



Chamber chairman Colin Barber is hosting the Backing Brentwood Business webinar series, featuring guest speakers that have included Chris Bushell of Smart Support

## Online is the way to go with new webinar series and virtual networking events

Reacting to feedback from members and faced with the postponement of our core events for the foreseeable future, Chamber has moved to produce a programme of online-only events as we steer a course through the coronavirus crisis.

Already having cancelled events for March-May, the executive committee took the decision at their April meeting to extend that through to the end of August. That necessary action has already seen the planned AGM postponed until September 10, and the total cancellation of this year's Brentwood Business Awards.

Focussing on what could be done to support members through the initial lockdown period and beyond, Chamber chairman Colin Barber agreed with Brentwood Borough Council and Brentwood Business Partnership to produce a joint online training programme.

These sessions - webinars hosted by the Chamber on Zoom - aim to give local companies the chance to ask a range of experts their COVID-19 business support questions, and receive answers in real time.

Subject matter in initial webinars in April ranged from Crisis Management with Smart Support's Chris Bushell, Furlough and Employment Queries with Lyndsay Salmon, HR consultant for LSHR Ltd, Choose Your Attitude presented by Colin himself, and a social media crisis guide with Emma Goode of 24 fingers.

Colin, who outlined Chamber's plans in an initial Talk To Your Chamber webinar early last month, said: "April has been a month of change and innovation for everyone, which while challenging may have brought about some positive new ideas for you and your business.

"I expect that some of you were already beginning to use video communications, but now that we have all had the opportunity to see the benefits, I suspect that it will become a key part of future interaction and communications.

"Virtual networking is certainly different from face to face networking, and it may not be so effective, but it also has future potential, particularly for bringing people together who are not geographically close.

"Adversity breeds innovation and now is certainly a time for all of us to innovate and try out new ideas. History teaches us that the survivors are those who innovate."

If you've not seen them live, you can watch the webinars at [brentwoodchamber.co.uk/webinars](http://brentwoodchamber.co.uk/webinars), or on the Chamber's YouTube channel at [youtube.com/channel/UC39BxChrewL2v9P1KYEE8Jw](https://youtube.com/channel/UC39BxChrewL2v9P1KYEE8Jw). They're also added on [facebook.com/BrentwoodChambers](https://facebook.com/BrentwoodChambers).

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## Enrolling now online at Havering College

NCC Havering Colleges have put together an online course offer to cover the period of coronavirus restrictions. The free Adult Distance Learning Courses are Level 2 Distance Learning Certificate courses, which give you the flexibility to study when and where you want at your own pace.

They are aimed at individuals who want to develop their knowledge of a specific subject, gain further qualifications, or are looking to broaden their work-related skills.

Courses range across subjects in Business and ICT, Health and Social Care, and Teacher Education. Course materials are mostly online, students complete online applications, and receive an email with logging on details if they are suitable for their subjects.

Students have access to tutors who will guide and work with them to achieve their qualification.

For further information and to register your interest visit [havering-college.ac.uk/online-courses](https://havering-college.ac.uk/online-courses) or [nclondon.ac.uk/short-courses](https://nclondon.ac.uk/short-courses).

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## Eight new members

The Chamber executive committee was pleased to approve another eight new member applications at the April meeting.

Joining up are **Tides Home and Garden**, an interior design and luxury furniture boutique on Brentwood High Street; and London-based **Citygate Rating Consultants**, who specialise in commercial properties.

Also delivery service providers **Two and a Half Birds**; and **Dom Fenton UW**, a Utility Warehouse Partner who helps clients save money on their utilities.

**Chelmer Wealth Management** provide bespoke wealth management advice; **All Massage Solutions** are Billericay-based offering various reflexology and massage therapy services.

**Regal Kitchens** are a kitchen supplier and installer operating from their Chelmsford showroom; while **Brandler Galleries** is an art gallery specialising in modern British art, illustrations for children's publications and English old masters in central Brentwood.

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## COVID-19 relief programme makes a big difference

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in the UK, The Little Edi Foundation has worked quickly and tirelessly to respond to community needs across Essex.

