

## A message from your Chairman

A lot has changed in the month since our last newsletter and, as a business owner myself, I understand how much impact this is having on businesses both large and small.

Most of us have probably never experienced anything like this before, and the situation is exacerbated by the fact that we do not know how long it will last.

My background is in the travel industry and I was working in marketing at Thomson Holidays (now Tui) during the first Gulf War. I remember the massive impact the war had on our business, indeed it resulted in the collapse of our nearest competitor (Intasun).

I know how quickly we had to react to a rapidly changing situation in a market which relies on consumer confidence. I also remember some very positive outcomes and learnings, once we came through it all.

As a Business Psychologist I have studied many successful entrepreneurs in an attempt to find the secret of their success, and I have noted that one common trait is their ability to overcome and indeed benefit from adversity.

The current economic situation is a challenge to us all, and I know many of you will be struggling to deal with the impact on a day to day basis. But how you manage this crisis will have a major impact on your business, not just now, but in the future.

There are three key areas where it would be good to focus your attention:

**Firstly** – How you handle the immediate impact. Times of crisis can present opportunities. Think about how you can adapt your business to this rapidly changing environment; what opportunities are there which did not exist before, what are your clients wanting?

The way that you interact with your clients when they are struggling can have a massive impact on their future loyalty. How can you help your clients?

**Secondly** – How you manage your business and your resources during the downturn. If your business is quieter



Thanks to Howe Chartered Surveyors, sponsors of our March Business Breakfast

than usual then this is an excellent opportunity to take a step back and examine it.

What can you do to improve your business and your processes (this does not need to cost money); how best can you utilise your workforce?

**Thirdly** – (and this is the area which often gets overlooked) – What plans have you made to ensure that you are in the best position to benefit from the upturn in the economy, when it happens?

An upturn can sometimes happen very quickly, and those who are best prepared are the ones who will benefit the most from the upturn.

I do hope that you all manage to get through this crisis with your business intact, but I also hope that most of you will come through it with a stronger more resilient business model.

**Colin Barber**

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## Events under review as cancellations essential

With Government advice over COVID-19 moving to social distancing measures by mid-March, Chamber took swift action to cancel all scheduled networking events for March-May, with refunds being processed for those that had already booked.

At the time of going to press we were still reviewing events scheduled for June onwards, and plan to keep you updated via this newsletter as well as via email and our social media channels.

We were also continuing to discuss the Brentwood Business Briefing, cancelled for later this month, with Brentwood Borough Council and Brentwood Business Partnership to see what might be possible in terms of running a conferencing or webinar event online at that time or a future date.

As Chamber chairman Colin Barber said in a message we delivered via email and social media on March 21: "Now is the time for innovation, so we are exploring other ways to help our members keep in contact with each other.

"Please let us know of any specific ways in which you think the Chamber can help you and your business."

Here are links to essential COVID-19 information sources:

Support for businesses: [gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses)

Guidance for employers: [gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19)

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## Working with animals

Having started the year at London's Royal Festival Hall filming Circus1903, which included life-sized elephant puppets, Chamber member David Strelitz Video Productions ([dsvp.co.uk](https://www.dsvp.co.uk)) has now been in Birmingham filming Peppa Pig: My First Concert.

David commented: "I'm lucky that I get to work on such a diversity of projects and work I do ranging from TV ads, West End shows for international companies, corporate projects, conferences etc as well as film and video transfer for members of the public."

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## Impact of domestic abuse in the workplace focus of six-month Essex-wide pilot

New Chamber member Alpha Vesta are a Community Interest Company delivering awareness, training, consultancy and policy development in domestic abuse for businesses and organisations.

Alpha Vesta was incorporated as a CIC in February 2019 by its Founding Director, Lucy Whittaker, who has an incredibly strong passion, ethos and mission of 'Breaking the Cycle' of domestic abuse through awareness, prevention and effective and safe early intervention through the workplace.

Explained Lucy: "With one in four women and one in six men being affected by domestic abuse at some point during their adult lifetime, a Home Office report released in January in 2019 estimated the social and economic costs of domestic abuse in England and Wales to be approximately £66 billion.

"Approximately £14 billion of this is attributed to loss of economic output through businesses and organisations across the country. Lost work days, lower productivity, poor mental health, frightened and distracted workers, poor career progression and high re-recruitment costs are some examples, of which there are many others.

"Astonishingly, 73 per cent of perpetrators of abuse use work-owned equipment such as phones, computers, technology and company cars to control or stalk their victim."

Alpha Vesta CIC have been funded by Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to run a six-month pilot across Essex delivering a range of awareness packages, presentations and fully-funded training workshops.

"The project launched in January 2020, and the aim is to engage with lots of different workplaces across the county in order to equip employers and employees with robust skills in recognising and responding safely and effectively to disclosures and suspected cases of domestic abuse within their workforce and those they come into contact with through their work," added Lucy.

