

# SWINDON BUSINESS NEWS

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## News Brief

### The Business Show is back

Swindon Business News is to be media partner for The Business Show Swindon, which returns for a second year next February following the enormous success of the inaugural event earlier this year.

The show will once again be staged at the STEAM museum. Exhibition stands are now on sale from with prices ranging from £200 to £900. Visit: [www.businessshowswindon.co.uk](http://www.businessshowswindon.co.uk)  
*Full story P11*

### Smiths profits up 10 per cent

**Full-year pre-tax profits at Swindon-based Smiths News, the UK's biggest wholesaler of newspapers, magazines and books, leapt by 10 per cent as cost-cutting and its acquisition of rival Dawson Holdings took effect. September-August underlying pre-tax profit was £38.6m, compared with £35m last year.**

### Meet the buyer event

Procurement Connection, an event connecting buyers from major public sector organisations to local small suppliers takes place at Swindon's STEAM Museum on November 17. Procurement heads from Forward Swindon, the Met Office and Ministry of Defence are attending.

### Coming up next month . . .

December's Swindon Business News will feature our annual review of the year which takes a sector-by-sector look back over a challenging 12 months for businesses. We will also profile the businesses setting the pace in the wealth management field, continue our quarterly series of export features with a look at some of the less traditional overseas markets and show how invoice discounting and factoring can help growing businesses. Plus our Focus on Malmesbury looks at how the historic market town is becoming a vibrant modern business centre.

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

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## Heathrow rail link would lift town's economy, bosses are told

**B**usinesses in the Swindon area are being urged to lobby the government for a direct rail link between the town and Heathrow Airport as train operator First Great Western presses for the scheme's approval.

The project has moved a step closer with the electrification of the main Cardiff-London line now going ahead from 2016.

That will ease the capacity restraints that often lead to delays between Swindon and Paddington and pave the way for the long hoped for direct Heathrow link.

While the main Great Western line into London runs just 6km from Heathrow, previous efforts to build a spur into the airport have remained on the drawing board.

But now, with the Greater Western franchise up for grabs in 2013, First Great Western has made it a priority in its submission.

It says it would be relatively easy to build the link from the main line near Langley, Berkshire, direct into Terminal 5, cutting journey times by at least 20 minutes from Swindon.

Having Heathrow, until recently the world's busiest airport, so close has been a major boost to Swindon's economy for decades.

At one time the town marketed itself to overseas businesses with the promise that it was quicker to get from



Heathrow Terminal 5

Heathrow to Swindon than from the airport into central London.

The arrival of major US companies in the town such as Intel has made journey times to Heathrow a vital factor in the town's continued economic success and a major selling point for inward investment.

Current rail journey times to the airport are around 1 hour 10 minutes via Reading, where passengers have to change to a bus, or about 1 hour 15 minutes if they continue to London Paddington and take the Heathrow Express back out. Journeys to Terminal 5 take around another 20 minutes.

A direct rail link would also ease traffic congestion on the M4 around Heathrow.

Dan Panes, communication development manager for First Great Western, told a recent Swindon

service following electrification will be more efficient and carry more passengers so they will open up more capacity on the line.

"That means, if we can build the spur into Heathrow, trains going direct from Swindon straight into the heart of the airport.

"There are real benefits for the business community in Swindon. The government is about to start consulting on the spur and we want businesses to support us."

Swindon Chamber is behind the plan and has invited First Great Western managing director Mark Hopwood to give more details when he speaks at its corporate dinner on November 15 at Bowood Hotel, Calne.

Chamber of Commerce meeting that the Heathrow spur was a priority for the company.

"The new trains that will come into

## Recruitment opens for LEP board

Business people with strong track records are being invited to apply for one of the nine board vacancies on the recently-formed Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Applicants will need to demonstrate recent and relevant business experience. They will need to be able to represent their sector, business size and geography – not their own business or personal interests.

The skill-set will need to include:-

- The credibility that comes with a successful track record in business;
- An excellent communicator and team player;
- Strategic and clear thinker who actively listens before forming opinions, can demonstrate a logical approach to problem solving and sound judgement;
- Reliable, effective and efficient, you will need to have the time and commitment to meet the demands of the role.

Appointments will be for three years with a review after the first 12 months.

The board is likely to be in place by January 31.

The LEP was approved by ministers in July with the aim of promoting economic growth by creating wealth, jobs and new business opportunities in Swindon & Wiltshire. For more information go to [www.ssep.org.uk/](http://www.ssep.org.uk/)

## Chamber of Commerce finds a home — at New College

Swindon Chamber of Commerce is to open an office in the town for the first time since it was relaunched as part of the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group. The base, in the new wing at New College, will enable the chamber to develop closer links with Fast Forward, the college's business services division. It will be

officially opened by Thames Valley Chamber chief executive Paul Briggs, on November 15. Swindon Chamber president Gary Mealing said: "The Chamber Council is delighted that New College has agreed to host our new office. It will become a focal point for members and local organisations to engage with the Chamber."

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# SWINDON BUSINESS NEWS

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## People

• Lloyds Bank Corporate Markets has extended its South West and South Wales team with the appointment of Paul Harvey as business development director. Paul joins the Bristol-based team after six years at the helm of Barclays Corporate in the South West and brings with him 30 years' experience in corporate banking. Paul will focus primarily on firms with revenues in excess of £100m and work closely with the regions' existing relationship directors as well as developing close working relationships within the local business community. His appointment underpins Lloyds Bank Corporate Markets' commitment to building its corporate business within the regions and demonstrates its continued investment in hiring key local expertise to support what is already a highly-successful team. Paul said: "I'm very excited at the prospect of applying my expertise to my new role. Lloyds Bank Corporate Markets is well-known for its constancy of relationships, trust and delivery of promises and I look forward to supporting and building on this through my work with new and



*Paul Harvey*

existing customers."

• SciSys executive chairman and founder Mike Love is to step back from day-to-day control of the Chippenham-based hi-tech company to become non-executive chairman. The firm said in a statement that he will, however, remain a director and significant shareholder in the group. SciSys, whose pre-tax profits rose 83 per cent to £1.1m in the six months to June 30, supplies high-end IT services and business-critical IT systems to the space, government, defence, environment and media/broadcast



*Mike Love*

sectors. It also announced a number of other key boardroom changes – all of which will come into force on January 1, 2012. David Jones, who currently holds the post of chief operating officer (COO), will become group chief executive while Klaus Martin Heidrich, 51, is to join the board as COO.

• Anita Lowe, chief executive of Wanborough-based events business Venues Event Management, has appeared as one the guest panellists at the 12th annual National Everywoman Conference held recently in London. The biggest one day Conference for business women in the UK attracted 300 attendees and this year saw the launch of the new Everywoman Network, an initiative for women who are looking to grow their business or develop their career and believe that challenge and change are essential to their future success. Anita was chosen for a panel advising and inspiring women in business as the winner of the Hera Award at the 2010 Everywoman awards. Everywoman co-founder Maxine Benson MBE said: "It is very important to everywoman to select vibrant business women to motivate and inspire our members. As a previous everywoman award winner, we knew Anita would deliver."



*Anita Lowe (centre)*

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## Events

### Corporate Taxation Reform Seminar

When: November 15, 8:30am-10:30am  
Where: De Vere Village, Swindon  
Contact: [www.rsmtenton.com/events](http://www.rsmtenton.com/events) or email  
[katie.gray@rsmtenton.com](mailto:katie.gray@rsmtenton.com)

### Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce, Swindon Corporate Dinner

When: November 15, 6:30pm-9:30pm  
Where: Bowood Hotel, Derry Hill, Calne  
Contact: [ravigupta@tvchamber.co.uk](mailto:ravigupta@tvchamber.co.uk)

### Domestic Violence and Abuse – What employers need to know

When: November 21 from 10am  
Where: Steam Museum, Churchward  
Contact: David Latham at [david.latham@richmondfellowship.org.uk](mailto:david.latham@richmondfellowship.org.uk)

### NRG Networking Lunch

When: December 6, 11amMarriott Hotel, The  
Where: Marriott Hotel, Swindon  
Contact: 01793 512 121

### Great Western Business Breakfast

When: December 7, 7:30am-9am  
Where: Steam Museum, Churchward  
Contact: [anna.arakcheeva@withyking.co.uk](mailto:anna.arakcheeva@withyking.co.uk)

• Send your events to Swindon Business News to  
[info@swindon-business.net](mailto:info@swindon-business.net)

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### Wiltshire Council

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### Chamber of Commerce

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## Former college site scheme is closer, says developer

The long-delayed £50m regeneration of Regent Circus in Swindon town centre has taken a significant step forward following property group Ashfield Land's acquisition of the remaining 50 per cent of the joint venture development company.

The move follows the collapse into administration of Regent Circus joint venture partner Parkridge Retail in August. Bristol-based Ashfield successfully concluded negotiations with Parkridge administrator PwC last month to acquire Parkridge's stake.

Ashfield managing director Andrew Fisher said: "This is excellent news because it ends any uncertainty associated with the Regent Circus scheme and means we can now press ahead with the regeneration of a key area of Swindon town centre."

The scheme, which has detailed planning permission, includes a 52,000 sq ft Morrison's superstore, eight restaurants and bars, a 30,000 sq ft six-screen cinema and 450-space car park.

The former Victorian technical college on the site is to be converted into offices while the derelict 1960s former college buildings will eventually be demolished – although

the fact that they have remained an eyesore on such a high-profile site for so long has led to some harsh words by Swindon Council chiefs who feel they should have been knocked down by now.

Ashfield said work on demolishing the buildings is expected to begin before the end of the year.

Mr Fisher added: "We are of course very pleased that Morrison's has committed to anchor the scheme, while we confidently expect to be able to announce the operators of the multi-screen cinema shortly.

"We also have a great deal of interest from national restaurant chains. To have so many enquiries from major retailers demonstrates how attractive the Regent Circus development is and the appeal of a rejuvenated town centre in Swindon."

Italian restaurant chain Ask is the first national group to lease a unit on the site.

Ashfield acquired the freehold in 2006 which facilitated Swindon College's relocation to its new £17m campus. The firm will fund the development with a mixture of debt and equity.

## Rising to the challenge

It is a market in decline – some would say terminally so. But while bigger companies have fled the scene, music store Rise spies an opportunity.

The CD retailer opened its unit Swindon's Brunel shopping centre last month and if all goes according to plan, it could pave the way for an expansion across the South West.

Deputy manager Steve Wilson (pictured right), from Nottingham, hopes his passion for music will lead to success. "I think it'll show that the independent music shop still works and there's still a gap in the market, even though HMV and the like aren't doing so well."

He has his work cut out. Latest figures from industry body the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) highlight the continued rampant theft of music online while, as a proportion of albums which consumers bought rather than pilfered, digital sales now make up 28 per cent of the market, up from 20 per cent in the same three-month period last year.

Meanwhile sales of hard copy CD albums continue to plummet, down more than 20 per cent year on year.

These trends make Zavvi's decision to sell-off or shut its stores in 2009 look inevitable.

HMV is also faces tough trading and is diversifying away from singles and albums.

The music selection in its Swindon town centre store is confined to 12 shelving units and end-of-rack displays of varying size – a big change from years gone by when it lived and breathed CDs.

How can Rise defy the gravity of this market?

