



SHREWSBURY
BUSINESS CHAMBER

Issue 4 2020



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Chairman's Foreword

Welcome to the Winter issue of the Business Chamber magazine.

After the floods in February and 10 months of life with Covid-19, it is safe to say that 2020 will not be a year fond in many people's memories.

We sympathise with local businesses who have failed to survive extended periods of closure during lockdown. During this Christmas period our independent shops need our help more than ever, so if you have more Christmas shopping to do please shop local.

I would like to pay thanks to Seb and the team at Shrewsbury BID, who have supported local businesses during their "Open Shrewsbury" campaign; provided Covid save guidance and also subsidised PPE to businesses as they reopened earlier in the year.

Our AGM saw changes to the Executive committee. Val Edwards has replaced Peter Bettis as President. I am confident she will be a great ambassador for local business moving into 2021 when we hope to bring back events in person. I am pleased to welcome Jenny Osborne as our new Vice Chairman. Jenny has brought a wealth of experience and knowledge to the committee over the years and I welcome her support to me as your new Chairman.

With the vaccine starting to roll out across the UK, we are seeing light at the end of the tunnel and there is optimism for good times ahead. But until then, we must follow the social distancing rules for just a little longer.

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Kevin Lockwood
Chairman, Shrewsbury
Business Chamber
Manager of Shrewsbury
Shopping Centres

Rosie and Niamh join the Executive Committee

Following the October AGM, Shrewsbury Business Chamber are pleased to announce two very strong additions to the Executive committee. Rosie Beswick and Niamh Kelly have both agreed to provide their experience and knowledge to the existing team.

Rosie is Managing Consultant of Rosie Consulting, a specialist Market Research, Marketing & Project Consultancy based on the outskirts of Shrewsbury. Having owned her own businesses since 1990, and prior to that running businesses for others as a Company Accountant, Rosie has gained a wide-ranging skill set. Rosie has worked with international blue chips to sole traders, in multiple sectors, knowledge which she hopes will benefit the Chamber.



New Executive Committee member
Rosie Beswick, Rosie Consulting

rosieconsulting 

Rosie is also a Governor of an FE College and Chair of a MAT. In 2007 Rosie co-founded and co-led the highly successful ladies business network, 'Network with Style' until December 2019. NWS supported a broad range of smaller businesses, helping Rosie to better understand the 'out of sight' economic army that forms much of the business backbone of Shropshire.

Rosie stated that "Networking keeps your outlook fresh, being a part of the Chamber enables me to do just that. Being asked to join the Executive Committee is an honour and something I hope I can add value to".

Níamh Kelly is an award winning HR professional with over 25 years HR experience at a Senior level in the corporate, public and voluntary sector. She launched "The HR Dept Shropshire" in May 2018, to provide employment law and human resources support to small and medium sized businesses across the County. The success of the company led to the recent launch of The HR Dept Wrexham and Chester and the expansion of her team including a Snr HR Consultant and an Apprentice to meet the growing demand.

"It's been quite a journey since I launched my own company two and a half years ago and have been really pleased with what I have been able to achieve. But the Covid-19 pandemic has been a terrible experience for so many people. It's also been a really difficult time for businesses dealing with the challenges of lockdown and the worry of what lies ahead. Despite all the uncertainty, however, I remain optimistic and extremely proud of the business community and how Shrewsbury businesses in particular, are helping each other through extremely difficult circumstances. I am delighted to be asked to join the Executive Committee and hope I can continue to do my bit for Shrewsbury Business!"



Niamh Kelly also joined the Business Chamber in November



New Mayor Gwen starts term with Virtual lights switch on

Last month, Shrewsbury Town Council took to Facebook to host its annual Christmas Lights Switch-on, a once popular event in the town which attracts 5,000 local residents to the Square to mark the start of Shrewsbury's Christmas festivities. With the prevalence of Covid-19 across the globe, the Town Council made key decisions this year to protect the crippled events calendar whilst also safeguarding the public's safety.

In May, the Town Council commemorated the 75th anniversary of VE Day with a number of pre-recorded events featuring Kevin Dempsey, Chairman of the Shrewsbury Branch of the Royal British Legion streamed to co-incide with the National 2-minute silence. September saw the Town Council retain local links with RAF Shawbury to hold the annual Battle of Britain service. This year on the 80th anniversary, a spitfire flew over the town as part of the commemorations. And in November the Town Council were able to uphold the Remembrance Day traditions and hold its wreath

laying event. With weeks of preparation, they successfully ensured that all members of the service and public were kept safe and were socially distanced from one another.

"We recognise these events are important in the Shrewsbury calendar" Town Clerk Helen Ball explained. "This year keeping people safe has become our priority rather than hosting events. We are hopefully that 2021 brings back a greater sense of normality."

With the large number of regular attendees at the Switch-on event, the time and date of the 2020 ceremony was a tight-lipped secret between the Town Clerk and Kirk Taylor of Potters Electrical, who installs the Christmas lights in the town and has been involved in a number of projects this year including installing solar lights in the Quarry and upgrading over 500 street lights to LED significantly reducing energy costs.

"The public are always keen to know the date of the Christmas lights switch-on. This year we

made a conscious decision of not telling anyone for fear of a lot of people coming into the town to congregate, which would breach the existing lockdown rules."

Over 45,000 people witnessed the event on the Town Council's Facebook page, which saw Councillor Gwen Burgess begin her 18 month term as Mayor turning the lights on.

Gwen, being a local business woman in the town centre knows the importance of Christmas lights to the town centre economy, which ordinarily would be the start of Late Night Shopping in Shrewsbury. A tradition for each Mayor of Shrewsbury is to choose a charity to raise money during their mayoral year. Gwen has chosen to support the Lingen Davies Centre, with a number of fundraising events to be announced in the near future.

For regular updates from Shrewsbury Town Council, visit [Facebook.com/shrewsburytowncouncil](https://www.facebook.com/shrewsburytowncouncil)



THE SHREWSBURY CHRISTMAS WINDOW COMPETITION



Click on any picture to vote online with a chance to win a £50 voucher for a Shrewsbury business of your choice as a thank you for voting.

Voting closes at 9am on Monday 21st December



The Glass Studio,
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Crane Quality Counselling,
51-52 Mardol



Gloulou,
17a Castle Gates



Majors,
10-11 Claremont Street



Thomas Glover,
5 St Marys Street



Heart & Arrow tattoo studio,
10a St John's Hill



Cooking Kneads,
3 Wyle Cop



Home Essentials,
28 Castle Street



Daily Brews,
24 The Square



Maggie Mae's Vintage
2-3 Dogpole



Carol Grant,
13 The Square



Illuminate Trust,
18 Wyle Cop



Wyle Blue World,
19 Wyle Cop



Lavender Hampers & Gifts,
1 Butcher Row



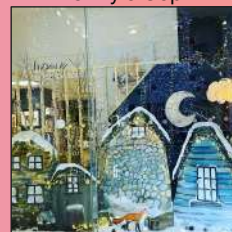
Shropshire Cat Rescue,
Roushill Bank



Vinterior,
9 Wyle Cop



Graphic Heart,
23a Wyle Cop



Meg Hawkins,
Darwin Centre



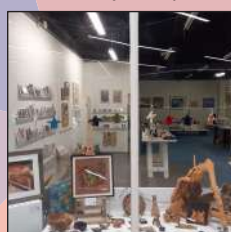
Tanners Wine,
26 Wyle Cop



Roly's Fudge Pantry,
2 High Street



Vintage 49a,
Shrewsbury Market Hall



Visual Art Network,
Darwin Centre



Penny Farthing,
4 High Street



The Soden Collection,
82 Wyle Cop



The Shrewsbury Coffeehouse,
5 Castle Gates



Acoustic Boutique,
6 High Street



Distinctive Bridal,
106/107 Frankwell



Toggs and Cloggs,
27 Princess Street



The Vault Vintage,
2a Roushill Bank



Cobbler Shoe Repairs,
20b Castle Gates



White Lotus Living,
1 Wyle Cop



Safety top priority as town centre re-opens

Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce, made up of Shropshire Council, Shrewsbury Town Council and Shrewsbury BID, says that safety remains a top priority for town centre businesses who reopened earlier this month.

