Langdon and Helen Williams of Stephens Scown.

Somerset entrepreneurs' group at The Activity Warehouse, Bridgwater



▲ Networking exclusively for SME business owners with up to 25 employees.

Somerset directors' forum at Yeo Valley HQ, near Blagdon



▲ The forum was an opportunity for business leaders to network and discuss common growing pains and challenges in a confidential setting.

Construction Connections at Hornets Rugby Club, Weston-super-Mare



▲ Attendees heard updates about the new Epic technology office campus from Gilbert-Ash at the event.



▲ Victoria (left) of ATI and Rosie Wicks of Blossom HR Consultancy and Vice Chair of Somerset Chamber's Board of Directors.



▲ From left, Tom Nation of Sandler South West, Mark Robinson of Jones Building Group and Colin Pitt of Training Services South West.



NEW MEMBERS

Amber River Shipman Wealth

Wealth management
08081 754433
info@amberriversw.com
amberriver.com/sw

Back2Market Ltd

Transport
07845 231488
enquiries@back2market.com
back2market.com

Cathedral Appointments Ltd

Recruitment
01823 813122
info@cathedralappointments.co.uk
www.cathedralappointments.co.uk

Crisp Clean Services Ltd

Manufacture
01458 250385
office@crispclean.co.uk
www.crispclean.co.uk

CulturaLinks Community CIC

Charity
07785 742746
info@theawardscompany.co.uk
www.theawardscompany.co.uk

David Hutchins Innovation Limited

Leadership and management development
01458 224040
info@dhiqc.co.uk
www.dhiqc.com

Denton-Powell Ltd

Construction
01460 242114
sales@denton-powell.co.uk
www.denton-powell.co.uk

Double Brace

Website and software development
01278 444975
hello@doublebrace.com
doublebrace.com

GD Media

Media
07411 388876
gareth@gd-media.org
www.gd-media.org

Green Machine SW Ltd

Property services
01823 294040
info@greenmachinesw.co.uk
greenmachinesw.co.uk

Grundon Waste Management Ltd

Waste management
01172 350423
sales.bristol@grundon.com
www.grundon.com

Injury Armour

Physiotherapy
03300436448
info@injuryarmour.com
www.injuryarmour.com

Quantock

Design/ Marketing
01823 327532
hello@quantock.com
www.quantock.com

Nickel-Electro Ltd

Manufacture
01934 626691
Clifton@nickel-electro.co.uk
www.nickel-electro.com

Sceptre Networking Limited

Engineering/Construction
01458 273770
david.benning@sceptrenet.co.uk
www.sceptrenet.co.uk

The Precious Thoughts Group Ltd

Funeral services
07791 895425
elaine@preciousthoughts.co.uk
www.preciousthoughts.co.uk

Thomas Carroll plc

Insurance
01172 330050
contact@thomas-carroll.co.uk
www.thomascarroll.co.uk

Total Clean Air

Manufacture
01737 924700
Info@tca.group
totalcleanair.com

Wisdom Energies LTD

Business consultancy
07379 071948
stepan@wisdomenergies.org
www.wisdomenergies.org

MEMBERSHIP

Latest member-to-member offers

IMPRINTS

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

FREE
ITEMS

10%
DISCOUNT

Pro Apprenticeships

Free apprenticeship and professional development (CPD) exploratory session

FREE
SESSION

FREE
HEALTH CHECK

Pro Cloud Solutions

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

10%
DISCOUNT

SAVE
ON TRAINING

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

Safety in Design

10% discount in April 2026 on CDM courses for Chamber members

Imex Consultancy Ltd

One hour free business health check

Compass Video

Save on B2B training sessions - Smartphone Filmmaking, Open-Source Software training to make digital content, Social Channel Management for businesses

Youth Adventure Trust

10% off the Somerset Cycle for all Chamber Members

Somerset engineering and manufacturing forum

Designed for senior level leaders in engineering and manufacturing businesses, join us at Numatic International for our Somerset engineering and manufacturing forum to network with industry professionals and discuss ways to showcase this sector in the region. You'll also be able to tour the site to see first-hand the world-leading manufacturing and engineering excellence we have in the heart of Somerset.

