



Torfaen Business Voice

Llais Busnes Torfaen

# FEBRUARY 2022

**The year to get your business back  
out there with Torfaen Business Voice**

**Next Event:  
24th March, 4.30pm**



<http://bit.ly/twitter-TorfaenBiz>



<http://bit.ly/Facebook-TorfaenBiz>



<http://bit.ly/youtube-TorfaenBiz>

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## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### MARCH

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

### JUNE

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

### SEPTEMBER

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

### NOVEMBER

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

# NOTES FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

I'm delighted to be able to write that we intend to move back to physical meetings this year after what feels like a very long time staring at a screen. As TBV celebrates its 21st birthday this year we expect to be able to mark this with a special June event (more on that in the next newsletter)

**Our next event will be a thank you meeting at Pages in Cwmbran on the 24th March 2022** where new joiners or current members who renew for this year are invited to join us for networking and a fish supper.

**As we are moving back to our normal format of networking followed by food and chat, we will also move back to our usual membership rates which will stay at 2019 levels with the usual discount for new joiners.** From our June event onwards, we expect to be able to invite members to bring a guest (rules permitting). It's good news that we can get back to making new connections and I hope you will all want to take this opportunity to promote your businesses.



**Ashley Harkus**

Chairman,  
Torfaen Business  
Voice

## BE PART OF THE CLUB! Membership from £48 for the year for all the benefits!

### What do you get from your All Inclusive Membership:

- A place at all our face to face and online meetings
- Quarterly digital newsletter with articles, tips and business events and information tailored for local Torfaen businesses.
- Varied networking opportunities
- E-mail bulletins with relevant, vetted information
- Advance notice of other Torfaen County Borough Council business events and opportunities, including business breakfasts, workshops & seminars
- Your company details listed on the business voice membership section  
(<https://bit.ly/Members-Profiles>)
- Exclusive sponsorship and advertising opportunities for member companies to reach the local business market

**Join now!** <https://bit.ly/Membership-Form-2022>





# PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS

Cyber-related offences now make up for more than 50 per cent of all crimes recorded in England and Wales. In a business, keeping IT systems safe from cyber-attacks is everyone's responsibility.

Gwent Police's Cyber Protect Team can help you to keep your business safe. By delivering tailored sessions to your staff, the team can raise awareness of current cyber threats and the simple steps you can take to stay protected.

**CYBER-ATTACKS ARE A VERY  
REAL THREAT FOR BUSINESSES**

Detective Superintendent Nick Wilkie, Gwent Police's cyber-crime lead, said: "Cyber-attacks are a very real threat for businesses and it's important that we all remember to stay safe while we are online. We are here to help businesses in Gwent improve their cyber security and protect themselves against the growing cyber threat."

For a full list of support and resources available from Gwent Police email [CyberCrimeUnit@gwent.police.uk](mailto:CyberCrimeUnit@gwent.police.uk). You can follow the Gwent Police Cyber Crime Team @GPCyberCrime on Twitter.

**If you have been a victim of online fraud, report it to 101 or Action Fraud on: 0300 123 2040.**

Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent Jeff Cuthbert is an Association for Police and Crime Commissioners lead for cyber crime, and a board member of the Cyber Resilience Centre for Wales: "Cyber-related crime poses an ever-growing threat to our communities. However, the single most effective way to stay safe from the majority of cyber-enabled crime is vigilance.

"Most of the crimes experienced by businesses are opportunistic, phishing exercises that can be identified and avoided if businesses keep up to date with current cyber threats. We have already invested in a specialist Cyber Crime Unit, including a dedicated Cyber Community Support Officer, and Cyber Protect

Officer, to deliver help, advice to businesses in Gwent. I would urge businesses to reach out and access the free support that is available to them."



AMDDIFFYN A THAWELU MEDDWL  
PROTECTING AND REASSURING



# venture

## GRADUATES



Prifddinas  
Ranbarth  
Caerdydd

Cardiff  
Capital  
Region



“OUR AIM IS TO LINK LOCAL BUSINESSES  
WITH SKILLED & TALENTED GRADUATES”

All of us at Venture Graduate are excited to be entering the second cohort of our new and improved graduate scheme. We understand that time and resource is extremely precious for SMEs, microbusinesses, and start-ups alike, so we want to support you with your recruitment needs, **all free of charge**. Our aim is to link local businesses with skilled and talented graduates, as well as raising the profile of your business within the region. We provide end-to-end support throughout the process, from advertising the job role, shortlisting and assessment centres, to organising the final stage interview (and that's where you come in!). You will then get the chance to meet the top candidates for your job role and conduct your final interview to choose who is the right fit for your business.

