

A Message From Your Chairman



Colin Barber,
Chamber Chairman

It is that time of year when we tend to look back over the past year and begin to think about what the coming year holds in store for us.

Here at the Chamber of Commerce, we are feeling positive about the prospects for businesses in Brentwood.

After a couple of years adjusting to the post Covid era there seems to be a significant

increase in new businesses and a steady expansion of existing businesses.

There are three major infrastructure projects in the pipeline, which should benefit Brentwood business, either directly or indirectly:

Construction of the Lower Thames Crossing is expected to be approved this year, and Balfour Beatty, the principal contractors for the Essex section will be expected to use local suppliers.

Construction of the new data centre just the other side of the M25 will generate income for the area.

Finally, two different companies are bidding to build a new motorway service station just north of junction 28.

People often ask what is the role of the Chamber of Commerce and how can we help you. In simple terms our objective is to help you build your business, which we aim to achieve in a variety of ways. However to a certain extent it is up to you to tell us what you need from the Chamber and how we can help you.

We now have a team of 3 people working to support you. Donna Wilkes is in charge of admin, and will often be your first point of contact. Gillian Brooks edits your monthly newsletter and Kimberley Craigmile manages all our social media. Gillian and Kimberley will be happy to help promote

your business. Just let them know if you have any news or upcoming events.

The Chamber is managed by a committee of volunteers from among our membership. We are grateful for all that they do to support you and the businesses of Brentwood. If you are interested in joining the committee, then we would be happy to hear from you.

Finally a message from our Treasurer - if you have not yet paid your 2025 subscription, then please do action this as soon as possible. We rely on subscriptions as our source of funds, and believe that the Chamber still continues to offer excellent value for money.

Christmas Lunch



We celebrated the season with a delicious traditional Christmas Lunch at Warley Park Golf Club. The room was busy and we had plenty of fun; answering true or false Christmas questions and singing the 12 days of Christmas! We were beautifully entertained by Hogarth School's children's choir. They sang wonderful traditional and modern Christmas songs and were thoroughly appreciated.

Thank you [Tees](#) for sponsoring such a successful event.

Our speaker was Mike Porter, Voice Over artist and radio DJ at [PhoenixFM](#). He shared his experiences and challenges as he progressed in his career. He has always seen a "no" as a challenge and so has grown successfully in the areas that interest him.

Member Spotlight

Ashley Wilson - The Treehouse Club



Ashley Wilson, Managing Director of The Treehouse Club.

During the COVID lockdown we introduced a popular series on YouTube called 'Member Spotlight'. These videos are still available to view on our [YouTube channel](#)

Following on from this series we have decided to introduce a 'Member Spotlight' feature in our newsletter, which will give you the opportunity to find out more about other chamber members.

This month our spotlight is on Ashley Wilson from [The Treehouse Club](#), winner of the 2024 Brentwood Business of the Year at The Brentwood Business Awards.

Tell us briefly about your business and how long you have worked there?

I started the Treehouse Club 14 years ago, from studying children's mental health I wanted to start a nursery that really reflected positive mental health and helping children to get the best foundations for life, this is why we were the first nursery to bring full time forest school to Essex.

What is your role in this business?

I am the managing Director.

What was your first job?

My first job was in the Co Op and Peter Pan's Playground (now Adventure Island).

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

I wanted to be a vet.

Who do you admire in the business world?

Alan Sugar and anyone who wasn't handed a business, they had the courage to try for themselves.

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

I didn't have a mentor, sadly anyone with dyslexia was ruled out of achieving in my days of education. I have just completed an MBA and I would say Steven, my lecturer, was my mentor as he held me accountable for everything.

What advice would you give to someone just starting up in business?

Keep going, yes you will get it wrong but surround yourself with good people who will cheer you on, not people that will hold you back and point out your mistakes.

How do you handle setbacks or frustrations?

By feeling it. Setbacks are frustrating and upsetting. It can make you feel not good enough however this is life and you won't always win. Allow yourself and your team to feel the emotions and then pick yourself up and lead your team forward.

What are your hobbies and interests outside of work?

I love walking, horse riding and sailing. Anything outdoors!

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

Alan Sugar. I would love to interview him.

Workshop : Menopause at Work

A Strategic Business Investment: Thursday 6th February



Dr Alice Scott from Essex Private Doctors.

Dr Alice Scott is a GP and recognised menopause specialist with the British Menopause Society. She will be presenting on this topic and covering aspects of management and treatment of the perimenopause and menopause. In particular she will focus on the approach and management of menopause as it relates to individuals in the

workplace. The talk will be informative for both men and women, for individuals, and for business leaders.

This event, supported by the Chamber, will be held at Holiday Inn Brentwood on 6th February at 6pm. It will be a unique opportunity to hear from an accredited expert and obtain a greater understanding of this key area of health.

[BOOK HERE](#)

December Business Breakfast Sponsored by Green Tornado



The Chamber's December Business Breakfast was sponsored by [Green Tornado](#), a website and SEO agency based in Brentwood. Phil Scott talked about the history of the business, the services, which they offer for small business and the various packages available. This was followed by a useful Q&A session, where guests were able to put their questions to Phil.

[CONTACT PHIL AT GREEN TORNADO](#)

Happy New Year!

We hope that 2024 has been a successful year for you and your organisation. We have certainly enjoyed partnering with you. Here's to a happy and prosperous 2025 for you and yours!

Speed Networking Wednesday 22 January



Most of you will be familiar with Speed Networking as we've run a few successful sessions. 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.

