

# SWINDON BUSINESS NEWS

01793 615393

www.swindon-business.net

info@swindon-business.net



**Sign of the times  
- Swindon teams  
up with Bristol  
and Cardiff**

**Page 3**

## Swindon's Economic Outlook

What's on the cards? - See pages 8&9

**Did we dodge a  
Budget bullet?  
Find out in our  
exclusive expert  
analysis**

**Back Page**



### News in Brief

#### Brand new look for top law firm

Law firm Thring Townsend Lee & Pemberton has rebranded to become Thrings. The UK top 100 firm, which has roots going back nearly 300 years, has grown rapidly since forming through the merger of Swindon-based Townsends and Thrings & Long in 2000 and with London firm Lee & Pemberton in 2007. Today it has offices in Swindon, Bath, Bristol and London. See next month's Swindon Business News for full story.

#### Former chief exec appears in court

The former chief executive of Swindon Chamber of Commerce, Dennis Grant, has appeared before Stroud magistrates on seven fraud charges that he made false representations to gain advantage for himself. Magistrates heard the total amount involved was just over £700,000 and dated from Grant's time as chief executive of Cotswold Water Park. No plea was entered. Prosecutors asked for Grant, 63, to be committed to the crown court for trial.

#### Dyson slams graduate restrictions

Pioneering designer Sir James Dyson has slammed tighter restrictions on foreign graduates as "sheer madness" and claimed they could force businesses to go abroad. The chairman of Malmesbury-based appliance group Dyson said enforcing time limits on newly-qualified overseas students would hit firms when the UK is already under-producing the number of engineers it needs.

#### Coming up next month

May's edition of Swindon Business News will include an analysis of Swindon's manufacturing and technology sectors, a focus on the growth of outsourcing and explain why leadership coaching is vital to business success as well as our regular overviews of commercial property, corporate finance and commercial law. See [www.swindon-business.net](http://www.swindon-business.net) for more details.

**South West's most active  
agent for the last 10 years**

**alder king**

PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

**1911-2011 Property excellence  
for the last 100 years**

## Lyneham theme park plan unveiled as military big guns back Army garrison development

**A**mbitious plans to redevelop RAF Lyneham as an Alton Tower-style theme park have been unveiled by Wiltshire businessman Eddy Shah.

But the newspaper tycoon turned proprietor of the Wiltshire Golf and Country Club hopes his scheme will remain a pipedream and the Ministry of Defence retain the huge base for military purposes.

Mr Shah says his scheme will create around 3,000 jobs – roughly the same number as currently depend on the base – and will include a 1,000 homes, a Center Parcs-style holiday village, hotel and theme park alongside a Wiltshire heritage centre, a college and other education facilities.

RAF Lyneham is scheduled to close completely by the end of next year.

So far, all efforts have focused on persuading the MoD to use the 1,300-acre site as a garrison for some of the



Defence  
Secretary  
Liam Fox

20,000 troops now based in Germany.

Campaigners, which include Mr Shah and North Wiltshire MP James Gray, received some positive words last month from Defence Secretary Liam Fox, who vowed to do everything he could to give RAF Lyneham a strong future after it closes.

Dr Fox said the MoD was investigating whether it could provide a long-term future for the base that



RAF Lyneham

would put money into the local economy.

Speaking at the annual dinner of Business West in Bristol, Dr Fox said bringing troops back from Germany would boost the UK economy by £250m. "I would like to see that spent in the UK economy," he said.

His comments will be welcomed by the campaigners who have expressed

fears that military cutbacks and the cost of the ongoing campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan – and now Libya – could delay a decision.

A decision will be taken this summer around the time the last of the base's ageing C130K Hercules aircraft retire and their new generation C130J replacements transfer to Brize Norton air base.

## Honda plant faces possible shutdown due to shortages

Bosses at car giant Honda's Swindon plant are considering measures to overcome a shortage of parts imported from its tsunami-hit Japanese factories, including possibly halting production.

Other options include reducing output and sourcing components from other suppliers.

None of the South Marston plant's 3,000 employees are expected to be laid off as production schedules are flexible enough to accommodate the changes.

Honda said production this month is secure but it needed to look ahead to May to plan for any parts shortage. Honda's five Japanese plants, which were closed following last month's tsunami and earthquake due to power restrictions, are about to re-open.

A Honda spokesman said: "As a result of the recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan, along with Honda Motor's announcement of limited production in all its Japan based plants, Honda of the UK Manufacturing Ltd (HUM) has been continually assessing the impact of parts sourcing from Japan on the production plan for Swindon.

"Although there is no immediate impact, it is likely that the situation will have some temporary effect to production going forward.

"HUM is expected to continue with normal production in the short term, however, we will continue to assess and confirm parts sourcing for production on a daily basis."

## Swindon to Kemble railway line redoubling gets green light

Chancellor George Osborne's decision to redouble the Swindon to Kemble railway line will strengthen the town's business links with the Midlands, Swindon Chamber of Commerce has said.

The announcement, made during last month's Budget, came a month after the Government's U-turn and approval for electrification of the main London-Bristol line. The two upgrades have the potential to deliver the biggest boost to Swindon's inward investment chances for years.

Clair Prosser, policy executive at Swindon Chamber, said the £42 million Swindon-Kemble scheme would, combined with the improvements in London services,

stimulate the local economy and make the town attractive to overseas markets. The single line between Swindon and Kemble allows for just one train an hour each way.

Property experts believe the reduction in journey times to and from London to under an hour will have a psychological effect on businesses considering relocating from the capital, especially as it could take effect around the time that the much-needed Union Square development in the town centre takes shape. Union Square will include 55,000 sq m of high-quality offices as well as 25,000 sq m of retail and leisure space – giving the town centre its first showpiece mixed use scheme.

We've never wanted to be the biggest;  
we only want to be the best

**Clark Holt**  
COMMERCIAL SOLICITORS

HARDWICK HOUSE, PROSPECT PLACE, SWINDON SN1 3LJ

TELEPHONE: 01793-617444

WWW.CLARKHOLT.COM



# SWINDON BUSINESS NEWS

26 Wood Street, Swindon  
Wiltshire SN1 4AB

**Telephone:** 01793 615393

**Fax:** 01793 488517

**Email:** info@swindon-business.net

**Web:** www.swindon-business.net

Editor: Robert Buckland

Advertising Manager: Ann Freegard

Production Editor: Owen Fishwick

Administrator: Jackie Hall

Controlled circulation: In excess of  
8,000 copies per month

© Copyright 2011

Published by County Business Publishing Ltd.  
Printed by Acorn Press

County Business Publishing also publishes a range of business leads newsletters: Swindon Business Newsletter; Bristol Business Newsletter; and South West Business Media, as well as Estates West Bulletin, a property deals newsletter. If you are interested in receiving a free sample please call 01793 615393.

Swindon Business News

County Business Publishing

## Events

• Wootton Bassett Chamber of Commerce lunch  
When: **13 April, 12.30pm**  
Where: Ganges Restaurant  
Contact: 01793 323103  
Email: secretary@woottonbassett.biz

• 4N Swindon Business Breakfast  
When: **13 April, 8am-10am**  
Where: The Sun Inn  
Contact: 0845 1234444

• Seminar: Negotiating and signing contracts, guest speaker Dr Maria Anassutzi  
When: **14 April, 9:30am and 12:30 pm**  
Where: Broome Manor Golf Club  
Contact: 07788 726446  
Email: maria@anassutzi.com

• Business biscotti Networking  
When: **19 April, 9:30am-11:30am**  
Where: Broome Manor Golf Club  
Contact: 01793 532403  
Email: maria@anassutzi.com

• Seminar: Changes in employment law  
When: **10 May**  
Where: 34 Regent Circus  
Contact: Lauren Harkin on 01793 553954  
Email: lauren.harkin@lemon-co.co.uk

• Swindon Connections  
When: **12 May, 6pm**  
Where: De Vere Village  
Contact: www.business-scene.com  
Email: admin@business-scene.com

• Artemis Forum: Inaugural event for women who are serious about their business  
When: **12 May, 6pm -9pm**  
Where: Jury's Inn  
Contact: 01793 840 105  
Email: ellen@bruckpayne.co.uk

• Making the media work for you  
When: **17 May**  
Where: Vox's office, Little London Court, Old Town  
Contact: 01793 511990

## Contacts

**Forward Swindon**  
01793 429250

**SWRDA**  
01392 214 747

**GWE Business West**  
08458 505066

**Swindon Council**  
01793 445500

**Business Link**  
0845 600 9966

**Wiltshire Council**  
0300 456 0100

**SSEP**  
01793 429259

**Chamber of Commerce**  
01753 870500

**Fast Forward**  
0808 178 3657

**Train2Gain**  
0845 600 9006

**First Great Western**  
08457 000 125

**Visit Wiltshire**  
0845 602 7323

## People

Chartridge Conference Company has announced the appointment of Ashwin Roda as general manager of Lydiard House Conference Centre in Swindon. Ashwin has a solid background in the conference and training industry and within the Chartridge Conference Company, where he started his career in 2002 at the Hitchin Priory Conference Centre in Hertfordshire. After a short break in 2004 to his Nairobi homeland Ashwin returned to England,



Ashwin Roda

where he gained further experience working with hotels in the Thames Valley. In 2005, when the position of operations manager at Chartridge Conference Centre became available, he was approached and accepted the role with responsibilities for ensuring the smooth running and maximising profitability at the Buckinghamshire venue.

Lyn Chapman, centre manager at Basepoint Swindon, has recently won Basepoint Business Centres Ltd's Employee of the Year Award for her outstanding contribution to the local business community.

Basepoint operates 28 business centres across the South of England and the Midlands and employs over 100 staff, so Lyn was delighted to win. She said: "I was totally unaware that I had been nominated for the award, so to win was a complete surprise. I am thrilled and touched to have been recognised by my peers for doing a job which I really enjoy. The last year has been challenging because of the difficult economic climate, so I am



Lyn Chapman

very proud to be rewarded for overcoming some tough obstacles." Christopher Harris, Basepoint's area manager, said: "Lyn became centre manager at Basepoint Swindon after her predecessor went on maternity leave. Since then, Lyn has increased the occupancy levels and the centre is now at its busiest ever; this is beneficial for all the licensees as there is such a strong sense of business community."

Lloyds Bank Corporate Markets has appointed a new relationship manager to its team in the South West. Paul McKenna will work closely with businesses across the Severnside region, which encompasses Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Swindon and the surrounding areas. Based out of the bank's new Gloucester office in Barnwood, Paul's role will focus on providing tailored financial support for businesses with a turnover of between £15m and £500m. Paul joined Lloyds as a graduate in 2001 after completing



Paul McKenna

his economics degree and in 2003 he joined the bank's Corporate Markets team in Bristol. His previous role saw him working within the Bank's Business Support Unit in Gloucester, which works with businesses facing particularly tough challenges to help bring them back to a healthy position.

Swindon brewer Arkells has appointed the country's first brewery community liaison manager. Richard Turner, who has more than 30 years' experience in the brewing industry, will work with Arkell's rural pubs to help them build links with parish councils and communities to sustain rural and pub life. The 168-year-old brewery has made the move as rural pubs struggle against ever-rising costs and difficult trading conditions. Brewery chairman James Arkell said: "With rural post offices and village stores closing, the role of the village pub is changing and there are opportunities for these pubs which weren't there before. If new initiatives are supported by the local community they could improve a pub's viability and reintroduce local amenities which have been lost."



Richard Turner

## SWINDON BUSINESS NEWS

**Subscribe NOW and get the next edition delivered directly to your door.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

An annual subscription cost £25.00. Send a cheque for this amount made payable to Swindon Business News, together with this coupon to:

**Swindon Business News, 26 Wood Street,  
Swindon, SN1 4AB**

**EMNICO**  
Technologies

Pro-Active IT Solutions for Businesses

Services Provided

- IT Support
  - Cloud Technology
  - Virtualisation Expertise
  - Software Development
- vmware  
Microsoft Partner

T: 01793 614700 E: info@emnico.com W: www.emnico.com

Pro-Active

Scalable

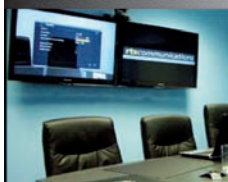
Affordable

## Improve your projections!

Now open in Swindon, RTS can help with all your audio visual, conferencing and event needs:

- From sound systems and screens to mobile video conferencing
- Fast delivery from our fully stocked Swindon warehouse
- Reliable, premium quality equipment
- Expert installation and first-class customer support

### Video conferencing



Conveniently located at our Basepoint Business Centre office, we offer a state of the art video conferencing suite available to hire.



