

A Fantastic Evening at the Chamber Summer BBQ



Photo courtesy of Tina Wing Photography

Nearly 70 members and guests joined us for an evening of great food, conversation and live music from Oasis Only, all set against a glorious summer evening at Brentwood Rugby Club. It was brilliant to see such a wide mix of businesses, charities and community organisations represented.

A special thank you to everyone who came along and helped make the evening such a success. Events like these remind us that business networking is about far more than exchanging business cards. It's about building genuine relationships, supporting one another and enjoying being part of the local business community.

We're already looking forward to the next Chamber event.



If you would like to access an electronic version of this newsletter, try this QR code.

Celebrate Brentwood's Best with the People's Choice Award



Brentwood is home to a vibrant and diverse business community that helps make our borough a fantastic place to live, work and visit. Now is your chance to recognise the businesses that make a difference every day by taking part in the People's Choice Award.

Whether it's your favourite coffee shop, a trusted independent retailer, a local restaurant, or a service provider that consistently goes above and beyond, every nomination and vote is an opportunity to celebrate excellence and dedication. These businesses are at the heart of our community, delivering outstanding customer service and contributing to Brentwood's unique character.

By voting in the People's Choice Award, you are doing more than acknowledging great service. You are helping local businesses gain valuable recognition, attract new customers, strengthen their reputation, and continue growing. Your support can contribute to job creation, investment, and the ongoing success of Brentwood's local economy.

The award shines a spotlight on the businesses that make a positive impact and encourages them to continue delivering exceptional experiences for residents and visitors alike.

Take a few moments to support the businesses you value most. Vote today and help celebrate the very best of Brentwood's thriving business community.

VOTE HERE AND SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESSES

A Message from Alex Burghart



Alex Burghart having a local pint.

Running a business has never been a bed of roses but I have always been hugely impressed by the level of entrepreneurialism, determination and sheer bloody hard work the people of Brentwood and Ongar put in to our local businesses. It's not been easy in the last few years: the Covid pandemic

was a real test of business survival and enterprise; the huge increase in energy and food costs when the war in Ukraine began; and the anti-business policies of the Labour Government have put immense strain on even the most enthusiastic of people. And yet the spirit of determined entrepreneurialism continues. I visit local businesses across the constituency whenever I can, and am currently running a campaign to Drink A Pint A Week In A Local Pub, which has attracted hundreds of thousands of views on social media. My choice of pint has varied, from Diet Coke to the Guinness which got Jeremy Clarkson asking why I wasn't drinking British beer, and suggesting Hawkstone might hit the spot. Although I'm willing to try a pint of any beer or soft drink in our local pubs – helped on by my willing team - this is not a campaign to sell more beer. It's a campaign to encourage everyone living in Brentwood and Ongar support their local pub. When pubs fail; consumers, high streets, and working people pay the price.

Now I'm hoping to extend the campaign to cafes, restaurants and small independent businesses in the constituency, so if you would like me to come to visit your business, please get in touch. And if you are struggling, or are baffled by what the Labour Government is doing to small businesses, get in touch too, and we'll have a chat. But it's too hot to be too political. Take the short message from this article. Head to your local pub, and have a pint. Cheers!

If you would like Alex to visit your business, let us know and we will contact Alex on your behalf Office@BrentwoodChamber.co.uk.

AI Workshops



Following the success of the first few sessions in our AI Workshop Series, delivered in partnership with [Brentwood Borough Council](#) and David Bell of [Simboc](#), we are pleased to continue supporting local businesses in exploring the practical benefits of artificial intelligence.

Upcoming workshops in the series:

- Friday 4 September – Smarter Social Media with AI
- Friday 9 October – AI-Powered Video Creation for Beginners

Participants who attend all 5 workshops will receive a Certificate of Completion at the end of the programme.

[BOOK HERE](#)

Join us For Breakfast

Wednesday 5th August



Join us for the August Breakfast at
FIGO Restaurant, Brentwood High Street

Open to members & non members

business in a professional and welcoming environment. Both members and non-members are welcome.

Please book early to guarantee your place. We're looking forward to seeing you there.

[BOOK HERE](#)

Brentwood Business Awards Ceremony: Celebrating local success

Friday 16th October



The Brentwood Business Awards spotlight outstanding local enterprises, featuring 10 distinct categories including the coveted "Brentwood Business of the Year" award. Each category is expertly judged and sponsored by local businesses, with winners revealed at our highly anticipated awards ceremony.

This year, we're thrilled to have [Pinney Talfourd Solicitors](#) as our Headline Sponsor and [PhoenixFM](#) as our Media Partner, both steadfast supporters since the awards began in 2018.

