



# SWINDON BUSINESS NEWS

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Monthly in print, daily on the web - [www.swindon-business.net](http://www.swindon-business.net)

**Business as  
'ewe-sual'**

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## Trust in money

Our special wealth management  
feature

Pages 8 &amp; 9

**Next month  
Special 30th  
Anniversary edition**

## Swindon's £2bn regeneration..

Swindon is about to move into the fast lane for economic regeneration with schemes worth more than £2bn underway or about to start.

That puts the town at the head of the UK regional league table for redevelopment, according to council leader Rod Bluh. No city or town outside London has projects worth as much at such key stages of development, he said.

He admitted that the town had suffered badly during the recession, with ambitious plans drawn up between 2004 and 2008 staying on the drawing board when the downturn hit.

"There were plans in place for the town centre between 2004 and 2008. Then the recession came along, the phone stopped ringing and everything stopped," he said.

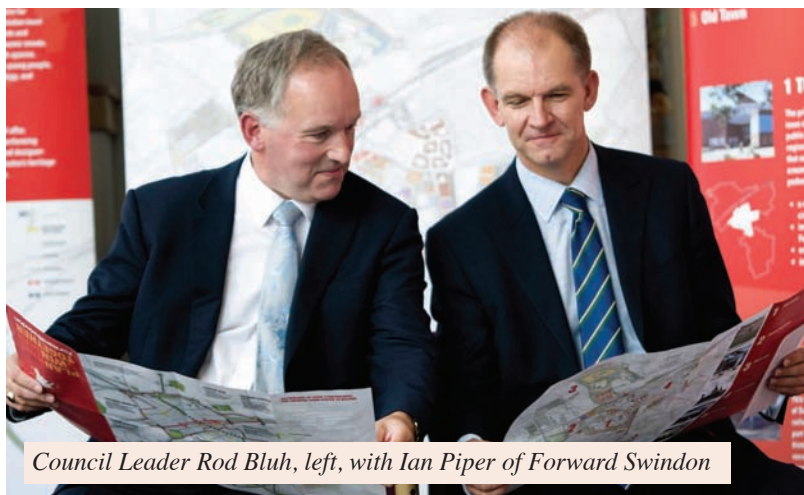
However, these schemes had been put on ice – not abandoned and were now getting underway. Cranes could be seen working in the town centre for the first time in a decade, he said.

Among the schemes are:

Union Square. The £350m new heart for the town centre. A mixed-use scheme over 20 acres with offices, homes, car park, upmarket retail and hotel, it is being developed by Manchester firm Muse.

Regent Circus. A £70m retail and leisure scheme on the former derelict college site. Developed by Bristol-based Ashfield Land, it will include a superstore, cinema and restaurants.

Refurbished Oasis Centre. A £70m



Council Leader Rod Bluh, left, with Ian Piper of Forward Swindon

overhaul and update of the leisure centre and surrounding area by London-based Moirai Capital Investment. It will include a ski slope and other attractions.

Railway station forecourt. Britannia Construction is just finishing a regeneration of the pedestrian area in front of the station.

A revitalised town centre – as envisaged by a new masterplan now out for public consultation – could also bring about a major shift in the town's image, said Ian Piper, chief executive of Forward Swindon, the town's economic regeneration company.

The masterplan includes a cultural quarter with a new art gallery and performing arts centre.

The arts centre could be an iconic building – giving Swindon town centre

a focal point and potentially becoming synonymous with the town itself.

The council has one of the UK's best modern art collections yet nowhere to display most of the work.

The Wyvern Theatre is also deemed to small to attract major headline acts – so the performing arts centre will help put the town on the cultural map.

These buildings, planned for an area close to the Wyvern, will also help attract cafes and restaurants, creating a 'night-time' economy for the town and encouraging families and older people to visit. Forward Swindon recognises at present that most of the town centre is a no-go area for many people at night because of the number of large pubs.

**Town centre plans P13**

## .. And Honda pledges £267m in its largest investment for a decade

Honda marked the launch of its new CR-V by announcing a £267m investment plan for its Swindon plant – the biggest investment in its UK manufacturing base for more than a decade.

The Japanese car giant said the money will support the introduction of its new Civic and CR-V car models and a new 1.6-litre diesel engine.

The site is expected to produce 183,000 cars this year, with output forecast to rise to 250,000 within three

years. About 500 workers have been recruited this year in the firm's biggest single UK investment programme for a decade, raising the total workforce to 3,500.

Honda said Swindon remained the "cornerstone" of its European business.

Honda UK managing director Dave Hodgetts said: "This investment programme underpins Honda's commitment to manufacturing in Britain and to our UK workforce. It

also reaffirms the Swindon plant's position as the cornerstone of Honda's European operations, as it has been for over 20 years."

Despite the expansion, many car makers in Europe are struggling with overcapacity and falling sales.

Honda's Swindon factory builds cars and engines for export to more than 60 countries in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Australia.

Honda has now invested more than £1.5bn in the 370-acre Swindon site.



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## People

• Logistics company Howard Tenens, which has major interests in Swindon, has appointed **Ian Jones**, recently retired managing director of Mercedes Benz Commercial Vehicles, to its main board as a non-executive director. Ian has successfully held many high-profile positions across the industry working for Volvo, Scania and DAF Trucks before joining Mercedes-Benz in 2002. Under Ian's leadership, Mercedes Benz Commercial Vehicles had a number of notable successes, gaining significant market share growth and reputation. His focus on product enhancement, expansion of customer support and building a motivated dealer/manufacturer team were all key features that led to the Sprinter winning the Motor Transport Award for fleet van of the year on four consecutive years and Mercedes Benz attaining the premier position in the UK truck premium tractor market.



*Ian Jones*

Mr Jones said: "Howard Tenens have demonstrated that they are at the leading edge of many aspects of the changing world of transport – from early adoption of new technologies driving both cost and environmental benefits, as well as proving to be extremely innovative in creating and tailoring transport solutions for a variety of customers with varying individual needs."

"I value the fact that Howard Tenens is a family business with a strong financial accreditation; both aspects facilitate quick decisions and fast implementation. Howard Tenens has earned its reputation for service, flexibility, customer care, value for money and environmental credibility and I am delighted to be able contribute to its future development."

Peter Morris, chairman and CEO, said: "Ian's breadth of experience in the global commercial vehicle industry will add significant value to Howard Tenens. He joins us at an exciting time when we have just led a successful bid for the Low Carbon Truck Demonstration Trial funded by the DfT and Technology Strategy Board, which will expedite our low carbon transport strategy."



*Julie Tickell and Rachel Topps*

• Specialist business-to-business (B2B) marketing communications and PR agency Clear Communications has recruited two new account managers to its Cirencester-based team following a spate of new account wins. The appointment of **Julie Tickell** and **Rachel Topps** takes the team to 14. The agency handles campaigns for major international clients such as AkzoNobel, DHL and Toyota and Lexus Fleet Services. Set up 22 years ago by chief executive Julie Clare it has specialised in B2B marketing for key business sectors across the globe including automotive, aerospace and defence, manufacturing, health and safety and construction.

• EEF, the manufacturers' organisation has appointed **Phil Brownsord** as its new director for the South West Region. Phil replaces Paul Knight who has taken up a new position as national director of sales operations. Phil originally joined EEF in 2008 to run the Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) contract in the South East and was instrumental in EEF bidding for and winning an extension to the contract in 2009. More recently, he has served as EEF's business improvement director developing the organisation's strategy for 2015. Before joining EEF, he held senior manufacturing, product development and operations roles for a variety of companies, including Johnson & Johnson, Lotus Cars, Fisher & Paykel and Halma Group. Phil said: "I am pleased to be taking on this role at such an exciting time when manufacturing is at the centre of the



*Phil Brownsord*

political and media debate. Industry is a significant contributor to the health of the South West economy providing many highly skilled, high value jobs."

• **Neil Sherreard**, a non-executive director of Swindon-based construction group Beard, has been appointed to the board of The Building Safety Group, the national health, safety and environmental consultancy. Neil was previously on the board of the consultancy, based near Bristol, between 1998 and 2008. At that time he was managing director of Bristol-based Cowlin Construction. He left Cowlin a year ago to take up a number of board appointments. As well as his role at Beard, he is a director of PR firm bClear Communications based in Clevedon. The Building Safety Group has more than 750 member companies employing 20,000 people across 3,500 UK workplaces.



*Neil Sherreard*

• Barclays Business has appointed **Fiona Harrison** as its new regional development manager for Swindon and the South West. Fiona will be responsible for developing and managing relationships with independent brokers to generate, package and place new commercial mortgage lending propositions of between £50,000 and £3m for businesses seeking finance. She will also work closely with Barclays Business Managers across the region. Fiona, who lives in Swindon, ran her own successful business for 10 years alongside managing a mortgage and insurance brokerage for two years. She has worked in the financial services for more than 10 years, including a stint at NatWest in various roles across Wales, South West and the Midlands, before joining Barclays two years ago.



*Fiona Harrison*



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# Hydrogen station to fuel changes for Swindon's commercial vehicles

Vehicles powered by green hydrogen could soon be a regular site on the streets of Swindon over the coming years following the expansion the pioneering hydrogen refuelling station at Honda's South Marston plant.

On-site solar-powered electrolysis has been installed to enable the station to produce hydrogen more sustainably. The gas produced will be used to fuel a number of different vehicle types using state-of-the-art filling technology developed by industrial gases and clean energy business BOC, a partner in the scheme.

The vehicles will include vans converted by automotive specialist Revolve Technologies and operated by Swindon Commercial Services (SCS) and Commercial Group, as well as fork lift trucks supplied by Briggs Equipment and used by Honda at the plant.

The project also includes an innovative low-platinum fuel cell designed and built by ACAL Energy.

The public-access hydrogen refuelling station – the first to be opened in the UK – is the result of a collaboration led by BOC, a member of The Linde Group, alongside Honda of the UK Manufacturing and economic development company Forward Swindon.

The existing facility will be developed so that vehicles can be fuelled with green hydrogen made from renewable solar energy.

The new two-and-a-half year project will start later this year. Part-funded by the Government's Technology Strategy Board (TSB), which is also based in Swindon, it will



Flashback: The Honda hydrogen station's official opening

assess the potential for integrating the different technologies involved in hydrogen-powered transport, from solar power sources, through hydrogen storage, to the way in which the vehicles can be used and refuelled in day-to-day working.

