

Annual Report 2019/20

Buckinghamshire Business First
Year ended March 2020



What local businesses say about us



“ 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.

Mike Iddon, Insight & Advice Ltd



“ We just wanted to say how grateful we are for all the assistance in helping us get this grant. It's the first time we have asked for help with a project, believing the process would be too frustrating. With such a speedy turnaround time, we will be sure to research what's available to us in the future.

Feedback from a member



“ Attending a Growth Masterclass with Buckinghamshire Business First's Growth Programme really helped me to step out of the business and focus on it, rather than on service delivery.

Terri Connor, HubPro Ltd



“ 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.

Marnie Logan, Dustaway





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



Reaching out for business support is having a real impact on our business as we progress along our growth journey. The Growth Programme has provided valuable insights and contacts. We've seen improvements in our trading profits, we're looking to collaborate with businesses, and we feel better prepared for the future.

Teresa Stroud, 3 Way Displays



Yesterday I spoke to someone who said that every single person they had ever spoken to at BBF had been so lovely but also so informed and helpful. They also said that the regular communications they received such as the newsletter were incredibly useful. They finally said, what they also valued was how in-depth your website is and how it refers them to other parties when BBF are not the most appropriate organisation. I could only respond with – they are amazing aren't they!

Feedback from a member



Everything was amazing including easy forms, great staff who were always helpful and a fantastic cause!

Feedback from a grant beneficiary



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.

Kris Theophanous, Bradbury Tracks





**The secret of change is to focus
all your energy, not on fighting
the old, but on building the new.**

- Dan Millman, author and former world champion athlete



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Personal note from Michael Garvey, Chairman, Buckinghamshire Business First

Looking back at the introduction I wrote for the Annual Report last year, I spoke about uncertainty being the standout challenge for our members. Namely: political, economic and technological uncertainty. Few could have imagined that 2020 would be dominated by something more uncertain, unprecedented and unwelcome. COVID-19 is having a global impact and the economic ramifications are only just unfolding. So, uncertainty is something we are all having to come to terms with.

Chairing Buckinghamshire Business First through the current crisis has been rewarding and heart-breaking in equal measures. Rewarding to see so many businesses pulling together and reinventing themselves to serve the public good, and heart-breaking to see good businesses struggle through no fault of their own.

Buckinghamshire Business First has been at the heart of a wide range of initiatives that have supported the business community. By working in partnership with Buckinghamshire Council, Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership and other stakeholders, we have, I think, made a significant contribution to the survival of many businesses.

As attention turns to recovery, there is much work to be done. The political, business, healthcare and third sector alignment we have in the county is the envy of most other locations and is something to be celebrated. The partnership principle of "Team Bucks" is something many of us have aspired to achieve for some years and the current crisis has reinforced the need and benefit of this.

There are too many people and organisations to list here, however I would like to express my thanks to everyone that has played a part in helping others to get through this crisis. The team at Buckinghamshire Business First - led by Philippa Batting and the Senior Management team - has worked incredibly hard, helping members in countless ways to access information and grants and by just being there to "talk them back from the edge". The COVID-19 support webpage established on 17th March has been a valuable source of information and many members have supported each other; by running webinars and workshops specifically aimed at crisis management.



Prior to the crisis, we had the excellent Buckinghamshire Business Festival fortnight, including the Buckinghamshire Business Expo on 6th March. It was a showcase for the rich and diverse business community within the county and a celebration of so much achievement.

The challenges ahead for many businesses can't be underestimated, but as a business member myself, I'm grateful that Buckinghamshire Business First exists to help and support my business. Being part of a community of almost 13,000 members, many of whom actively support each other, is something that is truly powerful.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael".

Michael Garvey
Chairman, Buckinghamshire
Business First
Managing Director, Chandler Garvey



What's on offer from Buckinghamshire Business First?



Telephone hotline
and triage service



Grants and funding
advice



Growth, innovation
and skills advisers



Online business
support and
business directory



Virtual meetings
and workshops



Masterclasses in:
growth, innovation,
finance and investment
readiness



Bespoke intellectual
property support



Mentoring with 'Growth
Champions' from the
business community



Leadership
development and peer
to peer networking



Business collaboration
through networks and
partnerships



Enterprise days, short
courses and mentoring
for start ups



Research and
business intelligence



Buckinghamshire
Business Awards



Buckinghamshire
Business Festival



Experienced team of
50 including sector
specialists



**SUPPORTING
BUSINESSES
IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
BUSINESS FIRST**

**YOUR LOCAL
GROWTH HUB**

1 | Our Impacts 2019 / 2020



£2,806,610

was awarded to individual businesses through grants



33,000 instances

of information and assistance were provided by our team to businesses



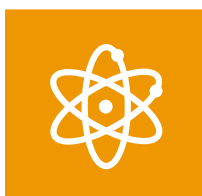
543 jobs

were facilitated through our grant and project activity



109 businesses

were supported to introduce new products or services to market



1735.244 tonnes*

CO₂e saved every year



168 businesses

were provided a professional workspace by our Business Hubs on over 700 occasions