To find out more call 01793 694470 or 0844 800 6440  
www.rtscommunications.com

**rtscommunications**  
audio visual solutions are our business

## Swindon Top 100 Companies

In our february edition we produced a table of Swindon's largest 100 companies ranked by turnover. The table included a column showing each company's net change in profit, year on year. The column heading 'Profit (£'000s)' may have appeared misleading and not a true reflection of a company's profits earned during the period. We apologise for any confusion.

**SBN**



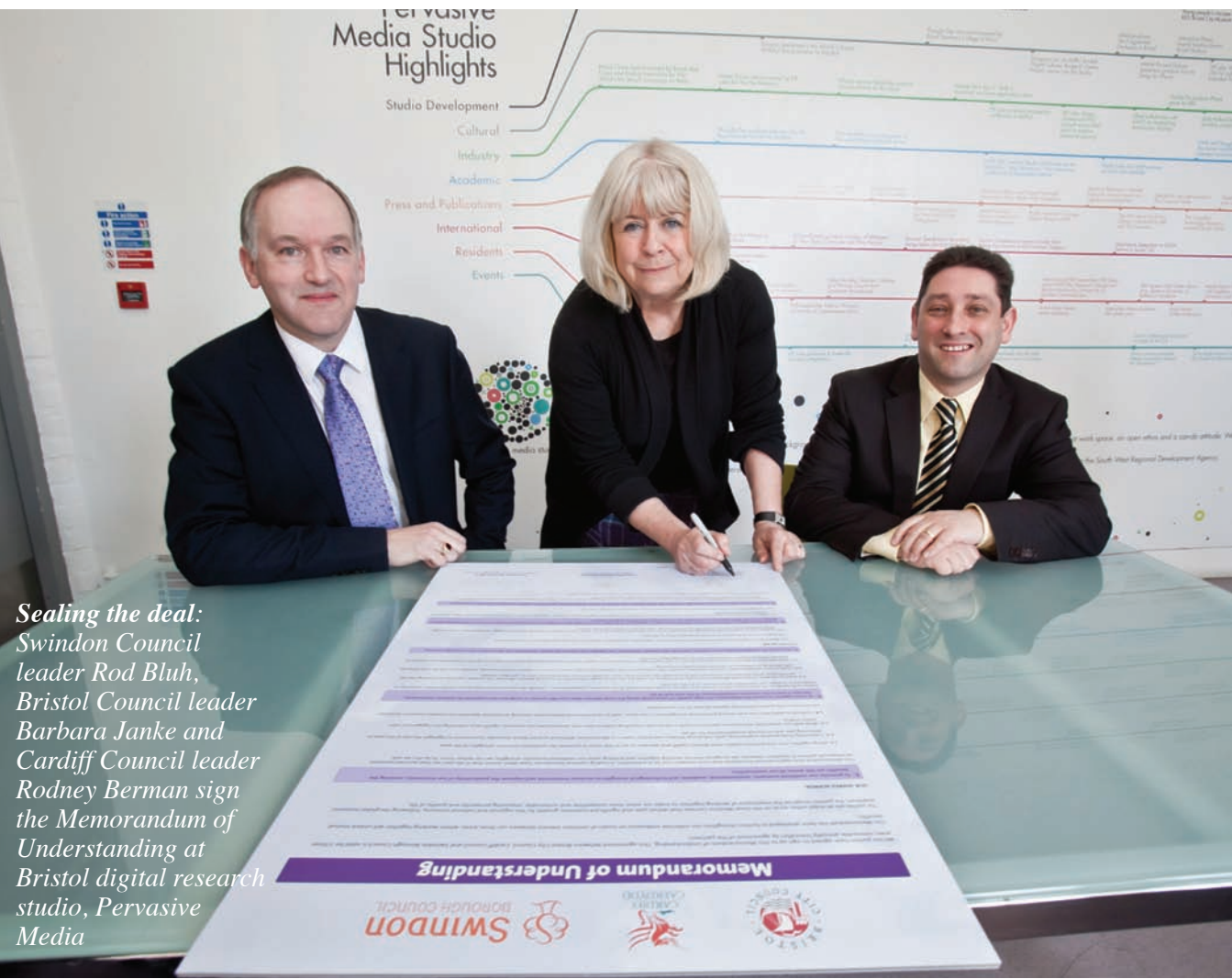
# Town signs deal with Bristol and Cardiff

Swindon Council leader Rod Bluh has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with his opposite numbers from Bristol and Cardiff city councils pledging them to more collaboration, especially over economic development.

As revealed in Swindon Business News last month, the move comes after the three councils lobbied successfully for electrification of the Cardiff-London railway line through Swindon. The three realised they could work closer to give the M4 corridor between Swindon and the Welsh capital a more powerful voice in Westminster and Whitehall on key economic issues.

The Western Way MoU is valid for three years, with five key areas identified where the three authorities can work together:

- To promote the combined economic, environmental, academic and technological strengths to increase investment and improve the productivity of the three economies, ensuring the benefits are felt across all communities;
- To work together to ensure the importance of a high quality of connectivity along the Great Western Main Line/M4 corridor is recognised and supported by national governments. This link is vital to the economic competitiveness of the area and UK plc;
- To promote the complementarity of research, education and scientific institutions, and highlight the national and global contribution the areas make to the knowledge economy;
- To promote the area as a cultural and tourism destination, as well as a gateway to South Wales and the South West of England, including National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty such as the Brecon Beacons, the Cotswolds, the Forest of Dean and the North Wessex Downs;
- To jointly seek to address the challenges of dealing with urban growth in the context of climate change using sustainable development.



*Sealing the deal: Swindon Council leader Rod Bluh, Bristol Council leader Barbara Janke and Cardiff Council leader Rodney Berman sign the Memorandum of Understanding at Bristol digital research studio, Pervasive Media*



## From front room to boardroom in 20 years

An IT recruitment specialist company, which started from the managing director's front room, has celebrated 20 years in business.

Outsource UK specialises in providing IT personnel to a range of industries. It was set up in 1991 in Swindon by Paul Jameson, and now has a turnover of more than £21m, employs 29 people and has a string of accolades to its name.

The company, which last year relocated from Old Town to prestigious offices Swindon's historic railway quarter, celebrated with a party for its most valued clients, employees and candidates.

"In 1991, IT recruitment businesses had very little interest in focusing on servicing the needs of clients and candidates, most were much more interested in how much money they could make," said Paul. "I believed that if I could create a business which had the best interests of our users at heart, we could obtain long-term success."

Since its formation, Outsource's reputation and size has grown. It is the 54th largest specialist IT recruiter nationally and the 174th largest recruiter, out of a total of 7,400.

*Celebrating two decades of business: Richard Charnock of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation, Outsource sales director Andrea Williams, Nicky Iddon of Halerow, Outsource financial director Sandie Gale, Outsource MD Paul Jameson and Outsource chairman Charles Hughes*

## IT company gets involved in green charity to help local schools

Emnico Technologies' Green IT Campaign continues its quest to support local charities and not-for-profit organisations. Definitive Consulting, through Emnico, has donated an entire IT suite to Haydon Wick School.

Emma Faramarzi, marketing director, said: "Businesses are investing in new technology and have redundant IT equipment which they don't know how to dispose of securely and safely so we've set up a system to completely cleanse confidential data and remove the worry of any PC licensing issues. The equipment can then be re-distributed to eligible organisations like Haydon Wick School and anything that is deemed not re-usable is recycled through the national charity Remploy. There is so much needless waste in today's society and in these difficult times of austerity we all need to pull together and help each other."

To find out more about developing a sustainable IT practice contact Emnico on 01793 614700 or go to [www.emnico.com/green](http://www.emnico.com/green).

## Vox Academy

**Tuesday 17th May**  
At Vox, 3 Little London Court, Swindon.

**Session 1: 9.30am - 12.30pm**  
**Making the Media Work for You**

**Session 2: 2pm - 5pm**  
**Social Media for Business**

**Price: £45 per session.**  
Book one or both sessions. Call or email for details: [enquiries@voxonline.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@voxonline.co.uk)

Tel. 01793 511990  
[www.voxonline.co.uk](http://www.voxonline.co.uk)

**VOX**  
The Public Relations and Marketing specialists

3 Little London Court | Old Town | Swindon | Wiltshire | SN1 3HY

[carterjonas.co.uk](http://carterjonas.co.uk)

Commercial | Survey & Valuation  
Building Consultancy | Infrastructures

4 Little London Court, Old Town, Swindon SN1 3HY T: 01793 439300

# CARTER JONAS

The Property People



# Campaign to find UK's most talented 'makers'

Car giant Honda has launched Made in Britain, a campaign to find the country's most talented 'makers' to promote the skills of its car building engineers in Swindon.

Made in Britain aims to unearth highly-skilled crafters, builders, innovators and techno-gurus through a new Facebook campaign, offering outstanding creators development awards worth up to £1,000.

More than 80 per cent of the Honda cars sold in the UK are built by 3,000-plus engineers at its Swindon plant. The factory produces around 600 cars a day for British drivers but also for export to 63 countries worldwide.

Honda isn't the only firm making incredible things on our shores. Britain is buzzing with doers, makers, builders, bakers – creators of all kinds. And Made in Britain encourages them to share their skills by uploading details and images

of their work to a dedicated Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/hondamadeinbritain>

Every three months Honda will award a development grant to cultivate the talents of the most skilled makers. This could be used to fund a course of classes to improve skills, materials and equipment, or a new website to promote their wares.

Ultimately, Honda wants the prize to help these crafters and producers to realise their dreams – whether that's turning an idea into a hobby or even a hobby into a job! This grant will also be supplemented with additional prizes such as weekend breaks and mentoring from industry peers.

The first stage of the competition, celebrating British style, will be judged by some of the UK's foremost experts on all things aesthetic, including Adrian Clark, editor of Shortlist Mode Magazine,

Alexandra Fullerton, fashion director of Stylist Magazine, and Agents of Change, a team of culturally-diverse, mixed media and art zealots who have been denitrified by Honda as influential cultural engineers of modern society.

Throughout the year there will be three categories for potential entrants to submit their efforts, including:

- February-June: Style – Anything from funky T-shirts and designer tea-cosies to creative sculptures, funky furniture and even home-made kit-cars.

- June-September: Green – The campaign is after products that have been created with consideration for the environment. They could be something that helps reduce existing consumption or an every-day item that has been redesigned using environmentally-friendly materials

- September-December: Futurology – Whether

it's the toaster of the future, an innovative new lawn-mower, a concept bicycle or even futuristic fashion, this is the chance for the British public to give an insight into the future.

Honda (UK) communications manager Steve Kirk said: "Britain is crammed with people making brilliant things and we should be shouting that from the rooftops. We employ more than 3,000 incredibly-skilled engineers in Swindon and every year they build 140,000 of the most innovative and reliable cars on the road. This campaign is about celebrating their expertise and the making talents of the nation."

Honda's total investment in Swindon since it set up its Honda of the UK Manufacturing (HUM) business in the town in 1985 is £1.44bn. Today the car plant assembles the Civic 3 and 5-door, CR-V and Jazz models. The 370-acre site also includes an engine plant.

## Swindon College offers 'bite-sized' courses

Business first, the commercial arm of Swindon College, is now offering subsidised units of training certified by nationally recognised awarding bodies that can be delivered in the workplace. The college is one of only 15 in the UK able to offer organisations this type of provision.

From finance through to management and IT, Business First has a wide range of bite-sized training courses to help employees fill their skills gap.

Andrea Fitzgerald, business development manager for Business First, said: "Traditionally, work-related learning has been associated with long training courses that take

up time away from the workplace. Research has shown that people learn and remember more if they learn 'a bit at a time'.

"Employees are likely to benefit from bite-sized learning as these smaller units provide participants with the chance to learn effectively over a shorter period of time, while using a stronger focus approach to develop their skills."

For more information on the bite-sized training courses and to discuss your training requirements call the Business First team on 01793 498250 or email: [businessfirst@swindon-college.ac.uk](mailto:businessfirst@swindon-college.ac.uk) Visit: [www.swindon-college.ac.uk](http://www.swindon-college.ac.uk)

## No win, no fee plans criticised

Changes to no win, no fee legal arrangements defeat fundamental legal principles, according to an expert at Swindon-based law firm Withy King.

Plans were revealed earlier this week, by way of a public consultation, which will see some legal fees in civil cases deducted from damages awarded to the claimant, rather than being charged entirely to the defendant.

Justice Secretary Ken Clarke said that the no win, no fee arrangements were being altered to ease the burden on businesses and the NHS.



For the full story visit:

[www.swindon-business.net](http://www.swindon-business.net)



MP for North Swindon, Justin Tomlinson (centre) with, from left, Julian Thompson of 24.7 Staffing, business advisor and speaker Robert Craven and Maria Young and Steve Childs of Barclays at the Barclays 'Driving the business forward' event in Swindon.