The Chamber member has rapidly adapted activities to prioritise supporting residents who are most vulnerable to the virus and its impacts. As children and young people are at the heart of the organisation, their COVID-19 Community Relief programme focuses on protecting the safety and well-being of vulnerable children:

- Distributing food, hygiene packs and school supplies to vulnerable children
- Supporting local food banks by donating food, hygiene packs and clothing
- Shopping for essential items and medication for those who are unable to or have difficulty leaving their homes
- Providing a one-stop-shop for parents and carers in need of guidance and reassurance

They'd like to thank the invaluable support of their network of volunteers, community groups, churches and local businesses that enable the success of The Little Edi Foundation's relief work.

Keen to help the community, their youth volunteers launched a new campaign, 'You can talk!', to combat loneliness among older people in Essex. The Youth Forum have partnered with local care homes to befriend isolated residents, writing letters to them once a week.

Since 2016, The Little Edi Foundation has provided learning and development opportunities for disadvantaged and disengaged 13-18 year olds from Essex. They create opportunities for Essex youth to engage in social action by volunteering.



*The Little Edi Foundation has provided essential items and school supplies to those in need*

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## Webinar to show how to prepare to thrive post-crisis

COVID-19 has impacted all businesses in different ways. Understanding the internal elements of your organisation (finances and people) and how to better protect them through the disruption, while preparing your business to emerge post-crisis are important areas to focus on right now.

New Chamber member Blackmore Four has scheduled a webinar for May 12 (10.30-11.45am) called 'Protect & Prepare your business during COVID-19 to thrive in the future', with Fiducia Wealth Management.

It will address the following issues: what organisational effectiveness is, why it is relevant to your business and how your business can become organisational effective. Understand if your business really is your retirement plan, how your pension can support your business, the importance of business and personal estate planning, business tax planning and bringing the strategy together.

You can register at [eventbrite.co.uk/e/protect-prepare-your-business-during-covid-19-to-thrive-in-the-future-registration-103221235494](https://eventbrite.co.uk/e/protect-prepare-your-business-during-covid-19-to-thrive-in-the-future-registration-103221235494).

Additional Blackmore Four webinars are being planned in May, including a series arranged with Tees Law. Follow [linkedin.com/company/blackmore-four-ltd](https://www.linkedin.com/company/blackmore-four-ltd) to keep informed.



Brentwood Station, from the Keller Williams local landmarks colouring book put out at Easter

## Keller Williams show colourful innovation

Responding to our recent reach out via social media to hear about members' innovative ideas during the current crisis, we were contacted by Peter Garland-Collins from Keller Williams.

"I decided to create a free children's colouring book containing landmarks in Brentwood for parents to download over Easter," explained Peter. "This was designed for parents to keep their children entertained and maybe even educate a little about some of the landmarks in Brentwood.

"The children could also draw their own house at the back next to the Keller Williams For Sale sign.

"While the book is a little basic, I really enjoyed putting it together and had over 150 people download over Easter, as well as it being organically shared by the local children's book shop on Facebook."

Thanks to Peter for sharing with us. Do get in touch to let us know how you are innovating to get through the coronavirus crisis.

## Phoenix FM business club offers added ad value

Chamber member Phoenix FM is working hard to bring important local information to the community in the current crisis. With 33 per cent of people not on social media (many of these in the most vulnerable category,) they are a source of accurate news from local businesses, community groups, charities and Brentwood Council.

This has been reflected in their listenership: in March their online audience alone jumped from 70,000 a month to 115,000, with overall listenership estimated at 170,000. Monthly visitors to their website in March grew from 200,000 to just under 300,000!

"This is all great news for us, but unfortunately doesn't translate into money as businesses tighten their marketing budgets," explained Phoenix FM's head of sales and marketing Steve Roach.

"Ironically there's never been a better time to advertise with us with a large and engaged audience listening in - and our Business Club is a low cost way to reach these."