278,000 student encounters

have been facilitated with employers through the Bucks Skills Hub



Buckinghamshire Business Festival

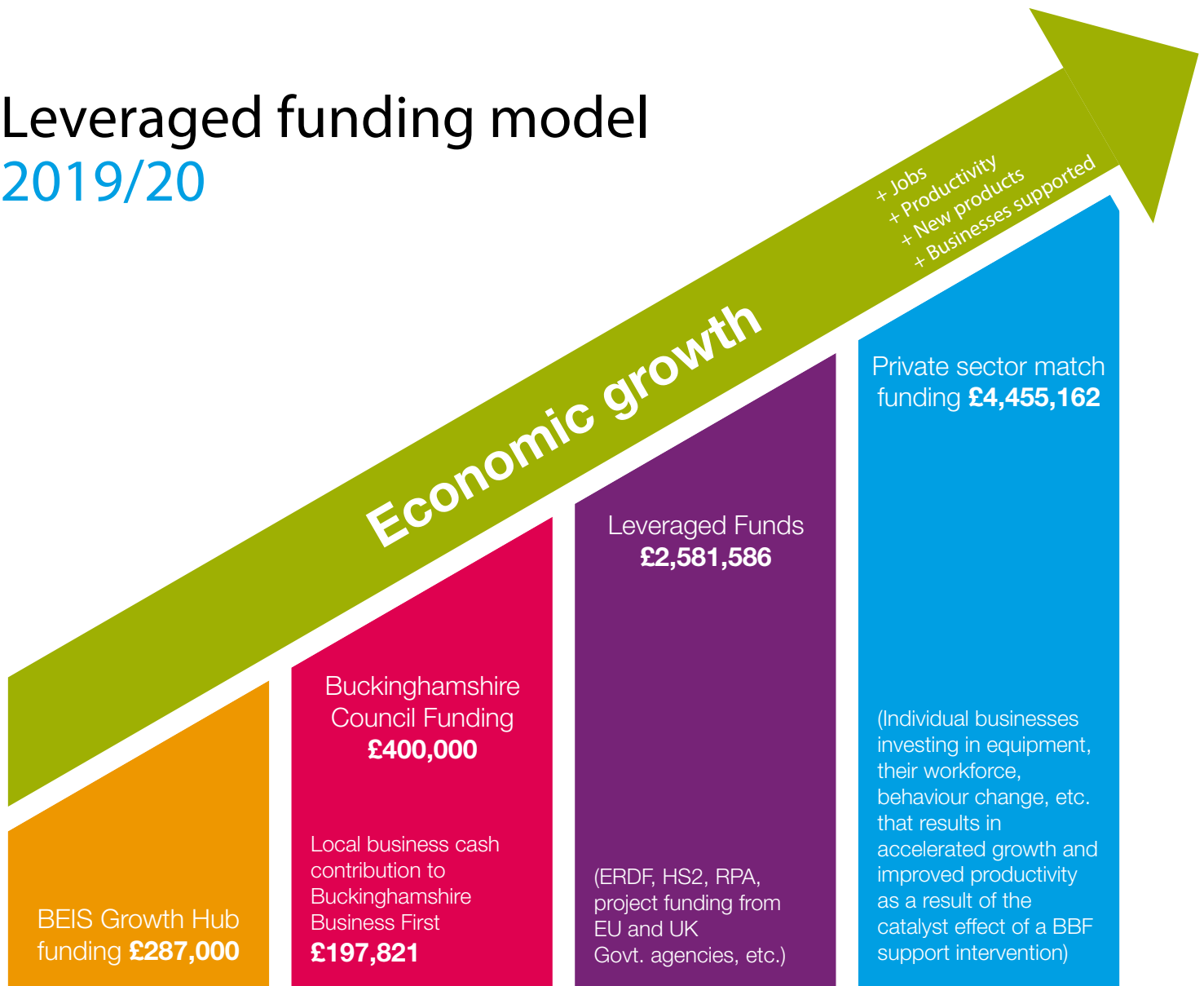
Over 750 participants and 30 events (including the Buckinghamshire Business Expo)

* These figures are based on carbon savings verified by LCW in the 2019/2020 year

2 | How we are funded

Buckinghamshire Business First has a mixed funding model. Its core funding comes from members, Buckinghamshire Council and events. This core funding is used as 'match', for other funds which can be leveraged from Europe and UK Government agencies. All funding secured has SME competitiveness at its core.

Leveraged funding model 2019/20



For every £1 of core funding received by Buckinghamshire Business First Growth Hub, an additional £11 has been leveraged to support economic development at the level of the firm, stimulating growth and improved productivity.

3 | Our Board

The Buckinghamshire Business First Board is made up of 10 individuals reflective of the diverse nature of the Buckinghamshire business community. It includes representatives of micro businesses and businesses in strategically important sectors from across the breadth of the county. They are with us every step of the way on this journey as we nurture a thriving economy in the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain.



Buckinghamshire Business First has been integral to the growth of the business and wider community. Joining the Board has given me a platform to work with my fellow board members and continue this excellent work.

Hiren Gandhi



Michael Garvey
Chairman
Managing Director,
Chandler Garvey



Philippa Batting
Managing Director,
Buckinghamshire
Business First



Hiren Gandhi
Vice Chairman
Partner, Blaser Mills



What I love about BBF is the way that anyone with an idea can find an extraordinary range of support. Most of our businesses are small or micro, run by pioneers. This makes for an extraordinary culture. Having BBF alongside you is like having a great GP or dentist. Being part of this makes me proud.

Alistair Lomax



Alistair Lomax
Director of Development,
The University of Buckingham



Mark Walker
Director
Ashridge Group Ltd



I experienced the support that BBF delivers and the strong voice it provides in representing businesses in the county. Joining the Board has enabled me to contribute to the economic growth of the local community, and gain a greater understanding of the regional business agenda.

Mark Walker



I have seen first-hand how BBF works hard to represent all businesses in Buckinghamshire: large, small, including not-for-profits and how it drives the local economy. It has been a privilege to work alongside a Board and Team of such high quality, commitment and enthusiasm.

Michael Harris



Michael Harris
Director,
Lindengate



Adam Stronach
Treasurer
Director, Harwood
Hutton Ltd



The more you get involved, the more you can help influence the agenda around infrastructure, employment, skills, access to finance and other business-critical issues.

Adam Stronach



Eman Martin-Vignerte
Head of External Affairs,
Governmental and Political
Relations, Bosch



Klaus Allion
Owner and Managing
Director, ANT
Telecommunications



Andrew Smith
Director of Strategy and
Communications, Pinewood
Studios Group



We are ambitious in our aims of helping people develop their skills and access employment and business opportunities. Through BBF, I can see the new talent we have emerging on our doorstep.

