



Annual Report 2022/23
Buckinghamshire Business First
 Year ended 31st March 2023



**SUPPORTING
 BUSINESSES
 IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

“This was just excellent, lots of tools added to our armoury to improve how we plan and measure our progress from so many different perspectives. This is the best course I’ve been on with Buckinghamshire Business First - thank you!”

- Nigel Nerurkar, Fused4



“The support helped me assess the areas to focus on for growth and gave me access to professionals with the experience and knowledge required to make informed decisions on business direction.”

- Cath Friend, Emerald Frames & Gallery



“Buckinghamshire Business First’s support has helped me to formulate the business plan and crystallise my ideas as to how to grow the business and move forward positively.”

- Amanda Carthy, QueenMee



“We joined Buckinghamshire Business First back in 2021 and it’s one of the best decisions we made! The increased knowledge and confidence within our staff and the change in some of our best practices have been invaluable.”

- Steve McWhirter, Foam Engineers Ltd





“We dropped 60% in turnover after the first lockdown, but the business is now back to pre-Covid levels, and we just had our best month ever. The Growth Advice Service has helped us achieve these results.”

- Karl Macrow, KamTech High Street Garage



“The Buckinghamshire Business First team have been a pillar of support throughout Optec Group’s first year of trading.”

- Rob Armitage, Optec Group Ltd



“Buckinghamshire Business First is my go-to for Net Zero, rural, and skills signposting. The team have given helpful feedback on the content and usability of the FSB’s own Net Zero Hub. Should there be an opportunity to work with Buckinghamshire Business First in future, I would always be happy to do so as they are a trusted organisation.”

- Yvette Lamidey, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) - Milton Keynes



“Buckinghamshire Business First helped us get investor ready. The adviser made an introduction to a venture capital firm that led towards an offer that is in an advanced stage of sign off.”

- Steven Frost, Workbuzz

“I’m convinced that about half of what separates the successful entrepreneurs from the non-successful ones is pure perseverance.”

- Steve Jobs

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As I write this introduction in mid-October, the uncertainty that has been a feature of business life for several years continues, with global events an ever-present threat to domestic stability, or at least what we have come to think of as stability, which generally means several days without some political or economic bombshell.

The success Labour has had in Scotland might point to more success at the General Election that is now widely expected next October. The business sector will be cautious of more changes in national policy that will need to be navigated at a time when the burdens on businesses have never been greater.

Buckinghamshire Business First remains a non-political organisation and will work with any local or national administration to promote the thinking that it is the business community that ultimately pays for almost everything, directly through taxes and indirectly through employment, and that without the right levels of investment, freedoms and rewards, the problems with productivity will continue. BBF is a strong advocate for its members and works hard in the background with all manner of stakeholder partners to make starting and growing a business easier.

The Buckinghamshire Business Awards, held in September at Aylesbury Waterside Theatre, were a wonderful showcase of all that is good about the business economy in Buckinghamshire - the innovators, the high achievers and those with big hearts. It was a truly inspiring evening, and the 12 category winners and finalists should be proud of their achievements as they are beacons for others to follow.

When I spoke at the start of the awards evening, I said that tough times have never lasted, but tough people do. Running any business can be tough, but running a small business when there aren't specialist directors running individual departments can be particularly tough. The constant juggling of roles between sales, HR, IT and compliance can, in equal measures, be rewarding and draining. This is where BBF stands by your side, signposting help, mentoring, and providing opportunities to network with other businesses that face the same challenges.

The past 12 months has been incredibly busy again for the BBF team, with activities including a whole range of business festivals, summits, and networking events. I say this every year, but the team do an amazing job and are a credit to Philippa and the senior management team, who themselves give so much to the business community.

As mentioned, BBF continues to amplify the voice of the business community at a strategic level with various partner organisations and works collaboratively to



influence change, with a themed agenda that taps into the concerns of the membership. We are just launching our Business Manifesto focused around five themes: business growth and productivity; skills; business support; infrastructure; and Net Zero.

We will always be evidence led and driven by the needs of businesses, openly share knowledge and learning, and keep challenging what we and others do in the space of economic development. We will never be afraid to speak up for the business community, nor hold back when we see opportunities to make a positive difference to the wider community.

The Board comprises of leaders from a diverse range of businesses, and through various channels we listen to your concerns and reflect these to local and national politicians, business representative organisations, and academia and work to help shape the economic development landscape for shared benefit. Together we are stronger, but individually we can effect change.

Let's remember that success in business isn't just about numbers or bottom lines. It's about people - our teams, our customers, and our communities. Don't just aim for success on paper. Aim for impact. Because the businesses that stand the test of time don't merely succeed, they matter. Let's not just do well, let's do good.

Michael

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



14,800 members of Buckinghamshire Business First (45% of businesses in Buckinghamshire)



24,489 business support interventions - an average of 2,190 times per month



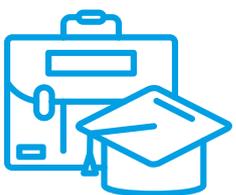
£1.3 million of grant funding direct to businesses



647 new jobs created



26 volunteer business owners trained to be mentors



1,460 individuals supported with skills advice



5,000 attendees at the Bucks Skills Show at Stoke Mandeville Stadium



152 apprenticeship / T Level opportunities supported



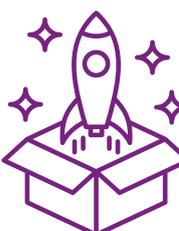
731 tonnes of CO₂e saved in the businesses we've worked with



183 decarbonisation plans created for Bucks businesses



336 grants of £1,000+ awarded to businesses



78 businesses were supported to create new products and services



35 businesses teamed up with a mentor for the year



350 businesses supported with workforce skills – including one-to-one support for 200 businesses



450+ businesses involved in the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan



153 people helped to start their own business

Buckinghamshire Business First operates a mixed funding model and has a portfolio of income streams securing funds from local and national government departments, including Buckinghamshire Council, Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Department for Business and Trade, and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities amongst others.

All funding received is used to deliver activity that supports businesses to grow and overcome challenges.