The project evaluation will look at a number of important factors, from overall CO2 savings, through operating efficiency, to duty cycles and commercial cost benefits.

BOC innovation manager for hydrogen systems Nick Rolf said: "This will be the UK's first and longest demonstration of solar hydrogen production linked to transport and materials handling applications – the two early commercial markets for hydrogen. The partners will be able to use this project as a 'shop window' to attract potential customers in the region and beyond."

We are delighted to be leading this groundbreaking initiative."

Honda chief engineer Mike Godfrey said: "If the low-carbon economy is really to deliver a sustainable economy by 2020 and beyond, then it has to operate at a local level."

"This project will show how green technology can be deployed here in Swindon and make a real and immediate difference to the area."

Bill Fisher of Swindon Commercial Services added: "SCS is an environmentally conscious brand, and we are delighted to be working on this project in such illustrious company. We will be trialling the use of hydrogen fuel to run our vehicle fleet as it operates around Swindon. We'd like to demonstrate the practicalities of adopting hydrogen in an everyday commercial situation."



NRG members celebrate completing their task

## Swindon NRG meeting raises the baa

Business as 'ewe-sual' was definitely off the agenda for Swindon networking group NRG at its latest meeting.

For the September get-together, members went down on the farm at the invitation of corporate team-building firm and member, Raising the Baa.

The members were split into two teams (which named themselves Ewesful and Rams) to undertake a range of shepherding tasks, each with the goal of herding a flock of lively sheep into a pen – which proved to be quite a challenge.

Members soon found out that in herding sheep – as in business life – some follow, some lead and some do the running around. But each has a vital role to play.

Swindon NRG host Jo Smyth said: "We had a really fantastic day, helped by beautiful weather. Rounding up sheep is not as easy as it looks, but we finally worked out a method which involved – not surprisingly – working together as a team."

Jo, who runs Malmesbury-based PR consultancy Word Worker, added: "We would like to say a big thank you to Raising the Baa for inviting us."

The firm, based at Bromham, near Devizes, was launched by working shepherd Chris Farnsworth, who noticed the parallels between shepherding and teamwork. When Swindon charity Inner Flame needed a challenge as part of its personal development course for teenagers, the idea of teambuilding with sheep was born. Chris was joined in the business by former marketing executive Caroline Palmer, who is also a coach and runs her own personal training business.

NRG member were delighted with the session. Tim Woodward, of Chippenham-based Pewsey Financial Services, said: "We soon learned that we should have listened to people's suggestions early on and, if we had, we would have completed the initial task much quicker."

And Fiona Scott, a journalist and PR specialist from Swindon-based Mums In Media, added: "It was a really interesting exercise. We are all business owners and so we're used to leading, but we soon learned that everyone can't lead at the same time and you have to work together."

Caroline at Raising the Baa said: "Every team takes a different approach and without exception the participants realise that it requires the total commitment and co-operation of everyone to succeed."

"We all have different leadership and communication styles and these certainly come to the fore when dealing with the added unpredictable nature of the sheep. The NRG members rose to the occasion wonderfully – it certainly was networking with a difference."

NRG Swindon meets on the first Tuesday of the month at The Weighbridge Brewhouse, Churchward, Swindon. Guests are welcome. For more information visit [www.nrg-networks.com](http://www.nrg-networks.com). For more about Raising the Baa go to [www.raisingthebaa.com](http://www.raisingthebaa.com)

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## IT solutions business re-brands to breathe new life into company

InfoSys, the IT solutions company based at County Park, Shrivenham Road, Swindon, has unveiled its new name - VereLogic IT Solutions - following a branding review.

The change has been made to establish a fresh identity and enhance a new era for their company, which has been trading for more than 25 years and has customers such as IBM, Royal Bank of Scotland, Bank of Tokyo, Johnson Controls, First Group, Halfords, Raytheon, South West Trains and Virgin Money.

Chief executive Kevin Metcalfe said: "This is an exciting time for our company as we continue to develop an innovative business despite the difficult financial climate.

"We recognise that technology is continually changing, so we wanted to develop a brand that can meet the demand as well as give our customers the best service at the same time. We intend to retain our established business values, while developing a new and modern identity."

He said VereLogic IT Solutions understood the challenges faced by companies in the current tough economic climate.

"That's why it's crucial businesses evaluate their IT software so they can increase internal efficiency, reduce running costs and improve their customers' experience," said Kevin.

## Outsourcing firm focusses on flexibility

Outsourcing company WhyteKnight launched this month to provide professional, effective business support ranging from PAs, event management and admin for all types and sizes of firms.

At a time when businesses must work as cost efficiently as possible, outsourcing is one of the best ways of bringing in the expertise needed in a flexible way.

WhyteKnight director Maureen Gregory said: "Through my demanding PA, event and admin roles in SME and corporate environments, I recognised the cost-saving benefits when a skilled person is matched to a task.

"At WhyteKnight we've brought together a team of experienced and efficient PA, event and admin staff. Many businesses simply cannot afford the luxury of full-time office support these days, so all the day-to-day tasks and one-off projects are carried out by expensive staff who are busy with their own jobs." WhyteKnight will be covering Wiltshire, Gloucester and The Cotswolds. For more information visit [www.whyteknight.co.uk](http://www.whyteknight.co.uk) or call Maureen on 07813 035473.

## Community group aims to bring a new ambition to Chippenham town centre

A team of enthusiastic volunteers are making good progress in ensuring that Chippenham becomes a vibrant and socially successful town again.

Cherish Chippenham, a Community Interest Company (CIC), is made up of a wide variety of business owners, independent and national retailers, developers, community support groups, members of the public, and the town and county councils, along with the Wessex Chamber of Commerce; all with a common goal - to improve and regenerate Chippenham town centre.

Cherish Chippenham was borne out of the team that developed the initial bid for the first round of the Portas Pilot - the regeneration fund set up by local government minister Grant Shapps in conjunction with retail expert and TV presenter Mary Portas.

Despite being unsuccessful in both rounds of the competition, the team has been undeterred from the task of breathing new life into Chippenham



Chippenham town centre

town centre by taking a project-by-project approach. As a result some major successes have already chalked up.

In July 15,000 people attended the Cherish Chippenham launch which showcased the town through music and art, displays from local clubs, groups and schools, artisan market stalls and local company stands.

The event was organised by Ben Gregory of Chippenham-based DigiPrint, who looks after marketing and communications for Cherish Chippenham.

Ben said: "Putting on this event has shown what can be achieved in a short period of time - four weeks - with a team of willing volunteers. Importantly the event was in the main square bringing about a major uplift in the numbers of people coming into the town centre and seeing what is on offer from shops and business.

"Following on from the success of the launch day, we are already planning next year's event on Bank Holiday Monday May 6."

The next Cherish Chippenham project is to open a community café. The town centre, like many market towns across the country, has a number of empty shop units, with a recently-vacated unit still fitted out as a café.

Working with the owners and leaseholder, the Cherish Chippenham team aim to re-open the café,

providing a meeting space for youth and other groups with no 'home' or poorly-serviced facilities.

The café will be run as a social enterprise providing local people with the opportunity to help run it and sell their wares. Melody Thompson, director of 24-7 Staffing and chair of Cherish Chippenham, is helping to manage the project together with Ed Deedigan from Kandu Arts, another professional board member.

Ms Thompson said: "The café is in the main square and re-opening it will ensure that footfall is maintained in area supporting the existing shops and businesses.

"Being able to provide opportunities for local start-up businesses is a key objective for Cherish Chippenham. The community café is an excellent platform providing an outlet for local people who want to work in the catering industry as well as providing facilities and space for local groups to meet."

It is hoped to open the café in November. Anyone interested can get in touch via the Cherish Chippenham Facebook page/website.

The group has also secured funding in principal for the new role of town centre manager and plans to introduce a Business Improvement District (BID) to Chippenham.

For further information on Cherish Chippenham go to: [www.chippenhamtownteam.co.uk](http://www.chippenhamtownteam.co.uk)



## Silvia couldn't see her IT problems



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## Alliance Pharma hit by competition but it stresses a healthier outlook

Half-year sales and pre-tax profits have fallen at Chippenham-based specialist drugs firm Alliance Pharma after sales of its Deltacortril steroid were hit by a new competitor and changes in doctors' prescribing trends.

Sales in the six months to June 30 were down 10% to £22m which pushed won pre-tax profits during the period from £7m to £5.3m.

However, stripping out Deltacortril's performance, underlying sales growth at Alliance, which acquires and licenses established products with stable sales in niche areas, was up 2% and underlying pre-tax profit growth hit 16%.

The firm's net bank debt was reduced from £18.4m to £14.3m. During the period Alliance also

continued its acquisition strategy, taking over anti-malarial brands from AstraZeneca UK last month.

It also completed the first stage of expansion into Europe.

Chairman Michael Gatenby said: "We are pleased with the underlying performance in the first half year.

"We have an attractive and robust portfolio, which, boosted by the product acquisitions we have made over the past 12 months, gives us plenty of scope for driving organic sales growth.

"We remain well placed to fund further acquisitions and we have substantially broadened our search for targets to include opportunities on the Continent. We are confident that Alliance will continue to make solid progress." Alliance said sales of

Deltacortril now appeared to have stabilised at a run rate of around £2m a year, following the decline after the launch of a second generic competitor and "changes in clinical preference".

The firm has also seen increased competition in Ireland for Nu-Seals low-dose aspirin.

Looking ahead, chief executive John Dawson said: "We have an attractive and robust portfolio, which, boosted by the product acquisitions we have made over the past 12 months, gives us plenty of scope for driving organic sales growth.

"We remain well placed to fund further acquisitions and we have broadened our search for targets to include opportunities on the Continent. We are confident that Alliance will continue to make solid progress."

## Women warned on insurance products

Emma Ryder, director of Royal Wootton Bassett-based If Only . . ., which provides guidance and advice on regulated insurance products, is warning of some important changes that could result in women paying much more for insurance products.

"At present, many healthy females will pay less than healthy males for insurance products such as life insurance and critical illness cover," said Emma.

"However, this situation is unlikely to continue as a result of a European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruling issued last year, commonly known as Test Achats. From December 21 this year UK insurers will no longer be

able to offer insurance premiums based on gender."