Shropshire Council have confirmed that the pedestrian zone along High Street will be re-introduced from 11am-4pm to enable more space for people to move around and observe social distancing during the busiest part of the day. Incoming traffic will not be permitted up Wyle Cop and along High Street during the hours of 11am-4pm and drivers needing to traverse the town centre will be encouraged to use the inner ring road.

All car parks will remain open and accessible with no charges in all Shropshire Council car parks from 11am each day until 17th January.

Kevin Lockwood, manager of Shrewsbury Shopping Centres and part of the Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce, said: "Everyone is understandably very keen to see some sort of normality returning, and it's good news that some of our shops and restaurants opened their doors this month, although some hospitality businesses will have to remain closed whilst we are in Tier 2 restrictions. "It is absolutely vital that we all

remember the basics, just like we did back in the summer, to observe social distancing, sanitise our hands and wear masks inside public spaces.

"Removing through-traffic from the centre of town enables us to create a more comfortable and spacious environment for people.

"We are also looking to remove some of the street furniture on Pride Hill to make it easier for people to follow the rules.

"We all need to keep doing everything we can to keep Shrewsbury safe and welcoming for everyone."

Extra cleaning operatives, funded by Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce, are continuing to patrol the town centre, sanitising common touchpoints like cashpoints, bus stops and benches to help prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Town centre traders are also being reminded of the importance of ensuring their customers can maintain social distancing and good hygiene practices.

Stacey Hill, owner of Oberon on Wyle Cop and Shrewsbury BID board director, said that re-introducing the pedestrian zone was very positive move to provide customers with a safe and welcoming environment for people to do their shopping. She added: "We are so excited to be opening our doors once again, and I know traders have spent a lot

of time during lockdown making sure our shops are super safe. "Removing through-traffic has been very popular with shoppers because it allows so much more space for people, as well as improving the general atmosphere, so we will be happy to see the pedestrian zone being brought back into action."

Alexis Hill, operations manager at The Loopy Shrew and Shrewsbury BID board director, said Shrewsbury continued to be a very safe place to visit.

He said: "As we head out of lockdown again, we are all keen to see the retail and hospitality businesses throughout the town thrive, and see a level of normality return to our lives.

"Being in Tier 2 does present additional challenges for the hospitality sector, and of course many businesses will still be unable to open, so we all need to keep abiding by the rules in the hope that restrictions can be eased sooner rather than later.

"The work that the Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce has done, and the initiatives that they have put in place, will no doubt ensure that Shrewsbury is, once again, one of the safest places to shop, eat, and drink."



How can Shropshire SME's manage the mental health of employees during the latest Coronavirus restrictions?

With so much of the UK experiencing a second lockdown this autumn, there are real concerns over the impact it will have on the mental health of employees. Despite often not having a significant inhouse HR resource, small and medium sized businesses (SME's) are well placed to engage with employee mental health. This is because of the close relationships forged between senior managers or owners and staff. Niamh Kelly from The HR Dept Shropshire shares some advice on what SME's can do to manage mental health.

"Mental health is personal to each individual: what some people take in their stride, may cause stress, anxiety or depression in others. Add to that, that we are all experiencing different levels of lockdown: some will still be at their place of work, others furloughed, some remote working and others made redundant. It's clear that one size of solution does not fit all problems.

"However, there are many good practices that managers in

SMEs are well placed to follow. Spotting signs of poor mental health early is invaluable for staff and the company. It is possible to get training in this, but signs could include mood changes, working long hours and out-of-character performance issues.

"Role modelling is a powerful technique, where managers visibly display good behaviours for mental health: for instance not being 'always on', being open in communication and taking part in company led well-being activity.

"Encouraging connection among team members is a key action. This could be through regular team video meetings as well as virtual social events. And don't forget one-to-one reviews of workload and individual well-being. They will also be helpful.

"Look back and consider what lessons you can learn from the first lockdown and be ready for further challenges if the County goes into a new Tier.

"This time, it's not quite the same as the lockdown in the

spring. Working parents will be relieved that the schools and nurseries are still open, but childcare will still be a lingering issue, especially when school outbreaks occur. People furloughed on 80% of their salary in the hospitality sector will miss out on tips, often crucial to their earnings over the festive period, and the cold weather and dark nights will not be any good for people's spirits.

"As well as the technical HR tasks you have to get right, there are many low-level but effective HR activities which you can deploy to help. An extra workplace perk like a health cash plan (which often includes access to counselling support) can cost just a few pounds a month per employee, or Shrewsbury shopping vouchers which could help out significantly with Christmas just around the corner. And of course, you'll be helping out other SME's as well!

For more information about how Niamh can help meet your HR needs, email Niamh.Kelly@hrdept.co.uk



Council team reflect on challenging year

Shrewsbury Business Chamber members enjoyed a positive question and answer session with Shropshire Council on the 11th November. Council leader Peter Nutting and chief executive Andy Begley spoke about the challenges the organisation have faced this year from the flood response in February, to the logistical challenges presented by Covid-19.

The chief executive, who was appointed to his role in September described the interim period in charge as a “baptism of fire” where he has had to quickly redirect council resources to support those in need. The council processed over £100m worth of loans from central government that have been passed on to businesses across Shropshire helping them to survive an extended period of closure.

Mr Begley, who has been working for Shropshire Council since 2013 as executive director of adult social care, public health and housing spoke about where the organisation has room for improvement. “We are keen to change the public perception that the council is not in touch with the community” he explained. “Special thank you to Shrewsbury

Shopping Centre manager Kevin Lockwood, who helped facilitate a walk-in shop in the Darwin centre in a very short space of time.” Shropshire Council have also made a new addition to their marketing communications team who will start with the organisation in the new year.

Mr Nutting outlined his vision for regenerating parts of the town, making reference to the Big Town Plan that includes the Riverside Shopping Centre, Raven Meadows multi-story car park and a new Park and Ride site in Bowbrook, that will improve access to the town centre. The need for the North West Relief Road was also greatly discussed, alleviating traffic inside the loop of the river.

Both Peter and Andy spoke about how they aspire to make the county more attractive to people and businesses looking to move into the area and change the pattern of younger people leaving to find opportunities elsewhere. Attracting more small and medium enterprises such as IT based companies is a goal, but this hinges on improved broadband and mobile signals across the county.

