

the masthead

ISSUE 34

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE FOR SOUTH EAST LONDON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ENVIRONMENT

Sustainability in action.

SKILLS

Bridging local skills gaps.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Mental health and resilience
within your business.

KATE HEAPS

Chief Executive of the Community Hospice,
talks about compassion and kindness and
her latest fundraising expedition – trekking
across the Sahara Desert.

SOUTH EAST
LONDON
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WELCOME

Spring has arrived, and the Chamber has been bustling with activity as we transition to our new office.

We are now based in Bexley but stiWe have relocated from Thames-Side Studios near the Thames Barrier in the Royal Borough of Greenwich to Thamesmead. Our new base in Bexley offers a picturesque view of Southmere Lake, home to many swans. We are now situated within The Nest Community Building and Library at 3 Cygnet Square, a remarkable facility that is part of Peabody's regeneration of Thamesmead. As President of the South East London Chamber of Commerce (SELCC), I proudly represent Peabody on the Board.

I had the honour of serving as a judge on the panel for the Best of Royal Greenwich Business Awards 2024, in association with SELCC.



The panel faced a challenging task in selecting the winners, who were celebrated at a splendid luncheon at the InterContinental London – The O2 in early February. Details of the event and the winners can be found on page 11. SELCC has generously offered a year's free membership to the winners, and we are collaborating with some of them on their business journey.

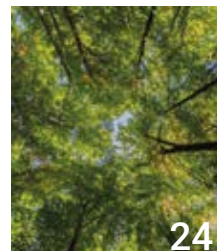
Our Chamber has recently become an Affiliate of the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network and participated in the Conference 2025, held at Woolwich Work. Coverage of this event is available on page 10.

In this issue, you will find reports on events we have hosted across our five boroughs, including an Executive Lunch in Croydon's magnificent Town Hall. Originally opened in 1896 when Croydon was part of Surrey, the Town Hall underwent restoration and renovation in the mid-80s. We had the privilege of dining in the beautifully wood-panelled former Council Room. Executive Mayor Jason Perry joined us for lunch following his attendance at the breakfast launch of the London Growth Plan. This initiative aims to turbocharge London, and Mayor Jason shared insights on Croydon's plans to revitalise the borough as part of the London plan. Coverage of the London Growth Plan can be found on the following two pages of this Spring issue of the Masthead.

Warm regards,

Christofi Christou
President, South East London
Chamber of Commerce

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London Growth Plan to turbocharge productivity

The London Growth Plan – developed by the Mayor of London and London Councils – is a ***“blueprint for turbocharging productivity”*** in the capital. It aims to create 150,000 new jobs in the capital by 2028.

The London Growth Plan is a 10-year-long plan to boost London into a **“more prosperous, fairer and greener city”**.

Developed by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, and London Councils, the London Growth Plan aims to restore productivity growth to an average of two per cent a year over the next decade, making London's economy £107 billion larger in 2035, and to help create more than 150,000 jobs by 2028.

More investment will be made in key priorities such as housing, infrastructure, skills and transport.

“London is the engine of the UK economy, bursting with talent and creativity – but our city's growth has been held back since the 2008 financial crash, and this flatlining productivity has damaged the whole nation's prosperity,” said Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London.

“Our new plan provides a golden opportunity to turbocharge the growth needed to improve wages, living standards and public services as we continue to build a better and more prosperous London for everyone.”



The key ambitions of the London Growth Plan are:

- **Support businesses** – investing in industrial innovation corridors and harnessing the growth potential of cutting-edge sectors like AI, life sciences, robotics and clean tech.
- **Build skills for the future** – the Inclusive Talent Strategy will build Londoners skills and help all find good, meaningful work and progress their career.
- **Level up affordable housing and infrastructure** – with major transport upgrades, such as the Bakerloo Line extension and by introducing new rent-controlled key worker homes.
- **Help local high streets thrive** – £21 million boost to local high streets this year, tackling empty properties and ensuring all London boroughs benefit from economic growth.

London has experienced a rollercoaster of times in the past 20 years, from the economic boom in the nineties and noughties to the financial crisis of 2007-2008. The summer of 2012 cast a positive spotlight on the global city at the London 2012 Olympics but then came the triple shock of the Covid-19 pandemic, Brexit and soaring inflation and interest rates.

London's growth ambitions are:

1. **Productivity** – raise productivity growth rates to 2 per cent average per year over 2025 to 2035.
2. **Inclusion** – raise the real household weekly income (after housing costs) of the lowest earning 20 per cent of Londoners by 20 per cent by 2035. This would mean that at least a million London households would have on average an extra £50 to spend each week after paying for housing costs.
3. **Green growth** – accelerate progress towards achieving London's net zero target for 2030.
4. **A global capital** – grow London's services exports by an average of 6 per cent per year.

The Mayor adds that London is "entering a new cycle of reinvention". The post-Brexit, post-pandemic era will be shaped by six major shifts:

- **Big shift one:** Workforce in flux. Brexit ended an era of almost limitless labour supply at all skill levels, upending London's migration patterns and leading to labour shortages in key sectors such as construction and hospitality. The legacy of Covid-19 is many Londoners leaving the workforce because they chose to retire, became long-term sick or are caring for others. High housing costs are also increasingly putting a strain on recruitment and talent retention. The challenge for London is to grow the skilled workforce.
- **Big shift two:** Changing nature of work. Covid-19 crystallised a generational change in the nature of work. Hybrid and flexible working patterns have become normal in many sectors. Younger generations have new expectations of work-life balance. The challenge for London is to provide good-quality work in a changing world.
- **Big shift three:** From innovation taker to innovation maker. London has taken technologies largely developed in the

US and applied them at scale.

The city now has the opportunity to become an originator. The challenge for London is to turn brilliant discoveries and inventions into global companies.

- **Big shift four:** Polycentric growth. London is 11 per cent of the entire UK economy and vital to achieving the national and London growth missions. In recent decades, significant new clusters of growth in London have sprung up, and the next phase of growth will continue this trend with major new commercial and industrial developments outside the city centre, including Old Oak and Park Royal, Royal Docks, Earls Court, Brent Cross Town, Meridian Water, Barking and Dagenham. The challenge for London is to maintain a thriving city centre and to create the infrastructure and places for growth to spread across the city.
- **Big shift five:** Climate and ecological emergency. London must decarbonise to slow climate change and improve air quality. Climate action in London will create economic growth and a large domestic market for green innovation, which London can then export to the world. The challenge for London is to finance the green transition and to secure the supply of people and materials to deliver it.
- **Big shift six:** Reordering of global trade. Exporting services to the world is the bedrock of the London economy. The challenge for London is to stay agile to keep growing international trade in a world of turbulent geopolitics.

Each of the big shifts and the strategies to tackle them are explored in more detail in the full version of the plan.

The Plan has been developed jointly by City Hall and London Councils with London's growth agency London and Partners, in collaboration with businesses, trade unions, education providers and Londoners.

“London is the engine of the UK economy, bursting with talent and creativity – but our city's growth has been held back since the 2008 financial crash, and this flatlining productivity has damaged the whole nation's prosperity.”

£2.5 million funding boost for 82 community projects in Lewisham

More than 80 community projects in Lewisham will receive a funding boost.

Lewisham Council's Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) ward fund of nearly £2.5 million will be divided between 82 community projects.

The projects were chosen through a community consultation and review process and received nearly 12,000 votes.

The groups that will benefit from the funding include Greening Evelyn, which aims to create a climate-resilient play area in Evelyn Ward; Lewisham Changemakers, a training programme and network that supports social entrepreneurs; The Parent Empowerment Project, designed to support and empower parents and carers, particularly from Black communities; Spontaneous Productions' Refugee and Migrant Writing and Performance Project, which invites refugees and migrants to share their stories through writing and performance workshops; and Lewisham Sight Support Service by BlindAid, which provides practical and emotional support to blind and visually impaired people.

Cllr Sakina Sheikh, Cabinet Member for Communities, Refugees, Safer Lewisham and Equalities said: "It's really exciting to be announcing funding for so many fantastic local projects that will see long-term benefits for our Lewisham communities. This NCIL funding will empower our residents to shape their communities and make long-term improvements to their local facilities. We hope the projects funded can enhance the quality of life for residents and enable civic pride in our environment."

Planning permission granted for supermarket and creative studios in Purley

The old Milk & More dairy site in Brighton Road, Purley, is set to be transformed into a retail unit and 20 studio spaces for local creatives.

The designs received huge support from the Purley community and have been given the green light by Croydon Council's planning department.

The three buildings of the former dairy, which have locally listed frontages, will be sensitively repaired and restored, bringing them back into public use. The new additions will be set back from the former dairy frontages and are designed to celebrate their heritage.

The retail unit is anticipated to be used by Marks & Spencer for a new Foodhall, which is within the Purley Business Improvement District. The development will create about 120 new jobs for residents, including 55 at the supermarket. The site will also deliver a new creative hub for

locals – with 20 individual studios and two large open-plan studios, all located above the 68-space car park.

The new Foodhall will contribute to Marks & Spencer's presence in the borough, with existing stores located in the town centre – Whitgift Centre in North End – and the recently opened full line store on Purley Way.

Nick Snashall, of developer Grove Property, said: "Having acquired the site from Milk & More our vision was to breathe new life into the area. Working closely with Croydon Council and M&S to bring the application proposal forward has enabled us to do this, and we are excited to enter the delivery phase of this project, which will bring much needed inward investment and new job opportunities to the area."

“The new Foodhall will contribute to Marks & Spencer's presence in the borough, with existing stores located in the town centre – Whitgift Centre in North End – and the recently opened full line store on Purley Way.”



Ask an Expert

Aimal Gram, a commercial property solicitor at **Amphlett Lissimore**, considers what is a Full Repairing and Insuring (FRI) lease in the context of commercial properties.

What is a 'Full Repairing and Insuring' (FRI) lease?

Most commercial leases are on a full repairing and insuring (FRI) basis. Depending on whether the lease is of part or the whole of a building, a tenant will be responsible for all repairs of internal parts or both internal and external parts, including the structure. This means the costs of all repairs and insurance are borne by the tenant.

What are the obligations for repair?

An FRI lease will typically contain a covenant by the tenant to keep the property in "good repair and condition". There is a common misconception, usually by inexperienced tenants, that a tenant only must give the property back in the same condition in which it took it when it entered the lease. This is not the case.

A requirement to keep the property in good repair and condition throughout the lease term includes an obligation to put the property into good repair if it is in disrepair at the start of the lease. The word 'condition' gives an even more onerous layer of obligation and may require works to be carried out where the property has not yet fallen into disrepair.

Can a landlord inspect the property?

FRI leases will usually contain rights for landlords to inspect the property periodically to ensure the tenant has kept up its repair obligations. Landlords should take advantage of this right, but tenants should be aware that it is reasonable to have provisions in the lease for landlords to give tenants prior notice to minimise any business disruption.

What is a schedule of dilapidations and when can it be issued?

Simply put, a schedule of dilapidations is a list prepared by the landlord which sets out any outstanding repairs that are required to be carried out by the tenant. A schedule of dilapidations can be issued by the landlord at any point during the lease term, and usually up to six months after the lease has come to an end depending on the terms agreed. It is important for tenants to consider what repair or maintenance work may be needed from an early stage in taking on a lease.

Schedules of dilapidations are often the cause of disputes between landlords and tenants. It is important the lease is clear on repair obligations and both parties understand them to avoid costly proceedings in courts.

What should landlords do to protect themselves?

A properly advised landlord would want to maintain the value of its investment and having an FRI lease ensures the property does not fall into disrepair and it will have an industry standard and lender acceptable tenant's full repairing covenant in the lease, otherwise it could affect the marketability of its investment.

What should tenants do to protect themselves?

Tenants should carefully consider the definition given to "the property" in a lease because it determines what a tenant is responsible for. For instance, if the lease is of the whole building the tenant could be taking on responsibility for the structural parts such as the roof, foundations, etc.

If the condition of the property is of concern an independent survey of the property should be considered and depending on the bargaining position of the tenant a "schedule of condition" should be agreed with the landlord.

The schedule of condition is usually attached to the lease at the start accompanying provisions in the lease for the tenant to return the property in no worse condition evidenced by the schedule thus limiting the tenant's repair liability.

For more information,
visit www.allaw.co.uk
email contact@allaw.co.uk
or contact the team on
020 8771 5254



Amphlett Lissimore
SOLICITORS

Focus on Lewisham



First-of-its-kind youth jobs and skills hub

Only 3% of Lewisham's jobs are based in Downham and young people have reported difficulty navigating fragmented services to support both their personal and professional growth.

Responding to this, we launched Elevate 100 earlier this year. A first-of-its-kind space for young people (16 to 30 years) in Downham which offers a mix of personal, professional and start-up business services and opportunities.

Central to the decision-making is the Youth Action Board who have helped ensure the project is designed by young people, for young people.

This project is a partnership effort between the Council, Circle Collective, Phoenix Housing and our award-winning employment service Lewisham Works and made possible by funding from Youth Futures Foundation. This programme aims to identify barriers facing marginalised young people and collaborate with them to develop effective strategies for system change.

This project is guided by our new Inclusive Economy Lewisham strategy which sets out the Council's mission to equip young people with the skills they need to succeed as well as making sure residents across the borough can achieve their potential and access economic opportunities. It also aims to put young people at the heart of service design.

Our offer to employers and local providers

We at Elevate 100 want to collaborate with local service providers and employers to maximise opportunities for young people in the borough.

