

THE CHAMBER

THE BUSINESS MAGAZINE FOR EAST CHESHIRE

September 2016 / Issue 50



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▼ TOUR OF BRITAIN

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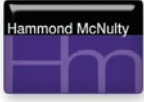
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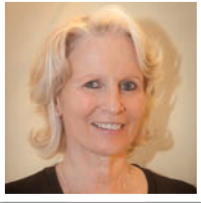
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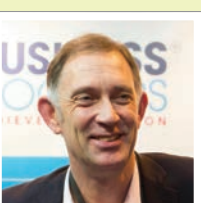
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EVENTS CALENDAR

Auto Enrolment Seminar
Franklyn Financial Management
6th October 2016 8:30am – 10:00am
The Boardroom, Riverside, Mountbatten Way,
Congleton CW12 1DY
Contact Jackie Randles on 01260 540570 for further details

Thursday Thirty
13th October 2016 08:30am – 10:00am
Prism Solutions, The Technology Barn, John Bradshaw Court,
Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 1LB

Clay Pigeon Shoot
Sponsored by Business Doctors
19th October 2016
Cloudside Shooting Ground, Red Lane, Congleton,
Cheshire CW12 3QG

Thursday Thirty
24th November 2016 08:30am – 10:00am
Kidneys For Life, Details to be confirmed

Christmas Lunch
9th December 2016
Pecks Restaurant, Newcastle Road, Congleton CW12 4SB
Booking forms will be emailed out 4 weeks before the event

Events can be found on our website
'Events Page' www.eastcheshirechamber.co.uk

Please email jackie.randles@eastcheshirechamber.co.uk for further details and booking forms



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David Watson Comments

As the Summer Holiday Season draws to a close companies will be returning to their factories, offices and warehouses to get on with steering their business through the uncharted waters we are now in following the referendum result that surprised a lot of people. Most people's view is that we will be strong outside of the EU and I for one agree.

If you could see the export documents that come to our offices for authorisation you would soon realise that the exporters in our area working on a global platform are shipping goods all over the world. Of course there will be challenges along the way to our leaving the EU but we have a strong skills base, resilient companies, dynamic management and dedicated workforces. With all of this, and in spite of the potential turbulence of currencies and differing threats around the world I am sure that we will win through.

An item of good news that we have to report is that Berisfords Ribbons of Congleton are starting out on a journey to build a brand new purpose built manufacturing unit in Congleton to secure the business for the future. Their press release announcing the plans can be found on page 22 of this edition of CHAMBER. Berisfords have been in Congleton for nearly 160 years and are still weaving fabrics, now using the latest technology machines when the textile industry of the North West has declined to such a low level of activity.

Chittagong Chamber

Genesys International of Middlewich recently had a visit from the head of Chittagong Port Authority, Commodore Zulfikur Aziz, and Chairman of the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce, Mr A K M Ataul Korim. Their visit was part of a sourcing mission to businesses in the UK and they asked if it would be possible to meet with Chief Executive of the East Cheshire Chamber, of which Genesys are members.

Another success story is that Genesys International of Middlewich have won the Queens Award for Export for the third time and will be presented with the award at a ceremony in October by Her Majesty's Representative, The Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire David Briggs.

On page 9 you will see our "New Membership Offer" that we plan to run for the remainder of the year. Whilst our membership numbers remain strong we must keep showcasing the East Cheshire Chamber and it's services and ensure that as many businesses as possible consider joining. To this end, the offer will entice some to "suck it and see" where as normally they would not.

Membership is not all about connecting through business activities but also offers the chance to join in on a more social level, such as coming along to one of clay shoot competitions that we hold at the Cloudside Shooting Ground on Bosley Cloud. The next one is on 19th October and is being sponsored once again by Business Doctors.

The front cover of this edition highlights the opening of Prism IT's office at John Bradshaw Court, Congleton. This is a major step forward for this award winning company founded just 15 years ago and now employing 40 people in Congleton and also having offices in London and Manchester. Read more about Prism in the article on page 11.

You can also see details on page 21 of a project that they are promoting as one of their CSR programme strategy, that is "Winter Wonderland" which will be a fantastic Christmas extravaganza at Congleton Town Hall.

