

BICESTER VISION

Community Interest Company

Annual Report 2022

Chairman's Report

The Big Picture

This is my second report in the role of Chairman Bicester Vision Community Interest Company (BV CIC), an organisation whose relevance remains as critical as ever, if not more so. As I write I am very mindful that these last few years are so out of the ordinary that they seem without precedent.

Firstly, the United Kingdom chose to leave the EU which, whilst an outcome of our democratic process, has undoubtedly presented challenges. Before the country had settled the implications of doing so we were hit by Covid-19. Nobody would have chosen this plague with its adverse implications for health, wellbeing and happiness but nature, it seems, may well have done. With Brexit still in play Covid-19 was flushed into our lives and if that wasn't bad enough President Putin has now chosen for us a European war, the consequences of which could see such grave miscalculations that all of our professional and personal plans could be utterly up-ended.

Some might think that this is all perhaps rather strategic for the deliberations of a Community Interest Company based in an Oxfordshire market town. The reader may well wonder what on earth all this has got to do with us. The short answer is "Everything". This is because we as a community concern will be assaulted by the collective consequences of these shocks as we help address the adverse effects at the local level. Three years ago, our brief was perhaps promoting prosperity and wellbeing in the context of climate change and a shifting cultural context created by politics, technology and life style choices. How simple those times seem now.

Relevance, Weight and Significance

I started this report with a claim that the Bicester Vision Community Interest Company (BV CIC) is an organisation whose relevance remains as critical as ever; if not more so today. There is a reason for this and it is because as a group we are extremely well placed to help address adverse as well as routine concerns for the following reasons:

We exist to unite all of Bicester's communities as a collective endeavour to ensure shared prosperity and the wellbeing of all.

We are a three-dimensional, community based one stop shop network that provides commercial, community and local government awareness to inform and enable better business and community decisions.

Our membership is made up of some of the finest minds in Bicester from local government, the public sector, the private sector and volunteer cohort.

You are our membership and your collective effort and funding means that we are a force for good in the community because we are relevant, have weight and undertake that which is significant for the advancement of Bicester.

We Have Been Busy

Bicester Vision has over this reporting period seen us undertake a mass of work in pursuit of the betterment of all. One event which leaps out is the youth development effort that was done in partnership with the Chiltern Rangers and Bicester Garrison that involved scrub clearance to enhance local wildlife. In March we hosted a Networking Plus partnership seminar at the excellent Bicester Golf and Spa hotel. Our role as a Delivery Partner on the Bicester Garden Town Strategic Oversight Partnership has continued much to the apparent satisfaction of the Elected Representatives and Officers of Cherwell District Council who would also welcome our continued input into the Bicester Town Centre Task Group. Bicester Vision has also engaged with the Oxfordshire Lieutenancy in a project aimed at reducing reoffending at HMP Bullingdon. Finally, we have maintained community awareness and cohesion through our regular board meetings and newsletters.

Bicester Vision is currently planning a literacy event aimed at our young people and developing the germ of an idea to support mental health through assisting another charity.



Lyndon Robinson: *Chairman of Bicester Vision CIC*

Thank You

May I express my deep gratitude to all our members for their expertise, input and funding. This really is a remarkable organisation. Lastly, I should mention our excellent Business Manager, Grae Laws, and Administrator, Sarah Fraser, without whom none of our work would be possible.

What is a CIC?

A community interest company (CIC) is a type of company introduced by the United Kingdom government in 2005 under the Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise) Act 2004, designed for social enterprises that want to use their profits and assets for the public good.

A community interest company is a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximize profit for shareholders and owners. CICs tackle a wide range of social and environmental issues and operate in all parts of the economy. By using business solutions to achieve public good, it is believed that CICs have a distinct and valuable role to play in helping create a strong, sustainable and socially inclusive economy.

The community interest company emerged from many sources, many citing the absence in the UK of a company form for not-for-profit social enterprises similar to the public benefit corporation in the USA. One notable early proposal was advanced in 2001 by the Public Management Foundation in “The case for the public interest company,” based on research supported by the Gulbenkian Foundation, Gordon Roddick, and the Office for Public Management.
CICs are diverse. They include social and community enterprises, social firms, mutual organizations such as co-operatives, and large-scale organizations operating locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally.

The formation and registration is similar to that of any limited company. CICs must be limited companies of one form or another. A CIC cannot be a charity, an IPS or an unincorporated organization.
Limited liability companies that do not have charitable status find it difficult to ensure that their assets are dedicated to public benefit.
There is no simple, clear way of locking the support of such a company to a public benefit purpose, other than applying for charitable status. The community interest company is intended to meet this need.

When a CIC is requested, the CIC regulator considers whether the application meets the criteria to become a CIC. If satisfied, the regulator advises the Registrar in Companies House who, provided that all the documents are in order, will issue a certificate of incorporation as a CIC.



CICs cannot:

Be politically motivated (see regulation 3 of the Community Interest Company Regulations 2005 (“CIC Regs”)).

Be set up to serve an unduly restrictive group (see regulations 4 & 5 of the CIC Regs).

Be a charity.

Carry out unlawful activities.

A charity can convert to a CIC with the consent of the Charity Commission. In so doing, it will lose its charitable status, including tax advantages. A charity may own a CIC, in which case the CIC would be permitted to pass assets to the charity. CICs are more lightly regulated than charities but do not have the benefit of charitable status, even if their objectives are entirely charitable.

Those who may want to set up a CIC are expected to be philanthropic entrepreneurs who want to do good in a form other than charity. This may be because:

CICs are identified explicitly with social enterprise.
Some organizations may feel that this is more suitable than charitable status.

Members of the board of a charity may only be paid where the constitution contains such a power, and it can be considered to be in the best interests of the charity.
It means that, in general, the founder of a social enterprise who wishes to be paid cannot be on the board and must give up strategic control of the organization to a volunteer board, which is often unacceptable. This limitation does not apply to CICs.

They are looking to work for community benefit with the relative freedom of the non-charitable company form to identify and adapt to circumstances, but with a clear assurance of not-for-profit distribution status.

The definition of community interest that applies to CICs is wider than the public interest test for charity.
CICs must annually provide form CIC34 as part of their annual submission to Companies House. This includes confirmation of Director remuneration and some explanation of their social impact or evidence of the social benefit that they have provided over the last financial year.

CIC 36
Declarations on Formation of a Community Interest Company

BICESTER VISION
Community Interest Company

Community Interest Statement: Beneficiaries

Bicester Vision was formed in 2007 as a community partnership. It has created a climate of positive engagement between all stakeholders in Bicester since its formation. Its success in bringing together employers, three tiers of local government and wider stakeholders is evident in its longevity. The architecture is in place to engage successfully with our communities. Bicester Vision CIC will differ from a commercial company as the Board representation is either directly or indirectly from all three sectors. They balance the collective interest over the single needs of a commercial company or single entity.

The new company's activities will continue to provide benefit to the businesses and residents in the Bicester area, and support the town's long-term economic growth and prosperity.

Bicester Vision exists to drive economic growth and to ensure the town is competitive and attractive to global businesses. It seeks primarily to support the creation of good quality employment opportunities for all ages by supporting and encouraging existing and new businesses to thrive and further strengthen Bicester's unique position within Oxfordshire. It does this by generating and supporting activities which benefit the whole community with a focus on maintaining a vibrant and burgeoning local economy and ensuring the town is attractive and relevant for its residents, visitors and its businesses.

Community Interest Statement: Activities & Related Benefits

Run business focused events that promote the town, drive increased visitor numbers and support town centre regeneration.
By identifying and running events that create economic activity and opportunity and in doing so generate improved social wellbeing for the local community.

Promote the town to a wider audience to ensure Bicester's potential is maximized.
Promoting the economic opportunities in Bicester on both a global and local scale. Creating employment opportunities and raising the aspiration of the local community.

Develop a strategy for job creation and inward investment.
Bicester Vision is well placed to assist Bicester businesses to become more productive and to be able to access funding and business support. This includes contributing to or developing a strategy for job creation or inward investment.
Whilst allowing alignment with Bicester Vision strategy with that of local councils and the Oxfordshire LEP.

Work with local authorities and local businesses.
Ensuring that the voice of the business community is heard and that they are benefactors of new initiatives that local authorities will propose and deliver in the region.

Maintain situational awareness about legislative, cultural, technological and other changes.
Bicester Vision will identify change and encourage business to adapt to wider economic forces through sourcing subject matter experts and holding presentations or workshops that provide practical information as well as the connections to succeed.
This will be possible because the Board representation is broader than that of a commercial company and therefore better sighted on the issues of the day.

Encourage best practice.
Bicester Vision will improve business efficiency by encouraging and celebrating best practice through its contacts in its expansive business network. Because the Board is so diverse in composition it is unique in its ability to map best practice across a wide range of existing and emerging sectors and to offer innovative approaches for its own members as well as the wider community.

If the company makes any surplus it will be reinvested into the activities of the residents and businesses of Bicester.



CIC 34
Community Interest Company Report

Introduction

This reporting period has seen Bicester Vision Community Interest Company (BV CIC) continue to manage the complications brought on by COVID-19, which arguably has highlighted the relevance of such a construct in a time of national crisis. Indeed, many would suggest that our organisation remains as significant as ever; if not more so today. There is a reason for this and it is because BV CIC is extremely well placed to help address adverse as well as routine community concerns for the following reasons:

a. BV CIC exists to unite all of Bicester's communities as a collective endeavour to ensure shared prosperity and the wellbeing of all.

b. BV CIC is a three-dimensional, community based one stop shop network that provides commercial, community and local government awareness to inform and enable better business and community decisions.

c. BV CIC membership is made up of some of the finest minds in Bicester from local government, the public sector, the private sector and volunteer cohort.

These underlying principles coupled with its membership allows BV CIC to be a collective effort using membership funding to be a force for good in the community because BV CIC is relevant, has weight and undertakes activity that is significant for the advancement of Bicester.

Outputs During This Reporting Period

BV CIC has over this reporting period undertaken a mass of work in pursuit of the betterment of all.

BV CIC undertook a youth development effort that was done in partnership with the Chiltern Rangers and Bicester Garrison. This involved scrub clearance to enhance local wildlife and create a context where successful people, in working alongside youngsters, generate mentoring through conversation and physical labour in a constructive environmental setting. It is hard to measure success but the model has been piloted with real potential for the future.



In March, BV CIC hosted a Networking Plus partnership seminar at the Bicester Golf and Spa hotel. Business focussed, it was weighted towards sustainability and the future of electric vehicles from both a business and environmental perspective. Attendance did result in business growth and the exchange of mutually beneficial information and ideas.

BV CIC's role as a Delivery Partner on the Bicester Garden Town Strategic Oversight Partnership has continued much to the apparent satisfaction of the Elected Representatives and Officers of Cherwell District Council who also welcome BV CIC's continued input into the Bicester Town Centre Task Group. BV CIC is shaping the future of Bicester and provides local government with a one stop shop for a local perspective that seeks to inform, guide and counsel political decision making in a partnering context. This has included a Zoom call with a government minister.

BV CIC has also engaged with the Oxfordshire Lieutenancy in a project aimed at reducing reoffending at HMP Bullingdon. At a time of labour shortages in Oxfordshire this is an obvious source of manpower apart from being a compassionate thing to do. BV CIC will provide the network for the prison's yet to be appointed outreach worker to leverage the community in support of his or her aims.

BV CIC has continued to maintain community awareness and cohesion through its regular board meetings and newsletters.

Next Steps

BV CIC is currently planning a literacy event aimed at our young people in partnership with a local bookshop. BV CIC is also working to grow and retain its membership in order to ensure buoyant finances and expand its presence and relevance. This does require effort and potentially greater effort than has been required previously. This may necessitate a growth in our excellent funded professionals and the further development of our doctrine and structure as we endeavour to keep abreast of change.

BICESTER VISION
Community Interest Company

Meet The Exec

Definition of Roles

Observer - not listed at Companies House

Day to day running of the CIC
This is a hybrid role which has been designed so that individuals can work alongside the directors and have access to information without assuming the obligations and liabilities of directors.