Visit [alphavesta.com](https://www.alphavesta.com) or email [enquiries@alphavesta.com](mailto:enquiries@alphavesta.com) to speak to Lucy and find out more about the project and how to get involved.



Lucy Whittaker, Founding Director of Alpha Vesta CIC

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## Wide variety of organisations join the Chamber fold

As Chamber membership continued to push to new record levels during the first quarter of 2020, another 20 organisations were approved to join up at the March meeting of the Executive Committee. And as usual, it's encouraging to see new members coming from a wide range of sectors, and of varying business sizes.

**Aspire Essex Magazine** is a luxury lifestyle magazine; while **Blackmore Four** is a business consultancy; **Essex Business Forum** is an independent networking group; **Hutchinson Financial Planning** provides financial planning consultancy; and **Hutton View Care Home** is due to be completed soon.

**Levett Consultancy Ltd** provide digital services and solutions; **Perfect Virtual** helps with business processes and strategies; **Edwillgrove** supplies services to the financial sector; **Creative Fire** is a full service design agency; while **Environtec** is an environmental health and safety compliance consultancy.

**KB Fitness Mobile** is a mobile personal training and sport massage provider; **Shenfield Cricket Club** is based on Chelmsford Road in Shenfield; **Chorus Advisors** supply data protection services; **KC PT** is a personal trainer; **Aspen Waite** are business advisors; **Dave Amber Photography** provides high quality photographic services; and **Glass House Retreat** is a deluxe wellness retreat.

All approved members are added to the directory at [brentwoodchamber.co.uk/](https://www.brentwoodchamber.co.uk/) members where you can access their websites and contact info.

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## Government launches business support portal with info to help with the impact of coronavirus

The Government has launched a new website containing all the support, advice and information needed to help with the impact of coronavirus. The new Business Support site at [businesssupport.gov.uk](https://businesssupport.gov.uk) carries all the details of the way the Government is supporting businesses and their employees through a package of measures during the period of disruption.

This includes details of the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, now available for applications from small and medium sized businesses. The scheme will help any viable business with a turnover of up to £45m to access government-backed finance of up to £5 million. Interest payments and any lender-levied fees for businesses will be covered by the Government for an initial period of up to 12 months.

Other specific business support topics covered on the website include:

- Business Rates Holiday for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure
- Cash Grant for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure
- Small Business Grant Funding
- Statutory Sick Pay Rebate
- Time to Pay
- Business Rates Holiday for Nurseries
- VAT Deferral
- Income Tax Deferral for the Self-Employed
- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

The Government has also announced extra protection for businesses with a ban on evictions for commercial tenants who miss rent payments. Commercial tenants who cannot pay their rent because of coronavirus will be protected from eviction.

Many landlords and tenants are already having conversations and reaching voluntary arrangements about rental payments due shortly but the Government recognises businesses struggling with their cashflow due to coronavirus remain worried about eviction.

These measures, included in the emergency Coronavirus legislation, will mean no business will be forced out of their premises if they miss a payment in the next three months. Full details can be found at [gov.uk/government/news/extra-protection-for-businesses-with-ban-on-evictions-for-commercial-tenants-who-miss-rent-payments](https://gov.uk/government/news/extra-protection-for-businesses-with-ban-on-evictions-for-commercial-tenants-who-miss-rent-payments).

On March 23 the Government also issued guidance on further businesses and non-essential premises being asked to close, saying they would look again at the measures in three weeks and relax them if the evidence showed this was possible. Full details at [gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close](https://gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close).

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## Grow people and they grow the business

Chamber member Ade Ogunbambo, ActionCOACH Business Growth Specialist, says: "You don't grow businesses - you grow people and they grow the business." This means we need to attract, motivate and retain the right people for our businesses to grow.

In any business, real growth happens when the TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More) performs at a high level. "We need to Attract-Motivate-Retain people who share our Vision, Mission, Culture and Goals for our businesses," says Ade.

"The next challenge is to have clarity on whether to lead or manage the people in our team. Business owners require both leadership and management skills to achieve great results. The question is are we leading when we should be managing; or managing when leadership is required of us?"

"Leadership is about involving your team, who share and believe in your vision to work with you to achieve your goals. Managing is more task-focused, it's about making sure the team's day-to-day operations are happening as they should. To be successful, business owners need to be both strong leaders and managers to get their team to achieve their vision of success."

You can contact Ade on 07873 108 396 or email: [adeogunbambo@actioncoach.com](mailto:adeogunbambo@actioncoach.com).

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## Please keep submitting your newsletter articles

Now, more than ever, we need to hear from you and have your articles to publish in the Chamber newsletter over the coming months.

In these difficult times, it'll be important to keep the Brentwood business community together, and let us know what each other is up to. We'll keep you posted on Chamber developments, but we want to still keep receiving your articles for publication.

Any news is welcome, but it will be especially good to hear about ways in which you have adapted and changed your business practices during the crisis. And any tips and suggestions that you can pass on to your fellow members and newsletter readers.