Of course, I couldn't leave out of this page the wonderful sporting achievements of TEAM GB at the Rio Olympics and also the big sporting event for Cheshire East. The Tour Of Britain cycle race with Congleton being the host of the start of stage 3. I am sure that both of these amazing events not only showcased our wonderful athletes but also brought benefits to both local and national economies. The Chamber would like to take this opportunity to congratulate everyone involved.

David



International Visitors

Mr Korim from Chittagong Chamber of Commerce, Commodore Aziz from Chittagong Port Authority presenting David Watson with a memento of their visit and Steve Chesters, Managing Director of Genesys International Ltd.

Welcome to our new members



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CHAMBER GOLF DAY 2016



FIRST PLACE WINNERS

Bluebell BMW
Presented by
Nigel Moorhouse from
Roman Lodge Estates



LONGEST DRIVE WINNER

Adam Cockerill from the
Genesys Team
Presented by
Peter Bowers from Berisfords Ltd



LADIES BEST INDIVIDUAL SCORE

Jo Darton, Astbury
Ladies Team
Presented by
Nigel Hartley from Total People



SECOND PLACE WINNERS

ALPS Ltd
Presented by
Phil Brown from Bluebell BMW



THIRD PLACE WINNERS

Picea Designs
Presented by
SAS Daniels



NEAREST THE PIN WINNER

Stephen Myers
Presented by
Franklyn Financial Management



PUTTING COMPETITION WINNER

Nick Davenport from the
Genesys Team
Presented by
Stephen Myers from Myers & Co

The East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce golf day was held recently at its now regular venue of the Vale Royal Abbey Golf Club.

ROSSENDALE TRUST

A raffle and auction raised
£1,300.00 for the
Chamber Charity of The Year.



21 Teams competed on the excellently presented course and in the evening enjoyed a wonderful Roast Beef Dinner in the Great Hall.

The major sponsor of the event was Blue Bell BMW and there were many cars from the BMW range placed around the course. On the 10th tee there was a MINI which was the prize for a "Hole In One".

Whilst no one managed to hit a hole one the very first shot of the day, played by Stephen Myers of Myers & Co, finished just eight inches from the pin and that shot won him the "Nearest The Pin" prize.

Before play commenced there was a putting competition organised by Astbury Ladies Team. This was won by Nick Davenport who was playing in the Genesys International Team. The "Longest Drive" was won by Adam Cockerill also of the Genesys International Team.

"Best Ladies Individual Score" went to Jo Darton of the Astbury Ladies Team. Second place went to ALPS Ltd and third place went to Picea Designs. The overall winners were in fact the major sponsors Blue Bell BMW with a score of 91 points.





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Let's celebrate the continued success of our growing Chamber, with all the benefits and support it brings.

*Please quote reference CC1.

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MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT

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What motivates you?

Ensuring that the students get an exceptional education and the best possible experiences to set them up for a lifetime of success. I firmly believe in lifelong learning and want for Eaton Bank Academy to be the stimulus for this in all students who come through the school.

If you had the chance to start your career over again, what would you do differently?

I certainly wouldn't change career. I've always loved being in education and being a teacher. I've had the privilege and pleasure to work in a number of schools, having different responsibilities and roles and have thoroughly enjoyed every job and role I have undertaken. There are other careers which are more lucrative and more materially rewarding but to have the opportunity to shape the education, learning and aspiration of children and young adults is enormously rewarding and inspiring.

How many hours do you work a day on average?

Probably around 10-11 hours a day.

How do you spend your Leisure time?

Sportswise I love playing football and golf and occasionally running or going to the gym. I am also a season ticket holder at Crewe Alexandra and so 'relax' watching some high

quality football every other Saturday at Gresty Road! I also enjoy the theatre and cinema and as an English teacher can get lost for hours in a good book!

What Are Today and Tomorrow's Challenges?

The challenge is always to ensure the very best educational experiences and outcomes for all students at every point in their journey through Eaton Bank Academy.

Tomorrow's challenges are ensuring that the best experience is delivered against an increasingly more challenging financial backdrop.

Who has been your greatest inspiration?