Obligations
The observers will have the same rights of access to information and to attend meetings as the directors. The fundamental difference is that they cannot vote on any decision of the directors (unless acting as proxy for a Member/Director from the same organisation).

Director - listed at Companies House

Day to day running of the CIC
The directors are in control of the day to day running of the company. They ultimately report to the members, although they will run the business with little or no formal interaction with the members. Directors do not own the company they simply manage it.

Obligations
The directors have to comply with certain duties, eg act within their powers, promote the success of the company, exercise independent judgment, exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence, avoid conflicts of interest, not to accept benefits from third parties and declare an interest in a proposed transaction or arrangement. The directors also need to be aware of their obligation under the articles, eg appointing new directors (Article 23.2).

Member - listed at Companies House

Day to day running of the CIC
The members are the owners of the company and have ultimate control over it. They are not involved in the day to day running of the company but will be required to approve certain decisions, eg removing directors as per Article 24 (f).

Obligations
The company is limited by guarantee as opposed to shares, ie the members guarantee to pay £1 if the company goes into liquidation.

Lyndon Robinson - CIC Chairman, Observer



Born in Aylesbury in 1961, Lyndon was educated locally and raised in a large family next door but one to the police station, a fact which some have attributed to providence. As a young man he was offered an apprenticeship as a baker and enjoyed wider part time employment in agriculture, hospitality and food supply. At eighteen he secured a place at Plymouth Polytechnic where the principal attraction to his science degree seemed to be undertaking research while scuba diving. His industrial phase saw him work beam trawlers out of Brixham and on graduation he was offered a graduate placement with McDonald's.

Despite enjoying his time with the company, he nevertheless opted for the Army and passed out of Sandhurst in 1985 where he subsequently enjoyed a military career spanning over three decades. To the great relief of his soldiers, he eventually retired in 2020 as Bicester's Garrison Commander.

While in the Army his speciality was amphibious warfare which saw him command a 1,600 tonne landing craft. Despite wanting to command Her Majesty's Army Vessel Ardennes forever the Army had other plans which involved periods of high excitement in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans and Northern Ireland while trying to master other skills such as contracting, facilities management, defence mentoring and logistics more generally.

Having now retired from paid employment his other voluntary activities include his local church and the Chairmanship of Buckinghamshire's Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association. Long past the high water mark of martial arts and rugby his interests today include amateur dramatics, campanology, distance walking and, as he would have you believe, poetry. This ambitious claim is simply based on his having had works published in a couple of now out-of-print books on military poetry. On a more poignant level he has given motivational speeches to those involved in the care sector where he calls upon his extensive period in foster care to inform his audience.

Married to Eleanor, who is noted for her patience, they have two daughters, one of whom is serving with an Oxford based Army Reserve unit while the other is undertaking a doctorate at the University of Oxford.



Lynn Pratt - CIC Vice Chair, Member and Director
Cllr at Cherwell District Council

I have lived in Bicester since 1998 when I relocated from Scotland. However, my roots lie in Lancashire having been born in Accrington too many more years ago than I care to remember.

Having been involved in politics since 1974 but never standing for election before, I was asked to stand for the Bicester Town Council Elections in 1999 and surprisingly won the seat. I have now been on the Town Council for 23 years. I have also been proud to serve as the Mayor of Bicester twice.

I then progressed to stand for Cherwell District Council where I have been a member for 13 years. I am a member of the Executive holding the Portfolio of Economy, Regeneration and Property.

I represent Bicester North and Caversfield on both Councils, which includes the eco development of Elmsbrook. I have been pleased to represent the people of Bicester North over the years and have seen not just my ward but the whole town grow since I came to live here.

Steven Thornton - Member and Director
Director Logistics and Supply Chain UK
at BRITA Water Filters/BRITA Vivreau



Steve has 18 years' experience at senior management / Director level, with the last 15yrs at BRITA UK driving operations, improvements and performance. Extensive experience within manufacturing, distribution, operations management, production and planning across a range of industries, mostly in FMCG. Representing the UK for international logistics within BRITA Group.

Steve is also Director and board member for the Chaucer estate, representing the company's interests and maintaining governance and standards.

When not working, Steve enjoys time with his wife, Jo, and two children. Walking, playing golf, mountain bike riding, motorsport and cooking are all enjoyable passions.

Grae Laws - CIC Business Manager, Director
MD at Beyond Touch

Grae is also Vice Chairman of Bicester Chamber of Commerce.
Grae has spent over twenty years in print and publishing before moving into advanced manufacturing. In 2013 he set up a consultancy company, offering support to owners of small and medium size businesses. Along with his work in Bicester, Grae delivers 1:1 mentoring and small group online workshops for SMEs on topics including Project Management, New Product Development, Change Management, Business Model Planning and Value Proposition.

When not working Grae enjoys photography, painting and fundraising for local charities.

Grae has been managing the day to day activities of Bicester Vision for 7 years and continues to enjoy his role as both director and Business Manager of Bicester Vision CIC.





Amrik Manku - Observer
Oxfordshire County Council

Amrik joined Oxfordshire County Council in March 2020 as the Growth Manager for Cherwell & West. He has over 30 years' experience in local government developing and delivering transport strategies.

In his current role he leads a highly capable group of transport strategy, transport development control and road agreement teams playing a critical role in Bicester's growth story.

His passion is for transport infrastructure investment improving everyone's lives and enabling strong and vibrant communities.

His outside interests include art, culture, travel and Formula 1.



Phil Shadbolt - Member and Director
MD at Zeta Specialist Lighting Ltd

Phil Shadbolt, co-founder of Zeta Specialist Lighting Ltd, has managed the company since its inception in January 1989. Phil is a highly respected entrepreneur and has committed to pushing the boundaries of R&D by continually developing new innovative solutions within the lighting industry. In the last two years Phil has been developing a state of the art electric vehicle charge point. As the lead partner in an OZEV funded innovation project, Phil and his team will install 140 EV charge points across 23 council owned car parks in Oxfordshire.

Phil is the former chairman of Bicester Vision CIC and was instrumental in transitioning Bicester Vision from being a loose partnership into a fully fledged incorporated Community Interest Company.



James Hill - Member and Director
CEO at Adalta Real Limited

James Hill has been a supporter of Bicester Vision for over five years and has been an active Executive Board Member for the last three years.

James lives in north Oxfordshire and is the CEO of Adalta Real Limited.

Adalta Real is a commercial property consultancy and development business which acts for landlords and tenants in the letting, sale and acquisition of commercial properties throughout the Midlands. Adalta Real has acted for many landlords and tenants in the Bicester area since the company was established in 2009. In addition, Adalta actively seek commercial development opportunities throughout the south; their most recent development in the Bicester area was the McDonalds Drive Thru at Baynards Green.

James has been a supporter of Bicester Chamber of Commerce and a founding member of the Town Centre Task Group formed in 2019. This group were formed following a series of engagements with high street guru Bill Grimsey, to review and make suggestions for improving the attractiveness and popularity of the High Street in Bicester.

Sarah-Jane Curtis - Observer
Property Director at Bicester Motion



Sarah-Jane Curtis is Property Director at Bicester Motion, a position she has held since January 2020. Prior to this, Sarah-Jane worked for Value Retail Management Ltd, as Business Director, Bicester Village.

Before joining Value Retail in 2016, Sarah-Jane was Director, Covent Garden for Capco, where she was instrumental in the reinvention of this historical location.

Sarah-Jane spent the majority of her career with Grosvenor, where her responsibilities included London Estate Director and Fund Manager for Liverpool ONE.

Sarah-Jane is a Non-Executive Director at TR Property Investment Trust plc.

Graham Perryman - Member and Director
Owner of Dragonfly Framing



Graham is also the Chairman of Bicester Chamber of Commerce and is now in his second year at the helm. Graham lives in Bicester and is the owner/operator of Dragonfly Framing, a well-respected Bicester based picture framing company. https://dragonflyframing.co.uk.

Graham is a keen artist and photographer and is part of a vibrant arts community in Bicester.



Miranda Markham - Member and Director
Community Relations Director at Bicester Village

Miranda joined Value Retail in 1995 as Deputy Centre Director at the inception of Bicester Village. She has also participated in the opening and community integration of other Villages created and operated by Value Retail, which now total nine in Europe and two in China, in 2014 and 2016 respectively.

For the last decade Miranda's primary focus has been as Community Relations Director for Bicester Village, developing a CSR programme, handling regional PR and assisting with planning and development projects and importantly championing Bicester as a place to live, work and do business.

Miranda has served as a sponsor and governor of Bicester Community College and a Trustee of Oxford Brookes student's union. She represents Bicester Village on a number of committees and non-executive boards and is currently a Director of Bicester Vision, OXLEP and Experience Oxfordshire. She has been a DL since 2008.

Miranda is married to Michael Markham, who farms locally, and they have 2 children. She is fluent in both French and Italian.

Miranda is an active member of Bicester Chamber of Commerce and Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

Richard Mould - Member and Director
Cllr at Bicester Town Council



I am the elected member from Bicester Town Council and sit on the Executive Board of the Vision CIC as a director.

I have been a town councillor since 2007 and have represented the town council with Bicester Vision since 2014. Throughout this time we have seen a number of exciting developments completed around the town, with the first stage of the Howes Lane road diversion being completed with the bridge placed under the railway line at Bucknell Road.

Additional Exec Personnel

Peter Cox - Observer and Proxy for Graham Perryman
Partner at Grange Mews

Duncan Enright - Member and Director
Cllr at Oxfordshire County Council

Richard Byard - Observer
Director at Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Shaun Jardine - Member and Director
Director at Mediation Zone

Michael Waine - Observer
Cllr at Oxfordshire County Council

Jacqui Cox - Observer and Proxy for Amrik Manku
Infrastructure Locality Lead at Oxfordshire County Council

Alex Atherton - Observer
Garrison Commander at Bicester

Paul Reeve - Observer
Representative of HMPS, Bullingdon

Robert Jolley - Observer
Assistant Director at Cherwell District Council

James Metcalf - Director
CEO, Metcalf Security Group

BICESTER VISION
Community Interest Company

Forward Plan 2022 to 2023

What	When	Where	Why	Who
Full Partnership	Thursday 12 May 2022, 12-2pm	**British Bakels, Bicester**	AGM and announcements.	Full Partnership and wider stakeholders
Executive Board	Thursday 9 June 2022, 10am-12pm	Zoom	Operational oversight and strategy.	Executive Board
Executive Board	Thursday 21 July 2022, 10am-12pm	Zoom	Operational oversight and strategy.	Executive Board
Full Partnership	Thursday 15 September 2022, 8-10am	**Bicester Garrison**	Breakfast business briefing.	Full Partnership and wider stakeholders
Executive Board	Thursday 6 October 2022, 10am-12pm	Zoom	Operational oversight and strategy.	Executive Board
Executive Board	Thursday 3 November 2022, 10am-12pm	Zoom	Operational oversight and strategy.	Executive Board
Full Partnership	Thursday 1 December 2022, 12-2pm	**TBC**	Network PLUS partnership event.	Full Partnership and wider stakeholders

Forward Plan 2022 to 2023

What	When	Where	Why	Who
Executive Board	Thursday 12 January 2023	Zoom	Operational oversight and strategy.	Executive Board
Full Partnership	Thursday 10 February 2023	**TBC**	Network PLUS partnership event.	Full Partnership and wider stakeholders
Executive Board	Thursday 2 March 2023	Zoom	Operational oversight and strategy.	Executive Board
Executive Board	Thursday 20 April 2023	Zoom	Operational oversight and strategy.	Executive Board

Business Model Canvas

BICESTER VISION
Community Interest Company

Purpose. The Bicester Vision Community Interest Company exists to unite its communities as a collective endeavour to ensure shared prosperity and the well-being of all.
Operating Model. BV is a registered CIC with directors, members, observers and supporters, some of whom meet monthly at Bicester Town Council's Garth Park to lead and guide the organisation. We also hold open partnership meetings to share interesting news and free workshops.

