



# Making a difference in Buckinghamshire

*A stronger and more cohesive business community*  
**Buckinghamshire Business First**



**SUPPORTING  
BUSINESSES  
IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

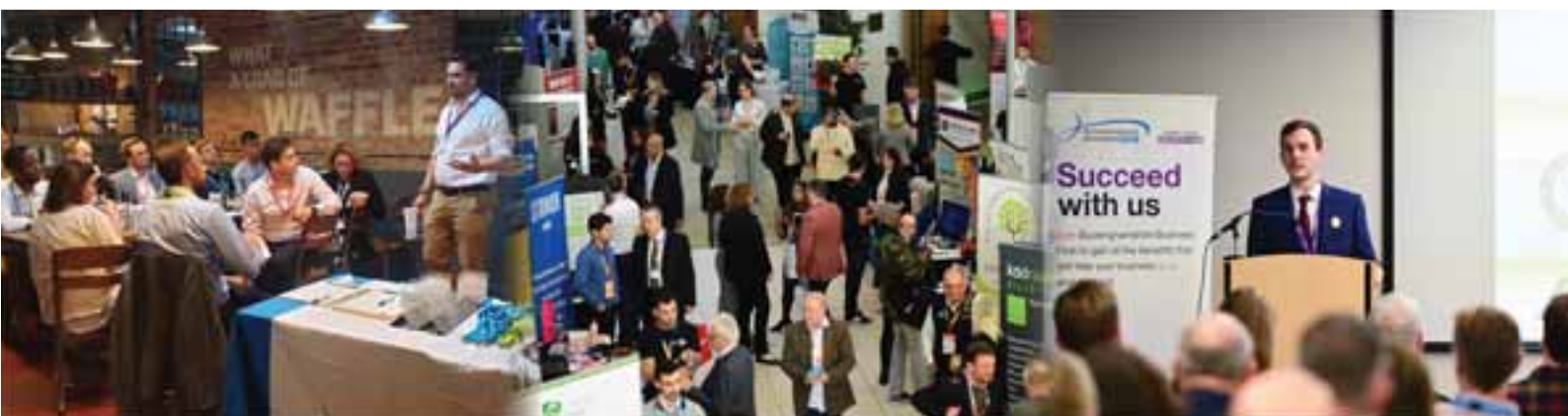
**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
BUSINESS FIRST**

**YOUR LOCAL  
GROWTH HUB**

# Economic development at the level of the firm

Established in 2011 for the benefit of the Buckinghamshire business community, Buckinghamshire Business First is here to help businesses who trade or reside in Buckinghamshire to reach their full potential. There are just over 36,000 businesses in Buckinghamshire and every year Buckinghamshire Business First supports more than 9,000 of them. Our ultimate aim is to connect business leaders and their workforces with the right solutions to help them overcome any barriers that are in their way.

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# What businesses say about us



*"Buckinghamshire Business First has a great set-up and is a great resource for businesses. The Business Support Team do a great job. Buckinghamshire businesses are lucky to have this service on our doorsteps."*

Nicole Martin, Pinpoint Marketing Consultancy

*"Buckinghamshire Business First is an invaluable resource that can help you focus, plan and implement a strategy that helps your business grow. Take advantage of your membership and attend workshops and networking events and seek the advice and support of their advisers."*

James Hakesley, Cube Video



**Buckinghamshire Business First is the largest business representative organisation in Buckinghamshire, with**

**more than 30%**

**of the county's businesses engaged with us, and more than 65% of the county's private sector employees on the payroll of those businesses.**



*"It is an important feeling to know that whatever challenge we will face in the future, Buckinghamshire Business First is out there to help businesses like ours achieve their goals."*

Dominic Posnanski, Letterbox4you Limited



**When surveyed about a range of services, businesses reported an average overall satisfaction of 96%**



**96% of businesses who have engaged with the Growth Hub would recommend Buckinghamshire Business First to a friend.**

*My business adviser at the Growth Programme has been incredibly supportive, assisting with strategy, operational issues and training needs and facilitating a vital piece of financial assistance.*

**Finella Devitt, Firehorse**



*We contacted Buckinghamshire Business First almost immediately after we landed in the UK from Australia, and within 48 hours they had provided us with an array of useful local contacts. The team got us off to an exemplary start in the UK, which we are now consolidating. I cannot fully express our appreciation of Buckinghamshire Business First's positive perspective on the future for those businesses looking to raise their international profile.*

**Simon Stokes, ChinaAcumen**



*"I would like to put on record my sincere appreciation and thanks to all the staff and management whom I have been engaging with at Buckinghamshire Business First since July 2018 in pursuit of an agenda of the provision of appropriate, realistic and cost-effective Cyber Protect advice for their members and associated partners."*

**Mark Godsland, Cyber Protect Officer, Thames Valley Police**



*"I can't believe how much support Buckinghamshire Business First offers for free! As a small business, cash flow can be an issue, you have to watch every penny and spend in the right places, but it's often hard to know where to spend it. The training and mentoring we've had helps us identify the areas we need to invest in and work on, and keeps us going in the right direction."*

**Tina Duggan, Oven Loving**



**6,937**

**businesses have been provided information and assistance by our team during 2019/20**



# Planning for the future with expert growth advice



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Step into any high-end retailer and the chances are you will be interacting with displays and fittings designed, fabricated and installed by 3 Ways Displays in Chesham.

Having built a successful family business over the last 20 years, Founder and Managing Director Mark Stroud recognised that they needed to strengthen the leadership team and drive up efficiency to provide a rigorous platform for future growth.

Mark's wife, Teresa, joined the business to bolster the management team, and although retirement is a little way off, they both started to think about how to 'futureproof' the business and gradually hand the reins over to their daughter, Olivia. "We'd reached a crossroads and needed support to move the business forward and make it more resilient," explained Teresa. Having worked in the Education sector, where there is an open culture of collaboration, it was a natural next step for Teresa to reach out for support to the Growth Advice Programme.

“The greatest benefit of working with the Buckinghamshire Business First Growth Advice Programme was having the opportunity to access a broad range of experts for high-quality advice.”

"Attending the Growth Masterclass with Cranfield School of Management helped us to clarify our growth strategy, helping us to identify and plan around key areas of growth for our business over the coming years," explained Teresa. "The whole team now have a clear understanding of the growth journey the business is on and their part in it."

"Having reached capacity in our production, our Growth Adviser introduced us to the Manufacturing Technology Centre, which is helping us to develop digital processes that improve our production flow from customer order to delivery, which will ultimately enhance our productivity and profitability. A Finance Masterclass then helped us develop a financial plan and performance monitoring systems better suited to the needs of our growing business."

"Reaching out for business support is having a real impact on our business as we progress along our growth journey. The Growth Advice Programme has provided valuable insights and contacts, we've begun to see improvements in our trading profits of 2% through the changes we've made to date, and we feel better prepared for the future."

# Taking time out creates accelerated growth



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BUSINESS FIRST  
AMBASSADOR**



Born out of a management buy-out from Bosch Telecom, ANT Telecom is a specialist in providing mobile communications and lone-worker solutions to suit individual business needs. Based in Bourne End in Buckinghamshire, they work with UK customers across many industries, offering handsets and smart phone applications to improve their efficiency and protect and monitor employees whilst they work, travel or meet with clients alone or in very remote locations such as wind farms. In some instances, this literally saves lives.

“One of our biggest challenges as a business, coming out from a large corporate, was for us to quickly adapt to being an agile independent systems integrator. We needed to change our approach to existing and new customers, new markets and new technologies,” explained Managing Director, Klaus Allion.

“Engaging with Buckinghamshire Business First’s Growth Advice Programme has really helped us to refocus our strategy and make our agility and workforce our key strengths.”

“Technology and customer requirements change fast and it’s a real challenge to spot the opportunities, respond and develop the business,” continued Klaus.

“We are now clear on the key areas where we have the best opportunity to help our customers to overcome their challenges. We’ve also changed the way we recruit and engage with our staff to drive growth, prioritising soft skills like curiosity and engagement and recruiting more young people as apprentices, which helps us to keep a step ahead.”

Klaus attributes most value to the opportunities he has had via the Growth Advice Programme’s peer-to-peer sessions to take a step back, learn and exchange ideas alongside other MDs facing similar challenges:

“As a leader and business owner, the growth and finance masterclasses and peer-to-peer support have been essential for my business. Our sales have increased by 20%, I have a new appreciation as to how to create long-term business value, and we have fully engaged and motivated staff. The wealth of experience you have access to gives you confidence that the ideas you’re going to implement will work, and I’m 100% certain that I’ve improved as a leader.”



# Growing with digital innovation



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
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AMBASSADOR**

BRADBURY TRACKS

Bradbury Tracks, a family business based in High Wycombe, manufactures high-end bespoke curtain tracks and poles for interior designers, major high-street retailers, trade fitters and DIY Specialists. A Growth Grant from Buckinghamshire Business First was used to help fund an innovative and bespoke website that has increased sales by 40%.

Bradbury Tracks have been trading for 50 years. Their lead times are the fastest in the industry because of the innovations and technology they use.

"From taking the customer's measurements, making sure it's all accurate first time, to delivering it at their door; we guarantee a service which basically means that we ask the customer when they need it, rather than stating a lead time to them," explained Kris Theophanous, Managing Director.

Kris credits lean management principles as one of the driving forces behind the company's success.

**“The Growth Grant we received from Buckinghamshire Business First has given us the ability to put our ideas into action. We were able to add the grant funding to the money we had available to make the perfect new website. It's been a fantastic catalyst for change for our business.”**

Their 'two-second lean' process challenges all staff to find small improvements every day in their business processes.

