



EAST ANGLIAN DAILY TIMES  
**BUSINESS  
AWARDS<sup>24</sup>**

# MEET THE FINALISTS

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# CELEBRATING THE SUFFOLK BUSINESSES THAT INNOVATE IN THE FACE OF CHALLENGES

Liz Nice, editor of the East Anglian Daily Times, congratulates all of the finalists at this year's EADT Business Awards and looks ahead to the awards ceremony on Thursday, July 4.



### Welcome to the finalists supplement for this year's East Anglian Daily Times Business Awards.

There are so many things that are great about Suffolk, but something that is particularly evident in hundreds of the county's businesses is the spirit of innovation and determination in the face of challenges.

The path to net zero is yet another challenge faced by today's businesses the world over, and in our region firms large and small are showing dedication and forward planning to drive sustainability and make our county a better place.

That is why the theme of 2024's EADT Business Awards is sustainability, and we want to put the spotlight on the Suffolk businesses that are passionate about reducing carbon footprints, increasing net zero targets and developing new and fascinating ways of working sustainably.

A huge well done to all our finalists this year. To be included in this supplement shows the incredible talent of your business.

I am eager to find out who this year's winners will be at the awards ceremony on Thursday, July 4 at Milsoms Kesgrave Hall, where we will be supporting this year's chosen community group Restitute – turn to page 14 to find out more.

A huge thank you to Milsoms for being our venue sponsor and to Denny Bros, last year's Suffolk Business of the Year, for sponsoring the drinks reception.

Our headline sponsors are, once again, the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce and Sizewell C. We thank them again for their support, as well as the support of all of the category sponsors.

"I believe in the power of recognising excellence and contributing to the vibrant business community in Suffolk," said Nick Evans, UK site and sales director at Treatt and vice-president of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce. "Serving as a judge allows me to contribute to acknowledging outstanding organisations that have made significant strides in the past year."

This year's Suffolk Business of the Year winner will be hand-picked by the judges, including Steven Carroll, supply chain engagement lead at Sizewell C,

"I have judged the Suffolk Business of the Year award four times now," he said. "It has always been a great experience, but it is also extremely tough to get to an eventual winner."

"The EADT Business Awards are a great platform to showcase your business and show off how great you are."

In a few months, the winners will be announced and a varied group of local firms will take to the stage to collect their awards.

I wonder who will take the titles this year?

■ For more information about the East Anglian Daily Times Business Awards, visit [eadtbusinessawards.co.uk](http://eadtbusinessawards.co.uk)



Above: the winners of the EADT Business Awards 2023. Below, left to right: Lucy Denny, Graham Denny and Ashley Simpson of Denny Bros, which won Suffolk Business of the Year at last year's awards

Images: MATTHEW POTTER PHOTOGRAPHER AND VIDEOGRAPHER



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# SUFFOLK BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

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The Suffolk Business of the Year award is a non-entry category, with the winners from all the other categories entered automatically and the overall winner hand-selected by the judges.

The winner of this award will be an organisation that has achieved outstanding things in the last 12 months, standing as an example of the passion and innovation that is evident throughout the Suffolk business community as a firm that the county can be proud of.

The judges will assess the finalists' brand profiles within their customer audience, as well as their financial standing, how effectively they conduct community relations and their efforts to understand and reduce their environmental impact.

"As in previous years, we will be looking for businesses to demonstrate significant impact in the county," said Steven Carroll, supply chain engagement lead at headline sponsor Sizewell C.

"As well as operating a great business, they will have to show how they have created social



The winner of Suffolk Business of the Year should exemplify a commitment to sustainability. Left top, Steven Carroll. Left bottom, Nick Evans

Images: GETTY IMAGES/SIZEWELL C/NICK EVANS, TREATT

value." Nick Evans, UK site and sales director at Treatt and vice-president of headline sponsor Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, said that he will be looking for firms that exhibit "exceptional achievements" across the board, from brand identity to sustainability.

"A holistic approach to success, where the company's impact extends beyond financial metrics, will truly grab my attention as a judge," he said.

The theme of this year's EADT Business Awards is

sustainability, and so the Suffolk Business of the Year winner should exemplify the awareness and proactivity that is key for today's businesses when building an effective sustainability strategy – acting as an inspiration for local firms looking to do the same.

"Sustainability is paramount for businesses," said Mr Evans. "It's not just a moral imperative but a strategic necessity for long-term viability.

"Embracing sustainability enhances resilience, attracts conscientious consumers and positions businesses as responsible stewards. Those

attuned to sustainable practices are better poised for enduring success in an evolving business landscape."

Mr Carroll added: "Social value is an ever-increasing requirement within any supply chain. It demonstrates that businesses are thinking about their impact both on the planet and their community.

"Putting something back will be key in judging this year's winner."

Winning this prestigious award will also bring a range of benefits for 2024's Suffolk Business of the Year. Mr Evans said that the title "serves as a

validation of their outstanding accomplishments over the past year, enhancing brand recognition and fostering a positive reputation within Suffolk".

He also said that the recognition from "such a distinguished accolade" can open new doors to local firms.