Key parties that help us

Bicester Vision CIC will not employ anyone directly but will subcontract services as follows:

Manager:
Grae Laws - Beyond Touch Ltd

Accounting:
Azets

Legal:
Brethertons LLP Solicitors

Web/Creative:
Bubble Creative Solutions Ltd

Administration:
Sarah Fraser PA

Social Media Communications:
Ben Jackson, 2B's Ltd

Insurance: Hiscox
Banking: NatWest

Bicester Vision CIC will also look to other organisations for partnering opportunities: SME supporters, Bicester Schools, Chambers of Commerce, Local Authorities, OxLEP, Business Network Groups, CIC Groups

Key activities of the CIC

Representing business at LA meetings.

Planning and participating in Oxon/ Bicester events.

Designing and proliferating collateral about Investment in Bicester.

Finding grants to further our work.

Attending networking meetings to stay abreast of the business sentiment in Cherwell.

Key resources utilised by the CIC

PC and Screen.

Website and domain name.

Cash reserves currently within our bank account.

Manager, Chairman and Administrator.

Digital Image and Video content Library.

Our value proposition

Our unique selling point:
Compared to other partnerships we are a three-dimensional, community based, one stop shop network, providing commercial, community and local government awareness to inform and enable better business and community decisions. We're unique and are often compared to a supercharged BID + Chamber + Mini-LEP.

Our core functions will be:

1.Support business retention and growth in the area.

2.Develop skills and generate enterprise for Cherwell businesses.

3.Promote the betterment of all the people of Bicester, be it economic, environmental, welfare or sustainability.

4.Secure investment in Bicester Town centre and surround.

5.Promote Bicester as a visitor destination.

6.Work with local businesses to ensure compliance and to promote best practice.

Relationship building

Membership model for Supporters of BV.

Direct access to Partnership Manager at their place of work.

Long term community relationship building.

Frequent networking PLUS meetings to learn and share best practice.

Channels to reach customers

Cherwell business networking and community meetings.

Bicester Vision CIC Partnership Meetings.

https://www.bicestervision.co.uk/

https://www.facebook.com/BicesterVision/

https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4147186/

Who we will help

Local Authorities:
We will act as a barometer and conduit to businesses. To assist in implementation of Local Authority strategies.

Local Businesses:
We will be their voice at Local Authority meetings. Support their growth aspirations. Find 3rd party support institutions and facilitate ongoing support. Promote their interest across the County of Oxfordshire.
Help them build competitive business models.

Local People:
We will work to see more investment in Bicester, encourage greater diversification of job opportunities, lobby for improved clean technology infrastructure and work with the NHS and our community to promote a healthy work-life balance.

Community Groups:
We will work with organisations that support the vulnerable in the community of Bicester.

Running costs of the CIC

Subcontract services costs.	Marketing and promotion.	Events hosting.

Sponsorship of Cherwell Business Awards, Mayoral & CDC initiatives, charitable events of our supporters. Young Enterprise for Schools in association with Chiltern Rangers.

Measuring success

We are a not-for-profit organisation. Success will be measured against:
Securing public and private funding for continuity.
Growing the CIC to have greater impact in the community.
Delivering demonstrable outcomes for the public good – as per the Value Proposition.

Revenue generated by the CIC

Size of organisation (based on FT equivalent at group level)	Annual contribution
Micro (0-9 employees)	£500
Small (10-49 employees)	£1,000
Medium (50-249 employees)	£2,000
Large (250+ employees)	£5,000

Grants from Public Sector bodies and funding agencies £5k - £50k.

Partner Updates

spratt endicott
SOLICITORS

ARCh
Assisted Reading for Children in Oxfordshire



wednesday business club

THE COOPER SCHOOL BICESTER

bpi
BICESTER PROPERTY INTERIORS

BRITA

GRAVEN HILL
IMAGINE.CREATE.BUILD.LIVE.

MEDIATION ZONE

BICESTER MOTION

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

BAKELS
BAKERY INGREDIENTS SINCE 1904

Bicester Festival

Bicester Chamber
WORKING TOGETHER FOR BUSINESS GROWTH

OxLEP Business

THE BICESTER SCHOOL
Aspire and Achieve

BICESTER hotel and spa

oyap trust

CATALYST BICESTER

Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

TRITAX SYMMETRY
A TRITAX BIG BOX COMPANY

Whitley Stimpson
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS AND BUSINESS ADVISORS
1931-2021 90th Anniversary

YOUNG enterprise
A Member of JA Worldwide

YOUNG money
Part of Young Enterprise

EZ-CHARGE

ARCh

Award winning charity inspiring children to read

Elaine Adams and Jane Rendle ran the Oxfordshire branch of a national charity called Volunteer Reading Help, subsequently renamed Beanstalk, until 2008 when the charity closed 5 branches in the South of England due to a lack of funding. At this time there were 120 volunteers supporting 360 children across Oxfordshire.

With help from many local supporters, ARCh was set up as an independent charity to carry on the good work, focussing purely on Oxfordshire.

Since that time we have helped thousands of children, thanks to our amazing, dedicated volunteers. The charity's work is unique in Oxfordshire as we provide vetted, trained, resourced and supported volunteers to 120 primary schools in the county.

In 2016 ARCh won the Queens Award for Voluntary Service.

ARCh has been the holder of the Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action (OCVA) Charity of the Year since 2018 and was the Cherwell Business Awards Charity of the Year in 2019.



ARCh Reading Helpers

No formal qualifications are required to become an ARCh Reading Helper, just enthusiasm for reading, enjoyment of children's company and good communication skills.

We provide an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, interview and take up references for every helper. Once the application, checking and initial training process is complete, readers visit their designated school twice a week, for an hour and a half at a time, during the school day. The school selects 3 children for each adult to work with.

Each child benefits from 2 half hour sessions 1:1 with their helper each week. The charity provides books and games to use in the sessions and these are selected with the individual child in mind, to encourage them to enjoy reading.

It is a long term commitment as volunteers continue to work with the same 3 children for the entire year, to build a supportive, mentoring relationship and boost confidence. We do therefore ask volunteers to commit to work with ARCh for at least one year.

It is important that adults enjoy and gain from their experience with ARCh. Many volunteers continue year on year! The average stay is 5 years.



We provide every helper with a book box to use with their three children. Contents are personalised to each individual child's interests and ability, which encourages reading for pleasure.

The book box contains a wide range of genres: picture books, novelty books (for example - pop up, lift the flaps), simple chapter books, poetry, duologues and plays, joke books, puzzles, children's magazines and comics. Non-fiction books are also popular and we provide an atlas and a dictionary too. The box also contains a selection of games.

Our reading helpers get to know their children very well and we work with them to find just the right books to entice their reluctant readers. We also help them to change their resources frequently, so that there is always something exciting and new to engage the children.

Zoom New Volunteer Training

Since the Covid pandemic we have adapted our initial training to run via Zoom – 2 sessions supplemented by a comprehensive manual to read. To ensure the training remains interactive and that everyone has a chance to participate we have limited group size at each training to around 8-10 participants.



This year we have trained over 100 people via Zoom. We hope to return to face to face training courses in 2022 but will continue to offer Zoom training as an alternative.

Volunteer feedback:

"A well thought through example of use of Zoom. The manual seems very comprehensive."

"I felt I was in safe hands – i.e. being trained by people who knew their aims and objectives and had a wealth of practical experience and ideas to offer. Many thanks."

"Excellent – very smooth technically and easy to hear everyone. Clear presentation of the slides and the right amount of content and length of course."

"Obviously face to face would be better, but I thought the zoom meetings were well-created and well-managed. The volunteer manual seems to cover everything we need."

After training ongoing support is provided by our team of experienced ARCh fieldworkers via telephone, email and observation visits to schools.

More than Reading

We have become increasingly aware of the impact our work has on children's mental well-being. Schools frequently select children for ARCh because of the nurturing benefits the twice weekly one-to-one sessions with a special friend in school provide. With ARCh support, children's confidence and self-esteem increases and as a result, the ability to learn and enjoy learning improves.

We welcome support from Bicester Vision and during the next year we hope to work with the business sector and with secondary schools in both the state and independent sectors.

We know that there is now a greater than ever need for our work. The pandemic resulted in so much missed schooling, for so many children. The impact of this will be felt by all children but particularly by the most disadvantaged. There is an obvious need for academic catch up but children will also need support for their well-being and to improve social and communication skills.

Safety of our volunteers, staff and everyone in schools is of paramount importance; we have conducted comprehensive risk assessments and developed new safety protocols so that ARCh volunteers are well placed to help close the attainment gap caused by COVID-19.



Together we can inspire more Oxfordshire children to read

https://archoxfordshire.org.uk/

The Cooper School

This year has seen a real effort to get back to normality. We have been conducting all the Year 11 Careers interviews over the past couple of months, which has shown us the aspirations and plans of our young people. We are really pleased that the students are well motivated, are looking forward to the challenges that they are soon to embark on. Having spoken with all our Year 11 GCSE students, we know there is a huge amount of positivity from them, having endured a difficult few years to get to this point. They are well prepared to live up to our school's motto ('Dream big, work hard, be kind'). Many of our students want to get involved with their communities and make a difference.

We have continued to add to our Careers team. We have two new members of the team: Helen Lewis is working on Careers in the curriculum and Jayne Menzies is our Careers Administrator. We are all working on a 'Careers Week' for Year 10 at the end of the summer term. The 'Careers Week' is where we want to give our students a taste of a range of careers, and we would invite anyone reading this to be part of it.

On 13th July - 19th July (excluding the weekend) we will be seeing a range of businesses on our site, showing off what they do and interacting with our students. We hope this will be extremely valuable for our students and for everyone involved. We will be promoting this event to all our parents and the local community via our social media channels and website. We hope that this could generate interest for any businesses or companies involved.

If this is something you want to be part of, can you please just let us know. If you want to say if there are any specific dates or times within the week (13th July - 19th July - excluding the weekend) please do so by contacting our Careers Team via email. More generally, we are keen to connect and build relationships with as many local employers as possible in order that we develop a workforce who can add value to your businesses. We are interested in hearing of any Work Experience opportunities, placements, apprenticeships, traineeships or vacancies you may have to build long term relationships to help engage the young people (our future) of Bicester.

Please get in contact via careers@thecooperschool.co.uk.

https://www.thecooperschool.co.uk/

Bicester Festival

Bicester Festival is the town's annual community arts event, a celebration of arts and creativity which shows Bicester is alive with creativity and culture. It has something to inspire everyone, whether you want to watch, perform or join in the festival spirit.

After two years, where the impact of the pandemic meant virtual events and smaller gatherings, we hope to bring the community together in 2022. We will build on the most successful components of previous years, bringing them together into a single day with a real festival vibe, combining a parade through the town centre with a music stage, performances and participatory workshops in Garth Park. There will be lots of opportunities to get creative, including arts and crafts, dance, theatre, and music making. There will be something for everyone to see or do - why not try something new!

Highlights for this summer include Festive Road's Gwynhaff, a magnificent, pedal-powered dragon, who will lead the parade and pose for photos, Just More Productions Do What Yah Mamma Told Yah! a vibrant comedy circus outdoor show and Hula-Hoop workshop in the park, and Torrin, 2021 winner of The Voice Kids on the music stage.

Residents, community groups and local businesses are a big part of the festival too, and everyone is encouraged to get involved. There will be opportunities for individuals and groups to share their creative work, to join the parade, and for volunteers in planning or to help things run smoothly on the day. We also welcome help with sponsorship or promoting the wonderful activities on offer. Do get in touch if you want to find out more.

Bicester Festival is organised by a team of volunteers and local arts organisations OYAP and The Mill Arts Centre, with the support of Cherwell District Council and Bicester Town Council.

The full programme will be on the festival website nearer the date https://www.bicesterfestival.org/

Follow @BicesterFestival on Facebook and Instagram and @BicesterFest on Twitter for all the latest news.

Bicester Festival … Be Inspired … Be There!