Time: 9.30am - 11.30am at Numatic, Millfield Industrial Estate, Chard, TA20 2TD
Cost: £24.99 plus VAT members
 £34.99 plus VAT non-members

Tuesday
21 Apr

Sponsored by:



Vision 2029: The Somerset Chamber member summit

Join us at this special networking event which will bring members together to celebrate the strength of our business community and unveil the Chamber's new three-year strategic plan. This flagship event will showcase the value of Chamber membership and outline how our 2026-2029 strategy will support, champion and empower Somerset businesses in the years ahead.

Time: 8.30am - 10.30am at Taunton Racecourse, Orchard Portman, Taunton, TA3 7BL
Cost: No charge members
 £24.95 plus VAT non-members

Tuesday
28 Apr



County Connections - Minehead

What better way to start the day then with a cooked breakfast and a host of networking opportunities! Join us for our County Connections networking breakfast in Minehead with Singer Instruments to raise the profile of your business, make new connections and catch-up with existing contacts.

Time: 8.30am - 10.30am at Minehead and West Somerset Golf Club, Warren Road, Minehead, TA24 5SJ
Cost: £24.99 plus VAT members
 £34.99 plus VAT non-members

Wednesday
22 Apr

Sponsored by:



County Connections - Frome

Guests will be able to enjoy some informal networking over breakfast, before hearing from Paul Hargreaves, one of the UK's most influential advocates for using business as a force for good. Paul has championed the idea that truly successful organisations put people and the planet before profit and heads up Cotswold Fayre. The event is sponsored by Mogers Drewett and delivered in partnership with Frome Chamber of Commerce.

Time: 9am - 11am at Flourish, Farleigh Hungerford, BA2 7NG
Cost: £17.50 plus VAT members
 £27.50 plus VAT non-members

Tuesday
5 May

Sponsored by:



Somerset entrepreneurs' group

The Somerset entrepreneurs' group gives all attendees the opportunity to introduce themselves to the room, highlighting their company or organisation and giving delegates more information about themselves and what they do. There will also be a chance to meet other business owners one-to-one and network.

Time: 9.30am - 11am at the Firepool Centre for Digital Innovation, Trenchard Way, Taunton, TA1 1FH
Cost: £15 plus VAT members
 £20 plus VAT non-members

Thursday
23 Apr

Sponsored by:



Somerset marketing professionals' forum

Chaired by Albert Goodman's Director of Marketing, Robin Clempson, and sponsored by Teapot Creative, this is an opportunity for the leaders of in-house marketing team to discuss current challenges, seek solutions and share ideas. Attendance criteria applies.

Time: 9.30am - 11.30am at Yeo Valley HQ, near Blagdon, BS40 7YE
Cost: £25 plus VAT members
 £35 plus VAT non-members

Wednesday
6 May

Sponsored by:



Somerset directors' forum

Wednesday
13 May

This roundtable is specifically for senior decision-makers to discuss common challenges, growing pains and to share good practice in business. Join us for networking and the opportunity to hear from the Dean of Wells, Toby Wright, who will share valuable insights into the business side of the diocese.

Time: 9.30am - 11.30am at Wells Cathedral, Cathedral Green, Wells, BA5 2UE

Cost: £35 plus VAT members
£40 plus VAT non-members

Business breakfast - economic update 2025

Tuesday
19 May

Enjoy a cooked breakfast and networking alongside key, expert economic insights from Paul Kharbanda who leads the Foreign Exchange Business Sales at Lloyds Bank. It's guaranteed to be thought-provoking at this critical juncture for the UK and global economy. Early booking is advised.