In line with the EADT Business Awards 2024's overall theme, Mr Carroll said that winning this award will "show potential clients and suppliers that they are dealing with a sustainable business that lives and breathes its company values".



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# CUSTOMER EXCELLENCE AWARD

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## CORBEL SOLUTIONS

Corbel Solutions is an Ipswich-based provider of IT consulting and managed IT services for SMEs across Suffolk.

Founded in 1995, today the business serves over 50 clients across various industries, helping them to achieve their goals with a wide range of solutions and the core values of integrity, excellence, collaboration and customer satisfaction.

The business invests in continuous training and certification to keep up to date with the latest trends and best practices in the IT industry.

The judges said "Corbel sees itself as an extension of its clients" and that it provided specific examples of times it has gone the extra mile.

They also noted the "series of value-add initiatives" it has employed to educate its clients on leveraging technology to better their business.

## FRED. OLSEN CRUISE LINES

Founded in 1848 by three Olsen brothers, Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines in Ipswich is now in the fifth generation of the family, employing 220 people ashore and 2,000 crew on board its three ships: Bolette, Borealis and Balmoral.

In recent years, the business has undertaken comprehensive research into its customer base. This resulted in a detailed customer profile that has allowed the firm to enhance its on-board and ashore experiences.

As a result, last year it celebrated its best year on record.

Recognising the "real passion to make everyone's experience with Fred. Olsen a memorable one", the judges said that the



Clockwise from top left, Corbel Solutions, Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, Geek Retreat Ipswich, Kingsfleet

Images: ROSS DEAN PHOTOGRAPHY/FRED. OLSEN CRUISE LINES/GEEK RETREAT/SIMPLY C PHOTOGRAPHY

business has adapted to feedback from customers and "a number of initiatives have been created to excite the traveller".

## GEEK RETREAT IPSWICH

Now in its third year, Geek Retreat is a game shop and café serving the people of Ipswich.

The small, family-run business has inclusion and community at its heart. Its menu, product offerings and events are tailored to the needs of the community, and it invests all profits back into the space.

It also works with and supports the service users and workers of several local charities and organisations.

The judges said that, at Geek Retreat, "it is clear that there is a real passion to be part of the community and to go the extra mile for customers whose interests and needs vary enormously".

They commended the business for "creating tools to aid customer satisfaction", adding that these have "also benefited the broader Geek

Retreat network".

## KINGSFLEET

Kingsfleet is a chartered financial planning firm based in Claydon that serves over 400 clients, managing millions of pounds for them.

The firm provides personalised financial planning solutions, helping clients achieve their future goals by advising them on their wealth, from pensions and investments to personal estate planning.

Its focus on client outcomes

rather than solely profit is underlined by its B Corp status, which it achieved in 2022, and its commitment to outstanding service is evidenced in its excellent customer reviews.

The judges commended Kingsfleet for offering "a truly customer-focused, personal service for its clients".

They said that the business is "consistently listening to customers and tailoring its support to their individual needs" and takes "a relentless approach to continuous improvement".

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# DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

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**JON NEAL – SUFFOLK MIND**

Jon Neal is the CEO of Suffolk Mind, an independent mental health charity with offices in Felixstowe, Bury St Edmunds and Saxmundham.

It provides a wide range of support services to over 18s and delivers The Mental Health Kitbag for young people and the adults who support them, along with mental health training for businesses.

The judges said that “Jon is dedicated to making Suffolk the best place in the world for mental wellbeing and has made great strides over the last few years to achieve this”.

They recognised the ways in which Jon takes an active leadership role and said that “under his leadership, Suffolk Mind has implemented various initiatives aimed at promoting mental health awareness”, as well as increasing its fundraising efforts.

**LUCY SMITH – CLARITY UMBRELLA**

Lucy Smith is the owner and founder of Clarity Umbrella, a PAYE umbrella company in Copdock that offers an employment solution to UK contractors that are tax residents in the UK working on assignment for an end client.

It runs an efficient payroll every single day, taking care of pensions requirements and ensuring all deductions are reported directly to HMRC, and it has received consistent positive feedback.

Lucy set out on her own to set up Clarity, a journey that the judges said “is a testament to perseverance, innovation and unwavering commitment



Clockwise from top left, Jon Neal, Lucy Smith, Luke Broadley, Samantha Cage

Images: SUFFOLK MIND/LUCY SMITH/CAROLINE HORNE SUFFOLK PHOTOGRAPHY/SUFFOLK SOUND/DEVELOPINGMARK

to excellence”.

They said Lucy has “built up a loyal customer base and cultivated a dynamic workforce”, and still shows an “obvious” commitment to Suffolk.

**LUKE BROADLEY – LONGFIELDS**

Just before the pandemic, Luke Broadley set up Longfields in Otley, an insurance brokerage specialising in agriculture, commercial and high net worth private clients.

As well as working with commercial businesses, Longfield is also renowned in haulage and

logistics, farming and agriculture.

It exclusively partners with a carefully selected panel of insurers known for their comprehensive policies and reliable claims processes.

The business also embraces cutting-edge technology and is committed to offering “unrivalled” customer service.