Phoenix FM's Business Members Club costs £500 a year, and includes:

- Monthly blog on their website about your business during your 12-month membership - giving you excellent exposure to their online audience, and helping to improve your SEO
- Sponsorship of the station for a day: slots on each of their four primetime shows on the day for interviews, chat and your record choices played, advertising banners displayed in the studio, pictures taken and put on their website and social media (once restrictions are lifted)
- Quarterly live interviews (over the phone until restrictions are lifted)
- Two all-inclusive tickets to the Phoenix FM yearly event (includes food/drink and entertainment)
- Listing as a business member on their website

To find out more or to sign up please email Steve Roach on [sr@phoenixfm.com](mailto:sr@phoenixfm.com).

## Stay engaged naturally to break up lock down

To break up lock down and manage mental health, The Wilderness Foundation UK has launched 'Wild Time' an online series of tools and exercises to stay engaged with nature and the outdoors - even from your window.

Three main resources can be found at [wildernessfoundation.org.uk/wildtime](http://wildernessfoundation.org.uk/wildtime) - mindfulness techniques; practical activities to do with the family or on your own; and reflections and tools for maintaining positive relationships.

Everyone is invited to engage by sharing photos, writing, art and their own ideas which will be added in, and social media will boost the sharing platform.

To support those experiencing hardships through the coronavirus crisis, Wilderness Foundation offers the services of a voluntary mentor or coach to talk through any dilemmas you have, or support you and offer some company.

They also offer therapy and counselling for those in crisis. For more information or help for mentoring or therapy please contact [info@wildernessfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@wildernessfoundation.org.uk).

## New client-facing tool a timely addition

Fisher Jones Greenwood LLP are the first solicitors in the UK to introduce Settify - a website that takes instruction for both Family Law and Wills & Estates matters, limiting the need for initial face-to-face contact with clients in the current climate.

Susanne Grimwade, partner and head of Wills, Life Planning & Probate at the Chamber member said: "In this current time of uncertainty we want to reduce any in person contact we have with our clients, but not stop communication completely, particularly with those who are most vulnerable.

"Over the past few weeks we have inevitably seen a rise in estate planning queries and Settify allows clients to instruct a solicitor, access documents and track case progress on a new matter all from their own home."

# Chamber Events Calendar 2020

## May

**Thursday 7 – Chamber Training Workshop run by 24 fingers: How to Get Great Reviews and Testimonials for Your Business**

Being run online

**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

**Mondays – Coffee & Chat with members**

Virtual networking via Zoom

**Tuesday & Fridays – Backing Brentwood Business**

Webinar series via Zoom

**Wednesdays – Chamber Lunchtime Networking Get Together**

Virtual networking via Zoom

All other May events cancelled

## June

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

Being run online

**Mondays – Coffee & Chat with members**

Virtual networking via Zoom

**Tuesday & Fridays – Backing Brentwood Business**

Webinar series via Zoom

**Wednesdays – Chamber Lunchtime Networking Get Together**

Virtual networking via Zoom

All other June events cancelled

## July

All offline July events have been cancelled. Details of online events will be confirmed in due course.

## August

All offline August events have been cancelled. Details of online events will be confirmed in due course.

## September

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

**Thursday 10 - Chamber Open Meeting and 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 22 - Meet The Neighbours, Safari Networking**  
Stansted Airport

**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 - Chamber Training Workshop run by 24**

**Fingers: Give yourself the Gift of New Customers this Christmas - How to Run a Highly Effective Marketing Campaign**

**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](https://brentwoodchamber.co.uk/events) - where all online events can be booked in advance.

## Online the way to go

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Chamber events coordinator Sally Sykes has started hosting regular virtual networking events via Zoom twice a week. On Monday mornings you can start your week off by joining the 10am Coffee & Chat with Chamber Members.

Then on Wednesday there is the chance to take part in the Lunchtime Networking Get Together from 12pm, which also offers members the chance to talk about their organisations in the current crisis, share tips and advice - and generally keep the communication channels open.

Emma Goode has collaborated with Chamber to take the scheduled social media workshops online, and put on multiple extra sessions in April, with more already planned in May.

You can register for all the new online events at [brentwoodchamber.co.uk/events](https://brentwoodchamber.co.uk/events).

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