



# SHREWSBURY BUSINESS CHAMBER

ISSUE 3 2024

**FIND OUT ABOUT UPCOMING  
NETWORKING EVENTS**

**MAKE YOUR BUSINESS CLIMATE-  
FIT FOR THE FUTURE**

**MEET SBC'S NEWEST MEMBERS**

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# CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



## KEVIN LOCKWOOD

Manager of Shrewsbury Shopping Centres

**Welcome to the latest edition of the SBC Magazine. I can't believe how quickly this year is going and it doesn't feel as if we have had any prolonged spells of sunny weather during this Summer period! Christmas is just around the corner...**

So.. It's all change in central government and we have a newly elected Shrewsbury MP - Julia Buckley. We look forward to welcoming Julia to a members event on Wednesday 2nd October, however, in the meantime, our roving reporter, Louise Welsby from Buy-From managed to grab Julia for a quick Interview in August and you can read the contents of the Interview within this magazine. Alternatively, book a space for the event and ask Julia a question at the event.

Speaking of member events .... they continue to be varied and well supported. Please check out our forthcoming events on our website

<https://shrewsburybusinesschamber.com/events-calendar/events/>

I hope you enjoy the magazine and if you have any ideas, or, content for us, please get in touch.

Best wishes,

Kevin Lockwood Chairperson, Shrewsbury Business Chamber

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## NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER APPOINTED AT BERRYS



### **Leading property consultancy Berrys is pleased to announce the appointment of Stuart Thomas as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO), effective from 1st June.**

Stuart succeeds Matthew Anwyl who has served as Managing Partner and CEO for the past 16 years. Matthew will remain on the Executive Board at Berrys as well as continuing to serve his extensive client base across the region.

Stuart brings over 20 years' experience in the development industry, having previously held key leadership and management roles in both the private and public sectors. He has been an Equity Partner and Executive Board member at Berrys since 2014 as well as heading up the Planning team across the UK.

**Matthew said:** *"On behalf of the Equity Partners, I would like to congratulate Stuart on his appointment. I am proud of the growth and development of the business over the last 16 years, having guided it through significant periods of change. I look forward to Berrys continuing to go from strength to strength under Stuart's leadership."*

**Stuart added:** *"I am delighted and proud to be taking on this role at an exciting time for the business. I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to Matthew and I hope to build on the success he has delivered for the business."*

*"Our talented, professional and dedicated team is our greatest asset and I look forward to us working together, alongside our valued clients and external partners, to deliver a bold and ambitious business plan over the next five years."*

To find out more about Berrys, its services and people, please visit the website [www.berrys.uk.com](http://www.berrys.uk.com) or contact Stuart Thomas on 01743 267069.

# ENERGISE CHIROPRACTIC: REVITALISING HEALTH IN SHREWSBURY

**Nestled in the heart of Shrewsbury, Energise Chiropractic Shrewsbury (ECS) is a haven for those seeking relief from aches, pains, and stiffness.**

Established in February 2021 by the dynamic couple, Laura and Matt Beaumont-Perry, ECS has quickly become a cornerstone of the local health community.

*"Here at ECS, we help people regain control of their body, health, and lives,"* shares Matt, co-founder and practice manager. The clinic focuses on chiropractic care, aimed at enhancing overall well-being and vitality. Laura, after working as an associate chiropractor for over four years, brought her passion and expertise to their own practice, while Matt transitioned from a sales executive role to manage the practice, allowing Laura to focus solely on patient care.

## Personalised Chiropractic Care

Energise Chiropractic prides itself on offering personalised chiropractic care tailored to each individual's needs. The journey begins with a comprehensive consultation where Laura conducts a thorough examination to determine the root cause of any issues and assess the suitability and safety of chiropractic care for the patient.

*"We also offer a free Introduction workshop,"* Matt explains. *"It's an opportunity for people to learn more about what we do and how chiropractic care can change their lives."* These workshops are a unique feature of ECS, providing potential patients with a platform to ask questions and understand the benefits of chiropractic care before committing to a treatment plan.

## The Brain-Body Connection

A key philosophy at ECS is the importance of the brain-body connection. Laura elaborates, *"Many people are often disconnected from their body. The more disconnected you are, the harder it is for your body to function well."* Chiropractic care at ECS aims to restore this connection by removing spinal interference, allowing the nervous system to function optimally.

*"Think of it like patchy wifi or 4G/5G signal on your mobile phone,"* Laura analogises. *"Not ideal for good function."* By ensuring that the signals between the brain and body are clear and uninterrupted, chiropractic care helps the brain make better decisions about how to control the body, leading to improved health and well-being.



## Community and Collaboration

Energise Chiropractic's commitment to community extends beyond their clinic. They joined the Shrewsbury Business Chamber in December 2021, encouraged by the support for small, independent businesses and the valuable connections to the Shrewsbury BID and council. *"It's great to stay informed with local issues that can impact our businesses,"* Matt notes.

Being part of the SBC community has provided numerous benefits for ECS. One notable highlight was hosting a free Introduction workshop at the Shrewsbury and Telford offices of Lanyon & Bowdler, which led to a significant number of attendees booking consultations. *"We are also in the process of reaching out to other businesses with the accessible database of members of the chamber - which has been a huge help!"* Matt adds.

## Living and Working in Shrewsbury

For Matt and Laura, Shrewsbury is not just a place to work; it's home. *"Having lived in Shrewsbury all my life, I've always found it an eclectic mix of people, giving it a vibrant community feel,"* Matt shares. The couple loves contributing to the health and happiness of their community, embodying the spirit of Shrewsbury through their work at ECS.

Energise Chiropractic continues to thrive, driven by their passion for helping people and their deep-rooted connection to Shrewsbury. Their dedication to improving the health and lives of their patients, combined with their active involvement in the local business community, makes them a cherished asset to Shrewsbury.

For more information about Energise Chiropractic and their services, visit their website at [www.energisechiro.co.uk](http://www.energisechiro.co.uk).



# Make your business climate-fit for the future



Shake on low-carbon partnerships and reduce costs



Switch into energy opportunities and increase profits



Travel low-carbon and save miles more money



Learn how to grow profitably: make the most of the “green revolution” in this one-day workshop



Be Carbon Literate in a day and learn how to take action



7 St Johns Hill, Shrewsbury  
September 25th 9.15 am  
Book at <https://bit.ly/3Jhouku>

# EPX TECHNICAL SERVICES RANKED ON THE TECH INDUSTRY'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS LIST



## EPX Technical Services ranked on Channel Futures 2024 MSP 501 - the tech Industry's most prestigious list of Managed Service Providers worldwide

Shrewsbury Business Chamber member EPX Technical Services has been named one of the world's top-performing managed service providers in the prestigious 2024 Channel Futures MSP 501 rankings.

The Channel Futures MSP 501 list, a technology industry benchmark, ranked EPX, which works with clients in Shropshire and Staffordshire, as 271st in the world - a milestone achievement for the business.

A quantitative methodology ranks companies, and MSPs that qualify for the list must also pass a rigorous review conducted by the Channel Futures research team and editors.

*"The judging is a rigorous process, and we are so pleased to have been ranked at 271, up from 284 in 2023,"* said EPX CEO Dan Ellis.

*"We achieved this thanks to the dedication of our exceptional staff team and the support of our wonderful clients - we are grateful to both for being a part of our journey!"*

This year's list is one of the most competitive in the survey's history. Winners will be honoured during a special ceremony at MSP Summit on September 16th to 19th, 2024 in Atlanta, Georgia.

