

BUSINESS focus

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together.**

**Working together,
achieving more.**

Official Magazine of Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce

Autumn 2021

Luton comes up Trunks



 **Keech**
hospice care

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03

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BUSINESS
focus

Official Magazine of Bedfordshire
Chamber of Commerce

Our Partners



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Big Trunk Trail - 'Inspiring Hope'
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Welcome

Business Post-Pandemic: Recovery is Not Enough!

As our economic research and analysis shows, the UK economy has suffered an enormous shock since March 2020. While the figures speak for themselves, they cannot convey the cold, hard reality of life as a business owner over the past 18 months. While some businesses have been able to innovate and find a way through these difficult times, others have found themselves burning through cash reserves just to keep their heads above water.

As we emerge from months of restrictions which have seen huge swathes of business communities closed entirely, or operating with restricted capacity and depleted demand, positive action is needed to enable businesses in all sectors, and of all shapes and sizes, to accelerate their recovery and return the UK to growth and prosperity.

However, recovery from the pandemic is not the only challenge that businesses face: skills and labour shortages, rising costs, and the climate challenge were all issues top of mind for business before the crisis hit. In rebuilding our economy, we must take the opportunity to not only recover from the damage caused by the pandemic, but to also begin to tackle these long-standing issues, which have remained unresolved for too many years.

Bedfordshire Chamber is actively engaged in all these areas and contributing your views in local, regional, and national forums to ensure your voice is heard by those making the decisions about the road ahead.

Looking at that road ahead, we have two exciting announcements to make. The first is we have launched a new service within our Global Trade Services portfolio and can now offer T1 transit documents to exporters. The document allows goods to travel from the UK to an EU destination country without the need to make a declaration at the first port of entry. It means we can ensure your time-sensitive supply chains move efficiently and smoothly, avoiding additional costs through delays or errors.

Secondly, we have set the date of the 13th October for our next 'Meet the Buyer' event. We have a number of buyers lined up to discuss their procurement needs, giving members the opportunity to pitch directly for buyers' specific purchasing requirements. Our previous event saw 122 opportunities open up for local businesses and so the October event is definitely not to be missed. This event will be online, but, hopefully, we'll all be able to meet at a face-to-face event very soon.

#workingtogether #achievingmore

Justin Richardson

Chief Executive

Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce



focuscontent

- 4 **CHAIRMAN'S VIEW**
Richard Cooper, Chairman of Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce
- 5 **CHAMBER NEWS**
News and updates from Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce
- 7 **ECONOMIC REPORT**
Our quarterly financial report review
- 8 **MEMBER NEWS**
Bedfordshire Chamber members share their news and developments
- 16 **MEMBER PROFILES**
Learn more about our recently joined members
- 18 **NEW MEMBERS**
New businesses that have joined Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce

Working together, achieving more.

www.chamber-business.com | 03



Richard Cooper
Chairman of Bedfordshire
Chamber of Commerce

“What is certain now is that business strategies – in particular marketing – must be urgently revisited, regularly revisited in the future and flexed wherever necessary – and some will find this a challenge they need help with.”

The Chairman's View

While the relaxation of Covid restrictions continues, the mood across businesses is mixed, with stories of success, cautious optimism and still – in some sectors – concern.

To a degree, the outlook is indeed positive. If Covid restrictions continue to reduce, our own research indicates that the forecast for UK GDP growth will be 6.8% for 2021 – the strongest out-turn since official records began in 1949. The economy is then expected to return to its pre-pandemic level in Q1 2022, with projected annual growth of 5.1%.

However, as I indicated in last summer's issue, “business as usual” could look very different now and we must all be prepared for post-Covid market changes and challenges.

The marketplace itself has changed radically for many. Competitive positions have shifted, new alliances have been forged, new players have emerged and, regrettably, some others have disappeared. How to navigate a landscape that is simultaneously lacking the old certainties but replete with new potential?

And in a marketing universe that, in many sectors, has almost entirely ‘gone digital’ (an established trend accelerated by the pandemic), how will businesses use technology to understand and build trust with buyers now that opportunities for in-person interaction already sometimes feel extinct?

In short, what is certain now is that business strategies – in particular marketing – must be urgently revisited, regularly revisited in the future and flexed wherever necessary – and some will find this a challenge they need help with.

That said, we're no strangers in this county to staring challenges down and doing some good along the way, and nowhere has this been clearer than in the Chamber's UK Business Heroes campaign that, in January 2021, recognised the outstanding work of many local businesses in supporting communities during the pandemic. United in adversity, nothing can keep us down for long!

On that note, I am confident the Chamber will return to face-to-face events soon. In the meantime, our online events continue apace, and we are still your first port of call for support and advice as the dark 18 months we have all endured hopefully give way to (to quote Churchill) the “broad sunlit uplands” of a new start.

Let's all raise a glass to that.

Engineering Bursary Award 2021

Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce working together with David Sheridan of Veruth Holdings on the Engineering Bursary scheme which is now in its 12th year had a record number of entries this year. The bursary of £15,000 is awarded to a Luton student who is going on to university to study engineering.



