

And our finalists are...

We meet the finalists for the 2019 South Wales Argus Business Awards and find out their stories...

Best Place to Work Award Sponsored by Johnson & Phillips

Melin Homes, Pontypool

"In simple terms, people love working at Melin!" the business says.

"We are fully committed to supporting our staff, to invest in our people and create a vibrant culture.

"We are incredibly proud to currently be number 11 on the Sunday Times Top 100 Best Not-For-Profit Organisations To Work For and utilise this process to help us to improve year on year and make Melin a better place to work.

"We live by our strong values and ensure that our staff are valued and listened to. We have a whole host of staff working groups and exciting corporate events to ensure that everyone is able to contribute to making Melin a fantastic place to work."

Here's what our staff say: "Melin has a real family ethos and I am proud to play my part in making it the successful organisation it has become."

"Melin has a great culture, great people and a vision to make a real difference to the lives of the residents and communities we serve."

Henry Howard Finance, Newport

"Henry Howard Finance is truly a great place to work, delivering inclusion, fairness, innovation, leadership and engagement at all levels and opportunities. Our values, Ambitious, Bold, Capable and Different embed all of our team, and our outlook."

Henry Howard Finance was founded in 1996 and is one of the UK's largest independent finance houses. The business,

which has 147 employees, prides itself as being one of the most flexible and advanced funders in the market, offering competitive finance packages, quick decisions and innovative solutions...

More than 30,000 different UK-based businesses across a variety of sectors have been assisted by HHF to fund critical business equipment. The business is one of the leading vendor finance businesses in the UK.

"We have excellent staff benefits, including: MediCash plan; free flu vaccination; an additional paid Christmas shopping day holiday; Excellent pension; Paternity pay top up; Life Assurance for every employee; Occupational sickness pay; Early finish on a Friday; Corporate rates; Company cycle to work schemes."

W2 Global Data, Newport

W2 Global Data is proud to offer staff an ever-improving benefits package.

The business insists all employees fully embrace the notion of a healthy work-life balance, supported by flexible working and annual leave allowance.

While the norms of auto enrolment on the company pension scheme, death in service cover and a BUPA wellbeing health expenses scheme are all in place, the provision of a share option scheme offers a further longer-term benefit to all.

The teams all have laptops, phones, notepads, laptop bags and branded brollies.

It's the 'Refer-a-friend' scheme, the volunteer days, the employee recognition scheme, the weekly yoga sessions, the weekly fruit deliveries, the free 'fancy' coffee, herbal tea and 'builders' tea that the business says makes them a little different.

Its open place 'Nest' area affords football

table, Xbox and a quiet reading corner. Along with discounted cinema tickets, the business strives to have the most imaginative and employee centric benefits package in South Wales.

"If we don't have today, then we soon will have. We have a great working culture and something that we look to build upon at every opportunity."

Customer Service Award Jointly sponsored by the Kingsway Centre and Friars Walk

Bluebird Care, Newport

"These customer is at the heart of absolutely everything that we do. Since opening our doors in 2013, our business has grown by 640 per cent in terms of revenue and 540 per cent in terms of the hours of care that we provide for private customers as well as those funded by the council/health board.

"Operating in an ever-growing, competitive market where demand continues to outstrip supply, Bluebird Care is committed to providing high-quality, compassionate care and support for people in their own homes.

"Delivering on average 1,000 care visits/ week, we tailor our services to the individual needs of our customers. Our services range from 30-minute care visits, up to 24-hour care (full 'live-in' support)."

Inca Hair and Beauty, Newport

Abigail Scrimshire said: "I have had the salon for more than 14 years. It is an industry whereby you can only succeed if you excel in customer service. Yes, clients will return



**SOUTH WALES
Argus**

BUSINESS AWARDS¹⁹

FINALIST

In Partnership
with:

NEWPORT NOW



once
maybe
even twice
if you are a good
stylist but you have to
have excellent customer service
to retain clients for 14 years, which we have
done.

"I have divorced couples and feuding
friends that I know to book in on different
days, breastfeeding mums that we offer
a private room to feed in and if a client
is hungry we do a lunch run to the local
sandwich shop.

"We have even gone to elderly clients'
homes and either styled their hair at home
or picked them up if they wanted to come to
salon but couldn't get there.

"I believe that we all go 'above and
beyond' a normal salon to give our clients the
best experience they can have."

Liverton Opticians, Newport

Having opened in 2017, Liverton Opticians
is building momentum into becoming an
established practice in the heart of Newport.

"Passionate about our independent values,
we strive to stock the best independent
products, supporting local wherever
possible.

"The heart of our business is to provide a
bespoke service to the people of Newport,
supporting both the community and local
charities.

"We show a commitment and dedication
to providing a comprehensive eye exam

with the most recent
technology for both NHS
and private patients, bringing
a unique level of ophthalmic health
care in Newport, with the firm belief that
the best care should not be dictated by
affordability or availability.

"We go over and above in delivering
service and customer care, frequently
providing domiciliary visits to those who
cannot attend the practice.

"Additionally, we have reached out to local
charities, such as The Wallich, being aware
of the lack of healthcare services available
for the homeless, where our optometrist
offers her time to provide local homeless
people eye examinations as well as reaching
out to support groups within the community
regarding eye health, such as The Macular
Society and Sight Cymru."



Left: Monmouthshire Building Society
Middle: Specsavers
Right: Diverse Vinyl



Best BID Independent of the Year **Sponsored by Newport Now Business Improvement District**

Liverton Opticians, Newport

Diverse Vinyl, Charles Street, Newport

The BID said: "The curators and organisers of this year's BID-funded free music festival across six city centre venues to mark Record Store Day."

The Potters, Upper dock Street, Newport

The BID said: "Breakfast, lunch, dinner, live music & great beer. What more could anyone want from a city centre pub?"

Best BID National Business of the Year **Sponsored by Newport Now Business Improvement District**

Specsavers, Austin Friars, Newport

The BID said: "A huge supporter of the BID, Specsavers values its role in the wider community and played host to a contactless donation point for the BID's Street SupPORT homelessness fund for Newport."

