

## A message from your Chairman

Again I find myself writing this message during a lockdown, with 2021 looking to be another unpredictable year. On New Year's Day, when writing my New Year's resolutions, I was tempted to do two sets – one for a Covid affected year and one for a normal year!

Here at the Chamber we are constantly looking at ways to support our members through this difficult time. Do let us know if you have any ideas on how we can help Brentwood Businesses throughout the coming year.

I am very pleased to say that we have decided to proceed with the Brentwood Business Awards in 2021 - there is a lot of excellent work being done in Brentwood, which we need to recognise and celebrate.

You may notice a slightly different feel to this newsletter, as our previous editor Julian Goode stepped down at the end of last year. Our continued thanks go to James Dawson from JD Designs for his monthly input in designing the newsletter for us. We are looking for a permanent editor, so if you know of anyone who you feel would be suited for the role, then do let us know.

Finally a message from our Treasurer - if you have not yet paid your 2021 subscription, then please do action this as soon as possible. We know that times are tough, but do believe that the Chamber still continues to offer excellent value for money.



Baker Labels – Brentwood Business of the Year 2019

## Business Awards

As you will probably be aware, we made the decision to cancel the Brentwood Business Awards in 2020, as we felt that the businesses of Brentwood needed to focus their attention elsewhere.

However as everyone begins to adapt to the new environment, we feel that it is important to once again focus the spotlight on those businesses, which are continuing to succeed despite the current adversities. We have therefore decided to run the Business Awards in 2021.

The format will probably be slightly different from previous years, especially as at this stage, we do not know if we will be able to hold a prestigious awards ceremony in November, but we will ensure that the Awards receive the publicity and recognition which they deserve, and which undoubtedly boosts the businesses of Brentwood.

Our main focus at this stage is to find sponsors for each category, and to encourage as much publicity as possible for the Awards, so that we receive a high level of entrants.

If you would like to find out more about the Awards or are interested in sponsoring a category, then please contact our co-ordinator, Leah Burke – [leah.burke@BrentwoodChamber.co.uk](mailto:leah.burke@BrentwoodChamber.co.uk)

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## Savills Place Shaping Report on the future of Brentwood

COVID-19 has had a terrible effect on the nation's health, and it has wreaked havoc on the economy - especially on our high streets.

So it was timely that, in early 2020, Brentwood Chamber, along with Brentwood Business Partnership and Brentwood Council, commissioned a report by renowned consultancy, Savills, to analyse and make recommendations on the future of Brentwood. Originally we had in mind improving the attraction of Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatestone as places to shop, visit, live and do business in. But COVID-19 made this exercise even more urgent.

Chamber has played an active part in the discussions and it was recognised very early on that Brentwood, as a borough, needs to market itself better; as, according to surveys, it already has many of the features which make it a desirable place to live, work and visit - seen as green, inclusive, relatively safe and prosperous.

So, the emphasis has been on creating a brand which will achieve national recognition - beyond the 'Towie' image some have of Brentwood. Savills are due to report in the next month and the challenge will be to digest and implement its recommendations - as part of the recovery which is so badly needed.

Brentwood Chamber will be playing a full part in that process, for the benefit of members and the local community.

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## Welcome to 4 new Committee Members

We are pleased to welcome 4 new additions to the Chamber Executive Committee who joined the team in January. You may know some of them already, but we thought you might like to know a bit more about them and the organisations, which they represent.



### **Matt Barry - Blue Serif**

Matt is Creative Director and Founder of Blue Serif, a brand design agency, started 6 years ago in an office at the end of his garden. Now with a growing team of creatives and industry experts, Blue Serif has grown into a major player within the creative marketing and digital space in Essex. Matt brings 20+ years' experience, a passion for creative thinking and a flexible working approach to ensure that they meet their clients' needs and expectations.

Blue Serif help create and nurture brands at whatever stage they are at in their growth. Their purpose is to develop a deep understanding of their clients' needs, to deliver outstanding creative solutions that will drive enhanced business outcomes and user experiences.



### **Emma Goode – 24 fingers**

Emma will be best known to you as the person behind the 24 fingers' social media training courses.

Emma is passionate about business, and more specifically, passionate about business in Brentwood. She has seen first-hand how her business has developed through Chamber membership and is keen to recommend Chamber membership to any (and every!) local business she meets.

Emma is also the local leader representing Essex for Enterprise Nation, a nationwide organisation of 75,000 small business owners.

Emma says that she has thoroughly enjoyed delivering training courses to Chamber members over the past year and wants to offer additional support to both Chamber and its members.