Dave Raffo, MSP editor and MSP 501 project manager,

said: *"The 2024 Channel Futures MSP 501 winners survived a challenging market and emerged as the highest performing and most innovative IT providers in the industry today."*

*"The most impressive thing about the MSP 501 winners is they deliver for their customers every day. These are the most innovative, driven, and successful MSPs in a fiercely competitive industry."*

Bob DeMarzo, VP Content, Informa Channels, adds: *"These are the best of the best in the managed services industry as defined by Channel Futures' extensive research. The MSP 501 companies are the most sought after by peers who want to understand today's best practices and by technology suppliers who want to partner with these organisations."*

*"At their core, these are vendor and platform neutral partners focused on doing what is right for their customers."*

You can find out more about EPX or speak to the team here: <https://epx.uk/work-withepx-social469284>



# A CONVERSATION WITH JULIA BUCKLEY ON BUSINESS RATES, TRANSPORT, AND FUTURE GROWTH



**In a recent interview with Julia Buckley, we delved into some of the most pressing concerns facing Shrewsbury Business Chamber members. From business rates reform to rural public transport, and the electrification of rail infrastructure to climate action initiatives, the discussion highlighted the steps being taken to address these issues. Here we summarise the key takeaways from the conversation, offering insight into what businesses and residents can expect moving forward.**

## **Business Rates Reform: Levelling the Playing Field**

One of the foremost concerns raised by Shrewsbury businesses was the current system of business rates, which many feel disproportionately impacts small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) while favouring large multinational corporations. Julia Buckley acknowledged this imbalance, stating:

“We need a level playing field so that businesses are competing fairly. Small and medium enterprises, which are really the lifeblood, particularly in Shrewsbury, need supporting and lifting up.”

To address this, Julia confirmed that business rates reform is a top priority for the current government. The commitment to reform was highlighted in Labour’s manifesto and reiterated in the King’s Speech, with a pledge to overhaul the system within the first year of government. This reform will aim to remove the unfair advantages that large multinationals currently enjoy and create a more supportive environment for SMEs. This

will ensure that all businesses contribute their fair share to the economy, allowing smaller enterprises in vibrant communities like Shrewsbury to thrive.

## **Rural Public Transport: Reconnecting Shrewsbury’s Hinterlands**

Access to reliable public transport is a significant issue in Shrewsbury, particularly for those living in rural areas and for businesses that rely on workers commuting from these areas. Julia Buckley emphasised the importance of improving rural transport links, particularly in the first year of the government’s tenure:

“We will change the law to allow local councils to franchise their own bus routes, designing them around passenger needs rather than profitability. This will bring back thousands of bus routes across Shropshire that were cut by commercial operators.”

This legislative change will empower local councils to prioritise the needs of their residents, ensuring that even less profitable routes are maintained through a cross-subsidy model. This is similar to the approach taken by Andy Burnham in Manchester, where surplus income from peak periods is used to fund off-peak services. The goal is to provide reliable, frequent bus services that connect rural areas to Shrewsbury and other key destinations, unlocking opportunities for young people, workers, and businesses alike.

## **Rail Infrastructure: Electrification and Grid Capacity**

The electrification of Shrewsbury’s rail line has been a topic of much discussion, particularly considering the reallocation of HS2 funding. Julia provided an update on the government’s plans:

“Midlands Connect is confident that £500 million of HS2 money will be reallocated to Shrewsbury for the electrification of the line to Wolverhampton. However, this requires addressing a significant issue: grid capacity.”

Julia explained that the local electricity grid currently lacks the capacity to support large infrastructure projects, including rail electrification. The government has recognized this and is prioritising investment in the electric grid to ensure areas like Shropshire can benefit from these upgrades. Once the grid capacity is enhanced, Shrewsbury can look forward to faster, more reliable rail services that connect the town more effectively to the broader Midlands region.

Continued...

## **Climate Action: Supporting Businesses in the Green Transition**

Climate action is a topic of growing importance for businesses in Shrewsbury, with many eager to contribute to net-zero targets but unsure where to start. Julia spoke passionately about the opportunities presented by GB Energy, a government initiative aimed at fostering growth in the green sector:

“GB Energy will provide investment and access to finance for businesses to grow in the green energy sector. This includes grants for retrofitting buildings, and training programs to close the current skills gap in areas like renewable energy.”

Julia also mentioned the importance of carbon literacy training, which has already been undertaken by many councillors in Shropshire. The training emphasises practical changes that can be made at both personal and organisational levels to reduce carbon footprints. The government’s approach is to frame the green agenda as a massive growth opportunity, rather than a set of constraints. This perspective encourages businesses to see sustainability to increase productivity, lower running costs, and create new revenue streams.

## **Planning and Conservation: Striking a Balance in Shrewsbury’s Heritage**

Shrewsbury’s rich architectural heritage is both a blessing and a challenge, particularly when it comes to planning and conservation. Many business owners feel that current planning regulations are too rigid, discouraging the maintenance and modernisation of older buildings. Julia acknowledged this concern:

“There is a balance to be struck between protecting our beautiful streetscapes and allowing for necessary modernisation and expansion.”

To address these issues, the government plans to reform the national planning framework, simplifying the process and providing local councils with additional resources. This includes hiring more planning officers to speed up the process and ensure that businesses can move forward with their projects without unnecessary delays. Additionally, the government is committed to supporting the retrofitting of older buildings, ensuring they meet modern standards while preserving their historical value.

## **North West Relief Road: A Pragmatic Approach to Reducing Congestion**

The North West Relief Road has been a contentious issue in Shrewsbury for decades, with strong opinions on both sides. Julia offered a balanced perspective, acknowledging the challenges while proposing alternative solutions:

“Whether or not the North West Relief Road is built,

we must address the immediate issues of congestion, particularly at Battlefield and other key points.”

Given the rising costs of the relief road, which now far exceed the original estimates, Julia suggested reallocating the existing funds to more immediate infrastructure improvements, such as widening the roundabouts at Battlefield and Sundorne. These changes would provide immediate relief from congestion and support business growth by improving access to the town’s enterprise parks.

## **Conclusion: A Future of Growth and Opportunity**

The interview with Dr Julia Buckley offered a comprehensive overview of the challenges facing Shrewsbury and the proactive steps being taken to address them. From business rates reform to transport improvements and climate action, the government’s first-year agenda is packed with initiatives aimed at supporting the local economy and enhancing the quality of life for residents.

As these plans unfold, the Shrewsbury Business Chamber will continue to play a crucial role in advocating for the needs of its members and ensuring that Shrewsbury remains a vibrant and thriving community.

You can listen to the full interview via the link below:  
<https://shrewsburybusinesschamber.com/a-conversation-with-julia-buckley-on-business-rates-transport-and-future-growth/>

For businesses looking to engage further with these initiatives or discuss their specific concerns, Julia Buckley is available for one-on-one meetings. She can be contacted directly via email at [julia.buckley.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:julia.buckley.mp@parliament.uk).

If you’re a business owner or resident in Shrewsbury, now is the time to get involved in shaping the future of our town. Stay informed, share your concerns, and take advantage of the opportunities being presented to ensure that Shrewsbury continues to grow and prosper.

# SHREWSBURY ENTREPRENEUR STEPPED INTO NEW REALMS TO WRITE A BOOK.



## Shrewsbury Entrepreneur Helen Pugh whose business is FlexAssist has recently stepped into new realms to write a book.

"A Tiny Flower, Lent Not Given " Through evocative prose and deeply personal storytelling, the book captures the delicate balance between grief and hope, sorrow and solace.

At the tender age of 20, Helen lost her son Matthew, who was just two days old. Now 34 years on, Helen felt she wanted to share her story and support other parents on their journey of baby loss, with a book she has written "A Tiny Flower, Lent Not Given".

The book is structured into three sections. There is valuable information for parents navigating this journey. Helen shares a deeply personal narrative of Matthew's story offering readers a heartfelt connection. Finally there are pages for reflection, serving as a memory keepsake for parents to honor and remember their baby and their journey.

Helen has also curated a care package to go with this book. Presented in a box which parents can keep as a memory box, it holds items designed to bring comfort and solace during such a difficult time.

## GREEN FINGERED VOLUNTEERS RECEIVE SUPPORT



### **A Shropshire insurance broker is once again backing a local organisation that works hard to maintain one of the county's finest parks.**

Henshalls, which has its head office in Newport, is supporting the Friends of Telford Town Park by paying for their annual public liability insurance for the next 12 months.