Andrew Smith



4 | Influencing the business environment

Buckinghamshire Business First works closely with Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (Bucks LEP) whose primary objective is to mobilise each of Buckinghamshire's internationally significant economic assets - space, creative, advanced manufacturing and digital health. This would enable the growth of clusters of businesses that are pioneers in their fields to raise productivity nationally, regionally and in Buckinghamshire.

Buckinghamshire is a major wealth generator for the UK economy, and the commitment of over £73m in Local Growth Funds is unleashing ambition and creativity across the county.



Investment regenerating High Wycombe Town Centre

A new road link through High Wycombe Town Centre has been completed thanks to Bucks LEP Local Growth Funding of £8.5 million, boosting regeneration potential, unlocking hundreds of high quality new homes, as well as commercial and retail opportunities. Work started on the scheme in 2015 to improve accessibility, public realm, address local congestion and traffic movement through the town centre. This outstanding collaboration with local authorities and developer Inland Homes has transformed the town centre; paving the way for future investment in further regeneration plans in High Wycombe.

This funding is enabling the delivery of new road and rail infrastructure, better skills and business opportunities and enhancing digital connectivity to support sustainable economic growth in Buckinghamshire.

Local Growth Fund investment has helped support the development of new educational facilities, infrastructure projects and centres of innovation and engineering.



The Local Growth Fund grant has leveraged over £119m match funding generating a capital programme value of over £192 million.



World class sports engineering hub opens at Silverstone Enterprise Zone

A cutting-edge elite sports engineering facility, funded by Bucks LEP, has officially opened at Silverstone. Investment of £2m Local Growth Funding in the Silverstone Sports Engineering Hub, situated in our Silverstone Enterprise Zone, has established a research, development and business incubation centre to put Bucks at the forefront of the development of aerodynamic technologies for high-performance sport.

In partnership with:

Buckinghamshire
LOCAL ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP
THE ENTREPRENEURIAL HEART OF BRITAIN

 **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**
SKILLS HUB

**THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE**
COMPANY



HM Government

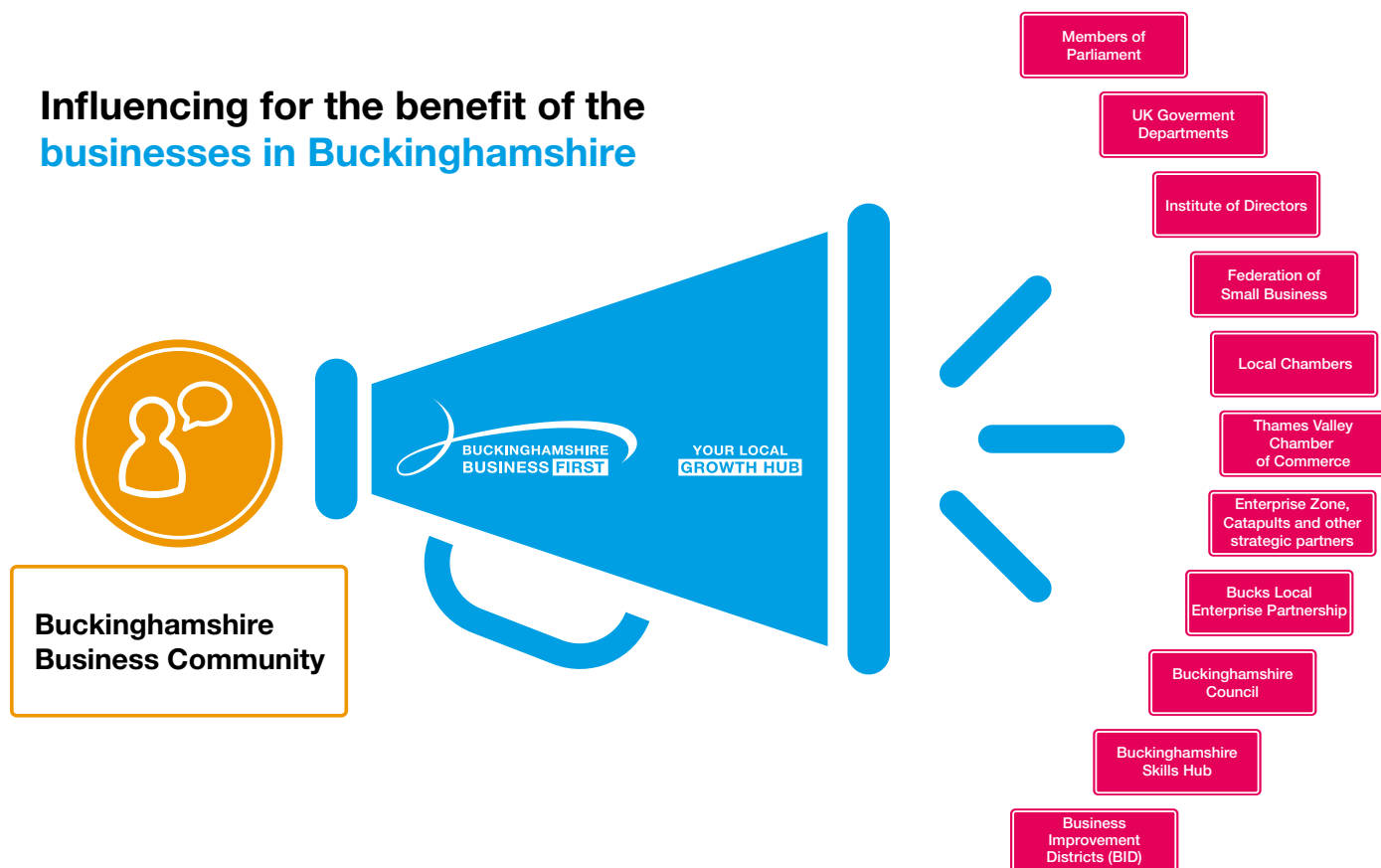
Boost to Buckinghamshire's world-renowned creative sector

Bucks LEP funding of £1.6m is supporting Bucks Creates@Pinewood to bring a full suite of 21 new master's and bachelor's degree programmes in the crafts integral to the film, media and TV industry. A partnership involving Buckinghamshire New University, Creative Media Skills, Pinewood Studios and Bucks LEP will boost education in the creative industries, which contributes £7.7bn to the economy and is the UK's fastest growing sector. Buckinghamshire's creative sector is world-renowned - with the highest proportion of employment in this sector in the UK with over 17,300 jobs across 4,430 businesses – and funding this major project will further unlock its long-term impact for the local economy and support the delivery of the Government's Industrial Strategy.

