

Growth Hub Newsletter

January 2026

Support for your business

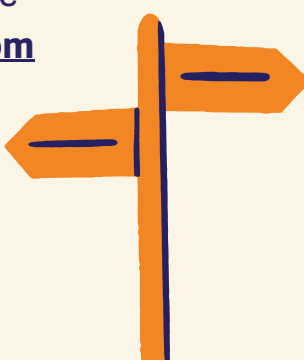
We provide fully funded support for every stage of business, from start-up to growth. This includes one to one support with one of our expert advisors, facilitated workshops and webinars, peer groups and much more.

Get started...

Complete the Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Support Tool today, to get started and receive your business support plan signposting you to profit boosting, market growing business support:

[Business Support Tool](#)

If you have any questions or requests for support please email us directly at: **business@enterpriseoxfordshire.com**



New business support programme launched to support county's high streets to flourish

A new, focused programme of support – aimed at boosting the prospects of Oxfordshire's high street-based businesses – launched on 11th December.

Running through until the end of March 2026, Enterprise Oxfordshire Business' 'Helping High Streets' support programme aims to back businesses who operate within typical high-footfall locations in the county.

The latest initiative – which follows in the footsteps of many business support programmes headed-up by Enterprise Oxfordshire Business, supporting thousands of SMEs and entrepreneurs in the county – is set to enhance the prospects of dozens of high street organisations through a mixture of support delivery styles.

Helping High Streets will be taking a 'place-based' approach, working with one identified geographical area within each district. Enterprise Oxfordshire will announce specific details on this soon.

Alongside this targeted aspect of the programme, further online support will be available more widely to eligible, high street-based businesses from across Oxfordshire – full details of the online support offer will be announced soon by Enterprise Oxfordshire Business.

With a diverse array of high streets across the county – from rural, Cotswold market towns through to the bustling city centre streets of Oxford – the Helping High Streets programme recognises the broad offer Oxfordshire's high streets has and the different types of customer they each attract.

The programme aligns with the wider Government emphasis on supporting high streets and its broader 'everyday economy', including the mix of enterprises often represented on high streets and not just retail.

It also recognises the need for high streets to remain vibrant to support to community life too.

Helen Brind – Head of Business and Skills at Enterprise Oxfordshire – said: *"High streets are the heartbeat of our communities, and this programme is about giving them the support they need to thrive."*

"By working closely with our district councils and offering tailored, place-based support alongside wider online resources, we aim to help businesses adapt, grow and remain vibrant in a changing economy."

"Enterprise Oxfordshire Business is committed to backing this crucial area of our local economy, ensuring our high streets continue to play a vital role for residents, visitors and businesses alike."



Businesses set to benefit from the support will be those operating from a high street location, such as retail, leisure, hospitality and service businesses.

To find out more and to register an interest in the programme, head to the [Enterprise Oxfordshire Business website](https://www.enterpriseoxfordshire.co.uk).

[Find out more](#)



*Helen Brind,
Head of Business and Skills,
Enterprise Oxfordshire*

Social Impact Business Support Programme

The Social Impact Business Support Programme is a new initiative designed to help co-operatives, mutuals, social enterprises and other organisations using alternative business models to start, scale and thrive.

Led by Enterprise Oxfordshire Business and delivered by OSEP CIC (the Oxfordshire Social Enterprise Partnership) – itself a social enterprise – the programme extends successful support already operating across Oxford City, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts.

What support is available?

Participants will benefit from a practical, hands-on package of support, including:

- One-to-one advisory support for new and existing co-operatives, mutuals and alternative businesses.
- Workshops (online and in person) covering legal structures, marketing with a mission, finance, business planning and more.
- Peer networking and awareness-raising events with key stakeholders across the co-operative and alternative business sector.

The programme is due to run until the end of March 2026.

Co-operatives, mutuals and social enterprises play a vital role in Oxfordshire's inclusive economy.

Collectively, they play a major role in the UK economy – more than three-quarters of co-operative start-ups remain active after five years, compared to fewer than two-fifths of new companies overall.