Image courtesy of Professional Images

## Firms urged to 'Take One Step'

The Government is doing all it can to support existing small firms and help new ones start up, North Swindon MP Justin Tomlinson told a gathering of small business owners.

The MP was a guest at the event held on Barclays Bank's mobile Take One Small Step venue, which is touring the country. The breakfast meeting, staged with the mobile venue parked at Swindon's Orbital shopping centre, also included a short, lively presentation by business coach Robert Craven, who guided the business owners through

10 steps they could take to immediately improve their businesses.

Steve Childs, regional business director, Barclays Business, South West, said: "Local businesses are the backbone of Britain's economy and it's important to support the ongoing efforts of Swindon businesses in such challenging market conditions. This was a great event which included for the first time in the country a presentation and Q&A session from a local MP."

## Take part in free green IT online survey

Firms are being urged to take part in an online survey gauging how green their IT is. The exercise is part of an initiative aiming to help further education colleges share their knowledge and expertise with businesses, helping them save money on IT and related energy costs while ensuring the environmental impact is minimised.

New College Swindon is part of the consortium working on the Lean Green IT Machine project, which is supported by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS).

The Green IT Survey marks the launch of the project. When completed in November 2011, businesses will be able to take advantage of a free online toolkit with advice on how to save money on IT and related energy costs.

To take part in the survey go to: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/greenitproject](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/greenitproject)

## Commitment by Beard gains gold standard

Swindon construction firm Beard has achieved the Investors in People Gold Standard for its commitment to the principles of Investors in People (IiP) and their benefits to company performance.

Just 48 organisations in the South of England have achieved the standard, which puts Beard in the top 1 per cent and makes it one of only four construction firms in the South to attain this.

Beard's main objective for implementing the Standard is to add value to the organisation, improve performance at all levels and add value to its customers.

IiP assessor Cath Parish, who conducted Beard's review, said: "In comparison to many other organisations I have worked with in this sector, I was very impressed with the vibrant and supportive attitude within Beard."

## SciSys secures contract with Govt agency

Specialist IT and software group SciSys has secured a contract with the Environment Agency to improve its effectiveness as a regulator.

The contract, worth around £1.75m over 15 months, will also help the agency provide a better service to those it regulates and the public while reducing costs.

The agreement strengthens an existing relationship between Chippenham-based SciSys and the agency, adding to regulation work the group's Environment Division has been carrying out for several years.

SciSys chairman Mike Love said: "Delivering these enhancements to the Environment Agency's permitting solution builds on the work that has been undertaken for the Environment Agency over a number of years in helping them to develop solutions to meet their Better Regulation objectives."



## Bite-Size TRAINING ...that Counts!

Whatever the size of your organisation, bite-sized learning offers employees the opportunity to:

- Learn effectively over a shorter period of time
- Focus on developing specific skills needed for the workplace
- Complete and receive a nationally accredited certificate for each unit completed.

From Finance through to Management and IT, whatever your skills gap, Business First have the right bite-sized training programme at the right level and right price for your organisation.

**Business** first



To find out more contact the Business First Team on (01793) 498404, or via email on [businessfirst@swindon-college.ac.uk](mailto:businessfirst@swindon-college.ac.uk) or visit: [www.swindon-college.ac.uk](http://www.swindon-college.ac.uk)

Swindon College, North Star Avenue, Swindon SN2 1DY



# Growing Business

the big conversation

## Programme launched to boost start ups in South West economy

Start ups with high growth potential have been identified across the developed world as an antidote to the downturn. This month in our Growing Business – the Big Conversation campaign we look at how ambitious start ups can help spearhead the recovery in this region.

A major drive has been launched to identify and encourage the region's most promising start-up businesses, providing them with the targeted support they need to realise their full potential.

Funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the three-year programme, entitled Starting a High Growth Business, is being led by GWE Business West together with local partners. It will identify 150 new businesses across the South West – including Swindon and North Wiltshire.

Neil Higginson, programme manager, ERDF Projects, who is leading the initiative, said: "Influential studies demonstrate that it is a small number of highly motivated new businesses that generate the majority of new jobs.

"These high growth start ups are often in dynamic sectors with strong growth potential. They are innovative, create high-value jobs and have a positive impact on the region's prosperity.

"Our programme offers highly targeted support. This helps tackle the many challenges that are faced starting a high growth business – for example, producing a solid business plan, gaining the finance needed in the early stages of trading and safely protecting innovative ideas. We offer firms intensive one-to-one mentoring and coaching, focusing on their ambitions and ensuring that they have the skills to thrive. We will also run specialist, hands-on workshops."

The new programme is open to businesses with the potential to achieve between £500,000 and £1m turnover within their first three years of trading, and the attitude, aspirations and commitment of new businesses will be taken into account when selecting candidates.

Ian Larrard, director of Initiative in



Neil Higgins, programme manager, ERDF

Swindon and Wiltshire, said: "Ambitious high growth businesses play a vital role in renewing the region's economy. They have the cutting edge ideas and determination to succeed that will allow this region to thrive in an increasingly competitive global economy.

"This new service will give these entrepreneurs access to relevant, locally-based support that will give a real boost to their businesses."

To find out more call 0845 600 9966, visit: [www.growthsouthwest.co.uk](http://www.growthsouthwest.co.uk) or email [info@growthsouthwest.co.uk](mailto:info@growthsouthwest.co.uk)

To get involved in our 'Growing Business - the Big Conversation' campaign visit [www.businessi.info/thebigconversation](http://www.businessi.info/thebigconversation) or follow us on Twitter @growthsouthwest

## A conversation with Jamie Murray-Wells, Glasses Direct

Jamie Murray-Wells founded Wiltshire-based Glasses Direct in 2004, at the age of 21. Since then it has gone on to become the world's leading online spectacles providers and has a staff of 70. Jamie has continued to grow the business and has recently set up another firm, Hearing Direct. Here, he tells us about his enviable business journey:



Jamie Murray-Wells, founder of Glasses Direct and Hearing Direct

### What drives you to keep growing your business?

The need to help more and more people realise they have the right to shop around. I want people to know they don't have to settle to be able to afford what they want – they can have great glasses with an exceptional service, without breaking the bank.

### How fast has your business grown?

We [Glasses Direct] have experienced high double-digit growth consistently over the last five years.

### How have you continued to thrive during the downturn?

In a downturn, or when times are tough, you have to focus on what you do best. We haven't seen a significant impact – people are looking for bargains more, and what we do is provide a product that people need at a price they can afford.

### What were the biggest obstacles to your success?

There was a lot of opposition from the high street; some of the well known high street names put pressure on our suppliers as they saw the threat we posed to their business models. We had to close down the website for a few weeks while we found another supplier, but we managed to overcome this. If you are doing something disruptive, you have to be wary – particularly in such an outdated industry like this one – but it just proved that we were doing something right to make them so concerned that they would resort to tactics like this.

### What have been your best and worst business decisions?

Worst business decision was to develop a pair of glasses that you whistle for and they whistle back – we were unable to measure the success and how effective they were. Best decision I made was to closely protect the brand principles which Glasses Direct was originally designed to uphold, and keep us true to our roots as we grow.

### How did you fund your growth?

Within a few months of launching we took some funding and raised money through angels as well as friends and family. I also managed to get people like David Magliano – who was MD at EasyJet and also worked on the London Olympics bid – on board and we found an expert optomologist who joined the board as a non-executive director and advised us. We raised around £700,000 this way, and topped it up with further funding rounds.

### What advice would you give someone looking to grow a business?

Recruit the best people around. No-one is great at everything; you need to be aware of your weaknesses and get the right people onboard. Make sure your customers are at the heart of the business and everything that it does. Also encourage regular feedback and use it to become even better. Always look for new and exciting ways to encourage customers to engage with the brand.

### What are your priorities for the year ahead?

Glasses Direct and Hearing Direct – six years old and one year old respectively – are growing significantly and we're constantly introducing innovative tools and services to make them even easier, quicker and affordable for customers. Aside from these, I'm always on the lookout for other similar industries yet to be tapped on the web, although there aren't many left.

### How important is it to build staff loyalty and trust?

Like customers, staff should be at the core of a company's strategy. They talk to and help our customers every day and must stay well-informed and motivated. Staff training is essential for morale as well as the business.

### What makes a great entrepreneur?

Having the ability to spot gaps in the market that have yet to be tapped. Not getting too attached and sentimental about business ideas that just aren't working, and realising there are always new ideas around the corner.

Accessed through

Part of

A specialist deliverer of Solutions for Business

Funded by





## Don't be held to ransom over transfer of shares

Many owners of companies find themselves contemplating whether or not it would be appropriate to bring in another shareholder, such as an employee or family member.

Ownership of shares can be an excellent way of rewarding and motivating key individuals, but it is crucial that if adopting this strategy you protect your own interests warns Alex Pyatt, a Partner in the Corporate Team at Withy King Solicitors in Swindon. Once the shares are in the hands of another party there may be nothing in your company's constitution which prevents those shares being sold or ensures they are transferred back to the company in the future.

The following situation arose recently. A shareholder transferred shares to an employee who subsequently left the company. The shares were never bought back by the founding shareholder or the company, but some years later the founder wanted to sell the company. As is always the case the buyer wanted to acquire all of the shares and it became apparent to the minority shareholder (who by then had fallen out with the founder) that he could demand a greater price for the shares which the founder would rather pay than see the deal fall flat.

This could easily have been avoided by building provisions into the company's articles of association requiring the shares to be transferred should the shareholder ever cease to be an employee.

Of course, the same problem could arise even if the employee was still on board. To avoid this, the constitution should include what is known as a "tag-along" and "drag-along" clause. Essentially this gives the right for the minority shareholder to be offered a fair price for the shares – essentially the same price per share that the founder is getting from the third party purchaser. However, it also requires them (provided that they are offered such a price) to transfer their shares when the time comes – thereby preventing a sale and possibly someone's retirement plans being held to ransom.

The obligation to sell when ceasing to be an employee is one of several possible "deemed transfer events". Other common ones are ceasing to be a director, death or bankruptcy, but even divorce can be specified if that is relevant in the circumstances.

An obligation to sell is one thing but then of course there is the question of price. In most cases the price is the fair value of the shares as determined by the accountants of the company. However, how would you feel having



Alex Pyatt

to pay fair value to someone who had been sacked? To cover this situation the constitution can specify that if someone is a "bad-leaver" they not only have to offer their shares for sale but are only entitled to a fraction of their true value.

So far I have used the word "constitution" when describing where these sort of details would be set out and many people will be familiar with the concept of a shareholders agreement.

The other part of any company's constitution (and often the only part) are the company's articles of association. If you have never looked at yours you are probably not alone. However, if they were the standard ones you had when you set up the company they are probably not going to be very illuminating should you ever go to them for help on a particular issue.

While shareholders agreements are very important in numerous situations, the aspects I have described above would usually be implemented by amendment or replacement of your existing articles of association. The advantage of this is that there is no need to get your prospective shareholder to sign up to them – they simply automatically take the shares subject to the articles.

A word of caution if planning to put a structure such as this in place to cover shares which have already been issued. You need to be careful not to abuse the rights of minority shareholders.

The best approach is to grasp the nettle and get your constitutional affairs in order before any problems arise.

For further information about any company law issue, please contact Alex Pyatt at Withy King Solicitors on 01793 536526 or email alex.pyatt@withyking.co.uk

## Employers advised to check retirement policies

Swindon firms are being advised to ensure their retirement and employment policies are water-tight ahead of new legislation that stops workers aged over 65 from being automatically retired.

Between April 6 and October 1 this year only people notified before April 6 and whose 65th birthday is before October 1 can be compulsorily retired using the default retirement age (DRA).

After that, employers will not be able to use the DRA to compulsorily retire employees who have reached 65.

Swindon-based employment law specialists Lemon&Co Solicitors say dismissing an employee after this date on grounds of retirement will be age discriminatory unless it can be objectively justified.

It would also be regarded as an unfair dismissal unless a fair reason for terminating their employment can be established.

It remains to be seen whether employers will be able to justify company-wide retirement ages and what alternatives there will be to compulsory retirement, according to Lemon&Co.

Employment solicitor Lauren Harkin said: "The law changes many things for employers and there are lots of potential pitfalls ranging from knowing what to do with existing staff who still want to retire when they are 65 to dealing with issues around maintaining and dealing with an ageing workforce."

"In addition, businesses should consider what amendments need to be made to company policies and procedures in order to comply with the new law."

"This has already proven to be a highly talked about and visible piece of employment legislation so people will be more aware of their rights. This means employers really will have to get their heads round it to be able to deal with the changes appropriately."

The DRA enables employers to force staff to retire at 65 regardless of their circumstances. The Government believes the new law will give employees more choice about when to stop working as people live longer, healthier lives. It could also boost the economy.

