

# Business FOCUS

**Better Together**  
Working together, achieving more

Official Magazine of Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce

Winter 2024/25

A photograph of two men in a large warehouse. The man on the left is wearing a green high-visibility vest over a dark jacket and blue jeans. The man on the right is wearing a pink shirt, a yellow high-visibility vest, and dark trousers. They are both looking towards the right, where high industrial shelving units are filled with boxes. The man on the right is gesturing with his hands as if explaining something. The floor is polished concrete.

## Collaborating to Create **SUCCESS**

Fliweel.tech and Ark-H  
Explore the Future with  
AI-Driven Fulfilment

**CONNECT. GLOBAL. VOICE.**



Bedfordshire  
Chamber of  
Commerce

Discover more at [www.chamber-business.com](http://www.chamber-business.com)



# BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION:

## A CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT EVENT

### About Event

This free event will provide an insight in the latest innovations in Continuous Improvement methodologies and how organisations have used these to transform their business. Additionally, you will have the chance to meet like-minded individuals and professionals to exchange ideas and discuss strategies.



5 March 2025



1.30 - 4.30pm



Putteridge Bury  
Conference Centre,  
University of  
Bedfordshire

SCAN QR CODE TO  
REGISTER:



[theleansixsigmacompany.co.uk/  
lean-six-sigma-event](https://theleansixsigmacompany.co.uk/lean-six-sigma-event)

### Why Attend

-  Gain exclusive information about Lean Six Sigma in a short time
-  Network with industry peers
-  Hear success stories from various organisations across different sectors
-  Be inspired by new insights
-  Discover new next steps







# Business FOCUS

Official Magazine of Bedfordshire  
Chamber of Commerce

## Our Partners



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# Welcome

...to the winter edition of Business Focus Magazine.

As I write this, it's been less than 24 hours since the first Labour Budget in 14 years and there is understandable concern over its implication for business. The Chancellor's approach attempts to balance fiscal responsibility with targeted investments for resilience and long-term growth, however, it's clear that firms will bear the brunt of the Budget's £40bn tax increases.

While some protection for smaller businesses is welcome, the increase in employer National Insurance Contributions and reducing the threshold of when it comes liable will place a further cost burden on business. This, coupled with a 6.7% increase in the National Living Wage, means many companies will find it more challenging to invest and recruit in the short-term.

**But** as we wrap up another year, I am reminded of the remarkable power of collaboration within our Chamber network. By connecting businesses, we consistently see new innovations and growth opportunities that are strengthening Bedfordshire's economic landscape. At the Chamber, our goal is to create a platform where businesses can connect, share fresh perspectives, and support each other, fuelling growth that becomes a shared achievement.

Two recent collaborations within this edition highlight this perfectly. First, Pictons and Talk UK are collaborating to ensure businesses have essential connectivity infrastructure in commercial property contracts, helping companies avoid disruptions and prepare for growth. Similarly, Fliweel.tech and Ark-H have joined forces to explore AI-driven efficiencies in logistics, transforming processes and boosting productivity.

The platform we provide through events, roundtables and our SME Business Awards is all geared towards fostering these connections. As we look forward to 2025, we're expanding these opportunities with new initiatives to bring even more value to our members. From sector-focused groups to networking events, there are a whole host of opportunities for you to build relationships that could unlock new potential for your business.

Looking ahead, there's a sense of excitement for what's possible in Bedfordshire. With major investment decisions on the horizon – Universal Studios' potential theme park development in Bedford and the expansion plans at London Luton Airport – the region stands on the brink of transformative change. These projects promise to bring new opportunities, from job creation to enhanced connectivity, reinforcing Bedfordshire as a prime location for business and community growth.

I hope you have the chance to relax and recharge over the Christmas period and look forward to working together in 2025.

**#workingtogether #achievingmore**

**Justin Richardson**

Chief Executive Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce



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**Richard Cooper**

Chairman of Bedfordshire  
Chamber of Commerce

*“SMEs I’ve spoken to remain upbeat, start-ups are enthusiastic about new offerings, and entrepreneurs are still coming up with great ideas.”*

## *The* Chairman’s **VIEW**

Our little county punches way beyond its weight in innovation, entrepreneurship, and sheer business resilience – and I’m proud of it.

Nonetheless, pride doesn’t insulate us from upheaval, and it’s fair to say businesses are going through quite a bit of that at the moment, even as we head into the season of goodwill and retail fervour!

The Budget, for example, was a bruiser, with little immediate business support of any kind beyond what already existed, and financial repercussions that will raise concerns for many of our members.

The growing uncertainty around global security and supply chain stability also continues to be a worry, and one I think we’ll see persist for some time yet.

But the old saying, ‘challenges are just opportunities in work clothes’, comes to mind here.

Lift the lid on the Budget, for example, and there are provisions for long-term infrastructure improvement, and investment in education, skills, and training. Equally, an unexpected upside of the supply chain issue is that some 69% of UK supply chain firms are coping by sourcing more items locally!

And on the ground, SMEs I’ve spoken to remain upbeat, start-ups are enthusiastic about new offerings, and entrepreneurs are still coming up with great ideas.

What won’t change in these bracing times is the Chamber’s ability to connect businesses across all sectors to our advisers’ expertise, new prospects, and critical growth opportunities like export and global trade.

I wish you a successful holiday trading period, a happy and peaceful Christmas, and a prosperous New Year.

*Richard Cooper*



## Supporting Education and Training: THE VALUE OF APPRENTICESHIPS

At Beds Chamber, we're proud of our track record in supporting education and training initiatives at both a local and national level - and we've also committed to supporting those same goals within our own organisation, through apprenticeships. On that note, meet Kiahna Mitchell!

### From college student to Chamber apprentice

Kiahna initially came to us as after one of our Connect Over Coffee events that she helped organise as a student at Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College in Luton. The event was a great success (in fact, we christened it 'the QE6 takeover!'), and Kiahna, inspired by the work, started a two-week work experience placement at the Chamber. She's now embarked on her Business Administrator Level 3 apprenticeship, focusing on marketing and events, which, over 21 months, combines study with valuable work in the heart of our team.

### The value an apprenticeship delivers

Kiahna's apprenticeship has already seen her involved in the planning and execution of several Chamber events, and our marketing presence at others, including Business Expo, and this year's SME Bedfordshire Business Awards. Another interest the apprenticeship enables Kiahna to develop and refine is social media. She's even set up the Chamber's Instagram account, giving us a new presence on this high-profile platform.

### Kiahna the apprentice – in her own words

"Before the Chamber came to my college," Kiahna says, "I didn't know anything about Chambers of Commerce, but now I've learned how Bedfordshire Chamber draws businesses closer together, and I want my work here to support that."

A young apprentice today, a professional who'll make a real difference to a business tomorrow – this is why, at the Chamber, apprentices like Kiahna mean so much to us.

## Engineering Bursary Award

*'I was so shocked and have no words to describe how happy I am.'*

*'I am grateful to receive this award. It will allow me to focus on my studies without being as worried about money.'*

*'I have a real passion for engineering, I have built robots and a bionic hand. I'm pleased David saw this passion.'*

These are just a few of the responses we've received from young people who have been awarded the Veruth Holdings Engineering Bursary award. Since the award began in 2009, 15 young people from Luton have each received at least a £15,000 bursary generously donated by David Sheridan of Veruth Holdings to support them at their time at university studying engineering. Over the years this amounts to over £250k.

The Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce are once again delighted to collaborate with David Sheridan of Veruth Holdings for the 2025 Engineering Bursary. To enter students must write an essay on 'Why I want to be an Engineer' and there is no word limit. The criteria for 2025 entrants is that student must reside in LU1,2,3 or 4 and be going to University in the UK to study any form of engineering (Sept 2025).

Entries are received from students attending the following schools and colleges Chalk Hills Academy, Stockwood Park Academy, Newman 6th, Barnfield College, Bedford College and Luton Sixth Form who meet the above criteria.