While this change will obviously affect the most common products such as motor insurance, it could also impact on life insurance and critical illness cover, Emma says.

"If you wait until December 21 or later to buy these products, you may have to pay more for insurance compared to current prices. Experts\* are predicting that premiums for healthy females could rise by 11 to 15 per cent on these products."

If Only... works with people who are looking for ways to secure the financial future of their family and/or business.

"Plans can often be knocked off track by an unforeseen illness, accident or the death of a family member or business partner/co-director," said Emma.

For further information please contact service@ifonly.co.uk or call 01793 858210.

*\*Figures from The Actuarial Profession, a professional body of mathematical advisers to the insurance, pensions and healthcare industry, in March 2012.*

## Swindon to host Venus Business Women Awards

The Venus Business Women Awards are coming to Swindon in 2013! and Queen Bee Event Solutions are on board to make it all happen...

At Venus Awards we are passionate about the role of local business women in the community.

There are numerous organisations in all areas of business that are driven by women that deserve to be recognised for their efforts. Whether a sole trader, or a larger company managed by women or promoting a female friendly, flexible and stimulating business environment; Venus Awards wants to celebrate this wealth of local female business acumen and diversity. Companies

wishing to support the women in the local community can choose to be a category, title or awards night sponsor.

The awards have been a huge success in Dorset in 2010, 2011 and 2012 (with sponsors such as Nat West, Lexus, Heart Radio) also branching out into Southampton in 2012 they had an outstanding 500 nominations! These amazing and long overdue awards to recognise women in business are now being taken to other regions/cities across the country

If you would like to register your interest to support these fantastic awards as a sponsor, please contact michelle@lifeiswhathappens.co.uk before 30th September

## Green IT tips to show companies what works and what doesn't

Many organisations – and especially IT companies – cite the term Green IT, yet not many people understand what this means. Are there genuine benefits or is it simply the latest IT marketing spin to encourage firms to spend on IT consultants?



IT provider ITS, which is based in Notton, near Chippenham, has come up with four tips to dispel the rhetoric and help clients understand what works, what doesn't and the benefits of embracing green IT:

- Use flat screens. They take up less room, last longer and as a result should be the greener option. So replace those old, big screens.
- Offset energy used in the manufacturing process. Some 70 per cent of the natural resources consumed in the lifetime of a monitor are used during manufacturing. So offset this by cleaning the insides of PCs – dust and unnecessary software will clog your system and slow down its performance – and by adding memory and upgrading software.
- Use power-efficient servers to

run the processor and memory, and move the running of applications to a server-based rather than desktop-based model. This will result in reduced hardware purchase and running costs. It's known in the trade as 'going thin'.

- Consider cloud computing or virtualisation. Not only will this considerably reduce the hardware required but is the best way to facilitate system backup and enable disaster recovery from unexpected interruptions such as flooding, fire, theft and more.

The above measures will prolong the life of systems, deliver operational and cost savings and reduce a firm's carbon footprint. To find out more from a team that champions green IT and uses plain English, call ITS on 0845 241 7410 or email: info@itsis.co.uk.

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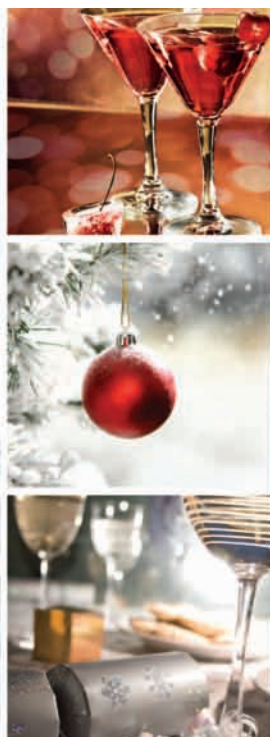


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## Mindful Employer Network gets support from the FSB

The Swindon branch of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) has announced it will actively support the Swindon Mindful Employer Network fourth annual conference next month.

The network conferences, which focus on mental health and well-being in the workplace, have rapidly built up a reputation for excellence and are free of charge to representatives of employers in the Swindon area.

The local FSB will be sponsoring the pre-conference reception which is hosted by the Mayor of Swindon at the conference on October 15, which takes place the Swindon Marriott.

FSB Swindon branch chair Emma Faramarzi said: "I believe business people and employers in all sectors now have a greater awareness of mental health and well-being issues at work."

"The reality is that owners and staff in small businesses face the same pressures in challenging economic times as their colleagues in larger enterprises."

"I meet owners of small businesses everyday and at times the stress of running your own enterprise can be overwhelming. I believe the work of the Swindon Mindful Employer Network in highlighting these crucial matters of concern is extremely valuable to Swindon businesses and local community."

Richmond Fellowship Wiltshire's David Latham, who manages the network, is delighted by the offer of support:

He said: "Due to the generosity of organisations like the local FSB we can once again provide another conference to local businesses free of charge. The FSB has been actively supporting the work of the network for several years and we are keen to continue this excellent association for many years to come."

The pre-conference reception is at 11.30am with the conference running from 12noon to 2.50pm.

The keynote speaker is David Frost CBE, chairman of the National Network of Local Enterprise Partnerships, and former director general of the British Chambers of Commerce. He is also co-author of the Government-commissioned Health at Work - An Independent Review of Sickness Absence.

Other speakers include Melanie Richens, chair of the Swindon Mindful Employer Network, and John Gilbert, board director commissioning, Swindon Borough Council

The event will be hosted by BBC Points West presenter Ali Vowles.

For more information email david.latham@richmondfellowship.org.uk or go to: www.mindfulemployer.net

## Swindon lawyers' two-day bike ride brings in £1,300 for Air Ambulance

Staff from Swindon law firm Withy King have raised more than £1,300 for Wiltshire Air Ambulance by cycling 136 miles over two days.

The team rode to the Devizes head office of the charity from Children's Hospice South West in Bristol and then on to Helen & Douglas House in Oxford.

Earlier this year these three charities were chosen by the firm's three offices – in Swindon, Oxford and Bath/Bristol – as the annual good cause. The bike ride raised more than £4,000 which has been split between the three charities.

Withy King partner and chair of its charities committee Chris Kane said: "As promised earlier this year when we unveiled our new brand, we are committed to making a positive impact on the communities we work in and this sponsored bike ride is one of many initiatives we have undertaken under our new charities strategy."

"We would like to thank our friends, family and colleagues for their generous donations and look forward to our next fundraising campaign."

Wiltshire Air Ambulance head of fundraising Caroline Corrigan said:

"Congratulations and thank you to all those who took part. We are extremely thrilled to be one of Withy King's charities of the year which not only helps to raise funds but also our profile."

On average the air ambulance is called to three incidents a day. The helicopter costs the charity £2,000 a day to keep flying.



From left: Jessica Bent, partner, Withy King; Chris Kane, partner and chair of Withy King's charities committee; and Dave Eagle, head of IT

## Solicitor returns to law firm he left 30 years ago

Solicitor Doug Hughes is to merge his DR Hughes sole practice with Bevirs Solicitors on October 1. Mr Hughes worked as a solicitor with Bevirs before setting up on his own 30 years ago. He has been successfully running the practice in Royal Wootton Bassett for the past 13 years.

He said: "I am delighted to be returning to Bevirs, this time as a consultant solicitor at their Royal Wootton Bassett office. I am looking forward to continuing to work for my clients bringing to them all the benefits of the technology and resources that the combined firm will offer for the future."

Bevirs has offices in Swindon, Calne and Royal Wootton Bassett. Its senior partner John Hunt said: "We have always enjoyed a positive professional relationship with Doug. Many of us worked with him when he was here previously and we are certain that his expertise and experience will enrich the services we offer to all Bevirs clients."

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## Even the smallest firm needs a good strategy

Your business is the result of hard work, commitment and investment so it's only right that you want to ensure it's safe. However what would you do if your business experienced a major emergency such as a flood, fire or anything that would affect your normal operations? Do you have a business continuity plan in place should the worst happen?

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## Audit exemption rules welcomed by Banks

Swindon-based chartered accountants Banks has welcomed new rules which will exempt many firms from having to undergo an audit.

But they are cautioning companies against immediately opting out of audits without first considering their benefits.

Business Secretary Vince Cable recently launched proposals to reduce auditing and reporting requirements – a move which would enable 36,000 firms to now choose whether or not to be audited.

Banks director Neil Elsdon said: "We certainly welcome the changes, which will enable many more companies to make a commercial choice about whether or not to be audited, rather than being forced to comply."

"But we would counsel caution. While it may at first seem attractive to not have to undergo an audit – so

saving time and money – there are benefits to being audited.

"Having an audit means an expert, independent and critical eye is cast over the business, which can be very useful in helping the owners and managers to ensure the businesses is being run effectively.

"Third parties – such as banks and suppliers – are also likely to have more confidence in a business which they know is being independently audited."

The new regulations, which come into force for accounting years ending on or after October 1, 2012, mean businesses will be exempt if they meet at least two of three criteria: a turnover below £5.6m, a balance sheet of £2.8m, or 50 or fewer employees.

The move brings into line mandatory audit thresholds with accounting thresholds.

## Conference to tackle issue of 'responsible capitalism'

The leadership qualities and business policies needed to navigate today's corporate responsibility issues are to be explored at an exclusive conference in Bristol next month.

The exclusive event, the latest in the Board 2020 seminar series, will look at how, in a rapidly-changing environment, businesses should present themselves to the world. It will pose the question: Is the current capitalist business model acceptable or sustainable for the future?

The conference takes place at UWE's Frenchay Campus, near Bristol, which is hosting it along with Strategic Value Partners (SVP) and Bristol-based executive search and recruitment specialists Moon Consulting.

Backed by Swindon Business News as media partner, this free conference will hear from experts in leadership and strategy, environment and sustainability, corporate law and executive remuneration.

Among those lined up to speak are Colin Drummond OBE, chief executive of specialist waste and recycling firm Viridor, and Andrew Webber, corporate partner at Bristol law firm TLT.

The event, for which a handful of places are still available, takes place at UWE on October 5 from 8.30am to 2pm. It is free to attend and lunch and refreshments will be served.

Board 2020 was set up last year to stage conferences with a difference. Its events give delegates the chance to hear from world-class speakers as well as getting a valued interactive learning forum through a range of facilitated group discussion platforms such as World Café and Open Space.

Board 2020 events are attended exclusively by board members, executive and non-executive directors.