Lemon&Co hosts a free seminar on the changes for employers on May 10. Contact Lauren Harkin on 01793 553954 or email: lauren.harkin@lemon-co.co.uk to book a place.

## Security giant takes over three companies

Swindon-based security provider, Stanley Convergent Security Solutions has bought Smiths Security Services, Raysil Security Systems and SRP Security Systems, from Verifier Capital.

The acquisition of Smiths, Raysil and SRP located in Oxfordshire, Surrey and Buckinghamshire respectively, includes the operations of each business with expertise in installing, servicing, inspecting, maintaining and monitoring intrusion alarms, fire alarms, access control and video surveillance systems.

The deal includes mostly commercial accounts including top universities, telecommunications, financial, healthcare and retail customers throughout the UK. Terms of the sale were not disclosed.

For Stanley CSS, the acquisition is part of a planned dynamic growth strategy in the UK. During 2010, it completed and launched its first UK SSAIB certified ProtectionNet™ Customer Service Centre which is among the largest data and monitoring central stations in the UK, with capacity to monitor more than 50,000 customers and recruited two

regionally-based sales teams as part of an organic growth initiative. The acquisition of the three security companies continues this expansion plan, bringing 5,500 new customers into the company along with a talented team of committed staff.

Tony Byerly, president of Stanley CSS North America and United Kingdom Direct, said: "The acquisition of these three companies continues our commitment to growing our global electronic security business and gives us additional resources in the UK and makes us even stronger for existing and potential customers in that market."

"It fits well with our existing business and supports our strategy of global reach with a local touch for customers."

"We currently operate six Stanley CSS offices throughout the UK and a world-class monitoring centre in Swindon."

"I am confident that customers and associates alike will be pleased with Stanley CSS's high level of customer service and security protection."

## a fresh take on business news

The Swindon Business News website now offers you a whole lot more than just a great informative place to keep up to date with the latest business information and local company news.

We now have a revamped website offering a full company directory with links and information provided.

We also hold all our current month's pages online with active links which can be viewed and downloaded.

To be part of our next issue or to get listed on our website business index call us today.

- Accountants
- Property Agents
- Computer Services
- Financial Services
- Hotels
- Motoring
- Design
- PR & Marketing
- Photography



## SWINDONBUSINESSNEWS

26 Wood Street, Old Town, Swindon, Wilts, SN1 4AB

Tel: 01793 641829 Fax: 01793 488517

www.swindon-business.net info@swindon-business.net

Companies should build provisions into articles requiring shares to be transferred, should the shareholder ever cease to be an employee, to protect against potentially being held to ransom

For further information or advice please contact  
**Withy King Solicitors**



Swindon  
01793 536526

Bath  
01225 425731

Marlborough  
01672 514781



# Osborne's Budget 'doesn't disappoint'

By Sharon Omer-Kaye, tax director

In the weeks running up to it, the Chancellor declared that this would be a "Budget for growth, enterprise and aspiration" and he didn't disappoint.

Our clients range from partnerships and owner-managed businesses to large corporate enterprises with international reach. Certainly, the Budget 2011 contained some particularly welcome changes for all.

The recently-formed Office of Tax Simplification had a big influence over the Budget with many of the recommendations set out in its report being endorsed. Although changes are unlikely to be immediate, there are proposals for a radical overhaul of many parts of the tax system – not least income tax and National Insurance. What will follow is a long consultative process throughout which we will be representing the views of our clients.

Many of the smaller businesses we work with will welcome the recommendations contained in the reports as several complex areas of the legislation will be simplified.

In a surprise move, Chancellor George Osborne announced a cut in fuel duty by one pence per litre. This came after a recent poll commissioned by RSM Tenon showed that almost half the UK population would be happy to see an increase in tobacco duty if it meant a reduction of petrol prices.

The surprise move should be welcomed by Swindon businesses – particularly SMEs who rely heavily on transport. The cut will have a huge and positive effect on hauliers and our owner-managed business clients who make use of commercial vehicle leasing firms. We believe that this is a positive indication that the Government recognises the important role that SMEs play in helping the country out of the current economic



Sharon Omer-Kaye

situation and which will ultimately see the prevention of a double-dip recession.

## What about larger corporates?

Much of what was contained in the Budget for large corporates and multinationals was already known following the announcement of the Corporation Tax reform at the end of last year. The surprise announcement was the 2 per cent reduction in the main rate of corporation tax from April 2011 was down to 26 per cent.

The theme running throughout is twofold: protection of the UK tax base; and making the UK a more attractive place in which, not only to do business, but to base some of the more strategic operations of a multinational group. With the recent flurry of exits from the UK by major international groups, the Government clearly felt the need to respond.

For more information on how the Budget 2011 could impact your business over the coming years, please contact Sharon Omer-Kaye: sharon.omer-kaye@rsmtenon.com

# Firms upbeat about growth prospects

Mid-market companies are upbeat about their growth prospects over the next 18 months – but still believe it will be at least six months before the South West region starts to see visible signs of economic recovery.

Some 88 per cent of firms in the £5 million-£100 million turnover bracket are expecting to grow between now and the middle of 2012, according to the latest Mid-Market Business Survey from accountants and business advisers Grant Thornton.

This is despite the fact that three-quarters of them believe tangible evidence of a sustained recovery will not be seen until the second half of the year.

Fifty-four per cent of the finance directors questioned in the survey say the single biggest challenge this year will be the effect of public spending cuts, on their customers and suppliers, both directly and indirectly.

Three-quarters expect to increase their headcount over the next two quarters. However, bank lending remains a concern with just 20 per cent forecasting any real improvement in the funding environment for businesses this year.

Grant Thornton's South West managing partner Nigel Morrison said: "It is heartening that, although we remain in a difficult economic environment, an overwhelming majority of businesses expect to continue growing, while

"Nonetheless when it comes to what businesses believe should be the top priority for the Government for the mid-market sector, bank lending now appears to be less pressing than other issues.

"Instead, making a concerted effort to reduce red tape affecting businesses, as well as delivering on the pledge to create a simpler, more business-friendly tax regime, is now top of the wish list.

"Our survey has highlighted that the big unknown for businesses in the early part of 2011 is the impact of the cuts. Businesses need stability to make decisions about investment and growth and the uncertainty surrounding the likely effect of the cuts, plus possible industrial action in protest against them, runs counter to this."

# Confusion heats up over food VAT pay-outs

Martin Gurney, tax partner at HW Accountants, writes about how companies in the food trade could be eligible for a big VAT pay-out as confusion between standard-rated and zero-rated food continues.

Historically, where food is heated, it has been treated as a standard-rated supply for VAT purposes. Various successful challenges have been made to this treatment, where it has been possible to demonstrate that the heating of the food was simply a by-product of the manufacturing process.

In such circumstances, the food is zero-rated and, as a result, a number of food producers have received very significant refunds of VAT where standard-rated supplies have been reclassified as zero-rated.

There have been some recent developments that may present more opportunities to reclaim VAT.

On March 10 the European Court of Justice released its decision in the case of Manfred Bog.

The decision indicated that the following are each a supply of goods and could mean that such supplies qualify for zero rating in the UK:

- Sausage and chips sold from mobile stalls
- Popcorn and nachos sold in cinemas
- Fried sausages, sausages in curry sauce, hot dogs, chips, steaks, pork belly, skewered meat, spare ribs sold from several snack stalls
- Some supplies by catering firms

However, any claims should be lodged as a matter of urgency as the



Martin Gurney

UK may seek to introduce new legislation to prevent retrospective claims.

Haines Watts specialist VAT teams have achieved many major reclaims of back-dated overpaid VAT for catering sector clients and are happy to work on a no win, no fee basis.

I strongly recommend that immediate action is taken to seek specialist advice on this matter and, in particular, that advice is taken regarding how disclosures should be managed and presented and I would be happy to discuss this with you

Martin can be contacted on 01793 533838 or email: msgurney@hwca.com

RSM Tenon

Every business needs an individual approach

When faced with strategic challenges you need advisers who understand the problems you and your business face.

RSM Tenon is one of the most progressive and entrepreneurial professional services firms in the UK today, offering a wide range of services:

- Audit, tax & advisory
- Financial management
- Recovery
- Risk management

We appreciate no two businesses are the same, and you will have unique requirements. Our specialist advisers will offer a service as individual as you are.

To find out more please contact: Sharon Omer-Kaye, Director  
Tel: 01793 603300 Fax: 01793 511123 Mob: 07855 314990  
Email: sharon.omer-kaye@rsmtenon.com

www.rsmtenon.com

RSM Tenon Limited is a member of RSM Tenon Group. RSM Tenon Limited is an independent member firm of RSM International, an affiliation of independent accounting and consulting firms. RSM International is the name given to a network of independent accounting and consulting firms each of which practices in its own right. RSM International does not exist in any jurisdiction as a separate legal entity. RSM Tenon Limited (No 4066924) is registered in England and Wales. Registered Office 66 Chiltern Street, London W1U 4GB, England.

For the latest in Finance  
www.swindon-business.net



HW

Chartered Accountants  
Local Matters, National Strength

Expert business advisers,  
helping your business make  
the most of its money

Particularly now...

Can you afford not to talk to us?

Go on... Call us today!

HW Chartered Accountants  
Old Station House, Station Approach  
Newport Street, Swindon  
Wiltshire SN1 3DU

Tel: 01793 533838  
Fax: 01793 434930  
Email: Swindon@hwca.com  
www.hwca.com



# Wincanton wins £42m government contract

Wincanton, the Chippenham-based logistics group, has teamed up with outsourcing giant Serco, to provide prisoner escort and custody services in London and the East of England.

The contract with the Ministry of Justice is worth £42 million a year and will run for seven years with options to extend it by a further three years.

Under the arrangement prisoners will be securely transported between HM prisons, police stations and courts. Staff will also be provided to manage custody suites and accompany prisoners in courtroom docks.

Serco will manage the day-to-day operations, employ prison custody officers and supply management systems. Wincanton will provide logistical expertise including a fleet of specialist vehicles, activity scheduling and vehicle tracking, as well as providing driver training and fleet management.

Wincanton chief executive Eric Born said

## Logistics group and Serco secure MoJ prisoner transport services for next seven years

the announcement represented an excellent strategic opportunity for Wincanton as it looks to expand its presence in the public sector.

“By combining Serco’s long-standing expertise within the criminal justice system and Wincanton’s proven track record in specialist logistics, we expect this highly-innovative service to deliver considerable savings for the UK taxpayer over the life of the contract.”

# Howard Tenens expands to West London division

Logistics group Howard Tenens has opened a West London division near Heathrow Airport to offer specialist services to the vending and fishcare products industries, including handling food, aquariums and medications for a major UK manufacturer.

The division is housed in a new 30,000 sq ft depot just 800 yards from junction 4 of the M4. It stores drinks, vending machines and fishcare products for distribution and installation across the UK mainland.

Howard Tenens, one of the UK’s largest privately-owned third party logistics companies with a £56 million annual turnover, already had warehousing and transport bases east of London at Barking, Dagenham and South Ockendon, Essex. By linking these divisions with the Heathrow the group is able to seek new, larger contracts.

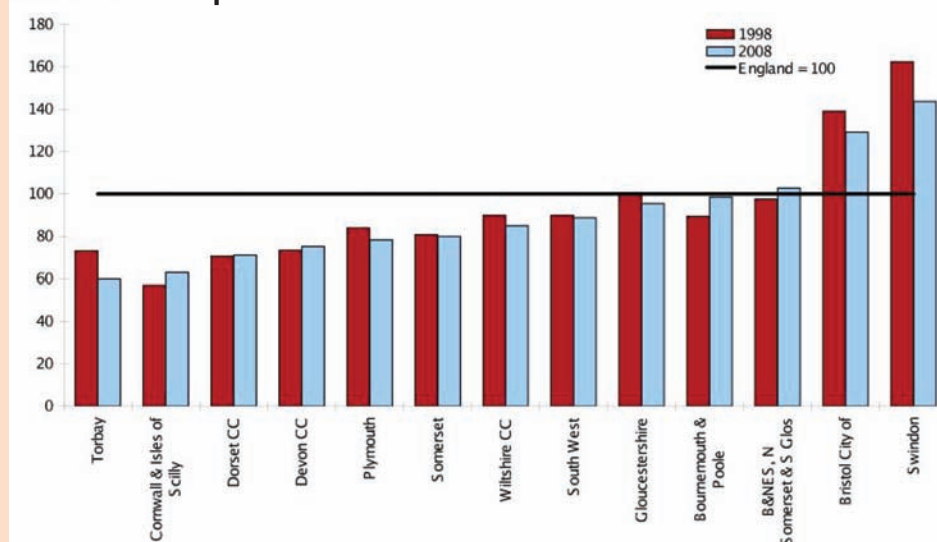
Managing director - operations - Ben Morris said: “Heathrow is a prime geographical location for us and the management team’s vending expertise will expand our overall knowledge, further enhancing the strategic growth of our business.”

