



SHREWSBURY BUSINESS CHAMBER

ISSUE 1 2025

**FIND OUT ABOUT UPCOMING
NETWORKING EVENTS**

**SHREWSBURY NAMED
NUMBER ONE HIGHSTREET**

MEET SBC'S NEWEST MEMBERS

WWW.SHREWSBURYBUSINESSCHAMBER.COM

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



KEVIN LOCKWOOD
Manager of Shrewsbury Shopping Centres

**Is it still ok to say Happy New Year??
So 2025 begins what appears to be another interesting and challenging
one for Businesses following the Chancellor's budget in 2024!**

National living wage increases, along with NI contribution increases will see a real pressure on bottom lines from April which may result in uncertainty for the future of some businesses.

At the Shrewsbury Business Chamber, we are again pulling together a full year's activity of Members networking events. Please visit our website for full details on each of the events.

It is also with great pleasure that I can introduce our new Executive Board Directors who I am sure will bring their individual expertise to our growing membership. Suzanne Heavens of Heavenly Brides, Pippa Tait of Sales Geek, Nikki Pickering of Berlad Graham and Beth Heath of Shropshire Festivals.

As always, if you have any thoughts, ideas that you think will benefit our members, please do not hesitate to contact us.

All the best for 2025.

Kevin Lockwood
SBC Chair.

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LAWYER TACKLING HALF MARATHON FOR OSWESTRY HOSPITAL GARDEN CHARITY



A lawyer will be pounding the streets of London in the spring to raise money for a special garden which brings comfort to patients at the Robert Jones and Agnes Hospital in Oswestry.

Dawn Humphries, head of the personal injury team at Lanyon Bowdler, helps clients rebuild their life following a serious injury and has worked closely with the hospital's spinal injuries unit for many years.

She is running the London Landmarks Half Marathon in April to raise money for Horatio's Garden, which Lanyon Bowdler has supported ever since its inception in 2018 - when Dawn ran the half marathon for the first time.

Dawn says: "I was really fortunate to run the London Landmarks Half Marathon in 2018 to help with fundraising for the garden, which is based on a design by Bunny Guinness from *Gardeners' World*, so I was able to see it being created from scratch.

"Over the years, I have visited clients at the hospital, and have watched the garden develop and become a thing of beauty. It also has a very functional and practical role in supporting the patients, giving them a wonderful outdoor sanctuary, assisting in their rehabilitation and nurturing their wellbeing after spinal injury.

"The garden is named after Horatio Chapple, a schoolboy who wanted to be a doctor and noticed the lack of outdoor spaces for patients whilst volunteering at the Salisbury Spinal Unit. Tragically his life was cut short in 2011 at just 17, when his camp was attacked by a bear during a school expedition to Svalbard in the Arctic.

"I was so proud to be a little part in supporting the development of Horatio's Garden and am thrilled to continue raising further monies for its continuing good work by running the London Landmarks Half Marathon once again."

The half marathon takes place on April 6 and starts on The Mall, taking in iconic London sights such as Trafalgar Square, Big Ben and St Paul's, crossing Westminster Bridge before finishing at Downing Street.

Dawn says she is excited about taking on the route again - although she is less keen on the winter training! "It's a wonderful event, with incredible support along the whole route, including West End musical casts out singing, as well as bands, choirs and of course the amazing crowds which just keep you going," she says. "It's my favourite race - and has the added bonus of being half the distance of the full marathon.

"I am most looking forward to the atmosphere at the finish, with the incredible Chelsea Pensioners presenting the medals, and of course my husband with chocolate. My most dreaded bit? Early morning runs in the cold dark days of winter!

"Although I have done this race before, it will still involve a lot of dedication and training, but I'm very determined to achieve this goal. It will be an honour and privilege to be part of the team raising money for such an important facility here in Shropshire."

To donate, visit Dawn's Just Giving page at <https://www.justgiving.com/page/dawn-humphries-1722512256873>

RECLAIM TAX UK WELCOMES RICHARD SHEEHAN AS CHANNEL DIRECTOR



Shrewsbury, UK - January 6, 2025 - Reclaim Tax UK is pleased to announce the appointment of Richard Sheehan as Channel Director, effective immediately. Mr. Sheehan, who retired in March 2023 after nearly 16 years as Chief Executive Officer of the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce, brings a wealth of experience and a steadfast commitment to supporting businesses, particularly within Shropshire.

During his tenure at the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Sheehan was instrumental in navigating local businesses through significant challenges, including economic recessions, Brexit, and the COVID-19 pandemic. His leadership was pivotal in fostering a resilient and innovative business community in the region.

Upon his retirement, Mr. Sheehan expressed immense pride in serving the business community and gratitude for the support he received over the years. He stated, *"I consider myself incredibly fortunate to have worked with a truly wonderful group of people who have supported me over the past 15 and a half years."*

Despite his retirement, Mr. Sheehan felt that his mission to support businesses, especially those in Shropshire, was not yet complete. This unwavering dedication has led him to join the senior leadership team at Reclaim Tax UK,

where he will oversee channel development and strategic partnerships.

