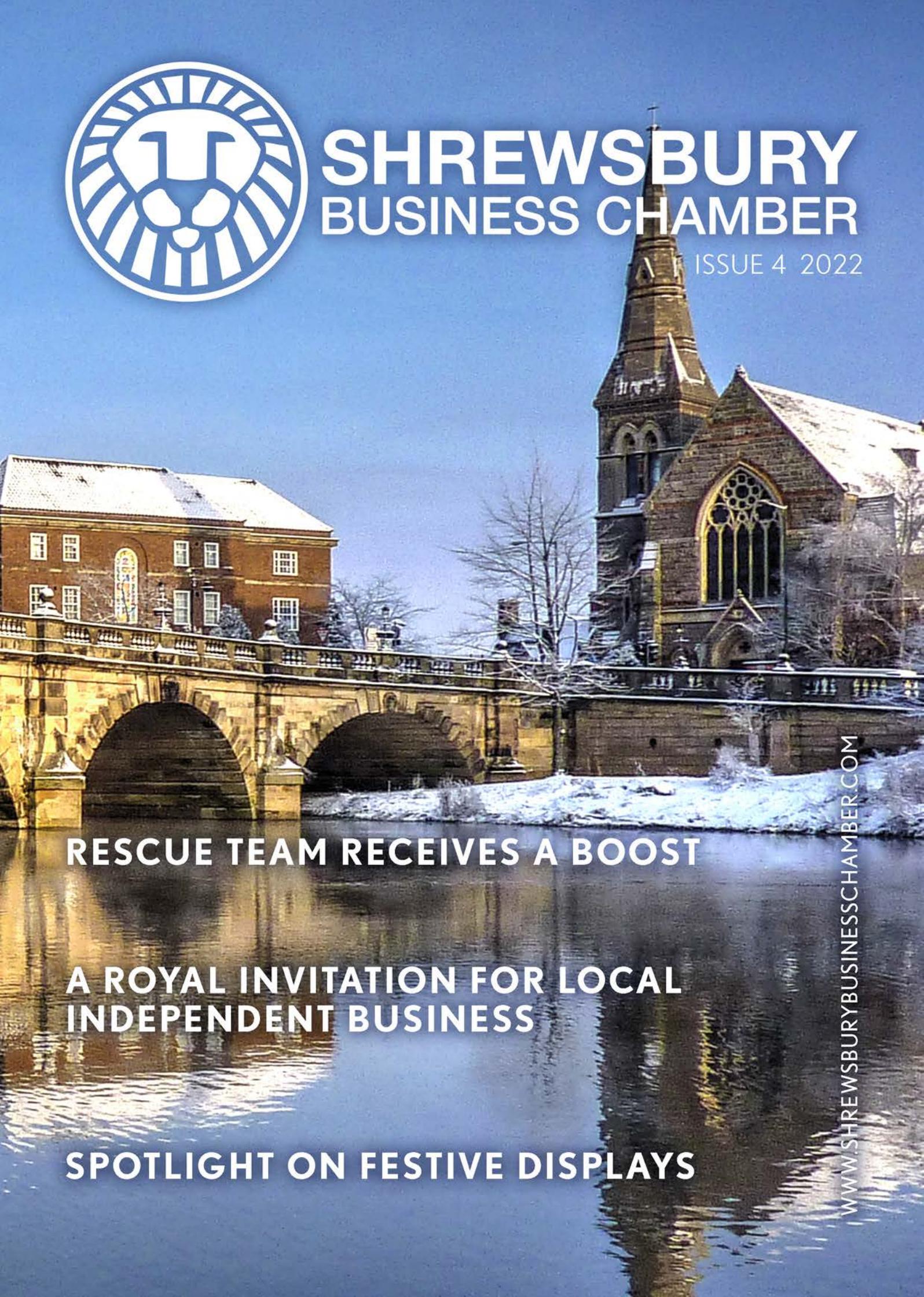




SHREWSBURY BUSINESS CHAMBER

ISSUE 4 2022



RESCUE TEAM RECEIVES A BOOST

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SPOTLIGHT ON FESTIVE DISPLAYS

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CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



KEVIN LOCKWOOD

Manager of Shrewsbury Shopping Centres

Another roller coaster of a year for business and households with the Ukrainian war, Cost of Living crisis and energy bills soaring, yet again businesses are having to adapt to move forward or even stand still.

The passing of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II brought the country together and now we enter a new era, welcoming King Charles III as our monarch.

At the Shrewsbury Business Chamber, we have enjoyed face to face meetings again, comfortable in the fact that life (and business) is attempting to get back to some sort of normality, following the devastating affect of COVID.

We hosted some great networking events, including a ghost tour, Meet the leader - Lezley Picton, Summer Window Competition and event at Love to Stay, 5 from 5 (meeting new members) and many more. We are looking forward to welcoming you at our 2023 networking events, visit our website <https://shrewsburybusinesschamber.com/>

or sign up for our newsletter <https://shrewsburybusinesschamber.com/newsletters/> for further details. On behalf of the Shrewsbury Business Chamber, I wish you and your families and wonderful Christmas and Happy New Year.

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CUTTER CUP VICTORY FOR HENSHALLS



Celebrating the win are, from left, Mitch Gough, Adrian Burton, Simon Burdon, Neil Atkinson, Martin Pitchford, Mark Freeman, and Peter Richardson

It's coming home....!

Staff from a Shropshire insurance company are celebrating after winning a charity golf challenge named in memory of a much-loved former colleague.

The team from Henshalls Insurance Group took on a team from Throgmorton Associates Wealth Management to compete for The Bryan Cutter Cup at Shrewsbury Golf Club. And this year, it was the Henshalls team that was victorious bringing home the cup that's named for Bryan Cutter - a director of the firm who died after a long and courageous battle with cancer.