Sponsored by:



Time: 8.30am to 10.30am in the County Room, Somerset County Cricket Club, St James Street, Taunton, TA1 1JT

Cost: £28.95 plus VAT members
£34.95 plus VAT non-members

Somerset speed networking - Wellington

Thursday
14 May

Somerset speed networking is coming to Wellington in partnership with Taunton Chamber of Commerce! 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 to do some more general networking before the main event, too!

Time: 6pm - 8pm at Wellington School, South Street, Wellington, TA21 8NT

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

County Connections - Chard

Tuesday
9 Jun

Set yourself up for a great day in the office by enjoying a cooked breakfast in fantastic company at our ever-popular networking breakfast event! Join like-minded business professionals at Hornsbury Mill for the opportunity to make new connections and raise the profile of your business.

Time: 8.30am - 10.30am at Hornsbury Mill, Hornsbury Hill, Chard, TA20 3AQ

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

Weston business breakfast - launch event

Friday
15 May

Somerset Chamber of Commerce is delighted to launch a new series of events designed to bring together businesses from across Weston-super-Mare and North Somerset for meaningful networking, insight sharing, and collaboration. It will be a chance to connect with like-minded professionals and potential partners and influence local, regional and national decision-making. Speakers will include Pat Jones, Principal and CEO of Weston College, Mandy Bishop, CEO of North Somerset and Daniel Aldridge MP.

Time: 8.30am - 10.30am at the Winter Gardens Pavilion, Royal Parade, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1AJ

Cost: £24.95 plus VAT members
£34.95 plus VAT non-members

Ignite Somerset conference 2026

Tuesday
30 Jun

Held in partnership with Somerset Council and the Somerset Growth Board and sponsored by NatWest, this new major flagship business and investment event is designed to accelerate economic growth and showcase the county's most significant commercial opportunities. The conference is expected to attract up to 250 delegates, including SME leaders, major corporates, investors, developers, and regional stakeholders.

Sponsored by:



Time: 8.30am - 4pm at Haynes Motor Museum, Sparkford, near Yeovil, BA22 7LH

Cost: £29.95 plus VAT members
£49.95 plus VAT non-members

*Prices are plus VAT unless otherwise stated

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



Arc marks 50 years of tackling homelessness in Somerset

Somerset-based homelessness charity Arc is marking its 50th anniversary in 2026 with a year-long programme of events, community action and business engagement.

Founded in 1976, Arc has supported people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity across Somerset for half a century. Over the past 50 years, the charity has helped thousands of individuals find safety, stability and a place to call home.

Today, Arc works closely with local authorities, health services, community organisations and businesses, and is recognised as a leading voice on homelessness in the county.

Throughout its anniversary year, Arc will celebrate its legacy while shining a spotlight on the realities of homelessness today. The programme aims to challenge stigma, inspire collective action and strengthen partnerships that can help ensure homelessness in Somerset becomes a thing of the past.

Paul Richards, Chief Executive of Arc, said: "Our 50th year is a moment to reflect on how far we've come, but also to be honest about how much more there is to do. Having somewhere to live should be a fundamental part of everybody's life. Everyone has a right to a good, affordable place to call home."



"Homelessness is not inevitable; it is solvable when communities, services and decision-makers work together. This anniversary is about celebrating hope, housing and dignity, and launching the next chapter of Arc's work to end homelessness in Somerset for good."



Arc's 50th anniversary programme will run throughout 2026 and includes:

- 50 Stories for 50 Years, sharing experiences from clients, staff, volunteers and supporters
- The flagship community event Arc in the Park which includes the annual Big Sleep Out on Saturday, June 13, at Taunton Rugby Club
- 50 Miles for 50 Years, a county-wide fundraising challenge
- 50 Corporate Champions for Change, partnering with 50 local businesses to make a tangible impact
- Education and Outreach Sessions for schools, workplaces and community groups
- The launch of Arc's new Forward Strategy, setting out priorities for the next 50 years

The charity's new strategy will focus on providing affordable accommodation and tailored support, while working collaboratively on prevention, access to housing, tackling rough sleeping and driving systemic change.

