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KEY STATISTICS

Readership: 15,000

Our audience:

56% business owner/ director level

44% partner, manager or senior executive

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Thank goodness summer is finally here. It feels like we've all earned it.

At TBE it's been super busy, from working on the live final of Bath Dragons, to launching new initiatives such as The Next Generation, supporting young professionals and entrepreneurs. It's fantastic to be able to work with so many businesses through what we do. I'm continually inspired by the amazing work happening across our region.

Despite an unsettled Government and global picture, businesses locally are building momentum and there's plenty of positive news to share. From One Family Law's exponential growth to the Roman Baths being ranked in the top 1% of global attractions by TripAdvisor.

We've also put the spotlight on our high

street, with Bath bucking the national trend and seeing a raft of new retailers investing in the city.

Event season is now well and truly underway, with something for everyone. From the TBE South West Charity Conference & Expo in June, to TBE Show in September, there are plenty of opportunities to connect, learn and grow.

TBE is all about helping people and businesses get seen, get connected and get results. In this issue, we share a great example of how two TBE VIP members are now working together to grow their offering and support the wider business community. If you'd like to find out more about how we bring together print, online, events and awards, please get in touch.

I hope to see you at an event over the coming months and, during some well-deserved downtime this summer, don't forget to submit your entries for the TBE Awards. It's a great opportunity to reflect on your successes and use that in your wider marketing. There's nothing to lose, and you've got to be in it to win it!

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More news at: tbebathandsomerset.co.uk **and** tbeswindonandwilts.co.uk

Tripadvisor places Bath landmark in top 1% of global attractions

Bath's historic landmark, The Roman Baths, has been named one of the world's very best visitor attractions, securing a prestigious Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice® Best of the Best Award for 2026 and ranking fourth overall in the UK.

Based on millions of traveller reviews worldwide, the award places the site in the top 1% of attractions globally and among the top 20 attractions in Europe, cementing its status as one of the UK's must-visit heritage destinations.

The site offers an immersive journey into ancient Roman life where visitors can explore the remarkably preserved 2,000-year-old bathing and temple complex, walk beside the simmering, warm water of the Great Bath and uncover the story of the Temple of Sulis Minerva in the award-winning museum.

The Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Best of the Best Awards are widely regarded as one of the industry's most trusted endorsements, determined solely by the quality and quantity of

visitor reviews and ratings submitted over a 12-month period.

Bath & North East Somerset Council leader, Councillor Kevin Guy said, "We're incredibly proud to be recognised as one of the UK's top attractions in Tripadvisor's Best of the Best Awards. This accolade is a reflection of the passion and dedication of our fantastic team, and the timeless appeal of The Roman Baths. It's wonderful to see how much our visitors value their experience here, and we're grateful to everyone who took the time to share their glowing reviews."

Matt Dacey, Chief Marketing Officer, Tripadvisor, said, "Congratulations to The Roman Baths on your recognition in Tripadvisor's Travellers' Choice Awards for 2026. Ranking among

the top percentage of businesses globally means you have made such a memorable impact on your visitors that many of them took time to go online and leave a glowing review about their experience. We hope this recognition continues to drive business to you in 2026 and beyond."

 For more info:
www.romanbaths.co.uk



“Ranking among the top percentage of businesses globally means you have made such a memorable impact on your visitors”

BATH DRAGONS 2026: FINALISTS ANNOUNCED

Following a competitive selection process, the four finalists in year two of the Bath Dragons competition have been announced.

Organised by Richardson Swift, Mogers Drewett, South West Business Finance and The Business Exchange, Bath Dragons brings together ambitious local businesses, expert support and the wider B&NES business community.



The 2026 finalists are:

- **Wild Flour Cake Company**
A Bath-based wholesale bakery producing handmade, artisan cakes for cafés, hospitality and foodservice, with a focus on quality, consistency and national distribution.
- **Nuditea**
An independent Bath tea brand creating award-winning, ethically sourced whole leaf tea blends, supplied to retail and hospitality in sustainable, plastic-free packaging.
- **CaliUnity**
A Bath-based, community-focused gym and not-for-profit CIC using calisthenics and coaching to make fitness more accessible, inclusive and engaging.

• **Sporting Sensations**
A children's sports coaching provider delivering PE, clubs and holiday programmes designed to build confidence, skills and wellbeing in young people.

The four businesses stood out from a strong field of entries and will now go head-to-head in the Bath Dragons Live Final on Monday 1st June at the Apex City of Bath Hotel.

This year's overall winner will receive a £25,000 prize package, comprising £5,000 in cash and £20,000 of expert support covering tax, finance, legal, PR and communications. The prize is designed to act as a genuine springboard for growth, combining financial backing with specialist insight from some of the region's most respected advisers.

During the live final, each finalist will pitch their business to the Bath Dragons panel before responding to questions, with the ultimate winner decided by an audience vote. The format gives the local business community a direct role in selecting the winner.

The Bath Dragons panel includes Debbie Boulton, Managing Director at Richardson Swift; Tom Webb, Corporate and Commercial Partner at Mogers Drewett; Dan Smith, Co-founder of South West Business Finance; and Anita Jaynes, Founder of The Business Exchange.

The evening will be formally opened by the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, with the winner announced by Cllr Kevin Guy, Deputy Leader of the West of England Combined Authority.

The event brings together a broad cross-section of the regional business community, including representatives from Invest in B&NES, Bath BID, Bath Spa University Business School, the University of Bath School of Management and Bath Building Society.

The four finalists shared their thoughts ahead of the live final:

"CaliUnity started with free meet-ups at Bath's Victoria Park just after the loneliness of lockdown. Today we have a thriving local gym that serves as a lifeline for those who dislike traditional gyms. It holds the Bath Life Best Business 2026 Platinum award in reception and operates as a Community Interest Company, meaning it can never be sold or stripped for parts. Being a Bath Dragons finalist alongside three brilliant local businesses is a real honour."

Ollie Chick, Co-founder, CaliUnity

"We're absolutely thrilled to have been selected and make it to the finals of the Bath Dragons 2026. We're really excited for the live event, where we'll be sharing our new concept for the convenience sector of 'Iced Tea Lattes' - a new canned drink format that brings our award-winning speciality tea to the grab-and-go market."

Josh Holmes, Founder, Nuditea

"Being selected as a Bath Dragons finalist is a huge moment for us after such a transformational year for the business. We're excited to share our vision for growing Wild Flour nationally while staying true to the handmade quality and relationships that have always been at the heart of the brand."

Jessica Langford-Snape, Founder, Wild Flour Cake Company

"To have made it to the final four of Bath Dragons feels like a huge achievement for both myself and Sporting Sensations. This opportunity highlights and recognises the impact Sporting Sensations has already had and will continue to have on our local community and the children we work with."

Chris Pile, Managing Director, Sporting Sensations

 For more info:
www.wildflourcakeco.co.uk
www.caliunity.com
www.nuditea.com
www.sportingsensations.co.uk



University of Bath approved for new adult learning initiative

The Government has announced a new, flexible student finance system, which it hopes will give more adults a new route into university and college.



From September 2026, people will be able to access student finance for shorter, flexible 'module' courses, as well as traditional university degrees.

The University of Bath has been named among the first 130 universities and colleges approved to offer the new courses.

The change is part of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement, as set out in the Government's Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper last year.

Traditionally, higher and further education has been built around full-time degrees and qualifications taken straight after school or college, but the system is restrictive for people who need to fit study around life commitments or want to return to learning later in life.

The funding of these new, smaller courses means people can gain qualifications over time, rather than needing to complete a rigid three-year full-time degree in one go.

The modules on offer will focus on subjects that will tackle skills shortages, including economics and computing, engineering and architecture, as well as health and social care.

Skills Minister Jacqui Smith said, "Financial support should be available whether you want to do a degree, take a short course, or retrain later in life. Our changes will make that happen, with the option to access student finance in any stage of life.

"Whether it's fitting study around a job, retraining for a completely new career, juggling childcare, or getting qualifications later in life, the new Lifelong Learning Entitlement will open up new opportunities for thousands more people to build the careers they want and get on in life."

Applications for student finance will open in September 2026 for anyone starting courses or the new modules from January 2027. Under the system, people will be able to access funding equivalent to four years of post-18 study, currently worth up to £39,160.

People who already have a degree may still be able to access the new funding, either if they have remaining student finance available in their pot or want to retrain in certain priority subject areas.

Professor Dave Phoenix, Vice-Chancellor of The Open

University, said, "As pioneers of flexible learning, The Open University has long focused on reaching learners where and how they need to study. The Lifelong Learning Entitlement provides a real opportunity to deliver a post-18 education system for the 21st Century, one that better reflects how people, live learn and work today.

"It has the potential to truly stimulate lifelong learning, by enabling institutions to build more flexible, modular pathways both into and through higher education, enabling people to train, retrain and upskill throughout their lives.

"Realising that potential will depend on ensuring the system works in practice for learners, employers, and further and higher education providers alike and require providers to challenge themselves as to what the future could look like."



For more info:
www.bath.ac.uk

Growing with purpose at One Family Law

Launched in 2024, One Family Law Solicitors has become one of the fastest-growing specialist family law firms in the South West, achieving more than 350% growth in just two and a half years as demand rises for a more compassionate, modern approach to separation and divorce.

Built around its pioneering 'One Couple One Solicitor' model, the Bath-based firm is challenging the traditional adversarial approach to family law by helping couples resolve matters together through one lawyer, reducing conflict, emotional strain, time and cost while keeping children and family wellbeing at the centre of the process.

The rapid growth reflects a significant shift in what separating couples are looking for. Clarity over confrontation, dignity over dispute and solutions that help families move forward positively rather than becoming trapped in damaging legal battles.

Co-founders Tina Marshall-Kelliher and Victoria Barnett launched the firm with a bold vision to redefine how family law is delivered. Since then, the business has expanded its team, attracted senior legal talent and built a reputation as one of the leading specialists in the One Couple One Solicitor approach both regionally and nationally.

Tina commented, "I'm most proud of the fact that, two years ago Victoria and I had the courage to set up our own firm based on the One Couple One Solicitor model. We genuinely believe in helping couples deal with separation together, using one lawyer, and at the time it wasn't a traditional or widely accepted way of practising and still isn't as common now."

The firm's momentum has also been recognised across the region, with Tina and Victoria both named in TBE's 2026 Most Inspiring Women list and the business shortlisted as a finalist in the Best Start Up category at the TBE Awards.

In May 2026, the firm announced the appointment of two highly respected senior Partners as part of its continued expansion. The appointments come at a pivotal moment, following the firm's move to Cambridge House on Henry Street, the former Bath law courts. The relocation reflects both continuity and progress, a modern firm operating from a site with legal heritage.

Samantha Newton joins from national law firm Ashfords, where she led the Bristol Family Team, advising highly complex and internationally connected clients. Caroline Fell joins from Stone King, where she led the Family and

Mediation Team and built a national reputation in collaborative practice and child inclusive mediation.

The appointments significantly strengthen the firm's mediation, collaborative law and complex family law expertise, while reinforcing its commitment to resolving disputes in a more constructive and family-focused way.

Victoria said, "What we are seeing is a real change in mindset from clients. People no longer want separation to automatically mean conflict. They want to feel heard, supported and able to move forward without destroying relationships, particularly when children are involved.

"One Couple One Solicitor gives couples the opportunity to work together with the right guidance and support around them. It can completely change the tone and outcome of a separation."

Tina added, "When we launched the firm, we believed there was a better way to help families through one of the hardest periods of their lives. The growth we've experienced shows just how many people were looking for an alternative to the traditional legal process.

"We are incredibly proud that clients trust us at such an important and emotional point in their lives. Seeing people move from fear and uncertainty to clarity, confidence and hope is exactly why we started One Family Law."



For more info:
www.onefamilylawsolicitors.com



“People no longer want separation to automatically mean conflict.”

Bath city centre closes chapter on difficult decade

After a turbulent decade, Bath city centre is bucking the national trend, with a raft of new retailers and a strong leisure and hospitality offering.