Led by Malcolm Lewis of SVP, the facilitated group discussions offer excellent networking opportunities as well as strong dialogue around the issues that matter to directors and the wider business community.

For further information contact Oliver Harrison at Moon Consulting on 01275 371200

## Less tax inside the 'Patent Box'

Traditionally, patents have been taken out to stop competitors copying inventions. However they now have a further power – reducing your corporation tax!

The Government intends to introduce a Patent Box regime next April under which corporation tax for a portion of profits can be reduced to 10 per cent (from normally over 20 per cent) when a business has a qualifying patent covering its products.

Chartered accountants Haines Watts has teamed up with patent and trade mark attorneys Phillips & Leigh to stage a series of overview seminars dedicated to the new Patent Box initiative. Each seminar will cover:

- The fundamentals of the Patent Box
- How businesses can benefit if they don't have a patent or a patent application
- How they can benefit if their patent application hasn't yet been granted
- How they can benefit if they have already got a granted patent.
- What the benefits can be
- The things that businesses should be considering now to help get into the 'box'. The seminars take place



Martin Gurney of HW Accountants

between 9am and 12:30pm on October 18 and November 6 at Swindon's Jurys Inn. Tea and coffee will be provided. Possible future dates may also be confirmed.

Anyone interested and wishing to book a place should contact Haines Watts on 01793 533838 or email [Swindon@hwca.com](mailto:Swindon@hwca.com). Places cost £15 per person and are limited to two people per company.

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### Ask Peter B

Small Business advice from Peter Bromley ACA  
Technical Director, AMS Accountancy Ltd.

**Q: I'm married and earn £50,000 - including interest from savings and investments. Can I legitimately reduce my Income Tax bill?**

**A: Your income is over £42,475 (Higher Rate threshold); so any savings and investments income you receive will incur an extra 20% tax.**

There are legitimate ways to reduce the extra tax:

You could gift your investments to your wife. (Some might prefer to pay the extra 20% tax – but this isn't an accountancy issue). She will be taxed on the investment income at 20%, so long as her income stays below £42,475. This will reduce your income and also your tax. You can further reduce your tax by paying into a pension plan; saving you 20% tax on the contributions plus a further 20% tax relief in your pension fund.

**Example:** Jim earns £51,500 and also receives share dividends of £1,800. His wife Jill earns £15,000. If Jim gifts his investments to Jill, he will save tax of £450/year. By paying £1,200 into a pension, he will have a pension fund of £1,500 (£1,200 + tax relief of £300), and will also receive a tax refund of £300.

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## Fixed mortgage rates becoming more popular

Fixed-rate mortgages are becoming more popular as a raft of new products come onto the market, new figures show.

The percentage of borrowers choosing fixed rates on purchase applications climbed by 3.8 per cent to 83.1 per cent in August – the highest level since June 2009.

The data emerges from the latest National Mortgage Index from the UK's leading independent mortgage broker, Mortgage Advice Bureau (MAB).

Using data from more than 500 brokers and 800 estate agents, the National Mortgage Index also reports the percentage of remortgage applications for fixed rates rose to 84.2 per cent some 15.8 per cent higher than at the start of the year. The increases follow a rise in the number of products and a fall in average fixed rates, as pricing competition among lenders intensified in August.

The average two- and five-year fixed rates were down compared to July, with the average five-year fixed rates falling 0.14 per cent to 4.73 per cent.

Alongside the traditional summer lull in August, the

impact of the Olympics and Paralympics had been expected to have a negative effect on application levels. But this was partially offset by the official launch of the Funding for Lending scheme on August 1.

As such, applications for purchase and remortgage borrowing fell just 4.16 per cent from the level in July, and purchase activity remained 14 per cent higher than it was at the start of the year.

Brian Murphy, head of lending at Mortgage Advice Bureau, said:

"We saw a growing number of lenders releasing more competitive products as a result of the Funding for Lending Scheme. In particular, we've seen a marked increase in the number of fixed rates, demonstrating that borrowers are seeing real value in both the price and security they offer."

In August we saw an increase in competition among lenders both in terms of pricing and also in numbers, with the number of products available on the rise. As such we expect this will start having more of an impact on activity this month and that September will be a strong month in terms of new applications."

## Morris Owen asks: Is your investment profile still right for you?

*"If you keep on doing what you've always done, you'll keep on getting what you've always got."*

Wise words? Well not so, according to Morris Owen, when applied to managing your investments. Maybe in the boom times that might have been common financial advice, but times really have changed.

Reviewing your investments regularly has never been so important. Gary Mothersill of Morris Owen's financial services team explains: "With today's fast-moving financial situation change happens very quickly. New investment products are coming onto the market all the time so not undertaking regular reviews of your investments might mean that you miss out on new opportunities. During times of financial turmoil, it is common for personal circumstances to change too. Regularly reviewing your financial plans and attitude to risk has never been more vital".

So what is involved in reviewing your investments? Some wealth managers will simply send a valuation statement to their clients each year. That may have been sufficient for some during better economic times but the financial services team at Morris Owen believe a strategic



Gary Mothersill

approach is necessary.

Morris Owen's approach is to regularly review the performance of clients' investments and work with them to discuss both their views and the clients' views on where the markets are going. Changing personal circumstances will affect the longer-term investments too so these are always taken into account.

Attitude to risk is another important aspect that needs to be considered and reviewed. Gary comments, "when we start working with clients the first thing that we do is determine their attitude to risk and their capacity for losses. Of course these change over time depending on life experiences but fundamentally

people are all different and some people are prepared to take much more risk than others to achieve their financial goals. Risk profiling defines the levels of volatility clients are willing to accept in order to achieve their financial goals and their capacity to accommodate loss over the time periods involved."

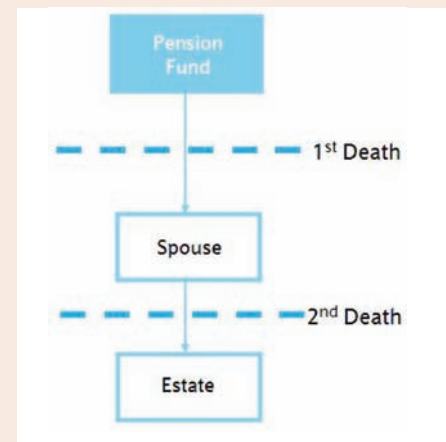
At some point this current global economic crisis will be stabilised and some form of normality will return. Morris Owen warns: "those who wait for evidence of this growth do run the risk of missing out on growing their investments. Those who are able and prepared to invest over the longer term may want to seek opportunities and consider investing, providing of course the investment matches their own risk profile and that they continue to review those investments frequently."

Good Wealth Management is about helping clients remain realistic about their financial goals and reviewing what is achievable on an ongoing basis. If you think you should be reviewing your investments then call Morris Owen for an informal chat, Gary and the team will be pleased to discuss your needs with you. Tel: 01793 603900, or email: gary.mothersill@morrisowen.com

## • CASE STUDIES •

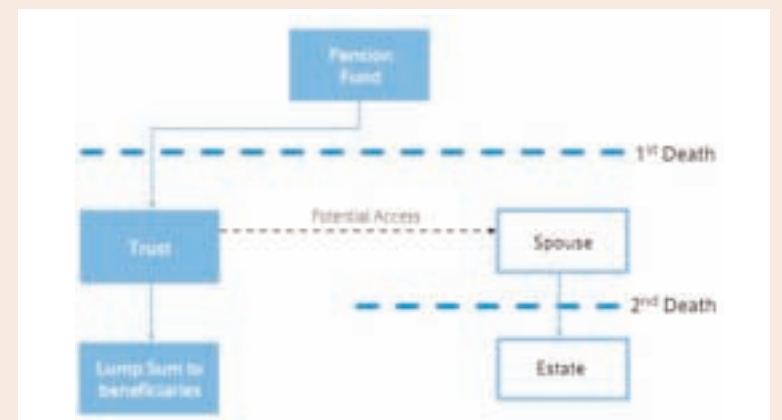
### An Example – Not using a Spousal Bypass Trust

- Phil and Mary have an estate valued at £1,000,000.
- Phil has lump sum death benefits from his pension of £400,000.
- If Phil died now £400,000 would be paid to Mary, which could increase the IHT liability on her subsequent death by £160,000 (40% of £400,000).
- Assuming no asset growth, and both Nil Rate Bands available, the total inheritance tax bill could be: £1,400,000 less £325,000 (Phil NRB) less £325,000 (Mary NRB), taxed at 40%, £300,000 inheritance tax liability payable on second death. Beneficiaries receive £1,100,000.



### An Example – Using a Spousal Bypass Trust

- Phil and Mary have an estate valued at £1,000,000.
- Additionally, Phil has lump sum death benefits from his pension arrangement of £400,000. He has affected a Bypass Trust.
- If Phil died now £400,000 would be paid to the trustees to invest in the Bypass Trust
- Assuming no asset growth, and both Nil Rate Bands available, the total inheritance tax charge could be: £1,000,000 less £325,000 (Phil NRB) less £325,000 (Mary NRB), taxed at 40%, £140,000 inheritance tax liability payable on second death. The trust has secured a potential IHT saving of £160,000. Beneficiaries receive £1,260,000.



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# Why putting trust in efficient tax and estate planning can pay off

With much of a typical financial plan focusing on acquiring, protecting, using and enjoying wealth, it is all too easy to overlook the key consideration of how best to pass on wealth.

In the first of a series of articles on wealth management, we look at the benefits of including the use of trusts within the planning process.

Anyone involved in estate planning – whether as adviser or client – will talk about the importance and benefits of using trusts. There are many kinds of trusts and many become fashionable as changes in the tax regime make them more effective. In the same way others fall out of use when they are no longer advantageous to estate planning.

For example, bare trusts (also known as simple trusts) are now growing in popularity while spousal bypass trusts are also increasing being used to good effect.

## But to start from the beginning, what is a trust?

Paul Kirk, Barclays' regional head, wealth and investment management, says: "In its simplest terms, a trust is a way of arranging the property within an estate (assets such as land, money, buildings, share portfolios, or other items such as antiques, paintings, furniture and jewellery) for the benefit of other people without giving them full control over it compared to an outright gift."

"The settlor (the original owner of the property being put into trust) transfers legal ownership of the property to the 'trustees' of the trust to hold for the benefit of one or more persons known as the 'beneficiaries'."