Le Bistrot Pierre, Friars Walk, Newport

The BID said: "A commitment to great food and service, Le Bistrot Pierre is one of Friars Walk's many success stories. Always busy, it has become the go-to city centre venue for romantic dinners, business meetings, family celebrations and much more."

Monmouthshire Building Society, John Frost Square, Newport

The BID said: "With a refurbished and relaunched headquarters in John Frost Square, MBS has reaffirmed its commitment

to Newport city centre. This year sees a significant milestone and achievement as Monmouthshire Building Society celebrates its 150th birthday. The idea and vision of three local businessmen one Saturday evening in 1869 has transformed into a modern mutual building society with more than £1bn pounds in assets."

Contribution to the Community Award **Sponsored by Monmouthshire Building Society**

Gateway Credit Union Ltd, Pontypool

Gateway Credit Union exists to provide safe, convenient savings and affordable loans to people across Torfaen, Monmouthshire and the surrounding area.

Run by a team of local staff and volunteers we provide a competitive service to people who could borrow and save anywhere, and a lifeline to people on low incomes.

"We are a true community organisation, run by local people in each of the areas we serve, and working with our many employer partners to encourage their staff to save regularly and borrow sensibly."

Green Willow Funerals Ltd, Cardiff and Newport

Green Willow Funerals Ltd is a social enterprise. Year on year, its profit is transferred to its shareholding charity who reinvest profit by awarding grants to local community projects across south east Wales. Since 2015, more than £1m has been transferred to the charity, 'the 1910 Trust'.

Niche IFA, Newport

A spokesman said: "Charity has been important to us for a long time and we like to support local charities where we can.

"We offer local community groups and charities the chance to advertise on our M4-facing wall, which provides exposure

to around 100,000 vehicles a day. In 2019 alone, we have displayed banners for charities such as Ty Hafan, Royal British Legion, British Transplant Games and Newport's own Portstock Festival.

"Additionally, we provide sponsorship to seven sports clubs across a variety of disciplines in South Wales – Dragons Rugby, Cardiff Devils, Glamorgan Cricket, Hartridge RFC, Lisvane Cricket Club, Crindau Corries AFC and Whitchurch Hockey Club.

"The local environment is also at the heart of Niche. In early 2019 we introduced Niche Ethical, which allows clients to select a full ethical investment service, which takes into consideration how it affects the world around us.

"We have also recently partnered with Bee 1, where we have plans to build a beehive to encourage wildlife around our office.

"Recruiting from the local community is vital to us, too. We offer paid internships and placements to students from local universities. However, we also look beyond qualifications, hiring local young people based on their drive and determination rather than their qualifications."

Digital Technology Business of the Year **Sponsored by Newport City Council**

CashCalc, Newport

CashCalc entered the financial advice profession in 2014 which was very different from the one that we sit in today.

Still an economy recovering from the financial crisis of 2008, the financial services sector was struggling to play catch up.

From extremely humble beginnings, CashCalc director Ray Adams was inspired to turn the spreadsheets he was using to help his clients into an easy-to-use suite of calculators that would help deliver more efficient and affordable financial planning.

The project quickly grew, and that year CashCalc was launched with 200 sign ups



Left: Niche IFA; Middle: Creo Medical; Right: Newport Transport
Below: Mamma Linas

on the very first day.

Ever since, CashCalc has continued to grow and develop its innovative financial planning tools to help improve quality and costs for clients across the globe.

Today, it's the most used and leading provider of cashflow planning software in the UK and together with users, we've strived to make financial advice more accessible and engaging for the next generation of clients.

Veezu, Newport

"Veezu has invested heavily in supplying all our private hire companies with the best technology.

"Our three-tap app makes booking quick and easy. Passengers can book a ride in less than 10 seconds. The app uses the passenger location, so the driver knows

exactly where to pick up. This allows passengers to book a ride directly on our map, and see how many available cars there are nearby.

"Or alternatively, get a fare estimate to know the cost of a journey before a ride is booked. Passengers can track a car as it arrives on a map, or call the driver when nearby. No more guessing where the taxi might be.

"Also, passengers can pay in cash or register a credit or debit card. Receipts and invoices are emailed immediately after a completed journey.

"After the ride, passengers can rate the driver and provide feedback to help us keep improving the passenger experience. Unlike some app-only businesses, Veezu gives passengers greater options.

"An easy booking form, vehicle tracker,

fare estimates, advanced booking options and a way to contact their driver partners."

Wolfberry Cyber Security, Newport

"We are a Newport business, that provides cyber security services across the globe from our offices in the heart of Newport.

"We have developed Viper of cutting edge technology that allows us to test and protect companies, Viper has recently been recognised as a finalist in the Computer Security Awards 2019.

"In recent months we have brought visitors from Japan and Dubai to Newport, who want to work with us and build a base in Newport.

"Wolfberry is instrumental in Newport being recognised globally as a centre for excellence in cyber security."

Wolfberry Cyber was setup in 2016 to meet the growing needs for businesses to protect against cyber attack. Its CEO Damon Rands is a key figure in Welsh cyber security, and as co-founder of the South Wales Cyber Cluster and Cyber Wales, he represents the country globally talking about cyber security.

Wolfberry now employs nine staff and helps to secure more than 100,000 users worldwide.

Environmental Business Award

Industrial Automation and Control Ltd, Newport

The entire strategy of the business is built around development of the individual, and this extends to trying to conduct the business in an ethical and honest way.

A spokesman said: "We have a duty to the individual, and consequently, a duty to maintaining our environment for the future. We would like to think that we have a business model which all companies should follow. Not one driven by profit, but one driven by sustainability and longevity.

"IAC moved into its current location in 2010 – a 37,000 sq ft modern, building in





Meadows Road – one of the first BREEAM rated buildings in Wales.

“Although a very well insulated building, the lighting and heating was still a little energy hungry. A programme to swap out all of the inefficient lighting was drawn up and fittings were replaced as time and finance allowed.

“The last of the hi-Bay fittings on the shop floor were swapped out in 2017, complete with movement sensors. In addition, two years ago, the directors decided to move from diesel cars to hybrid, adding six charging points to the car park.”

