

## Meet the Chamber and AGM

On Thursday 9th May Chairman, Colin Barber, welcomed us to the 79th AGM and Meet the Chamber. We were reminded that the Chamber is here to act on the members' behalf and urged members to get in touch with any requests for support or suggestions and ideas.

We reflected on the past year and it has been a busy one. Some highlights included Barry Hearn hosting the Summer Barbecue in aid of St Francis Hospice, hosting our first Speed Networking event together with the Council, moving our Business Breakfasts from Fridays to Wednesdays and successfully running another Brentwood Business Awards Ceremony. There have also been some changes to the Executive Committee over the year and we are especially sad to see Mike Hawkins retire after 20 years of service to the Chamber.

It was wonderful to have so many members attend this important meeting. The weather was perfect - the sun was shining through the many windows and the balcony doors were open. Thank you to Old Brentwoods Club for hosting this event.

We hope that the meeting was informative and you managed to forge new networking connections. Remember to get in touch if you are interested in joining the Executive Committee, as we are always on the look out for great new candidates.

Contact [office@brentwoodchamber.co.uk](mailto:office@brentwoodchamber.co.uk) for meeting minutes if you haven't received them yet.

## General Election: Meet the Candidates

The Chamber continues to endeavour to be your gateway to local politicians, raising issues which affect Brentwood businesses at both a local and national level.

With this in mind we are holding a *Meet the Candidates* event prior to the general election, which will give you the opportunity to hear from the parliamentary candidates for the Brentwood and Ongar constituency and to put your questions to them.

The event will be on Monday 24th June at 7pm at Old Brentwoods Club.

There is no charge to attend the event, but we do ask you to register in advance, so that we have an idea of numbers. There will also be an opportunity for you to submit questions in advance.

REGISTER

## Cllr Louise McKinlay

Cllr Louise McKinlay will be joining our June Executive Committee meeting. Louise is the Deputy Leader at Essex County Council and also responsible for Business Engagement in Essex. She is a local resident and was also the Leader of Brentwood Council for 10 years. If you have anything that you would like us to ask her on your behalf, please contact us at [office@brentwoodchamber.co.uk](mailto:office@brentwoodchamber.co.uk).



79th Meet the Chamber and AGM 2024



Cllr Louise McKinlay with Chamber Chairman, Colin Barber.

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## Mike Hawkins Retires from ExCo

Mike announced his retirement from the Executive Committee (ExCo) at the *Meet the Chamber and AGM* meeting and said "It's been a great second career for me and a privilege."

After 20 years of faithful service to the Chamber, we have to say *Thank you and Farewell* to Mike Hawkins. Mike joined and ran the Chamber when the newsletters (and all paperwork) were hand-written and delivered in person whilst requesting subscription fees. He quickly modernised the newsletter process through buying a computer and began printing copies which him and his wife posted. Mike said, "We enjoyed ourselves and met great people."

After stepping down from running the Chamber in 2017, he continued on the ExCo in various capacities and has seen many changes in Brentwood. One being the change of members from mainly retail to less retail and more professional services. He said, "There is a very modern feel to the Chamber now."

We will miss Mike at the committee meetings, his wise council and humour but know that he won't be far away.



Mike Hawkins at the Meet the Chamber and AGM.

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## Brentwood Business Barbecue

### Wednesday 17 July

The Brentwood Business Barbecue will be held at Warley Park Golf Club on Wednesday 17 July. All businesses in Brentwood are invited and Chamber members will have discounted tickets so bring along your colleagues and friends.

This will be a great event and we look forward to enjoying the sunshine with you.

A variety of sponsorship packages are available. Please contact us at [office@brentwoodchamber.co.uk](mailto:office@brentwoodchamber.co.uk) for further details.

BOOK YOUR TICKETS

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## Brentwood Business Awards



Our much anticipated Brentwood Business Awards is taking place again this year and Pinney Talfourd Solicitors continues to be our headline sponsor.

Any organisation that is based or does business in Brentwood is invited to enter. You can also recommend an organisation you believe is worthy of an award and we will contact them to discuss the process.

It's great to win an award and be recognised for your contributions to your industry but this process is also a good opportunity to reflect on what your business excels at.

Entries are open as of 5th June and we are looking forward to hearing from many of you in the coming days. Give it a go. Remember that if you don't enter, you can't win!

MORE INFORMATION

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## Speed Networking

We held a successful, albeit noisy, Speed Networking event back in January this year. 40 people attended and many new connections were made. The feedback was very positive so we have partnered with Brentwood Council to do it all over again on 26th June from 9:30am at the Old Brentwoods Club.

The benefit of Speed Networking is that it enables you to meet a lot of people in a short space of time, with the objective of finding a few people who you would like to connect with further. The format is structured, so no need to worry about who to talk to or how to approach them.

MORE INFORMATION

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## New Chamber Members Welcome

If you are a local business and have not yet been to a Chamber of Commerce event, you are very welcome to come along to take advantage of the Chamber's programme. To find out more visit the website at [brentwoodchamber.co.uk](http://brentwoodchamber.co.uk). If you would like to join the Chamber email us at: [office@BrentwoodChamber.co.uk](mailto:office@BrentwoodChamber.co.uk)



## Meet The Members: The Treehouse Club



Chamber members enjoying archery

On Thursday 16th May, [The Treehouse Club](#) opened their doors to Chamber members with an invitation to enjoy a free game of archery and a look around the nursery setting.