Tourism, as it has done for centuries, is playing a major role in this new era, with a healthy symbiotic relationship between the historic and the modern, the Georgians and the Caroleans, the customers and the businesses.

It's a period of renewed confidence, with a series of major projects and investments set to reshape the high street, strengthen its cultural offering and improve the visitor experience.

Bath's success story is backed by the stats (kindly supplied by Bath BID). Footfall in Bath city centre has been strong in 2026, with visitor numbers up 5.3% year to date.

March was a particularly good month, delivering growth of 8.4% compared to the same period last year, at a time when national footfall fell by 1.9%.

Milsom Street is experiencing major investment from the retail sector, with the return of Jolly's department store set to play a key role in the high street's future. Morleys Stores has confirmed the historic shop will reopen in March 2027 following a major programme of restoration and redevelopment.

The project has involved extensive conservation of a building that has evolved over more than 250 years, alongside upgrades to bring it in line with modern retail expectations. The renewed store will blend restored architectural features with updated retail spaces, aiming to create a vibrant destination for both residents and visitors while supporting local suppliers and partnerships.

Ray Clacher, Morleys Stores CEO, said, "Working within a series of interconnected buildings that have evolved over more than two and a half centuries has been both inspiring and incredibly complex. Every stage of the project has presented opportunities to protect and celebrate the history of Jolly's while ensuring we create the very best department store possible for the residents of Bath and visitors to the city.

"We know how much affection people hold for Jolly's, and that has driven our ambition from the very beginning. Our

goal is not simply to reopen the store, but to create a vibrant, welcoming destination that Bath can be proud of for many years to come."

Further strengthening the retail mix, luxury fashion brand ME+EM is also planning to open a new store on Milsom Street, taking over a long vacant unit previously occupied by Ted Baker. Proposed works to the listed building include internal refurbishment, restoration of historic features and upgrades to lighting and building services. The arrival of a growing British brand adds to signs of renewed demand for prime retail space in the city centre.

A recent visit from the High Street Positives Campaign group highlighted the opportunities created by the emerging Milsom Quarter development. Plans for the new Fashion Museum, the growing fashion retail offer and the involvement of fashion students from Bath Spa University are all boosting its appeal.

The Fashion Museum Bath is relocating to the former Old Post Office on New Bond Street. The project will see the Grade II listed building carefully restored and adapted into a modern museum, combining historic character with contemporary design.

Once complete, the new site will more than double the floorspace of the museum's former home, allowing far more of its internationally recognised collection to be displayed. A new public courtyard, garden and improved public realm will create an accessible and welcoming environment, alongside a light-filled entrance space with a café, shop and free displays.

The museum is expected to attract around 250,000 visitors each year, supporting Bath's wider cultural economy and reinforcing its reputation as a centre for heritage and creativity. With construction due to begin in winter 2027 and an opening target of December 2030, the scheme forms a cornerstone of the wider Milsom Quarter regeneration.

Alongside investment in culture and retail, significant infrastructure improvements are underway to support

the long-term resilience and accessibility of the city. Major reconstruction works are due to begin on Manvers Street, upgrading pavements, street lighting and underground utilities.

Allison Herbert, Chief Executive of Bath Business Improvement District, says that there are many positives for the city centre.

"Our retail offering is doing very well," she explained. "We have a unit vacancy rate of just 5% in Bath city centre, compared to the national average of 14-15%. Bath is a visitor destination and it makes our retail and hospitality offering incredibly resilient, despite many of the wider challenges the UK is experiencing.

"The new M&S store was a significant moment. Standing on a major gateway into Bath from the major transport links, the store is performing very positively and helping to drive increased footfall. It's a catalyst for more high street names as well as independent businesses to join Bath's eclectic mix. We're looking forward to a very busy summer."

Investment in heritage, culture, retail and infrastructure is not only preserving what makes Bath unique, but also adapting it for the future, ensuring the high street remains a vital and attractive place for generations to come.

- **Footfall across Bath city centre is up more than 5% so far this year, following a steady 2025**
- **The city has recorded three consecutive months of year-on-year growth, with February, March and April all seeing strong increases in visitor numbers**
- **March alone brought more than six million visitors into the city centre**
- **Bath is also outperforming national trends, with footfall rising locally while UK figures remain in decline**

Revitalising Bath's Retail Landscape

The Rise of Concessions and the Reimagining of Commercial Property



By Hannah Jackson, Commercial Property Solicitor at Goughs Solicitors

Bath has long been celebrated for its historic charm, distinctive architecture and vibrant tourism economy. However, like many towns and cities across the UK, its retail landscape has undergone significant change in recent years. Shifts in consumer behaviour, economic pressures and the rise of online shopping have all reshaped the high street. Against this backdrop, one model has emerged as a proven and effective way to reinvigorate physical retail spaces: retail concessions.

At Goughs Solicitors, specialists in commercial property law, we are seeing first-hand how concessions are helping to breathe new life into traditional retail environments, while creating meaningful opportunities for both landlords and tenants.

Retail concessions typically involve a smaller or independent brand operating within the premises of a larger, established retailer. Often described as a form of retail "co-working", this collaborative approach allows multiple brands to trade under one roof, bringing mutual commercial benefit and a more engaging experience for customers.

Increased Footfall, Engagement & Dwell Time

Today's consumers are drawn to experiences rather than transactions alone. Hosting multiple complementary brands under one roof encourages customers to browse longer, explore more and return more often. These curated environments increase dwell time, footfall and overall sales, offering a modern evolution of the department store concept tailored to today's experiential economy.

Empowering Independent Brands

For smaller businesses, securing a standalone unit in a prime location can be cost-prohibitive. Concessions provide an accessible route into bricks-and-mortar retail, without the long-term commitment or overheads of a traditional lease. This model enables creative brands to test new markets while offering landlords and lead tenants a rotating, dynamic retail mix that keeps spaces fresh and appealing.

Financial Flexibility for Lead Tenants

From a commercial and legal perspective, concessions can offer valuable financial flexibility. Lead tenants may offset occupancy costs through revenue-sharing arrangements or fixed concession fees, while maintaining control of the premises. At Goughs, we advise on and draft concession agreements that clearly define responsibilities, income structures and operational boundaries, protecting all parties involved.

Choice and Community for Consumers

Concessions add depth and diversity to the retail offer. With so many high-quality artisans and independent businesses across Bath, Somerset and Wiltshire, this model strengthens local identity while giving consumers greater choice and a more personalised shopping experience. It also allows brands to grow sustainably, building confidence before expanding further.

A Sustainable Future for the High Street

Retail concessions are more than a passing trend. They form part of a broader shift towards collaboration, adaptability and community-focused retail. With the right legal framework in place, they can transform underused space into vibrant destinations, support independent businesses and help future-proof commercial property.

At Goughs, we help commercial property stakeholders, both landlords and tenants to navigate the complexities of these evolving relationships, ensuring that their agreements are robust, flexible and future-ready.

The future of retail is not about resisting change, but embracing it. With the right legal support, concessions can turn vacant units into vibrant destinations, reinvigorate shopping centres and make our high streets relevant again.

if you're considering hosting or becoming a retail concession or wish to explore how your commercial property can better adapt to today's market, Goughs are here to help.

HannahJackson@goughs.co.uk
01249 475888



Additions to Bath City Centre 2025-26		Opening soon:	
• Bird and Blend	• NRBV	• Gail's	• Jolly's (March 2027)
• Bramley's	• Manipura House	• Prima Vista	• Gordon Ramsay Restaurant at The Hilton
• RM Williams	• Sarthi Restaurant	• Joe and the Juice	• Uniqlo
• Heal's	• Marchon Gym	• Royal Spa Nails	• Pure Seoul
• The Cub	• M&S (relocation)	• Emberwood	• Me & Em
• Sosandar	• Space NK (reopening)	• Root	
• Gieves and Hawkes (reopening)	• Lucy and Yak (pop-up)	• Zaytoun	
• Busby and Fox	• Café Pastel	• Angelo's	
• The Welly	• Manipura House		

Summer of growth: Why confident businesses are still moving forward

by Steve Barrett and Daniel Smith, Co-Founders, SWBF

Much is made about uncertainty in today's market, but from where we sit, a more positive story is quietly unfolding across the UK business community.

Yes, headlines continue to focus on inflationary pressures, interest rates and global instability. Yet many ambitious business owners are choosing a different path. They are planning, investing and moving forward with confidence. Whether that's expanding their teams, entering new markets, launching new services or securing funding to support their next phase of growth.

"Growth doesn't pause just because the market feels uncertain. In many cases, uncertainty is exactly what drives the most considered and strategic decisions."

Steve Barrett, Managing Director and Co Founder of South West Business Finance

Growth looks different for every business

The definition of growth has evolved. For some businesses, it's about increasing headcount or expanding premises. For others, growth means strengthening cash flow, refinancing existing facilities, investing in technology, or creating a more resilient funding structure to support long term plans.

Over the past year, we've supported businesses across a wide range of sectors, from property developers and investors to trading businesses, professional services firms and family owned companies, all pursuing growth in ways that suit their own circumstances and ambitions.

Funding as a strategic advantage

One of the biggest changes we're seeing is how businesses think about finance. Increasingly, funding is no longer viewed as a last resort. Instead, it's being used as a strategic tool, supporting expansion, acquisitions, succession planning, or unlocking opportunities that might otherwise remain out of reach.

This shift is happening against the backdrop of a lending market that has never been more diverse. With over 200 active lenders operating in the UK, traditional high street funding is now just one part of a far broader landscape that includes specialist property finance, asset backed lending, invoice finance and more structured solutions.

"Our job is to know the lender market inside out. We spend our time understanding how lenders think, what they're looking for, and how different products can be combined. As a result, clients often secure funding structures they simply didn't realise existed." **Daniel Smith, Managing Director and Co Founder of SWBF**

By taking the time to truly understand each client's objectives, risk profile and longer term plans, we're able to recommend funding that genuinely aligns with their growth ambitions, not just the easiest or most obvious option.

The power of relationships and knowledge

Alongside funding, the most successful businesses continue to invest in strong professional relationships and trusted advice.

At South West Business Finance, relationships sit at the heart of everything we do. We work closely with business owners, accountants, solicitors and property professionals to ensure funding decisions are fully aligned with wider commercial objectives.

Sharing knowledge is just as important. Through our expanding Knowledge Bank and programme of events, including economic briefings and property focused forums, we aim to help business owners cut through the noise and gain practical, actionable insight into the market.

Find out more

To keep up to date with the latest events, insights and opportunities, follow South West Business Finance on LinkedIn. We regularly share updates on the property focused forums we attend, industry events we support, and our Mark Berrisford Smith Economic Briefing, which returns this October.

Visit www.swbf.co.uk to learn more about how we support businesses at every stage of their growth journey.



Steve Barrett and Daniel Smith, Co-Founders, SWBF

A steady hand in financial planning: Jennifer Davis

At Belgrave Asset Management, our strength has always come from the people behind our process, and over the coming editions of The Business Exchange, we are delighted to introduce more of the individuals who make up our team.

We begin by shining a spotlight on Jennifer Davis, a longstanding and highly valued member of Belgrave.

Jennifer joined Belgrave in 2007 and has since become an integral part of our financial advice team. Over nearly two decades, she has built trusted relationships with clients and colleagues alike, earning a reputation for her professionalism, empathy and unwavering commitment to delivering the highest standards of client care. Her calm, thoughtful approach has made her a go to source of reassurance for clients navigating both everyday decisions and life's more complex turning points.

A key part of Jennifer's role is supporting clients through some of life's most significant milestones and transitions. Whether guiding young families as they begin planning for their future, helping clients understand the financial implications of marriage or divorce, or supporting individuals as they approach retirement, Jennifer brings both clarity and compassion to every conversation. She has a great ability to combine deep technical knowledge with a genuinely caring manner, ensuring clients feel informed, supported and confident during important moments in their lives.

Beyond her client-facing work, Jennifer plays a vital role behind the scenes at Belgrave. She works closely with the directors to help deliver the coherent financial planning strategies that underpin our advice. With a strong understanding of Belgrave's investment philosophy and processes she helps ensure that every client receives clear, consistent and well structured guidance tailored to their long term objectives. Her attention to detail and ability to translate complex ideas into practical, actionable steps make her an invaluable contributor to Belgrave's strategic work.