"Trust law imposes strict duties on these trustees to hold the trust property and administer it for the benefit of the beneficiaries as directed by the trust provisions. The trustees are also fully accountable to the beneficiaries and are not allowed to receive any benefit at all unless the trust expressly permits it."

There are a number of different types of trust. However two are more commonly used:



James McNeile

## Absolute or bare trusts

An absolute trust is one where the beneficiary(ies) has an absolute interest and the sole duty of the trustee is to hold the property for the beneficiary and transfer it to the beneficiary when required.

The beneficiary(ies) has an absolute right to the property at age 18.

According Swindon law firm Withy King's partner, tax and estate planning, James McNeile, bare trusts have suddenly become popular because of Government changes in inheritance tax. A bare trust set up by a grandparent allows income and capital gains to be taxed as the child's – often meaning that no tax is payable once the child's tax allowances are taken into account.

"The great thing about bare trusts is that they are transparent," says Mr McNeile.

"You can put a property into a bare trust for a child or grandchild and they get control at 18."

"They also make giving gifts easier for grandparents. For example, if the grandparents of a 12 year old want to give it a sum of money it may be easier to give it to the parents to be kept in a bare trust – tax-wise it's treated as the grandchild's."

Bare trusts also being used for compensation protection.

Mr McNeile says if an individual wins an amount because of, for example, a clinical negligence case, a bare trust can be used to protect this money without it affecting other income from benefits.

## Discretionary trusts

A discretionary trust is one where trustees have discretion about how to use the income of the trust, and sometimes the capital.

Paul Kirk at Barclays explains: "Discretionary trusts are often set up to put capital aside for a future need that may not be known yet, for example a grandchild that may require more financial assistance than other beneficiaries at some point in their life or for beneficiaries who are perhaps not capable or responsible enough to deal with money by themselves."

"Under a discretionary trust none of the beneficiaries have a right to receive the money held in the trust. The trustees will decide which of the beneficiaries receive capital and/or income for the trust."

Spousal bypass trusts, a type of discretionary trust, are increasingly being used in tax planning.

Such an arrangement will enable an individual to pass pension assets into a trust which their spouse can benefit from after their death rather than passing them to the spouse directly.

Loans can be made to a spouse from the trust and if not repaid will generally be a debt on their estate.

These methods both operate to reduce the value of your spouse's estate and can therefore reduce the amount of inheritance tax payable on their death., explains Paul Kirk.

For tax reasons, both spouses are excluded as beneficiaries while you are alive.

James McNeile at Withy King says: "Spousal bypass trusts have become popular for IFAs. They have been around for a long time but have been used mainly by people with large pensions."

"They have some excellent benefits."

# Saving tax can add lustre to your investments

By Mandy Casavant, a solicitor in the Probate and Estate Administration team at Withy King

Many of our clients have added lustre to their investments through using sensible tax saving opportunities.

Three current opportunities are:

## 1. Writing life insurance policies and pension death benefits in trust

If you hold life insurance policies in your own name or you die before fully drawing down your pension, the proceeds of the policy or the return of your pension fund can suffer Inheritance Tax ('IHT') at up to 40%. Given that these amounts are, by necessity, not ones which you can benefit from in your lifetime, it is sensible to write them 'in trust' for your chosen beneficiaries. In this way you avoid any IHT liability on these amounts.

Depending on your personal circumstances the proceeds can be written in trust for children absolutely or for a trust from which a surviving spouse can benefit, but where the value does not form part of their taxable estate when they eventually die. Money can be made available to such a spouse as needed or by loan.

Bypass trusts of this kind can be simply set up using standard documents provided by insurance and pension companies or by your Independent Financial Adviser. Sometimes it will be worth pulling proceeds from different policies together under one bespoke trust drafted by your lawyer.

## 2. Furnished Holiday Lettings

A tax efficient investment opportunity has arisen in furnished holiday lettings. This is one of the few residential property investments which can be fully relieved from Inheritance Tax and can also allow capital gains made on other investments to be rolled over into the purchase of a property and income tax relief on losses made in the letting business. European law means that your property may be situated anywhere in the European Economic Area.

The Revenue have recently tightened the basis on which a let property may qualify for these reliefs - for instance the property will from next spring have to be available for 210 days a year and actually be let for 105 days a year.



Mandy Casavant, a solicitor in the Probate and Estate Administration team at Withy King

## 3. Use of bare trusts

In IHT planning there remain great tax advantages of giving away surplus capital sooner rather than later - by surviving the gift by at least seven years the value avoids IHT on the donor's death. Giving money to young people may, on the other hand, mean that more than just the tax is lost - they might waste it or be persuaded to give it away. By using a bare trust the donor can retain moral control over the money and invest it appropriately while still allowing the gift to be treated as having been made and with the beneficiary's own capital gains tax and income tax allowances and rates to be used.

Let's be honest, we'd all prefer to pay less tax. No one wants to pay tax unnecessarily, but tax planning is increasingly complicated so you might be paying more than you should. If you get it wrong and underpay, you risk extra interest and high penalties. We can help, whether it's dealing with tax returns or trust accounts, capital gains tax computations or tax certificates for beneficiaries.

For advice on these and other ways of protecting your hard earned wealth contact Mandy Casavant or James McNeile at our Old Town office in Swindon on: 01793 536526 or email:

mandy.casavant@withyking.co.uk or james.mcneile@withyking.co.uk

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## Directors should be taught responsibilities

New company directors should be taught about their responsibilities before they take their seat in the boardroom, according to West insolvency expert Rupert Mullins.

Having been an insolvency practitioner for 30 years, Rupert, who heads the regional office of Benedict Mackenzie, has seen for himself the problems that can follow when an enthusiastic – but naïve – director gets involved in a business.

He wants the Government to stage compulsory half-day courses for all new directors with a particular emphasis on their personal liabilities should the business fail.

"I've recently had some cases which highlight the lack of understanding by directors," said Rupert. "Unfortunately many directors do not listen and go in with their eyes closed. They can be easily duped."

"One is a very small business that is facing a loss of more than £60,000 simply because the new owner did not ask the right questions."

He has been calling for compulsory lessons for new directors for more than a decade – but says the present economic climate is making them even more vital.

"We all like to see enthusiastic people starting up businesses but too often they don't know what it takes to run a business," he said.

"So often I find that directors' understanding about their own business isn't good, which is no wonder so many go out of business."

"There is a need for good quality

training for directors so they understand their role in the business and their responsibilities."

Director lessons would address issues such as filing company accounts on time and paying PAYE as well as some of the legal obligations of the job.

He argues that almost anybody can be made a director of a company – and many people jump at the chance – but there is a woeful lack of knowledge of what that entails, especially the legal responsibilities.

"Do all directors of small businesses know the definition of insolvency?" he said. "People say I've got a good idea and they go and start a business, but the back office work needs to be done."

"I'm always hearing people say 'Oh, my accountant does all that' but then you find these accountants are just book-keepers, they can't advise on the direction of the business or key factors – they just add up the numbers and present them back to the director."

"We need to encourage sustainable businesses. The Government wants to encourage entrepreneurs – which is excellent – but these people need more than just being shown how to put their idea into practice."

"They need to be commercially aware. They need to understand about their market and their responsibilities as a director and they need to know where to go to for proper advice."

For further information contact Benedict Mackenzie on 0117 373 6222 or visit [www.benemack.com](http://www.benemack.com)

## Social enterprise to help young people launched

A social enterprise scheme to provide affordable, sustainable property development and maintenance for public and private home owners, while encompassing work placements for young people aged 16 to 24 who have been not in education, employment, or training, has been launched in Swindon.

Created by Chris Dodd of La Maison, the not-for-profit enterprise will provide a hands-on practical learning environment, led by experienced and well-qualified supervisors for young people to regain their confidence in learning and develop skills to enable them to re-engage with education or enhance their opportunities to enter into employment.

Mr Dodd's background in education provides him with a unique approach to learning and in tackling the problems that disengage young people within the community.

The young people will be referred to La Maison directly by the Job Centre Plus office in Swindon.

The social enterprise will also be actively looking to work with organisations that need to ensure cost-effective and quality maintenance work within tight budgets such as charities, other social enterprises, support groups and community-based organisations.

Companies needing property and maintenance services are being urged to engage contact La Maison.

Each six month programme is broken down into the following structure:

- Four days a week working (supervised) on site at property development projects in both the public and private sectors
- One day a week of study towards completion of the CSCS qualification and development of employability skills
- First Aid training
- Registration with a recruitment agency
- Awards Ceremony for all finishers.
- All those who undertake the programme receive a weekly training bursary.

For more information contact [chris@la-maison.org.uk](mailto:chris@la-maison.org.uk)

## EXPERTS

## Getting the business edge: IT simply applied

In his latest expert column, business technology mentor Ray Smyth of Swindon's The IPstore says "Cyber warfare is coming your way . . . and it's official."

The days of the stereotypical hobby hacker may not be over, but our long-haired pizza-eating student type has been usurped and the usurper is really, really dangerous. So dangerous that the normally discrete Cheltenham based listening centre GCHQ has spoken out and is advising business leaders about how to better tackle cyber threats in their organisation.

This new front on cyber war is in fact jointly created by CESG (GCHQ's information security organisation), The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) with the Government four-square behind it.

There are many things we can draw from this move but clearly all these organisations think that security of our information and IT systems is substantially at risk. They are right, it is. The other thing that is clear is that for the criminally minded, the internet and ubiquitous IT has helped them to simplify their business model. No longer do they need to meticulously plan a bank heist with all of the associated risks to hit the big time; they just need to recruit some able minds and establish access to your resources.

This messaging is unequivocally targeted at the most senior executives to encourage a more direct interest. The Government minister responsible for GCHQ, Foreign Secretary William Hague, said: "A networked world brings many advantages. But cyberspace – and cybercrime – knows no borders. Businesses must be alert to the dangers. Drawing on GCHQ's experience and working with industry, the Government is committed to helping reduce vulnerability to attacks and ensure that the UK is the safest place in the world to do business."

The advice and insight being offered is definitely worth a read but



more so, active consideration, leading to action. And it is here that the first challenge arises, what, how and when.

For me, an organisation's defence and protection should be mounted on two fronts.

Firstly security hygiene measures: these are no-brainers such as anti-virus, intrusion prevention and a correctly-configured firewall.