The evening was both fun and informative. Many hadn't played archery before so learnt the techniques of shooting an arrow at a target. The nursery is in the heart of the woods so there was a short woodland walk to the nursery followed by a guided tour around the modern setting and then some snacks while networking. They really do "bring the outside in" with wooden furniture and natural playing equipment.

Meet the Members events are always free to attend and free to host. Let us know at [office@brentwoodchamber.co.uk](mailto:office@brentwoodchamber.co.uk) if you would like to host a Meet the Members event at your premises.



Inside The Treehouse Club nursery

## TikTok Workshop



On Tuesday 14th May, Emma Goode from [24Fingers](#) lead a very informative and interactive workshop on how TikTok can help us in business. She addressed our time and resource constraints and showed us how to make the most of the fastest growing social media platform to date. "TikTok is not just for kids" and the videos we post can simply be "You doing what you do best." Emma prepared us for what would be needed for success on this far-reaching but targetable platform.

## Meet the Members

Meet the Members is a simple and effective approach to networking, with the unique attraction being that each event is hosted by a different member at their business premises.

It is an opportunity for a member to showcase their business and of course for other members to get ideas and inspiration by seeing how other businesses are run.

Another positive aspect is that there is no charge to either host an event or to attend one. All we suggest is that the host supplies some light refreshments.

Recent Meet the Members events have been hosted by a wide variety of members, including Nuffield Health, Blue Serif, DiemX and Reach Hippotherapy.

The events are normally held from 6pm till 8pm on a weekday evening, and we are flexible on dates. If you are interested in hosting an event or would like to hear more about what is involved please let us know:  
[office@BrentwoodChamber.co.uk](mailto:office@BrentwoodChamber.co.uk)

## Member's News

### "The Great Switch off" Explained by LG Networks



**LG • NETWORKS**  
ADVANCED NETWORK SOLUTIONS  
FOR VOICE AND DATA

In 2017, Openreach announced 'The Great Switch off', to replace all legacy copper and analogue services with internet based connections by 2025. The network simply isn't advanced enough for all UK lines to be moved over to 'IP' (i.e. internet protocol, the most common being 'Voice over Internet Protocol', or VoIP – i.e. internet based phone services) by next year.

The majority of ISDN lines – the standard of business lines for the past 30-40 years – have been migrated already and it is LG Networks' opinion that Openreach will actually cease the remainder at the end of next year.

If you are still using ISDN or analogue lines as your business phone service then you need to discuss your options urgently with your current or prospective provider. If your broadband service still uses an analogue line with either ADSL2 or FTTC (i.e. old copper based connections) then you also need to look at upgrading this as Openreach claim these services will also be withdrawn next year.

If you still have any legacy products (ISDN, analogue lines, ADSL, FTTC) then contact [LG Networks](#) to get the latest information.

## Meet The Committee



Chamber Admin Manager, Donna Wilkes

We thought that you would like to find out a bit more about the members of the Chamber Executive Committee, so each month we will be interviewing a different person. This month, we have chosen to introduce you to Donna Wilkes, our Admin Manager.

### Tell us about your current job.

Apart from my work for the Chamber, I am a stay-at-home mum of two young daughters, so Chief...Diary Manager, Entertainment Officer, Party Planner, Educator, Chef, Cleaner, Launderer, Time Keeper and Agony Aunt!

### What do you like about Brentwood?

I love the location of Brentwood. The fact that we have access to such beautiful green spaces such as all the country parks and field walks on our doorstep, only 30 mins from the coast and a quick train ride from London.

### What was your first job?

My very first job was a Saturday girl waitress at the local Wimpy back in the North East when I was 16 for a princely £2 per hour!

### What job did you think you would like to do when you were a child?

It was always between a hairdresser and an air hostess.

### Who do you admire in the business world?

Karen Brady. I think what she achieved at such a young age with Birmingham City and moving her way up through the ranks of the sporting and business worlds is so impressive. And the fact that she is an avid champion of women in business.

### Have you had any mentors and if so, what did you learn from them?

I haven't had any one particular mentor, but in every job I held in the City, there were various people who I looked up to and learned from to further my career.

### How do you handle setbacks or frustrations?

Have a strop, then tackle it head on!

### What are your hobbies and interests outside of work?

I love to cycle and walk through the countryside of Brentwood. I attend the Brentwood Centre regularly for exercise classes. I also love to have days out all over Essex with my family.

### Who would you like to spend one day with and why?

Ant and Dec. Apart from all being from the North East, I just think it would be a really good laugh and they seem like such nice people! I totally admire how well they have done in their long TV careers and I bet they could tell a story or two!

## Upcoming Chamber Training

**13 June**

Thursday

**Customer Service Excellence Online**

[BOOK HERE](#)

## Upcoming Chamber Events

**12 June**

Wednesday

**Business Breakfast at Marygreen Manor Hotel Sponsored by Brentwood Business Awards**

Sponsored by Brentwood Business Awards

[BOOK HERE](#)

**26 June**

Wednesday

**Speed Networking The Old Brentwoods Club**

[BOOK HERE](#)

**10 July**

Wednesday

**Business Breakfast at Marygreen Manor Hotel Sponsored by Attract & Engage**

[BOOK HERE](#)

**17 July**

Wednesday

**Brentwood Business Barbecue at Warley Park Golf Club**

[BOOK HERE](#)

### Let's Connect:

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