



Dorset Chamber 2024 - 2025 Manifesto

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www.dorsetchamber.co.uk



ENABLING BETTER LIVES THROUGH BUSINESS



“Dorset Chamber is an invaluable part of the business community. The initiatives are excellent and the support is second to none. Dorset Chamber is professional, friendly and fun. Proud to be a member.”

Marc Penn, The Perfect Source

Welcome to the 2024-2025 Dorset Chamber Manifesto, setting out our ambitions from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 as the Chamber of Commerce for Dorset, accredited by the British Chambers of Commerce. In what remains a challenging climate for many businesses, we will continue to do our absolute best for our members and the wider business community. This approach was recognised last year by the British Chambers of Commerce where Dorset Chamber was one of the top five Chambers in the UK in Chamber of the Year. This year also marks our 75th anniversary.

With our vision statement “Enabling better lives through business”, we pride ourselves on being a Chamber of Commerce with strong social values. We recognise the responsibility and role that business has in our wider society and seek to both encourage and celebrate this. The role of business and its societal impact is vital on many levels in the 21st century.

We embrace these principles as a business and we are committed to:

- ✓ Reducing our carbon footprint and have committed to the BCP Council supported programme Climate Essentials, helping us take action to reduce our carbon footprint. Last year we also published our Environmental Policy which can be seen on our website.
- ✓ We continue to actively promote and facilitate car sharing for our events, being the first accredited Chamber in the UK to introduce this.
- ✓ Last year we introduced and published our Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity policy.
- ✓ We are proud to be an accredited Living Wage employer.
- ✓ We continue to maintain our accreditation with the British Chambers of Commerce, a robust assessment of our finances, governance and quality of our services.

The year will see a strong plan of action that will include:

- ✓ Supporting businesses and growth through membership, training, and events
- ✓ Building a global economy through international trade
- ✓ Providing a voice and lobbying for business
- ✓ Supporting the personal and professional development of our future leaders
- ✓ The 2024 Dorset Business Festival
- ✓ Continuing the delivering the Dorset LSIP (Local Skills Improvement Plan)
- ✓ Working with Partners



Tony Brown
President
Dorset Chamber



Ian Girling
Chief Executive
Dorset Chamber

1. SUPPORTING BUSINESS THROUGH MEMBERSHIP AND EVENTS

Through a range of services, Dorset Chamber membership enables you to:

Protect your business

Dorset Chamber membership includes legal expenses insurance with up to £1m worth of cover. This includes employment tribunal cover and tax enquiry cover, HSE prosecution defence, property disputes, data protection, licence protection, criminal prosecution and jury service. Personal cover includes personal injury, motor disputes and wrongful arrest (also covers employees).

In addition, members have unlimited access to the following expert Advice Lines:

- ✓ HR
- ✓ Health & Safety
- ✓ Legal
- ✓ Tax & VAT

This membership benefit has recently been enhanced to include an online documentation library that includes a wide range of HR, health and safety, legal and business documents, providing access to 800 free downloadable templates that are updated regularly.

Connect

Always well attended, our events offer the opportunity to gain information and connect with businesses and organisations that are invested in raising their profile, growing, learning, and supporting each other. We'll always aim to provide a welcoming, friendly and professional environment. Our events include:

- ✓ National Networking Online
- ✓ Simply Networking Live
- ✓ Business Networking Breakfasts and Lunches
- ✓ Directors Network Events
- ✓ Business Expo's
- ✓ Experience Events
- ✓ The Dorset Business Awards
- ✓ The Dorset Apprenticeship Awards
- ✓ Future Leaders Events sponsored by Mazars and Frettons
- ✓ International trade events
- ✓ Sector-focused events
- ✓ Health and wellbeing events (with thanks to our Health and Wellbeing sponsor, Lester Aldridge)

This year we will also be holding a celebratory Gala Dinner on 27 June 2024 at Marsham Court Hotel, kindly sponsored by our longest standing members Goadsby.

Develop your business skills

Our training offers the opportunity to develop key business skills and maximise the potential for your business. We also offer members the opportunity to promote their own training through our website, providing members with a valuable platform to connect with the wider community.