### **Cally Raynor – Howe Chartered Surveyors**

Cally is responsible for Business Development & Administration at Howe Chartered Surveyors. Her role encompasses Strategic Planning, Networking/Partnerships, and Managing Client Care.

Howe Chartered Surveyors (HCS) has been an active member of the Chamber for the past four years, and in that time, has seen the Chamber thrive – as HCS has done the same.

Cally says that joining the Chamber Committee is a great honour and achievement. As part of a young team at HCS, she feels she can inspire further positive change and help to create events that enthuse members, and non-members, to come together to support one another.



### **Noelle Hones – Brentwood Borough Council**

Noelle joins us as the representative of Brentwood Borough Council on our committee. Noelle has been a local Councillor representing the Ward of Ingatestone, Fryerning & Mountnessing since 2007. In her time as a Councillor she has served on several Committees and outside bodies. She has been Deputy Leader and in 2016-2017 had the great honour of being the Mayor of Brentwood.

Noelle was born in Basildon and attended Grays Convent school before joining JP Morgan in the City, where she worked until leaving to start a family. She lives in Ingatestone and is married to Jon Cloke who is also a councillor and runs his own IT support business. Noelle's hobbies are golf, reading, dog walking and zumba dance classes.

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## Unpacking the Chancellor's Spending Review

### Handelsbanken

James Sproule is Chief Economist at Chamber member, Handelsbanken plc. He has long had a passion for economics and has made regular presentations, speeches across a wide range of media channels. He has an ability to explain complex concepts and developments in a manner which business people find both readily understandable and of direct relevance to their companies.

Here we share some of James' thoughts about the Chancellor's recent Spending Review:-

The Chancellor has given us his interim verdict: we are in an unenviable place and getting out of it is going to require considerable effort.

The figures are indeed alarming: an overall decline of almost 12% of GDP in 2020 makes this the deepest recession we have seen in over 300 years. Trying to cushion the impact of the lock down has resulted in the biggest peacetime budget deficit on record, 19%.

Even with all this spending, and a healthy parliamentary majority, politically the Chancellor did not feel he could re-impose austerity, but the planned reductions are drops in the ocean when compared to what is eventually going to be needed.

To move forward credibly, he has made two bets, one stated, one not.

#### The stated bet

The stated bet is that the economy is going to recover in 2021. Covid and lock downs have undoubtedly resulted in a good deal of long term scarring. This is the Chancellor's way of saying that we cannot simply expect businesses to revive, we need to rebuild. The changes in retail trade are the most obvious and while the revival in spending has truly been impressive, much of this has been due to online shopping now accounting for over a third of spending. Alongside this is a good deal of activism from the government itself, which set out plans for increased spending on housing, broadband, roads, rail and cycle ways – what longer term sustainable returns these investment will eventually deliver might be questioned, but the immediate impact will add to growth.

#### The unstated bet

Against all of this is the unstated bet that if the desired economic growth does not materialise, we are going to have to think again about tax and spending at the next budget.

The Chancellor also set out his concerns about rising unemployment. He clearly expects unemployment to increase, with the good news being that the forecasts for unemployment to rise rapidly towards 12% in early 2021 look unduly pessimistic. The revised forecast is for unemployment to peak at 7.5% towards the middle of this year, a forecast with which I concur. Sustainability is arguably the defining zeitgeist of our age. But alongside environmental and resource sustainability, we need to add another equally important sustainability: fiscal sustainability. The Chancellor knows this, while his detractors will always call for yet more spending, he has to bide his time, judge the strength and state of the recovery and balance strident voices against economic necessity. It is likely to be a close run game.



Andy Rogers – We Build Essex

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## Building the Best Commute with We Build Essex

Last year, everything changed and without wanting to gloss over the terrible suffering of many who experienced Covid 19, there was a glint of light that gave millions an enforced and for most, a massively new and improved life/work balance.

Spending so much more time at home, a lot of us started looking to extend, move or even build a property to gain extra space. Not just bigger bedrooms but things of dreams like utility rooms, dressing rooms, cinema rooms, a study or home office. If you have children of any age, or a partner who is on the spectrum regarding hoarding, then that 'study' is doomed to be anything but. Plus, have any of us hand on heart, had one complete productive day in that study when the dreaded 'home schooling' was imposed on us?

Garden offices are the future. Fact. However, build one that is fit for purpose. Anything that does not have insulated walls, floors and ceilings is what we call, a shed. Double glazing, mains power/water are also essential. Don't build too big and compromise on the spec. All year round use is the key.