Other improvements have included ERP and CAD software to reduce paper usage and make the manufacturing process more efficient. And the installation of 100kW solar panels.

“We have introduced environmental champions – given time away from their work to perform their duties. We were also certified for ISO 14000 in January 2019.”

Newport Transport Newport

Newport Transport has been over many years forward thinking in regard to recycling and power generation to offset the carbon footprint we create as bus company.

The company is at the forefront of new technologies in ensuring the environment in which we live is alive and sustainable for future generations and that we give our customers the choice to move to a more environmentally friendly public transport solution.

It has installed 214 solar panels on the depot roof with plans to increase to more than 750 and introduced the first fully electric bus in service in Wales with zero emissions. It has 14 fully electric buses ordered for delivery in March 2020, which will equate to 19 per cent of buses required each day powered by zero emission electric.

Other initiatives include a battery farm ordered for inception on site in November 2019 to store energy created by solar

power to limit energy taken from the grid and paper and cardboard recycling.

Hospitality Business of the Year

Chepstow Racecourse, Chepstow

Chepstow Racecourse is an all year-round hospitality venue. It offers a variety of hospitality packages to suit all budgets, from simple buffets to four course plated menus.

It hosts 32 race meetings a year varying in size and scale. In June this year it welcomed Madness to the course, and looked after more than 1,000 hospitality guests on site, in boxes, restaurants and marquee suites across the site.

It's not just about the racing; outside of the race meetings the racecourse runs a busy conference and events venue.

It offers dinners for up to 300 guests, weddings, meetings and outdoor events.

It enjoys positive customer feedback about its food and service at the course, and its head chef and his team work hard to ensure that it is offering seasonal menus across the year.

Last year the racecourse underwent a refurbishment of a section of its boxes and main restaurant – the View.

The views from its boxes are spectacular taking in the backdrop of the cliffs of the Wye Valley and the parkland that borders the racecourse.

Over the last five years the racecourses hospitality has grown significantly, with the addition of more feature race meetings, including Music Live Events.

In 2013 the racecourse brought the catering in house. With its own in-house chef and catering team, it is constantly changing and improving the menus to offer the best product against its competitors.

PANDYMAX LTD trading as Mamma Lina's Italian Restaurant, Rogerstone

A spokesman said: “We are an independent family-owned Italian restaurant which has in the last year been named as the Best Family-owned Italian Restaurant in Wales, been awarded the Certificate of Excellence by Trip Advisor for the past four consecutive years and on their website we have received 474 reviews of which 328 are rated excellent and 77 being very good.

“On Facebook we have received a 4.8 out of five rating based on the opinion of 429 people.

“From the moment our visitors enter the restaurant we do our very best to ensure they have a wonderful time enjoying our comprehensive range of traditional Italian dishes in a very warm and welcoming environment.

“We opened just a few years ago and have established ourselves as one of the most popular restaurants in south east Wales.

“Family owned and run, we focus on providing visitors with a true taste of Italy by serving traditional Italian dishes created from recipes passed down our family.

“We buy local produce as well as importing key ingredients from Italy to authenticate the dishes.

“Our 160-seat restaurant is fully booked every weekend and the number of meals we serve during the week and at lunchtimes has continually increased year on year.

“Our success has enabled us to open a second restaurant, located in Albany Road Cardiff. This was opened in June and is already establishing a good reputation and customer base.”

The Pod, Newport

“We are ‘a one of a kind’ venue in the heart of Newport,” said The Pod.

“We believe we have helped improve the city’s social scene and brought people back into the town centre to eat, drink and relax.

Our industrial, New York-style interior allows customers to feel at ease and comfortable



Left: The Pod
Right: Nathan Bowles, of Veezu



while soaking up the views across the River Usk.

"Over the past 19 months our staff and management teams have been relentless in their drive to provide high end hospitality and service that enables us to further stand out from others.

"We are ambitious in our goals and targets and believe there are no strangers that visit The Pod, only friends we haven't seen in a while.

"Since our opening, we have incorporated a second company - The Pod Events. This sister company, allows us to take our food and drink on the road in the form of a pop-up bar. Available to hire for parties, concerts and festivals, charity and corporate events, its purpose is to increase sales and awareness of our venue and the city we live in."

Innovative Business of the Year Sponsored by Western Power Distribution

CashCalc , Newport

Creo Medical, Chepstow

Creo Medical is a pioneering medical device company developing technology for use in the field of surgical endoscopy.

Creo has developed CROMA, an advance energy electrosurgical platform that delivers microwave and bipolar radio frequency through a single accessory port, allowing endoscopic devices to cut, coagulate and ablate with precision.

Creo's lead product, which is CE marked and FDA cleared and is known as Speedboat, allows clinicians to remove cancerous and pre-cancerous gastrointestinal lesions in a single large piece using a flexible endoscope, providing a more complete and accurate specimen for analysis and reducing the need for frequent endoscopic checks.

The device reduces the risks associated laparoscopic procedures, and as a result can also reduce the length of surgery times

and hospital stays post treatment.

FJ Barrett & Son, Newport

A spokesman said: "As a winner of a silver medal representing Wales in the international exhibition of new products in Geneva, we have now set up full production of this new environmental product, the Litter Gripper (www.barrettslittergripper.co.uk/).

"We have developed the product over the course of the last ten years and are now in full production in south east Wales.

"The product is the Litter Gripper, an innovative product for the collection of litter, recycling and waste collection. Main customers are local authorities and gardening retailers nationally."

Family Business of the Year Sponsored by Baldwins

Pie Corner Fish Bar

Pie Corner Fish Bar started in 2013 as a family run business with four partners - Beatrix Hughes, her partner Richard Kovacs, and her mum and dad, John and Julia Hughes.

Now solely owned by Beatrix Hughes and run with partner Richard the business has gone from strength to strength winning numerous awards including best five in Gwent voted by Argus readers.

Pie Corner was established In June 2013, Beatrix finished her degree at Cardiff University for business and marketing and she was looking for a venture to start her career.

Her parents approached her and told her that one of the buildings they own which was set up as a chip shop and leased was up for sale so we all decided to buy this failing business as a family and give it a go.