Promote

We offer members a multi-channel reach across Dorset through our media channels:

- ✓ Dorset Chamber website (over 6,000 visitors per month)
- ✓ Dorset Chamber e-newsletter (over 6,200 subscribers)
- ✓ Magazine readership of 10,000
- ✓ LinkedIn (7,400 Followers with a page reach of up to 75,000)
- ✓ Twitter (over 6,600 Followers)
- ✓ Facebook (over 3,000 Followers)
- ✓ Instagram (over 2,500 Followers)

We offer our members the opportunity to:

- ✓ Submit articles and news pieces for our website and magazine
- ✓ Raise their profile through event sponsorship opportunities
- ✓ Receive support and promotion through social media

Saving you money

Dorset Chamber membership offers members considerable discounts on a range of services, both through our member and our affinity schemes through the British Chambers of Commerce. This includes significant savings on roadside assistance, business healthcare cover and cash plans.

We also offer different membership levels, enabling businesses to access a package of support that meets their specific needs.

We'll also continue to work closely with our Premier and Platinum Business Partners, positioned as champions within our business community and vital contributors and supporters of the work of Dorset Chamber.

2. BUILDING A GLOBAL ECONOMY THROUGH INTERNATIONAL TRADE

One of our key roles is supporting business growth through international trade. As a one-stop-shop for international trade, we will continue to:

Encourage businesses to consider international trade opportunities and seek new overseas markets. This is through general advice and support as well as bespoke advice on new markets. We also offer access to a global network of accredited overseas Chambers of Commerce through the British Chambers of Commerce.

We will continue to offer our international trade training programme. This includes introductory training to exporting as well as more complex programmes around documentation and legal requirements. Training can also be offered on a bespoke basis and members receive a substantial discount on training.

As an accredited Chamber, we can issue documentation on behalf of HMRC. Our highly qualified and professional international trade team offer first class support in terms of issuing vital documentation for exporters including Customs Declarations and Certificates of Origin. The team can also offer advice on any aspect of documentation.

Our successful International Trade networking events will continue, providing a valuable platform for businesses to connect with other exporters, share knowledge and hear from expert speakers.

This year we are building on our advisory services and can offer:

- ✓ General international trade consultancy
- ✓ Webinars on a range of topics
- ✓ International trade clinics
- ✓ Compliance check reviews
- ✓ Peer-based International Trade Leadership Programme

CHAMBER
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3. PROVIDING A VOICE AND LOBBYING FOR BUSINESS

A key role for Dorset Chamber is representing a voice for business and lobbying at both a local, regional and national level. We provide regular media comment on a range of issues and campaign for business on key issues. Our membership of the British Chambers of Commerce also means we have a powerful national voice that is highly respected in Westminster and Whitehall.

Dorset Chamber is also represented on various committees and boards, including the Dorset Local Enterprise board, representing and advising on issues for business.

We also encourage all businesses in Dorset to complete the British Chambers of Commerce Quarterly Economic Survey, the most respected and influential independent business survey in the UK and a significant economic indicator.



4. SUPPORTING THE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF OUR FUTURE LEADERS

Established In 2022 and sponsored by Mazars and Frettons, our Future Leader programme supports the personal and professional development of our future leaders aged under 30.

Future Leaders provides a valuable networking opportunity as well as a focus on range of themes, including effective networking, ESG, public speaking, interview skills and building confidence.

We will also have the opportunity to hear life stories from inspiring business leaders. Future Leaders also hold social and fitness-focused events.

The Chairperson of Future Leaders is a Dorset Chamber board member, ensuring the voice of our Future Leaders helps drive Dorset Chamber at a strategic level.



Future Proofing Your Finances Event held at FOUNDRY, Poole





Dorset Chamber joined by festival partners at the Dorset Business Awards Launch event held at Dorset Museum & Art Gallery, Dorchester

5. THE 2024 DORSET BUSINESS FESTIVAL

Dorset Business Festival
Conference | Expo | Awards

Dorset Business Festival
EXPO

Dorset Business Festival
CONFERENCE

Dorset Business Festival
AWARDS

2024 will see the second Dorset Business Festival take place in the Autumn after a hugely successful inaugural Festival in 2023 that engaged over 800 businesses. The theme of the 2024 Dorset Business Festival is “Business as a Force for Good”.

The Festival will include the following events:

We are very proud to be working with, and would like to thank, Lester Aldridge as our Premier Festival Partner and Festival Partners; Bournemouth and Poole College, Blue Sky Financial Planning, Dorset Council, ElectriX and YMCA Bournemouth.

