

Growth Hub Newsletter

October 2026

Support for your business

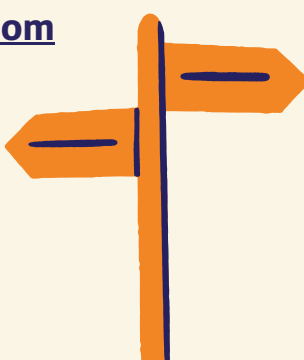
We provide fully funded support for every stage of business, from start-up to growth. This includes one to one support with one of our expert advisors, facilitated workshops and webinars, peer groups and much more.

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**



Help shape the future of business support in Oxfordshire.



We're reviewing activity delivered by the Oxfordshire Growth Hub and would like your input.

The following short survey takes around 10 minutes to complete and will help ensure future business support is shaped by what Oxfordshire businesses and entrepreneurs actually need.

From April 2027, Enterprise Oxfordshire and its partners will introduce a new approach to business support. Your feedback will help us create services that complement national provision, deliver real value and support local businesses to thrive.

All responses will be treated confidentially and will only be seen by Enterprise Oxfordshire and our independent reviewers, EPM Consultancy.

Your business will not be identified in any published findings without your permission.

Thank you for helping shape the future of business support in Oxfordshire.

[Take Part in the Survey](#)

New Growth Support for Oxfordshire Businesses

Enterprise Oxfordshire is launching four new support packages this autumn for established Oxfordshire businesses ready to strengthen leadership, sharpen strategy and grow with confidence.

From exploring international markets to developing stronger commercial leadership, these practical, expert-led programmes offer focused workshops, specialist advice, peer learning and real-world tools to help leaders take clear action.

Places are limited, so don't miss the chance to access targeted, fully funded support for your next stage of growth.

[Register your interest today.](#)

Start-Up Business Basics: One-to-One Support

Join us for Start-Up Business Basics: One-to-One Support on **Friday 16th October** at the Business and Intellectual Property Centre Oxfordshire (BIPC), Westgate, Oxford.

This free, in-person opportunity is designed to help aspiring entrepreneurs and new business owners take their next steps with greater clarity and confidence.



Each 30-minute Business Basics session offers practical, tailored support to help you think through the essentials of starting and running a business. Whether you want to clarify your offer, understand your customers, test your idea, choose a trading structure, organise your finances or build a simple online presence, this friendly one-to-one session gives you space to ask questions, explore challenges and identify realistic next steps.

You do not need a finished business plan or polished idea to attend - just bring your questions, ideas or current challenges. Spaces are limited and must be booked in advance, so reserve your free session today.

[Book your place](#)

Your invite to MAC26: Network, celebrate and be inspired

Book Your Place at Oxfordshire's Biggest Business Celebration

Be part of Oxfordshire's biggest business celebration. Marketplace and Celebration 2026 (MAC26) brings together SMEs, innovators and business leaders for networking, inspiration and live awards excitement - with over 130 businesses already booked.

- Connect with 40+ local businesses in the Marketplace
- Celebrate live award winners across six categories
- Hear practical insights from mindset coach Mark Franklin



Join the county's business community for an afternoon of connection, celebration and fresh ideas to take back into your own organisation.

Tickets are limited, and demand is building fast. Secure your place now and don't miss the chance to be in the room for Oxfordshire's standout business event.

[Book Tickets](#)



Award categories include:

- The Tap Social Socially Responsible Business of the Year
- The Stephen Spencer + Associates Innovation in Customer Experience of the Year
- The Cypher Start-up of the Year
- The Institute of Directors Business Leader of the Year
- The Velocity Cycle Couriers Environmentally Sustainable Business of the Year
- The Olamalu Growth Business of the Year

The Overall Winner Award will also be selected by our Headline Sponsor, Oxfordshire County Council, from the winners of each category.

[Book Tickets](#)

O.I.C. Valve Covers Ltd's Journey with Made Smarter

O.I.C. Valve Covers Ltd is a family-run manufacturer based in Oxfordshire, specialising in the design and manufacture of bespoke thermal insulation jackets, metal cladding and generator insulation systems. Serving customers across industrial, energy and data centre sectors, the company has built a strong reputation for quality, flexibility and customer service through its highly skilled workforce and commitment to continuous improvement.



A key bottleneck within the business was the manual marking out and cutting of insulation fabrics using paper templates. This process relied heavily on operator skill and experience, requiring approximately 24 hours of labour each week while creating variability in accuracy and material utilisation.