Closing Date: Thursday 17th April 2025.



## Justin Joins Business Board

We want to congratulate our CEO Justin Richardson on his recent appointment to the newly established South Midlands Business Board. As part of this dedicated team of regional leaders, he will work closely with South Midlands Authorities to advocate for and support the business community across the area.

This position underlines his commitment to advancing the interests of local businesses and fostering regional economic growth, we are excited to see Justin play a part in shaping the local business landscape.

Justin says: *"It's a great honour to be appointed to the new South Midlands Authorities Business Board. The role presents a great opportunity to champion the voice of business and help deliver economic growth in the region. I can't wait to get started."*

**South Midlands  
Business Board**

# Chamber EVENTS



## Kicking off the New Year with the **2025 SME Bedfordshire Business Awards**

It may feel like only a few months since our 2024 SME Bedfordshire Business Awards wrapped up – and it was! But with the resounding success of last year's event, we're already gearing up for an even bigger and better 2025 Awards programme. Mark your calendar for 15th January, when we'll officially launch the 2025 Awards at the Bedford Swan Hotel. Here's why it's a date you won't want to miss.

### “The best Awards yet...”

This was the verdict on the 2024 Awards, but we're determined to make 2025 even more outstanding. These Awards offer a fantastic platform for Bedfordshire's SMEs to showcase their achievements and celebrate the vibrant business community in our region – a chance for the best of Bedfordshire to shine and raise their profile. The Awards attracted a huge variety of businesses, with winners representing everything from pram and pushchair manufacturers, to law firms, to care providers, and many more. It's diversity the 2025 Awards will proudly continue – so no matter what kind of business you are, you're in with a shout!

### Entering, sponsoring, attending - winning?

Join us at the launch event on 15th January 2025 to hear all about the award categories, how to enter, and to meet our sponsors. Stay tuned for further details, or feel free to call our team on 01582 522448 with any questions. Save the date and be part of the celebration of Bedfordshire's exceptional SMEs. We look forward to seeing you there!

## Forthcoming Events...

### SME Bedfordshire Business Awards 2025 Launch

15th January 2025 | 9:30 - 11:15am

We would like to welcome you to the launch of the SME Bedfordshire Business Awards 2025. As part of our hugely successful Connect Over Coffee event, we are delighted to be launching the SME Bedfordshire Business Awards for 2025. Find out about this year's awards categories, key dates, awards sponsors and our top tips for writing a winning entry! There will also be plenty of time to network with fellow members.

*This event is kindly being hosted by*  
**The Bedford Swan Hotel**



### SME Bedfordshire Business Awards Masterclass

5th February 2025 | 9:30 - 11:00am

Join us at the beautiful Wrest Park for business networking and to hear from Awards Director, Damian Cummins, award judges and some previous winners. The Awards Masterclass will cover top tips on submitting an award winning entry and how to promote being a finalist.

*Hosted and supported by Gold Sponsors*  
**Wrest Park Business Centre**



Headline Sponsor



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# Q&S Quarterly ECONOMIC SURVEY REPORT

**Justin Richardson***Chief Executive, Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce*

## TAX ANXIETY GROWS: Insights from Our Latest Business Survey

As the Chief Executive of Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce, I have the privilege of being in regular contact with businesses across our region, hearing first-hand about the opportunities and challenges they face. Our recent Quarterly Economic Survey for Q3 2024 reveals insights into the current business landscape, underscoring both areas of concern and resilience within our local economy.

### Challenging Period for Domestic Sales

One of the survey's key findings is the widespread concern about competitive pressures. Both UK and overseas markets are experiencing heightened competition, with businesses reporting this as a primary challenge impacting their sales.

Domestic sales, in particular, have faced a challenging period, with businesses noting a significant slowdown in advanced orders. Respondents highlighted that August and September were particularly quiet, reflecting the strain businesses are under to secure future orders.

### Taxation Now the Primary External Concern

Taxation continues to weigh heavily on our members, limiting their ability to invest in growth and new opportunities. The call for a business-friendly tax regime is stronger than ever, as reforms could alleviate this burden and enable businesses to thrive.

With speculation rife about the tax impact of this month's crucial Budget, businesses are clearly anxious. They understand the fiscal backdrop the Chancellor is facing and the need for the Government to address public finances. However, that must not be at the expense of investment and growth.

### Export Market Outlook Shows Promise

While the export market was relatively flat in Q3, there is cautious optimism for the future, with businesses reporting a more positive outlook for their forward-looking order books.

## Decline in Workforce and Weakened Recruitment Prospects

The survey also highlighted a decline in workforce numbers during the period, with only 26% of respondents seeing an increase, while 57% reported stable employment levels, and 17% noted a decline. Furthermore, recruitment expectations for the next quarter look weak, indicating potential challenges in attracting and retaining talent in the near term.

## Small but Positive Shift in Investment Intentions

Despite these hurdles, the survey did note an improvement in investment intentions, with businesses planning to increase spending on both plant and machinery and on training. Bucking the national trend of flatlining investment figures may reflect a commitment to long-term growth and a measure of resilience within the county.

## Interest Rates and Economic Uncertainty

Interest rates are another factor causing apprehension. As businesses navigate fluctuating rates, the cost of financing operations and expansions becomes increasingly unpredictable. This challenge underscores the need for sound financial planning and a robust approach to cash flow management, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises that often operate on tight margins.

Despite these challenges, our survey also highlights a resilient business community that remains committed to growth and innovation. Many businesses report stable or even increasing sales, demonstrating their adaptability and strategic focus. In particular, it is encouraging to see companies exploring new markets, investing in digital transformation, and building partnerships that will strengthen their competitive edge.

Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce is here to help businesses not only weather current challenges but also seize opportunities that arise. By working together and staying engaged with the issues that matter most, we can help our businesses succeed in an ever-evolving landscape.

# Member NEWS



A Member of JA Worldwide

## YOUNG ENTERPRISE Empowering the Next Generation

Young Enterprise is a national financial and enterprise education charity. We are passionate about developing the financial capabilities and enterprising mindset of the next generation and believe that increased access to meaningful opportunities, combined with ongoing support, can change young people's futures. As part of this, we strive to empower young people to build the vital skills to earn and look after their money and make a positive contribution to their community. We provide practical employability, enterprise, and financial education programmes, working in partnership with teachers, parents, businesses, and volunteers.

We'd love to connect with local businesses to join us in shaping the future of young people in our community. We're partnering with the Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce to engage with businesses like yours for several exciting opportunities:

**Raise Awareness:** Help us spread the word about the life-changing work YE is doing with young people across our area.

**Volunteer Your Expertise:** We're looking for business professionals to volunteer their time and skills, guiding and mentoring students as they explore entrepreneurship and develop essential skills for the future.

**Sponsorship Opportunities:** By sponsoring a YE program at a local school, you can showcase your company's commitment to youth development and community growth.



Together, we can empower the next generation of business leaders and innovators.

*If you or your business would like to help shape the lives of our young people in Bedfordshire, please do get in touch today on 07707 153608 or email [jo.ward@y-e.org.uk](mailto:jo.ward@y-e.org.uk) to learn how you and your business can make a real difference!*

## CARALINE EATING DISORDER SERVICES

### Celebrates 30 Years of Supporting the Community

This year marks a significant milestone for Caraline Eating Disorder Services as we celebrate 30 years of providing vital support to individuals and families affected by eating disorders. Since our founding in 1994, Caraline has been dedicated to offering compassionate, accessible care for those with conditions such as anorexia, ARFID, bulimia, and binge-eating disorder.

Over the past three decades, we have grown from a small, local charity into a trusted resource for the community, providing one-to-one therapy, group therapy, and family support services. Our commitment to raising awareness and reducing the stigma surrounding eating disorders remains at the heart of everything we do.