Business assists	24,489
New jobs created	647
Grant funding to businesses at the coalface	£1,312,817
Growth in GVA	£41 million

Buckinghamshire Council

£400,000

LEP funding for Growth Hub provisions

£421,000

Private Sector (match to projects)

£2,274,426

- UK Government Funding (BEIS, DCLG, RPA, etc)
- EU Funding
- Trusts and Foundations

£1,573,290

For every £1 invested by Buckinghamshire Council, an additional £9.61 was secured from the private sector and other funders. All supporting the aspiration of a vibrant Buckinghamshire Economy.

For more information visit > bbf.uk.com/about-us

We staged 114 events in 2022/23 with a total of 2,111 attendees.

Business Leaders' Dinners and Lunch

Venue: Hartwell House Hotel & Spa
Guest speaker: Sally White, SYLO
 Beyond HR & Bucks Skills Advisory Board
Theme: Employers' skills needs



Business Leaders' Lunch
Venue: Vaasu by Atul Kochhar
Guest speaker: Hiren Ghandi
Theme: Our business community



Business Leaders' Dinner
Venue: Waddesdon Manor
Guest speaker: Luke Delahunty,
 former RAF Gunner paralysed from the chest down
Theme: Inclusivity and accessibility



Business Briefings with Members of Parliament

MP: Joy Morrissey, MP for Beaconsfield
Venue: The Iver Hub
Spotlight on: Tourism

MP: Rob Butler, MP for Aylesbury
Venue: Buckinghamshire UTC
Spotlight on: Skills provision

MP: Steve Baker, MP for Wycombe
Venue: Chandler Garvey
Spotlight on: Retail and the high street

MP: Greg Smith, MP for Buckingham
Venue: Real Drinks Co.
Spotlight on: Rural businesses

MP: Joy Morrissey, MP for Beaconsfield
Venue: GRIDSERVE
Spotlight on: Net Zero



Clean Air Day eases the road to Net Zero

We teamed with Buckinghamshire Council, Global Action Plan and The University of Buckingham for a day of inspiration and action.

A panel of business leaders discussed their personal journeys, practical ideas and rewards along the 'Road to Net Zero'.

Low Carbon Advisers gave 1-2-1 advice on electric vehicles, energy bills, air quality, grant funding, and Net Zero action plans.

Read the event round-up > bbf.uk.com/news/business-collaborations-ease-the-road-to-net-zero-on-clean-air-day

"I had great conversations and came away with great information." - Ian Shuck, Smartcomm Ltd



Preparing business for the Future of Work

Keynote speaker Cat Barnard, Director of Working the Future, explored:

- top trends that are transforming work
- how attitudes to work are changing
- the opportunities for businesses
- why as a business community, we are better together

A panel of local business leaders who have taken action to future-proof their operations discussed:

- hybrid working
- how to manage people remotely
- communicating with staff
- why sustainability is the only choice

The inspiring Future of Work Summit, held at Rackleys Chiltern Hills, helped businesses get ahead of future workplace trends and prepare them for whatever is around the corner.



Buckinghamshire Business First AGM

Preceding the Future of Work Summit was the Buckinghamshire Business First AGM, which explored our vision for the year ahead with Chairman Michael Garvey and Managing Director Philippa Batting.

Read the Future of Work Summit and AGM round-up > bit.ly/Future-of-Work-Summit



The biggest business awards in the county were back in-person for the first time since 2019, hosted by Aylesbury Waterside Theatre. The awards, which were officially launched earlier in the year at a Business Leaders' Lunch held in the theatre's Norman Bragg Studio, were another grand celebration of our local business community and gave deserved recognition to those who embody the spirit of entrepreneurship that makes Buckinghamshire renowned for success.

The Winners

Company of the Year

Winner: Origin

Sponsored by Buckinghamshire Business First

Apprentice and Young Person Employer of the Year

Winner: Zenopa Ltd

Runners-up: All Spring Media Ltd, WestWon Ltd

Sponsored by Buckinghamshire Council

Community Champions Award

Winner: J Brown Funeral Services Ltd

Runners-up: Alcom IT, Seymour Taylor Ltd

Sponsored by Chandler Garvey

Creative Business Award

Winner: Globe Print Ltd

Runners-up: FoxWylie Event Production Ltd, PCMS Design Ltd

Sponsored by Pinewood

Enterprising Business of the Year

Winner: Flare Bright Ltd

Runners-up: SFE Services Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Ltd, Yellow Bricks Ltd

Sponsored by B P Collins

Excellence in Customer Service Award

Winner: Hill Farm and Orchard

Runners-up: Origin, Oven Loving Ltd

Sponsored by CUBE

Growth Business of the Year

Winner: Origin

Runners-up: The Original Biltong Company Ltd, Zenopa Ltd

Sponsored by Richardsons Chartered Accountants

Innovative Business Award

Winner: Digital Manufacturing Centre Ltd

Runners-up: REAS Group Ltd, WhiffAway Ltd

Sponsored by Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Net Zero Buckinghamshire Business of the Year

Winner: WestWon Ltd

Runners-up: The Pantry at 51, WhiffAway Ltd

Sponsored by Handelsbanken

New Business of the Year

Winner: Autocanteen Ltd

Runners-up: Digital Manufacturing Centre Ltd, Girl Power Nutrition Ltd (trading as BOMIMO)