Mutuals employ over 1.3 million people and generate a combined annual income of £165.7 billion.

This new programme adds further depth to that support, focusing specifically on community-owned and mission-led organisations.

Who can benefit?

Impact driven enterprises, including social enterprises and businesses looking to shift towards – or those looking to create – a member-owned model that focuses on shared benefits, company surplus and democratic member control.

[Register an interest in the programme](#)

Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Directory

Our fast-growing Business Directory is the perfect place for you to showcase your business, connect with other local enterprises, and take advantage of the numerous opportunities that our network offers. Whether you're a small start-up or an established company, listing your business in our directory can significantly enhance your visibility and reach.

The process is simple and straightforward, and our team is here to assist you every step of the way.

[List your business today](#)

Oxfordshire Network Groups

Are you looking to make valuable connections and boost your business success? We have some exciting news for you! There are numerous networking groups and events happening right here in Oxfordshire that can help you expand your professional network and open new doors for your business.

The Oxfordshire Network Groups directory is a great resource for discovering the best ways to find networking groups and events near you. Whether you're looking to connect with like-minded professionals, share ideas, or simply grow your business, this is the perfect place to start.

[View Networking Groups](#)

Other Resources Available to Businesses

As part of Enterprise Oxfordshire's unwavering commitment to deliver the best possible service to Oxfordshire's SMEs, we continuously strive to ensure that other services and grant opportunities available to businesses within Oxfordshire are highlighted and signposted on our 'External Resources' website page.

Check out our 'External Resources' page and keep updated with any new opportunities that could benefit your business.

[Find out more](#)

Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Events

Find out more about upcoming Enterprise Oxfordshire Business events, workshops and webinars designed to help your business.

[View events](#)



Oxfordshire Business Opportunities & Support Network

A network for all Enterprise Oxfordshire clients to connect, collaborate and exchange ideas.

Date: Tuesday 6th January

Time: 4:00pm - 5:00pm

Online event



Join Today!



The '**Oxfordshire Business Opportunities & Support network**' for all Enterprise Oxfordshire Business clients & anyone who wants to learn more.

The Number 1 regular meet-up for Oxfordshire businesses who want to connect, collaborate and exchange ideas.

Enterprise Oxfordshire Business engages with thousands of business owners and leaders every year providing knowledge, advice and other business development support. But until now there hasn't been an easy way to help these businesses to network. Problem solved...

The OxBOoSt network will meet via zoom on Tuesday 6th January from 4:00pm to 5:00pm and is open to all Oxfordshire based businesses to join (and its free!).

Each meeting will include 5-8 pre-arranged slots for businesses to share their story or pitch for collaboration and a forward look of business support from Enterprise Oxfordshire. And of course there will be plenty of time for networking.

[Register Here](#)



Join us for...

AI Advantage 2026: Smarter Growth

 Tuesday 13th January

 9:30am - 11:30am

 Online workshop

Ready to make 2026 the year your business gets smarter with AI?

Join our interactive online workshop created for Oxfordshire entrepreneurs, start-ups, and professionals who want to turn artificial intelligence into a practical growth tool.

This engaging session explores how AI can help you spot local opportunities, uncover new customers and partners, and strengthen your regional presence. Discover how smarter tools and tailored prompts can power better decisions, sharper marketing, and more authentic local connections.

Guided by Google-accredited AI trainer Grae Laws, you'll get hands-on experience using AI platforms to identify collaboration opportunities, fine-tune your offers, and reach the right audiences across Oxfordshire and beyond. You'll also learn how to use AI responsibly, covering ethics, compliance, and community trust, so your growth strategies align with local values.

[Register Here](#)



START-UP CLUB BOOTCAMP

 Tuesday 13th January

 5:00pm - 7:00pm

 Online Workshop



SUP Club Bootcamp is back! Session 1 of 3, designed to help you to create and grow the business you always dreamed about!