"We're constantly trying to improve our efficiency. We'd been thinking about a new website for our business which could make it as easy and quick as possible to order our made-to-measure curtain tracks and poles online. This was a vital project for our business and required a complex, bespoke and costly design. After a conversation with Buckinghamshire Business First, we applied for a Growth Grant to help us fund the web development work. Everyone we spoke to at BBF knew exactly what we wanted and exactly how to go about it, which just made everything very, very simple," said Kris.

"The Growth Grant allowed us to add extra into the project, making it a perfect site," said Kris. "It's had a considerable impact on our business. We've increased sales by 40% and our conversions have also increased, making the customer journey much smoother. We've doubled our staff from eight people up to 16 and we're looking to employ a further two people to cope with future growth."

# Taking expert advice to keep growing



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“Having set up my own cleaning company, I’d reached a point where I felt I needed a bit more knowledge and expert advice. Buckinghamshire Business First’s Growth Programme has forced me to step out of my comfort zone and the knowledge I’ve gained is helping me massively to grow my business.”

Dustaway Cleaning Services is a rapidly growing domestic and commercial cleaning company based in Buckinghamshire. Having built the business based on a reputation for its trustworthy and reliable service, Founder Marnie Logan realised that she needed expert advice and support to take her business to the next level. Working in partnership with the Buckinghamshire Business First Growth Programme, she has seen an increase in sales and turnover and now has a clear vision and plan for the future.

Marnie Logan started off as a cleaner at 15 years old. Having worked in the industry for a few years, she discovered that she wanted so much more and felt she had to the potential to do it, setting up her own cleaning company, Dustaway Cleaning Services. “I then reached the point where I felt I needed a bit more knowledge and expert advice,” explained Marnie.

“I came across Buckinghamshire Business First on Facebook, filled out a questionnaire and was contacted by a Business Adviser on the Growth Programme. After having our first conversation, I straight away felt positive. The knowledge I’ve gained is helping me massively to grow.”

Dustaway has already started to see successful results. They have hired additional cleaning staff and a marketing manager and launched new products and specialist services, including upholstery and oven cleaning. They have also expanded into neighbouring counties. Marnie now takes time out to engage in business planning as a priority as part of her monthly activity. The business is firing on all cylinders and ambitious plans to franchise the business are on track.

“I definitely recommend the Buckinghamshire Business First Growth Programme,” said Marnie.



# Increasing conversations and sales with a marketing boost



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Malt the Brewery is a micro brewery producing traditional ales and contemporary craft beers, based in Prestwood, Great Missenden. As well as operating a British-made 10-brewer-barrel brewery, they run a popular tasting bar and shop from their base in Collings Hanger farm.

A Growth Grant from Buckinghamshire Business First was used to help fund their attendance at a range of customer-facing events which boosted sales, raised their profile and played a vital role in their subsequent success.

Malt the Brewery launched in 2012, capitalising on the growing interest in quality artisan ales and the trend towards local provenance in food and drink. "Our customers are discerning foodies who look for high quality. They want to know where things are made, how they're made, what ingredients we use. They're looking for something that feels real," says co-owner Jenny Watson.

**“As a microbrewery, Malt’s customer base is centred locally. Local pubs sell a lot of our Missenden Pale Ale and the idea that it’s local really goes down well.”**

Local support, coupled with their own tasting bar and shop where the public can try out the full product range in a welcoming environment, put Malt at the heart of their community. But how does a small but growing business reach beyond? "Traditionally, we've relied on word of mouth," says Jenny, "which works really well, but obviously that's quite slow."

A £1,000 Growth Grant helped them find the answer. One way of reaching out to like-minded consumers is to sell at farmers' markets, and in 2018 Malt had their eyes on the Waddesdon Manor Chilli Fest and their five-week Christmas Fair. "It's quite a leap of faith because it costs a lot of money to attend. The Growth Grant enabled us to be there for the full five weeks. Right place, right people, right amount of time."

It paid off handsomely. Malt exceeded their ambitious sales target by 10%, and many more customers have been coming through the brewery's door since.



Initial 10% uplift in sales and confidence in ROI on events marketing



Attracted £225k in further crowdfunding investment



Doubled workforce

# Cube Video open new markets with Growth Programme support



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
BUSINESS FIRST  
AMBASSADOR**



Cube Video's desire for further growth led them to contact the Buckinghamshire Business First Growth Programme to see what support was available. The team sprang into action and an adviser began working with Cube. We asked the video production company's co-founder James Hakesley how it went.

## **What made you reach out to Buckinghamshire Business First for support?**

"We felt we could gain valuable insight and support from their business advisers. As a small business, to have the opportunity to have an experienced sounding board is a great opportunity. We focused on how we could build a strategy for sustainability and growth and soon doubled the team, key sectors and products and services."

## **How did you find the one-to-one advice on strategy and planning?**

"We received valuable advice and support with our future strategy planning, with our business adviser at Buckinghamshire Business First providing years of experience and wisdom having previously run their own business. These sessions enabled us to

A project delivered by



“Take advantage of your Buckinghamshire Business First membership and attend workshops and networking events and seek the advice and support from their advisers. Buckinghamshire Business First is an invaluable resource that can help you focus, plan and implement a strategy that helps your business grow.”

focus on what we needed to do in order to grow.”

## **Your business adviser recommended attending free workshops on marketing and sales. What did you learn?**

"I found the events to be great places to learn and broaden thinking. We improved our telephone sales conversations, networking approach, and areas of our website and marketing."

## **Did the support from the Growth Programme yield any other benefits?**

"With our business adviser's support we identified the need to diversify and so focused on winning new business in new sectors. With this strategy we have now opened new markets such as technology, pharmaceuticals and professional services. We also added new services for our clients and now provide animation, photography and video marketing."

"The Growth Programme connected us with numerous other businesses and we have gone on to produce multiple videos for these contacts. We saw substantial growth over 2018 with two new team members and the new services we added for our clients."

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enabling | transforming | performing

# Growth Grant helps launch luxury fashion brand



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Finella Devitt's new luxury range of scarves now benefits from a full e-commerce presence thanks to a new website that was part-funded by a £1,000 grant from Buckinghamshire Business First's Growth Programme.

Finella had spotted an opportunity to sell a range of luxury silk scarves in the shops of art galleries and museums, as well as with high-end luxury retailers. Creating an impactful online presence was deemed crucial to the success of the new business, named Firehorse. The Growth Grant helped Finella with the cost of a website and branding, helping to ensure that the look and feel of the business matched the quality of the scarves on offer.

Finella takes up the story: "Developing a successful luxury product and powerful brand certainly requires investment. It was hugely important to me that every element of Firehorse's marketing was executed to a very high standard and we could compete with some of the very best brands internationally.

“The grant application process could not have been easier, taking only a few days to arrange. My business adviser has been incredibly supportive, assisting with strategy, operational issues, training needs and of course facilitating this vital piece of financial assistance.”

"The Growth Grant gave me that extra financial leeway to commission a really professional brand and e-commerce site. We could not have achieved this level of quality without the grant. Apart from a fantastic brand and online shop, we now also have a brilliant showcase for Firehorse, for both consumers and retail buyers."

Jane Dell, Growth Programme Manager at Buckinghamshire Business First, said: "Working with Finella has been inspiring and really fulfilling. I've seen how a business can develop successfully, with such positive results. As a Business Adviser, this has been a true example of a business development opportunity that has benefited from a simple Growth Grant, enabling the Firehorse brand and website to come to life."

"We have been thrilled with the response to the scarves," says Finella. "Since launching, sales have been building gradually through the website and we have ordered another batch of stock to fulfil our first Christmas retail season. We have also secured our first independent retailer."



# Invaluable business support lays foundations for growth



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
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insightandadvice

Mike Iddon of Insight & Advice Ltd got in touch with the Buckinghamshire Business First Growth Programme in order to pursue growth opportunities for his business.

We asked Mike about his experience.

## What made you reach out to the Growth Programme for support?

"I was in need of specific advice for a new business opportunity I was pursuing at the time. I attended a seminar on business funding for SMEs organised by Buckinghamshire Business First in Aylesbury, which is where I became aware of the Growth Programme."

“Everyone in the team was very supportive and interested in helping me grow my business. For a business like mine, where you are a single-person operation, the ability to talk to a business support team is invaluable.”

## How helpful did you find the support from the programme?

"It was really beneficial. I was the beneficiary of one-to-one support sessions with both the Growth Programme team and through the Fit4Funding programme, which were invaluable in challenging my thinking and plans.

"I was supported excellently by Fit4Funding in building a financial business model and by attending a number of related workshop sessions.

"The input I received will be valuable for future growth opportunities."

## Do you plan to reach out for further support from Buckinghamshire Business First?

"I will be keeping my eyes out for any further programmes or support from Buckinghamshire Business First that relate to my business now and in the future."

Insight and Advice Ltd specialise in distribution strategies and helping achieve a route to market, specifically for healthy food ready meals companies.

# Aylesbury business loving the growth support on offer



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Tina Duggan, who runs Aylesbury-based Oven Loving with her husband Ian, heard about Buckinghamshire Business First by word of mouth and after meeting with a Growth Adviser as part of Buckinghamshire Business First's Growth Programme, soon entered a world of business support.

"We are not only trying to grow our business," says Tina, "we are trying to grow it in a better, faster way. We began our journey with our Growth Adviser and everything stemmed from there. Every step we made along the way made us realise that we needed another type of support, and when we needed it, Buckinghamshire Business First provided it."

After completing the Virtual Adviser tool on the Buckinghamshire Business First website, Oven Loving received a £150 training voucher from Adviza to put towards the cost of coaching that helped them develop a fresh business plan and set realistic and focused goals.