Pure Vans LTD, Newport

Pure Vans Ltd is a Newport-based company run by David and Bethan Greenhaf.

They said: "We pride ourselves on great customer service and a personal touch currently selling more than 1,200 commercials annually throughout the UK, having recently achieved our 9,000th sale.

"All our staff are highly trained. We have taken a member of staff through the 'Jobs Growth Wales' Welsh Government scheme putting them into full time employment.

"Family values and treating our customers honestly and fairly is an essential part of our business model.

"After being made redundant three times in three years in 2009, David decided he would start the business on its own from his house with no financial capital and a borrowed laptop.

"The business is now thriving turning over £15,000,000 in 2018. Owning its own premises, being a major sponsor to Newport County AFC, being their official van supplier and having the away stand named the 'Purevans.com' stand proves our commitment to Newport and the local area."

Large Business of the Year Sponsored by RDP Law

Industrial Automation and Control Ltd, Newport

Monmouthshire Building Society, Newport

Storage Giant, Newport

Storage Giant Ltd was established by Simon Williams in his home town of Newport.

Simon launched the company after spending time in the US, where he ran a successful small business.

It was incorporated in 2003 as a commercial property investment company specialising in multi LET light industrial estates.

Storage Giant has grown from a single facility self-storage firm, established in Newport on the cusp of recession, to becoming a £5m turnover business with nine operating self-store facilities to its name in

2019.

Storage Giant is now the second largest private self-storage company in the UK, with facilities in Cwmbran, Newport, Cardiff, Swansea and Llanelli.

The Leeway Estate, Newport site remains the company HQ.

As well as offering quality self-storage to its many thousands of clients, Storage Giant is home to almost 1,000 SMEs across its Wales-based sites alone, supporting approximately 5,000 regional jobs and boosting the local economy. These SMEs are attracted to Storage Giant facilities because of its very low rents and flexible lease terms.

Start Up Business of the Year Sponsored by Admiral

Liverton Opticians, Newport

Adventure Digital, Newport

Since operations began in May 2018, Adventure Digital has grown from strength-to-strength. Internally, business performance has been extremely strong.

A spokesman said: "In the first year of business, I set myself some goals: to hit 60k turnover, to have a client retention rate of 80 per cent, to have secured an office space and to have 70 per cent of income come via a retainer to provide security to me and my team – I have achieved and exceeded all of these goals.

"We've had the pleasure of working with some of South Wales' most exciting start-ups, including PillTime, Brushbox, Hoop Recruitment, Uproots and No Office Walls.

"We've also secured national health, beauty and pleasure brand Woowoo, and the results speak for themselves. We've helped deliver massive sales increases and reduce cost per acquisitions."

Sober Drinks Ltd Newport

Sober is new Welsh business that has great potential to make a real impact in the food and drink industry over the next few years.

A spokesman said: "We are the first

drinks business to market a non-alcoholic drink aimed at relaxed, playful, laid-back consumers who aren't overly serious but who want to socialise with friends.

"The vibrant colours of our flavours range reflect the vibrant personalities of our consumers.

"We are on the pulse of what our audience desires and created #Sober specifically for them.

"We are finalists for two national awards with the Natwest Great British Entrepreneur of the Year and the Welsh Start Up Awards.

"In addition we have been accepted on to the Natwest Accelerator for high growth potential start ups.

"It's so great to finally have a non-alcoholic drink that means that you don't feel like you're missing out on the fun. It's accepting, non-preachy, non-judgemental and FUN!"

Small Business of the Year Sponsored by Kymin Financial Planners

Beth's Bakes, Newport

The Beth's Bakes brand has rapidly grown not just in Newport but across the UK with more than 50K followers combined across the Instagram and Facebook platforms.

Beth said: "We have recently expanded the business after an amazing first year as a shop.

"I started baking from my parents' house for family and friends six years ago while studying in university and working part time.

"In 2017, I took the risk and left my retail job to pursue by baking career working from home.

"In April 2018, the first Beth's Bakes shop

opened on Church Road in Newport. After a successful first year, we expanded in April 2019 and developed Beth's Bakes 'The Bakery' situated next door to keep up with the extreme demand of the business and to expand areas of the business such as online postal orders, wholesale orders and weddings."

Icon Creative Design, Newport

A small business with big ideas and big impact, Icon Creative Design has recently celebrated 20 years working with clients to deliver intelligent, memorable and successful design campaigns.

During this time, the company has maintained its Newport roots, consolidated its local workforce by developing and nurturing local talent as well as creating instantly recognisable creatives that have celebrated the best of Newport as well as fostering links with regional and national customers.

Successful businesses need to adapt and Icon has continually evolved to reflect: a) the change in actual consumer and client markets and, b) the tactics used in communication, marketing and design ie how and where people access and digest information.

Androulla Webb, Creative Director, founded the business when female entrepreneurs were the rarity rather than the norm, using her passion for design and commitment



Left: FJ Barrett's Litter Gripper
Right: Icon Creative Design



to exceeding client satisfaction even when juggling the demands of a young family.

Aside from the creative expertise for the business to prosper, Androulla developed her skills in running a business, including HR, PR, tax and other admin.

As creative director, her belief in developing and employing the best people has paid dividends; in a challenging industry and during turbulent times, the organisation has maintained focus and growth.

Nassa Travel, Newport

Nassa Travel is the fastest growing travel agency in Newport. It prides itself on five-star customer service with outstanding market leading prices serving the people of Newport, from booking short UK breaks to going on a cruise around the world.

Established online 2015 by Jayde Nassa, former Thomas Cook worker. In 2017 the first branch was open with two members off staff. It took £700,000 in turnover in the first year.

It now has seven members of staff with a turnover this year alone (October 18 - August 2019) of just under £2m. It has recently opened its second store in Cardiff and are looking to open a third in Penarth.

Young Entrepreneur of the Year Sponsored by Icon Creative Design

Jenna McDonnell, Newport

Jenna said: "In just five years that I have been open I have gone from being unemployed with little or no money to now owning my own business premises and employing 10 staff.

"I have been recognised worldwide as one of the top makeup and hair artists in the UK.

"I've set a new Guinness world record in hairstyling as well as winning multiple awards and have raised more than £12,000 pound for local charities in the process.