For start-ups and early-stage entrepreneurs, this bootcamp is designed to encourage businesses to focus on the fundamentals of a successful business and develop a viable, successful and sustainable business.

Three intense sessions, each delivered by one of our experienced business experts, providing practical content to help you learn and make progress, alongside a group of supportive peers.

You will finish the Bootcamp with a clear plan on how to move your business forward and reach your next milestone.

Session 1 - Business Planning In this first session Lesley McKie, Director at Positively Media and long-term supporter of small businesses and businesses with purpose, will introduce the Business Model Canvas, a great tool to help you create your first business plan on one page! Completing your own Business Model Canvas will also help you to refine the business idea, and consider all of the key ingredients to help you to make it a success.

Session 2 - Your Value Proposition and Your Customers - Register for that event separately.

Session 3 - Managing your Business Finances - Register for that event separately.

This Start-Up Bootcamp is perfect for individuals who are thinking of starting their own business, sole trader or Limited Company. Or for businesses who are looking for some help with developing their early-stage business or pivoting their plans.

[Register Here](#)

Join us for...

Paid vs Free - Which is best for business growth?

 Monday 19th January

 12:30pm - 1:30pm

 Online Webinar



Which Marketing Strategy is Best for Your Business?

In today's competitive landscape, every business needs a strong marketing strategy. But with so many options, how do you decide whether to invest your valuable resources in paid marketing or focus on free (organic) methods?

This one-hour session will break down the crucial differences between these two approaches, helping you understand the pros and cons of each.

[Register Here](#)

Working Well Members Week

Launching our latest Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Members Week, with a focus on Working Well.



Working Well Members Week: Demystify Menopause

One in ten women have left a role due to lack of support, costing the business £30,000! Launching our latest Members Week, with a focus on Working Well, this brilliant event is for all SME business owners and managers.

Join us for an accessible 60 minute session where we will 'Demystify Menopause', bust some myths, find out why peri/menopause is more than mood swings and hot flushes, and learn how we can best support those in our work and personal lives that might be navigating the choppy waters of peri/menopause.

[Register Here](#)



Working Well Members Week:

-  Wednesday 28th January
-  12:30pm - 1:30pm
-  Online Webinar



Sit Happens!
with Alison (AKA The Safety Elf)



Working Well Members Week: Sit Happens!

Because posture, comfort, health and focus shouldn't be casualties of desk-based working.

Whether you WFH, work in an office, or are constantly on the go, if you bring your body as well as your laptop to work, this webinar is for you.

[Register Here](#)



Working Well Members Week:

-  Thursday 29th January
-  12:30pm - 1:30pm
-  Online Webinar



Going Against the Grain
with Jack Thorne



Working Well Members Week: Going Against the Grain

Every workplace, just like a beautiful piece of wood, has imperfections that can be worked with.

Join this webinar for an inspiring session led by Jack from Against The Grain Oxfordshire CIC, a social enterprise using creativity, craftsmanship and collaboration to help people grow with purpose.

[Register Here](#)



Working Well Members Week:

-  Friday 30th January
-  12:30pm - 1:30pm
-  Online Webinar



Conversation Culture
with Heidi Black



Working Well Members Week: Conversation Culture

Whether it is checking in with an employee to find out how their daughter's wedding went at the weekend, right through to addressing a drop in someone's performance, effective workplace conversations are at the core of a thriving workplace.

We will talk about making conversations part of your company culture, making the easier one's common place and the harder ones less challenging. I will cover different scenarios and encourage you to think about when and where you have conversations, so you get the best outcome.

[Register Here](#)

Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills

For more information on Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills please visit:
enterpriseoxfordshireskills.com

10th Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards open for entries and nominations!

The 10th annual Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards were declared open for entries and nominations on 3 December at the Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Christmas Networking Event at Loose Cannon Brewery in Abingdon by Helen Brind, Head of Business & Skills at Enterprise Oxfordshire, Councillor Ben Higgins, Cabinet Member for Future Economy and Innovation, awards committee members and co-costs Sarah Jaycock, Co-Founder and Director at High Spec Composites and Simon Newton, Managing Director at Darke & Taylor Ltd and Shirley Popham, Managing Director and Founding Director of headline sponsor Popham Hairdressing.