Arc is inviting Chamber members and businesses across Somerset to get involved by becoming a Corporate Champion for Change, taking part in fundraising challenges, supporting events or exploring partnership opportunities.

To find out more about Arc's 50th anniversary and how to get involved, visit www.arc50.co.uk.

EdTech company launches groundbreaking community investment scheme



EdTech company Academy ICT has launched a groundbreaking price neutrality scheme, pledging to reinvest in the community to the same value as orders it receives from schools, trusts, federations and colleges.

Operating across the region, Academy ICT works with education leaders on everything from infrastructure upgrades to artificial intelligence initiatives.

Now for every £1 million Academy ICT receives in orders from partners in the South West, the company will arrange an equivalent – or greater – amount in fully funded programmes, rebates and strategic initiatives for the wider

education community.

Brian Stoneman, Managing Director of Academy ICT, said: "Crucially, access to this funding is not limited to paying customers. When one establishment invests, the benefit is designed to ripple across the entire region.

"This collective model is what sets the programme apart. Rather than limiting value to a single contract, Academy ICT channels purchasing power into broader educational impact.

"Schools that may not yet be customers can still benefit from funded initiatives, professional development opportunities and

strategic projects generated through the scheme."

He said by embedding community benefit into its commercial model, Academy ICT was challenging traditional approaches to EdTech procurement in the South West. Its price neutrality framework was reframing technology investment not simply as expenditure, but as a catalyst for regional advancement.

Prior to the official launch some schools in the region have already benefitted and to date have received access to over £100,000 in funding or rebates through Academy ICT.

DHA Fire Stopping accelerates growth by 20% with new services and investment

DHA Fire Stopping, the Weston-super-Mare-based specialist provider of passive fire protection and fire safety services, is accelerating its national expansion after recording around 20 per cent organic growth year-on-year for the past five years.

The move is supported by investment in its team, fleet and two new compliance-focused services.

Founded in 2010, the business now employs a team of around 30 specialists delivering fire stopping, fire door surveying, fire protection inspections and compliance support for organisations managing large and complex building estates across the UK.

Recent contract wins include work for a global online retailer, a multinational technology company and a global real estate organisation, reflecting the growing demand for accredited, competence-led providers.

As part of its continued expansion, DHA Fire Stopping has invested in new Euro 6 fleet vehicles and confirmed a further



£20,000 investment in professional training and development during 2026.

The programme supports staff across the whole business, from administration and project teams to surveyors and site operatives, reflecting the company's long-standing commitment to building an inclusive, highly qualified workforce in a traditionally male dominated industry.

The company's growth is being driven by the post-Grenfell regulatory environment, in which building owners, duty holders and estates teams are under increasing pressure to demonstrate that fire safety is being actively managed.

In particular, Regulation 38 of the Building Regulations requires that accurate fire safety information is passed to the responsible person so a building can be operated safely once occupied, placing greater emphasis

on the quality and accessibility of compartmentation, fire door and fire stopping records.

The company has launched two new services in response to the latest regulations. One is trigonometry-based fire containment and compartmentation plans, which provide accurate, auditable building safety information. The other is CPD-accredited, in-person training delivered on site to support responsible persons and facilities management teams in managing fire safety across existing buildings.

Dave Alsop, Managing Director of DHA Fire Stopping, said: "Our growth has come from focusing on professional standards, ethical delivery and investing in our people. The investment we're making in new services, vehicles and training reflects the way the industry is moving and the responsibilities our clients now carry."

Steve Young, Operations Director at DHA Fire Stopping, said: "The expectations placed on building owners and estates teams have changed significantly over recent years. Organisations now need clear, accurate information about their buildings and the competence to act on it, not just at handover but throughout a building's life."

For more information, visit: www.dhafire.co.uk.

Young Somerset seeking three new trustees to join board of directors

Young Somerset, the South West's largest youth work organisation, is inviting applications for three new Trustees to join its Board of Directors.