Recognising Luke’s “obvious entrepreneurship”, the judges said that his “hands-off management style has clearly earned him the respect of his staff”.

They concluded by saying that “Luke is passionate about

business in Suffolk and helping everyone he can achieve success”.

**SAMANTHA CAGE – OCALA HEALTHCARE**

Ocala Healthcare in Stowmarket was launched by Samantha Cage and Adam Storey in 2017. They built the social care recruitment agency with the aim of delivering better agency care services and valuing care workers in the way they deserve.

Today, Ocala is a CQC registered care provider, with Ocala Recruitment continuing the recruitment service. It has also

implemented a ‘Community Response Team’ to deliver emergency care in learning disability services.

Praising Ocala for going “from strength to strength”, the judges said that Samantha “not only excels in business but in doing so strives to make a positive impact on society and the environment of the people Ocala supports”.

They also commended Samantha for “recognising the need for support for carers, providing appreciation throughout the year”.

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# EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR

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## HARWICH HAVEN AUTHORITY

Established in 1863, Harwich Haven Authority is a major employer in the region, with approximately 70% of its employees living locally.

As one of the UK's largest trust ports, the business operates 24/7, 365 days a year. Nearly 40% of all containerised goods enter the country via the Haven, making it critical to the local, regional and UK-wide economy.

The judges were impressed with "the consistency around explaining the 'why' to employees as an intentional approach to changing employee mindsets".

They said it was great to hear about the Haven's use of a "social value portal that puts tangible figures against the benefit of working, recruiting and buying ethically and sustainably".

## MORGAN SINDALL CONSTRUCTION

Morgan Sindall Construction is a UK business with a network of local offices, including an office in Ipswich serving Suffolk.

The company's construction services range from special works and repair and maintenance to major landmark schemes delivered as standalone projects or as part of larger, multiple-project frameworks.

Covering the public and private sectors, its recent projects in Suffolk include Stowmarket Fire and Police Station and Newmarket Hospital Community Diagnostic Centre.

The judges noted the "huge range of culture, engagement and wellbeing activities that embrace every part of an employee's journey".

They also praised the combined long service and new starter lunches as a "simple but effective activity".



Clockwise from top left: Harwich Haven Authority, Morgan Sindall Construction, Pager Power, SimpleClick

Images: HARWICH HAVEN AUTHORITY/DARREN CARTER/PAGER POWER/SIMPLECLICK

## PAGER POWER

Based in Sudbury, Pager Power is a global consultancy working in the renewables, aviation, building and telecoms sectors.

It primarily helps developers gain planning permission by providing the required analysis and technical reports for planning applications, and by assisting them to overcome objections from stakeholders.

From four full-time employees in 2016, the company has now grown to a team of 18, in addition to part-time staff and specialists who assist with

marketing and development.

All three directors started at a junior level and now manage the company on a daily basis.

The business always promotes from within and looks for raw talent when it recruits, with less focus on experience and more on a candidate's potential.

The judges said the financial success of the business, "no doubt helped hugely by the employee-owned engagement in delivering returns", puts it in a "wonderful position to consider how the company acts on community and social values".

## SIMPLECLICK

Having just celebrated its 15th anniversary, SimpleClick is an Ipswich-based agency specialising in software, mobile and web development.

High-calibre clients include Suffolk-based businesses Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, Waller Transport Services, MacKenzie King, Same Day Business Loans, Vint-tro, Pier Marketing and ihAg.

In 2023, SimpleClick achieved record profit of 24.1% through recruitment, maintaining low staff turnover and investment in

its proprietary platform, Duddle.

The judges said: "You can really feel the care that has gone into matching commercial decisions with how best to serve the employees. Innovative ideas – such as the nine-day fortnight and having the taking of leave as a KPI – show how to carefully balance the needs of both employees and clients."

They added that the company is "embracing the opportunity to nurture diversity" among its team, with examples of employees feeling comfortable to bring their whole selves to work.

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# ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY AWARD

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### SUFFOLK NEW COLLEGE

Suffolk New College (SNC), based in Ipswich, is an award-winning regional business with a national reputation as a provider of education, training and apprenticeships.

SNC prides itself on offering a diverse range of courses, giving all learners the opportunity to broaden their horizons.

Previously, SNC has won the Association of Colleges Beacon Award for Education for Sustainable Development, and the Further or Higher Education Provider of the Year at the Suffolk Education Awards.

The judges said the college has a “strong strategy for environmental and sustainable practices”, and that it is going “above and beyond in terms of adding sustainability to its learning agenda”.

### THE BILDESTON CROWN

Set in the village of Bildeston, The Bildeston Crown is a 15th century three AA Rosette restaurant, hotel and bar.

The produce used at the Crown is grown around a mile away at Nedging Hall, from beetroot to beef, keeping its offering seasonal and local.

The hotel offers tranquil escapes, with Suffolk charm coming from each uniquely decorated bedroom.

The Bildeston Crown has developed its green strategy to ensure it is sustainable and continuing to deliver high standards while working with the environment, and not taking from it.