Stroud-based Howard Tenens operates 17 depots across the UK, employing around 500 people. The group’s Swindon operation on the Europa Industrial Park occupies approximately 25 acres with more than 845,000 sq ft of warehousing and office accommodation.



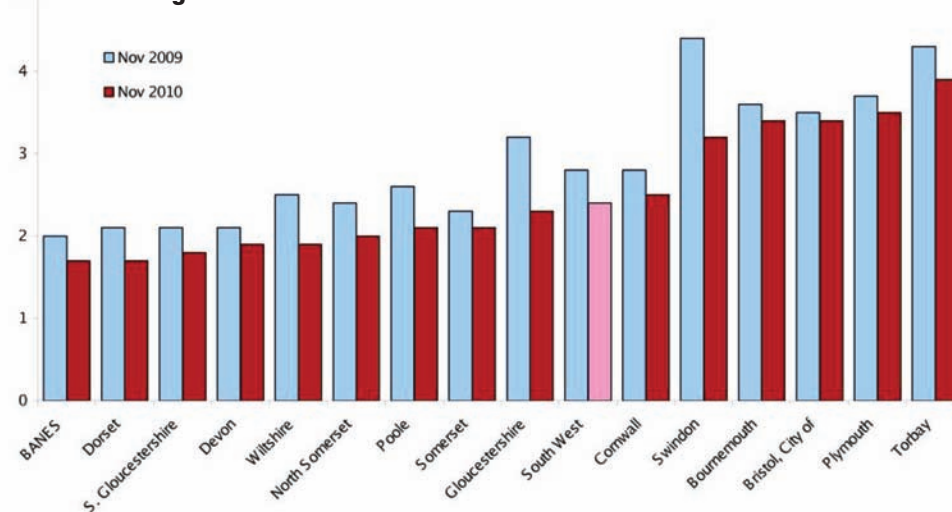
Howard Tenens's West Drayton facility, near Heathrow

Index (Eng=100) GVA per head



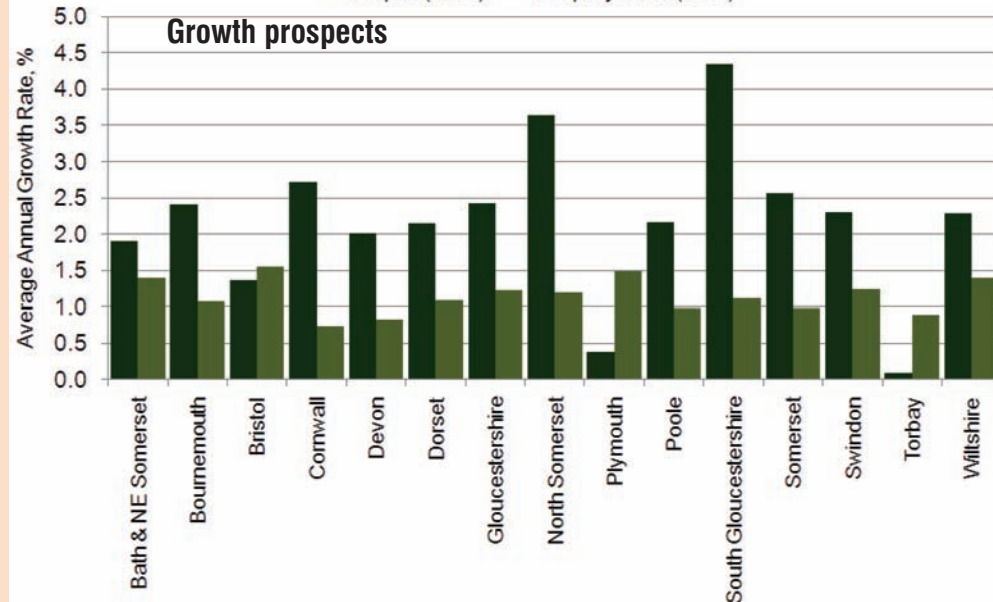
Source: ONS

Change in claimant rate

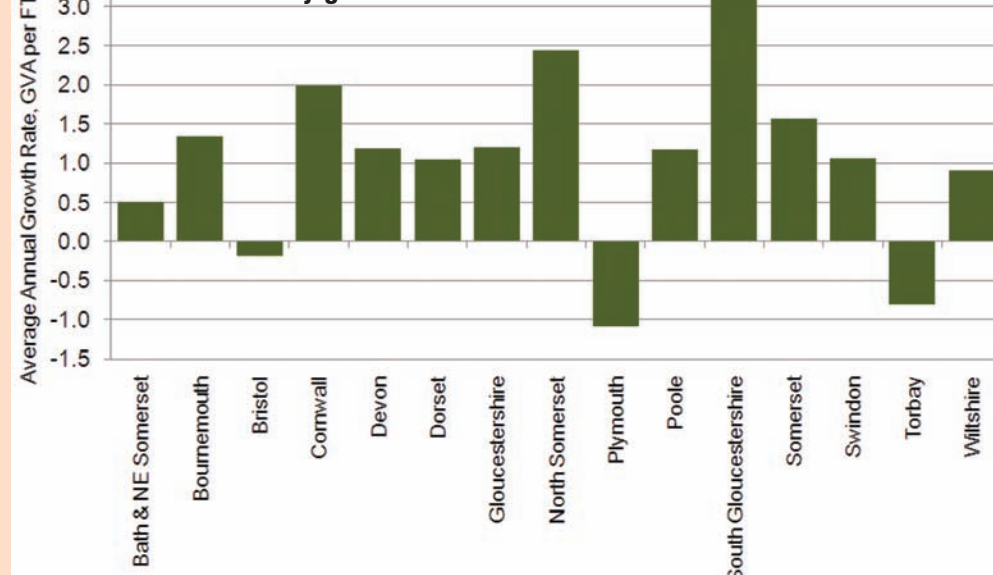


Source: Department of Work and Pensions (via NOMIS)

Output (GVA) Employment (FTE)



Productivity growth





# Moving on up

Swindon's economy is on the mend after a severe buffeting during the recession. The town was among the hardest hit in the country when the economy faltered in 2008, suffering a sudden and sharp increase in unemployment. But what are the forecasts for the one-time boomtown as the national economic outlook slowly brightens? Is it on track to bounce back as it has done from previous downturns? Swindon Business News looks at the latest forecasts.

Swindon has long been a favourite subject for economists, academics, government officials and opinion pollsters.

The reason is because the town pretty much reflects the national picture in terms of the social make up of its population, spending patterns, home ownership and the like.

So when the national economy heats up, Swindon booms. But when it cools, Swindon catches a cold.

Swindon suffered a significant slow down in its growth, as measured by what economists call gross value added (GVA), in 2008 with a three per cent increase compared to a 7.2 per cent rise between 2006 and 2007, according to research by the South West Observatory economic forecasting organization.

The Observatory says this reflects its vulnerability to the early effects of the recession, with the manufacturing sector - a significant part of the local economy - being hit comparatively hard.

In fact, Swindon suffered the biggest slow down of any town or city in the South West between 2007 and 2008 having been growing at an above-average rate for the preceding 10 years, the Observatory's latest State of the Region report reveals.

What made this more alarming was the fact that Swindon's economy has for many years boasted a productivity rate far higher than the national average while its GVA per resident in 2008 at £30,233 was the highest in the South West and much higher than the English average of £21,049.

The make up of the town's industrial base - it has a large concentration of financial service employers - meant it was hit early by the fall out from the banking crisis. As back office jobs posts were slashed and businesses linked to financial services cut staffing levels, so Swindon's jobless rate rose.

But the good news for the town is that it has a relatively high concentration of jobs in manufacturing - just under a fifth of the total and far higher than most other towns and cities in the South West. Latest research shows jobs are being created faster in the manufacturing sector

than others.

More good news is the fact that Swindon has a very small number of people working in the public sector - under 10 per cent - compared to other parts of the region.

With the axe yet to fall on thousands of civil service, local authority and other public sector jobs, Swindon is likely to escape relatively lightly.

The town's jobless rate fell last year while across the country it continued to grow - the town had one of the largest decreases in claimant rate in the South West between November 2009 and November 2010, according to the Observatory's research.

While the labour market recovery remains fragile - March's rate was 3.6 per cent, only slightly below the national figure of 3.8 per cent - Swindon has a strong track record on job creation. For example, B&Q is to recruit 600 staff for its new regional distribution base at South Marston.

Jobs in Swindon also tend to be full-time rather than part-time - the town has the lowest number of part-time jobs in the South West at less than 25 per cent.

Jobs here also tend to be better paid.

Average earnings are £502.7 a week against the UK average of £498.80 while house prices are lower than the average - a factor that helps companies relocating to the town bring key staff with them.

Swindon is also among the most country's 100 most competitive towns, according to the UK Competitiveness Index (UKCI), which measures factors such as research and development expenditure, GVA per head and unemployment.

While these may point to a brighter future for the town, one area where it is failing is in education and training.

The number of people of working age educated to NVQ level 4 and above is 23.1 per cent - alongside Cornwall and Plymouth, the lowest in the South West.

Worryingly, Swindon also has the lowest percentage of its working age population receiving job-related training - at 7.7 per cent it was lower than Cornwall - and the highest rate in the South West of NEETS - young people not in education, employment or training.

## Vox training academy to open its doors

Award-winning public relations and marketing communications company Vox will be opening its doors and sharing its knowledge in a series of training courses.

The Vox Academy launches on May 17 with its first two half-day seminars; Making the Media Work for You and Social Media for Business.

Making the Media Work for You will give businesses an insight into how they can help build and protect their reputations, how to craft media-ready copy and what to do should they encounter a crisis.

Social Media for Business will give companies an introduction to the different online channels available to them, the pros and cons of each and practical examples of how to get started.

Julie Margerum, managing director of Vox, said: "We understand that small businesses can sometimes be unsure about how to market themselves effectively by getting into the media and understanding what they ought to be doing online."

"Our Vox Academy training courses will help demystify these areas and equip businesses with the skills and confidence they need to get started."

The courses will be held at Vox's offices in Old Town, Swindon. Each seminar costs £45 including take-home materials where appropriate and refreshments.

To find out more about the Vox Academy or to book on to a course, call 01793 511990 or email [mandy.hooper@voxonline.co.uk](mailto:mandy.hooper@voxonline.co.uk).

## Let video conferencing bring your business in to focus

RTS Communications is offering free demonstrations of video conferencing via their mobile solution or at their custom built suite to Swindon businesses.

The demo will show firms how they can save money communicating with colleagues and suppliers across the country and around the globe.

As well as being a greener alternative to face-to-face meetings, with fuel prices still at an all time high the cost savings provided by video conferencing are significant for any business that has traditionally taken to the road for every meeting.

Mike O'Sullivan, operations manager of RTS Communications in Swindon, said: "While the cost benefit is compelling, the business benefit is even greater. Video conferencing helps businesses to communicate quickly and effectively. This speeds up the decision making process - regardless of the location of the offices or key personnel."

RTS Communications is offering business across the Swindon area a free demonstration to find out more about the video conferencing

**Firms invited to free demonstrations to see how video conferencing can benefit them**

services they provide - which can be hired by the hour.

Mike added: "With Swindon companies increasingly doing business in Europe, and beyond with the Link to China initiative, we believe this is the perfect time to take a look at video conferencing."

"Whether it's at our fully-equipped suite at Basepoint Business Centre or at a company's own premises, where we can set up our mobile conferencing equipment, we can deliver state-of-the-art video conferencing at a fraction of the cost of buying a system."

To arrange a free visit from an RTS Communications conferencing specialist, call 01793 694470 or email: [info@rtscommunications.com](mailto:info@rtscommunications.com)

## Power, Purpose and Potential

It's hardly surprising that women walk away from business enterprise when they have so many 'obstacles' to overcome.

The negative effect of the latest business stampede on female diversity from the boardroom has even affected the government agenda. Women have to ask themselves, do I really need legislation to act as a 'crutch' to support me? Surely this simply continues the myth that we can't do things under our own steam in a man's world. Conversation, collaboration and compromise have always been the best way to solve a problem not an edict from Whitehall.

Some thoughts to reflect on.....

- How do we find compromise with organisations to support the family agenda without them suffering financial penalties?
- How do women create their own recognised value in business, not because they are female but because they do the job well?
- How do we support aspiring, talented and positive young women to be resilient in their careers when their hormonal clock is at the forefront of most interviewer's minds?

I have started the Artemis Forum as a medium to offer serious women who want to reach their full potential and make a difference to their organisations, their families and their own self esteem, the opportunity to grow.



Bruck Payne Associates invites you to an exclusive evening where we will be launching **The ARTEMIS Forum.**

The ARTEMIS Forum is designed to be a place where executive women meet together to discuss their business issues in a supportive environment.