Managing director Lawrence Montgomery, now 24 but just 19 when he opened his first store in Cheltenham, says: "A lot of other competitors have gone to the wall."

"Woolworths used to sell a bit of music. WH Smith doesn't have a lot of a range. A lot of the music market has shrunk. But there's still a market there, if it's the right price and the right product they'll want to buy it."

"We're widely recognised among our peers as a really excellent store."

"We know our music, and if someone asks us, we can give them an honest opinion."

Lawrence, who previously worked for HMV, literally helped set up the roughly-1,000sq ft Swindon store shelf by shelf, piece by piece.

His first impressions of Swindon were not promising – To Let signs, car parks, roadworks, he says.

"Then you stay here for a couple of weeks and see that there is something here."

"This sounds really weird, but there is some great graffiti artwork around. That means there are a lot of kids bored here. They're creative, they like their art, and that's a good thing to have."






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# CARTER JONAS

The Property People



## Firm gets Govt growth cash boost – but critics ask if the fund is enough

Hundreds of jobs have been safeguarded across North Wiltshire after automotive supplier DTR VMS received more than £3m of government funding under the £950m Regional Growth Fund.

The grant, part of an overall investment of £21m in Wiltshire from the RGF, will safeguard 195 jobs at Chippenham-based DTR VMS and help secure around 800 more jobs in other companies in its supply chain.

DTR VMS, formerly a subsidiary of Avon Rubber and now part of Dong Ah Tire and Rubber Company of South Korea, manufactures specialist automotive components, including engine mounts and vibration management systems.

It plans to increase its research and development capacity by moving into a purpose-built state-of-the-art facility, together with the relocation and similar upgrading of its manufacturing and logistics operations while also consolidating the group's European and Asian logistics operations.

It hopes the move will create more than 50 jobs directly and more than 200 indirectly by 2020, once its new products are being sold.

A spokesman said: "DTR VMS is proud to be able to support and play its part in the government's initiative to create and safeguard more than 200,000 jobs across England.

"The project is key to underpinning the growth plans of its parent company and will ensure the safeguarding of

around 195 existing jobs in the UK facility and the creation of up to 21 new jobs in the next few years."

Wiltshire Council cabinet member for economy Fleur de Rhe-Philipe said: "Securing RGF funding to support local economic development is a specific objective within the Action for Wiltshire programme and it sends a strong signal that the council and its partners want to make Wiltshire a business location of choice.

"The investment will create and safeguard a significant number of highly skilled jobs within a priority sector. We hope this will help build confidence at a crucial time for the local economy and will encourage other foreign owned companies to invest in Wiltshire."

However, the way the RGF cash was allocated has been criticised by GWE Business West.

Policy and communications director Tessa Coombes said: "With only 7 per cent of approved bids providing benefit to our region compared to 20 per cent for the North West and North East, we are naturally disappointed and we would urge the Government to consider its approach for future funding opportunities.

"We believe there is more benefit to be gained by investing in areas like the West of England, Gloucestershire and Swindon/Wiltshire where there is a good track record of delivering private sector jobs growth."

A disappointing seven per cent of approved bids are going to the South West, compared with 20 per cent for the North West and North East

## Business failures rise faster in South West as economy falters

Business failures are rising faster in the South West than the national average as the tough market conditions and weak economy take their toll.

The latest figures from business information provider Equifax show the number of businesses going bust in the region climbed by 22.5 per cent during the three months to the end of September compared to the same period last year.

While that is slightly higher than the national increase of 20.3 per cent, quarter on quarter the South West failure toll, at 16.5 per cent, is alarmingly much higher than the national figure of 7.8 per cent.

This higher figure could represent the region's large number of small businesses which do not have the

reserves of their larger counterparts to survive worsening trading conditions.

Across the UK a total of 7,994 businesses failed in the third quarter – the highest number for more than 12 months and not far short of the peak of 8,874 in the second quarter of 2009.

Hardest hit have been retailers with a worrying 41.8 per cent year-on-year increase in failures. The construction industry is also finding conditions challenging with a 22.6 per cent rise in companies going under.

The transport and communications sector, however, is showing some resilience with a 5.4 per cent quarter-on-quarter drop. Equifax director Mark Nuttall said: "This new report continues the disappointing trend which started in the summer."

## Training during recession saves money, study shows

There is a commonly held view that training budgets are 'one of the first to go' in a recession. An online poll of 120 learning and development managers, carried out by the South West observatory, found that 44 per cent expected cuts in their training budgets over the next 12 months, while 54 per cent expected budgets to remain stable and just two per cent expected an increase.

Conventional theory is that employers cut back on training during periods of recession both to save money and because they are less likely to be recruiting new staff. Economic pressure means that they have to resort to short-term solutions that can leave them without the skilled people required for when economic conditions pick up. (South west observatory, skills and learning) However, further research from the Cranfield School of Management has found that investing in training during periods of recession not only saves money and improves motivation during difficult times, but is more cost effective than shopping around for talent.

Business First, the commercial arm at Swindon College, is able to support local and regional businesses to either up-skill or retrain their staff using a variety of different training solutions some of which are either fully funded or highly subsidised. As part of one of the largest vocational colleges in the South West, Business First is able to offer specialist courses across all industry sectors with flexible work place schedules to suit your organisation. In addition, Business First offers a full-range of value added services to any organisations who opt to train with Business First. These include a dedicated account manager, recruitment services for staff, access to employer networks and forums, full training needs analysis and continued professional development.

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Nigel Hudson



David Jerram

## Photography business developing a new angle on corporate images

A business with a very different take on corporate photography has been launched.

Worx iD, based at Great Bedwyn, near Marlborough, has been created by career photographer Nigel Hudson and his business partner David Jerram, and offers a comprehensive corporate photography service which provides a competitive alternative to stock photography.

Its unique offering is to provide not only a superior set of pictures but a secure, online photo library service which clients can access to manage their images.

Nigel said: "We offer a plan, shoot, manage service which I haven't come across before in a photography business."

"We've developed software which means we hold a fully-catalogued library of our clients' photos on a server they can access and use at any time, and have a lifetime licence for."

"This means whenever we do a photoshoot, for example for a product launch, our clients can access their photos

easily and indefinitely, rather than them being stuck on a CD or in someone's mail box where they get lost."

Nigel and David, who runs Jerram digital marketing agency in Reading, came up with the idea when they were invited to pitch to a new client.

"We were given a very wide brief. They wanted something to wow their shareholders," Nigel added.

Their pitch was successful and part of their offering was to manage the images afterwards. "I wondered if we could take the idea further and develop some software so clients had an accessible and catalogued library of their images," said Nigel, who studied at Central Saint Martins in London before embarking on a successful career as a photographer.

His work has covered a broad sweep from fashion and travel photography to 'people' photography for corporate clients including M&S, British Gas, Orange and Yahoo.

His discreet approach means he is able

to take unguarded and natural photographs, which perfectly illustrate a company's brand and its people.

Among Worx iD's clients are the British Medical Association (BMA) and their publishing arm the British Medical Journal.

Nigel believes clients will be attracted not only by Worx iD's photo management facility, but because they end up with a unique image library for their organisation.

"So many businesses invest heavily in their brands to get across their message and identity to their customers, yet they let the whole concept down by opting for stock photographs, which do anything but give them a unique identity," he said. "They really need images that tell their story and nobody else's."

"One of the reasons we landed the BMA contract was because their marketing people wanted real doctors to illustrate their collateral and not impossibly good-looking surgeons with bleached white teeth."

## Drive by law firm to help motorists facing court action

Law firm Stone King, which has an office in Melksham, has set up a dedicated traffic team to defend local motorists and deal with an increase in drivers challenging prosecution.

The team is made up of five experienced solicitors headed by Emma Haley, an expert in traffic law. Working alongside her is Andrew Banks, who specialises in transport law, and fellow team member Jonathan Lewis.

Andrew and Jonathan are higher court advocates meaning they can conduct cases in the crown as well as magistrates' court. Other members of the team include Celia Strathdee, who has 27 years' legal experience, and Richard Kirby, a former court legal adviser.

Emma Haley said: "The number of drivers who we have successfully defended continues to grow."

"Greater reliance on roadside technology by police has resulted in an increase in the number of people facing – and challenging – prosecution. We expect that this will rise still further if government plans for on-the-spot fines for careless driving are introduced."



## Complete IT celebrates third anniversary

The Shrivenham-based office of Complete I.T. has celebrated its third anniversary with impressive turnover growth and by expanding its team.

Formed in 2008, when the company took over Exedos, Complete I.T. started with only three staff. It now has 15 employees while turnover has risen to more than £1m thanks its growing reputation for excellence amongst its 50-plus clients.

Director and founder Trevor Davies said: "Our move into Swindon has been a great success for the business and, hopefully, for our growing number of local clients. We've responded to their requests and have significantly grown the team to offer a complete range of local IT support services."



General manager Adam Whatford and Hayley Tippins from Juice Recruitment at Complete I.T.'s third anniversary celebrations

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## Act now to take advantage of Govt help for innovators

Swindon's innovative businesses are being urged to act now to reap the benefits of the Government's proposed Patent Box relief.

Businesses should be reviewing their patents and considering how their activities may be impacted to ensure they are able to use the new relief to their full advantage.

The call comes from experts at PwC's West office just weeks after an extensive public consultation exercise by HM Revenues and Customs into the new system.

Under the proposals income from patents will be taxed at a reduced rate of 10% as opposed to the forecast headline rate of 23%. The 10% tax rate will be phased in from April 2013 – a move that is ultimately expected to save UK companies around £1bn a year.

Draft legislation to implement the Patent Box is expected to be published by the Government next month (December).

Tracey Bentham, Tax Partner at PwC in the West, said: "The Patent Box is key to making the tax regime competitive for innovative companies and will help to put the UK back on the map as a top location for innovative industries. It will undoubtedly encourage businesses across a wide range of sectors, such as manufacturing and engineering, to invest in the UK, generating growth and creating jobs."

"Given the new regime is intended to apply to income after April 2013 from any new or existing patents granted, businesses should take action now."

## Cautious Jelf in good shape and pondering future growth

Jelf, the diversified financial consultancy with a major office near Swindon, is expected to report that it has traded well in the second half of the year with results in line with market expectations, despite the continued economic downturn.

The group, based at Yate, near Bristol, provides a broad range of insurance, financial services and employee benefit services to corporate and individual clients. Its employee benefits business has a base in Wootton Bassett.

The group has more than 30 branches throughout England and South Wales mainly added through a spate of acquisitions over recent years including the 2006 takeover of Auto Business Solutions, based in Chippenham.

The group will announce its preliminary results for the year ended September 30 on December 13.

In a statement to the Stock Exchange it said net debt has considerably reduced and, although the board remains cautious about the economic outlook, it is appraising a number of investments aimed at generating future economic growth.

## Business Breakfast gets quiz

The Great Western Business Breakfast, known for its expert speakers and informative presentations, will for the first time play host to a festive quiz at its December meeting.

Attendees will have the opportunity while competing for a case of wine to be shared between their team.

The quizmaster will be David Roblin of Monahans Chartered Accountants who said: "I am devising questions around the two main themes of Christmas and Wiltshire – a helpful hint for those who want to take the prize home! We think the attendees will have a lot of fun, and working together as a quiz team will help forge new business links."