Judges were impressed by its



Clockwise from top left, Suffolk New College, The Bildeston Crown, University of Suffolk, Vertas Group

Images: PAGEPIX/ALEXANDER PARNELL/GREGG BROWN/VERTAS GROUP

“commitment” to sustainable practices and added that “sustainability is at the forefront of everything it does”.

### UNIVERSITY OF SUFFOLK

The University of Suffolk (UoS), located in Ipswich, offers learners the opportunity to align themselves with the modern world of employment and entrepreneurship.

It provides a space to learn with teaching rooms and specialist teaching facilities.

UoS is committed to the

advancement of sustainability in education and research, as well as pioneering new technologies and operational management programmes. So much so that its vice chancellor declared 2023/24 a year of sustainability.

The university is passionate about people, the planet and prosperity as it actively works towards meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The judges said that “it was good to see the mix of business ambition and education ambition in terms of sustainability” at UoS,

along with “the recognition that the two are as important as each other”.

### VERTAS GROUP

Vertas Group in Ipswich supports its clients by delivering sustainable and agile solutions expertly delivered by its people.

It provides a range of services such as integrated facilities management, recruitment and environmental waste and recycling solutions.

Vertas is committed to delivering benefits to the places it

operates in and investing in people’s development and wellbeing.

The judges liked that Vertas has appointed sustainability champions and said that “sustainability and the environment are a priority for the group”.

They noted that Vertas is engaging with staff about sustainability and implementing some of their ideas, including clothes donation points, swapping to bamboo toilet roll and recycling crisp packets.



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# GROWTH BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

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## ACCUGRIT

Established in 2019 and based in Rickingham, Accugrit is the UK's only dedicated winter maintenance service provider.

Accugrit is harnessing the power of innovation, using specialist weather forecasting technology to empower its clients in the commercial and private sectors with accurate, timely and actionable insights to navigate the challenges of winter weather.

Its greatest asset is its focus on customer satisfaction, going above and beyond to exceed expectations, and fostering long-lasting relationships built on trust.

Accugrit is aiming to be a pioneer in shaping the future of winter services management in the UK.

Judges were impressed by its "consistent year on year growth in both its turnover and profit," and said that it "scored highly across all key metrics and growth measurements".

## BISHOP & MILLER AUCTIONEERS

Bishop & Miller Auctioneers is a specialist auction and valuation firm that has salesrooms in both Stowmarket and Glandford near Holt, Norfolk.

Founded by Oliver Miller in 2015, it has since grown to a team of 21, with expertise across a broad range of specialist areas.

Bishop & Miller offers expert guidance on items, with the team on hand to help with every aspect of the auction experience.

With links across North America and Europe, Bishop & Miller is dedicated to producing a great service and making the auction experience as enjoyable as possible.

The judges commended Bishop & Miller's "strong leadership",



Clockwise from top left, Accugrit, Bishop & Miller Auctioneers, Longfields, Pager Power

Images: ACCUGRIT/DANIEL PAGE, BISHOP & MILLER PHOTOGRAPHER/LUKE BROADLEY/PAGER POWER

and said "the aspiration of the business really stands out".

## LONGFIELDS

Longfields is a local insurance brokerage specialising in agriculture, commercial and high net worth private clients, with offices in Ipswich and Colchester.

It prioritises fostering traditional client relationships, ensuring all its clients are assigned a dedicated account manager.

It also uses the same cutting-edge technology utilised by

national insurers, which is central to its strategy of maximising efficiency and continuing to allow its team to deliver a personalised service.

With a steadfast dedication to professionalism and excellence, it strives to be the preferred choice for businesses and individuals seeking expert insurance advice.

The judges liked that Longfields is "clearly an ambitious business" with a strong identity and ethos", and added that it is "well positioned to have a 'disruptive' impact on the

traditional insurance marketplace".

## PAGER POWER

Located in Sudbury, Pager Power is a global technical planning consultancy working in the renewables, aviation, building and telecoms sectors.

It helps developers gain planning permission by providing the required analysis and technical reports for planning applications and assisting developers in overcoming objections from stakeholders.

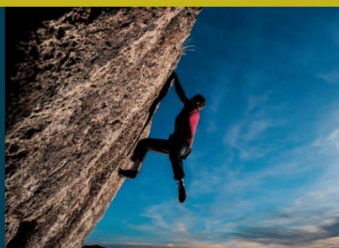
Most of its project work revolves around solar PV and wind developments in the UK, working on projects from a domestic scale all the way up to national significance.

Pager Power has been operating for over 25 years, and the business always looks to promote from within.

The judges said that Pager Power has "delivered impressive, continued growth" and believe that it has "hit all of the key growth measurements" based on multiple factors.

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# MEDIUM BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

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### BISHOP & MILLER AUCTIONEERS

Bishop & Miller is a specialist auction and valuation firm with salerooms in Stowmarket and Glandford, Norfolk.

Founded in 2015, the business has since grown to a 21-strong team with expertise across a broad range of specialist areas. It is known as a specialist in oak and often obtains large collections of early pieces of oak from across the UK.

Part of its busy auction calendar is the firm's continuous online auction presence, and it also hosts valuation days and events around the country as well as house calls and probate valuations.