We want to help local businesses to grow and thrive, and we believe that adding a graduate to your team is the perfect way to do that. By hiring a graduate, you are opening yourselves up to fresh talent, skills, and ideas. Interest in the scheme is growing across Torfaen, and we don't want you to miss out on this opportunity, the deadline for this next intake is 21st Feb. If you'd like to hear more about the scheme you can register your interest on our website:

<https://bit.ly/venture-register-your-interest> and one of the team will get back to you. Alternatively, you can contact us directly on:

[ccrgraduatescheme@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:ccrgraduatescheme@cardiff.gov.uk) to find out more!

# HOW GREEN IS YOUR BUSINESS?

## *The Cwmbran Firm Tracking Their Carbon Emissions*



Cwmbran-based telecoms company RPS Telecom have become a member of Treepoints, a certified Social Enterprise who help businesses understand their emissions, support climate projects and track their impacts.

Becoming a greener business boasts the benefits of happier employees, offsetting business travel, supporting local communities and rewarding your team, according to Treepoints.

Natalie Strange, General Manager of RPS Telecom said: "With climate change an ever-increasing threat, there has been a push for businesses to take action, and we are doing just that. We will be offsetting a total of 42 tonnes of carbon each year, planting 840 trees and recycling 840 bottles.

"For many businesses, the move to remote working has led to a decline in their environmental impact. 95% of RPS Telecom's customers are supported remotely, up 15% from last year. When in-person visits are made, team members car-share which also has the benefit of boosting morale."

Becoming a member of Treepoints has allowed the team to understand their emissions. RPS Telecom's office is fitted with environmentally friendly automatic lights, the company encourages a paperless policy and all packaging is recycled.

Natalie added: "Companies track productivity, they can measure sustainability too. Being able to track our emissions is a fantastic way to show the team the positive impact we are having on the planet."

To find out more about RPS Telecom and the services they offer, visit: [rpstelecom.co.uk](https://rpstelecom.co.uk). RPS Telecom are based at Springboard Business Innovation Centre, Llantarnam, Cwmbran, home to a community of high growth science and technology businesses. Offering state of the art technology, a highly accessible location and great business support services, Springboard offers a dynamic culture in which businesses can thrive and flourish.

**Want to find out more? Contact Rhiannon Jones:**  
[Rhiannon.jones@torfaen.gov.uk](mailto:Rhiannon.jones@torfaen.gov.uk)  
<https://bit.ly/Springboard-Business-Innovation>



**“COMPANIES TRACK PRODUCTIVITY,  
THEY CAN MEASURE SUSTAINABILITY TOO”**



# FINANCE FOR TECH VENTURES

Andy Morris is an investment executive at the Development Bank of Wales. He explains how the Development Bank's equity finance supports tech business' from seed to later stage needs.

What sets us apart:

- 70+ Technology businesses supported in Wales
- Entry investment between £50,000 and £2 million
- Follow-on investments up to £5 million
- A large network of co-investors and business angels
- Substantial investment in all technology sectors
- Strong relationship with technology incubators and universities
- Work with companies from start up through to exit

How we can help - We're here to support innovative technology ventures in a range of ways.

**WE CAN CONTINUE TO SUPPORT**

**YOUR TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS**

**THROUGH ALL STAGES**

## Start-Ups

We're forward-thinking investors who understand the challenges of running a technology start-up or spin out.

## Early Stage

As start-ups progress and move towards commercialisation we can offer additional support to help the process.

## Established

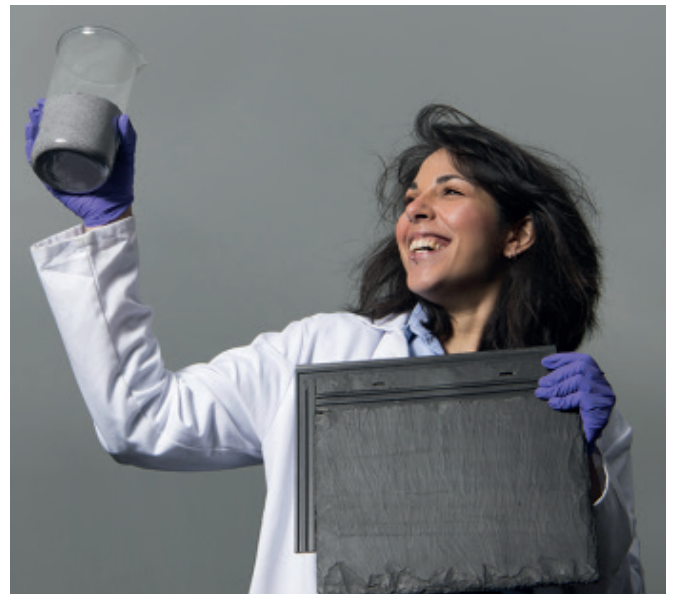
We can continue to support your technology business through all stages - even up to (and beyond) an initial public offering (IPO). An injection of development of expansion capital can significantly boost your business' growth prospects.