"We are thrilled to welcome Richard to our team," said Richard Canfer-Taylor, CEO of Reclaim Tax UK. *"His extensive experience and deep-rooted commitment to the business community align perfectly with our mission to provide exceptional tax reclaim services. We are confident that Richard's leadership will be instrumental in driving our growth and enhancing the value we offer to our clients."*

Mr. Sheehan's appointment marks a significant milestone for Reclaim Tax UK as the company continues to expand its services and strengthen its support for businesses across the UK.

About Reclaim Tax UK:

Reclaim Tax UK Ltd specialises in assisting businesses with tax reclaims, ensuring they receive the financial benefits they are entitled to. With a focus on client success and compliance, the company offers tailored solutions to meet the unique needs of each business.

For more information, please contact:

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Reclaim Tax UK Ltd
info@reclaimtaxuk.co.uk
01743 298980
W: reclaimtaxuk.co.uk

NOTABLE YEAR FOR QUILTER!

Quilter has had a notable year in 2024, earning recognition from several prestigious awards.

These accolades, including Best Platform at the Money Marketing Awards and Platform of the Year at the Schroders UK Platform Awards, highlight the quality and reliability of Quilter's platform services.

Such recognition from third parties underscores our commitment to service excellence.

Quilter's dedication to responsible investing was also acknowledged when the WealthSelect Responsible and Sustainable portfolios received the Best ESG Solution for Advisers at the Professional Adviser Awards.

These achievements are a testament to Quilter's focus on delivering excellent customer outcomes. They continually strive to provide innovative offerings and user-friendly tools that empower financial advisers and their clients.

As Quilter looks ahead, the company remains committed to enhancing its services.

Exceptional...
but don't just take our word for it

Quilter

- Best Platform**
Money Marketing Awards 2024
- Platform of the Year**
Schroders UK Platform Awards 2024
- Best Wrap/Platform**
ILP Moneyfacts Awards 2024
- Best Platform**
Professional Paraplanner Awards 2024

We're trusted by our customers

Trustpilot
Reviews 8,201 • Excellent
Rated Excellent As at Oct 2024

We're financially very strong

AKGA
FINANCIAL STRENGTH RATED
PLATFORM SECTOR SUPERIOR
QUILTER INVESTMENT PLATFORM LTD.

We provide top rated products and investments

defaqto
★★★★★
2024
EXPERT RATED
Five star products

defaqto
★★★★★
2024
EXPERT RATED
Five diamond investments

FOUR NEW PARTNERS AT LANYON BOWDLER



A Shropshire law firm is celebrating the appointments of four new partners - including one who started out as an office secretary nearly 30 years ago.

Lanyon Bowdler has announced that four senior members of staff have been promoted to partners - Karen Clarke, Kate Lawson, Emma Deering and Georgina Hughes.

Karen Clarke, of the personal injury team in Telford, joined Lanyon Bowdler as a secretary in 1996, before training as a lawyer so she could do more to help the clients she worked with.

Kate Lawson is a private client solicitor based in the Shrewsbury office, who joined Lanyon Bowdler when the firm merged with Longueville Gittins in Oswestry back in 2010.

Georgina Hughes is based in the private client team in Hereford, qualifying as a solicitor nearly 20 years ago and working in Gloucestershire prior to joining Lanyon Bowdler in 2022.

Completing the appointments is Emma Deering, a chartered legal executive in the Conwy office, who works with clients across North Wales. Emma joined Lanyon Bowdler in 2021 to lead the private client team in Conwy, the firm having opened its office there in 2019.

Brian Evans, Lanyon Bowdler's managing partner, said he wanted to congratulate Emma, Georgina, Kate and Karen on their promotions.

"I am really pleased to announce these additions to the firm's partnership," he said. "Each of them has had a different journey through their legal careers with a range of experiences which are hugely valuable to the firm and our clients.

"We are proud of our track record of providing excellent opportunities for staff to move up through the ranks to progress their careers with the firm.

"A great example of that is Karen Clarke, who is now a partner of the firm which she joined as a secretary in the mid 1990s - a real testament to her hard work and dedication to her clients.

"My congratulations go to each of our new partners, and I wish them continued success in their legal careers."

Lanyon Bowdler has offices in Shrewsbury, Telford, Oswestry, Hereford, Ludlow, Bromyard and Conwy, assisting businesses and individuals with a wide range of legal services.

For more information, visit www.lblaw.co.uk

Someone raises a health issue

You have a concern

Your business is changing

An employee raises a complaint

You are looking for development & training

You simply need some reassurance

You need help recruiting

Call us if...

Contact Ms Niamh Kelly
Call 01743 290 474
Visit www.hrdept.co.uk

HR DEPT

Preventing People Problems

Niamh.Kelly@hrdept.co.uk

SHREWSBURY NAMED NUMBER ONE IN THE TELEGRAPH'S LIST OF UK'S BEST HIGH STREETS



Shrewsbury is officially home to “the UK’s best high street” according to travel experts who have named Shropshire’s county town number one in a list of top shopping destinations.

The town centre is highlighted by writers in The Telegraph as among the very best places for Christmas shopping in the country, with Wyle Cop in particular coming in for high praise.

The Telegraph says: “With its meandering streets and blush-sandstone castle wrapped in a loop of the Severn, Shropshire’s compact county town is ideal for wandering and window shopping.