"With no handouts, loans or grants - just hard work and dedication. Most importantly though, I'm kind and look after my staff and have created not only a successful and lucrative work place but a happy one, which I'm extremely proud of.

"I travel worldwide to destination weddings



Left: Liverton Opticians
Right: Industrial Automation and Control Ltd
Below: Chepstow Racecourse

and other educational trips.

"I started my business in a box room at my parent's house sewing personalised bags that made me enough money to keep growing into what I am today - a bridal hair and makeup specialist salon and hub to all things wedding!

"I have set a date to open my school September 2020 where I will be flying in Canadian makeup artist Mimi Choi to support my new venture, which I'm really excited about."

Jayde Nassa, Nassa Travel, Newport

Jayde said: "I am the youngest travel entrepreneur in the whole of the travel industry. I am 27 with two travel agency stores - one in Newport and one in Cardiff. I have a following of more than 27,000 followers on social media.

"I strive and manage my shops with the highest passion and dedication possible with a team of eight staff.

"I started off as an apprentice for Thomas Cook 10 years ago. In 2015 I decided to go solo with all the experience I received and having obtained a diploma in Travel & Tourism with a distinction.

"As a travel agency, we sell worldwide packages. We have two stores alongside an online business. We have eight members off staff."

Oliver Williams, Ollywood Ltd, Newport

Ollywood has been set up by a military veteran who has served his country in the Royal Air Force for just over seven years.

The company is based and run from Newport. The company has been set up to support and help ex-service leavers and military veterans within the local area.

Oliver served in the Royal Air Force for just over seven years and then worked in London for Waitrose on a three-month contract launching the first food truck at festivals across the UK.

He said: "Then I worked with leading brands as an event manager across the UK. I then worked for a creative company as the operations manager looking after installations and pop ups at shopping centres and town centres.

"I then took the jump to start Ollywood and combine all my knowledge and experience and build something which would allow me to give something back to local veterans."





Meet the sponsors

Businesses and organisations from around Gwent got on board to support the second annual South Wales Argus Business Awards. Here we find out why...

A word from our lead sponsor



THE Newport Now Business Improvement District is proud and delighted to again be supporting the South Wales Argus Business Awards as headline sponsors.

The BID was the main sponsor of last year's hugely-successful inaugural awards and is renewing its partnership with the awards this year.

The BID decided to renew its headline sponsorship following particularly positive feedback from Newport Now members.

Their overwhelming view was that last year's awards ceremony was a great night for Newport city centre and its businesses.

With two awards categories again open only to BID levy payers – one for independent businesses and one for national chains – the event will again be a fantastic way to recognise and celebrate some of the amazing businesses and people that are a credit to our city centre.

The judging process with other sponsors was extremely difficult given the high quality of entries – but it was fantastic to learn more about some of the outstanding businesses operating in Newport and the surrounding area.

It is a cliché – but also entirely accurate – to say that every nominated business at the awards night will be a winner.

More than 400 city centre businesses are represented by Newport Now, which is one of more than 300 BIDs across the UK.

Not-for-profit private companies funded and run by local businesses for local businesses, BIDs work to enhance business opportunities in the areas they operate; finding ways to increase footfall and create a better experience for businesses, visitors, shoppers and staff alike.

All BIDs are set up following a ballot of local businesses to deliver a five-year plan. BIDs then seek renewal via another ballot of their members for a further five-year term.

Newport Now is in its fifth and final year of its current operations and its renewal ballot is now underway. The postal vote closes on November 28 with the result declared the following day.

The BID consulted its members via one-to-one interviews and an online survey to understand what they want to be included in Newport Now's business plan for 2020-25.

The plan was unveiled at a special launch

event at the Riverfront Theatre on October 3.

All BID members have received copies of the business plan.

At the end of the BID's current term next March, it will have invested more than £1.2m in the city centre and delivered numerous successful business initiatives.

Since 2015, Newport Now has delivered:

- **BID Ambassadors:** Our uniformed Ambassadors are on duty seven days a week. Part of their role is to liaise with businesses and log any issues they may be facing. They aim to visit 140 levy payers every month. In addition to this, they will also attend to incidents in the city centre reported by businesses. Typically, the number of incidents they attend each month number more than 100 and relate to issues including anti-social behaviour, shoplifting (dealing with or assisting), general public enquiries, general crime, parking/traffic, medical emergency.

- **Newport Business Against Crime Partnership:** All BID Levy payers are NBAC members via funding from the BID. As such, they all have access to intelligence-sharing software and an app.

- **Gift Card:** The Newport Now Gift Card can only be spent with participating businesses in the city centre. At present we have 86 businesses participating in the scheme and cards worth £11,000 have been sold – money that can only be spent in the city



centre. Any unspent money on expired gift cards is refunded to the BID and can then be spent on other projects.

- **Events:** The BID has organised and delivered and/or sponsored: Countdown to Christmas, Festival of Classics, Food and Drink Festival, Urban Beach, Big Splash, Record Store Day, Small Business Saturday, the Admiral City of Newport Half Marathon, Newport Wales Marathon, Christmas Market, and the British Transplant Games, among others.. These events have helped to significantly increase footfall in the city centre. For example, in 2018 there were nearly 8,000 more people in the city centre for the Countdown to Christmas event compared to the previous Saturday.

- **Savings Service:** Our Savings Advisory Service has identified business savings of £48,500 for BID members on items such as energy, telecoms, merchant fees and pest control.

- **Grants:** The BID offers a Shopfront Improvement Grant to its members. Funding of more than £10,000 has so far been provided to improve the look of city centre shopfronts.

- **Lobbying:** The BID is the voice of local businesses in Newport city centre. It has lobbied the city council and the police – both

privately and in public – on issues such as anti-social behaviour, parking and begging. Working with BIDs across Wales, Newport Now successfully lobbied the Welsh Government on behalf of its members to ensure business rate discounts propose for England were adopted in Wales.

All the above will continue for a further five years from next April if businesses vote YES in the renewal ballot.