When asked about the council's biggest challenges over the next 12 months, Peter was concerned about their ability to continuously provide social services for everyone who needs them, whilst Andy was concerned about the potential increase of homelessness after funding from central government ceases. Over half of the council's budget is allocated to providing social services including supporting children. Other concerns included a rise in unemployment, which depends on a number of factors including the worldwide search for an approved vaccine to Covid 19.

Supporting retail businesses in Shrewsbury over December was considered important, with many traders hoping government guidance will allow them to open from the 3rd December. There is a key message to shop local; follow the social distancing guidance and take advantage of the extended opening times that many businesses propose to run, which will help customers to shop in a safe and controlled environment.



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Look out for tax opportunities

Tax payers looking for higher returns on their investments are being encouraged to explore a lesser known form of tax relief.

Jess Swift, Tax Client Manager, says Investors' Relief was a largely overlooked but hugely valuable benefit that could be increasingly attractive with interest rates at record lows.

"The Spring Budget introduced some drastic overnight changes to Business Asset Disposal Relief which was formerly known as Entrepreneur's Relief, but the criteria for Investors' Relief remained unchanged.

"Where it is available, this relief reduces the rate of Capital Gains Tax from 20% to 10% on up to £10 million of lifetime gains.

"And now, given the low interest rates, investors may be prepared to take greater risks in order to potentially achieve higher returns, and Investors' Relief could play an important role in the decision-making process."

Jess says the aim of Investors' Relief was as an incentive to attract investment in unlisted trading companies.

"This means it's not generally available to employees and directors, but it may be available to directors who do not take a salary."

"The shares must be ordinary shares subscribed for in cash on or after March 17, 2016, and there is a minimum holding period of three years before the relief becomes available. There



Jess Swift, Tax Client Manager

is also no 5% minimum holding and there are no excluded activities."

Jess says the April 5, 2020, self-assessment tax returns would be the first returns in which claims for Investors' Relief could be made as the three-year minimum holding period was only met on April 6, 2019.

"The legislation surrounding Investors' Relief and Business Asset Disposal Relief is extremely complex and investors should seek specialist advice before making any decisions to make sure they meet all the qualifying criteria."

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Cooper Green Pooks - Units 2-4 Anchorage Avenue, Shrewsbury Business Park
- Artist's Impression, Courtesy of Walker Hay Architects, London

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Planning for the future – the WR Partners experience

With many businesses currently operating hand to mouth and fighting every day to survive, the thought of spending time on the long term strategic direction of their business might, to many business owners, seem like an investment they just can't afford to make. I would argue however that now is exactly the time that business owners need to lift themselves out of the day to day and really consider the future for them and for their business.

The reality is that not all businesses suffer to the same extent during a downturn – a drop in national or local GDP is just an average and while many businesses do suffer (and sadly go under) there are others that not only survive but indeed thrive during tougher times. It is also a clear that there will be an end to this (even if that currently seems to be a long way off at the moment) and businesses that come out of the other end of this crisis with strong foundations and a clear plan for the future will be the ones best placed to take advantage of the opportunities the recovery will present.

Even in the best of times many owner managers are so wrapped up in the operations of the business that they don't take the time to plan for the longer term – they are too busy working in the business to work on the business. Even in our own business it is often easy to lose sight of the bigger picture because we are too busy – the trick is to ask ourselves are we “busy” doing the right things?

As a leadership group at WR Partners it is critical we don't lose focus on what really matters to the long term future of our business. Initially we invested a great deal of time in developing a clear set of goals and identifying the key actions we need to take to reach those goals – all of these captured on a one page plan. This plan is the document which sets out the



strategic direction for our business in a clear, simple manner and we regularly revisit it and challenge ourselves to ensure that we are on track and we still believe the direction set initially is the right one. All of this was done before the pandemic hit, but we have kept that discipline throughout – there may be a few more twists and turns along the way than we might have anticipated but the end goals remain the same.

By doing this we have been able during the current challenging times to roll out a fresh, new and exciting brand which aligns completely with our core beliefs as a business, and to expand the business with two new offices in Cheshire. We have total confidence that we will emerge into the “new normal” with a business which has not only survived the pandemic but is ready to thrive in a post Coronavirus world.

This time we spend working on our business is the most valuable time we spend as a team and has brought us together like never before. At the same time we acknowledge that we could not have achieved what we have to date without outside help. Having someone outside the business challenge us and ensure we are on

track has been a hugely valuable part of the process. The key has not been that we have been given the answers – there is no one secret recipe for success as a business. Instead we have been asked the right questions and pushed to find the answers within ourselves – at times a confronting process but it means that we really “own” the strategy as we have built it ourselves and not followed the theoretical ideas of others.

Get a free Strategic Business Review

Having been through the process ourselves we can attest to the value at both a business and a personal level.

We would challenge every business owner to ask themselves if they really have a clear strategy for the future – even if it is just “I can't go through this again so I want to find a way out!” then at least you have a goal to work towards.

If you would like to understand more about the strategic planning process that we have undertaken and how we might be able to bring that to your business and help to protect your future, then register your interest today for a one-hour free strategy workshop by using the button above.

Shropshire law firm maintains excellent rankings in national guide

A Shropshire law firm has maintained its excellent rankings in a national guide, with 14 lawyers highlighted as recommended practitioners.

Lanyon Bowdler has eight practice areas recommended in the 2021 Chambers UK legal guide, six of which are ranked in the top band. The Chambers UK guide ranks law firms based on independent research and interviews with clients, and has been helping people find the best lawyers and firms in the country for more than 30 years.

Brian Evans, managing partner of Lanyon Bowdler, which has offices across Shropshire, Herefordshire and North Wales, said Chambers UK was a highly-respected guide. He said: "Law firms are always very keen to be included in the guide because it is shaped by comments from clients themselves, along with independent research and interviews with other professionals. "We are therefore very

pleased to see eight practice areas and 14 individual lawyers recommended in the guide.

"It is a great achievement for every lawyer included in the guide, but I particularly want to highlight Edward Nutting who has been recommended for agriculture in Wales for the first time.

"I also want to mention Beth Heath from our clinical negligence team who is making her debut in the guide, and joins Kay Kelly and Lucy Small at the very top of their field.

"The firm's head of personal injury, Neil Lorimer, is again ranked in the top band for his expertise and specialist knowledge which is nationally recognised."

As well as the rankings, the guide includes testimonials from clients about individual lawyers and firms.

The guide says: "Beth Heath receives considerable praise for her clinical negligence expertise as well as her advocacy skills, with interviewees stating that



Brian Evans, Managing partner at Lanyon Bowdler

'she excels in the tactical litigation process'.

"One client enthuses that Lucy Small is 'absolutely fantastic: she has always been on hand and very helpful with explaining confusing situations to us in a simple, understanding way'." Describing the family law team, the guide adds: "One source describes the lawyers as 'absolutely fantastic', adding that 'their advice is second to none'.

"Another impressed interviewee lauds the firm as an 'excellent organisation that has true experts in the field'."