The event, organised for Swindon businesses by Withy King Solicitors, Monahans, Aldermore Invoice Finance, the FD Centre and HSBC, is at the STEAM museum, Churchward, Swindon on Wednesday December 7 from 7.30am to 9am. Demand for places is expected to be high so early booking and payment is essential.







From left: Mike McCartney; Petra Myall; Ron Ashton; Audrey McCartney; Sally Rodden; Phillippa Myall; Amy Davidson; Michael King; Katie Burtenshaw; Jo Clifford and Martin Randall

## Executive travel firm gets pretty in pink for charity

Staff from Swindon luxury executive travel firm Flightlink were literally tickled pink when they staged a charity fundraiser.

The team donned pink tights, wigs and leg-warmers to take part in Wear It Pink Day, in aid of the Breast Cancer Campaign. Only the drivers were excused from dressing up, sticking to their usual Flightlink Executive Travel uniforms.

Managing director Mike McCartney said: "We've always wanted to give something back to the community and have supported a number of charities before, including Wiltshire Air Ambulance and Prospect Hospice."

"These are good times for Flightlink,

having doubled the size of our business in the past two years. So when some of our sports and social club members suggested we support the Breast Cancer Campaign everyone jumped at the opportunity to help a very worthy cause."

As well as dressing up, staff organised a raffle, sold pink cupcakes and staged a car wash, with a bargain £5 for wash and valet. So far, the company has raised £700 but hopes to boost that amount with further fundraising events.

The Cheney Manor-based firm, formerly known as Road Runners, specialises in providing a luxury travel service for executives needing inter-office or airport transfers.

## Jeans for Genes success at Vox

PR firm Vox is celebrating another job well done with the end of the Jeans for Genes 2011 education campaign, Genes Are Us.

Since the start of the campaign in February, Vox has placed articles about the fundraising day and free teachers' resources in target media, has set up and managed the campaign's social media and organised a series of roadshows for primary schools to learn more about genetics and genetic disorders.

Over the nine months of the campaign, an audience of more than a million was reached and Vox provided Jeans for Genes with a return on investment of approximately four times.

Vox director Sue Pycroft said: "The Genes

Are Us 2011 campaign was one close to our hearts and we were determined to make sure we produced the best results possible, as we do for all of our clients.

"The combination of online and offline public relations, as well as getting inside schools through the roadshow has not only helped spread the word far and wide about Jeans for Genes' education programme, but has also enabled the charity to build links with more schools, teachers and research establishments that should be of benefit to them for years to come." If you want to find out more about how your business can benefit from PR and marketing expertise, call Vox on 01793 511990.

## WH Smith builds profits by 4.5% despite sales fall

Annual profits rose by 4.5 per cent at WH Smith as the Swindon-based retailer continued to implement cost cutting and margin improvement rather than achieve sales growth.

Pre-tax profits were £93m in the year to August 31 despite sales falling 3 per cent to £1.27bn.

The group has more than 580 high street stores and 530-plus outlets at airports, train stations, hospitals, motorway service stations and work places.

WH Smith has focused on more profitable products, better sourcing and better control of markdowns to drive profits growth rather than discounting.

Chief executive Kate Swann said: "The economic conditions remain challenging, however we have planned accordingly."

## SciSys on target for slice of £1bn contract

SciSys, the Chippenham-based specialist software developer, looks set to gain significant business from the recently-launched £1billion British Army Warrior Armoured Fighting Vehicle upgrade programme.

As a member of the Warrior Transformation Team with special responsibility for the electronics architecture, SciSys representatives were present when the selection of Lockheed Martin UK to lead the upgrade was confirmed. SciSys anticipates entering into meaningful dialogue with Lockheed over a possible contract as part of the overall transformation programme. Hundreds of vehicles will be fitted with an improved turret and new, stabilised 40mm cannon enabling them to fire more accurately while on the move. They will also benefit from a new armour mounting system.

## Pulling out the stops as the rail industry looks to thrive

Swindon's proud railway heritage is proving to be a bonus as the rail industry goes through something of a renaissance.

While the town has not had a serious railway manufacturing industry since its historic rail works closed 25 years ago, it remains home to a number of major rail-related businesses, among them Atkins Rail, Owen Williams Railway, Scott Wilson, First Great Western and Network Rail.

Not too far away Invensys Rail in Chippenham, and Knorr-Bremse Rail Systems in Melksham, maintain the area's long link to railway engineering – both were formerly part of the giant Westinghouse group.

These businesses are benefiting from major new investment in UK railways as the network groans under the weight of spiralling passenger numbers, line capacity crises and rapidly-aging rolling stock.

Latest figures from the Association of Train Operating Companies show more passengers are using the rail network since the heydays of steam in the 1920s.

The Association estimates that 1.3bn train journeys will be made on the UK network this year – despite fares rising by an average of 6.2 per cent.

With petrol prices soaring, it is not just commuters who are letting the train take the strain. More holidaymakers are going by rail to the seaside and rural branch lines are witnessing a boom in passenger numbers.

And with the ever-growing environmental pressure to move more freight by rail, these increases are creating a golden opportunity for the rail sector.

The £32bn High Speed 2 (HS2) scheme linking London and Birmingham (and eventually Manchester) will spark a massive opportunity for the rail engineering sector as it includes some of the largest investment in new routes for generations.

Closer to home, Swindon's key location on the Great Western mainline between Bristol and London is creating opportunities.

The £704m electrification of the Cardiff-London route will not only cut Swindon-London journey times to under an hour but usher in a modern fleet of trains.

At the same time, the long-hoped for Heathrow spur could be developed, taking trains from Swindon direct to a new station in the heart of the airport and slashing journey times by at least 30 minutes.

Also plans are being drawn up to build a new station at Sparcells on the soon-to-be-redoubled Kemble line, giving commuters an easy, and less environmentally damaging route into Swindon town centre and beyond.



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# Growth in challenging times

The government has introduced measures to encourage investment, enterprise and innovation in an effort to drive private sector growth. It is too early to assess their impact but anecdotal evidence from business lawyers at Withy King's Swindon practice suggests that many local companies are expanding, despite the continuing challenges.

Swindon Business News and Withy King have teamed up to develop a series of Business Life Cycle features to help directors weigh up their options and make the right decisions at vital stages in their company's development.

In the second of the series, Withy King highlights potential opportunities and pitfalls facing directors of growing businesses.

## Accommodating growth

There are plenty of opportunities in Swindon and surrounding areas for companies looking to expand, whether into offices, retail units or warehouses. Angus Williams, a partner in Withy King's commercial property team, explained: "There are still good deals to be done but as directors, you need to be clear about your priorities. If cash is your biggest issue, then aim to negotiate a significant, rent-free period but be prepared to be tied in for longer. However, if flexibility and the ability to exit quickly are more important, then agree a shorter term or break clause in the early years. Institutional landlords can be less flexible than private landlords so you should enter into negotiations with a clear idea of what your business needs to achieve its growth potential in the short to medium term.

"You should also weigh up the risks and costs associated with any move, before making a final decision on how to accommodate your expansion. If your company has grown quickly or unexpectedly or if you're unsure whether your growth is sustainable in the longer term, a move to secondary space may be a good interim step. This allows you to maintain your current premises, while taking on additional space – either in your existing building or elsewhere –



Malcolm Gregory

on more flexible terms. Then, if things don't go to plan and you need to downsize, it will be simpler and less costly than being stuck with large premises that you don't actually need or having to make yet another move.

"Now is also a good time to buy your own premises if the company is robust enough or the directors are in a position to use their pensions to make the investment.

"Whatever you decide, ensure you can afford your expansion. All too often deals break down because the finance isn't in place."

## Increasing market share

An increasing number of growing businesses are setting their sights abroad and many will be considering how best to take their products and services to market. It may make sense to appoint distributors. "Don't be tempted to give away more than you have to – for example, only give the new distributor the market you think they will truly be capable of exploiting. If you're expanding into France, then give your French distributor France; reserve other territories for



Angus Williams

yourself or other potential distributors," advised Alex Pyatt, partner and head of Withy King's commercial team in Swindon. "It makes sense to keep distributors on a short leash with clear targets and timescales. You will also need to be clear whether your relationship is exclusive, non-exclusive or sole as these carry different rights and obligations. European legislation is a minefield so don't be tempted to take a DIY approach to distributor agreements. They need to be done properly or you may fall foul of the law – particularly if you have a large market share.

"For those companies interested in growing through acquisition, there are many potential targets which are looking for an exit and may be willing to negotiate a deal. Getting finance in place, appointing a decent accountant, conducting proper due diligence and agreeing heads of terms are all vital steps. If you are planning to grow through merger with a smaller business and perhaps bringing its owner in as a shareholder, don't forget to think about how you are going to govern shareholder relationships. It's risky to simply issue new shares and hope



Alex Pyatt

for the best. Far better to regulate relationships with a shareholders' agreement which sets out exactly where the parties stand, what is expected of them and what happens if it all goes wrong."

## Employment

As companies grow, so do their HR requirements. "However, your responsibilities as an employer do not change and you are obliged to provide every member of staff with an employment contract and you should also provide a copy of the staff handbook, regardless of how many people you employ," said Malcolm Gregory, partner and head of Withy King's employment team. "When you are busy trying to cope with the demands of running a rapidly-expanding company, it's easy to overlook the employment essentials. But be aware that any shortcuts taken now may have a huge impact on the business further down the line. Consulting with staff on changing terms and conditions is not always straight forward and can be avoided if you have the right contracts in place from the outset."

## Now is the time to join the growth debate

Directors of ambitious, growing companies are invited to join *Swindon Business News* editor Robert Buckland and business solicitors from Withy King for a round table discussion of the issues which really matter to expanding businesses.

The event is at the Swindon Marriott Hotel on Wednesday, November 30 from 12noon-1pm and will be followed by a buffet lunch and networking. It is open to directors of non-competing companies on a first come, first served basis – and places are limited. To register contact Anna Arakcheeva at Withy King on 01793 536526 or email [anna.arakcheeva@withyking.co.uk](mailto:anna.arakcheeva@withyking.co.uk)

## COMPANY PROFILE: IEW - WIRED FOR SUCCESS



Duncan Game

After being made redundant 31 years ago, wireman Les Wheeler established Industrial Electronic Wiring Ltd to provide sub contract assembly services to local businesses. IEW, which assembles cables, chassis, panels, looms, harnesses and PCBs for customers across the UK and internationally from Kembrey Park, Swindon, now employs 60 people and has a turnover of £5m.

"We've grown steadily, particularly in the last two years when the business has really taken off and we've seen a significant increase in staff numbers and turnover," said Duncan Game, Managing Director at IEW. "We have always kept the focus on quality, delivery, cost and customer satisfaction and these are the cornerstones of our success. We work in partnership with our customers to understand their key business drivers so that we can provide a personalised service."

So how does a business almost double in size in two years during one of the toughest economic periods on record?

"Despite the very serious global issues, many of our customers are doing well and because they sub-contract to us, we are able to grow together," explained Duncan.

"That's not to say we are complacent – far from it. We focus on building and maintaining strong customer relationships which engender loyalty and help the business to grow organically. We have also worked hard to attract new customers through concerted telemarketing and by attending exhibitions which give us insights into potential new markets. We believe it's important to keep selling, regardless of whether you're going through a quiet or busy period. In addition, we've invested in new equipment and a bright, clean factory environment which impacts positively on those who visit us.