You can reach out to us via our social media channels (see the footer on the back page if you don't already follow us on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram). Or email your article suggestions to [neil.hornsby@BrentwoodChamber.co.uk](mailto:neil.hornsby@BrentwoodChamber.co.uk).

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## Tina gets a Twitter boost from Theo

Chamber member Tina Wing Photography has received a business boost from retail entrepreneur Theo Paphitis by taking part in his Twitter #SBS Small Business Sunday event.

Wickford-based Tina tweeted Theo about her business during Small Business Sunday and was one of six weekly winners to gain a retweet to Theo's 500,000 followers.

As a result, [tinawingphotography.co.uk](https://tinawingphotography.co.uk) has over 100 more followers and pushed extra business for her photography, which includes weddings, portraits, business and food photography.

Each year every winner is invited to attend an #SBS Event, and Tina got to meet Theo at the recent one in Birmingham and receive her #SBS certificate from him.

"It was such a thrill to win. When I attended the #SBS Event we found out that 400,000 businesses had applied, but only one per cent had been successful," said Tina.

"It was wonderful to receive my certificate from Theo. It is great to have support from Theo and that he has recognised my hard work and helped spread the word about what I do to his following."

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## Chamber Events Calendar 2020

### April

**Friday 3 – Chamber Training Workshop run by 24 fingers:  
How to keep your business visible**

Being run online

**Thursday 9 – Chamber Training Workshop run by 24  
fingers: Getting started with Facebook ads**

Being run online

**Wednesday 15 – Chamber Training Workshop run by 24  
fingers: How to optimise your LinkedIn profile for business**

Being run online

**Friday 24 – Chamber Training Workshop run by 24 fingers:  
Using Facebook to get more business**

Being run online

All other May events cancelled

### May

**Friday 15 – Chamber Training Workshop run by 24  
fingers: How to Easily Create Eye-Catching Images and  
Video for Your Social Media**

Being run online

All other May events cancelled

### June

**Tuesday 2 - Meet & Eat lunchtime networking event**

The Teriss Bar, sponsored by Wylie Veterinary Centre

**Wednesday 10 - Netwalking**

The Green Man, Herongate

**Friday 12 - Business Breakfast**

Sponsored by Bennetts Funerals

**Friday 19 - Chamber Training Workshop run by 24  
fingers: How to Build a High Converting Sales Funnel**

**Monday 22 - Meet The Members networking event**

SNAP

### July

**Wednesday 1 - Chamber Summer Barbecue**

**Tuesday 7 - Netwalking**

The Greyhound, Little Warley

**Thursday 9 - Brentwood Business Showcase - Chamber Zone**

Brentwood School

**Friday 10 - Business Breakfast**

Sponsored by Guided Learning

**Monday 20 - Meet The Members networking event**

Saint Francis Hospice

**Tuesday 28 - Meet the Members networking event**

Bennetts Funerals

### August

**Tuesday 4 - Meet & Eat lunchtime networking event**

**Wednesday 12 - Netwalking**

The Green Man, Herongate

**Friday 14 - Business Breakfast**

Sponsored by Rotary Club of Brentwood

**Tuesday 25 - Meet The Members networking event**

The Teriss Bar

### September

**Tuesday 1 - Meet & Eat lunchtime networking event**

**Thursday 10 - Chamber Open Meeting & AGM**

**Friday 11 - Business Breakfast**

Sponsored by Carers First

**Friday 18 - Chamber Training Workshop run by 24  
fingers: How to run an engaging Instagram Profile**

**Tuesday 22 - Meet The Members networking event**

Guided Learning

**Tuesday 29 - Meet The Members networking event**

Tees Law Directors

### October

**Tuesday 6 - Meet & Eat lunchtime networking event**

**Friday 9 - Business Breakfast**

Sponsored by Aching Arms

**Friday 16 - Chamber Training Workshop run by 24  
fingers: How to Use Instagram Stories**

**Tuesday 20 - Meet The Members networking event**

Kinetic Podiatry Clinic

**Monday 26 - Meet The Members networking event**

Kids Inspire, Chelmsford

### November

**Tuesday 3 - Meet & Eat lunchtime networking event**

**Friday 6 - Brentwood Business Awards**

Orset Hall Hotel

**Friday 6 - Chamber Training Workshop run by 24  
fingers: Marketing Campaigns**

**Friday 13 - Business Breakfast**

Sponsored by Brentwood Development Partnership

**Tuesday 24 - Meet The Members networking event**

Wylie Veterinary Centre

**TBC - Meet The Members networking event**

Brentwood Brewery

### December

**Friday 11 - Business Breakfast**

Sponsored by 24 fingers

**Thursday 17 - Chamber Christmas Lunch**

Events will be reviewed and cancellations updated at  
[brentwoodchamber.co.uk/events](http://brentwoodchamber.co.uk/events)

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## AGM and Awards Cancelled

The Chamber AGM scheduled for May 14 has been postponed to Thursday September 10, where we will also elect new Committee Members. The Brentwood Business Awards for 2020 have also been cancelled.

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