The full list of recommended lawyers is:

Andrew Pegg (litigation)
Andrew Evans (agriculture)
Edward Nutting (agriculture)
Lucy Small (clinical negligence)
Emma Broomfield (clinical negligence)
Kay Kelly (clinical negligence)
Beth Heath (clinical negligence)
Sue Hodgson (family)
Lisa Grimmett (family)
Colin Spanner (family)
Neil Lorimer (personal injury)
Dawn Humphries (personal injury)
Louise Howard (personal injury)
Edward Rees (private wealth law)



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A question for Katy Jones, Managing Director at Shrewsbury-based PC Net Solutions...

Can the internet go off?

Here's something to think about: Can the internet go off? And if it can, what happens to all your important data?

Our level of dependency on the internet is growing all the time. We use it for pretty much everything we do, running the country, keeping our airports and railways functioning, operating a business, right down to ordering mum's birthday present - all of which can be a bit scary if we sit and think about it for too long!

So, what would happen if the internet went off? Could it happen and, if so, what about all that vital information we rely on to carry out our day-to-day lives? Would it be lost forever?

Free-flowing data

The short answer is, your data isn't going to be affected. The internet is purely a flow of information without one single connection point where data travels through. It's fluid, a bit like a river, if one tributary is blocked water always finds a new route to continue on its way and it's almost impossible to block every part of the river at the same time.

Flowing data is much the same and the internet was designed to enable data to find a way around the parts of a network which may



'go down'. The internet is actually more of a concept than something tangible, relying on a physical infrastructure to enable it to work.

Big brother has a say in it

Having reassured you about your flowing data, it's also worth mentioning that aspects of the internet can go down or be taken down which can affect access and the way you operate.

A BBC report highlighted how Governments around the world can 'switch off' the internet by ordering service providers to block certain areas from receiving signals, and revealed that services were shut down more than 200 times across 33 different countries last year.

It only happened once in the UK when climate change activists were protesting in London and British Transport Police shut down the wi-fi on the Tube network. Most of the shutdowns around the world were made during protests while some occurred during elections.

Staying secure

Armed with the knowledge that your data flow will continue to meander around the internet, it's worth reminding you about a much bigger worry - the loss of your important, sensitive, information by other means . . . namely a security breach.

It's a growing problem and one which needs your urgent attention if you want to protect the integrity of your business. There are a number of steps you can take to ensure you stay cyber-secure.

Do give the PC Net Solutions team a call on 01743 290588 if you would like more information.



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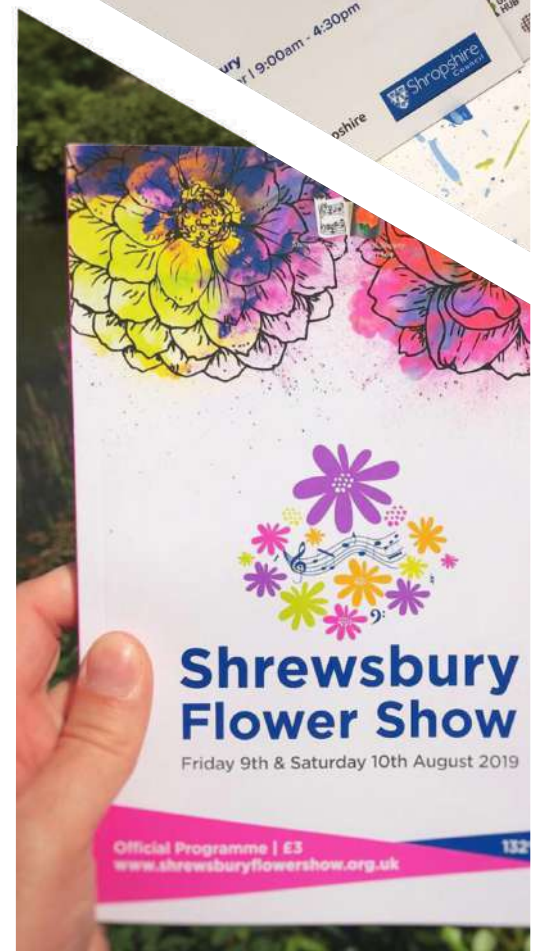
Print is Powerful

It might be easy to fall into the trap that 'the world has gone digital' therefore we no longer need a brochure or a flyer or catalogue for our business. But in reality there has never been a better time to go to print.

In a world where we are bombarded with virtual messages, digital access, screen based social lives, online shopping, there is something quite powerful about receiving a printed brochure to browse and read at our leisure.

More than ever, people have time and desire to thumb through the latest magazine or browse a brochure, we are spending so much time looking at our lives on a screen that the printed format is truly coming back into its own.

Let Yarrington make your print stand out, make it beautiful, make it artistic, make it a joy to have.



6 Reasons Not to Diversify in 2021 Courtesy of Shane Stark

Diversification is a sound financial planning strategy, but does it work for company building?

How does Vitamix get away with charging £700 for a blender when reputable companies like Cuisinart and Breville make blenders for less than half the price?

It's because Vitamix does just one thing, and they do it better than anyone else.

WhatsApp was just a messaging platform before Facebook acquired them for \$19 billion US. Go Pro makes the best helmet mounted video cameras in the world. These companies stand out because they poured all of their limited resources into one big bet.

The typical business school of thought is to diversify and cross sell your way to a "safe" business with a balanced portfolio of products – so when one product category tanks, another line of your business will hopefully boom. But the problem with selling too many things – especially for a young or small company – is that you water down everything you do to the point of mediocrity.

Here are six reasons to stop being a jack-of-all-trades and start specialising in doing one thing better than anyone else:

1. It will increase the value of your business

When you sell one thing, you can differentiate yourself by pouring all of your marketing money into setting your one product apart, which will boost your company's value. How do we know? After analyzing more than 13,000 businesses using The Value Builder Score, we found companies that have a monopoly on what they sell get acquisition offers that are 42 percent higher than the average business.

2. You can create a brand

Big multinationals can dump millions into each of their brands, which enable them to sell more than one thing. Kellogg can own the Corn Flakes brand and also peddle Pringles because they have enough cash to support both brands independently, but with every new product comes a dilution of your marketing budget. It's hard enough for a small business to build one household name and virtually impossible to create two without gobs of equity-diluting outside money.

3. You'll be findable on Google

When you Google "helmet camera," Go Pro is featured in just about every listing, despite the fact that there are hundreds of video camera

manufacturers. It's easy for Go Pro to optimize their website for the keywords that matter when they are focused on selling only one product.

4. Nobody cheered for Goliath

Small companies with the courage to make a single bet get a bump in popularity because we're naturally inclined to want the underdog – willing to bet it all – to win. When Google launched its simple search engine with its endearing two search choices "I'm feeling lucky" vs. "Google search," we all kicked Yahoo to the curb. Now that Google is all grown up and offering all sorts of stuff, we respect them as a company but do we love them quite as much?

5. Every staff member will be able to deliver

When you do one thing, you can train your staff to execute, unlike when you offer dozens or hundreds of products and services that go well beyond the competence level of your junior staff. You may find staff turning away business or asking your approval before saying yes. Having employees who can deliver, means you can let them get on with their work, freeing up your time to think more about the big picture.

6. It will make you irresistible to an acquirer



The more you specialize in a single product, the more you will be attractive to an acquirer when the time comes to sell your business. Acquirers buy things they cannot easily replicate themselves. Go Pro (NASDAQ: GPRO) is rumored to be a takeover target for a consumer electronics manufacturer or a content company that wants a beachhead in the action sports video market. Most consumer electronics companies could manufacture their own helmet mounted cameras, but Go Pro is so far out in front of their competitors – they are the #1 brand channel on YouTube – that it would be easier to just buy the company rather than trying to claw market share away from a leader with such a dominant head start.