This milestone reflects the tireless work of our dedicated team, the generosity of our supporters, and the resilience of those we serve. As we look to the future, Caraline remains focused on expanding our services and continuing to provide hope and healing to even more individuals in need.

*For more information about our services or to find out how you can support us, please visit our website at [www.caraline.com](http://www.caraline.com). We are grateful to everyone who has been part of this journey and look forward to many more years of making a difference in the lives of those affected by eating disorders.*







## Fliweel.tech and Ark-H EXPLORE SMARTER WORK WITH AI-DRIVEN FULFILMENT

Ark-H is an established third-party logistics provider based in Bedfordshire. Specialising in omni-channel order fulfilment and contract packing and kitting, the business helps clients get physical products out to trade customers and consumers, on time and within budget.

With 150,000 square feet of ambient space and over 1 million orders fulfilled each year, Ark-H aims to be the most recommended company in their sector.

But like all successful businesses, Ark-H understands the importance of streamlining processes to help them deliver better solutions; so they are always looking for good partners to work with. It was at a Chamber event that they met local company, Fliweel.tech, whose innovative artificial intelligence (AI) solutions clearly have the potential to help Ark-H achieve exactly this.

Fliweel.tech was the headline sponsor of the Chamber's Members' Summer Reception event and it was there that Director Andy Paul met with Ark-H's Client Services Director, Dan Turner and MD, Fiona Strong, who were curious as to how AI and automation could help Ark-H take productivity to the next level.

The explorations kicked off in earnest shortly thereafter, with AI and automation workshops, hosted by Fliweel.tech, focusing on Ark-H's key business functions.

The workshops sparked deep-dive discussions with key stakeholders on business and functional objectives around replacing manual and repetitive processes with more efficient and less error-prone AI and automation alternatives.

But this was no mere talking shop; from the discussions, Fliweel.tech produced a workshop report describing the business case, quantifying the extent of the challenge, and outlining the likely ROI achieved by the proposed technical implementation.

Ark-H and Fliweel.tech continue to work closely on these proposals, designed to scope cutting-edge technology that has the ability to revolutionise the way Ark-H delivers fulfilment and logistics, and to elevate the profile and reputation of its brand in the industry.

"It's been a real eye-opener working with the Fliweel.tech team," says Dan, "and we're seeing opportunities for performance uplift and productivity gain that will benefit our clients and our colleagues immensely."

"Ark-H is an exceptional local business that has shown itself to be totally open to the AI and automation benefits Fliweel.tech can deliver," says Andy, "and their journey towards an ever-improving customer experience is exciting to watch."

It just goes to show what some charcoal and chilled drinks on a balmy summer evening can do to get Chamber members working together!

*If you're interested in learning more about AI and Automation workshops, contact Andy Paul ([andy@fliweel.tech](mailto:andy@fliweel.tech)). If it's fulfilment that interests you, just contact Dan Turner at Ark-H ([dturner@ark-h.co.uk](mailto:dturner@ark-h.co.uk)) for more info on 3PL and fulfilment services.*

# Member NEWS



## INCLUSION 365 FOUNDER Nominated for 'Person with Purpose' Award

Victoria Dale, Founder of Inclusion 365 has been nominated for the 2025 Northern Power Women Awards for the category "Person with Purpose: The individual who is driven by a genuine desire and purpose to create real change in the world and better the lives of both individuals and communities". The Northern Power Women Awards recognises role models and trailblazers, with the pursuit of a more gender equal world.

"I'm absolutely thrilled and delighted to have been nominated. I love helping employers who are serious about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion by helping them create workplaces that are happier, more productive, profitable and enable everyone to thrive."

Over the past 9 years, Victoria has been supporting employers across different industries from multi nationals to SMEs to transform their workplaces into thriving, safe and inclusive places to work. This includes equipping managers and leaders with the right skills to lead teams more inclusively to supporting organisations come up with a strategy to attract and retain more diverse talent. Victoria has supported employers to lay the foundations to become great places to work saving them time, talent and money and remain relevant in a competitive market.

If you are committed to becoming a more diverse and inclusive employer and need support, book in a free 20-minute discovery call with Victoria where we'll explore the most pressing workplace inclusion challenges and discuss how we can support you to overcome these.

Email: [victoria@inclusion365.co.uk](mailto:victoria@inclusion365.co.uk) | Website: <https://inclusion365.co.uk>

## MIND Over Matter

Mind BLMK is the leading VSCE mental health provider in Bedfordshire, and Milton Keynes with over forty years' experience in supporting people's mental health and wellbeing. Offering a suite of mental health services to change lives and influence the way mental health is perceived and supported.

We provide a suite of services supporting mental health and wellbeing connecting with local businesses, our communities and for individuals with mental health problems ranging from mild to moderate, complex needs and those that have serious mental health illnesses.

Mind BLMK offer a collective assortment of education and training with a wide range of subject areas specifically around emotional health and wellbeing and offer specialised experience speakers for events and occasions.

We were thrilled to win in two categories at this years SME Bedfordshire Business Awards taking Gold for Community Business of the Year and Silver in the Positive Impact Award. We were also successful in winning the Mind Quality Mark Impact Award in achieving excellence in our quality standards.

As an organisation we continue to develop and grow with the offer of new and unique services through success in our procurement team.

If are able to support Mind BLMK in providing quality mental health services there are several opportunities available, including Volunteering, fundraising, donations, nominating us as your Charity of the Year and / or becoming a Guarantor Mentor.

To find out more about Mind BLMK visit [www.mind-blmk.org.uk](http://www.mind-blmk.org.uk)

## VEGGIE CRUSH Are Going Nationwide!

We are thrilled to be part of this amazing community and can't wait to connect with all of you! At Veggie Crush, we specialise in convenient, delicious plant-based meal prep tailored for individuals seeking to improve their health and wellness while navigating busy lifestyles.

And we have some exciting news to share: our business is expanding nationwide, bringing our nutritious meals to everyone across the country and you are all invited to join us.

For those who value positive change—whether it's achieving health goals, enhancing energy levels, or embracing a more sustainable lifestyle—we invite you to support our vision and mission by signing up for our waitlist and sharing the link with your friends and family. Together, we can shape a brighter, healthier future for all! Your support means the world to us, it helps us understand the demand and create the best products and services. We can't thank you enough for being part of this journey.

[veggiecrush.co.uk/join-nationwide-shipping-waitlist](https://veggiecrush.co.uk/join-nationwide-shipping-waitlist)







## How Much Food Goes To Waste During Christmas?

Christmas is synonymous with quality family time, laughing, joking and eating far too much food!

Many of us also treat the festive period as an excuse to loosen the belt buckle and take our seats at the table in preparation for the annual family feast, containing a meal fit for a royal banquet! We also conveniently forget to count those Christmas calories, and instead end up on the sofa snoring brought on by overindulgence.

In the moment, this greed might fill our bellies with joyous bliss, but what happens to all this excess once your stomach raises the white flag and surrenders to further gorging? That's right – Christmas is as prominent for wasting as it is for making a child's dream come true.

A staggering **seven million tonnes of food ends up in the bin each Christmas in the UK**. Unsurprisingly, this places 'the most wonderful time of the year' as the time of the year when food waste is at its peak.

Yet all this inedible festive fare is more than just money (and gravy) down the drain. Have you begun to consider the impact of this absurd amount of Christmas food waste on our planet?

### How much food is wasted in the UK?

Food waste is a significant problem in the UK, and we painfully stand out on our own as **the highest food waste producer in Europe**. To understand what is defined as 'food waste', it refers to food fit for human consumption being left uneaten, unused, or discarded, whether or not after it's kept beyond its expiry date or left to spoil.

Whether it's expired products sitting on supermarket shelves, or throwing away leftovers and surplus food, retailers and consumers need to implement greater collaborative action and adopt better habits to combat our excessive wastage.