The manual process also limited production capacity, making it difficult for the company to respond quickly to larger customer projects. Material waste was estimated at around 15%, while quoting and production planning depended on historical knowledge rather than reliable production data.

As demand increased, O.I.C. needed a solution that would improve productivity, reduce waste and create the digital foundations required to support future growth.

Following participation in the Made Smarter South East programme, O.I.C. identified the implementation of a CNC automated fabric cutting machine with integrated CAD/CAM marker layout software as a key investment to support its digital transformation.

Read more about O.I.C. Valve Covers Ltd's Journey with Made Smarter here: <https://www.madesmarter.uk/resources/case-study-oic-valve-covers-ltd/>

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 startup 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

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.

Find out more

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.

View resources

Enterprise Oxfordshire Business Events

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



Made Smarter South East: Digital Transformation Workshop for Manufacturers

[**Register Here**](#)

Tuesday 6th October • 2.00pm - 4.00pm • Bicester Hotel Golf & Spa

Discover how Made Smarter South East can help Oxfordshire and South East manufacturers, makers and creators adopt digital technology, build skills and access fully funded expert support. Stay afterwards to meet fellow businesses at a wider networking event at the same venue



OxBOoSt - October

[**Register Here**](#)

Tuesday 6th October • 4.00pm - 5.30pm • Bicester Hotel Golf & Spa

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



Is Your Business Ready To Go Global?

[**Register Here**](#)

Wednesday 7th October • 9.15am - 10.00am • Online

You will hear how our new International Growth & Market Entry Programme will help a small cohort of 12 committed local businesses to choose the right market, build a focused pilot project and start generating real international opportunities over just three months.



Enterprise Oxfordshire Start-Up Club (1) - Planning Your Business

[**Register Here**](#)

Wednesday 7th October • 5.00pm - 7.00pm • Online

For people who want to start their own business, whether you are a sole-trader, and early-stage entrepreneur, or a start-up looking to grow, this Start-Up Club is designed to encourage you to focus on the fundamentals of a developing a successful business.



High Street Businesses: Spot Trends, Customer Needs & Ideas for Growth

[**Register Here**](#)

Monday 12th October • 1.00pm - 2.00pm • Online

This workshop helps businesses develop the habit of seeing problems differently and spotting opportunities hiding in plain sight. We'll explore how to recognise emerging trends, identify unmet customer needs, understand changing human behaviour, and use curiosity as a business advantage



Routes to Market & Building Your Action Plan

[**Register Here**](#)

Tuesday 13th October • 9.30am - 10.45am • Online

Identifying a new market is just the start. The real challenge is choosing the right route to enter it, and managing risks along the way. Should you go direct? Partner with others? Use distributors? And how do you build credibility fast?

Women in Business Gathering

Wednesday, 14th October 2026

 The Old Crown Coaching Inn,
25 Market Place,
Faringdon,
SN7 7HU



Enterprise Oxfordshire Women in Business Gathering

[Register Here](#)

Wednesday 14th October • 9.30am - 12.00pm • The Old Coaching Inn, Faringdon

Our Women in Business Network brings together ambitious female founders, leaders, and managers to engage in meaningful conversations, share experiences, and build long-term professional relationships in a supportive and inclusive environment.



Join us for...

Start-Up Business Basics: One-to-One Support

 Friday 16th October

 Book a 30 minute time slot

 Business and Intellectual Property
Centre Oxfordshire (BIPC), OX1 1DJ



Start-Up Business Basics: One-to-One Support

[Register Here](#)

Friday 16th October • Business and Intellectual Property Centre Oxfordshire (BIPC), Westgate, Oxford

Starting a business, or recently launched? Book a free 30-minute Business Basics one-to-one session in Oxford.



Join us for...

Commercial Leadership: Define Your Strategy and Growth Choices

 Tuesday 20th October

 9:30am - 12:00pm

 Bee House, Milton Park, OX14 4SB



Commercial Leadership: Define Your Strategy and Growth Choices

[Register Here](#)

Tuesday 20th October • 9.30am - 12.00pm • Bee House, Milton Park

A commercial growth programme for ambitious founders, CEOs and senior leaders of Oxfordshire businesses employing over 5 employees.



Is Your Business Ready To Go Global?

[Register Here](#)

Thursday 22nd October • 9.15am - 10.00am • Online

You will hear how our new International Growth & Market Entry Programme will help a small cohort of 12 committed local businesses to choose the right market, build a focused pilot project and start generating real international opportunities over just three months.