Diversification is a great approach for your stock portfolio, but when it comes to your business, it may be a sure-fire road to mediocrity.

AAT warns of dramatic rise in self-assessment filing

Courtesy of James, Holyoak & Parker Chartered Accountants

Lockdown restrictions and mounting pressure on businesses could combine to cause a 'dramatic rise' in self-assessment filing this tax year, according to the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT).

Almost a million self-assessment tax returns were filed late in the last financial year, but the situation has been worsened by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The chances of late filing increased dramatically once a second national lockdown was announced, the AAT said.

In responding to the concerns of its members, the AAT identified three potential solutions and brought them to the attention of the senior leadership team at HMRC. These include a two-month deferral on filing and payments; the waiving of penalties for late filing; and increased use of HMRC's Time to Pay.

Phil Hall, Head of Public Affairs and Public Policy at the AAT, said: 'There has been a raft of

government assistance to mitigate the worst of the economic problems caused by coronavirus, so it doesn't seem unreasonable to ask what could be done to reduce the chances of millions of people being landed with at least a £100 late filing penalty, and in many cases much more, to add to the growing financial problems many are currently enduring.

'For now, it's important that we all do everything we can to be ready to meet the 31 January 2021 deadline, whilst recognising that's very much easier said than done.'

Business mixed with beats as Shrewsbury ex-DJ launches new radio station

A former DJ from Shrewsbury has launched a new online radio station combining business advice with dance music. Intune Radio is the brainchild of web designer Wayne Flynn, who said he wanted to create a fun, upbeat way of supporting entrepreneurs.

In the spirit of offering local support, InTune Radio has opened its (virtual) recording studio to local musicians for our Christmas Show.

"At the moment, there will be a lot of musicians without any work, because all the music venues have shut and everybody is staying at home," he said.

"We're very keen to support local business and Christmas is the perfect time to support local bands by giving them airtime. We want to do something positive while a lot of

people are finding things difficult at the moment."

To provide on-going support, the station will produce regular shows of about two-and-a-half hours which would be broadcast on its website (<https://intune-radio.co.uk>) and also streamed through services such as iTunes, Spotify and Google.

Mr Flynn added that the broadcasts feature a mix of information and advice about running a small business, with a number of experts being featured.

"We are making it fun, that's why we're playing commercial music to give the station an upbeat feel," he said.

Mr Flynn said the Christmas show was likely to be broadcast in the second week of December and would be headlined by Shrewsbury Rock Choir.

The choir would be playing its charity single "Keeping The Dream Alive", which will raise funds for the Mental Health Foundation.

Mr Flynn said he is excited about the number of local artists that have contributed Christmas-related songs.

"They may for instance have one song, or 20 minutes of Christmas-related content, this can be carols or Christmas song cover," said Mr Flynn.

Any bands or performers interested in appearing on future shows are asked to get in touch either by using the form on the station's website or by emailing info@intune-radio.co.uk

Please listen to our November showcast at <https://intune-radio.co.uk>

The Full Cast and Crew at InTune Radio are:



Wayne Flynn

Founder | Brand & Web Expert
Wayne Flynn is an award winning designer who specialises in branding and website design within the business, education and charity sectors.



Becci Hollis

Social Media Expert
Becci works with business owners to grow their online presence and promote their business via digital marketing techniques.



Deryn Oliver

Voice Over Expert
Deryn Oliver uses her acting skills to voice a wide variety of audio projects including corporate videos, audiobooks and gaming characters.



Rob Tolley

Telecommunications Expert
Rob provides telecommunications solutions to meet customer requirements and is committed to a quality and professional service.



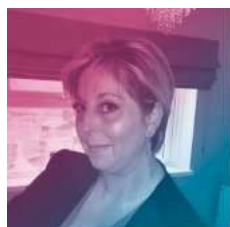
Shane Stark

Business Expert
Shane enjoys providing practical advice, support and coaching to small and medium sized businesses to maximise returns from assets and talent available.



Sarah Platt

Social Media Strategy Expert
Sarah helps established SME's, marketers & agencies serve more clients by strategising and then managing social media accounts.



Marisa Fernandez

Language Expert
Marisa teaches Spanish, Italian and Portuguese to GCSE, ALevel and Degree level and she tutors business personnel who deal with international companies.



Victoria Handbury-Madin

Charity Expert
Victoria supports charities to raise awareness, grow fundraising and deliver good governance to help drive sustainability, reduce risk, and maximise impact.



Amanda Wynne-Evans

Marketing Expert
Amanda provides marketing support and strategic expertise to the SME sector with a focus on helping you connect to your ideal target audience..



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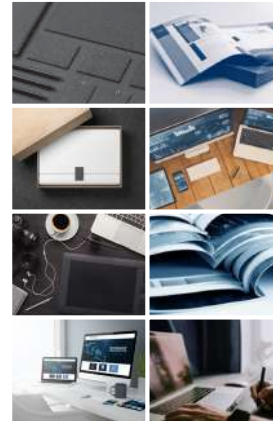
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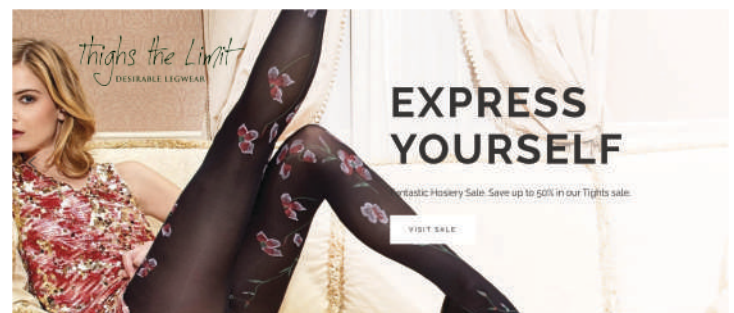


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Hatchers Solicitors announces promotions

Whilst 2020 has been a challenging year for all Shropshire businesses, Hatchers are pleased to announce that two members of staff have been promoted as a reflection of their experience and overall contribution to the firm and its development.

Sarah Jane Smith has been promoted to Senior Associate. Sarah Jane is highly regarded as one of the region's most experienced family lawyers, having qualified over 25 years ago, and has a significant wealth of knowledge in her subject matter.



Sarah Jane Smith promoted to Senior Associate

She joined Hatchers Solicitors as Head of their Family department in May 2017

at what was considered to be a challenging time for the department in general.

Sarah Jane has transformed the department and her promotion is



Sarah Cox promoted to Associate with the Residential Property team

recognition of her having made a significant and material difference to the running of the department within the practice.

Sarah Cox has been made Associate within the Residential Property team. Having grown up in Shropshire, Sarah qualified as a Solicitor in 2007, before spending three years in London and Surrey. She moved back to Shropshire

and joined Hatchers in 2018. Sarah has extensive experience of providing advice and professional assistance on all non-contentious property matters, dealing with all aspects of conveyancing.

Since joining Hatchers, Sarah has focussed in particular on new-build properties, and has forged excellent relationships with local developers including Bellway, Bovis and SJ Roberts.