With restrictions still in place due to COVID-19, Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce hosted the award ceremony virtually on the afternoon of Thursday 10th June. The Chamber welcomed David Sheridan, Brian Hibbert, students and representatives from Luton Sixth Form, The Shared Learning Trust and Cardinal Newman Catholic School to the presentation. This year's winner, Summer Villas from Cardinal Newman Catholic School, said: “I was so shocked, I have no words to describe how happy I am.”

Rosa Palmiero, Careers Guidance Counsellor at Cardinal Newman, said: “Congratulations Summer, we look forward to hearing all about your experiences in Sheffield and wish you all the best. We also wish to thank the team at Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce for their continued support of our college students.”

David Sheridan of Veruth Holdings said: “We are delighted that the winner Summer, means that over the years 6 boys and 6 girls have so far been awarded bursaries. It was a tough decision for the five judges, and we were very impressed by many of the entries. It is pleasing to see more young people see a long, valuable, and challenging career in the many fields of engineering. Veruth Holdings is delighted to be involved with the Chamber in promoting and encouraging this bursary to 6th formers in Luton. We shall look forward to judging next year's fascinating entries.”

 **Veruth Holdings**
actively investing in trading activities



Do you have
enough on your
plate running a
business?

A smart meter
could help



Running your very own restaurant, coffee shop or bar might be a dream, but you are up against huge competition, and it can be tough out there. For survival and success, you may want to consider the following:

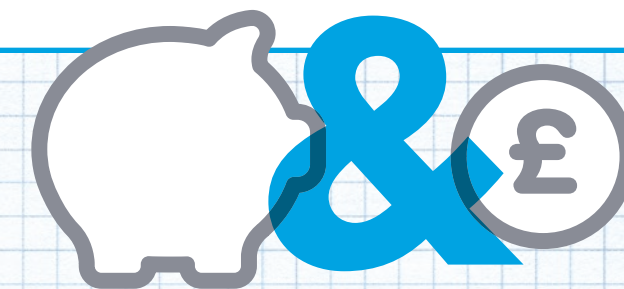
- Find your niche: small independents can compete with the big chains – but you need to find your USP. How are you different?
- Location is key: aim for areas of high footfall with few competing businesses nearby
- Build the right team: you need to find great staff who can deliver outstanding customer service – you can't do it on your own
- Pick your suppliers carefully: your customers will only turn into regulars if you're offering quality food and drink
- And finally, don't forget your bottom line: you also need keep an eye on regular outgoings such as your energy bills

Energy is a key expense for small catering businesses which makes it a crucial area for these businesses to save money and take control of their finances. Smart meters could give businesses additional visibility over energy use and costs to make it easier to identify where changes and savings can be made. In addition, sustainability is a key focus for many businesses across Great Britain – the smart meter rollout is predicted to reduce CO2 emissions by an estimated 34.4m tonnes – so by getting smart meters installed in your business you're helping achieve this, making your business that bit more sustainable.

Your smart meter works as hard as you do. Running an independent coffee shop, bar or restaurant is a round-the-clock job and supplying your energy readings is often not a top priority. Smart meters send your gas and electricity readings directly to your energy supplier, saving you time to focus on other jobs. Firms with 10 employees or less could be eligible and installations can be arranged at a convenient time to ensure minimal interruption to your business and your clients.

Contact your energy supplier
or broker today and see if you
are eligible.





Quarterly Economic Survey Report

Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Economic Survey (QES) forms part of the British Chamber of Commerce's national survey and is the principal business survey in the UK. Its results are closely watched by both the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee and the Treasury. The data reveals a timely and accurate snapshot for the economic climate for businesses in Bedfordshire and beyond.

Our latest results have been published and the outcome for Q2 2021 saw improvements across the board from the previous quarter.

- Local businesses showed that some key indicators, such as domestic sales, business confidence and investment intentions, displayed significant rises, as more companies reported improved business conditions.
- Cashflow saw significant improvements compared to the previous quarter.
- However, it also showed rises in the number of manufacturers expecting to raise prices, with inflation being cited as a cause for concern.

The Bottom Line

To see the report in full please visit www.chamber-business.com

A sweet spot for the economy?

Responding to the findings, Head of Economics at the British Chambers of Commerce, Suren Thiru, said:

"Our latest survey points to a striking rebound in underlying economic conditions in the second quarter."

"The UK economy is in a sweet spot right now with the rapid vaccine rollout, the release of pent-up demand as restrictions eased and ongoing government support driving a strong revival in indicators of activity in the quarter."

"The rebound in services activity was distinctly two-paced, with business services providers recording the biggest gains in the quarter while consumer-focused services firms, where the remaining restrictions most limit activity, saw the smallest improvements. Manufacturers enjoyed a notably strong three months, despite ongoing supply chain disruption."

"The historic uptick in price expectations suggests that inflation will drift markedly higher over the near term. However, with our results also showing little evidence that higher inflation is becoming embedded in higher pay settlements, the MPC should have sufficient scope to tolerate a marked period of above target inflation."

"The upturn in forward-looking indicators points to a summer economic rebound. However, the second quarter may be the high point for the UK economy with momentum likely to fade somewhat later this year when Government support ends and the transient boost from the economy reopening dissipates."



Suren Thiru
Head of Economics at the British
Chambers of Commerce

Peli BioThermal Presented with UK Business Hero Award

Company receives prestigious award at official ceremony in recognition of its pandemic response

Peli BioThermal, the global name in temperature controlled packaging solutions, is celebrating officially receiving its UK Business Hero Award.