The judges called Bishop & Miller an "innovative and impressive business", with strong leadership, clear values and vision and "exciting plans in the near future to achieve organic growth".

### BRIDGE CLASSIC CARS

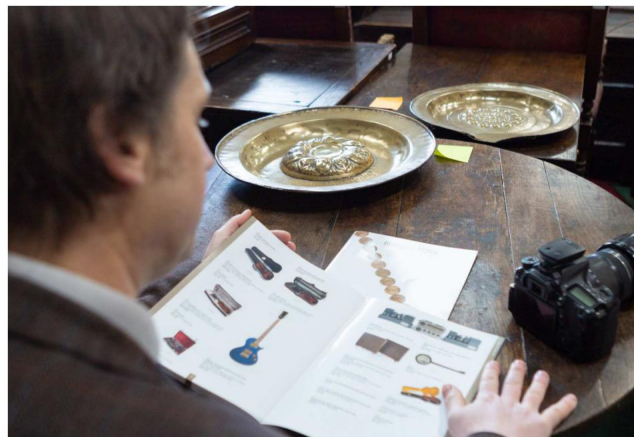
Bridge Classic Cars, based in Pettistree, near Woodbridge, is a specialist in the maintenance of vintage and classic cars.

It operates a full in-house service including restorations, automotive electrics, service and repairs, body preparation and paintwork, and interior trim work; all in its state-of-the-art facilities.

The business' team of specialists have nearly 400 years of combined experience in owning, restoring, maintaining and competing with classic cars and motorcycles.

Calling Bridge Classic Cars an "inspiring" business, the judges said that the firm is "really strong on marketing, leadership and service, with a very impressive headquarters".

They also praised its work in



Clockwise from top left, Bishop & Miller Auctioneers, Bridge Classic Cars, Caribbean Blinds UK, Sarah's Carers

Images: SIMPLY C PHOTOGRAPHY/NICK SKINNER, BRIDGE CLASSIC CARS/CARIBBEAN BLINDS UK/CLAUDIA GANNON

"doing good and giving back to the community" and said that the team "understands the impact of their operations on the environment".

### CARIBBEAN BLINDS UK

A family owned and run business based in Sudbury, Caribbean Blinds UK has been dedicated to providing premium external shading solutions for residential, commercial, contract and trade projects across the UK since 1987.

Its innovative external shading systems are made at its 30,000 sq

ft factory by a team of highly skilled technicians, and are rigorously tested to ensure they meet stringent safety and quality standards.

The judges were impressed by Caribbean Blinds UK's "slick and really well-thought out" headquarters, as well as its "understanding of environmental impact and strategy", which includes a "great recycling procedure" and the use of electric cars and solar panels.

They concluded by saying this is a "great business with a clear

strategy, vision, financials and values".

### SARAH'S CARERS

Sarah's Carers is a care agency based in Woodbridge founded by Sarah Seaman and her daughter Nicola Edwards after Sarah's husband was diagnosed with a terminal illness.

The teams provide anything from an hour of support a day to a full live-in care service, and recognise the broad spectrum of needs among clients, from those facing difficulties in performing

daily routines to individuals with dementia requiring constant support.

This approach allows individuals to remain in their own homes rather than moving to a care facility.

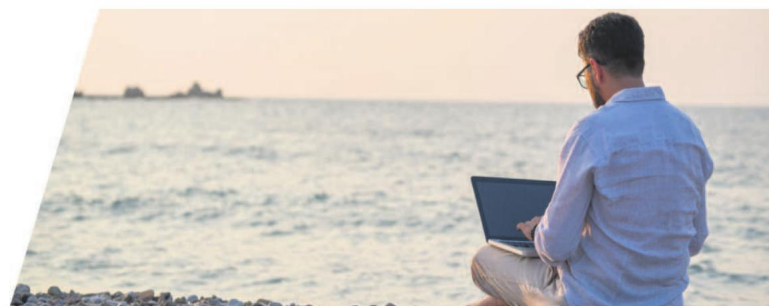
The judges said that Sarah's Carers is a "great local business and a force for good". They felt that the Woodbridge headquarters is "warm and inviting" and commended the "caring and passionate team who clearly value their customers and each other".



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# LARGE BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

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**BACTON TRANSPORT SERVICES**  
 Based just outside Bury St Edmunds, Bacton Transport Services is a family-owned business that aims to deliver exceptional service across its range of distribution and logistics services.

It was founded in 1932 by the grandfather of the current owners, Charles and Edward Downie, and recent successes have enabled the firm to expand and diversify its offering and invest in its facilities and people – introducing a robust training programme.

Additionally, it consistently invests in its fleet to ensure it is well-maintained and has built a state-of-the-art facility to further its journey to net-zero.

The judges commended Bacon Logistics' "willingness to try new ways of doing things" and also praised the "remarkable" innovation the business has achieved in sustainability and training.

#### DPL GROUP

Ipswich-based DPL Group is a 24-year-old family-run business that excels in the design, installation and maintenance of building services.

Operating predominantly in East Anglia, DPL collaborates extensively with local councils, authorities, schools and hospitals, covering all aspects of the building services industry.

