

SWINDON BUSINESS NEWS

01793 615393

www.swindon-business.net

info@swindon-business.net



'Why Swindon is great for business'

Page 9

Pioneering housing scheme wins award

Page 13

**Coming in August
Swindon Business News
Green Special**

Call us now to find out more.

News Brief

Civic 'best value' car

Honda's Swindon-built Civic 1.4 i-VTEC SE has been recognised as representing the best value for money.

The car was judged overall winner in the annual Parkers Cost of Motoring New Car Awards. It also topped the competitive Medium Hatchback category on the basis that it offers better value than any of its competitors over a three year period.

Full story: In Gear Page 15

CPC wins Norwich work

Print, packaging and software publishing firm CPC, based in Malmesbury, is helping Norwich in its bid to become England's first UNESCO City of Literature. The firm has printed and finished the city's bid document - an innovative work of art packaged in hand screen-printed wrapping paper and using three economic paper stocks for a range of textures, with high-quality pages containing spreads of imagery.

AXA offloads Bluefin

Bluefin Corporate Consulting, the employee benefits business with an office in Swindon, has been sold by parent group AXA to Capita in a £50m deal. The firm will become part of Capita's pensions business Capita Hartshead.

AXA will retain the Bluefin trading name. Bluefin's other operations, including Bluefin Insurance Group, which is core to AXA's Commercial Lines operation, and Bluefin Personal Consulting.

Coming up...

In May Swindon Business News will analyse Swindon's strength in manufacturing in the light of efforts by the Government to support the sector. This major feature will profile the success stories and the organisations that support them. May's issue will also look at the latest trends in employee benefits and leadership and business coaching, and put direct marketing under the spotlight. We will also focus on the best conference venues and business hotels around Swindon.

South West's most active agent for the last 11 years

alder king

PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

01793 615477
www.alderking.com

New Swindon promotion gets underway

A major campaign to promote Swindon as a vibrant business location has been launched, built around the town's strengths in advanced engineering, hi-tech and research.

The campaign by Forward Swindon, the company responsible for economic growth and regeneration, is the biggest initiative of its kind since the inward investment heyday of the 1980s which resulted in major employers such as Honda and Intel setting up in the town.

The campaign will focus on Swindon's strengths, including its M4 corridor location, excellent transport links, skilled and flexible workforce, engineering heritage and new hi-tech business.

It comes at a critical time for Swindon, which has failed to attract any largescale new business investment for several years while suffering a spate of closures and job losses that have forced up unemployment, particularly among young people.

Swindon's image has also suffered - with no major office or retail development in the town centre for decades.

However, Forward Swindon and Swindon Borough Council believe the town has now turned the corner with a number of new investments either underway or poised to start, including:

- Developer Muse's 17-acre Union

Square town centre scheme which will include 450 homes, 600,000 sq ft of high-quality offices. Work on the old police station site has started

- Demolition of the derelict Swindon College building at Regent Circus, which is about to start, to make way for Ashfield Land's £50m leisure scheme, including a six-screen cinema and supermarket.

- A £65m refurbishment of the Oasis Leisure Centre by Moirai Capital Investments which will trigger a full scale redevelopment of North Star as a national leisure destination.

- New masterplan to regenerate the town centre, including possible art gallery and industrial heritage centre

- Possible £7m University Technical College based in the former railway workshops in London Street

- Electrification of the railway line to London, doubling of the Kemble line and possible direct rail link to Heathrow.

The first two stages of Forward Swindon's campaign is the launch of a new business investment service and new website which will promote the town to UK and international businesses, giving all the information they need to encourage them to locate and invest in Swindon. The website - www.swindon.uk.com - provides a



Part of Forward Swindon's new website

PA of the Year awards launched

Calling all PAs - and their bosses. We are looking for the PAs who go the extra mile in helping their organisations reach their potential, who make a real difference to their managers and who play key roles in delivering excellence in the workplace.

Swindon Business News has teamed up with Ston Easton Park Hotel, near Bath, to stage the South West PA

of the Year Awards on July 4 when the winners will receive their accolades following a champagne tea on the hotel's beautiful terrace.

The closing date for the awards is June 17, 2012.

For more details on the Awards, sponsorship opportunities and information on how to enter go to www.swindon-business.net

comprehensive range of information about Swindon as a prime location for business.

Forward Swindon head of communications and marketing Julia Falcon said: "Awareness of Swindon's success is low - hence the need for a new website and campaign."

The town can boast a healthy 11% of employment in manufacturing - the highest of any town in the South West, and more than Reading or Milton Keynes, which are often considered competitor centres.

An independent survey for Forward Swindon of senior business people based outside Swindon and Wiltshire captured their perceptions and knowledge of the town which helped

the campaign team create relevant marketing messages. A key finding was that there is low awareness of Swindon in the target group.

Julia added: "Some of the insights were particularly encouraging, for example, 79% of business people rate Swindon's prime location on the M4 corridor very highly."

"But the research revealed low awareness of Swindon's other assets, such as our high productivity, affordable premises and the companies already flourishing here."

Many of these compelling aspects will be priorities for the campaign, creating the right image of the town as a superb location to set up or expand a business.

Looking for a friendly, professional and local office products supplier to deliver great service and value for money?

Call Accord Office Supplies on:
01793 541500

Your office.
Our passion.
www.accordoffice.co.uk

24/7 ONLINE ORDERING | ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY | THE PERSONAL TOUCH

ORCHARD PRESS LIMITED

FOR ALL YOUR PRINTING REQUIREMENTS

Try Us, You'll Love Us!

e: jason.grubb@orchard-press.co.uk | t: 01793 420 642 | w: www.orchard-press.co.uk

SWINDON BUSINESS NEWS






26 Wood Street, Swindon
Wiltshire SN1 4AB

Telephone: 01793 615393

Fax: 01793 610553

Email: info@swindon-business.net

Web: www.swindon-business.net

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Editor</i> Robert Buckland |  |
| <i>Production Editor</i> Owen Fishwick |  |
| <i>Business Development Manager</i> Anita Jaynes |  |
| <i>Office Manager</i> Jackie Hall |  |
| <i>Sales Executive</i> Claudia Carr |  |
| 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 newsletters: Swindon Business Newsletter; Bristol Business Newsletter; Bath Business Newsletter and Estates West Bulletin, a property deals newsletter. If you are interested in receiving a free sample please call 01793 615393. | |

County**Business**Publishing
Swindon**Business**News
Bristol**Business**News
Bath**Business**News

People

• Global insurer Zurich has appointed **Gary Shaughnessy** as CEO of its Swindon-based UK Life business with effect from June. Gary joins from Fidelity Worldwide Investment where he has been managing director, UK Defined Contribution and Retail Business, since 2008. His appointment has been approved by the FSA. He will report to David Sims who, in addition to being CEO Zurich Global Life in Europe, has been interim CEO for Zurich's UK Life business since Michael Brennan retired last August. David said: "Gary brings with him a wealth of experience which will allow him to build on the success of the UK Life business, and is perfectly placed to lead the business as we move forwards with our platforms." In his current role Gary is responsible for Fidelity's retail funds and Investment Trust business, including IFA, banks and wholesale distribution; FundsNetwork, the UK's third-largest investment platform; the Defined Contribution and workplace business; and the direct to consumer arm, with 250,000 customers. He is also a member of Fidelity's Global Operating Committee. Gary, 46, has also worked in senior roles at Prudential UK and M&G Investments. "This is a time of enormous change for UK consumers, intermediaries and employers, with increased regulation, personal tax complexity and the transfer of health and retirement responsibility onto the individual all taking place at the same time," he said



impressed by Zurich's ambition to lead the re-shaping of financial services in the UK."

Gary's background is in marketing and distribution, with previous roles spanning the broad financial services market at AXA, the Automobile Association and the Bank of Scotland.

• Arkell's, the Swindon-based family-owned brewery has appointed 26-year old **Alex Arkell** as head brewer – the first family member to take on the role for several generations. The brewery was started by John Arkell in 1843 and has been in the same family's hands since – surviving the mass of takeovers and mergers that has revolutionised the pub trade over recent decades. For the past six months Alex has been working alongside Arkell's former head brewer Don Bracher, who retired earlier this month after 20 years in the role. But, as the son of chairman James Arkell and brother of director George, he was always likely to enter the brewing business.



• Synergy Health, the Swindon-based provider of outsourced sterilisation services, has made a number of changes to its board. **Robert Lerwill**, who has served as a non-executive director since January 2005 and as non-executive chairman since September 2010, is to stand down on June 7 to coincide with publication of the company's preliminary results for the year to March 31. Sir Duncan Nichol, senior independent director, will then take up the role of chairman. Mr Lerwill said: "It has been a privilege to have contributed as a board

member as Synergy has gone from strength to strength and from an AIM to a FTSE-250 company under CEO Richard Steeves' leadership." Synergy supplies the global medical device market and healthcare sector.