**“It can be lonely in business, but if you reach out for support, you will see that you are not alone and that the support on offer can help your business grow.”**

As Oven Loving's growth plans took positive steps forward, Tina engaged the Fit4Funding service which helps businesses get 'finance ready'. This free business consultancy service further helped shape the Oven Loving business plan thanks to one-to-one support from advisers at Harwood Hutton.

Next: the events programme. "Attending workshops and networking events has really helped us make meaningful business connections and is great for brand awareness," says Tina.

"We are trying to grow further," says Tina, "and want to develop certain aspects of our business, adding products and services. All of this support has helped us with our growth ambitions and further plans for the business."

"I can't believe how much support Buckinghamshire Business First offers for free! As a small business, cash flow can be an issue, you have to watch every penny and spend in the right places, but it's often hard to know where to spend it. The training and mentoring we've had helps us identify the areas we need to invest in and work on, and keeps us going in the right direction."

# Growth support from the first step to the last



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
BUSINESS FIRST  
STAKEHOLDER**



“The Growth Grant came to us in a crucial time when, due to fast expansion of the business, we needed to expand our team and increase our investment in marketing and online-based tools.”

A small business received the support it needed in the shape of a £1,000 Growth Grant, which enabled a new member of staff to join the team.

Dominic Posnanski, Founder & Director, Letterbox4you Limited, said: “As a small business you always make small steps, but unfortunately there is nobody to help you out there as banks and larger lenders concentrate mostly on bigger projects involving larger amounts of money.

“Luckily, we contacted Buckinghamshire Business First and learned that we were eligible to receive the Growth Grant. The whole process was very easy and what we really appreciated was the way we were assisted all the way by the Growth Programme team from the first step to the last.

“Soon after we received the grant we were able to employ a new member of staff, which for us is just another small step towards becoming the leading supplier of letterboxes in the UK.

“It is an important feeling to know that whatever challenge we will face in the future, Buckinghamshire Business First is out there to help businesses like ours achieve their goals and dreams.”

From a small dream in 2012 to run a lifestyle business, Letterbox4you have become the leading supplier of individual and communal post boxes in the UK.

“It’s a thrilling feeling to know that every day thousands of people in the UK, Ireland, Germany and even Australia are checking their Letterbox4you-supplied mail box,” says Dominic. “We also have names like Kier Construction and some of the largest housing associations and councils in London on our client list. And there are going to be many more thousands this year!”



# Fit4Funding puts local business in the driving seat



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
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**car leasing  
solutions**

Andy McCready has big plans for Car Leasing Solutions and needed specialist guidance on how to get his business in the best shape to attract the funding to accelerate away.

That came in the form of Fit4Funding, a service that dovetails with the Buckinghamshire Business First Growth Programme and which is provided free of charge by Harwood Hutton courtesy of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Andy wants Car Leasing Solutions to be a different type of car leasing business – one that really listens to its customers and puts them in the vehicle that best suits their needs.

With a background in credit and finance and a passion for cars, Andy had the idea to launch his own car leasing business, one that excelled in customer service. So he quit his job as a director of a Buckinghamshire asset finance company and Car Leasing Solutions was born.

“Through Fit4Funding, I now have much greater confidence in being able to achieve my growth goals. It’s been a massive breakthrough for me.”

After setting up the business in 2015, Andy has seen steady growth year on year, and to date he has helped more than 700 customers drive off in their new dream car. This early success encouraged him to seek funding to fast-track the growth of the company, and he decided to seek guidance on how to attract funding.

After chatting with some business contacts, Andy was introduced to Buckinghamshire Business First and was enrolled onto the Growth Programme, going on to receive support from Fit4Funding.

“It’s a fantastic service and it has given me the tools I need to move forward,” said Andy. “I particularly valued the help I received on how to present my business. Until the ‘Pitching to Win’ workshop, I had never created an investment presentation or stood up and spoken to a room full of potential investors.”

Andy is looking to drive his first-year turnover of around £80,000 to £1 million within the next five years, saying: “I want to be able to invest in a new website, brand-building and a great customer relationship marketing system that will automate a lot of the work we are currently doing manually and which takes up so much of our time.”

# Matchmaker Tracey finds a friend in Fit4Funding



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Tracey Blake has big ambitions for Student Nannies, believing it has the potential to be a £6million business within three to five years. But first she needs investment, and so signed up for the Fit4Funding service which offers free advice on business growth and corporate finance to Buckinghamshire entrepreneurs.

Tracey recalls the moment that the seeds of a business idea were sown in her head, while waiting for a train to take her to London for work: “I was thinking about childcare and how difficult it is for working mums, when I overheard two students talking about the things they could do to earn some money.

“We ended up having a chat about how we could square those twin needs – my need to have someone look after my two children after school and their need to find some flexible paying work that fitted into their studies.”

“Fit4funding has been so good for me. I am now investor-ready, with a water-tight financial model that I understand inside out.”

That was in late 2015, and a few months later Student Nannies was born. Student Nannies is an online platform that connects parents and students. Parents can search for students studying a subject their child enjoys or needs help with, while students can search for parents by profession, giving them a possible leg-up with their career.

“As a journalist, I know I’m good at telling the story behind Student Nannies,” says Tracey, “but I’m the first to admit that I needed some help with the numbers, so I could also talk confidently about what a profitable business it is.” That’s where the Fit4Funding service came in.

Tracey has found the interactive workshops that make up part of the Fit4Funding service to be full of useful, practical tips for running a better business, and she has enjoyed networking with fellow business owners.

However, she reserves her biggest praise for the one-to-one consultancy she has received from Amandeep Dhillon at Harwood Hutton. “It has been incredibly valuable,” she says, “and thanks to Amandeep, I have emerged with a much more detailed revenue model which I am much happier about.”

# Creative agency snaps into action with Fit4Funding service



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“With the key numbers now in place, I feel we have a greater strategic grip on what we’re doing and where we’re going.”

A Buckinghamshire business owner has received valuable support to help his business achieve its growth ambitions.

James Pinniger is co-owner of a creative agency that specialises in PR photography and video. Following a takeover at his last firm, James found himself working for a well-known global agency but without a great deal of job satisfaction. Looking to rediscover his mojo, he teamed up with old friend and colleague Joe Pepler, and Pinpep Media was launched in July 2017.

“I guess like so many start-ups we didn’t have a business plan or a budget. We were just running on instinct,” said James, who lives in Princes Risborough. “I was looking for some guidance and discovered Buckinghamshire Business First’s Growth Programme and the Fit4Funding service, which looked really interesting.

“I went along to a seminar and I liked the way it was pitched: neither too basic nor too technical. I enrolled straight away and completed the programme within a couple of months. All in all, it was a total of about 12 hours access to some very knowledgeable people.”

James now has a detailed profit and loss account and cashflow report, both with projections, which has given him more confidence about the direction of Pinpep.

James expects first year turnover to be around £200,000 and has his eye on £1 million within the next five years.

Fit4Funding is part of Buckinghamshire Business First’s Growth Programme, which is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).



# Growth Grant brings instant reward for Buckinghamshire business



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**L & C CARPENTRY**  
The Developer's Choice

Vicky Cannell of L & C Carpentry Ltd was in need of a quick win. She had identified a piece of software that would increase the profitability and productivity of her business, but had just one week in which to purchase it at the special discounted price quoted to her.

Vicky knew she needed grant funding quickly to help her purchase the equipment, and after an online search for local business support she found and contacted the Buckinghamshire Business First Growth Programme. The team quickly established her eligibility for a £1,000 Growth Grant.

With time critical, the team sprang into action. Within an hour a grant application form had been sent to Vicky. This was completed and returned the next working day. The grant was approved by the Growth Programme team three days later, meaning Vicky could go ahead and purchase the software at the special offer, and put the £1,000 grant towards the cost. A successful turnaround of less than a week!

“The Growth Programme provides £1,000 Growth Grants to help fund investments in specific projects that will deliver growth for businesses.”

The equipment that Aylesbury-based L & C Carpentry required helps the business improve the traceability of items on site. The business offers a wide variety of carpentry and woodworking services, meaning a large number of goods are on site at any given time. This made it difficult to keep track of everything, which led to project delays or losing items altogether. This naturally impacted profits. The new software provides the missing link in the chain, helping L & C Carpentry keep track of all items on site, ensuring projects are not delayed, therefore leading to increased profits and productivity.

Jane Dell, Growth Programme Manager, said: “When a business owner knows what they require to grow, but they don’t quite have the means to secure it, it can be frustrating.

“Time was of the essence with L & C Carpentry’s grant application, and the whole team was delighted to turn it around so quickly for Vicky to ensure the business got the software it requires to grow.”

# Simple application process yields £50,000 grant to fund business expansion



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
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A leading UK manufacturer of fresh produce has opened a new state-of-the-art facility thanks to investment that included a £50,000 SEMLEP Capital Grant delivered on behalf of the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) in Aylesbury Vale by Buckinghamshire Business First.

Chiltern Foods' new facility in Aylesbury will enable the business to expand its award-winning range of products and supply a number of new clients. At least 10 new jobs will be created to meet the growth of the business.

The £750,000 investment in the new 20,000 sq. ft. site was necessary as the previous premises had insufficient space to allow Chiltern Foods to achieve its growth plans. The new site has been transformed into a modern food production facility that will enable the business to meet the needs of its customers and consumers who seek healthy, fresh produce.

We asked Robert Pollard, Managing Director of Chiltern Foods, for more detail behind the grant award and what it means for Chiltern Foods.

## What does the move to your new site mean for the future of Chiltern Foods?

"The move has allowed us to re-design our processes and become more efficient, while creating space and capacity for future growth."