**Our Speaker for the evening is**

**The CEO and Chair of Gloucestershire PCT, Jan Stubbings, who will be talking about her career, experiences in different business sectors and the challenges of being a female Chief Executive in the National Health Service today.**

Our question would be, "As a senior business woman can you afford not to come?"

Jurys Inn, Swindon  
12<sup>th</sup> May 2011  
6pm - 9pm

RSVP to [ellen@bruckpayne.co.uk](mailto:ellen@bruckpayne.co.uk) or call us on 01793 840105 to reserve a place

[bringingperformancealive.co.uk](http://bringingperformancealive.co.uk)



## Sponsors jump at the chance to drive sales

More than nine out of 10 corporate sponsors believe corporate entertainment and hospitality can help drive sales, making it their prime motivation for sponsoring horse racing, according to a new research into corporate sponsorship of Jump Racing.

The report, called *The Value of Jump Racing Sponsorship*, shows that despite the economic downturn, sponsorship is a significant revenue earner for major racecourses such as Cheltenham, which also allows smaller courses to stage better-funded programmes.

Some 56 per cent of firms taking part in the research believe Jump Racing is better for corporate entertainment and hospitality opportunities than other sports while 44 per cent say it delivers better PR opportunities.

Just over three quarters (78%) of the sponsors cited reaching their target audience as being a key motivation behind their decision to enter into Jump Racing sponsorship.

The research was carried out by Jockey Club Racecourses (JCR) and Racing Enterprises Limited (REL) ahead of last month's Cheltenham Festival.

The festival is a showcase for sponsorship in the sport - there is traditionally a waiting list to sponsor the most popular races while Cheltenham Racecourse is one of the leading advocates for innovation in the development of

sponsorship for the sport at large.

Peter McNeile, co-sponsor of the report and Cheltenham Racecourse's director of sponsorship, said: "We have always believed that brands choose to invest in the sport for hard-headed business reasons and that assumption is borne out by the findings of this report. We offer sponsors the highest quality environment and races, so their brands can be associated with passion and excellence. Yet we also work incredibly hard to provide them with a sponsorship package that meets their specific business objectives and a corporate hospitality environment that helps them do businesses."

Sponsorship of Jump Racing brought £10m to the sport during the 2009-2010 season and that figure has held up during the 2010-2011 season.

Rod Street, co-sponsor of the report and chief executive of Racing Enterprises, added: "By increasing the number and quality of our audiences we increase racing's value to its current and potential sponsors. That helps us to invest more in the prize money and facilities that keep British racing at the pinnacle of excellence, with the most exciting racecourses, horses and jockeys to draw in the crowds." Anyone wanting a copy of *The Value of Jump Sponsorship* research can download it from [www.jump-racing.com](http://www.jump-racing.com) or email: [peter.mcneile@jockeyclubracecourses.com](mailto:peter.mcneile@jockeyclubracecourses.com)



## Events firm extends contract

Local events specialist Planet Pursuits has secured a contract to extend its role as the event management company to run Christmas theme parties at the Steam Museum.

Planet Pursuits was already contracted until December 2010, but this means the company will continue to deliver parties for the foreseeable future.

Working two years in advance the company has already released the 2011 theme - Disco Funk Fever, a take on the New York disco fever theme that took grip in the late 1970s.

The event will feature a funky retro disco interior, complete with giant mirror ball, huge glitter boots and lookalike theme props from the disco era.



The packages include, dinner, disco until 1am, casino, rodeo bull, tarot readers and a retro arcade area.

Director of Planet Pursuits Simon Maddison said: "Planet Pursuits are proud to be part of the Steam events supply team. Last year marked our fifth year running successful event at this stunning venue."

"The huge investment and improvements to the events hall made last year's Roman event the best ever."

"Steam offers the largest exhibition and events space available in Swindon and it's the perfect central venue in which to host our parties."

"We have a superb working relationship with the staff and we are looking forward to delivering Swindon an alternative style Christmas party package."

For all the latest local business news visit us at [www.swindon-business.net](http://www.swindon-business.net) or follow us on Twitter @SwindonBiz Call us on 01793 615393 to find out about our subscription only newsletter service



Paul McCombe, with Frankly Recruitment colleagues, from left: Kelly Walker, senior consultant, Amanda Franks, branch manager/owner, Charlotte Frank, branch administrator, Jo Hamer, business consultant

## Iron man Paul shows his mettle by preparing for gruelling triple challenge

For most people, just completing a regular Iron Man would be hard enough.

But when friends Paul McCombe and David Zimmer wanted to raise money for charity, they decided the standard ironman triathlon of a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride and a marathon run of 26.2 miles wasn't quite enough of a challenge for them.

Instead, the pair will be tackling a triple ironman event - that's a 7.2 miles swim, a 336-mile cycle ride and a 78-mile run - when they take part in the Enduroman competition in the New Forest in June.

Paul, who works for Frankly Recruitment in Swindon, said: "I've done a few single ironman events before and a double ironman in Virginia in 2006, but this year we thought we would push ourselves even more - it's a bit of a challenge and we want to raise money while we're doing it."

Paul is hoping to raise around £1,000 for Prospect Hospice. He said: "An enormous amount of commitment and motivation is

required to complete an event of this magnitude. With this in mind I felt it would be far more meaningful to devote the support and energy to a worthy cause. My friend Jo suggested I contact Prospect, a charity close to her heart."

"Prospect is dedicated to providing care and support for terminally ill patients and their families. The success of the Hospice is thanks to all the volunteers who support it and without whom it would cease to exist. The selflessness of the staff and volunteers helped me decide that Prospect Hospice would be who I dedicate my triple ironman efforts to."

"I can only hope my participation in the event raises enough money to help support the continuing good work of the Hospice and its remarkable people."

Although participants are expected to take around 60 hours to complete the event, the pair hope to complete the challenge within 40 hours.

To sponsor Paul go to: [www.justgiving.com/PaulMcCombe0](http://www.justgiving.com/PaulMcCombe0)

## Juice celebrates 12 years by launching its new website

Juice Recruitment, who describe themselves as the South West's most energetic and vibrant recruitment consultancy, celebrates its 12th year of success with the launch of a new website.

The site is one of a series changes the business is undergoing this year. With new imagery being featured, Juice Recruitment is reaffirming its position as a serious contender in an increasingly competitive arena.

Although the business is 12 years old, it is showing no sign of slowing in either growth or success. With further branches planned for 2012, the network of Juice consultancies is set to broaden across the South West.

As well as breaking into new

markets the business has been successful in retaining existing clients - South West organisations that began trading with Juice in its first year of business are still working with the recruitment consultancy today.

Juice has been successful in bringing in new talent. Experienced consultants are attracted to the business due to its higher-than-industry salary and benefits package as well as the autonomy to run and manage a business that matches the local market requirements.

For more information, contact Juice Recruitment, 26 Commercial Road, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN1 5NS [www.juicerecruitment.com](http://www.juicerecruitment.com) 01793 238323



CONTACT

BATH - 01225 447870

12 Mile's Buildings, George Street, Bath BA1 2QS

BRISTOL - 0117 920 9393

2 St Augustines Court, St Augustines Place, Bristol BS1 4XP

CHELTHENHAM - 01242 210410

123 The Promenade, Cheltenham, Glos GL50 1NW

SWINDON - 01793 238323

26 Commercial Road, Swindon, Wiltshire SN1 5NS

Simply Refreshing Recruitment in Swindon



# Revealed: The seven deadly sins of raising finance

A major new initiative has been launched to help South West SMEs understand how to secure finance. Delivered by Business West, Understanding Finance for Business is a Solutions for Business-branded product funded by the European Regional Development Fund (EDRF). Here, business finance coach Mike Stutter offers a taste of what the programme includes, describing the Seven Deadly Sins of what *not* to do when trying to secure funding.

## 1. Asking for too little, too late

Lenders or investors only get on board when they have confidence in the captain of the ship. Few things are more off-putting than a business leader who is desperate for cash just to keep afloat. So plan for every eventuality, not only worst-case scenarios – unforeseen growth can place major strains on liquidity too. Get to know potential lenders or investors before you need their help – they are much more likely to favour a formal approach if they have established trust in you and your business model.

## 2. Jumping in without considering all your options

Banks are an obvious choice for low-risk, well-planned businesses but many other options exist. Specialist finance firms can separate bank facilities from capital investments and invoice finance can provide working capital. National and regional Government bodies offer options for businesses without a track record or security. If you are looking for funding for research and development (R&D) projects, it may worth looking into specialist European R&D collaboration programmes. Then there is investment – seed corn capital for up to £25,000, angel investors for up to £500,000 and private venture capitalists for serious growth businesses.

## 3. Failing to provide enough detailed financial data

Ultimately, lending decisions come down to numbers. Strong financials are crucial to the success of applications. An accountant, financial controller or part-time finance director can help. With proposals, base executive summaries on financials rather than vision and imaginary prospects. Add substance with market research, clear reasoning and any available letters of intent. And use the latest figures with key performance indicators relevant to your sector, to show the health of your business.

## 4. Skipping over non-financial matters

Non-financial matters are an important factor in the effectiveness of any pitch. Investors or lenders will want to see passion and drive – signs of belief in the businesses and the dedication needed for difficult times. Successful businesses depend on their people, so demonstrate a strong management team with experienced directors boasting the necessary skill set. Emphasise the systems and processes which make your business stand out – use straightforward language,



Mike Stutter

not jargon, and focus on the details that matter.

## 5. Underestimating what's involved in securing investment

Investment isn't just a step on from borrowing – it's a whole different ball game. Capital usually takes months to materialise so plan your growth strategy well in advance. Consider the cost to you – valuations, agreement drafts and producing your application won't come cheap and much will need doing before you speak to investors. Don't feel like you need to take the first offer – don't give too much away, insist on the right qualifications and experience and always carry out due diligence.

## 6. Not being sufficiently attractive to investors

Private investors can choose who they back, so have a watertight and compelling case. Be realistic about your chances – successful applications are rare but a thorough business plan, scalable processes, protected intellectual property, appropriate accreditations and a well thought-out exit strategy will certainly help. Investors are more likely to join the team if you have planned and documented board meetings, and understand how to make your business tax efficient to investors – for example by understanding the Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS).

## 7. Not delivering a great pitch

Remember, you only get one shot to impress. Prepare rigorously and anticipate all the questions which might be fired at you. Have all your figures to hand – know how much you need, the expected rate of return on an investment or the likelihood of repaying a loan. Advise lenders and investors on what to expect before the meeting then find out exactly what it will entail, so you can rehearse and get the feedback you need to deliver the perfect pitch.

The Understanding Finance for Business programme offers businesses a minimum of 12 hours support including time with a dedicated business finance coach.

To find out more about the new programme call 0845 600 9966, visit [www.growthsouthwest.co.uk](http://www.growthsouthwest.co.uk) or email [info@growthsouthwest.co.uk](mailto:info@growthsouthwest.co.uk)

**Solutions for Business**

Funded by government

## High Growth services to support South West businesses

Are you.....

- Starting a High Growth Business?
- interested in coaching for High Growth?
- Need to Understand Finance for Business?

Register your interest today

[www.growthsouthwest.co.uk](http://www.growthsouthwest.co.uk)

Delivered by

Funded by

Accessed through

European Regional Development Fund  
Investing in your Future

Business Link



# Leading the way to higher performance

Jack Welsh, one of the greatest business leaders since World War Two, encapsulated effective leadership in a simple equation: Effective Leadership = Values x Results.

His point was that if you have high values, but your business doesn't perform, then you fail as a leader – conversely, you can turn in a great performance, but if you're a tyrant and only achieving your results by bullying your staff, then again you are not an effective leader.

To achieve a sustainable, high-performance business, you need to identify the values that you want to live by – as well as getting clarity in what excellent results look like for your business.

The Strategic Leadership Programme is aimed at firms with serious growth potential. Its purpose is to give the directors who run these businesses an insight into what effective leadership means. The objective is to increase the leaders' self-awareness as well as introducing them to a range of practical leadership and communications tools that will help them in the task of building a high-growth business.

The programme is structured around three modules – each module lasts half a day. Bringing together directors from different businesses is an important part of our approach. Peer interaction is valuable with businesses sharing experiences.

Wiltshire firms with high growth potential are preparing to embark on the Strategic Leadership Programme, which has been carefully designed to boost their performance. *Here Stewart Barnes, who designed the programme, explains the purpose and structure of the initiative.*

With between eight and 15 directors attending each course, we create a virtual boardroom. Here participants have the confidence to raise issues and ask questions that they might hold back in their interaction with colleagues.

In preparing for the programme, we ask individuals to think about a range of leadership issues. Many entrepreneurs running small and medium-sized businesses don't see themselves as leaders – it's as though they associate leadership as something that is more relevant to big, corporate businesses.