Both are based at the Welsh Bridge office in Shrewsbury.

Commenting on staff development, Emma Jones, Practice Manager at Hatchers said "We are delighted to be able to share such positive news in what has been a difficult year. It is wonderful to be able to reward individuals for their contribution to the firm by way of promotion and both are thoroughly deserved. The Partners would like to congratulate both Sarah's on their new roles."

If you have any legal queries please contact Hatchers Solicitors on 01743 248 545 or visit www.hatchers.co.uk.





Mayor opens Salop Christmas Adventure which aims to lift spirits

Shrewsbury's new mayor officially opened a leisure company's 'Christmas adventure' yesterday (Thursday) to lift spirits in the town following the latest Covid-19 lockdown.

Councillor Gwen Burgess paid a visit to Salop Leisure's headquarters, based alongside Shrewsbury bypass at Emstrey, where the company is pulling out all the stops to make the festive season memorable and safe for customers of all ages after a challenging year.

The Salop Christmas Adventure is scheduled to run until December 23 at the company's Love2Stay resort where Covid-19 safety rules are in place to protect visitors and staff.

Festive attractions include Shrewsbury's largest outdoor synthetic skating rink, Shropshire Handmade and Creative Christmas Fair on December 12 and 13 and virtual Santa and Elf Dashes to raise money to support the good work of Shrewsbury Town in the Community.

There will also be Santa's Grotto, Tea with Santa, Christmas wreath making, festive afternoon tea and morning festive warmers for adults and craft activities and Christmas films for children.

The mayor said: "With news about a Covid-19 vaccine becoming available, it's such good timing by Salop Leisure to open the Salop Christmas Adventure. These events at Salop Leisure have really taken off in the last couple of years.

"I am pleased that these events are still happening in Shrewsbury and I know that the company will do everything it can to keep people safe."

The synthetic skating rink is open from 10am to 6pm daily, with skaters

restricted to 10 at any one time. Group bookings are available at selected times for schools and youth groups and autism friendly sessions can be arranged. Email adventure@love2stay.co.uk for details.

Santa's Grotto runs from December 5 to 23, with each child visiting Santa receiving a gift and souvenir photo for £9. There is no charge for accompanying adults, but families are limited to four people.

The grotto will be open every weekend up to Christmas from 10am to 5pm and on December 18 and 19 from 3pm to 5pm. Parents are advised to book their child's visit online at <https://www.salopchristmas.co.uk/> to avoid disappointment.

The annual Shropshire Handmade and Creative Christmas Fair will be hosted as an outdoor Christmas market within the grounds of Love2Stay on December 12 and 13. Up to 50 local traders will be offering handmade, home designed, artisan and products and food.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, Salop Leisure's popular, annual Santa and Elf Dashes will be a virtual affair this year to raise money to support the good work of Shrewsbury Town in the Community.

Individuals and families can choose to do their own fun run, jog, walk or treadmill session of between five and 10 kilometres until December 23 and all participants will receive a Santa suit and bespoke medal.

It costs £10 to enter and participants are asked to email a photo of their run, jog or walk, recorded on Garmin, TomTom or Fitbit, to adventure@love2stay.co.uk or to tag Love2Stay in to selfie social media

posts.

The virtual Elf Dash is for children under the age of eight who can choose their own route. It costs £6 to enter and each child, who will receive an elf suit and a medal, is asked to email their 'Elfie Selfie' to adventure@love2stay.co.uk or to tag in Love2Stay on social media.

Children and accompanying adults will also have a chance to have Tea with Santa from Wednesday to Sunday until December 23 for £12 per person. One bubble or extended family will be allowed per table.

Other treats lined up at Love2Stay include a morning Festive Warmer, which includes a hot drink and sweet treat for £5, at the coffee shop from Monday to Friday throughout December.

There will also be Christmas craft activities for children over the age of four until December 23, children's Christmas films and a movie special on Friday nights with food and drinks provided.

Adults can make their own Christmas wreath with tuition during a two-hour workshop for £35 and festive afternoon teas will be served at Love2Stay and Salop Leisure's Love Coffee restaurant from December 7 to 23.

"The Salop Christmas Adventure is designed to make the festive season magical and safe for our customers who have young families," said Ed Glover, Salop Leisure's marketing manager. "I think everyone needs a festive lift this year.

"In addition to celebrating Christmas in Shrewsbury, our exciting programme of activities aims to raise public awareness of all the services we offer at Salop Leisure and Love2Stay."



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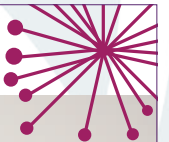


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"Assumptions are made
and most assumptions are wrong"
— ALBERT EINSTEIN



The Collective Opens at Shrewsbury's Darwin Shopping Centre



A new specially created shopping gallery for independent traders opened in Shrewsbury's Darwin Shopping Centre on 7 December 2020. Called The Collective, the space will house up to 10 independent businesses, with eight already opening. These include Sidney's Café, Jennico, Val B's Wax Jewellery, Heavenly Brides, Beauty & Nails Inbox, Tubeway Records, DVD Megastore, and Irehab.

The Collective is located on the ground floor of the centre, in the former QVC unit, which was 8,710 sq ft. The independent traders within The Collective will benefit from higher, regular, footfall in the Darwin Centre, and will be able to trade alongside other established brands. Most of the tenants have relocated from the Pride Hill Shopping Centre as part of plans to establish the Darwin Centre as Shrewsbury's main retail centre, and with the Pride Hill Centre set to be redeveloped.

The new gallery will also form a destination in Shrewsbury for people looking for something unique, local and special.

Kevin Lockwood, Shrewsbury Shopping Centre Manager, said, "Our vision is for the Darwin Centre's retail mix to evolve into more of a community-led shopping centre with more regional and independent stores whilst retaining some popular national brands. We're really excited about The Collective, which will offer a unique destination for independent businesses. With lockdown ending, we encourage people to come and see it for themselves. They will be able to shop safely and support some fantastic local independent traders."

Steve Charmley, Shropshire Council's Cabinet member for assets, economic growth and regeneration, said, "Shrewsbury has a wonderful history of independent and small business success and the council is building

on this foundation within the Darwin Centre by relocating a number of independent businesses from the Pride Hill Centre to The Collective. There is an increasing desire to support UK, regional and local businesses and we're responding to this trend and helping small independent shops trade in the Darwin Centre by offering affordable and flexible terms in this new, attractive and well-designed space."

Estaban Bridges from DVD Megastore said, "We're really happy to have opened our new unit in The Collective, alongside so many other brilliant independent traders, and to welcoming customers old and new. This year hasn't been an easy one for retailers but this is an opportunity for a fresh start, and a chance to create a real community of independent local stores. It'll be great to see people back in the town, in the shopping centres and in The Collective."





Get Creative This Christmas

2020 has been a year that will be hard to forget. Right from the beginning, coronavirus has not only dominated our lives, but it has changed the way we communicate, how we work, how we travel and how we socialise. Strange new words such as 'social distancing', 'support bubble' and 'self-isolation' have been added to our dictionaries and vocabulary.