Throgmorton Associates covered the costs of the event and Henshalls have made a donation of £250 to Severn Hospice in Bryan's memory on behalf of everyone taking part.

Martin Pitchford, for Henshalls, said: "Initially rain stopped play so we had to reschedule the event for a better day, but once we had clearer weather, the event was a fantastic success.

"The Bryan Cutter Cup is a wonderful way to honour Bryan's life and his memory and it has now become an annual event that we all look forward to and which creates some really positive friendly rivalry.

"We'd like to thank everyone who took part this year, and we're delighted to have pipped the Throgmorton Associates to the post by just a single point in the end.

"The day was played in great spirit with lots of laughs and banter, and we'd like to think that Bryan was looking down on us as we brought his cup home for the first time ever."

Nick Jones, from Throgmorton Associates, said: "It's always a pleasure to join our friends from Henshalls for such an enjoyable and positive day. "We were disappointed to have missed out on a hat-trick of wins as we had won both the previous challenges, but we'll be back stronger and well-prepared for next year and determined to get our hands back on the cup."

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RIVER SHUTTLE SERVICE LAUNCHED IN SHREWSBURY



People will be able to hop across the river on a new shuttle service which is being launched in Shrewsbury whilst a footbridge is closed.

Whilst Porthill Bridge is closed for essential maintenance work, Sabrina Boat and The Boathouse have teamed up with Shrewsbury BID, with support from Shropshire Council, to introduce the replacement river shuttle.

The service will operate from 8am to 6pm each day, crossing from The Boathouse pub to the jetty in The Quarry, saving pedestrians the lengthy diversion route across the Welsh Bridge.

Porthill Bridge is expected to be closed for three weeks while Shropshire Council carries out maintenance work, and the river shuttle will start on Monday November 21, costing £1 return for adults or £2.50 return for families.

Seb Slater, executive director of Shrewsbury BID, said: "Porthill Bridge is an important route into Shrewsbury, and popular with people who want to enjoy The Quarry on their way into the town centre. "We understand the need for this maintenance work, but we were keen to offer an alternative so people can continue to easily reach the town from Porthill during the closure. "We are delighted to have been able to work with Sabrina Boat and The Boathouse to arrange the river shuttle service,

which we hope will prove to be a popular way of getting into town."

Dilwyn Jones, owner of the Sabrina Riverboat, said: "We are always happy to make more use of the river, and it's great to be working with local partners to introduce this shuttle service while the footbridge is closed. "We are using our picnic boat, which carries up to eight passengers at a time, and the crossing is a pleasant three minutes. "As well as being a useful service, we hope people will enjoy spending a bit of time on the river, and if it's popular we may look at doing something similar again in the future."

Jim Littler, of The Boathouse, added: "A lot of our customers use Porthill Bridge to reach us, so we are very pleased to be part of the river shuttle project. "It's an ideal way of crossing the river, and with the jetty being in our beer garden it's the perfect excuse to pause and enjoy a drink on your way in or out of town!"

For more information, visit <https://originalshrewsbury.com/porthill-shuttle>

MANUFACTURERS ALERTED TO CYBER CRIME THREAT

The manufacturing industry is undergoing something of a digital revolution as more and more companies realise the benefits of embracing technology to help them remain competitive and develop a thriving business - but it also raises questions about security!

Security of systems and data is of paramount importance and at PC Net we understand the reluctance of some manufacturers to race headlong into major digital changes which could see undoubted major advantages to a business offset by costly breaches or loss of vital information.

A sign of the times

The bottom line is that digital technology is with us and the pace of implementation has certainly been quickened by a greater reliance on remote working through the pandemic - a policy which is being continued in many instances but something which, again, can lead to headaches when it comes to cyber security.

For those manufacturers who are still apprehensive about embracing digital technology, we can tell you that it can be implemented safely and securely.

Some facts and figures

Make UK, which represents 20,000 manufacturers across the country, compiled a report after asking its members to take part in a cyber security survey. It found that **one in eight manufacturers said the fear of cyber attacks was preventing them from adopting digital technologies.**

Other interesting statistics thrown up by the survey include:

- **47% of manufacturers reported being the victim of cybercrime over the previous 12-month period.**
- **Of those companies, 22% said it had cost them between £5,000 and £25,000, while 63% said it had cost their business up to £5,000.**
- **61% of companies now appoint a director responsible for cyber security.**
- **50% report cyber security has become a higher priority since the start of the pandemic.**
- **EVERYONE questioned said they believed cyber security measures were essential to the smooth running of the business.**
 - **52% have taken out insurance against cyber attacks.**
 - **44% DON'T offer cyber security training to their staff.**

Staff training is of paramount importance - creating an environment of awareness and consequences of not adhering to policies you have in place as a company to prevent a breach. They also need to understand what action to take if they recognise something is wrong.

Cyber attacks will evolve, become increasingly sophisticated and more difficult to spot or prevent, particularly as more devices and systems become interconnected. It is important to be aware there are steps you can take to reduce the risks.

THE DARWIN'S KEVIN LOCKWOOD WINS CENTRE MANAGER OF THE YEAR



Shropshire Council is proud to announce that Kevin Lockwood, Centre Manager at The Darwin, has won Shopping Centre Manager of the Year at the 2022 SCEPTRE Awards, which were announced in London.

The SCEPTRE Awards recognise the best practice and the best people in the shopping centre industry. They are the pre-eminent accolades in the shopping centre industry, putting the spotlight on management teams, retailers and suppliers that demonstrate real excellence.

Shopping Centre Manager of the Year for a small centre is one of the most coveted and competitive awards of the night. Kevin was recognised for his innovative ideas including his involvement in the launch of The Collective, championing mental health training, initiating ideas to tackle anti-social behaviour, improving welfare facilities, launching the centre as dog friendly and supporting current and future tenants.