"When a business is on the verge of rapid growth, it's often difficult to know when to press the button and start investing seriously in people, premises and technology. Excellent financial management is vital, both in terms of understanding the true costs and building your business around them, but it also helps when it comes to developing a good relationship with your bank. We've also learnt to keep continual pressure on new sales while nurturing our existing customers ensuring that quality and service aren't compromised. Our aim is to enjoy manageable and sustainable growth," said Duncan.



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# CHRISTMAS

## Movie action man to speak at Whatley Manor

Whatley Manor, the luxury hotel near Malmesbury, hosts probably its most unusual event to date later this month when it welcomes Vic Armstrong, the renowned action director and stuntman to talk about his legendary movie career.

During his 40 years in front of - and behind - the camera, Vic has been the stunt double for a host of movie heroes, including Sean Connery as 007 in the Bond movie You Only Live Twice, Superman and, most memorably, as Indiana Jones, when he doubled for Harrison Ford. He has also

directed the action scenes for recent blockbusters The Green Hornet and Thor.

In 2001, Vic was honoured by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences with an Oscar for Technical Achievement and in 2002 he picked up the prestigious Michael Balcon BAFTA, a Lifetime Achievement Award for Outstanding British Contributions to Cinema.

Guests at the special evening, which takes place on Tuesday, November 22, will hear Vic recount some of his hugely entertaining movie memoirs. He will also present a showreel of action movie clips, including 'behind the scenes' footage, in Whatley Manor's private cinema.

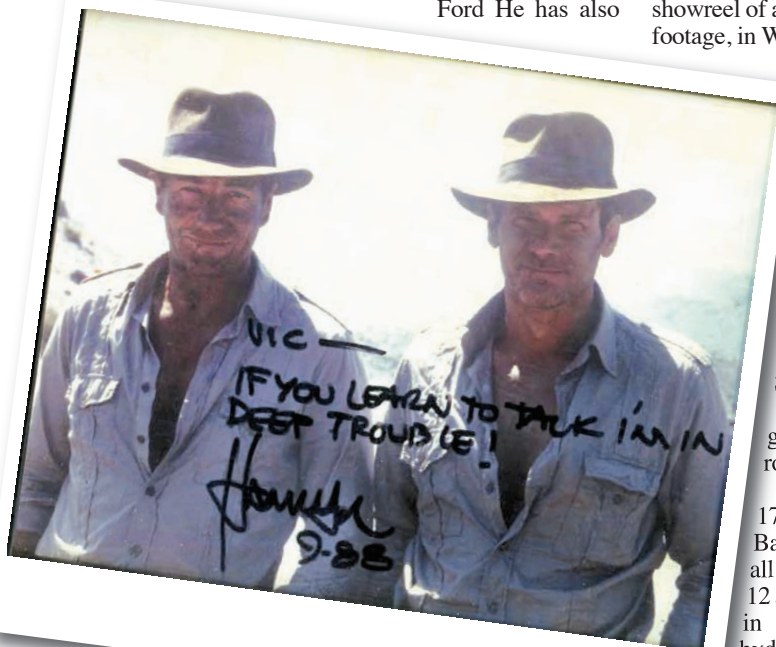
There will also be a chance to ask questions before Vic joins guests for a three-course dinner in the hotel's brasserie, Le Mazot.

This unusual event starts at 6.30pm for 7.00pm with aperitifs served in the gallery rooms.

The event costs £85 per person and includes an aperitif, the presentation, three-course set menu including wine, coffee, petit fours and a signed copy of Vic's book The True Adventures of the World's Greatest Stuntman.

There is also a special events room rate for guests wishing to stay overnight, with standard rooms from £240 per room.

Whatley Manor is 20 minutes from junction 17 of the M4 and easily accessible from Swindon, Bath and Bristol. It has 15 rooms and eight suites, all individually decorated. Guests can explore the 12 acres of beautiful English country garden or relax in the spa, Aquarias, which features a large hydrotherapy pool, thermal cabins, salt scrub showers and wave dream sensory room.



## Indian restaurant to offer outside catering

Swindon's multi award-winning Indian restaurant, the Jewel in the Crown, is offering outside party catering for businesses for up to 400 people this Christmas.

Companies looking for something special for the festive season can simply book their order now with the restaurant from a choice of menus and leave the rest to the Jewel in the Crown's expert chefs who will produce a mouth-watering selection of dishes which will be delivered for their Christmas party. While outside catering is becoming more popular for businesses this Christmas, the Jewel in the Crown's landmark 200-seat restaurant in Victoria Road is already strong receiving bookings for parties in December.

The restaurant, which has become a Swindon institution since it opened in

1987, is available to book outright for large gatherings or can be divided into four suites for smaller parties, each offering a self-contained venue, including the refurbished basement restaurant, which is now ready for the party season. The Jewel in the Crown is offering value-for-money menus this Christmas to suit any budget. Owner Mr Muzammil Ali said: "Companies just need to tell us their budget and how many guests will be coming and we will produce a wonderful Christmas meal for them which they can enjoy in one of our private suites."

"We believe we are offering Swindon's best value Christmas parties this year for people to enjoy in wonderful surroundings."

For bookings and further information, contact the Jewel in the Crown on 01793 522687.

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*The time of the year is here to be merry and joyous.  
With Christmas and New Year round the corner, get into the best of your mood.*

## CHRISTMAS PARTIES AT WHATLEY MANOR

ENJOY THE FESTIVE ATMOSPHERE IN LE MAZOT, THE SWISS INTERIOR STYLE BRASSERIE

Festive à la carte menu served from 1st – 24th December

### STARTERS

Brussel sprout and bacon soup  
Served with toasted almonds

### Winter game terrine

Served with poached quince  
and mixed leaves bound with  
hazelnut dressing

### Locally smoked salmon

Dressed with caper berries,  
boiled egg and parsley

### Deep fried goats cheese

With pears poached in mulled wine  
and mixed leaves bound with  
walnut dressing

Traditional Swiss style cheese fondue  
Served as a starter or a main course  
with air dried beef, hot new potatoes  
and crusty bread

### MAINS

Braised beef blade  
Served with celeriac and potato  
purée and red wine jus infused  
with thyme

Venison and mushroom pie  
Served with brussel sprouts  
and toasted almonds

Fillet of salmon  
Pan fried and served with  
champagne sauce

Fillet of sea bream  
Poached, dressed with a Thai  
broth and steamed mussels

Moules Marinière  
Served as a starter or main  
course with French fries

Truffle and parsnip risotto  
Topped with sage foam

### DESSERTS

Christmas pudding  
Accompanied with clotted cream  
and brandy butter

Warm pear and pecan nut tart  
Served with maple syrup ice cream

Ginger crème brûlée  
Pain d'épice ice cream and  
ginger biscuits

Puff pastry tart  
filled with mince meat  
Baked and topped with vanilla  
ice cream

Bûche de Noël  
Filled with candied chestnuts

Cheese plate  
A selection of various cheeses  
with grapes and biscuits

### CHRISTMAS PARTIES

£38 per person includes the  
three-course festive menu and coffee.  
Crackers are available on request.

Call Events on 01666 834 026 or  
email [events@whatleymanor.com](mailto:events@whatleymanor.com)

### FESTIVE À LA CARTE MENU

£38 includes the three-course festive menu  
and coffee. The light lunch menu will not be  
served from the 1st December and will be  
available from the 3rd January 2012.

Call 01666 822 888 or  
email [reservations@whatleymanor.com](mailto:reservations@whatleymanor.com)

### CHRISTMAS PARTY ROOM RATES

Special event room rate applies when booking three rooms or more in conjunction with a Christmas party taking place Sunday to Thursday. Rooms from £240 and Suites from £440 including full English breakfast, use of the spa Aquarias, vat and 10% discretionary service charge. Special Event Room Rate does not apply Christmas and New Year's Eve.

Call Events on 01666 834 026 or email [events@whatleymanor.com](mailto:events@whatleymanor.com)

## CHRISTMAS AND THE FESTIVE SEASON AT WHATLEY MANOR

### Christmas parties at Whatley Manor

To ensure the smooth running of your Christmas party, parties of ten guests and above place your order five days in advance. A set three-course festive menu will be served for sixteen guests and above.

Christmas wreath making and table decorations with Rachel Wilson  
16th November

£90 includes a three-course lunch, wine, festive refreshments and all materials to make your very own wreath or table decoration to take home.

Festive shopping at Whatley Manor  
28th November

Browse the Christmas gifts on offer whilst enjoying the festive atmosphere. You will be welcomed with mulled wine and Christmas biscuits. Afterwards why not join us for lunch, afternoon tea, make use of the spa facilities, or dine with us in one of our restaurants?

Set lunch menu from £19  
Festive afternoon tea £20  
Mulled wine and mince pies £8.50  
Spa use from £48

Call Events on 01666 834 026 or email [events@whatleymanor.com](mailto:events@whatleymanor.com) to make your Christmas and party reservation. Early booking is recommended.

### Festive dining at Whatley Manor

Christmas Eve dinner - £83 per person  
Champagne and canapé reception,  
four-course menu in candlelit  
surroundings with coffee and petit-fours

Christmas Day lunch - £103 per person  
Glass of champagne with savoury pastries  
served at the table followed by a five-course  
traditional lunch with Christmas crackers  
and coffee

Boxing Day lunch - £39 per person  
Three course table d'hôte lunch  
including coffee

Bank Holiday lunch - £28 per person  
27th December and 2nd January  
A three course table d'hôte lunch  
will be served

New Year's Eve dinner - £150 per person  
Champagne and canapé reception,  
six-course gala dinner with live jazz

New Year's Day lunch - £39 per person  
Three course table d'hôte lunch  
including coffee



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Campanile Swindon is the perfect location for your Christmas event this December.  
Specialised in organising corporate Christmas lunches and dinners (entertainment available)  
Book your Christmas Party from £21.00 per guest.  
Traditional Christmas Lunch on the 25th of December £41  
Terms and conditions apply



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## Not so much bah humbug, as be careful this Christmas

While employees might be disappointed that the traditional all-singing, all-dancing (and often all-drinking) office Christmas party has been scaled back to a mere trip to the pub and a mince pie due to the recession, for many company bosses it's a huge relief.

For the majority of employers, it's navigating the increasingly complex area of the Christmas party and employment law that can put them off rather than a Scrooge-like approach to cost-cutting.

Fortunately, despite sensationalised news cases about employees who sue their employers and vice versa as a result of their festive behaviour, it is still rare for employment law claims to arise from the office Christmas party. Indeed, after a hard year of putting the work in, the benefits of Christmas parties in terms of team motivation and employer goodwill still outweigh the modest legal risks.

However, according to Swindon employment law experts Lemon&Co Solicitors, there are still some important legal issues involved in occasions where work and social life meet and it is employers who are fully equipped with all the facts who can sit back, relax and join the party.

Lemon&Co employment lawyer Lauren Harkin said: "The starting point is that employers are generally responsible for anything done by their employees 'in the course of their employment'.

"This notion of vicarious liability means that an employer is responsible for any harassment of one employee by another employee even if the employer did not know about it and did not approve of it.