But already I am embedding a warning, any old firewall will not do – it must be correctly configured and ideally next-generation...

The second front does need to be driven from the top because it is essentially a business-defined view that examines specific risks faced by the business, its vulnerability and ability to tolerate or repel a given risk.

This is challenging because two disparate operational areas need to work as one, each bringing their talents, knowledge and skill to produce one, likely to be complex solution. It doesn't end here because the effectiveness of that solution requires testing and the entire process must be regularly repeated to account for changes in business drivers and technology.

To succeed in this endeavour, organisations will need professional and diverse help. Help that is targeted across the organisation, not exclusively focused on technology, and regularly tested for its effectiveness. It is effectiveness in the context of a known risk profile that is the goal and this means no surprises.

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# 1982-2012

## CELEBRATING 30 YEARS IN BUSINESS

**Help us celebrate 30 years in business**

**In October Swindon Business News will produce a special edition looking back at business in Swindon in 1982 and at the town's progress over the past three decades.**

**To take part in this unique supplement contact Anita Jaynes on 01793 615393 or email her at [anita@swindon-business.net](mailto:anita@swindon-business.net)**





# Former Dragon heads West to snap up last of Von Essen group

The final hotel in the Von Essen's portfolio, the upmarket Ston Easton Park near Shepton Mallet, has been sold to former Dragon's Den investor James Caan, pictured.

The 22-bedroom hotel, a Palladian mansion turned four-star hotel in the Mendip Hills, was sold by Christie & Co to Mr Caan's private equity firm Hamilton Bradshaw for a reported £3m on behalf of administrators Ernst & Young.

Christie & Co director and location manager Martin Davis said: "That we were able to sell this entire group of hotels in little more than a year, and when the market conditions – including the lack of available debt finance – could at best be described as difficult, is symptomatic of the fact that there will always be a market for high quality assets like those on the von Essen Hotels estate.

"We've thoroughly enjoyed working with the administrators Ernst & Young on this process and wish all the new owners well with their new business acquisitions."

Bath-based Von Essen went into administration in April 2011 with debts of nearly £300m.

At the time it owned 28 prestige hotels in the UK and France, including Bishopstrow, near Warminster, and Woolley Grange, near Bradford-on-Avon, as well as Bath's iconic Royal Crescent Hotel. It also owned Cliveden in Buckinghamshire, the former country house famous for its role in the Profumo scandal of the 1960s.



James Caan

Christmas bookings now being taken

- >Party nights from £25.00 per person
- >Santa Sunday Lunches from £17.00 per person
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- >Festive lunches £12.50 per person for 2 courses
- >New Years Eve from £45.00 per person

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**0871 222 4620**, option 2

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# Parent group of Swindon venue firm acquired by Capita for £6m

Business travel company Capita has announced the acquisition of Exptel, the company that owns Venues Event Management in Swindon, for £16m.

It is the second major purchase for Capita in two years after it bought Booking Services International (BSI) in 2010.

Paul Pindar, chief executive of Capita, said: "The addition of Exptel will bring both significant additional expertise and greater scale to our UK focused corporate travel business.

"Exptel also brings considerable experience in venue and event management, which, alongside our existing business, creates a proposition of genuine scale and depth in this fast-growing area of the market."

The combined Capita and Exptel corporate travel businesses will employ nearly 900 staff in 10 locations, including Venues Event Management in Wroughton, Swindon.

Founded in 1989 by Chris and Anita Lowe, Venues Event Management is one of the UK's leading event management, conference placement, venue finding and accommodation sourcing companies with clients such as BP, Capgemini and Mercedes-Benz.

The companies, which were both in the top 10 of Buying Business Travel's list of 50 Leading TMCs, have combined gross business travel sales of more than £500m based on 2011 figures.

Exptel made an operating profit of £3.2m on turnover of £16.3m during its last financial year to October 2011. The company's current clients include National Grid, Virgin Media, Scottish government and BP.



## PRE-CHRISTMAS PARTY MENU AND THE FESTIVE SEASON AT WHATLEY MANOR HOTEL AND SPA

### Pre-Christmas Lunch or Dinner

£29 per person choosing three courses from the menu below

#### Christmas Eve lunch – £29 per person

Three course table d'hôte lunch will be served

#### Christmas Eve dinner – £83 per person

Champagne and canapé reception, four-course menu in candlelit surroundings with coffee and petit-fours

#### Christmas Day lunch – £105 per person

Glass of champagne with savory 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

#### New Year's Eve dinner – £155 per person

Champagne and canapé reception, six-course gala dinner served in The Sitting Room with live jazz

#### Christmas party room rates

Special room rate applies depending on availability when booking a room 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 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) to make your Christmas and party reservation. Early booking is recommended.

### Pre-Christmas Party Menu

SERVED FROM 1ST DECEMBER – 2ND JANUARY 2013

EXCLUDING BOXING DAY LUNCH, NEW YEAR'S EVE LUNCH AND DINNER, NEW YEAR'S DAY LUNCH AND DINNER.

#### STARTERS

##### Seasonal salad leaves

Dressed with Jerusalem artichokes and hazelnuts

##### Brussel sprout and bacon soup

Served with toasted almonds

##### Smoked salmon and trout press

Layered with horseradish butter and pickled anchovies

##### Pork and green peppercorn terrine

Served with crusty onion bread and piccalilli

##### Caramelised fig, onion and goats cheese tart

Served with mixed leaves bound with walnut dressing

##### Moules Marinière

Served with French fries

#### MAIN COURSES

##### Braised beef blade

with buttered cabbage and red wine jus infused with thyme

##### Chicken, ham hock, chestnut and sage pie

Served with buttered carrots

##### Fillet of plaice

Baked with leeks and bread crumbs and served with truffle emulsion scented with chives

##### Fillet of skate wing

Steamed resting on mashed potato, dressed with capers, lemon, parsley bound with chicken jus

##### Truffle & butternut squash risotto

Topped with rosemary foam

##### Traditional Swiss style cheese fondue (starter or main course)

Served with hot new potatoes and crusty bread.

Air dried beef £2.50 supplement

#### DESSERTS

##### Whatley Manor Christmas pudding

Accompanied with clotted cream and brandy butter

##### Warm date and pecan nut tart

Served with orange and yoghurt sorbet

##### Egg nog crème brûlée

Dressed with nutmeg ice cream

##### Bûche de Noël

Filled with candied chestnuts

##### Clementine Bavarois

Layered with bitter chocolate and served with clementine sorbet

##### Cheese plate

A selection of various cheeses with grapes and biscuits



To ensure the smooth running of your Christmas party, parties of nine guests and above please place your order five days in advance. A set three-course festive menu will be served for fourteen guests and above. Crackers are available upon request.



## Stimulating learning environment at one of the top academic schools

**K**ing Edward's School is one of the top academic independent day Schools in the UK for girls and boys aged 3 to 18 years. This success has been achieved through the very highest standards in teaching, the quality and dedication of our staff and the individual guidance given to our pupils to realise their full potential.

The School provides a stimulating learning environment where children are encouraged to strive for excellence and to acquire a lifelong passion for knowledge, discovery and adventure. There is a broad and dynamic curriculum and an exceptional range of extra-curricular activities to interest and enrich the lives of all pupils. This is underpinned by 'outstanding'



pastoral care. Pupils achieve success in many areas. The strength of music in the school is reflected in the excellent levels of public

performances, the considerable success in examinations and the regularity with which pupils gather honours at regional music festivals. The School has an outstanding dramatic tradition, with two or more major productions a year, an Art and Photography Department which is a centre of excellence and a tradition of sporting success, with many pupils representing their sport at both regional and national levels.

We look forward to welcoming prospective parents and pupils to our Open Events which will provide an opportunity to meet our welcoming teachers and talk to pupils, see our excellent facilities and find out how we can give your child the best start in life

Please contact our Registrar on Tel: 01225 464313 or see our website, [www.kesbath.com](http://www.kesbath.com) for further details.



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To book please call Tel: 01225 421681

TEL 01225 464313 EMAIL [openday@kesbath.com](mailto:openday@kesbath.com) Further details at: [www.kesbath.com](http://www.kesbath.com)

## Board established to inspire enterprising young people

Young Enterprise, the national education charity which builds links between schools and industry, has established a Wiltshire strategic board to help inspire the next generation of enterprising young people.

The board will encourage businesses leaders to volunteer their time to mentor students and businesses to become involved in sponsorship. It will also help Young Enterprise engage with more schools and young people across Wiltshire.

Students taking part in Young Enterprise set up and run their own real business for a year, mentored by a volunteer business adviser.

The students gain vital business experience that will stand them in good stead. Young Enterprise statistics show those who take part are 80 per cent more likely to find employment post-education and are twice as likely as their peers to run their own business.

Among the businesses already helping out is Swindon-based IT and communications business Excalibur, which is also offering to provide half the Young Enterprise entrance fee for schools.

Excalibur chief executive James Phipps, who will sit on the board, said: "Young Enterprise offers a unique opportunity for school children.

"I strongly believe this investment in entrepreneurialism is vital to ensure the long-term growth of the region."

Every year Young Enterprise, which was founded in 1963, helps 250,000 young people learn about business and the world of work in the classroom under the guidance of volunteers from 3,500 companies.

Any business interested in sponsorship or becoming a business advisor, or a school wanting to get involved in Young Enterprise should contact: Andrew Martin on 07816954491 or [andrew.martin@young-enterprise.org.uk](mailto:andrew.martin@young-enterprise.org.uk).



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- Teachers show readiness to "go the extra mile" to make teaching better - Ofsted
- Exceptional improvement in GCSE results over last 2 years, 5A\* - C up by 26% to 74% and 5A\* - C with English and Maths up 22% TO 52%
- Dorcan is "All about learning" with personalised learning for our students meeting all their different needs and broadening their learning skills equipping them for life beyond school
- Students say that they "enjoy their learning and take pride in their school and work well in a safe environment"
- Excellent primary induction

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Dr Scott Sissons Head Teacher

**Stand out from the crowd**



# Masterplan for Swindon unveiled

Swindon town centre is poised for its biggest regeneration in decades – and this time planners are hoping to bring a much-needed cultural dimension and new homes to the area rather than just more offices and retail.

Ideas being taken seriously include a cultural quarter for the town centre around the Wyvern Theatre with a new art gallery and performing arts centre.