He has also completed world host training in customer services, restructured several internal processes and managed flooding and development issues. His work as Vice Chair of Shrewsbury BID, Chair of the Shrewsbury

Business Chamber and being a member of Team Shrewsbury were also praised.

Kevin Lockwood, Centre Manager of The Darwin, said, "This is one of the proudest moments of my career. I have an incredible team that support me daily and some terrific tenants, which make working at The Darwin a real joy. We've had some challenging times in recent years, but there have been some exceptional highlights and we've achieved some brilliant things at the centre. To be recognised by SCEPTRE for all that we've accomplished is very humbling."

Pauline Neville, Manager of Wilko Shrewsbury said, "I would like to acknowledge Kevin Lockwood as being a supportive and highly thought of centre manager. I have worked for Wilko for 26 years and have never had this level of support from previous stores I have worked at. In the 3 years I've been managing the Shrewsbury Store Kevin has supported us through 3 floods, Covid and also our relocation from Pride Hill to the Darwin Centre. Kevin often checks in to see how the store is performing and its reassuring to have him as the centre manager as I feel his experience and the decisions he makes are always the right ones to keep our centre trading to its full potential."

AZETS MIDLANDS STRENGTHEN SENIOR TEAM

Azets, the UK's largest regional accountancy firm and business advisor to SMEs, has demonstrated its commitment to nurture its network with two appointments and three promotions in the Midlands region.

Neil Belton has been appointed as a Director within the Technology Risk team. Neil has over 30 years of IT Internal Audit/Assurance and Advisory experience across a large variety of industries spanning both public and private sector. His expertise includes but isn't limited to IT governance, digital/IT strategy, IT transformation projects, as well as cyber, network and data security, disaster recovery and software licensing. Neil has been a Qualified CISA Auditor in Computer Audit for more than 15 years.

Andrew Bateman has been promoted to Partner. Andrew is an FCCA qualified accountant with over 25 years' experience in the accountancy industry. He has a broad background of experience from general accountancy, business advisory, taxation and audit. As a Partner in the Accounting and Business Advisory team, Andrew works with a wide variety of clients ranging from sole traders, owner managed businesses to medium sized business in various sectors.

Chan Landa has worked at Azets Coventry for over seven years and has been promoted to Associate Director. As an ACCA qualified accountant, Chan has vast experience advising SME's and OMB's throughout his time at Azets and primarily focuses on growing businesses, to look for solutions to their accounting and taxation needs. He specialises in industries including retail, hospitality construction and manufacturing.

Having joined Azets in January 2022, Ben Fahy has been promoted to Senior Manager. Ben is an ACCA qualified accountant with over 5 years' experience in the accountancy industry. He has a broad background of experience from management consultancy and corporate audit, through to general accountancy and tax advisory. As a Senior Manager in



the Accounting and Business Advisory team, Ben works with a wide variety of clients and industries, ranging from sole traders to members of international group companies. Ben is a keen advocate of cloud accounting software, in particular Xero.

On the promotions, Paul Clifford, Regional CEO of Azets, said: "It's an exciting time for us as we continue to support our teams to match business demand. These promotions are incredibly well deserved and reflect the talent and expertise within the office. Growing and developing our team allows us to further support our clients across a variety of service lines and sectors as we look to expand."

All vacancies can be found at www.azets.co.uk/ where applications from those who are looking to work flexibly or part-time, reduced hours or term-time are encouraged.

An advertisement for HR DEPT. It features a white background with a green border. The HR DEPT logo is in the top right corner. Handwritten-style text in various colors (yellow, red, purple, green) lists scenarios where one should call HR: "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", and "You need help recruiting". The central text reads "Call us if...". At the bottom, contact information is provided: "Contact Ms Niamh Kelly", "Call 01743 290 474", and "Visit www.hrdept.co.uk". The slogan "Preventing People Problems" is at the bottom left, and the email "Niamh.Kelly@hrdept.co.uk" is at the bottom right. A green wavy graphic is at the bottom right.

NICK JONES, BUILD AND TREK CHALLENGE, NEPAL



Nick Jones, Director at Throgmorton Associates Wealth Management Build and Trek Challenge, Nepal

When an invitation went out from the St. James's Place Charitable Foundation for SJP Partners to sign up and volunteer to help build a Vocational Centre that will provide young students with the opportunity to learn a trade - carpentry, plumbing, electrics, welding, fabrications and tailoring, Nick Jones, one of the Directors at Throgmorton Associates in Shrewsbury, was there like a shot. The thing is ... the location of this centre is in Nepal!

Nick's story

Nepal's children have suffered like never before through the pandemic, and the scarcity of work due to a collapsed economy creates a very uncertain future for everyone.

One beacon of hope is a 'Vocational Training Centre' that the charity Supporting Nepal's Children, along with the St. James's Place Charitable Foundation, intend to build. It will provide young students with the opportunity to learn a trade - carpentry, plumbing, electrics, welding, fabrications and tailoring. The students will then return to their villages and start a business. It's a phenomenally successful approach and over 1200 young students have already seized this opportunity. But they need greater capacity to train more young people to help themselves - a "hand-up not a hand-out".

Nick, along with a team of fellow volunteers from St. James's Place had planned to visit Nepal in November 2021 to help build a second Vocational Centre - digging

foundations, mixing cement, and laying bricks. It was to be hard labour in the hot sun and the volunteers would work from dawn to dusk to create this magic place.

Due to COVID, they had to postpone this expedition to the autumn of 2022, but fundraising continued in the meantime. Nepal needed help more than ever due to the pandemic. This delay also meant that Nick's eldest son, Ethan, was now able to join the team.