"But what is deemed acceptable? This is where the challenge for the employer begins, in that the key point is that it is for the employee themselves to determine what is acceptable to them and what they find offensive.

"For example, if the employee is easily offended or has a low tolerance threshold for banter of a sexual nature, then this could give rise to a claim of sexual harassment even if a different employee may not have found it offensive. The updated Equality Act also means that employees can claim harassment if they are offended by an act or comment even if that act or comment is not directed at them."

Sexual harassment can include both unwanted sexual remarks as well as physical harassment. The essential characteristic of sexual harassment is words or conduct that are unwelcome to the employee.

While the office junior suffering unwelcome advances from a senior director after one too many drinks is the scenario most people imagine when it comes to sexual harassment at the Christmas party, interpretation of the law can be far more complex.

For example, in 2010 an employer was found liable for an unfair constructive dismissal, sex and pregnancy discrimination claim after an employee decided to resign and take her case to court. The claims arose following the



Lauren Harkin

company Christmas party, where the woman had been seen going to a hotel room with a male colleague, following which she became pregnant.

Due to office gossip about her pregnancy and speculation about the identity of the child's father the woman resigned after her grievance was not addressed, feeling she could not continue in her current employment. The Employment Appeal Tribunal found the employer liable for constructive unfair dismissal and sex and pregnancy discrimination, albeit that the woman's compensation was reduced for contributory conduct.

Aside from the issue of sexual harassment and discrimination, there is also the risk that things may be said at Christmas parties that are later regretted, especially when the mulled wine is flowing.

In one reported case, a company director allegedly promised an employee a pay rise in the course of a casual conversation at a Christmas party. Whilst the Court of Appeal eventually held that there had not been a contractual commitment because the employer had not been sufficiently specific about the level of the pay rise and the date on which it would take effect, this would have had massive implications for the company in respect of time and legal costs.

Further, the Court of Appeal made it clear that there was no reason in principle why a contractual commitment could not have been entered into at a Christmas party provided that the promise of a pay rise was sufficiently clear and specific. Employers must take care to ensure that their Christmas good will does not overspill into reckless promises of future pay rises!

## It's the time of the year for giving presents - even the taxman has a gift for us

Christmas can be an expensive time for businesses, but it is one of the few occasions in the year when the taxman comes bearing gifts – in this case, help with cost of the staff party.

HM Revenue & Customs's festive gift allows companies an annual tax-free amount of up to £150 per member of staff.

As many firms are planning a frugal Christmas this year, more staff parties could end up being tax-free.

The total of £150 not only covers food and drink but also accommodation and transport home if the employer pays for these.

Employees can even bring along their spouse or partner and as long as the cost per head is under the limit, there is no income tax or National Insurance (NI) to pay. On top of this, the employer will also get tax relief on what it all costs.

The rules apply to any annual party or similar function, which must be open to staff generally or to workers at a particular location. The tax-free limit applies for a tax year, so if the employer puts on a summer party and a Christmas dinner together costing less than £150 a head, both will be tax-free for employees. This generosity from the taxman is

available to businesses of all sizes.

But one penny over this limit and the full amount spent will become liable to income tax and NI for both staff and employer alike. It is taxed as a benefit which could bring a nasty chill in the New Year.

Anita Monteith, tax faculty technical manager at the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales ICAEW, explains: "It has been a tough time for many businesses as the economy begins to recover and staff are probably in need of having their spirits raised. Having a Christmas party is a real morale-booster and rewards the hard work that staff put in over the year. It is a good way for businesses to show appreciation for their employees' contributions and encourages their commitment and ongoing efforts."

For those bosses who are truly entering the festive spirit, they should remember that gifts for employees will be taxable. But bosses who prefer to give staff a present such as a high street gift voucher can pick up the tax bill on behalf of their employees by setting up a PAYE Settlement Agreement (PSA) with their tax office.

For further information please see [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk).

## Business gifts not just for Christmas

Giving a client a bottle of wine at Christmas is usually well received and is a nice way of saying thank you to a valued customer. However, once the cork has popped how do you stop that message getting lost in the bottle bank?

Your business gifts are an investment and with a little bit of creativity, can keep on delivering long after the last piece of spruce has crackled on the fire. In fact, a well thought out promotional business gift can keep on promoting your brand all year!

If you haven't finalised your business gift requirements for this Christmas, Malmesbury based marketing support agency, Mindvision have a fantastic range of ideas to promote your brand. For further information or to request a catalogue call 01666 826226 or go to [www.mindvisionmedia.co.uk](http://www.mindvisionmedia.co.uk).

## Traditional and friendly welcome at Cricklade House Hotel



Standing in over 30 acres of peaceful, secluded grounds on the edge of the Cotswolds, the privately-owned Cricklade House offers a traditional, warm and friendly welcome for those in search of tranquillity, with extensive recreational facilities including a nine-hole golf course, swimming pool and spa. The venue is also ideal for a Christmas party, or an intimate festive feast.

This beautiful and dignified country house, built at the turn of the last century, has been tastefully restored and carefully extended to include 46 ensuite bedrooms. Perhaps the most impressive addition is the magnificent Victorian –style glass conservatory that runs the full length of the original building, making the most of the hotel's elevated position, with wonderful panoramic views over the Wiltshire countryside.

The Dining Room restaurant is the perfect venue to celebrate or entertain. For larger festive gatherings, and weddings the Ballroom provides a stunning venue for all occasions.

Bookings now being taken for Christmas parties, dinners and lunches, Christmas Day Lunch and New Years Eve.

CRICKLADE HOUSE  
HOTEL-GOLF-RESTAURANT-SPA



Christmas Party Bookings,  
Christmas Lunch, New Year's Eve

Eat Drink & Be Merry!

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



## Keeping jobs local key to the rural economy

One of the key strands of the promotion and growth of the rural economy in Wiltshire is to make jobs more local so that the county's carbon footprint is reduced.

Wiltshire Council's draft Core Strategy, the blueprint for the county's economy to 2026, aims to ensure that appropriate employment opportunities are available for Wiltshire's residents, providing the opportunity for people to live and work locally, helping to reduce levels of out-commuting and increase the self-containment of settlements.

The draft strategy sees the need to protect these jobs, and to promote the expansion and diversification of the rural economy.

Part of that is ensuring a supply of appropriate workspace in keeping with the surrounding environment and which can become a key driver to aid the diversification of the rural economy.

Forest Gate, part of The Bowood Estate on the outskirts of Chippenham is one such scheme with business units and offices available for rent.

It may be away from the frenzy of city business life but Forest Gate's rural setting comes with a prime location on the A4 between

Chippenham and Calne, within easy reach of Junction 17 of the M4 and 70 minutes from Paddington via Chippenham's mainline rail station.

Current occupants are a diverse collection, from a photography studio, property developer, accountants, a ballet school, recruitment consultants, a wellbeing centre, construction consultants and a wedding dress showroom.

Forest Gate is an integral member of the wider Bowood community, with Bowood House and Gardens and Bowood Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort nearby.

Two open-plan offices are now available within the Forest Gate complex of 21 business units, as well as serviced offices based in the Old Farmhouse.

Contact Sarah Goodall on 01249 810953 or email: [s.goodall@bowood.org](mailto:s.goodall@bowood.org) to discuss a move to Forest Gate.

\* In December's Swindon Business News – Focus on Malmesbury. The historic market town of Malmesbury is becoming a vibrant, modern business centre with a range of companies taking advantage of its location close to Swindon, Bath and the M4.



## TO LET

### FOREST GATE PEWESHAM, CHIPPENHAM, WILTSHIRE OPEN PLAN OFFICE ACCOMMODATION IN A RURAL SETTING

Forest Gate, formerly a working farm, has been converted by The Bowood Estate to provide in excess of 22,000 sq ft of office and light industrial space. The offices are on the A4 between Calne and Chippenham and have the benefit of ample parking and easy access to mainline rail and the M4 whilst enjoying delightful views over open countryside.

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## Funding for high growth

*The Prime Minister recently described high growth businesses as 'the engine of the UK economy'. Here, Ian Larrard, director of GWE The Initiative, looks at these exceptional businesses and the support that is available to them in Wiltshire.*

It's a startling statistic, but just six per cent of UK businesses generated over 50 per cent of new private sector jobs between 2002 and 2008, according to NESTA research.

Which is why these high-growth businesses are so crucial to our recovery from the downturn and the long-term economic and social wellbeing of the region.

In Wiltshire, to realise the full potential of businesses with the scope to achieve high growth, we are offering a range of support services for their management teams. Marketed under the Solutions for Business banner, these services are delivered in Wiltshire by GWE The Initiative with funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

### Backing Businesses in Swindon & Wiltshire

In recent years considerable media attention has been given to the difficulties facing businesses looking to raise funds. To tackle this issue head on, we're offering specialist workshops and intensive one-to-one business mentoring and coaching sessions.

High-growth businesses in Swindon & Wiltshire are invited to join the stimulating Backing Businesses in Swindon & Wiltshire programme. This helps identify the funding routes best suited to them and then prepare their pitch to potential funders.

### Understanding Finance Options for Business Growth

A special video is being posted on the [www.growthsouthwest.co.uk](http://www.growthsouthwest.co.uk) website from mid November, to prepare companies for the programme. This will review the range of funding options that are available to growing businesses. It will help owners identify the alternative that best meets their needs.

### The Perfect Pitch, December 9

Being able to effectively pitch your business and the opportunities that it presents to investors is essential when raising funds. This workshop will help you to hone your presentation skills.

### The Process Begins, January 16

By this stage, you will know the form of finance that you want to raise – and the presentation skills required to succeed. This session allows you to test your pitch in front of our team of experts, helping you fine tune your proposal.

Investor Presentations, February 2: This is crunch time – your opportunity to visit the 'dragons' den'. This is your opportunity to make your pitch to a panel of potential investors.



Ian Larrard

Other services available to high growth businesses in Wiltshire include:

### Coaching for High Growth

High-growth businesses can benefit from the focused one-to-one support being offered through our Coaching for High Growth Programme.

### Improving your Resource Efficiency (IYRE)

You can achieve sustainable business growth through environmental improvements and save money and reduce waste through the IYRE service.

### Strategic Development Services

We offer a range of Strategic Leadership & Marketing programmes, which focus on supporting business leaders and board level directors.

### Starting a High Growth Business

A further specialist service is entitled Starting a High Growth Business. This helps tackle the many challenges that are faced launching a new company – for example, producing a solid business plan, gaining the finance needed in the early stages of trading and safely protecting innovative ideas.

To find out more about the Solutions for Business services go to the website [www.growthsouthwest.co.uk](http://www.growthsouthwest.co.uk)



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## Essential points for high-growth businesses

Great business ideas, clearly articulated and supported by a sound business plan will always attract funding. But owners looking to fund high-growth businesses must take stock, review all the options and make sure that they make the right decisions. This could have a significant impact on their company's long-term development. GWE The Initiative provides the following advice:

- High-growth businesses often provide innovative products and services presenting better solutions than established alternatives. There must be clarity in communicating these ideas, supporting business plans with evidence that the new products are well received by the market.
- Highlight the track record of the team. Win confidence that you have the experience and know-how to deliver the growth performance that you are proposing.
- Find the right specialists to review your business plan and test your ideas – and make sure that it all stacks up. You

will be seriously questioned by lenders – make sure that you have carefully prepared the ground.