I am inspired by lots of people in lots of different fields; people who demonstrate perseverance, dedication, commitment, loyalty and altruism are always incredibly inspirational to me. From a historical perspective, Noel Chavasse was an amazing character whose altruism was at the sacrifice of his own life. He was the only double Victoria Cross winner from the First World War.



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Ed O'Neill
Headteacher

How important have your team members been to your success?

Being part of a fantastic team is one of the most important ingredients for success. Being a Headteacher is a hugely complex role and without a brilliant team of Senior Leaders, Middle leaders and Governors at Eaton Bank Academy we wouldn't be able to achieve the very highest standards for which we always strive. I have always been part of effective teams and it is inspiring and continuously developmental to see the expertise, know how and skill which other people bring to bear on strategies, developments and projects.

IRON GUT PUBLISHING

What motivates you?

My family, I have two very young children as well as an older child soon to be going off to University, yes I enjoy what I do but my motivation is to build a business that will support them throughout their lives.

If you had the chance to start your career over again, what would you do differently?

When I left full time employment to set this company up I should have looked for financial backing whether that be from a governmental body or private investors, I would have got to the stage I am at now much sooner, rather I tried to do everything on a shoe string budget using personal funds and that did slow the company's growth down in the early years.

How many hours do you work a day on average?

Now I have taken extra employees on it is only 10 hours a day but it used to be a lot more, I try to put it out of my mind how long I worked each day during the first few years of the business.

How do you spend your Leisure time?

With a very demanding 1 and 3-year-old.

What Are Today and Tomorrow's Challenges?

Exporting is today's challenge, we have a number of global licenses and in the past 6 months I have exported to Dubai, USA and Germany. As for tomorrow, we need to keep ahead of the game and secure licenses with more global brands, so as of 2017 I will be attending American licensing shows as well as my usual European ones.

Who has been your greatest inspiration?

I'm a bit of a history buff so without this sounding like a cliché, it would be Winston Churchill, his humour, stoicism, foresight and the fact that he would never give in are qualities that are relevant today as they were back in the 1930's and 40's.



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TECHNOLOGY BARN
OFFICE OPENING

Celebrating Prism's success at the Technology Barn



From the left: Gary Smith,
David Watson, Richard Alexander,
David Brown Mayor of Congleton



After moving to their new state-of-the-art offices earlier this year, Prism took some time out to hold an official 'how do you do?' opening party.

With successful hubs in London and Manchester, Prism's Head office in Congleton, really is the jewel in its crown and was worthy of the many valued employees, neighbours and around 100 guests from the local business community who attended.

Prism's Technology Barn was formally opened by David Watson, CEO of East Cheshire Chamber, who was accompanied by David Brown, Mayor of Congleton and Charles Booth deputy Mayor as well as a number of East Cheshire Chamber members who came along to show their support.

Guests, together with many of Prism's long standing clients and friends from their 15 year journey, were invited to tour the new offices before a very witty speech by David Watson and the cutting of the ribbon. Once the formalities were complete, guests enjoyed a more relaxed remainder of the day. A top notch barbeque and a few tipples flowed along with some great music - the party was so good that even the sun decided to stay.

Gary Smith, Director said, "What we now want to do is support other SMEs on their growth journey. We know that those first few years can be tricky without the right support and we can share this with those starting out or those on the growth trajectory. If anyone is unsure about where to start with their IT, just give us a call." ... "Prism Solutions is a classic home-grown success story that proves with the right foundations and support, start-ups and small businesses can do great things."

"I also wanted to thank our amazing employees for their support." added Richard Alexander, a Director at Prism, "We've invested a huge amount of time and resources in redesigning our offering for employees in terms of the office space and the packages we provide, with a real focus on employee wellbeing and incentives. We're looking at giving employees career plans and job satisfaction for life, not just for a year or two. The feedback has been brilliant and we've had amazing support from everyone."

But the final word goes to David Watson, CEO of East Cheshire Chamber "Congratulations to Prism - what a success story. We are delighted and lucky to have a company like Prism on our doorstep, investing in our people and their wellbeing, making Congleton an employment destination of choice. They are a real asset to East Cheshire."



Anthony Marks
Managing Director

How important have your team members been to your success?