Jennifer's dedication, experience and integrity make her an essential part of the Belgrave team.

More than that, her approachable nature and commitment to helping others embody the values that define Belgrave Asset Management and the relationships we strive to build with every client.

Outside of the office, Jennifer brings the same energy and commitment to her personal life. She is a keen and dedicated runner and laces up her trainers to run almost every day! Family time is at the heart of Jennifer's world, and she loves spending time with her two boys, as well as friends and family. She is also a passionate supporter of local businesses, especially independent restaurants, and is widely regarded within the team as the person to ask for recommendations. Whether you are after the best Sunday roast in town or a hidden gem for a midweek meal, Jennifer will always deliver with a great suggestion!

If you're looking to review your finances, please get in touch with the Belgrave team.

Call: 01225 484141
Visit: belgraveifa.co.uk



'Jennifer brings both clarity and compassion to every conversation'

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Bespoke Asset Management & Financial Planning

Milsted Langdon's Zoe Chandler named Rising Star of the Year

Milsted Langdon's Senior Tax Manager, Zoe Chandler, has been named the winner of the Rising Star category at the Tolley's Taxation Awards 2026.

Zoe, who works in the firm's Bath office, was picked from a competitive field of entries, capping an exceptional period in her career.

Since joining the firm in 2023, Zoe has helped to double the size of the Bath tax portfolio and built specialist expertise in several niche, complex areas, including assisting high net worth individuals, inheritance tax and international trust advisory.

Alongside her technical work, she has also played a key role in mentoring junior members of the team, building strong professional relationships and delivering meaningful support to clients.

These are all qualities that the Tolley's judges singled out as the hallmarks of a Rising Star, and the result was announced at an awards ceremony at the Hilton Park Lane in London.

Rob Chedzoy, Tax Partner at Milsted Langdon, said, "We could not be prouder of Zoe. To win Rising Star of the Year at the Tolley's Taxation Awards is a significant achievement in its own right, but it is even more remarkable given the strength of the shortlist this year.

"Zoe's win reflects the progression she has made since joining us, the genuine technical depth she has developed

in some highly specialist areas and the leadership she has shown across the team.

"Her success also tells a wider story about the next generation of talent within the firm. We have invested heavily in our tax team over the past few years and to see that investment recognised at this level is hugely rewarding."

Zoe's win sits alongside the firm's own shortlisting in the Best Tax Practice in a Regional Firm category at the same awards.

Zoe said, "I am genuinely thrilled. The Tolley's Taxation Awards are the awards everyone in our profession wants to be recognised at and to win in such a competitive category means a great deal.

"I am very grateful to the partners and the wider team at Milsted Langdon for the support I have had since joining."

The Tolley's Taxation Awards celebrate excellence, innovation and impact across the UK tax profession and are widely regarded as the most prestigious recognition in the sector.

For more info:
www.milstedlangdon.co.uk



Shaping the future of Bath Building Society

In the second instalment of our interview with CEO Richard Ingle, we explore how Bath Building Society is investing in its future. From digital transformation and product innovation to community impact and regional growth, Richard shares how the Society is evolving to better serve its Members.

You're upgrading the Society's core banking platform this year. How transformational will this be for Members?

This upgrade is a major step forward for the Society and our Members. It makes our core systems more reliable and future-ready, laying the foundations for greater flexibility, for example, letting Members choose how often interest is credited and enabling faster updates to balances and payments. Over time, it also opens the door to new features and services that make managing money simpler, quicker and more convenient.

Many mutual Building Societies face challenges with legacy systems. What has been your biggest learning from the digital transformation journey so far?

Identifying what functionality you want your future IT systems to offer, then designing and realising this is always more complicated in practice than you imagine at a high level at the outset. It's always important to invest the time up front to identify what your business requirements are, then carefully select the right software for your organisation, assemble the right internal and external implementation teams and have the right project governance to oversee delivery. We have experienced plenty of learning opportunities in all these areas! We have nimbly adapted our delivery approach based on what we have learnt along the way. We have already delivered digital savings, including being able to onboard new Members through our mobile app within a few minutes, and will implement a digital mortgage application process across the rest of 2026 and early 2027.

Tell us more about your special Green Self-Build mortgage product?

Working with our self-build partner, BuildStore, who introduces self-build mortgages to us, we identified that 75% of people building their own home want to invest in eco features beyond already mandatory heat pumps, but only 25% actually do this. We have developed a green self-build mortgage that incentivises our customers to make the extra eco investments by waiving the normal £995 product fee and offering a £1,000 cashback incentive if they incorporate the additional green features in their new home. This has already

proved popular with customers and means that we are helping them minimise their and the UK's carbon emissions from homes, as well as reducing home running costs.

The Society donated 2% of profits to local good causes last year. What impact are you hoping to make in 2026?

We have supported over 150 local charities and voluntary groups over the last two decades through the Society's Community Awards programme and also by supporting a Charity Partner each year. We wanted to deepen and clarify the extent of this community support by committing that at least 2% of profit will be donated to local good causes. We have extended our Charity partnership (currently Julian House) for two years, so that we can maximise the contribution that the Society can make, through donations and also via colleagues volunteering in the charity shops, accommodation and more recently painting the new day centre in the old bike shop premises on Corn Street.

What work does Bath Building Society do in the community to educate young people about savings at school or college?

Through another fantastic partner, WizeUp, we provide financial education in all the state school sixth forms in Bath and also two primary schools. It's so important to learn how to manage your money and this is an under-resourced part of the national curriculum. It's great to see local youngsters build up their financial management knowledge, to help them build financially resilient lives.

With such deep roots in the region, how do you see the Society's social role evolving over the next decade?

Wow, big question! We need to grow the Society by welcoming many more Members in the coming years to support the long-term sustainability of our business. Our growing impact and success mean success for our Members, as well as the broader Bath community, which we are deeply connected to. We will keep building momentum on this positive upward spiral of success together with our Members and community partners.



"we provide financial education in all the state school sixth forms in Bath"

For more info:
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Cheesy business...

At Richardson Swift, supporting ambitious businesses goes beyond the numbers. Through our work with clients across the region, the team sees first-hand the challenges and opportunities that come with growth.



In this client spotlight, we share the story of Pong Cheese, a Bath-based business that has built a strong reputation in a competitive market, and speak to Founder Mathew March-Smith about the journey so far.

Take us back to the beginning. How did you get into cheese?

My background was in advertising and I was working for brands like Jamie Oliver and Waitrose. I met Ben Lambourne at a dinner party; in those days he sold speciality cheese into large restaurant groups. He laid out a cheese board the likes of which I had never seen and talked so effusively and passionately about each one that I was instantly hooked. The next day I looked into how viable selling that sort of product would be online.

How has the business evolved since those early days?
We've been very methodical with our growth. When busy periods come, such as Christmas, we have to make sure we can meet demand with supply. Some producers have limited volumes and we're always dealing with a short-life product, so we can't order early and sell it later.
We also had the pandemic, when turnover reached five times the previous year. We had to improve our systems, logistics, stock management and almost every part of the business. Turnover has come down since then, but it's still much higher than before 2020, and fulfilment is now far more efficient.

Where are your day-to-day operations based today, and how have those facilities evolved?
We have a facility in Peasedown St John, which we bought many years ago. At the time it felt too large, but it has supported our growth. We've recently been acquired by an international dairy group, Savencia, and we may move to be with them in the future.

What routes to market do you focus on?
We focus on ecommerce, supported by subscription. Growth has come through Paid Search and PMAX, email marketing and eCRM, social media advertising and affiliate marketing. From the start, we've prioritised a

highly optimised site and user journey, driving strong traffic and conversion rates.

Who is the Pong Cheese customer, and how has that audience evolved?

We focus less on who customers are and more on how they behave. There are common traits, such as slightly higher income and an older profile, but we mainly target based on online behaviour. That includes what they like, whether they're buying for someone else, and what they're searching for. We're not currently selling to trade customers.

The Pong Cheese Club has become a big part of the brand. What was the thinking behind launching it, and why has it been so popular?

We created the Cheese Club subscription to smooth quieter periods after Christmas and Father's Day. We developed it with the team behind the first Hotel Chocolat subscription, which was built around similar seasonal peaks. Its popularity comes from the effort we put into sourcing a wide range of cheeses from across the world, mainly Europe. The variety keeps things interesting and gives customers something to look forward to.

When it comes to the cheese itself, what tends to be most popular with your customers, and how do you balance British and international choices?

Our bestsellers tend to be the cheeses featured in our most popular boxes, such as the Gourmet Christmas Cheese Box and the Explorer Box. In our singles range, the biggest sellers are well-known continental cheeses like Epoisses and, when available, Vacherin Mont d'Or.

What are your ambitions for Pong Cheese over the next few years?

Since Savencia acquired a majority stake, we have big plans. They're an extraordinary, international company that's still privately owned. A few years ago, we recognised we wouldn't be able to fulfil all our ambitions alone, so we looked for a partner who could. Savencia brings global reach, strong producer partnerships and

the teams to support the next phase of growth. I can't share too much yet, but it's a case of watch this space.

At what point did you realise you needed an accountancy practice that understood growth and ambition, not just the numbers?

We've had an accountancy practice since the early days. I came from a digital agency background, so I understood the importance of financial control. But it wasn't until we started working with Richardson Swift in 2014 that it felt like a true partnership. They've been instrumental in our growth and in supporting the sale process.

How has working with Richardson Swift supported your growth journey so far?

The team at RS, including Tom Allen, Rachael Rackham and Derek Swift before he retired, have been consistently supportive, informative and creative, both as a business and on a personal level. It feels like they are part of the business, not just advising on it. We've worked through audits, due diligence and growth planning together, and each challenge has felt shared rather than ours alone to solve.

Finally, what still excites you most about running Pong Cheese?

It feels like a new chapter, with a different set-up ahead. My role hasn't really changed, and in many ways we're carrying on as before, but there will be gradual and significant change. I'm excited to be part of that, but most of all to see the brand we created in 2009 now part of one of the world's leading international cheese companies, one that owns many of the brands we grew up with and that first sparked our love of cheese.

Richardson Swift has worked alongside Pong Cheese for over a decade, supporting the business through periods of growth, change and more recently its sale process. It is this long-term, collaborative approach that defines the firm's work with owner-managed businesses across the South West.

UNDERINSURANCE – A HIDDEN THREAT

by Ian Sandham Operations Director at Mark Richard Insurance

Robust insurance cover is necessary for all businesses to protect them from unexpected threats from fire, flood or criminal activity both physical or cyber.

A single uninsured event—can cause severe financial disruption, halt operations and, in some cases, threaten long-term viability. Yet, despite these risks, underinsurance remains a frequently overlooked vulnerability.

Common causes of underinsurance

- **Outdated property valuations**
SME business owners may overlook the need to regularly update the value of their buildings, equipment or inventory, resulting in cover limits that no longer reflect current replacement costs.
- **Business growth without policy updates**
SME business owners may add staff, locations or assets without adjusting their insurance cover, leaving new exposures unprotected and increasing the risk of uncovered losses.
- **Misunderstanding policy terms**
SME business owners may misinterpret complex policy language, leading to incorrect assumptions about what is covered, when cover applies and how indemnity limits are structured.
- **Focusing solely on premiums**
SME business owners may focus on minimising insurance costs without considering the implications of reduced cover limits, broader exclusions or how higher excesses compromise cover.
- **Neglecting emerging risks**
SME business owners may fail to account for new threats such as cyber-attacks, climate-related events or supply chain disruptions that may not be covered under standard policies.