It is important that entrepreneurs consider all the options when raising the finance that they need to fund growth strategies. Just some of the possibilities include:

- You might consider lending secured by assets – such as invoice discounting or factoring. This is a very popular funding approach for individuals growing businesses which essentially involves borrowing money against the invoice value of the business.
- Equity finance is a way of raising share capital from external investors in return for handing over a share of the business. You might approach local business angels – wealthy individuals providing equity finance. Some invest on their own, whereas others do so as part of a network, syndicate or investment club. In addition to money, business angels often make their own skills, experience and contacts available to the company.

## South West small businesses are looking positive, according to Barclays research

Small businesses owners across the South West still retain a good sense of optimism and are looking to job creation and investment in training to help boost their business next year.

The upbeat findings come from the annual Barclays Business Regional Impact Index which shows which regions of the UK benefit most from the contributions of their small businesses and crucially, the role they are playing in boosting recovery across the country.

The index shows that, despite a challenging year and a drop of one place in the Index, South West small businesses are proving to be one of the most resilient and have begun to reposition themselves to be well placed to perform in the recovery.

They also anticipate increasing their head count by 25 per cent in 2012 – with an expected shift to highly-trained employees

However, less than half (42 per cent) expect to grow in next year – down 30 per cent from 2011

Darren Farnell, head of Barclays Business, South West, said: "The current economic climate continues to have an impact on many small

businesses in the region. Confidence remains low and clearly businesses are cautious as we approach 2012. These fears could be unfounded, but the uncertainty is real enough to damage confidence."

"However, it is encouraging to see there is still optimism, South West's businesses have comparatively increased their use of local and regional suppliers, boosting the region from tenth to fourth place. This will add to resilience in the region, as businesses support each other, retaining capital within the South West.

"We are committed to doing everything we can to ensure business owners receive the support they need to help deliver growth next year. Improving confidence is critical, as we look to help businesses to succeed in 2012."

The Barclays Business Regional Impact Index, in its second successive year, is based on an in-depth study of around 1,000 owner-managers, combined with qualitative analysis by Kingston University's Small Business Research Centre. The study ranks each region on 13 key indicators including outlook on growth, employment

generation, and expected profit.

This year's Index reveals a complex picture. Nationally, small businesses have 'battered down the hatches' following a difficult year. This is also reflected in the South West, as businesses' looking ahead to 2012, remain cautious compared to last year – with only 42 per cent having ambitions to grow their business compared to nearly three quarters (72 per cent) in 2010. Despite a challenging year firms in the South West have climbed two places, to second place, for expected profits in 2011, as around a third of businesses look to have increased their profitability. This places these firms on a solid footing, to take advantage

## More than half HMRC penalties are incorrect

Do you think H M Revenue & Customs always get their VAT decisions correct? Unlikely of course, as nobody is perfect. How about most of the time then? More often than not even?

Shockingly it would appear that the correct answer is actually 'sometimes' says Mark Peters VAT specialist with accountants Old Mill who have their Wiltshire office in Melksham.

Data recently obtained under the Freedom of Information Act confirms that during the last year and a half 56 per cent of all penalty and technical decisions issued by H M Revenue & Customs were wrong. Out of 28,912 reviews undertaken, 16,270 were overturned, either by the Courts or by H M Revenue & Customs themselves.

The position is worst with penalties and fines, of which 60 per cent were eventually cancelled. For technical decisions 'only' 48 per cent proved to be wrong. And this may not represent the complete picture as many taxpayers don't challenge decisions at all, either because they don't have the time or resources, or because they mistakenly assume they will be unsuccessful. If VAT officers were schoolchildren they'd be getting marks of four and a half out of ten for accuracy.

For taxpayers, the message is clear. If you get a penalty, or are assessed for underpaid tax, don't just accept it. Consider challenging H M Revenue & Customs, for as these statistics show, your chances of winning seem to be better than 50/50.

For more information please contact: mark.peters@oldmillgroup.co.uk

## Business Show back after success in 2011

The Business Show Swindon returns for a second year next February following the success of the inaugural event earlier this year.

The show, which will once again be staged by GWE The Initiative at the STEAM museum in Churchward.

And as part of a campaign to widen its profile among the business community, it has teamed up with Swindon Business News, which will act as media partner.

Taking place on February 1, the show will again feature a broad range of exhibitors, talks and networking sessions highlighting the tremendous opportunities for businesses of all sizes and sectors in and around Swindon. Some 80 exhibitors from across the region will be able to book stands in the hall – which this year was a hive of activity.

Delegates can look forward to a high-profile key note speaker with details to be announced later this month on Swindon Business News' website [www.swindon-business.net](http://www.swindon-business.net).

The popular speed networking sessions return and the show will also feature the innovative LinkedIn Espresso Bar

which is exclusively for members of GWE The Initiative and Business West's LinkedIn group – the largest LinkedIn group in the South West with more than 3,200 members.

Further information will be posted on the group soon. Businesses can visit [www.gwebwlinkedin.co.uk](http://www.gwebwlinkedin.co.uk) to join.

Exhibition stands are now on sale with prices ranging from £200 to £900. A downloadable exhibition floor plan and booking information is available at [www.businessshowswindon.co.uk](http://www.businessshowswindon.co.uk). k.lan Larrard, director of GWE The Initiative in Swindon and Wiltshire said: "This year's Business Show was a great success with more than 750 attendees.

"Feedback from local businesses was overwhelmingly positive with a large number expressing support for the show to become an annual event.

"I am confident that the Business Show Swindon 2012 will build on this and become the place to network and do business in Swindon."

The show, easily accessible from the M4 and Swindon railway station, will run from 9am to 4pm.

To register to attend visit [www.businessshowswindon.co.uk](http://www.businessshowswindon.co.uk)

## Access Displays shows others how it's done as it wins contract

Access Displays, the Swindon-based display stand specialist, has beaten 35 other businesses to win the contract to supply the new exhibition stand for the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).

The 150sq m stand will house five IOSH departments and will be used for events over the next three years with the option for an additional year. It will be used for the first time at the IOSH 2012 Conference and

Exhibition in Manchester next March.

Access Displays was chosen to undertake the design, construction, installation, removal and storage of the stand, after a series of reviews, evaluations and interviews.

Integral to the winning stand design is its flexibility – it can incorporate a 20-30 seater theatre/presentation area on larger sites but can be divided up into sections for smaller shows.



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## Threat to 2,000 green jobs in region as Govt cuts solar power incentive

**A**round 2,000 skilled jobs have been put at risk by the cuts to a key incentive for renewable energy announced by the Government, according to experts at Regen SW, the region's green energy group.

It claims the cuts, proposed in the Department of Energy and Climate Change's (DECC) consultation and review of Feed-in Tariffs (FiTs), will have a devastating effect on what has been a very successful and job-creating scheme in the South West.

DECC's plans would reduce the incentives for installing renewable energy from December 12 this year rather than April 1 next year as previously proposed.

FiTs were introduced in April 2010 to support renewable energy projects and have led to solar PV becoming a common sight on roofs of houses, schools and community buildings. More than 14,500 projects had been installed in the South West, the sunniest part of the UK, by last month and Regen's research shows 2,000 skilled jobs have been created in the region to fit the panels. More than 380 companies are qualified to install the technology.

Regen chief executive Merlin Hyman said: "The speed of these changes will be very damaging to businesses that have invested, in good faith, to meet the growing demand for

renewable energy – thousands of jobs are severely at risk. The feed-in tariff has brought the benefits of secure and sustainable energy to thousands of homes, communities and businesses – this is a success story we should be building on, not cutting off at the knees."

Juliet Davenport, founder and chief executive of Chippenham-based renewable energy supplier Good Energy, added: "We're disappointed to see the Feed-in Tariff cut significantly. The real story here seems to be that due to pressure from Chancellor George Osborne and the Treasury, DECC has had to cut the one scheme that gives households control over their rising energy bills."

Jamie O'Nians, managing director of Bristol solar company Your Power, said: "For Your Power the impact is significant, it is difficult to see how we can continue to grow, create jobs and add value to local economy – at the beginning of the year we had a team of five and now we are a team of 40. But the biggest losers from this reduction, apart from the Government's credibility, are the environment and the consumer." Regen has launched a campaign in support of the feed-in tariff including writing to all South West MPs and setting up a website with guidance on how people can make their concerns heard.

Alex Lockton, managing director of Freesource Energy, the Corsham-based supplier and installer of renewable energy products, described the move "a smack in the teeth".

"There's a lot the industry could have done to cope with this level of cut if we had been given more time to adjust our business models," he said. "Six weeks is too aggressive and the timing is a real nightmare with jobs on the line and Christmas looming. We've already seen a five-fold increase in inquiries over the past few days as people panic. The worry is that customer demand will fall off a cliff once the deadline has passed."

"The combination of the 50 per cent cut and the timing of its introduction is a double-edged smack in the teeth."

Freesource Energy supplies and installs solar water heating, heat pumps as well as photovoltaic solar PV to domestic and commercial customers.

## Interiors firm takes charge of eco-friendly office fit-out at Green Park

**O**ffice fit-out projects rarely come as prestigious as the work being carried out by Oaktree Interiors for clinical research organisation PRA International.

Oaktree is planning to introduce many exciting ideas for the new environment and achieve a very efficient and inspiring workplace for all of PRA staff to enjoy as well as clients and visitors to the firm's new 43,000 sq ft headquarters on Reading's showpiece Green Park

business park. Work began at the beginning of last month after a long period of design and planning, including the setting out of site and the installation of compounds, site offices and welfare facilities for the scores of tradespeople involved in the fit out project over the coming months – all supervised by Oaktree project managers.

An Oaktree spokesman said: "The commitment that PRA has made to both Green Park and us demonstrates

that perhaps the long-awaited recovery is now at last, upon us?"

"We are absolutely delighted to working on such a fantastic project - it's most certainly one we have all been thoroughly looking forward to implementing."

Green Park is set in 180 acres of managed parkland which helps to merge the office buildings into the natural environment. One of the biggest developments of its type in Europe, Green Park combines an attractive landscape with first class amenities.

The Park has individually designed landmark buildings offering high-profile, high-quality accommodation to suit the needs of a range of businesses. With office suites of 500 sq ft upwards, the accommodation also caters for emerging companies looking for room to grow.

Green energy firm Ecotricity has launched the first free-to-use electric vehicle charge point next to Green Park's wind turbine, although, in fact, it will be the world's first publicly-available charge point connected directly to not just one but two renewable energy generation devices – solar and wind.

## Swindon Business News to launch TV content

**S**windon Business News is to launch its own TV platform in partnership with Swindon-based Yantra Digital Media – a move that will bring business news and information to life and, for the first time, offer innovative and exciting ways for businesses in the area to engage with prospective customers.

Swindon Business TV will give local companies and organisations an unparalleled web-based media platform to share their stories – from new business wins to product launches, and from inspirational interviews with successful business leaders to expert advice and guidance from key local professionals.

The platform will go live later this month and will become an integral part of Swindon Business News' successful online offering via its website – [www.swindon-business.net](http://www.swindon-business.net).

It will be officially launched at a high-profile event in Swindon in early December where an invited audience will hear – and see – more about how Swindon Business TV is leading the digital media revolution in the town.

