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WYCHAVON

Business news



December 2018

Annual business breakfast - save the date

Please put Wednesday 23 January 2019 in your diary for our business rate payers breakfast meeting here at the Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Station Rd, Pershore WR10 1PT.

Innovation will be the theme, featuring HERU the Home Energy Resources Unit, a global game-changing invention being trialled at Wychavon. Nik Spencer Chairman of Mission Resources Group Ltd will be talking about the

development of HERU, a revolutionary UK home energy solution, which heats your hot water with everything from nappies to plastics, coffee cups to food. We will be taking part in a year long field trial of one of the prototype units at our offices at Pershore which will help to take the HERU to the next stage. We are keen to help make the HERU a commercial reality, bringing environmental benefits to us all.

We will have speakers from the European funded Proof of Concept programme which will offer specialist advice and grants of between £2,000 to £30,000 for businesses seeking to develop innovative new products and services, and from the Worcestershire innovators networking group WINN.

We will also update you on our budget and Council Tax, and business rates for 2019/20. You are invited to join us for breakfast at 7.30 a.m.

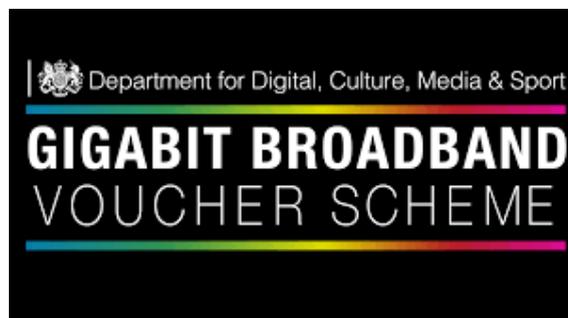
To book your place early please contact Jane Dobson. Parking at the Civic Centre is free. E: jane.dobson@wychavon.gov.uk. T: 01386 565278.



Cllr. Richard Morris, portfolio holder for economic growth and housing at Wychavon.

Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme in Worcestershire

You may already know that in March 2018 the Government announced a £67 million [Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme](#) to support the cost of installing full fibre broadband connections for small to medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and the local communities around them.



Gigabit vouchers can be used by **SMEs** and the **local communities** surrounding them to contribute to the installation cost of a gigabit-capable connection. Businesses can claim up to **£3,000** against the cost of connection either individually or as part of a group project. Residents can benefit from the scheme with a voucher worth **£500** as part of a group project.

On 12 November the Government announced some changes to this scheme to make sure that the scheme benefits even more people: The maximum amount that businesses can claim towards the cost of installation will change from **£3,000** to **£2,500**. At the same time, it will be even easier for groups of residents to pool their vouchers together with businesses in project schemes. So, to take advantage of the **£3,000** contribution for your business, you must act fast! **APPLY NOW** or get in touch with the Superfast Worcestershire Team to discuss the scheme: superfast@worcestershire.gov.uk.

The **Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme** is a significant opportunity to expand the full fibre network in your area, especially if your community is not currently included in the Superfast Worcestershire roll out.

But please act fast! **£16 million of the £67 million pot has already been allocated, which proves how popular the scheme is.**

Approximately **£250,000** is already being claimed by Worcestershire communities, with many new ones already going through the process.

The new [postcode checker](#) may also prove helpful to identify premises without access to superfast speeds in your area.

Open Worcestershire - places to co-work and connect



WINN believes that great things happen when people get together, which is why they've produced [this map of places across Worcestershire for businesses to co-work and connect](#). There is everything you need to support your business including affordable incubator and accelerator workspaces.

The aim is to develop a community of inspirational individuals and brilliant businesses to help the region grow and become recognised nationally as a hub of innovative ideas and projects.



It doesn't matter whether you want to be innovative with your products, services or processes, or if you just want to celebrate diversity and entrepreneurship. WINN can help you to showcase your ideas, learn from other innovators and be inspired.

So, whether you want to connect, collaborate, co-ordinate or just be inspired, WINN should be your first point of call.