The first day focuses on leading change – specifically, identifying how leaders should cope with and manage change.

We discuss definitions of leadership. We ask participants to identify what good leadership looks like – giving examples of leaders who they admire. We then turn our attention to bad leadership, hearing from participants about bad experiences when being managed.

By looking at all the attributes of a good leader we demonstrate that no person can have and exhibit all these values. We suggest that there is no single 'best' leadership style. Effective leadership is situational and thus relevant to specific tasks and successful leaders must be able to adapt their approach to the individual or group they are leading. We provide participants with practical tools that they can use in different leadership situations, following a model developed by the great American specialist in Situational Leadership Ken Blanchard.

The strength of small and medium-sized high-growth businesses is their ability to adapt to changing circumstances and opportunities. We place considerable emphasis in the programme on preparing leaders to lead the process of change.

The starting point is to look at how individuals deal with change. We focus on the range of emotions that they experience in a series of stages – called the 'change curve'. We look at ways in which leaders can help people at the various stages in this process. Effective communications is at the heart of change



Stewart Barnes

management. From my experience, I believe that you can never communicate too much. You need to create a communications framework that tells employees what is going on – the good, the bad and the ugly. It's important that the top team controls the grapevine – and that the grapevine doesn't start to control the organisation.

From many years experience on the boards of national and international businesses, I have used the 20:60:20 rule. The top 20 per cent of employees are full of ideas, looking for leadership and full of energy to drive things forward. At the other extreme, 20 per cent comprise the moaners and whingers, who will look for reasons to complain. Then you have the majority – the middle 60 per cent, who follow where they sense the focus for the business is.

Most business leaders focus their efforts speaking to the bottom 20 per cent – attempting to motivate them and bring them up to the mark. The problem with that approach is that the mid 60 per cent see all the attention going to the bottom 20 per cent and they follow, reflecting their behaviour and now you have 80 per cent of your employees working against you.

I believe that the right approach is to focus your attention on the top 20 per cent, building on their ideas and suggestions. This places the emphasis on a motivated workforce and the middle 60 per cent will follow. So you end up with 80 per cent of your organisation with you. The bottom 20 per cent then realise that they can't become detached and are pulled along as well.

This approach is particularly important

during times of change when there will be anxiety and uncertainty – times when you really need your staff to be motivated and looking for the positives.

On the second day of the programme, the emphasis is placed on looking at individuals as leaders. This is all about self awareness. We use Team Roles survey to help identify an individual's preferred role within a team.

We also spend time understanding how best to communicate with the workforce. This takes into account the different ways in which people learn and the need to use a range of ways to effectively promote messages across a range of employees.

The third day pulls together all that has been learnt in the first two modules and places the focus on leading teams and employee engagement.

There has to be an understanding of the values on which the business is built. We explain the care that effective leaders take in meticulously grinding down, granulating the four or five key values that are critical to the success of their business. We reinforce the importance of undertaking this process with senior colleagues.

We look at how a communications structure can be designed that works best. This may range from the informality of daily 'huddles' to weekly team briefings and monthly management meetings. You may want monthly operational meetings involving cross functional teams that can look at issues such as quality and continuous improvement. You may use an intranet or internal newspaper that recognises the performance of the organisation and the contribution of teams.

Staff appraisals and feedback will be part of the communications system, focusing individual performance and aspirations with the development of the business.

Developing and sustaining an effective recognition system is a further vital part of the leadership process. You need to achieve clarity in how you want to recognise excellent performance inside the organisation as you move to becoming a high-performance business.

To be a high-growth business you need to have excellent systems in place that can be continuously improved. You need to benchmark against key competitors and the best in the sector. A strong cultural foundation is essential, with people buying in and playing their part in moving the organisation towards excellence.

Ownership of the vision and values of the business by the top team is critical – because whether you're Jack Welsh or running a small or medium-sized business locally, you need a great, motivated management team. You can't take on the whole task of running your business alone.

The Strategic Leadership Programme is being held at Center Parcs near Warminster between April 5 and 19. To find out more on how it can benefit your business, contact Business Link on 0845 600 9966 or email: [growth@businesslinksw.co.uk](mailto:growth@businesslinksw.co.uk).

Stewart Barnes is a member of Business Link's growth team, which is funded by the European Regional Development Fund. His career has included 10 years with the independent, £100 million Hansen Group, where he became joint CEO. This role involved a strong growth strategy, involving an active acquisition programme.

## The 20:60:20 Rule

20

The top 20 per cent of employees are full of ideas, looking for leadership and full of energy to drive things forward

The majority - the middle 60 per cent, who follow where they sense the focus for the business is

60

20

The moaners and whingers, who will look for reasons to complain.



European Regional Development Fund  
Investing in your future

To find out more on how the Strategic Leadership Programme can benefit your business, contact Business Link on 0845 600 9966 or visit: [growth@businesslinksw.co.uk](mailto:growth@businesslinksw.co.uk)





# Developments to decide Town's long-term future

Public consultation is underway on Swindon Council's Core Strategy – the blueprint for the future shape of the town.

The report sets the planning framework for housing and employment development, transport infrastructure and areas where development should be constrained over the next 15 years.

Swindon's expansion has been spectacular over the past 60 years or so and during the 1980s it earned itself the title of the fastest-growing town in Europe.

But alongside that has come questions about the pace and type of development and whether it needs to be controlled to stop the town encroaching on the surrounding villages and countryside.

The coalition's Government's move towards localism has already abolished regionally-set housing targets and Swindon Council has reduced its from 36,000 new homes by 2026 to 25,000 "in response to widespread public concerns over the scale of growth" according to council leader Rod Bluh.

Consultation on the Core Strategy lasts until May 19. The document will then be submitted to the Secretary of State later this year, examined and inspected in early 2012 with adoption likely in autumn next year.

Here we look at the key expansion

areas identified by the strategy.

## Town Centre

The regeneration of the town centre is the top priority for Swindon, according to the council.

"Improving the town centre is the principal way all of Swindon's communities can benefit from planned economic growth," the council says. The Core Strategy highlights:

- At least 90,000 sq m of new office space
- About 1,000 additional homes
- A new bus interchange
- A new 1,000 space car park to the north of the railway line
- A 'green spine' linking Old Town, the town centre and North Star
- A potential university site at North Star
- Old Town promoted for niche shopping and leisure uses

## Wichelstowe

To the south of the town, between Old Town and the M4, Wichelstowe will be the main focus of development for the next decade.

The Core Strategy highlights:

- 4,500 homes
- 12.5 hectares of employment land
- Four local centres, one with a 2,000-2,500 sq m food store
- Rapid transport link to the town centre and a park and ride.

## Commonhead

Permission to develop this gateway



**Blueprint for growth:** Swindon needs to strike a balance between new housing, town centre redevelopment and protecting its rural surroundings

site next to Junction 15 of the M4 was recently deferred by Swindon Council's planning committee.

The Core Strategy allocates the 74.5-hectare site for a mixed-use development and highlights:

- 15 hectares of employment land
- 900 homes
- A local centre
- 5.5 hectares safeguarded for expansion of the Great Western Hospital
- Protection for Coate Water Country Park

## Eastern Villages

The Core Strategy recommends a mixed-used development east of the A419 on land south of South Marston village long seen as Swindon's next area for expansion.

Highlights are:

- 20 hectares of employment land
- 7,500 homes
- A high-quality district centre with 35,000 sq m of office space and an anchor food store of up to 10,000 sq m
- Three local centres
- Leisure centre with swimming pool

## Tadpole Farm

A mixed-use community north of the town which would integrate with existing communities, according to the Core Strategy.

It recommends:

- Five hectares of employment land
- 1,700 homes
- A mixed-use local centre
- A rapid transit link to the town centre
- Sport, leisure and community facilities.

# DELTA500

## TO LET

SHORT TERM  
AGREEMENTS  
AVAILABLE

### 266m<sup>2</sup> 2,866ft<sup>2</sup>

Refurbished. Fully air-conditioned.  
Easy access to M4 and town centre.

**01793 541000**

## TO LET FAIRFORD

### Whelford Lane Industrial Estate

- ◆ New detached warehouse/industrial unit
- ◆ Office on ground and first floor
- ◆ 1,162 m<sup>2</sup> (12,508 ft<sup>2</sup>)
- ◆ Secure fenced yard
- ◆ Flexible terms available

**01793 541000**

## Click here.

Check out the latest updates  
[www.swindon-business.net](http://www.swindon-business.net)

## FOR SALE

### SWINDON

### Industrial/Warehouse

## 3,771 sq.ft.

### (350.4 sq.m.)

PROPERTY CONSULTANTS  
**01793 615477**  
[www.alderking.com](http://www.alderking.com)

## FOR SALE TO LET

GRAFTON ROAD  
BURBAGE, NR MARLBOROUGH  
WILTSHIRE SN8 3BA

### Modern detached workshop/warehouse facility

1,804 sq m (19,420) sq ft on approximately 1.8ha (4.5 acres)

- Potential for further expansion subject to planning consent
- Self-contained site
- Fitted 5 tonne overhead crane

**01793 541000**



• The government has now approved the Local Development Order (LDO) for Victoria Road. The LDO removes the need for planning applications to be made for certain types of business use, such as shops, restaurants, hotels and houses. This order has been put in place with the hope of increasing occupancy rates along the road as well complementing the college redevelopment site by providing flexibility to owners and businesses.

• South West property consultancy Alder King has won the prestigious Estates Gazette's Most Active Agent award for the 10th year in a row after completing the most deals in the region last year. The firm was also specifically recognised for completing the most office and industrial deals. James Gregory, Alder King's Swindon partner, said: "We are very pleased to have secured such a prestigious award, which shows the firm's consistent market-leading performance over the past 10 years."

# Into the unknown

By Paul Whitmarsh MRICS, partner, Whitmarsh Lockhart

The commercial property market in 2011 feels like its moving into the unknown. As always with the wider economy, it is a complex equation which makes it very difficult to be scientific about the future. We are in an uncertain world, in an uncertain economy and therefore it is difficult not to be cautious about the prospects in the industrial/warehouse marketplace.

When we look back to last year the industrial/warehouse marketplace in Swindon was one of the more optimistic and active of any of the commercial property sectors. With 1 million sq ft of take up – well above the yearly average – the town was able to boast a far more robust economy than many had anticipated. Swindon may be an ugly duckling but at least we can swim!

Take up in the first quarter of 2011 has been 172,000 sq ft, which has put us in line to have an average year by industrial/warehouse standards.

The most notable deals have been Polymer Logistics taking 61,000 sq ft at Radway Road on

## Steady progress shows that the commercial property market is slowly 'creeping' back

Europa Park, Unit A Europark let to Microlights as it expands and relocates from Marlborough, and a children's entertainment operation signing up on the Spectrum showroom at Rivermead.

There have also been a further 12 transactions all under 5,000 sq ft on a range of units across the town.

In the next quarter we will see the completion of the B&Q warehouse at Gazeley's G.Park site on Highworth Road, South Marston. This totals 800,000 sq ft on 44 acres and, come what may, will put a very rose-coloured tint on the take up and market activity this year, bearing in mind it is more than the average annual total take up in one



Paul Whitmarsh

building! With G.Park's site infrastructure now complete, South Marston will be able to provide a further 35 acres of serviced development land.

As for the rest of 2011 and accepting the B&Q deal, my prediction is for an average year. There are a number of larger inquiries in the marketplace of between 60-100,000 sq ft and the prospects of some of these landing in Swindon are good at this moment.

However, money will still be difficult to find. Friendly bank managers, while still willing to lunch, will study very carefully any situations before lending.

It is important to remember that there is no quick fix to a recession and the commercial property market has a habit of 'creeping' back slowly over a number of years. We will therefore have to be patient. But I do not anticipate market circumstances deteriorating.

## FOR SALE/TO LET

JUNCTION 17 M4



**Workshop with Yard**  
**4,550 sq.ft. (422.71 sq.m.)**  
**on 0.91 acres (0.37 ha)**

**alder king**  
PROPERTY CONSULTANTS  
**01793 615477**  
[www.alderking.com](http://www.alderking.com)

## Boutique hotel brought to market

The Best Western Sudbury House Hotel at Faringdon has been put on the market for offers in excess of £2 million.

Set in nine acres of grounds, the hotel opened in 1991 and has 49 bedrooms, a restaurant and conferencing facilities.

It attracts a range of leisure and corporate business from Swindon and Oxford.

The hotel (pictured right), is being marketed by Christie & Co.

Jeremy Jones, director at Christie & Co said:

"Opportunities such as Sudbury House rarely come to the market. An excellent trading location. Close to both Oxford and the Cotswolds and a large freehold site means that we are anticipating a strong response to our sales campaign."