By working together, we can support you by:

- promoting your jobs to a pool of trained and job ready young people
- promoting your support services and referring your programmes and activities
- coordinating focus groups of young people to help you improve your services

- co-locating opportunities as an outreach location for your organisation
- offering workshops and a training space

Find out more about how we can work together by contacting us at elevate100downham@gmail.com.

Growing business voice for Bakerloo Line Upgrade & Extension

The Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Extension is the next big opportunity for the capital, transforming transport links across the capital, linking customers and employees to businesses, new and old. As the UK Government focuses on unlocking economic growth and raising productivity across the country, we want to show them the potential this project has for not only London - but the UK too.

Featured in the London Growth Plan and London Infrastructure Framework, we are now calling on the government to commit to delivering the upgrade and extension in the upcoming Comprehensive Spending Review and 10-year Infrastructure Strategy.



Business for Bakerloo

Several businesses including LandSec and Delancey have come together to create our sister campaign, Business for Bakerloo, aimed at establishing a strong business voice for the project.

We encourage any supportive business, big or small, to sign-up to the Business for Bakerloo campaign via businessforbakerloo.com alongside our own pledge drive at backthebakerloo.org.uk.

Other ways your business can help spread the word

- **Display a supporter sticker on your business premises!** - please reach out to our campaign at business@lewisham.gov.uk to get a sticker sent across

- **Tell us why the Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Extension matters to your business!** - share on your social media using the hashtags **#BackTheBakerloo** or **#Biz4Bakerloo**, or by emailing the address above

Addressing the gap in online business skills

The Council is thrilled to announce the launch of its new online marketplace House of Lewisham, dedicated to showcasing the creativity and talent of local businesses and artisans while supporting them on their online business journey. From fashion and apparel, gifts, homewares and more, the marketplace is packed with locally made products.

House of Lewisham was previously an online store to celebrate the unique culture and community of Lewisham. Now, in its new iteration, which is led by the Council, it provides a platform for shoppers to buy directly from local featured creators, helping grow and sustain our local early stage or micro maker enterprises.

Digital divide

A 2023 high streets survey found that:

- only 1/3 of independent high street businesses are selling online
- and 1/3 of independent business owners want to learn how to sell online but struggle with accessing resources, technology, and balancing it with running their business

We wanted to address this skills gap, so, along with the site platform, the programme offers training and support to these early-stage businesses through tailored and community-based e-commerce and small business skill development.

"As an inclusive and ambitious borough, Lewisham is committed to tackling inequalities and driving transformative change. To further develop our vision of an inclusive local economy, we are creating conditions where skills, resources, and income can grow, stay and circulate throughout Lewisham. House of Lewisham is a key component of the Inclusive Economy Lewisham strategy and action plan, ensuring that local businesses thrive and contribute to our vibrant, equitable community." - **Councillor Ese Erheriene, Cabinet Lead for Business, Jobs and Skills**



Croydon a prime destination for investment and development

Executive Mayor of Croydon Jason Perry

Photos: Nnenna Nnachi-Cole



Croydon is London's largest single opportunity borough. I shared this message at the South East London Chamber of Commerce Executive

Lunch in February—a dynamic event where business leaders, investors, and innovators came together to learn about Croydon's regeneration journey.

As the Executive Member for Business, Economy, and Culture at London Councils, I discussed our borough's growing importance in London's future. Working with the Deputy Mayor of London for Business on the London Growth Plan, we are positioning Croydon as a prime destination for investment and development. The response at the lunch was overwhelmingly positive, with many questions reflecting the growing confidence in Croydon's future.

This optimism is already translating into action. Start-Up Croydon's Creative Digital Lab, located just off Purley Way, is a game-changer. This state-of-the-art facility provides local businesses with direct access to industry-standard equipment, ranging from production suites to podcast studios. We are proud to have secured funding to support its development, offering unparalleled opportunities for producing high-quality digital content within the borough.

During a recent visit, I met with CEO Saffron Saunders to discuss the lab's role in nurturing local talent and fostering innovation. I also participated in a podcast highlighting the borough's regeneration efforts and the importance of supporting creative enterprises. The lab has initiated partnerships with institutions like the University of the Arts London (UAL) to deliver programmes such as the Unreal Engine course, and with the London Learning Consortium to offer a Creative Digital Roadshow across South London. These collaborations aim to enhance skills and create new career paths for our residents.

Guided by our Economic Inward Investment Plan, I have been working with education providers and community organisations in Croydon and throughout the South London Partnership to improve access to education and training. I want our residents to thrive in their careers, and for employers to have access to a skilled local workforce.



Mayor Perry with Louise Cooper, the COO of The BRIT School



All Heads Recognized podcast studio in South Norwood

The London South Bank University Campus in Croydon exemplifies our commitment to providing opportunities for our young people, training a third of all London's nurses. Croydon also boasts a thriving small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector. We are proud to be home to renowned creative institutions, such as The BRIT School for Performing Arts and Technology in Selhurst, which continues to produce world-class talent, including artists like Adele and Raye. The school reinforces Croydon's reputation as a hub for creative excellence, and I am working with the BRIT School to explore new ways to create opportunities for Croydon's young people, keeping culture at the heart of our borough.

Through partnerships with London South Bank University, The BRIT School, Croydon College, and Universal Music Group, we are building a talent pipeline that will fuel the borough's creative and digital industries for years to come.

Our borough is also leading in skills and employment access. Through the Connect to Work programme, Croydon is pioneering a new approach to help those furthest from the labour market find meaningful employment. This five-year, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) funded initiative will support over 4,400 people—especially those with long-term health conditions or complex barriers. It is being delivered in partnership with the South London Partnership, which includes the boroughs of Croydon, Kingston, Merton, Richmond, and Sutton.

The programme will create new pathways to work by fostering stronger integration between employment services and local systems, such as the NHS, adult social care, skills providers, and employers. Connect to Work builds on Croydon's experience delivering employment initiatives like the Work and Health Programme Pioneer, reflecting our ongoing economic commitment to tackling economic inactivity and supporting inclusive growth.

One of my priorities in my Mayor's Business Plan is to ensure that Croydon's young people have opportunities to gain skills that support their future careers. That's why I was delighted to attend the launch of the All Heads Recognized podcast studio in South Norwood, which helps young people develop media and communication skills through hands-on training. Backed by our South Norwood Regeneration Programme, funded by the Mayor of London's Good Growth Fund and Historic England's High Street Heritage Action, this initiative empowers young voices and equips them with the tools to shape their futures.

From creative startups to community-led skills training, we are building an economy that is inclusive, innovative, and future-focused. We are supporting our young people, backing entrepreneurs, and creating the right environment for growth—one investment at a time.

Find out more:

www.startupcroydon.co.uk
www.creativedigitallab.co.uk

The Royal Borough of Greenwich hosts Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network Conference 2025

The Royal Borough of Greenwich had the honour of hosting the **Co-operative Councils' national conference and AGM** on 12 and 13 February, bringing together councils, businesses and experts to learn and share ideas on better ways of working for, and with, local people for the benefit of their local community.

The Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network (CCIN) was hosted at Woolwich Works, in the heart of Woolwich's creative district, which has a rich history of co-operatives, with the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society opening as far back as the 1700s before merging into the national Co-operative Wholesale Society.

As a member of the network, Royal Borough of Greenwich was proud to host this year's CCIN – which fittingly took place during International Year of Cooperatives – bringing together leaders, communities, and decision-makers from across the UK to explore new and creative ways councils can help tackle the country's big challenges. Co-operatives play a significant role in fostering innovative approaches to economic growth. Through democratic decision-making, they empower individuals and promote inclusive growth to tackle environmental, economic and social challenges.

The CCIN Conference would not have been possible without the sponsorship of Greenwich Leisure Ltd, which itself started as a co-operative in 1993 and now over 30 years on is the UK's largest provider of public leisure and cultural services.

As part of the conference, Royal Borough of Greenwich launched a range of recommendations through their strategy Together for Greenwich: Co-operation for the Future aimed at empowering residents, businesses, and stakeholders to shape a sustainable and inclusive future. This is the first-of-its-kind for the borough, which was brought together by a dedicated Commission chaired by The Rt Hon. the Lord Bassam of Brighton with a focus on solving challenges in three key areas.

Supporting new and existing co-operative start-ups and businesses

Co-operatives play a crucial role in local economic development by creating good jobs and strengthening retail and financial services. By supporting existing co-operatives and promoting the creation of new ones, the strategy finds solutions to strengthen the local economy and provide staff with a greater stake in the work they do.



Social care

The current adult social care system is in crisis. A solution being explored is commissioning local, small, ethical, or third sector provision – while also building publicly-owned capacity – by providing a clear path for how social care co-operatives can grow and contribute to a robust social care system.

Community Energy

Community energy projects empower local communities to generate and own renewable energy, from solar, wind, or hydro energy to broader energy initiatives. These projects contribute to a more sustainable future and address critical issues like fuel poverty by providing affordable energy options to households struggling with high energy costs. The recommendations offer a way to strengthen the infrastructure that allows community energy to thrive, promoting

sustainability and generating funding for projects that directly benefit communities

Councillor Mariam Lolavar, now Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care and Borough of Sanctuary said: "As the former Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy, Business and Skills, Together for Greenwich has become a part of the legacy I leave to local businesses across Royal Greenwich. It is a powerful step towards building a more inclusive, fair, and sustainable future.

"By embracing co-operative values, we are putting our communities at the heart of decision-making, ensuring that everyone has a voice in shaping the services and opportunities that matter most. These recommendations are not just about policy; it's about real change led by our residents, that strengthens our local economy and transforms the way we support one another."

Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Royal Borough of Greenwich said: "Co-operatives have a proven track record of creating meaningful jobs, strengthening local economies, and putting people above profit.

"As part of our commitment to growing the co-operative movement in our borough, we are aligning with the government's ambition to double the size of the UK's co-operative economy. Through these recommendations, we are ensuring that economic growth benefits everyone, not just a select few."

Building on the success of the CCIN conference, the Royal Borough of Greenwich will be supporting Co-operative Fortnight from 23 June to 6 July. The council will launch a programme in the coming weeks. If you are a new or existing cooperative, mutual or community interest business and want to find out more please email business@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.

Read the recommendations made in Together for Greenwich: Co-operation for the Future: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/coop-strategy



Best of Royal Greenwich Business Award winners



Following months of anticipation, the exceptional **Best of Royal Greenwich Business Award winners** were revealed at the prestigious awards ceremony on Friday 7 February. Over 330 local entrepreneurs, business owners, investors and stakeholders attended the annual event at InterContinental London – The O2 to celebrate local businesses' success and hard work.

Royal Greenwich's rich diversity was reflected in the list of finalists. With 47% of the shortlisted businesses female-led and 51% of businesses owned by people from a range of backgrounds including African, Caribbean, Chinese and Indian heritage.

This year's event was sponsored by LandsecU+ and the South East London Chamber of Commerce and hosted by Ayesha Hazarika, a political commentator, writer and comedian.

The top accolade of Business of the Year went to Inclusive Stories Ltd, who provide unique subscription boxes filled with diverse children's books and sensory fidget toys specifically designed for families raising autistic children. They won £3,000 for a project of their choice.

Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Royal Borough of Greenwich, said: "Huge congratulations to our winners and finalists, who have achieved amazing things over the last year.

"Royal Greenwich is a world-class place for businesses to establish themselves and grow. Our vision is to create an inclusive economy that works for everyone and does not leave anyone behind. Local businesses are vital in creating prosperity for local people and we want to thank them for their important contributions to Royal Greenwich"

Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy, Business, Skills and Greenwich Supports – and Head Judge – said: "It was wonderful to celebrate our incredible winners and finalists at the ceremony on Friday. Competition was high across all categories this year, so it was no easy feat to choose who would win.

"This year's winners reflect the exciting range of industries in the borough – from AI to education, fashion to physiotherapy, food stalls to furniture design. We are so proud of our business community and the Business Awards are our chance to shine a light on their remarkable achievements."

Three categories – Best Food and Drink Venue, High Street Business and Market or Mobile Trader – were determined by 3,265 public votes.

Royal Borough of Greenwich received £3,000 in sponsorship for prizes towards the Mayor's Raffle, which raised £1,240 for the Mayor of Greenwich's charities: Commonwealth and Gurka Garden Project at the St George Garrison Church and Bowel Cancer UK. A further £555 of event ticket sales also went to these worthy causes, making a grand total of £1,795 raised.

The winners are:

- **Business of the Year**
Inclusive Stories Ltd
- **Best Food and Drink Venue**
Cakes & Layers
- **Best New Business**
The Coffee Studio
Highly Commended: We Candle It
- **Digital**
Roon's Catering
- **NEW CATEGORY: Entrepreneur - Over 30**
Inclusive Stories
- **NEW CATEGORY: Entrepreneur - Under 30**
TULASI
- **Greener Greenwich**
University of Greenwich
- **Health and Wellbeing**
Woolwich Service Users Project (WSUP)
Highly Commended: The Community Hospice
- **High Street Business**
Village Greengrocers
- **Innovation**
AI Accelerator
- **Made in Greenwich**
Haneker
- **Market or Mobile Trader**
Butter Me Up
- **Professional Service**
Clearcut Physiotherapy
Highly Commended: Ginkgo Financial Ltd
- **Staff Development**
Home-Start Greenwich
- **Tourism and Culture**
Art and Craft Greenwich Market
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Transforming Orpington leisure

The multi-million-pound transformation of the **Walnuts Leisure Centre** is delivering a major boost to leisure for Orpington and the wider borough.