- ✓ Launch of The Dorset Business Awards
- ✓ Festival Opening Breakfast with keynote speaker Lord Matthew Elliott, President of The Jobs Foundation
- ✓ A business conference, Business as a Force for Good. Hosted by presenter and business journalist Declan Curry, featuring keynote speakers Benita Matofska, world-leading speaker, author, changemaker and climate change consultant, Lord Matthew Elliott, President of The Jobs Foundation and Steve Heapy, Chief Executive of Jet2.com, the UK’s largest tour operator. The conference will feature expert panel discussions
- ✓ A Business Expo with 70 stands and anticipated footfall of over 350 people
- ✓ The Dorset Business Awards

Premier Festival Partner



Festival Partners



Bournemouth & Poole College



ElectriX
electric driving made easy

YMCA BOURNEMOUTH
Bournemouth/Poole/Christchurch

6. DELIVERING THE DORSET LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (LSIP)



Now in its second year, the Dorset Local Skills Improvement Plan (Dorset LSIP) is a three-year Dorset-wide review of skills provision against the current and future needs of businesses, funded by Department of Education (DfE). It aims to identify, and provide recommendations on, the skills and training provision which Dorset employers need to grow and develop their businesses now and in the future.



Since the launch of the Dorset Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) process in November 2022, Dorset Chamber has worked with a wide range of stakeholders including other employer-representative partners including the FSB, employers, a wide range of education and training providers, and organisations who support learners and people not-in-employment. We have targeted and spoken to small and micro businesses who are typically unheard across the sectors and the county. Our approach has been collaborative and focused on constructive partnership working.

Findings of the first phase of the LSIP have been published in the initial report and providers are already embedding many of the opportunities identified within their curriculums.



The current phase of the LSIP is looking more closely at each priority economic sector, and digital and net zero skills, to identify further curriculum and other developments needed to support increased productivity. More research and data analysis has been done and shared on our website too.

The three key themes of the delivery plan are building capacity – so more people – in the local workforce; developing the capability, the skills of the current and future workforce; and increasing the collaboration between employers and training providers so they share knowledge and resources. These are the strands of our activity linked together by a new shared ‘Dorset Skills’ communications plan and visual identity developed with partners.

With a higher-than-average ageing population and higher than average housing costs, we need to work to attract to, and keep people in, the area. Exemplary employment practices and training opportunities well communicated will do this. We also need to expand diversity and inclusivity by maximizing support and opportunities for all those wanting to work.

Dorset has a broad and developing range of traditional and specialised industries, globally recognized education opportunities, and a beautiful natural environment. Inspiring school and college leavers to stay here or move to the area by increasing their understanding of local career paths and lifestyle options is another key strand of activity.

Please visit dorsetchamber.co.uk/lsip for more information.

Funded by

Department
for Education

**Dorset
LSIP**

Delivered by:
 Dorset
Chamber



8. WORKING WITH PARTNERS

We'll continue to work closely with our many partners in both the public and private sector, always seeking to work collaboratively in supporting businesses across Dorset. We'll also continue to work closely with town Chambers affiliated to Dorset Chamber.

With many charities within our membership, we consider our partnerships within the community and voluntary sector to be vital in recognising both their contribution to our economy and the valuable services they deliver.

We look forward to working with you.

We very much welcome an open and proactive conversation with businesses, partners and stakeholders. We always welcome feedback and are open to ideas and if you'd like to talk to us at any time, our door is always open.

We are a forward-thinking, innovative, modern and inclusive Chamber of Commerce and our thanks go to our members, Business Partners, Board, Ambassadors, partners, sponsors and of course the fantastic Dorset Chamber team.



Dorset Chamber Premier Business Partners



Sports Partner



Legal Partner

Dorset Chamber Platinum Business Partners



Insurance Partner



Financial Planning Partner



Airport Partner



Further Education Partner



Higher Education Partner



PR and Newsroom Partner



Digital Storm

Website Partner



Community Place Partner



I.T. Solutions Partner



Field International

Engineering Partner



Construction Partner



Automotive Partner



Video Partner



Investment Banking Partner



Digital Marketing Partner



Audit, Tax and Advisory Services Partner



Public Transport Partner



Steel Design and Construction Partner



Data and Insights Partner



Property Partner



Marine Manufacturing Partner

OUR TEAM VALUES

As a team, we are committed to the following values:

EXCELLENCE	Leading customer service, professionalism and responsiveness.
INNOVATION	Supporting continuous growth and improvement in all we do.
INTEGRITY	Uncompromising standards of integrity and ethical conduct.
RESPECT	For our colleagues, our customers, our organisation and the business community.
TEAMWORK	Universal teamwork and collaboration with a can-do attitude to support the organisation and serve Dorset.
WELLBEING	Providing a family-friendly and supportive work and professional environment.



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