Training, as you can imagine, was tough and working at altitude isn't going to be easy ... but as the title says, there's also the small matter of actually trekking to the location of the village before the hard work starts!

In addition, every donation receives Gift Aid, Nick has pledged to match the first £10,000 personally and St. James's Place Wealth Management will double that total.

That extra money is going to OnSide which is a UK charity helping some of our most vulnerable young people in the UK. So, for every £1 that's donated, it will become £4 between two very worthwhile causes.

How BRILLIANT is that?

Many thanks in anticipation of your support. Together we can make a difference!

To donate, please go to <https://supportingnepalschildren.enthuse.com/pf/nick-jones-c35b2>

R&D TAX EXPERT WARNS OF TERMINAL WORKING CAPITAL THREAT

One of the country's leading research and development (R&D) tax experts has warned working capital issues caused by lengthy processing delays might prove terminal for dozens of businesses with genuine tax credit claims.

Stuart Bentley, Director of Tax at Azets, the UK Top 10 accounting firm, welcomed the news that eight people accused of conspiring to submit over 100 fraudulent claims have been arrested. He also commended HMRC on its claim to have protected £46m of public money.

However, Stuart Bentley does not believe enough is being done to ensure genuine claimants are benefitting from the scheme, which is intended to encourage investment in innovation and contribute to economic growth.

He said: "We are pleased that long-awaited action has finally arrived, and appalled that any individual, company, or so-called advisor would seek to abuse a system designed to provoke innovation and accelerate growth.

"Nevertheless, it has taken far too long to reach this point, with hundreds of genuine claimants caught up in delays lasting months and suffering critical working capital issues.

"This disruption to cashflow coupled with the ongoing economic downturn could see dozens of bona fide R&D claimants needlessly losing their businesses due to lack of cash. This despite them responding immediately to HMRC's Fraud Investigation Service with all the information requested."

Stuart Bentley expressed hope that now HMRC has brought action against tax credit claims identified as fraudulent, it can return to swifter response times in support of businesses which desperately need the funding.

Amid speculation the relief scheme may be curtailed as part of the Autumn Statement on 17 November, he believes this would heighten the risk of innovative businesses running out of cash quickly.

Stuart Bentley said: "HMRC has promised to step up its monitoring of claims for R&D tax relief fraud. We urge HMRC to also step up its oversight of the scheme overall and ensure a faster, smoother process for genuine claims.

"Businesses were encouraged to use the tax credit system and many hundreds did so in good faith. While it's important HMRC continues to counter fraud and protect public money, it needs to find a way to do so in parallel with better delivery of the scheme.

"I hope we do not see a reduction in R&D tax relief in the Chancellor's Autumn Budget. This is a vital source of funding for loss-making businesses who invest all their capital in innovation."



Stuart Bentley, Director of Tax at Azets.

RESCUE TEAM RECEIVES A BOOST

Search and rescue volunteers from a Shropshire charity have thanked a local company for supporting their work.

Henshalls Insurance Group has donated £250 to the West Mercia Search and Rescue team to help with their latest fund-raising initiatives.

Director Mark Freeman said: "The volunteers show such dedication to helping others and it takes real commitment to be a part of the team."

"We are very pleased to offer them some support towards their fund-raising as they have a huge challenge on their hands as they need to replace their well-used 4x4 vehicle and their drone equipment - both of which are vital when it comes to searching for missing and vulnerable people."

"As a company, Henshalls is proud to work with local organisations and community groups that make a real difference, and the search and rescue volunteers are an excellent example of people putting others first."

West Mercia Search and Rescue is a wholly voluntary group and the volunteers give their time, money and dedication to help save lives. Earlier this year they were presented with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service - the MBE for voluntary groups.

Search planner and fund raising officer Andy Neal said: "We couldn't run our charity if it wasn't for public support and we're very grateful to Henshalls for their donation - we don't receive any money from the Government, and we need to raise the £60,000 a year it costs to run the team."

"We need to give our operational members the best training, safety kit and specialist equipment so that they can do their job safely."

"Every penny that is donated goes towards supporting and maintaining the operational rescue team, so we're always keen to hear from local companies and groups that may be able to pledge their support and kindly make a donation."

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



Mark Freeman from Henshalls and Andy Neal from West Mercia Search and Rescue.

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STAFF PROMOTIONS AT HATCHERS

Amy Sweetman



Julie Bickley



Joanne Roberts



Katie Cooper



Victoria Pugh



The Legal Directors at Hatchers Solicitors are very pleased to announce a number of staff promotions this Autumn, in recognition of their contribution to the firm and commitment to their clients.

Joanne Roberts, Solicitor in the Residential Property Team has been promoted to the role of Senior Associate. With over 20 years' experience in her field, Joanne has taken on a senior role within the Residential Property Team by assisting with financial management and also taking on additional responsibilities at our office in Green End Whitchurch.

Amy Sweetman, Chartered Legal Executive within the Residential Property Team, has been promoted to Associate in recognition of her contribution to the development of the New Build property Team. Amy has also taken on additional responsibilities for the team's IT strategy alongside fellow Associate Alison Bell.

Julie Bickley, Senior Probate Executive has been promoted to Associate in recognition of her overall contribution and wealth of experience in Probate Administration.

Kate Cooper, Solicitor within the Crime Team, is promoted to Associate as she takes on taken on a supervisory role, supporting and mentoring colleague Millie Woods as she undertakes her own Police Station Accreditation.

Victoria Pugh, Chartered Legal Executive within the Wills and Probate Team is also promoted to Associate in recognition of her expertise in the field of Elderly Client law and her continuing development of this niche area.

Commenting on the promotions, Operations Director Emma Jones said, "Over the past twelve months we have continued to make improvements to our career progression strategy, aligning individual skills and

aspirations with our business goals. It is wonderful to provide staff with opportunities for development and progression and to recognise hard work, experience and overall contribution to the firm by way of promotion. Congratulations to you all".