## What will the new job roles created involve?

"The new jobs will be across all functions but mainly production staff. We are taking on a New Product Development staff member, as well as one for a sales/admin role."

## Business seems to be going well. Are there any particular success stories you'd like to share?

"The move to the new site has allowed us to secure business with current customers and has also enabled us to do business with other larger customers such as Costco and Whitbread, which I have recently managed to secure contracts with."

## How helpful was the £50,000 grant to the process of moving to the new site?

"The grant was very helpful and Buckinghamshire Business First's Business Support Team were particularly helpful in terms of making the process very smooth, and ensuring we got the grant at all! Although in the overall figure £50,000 is a small percentage, it made the investment decision easier."

## What was the grant application process like?

"The application process was much simpler than others I have done at previous companies and in other regions. The Business Support Team are great!"

SEMLEP Capital Grants were available to businesses in Aylesbury Vale. Buckinghamshire Business First delivered the grants in Aylesbury Vale on behalf of the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP).

Working in partnership:



**YOUR LOCAL  
GROWTH HUB**

**SEMLEP**

# Electric ice cream van **works a carbon-free treat**



Across the Chiltern Hills and out as far as Oxford, a little electric van full of ice-creams, gelatos and sorbets weaves its way, delivering its rich, full-flavoured concoctions to restaurants, cafés and independent stores with a taste for the artisan.

“Some people thought we were mad when we got this van, but going electric just seemed to fit,” says Arthur LaCour, owner of the Chiltern Ice Cream Company. “We’re a local business with locally-sourced ingredients, local customers and suppliers and low food miles. We want to make a big impact on flavour, but a low impact on the environment.”

In 2019, the Chiltern Ice Cream Company purchased an electric Renault Kangoo with the aid of a £4,666 grant from Low Carbon Workspaces to use as their primary method of distribution. Six months on, they offer a fascinating insight into the practical realities of ditching the diesel.

“I was always committed to the idea, but it wasn’t an easy decision. When you transport ice-cream - if it melts, you don’t have a product. And with the current technology, electric vehicles and refrigeration don’t really mix. It would just drain the battery.”

So before committing to a purchase, Arthur first had to find a packaging solution. “We found these big, recycled polypropylene boxes that only lose 1°C an hour. That’s fine for our 3-4 hour delivery schedule.”

Problem solved. Then he had to find the vehicle. “A lot of dealerships quote a 9-month wait or don’t have one to test drive. We went for the Kangoo, because although it’s smallish, you can get around 110 miles out of a full charge. That works for us.”

The first thing everyone worries about is range. “It takes about 6 hours for a full re-charge, which we do overnight. Then, as long as we plan our routes properly, we’re able to complete even our longest delivery rounds with something in reserve. At lunchtime, we can come back to base, charge up for an hour, reload and go again for a shorter round in the afternoon. That gives us an extra 15-20 miles.”

Arthur has also adapted his driving style. “If you try to drive it like a fossil fuel vehicle, you won’t get far. You have to accelerate more slowly, anticipate stopping and take your foot off the accelerator. It prefers speeds under 55mph.”

The Renault’s range projection computer has proved to be consistently accurate, which significantly reduces range anxiety.

And what’s the reaction been like from the Chiltern Ice Cream Company’s customers? “Really good. Restaurant chefs come out to see what’s under the bonnet. Under the right circumstances, an electric delivery vehicle is definitely a viable alternative, even in semi-rural areas like ours.”

The Chiltern Ice Cream Company has cut its carbon emissions by 1.7 tonnes per year.

A project delivered by



Funded by



HM Government



# Low Carbon Workspaces helps to display products in a whole new light



urban | front

People buy with their eyes. And when you're buying a house, one of the first things you see is the front door. It sets an expectation about what lies behind. A beautiful door suggests a beautiful house.

For Urban Front, a Chesham-based business which designs contemporary hardwood and metallic doors for high-end clients, presentation is key. "Our customers really look for the 'Wow' factor," says Elizabeth Assaf, Co-Founder. "They want a unique door that doesn't look like anyone else's."

Lovingly hand-crafted in their Buckinghamshire workshop, Urban Front doors are viewed as works of art, and their reputation has spread far and wide since the company launched in 2005. Today, its doors feature on many an award-winning house, including Caring Wood, winner of the RIBA House of the Year in 2017. Many of these properties typify not just a commitment to craft and aesthetics, but also to the highest aspirations in sustainability – an ethos at the heart of Urban Front's business practices.

A project delivered by



"All of our timber is either FSC or PEFC-registered, meaning it is guaranteed to be sourced only from sustainably managed re-planted forest," explains Elizabeth. "We used to work with an African hardwood called Wenge, but when we realised it was endangered and didn't come from a re-planted forest, we stopped selling it. Why sell a product that damages the environment?"

Urban Front is also committed to ongoing research and development into energy efficiency. They recently launched a door that meets Germany's Passivhaus standard, meaning it achieves one of the highest insulation ratings for door panels in Europe. Meanwhile, recycling helps to minimise their impact across the production process. All of their sawdust is used by a local farmer for fertilising his soil and laying tracks for horses. Off-cuts are used to make timber cladding, while employees have been known to craft shelving and tables from left-over material. In the future, they'd like to invest in a briquette machine to convert sawdust into heat energy to warm the premises and cut out their gas usage.

So when the time came to renew the lighting in the product showroom and workshop, Elizabeth knew this was an opportunity to not only enhance presentation, but also to reduce their carbon footprint. Aided by a £1,500 grant from Low Carbon Workspaces, they replaced their existing halogen and fluorescent lights with directional LED spotlights, saving 2 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year. The project, which cost £5,000, will pay back in 3.5 years. Although the new lights will reduce their electricity bills by an estimated £1,000 per year, money was not the primary motivation.

"We have more lights, but less energy output," says Elizabeth. "But the best thing is that it creates a nicer environment for our staff. There's no more squinting in the workshop. It was just the right thing to do."

Funded by



HM Government

# Wine producer toasts a low carbon future



Award-winning wine producer, Chafor & Chafor, based in Gawcott, North Buckinghamshire, can expect a rosy future of lower energy bills and carbon emissions thanks to a £2,500 grant from Low Carbon Workspaces.

The producer of English wines qualified for a grant to install an off-grid solar PV system with battery storage. They fitted a 15-panel solar array on their processing building which can deliver up to 4kW of electricity. In addition, the batteries can store over 7kWh of unused electricity to power the bottling plant and host events when the sun isn't shining.

The solar panels replaced the diesel generator which had previously powered the processing building. This has resulted in a projected carbon emission saving of over 1 tonne of carbon per year and a cost saving of over £260 annually, which would have been spent on diesel to power the old generator.

A project delivered by



Low  
Carbon  
Workspaces



enabling | transforming | performing

“ Since we installed the solar panels, they have generated more than enough for our needs. The batteries have been a great addition, allowing us to use electricity generated during the day when the sun goes down. ”

This will help to future-proof the business, reducing the need for increasingly expensive fossil fuels and instead using a source of free energy - the sun!

Tim Chafor, Owner of Chafor & Chafor, spoke about how helpful the Low Carbon Workspaces grant and team were: “The Low Carbon Workspaces grant helped a great deal. The team were a huge help in the application process and were always on hand to answer any questions we had and to help complete the forms.”

The Low Carbon Workspaces team were delighted to support the project, saying:

“This is a great example of a business taking action to move away from fossil fuel-based energy generation to a renewable source. Not only will this increase Chafor & Chafor's environmental credentials, the solar PV system will reduce their energy costs too!”

Funded by



HM Government

# Saving energy with a kind of magic



Axion Now is an events centre and online business based in Amersham which specialises in a strategic trading card game called Magic: The Gathering.

Similar to role-playing games like Dungeons and Dragons, in Magic, players control teams of wizards who cast spells and summon mythical beasts to defeat their opponents across the table-top. The game boasts over 20 million players worldwide and so popular has Magic become, that it's even had a whole episode of South Park dedicated it.

Given the sheer scale of interest in the game, it might come as a surprise to find the UK's only dedicated Magic: The Gathering events centre based on the high street of a town with a population of only 18,000, but that makes Axion Now quite the local asset, says co-owner Elizabeth Kolb Barnettson. "I absolutely believe that this is where the high street should be going. People come from as far as Birmingham and Taunton to play here. We're a regional attraction, but it's also for the local community.

A project delivered by



"This game brings people together of all ages and abilities, and we are definitely driving business and wealth into Amersham."

Axion Now's events centre can host about 60 players at a time and with events throughout the week, they need to make sure their guests have a positive and comfortable experience when they get there. "We pride ourselves on our customer service, but we did have one problem - we have these day-long events, and in the winter it can get quite cold and in the summer it gets hot. We tried using fans but they never lasted long and if we opened the windows, it blew the cards everywhere. We decided we really needed some air conditioning units."

That represented quite a large investment for a small family business. They didn't have the capital so they started looking around to see if there were any grants available. "We're members of Buckinghamshire Business First, so we asked them for their advice. They suggested Low Carbon Workspaces."

After assessing the costs and potential benefits of the project, Low Carbon Workspaces offered a grant towards the purchase and installation and also recommended the most energy efficient air conditioning units for a facility of that size.

"We were umming and ahing, but if we didn't receive the grant I don't think we would have been able to do it. We might have had to look for new premises," says Elizabeth.

The total project cost was £5,500. Elizabeth is delighted with the results. "We've ended up saving 40% off our annual fuel bill, which is great. Thanks to the advice we were given, we've moved to a cheaper and greener energy tariff, and we no longer need to use gas.