We are a small team so it is important that we are all pulling in the same direction and are fully committed to making this business a success. Our customers know we produce everything in the UK so they expect a quick turnaround and we are used to receiving last minute rush orders, so if that means working through the weekend till midnight to get orders out then we know we can rely on each other to make it happen.



INDEPENDENT FIRE RISK ASSESSOR AND CARE HOME IN COURT

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service is warning businesses to treat fire safety as a legitimate business requirement, after an independent fire risk assessor has been given a four month jail sentence, suspended for 12 months, and ordered to pay £1,000 costs after 'paying lip service' to assessing a Cheshire care home.

At the same hearing before Judge Tina Landale at Warrington Crown Court on Thursday June 23, Surrey-based nursing home company Minster Care was fined £40,000 and ordered to pay £15,000 in costs after pleading guilty to serious breaches of fire safety regulations at Croftwood Care Home in Runcorn.

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service first pointed out inadequacies in fire safety in September 2011, and served an enforcement notice on the property for fire safety breaches in March 2014.

Simon Gibbins, Head of Protection at Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service said: "Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service aims to help and support any business to operate safely. However we will take action when companies choose not to treat fire safety as a legitimate business requirement. We urge all companies to take their fire safety obligations seriously to avoid prosecution."

Simon added: "It is important that anyone employing a fire risk assessor must understand that the fire risk assessment is not just a document but the beginning of a process that must involve the cooperation and understanding of both parties."

Anyone who has concerns about fire safety should contact the Service.

Information on Fire and Rescue Service

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THE CHESHIRE TOUR OF BRITAIN

Tues 6th Sept
2016



Stage 3 of the Tour of Britain cycling event saw the riders take on a tightly wound route situated entirely within Cheshire East, marking the first time that the Borough has hosted a stage of British Cycling's premier event.

Crowds in their thousands turned out to line the streets of Congleton to watch the peloton head west to ride through Crewe and Nantwich before looping back on themselves towards Sandbach, Holmes Chapel, Knutsford and on towards the ten-kilometre climb of the Cat and Fiddle above Macclesfield before racing back through Knutsford to the finish line in Tatton Park.

Ian Stannard showed all of the power for which he is renowned as he soloed to an emphatic win on Stage 3.

The Team Sky hardman, who had never before won a stage of the race despite having finished on the podium back in 2008,

was clearly the strongest rider in the four-man breakaway which escaped not long into the 182.7km stage from Congleton to Tatton Park, Knutsford.

But after cresting the famous Cat and Fiddle climb in the Peak District, where the trio's gap to the bunch was around seven minutes, the former national road race champion decided it was time to put the hammer down, going clear with around 40km of the stage remaining and eventually winning by 1:46 from Briggs who outsprinted House for an all-British top three.

"It was a pretty big day today on home roads so I was motivated and keen to get away," said Stannard who lives in the Peak District and who admitted his local knowledge stood him in good stead.

It's always nice to win from a breakaway. There's some really awesome crowds out there today and it's really fantastic to see people getting behind the race."



"Thank you to the businesses who supported the Tour Of Britain"

- David McGifford, Chief Officer
Congleton Town Council



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THINKING OF EMPLOYING AN APPRENTICE? FIND OUT THE FACTS WITH OUR GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS.

There is no doubt that employing an apprentice in the right role can create a win-win situation for the business and for the young person. The business gains fresh new talent and energy at a reasonable cost, whilst the apprentice gains confidence, skills and experience.

70% of businesses who employ apprentices report that it is a benefit. The Government is certainly advocating the value of apprenticeships and will be launching an 'Institute for Apprenticeships' in April 2017. They have set a target of three million apprenticeship starters by 2020.

Hiring an apprentice

Employers can register their interest in employing an apprentice with the National Apprenticeship service (NAS). They support, fund and co-ordinate the delivery of apprenticeships throughout England. They can also advertise vacancies. Contact them on **08000 150 600** or at www.getingofar.gov.uk/employers.

Once you have selected your apprentice, you will make an 'apprenticeship agreement' or an 'apprenticeship contract' with them. The different agreements give the apprentice different rights, so it's important that employers understand these differences and that the most appropriate one is drafted.

Training

Many industries provide a 'framework' for training for most job roles. The NAS will guide you to the right industry body which can assist with your apprentice's training, qualification and assessment.