Bicester Chamber

Bicester Chamber of Commerce have had a great year working with local businesses in Bicester. Our AGM in November was held at the Welcome Back gallery. The gallery featured a wide selection of art by local artists from the Bicester Art Network.

This exhibition has been made possible through the support of the landlord Sarah Gadsden, Cherwell District Council and Bicester Town Council. With thanks to Dragonfly Framing, Bicester Village and Adalta Real.

Funding for the exhibition is from the Welcome Back fund - providing councils across England a share of £56 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to support the safe return to high streets and help build back better from the pandemic.

Beautiful Bicester

2021 saw Bicester move from a recovery phase post-covid to a period of renewal.

With funding from Cherwell District Council and Bicester Town Council we have built the Beautiful Bicester website with a dual purpose for both the local community as well as Bicester based businesses. https://www.beautifulbicester.co.uk/

It features local news and events as well as a Business Directory. Businesses are offered one year free for their information to be featured on the site with a small fee thereafter.

280 businesses are currently featured and 50 have signed up and have content.

Graham Perryman, Chairman of Bicester Chamber welcomes content suggestions for the website – please send any community info and events to him directly.

The Visitor Economy

The Welcome Back Exhibition has demonstrated that Bicester has an appetite for culture and art that enriches our town. Our community needs a place to visit, to spend their time and come together. We should all feel immensely proud of our town which has been the centre of trade and commerce in North Oxfordshire for over 700 years. We need to bring more people into town to enjoy these spaces and places as we ourselves do.

Focus on delivery

Bicester Chamber will be actioning projects that benefit the small business community.

Entrepreneurial opportunities have grown since the pandemic and we will continue to petition for more support and easier access to training schemes and grants for businesses and their staff.

The chamber would like to engage with new small businesses to understand what their needs are, so do reach out to us and share your views.

Graham Perryman, Chairman
https://www.bicesterchamber.co.uk/



Graham Perryman:
Dragonfly Framing
(https:dragonflyframing.co.uk),
Bicester picture framer, Chair of
Bicester Chamber of Commerce and
Director of Bicester Vision CIC

Bicester Chamber
WORKING TOGETHER
FOR BUSINESS GROWTH



Young Enterprise

It has been a really good year so far for Young Enterprise in Oxfordshire.

We have had 24 separate student teams in our company programme from 20 different schools/colleges, including some new schools.

The final Showcase for our teams will be held early May and it will be great to see them get together presenting their achievements.

One day programmes are now picking up with younger year groups so, again, this is very positive.

https://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/what-we-do/where-we-work/region/southcentral/oxfordshire/

YOUNG enterprise
A Member of JA Worldwide

YOUNG money
Part of Young Enterprise

Bicester Hotel, Golf and Spa

Here at Bicester Hotel Golf & Spa we continue to offer an amazing wedding service. This was recognised by nationally renowned company Hitched, who have given us a 5 star award for being the most recommended and valued venue in Oxfordshire.

On Sunday 7th November we held our annual Fireworks Extravaganza, this was the first big social event we have held since the start of the pandemic. In a Covid safe environment over 3,000 people attended for the amazing display and it was great to feel the community spirit back in Oxfordshire. Keep an eye on our social media platforms as we plan an even bigger display for 2022.

It was a pleasure to welcome local MP Victoria Prentis during national tourism week. Victoria last visited us during the start of the pandemic to see the early stages of our new development of the Performance Centre. Being able to invite Victoria back to see the finished article was fantastic. Our new 200m Outdoor swimming lake, outdoor assault course, Performance Gym and outdoor saunas have offered something extra to the local and wider community for both personal use and corporate team building opportunities. For more information on these facilities and available packages please email lee.wood@bicesterhgs.com.

It has been a joy to welcome guests and members back to many of our social events and it is great to see everyone enjoying themselves with huge cheesy smiles. We are sure the next set of events will be a huge hit. Some of these include Abba's Angels Tribute Act on the 1st May, Jubilee Afternoon Tea on the 5th June and Boogie Bingo on the 12th August. For information on these events please visit the events page at bicesterhotelgolfandspa.com.

On Saturday 29th March the Bicester Ice Breaker returned to Bicester Hotel and Spa. With over 40 brave swimmers taking the icy plunge we managed to raise £4,136 in aid of the Crisis charity who provide essential support to the homeless in Oxfordshire. Thank you to everyone for your amazing efforts to support this amazing cause.









Upcoming events

With the exciting development of the Great Wolf project, the upgrade to the front 9 of the golf course is well underway. Once completed, the front 9 will become a stunning 9 hole, 18 tee-off course, with beautiful water features and tricky bunkers throughout. In line with this development we will also be opening the new driving range later this year, so whatever your golfing ability, Bicester Hotel Golf and Spa will be the home of golf for Oxfordshire.

In traditional Bicester Hotel & Spa style, we are always looking to be one step ahead of the crowd. It is with great pleasure that we can confirm that we will be renovating the Health Club Gym & Spa. This transition will provide gym users with the latest equipment in return offering the very best training facility in Bicester and surrounding areas. Keep an eye on our social media channels for illustrations and early bird offers where you can join up to the new state of the art Health Club & Spa at Bicester Hotel and Spa.

New this year! We will be holding a charity fundraiser, co-hosted with Ronald Mcdonald House Charity.
On the 25th September we will be holding the first ever fire and ice challenge at Bicester Hotel and Spa. This event is a fantastic opportunity for members of the community to challenge themselves while walking barefoot across burning hot coals or stride confidently across the broken glass ice. We and Ronald Mcdonald House will soon be sending more information out so we hope you can join us to support this amazing cause.

www.bicesterhotelgolfandspa.com

Bicester Motion

BICESTER MOTION

Innovation and expansion on the cards

Work is very much underway to deliver our long-term masterplan here at Bicester Motion, with a positive planning determination awarded for our Experience Quarter in January of this year and work soon to begin on the delivery of our Innovation Quarter.

Our setting, formerly home to RAF Bicester, is home to a ‘collection of Quarters’, celebrating sustainability and motion through the provision of areas that will be a destination unlike any other.

Within our four Quarters - Heritage, Innovation, Experience, Wilderness - guests will discover an incredible array of overnight residences and actively explore the open parkland, beautiful lakes and winding nature trails which will surround our unique destination.

The Heritage Quarter, our most developed quarter, is now home to over 45 businesses new to Bicester. The Quarter has recently welcomed Brabham Branding Ltd, Burlen and J40 Motor, Electrogenic and HiSpeed Ltd.

In addition to our Scramble! events, the launch of our Scramblers membership club last year also provides us with the opportunity to open up our site on a monthly basis, with smaller-scale themed assemblies free for members and their families to attend. From Hondas to fourwheelers and rally themed specials, sign up to wearescramblers.com for more information and to be a part of the mailing list.

You can stay up to date with our activities and events on our website, Bicestermotion.com.





The Experience Quarter

We are excited to update you that our Experience Quarter was awarded a positive determination at Cherwell Planning Committee, held on the 13th of January this year.

This new hub will provide unrivalled facilities, including an active airfield, driving training and handling tracks as well as walking and cycling trails. Placing the focus firmly on the provision of sustainable transport solutions, the green open spaces and landscape will encourage the entire family to get outdoors and explore the Bicester Motion site.

The Innovation Quarter

The Innovation Quarter will provide a space to exchange new ideas and push limits in a market that embraces disruption and change, offering mobility firms a key position at the heart of our vibrant destination.

The Quarter is an opportunity to develop a campus over six buildings, for training technology, design, development and engineering.

What’s on at Bicester Motion?

Scramble! dates for your diary: 19th June 2022, 9th October 2022
For those of you who don’t know, our Scramble! open day gives you the chance to see the latest additions to our beautiful former RAF Bomber Station and visit the 45 industry-leading specialist businesses based in our restored historic buildings. This truly is an event unlike any other.

Family and dog friendly, the Scramble! is a wonderful way to while away the weekend hours in the company of some spectacular machines at the best-preserved WW2 RAF Bomber Station in the country.

We look forward to welcoming you on site at Bicester Heritage this summer and sharing with you our plans for Bicester Motion and our Quarters going forward!



Bicester Property Interiors Limited

It has been an interesting past twelve months at BPI. We have struggled through the 'pingdemic' at the same time as the busiest the construction sector has ever known it to be. We have experienced significant staff changes and at the same time doubled the business size. It has not however been without its struggles as I'm sure all fellow business owners will have experienced. The exciting developments of recent months are the new additions to our ever growing 'in house' service and those are our electrical and gas services. As well as now being Gas Safe registered, we are also an NICEIC Approved Domestic Installer which means we can carry out all areas of gas and electrical services in domestic properties.

We can now offer our customers a fully managed 'in house' bathroom or kitchen renovation from decorating and tiling right up to electrics and gas and provide all the necessary paperwork. After a few months of consolidation this year, we hope to be growing the team again and hopefully taking on some apprentices from a local college.

https://bicesterproperty.com/

Bicester Town Council

As we move into the new financial year it is an opportunity to reflect on what happened in the year just completed and the prospects for 2022/23.

We started the year with Covid 19 restrictions still in place but with hope that the vaccination programme would provide us with a means of escape and a return to normality. The plans were in place for a full year of events but the celebration of Armed Forces Day in June was cancelled due to the pandemic continuing. As things improved all council meetings resumed in person, firstly in the JP2 centre to make sure social distancing could be maintained and from the end of June we returned to the council chamber. Our planned programme of events kicked off in July with three very successful events, including the Super Hero Day. Remembrance Sunday service was held in St Edberg's followed by the usual parade.

The Christmas Lights switch on went ahead with a new light display welcomed by all. Although the gale force winds caused some problems the event was enjoyed by everyone. The following week the Christmas Lights Trail in Garth Park was opened and was received well by residents. The illumination of Garth House was spectacular.

Looking forward to 2022/23 we have more events planned this year. The first event will be the celebration of The Queen's Jubilee with different activities across the town over the 4 day weekend, culminating in an Evensong Service in St Edberg's on the Sunday evening.

Following the resignation of the Chief Officer, Mr Phil Evans was appointed as the new Town Clerk and has been in post since the first of March.

The Town Council have also announced that the sports village at Whiteland's will become the full responsibility of the Town Council in September.

It is going to be a busy year for all of us. Full details of events are published on the Town Council website: https://www.bicester.gov.uk/



The new EWR bridge offers views into Bucks and the River Ray conservation area

Grange Mews

Grange Mews have taken a leaf out of Bicester Vision's book and most of the secretarial work will now take place remotely in Shropshire. All partners will continue to work with fibre broadband to the premises, with all the computers integrated. This has already created a much more cohesive and rapid understanding for the new partners. Of course, there will always be a physical presence to attend to immediate matters. A recent incident being an inundation of wasps which turned out to be a seasonal hatching of masonry bees; a major problem to the young lady who reported it.

This last year has been problematic not only from Covid but the adjacent public highway has been closed for a year and we have been at the end of a dead end . Not HS2, but EWR, who have built a new bridge, bigger (not bragging, but it is huge) than the one on the A4421 at Bicester, across some of our property . Now opened, the Oxfordshire view into Buckinghamshire and the River Ray conservation area is outstanding.

Hummingbird charity are based here but have been closed for some while due to covid; they are now meeting their volunteers again, and visitor friends are welcomed four days a week. They are inviting more volunteers, to assist them to entertain people who visit them both for psychological and physical therapy and even just for company where they or family just need company and assurance. It is a very welcoming place, and all are unpaid volunteers, a great bunch of people . If you have the time and inclination, call them and discuss where and how you might wish to participate.

www.grangemews.co.uk

British Bakels

British Bakels celebrates 75 years with launch of new report

On 25 February, British Bakels, manufacturers and distributors of bread, pastry, cake and confectionery ingredients, is celebrating 75 years since it was founded in 1947. To mark this achievement, the company has collaborated with food futurist, Lyndon Gee, on a brand new report – Baking Past, Present and Future, which looks back at the business' key achievements, landmark movements in the food industry's history and what might lie ahead for the next seven decades.