Sponsored by Buckinghamshire New University

Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure Business of the Year

Winner: Town Farm Ltd

Runners-up: Sports Nut Ltd, Wycombe Swan

Sponsored by Stoke Park

Young Entrepreneur of the Year

Winner: Joe Purnell from That Nerd

Runners-up: James Richardson from JR Football Ltd, Rachel Harris from StriveX

Sponsored by The University of Buckingham



Watch the video highlights of the ceremony >
bit.ly/bba2022-highlights



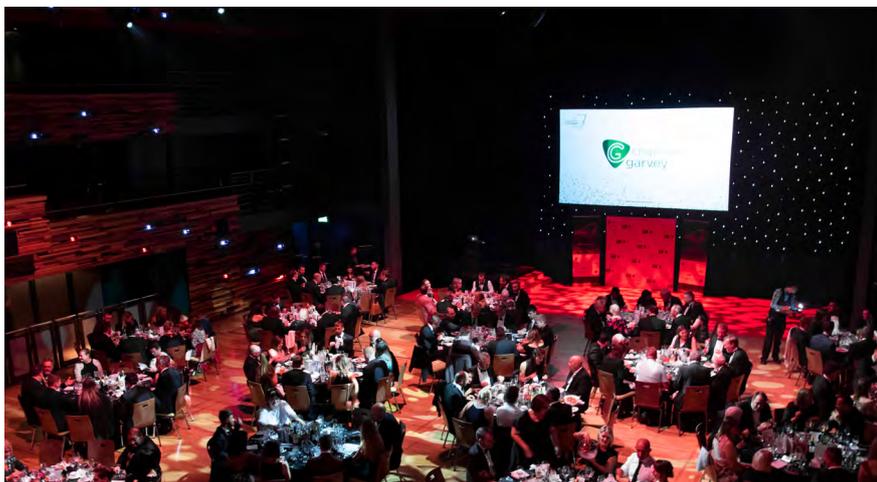
Hear from all the delighted winners >
bit.ly/bba2022-winners



Check out the professional photos taken on the night >
bit.ly/bba2022-photos



See how the awards played out on Twitter
(as it was called then!) >
bit.ly/bba2022-twitter



See behind the scenes with the finalists >
bit.ly/bba2022-finalists

Our Talking Heads podcast now boasts 11 episodes with a great mix of guests and no shortage of insight and inspiration.

The future trends set to transform the workplace

Cathryn Barnard, Director of Working the Future, discussed some of the significant trends transforming the workplace, bringing to the fore her experience of nurturing high-performing teams and helping business leaders future-proof their commercial activities.



How businesses can reduce carbon emissions

Our Managing Director Philippa Batting and our Climate Change Programme Manager Dan Cope have an honest conversation about the reasons why employers may delay tackling their carbon emissions, and why, in the face of climate change and skyrocketing energy prices, there are limitless benefits to facing the challenge head on.



How Moogies creates thriving businesses

Helen Barrett, Head of Marketing & Sustainability at Moogies Limited, explained how Moogies invests in underperforming pubs and restaurants, turning them into thriving, sustainable businesses that are recognised and valued by the communities they serve.



Going from strength to strength with Origin Global

Victoria Brocklesby, co-founder of Origin Global, discussed the remarkable story of the business and its involvement with Buckinghamshire Business First. Origin was named Company of the Year at the 2022 Buckinghamshire Business Awards, where they also won Growth Business of the Year.



How small businesses can change the world

Jo Fairley, co-founder of Green & Black's chocolate and one of the UK's leading eco business pioneers, spoke about the outlook for businesses during the cost of living crisis, and how small businesses are best placed to change the world.



Discover all podcast episodes here
> bit.ly/Talking-Heads-podcast

Our MD Ngage leadership development programme lets business owners, MDs and CEOs step out of the day-to-day running of their business to explore fresh ideas and new solutions, and grow as leaders.

This year, 10 business leaders joined a closed and confidential group known as Momentum to focus on 'Going for Growth'.

They benefited from:

- Interactive workshops
- Personal development sessions
- High-quality speakers
- Bespoke 1-2-1 support
- A face to face leadership and development programme



Topics explored by expert speakers

- Building Better Business Models
- Getting Forensic About Your Business
- Creating the Conditions for High Performance
- Developing Organisational Agility
- Staying Fit for Leadership

"I invest in MD Ngage because my business needs me to. My business needs a better leader, a better manager. This is the best money I spend a year. I also spend money on training for my staff, but this is for me. It's money very well spent."

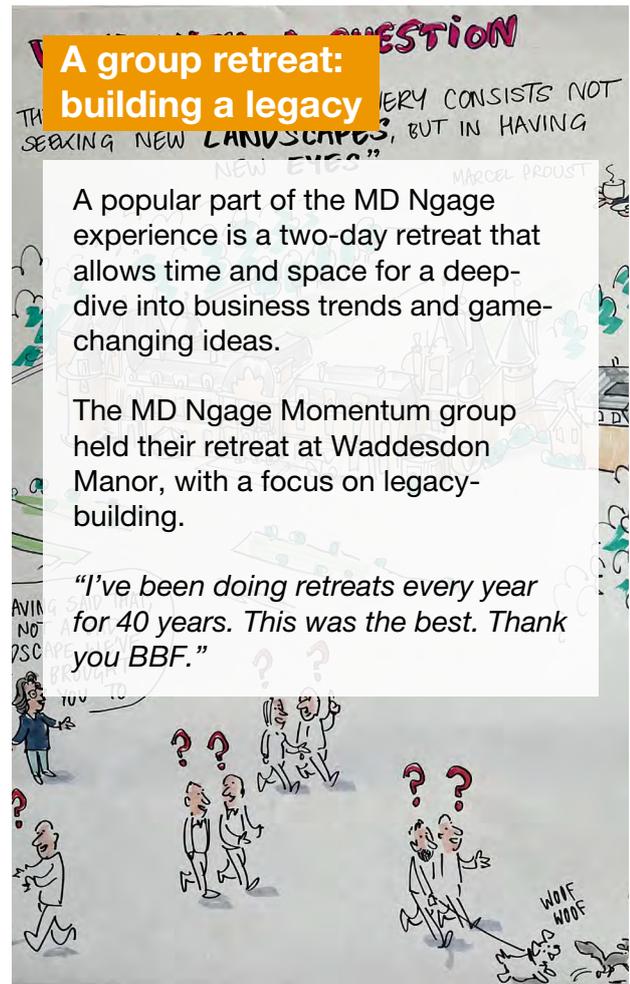


A group retreat: building a legacy

A popular part of the MD Ngage experience is a two-day retreat that allows time and space for a deep-dive into business trends and game-changing ideas.

The MD Ngage Momentum group held their retreat at Waddesdon Manor, with a focus on legacy-building.

"I've been doing retreats every year for 40 years. This was the best. Thank you BBF."



The four learning pillars of MD Ngage

- Processes and Tools
- Leadership and Management
- Sales and Marketing
- Future Trends



Learn all about MD Ngage at > bbf.uk.com/md-ngage



Peer Ngage is a flexible and affordable leadership development programme conducted entirely online. In 2022/23, two groups were formed – one for senior managers, one for managing directors – with 16 individuals taking part in total.