### How many tonnes of food do we waste at Christmas?

A disproportionate amount of the UK's annual household food waste (4.5 million tonnes of food) is during the time when Santa pays a visit.

Christmas Food Waste Facts:

- 2 million turkeys
- 5 million Christmas puddings
- 74 million mince pies
- And £67 million worth of oranges

(there's always one in the Christmas stocking!)



From March 2025 all commercial outlets producing food are required to have food waste collection service in place as part of legislation introduced by the British government.

Therefore, award winning SWS are launching a new(free) membership initiative called "EAT GREEN" encouraging all food producer to introduce a food waste recycling scheme within their organisations. By becoming an exclusive member of "EAT GREEN" you will receive key information to promote to your clients what your company is doing as well as useful data allowing you to demonstrate how much food waste you have diverted from landfill as a result of joining "Eat Green".

*For more information about food waste recycling or to receive a free quotation for any waste management requirements, please contact Sommers Waste Solutions on T: 01582 486442 E: [info@sommerswastesolutions.com](mailto:info@sommerswastesolutions.com) or take a look at our website [www.sommerswastesolutions.com](http://www.sommerswastesolutions.com)*



# Member NEWS

## Who We Are – ERA GROUP

ERA Group, though new to the Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce in 2024, has been supporting organisations in reducing costs, improving processes, and achieving sustainability goals for over 30 years.

ERA Group partners with business leaders to tackle their greatest challenges, and illuminate their greatest opportunities hidden within their cost base.

Our mission goes beyond simple cost reduction – we help validate and improve processes, turning insights into tangible opportunities. Built on transparency and trust, ERA works closely with business leaders to deliver bottom-line impact while enabling organisations to thrive in today's competitive landscape.

With deep industry expertise and a wide range of perspectives, we're here to spark meaningful change for your business. We've helped and are helping thousands of clients, from some of the world's largest organisations through to local businesses.

### Our Work with Sue Ryder

One of the recent success stories within the Chamber of Commerce is our collaboration with Sue Ryder, a well-known UK charity. Sue Ryder faced rising operational costs and sustainability challenges, and they approached us for help in reducing costs while maintaining service quality.

Our team at ERA conducted a thorough review of their supply chain and operational processes. We worked closely with their procurement team to identify opportunities for cost savings, negotiate improved terms with suppliers and introduce sustainable practices that aligned with their values.

### A multi-million contract built on trust and collaboration

Through this collaboration, ERA Group delivered huge savings across multiple cost categories, including waste management, medical supplies, and telecoms. Not only did we manage to lower their operational costs, but we also strengthened their supplier relationships, ensuring better service and support moving forward.

Now ERA Group are currently tracking over £2 million of spend and delivering 23% savings across the board, with more on the horizon.

David White, Head of Procurement at Sue Ryder, expressed the value of our partnership, saying: "We're essentially a small fish when it comes to procurement, and ERA, with their sheer scale and leverage, can get much better deals for us. That more than pays for any share of savings that they receive as fees. This working relationship has been nothing but win-win for us."

### How We Can Help You

It starts with a conversation to really understand your business, what you are trying to achieve, and overcome any challenges you are facing. This will enable us to provide an opportunity assessment, and solutions that align with your broader business goals.

I'm eager to bring this expertise to other members of the chamber. Every business has unique challenges, but with tailored cost optimisation strategies, process improvements, and sustainable practices, we can help unlock significant value for your organisation.



**Because no one  
should face death  
or grief alone**

Download the full case study today to explore more detail about how ERA worked with Sue Ryder to achieve valuable and sustainable cost savings:



Let's discuss how ERA Group can support your goals. Together, we can deliver long-lasting, meaningful improvements to your business.

*Kevin Davies, Principal Consultant*

T: +44 7721 506127 | [kdavies@eragroup.com](mailto:kdavies@eragroup.com)





## **SANDALWOOD ACCOUNTANTS** Helping Small Businesses Flourish

Introducing an excellent chartered accountancy practice with a passion for providing professional, efficient service of the highest standard to small businesses across Bedfordshire.

Sandalwood puts clients at the heart of everything it does, striving always to build collaborate, value-added business partnering and gaining client trust through its reliability, integrity and exemplary communication values.

Sandalwood supports new and fledgling start-ups through to growing solo entrepreneurs and established business by helping to navigating the constantly changing compliance environment, seeking out tax efficiencies, saving money, saving time and guiding each to achieve their career aspirations and lifestyle goals.

Founded by Tanya Cardall, who since qualifying with PwC in 2001 has spent her career developing a wealth of accounting experience and knowledge in both practice and corporate finance, returning to her passion in 2018 supporting small businesses.



Whether your business is looking for a single accounting service or the full range, or you simply wish to learn more about how Sandalwood can help your business then please contact Tanya or visit the website.

01234 958993 / 07946 636135

[t.cardall@sandalwoodaccountants.co.uk](mailto:t.cardall@sandalwoodaccountants.co.uk)

[www.sandalwoodaccountants.co.uk](http://www.sandalwoodaccountants.co.uk)



## **YOUTURN FUTURES** A Decade of Transforming Lives in Bedfordshire

YouTurn Futures, a multi-award winning Bedfordshire Charity. Our mission is clear, to reduce reoffending and support individuals as they reintegrate into society.

We are thrilled to be delivering a three-year employment support initiative in Luton, made possible by funding from Luton Rising- Community Investment Fund, through the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation. Since April 2024, we've supported nearly 100 individuals in accessing training and taking steps toward employment.

We are calling on local businesses to get involved by offering internships, apprenticeships, or work placements. If you feel you can help in any way, please do get in touch with us at [elaine.mcconnell@youturnfutures.com](mailto:elaine.mcconnell@youturnfutures.com)

### **James' Journey**

One of the many lives we've touched is that of 'James'. Initially, James was deeply mistrustful of professionals, having never held a job before. However, with the dedicated support of our team, he's now volunteering with a charity close to his heart and experiencing the satisfaction of contributing to something meaningful.

James faces ongoing challenges with his mental health, but thanks to our mental health worker, he is receiving the help he needs to stay focused and work through past traumas. With our support, he has obtained identification documents, opened a bank account, and is now completing his CV and honing his interview skills. James is eager to take the next step into paid employment, marking the start of a new chapter in his life.

<https://youturnfutures.com/>



# Member NEWS

## ARK-H HANDLING SECURES TOP HONOURS for excellence in Fulfilment, Delivery & Logistics

Ark-H Handling, an established provider of third-party logistics (3PL) and supply chain solutions, is proud to announce its recent win at the prestigious Direct Commerce Awards.

The company was recognised in the Fulfilment, Delivery & Logistics category, highlighting its ongoing commitment to innovation, efficiency, and client satisfaction in the logistics sector.

The Direct Commerce Awards, known for celebrating excellence in the direct-to-consumer and multichannel retail sectors, provide a platform for recognising companies that push the boundaries of operational excellence. Ark-H Handling's award win underscores its role in supporting businesses with seamless order fulfilment and logistics services, which are critical to the success of direct commerce.

"Winning this award is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our entire team," said Dan Turner, Client Services Director of Ark-H Handling. "In today's fast-paced market, reliable logistics behind the scenes are critical in ensuring that businesses can meet customer demands efficiently and reliably. We're thrilled to be recognised for our efforts in this area and look forward to continuing to provide our clients with best-in-class solutions."

Ark-H Handling specialises in omnichannel order fulfilment, co-packing, kitting and distribution. With a wide range of clients Ark-H is trusted to prioritise customer satisfaction and deliver reliable, cost-effective solutions underpinned by industry leading connectivity in systems.

With 30 plus years of experience Ark-H has developed an outstanding reputation by virtue of their adherence to strong values: keen, lean, green and care. This recognition further demonstrates the importance of logistics in enhancing customer experience and business growth in the direct commerce space.

See [www.ark-h.co.uk](http://www.ark-h.co.uk) or call 01234 742777 for further information.