“The covered market was voted the country’s best in 2024. But it’s hard to beat Wyle Cop, a curving, climbing high street lined with 39 listed buildings, ranging from medieval half-timbered to Victorian ornate.”

Shrewsbury is named at number one in The Telegraph’s list of Britain’s best high streets, described as “beacons of light piercing the gloom: thriving high streets in handsome towns that retain a healthy selection of quirky and independent businesses, giving shoppers a fine reason to escape the tyranny of Amazon.”

Mike Matthews, owner of the Prince Rupert Hotel and chairman of Shrewsbury BID, said the article was a great boost for the town.

“We are rather getting used to Shrewsbury being praised by the national media, but being named as the very best shopping destination in the UK by The Telegraph is really something to celebrate,” he said.

“It’s particularly pleasing that the writers have highlighted Shrewsbury’s wealth of independent businesses as being the prime reason for a visit - along with the town centre’s

charm and beautiful buildings, of course.

“I hope this will remind people just how wonderful Shrewsbury is for a shopping trip, especially as we approach Christmas which is such an important time for all town centre businesses.”

Councillor Alan Mosley, leader of Shrewsbury Town Council, said: “It’s great to see further plaudits for our vibrant town centre which follow on from the prize winning of our market, accolades for our Britain in Bloom win and coming top in the Academy of Urbanism Awards. “Surely it’s proof that the working partnership between the Town Council, BID and Shropshire Council is making significant advances in making our town an even better place to live, work, visit and do business.”

Mark Jones, Shropshire Council’s Cabinet member for growth and regeneration, said: “This is great news, well-deserved, and something that everyone connected to Shrewsbury can be really proud of.

“We all know that Shrewsbury is a wonderful town with a lot to offer, and is a place visitors flock to, to experience its individuality and history, as well as its excellent shops, eateries and other attractions. It’s fantastic that this has now been recognised nationally, and I especially want to congratulate the town’s many traders and businesses.”

Mark Hooper, of Visit Shropshire, added: “Being named Britain’s Top High Street is a tremendous accolade for Shrewsbury, and it’s no surprise to those of us who know and love this remarkable town.

“Shrewsbury’s unique blend of independent shops, historic charm, and warm community spirit makes it a true gem in the heart of Shropshire. This recognition highlights the dedication of local businesses and the ongoing efforts to make Shrewsbury a vibrant and welcoming destination for visitors and residents alike.”

PROMOTING EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AT WORK: A KEY TO STRONGER, MORE PRODUCTIVE TEAMS



In today's fast-paced work environments, businesses emphasise physical health, ensuring safety and preventing injuries. However, discussions around mental and emotional health are often left behind. Despite growing awareness, stigma persists, making it difficult for employees to discuss their struggles. Even in 2025, workplaces still face challenges in fostering open conversations about emotional wellbeing.

Employees may find it easier to discuss physical ailments than to admit feeling overwhelmed or burned out. However, mental health is equally important. Addressing emotional wellbeing benefits both individuals and the organization as a whole.

Leaders who prioritize mental health create more empathic, supportive workplaces. Recognizing early signs of emotional distress and equipping themselves with tools to assist employees, creates a culture of openness, leading to higher engagement and productivity.

The Cost of Ignoring Mental Health

Many people push through stress and emotional strain until reaching a breaking point. This can significantly impact work performance, focus, and morale. Employers, particularly in remote and hybrid settings, may struggle to detect early signs of burnout, such as decreased productivity, changes in behaviour, or difficulty focusing

on tasks; these can all be indicators of underlying mental health concerns.

Ignoring mental health has financial consequences. Deloitte (2024) estimates that poor mental health costs businesses around £1,529 per employee annually. Additionally, Champion Health (2023) found that one in five employees struggles with performance due to mental health challenges. Increased absenteeism, presenteeism (being at work but underperforming), and high turnover further burden businesses.

Building a Supportive Workplace Culture

A healthy workplace prioritises mental health as much as physical health. Leadership plays an important role in encouraging openness and ensuring employees feel safe discussing their emotional wellbeing.

CIPD (2022) reports that 55% of employees experiencing depression cite workplace stress as a major factor. Despite this, many hesitate to seek help due to fear of judgment or negative career impact. Some may feel too vulnerable, while others fear stigma. Employers must actively counter these concerns by promoting an inclusive, supportive culture.

A proactive approach includes open discussions, accessible resources, and policies that normalize mental health support. Creating a stigma-free environment benefits both employees and business performance.

Continued...

The Business Benefits of Supporting Mental Health

Investing in mental health initiatives benefits organizations in tangible ways. A mentally healthy workforce leads to higher productivity, reduced turnover, and improved morale. Addressing mental health issues early can prevent long-term absences and costly mistakes. Companies prioritising employee wellbeing attract and retain top talent. Professionals increasingly seek employers who value their mental health, making workplace emotional well-being programmes a competitive advantage.

Simple Steps to Improve Mental Health Support

Small changes can significantly impact workplace emotional wellbeing. Employers can take the following steps:

1. Offer Training and Education: Provide workshops on stress management, mindfulness, and burnout prevention. Many free resources are available to help organizations introduce these programmes. e.g: Mind Wellbeing

2. Provide Access to Professional Support: Ensure employees can access mental health services such as Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) and counselling. Early intervention can prevent small issues from escalating.

