

Autumn 2025 edition
CHAMBER CHATTER
by local business. for local business

ALL THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE TAUNTON BUSINESS COMMUNITY

The
Castle
at taunton

The Chapman Family Celebrates
75 years at The Castle Hotel

75 ^{1950 - 2025}
years
One Family. Three Generations



*In this
edition...*

- Read about the fantastic local businesses recently taking up Taunton Chamber of Commerce membership.
- Book your tickets for our upcoming events: opportunities to network, make new connections and pick up some top business tips.
- Catch up with good news from across our membership.

Upcoming Events Programme

Don't miss out on the following opportunities across to meet with fellow members, make new connections and learn something new!



**YOUNG CHAMBER POTTERY PAINT
& PROSECCO EVENING 17TH SEPTEMBER**
6 - 9PM £5 (plus cost of what you choose to paint)

The Taunton Young Chamber are delighted to invite you along to their next networking event – a Pottery Paint and Prosecco evening at **Serendipity Creative Café** in Taunton! Everyone will be welcomed with a glass of prosecco (or non-alcoholic alternative) and will have 2-3 hours of painting, conversation and fun with like-minded young professionals from Taunton and the surrounding area.



**SMART PHONE PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP
WITH ANDREA DUNCAN PHOTOGRAPHY**
24TH SEPTEMBER £15

'Edit with Skill and Intention: Transforming Your Camera Roll into a Visual Story'

This interactive workshop brought to you by member **Andrea Duncan Photography**, will leave you with practical insights and actionable steps to take the smartphone photos you use for your business to another level.



**BREAKFAST AT THE CASTLE HOTEL WITH
SRD TECHNOLOGY UK**
WEDNESDAY 1ST OCTOBER 7:45 - 9:30AM - £18

October is #CyberSecurityMonth so our topic for this breakfast with members **SRD Technology UK** is a timely one: 'Decoding Cyber Security for Small Business'. We'll hear all about the benefits of Cyber Essentials accreditation and how we can ensure our businesses are as protected as possible.

Alongside the insight shared, there will be plenty of opportunity to network, and enjoy a delicious Full English Breakfast courtesy of fellow members **The Castle at Taunton** - in addition to Traditional Breakfast, Vegetarian and Vegan Full English Breakfasts are also available.



**BE SUPPORTED AND GROW
- FREE WEBINAR FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES**
14TH OCTOBER FREE

Take less than an hour out of your day at lunchtime on 14th October and focus on opportunities to develop your skills and grow your business. Join Taunton Chamber of Commerce alongside our partners at **Somerset Council** and **Cosmic** to explore the FREE business support and upskilling programmes available to your business this autumn.

TOP SECRET

**AUTUMN SOCIAL EVENT WITH TAUNTON
YOUNG CHAMBER & SEDGEMOOR
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 23RD OCTOBER £18**

If you liked our previous LEGENDARY social nights at eat the bird, then you'll LOVE this! Be part of the in crowd and secure your ticket ASAP - full details for those in the know will be shared in the run up to the event! Taunton town centre location. Your ticket includes awesome tuck and a drink from the bar - all dietary needs and preferences catered for!

THE GREAT
WESTERN HOTEL
TAUNTON

**CUPPA & CAKE RELAXED NETWORKING
6TH NOVEMBER 11AM - £8.50**

Join us for our ever-popular relaxed networking events at members **The Great Western Hotel** an easy stroll from the town centre and with parking nearby at Kilkenny Car Park. A relaxed opportunity to enjoy delicious refreshments, catch up with all the latest from the local business community & to make some new connections at the same time. Plus, bring unwanted books, DVDs, CDs and vinyl for donation to members Oxfam Books and Music.

**"SPIRIT OF THE SEASON: A SOMERSET TASTING TRIO"
A DELICIOUSLY DIFFERENT TASTING & SHOPPING EVENT - 12TH NOVEMBER**

The
Castle
at taunton

Join us at members The Castle Hotel for an evening of local artisan gin, cheese and chocolate in celebration of the darker months, crafted by fellow members Somerset Chocolate Co and Dryad Gin, with The Cheese Connection. Hear about the local provenance and story of delicious local produce over tastings, plus do some festive shopping too.