For more information, contact Hatchers Solicitors on 01743 248545 or www.hatchers.co.uk

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FAXING - HAVE WE COME TO THE END OF THE LINE?

2025 could be a landmark year for the demise of what was historically one of our most effective forms of communication - the fax machine.

The fax **was the go-to method of delivering documents** during the peak of its popularity in the 20 years or so between the 1970s and 1990s, but its use dates back long before that.

So why is 2025 so important?

We spoke to the team at EPX Technical Solutions to find out more....

The problem is that **all analogue telephone lines will come to an abrupt end in 2025**, and it is these analogue services that are used to send and receive data through a fax machine. It's been a pretty simple process for a long time. All you have had to do is buy the machine, obtain a landline, set it up and away you go.

The shutdown of analogue - a switch-off of ISDN and PSDN means your Fax machine will no longer operate. It's that simple and **will require all systems using the outdated analogue technology to be transferred to a different way of operating.**

It is the rise of digital technology that has ultimately sounded the death knell for the fax machine, but the fax has somehow still had a place; it's **just a question of adapting to a more up-to-date method of delivery.**

There are estimated to be **more than 40 million fax machines still in operation globally**, with many millions more still being made and sold every year, making the fax still one of the most popular forms of communication, as evidenced by the **near 20 billion documents** that make their way through fax machines annually.

Some downsides to faxing include:

- Poor security
- Issues with GDPR
- Analogue line instability, resulting in faulty transmissions and errors
- Downtime when the technology doesn't work as it should
- Higher costs
- Junk Faxes - they're still going strong!

A **move to online faxing** means your fax messages are handled in a totally different way and prevent most, if not all, of these problems arising.

Many businesses still use - and rely upon - fax services but will have to adapt moving forward. The fax machine as we have known it will cease to exist, but 'faxes' are likely to continue - just in a different way - as an electronic service.

Other affected services

It's not just the fax machine that will be affected by the changeover. Some Payment Terminals, EPOS systems, door entry and CCTV systems - even the emergency telephones in lifts!

If you haven't already done an assessment of your business comms, then we strongly recommend you start investigating.

Faxing timeline

The fax has been around for a long time, and despite being considered to be a mid to late 20th Century administrative workhorse, **its origins can be dated to 1843.**

Here are some notable milestones:

- 1843 - Scottish inventor Alexander Bain takes out a patent for his Electric Printing Telegraph, the first known reference to using electric signals to read text documents and reprint them at other locations.
- 1880 - The Scanning Phototelegraph is developed, the first machine to replicate two-dimensional images.
- 1908 - First known transcontinental fax transmission which shared wanted posters with police between London and Paris.
- 1924 - 15 photographs sent from Cleveland to New York. They were of sufficient quality to be used in the following day's paper.
- 1964 - The Xerox Corporation transitioned transmissions from the electrical wiring network to the more secure telephone system.
- 1985 - Computer interface for faxing developed.

Use of the fax has declined since then of course as great strides continue to be made in the world of technology, but the **fax continues to be used** - so could we really be at the end of the line for this one-time favourite mode of communication?

If you would like a free audit to look at your tech and how you use it now - and how you will use it in the future - you can contact EPX Technical Solutions on 01743290588.

LOCAL BUSINESSWOMAN WINS TOP NATIONAL AWARD



A Shrewsbury based businesswoman is celebrating after scooping a prestigious award at the National Women in Business 2022 awards held in London recently.

Niamh Kelly, who owns The HR Dept Shropshire, collected the big prize of the evening, being named, 'Businesswoman of the Year' in the small business category.

The 2022 Business Women Excellence Awards were held in Wembley. The annual event is designed to shine a bright light on many of the UK's extraordinary and inspirational business women who deserve to be recognised, rewarded and promoted for their achievements. Now in their fifth year, the National Women in Business Awards continually strives to offer so many incredible business women a platform of their own to celebrate their incredible achievements and rewards and promotes stars of today and of tomorrow across many diverse sectors.

Speaking about her success, Niamh said: "I am thrilled and delighted to have had my name called to the stage to receive this highly rated national business award.

"A great deal of hard work has gone into my business over the past five years. The team and I always strive to ensure all our clients receive the very best advice and timely support in these difficult times and is a just reward for everyone at The HR Dept Shropshire".

Niamh is originally from Dublin and worked in Ireland for USA multi nationals before moving to the UK, working for the NHS and Higher Education. Niamh established The HR Dept Shropshire five years ago and together with a team of 4 HR specialists, has since extended her range of operation to Wrexham and Chester and Mid Wales.



COCKTAILS & CANAPES

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Christmas cocktails and canapes with special guest Elizabeth Wilkinson MBE

Enjoy an evening of Cocktails & Canapes while networking with other local businesses. A chance to wear your finest festive outfit or simply opt for casual wear, all is fine by us! During the evening the winners of the Christmas Shop Window Competition will be presented with their awards.

This year we are honoured & delighted to be joined by Elizabeth Wilkinson MBE who will be talking about Dyslexia, Me & my MBE - Elizabeth is an award-winning Dyslexia Consultant - Dyslexia Coach, Trainer, Teacher, Advocate, and Campaigner.

A delightful array of canapes will be designed to suit every type of dietary need. There will be both alcoholic and non alcoholic cocktails available. Three drinks per attendee, after that there will be a pay as you go bar.

The event will start at 6.30pm at Origins Restaurant, Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology, London Road Shrewsbury SY2 6PR. Ample parking on site.

The perfect festive way to promote your business to other local businesses, while having an enjoyable social evening.