We are now exiting our second lockdown this year and suddenly the Christmas season is upon us. The situation changes by the hour, and even writing this article, I am unsure as to what degree of restrictions will be in place during the festive period. What for many would be a time to socialise with work colleagues, for families and friends to get together or to catch up with distant relatives may all be restricted in some form or another.

Therefore, the Festive Season is a time to get creative. At the start of the year virtual meetings via Zoom etc. were a new phenomenon for most. Backdrops, muting, issues with broadband speed were a regular topic of conversation. Now,

however, the novelty has worn off – we are surrounded by virtual communication every day, so this year the personal touch will be key towards sending good wishes to clients, friends and family alike.

2020 is a year when sending a personalised Christmas Card will be more important than ever. We may not get the chance to meet people face to face this year, so by sending a physical card you are giving the recipient a tangible experience, showing them that you have taken time out to think about them during these extraordinary times.

From a business perspective, you may have spent all year behind closed doors, operating online or via email, with no face-to-face contact with your customers. A personalised card shows that your business is real, that it cares about its clients and customers and that you have taken the time to get a personal message sent out to them to show your appreciation. It shows that you have gone that extra mile.

Coronavirus has deprived us of social contact, meaning that the

simple act of getting a personalised message in the form of a physical card, whether it be Christmas or some other occasion, will be uplifting and more importantly, the next best thing to actually being there in person.

Distraction is good for our mental health and well-being, so 2020 is a year when sending a personalised Christmas card through the post to a business colleague or relative to give them your best wishes is more important than ever.

So, get creative this year and rather than sending an e-card or email, take time out to send a physical Christmas card – it will have far greater impact and longevity than any electronic communication.

For more information on graphic design and many other business topics visit: www.dmlovatt.co.uk



Shrewsbury is getting into the Christmas spirit

Children are being invited to post a letter to Father Christmas using a special post box which has appeared in the centre of Shrewsbury.

The bright red post box has been placed in The Square by Shrewsbury BID (Business Improvement District), alongside a large Christmas tree taking pride of place under the Old Market Hall.

A letter template can be downloaded from the Original Shrewsbury website which children can use to ensure they receive a reply from Father Christmas himself.

As well as the Letters to Father Christmas campaign, local musicians will be playing on December 11, 12, 16, 18, 19 and 22 to provide some extra festive atmosphere in the town centre.

The town will also be lit up with not only the traditional Christmas lights, but a special festive lighting project by Shrewsbury-based projectionist Andy McKeown.

Emma Molyneux, of Shrewsbury BID, said it was all part of an effort to make the town centre feel fun and welcoming, as well as being safe, for people to do their Christmas shopping.

"This is certainly a Christmas like no other, and we want to do as much as we can to help people enjoy spending time in the town centre," she said.

"Safety is of course the number one priority, but we hope that providing live music, exciting lighting displays and letters to Father Christmas will help create a lovely festive atmosphere.

"Specially-designed templates for letters can be downloaded from the Original Shrewsbury website, or children are welcome to write their own letters without a template - just remember to include an email address so Father Christmas can reply!

"We would like to thank Shrewsbury Town Council for all their work on the lighting displays, which look absolutely fantastic."

Town centre traders were being encouraged to join in with the festivities by decorating their windows as part of the shop window competition being run by Shrewsbury Business Chamber and Shrewsbury BID.

Currently, the general public are voting on their favourite display, with the winner to be revealed on the 21st December. The Business Chamber also judge the competition with prizes for the winners of the big shop window, small shop window and charity shop categories. There is also a festive Appleyards hamper which will be awarded to the best overall best entry.





Going it alone...how I survive working by myself.

Thirty years owning businesses has given me the opportunity to try many ways of working. For the first 11 years I had a team of over 30 staff and when I sold that business I vowed never to employ again, as that part of the business was the most time consuming! I decided work with subcontractors, work collaboratively, buy in expertise as needed, and be home based; what a breath of fresh air the last 19 years have been.

I can understand it's a big step for anyone to walk out of an office one day, where you have managers and processes to support you, like them or not, and to sit alone at home, computer in front of you and start. You may have dreamed of self-employment or arrived there through redundancy or life changing circumstances, whatever the reason it will be daunting, with much to consider. Starting as you mean to go on is key, so below I share with you some tips from my years of running my Consultancy from home.

Be professional: Set yourself goals. Start work at set times. Be

tidy and organised, no excuses. Help the family understand you are 'at work'. Remember Zoom meetings still allow others to see you, so be professional! Mentally separate work and home life, you will be far more productive that way.

Be Realistic: Do not over promise and under deliver. Be flexible in every aspect. Accept that client request timings are not always great, but make the most of any unexpected down time. As businesses grow plan A often turns into plan B, accept it. You cannot do everything, so pay for Accountants, IT, Web etc. Learn about tax, insurance, and relevant legislation so you do not get caught out.

Communicate: Ensure you keep clients, suppliers and family informed clearly and regularly. Do not let your business be the best kept secret. People need to know who, what, when and where. Talk to other humans, pick up the phone and network when you can.

Reputation: Keep your private life away from your work life, especially on social media. Never respond to clients or suppliers in haste, temper or after a glass or two.

Face up: Embrace technology. Keep up with your sector and trends so your business does not become stale. Work will not flow evenly; you must face that. Family are not your best critics, sadly often not honest, just kind.

Confidence: Stop assuming everyone is doing better than you, few will be. Know your competitors but avoid being obsessed by them or you will waste energy best spent on your own business. Remind yourself about past employment negatives and the now positives.

Dedicated workspace: You might have to ensure the desk reverts to the kitchen table at tea-time, but however small/ shared your work space, have some tidy, logical and secure way to store your work away from the family and pets.

Embrace self-employment, as it can be a wonderful way to work.



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Online support opens up

A Shropshire insurance broker is using the very latest technology to help support employers and businesses during the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Henshalls Group, which has offices in Newport, Shrewsbury and Stafford has developed a bespoke online portal that offers invaluable advice

Previously the service was only accessible to clients, but now, as part of their response to the Covid crisis, Henshalls have revamped the online presence and they are making it available to everyone.

Dave Williams said: "In these difficult times, we felt it was important to do what we could to support local companies, and opening up our portal gives businesses an opportunity to access all kinds of advice that could help them navigate through the ongoing crisis.

"We're committed to delivering effective and straight-talking advice, and we're the only broker in the region to offer this bespoke online service."

The MyWave Connect portal is designed to offer information on health and safety, human resources, risk management, legislative updates and insurance requirements, and it's accessible 24 hours a day.

It delivers automatic timely updates to keep businesses informed of relevant hot topics in the insurance sector and in individual industry sectors, so that they're up-to-date with all the latest developments without having to spend precious time searching the internet.



Dave said the customised portal had been created to be efficient and simple to use, with clear and concise tools to streamline the process, as well as being fully-compliant with GDPR data rules.

"The portal gives businesses the option to select their preferences so that they receive the latest breaking news from the world of business and insurance – all tailored to their specific interests and area of business.

"They can access thousands of free articles on all kinds of topics including risk management, risk education, the best ways to communicate with employees, wellness resources, workplace policies, and loss control.

"Thanks to the way the portal has been configured, business owners can carry out a simple search that takes their preferences into account and the most relevant resources will appear instantly – it's also fully mobile accessible too."