To book: www.the-castle-hotel.com/events

Coming Soon

Look out for emails and social media posts across the next few weeks, introducing the remainder of our 2025 events programme, including:

- Winter Warmer Breakfast
- **3rd December:** Christmas Lunch at The Quantock Restaurant
- **10th December:** Festive Networking Morning, jointly with Somerset Chamber of Commerce

HOW TO BOOK

Unless otherwise stated, all our events are bookable via the following eventbrite link:

www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/taunton-chamber-of-commerce-15354648391

Plus, you can click to 'follow' our eventbrite page, which means you'll get a handy notification into your inbox whenever we add a new event!



MAIL BOXES ETC.

7 Bridge St. Taunton
Tel: 01823 322263
Email: info@mbetaunton.co.uk



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Taunton Chamber of Commerce



Blackdown Hearing
Independent Hearing Specialists In Somerset

At Blackdown Hearing, we believe hearing care should feel personal, not pressured. Based just outside Taunton, our independent hearing clinic was founded by local audiologist Duncan Jury to give people across Somerset a place they could turn to for expert advice and ongoing support without the sales focus or rush of the high street.

Being independent means we are free from manufacturer ties and sales targets. That freedom lets us put people first. We take the time to listen carefully, talk through options clearly, and build long-term trust, with the continuity of always seeing the same experienced audiologist who knows your story.

Our countryside hearing clinic at Swan Retreat in Stoke St Mary provides a welcoming, relaxed setting with free parking, while our convenient home visit service extends expert hearing support to our clients across Somerset.

We are proud to be one of the most highly rated independent hearing clinics in Somerset, and even prouder of the long-term relationships we have built within our community. Joining the Taunton Chamber of Commerce is an exciting next step, giving us the chance to connect, collaborate and contribute to our thriving local business community.

Visit www.blackdownhearing.co.uk or call 01823 586777 we'd love to hear from you

cosmic[®]

Cosmic is an award-winning social enterprise with almost 30 years' experience helping businesses, charities, and communities across the South West to thrive in the digital world. We provide a unique blend of technical support, website services, training, and consultancy to ensure organisations can make the most of digital opportunities.

A brand-new initiative for 2025 is Start Up and Grow, supporting entrepreneurs and growing businesses in Somerset. This programme offers workshops and one-to-one support to help business owners develop their digital skills, strengthen operations, and reach new markets.

Alongside this, Cosmic provides expert IT support services for SMEs, helping to keep systems secure, reliable, and aligned with best practice through services such as Cyber Essentials Plus certification and managed IT solutions. Our web team designs and develops fully bespoke websites for organisations looking to scale, and we also offer a low-cost website solution tailored for start-ups and small businesses that need a professional online presence without the big price tag.

We are also helping businesses explore the potential of AI and automation — from simple time-saving tools to more advanced digital transformation — ensuring organisations stay competitive in a fast-changing world.

At the heart of everything we do is our mission to make sure nobody is left behind by digital.

www.cosmic.org.uk



KINGSTANTON COACHING & CONSULTING

CONFIDENCE. MINDSET. GROWTH.

Hello, I'm Rebecca Johnson, a Personal and Business Coach with over 25 years' experience supporting individuals and organisations to navigate change and realise their goals.

My clients are often experiencing uncertainty or change in their lives, perhaps unsure of their next steps, or seeking support to reach a personal or professional goal. By providing a supportive and impartial space for reflection, I help them to take a step back, reframe their thinking, challenge any assumptions or self-limiting beliefs, and gain the understanding they need to move forward with a positive mindset, greater confidence and a clearer sense of direction.

I offer 1:1 and group coaching services for individuals and organisations. I have a particular interest in supporting people in their professional lives - whether they are just starting out, mid-career, transitioning to new opportunities or moving towards retirement - helping them to navigate, with confidence, issues such as: building effective relationships and teams; being confident and authentic at work; nurturing personal and team strengths; personal/ professional development and progression; tackling the inner critic; building resilience and avoiding burnout; or achieving a better work-life balance.