3. Encourage Mental Health Days: Just as employees take time off for physical illness, they should feel comfortable taking mental health days. Normalising this practice helps prevent burnout and supports long-term productivity.

4. Create an Open, Supportive Environment: Encourage honest conversations about mental health.

Regularly remind employees of available resources and promote a culture where seeking help is encouraged.

5. Prioritize Confidentiality and Trust: Employees must trust that their mental health concerns will be handled discreetly and respectfully. Confidentiality ensures they feel safe seeking support.

Why it's worth investing in Employee Wellbeing

Workplace mental health initiatives prevent burnout and create an environment where employees can thrive. When people feel supported, they are more engaged, motivated, and loyal. This leads to better team collaboration and a healthier workplace culture.

For businesses, investing in mental health improves job satisfaction, reduces absenteeism, and boosts overall performance. By prioritizing emotional wellbeing, employers set the foundation for long-term success.

If you're unsure where to begin, you don't have to navigate this alone. I specialize in emotional wellbeing, including offering short term focussed, confidential counselling services to employees. Taking proactive steps toward mental health support strengthens your team and creates an atmosphere where staff can thrive.

For more information on how I can support your team's mental health, feel free to reach out. Together, we can make your workplace a happier and healthier place for everyone.

Susie Harris MNCPS (Accredited) Presence Counselling & Psychotherapy



SHROPSHIRE FESTIVALS SCOOPS NATIONAL AWARD



Local events business, Shropshire Festivals, picked up an award at The National Outdoor Events Association Awards.

NOEA is the UK's leading trade association representing and progressing the outdoor events sector. Shropshire Festivals picked up the Sustainability Award for their work running zero waste events.

The Annual Convention and Awards Dinner was held in the Roman Baths and Pump Rooms in Bath on November 26th. The judges of the awards underlined the continued competitiveness of the awards and the quality of the entries, up over 30% from previous years. "This felt like a really 'people-orientated' awards event. The businesses and events that won put great people at the core of what they do," commented Al Turner, Chair of the Judges.

Shropshire Festivals owner, Beth Heath, said, "I'm so proud that our small, family-run business has been

recognised nationally amongst the biggest players in the festival and events industry. We were also shortlisted for 'Event Organiser of the Year' and lost to CarFest - to even be in a category with them is amazing!

"We are chuffed to bits that we are being recognised for our sustainable approach. We've invested heavily in reusable cups, on-site recycling teams, carbon footprint reducing practices, and we promote sustainability at our events. Running zero waste events doesn't come cheaply or easily, but we believe it's the right thing to do."

"Following the Shifnal Christmas Lights and Market we have now completed our 2024 events season but we're not resting on our laurels. We have launched tickets, exhibitor, and sponsorship opportunities for Shropshire Business Festival, which is taking place on March 6th, 2025 at Telford International Centre."

"We've also launched tickets and gift vouchers for Shrewsbury Food Festival on June 28th and 29th and Shropshire Oktoberfest on October 3rd and 4th."

Find out more at www.shropshirefestivals.co.uk.

LANYON BOWDLER CELEBRATED MORE QUALIFICATIONS

A Shropshire law firm is celebrating a raft of qualifications, with five members of staff qualifying as solicitors in 2024, across a range of legal disciplines.

The latest to qualify as solicitors are Emily Mouland, Jemma Groves, Kelly Reynolds, Claudia Booth and Morgan Hanley.

Lanyon Bowdler's managing partner, Brian Evans, said training staff and helping their careers to flourish would always be a core value for the firm. *"It is always a proud moment to see our staff qualify as solicitors and settle into their departments,"* he said.

"I would like to congratulate Emily, Jemma, Kelly, Claudia and Morgan on their qualification and am delighted they are all staying with Lanyon Bowdler to progress their careers.

"We are proud of our reputation as being a firm where lawyers can work with a wide range of cases and clients, building their experience and providing the opportunity to further their career within the firm."

Emily Mouland and Morgan Hanley have both joined the Court of Protection team, while Jemma Groves has joined the corporate law team, all based in the firm's Shrewsbury office.

Kelly Reynolds has joined the family law team, working across the Telford and Shrewsbury offices, and Claudia Booth has joined the clinical negligence team in Hereford.

For more information about Lanyon Bowdler, visit the website at www.lblaw.co.uk or pop into one of the firm's offices in Shrewsbury, Telford, Oswestry, Ludlow, Hereford, Bromyard and Conwy.



RECORD YEAR FOR START TECH



A managed IT service provider based in Shrewsbury has enjoyed a record year.

The business has been operating for 24 years and has seen a 24% increase in turnover in the last year.

They have picked up several awards in the last 12 months: the 'UK & Ireland Solution Provider Spotlight Award' at the CompTIA Community Spotlight Awards, Pax8 Beyond Partner Award in the 'EMEA Peak Performance - Security' category in Berlin, named as one of Britain's 50 Best Managed IT Companies, and in December 2024 they won MSP Titan of the Industry (EMEA) in Los Angeles.