The recipient of last year's Best Sole Trader Award, generously sponsored by Brentwood Council this year, was Amy from Smiths Cat and Dog Grooming. Amy's experience truly highlights the award's transformative power. She shared, "Thank you again for honestly changing my life. The extra customers I gained from the award winning has led me to opening a new unit." Her journey stands as a powerful testament to the incredible growth and new opportunities that winning this award (or any of our other awards) can bring to local sole traders.

Member Spotlight

Mohamed Omar - Founder of Shinimini Ltd



Mohamed Omar: Founder of Shinimini Ltd

Tell us briefly about your business.

I run **Shinimini**, which trades as The Scaling Firm. When most people hear "AI," they picture ChatGPT or a chatbot, and honestly, that is the very tip of the iceberg. What we actually build is AI

that does the work rather than just talks about it. Systems that answer your missed calls, book appointments, chase reviews and invoices, draft the emails, edit the videos, and quietly run the busywork in the background. We build them bespoke, around one business at a time, so they replace the pile of monthly subscriptions most owners pay for and never fully use. I do not see us as a supplier either. I work as a growth partner; your growth is my growth, and that is the only model that has ever made sense to me. Alongside that, I am building UK AI Assurance, an independent company that tests and stress tests AI systems for safety and accuracy, especially the tools now moving into healthcare. My aim in Brentwood is simple: help a hundred local businesses across Brentwood, Ingatestone, and Shenfield win back at least ten hours a week each.

What is your role in this business?

Founder. Day to day that means setting the direction, leading the team, and, the part I enjoy most, sitting down with an owner to work out exactly where this technology can take real weight off them. I care far more about getting that right than about looking busy. If the people around me are growing and the customer is genuinely better off, I have done my job.

How long have you worked there?

Shinimini was incorporated in 2023, but the journey started well before that. I have been building things since I was eighteen, so this is simply the most focused and most ambitious version of a road I have been on for years.

What was your first job?

I was pulling computers apart to see how they worked long before anyone paid me for anything. My first real venture came at eighteen, building e-commerce websites and running the advertising behind them. From there it was trading, then helping other businesses with their marketing, each step teaching me a bit more, until it all rolled into what Shinimini is today. The lesson underneath all of it was the same: no job is too small if you do it properly.

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

I was hooked on computers from about the age of seven, always taking them apart to see what was inside, so a life in technology was probably always coming. What I really wanted, though, was to build something of my own that actually mattered to people. That part has not changed.

Who do you admire in the business world?

I admire the people who reach real success without losing their character or their values on the way up. Getting ahead is easy if you are willing to cut corners and become someone else to do it. Staying true to who you are while you do it, under real pressure, is the hard version, and it is the only one I respect.

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

Yes, many, and I am grateful for every one of them. I have always looked for mentors when I am stepping into unfamiliar territory, because someone who has walked the path before you can save you years. I have taken something from each of them, and above all, I am grateful to God as the ultimate

guide through everything. The thread running through it all is simple: stay humble enough to keep learning and respect the people who help you along the way.

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

Truly believe in yourself, and know exactly who you are before you chase anything. Get clear on your values and your non-negotiables so that when an opportunity turns up, you can read it properly because you are moving from self-belief and clarity rather than fear or a fear of missing out. Talk to real customers early and automate the parts of the work that drain you, but above all keep your identity on lock. Most of the good stuff follows from that.

How do you handle setbacks or frustrations?

I treat them as information, not disasters. Part of who I am is someone who meets setbacks well, so I step back, work out what the situation is actually telling me, fix that, and keep moving. Some things are meant to be and some are not, and often you just need a bit of outside perspective to see which is which. I learned a fair amount of this the hard way, including coming through a stage four cancer diagnosis while I was finishing my degree and running the business, and it left me with one simple belief: most problems look smaller in the morning.

What are your hobbies and interests outside of work?

Honestly, work is a lot of fun for me, so the line between the two is blurry. Outside of it, I like whatever is good for the soul, time with the people close to me, traveling, a proper good meal, and a decent game of chess. My rule is simple enough: live life to the fullest while you can.

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

Someone who reached the very top of their field without ever losing sight of where they came from. I have a lot of respect for people who stay rooted in their identity and their heritage while they build something great, because I think that is where real confidence comes from. I would happily give up a day to understand how someone held on to both.

If there is one thing I would want people to take from my story, it is this: be proud of who you are and where you come from, and let others be proud of theirs too. I am grateful for my own roots and just as grateful for the life I have been able to build here in the UK. The most genuine people I meet are the ones who know exactly who they are, and I would love for more people to feel that.