Open Before Everyone Else: AI for High Street & Rural Businesses

[Register Here](#)

Friday 23rd October • 6.30am - 7.30am • Online

This session is about closing that gap with AI tools that are cheap or free, need no technical background, and can be running before you've finished your first coffee.



Foundations to Growth Programme

[Register Here](#)

Monday 26th October • 8.00am - 10.00am • Online

Participating will help you gain new perspectives, inspire new ideas and change your way of thinking. It can also help you form new contacts, build networks and gain valuable professional and personal support.

Oxfordshire Net Zero Business Support

SMEs across Oxfordshire play a vital role in helping the county reach net zero emissions by 2050. To make this journey easier, Enterprise Oxfordshire have created a one stop resource hub offering guidance, tools and funding opportunities – no matter your sector or where you are on your sustainability journey.

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.

[Find Out More](#)

Climate Action Oxfordshire

Find out what sustainability support for Oxfordshire SMEs is available, including free energy assessments, match funding for upgrades, practical checklists, local and national resources, and grant schemes to cut costs and emissions.

[Find Out More](#)

Low Carbon Hub

Low Carbon Hub work with businesses and organisations across Oxfordshire on their energy efficiency, helping them to save money on their energy bills as well as generate clean energy.

[Find Out More](#)

Cherwell District Council – Sustainable Practices

The latest greenhouse gas reports show that almost 25% of the Cherwell District's CO₂^e emissions come from commerce and industry. To address this, CDC are considering conducting short knowledge-gathering workshops with local business owners. By understanding what prevents individuals or organisations from becoming greener, CDC can address challenges such as financial constraints, lack of information, or practical difficulties. This knowledge will enable the council to provide more tailored support through grants, educational resources, or policy changes.

[Find Out More](#)

Eight new partners join Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership

Eight organisations have joined the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP), strengthening countywide efforts to cut emissions and adapt to climate change. The new members broaden the range of sectors represented in ZCOP and add practical expertise in a number of areas including land use and nature recovery, farming and food, low-carbon development and construction, as well as sustainable freight and deliveries.

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

Other Net Zero Support

Business Climate Hub

The UK Business Climate Hub provides sustainability advice for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The Hub is a shared endeavour, developed with the [Department for Energy Security and Net Zero \(DESNZ\)](#), the [SME Climate Hub](#) and business organisations, energy networks, high street banks and professional bodies. Alongside a range of free tools and resources, the SME Climate Hub hosts the SME Climate Commitment.

The SME Climate Hub has developed a guide to assist businesses with their procurement: [Engaging Suppliers to Reduce Emissions - SME Climate Hub](#). The guide encourages suppliers to take action on climate change and includes actions relating to securing management commitment, setting targets for supplier commitments, public commitment to supplier engagement and estimating emissions in supply chain.

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

Oxfordshire Business Support

Thrive at Work Oxfordshire

A free support programme developed to assist Oxfordshire-based workplaces passionate about creating happy, healthy, and inclusive environments where organisations and employees can thrive. Any Oxfordshire-based workplace with three or more employees is eligible to access the programme. Participating organisations will gain access to a range of free support, including a structured wellbeing framework leading to certification, training webinars, staff wellbeing surveys, policy templates, practical resources, and tailored advice from workplace wellbeing specialists.

[Find Out More](#)

Match My Project Oxford

Match My Project Oxford City Council invites you to a special networking morning on Tuesday 6 October 2026 to explore how local businesses and community organisations can collaborate to promote social value. Discover the **Match My Project platform**, hear real success stories, and meet potential partners. Whether you're looking to offer support or need support for your projects, this event is for you.

[Find Out More](#)

British Business Bank The South East Investment Fund

The South East Investment Fund will deliver £210 million of new funding to smaller businesses across the region.

The fund aims to drive sustainable economic growth by supporting innovation and creating local opportunities for new and growing businesses throughout the South East. The South East Investment Fund offers two commercial finance options: loans ranging from £25,000 to £2 million and equity investments of up to £5 million. The fund supports businesses across the entire South East, including rural, coastal and urban communities.