Take that over priced season ticket with standing room only and your probably not far off a very nice 6 SQM complete garden room. Definitely sell that white Fiat 500 that either sits on your drive at weekends and the station car park Monday to Friday and upgrade to a top end unit that you could advertise on Air B&B.

If there hasn't been already, there will be employers who will offer 'added incentives' to setup correctly at home. As they scale down their floor space and rent in cities there will be a shift and possible tax benefits to 'help' employees do things correctly at home, instead of working from your dining table or indeed the dreaded shed!

WeBuildEssex have completed many of these office structures. We understand the importance of how they perform, how to deal with any aspects of planning, how to build them to fit in with their surroundings and of course, by only using materials that are sustainably sourced.

If any of this sounds interesting please contact:

Andy Rogers  
[andy@webuildessex.co.uk](mailto:andy@webuildessex.co.uk)

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## Chamber Events Calendar 2021

### February

Thursday 4 - Member Spotlight – RCH Care Homes

Friday 12 - Virtual Business Breakfast

Friday 19 - Virtual Business Lunch

### March

TBA - Member Spotlight - Guest TBA

Friday 12 - Virtual Business Breakfast

Friday 19 - Virtual Business Lunch

### April

TBA - Member Spotlight - Guest TBA

Friday 9 - Virtual Business Breakfast

Friday 16 - Virtual Business Lunch

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## Breakfast Discussions

One of the features of the monthly Business Breakfast has always been a discussion on each table about a specified topic, followed by a spokesperson from each table sharing the main points of the discussion with everyone else attending.

At a recent Virtual Business Breakfast, the topic for discussion was 'The Positive Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic' particular in relation to business.

There were a lot of positive comments, some of which included:

- Enables people to network to an unlimited geographical area, thus potentially increasing your target market
- A better work/life balance, with much more flexibility in working hours
- A lot more time and opportunity for formal and informal self-development and training
- A much greater awareness among the wider population of mental health issues, and a greater willingness to discuss them
- Less travelling, saving money and lower carbon emissions
- Less paperwork, as we become more digitalised
- An increased use of and familiarity with IT

There are no doubt many other benefits, and for many of us the working week will never return to what it was before.

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## A breath of fresh air for local Education during Covid-19

In today's challenging Covid-19 environment, it has become clear that the need for ventilation in occupied buildings is even more important than ever before. School, nurseries, colleges and universities are of course high priority to keep our children safe. With the onset of Covid-19, the means of ventilating in these settings needs a lot more thought and consideration than simply opening the windows.

Couple this with the onset of the winter months and merely opening windows becomes impractical, as the air required to ventilate the classroom is very cold.

### What can be done?

Installing mechanical ventilation is one suitable option whereby a mechanical ventilation system provides tempered fresh air into a classroom. This expels the stale air to atmosphere without the need to open a window. Fresh air is brought in from outdoors, warmed through a heat exchanger and the stale air removed from the space and exhausted to atmosphere.

Chamber members CS HVAC Ltd ([www.cshvac.co.uk](http://www.cshvac.co.uk)), based in West Horndon have a highly experienced and knowledgeable team in this field of expertise. The team offer a range of skill sets ranging from installation, refurbishment, project management and complete HVAC solutions. Additionally, they have a full host of certifications and accreditations (details of which are all on the company website).

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## Newsletter Content

If you have any news or articles, which you think would be of interest to our members, then we would be happy to hear from you – [info@BrentwoodChamber.co.uk](mailto:info@BrentwoodChamber.co.uk)

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## Sponsor an Event

With the Virtual Business Breakfast and Lunchtime Networking both established as monthly events, we are now offering sponsoring opportunities for these events.

The benefits of sponsorship include:

- Event branding with sponsor's name and/or logo included on Eventbrite, Chamber Website, Zoom, Social Media posts and in the Chamber Newsletter.
- A follow up article in the newsletter.
- A 10 minute presentation during the event with the opportunity to include a video
- Live Q&A providing interaction with attendees.
- Option to record the presentation for YouTube

The cost of sponsorship is £100, but we are offering a 50% discount in February, and March. If you would like more details then do contact us - [info@BrentwoodChamber.co.uk](mailto:info@BrentwoodChamber.co.uk)

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Let's Connect:

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Instagram: [@brentwoodessexchamber](https://www.instagram.com/brentwoodessexchamber)

LinkedIn: [/company/brentwood-essex-chamber-of-commerce](https://www.linkedin.com/company/brentwood-essex-chamber-of-commerce)

YouTube: [youtube.com/channel/UC39BxChrewL2v9P1KYEE8Jw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC39BxChrewL2v9P1KYEE8Jw)

Newsletter Design:

JD Designs

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