Designed for senior managers and managing directors, groups of like-minded peers in non-competitive businesses focus on key topics with the aid of expert speaker sessions, collaborative discussions, and 1-2-1 support from experienced Business Advisers.

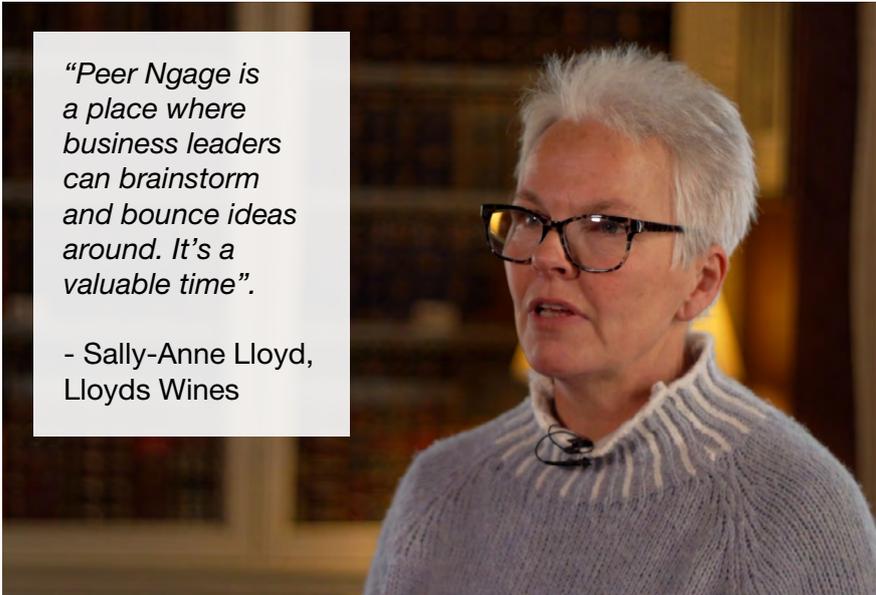


“Peer Ngage is exactly the right platform for anyone in any business looking to gain some leadership skills, experience, and a good network.”
- Matthew Swansbury, Saffery Champness LLP

Sessions enable fresh thinking and ‘the art of the possible’ to unfold.

Insights from guest speakers this year included:

- Upping your Social Media Game
- Being a Better Kind of Busy
- Improving Quality Thinking
- Generating Innovative Ideas
- The Employee Life Cycle
- Mapping the Customer Journey
- Creating a Coaching Culture
- The Business Model Canvas



“Peer Ngage is a place where business leaders can brainstorm and bounce ideas around. It’s a valuable time”.
- Sally-Anne Lloyd, Lloyds Wines

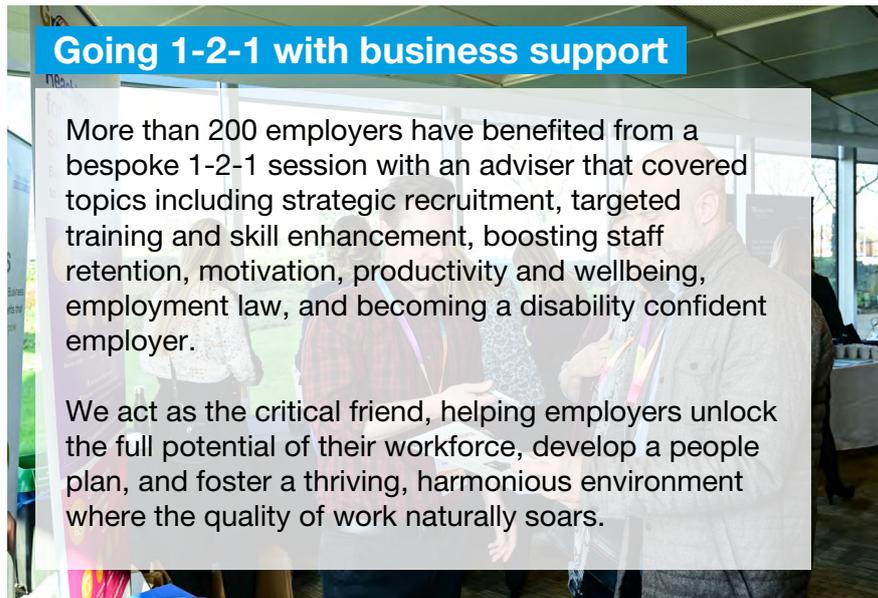
★★★★

Every session has been rated 4 or 5 stars out of 5 by participants.

★★★★★



Our experienced team of Workforce Skills Advisers have been busy helping employers recruit, nurture and grow the talent their business needs to thrive.



Going 1-2-1 with business support

More than 200 employers have benefited from a bespoke 1-2-1 session with an adviser that covered topics including strategic recruitment, targeted training and skill enhancement, boosting staff retention, motivation, productivity and wellbeing, employment law, and becoming a disability confident employer.

We act as the critical friend, helping employers unlock the full potential of their workforce, develop a people plan, and foster a thriving, harmonious environment where the quality of work naturally soars.

Buckinghamshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

We proudly published the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), a multi-year plan that outlines the key priorities for the future of post-16 technical education in Buckinghamshire. This ground breaking report is the sum of eight months of hard work, debates and focus groups with more than 450 employers, training providers and other stakeholders.

Thanks to this collaboration, we have established the specific skills priorities for Buckinghamshire and created the blueprint for how these needs can be met.

Skill Up Bucks

The Skill Up Bucks project encourages businesses to get involved in training and skills activities, such as:

- Offering an apprenticeship, internship, traineeship, work experience placement, T-level
- Attending a career/job fair or a sector-based promotional event
- Engaging with students by offering a company visit, creating a challenge activity, or delivering an employability workshop (also for unemployed people)

More than 110 businesses have been supported through Skill Up Bucks, with more than 1,600 people engaged with overall.



150 apprenticeship opportunities identified

With great experiential activity, it's no wonder the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub was confirmed once more as one of the country's best performing careers hubs.