The consequences of being underinsured

The financial and operational consequences of underinsurance can be significant. SMEs may face:

- **Partial or denied claims**
Insurance may not fully cover the cost of losses if cover limits are too low or exclusions apply, leaving the business responsible for the uncovered portion.
- **Prolonged downtime**
Without adequate business interruption cover, a business may struggle to meet ongoing expenses during recovery, increasing the risk of sustained operational disruption or permanent closure.
- **Legal and regulatory exposure**
Insufficient liability insurance can leave businesses vulnerable to legal claims and regulatory penalties, particularly in sectors subject to strict compliance requirements.
- **Reputational damage**
Delays in service or failure to meet obligations due to uninsured losses can erode customer trust and harm long-term relationships.
- **Strategies to avoid underinsurance**
To minimise the risk of underinsurance, SME business owners should routinely reassess their insurance cover, particularly after operational changes such as expansion, new hires or equipment upgrades. Obtaining professional appraisals of property and assets is also essential, especially during periods of inflation or supply chain volatility. Additionally, SMEs should evaluate whether their existing policies account for emerging risks like cyber-threats, climate-related events or evolving liability exposures.
- **Work with a knowledgeable insurance broker**
SME business owners should carefully examine policy terms and understand any exclusions to reduce the risk of insurance shortfalls. Working with a knowledgeable broker can help uncover overlooked insurance gaps and ensure that cover closely aligns with the SME's current operations, assets and evolving risk landscape.



Contact Mark Richard for a free audit of your insurance covers to make sure your cover is sufficient to protect your business.

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Help to Grow: Management at the University of Bath

Practical leadership development for ambitious SME leaders

Running a growing business often means spending all your time in it, not on it. Decisions pile up. The day to day takes over. Strategy slips to the bottom of the list. That’s where Help to Grow: Management comes in.



Delivered by the University of Bath School of Management, this 12 week leadership development programme is designed specifically for decision makers in small and medium sized businesses. It is backed by the UK government and the Small Business Charter and structured to fit alongside existing commitments. The programme combines online learning with face to face

workshops, one to one mentoring and peer support. Participants leave with a clear, practical growth plan they can put into action straight away. To show what that looks like in real life, we spoke to Gavin Badgery, Managing Director of Bitton Automated Access Limited, about his experience on the programme.

Help to Grow in practice: Gavin Badgery’s story

Tell us about you and your business

I run Bitton Automated Access. We install and maintain electric gates, fencing and carry out civil works. I started the business nine years ago with no real background in the industry, just the belief that I could make it work.

Today we’re a team of eight, including engineers and admin staff, and we work across the South West. Our clients range from domestic homeowners through to schools, the police and high security sites.

What’s helped us grow is our full service approach. A lot of gate companies will only make or install gates. We handle the civils, the fencing, the whole job. If someone throws a project at us, we’ll find a way to deliver it.

What made you sign up to the Help to Grow programme?

Like most SME owners, I was stuck in the day to day. Running jobs, managing people, dealing with issues as they came up. You’re so close to the coalface that you rarely get time to step back and look at the business properly.

I came across Help to Grow by chance and, I’ll be honest, I was sceptical. But I’m really glad I did it.

What the programme gave me was space. Time to lift my head up and think about the bigger picture.

What surprised you most about the course?

How relevant it was. When you run a small business, you’re already doing marketing, finance, operations and people management every single day. The course helped me recognise that, then gave me frameworks and tools to formalise what I was already doing and do it better.

One exercise with my mentor really stuck with me. He asked me to write down our customer base. When I did, I realised that

was our brand. One day we’re fitting a small side gate for a homeowner, the next we’re in meetings for high security government contracts. That level of trust says a lot about the business, but I’d never looked at it that way before.

Was the course practical or more academic?

Very practical. Most of the lecturers have real entrepreneurial experience, which makes a big difference. You can tell they understand what it’s like to deal with cash flow, recruit people, manage growth and juggle pressure.

The digital and AI module really stood out for me. It’s already shaping how I think about the future of the business.

How did you manage the time commitment?

The programme is designed to fit around running a business, and that’s accurate. I dedicated roughly one day a week between sessions, mentoring and assignments.

What’s interesting is I’ve carried that forward. I now block out regular time for business development, strategic thinking and networking. That’s something I didn’t do before, and it’s been a real shift for me.

What impact has Help to Grow had on your plans?

It clarified everything. The biggest learning was the importance of having a clear plan, rather than just reacting to the day to day. I can now see where I want the business to be in five, ten and even twenty years.

My ambition is to become the largest electric gate company in the South West, then expand nationally through acquisition. Over the next 12 months, the focus is on putting the right systems and processes in place so the business is genuinely scalable.

I’ve also recognised that I can’t be the bottleneck. If everything depends on me,

growth stalls. The course really highlighted the need to build a strong team and a structure that doesn’t rely on me doing everything.

Have you made changes already?

Yes, particularly around operations and digital. We’re refining the customer journey from first enquiry through to post installation follow up. Small operational tweaks can have a big impact on customer experience and growth.

Digitally, I’m rebuilding our website to be modern, AI enabled and optimised for voice search. The aim is that someone can eventually say, “Find me an electric gate installer,” and be booked straight into our system. That’s about future proofing the business.

Did you benefit from learning alongside other business owners?

Absolutely. The peer group was incredibly varied, from contractors to policy specialists, but the challenges were very similar. Cash flow, people, time pressure, growth decisions.

There’s real value in hearing how other business owners deal with those same issues and realising you’re not on your own.

Would you recommend Help to Grow to other businesses?

Without hesitation. I’ve already recommended it to other contractors who are ambitious and ready to grow. If you’re serious about your business and want time, structure and support to think properly about where you’re going, it’s worth doing.

For me, it wasn’t about learning how to run a business from scratch. It was about stepping back, recognising the potential of what I’d built, and putting a plan in place to take it further.

Who is the programme right for?

If you’re a decision maker in a growing SME, you’re exactly who it’s designed for. You do need to commit the time and engage properly. If you do, the return is significant.

UPCOMING COURSE DATES

• 24 September – 10 December 2026

• 18 November 2026 – 17 March 2027

To find out more about Help to Grow: Management at the University of Bath, scan the QR code below or email: edo@management.bath.ac.uk



To learn more about Bitton Automated Access Limited, visit:

www.bittonautomatedaccess.co.uk

or email:

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HELP TO GROW
MANAGEMENT COURSE

Two opportunities to reset your next 90 days with The Growth Collective

Growth should bring freedom. Yet for many business owners, it brings complexity, pressure and an increasing volume of decisions. Days are full, but not always focused. Chalkhill Blue’s Growth Collective is designed to create the space to step back and think clearly about what comes next.



Taking place at Royal Wootton Bassett RFC on Thursday 25th June and again on 24th September 2026, these one-day planning workshops are built for owner-led businesses typically turning over £1m–£3m and beyond.

This is not a seminar and not a networking event. It is a structured, disciplined working day centred on clarity, focus and execution.

The format is consistent across both dates. Mornings are dedicated to learning and perspective, with guest experts sharing practical insight drawn from real experience.

On 25th June, guest expert Matt Garman will share an unconventional approach to leadership, shaped by his experience of building, scaling and exiting a business. His session explores how leadership needs to evolve as businesses grow, and how to build teams that take ownership and drive progress without constant direction.

On 24th September, guest expert Charlie Hills will focus on visibility and growth, sharing how SME leaders are using AI and

LinkedIn to build trust, raise their profile and create inbound opportunities in a more structured and sustainable way.

The afternoon shifts from thinking to action.

Using Chalkhill Blue’s proven planning framework, delegates will clarify priorities, challenge assumptions and build a focused 90-day execution plan. By the end of the day, there is a clear sense of what comes next, why it matters and what can wait.

Because growth rarely stalls through lack of effort. More often, it slows when decisions become reactive rather than deliberate.

Previous attendees consistently highlight the same outcome. Clarity, and the confidence that follows.

Places are limited to maintain the quality of discussion and focus in the room. For leaders who want to step out of the noise and make the next 90 days count, these sessions offer the time and structure to do exactly that.

To find out more and to book, visit: chalkhillblue.org/events



Growth was supposed to make things easier.

Instead, many business owners find themselves working longer hours, making more decisions, and carrying more pressure than ever.

More turnover should create freedom.

But growth often brings:

- More complexity
- More people problems
- Slower decision-making
- Greater dependency on the owner

At a certain point, working harder stops being the answer.

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10 YEARS OF SUPPORTING BUSINESS GROWTH AT PCH

This summer marks a significant milestone for PCH Business Consultants - 10 years of supporting businesses to grow, adapt and succeed. Reaching a decade in business is always something to celebrate, and it is also a moment to reflect on what has been an extraordinary journey. Here, Founder and Director Paul Holmes shares his thoughts on the PCH journey so far.

Looking back, it is hard to imagine a more challenging time to have started and grown a consultancy business. Over the last 10 years, businesses across the UK have faced wave after wave of uncertainty. Brexit brought years of political and economic change, followed by shifts in trade, recruitment and business confidence. Funded programmes and capital projects that PCH were involved in were quietly shelved. Then came Covid-19, which forced businesses to adapt overnight, navigating lockdowns, remote working, changing customer behaviour and significant financial pressure. Having already worked with the Oxfordshire Growth Hub, I was asked to lead the business response to Covid for Oxfordshire. Six years later, I am still very much involved. It not only helped my own business remain busy, but more importantly, has allowed me to support more than 1,000 businesses to survive, thrive and grow.

Across the past decade, PCH has grown by staying close to its clients, understanding their goals and helping them navigate both opportunities and challenges. The focus has always been on practical support, honest conversations and helping businesses make confident decisions, all built on the concept of planning for success.

One of the biggest strengths of PCH has been its ability to adapt. Markets change, customer priorities shift and

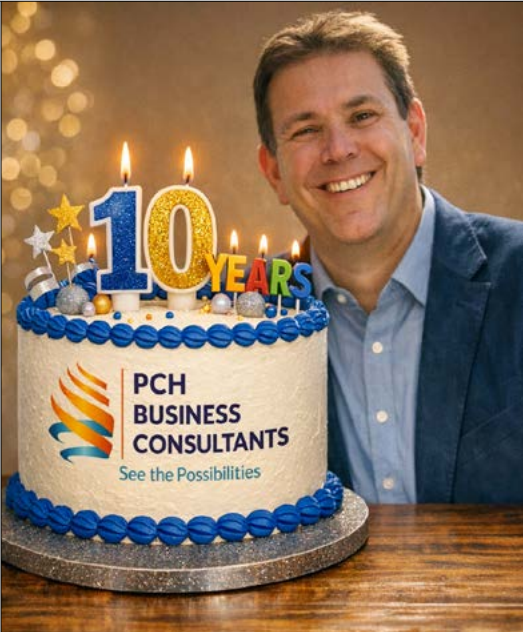
economic conditions rarely stand still. Successful businesses are not those that avoid challenges altogether; they are the ones that keep moving, keep learning and continue to find new ways to create value.

PCH has done exactly that. These last 10 years have been built on strong relationships, resilience and a willingness to evolve. They have also been shaped by a belief that even in difficult times, there are always opportunities for businesses prepared to think differently, act decisively and stay focused on what matters most.

A huge thank you to everyone who has supported PCH over the past decade, those who have supported me as the business has grown, family, friends, colleagues and all the clients who have made the journey so memorable.

PCH continues working closely with businesses in Oxfordshire and supporting clients across the country, and I continue to develop our new holding company and manufacturing acquisition. It has been a rollercoaster and an incredibly rewarding one. Thank you. Here's to the future.

For more info:
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Leadership Dialogues 2026 unveils speaker line-up for its biggest year yet

The one-day conference programme is looking bigger and better than ever for the third year of Leadership Dialogues in Bath on Wednesday 1st July. Building upon its core principle of using Leadership as a Force for Good, the event brings together delegates from all walks of life to discuss how we are all leaders in our own way and can apply the five pillars of intentional leadership in many day-to-day situations to help drive positive change. Through individual accountability, this can benefit communities, organisations and society as a whole.

The line-up:



Minnie Moll, former Chief Executive of the Design Council, will discuss how Inspiring Purpose, Vision and Values are critical to successful organisations, but if you also add an urgent Mission you can really accelerate the change you are trying to make. When your Mission seeks to address the climate and nature crisis, the biggest challenge of our lifetime, there is no time to waste.