Your commitment as an Employer

The word 'Apprentice' means that an employer is legally obliged to provide training. Employers need to commit to providing a high standard of on the job skills whilst providing a strong training plan. You'll need to allow them time to fit in studying or to take exams, within reasonable limits. As they progress, their wages and training plan should be adapted accordingly. Employers must:

- Pay the apprentice for time spent training or studying for a relevant qualification, whether while at work or at a college or training organisation.

- Offer apprentices the same conditions as other employees working at similar grades or in similar roles. This includes paid holidays, sick pay, any benefits and other support.

You have no legal obligation to provide a job once the apprentice's contract has ended, unless you have promised one within the agreement.

The apprentice's commitment to your business

An apprentice employed under an 'Apprenticeship Agreement' has to commit to normal terms of employment, like any other employee. However, an 'Apprenticeship Contract' ensures the apprentice will have greater employment protection than an apprentice employed under an Apprenticeship Agreement or other employee.

Pitfalls of Apprenticeships

An Apprenticeship Contract is a fixed term contract, with some being up to five years in duration. There is very limited scope for early termination, so for example if a business gets into financial difficulty and needs to make redundancies, most apprenticeship commitments can't be easily withdrawn. This is because you have a contract to train them.

If an employer breaches the contract, an apprentice could claim for loss of earnings which will be assessed over the remaining term of the agreement, plus further damages for the apprentice's lost opportunity to qualify into their chosen career. This could be ten times the cost of an unfair dismissal claim.

If an apprentice is involved in any misconduct, the level of this should be deemed higher compared to an ordinary employee or someone employed under an Apprenticeship Agreement.



Contact James Heath at SAS Daniels for further information on Apprenticeships.

☎ 01260 282300
✉ james.heath@sasdaniels.co.uk

An employer should seek legal advice before employing an apprentice as well as before deciding to end the apprenticeship early for another reason.

Employers may also face an increase in Employers Liability contributions, as many companies are required to inform their insurers when they recruit an apprentice.

The Apprenticeship Levy – commences April 2017

From April 2017, employers with a payroll of more than £3 million, will be required to make a payment of 0.5% of their payroll bill to the apprenticeship levy through PAYE. For every £1 paid in levy payments, employers will be given an additional 10 pence by the government, paid into their digital account.

The organisation can spend this cash on accredited apprenticeship programmes, training and assessment within an 18 month period. The money cannot be used for additional expenses, overheads and wages.

Each employer will be able to access their levy funds through the 'digital apprenticeship service'. Registration for the service is expected to open from January 2017.

For organisations with a payroll of below £3 million, the government will continue to make a contribution towards apprenticeships for organisations using a system of co-investment. The exact amount employers will have to pay will be announced before the end of 2016.

APPRENTICE'S SALARY

Apprentices are entitled to the apprentice rate of £3.30 per hour* if they're either:

- aged under 19
- aged 19 or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship

An apprentice aged 22 in the first year of their apprenticeship is entitled to a minimum hourly rate of £3.30

An apprentice aged 22 who has completed the first year of their apprenticeship would be entitled to a minimum hourly rate of £6.70

*Rising to £3.40 per hour from October 2016.

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Your key contact:



James Heath
Associate

☎ 01260 282300
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Thursday Thirty Breakfast Networking Meetings

The popularity of the Thursday Thirty Breakfast Networking Meetings continues with venues now booked until October 2017 with hosts from many different business sectors.

Held approximately every 6 weeks these meetings fit in around other chamber activities and we continually hear of connections which are made between businesses during networking.



East Cheshire Hospice hosted the June meeting at the Hospice in Macclesfield in the Chapel and guests were invited to a tour around parts of the hospice.



July's meeting became a Thursday 40 when Cheshire Fire and Rescue allowed us to take extra bookings! We were invited to a tour around the Fire Station and Kristian Clowes gave a very informative short presentation on fire safety.



Congleton Museum hosted the August meeting and they were proud to announce that The Romano Cheshire Hoards are on display at the Museum until January 2017. Again, a very well attended networking meeting with a tour around the Museum for the guests.

WE ARE PLANNING A CHRISTMAS PARTY WITH A DIFFERENCE AND WOULD LIKE YOU TO JOIN IN.