"Our customers and staff are so much more comfortable. A lot of our players are quite young, so many of them would expect us to be conscious about our environmental impact. It's not a unique selling point of ours, it's just about being a responsible citizen."

Funded by



HM Government



# CES Hire saving precious resource with new way of working



CES Hire, a family-run machine-hire business, are on a mission to provide an outstanding experience for their customers whilst minimising waste. When moving to new premises, they installed a new commercial wash bay which recycles water thanks to a £2,500 grant from Low Carbon Workspaces. Not only are they using 40% less water, the initiative has helped them change their business by giving staff a purpose beyond just profit.

Nick Rogers has always been keenly aware that water is a precious resource and when living on the Nigerian coast as a boy he saw first-hand that poor sanitation, contamination and shortages of water lead to disease and malnutrition. Now in his sixties and running CES Hire, Nick decided that the business moving to new premises was his chance to make a sustainable difference.

“Our machines often come back covered in muck,” explains Nick, “so we need to jet wash them over and over again. This uses a huge amount of water which used to go straight down the drain. Such a waste!

A project delivered by



“Our move to larger premises was a big decision with much upheaval, but it’s allowed us not only to expand our physical space, but also expand the way we think about our processes and how we can make them more eco-friendly.”

“The grant from Low Carbon Workspaces allowed us to purchase and install a new wash bay. We now use over 40% less water, the soil and muck is captured and recycled appropriately and our machines still go out of the door sparkling!”

At weekly ‘Toolbox Tuesday’ meetings, staff discuss what more they can do: plastic cups have been replaced with long-life water bottles, and they’ve set up an online community with neighbouring businesses to minimise traffic into their business park. Discussions are shared externally with customers and via a blog on their website.

“We could have continued to manage our business in the same way we had previously, but that would have been wrong,” says Nick. “Through our actions we can encourage more people to make changes. I’m in my early sixties but it’s never too late to start to change the world.”

Low Carbon Workspaces offers grant funding to businesses to invest in their workplace, reduce their carbon footprint and open up opportunities to boost growth.

Funded by



HM Government

# Spotless Garments changing the planet with clean shirts



Spotless Garments is revolutionising the laundry service market with its “best for customers and best for the planet” approach. Business is booming and their new electric delivery van is already showing impressive results, saving nearly £2,000 in fuel costs and over 3 tonnes of carbon CO<sub>2</sub>e in a year.

Something as everyday as doing the laundry has many environmental implications from wasted water and power to harmful substances in common detergents and particles from synthetic fabrics contaminating our waterways.

Anne Benson and her husband Martin live on a farm with their two sons, and laundry is a regular requirement. Whilst ironing an “un-cooperative” shirt, Anne got thinking: ‘there must be a better way to do this and reduce our impact on the environment?’ Spotless Garments was born. Small companies can play a significant part in tackling the climate crisis. Spotless Garments researched the best way to provide a quality laundry service, whilst doing everything possible to be eco-friendly.

“Right from the start we knew we wanted to make our business as environmentally friendly and sustainable as possible. Our new electric van is a customer-facing symbol which demonstrates our genuine commitment to being eco-friendly, whilst encouraging our customers to consider the environment in everything they do too.”

With a £2,500 grant from Low Carbon Workspaces they bought an electric van to offer an easy pick-up service for their customers whilst eliminating harmful pollutants.

“The range is perfect,” explained Anne. “We can do a full 4-hour route with a quarter of the battery charge remaining. It recharges through the day ready for evening deliveries and it’s so quiet it doesn’t upset the neighbours at 10pm! Customers book a pick-up slot on our website which produces an optimised daily route for our van driver, ensuring we cover as few miles as possible.”

Fuel savings made by Spotless Garments are being re-invested in other initiatives such as multi-use covers to replace traditional single-use plastic bags, and microbead plastic filtration to stop harmful plastic being fed into our waterways.

Still only in their second year, Spotless Garments are growing rapidly and looking to expand into larger premises. “Our customers really get the environmental message and we’ve been inundated with enquiries and new customers,” says Anne.

A project delivered by



Funded by



HM Government

# Grant funding brings energy efficient equipment for Bledlow business



Apex Circuit Design, a global leader in automotive destination design, has benefited from a £2,000 Low Carbon Workspaces grant to replace ageing and inefficient IT equipment.

As the first supplier to the motor sport industry to achieve accreditation in the FIA Institute's Environmental Programme, the Bledlow-based business is continually looking for ways to reduce its operational carbon footprint.

As part of this initiative, Apex contacted the Low Carbon Workspaces project to find out how grant funding could help the business reduce energy consumption by replacing outdated and inefficient IT equipment.

The Low Carbon Workspaces team worked with Apex Circuit Design to identify potential savings and were able to award a grant of just over £2,000.

“As a business that works to demonstrate continued development towards environmental excellence, the Low Carbon Workspaces grant has helped us to continue on our sustainability journey.”

This went towards the cost of replacing separate colour and non-colour printers with a single, multi-function model, thus reducing printer-related electricity consumption by 70%. They were also able to replace 2 ageing laptops with smaller, faster and more efficient models.

Design Director Dafydd Broom was delighted with the outcome: “We are very happy with our equipment, which has reduced our electricity consumption significantly. Additionally, not only are our new laptops more energy efficient, but they will also enable employees to work from home, thus reducing our operational energy bills and commuting-related carbon emissions.”

Rowan Wallis, Low Carbon Workspaces Programme Manager, explained: “Energy efficiency goes beyond the usual LED lighting and condensing boiler installations. Electricity consumption by office IT equipment can be 20% of the total bill. By using a Low Carbon Workspaces grant to purchase new IT equipment, Apex Circuit Design have been able to reduce their energy-related overheads, as well as have up-to-date technology.”

A project delivered by



Funded by



HM Government



# Shining a light on energy efficiency savings



**Sarratt  
Management  
Limited**

A grant-funded installation of LED lighting has come to the aid of a serviced office provider, which will see a reduction in its energy bills and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Claydon House Business Centre, run by Sarratt Management Ltd in Aylesbury, is home to start-ups and small businesses and organisations. The various offices and meeting rooms in the building were previously lit by inefficient fluorescent tube lights, something Sarratt Management recognised as an issue and set about rectifying. A referral to Low Carbon Workspaces followed, and a grant of just under £2,000 was delivered to support the business's energy saving efforts.

Sarratt Management replaced all of the quad fluorescent fittings with slim-line LED panels. The expected savings? £920, 8,350 kWh and 4.67 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year. These savings represent fully 29% of their electricity usage.

“With help from the Low Carbon Workspaces team the application process was simple and quick. The new lighting not only saves us money, it also looks great.”

Measurements taken post-installation show the business is on track to deliver these savings. While these savings will benefit Sarratt Management, all of the businesses and employees that call Claydon House Business Centre their home will feel the effects. The upside to LED lighting is not just financial, it can be health-related too. A reduction in headaches, less stress and anxiety, and a more balanced circadian rhythm have all been associated with LEDs when compared to fluorescent lights.

Rupert Potter, Managing Director of Sarratt Management Ltd, said: “The Low Carbon Workspaces grant made a project we were keen to do affordable for us. The new lighting will pay for itself in just a few years.”

Rowan Wallis, Low Carbon Workspaces Programme Manager, said: “With a simple change of lighting, a business can make significant yearly savings. LED lighting is well known to be more energy efficient than fluorescent lighting, and lasts up to 3.75 times as long, reducing the cost of replacement. If a business is constantly dreading the next energy bill arriving, it would be a good time to look into measures that can help reduce it.”

A project delivered by



Funded by



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# Action4Youth saves with a new boiler thanks to Low Carbon Workspaces



“The boiler breaking down in the middle of winter was a nightmare. As a charity, funds are always limited, so the Low Carbon Workspaces grant becoming available was well timed.”

An Aylesbury-based charity has installed a new efficient condensing boiler thanks to a near-£4,000 Low Carbon Workspaces grant.

Action4Youth, an established and energetic youth charity, were looking to replace their current boiler at the Caldecotte Xperience, their outdoor education centre near Milton Keynes. The boiler in the residential facility, the George Amey Centre, was 15 years old, inefficient and had broken down in early 2017. To keep the building warm for the young people in residence, they had to use portable electric heaters to get through the cold period. A new boiler was required as a matter of urgency.

Nick Lund, Development Director, contacted Low Carbon Workspaces to take advantage of one of their grants. After a quick application process, Action4Youth were soon benefiting from a £3,780 grant to install an A-rated condensing gas-fired boiler at the George Amey Centre. This will help the charity save 14,202 kWh of natural gas and 2.61 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year.

Nick commented: “It is great to know that we will be saving on future energy costs with the installation of the new boiler. These are savings which the charity can put to better use investing in the young people we support.”

Low Carbon Workspaces is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), with grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 available to businesses in Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, and the Black Country to put towards projects that will reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

A project delivered by



Funded by



HM Government

# Energy bills wasting away thanks to a low carbon grant



Two new boilers and a modern thermostat were installed at a village hall thanks to a Low Carbon Workspaces grant, reducing energy waste and potentially saving more than £500 a year.

Farnham Royal Village Hall is made up of two main spaces - the hall itself and a separate area occupied by a school - that not only shared the same boiler that was installed 30 years ago, but also the same heating control system. This meant that when the heating was turned on in the morning for the start of school, the empty hall was also heated unnecessarily.

Thanks to support from Low Carbon Workspaces, which delivered a £3,500 grant, plans for the hall were realised to separate the heating system into two, replace the old boiler with a new 'A' rated version that will reduce consumption by 15%, and install another new smaller boiler in the school area. This ensures no wasted energy and will reduce overall consumption compared to the old set-up.