Caroline Bee and Richard Formby

• Chartered accountants Monahans, which has offices in Swindon and Chippenham, has recruited **Caroline Bee** as manager in its fast-growing forensic services team. Caroline is returning to the practice having originally qualified with Monahans after leaving university and working in corporate finance. She returns after working within senior management at Wiltshire Council, latterly as head of finance and procurement. She brings with her experience of dealing with complex and sensitive issues in a clear, concise and robust manner. Caroline is also celebrating being recently accepted as a Fellow of The Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Contacts

| | |
|---|--|
| Forward Swindon 01793 429250 | Bristol Airport 0871 334 4344 |
| 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 |

SWINDONBUSINESSNEWS

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

For advertising
contact
Anita Jaynes
on
01793 615393

Click here.

SBN

Check out the latest updates
www.swindon-business.net

Events

- **Active @ Work**
WHEN: Thursday April 19, 10am-12pm
WHERE: Jurys Inn, Swindon
CONTACT: 01793 433571
- **Business Biscotti Swindon**
WHEN: Last Friday of the month – between 9.30am and 11.30am
WHERE: Basepoint, Rivermead, Swindon.
CONTACT: Andy Entwistle on 07941 041364 or email andyentwistle@salientsales.co.uk or visit www.businessbiscotti.co.uk
- **North Wiltshire Business Ladies Club Lunch**
WHEN: Tuesday April 24, 12:15pm
WHERE: Bowood Golf and Country Club
CONTACT: Nynke Hunter 01249 766966
- **Swindon Business Networking**
WHEN: Wednesday April 25, 8am-10am
WHERE: The Sun Inn, Swindon
CONTACT: www.4networking.biz
- **Business-Scene**
WHEN: Thursday April 26, 6pm-8:30pm
WHERE: Jurys Inn Swindon
CONTACT: www.business-scene.com
- Send your events to Swindon Business News to info@swindon-business.net

Retail Academy launched at Brunel shopping centre



Swindon's Brunel shopping centre has launched an innovative new initiative aimed at helping store staff develop their business and retail skills.

The Brunel Retail Academy, believed to be the first shopping centre-led scheme in the UK, opened last month. Its programme of monthly, free, half-day courses cover topics from recruitment skills to visual display training and e-marketing to operations planning.

Visual display training firm Made You Look staged the first session which attracted an impressive turnout representing more than a fifth of the Brunel's tenants.

The programme is designed to help owner-operated independent stores and while the majority of attendees came from these shops, staff from some of the more established high street names, including Lush and Shuopody, also took the opportunity of free development training.

Louise Norton, manager of vintage clothing store Revolve, said: "The session was very good and gave me lots of new ideas and contacts for props and display items."

"We're going to be building on what we're already doing by adding more colour and lighting to our window displays to make us stand out more. It was good to know that we were going in the right direction with what we were doing previously as well."

A large number of the courses will be delivered as a part of a new partnership between The Brunel and Swindon College, through which NVQ students will use empty units to practice their merchandising skills.

Alliance profits hit by poor sales of anti-inflammatory drug

Lower sales of its Deltacortril anti-inflammatory drug have hit annual pre-tax profits at Chippenham-based specialist pharmaceutical company Alliance Pharma.

Deltacortril sales tumbled from £13.5m in 2010 to £4.7m last year as rival products entered the market. That reduced total sales at Alliance by 8% from £49.9m to £46m – but the group said the reduction was anticipated and, stripping out the lower contribution from the drug, underlying sales rose 13%.

Pre-tax profits came in at £10.7m against £12.9m the previous year.

Chairman Michael Gatenby said: "The underlying growth of our business remains strong and cash generation remains healthy. We were particularly pleased with the sales growth of our promoted products coupled with the dependable sales of our core products. We successfully completed three acquisitions during the year and continue to seek and evaluate further acquisition opportunities."

The three acquisitions made last year added 10 products, with annualised sales of £4.7m, to its portfolio.

Free jobs fair at Minton Place

Businesses are being the chance to promote themselves and their career opportunities to jobseekers at an event hosted by adult learning provider TBG Learning Swindon.

The free jobs fair takes place at TBG Minton Place base on Station Road on June 20 from 10am to 2pm.

TBG Learning is delivering the Government's Work Programme on behalf of Rehab JobFit by helping the long-term unemployed into work through a bespoke package of support and assistance.

Helen Saunders, of TBG Learning, said advisors will also be on hand to offer CV writing tips, interview techniques and training to jobseekers during the event.

"This event will be a good chance for businesses in the area to have one-on-one chats with jobseekers registered with us," she said.

A number of businesses have already pledged to attend the jobs fair and recruit for vacancies including bakery chain Gregg's Alexandra House Conference Centre at Wroughton, Menzies Hotel Swindon and independent home care providers Agincare.

Businesses interested in attending or seeking more information should contact Helen at TBG Learning Swindon on 01793 684 444.



Last year's graduates: Claire Faulconbridge, Tim Knott, Natasha McKinven and Christopher Watkins

Outsource UK to recruit more trainees to support expansion

An innovative training scheme to develop a new generation of consultants to work in the IT recruitment industry is re-launching next month.

Outsource UK, the Swindon-based IT recruitment specialist, first ran the trainee recruitment consultant scheme last year to nurture its own raw talent and to support the company's continuous expansion.

The firm took on five high-calibre trainees from diverse backgrounds and with different skill sets, four of whom have stayed on and qualified as fully-trained recruitment consultants.

Now Outsource is looking to repeat the scheme and take on a further four trainees.

Its recruitment and training manager Anna Stretch said: "We were delighted with the response to our scheme and

have been pleased with the high level of drive and commitment shown."

"It's a win-win situation. Young people are given the opportunity to work in a progressive industry, and at Outsource UK we get great new recruits who we can train to the highest standards."

Last year's successful trainees were Claire Faulconbridge, who has a business degree with a working background in hospitality; Tim Knott, a graduate and qualified teacher; Christopher Watkins, who has a history degree and customer service experience; and Natasha McKinven, an art and design graduate with several years' retail experience.

Claire said: "I joined the trainee scheme after spending many years in the hospitality industry and have never looked back. The trainee scheme was

fantastic as it gave me a strong understanding of all areas of the work of a recruitment consultant and enabled me to hit the ground running on graduation."

Natasha added: "Since starting the trainee scheme at Outsource I have learnt so much and so quickly. It has been really refreshing that a company can give people from any background a chance to build a new career."

All consultants at Outsource have the option of taking a professional recruitment qualification through the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC), the industry's governing body, once they have completed a year's service with the company.

Outsource specialises in providing IT recruitment services both on a contract and permanent basis to a range of industries in the UK and Europe.

Brighter outlook at SciSys as it boosts profits and dividends in tough market

Specialist software firm SciSys has

signalled confidence in the future by raising its annual dividend 10% on the back of a rise in pre-tax profits from £1.57m to £2m in 2011.

The Chippenham-based company, which has a base in Bristol, develops information and communications technology services, e-business and advanced technology solutions serving the environment and utilities sectors. Its customers and partners range from the European Space Agency to Cable & Wireless Worldwide, the BBC and the Ministry of Defence.

Chief executive David Jones said 2011 had been another successful year with professional fees up 11%. Total revenues dropped slightly (from £43.5m to £42.8m) as the lower margin revenue associated with project subcontracts and licences dropped. But, he added, operating margins rose to 6% demonstrating real progress in achieving the SciSys strategic objective of achieving operating margins of 7% by the end of 2013.

He said: "I believe we have delivered a very creditable performance for the year in the face of very challenging market conditions and economic uncertainty. SciSys has delivered an adjusted operating profit before tax of £2.4m, a 14% improvement on 2010."

"Significantly, cash inflows have remained healthy and the company's balance sheet has further strengthened such that borrowings secured to fund the acquisition of the company's head office freehold premises in May 2011 for £5m were balanced by cash deposits at the year

end."

Chairman Dr Mike Love, who stepped back to the role of non-executive chairman during 2011, said: "Despite all the challenges faced during 2011, both economic and political, I am very pleased that the group was able to produce such good results. Our opening order book, some of which stretches out to 2013 and beyond, is strong, and by balancing opportunities for new business across five diverse markets we are in a reasonable position to



Mike Love

counteract the risk of any further downturn in any particular market sub-sectors."

He said that going into 2012 SciSys has a wider and more diversified client base adding that the group, which has a German arm, derives 50% of its revenues from outside the UK. It also has foreign currency hedging arrangements in place to guard against any unexpected rapid appreciation of the pound against the euro. He said: "We remain confident that the group will make good progress during the year in line with our stated strategies, although a slower start to 2012 compared with 2011 leads us to remain cautious about what may lie ahead for the remainder of the year."

The PR and Marketing specialists

- PR and marketing campaigns
- Branding, advertising and design
- Marketing materials
- Promoting your business using digital media
- Media relations

www.voxonline.co.uk

VOX Swindon: 01793 511990
VOX Bristol: 0117 299 3301



Profits double as construction firm beats trend with best year so far

The construction industry might still be in the doldrums but Swindon-based Beard Construction has had its best year ever with turnover up 28 per cent to £59m and profits doubled to £1.7m for the year ending December 2011.

The company believes that adjusting early to what it calls a 'new market reality' with a focus on doing the basics really well, with an absolute commitment to high-quality, snag-free projects, delivered on time, have been crucial. Beard calls this 'prompt and faultless delivery'.

Construction director Marc Bayley said: "Understanding the changing climate, adapting quickly with streamlined processes and maintaining an enthusiastic workforce are helping us to succeed. Above all it's about delivering projects to a much higher standard and doing the basics really well."

