



West Chester
Commercial BID

WINTER NEWSLETTER



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Hello and welcome to the West Chester Commercial BID winter newsletter.

I'm thrilled to share the impressive strides our business community has made recently. Continuous improvement and growth are the cornerstones of success, and it's inspiring to see so many members exemplifying this spirit.

Take Quality Hydraulic Power for example. Their recent £2 million investment in new buildings, facilities, and equipment is already paying off. This commitment to expansion ensures they can not only meet customer demand, but also set the bar even higher for quality and efficiency.

But it's not just about bricks and mortar. Magma Granite secured vital funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, allowing them to accelerate their sustainable growth vision. Their dedication to eco-friendly practices, like installing solar panels and a wood waste heating system, positions them not only as industry leaders but also as responsible stewards of our environment.

And let's not forget the human element. Proximo Group's commitment to their employees earned them a well-deserved award for their best-in-class recruitment and retention strategy. Their focus on wellbeing, communication, and employee satisfaction shines a light on what it truly means to be an employer of choice.

Looking ahead, we're excited to welcome Illumex, a new business specialising in LED signs, to the Sealand Industrial Estate. Their arrival adds depth and diversity to our community, providing businesses with access to state-of-the-art signage solutions.

But the BID's impact extends beyond individual businesses. We're actively working to improve the infrastructure and resources available to everyone. The installation of a defibrillator in the Quad area, and the continued offer of free job advertising, are just two examples of our commitment to creating a safe and prosperous environment for all.



We're also playing a vital role in fostering a sustainable future. We're excited to partner with businesses to access UK Shared Prosperity Fund grants for sustainability upgrades and to promote the LoyalFree app, which highlights local businesses and encourages eco-friendly practices.

Of course, challenges remain. Finding a parking solution for the employment park and the estate continues to be a priority. However, we're exploring innovative options like partnering with Beech House West Park to offer discounted employee parking, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to finding solutions.

Finally, training and development remain at the heart of our mission. Last year, we delivered over 500 hours of free training to local businesses, empowering them with the skills they need to thrive.

As we start the new year, I'm confident that the West Chester business community will continue to grow and prosper. With the combined efforts of our members, the BID, and local organisations, we'll build a bright future for everyone.

Yours Sincerely,

Jordi J Morell,
Chair of the West Chester Commercial BID Executive Board



INVESTMENTS HELPING TO DRIVE QHP FORWARDS

A Minerva Avenue based business has made a number of investments in order to keep up with customer demand and the expectations within their market.

Quality Hydraulic Power (QHP) recently committed £2 million towards new buildings and facilities which became operational in 2023.

The project includes a purpose-built warehouse which holds an abundance of readily available stock, a custom-built on-site welding facility which houses state-of-the-art equipment and six qualified welders, and a complete Bladder Compensator production line.

On top of this, QHP has also invested a further £250,000 into their in-house painting facilities which will see a brand-new paint line being installed. A new blast booth for Stainless Steel Accumulators is already in situ as part of the investment.

We wish QHP well as they look to grow further in 2024.



UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND BOOSTS MAGMA

Over the last year the West Chester Commercial BID team has shared details of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to raise awareness of the business support programme and highlight how BID members could benefit.

And we're pleased to reveal that **Magma Granite** has secured funding from the initiative which it is utilising to advance its sustainable growth vision.

A stone fabrication company established in 2016, Magma Granite moved into a new sustainable facility here in Chester in August 2022, and now boasts an 18-strong team of employees.

Thanks to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Magma Granite has been able to plan a number of investments. These include installing Solar PV panels and a wood waste heating system, creating stone masonry apprenticeships, implementing new quality/environmental standards, enhancing CNC machines, and creating jobs for machine operators.

The company opened a new showroom in October 2023 and will make further capital investments in 2024 such as purchasing a new saw jet and dust extractors.

It is great to see West Chester businesses taking advantage of government backed schemes in the way Magma Granite has done.

To see how your business could get involved, head to: <https://bit.ly/48nyTpC>.



**LEVELLING
UP**

DON'T MISS THE 2024 AGM

Please save the date for this year's West Chester Commercial BID AGM which is taking place on Wednesday 7th February at Chester City Football Club.

Providing the opportunity for BID members to come together and review the accomplishments from the previous year, the meeting will also feature a look ahead to plans for the next 12 months.

We're also excited to announce that the AGM will feature a special guest speaker and an exclusive preview of the new CCTV system.

So if you'd like to find out more about the BID's continued work to help elevate the employment park and industrial estate as a destination of choice for workers, residents, and visitors alike, please put the date in your diary.



Please note that members present on the day will vote on approving the incoming Executive Board using provided ballots.



AWARDS SUCCESS FOR PROXIMO GROUP

A huge congratulations must go to Proximo Group after the company won the Best Recruitment and Retention Strategy award at the Northern Contact Centre Awards.

The award celebrates contact centres that excel at attracting, selecting, and retaining top talent. Proximo impressed judges with its progressive, people-first approach that has achieved industry-leading attrition rates.