[Find Out More](#)

British Industrial Competitiveness Scheme

From 2027, BICS will reduce electricity costs by up to £40 per megawatt hour for manufacturing frontier industries within the Industrial Strategy's growth sectors (the 'IS-8') and foundational manufacturing industries, which provide important inputs to the frontier industries, who meet the relevant electricity intensity threshold. BICS will exempt eligible businesses from paying the indirect costs of the: Renewables obligation, Capacity market and Feed-in tariff. Applications for BICS will open on 1 October 2026 and close on 30 November 2026.

[Find Out More](#)

Business Growth Service

The Business Growth Service is accessible via a new digital platform which acts as a single-entry point for tailored support.

Whether you're looking for funding, mentoring, or export advice, the platform helps you find what you need quickly and easily.

Enterprise Oxfordshire Business is integrating the Business Growth Service into our communications and promotional activities, making it easier for local businesses to discover and access support. This builds on our existing offer, which has already delivered significant impact.

[Learn More](#)

Defence Office for Small Business Growth (DOSBG)

The Defence Office for Small Business Growth is the Ministry of Defence's focal point for improving how small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) access, compete for, and grow within the UK defence supply chain.

[Learn More](#)

MADE SMARTER

Nearly 300 South East manufacturers have already benefited from the Made Smarter South East programme last year. Manufacturers and makers - don't miss out!

Made Smarter is a government-funded push to drive growth in South East manufacturing SMEs, helping boost productivity and increase their competitive edge through the adoption of new industrial technologies. After last year's successes, the programme has been extended for a further year to March 31st 2027.

Once you've registered for the Made Smarter programme, you will be assigned a Technical Expert who will provide personalised advice and support to your manufacturing business. They will help you adopt advanced and automated technologies. Made Smarter also provides up to £20k in grant funding, covering up to 50%, along with specialist advice, leadership and workforce champion training, and paid internships.

Whatever you make, make it smarter.

To understand how joining the Made Smarter programme could help your business, read about [how South East manufacturers are accelerating the adoption of artificial intelligence \(AI\), automation and digital tools through Made Smarter South East's Digital Internship programme.](#)

[Find Out More](#)

Small Business Britain

Small Business Britain gives community, knowledge, support and accessibility to all small business owners and those wanting to start a business throughout the UK. It is driven by reaching each and every person in the UK to offer a clear and accessible path to entrepreneurship and have a commitment to enabling people from underrepresented groups to thrive.

[Find Out More](#)



Small Business
Commissioner

The Office of the Small Business Commissioner (OSBC)

The Office of the Small Business Commissioner (OSBC) is an independent public body established by Government under the Enterprise Act 2016 to tackle overdue payments and unfavourable payment practices in the private sector.

[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:

Community Capacity Fund launches

Community groups across Oxfordshire are being encouraged to apply for a share of more than £770,000 to support projects that help people stay active, connected and independent in their communities.

Applications have now opened for the Community Capacity Fund, administered by Oxfordshire Community Foundation, with £503,392.50 available in grants of between £5,000 and £20,000. Submit an expression of interest online by Monday 5 October.

[Learn More](#)

Grassroots Music Fund

Oxford City Council has £20,000 available as part of the Grassroots Music Fund. There are two strands divided into Venues and Musicians & Promoters. The goal is for venues to be able to connect with and support musicians & promoters by providing space and reducing costs in Oxford. To find out more and see if you are eligible, click here: [Grassroots Music Fund | Oxford City Council](#)

[Learn More](#)

Music Growth Fund

Grants of between £1,000 and £100,000 are available through Arts Council England's Music Growth Fund to support sustainable and inclusive growth across the UK music sector. Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture, investing public money to support arts, museums, libraries and cultural activity.

[Learn More](#)

South Oxfordshire District Council Community Grants

The council provide grants to voluntary and community organisations to help build thriving communities and improve the quality of life for the residents of South Oxfordshire, through projects that; create thriving, healthy and inclusive communities, provides infrastructure that meets local need, and that take action on climate change and nature recovery. Grants currently open include Performing Arts Grant Fund and Fund for nature recovery projects.

[Learn More](#)

Councillor Community Grant Scheme 2026/27

Each South Oxfordshire district councillor has £7,500 to award to projects and activities that offer community benefits in their ward area, budget permitting. Applications should focus on projects that deliver a clear and demonstrable benefit to the people of South Oxfordshire, specifically in the ward area they are applying to. Scheme closes: Midday 4 December 2026.

[**Learn More**](#)

The Oxford Magazine: What's on in Oxfordshire

[Learn More](#)

Oxfordshire County Council News

[Learn More](#)

Experience Oxfordshire: What's on

[Learn More](#)

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