To contact WINN [click here](#) - email info@winn-hub.com or join WINN Wednesday, a series of innovation networking events that encourage collaboration, with engaging and inspirational speakers sharing their innovation insights and journeys.

Investment support for local small business

The Investing in Growth programme which supports small businesses to initiate significant expansion projects is pleased to announce that the programme has taken on two new providers, Ian Priest and John Painter who will be helping businesses in the region to achieve their growth potential.

Ian has worked in Worcestershire since 1986 and has a strong understanding of the region's strengths and opportunities for growth. The insights that Ian provides to businesses who access the 18 hours of free support primarily helps them to both source and then present their case to potential lenders and investors, in a way that they can easily digest and understand.

John Painter has been helping business owners to manage and grow their businesses for many years by helping businesses understand and implement their growth aims. John offers participating businesses support through a blend of coaching and consultancy aimed at providing answers and giving a business direction.

If your business is looking for investment to grow now or are planning for future growth and would value further advice, guidance or support, 18 hour investment readiness help is available to Worcestershire based small businesses trading predominantly business to business. To find out more [click here](#).



Do you employ staff from a European country?

If your business employs staff from a European country they will need to secure their agreed rights through the EU Settlement Scheme.



In December 2017 the UK government reached an agreement with the European Union on citizens' rights. In March this was extended to cover those arriving during the implementation period (to 31 December 2020).

The agreement protects the rights of EU citizens after the UK leaves the EU and enables them to continue to live their lives as now. It also covers their family members.

Further information on the agreement is at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Applying for the Settlement Scheme

- EU citizens in the UK and their family members will need to apply to secure their rights through a simple digital system to get [settled or pre-settled status](#).
- The settlement scheme will be phased in until it is fully open by the end of March 2019. EU citizens do not need to do anything now.
- The scheme will remain open until 2021 so there will be no need to rush to apply.

Applications via a three-step process

- First applicants will need to use their EU passport or national ID card to prove their identity.
- Then applicants will use their National Insurance number or select from a wide range of other documents to prove UK residence.
- Finally, applicants will declare any criminal convictions.
- An application will cost £65 or £32.50 for children under 16. It will be free for those with valid documented permanent residence or valid indefinite leave to remain or enter, and also for looked after children.
- An Assisted Digital service is available to citizens who do not have the appropriate access, skills or confidence to complete an online immigration application form.

An employer toolkit is available to equip employers with the right tools and information to support EU citizens and their families to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. It is available [here](#) and webinars are also being organized, details will be on GOV.UK.

New campaign 'Creating our Future Workforce' launched for businesses in Worcestershire

Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Worcestershire County Council have launched a new campaign for 'Creating our Future Workforce'.



The campaign aims to tackle the county's skills gap and support businesses to get involved with developing Worcestershire's skilled workforce of the future, by working together with educational establishments.

Businesses of all sizes in Worcestershire can get involved with 'Creating our Future Workforce' through a variety of pathways. Organisations can help by attending assembly talks to schools, supporting young people with mock interviews and CV workshops, and offering a young person a work experience or internship opportunity.

The campaign was launched at the Worcestershire LEP Annual Conference as part of a skills panel which discussed the challenges that businesses face in terms of recruiting staff. The panel also highlighted what is being done to support young people to develop the skills they need for their ideal career.

Over 400 businesses were in attendance at the Worcestershire LEP Conference to witness the launch of the program to tackle the skills shortage that many businesses are facing across the county.

Judy Chadwick, Skills Lead for Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, said: “I thoroughly enjoyed launching the ‘Creating our Future Workforce’ campaign at the Worcestershire LEP Conference. We are determined to use this campaign to help tackle the skills shortage businesses face in Worcestershire and enable us to continue improving the skills of our local workforce.

I am encouraging businesses to pledge their support to help make a difference to their business and the local community.”

All businesses that have signed up to the campaign will be featured at next year’s Worcestershire Skills Show, where it will be unveiled how local business commitment is helping to improve career opportunities for young people across the county.

To get involved with the campaign, email the team on CEC@Worcestershire.gov.uk

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