Victoria Humphries, adventurer and CEO of the Royal Photographic Society, will share the real-world lessons she learned on the first all-female expedition to the North Pole, and how those same principles apply to modern leadership. From falling into the Arctic Ocean at -40°C to leading organisations through uncertainty, Victoria shows how resilience, curiosity and small consistent steps can transform how we navigate change.



Deborah Hale MBE, Founder of Start a Fire and former Head of International Marketing for London, will discuss the topic of Creating Purposeful Vision and Igniting Energy in People, Brands and Communities.



Charles Mindenhall, Co-Founder and CEO of Blenheim Chalcot, will explore how Blenheim Chalcot has evolved over 28 years, guided by a clear sense of purpose and long-term thinking. Bringing together insights from Charles's leadership journey, the growing role of AI across the portfolio, and the changing approaches to finding and developing talent, the session also highlights two national social initiatives established and driven by Charles, OnSide Youth Zones and Babyzone, and the role business can play in creating long term impact beyond commercial success.



Joanne Dewar, Fintech social entrepreneur, will speak on her new initiative Project Nemo - a volunteer led, grass roots campaign to drive disability inclusion. She will explore its secrets of success and what it tells us about both leadership and people's desire to belong to something bigger.



Neil Pearse, Managing Partner of McKinsey's People & Organisational Leadership practice, will discuss the Five Shifts in Leadership to create Thriving Human Organisations. For over 20 years, Neil has focussed on facilitating and enabling fundamental leader-led change in organisational cultures.

During the afternoon breakout workshops, the topic of education will form the basis of a discussion piece around whether we are collectively and politically leading education in a way that is truly supporting the most vulnerable learners and providing equity.

So invest a day in yourself on Wednesday 1st July 2026 at The Forum in Bath. Delegate passes, with lunch options also available, can be booked now via the Leadership Dialogues website.



LEADERSHIP DIALOGUES 2026

Leadership as a Force for Good

Wednesday 1 July 2026

www.leadershipdialogues.co.uk



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TBE Charity Conference & Expo – Bringing the Third Sector together

TBE South West Charity Conference & Expo returns to Bath Racecourse on Thursday 11th June 2026 for its eighth year, bringing together charities, fundraisers, advisors and supporters from across the region and beyond.

This year's theme, Rebuilding Trust, Resilience and Relevance: The Future of Charity in a Changing World, reflects the challenges facing the sector and the opportunities ahead. It's a day designed to support, connect and inspire those working within it, while showcasing the South West as a true leader in the third sector.

Delivered in partnership with founding sponsor Milsted Langdon, the event is expected to welcome over 500 attendees, with more than 100 joining the morning networking breakfast and over 50 organisations exhibiting throughout the day.

The morning begins with a structured networking breakfast and panel discussion, creating space for meaningful conversations and new connections across the charity and professional services communities. The panel will explore key issues facing the sector, from rebuilding trust to adapting in an increasingly complex landscape.

From 10am, the free to attend expo opens, offering the chance to meet a diverse range of charities and businesses,

discover new ideas and build valuable relationships.

A relaxed networking lunch follows, before the afternoon conference gets underway. Running from 2–4pm, the fast paced programme will feature keynote speakers sharing insight, experience and practical takeaways.

Confirmed speakers include James Shone, founder of I Can & I Am, alongside sessions from digital transformation experts Nine Feet Tall and Alabaré, winners of the 2025 TBE Charity/Not for Profit of the Year Award. Together, they'll explore what resilience looks like in practice, from leadership and culture to frontline impact.

Whether you're part of a charity, support the sector professionally, or simply want to stay connected to what's happening locally, this is a day to connect, gain perspective and be part of the conversation.

For more info:
www.tbesw.co.uk



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Meeting rooms at the Science and Innovation Park are equipped with full AV systems and are available for daily or weekly hire, while the versatile outdoor areas can also be hired for a variety of events, including corporate volunteering.

Teams who visit the Park for their away days also experience an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of the Hawking Building – our state-of-the-art working store where

we care for unique and historic objects from the Science Museum Group when they are not on display in a museum.

With good access to Swindon and local hotels within easy reach, our team can help plan your day, assisting with transport, food and other services on request.

If you're looking for a unique spot to host a team away day to plan for the new financial year or for a beautiful location for a team building event in the spring or summer months, get in touch with our dedicated team today.

"We worked with the Science Museum Group to put together an offsite team building event as part of a company-wide

coaching programme. The space allowed us to facilitate the session well and the team came up with a great activity linked to their sustainability goals, aligning well with our company values. We are looking forward to working with the Science Museum Group for future events and workshops."

Johnson Matthey Global leader in sustainable technologies

To find out more:
Phone: **07788 451912**
Email: hirethesip@sciencemuseum.ac.uk
Visit: hirethescienceinnovationpark.com

TBESHOW

in partnership with...

CONNECTING YOU FOR SUCCESS

Thursday 17th Sept, 8:30am-4pm, University of Bath School of Management

We're excited to be returning to the University of Bath School of Management for TBE Show 2026.

This year's theme is **Powering Progress: Strategies, Partnerships and Purpose for Long-Term Success.**

Join the South West's business leaders, innovators and changemakers for a day of connection, insight and growth on Thursday 17th September.

TBE Show 2026 will explore what it takes to build a business with staying power, one that's agile, visible and ready for the future.

Whether you're looking to grow your network, sharpen your thinking, build your brand profile or boost sales, this event is designed for ambitious B2B professionals, entrepreneurs and professional services firms.



We're delighted to announce that the UK's Small Business Commissioner, Emma Jones, is joining us as guest speaker. The Office of the Small Business Commissioner (OSBC) is an independent public body established by the Government to tackle overdue payments and poor payment practices in the private

sector. It supports small businesses to get paid quickly and on time, works with larger organisations to improve payment behaviours, and helps raise payment standards across the UK.

Emma was appointed Small Business Commissioner in June 2025. She began her career at Arthur Andersen after studying Law and Japanese, working across multiple UK offices and establishing the firm's Inward Investment practice. In 2000 she launched her first business, Techlocate, which she sold to Tenon plc just 15 months later at the age of 27.

Inspired by this experience, she founded Enterprise Nation in 2005 to support the growing number of start-ups and small

businesses. The company went on to become a major SME membership community, reaching more than 800,000 businesses a year. Emma also co-founded StartUp Britain in 2011 and has been an influential voice in shaping enterprise policy. She later served as SME Representative for Crown Commercial Service from 2016, championing small business access to public-sector opportunities. Her contribution to enterprise has been recognised with an MBE in 2012 and a CBE in 2021.

At TBE Show Emma will discuss how she's working to support the UK's 5.5 million small businesses.

Emma said, "I'm delighted to be speaking at the TBE Show on the work we are doing to make life easier for small firms by getting money moving faster around the economy, whilst also making effort across wider Government to ensure SMEs gain access to relevant contracts and support."

Anita Jaynes, Founder of The Business Exchange, added, "Having Emma Jones join TBE Show this year will be immensely valuable for our attendees. Not only does she have a wealth of knowledge and experience to impart from her own experience of business, she also fully understands the challenges smaller businesses in the private sector face.

"We're looking forward to welcoming her and we'd encourage anyone keen to harness her in-depth knowledge to make sure they book their tickets as soon as possible."

ABOUT THE DAY

Networking Breakfast & Panel Discussion 8:30-10am

TBE Show will begin with a networking breakfast and panel discussion at 8:30am.

Meet Emma Jones, UK Small Business Commissioner 11am

The Expo 10am-1pm

Businesses and organisations are invited to exhibit on the day. As an exhibitor you receive:

- A table – 6ft x 2ft
- A white tablecloth
- 1 chair

There is space for a pop-up banner, marketing literature on the tables and an iPad/tablet.

Seminars

There will be a number of seminars throughout the morning including sessions with business transformation experts Nine Feet Tall and Redkite Solicitors.

Redkite will be looking at 'Growth in Action' - how to achieve it, sustain it and learn from the journey with property and commercial strategy partner, Gemma Millard.



Networking Lunch 1-1:45pm

There will be a lively networking lunch for all exhibitors and delegates before the afternoon sessions begin.

Conference 2-4pm

A fast-paced two-hour marathon of insight and information to help you and your organisation power progress. Speakers to be announced.

Delegate tickets are £25 and are available to purchase now.

To find out more about being part of the day email: press@tbesw.co.uk



Show stand are just... **£300**

For more information on the event and to book your tickets visit:
tbesw.co.uk

TBE AWARDS

Celebrating business excellence

GET YOUR ENTRIES IN

Entries are now open for the TBE Awards 2026, celebrating businesses and not-for-profits across Swindon & Wiltshire and Bath & Somerset.



With 14 categories, there are opportunities for organisations of all sizes to showcase their achievements, share their stories and gain recognition across the region. From start-ups to established businesses, last year's entries reflected the strength and diversity of the South West business community, with over 130 organisations taking part, and we're looking forward to building on that with even more entries this year.

TBE AWARDS CATEGORIES

- Best User Experience
- Using Tech to Transform Business
- Charity/Not-For-Profit of the Year
- Going for Growth Award
- Rising Star Award
- Positive Business Award
- Best Start-up 2026
- Best Creative Campaign
- Sustainable Business of the Year
- Going the Extra Mile Award
- Leader of the Year
- Innovation Award
- The Dream Team Award
- Flying the Flag for the South West

KEY DATES FOR 2026

Entries close: Friday 25th September
Finalists announced: 8th October
Awards night: 5th November

Whether you are growing, innovating or making a difference in your community, this is your opportunity to be recognised.

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MEET THE JUDGES:

RAMONA DERBYSHIRE AND KATE WESTBROOK



As we count down to this year's TBE Awards, we're introducing the judges who will be reviewing entries and helping to spotlight the most inspiring businesses across the South West.

Joining the panel for the first time is Ramona Derbyshire, Partner and Head of Business Growth at Thrings Solicitors, bringing a fresh perspective and a strong strategic lens to the judging process.

She's joined by Kate Westbrook, Partner at Thrings Solicitors, who returns as a judge for the third year running.

Thrings are proud to be the headline sponsor of the TBE Awards for the third consecutive year, and also sponsor of the Flying the Flag for the South West Award, a category that celebrates businesses successfully championing the region on a national or international stage.

We asked them about their involvement in the 2026 TBE Awards.

What attracted each of you to getting involved?

K: We have had the pleasure of collaborating with TBE on a range of initiatives over the years and it has been great to work with Anita and the team to champion businesses in our region. So, when this opportunity came along to find out about the amazing things businesses have been up to, I jumped at the chance.

R: Having seen how much Kate has enjoyed the experience in the first two years really gave me FOMO! I thoroughly enjoy getting to know businesses, how they tick and their aspirations for the future, so I had to get involved.

Thrings has been headline sponsor of the TBE Awards for the past three years. What makes the awards the right fit for the firm?

R: We are all about helping businesses thrive, enabling their growth and success, and we see TBE Awards as an important part of that – putting a spotlight on businesses as they continue to evolve and celebrating their accomplishments. It is a fantastic way to give back to the communities we work alongside and helps to inspire us for the future too!

Thrings also sponsors the Flying the Flag for the South West Award. What does this category represent to you, and why do these businesses deserve to be celebrated?

K: As a region, the South West really punches above its weight. We are home to many amazing businesses that have grown to household name status from simple beginnings, with more and more being created all the time. This award is a special one because it helps recognise those businesses that are innovating and thriving in a way that helps put our region on the map, whether that is nationally or internationally. These are some of the most exciting stories we hear and it's important we showcase them to help inspire others!

What makes the TBE Awards different from other awards schemes?

K: It comes down to three simple things: the community, the support and the integrity of the judging process. It's about the awards doing what they are meant to, celebrate the best in our region's business community and giving them a stage to shine.

R: The awards night also stands apart from other events. It is a very different atmosphere with no black tie or seating plans and instead an environment where people can explore and engage with plenty of good food and drink. Anita always seems to have new tricks up her sleeve.

What do you most enjoy about the judging process?

R: I really like hearing the stories behind the businesses, their drivers and the aspirations they have for the future. For me, that is what really brings the process to life and gives you more of an insight into who they are outside of the facts and figures.