Ground-breaking computing and AI centre comes to Bucks

Thanks to a £2m Local Growth Fund grant from Bucks LEP, the University of Buckingham is able to commence work on a pioneering new School of Computing and Centre for Artificial Intelligence. Due to open in Spring 2021, the new School of Computing and Centre for AI will offer new undergraduate and masters programmes in AI, Cyber Security, Immersive Technologies and Data Science. This new development will have a game-changing impact on Buckingham and the surrounding area by facilitating the training of the next generation of leaders and supporting the UK to realise its industrial ambitions.

Influencing for the benefit of the businesses in Buckinghamshire



In partnership with:

Buckinghamshire
LOCAL ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP
THE ENTREPRENEURIAL HEART OF BRITAIN

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
SKILLS HUB

THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY



HM Government

5 | Business Hubs & Meeting Rooms

Buckinghamshire businesses have four, free-to-use business hubs across the county. Each space is designed to encourage collaboration and business growth. They offer a professional setting for team meetings as well as remote and lone working.

Two new business hubs were launched in 2019/20. These are enabling Buckinghamshire businesses to now access four free to use business hubs across the county.

The Enterprise Hub at the University of Buckingham was launched in May 2019 finding favour with local BBC Weather presenters, architects, AI Developers and growth strategy consultants alike. The co-branded space is in the heart of the newly opened Vinson Centre at the University. This new Hub allows businesses to become more acquainted with the university; as well as providing an opportunity for students and local business to work alongside each other.

To complement our existing Hubs at Chesham Library and the High Wycombe Business Hub at Bucks New University, a new meeting room was made available in September 2019 at Missenden Abbey in Great Missenden.

All four hubs are co-branded with the Institute of Directors and are available to book via our website: bbf.uk.com

168 businesses

were provided with a professional workspace by our Business hubs on over 700 occasions in 2019/2020



Buckingham Enterprise Hub



Missenden Abbey Meeting Room



Chesham Business Hub

**SUPPORTING
BUSINESSES
IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

 **MISSENDEN
ABBAY**



 **THE UNIVERSITY OF
BUCKINGHAM**

 **Inspiring business
South**

6 | Events Programme to enable resilience and growth

Our events programme continued at a great pace this year, and in March we transitioned to delivering online events and established a programme of COVID-19 related webinars to support businesses through the pandemic.



Business Leaders' Dinners

Buckinghamshire's most ambitious and influential business leaders come together quarterly at our Business Leaders' Dinners for high level networking and fine dining in fantastic locations. Guests were treated to the very best company, food and service at The Compleat Angler, Villiers Hotel, Missenden Abbey and Danesfield House as valuable business connections were made.

Member-to-member workshops

Regular member-led workshops facilitate peer-to-peer learning and encourage the sharing of best practice between our members. Topics covered include LinkedIn, CSR, GDPR, recruitment and financial planning.



Insightful, well delivered, interesting & relevant information delivered in an informal 'real life' style by a knowledgeable and approachable presenter. Refreshing!



Delegate feedback from Focus on Digital Marketing



Young Directors' Meet Ups

A series of events aimed at supporting younger entrepreneurs - a place to share experiences, learn and collaborate with other business owners.



'Focus on' workshops

Our 'Focus on...' series of half-day workshops are held monthly to provide business owners with core skills in areas such as finance, digital, business planning, marketing and sales.



145 events

were hosted by
Buckinghamshire Business
First in 2019/20 with a total of



3,027 attendees

Find out more about Buckinghamshire Business First's events programme at:
bbf.uk.com/events or contact the events team on **01494 927158**.



94% of delegates rated our events as good or very good

7 | Get ready for Brexit

Throughout 2019 Buckinghamshire Business First worked with businesses to help them prepare for the EU Transition. In addition to sharing government updates and advice, funding was made available in partnership with Buckinghamshire County Council to support Brexit preparations.

£35,000 of 'Get Set for Brexit' vouchers supported 19 businesses to take professional advice on their exposure and help them plan for the future.



£50,000 of Go Vouchers supported 12 businesses implement critical changes to ensure they were better prepared to deal with new trading relationships.



A 'Get Ready for Brexit' event was held in High Wycombe on October 17th 2019 in partnership with local and national government and local businesses. The focus of the event was to ensure that local businesses:

- ✓ Understood what was changing for them
- ✓ Received advice on the practical steps and actions to take
- ✓ Found out more about funding, resources and support available to help them get ready for Brexit and focus on their business resilience



83% of businesses

in attendance felt more prepared for Brexit after attending the event.



8 | Buckinghamshire Business Awards

The Business Awards in October 2019 was a glittering affair that proved that nobody does business like Buckinghamshire. Each winner and finalist embodies the spirit of entrepreneurship that makes Buckinghamshire renowned for business success. This year's Master of Ceremonies was Derek Redmond, the former European and World Champion athlete.



Relive the 2019 Business Awards here:
bbf.uk.com/bba2019

Interested in sponsoring next year's awards?
 For further information contact
events@bbf.uk.com or call **01494 927158**.