The team was praised for its dedication to fostering a culture of respect, open communication, and continuous improvement. Key retention initiatives include “Wellbeing Hour”, which enables employees to take an hour for wellness activities, enhanced flexible working, a company rewards program, and a partnership with Chester Zoo.

Group HR & Customer Experience Director, Mary Murphy, said:



By embedding our values and improving our employee proposition, we've built a culture that values all our people. This award reflects the hard work of all our colleagues in making Proximo a great place to work.



DELIVERING CRITICAL SKILLS FOR WEST CHESTER BUSINESSES

The BID's schedule of free training courses continues to grow and prove popular, and in the past year West Chester BID has delivered over 500 hours of accredited training to 59 employees from local businesses.

The nine multi-day courses provided offer accredited certifications in areas such as **Health and Safety in the Workplace, Mental Health First Aid, Emergency First Aid in the Work Place, Manual Handling, Risk Assessment, Principles of COSHH, Fire Marshal training and Working at Height** – all skills that are integral to operational excellence.



Last year alone, the BID's training programme saved businesses a combined value of over £14,000, demonstrating the tremendous savings and talent development the BID provides to businesses. With so many hours of training logged in 2023 alone, West Chester BID continues helping to build the backbone of the district's current and future success.

The 2024 schedule of training is now live - please contact Stephanie.Leese@groundwork.org.uk to see what's available if you are looking for free training for your staff.

ARE YOU LOOKING TO EXPAND YOUR TEAM?

Looking to hire new employees in 2024? Your BID Manager, Hugh Shields, is here to help you promote vacancies and spread news of any openings you may have.

Thanks to Hugh's connections in the local community, he can promote job listings at no cost to BID members through the following:



- **The BID website, where open positions receive substantial visibility**
- **Job Centres across Cheshire, allowing us to tap into a wide candidate network**
- **Local job clubs, to reach unemployed people looking for opportunities**
- **Attending area partnership meetings and job fairs**

If you do have any vacancies you would like promoting, please send Hugh the job specification including position title, responsibilities, required qualifications and preferred skills. He will then circulate the listings through his channels.

To contact Hugh, please email Hugh.Shields@groundwork.org.uk

UPDATES FROM AROUND THE ESTATE

Parking alternative

The BID would like to address the ongoing parking challenges here on the employment park and estate. Despite exploring various options, the BID has faced difficulties in finding a suitable solution. However, we have identified a potential remedy that could greatly benefit staff on the estate. Beech House West Park office has available parking spaces, and we can offer employees the opportunity to park there for a small fee. This arrangement could help the current shortage of parking spaces and provide a more convenient option for employees. For more information, please email Hugh.Shields@groundwork.org.uk.

Welcome to West Chester

The BID board would like to welcome Illumex to West Chester Commercial BID. Serving customers both across the region and nationally, the company specialises in the manufacture and supply of LED illuminated signs, as well as offering wide format printing, fabricated plastics, and general signage products. Please join the board in welcoming them to our business community. Learn more at www.illumex.co.uk.

Net Zero & UK Shared Prosperity Fund

We're pleased to share that three businesses on the estate have been approved for UK Shared Prosperity Fund grants for new boilers and solar panels, and two more grant applications are pending. The programme aims to support Cheshire West and Chester businesses to increase productivity by creating the conditions for businesses to start-up, scale-up and innovate. Find out more: <https://bit.ly/48nyTpC>

LoyalFree app

Don't forget to download the Cheshire West and Chester Council LoyalFree app. The app aims to showcase vital area information for residents and visitors including a local guide, exclusive deals and loyalty schemes, fun local events and interesting trails. Businesses will benefit from advertising opportunities, customer insights and social media support. For more information, go to: www.loyalfree.co.uk.

New defibrillator

Businesses located in the Quadrant area now have access to a potentially life-saving piece of medical equipment after a defibrillator was installed on the gable end of unit 5. Financed by the BID, the defibrillator demonstrates a commitment to promoting health, safety, and preparedness for the business community and surrounding neighbourhoods.

The prominent placement of the defibrillator allows for quick, easy access if needed and further enhances the safety and security of both the Quadrant area and West Chester Commercial BID as a whole.

Cheshire transport – have your say!

Transport is vital for access to work, education, and services, and impacts health, wellbeing, and the economy. To develop a vision and priorities for local transport's future, respondents can provide input on the current system and key issues via an online portal through the Cheshire West and Chester Council's website. This is your chance to have your say and provide feedback on the things you'd like to see changed or implemented. To learn more and take part, go to: <https://bit.ly/3S5uxh9>.

Keep in touch

Got some news to share or promote? Please email BID Project Manager Hugh Shields via Hugh.Shields@groundwork.org.uk. You can discover more about the West Chester Commercial BID via our website: www.westchesterbid.co.uk





WestChester

CommercialBID

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The West Chester Commercial Business Improvement District is managed by the not-for-profit charitable trust, Groundwork CLM



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