“We found the grant process very straightforward and were greatly helped at each stage by the excellent Low Carbon Workspaces team.”

Modern thermostatic controls that can be operated via an online app were also installed to increase the caretaker's control over the building's heating levels. This could reduce natural gas consumption by a further 5%.

Chris Owen of Farnham Royal Village Hall was delighted with the outcome. “The savings in gas consumption met our expectations, and in the initial six month period after the completed work we achieved a 23% reduction in kilowatt-hours (kWh) used, compared to the same period in the previous year. This equates to a £600 saving which we are very happy with.”

Rowan Wallis, Low Carbon Workspaces Programme Manager, said: “Installing new efficient boilers is a staple of the Low Carbon Workspaces grant programme, and a great way for businesses to reduce their energy consumption. The hall also benefited from advancing technologies such as apps that support energy efficiency. These technologies offer businesses great rewards if they choose to embrace them, as evidenced by the savings experienced here.”

A project delivered by



Funded by



HM Government



# Boosting business confidence with workplace training



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
BUSINESS FIRST  
MEMBER**



Buckinghamshire Skills Brokerage, which was delivered by Adviza in partnership with Buckinghamshire Business First, offered great support for businesses. Eat at The Works in Aylesbury is just one business to benefit.

First, Tom Bolton of Eat at The Works completed the free online Virtual Adviser® tool on the Buckinghamshire Business First website. The tool identifies skills gaps within a business and points to possible solutions. This led to the understanding that a member of the leadership team had a phobia of presenting and that this could hold him and the business back.

Buckinghamshire Business First then referred Tom to Adviza, and he soon met with their specialist Skills Advisers to explore potential training options to support the individual concerned. “After meeting the team for the first time, it was clear they were incredibly supportive and understood our business fully,” said Tom.

The team at Adviza took Tom through the training options available and supported him through the process of receiving a £150 voucher that he could put towards the cost of training for his colleague.

Tom was connected with Ian Thomas at Cognisant Training, a company that uses a range of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) techniques and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to train individuals and teams.

**“ Using the training voucher we received, my colleague went to Cognisant Training to receive support for his phobia of presenting. A big step was made to improve his fears and he has become more confident in his managerial role. Without the support from Adviza and Buckinghamshire Business First we wouldn’t have made this positive step forward. ”**

Improving your people improves your business. To identify any skills gaps and training needs within your business, use the Virtual Adviser® tool on the Buckinghamshire Business First website.

Working in partnership with



European Union  
European Social Fund



Education & Skills  
Funding Agency

# Coaching the way to business growth



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
BUSINESS FIRST  
STAKEHOLDER**

**ecobrand**  
BRANDS THAT GROW BUSINESSES

A creative agency in High Wycombe received fruitful business growth advice at a discounted price through the Buckinghamshire Skills Brokerage.

Richard Collins of Ecobrand completed the free online Virtual Adviser® tool, which identifies skills gaps within a business and points to possible solutions. The objective for Ecobrand was clear: to get business growth advice and gain a better understanding of what the business needed to do to achieve their next steps.

The Virtual Adviser® tool is available on the Buckinghamshire Business First website, and it was they who referred Ecobrand to Adviza's specialist Skills Advisers who helped Richard understand the potential training options available to him in the form of business mentors. The team at Adviza then guided Richard through the process of receiving a £150 training voucher to put towards the cost of the training.

“Without the opportunity to benefit from business mentoring through the Buckinghamshire Skills Brokerage we would not have been in a position to move our plans forward at this stage.”

Adviza's Skills Advisers identified a business mentor for Richard and an introductory phone call was set up between the two. “It was great that I could talk to the mentor directly before deciding on whether to go with them,” said Richard. After Richard had decided on his mentor, further two-hour-long sessions took place which included a full report on progress and future goals upon completion of the sessions.

Richard said: “What was of real value to me was being able to have a mirror held up to my initial business growth plans. The sessions explored my own thoughts and added new and insightful options. This has given me the confidence to move forward with our business growth plans. The mentoring looked at staffing, financials, marketing and the evolution of our services. The reports following each session have provided a useful line in the ground to reference as progress is made going forward. Thanks to this we are moving forward with the restructuring of our business with the confidence that we have implemented a level of due diligence that supports our actions.”

Working in partnership with



European Union  
European  
Social Fund



# LEADER enables family dairy farm to drive sustainable growth



Second-generation dairy farmers have embarked on plans to diversify and drive sustainable growth thanks to a £19,000 grant from the LEADER Programme.

Jennifer and Adam run their 110 hectare farm in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, milking 120 Holstein Friesian cows. With LEADER support, they now have the facilities to process milk on site and to sell direct to customers in a local farm shop using a state-of-the-art milk vending machine.

Previously, the farm's wholesale milk sales were subject to market volatility and a restrictive pricing structure against increasing costs for animal feed and bedding. For the business to remain viable, Jennifer and Adam knew they needed to increase productivity and generate new revenue streams.

Their new business venture, 'Milk Mad', has seen them sell almost 200 extra litres of delicious full-cream milk per day from the new vending machine located at a local farm shop.

A project delivered by



“By adding value to the milk we produce by processing it here on our farm, we're able to charge a premium price of over £1 per litre. This has not only increased our income, but has also helped us improve our business planning. We're now better able to weather the market.”

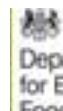
Thanks to the new sales, an additional part-time employee has been hired to be trained in the milking parlour, while Adam concentrates on the milk processing.

Customer feedback is extremely positive. “Customers are telling us that our milk tastes better than what's available in supermarkets, and as it doesn't go through the same homogenising processes, it's easier to digest too,” said Jennifer. “We're also told that as our milk is kept chilled in the machine, it's fresher than the local milk delivery services. Happily, customers are also finding the vending machine easy to use and love the distinctive design of our refillable glass bottles with metal lids – which means that they're quickly getting into the habit of buying a local product with no plastic packaging.

“The LEADER team were very helpful throughout the project. A lot of hard work went in to securing the necessary food hygiene and safety standards to launch the project, but the 'Milk Mad' vending machine is now providing the perfect launchpad for our other new added-value products.”

Planned additions to 'Milk Mad' include a range of natural, flavoured Greek yoghurts, bottled natural protein whey targeting the health and fitness market, and bottled milk deliveries to a local chain of shops and cafes.

Funded by



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



The European Agricultural  
Fund for Rural Development  
(Europe investing in rural areas)



# LEADER helps to launch Wigginton Village Shop



The last shop in Wigginton village in the Chiltern Hills shut its doors more than a decade ago.

A small group of passionate residents agreed that the community needed and would benefit from a new shop and café selling local produce to local people, and providing a new community hub.

Locals wholeheartedly agreed. Over time, some 80-100 Wigginton residents mobilised and joined the working party set up to launch the shop. A range of local professionals invested their time for free.

The community held fundraising events and opened a community share scheme. A LEADER Programme grant of £13,530 helped to fund the construction of the new specially designed building by a local builder, and other grants then contributed to kitting out the kitchen and café.

The Wigginton Village Shop opened its doors to the community on 1st December 2018. The shop and café were an instant hit and as well as attracting a base of regular local customers, the business has also started to become a destination for outdoor enthusiasts such as cyclists, walkers and horse riders.

The economic boost to the local community is also significant. Turnover has exceeded expectations at £20,000-£30,000 per month, with the café's performance stronger than anticipated.

Over 90 volunteers have signed up to work in the shop, while the business has also hired a full-time manager and two part-time supervisors and offered paid summer work experience for six local school-leavers. Another key success has been that the shop and café have been able to source 70% of their stock from within a 30-mile radius. Small local, independent and start-up producers now have a shop window for their wares and an opportunity to expand their businesses.

As a business run by the community, for the benefit of the community, one of the other objectives has been to invest any profits into other local projects. A donation was made to a facelift of the neighbouring children's playground in spring 2019. In turn, this has helped to drive more visitors to the shop's café and has helped attract more visitors to other local amenities such as the neighbouring sports ground.

The business has also started to host community events such as a mental health awareness event for local parents in partnership with a local mental health and suicide prevention charity, and 'cake and coffee' afternoons for older residents.

Having established the Wigginton Village Shop, the local community has realised the power of coming together to boost the local economy and create sustainable change. Looking ahead, this dynamic village is now investigating how it can reduce its environmental impact via a community renewable energy scheme, possibly installing solar panels on the roof of the shop, and employing plastic-free initiatives.

A project delivered by



**ngage**

enabling | transforming | performing

Funded by



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



The European Agricultural  
Fund for Rural Development  
Europe investing in rural areas

# LEADER grant leads to job creation and business growth



A retail nursery near Aylesbury is expected to generate 20% growth and create at least six new jobs after building a tea room with the help of a £50,000 LEADER grant.

Hartwell Nurseries, a family-owned business also dealing in landscape supplies, has serious ambitions for growth and turned to LEADER for support with a project designed to increase their sales and customer experience, and create a positive knock-on effect for other local businesses.

With Hartwell Nurseries located on a popular cycle route and footpath, the potential for increased footfall is high. Neil Bowness estimates that the building of the tea room will generate 20% growth year-on-year and necessitate hiring six new full-time employees to run it. "Additionally," said Neil, "we believe a further three jobs will be created throughout the nursery, through increased footfall from the tea room in the first year."

A project delivered by



“Visitors to Hartwell Nurseries previously had nowhere to sit down, enjoy a bite to eat and enjoy the rural landscape while shopping. The new tea room will enhance the customer’s retail experience but also increase business by enticing new customers to the nursery.”

LEADER funding can drastically reduce the cost of a project, something Neil can attest to. “The funding enabled us to build the tea room at a reasonable cost. The £50,000 grant helped make this project possible, while also reducing the risk to the business and ensuring our cash flow was not impacted.