An award ceremony was staged at Peli BioThermal in Leighton Buzzard, where the accolade was officially presented to the company on behalf of the British Chambers of Commerce, which acknowledged "the incredible work UK businesses have been doing to support local communities, innovate and meet new demands during the Coronavirus pandemic".

The award presentation was conducted by Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive, Justin Richardson and Chamber Chairman Richard Cooper. Mr Richardson announced Peli BioThermal were one of just 110 businesses in the UK to receive the prestigious UK Business Hero accolade out of 55,000 chamber members. The company was one of only 10 based in Bedfordshire who were recipients of the award, which he said recognised "civic minded business giving back in a time when a lot of people needed help".

Mr Richardson added: "As a chamber of commerce we want to thank Peli BioThermal for everything you are giving back to the local community and say very well done. We are proud to have your organisation in our network."

Peli BioThermal were selected as a UK Business Hero following a campaign by the British Chambers of Commerce alongside the local Chamber network, which

saw the company receive royal recognition with a letter of congratulations from HRH The Countess of Wessex GCVO, who supported the campaign.

The company was nominated for the accolade for its efforts during the pandemic which included loaning some of its award-winning temperature controlled shippers to help with the delivery of essential pharmaceuticals direct to the homes of housebound patients during the coronavirus crisis. The company's products continue to play a critical part in the ongoing global pandemic response, including the safe transportation of vital vaccines worldwide.

Paul Terry, Peli BioThermal's Director of Sales EMEA, said: "We are delighted and honoured to officially receive this prestigious UK Business Hero award. It is in recognition of all the extensive efforts of everyone at the company who continue to provide essential support locally and globally throughout the pandemic."

Dan Turney, Warehouse Supervisor at Peli BioThermal, added: "This award represents the hard work put in throughout the pandemic and lockdowns. It gives the teams a sense of reward seeing our products being used around the world including protecting payloads being delivered to vaccination centres. All the extra hours and hard work is worth it when you see our products making a difference nationally and globally."

Visit www.pelibiothermal.com to learn more about the wide range of Peli BioThermal products and offerings.

Member News



Have you herd? The Big Trunk Trail is in town!

A herd of more than seventy beautifully decorated elephants have taken up residence in Luton for the biggest, brightest public art trail Bedfordshire has ever seen. The free, family-friendly outdoor installation has unleashed the gorgeous creatures across the town's parks and landmarks, including Wardown Park, the Town Hall, Stockwood Country Park and in multiple locations across the town centre.

The elephants will be on parade until 8 October as Keech Hospice Care's way of saying thank you in their 30th anniversary year to everyone who has supported them through the decades. When the Trail draws to a close, the unique works of art will be sold at auction to raise vital funds to keep the hospice caring into the future.

Each of the thirty-two large elephants has kindly been sponsored by a local business or organisation including event partners, London Luton Airport Ltd., The Mall Luton, University of Bedfordshire, Luton BID and AiSolve. The entire event has been made possible by tremendous support from Project Presenting Partner, Love Luton. Other big names with their own decorated elephants include Great British Bake Off champion, Nadiya Hussain and the charity established in the name of the local fundraising hero, The Captain Tom Foundation. Some of the artists also have strong local links, like Luton born, former Turner Prize nominee, Mark Titchner whose best known works include 'Beacon' at the Hat Factory.

The forty-one baby elephants in the herd have been decorated by local schools and community groups as part of the Big Trunk Trail learning programme, thanks to generous support from Trail Partners, The University of Bedfordshire and London Luton Airport Ltd. The schools and groups have all been fundraising furiously and their calves are together in groups at six indoor locations including The Mall, The Hat Factory, Wardown Museum and the Central Library.

A special map has been created to guide people on their elephant safari around the trail. Copies are available (with a suggested £1 donation) from The Keech Hospice Care Park Street shop, Luton Central Library and The Big Trunk Trail "gift shop" in The Mall. The map can also be followed in the Interactive Fun section of the special Keech Connect app which is packed with useful and fun elements. It shows where the elephants are, how to get to them and how long it will take. Visitors can keep track of how many of the colourful creatures they've seen and take advantage of some excellent money-off coupons for use in local shops. And, there are some wonderful Augmented Reality enhancements that the kids will love.

As part of this unforgettable experience, there will also be the chance for people to own an elephant of their own when the trail draws to an end. Although the elephants will be withdrawn from their places on the Trail on 8th October, there will be two final opportunities to view the herd en masse at Farewell Events at ZSL Whipsnade Zoo (22-28 October) and Stockwood Park (30 October-7 November). The small elephant sculptures will then return to their respective schools and community groups, whilst large elephant sculptures will be prepared for auction on 11 November, with all the proceeds helping Keech Hospice Care continue its vital work, caring for adults in Luton and south Bedfordshire and children from Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Milton Keynes with life-limiting and terminal illnesses.

For anyone wishing to help the charity during the Trail, donations can be made via the Keech Connect app or by texting trunk to 70470 to make an instant £3 donation (£3 donation plus standard rate message).

For more information on donating or participating in the auction visit The Big Trunk Trail website www.bigtrunktrail.co.uk or follow the herd on social media @BigTrunkTrail, #BigTrunkTrail.



