



BRENTWOOD Chamber of Commerce

Bringing you the latest business news from Brentwood

Stronger together and better for Brentwood business

If you follow the Chamber's social media channels or receive our emails, you will have noticed recently promotion for the first of what we hope will be a long series of co-branded events with Brentwood Borough Council and Brentwood Business Partnership.

The three organisations have agreed to work together wherever possible for the benefit of business in Brentwood, by putting on training courses and offering networking opportunities.

The aim is simple - the creation of an improved environment for business in the Borough. So the Chamber will be working with the Council and Business Partnership to co-promote courses, put on by the best possible providers, and delivered free of charge to attendees.

Details of the 'Managing Growth... and the Unintended Consequences' business workshop being run by Pro-actions Business Coaching and Support on April 3, and the 'Social Media for Business' Invest Essex workshop on April 23 can be found at brentwoodchambers.co.uk/events. There are further seminars already pencilled in for the second half of the year, with future plans being discussed on an ongoing basis.

We're also right behind the Council's drive to give Brentwood High Street a spring clean this first week of March, as detailed alongside. Look out for opportunities to get your business or organisation involved across our social channels this week!

And as you'll see when you turn to the back page of this edition, the Chamber's new-look events outline for 2019, agreed at our latest Executive Committee meeting, is promising some different kind of events this year.

We already scheduled in the first of our new Meet The Members series at Toni & Guy Brentwood on February 26. Please get in touch if you're interested in hosting members at your business at a future event to show them what you do, and provide an evening networking opportunity.

At the time of going to press we were also finalising details of a free evening workshop event with refreshments on Thursday March 7 at the Baytree Centre, tied in with the Centre for Apprenticeships pop-up there during National Apprentice Week (March 4-9).

The event, co-hosted with Havering College, will include lots of advice for businesses that have thought about taking on apprentices, from the Centre for Apprenticeships team at the College. See brentwoodchambers.co.uk/events for the latest confirmed details if you are interested in going along.

SPRUCE UP THE HIGH STREET 4-8 MARCH 2019 VOLUNTEER WITH US!

Brentwood Borough Council and the Neighbourhood Action Team will be giving the High Street a spring clean the first week of March, including:

- Removing fly posting
- Painting railings
- Varnishing street furniture
- Planting and weeding

We're looking for a few volunteers to help keep the town centre tidy!

If your business or community group would like to get involved, email business@brentwood.gov.uk or call **01277 312774** for more information.



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## Membership heads past 200 as another 10 businesses join up in February

The Executive Committee approved 10 more applications to join the Chamber at the February meeting. Here are some brief introductions:

**Bretts Business Recovery Limited** recently opened a branch in Shenfield. They help people through their financial difficulties with free, confidential, no-obligation discussions, providing information on all the options and solutions available.

**Rainer Hughes Solicitors** are key players in the Shenfield community, since the practice first traded as Hughes and Co in 1996. Brian Hughes MBE, the founder, has been closely involved in Shenfield and the surrounding area since 1968 - and remains as involved as ever as head of the Property Department.

**Sunsure UK Ltd** are insurance specialists and believe they can help save businesses of all sizes money - using their knowledge of risks and the insurance market to find the most appropriate policy at the best possible price.

**U-bos Office Solutions** are based in Hutton and provide marketing, office design, space planning and furniture with attention to acoustics to improve your working environment - with any size of project considered.

**Bradley Consulting** provide employment and industrial relations advice from their Basildon base, with guidance and practical assistance to SME employers - working with them proactively on issues to ensure a sensible, informed outcome.

**Natasha Worby Photography** has been photographing people from a variety of backgrounds since 2010. Based in Brentwood, Natasha specialises in portraits of individuals, headshots and family photography.

**Toni & Guy Brentwood** are celebrating 20 years of success on the High Street, and would like to celebrate as they join Chamber by offering local businesses a 20 per cent lifetime discount on colour and cutting services. Contact Enzo on [enzo@toniandguybrentwood.co.uk](mailto:enzo@toniandguybrentwood.co.uk)

**Carers FIRST** is an independent, charitable organisation based in Braintree supporting and helping carers in Essex. They provide information, advice, guidance, emotional support, training and activities, giving carers an opportunity to have a break from their caring role.

**British Hair Clinic** in Shenfield has developed a reputation as one of the leading hair restoration clinics, preferred by celebrities and sports stars. Their team of hair specialists are renowned throughout the industry, advising on how they can help clients with hair loss.

**A Matter Group** is Romford-based and operate the only community mobile patrol service in the area, quickly forming a bridge between the community and the police.



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## Orsett Hall Hotel to stage 2019 Awards dinner

The time and place for this year's Brentwood Business Awards dinner has now been set - so mark November 8 at Orsett Hall in your diary!

Chamber is determined the event is going to be bigger and even better this year. And as we announced in last month's newsletter we are increasing the entry categories from eight to 10 in 2019, with a bigger attendance resulting on Awards night itself.