The substantial upgrades at the leisure centre in the London Borough of Bromley will deliver improved gyms and reconfigured changing rooms with new showers and lockers. A new competition-length pool will be provided to benefit residents and swimming clubs alike, supporting Bromley's position as a hub for regional sporting activity.

New exercise studios with power-assisted equipment are being created to provide support to those with mobility issues or undergoing rehabilitation. Works will also include essential repairs to the centre and the installation of completely new heating system, which will reduce costs and help ensure the smooth running of the site.

The works are now well underway at the centre, with the swimming pool now drained as part of the strip out works to ready the sites for complete refurbishment.

Councillor Yvonne Bear, Executive Councillor for Renewal, Recreation and Housing, said: "Transforming this centre is a significant investment that we have prioritised, not only to provide an important boost to the borough's leisure provision, but also to complete essential works to help reduce our future maintenance liabilities, ensuring the centre serves Orpington and council taxpayers effectively for many years to come."



Scaffolding is now being set up around the Walnuts leisure centre ahead of the more substantial phases of the works. The upgraded centre is set to open next year, following its closure in January to allow for refurbishment.

To minimise disruption during the works, Mytime Active, the borough's long-standing leisure provider, is running a comprehensive programme of alternative leisure services, including group exercise classes, aquafit, indoor cycling, swimming and a fully equipped gym at the nearby Crofton Halls and Sports Centre, the Darrick Wood swimming pool and Biggin Hill swimming pool.

Steve May, interim Managing Director at Mytime Active, said: "The refurbishment of Walnut's Leisure Centre is far more than just a fresh coat of paint, it's an exciting multi-million-pound investment designed to transform the centre into a vibrant hub for our community, ensuring it remains a key resource for generations to come."

"We are committed to offering support whilst the Walnuts is temporarily closed and have invested in a comprehensive wellbeing offering featuring all the same friendly faces our customers know from the centre, including personal trainers and health and wellbeing experts, to keep our Walnuts community together, positive and active."

The refurbishments are being progressed with the Council's partner contractors Alliance Leisure, a specialist in leisure centre redevelopment, and sub-contractor Etec Contract Services.

Ruth Ripsher, Delivery Manager at Alliance Leisure Services said: "We're excited to be getting underway with these works and delivering these leisure improvements based on our 25 years' experience leading on over 260 high quality leisure centre redevelopments."

Updates about the leisure centre works are being provided on the council website.

<https://www.bromley.gov.uk/LeisureCentresRefurbishment>

Focus on Bexley



A new community space for Erith

Exciting developments are underway at 68 Pier Road, where an ambitious transformation is set to bring a vibrant multi-use community space to Erith.

Known simply as '68'—a name chosen by local residents through a public vote—the new facility will provide a welcoming hub for volunteering, employment and training opportunities, social gatherings, events and community services.

A London Borough of Bexley project, supported by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Greater London Authority (GLA), as part of the Erith Regeneration Programme, the scheme aims to enhance community spaces and encourage local engagement. 68 will feature a kitchen, hireable event spaces, meeting rooms, and a Changing Places toilet to ensure accessibility for all.

A highlight of the facility is its indoor courtyard, providing a relaxing space for residents and a venue for outdoor events. With construction work progressing, 68 is set to become a vital hub designed in collaboration with by and for the people of Erith.

Talking Business: Supporting local entrepreneurs in Bexley

Small businesses are the backbone of our local economy and through the Talking Business programme, Bexley entrepreneurs are receiving tailored support to help them grow and thrive.

One such success story is Graham Baker, an award-winning commercial photographer based in Welling. Graham's work helps businesses and entrepreneurs move from behind their brands to confidently presenting themselves in front of them. His expertise spans business and corporate photography, headshots, aerial photography and immersive 360-degree virtual tours.

Recently, CNT Associates provided Graham with expert business support through Talking Business, covering key areas such as:

- **Business Model Canvas** – Streamlining and refocusing goals for strategic growth.
- **Cashflow Forecasting** – Strengthening financial planning for sustainable success.
- **SEO & Website Positioning** – Enhancing digital visibility through expert guidance.
- **Networking & Collaboration** – Encouraging new connections, leading to the creation of a dedicated local networking group.

Reflecting on the support he received, Graham said: "While I already had a business plan, the streamlined Business Model Canvas process helped me refine my goals, especially around industry-specific networking and collaborations. This has allowed me to implement a more strategic marketing plan focused on my ideal clients."



I used to feel that Bexley was somewhat overlooked when it came to business support compared to neighbouring areas like Greenwich, Bromley, and Kent. However, in the past couple of years, access to free business support programmes like Talking Business has changed my perspective. These initiatives have inspired me to create new networking opportunities specifically for businesses in Bexley."

Beyond his photography business, Graham is also an ambassador and peer support volunteer for StrongMen, a charity that helps men dealing with bereavement-related emotional and mental health challenges.

Graham's journey demonstrates the real impact of accessible business support in Bexley. Thanks to an extension of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, supported by the Mayor of London, Talking Business will be returning to Bexley in April 2025 to continue helping local businesses.

To learn more about the programme and upcoming opportunities, visit www.bexley.gov.uk/talkingbusiness.

How BBE can help you recruit staff for free

Finding the right employees can be challenging and costly. Bexley Business & Employment (BBE) makes it easy by connecting local businesses with skilled job seekers—at no cost.

How it works:

BBE offers a free recruitment service with access to a pre-screened talent pool.

Employers benefit from:

- **No-cost hiring** – No advertising or agency fees.
- **Pre-screened candidates** – Job-ready individuals matched to your needs.
- **Ongoing support** – Helping businesses and employees succeed together.

BBE success story: From jobseeker to a new career

James, a Bexley resident, joined BBE's talent pool in November 2024 after struggling to find work. With experience in customer service, team leadership and operations management, he was a strong candidate but needed guidance.

Initially seeking a retail management role, James worked with his advisor to explore other options. His CV was updated and he was connected with potential employers. In January 2025, he applied for a role at CO-OP Funeral Service, excelled in the interview, and secured the job. By February 2025, he was thriving in his new role.

BBE helps job seekers find meaningful employment while supporting businesses in recruiting top talent.

Looking to hire or find work?

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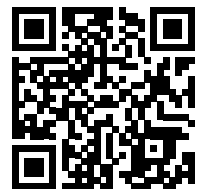
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trips by **150,000**





Image: Warren King Photography

Why death and dying is everyone's business

Kate Heaps, Chief Executive of Community Hospice, is passionate about changing the conversation around death and dying. She talks to Sarah Dale about her latest fundraising expedition – trekking across the Sahara Desert – and why death is everyone's business.

Dying is part of life - but talking about it is still a difficult conversation for many people, a fact Kate Heaps and her team are trying to change for the positive.

Having worked in palliative care for over 30 years, Kate understands the power of two simple things - compassion and kindness - and how they can build a stronger, more compassionate community.

"People used to be so much more comfortable talking about death. In fact, we've gone backwards over the years," says Kate. "As a society, we used to spend time with people who were dying in their homes and it was just a normal part of life. These days, many people often only hear about death through violent news stories, which makes it feel even more frightening. We need to help people understand what a natural death really means, and make death and dying feel more normal again."

"With the Assisted Dying Bill being in the news in recent months, it has meant that more people are talking about death, which is positive. But as a community, we all have a role to play in supporting one another - and that includes in the workplace. Many of our colleagues and customers are likely to be caring for someone or grieving a loss at some point during their employment. Talking about death can feel difficult, but it starts with compassion and kindness.

"Businesses can help create a culture where people feel supported, simply by encouraging open conversations, offering flexible policies, and signposting to local support – like the hospice."

Many people think that palliative care is just for people at the very end of life, but what the hospice does goes way beyond that. Its purpose is simply to support anyone living with a terminal illness to live as well as they can, for as long as they can.

The hospice, which opened in 1994, also provides training to a variety of people from businesses and organisations, from specialist education and support for GPs, District Nurses and care home workers, to training people to be Compassionate Neighbours - a programme of incredible volunteers who help tackle the loneliness and social isolation of local people. Many go on from the training to become an active Compassionate Neighbour, where they donate an hour a week to befriend someone living nearby who is facing a terminal illness.

"We are always on the lookout for like-minded businesses to partner with us," says Kate.

"The hospice can be a valuable and strategic partner to Chamber members, helping them to address the challenges employees and employers are facing while keeping teams motivated and engaged."

Community Hospice, which joined South East London Chamber of Commerce several years ago, has grown its workforce under Kate's leadership from around 60 employees to more than 200 and now have between 350 and 400 volunteers.

"We are a large, important business in the local community," explains Kate. "People think of us as a healthcare provider and a charity, and we are both of those things, but we are also a registered company, which includes our palliative care services, retail, training and fundraising. We are just like any other business and need to generate income to sustain our hospice. It is great to learn from other Chamber members and to be able to support each other.

Chamber members have been incredibly valuable to us over the years, especially in providing advice and introductions. And I would hope that we can support other Chamber members where we can too. Many employers will have employees facing a terminal illness or a loved one who is very sick and need our guidance or advice. We all know how important it is to look after your staff, especially when they are facing terminal illness and bereavement, it will be repaid in spades."

The hospice has a turnover of £13 million - £5.5 million of which comes from the government. This means that they must raise £8 million a year to keep all their services running. With hospices located in nearby boroughs, their fundraising activity is restricted to the area surrounding the hospice which has around half a million residents. "When a local business supports our hospice, they can be confident that their donation stays within the community, directly helping local people," Kate adds. "This sense of making a real difference to the community where they live, and work can be an incredibly powerful influence."

While funding is a key challenge for hospices, another concern for Kate is inequity of access to hospice services.

"It is so important that we make sure that the care we provide is available and appropriate for the whole of our community regardless of background," she says. "With the death rate going up nationally, more people need our support."

The national picture, shares Kate, is that you are more likely to be referred for hospice support if you are female, white, younger or have cancer.

"We have a very diverse community here and we are serious about making sure that older people, people from global majority communities and people with any terminal illness get the support they want and need," she said. "We do a lot of outreach work so that more people in the borough know we are here, what we do and how we can help them."



Kate recently returned from a fundraising expedition in the Sahara Desert as part of a team of 27 hospice supporters. Over the years, she has also done a sponsored abseil and taken on Snowdon. "It was an amazing experience," she says.

"For me, the additional benefit was I was able to really reconnect with some people who have experienced our support first-hand. I try and do that through my day-to-day role, but when you're walking alongside people, it's easier to build connections. It's very powerful. I knew it was going to be a physical challenge, but I don't think I had anticipated the depth of emotion. The majority of the group were bereaved and we had cared for their loved one. There were some really touching stories and the trek was part of their bereavement journey."

Collectively they raised £101,000, an "incredible amount of money, more than we could have dreamed of" and donations are still coming in.



The hospice has recently taken on Darren Bennett, in a new role of Corporate Partnerships Fundraiser, and they are planning to hold a business breakfast event later this year. If you would like to attend or you just want to find out more about working with the Community Hospice you should email Kate or Darren at team@gbch.org.uk.

To find out more visit communityhospice.org.uk

Toxic mix as businesses prepare for tax rise

Business sentiment remains very weak as taxation continues to be the top concern, according to new research from the British Chambers of Commerce.

Ahead of the rise in national insurance (NI) contributions, which came into effect on April 6, the BCC Quarterly Economic Survey for Q1 surveyed more than 5,000 businesses across the UK, 91 per cent of which are SMEs).

They found that business confidence remains low, with less than half (48 per cent) of businesses expecting their turnover to increase over the next 12 months, compared with 49 per cent in Q4. Pre-Budget confidence was 58 per cent in Q2 2024 and 56 per cent in Q3 2024. Confidence levels are lowest in the retail sector (38 per cent) and the transport and logistics sector (40 per cent).

Three-fifths (59 per cent) of businesses say tax, including national insurance, is now a concern.

A quarter (26 per cent) of businesses have cut back on investment in the past three months, while only 20 per cent have increased investment.

Most firms surveyed (55 per cent) are expecting to put up their prices over the next three months, with labour costs continuing to be the main driver.

The survey was carried out before the recent Spending Review, with the fieldwork conducted between February 10 and March 10. The data also shows that most firms are expecting to raise prices.

Over half (55 per cent) of responding firms say they expect to raise their prices in the next three months, the same elevated level as Q4. While 43 per cent of businesses expect prices to stay the same and only 3 per cent expect them to decrease.

Labour remains the main cost pressure for companies, cited by 73 per cent of businesses (75 per cent in Q4), particularly for the production and manufacturing sector with 82 per cent reporting it as a challenge, followed by 81 per cent of firms in the transport and logistics sector alongside hospitality businesses.


As businesses navigate rising cost pressures, 26 per cent said they have cut back on investment plans in the past three months, up from 24 per cent in Q4. The issue is more marked in certain sectors, with 40 per cent of hospitality firms and 35 per cent of retailers reporting a scaling back of investment plans.



Shevaun Haviland, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, said the national insurance rise has been an “impending concern for months” and is now a “toxic reality for millions of businesses across the UK”.

“Our survey shows tax continues remains the top concern, with firms telling us they are planning to cut investment and raise prices, just to balance the books,” she said.

“Exporting firms have been dealt a further hammer blow by US tariffs. The cost pressures for business at home and abroad are now huge.



“Sustained economic growth will only come through businesses, not Government. While there were some limited announcements in the Spring Statement which we welcome – it is hard to get away from the bleak growth predictions.”