An Olympic victory for IT

In the same week Team GB were winning medals in Tokyo, Leighton Buzzard based IT firm, JamCrackers scored an outstanding double victory of their own at the National SME Business Awards. The awards, Silver for Best Customer Service, and Gold for Service Excellence, come just weeks after the Bedfordshire IT company scooped an amazing four further awards at the Luton and Bedfordshire SME Awards.

We never expected this one

As anyone who owns or runs an SME will know, to win one SME Business Award is a great achievement, and an exciting opportunity to gain some extra exposure. But, to win six awards, including two National Awards in the same year, is a dream come true, or as JamCracker's MD, Richard Latimer put it, 'We are actually blown away.'

10 years in the making

The team have recently celebrated 10 years since JamCrackers was formed. A decade which has seen the business grow from a one-man IT repair shop at the kitchen table, to a leading, 'multi award-winning', IT support service.

So, why does JamCrackers stand out from the crowd?

Much of JamCrackers success comes from providing customers with the personal service many of their competitors don't offer. Phone JamCrackers and you get straight through to a helpful IT engineer, not put in a frustrating, impersonal ticketing system. This simple, yet rare approach in the world of IT, has helped JamCrackers gain a loyal and varied client base, plus widespread industry recognition

Where next for JC?

For Richard and the JamCrackers team, it's business as usual - providing their growing number of business and personal clients with a whole host of professional IT services at their new, HQ at Leighton Industrial Park, Billington Road.

To find out more about the SME Business Awards visit smenationalbusinessawards.co.uk, or to discover how JamCrackers could help your business, visit jamcrackers.co.uk today.

Get Staffed

Get Staffed are a small team of online recruitment specialists - dedicated to providing a more straightforward and cost-effective recruitment experience to every organisation that we work with.

Having worked for traditional recruitment agencies in the past, we noticed there was a need for a company to find great candidates online without charging such extortionate fees. Get Staffed was created to do just that. We work closely with our clients, advertising their vacancies to millions of potential candidates across the best job boards like Indeed, Reed, Monster, Jobsite and Totaljobs to attract the best talent.

As an increasing number of people are also using social media to find new jobs, we also promote all our vacancies across Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram to attract more candidates to every role.

We constantly adapt our service to suit our clients' needs, whether that's advertising on premium boards like Guardian Jobs or targeting different sectors like Finance, Care, and IT/Tech on specialised sites - we will do whatever we can to attract more candidates and keep our customers happy.

Tired of trawling through hundreds of applications? We also offer a more complete recruitment service where we can shortlist your best candidates based on behaviour assessments, skills and personality testing, and even video interviews so you only take the best people forward for final interviews. There's so much more you can use to decide if someone will be a good fit for your company as opposed to just a CV.

Interested? We would love to hear from you, please give us a call on 01234 816741 or send us an email on info@get-staffed.com

Member News



Central Bedfordshire College Engineers the Future with Amazon

Engineering students at Central Bedfordshire College are thrilled to have the opportunity to extend their practical industry knowledge using top-of-the-range machines donated by Amazon.

Former Central Bedfordshire College student, Edward Waymark, now works as a Senior Reliability Maintenance Engineering Technician for Amazon. Having kickstarted his career with an apprenticeship through the college, Mr Waymark kindly coordinated the donation of a lathe, a milling machine and a grinding station with vacuum to his alma mater. He visited the students at Central Bedfordshire College's dedicated engineering and motor vehicle campus on Luton Road to present the machines and speak to the students about how his college experience prepared him for his career with Amazon.

Central Bedfordshire College Principal and CEO, Dr Ali Hadawi CBE, commented: "We are delighted to see a former student of the college doing so well in his career and eager to give back to the college with such a thoughtful donation and to strengthen our link with Amazon, which will benefit our students immensely."

Learning Area Manager for Technology and the Built Environment, Louise Marriott, added: "This extraordinarily generous donation from Amazon has been fantastic for our students, who are now using the machines daily for training and assessment."

Central Bedfordshire College is a Further Education College currently celebrating 60 years at the heart of the Bedfordshire community since its founding in 1961. The college aims to provide the skills and qualifications that are needed in the local area and to enable students to achieve their maximum potential with strong support, integrity and love of learning.



Burton Smith appoint local man as new commercial manager

Burton Smith Limited are pleased to announce that Simon James has joined the team as the new Commercial manager for the company, Simon brings over 30 years of experience working in the commercial and industrial plumbing heating and building services field.



Toby Burton, Managing Director of Burton Smith Limited, said: "We are delighted in welcoming Simon to the team, we are looking to expand our business opportunities in the commercial and industrial environment. We are ideally placed in Central Bedfordshire to provide services and support to local business in all their heating, ventilations and building services requirements. Simon brings a wealth of experience, and all the team are looking forward to working with him".

Burton Smith was established in 2017 and have quickly built up a reputation for outstanding workmanship at competitive prices and have already won many contracts including a large insurance company, a major UK distribution company in Swindon, a sheltered housing scheme in Westminster as well as working locally in Cambridge at the Corn Exchange and Guildhall.

These contracts included carrying out routine planned servicing along with emergency plumbing, building fabric repairs, heating installation and a complete boiler room refurbishments along with rerunning external gas supplies to 3 large blocks of flats in Cambridge.