Who would you love to see entering the awards this year? Are there any stories, sectors or types of businesses you're especially keen to hear from?

K: We want to hear from everyone. The South West has such a diverse array of businesses across a wide range of sectors, each with a fantastic story to tell.

Finally, what would your top tip be for anyone thinking about entering but questioning whether they're good enough?

K: Stop questioning yourself and get on with it! At the very least you will have been able to reflect on what you have achieved in the past 12 months – but you could also walk away with an amazing trophy.

R: Use the process to find what sets you apart from the crowd and tell it to us straight. If you think you are amazing at what you do, enter and tell us why!

“Stop questioning yourself and get on with it!”



TBE Awards - Celebrating our vibrant business community across Bath & Somerset and Swindon & Wiltshire

Entries close Friday 25th September

Enter online at: tbeawards.co.uk

Blackmore UK celebrates 30 years of secure sustainable IT

In 1996, as the digital age began reshaping how businesses operated, one question was largely overlooked: what happens to technology at the end of its life?



Simon Barfoot, Founder and Director of Blackmore UK, identified that gap early. While organisations across the South West and beyond focused on adopting emerging technologies like Windows 95 and the growing internet, few were considering the long-term implications of disposal, data security and environmental impact.

Blackmore was established to address exactly that, building its foundations here in the region and growing alongside the businesses it serves.

Initially focused on IT recycling and refurbishment, the business provided organisations with a cost-effective way to extend the life of their technology assets. By recovering value from redundant equipment and ensuring responsible downstream recycling, Blackmore helped local businesses reduce both costs and waste. These principles remain central to its service today.

As the regulatory landscape evolved, so did the business. With the introduction of stricter electronic waste legislation in the early 2000s, Blackmore became a WEEE (Waste

Electrical and Electronic Equipment) compliant facility, giving organisations across Wiltshire, Bath and Somerset an alternative to landfill while strengthening its position as a trusted regional partner in IT lifecycle management.

Growth and acquisitions have since expanded Blackmore's capabilities into a comprehensive service covering all categories of electrical waste. At the same time, the business has developed a strong reputation in secure data destruction, now a critical priority for organisations handling sensitive information across sectors including professional services, education, healthcare and manufacturing.

Now led by Simon and Chairman Steve Edmunds, Blackmore continues to operate in a sector that is becoming increasingly important to regional businesses. As organisations face growing pressure around ESG commitments, data protection and regulatory compliance, the need for secure and sustainable IT disposal continues to rise.

Blackmore backs this up with a range of recognised certifications, including several ISO standards covering data

security, environmental management, quality and health and safety. In simple terms, this means clients can trust their IT is handled securely, responsibly and in line with current regulations.

To mark its 30th anniversary, Blackmore is investing in environmental and social impact within the region. The company is planting 30 black poplar saplings on land in Somerset. The trees will form part of a five-acre rewilded woodland originally established by Simon, who planted 2,000 trees on the site a decade ago. The project will support biodiversity, contribute to carbon capture and help preserve one of the UK's rarest native tree species.

Alongside this, Blackmore is launching an initiative aimed at tackling digital exclusion in schools. The programme builds on the company's long-standing commitment to reuse IT assets, ensuring that they can continue to deliver value within the community.

30 Years. 1,000 miles. One ride.

Simon Barfoot is embarking on an ambitious challenge as Blackmore UK turns 30, cycling from Blackmore headquarters all the way to the Black Wood (Bois Noir) in Valdeblore, a mountain forest about 108 km from Monaco. For Simon, the ride is about celebrating 30 years of innovation and demonstrating the values that have guided Blackmore Computers since 1995: sustainability, reuse and a readiness to tackle tough challenges. We asked him a bit more about his journey with Blackmore UK.



What are you most proud of in the past 30 years?
I'm so proud of how many staff we have with 10, 15, even 20 years' service. So many have joined us as we have grown and stayed with us. We've been there as they bought their first house, got married and had kids, and now even some of their grown-up children work with us alongside their parents.

What do you feel the biggest successes have been?
Our client retention rate continues to be our greatest success. It gives us the strength, resilience and confidence to set and achieve ambitious goals such as attaining and maintaining four ISOs and the UK's highest data wiping certification. We are also about to become a BCorp. With amazing client loyalty underpinning the business, we have been able to, and continue to, succeed.

How have you seen the industry change over that time?
The business originally had to operate in three very

different sectors: high care data destruction, technical IT refurbishment and sales, and the scrap metal sector. These have now merged into a sophisticated, highly regulated service called ITAD (IT Asset Disposition), which is now an essential service for all businesses.

We have been lucky to grow with these changes and even play a role in shaping them. The biggest change of late is the wish from clients to do good with their old tech, with ESG and CSR now key drivers for companies seeking an ITAD.

Blackmore is not only the highest accredited ITAD in the South and South West, it is also the main supporter of a digital inclusion charity called DonateIT, which works with charities, support agencies, the NHS, Job Centres and many more organisations to get tech into the hands of people experiencing digital poverty or exclusion.

What are you most looking forward to in the future?
Staff and client loyalty is key and we see these relationships

as partnerships. With them, the work we do is a pleasure and provides very high job satisfaction. I look forward to continuing to build on these and making working in, and doing business with, Blackmore a rewarding and enjoyable experience.

Safe, secure, ethical IT recycling is hard to do well and we are ready for whatever changes are coming, to protect our clients, provide the best service and give our staff a bright future together with Blackmore.

BLACKMORE

To find out more about Blackmore UK and to book a secure collection, visit: www.BlackmoreUK.com or call 01985 851000

A year as CEO of WestSpring IT

By Emma Carter, CEO, WestSpring IT

This summer marks my first anniversary as CEO of WestSpring IT - and it's been a journey of learning and development for me and the team.

I don't tend to romanticise leadership. When people ask what it's been like, the answer is simple: challenging, rewarding, occasionally messy and very real.

We are a managed service provider, but for me it has never been about tech for tech's sake. It's about people, relationships, showing up, doing what we said we'd do and owning it when we don't.

That sounds great written down, but the real test is whether it holds up on a wet Tuesday when three clients have issues at once and the inbox is on fire.

When I look back on the year, everything comes back to three things: people, process and systems. That's where we've focused most of our time, energy and budget, all while dealing with an economic backdrop that hasn't exactly made life easy.

Costs have gone up, clients have been more cautious, projects have slowed, and recruitment hasn't always moved at the pace we'd like.

Our biggest win hasn't been anything flashy, but it has been, and will continue to be, vital: trust. Building it, keeping it, and sometimes rebuilding it by getting the basics right again and again.

We asked clients for feedback, which is always slightly uncomfortable, even when you think things are going well. The response was reassuring. We're seen as responsive, reliable and good at building real relationships. Not just tickets and task lists. That's exactly what we want to be known for, and we know we can't afford to let that slip.

Internally, I'm just as proud. Our people survey results were strong, but more importantly, they felt genuine. People feel supported, they feel they are contributing, and most say they wouldn't leave. What matters most to me is that our team feel able to speak up when something isn't right.

This is IT. Things go wrong. If people don't feel safe to say that out loud, you've got a bigger problem than the issue itself.

We've also worked hard to move away from what I'd call 'hero mode' into something more repeatable. We can still step up when things go wrong, because that's part of the job, but we've reduced the number of situations where only one person knows how something works. There's clearer ownership, better handovers and more consistency in how we deliver.

A big part of the year has been investment, although not in a glossy, big-programme way. It's been more practical than that. Find the most painful thing, fix it, then move on to the next, while keeping the business running.

On the people side, that's meant being more structured about hiring, onboarding properly, and being clearer about what 'good' looks like. We've invested in management training because promoting someone and hoping they figure it out isn't fair on anyone. We've also been clearer about what we stand for as a business.

On process, we've focused on consistency. Particularly in areas like major incidents, where clear

communication matters most. When a client is down, it's not just an IT issue; it's their business. How we respond in those moments defines how they experience us.

On systems, we've taken a hard look at how we work and where we were wasting time. We've introduced tools like HubSpot, ContractBook and SmartSheets to improve visibility and accountability, and we've moved to Halo PSA for our service desk. The aim is simple: make it easier for good people to do good work.

That said, one of my biggest learnings is that systems don't fix messy habits. They just make them more obvious.

It hasn't all been smooth. Costs are up, clients are asking tougher questions, and there's always that lag between investing and seeing the return. We've had gaps, duplication, and a few 'why on earth do we do it like that?' moments. Some changes have been quick, others slower, and some are still ongoing.

But the direction is right, with less chaos and more clarity.

If I had to sum up my first year, it's this: look after your people, make the work repeatable, invest in systems that genuinely help, and don't beat yourself up when reality doesn't follow the plan.

We're building for the long term - and we're trying to do it properly.

 For more info: westspring-it.co.uk



“Our biggest win hasn’t been anything flashy, but it has been, and will continue to be, vital: trust.”





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The ghost in the machine: Why medium-sized businesses need more than just an ‘alarm’ in 2026

For years, the gold standard of cybersecurity for medium-sized businesses was simple: install a reputable antivirus, set up a firewall, and tell employees not to click on suspicious links.

The myth of the ‘Fortress’

Traditional security tools act like a bouncer at a club. They have a ‘blacklist’ of known troublemakers. If a known virus tries to enter, the bouncer stops it.

However, today’s attackers don’t look like troublemakers anymore. They use ‘Living off the Land’ techniques, using your own legitimate business tools (like remote desktop software or administrative utilities) to move through your network.

To your antivirus, these actions look like normal business. To an attacker, they are the keys to the kingdom.

What is MDR, Really?

Managed Detection and Response (MDR) is the evolution of security. If traditional antivirus is a bouncer, MDR is a 24/7 security team monitoring a high-tech CCTV network inside your building.

MDR doesn’t just look for ‘bad files’; it looks for bad behaviour. It combines:

- **Advanced AI:** To sift through millions of digital signals and spot the ‘needle in the haystack.’
- **Human Expertise:** Real-world analysts who can tell the difference between a late-night IT update and a hacker trying to exfiltrate your customer database.
- **Rapid Response:** Not just telling you that you’ve been hacked, but actively stepping in to ‘quarantine’ the threat before it spreads.

Why the ‘M’ in MDR matters for medium businesses

Large corporations can afford to build their own internal ‘Security Operations Centres’ (SOCs) with dozens of six-figure experts.

For a medium-sized business, that’s financially impossible.



MDR levels the playing field. It provides you with:

- 1. 24/7/365 Eyes-on-Glass:** Hackers don’t work 9 to 5. Most major breaches are initiated on Friday nights or during holidays. MDR doesn’t take weekends off.
- 2. Alert fatigue relief:** MDR filters out the ‘noise’, so you only hear about the threats that actually matter.
- 3. Insurance & compliance:** In 2026, cyber insurance providers are increasingly making MDR a prerequisite for coverage. Without it, your premiums may increase, or you may be uninsurable.

The bottom line: Business resilience, not just IT

As a business leader, you don’t need to understand the code behind a ransomware attack. You do, however, need to understand the cost of 48 hours of downtime, the legal fees of a data breach, and the reputational hit of telling your clients their data is gone.

MDR is no longer a luxury for the Fortune 500. It is a

fundamental utility - like electricity or insurance, that allows you to focus on growing your business while the ‘ghosts in the machine’ are hunted by professionals.

In a world where an attack is no longer a matter of ‘if’ but ‘when’, the question isn’t whether you can afford MDR. It’s whether you can afford to be without it.