The charity, committed to improving the lives of young people across the region, is seeking individuals with strong professional skills, strategic insight, and a passion for supporting young people to thrive.

New Trustees will join an established and supportive Board responsible for ensuring effective governance, financial oversight and the long-term sustainability of the organisation.

Young Somerset is particularly looking

for candidates who can bring expertise in legal, commercial, or human resources leadership. This includes:

- Legal expertise to support the Board and Senior Leadership Team with governance, risk, and compliance matters
- Commercial or business development experience to contribute to strategic planning, organisational growth, and the development of the charity's commercial activities
- Strategic HR leadership to advise on people management, workforce planning, and organisational development



Trustees play a vital role in shaping the charity's strategic direction and supporting its Senior Leadership Team.

For more information is available from Young Somerset's Chair, David Elstone, by email on DavidElstone@youngsomerset.org.uk. Closing date for applications is May 29 at midday.



Nuffield Health Taunton Hospital Achieves Gold Standard for delivering high-quality care

Nuffield Health Taunton Hospital is celebrating a major accreditation in infection prevention, having achieved the prestigious Gold standard in Aseptic Non Touch Technique (ANTT).

ANTT is the nationally recognised standard designed to minimise healthcare associated infections. Achieving the highest Gold level demonstrates that patients at Nuffield Health Taunton Hospital can expect consistently safer treatment, reduced infection risk, and adherence to the highest clinical care standards.

As part of Nuffield Health's commitment to delivering safe, high quality care, Nuffield Health Taunton Hospital underwent a rigorous assessment of its education and training, infection prevention policies, staff compliance, and ongoing audit and quality assurance processes. The Gold accreditation signals excellence in all these areas.

ANTT applies to all invasive treatments, from finger prick blood tests, wound care, IV access and injections, to major surgical procedures.

Reaching the gold accreditation is a significant challenge, with only a limited number of providers nationally meeting the benchmark to date. Nuffield Health Taunton Hospital's accreditation reflects both the dedication of its clinical teams and the strength of its governance and training processes.

Heidi Finney, Director of Clinical Services at Nuffield Health Taunton Hospital, said: "Reaching Gold ANTT Accreditation is an outstanding achievement. We've always had a strong approach to quality and infection prevention, and that foundation gave us confidence to go for the highest level of ANTT."

"This recognition reflects the dedication of our clinical team, the strength of our governance systems, and our commitment to delivering safe, high quality care. It really gives patients the reassurance that they will receive the highest standards of quality, safe care here at Nuffield Health Taunton Hospital".

This achievement at Nuffield Health Taunton Hospital forms part of Nuffield Health's wider success, with more



than 90 hospitals, medical centres, and fitness and wellbeing clubs across the organisation achieving Gold ANTT accreditation - making Nuffield Health one of the UK's largest providers to reach this prestigious standard across all its clinical services.

Stephen Rowley, Clinical Director at ANTT, said: "We've been hugely impressed by the Nuffield's determination and commitment to implement ANTT in so many sites across the UK. Such a focus on optimising patient safety at all levels should certainly provide the clinical assurance that all patients deserve."

Occuteach relocates head office to new premises

Occuteach Ltd has opened a new Bristol head office which includes a bespoke training room, free parking and a modern learning environment designed to enhance the experience of our learners and partners.

The company offers international occupational training and alternative learning provision and will continue to operate a dedicated training facility in Weston-super-Mare alongside the new Bristol base.

Tracey Santo of Occuteach Ltd said: "We look forward to welcoming learners and partners to our new Bristol head office."

"We deliver a wide range of accredited training courses, diploma qualifications and certification programmes across diverse industries."

"Alongside our professional training offer, we also provide tailored alternative education and bespoke private tuition for children and young people who are unable to attend mainstream education."