There would also be better connections between the north and south of the town centre with new bridges over the main railway line.

These are seen as key to joining up the existing retail heart of the town with the areas that bring in visitors, including the new leisure facilities at North Star and the expanding Great Western Designer Outlet at Churchward.

New homes would be built in the town centre and family-friendly restaurants and cafes encouraged as a

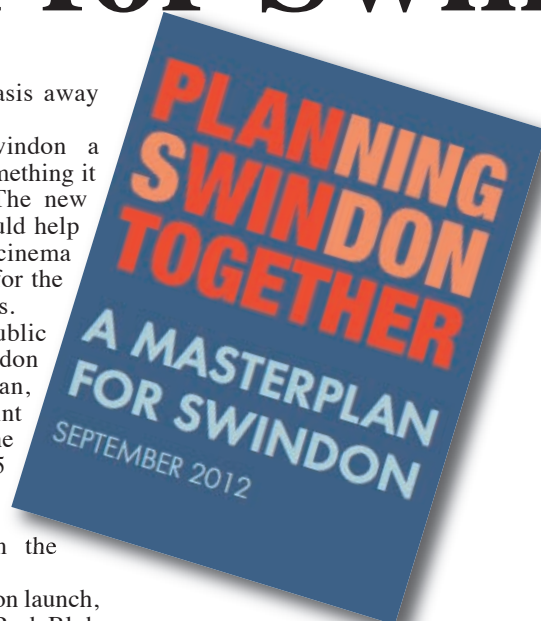
way of shifting the emphasis away from large pubs.

This would give Swindon a 'night-time' economy – something it has lacked for decades. The new Regent Circus scheme would help create this as it brings a cinema back into the town centre for the first time in around 20 years.

The latest round of public consultation on the Swindon Town Centre Masterplan, which will act as a blueprint for its development in the area over the next 10 to 15 years, is now taking place with an exhibition of the plans touring libraries in the town.

Speaking at the exhibition launch, Swindon Council leader Rod Bluh said regeneration of the town centre was the number one priority for the council.

But he said it was a long-term game and residents and businesses in



the town should not expect things to happen overnight.

"It's a 10 to 15 year game and possibly even longer," he said. "It isn't about waving a magic wand. The reality is that there were plans in place for the town centre between 2004 and 2008. Then the recession came along, the phone stopped ringing and everything stopped."

"But thankfully these plans were

delayed but they are still alive."

He pointed to the Regent Circus retail and leisure regeneration scheme on the former Swindon College site and the Union Square development – both now underway – as proof that Swindon town centre was changing fast.

"Confidence in Swindon town centre is building," he said. "The plans for the college site were in place four years ago. They've been delayed but work is now underway and by Christmas we will see new buildings going up."

He said the masterplan was a framework for regeneration not a concrete plan so could be adapted as the economy changes.

Schemes had already changed since before the recession, he added, to take account of changes in lifestyle.

The masterplan, which has been drafted by London consultants Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners, was described by Ian Piper, chief executive of Forward Swindon, the town's regeneration company, as "a direction of travel". It sets out the principles," he said. "But things change and we have to be flexible."

## Five key themes of the masterplan:

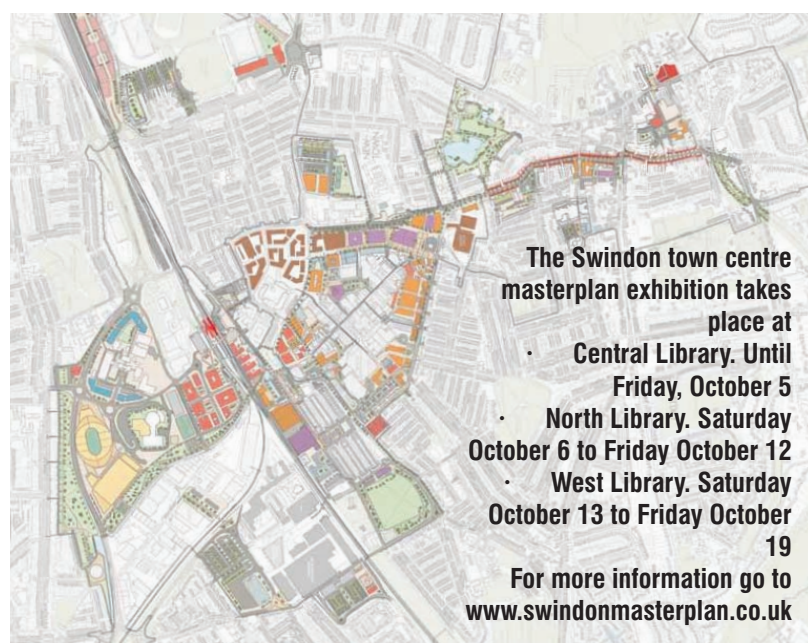
1) **Town centre.** Priority is to create a first-class town centre with excellent shops, restaurants and public spaces which can also be a cultural hub for the region.

2) **Railway Southside.** This includes much of the town's architectural and railway heritage, which will be preserved and enhanced. Pressing need to secure future of the Mechanics Institute.

3) **North Star.** Area has significant development potential around leisure but needs to be carefully planned to unify with town centre. New homes also needed here.

4) **County Ground area.** This needs to be enhanced with additional landscaped features and sporting facilities.

5) **Old Town.** A great asset and has a distinct role as a local centre. Better links with town centre needed. A 'green spine' along Victoria Road is proposed.



The Swindon town centre masterplan exhibition takes place at

- Central Library. Until Friday, October 5
- North Library. Saturday October 6 to Friday October 12
- West Library. Saturday October 13 to Friday October 19

For more information go to [www.swindonmasterplan.co.uk](http://www.swindonmasterplan.co.uk)

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## i2 Marketing takes space in Cirencester

Expanding communications agency i2i Marketing has taken space at Unit 17 on the Cirencester Office Park in a deal arranged by property consultants Alder King's Swindon office.

i2i Marketing, which creates campaigns for brands including Maoam (Haribo), Aquafresh and Phillips, has taken the 1,912 sq ft (177.63 sq m) ground floor office suite on a new six-year lease. It has relocated from serviced offices at the park after taking on new staff to service new accounts.

Cirencester Office Park is a modern scheme of three properties finished to a high standard in Cotswold stone half a mile north of the town centre.

Alder King acted on behalf of owners MW Pensions.



## Smiths News signs lease on new office headquarters at Kembrey

Smiths News has chosen the Rowan office building in Kembrey park for its new head office following expansion.

Commercial agents Loveday let the 27,733 sq ft building to the newspaper and book wholesaler on a 12 year lease.

Tye Lohrenz, property and facilities manager at Smiths News said: "In the past three years Smiths News PLC has made several large acquisitions which required a review of the future structure of the company.

"The imminent end of our lease at Wakefield House gave us the opportunity to look at re-organising our head office function in a new location.

"It was important that we stayed in the Swindon area to retain staff, so following a review of available properties, Rowan House was chosen as a well presented building that offered us the flexibility we required in a well-managed park with amenities that would benefit our staff."

The Rowan building is one of the largest office buildings on Kembrey Park, which is run by property fund manager Highcross. Built around a landscaped central courtyard, the two-storey, air-conditioned office scheme also has more than 100 car parking spaces.

Nick Turner, asset management director at Highcross said: "Smiths News is one of Swindon's leading companies and we're delighted that it has selected Kembrey Park as the location for its new headquarters in the town.

"With its self-contained, high quality, refurbished office space and prominent location, the Rowan building met the company's growth requirements, and offered the additional benefit of access to the park's extensive on-site facilities."

Joint agents for Kembrey Business Park are Loveday and Keningtons.

Smiths recently renewed its wholesale contract with News International securing a £40m deal over five years.



**From left:** Chris Winter, managing director – Summerfield, Ben Trickey, senior development surveyor – Summerfield, James Napp, managing director – Bechtle Direct, Nigel Hounslow, commercial director – Summerfield, James Holyday, property director – Summerfield

## Chippenham IT firm relocates to new office

A new office development in Chippenham has officially opened its doors to its occupant IT services provider Bechtle Direct, who have signed a 10-year lease to run its British operations from the site.

Work on the 8,200 sq ft Turnpike House, on Chippenham's Methuen Park Estate, by Summerfield Developments began in October last year. Bechtle Direct had already been secured as occupier.

Summerfield has previously developed and sold three other buildings on the business park, which are now occupied by Herman Miller, Wincanton Logistics and Fleet Support.

Summerfield senior development surveyor Ben Trickey said: "We worked directly alongside our clients Bechtle to deliver a bespoke build, developing an office space that fit their specifications entirely.

"Working with them, we slightly reduced the size of the office, and delivered their internal fit-out for them."

Turnpike House was designed with the occupants in mind, ensuring that the accommodation delivers a customer-facing office for Bechtle's clients to meet and receive training.

Bechtle Direct is the UK arm of Bechtle AG, the German information technology services company. The firm, founded in 1983, now has more than 5,800 employees in total and turns over £2bn.

The Wiltshire team's vendor partners include Microsoft, Samsung, Lenovo and HP.

Managing director James Napp said: "Turnpike House is a world-class facility, which offers modern working conditions for staff to encourage a truly collaborative approach.

"Our new offices make the most of modern technology with full integration in all areas of the business including our meeting rooms, and the customer friendly environment makes this the perfect space to host frequent customer events and seminars. It is a huge upgrade from our previous premises, and has been made possible by the hard work of the team."

James Gregory of Alder King (Swindon office) acted for Summerfield and John Mulholland of Jones Lang LaSalle (Bath office) was the joint agent. Karen Chapman of Drucis acted for Summerfield on the legal.



Priam House, Swindon

## Unique building comes onto market

A prestige office development in Churchward, Swindon, has come onto the market which offers occupiers a unique opportunity to relocate to the town's prime industrial regeneration area.

Priam House, developed by Thatcham-based housebuilder Thomas Homes, forms part of the newly-developed Heritage Plaza in Churchward, originally the site of Swindon's historic railway works

The building provides 8,000 sq ft of high-quality ground-floor office accommodation below 34 residential apartments which are all now sold and occupied.

Some 2,000 sq ft has been pre-sold to Bristol-based IFA Grosvenor Financial Services, leaving 6,000 sq ft with 27 car parking spaces. The space can be further sub divided into self contained suites from 2,000 sq ft and is being offered on a new lease for a term to be agreed, or alternatively can be bought on a 999 year long leasehold basis.