“Sustained economic growth will only come through businesses, not Government. While there were some limited announcements in the Spring Statement which we welcome – it is hard to get away from the bleak growth predictions.

“We urgently need the Government to publish a wider tax roadmap, which includes national insurance, to give firms a direction of travel to lower cost pressures. Ministers must also focus on infrastructure projects and promoting exports, as a springboard for business growth.

“The Employment Rights Bill also threatens to fuel further costs and complexity on

businesses at a very delicate time. While Government has listened and made some sensible changes – the legislation as it stands risks unintended consequences which will limit economic growth.

“The Government needs businesses to invest and grow to kickstart the economy. But unless swift action is taken to ease cost pressures and support firms, growth will remain elusive.”

David Bharier, Head of Research at the British Chambers of Commerce said: “It is clear that business sentiment is in a slump following the Autumn Budget last year and this fresh dataset shows no improvement

to that. In some indicators, we have seen a further worsening.

“This is to be expected as costs have piled on businesses simultaneously. On the domestic side, tax rises, specifically the NICs increase, are consistently cited by businesses as a concern. A global tariff war is also a major blow for both importers and exporters.

“The end result is a low growth outlook, weak investment among SMEs, and damage to global trade. As we see from the data, as more firms expect price rises, this could further fuel inflation and limit further interest rate cuts.”

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Autism Acceptance Month: Unlocking the potential of neurodiverse employees

At London South East Colleges (LSEC) we are committed to ensuring an inclusive workplace, where all staff can thrive. April is Autism Acceptance Month, so we want to highlight the value that neurodiverse employees bring and the simple but effective adjustments that can help them succeed.

Neurodiversity - including autism, ADHD, dyslexia and other neurological differences - offers unique strengths in the workplace. Many neurodivergent people bring fresh perspectives, strong problem-solving skills, attention to detail and great focus. Yet, despite these strengths, only 3 in 10 autistic adults are in employment, with many facing barriers such as rigid workplace structures, lack of understanding and difficulties accessing the right support.

As an FE college, we already work hard to support neurodiverse students - so ensuring that our staff receive the same understanding and adjustments is a natural next step. By making workplaces more accessible, employers can create an environment where neurodivergent employees don't just cope, but excel.

Case Study: Leah's Experience at LSEC

Leah Stone, LSEC's Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Officer, was diagnosed with ADHD and autism as an adult. Learning about her neurodivergence was a turning point, helping her make sense of her experiences and develop strategies to work effectively.

Leah says: "Since joining LSEC five years ago, I've been really well supported by my manager and my colleagues, which has made such a difference to my life – both in and outside of work. It has also made me passionate about encouraging other employers to create environments where neurodiverse staff can thrive."

Here are five adjustments that have made a real difference to Leah:

- 1. Flexible working** – Hybrid or flexible arrangements help neurodiverse staff manage sensory overload and social fatigue. Leah works from home most of the week, allowing her to perform at her best.
- 2. Clear communication** – Providing advance notice of meetings and structured expectations reduces stress and improves productivity.



- 3. Consistent workspaces** – A dedicated workspace (rather than hot-desking) helps with focus and reduces anxiety.
- 4. Inclusive culture** – Encouraging open discussions about neurodiversity helps develop a sense of belonging. Support networks and visible role models in leadership will create an inclusive environment.
- 5. Neurodiverse-friendly recruitment** – Offering interview questions in advance and allowing different assessment formats makes the hiring process more accessible.

At LSEC, we believe that creating an inclusive workplace benefits not just neurodivergent employees, but the whole organisation. By embracing neurodiversity, all types of businesses can unlock a wealth of talent, innovation and fresh thinking.

Visit [LSEC.ac.uk](https://www.lsec.ac.uk) for more information.



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At Shooters Hill Sixth Form College, we are dedicated to offering a comprehensive Careers Education, Information, Advice, and Guidance (CEIAG) programme to all students. Our goal is to equip students with the skills, knowledge, experience, and resources necessary for success in their chosen pathways. Our Careers and Employability Education is customised to cater to specific vocational areas and academic levels.

Below is an overview of our Careers Programme, outlining the careers and employability activities available throughout the year.

Careers Guidance

- Careers Guidance Meetings
- Careers Guidance Drop-ins
- Careers Advice at Enrolment
- Virtual Careers Advice
- Next Steps Group Workshops
- Progression Appointments
- Online Careers Resources
- School Visits and Transitions

- Work Ready Interviews
- External Guest Speakers
- Mock Interviews
- Careers Fair
- Speed Networking Events
- Job Search Skills
- Apprenticeship Advice
- Work Experience
- Future Skills Days
- Apprenticeship Application Advice

- Open Days
- Educational Trips and Visits
- Visiting Guest Speakers
- Employer Experience
- Work-Related Learning
- College Taster Days
- Enrolment Support
- Parents' Evenings, Assemblies/Induction

Employability

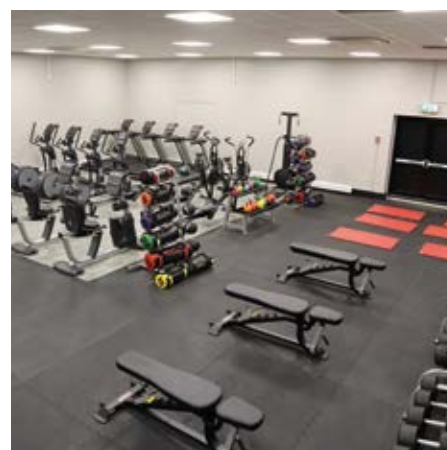
- CV Workshops
- Interview Skills Techniques
- Employability Skills Sessions
- Blended Learning Employability Programme & Tutor Programme
- Careers and Employability Events

Events

- College-wide Visit to Skills London
- National Apprenticeship Week
- College Careers and Apprenticeship Fair
- Higher Education Fair

Higher Education Support

- UCAS Clearing Support - Drop-ins and by Appointment
- UCAS Application Support
- Personal Statement Writing and Course Search Support
- University Visits
- Student Finance Support
- Higher Education Fair



Booking for our next open event is now live!

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For further information, please contact our Futures Manager, Jas Mato, via email at Jas.mato@shc.ac.uk

Supporting Careers in Education: London South East Colleges' 'Preparing to Work in Schools' programme

London South East Colleges (LSEC) is helping to bridge local skills gaps in education through its 'Preparing to Work in Schools' Sector Work Academy Programme (SWAP).

This pioneering initiative provides adult learners with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to embark on careers as teaching assistants in schools, particularly in the crucial area of Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Delivered in partnership with London Borough of Bromley and Jobcentre Plus, the SWAP programme is designed to support career changers, returners to work and those looking to develop skills in education. Running for six weeks, the programme combines theoretical learning with practical experiences. It covers essential topics such as educational systems, safeguarding, communication techniques and strategies for supporting children with SEN.

Participants benefit from engaging lectures delivered by SEN professionals, group activities and school visits. This provides first-hand insight into working with children who have additional learning needs, helping learners develop inclusive teaching practices and see what life as a teaching assistant is really like.

The programme has been extremely successful so far, with 26 learners having completed it.

Janice Chanan, a former retail and hospitality worker, enrolled in the



course after being recommended by her Jobcentre.

Reflecting on her journey, she said: "The course was well-organised and delivered, offering valuable insights in a clear and engaging manner. The mix of theory and practical tools helped me to see myself as a Learning Support Assistant. The support from my tutor and the interview opportunities provided at the end were invaluable."

Janice has since secured a role as a teaching assistant at Langley Park School for Boys, where she completed her school visit during the programme.

Similarly, course participant, Emine Gerguri, said: "I learned lots of new concepts and new things about working in an educational

setting, such as the different stages of school life and how to deal with certain situations. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in this course."

Emine is now progressing onto a Level 3 Teaching Assistant course at LSEC, further strengthening her career prospects.

Other participants from the latest cohort have secured a variety of jobs at nurseries and schools across the region, including: Cleeve Park School, Little Sunshine Day Care, St George's CE Primary, Monkey Puzzle Nursery and Riverside School.

With a growing demand for skilled teaching assistants and SEN support staff, this programme is playing a vital role in addressing local workforce shortages.

For those considering a career in education, this course offers a pathway into nurseries and schools, providing the foundation needed to make a real difference in children's lives.

For more information, contact: Dagmara Lubienka at: kickstart@lsec.ac.uk

**LONDON
SOUTH EAST
COLLEGES**

Sustainability in Action

Want to get on the
sustainability journey
but don't know where
to start?





By Mark Jenkinson,
Crystal Associates
and SELCC Board Member.

In this quarter's edition of Masthead we feature some exemplary organisations from across our five boroughs which should inspire you and your business to take the next step.

Before we hear from them here's a quick update on what we at the Chamber have been up to over the last quarter on the green agenda.

Greener Greenwich Business Breakfast

A year on from the Greener Greenwich Summit 2024 (GGS24), the Royal Greenwich Council in conjunction with the South East London Chamber of Commerce (SELCC) held a Greener Greenwich Business Breakfast event.

We shared how things have progressed since last year's Summit, held workshops focused on the four project initiatives, and explored how businesses - large and small - can play your part in the battle to tackle Climate Change.

As a reminder, the four Greener Greenwich projects under the four themes are:

- 1. Embedding Wider Change:** All Greenwich businesses to develop a Carbon Footprint Action Plan
- 2. Buildings (and energy):** Scale up energy efficiency measures in domestic and non-domestic buildings
- 3. Transport:** All Organisations to develop a Green Travel Plan

- 4. Green and Digital:** Employers to pledge their support to Local Colleges and Universities to deliver the right green and digital skills in the borough

See the update (<https://greenergreenwich.org/documents/Greener-Greenwich-Update-Mar-2025.pdf>) for more detail on our Greener Greenwich activities in the last 12 months.

SELCC Sustainability Group

This quarter the SELCC Sustainability Group was kindly hosted by Royal Museums Greenwich (RMG).



We were treated to hear about how RMG is decarbonising its heritage buildings as well as its approaches to greening up transport and reducing waste through recycling and reuse.

In May we plan to visit the University of Greenwich's Avery Hill campus to see its sustainability measures in action, including its air-source heat pump and natural spaces to talk about the importance of biodiversity. Keep an eye on the SELCC website as we may have some places available to join the presentation/tour.

Well, that's enough from me for now. Please enjoy and be inspired by the four case studies showing sustainability in action and feel free to contact me (mark@selondonchamber.org) if you would like to share the good things you're doing – as well as any lessons learned!

“In May we plan to visit the University of Greenwich's Avery Hill campus to see its sustainability measures in action, including its air-source heat pump and natural spaces to talk about the importance of biodiversity.”

Sustainability is key to success



Air Source Heat Pump installed at Avery Hill campus

The University of Greenwich knows sustainability is key to its success and that of its community and the wider planet. Over the last ten years we have made significant progress in our work in the area and have been recognised for our sustainability leadership through several awards.

In the last year alone we have successfully installed a large Air Source Heat Pump at our Avery Hill campus leading to a 55% reduction on gas consumption and carbon emissions on one of our major sites.

This work and other energy efficiency programmes is helping on our journey to meet the university's Net Zero target by 2033

– given our size and the particulars of our estate, this is no easy task.

Currently our estate and fleet's carbon emissions have reduced by 33% since 2018/19 whilst our student and staff numbers have increased significantly.

Our ambition is "sustainability excellence in everything we do" and this is being carried across our areas of work. In November 2024 the university launched its Sustainability Strategic Sustainability Action Plan which set out our ambitions to deliver sustainability across our TEF gold rated teaching, research and operations.

For example, we have developed resource reuse schemes meaning that furniture and other items are reused internally and where we can't rehome them, they are donated to local hospitals, care homes, schools and charities.

We have given away over £110,000 worth of items since 2019 and in 2024, our students donated over £20K worth of clothing to local British Heart Foundation shops.

These initiatives have saved significant amounts of carbon, saved money and

waste in procurement and cut down on disposal charges.

Our work creating nature rich habitats have meant we now have endangered species thriving on our campuses including dormice, hedgehogs and birds of prey.

Sustainability is also about how we develop partnerships, sharing our ideas and deliver positive social and environmental outcomes.

We work closely with Charlton Athletic Football Club, its Charitable Trust as well as other organisations to deliver positive outcomes for our students and community.

Partnerships with large companies such RSK and IBM have led to national and local awards, including an innovative professional development programme for staff, and recognition locally for our net zero and circular economy achievements.

Net Zero and sustainability at the University of Greenwich comes with unique challenges. We have multiple campuses, listed building and shared spaces and well as large student and staff numbers. However, we are proud of the progress we have made and determined as ever to reach that net zero number.

Unlock the power of renewable energy



Green Shield Group is a leading renewable energy solutions provider, helping businesses reduce energy costs, lower carbon emissions, and gain greater energy independence. With a data-driven approach and flexible funding options, we deliver tailored systems that support sustainability and long-term savings.

"As a Southeast London resident, I'm passionate about helping local businesses take control of their energy use," says Andrew Ladbrook, Regional Director. "With energy prices rising and sustainability targets growing, now is the time for businesses to act. What I love about Green Shield Group is our proactive, can-do attitude. We don't just identify problems; we find practical ways to deliver results."

That mindset has driven Green Shield Group's success with major clients across London, including global hotel brands like Hilton and IHG. At Crowne Plaza Docklands, a rooftop solar PV system designed by Green Shield Group is set to reduce CO₂ emissions by nearly 15,000kg in

the first year alone while cutting grid energy demand by 4%.