To find out what we can do for you visit www.burton-smith.com or call Simon on 01462 412022



High Hopes for PragmatIQ Solutions

PragmatIQ Solutions have been named as one of three finalists at the SME MK & Buckinghamshire Awards 2021, in the High Growth Business of the Year category. The SME MK & Buckinghamshire Awards 2021 recognises businesses from across the county who are demonstrating excellence in their sector. The category acknowledges high growth firms who are racing ahead and contributing to employment growth.

Managing director Stuart Goldwater said: "We pride ourselves on delivering bespoke technology solutions that solve real problems and make a difference, for businesses in the local area and further afield. To be recognised in this category is a real privilege and credit to the team."

Over the last few years, PragmatIQ has seen huge success across all areas of the business, from growing the team to surpassing all revenue targets. Their most recent achievement was being recognised as a Microsoft Gold Partner - the highest status available for Microsoft Partners, which is only held by a small percentage of businesses worldwide. The winners will be announced on 9 September. Visit: www.buckinghamshireawards.co.uk/categories/2021-finalists-2/

Can you spare 10 minutes to help inspire local young people?

Aspire Higher comprising of University of Bedfordshire, University of Hertfordshire and University of Northampton have created a regular series titled 'Meet the Employer' in our monthly newsletter.

We feature a different employer every month. We have joined up with SEMLEP and Luton Careers to ask local employers to create a short 5 to 10 minute video. The video will be promoted in our newsletters and on our websites. This can be free publicity for your company and a great resource for local young people.

The aim of these videos is to inform and inspire young people about the opportunities locally, the skills sought by employers and help clarify the relevance of their education to the world of work.

If you are interested and able to help you can either record yourself on a mobile phone or computer. Alternatively, I can set up an online meeting where I can ask you a series of questions and record you answering them.

The video will give you a chance to explain your organisation, what you do day to day and why you chose your careers. We have a series of suggested questions to answer. In particular we would like something you wish you knew at school before choosing your career.

If you are interested in taking part and would like more details please contact colleen.galley@beds.ac.uk.



As of 1st April 2021
YMCA Bedfordshire has rebranded as
IMPACT HOUSING & SUPPORT

Same incredible organisation, new name.
www.impact.org.uk
hello@impact.org.uk

All our sub projects have also had a facelift!

Member News



Jewers Opens New Purpose-Built Headquarters

Staff at Biggleswade-based Jewers Doors have moved into their new purpose-built factory and office building this week after only a 26 week build programme. The new premises at Juno Place on Stratton Business Park comprises 45,700 sqft of factory and over 12,000 sqft of office space, more than double the size of their old site only a quarter of a mile away.

An opening ceremony was held on Tuesday 22nd June attended by all the staff. Managing Director, Chris Jewers, gave a speech on the origins of the company and the significant growth that had been made over the years. Founder and Chairman, Nigel Jewers, cut the ceremonial ribbon.

Chris commented: "This is a hugely proud moment for the family, the company and our amazing employees, all of whom have worked incredibly hard to put the business in a position where we have been able to make this happen".

Designed by Woods Hardwick's commercial architecture team, constructed by Parkway Construction of Milton Keynes and overseen internally by Directors Ben Chowdhary and Jonathan Jewers, these outstanding new premises were finished and handed over to Jewers on time on 29th March – an impressive achievement given that it was built whilst managing the challenges of a global pandemic.

The new building is highly insulated with energy efficient heating and cooling systems in both the factory and offices. The offices have a heat recovery system which maintains fresh air around the building while minimising heat loss. There are over 200 M² of photovoltaic panels on the roof capable of generating over 42kW of power and with plenty of space to expand in the future. Excess electricity can be fed back into the National Grid. Low energy LED lights which are sensor controlled are fitted throughout factory and offices – not a light switch in the building. There are 8 EV charging points for employees in anticipation of the uptake in electric and hybrid vehicles and with provision to easily increase this number in the future.

Established in 1983 and still a family-run business, Jewers had been at their previous headquarters since 1993. But with the workforce growing and now with offices to support in the Middle East, North America and Europe, they made the decision to construct a purpose designed workshop and offices to design and manufacture their range of industrial sliding folding doors, aircraft hangar doors and bespoke industrial door solutions.

The Esavian range of sliding and folding doors are in service on every continent and in more than 40 countries. They are the most advanced hangar door system in the world and remain the premium choice for commercial airlines, military, MROs, FBOs and Royalty.

Recent prestigious projects include the supply and installation of a pair of 70 metres high, bespoke hinged doors on the mobile gantry for the European Space Agency's Ariane 6 space rocket in French Guiana. The 2 lower leaves weigh a staggering 45 tonnes each and the upper leaves 16 tonnes each. And a current order to supply and install 9 sets of Esavian Type 126 power operated steel sliding hangar doors for the Turkmenistan Presidential hangars at Ashgabat Airport in Turkmenistan is being overseen by their office in Turkey.

Jewers also continues to win orders for the UK Armed Forces and military customers around the world with the Gulf States being their biggest export market.