Great achievement on Gatsby Benchmarks

The Bucks Skills Hub outperformed the national average on each of the Gatsby Benchmarks that define what good careers guidance is in line with government policy. They include linking the curriculum to careers, and creating employer encounters for students.



The Buckinghamshire Skills Show 2023

March 8th & 9th
Stoke Mandeville Stadium

Two days of careers inspiration. Thousands of school students. Hundreds of career seekers.

Read the full round-up >
bit.ly/skills-show-2023-roundup



5,200 visitors



(4,500 visitors in 2022)

10

key industry sectors represented

Over 130 exhibitors with interactive activities



30 schools attended



In June, the Bucks Skills Hub held its very first SEND Skills Show for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Stoke Mandeville Stadium welcomed 230 young people and 35 different organisations and saw SEND students' futures brought to life.

Read the full round-up >
bit.ly/SEND-skills-show-2022-roundup



"We had a lovely time speaking with the students about our apprenticeships and finding out what they have a passion for."
- Employer

"A big thank you for such a great event." - School

"Thanks so much for taking the time to help us at the show. It really was an incredible event with some really great ideas." – Parent

2,043 visitors

38 exhibitors



Be Your Own Boss: helping to launch hundreds of business dreams

BE YOUR OWN BOSS

This year saw the evolution of Be Your Own Boss as we launched a new series of online bitesize support sessions that took place in the evening.

Offering greater flexibility to fit around people's busy lives, the two-hour workshops took people through each stage of setting up and running a new venture.



9 online bitesize sessions to complement the rest of the programme

88 attendees overall

3 online events held in partnership with Neurodiverse Self Advocacy Partnership CIC

BE YOUR OWN BOSS

Turn your business dream into a reality



Learn how to run your own business



Short evening workshops



Free support

bbf.uk.com/BYOB 01494 927130



Don't Miss!
Events in June, July & September

Support included introductory Enterprise Days, intensive 2-day courses, and flexible bitesize sessions.

"Lovely informative day, pitched at the right level. Thoroughly enjoyed it and took away useful things I can do straight away."

- Adebukola Bukky Ayode, Vibrant Midlife Wellness

"Following today's session, I feel equipped with useful information and highly motivated to start working on developing my business models."

- Candid Care Ltd

Preparing people for the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead with experienced support and advice, including:

- 1-2-1 support from an adviser
- Training courses and networking events
- Guidance from peers
- Information 24/7 with our Virtual Adviser® support tool
- Discounts on local products and services
- Access to an online business directory
- Buckinghamshire Council library resources

To find out more >
bbf.uk.com/news/need-help-starting-a-new-business

The Growth Programme is a cornerstone of our business support.

An independent evaluation by Winning Moves concluded that the programme's achievements "are particularly notable in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions. The team continued delivering the Growth Programme whilst simultaneously handling a large volume of enquiries from SMEs."

Visit the Growth Programme showreel - bit.ly/growth-showreel



77% of businesses increased their turnover

More than 600+ businesses received bespoke support

200+ new jobs created beneficiaries forecast a combined turnover of £103m & GVA of £36m

Sustainable solutions

Our Growth Advice Service helped Shailesh Patel's wholesale company, Lynam Pharma, reduce plastic waste by creating a recyclable surgical gown.

"We had this great idea and needed help to make it a commercial reality. We've accessed advice, contacts, mentoring, and Innovate UK funding." - Shailesh

Looking good for growth

A talk with a Growth Adviser helped Janet Fricker create a 5 year growth plan for Delilah Cosmetics.

"It's so important to take time out and listen to people with expertise." - Janet

The sweet taste of success

During lockdown, Kate Rumsey turned to the Growth Advice Service for help to capitalise on a surge of online orders for the family-run Rumsey's Chocolaterie.

"I had a whole team of people helping me that I could call on for different needs. Money can't buy that. BBF is a brilliant resource for businesses like us." - Kate

"Working with a manufacturer, we re-worked their production line layout for a product and they reported a 50% increase in output per employee on the production line, with less stress placed on management too."

- Growth Adviser Manufacturing Specialist

To find out more > bbf.uk.com/Business-Growth-Stories

Our flagship programme, Low Carbon Workspaces, has been supporting the shift towards a low carbon economy by incentivising businesses to implement energy and carbon-saving initiatives. A wide variety of businesses have benefited, from a seafood wholesaler to a machine hire business to a theatre.

Visit the Low Carbon Workspaces showreel - bit.ly/lcw-showreel



Grants to cut carbon emissions, save money & minimise waste

933 businesses supported

£3.3million of funding delivered to SMEs

5,033 tonnes of CO₂e saved, equivalent to annual emissions of 2,349 cars

Diverted 60 tonnes of waste from landfill, reduced water usage by 1.4 million litres

Generating your own power

A martial arts business has generated power of another kind by fitting solar panels thanks to a £2,400 grant. The stored energy takes care of 70% of ZKS Martial Arts' daily usage and cuts £1,240 off their yearly bills.

"That gives us the ability to run our classes almost off-grid."
- Ben Babbington, Owner

Calling time on CO₂e emissions

The Pilgrim Pub invested in a new fridge, freezer, and air-con system with the help of a £5,550 grant. The award-winning village pub now saves £4,500 and 5 tonnes of CO₂e a year.

"We've had a 40% reduction in our energy bills."
- Brett Newman, Owner

Tackling energy waste

Total Carbide, a leading European manufacturer, reduced their carbon footprint thanks to an air ducting project supported by a £1,700 grant.

"It's saved us over £2,000 per month in heating costs in the winter."
- Andreas Hohmann, MD

For more information >
bbf.uk.com/net-zero-ngage

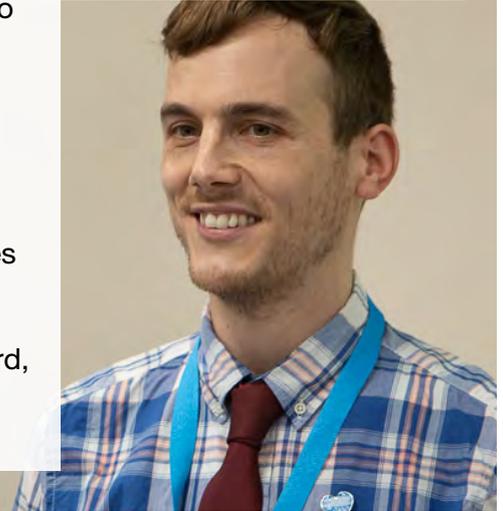
Net Zero MK

net zero:MK

Net Zero MK engaged businesses in Milton Keynes to support and upskill them with environmental knowledge, empowering them on their journey to Net Zero and lower energy bills.