The business has taken on five new members of staff this year, and as well as supporting apprenticeships, they have had their first T Level Student from Shrewsbury Colleges Group.

There have been two major promotions in the last month. Jordon Tipper has been promoted to Operations Director and Kieran Jones is the new Client Strategy & Professional Services Manager.

Start Tech's Managing Director, Ian Groves, said, "We have had a phenomenal year in terms of growth in turnover and the team size, and a shelf extension needed for our new awards collection!

"Jordon's promotion has made room for Kieran to step up into a new role where he will oversee account management, strategic business reviews and internal project delivery. We're really excited to see how the business will evolve with his input.

"And Jordon, aged 26, has stepped up to Operations Director to execute the vision of the business. Jordon entered the business in 2017 as an apprentice. Since then, he has swiftly climbed up the ranks to senior management and has been integral to our business growth. He's already achieved so much so young; he has a very exciting future in the sector.

"With a successful 2024 under our belts, we are excited to embark on 2025 with plans to grow our client portfolio even more."

To find out more about Start Tech visit www.start-tech.co.uk.

WALKING FOOD TOURS UK IS ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR PART-TIME TOUR GUIDES



Are you passionate about food, drink, and delivering unforgettable experiences?

The multiaward-winning Walking Food Tours UK is on the lookout for part-time tour guides to join its growing team in Shrewsbury.

Having established a strong presence in the town, founder Gareth Boyd shares his vision: *"Now that we have been operating in Shrewsbury for a while, I'd love to hear from locals who have a passion for customer service and, of course, great food and drink. There are so many amazing independent food and drink venues in the town centre. With our exciting tour growth plans, we need new team members to play a key role in driving this forward."*

This is a fantastic opportunity to work with a company that celebrates local businesses and offers full training to help you shine.

If you're enthusiastic, friendly, and eager to showcase Shrewsbury's culinary gems, email hello@walkingfoodtoursuk.co.uk to express your interest and learn more about the role.

Make your passion your part-time profession—join Walking Food Tours UK today!
For further information go to www.walkingfoodtoursuk.co.uk



SEAN GOODMAN PROMOTED TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR AT RECLAIM TAX UK



In an exciting announcement for Reclaim Tax UK, Sean Goodman has been appointed as the company's new National Development Director. This promotion marks a significant milestone in Sean's career and a proud moment for the entire team.

Sean has been with Reclaim Tax UK for five years, during which he has demonstrated not only an exceptional work ethic but also a passion for fostering strong client relationships and driving business growth. His commitment to the company's success has been unwavering, making him a natural fit for this new leadership role.

Chris Jones, Group Managing Director, praised Sean's achievements: *"Sean's journey with us is a testament to his dedication, not just to the business but also to his colleagues and, most importantly, to our clients. This promotion reflects the impact he's made and the trust he's earned."*

Sean shared his enthusiasm for the new position, saying: *"It's a real honour to step into this role. Reclaim Tax UK has been like a second home to me, and I'm looking forward to contributing even more as we continue to grow and support our clients."*

The team at Reclaim Tax UK is thrilled to celebrate Sean's well-deserved promotion and looks forward to the success he will undoubtedly achieve in his new role.

This is just the beginning of an exciting new chapter for both Sean and the company. Congratulations, Sean!



LOVEFITNESS

EXCLUSIVE DEALS!
for Shrewsbury Chamber Members!



Stronger teams start here!

Boost your team's wellbeing with discounted corporate gym memberships exclusive to Shrewsbury Business Chamber members.

Call: 01743 583124
or visit www.love2stay.co.uk/love2live

TO CLAIM YOUR OFFER!

SHROPSHIRE FESTIVALS: WHAT'S COMING UP IN 2025



Shropshire Festivals hosts four flagship events every year. Last year, Shropshire Business Festival's attendance was up 40%, Shrewsbury Food Festival won Festival of the Year at the West Midlands Tourism Awards, Shropshire Petal Fields was featured on BBC Breakfast, and Shropshire Oktoberfest pulled in thousands of lederhosen-clad fun seekers for the county's biggest beer festival.

So, it might be surprising to read that Shropshire's award-winning events team are calling out for more support in 2025.

Beth Heath, Director of Fun of Shropshire Festivals explains: "Every event we deliver comes back to our core value of championing our local region. Whether that's giving a platform to local businesses, producers, and performers; enriching the local calendar of events for our community; or helping local hotels and venues by drawing in visitors from all over the UK.

"But putting on events has become harder than ever. There's a reason big name local festivals are not going ahead this year.

"Festivals and events are getting hit by poor ticket sales,

which is probably a knock-on effect of the cost of living crisis impacting our disposable income. But reducing ticket prices to combat that is impossible. The cost of putting on a festival now compared to when I launched Shropshire Festivals over a decade ago is jaw-dropping. Many of our biggest costs are around keeping our customers safe and complying with new regulations out of our control, plus the cost of event infrastructure seems to only go up.

"This is a call out to our local community for support to keep our events going. We need your help to spread the word too.

"We would also like to work alongside more businesses through corporate partnerships - whether that's helping you boost your brand awareness with sponsorship of festival areas, holding VIP parties within our festivals, or delivering events for your business. And if you have a business in a prominent position, we would love to advertise our event to passersby in return for tickets!