Managing director Mark Freeman said it was the sixth year in a row that the company had offered to cover the cost of the vital insurance policy that was crucial for a location that is so popular with the public.

*"Our aim as a local company is to support causes and organisations that make a real difference in the community, and the volunteers from the Friends of Telford Town Park are a perfect example of the groups we work with."*

*"Their efforts are incredible in the work they put in to maintain such a valuable green area in the heart of Telford."*

*"They deserve all the help we can offer to allow them to continue operating safely and legally, and that's why we decided to cover the cost of their policy so they can have total peace of mind."*

FOTTP chairman Adrian Smith has only taken over the reins this year, and said the support from Henshalls was very much appreciated.

*"Support from local companies like Henshalls is the*

*key to ensuring our programme of maintenance can be carried out regularly and efficiently.*

*"Thanks to Henshalls covering our policy costs, we don't have to worry about keeping the cover up-to-date or whether we'll have to dig deep to find extra finances to pay for it ourselves."*

*"In a time when everyone is dealing with a difficult economy, it's reassuring to know that we won't need to raise even more cash to cover our insurance liabilities."*

FOTTP began in 2003 as a group of three people who all felt that the park needed some extra care and attention. The group was formally constituted in 2004, and currently consists of over 20 members from all walks of life.

The volunteers are involved in many different activities throughout the park's 400 acres including gardening, hedge laying, scrub clearing, promotional events, installing bat and bird boxes, and other general environmental maintenance work.

The FOTTP assist with the upkeep of the award-winning park with a team of volunteers looking after the Chelsea and Maxell Gardens and beyond. Around 700,000 people visit the park every year and it is thought to be one of the largest urban town parks in Europe.

Henshalls is part of Brown and Brown Inc, the fifth largest insurance broker in the world.

*Pictured: from left, Lucy Sutton from Henshalls with Kevin Smith and Chris Pettman*

# WHAT DOES THE KING'S SPEECH TELL US ABOUT LABOUR'S PLANS FOR EMPLOYMENT LAW?

## The King's Speech confirmed that Labour intends to implement an Employment Rights Bill, following through on their manifesto promise to "make work pay".

The government has confirmed that this legislation will be brought before parliament during the first 100 days - which means we can expect it before the end of October.

### What can we expect to be included in the Employment Rights Bill?

The government has confirmed that the Bill will include the following commitments:

- Banning exploitative zero-hour contracts, meaning workers will have a right to a contract that reflects the number of hours they regularly work. Workers will also be entitled to reasonable notice of any changes in shifts, with proportionate compensation for any shifts cancelled or curtailed.
- Making parental leave, sick pay and protection from unfair dismissal available from day one for all workers though they have confirmed that employers can still operate probationary periods to assess new hires.
- Strengthening of statutory sick pay (SSP), removing the lower earnings limit to make it available to all workers, as well as removing the three-day waiting period
- Make flexible working the default from day one for all workers, with employers expected to accommodate this as far as is reasonable
- Strengthened protections for new mothers, making it unlawful to dismiss a woman who has had a baby for six months after her return to work (this excludes specific circumstances).
- Establishing a new single enforcement body, to be known as the Fair Work Agency, which will be tasked with strengthening the enforcement of workplace rights.
- Updates to trade union legislation, removing

restrictions applied by the previous government and simplifying the process of statutory recognition

- Ending 'Fire and Rehire' and 'Fire and Replace' practices through legislative reform.

### What does this mean for your business?

You need to get prepared and begin futureproofing your business. And you need to do it now.

Contracts, policies and handbooks will all need to be rewritten to reflect the changes that are coming, particularly to take into account the changes to day one rights.

If you need to carry out any organisational changes or restructuring, you need to prioritise this.

Your processes need to be audited to ensure they are fit for purpose. Most importantly, are your probationary processes clear and being implemented effectively? This becomes even more important with protection from unfair dismissal becoming a day one right.

All of this is likely to be time consuming and costly, particularly if you don't get it right.

Get in touch today at [shropshire@hrdept.co.uk](mailto:shropshire@hrdept.co.uk) and we can help you implement the change effectively.



Someone raises a health issue

You have a concern

Your business is changing

An employee raises a complaint

You need help recruiting

You are looking for development & training

You simply need some reassurance

**Call us if...**

Contact Ms Niamh Kelly  
Call **01743 290 474**  
Visit [www.hrdept.co.uk](http://www.hrdept.co.uk)

Preventing People Problems

[Niamh.Kelly@hrdept.co.uk](mailto:Niamh.Kelly@hrdept.co.uk)

**The Work in Shrewsbury (WISH) campaign is a movement to put Shrewsbury on the map as one of Britain's most desirable locations to live, work and invest.**

**To help evolve and grow business in Shrewsbury, we've worked with programme planner Liza Freudmann to put together a programme of inspiring talks from business leaders.**

## **Evolving Business Culture - September 12**

We are excited to welcome to this event Cally Beaton, speaking about Entrepreneurial Thinking, and local entrepreneur Vivek Bhatia who will share the Dough & Oil story and entrepreneurial opportunities and challenges.



## **Evolving Business Innovation - October 9**

Whether you're thinking about ways to transform your business for future success, or keen to learn more about the future of town centres, come and join us! Our expert speakers for October are Wizz Selvey, who will share her insight on retail trends and transforming town centres, and David Milton, who'll talk about Innovation in business.



## **Evolving Business Purpose - November 12**

As we become increasingly aware of our impact on the world and people around us, many businesses are rethinking why and how they operate. This event looks at why business purpose is important, what it means to you, and how and why businesses with purpose are thriving.  
Brilliant speakers TBC.



To get your tickets please follow the link below.

<https://workinshrewsbury.co.uk/the-wish-evolving-business-series>

# WHY EVERY BUSINESS NEEDS PROFESSIONAL BRAND PHOTOGRAPHS



**I recently had the pleasure of revisiting Chris, the founder of Shrewbury-based business Ecommerce Intelligence, for a brand photography session. Having photographed his team in the past, Chris invited me back for a three-hour session to refresh their team headshots and capture some images in the natural light of their new office.**

Priced at £550, this session was a strategic step towards evolving their brand's visual identity, demonstrating the undeniable impact of professional photography on business growth.

Chris's vision for this shoot was clear: fresh, lively headshots for all team members and some candid, natural photos to reflect the openness of their new workspace. The difference from their previous, more confined space was night and day—literally! The natural light brought out the best in everyone.

A key challenge was ensuring that every team member was happy with their photos. So this time around, I opted for a more collaborative approach. We captured a diverse array of shots and, instead of selecting my personal favourites for editing, I shared all the raw images with the team. This allowed each member to choose their favourites for me to edit, ensuring everyone was represented as their authentic selves.

For the backdrop, Chris chose a colour that not only stood out but also worked well with his brand's logo. This thoughtful selection underscored the photos' role

as powerful branding tools that reinforce Ecommerce Intelligence's visual identity.

Professional photography is essential for business owners, and here's why: genuine, high-quality images significantly boost consumer trust and engagement. Did you know people only remember 10% of information three days after reading it? Incorporate photos and their recollection increases by 65%. This enhancement in brand recall and connection is invaluable.

If you're a business owner deciding whether to go for professional photography, here are a few pointers:

- 1. Consistency Is Key:** Opt for colours and themes that match your brand's identity to maintain a unified look across all channels.
- 2. Detailed Planning:** Clearly define the purpose of each photo—be it for your website, social media, or corporate portraits.
- 3. Involve Your Team:** Engaging your team in the photo selection process boosts morale and ensures the final images genuinely reflect those who make your business shine.

For small business owners aiming to amplify their presence in their market, professional brand photography is not just beneficial; it's crucial. It builds trust, creating a tangible connection with clients and leaving a lasting impression on people.

Ready to transform your business with professional photography?

Check out my packages here: [www.lauramayphotography.co.uk/branding-photography](http://www.lauramayphotography.co.uk/branding-photography)

# SHROPSHIRE OKTOBERFEST: TICKETS LIVE



## Shropshire's biggest beer festival returns to the Quarry on October 4th and 5th. Shropshire Oktoberfest hosts local brewers, drinks producers, and street food trucks from the region, against a backdrop of live music and lederhosen.