Book now as spaces are limited

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

SHREWSBURY COLLEGES GROUP WELCOMES LOCAL MP FOR POLITICS STUDENTS TALK

On Friday 11 November, over 35 A Level politics students welcomed local North Shropshire MP, Helen Morgan to the English Bridge Campus for an insightful talk on her experiences of her first year of being an MP.



Helen Morgan gave a detailed exchange with the gathered students about her responsibilities as an MP and how she divides her time between the House of Commons along with her local constituency office in Wem. Over the course of the hour-long talk, Helen gave details on what it was like for her to ask a question of the Prime Minister on her first day as an MP as well as how she is proposing a Private Members Bill on Bus Transportation.

Helen then took a number of questions from the students across a whole range of topics covering local, national and international issues.

Sarah Roberts, course leader for Politics A Level at the college said: 'We were delighted that Helen was available to come and talk to the students. It was an excellent

insight for the students on what a day is really like for an MP and how they balance their national and local responsibilities.'

James Staniforth, Principal of Shrewsbury Colleges Group, added: 'We were extremely thankful for Helen making space in her busy schedule to spend time with our students. The students were hugely enthusiastic about the visit and made the most of Helen's time with some probing questions.'

Helen Morgan MP, concluded: 'I thoroughly enjoyed meeting the students at Shrewsbury Colleges Group and having the opportunity to tell them about my experiences with the workings of our Parliamentary system.

The students were fantastic and asked some great questions across a range of topics that they were interested in.'

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IT'S A ROYAL INVITATION FOR SUCCESSFUL SHREWSBURY INDEPENDENT BUSINESS



An independent business owner from Shrewsbury is hoping to sing the praises of the county town to The King after being invited to a special event at Buckingham Palace.

Gill Gradwell, owner of Cooking Kneads in Wyle Cop, is heading to London for a royal reception to recognise the contribution of small businesses to the economy.

Gill was nominated by the British Independent Retail Association as an outstanding example of a successful business, and said she was shocked and delighted. "I feel totally overwhelmed and privileged to receive this invitation," she said. "Shrewsbury is a wonderful town and Cooking Kneads is very lucky to be amongst some wonderful independent shops on Wyle Cop - we can boast as being the longest stretch of independents in Britain! "If I am lucky enough to speak to The King then I would thank him for inviting me and how much of an honour it is.

"I would also like to say how important small businesses are and how the high street has changed with more specialist shops and how important customer service is. I would love him to visit our wonderful town! "Cooking Kneads started in 2015 and has gone from strength to strength. Our team consists of Jane, Tracey, Kay, Sarah and Rose and we pride ourselves on excellent customer service and a wealth of knowledge in the cooking and houseware retail industry.

"During Covid we created our website - I was very fortunate that my family were 'stranded in Shrewsbury' and created the online shop, which gave Cooking Kneads another dimension.

"We provided free local delivery and kept ourselves on the map through these tough times. When allowed to reopen the support from people was amazing and the loyalty of our customers has been very much appreciated. "Over the years I have had several career changes - from veterinary assistant, PA for a sports agency, catering manager and restaurant owner. Being a farmer's daughter I have always loved the outdoor life - working on the farm during my teenage years. "My mother was an excellent cook and taught me some great skills. I have a wonderful family and great friends and I am very lucky to have Cooking Kneads and be able to do a job that I love and feel very passionate about."

Seb Slater, executive director of Shrewsbury BID, congratulated Gill on her royal invitation. He added: "Cooking Kneads is a well-established business in the town centre, and a fantastic example of the many wonderful independent shops which Shrewsbury is renowned for. "We hope Gill enjoys the reception and gets the opportunity to tell King Charles all about our fantastic town!"

Jeff Moody, managing director of BIRA, said: "The British Independent Retailers Association were delighted to be invited by Buckingham Palace to nominate independent businesses from all over the UK to recognise their important contribution to the economy. "Cooking Kneads is a perfect example of a customer focusing retailer offering real service to the community and increasing footfall on in Shrewsbury town centre. "Being a local man myself I am so pleased that Shrewsbury BID supports so many independent retailers."

SPOTLIGHT ON FESTIVE DISPLAYS

Christmas shoppers in Shrewsbury will get the chance to vote for their favourite window display this year as part of a festive initiative.

And shop owners who take part in the project have the chance to win top prizes thanks to a local firm.

Henshalls Insurance Brokers have once again signed up to sponsor the Christmas Window Competition and will provide hampers for all the category winners.

The project has been organised by Shrewsbury Business Chamber and Shrewsbury BID with a theme of "A Shrewsbury Christmas", and it's free to enter. There are three categories: class one for smaller shops up to 18ft wide; class two for larger shops more than 18ft wide; and class three for charity shops.

This year there will also be a public vote and to be included, shop owners need to submit a picture of their festive window by 9am on November 30. This vote will close on December 4.

Jenny Osborne, for Henshalls, said: "We are very pleased to be working with Shrewsbury Business Chamber and Shrewsbury BID once again, and it's set to be another spectacular year.

"Traders get the chance to be creative and put on incredible displays, while shoppers get to enjoy a festive treat as they prepare for the busiest time of the year.

"As a company, we're always keen to support local initiatives and organisations that benefit the community we're part of, and this is an excellent way of spreading some Christmas cheer."

Kevin Lockwood, chair of Shrewsbury Business Chamber, said: "Last year's competition was extremely popular and we're hoping to encourage as many town centre traders as possible to get involved this year."

Emma Molyneux of Shrewsbury BID, said: "We'd like to thank Henshalls for their ongoing support and traders can rest assured they will win some great prizes if they win their categories.

"Christmas is the perfect time for a window competition with so many more shoppers making the most of everything Shrewsbury has to offer and we're looking forward to seeing what designs our traders come up with."