The firm places a strong emphasis on the continuous development of its staff and employs 6-8 apprentices annually. It is also passionate about community engagement and sustainability and has incorporated heat pumps and electric vehicle chargers.

The judges said that DPL is "ahead of its market, with a clear focus on sustainability". They



Clockwise from top left, Bacton Transport Services, DPL Group, Jackson Civil Engineering, Spectra Packaging

Images: BACTON TRANSPORT SERVICES/DPL GROUP/JACKSON CIVIL ENGINEERING/SPECTRA PACKAGING

"really enjoyed" some of the ideas presented by the firm, including its shadow share award scheme, and said that "staff care is in its core beliefs".

#### JACKSON CIVIL ENGINEERING

Jackson Civil Engineering employs around 320 staff across England, with roughly half that number working from its head office in Ipswich.

It undertakes civil engineering projects ranging from £500,000 to £50 million in value, and works for major clients such as the Environment Agency, National

Highways, Canal & River Trust and Anglian Water, as well as many local authorities and private clients.

Recent projects include the infrastructure for the Gateway 14 business park at Stowmarket, upgrades to the Ipswich Tidal Barrier and construction of the Beccles Southern Relief Road.

Praising the culture at Jackson, the judges said "this is a very positive business". They praised its focus on people and added that "the diversity of the workforce is wonderful to see".

#### SPECTRA PACKAGING

Based in Holton, Spectra Packaging is a leading UK manufacturer of plastic bottles and caps for the cosmetics, toiletries and personal care sectors.

Since its formation in 2008, the business has worked with well-known high-street brands including Lush Cosmetics, Boots, M&S, Molton Brown and Liz Earle.

It has core values rooted in sustainability, evident from its 104,000 sq ft purpose-built facility with 1,700 solar panels, energy-

efficient machinery and recycled materials used within the building structure.

Its product offering also focuses on recycled materials, as well as Prevented Ocean Plastics, which are discarded plastics gathered near waterways and ocean shores in at-risk regions without established recycling infrastructures.

The judges described Spectra Packaging's knowledge on sustainability as "world class" and said, "how they treat each other within the company culture is wonderful and inspiring".



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# POSITIVE IMPACT IN THE COMMUNITY



Clockwise from top left, Bridge Classic Cars, Combat2Coffee, Home Instead, the New Wolsey Theatre

Images: BRIDGE CLASSIC CARS/COMBAT2COFFEE/HOME INSTEAD/WILL GREEN PHOTOGRAPHY

## BRIDGE CLASSIC CARS

Led by father and son Gordon and Craig Ranson in Pettistree, near Woodbridge, Bridge Classic Cars offers a full in-house service including restorations, automotive electrics, service and repairs, body preparation and paintwork, and interior trim work for classic cars and motorcycles – all in its state-of-the-art workshop facilities.

From the painting and restoration work through to the in-house reupholstering, the craftsmanship of Bridge’s workers was described as “awe-inspiring” by the judges.

They noted the ways in which the “highly motivated and busy one-stop shop” is reducing its environmental impact, including switching to water-based paints in its paint shop and building a relationship with a synthetic

fuel manufacturer, and also recognised the impact of its events, which have raised more than £150k for charity.

## COMBAT2COFFEE

Ipswich-based Combat2Coffee is a community interest company (CIC) dedicated to improving the lives of serving and former uniformed service personnel and their families using coffee as a vehicle for conversation.

It is the brainchild of Royal Anglian veteran Nigel Seaman and is split into two halves, the CIC and a commercial arm run with the support of Vertas, the profits of which are reinvested into supporting ex-uniformed services.

The judges praised the “dynamic and eye-catching brand” that Nigel has created. They said that “through his

perseverance and dedication the not-for-profit company has become well-known in Suffolk and beyond”, with Nigel and his colleagues invited to attend and speak at numerous national events.

They also recognised the work Combat2Coffee does to help veterans and prisoners to learn new skills.

## HOME INSTEAD

Home Instead is a locally owned home care provider covering the Ipswich, Woodbridge and Felixstowe areas.

It provides companionship, home help, daily care, end-of-life care and live-in care to 150 clients, with 96 care professionals working on a daily basis supported by an office team of 18.

The business’ ethos is to

support its care professionals and clients and the team regularly goes above and beyond for clients and their families.

The judges said the business’ “highly organised top team is inspirational – and comes up with many practical ways to engage with the wider public and business community”.

This includes running memory cafes, groups and a dementia-friendly golf club, “which not only helps its clients but also creates a sense of community”, as well as delivering free dementia training and talks.

## NEW WOLSEY THEATRE

The New Wolsey Theatre in Ipswich offers a diverse and accessible programme of performances, creative community engagement projects and collaborative ventures with

the aim of enriching the lives of the community, celebrating creativity and embracing people of all backgrounds.

The organisation has experienced remarkable growth in its Environmental Responsibility programme, culminating in the recent attainment of the Carbon Charter Silver award.

The judges said that the New Wolsey “is more than simply a theatre – it is at the centre of its community in Ipswich, providing support and inspiration for many deprived and marginalised people as well as the wider public”.