Paul Gulley, from the Chamber's Awards sub-committee, said: "Following the success of the Business Awards in 2018, the Chamber of Commerce is delighted to announce that the awards will be run again in 2019.

"In order to accommodate all those that wanted to attend, and following feedback

received after the sell-out Awards dinner in 2018, we will be holding the dinner at a larger venue so that we can meet the demands of the local business community and wider Chamber membership.

"We are therefore delighted to announce that this year's Awards dinner will take place at the prestigious Orsett Hall Hotel."

Entries for the 2019 Business Awards will open later in March and close on June 30, so keep watching the Chamber's website at [brentwoodchambers.co.uk/business-awards](http://brentwoodchambers.co.uk/business-awards) and social media channels for confirmed details as the full timeline is finalised.

We'll also be confirming all the Awards sponsors and partners, and how you can get tickets for the big night itself at Orsett Hall (pictured above).

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## Get fit and network

The second Essex Business Squash Tournament is taking place at Club Kingswood in Basildon on March 15 (10am-5pm), run by the Squash Club Business Network - co-founded by Justin Walton of Chamber member PLS Tax Solutions.

The Network promotes and runs monthly business networking events in squash clubs in Essex and Hertfordshire, open to players and non-players of all abilities.

"We are working with local business people to help them grow their networks through informal, relaxed networking while getting fitter, more active and improving mental and physical wellbeing," explained Justin.

Further information: [www.thesquashclub.co.uk/events](http://www.thesquashclub.co.uk/events)  
[info@thesquashclub.co.uk](mailto:info@thesquashclub.co.uk)

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## Creative writing with more confidence

Chamber member Janette Collins (pictured right), author and creative writing coach, has launched a new project for 2019 - Janette's Creative Writing Academy.

After a constant pull to write a novel, Janette published her book *Truth in Death* in 2018 - a suspense novel about a young people pleaser, who may or may not have killed the local bar owner.

While marketing her book, Janette found that many would connect to her story. She worked in a corporate environment most of her working life, loved her work and was somewhat ambitious, but was missing a single ingredient, creativity.

The comments were often along these lines: "I wished I had done that."

"I would love to write a novel, but wouldn't know where to start."

"I have an unfinished book in my desk. I would finish it, but don't know how."

With a background in training, simplifying the most complex rules and regulations, Janette decided to create a safe and helpful environment for aspiring authors to learn and enhance their writing skills while getting into the right mindset.

"The problem most face is fear of judgment, procrastination, perfection, and



sometimes lack of support," she explained. "Many want to write, want to be published and see their book in the store window, or a number one bestseller on Amazon. But they hit what often feels like a brick wall.

"That's where Janette's Creative Writing Academy comes in. The Academy supplies online training, on all essential aspects of storytelling while helping participants get into the mindset of an author.

"The momentum it creates has seen massive changes for my dedicated clients, as early as day four. And now I am excited about supporting the next group of participants."

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## Lord Pickles to speak at Chamber AGM in May

Former Brentwood and Ongar MP Eric Pickles - now The Rt Hon. the Lord Pickles - has been confirmed as the main speaker at the Chamber's Open Meeting and Annual General Meeting in May.

The AGM will take place on Thursday May 16 at Brentwood Cricket Club on Shenfield Road, and as an Open Meeting welcomes non-members as well as Chamber members.

Lord Pickles is certain to have some interesting insight into current political affairs in the Borough and in Parliament, both from his time as Member for Brentwood and Ongar from 1992 to 2017, and since becoming a member of the House of Lords in June 2018.

Having had several roles within the Conservative Shadow Cabinet between 1998 and 2009, as well as being Deputy Chair of the Conservative Party from 2005-2007, he then served as Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government from 2010-2015. He was also Party Chair of the Conservative Party in 2009-2010.

Also on the agenda for the AGM that evening will be election of Chamber officials and members of the Executive Committee. To that end, we're very keen to hear from any Chamber member that would like to get involved and put themselves forward for election to the Committee in May.

You can download an application form as a PDF on the Chamber website - which needs to be completed and returned to us by April 26.

The Committee meets every month, usually on the second Thursday, and is comprised entirely by volunteers from the Brentwood business community, from a range of different sectors and backgrounds.

For further information about what the role entails you can email us at [info@Brentwood.Chambers.co.uk](mailto:info@Brentwood.Chambers.co.uk)

Full details of the AGM will be published in due course on the Chamber website and social channels.

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## Getting to know you...

**Sara Porter, director of Edwards Watts Opticians in Shenfield, who joined the Chamber's Executive Committee in 2018, agreed to do a newsletter Q&A**

**Tell us about your business background Sara:**

I've no training in business, I was just bred into it! I learned from my predecessors and mistakes! My first management post was at 26, I worked for big companies and hated it - but took on board their good bits of management knowledge and systems.