At The Westminster London, by Hilton, we installed a 75.03 kWp solar PV system generating over 66,000 kWh of renewable energy annually. Alongside two voltage optimisers, the project is reducing the hotel's energy demand by an estimated 8% each year. The result? A payback period of over seven months and projected first-year savings of over £175,000.

Green Shield Group understands that switching to renewable energy is a big decision. But for businesses looking to future-proof their operations, it pays off. As energy costs continue to rise and sustainability is no longer an option but a key business priority, energy efficiency has already become a foundation for long-term commercial resilience.

Whether you're a small business or part of a large estate, renewable energy is a smart investment that builds resilience, drives down costs, and strengthens your sustainability credentials.

Ready to explore what's possible for your business?

Get in touch with Andrew Ladbrook for a chat and discover how we can help you unlock the power of renewable energy.

a.ladbrook@thegsg.co.uk • www.greenshieldgroup.co.uk



green shield group

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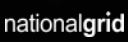
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Tackling Food Waste in Greenwich:

A Borough-Wide effort for a Sustainable Future

Food waste is one of the most pressing environmental challenges we face today—and the numbers speak for themselves.



Photo from WRAP website 8 April 2025

In London alone, around 33% of all food produced to supply the city is lost or wasted, with 67% of that being edible. This waste not only contributes to food insecurity, but also accounts for 10% of London's consumption-based greenhouse gas emissions. Much of this food ends up in landfill, where it emits methane—a potent greenhouse gas—and squanders the energy, water, and labour that went into producing it.

In response to this urgent issue, the UK government is introducing new legislation under the Simpler Recycling initiative. From March 31, 2025, all businesses in England with 10 or more employees will be legally required to separate food waste from other waste streams. The goal: to improve recycling rates, reduce landfill use, and ensure food waste is more appropriately treated through methods like composting and anaerobic digestion.

A Local Response: How Good Food in Greenwich Is Leading the Way

Greenwich has long been at the forefront of progressive food work. As a founding member of the Sustainable Food Cities network (now Sustainable Food Places), the borough committed in 2012 to a systemic approach to food. By 2014, this work evolved into Good Food in Greenwich (GFiG)—a dynamic food partnership built on collaboration between individuals, businesses, public institutions, and community groups.

GFiG champions food that is good for people, the planet, and the local economy—and tackling food waste is central to that mission.

Charters as a Tool for Action

One of the most powerful tools developed by GFiG is its sector-specific Charters, which provide clear, actionable frameworks tailored to different sectors including

hospitality, education, retail, community organisations, developers, social landlords, and workplaces.

Each Charter outlines simple but impactful steps organisations can take to become part of the borough-wide good food movement. When it comes to food waste, the Charters emphasise practical changes such as:

- Implementing food waste separation and recycling schemes
- Reducing surplus through improved stock management and menu planning
- Offering surplus food to community groups or food redistribution schemes
- Using compostable packaging and refill stations
- Educating staff and customers about waste reduction

These actions help businesses and organisations prepare for upcoming legislation, but more importantly, they contribute to a greener, more resilient borough.

Charters Leading by Example

The Charters are especially relevant as the new regulations approach. They provide tailored support for settings where large amounts of food are handled daily, from office kitchens to convenience stores. By aligning waste practices with sustainability goals, these Charters help organisations lead by example while meeting compliance requirements.

Join the Movement

Good Food in Greenwich is more than a campaign—it's a growing community of change-makers. Whether you're a business owner, community leader, school representative, or resident, there's a way to get involved and help reduce food waste across the borough.

Email: info@goodfoodinggreenwich.org

Website: www.goodfoodinggreenwich.org

Together, we can create a food system that is healthier, fairer, and far less wasteful—for Greenwich and for the planet.

Sustainable Celebrations: The 4YaParty Story

In an industry known for excess, waste, and single-use decor, one South London entrepreneur is leading the change for a greener future.

Mercedes Gale Parr, founder of **4YaParty Weddings & Events**, has built a thriving business with sustainability at its heart—proving that beautiful celebrations don't have to come at the planet's expense.



Mercedes' journey began with a passion for event styling and a desire to create stunning spaces for weddings and special occasions. However, in the first year of business, 4YaParty

provided single-use decor and balloons, contributing to the very waste problem Mercedes would later fight against.

Her turning point came after seeing a graphic image of a turtle with a straw lodged in its nose, she decided to change her business model the very next day. Determined to make a difference, she restructured 4YaParty into an eco-friendly event decor business, ensuring sustainability was at the core of everything she did.

What sets 4YaParty apart is its commitment to a circular economy and zero waste principles. Mercedes prioritises upcycling, repurposing, and renting out decor rather than encouraging disposable purchases. By sourcing pre-loved items, working with sustainable suppliers, and encouraging couples to embrace reusable decor, 4YaParty is dramatically reducing the waste that comes with events.

Mercedes' efforts have not gone unnoticed. Over the past five years, she has earned multiple industry awards and recognitions, including the Sustainable Wedding Award, the Gold Plastic Free Champion Award and the Silver Ecologi Award amongst others.

As a public speaker and ambassador for the Sustainable Wedding Alliance, she uses her platform to educate others on the importance of sustainability in events and with her new business 4YaBiz, she coaches solopreneurs from all industries

on how to make their business more sustainable.

Now, with 4YaParty growing, Mercedes has set her sights on the next big step—franchising. By expanding through a network of like-minded franchisees, she hopes to bring sustainable celebrations to more couples across London and the South East, while ensuring that every new branch upholds the brand's green values.

Mercedes' story is a testament to the power of small businesses in driving change. Her journey from a passionate entrepreneur to a leader in sustainable event decor is an inspiration to fellow business owners, proving that with vision, innovation, and commitment, it's possible to build a successful business that truly makes a difference.

For more information about 4YaParty Weddings & Events or 4YaBiz, visit www.4yaparty.co.uk.

TfL's emission reduction targets validated in line with Paris Agreement

Transport for London's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets

have been validated as aligning with limiting global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The Science Based Target initiative (SBTi) has validated TfL's near and long-term greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and net zero targets, in line with the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

It is the first time TfL has set near and long-term emissions reduction targets across all areas of its business, extending beyond its own vehicle fleet and buildings to include its contracted services, construction projects and supply chain. Together these targets align with TfL's aim of reaching a 90 per cent reduction in emissions across its operations by 2030.

It has renewed momentum behind TfL's work to remove fossil fuels across its buildings, transitioning its operations to renewable sources, installing green heating, LED lighting and other energy efficiency measures in its head offices, depots, train stations and bus stops, as well as work to convert its vehicle fleet and buses to zero emission.

Transport for London's commitments on climate action have been recognised as the gold standard.

Deputy Mayor for the Environment, Mete Coban, said: "This is brilliant recognition



for all the work TfL is doing to reduce carbon emissions not just within the organisation but across their whole supply chain.

"The Mayor is committed to leading the way on cutting carbon emissions and initiatives like this are helping us to continue building a better, greener London for everyone."

"As the capital's public transport provider, we have a vital role to play in reducing carbon emissions, ensuring our organisation and network are making a major contribution in response to the climate emergency and taking action to reduce harmful pollution in our city."

Lilli Matson, Chief Safety, Health and Environment Officer at Transport for London, said: "We are delighted to have received this certification from the Science Based Targets initiative, which has confirmed we are on track with our current targets, supporting world-wide efforts to keep the rise in global temperatures under 1.5 degrees.

"As the capital's public transport provider, we have a vital role to play in reducing carbon emissions, ensuring our organisation and network are making a major contribution in response to the climate emergency and taking action to reduce harmful pollution in our city. We will continue to maximise our efforts to maintain London's place as a world leading sustainable city."

Susan Jenny Ehr, Interim Chief Executive Officer from the Science Based Targets initiative, said: "Climate science is clear: rapid and deep emissions cuts are essential if we are to achieve global net-zero. Today, Transport for London steps up, joining the growing list of companies cutting emissions across its entire value chain in line with science, and actively contributing to limiting warming to 1.5°C."



Bombardier announces new paint facility at London Biggin Hill Airport

New partnership between CAFC and Westbury

Charlton Athletic were recently delighted to announce a new partnership with **Westbury FM LTD**. It marked a significant step in its commitment to both football excellence and community engagement, underscoring a shared dedication to creating opportunities both on and off the pitch.

As part of this agreement, Westbury FM will both serve as the official sleeve sponsor of Charlton Athletic Women's Football Club, while also supporting vital community initiatives through Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT), aiming to support and inspire the next wave of female leaders, both in sport and the workplace.

A priority of this partnership is to empower future generations through community initiatives. In collaboration with CACT, Westbury FM will play a crucial role in 'Pathway to Work', an experience programme aimed at young people from CACT's mental health, youth services, and early intervention programmes. Through hands-on training and mentorship, this initiative will provide invaluable career development opportunities for individuals looking to enter the workforce, particularly in the Royal Borough of Greenwich and the London Borough of Bexley.

Westbury FM's commitment extends beyond sponsorship, ensuring young people have access to real-world job

experience and the guidance they need to build successful careers particularly backing women in sport and industry. A key aspect of this partnership is Westbury FM's sponsorship of Charlton Athletic Women, with their brand proudly featured on the sleeve of the women's first-team shirts for all league and cup fixtures.

This collaboration also includes mentorship and career guidance for Charlton Athletic Women's players and academy squads, with a focus on female leadership and representation in traditionally male-dominated industries.

It is vital that partnerships like these have a measurable impact, and not only will this collaboration will feature matchday branding and digital content to showcase the positive impact of Westbury FM's support, CACT will provide social value calculations to measure the impact of Westbury FM's investment in the local area and beyond.

For more information, please contact steve.sutherland@cafc.co.uk

Canadian business jet manufacturer Bombardier has announced further investment in London Biggin Hill Airport with the addition of a new two-bay paint facility to enhance its high-quality service offering.

With plans to open in the second half of 2026, the facility will be approximately 51,000 sq. ft. and designed to accommodate all Bombardier Global, Challenger and Learjet aircraft. It will be a significant addition to London Biggin Hill Airport's infrastructure and once operational, it is estimated to generate more than 50 skilled jobs, underscoring the airport's support for local job creation.

Robert Walters, Commercial Director at London Biggin Hill Airport, commented: "Bombardier's sustained investment in new facilities at London Biggin Hill highlights the airport's role as a strategic hub for MRO operations. Together with Bombardier, we will continue delivering premium services to our customers, creating valuable local employment opportunities, and strengthening our contribution to the regional economy."

The new paint facility complements Bombardier's state-of-the-art 250,000 sq ft European Service Centre, which opened in 2022 and draws global clients to south London with its wide range of capabilities and excellent service provided by skilled technicians and staff.



LONDON
BIGGIN HILL
AIRPORT

Securing the Future: How **Financial Advice** transformed More2 Nurseries

Running a small business comes with challenges, from managing cash flow to securing long-term financial stability. For More2 Nurseries, a childcare provider in South East London, expert guidance from financial adviser Daren Wallbank and his team at Ginkgo Financial proved invaluable.

Eve Daniels, one of More2 Nurseries' directors, recalls their early struggles. "There were three of us—myself, Glenda, and Kelly. We had different skills, but financial planning was a gap. We didn't fully understand tax efficiency, pensions, or the best way to pay ourselves as business owners."

They initially worked with several financial professionals but struggled to find the right fit. "Some spoke in jargon and didn't really 'get' our business. Others didn't offer anything new. Then we met Daren, and it just clicked. He spoke in a way that made sense, understood our needs, and most importantly, followed through on what he promised."

Building Financial Confidence

One of More2 Nurseries' key steps was setting up a pension scheme for employees. "We wanted to offer more than the bare minimum," Eve says. "Most nurseries just go with the basic Nest pension, but we wanted to give our team a better option. Daren helped us set up a scheme with Scottish Widows, giving employees access to a strong pension plan with online tools to manage their savings."

Financial planning didn't stop at the business level. Eve and her co-directors also benefited personally. "We all have different financial goals," Eve explains. "I'm the eldest, so my retirement planning looks very different from Kelly's or Glenda's. Daren helped us map out tailored financial strategies."

Supporting Employees Beyond the Pay Cheque

An unexpected benefit was the impact on staff financial well-being. "Many of our employees had never thought about pensions or savings," Eve says. "Daren explained things in a way that made sense. Some of our older staff had never had a pension. After speaking with Daren, they realised how important it was to start saving—even later in life."

Beyond pensions, Ginkgo Financial helped More2 Nurseries understand life insurance and shareholder agreements. "Daren ensured we were covered in case something happened to one of us," Eve notes. "That peace of mind is invaluable. If one of us were to pass away, we now have protections in place so our shares wouldn't automatically transfer to our families, who might not want to run a nursery."

The Value of Trust in Financial Advice

For Eve, trust was the biggest factor in choosing a financial adviser. "Daren and his team don't just give advice and disappear. They follow up, check in, and genuinely care. I have a million things to juggle as a business owner, and knowing I can rely on them means I can focus on running and growing the business."

Many small business owners struggle to find trustworthy financial guidance. "I've worked with advisers who say they'll look into something and never get back to me," Eve says. "That's never been the case with Ginkgo Financial. They do what they say they're going to do, and that's rare."

Financial Advice: Not Just for Big Businesses

One misconception Eve hopes to dispel is that financial advice is only for large companies. "You don't need to be turning over millions to benefit from a financial adviser," she insists. "If anything, getting advice early can set you up for long-term success."