The Buckinghamshire Business Awards 2019

Company of the Year

Sponsored by
 Buckinghamshire
 Business First

Winner: UFIT Drinks

Apprentice and Young Person Employer of the Year

Sponsored by
 Buckinghamshire County
 Council

**Winner: Silverson
 Machines Ltd**

Runners-up:

- ✓ De Vere Latimer Estate
- ✓ The Lion, Waddesdon

Digital Innovation Award

Sponsored by Bosch

Winner: Care & Carers Ltd

Runners-up:

- ✓ Bradbury Tracks Ltd
- ✓ The MedicAlert Foundation

Growth Business of the Year

Sponsored by Richardsons
 Chartered Accountants

Winner: UFIT Drinks

Runners-up:

- ✓ Ashridge Group
- ✓ Enterprise Waste Management

Low Carbon Workspace of the Year

Sponsored by Low Carbon
 Workspaces

Winner: Spotless Garments

Runners-up:

- ✓ CES Hire Ltd
- ✓ Point of Difference Workspaces Ltd

Small Business of the Year

Sponsored by
 Buckinghamshire Local
 Enterprise Partnership

**Winner: The Original
 Biltong Company**

Runners-up:

- ✓ Millstream Estate Services
- ✓ UFIT Drinks

Best in Wycombe District

Sponsored by Wycombe
 District Council

Winner: UFIT Drinks

Runners-up:

- ✓ Seymour Taylor
- ✓ Zenopa Ltd

Best in Chiltern & South Bucks Districts

Sponsored by Chiltern &
 South Bucks District Councils

**Winner: Ashridge Home
 Care Ltd**

Runners-up:

- ✓ Melford Technologies
- ✓ Walk This Way Podiatry

Corporate Social Responsibility Award

Sponsored by
 Chandler Garvey

**Winner: Michael Anthony
 Estate Agents**

Runners-up:

- ✓ Ashridge Home Care Ltd
- ✓ Seymour Taylor

Excellence in Customer Service Award

Sponsored by Mix96

**Winner: Spotless
 Garments**

Runners-up:

- ✓ Fitlife Health Club
- ✓ Lane End Conference Centre

International Trade and Export Award

Sponsored by Heathrow

**Winner: Melford
 Technologies**

Runner-up:

- ✓ Glo-Ed

New Business of the Year

Sponsored by Bucks New
 University

**Winner: PragmatiQ
 Solutions**

Runners-up:

- ✓ Corzo & Wood
- ✓ The Fab Lab

Best in Aylesbury Vale District

Sponsored by Aylesbury
 Vale District Council

Winner: Ashridge Group Ltd

Runners-up:

- ✓ Aylesbury Granulation Services Ltd
- ✓ Graphite Additive Manufacturing Ltd

9 | Launch of NetZero

The #NetZeroBucks campaign was officially launched at our AGM on November 28th 2019 in the presence of Buckinghamshire businesses and pioneering environmentalists.



To effect change, it's useful to have inspiring stories to show the way. The Growth Hub brought together a panel of incredible businesses to speak about sustainability and carbon reduction.

We heard from:

- ✓ Will King - whose Beaconsfield-based King of Shaves are leading the way in developing refillable grooming products
- ✓ Benjamin Jones of Terracycle - a global platform that enables consumer product companies and retailers to shift from a disposable supply chain to a sustainable one
- ✓ Alex Cullen of BLA London - based in Chesham who help businesses understand new consumer expectations around sustainability and how to get their messaging across
- ✓ Daniel Cope of the Low Carbon Workspaces project, delivered by Ngage Solutions which delivers grants to businesses to help pay for efficiency projects



After the speakers had inspired the crowd, members of the audience took their chance to ask questions and share their own experiences. This showed a willing appetite among the business community to develop the Net Zero theme into a tangible and lasting legacy.

Watch the video from the
#NetZeroBucks launch here:
netzerobucks.org



#NetZeroBucks was also the focus of the December Business Leaders' Dinner held at Missenden Abbey, where local environmental consultant, Phil Clark of Consciam focused on the 'Business Case for Sustainability'.

Businesses have been reducing their energy consumption and bills thanks to Low Carbon Workspaces's continued support and resource efficiency solutions.

Match-funded grants help businesses implement a wide range of sustainability projects, including electric vehicles, water efficiency and waste reduction measures, lighting, building fabric improvements, equipment, and heating and cooling upgrades.

“ Everything was amazing including easy forms, great staff who were always helpful and fantastic cause!

Feedback from grant beneficiary



2,285

total annual carbon emissions savings of 2,285 tCO₂e, equivalent to the annual energy used in 248 homes

£1.275m

delivered in grants

20+

full time jobs created or safeguarded

64%

of businesses reported their awareness and understanding of energy efficiency, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change had increased due to Low Carbon Workspaces

42%

of businesses would not have invested in a project without Low Carbon Workspaces

In 2019/20 LCW saved:



1735.244 tonnes CO₂e



5.6 tonnes of Nitrogen Oxides



0.163 tonnes Particulates ≤10µm diameter

(These figures are based on carbon savings verified by LCW in the 2019/2020 year)

92%

of businesses felt the LCW grant was partially or entirely responsible for the energy and financial savings they achieved

See how Spotless Garments used a £2,500 LCW grant here:
bit.ly/LCW-spotless-garments

See how CES Hire used a £2,500 LCW grant here: **bit.ly/LCW-CES-Hire**

Delivered by:



In partnership with:



Funded by:



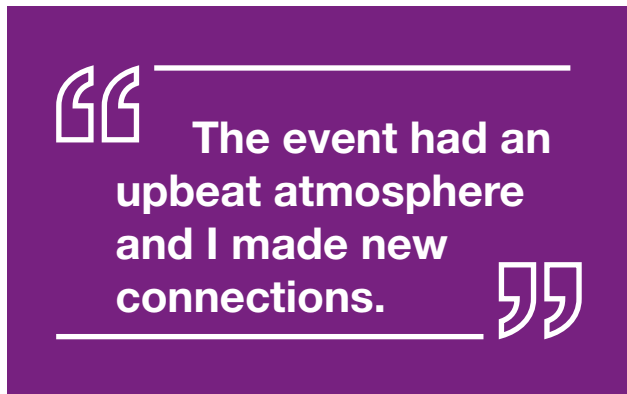
European Union
European Regional Development Fund

Businesses can check their eligibility for a grant and receive a free guide to energy efficiency at **www.lowcarbonworkspaces.co.uk**

Call the team: **01494 927131** or email: **info@lowcarbonworkspaces.co.uk**

11

A Celebration of Business in the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain



12 | Bucks Business Festival

The Buckinghamshire Business Festival 2020 was held between the 2nd & 13th March, and was a great celebration of business in the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain. Designed to boost knowledge, encourage collaborations, share opportunities and highlight innovation. The Buckinghamshire Business Festival helped businesses make new connections and gave them fresh ideas to grow their business.