The award-winning events team behind the event, Shropshire Festivals, are expecting Saturday's main tent and VIP area to sell out again.

Shropshire Festivals' Director of Fun, Beth Heath, said she loves championing local food and drink producers, particularly the brewers who have supported the event since it began in 2017. She said, "There's no doubt about it, Shropshire Oktoberfest is a lot of fun. Our drinks tent is filled with local brewers, cider makers, distillers, winemakers and producers who proudly serve their tipples direct to the customers. It's not the usual mainstream rubbish you so often get served at festivals.

"We'll fill your bellies with incredible street food from vendors such as Wild Street Kitchen and Señor Tigre, then you can dance your socks off in front of the live music stage or choose your own music in the silent disco."

CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) will be running the Hoppportunity Bar with their top picks and unusual choices, which usually include vegan and gluten free options.

Friday's music lineup features Unit 47, The Founders, Supersonic - The Sound of Oasis, Lucas D & the Groove Ghebo, and Fee Fee & The Sentiments. On Saturday the stage will host Two Blank Pages, Something 4 the Weekend, Custard & Gunpowder, The Dirty Rockin Scoundrels, Thomas Atlas, Hot Rox, The Vertigo Band and some Oompah.

Festival goers can pick their own music in the silent disco tent and have 5 minutes of fame at Volvo Shrewsbury's Carpool Karaoke.

The comedy tent will be open on Saturday, October 5th. Back by popular demand, Daliso Chaponda returns to the comedy lineup. He shot to fame on Britain's Got Talent and has since toured worldwide and appeared on Have I Got News For You, The Royal Variety Performance, QI, and The News Quiz. Joining him is Preston's funny man - Tony Vino, Lou Conran who has supported Sarah Millican and Joe Lycce on tour, Steve Royle who also made a BGT final, Pat Monahan who won ITV's 'Show Me The Funny,' and Irish comic Kieran Lawless will MC. The comedy tent's closing act is award-winning stand up Sam Avery, aka The Learner Parent.

Beth adds, "Dust off those lederhosen and get ready for the county's best party!"

Purchase tickets at [www.shropshireoktoberfest.co.uk](http://www.shropshireoktoberfest.co.uk) and contact [Fun@ShropshireFestivals.co.uk](mailto:Fun@ShropshireFestivals.co.uk) to find out more about available sponsorship opportunities.



# LITTLE STARS TO HOST A CHARITY BALL



**Little Stars, a dedicated charity supporting vulnerable families in Shropshire, is excited to announce its first Charity Ball. Scheduled for Friday, 1st November, this captivating event will include a live band, some spooky surprises, welcome drinks, and a delicious three-course meal. Guests are encouraged to wear their finest attire with a Halloween twist for a night of elegance and fun.**

The event aims to raise essential funds to support Little Stars' mission of providing crucial items and support to families in need. The team has been hard at work, ensuring the venue is transformed into a spooky setting, promising an unforgettable evening for all attendees.

Alex Garmston, Chair Trustee of Little Stars said: *"We're so excited to host our first Charity Ball. As Chair Trustee, this is a momentous occasion for us and we are delighted to invite our community to join us for an evening of fun and glamour at our atmospheric event. Your participation helps us provide vital resources to Shropshire families. We can't wait to celebrate with you on 1st November."*

Headline sponsor Aico has been instrumental in making this event possible. Jane Pritchard, Community Liaison at Aico, shared their enthusiasm: *"As ongoing supporters of Little Stars, Aico are proud*

*to be headline sponsors of their first ever Charity Halloween Ball! It has been inspiring to see how the charity has grown and flourished over the past few years. We hope this exciting event will raise significant funds for Little Stars to help them continue the great work they do to support local families who need it most."*

Ian Groves, Managing Director at Start Tech, the event's other major sponsor, added:

*"Start Tech are proud to be sponsoring the Little Stars' Halloween Ball, which will enable them to raise funds for their amazing work. We also cover all of their IT needs, which means they have more time and resources to support families across our region. Please join us on Friday, 1st November to help this brilliant local charity raise funds and celebrate everything that Leanne and her team have achieved."*

Little Stars continues to make a big impact in Shropshire, by providing essential items like prams, cots, and school uniforms to local families. The charity's ongoing efforts ensure that children in the county have access to the essentials they need to feel safe and secure.

Join us for an evening of thrills at the Little Stars Halloween Charity Ball on Friday, 1st November. Tickets are priced at £55 per person and include a drinks reception, a three-course meal, and unforgettable entertainment.

For more information or to purchase tickets, please email [enquiries@littlestarscharity.org](mailto:enquiries@littlestarscharity.org).

# SHREWSBURY TRAVEL AGENTS SHORTLISTED FOR NATIONAL AWARDS



## Shrewsbury travel agents, Peakes Travel Elite, has been shortlisted in the Agent Achievement Awards, which celebrate travel agents across the UK and Ireland.

Peakes Travel Elite is one of five agencies to be selected for the Central England Small Agency category. The 2024 Travel Weekly Agent Achievement Awards are billed as the UK and Ireland's biggest and most prestigious celebration of the travel trade. The winners will be announced at London's Park Plaza Westminster Hotel on Thursday, July 11th.

Claire Moore, managing director, said, "It is no small feat to be selected for the UK and Ireland's most prestigious celebration of the travel sector, so we are absolutely thrilled.

"I truly believe our offering at Peakes is the best it has ever been. Our team of 6 welltravelled and knowledgeable agents have over 125 years of experience in this industry. Online alternatives just don't compare.

"This year we have enjoyed using our new luxury travel

*lounge, which is used as a private and comfortable space to create more involved travel itineraries, where customers can have three-way conversations with travel operators and our team.*

*"We have also used the space to host travel experts from trusted tour operators as part of our 'Meet the Expert' series of events. Customers have enjoyed having focused sessions where we can take a deeper dive into specific destinations.*

*"Peakes Travel Elite is committed to providing a luxury end-to-end service, supporting our customers every step of the way. We offer a concierge service with a 10-point checklist to ensure no detail slips through the net - from entry requirements to having a restaurant booked on the first night of the holiday. Our premium customer service means each customer is treated as an individual - there are no chatbots, just real people giving good, honest advice. Wish us luck for the awards ceremony!"*

Peakes Travel Elite is open Monday to Saturday from 9am to 5pm for appointments. Visit [www.peakestravelelite.co.uk](http://www.peakestravelelite.co.uk) for more details.

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# LETTER FROM WESTMINSTER

## **As your new Member of Parliament for Shrewsbury and the villages, I wanted to introduce myself and update you on developments from the new Labour Government, which may be relevant.**

My background is a 20-year career in government grants, investing in local communities and a five-year period working in the European Parliament in Brussels, as a policy advisor. I had won a scholarship for my PhD in EU policy and then used my knowledge to train businesses in how to apply for EU grants, bringing over £60m into the region through my team of advisors. In 2021 I became a Shropshire Councillor, then Leader of the Labour Group, before becoming Shrewsbury's first female MP in July.

In my first couple of months, I prioritised meeting up with Ruth Ross to learn more about local business issues through the chamber, as well the BID, Rotary, NFU, our markets and other important networks locally.

It is interesting to note the consistent concerns that are raised across the piece : recruitment, public transport, skills gap and street scene. I am determined to work collectively and constructively to support businesses navigate these challenges.

In the first few weeks of the new Labour Government, the Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Business & Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds set out their ambitions for a new industrial strategy - one that is fully aligned with our trade strategy and will be international from the start.

The plan is to work in partnership with Councils, CEOs, businesses and universities to build a more resilient economy where training and skills go hand-in-hand with developing employment opportunities. Ruth Ross rightly asked me whether chambers of commerce will have a place at the table? And I have written to the Minister to request their inclusion.