Forward thinking is a key philosophy for British Bakels and this report identifies key trends that can impact the future of the baking industry. For example, novel ingredients, sustainability, technology, consumer behaviours and ethics are all forecast to influence the baking landscape.

Novel ingredients will become everyday foods with huge growth forecast in algae and seaweed, owing to their versatility and health qualities. A 'shroom boom' is also expected, from psychoactive mushrooms being adopted in mental health, to their ability to be used to create edible frameworks for flavour and as edible packaging.

To help combat climate change and enhance sustainability, staples such as grains will be genetically edited to survive on very little water and hybrid genetically edited plants will enable people to grow their own food. Sharing apps such as Olio or Too Good to Go will expand and regulation may make food waste illegal in the food production and retail sectors.

Technological developments will continue to lead change in the baking sector. AI will play an integral role in industrial baking, using robots with 5,000 potential flavours, ingredients and aromas to create innovative combinations while also analysing real-time sales, data and buying habits.



Where consumer behaviour is concerned, ethics will become even more important. Seventy-seven per cent of consumers are already focused on the environmental impact of the products they buy, and this statistic will increase, particularly among Generation Z.

Paul Morrow, Chairman of British Bakels, comments: "We are thrilled to be celebrating 75 years of success. It's hard to believe that food rationing and the 'National Loaf' were in place when we first set up British Bakels in 1947. Since then, there's been a revolution in both technology and ingredients and today's consumers enjoy a vast array of different breads and baked goods.

"Over the next decade, sustainability will be at the forefront of everything we do. Responsible sourcing, reducing food waste, health and plant-based solutions form integral parts of our strategy for the future, aligning with increasing customer expectation. This dynamic ethos is very entrepreneurial in that we are constantly finding new ways to support our customers.

"While trends and ingredients will certainly evolve in the future, the core business model will not change. Bakels develop products to meet consumer and customer needs, manufacture them safely and efficiently, and offer technical application support to foster long term sustainable relationships. That's what British Bakels have done for the past 75 years and will continue to do for the next."

British Bakels has enjoyed many successes over the past 75 years. It supplies a variety of ingredients for both retail and food service, which includes enough to produce 2.36 billion burger buns each year, as well as 129 million Danish pastries and 115 million doughnuts.

Innovation and NPD are at the heart of British Bakels. Multiseed Bread Concentrate is a great example of this, which launched in 2004, and is the company's most successful product to date. Ingredients for bread loaves collectively contribute to the production of 276 million loaves of bread each year.

Founded on 25 February 1947, British Bakels is part of the Bakels Group Worldwide, which produces 2,000 bakery products and employs 2,750 people across the globe.

For further information, please contact the British Bakels press office: +44 (0)1189 475956 / emily@hdcomms.co.uk

https://www.britishbakels.co.uk/



BAKELS

BAKERY INGREDIENTS SINCE 1904

Catalyst Bicester

Catalyst Bicester's first three units let with phase 2 construction due to start

The first three units at Catalyst Bicester, the new, under construction, £100 million advanced manufacturing and technology business community in Bicester, Oxfordshire, have been let to a soon to be announced pioneering company.

The company has taken units 1 to 3 for its new HQ which are interconnected and total 38,000 sq ft (3,530 sq m).

Catalyst Bicester is under construction to the town's south, just off the A41 adjacent to the Bicester Avenue retail centre and the new Holiday Inn and under two miles from J9 M40.

Unit 4, a stand-alone building totalling 21,365 sq ft (1,985 sq m), is available for immediate occupation either on either leasehold or freehold terms.

Phase 2, with units 5 to 9 ranging from 20,000 sq ft to 110,000 sq ft, is due to start construction in autumn 2022 with five, state of the art technology buildings due to be ready in autumn 2023.

When completed, Catalyst Bicester will total circa 300,000 sq ft (27,870 sq m) and provide workspace for up to 1,750 new jobs. The new David Lloyd Health and Racquets Club is under construction and due to open later in 2022.

Simon Parsons, Albion Land explained: "When we started this project, our third major investment in Bicester, it was in response to demand from technology, advanced manufacturing and high-performance engineering companies to create many new jobs and help to reduce out-commuting from the town. Our recent letting is exciting news for Bicester and due to the high demand, we are progressing our plans to speculatively build phase 2."

The letting agents are Brown & Co, Colliers International and VSL.

For further information, please visit: catalystbicester.com

About Albion Land

Albion Land is a privately-owned commercial property developer and asset manager. Established in 1990, it is run by the original founders Simon Parsons and Kelvin Pearce with the ethos of collaboration and personal service running through every project. It works with local authorities, local communities, construction companies and businesses to unlock land to provide business space and investment opportunities. Albion Land is committed to developing a number of high-quality schemes in Bicester, recent and current projects total more than 1,000,000 sq ft.

Visit Albion Land's website: https://albionland.co.uk/



Cherwell District Council

Tackling Economic Hardship

Since the start of the pandemic, up to the end of March 2022, Cherwell District Council has administered a number of HM Government COVID-19 business grant schemes, awarding over 10,700 separate payments totalling £55.5m to businesses in the district of Cherwell, helping protect the livelihood of many businesses and their employees.

Bicester Garden Town - Welcome Back Funding

Cherwell District Council's Bicester Delivery team worked collaboratively with other Council teams and Bicester Town Council (aided by many of the stakeholders from Bicester's Town Centre Task Group, commercial landlords and local businesses) to take advantage of HM Government's Welcome Back Fund scheme, which was funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

The Welcome Back Fund has enabled delivery of a number of events and projects for Bicester, including additional picnic tables, benches and planting; work to improve an area of green space in West Bicester which is part of the Bowmont Reserve (known as 'Dangerfield'); new equipment for events and markets; vinyls for vacant retail units in the town centre; and the 'Welcome Back Pop-Up Art Gallery' which took place in the former Marks and Spencer store and provided display space for independent artists to sell their attractive wares in the run-up to Christmas.



The Welcome Back Pop-Up Art Gallery was enabled by the Welcome Back Fund.



Business Support

Through HM Government's Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), valuable market summaries of Cherwell's key commercial hubs, including Bicester, were produced and made available, offering an insight for both existing and incoming businesses into the commercial and business investment potential of Bicester. Bicester businesses have also been keen and active participants in the similarly funded and ongoing 'Business Resilience' programme, offering expert advice and bespoke confidential support to enable businesses to recover, adapt and develop their businesses, as well as working on business resilience plans to cope with any future shocks or changes.

The Council continues to offer a wide range of support services for businesses, as explained at: www.cherwell.gov.uk/business.

Workplace Wellbeing

Since late last year, Mental Wellbeing has been the focus of the Council's workplace wellbeing support to businesses because multiple studies have shown that mental health, generally, is now worse than before the start of the pandemic.

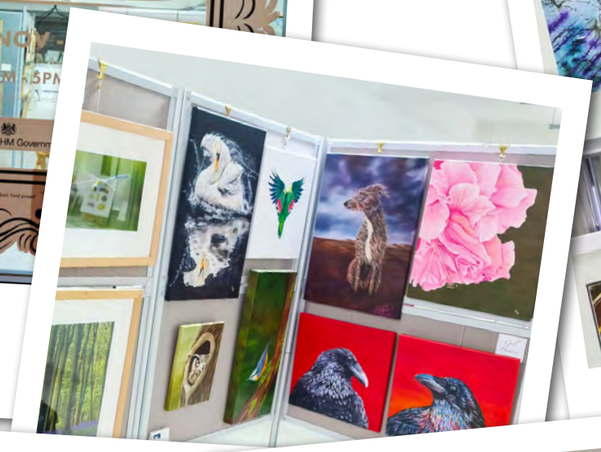
As part of a proactive offer, Cherwell District Council and Bicester Vision collaborated to provide partners with a training session on Understanding Mental Health for Line Managers. The session was aimed at increasing participants' confidence in supporting their teams' mental health and wellbeing. Results from the post-course evaluation were very positive and delegates were keen to implement their learnings.

Further sessions of the line manager training and other Mental Wellbeing events for the workforce throughout the district have been offered, funded through HM Government's Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) and these will continue to be available until the end of 2022 through an agreed partnership with Oxfordshire Mind, the mental health charity. The activities planned include 'Working Well From Home', where participants can explore the challenges of the new style of working and how to manage their mental wellbeing.

For participants who would like to further their skills to be able to offer soft touch wellbeing sessions in their own organisations, a 'train-the-trainer' model is also being offered. Interested individuals and organisations are welcome to contact the Council's Healthy Place Shaping Team at healthyplaceshaping@cherwell-dc.gov.uk to book onto a session or to receive further guidance and support around workplace wellbeing, suited to the needs of their organisation.









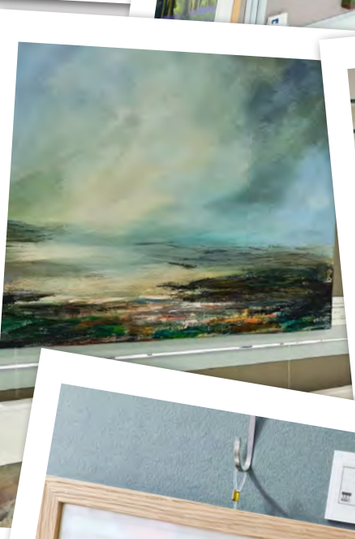














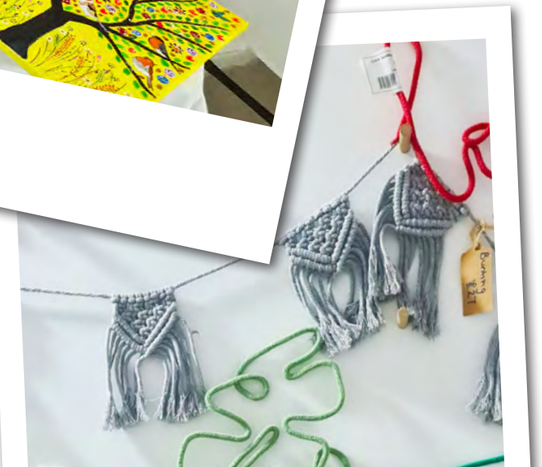












Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE



Graven Hill

As another busy year comes to an end, Graven Hill has achieved the 400 occupations milestone on our development on the outskirts of Bicester. Recent launches of new self-build plots, custom build new homes and a new apartment block have been extremely popular, and we look forward to welcoming new residents to our ever-growing community.

Delivering diversity in modern housing

During recent months, Graven Hill Village Development Company (GHVDC) has showcased the development to a variety of visitors including Homes England, University College London and the Housing Minister, who officially launched our new residential phase.



We enjoyed a hugely successful weekend at Build It Live, Bicester on 2-3 October. At the 'Graven Hill Zone', 18 new self-build plots were launched and attendees were able to meet the team for one-to-one advice, learn more about the site's innovative approach to planning permission, and hear from Graven Hill's very own self-builders.

Graven Hill residents Darren and Christine Adams won the award for Best Brick Home at the Build It Awards in November 2021, beating 3 other shortlisted entries to take home the award. Another Graven Hill resident, David Spafford was shortlisted for an award for Best Off-Site Manufactured Home.



As part of GHVDC's ongoing strategy, we recently conducted a 'Critical Friend Review' to help inform and guide the development's vision. This involved engaging with stakeholders for their comments, considering lessons learned to date, market forces, legislation and revisiting our shareholder objectives. Whilst the world is a very different place to when our initial vision was set, the feedback received has provided us with food for thought on how we can continue to offer alternatives and choice compared to the traditional housing market.

The past year has seen Graven Hill continue to evolve into a diverse and vibrant development where home-buyers are given a unique opportunity to create their ideal home. Set against the impressive backdrop of the ancient hill and woodland, and with large green spaces woven across the development, Graven Hill provides an attractive countryside setting for residents to enjoy.

Looking towards the future

Amenities across the site continue to progress, with 5 new play areas now open and work on the retail units underway. We are pleased to see that the Health Hub Development Team have made positive progress on their journey through the planning process. The planned Health & Wellbeing Hub to be built at Graven Hill will see four of Bicester's GP surgeries come under one roof, along with a pharmacy. This facility will be situated just off Rodney House roundabout and will provide for the medical needs of both Graven Hill residents and the wider community.