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## Good Skills Training

I am Helen Borino, one of the Directors of Good Skills Training Ltd. I moved to Bedfordshire 8 years ago and two of our directors grew up here. We are a family business that have been established for nearly 20 years and we are now expanding in Bedfordshire.

We are specialists in Health & Safety Compliance, Training and Consultancy. The go to company for all your compliance needs. Without appropriate health and safety in place, your business is at risk financially and legally, which could result in fines and/or prosecution. However, we are here to help! We believe that nobody should be alienated by health and safety and that quality training and consultancy should not cost the earth.

Recent figures from Health & Safety Executive show stress to be the number one concern for many workers. It is important that business owners and managers are looking after the mental health of their teams and that stress levels are controlled. Have you considered how you are going to look after the mental health of your staff? Are you aware that recent changes require you to consider mental health as part of your first aid needs assessment. Have you carried out a first aid needs assessment that takes into account your mental health needs? If not and you need help, or any other health and safety advice or training, give us a call on 01582 326412 or Go To [www.goodskillstraining.co.uk](http://www.goodskillstraining.co.uk) or email [helen@goodskillstraining.co.uk](mailto:helen@goodskillstraining.co.uk)



## The benefits of technology in PROMOTIONAL MERCHANDISE

Promotional merchandise is an incredible thing, but add some tech to it and you've got something people will want to hang onto! Tech gadgets like Bluetooth speakers, power banks, and wireless earbuds offer real value, meaning customers are way more likely to use them—and remember you! And don't forget the tech notebook—part sleek organizer, part digital assistant. These notebooks, often equipped with features like wireless charging pads, USB ports (for those extra power boosts), and even digital page saving, add a whole new level of functionality to the traditional notebook. It's like giving a gift that says, "Hey, we're practical and cool!"

Whether you're at a trade show or sending out thank-you gifts, tech merchandise can wow just about anyone. And if you're going green, there are eco-friendly options too—think solar chargers and energy-efficient desk lamps that appeal to the sustainably-minded.

Another big plus? Some tech items can actually record engagement. Imagine using a QR code on a wireless charger that links to exclusive offers, or a tech notebook that connects to your digital content—talk about smart marketing! So, if you want your promo game to level up, add a dash of tech. It's useful, it's memorable, and it makes your brand look like it's on the cutting edge—without even trying!

*To discuss your next promotional campaign call Jo Wareham on 07852 951425 or email [jo@thelittlebrandingcompany.co.uk](mailto:jo@thelittlebrandingcompany.co.uk) [www.thelittlebrandingcompany.co.uk](http://www.thelittlebrandingcompany.co.uk)*

## Introducing Mary Hill from Face2FaceHR Bedford PROVIDING TAILORED HR SOLUTIONS FOR SMEs

With over two decades of HR expertise, Mary provides tailored HR support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Whether your business needs pragmatic employment law advice, bespoke contracts and policies, or help with complex HR issues, Mary is here to provide peace of mind. Her down-to-earth, practical approach is shaped by her experience across sectors like financial services, technology, retail, education, and charities. Mary can adapt her expertise to meet your business's unique needs, whether it's performance management, disciplinary matters, or ensuring your HR policies are up to date.

Mary holds a Master's in Strategic HR Management and Development and is an MCIPD member. She's also a trained mediator and Certified NLP Practitioner, ensuring effective communication and positive client relationships. Her experience covers handling employment law issues, mergers, acquisitions, TUPE transfers, and more. Mary offers flexible support, including ad-hoc advice, outsourced projects, and affordable monthly retainers. She also provides a FREE HR Checkup.

For SMEs looking for an approachable HR consultant, Mary Hill is a fantastic resource.

[mary.hill@face2facehr.com](mailto:mary.hill@face2facehr.com) | 07922 599915



## A MODERN APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT

The Chamber talks to Emma Tarbox, local Operations Manager at Tate about the challenges in recruitment and finds out why putting inclusion and wellbeing at the heart of your people strategy is the future of recruitment.

Since the pandemic, when almost all office jobs adapted to working from home, there has been a significant demand and expectation for hybrid or remote working. While some organisations have embraced this as their permanent model, others have resisted, often due to traditional leadership or a rigid “one-size-fits-all” approach. The challenge now is finding a balance that meets the evolving needs of the modern workforce.

Emma explains: “Attracting talent today requires more than just a competitive salary. Flexibility and an understanding of individual circumstances are crucial. Our workforce spans five generations, each with unique needs. For instance, older employees may be juggling work with caring for elderly parents and managing other family responsibilities. Many in the 50+ age group are still at the peak of their careers and have no intention of slowing down, even as the national pension age is pushed back.”

She emphasises that businesses can show their commitment to flexibility by implementing thoughtful policies. “It’s about understanding your staff and offering flexibility with start and finish times, allowing flexible hours to accommodate school pick-ups, or providing hybrid options that save travel costs and time. This not only allows workers to find ‘me time’ during breaks but also fosters a healthier work-life balance. Such small adjustments can prevent burnout, reduce sickness, and improve overall mental health, leading to reduced sick leave and enhanced performance.”

Emma notes that this shift requires a change in management mindset. “Trust and autonomy are key, with the focus on outcomes and productivity rather than simply logging set office hours or being physically present at the same desk each day. Line managers must promote open conversations and create a safe environment where employees feel comfortable discussing their needs without fear of judgement. Our data shows that over 68% of candidates currently registered are looking for work flexibility. Employers that offer these options are more appealing to job seekers and gain access to a broader talent pool,” Emma concludes.

The modern office worker values flexibility, which is no longer just a perk but an essential aspect of job satisfaction. For businesses to thrive, embracing this new reality and adapting their approach to leadership and work culture is vital.

[emma.tarbox@tate.co.uk](mailto:emma.tarbox@tate.co.uk)



## The Importance of Key Person Insurance for Business Owners

A lot of small businesses insure their premises, equipment and machinery. But strangely, they often don’t protect against the more important risk of key individuals dying or having serious health problems.

Key person insurance addresses this critical issue by paying a cash sum if that happens.

A typical policy pays three to five years of that person’s salary if they die or have a critical illness. Firms can use the insurance to cover any business issues that result from the individual’s absence.

This can include lost revenue, but also cover cash flow and costs such as recruitment and training – buying you time to get the best possible replacement, which is essential to continuity and future success.

A key person need not be a director or shareholder. It might not even be an employee – for example, it could be a contractor or anyone else the business has an insurable interest in.

If the business is unlikely to continue without that individual – for example, where it’s just one employee or a husband-and-wife team – key person cover would not make sense.

Any claim is paid to the business, but there may be no business to pay to. So personal life insurance and critical illness policies are more suitable.

In any case, it is important to understand your needs and circumstances then implement a bespoke protection plan that considers your business and how you would like to protect it.

Get in touch via [nathan.williams@sjpp.co.uk](mailto:nathan.williams@sjpp.co.uk) or call 07956 525831 to find out more.





## The Importance of Connectivity Infrastructure in Commercial Property Contracts

When it comes to securing new business premises, the focus often falls on location, size, and rental terms. However, one crucial aspect that should never be overlooked, but often is according to our friends over at Talk UK, is connectivity infrastructure. In today's digital age, the ability of a business to operate smoothly hinges significantly on having the right connectivity in place.

### Understand your connectivity needs

Before entering into any commercial property contract, businesses must assess their connectivity requirements. Consider the nature of your business. Understanding these needs will guide your negotiations and ensure the property can support your operations effectively.

### Assess current infrastructure

As part of the due diligence process, it's essential to evaluate the existing connectivity infrastructure of the premises. This includes:

- Internet Speed and Reliability - Is high-speed internet available?
- Mobile Connectivity - How strong is the mobile signal?
- Wired vs Wireless Options - Are there adequate wired connections for devices, and is the wireless infrastructure sufficient for your needs?