The Prime Minister will also host an International Investment Summit on 14th October that will help to attract investment in the UK, creating good jobs across the country and boosting growth.

But our top priority will always be supporting our local, small businesses who are the lifeblood of the economy. The Government plans to reform business rates and to replace the unfair and outdated system with a modern, balanced approach. Rachel Reeves said that "Labour's



rate reforms will work in a way that reduces the costs for small businesses and high streets, ensuring that some of the big multinationals and tech companies pay their fair share."

Finally on public transport, I was delighted to vote to re-nationalise the railways and have requested to give my maiden speech during the Great British Railways debate at second reading in September. The re-direction of HS2 monies to invest in electrification of the Shrewsbury to Birmingham line will transform the capacity, speed and frequency of our trains, re-connecting us back into the heart of the midlands, and beyond.

Buses will also be brought back under public control, to franchise increased routes, frequency and reliability of service. This is so welcome in Shropshire where we have lost over 5,000 bus routes since 2010.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at local events or if you have any questions, please do contact my office at 64 Wyle Cop, SY1 1UX, tel. 01743.650434 or by email on: [Julia.buckley.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:Julia.buckley.mp@parliament.uk)

# ARE YOU A PEOPLE PLEASER?



## **Do you often find it hard to say no to the requests of friends, family members or co-workers? Even when it is a detriment to yourself?**

I'm talking about you doing things because someone else wants you to and you might not really want to.

If you constantly put others' needs above your own, you might have learnt to feel loved, valued and accepted from this. When you adapt your behaviours to please those around you, this may end up harming you.

You might find you become exhausted trying to do too much because you're desperate to please another person, leading to overcommitments and potential burnout.

Constantly attempting to please others may lead to a loss of the sense of your true self.

Ultimately it may lead to you struggling to really accept and value yourself for the unique individual that you are.

If this resonates with you, chances are your life experiences are what has led you down this path.

The good news is we have amazing brains and our learning never stops. Once we become aware of certain habitual patterns of thinking or behaviour that are no longer serving us well, we can choose to do something differently.



your early years you may have learnt to place the expectations of those around you above what you need. It may be partly to do with your place in your family and your experiences growing up.

Young children seem to instinctively want to please their care givers. (Obviously not always!). This might be to do with survival mechanisms.

Children rely on adults to care for them and meet their needs, because they can't meet their own needs. You may have learnt as a child that the environment you live in can feel unsafe if the adults don't seem to be 'ok'. For you to remain quiet to avoid further conflict may have been one way you learnt to people please.

Maybe you learned that pleasing those around you helped you be accepted or cared about. This may be how you received praise. Something that is incredibly common during formative years is being bullied by peers in school. Perhaps because it is so common, you might dismiss the impact of this upon you.

Abusive words sometimes hang around and can become part of you, in the form of a critical inner voice with a commentary about you.

Young people can have 'frenemies' who don't consistently treat them with kindness and respect. They may be a friend enough for it not to become obvious that in fact they are an enemy.

They may say hurtful things and because the young person believes they are a friend, these words hurt much more than if they were from someone there was no attachment to.

Maybe as you read these words, someone comes to mind from many years ago?

You don't need to believe every thought you have about yourself, especially if the thought tears you down or attacks something about you.

It takes time and practice to offer yourself compassion and kindness when you have an inner critic in your head.

Continued...

What can help you start to really value yourself?

The first place to begin is to start to become aware of what values you do hold about your needs. This isn't about not considering others needs and being totally selfish. It's about making sure you're not neglecting your own needs as you please those around you.

Do you believe that your needs and feelings are as important as your friends and family's?

Would you say the people you spend time with encourage you and build you up?

If those who you are with needlessly criticise you and point out your flaws, these people are likely best avoided as they will tear you down and your confidence will be knocked. It's important to spend time with those who you feel like you and accept you for who you are.

Are you able to say three things you really value about yourself?

This can be about your personality, your values, your identity or even what you enjoy and feel good about. Usually you enjoy what you are good at too.

Don't worry if this feels too difficult at first. If you can think of one thing you like about yourself you can gradually build on this. You can ask someone you trust if they are able to tell you something they appreciate and value about you. Receive what they say, don't push it away.

Start to notice any negative self talk or criticism you have about you.

For instance if you make a mistake, what might you say to yourself?

Can you think what you might say to someone you cared about if they made a mistake? Often you may offer kinder words to your best friend that you might to yourself.

Mistakes are of course all part of learning and the person who never made a mistake, never made anything!

What else helps raise your self esteem?

Writing down positive attributes that you have eg: I'm someone that people can trust or I make banana and chocolate chip muffins very well.

Start to notice compliments or good things others say to you. Really hear these and let them stay with you, rather than batting them away, or dismissing these positive affirmations.

The good news is your self esteem may be low now, however, it is something that with time and practice

can be improved. Consider talking to someone you trust about how you feel, or if that feels a little awkward consider seeking professional support.

Counselling or therapy is not only about mental wellbeing, it is about increasing your self awareness, developing new and healthier habits and even personal growth.

In this article I've made some suggestions about what may have led to people pleasing, low self esteem and what you might begin to do to learn to value yourself.

Counselling offers a sanctuary where you are accompanied as you begin to discover who you truly are and what you value.

A counsellor will work with you to help you hear yourself. They will not judge you or tell you what to do. It is an opportunity to explore thoughts and feelings where you don't need to feel you're a burden to anyone else.

Perhaps when someone asks you how you are you say: **I'm fine.** (Actually you might be: *'struggling inside, I'm not feeling seen. Trying to hold everything together. Life feels overwhelming. I don't want others to know I don't feel OK'*).

This is where talking to a professional who can accompany you and offer you support without the need for you to feel you are being a burden is very useful.

Many people, may find it hard to reach out for support with how they're feeling as our society has encouraged hiding emotions such as sadness. This can have disastrous or even fatal consequences.

Dismissing feelings might work for a time, until that coping mechanism no longer works. When strong emotions are buried they can become much more intense and even unbearable.

A counsellor can help you learn how you might start to set boundaries initially in small ways as you gain confidence with being more assertive for your own wellbeing.

You are the most important person in the room. Your needs and feelings are the focus, no one else. When you experience being fully accepted and valued for who you really are, you may find courage to allow those close to you to discover that you need their support at times. It is always the strong thing to do to reach out for support.

This really is the ultimate in self care.

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# RECLAIM TAX UK SPONSORS VIP MARQUEE AT SHREWSBURY FOOD FESTIVAL FOR THIRD YEAR



**Reclaim Tax UK were delighted to announce our continued sponsorship of the VIP Marquee at this year's Shrewsbury Food Festival, marking the third year of our involvement in this vibrant and award winning community event. The Shrewsbury Food Festival, a highlight in the local calendar, provided an excellent platform to celebrate local culture, cuisine, and businesses.**

Our VIP Marquee welcomed a host of distinguished guests, including Shrewsbury MP Daniel Kawczynski, along with our valued clients, friends, and local business owners from across Shrewsbury and beyond. The gathering was a testament to the strong relationships we have built within the community and our commitment to supporting local Businesses.

A highlight of the day was our fundraising efforts for The Shrewsbury Town FC Foundation Charity. We were thrilled to have PDC Darts Seniors Legend Andy 'The Hammer' Hamilton join us in support of this cause. Hamilton's presence added an exciting twist to the festivities as he challenged our guests to games of 501 darts, showcasing his remarkable skills and sportsmanship by losing only a couple of legs throughout the afternoon. His participation was instrumental in helping us raise over £1,000 for the charity, demonstrating the power of community and generosity.

The event also served as a perfect occasion to bring together clients from across Shropshire. It allowed us to express our heartfelt thanks for their ongoing support and loyalty to Reclaim Tax UK. Our expertise in Research and Development Tax Relief has enabled many of these businesses to thrive, and the festival provided a relaxed environment to celebrate these successes.