2016

**WINTER
WONDERLAND**

by Prism for the PETT scheme
Friday 2nd December 2016



Welcome to the first Winter Wonderland event destined for Congleton Town Hall, December 2016.

Having done the standard fayre Christmas party, tried to create our own entertainment and even made the decision to give the budget away instead of having a party in previous years; we have decided to combine the festive period celebrations with other businesses we like to work with, whilst creating an event that is good value and raise some money for our PETT scheme. After all Christmas is about giving, right?

The concept is a winter wonderland themed event for our business friends and neighbours who may want to share the period with us, using any profits from ticket sales and other contributions to help others.

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DAVID WATSON COMPERE

We are delighted to announce that David Watson from the East Cheshire Chamber will be our comper for the evening.

CONGLETON SINGERS CHOIR

Founded in 1971, Congleton Choral Society are a friendly and busy mixed choir of some 70 voices. We would like to thank them for their support of this event.

RUNNING ORDER

Reception Drinks - 6:30pm
Dinner - 7:00pm
Last Orders at the Bar - 12:30am
Close / Carriages - 1am



PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

As sales continue to increase and the business develops into new areas, Berisfords are now planning for the future.

Berisfords are planning to relocate within Congleton into a new purpose built unit that will not only improve efficiencies but will help us to remain competitive in an ever more challenging market. This in turn will enable us to attract new business in existing areas as well as new markets, creating new employment opportunities.

The timescales for this relocation is 3 to 5 years; this is largely due to land availability and road networks.

The plans for the current location are to change the site into a residential development and the process for this is already underway.

BERISFORDS SUPPORTING MYELOMA UK

Following the recent diagnosis of a colleague with multiple Myeloma, 7 work colleagues decided to engage in the 62 mile Manchester to Blackpool bike ride on behalf of Myeloma UK.

The 7 participants consisted of Dave Dennett, Ian Wilson, Chris Machin, Kevin Bibby, Martyn Jones, Nick Howarth and Tim Edwards with the fastest member completing the ride in 3 hours 40 minutes.



Congratulations to all of the team for raising the grand total of £2,500.

Thanks must also go out to all the family, friends and supporters who helped them to achieve this target.

Should anyone wishing to add to this target the just giving page is:
<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Berisfords>

On behalf of Berisfords I would like to thank the team for the hours of training, hard work and dedication that enabled them to all complete the trip.

P J Bowers
Managing Director

Chamber Forthcoming Events 2016



Auto Enrolment Workshop

Thursday 6th October

Auto Enrolment has already started and you must ensure your business complies with the new rules by 2017. Learn more at the Auto Enrolment Workshop to be run by Franklyn Financial Management.

The Boardroom, Riverside, Congleton
8:30am until 10:00am



Thursday Thirty Breakfast Meetings

To be held on Thursday 13th October 2016 and hosted by Prism Solutions, The Technology Barn, John Bradshaw Court, Congleton, CW12 1LB and on Thursday 24th November 2016 to be hosted by Kidneys For Life, details to be announced.



Autumn Clay Pigeon Shoot

The day commences at 10.30am with breakfast, a clay practice at 11am, clay competition at 1 pm and a meal at 3pm.

Sponsored by Business Doctors.



Christmas Lunch

Friday 9th December

One of the Chambers most popular events of the year is the Christmas Lunch to be held on 9th December 2016 again at Peck's Restaurant, Newcastle Road, Moreton, Congleton, CW12 4SB.





Pecks if your business meeting has to impress, then it has to be Pecks...