During the last few months, further strides have been taken into Phase 2 of the development. This has included the commencement of works to the junction between Pioneer Road and the A41, which will provide essential access to the commercial land and neighbouring development. The new Pioneer Roundabout is nearing completion, transforming the former junction with improved pedestrian and cycle-friendly measures, and greatly improving connectivity to the Graven Hill employment land and future residential phases. The 2km employment access road is under construction and will pave the way to open up Graven Hill's employment land. This is extremely positive news for Bicester, as this significant part of the development will help to bring significant employment opportunities to the local area.







The second series of Grand Designs – The Streets launched in April 2022 and promotes Bicester as a great location, whilst showcasing the self and custom build options at Graven Hill in all their glory and demonstrating how the development has also led to the creation of a new business and local jobs.

If you missed the series, all episodes of Grand Designs: The Streets are available to watch on Channel4.com.

Graven Hill will be returning to Build It Live on 11-12 June at Bicester Heritage. Anyone wishing to attend the show can use our unique link (https://builditlive.co.uk/graven-hill-at-build-it-live/) to claim 2 x free tickets worth £24. The Graven Hill team will be on Stand B18 and look forward to sharing more about what the future holds for the development.

Whilst Graven Hill continues to develop, we are proud of the progress made to date and look forward to seeing its evolution over the coming months and years as it brings more unique homes and jobs to Bicester. Once complete, Graven Hill will boast approximately 1,900 bespoke and new build homes, creating a unique and diverse community. Whether you are looking to take on the self-build challenge, or simply want to live in a community like no other, there is a home for everybody at Graven Hill.

Contact us

For more information about the range of homes available at Graven Hill, visit www.gravenhill.co.uk.

Beauty and Bicester





To see more of Eddy Gong Xi's wonderful pictures of Bicester and to support him in his ceaseless promotion of Bicester as a beautiful place to live and work, please visit:
https://www.facebook.com/beautyandbicester/
https://www.instagram.com/beautyandbicester/

Mediation Zone

What is mediation?

Mediation is a voluntary and confidential process for resolving disputes in which an unbiased third person (the Mediator) helps people in dispute to find a mutually acceptable resolution without going to court. Mediation is a non-adversarial procedure at which a neutral, trained professional assists the parties in reaching a settlement of a dispute or difference.

Mediation is quite simply a process of finding a solution that the parties can live with.

How long have you been a mediator?

I have been helping people resolve disputes through mediation for over 20 years. I qualified as a mediator in 2001, when I first became involved in community mediation on a pro-bono basis primarily dealing with neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour cases. In 2006, I was appointed as the lead mediator for Banbury County Court during the court services week.

What are the advantages of mediation?

Cost effective – can cost much less than litigation.
Non-confrontational atmosphere - avoids the court room, which can be intimidating.
More control – the disputing parties (and any advisers) ultimately decide how a case will be settled.
Confidential – information revealed in a mediation session cannot be used in any court proceeding at a later date.
Easy and quick to arrange - it is possible to arrange at 24 hours notice.
More focus on feelings and fairness – courts tend to concentrate on legal rights, wrongs and duties, whereas mediation acknowledges feelings and parties' needs.
Choice of mediator – the parties choose the mediator. You don't get a choice of judge.
Encourages and can provide for future cooperation between parties.
Reduces the need for enforcement – a high level of compliance can be achieved because parties have chosen their own solution.
There are no losers because a solution is mutually agreed.

What happens in a mediation session?

Each mediator has a preferred method of dealing with mediation. Some mediators prefer to work with the parties keeping them separate throughout the process, only bringing them together at the end if agreement is reached. Others prefer to start with a joint meeting and then separate the parties and shuttle between them. Sometimes the parties do not initially wish to meet at the outset as feelings may be running high.

Generally, mediation will proceed as follows:

A venue will be agreed between the parties.

The mediator will explain the process to the parties and set out the ground rules for the mediation. These will include:
The signing of a mediation agreement.
Explaining that the process is confidential and without prejudice.
Explaining that the process is voluntary and that the parties are free to leave at any time.

The mediator will ask each party to give an opening statement, briefly setting out what they believe the dispute is about. This statement is sometimes known as a Position Statement. The mediator then conducts a series of private meetings with each party during which the claim, defence, arguments, and positions are discussed and analysed.

Everything the parties say to a mediator during the private meetings is confidential, although the mediator may seek permission of either party to release certain facts if they are likely to assist in the mediation process.

The parties are free to discuss matters with their legal advisers at any time and are free to ask the mediator to vacate the room whilst they do so. The mediator is not a Judge and is not a legal adviser to any of the parties.

It is important that the parties present at the mediation have a commitment or authority to settle a dispute.

Will mediation work?

Government research published in 2021 suggests that more than 70% of those using mediation services will resolve their issues outside of a courtroom. The research also found that only 3% of the two million civil proceedings issued went to trial in 2019, 'showing the vast majority of claims can be resolved without the need for a judgment'.

If agreement is reached, the parties will be required to draw up a mediation settlement agreement, which the parties or their lawyers (if any) can produce to the court in order to conclude proceedings.

A mediated agreement can result in a settlement which would not have formed any part of the core judgment, but ultimately would work for the parties. The parties may continue trading with each other, or if they are neighbours, they can continue living next door to each other safe in the knowledge a dispute has been resolved.

How long does mediation take?

Some mediations can last a few hours. Others can take a whole day. Much depends on the subject matter of the dispute and the number of parties involved.

What will mediation cost?

It can cost as little as £300 per party for a half day mediation, which in many cases is less than a court issue fee! With Small Claims cases taking on average 51 weeks to get to a hearing, it's a lot quicker too!

To learn more about mediation contact Shaun at Mediation Zone Shaun@mediationzone.co.uk. Tel 07866 447603
www.mediationzone.co.uk



OxLEP Business

OxLEP Business operates the Growth Hub for Oxfordshire, simplifying the business support landscape and helping individuals and businesses to easily connect. We're here to help small businesses (SMEs), entrepreneurs and socially minded enterprises find the support they need.

Offering prompt, friendly, impartial advice we signpost businesses to the right, no cost, business support.

In the past year OxLEP have delivered leadership and business growth support for Oxfordshire businesses with strong ambition to support recovery from COVID-19, build business resilience and enable growth for businesses. This year OxLEP have:

- increased the pipeline of businesses seeking support - over 68% of businesses supported have been new to OxLEP;
- increased the specificity of support by providing triage to identify the key business needs of over 1,200 businesses;
- provided a broader range of programmes and increased access to expertise based on the needs of businesses;
- introduced new support such as our pre-start/start up bootcamp and mentoring programme for all stages of business;
- delivered £3.8 million worth of support;
- delivered a series of grant schemes with a total project value in excess of £6 million.

OxLEP's Enhanced Growth Hub signposted 1,258 businesses to support across the county between April 2021 and March 2022. Of these businesses, 524 received a bespoke personal business support plan (106 businesses from Cherwell) to direct them to relevant programmes of support. This has resulted in:

- 1,480 hours of support
- 287 hours of 1:1 support
- 126 hours of 1:many support in OxLEP start up club (based on actual attendance)



OxLEP Business event 2019 at Natural History Museum, Oxford

- 168 hours of face to face support at our pre-start bootcamp
- 97 hours 1:many support in OxLEP's Foundations to Growth Programme
- 87 hours 1:many support in the Enhanced Growth Hub version of Peer Networks for those businesses who weren't quite eligible for the national programme
- 81 hours of support in our NED (Non Exec for the Day) Strategic Programme
- 110 hours of 1:1 support in our mentoring programme
- 600 plus new/safeguarded jobs safeguarded
- 22% of Cherwell businesses have engaged with the support offered through the OxLEP Business triage tool. This represents the biggest engagement across the 5 local authorities.

The OxLEP Peer Networks programme from April 2021 to March 2022 has:

- supported 151 businesses through 14 cohorts
- delivered 126 Action Learning Sessions
- delivered 180 1:1s
- Over 2,500 hours of support for businesses.

European Funded Programmes

During the pandemic we have continued to support Oxfordshire businesses through our two part funded European funded business support programmes. The total value of support across the two programmes is in excess of £10 million.



OxLEP Business looks forward to bringing people back together once again in 2022 and beyond

Escalate

Escalate is a 3.5 year project which supports Oxfordshire's small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) that are scale-ups or have scale-up potential, and socially minded enterprises.

Innovation Support for Business (ISfB)

Innovation Support for Business (ISfB) is a four-year project which supports Oxfordshire's innovative entrepreneurs and SMEs.

Through both programmes we offer specialist one to one support, a series of webinars, grant opportunities for both revenue and capital and access to equipment, expertise, and resources such as the Agile laboratory at Begbroke and the Bicester Eco Business Centre in Elmsbrook.

Since the launch of these two programmes:

Grants awarded - £1.4 million
SME's signed up to the programmes - 1100
Businesses receiving 1:1 support - 602
Specialist webinars/workshops delivered - 171.

Nicky Sexton, Director of WIG Engineering Ltd, based in Bicester, has been engaged with the OxLEP Peer Networks programme. This programme is designed to help SMEs with 5 or more staff to collaborate with their peers and to plan for growth. Nicky has found the group sessions hugely valuable feeding back that: "I am pleased to have been guided in thinking a little differently about my business and myself and it has been great to meet others from a wide variety of industries. We have reviewed each other's areas of concern to agree what we would focus on, which was a) good to talk through and learn from, and b) good to know others have the same issues as me. The support has been great."

One of our clients based in Bicester, who attended our Pre-Start Bootcamp, said they "...found the day a wealth of knowledge and information, OxLEP did a great job."

Looking ahead

In 2022/23 OxLEP aims to secure Social, Economic and Environmental Benefits by supporting Oxfordshire SMEs to thrive and grow. We will achieve this by making more than 4,000 hours of support available to businesses through webinars, workshops, and masterclasses, 1:1 support, peer networking.

We will continue to provide support through existing grant schemes, but also offering a number of new grants schemes including:

Cherwell Business Adaptation Fund (CBAF)

OxLEP is delivering the £500,000 Cherwell Business Adaptation Fund on behalf of Cherwell District Council. CBAF is a grant fund to support local businesses to accelerate investment to strengthen business performance, provide supply chain resilience, transition to net zero, drive technology and innovation adoption and increase sales and market share.

CBAF will offer revenue and capital investment grants ranging from £5k-£20k to eligible businesses in the Cherwell area.

Visitor Economy Renaissance Programme Innovation Fund (VERPIF)

The Visitor Economy Renaissance Programme Innovation Fund (VERPIF) will enable businesses within the visitor economy in Oxfordshire to adopt new business models, invest in new technology solutions, build an improved digital presence to rebuild market share. Also, to attract new customers, develop new activities in new areas and seize new opportunities that will restore employment and secure jobs. The £500k VERPIF will offer co-investment grants which we expect will range from £5k-£20k (to be confirmed) with businesses required to provide match funding, for capital projects that deliver tangible outcomes aligned to rebuilding the visitor economy, assisting visitors to return, market recovery, job security and creation, alongside supporting the county's aim to be known as a COVID safe destination.

To find out more about the support offered through OxLEP Business, complete the Business Support Tool: https://www.oxlepbusiness.co.uk/oxlep-business-support-tool

OxLEP Business

OYAP Trust

We have had a busy year getting our projects back on track, opening our spaces for community groups, and re-engaging with both young people and partners. As things begin to return to normal we have found participating in creative activities has become more important to people than ever before, and activities which bring the community together, like our lantern parade for the Christmas lights switch on, are thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Participating in the arts is good for wellbeing and as the pandemic restrictions lifted we have been able to help people to socialise in a safe space. This has been particularly important for young people who have experienced lots of disruption to their education and few opportunities to get together. Our older people's pottery group has been really pleased to resume too!