"Investing in our people with extensive leadership programmes and training, creating our own 'happiness index' which we have been running for



A completed Beard project in Lydiard Millicent

over 13 months and focussing on making our service-orientated business model even stronger, are all ways we try to make a difference."

Although contracts have



Marc Bayley

reduced in size and competition has increased, the company believes there are still plenty of untapped opportunities. Beard remains very busy in the defence and education sectors having recently completed a new primary school at Lydiard Millicent, near Swindon. It expects further projects as pressure grows on primary schools to provide more places over the next couple of years.

Quiz night for charity to raise funds

Swindon-based Banks Chartered Accountants is kicking off its charity fundraising for 2012 with a quiz night.

The event, on April 19, will be the first in a series of fundraising events during the year in aid of the town's Prospect Hospice.

Last year Banks, based in Old Town, raised more than £2,500 for Wiltshire Young Carers.

Banks director Neil Elsdon says he hopes to bring in even more this year. "Last year was the first time we had supported a charity, and we held a number of fundraisers including a golf tournament and entering a team in the Swindon Half Marathon," he said.

"We hope to hold more events and so bring in even more this year. By supporting the Prospect Hospice we'll again be helping a really worthwhile, local charity."

Teams are invited to enter the quiz, which is at Swindon Town Football Club, starting at 7pm. Entry is £5 per head, with a maximum of eight per team. To enter contact Tracey Heath on 01793 616284.

• Staff from utility group RWE npower's Swindon head office raised a record £16,234 for Macmillan Cancer Support by taking part in a 10 kilometre run. More than 120 employees pounded the pavements to beat last year's total of £16,000.

Chief executive Volker Beckers joined the runners along with Macmillan's head of high value Charles Byrne.

RWE npower charity manager Ruth Worton said: "This year's Swindon race was bigger and better than ever before and we're delighted to have beaten last year's fundraising total."

"Macmillan is an organisation close to many of the runners' hearts and it's thanks to their hard work that we have been able to continue supporting Macmillan's vital work."

Over the past eight years RWE npower's partnership with Macmillan has been valued at more than £5m. Employees have raised money for the charity through large-scale fundraising events like the Swindon 10K run through to individual efforts such as climbing mountains.

Mr Byrne added: "We've been working with RWE npower since 2004 and their employees have always been hugely supportive."

Custom customer management system benefits all at Orchard

A customer relationship management (CRM) system designed exclusively for the printing industry is allowing Orchard Press to invest even more in customer care.

Orchard Press managing director Paul Rowley says that the firm's decision to use the Accura CRM system reflects the great store his staff put on making sure their customers come first at all times.

"All of us at Orchard Press have always taken a real pride in doing a great job for our customers," said Paul.

"We're not the biggest print company in the region, but we've always genuinely wanted to be the very best in our line of business, and so we've put customer service at the heart of everything we do."

"For example, rather than use a courier company to make deliveries, we have our own dedicated van driver, Neil, and customers love him. He will carry deliveries up several flights of stairs for customers, if required, rather than just get them to sign for them at the door – and will even put the deliveries on the shelves if that's what's wanted."

"The Accura customer relationship management system is just another facet of wanting to delight our clients. It means that we have all our customers' details available to all colleagues at all times, so we can react immediately when clients get in touch."

"But as with all the other technology we've invested in, it will never replace our internal experience and expertise. It's a valuable tool, but it's the combination of the personal touch and the human relationships we have with our customers that give us the edge, not the computer program itself."

Orchard Press has a very high customer retention rate – something that can be unusual in an industry that is as highly competitive as theirs.

Paul says the new CRM system is another example of how Orchard Press uses technology intelligently, to satisfy genuine customer needs.

"Our customers already love the benefits of Orchard Online's intelligent stock and storage service that we offer," explained Paul.

"It allows them to be totally in control of their print at the touch of a button, 24/7, and just call off the amount of stock they need at the time, because we will store the rest until they need it. Larger print runs mean lower unit costs, so we save them money – and have happy customers, which is what we want."

For more information call 01793 420 642 or email jason.grubb@orchard-press.co.uk or go to www.orchard-press.co.uk

The key to creating your Dream Home

If you're still dreaming of building your own home, planning to renovate, or have a project that's stalled, and in these uncertain times feel nervous and unsure of how and where to start, then this show is for you.

It has everything you need to make your project a success – from finding the right plot or finance to how to project manage it yourself, and from sourcing suppliers and working with tradesmen to discovering new technologies and energy efficient eco solutions.

Not forgetting a raft of seminars, talks, tours and demos, more than 200 exhibitors, three full scale houses, and a range of industry experts – all on hand to help you, every step of the way. You'll get all of the knowledge, confidence and contacts you need to progress with your project and create your dream home.

Everything you need... under one roof

- How to... sessions, build-system talks, products presentations and case studies
- Free appointments with more than 20 industry professionals in Expert Alley
- Tours of our full-sized renovation house and real-life examples in the Educational Journey
- More than 200 companies in our Exhibitor Area

REGISTER NOW FOR FREE ENTRY*

www.nsbrc.co.uk
or call 0845 223 4455

The National Self Build & Renovation Centre

The National Self Build & Renovation Centre
Lydiard Fields, Swindon, SN5 8UB

* Entry otherwise costs £10 per person and £15 per couple on the day

pens, mouse mats, coasters, USB's, key rings, conference folders, bags, caps, t.shirts, calendars, diaries, desk pads, mugs, umbrellas, awards, calculators, cuff links, magnets, torches, sports bottles, balloons, yo-yo's, pens, mouse mats, coasters, USB's, key rings, bags, conference folders, caps, t.shirts, calendars, diaries, desk pads, mugs, umbrellas, awards, calculators, cuff links

Complete Business Gifts Ltd
Experts in Promotional Merchandise

Let us help you create a lasting impression

Email sales@cbgltd.co.uk www.cbgltd.co.uk Tel. 01249 650869

Thousands of asbestos victims to benefit from Supreme Court decision

Swindon solicitor Brigitte Chandler, one of the UK's leading experts on asbestos law, has welcomed a Supreme Court decision that could allow thousands of insurance claims by families of people who died after exposure to the cancer-inducing material.

The ruling means insurance liability starts at the time an employee was exposed to asbestos, rather than when symptoms appeared.

This helps relatives of workers who died of the cancer mesothelioma make claims on policies, some of which date back to the 1940s. Mesothelioma is often called the Swindon Disease because of the large number of cases among former workers from the town's railway works.

Brigitte Chandler, from Swindon law firm Charles Lucas & Marshall said the Supreme Court ruling was very good news for people who develop asbestos disease and their families.

"The insurers have been trying to argue that the liability should remain with the company in place at the time the illness develops," she said. "The



Brigitte Chandler

problem with this is that most people were exposed to asbestos up to 40, 50 or 60 years ago.

"Many companies who exposed their employees are no longer in existence and the insurance policies have been lost. This means that if the Supreme Court had not given their ruling, many people would no longer have been able to get compensation

as there would have been no company and no insurers to pay them.

"The insurers were paid to provide employer liability cover under statutory regulations and as they were paid to cover this liability, it is only right that they should now have to pay.

"It is good to see such a common sense decision by the Supreme Court. Many people have been waiting for several years for compensation and will now finally receive the monies due to them."

The Supreme Court was asked to rule after judges in lower courts failed to agree. Families had a success in 2008, when the High Court said firms' insurers at the time workers inhaled fibres were liable.

But two years later the Court of Appeal said that in some cases liability was triggered when symptoms developed - which could be decades after exposure.

The new ruling by a panel of five Supreme Court justices states that the disease can be said to have been "sustained" by an employee in the period when it was caused or initiated.

More than meets the eye



Swindon Business News has a simple objective, to provide useful business information which helps you and your staff to run your company or organisation more effectively.

This information can be provided for you in a number of ways, in this multi-media age. You can pick up a copy of our printed publication at many locations around town, or you can get one mailed to you for £25 a year.

Call: 01793 615393

**1982-2012
CELEBRATING 30 YEARS IN
BUSINESS**

www.swindon-business.net

SWINDONBUSINESSNEWS

Tel: 01793 615393

Email: info@swindon-business.net Web: www.swindon-business.net



The legal landscape is constantly changing, making it difficult for directors to keep up with a seemingly endless stream of new rules and regulations. Here, solicitors from Withy King's Commercial team in Swindon highlight a few recent developments.

Business 'common sense' to interpret contracts

When the parties to a commercial contract are in dispute, this will often be due to one of them taking a different view as to the meaning of the terms of the contract between them. A recent Supreme Court case confirmed that the application of business 'common sense' is increasingly relevant in determining the court's approach to the interpretation of commercial contracts in this situation. It is important that businesses bear this in mind when negotiating contracts and, wherever possible, take steps to avoid any ambiguities which would put them at risk if things go wrong.

Don't be bound by accident

The Court of Appeal has said that an enforceable guarantee can be created by an exchange of emails authenticated by the online signature of the guarantor. If you do not want to create such a guarantee while having written negotiations, then it is important to make it clear that you are negotiating subject to contract and do not intend to be bound until a formal document is executed.