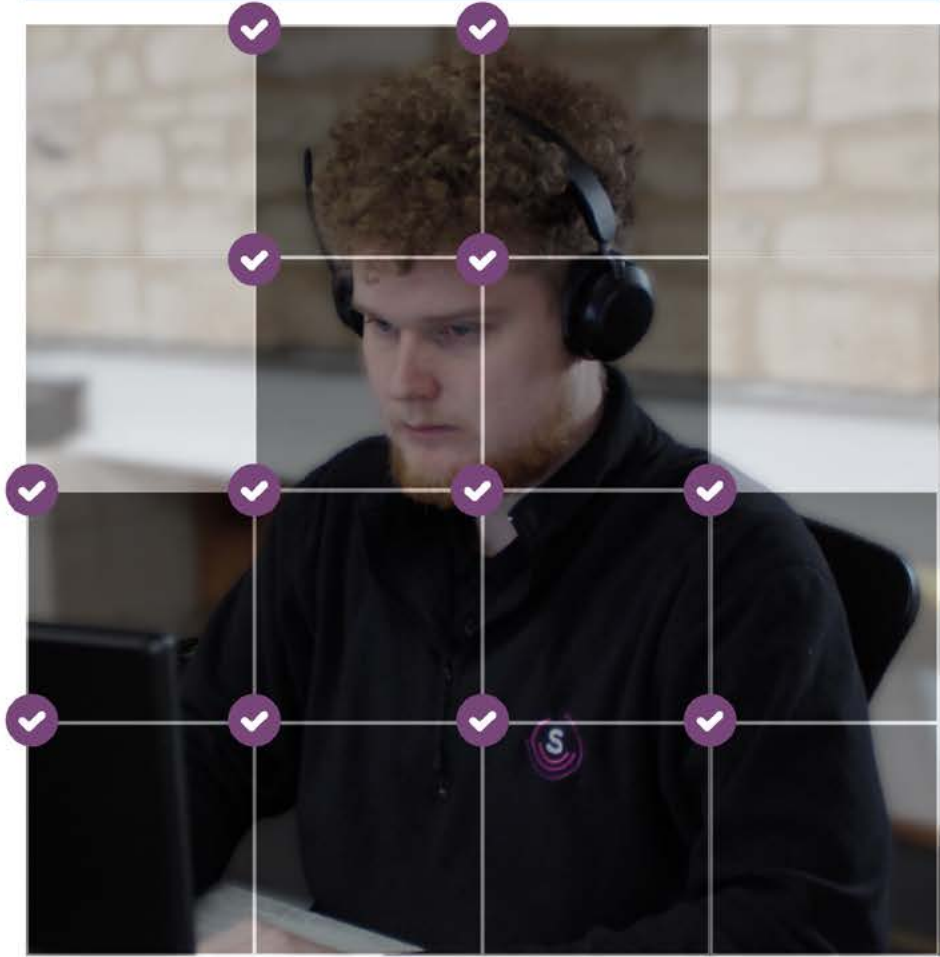
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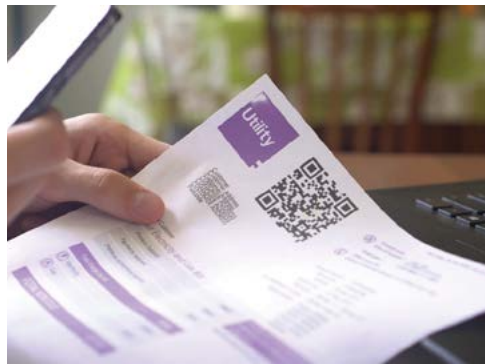
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From Bath to base camp, local expertise shapes Cotswold Outdoor Group's HQ

Cotswold Outdoor Group has moved into new headquarters in Swindon, designed by Bath-based Interaction to bring the natural world indoors.



The outdoor clothing and equipment group behind high-street brands Cotswold Outdoor, Runners Need and Snow + Rock has relocated to 1 Newbridge Square, a new, sustainable office development in the town centre.

The group's new 17,917sq ft Swindon HQ has been designed to provide staff with modern facilities that focus on people and planet, enabling the company to better live its values and deliver on its sustainability pledges.

The space includes a mix of open-plan workspace, formal meeting rooms and flexible collaborative areas designed to support the different working styles of the 200-plus staff based there.

The earthy, outdoor-inspired design palette celebrates Cotswold Outdoor's adventurous values, with angled forms, textured materials, and finishes inspired by the company's retail spaces. The group's signature red is used as a striking

feature thread throughout the space to elevate the natural tones, alongside broken flagstone-style tiling inspired by rocky terrain.

Sustainable materials have been used in furniture and finishes throughout the workspace including recycled coffee cups and carpet fabric, as well as natural timber and cork. The building itself has been rated BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) 'excellent' and has an EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) 'A' rating.

Cotswold Outdoor Group CEO, Jamie Kristow, said, "This is an important moment for our business, and not because of bricks or glass, but because of what this space represents for our future.

"An office is never just a building. It's a signal. A statement about who we are, how we work together, and where we're heading next. It gives us a modern, accessible, sustainably

designed environment that supports collaboration, flexibility and growth. But more importantly, it gives us a place that puts people at the centre."

Carl Gough, Project Lead at Interaction, added, "Our brief was to create a truly unique workspace that feels like home for Cotswold Outdoor Group and reflects the company's fun culture and adventurous values.

"The result is an inspiring, exciting office terrain that pushes the boundaries of what a workplace can be, introducing spaces that celebrate the joy of connecting with the outdoors."

For more info:
interaction.uk.com

Spaces that sustain.

It's tough being a modern workplace. You have to be everything to everybody. You need to make everyone comfortable, and of course you need to be incredibly adaptable. But you also need to foster inclusiveness, create community, and nurture creativity.

And not only that, you have to do it all in a way that's environmentally and ethically responsible, integrating eco-friendly materials, energy-efficient systems and sustainable design.

While looking incredible.

It's a lot to ask of an office. But we don't think it's unreasonable.

If you're looking for a new space that can sustain both your people and the planet, **get in touch with Interaction today.**



Scan to learn more
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Smarter savings on summer meetings at the NSBRC

Planning a conference, training day, board meeting or corporate event this summer? There's never been a better time to discover one of Wiltshire's most distinctive business venues.

This June, July and August, The National Self Build & Renovation Centre is offering 25% off all new room hire bookings, alongside a complimentary first round of teas and coffees for every delegate - giving businesses even more reason to rethink where they meet.

Conveniently located just minutes from Junction 16 of the M4, with ample free parking and excellent transport links, the NSBRC offers a refreshing alternative to the standard hotel meeting room. Set within the UK's only permanent visitor centre dedicated to self-build, renovation and home improvement, it's a venue guaranteed to leave a lasting impression.

Whether you're hosting a strategic board meeting, a client presentation, a networking event, training seminar or a full-scale conference, the NSBRC offers flexible event spaces for groups ranging from intimate meetings of two, right through to conferences of up to 240 delegates. Each room is equipped with modern AV and presentation technology, adaptable layouts, and the support of an experienced conferencing team dedicated to making every event run seamlessly.

As an employee-owned business, exceptional service sits at the heart of everything we do. Our team understands that every event is different, which is why we work closely with organisers to create tailored packages that fit your exact requirements - without any hidden costs.

And with our unique exhibition environment, full-sized houses, and inspiring surroundings, your delegates can enjoy a meeting experience that's anything but ordinary.

Book your summer event for June, July & August 2026 and take advantage of 25% off new room hire, plus complimentary teas and coffees on arrival.

Availability is limited across the summer months, so early booking is advised.

To discuss your event requirements, contact the NSBRC Conferencing Team today on 01793 847397 / conferencing@nsbrc.co.uk - or visit the NSBRC Venue Hire page at [nsbrc.co.uk](https://www.nsbrc.co.uk).



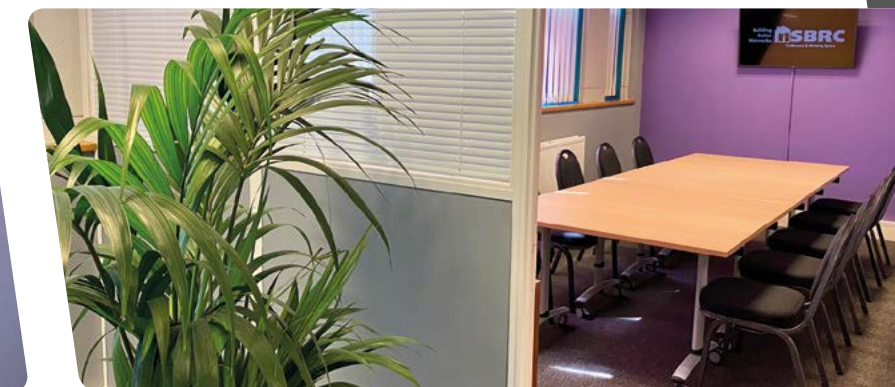
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To make an enquiry contact the conference team on 01793 847 400 or conferencing@nsbrc.co.uk



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3SG launches exciting new Charity Sector Hub, 'ThirdSpace'

Bath & North East Somerset Third Sector Group (3SG) will be opening a central home for the Third Sector in B&NES as part of its move to a new office space. With its expanding team needing more room, an opportunity to take a lease on Queen Square, in Bath city centre, has opened doors for its 260 charity membership network.

The new space will include a boardroom which seats up to 12 people with hybrid facilities, a smaller 1:1 and interview space and hot desking for both members and non-members. All spaces will be available at affordable rates in a conscious effort to support a sector that can sometimes find city centre locations financially out of reach.

3SG Director, Becky Somerset, said, "Myself and the team are really excited to be opening ThirdSpace to both 3SG members and non-members. It marks the beginning of a new chapter for us as an organisation. After a concentrated period of growth, this facility will give us a new base and offer this fantastic resource for the local Third Sector at the same time.

"Our ambition is for this to be a fun, flexible space for small events, for people to connect, learn from and collaborate with one another. We hope this is an exciting offer for our membership and for people who might not be members to come and discover us. The Sector is operating in a challenging landscape and we are stronger when we are working together. We're excited for the future."

3SG has also undergone a brand refresh, will shortly launch a new website and its new, three

year strategy. The organisation is pleased to be supporting TBE's charity conference in June, and will be both exhibiting and speaking during the breakfast panel discussion.

On 14th July, 3SG will be hosting a special half day charity and business event at the new premises,

"Our biggest win hasn't been anything flashy, but it has been, and will continue to be, vital: trust."

working alongside Jane Montague Consultancy, TBE's Anita Jaynes and Sue Marchant from Cool Ventures. This follows 3SG's previous speed dating events, matching businesses and charities, and will see in-depth focus groups talking about the need on both sides with engaging facilitators, including a networking lunch. The event will enable 3SG to plan its brokerage support in future and forge brand new connections. Businesses are warmly welcomed to this event, please email: contact@3sg.org.uk to find out more.



For more info:
www.3sg.org.uk

Photo credit: Paul Perkins



Local village rallies for MND

A major community fundraiser is heading to Colerne this summer, as former Bath Rugby player and coach Chris Lilley joins forces with local volunteers to host a 24-hour Skittles Marathon in aid of the Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Association.

Taking place from Friday 26th to Saturday 27th June at Colerne Rugby Club, the event will bring together the village, local businesses and the wider rugby community for a round-the-clock challenge, raising both funds and awareness for a cause that hits close to home.

Inspired by the recent diagnosis of former England international Lewis Moody, and the loss of several local residents to MND, the event is as much about community as it is fundraising.

A core team of eight players will take on the full 24-hour challenge, with guest teams joining throughout, including Bath Rugby players, coaches and former internationals. The marathon will culminate in a standout match against a side of ex-England players.

Saturday will see the club host a Family Fun Day, with

stalls, food, entertainment and a packed programme, alongside a raffle and auction featuring a growing list of prizes.

Support is already building, with friends of TBE including Bath's DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel and The Royal Crescent Hotel donating prizes. TBE has also contributed a Bath Rugby shirt signed by last year's triple-winning squad.

Organisers are calling on businesses and the wider community to get involved, whether by attending, donating prizes, bidding in the auction or simply showing support on the day.

To get involved or support the event, email anita@tbesw.co.uk.

To check out the auction visit: app.galabid.com/colerne-strikes-out/items



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BUSINESS SUPPORT



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EDUCATION



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Is ‘place’ the unsung hero of the world’s best wines?

Ben Franks, co-founder of Canned Wine Group in Bath and formerly Novel Wines, is the new wine columnist for TBE. Enjoy stories from the trade, and a few tips of what you could drink next.

From the Nerello Mascalese vines that run along rocky trellises along the foothills of Mount Etna, Sicily, to the delicate pink Kosu grapes topped with their paperhats on pergola vines in Yamanashi, Japan, there’s something special about wines born from fire.