Feedback sought on new AI guide to support people through bereavement

Orbital Media has developed BereaveGuide, an AI-assisted digital companion designed to support people immediately after a bereavement and is appealing for local specialists for feedback on the guide.

Hayden Allen-Vercoe, COO of Orbital Media said the guide provided calm, step-by-step guidance on what needs to happen next, translates complex correspondence into plain English, and signposts trusted support services at the right time.

He said it was built to complement, not replace, human care, to help reduce confusion and cognitive overload when people are least able to cope.

"We are now seeking opportunities to trial BereaveGuide with hospices, bereavement services, insurers, and public-sector organisations, to help refine the platform and maximise its real-world impact," he said.

Anyone interested in finding out more can contact Hayden by emailing haydenav@orbitalmedia.com.

ORBITAL
MEDIA



YOU'RE NOT LIKE EVERYONE ELSE.

NEITHER ARE WE.

We're not here to blend in. We're a law firm bringing bold, values-led legal support to Somerset.

We provide expert, professional advice for individuals and businesses at every stage of your life or business journey.

Whatever the client or sector, we push, improve and deliver, proudly going beyond expectations.

Crafted legal advice for those who expect more. From the South West's leading law firm where making a difference matters.

stephens-scown.co.uk



Haynes Motor Museum's 1961 Aston Martin DB4 is brought back to life by specialist workshop

HAYNES
MOTOR MUSEUM

Expert restoration by Haynes Heritage Engineering returns the Museum's iconic 1961 DB4 to running condition. It is now on public display as part of Haynes Motor Museum's Collection.

After more than 20 years as a static exhibit, the 1961 Aston Martin DB4 has been carefully restored to full running condition by Haynes Heritage Engineering, the specialist classic car workshop at Haynes Motor Museum. The car will remain part of the Haynes Motor Museum's Collection and is now on display to the public.

Originally purchased at auction and generously donated by John Haynes OBE and his wife Annette to grow the museum collection, the DB4 embodies a remarkable chapter in British automotive history.

Widely regarded as one of Aston Martin's most desirable models, the DB4 combined Italian-influenced Superleggera design, a powerful straight-six engine, and effortless high-speed touring ability, establishing the blueprint for generations of Aston Martin Grand Tourers.

Prior to being acquired by John Haynes, the DB4 was written off in its first year of use and later involved in a number of



smaller incidents, meaning it required significant structural repairs.

These included the careful reconstruction of the front section and the correction of historic repair work, with every step prioritising the car's originality and historical integrity.

The car has been returned to its original Dubonnet Red paintwork, the exact shade it would have left the Aston Martin factory in 1961. Over 200 hours of hand metalwork, approximately 300 hours in the Paintshop, a full engine rebuild, and the reinstallation of the original Fawn leather interior were required to complete the project. As a result, the car retains both its historic authenticity and full road-going capability.

"Restoring this DB4 has been an incredible opportunity to showcase the craftsmanship of our team," said Nick Lockey-May, Workshop Manager at Haynes Heritage Engineering.

The restoration work was carried out by Haynes Heritage Engineering, a public-facing workshop based within the museum grounds, supporting both private projects and the ongoing care of the Museum's Collection. All profits generated by the workshop are reinvested into the Haynes Motor Museum charity.



Rotec Hydraulics achieves globally recognised health and safety certification



Rotec Hydraulics Ltd, a leading provider of hydraulic, pneumatic, and electrical engineering solutions, has achieved the ISO 45001 certification for occupational health and safety management.

This globally recognised accreditation completes a 'trio' of ISO International Standards for Rotec, having already been awarded ISO 9001 (Quality Management) and ISO 14001 (Environmental Management).

The achievement follows a rigorous independent audit process,

demonstrating Rotec's unwavering commitment to the highest global benchmarks for safety, quality, and sustainability.

Achieving ISO 45001 comes during a period of significant compliance success for Rotec, following the recent successful renewals of its JOSCAR and SafeContractor status. Together, these certifications provide a robust framework for Rotec's operations across all industry sectors, including marine, aerospace, defence, and manufacturing.