“Without LEADER funding, this project could have been delayed for at least two years. In that eventuality, and without the predicted increase in sales generated by the tea room, it is unlikely we would be expecting to hire at least six new staff members.”

The building of the tearoom is not just designed to increase Hartwell Nurseries’ sales, but also to help other local businesses by using, wherever possible, locally sourced products, thereby supporting local suppliers, growers and producers. “Not only that,” says Neil, “but the tea room will also act as a daytime tourism attraction, bringing people out to our rural location of Hartwell that is on the way to other tourist destinations like the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre and Waddesdon Manor.”

Funded by



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



The European Agricultural  
Fund for Rural Development  
Leaves no stone unturned

# Aylesbury farm modernises operations thanks to £48,000 LEADER grant



An Aylesbury Vale farm will benefit from a new turkey processing facility thanks to a £48,000 LEADER Programme grant, creating two full time jobs and generating otherwise unattainable growth.

Patrick Lambert has been rearing turkeys at Starveall Farm for nearly 30 years, in which time capacity has risen from being able to process just 100 turkeys to more than 5,000 in 2016. For a time, this was the ceiling that Starveall Farm could not break through. "The existing turkey processing facility is an adapted shed originally built for another use," explains Patrick. "It is at full capacity, and not fit for purpose. Therefore, to expand the business, we need a new processing plant."

And so Patrick's son Mike applied to the LEADER Programme for grant funding that would help build a brand new, modern facility with greater capacity. A £48,000 grant followed, bringing multiple benefits, outlined by Mike: "The new facility will modernise and expand our operations, allowing us to accommodate a further 3,000 turkeys."

A project delivered by



“The LEADER team were exceptionally helpful throughout the whole process from start to finish. They were excellent at guiding us through the application requirements, making it as simple as possible.”

“The new facility means increased production capacity, improved productivity, improved quality standards, and ultimately, increased turnover on the farm. We will also be able to bring two new full-time employees on board.”

The LEADER team is heavily involved throughout the grant application process, and Mike was impressed with the support they offered: “It was crucial that we began work on our project at a specific date and the LEADER team made this happen. Without them it would not have been possible. I would be delighted to work with the LEADER team again.”

Will Dallimore, LEADER Programme Manager, was happy to deliver the grant: “The project at Starveall Farm is a great example of what a rural business with growth ambitions can achieve when it accesses LEADER funding. Supporting an increase in farm productivity is a key LEADER priority, so we were delighted to provide £48,000 of funding to Starveall Farm.”

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# Christmas tree business grows with LEADER grant



“The LEADER team are very good at being in regular touch to guide you through the whole process, and letting you know all the timescales on each part of the application.”

The new machinery will lead to better quality trees and potentially lead to more trees being planted in the future. This means jobs are safeguarded in the first instance, with jobs growth possible in the future.

The owners of a farm near Newport Pagnell received a boost after a £12,000 LEADER grant enabled them to mechanise their Christmas tree business, safeguarding jobs and increasing productivity in the process.

Chris and Jenny Letts have 25,000 Christmas trees across 18 acres of Stoke Lodge Farm, having planted their first back in 2001. Sales have grown year upon year, but after years of weed control, pruning and applying fertiliser by hand, the Letts' knew they had to embrace mechanisation in order to fulfil their future growth potential.

Enter the LEADER Programme. “We received a £12,000 grant from the LEADER Programme that enabled us to purchase a new specialist Christmas tree tractor and sprayer system which we use across our plantations,” explained Chris. “This tractor allows us to mechanise many operations which were carried out by hand.”

“Without this grant funding it would have been difficult for us to cope with our existing tree numbers, let alone increase them,” says Chris, who outlines the time savings they expect to make with the tractor in full flight. “It takes 10 back-breaking minutes to prune one tree by hand; the new tractor will prune one tree every minute. It takes 45 minutes to fertilise 1,000 trees by hand; the tractor will do this in 10 minutes.”

On hand every step of the way to support Chris and Jenny, as ever, were the LEADER team, as Chris confirms: “The LEADER team were very helpful throughout the whole application process, giving invaluable telephone support and advice the whole way through. Their workshops also look an excellent starting point for anyone looking to start an application, as they give good advice as to how to approach the paperwork.”

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Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



The European Agricultural  
Fund for Rural Development  
Lease (Investment in rural areas)

# Farm diversification made possible with LEADER grant



“First, LEADER was our safety net, giving us the confidence we needed to dream big. Then, LEADER became our springboard, helping to take us to new heights.”

A farmer with no previous catering or butchery experience was given the confidence to diversify thanks to a £16,000 grant from the LEADER Programme.

Rob Pratt runs Marbled Meats from his family farm in Northall, Leighton Buzzard, where he raises lambs and Wagyu cows. With LEADER support he is now able to process carcasses and sell from the farm gate.

Marbled Meats previously relied on others for processing and selling their meat. In the knowledge that taking control of the whole process would give his customers the necessary confidence, Rob began to formulate plans for diversification. But with no previous sales or butchery experience, he was in need of practical and moral support.

“I wanted to purchase a catering trailer and to install our own processing facilities at our farm, and received a £16,000 grant in order to do so,” says Rob. “The LEADER team were there every step of the way with me. It felt like they were on my side.”

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With his farm now equipped with processing facilities and a brand new catering trailer with which to sell directly to customers at events, Rob has been able to hire an additional full-time employee, and another on a part-time basis.

“I wouldn’t have been brave enough to go through with it all if it hadn’t been for LEADER,” says Rob. “LEADER gave us the confidence we needed. And when you have confidence in what you are doing and what you are selling, you are better able to interact with customers and get more sales.”

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Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



The European Agricultural  
Fund for Rural Development  
(Europe investing in rural areas)

# Productivity growth for forester after grant support



A forestry business in South Oxfordshire has received a £10,000 LEADER grant to invest in a forwarding trailer to expand its operations.

Benjamin Manning has been felling timber for nine years as the owner of Chilterns-based B.M.T.S Forestry, conducting the woodland management on a 400-acre site and managing several smaller local woodlands. Benjamin recently purchased a tractor that enabled him to take on larger contracts, but has now taken a further step by investing in a tractor-based forwarding trailer that will bring an increase in productivity and efficiency.

These increases would have been in jeopardy but for the LEADER funding, as Benjamin explains: “The LEADER funding was critical to this project. Without it, the trailer would not have been purchased and the business would have had to continue relying on the availability of busy local contractors to extract felled timber, which would have meant plenty of lost opportunities for B.M.T.S Forestry.”

A project delivered by



“With the trailer in place we will now be able to fell and extract small volumes of timber from local woods whenever it is convenient for us. This will enable us to expand the amount of woodland we manage, increase the amount of economically active woodland in the local area, and sell more timber and firewood into local markets.”

LEADER Programme Manager Will Dallimore was impressed with the project: “Benjamin identified a great solution as to how to increase productivity and I am just as positive as him as to the potential outcomes. I am delighted that this project will meet several LEADER Programme objectives by boosting local woodland activity, sparking productivity growth for a small rural business and providing other local businesses with sources of income.”

Indeed, the project will not just benefit B.M.T.S Forestry. It is estimated that once the benefits of the trailer start to be felt, the additional timber and firewood extracted from the woodlands in the Chilterns will generate approximately £34,000 a year for the local rural economy.

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# Security firm creates the blueprint for maximising investment opportunities



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
BUSINESS FIRST  
AMBASSADOR**

Ashridge  
Group

Mark Walker, Group Chairman of Ashridge Group, an award-winning security provider based in Wingrave, initially became a Partner investor in Buckinghamshire Business First, but didn't stop there, later upgrading to Ambassador.

As soon as Mark had invested he set about taking advantage of the various benefits he now received. "As a Partner investor we were able to post a member offer up on the website, thanks to which we got a new client," Mark begins.

"We could also advertise a contract for which we were inundated with responses and ended up engaging a local business to undertake. I was also in need of advice on hiring a PR company so I posted a question in the member Q&A section. The quantity of responses to this was amazing for such a niche requirement. I was genuinely surprised with the results, something which has confirmed my opinion that Buckinghamshire Business First really is the 'go to' hub for business in Buckinghamshire."

**“Buckinghamshire Business First is a champion of the business community in Buckinghamshire and we have greatly benefited from their advice and support as we have grown, as too have many other businesses and entrepreneurs alike throughout the county. This is why we wanted to make our own investment in Buckinghamshire Business First.”**

All of the features Mark mentions can be promoted via the enhanced business profile that investors get on the Buckinghamshire Business First website. This profile is a one page overview of the business full of information, testimonials, videos, contracts, offers, events, photos, logos and award listings. Invested members also get their profiles ranked at the top of the search results on the online member directory.

All in all, Mark couldn't be happier and more impressed with how his investment has paid off. "We are a local company with a national footprint and have greatly benefited from the business opportunities and active networking that we have experienced with Buckinghamshire Business First. They offer an important platform that brings the local business community together and enables businesses like ours to buy and supply services within Buckinghamshire, benefiting the local economy."

# Quick returns show what's possible with co-investment



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
BUSINESS FIRST**  
**PARTNER**

**ActionCOACH**  
business coaching

What do you do when you can't quite reach your target market? You change your approach. For Helen Pethybridge of ActionCoach this meant exploring the perks of Buckinghamshire Business First membership and the great opportunities that co-investing in the organisation can bring.