I'm pleased to be a part of the Chamber and looking forward to getting to know fellow members over the coming months.

If you'd like to know more about coaching, get in touch at info@kingstanton.com or www.kingstanton.com



At the foot of the Quantock Hills, Meadow Somerset is the newest chapter in a long family story at East Lydeard Farm (we are now 6th generation here). Meadow Café opened its doors on 15th August and has been buzzing ever since – we're so stoked to have welcomed so many locals through the door already! Serving speciality coffee, seasonal bakes, delicious breakfasts and lunches, Baboo Gelato and more, the café is a relaxed, family-friendly spot to eat, play and unwind.

Hospitality has always been part of the farm's DNA. From blackcurrant harvests that brought the Bishops Lydeard community together, to fruit-picking, a cricket team and stunning cricket pitch for The Flying Geese Cricket Club, and the original tea room that later became Podshavers restaurant – and even the first workshop of M&H cricket bats (now based at the County Ground in Taunton) – East Lydeard has always been a place for people to gather.

We're already planning exciting new additions for the community: sourdough bread and fresh flowers for café pick-up direct from local suppliers; using our own farm milk in coffees and produce; and even making our own ice cream for next summer. Our new community barn opens in just two weeks, providing a flexible space for yoga / pilates / movement classes, workshops, parties and meetings. Looking further ahead, we'll add a stream-side woodland sauna (Winter 2025) and hand-built cabins for unique countryside stays (2026). It's going to be a busy year!

www.meadowsomerset.com



NEVER MISS A CUSTOMER AGAIN

Every missed call could be a missed customer – and lost revenue. Nova Vox AI makes sure that never happens.

Our intelligent voice assistant answers your calls 24/7, books appointments, takes messages, and follows up with customers instantly – exactly as if it were a member of your own team. The best part? You choose the name and personality for your assistant, so it feels unique to your brand.

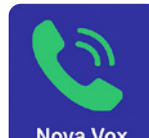
Nova Vox AI is fully customised for your business – from garages and clinics to salons, restaurants, and beyond. It integrates with your booking system, CRM, and communication tools, so no enquiry slips through the cracks.

Whether you're open, closed, or too busy to answer, Nova Vox AI keeps your customers connected and your diary full.

HOW DOES NOVA VOX WORK?



Customer calls your number



Nova Vox answers instantly (even after hours)



It books appointments & sends you transcripts



You focus on your business



EXCLUSIVE FOR TAUNTON CHAMBER MEMBERS:

- 4-week free trial – experience the difference with no obligation
- 20% discount on your plan after the trial

www.novavox.co.uk - because your business deserves to be heard

MOUNTSTEPHENS
ELECTRICAL



KEEPING SOMERSET SWITCHED ON

We are a family-run team of electrical specialists that has been part of the Taunton and Somerset community for over 45 years. We're proud to have supported homes, businesses and industries across the South West with a friendly, reliable and professional service that people can trust.

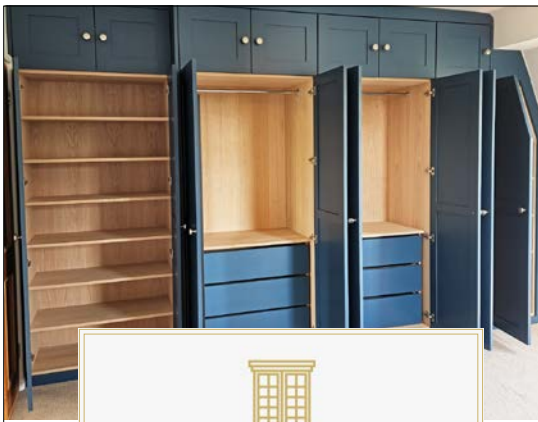
As a local small business and NICEIC Approved Contractor, we understand how important it is to have electrical work carried out quickly, safely and to a high standard. That's why we offer a wide range of services to suit our customers' needs – from new installations in the home or workplace, to landlord and commercial safety inspections, fire alarms, emergency lighting, thermal imaging surveys and commercial maintenance contracts. We're also helping future-proof Somerset with the installation of EV chargers for homes and businesses.