They praised the theatre for “doing far more than simply surviving” in the face of the challenges faced by the arts, securing sponsors and supporters, collaborating with businesses and performing at local schools.

## SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR



Clockwise from top left, Kingsfleet, SimpleClick, Token of the Forest, Westview IT

Images: SIMPLY C PHOTOGRAPHY/SIMPLECLICK/EMILY PLATT/OWEN WILLIAMS

### KINGSFLEET

Based in Claydon, Kingsfleet is a chartered firm that provides personalised financial planning solutions, helping hundreds of clients organise their wealth, from pensions and investments to personal estate planning.

The business was founded in 2010 by Colin Low, who wanted to provide financial advice on an ethical basis, rather than focusing purely on profit. In 2019, the business furthered this aim by shifting focus from the scale of clients' wealth to what they want to achieve using it.

The judges said that this is "a business with a clear moral compass, practising what it preaches", as underlined by its B Corp status. They added, "the organisation firmly has its roots

within Suffolk and actively gives back to the local community by supporting many local charities".

### SIMPLECLICK

Web design agency SimpleClick, located in Felixstowe, recently celebrated its 15th anniversary and yet remains at the forefront of innovative software, app and web development.

The business boasts a high-calibre client base and in 2023 it achieved 24.1% in profit – its best year ever. It was also recognised for its investment in company culture at the 2024 UK Dev Awards when it won Employer of the Year.

Praising recent adjustments to strengthen the business' management team, the judges said "SimpleClick has proactively

reviewed its working arrangements to the benefit of staff wellbeing while not neglecting the needs of the business".

They also commended the Duddle platform, which "has enabled the organisation to create a business that is specialised and has global industry".

### TOKEN OF THE FOREST

Token of the Forest is a woodworking company based in Barking Tye. It is owned by Joe Gleed, a self-taught woodworker who always dreamed of being an entrepreneur.

Joe set up the business during lockdown, aiming to give old materials a new lease of life. The majority of products are made

from disused whisky or wine barrels and other reclaimed materials.

The judges said that "this sole trader organisation is in the early stages of its development and is driven by a passionate owner who has a fantastic skill in wood and craftwork".

They concluded by saying that "the business is progressive in its outlook and has a wealth of opportunity to grow and develop".

### WESTVIEW IT

Stowmarket-based Westview IT offers IT and support services across East Anglia.

It was launched in 2017 by Owen Williams as a traditional IT support company and computer repair service, and

today has developed into an outsourced IT department exclusively for small businesses.

The business has a comprehensive environmental strategy, implementing energy-efficient technologies and practices such as virtualisation, server consolidation and energy-efficient hardware, as well as properly recycling and disposing of e-waste generated from outdated or decommissioned equipment.

Praising Owen's "enthusiasm, energy and ambition for the business", the judges said that Westview IT has "a clear view of its own strengths and weaknesses" and they liked the "focus on taking particular clients that suit its skillset" to avoid overstretching staff.



# START UP OF THE YEAR



Clockwise from top left, Curious Retreats, East Anglian Financial Planning, Lanman Solar, Satsuma Group

Images: CLAUDIA GANNON/WARREN PAGE AND MARIE RUSH/GREG NEWMAN/PAUL NIXON

**CURIOS RETREATS**

Launched in 2023, Curious Retreats near Woodbridge aims to curate premium, tailored holiday experiences that capture the true spirit of Suffolk.

The business is made up of local people with local values doing local good, and is a product of founders Tim Ripman and Tim Cook’s lifelong friendship as well as their passion for the tourism and hospitality sector and the beautiful surroundings of Suffolk.

The agency works to put the property owners and guests first, with an emphasis on quality over quantity.

The judges described Curious Retreats as “a company being truly innovative in the holiday let sector”. They praised its focus on “outstanding service” and the

passion of the owners, “who have their finger firmly on the pulse”.

**EAST ANGLIAN FINANCIAL PLANNING**

East Anglian Financial Planning (EAFP) in Langham, near Colchester, provides bespoke holistic independent financial planning to individuals, trusts and businesses across East Anglia.

Its team of experienced chartered independent financial advisers (IFAs) aims to help clients preserve and build their wealth through innovative investment solutions and bespoke financial planning. They provide advice in a wide range of areas including pensions, investments, retirement planning and financial planning in divorce.

Calling EAFP “a start up that has grown exponentially and profitably in a short space of time”, the judges recognised the firm’s “loyal customer base” and “exacting service”, which is “at the core of everything it does”.

They also noted the “impressive set of accreditations for customer reassurance” that the business has achieved.

**LANMAN SOLAR**

Located just outside of Ipswich, Lanman Solar is a fully accredited solar energy installation specialist.

It offers a range of solar services, from solar panel installation and battery storage systems to solar servicing, repair and maintenance – as well as EV charging points.

It has completed a range of projects, from small domestic installations to complex commercial projects such as the nearly 700 panels installed at The Earlham Institute.

All of its solar panels are responsibly recycled and Lanman also plants a tree for each day of operation.

Recognising the “long list of five-star reviews” that Lanman has accrued, the judges said that the business “puts customer service at the core” and has achieved “impressive financial turnover in the short period of time it has been established”.