A point of interest

In the current climate of cash flow problems and the squeeze on borrowing don't forget the well publicised but seldom used legislation known as the 'Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act' 1998 - as amended. This Act was designed to encourage commercial business to improve on payment days but was not often used by the creditor for fear of alienating the customer. However, in the current economic times it is well worth revisiting your policy on credit control and implementing the legislation.

Whose goods are they anyway?

With the increasing and common problem of companies going into administration / liquidation, suppliers all too often receive the dreaded 'Proof of Debt Claim' form. This invites them to submit details of their outstanding invoice(s) to the Administrator / Liquidator with the usual result of a 'nil dividend' many months down the line. However, if you have a legally binding 'Retention of Title' clause you may be able to reclaim your goods and have priority over other secured and unsecured creditors.

For further information on these or any other business issues, please visit

www.withyking.co.uk

or contact Alex Pyatt, partner in the Commercial team at Withy King in Swindon on 01793 536526, or email alex.pyatt@withyking.co.uk



**Swindon
01793 536526**

**Bath
01225 425731**

**Marlborough
01672 514781**

**Oxford
01865 792300**

Companies House - a vision to become completely electronic

In the age of the paperless office, it appears that Companies House is ditching the documents, abandoning the archives and parting with the paperwork in favour of online filing, writes Vijay Tanna of RSM Tenon.

Expectations initially were that by March 2013, all incorporations and filing of Annual Returns, accounts and main forms will be digital-only (electronic). This will cover the standard company types which represent over 98 per cent of companies on the register and 92 per cent of all transactions by volume. For the remaining company types and transactions, developments will continue but a "paper" option for these will remain until electronic versions are ready. This change was subject to regulations being passed by Parliament after consultation.

However, due to the moratorium on new regulation for small businesses, this will not be reviewed again until the end of 2014. In the meantime, Companies House will devote its resources to improving digital services.

Digital transactions have a number of benefits:

- Filing online saves time.
- It guarantees delivery and means faster processing.
- There is less chance of rejections due to pre-populated data and in-built checks.
- There is an automatic email acknowledgement.
- Other information can be filed including changes to a registered office address, officer/member information as well as company accounts.
- Increased security and reduced risk of fraud. The move to



Vijay Tanna

digital accounts will mean that it is easier for accounts data to be used for analysis, comparisons and benchmarking. Digital services offer significant cost savings over their paper equivalent. Those savings are passed on in full through lower fees – the statutory fees for these services are set on the basis of cost recovery. There is a saving of 25 per cent for electronic incorporation and 50 per cent for electronic annual returns compared to paper-based transactions. The expected savings from lower fees will be more than £2m based on current filing patterns, which can only be good news.

Similarly, VAT returns for the period commencing 01/04/2012 are to be filed electronically with HMRC. For further information please contact: Vijay Tanna on 01793 603300 or email: vijay.tanna@rsmtenon.com

Business lending on the up, says bank

Net lending to businesses across the South West by its wholesale banking and markets division rose 18 per cent last year, Lloyds Bank has said.

Clive Hetherington, the bank's area director, said the figure was encouraging news for the region's larger firms.

"After another challenging year, this result is a clear indication that South West businesses remain financially robust and are poised to take advantage of any upturn," he said.

"There are relatively high levels of liquidity within businesses in the area, which is testament to the strength and foresight of the region's management teams, and many are now in a good position to plan for growth.

He said, however, that business confidence in the region does not yet

match the strength of underlying business health. "Despite our increased lending to medium-sized businesses and the £74bn leant to smaller businesses under the Government's Project Merlin deal, confidence is still being knocked by the eurozone crisis," he said.

Last year Lloyds was involved in a mix of corporate finance and refinancing deals in the region and the bank also witnessed a marked increase in the number of South West customers looking towards overseas growth, particularly in the US.

The bank's specialist trade finance team anticipates an increasingly busy year as customers seek to take advantage of export opportunities, requiring bespoke trade finance packages and currency risk management advice.

On the back of this, the bank is also expecting continued growth in

the food and agri-food sectors which play a key role in the region's economy. The food and drink industry is the single largest manufacturing and retail sector in the South West accounting for 8 per cent of all economic output and Mr Hetherington anticipates opportunities for export will only help to bolster this.

"We are pleased to have reported significant growth in 2011 including completing over 50 new deals, but we need to maintain this momentum into 2012," he said.

"While the wider economic picture remains gloomy, it is pleasing that so far South West corporates are weathering the storm. I remain confident that the region's natural resources and solid skills-base mean it is well placed to be a driving force as the country, eventually, undergoes economic recovery."

Accountants in line for top tax award

Accountants RSM Tenon, who have an office in Swindon, have been shortlisted in the Tax Team in a National Firm category in this year's annual Taxation Awards 2012 - considered the gold standard of excellence within the UK tax industry.

The award is aimed at accountancy firms offering a full tax service from a network of offices across the UK, and that can demonstrate teamwork, commitment, and the ability to give proactive tax advice to clients.

RSM Tenon tax director Sharon Omer-Kaye said: "Over the past two years we have doubled the size of our tax team

and have strengthened our specialist teams on both a national and regional basis.

"In particular in the last year we have grown our VAT team in the South in order help clients manage complex VAT issues. We are immensely proud of our tax team and what we have achieved in the last couple of years, and are confident that the judges will recognise our strengths and attributes."

The result will be announced at the awards ceremony in London on May 24.

RSM Tenon won the National Firm of the Year Award in last year's British Accountancy Awards.



Sharon Omer-Kaye

No better time to apply for funding - but first make sure your proposal is right

Lending from banks is available if the right proposal is put forward, according to Swindon-based Banks Chartered Accountants.

The firm has long held this view but at a recent Business Growth Forum in Swindon, where Banks director Neil Elsdon was on a panel of experts, a major concern was the lack of available funding, which has been constraining the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

With the launch of the National Loans Guarantee Scheme, Neil is convinced there's no better time to apply for finance. "We know from our regular contact with high street lenders that if the right proposal comes in it will succeed," he said.

His advice is to discuss the business requirements with your advisors, including the bank manager, before applying for a loan. "You need to get as much initial input as possible into how a lending deal can be structured, and the level of detail required in the business plan that will be used to support the application," he said. "You will need to be able to explain clearly the reasons for the funding, which will dictate the type of funding facility you require and how it will benefit the business.

"Your accountant will be able to help prepare the necessary financial information, including up-to-date management accounts and a forecast of both the profit and loss account

and cashflow for 12 months. Your accountant should also be able to assist in the final presentation of the application to the bank manager and, because you took the time to discuss the proposal first, there should be no

surprises and no reason for it to be rejected."

For help or advice on applying for a loan, contact Banks Chartered Accountants on 01793 616284 or visit www.banksca.co.uk.



Professional

Successful

Efficient

Effective

Here to help with all your business's financial needs

Call now for a complimentary consultation

01793 616284

We would love for you to join us at our Charity Quiz Night on 19 April in aid of Prospect Hospice. Please visit our website for further details!

www.banksca.co.uk

Changing the way you think about professional advice

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.

265407011009

Positive outlook for private equity



Private equity backed companies expect to increase both turnover and profitability this year despite continuing economic uncertainty and difficult debt markets.

Eight in 10 predict higher turnover while almost three quarters anticipate profits growth, according to a new report from accountants PwC.

There is also good news on employment with 60 per cent of portfolio companies expecting to increase permanent headcount and the same percentage saying their private equity (PE) houses are ready to inject additional capital should it be needed.

The report Supporting UK growth – private equity backed company survey 2012, is based on a survey of management teams from 77 private equity backed companies.

The findings also suggest that PE houses are looking to invest for the longer term, with a view to helping businesses withstand the downturn.

Although the number of PE houses needing to inject additional capital into their businesses has dropped to 27 per cent, compared with 37 per cent in last year's survey, 70 per cent of the management teams this time round said they expected their PE houses to invest for growth. This was most prevalent among the larger companies.

PwC West & Wales corporate finance director Gary Partridge said: "With its focus on growth, private equity has a critical role to play in the UK's recovery and is well aligned with the Government's efforts to rebalance the economy. But 2012 is likely to be another tough year for companies seeking to secure financing and new funding.

"Management teams at PE-backed companies need a clearly defined strategy to achieve their ambitious growth targets. As well as the willingness to invest, they need to focus on efficiencies to give their businesses the best chance to weather the increased uncertainty in the marketplace and improve their EBITDA and bank covenant headroom."

Tom Ayerst, PwC's West & Wales transaction services director, added: "The version of the private equity model that relied on high leverage for its success was a product of the credit boom and private equity now needs to show that it has the ability to adapt and refocus on growth and achieving operational improvements.

"It is no surprise therefore that improving cashflow, reducing costs and seeking efficiencies are now high on management's agenda."

The report notes that reducing costs and seeking efficiencies has moved up to joint third position in this year's ranking of strategic criteria. At the same time, seeking acquisitions and international expansion are both of less importance this year, reflective of the unavailability of funding. The message is that the PE sector is focused on generating growth in the UK economy and is optimistic of achieving it.

Act like a hawk to defend your business

The next 12 months are likely to be extraordinarily tough for businesses as they compete for market share and survive by winning business from others and I can only urge business owners to 'act like hawks' over the coming year ahead, writes Mike Lloyd of HW.