Kick Arts, our alternative education programme, was rescheduled repeatedly whilst schools faced their own challenges from the pandemic, but finally happened at the Pitt Rivers Museum in June and July 2021. This had real impact despite the challenges, and the participants all successfully put together a personal creative portfolio, an exhibition and gained an Arts Award.

Our Creative Minds group is one of the successes of our response to the pandemic. This free to join project was developed to help young people to look after their mental health and general wellbeing, particularly as they faced many challenges after the lockdowns. The weekly sessions use artistic activities to open discussions, improve life skills, reduce anxiety and increase confidence. We also hope they make friends and have a time to look forward to.

Another key achievement was the return of Fright Night, our annual Halloween event. This production brings all our groups together to work with a professional technician and an experienced director to deliver a high quality immersive performance with lighting, sound and a live audience. This year we collaborated with Elite Dance to include dance in the performance. The atmosphere was amazing and audience feedback was great. This October we'll be back; we'd love as many people as possible to get involved or come to watch the show.







Music has been a big part of our programme too. Our Music Matters Bicester project worked to extend opportunities for those with limited chances to participate in music making, and included Rock School, Ukulele sessions, DJing workshops, and song writing. Our Gig Committee organised both an online and a live gig. We are particularly grateful to the local musicians who kindly gave their talent for free at a fundraiser in November. This is most welcome as unrestricted funds enable us to run our venue and cover the administration needed to make our projects happen.

We're an Artweeks venue for 2022, and have partnered with Bicester Sculpture Group to present a mixed exhibition of 19 artists whose work ranges across painting, sculpture, illustration, jewellery and more. Visit the exhibition to browse or buy something unique. You'll also see us at town events across the summer, so come and say hello if you want to chat!

Find out more about our activities: https://oyap.org.uk/
Follow us on facebook to hear what's new: oyaptrustpage

Spratt Endicott

Putting the upheavals of 2021 behind us, we view 2022 incredibly positively at Spratt Endicott. Having grown to over 140 people across the firm over the past two years, with 25 staff now based in our Bicester office, we are looking forward to continuing to support and work across the Bicester community in 2022 and beyond. It is fantastic to be able to see such an exciting vision for the development of the town and being able to actively help with its evolution through continued investment in our staff to support the local community with their legal needs.

We are proud to have been one of the few local solicitors to work with Bicester-based Graven Hill, the country's biggest self-build community. Our conveyancing team's expertise in this area has been a huge asset to a number of our local clients who are in the process of building their own properties at Graven Hill.

To support the growing legal needs of Bicester we continue to invest in developing our presence in Bicester and in the training and development of our current team. Senior Associate Aniz Waiz, who leads the Bicester Dispute Resolution team, has taken over as head of our Bicester office on the retirement of Shamsher Pangu. Our Family Law department has been bolstered with the arrival of Senior Associate Deborah Davies to lead the Bicester team. Deborah is a vastly accomplished solicitor with over 25 years post-qualification legal experience. She has been on the Law Society Family Panel since 2001 and is a member of the Local Family Justice Board. We are also delighted that Solicitor Sigourney Lee-Smith has now completed her training contract with the firm and has joined us as a fully-qualified Solicitor. Our Commercial Property department welcomed Associate Andrew Symington into the practice in 2021. Andrew has joined us from the Oxford offices of Bower Bailey and joins long term Associate Graham Roberts in our Bicester office. Our Residential Property team has seen Claire Rose promoted to Associate in 2021 and become head of the Conveyancing team in Bicester. Claire specialises in self build and now leads a team of 9 and, with the arrival of Solicitor Matthew Carr, provides the Bicester community with the most comprehensive level of expertise in residential property legal matters in the area. Emma Rolfe continues to develop our private client work within the local community, launching a free will scheme for Florence Nightingale Hospice and more recently for Thames Valley Air Ambulance.

Spratt Endicott is also proud of the wider legal support we provide to both private and commercial clients in the Cherwell valley and beyond via our offices in Banbury and Brackley, so we were delighted to retain Top Tier status for a sixth consecutive year in 2022 in The Legal 500. This publication acts as a barometer for potential clients and other solicitors of the best legal service providers, judged both by interviews with our staff and our clients. In addition to recognition of the firm as a whole, 22 of our solicitors were also listed as Legal 500 Recommended Lawyers.

It goes without saying that we remain very proud to be a part of Bicester Vision and the incredible efforts that are being made by the organisation for the future of Bicester, putting in place a strong and vibrant commercial community that will help Bicester grow long into the future. Where possible we are always happy to lend our expertise and guidance to supporting local people, businesses and charitable organisations.

Contact us

For more information about Spratt Endicott or to discuss any personal or business legal matter, please contact us on 01869 252761, email enquiries@se-law.co.uk or visit our website at www.se-law.co.uk

spratt endicott
SOLICITORS



The Bicester School

Careers education and support continues to develop and grow at The Bicester School. The careers provision is led by Gareth Allum, Assistant Headteacher, and the careers team. The school are in the fortunate position of having employed a full time Level 6 careers adviser in Alison Rosier, with further support from Sam King, who oversees the work experience programme and professional mentoring initiatives.

Despite a previous 18-month period which resulted in much of the careers provision taking place online via Success for School's speakers and utilisation of the UniFrog careers platform, several face-to-face events have successfully taken place this academic year, with many more planned.

Earlier in the year, the entire Year 9 cohort visited Bicester Heritage to sample and experience a varied workplace environment, as well as enjoying some of the classic cars during their lunch break. The school worked in collaboration with the Bugatti Trust and Starter Motor to organise the event and look forward to similar partnership events throughout the next academic year and beyond. In a further follow up event, Year 9 took part in the annual Human Library event, organised with the school's Enterprise advisers: Sarah Jaycock, Gemma Scrivener, and Clelia Bevillard. The event gave students the opportunity to hear from several local and national employers and entrepreneurs about their career path and journey, a truly valuable experience. Year 10 students have an upcoming Future Plans Day, as is the case for Year 12.

In addition, all subjects have a range of careers-based lessons embedded into the curriculum, with the school continuing to provide further information and insight into post-16 options, with sessions on FE Colleges, Sixth Form and Apprenticeships. Further information has been provided and applications supported for HNC's and HND's via the school's trust support from Holly Perrett at Activate Learning.



The school aims to develop its role in the community further and would encourage and support those who would like to support the professional mentoring initiative, in which the school aims to pair Sixth Form students with industry professionals to support and provide valuable industry insight. Support for the community was demonstrated last term, with Year 13 Business Students learning about key customer service skills whilst helping several market traders at the Bicester Friday market, who kindly provided their community stall for the day.

Please contact the careers team via ceiag@thebicesterschool.org.uk if you would like any further information regarding supporting the school's careers provision.

thebicesterschool.org.uk



Apprenticeship Insight session - Sixth Form

THE BICESTER SCHOOL
Aspire and Achieve

Tritax Symmetry

Tritax Symmetry (TSL) are proud to continue to support Bicester Vision. Tritax Symmetry have several strategic land holdings in Cherwell, Bicester and the M40 area, with the final unit at Central M40 Banbury developed in early 2022 having been let prior to completion to British electric vehicle manufacturer, Arrival Ltd.

TSL are on site at Symmetry Park Bicester with the final building, Unit C (270,000 sq ft) being built speculatively and to 'net zero carbon in construction', due to complete in September 2022. The previous speculatively built unit, Unit B, was let to Ocado creating around 900 jobs in the town and due to open fully in July 2022 after an extensive fit out. More information at www.tritaxsymmetry.com/bicester.

Tritax Symmetry has a land portfolio comprising 4,150 acres, capable of accommodating 40 million sq ft of logistics space across the UK. The company is the logistics development arm of Tritax Big Box REIT plc, a FTSE 250 company, and the owner of the UK's largest logistics focused land platform.

Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility

Tritax Symmetry is a long-term investor in logistics property and therefore has a serious interest in the futureproofing and sustainability of all its sites.





The company is a Gold Leaf Member of the UK Green Building Council (UKGBC) and is now delivering new developments that meet the UKGBC's definition for net zero carbon in construction. The first of these, TSL delivered for DPD Group UK Ltd at Symmetry Park, Bicester - the greenest and most sustainable facility in DPD's UK network. From their baseline, TSL saved 535 tonnes of carbon during construction, the equivalent of powering 200 homes for a year.

Tritax Symmetry take their commitment to creating sustainable spaces and a healthy working environment extremely seriously. That's why all their buildings are carefully designed with a holistic approach to ensure they create spaces where their customers' businesses can thrive, and employees are happy and healthy when they come to work.

TSL are committed to providing a package of facilities on Symmetry Parks where their customers can positively contribute to their own wellbeing. These facilities will also be available to the public, recognising the potential to integrate Symmetry Parks into local communities and enhance their wellbeing offerings.

TSL have conducted a review of their own standard base specification against the WELL Standard factors. This means that any future occupiers will be able to tailor their workspace with wellness as a priority and ensures they will be able to work towards WELL Accreditation if they wish to.

Tritax Symmetry want their developments to have a positive influence on those communities in which they work, over and above the substantial jobs, training, and socio-economic growth opportunities that they deliver. As part of their Corporate and Social Responsibility (CSR) Policy, TSL have committed that each newly consented Symmetry Park will have its own Community Benefit Fund (CBF) which can be used to benefit the community for local initiatives. The CBF has been created to help achieve the objectives and purposes of registered local charities, not-for-profit organisations and other community and voluntary groups.

www.tritaxsymmetry.com/responsible-business

Immediate Economic Growth

DPD joins online grocery retailer, Ocado, at Symmetry Park Bicester, a 53-acre site already home to Bentley Designs Ltd and Medline Services Ltd. The 60,000 sq ft distribution centre has created up to 250 jobs. DPD's Head of CSR, Olly Craughan, commented, "It is an incredible building in its own right, but what it allows us to do is probably even more significant. We serve a wide area from Bicester, including the city of Oxford, and this larger, more up to date building means that not only are we more sustainable on the site, we can also now provide an entirely green delivery service for Oxford businesses and residents.

"We have invested heavily in our regional network in the last ten years to meet the huge increase in demand for our services. This is our 37th new, purpose-built facility in that time and by far our most ambitious. The building is a key part of our wider plan to deliver to 25 of the largest towns and cities in the UK by only eco-friendly means. This joined up approach ensures we really are doing our bit to reduce emissions and congestion in and around the city centre and it is a concept we are keen to follow elsewhere."

Visit www.tritaxsymmetry.com

TRITAX SYMMETRY
A TRITAX BIG BOX COMPANY

Wednesday Business Club



Having launched in 2017 and been operating continuously since that date, the Wednesday Business Club (WBC) is now looking at celebrating its 15th Birthday. It is still believed to be the town's longest running one-member-per-category business networking group.

Operating as a not-for-profit business networking group, run on a voluntary basis "by the members for the members" the Club has no structure to support financially other than its website and the occasional items of printed material. This means that the affordable one-off joining fee at just £30.00 and the annual membership fee of just £60.00 have been maintained for all of the last 15 years.

The last year has seen the WBC return to face-to-face meetings on all bar the first Wednesday of the month, which remains a Zoom-based meeting. Annual membership fees have now been re-instated having been suspended during the whole of the COVID-19 lockdown period. As a part of the opening back up payments, which at the time of writing remain at just £10.00 per meeting attended, are now taken at the meetings using a card reader, removing the need for members or visitors to bring cash.

The Club maintains a flexible approach to its members' ability to attend meetings, needing to shield, and meet with clients etc. Members are only asked to bring a positive mindset, the occasional visitor and genuine referrals to the meetings they attend and to try and attend at least 50% of all meetings.

There is an Open Meeting on the 4th Wednesday of each month where an outside speaker usually addresses the room for around 20 to 25-minutes before breakfast is served. Anyone wishing to be considered to speak should initially email Ben Jackson on ben@bbkmedia.com.

The Club are most grateful to the Littlebury Hotel in Bicester for their support over the last 15 years and especially most recently in the post COVID re-launch. The service and flexibility provided have been a key part of the Club's success over the last 15 years.