As well as the showpiece Buckinghamshire Business Expo on 6th March, just over 30 events took place during the festival fortnight hosted by Buckinghamshire Business First, our partners and our members with over 500 participants involved.

Buckinghamshire Business Expo 6th March 2020

This year's expo attracted over double the footfall of last year's inaugural event with over 500 visitors and exhibitors in attendance.

#NetZeroBucks

The #NetZeroBucks zone at the Expo was sponsored by Aylesbury Vale District Council. Showcasing businesses that offered green tech and solutions to help businesses to reduce their carbon emissions.

To ensure we delivered a #NetZero event, we reduced the amount of printing by creating an Expo App. Rather than offering plastic and paper cups, we provided re-usable thermal mugs and encouraged car sharing.



Visitor & Exhibitor Feedback

- ✓ 90% were satisfied with their experience
- ✓ 90% would attend again next year
- ✓ 70% are planning to take action to reduce their carbon emissions as a result of their visit to the #NetZeroBucks zone



This was Grumbling Gorillas's first expo and we were very pleased. We had a great stand, plenty of people, we also got a number of warm leads to follow up on and other business contacts.



Jakki 2ky was there to sell our services and products but we were really pleased to meet a number of businesses that we can either use ourselves or recommend to other companies.



View videos and photos from the day:
bbf.uk.com/event/buckinghamshire-business-expo-2020



The Growth Programme, consisting of Growth Advice and Growth Grants, delivers bespoke one-to-one business advice, workshops, and grants to Buckinghamshire-based small and medium-sized businesses with growth potential.



Impacts 2019/20

- ✓ 38 businesses supported with advice equivalent to over £45,000 of value
- ✓ 48 new jobs to be created
- ✓ 23 new products/ services supported

“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.”

Klaus Allion, ANT Telecom



Impacts 2019/20

- ✓ £77,700 grant funding awarded to 36 businesses
- ✓ 83 new jobs to be created
- ✓ 50 new products/ services supported



“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.”

James Hakesley, Cube Video



Funded by



HM Government

Delivered by



YOUR LOCAL
GROWTH HUB

The Leader programme supports growth, creates jobs and increases productivity within the rural economy. The programme is funded through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

OVER £5 MILLION IN GRANTS AWARDED OVER THE LIFETIME OF THE PROGRAMME

74 BUSINESSES BENEFITED FROM A LEADER GRANT



Micro-business Chiltern Wool is opening the market for local sheep farmers from its carbon-neutral, solar-panelled cabin near Ashridge Forest in the Chilterns. Chiltern Wool was set up by Rachel Astor, a textile and art teacher, with the help of a LEADER programme grant.

As a result of the LEADER programme grant, Chiltern Wool has been able to purchase a 5-gauge knitting machine, high-tech pressing equipment and a commercial washing machine. This has allowed Rachel to reach out to local farmers to collect their wool. Chiltern Wool works by taking care of the whole 'farm to garment' process, providing the farms a choice of designs to create bespoke woollen garments to sell at local craft shows, online or at farm shops.

This innovative opportunity for farmers to diversify into knitwear using a by-product is not only boosting local economies, but also a step in the right direction for sustainable clothing and zero-waste fashion.

The whole process involves collecting fleeces, washing, spinning, designing, knitting and finishing. Rachel also extends this offer to designers or clients who would like small batches of sustainable knitwear.

Fast fashion is the second biggest contributor to world pollution (the first being oil), with the proportion of synthetic fibres in clothing doubling since 2000. Wool is known as a high-performance material, it is rapidly renewable, biodegradable (decomposing in a year), and recyclable. It is also highly durable, hypoallergenic, inherently flame resistant and can help regulate body temperature. Chiltern Wool prides itself on all its wool being sourced locally and keeping local produce local, and because of this, all its wool has low environmental impact.

Within the ever-growing fast fashion industry, Rachel is transforming opportunities for farms to diversify into sustainable fashion. You can find Rachel and her wool products at: www.chilternwool.co.uk.

Delivered by:



Funded by:



The MD Ngage programme delivers peer-to-peer networking and support for business leaders with growth ambitions. Leaders meet in closed confidential groups throughout the year to take time out from the day-to-day running of their businesses to explore new ideas, tackle challenging issues and grow as leaders, all in support of each other.

MD Ngage groups have been supportive of each other throughout the COVID-19 crisis with participants reaping the rewards of being part of a peer group. Members looked to MD Ngage as a resource through the initial shock of the pandemic and shared practical advice and experiences on things like furloughing, redundancies, and loan applications.

“MD Ngage has massively helped me develop myself and my company, as every session inspired new ideas.”

“Being a business owner can be quite lonely and this group offers a place to share ideas, discuss challenges and know that you’re not alone and that many other companies suffer the same issues.”

“The MD Ngage programme has helped enormously to fill the gap in my business life. It is very hard running your own business without people to bounce ideas off, and MD Ngage means I have 11 other people to do that with.”