Hawks are birds of prey that vigorously defend their territories, probe for weaknesses and, above all, continually keep an eye on what is going on. Company bosses that are looking for success could do worse than model themselves on hawks.

The first priority is for businesses to keep a beady eye on cash flow and debtors. For most businesses, this is their weak spot. Figures from the payments company BACS revealed that SMEs are owed a total of £33.6bn – a rise of 10 per cent on the previous 12 months and the highest figure since records began in September 2007.

Each SME is owed an average of £39,000 and is waiting as long as two months to get paid. The worst payers are larger businesses which put huge

pressure on smaller concerns that are unable to get credit from the banks.

At the same time, businesses need also to defend their territory. In a declining or static market, the only way you are going to increase turnover is by taking business off someone else. Like a hawk, you have to defend your businesses' own territory and make sure that predators don't move in.

At the same time, you can take advantage of weaker businesses that are lower down the food chain. Weaker companies can provide opportunities for growth and take over. Finally, businesses need to take advantage of any of the "scraps" the government might throw at it. The Chancellor has announced a number of measures that aim to improve access to finance for SMEs. Every morsel helps – provided businesses take advantage of it.

If you would like further information or advice contact Mike Lloyd at HW, Chartered Accountants, Swindon, on 01793 533838 or email mlloyd@hwca.com



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



Ask Peter B

Small Business advice from Peter Bromiley ACA
Technical Director at AMS Accountancy Ltd.

Q. I received a Dividend payment this year and the Dividend Voucher with it included something called a 'Tax Credit'. Is this something I should pay or will it be paid to me?

A. It's neither of the above. Companies who pay out profits to their Shareholders in the form of Dividends must pay tax on these profits **before** issuing the Dividends.

This Tax is then reflected on the Dividend Voucher as a 'Tax Credit' of 1/9th of the Net Dividend - the amount you actually receive when it is paid to you. You should keep the voucher to enter details in your Income Tax Return – but the Tax Credit itself is neither to be paid nor refunded.

However, if your taxable income in the year exceeds the Higher Rate Tax threshold, which is currently £42,475, you will have to pay Tax of 25% on that portion of the Net Dividend over and above £42,475.

This remains relevant for 2012/13 (always ask your accountant before taking action)

If you are looking for a good Accountant - speak to us!

AMS Accountancy Ltd Swindon
T: 01793 818400
W: www.ams-accountancy.co.uk



Jelf benefits from positive start to year

Jelf, the independent consultancy which provides a broad range of insurance, financial services and employee benefits to corporates and individuals, says it "has enjoyed a positive start to the year" and is trading in line with expectations.

Part of Jelf's employee benefits business is located in Wootton Bassett and the Yate-based group has a total of more than 30 branches throughout England and South Wales. These have mainly been added through a spate of acquisitions over recent years, including the 2006 takeover of Auto Business Solutions, based in Chippenham.

It defied the continued economic downturn last year to produce full time pre-tax profits up from £278,000 to £3.2m and also significantly strengthened its balance sheet with net debt down from £7.3m to £3m. According to today's London Stock Exchange statement, its focus remains on margin improvement while net debt continues to reduce in line with management's expectations.

It adds that while the board remains cautious about the economic outlook, it continues to invest in future growth and consider additional investment opportunities. Results for the six months to March 31 will be announced on May 8.

Stand out from the crowd

Flexible workplace solutions to support your business

Options to suit all budgets

Regus
Work your way

From just one person, to an entire department, we provide a whole range of cost-effective, flexible office solutions which can be tailored to your business and to suit any budget.

- Fully equipped offices and virtual office services
- Professional meeting and training rooms
- Drop-in business lounges and day offices
- Over 150 locations across the UK

Find out more about our flexible solutions...

visit us at **www.regus.co.uk** or give us a call **0800 056 1848**

Also available at:

STAPLES

that was easy.™



EQUIPPED OFFICES



VIRTUAL OFFICES



MEETING ROOMS



VIDEO COMMUNICATION



BUSINESS LOUNGES



BUSINESSWORLD

1200 locations | 550 cities | 95 countries



Ant Hodges

The new campaign to promote Swindon as a great place to do business highlights the town's track record for start-ups and flourishing small and medium-sized firms.

Forward Swindon, the economic development company behind the campaign, wants to promote the town's entrepreneurial spirit as much as its location, flexible workforce and other factors which have traditionally attracted multinational businesses.

Here we look at two new and growing firms that think Swindon is a great place to start a business.

HodgesNet

Internet marketing expert Ant Hodges believes many people wrongly see Swindon as a less attractive place to operate a business compared to other major towns and cities up and down the M4 corridor or the Cotswolds.

Ant is adamant that Swindon is a great place to start a business. His new company HodgesNet was launched last summer having previously run a marketing business that closed at the height of the recession and having also been employed as a director of an online agency.

"After my business was closed in 2009, I

found things really tough," he said. "We lost clients due to marketing budgets being slashed in April 2009 and we could not sustain the full service agency model that we were trying to build.

"Last summer I decided to take the risk and set up HodgesNet, this time choosing to niche and focus purely on internet marketing. Jumping back in when the economy is still on its knees was a risk, but one that I am so glad that I took. And I'm thankful I was able to do this in Swindon."

Ant says much of the success of HodgesNet has been a result of his decision to open in Swindon. "Being based in Swindon, means we

'Swindon is a great place to do business. I'd recommend it to any company setting up.'



Liz Ledger

collaboration with other complimentary businesses is something I love about the business community in Swindon."

Total Guides

It may only have been live for a few weeks, but Swindon's newest website has already begun to make a mark in the town.

Total Guide to Swindon (TGtS) is a unique, user-friendly content hub. Launched in early March, it is the brainchild of Swindon businesswoman Liz Ledger and has secured a number of high profile advertisers and strategic partners including Swindon Borough Council, The Brunel Shopping Centre and SUJU nightclub.

Over 4,000 people have registered with the site, which offers a number of regular competitions, including an exclusive iPad 3 giveaway.

Liz, 29, has worked in Swindon for nine years and chose to launch the 'Total Guide to...' brand here despite being offered the chance to start Total Guide to Bristol late last year.

"I love doing business in Swindon," she said. "There are so few towns where you find the kind of camaraderie between local businesses you get here."

"Obviously the economy is struggling at the moment but Swindon has a lot going for it with Honda and Nationwide employing more staff and the town's regeneration taking shape, so I think we should really be shouting about it!"

As well as promoting local businesses, TGtS also offers them social media management and training.

The 'Total Guide to...' brand bridges the gap between business and lifestyle and will be rolled out to a number of different towns and cities across the UK – starting with the South West later this year.

GWP Group celebrates after winning Wiltshire Business of the Year award

Staff at GWP Group are celebrating after winning the prestigious Business of the Year category in the Wiltshire Life Magazine annual awards.

GWP Group is a major UK packaging specialist and exporter based in north Wiltshire and Salisbury, with a turnover of almost £10m and 90 staff.

The group designs and produces highly complex bespoke packaging, protective cases and inserts for valuable equipment, to cater for a range of products including packaging for rockets and submarines, protective packs for delicate surgical instruments, and recyclable delivery boxes for national organic food suppliers.

It comprises four divisions – GWP Packaging, GWP Protective, GWP Conductive and GWP Coatings.

GWP's origins go back to 1990 in Swindon, when its five founding members recognized that the packaging industry's traditional business model was failing to meet manufacturing customers' needs.

The five were very conscious that while manufacturers need packaging to be fit for purpose, appropriate to the product and offer maximum protection at minimum cost, ideally the packaging should arrive at customers' premises



David Pedley receiving his award

neither too early, nor too late, but just in time.

The first company in the UK to offer Just In Time (JIT) packaging to any significant degree, GWP soon counted Motorola, Honda and Raychem (now Tyco) among their clients. Their recognition of how investment in IT systems for stock control could take some cost out of the supply chain, resulted in what is now GWP Group – and its rise to its current position as a major player in the UK packaging industry.

CEO David Pedley, one of the

founders of GWP Group, said: "We are absolutely delighted to be recognised by Wiltshire Life as the business of the year, and would like to thank all our suppliers and clients for helping us to continuously improve our products and services. We were told that there was a record number of entries for the business category, and that the standard was really high. As to the future – as the UK pioneer of Just In Time (JIT), we will continue to provide exactly the product that our customers demand and need, at a mutually acceptable price, and always Just In Time."

GWPGroup

A huge thank you from everyone at GWP Group!



www.gwp.co.uk

01793 754444 email: group@gwp.co.uk

GWP
Packaging

GWP
Protective

GWP
Conductive

GWP
Coatings

The business benefits of higher education

University-level courses at Swindon College are an affordable way to upskill and provide essential qualifications for your workforce.

The college is a long established provider of Higher Education programmes and offers a diverse range of courses including Art, Engineering, Early Years and Business – from HND through to Masters level. Its two Higher Education partners are Oxford Brookes University and the University of Bath – students study in Swindon but receive their degrees through the universities – and the college also offers a range of HNDs through Edexcel. Many construction and civil engineers in the region have qualified at the college through this route over the years.