There's something for everyone at the 2026 awards, with categories for apprentices, former apprentices, employers, training providers and individuals who champion apprenticeships and other vocational pathways!

Do you employ an apprentice? Why not nominate them for one of the apprentice awards and enter yourself as an employer!

Do you know an apprentice or a business that employs apprentices? Please help us spread the word by letting them know that the awards are open!

The categories and sponsors are as follows:

- Intermediate (Level 2) Apprentice of the Year Award (Abbott Diabetes Care)
- Advanced (Level 3) Apprentice of the Year Award (NielsenIQ)
- Higher/Degree Apprentice (Level 4+) of the Year Award (Grundon)
- Special Recognition Award (M Group Highways)
- Rising Star Award (Webexpenses)
- Shining Star Award (Hill)
- Skills Champion Award (The Engineering Trust)
- Training Provider Individual Award (Blenheim & Pye Homes)
- Apprenticeship Employer of the Year Award (<250 employees) (Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust)
- Apprenticeship Employer of the Year Award (250+ employees) (Assure UK)

The awards are open until 23:59 on **Monday 23 February 2026**. Winners will be announced at a special celebration evening, which will take place on 21 May 2026 at the recently-opened Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities – the University of Oxford's new world-class centre for the arts and humanities.



Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills

For more information on Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills please visit:
enterpriseoxfordshireskills.com

Apprenticeship support for employers

Apprenticeships are a fantastic way for businesses to gain the skills they need to grow and thrive. Our headline sponsor Popham Hairdressing is a fantastic example of this, with their first ever apprentice now their General Manager and 77% of their team being home-grown.

If you're interested in finding out how Enterprise Oxfordshire can support you with employing an apprentice, including accessing funds to support with training through our Apprenticeship Levy Support Scheme, visit:

[Find out more](#)

Or email ApprenticeshipLevy@enterpriseoxfordshire.com

'The return on investment is real': Darcica Logistics

"There is such a variety of apprenticeships and training providers out there that you can find one that fits. Apprenticeships are a fantastic way of developing people from within in a way that's relatable to the job and at a more reasonable cost than other training options." Melanie Tattersall, Director of Sustainability & Communications, Darcica Logistics

Read our case study to find out how Darcica Logistics is using apprenticeships as a powerful tool for upskilling their existing team and also as a gateway to bring in fresh, young local talent.

[Read the case study](#)



Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills

For more information on Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills please visit:
enterpriseoxfordshireskills.com

Apprenticeships awareness broadcasts for parents and carers

Are you a parent or carer? Would you like to know more about apprenticeships to help you support your young person with deciding what to do when they leave school or college? There is so much choice for young people in terms of what they can do at 16 and 18 and it's important that all young people learn about all the pathways available to them so that they can decide on their best next step.

As parents/carers we know the important role you have in supporting your children with these choices, so we'd like to invite you to join Oxfordshire Careers Hub and Career Friendly (young people are welcome to attend too!) during National Apprenticeship Week for our apprenticeship awareness broadcasts from 18:00 – 19:00 on Wednesday 11 February (post 16 options) and Thursday 12 February (post 18 options) to hear from local employers and apprentices and learn more about a pathway that has opportunities for everyone.

Career Friendly programme connects schools, businesses and parents/carers to create meaningful learning experiences and career opportunities for students. Register for free to watch the broadcasts and connect with local and national employers to find out about the opportunities they have to offer your young person.

[Find out more](#)

Connect your business with the next generation

Interested in connecting with local schools and colleges and promoting your business to the next generation and their parents/carers? You can also register as a business on Career Friendly to make those vital connections.

Find out more in this video:

[Watch now](#)



Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills

For more information on Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills please visit:
enterpriseoxfordshireskills.com

Careers Fest 2026 – session for parents and carers

Are you a parent or carer of a young person in Year 9 or above? Like to know more about their options for when they leave school or college to help you support them with taking their best next step?