### Impact on business operations

The right connectivity infrastructure directly impacts productivity. A reliable internet connection could mean the difference between smooth operations and frustrating downtime. For instance, a poorly connected office can hinder communications with clients, disrupt workflows, and ultimately lead to loss of revenue.

When negotiating contracts, consider how connectivity failures might impact your business and negotiate terms that provide you with alternatives in such scenarios.

### Future-proof your business

As technology continues to evolve, businesses must future-proof their connectivity needs. Consider clauses in your lease that allow for scalability, whether it's the option to upgrade bandwidth or add additional lines without excessive costs. This foresight can safeguard your business against obsolescence as demand for better connectivity grows.

### Legal implications

In the UK, a commercial property contract is a legally binding document. It's essential to ensure that connectivity obligations are clear and enforceable. Any ambiguity in the lease can lead to disputes down the line, so working with legal professionals experienced in commercial property can be invaluable.

Connectivity infrastructure is not just an operational detail, it's a fundamental element of any commercial property agreement. By carefully considering your connectivity needs and negotiating appropriate terms in your lease, you can position your business for success in an increasingly digital world.

Investing time and effort into ensuring the right connectivity infrastructure is in place from the outset can save you significant challenges and costs in the future.

By prioritising connectivity infrastructure in your commercial property contracts, you are not only protecting your current operations, but also laying a solid foundation for future growth and success.

### How Pictons can help

Whether you are an owner managed business, an SME or a large multinational organisation, commercial property contracts will create certainty, discourage disagreements, and keep your business running smoothly. But only if the contract meets the needs of your business at the outset.

Pictons take a very personal approach to commercial property contracts, looking at every aspect of your commercial property transaction, to ensure the suitability of your premises for your business needs. Our detailed and expert advice can save you a lot of money and ensure that you are pursuing the right course.

*E: [info@pictons.co.uk](mailto:info@pictons.co.uk) | T: 0800 302 9448*

Talk UK provide assessments and broadband checks free of charge, regardless if you go on to use their services or not.

*E: [sales@talkuktelecom.co.uk](mailto:sales@talkuktelecom.co.uk) | T: 0330 332 2332*



# Member NEWS



## CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF THE RUFUS CENTRE

Conference and events venue, The Rufus Centre, celebrated its 25th anniversary in October. Back in 1999, Flitwick Town Council had the foresight to purchase the building on the edge of the town. It has now evolved into one of the most popular meeting spaces in Bedfordshire with the flexibility to accommodate any type of event.

Home to the Town Council, The Rufus Centre offers serviced offices and a choice of seven meeting rooms to accommodate up to 200 people. A programme of investment during 2024 includes a complete refurbishment of The Lockyer Suite, the largest space, with new video conferencing facilities.

But it's not all work and no play! The Rufus Centre is also a popular celebration space and wedding venue, licensed to host wedding ceremonies, and has a varied programme of events throughout the year.

A destination in its own right, the centre's Rendezvous Café & Bar is a great place to meet for a breakfast or lunch meeting with a new dedicated workstation and free Wi-Fi.

The Café prides itself on using locally sourced products and has a loyal following of repeat customers including current English Middleweight Champion Linus Udofia who visited recently complete with his winning title belt!

To showcase the venue, The Rufus Centre commissioned a 3D virtual tour of the building giving a birds eye view of the facilities and its flexibility. Scan the QR code below to take a look round.

Business & Facilities Manager, Mathew Earles, who joined the team just over a year ago said: "What differentiates us from the competition is our commitment to providing flexible services and facilities to meet the growing demands of our customers. Our vision is to represent not just a meeting space, but a thriving hub of commerce and community.

"We can't wait to see where the next 25 years takes us!"

To find out more about The Rufus Centre visit [www.therufuscentre.com](http://www.therufuscentre.com) or call 01525 631905.

To celebrate its 25th anniversary The Rufus Centre is offering a 25% discount on meeting or conference room hire for Chamber members.







## **COPYBOX DOCUMENT SYSTEMS** **Family Business of the Year**

Copybox Document Systems (Copybox) is a recognised provider of a range of comprehensive services and support for printers and multi-functional photocopiers, including cost-effective rental and lease packages, installation and repair services and on-going technical support.

A family-run business, with father Paul Kamlesh and daughter Tanika Paul at the helm, Copybox has built an excellent reputation for providing a managed print service that is flexible and cost-effective. Now in its seventh year, the business has gone from strength to strength, growing by 40% in the last year alone and recently winning the Family Business of the Year Award at the SME Bedfordshire Business Awards.

When we caught up with Tanika recently, she said: "We couldn't be prouder. As a father and daughter team, we have poured our hearts into building Copybox together; it's our passion. With the life-long knowledge and respect we have for each other we are able to successfully combine traditional values with a vision for the future."

Paul has been in the print industry for over 30 years and Tanika for over 5, and this experience and strong family connection are just two reasons that Tanika cites for the success of Copybox. She explains, "We have a lot of industry experience and expertise behind us, but by having two different generations in the business, we are able to combine traditional and new outlooks to continually innovate, improve and grow."

"Copybox's drive is not just about technical knowledge across a wide range of printers and photocopiers, but also a genuine commitment to exceptional customer service. With strong family values, the customer is at the heart of everything Copybox does".

"We are strong on our service and the majority of new business comes from referrals and recommendations from existing customers. As a family business, our morals and work ethic are unwavering, and our customers trust in us to provide them with a great service."

"We work hard to provide the best service possible to our clients, through our team of 10 qualified and experienced engineers, we are able to respond quickly to all of our customers' needs."

"We want to carry on providing the best photocopier and printer service to the businesses and schools throughout Bedfordshire. We enjoy what we do and, if we continue to grow at the same rate, we will count ourselves incredibly lucky."

<https://copyboxdocumentsystems.co.uk/>



## **Stylise Autos**

I started my business Stylise Autos in 2011 and offer customers a bespoke classic car interior design service.

I worked at Vauxhall Motors in Luton, where I sewed the interior seating covers for a range of Vauxhall cars. This is where I found the passion for sewing and identified it was for car interior trim.

A friend told me of an opportunity coming up at Aston Martin in Newport Pagnell and I was successful in gaining the job of Sewing Machinist where I was responsible for sewing the interior trim for a complete Aston Martin car. This would range from the Aston Martin DB7, Aston Martin DB9 and Aston Martin Vanquish cars. Due to the Aston Martin Vanquish phasing out and the Newport Pagnell plant closing, I moved to Aston Martin's new production plant in Gaydon, Warwickshire, where I sewed the interior for the Aston Martin Vantage and Aston Martin DBS cars. Worked for Aston Martin for 9 years.

After leaving Aston Martin, I worked at different sewing companies whilst deciding my future. I decided to use my experience and sewing skills and my company Stylise Autos was created.

Stylise Autos is based in Luton and specialises in re-designing classic & old car interiors. I offer a consultation with customers at my unit in Luton to go through their requirements and any re-designing needs. During the consultation, the customer will decide the material they want for use for their interior by going through the different samples I have.




I have also worked on other projects such as sewing the bench seats for 'New Wembley Stadium' / 'Club Wembley where press conferences are held.

*You can see my work and follow me on Facebook and Instagram at Stylise Autos or for consultations email me at [styliseautos@talktalk.net](mailto:styliseautos@talktalk.net)*

# Member PROFILES

**Member PROFILES** are provided as part of membership to the Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce. You can learn more about becoming a member, so you too can enjoy this and a host of other benefits, simply by calling us now on 01582 522448 or by emailing [info@chamber-business.com](mailto:info@chamber-business.com)




## BW Bookkeeping and Project Solutions Ltd

 Jen Nolan  
 [jen@bwbps.co.uk](mailto:jen@bwbps.co.uk)  
 [bwbps.co.uk](http://bwbps.co.uk)



We are a small bookkeeping practice aimed at helping small business owners with their bookkeeping, VAT returns and achieving their business targets. Our business was set up in 2014 and has helped lots of small businesses to meet their deadlines and reach their goals.