Whatever stage your venture is at we have the means and connections to help you reach your milestones.

**Want to know more? If you are interested in applying for finance you can find out more here:**

**<https://bit.ly/development-bank-contact> and we**

**can put in touch with one of our investment experts.**



# DIGITAL PACKAGE FOR TORFAEN BUSINESSES CAMPAIGN

As a result of recent funding by the UK Government's UK Community Renewal Fund, local Torfaen businesses can benefit from a fully funded starter website for 12 months. As well as this, they have the opportunity to be advertised locally on the Uddr mobile app for the same period.

**To express your interest and for more information, please click here.**

**<https://bit.ly/Digital-Package-Torfaen-Businesses>**

# PONTYPOOL STEEL SPECIALISTS GAINS CRUCIAL FUNDING FOR INVESTMENT

Pro Steel engineering has successfully secured grant funding from Welsh Government's Productivity Enhancement Programme for crucial investment. The programme was launched in Torfaen in 2020 by the Economy & Enterprise Team at Torfaen Council in partnership with Welsh Government and has seen a significant amount of capital investment awarded to Torfaen's manufacturing sector.

Pontypool steel specialist company Pro Steel Engineering has put the grant funding of £25,000 to good use by purchasing new cranes. The investment will allow double lifting capacity in one bay of the factory, and considerable support in another bay. Crucially and of significant benefit, is the ability to now utilise additional cranes at the same time as the existing crane, which will increase productivity and significantly reduce the time that staff members have historically had to wait for lifting apparatus.

**THANK YOU TO THE WELSH  
GOVERNMENT & TORFAEN  
COUNCIL FOR THE GRANT**

Richard Selby, director and co-founder, Pro Steel Engineering said: "This investment came at exactly the right time for us. We are experiencing a time of growth and to now have the capability to use multiple cranes at the same time will not only save our team time, but it will also allow us to plan for bigger and more lucrative projects and client work. Thank you to the Welsh Government & Torfaen Council for the grant and we look forward to maximising their installation."

## About the Productivity Enhancement Programme

The programme aims to increase efficiency, develop new products and explore new markets within the business. Participants are assigned a Welsh Government Relationship Manager and Innovation Specialist to help review productivity enhancement and support them through the business-friendly application process. Furthermore, expert manufacturing advice is provided through a funded productivity consultancy that can help with advice surrounding factory layout, automation and digital, technical manufacturing challenges and quality marking requirements.

**If you are a manufacturing business based in Torfaen who would like to explore this programme, please contact Torfaen Economy & Enterprise team:**

**Email:** [info@southwalesbusiness.co.uk](mailto:info@southwalesbusiness.co.uk)

**Visit** <https://bit.ly/smart-innovation-programme>





# Learn. Share. Implement.

Take action to become an age-inclusive employer.



The Responsible  
Business Network  
Cymru



Creu Cymru aed gyfeillgar  
Creating an age friendly Wales



## BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY: AGE AT WORK

Join the growing group of businesses in Wales that are benefitting from an age diverse and inclusive workplace.

The proportion of people aged 50+ in employment has risen over the last 20 years, with one in three workers now aged 50 or older.

However, this rise has now stalled and people over 50 are leaving work prematurely due to factors including: ageism in recruitment; lack of flexibility from employers; insufficient support for health conditions; and difficulty managing caring responsibilities alongside work.

Business in the Community Cymru (BITC) supports businesses to take action on age inclusion in the workplace through the Age at Work programme, in partnership with Age Cymru and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

A key part of this programme is the Age Inclusive Learning Network, which brings together and supports HR, wellbeing and inclusion professionals, from businesses of all sizes and all sectors, to become more age-inclusive in their approach to workplace policy and practice.

**THE PROPORTION OF PEOPLE  
AGED 50+ IN EMPLOYMENT HAS  
RISEN OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS**

The Network meets over five facilitated sessions to share best practice, discuss challenges and opportunities, and to hear from expert speakers. Participants are supported to develop a bespoke Age-Inclusive Action Plan, and to implement this in their business as part of wider Health & Wellbeing and Diversity & Inclusion strategies.

**For more information on Age at Work and how your business can benefit from helpful toolkits, resources, and ongoing support, or to register for the next Age Inclusive Learning Network, visit:**

**<https://bit.ly/Age-at-Work-Wales>  
or contact Jill Salter, BITC Cymru, on:  
07793 443893 or at [jill.salter@bitc.org.uk](mailto:jill.salter@bitc.org.uk)**