Oxfordshire Careers Hub are holding a twilight session for parents and carers at Careers Fest on **Wednesday 18 March from 16:00 – 19:00** at The Kassam Conference & Events Centre in Oxford, which will be an opportunity for you to meet with a wide range of employers, further education colleges, universities and training providers and find out about all the options on offer. Visiting Careers Fest with your young person is a fantastic way to get those careers conversations started and help you feel equipped with the right information to support them with deciding on their next step.

[Learn More](#)

Careers Fest 2026 – session for parents and carers

Teacher Encounters are one of the ways in which Oxfordshire Careers Hub helps to bridge the gap between education and the world of work. These experiences allow educators to step into real workplaces, gaining first-hand insights into industry practices, career pathways and the skills employers value most. By doing so, teachers return to their classrooms equipped to inspire students with practical examples and informed guidance.

Teacher Encounter at Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre

On 10 December, Oxfordshire Careers Hub partnered with Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH) to deliver a unique teacher encounter at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre in Headington, Oxford. STEM teachers from local schools attended this immersive experience, which included a hands-on theatre skills workshop, tours of active hospital departments such as Occupational Therapy, Orthotics and the Oxford Centre for Enablement and insight into career pathways in Allied Health Professions, including apprenticeships and work experience opportunities.

The teachers met a number of healthcare professionals in each department - who shared information about their job roles, career journeys and top tips for students interested in following in



Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills

For more information on Enterprise Oxfordshire Skills please visit:
enterpriseoxfordshireskills.com

their footsteps - expanding their knowledge about the range of roles available in the Allied Health Professions and the various pathways into them. They left with practical knowledge to enrich their lessons and inspire students to consider careers in healthcare - a sector critical to Oxfordshire's economy, exemplifying Oxfordshire Careers Hub and The Careers & Enterprise Company's commitment to aligning education with local growth sectors.

Vicki Patterson, Science Teacher and Team Leader at Wheatley Park School, said: "We had the opportunity to explore different hospital departments and saw the vast range of professionals who work in the NHS beyond doctors, including some departments I had no idea even existed. Speaking to staff about their career pathways has allowed me to gain valuable insights into what NHS employers look for when they are hiring and ways to get into a job role, especially at an apprenticeship level. As a result, I now feel much more informed about the variety of roles available in the NHS and can use this knowledge to inform and inspire my health and social care students in future lessons."

Why Teacher Encounters matter...

Teachers who participate report improved confidence in discussing apprenticeships, technical routes and local labour market trends, stronger curriculum links, enabling them to connect classroom learning to real-world applications and enhanced employer engagement, fostering partnerships that benefit both schools and businesses. Students gain a better understanding of career options, improved decision-making and increased motivation to pursue pathways aligned with their interests and skills. Hosting employers gain direct engagement with educators, ensuring accurate representation of their sector in schools, opportunities to showcase career pathways, including apprenticeships and work experience and a stronger talent pipeline, as teachers influence future workforce aspirations.

You can find out more in this film that showcases the launch of the CEC Teacher Encounters project at Oxford Biomedica in 2023.

[Learn More](#)



Oxfordshire Net Zero Business Support

As communities worldwide continue to grapple with the environmental challenges brought about by climate change, it's more crucial than ever for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in Oxfordshire to join the global push towards net zero emissions by 2050. But what exactly does this mean, and why is it so important?

In simple terms, achieving net zero means that a business has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions to the point where they are balanced by the amount removed from the atmosphere. This is a significant step towards combating climate change and ensuring a sustainable future for all.

However, the journey to net zero can seem like a daunting task. That's why, in collaboration with our partners, we have created a one-stop-shop for Oxfordshire SMEs. This resource hub brings together the support and resources available in Oxfordshire and beyond to help you on your net zero journey, regardless of your business size, sector, or stage.