Yantra Digital Media, partner in this groundbreaking project, is rapidly establishing its Swindon TV web platform as a major new force in the town's media and sees the launch of Swindon Business TV as a key part of that growth.

Yantra managing director Gurps Nijjar said: "We have been developing and managing video content on the web for more than two years now and it is fast growing into the most powerful communication method on the web."

"This platform with Swindon Business News is a

great way to promote local businesses, giving them every opportunity to promote themselves and their offerings, as well as keeping people up to date with news, analysis and valuable information on their industry."

"I would like to invite businesses in and around Swindon to engage with Swindon TV and help us create something special. We want to listen to local businesses and provide the type of platform that allows solid end user engagement."

Swindon Business News' editor Robert Buckland added: "Swindon Business TV will be a powerful new way for businesses to engage with potential customers and we are delighted to team up with Yantra to make this happen."

"Since its launch 29 years ago Swindon Business News has become the area's most prestigious and trusted source of business news and information. We have long prided ourselves on harnessing the power of leading-edge technology to connect with our readers and advertisers."

"Swindon Business TV is the latest, and most exciting, method of enhancing our offering."

For more information contact Swindon Business News on 01793 615393 or email: [info@swindon-business.net](mailto:info@swindon-business.net)



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# Old Zarlink building to become managed workspace for entrepreneurs

A large building on the Cheney Manor industrial estate that has stood empty since semiconductor firm Zarlink vacated it several years ago is being rejuvenated to cater for entrepreneurs and companies with high-growth potential.

The first phase of Nexus Business Centre will be launched to the business community in January 2012. It will offer several packages, including fully serviced offices from 140 sq ft to 400 sq ft configured to clients' own specifications and hot-desking facilities, as well as semi-serviced open plan offices from 1,800 sq ft to 3,750 sq ft on flexible terms. The generous onsite car park allows parking at a ratio of one space per 150 sq ft. Despite the state of the art new facilities, directors Anthony Spender and Peter Triggs say that the emphasis is on value for money and flexibility in today's volatile market.

Under the direction of local commercial property developer Peter Triggs and seasoned office space manager Maria Basson, parts of the building have been gutted to create the new offices, a stunning reception area with a water feature, lifts and access for disabled people, and a café. Plans for phase two include a gym and a day nursery, as well as a decking area overlooking the attractive lagoon behind the centre.

But Maria says the services that clients will be able to access are as attractive as the renovated and refurbished building.

"As well as offering easy-in, easy-out terms to small and large companies we are providing a wide range of

services to make working and doing business here as flexible, economic, pleasurable and comfortable as possible," says Maria.

"The concept of Nexus is to provide everything that the client and their colleagues and visitors could need in the space of a working day and beyond. For example, the café will be run by professional caterers, all clients will have access to high speed wi-fi internet access, there will be private meeting spaces and kitchens on each floor, and we're offering a dry-cleaning collection service, shop with a newsstand, and are looking at eventually having a day nursery and a gym."

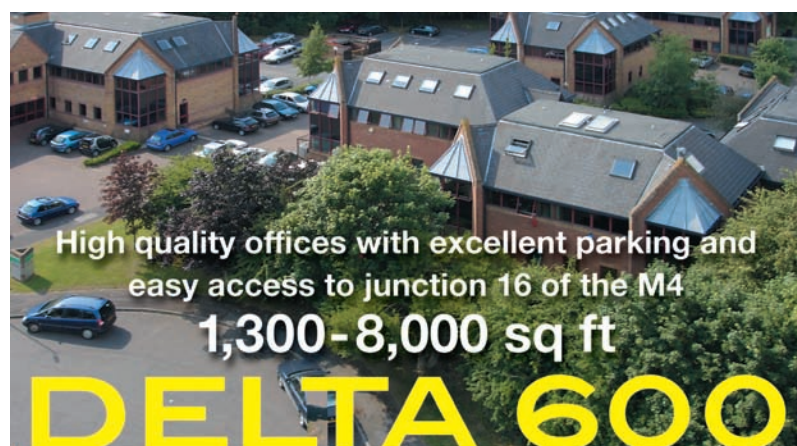
"The world of work has changed hugely over the past decade, and will continue to do so, and Nexus is being brought to market to meet the challenges that brings."

"These days people aren't necessarily working nine-to-five, and there's no such thing as a one-size-fits-all office any more. For some it needs to be a place they can go to hot-desk in between external meetings, for others it's a base where they can expand unit by unit, and yet other companies will appreciate being able to take a large amount of space on short leases."

The first phase of Nexus Business Centre is due to open in January 2012.



An artist's impression of the redevelopment



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## FACT FILE

- Office space ranges from 140 sq ft single rooms to entire floors of 8,000 sq ft, configured to individual specifications, on-site parking.
- Meeting rooms and kitchen areas on each floor
- Secure card 24/7 access
- Showers and cycle racks
- Full telephony and broadband provision
- monthly cost includes utilities, maintenance, cleaning and car parking
- additional support services via reception
- The Nexus Hub – a state-of-the-art business lounge giving members access to private meeting space, high speed internet, wi-fi and colour printing

The first phase of Nexus Business Centre is due to open in January 2012. For more details contact  
mariabasson@nexuswindon.co.uk or  
Jeremysutton@keningtons.com or call  
01793 691961.

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# Space runs out, Ergo, good work

The last industrial space on the Ergo Business Park in East Swindon, has been let and agents Whitmarsh Lockhart are confident of the same successful outcome for its two remaining office units.

The development, next to WH Smith's head office and warehouse complex, at Greenbridge, was launched in 2007 and has become a mature, well-managed landscaped environment for small, growing businesses.

London and Bristol-based developer MacNiven Quays says the buildings offer a high-quality blend of practicality, combined with modern design and flexible lease packages.

The last industrial unit to be taken, Unit 9, has recently been let to Graphic Services UK, which has relocated from a shop in Eastcott Hill.

The firm, which designs and

makes products ranging from business cards to brochures, parking signs to shop fascias, and portable displays to custom-build exhibitions, says its new premises offer better working space which further improves the quality of its work and production timescales.

Unit 9, a modern, terraced 1,308 sq ft light industrial unit, has been let on a new five-year lease with an annual quoting rent of £10,000.

Hot on the heels of this letting, one of the highly-specified modern office units has been let to Hirata Engineering Europe, which relocated from a manufacturing facility at Burbage, near Marlborough.

Unit 21, a two-storey 1,507 sq ft office, has been on a new five-year lease at an annual quoting rent of £21,000.

Hirata Engineering Europe, part of the Japanese engineering group Hirata which supplies production equipment to plants in the

## East Swindon business park has only two office units left on the market

automotive, semiconductor, and electronics industries, shortlisted the property to suit its requirement and was able to agree a lease and take occupation within three weeks.

Martin Baker at Whitmarsh Lockhart said: "This was due in no small part to the flexibility of the landlord and the determination of both parties to complete the transaction within a tight timescale."

He said there was strong interest in the remaining business units – 12 and 13, both 2,392 sq ft units over two floors – with the 3,350 sq ft Unit

6 having recently been placed under offer.

Existing tenants on Ergo Park include precision engineers Krontec Design, Motion Cars, which specialises in low carbon engine used cars, property maintenance company Indigo Facilities, printers Origin Zone and Kall Kwik, security management group SSG and branded clothing firm UK68 Agencies.

Flexible lease terms and levels of fit out are available and properties can also be bought through a long leasehold transaction.

## Developers sought for school

Developers are being sought to shape the future of the former Headlands School grounds at Upper Stratton, Swindon.

Colliers International has been instructed by Swindon Borough Council to sell the 13.5-acre site following the opening of the new Pinehurst Academy. It has been earmarked for around 150 homes including some affordable housing.

Collier's planning team submitted an outline application in January for residential use of the eastern part of the site with up to 152 homes with a new sports pitch, open space, playground, water feature and car park.

This was approved at committee subject to a Section 106 agreement covering various financial payments and a proportion of affordable housing. The sale is by informal tender with offers invited for the freehold interest by the end of November.

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## Property in Brief

- Work has started on the final office building at Summerfield Developments' Methuen Park scheme in Chippenham. The Somerset-based developer's £2m 8,200 sq ft office scheme has already been let to Bechtle Direct. The firm, the UK arm of AG German IT services group Bechtle, will move to building when it is completed next summer. The firm is currently based on Chippenham's Bumpers Farm business park.

Managing director James Napp said: "Our business growth has consistently exceeded targets and the company needs to relocate to larger premises to help us meet future challenges."

"With our skilled and dedicated workforce we wished to stay in the area and were delighted to learn of the new phase being built by Summerfield developments at the site in Chippenham." Alder King's Swindon office acted for Summerfield with Jones Lang LaSalle's Bath office as joint agent.

- Keningtons has let the 2,437 sq ft Unit 20 at Calne Business Centre to Engineering Solutions, which has relocated from a smaller unit elsewhere on the town's Portemarth Industrial Estate. Engineering Solutions has taken the unit on a new 10-year lease, with tenant's breaks.**

- Specialist housing developer Sarsen Housing Association has bought the site of a former NHS health clinic in Goldney Avenue, Chippenham, for development.

The 0.4-acre site, which had been cleared and made ready for redevelopment, was sold by property agents Alder King on behalf of the NHS subject to planning. Sarsen has since secured planning consent and started construction on site.

The site, to the north west of Chippenham town centre, is in a predominantly residential area.

Sarsen owns and manages around 6,000 homes for rent and shared ownership across the South West and has built nearly 2,000 homes in the region for residents since 1995.

- Keningtons has let the 2,437 sq ft Unit 20 at Calne Business Centre to Engineering Solutions, which has relocated from a smaller unit elsewhere on the town's Portemarth Industrial Estate. Engineering Solutions owner Mark Dunsmore said: "We are very pleased to have secured these new premises and had very straightforward dealings with the landlord and their agents Keningtons. This move is an important development in the growth of the company." Keningtons partner Jeremy Sutton added: "It is always good to see companies expand and this letting follows on from the letting of Unit 18 in August. There is just one smaller unit of 1,500 sq ft left available at Calne Business Centre." Kenington acted on behalf of private landlord clients. Engineering Solutions has taken the unit on a new 10-year lease, with tenant's breaks.**



# Safety focus for new Swindon-built Civic

The new Honda Civic and CR-V, being made in Swindon, will be the first Honda car in Europe to come with its advanced Collision Mitigation Braking System, designed to increase driver and passenger safety and that of other road users.

During its development, the design team at Honda took a strong focus on safety. "Honda has a high tech crash test facility in Tochigi, Japan. There we were able to crash the new Civic into vehicles of different weights and sizes, and at different angles and speeds. We wanted to make sure that we are offering the best 'real world' safety for our customers," said Mitsuru Kariya, Civic development leader.

One of the ways that this is achieved in the new Civic is through the Advanced Compatibility Engineering (ACE) body structure. This is a front-mounted polygonal frame that is designed to prevent the cabin becoming deformed by distributing forces away from the passenger compartment.