For More2 Nurseries, working with Ginkgo Financial has been a game-changer. "It's allowed us to grow with confidence, knowing we're making the right financial decisions. I would absolutely recommend that other small business owners seek expert financial advice sooner rather than later."

As More2 Nurseries continues to thrive, Eve remains grateful for the support they've received. "Daren and his team have been instrumental in helping us navigate the financial side of our business. Without them, we wouldn't be where we are today."

For small business owners considering their own financial future, the message is clear: expert advice isn't just a luxury—it's a necessity.

www.ginkgofinancial.com
www.more2nurseries.com

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Please note: This guide is for general information only and does not constitute advice. The information is aimed at retail clients only. Some Employee benefits are not regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

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GINKGO
FINANCIAL

Making the right connections

Each month the Chamber hosts a variety of events which offer members a superb opportunity to meet and chat to fellow business people. **Here, we review a few of our past events.**

Executive Lunch

with Professor Tony Travers,
Director of LSE London

Thursday, 23rd January 2025

The Chamber held an Executive Lunch at DoubleTree by Hilton London Greenwich in January.

Over 30 members attended for a drinks networking reception. We were pleased to welcome Professor Tony Travers, Director of LSE London.

He provided an insightful overview of London's economic growth and regeneration plans for 2025 and explored the key developments, challenges and opportunities, shaping the capital under a Labour Government.



Greenwich Evening Drinks

at ASN with TfL

Thursday, 30th January 2025

We were excited to partner with TfL to bring our members and their guests a special Greenwich Evening Drinks, hosted and sponsored by Alcatel Submarine Networks at their site in East Greenwich.

Our guest speaker was Jonathan Baggs MCIPR, Community Partnerships Lead at Transport for London (TfL) who discussed the opening of the Silvertown Tunnel and its connectivity impact; new transport schemes set to transform South East London and their capital investment plans for the year ahead

Photos: Warren King Photography



Lewisham Link 'n Drink

at Everest Inn

Wednesday, 12th February 2025

In February, we returned to the Everest Inn in Blackheath for our monthly Lewisham Link 'n Drink, which aims to bring the South East London business community together.

It was great to make lasting connections, and forge new partnerships in an informal setting.

Business Breakfast

with London South East Colleges

Thursday, 13th February 2025



We were joined by Members and Non-Members at the Bromley Court Hotel last week for a business breakfast, sponsored by London South East Colleges for National Apprenticeship Week 2025, which aimed to provide practical strategies to address skill gaps and invest in future talent.

Neil Coates, Deputy Principal Apprenticeship from LSEC and SELCC Board Member, explained how they can support apprenticeships and employer workforce development needs. His presentation discussed how to get people into work, improve people skills in work and developing curriculum and skills for the future.



Bexley Link 'n Drink

with London South East Colleges

Wednesday, 19th February 2025

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our Bexley Link 'n Drink at the Kings Arms.

We were met with both Members and Non-Members from across the five boroughs we represent. We would like to give the Kings Arms a special thank you for hosting us over the past 6 months for our regular meet-ups.

Enhancing Team Management

with DISC Personality Profiling

Wednesday, 26th February 2025

In a recent webinar, Saddiq Fazaluddin, a seasoned professional with 20+ years of experience in the legal sector, explored the power of DISC personality profiling – a proven tool to enhance communication, build stronger relationships, and create a more cohesive, high performing workplace. This webinar was not recorded and cannot be found on our new website.

Executive Lunch

with Jason Perry,
Executive Mayor
of Croydon

Thursday, 27th February 2025

Members and Non-Members gathered in the impressive surroundings of Croydon's Grade II listed Town Hall for an SELCC Executive Lunch with Jason Perry, Croydon's first Executive Mayor. Sponsored by Chamber Member, Caridon Group.

Mayor Perry shared his plans to support the local business community, followed by Q&A, a two-course meal, drinks and networking.

Photos: Billy Watson at Diagonal Design



Bromley Link 'n Drink

at BR6
Restaurant

Wednesday,
5th March 2025

Members and Non-members gathered at the BR6 Restaurant located on the Orpington campus of our Strategic Partner, London South East Colleges, who kindly provided some delicious snacks while guests talked business and forged new partnerships.



Greenwich Evening Drinks

with Thackray Williams

Thursday, 13th March 2025

We held an informative legal discussion evening, in partnership with Thackray Williams LLP at the DoubleTree by Hilton London Greenwich.

Our guest speaker was Julian Munroe, Employment Associate Solicitor at Thackray Williams, who provided clear, practical insights into the latest legislative updates that every employee needs to know. Guests were also treated to two glasses of wine/soft drinks and a selection of canapes.



Lewisham Link 'n Drink

at Ignition Brewery
Tuesday, 18th March 2025

We recently returned to the Ignition Brewery in Sydenham for our Lewisham Link 'n Drink, where members and non-members came together to meet and talk business, to forge new partnerships in an informal setting.

Ignition Brewery gave guests a chance to view their in-house brewery, and also explained their mission to employ and train people with disabilities to brew their great beer.



Business Breakfast

at The Valley

Thursday, 27th March 2025

We were pleased to partner with Charlton Athletic FC to host an engaging business breakfast for our members and their guests at CAFC's iconic, The Valley – a truly impressive venue at the heart of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

With over 70 businesses in attendance, we extend our thanks to CAFC, one of our Strategic Partners and their event caterer, Gather & Gather who sponsored an excellent breakfast and meeting. Guests heard insightful talks from Ed Warrick, Financial Director at CAFC and Jason Morgan, CEO of Charlton Athletic Community Trust.



To book for our future events, please visit our website
<https://www.selondonchamber.org/events>



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IN COLLABORATION WITH SOUTH EAST LONDON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



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To accentuate the island flair expect to be greeted with a glass of refreshing Caribbean Rum Punch.

Wednesday, 21st May 2025

14.00 – 16.00

Price: £37.50 (+ VAT)

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GOLF DAY
2025

Friday 13th June 2025

07.00 – 15.30

Price: **£109** per person

We are pleased to announce that we will be returning to the Royal Blackheath Golf Club for our SELCC Golf Day 2025, Sponsored by Group 1 Automotive

Join us at the historic Royal Blackheath Golf Club where the challenging 18-hole course is set in beautiful parkland, within the grounds of the grand 17th century club house. Guests can look forward to meeting new people and re-connecting with others. This promises to be an excellent golf day with amazing prizes available to the winners.

Please note:

Beginners should not apply, prior golf experience is essential to enjoy the day.

Please email raffgallo@selondonchamber.org if you are interested in attending.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Bexley Link 'n Drink at the Kings Arms

**Wednesday, 18th June 2025
18.00 – 20.00**

We're really pleased to be returning to the Kings Arms in Bexleyheath for a night of networking!

Join us and fellow like-minded businesses, and meet new contacts, suppliers, and maybe even new clients over a drink in a relaxed environment.

You can expect informal networking with representatives of small and medium sized businesses, and a short introduction of attendees.

This event is open to both our members and non-members.

Lewisham Link 'n Drink at the Everest Inn

**Wednesday, 14th May 2025
18.00 – 20.00**

Join us and fellow like-minded businesses for an evening of networking, and meet new business contacts, suppliers, and maybe even new clients, over a relaxed drink.

We will be holding our next Link 'n Drink in Lewisham at Everest Inn in Blackheath, where both non-members and members are welcome!

You can expect informal networking with representatives of small and medium-sized businesses, and short introductions of attendees.

Come along, meet like-minded business people and get to know your local business community better! the team here at SELCC will be on-hand to introduce you to anyone you might like to speak with.

Bromley Link 'n Drink at BR6 Restaurant

**Wednesday, 21st May 2025
18.00 – 20.00**

We're looking forward to returning to Bromley for our next Link 'n Drink networking event, this time hosted at the BR6 Restaurant, located at the Orpington Campus of our Strategic Partner, London South East Colleges.

This informal networking event is the perfect opportunity to connect with fellow business owners and professionals, and in a relaxed and welcoming setting.

GreenwichB2B Link 'n Drink at the Greenwich Tavern

**Tuesday, 6th May 2025
18.30 onwards**

**Tuesday, 3rd June 2025
18.30 onwards**

GreenwichB2B Link 'n Drink in association with the South East London Chamber of Commerce is an informal and free networking event for businesses from Greenwich and bordering boroughs but also businesses from afar.

We meet on every first Tuesday of the month at the Greenwich Tavern.

You can expect informal networking with representatives of small and medium sized businesses, short introductions of attendees and often a short presentation by a regular.

The GreenwichB2B group was started in October 2015. The networking group is organised by Marco Weinand, web developer, software engineer and director at Nomon Internet Solutions Ltd

Greenwich Office Drinks at the Drury Tea & Coffee Company

Thursday, 8th May 2025 18.00 – 20.00

Members and their guests are invited to join us for another great evening of relaxed networking with fellow business people at our Greenwich Office Drinks, sponsored and hosted by the Drury Tea & Coffee Company at their premises on the Royal Arsenal Riverside in Woolwich.

This gathering provides you with the perfect opportunity to connect, share ideas, and grow your network. As in previous years, Drury will be putting on a selection of interactive

demonstrations and a fun competition (with prize!), plus there will be the opportunity to sample a coffee or tea based cocktail.

As a special highlight, Marco Olmi, Managing Director of The Drury Tea & Coffee Company, will share insights into the rich history of their family-run business, which dates back to 1936. Guests will also enjoy an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of their facilities.

Drinks and snacks are included.

SELCC Charity Quiz Night 2025

Wednesday, 11th June 2025, 17.30 – 22.00

Join us for an unforgettable evening at the iconic Trafalgar Tavern

We're back with our ever-popular Charity Quiz Night – and this year, we'll be at a new and stunning riverside venue: the historic Trafalgar Tavern in Greenwich.

If that's not enough, we have a new quiz master on board, bringing a fun and inclusive event designed to entertain quizzers of all knowledge levels.

Gather your team (or come solo) and get ready for an evening of brain-teasing trivia, laughs, and delicious comfort food – all for a brilliant cause.

- Tuck into bangers & mash (vegetarian option available)
- Relax with a drink from the bar and enjoy the elegant surroundings of our new venue
- Put your brain to the test across a variety of quiz rounds – from curious facts to pub classics
- Enter our charity raffle for your chance to win fantastic prizes
- All profits from the night will go to WSUP (Woolwich Service Users Project) – a charity providing critical support for people in our community facing poverty, homelessness, and addiction.

Doors open at 17:30 and the Quiz begins at 19:00 sharp
Teams of up to 8 welcome – or we'll help you find one!

£20 + VAT per person – every penny of profit goes to WSUP

Raffle prizes generously donated by our members

Don't miss this chance to enjoy a great night out while making a real difference

Executive Lunch with Tom Copley, Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development

Members: £50+VAT | Non-Members: £70+VAT

**Thursday, 19th June 2025
12.00 – 14.30**

Join us for our upcoming Executive Lunch with Tom Copley – Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development, on Thursday, 19 June 2025, 12.00 – 14.30 at DoubleTree by Hilton London Greenwich, and sponsored by Grant Saw Solicitors LLP.

12.00 – 12.30 Drinks Reception

12.30 – 13.00 Tom Copley, Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development, will provide guests with an update on his portfolio and plans for the upcoming year.

13.00 – 14.30 A two course lunch with 2 glasses of wine/beer/soft drinks.

Tom Copley oversees the Mayor's two affordable homes programmes, including 'Building Council Homes for Londoners' – the first-ever City Hall initiative dedicated to council homebuilding.

Top 10 Key Terms you need to agree for Your First Business Lease in Partnership with Thackray Williams LLP

**Wednesday, 25th June 2025
10.00 – 11.00**

Taking on your first business lease is a huge step—but navigating lease terms, legal jargon, and negotiations can be overwhelming.

This webinar, led by Associate Solicitors, Sibel Vurdu and Susan Collins from Thackray Williams LLP, will break down everything you need to know—without the legal headaches!

What You'll Learn:

- **Streamlining Lease Negotiations** – Get clear on heads of terms to cut delays and reduce solicitor costs
- **Avoiding Common Pitfalls** – Rent deposits, rent-free periods, repairing obligations—know what to watch out for
- **Faster Deals, Better Terms** – Master key details like the 1954 Act and rent review clauses to get the best deal
- **Effective Communication** – Learn how to work with solicitors, landlords, and agents to keep your transaction on track.

Don't sign a lease before attending this webinar - get the knowledge you need to make informed decisions!

SELCC Summer BBQ 2025

Members: £50+VAT

Non-Members: £60+VAT

**Thursday, 24th July 2025
12.30 – 15.00**

Join us this July for our Annual BBQ!

Get ready to enjoy a summer tradition as we host the South East London Chamber of Commerce Barbecue in the beautiful walled garden of the Clarendon Hotel facing Blackheath.

We invite our members, partners, and colleagues—both familiar faces and new connections—to join us for a relaxed afternoon of good food, refreshing drinks and networking in a vibrant atmosphere.

Renewing Your Business Lease in Partnership with Thackray Williams LLP

**Is your Business Lease up for Renewal?
Here's what you need to know!**

**Wednesday, 3rd September 2025
10.00 – 11.00**

Negotiating a business lease renewal can be daunting – but it doesn't have to be.

Join us as we partner with Thackray Williams LLP for an exclusive webinar where legal experts, Yildiz Betez and David Hacker, will break down the process, helping you secure the best terms and avoid costly mistakes.