Five new university-level courses are available from September 2012, including an HND in Salon Management aimed at those in the hair and beauty sector and an Oxford Brookes Foundation Degree in Health

and Social Care which will give care workers a nationally recognised qualification to support the work they do.

Swindon College courses are flexible and can be studied part time to fit around work hours. Typically, part time students attend College one day a week, meaning they can maximise their time at work and put the theory they are learning into practice.

All Swindon College Higher Education programmes are validated and come with access to full student loans through The Student Loan Company; alternatively employers can elect to sponsor their employees through the qualification.

For more information about the ways in which higher education can boost your business, call 0800 7312250, visit www.swindon-college.ac.uk or come to our Higher Education Open Evening on 26th April 2012.

Mindful Employer event to promote healthy work

An event highlighting the advantages for businesses of promoting physical well-being and a healthy workforce takes place at Swindon's Jurys Inn on April 19

The session is staged by the Swindon Mindful Employer Network and Swindon Borough Council's Challenge Swindon and Active@Work initiatives.

Among the guest speakers will be Tracey Scarr of Swindon-based fleet car firm Arval UK Group, Jane Abraham of the Department of Health and Dr Dinesh Sirisena who will give a talk on exercise as medicine.

They will be joined by Claire Fleming, Swindon Borough Council's

travel plan and travel awareness officer, who will provide details on the Sustainable Transport Fund and Global Corporate Challenge.

A discussion panel will be chaired by Heart FM news editor Cormac MacMahon.

Swindon Mindful Employer Network chair Melanie Richens said: "Active@Work is a wonderful opportunity for local employers to understand the considerable benefits of a healthy workforce in reducing costs and absence while improving productivity." For more information please contact David Latham at Richmond Fellowship Wiltshire on smen@richmondfellowship.org.uk

Why it's good to go goodwill hunting



Swindon-based consultant and coach Peter Mayes and Swindon Business News have teamed up to identify some of the key obstacles to effectiveness and look at some of the major stumbling blocks to running a successful and productive team.

In the second of his articles Peter looks at why goodwill is one of those things that can make an enormous difference in business.

The benefits of having a team who are prepared to go the extra mile, work late to get an important piece of work done, support their colleagues without being asked or constantly seek improvements, are immeasurable.

But this level of goodwill is not something companies should expect as of right. Good will has to be earned. So when do people give of their best?

- When they feel a part of something
- Feel that they are making a contribution to the whole
- Feel that they matter and that they are not a number

When they feel it is worth the trouble I recently met an engineer who loved to devise easy solutions to complex problems. He had spotted a flaw in how his organisation prevented damage to its equipment and created a simple solution. He then showed me the online process where he was supposed to highlight this solution. It comprised 15 tables describing how to build a business case and cost it for evaluation. Little wonder his enthusiasm flickered and died and little wonder the suggestion scheme was rarely used by staff.

So five easy ways to get employees to join in

1. Listen to what's important to them
2. Make it easy for them to take part by having systems that aid improvement
3. Build on their strengths and interests
4. Promote a willingness to make things better
5. Thank them for their ideas and efforts

There are many more ways to bring out the best in employees but creating and earning some good will get your organisation off to a great start. Find out more about Peter at www.petermayes.co.uk

Consultancy aims to solve office conflict

Two Wiltshire employment experts have set up a consultancy to help organisations where conflict is hitting productivity and damaging working relationships.

Sarah Crayford Brown and Alison Bennett have formed Conflict Masters in response to growing demand from companies for help in addressing the conflict that is undermining their potential.

Conflict Masters combines Sarah's skills as a barrister and a mediator with Alison's experiences as an executive coach and HR professional.

They point to the Managing Conflict at Work survey carried out by the CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) last year which found that conflict management is now the number one concern for employers. It concludes that companies need to develop more positive strategies for dealing with workplace conflict.

For a free consultation by Conflict Masters, contact Sarah or Alison at info@conflictmasters.co.uk or on 01249 859417. Swindon Business News is to print a series of monthly articles by Conflict Masters looking at *Courageous Conversations* at work and how they can benefit organisations.

Don't be the last to know.

SBN

Subscribe to
Swindon Business News today.
Call 01793 615393



Swindon College
The largest provider of Higher Education in Swindon!

University Level Courses in Swindon

NEW HNDs
NEW Foundation Degree

- Foundation Degree Health & Social Care
- HND Fashion and Textiles
- HND Hair & Beauty Management
- HND Interactive Media
- HND Public Services
- HND Computing & Systems Development

starting September 2012

Study locally, save money!
Studying at Swindon College means you can stay in employment and save money on tuition fees. All of Swindon College's university level courses come with **full student loans** and **financial support**.

Our University Partners:




Visit www.swindon-college.ac.uk or call **0800 731 2250** for more information.

HE Open Evening Thursday 26th April 5-7pm

Swindon College, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1DY

The journey begins for railway improvement scheme

Work has started on the largest-ever scheme to modernise signalling on the Great Western railway line through Swindon.

When completed, the four-year £350m improvements to the 1960s signalling infrastructure could help cut delays by 50 per cent.

The upgrade is vital to prepare for electrification of the line between London and the West and forms part of a wider 10-year, £5bn plan to expand services on the Great Western main to accommodate the increase in the demand for rail by the end of the decade.

Patrick Hallgate, Network Rail's Swindon-based Western route managing director, said: "We are

safeguarding the long-term future of a vital rail artery in the South West of England and Thames Valley. The Great Western main line is running out of room with nearly 30 million journeys and a growth rate of at least 5 per cent each year. A robust and modernised signalling infrastructure is vital to cope with this burgeoning growth.

"In a few years' time, the signalling infrastructure will be considered life-expired but we are ahead of the game by starting the improvements now."

The work will be carried in five stages, starting from the Didcot area, to minimise disruption.

The work between Swindon and Chippenham and Swindon and

Gloucester will complement the long-awaited scheme to lay double track between Swindon and Kemble and improve services between the town and the Midlands and North.

The improvements will replace the outdated relay system of signalling to powerful computers allowing signallers to control the safe passage of trains from a state-of-the-art centralised hub using the latest digital technology.

Lightweight signals will be used trackside as part of this upgrade, which will reduce costs. These innovative signals have reliable LED powered lights, are quicker to install, last longer, are more environmentally friendly as they use less materials and power, and are safer for staff to

maintain as there is no need to work at height.

Network Rail is also using innovative plug coupler technology to

overcome complex wiring changes which means work can be carried out much quicker with less disruption to train services.

The work

- * Replace 1960s signalling control panels with modernised electronic control system
- * Centralise signalling control, which manages the movement of trains, under one roof to improve communication and responsiveness during incidents
- * Replace old signalling gantries and cantilevers with straight posts, where possible, to make room for overhead electric wires
- * Improve signalling equipment, including points which allow trains to switch tracks to different paths, to become compatible

TIMELINE

* 2012: route between Didcot and Swindon and Didcot and Oxford

* 2015: route between Newbury and Reading and Oxford area

* 2014: route between Swindon and Chippenham, Swindon and Gloucester, Swindon and Hullavington (route to Bristol Parkway)

* 2015: route between Bath and Parson Street via Bristol Temple Meads, Swindon and Bristol Parkway

20

successful years of moving people

ATWELL MARTIN

ESTATE AGENTS

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS IN THE TOWN & COUNTRY

www.atwellmartin.co.uk

RICS

Chippenham Swindon Calne Devizes London Plymouth

01249 447777 01793 643643 01249 813813 01380 720720 020 7581 2114 01752 202121

Regen SW reaches landmark as renewable energy demand grows

Regional renewable energy group Regen SW has hit a new milestone – 200 organisations have joined within just 15 months to support its mission to enable ground-breaking renewable energy projects and low carbon jobs.

This achievement comes as new figures show renewable energy share of electricity generated jumped from 7 per cent to 9.5 per cent across the UK in 2011, according to latest figures from the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC).

Regen SW members range from leading international firms such as Bristol-based Garrad Hassan – the world's leading renewable energy consultancy – and international consulting engineers Arup, to growing small businesses such as Marine Current Turbines, based in Bristol.

Major local landowners such as the Duchy of Cornwall and local authorities such as Devon, Cornwall and Bristol councils have also signed up. Regen SW chairman Michael

Huntingford said: "The growth of Regen SW's membership is a ringing endorsement of the importance and impact of our work to develop renewable energy and support the growth of thriving local businesses in this rapidly developing sector."

Chief executive Merlin Hyman, of Regen SW added: "Renewable energy is a huge economic opportunity employing more than 10,000 people in the South West, as well as a source of secure and sustainable energy. By bringing together the strength of 200 companies and public bodies we can deliver pioneering projects that demonstrate what can be achieved, and unlock new investment."

Swindon Business News is producing its annual Green Special in August looking at the area's achievements in the low-carbon and renewables industry. For details contact Anita Jaynes on 01793 615393 or email anita@swindon-business.net





Homes at The Triangle

Swindon's innovative Triangle housing development has been commended in the prestigious Civic Trust Awards, which recognise the best new architecture and design.

The development on Northern Road is the first housing scheme completed by Haboakus, the joint venture between TV presenter Kevin McCloud's company Hab and Swindon-based social housing group GreenSquare. The brief for the architects, Glenn Howells of London, was to create homes that were flexible, affordable and efficient to build and manage – using sustainable materials and set in a beautiful landscape.