Meeting timings are as follows:

07.00	Open networking
07.25	Take seats
07.30	Guest speaker
08.00	Breakfast followed by Round the Tables
08.45	Close meeting

More details on the WBC, each of its current members and the Club's activities can be found on the Club website at http://wednesdaybusinessclub.co.uk/

There is also a WBC Facebook page to be found at https://www.facebook.com/WednesdayBusinessClubBicester and you can sign up to receive email reminders and updates on the monthly Open Meetings by emailing Ben Jackson and asking to be added to the mailing list held on Mailchimp.



wednesday business club

Whitley Stimpson

A steady ship to navigate turbulent financial waters

We live in challenging times with soaring energy prices, rapid inflation and general economic problems sparked by world events all raising their heads even within the last six months.

Combined with the ongoing effects of the pandemic, this has created a huge amount of uncertainty, not least for our clients, but they can be assured we will offer the best services and advice to help them tackle issues as they arise.

We can say that with confidence – it was no coincidence that Whitley Stimpson recently celebrated 90 years in business.

Back in 1931 there were perhaps even greater challenges with the country in the grip of the Great Depression.

From those early days we have expanded and thrived with a client base that now stretches the country, employing 83 staff across offices in Bicester, Banbury, Witney and High Wycombe.

How has this been achieved? A key theme throughout the firm's history has been its commitment to friendly and personal service as well as its dedication to nurturing young talent among its ranks.

As a result, many clients have been retained for decades from their early days as start-ups through to becoming multi-million-pound enterprises. But recently there have been new challenges as we adapt to clients' changing needs.

Laura Herbert, director of the Bicester office which can trace its roots back to the 1960s, said: "Traditionally the Bicester office has provided advice to owner managed businesses while we also have many private clients for whom we provide personal tax advice.

"We have seen a significant increase in individuals seeking inheritance tax planning and are advising families following the changes in reliefs that have happened surrounding property. Two webinars we held recently about inheritance tax were well attended so this is a hot topic and an issue of concern."



Some of the firm's new starters and exam successes in 2021.

Like many business sectors, the aftermath of the pandemic has led to recruitment issues for the accountancy industry.

Laura added: "We have seen an increase in the number of people within accountancy practices who have taken the opportunity of home working to set up on their own and over the last year the Bicester office has lost a couple of senior accountants to this.

"However, staff retention remains strong. I have been with the firm for 15 years and others at the Bicester office have stayed with the company many more. We look to grow people within the firm to stay with us for the long term."

This year the company has promoted five staff to become local office directors. Changes to the team in Bicester has allowed Frances Simpson, Balvinder Kaur Sangha and Sam Speed to also step up in their roles. Clients have chosen to stay with Whitley Stimpson due to the firm's breadth of knowledge, with a team of experts providing advice and support they can rely on.

"We can advise at every step from starting up a business to planning ahead and setting up planning and exit strategies," said Laura.

"We provide a far higher level of expertise due to our breadth of accountancy understanding and specialisations. Significantly, there is a lot of new business that we take on from smaller firms where we unravel and correct errors and issues.

"The key message is that we continue to provide existing clients with the assurance that we are providing sound advice across the full spectrum of accountancy with a higher level of service."

This consistent approach is also being applied to the firm's focus on training and development to support the next generation of accountants with eight new starters joining last year. Three staff also passed their final professional exams to become qualified accountants.

Tamjid Ali, Macaulay Fletcher, Robert Lay, Cindy Osei Kuffour, Charlie Paviour and Jacob Powell joined the firm as trainee accountants. Emma Butler and Lauren Paviour have joined as qualified accountants and Micaela Cardoso has joined as a junior payroll administrator.

These new starters are based throughout the firm and will receive tuition on the well-established and respected Whitley Stimpson training and development programme, whilst studying for their ACA/ ACCA qualifications.

Laura said: "The trainee role applications are picking up now, but we still have vacancies to fill and recruiting staff at a higher level is still challenging.

"We are pulling out all the stops to encourage people to join the firm, such as flexible working. The core hours we require people to work can be moved according to their needs while everyone can work from home a couple of days a week.

"We have also expanded employee benefits to include private medical cover and our staff have a substantial recruitment bonus to encourage them to bring other people they know into the firm, and we have an award-winning training programme so we are a company with a great future."

For advice on business or personal accountancy or to book a free consultation, please contact Laura Herbert at Whitley Stimpson on 01869 252151 or visit www.whitleystimpson.co.uk



The team at Bicester office, from left to right: Jonathan Walton, Balvinder Sangha, Rebecca Parmenter, Mac Fletcher, Frances Simpson, Laura Herbert, Charlie Paviour, Naomi Willis, and James Field.

Whitley Stimpson
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS AND BUSINESS ADVISORS
1931-2021 90th Anniversary

Zeta Specialist Lighting

Park And Charge Oxfordshire

In 2019 the Department for Transport announced investment of £37m of match funded grants into electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Zeta (EZ-Charge) led a consortium to secure £5m of this funding.

The shared objective was to overcome a public perception that there was a lack of charging infrastructure in the county. This perception was identified as one of the main barriers currently preventing Oxfordshire residents making the switch to electric vehicles despite an increasing number of electric vehicles on the roads.

By giving residents and visitors access to well positioned car parks, charging hubs and a wealth of resources and real life experiences, Park & Charge Oxfordshire aims to give confidence in the infrastructure and encourage others to make the switch.

The primary focus of the project was to specifically target residents who have no access to off-street parking and charging and give these members of the community the confidence to purchase an EV without worrying about having nowhere to charge their car.

Progress

We are currently installing 250 x 22kW fast charge points in 20 hubs throughout Oxfordshire. This project was awarded £1.2m by the On-street Residential Charging Scheme (ORCS).

For the Oxfordshire Park and Charge Project, online and in-person events were organised to raise public awareness of the scheme at each of the 21 hub locations.





Always On

EZ-Chargers self monitor, automatically reboot and alert engineers if there are problems.

Maximum Charge Rate

Our unique technology assists Distribution Network Operators (DNO) and always provides the best charging speed possible.

Easy To Use

Contactless payment, plus a user friendly app with unique booking capability.

Round The Clock Support

24/7 customer support helpline and rapid response team.

What Next?

EZ-Charge is set to go global, with their technology forming the backbone of a new electric vehicle charging network in Malaysia.

The Bicester-based company has entered into a formal Memorandum of Understanding with Mobility Werk Group – the Malaysian subsidiary of the global corporation MW Group – for its electric car charging units to be manufactured, installed and operated in-market, under licence.

https://www.ez-charge.co.uk/


EV
CHARGING
ONLY


EZ-CHARGE
WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Electric Vehicle Charging Point
Woodford Way Car Park
A Penalty Charge Notice may be issued for the following:
• Electric vehicle not connected/charging
• Non electric vehicle parked in these bays
For assistance or to report a fault with these charging points please contact EZ-Charge on 0800 051 4125




EZ-CHARGE

EZ-CHARGE






EZ-CHARGE
MC19 VWE


EZ-CHARGE

Bicester Vision Meetings - Key Messages 2021

April 2021

Bicester Vision CIC offers its condolences to Her Royal Highness The Queen on the death of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

Bicester Vision CIC is planning events to bring together businesses in a volunteer setting.

Bicester Vision CIC congratulates Eddy Gong on the photographic content he has produced for the Beautiful Bicester website.

Bicester Vision CIC is delighted to see the reopening of Bicester High Street and very much hopes this will go from strength to strength.

May 2021

Bicester Vision CIC's Annual Report published and available to all online.

Bicester Business Directory is open and online at www.beautifulbicester.co.uk.

LoyalFree App is live, useful, and free to all to use.

June 2021

Bicester Vision CIC notes the reframing of the Cherwell Industrial Strategy to a Recovery & Prosperity Strategy which Bicester Vision CIC will help deliver.

Bicester Vision CIC's successful AGM is available on Youtube; please like and share https://youtu.be/62iuf55KnH0.

As he steps down from public service, Bicester Vision CIC's Directors offer their sincere thanks to Lawrie Stratford for his tremendous support of Bicester Vision and the wider Oxfordshire business community.

July 2021

Bicester Vision CIC welcomes Steve Thornton (Brita UK) as a new Director.

Bicester Vision CIC seeks a presentation on the plans in place for Market Square.

September 2021

Bicester Vision CIC's Volunteering Day on 16 September saw 25 people from a variety of local Bicester based companies join Chiltern Rangers at Bicester Garrison for a day clearing scrub to encourage new growth and creating perfect habitats for birds, butterflies and insects.

Financial donations made on the day went to support Chiltern Rangers' work with students, and donations of tinned food went to the One Can Trust - https://onecantrust.org.uk/.

An excellent team building day bringing benefit to individuals, companies, the community and the environment.

October 2021

Bicester Vision CIC is delighted its initiative, undertaken with Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire MIND, has seen the Mental Health Training for Managers course fully subscribed.

Bicester Vision CIC will be representing Bicester businesses at the Oxfordshire LEP roundtable discussing what's needed in terms of business support provision in the Bicester area.



November 2021

Bicester Vision to work with Bullingdon Prison to progress a project building links between the prison service and the voluntary, community and business sectors, in order to better support ex-offenders reintegrate into society with the aim of reducing reoffending rates.

Bicester Vision supports the pop up Art Gallery being arranged in the town centre open daily from 20 November-5 December.

Bicester Vision plans an event to encourage book reading through collaboration with ARCh and Coles Books.

December 2021

ARCh (Assisted Reading for Children in Oxfordshire) provided Bicester Vision CIC supporters with a presentation on their inspirational work with children across Oxfordshire. Please contact ARCh if you can offer any support to enable this wonderful charity to continue and expand their work.

Oxfordshire Careers Hub are working closely with Bicester schools to prepare students for the careers of the future.

The Welcome Back Project is in full swing in Bicester's town centre; all those living in and around Bicester are encouraged to visit.

Bicester Vision Meetings - Key Messages 2022



January 2022

Bicester Vision seeks to deliver a literacy event at a future open meeting, focussed on books and reading, in partnership with Coles Books.

Bicester Vision CIC welcomes James Metcalf (Metcalf Security Group) as a new Director.

Bicester Vision worked in partnership to support Bicester Town Council, Bicester Village and Dragonfly Framing to deliver the successful Pop Up Art Gallery pre-Christmas. A further event is planned, benefitting from the enormous support of town centre landlord, Sarah Gadsden.

March 2022

Bicester Vision CIC hosts approaching 50 people for its first face to face event in 2 years!

Oxfordshire Skills Hub invites employers to help unlock the Apprenticeship Levy; support the Oxon Apprenticeships Awards; and support careers delivery in Oxfordshire's schools/colleges. Please contact Oxfordshire LEP.

Bicester Hotel, Golf & Spa continues to offer great facilities to businesses, individuals and those looking to build teams.

Bicester Vision CIC continues talks with Cherwell District Council re: grant funding agreement.

Bicester Vision Supporters

Activate Learning Education Trust
Adalta Real
Applied Landscapes
Azets
Bicester Chamber of Commerce
Bicester Garrison
Bicester Hotel Golf and Spa
Bicester Motion Ltd
Bicester Property Interiors
Bicester Town Council
Big Yellow Penguin Mediation Zone
Brand Protect Ltd
Brethertons Solicitors LLP
BRITA (UK) LIMITED
British Bakels
Cherwell District Council
Darcica Logistics Limited
Elliott Group
Graven Hill Development Company
Great Lakes UK Limited
Heyford Park Settlements
Integration Technology Ltd
Launton Settlement Trust
Metcalf Security Group Ltd
Oxfordshire County Council
Oxfordshire Greentech
P3 Eco Ltd
Redshift Media
Short Stay Development Ltd
Spacecraft Consulting Ltd
Spratt Endicott
The Chiltern Railway Company
The Bicester School
The Cooper School
The Zeta Group
Tritax Symmetry (Bicester Reid) Ltd
Value Retail (Bicester Village)
Whitley Stimpson Limited



BICESTER VISION

Community Interest Company

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https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4147186/

Many thanks to photographer Eddy Gong Xi for allowing us to use so many of his wonderful images of Bicester.