Our approach has always been the same: to treat every job, big or small, with the same care and attention. Whether you're a homeowner, landlord or business owner, you can count on us for responsive support and clear communication from start to finish.

At Mountstephens Electrical, we're more than just electrical contractors – we're your neighbours, here to keep Somerset running safely and smoothly for many years to come.



For more information visit:
www.mountstephens.co.uk



We are a small family run business that strives to deliver excellent customer satisfaction through our keen eye for detail and craftsmanship. We offer a range of fitted furniture solutions such as wardrobes, alcoves, media centres, bespoke storage and much more.

We are not fixed to particular design restraints as we make all of our furniture in our workshop by hand, which allows for us to be more specific and unique in design.

What stands us out when compared to the high-street competitors is the experience we provide from start to finish. We offer a range of colour and finishing choices, choosing from 100's of possible colours to best suit your home.

We provide free designs; surveys of the area and you will receive documentation progress of your build throughout. Most of all we are competitively priced with no hidden costs.

CUSTOMER REVIEW FROM RICHARD:

"Fantastic experience start to finish from Luke. Whether initially considering our design thoughts and building on them with his experience through to keeping things cost effective while keeping quality really high and to finish - all fitted ahead of schedule. Definitely would recommend and we have future room plans for Luke too."

www.whizzywoodworking.co.uk



designbean

graphic design with a personal touch



designbean.co.uk

Member Good News



QUEEN'S COLLEGE AWARDED HIGH PERFORMANCE LEARNING WORLD CLASS SCHOOL STATUS

This globally-recognised award is given to schools that are deeply committed to helping every student achieve their best – not just in the classroom, but in life beyond school. It marks the culmination of a two-year journey for Queen's, during which the whole community has worked together to embed the High Performance Learning philosophy into everyday life.

At the heart of HPL is a simple but powerful belief: great learning and high performance should be for everyone. The approach challenges the idea that ability is fixed and instead focuses on the idea that with the right support, encouragement, and opportunities, all young people can thrive.

At Queen's, dedicated student and staff drive teams have played key roles in shaping this journey. Together, they've helped ensure that HPL is woven through the fabric of school life, from lessons and tutor time to assemblies, clubs and enrichment activities. The result is a learning environment that supports not just academic success, but the development of flexible thinking, resilience, creativity, and confidence.

Within the HPL report, Queen's College was complimented for their clear vision, strong leadership and excellent implementation of HPL principles. What stood out was how HPL has been implemented in an 'organic' way, driving whole-school improvement. This recognition marks a significant milestone for Queen's College and an exciting step forward in its continued commitment to delivering a high-quality, inclusive and future-focused education.

www.queenscollege.org.uk/high-performance-learning



THE UK'S NEWEST AND MOST AMBITIOUS COLLEGE GROUP

Formed to drive economic growth, deliver cutting-edge skills, and transform opportunities for students and communities across Somerset.

We're building the future of education, today.

The launch of the UCS College Group this August marks a truly exciting moment for Somerset – one that promises to deliver long-term benefits for our people, our economy, and our sense of place. Formed from the merger of Bridgwater & Taunton College and Strode College, and including University Centre Somerset, this new College Group represents a powerful collaboration across the county. It brings together four colleges – Bridgwater, Cannington, Taunton and Strode – under one shared vision: to deliver world-class education and skills that raise aspirations and support everyone in Somerset to thrive.

UCS College Group will be the seventh largest college group in England. That scale matters. It means more investment, more reach, and more influence at government level. Equally important is the Group's local-first approach. Each College retains its name, leadership, and community focus, allowing it to respond to local need while sharing the strengths and specialisms of the wider group. The curriculum will be shaped by local and regional priorities, ensuring young people and adults are gaining the skills our economy needs, in sectors from engineering to health and digital.

www.btc.ac.uk/ucs-college-group

24-HOUR GOLF MARATHON TEES OFF FUNDRAISING YEAR

Ros Wills has set herself an amazing challenge to raise £60,000 for Cancer Research UK as she hits her 60th birthday this year. The effort is in memory of her beloved husband, Andrew Gadd.