Thomas Homes has appointed joint Swindon property agents Keningtons and Whitmarsh Lockhart to market the office accommodation, which is close to the Great Western Designer Outlet Village, The National Trust Headquarters, English Heritage, National Monument Record Office and the Steam Museum.

Jeremy Sutton of Keningtons said: "Churchward offers a unique and vibrant environment and Heritage Plaza is the latest phase in this major mixed-use urban regeneration success.

"The offices would be ideal for either the rail-related sector or professional/financial services and are in a unique location providing new and high-quality accommodation in an out-of-town environment."

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Matt Simmonite and work colleague

# Double travel award landed for Swindon’s British Study Centres

Swindon-based British Study Centres has scooped two awards at the prestigious Study Travel Magazine awards. British Study Centres is an award-winning educational group providing high-quality language courses for adults and juniors, offer children and teenagers aged eight to 18 the opportunity to combine the learning of English with sports, activities and visits in their schools both in the UK and USA. BSC won the trophy, presented at a ceremony at London's Hilton Park Lane, for Star English junior courses for under 18's seeing off stiff competition from schools in Malta, Canada and the UK. The group also won Star English Language School Europe, the all-year round English language schools for adults based in London, Brighton Oxford and

Bournemouth. This is the first time in the history of the awards that an organisation has done the 'double' in both Adult and Junior categories. The awards are voted for by readers of Study Travel Magazine - essentially, language professionals and agents across the world - and are highly sought after. Director for the juniors division of the group Matt Simmonite said: 'We are absolutely ecstatic to win both awards and we would like to thank all of our teachers, marketing and admin staff who have worked so hard towards this. "It is a huge honor for the company to have collected such prestigious awards. The competition in both categories is extremely intense - there are hundreds of eligible schools - and to win both awards is a huge feather in our cap."



Clive Chamberlain receives the award

## Project management firm achieves CBC status

Director of M4 Property Solutions Clive Chamberlain has been awarded the status of Chartered Building Consultancy on behalf of his business. Mr Chamberlain, who also works as the renewable energy consultant for Swindon Commercial Services, said: "For our consultancy, this award represents recognition that we operate with integrity and professionalism and it is a great boost to our credibility in a challenging business environment." M4 Property Solutions is a provider of flexible construction project management, mentoring, training and renewable energy services. Established a year ago, M4 Property Solutions has won more than £5m in new facilities management contracts for its clients. Mr Chamberlain is working with Swindon Commercial Services to help develop new business, focusing on renewable energy. His involvement has seen the completion of several large scale commercial photovoltaic (PV) installations, making Swindon Commercial Services the largest PV installer in the South West. He is also assisting them in developing other sustainable solutions such as biomass, air source and commercial rainwater harvesting.



## Honda’s CR-V to take centre stage in Paris

Honda has revealed its 2012 Paris Motor Show line-up - with its new Swindon-built products taking centre stage. The line-up consists of the new CR-V, being produced at the South Marston plant and the all-new 1.6 diesel engine in the Civic, plus an updated CR-Z. The new fourth-generation Swindon-built CR-V makes its European debut at the Paris Motor Show 2012. Building on the success of its predecessors, the new CR-V has improved quality, practicality and refinement. For the first time in Europe, the compact SUV will be offered with a choice of both two- and four-wheel drive, while improvements to both the petrol and diesel engines have resulted in a significant reduction in CO2 emissions. Shown for the first time at Paris Motor Show, Honda has introduced a new 1.6-litre i-DTEC diesel engine in the Swindon-built Civic hatchback. The first engine in Europe to feature Honda's Earth Dreams Technology series, it combines strong performance (120 PS) with CO2 emissions of only 94 g/km\* helping the Civic to achieve a combined consumption of 78.5mpg\*. The CR-Z features revisions to the exterior and interior enhancing the styling of the car whilst the power of both the petrol engine and electric motor has been increased without comprising fuel economy or increasing exhaust emissions. Details of performance and the on the sale date will be announced at Paris. Honda will also be exhibiting the EV-STER, next-generation electric small sports concept model. Honda will also be marking the 40th Anniversary of the Civic this year by displaying an original first generation Civic at the Paris Motor Show alongside the latest generation Civic. Since it was introduced in 1972 Civic sales have exceeded 20 million units worldwide. The show takes place between September 29 and October 14.

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## Howard Tenens leads the drive to bring in low-carbon trucks

A low-carbon gas refuelling station for trucks is to be installed at logistic group Howard Tenens' Swindon operation and 34 commercial heavy goods vehicles to be converted to dual fuel (gas/diesel) under a Government-backed project.

A consortium led by Howard Tenens has been awarded £1.26m from the Department for Transport's Low Carbon Truck Demonstration Trial and the Swindon-based Technology Strategy Board.

Howard Tenens partnered with vehicle operators John Lewis Partnership and Lenham Storage in the successful bid and will be supported by Swindon-based vehicle telematics and driver behaviour specialist CMS SupaTrak and London firm Emissions Analytics for data and emissions verification.

Through match funding from the partners the total investment will reach £2.5m.

Twelve of the vehicles taking part in the trial will be operated by Howard Tenens and the rest by John Lewis and Lenham Storage, which has bases in Maidstone, Kent, and Andover, Hampshire.

A proportion of the award will be committed to monitoring and verifying the vehicles' performance. One of the criteria for the funding was that vehicles



should deliver a minimum 15 per cent reduction in CO2 emissions.

Sophisticated on-board emissions and monitoring equipment will be installed in some of the vehicles to record fuel consumption and emissions as well as a telematics system which will monitor the diesel and gas usage on the dual fuel vehicles.

This will enable accurate reporting of vehicle mpg via the vehicle's on-board computer for the first time.

Howard Tenens CRS director Catherine Crouch said "We are committed to reducing the carbon footprint of our operations and this project will facilitate a substantial step forward in realising this ambition."

## IT network for Hills Group to undergo a complete rewiring

Marlborough-based Hills Group, whose businesses span waste collection, recycling, quarrying and housebuilding, has appointed consultants ITS to carry out a complete overhaul of its IT network.

The Hills Group had outgrown its existing IT network, which was impacting on the business. It approached ITS, based at Notton, near Chippenham, to provide a solution that would centralise services, increase productivity and stabilise wide and local area networks across Hills' 32 sites.

Significant considerations were reliability, scalability and cost as well

as ensuring it introduced 'green' IT to the business.

A key element of the solution implemented by ITS was virtualisation of the infrastructure. ITS is a strong advocate of virtualisation technologies, not simply for reasons of business continuity and disaster recovery, but also for the cost savings that can be reaped as a result of power, hardware and warranty reductions.

Through a dedicated ITS team working with Hills' own IT staff, the overhaul included new servers to ensure network stability and resilience, and a centralised service that has significantly increased operational

efficiency, as well as providing capacity and a system that can handle the IT demands required for Hills' ambitions for the next three to five years.

ITS managing director John Matthews said: "We are delighted to be working with such a well-established local company. Having implemented the network infrastructure, we now offer ongoing IT to The Hills Group and look forward to helping them achieve their objectives by ensuring their IT systems are fit for purpose, robust and optimised to deliver first-class service not just now but in the years to come."

## Swindon Chamber of Commerce News



### Supporting Business

Welcome to the second in a series of columns from Swindon Chamber of Commerce, featuring local events and news. Swindon Chamber is recognised as the leading voice of business, representing micro to major multinational organisations; a 'Centre for Excellence' providing international trade services and global representation; committed to long-term relationships with members and providing them with relevant, value added services that help, support and protect local, national and international business.

### Core Strategy Consultation

Swindon Chamber of Commerce (SCC) submitted representations in respect of the Local Authority's Core Strategy last year and was fundamentally opposed to a policy framework that was predicated on a long economic growth scenario with the resultant low levels of commitment to allocations for employment land and housing needed to address labour and skill shortages and demands on the local workforce. This year, SCC has flagged that it believes that the Swindon business community would support:

- recognition by the Council of recent job losses in the town and firm commitment to its economic strategy to a programme of job creation through nurturing local business and inward investment;
- identification of a suitable large employment site with good access to the principal road network to help secure the above;
- housing strategy predicated on a realistic forecast of economic growth prospects;
- a land strategy and policy framework should reflect the upper end of any range to make sufficient land available to meet market requirements;
- a commitment to maintaining and enhancing the viability and attractiveness of Swindon town centre and other local shopping centres in the Borough;

- effective delivery of regeneration projects that can improve the Swindon offer to support attracting new businesses as well as retaining existing organisations and encouraging local consumption;
- improving skills and encouraging establishment of Higher Education facilities;
- supporting entrepreneurship with assistance for new business start-up, particularly where this may help reduce long term unemployment.

### Event Focus

Each month, Swindon Chamber holds a Business Breakfast at the Swindon Marriott between 07.30-09.30. Come along to network with other local businesses and gain insight into a wide variety of topics from our guest speakers. These are the details of forthcoming events:

Friday September 21 2012 - 'Successfully Integrating Social Media into Business': David Wood, 3seven9. David will share some top tips on getting the best out of social media. 3seven9 designed and created the new Thames Valley Inward Investment Portal [www.thamesvalley.co.uk](http://www.thamesvalley.co.uk)

Friday 19th October 2012 - 'Developing a Growth Strategy for Swindon': As leader of Forward Swindon, the company established by Swindon Borough Council to deliver and facilitate the town's economic growth and property development, Ian Piper, Chief Executive will give an insight into the emerging growth strategy, what needs to be done in the future and what this means for business.

Also for Corporate organisations on the evening of Wednesday October 4 2012 is a Corporate Insight Dinner where the guest speaker is Jason Reakes, Head of Government Affairs, BMW Group UK talking about 'Managing the transition to a low carbon future: prospects for electromobility'.

To book a place visit [www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk/events](http://www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk/events)

Swindon Chamber of Commerce is part of the Thames Valley of Commerce Group. If you would like to find out more about membership visit [www.swindonchamber.org.uk](http://www.swindonchamber.org.uk) or contact Rosemary Wells 07834 869562 or Ian Moore 07834 869561. If you would like to get involved, why not try our free Guest Membership which entitles you to attend two events. Sign up at [www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk](http://www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk) and click on the Join Guest Membership button.



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