We believe that with the right support and resources, every business can make a meaningful contribution to a greener future. Let's work together to achieve net zero and make Oxfordshire a leader in sustainability.

Visit our webpage for advice on how to make your business net zero. Read inspiring stories, find net zero support, and discover funding and grants available to support your net zero journey. Along with lots more.

[**Find Out More**](#)

Other Net Zero Support

TechX Accelerator

TechX Accelerator is an intensive 14-week programme for innovative startups with the potential to transform the future of affordable, sustainable energy. Connect with their extensive energy network, access technology experts and mentors, and secure funding to turn your concept into a real-world solution that can drive net zero.

- Up to £50k grant per startup
- Open to startups globally
- Targeting startups at technology readiness level 3 to 6
- Open to multi-team founders

[**Find Out More**](#)

Oxfordshire Business Support

Made Smarter

The UK is set to be the global leader in the creation, adoption & exportation of advanced digital technologies.

Now's the time for manufacturing to evolve and with emerging technologies the possibilities are endless.

This not-so-distant future will boost our economy and create new jobs. Want to be part of it?

We can help you to leverage the power of these tools. The manufacturers of tomorrow use technology to streamline their processes. They are faster, more responsive, and more efficient. Ultimately, they make better products for less. Made Smarter helps you secure this competitive edge.

[Learn more](#)

Consultation on business support for co-operatives

The Department for Business has launched a consultation on how the Government can continue to support co-operative and non-financial mutual businesses to start up and grow. The consultation will cover the start-up process, how co-operatives and non-financial mutuals grow, and experiences of co-operatives and non-financial mutuals in accessing business support.

[Learn More](#)

Consultation on business rates and investment

HM Treasury has launched a consultation on reforms to the business rates system. The consultation will examine how the business rates system influences business investment decisions and how reforms could help better support investment and economic growth.

[Learn More](#)

Oxfordshire Business Support

As part of our ongoing commitment to provide the best possible service to Oxfordshire's SMEs, we always ensure that other services and opportunities which may be available to business within the county are highlighted and signposted.

Business & IP Centre Oxfordshire

At the Oxford Westgate Library

Supporting Oxfordshire residents to start, protect and grow their own business.



[Learn More](#)

OSEP

OSEP provides support, empowerment, and advocacy for local social enterprises, enterprising charities, and purposeful businesses in Oxfordshire. Email: hello@osep.org.uk



[Learn More](#)

District Council Support for Businesses

[Cherwell District Council](#)

[Oxford City Council](#)

[South Oxfordshire District Council](#)

[Vale of White Horse District Council](#)

[West Oxfordshire District Council](#)

Non Business News/Events:

Corporate Training with Oxford Playhouse – 2026 Dates Now Open

"I took away skills that will last a lifetime." (Participant from Willis Towers Watson)

Step out of the meeting room and onto the stage with a Corporate Training Day at Oxford Playhouse. Hosted in one of the UK's most prestigious theatres, this immersive experience is designed to help your team build confidence, presence, and authenticity in communication. Led by award-winning director Mike Tweddle, Artistic Director and CEO of Oxford Playhouse, the day focuses on developing vocal and physical range, improving presentation skills, and learning to communicate with spontaneity and impact. Participants will also have the rare opportunity to perform on the historic Oxford Playhouse stage with professional lighting and sound, before concluding the day with supportive feedback and reflection.

New corporate training dates for 2026 are now available for:

- Tuesday 1 September
- Monday 7 September
- Tuesday 8 September

"Engaging, thoughtful, and full of energy. A powerful reminder of the growth that happens when we embrace challenge." (Participant from Blenheim Palace)

To find out more or to discuss tailored options for your organisation, please contact Mollie in the Development Team at mollie.dibb@oxfordplayhouse.com

[More Info](#)

The Oxford Magazine: What's on in Oxfordshire

[Learn More](#)

Oxfordshire County Council News

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Experience Oxfordshire: What's on

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If you have anything you would like sharing in future editions, please
email: business@enterpriseoxfordshire.com