We spoke to Liesbeth from Marillac Neurological Care Centre and she said. "I've found Brentwood Chamber's speed networking events incredibly beneficial - meeting face-to-face with local business leaders and making meaningful connections have been invaluable in raising awareness for and promoting Marillac's cause. In an age dominated by digital platforms, nothing beats the impact of in-person events."

We are pleased to announce that, due to popular demand, in conjunction with Brentwood Borough Council we will be holding another Speed Networking event on Wednesday 22nd January at The Old Brentwoods Club. We look forward to seeing you there.

[BOOK HERE](#)

Member's News

Marillac Neurological Care Centre

Food & Wine Pairing Fundraiser : Friday 28th February

Marillac Neurological Care Centre are thrilled to announce their upcoming fundraiser in collaboration with Holiday Inn Brentwood and Accolade Wines.

Enjoy an evening of exquisite food and wine pairings, exciting auction prizes, and exclusive Marco's goodie bags, in support of Marillac Neurological Care Centre. Don't miss this unforgettable evening of fine wine, great company, and community spirit – all for a good cause.

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

Welcome to Our New Members

Lucking Utility Services



LUCKING
UTILITY SERVICES

Lucking Utility Services are specialists in the repair, replacement of installation and water mains across London and the South East of England.

Their teams are able to install a variety of pipes, ducts and cables via moling, horizontal directional drilling and micro trenching. This is an efficient and environmentally friendly solution to your project.

Neil Patrick Celebrant



Neil Patrick Celebrant offers beautifully crafted, bespoke ceremonies for all occasions with optional live musical tributes. Written with care and attention, performed with heart and soul.

Invoices for 2025

As you will know, we are a membership organization, and rely on members' subscriptions to fund our activities for the benefit of Brentwood businesses.

Invoices for your 2025 membership will be sent out in December. Unfortunately, because of inflation over the past two years, we have had to make a slight increase in our rates for 2025. However our subscription rates still remain low compared to other Chambers of Commerce, and offer excellent value for money.

Attract & Engage

Made in Essex: The Podcast

Attract & Engage are always on the lookout for new people to feature in future podcast episodes with interesting stories & successes, Chamber members are invited to email recommendations to info@attractandengage.co.uk.

This month, Jill Willis from Attract & Engage talks to Dr. Nicola Thorn, CEO of AND Technology. Focused on MedTech projects, Nicola shares her experience of leading a family business. Packed with real truths and valuable insights, Nicola reveals how she's championing Essex's tech ecosystem and inspiring the next generation of women in tech..

[LISTEN HERE](#)

Resolve Building Claims

Leah Dances for Charity

Strictly Air Ambulance 2025
A spectacular evening of dance and entertainment raising vital funds for your local life-saving charity!

Leah Burke and professional dancer Andrew Lingard are competing in aid of Essex & Herts Air Ambulance!

Support your local dazzling duo by scanning the QR code to donate today!

Essex & Herts Air Ambulance
Your local life-saving charity
Charity Number: 1108989

Brentwood-born Leah, a director at [Resolve Building Claims](#) and Brentwood Chamber committee member, was moved to support EHAAT after a close friend's serious canyoning accident highlighted the life-saving role of air ambulances. Deeply grateful for the opportunity, Leah is ready to take on this challenge with some nerves but plenty of determination. Leah says "I'm grateful for the opportunity to support the charity at such a fun event and pray that I can do it justice and raise as much money as possible. To know that we have an air ambulance in and around Essex and Hertfordshire is something no one should take for granted."

Andrew, who is returning for his second year, found his love for dance at five, going on to win medals across the Juvenile, Junior, and Adult circuits. An experienced competitor, at amateur and professional level, including same-sex competitions, he has represented the UK worldwide. Now a qualified professional instructor, he runs his own dance school, training everyone from beginners to seasoned competitors.

Consider Sponsoring a Brentwood Business Award Category in 2025

Category Sponsorship package includes your logo appearing on the Brentwood Chamber of Commerce website, 2x complimentary tickets to the awards ceremony, your representative presenting your category's award at the ceremony, your logo on your category's marketing material and awards evening slide(s), full page advert in the printed event program, promotion of your sponsorship on the Chamber's social media channels and email marketing database, promotion on PhoenixFM and your banners can be displayed at the Awards Ceremony, Chamber AGM and the Summer Barbecue.



Upcoming Chamber Events

8 January Wednesday	Business Breakfast at Marygreen Manor Hotel Sponsorship Available	BOOK HERE
22 January Wednesday	Speed Networking Old Brentwoods Club	BOOK HERE
6 February Thursday	Menopause at Work Workshop Holiday Inn Brentwood	BOOK HERE
12 February Wednesday	Business Breakfast at Marygreen Manor Hotel Sponsorship Available	BOOK SOON

Upcoming Member's Events

28 February Friday	Food & Wine Pairing Fund Raiser Marillac Neurological Care Centre Holiday Inn Brentwood	BOOK WITH STEVE
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Let's Connect:

Brentwood Chamber of Commerce
Town Hall
Ingrave Road
Brentwood
Essex
CM15 8AY

- @BwdChamber
- @BrentwoodChambers
- @brentwoodessexchamber
- /company/brentwood-essex-chamber-of-commerce
- @brentwoodchamberofcommerce

Phone/WhatsApp: +44 7849704037
office@brentwoodchamber.co.uk
www.brentwoodchamber.co.uk

Newsletter Design:

JD Designs
www.jddesigns.co.uk