Workshop: Public Speaking

Wednesday 2nd September

Public speaking is one of the most valuable skills for personal and professional success, and it's no surprise that this workshop has been one of our most requested topics.

We are thrilled to announce that this interactive session will be delivered by **Neil Patrick**, an experienced independent celebrant who knows exactly what it takes to command a room, capture hearts, and deliver unforgettable speeches.

Whether you are presenting at work, speaking at family events, leading team meetings, or simply looking to communicate with greater confidence, this workshop will provide practical, real-world techniques to help you engage any audience, manage nerves and deliver impactful messages.

Join us to learn from a master storyteller and develop the skills and confidence you need to become a more effective, authentic speaker..

[BOOK HERE](#)

Workshop: Market Insights

Wednesday 7th October

Stop Guessing. Start Growing: Turn Market Questions into Business Opportunities

Are you struggling to understand why sales have stalled, which customers to target, how to stand out from competitors, or whether a new product or service will succeed?

Join freelance Market Insights Consultant, Gillian Brooks, for an interactive workshop designed specifically for local SMEs. Discover practical, cost-effective ways to gather and use market insight to make smarter business decisions. Learn how to identify growth opportunities, understand customer needs, test ideas before investing, strengthen your marketing, and gain confidence in your strategy. Leave with actionable techniques and a clearer path to informed business growth.

[BOOK HERE](#)

Members' News

Nuclear Wild Forest - Splash

August

From bouncing and climbing to splashing and sliding, children aged 6+ can explore the Lake Zone in a safe, exciting environment packed with energy and laughter. Epic water obstacles include Upslide-Down, Doughnuts, Mud Pits, YouTube, Magic Carpets, Splat-the-Rat and more.

Nuclear Wild Forest - Just Get Over it

Tuesdays & Thursdays in the summer holidays

90 minutes of action packed obstacle and muddy fun, led by designated & qualified instructors. Children will bounce, climb, crawl, jump and slide their way around the course in a session designed for all abilities.

Nuclear Adventures - UNLIMITED Summer Pass

Why settle for one day of adventure when you can have six weeks? The Nuclear Adventures Summer Pass is the ultimate ticket for adrenaline-seekers and families looking to stay active all holiday long. This year, we've made the pass more inclusive than ever. Whether you're conquering the treetops, hitting the bullseye at the range, or joining our specialised Quiet Sessions, your pass covers it all.

[MORE INFO](#)

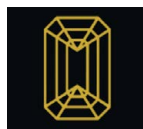
Charity Music Bingo

Friday 18th September

Join PhoenixFM for a Charity Music Bingo night at [Holiday Inn Brentwood](#) on Friday 18 September, starting at 7pm, in aid of [Marillac Neurological Care Centre](#). Tickets are £30, including curry, rice and two bingo cards. Great music, fantastic prizes and tables for 2-10 people. Email Steven Roach for more information at sr@phoenixfm.com.

Welcome to Our New Members

[Shinimini Ltd](#)



[Shinimini Ltd](#) (The Scaling Firm) is an AI and business automation consultancy helping businesses understand, adopt, and benefit from artificial intelligence. The company offers practical AI audits,

hands-on workshops, and implementation support for SMEs, enabling them to work smarter without the corporate price tag. Shinimini Ltd is committed to growing Brentwood's business community from within, through education-first engagement, free resources, and long-term local partnerships.

[The Pink Parachute](#)



[The Pink Parachute](#) is a creative, community-focused pottery painting studio bringing colour, imagination and hands-on fun to Brentwood. We offer a welcoming space where all ages can relax, create and enjoy

memorable experiences — from paint-your-own pottery sessions and seasonal workshops to birthday parties, corporate team events and bespoke keepsake designs. We're proud to be part of the Brentwood community and look forward to welcoming families, schools, local businesses and creative explorers through our doors.

Upcoming Chamber Events

5 August Wednesday	Business Breakfast Figo Restaurant	BOOK HERE
2 September Wednesday	Workshop: Public Speaking Holiday Inn	BOOK HERE
3 September Thursday	Business Breakfast Brentwood School	BOOK HERE
4 September Friday	Workshop: Smarter Social Media with AI Holiday Inn	BOOK HERE
7 October Wednesday	Workshop: Market Insights Holiday Inn Brentwood	BOOK HERE

Upcoming Members' Events

August	Nuclear Wild Forest Splash	MORE INFO
Tues & Thurs in the summer holidays	Nuclear Wild Forest: Just Get Over it	MORE INFO
18 September Friday	Marillac Charity Music Bingo	MORE INFO

Let's Connect:

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