New projects included in the BID's 2020-25 business plan include provision of a taxi marshal service at an appropriate rank on Friday and Saturday nights, the successful application and ongoing management of Purple Flag status to further support the night time economy, and the expansion of the BID area to include parts of Clarence Place and Clytha Park Road, Rodney

Parade, the eastern riverfront, Mill Street and the former Sainsbury's site on Wyndham Street.

Levy payers are currently being asked to vote on whether to renew the BID.

A YES vote will secure a further five years of project deliveries like those above. Voting NO means all services provided by the BID would cease on March 31 next year, with no funding available to replace them.

For more information about the BID, the business plan or the renewal ballot, please contact the BID manager Kevin Ward on 07824 472543 or kevin@kevinwardmedia.com

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We would like to thank all our sponsors



Meet the sponsors



Customer Service Award Kingsway Centre (joint sponsor)

Kingsway Centre, right in the heart of Newport, directly employs more than 15 staff from cleaners, security, administration and management.

The centre supports the employment of more than 300 people in the local area via its tenants such as Wilco's, Peacocks, Pure Gym and Boswells as well as contractual partners from marketing, print, entertainers, builders, electricians to name but a few.

Colin Rees, operations manager for Kingsway Centre, said: "Face to face interaction, smooth and prompt service, an offer to go that extra mile, all create a positive impact on visitors to Kingsway Centre while building upon the reputation of Newport as a welcoming place to visit.

"Sponsoring the customer service award acknowledges the value and importance that this element of care has while at the same time crediting the hard work that staff put in day in day out.

"Sharing good news is positive; although we consider excellent service as the norm, sometimes there are occasions when staff go above and beyond. An award is a great acknowledgement, a nod to a particular person or people who have real impact on how we perceive customer service.

"Building up a reputation can take a lot of time and effort; these awards can help profile both a given organisation as well as an individual. It's also an opportunity for managers to praise and recognise the value of an employee or even a team of staff in an official capacity.

"Newport is a dynamic city and most importantly the city centre is the hub of this. Local businesses are the backbone to a vibrant economy and it's important that we recognise and support positive news stories. Without great people, without kind people our Newport high streets and commercial centres would decline."



Customer Service Award Friars Walk (joint sponsor)

Simon Pullen, centre director at Friars Walk, Newport, said: "From my perspective, with how the market is and with there being so many different avenues for people to purchase their products, it is a real privilege to reward and recognise those that go above and beyond.

"More than anything, these awards should be a motivating factor for any individual that works in customer service.

"It gives each and every one of us something to strive towards in our daily working life and with how important customer service is in business, being in a position to point to awards is a great commodity.

"We should all endeavour to be best in class and to achieve that in front of your fellow colleagues and peers is a very special feeling.

"For any business, strong, positive,

recognition is important and is often the point of difference when it comes to selling its product to a deciding customer.

"If a business is recognised for its service and its quality, it naturally gives it an advantage in the market over its competitors.

"Being able to say that your customer service has been recognised as best in class is a big thing.

"I'm a firm believer in the local community and we should all want the best for each other, no matter what facet that falls under.

"I want to see each and every business thrive and achieve success, regardless of size, type, profile or prominence. What's great, particularly about this award, is that everyone has an equal chance of winning it and showcasing how they are going above and beyond to deliver the best customer service. It's a pleasure to be part of that process."



Digital Tech Business of the Year Newport City Council

Newport City Council is demonstrating its long-standing support for business in the city by sponsoring a key award.

The council, which employs some 6,500 people in the city, is sponsoring the Digital Tech Business of the Year category.

The council sponsored the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2018.

Councillor Debbie Wilcox has been the leader of the city council for more than three years and will soon be taking a seat in the House of Lords as a working peer.

She said: "We chose this award because Newport is rapidly establishing itself as a digital hub. As well as existing businesses such as SPTS and Next Generation Data, the city is also home to emerging and developing companies such as compound semi-conductor foundry IQE – co-located with the CSC Catapult and acting as the core of the regional CSC cluster – and SME start-ups.

"We also proud to have Cardiff University's National Software Academy and USW's National Cyber Security Academy right here in Newport. Our regeneration efforts also include a focus on supporting tech businesses.

"Technology is about breaking barriers and embracing change in a fast-moving world. It is exciting to be at the heart of such a modern industry so it seemed fitting to back this award.

"It is important to recognise all local businesses, both large and small, as they are vital to the continued growth and success of the city – providing employment, training opportunities and boosting the economy.

"We provide a range of support for businesses, both practical and financial, through our business support team and backing these awards is another way of showing that support."



Contribution to the Community Award Monmouthshire Building Society

Monmouthshire Building Society is a financial services provider with more than 150 years of history, supporting many people throughout Gwent and beyond.

The society, which has its head office in Friars Walk, Newport, provides savings and mortgages for both personal and businesses, plus a host of extra products, including, home insurance and funeral planning. It employs 198 people across its network of branches.

Laura Harvey, of Monmouthshire Building Society, said: "The society feels strongly about supporting local initiatives, and is pleased to be involved with the community award this year.

"Supporting the communities around our heartlands is so important for us, and we are looking forward to congratulating the winner.

"These kinds of awards are important for businesses and individuals as everyone is so busy day to day that we often forget to take time to celebrate the great work being done.

"These awards are a fantastic way to celebrate everything that is great about the businesses and individuals working in and around Gwent.

"Recognition helps businesses attract and retain talent as well as raising brand awareness. For an individual to win, it is a great confidence boost and fantastic recognition amongst peers.

"We believe it's important for businesses and organisations, such as ourselves, to sponsor and support local businesses in this way. It can often be tough in the business world so it's great to be able to show our support in this way. All businesses need to help each other

to get on in this ever increasingly competitive world.

"Winning an award, if nothing else, gives the feel-good factor to be recognised. It is also a great opportunity to network at these types of events."

Large Business of the Year RDP Law



Law

RDP is a leading Legal 500 listed law firm, employing 28 people at its base in Langstone, Newport.

Its team of specialist solicitors provides expert advice within a broad range of both commercial and private legal practice areas including real estate, corporate, general commercial, data, intellectual property, family, wealth management agriculture and dispute resolution.