"This year will mark five years since Andrew's untimely death from cancer and as I celebrate my 60th year in various forms with all my fantastic friends and family, along with the parties and fun, I want to give something back. I aim to raise, through various events and challenges, as much money as I can for Cancer Research UK over the next 12 months," explained Ros.

Fundraising got underway in earnest with a 24-hour golf marathon at Oake Manor Golf Club, near Taunton, with three teams of 18 golfers taking part at the weekend.

Ros said: *"What an amazing and uplifting experience. The camaraderie was incredible. I'm still buzzing from the high. Some participants played 95 consecutive holes and walked approx 57,000 steps. The night time golf was hilarious."*

Thank you so much to everyone taking part, including our non-playing support team, we couldn't have done it without you. huge thank you also to Oake Manor Golf Club for not only allowing us to stage the challenge but for going that extra mile to support us in every way."

Among those taking part was Graham Ford, Partner at Taunton Chamber of Commerce members **Greenslade Taylor Hunt**, and long-term friend of Ros and Andrew.



Graham Ford, John Compton from member **Time For You Cleaning**, Bradley Ford, Nigel Fry from members **Milsted Langdon**, Mike Williams, Chris Winter from members **Cherwyn Developments**.

Graham said: *"The day was a fantastic event, lots of challenges and fun particularly during the night trying to play golf in the dark with torches, head torches and glow balls!"*

So far, the golf marathon has raised more than £20,000. It's still possible to donate by visiting <https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/60000-for-my-60th-birthday-year>

STEPHENS SCOWN EXPANDS IN SOMERSET

Taunton Chamber of Commerce member Stephens Scown LLP is driving forward with its strategic growth plans thanks to investment across the South West. The latest move for the employee-owned and B Corp™ Certified law firm with offices in Truro, Exeter and Taunton establishes a more permanent home for its growing Somerset team and plans for a brand-new base in Bournemouth.

Following the major refurbishment and investment in purchasing the leasehold of the firm's headquarters in Exeter, Stephens Scown is strengthening its roots in Somerset with a 10-year lease at Portland House on Taunton's Blackbrook Estate.

With a move-in date set for early September, Stephen Wray, who leads the firm's Commercial Dispute Resolution and Somerset team, says of the move: *"We are delighted with the progress we have made since moving onto the Blackbrook Estate in 2023, galvanising our links with the local business community and developing relationships with clients across the region, while supporting the wider community with everything from sponsored swims to gardening and reading in schools. Now is the time to establish our new long-term home in Portland House and we can't wait to move in."*

He continues, *"We are a growing and fun-loving team, and we'd love to hear from talented individuals who are looking for their next challenge in a firm with an outstanding workplace culture that balances support for its people, the planet and profit."*