**DELTA**  
**1200**

DELTA OFFICE PARK SWINDON



**TO LET**

up to 20,825 sq ft

A highly specified, modern two storey office building on an established business park with excellent amenities.

Flexible terms available.

[www.delta1200.co.uk](http://www.delta1200.co.uk)

**Hartnell TaylorCook**  
LLP

**0117 923 9234**  
[www.htc.uk.com](http://www.htc.uk.com)

**Keningtons**  
Chartered Surveyors

**01793 423 351**  
[www.keningtons.com](http://www.keningtons.com)

**Ash, Birch & Redwood**  
Quality units on flexible terms **Kembrey Park**

**To Let**  
Units available from  
1,000 - 15,000 sq.ft.

**King Sturge**  
**0117 927 6691**  
[www.kingsturge.com](http://www.kingsturge.com)

**alder king**  
PROPERTY CONSULTANTS  
**01793 615477**  
[www.alderking.com](http://www.alderking.com)

**loveday and loveday**  
**01793 423344**  
[www.lovedayandloveday.co.uk](http://www.lovedayandloveday.co.uk)



*B&Q's distribution centre at G.Park is only weeks away from completion*



## Car firms drive interest in Gazeley's warehouses

Motor industry companies are among potential occupiers interested in taking two large warehouse buildings planned for developer Gazeley's 98-acre G.Park scheme at South Marston.

With construction of B&Q's 800,000 sq ft warehouse on target to finish within weeks, attention is now focusing on the 440,000 sq ft and 110,000 sq ft buildings. Gazeley has appointed three agents to market the buildings on a pre-let basis - and according to Charles Blake, G.Park development director, inquiries are already coming through.

G.Park is directly opposite Honda's 370-acre South Marston production site, giving supplier firms an easy route into the car and engine plants to fit in with the car maker's just-in-time assembly methods.

Mr Blake said inquiries have also come from suppliers to BMW's Mini plant which is only a mile away from G.Park at Stratton.

"We are seeing quite a bit of interest from businesses in the car industry. There aren't many buildings of these sizes about to come onto the market which are so close to Honda

and BMW. We are also getting inquiries from other types of occupiers. We are very pleased with the response so far which is a lot to do with G.Park's location."

While the two pre-lets are large by usual standards, they are dwarfed by B&Q's warehouse, which will distribute directly to the DIY chain's outlets across the South of England.

B&Q will take ownership of the giant £70 million building - the largest warehouse under construction on the M4 corridor - within weeks, well ahead of the original scheduled handover in June. The distinctive blue building will be fitted out with racking to B&Q's own specification and will be fully stocked and operational for Easter next year.

By that time around 600 people will be working there.

Jonathan Fenton-Jones, Gazeley

global procurement and sustainability director, praised construction firm McLaren for rising to the challenge and completing the building earlier than expected - especially as several days were lost to snow and ice before Christmas.

"At one time the temperature on the site was minus 11," said Mr Fenton-Jones. "So all credit to McLaren for working in partnership with us to deliver such a huge building on a 44-acre site within seven months."

The warehouse boasts a number of green features, including an energy panel above the loading doors which will heat or ventilate the building, rainwater harvesting and low-energy lighting controlled by daylight sensors and motion detectors. Concrete has come from a nearby plant and local aggregates and recycled materials have been used. The development also includes a 16,000 sq ft recycling depot which will handle packaging and other material from B&Q stores, including shredding and crushing.

Gazeley is also planting 500 trees at G.Park and is contributing £700,000 to the Great Western Community Forest.

Agents for the two new buildings are Lambert Smith Hampton, Whitmarsh Lockhart and Burbage Realty.

• HM Revenue & Customs' (HMRC) public enquiry centre in Chippenham has moved to a new location.

The enquiry centre is now located with Wiltshire Council at the Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham.

Bob Gaiger, of HM Revenue & Customs, said: "We have moved across town and are pleased to be sharing facilities with Wiltshire Council."

The enquiry centre will continue to provide free help and advice to local people and businesses on a whole range of services including: income tax, national insurance, tax credits, the Business Payment Support Service, VAT, pensions and self assessment along with many other topics.

Anyone wishing to make an appointment should pre-book through the Taxes Helpline on 0845 300 0627.

## In Gear

• Fish Brothers Nissan in Swindon is inviting customers to see how far they can go in 24 hours with Nissan's new Micra test drive. A first for the compact car category, the 24-hour test drive provides drivers with the opportunity to put the new Nissan Micra and all of the iconic city car's features to the test. And there's no restriction where customers can go. With improved fuel efficiency and up to 593 miles between fill-ups, Micra test drivers can indulge in a trip to the coast, visit family and friends or simply go about their daily routine - it's entirely up to them. For more information about the new Nissan Micra or to take a 24-hour test drive offer, contact Fish Brothers on 01793 645510



• Dick Lovett has revealed the first details of its new Ferrari and Maserati showroom to be built in Swindon. The showroom will be one of the first in the UK to display

Ferrari's new corporate identity for 2011 and to feature a fully-detailed 'Atelier' for both Ferrari and Maserati to assist clients with the personalisation of their new car. The showroom will also feature a double-story used car showroom with space for up to 50



cars, ensuring that customers get the best choice when searching for their dream car.

• Fleet management provider Arval has won the Leasing Company of the Year and the Best Product or Service awards at the prestigious Fleet News awards. The Leasing Company of the Year award recognises the best contract hire and leasing company for 2010. The judges were looking for companies that provided benefit to fleet decision-makers over and above that of the competition. They were particularly looking for a focus on services, cost reduction, environmental initiatives, safety and risk management and innovative products. The Best New Product or Service award was given to Swindon-based Arval for its Grey Fleet Calculator which stood out by providing effective support to fleets in managing the complex area of grey fleet. The term 'grey fleet' relates to any vehicle which is owned by the employee but is used for work related journeys. Designed and built by the Arval Consultancy Team, it allows customers to model their company's grey fleet travel in a simple, logical and structured way covering the areas of cost, emissions and risk.

• The BMW Group has achieved new record highs for revenues and earnings in 2010, with revenues climbing by 19.3% to euro 60,477 million (2009: euro 50,681 million) and the profit before tax (EBT) jumping to euro 4,836 million (2009: euro 413 million). The Group reports a profit before financial result (EBIT) of euro 5,094 million (2009: euro 289 million) and a record net profit for the year of euro 3,234 million (2009: euro 210 million).

For the latest news on Motoring,  
visit our website at  
[www.swindon-business.net](http://www.swindon-business.net)





**TO LET**  
MODERN HIGH QUALITY  
OFFICE ACCOMMODATION  
**5,072 - 10,354 SQ FT**

**BUILDING TWO**  
DRAKES MEADOW • DRAKES WAY • SWINDON SN3 3LL

**EDGE OF TOWN CENTRE LOCATION  
OUT OF TOWN ENVIRONMENT**

- UP TO 38 CAR PARKING SPACES
- SPACIOUS RECEPTION AREA
- FULLY ACCESSED RAISED FLOORS
- MALE, FEMALE AND DISABLED WCs ON BOTH FLOORS
- RECESSED LG3 LIGHTING
- AIR CONDITIONING
- PASSENGER LIFT





01442 263033  
[www.brasierfreeth.com](http://www.brasierfreeth.com)



01793 423 351  
[www.keningtons.com](http://www.keningtons.com)





## -Budget 2011: Our Expert Panel's Verdict-



Jonathan Payne, senior partner at law firm Thrings



Gary Mealing, president, Swindon Chamber of Commerce



Sara Tye, owner of public relations agency, RedheadPR



Chris Elias, commercial director, Barclays Corporate



Dominic Bourquin, tax specialist at Monahans chartered accountants

**"It is clearly a Budget designed to help small and medium enterprises to help the economy"**

Chancellor George Osborne put business at the heart of his Budget with a pledge to make the UK the best place in Europe to start, finance and grow a business while fuelling growth in the wider economy.

Measures aimed at helping small firms include a 2 per cent cut in Corporation Tax in April, against the 1 per cent as previously planned, scrapping £350m of red tape and freeing firms employing fewer than 10 people from new regulations for three years.

Mr Osborne also extended the business rate relief holiday for small firms for a further year and increased

**"I'm pleased with fuel duty reductions and the commitment to re-double the Swindon-Kemble line"**

research and development tax credits to 200 per cent with a pledge to further extend them to 225 per cent.

Good news for Swindon included a commitment to re-double the rail line to Kemble and a further boost in apprentice numbers – vital to the town as it aims to overcome a large rise in youth unemployment.

But the Chancellor had to deliver the Budget against a backdrop of a sluggish economy, rising inflation and weakening tax revenues and he had to admit that the forecasts are not good – the economy is now expected to grow by just 1.7 per cent against an expected 2.1 per cent this year while inflation is likely to remain stubbornly at between

**"This is an aggressive move to increase the UK's international competitiveness."**

4 and 5 per cent.

Dominic Bourquin, tax specialist at Monahans chartered accountants, said that overall it appeared to be a positive Budget for business.

"The Chancellor announced a further 1 per cent cut in the main rate of corporation tax to 26 per cent from April," he said. "This, along with an extension to the business rates holiday for small businesses to October 2012, the scrapping of £350m of business regulations and increased small companies' R&D allowances to 200 per cent and then to 225 per cent gives us a positive outlook for business."

"Also, anyone looking to sell a business will benefit from a doubling of the entrepreneur's relief lifetime allowance to £10m, potentially saving them up to £1.8m in tax."

Jonathan Payne, senior partner at law firm Thrings, added: "It is clearly a Budget designed to help small and medium enterprises to help the economy. Welcome reductions in the rate of Corporation Tax, a doubling of entrepreneurs relief to £10m and significant increases in the Enterprise Investment Scheme should all help investment in business."

"The creation of further apprenticeships and an extension of the work experience scheme should also help our manufacturing base as well as going a small way to reduce the alarming rises in youth unemployment."

Gary Mealing, president of

**"The Corporation Tax cut, by 2% instead of 1%, is a good news story for businesses."**



Swindon Chamber of Commerce, welcomed the business-friendly measures, particularly those cutting small firms free from regulation.

"Having had time to reflect on the detail it is good to see action to reduce fuel duty, an increase in R&D tax credits for small companies and a reduction in corporation tax. There is clearly a need to do more to help young people kick-start good careers. More apprenticeships are welcome, but they must be high-quality and easy for businesses to access. More funded work experience placement will also help many people get a first taste of life in the private sector."

"I do not expect that we will see any benefit in Swindon from the creation of Enterprise Zones. Their creation brings into focus the need for Swindon to make sure we have good representation through the Local Enterprise Partnership framework so we have a voice and access to funds to

**"The extension of the rates holiday for small businesses to October '12 is positive."**

support the growth of our businesses."

For Sara Tye, owner of specialist public relations agency RedHeadPR, the highlight of the Budget was the 2 per cent cut in Corporation Tax and the ambition to make British companies the lowest taxed of the G7 nations.

"This is an aggressive move to increase the UK's international competitiveness. And very welcomed," she said.

The three-year exemption for small firms from new business regulations was "a nice touch" but had not been backed up with details of how these businesses would really benefit.

"The fuel duty reductions are unlikely to make a significant difference to many motorists – even less to businesses," Sara added. "This is just not enough to help businesses over the next six months trade while keeping costs down."

Chris Elias, commercial director, Swindon from Barclays Corporate said: "While some of the measures outlined in the Budget such as the accelerated reduction in corporation tax will have a real and almost immediate impact on companies, the most important aspect of this Budget is the positive signals it sends to a corporate sector which has been seeking both stability and reassurance from Government around its underlying stance towards business."

"Business investment is going to be a key factor in how much economic growth we can achieve this year."



### Jewel in the Crown

Winner of the Newby Tiffin Cup, beating 74 other Indian restaurants in a competition staged in the House of Commons

TELEPHONE (01793) 522687

15/16 Victoria Road, Swindon, Wiltshire

www.jewelinthecrown.co.uk

15% discount on all takeaways

Bookings strongly recommended

Open 7 days including bank holidays

Lunchtime 12 - 2:30pm - Evenings 5:30 - Midnight

## THE NEWS BACK THEN

### 5 years ago (April 2006)

- Swindon Chamber of Commerce failure fuels competition to scoop up its membership
- South West economy grows at its fastest rate for 19 months
- The Medical research Council takes 26,000 sq ft of space at North Star

### 10 years ago (April 2001)

- The threat on a recession looms
- Foot and Mouth disease hits the profits of local firms

### 15 years ago (April 1996)

- Plessey Semiconductors expands to a 27,000 sq ft site
- Property sales at the new Abbey Meads residential area begin to soar
- Unemployment in Swindon rises to 5.4 per cent.

### 20 years ago (April 1991)

- Local firm, Interference Technology International Consultants (ITIC) appointed to be the sole 'electromagnetic consultants' for Channel Tunnel project