## Howe To Consultancy

 Bex Howe  
 [bex.howe@howetoconsultancy.co.uk](mailto:bex.howe@howetoconsultancy.co.uk)  
 [howetoconsultancy.co.uk](http://howetoconsultancy.co.uk)



Howe To Consultancy is committed to helping teams and individuals to thrive. Through review, reflection and discussion we identify and utilise the strengths within the team to create a bespoke development programme designed to enhance the performance and effectiveness of your organisation.





## EQuality Consulting & Coaching Ltd

 Siobhan Godden  
 [siobhan@equalitycoaching.co.uk](mailto:siobhan@equalitycoaching.co.uk)  
 [equalitycoaching.co.uk](http://equalitycoaching.co.uk)



EQuality Consulting and Coaching Ltd provides strategic HR consultancy services and leadership coaching to organisations. We specialise in delivering value-added human resources support, helping businesses optimize their people management practices while developing effective leaders and teams through professional coaching programs.





## Hive – Virtual Assistant

 Tania Machado  
 07521 298162  
 [tania@hive-va.com](mailto:tania@hive-va.com)  
 [hive-va.com](http://hive-va.com)



As a Virtual Assistant, my focus is on streamlining your business operations. I handle administrative tasks, manage schedules, and optimize workflows, allowing you to focus on growth and innovation. With personalized support, I ensure your business runs smoothly and efficiently, freeing up your time to focus on what matters most.



## face2faceHR Bedford

 Mary Hill  
 07922 599915  
 [Mary.hill@face2facehr.com](mailto:Mary.hill@face2facehr.com)  
 [face2facehr.com/consultants/hr-consultant-bedford](http://face2facehr.com/consultants/hr-consultant-bedford)



As an HR Consultant with over 20 years of experience, I provide tailored support to small businesses, helping navigate key HR challenges like investigations, disciplinarys, grievances, and restructuring. Offering ad-hoc advice, outsourced projects, or affordable monthly retainers, I ensure your people matters are in safe hands. Free HR checkup available!

## MarMir Solutions

 Marcel Suciu  
 [marcel.suciu@marmirsolutions.co.uk](mailto:marcel.suciu@marmirsolutions.co.uk)  
 [marmirsolutions.co.uk](http://marmirsolutions.co.uk)



MarMir Solutions, a brand new company in UK's Freight Forwarding market devoted to deliver reliable, timely, and secure freight solutions tailored to customer needs. Having strong partnerships with international carriers and local logistics providers, the company ensures seamless and cost-effective global shipping solutions. Also, MarMir Solutions leads in reducing the carbon footprint through sustainable shipping options and green initiatives.





## Howden, Bletchley Office

 Kevin Henman  
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 [howdeninsurance.co.uk/Bletchley](http://howdeninsurance.co.uk/Bletchley)



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## NC Supplies Limited (Nordic Chem)

 Matthew Cooper  
 07305 075993  
 [matthew@nordicchem.com](mailto:matthew@nordicchem.com)  
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## Small Acts of Kindness

👤 Sarah Neighbour  
✉️ [sarah@smallactsofkindness.co.uk](mailto:sarah@smallactsofkindness.co.uk)  
📍 [smallactsofkindness.co.uk](http://smallactsofkindness.co.uk)



We're a charitable organisation reducing loneliness and isolation for vulnerable, older people, with a particular interest in helping those who are cold in their homes. Sourcing, packing and distributing practical gifts and information, we offer volunteer opportunities, working with community and corporate partners, reaching thousands of people every year.

## SMEB

👤 Liam Carroll  
☎️ 01256 962427 | 07904262535  
✉️ [hello@smeb.co.uk](mailto:hello@smeb.co.uk)  
📍 [smeb.co.uk](http://smeb.co.uk)



SMEB is a fintech with a big difference, we love cash! SMEB provides cash deposit solutions to replace bank branches with our SMEB Cube. This provides financial connectivity along with the ability to deposit daily takings. SMEB's aim is to be the financial services provider of choice for all SMEs. For more information contact: [hello@smeb.co.uk](mailto:hello@smeb.co.uk). SMEB is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), 984694

## The Grange, 1906

👤 Jennie Moore  
☎️ 07977 440201  
✉️ [jennie@thegrange1906.co.uk](mailto:jennie@thegrange1906.co.uk)  
📍 [thegrange1906.co.uk](http://thegrange1906.co.uk)



A luxury location house in the Bedfordshire countryside. Whether you are looking for a picturesque setting for filming & photography, a stunning event venue, or a professional retreat space, we have it covered. We work with you to turn your vision into a reality and create a unique experience.

## Quest Employment Ltd

👤 Mardi Cather  
☎️ 01234 358844  
✉️ [mardi.cather@questemployment.co.uk](mailto:mardi.cather@questemployment.co.uk)  
📍 [questemployment.co.uk](http://questemployment.co.uk)



Quest Employment is a leading recruitment agency in Bedford, providing tailored staffing solutions across various sectors, including industrial and commercial roles. We specialise in temporary, permanent, and contract placements, connecting local job seekers with businesses. Known for our personalised approach, Quest Employment supports Bedford's workforce and recruitment needs effectively

## Veggie Crush Meal Prep Ltd

👤 Monika Czuj  
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📍 [veggiecrush.co.uk](http://veggiecrush.co.uk)



Veggie Crush is a plant-based meal prep company dedicated to making healthy eating easy and enjoyable for busy individuals seeking to make positive lifestyle changes. We offer fresh, nutritionally balanced meals designed to support your health, energy, and wellness goals, with flexible subscriptions and expert nutritional guidance. Committed to sustainability, we're based in Bedfordshire and expanding to nationwide delivery soon, making it simpler to stay healthy wherever you are.

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representative



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# New MEMBERS



We would like to extend a very warm welcome to all **New MEMBERS** of the Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce. You can learn more about becoming a member and all of the associated benefits by calling us now on 01582 522448 or by emailing your enquiry to [info@chamber-business.com](mailto:info@chamber-business.com)

## **BW Bookkeeping and Project Solutions**

[www.bwbps.co.uk](http://www.bwbps.co.uk)

Bookkeeping practice.

## **Champneys Henlow**

[champneys.com/spa-resorts/henlow](http://champneys.com/spa-resorts/henlow)

Bedfordshire Spa Resort – Champneys Henlow blends timeless elegance with contemporary wellness, creating a haven of peace and rejuvenation.

## **Changes Forever Ltd**

[julienew.co.uk](http://julienew.co.uk)

Grief and sudden loss recovery – helping people to navigate life after life has changed forever.

## **CRD One Ltd**

[www.crdone.digital](http://www.crdone.digital)

We're a Bedford based search marketing agency dedicated to helping businesses become more visible in search engines.

## **EQuality Consulting & Coaching**

[equalitycoaching.co.uk](http://equalitycoaching.co.uk)

Professional human resource services, HR consulting and Coaching.

## **face2faceHR Bedford**

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## **Hamberley Care Homes**

[www.hamberleycarehomes.co.uk/care-homes/elstow-manor-care-home](http://www.hamberleycarehomes.co.uk/care-homes/elstow-manor-care-home)

Elstow Manor Care Home provides residential care, dementia care, nursing care and respite care for older people in Bedford. Elstow Manor is a luxury care home with a heart, where older people can enjoy life in a welcoming community.

## **Hive VA**

[www.linkedin.com/in/hive-va](http://www.linkedin.com/in/hive-va)

Virtual Assistant

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## **Howe To Consultancy**

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Learning & Development for Students, Schools & Professionals.