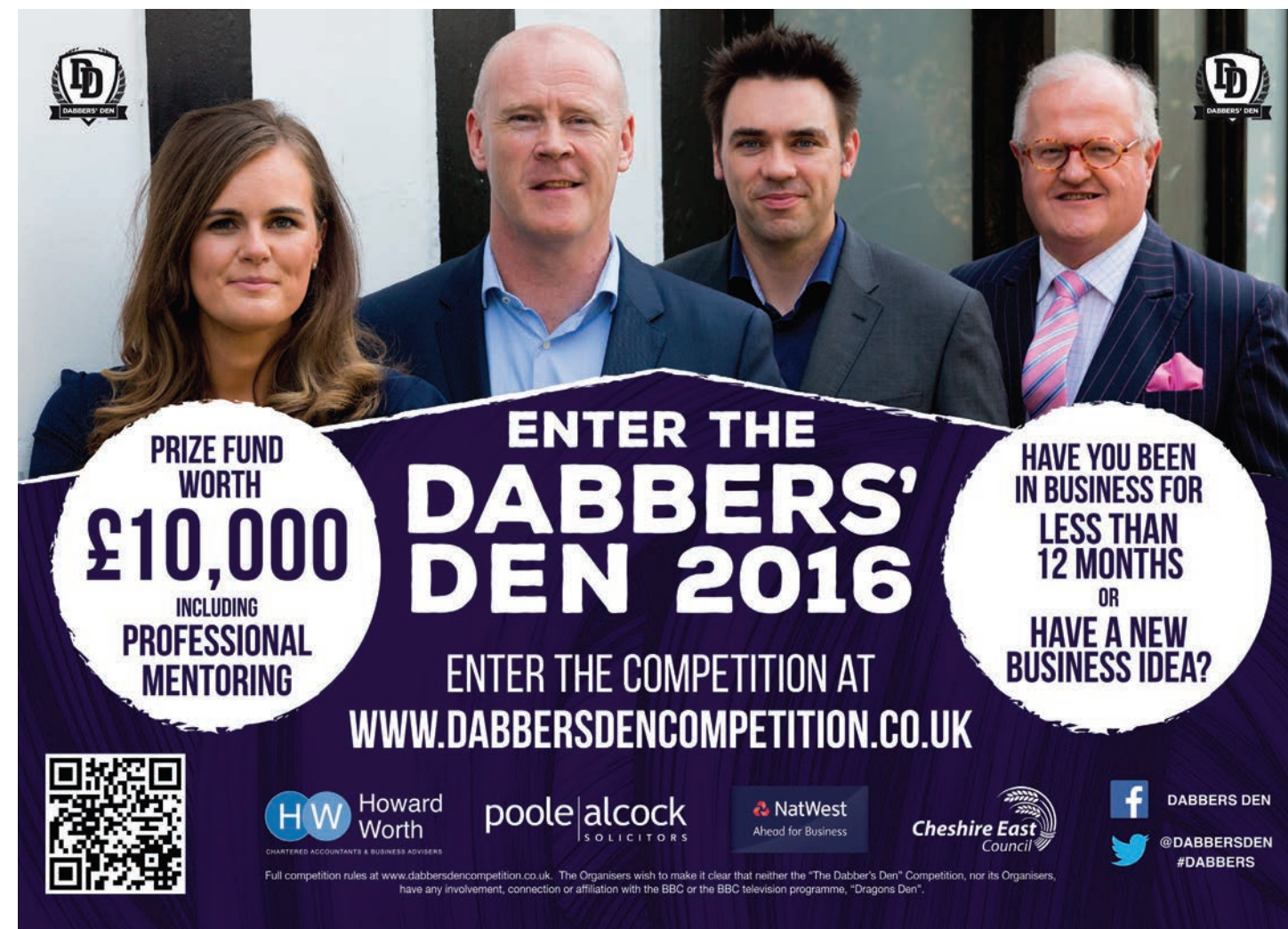
Lunch - calm, sophisticated, impressive, ideal to discuss and finalise that business deal.

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101-200	295.00	354.00
201-500	400.00	480.00
501+	490.00	588.00

From January 2016

COSTCO EMPLOYEE’S DONATIONS AND FUNDRAISING

Friends for Leisure has benefited to the tune of £1,000 from an introduction by David Watson to Amy Strensom, Marketing and Membership Supervisor of Costco in Chester.

The organisation, United Way, has set up a “Give Local” campaign whereby local organisations can receive funding from Costco employees’ donations and fundraising. Amy encouraged the charity to apply.

Back at the office, Friends for Leisure staff only had a few days before the end of the funding round, and quickly put together an application for support for their Crewe youth group.



It didn’t take long for United Way to let Friends for Leisure know that they would provide the £1,000 requested.

The charity is very grateful to both United Way and to David for the introduction.

COSTCO WHOLESALE



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