Just as important as technology that protects you in a crash is technology that helps you avoid an accident in the first place" says Kariya. "This is the first time that the CMBS

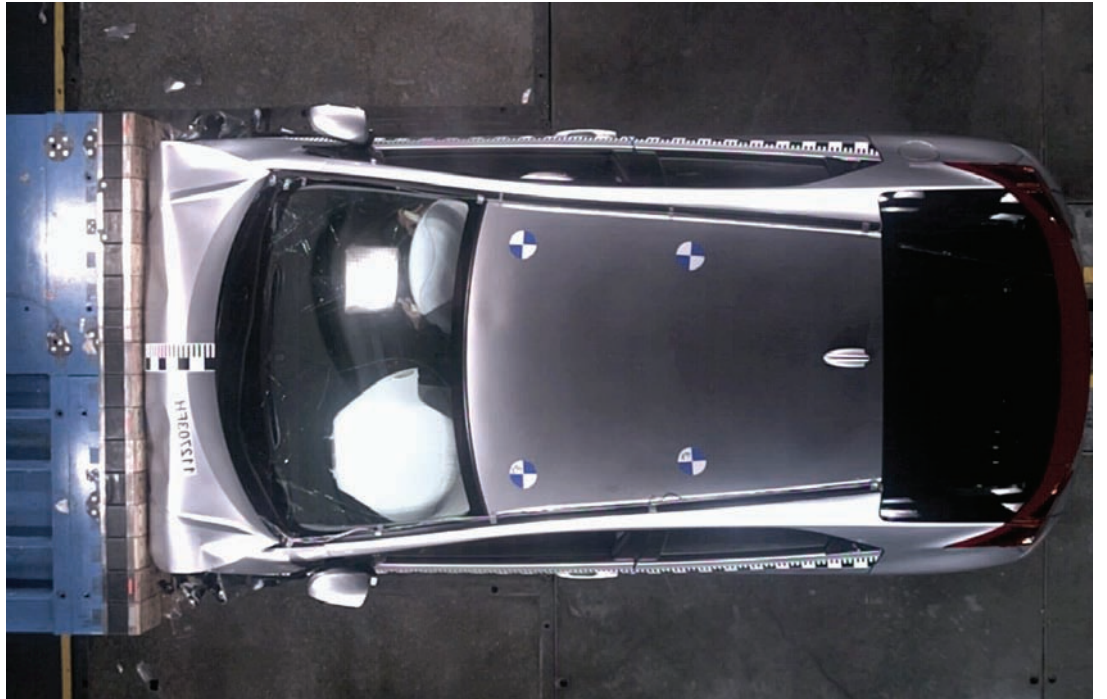
system has been introduced on the Civic in Europe."

Honda's Collision Mitigation Braking System (CMBS) monitors the distance and closing rate between your vehicle and the car directly in front of it, warning the driver when a collision is likely and helping reduce impact when a collision becomes unavoidable. The technology automatically assists with heavy braking and tightens the seat belts to reduce loading on the driver during an accident.

The new Civic also features sophisticated pedestrian protection features. "I am very proud that Honda has a leading reputation for pedestrian safety. It's an area in the new Civic that has been constantly worked upon," commented Julian Warren, senior safety engineer.

Pedestrian protection features include windscreen wiper pivots designed to break away on impact and energy absorbing front wing mounts.

The new 2012 Civic was unveiled at the Frankfurt Motor Show in September and order books at Honda dealerships are now open with cars arriving in dealerships during January.



# Hyundai i40 drives off with prestigious Golden Award

Hot on the heels of its launch in September, the new Hyundai i40 Tourer is already enjoying award winning status.

The i40 has received the prestigious Golden Award at this year's EuroCarBody Conference, held near Frankfurt, Germany, beating nine of Europe's & Japan's largest automakers to the prize.

Hyundai collected the top prize, considered the highest accolade in the industry. The awards were judged by over 500 attending delegates, including industry experts from across the world, and competitors included Audi, BMW,

Ford, Mazda, Mercedes-Benz, Nissan, Opel, Land Rover and Volkswagen.

The judges praised the comprehensive engineering and effective development of materials, as well as the production efficiency of the i40 which scored 37.98 out of a maximum 50 points. The closest competitor and second-placed car, the Audi A6, scored 35.86, with the Mercedes B-Class in third place achieving 34.66, giving Hyundai a clear victory.

Allan Rushforth, senior vice president and CEO of Hyundai Motor Europe, commented: "Winning the EuroCarBody Golden Award

demonstrates our commitment to providing the highest levels of safety for Hyundai customers. The i40 was recently awarded a maximum five-star rating in the Euro NCAP crash test, and this latest award is further independent evidence that our technology is market-leading."

In addition, the i40 has also been awarded Scotland's 'Best Estate Car.' The i40 faced tough competition from the Peugeot 508 SW, Focus Estate, Astra Sport Tourer and BMW 5 Series Touring.

Available in Estate and, from next year Saloon body styles, the all-new i40 comes with

Hyundai's comprehensive Five Year Triple Care package provides the ultimate peace of mind, comprising a five-year unlimited warranty, five years' roadside assistance, and five years of vehicle health checks. It was also rated in the lowest insurance grouping for a D-segment car in the UK, thanks to its innovative body structure.

The i40 Tourer is available from Pebley Beach Hyundai in West Swindon Motor Park, for just £234.26 plus VAT per month. To arrange a test drive, or find out more, call 01793 816800.

Why can't an estate be as stylish as it is spacious?

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**Pebley Beach Hyundai**

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

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Available on the App Store | Available on the Google Play Market

**The All New Hyundai i40 Tourer**

The Hyundai i40 Tourer is unlike any other estate. Its fluidic design is the first thing you'll notice, but striking looks aren't at the expense of space or comfort. Class-leading leg and headroom in the front, two-stage reclining rear seats in the back and plenty of space in the impressively large boot make long journeys exceptionally comfortable. Closer inspection also reveals a wealth of technology both inside and out, including touchscreen sat-nav\*, Bluetooth™ with voice recognition, Xenon headlights with Adaptive Front Lighting\*, Smart Park Assist™ and Lane Departure Warning System™. As you can see, a spacious estate can be as stylish as it is intelligent.

Prices start at £18,395\*  
Benefit in kind tax from 13%\*\*  
Find out more at [hyundai.co.uk](http://hyundai.co.uk)

Fuel consumption in MPG (l/100km) for i40 range: Urban 30.1 – 53.3 (9.4 – 5.3), Extra Urban 47.9 – 76.3 (5.9 – 3.7), Combined 39.2 – 65.7 (7.2 – 4.3), CO<sub>2</sub> Pack for Premium models only at extra cost. \*Features available with the Assist Pack for Premium models only at extra cost. \*\*On the road price of £18,395 applies to i40 Tourer Active 1.6 GDI owners/triple5 or ask your local dealer. iPhone is a trademark of Apple Inc. Android is a trademark of Google Inc.

Emissions 169 – 113g/km. Model shown is the i40 Tourer Premium 1.7 CRDi 136PS available for £24,730 with metallic paint and BIK at 19%. 15Style and Premium models only. (Features available with the Vision manual Blue Drive model. \*\*13% BIK, 65.7 mpg and 113g/km emissions apply to i40 Tourer Active 1.7 CRDi 115PS manual Blue Drive model. Five Year Triple Care terms and exclusions apply. Visit [www.hyundai.co.uk/](http://www.hyundai.co.uk/)



## Pioneering changes drive improvements at CarShop

Used car retailer CarShop has announced the introduction of pioneering changes within the business following feedback from customers.

Money-back guarantees, facilities to buy online and a home delivery service are not typically services associated with the used car market – but that is set to change following an announcement by the company.

As part of a plan to move from challenger brand to market leader, CarShop on Penny Lane, Swindon, will be introducing fundamental changes to the infrastructure of the company, transforming how it operates and communicates with its customers. These include a new website where customers can purchase cars online, a home delivery service, live online video facility, online part exchange valuation, a pledge to buy customer's cars even if they don't go on to buy from CarShop, and a seven day money back guarantee.

Swindon branch operations manager James Hawley believes a large portion of people are destined to move online. As a result, over the coming months CarShop will become the first multi-channel car retailer to sell motors both in store and on the web. The innovative move to embrace an online audience allows huge room for expansion within the retailer, as it negates geographical and time boundaries for customers. It will become a 24/7 nationwide progressive used car retailer, offering the residents of Swindon more flexibility and more choice.

He said: "I am delighted to announce that CarShop in Swindon is now a multi-channel car retailer. Research tells us that currently 30 per cent of consumers express an interest in buying a car online, and that this is on the rise;\* we are proud to lead our competitors by offering some industry firsts. It is through these that we are setting the benchmark for used car retailers, and innovating the market.

"While it's unlikely used car sales will ever move

completely online, our aim is to enable our customers in Swindon to choose their car, their way – regardless of time, date or location. It is by offering this degree of choice and flexibility that we will move closer to making CarShop the number one destination for second hand cars."

CarShop has also introduced a 'C-it-Now' system, which allows customers to scrutinize a prospective car live over the internet with the assistance of a Customer Consultant in-store. Each car profile includes 32 images as standard.

The changes follow a rebrand, which took The Car Shop to CarShop, with a new sleek, contemporary image to match. It all underpins CarShop's ultimate goal of operating eight retail sites by 2015 and selling 80,000 units a year. And with the opening of its Norwich branch scheduled for 2012, CarShop is already one step closer to fulfilling that objective.

An overview of the changes to be implemented at CarShop:

- Reserve online and collect in-store
- Reserve online for home delivery
- Seven day money-back guarantee
- Customer facing technology in store
- New customer contact centre

CarShop was established in 1999 and has branches in Cardiff, Doncaster, Northampton and Swindon. Its unique business model – selling former fleet vehicles on behalf of blue-chip companies – means it offers consumers prestigious brands, which have been properly maintained and come with a service history. What's more, each car is subjected to a 114 point inspection before it is accepted for sale, meaning that because CarShop doesn't own the cars it sells, it can reject anything that doesn't meet its exacting standards. Finally, its stock is re-valued every month in line with market value which is why CarShop offers a lowest price guarantee.



From left: Global operations director, Jonathan Dunkley and Swindon branch operations manager James Hawley

## LEP Board Recruitment

*"An opportunity to help drive the growth of Swindon & Wiltshire's Economy"*

### Local Enterprise Partnership Chair and Board Members

The Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is a Business-led Private/Public Partnership, approved by Government that is tasked with creating wealth, Jobs and new business opportunities in the area. It is now looking to put in place a formal structure to deliver those objectives and recruit the Business members for the Board to provide strategic vision and leadership and to oversee and direct that work.

There are nine Board vacancies, one of which will be the Chair. Applications will be welcomed for either/both of these roles. In the composition of the Board, we are seeking to reflect all aspects of the diversity of Swindon & Wiltshire including business size and sector experience. Our objective is to have the Board in place by 31 January 2012. They will be joined by four representatives from the Public sector. Board members will need to be either resident in the area or have a significant business interest.

The application pack can be found at [www.ssep.org.uk](http://www.ssep.org.uk), or contact the Secretariat by email

**Email:** [c2r@sdrichards.demon.co.uk](mailto:c2r@sdrichards.demon.co.uk)

**Post:** The Secretariat, Swindon & Wiltshire LEP, Old Orchard, Lynbrook Lane, BATH, BA2 5NB

**Applications:** Can be submitted electronically to the Secretariat at the email address above by 17.00 on Friday 9 December 2011. Written (Hard Copy) applications must be received at the address above by Monday's post – 12 December 2011

# www.ssep.org.uk



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