We launched the programme with the help of Jo Fairley, co-founder of Green & Black's chocolate and one of the UK's leading eco business pioneers, and three MK based environmental success stories - Bridgman and Bridgman, Bucks Star Brewery and Naturally Tribal Skincare. We brought practical energy cost solutions to businesses and their employees with our Power Hour series.

Our team attended and spoke at lots of external events to spread the word, including the Silverstone Technology Cluster Annual Conference, Google DevFest MK, and MoneyFest. Learn more at: bbf.uk.com/net-zero-mk



50 organisations received a carbon footprint assessment

Delivered 32 vouchers worth £8,750

4 expert led workshops enhanced business knowledge

21 businesses signed the SME Climate Commitment

Net Zero Collaboration Circle

The Net Zero Collaboration Circle brings local businesses together to share knowledge, resources, and ideas for creating a Net Zero Buckinghamshire economy. This has been so well received and will further prove useful moving forwards. The group is growing all the time and currently includes over 80 businesses.

Visit bbf.uk.com/net-zero-bucks to discover more information and resources to help in the pursuit of net zero in Buckinghamshire and beyond.



Energy Resilience Programme

We gave businesses struggling with outstanding energy debt the opportunity to reduce costs through a 1-2-1 intervention with an Energy Efficiency Adviser.

Buckinghamshire EV Project

As part of the Buckinghamshire EV Project, funded by Defra and run by Buckinghamshire Council, we partnered with Global Action Plan, Globe Park, Lookers and Haines Watts on activity that put electric vehicles and sustainable travel at the forefront of businesses' minds.

Esri UK were an early adopter: *"We transitioned 43 company vehicles to EVs. Our average vehicle CO₂e emissions dropped 90% in three years."* - Gary Lockwood, Esri UK

For more information > bbf.uk.com/net-zero-ngage

The LEADER Programme came to a successful close in December 2022, but not before maximising its support for the rural economy throughout The Chilterns, Clay Vales, Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire. Match-funded grants and advice helped businesses from forestry and farming to heritage and tourism.

- £1.5m extra profit
- 230 jobs created
- £3.1m in new job salaries
- 219 new techniques & bits of equipment
- 45 businesses reached new markets
- 59% agreed actions to reduce environmental impact
- Tackling climate change by funding direct drills & regenerative agriculture



146 projects funded

£5.7m awarded to businesses

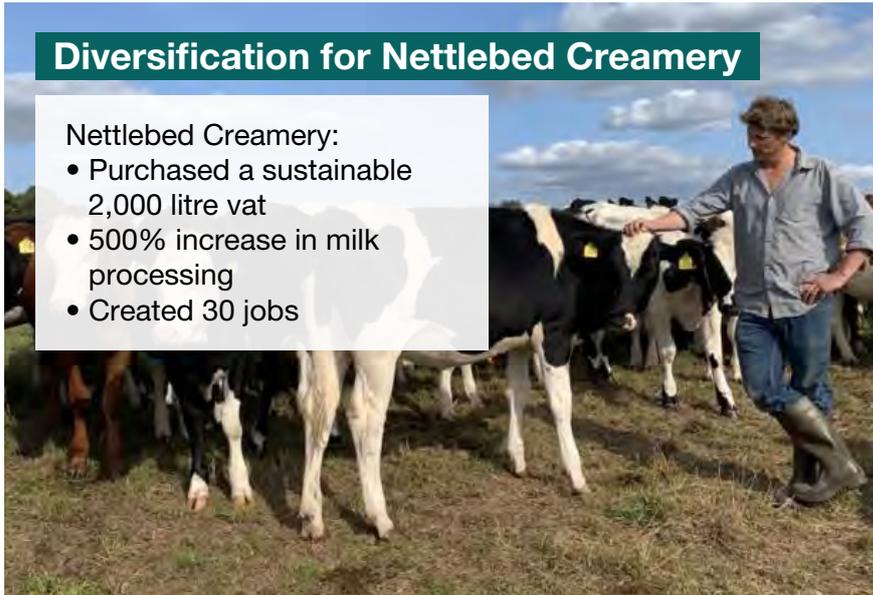
£9m+ match-funded

£1.3m extra drawn from unspent funds in other areas

Diversification for Nettlebed Creamery

Nettlebed Creamery:

- Purchased a sustainable 2,000 litre vat
- 500% increase in milk processing
- Created 30 jobs



"We are a small business wanting to grow and diversify. Expanding our farm shop helps us meet demand for quality local food and create many jobs for the local population."
 - Ben Hawkins, Haddenham Garden Centre

Sparkling growth for REAL Drinks Co.

- Bought six fermentation tanks & took bottling in-house
- Increased production five-fold
- Created 50 jobs
- Plans to export

"LEADER helped us invest in capital equipment and gave us the confidence to accelerate our growth plans."

- David Begg, Owner



For more information >
bbf.uk.com/rural-ngage

This year, we launched Rural Ngage – the new support network for rural businesses.

Our plan was to create a seamless transition from the LEADER Programme to Rural Ngage, and with the new branding, webpage and social media channels launching simultaneously, we hope we pulled it off.



The webpage bbf.uk.com/rural-ngage is full of dedicated advice and information, plus useful links to partner organisations and the latest funding opportunities, such as the Bucks Rural Business Grant (Rural England Prosperity Fund), Countryside Stewardship, and the Farming Transformation Fund.

We've been spreading the word about rural support through our new Rural Ngage newsletter and at events such as the MPs Briefing with Greg Smith MP, hosted by The REAL Drinks Co. in Aylesbury.