The afternoon was a blend of fun, laughter, and enjoyment, with an array of locally produced beers, ciders, and gourmet food contributing to the festive atmosphere. The inclusive VIP treatment ensured that our guests experienced the best of what the Shrewsbury Food Festival had to offer. Additionally, the event facilitated valuable networking opportunities, bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds who might not have otherwise crossed paths, fostering new connections and collaborations.

We were fortunate to enjoy favourable weather, which enhanced the overall experience, making the day even more memorable. The success of this event reaffirms our commitment to supporting the local community and participating in events that bring people together.

Reclaim Tax UK looks forward to many more years of involvement in local events and other community initiatives, continuing to support and celebrate the vibrant spirit of Shropshire Businesses.

# START TECH WINS TOP INDUSTRY AWARD



Kieran Jones, Ian Groves, and Jordan Tipper from the Start Tech team

**A Shropshire IT provider has scooped a prestigious award that recognises excellence and leadership in the technology industry. Start Tech has won the 'UK & Ireland Solution Provider Spotlight Award' at the CompTIA Community Spotlight Awards, which were held in Birmingham.**

Start Tech is an MSP (Managed Service Provider) which looks after the IT needs of 2,338 users across 60 companies around the UK, from their base in Shrewsbury. Robust cyber security is at the core of their offering. They were one of the first IT providers in the UK to become a National Cyber Security Centre Assured Service Provider.

CompTIA (Computing Technology Industry Association) is a leading voice worldwide for the \$5 trillion global information technology ecosystem. To win the solution provider award, Start Tech had to demonstrate leadership, excellence and innovation towards their organisation and clients, as well as being a true solutions provider.

MJ Shoer, chief community officer at CompTIA, said, "The awards are judged purely on the merit of each application. We enlist a prestigious panel of judges from outside the awarding region to ensure the highest

*integrity and objectivity when choosing the winners."*

Start Tech managing director, Ian Groves, was asked to speak at the event, which welcomed tech and IT companies from across the UK. He said, "We are over the moon to pick up the Solution Provider Spotlight Award. There isn't a more poignant award for us to win as an MSP. We were up against some big names - both in size and reputation, so this is a huge achievement, one which we'll be celebrating for a long time. I believe it will change the way we're viewed on a national scale.

*"We are having one of our best years in our 23-year history having been named as one of Britain's 50 Best Managed IT Companies and now scooping this important award. The business is going from strength to strength - our average year on year growth for the last three years is 39%, which is brilliant.*

*"I hope this award success helps more businesses find out about our work. We pride ourselves on providing a proactive approach to IT, where we lead with advice and solutions to improve efficiency, rather than the reactive approach that has been the industry standard for so long."*

To find out more about Start Tech visit [www.start-tech.co.uk](http://www.start-tech.co.uk).

# SHROPSHIRE EXPECTED TO SEE RADICAL PLANNING REFORM THAT'S SET TO DIVIDE OPINIONS



## Radical planning changes that will divide opinions are expected in the next six months, according to leading property consultants Berrys, following a landslide victory by Labour in the General Election on the 4th July.

Berrys Chief Executive Officer and Head of Planning, Stuart Thomas, says he cannot recall a time when planning was so high up on the political agenda, with 'a flurry' of changes to policy and decision making expected in the coming months.

*"In all my years of doing this job, I can't ever recall seeing planning being placed front and centre of government policy,"* he said.

*"The changes will mean that Shropshire Council will need to rethink its current approach to development. Watch this space - change is coming, and not everyone will like it,"* Mr Thomas added.

In his first speech as prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer firmly focused on 'rebuilding' the country's 'infrastructure of opportunity', doing so 'brick by brick'.

And in her first speech as Chancellor, Rachel Reeves announced a series of planning reforms that she says will get Britain building the infrastructure it needs, including 1.5 million homes in five years and a clean power system, which the government committed to in its manifesto.

Mr Thomas said: *"Shropshire already has one of the best-performing local Councils for delivery of rural affordable housing, but we expect to see more positive planning*

*reforms in this area and hopefully more homes built in the towns and villages where they are needed the most."*

*"This means more investment in local infrastructure, with new housing in Shropshire subject to a development tax (community infrastructure levy). On average, every new home build in Shropshire would deliver £10,000 to be spent on local community projects and infrastructure,"* he said.

The government has also said it will publish a draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) before the August parliamentary recess.

Mr Thomas expects the framework to contain some drastic changes.

*"We could see some radical changes proposed in the NPPF, which will undoubtedly influence how Shropshire makes decisions. There will likely be a strong emphasis on ensuring that Councils approve applications with tangible economic benefits, with such provisions previously being watered down in national policy,"* he added.

With the ban on on-shore turbines, which has been in place for the past decade, being lifted, a rise in applications is also expected for the area.

*"Love or hate them, they are back, with the government having already changed planning policy to facilitate fresh applications. Some parts of Shropshire and Mid Wales have wind speeds and directions perfect for the effective operation of turbines, so I would expect to see applications in this area being revisited in the not-too-distant future,"* he said.

Continued...

Other changes that are expected, include:

- **Review Of Green Belt Land** - The green belt remains a fierce battleground in Shropshire and has come under intense scrutiny as part of Shropshire Council's current review of their local plan. *"Done correctly the strategic release of green belt land would go a long way to solving the housing problems in areas which have clear potential to support development without any noticeable harm."* The reality of land in the green belt is it is often poor quality, underused land that serves no useful purpose for anyone. In addition, the greenbelt land in Shropshire is in the eastern part of the county which is most appropriate strategically for growth given its interrelationship with the West Midlands and Birmingham.

*"Labour have termed this type of land the 'grey belt' and they will shortly be writing to all councils seeking a review of their green belt land. Expect to see some radical changes in this area and support for strategic housing and employment being part of the pro-growth agenda."* said Mr Thomas.

- **An Increase In The Number Of Planning Officers** - This will likely lead to quicker decisions and more positive outcomes for Shropshire, which has the second-highest number of planning applications in the West Midlands.
- **Priority Given To Energy Projects**—Mr Thomas said *"There have previously been mixed results on solar farm applications. He expects this is about to change, with greater priority given to this area."*
- **Greater Weight Is Expected To Be Given To Planning Applications That Can Demonstrate Economic Benefit** - This could lead to the approval of applications which would have previously been refused.
- **Infrastructure Projects** - The government has announced that planning for key infrastructure projects of regional or national importance will now receive priority.

*"Planning makes things happen, and it should be at the heart of any government policy for growth and economic development. Planning can and should be a force for good. It was always a system put in place to facilitate growth in post war era, to get the country moving again. Somewhere along the way the profession lost its way and the system we have now is riddled with bureaucracy and negative, energy sapping mindsets that often easily find a way to say no rather than yes."* Mr Thomas added.

It does not have to be this way and maybe this is the time to rediscover the importance of positive planning in the UK.

*"At Berrys, we are keeping abreast of all the information coming out of Westminster, so we are best placed to advise our clients and achieve the best outcomes"* he added.

#### More information

Berrys is a UK-wide consultancy business that covers all property-related services under one roof.

Whatever your property needs, we are here to help. Visit [berrys.uk.com](http://berrys.uk.com) for more information.

The logo for Berrys, consisting of the word "BERRYS" in a large, bold, teal-colored sans-serif font, oriented vertically on the right side of the page.

# SOME SNAPS FROM RECENT EVENTS



Flower Show Business Breakfast



Netwalking



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We love welcoming your lovely faces to our monthly events, and this year we've got some great ones lined up.

Our events give you the chance to network with other local business owners, while trying/learning something new. We have met so many new lovely people & businesses in the last 12 months and we have welcomed a huge amount of new members.

If you would be interested in sponsoring an event please contact Donna - [shrewsburybc.events@gmail.com](mailto:shrewsburybc.events@gmail.com)

We hope to see you soon!