"One of the biggest lessons I've learnt over the years is the power of the Shropshire community and how good we are at helping each other. So, if you want to sustain local events, then help us turn the county pink in 2025 by supporting lots of brilliant events!"

Continued . . .



Here are the 2025 dates for your diaries:

SHROPSHIRE BUSINESS FESTIVAL

March 6 th at Telford International Centre
 Shropshire Business Festival is the county's biggest B2B event. Shropshire Festivals put their spin on a networking event by creating talking points with fun activities that create the opportunity to make meaningful connections. As well as talks and seminars on topical issues, you can sit down with experts from finance, legal, and HR teams and take part in networking sessions.
www.shropshirebusinessfestival.co.uk

SHREWSBURY FOOD FESTIVAL

June 28th & 29th at The Quarry in Shrewsbury
 Food and drink producers and top local chefs come together for a foodie weekend of fun. It's a day out for the whole family with an entire field of free kids' activities plus hands-on education in the field to fork area. There are chef demonstrations, a chef school, two live entertainment stages, and 200 food, drink and home stalls. It's way more than a food festival.
www.shrewsburyfoodfestival.co.uk

SHROPSHIRE PETAL FIELDS

August (dates TBC) in Newport, Shropshire
 Shropshire Petals Fields is an amazing spectacle with its pink, blue, purple, yellow, and white delphiniums,

sunflowers and wildflowers to wonder through. There's a wild woodland walk, on-site café and toilets, flowers for sale, and plenty of focal points to capture the perfect photo.

www.shropshirepetalfields.co.uk

SHROPSHIRE OKTOBERFEST

October 3rd & 4th at The Quarry in Shrewsbury
 Shropshire's biggest party champions local brewers, distillers, and drinks producers by bringing them all into a huge beer tent filled with people laden with Lederhosen. The live music stage hosts local bands and oompah all weekend, plus there's a silent disco, carpool karaoke, Saturday comedy club, and a street food village.
www.shropshireoktoberfest.co.uk

Find out more about Shropshire Festivals at www.shropshirefestivals.co.uk

and if you're interested in finding out about partnership opportunities or events consultancy, email Beth@ShropshireFestivals.co.uk.

GOOD NEWS FOR PEAKES TRAVEL ELITE



Shrewsbury's independent travel agency, Peakes Travel Elite, has received industry recognition.

AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators) awarded Peakes Travel Elite with the Shining Star award at the AITO conference in January. It recognises their outstanding relationships and forward sales with specialist tour operators. Managing Director, Claire Moore, also won the Chairman's Award for her outstanding contribution to luxury travel.

AITO has carried out a travel insights survey which revealed 86.5% of respondents said they would recommend Peakes to a friend or colleague and 85.7% rated their overall satisfaction with their last Peakes holiday as 'very satisfied'. 91.9% would rate Peakes as 'excellent' or 'good' value for money. When asked what they most value about the travel agent they book with, 86% said in-person appointments.

Claire Moore, managing director at Peakes Travel Elite, said she is delighted that customers see the value of their appointment service. *"Our customers really embraced our move to an appointment only service. It means there's no waiting around to see who's free like the industry*

norm, instead, they have been booked in ahead of time with the most suited travel expert to help them plan their next holiday. We're also happy for passersby to pop in to see if an appointment is available.

"Our luxury appointment space upstairs is perfect for taking a deep dive into holiday itineraries whilst video calling relevant tour operators from the comfort of the sofa with a nice drink in hand. We also regularly run 'Meet the Expert' events in-store. Each of our events is dedicated to a particular country. We then source a subject matter travel operator expert and bring them to the store for a day of one-to-one appointments with our customers.

"Turn your holiday dreams into a reality here at Peakes Travel Elite."

Call 01743 233234 or email sales@peakestravelite.co.uk to book an appointment.

LITTLE STARS REFLECTS ON A TRANSFORMATIVE 2024 AND LOOKS AHEAD



Little Stars, a charity dedicated to supporting children and families in Shropshire, celebrated a remarkable year in 2024. With the local poverty rate at 32% and the cost-of-living crisis persisting, demand for their services soared.

The charity provided essential items to 1,333 children, 52 pregnant women, and 140 adults, with 582 children receiving Christmas gifts. This is a staggering 176% increase in the number of children supported by the charity compared to 2023.

The year saw Little Stars spend over £7,000 in vital items such as stairgates, mattresses, and toiletries. By providing these essential items we directly contribute to the health, safety, and well-being of children.

In May, the charity launched its first-ever shop in Shrewsbury's Darwin Centre, creating a hub to raise funds and connect with the community. Events like the Wear Stars 4 Little Stars Day and their Halloween Ball, which raised over £6,000, showcased the incredible generosity of local supporters and businesses.

Corporate volunteers, including teams from Aico,

The Marches Academy Trust, Pwc and WSP, played a significant role by lending their time to the stockroom, shop, and Christmas wrapping events. Partnerships with Start Tech, St Winefriede, Liquid Fleet, Shropshire Media and other businesses helped the charity grow its reach and impact.