A low-built, secure and green scheme of 42 homes, the Triangle has a landscaped central green which acts as a communal area for tenants.

Celebrity-backed scheme gets its reward four years on after the ambitious proposals were announced in the town

The design was inspired by Swindon's Victorian railway terraces of Bath stone, which, said the Civic Trust Awards judges "has resulted in a clean and modern outlook with a historic link".

They added: "The development does so much in the way it mixes unit and occupancy types, and pulling together environmental and physical design elements, including access

which is both physical and social."

The Triangle was one of 52 projects recognised in the Civic Trust Awards at a ceremony held in Edinburgh. Commendations are given to projects that make a significant contribution to the quality and appearance of the built environment, demonstrating a good standard of architecture or design, sustainability, inclusive design and

The Triangle wins high-profile commendation at Civic Trust Awards



Kevin McCloud

provide a positive social, cultural, environmental or economic benefit to the local community.

Civic Trust Awards managing director, Malcolm Hankey said: "The Civic Trust Awards celebrate not only design excellence, but also the relationship between structures, places, the environment and communities. Winning projects have demonstrated architectural excellence whilst offering cultural, social or economic benefit to the local community."

Last November the Triangle landscape architects Studio

Engleback won the Communications and Presentation Award at the 2011 Landscape Institute Awards for the 'Grow 2 Eat' publication produced for its residents. Each of the 42 households were given a copy of 'Grow 2 Eat' at a residents' party while calendars and recipes from the book are available to them on the Shimmy information screens installed in every house.

Haboakus is now working with Swindon Borough Council to create around 240 new homes and regenerate the park at Gorse Hill as part of a £1m improvement scheme.

to let | for sale
edison park • swindon

Self contained office units
2,500 - 24,270 sq ft
 New Quoting Rents

CBRE
 CB RICHARD ELLIS
 0117 943 5757
 www.cbre.co.uk

Keningtons
 Chartered Surveyors
 01793 423 351
 www.keningtons.com

edison park a brighter place to work

The Triangle factfile

Owner: GreenSquare
Architects: Glenn Howells Architects
Developer: Haboakus
Landscape Designer: Studio Engleback
Services Engineer: Maxfordham
Structural Engineer: Curtins
Contractor: Willmott Dixon
Quantity Surveyor: DBK
Inclusive Design Consultant: Glenn Howells Architects
Interior Designer: Glenn Howells Architects
Project Manager: DBK



INTERFACE BUSINESS PARK
WOOTTON BASSETT SN4 8QQ

Commercial development land for sale
 from 2 - 12 acres (0.80 - 4.90 hectares)

Whitmarsh Lockhart
 01793 541000
 www.whitmarshlockhart.com

1.5 miles from J16 of the M4
 Excellent road communications

Government inspector approves Commonhead scheme

Mixed-use development at Commonhead, on the outskirts of Swindon near Coate Water, will go ahead after a Government planning inspector gave the scheme the green light.

Swindon Borough Council's planning committee rejected an application to build 890 homes last year, a decision that was appealed by the developers, a consortium of

housebuilders including Persimmon and Redrow.

Following a hearing last November, the inspector recommended the development, which includes 77,000 sq m of employment land, go ahead, which has now been endorsed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

Swindon Borough Council leader Cllr Roderick Bluh said: "We would not

have been able to resist development at Commonhead for ever, and as this decision has proved, we always knew we would never have the final say. What we did do was fight every inch of the way to get the very best development we could in order to protect the country park and the surrounding area. We have succeeded in doing that.

"In 2009 we successfully fought off an appalling scheme which would have seen 1,800 homes right next to Coate Water, and on that occasion we were backed by the planning inspector. The scheme that has been given the go-ahead now is completely different and half the size."

The development will be on land to the north of Day House Lane, surrounding the Great Western Hospital.

The developer has agreed to make financial contributions towards essential infrastructure and services as a way to mitigate the impact of the development, known as a Section 106 agreement. This amounts to £6million and includes: £2.6M towards a primary school; £1.6M towards additional secondary educational needs including special education; £650K for improvements to council sports facilities, playing pitches, changing facilities and car parking; £350K for improvements at Coate Water



The smaller development no longer threatens Coate Water

Country Park; £251K towards libraries, the Arts Centre and public art; £40K for Public Realm improvements; £79K towards wheelie bins and recycling boxes; £100K towards bus stop improvement works, cycleway upgrading, a school travel plan, road safety measures and traffic regulation orders.

Other measures will be paid for directly by the developers. These include improvements to the junction capacity and lanes along the A419 between Commonhead Roundabout and Junction 15 of the M4 and landscaping, allotments and open space and children's

play areas on the site. The development will be bound by 41 conditions which seek to minimise flood risk, safeguard and protect wildlife and biodiversity interests; ensure high quality design including sustainable construction measures and the sound phasing of the development; protect and manage local archaeology; provide traffic calming measures that prevent rat running on the existing Day House Lane and through surrounding villages, and promotion of other modes of transport.

Planning permission is granted in outline and there will be further consultation on detailed Design Codes for the whole site.

Kembrey Trade Centre
Industrial/ Warehouse units
To let
1610 sq ft
All enquiries

Keningtons
Chartered Surveyors
01793 423 351





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



brasier freeth.

01442 263033
www.brasierfreeth.com

Keningtons
Chartered Surveyors

01793 423 351
www.keningtons.com



Aha! Papermakers House. Perfect.

2,741-5,690 sq ft
of quality refurbished offices
with a wide range of **excellent local amenities:**

- West Swindon District Centre
- De Vere
- Link Centre
- Shaw Ridge Leisure Park

PAPERMAKERS HOUSE
RIVENHALL ROAD, SWINDON SN5 7BD

James Gregory

alder king
PROPERTY CONSULTANTS
01793 615477
www.alderking.com

Jeremy Sutton

Keningtons
Chartered Surveyors
01793 423 351




Self Contained Offices, Little London Court
596 - 1,272 sq ft

Second Floor Offices, Eastcott House
1,960 sq ft

TO LET
OFFICES IN OLD TOWN, SWINDON

Hannick

Whitmarsh Lockhart
01793 541000
www.whitmarshlockhart.com

loveday
01793 423344
loveday.uk.com

Business Edge: IT simply applied

Ray Smyth of Swindon's The IPstore says, "The cloud offers huge advantages but some organisations are sleep walking into disaster - Caveat Emptor"

Not all commercial IT has been created equally; the cost of acquisition and ownership has been too high for many organisations. However, the benefits that IT can provide are accruing, especially for the start-up and SMB, and this is empowering the commercial IT underclass. In fact the IT odds are stacked in favour of the SMB and start up because: IT hardware costs have fallen sharply; user/employee expectations have risen creating what is called the consumerisation of IT; software applications have become easier to acquire and use; and last but not least the introduction of a new computing architecture - Cloud Computing. Mainframe Computing and Client/Server Computing are examples of other computing architectures with which you may be familiar.

The IT marketing machine is four-square behind Cloud Computing or 'the cloud'. Organisations should not be taken in; instead they must fully evaluate the cloud in the context of their own clearly defined requirements. IT suppliers have been quick to reposition products as cloud offerings and while this blatant re-marketing is subsiding, it emphasises



that all IT decisions must be business driven.

The cloud market and its offerings are developing fast and this emerging maturity invites critical consideration. It also flags up many issues, most of which are not in fact technical. As witnessed from the internet, the new possibilities offered by the cloud challenges old law, outdated work practices, financial accounting, and good business sense.

For an organisation considering the cloud, the first step is to decide what kind of cloud your business requires from three basic options – the Private

Cloud, the Public Cloud and the Hybrid Cloud. Their names offer an insight into capability, but choosing the right one is less straightforward.

A Private Cloud is a safer and more controlled option, but it may deplete some of the benefits; a Public Cloud is easier, faster and possibly cheaper to deploy, but the risk and legal complications may not be acceptable or even understood, and because the third option is a hybrid of these two, you need to make some quite informed decisions and most organisations will be unable to tackle this alone.

Despite what the marketing hype might claim, there is nothing revolutionary about the cloud, in fact a good deployment will be more evolutionary in nature, thus avoiding security and data protection problems while yielding to unrealistic expectations. With a considered approach, careful deployment and good management, the cloud offers advantages for all organisations. For the SMB it sets the stage for competing on equal terms with the world's large enterprises.

In the May edition of Swindon Business News Ray will consider the economics of the cloud and some of its promises.

Read more at: www.TheIPstore.co.uk or contact Ray at Ray@TheIPstore.co.uk.

IT firm to hold open evening for Business against Poverty charity

IT technology firm ITS is holding an open evening at its offices in Notton, near Chippenham, in support of its nominated charity Business against Poverty (BaP).

The evening on April 17 will include a short presentation called Disaster Recovery & Business Continuity followed by drinks, networking and a chance to meet the ITS team.

Tickets are £15 per person with all proceeds going to the charity, part of People against Poverty.

ITS became the first of People Against Poverty's platinum partners last September and donated a new

suite of PCs for its Trowbridge head office.

The firm provides hardware, software and support for BaP while management and staff have shown their support for the cause by participating in regular fundraising activities.