Its client base is wide and varied but has one thing in common; each client expects us to always be on hand, to offer comprehensive, pragmatic legal advice and to help them and their business interests to grow and to prosper.

Charlotte Turner, marketing manager, said: "We are delighted to contribute to an event, and in particular to the category of Large Business of the Year, that does so much to showcase the fantastic businesses and individuals that are helping to drive forward business within south east Wales.

"Showcasing and celebrating local businesses and their work is paramount to the development of the local economy.

"Business awards are an incredible way of highlighting the hard work a team or an individual has invested throughout the year and really helps to celebrate success – internally and externally. It's also great promotion!

"There are many great businesses in Newport and south east Wales, and we are thrilled to be celebrating the best of the best. Newport is on the up and we want to be shouting about that."

Best Place to Work Award Johnson & Phillips



Johnson & Phillips is one of the UK's fastest growing power engineering companies specialising in both power quality and traditional electrical engineering to 33kV. HV/LV maintenance and servicing.

It is a manufacturer of LV panels and bespoke transformers, our expertise power factor and harmonics is second to none.

Originally established in London late 19th century Johnson & Phillips has changed hands several times moving from the capital to Midlands and finally South Wales.

It recently moved to a 40,000 sq ft manufacturing facility on the outskirts of Newport city centre.

A spokesman said: "We have chosen this award as we recognise it takes a lot of hard work and energy to create a great place to work. It starts at the top with a vision, then you build a culture and everyone buys in. We are lucky to have charismatic owners of our own

who are so passionate about the business its infectious.

"It's important that recognition is given to employers who are striving to go the extra mile for their employees. I believe it sends the right message to everyone, who wouldn't want to work at great place where your efforts are both acknowledged and appreciated. The best places tend to attract the best workers.

"For some business I think it can really help put them on the map regarding their products and services. For others the acknowledgement that they're doing the right thing, an endorsement if you like.

"Johnson & Phillips has a fantastic relationship with the South Wales Argus, we've enjoyed working with them. We believe its good to give back and support other local companies and their endeavours.

"Business can be both rewarding and challenging, by hosting awards like these it helps raise the profile of everyone involved."



Innovative Business of the Year Award Western Power Distribution

Western Power Distribution strongly believes awards are an excellent way to celebrate success, innovation and talent in business. WPD is the electricity distribution network operator for South Wales, the South West of England and the Midlands.

The power distribution firm has several offices and depots across its regions. In Wales WPD is located in Cwmbran, Brecon, Cardiff, Church Village, Swansea, Haverfordwest and Carmarthen.

WPD employs a total of some 6,500 people across all its regions. Around 1,000 staff are based in Wales.

Karen Welch, of WPD, said: "We believe the awards are a fitting way to recognise businesses and to celebrate their success, innovation and talent.

"The awards are an ideal way for businesses and individuals to promote themselves, raising their profiles by showcasing their talents. The awards also provide an opportunity for entrants to measure themselves against similar businesses.

"Winning an award or being nominated enhances reputation and raises profile. It may encourage others to want to use an award winner's service which in turn could have a positive effect on future profitability and stability.

"We believe it is the responsibility of large organisations like ours to play a full and active role in the communities served by us. The awards are a positive showcase for businesses who aspire to be the best at what they do by highlighting their achievements."

Meet the sponsors

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Icon Creative Design.com

Young Entrepreneur Award Icon Creative Design

Leading Wales branding and marketing guru Androulla Webb is celebrating more than 20 years of personal success by supporting a South Wales Argus Business Awards 2019 that is close to her heart.

Androulla, owner and creative director of Icon Creative Design an illustrious past winner of the Gwent Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award, has seen her business grow over the past 20 years. From being based on Stow Hill in the centre of Newport Androulla now employs a team of eight designers and project managers in a restored chapel in Bassaleg, on the outskirts of Newport.

The full-service branding and marketing agency works with clients in the arts, education, sports and regeneration sectors.

In 2019 the business backed The Westfield Health British Transplant Games, becoming the creative partner for the UK wide charity.

Androulla said: "We are proud to be based in Newport and have worked on some great projects - creating many of the iconic images for the city including the city dressing for the 2010 Ryder Cup, marketing to support Newport Unlimited's regeneration master plan, branding of the first Newport Food Festival plus brand creation and marketing campaigns for Friars Walk retail and leisure development in the city.

"2019 has been very productive; we are proud to be the ongoing partner for The British Transplant Games as well as extending a new client base with Newcastle University, Kings College London as well as ONS among others."

Creative director, Androulla who maintains a hands on role within the company, said: "When Icon was first established my focus was purely on delivering exceptional graphic design; as the nature of the business has grown and customer's expectations have evolved so too has the company's repertoire of skills.

"I initially started out on my own working

freelance with agencies in Cardiff and progressed to developing my own clients including the WDA, CADW and the National Botanic Garden of Wales.

"Many of our clients are now looking for a company to be a one stop shop, managing their portfolio of marketing requirements from shaping initial research ideas and creatives, organising photo shoots, digital campaigns, event delivery and evaluative feedback to name but a few.

"Starting your own business can be challenging but very rewarding. The South Wales Business Awards are a great way to raise your profile and get your story heard. It is also a fantastic marketing opportunity as the Business Argus reaches a wide audience across south east Wales.

"Taking control of my destiny has definitely worked for me and I wanted to encourage other entrepreneurs to do the same. I work in a fantastic office surrounded by my best friends, creating amazing work, for inspiring clients, need I say more!"

Kymin

Financial Planners

Small Business of the Year Award Kymin Financial Planners

Award-winning Newport-based financial planning and advice firm Kymin Financial Services is continuing its support for the awards by renewing its sponsorship of the Small Business of the Year category.

Founded in 1993 in Monmouth and based in Bridge Street, Newport since 2002, Kymin employs a team of eight financial planners along with six para planners and support staff.

Kymin managing director Robin Hall said: "We are proud to be a sponsor in this year's awards. It is extremely important to encourage and help small businesses to thrive as they are the backbone of the UK economy.

"Being a small business ourselves we recognise the hard work, commitment and determination it takes to build a business into a

successful enterprise.