It shouldn’t surprise the entrepreneurs and business owners amongst you what can come from an explosion of passion and fortitude. But what about when that same energy comes from the soil and earth itself? It’s an interesting concept, but it’s also evidently there: Hungary’s great Tokaji dessert wines have a vivid acidity no Sauternes could ever match, and their Lake Balaton rare Keknyelu wines (if you can find them; Danube Wines sells the excellent Sabar Keknyelu for £19.90 online) have a mouthwatering salinity and gunpowder spark you won’t find in your usual Rieslings. Both these, and those of Mt Etna and Mt Kosu, have something in common: volcanic soils.

These high drainage soils force the vines to root deeper. Through the plant’s struggle you get concentration in its fruit as it tries to propagate to survive. For every note of flavour you get a bonus point of intensity. If you like your zippy acidity, concentration of fruit (think dried berries rather than fresh ones, or candied lemon rather than pith), then volcanic wines offer something very special. A good red to try is the Torre Mora ‘Cauru’ Etna Rosso (£18.50, Majestic), which is made from both the Nerello Mascalese grape and another Etna variety, Nerello Cappuccio. The wine’s full of raspberries, violets and cherry jam. Perfect with lamb.

Koshu, the pink-skinned variety that made it to Japan along the silk roads, has a very special place in my heart. The Grace Winery’s Kosu Kayagatake (£24.99, Novel

Wines) was one of the first wines we ever stocked at Novel Wines when I launched that business over a decade ago. These wines are light, delicate and crisp but have a salinity I always associate with volcanic soils. They are, as you might expect, delightful partners to sushi or sashimi. I’m delighted to see Novel Wines still stock it after I sold the business in 2023.

It isn’t just the volcanic soils of these wonderful esoteric places that leave their stamp on your wines. Provenance breeds character, and it’s one of the reasons why my parents and in-laws can’t go back to the mass-produced wines they once drank. It’s just too dull.

The loess soils that run along the banks of one of Europe’s most important wine rivers, the Danube, are incredibly fertile soils largely formed of wind-blown silt and clay. In a cooler, more marginal continental climate like Austria, these soils provide the nutrients and water retention for one of my favourite grapes to thrive: Grüner Veltliner.

Grüner Veltliner is not far off the style of Sauvignon Blanc; it’s crisp, herbaceous, full of zesty citrus, and, when ripe, more exotic stone fruits and honeyed red apple. The grape is the star variety of Austria, especially in the Niederösterreich wine region to the north-east where the Danube circles its way from Wachau in the west to Vienna in the east. As you explore the river from the foothills and altitude in the west, where the wines are more herby and spicy, you’ll discover as the lands get flatter and warmer to the east the fruit becomes softer and more fruit driven.

When we launched Canned Wine Group, we chose to work with Markus Huber, one of Austria’s finest winemakers. His estate is based in Traisental, roughly in the middle



of the journey the Danube takes through Austria’s wine lands, and here there’s balance: zesty, green notes are combined with crowd-pleasing orchard fruit. You only get that balance through the unrivalled beauty of nature, where the fertile loess soils, the moderating influence of the fast-flowing Danube, and Austria’s cool continental climate all facilitate for perfectly ripe grapes.

There’s a lot more to your glass of wine than grapes. It’s the people and the place it comes from, and there’s passion born in every soil.

Canned Wine Co. Organic Grüner launched into Waitrose on 17th May, RRP

£5.75 and available on Waitrose’s 4 for 3 special offer across canned wines and ready to drink category.



For more info: cannedwine.co

Bath Rugby Business Club opens new opportunities for local and national brands

Bath Rugby continues to offer an exciting and ever-evolving commercial landscape for local and national businesses looking to elevate their brand, connect with like-minded leaders, and align with one of the region’s most prestigious sporting institutions.



The Bath Rugby Business Club has become a valuable platform for networking, relationship building, and premium experiences, bringing together businesses from across the South West and beyond. Throughout the season, members enjoy access to exclusive events, behind-the-scenes experiences, and opportunities to engage with the wider Bath Rugby commercial network.

Recent events have included networking evenings at Homewood Hotel, interactive business discussions with figures from the world of rugby and performance, and exclusive experiences at Farleigh House.

As Bath Rugby continues to build momentum both on and off the pitch, the Business Club remains an exciting opportunity for companies looking to strengthen relationships, reward clients and staff, and become part of the wider Bath Rugby journey.

Membership renewals for the 2026/27 season are now open.

‘the Business Club remains an exciting opportunity for companies looking to strengthen relationships, reward clients, and staff’

To find out more about Business Club membership or commercial partnership opportunities, please contact partnerships@bathrugby.com.

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WHEN CONNECTIONS TURN INTO COLLABORATION

At 42 Acres near Frome, a group of business founders spent a morning wrestling with the question most leadership teams are coming up against: what's the plan for AI?

The session was led by Alex Bacon, founder of AI advisory firm BrightKeel AI. He had been brought in by Alice and Nick from The Rethink Collective to deliver the AI strand of their founders' retreat.

Both businesses are members of the TBE VIP network. Their collaboration began with a conversation at a TBE event earlier this year.

One of the reasons we wanted Alex involved," said Alice, "was because the conversation around AI in business is becoming impossible to ignore. But we also wanted someone who could approach it in a thoughtful, practical and human way."

Alex's workshop, *Leading Your Business in the AI Era*, introduced his AI Maturity Model. Six tiers that help businesses understand where they are now and what comes next. It starts with culture and awareness, then moves through experimentation, strategy, data readiness, automation and agents, finishing with fully orchestrated AI systems. The model maps where a business sits today and what the next sensible step looks like.

Culture quickly became a central theme. Many of the businesses in the room were already using AI tools. Fewer had a clear strategy around how those tools were being used, what data was being fed into them, or how outputs were being reviewed before reaching clients or influencing decisions.

Each founder worked through Alex's AI Leadership Canvas, a 13-page booklet designed to guide leadership teams through the key questions around adoption. Where do humans add the most value? What does good governance look like? Which parts of the business are held back by poor data?

For The Rethink Collective, which focuses on leadership coaching, the session felt like a natural extension of their work.

"The conversations were brilliant," said Alice. "It helped business leaders think about how they evolve with AI without losing the human side of leadership, decision-making and culture. It was strategic, challenging and incredibly relevant."

By the close of the morning, the room had stopped talking about AI as something abstract. They were talking about their own businesses, their own teams, and the two or three changes they would make in the next ninety days.

This is a simple reminder that when the right people are brought together, good conversations turn into meaningful collaborations. And in this case, a single introduction led to a session that helped multiple businesses take their next step.

To find out more about BrightKeel AI visit: www.brightkeel.ai

For more about The Rethink Collective go to: www.therethinkcollective.com

BrightKeel.AI
AI & Automation Advisory for Growing Businesses

The
Rethink
Collective



"This is a simple reminder that when the right people are brought together, good conversations turn into meaningful collaborations"

The Breakfast Exchange debates AI impact on employment

By Aaron Sims, Thrings

AI is a topic that is hard to escape with most businesses having at least attempted to utilise it in their day-to-day activities. But how is it impacting business decisions, staffing and hiring trends?

These questions were at the centre of the discussion at the latest instalment of the Breakfast Exchange in Bath, co-organised by The Business Exchange, Thrings Solicitors and accountants Richardson Swift, exploring where AI is improving productivity, whether it is taking peoples' jobs and how it can support roles without undermining trust in workers.

Joining the panel to share their insights on the "tech vs people" topic with the 70 business leaders from across Bath and the wider region, were business founders Richard Jaggs, of digital marketing agency Resolution, and Alex Bacon from Brightkeel AI.

Alex said, "I very much see AI as a change management opportunity, not an IT project. Leaders need to understand the role they want AI to play in their business, then give their teams clear direction, guardrails, and proper training. I believe the real opportunity is enhancing your team, not replacing them."

Richard added, "At Resolution we are already integrating AI tools into our work and see further opportunities for AI-enabled ways of working to support the team and enhance our service to clients.. Human oversight and proper internal governance is an essential part of our approach to AI collaboration, understanding what we as people do best, where AI can add real value and where it can't."

They were joined by Natalie Ward, Partner in Thrings' Employment team, and Debbie Boulton, Managing Director of Richardson Swift, who discussed the experiences their clients are having and what businesses can and should be doing to utilise AI while protecting their workers.

Debbie said, "We act for many owner managed businesses and our advice to them is to plan strategically for how AI can be integrated in their businesses and what impact this will have – this may mean allowing staff to have time to explore and develop AI solutions, which can have a cost attached with regards reduced productivity, but longer term should improve margin and profitability. The cost of staff has reduced margin for many businesses but improving efficiencies should help turn this back around."

Natalie added, "It was great to be able to discuss the exciting opportunities that AI innovation undeniably presents all employers, and to hear so many varying views from the audience."

"Despite its obvious potential, AI may also give rise to risk, liability and an unsettled workforce wondering if they're going to be replaced. Wherever employers are in their journey to embed AI solutions within their businesses, they will want to engage staff in that process and also ensure that AI usage is clearly defined in a policy that also sets out the company's expectations of how AI output will be checked and verified by the human eye. Organisations that get this right will allow technology to flourish alongside the essential human element."

If you're interested in attending a future Breakfast Exchange, please email: press@tbesw.co.uk



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THRINGS
SOLICITORS

The Next Generation: a new space for young professionals to connect and collaborate

A new networking initiative is launching this summer with a clear aim, to create something that genuinely works for the next generation in business.

TBE THE NEXT GENERATION

In partnership with Goughs

The Next Generation, a partnership between The Business Exchange and Goughs Solicitors, is aimed at young entrepreneurs and professionals across Bath & Somerset, Swindon & Wiltshire. It comes from a shared recognition that much of the current networking offer no longer reflects how younger people want to build relationships.

For many established business leaders, their early careers were shaped by young professional groups. These were the spaces where friendships formed, opportunities emerged and trusted networks were built.

Today, that experience is harder to find. Expectations have shifted. Time is tighter. Many younger professionals aren't drawn to rigid formats or overly structured events. They're less interested in pitching themselves in a room and more interested in meeting people naturally, in settings that feel relaxed and worthwhile.

Megan Solomon, Solicitor at Goughs, said, "I'm really excited to see Goughs working alongside The Business Exchange on something that feels genuinely different for younger professionals. Networking can sometimes feel quite formal or intimidating when you're starting out in your career, so creating a space that's more relaxed, welcoming and focused on real connections is really important. Having qualified as a solicitor less than a year ago, I know how valuable it is to meet people who are at a similar stage, share experiences and build relationships naturally. I'm looking forward to seeing The Next Generation bring together ambitious people from across the region in a way that feels friendly, supportive and enjoyable."

A more relaxed way to connect

Rather than following a traditional networking format, the focus is on creating an environment where conversations happen more organically.

There is no set agenda and no pressure to 'work the room'. Just a chance to spend time with like-minded people, share ideas and build relationships over time.

It is also about creating something with longevity, a network that supports people as they grow in their careers and helps foster connections across the region.

Launching at Bath Boules

This year also marks the first time Bath Business Improvement District (BID) has taken over the running of the event. The four-day summer boules festival is one of Bath's most loved, bringing together businesses, charities, community groups and friends for a lively mix of friendly competition and serious fun.

The first event will take place on Thursday 2nd July from

6pm to 8pm, following the opening day of Bath Boules in Queen Square.

Bath Boules is a well-established part of the local business calendar, offering a relaxed outdoor setting that naturally brings people together. Guests are invited to come along after a day's play, or to stop by for a drink with like-minded people after work.

Get involved

The Next Generation is open to those building their careers, starting businesses or stepping into new roles.

If you haven't quite found your place in traditional networking, this is an opportunity to try something different.

The first event takes place on Thursday 2nd July, 6-8pm at Queen Square, Bath, following Bath Boules. Book on via www.tbew.co.uk

For more info about Bath Boules visit: www.bathboules.com



Megan Solomon, Solicitor, Goughs



"I'm really excited to see Goughs working alongside The Business Exchange on something that feels genuinely different"



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