A team of seven ran in the 2012 Bath Half Marathon, raising £1,700 and future events include a sponsored London to Paris cycle ride in the autumn.

ITS managing director John Matthews said: "In selecting People Against Poverty as ITS' dedicated charity for 2011/12, we were

delighted as a company to become more involved and take a more active role than simply donating money. The work of all at People Against Poverty is truly inspiring – all of ITS' staff has been able to see where our efforts have helped and this has proved to be a real lift to our staff."

ITS has also invested in expertise and products to deliver Green IT through virtualised servers which enable clients to run IT systems that reduce carbon footprint and the cost of hardware, while gaining considerable service improvement benefits.

In Gear



New petrol station for Marlborough

Marlborough is to get a new filling station after Wiltshire Council gave planning permission to Oxford-based forecourt operator Fraser Group to develop a vacant site at the front of the town's business park.

The £2m development, which will open this autumn, will have eight pumps, a Budgens convenience store, Subway food outlet, car wash and parking for 19 cars. It will create 50 jobs.

The family-run group operates a chain of six petrol stations in Oxfordshire and Wiltshire, including in Calne. All are branded as BP garages and have convenience stores selling some local produce. Nick Fraser from Fraser Group said: "We pride ourselves in our high standards of customer service and our sense of community."

"We're committed to supporting other local businesses, and will be stocking local fresh and packaged produce while offering excellent value on big brands, hot drinks and food on-the-go."

"We've already had a terrific response from local people, and are really looking forward to becoming an important part of the Marlborough community."

The development has been welcomed by Marlborough Town Council and Marlborough Chamber of Commerce as providing competition for the town's only other petrol station. Until a few years ago the town had five petrol stations. But in line with the rest of the country, rural and market town stations have been forced to close due to competition from supermarkets. Across the UK thousands of petrol stations have gone out of business over the past decade.

Building work will start on the site in July, with the facility opening in October.

Civic 'best value for money' car

The new Swindon-built Honda Civic 1.4 i-VTEC SE has been recognised as representing the best value for money in the Parkers Cost of Motoring New Car Awards, 2012. It not only came out on top in the competitive Medium Hatchback category on the basis that it offered better value than any of its competitors over a three year period, but it was also named as the overall Awards winner.

The new Civic which has only been in dealerships since February held off fierce competition to be given the number one spot based on figures collated by Parkers' Cost of Motoring tool. This innovative tool calculates the true "hidden costs" associated with owning and running a new car, including fuel consumption, depreciation, servicing, breakdown cover and road tax over a three year period. In a further boost to the Honda range, the Jazz 1.3 IMA HE Hybrid was awarded the Eco Car category title for the second year running.

Kieren Puffett, editor of Parkers, commented; The Medium Hatchback category is a hugely competitive market so to have a winner here is truly a tremendous achievement and that is why we are not only delighted to announce that the Honda Civic Hatchback 1.4 i-VTEC SE five door wins the Parkers Cost of Motoring New Car Awards for the Medium Hatchback category, but is also the overall winner.

"The statistics for the Civic tell us it is great value for money and Honda should feel rightly proud, because the Parkers awards are based on statistical analysis of every new cars' running costs, rather than opinion. But it doesn't end there. The icing on the cake is that the Honda Jazz 1.3 IMA HE Hybrid wins for a second year in a row the Parkers Cost of Motoring New Car Awards Eco Car category. It's an outstanding performance by Honda all round."

Commenting on Parkers announcing the Honda Civic as the overall winner in the Cost of Motoring New Car Awards 2012, Dave Hodgetts, Managing Director of Honda (UK), said: "This is a fantastic result for the new Civic. It has only been in dealerships since February and to have received this accolade so soon is a great achievement. What makes the award even more special is that it is based on fact."

THE BUSINESS GROWTH SHOW

Tues 22nd May 2012
09:00am - 03:00pm
Menzies Hotel Swindon
FREE Business Event

You are invited to The Business Growth Show Swindon

Networking
Expert Exhibitors
Seminars & Workshops
Business Growth

Visit www.thebusinessgrowthshow.co.uk to register for **FREE** or call 01793 461 001 to find out more

technology simply applied

IT Security
IT Networking
IT Management
IT Administration

We spend time understanding your business

Helping you to create your business edge

Advantage@TheIPstore.co.uk
www.TheIPstore.co.uk
01793 251 500



Chancellor George Osborne opened last month's Budget by vowing it would "unashamedly back business". But did he succeed? Swindon Business News teamed up with Swindon accountants Morris Owen to gauge the views of a panel of business experts.



Rob Beale

Rob Beale, partner, Morris Owen

"With nothing to play with, we ended up with a neutral budget that will be remembered most for who will suffer in the name of tax simplification and cutting tax for the rich, as opposed to the intended headline of increasing tax free allowances for the many.

From a business perspective, a reduction in corporation tax was welcome but this is for larger businesses as opposed to SMEs and there were no revisions to the capital allowance changes that may have encouraged business to invest for the future. To have seen emphasis on smaller business would have been welcomed in the current economic climate.

The proposal for general tax anti-avoidance legislation will be



Mark Lovelace

welcomed by most, but tax avoidance legislation has a habit of being synonymous with the law of unintended consequences and we will have to wait to see the impact on tradition planning that has been long accepted as being non-contentious.

As usual, the detail in the Budget notes include changes to tax and VAT that will have significant implications for those concerned – again, it's not so much a case of how many losers there are, it's more a case of who the losers are."

Rosemary Wells, head of political and corporate engagement, Swindon Chamber of Commerce

"There were both positive and disappointing elements. Although there is a going to be a reduction in Corporation Tax of 1%, companies will still be hit with a 5.6% rise in



Chris Elias

business rates this month.

This comes at a difficult time, particularly for our small and medium-sized businesses, who are facing financial pressures.

The positives included:

- The reduction in Corporation Tax, which can help encourage investment in equipment, services and jobs which can be of benefit to the Swindon economy
- Commitments to support overseas trade – and this is a good opportunity, with current exchange rates, for our businesses to consider exporting as a way to grow.

Incentives for creative industries and scientific research – it will be interesting to see how this takes shape in terms of practical business support

Improvements to the Enterprise Management Incentive Scheme, the Business Finance Partnership and

Enterprise Finance Guarantee. Swindon is well-placed, with its good track record in business start-up and survival of small businesses, to benefit in the future from access to these emerging initiatives.

But to help businesses survive and thrive, there needs to be practical and effective delivery of these measures in a way that works for business and gives them easy access to the support."

Mark Harden, partner, Swindon law firm Thrings

"There was help for businesses, particularly the cut in Corporation Tax, but the tax system is very complicated for many small businesses and I was surprised that the consultation will only be for firms turning over less than £77,000 which is tiny. Businesses much larger than this find it complicated. While there was some help with research and development, there wasn't a lot for manufacturers and exporters – the two parts of the economy that have been highlighted for growth. As with any recent Budget, the devil will be in the detail."

Chris Elias, relationship director at Barclays, Swindon

"The Budget delivered some real benefits to the business community. The most notable of which was the National Loan Guarantee Scheme (NGLS) which will make £20bn available to small businesses across the UK. Barclays is one of a number

of banks which have signed up for the new scheme and due to reduced funding costs will be able to pass on these cost savings direct to customers. The Barclays scheme is already up and running and any new qualifying loan from today will receive a 1% discount on the price of the loan over the first five years, but received immediately as an upfront cashback payment on day one, enabling businesses to benefit from the discount immediately and potentially reinvest into the business. To qualify a business must have an annual turnover of less than £50m."

Mark Lovelace, business owner, elmtreecars.com

A prudent budget was the most essential requirement and the vast majority of changes were small – if it appears credible internationally that should keep borrowing rates low.

Pensions need reform – on balance, for political reasons alone, I would not have reduced the 50p rate now. I believe families earning £800 a week (£40,000 per annum) can live without child benefit and a stamp duty rise is preferable to a council tax rise – many people (often elderly) own large homes but have little else to pay bills with.

There is still a 5.6% business rate rise in the offing so it looks like I will be paying my share but it has to be remembered none of this will stop total borrowing rising by over £100bn this year.

Phone research company dials up major landmark in its growth

In-house Research, the Wootton Bassett-based customer experience research, market research and training firm, has celebrated completing its 150,000th telephone interview with a new home buyer.

The firm works with nine of the UK's 13 best-rated homebuilders, supplying telephone

surveys that provide feedback that helps them improve their overall customer experience.

Managing director Malcolm Pitcher said: "We work with 40 of the UK's leading housebuilders, developers, contractors, managing agents and estate agent to increase customer satisfaction.

"Over the years that we have been measuring the customer experience, we've seen both customer satisfaction and recommendation scores rise significantly. Some of our clients are now achieving nearly 100 per cent when it comes to recommendation.

"Without clients listening to feedback and changing the way they work, scores like this could not have been achieved."

In-House Research achieves an average response rate of 75 per cent and promises to deliver the results to clients within two minutes of speaking to a new home buyer.

South West of England PA of the Year Awards

Calling all PAs and their bosses . . .

We are seeking the region's top PAs

Date: July 4, 2012 Venue: Ston Easton Park Hotel

For full details go to:
swindon-business.net