Paul Prouse, Managing Director of Rotec Hydraulics, said: "Achieving ISO 45001, alongside our existing ISO 9001 and 14001 certifications, reflects our team's commitment to hard work, high standards, and operational excellence.

"These global certifications are a foundation for continuous improvement, sustainable development, and offers third-party assurance of operational integrity to our customers and partners."

For more information, visit www.rotec.net.



Business owners turn to AI for advice

Research from American Express has revealed a growing shift in how UK small business owners seek advice, with many now turning to AI. The research found that 26% of business owners sought guidance from AI platforms instead of other business owners. Time pressures and limited availability of local networking events were the biggest barriers to seeking in-person advice, making AI a convenient alternative.

Read more about the research at:

<https://channelx.world/2026/03/uk-small-business-owners-turn-to-ai-for-advice-but-human-connection-matters-most/>

Self-employed women earn less than men

Research by IPSE has found that self-employed women in the UK earn an average of £51 less per day than men. This means that the average self-employed woman working full time could be £12,266 worse off per year compared to a self-employed man. There are an estimated 1.64 million women working as sole traders and freelancers in the UK, up 34% since 2015.

Read more about the research at:

<https://www.ipse.co.uk/articles/self-employed-gender-pay-gap-narrows-by-3-000-but-women-still-earn-12-000-less>

Campaign to help people understand their tax affairs

HMRC has launched a new campaign to help people with their everyday tax affairs. The Tax Confident website is aimed at filling in the gaps in taxpayers' knowledge and covers tax basics, working life, small businesses and retirement. It also provides guidance on how taxpayers can examine tax codes, find their National Insurance number and check how much tax they owe.

Read more about the campaign at:

<https://taxconfident.campaign.gov.uk>

Small businesses curbing growth to avoid VAT threshold

HMRC figures have indicated that thousands of small firms may be deliberately limiting expansion to avoid crossing the £90,000 VAT registration threshold. The figures show that 683,700 businesses reported turnover below the VAT threshold in the year to December 2025, up from 671,000 the previous year. According to industry advisers, micro-businesses such as cafés, shops and tradespeople are reducing opening hours or switching to four-day weeks to stay below the threshold.

Read more about the figures at:

<https://britishbusinessexcellenceawards.co.uk/from-the-awards/businesses-curb-growth-to-duck-vat-threshold-hmrc-data-suggests>

Lack of support prevents start-ups from growing

A report by the Enterprise Research Centre has found that 36% of working-age adults are now starting, running or planning to launch a business, the highest level since records began in 1999. However, small business innovation has fallen for the fourth consecutive year, and urgent action is needed to stop the decline. The report warned that the UK's entrepreneurial ecosystem is deteriorating, with persistent weaknesses in access to finance, entrepreneurial education and government policy support continuing to hold businesses back.

Read more about the report at:

https://www.enterpriseresearch.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/SSBB-2025_26-Report-press-release.pdf

Source: BAD News (Business Advisers News)



FREE Print review for Somerset businesses

Businesses are having to work differently & SDS are ready to help

Armed with technical expertise & a wide range of photocopiers & printers, featuring the very latest in smart technology, we'll save your business time & money.

Call **01278 723784** or email sales@sdsLtd.uk.com today & book your **free print review**.

SDS Limited
Unit 3-4 Suprema Industrial Estate,
Edington, Somerset TA7 9LF

T: 01278 723784 F: 01278 723785
E: info@sdsLtd.uk.com www.sdsLtd.uk.com

 **KONICA MINOLTA**
MANUFACTURER APPROVED
5 STAR SERVICE ACCREDITATION
SOUTHWEST DIGITAL SYSTEMS LTD.



SOMERSET BUSINESS AWARDS 2026

CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU



TO EVERYONE WHO
SUPPORTED #SBA2026



HEADLINE SPONSOR,
ALBERT GOODMAN