Mark Jewers, Director for the Phoenix division, commented: "The company is buzzing about the new facilities and the future for industrial folding doors. We have a state of the art 8m long panel press being installed this month, and our new powder coating plant will hugely improve the quality and service we are able to provide for our folding sliding doors."

www.jewersdoors.co.uk



Double Award Winners

Imagefix is delighted to have been the recipient of two awards at the recent SME Luton and Bedfordshire Business Awards. Our wonderful apprentice, Reece Hornblower, won the Gold Winner Award for 'Apprentice of the Year', and Imagefix won the Silver Winner Award for Bedford Business of the Year.

Established by Garry West and Tina Loan back in 2006, Imagefix has its roots in the digital design and marketing industries. Now, the team helps local SMEs win business, through the use of creative website design and digital marketing. Clients include start-ups needing a logo, collateral and their first website, and SME's looking to grow their business and improve their brand identity. The focus is always on creative ways to grow sales of either services or products.

Creative Director, Garry West comments on the Imagefix approach: "We've been through the process of building a business ourselves. We just want to do the same for our customers – and we get something out of it too – as Bedfordians we want to see the place where we live and do business thrive."

The work we do at Imagefix is all about maintaining relationships. We take time with every single client to get to know their business, their customer base, and the passion which underlies all their hard work. Successful design and digital marketing depends on us knowing what drives a company. Once we know their story, we work with them to develop the design or marketing package that will best help them meet their sales targets and goals.

At Imagefix our goal is to build long-term professional partnerships. Most of our clients stay with us for four reasons; we help them grow their business, they rate our work, they know we're there for them and, most important, we 'get' what they're about.

imagefix.co.uk

A sustainable solution to textile waste

Essential Workwear has launched a brand-new garment recycling initiative to help clients become more sustainable and support the target of achieving the government's net-zero emissions by 2050.



Textile waste is becoming an ever-increasing concern across the globe. The key challenges that organisations face when disposing of branded textiles is the negative impact this waste has on the environment. Essential are working with market leaders in offering a textile recycling program for corporate branded workwear and other garments as a solution to textile waste.

On average, 2,700 liters of water is needed to create a single T-shirt. That is enough drinking water for one person for 2.5 years. By recycling used garments, Essential are going to significantly reduce the amount of water that is used to create new garments. Furthermore, 26.2m tonnes of CO₂ is produced in the UK due to textiles each year and 350,000 tonnes worth of textiles is sent to landfill each year.

The Essential Workwear recycling program guarantees that all textiles are securely destroyed by a custom built cross-cut industrial shredder. This ensures the textiles are unrecognisable and broken down to a size where it is impossible to re-weave back into any other garment. All Essential practices are in line and compliant with ISO 9001 & 14001 accreditations, BS EN: 15713-2009 and BS 7858. Once the textiles are destroyed, they are baled into mill-size bales and transported to specialist mills to begin the recycling phase and certificates are issued including time and date that the shredding took place.

When the textile product is deemed redundant, this new service helps limit the environmental impact by closing the loop and reducing the miles that textiles cover. Essential securely destroy textiles and recycle all the natural fibres within the UK. The fibre materials go through the process of stretching where the fibres are turned into a wide range of products such as insulation, geotextiles and other innovative products. This is the sustainable recycling service that is contributing to reducing the 11 million items of clothing a week currently ending up in landfill, as estimated by Oxfam. Essential will charge an admin fee per garment to carry out this process, intended to cover any direct costs, however no profit will be made from the initiative.

George Georgiou, Managing Director of Dunstable based Essential Workwear commented, "For more than twenty years, we have been witnessing the huge impact that our industry has on the environment, and we recognised that the time was now in 2021 to introduce an innovative and powerful new service to help reduce waste into landfill. The Essential garment recycling program will offer all of our clients the opportunity to support their ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) policies now and long into the future. Together with our team of uniform specialists, I am immensely proud to have launched this new service. It's the smallest changes which make the biggest difference."

Award-winning, second generation, family-run Essential Workwear brand close to 11,000 pieces of work and safety wear every day, from their factory in Dunstable, Bedfordshire. They are an established safetywear company with an in-house PPE expert and are a BSIF registered safety supplier.

For more information visit www.essentialworkwear.com. Follow on Facebook @essentialworkwear, Instagram essentialworkwear and LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/essential-workwear

Member News

Woods Hardwick Announces New Office In London

A new London office is set to strengthen Woods Hardwick's UK coverage and build existing and new relationships with clients and project teams in the capital. The Commercial Architecture and Planning divisions will take the lead in the new office. Associate Director and Architect, Diane Cox and Planning Director, Paul Woods, who has more than 20 years' experience in the London market, will lead the team.

Diane Cox explains: "The decision to expand into London was a logical step in our business growth strategy, opening a new office here after the events of last year is testimony to the ambition, skill and knowledge of Woods Hardwick's growing team and client base."

Paul Woods, Planning Director, continues: "Woods Hardwick have been active in London for many years, working across the retail, leisure, restaurant, heritage and residential sectors. Building on the success of our offices in Bedford and Birmingham, we have a deep understanding of planning requirements and regulations, strong relationships across the development industry and with local planning teams."



The team has extensive experience, an outstanding pedigree for high quality design, technical ability and the successful delivery from conception through to completion of projects of all types; combining imaginative and innovative design and planning skills while maintaining a strong appreciation of commerciality and practicality, irrespective of project size or complexity.