- 360 South West
4 Seasons Flooring
Academy ICT
A C Mole & Sons
Activate Fitness
AE Floor Restoration
Aisling Magill Photography
Albert Goodman
Alder King Consultant Surveyors
Alfies Landscapes Ltd
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Ballantine Wealth Management
Barclays Business, Taunton
Bath Place Traders Association
BBQ Lodges Ltd
Be. Laser & Skin Clinic
Below Ground Solutions Ltd
Bishop Fox's School
Blackdown Financial
Blackdown Hearing
Blue Penguin Chartered Accountants
Bredons Sewing Machine Centre
Brewhouse Theatre & Arts Centre
Calverts (Taunton) Ltd
Carly Press
Castle Hotel (Taunton) Ltd
Centenary Lounge
Chadwick Business Centres
Channel Adventure CIC
Channel UK Events CIC
Charlotte Fisher Wellbeing Coaching
Cherwyn Developments Ltd
CICCIC
Clark Shaw Associates
Clarke Willmott
Cleaning Solutions UK
Confident Orthodontics
Cosmic
Cooper Associates
Corner House Hotel
Costgard Ltd
County Walk Shopping Centre
Crescent Funeral Services
Cullen's Catering
CulturaLinks CIC
Daffodil PR & Communications
Daisy Admin Services
Dan Kennedy Electrical
Dawn Booth Life Coach
Deckhouse
Design Bean
Design Hive
Diversity Voice
Dough Bros.
Dryad Gin
Easy IT Solutions
eat the bird
Eden May
edge+
Ellisons Commercial Training Ltd
EMR Business Management
Ethical Sales Pro
Everys Solicitors
E White & Son (Taunton) Ltd
Fabric Sewn Beautiful
Fifields Construction
Frameworkx
Frethey House Care Home
Fusion Dance Circus & Academy
GD Media
Gecho Agency
Genius PR & Events
Gideon Amos MP
Go Create
Great Western Hotel
Green Catalyst Business Solutions
Greenslade Taylor Hunt
Gurds Menswear
Hatfield White Ltd
Heat 24 Ltd
Heritage IFC Ltd
Hickleys Ltd
Honey Legal - Lee Harrison
Idea 4 You Body Shop & Car Detailing
Il Basilico Restaurant
Imperial Finishes Antiques & Restoration
Imprints
In House Training & Consultancy Ltd
Inicio Architecture & Design
Initiis Ltd t/a Vodafone
Inspired Partnership Limited
Inspiring Success
Introtweet Ltd
Islands Restaurant
Jane Amour Trading
Jen the Celebrant
Jewells of Taunton
JP Rata Ltd
Just Ceremonies
Katie Thomson Marketing
Kingstanton Coaching and Consulting
K & J Hodge Contractors Ltd
Lentells Chartered Certified Accountants
Lloyd & Whyte Community Broking
Lloyd & Whyte Health & Wellbeing
Ludacrust Ltd
Lula Wellness
MAD Community CIC
Mailboxes (Taunton) Etc
Mainline Spirits
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Meadow Somerset
Michael Spiers Jewellers



75 years 1950 - 2025

One Family. Three Generations

The Castle
at taunton



The Chapman Family Celebrate 75 years at The Castle Hotel with Fundraising event for Arts Taunton

On Friday, 17th October, Kit & Louise Chapman and their Family will be hosting a party to celebrate 75 years as custodians of The Castle Hotel - Taunton's part-12th century Grade 2 landmark. Kit tells us more: "My father, Peter, took on the hotel on the 15th of the same month in 1950. Our son Nicholas and his wife Annabel represent the third generation in charge.

This charitable evening event will be sponsored by our wine merchants and other suppliers. The menu and cooking will be led by Dominic, our other son and Michelin Chef-Patron at The Crown in Burchett's Green, Berkshire, alongside Richard Guest, Chef-Patron at Augustus in Taunton, previously at The Castle, plus The Castle's Head Chef, Jacques Ballinger.

Our Guest of Honour will be Stanley Johnson, an old friend of the family and The Castle, and there will be a cabaret performed by "The Rocking Bishop" - Jonathan Meyrick, formerly Bishop of Lynn & Dean of Exeter - a gig to make the evening, I can promise you, highly memorable! For Jonathan's second piece, he will be joined on stage by our Daughter-in-Law, Annabel.

The price of this wonderful celebratory event is just £100 per person for the whole package, which will be supporting Arts Taunton, the charity I founded in 2015. In addition, Stanley will be conducting an auction of spectacular prizes donated by my friends in the trade. All the proceeds from the auction will go to Arts Taunton.

Dress: Black Tie. Drinks reception will be held at 6.30pm in our Music Room followed by the dinner at 7.15 pm. To secure your tickets, please contact David Plant on 01823 328303 or email cmullan@the-castle-hotel.com



Orchard Gallery

ART | STUDIO | SHOP

GoCreate Taunton CIC

Creativity Comes to Life in Taunton with
The Orchard Gallery!

12 Local Artists | Live Demos | Original Art for Sale

Paintings, Prints, Sculpture, Woodwork & Gifts.

Watch Artists at Work - Every Day!
Taking Part in Somerset Art Weeks 2025.
Every Sale Supports Community Art Workshops.

The Orchard Shopping Centre, Taunton.
Open Daily Monday - Friday & Sunday 11-3pm
Saturday 10-5pm



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www.gocreate.org.uk