To enter visit <https://shrewsburybid.co.uk/christmaswindow/>



Jenny Osborne from Henshalls prepares for the Christmas window competition

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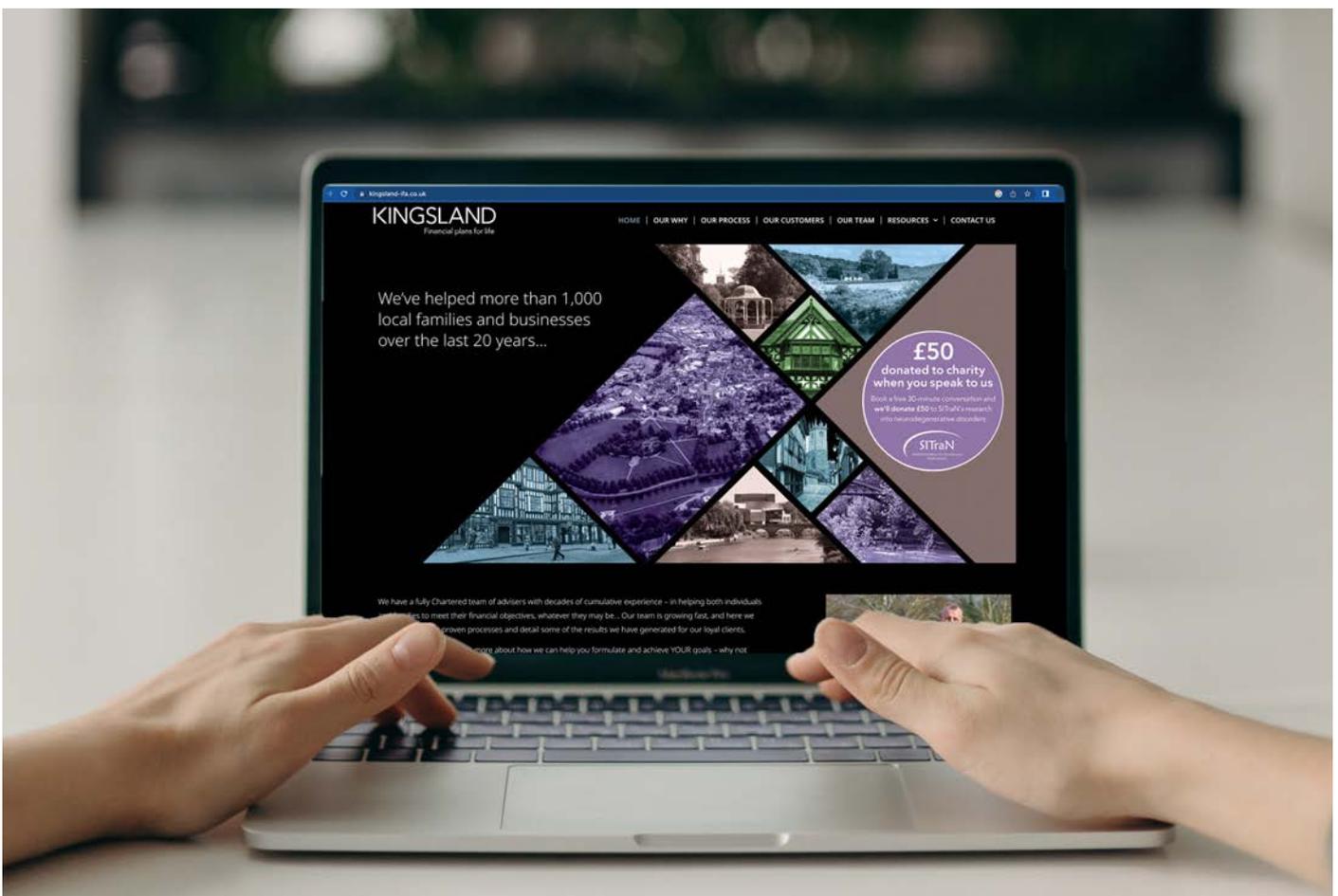
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SHROPSHIRE FESTIVALS' FOUNDER CROWNED GAME CHANGER AT NATIONAL AWARDS

The British Chambers of Commerce have crowned Shropshire Festivals' founder and Creative Director, Beth Heath, the 'Game Changer Entrepreneur of the Year.' Beth outshone hundreds of nominees to win the award at the 2022 Chamber Business Awards, sponsored by Meta. Shropshire Chamber of Commerce nominated Beth for the accolade.

Shevaun Haviland, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, said, "Huge congratulations to Beth Heath at Shropshire Festivals, one of just eight national winners of our Chamber Business Awards 2022. You have transformed your idea into a successful, sustainable business by understanding your market's key challenges, customers and competitive landscape."

One of the judges said of Beth, "You were a clear winner for us. It's clear that owner, Beth, has successfully combined entrepreneurial drive, ambition, and ability, with a community spirit that means she is making a real difference to others." Another judge said, "What makes Beth stand out is the passion she feels for her local area, making it a better place for everyone."

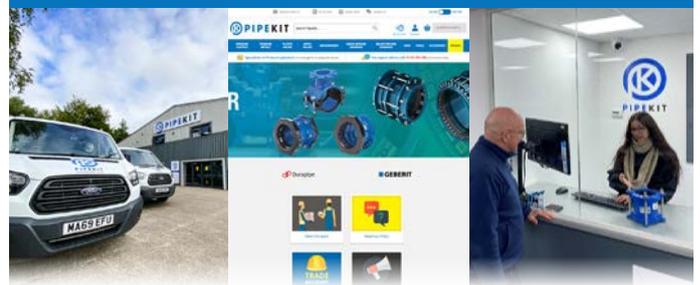
Beth is the brains behind several top Shropshire events, including Shrewsbury Food Festival, Shropshire Oktoberfest, Shropshire Tasty Trail, and Shropshire Kids Festival. Her annual events collectively attract around 90,000 visitors to the region annually.