Current clients include luxury retail, leisure and restaurant brands, as well as commercial and residential developers. From heritage and refurbishment projects to interior design and fit-out services, the team is excited to support existing and new clients. As the world seeks to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, the team is committed to working clients and project teams to build back better.

This new office adds to Woods Hardwick's existing presence in Bedford and Birmingham. The London office address is: The Harley Building, 77 New Cavendish Street, London, W1W 6XB.

woodshardwick.com



Forest of Marston Vale welcomes patronage of HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Helen Nellis

Local Community Forest charity the Forest of Marston Vale celebrates receiving royal approval as Her Majesty the Queen's representative for Bedfordshire becomes its first official Patron. A longstanding supporter and tree-planting advocate, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Helen Nellis will bring her passion and enthusiasm for the natural world to her latest role as champion for the Forest of Marston Vale.

Grant Sorrell, Commercial Director, says he's delighted to have the Lord-Lieutenant involved and looks forward to continuing to improve access to nature for communities across Bedfordshire with Helen on board: "Helen has long been a great friend of the Forest, often getting behind our messages, causes and campaigns - as an organisation we're proud and honoured that after many years of support she has agreed to become our first Patron. Her enthusiasm and passion for planting trees and the natural world is invaluable. By helping us raise awareness and promote the work that we do we'll be able to grow the Forest further. With Helen's support we can reach new audiences of people who might already not be aware of the Forest of Marston Vale, what that means and how trees make life better."

The Lord Lieutenant's appointment comes after the most challenging tree planting season and fundraising year in the Charity's history, and aligns with a renewed national and local commitment to increase and protect native tree cover.

The Forest of Marston Vale team - despite Covid restrictions and no public events - planted over 17,000 native trees and shrubs in Community Woodlands, schools and land across Bedfordshire as part of the first year of Defra Trees for Climate scheme, and is set to continue that momentum through a second year. They will also be joining local delivery partners in a county-wide native tree planting initiative facilitated by the Lord-Lieutenant as part of the Queen's Green Canopy, in honour of the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in 2022.

Commenting on her appointment as Patron, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Helen Nellis said: "At this moment in history, where we all have an increased awareness of the vital importance of looking after our environment so that we can live in harmony with nature, it is a pleasure and an honour to support the excellent work of The Forest of Marston Vale Trust as their Patron. I have long been impressed by the huge difference they make to our lives in Bedfordshire. Their outreach programmes, which engage young and not so young, enable greater understanding of the part we can all play in nurturing our natural world so that future generations will benefit. Plant a tree today and just imagine a child, one hundred years from now, playing under its boughs - a beautiful thought!"

www.marstonvale.org

Mental Vitamins - Intensive course

A course for corporate staff, designed and delivered by Bonita Ackerman du Preez and David Ball. We work with stressed out and anxious teams to bring back balance and productivity.

Stress and anxiety are rising in the hybrid workplace and employees aren't asking for help or can't get it if they do. A variety of stressors have been accelerating under working from home (WFH) and Covid-19 and the old coping mechanisms aren't working any more. Feelings of isolation and worries about everything from childcare to food supplies to redundancy as businesses fail are occupying the minds of staff and seriously affecting productivity. The 'always on' nature of working from home has brought into sharp focus domestic and relationship issues and the inability to 'shut off life and go to the office' has caused a host of additional mental health concerns not seen before.

Businesses try to assist with work-life balance but don't always know what is happening in an employee's personal life and how that's affecting job performance, emotional wellbeing and decision making. Add to that, challenges such as co-worker conflicts, large workloads and disjointed management and reporting structures and the burden becomes too heavy for many.

The Mental Vitamins - Intensive Course, began its development as a response to this growing situation due to the increasing number of people we were helping with stress and anxiety in our private practices. We realised that most of our clients worked and that work was deeply affected by their condition.

The implications for businesses and staff are stark, many specialised skills and much expensive training can be lost when staff take time off, sometimes never to return to the workplace. The impact on competitiveness, productivity and ultimately survival of some businesses can be predicated on this alone.

We decided to design The Mental Vitamins - Intensive Course as a preventative intervention, to teach staff how to get healthy and stay healthy by regular practice of simple, but modern, effective techniques. The goal is to cancel any anxious, stressed feelings and then teach simple techniques to clear away the underlying vulnerabilities that we all have, to prevent work and life pressures from triggering suffering in the future.

The course can be delivered in a single day in person or over Zoom/Teams. After the course staff are signposted to our Support System to either self-serve help for issues that come up or contact a trainer to discuss a specific challenge.

The Mental Vitamins Academy is led by professionally trained therapists Bonita Ackerman du Preez and David Ball. The Mental Vitamins Academy is supported by two online Facebook programmes and groups creating a strong and supportive community for men called The Men's Room and for women The Anxiety Recovery School. These communities are there to encourage people to seek help and support. Both online communities offer techniques, help guides and guest speakers to better support mental health both at work and while in the home.



To book on The Mental Vitamins - Intensive Course please contact David or Bonita on info@mentalvitaminsacademy.com or call on 07970011235 or to find out more about us please visit <https://mentalvitaminsacademy.com>.