**And all about Edward Watts Opticians?**

It was established in 1958 by my father - after National Service in the RAF, he was given a desk job and hated it with a vengeance, so he went back to college and started his own business - and it moved to the present address in Chelmsford Road in the early 1960s. It was originally in Toll Bar Cottage next door. After much building work and many people we are still there.

The optical business is a unique profession as it is a mix between commercial and healthcare. And the business is unique in the optical world as we work both in hospitals and the High Street.

**What made you put yourself forward for election to the Exec Cttee?**

I was asked!

**What areas are you looking to develop in 2019 with the Chamber?**

I do not have a lot of spare time so I'm unable to support many events, but I'm happy to advise generally, and I'm pretty hot on the Equality Act. Born and bred in Shenfield, I know the area and its business challenges very well.

**What do you think are challenges facing your business and the Brentwood business community in 2019?**

They're huge - business is changing all the time. You just think you've cracked it and the bar gets raised, such as with Health & Safety and GDPR.

Technology has moved on greatly, and that gives us a better understanding and knowledge of our eyes. But technology comes at a cost. The High Street optician is called Primary Care, hospitals are Secondary Care, and the challenge is to move patients out of Secondary into Primary - thus relieving the burden on the NHS.

Another challenge is to educate the general public to respect and understand more about their eyes, and enhance the continuity and communication you can get from the independent practitioner which as a rule you don't get in multiple chains due to the high turnover of staff.

## Chamber Events Calendar 2019

### March

#### Tuesday 5 - Meet The Neighbours

Hosted by Stansted Airport Chamber

#### Thursday 7 - Apprenticeships workshop

Baytree Centre

#### Friday 8 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Aching Arms

#### Mon/Tues 18/19 - Networking & seminar on Cyber Security (TBC)

### April

#### Wednesday 3 - Managing Growth... and the Unintended Consequences business workshop

FRP, Jupiter House, Warley

#### Friday 12 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Nuffield Health Brentwood Hospital

#### Tuesday 23 - Social Media for Business workshop

Brentwood Borough Council, Seven Arches Road

#### Tuesday 30 - Meet The Members networking event (TBC)

### May

#### Friday 10 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Mellow Moments

#### Thursday 16 - Chamber Open Meeting & AGM

Brentwood Cricket Club

#### Tuesday 21 - Meet The Members networking event

Ashwells Reclaimed Timber, Bulphan

### June

#### Monday 3 - Netwalking (location TBC)

#### Friday 14 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Tees incorporating Wortley Byers

#### Mon/Tues 24/25 - Meet The Members networking event (TBC)

### July

#### Wednesday 3 - Chamber Summer BBQ (TBC)

#### Friday 12 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Howe Chartered Surveyors

#### Tuesday 23 - Meet The Members seminar on Self-Defence

Bennetts Funeral Directors, Brentwood



*Our Business Breakfast in February was sponsored by Mullis & Peake LLP Solicitors, who presented to another packed house at Marygreen Manor*

### August

#### Friday 9 - Business Breakfast

#### Thursday 22 - Meet The Members open networking event

The Olde Dog Inn, Herongate Tye

### September

#### Monday 2 - Netwalking (location TBC)

#### Friday 13 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Brentwood Borough Council

#### Thursday 19 - Business Planning workshop (TBC)

#### Mon/Tues 23/24 - Chamber visit & tour (to location TBC)

### October

#### Friday 11 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Tees incorporating Wortley Byers

#### Mon/Tues 21/22 - Meet The Members networking event & financial seminar (TBC)

### November

#### Friday 8 - Brentwood Business Awards 2019

Orsett Hall Hotel

#### Friday 15 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by KK Mobile Tyres

#### Wednesday 20 - Business Seminar & Workshop (TBC)

### December

#### Friday 13 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Home Tuition Agency

#### Thursday 19 - Chamber Christmas Lunch

Mount Avenue Banqueting Suite

See [brentwoodchambers.co.uk/events](http://brentwoodchambers.co.uk/events) for latest updates and online ticketing. Remember, you can add your own member events to our website at [brentwoodchambers.co.uk/add-member-event](http://brentwoodchambers.co.uk/add-member-event)

## Joint meetings with Council confirmed

Twice a year the Chamber's Executive Committee aims to hold a joint meeting with Brentwood Borough Council, ahead of the monthly committee meeting.

And these have now been confirmed for this year as taking place on Thursday April 11, and Thursday October 10.

These meetings give the Chamber an opportunity to hear an in-depth update from the Council's chief executive Phil Ruck and Councillor Louise McKinlay, the Leader of the Council - and to raise any issues with them on behalf of Chamber members.

So please get in touch ahead of those meetings if there is anything you would like us to put forward on behalf of your business or organisation.

The full list of dates for Executive Committee meetings this year is: March 14, April 11, May 16, June 13, July 11, August 8, September 12, October 10, November 7, December 12.

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