"It is an absolute honour to receive the Game Changer award and to have my work recognised by such a prestigious national institution," Beth Heath said. "I'm particularly proud to be called a 'game changer' as I've never been content with the status quo and I'm always looking for ways to make what we do that little bit cooler, more engaging and above all, fun."

"As a business we have worked really hard over the last few years pivoting to stay viable through challenging times in the events sector. Thank you so much to the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce for nominating me, and their ongoing support, I'm absolutely over the moon. It's given me a boost of motivation to make our 2023 events better than ever before!"
To find out more about Shropshire Festivals visit www.shropshirefestivals.co.uk.



Beth and Sid Heath with children Jessica and Jonathan and their dogs



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Festive Friends Return to The Darwin

Saturday 3rd to Friday 23rd December

They're back! Join us throughout December and bring the family to meet our cheeky Grinch impersonator and his lovely companion Cindy Lou, as well as Polaris the Polar Bear and the big man in red himself, Santa!

Festive Friends are available on selected dates only.*

Find out more at [Shrewsbury-Shopping.co.uk](https://www.Shrewsbury-Shopping.co.uk)

*Polaris the Polar Bear visit on 10th and 19th December. Grinch Impersonator visit on 3rd, 17th and 21st December. Cindy Lou visit on 3rd and 17th December. Festive guests will be present on mall for 30 minute sessions at a time, in between 30 minute breaks.

For further details visit
[Shrewsbury-Shopping.co.uk](https://www.Shrewsbury-Shopping.co.uk)   



Shopping at the
heart of Shrewsbury



CHRISTMAS WINDOW COMPETITION

PUBLIC VOTE CLOSES 08/12/2022

Category 1	Smaller Shops	Sponsored by Hatchers
Category 2	Larger Shops	Sponsored by Portland Financial Planning Limited
Category 3	Charity Shops	Sponsored by Kingsland Wealth Management
Category 4	Public Vote	Sponsored by Shrewsbury BID
PRIZES		Sponsored by Henshalls Insurance Brokers
Drinks Reception		Sponsored by The HR Dept Shropshire

VOTE NOW

originalshrewsbury.co.uk/christmas-window

**Winners / Runner up will be invited to Cocktails and Canapes
13/12/2022**

where overall winner will be announced
<https://shrewsburybusinesschamber.com/events/>



REECH STRENGTHENS GROWTH PLANS WITH TWO KEY APPOINTMENTS



Shropshire's leading full-service marketing agency, Reech, strengthens its growth plans with the appointment of Amelia Redge as head of marketing and Amy Flanagan as head of client growth.

Working closely alongside directors Rob Hughes (managing director) and Dena Evans (creator director), Amelia and Amy will be responsible for the continued growth of the agency, generating new business opportunities and expanding relationships with existing clients.

With a full-service offering spanning branding, design and website development, through to digital marketing, content creation services and marketing, reech has ambitious growth targets for next year and beyond.

Amelia joins reech from a senior marketing role within the technology sector and amy comes with a wealth of experience in the construction industry. Both have held previous agency positions in marketing and business development.

Following Reech's rebrand earlier this year, these key appointments mark a continued investment in reech's own sales and marketing strategy and its dedication to providing the best possible client experience.

Speaking about her new role, amelia redge said: "it couldn't be a more exciting time to join Reech. With the new brand to develop, an expert team behind us and upcoming service launches in the pipeline, I am confident that amy and I will work closely together to deliver tangible results for both the agency and our clients."

Rob Hughes, managing director at Reech, also commented: "I am thrilled to welcome Amelia and Amy as the newest members of the reech team. The agency has expanded consistently year on year and both these appointments bring the strategic thinking and growth focus needed to continue on this exciting trajectory."



reech.agency

UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER

CANAPES & COCKTAILS

Tuesday 13th Dec 6.30pm

Origins Restaurant

Members £8 Non Members - £12

Christmas cocktails and canapes with special guest Elizabeth Wilkinson MBE.

Enjoy an evening of Cocktails & Canapes while networking with other local businesses. A chance to wear your finest festive outfit or simply opt for casual wear, all is fine by us! During the evening the winners of the Christmas Shop Window Competition will be presented with their awards.

This year we are honoured & delighted to be joined by Elizabeth Wilkinson MBE who will be talking about Dyslexia, Me & my MBE - Elizabeth is an award-winning Dyslexia Consultant - Dyslexia Coach, Trainer, Teacher, Advocate, and Campaigner.



A delightful array of canapes will be designed to suit every type of dietary need. There will be both alcoholic and non alcoholic cocktails available. Three drinks per attendee, after that there will be a pay as you go bar. Ample parking on site.

The perfect festive way to promote your business to other local businesses, while having an enjoyable social evening.

Book now as spaces are limited -

https://shrewsburybusinesschamber.com/yarr_event/christmas-cocktails-and-canapes-with-special-guest-elizabeth-wilkinson-mbe/

JANUARY

NEW YEAR, NEW START, THOUGHTS FOR 2023

FROM THROGMORTON ASSOCIATES WEALTH MANAGEMENT LTD

Wednesday 18th Jan 6pm

Origins

Members FREE Non Members - £10

FEBRUARY

LOOK OUT FOR OUR EXCITING VALENTINE THEMED EVENING IN FEBRUARY



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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.

BUSINESS SUBSCRIPTIONS	ANNUAL FEE
Sole trader	£60
Up to 10 employees	£90
More than 10 employees	£120

OTHER SUBSCRIPTIONS	ANNUAL FEE
Student (0-24)	FREE
Charity (less than ten employees)	£30
Retired Business Owner	£30

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