To make sure you don't miss out on our events make sure you check out our website

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THE DARWIN

# BERLAD GRAHAM JOINS SHREWSBURY BUSINESS CHAMBER



**Nikki Pickering is a Family Chartered Legal Executive with over 25 years experience entirely in Family Law based in Shropshire. Here she sets out the importance of taking advice when necessary.**

**Family Lawyers frequently get bad press - you will no doubt have seen the comic stereotype of us being money grabbers or have heard horror stories from friends and family of how disastrous their divorce was.**

It goes without saying that the end of a relationship or marriage is stressful. Even if the separation is amicable. Despite what you have heard, family lawyers are not there to make things worse or drive up your costs. Believe it or not a good family lawyer will want matters to proceed as smoothly and quickly as possible for you - after all we are only in your lives for a short period of time and, especially where children are involved, the separating parties are going to be in each other's lives for some considerable time. We want you to be able to have an amicable relationship going forward.

A good family lawyer can support you even if you are not sure you want to end your relationship and can point you in the direction of agencies who can help you get your relationship back on track.

Or if you have decided that your relationship is over your family lawyer will advise you on all your options, believe it not divorce is not the only option available to you.

Even if you and your former partner have amicably

agreed to separate it is always worth taking advice to make sure you have covered everything. Taking advice, while not always, free will probably not be as expensive as you anticipate and may end up saving you money in the long run.

Family lawyers have to be a "jack of all trades" and as well as providing a sympathetic ear alongside legal advice, will listen to your issues and notify you if they think you need advice in other areas of law such as immigration, wills or property matters.

Also, as unromantic as it sounds, family lawyers can also help at the start of a relationship, providing advice on cohabitation or pre-nuptial agreements. Again taking proper advice at this stage may end up saving you money in the future.

When it comes to children there is no "one size fits all" arrangement and again advice can be given to you on what could work for your family as well as advice on agencies who can help you without the need for painful Court proceedings. If you feel that Court is the only option for you, a supportive family lawyer can ensure that the process works smoothly for you.

Berlad Graham LLP are pleased to have opened their Shrewsbury office in St Austin's Friars to support our increasing number of Shropshire clients. If you require family advice or any other area of work please contact Nikki on 07561684249.

# ENERGY EVENTS JOINS SHREWSBURY BUSINESS CHAMBER



**Energy Events is perhaps better known as the driving force behind Shrewsbury Comic Con. The inaugural event in April was a great success and that paved the way for future events in Shrewsbury, including a horror-themed comic con this October.**

The comic con is a great showcase for local artists, businesses, hobbyists and gamers, as well as bringing a boost to the local economy.

Owner Nick is keen to keep the comic con focussed on its comic roots. "Shrewsbury has a vibrant artistic community and I'm keen to maintain a balance between comic artists and media guests."

So what happens at a comic con?

I appreciate that some chamber members will not have attended a comic con or really be familiar with the concept, so I have broken down below what will be happening at the October event:

**VIP guests:** Attendees will have the chance to meet, get an autograph from and/or have a photo with one of our media or comic guests. In October, our media guests include voiceover artist Matt Hill, actors Craig David Dowsett and Amber Doig-Thorne from the Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey franchise and actors Willie Coppen and George Coppen. There will also be comic artists Mike Perkins, Patrick Goddard and Mike Collins, with horror writer M R Carey.

**Vendor's room:** A chance for local businesses to showcase and sell their products to attendees.

**Q&A sessions -** A chance for attendees to ask the guests questions and/or listen to some of their life experiences.

**Manga drawing workshops,** led by Manga Artist Eira Richards.

**Gaming zone -** Shrewsbury Wargames Society will be running 3 Warhammer demonstration games and leading a model painting workshop all day long. Local business Nerdy Shrewsbury will bring a selection of their board and tabletop games for attendees to play. Also, the Shropshire DM Joel will be leading attendees through some hosted horror-themed games. Outside, Adaptive Gaming will be running their professionally hosted gaming marquee, which includes multiple copies of every single video game console, retro gaming and tens of thousands of games.

**Props -** Props from favourite movies and TV shows will be present, including the Jurassic Park Jeep and Preston City Ghostbusters, which is fun and interactive for all.

**Cosplay groups -** two professional cosplay groups, the East Midlands Garrison and The Dragon Order will be raising money for their chosen charity.

**Cosplay competition -** Many attendees will themselves come dressed and made up as characters from TV, film, animation and video games. This is not compulsory, but many attendees enjoy doing so. There is also a cosplay competition, sponsored by local business DVDMegaStore.

Hundreds of local and regional attendees will be present. Each get a full colour glossy event guide which has advertising possibilities.

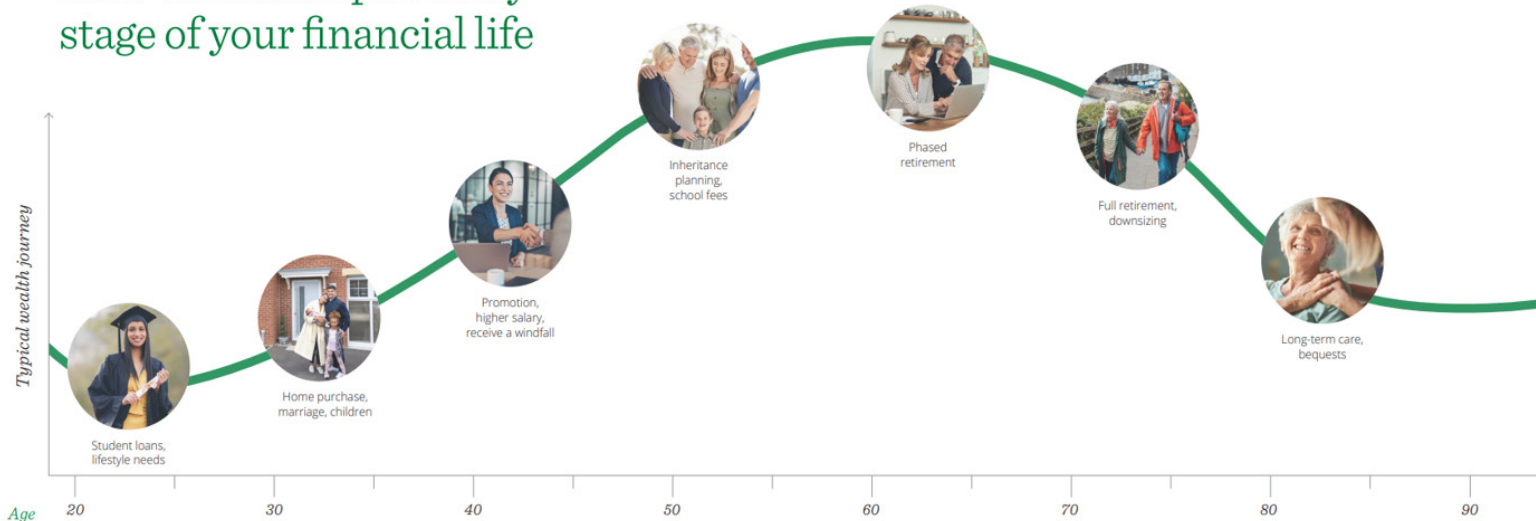
The Shrewsbury Biscuit Podcast will also be bringing their full studio to the event to record a special episode.

Hopefully that has demystified comic cons a bit and you will be able to see where there could be opportunities for mutually beneficial working relationships. I'm looking forward to meeting and getting to know you all.

# QUILTER FINANCIAL ADVISERS JOINS SHREWSBURY BUSINESS CHAMBER

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**Ollie prides himself in helping individuals, families, and business owners achieve their dreams and ambitions through goals-based and holistic financial planning.**

He takes pride in being with his clients on their financial planning journey, from protection needs to planning for retirement and beyond. He places emphasis on building and maintaining long-term relationships with his clients and to provide them with a source of trusted advice as their financial needs evolve over the years.

With Ollie's expertise and dedication, clients can trust that they are in good hands and can make steps to achieving financial success and peace of mind.