Looking to 2025, Little Stars anticipates increasing demand for its services and aims to forge new partnerships with local businesses and individuals. A full calendar of fundraising events is planned, including Musical Bingo on 4th April and taking part in the Shrewsbury Half Marathon on 28th September.

Contact Chantal@littlestarscharity.org if you would like to know more about these events or if you want to get involved!

To stay informed or to find out more, visit Little Stars' website www.littlestarscharity.org and subscribe to their monthly newsletter or contact the team directly on Corporate@littlestarscharity.org.

Together, we can ensure even more families are supported in the coming year.

SHREWSBURY BASED PIPEKIT RECORDS STRONG GROWTH GOING INTO 2025



Pipekit, an independent distributor of specialist pipework systems and drainage solutions, has exceeded 30% year on year growth going into 2025 and expects a busy year ahead. The success is attributed to a combination of factors including continued sales growth online, development of regular account customers and the expansion of its fabrication operation.

Significant sales growth has been driven by the company's investment in July 2024 of its third-generation e-commerce website. The new platform has offered a superior user experience with the latest technology offering a faster and easier customer interface. Pipekit's fabrication operation has also continued to expand with increased projects for prefabricated HDPE drainage stacks for tall buildings, and higher volumes of modular plumbing kits for the offsite volumetric bathroom pods and utility cupboards sector. Investment in new machinery and dedicated staff will further support the predicted growth for this market in 2025.

Growth for the business is also aligned heavily with the continued development and investment in staff and the last 12 months has seen various new team members in all areas across the business. These have included further expansion to sales and customer service roles, as well as fabrication welders and specifically the new addition of Lloyd Winter, Technical Design and Support Manager, which brings a new dimension to Pipekit's offering as a pipework and drainage distributor. Furthermore, the business created a new leadership team structure last year to ensure the team has the skills in place to be

effective leaders and continue to drive and stretch the business.

Commenting on his outlook for the business in 2025, Martyn Rowlands, owner and MD of Pipekit said: *"The continued growth, performance and commitment of our team in applying themselves to continuous business growth is rewarding to see and with ambitious growth targets in place for 2025 we go again"*.

He continues: *"With growth expected through our e-commerce site, new product offerings and from within our fabrication business, we expect a busy year ahead."*

"We're looking forward to continuing to grow our customer base and offering our customers a full range of technical support services and leading, high-performance products. All whilst seeing our team grow in both skills and expertise".

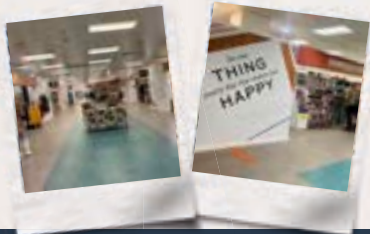
As well as Pipekit being a leading, independent distributor operating both regionally, nationally, and internationally, Pipekit supports various local communities and charities, as well as partners various organisations in order to drive both social and corporate responsibility. Pipekit's main charity for 2025 is Lingen Davies Cancer Fund a charity that supports people impacted by cancer in Shropshire, Telford and Mid Wales. Plus, Pipekit partners organisations such as the Shrewsbury College Group, by sponsoring the plumbing and gas department at Shrewsbury College, to support the future generation of plumbers and gas fitters.

For further information on Pipekit's products and services please visit www.pipekit.co.uk, telephone 01743 860088 or email: enquiries@pipekit.co.uk

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Are you running a small business and considering a retail unit in Shrewsbury? If so - we'd love to hear from you!



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Flexible 2 year lease at an affordable rent - inclusive of utilities, service charge, wi-fi and marketing support (does not include business rates but some smaller units may be eligible for relief).

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ABOUT THE LATEST OPPORTUNITIES, PLEASE EMAIL:
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James Satoor

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PIPEKIT, independent distributor of specialist pipework systems & drainage solutions, offers personal customer service & technical support built on experience.



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Find us:

Chapter House North,
Abbey Lawn,
Abbey Foregate,
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SOME SNAPS FROM RECENT EVENTS



Netwalking

We love welcoming your lovely faces to our monthly events, and this year we've got some great ones lined up.

Our events give you the chance to network with other local business owners, while trying/learning something new. We have met so many new lovely people & businesses in the last 12 months and we have welcomed a huge amount of new members.

If you would be interested in sponsoring an event please contact Donna - shrewsburybc.events@gmail.com

We hope to see you soon!



Cheese & Wine Evening

To make sure you don't miss out on our events make sure you check out our website

<https://shrewsburybusinesschamber.com/events/>

and follow us on all socials...



YOU'LL FIND US AT THE HEART OF YOUR COMMUNITY!



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SHOOTHILL JOINS SHREWSBURY BUSINESS CHAMBER



Aviramp commission Shootill as full-service digital technology provider.

Shootill are proud to announce that Aviramp, a Midlands manufacturer of aviation ramps, has commissioned Shootill as its full-service digital technology provider.

Aviramp specialises in access and loading systems within aviation. The award-winning company produces a series of fully accessible, single operator ramps from its Telford base which provide a reliable and efficient method of boarding and disembarking planes at airports all over the world.

Aviramp will be making use of Shootill's full-service provision which will span a series of projects as part of a significant digital transformation. They include IT support, website development, digital marketing as well as bespoke software.