## **MarMir Solutions**

[www.marmirsolutions.com](http://www.marmirsolutions.com)

MarMir Solutions is a UK-based freight forwarding company dedicated to providing comprehensive and personalised logistics services across international borders. We support businesses by coordinating the entire import or export process, including customs clearance, compliance, documentation handling, and transport solutions that minimise costs and delivery times.

## **Nordic Chem**

[nordicchem.com/en\\_gb/#](http://nordicchem.com/en_gb/#)

Nordic Chem 2.0 is an advanced antimicrobial and ceramic coating that enhances surface aesthetics while providing long-term protection against pathogens and contaminants. It repels dirt and water, improves hygiene, and reduces cleaning costs. Committed to sustainability, it helps businesses minimise chemical use and waste, supporting their Carbon Net Zero objectives.

## **Peerless-AV Ltd**

[eu.peerless-av.com](http://eu.peerless-av.com)

Designer and manufacturer of AV solutions.

## **Plug Me In**

[www.plugmein.com](http://www.plugmein.com)

Plug Me In are helping the whole of the UK switch to smarter, cleaner energy. We remove the hassle from the installation of EV Chargers, heat pumps, solar PV and battery solutions and what's more we can even maintain them for you.

## **Quest Employment**

[www.questemployment.co.uk/branches/recruitment-agency-in-bedford/10](http://www.questemployment.co.uk/branches/recruitment-agency-in-bedford/10)

Cost effective and flexible recruitment packages along with honesty and integrity.

## **Shine Learning**

**& Training Centre CIC**

[shineltc.com](http://shineltc.com)

Shine Learning & Training Centre CIC which aims to make a difference to the life outcomes of students who find mainstream education challenging.

## **Silicon Valets**

[siliconvalets.co.uk](http://siliconvalets.co.uk)

Multi-discipline marketing agency providing effective, creative solutions for our clients large and small.

## **Small Acts of Kindness**

[www.smallactsofkindness.co.uk](http://www.smallactsofkindness.co.uk)

Charitable organisation reducing loneliness and isolation for older and vulnerable people, one small act of kindness at a time. We source, pack and distribute helpful gifts and information, connecting communities with kindness.

## **SMEB Limited**

[www.smeb.co.uk](http://www.smeb.co.uk)

SMEB has been created to address the void left for SMEs in rural locations SMEB is an authorised payment institution. SMEB is a Principle member with VIA & Mastercard SMEB is licenced for Open Banking services, creating a payment microenvironment in rural locations.

## **The Grange 1906**

[www.thegrange1906.co.uk](http://www.thegrange1906.co.uk)

A luxury location house nestled in the Bedfordshire countryside. Whether you seek a picturesque setting for filming and photography, a stunning backdrop for your event, or a professional retreat space, we have everything you need to make your vision a reality.

## **Veggie Crush**

[www.veggiecrush.co.uk](http://www.veggiecrush.co.uk)

Your healthy vegan and vegetarian meal prep service, catering & wellbeing partner.

## **Watton Recruitment Ltd**

[wattonrecruitment.com](http://wattonrecruitment.com)

Specialist recruitment services for the commercial and industrial sectors.

## **Yellow Media**

[yellowmedia.uk](http://yellowmedia.uk)

Yellow Media provides training solutions to Small Businesses and Start-Ups across Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, including LinkedIn Training, Start-Up Business Workshops and dedicated I.T and Lightboarding Training, all from our purpose-built studios in Northampton, as well as offering online courses and webinars.

## **Young Enterprise**

[www.young-enterprise.org.uk](http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk)

Motivating young people to succeed in the changing world of work by equipping them with the work skills, knowledge and confidence they need.





# CHUMS CHARITY GOLF DAY SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

**CHUMS Charity Golf Day is a fabulous way to enjoy the sport, experience the challenge of the rolling Chiltern hills, and support children and young people with mental health needs in the process.**

We are delighted to announce another Golfing Experience at the Bedfordshire Golf Club, on **Thursday 1st May 2025**, four-ball spaces are available to reserve now, so hurry and book now. Email: [claire.feasey@chumscharity.org.uk](mailto:claire.feasey@chumscharity.org.uk).

Located in the North Bedfordshire countryside Bedfordshire Golf Club was established in 1891. It is the oldest golf club in the county, and offers a beautiful and challenging championship course and elegant club house. CHUMS Charity Golf Days are well attended and marketed, so sponsoring this event is an effective opportunity to raise brand exposure and awareness, helping you to reach potential new clients.

With opportunities to suit all budgets, this is an exciting and accessible opportunity for businesses big and small.

## This year we are offering the following excellent packages

- Have your logo and a message included in our community / corporate pack for 12 months. **£350.00**
- Sponsor the prizes for the raffle/auction (logo & website on prize list). **£300.00**
- Sponsor the refreshments buggy for the day. **£250.00**
- Sponsor the Beat the Pro competition. **£200.00**
- Sponsor a hole with your Company logo displayed. **£100.00** per hole
- Donate a prize for the raffle/auction **£50**

## Book your sponsorship package today.

To make the most of one of our exciting sponsorship opportunities, contact Claire Feasey:

[claire.feasey@chumscharity.org.uk](mailto:claire.feasey@chumscharity.org.uk)



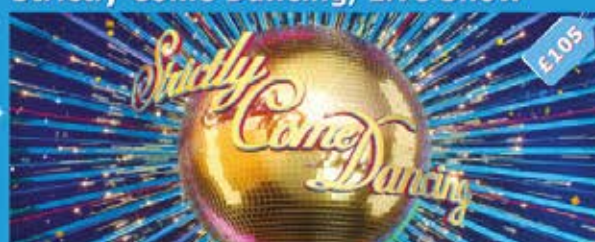


**Three Star Coaches.com**  
**2025 DAY TRIPS**  
**MORE TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON**

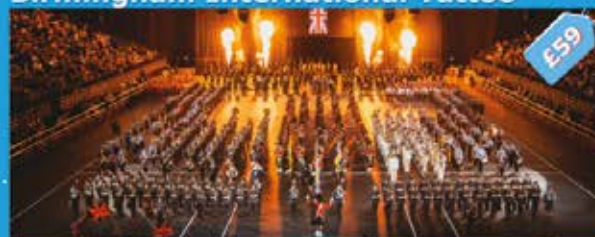
**Sunday 5th January**  
**Robin Hood, London Palladium**



**Sunday 19th January**  
**Strictly Come Dancing, Live Show**



**Sunday 9th February**  
**Birmingham International Tattoo**



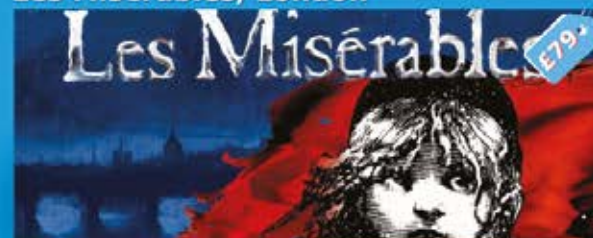
**Tuesday 18th February**  
**Kew Gardens, Orchids Festival**



**Sunday 23rd February**  
**Abba Voyage, London**



**Thursday 6th March**  
**Les Miserables, London**



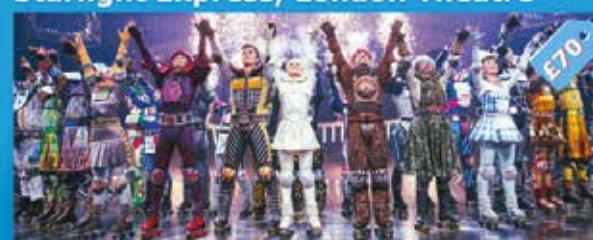
**Wednesday 16th April**  
**Wicked the Musical**



**Saturday 10th May**  
**André Rieu, Resorts World Arena**



**Thursday 15th May**  
**Starlight Express, London Theatre**



**SECURE YOUR SPACE WITH A 50% DEPOSIT**

SCAN



For detailed information, visit our website or contact us on:

**01582 722626**