It was the summer of 2016 and the Buckinghamshire Business First website had just been revamped, while co-investment packages offered members a whole new world of opportunity. Helen spotted her chance, describing how she "set aside some time to go through everything that Buckinghamshire Business First offers, from the co-investment packages to the online business profile that each member gets on the member directory. I quickly realised that Buckinghamshire Business First could help me reach the businesses I needed to. Taking on just one client that I met through Buckinghamshire Business First gave me a quick return on my investment."

“The Business Leaders’ Dinners are now a diary priority for me. You meet people two or three times at these events, which allows you to build a rapport and trust, which can lead to further business or referrals.”

Helen co-invested as a Partner of Buckinghamshire Business First, primarily in order to run her own workshops that would get her face-to-face with potential clients. “I really enjoy hosting workshops,” says Helen, who supports businesses through one-to-one or group coaching. “The chance to speak directly to a group of people that you already know have an interest in what you offer and want to know more is a chance not to pass up. It’s fair to say that hosting these workshops is now a key part of my marketing strategy.”

Helen soon found another example of what can happen within an interconnected and supportive business community. “It was at a Business Leaders’ Dinner that I met with a representative of Barclays and he invited me to a seminar that they were running. It was at this seminar that I met a fellow business owner who I invited to one of my own workshops, and, long story short, I ended up doing business with him and his business partners!”

Helping businesses grow is what ActionCoach is all about, and helping businesses to do what they do best is what Buckinghamshire Business First is all about. By co-investing in Buckinghamshire Business First, ActionCoach has uncovered the secret to helping more businesses.

# Marketing consultancy reaps the benefits of business support



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
BUSINESS FIRST  
STAKEHOLDER**



Pinpoint Marketing became a Stakeholder member of Buckinghamshire Business First after Director Nicole Martin explored the different investment packages on offer. We asked Nicole all about it.

## **You renewed your Stakeholder investment package, so you must be happy with your investment?**

Yes, I am! Buckinghamshire Business First has a great set-up and is a great resource for Buckinghamshire businesses. I use the member offers facility, which enables me to create special offers for other members. I regularly post offers and review them periodically. I have had some take-up on these offers, particularly for Mailchimp training. I have also utilised the meeting room facilities, and as a Stakeholder investor I get extra free hours to use these rooms.

## **You have written and published articles in our newsletter before, a perk that is available to invested members. Do you appreciate these kinds of promotional opportunities?**

Yes I do, very much so. PR is like gold dust for small businesses, so the chance to write articles for a newsletter with a circulation of 11,500 businesses is very valuable. The raised awareness of the brand is a benefit, as is the opportunity to add value and educate readers.

“ Having a profile on the Buckinghamshire Business First member directory makes your business easier to find, plus listings and links like these help with SEO rankings. I would be very happy sending potential clients to my profile. ”

## **What other ways have you benefited from membership of Buckinghamshire Business First?**

I hear about all of the funding opportunities available to local businesses and pass this information on to my clients, which can be a great source of leads for me. I have also spoken at the Be Your Own Boss networking events. This worked well for my profile and also increased my social media connections. The Business Support Team do a great job of supporting us, including with promoting our social media content with retweets and shares.

## **What advice would you give to businesses that are in need of business support?**

Contact Buckinghamshire Business First and ask for their advice. Follow them on social media for tips and news. Attend their events and get you and your business out there. Buckinghamshire businesses are lucky to have this service on our doorsteps. It would be great for more local SMEs and start-ups to utilise their support.

## **What advice would you give to businesses thinking of investing in Buckinghamshire Business First?**

Go for it! Like everything, you get out of it what you put in. So make an effort, get yourself known and get involved.



# Speculation leads to accumulation for High Wycombe business



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
BUSINESS FIRST  
STAKEHOLDER**

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

“ We invested in becoming Stakeholder members of Buckinghamshire Business First because we saw the potential of the enhanced business listing. Among the things we did with this listing was create and promote special offers for the rest of the Buckinghamshire business community that helped us attract new customers. ”

When the new-look Buckinghamshire Business First website launched in early 2016, Your Print Solution was one of the first companies to take advantage of the opportunities it created.

“As soon as the new website launched I was looking forward to utilising it to help me grow the business,” says Steven Brown, Director of Your Print Solution, a digital print and cross-media marketing company based in High Wycombe.

All members of Buckinghamshire Business First get a basic listing on the online business directory on the Buckinghamshire Business First website, but those that invest can add testimonials, member offers, events, videos, photos, logos and award wins.

“We wanted more than a basic listing because that’s how you stand out from the crowd,” says Steven. “Becoming a Stakeholder member means that we feature higher on the business directory and get more eyes on our business.”

This is not the only way that Steven has made the most of his place within the Buckinghamshire Business First membership. He attended several Business Leaders’ Dinners, events that draw the cream of the entrepreneurial talent within the county, and also greatly enjoyed workshops delivered by fellow members.

While engaging with the Buckinghamshire business community is important to Steven, giving back to the local area means an awful lot too, as he explains: “I like to go into local schools and speak to the children there about what we do, offering them a glimpse into a possible future career. It’s all about engaging young people and giving something back to the local community.”

## Membership makes ‘valuable contribution’ to business success



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
BUSINESS FIRST  
AMBASSADOR**



“

Having been a member of Buckinghamshire Business First from the start, we want to ensure that we get the most out of our membership and believe it has made a valuable contribution to our success in recent years. By attending networking events and member to member workshops, we have learned new skills which have been brought back to the business and helped us to achieve our goals. We have also hosted a number of member to member workshops which have led to us creating some long-standing connections within our thriving business community, as well as winning new business. When looking for a product or service, the online member directory on the Buckinghamshire Business First website is our first port of call.

”

~ *Charlie Hughes, Chandler Garvey*



**YOUR LOCAL  
GROWTH HUB**

## “Can-do” attitude helps promote cyber security to businesses

“ I would like to put on record my sincere appreciation and thanks to all the staff and management whom I have been engaging with at Buckinghamshire Business First since July 2018 in pursuit of an agenda of the provision of appropriate, realistic and cost effective Cyber Protect advice for their members and associated partners.

”

“I have been very impressed by the “can-do” attitude of staff that I have engaged with and their willingness to collaborate on solutions or to suggest processes to ensure that the messaging Thames Valley Police Cyber Protect provided - be it via quarterly newsletters, social media or information messaging - are promulgated to their members in a timely fashion, notwithstanding the invitations to various events and speaking opportunities.

“It would be disingenuous to name specific members of their staff as they have all as a collective made my role as the Cyber Protect Officer for Thames Valley Police so much easier to achieve and deliver in this context, hence my expression of thanks.

“I look forward to further positive engagements and collaborations to assist their members, as well as the wider business community in Buckinghamshire.”

~ *Mark Godsland, Cyber Protect Officer,  
Thames Valley Police*





**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
BUSINESS FIRST**  
**MEMBER**

**Amanda Heritage**  
Virtual Services

## ‘Fantastic’ Hub facilities impress

“ As a member of Buckinghamshire Business First, I used their Business Hub at Buckinghamshire New University. Absolutely fantastic facilities, and all free for me to use due to being a member! I really appreciated the helpfulness of Buckinghamshire Business First’s onsite team. If your business is in Buckinghamshire, you need to register with them today!

~ Amanda Heritage,  
Amanda Heritage Virtual Services

## Invested member reaps rewards

“ I have found Buckinghamshire Business First to be an amazing hub with excellent meeting spaces, events and workshops. Being a Stakeholder member means that I get a number of hours to use the meeting rooms for my training workshops. In addition, my Stakeholder membership allows me free attendance to the networking events that Buckinghamshire Business First runs for local businesses, and I have always found these extremely useful. I highly recommend Buckinghamshire Business First.

~ Faisal Mahmood, FM Training



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**FM Training**  
First Aid Courses



# Positive outcomes at the Bucks Business Expo



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
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AMBASSADOR

ADLINGTON  
Young

“ The Buckinghamshire Business Expo was a first for Buckinghamshire Business First and a first for Adlington Young Executive Coaching! What a good day it turned out to be. Everything was well planned by Buckinghamshire Business First, which filled me with confidence that it would be a day well spent. The Expo kicked off soon after 8am and by 9:30am I was agreeing new business. The venue worked perfectly, and conversation buzzed all day. It felt more like a reunion than an Expo, and was definitely worthwhile! ”

~ Elizabeth Adlington,  
Adlington Young Executive Coaching



YOUR LOCAL  
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## Making new connections at the Business Leaders' Dinners

“ We had a very enjoyable evening at the Business Leaders' Dinner at Danesfield House. As well as being at a great venue with great food, we met some very interesting people to connect with. Thanks to Buckinghamshire Business First for running this event, it was a great way to make new business connections, and as an added bonus we also met some really great local charities too. We look forward to attending more Business Leaders' Dinners! ”

~ Graham Macey,  
Form Workplace Solutions



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workplace solutions



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# Inspiration strikes at Routes Into Creative Industries event



“ Routes Into Creative Industries created a welcoming space where students could gather information on a range of different avenues into careers in the media. It was certainly well attended and there were animated conversations taking place across the event. ”

~ Eleanor Brocklehurst,  
Boundless West/Fremantle

## Margaret Burgin, Head of Careers at Screen Skills, said:

“Thank you to the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub for inviting us to Routes Into Creative Industries. We met a number of young people and parents, all together speaking to about 150 people. I met quite a few girls who are interested in visual effects, which is always a good thing.”

## One young person in attendance said:

“The event was brilliant. It was held in a really professional yet informal manner, allowing you to feel like you were with industry experts but able to talk in a more colloquial way. Those with stands promoting their business were very informative and provided information to take away for further reading, as well as verbally supplying the main facts. I went between a few tables and found that the quality of information was good and even if they couldn't find something on their courses for me, they gave me other ideas and options that I may like - offering their support however possible.”



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