The objective of this partnership is to enable Aviramp to continue to grow and develop its business by increasing efficiency and offering customers the best possible service with one digital technology service provider working as an extension to the team.

Graham Corfield, chief executive of Aviramp said: "As we look to further grow our business, we are keen to

invest in digital technology solutions which support that expansion, which is why a trusted partner like Shootill makes perfect sense for us. I have been impressed with the speed at which Shootill has been able to understand Aviramp, adding value and expertise to our team from the beginning."

Simon Jeavons, Group Managing Director of Shootill said: "We are looking forward to supporting Aviramp's growth, offering the digital solutions needed to keep pace with their expansion. We'll refresh and rebuild their website, adding an e-commerce platform for spare parts and integrate this with their existing CRM. Ongoing monthly marketing support will boost online growth, generate leads and support the customer journey. We're also exploring bespoke software to improve efficiency across the business, ensuring Aviramp has the tools it needs for future success."

Shootill recently turned 18 years old and in this time has worked with everything from start-ups to local SMEs and global brands. With over 400 projects under their belt, the team are trusted experts in their field from websites and design to IT support services and bespoke software systems they offer a full-service solution.

To find out more head to:
<https://www.shoothill.com>

JOIN US FOR A

HISTORY TOUR

March 19th, 2025

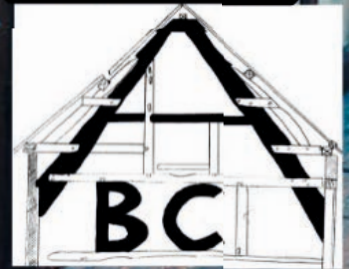
5.30-8.30pm

Members: £5

Non Members: £15

Shrewsbury Museum
The square Shrewsbury
SY1 1LH

Sponsored by Andrew's
Building Conservation



Join us for another guided history tour, this time learning about Shrewsbury's 'Shuts and Passages'

This event is sponsored by Andrew Shenton and is another opportunity for us to learn more about our town. Join other business owners and colleagues for a walking tour led once again by Maggie Love. The tour will finish with light refreshments and an opportunity to network.

Date and time

Wednesday, March 19 · 5:30 - 8:30pm

Location: Shrewsbury Museum, The square Shrewsbury SY1 1LH

To book your place go to -

<https://shrewsburybusinesschamber.com/events/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH

HISTORY TOUR

SPONSORED BY MEMBER ANDREW SHENTON OF ANDREW'S BUILDING CONSERVATION AND RUN BY MAGGIE LOVE

WED 19 MAR
5.30PM

MEMBERS: £5
NON MEMBERS £15

APRIL

NETWALK

2 HOUR WALK COVERING 4 MILES AND INCLUDES A PUB STOP.

WED 9 APR
6PM

FREE TO ALL

VISIT TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES & NETWORKING

WITH Q&A WITH HELEN BALL TOWN CLERK.

WED 30 APR
6PM

FREE TO ALL

MAY

ANNUAL CHAMBER QUIZ

A FUN NIGHT TO MIX WITH OTHER LOCAL BUSINESS.

WED 7 MAY
6PM

FREE TO ALL

NETWALK

2 HOUR WALK COVERING 4 MILES AND INCLUDES A PUB STOP.

WED 21 MAY
6PM

FREE TO ALL

JUNE

NETWALK

2 HOUR WALK COVERING 4 MILES AND INCLUDES A PUB STOP.

WED 18 JUN
6PM

FREE TO ALL

AN EVENING WITH JULIA BUCKLEY

OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS WHAT'S HAPPENED LOCALLY AND WHAT IS ON THE HORIZON.

THU 26 JUN
6PM

MEMBERS: FREE
NON MEMBERS: £5



For more information about our events, please take a look at the events section of our website and follow all our socials for updates.

 WWW.SHREWSBURYBUSINESSCHAMBER.COM

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THANKYOU!

Thankyou to everyone who has contributed to this issue of the Shrewsbury Business Chamber magazine.

We are always looking for new content to promote over social media, so if your business has some exciting news, any events or good news to share, then please send these to us so we can promote for you across our social media.

If you would like to be featured or have a story or an event you'd like included, if you could please send an email to shrewsburybc.editor@gmail.com with all copy and any images.

To advertise in future issues if you could please contact shrewsburybc.editor@gmail.com

Thinking about becoming a member?

Shrewsbury Business Chamber is the business group of choice for the Shrewsbury area. The Chamber organises regular events allowing businesses to network, voice their opinions and gain useful business expertise. The Chamber provides a collective voice and ensures business issues reach the right officials. A not-for-profit membership organisation which is headed up by a volunteer business focused Executive Committee. The Business Chamber works closely with other local private and public sector organisations for the betterment of businesses from across the Shrewsbury area.

MEMBERSHIP	ANNUAL FEE
Retired	£30
Charity	£50
Sole Trader	£70
Up to 10 employees	£100
More than 10 employees	£140

For more information on how to join please head to our website www.shrewsburybusinesschamber.com

The opinions expressed here do not necessarily represent the views of the editor, or those of Shrewsbury Business Chamber.

To advertise in future issues if you could please contact our editor via email at

shrewsburybc.editor@gmail.com