For more information >
bbf.uk.com/rural-ngage

The Visit Buckinghamshire: Boost project supported the recovery of the hospitality, leisure and tourism sectors in Buckinghamshire during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Support was delivered to help businesses and their employees across five key areas:

- Boost Green Credentials
- Boost Accessibility
- Boost Digital Skills
- Boost Your Workforce
- Boost Growth



83 people received digital skills training

288 businesses supported

2,933 – increase in visitor numbers for supported venues

The Visit Buckinghamshire: Boost launch event attracted esteemed experts such as leading travel journalist Simon Calder, who hosted the Future Tourism Summit, and Juliet Kinsman, the travel writer and sustainability expert.

We promoted Boost far and wide across social media, email campaigns, podcasts, local radio, and magazines.



TALKING HEADS with BUCKINGHAMSHIRE BUSINESS FIRST

£250 vouchers are available to implement new initiatives!



Visit Buckinghamshire: Boost is a new programme designed to accelerate recovery in tourism, hospitality and leisure businesses in Buckinghamshire.

Don't miss out on this fully-funded, easy-to-access support.



Visit: bbf.uk.com/boost
 Call: 01494 927130
 Email: boost@bbf.uk.com

Boost your business...



Boost Your Workforce

The hospitality, leisure and tourism sector provides a huge variety of career choices for people of all ages, whether it be in entertainment, travel, food services, hotels and more. A refreshed hospitality, leisure and tourism section on the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub website was full of information, inspiration, infographics, case studies and information on employers in the sector. bucksskillshub.org/sectors/hospitality-leisure-and-tourism



288 businesses supported (including some that had not received business support before)

38 jobs safeguarded

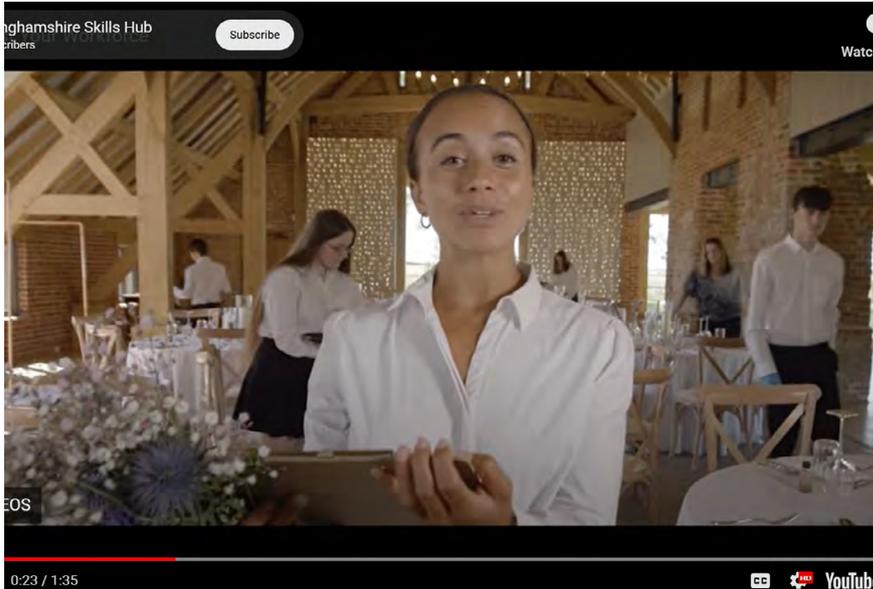
83 people received digital skills training

110 businesses learned about their carbon footprint and created plans to reduce emissions

15 businesses created an Accessibility Plan with Visit England and joined the Bucks Fair4All Scheme

60+ students met local and national employers at a Talent Showcase

100 attendees to the Future Tourism Summit



To show off all the opportunities the sector offers, we created this fabulous video which proved very popular > bit.ly/boost-your-workforce-showreel

Visit Buckinghamshire has remained the premier destination for businesses promoting their events, activities and attractions, and for residents and visitors alike discovering what's on around the county.

Another stellar year incorporated the Visit Buckinghamshire: Boost programme and a refreshed approach to improving the accessibility information visitors have access to, which, in combination with other activity, supported the ongoing recovery of the sector in the wake of Covid-19.



20,000 website visits each month

6,161 subscribers to Visit Bucks consumer newsletter (to visitors)

1,353 subscribers to Visit Bucks member newsletter (to businesses)

Accessibility – support businesses

New guidance designed by experts in accessibility and inclusive practice to help businesses become more confident about providing services to disabled people and their family and friends.

This guidance has been designed by experts in accessibility and inclusive practice with the aim of making you and your business more confident about providing services to disabled people and their family and friends.
Information created and collated by Buckinghamshire Disability Service (BuDS) and Buckinghamshire Business First.

Helping the local tourism sector rebuild

The Boosting Bucks campaign was launched to help our tourism and hospitality trade recover and rebuild after the challenges of the pandemic.

Our #BrilliantBucks campaign increased engagement on our social media channels, and in doing so, drove traffic back to businesses and itineraries on the Visit Buckinghamshire website. The campaign was rolled out in partnership with Muddy Stiletto's, leading to 3,000+ new sign-ups to the Visit Buckinghamshire consumer newsletter.



SHARE YOUR #Brilliant Bucks Moments and Win!

For more information > visitbuckinghamshire.org

Buckinghamshire Business First has a track record of dedicated support for our employees, the business community, the environment, our suppliers, and charity and community groups. Our accreditations and commitments are evidence of our dedication to achieving a fair, healthy and prosperous future for our employees and society as a whole.



Champion of Paralympic Heritage

We are part of the DICE Club which promotes the 4 Paralympic virtues: Determination, Inspiration, Courage and Equality. Our aim is to be seamlessly inclusive as an organisation.



Living Wage Employer

Every member of staff earns a real Living Wage, which is higher than the Minimum Wage and National Living Wage. An independently calculated hourly rate of pay based on the cost of living, the real Living Wage is currently £10.90 across the UK (£11.95 in London).



Climate commitment

Our Climate Commitment, recognised by the **United Nations Race to Zero campaign**, is to help reduce climate change by halving our greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050.