What you'll learn:

- **Essential lease renewal terms** – What to negotiate with your landlord
- **Protected vs. unprotected leases** – The legal steps you MUST take
- **Dilapidations explained** – What you'll owe at lease expiry and how to prepare
- **Expert insights** – Avoid pitfalls and strengthen your negotiating position

Business owners, tenants, and decision-makers leasing commercial premises—this session is for you! Whether you're renewing soon or preparing for the future, arm yourself with the knowledge to protect your business.

**To book for our future events, please visit our website
<https://www.selondonchamber.org/events>**

Construction begins on new SEND school in Kidbrooke

Construction has started on a new school for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in Royal Greenwich.

Located on the site of the former Kidbrooke Primary School on Hargood Road, Rowan Wood School is due to complete in early 2026, providing spaces for 128 pupils aged 11 to 19.

Councillor Adel Khairah, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, said: "In Royal Greenwich we want children and young people to achieve great things and fulfil their incredible potential. Developing environments like Rowan Wood School where additional support can be provided will empower them to do that.

"This tailor-made facility will provide the perfect setting for the next generation to learn and grow, and is a great investment in the future of our borough."

Rowan Wood will be managed by The Compass Partnership of Schools, a leading trust dedicated to meeting the needs of students with SEND.

Galliford Try and Pick Everard have been appointed by the council to undertake the works.

Simon Hembury, Associate Director of Project Management at Pick Everard, said: "It's always rewarding to work on SEND schools and consider the unique design requirements that staff and pupils have for their space. At Rowan Wood, that means we're consulting extensively with various stakeholders to ensure we are designing an inclusive space for all, in line with DfE regulations.

"We're looking forward to seeing the site evolve over the course of the year and have a positive impact on the region."

Work starts on £833,000 of improvements to five district centres across Croydon

A programme of works is set to start on enhancing five district centres across Croydon, after the council secured £833,000 from the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in 2024/25.

The projects were allocated the funding by Executive Mayor Jason Perry to support local businesses and job retention by attracting people to the district centres. The five areas to benefit are West Croydon (London Road), New Addington, Thornton Heath, Selsdon and Purley.

In New Addington, the market square stage and boundary walls in Central Parade will be refurbished and improved to support community events. There will be improvement works to the Octagon façade, which is host to the New Addington Pathfinders, who provide support services across the district centre and area.

In Thornton Heath, a new learning garden will be created in Collier's Water Lane, where school children can learn about food growth and nature through gardening activities, caring for raised beds and observing micro-habitats.

In West Croydon, and along London Road, the UKSPF funding will be used to set up power supply and support community events, as well as a new market. The new night and weekend market on Harris Invictus Academy forecourt is being organised by London Road Traders Association.

Footfall to High Street businesses in Purley and Selsdon are also hoped to get a boost by improvement works to district centres. In Purley, these include public art, lighting and green space improvements in collaboration with Purley BID (Business Improvement District). In Selsdon, new signage will help direct people towards the High Street and local green spaces, and shop plaques will be introduced to celebrate local history in Selsdon's 100th year.

Jason Perry, Executive Mayor of Croydon, said: "We are delighted that these projects are getting underway, which will help local businesses and communities across the borough with this welcome £833,000 of investment.

"We have been working with our partners and communities in these five areas to find out how their high streets can most benefit from the funding available, and their input has been essential in shaping these plans."

The £833,000 awarded is part of a wider package of £2.6 million the Council successfully bid for Croydon. Other projects include a Young Entrepreneurs Academy, to support Croydon's next generation of entrepreneurs, aged 18-35.



Galliard Homes acquires former Civic Centre campus site

Leading residential and mixed-use developer Galliard Homes have completed the acquisition of the 6.74-acre former Bromley Civic Campus site in the London Borough of Bromley.

The sale of the former Civic Centre follows the earlier successful move to the new Civic Centre building at Churchill Court by Bromley Council, with the financial savings this brings to the council.

Bromley Palace Park, which contains the former Civic Centre grounds continues to be open to visitors. Set within expansive parkland, the campus is anchored by Bromley Palace and is surrounded by green spaces, residential housing, and a four-storey car park, which was not included in the sale.

The sale opens up the historic Civic Centre site, which spans the Grade II Listed Bromley Palace and several office buildings, for potential redevelopment, subject to planning permission where applicable. This development presents an opportunity to deliver much needed new homes for Bromley, whilst improving connectivity between the Civic Centre campus, the town centre, and nearby residential neighbourhoods. Future plans could further integrate green spaces and linkages with Bromley Palace Park, fostering a vibrant, accessible space for residents and visitors alike.

Councillor Colin Smith, Leader of Bromley Council, said, "Whilst it was very sad to leave our former home at Stockwell Close, the benefits and financial savings the move has already driven before it, ultimately made that decision a very easy one to make. We now wish Galliard Homes, the old Civic Centre's new owners, our very best wishes in bringing their new acquisition to market in the shortest time possible and I know that they will be keen to share their plans to understandably curious neighbours at the earliest possible opportunity".

Simon Welch, Director of Land at Galliard Homes, says: "Bromley continues to be a sought-after location for both residents and investors, with a thriving town centre, excellent transport links, abundant green space, and highly regarded schools. We appreciate the importance of this site for the London Borough of Bromley and are excited to play a role in shaping Bromley's future, supporting developments that build on the area's appeal and create lasting benefits for the community."

The successful completion of the sale of the former Civic Centre site for £13,501,000 followed confirmation in August 2024 that an unconditional offer had been accepted, with the council then also officially moving to Churchill Court, the council's new Civic Centre home opposite Bromley South train station.

“Bromley continues to be a sought-after location for both residents and investors, with a thriving town centre, excellent transport links, abundant green space, and highly regarded schools.”

Purley Pool plans get green light

Plans for a new leisure centre on the Purley Pool site, and the regeneration of the surrounding area, have been approved by Croydon's Planning Committee.

Croydon Council received an application from developers Polaska, the long-term leaseholders, to redevelop the High Street site. Their proposals included a new leisure centre, a later living housing scheme (with 180 homes and a care home), and a new public square to help regenerate and create a focal point for the town centre.

The leisure centre will include a 25 metre six-lane main pool, training pool, 80-station fitness suite and studio space. It will also have a café overlooking the training pool and soft play.

The former pool closed in March 2020.

A key part of Polaska's designs is the regeneration of the area with a new public square and enhanced public realm. There will also be a pedestrian route connecting Whytecliffe Road South and the High Street, helping to improve connectivity from Purley railway station.

Since the initial application was submitted last year, the proposals have been revised. It now includes 10 per cent affordable homes and a locally distinctive public realm strategy to reflect Purley's character.

The Planning Committee also approved a planning condition to increase the proposed public car parking from 50 to 74 spaces, for visitors to the town centre.

Jason Perry, Executive Mayor of Croydon, said: "I remain committed to bringing a pool back to the heart of Purley, to make it easier for local people of all ages to enjoy healthy, active lifestyles.

"We have been working with Polaska on their proposals and listening to the views of our residents to make sure that the proposals are right for the Purley community. The proposals have changed significantly following consultation and this has resulted in more parking spaces and 10 per cent of affordable housing, which will help to meet the housing needs of the borough."

The proposal will next go to the Greater London Authority for consideration, as a referable application, before a decision on the application is formally issued.

Back the Bakerloo

Urgent call to set the signals green on **Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Extension.**



Councils, businesses and partners call for government commitment for growth-unlocking infrastructure project, ahead of the upcoming Spending Review and 10-Year Infrastructure Strategy.

The Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Extension is London's next big opportunity. This widely-backed and shovel-ready project will deliver the economic growth, homes and jobs London and the UK needs as well as improving connectivity, social inequalities and sustainable travel.

This is why the Back the Bakerloo campaign, led by London councils (Southwark, Lewisham, Brent, Westminster), Central London Forward and BusinessLDN, are urgently calling on the government to set the signals to green on this transformative infrastructure project.

We want the government to match London's ambition by committing to deliver the Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Extension in the upcoming 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy and by securing the project's funding for the next 3 years in the Comprehensive Spending Review, both expected in June of this year.

Urgent need for upgrade

The Bakerloo Line is a vital part of London's transport and economic infrastructure, however, with the current train fleet 16 years past its estimated life span, the service is currently at risk of full withdrawal and is a drain on the public purse.

TfL are seeking to upgrade the line with new rolling stock, which would enable the line to run 27 trains per hour rather than the current 20 (a train every 2 minutes) as well as making the service more comfortable and reliable for passengers.

In recent weeks, Andy Lord, the head of Transport for London (TfL) called for a long-term funding deal from the UK government to replace the 50-year-old Bakerloo Line trains and support fixing the rail network from falling into disrepair.

The extension is vital for growth

The first phase of the proposed extension - which TfL is currently conducting feasibility studies for is via the Old Kent Road with new Tube stations at New Cross Gate and Lewisham with the second phase taking the Bakerloo Line beyond Lewisham to Hayes and Beckenham Junction. This would mean making use of the existing National Rail line by converting it to a London Underground operation. This would see Ladywell, Catford Bridge and Lower Sydenham stations integrated into the tube network, helping support development in the south east of London and enabling capacity on the wider rail network.

Long-term benefits

A recent impact assessment highlights the significant benefits the project will bring nationwide, including:

- injecting at least an extra £1.5bn into the UK economy per annum
- unlocking the delivery of 107,000 new homes in London, to address the acute housing crisis
- supporting 150,000 good jobs, including in Goole, Yorkshire where the trains would be built
- breaking down economic barriers as 48% of people within reach of the existing Bakerloo Line live within the top 30% most deprived communities in England
- improving connectivity across London with travel time from Old Kent Road to Oxford Circus cut by nearly two thirds
- accelerating the UK's journey to net zero through sustainable travel, with 150,000 additional public transport trips and 20,800 fewer car trips daily. This will reduce road congestion and overcrowding on buses, as well as improving air quality
- delivering nearly 200,000 square meters of new commercial floorspace along the route

Backers

This shovel-ready project has overwhelming support, and is backed by the Mayor of London, TfL and London Councils. As per TfL's most recent public consultation, of the nearly 9,000 respondents, an overwhelming 89% expressed their support of the Bakerloo Line Extension proposals.

In recent weeks, the Mayor of London and London Councils placed the project at the heart of their new London Growth Plan, highlighting how the upgrade and extension will enable their vision for growth and productivity in the capital.

The project also has significant backing from business with a number of London and UK-wide developers and local businesses coming together to start-up the new Business for Bakerloo campaign, demonstrating the level of investment opportunities the project will bring to the UK.

Mayor of Lewisham, Brenda Dacres said: "For too long south east London has been excluded from the world-class London Underground Network and the benefits of being a well-connected inner London borough. With Lewisham wages nearly 40% lower on average than neighbouring boroughs, the Bakerloo line extension would be a game-changer for unlocking inclusive growth and opportunities not just in the south east but across the UK.

"Along with access to better pay and good jobs, we will see our high streets visited more, local businesses benefit, our roads less congested and air quality improved.

"The wider scheme will also create 150,000 good jobs across the UK and unlock nearly 200,000 square meters of additional commercial floorspace along the route."

“We want the government to match London's ambition by committing to deliver the Bakerloo Line Upgrade and Extension in the upcoming 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy and by securing the project's funding for the next 3 years in the Comprehensive Spending Review, both expected in June of this year.”

At **Woolwich Service Users Project (WSUP)**, we believe in a healthy and connected community that meets people where they are. Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity whatever their situation.

Each week, we support people facing some of life's toughest challenges - homelessness, poor health, addiction, and social isolation- through practical help and deep compassion.

And we're not just talking about change - we've lived it.

Thanks to the generosity of local businesses already supporting us - through monthly donations, free services and time - we've been able to grow our impact and stand strong for our community. Your belief in our mission truly changes lives.

Join this growing network of changemakers.

With the support of the Greenwich Healthier Communities Fund, WSUP is launching a new Health Coordinator role - ensuring our guests can access tailored, early help that prevents homelessness and reduces health inequalities. This is an exciting next step in our holistic journey - one that follows our proud achievement as Health and Wellbeing winner at the 2024 Best of Royal Greenwich Business Awards.



Photo by Chis O'Donovan, courtesy of RBG

But to keep going - and growing - we need you.

Join us by contributing a monthly donation of £50, £75, or £100, or by offering pro bono support in your area of expertise - be it HR, communications, legal, or tech. Your support will directly strengthen local wellbeing, enable safeguarding and peer mentoring and help us respond to urgent needs across our community.

Your support is more than charity - it's a statement of hope, solidarity and local pride.

To get involved or learn more, contact us at info@wsupwoolwich.org or visit www.wsupwoolwich.org. We'd love to welcome you to the WSUP family.

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Crystal Palace Subway shortlisted for Restoration of the Year award

A newly restored subway has been shortlisted for **Restoration or Conservation Project of the Year** at the national Museums + Heritage Awards.

The Crystal Palace Subway has been carefully and sympathetically restored in a £3.5 million project led by Bromley Council and driven by local support spearheaded by the Friends of Crystal Palace Subway.

The structure has now been brought back into public use as a unique, historic building, one of the few remaining structures from the Victorian Crystal Palace complex. Highlights of the restored building include a new glass roof, reconstructed staircases and the reuse and sourcing of heritage materials to maintain the character of the building.

The subway, now run by Crystal Palace Park Trust, has been visited by around 6,000 people in the first three months since reopening, hosting events from a craft market and pop-up cinema screenings to stand-up comedy and a silent disco.