86%

of participants have made changes in their business as a direct result of the MD Ngage programme



79%

reported increased productivity



36%

reported increased turnover



93%

agree that MD Ngage gave them an idea for action



93%

agree that MD Ngage helped them decide what action to take



86%

agree that MD Ngage helped them understand how to act



57%

reported increased profitability

Don't just take our word for it - watch this video:
bit.ly/MDNgage-insights

Interested in joining MD Ngage?
Email mdngage@bbf.uk.com

Be Your Own Boss is the start-up business support service that helps people turn their business dreams into a reality through support including mentoring, training courses and skills workshops.

Participants in the first round of Be Your Own Boss had the following to say about the programme:



“ I just wanted to say thank you so much for recommending attending the Be Your Own Boss Enterprise Day. I found the course content extremely helpful and I fully intend to put what I have learnt in to practice. Thank you for your support. I now feel confident in moving forward knowing that I have experts in the field to go to when I have a wobble. ”

Louise Mitchell, Calibre Quality Care

“ The Be Your Own Boss two-day course is a real eye opener on all the practicalities of setting up your own business. It is both informative and interactive, with plenty of time to ask questions and meet likeminded people. All in all, a great two days spent for anyone considering setting up their own business. ”

Hari Sharma



134

Start Up members registered with Be Your Own Boss



64

Aspiring business owners joined a Be Your Own Boss Enterprise Day



40

of these went on to attend a 2-day Start-Up course



5

pre-starts met with a 'Start Up Champion' for a Business Review



15

new businesses registered as a result of the programme



A partnership between:





Visit Buckinghamshire and The Chilterns is the Destination Management Organisation for Buckinghamshire and The Chilterns, hosted by Buckinghamshire Business First and supported by the Buckinghamshire Strategic Tourism Group.

New Partnership

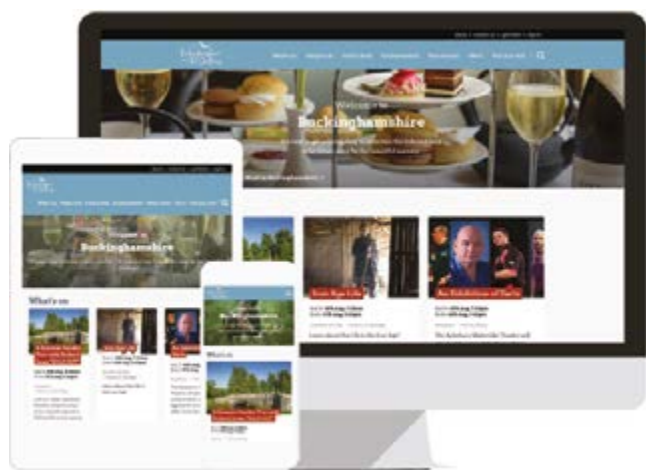
A new partnership launched in 2019/20 between Buckinghamshire Business First, Visit Buckinghamshire and Be the Business to support the Tourism & Hospitality sector, with a series of Masterclasses. In March, two new peer-to-peer Mastermind groups of twelve Tourism and Hospitality businesses, signed up to a 6-month programme of support, self development, collaboration and business improvement.

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE'S TOURISM SECTOR
PROVIDES 22,100 JOBS
IN THE COUNTY**

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HAS IN THE
REGION OF 2,600
TOURISM-RELATED BUSINESSES**

**THERE WERE 317,000
VISITS TO BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
IN 2018, UP FROM 306,000 IN 2017**

**VISITORS TO BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
SPENT £156M IN 2018
UP FROM £115M IN 2017**



Visit Bucks receives an average of over
12,000 website visitors per month
and **27,552-page views**



4.8K
fans



5.3k
followers



3.3k
followers

visitbuckinghamshire.org



Watch the Visit Buckinghamshire & The Chilterns video here:
bit.ly/welcome-visit-bucks

Download the itineraries here:
visitbuckinghamshire.org/plan-your-visit/itineraries-bucks

Discover all that Visit Buckinghamshire & The Chilterns has to offer:
See **visitbuckinghamshire.org** or contact the team on **01494 927151**.



The Buckinghamshire Skills Hub promotes and optimises links between the business community, education and training providers. Enabling young people and adults to develop the skills and qualifications they need to progress in the workplace, at whatever stage of their career they are in. Skills development is central to creating the conditions for sustained innovation, excellence and growth for our Buckinghamshire businesses, particularly in priority sectors as described in our Local Industrial Strategy. We co-ordinate a number of programmes including an Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hub working with schools, the annual Bucks Skills Show, sector focused employer and stakeholder groups, apprenticeship support for businesses and a Skills Advisory Panel for Buckinghamshire.



Bucks Skills Show

An experiential careers showcase event where employers demonstrate their businesses and their careers within them. Aimed at young people aged 11-19 enabling them to explore and experience different types of jobs, and gain information and guidance on progression routes. It was attended by over 4,000 students and over 120 exhibitors. In addition to the exhibition space, there was a space for guest speakers from a range of different careers to inspire and inform young people.

See the round-up of the
Bucks Skills Show here:
bbf.uk.com/SkillsShow2019



Careers Hub Pilot scheme

The Bucks Skills Hub was one of the national pilot areas formed in 2018, aimed at creating a group of schools working together to deliver the Gatsby Benchmarks and improve careers outcomes for young people. Working through a partnership approach with schools, colleges and employers Careers Hubs have accelerated levels of support and improvement in career development. As a result of the measurable and sustainable impact made, the Bucks Careers Hub has now been extended to include all mainstream secondary schools in Buckinghamshire in a new wave of expansion.

Find out more here:
bbf.uk.com/Careers-hub

Find out more about Buckinghamshire Skills Hub at bucksskillshub.org

Supported by:

Buckinghamshire
LOCAL ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP
THE ENTREPRENEURIAL HEART OF BRITAIN



THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY



Early action was taken to support businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The business support team was mobilised to focus on COVID-19 support and recruited 12 new staff members, including 4 seconded from the economic development team in Buckinghamshire Council.