Prompt Payment Code

Business growth relies on certainty and stability of cashflow, which is just one reason why we are committed to paying our suppliers promptly and encouraging other organisations to do likewise. It's also the right thing to do.



Cyber Essentials

Cyber Essentials accreditation demonstrates to suppliers, employees and the business community that we enforce robust cyber security practices and can be trusted with their data.



Disability Confident Employer

We commit to supporting employees who may have a disability and ensuring our recruitment processes are accessible and supportive. We share good practice with other employers and consider ways of deploying 'disability confidence' throughout our organisation.



Armed Forces Covenant

We commit to treating fairly those who serve or have served in the armed forces, and their families, and encourage other businesses to do so too. This pledge is close to home for us, as Buckinghamshire is home to RAF Halton, one of the largest RAF stations in the UK.



Heart of Bucks Community Investor

Membership of the Heart of Bucks Community Investor scheme recognises our ongoing commitment to, and support of, local charities and communities within Buckinghamshire.



Good Business Charter

The Good Business Charter (GBC) consists of 10 commitments, some of which are represented by the accreditations on this page. In addition, our pledges cover staff wellbeing, worker representation, diversity and inclusivity, reducing our environmental impact, paying our taxes, and offering fair working hours and sick pay.



Corporate Social Responsibility Awards

We have been awarded a Gold UK CSR Excellence Award and a Gold International CSR Excellence Award in recognition of our efforts to have a positive impact on society, including by providing mental health support to staff, having a diversity policy that we abide by, and reducing our carbon emissions.

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



Michael Garvey
Chairman
Managing Director,
Chandler Garvey



Philippa Batting
Managing Director,
Buckinghamshire Business
First



Hiren Gandhi
Vice Chairman
Partner, Blaser Mills



Eman Martin-Vignerte
Head of Political Affairs and
Government Relations,
Bosch UK



Victoria Brocklesby
Co-founder and COO of Origin
Frames LTD



Klaus Allion
Owner and Managing Director,
ANT Telecommunications



Michael Harris
Chairman,
Ngage Solutions



Adam Stronach
Treasurer
Director, Harwood Hutton Ltd



Elizabeth Adlington
Consultant,
Adlington Young Executive
Coaching



Yvette Lamidey
Owner,
The Business Locksmith



Andreas Hohmann
Managing Director,
Total Carbide Ltd., Versarien
plc

Buckinghamshire Business First receives funding for its day-to-day core activity from Buckinghamshire Council, Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership and programme funders such as UK Government agencies and others. The financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022 were submitted for external audit scrutiny and are summarised as below. Full, signed accounts will be submitted to Companies House and are also available on the Buckinghamshire Business First website.

Income

Buckinghamshire Council Contract Funding	£400,000
Project Funding	£1,763,290
Growth Hub Core Contract Funding	£231,012
Other Income	£45,100
Membership Income	£83,429
Interest Received	£3
Total Income	£2,522,837

Expenditure

Direct Costs	£2,380,777
Overheads	£194,305
Finance Cost - Bank Charges	£1,517
Tax	£1
Total Expenditure	£2,576,600
Excess of expenditure over income	- £53,763

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2022

Fixed Assets	£100
Current Assets	£1,152,286
Creditors	- £959,449
Total Assets Less Liabilities	£192,937

Funded by

Retained Reserves b/fwd 1 April 2022	£246,700
Excess of expenditure over income	- £53,763
Retained Reserves as at 31st March 2023	£192,937

Our views on the priorities for economic development



On Skills

Focus on skills and the availability of talented labour resource, ensuring that people and their skills are retained within the county for the benefit of local businesses. Buckinghamshire businesses will be supported to publicise the career opportunities within their organisations.



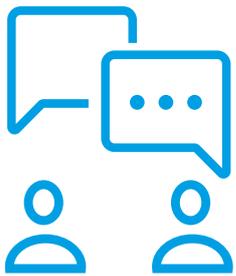
On Growth

Position Bucks as the “UK’s incubator”, encouraging and supporting young and innovative companies to develop and grow in the county with access to funding, digital connectivity and affordable workspaces.



On Infrastructure

Capture the fourth industrial revolution by thinking ‘Digital First’ and supporting smart infrastructure and connectivity, ensuring digital needs and sustainability are considered before build. These tech advances can improve business capacity, efficiency, resilience and services. Develop more land for employment sites, especially in the face of large volumes of housing developments, or risk a ‘brain drain’ and turning Bucks into a commuter county. Where residential sites are built, these must include affordable housing options to encourage people to move here or return after university.



On Business Support

The direct, one-to-one, bespoke support provided by BBF on a daily basis to individual businesses is vital to maintain growth.



On Net Zero

A low carbon, green economy must be nurtured and businesses supported to be more sustainable. This will also support resilience against ever-increasing energy costs.

Motivation

- To cultivate the conditions that encourage businesses to invest, grow and thrive in Buckinghamshire, therefore providing opportunities for growth and jobs within the county.
- Successful and growing businesses will provide the revenue required to deliver first-class services that benefit everyone in Buckinghamshire.
- Ensuring Buckinghamshire is a vibrant and economically healthy county, able to provide value to residents, tourists and businesses. The value that a vibrant local economy creates for the public sector helps to relieve the burden on the state and contributes to the national economy.



HIGHEST PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES WORKING IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR OF ALL 38 LEP AREAS



HIGHEST EMPLOYMENT RATE OUT OF 38 LEPS



THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 70 COMPANIES INVOLVED WITH THE WHOLESALE OF PHARMACEUTICALS GOODS IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE. THEY EMPLOY NEARLY 9 TIMES MORE PEOPLE IN COUNTY THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

£18.5 BILLION ECONOMY



7TH HIGHEST PRODUCTIVITY OUT OF 38 LEPS



THERE ARE TWICE AS MANY CREATIVE INDUSTRY JOBS WITHIN THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ECONOMY THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE, MANY OF WHICH ARE IN THE FILM AND TV SECTOR



THE MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION, WHOLESALE AND INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION SECTORS GENERATES THE MOST GVA FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



HOME TO 430 FOREIGN OWNED FIRMS





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01494 927130



@bbfuk



info@bbf.uk.com