Councillor Yvonne Bear, Executive Councillor for Renewal, Recreation and Housing, said: "This welcome news shows once again the quality of the restoration that has been completed on the much-loved subway, which means that the incredible structure is once again available for residents and visitors to enjoy. As we keep our fingers crossed for the final, we are also pressing ahead with the wider regeneration of this historic park, to ensure that all its magnificent heritage is protected

for the future, along with the thriving green spaces throughout the park."

The subway's restoration was guided by expert advice provided by Historic England with Bromley Council appointing architects Thomas Ford & Partners and conservation specialists DBR Limited to transform the space. The project was funded through several sources, including from the City of London Strategic Investment Pot, more than £1 million from Historic England, and generous donations from numerous individuals.

News of the shortlisting follows the subway winning a National Railway Heritage Award late last year. Techniques used in the restoration project included 3D digital technology combined with historical document research and onsite surveying to unearth obscured or lost heritage features.

The winner of the Museums + Heritage award will be announced at a ceremony on Thursday 15 May.

The subway restoration is the first phase of the major regeneration of the park, being co-delivered by Bromley Council in partnership with Crystal Palace Park Trust, with the next major stage of the works to include the restoration of the Crystal Palace dinosaurs and Italian terraces.

Visit crystalpalaceparktrust.org for more information and booking details.

Explore London's largest free outdoor sculpture park in Thamesmead

Winter Sculpture Park, London's largest free outdoor sculpture park, has come to Thamesmead and is open and running for eight weeks from March 1. Curated by No.32, this immersive event showcases 40 stunning works by 34 talented artists.

The event provides visitors with the chance to walk among striking sculptures and installations, all displayed in the beautiful outdoor setting, blending nature with creativity.

Winter Sculpture Park is located at the former Thamesview Golf Course, now owned by Peabody, and offers a perfect opportunity to enjoy a refreshing walk while engaging with art. Many of the featured artworks were created by local artists from Thamesmead. The venue is also close to the Thames Path, making it easy to combine a visit to the sculpture park with a scenic stroll along the river.

Cllr Cafer Munur, Cabinet Member for Place Shaping, said: "Winter Sculpture Park is a fantastic example of how Bexley's creative spirit is flourishing and it's wonderful to see both local artists and visitors coming together to celebrate art, nature and community in this special way. I encourage everyone to come and enjoy this free, family-friendly event – it's a perfect way to spend a day out in Bexley."

Tickets for Winter Sculpture Park are free of charge and can be booked online on the Gallery No 32 website.

A woman with curly hair, wearing a yellow sports top and orange leggings, stands in the center of the image. She is holding a barbell with green weight plates. The background is a solid teal color.

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Mental health and resilience within your business



RMJ Wellbeing is a multi-award-winning health and wellbeing business assisting clients across South East London.

We have recently been inundated with local businesses who want to take advantage of our latest service which is titled "Wellbeing Within The Workplace Talks".

This service is proving popular in local businesses because employers are struggling with the lack of resilience of their staff within their organisations. These talks are bespoke to each business and are aimed at supporting staff on how to check in with their own mental health and that of their work colleagues. The talks are delivered in person at the business location and offer an overview of how important one's mental health is.

It has been challenging times for many companies and there are several factors as to why resilience is being depleted. A main reason behind this is related to Mental health which is a critical aspect of overall well-being that affects how individuals think, feel, and act. In a business setting, fostering good mental health among employees is paramount to ensure resilience is at its peak. It not only ensures a healthier workforce but also enhances productivity, reduces absenteeism, and improves employee morale. A proactive approach to mental health can create a supportive environment where employees feel valued and understood.

Resilience is having the ability to bounce back from adversity and manage stress effectively. In a business environment, resilient employees are better equipped to handle challenges and maintain performance under pressure. Building resilience can lead to a more robust and adaptable workforce.

As a Director and Member of Wandsworth Chamber of Commerce, which is affiliated to LCCI and London's Local Chambers, it is apparent how resilience is a pivotal part of helping to support our members businesses.

Creating a Chamber of open communication is crucial for building resilience. Employees should feel comfortable discussing their concerns without fear of judgment or retribution. Regular check-ins, team meetings, and anonymous feedback mechanisms can foster a transparent and supportive environment.

Offering training and development opportunities can empower employees and enhance their resilience. Programs focusing on stress management, time management, and conflict resolution can provide employees with the tools they need to navigate challenges effectively.

A positive work environment plays a significant role in building resilience. Encouraging teamwork, recognizing achievements, and promoting work-life balance can create a supportive atmosphere where employees thrive. Acknowledging and celebrating milestones can boost morale and reinforce a sense of community within the workforce.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in promoting mental health and resilience in the workplace. Leaders must lead by example, demonstrating the importance of well-being and resilience. They should actively engage with employees, provide support, and create an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued.

To ensure the effectiveness of mental health and resilience initiatives, businesses should measure their impact regularly. Surveys, feedback sessions, and performance metrics can provide valuable insights into the success of these programs. Continuous improvement based on this feedback can help in refining and enhancing the initiatives.

Fostering mental health and resilience within a business is essential for creating a thriving and productive workforce. By recognising mental health challenges, implementing supportive initiatives, and promoting resilience, businesses can build a strong foundation for employee well-being. Investing in mental health and resilience is not only beneficial for employees but also for the overall success and sustainability of the business.

“Regular check-ins, team meetings, and anonymous feedback mechanisms can foster a transparent and supportive environment.”



If you would like a complimentary online 30-minute **Wellbeing Within The Workplace** Taster session or are interested in any of our other health and wellbeing services, please reach out. Our ethos is to ensure everybody lives their best life!

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Email: allysoncaseley@achieve-psychology.org

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Second floor 15 Montpelier Vale
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Contact: Stelios Papadopoulos
Tel: 07507 622380
Email: info@allcitylocksmiths.co.uk

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106 Eastcombe Ave
London SE7 7LN
Contact: Andres Korin
Tel: 07595988700
Email: andres@akorin.co

Any Rubbish Waste Management Ltd

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Contact: Phillip Davies
Tel: 07956 445946
Email: phil@anyrubbish.co.uk

Business Bosses

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Email: contact@igalorekconsultancy.com

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Email: office@mdpl-gi.co.uk

More2Childcare CIC

The Forum At Greenwich,
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Contact: Glenda Alexander
Tel: 020 8853 3644
Email: glendaalexander@more2nurseries.com

NatWest Group

9th Floor, 69 Park Lane
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Email: richard.stacey@natwest.com

Solutions 4 Pros Limited**T/A AI Accelerator**

81 Charlton Church Lane
London SE7 7AB
Contact: Mike Chatterton
Tel: 07887 773790
Email: mike@aiaccelerator.uk

The Coffee Studio Ltd

44 Creek Road
London SE8 3FN
Contact: Tahir Mehmet / Zaman Beg
Tel: 020 8158 9641
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TULASI

14 Pier Walk
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Email: tulasi@tulasiparmar.com

YMCA Thames Gateway

The Roundhouse, Overy Street, Dartford,
Kent DA1 1UP
Contact: Will Farmer
Tel: 01708 766211
Email: willfarmer@ymcatg.org

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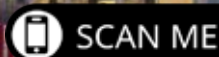
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And finally...

MICHELLE MARTIN

Chief Executive • Volunteer Centre Greenwich (VCG)

Michelle has worked within the voluntary sector for the past 25 years and has been the Chief Executive of Volunteer Centre Greenwich (VCG) for 16 years. VCG is the leading independent voice for volunteering in Greenwich supporting 700+ volunteer involving organisations and local residents.

Michelle holds a Masters degree in Management in Civil Society, has a commercial background and is also a qualified youth worker and trainer.

In 2008 Michelle was selected to represent volunteering for London as a Paralympic Torchbearer at the 2008 Games in Beijing.

What was your first job and what was the pay packet?

My first job was working for Barclays Bank as an office junior. I was 16 and my first pay packet was £160 per month – emergency tax!

What would you do with your last pound?

Give it to Pudsey.

What is the biggest challenge facing your business?

Funding, particularly for our core costs. Costs are going up but funding has been cut or levels haven't risen. We received a donation last year which was very helpful.

If you were Prime Minister, what would be your first decision?

To tackle the cost of living crisis and its impact on poverty, children, mental health and the voluntary sector.

If you could do another job what would it be?

I can't imagine doing any other job as I think volunteering is in my DNA! As well as working for Volunteer Centre Greenwich I am a volunteer bereavement listener and volunteer at my local theatre.

What book are you currently reading?

I love murder mysteries and am currently reading the third book 'The Bullet That Missed' in the Richard Osman series The Thursday Murder Club.

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Creating Pathways to Opportunities

Volunteer Centre Greenwich connects people to local volunteering that builds skills, confidence and community. We support individuals and organisations through tailored advice, training and access to inclusive volunteer opportunities.

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This June, we'll celebrate the heart of it all — the volunteers — at our recognition event during National Volunteers' Week. It's a moment to honour the everyday acts of kindness that make our community stronger.

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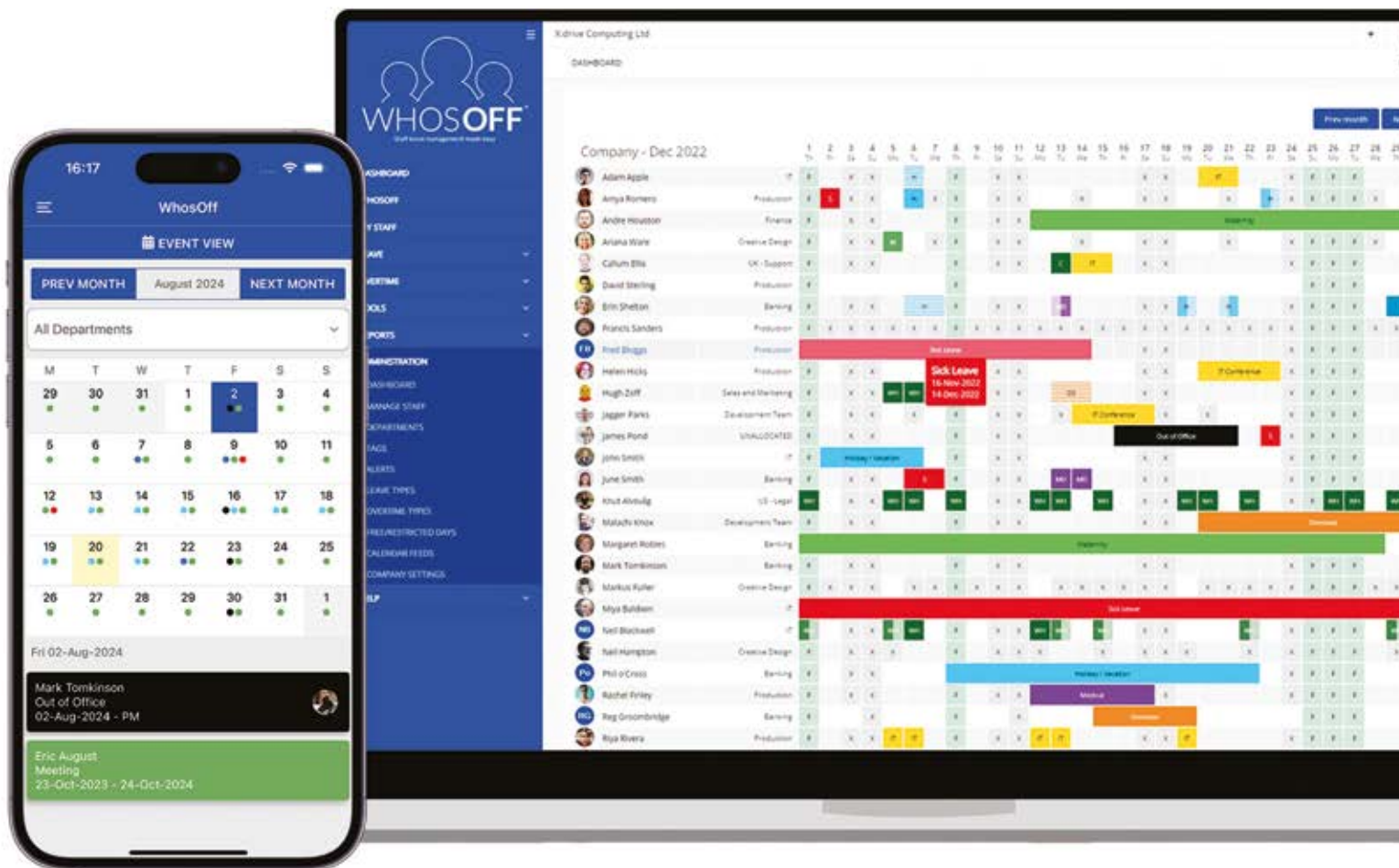
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Apprenticeships are the key to unlocking a pool of talented candidates eager to make a difference in your business.

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We believe in the power of industry collaboration to shape the future workforce. By partnering with us to design course content, you can unlock numerous benefits for your business.

Unlock the Potential of Your Workforce!

Invest in Apprenticeships and Upskilling for a Stronger Workforce!

Embrace the power of growth and potential with our tailored apprenticeship and upskilling programmes.

At London South East Colleges, we believe that investing in your workforce is the key to success in today's competitive world. We work with local, regional, and national employers to identify their training needs.

Are you ready to unlock the potential of your workforce? Email us today at employers@LSEC.ac.uk or call on 020 3954 4965 to discuss how we can help you find the right people for your business.

Invest in Your Future. Empower Your Workforce.



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