A support hub was created with a COVID-19 advice page bbf.uk.com/COVID-19, centralised resources, weekly COVID-19 Q&A Twitter, webinars, surveys and offers. Partnerships mobilised with local media for the launch of a dedicated 'We're here to help' campaign.

The team also collaborated with Buckinghamshire Council and Buckinghamshire LEP to ensure efficient messaging. Case studies and examples of local support and excellence were developed and shared with the business community.



COVID-19 Business Support



35,438 hits to the COVID-19 web page



1,254 social media posts
5,994 engagements



57 email communications sent
291,472 emails opened



109 recovery fund grant enquiries-**608** full applications



28,289 business assists



261 offers of support / assistance



444 survey responses



430 discretionary fund grant enquiries leading to **276** full applications



137 webinars hosted
400 online attendees



COVID-19 reflections

Key Issues



Cashflow



Future uncertainty – scale of lockdown / future local lockdowns



Lack of previous investment in agile working, skills deficits



Lack of Online Product / digital accessibility



Disruption of distribution channels

Key Recovery priorities



Digital connectivity & adoption and implementation of technology.
Cyber security



Workforce planning / mental health and wellbeing & reskilling needs assessments



New product development



Use of data to drive value in business



Workplace planning / accommodation strategies

Buckinghamshire Business First receives funding for its day-to-day activities from Buckinghamshire Council, the Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership, project funders, and members. The Financial Statements for the year, ending 31st March 2020, have been submitted for external audit scrutiny and are summarised below. Full, signed accounts will be submitted to Companies House and are also available on the Buckinghamshire Business First website.

Income	
Buckinghamshire Council Contract Funding	£400,000
Project Funding	£810,536
Growth Hub Core Contract Funding	£287,000
Other Income	£12,971
Membership Income	£171,729
Event Income	£26,092
Interest Received	£13
Total Income	£1,708,341

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2020	
Fixed Assets	£46,206
Current Assets	£1,021,195
Creditors	£901,117
Total Assets Less Liabilities	£166,284

Expenditure	
Direct Costs	£1,423,632
Overheads	£271,650
Finance Cost - Bank Charges	£977
Tax	£2
Total Expenditure	£1,696,261
Excess of income over expenditure	£12,080
Transferred to Reserves	

Funded by	
Retained Reserves b/fwd 1 April 2019	£154,204
Excess of Income over expenditure	£12,080
Retained Reserves as at 31st March 2020	£166,284



**3RD HIGHEST
EMPLOYMENT RATE
OUT OF 38 LEPS**



**12% OF BUSINESSES
OPERATE IN THE INFORMATION
AND COMMUNICATION SECTOR,
COMPARED TO 9% NATIONALLY**

**£17 BILLION
ECONOMY**



**2ND HIGHEST
BUSINESS SURVIVAL RATES
(3 YEARS AFTER STARTING UP)
OF 38 LEP AREAS**

**HOME TO 430
FOREIGN OWNED FIRMS**



**HOME TO THE BRITISH
GRAND PRIX**



**BIRTHPLACE OF THE
PARALYMPICS**

**4TH HIGHEST PRODUCTIVITY
OUT OF 38 LEPS**



**POPULATION PROJECTED
TO RISE 4.5%
UP 24,300 BY 2030**



**HIGHEST PROPORTION OF
VERY SMALL COMPANIES
IN BRITAIN, WITH 77%
EMPLOYING FEWER THAN 5**

**PREVALENCE OF HIGH GROWTH FIRMS
IS 12% HIGHER THAN
THE NATIONAL AVERAGE**



**HOME TO STAR WARS
AND PINEWOOD STUDIOS**



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE'S SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT
IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IS
MORE THAN TWICE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE
AND THE 3RD HIGHEST OF ALL 38 LEPS.**



**BUCKS HAS A CULTURAL HEART
WITH 460 CULTURAL BUSINESSES
(INCLUDING ARTISTIC CREATION,
MUSEUMS, HISTORICAL SITES)**



22 | Accreditations

Buckinghamshire Business First has a track record of dedicated support for our employees, the business community, the environment, our suppliers, and charity and community groups. To give reassurance to our members, partners and funders that we are a safe pair of hands in the delivery of projects and business support activity. We are dedicated to achieving a fair, healthy, and prosperous future for our employees and society as a whole.



Living Wage Employer

Buckinghamshire Business First is an accredited Living Wage Employer, meaning every member of staff earns a real Living Wage as a minimum. The real Living Wage is higher than the government's minimum, or National Living Wage, and is an independently calculated hourly rate of pay that is based on the actual cost of living. It is calculated each year and is announced by the Living Wage Foundation as part of Living Wage Week. It is currently £9.30 in the UK. livingwage.org.uk.



Prompt Payment Code

We are signed up to the Prompt Payment Code, showing a commitment to paying our suppliers promptly and encouraging other organisations to do likewise. smallbusinesscommissioner.gov.uk/ppc



Cyber Essentials

We have achieved Cyber Essentials accreditation, demonstrating to suppliers, members and employees alike that we can be trusted with their data and have robust cyber security practices in place. cyberessentials.org/background.



Corporate Social Responsibility Awards

We have been awarded both a Gold UK CSR Excellence Award and a Gold International CSR Excellence Award. These awards recognise our efforts towards having a positive impact on society as a whole, including providing mental health support to staff, having a diversity policy that we abide by, and reducing our carbon emissions. We have created a #NetZeroBucks campaign to encourage businesses to reduce their emissions and pursue a healthier future for all.



Armed Forces Covenant

As signatories of the Armed Forces Covenant, we are committed to treating those who serve or have served in the armed forces, and their families, fairly. We also aim to encourage other businesses to support these individuals.



Heart of Bucks Community Investor

Membership of the Heart of Bucks Community Investor scheme recognises our commitment to and support of local charities and communities within Buckinghamshire. heartofbucks.org/community-investors.



bbf.uk.com



@bbfuk



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Facebook**



**Join our network
on LinkedIn**



info@bbf.uk.com



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