**SATSUMA GROUP**

Headquartered in Wherstead, near Ipswich, Satsuma Group is a full-service creative agency

with staff working remotely and flexibly across the UK.

The company was founded by single parent Ellen Widdup, who had struggled to find a position that worked for her and created Satsuma to utilise the talented workforce that do not fit the typical nine to five.

The business has a range of sustainable practices in place. Last year, it balanced 367kg of carbon dioxide through the World Land Trust, supporting it to protect 70m2 of critically threatened tropical rainforest.

The judges said that Satsuma has grown into “a thriving business that has empowered other woman in similar positions, not just in the county but around the country, to get back into work, doing what they love”.

# AWARDS RAISE ESSENTIAL FUNDS FOR GROUP SUPPORTING FAMILIES IN CRISIS

At this year's EADT Business Awards ceremony at Kesgrave Hall, funds will be raised for Restitute, this year's chosen community group for the awards.

Restitute is a local community organisation that supports those that care for survivors of sexual abuse, sexual violence and other serious violence.

Founded in 2019, Restitute has supported 220 families in Suffolk, providing life-saving emotional and practical support to families that are blown apart by horrific instances of abuse and violence.

Survivors and siblings – not just those who have suffered abuse – caught in the middle of the chaos suffer bullying at school and appalling mental health issues, and carers are often faced with a huge sense of loss and betrayal, particularly when the abuser is a family member.

#### JO'S\* STORY

It was three weeks after the birth of my third child when the police knocked on our door. They said that their investigations had revealed that someone in the property had accessed indecent images and that they had a warrant to search and seize all devices in our house, including those of our children. At the same time, they arrested my husband of 10 years.

They walked in, took him, took everything they wanted, asked me if there was anyone they could call to be with me... and then left.

Three months later, they returned to tell me that some of the images were of my husband abusing my eldest child.

The police were sorry, but at that time there was nowhere they knew of to refer me to for support, although there was support available for my children.

I needed someone to talk to

who would understand what I was dealing with, to help me provide the care and support my children needed and to navigate the seemingly endless agencies, processes, forms and deal with the chaos of my in-laws and wider family.

Eventually, I found Restitute, like many others do – via a google search at 2am when I was unable to sleep.

I was wary contacting them, having sought support from my GP and been confronted with accusations that "I must have known", which nearly broke me.

After one call, I knew I'd found a safe place. The practical support given by Restitute was life-changing, the emotional support and working with someone who absolutely understood what I'd been through was lifesaving.

#### ADAM'S\* STORY

Anna, my wife, was invited to a hen party. It was one of those trips to Spain – a last blast with a group of mates that she'd been at university with. It wasn't the first of these – that summer I think we both went on two or three of these things.

After the last one, Anna came back in a state and told me that whilst she was there, she'd had her drink spiked and went to get a taxi home with a friend. She and the friend were driven to some place, raped by several local men and then chucked out of the cab not far from where they'd started off the evening.

Anna's friend didn't want to carry on with the fight of the criminal justice process. I guess she just wanted to forget about it and move on with her life, so they fell out and others in the group just felt so much guilt and



Restitute helps families that have experienced abuse and violence

Image: GETTY IMAGES

confusion, eventually they just stopped calling.

Unbeknown to anyone in our circle, we'd been trying for a baby and three weeks after the trip, Anna discovered she was pregnant and had to have a termination.

The support for Anna was incredible but I was left feeling so unbelievably angry I wanted to get on a plane and go and find who was responsible and do them serious harm.

Anna's support worker recommended Restitute and slowly I was able to deal with the anger, sort out the guilt I felt and also get some proper advice about what to expect and how to deal with both my work, and help Anna deal with hers.

We both needed time off but explaining to a random HR

person and telling my line manager just seemed like I was telling someone else's secrets and being selfish for feeling the way that I did.

Restitute helped me to help Anna and that has helped us both recover.

Assumptions that these crimes only happen to 'other people' or those that have somehow failed to protect their loved ones compounds families' misery, leading to isolation and stigmatisation, delaying disclosure and access to vital support.

■ To help Restitute support other people like Jo and Adam, you can make a donation using the QR code or arrange training, information and guidance for your staff, particularly those

who are managing people or work in HR.

You can also share the group's information in your workplace so that staff can access support should they need it.

Visit [restitute.org](https://restitute.org) for more information.

\*Names and details have been changed to ensure anonymity.



Supporting parents, families, and partners of people who have survived sexual abuse, sexual violence or other serious crime.

[www.restitute.org](https://www.restitute.org)



# OUR HOST!

## LANCE CORPORAL RICHARD JONES

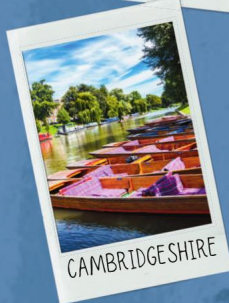
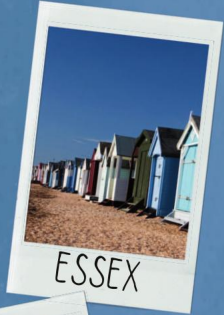
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