Wyboston Lakes Resort to develop new office facilities

Wyboston Lakes Resort in Bedfordshire has secured planning permission for an additional 11,000 square feet of modern office facilities to provide businesses with a choice of all-inclusive modern serviced office space.

The flexible space will be structured and designed to be ideal for organisations that are adopting new ways of working post-pandemic as well as those continuing with more traditional office usage. The Resort team are looking to work with a client who wants to create their own bespoke office design, for use as either a regional hub, to exploit the location in the technology arc that stretches from Cambridge to Milton Keynes, or a medium sized business that is looking to create its own new head office.

The space, which will be an extension to the Resort's existing Knowledge Centre, will feature booths, hot desking, break-out areas, quiet spaces, meeting pods and semi-enclosed areas, kitchen and social areas, and meeting rooms. Distributed across two floors, the open plan workspace will be designed in a way that facilitates collaboration, relationship building and innovation and enhances the working experience.

The space will be ideal for one large client, or two to three mid-sized clients, with the ability to have separate entrances, staircase and break-out areas. The space will be available on all-inclusive fixed monthly fee terms.

Companies are placing a lot more emphasis on the outdoor environment for their teams. The Resort's extensive leisure and events facilities will be attractive to these companies and their teams. The 380-acre site already includes a four-star luxury hotel, restaurant and bar, award-winning spa and health club, 18-hole golf course, water sports lakes, two state-of-the-art residential event and training centres, and a nature reserve. Companies will also benefit from Wyboston Lakes Resort's commitment and accreditation in sustainability.



Richard Smith, Sales Director for Wyboston Lakes Resort, says: "Modern and creative customer-centric design is at the heart of all we do at Wyboston Lakes Resort. Our new office spaces will provide a cost-effective option for businesses and an innovative workplace for their teams at a time when many are changing their working practices and use of offices post pandemic including relocating. This new exciting new development is designed for their needs today and in future."

www.wybostonlakes.co.uk

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

AJS Express (Luton) Limited

Gabor Szalay
01582 256161
www.luton.ajsexpress.co.uk



AJS Express (Luton) is a dedicated courier service covering Luton, Leighton Buzzard and Dunstable. We pride ourselves on building partnerships with our clients, rather than merely acting as just another delivery company. This allows for increased transparency, cost effective and error-free deliveries.

Burton Smith Limited

Toby Burton
www.burton-smith.com
info@burton-smith.com



Burton Smith are a specialist heating and plumbing company based in Central Bedfordshire. We offer all plumbing and heating services within the domestic market from breakdowns through to design and build for plumbing services. Our commercial department, specialise in HVCA, design and build, servicing and full compliancy services.

Deo Volente Solicitors LLP

Danna Quinto
dvsolicitors.com/contact-us/



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Caroline Miles
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www.elitehrandcoaching.com
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Envirotect Limited

Niven Smith
www.envirotectltd.co.uk
sales@envirotectltd.co.uk



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Robert Gracie
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rob@industry-training.co.uk



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Konsileo Insurance Brokers

Lewis Duggleby
07887 570599
www.konsileo.com
lewis.duggleby@konsileo.com



Konsileo's main objective is to protect businesses properly through effective risk management and advice. Bedfordshire broker Lewis Duggleby has been in the insurance industry for over 15 years and welcomes all members to get in touch regarding any type of Commercial insurance enquiry.

Luton All Women's Centre

Caroline Cook
01582 416783
www.lutonallwomenscentre.org.uk
caroline@lawc.org.uk



Luton All Women's Centre supports women who have experienced some sort of abuse or trauma, or who are experiencing poor mental health or wellbeing. Our Employers Against Domestic Abuse programme is a free offer to employers, where we work with you to ensure you're equipped to support staff affected by DA.

Sash Renovate

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Sharnbrook Mill Theatre

Douglas Pope
www.sharnbrookmilltheatre.co.uk



The Mill is a friendly, inclusive, open and award-winning community theatre, entirely run by volunteers, located in Bedfordshire. In 2020, SMT was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. Four in-house shows are staged each year in the historic theatre which was converted from an old mill. Alongside these productions, the venue welcomes bands, dance schools and professional artists. The venue is available for conferences, events, training and meetings.

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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

#Saveourtown

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<https://luton.ajsexpress.co.uk>

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Manufacturers of environmental test equipment.

Deo Volente Solicitors LLP

www.dvsolicitors.com

Deo Volente Solicitors, formerly known as Rehman Solicitors, was established in April 2007. In 2012 the firm renamed itself as Deo Volente Solicitors. Situated in the heart of Bedford Town Centre, the firm is a strong believer in giving back to the community with the confidence that clients will always return due to the warm yet professional service they receive.

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Luton All Women's Centre

www.lutonallwomenscentre.org.uk

A charity supporting women who have experienced trauma or abuse, or who are suffering with their wellbeing. We work with domestic abuse, childhood sexual abuse, forced marriage and honour based abuse, other issues that women may be struggling with and gender inequality.

Mentmore Foods Limited

www.mentmorefoods.co.uk

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https://atobgroup.co.uk/pmch_travel

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Sharnbrook Mill Theatre

www.sharnbrookmilltheatre.co.uk

The Mill is a friendly, inclusive, open and award-winning community theatre, entirely run by volunteers and located in Bedfordshire. We produce four in-house shows each year in our historic theatre which was converted from an old mill.

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