Dave said existing Henshalls Group clients would receive an email invitation to access the new-look portal in the coming days, and any other businesses interested should contact sburdon@henshalls.com.

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Loo Rolls and other flying objects

As we move into the winter, Russell Griffin, co-Director at Samuel Wood, assesses the state of the property market....

So many people are asking us about the property market at the moment. To provide some perspective, we often answer the question with a question. We ask, 'Do you remember back in March, how loo rolls became difficult to find as they were flying off supermarket shelves?'

'It would be hard to forget,' most people reply. So, we say, 'That's what's happened to property: houses are flying off our books.'

While the country was in lockdown, no one could envision what would happen to the property market next - including us.

We couldn't predict the strength of public demand for changes in surroundings and lifestyle.

We couldn't know how people would

react to isolation, sudden changes in working practices and the resulting opportunity to commute less often but therefore further - providing the chance to buy a larger suburban or rural house and garden.

Now, after several months of the most extraordinary market most of us can remember, we have experienced the combined effects of the Covid and Brexit bounces, the relaxation of stamp duty and low-interest rates.

Many first and second-time buyers and sellers won't remember the days when the market was on fire like this; when there were multiple offers on houses for sale, prices were spiralling upwards, and property was selling almost as soon as it came on to the market.

But we remember those days. We remember them very well. That is why we are highly experienced and skilled in dealing with this unexpectedly buoyant market.

For those thinking of buying before the end of the stamp duty reprieve, we recommend doing so now.

Why? Because neither we nor anyone else, including the Chancellor, knows what's going to happen next.

Another national lockdown - if there were to be one - might only temporarily suppress this strong market and drive even more people to want to move.

But big questions remain about the market in 2021. High unemployment, a negative Brexit trade deal, tighter mortgage criteria and the end of the stamp duty relaxation, could turn off the tap that was so dramatically turned on in July.

Only time will tell. But in the meantime, what we do know is that property is flying, and we are here to help buyers and sellers fly with it.

Eric Smith calls time on 26 year Radio career

Last week the BBC Radio Shropshire airwaves legend Eric confirmed that after 26 years at the station, the 22nd December will be his final show. Speaking to the Shropshire Star, he reflected on many of his career highlights: covering 8 General Elections, 22 Carols in the Square events and of course 16 pantomimes. Most recently, Eric has been performing with Brad Fitt in the Theatre Severn's "We'll have to do it again then" show, which has replaced the cancelled 2020 Pantomime. The Business Chamber wish Eric all the best with his retirement and hope to see him at our events in 2021.



(L-R) Eric beginning on the radio in 1994; King Eric promoting the 2012 panto Jack and the Beanstalk; In studio during 25th anniversary last year; greeted by the 2019-20 Mayor of Shrewsbury Phil Gillam.





5 Minutes with.... Gwen Burgess, Mayor of Shrewsbury



In less than a year you have transitioned from a resident to become the new Mayor. Tell me about your journey?

It's been a whirlwind, so much to learn. But because of Covid, I've had an extra 6 months to become accustomed to the idea of becoming Mayor. My term started in November, instead of May, as is usual. I've had so much support from my fellow councillors, and the staff at the Town Council.

As a business owner yourself, what do you think is special about the business community in Shropshire?

Being a fairly small town, our networks are strong, and we have mutual self-interest. We do seem to pull together, and are on the same side, even if we're competitors. Look how groups like the Wyle Cop traders have got together to promote their area. Similar in Coleham, after the floods earlier this year.

How important do you feel supporting and promoting local business will be over these next few months?

It's hugely important, and we must be careful not to put barriers in the way of trade. We need, as a town, to enhance the experience of running a business here, and especially giving support to fledgling businesses starting up. It's not just in retail that customers should think buy local, but also in awarding contracts for building and maintenance projects, technology and the service sector. We have great shops, printers, trades and tech firms here, we need to use them.

What charity have you chosen to support as Mayor, and why?

I chose Lingen Davies Cancer fund for a variety of reasons. I'm very lucky that no-one close to me has suffered from cancer, but we've heard so much during this pandemic about patients who have had their treatment delayed or deferred. Lingen Davies was founded in 1979 by a previous Mayor of Shrewsbury and over the years has supported over 75,000 local people through their treatment. Lingen Davies are based at the RSH, and have a great team of staff and volunteers. I'm looking forward to some amazing fundraising events

over my term, hopefully including abseiling down a well-known local landmark, and a very special Ball. If you can help Lingen Davies in any way, or would like to see more about what they do, please visit their web page www.lingendavies.co.uk

What do you hope to achieve over the next 18 months as Mayor?

I want to attend as many events as possible, although initially they'll be outside, and socially distanced. I hope I get the opportunity to represent Shrewsbury both at home and further afield. Recently, I was interviewed on Plymouth Radio, and we chatted about so many reasons to visit Shrewsbury. It's great to be an ambassador for our beautiful town.

If you could go back and give your younger self some advice, what would it be?

May 15, 1997. Mortgage the house and invest it all in Amazon

Tell us something about you most people wouldn't know

If I told you, I'd have to kill you

If you could form a bubble of 6 people dead or alive, who would you choose?

Elizabeth I, Margaret Thatcher, Emmeline Pankhurst, Marie Stopes, Joyce Grenfell. (Plus me). I don't think I need to explain why.....but Joyce Grenfell is the joker in the pack. She came to my school and performed in Assembly, and she remains the most memorable entertainer I have ever seen.

When the pandemic is over, and all the restrictions are lifted, how will you celebrate?

I've a wedding to look forward to – and it's going to be an amazing chance to have all our family and friends together, as I really hope that restrictions on numbers will be lifted by then.

Advisers to offer FREE expert one-to-one support

The Marches Growth Hub Shropshire is working with a new team of expert advisers to provide detailed free support to help the Shropshire's businesses to grow.

The hub – the one-stop gateway to business support and funding – says the move will help it support more businesses than ever before as the county recovers from the impact of the Covid pandemic.

Emma Chapman, Marches Growth Hub Manager, said working with the expert advisers meant the hub could offer unparalleled support for the local business community.

“We know that recent times have been amongst the hardest this country has ever known for businesses and that the future remains uncertain. But these additional advisers will help us support more businesses than ever and offer detailed, personalised help.

“Our advisers bring expertise and



knowledge across the full range of business issues. They can show you how to boost your sales, find the best finance and funding

opportunities, get your marketing into shape and make sure you have all the right HR and health and safety policies in place.

“We have a number of highly-regarded business consultants who can show you how to get your business running as smoothly as possible, experts on export opportunities and digital and social media specialists in the team.

“All the consultants are ready to help ensure your business can take advantage of new opportunities for growth and help our local economy to continue to flourish.”

To see how the new advisers can help visit <https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk>

The Marches Growth Hub Shropshire can be contacted on 01743 250526 or email marchesgrowthhub@shropshire.gov.uk



Despite Covid 19 making it impossible for the Marches Growth Hub to hold events in person, there are still plenty of courses and networking opportunities available using zoom, many of which are free.

**CLICK HERE TO FIND SKILLS
COURSES AND NETWORKING
OPPORTUNITIES**

Thank you to all those who have contributed to this issue interactive Shrewsbury Business Chamber magazine. The opinions expressed here do not necessarily represent the views of the editor, or those of Shrewsbury Business Chamber.

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