*"Having been born and raised in Shrewsbury, I am delighted to join the Shrewsbury Business Chamber with the aim of giving back to the community with clear, concise and value-for-money financial advice"*



# Quilter Financial Advisers

# THE MENTAL WELLBEING COMPANY JOINS SHREWSBURY BUSINESS CHAMBER



## **I'm Ruth Edwards, an ICF certified Trauma Informed Life Coach and Founding Brand Partner of The Mental Wellbeing Company.**

Gaining a deep understanding of trauma, nervous system responses and the mind-body connection has been game-changing in my own life. And I'm passionate about sharing this knowledge, to help others. In fact, it's what led me to give up the safety of a full-time corporate career and set up my own business as a trauma-informed coach, and buy a franchise in The Mental Wellbeing Company - so that I can make a difference to as many people as possible.

The Mental Wellbeing Company's mission is to improve mental health and wellbeing around the world with CPD/CE accredited Trauma Informed workshops for individuals, schools, workplaces and public sector organisations.

I can work with you on an individual basis through 1:1 coaching sessions, or by delivering these transformative workshops in your school or workplace.

### **What is trauma?**

Trauma can result from many different types of events; from bullying, divorce, the loss of a loved one, through to abuse, war, and pandemics. But trauma goes beyond the events themselves; it's about how these events impact us internally. In essence, it disrupts our internal world and can have profound consequences on our mental and emotional well-being.

### **Why be trauma-informed?**

Incorporating trauma-informed practices within your workplace can significantly enhance the overall environment, benefiting not only those who have experienced trauma but all employees, by fostering a culture of empathy, safety, and support.

Trauma-informed leadership encourages collaboration and creates a sense of shared responsibility. And when people lead from a position of true self, they are more creative, confident, connected and productive.

Investing in mental health support is not only the right thing to do, it's good for business.

### **CPD accredited Trauma Informed workshops**

Here at The Mental Wellbeing Company, we know that fostering a mentally healthy workplace can be challenging, especially when dealing with the invisible impacts of trauma.

Our workshops are designed to equip you with the tools and knowledge you need to create a culture of resilience, support, and success and can be delivered online or in person.

Take a look at our website for workshops:  
[www.ruthedwards.thementalwellbeingcompany.com](http://www.ruthedwards.thementalwellbeingcompany.com)  
Connect with me on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ruth-anwen-edwards/>  
Say hi on Instagram: @the\_somatic\_healing\_coach  
Drop me an email: [ruth@mentalwellbeingcompany.com](mailto:ruth@mentalwellbeingcompany.com)



# SHIRLEY LANE JOINS SHREWSBURY BUSINESS CHAMBER

## My name is Shirley Lane and I am a Menopause Coach. I can hear you saying OK, but what do you do?

Well I have three sides to my business. Balancing Butterflies which is for menopausal women, the Man Oh Pause which is for men, and a range of packages to support businesses to ensure they are able to support their teams effectively and have the correct policies in place.

I work with businesses to raise awareness of the menopause, as despite the subject being in the media regularly, a number of companies still do not have a policy or support their staff going through the menopause.

In the UK currently 51% of the population are women. Of those nearly five million women are aged 50-64 and are currently in employment.

This group is the fastest growing demographic in the workplace. With the current problems employers are experiencing recruiting staff, it makes sense for this group of women to be looked after. However, when women go through the menopause, being supported in the workplace is not always something which happens.

Even though nearly 8 out of 10 of menopausal women are in work, and the fact that 3 out of 4 women will experience menopausal symptoms of some sort, many still feel unsupported at work. In fact up to one in four women consider leaving their jobs because of menopausal symptoms!

This is why I'm on a mission to go into businesses to raise awareness about the menopause to help break down taboos. I can also help businesses implement menopause policies if required (these can be for just women or include men as well), and provide ongoing workshops and support for staff.

As a qualified hypnotherapist and NLP Practitioner (Neuro Linguistic Programming), I also do one to one consultations to help provide both men and women with practical solutions for some of the symptoms which may crop up around this time. The things I can help with may include one (or more) of the following: feeling stressed, anxious, overwhelmed, a loss of confidence e.g. at work or doing a task such as driving a car, self-esteem, phobias. Hypnotherapy can even help with some of the physical symptoms such as hot flushes to name just one. I became a menopause coach, as whilst studying to

be an NLP Practitioner. During this time I recognised that I was menopausal and experiencing a number of symptoms which I had not had before. Overnight I seemed to change, and I started becoming very anxious, stressed, my confidence and self-esteem plummeted and generally I just did not "feel like myself" anymore.

I found it difficult to talk about my issues to other people, even friends, and whilst there is some support out there to help women with the physical symptoms of the menopause, there seemed to be very little support for helping with the psychological ones. Personally I found that by using a combination of hypnotherapy and NLP it really helped me to get through this time. It helped me so much that I decided to become a menopause coach in order that I could help other women (and now men as well), as I didn't want anyone else to have to struggle on as I had. This is where I help.

Sometimes even just the opportunity to have a conversation about the menopause and how it is impacting the person at work can really help. The guidance in the government's Menopause and the Workplace document also recommends workplace training, raising awareness of menopause at work and introducing a variety of workable solutions.

When menopausal women are supported in the workplace, and it is done correctly, it supports an inclusive culture which is a win-win for all. It means current staff are likely to stay with their company, and indeed staff may be attracted to the employer, as they see the company as having an inclusive work culture.

If you would like to find out more then please contact me for a (free) chat of up to 30 minutes:

<https://calendly.com/shirleylanenlp/30minchat>

Or please have a look at my websites to find out more  
For women ~ <https://balancingbutterflies.com/>  
For men ~ <https://manohpause.co.uk/>



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## SEPTEMBER

### NETWALK

2 HOUR WALK COVERING 4 MILES AND INCLUDES A PUB STOP.

WED 11 SEP  
6PM

FREE TO ALL

### EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATE - IMPORTANT CHANGES FOR SMALL BUSINESS

BY WR PARTNERS

WED 25 SEP  
6PM

FREE TO ALL

## OCTOBER

### NETWALK

2 HOUR WALK COVERING 4 MILES AND INCLUDES A PUB STOP.

WED 9 OCT  
6PM

FREE TO ALL

### FOSTERING A HEALTHY WORKPLACE

WED 16 OCT  
6PM

MEMBERS: FREE  
NON MEMBERS £11.55

## NOVEMBER

### CHEESE AND WINE EVENING WITH LEZLEY PICTON

HOSTED BY DARWIN SHOPPING CENTRE AND SPONSORED BY LONG TIME MEMBERS CROWN WEALTH

WED 13 NOV  
6PM

MEMBERS: FREE



For more information about our events, please take a look at the events section of our website and follow all our socials for updates.

# THANKYOU!

## Thankyou to everyone who has contributed to this issue of the Shrewsbury Business Chamber magazine.

We are always looking for new content to promote over social media, so if your business has some exciting news, any events or good news to share, then please send these to us so we can promote for you across our social media.

If you would like to be featured or have a story or an event you'd like included, if you could please send an email to [shrewsburybc.editor@gmail.com](mailto:shrewsburybc.editor@gmail.com) with all copy and any images.

To advertise in future issues if you could please contact [shrewsburybc.editor@gmail.com](mailto:shrewsburybc.editor@gmail.com)

## Thinking about becoming a member?

Shrewsbury Business Chamber is the business group of choice for the Shrewsbury area. The Chamber organises regular events allowing businesses to network, voice their opinions and gain useful business expertise. The Chamber provides a collective voice and ensures business issues reach the right officials. A not-for-profit membership organisation which is headed up by a volunteer business focused Executive Committee. The Business Chamber works closely with other local private and public sector organisations for the betterment of businesses from across the Shrewsbury area.

MEMBERSHIP	ANNUAL FEE
Retired	£30
Charity	£50
Sole Trader	£70
Up to 10 employees	£100
More than 10 employees	£140

For more information on how to join please head to our website [www.shrewsburybusinesschamber.com](http://www.shrewsburybusinesschamber.com)

The opinions expressed here do not necessarily represent the views of the editor, or those of Shrewsbury Business Chamber.

To advertise in future issues if you could please contact our editor via email at

[shrewsburybc.editor@gmail.com](mailto:shrewsburybc.editor@gmail.com)