"We have more than 25 years of experience dealing with small business owners and entrepreneurs and over this time we have seen many of these companies grow with us.

"It is important for businesses and individuals to enter awards such as this. Obviously, it can be seen as a celebration of what you and your business has achieved but not only that it can raise your profile and provide great publicity for the firm.

"This can help set your business against your competitors. Every type of business is extremely competitive these days and in order to thrive it is important to try and differentiate yourself against the competition.

"Kymin constantly strives to support the local economy by employing local people and using as many local suppliers as we can in the day to day running of the company. We get involved in the local community and charitable events as often as we can. We felt by supporting these awards we are again putting something back into the city of Newport."



Start Up Business of the Year Admiral

Admiral offers car, van, household and travel insurance in the UK and the group includes Confused.com, a leading price comparison website.

Outside the UK, Admiral owns four insurance and several price comparison businesses.

The business has offices in Newport, Cardiff and Swansea. The Newport office opened in 2008 and in 2014 it moved to a new building in the city centre which is the base for more than 1,100 members of staff.

Admiral has a presence in nine countries but is proud to still have its headquarters in south Wales.

Admiral is one of the largest employers in the region, employing more than 11,000 worldwide, with almost 7,500 based across South Wales.

A spokesperson for the company said: "Sponsoring this category is a great way to recognise and celebrate the success of a flourishing business in Gwent.

"Celebrating the amazing achievements of local businesses and rewarding their success ensures that leading local businesses get the recognition they deserve for both themselves and their staff.

"Recognition is a great way for businesses and individuals to celebrate their achievements while at the same time raising their profile in the community.

"The local communities that surround our offices are really important to us and we hope to have a positive impact on them. It's fantastic to have an opportunity to sponsor a category at these awards and celebrate the achievements of truly remarkable people and businesses who help make our community a better place."



CINTEC

Lifetime Achievement Award Cintec International

Newport-based Cintec International is a globally recognised leader in engineering research and development.

It merges creative thinking with solid engineering principles and has solved thousands of client problems all over the world.

The business, which has its head quarters in Gold Tops has between 25 to 50 people on its team across the world.

Peter James, of Cintec, said: "Having started a business on my own I understand the many challenges you face when building a company in order to achieve success.

"This award honours the contributions over the whole of a person's career and I am proud to show my support to the winner of the award who will undoubtedly have made some outstanding achievements to their own business, as well as our local community.

"Awards are so important for businesses as they help promote budding businesses and give them the recognition for their hard work that they deserve. Starting up your own company successfully is a massive accomplishment and it deserves to be celebrated.

"Being recognised at such a prestigious awards ceremony is a great achievement. It shows businesses how they are taking a step in the right direction. It also provides a perfect environment to network with like-minded people."

BALDWINS

a Cogital company

Family Business of the Year Award Baldwins

Baldwins is one of the fastest growing accountancy practices in the UK, employing 160 staff and based in Newport, Cardiff, Swansea, Monmouth and Aberdare.

A spokesperson for the firm said: "We are proud to be sponsoring the family business award because we understand the important role they play in our economy.

"Each family business is unique, whether run by siblings, husband and wife teams or by multi-generations, and we understand the challenges and pressures they face.

"We have vast experience with family businesses and help our clients manage current issues and build a successful framework for the future, providing them with advice and information specific to their needs.

"There are clear benefits to be had by entering yourself or your business into an awards category. Aside from it being a celebration of achievement and ensuring staff receive recognition for a job well done, it's a great way of helping you to benchmark yourself

or your business against competitors.

"Awards also provide a great opportunity to network with peers and, in cases where they are judged by leaders in the industry, there can be the additional bonus of being able to discuss ideas with them.

"Recognition at an awards ceremony is an amplification of all of the above and, for staff morale, is the icing on the cake. It can help attract new talent to a business and helps to increase a sense of trust and credibility, both among clients and the wider industry.

"Baldwins believes passionately in not only recognising and celebrating excellence, but in supporting local businesses to be the best they can. "Who doesn't like a pat on the back and independent confirmation that you are a leader in your industry?"

Training and Development Business of the Year University of South Wales

University of
South Wales
Prifysgol
De Cymru

With students from 120 countries, the University of South Wales is a major player in UK higher education.

USW is unique in the breadth of its role, encompassing a modern university and two subsidiaries in Wales's national conservatoire, the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, and The College Merthyr Tydfil. With campuses in Cardiff, Pontypridd and Newport, the university is renowned for its partnerships with employers, from British Airways and the BBC, to the National Health Service.

Its relationship with employers as a leading university for careers is reflected in the high employment rate of its graduates, with 95 per cent of students in employment or further study within six months of graduating.

A spokesman said: "USW is sponsoring this category because our skilled workforce is a real source of strength for the economy of the region. Our providers of training and development, whether they are in-house, independent training providers or institutions of further and higher education, are performing a

vital role in preparing individuals with the hand-on skills they need for the world of work.

"The South Wales Argus Business Awards are a great way for businesses and individuals to raise their profile and to gain recognition for their successes. Very often, the success stories of the Welsh economy go untold, and awards like this give us a real platform to celebrate these achievements.

"At USW, preparing students for the world of work is at the very heart of what we do. As the region's university, it is important that we support and recognise achievement in the Gwent business community."

Programme sponsor Capsel

Monmouthshire-based business Capsel, a trusted and growing local business, is the trading subsidiary of the Monmouthshire Housing Association.

MHA's main purpose is to provide and manage affordable homes in Monmouthshire for people who need them. The association manages and maintains around 3,600 homes and 270 leasehold properties, as well as large numbers of garages and other land in the county.

Capsel provides a range of property-related services to businesses, landlords and homeowners alike. Capsel is also an up-and-coming property developer, bringing a variety of highly desirable new homes to the market in Monmouthshire and surrounding areas.

Every customer and business which uses Capsel's services effectively helps Capsel in its endeavour to support MHA and local communities.

Lorraine Tannatt Nash, assistant director of new business for Capsel, said: "We are delighted to support these awards.

"In this increasingly busy age, it's important to take time to recognise and celebrate the local businesses and individuals that actively make a difference to the people and communities that we live in."

Speaker sponsor NatWest

